

## Airport permit takes step forward

By J. R. Logan

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A decision on whether to issue a permit for the expansion of the Taos Regional Airport is likely less than a month away.

Acting Taos County Planning Director Edward Vig'l notified town officials in a Dec. 3 letter their application for a permit was complete. To download a copy, find this story at [taosnews.com](http://taosnews.com).

The town owns the airport and has been trying to get the \$24 million project off the ground for decades.

Since the town first filed a permit application with the county in September, Vig'l made repeated requests for additional information about the project. The Dec. 3 letter is notable because it means, under county regulations, Vig'l has up to 30 days to either give the project his OK or deny the town's application.

The town has secured a contractor for the first phase; the town has said the only formal hurdle remaining is the permit from the county.

Proponents of the project argue it will improve safety at the airport and foster economic development. Critics counter the project will only benefit the wealthy and increase pollution near the airport.

In September, a group of Taos-area residents filed a lawsuit seeking to halt the expansion until the county adopts airport-specific zoning. Attorneys for the town and county say the governments are under no obligation to adopt such zoning.

—J.R. Logan