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**DETERMINATION OF THE IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED NEW ILOILO AIRPORT
ON LAND USE IN THE MUNICIPALITIES OF STA. BARBARA AND CABATUAN,
ILOILO PROVINCE, USING DELPHI TECHNIQUE**

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Abstract:

The Philippines, consisting of almost 7,100 islands, is one of the largest archipelagic countries in the world. Its air transportation has been playing an important role for both passenger and cargo transport for the country; and the government has been developing more major airports for greater efficiency and service. One of these airports is the Iloilo Airport.

The Iloilo Airport is considered as the fourth busiest airport in the Philippines in terms of number of passengers. This existing airport, however, has been facing problems. Rapid urbanization in its surroundings is one problem which further hampers its development and expansion and imperils the safety of its aircraft operations within the area.

In 1997, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) conducted a Pre-Feasibility Study for a proposed New Iloilo Airport, which determined the urgent need to develop a new airport. The proposed airport will be located between the municipalities of Cabatuan and Sta. Barbara, about 19 kms. north of Iloilo City. The surrounding area in Sta. Barbara and Cabatuan thus becomes a natural focus for urban development. It is apparent that airports provide several essential ingredients that encourage urban growth – jobs, extensive roadway systems, a generally undeveloped setting where reasonably priced land is still available, and public utilities which can be easily tapped by other users.

This research was conducted to determine and forecast the impacts of the New Iloilo Airport on land use in the municipalities of Sta. Barbara and Cabatuan using the Delphi technique. In effect, therefore, the study would determine how airports influence land use using the Delphi method.

The study reveals that the new Iloilo airport will produce a host of impacts on land use in the two municipalities of Sta. Barbara and Cabatuan for the next ten years. The experts forecast that even during the construction stage of the airport, a lot of commercial establishments would be seen especially in the construction site area, but this would be only small in magnitude. The more permanent changes in land use would occur when the airport shall have started its operation. The respondents selected the Modified Land Use Option III as the land use most likely to happen in the next ten years.

The study concluded that the new Iloilo Airport would have a number of impacts on land use in the two municipalities of Sta. Barbara and Cabatuan for the next ten years. In fact, some impacts would already occur even during the construction stage of the airport but these would only be small in magnitude. The more permanent impacts on land use will occur when the airport begins its regular operations.

The experts expected that commercial establishment would be developed along the access route going to the airport. These commercial establishments would also be more visible in the *poblacion*. Residential areas would continue to expand in the *poblacion* areas and residential subdivisions would be formed within the area.

The Delphi technique is reliable for predicting impacts. Delphi offered a practical means of obtaining opinions on likely impacts of a certain development project, using the experts in the subject area. Having a “good” respondent group is the key for achieving good results. In this study, the Delphi approach was used to refine the land use options that were previously done. It was found out that Delphi technique could be used to determine which among the land use options, that have been presented, would be the most likely to happen in the next ten years.

The composition of the panel of respondents is critical, in which its members should have a thorough understanding of the current situation in the study area. From this study, it was found out that people inherently living in the area were very singular and specific in their consensus and forecasts. On the other hand, people from the national level, or those not inherently living in the area, despite their direct involvement in the project, were nonetheless not too familiar with the area and as such could not make specific forecasts for such impacts on commercial, residential, or industrial developments. They simply relied on what were existing during the time of the study and from thereon formed the basis for their predictions.