

MEETING NOTES

Two meetings were held. An open house for adjacent property owners and stakeholders was held from 11:00 – 1:00 and an Airport Advisory Committee meeting was held from 3:00 – 5:00. These notes summarize the general information and public comment received during both meetings.

1. INTRODUCTIONS –

2. PROJECT OVERVIEW & STATUS –

OVERVIEW

David Miller from Century West Engineering provided an overview of the planning process and an update of progress to date. The Airport Master Planning process is defined by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). It is essentially a facilities improvement plan for the airport over a 20 year planning period. The previous plan for the Methow Valley State Airport was completed in 1995. The FAA defined standard is a 20 year planning period with updates occurring typically every 7 to 10 years. Updates can occur more frequently if there is significant development on the airport, or stretch to the 10 year period if there is less development. The 20 year planning period is broken into 5 year increments for the development of the Capitol Improvement Program (CIP).

The first step in the process is an inventory of existing conditions and activities at the airport. This serves to assess the current condition of existing facilities and level of activity. Future demand is forecast based on the current number of based aircraft and take off's and landings. The WSDOT Aviation Long-term Air Transportation Study (LATS), economic forecasts, and other factors such as population/income/job growth statistics and other indicators of growth will all be factored into the forecasts for the airport. When the forecast are completed they are submitted to the FAA for review and approval.

Once the Inventory and Forecast are completed Preliminary Alternatives are developed to meet the forecasted demand. The preliminary alternatives are varied options to meet demand within the existing constraints at the airport. The goal is to layout development options that efficiently use the available land that can be economically served by the existing infrastructure.

The goal of developing the Preliminary Alternatives is to arrive at a Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative is often a blend of several components of the Preliminary

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Alternatives. Once agreed to, the Preferred Alternative will be incorporated into the Airport Layout Plan drawing set.

Through the process a series of draft working papers are generated and circulated to the working group that describes the findings of each work element. At the completion of the project, the draft chapters will be finalized with all comments incorporated and assembled into the Airport Layout Plan Report which will accompany the Airport Layout Plan set of drawings.

STATUS

The Inventory, Forecast, Airport Facility Requirements chapters, and preliminary development alternatives for the airport have been completed. Through the development of the Inventory it became apparent that additional research into the property ownership and through the fence agreements was necessary to get a clear picture of future development and capacity needs on and off airport property. Since the last meeting, Century West and the Aviation Division have spent considerable time researching these issues.

3. AVIATION ACTIVITY FORECASTS & FACILITY REQUIREMENTS

Methow Valley State Airport accommodates both general aviation aircraft used in business, personal or government travel, and aircraft used in seasonal firefighting efforts. The majority of general aviation activity consists of small single-engine and multi-engine piston aircraft, although the airport also accommodates a variety of turbine aircraft (turboprop, business jets, etc.) on a limited basis. General aviation activity is generated by local residents, businesses, and visitors to the area. The Methow Valley is one of Washington's most unique year-round destinations and has long attracted visitors and part-time residents for its wilderness setting and unique recreational opportunities, including the nearby Sun Mountain Lodge. Fire-related activity includes some piston engine aircraft, but twin-engine turboprops and helicopters account for the majority of aircraft operations.

The forecasts of aviation activity for Methow Valley State Airport include two existing forecasts (WSDOT LATS and FAA Terminal Area Forecast (TAF)) and one updated market-based projection. The LATS forecasts were developed for airports throughout the state, through the use of regional growth assumptions. The TAF provides broad-based projections that are consistent with the FAA's long term expectations of demand for general aviation in the U.S. The LATS and TAF provide reasonable baseline projections for use in the ALP project.

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An updated forecast was also developed that attempts to reflect several specific local factors that have the potential to affect activity at Methow Valley State Airport. This projection provides a slightly more aggressive growth trend that would be reflected in both based aircraft totals and airport operations.

