7 ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 ISSUES IDENTIFIED AND STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS

As stated previously, Scenario B plus HSR ranks as the top Scenario for all the Goals, except Livable Communities and is therefore the recommended approach to satisfy projected aviation demand. In brief, Scenario B includes the key strategies listed below.

- Significant redistribution of air passenger traffic from SFO to OAK and SJC;
- Increased use of Sonoma County Airport to serve local air passenger demand;
- New Air Traffic Control Technologies that have a high likelihood of implementation;
- A robust Demand Management program at SFO; and
- High Speed Rail initial segment from San Francisco to Orange County (Scenario B could also meet regional aviation capacity needs if HSR is not implemented in the timeframe of the study)

Because of the inherent uncertainty in the forecasts as discussed previously, there is a possibility that Bay Area air passenger, air cargo and general aviation traffic could grow faster than estimated and create additional pressure on airport runways. The recommended strategy for handling this potentially higher level of aviation demand is Scenario C, which is described in detail in Chapter 5 and summarized as follows:

- Even greater redistribution of regional air passenger demand to OAK and SJC;
- Additional local air passenger use of Sonoma County Airport;
- More extensive use of advanced ATC technologies being considered as part of FAA's NextGen program;
- New airline services at airports outside the Bay Area to serve passengers who would otherwise use Bay Area airports;
- Advanced Demand Management program for SFO; and
- High Speed Rail (HSR would be an essential element of a strategy to serve higher than forecasted air passenger demand, and Scenario C would benefit from extension of the HSR system beyond Orange County to San Diego, as this could divert even more air passengers to HSR).

If the major strategies above do not come to fruition to the extent planned, then future updates of the RASPA will likely need to assess other approaches, possibly including new runway development.

A number of important issues have surfaced during the course of the study that could have a significant impact on the Bay Area's ability to achieve Scenario B and the related long-range planning goals for the Bay Area airport system. To call attention to these issues, the study Recommendations and suggested future work tasks are listed by issue.

Issue 1: Changing conditions which alter long-range planning assumptions

1. Regional aviation forecasts should be updated more frequently to respond to changing events in the aviation industry and to better inform future airport planning decisions; RAPC should regularly track factors affecting the air passenger and air cargo forecasts.
2. Regional agencies will use the latest RASPA forecasts[5] in any of their airport-related planning decisions (e.g., BCDC approvals, ABAG regional land use policies and plans, and MTC airport access improvements). Individual Bay Area airports should collaborate with RAPC when developing new forecasts for their airports, particularly in regard to assumptions about total regional aviation demand as well the share of regional air passenger and air cargo demand served at their airport.
3. RAPC should regularly track factors that affect airport runway capacity and delays; update information annually.

Issue 2: Lack of regional mechanisms to influence airline decisions about which airports to serve

1. Regional plans should support the airport passenger distributions in Scenario B, as this Scenario performs the best in relation to the Study Goals.
2. RAPC should explore new ways to engage the airlines in discussions concerning regional airport capacity issues and regional interests in expanding the share of traffic served by OAK and SJC.

[5] Currently Baseline/Scenario B.

3. Working with the Bay Area airports, RAPC could develop a list of underserved airline markets at OAK and SJC and use this in advocating for needed service improvements with the airlines.
4. RAPC could also work with the Bay Area airports and the local business community to develop a regional marketing program to expand use of OAK and SJC by Bay Area residents.
5. Increasing ground accessibility to OAK and SJC by highways and transit will be important to attracting more passengers to these airports. RAPC supports ongoing and future transit and highway improvements to increase their regional accessibility.

Issue 3: Difficulty implementing airport-originated demand management programs

1. Future airline agreements at SFO should not preclude use of congestion pricing approaches as allowed by the latest FAA policy.
2. SFO should continue to examine new demand management approaches that could be quickly implemented if there is a sudden onset of extreme delays (due to added airline flights and/or more frequent bad weather).
3. If SFO's demand management program does not contain delays to acceptable levels, the Bay Area should advocate for FAA intervention to manage these delays.
4. RAPC should monitor other airport demand management programs around the country to determine what programs are being implemented and their effectiveness.

