

LONG-TERM AIR TRANSPORTATION STUDY (LATS) Washington State Aviation Planning Council

MEETING SUMMARY

February 5, 2009

Courtyard Marriott
480 Columbia Point Drive, Richland, WA

Present:

Council Members: Carol Moser (Chair), Paul Roberts (Vice Chair), John Sibold, Dave Field, Don Garvett, Penni Loomis, Neal Sealock, John Townsley, James McNamara, Leonard Bauer (for Larry Williams)

Staff: John Shambaugh, Nisha Marvel

Consultant Team: Sonjia Murray (SH&E), Helen Lin (SH &E), John Yarnish (URS), Sara Funk (WH Pacific), Rita Brogan (PRR), Kimbra Wellock (PRR), David Hollander (SH&E, by phone)

Chair Moser opened the meeting and reviewed the meeting objectives and agenda:

- Review alternative strategies
- Review aviation system plan
- Concurrence on alternative strategies for public review

Chair Moser thanked the Council members for their participation to date, and noted that the goal for today's meeting is to reach concurrence on the draft strategies to advance to the public, and to address any concerns and questions that Council member may have.

Vice Chair Roberts thanked the public for attending, and noted that Richland is a good meeting location as evidenced by the strong turnout.

Chair Moser led introduction of Council, staff, and audience members.

Public Comment

John Dobson (Washington Pilots Association) expressed his concerns about Vista Field. He began by sharing quotes from a recent City of Kennewick work session which he feels indicate an attitude against small airports. Mr. Dobson recommended the draft Phase III alternatives report: 1) define the economic impact by the end users of airport, noting that the WSDOT Study conducted by Bucher Willis and Ratliff Corporation does not address revenue generated by off-airport businesses, 2) discuss the wealth creation generated by airports, and 3) recommended stiffer penalties for grant programs non-compliance. He noted that the Washington Pilots Association is focused on four key efforts: 1) strengthening the Growth Management Act definition of an airport as an Essential Public Facility, 2) requiring local jurisdictions to comply with noise and safety overlays to protect public safety and assure continued airport viability, 3)

strengthening regulations to require property owners to accept responsibility for all obstructions on their land that affect the safe operation of aircraft, and 4) passing legislation that would require WSDOT Aviation Airport Infrastructure Improvement Grants to keep airports open until the end of the useful life of the project or for 20 years, whichever is greater. Mr. Dobson encouraged the Council to consider in its deliberations whether or not Blaine Airport would stay open as a result of the Council's recommendations.

Paul Herndon (Friday Harbor) noted that he flies general aviation aircraft. His comments address two issues relating to airport safety. He noted that Friday Harbor is an uncontrolled non-tower airport which experiences increased activity during the summer months. As Friday Harbor sits in Class G airspace, a there is potential conflict caused by instrument-rated pilots coming out of the clouds, flying around someone flying legally. He noted that Port Angeles addressed this same concern by changing to Class E. He also noted that the County Council is moving forward with plans to build a solid waste facility on a site that is in the path of the airport. He noted that the facility will potentially exacerbate existing wildlife and bird problems at the airport.

Council Member Sibold commented that the Council has been looking at issues from a high-level policy perspective, but we are hearing concerns about local communities and specific airports. He recommended that the Council take the time to consider how its recommendations will affect local airports and communities, as there is an expectation that the Council will address these community issues.

Council Member Garvett commented that there has been amplified interest in the issue of Paine Field since the last meeting. Council Member Garvett passed along a comment from the airline industry, that it is the opinion of the airline industry that airlines ought to be able to pursue their business without further impediment.

Approve December 4, 2008 Meeting Summary

Council Member Sealock moved to approve the December 4, 2008 meeting summary. Motion seconded by Council Member Garvett. The December 4, 2008 meeting summary was approved.

Staff Report and Follow Up from Previous Meeting

John Shambaugh, Council Staff (WSDOT Aviation) introduced revised language for land use policy #7, as a follow up from the previous meeting:

Washington State should require that airport sponsors and local jurisdictions coordinate with each other during the development and amendment of airport master plans and comprehensive plans/development regulations.

Vice Chair Roberts commented that throughout the process, several Council Members have said that operational considerations for airports need to be incorporated at the earliest stages of the land use planning process. Airports need to be considered during the entitlement phase and protection measures need to be put in place. The proposed land use policy is intended to address this issue. Vice Chair Roberts suggested that the Council make a strong statement about this issue.

Council Member Loomis commented that in many instances, the airport sponsor and local jurisdiction are one and the same. She asked if this fits, and if we need to require a state role in the development of policies.

Vice Chair Roberts commented that we appreciate the different relationship that exists when a facility is privately owned. He noted that this policy is aimed at making legislative changes. The process for land use is usually part of a different administrative silo. Land use protection needs to be strengthened to address both public and private airports. The point is to get the protection in place at the plan creation phase.

Council Member Sealock commented that he likes the proposed language. He noted that the majority of the challenges faced by the aviation community are the result of variances, and there is no recourse at once the local community issues a variance. He suggested that the Council consider asking the legislature to allow outside review of variances.

Council Member Sibold asked if this applies only to obstructions.

Council Member Sealock replied that we can only comment on proposals under the existing system. While these comments are considered, there are no teeth, as the jurisdiction issuing the variance does not have to address comments. The RCWs exist, but teeth are needed.

Council Member McNamara commented that if variances allow for the obstructions to happen, then the issue is in the language itself. It is better to strengthen the regulations and legislation. If the regulations are insufficient to provide the needed protection, we must rely on the vigilance of hearings board and others. He noted that Council Member Sealock's point about review is good, but we need to fix the regulations so that inappropriate projects do not slip through.

Council Member Sealock commented that the challenge appears when actions are not specifically prohibited. If something is not specifically prohibited, then the interpretation often is that it is allowed. Council Member Sealock commented that he is looking for a way to put teeth in beyond zoning and regulation. The system has not worked to date and a new way is needed.

Council Member McNamara commented that there is low compliance with comprehensive plans (about 20%), which is an issue.

Vice Chair Roberts commented that we face this issue because the jurisdictions that develop comprehensive plans have not dealt with these issues. This language is intended to provide mechanisms to address the issue. These issues need to be addressed at the earliest stages so the plan and development regulations can be developed properly. We are not questioning whether or not airports are Essential Public Facilities, but rather that protection of Essential Public Facilities is not being addressed properly in the planning regulations despite their designation.

Overview of LATS Phase III Products

John Shambaugh, Council Staff (WSDOT Aviation) reviewed the meeting objectives and the project schedule. He noted that we are now in the fifth stage of the project, development of alternative strategies and recommendations. The alternative strategies will be forwarded for public review after today's meeting, with a 45-50 day public comment period starting in late February. The next Council meeting is May 7th. The Council's recommendations will be forwarded to the Governor by July 1st. Three products will be developed by the end of Phase III, the Council Report, Aviation System Plan, and Phase III Alternative Strategies White Paper.

