

First look at Memphis International Airport's terminal modernization design



Image: UrbanARCH/Alliance

Rendering of the Terminal Modernization and Seismic Program's revamped ticketing area.

URBANARCH/ALLIANCE



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The modernization of Memphis International Airport's terminal is getting underway. The terminal modernization represents the largest capital project the airport has ever undertaken.

The Memphis-Shelby County Airport Authority (MSCAA) board of commissioners approved at its July 18 meeting the demolition of Concourse A. The move enables work to begin in August. The demolition, which is being handled by Turner Construction Co., Ardmore Roderick, and Chris Woods Construction, is an early-stage project of the airport's Terminal Modernization and Seismic Program (TMSP) and is scheduled to take eight to 10 months to complete.

Concourse A, which was built in 1974, is already closed, with all its activities being moved to the renovated Concourse B in 2022. The site of Concourse A, once demolished, could be used for a new consolidated rental car center and is already earmarked for a checked baggage inspection system area and a new MSCAA administration building.

The overall TMSP is currently expected to cost \$653 million. The modernization of Terminal B's arrival and departure areas is the "most significant" segment of the TMSP project and is expected to be completed in 2030 after starting work in 2026, according to MEM.

Renderings of the project (see below) show the modernized terminal, including baggage and ticketing areas.

Beyond the demolition of Concourse A, other early TMSP projects include the baggage level gaining a commercial lane and the ticketing/departures level's outer drive being replaced. Bids to demolish the outer drive were put out in February. Expected to start in 2025, the outer drive replacement is scheduled to be complete in about two years and result in a "seismically enhanced, expanded departures-level drive."



The outer drive replacement facilitates the terminal building moving outward, making way for the larger Terminal B work.

Completing the TMSP's Phase I would see a new ticket lobby, a checked-baggage inspection area, an expanded baggage claim, an employee screening checkpoint, a larger security screening checkpoint, newly located vertical circulation for travelers, relocation of escalators, and seismic upgrades.

“MEM is definitely on the move,” MSCAA President and CEO Terry Blue said in a news release. “More than two years ago, MEM reinvented the Memphis travel experience by introducing our modernized concourse. Now, we carry that momentum forward as we embark on our largest project ever, one that is designed to enhance our travelers’ experience and support our airport’s long-term growth.