Issue 4: Uncertainty regarding the timing and effectiveness of new ATC technologies

1. The FAA should provide regular updates to RAPC on the status of its NextGen program, including approximate timeframes for deployment of new technologies at Bay Area airports.
2. RAPC supports the use of incentive approaches by the FAA to encourage airlines to purchase NextGen technologies for their fleets.
3. Regional agencies should be more active in taking positions on federal aviation legislation affecting NextGen funding and delivery, particularly in regards to expediting NextGen in the Bay Area..

4. To increase the effectiveness of its NextGen advocacy, the Bay Area airports and regional agencies could form a larger national coalition with other regions experiencing major runway congestion problems (e.g., New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, etc.).

5. RAPC should support a study by the FAA of the Bay Area airspace to examine changes in operations and procedures that would be needed to maximize the benefits of NextGen technologies. The study should also identify any adverse airport or community environmental impacts resulting from changes to existing airport arrival and departure routes.

Issue 5: Uncertainty regarding future HSR plans and the effectiveness of HSR in diverting air passengers to rail

1. RAPC should continue to monitor future HSR developments, including any changes in assumptions about routes, fares, service levels, and implementation timeframe, as such changes would affect the conclusions reached in this study about HSR's effectiveness in addressing regional runway capacity and environmental issues.

2. RAPC should encourage discussions between the airlines and the California HSR Authority to examine the potential for joint ticketing arrangements, similar to the cooperative European model between airlines and HSR.

Issue 6: Uncertainty regarding the future role of some alternative airports

1. Air passenger or air cargo development at alternative airports will largely be initiated at the local level (as was done at Sonoma County Airport), and RAPC should work with the local government sponsors to determine how best to support their efforts.

2. RAPC encourages county Airport Land Use Commissions (ALUCs) and local jurisdictions to continue to maintain a high level of land use compatibility around all Bay Area airports, and particularly those evaluated in this study that have promise to serve some local air passenger demand in the future.

3. If regional air passenger and/or air cargo demand increases faster than currently forecasted, RAPC may wish to work with local jurisdictions to update the prior feasibility study for Travis AFB; this study should be conducted well in advance of any potential need for joint use of this facility

given the timeframe required to address some of the issues that would arise in connection with joint use.

4. RAPC should stay in close communication with Sacramento, Stockton, and Monterey airports and continue to involve these airports in the long-term planning of the Bay Area airport system.

5. Moffett Federal Airfield does not appear to be needed to serve the region's long-term air passenger demand; however, no other potential roles for Moffett Federal Airfield were evaluated (e.g., emergencies in response to a natural disaster, limited air cargo services, or as a general aviation reliever airport). Therefore its potential to serve in some regional aviation capacity should be protected until such studies are conducted.

Issue 7: Projected increase in community noise exposure around all airports (2007-2035)

1. Recognizing the substantial noise monitoring and noise exposure mitigation strategies Bay Area airports currently have in place, OAK, SFO, and SJC should continue to apprise RAPC about their latest approaches for working with communities to address existing and emerging noise issues.

2. Based on the initial assessment showing potentially significant increases in population exposed to airport noise levels of 65 CNEL and greater (2007 to 2035), Bay Area airports should use the more sophisticated noise modeling tools they have available to confirm noise trends out to 2035 when conducting future environmental studies and should address a broader range of noise metrics than were employed in this study.

3. Should these 2035 noise impacts prove significant, more detailed studies would be needed of potential mitigation strategies, including sound insulation of more homes, changes to runway operations, and changes to local land use plans.

4. Regional agencies should also review the contribution of the latest Focus Growth population projections to these estimated population increases and evaluate whether some of the population can be located in less noise-impacted areas.

Issue 8. Projected increase in criteria pollutants and GHGs

1. The Bay Area Air Quality Management District should provide periodic reports to RAPC on the amount of criteria pollutants (VOCs and NOx) and GHGs from aircraft operations at Bay Area airports (e.g., when updated emission inventories are prepared).
2. RAPC should monitor future regulatory and legislative changes at the federal and international level that could reduce these emissions and take supporting positions as appropriate.
3. The Bay Area airports should provide periodic updates to RAPC of their own initiatives to reduce on-airport air emissions from aircraft, ground service vehicles and transportation services to the airport.