Overview of LATS Findings – Statewide

Sonjia Murray, Consultant Team (SH&E) presented an overview of key findings from LATS. Ms. Murray began with basic information on Washington’s aviation system, noting that Washington has one of the most dynamic aviation systems in the nation. It is comprised of 138 public use airports. Every year, the system accommodates over 17 million enplaning passengers, 3.7 million aircraft landings/departures, and more than 600,000 tons of air cargo. It generates 171,000 jobs, \$4.1 million in wages, and \$18.6 billion in total output. Long-range aviation planning is needed in Washington to accommodate future population growth and to address issues such as limited funding, concentration of activity in key regions, local land use conflicts, and a fluctuating economy.

Ms. Murray provided background information on ESSB 5121, the charge to the Aviation Planning Council and the FAA System Planning Grant, which is funding a comprehensive assessment of capacity. In 2005 the Governor authorized the Washington State Long-Term Air Transportation Study (LATS) through transportation bill ESSB 5121. The bill calls for a long-term planning study for general aviation (GA) and commercial airports in Washington with a special focus on four Special Emphasis Regions. The Aviation Planning Council is charged with providing recommendations of how best to meet statewide commercial and GA capacity needs, determining regions of the state in need of improvement, making recommendations about future commercial and GA airport facilities, and considering public input collected as a result of a comprehensive public involvement process. LATS recommendations will be integrated into the Washington Transportation Plan (WTP), the FAA Bi-Annual National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS), and regional and local transportation plans.

LATS is being conducted in three phases. Phase I, completed in September 2006, assessed airport inventory, capacity, and included an airspace assessment. Phase II, completed in July 2007, looked at system needs, including a 25-year commercial service market forecast, air cargo forecast, high speed passenger rail assessment, future capacity analysis and system requirements. Phase III is currently underway, and is scheduled to be completed by July 2009. During Phase III the Aviation Planning Council will provide recommendations about how to meet system needs.

Ms. Murray then reviewed the Washington State Airport Classification System, which was developed to identify the role of each airport in the state system and to understand the types of facilities and services necessary at each. She provided information on the classifications, Commercial Service, Regional Service, Community Service, Local Service, Recreation or Remote, and Seaplane Bases. She explained that performance objectives have been developed for each classification level. Two types of performance objectives are proposed, 1) those that relate to all classifications, and 2) those that are customized for the facilities and services appropriate to each classification.

Ms. Murray continued with a review of system performance findings for each classification.

- Commercial Service Airports (16 airports) perform well in most categories. However, only 50% comply with land use and zoning compatibility objectives.
- Regional Service Airports (19 airports) perform poorer than commercial service airports for same objective. Less than 50% comply with land use and zoning compatibility objectives, and only 37% meet instrument approach objectives.
- Community Service Airports (23 airports) – less than 50% have compliant runway safety area. Most deficient objectives are land use compatibility and instrument approach.
- Local Service Airports (33 airports) perform well in lighting, runway length and runway pavement and perform poorly in many other objectives including land use, runway safety, and visual indicators.

- Recreation Airports (39 airports) general have lower compliance in all objectives. Data is incomplete as many of these airports are privately owned.
- Seaplane Bases (9 airports) – certain objectives relevant to land-based airports not applicable. Compliance is generally low, except in runway protection zone control.

Ms. Murray reviewed activity forecasts, which identify expected demand in commercial passenger traffic, general aviation activity, and air cargo volume in Washington through 2030. Washington’s population will double, growing by about 2.5 million people. She noted that growth in population and income drives demand in aviation and that Washington State is above average in both population and income growth. The following growth is forecast:

ACTIVITY	2005	2030	GROWTH
Passenger Enplanements	16.47 million	31.27 million	90% increase / 2.6% per year
Commercial operations	670,000	1,110,000	2.1% per year
GA operations	3.0 million	4.4 million	1.6% per year
GA based aircraft	8,100	11,800	1.5% per year
Air Cargo Volume	600,000 tons	1,407,000 tons	135% increase / 3.5% per year

Ms. Murray explained that the capacity analysis conducted as part of LATS measures the ability of existing airport facilities to accommodate existing activity, as well as expected future activity. The LATS capacity analysis examined five elements of aviation system capacity:

- Airfield Capacity: the ability of an airport’s runway system to accommodate take-offs and landings without experiencing delays.
- Commercial Airline Passengers: the ability of an airport terminal to accommodate airline passengers with adequate space for ticketing, security, etc.
- Air Cargo: the ability of an airport to accommodate processing of air cargo tonnage using existing facilities.
- Aircraft Storage and Parking: the ability of an airport to accommodate storage of based and transient GA aircraft in tie-downs and hangars.
- Airspace System: the ability of available airspace to safely accommodate aircraft in transit between airports.

Council Member Townsley asked if aircraft storage is only a general aviation issue, noting that he thought it was an issue for both commercial and general aviation.

Council Member Garvett responded that he does not know the size of the general aviation problem overall, but that at certain airports there is not always economically feasible aircraft parking available for commercial aircraft.

Sonjia Murray, Consultant Team (SH&E) responded that they did not find aircraft storage to be an issue at SeaTac.

Council Member Garvett responded finding economically efficient overnight storage is an issue.

Sonjia Murray, Consultant Team (SH&E) reviewed airfield capacity findings in greater detail:

- Four Washington airports are anticipated to exceed 100 percent of their operating capacity by 2030: Seattle-Tacoma International, Boeing Field, Harvey Field, and Kenmore Air Harbor Inc.
- Eight additional state airports were identified as exceeding the 60 percent capacity planning threshold – the activity level at which planning should commence for adding capacity – by 2030. These airports include Arlington Municipal, Auburn Municipal, Snohomish County/Paine Field, Crest Airpark, Friday Harbor, Spokane International, and Olympia.
- There are significant operations capacity constraints in the Puget Sound Region as nine of the twelve airports expected to exceed or approach their operations capacity by 2030 are within the Puget Sound Region.

Council Member Sealock asked how confident the Council can be using this data as a basis for its recommendations since it is now 18 months old.

Sonjia Murray, Consultant Team (SH&E) responded that the major change that might need to be factored in is that the dates might push further out. For example, SeaTac might reach 100% of capacity by 2035 instead of 2030. However, we know that delays will come. This data is the baseline for the planning that will occur approximately every seven years, and it will need continuous updating.

Council Member Sealock responded that there is no question that growth will occur, but noted that we will need to be able to show our confidence level in our plans and data.

Council Member Field commented that we have a lot of history that shows that despite downturns, growth has always come back. This should be noted in our report.

Council Member Garvett commented that Ms. Murray illustrated the issue correctly. There are many sophisticated forecasts, but the key factors to consider are population and income growth, which are the fundamental drivers of aviation activity.

Sonjia Murray, Consultant Team (SH&E) continued her presentation with a review of aircraft storage capacity, air cargo, and airspace capacity findings. She noted that aircraft parking and storage is generally constructed as demand occurs and that approximately one-quarter (36 of 139) of Washington State airports are expected to have capacity shortfalls by 2030. With regard to air cargo capacity, she noted that over 98% of statewide cargo tonnage is processed through SeaTac, Boeing Field, and Spokane International Airport. Air cargo is a market-driven process and air cargo companies build facilities when they are needed, and facility expansion occurs as demand grows. Excess capacity seldom exists. Market demand, geographic location, and apron/land availability influence future growth. The availability of off-airport properties for cargo processing facilities provides a way around limitations on developable land at airports. With regard to airspace capacity, she noted that no significant airspace overlaps occur outside of the four Special Emphasis Regions. The majority of overlaps occur in the Puget Sound Special Emphasis Region where population and aviation activity is highest. Seattle-Tacoma International Airport and Boeing Field/King County International Airport show the biggest airspace overlap in terms of potential operational conflict. As such, their proximity implies that flight path coordination between the two airports is required. Airspace within Washington State is subject to overlap from airports outside of the state. More specifically, airports in Southwest Washington are affected by Portland International Airport. Further study of airspace capacity and available technologies is needed to address future demand anticipated for the Central Puget Sound area. Such a study would fall under the purview of the FAA.