A new forecast of aviation activity was developed for Methow Valley State Airport that considers several market conditions that can affect airport activity that include; population, existing landside capacity, market factors in the valley, current based aircraft, and airport operations.

Based on a gradually increasing population ratio, the number of based aircraft at Methow Valley State Airport is projected to increase from 9 to 22 over the twenty-year planning period. It is estimated that 15 of the 22 based aircraft (68 percent) projected for 2030 will be located in adjacent off-airport hangar developments that currently exist or are currently under development. The remaining 32 percent (7 aircraft) will be located on airport property. It should be noted that once the development capacity of all existing through-the-fence development is reached (approximately 20 to 25 aircraft), 100 percent of future demand would be accommodated on airport property. In this sense, the facility needs beyond the current 20-year planning period should be considered when making current planning decisions.

4. PRELIMINARY AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS. OPTIONS FOR CONFORMANCE TO FAA STANDARDS AND ACCOMODATING FUTURE AVIATION DEMAND.

For the purposes of evaluating runway configuration needs, three preliminary development options were presented for consideration. The runway configurations presented in the preliminary alternatives will enable the majority of FAA airport design standards to be met while minimizing existing obstructions to FAR Part 77 airspace surfaces. The following items are among the FAA's highest priorities to enhance airport safety:

- **Clear Approaches to Runway Ends** – Unobstructed approaches (FAR Part 77 or through use of FAA Alternative Threshold Siting Criteria)
- **Runway Safety Area (RSA)** - Standard dimensions, surface gradient, surface condition (no objects > 3" above grade unless frangible) along the sides and beyond the ends of the runway

- **Obstacle Free Zone (OFZ)** – Standard dimensions without physical obstructions along the sides and beyond the ends of the runway
- **Primary Surface** – Unobstructed flat surface along the sides and beyond the ends of the runway
- **Object Free Area (OFA)** - Standard dimensions without physical obstructions along the sides and beyond the ends of the runway

In addition to runway and taxiway configurations, options for future landside development areas will provide adequate clearances from the runway-taxiway system, its protected areas and the associated airspace surrounding the runway. The landside components include the following:

- Aircraft Apron (tiedown, fueling area reserve)
- Helicopter Parking
- Hangar Sites
- Taxiway and Taxilane Access to Apron and Hangars
- Vehicle Access and Parking

Runway Option A

Option A (see Figure 4-1) addresses the current non-standard clearance between the south end of the runway and Evans Road by shifting the runway to the north approximately 1,200 feet and eliminating approximately 1,900 feet of existing runway at the south end. The reconfigured runway length is approximately 4,260 feet. A displaced threshold (approximately 277 feet) would be required for Runway 31 to provide clearance over vehicles traveling on Evans Road. The location of the north end of the reconfigured runway is limited by the Methow River and a riparian habitat conservation zone (based on the runway object free area and runway safety that extends beyond the runway end).

Primary benefits include:

- No change in existing surface access (Evans Road) for the airport and adjacent properties located west of the airport.

Primary impacts include:

- Reduction in current runway length and airport function
- Increased cost for runway construction/reconfiguration (compared to Option B)
- Increased property acquisition requirements (compared to Option B)

Runway Option B

Option B (see Figure 4-2) addresses the current non-standard clearance between the south end of the runway and Evans Road by closing the section of road that conflicts with the protected areas of the runway. Access to the properties located south of the runway would not be affected. Access to the west side of the airport and adjacent private parcels is provided by extending a new access road from nearby existing highways.

Four conceptual roadway alignments are depicted, extending from the Twisp-Winthrop Eastside Road (west options) or Old Twisp Highway Road South (west option). The west option requires a two-lane bridge to cross the Methow River. All of the options require property acquisition (assumed to be a 50-foot roadway right of way). The evaluation of potential road options is also affected by the proposed landside options that involve acquisition of property to develop future aircraft parking apron and hangar facilities. The eastside road options offer different connecting points (to existing roads), but have the same alignment beyond the north end of the runway to meet approach clearance requirements.

