As most of our readers know, the New Orleans Aviation Board (NOAB) has committed to building a North Terminal Airport Project at Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport with a scheduled completion date of May 2018. The Project includes a new 650,000-square-foot terminal complex featuring two concourses with 30 gates, a consolidated checkpoint, seamless connections between concourses and a 2,000 space parking garage. According to our recent economic impact study, the North Terminal Airport Project is expected to generate $6.3 billion with job projections exceeding 64,400 (directly and indirectly) after the new terminal is completed in 2018.

The North Terminal Project will be one of the most significant construction projects in New Orleans since the Superdome; creating more than 13,000 new construction jobs and having a significant positive impact on local businesses and Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) in the region.

An innovative contracting method known as the Construction Manager at Risk (CMAR) was authorized by the Louisiana state legislature for this exciting project. CMAR is a project delivery methodology whereby an owner selects a well-qualified construction manager for the project early on in the design phase through an open and transparent Request for Proposal (RFP) competitive selection process (as compared with a traditional bid). Once selected, the construction manager is then part of the team and available to consult on the design and provide pre-construction services, including value engineering. Because the construction manager participates in the design process, it is then in a position to negotiate with the owner and guarantee a maximum price for construction. Thus, unlike traditional bid construction projects, a CMAR does not get change orders to increase the contract sum, creating budget certainty. Instead, the CMAR is “at risk” to deliver the project within budget. Moreover, because the construction manager participates in the design process, the schedule can be collapsed and condensed, which allows for a more expedited project schedule.

During the August 21, 2014 meeting of the New Orleans Aviation Board, the Board accepted the recommendation of the Proposal Review Committee for the CMAR and unanimously awarded the CMAR Pre-Construction Services contract for the North Terminal Airport Project to the Hunt Gibbs Boh Metro (HGBM) Joint Venture team. The Nine member Review Committee with members from Tulane University College for Architecture, Delgado Community College, New Orleans Redevelopment Authority, State Facilities Planning & Control, Facility Planning & Control, City of New Orleans, Louisiana Department of Transportation and NOAB, met in a public meeting on August 7, 2014 to evaluate the proposals received from HGBM and NOLA Airport Builders Joint Venture in response to the public solicitation. The Review Committee discussed at length the scoring elements of the RFP, the grading criteria applicable to the proposals and the content of the submissions. The selection process was thoughtful and equitable. While both firms were very qualified to do this work, the evaluation resulted in a score of 787 to 822, with HGBM receiving the higher overall score and the committee’s recommendation.

As we design this $650 million dollar project, I want to point out that when completed this will not be just a building; it will be one of the most important gateways to the world for the people of New Orleans and the many visitors to our great city and region for years to come. I am confident that it will transform Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport into the facility New Orleans has always deserved. With the completion of this new terminal, our Airport will be an even greater asset for the city, state and region today, tomorrow and well into the future.

By Iftikhar Ahmad, Director of Aviation

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