Overview of LATS Findings – Special Emphasis Regions

Sonjia Murray, Consultant Team (SH&E) explained that the Washington State Legislature designated four special emphasis areas in ESSB 5121 because they are key centers of population, employment and economic activity and warrant more detailed analysis.

The Puget Sound Special Emphasis Region consists of King, Snohomish, Pierce, and Kitsap Counties. It is the most populated region in Washington State and the busiest aviation area, with a total population of 3.5 million (approximately 55% of total Washington population). In 2005, the Puget Sound Region accounted for 14.3 million annual enplanements (87% of the 16.5 million total annual enplanements reported in the entire state), 49% of total operations in the state, 47% of Washington's total GA based aircraft, and 83% of state's air cargo tonnage. Nine airports within the Puget Sound Special Emphasis Area are expected to exceed or approach their operations capacity by 2030 and four airports will exceed capacity completely: Seattle-Tacoma International, Boeing Field/King County International, Harvey Field, and Kenmore Air Harbor, Inc. Recent trends at Sea-Tac International including higher passenger load factors and an "upgauging" of aircraft size indicate that the airport may now reach its capacity limits beyond 2030. Ten airports (more than a third of the total airports in the region) are expected to approach or exceed aircraft storage capacity by 2030. Seattle-Tacoma International and Boeing Field may have potential operational conflict due to airspace overlap. Their proximity implies that flight path coordination between the two airports is required.

The Southwest Washington Special Emphasis Area consists of Clark and Cowlitz Counties. It has a total population of 500,000 and is one of the fastest growing regions in the state in terms of based aircraft and GA operations. Four of the eight airports in this region are privately owned and face significant land use encroachment issues. Evergreen Field closed in 2006 due to competing land uses. Of the four publicly owned airports, two airports have limited ability to expand. In the early 1990's the FAA was working with Clark County officials to locate and build a new airport north of the City of Vancouver along the I-5 corridor. The project was never constructed due to significant opposition by the public. Capacity and demand within the Southwest Region is complicated by the fact that the dominant airport for the region is located in Oregon. Portland International Airport (PDX), located just south of the region across the Columbia River, provides all passenger and cargo service for the region. Additionally, three active GA facilities located within Oregon and controlled by the Port of Portland provide capacity for GA growth in the Southwest Region. Five out of eight airports in the region are expected to approach or exceed aircraft storage capacity by 2030.

The Spokane Special Emphasis Area consists of Spokane County and accounts for the second largest concentration of commercial and general aviation activity in the state after the Puget Sound Region. It has a total population of 440,000. In 2005, Spokane accounted for: 7.1% of statewide based aircraft, 9.4% of statewide enplanements, and 16% of the state's air cargo tonnage. Three airports in the Spokane Region are expected to be at or exceed aircraft storage capacity by 2030.

The Tri-Cities Special Emphasis Area consists of Benton and Franklin Counties and has a total population on 220,000. Land use encroachment and alternative land use make the airports in the Tri-Cities region vulnerable to closure. The Tri-Cities Region has four public use airports. Tri-Cities is the third busiest commercial airport in the state after SeaTac and Spokane. Three airports are located within 20 miles of each other and include Pasco, Richland and Vista Field. Vista Field may close in the future due to alternative land use. It is unknown whether there is sufficient capacity at the remaining airports to accommodate demand.

Other regions in Washington outside of the Special Emphasis Regions also have a dynamic history in aviation and present both challenges and opportunities regarding the state's long-term aviation needs. Many small communities across Washington have lost a substantial amount of scheduled air service over the past 10-15 years. All of these communities are located outside of the four special emphasis areas. In the mid 1990's, the FAA worked with City of Colville officials to locate a new airport in the City of Colville. After completion of a fairly extensive environmental review process, the City withdrew from the negotiations.

Alternative Strategies

Chair Moser explained that the alternative strategies were first discussed at the Council's Go To Meeting on January 26, 2009. The technical team has made changes to the approach based on Council feedback.

John Yarnish, Consultant Team (URS) reviewed the alternative strategies development process. He explained that key issues represent major long-term challenges to the Washington air transportation system that impact both commercial and general aviation users across the state. The alternative strategies address the key issues identified, and will be evaluated based on various decision criteria, and will be submitted to the public for review. The Council will develop a package of preferred strategies based on public input and technical consultation as part of its recommendation to the Legislature. Mr. Yarnish introduced the four key issues identified by the technical team: Capacity and Service Constraints, Stewardship, Incompatible Land Use Encroachment, and State Role in Airport Development.

Key Issue 1: Capacity

John Yarnish, Consultant Team (URS) introduced the three sub-issues relating to capacity:

- 1.1 Capacity Constraints Anticipated by 2030
- 1.2 Airport Closures in Washington State
- 1.3 Loss of Scheduled Passenger Services at Smaller Washington Commercial Airports

Rita Brogan, Consultant Team (PRR) reviewed public comment related to addressing capacity shortfalls from the electronic town halls and regional meetings. E-Town Hall 2 participants were asked to rate ideas for things the state could do to address aviation capacity shortfalls – participants were most supportive of avoiding incompatible land uses. They also indicated support for expanding existing airports to include more commercial service. Opinion was divided about building a new airport outside of the Puget Sound Region. Participants outside the Puget Sound region more likely to rate this idea as 'good' and participants living inside the Puget Sound region more likely to rate this idea as 'fair'. Participants were least supportive of building a new airport in the Puget Sound region. Participants at the regional public meetings in July 2008 encouraged the Council to consider the impacts of airport development and expansion on adjacent communities, not just economic development benefits.

Ms. Brogan then reviewed public input relating to meeting future capacity needs. At E-Town Hall 2, participants were asked to indicate their level of support for meeting the State's future capacity needs. Participants were most supportive of converting a current airport to commercial service *through expansion*. Participants outside of Puget Sound more likely to support or strongly support this idea and participants in urban communities more likely to oppose or strongly oppose this idea. Opinion was divided about building a new airport and converting an existing airport *without expansion*. At the regional public meetings, participants encouraged the council to consider alternative travel modes to ease aviation capacity shortfalls and greener replacements to air travel.

Ms. Brogan reviewed public input relating to aviation access for small communities. E-Town Hall 1 participants were most supportive of focusing funding on airports that play an important role in the aviation system. Participants were also supportive of focusing funding on the airports that carry the most people. Opinion was divided about letting the free market decide who gets service and setting a goal that communities should be within a 90-minute drive of a commercial airport.