The south end of Runway 13/31 is reconfigured to meet the FAA standard for runway safety area (currently limited by the river channel and Evans Road). A minor extension at the north end of the runway compensates for the loss of runway at the south end. The reconfigured runway length is approximately 5,012 feet.

Primary benefits include:

- No reduction in existing runway capabilities or airport function
- Lower costs for runway construction/reconfiguration (compared to Option A)
- Reduced property acquisition requirements (compared to Option A)

Primary impacts include:

- Property acquisition requirements and cost to accommodate new roadways
 - Larger number of property owners affected (1+ mile of road right of way)
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- Bridge option (cost)

Runway Option C

Option C (see Figure 4-3) addresses the current non-standard clearances between the ends of the runway and the airport property ownership by reducing the length of Runway 13/31 to contain the most critical surfaces within airport property. No changes in existing surface access are required and no additional roadway access is required.

The south end of Runway 13/31 is reconfigured to meet the FAA standard for runway object free area (currently limited by Evans Road). A minor reduction at the north end of the runway is also required to conform to the object free area standard. The reconfigured runway length is approximately 2,943 feet. A displaced threshold for Runway 31 similar to Option A would also be required.

Primary benefits include:

- No property acquisition requirements
- No changes in existing surface access roadways

Primary impacts include:

- Significant reduction in existing runway capabilities or airport function
- May require downgrade in airport design category (ADG I)
- Adversely affects USFS Smokejumper Base Operations
- Could limit FAA funding for improvements (Maintenance Only Airport)

Landside Options

Three conceptual landside options (see Figure 4-4) identify potential development of aircraft parking apron and hangar areas. As noted in earlier analyses, the existing developable landside areas on the west side of the runway are limited and may be further reduced by development of a west parallel taxiway. The locations identified in the figure illustrate the functional placement of these facilities in relation to the runway-taxiway system. Each of the three areas require property acquisition and surface access. East and west side parallel taxiways are depicted based on standard ADG II runway separation requirements. Relocation of existing hangars and other facilities on the east side of the runway is needed to accommodate a full-length taxiway. The aircraft apron would provide light aircraft tiedowns, large aircraft parking, and a fueling area.

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Hangar development areas are located at the rear of the parking apron. Actual property acquisition requirements (acreage) to be determined based on specific configuration of facilities.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT AND DISCUSSION

Both meetings were opened for discussion of the various options presented. *Note: The discussion is paraphrased and attempts to capture the intent of comments.* The following questions and suggestions were offered:

OPEN HOUSE COMMENTS – 11:00 am to 1:00 pm

Q: Would it be possible to lower Evans road and tunnel under the runway?

A: We discussed that option, but came to the conclusion that the other relocation options would cost less.

Q: I live near the runway and would like to talk about airport noise. The take offs and landings aren't really that bad, but there are sometimes Forest Service personnel working on helicopters late at night. There is also a business jet that runs its engines for two or three hours. Is it possible to provide a curfew for airport operations?

A: We do look at airport noise contours for the project and the noise foot print. The FAA looks at noise as it relates to health issues, not annoyance. They have developed their standards and the effect of noise is measured cumulatively, not based on a single event. Subsequently, at an airport like Methow, you may have one event, but then nothing for a week and by the FAA formula this does not rise to the level of a significant impact. WSDOT Aviation is committed to being a good neighbor of the Methow Community, anytime there is an undesirable situation, such as a jet running its engines for a long period or helicopter noise late at night, Paul Wolf from WSDOT Aviation should be contacted and he will contact the operator of the aircraft and ask that they take measures to mitigate the impact of their operations.

Q: How do you intend to handle east side through the fence access?

A: The Aviation Division has said that existing through the fence agreements will be honored. No new through the fence access will be allowed.

