

# AIRPORT

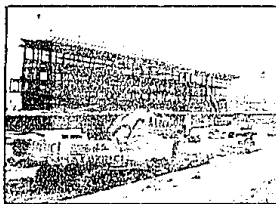
## Face lift

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The massive expansion program, which includes the new 74-gate Northwest Airlines Midfield Terminal, shopping mall and major new runway, will also include - after Midfield's scheduled December 2001 opening - makeover of the Davey (Northwest) and Smith terminals.

With Metro expected to be ranked the eighth busiest airport in North America and 18th busiest in the world, there's a lot of impetus for improvements now in place or going in, such as:

- Customer Service Agents stationed roughly every 30 feet throughout the airport.
  - Customer service training for more than 600 airport employees by a Walt Disney subsidiary.
  - The Airport Information Center, which helps answer questions about Metro and the Detroit area through videos, displays, brochures and CS-A personnel.
  - The upgrading of 65 restrooms through redecorating, including wider entrances/exits and touchless faucets and toilets.
  - Family restrooms, including baby-changing facilities for those with young children, plus more accessible unisex restrooms for the handicapped.
  - Lepton Lane Inc., with its offices for rent and fast T-1 Internet access, plus the new Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce conference facility.
  - Six new Concourse A gates (Southwest and Spirit airlines).
  - Widened, modernized security checkpoints for faster screening and less congestion.
  - The prototype Jose Cuervo Mexican restaurant - the first of its kind in the nation - plus other new Metro dining spots.
- Outside, improvements include 700 new on-site parking spaces, credit-card-express parking exits and tripled curb-front access to Northwest flights at the Davey. Expanded curb-front check-in at the Smith is next.
- And the new Midfield Terminal?
- With its graceful, eye-catching architecture, its 125,000-square-foot shopping/dining mall, its mile-wide A and B concourses with domestic and international gates served by an underground tram, its 11,500-space parking deck, southern access road and possible hotel, it's expected to top off Metro's turnaround.



**Concrete and steel:** The new Midfield Terminal rises near Metro's control tower (far right) as road-building continues.

## Mall

from page A9

said an equally excited Michael Conway, the airport's director of external relations.

"You're not alone, brother," Pobur shot back. To indicate the quality-level envisioned, Pobur stated that, of roughly 800 solicitations mailed to prospective merchants and restaurateurs, only 46 proposals were received (some joint applications were received).

"Why so few?" she asked rhetorically. "Because we set the bar high," she answered, adding that the proposals were "incredibly strong."

The quality of presentations being reviewed by her evaluation committee are "amazing, wonderful beyond our wildest dreams," she said.

### Top weight

In the evaluation process, the heaviest weight - 30 percent - is being given to the county's anticipated financial return: The airport, as mall landlord, expects first-year revenue to be "over \$100 million," Pobur said.

"It's around \$30 million now," with the airport getting 13 to 16 percent, according to David Katz, airport director.

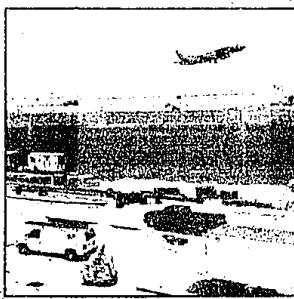
Conway noted the airport's income is mainly from airline landing fees, plus concessions, rent and parking - it gets no general-fund tax dollars. Metro is a "hub" airport because the other dollars allow it to keep landing fees "reasonable," he said. The Pobur committee's recommendations go in March to the Wayne County Commission for its approval.

The 2-million-square-foot Midfield Terminal, is to open by December 2001. Its mall will connect Midfield's multi-level passenger entrance, ticketing and luggage area to the mile-wide, 74-gate boarding area. The mall will have 41 specialty retail stores and 39 restaurants, all Detroit-themed.

The largest retail outlet will be a "world class" 6,200-square-foot duty-free store, Pobur said, but there also will be upscale stores carrying high-fashion designs, gifts and golf items.

### Emphasis local

The mall will emphasize local food specialties and gift shops featuring locally made items and apparel.



STAFF PHOTO BY TOM HEAVLY

**Work in progress:** A jet lifts off near a below-grade portion of access road at the new Midfield Terminal.

Michigan wines and microbrews plus museum and gift shops showcasing local artisans will be featured, along with restaurants representing the area's multi-cultural population.

Also planned are an American-style diner with carry-out, an aromatherapy shop and a fresh-flower shop.

To assure competitiveness with other metro-area outlets, officials require that businesses awarded concessions "agree to implement 'street pricing' based on proprietors' surveys of local-area charges for similar services and products."

"The airport price must be comparable to prices offered at off-airport locations," officials emphasized.

Furthermore, "to maintain and encourage good customer service," the airport will use "secret shoppers" and a quality-rating system to monitor offerings.

"Exceptional customer service" will be rewarded, with "penalties for consistently falling below standards, officials added.

To assure relevancy, Metro also wants its suppliers to have the "flexibility to respond to changing retail trends."

## Tenant criteria

Choosing tenants for the new Midfield Terminal Airport Mall is to be as top-drawer as the plans for the 125,000-square-foot area.

Metro Airport, beset by allegations it has failed to seek competitive bids on contracts, has sought to assure everyone, including potential tenants, about the selection process for the new mall by naming an independent panel and a corporate attorney to oversee the process.

"While we want to share the excitement about what's coming," said David Katz, Wayne County director of airports, "we also want to make certain the media and general public understand the stringent criteria and integrity-based selection process that will be used to select the winners."

The four panel members are Vernice Anthony, senior vice president of community health at St. John Health System; William C. Brooks, board chairman of United American Health Care Corp.; Douglas A. Fraser, former United Auto Workers international president; and retired Air Force Major Gen. Lucius Theus, former Tuskegee Airman and the first African American combat officer to be promoted to general.

The attorney is Leon S. Cohan, retired Detroit Edison general counsel and nationally known ethicist who served 10 years as chairman of the Michigan State Board of Ethics.

Cohan is reviewing and monitoring a selection committee's screening of the 66 proposals while the panel is evaluating and assuring the integrity of the process.

"This is an innovative retail program that will make Metro's airport mall the envy of the nation," said Colleen Pobur, the airport's director of concessions. "We want to make clear that this selection process has been open, fair and competitive."

"It's a very above-board process," she said. "There are no secrets to this."

In March, her committee is to present its recommendations to the Wayne County board of commissioners for final approval.



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