John Yarnish, Consultant Team (URS) reviewed background information on Issue 1.1: Capacity Constraints Anticipated by 2030. Airfield capacity constraints are expected to emerge at twelve airports. Several of the busiest commercial and general aviation airports in the state will reach capacity, including Sea-Tac, Boeing Field, and Harvey Field. Several commercial airports in the state lack terminal capacity to accommodate the future passenger demand expected. Constrained airports include Sea-Tac, Tri-Cities, Anacortes, Orcas Island, and Kenmore Air Harbor, Inc. A significant number of Washington's general aviation airports are also expected to have aircraft storage capacity shortfalls by 2030. Constrained airports include Boeing Field, Sanderson Field, Felts Field, Crest Airpark, and others.

Mr. Yarnish introduced the potential alternative strategies to address capacity constraints and discussed the advantages and disadvantages of each.

1. Let the market decide
2. Use technology and/or demand management solutions
3. Promote use of alternative airports
4. Expand constrained airports
5. Examine the possibility of constructing new airports

Council Member Sealock commented that saying that constructing a new airport would be costly is a huge understatement. He asked if we should clarify what we mean by "costly" so that the public has the information it needs to fully understand the tradeoffs.

Council Member Sibold added that constructing a new airport would also require federal initiative.

A member of public commented that while 139 airports exist today, that is half of what it used to be. He commented that closing an existing airport seems like absolute insanity.

Chair Moser commented that we need to look at the degree of involvement at the state level when discussing constructing a new airport. She asked if state involvement in this area is beyond the realm of possibility, given its involvement in other major facilities like the viaduct.

Council Member Field commented that constructing a new airport may be the only solution in the future. He expressed concern about how the issue is written, noting that it is easy to say we will "examine the possibility" of constructing a new airport. The alternative should say, "Construct a new airport."

Council Member Garvett commented that some people might see strategy 2, "Use technology and/or demand management solutions" as controversial and noted that some might find it offensive to say that local control is a disadvantage.

Council Member Townsley commented that there is excessive emphasis on state funding and WSDOT Aviation, and not enough emphasis on the benefits to the aviation system itself. This seems to project a message that we are going to have a bigger bureaucracy and not a better system. We need to remove the bureaucratic language from the strategies and focus instead on the impact of the strategies on the system and citizens, as well as how it will service the state's economy. We are not about building or sustaining a

bureaucracy, we need an effective system that meets the needs of the public, provides for the economy, and works for commercial and general aviation.

Council Member Garvett commented that cost is a critical issue to WSDOT, but noted that it is a tiny portion of the overall costs.

Vice Chair Roberts commented that the citizens might not care about cost, but we have an obligation to care about the cost of the strategies to WSDOT. He noted that he does agree with Council Member Townsley's point that we need to do to focus on the system and how it functions. He asked if we need to focus on the language, or if it is clear to the public.

Council Member Townsley commented that people might react to the language and suggested that the language be outcome oriented, focused on what we want of the system. He noted that how we get there is the detail.

Council Member Garvett commented that we provide significant focus on providers, sponsors, and regulators, but that it is important to focus on users as well. For example, in the first strategy, we should state the advantage to users, such as it allows for response to user input and influence.

Council Member Sealock commented that this is complex information that is difficult to understand. He noted that we need to be as clear and concise as possible so that the public can respond. People are expecting solutions but so much of the focus is on process. We need to be inclusive as possible, but also concise.

Council Member Sibold commented that we should highlight how the strategies address the policies.

Council Member Field commented that we do not connect the strategies to the policies. We need to be explicit that we identified policies and where the system fails to meet our policies.

Council Member Sealock commented that the strategies do not provide direction and lack prioritization. We know we do not have funds for everything. The priority should not be airport specific, but based on the classification. He noted that he believes this is the expectation.

Council Member Sibold asked if the Council should take on prioritization of the state role.

Council Member Sealock responded that it does not have to be that specific. We should stay at the strategy/vision level as we need to build consensus with elected officials, the public and local jurisdictions, etc.

Council Member Field asked if strategy #2 also relates to general aviation, and commented that it is a disadvantage that demand management techniques do not address general aviation.

Council Member Loomis commented that strategy #3 does not define an action. She asked how we encourage other airports to pick up the capacity.

Council Member Garvett commented that strategy #2 lumps together technology and demand management, but they are fundamentally different things. He noted that there is potential for debate on this strategy with the airline industry, and offered to discuss the issue further with staff if needed.

John Yarnish, Consultant Team (URS) reviewed background information on Issue 1.2: Airport Closures in Washington State. He noted that numerous publicly owned and privately owned public use airports have been closed in recent years and that most of the closed airports have been located in urban areas and have been displaced by competing development or they have been relatively low activity airports that the sponsor determined could no longer be operated and maintained. Many of the private airports that have closed were key contributors to capacity in key regions in the state. The loss of these airports reduced available capacity in high-growth regions and impacted all key airport facilities in the immediate areas. Airport closures from 1971 to the present have included both public and private airports in almost all regions of the state.

Mr. Yarnish introduced the potential alternative strategies to address the airport closure issue and discussed the advantages and disadvantages of each.

1. Initiate an education program
2. Revise the state airport grant program
3. Introduce new legislation
4. Allow for expanded state ownership

Council Member Sealock asked what kind of teeth can be developed for grant assurances.

John Yarnish, Consultant Team (URS) responded that the state could use the federal grant assurances as a model.

Council Member Townsley commented that strategy #2 should be revised to focus on grant assurances, and should state that we are clear that the goal is to keep airports open.

Council Member Sealock commented that the accountability piece is key.

Leonard Bauer (CTED) asked if there is potential for an unintended outcome, that an airport would chose not to expand or invest, and just shut down.

Council Member Townsley commented that there is potential, but that there should be a return if the State is going to invest money.

Council Member Garvett asked if we should assume that all airports are essential.

Council Member Sealock responded that the RCWs make it clear that all airports are essential.

Council Member Sibold asked if we need a more refined definition of essential public facility, since as currently written, all airports are deemed essential public facilities.

Council Member Townsley commented that it would be a different issue if we had 1,000 airports, but we do not.

Council Member Garvett asked if there is a difference between desirable and essential.

Council Member Townsley responded that in absence of a big event, some airports might not be essential. But when big events happen, airports become essential. We need to keep in mind that airports serve an essential emergency function, and do more than moving goods and people.

Chair Moser asked if the question is if all 138 airports should be essential public facilities.

Council Member Garvett added that the question is also if we should indicate which airports are desirable, but not essential.

Council Member Sibold commented that some would argue that the FAA's definition of an essential public facility is different than the state's definition.

Council Member Field commented that every public use airport is needed until someone decides it is not needed. It is a system decision and we should not sit here and try to decide that a certain number of airports are not needed. We might feel differently five years from now about what airports are needed. We need to leave this decision to the system plan and the future.

Vice Chair Roberts commented that the question before us relates to the presentation of the material and whether or not we have the right material to release to the public. The discussion we are having now is important, but it might make sense to wait until after we obtain public input. He commented that some airports are more critical than others, but we do not want to, nor do we have the authority to change it. The question is if we have the right language to describe the strategies, and if we are ready to release them to the public.

John Yarnish, Consultant Team (URS) commented that there are airports today that cannot receive state grants even if they are essential airports. He noted that the purpose of this strategy is to make it possible to give grants to essential private airports as they cannot access these funds today.