Q: How will the hangars on airport property that are to be removed be handled? Are we going to be a top priority for relocation or will other development happen first?

A: We often see hangar relocation required on airports to accommodate future facilities. It is typical for the relocation to occur in conjunction with the improvements that require the relocation. We would recommend discussing the timeline for relocation with Paul Wolf as there may be other issues involved.

Q: How far out is the fencing project?

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A: Based on current work planned for electrical and lighting improvements, the fence project is probably a couple of years out.

Q: Are you going to get the tetrahedron fixed?

A: We are looking into that for a summer project and also the possibility of including a standard segmented circle and lighted wind cone on the field.

Comment: My name is Craig Boesel and I own the property to the north of the airport. If you take 75% of my land I can't farm it. I've invested \$300,000 in pivots in the last few years that would be worthless and I have a 15 year commitment on them. Who is going to pay that back. The State has not contacted me in 5 years about purchasing my property and the way the State assesses property during condemnation doesn't reflect true value.

David Miller response: We understand that assessing a per acre value to a piece of property does not capture the value of 120 contiguous acres of farmland in the valley. We understand that given the limited amount of farmland in the valley, you can't replace what you have in the vicinity. When the options were developed, we looked at what it would take to conform with standards independent of the impacts. We wanted to show the various configurations that could meet standards. There are no great options here. Every option has significant challenges and we understand that. The goal of this meeting and receiving your comments over the next few weeks is to identify the best solution and come up with solutions that have the least impact to adjacent property owners.

Q: Why wasn't this meeting advertised?

A: An ad was placed in the Methow Valley News. *[It was learned following the meeting that the Methow Valley News is mailed on Wednesday and most people read it Thursday night and may not have seen the announcement for the Thursday meeting. Future meetings will be advertised further in advance.]*

Q: Why is this the first time we are seeing this? Craig should have been notified months ago that his property was going to be impacted.

A: The options shown have only been recently developed by Century West. At our last meeting in November we discussed the conformance issues and had a preliminary understanding of the issues. We didn't have this level of detail until Century West worked through the details regarding how FAA design standards could be met.

Q: Would it be possible to put signals on Evans Road to stop traffic if aircraft is approaching?

A: That would address the safety area issue, but would not address the fact that the roadway is in the object free area where the roadway runs parallel to the runway.

Q: Could the realigned roadway to the north be moved towards the river?

A: Yes, the alignment shown is very preliminary, but could be moved. The entire area to the north has a conservation easement, so how that will be dealt with still needs to be investigated. As

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you get close to the river there is a Riparian Habitat Conservation zone. The roadway could be placed upland of this zone.

Comment: I have three pivots on those fields and the roadway as shown would cut through them.

Q: Would a road along the perimeter still allow you to farm?

A: It would definitely be better.

Comment: If you used the existing Cotton Road and built the new road along the river and connected it to the end of the existing Evans Road you could avoid most of Mr. Boesel's property.

Response: That definitely looks like a possibility that we need to look at. A roadway along the river that would provide access to the east side and would create minimal impact on Mr. Boesel's property would definitely be preferable.

Comment: Another possibility would be for the State to purchase the Faval (sp?) property adjacent to mine and then we could look at a land trade. That would allow me to relocate my pivots so that they wouldn't interfere with the roadway or other airport needs and I would still have enough land to make it feasible to farm.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING COMMENTS – 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm

Q: If the ditch on the south end of the runway is covered, can Evans Road be moved beyond the runway safety area (RSA)?

A: Evans Road could possibly be moved beyond the safety area, however the road would still be located within the runway Object Free Area (OFA) and would still be an obstruction.

Q: Can Evans Road be lowered so that it is not in the OFA?

A: We discussed this possibility with the County, and lowering the roadway near the river would likely not comply with current County standards regarding construction in the flood plain.

Q: Does the airport have to meet FAA standards due to FAA funding already received or in order to receive additional FAA funding?

