

# To build or not — decision time for airport board

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After months of going through county loops for approval, the proposed Big Bear Airport terminal building documents are ready for review. The Airport District board of directors will do just that during a Zoom teleconference meeting at 4 p.m. on Wednesday, Aug. 11.

A quick look at the documents included in the district's agenda packet shows a rectangular building that features a community/board room, lounge area, kiosk area and administrative offices taking up about two-thirds of the footprint. The eastern side of the building is reserved for a restaurant, but will not be built out if the plan moves forward.

"None of us here are restaurant owners," said Ryan Goss, airport general manager. "If the project is approved, the restaurant area will be a shell with utilities.."

Goss said this allows a restaurant to be designed with the tenant's preference. "It's a cost thing for us," Goss said. "I would hate the district to build out and limit a potential restaurant." Goss said The Barnstorm Restaurant could potentially be that restaurant.

Goss said construction of the restaurant portion could be partially covered by the airport district, but it would be a board decision, Goss said.

The plans also call for outdoor seating for the restaurant with the potential of creating a kids playground area adjacent to the outdoor dining area.



Grizzly file photo

**Replacing the Robert P. Pratte terminal building at the Big Bear City Airport is on the agenda for the board to consider at its Aug. 11 meeting.**

The community/board room would be used for board meetings, Young Eagles and as an on-site teaching and training area for the airport's partnership with the school district in the Big Bear High School aviation curriculum. The room would also be available for community events, Goss said.

Costs have increased since the project began with construction materials at the top of the list because of supply shortages. Goss said with costs fluid he isn't ready to state what the costs of the project may be for the district. His hope, Goss said, is that materials costs will come down by the time the

plan moves to the construction phase.

If approved by the board, demolition of the existing terminal building could come as soon as 2022. The Bear Valley Unified School District board of trustees recently passed a resolution to give the former Chautauqua High School building to the airport district. Goss said the building would be used as a temporary terminal building during construction. "We appreciate the school district for helping us out," Goss said.

But demolition and construction won't begin until a final design is approved by the board, Goss said.

## Big Bear Airport District draft strategic plan

The Big Bear Airport District board will also review the draft strategic plan during its Aug. 11 meeting. While it is not a final document, these are a few of the items listed as potential projects for 2022.

- Begin construction of new terminal building.
- Construct SRE building.
- Establish quality aircraft maintenance facility as a commercial business at airport.
- Link transportation networks.

The terminal building isn't the only construction project that may be on the horizon at the airport. The Federal Aviation Administration recently approved the Big Bear Airport's Snow Removal Building, or SRE, project. This is a federally funded project, according to Goss, with the FAA providing 90 percent of the funds. Goss said there is potential to receive 5 percent funding from Caltrans, as well.

Goss said his hope is that the district can move forward with a new terminal building sooner rather than later. "This current terminal, it's tired. It's old," Goss said. "I believe this (new) building is going to be a place for the community to hang out."

To join the meeting using the Zoom teleconference app, use the meeting ID 848 4206 4723 and passcode 342556. Or, dial in by phone to 699-900-6833. Participants are required to mute their audio during the meeting except when making a public comment.