Council Member Townsley commented that if the strategy is intended to make it possible to expand the grant program to include private airports, then the strategy needs to state it.

Council Member Garvett commented that this is a difficult climate in which to ask for funds.

Council Member Sibold asked for clarification on strategy #3, about what taxes we are talking about.

John Yarnish, Consultant Team (URS) responded that the strategy is to waive taxes such as the GA fuel tax or offer a property tax exemption.

Council Member Garvett commented that commercial airlines might withdraw service.

John Shambaugh, Council Staff (WSDOT Aviation) commented that in a situation where there is encroaching land use, land values escalate. The tax would be deferred until the airport is sold for development.

Council Member Sealock asked if it is reasonable to expect that a small general aviation airport should be expected to operate on its revenue alone, noting that it might be impossible. It goes back to the question of priority. If it is deemed essential, the airport might need state aid.

John Shambaugh, Council Staff (WSDOT Aviation) commented that some private airports are significant to the system and their loss would have a significant impact on other airports.

Council Member Field commented that we need to clarify that we mean public use, privately owned.

Council Member McNamara commented that the state might not be in a position to outbid a private offer to buy an airport if the economic incentive to sell the land for another use is too high.

John Shambaugh, Council Staff (WSDOT Aviation) commented that based on the information we have, the problem starts as a tax burden to the airport.

Council Member Garvett commented that tax burden is a symptom of lack of revenue being generated by the airport.

Council Member Field commented that many times, the issue arises when an owner passes the airport property to heirs who do not want to take on running an unprofitable airport.

Vice Chair Roberts commented that we have not talked about other ownership options as alternatives to the state taking over ownership of an endangered airport. He suggested there may be other appropriate public entities that could take ownership, such as port authorities.

Council Member Loomis commented that the fact that new port authorities can only be established if they are countywide, which might preclude ownership of an airport. It might require inter-jurisdictional ownership.

Council Member Sibold commented that there are also cases where there is public leasing of a runway.

Rita Brogan, Consultant Team (PRR) asked if the intent of this strategy to focus on state ownership, or public ownership in general.

Council Member Sibold responded that we meant public ownership.

Council Member Field commented that public ownership is already possible and noted that the state might want to encourage public ownership.

Leonard Bauer (CTED) commented that on-going state ownership may not be necessary. The state could potentially own or operate the airport until another entity could be found to take over ownership or operation of the facility. As written, this strategy implies that the state would own the facility forever.

John Yarnish, Consultant Team (URS) reviewed background information on Issue 1.3: Loss of Scheduled Passenger Services at Smaller Washington Commercial Airports. Many smaller commercial airports in Washington have lost a substantial amount of scheduled passenger airline service over the past 10-15 years, and six Washington airports have lost all scheduled airline services over this period. Factors contributing to the loss of service at smaller commercial airports include proximity to larger surrounding airports that draw passengers from the smaller airports' market areas, reliance on a single carrier for all or most scheduled service, reductions in flight frequency at smaller airports due to increases in aircraft size within regional airline fleets, and high fuel prices, etc. Small communities such as Pullman/Moscow, Walla Walla and Wenatchee remain at risk of losing scheduled commercial service.

Mr. Yarnish introduced the potential alternative strategies to address the airport closure issue and discussed the advantages and disadvantages of each:

1. Allow market decisions of airlines to determine small community service
2. Proactive Approach
3. Local, State, and Federal Support to Critical Small Communities
4. Local, State, and Federal Support to All Currently Served Small Communities

Council Member Townsley commented that strategy #1 could negatively impact general aviation capacity due to the loss of fees and rents as a result of losing airlines. However, there could be an advantage as the

security requirements associated with commercial service would not be needed thus reducing the operating costs of the airport. For the public, the airport remains to handle smaller aircraft, serve the emergency function, and support air cargo. The primary disadvantage to the public is the further distance to reach the neighboring airport.

Council Member Sibold commented that we need to be careful about calling out communities that are at risk of losing service, as it could put them at risk of losing primary entitlement funds.

Council Member Field commented that sometimes it is not the airline, but rather community decisions that result in loss of service.

Council Member Garvett commented with regard to strategy #2, that some communities are better at speaking to airlines than others. It is important that communities learn how to speak to airlines.

Council Member Seacock agreed with Council Member Seacock. Whether the community is going to the airline or the FAA, it is critical that they be able to state why airline service is a benefit. Some communities might need to look at things such as block seats. Once a community loses service, it is irreversible.

Council Member Loomis asked if not mentioning the essential small community program was intentional in strategy #3 and if it should be specifically mentioned.

Council Member Sibold noted that Moses Lake is currently the only community eligible for this program.

Council Member Loomis asked if the state could assist getting other communities into the program.

Council Member Sibold responded that it cannot, that the program was established at the time of the deregulation of the airline industry, and was targeted only to those communities that had service prior to deregulation.

Sonjia Murray, Consultant Team (SH&E) commented that some communities are funded under this program and some are unfunded. She noted that the criteria keep changing. Moses Lake is funded, but additional airports cannot be added at this time.

Council Member Sibold explained that the essential small community program is a grant program.

Council Member Field commented that strategy #4 has the least advantages associated with it, but it is the most aggressive strategy we have. He noted that strategy #4 should have a greater benefit than strategy #3 since it is more costly and aggressive.

Council Member Seacock commented that we should drop strategy #4 as it is barely applicable to the situation, given that it impacts one airport.

Chair Moser commented that a disadvantage is that it is unlikely to happen.

Council Member Field commented that strategy #3 seems to be the same as #4.

Council Member Seacock commented that he sees little value in strategy #4.

Council Member Sibold commented that strategy #4 is more targeted than #3, but suggested that it the strategies could be combined.

John Shambaugh, Council Staff (WSDOT Aviation) asked if the airports should be operated like a transit system. With strategies 3 and 4, we can target certain facilities, or look more generally at strategies applicable to all airports.

Council Member Townsley commented that one advantage to these strategies would be that there would be ready access to airline service for most residents of the state to airline service, in addition to the accompanying benefits it would bring to air cargo.

Council Member Loomis commented that this would also imply that the state might want to buy into an airline.

Council Member Garvett commented that there is not a lot of leverage here.

Council Member Sealock commented that it is a zero sum game.

Council Member Garvett commented that it distorts economic decision-making.

Council Member Townsley commented that this sounds like a disadvantage, that the strategy could lure state into making large investments into unsustainable activities.

Vice Chair Roberts proposed deleting strategy #4, noting that we have capacity problems in some places, but not in other areas. It might be a better use of resources to look at other modes of travel and how to connect to the airports that already exist.

Council Member Townsley commented that strategy #3 specifies we are looking at investments in critical areas. Strategy #4 implies investments would be made everywhere, which is not feasible.

Key Issue 2: Stewardship

Sara Funk, Consultant Team (WH Pacific) introduced the stewardship key issue. She noted that measuring airport system performance is important to ensuring that it stays healthy. Many public use airports do not meet performance objectives that are appropriate for their classifications. The performance objectives are for type, not amount of aviation, and include objectives for pavement preservation, safety standards, up-to-date planning documents, land use compatibility protection, minimum airfield facilities, and services for aircraft and pilots. We estimate \$600 million is needed to fix performance deficiencies; currently, only \$11 million is estimated to be available annually.