A: The grant assurances agreed to by the State as the Airport Sponsor require a 20 year commitment by the airport to remain in operation as a public use airport. Each time the airport receives a new grant the 20 year period is renewed. FAA funding is a critical source of revenue for the airport given the significant cost of maintaining the current facilities (runway & taxiway pavements, nav-aids, etc.) at the airport.

Q: What is the design aircraft for the airport?

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A: The combination of Airplane Design Group (ADG) II smokejumper aircraft and other itinerant ADG II aircraft (Approach Category A through D) appear to meet the FAA minimum of 500 annual operations required for the design aircraft or family of design aircraft. Based on FAA criteria, the design aircraft, or family of aircraft, must have a minimum of 500 annual *itinerant* operations. The CASA 212 is representative of the A-II type of aircraft used in smokejumper operations. The other ADG II aircraft activity (Approach Categories B, C and D) is not expected to reach the required 500 annual operation threshold during the current planning period. Based on these considerations, and the forecast activity, the recommended current and future ARC for Runway 13/31 is A-II.

Q: Could the requirement to purchase property go to eminent domain if there was not a willing seller?

A: It is possible, but the Aviation Division would attempt to avoid that if at all possible.

Q: Is there a minimum runway length required to accommodate ADG II aircraft?

A: There is no absolute minimum for any type of aircraft. It is ultimately up to the pilot of any airplane to understand the capabilities of the aircraft and the conditions on the airfield to assess if they can operate safely from the airfield. The FAA has a program that allows you to put in the elevation of the runway and the average high temperature and it generates a list of runway lengths for the various ADG categories and then provides a length to service varying percentages of the fleet. We use the program to assess the runway length and compare it to the type of aircraft that use the facility to determine recommendations for runway length.

Q: Do any of your alternatives require purchase of property to the south of the runway?

A: No, but if property located in the runway protection zone (RPZ) became available, we would recommend that the airport purchase it to protect the RPZ in the future.

Q: Is the house recently constructed on the south end in the RPZ?

A: It does not appear that the house is in the RPZ, but it may be an obstruction. We have recommended that during an upcoming project on the airport that they survey the roof to see if it is an obstruction. If it is, it should be marked with a red obstruction light.

Q: What is the growth potential of the airport?

A: The forecast demand at the airport over the planning period is modest. We are forecasting growth from 9 based aircraft to 22 based aircraft over the 20 year planning period.

Q: Is the plan for the Airport to buy land for hangars?

A: It is assumed that most of the hangars will be built off airport on the currently platted Perot development. The landside options shown do include several possible off airport options to accommodate demand, but because there is sufficient capacity in the currently developed off airport development, we would anticipate that these sites would be utilized first. Also, the safety related projects shown to deal with the runway issues will take priority over any land acquisition to accommodate hangars.

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Comment: The hangar sites in the Perot development are too expensive. Pilots will buy hangars at Twisp if there are not cheaper options at Methow Valley State. We would like to see the Airport move to provide hangars on the airport at a more reasonable price.

Q: Is part of the planning project to provide additional area for transient aircraft and make the airport more attractive for people to use?

A: We will evaluate the need for transient parking and other facilities and if additional facilities are needed, we will identify them on the plan.

6. NEXT STEPS

The Aviation Division would like to receive comments by April 17th so that they can be incorporated into the plan, as necessary. Some issues will not be resolved entirely and there may be ongoing discussions with property owners on how the plan could be implemented. The construction of improvements identified on the plan will occur over many years. Significant projects like runway extensions and roadway realignments, if included in the preferred alternative, will have significant environmental processes and public involvement components.

Eric Johnson and Paul Wolf will communicate the comments received today to the Director, John Sibold and the division will use this information and the overall goals for the airport to arrive at a preferred alternative. The preferred alternative will then be incorporated into the Draft final plan set and report.

An additional meeting will be held in the Methow Valley to present the preferred alternative.