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Route between Huntsville International Airport terminal and baggage claim to move

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By Marian Accardi, The Huntsville Times

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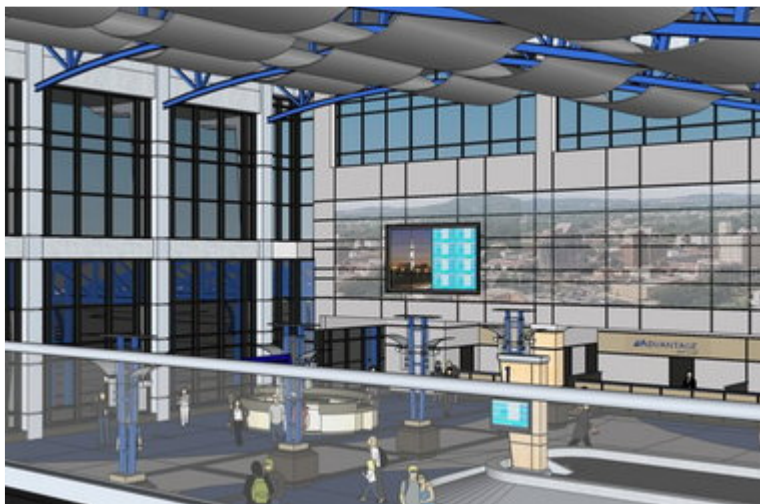
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Rendering of Huntsville International Airport's baggage claim expansion project. (Submitted by Chapman Sisson Architects)

HUNTSVILLE, Alabama -- Next month, passengers at Huntsville International Airport will start using a tunnel-type walkway to get from the second floor of the terminal to an escalator that leads to the baggage claim area.

The new route gets passengers back inside the building instead of having to use an outside covered passageway as crews finish the second phase of the \$26 million baggage claim expansion.

A new elevated pedestrian bridge between the terminal and parking deck is also expected to be open next

month, said Mike Chapman, principal at Chapman Sisson Architects in Huntsville, the project architect.

The entire bag claim expansion is scheduled to be finished in August, he said today at a construction update briefing.

The first of three new baggage carousels started operating last summer.

Phase two construction will add the other two carousels and new escalators and an elevator.

The bag claim project was designed to replace the low ceilings and limited natural light in the public waiting spaces with larger open spaces with lots of natural light, said Chapman. That will make it easier for passengers to navigate the concourse, terminal and bag claim areas, he said.

"We wanted to provide a positive first impression" at the airport for visitors, Chapman said.

The bag claim expansion also includes six relocated rental car counters; a new space for Executive Connection, which offers transportation services for passengers and baggage from the airport; a new kiosk for the Huntsville/Madison County Convention & Visitors Bureau and second floor shell space for future development.

Forty-five thousand square feet of terrazzo flooring and 350 tons of steel are being used in the baggage claim work, Chapman said.

Barbie Peek, the airport's marketing director, said the **airport's \$90 million capital-improvement program** has included a parking deck addition, public waiting and concessions expansions and renovation of the concourse and Four Points by Sheraton hotel.

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