Rita Brogan, Consultant Team (PRR) reviewed public comment related to stewardship. E-Town Hall2 participants identified top funding priorities for aviation system needs as follows: Improving airport landing safety (83%), local economic development (60%), supporting disaster relief (58%), meeting passenger capacity demand (57%), and maintaining service to Washington's smaller communities (52%). When asked to identify highest and lowest priority aviation system needs, E-Town Hall 2 participants living outside the Puget Sound region were more likely view economic development and maintaining commercial service to smaller communities as the highest priority aviation system needs. Ensuring adequate capacity to accommodate passenger demand and airport safety projects highest priority needs for those living inside the Puget Sound region. Participants at the regional public meetings commented that public investments should be commensurate with public benefits and that the state should

recapture grant funds if airport closes prior to agreed-upon lifetime of improvements. Participants also questioned if airports were the best economic development opportunity out of concern that airports generate lower-level jobs. When asked about ideas for preserving Washington's current airports, 77% of E-Town Hall 2 participants indicated support for funding projects that provide the greatest economic benefit to the state, 70% supported the idea of limiting incompatible land uses around airports, and 46% opposed letting the free market decide who gets service. Regional meeting participants encouraged the Council to provide special consideration for airports that serve an important role in emergencies. When asked what role the state should play in funding and preserving public use airports, E-Town Hall 1 participants indicated strong support for distributing public funds to reflect the priorities of the State Aviation System, moderate support for offering funding and technical assistance to public use airports, and moderate support for the state advocating for more funds for public use airports.

Sara Funk, Consultant Team (WH Pacific) introduced the potential stewardship alternative strategies and discussed the advantages and disadvantages of each:

1. No Action
2. Redistribute state grant funding
3. Improve system performance through higher levels of funding and more assertive tactics
4. Initiate a comprehensive program for 100% compliance with performance objectives

Council Member Sealock asked what the revenue source is for the increase in state grant funding proposed by strategy #3 and if it is presumptive to state a specific dollar amount.

John Shambaugh, Council Staff (WSDOT Aviation) commented that the stewardship strategies include cost components, but the others do not.

Council Member Sealock commented that this will not provide a solution to the Governor if it is an unfunded mandate.

John Shambaugh, Council Staff (WSDOT Aviation) commented that we should talk about the financing component and what it provides to the system as a whole.

Council Member Townsley asked what percentage compliance the increase in funding would provide.

Sara Funk, Consultant Team (WH Pacific) responded that \$5 million in state grant funding would achieve 50% compliance with performance objectives.

Council Member Sibold asked what would be needed to achieve a higher level of compliance, and suggested that we show a range of cost determinations to meet different levels of compliance performance objectives.

John Shambaugh, Council Staff (WSDOT Aviation) responded that we have this information by classification and by area.

Council Member Sibold commented that if he was a decision maker, he would need to know what the funding he secures will buy.

Sara Funk, Consultant Team (WH Pacific) commented that without additional funds, the only thing that can be accomplished is to maintain the status quo.

John Shambaugh, Council Staff (WSDOT Aviation) added that maintaining the status quo is unsustainable.

Council Member Sealock suggested stating percentage compliance as the goal in the strategy. The dollar amount required to achieve that goal is the next step.

Council Member Sibold commented that we cannot maintain essential public facilities without more funding. He noted that we are dancing around the issue of identifying the dollar level needed to meet system needs.

Council Member Sealock responded that this is not a budget request. We should state the performance measure that we think this is the minimum essential performance level that must be met. If we say anything less, we are accepting risk.

Vice Chair Roberts commented that we should not debate what the right funding level is. The goal is to improve performance. The strategy should say something to the effect of, “increase state funding which is currently \$1.3 million, to accomplish...”

Chair Moser responded that she understands what Vice Chair Roberts is saying, but asked what that would mean for strategy #4.

Council Member Sealock commented that we need to figure out what that is a reasonable level of compliance.

Council Member Townsley commented that it is not realistic to say that we are in compliance, and all is good, or we are not in compliance. In reality, we are somewhere in between, where we operate safely most of the time, but in non-compliant facilities. We do not know the likelihood of having an accident at a certain airport because it has a certain runway. We do not know what extra margin of safety is accomplished by a certain level of expense; we just know that the standards were set by the FAA. Council Member Townsley commented that he is not sure what this strategy buys us, and the increments seem to be feel-good measures. We need to consider what we are imposing on the system and the users of the system based on unknown increments.

Sonjia Murray, Consultant Team (SH&E) commented that we should not say what is safe and unsafe. It is about having an efficient system that can meet needs. We want to make sure the airports can be all they can be and as efficient as they can be.

Council Member Townsley commented that he does not disagree, but noted that we cannot be persuasive if we cannot quantify the return on investment.

John Shambaugh, Council Staff (WSDOT Aviation) commented that he is not sure it is possible to show return on investment for the performance objectives. The performance objectives are not FAA standards, but rather are the standards needed to meet the growing trends in aviation. Runway standards for regional airports are based on business aircraft association standard for getting a certain aircraft into a community. It is based on how we increase economic opportunity as well as the need to look at the system in the future.

Rita Brogan, Consultant Team (PRR) commented that she is hearing that we need some sense of what we are achieving. She suggested that staff spend some time to define the organizing principle.

John Shambaugh, Council Staff (WSDOT Aviation) added that we also need to address the prioritization issue.

Council Member Townsley agreed.

Council Member Field commented that stewardship relates to all issues.

Council Member Garvett commented that airlines have to be 100% safety compliant with the FAA. He also noted that private entities make cost-benefit decisions every day. The government should be able to do the same.

Council Member Sealock commented that it is important to maintain flexibility to be able to assign resources where they are most critically needed.

Council Member Field asked if the text for strategy #3 should state that the current grant program is not targeted to address system deficiencies.

John Shambaugh, Council Staff (WSDOT Aviation) commented that grant program funds are currently target by type of expenditure, with a certain percentage going to planning, pavement, and other areas.

Council Member Townsley asked if the Council needs to discuss things that WSDOT already has the ability to change, such as its grant program.

John Shambaugh, Council Staff (WSDOT Aviation) commented that we need to go back to the strategies to identify priorities and package them in way that is easy for the public to understand.

Vice Chair Roberts commented that strategy #3 needs refinement, noting that it presumes that the public has a level of knowledge that is not realistic. He commented that while the Council could spend a lot of time discussing it at today's meeting, it might not make it clearer. The goal is to be able to ask for the public's opinion on meaningful issues.

Key Issue 3: Land Use

Sara Funk, Consultant Team (WH Pacific) introduced the land use key issue. She noted that local governments are not protecting airports despite the existence of the Growth Management Act. Land use incompatibility issues include height, noise-sensitivity, wildlife attraction. Incompatible land use hurts airport operations, airport expansion, and economic development.

Rita Brogan, Consultant Team (PRR) reviewed public comment related to land use. E-Town Hall participants indicated support for a state role in discouraging incompatible land use. The majority of participants viewed avoiding incompatible land uses as a 'good' or 'excellent' way for the state to address aviation capacity shortfalls and 70% of E-Town Hall 2 participants indicated support for limiting incompatible land uses around airports as a means of preserving Washington's existing airports. Regional public meeting participants commented on the need to balance needs of airports and local communities, and that the Council's land use policies were too focused on the needs of airports. Participants also commented that environmental policies do not adequately address issues of noise (especially on schools near airports), air pollution, impact on property values, or other adverse impacts on human health.

Sara Funk, Consultant Team (WH Pacific) introduced the potential land use alternative strategies and discussed the advantages and disadvantages of each:

1. No Action
2. Increase enforcements and incentives
3. Take a more proactive role to protect land use compatibility
4. Enact new, stronger legislation

Council Member Townsley commented that strategy #1 continues the philosophy of local control over local issues, which can be an advantage. At the same time, local decisions do not necessarily address the system needs, which is a disadvantage.

Council Member Garvett commented that sustainability and continuity are important noting that changes in standards can cause trouble for airports.

Council Member Townsley asked if it would be necessary to change regulation or law to withhold grant funding, as proposed in strategy #2. He asked if this is a realistic strategy, or if this kind of change is quite involved.

Council Member Seacock asked that if the jurisdiction made the error, if grants other than the airport grant would be withheld.

Vice Chair Roberts commented that the notion of withholding some portion of the \$1.3 million in existing grant funding might not be a significant deterrent.

Council Member Garvett commented that strategy #2 punishes the wrong entity, noting that this is a huge issue.

Vice Chair Roberts commented that we are looking to determine what to release for public comment. At a minimum we need to empower the person reviewing land use plans by providing protection in the land use framework. Otherwise, we subject the jurisdiction to noncompliance measures. We have not discussed changing GMA non-compliance measures. The goal here is to make planning happen earlier.

Council Member McNamara asked if WSDOT could appeal a local comprehensive plan.

Council Member Sibold responded that WSDOT can appeal. He noted that there was a case recently in which PSRC threatened to withhold funds.

John Shambaugh, Council Staff (WSDOT Aviation) added that in this particular case, PSRC threatened to withhold TIB funds unless the jurisdiction passed regulations to protect the local airport.

Vice Chair Roberts asked for ideas about how to incorporate this into regulation, commenting that we need to develop intermediary steps if we are going to make this a criterion for funding. It will require more than just appealing a plan. He added that the hearings board is not most effective way to resolve these issues, as that is the last step in the process, when all other actions to address an issue have failed.

Council Member McNamara suggested using the RTPOs to review plans. This would provide review that might not happen now.

Leonard Bauer (CTED) commented that CTED and WSDOT Aviation have the same role in the process. The earlier an agency can be involved, the more effective it can be in influencing the process. This provides the opportunity to educate elected officials on the issues, such as the economic impacts and benefits to airports, and the effects of siting incompatible uses near airports. Appeals are after the fact.

The hearings board can only rule that something is out of compliance, but it cannot necessarily remove an ordinance or affect the kind of change we really want to see.

Council Member Townsley commented that a substantial number of comprehensive plans are not in compliance. He asked how this strategy helps to address this issue, to actually achieve the protection afforded by GMA.

Leonard Bauer (CTED) commented that there are not a lot of teeth in existing regulations. New legislation is needed to change this, which is provided for in strategy #4.

Council Member Townsley commented that he is thinking along the same lines noting that in his experience, RTPOs do not have the expertise to fulfill this kind of role.

Leonard Bauer (CTED) responded that CTED is wrestling with this same issue.

Council Member Loomis commented that RTPOs are not always attuned to the needs of airports. The needs of airport zoning and protection have been deferred to the local airport manager and the FAA. The issue has been put on the back burner. She noted that other transportation modes are more familiar to people.

Sara Funk, Consultant Team (WH Pacific) asked if strategies #2 and #3 can be combined.

John Shambaugh, Council Staff (WSDOT Aviation) responded that strategy #3 does say enough and suggested looking at both strategies to improve the phrasing.

Council Member Sealock commented that strategy #4 is already present in the HUD regulations, but there is no enforcement.

John Shambaugh, Council Staff (WSDOT Aviation) commented that the land use committee talked about withdrawing state funding to schools that locate in flight critical areas. He commented that we could also add airports to the list of places where schools should not locate, to prevent them from purchasing property in an airport zone.

Chair Moser commented that we are not there yet, and more work is needed on the strategies. She commented that the Council has established very strong policy recommendations relating to land use. She asked staff to review the strategies to ensure they are consistent with the policies. She further noted that the policies are the foundation for all of the alternatives, and that at this point, it feels like the Council is moving backward. She asked why the Council would suggest a no action alternative to the public.

Council Member Field commented that we need to send a full menu of strategies forward to the public. No action is not a recommendation, but something we consider, at different levels of funding and involvement.

John Shambaugh, Council Staff (WSDOT Aviation) responded that staff will review the policies and make certain the alternatives support the policies.

Key Issue 4: State Role in Airport Development

Sara Funk, Consultant Team (WH Pacific) introduced the state role key issue. She explained that WSDOT Aviation has statutory authority to foster aeronautics, encourage establishment of airports,

provide technical help, and administer a grant program for airport aid. WSDOT Aviation has a logical and important role in sustaining a viable, balanced, and integrated airport system. Currently, local airport owners develop and operate their airports without regard to system-wide impacts.

Rita Brogan, Consultant Team (PRR) reviewed public comment related to the state's role in aviation. E-Town Hall 1 participants indicated strong support for state government setting standards for public airports in order to qualify for funds (89%). Participants also indicated support for a state government role in providing funding to help maintain airports (71%), discouraging incompatible land uses near airports (70%), and helping local governments protect airports (68%). Fewer than 10% of participants indicated little or no support for these roles of state government in aviation. When asked how decisions should be made about building or siting new airports, 47% of E-Town Hall 1 participants indicated that state government should take a stronger leadership role, while 37% of participants believe that the state should play only a mediation role. Participants indicated limited support for a leadership role for local and federal government in airport siting decisions. When asked how decisions should be made about expanding existing airports, 46% of E-Town Hall 1 participants supported a stronger state role in airport expansion decisions and 38% indicated support for the state playing a mediation role to balance long-term air transportation needs with addressing local impacts. Participants indicated limited support for local government taking the lead in decision-making about expanding airports (13%), and the least amount of support for the federal government taking the lead in decisions about airport expansion (4%).

Sara Funk, Consultant Team (WH Pacific) introduced the potential state role alternative strategies and discussed the advantages and disadvantages of each:

1. No Action
2. Improve effectiveness of current staff and activity
3. Take a more proactive role in planning airport improvements
4. Be more involved in building and operating airports

Ms. Funk provided an overview of the FAA's state block grant program. The state block grant program transfers federal grant funds and program execution from the FAA to the state. Ten states participate in this program which began in 1987 – Georgia, Illinois, Michigan, Missouri, North Carolina, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, and Wisconsin. The program does not apply to primary commercial service airports. The advantages of being a block grant state include greater local control of priority setting and funding decisions (FAA standards still apply) and savings in time and money. The program also enables the FAA to focus on large commercial service airports. A 1996 Government Accounting Office report concluded that the pilot program was successful, in that it benefited both airports and the FAA, eliminated duplication, and streamlined the AIP approval process. The disadvantages of being a block grant state include the need for a major increase in state aviation staffing. This staffing ramp-up is funded by the state, unless a waiver is granted to utilize federal funds. Currently, the FAA's authorizing legislation limits participation in the program to ten states, though cap has been raised in the past.

Council Member Field commented that we need to clarify that the no action is to continue to run programs as efficiently as possible.

Council Member Sealock asked if we should spend time considering becoming a block grant state (strategy #3) since the program is full. He asked if it makes sense to put forth a strategy that relies on a program that is not available to the state at this point.

Council Member Sibold responded there is potential for space to become available in the program.

Council Member Sealock asked how many unfunded mandates the Council wants to propose.

Council Member Townsley commented that while the state block grant program is an interesting idea, he senses there is reluctance. He requested a white paper that would provide greater detail about the advantages and disadvantages about the program. This would help the Council make a more informed decision at the next Go To Meeting.

John Shambaugh, Council Staff (WSDOT Aviation) agreed that staff would prepare a white paper on the state block grant program.

Council Member Townsley added that the white paper needs to clearly state what the benefit is of becoming a block grant state.

John Shambaugh, Council Staff (WSDOT Aviation) commented that he is not sure that staff has an opinion about the block grant program.

Council Member Sealock commented that staff opinion will be the only thing that would change his mind about the program.

John Shambaugh, Council Staff (WSDOT Aviation) responded that the main benefit of the program is that it provides greater control over funding resources.

Chair Moser commented that we always want more local control of federal dollars for all transportation modes. She noted that it would take an act of Congress to become a block grant state.

Council Member Field added that it would require legislative action to secure the necessary administrative funding.

Council Member Sealock commented that we would obtain the same amount of money; the key difference is that the state would have more control over it.

Vice Chair Roberts commented that we need to tie these strategies back to our policies – the link needs to be very clear.

Chair Moser requested that staff review each strategy to ensure they are consistent with the Council's policies. The Council will want to review the strategies again before they are released to the public. She requested that the strategies be written in reader friendly language. She commented that "no action" is misleading and noted that we need to clearly state that the no action strategies maintain the status quo.

Helen Lin, Consultant Team (SH&E) suggested that we evaluate each strategy against the policies and explain how it fits as part of the advantages and disadvantages.

Chair Moser responded that this approach makes sense. The important thing is that we know that we show that are meeting our own standards.

Council Member Field commented that we need something that transitions the reader from the policies to the key issues. We need to show where policy areas that are not key issue headings, such as mobility, are addressed. For example, we should state that environment is addressed in the land use section.

Council Member Townsley added that in addition to linking the key issue to the policy areas, we need to state as a disadvantage when a strategy is inconsistent or fails to meet the policies. It is crucial that our recommendations are consistent with our prior work.

John Shambaugh, Council Staff (WSDOT Aviation) noted that some of the policies are applicable to all of the key issues.

Council Member Field responded that the important thing is that it does not look like we dropped the policy discussion.

System Plan

Sonjia Murray, Consultant Team (SH&E) reviewed the proposed approach to the development of the aviation system plan. She explained that the goal of airport system planning is to ensure that the state's air transportation needs are adequately served by its airports now and in the future. The system plan identifies aviation system needs statewide and provides guidance on how to maximize system benefits of airport investments, including aligning federal and state/local objectives. Typical components of aviation system plans include and airport inventory, identification of air transportation needs and airport roles, a long range activity forecast, special studies (such as cargo, air service, high speed rail), key issues, constraints, and/or opportunities, and policy guidance and implementation strategies. Ms. Murray noted the importance of strong public outreach efforts in the development of the aviation system plan. The end product will provide a cost-effective plan of action that guides long term development, establishes priorities (funding, airport roles, and policy strategies), identifies important trends, and ensures a responsive plan to overall air transportation needs. The system plan serves as an important contribution to the FAA's bi-annual National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS). System Plans are typically performed every five years and fit between the NPIAS and Individual Airport Master Plans.

Ms. Murray reviewed the system plan table of contents, and asked the Council to provide comment on the chapters that have been provided to them to date. Ms. Murray proposed moving the moving the public process part out of the appendix, so that it becomes its own chapter.

Vice Chair Roberts suggested incorporating the public outreach summary into the executive summary.

Chair Moser noted that the system plan is a WSDOT document.

John Shambaugh, Council Staff (WSDOT Aviation) responded that there is a close relationship between the system plan and the Council's recommendations, noting that we would not want to include anything in the system plan that is out of line with the Council's recommendations. The system plan provides the background material.

Sonjia Murray, Consultant Team (SH&E) added that the system plan is the basis for the Council's recommendations. The Council is the first user of the system plan.

Leonard Bauer (CTED) asked when the remaining chapters will be delivered to the Council.

John Shambaugh, Council Staff (WSDOT Aviation) responded that they are forthcoming, and that the consultant team is currently working on developing the alternatives.

Council Member Sealock asked how the system plan will be used.

John Shambaugh, Council Staff (WSDOT Aviation) responded that the system plan will be used by WSDOT Aviation. The document will be forwarded to the Washington Transportation Commission, and will become the aviation portion of the Washington Transportation Plan update, and part of the NPIAS document.

Council Member Sealock asked if the system plan is intended to be a living document.

John Shambaugh, Council Staff (WSDOT Aviation) responded that it will be updated regularly.

Council Member Sealock asked if there is a prior version of the system plan.

John Shambaugh, Council Staff (WSDOT Aviation) responded that the last system plan was developed 20-30 years ago. Smaller studies have been conducted since that time, but this is the first major update of the entire plan in decades.

Council Administration and Next Steps

Council Member Loomis offered her comments on the draft Council Report. She commented that the environmental section states that the Council supports the Governor's Climate Change Council, but noted Concern that the Council has not vetted this.

John Shambaugh, Council Staff (WSDOT Aviation) responded that the land use policy committee discussed this issue.

Council Member Loomis expressed concern that this might have a negative impact on aviation noting that fuel standards can impact certain kinds of planes, which may result in an unintended consequence for aviation. She also commented that the economic section of the report does not state the level of tax revenue generated by aviation that goes into the general fund. She noted that this fact needs to be more clearly stated in the report, so that we that have a clearly demonstrate aviation's contribution to the general fund.

John Shambaugh, Council Staff (WSDOT Aviation) encouraged the Council to look at a report from Arizona on the economic impact of airports. He noted that the WSDOT Aviation anticipates receiving a grant to conduct an economic impact analysis. The study will start in the spring, and will take 18 months to complete.

Vice Chair Roberts commented that he does not have an issue modifying the climate change language in the report, but it should not be eliminated entirely since it is such an important issue. He noted that the land use and environment subcommittee looked at inside and outside airport impacts, and determined that it is important to think about reducing the carbon footprint. The subcommittee did not suggest a specific strategy, but instead focuses on the bigger picture need to reduce the carbon footprint.

Council Member Loomis noted that she was in full agreement regarding the need to reduce the carbon footprint, but stressed the importance of avoiding unintended consequences on aviation.

Rita Brogan, Consultant Team (PRR) reviewed upcoming public involvement activities. In March, we will conduct an online survey of 1,000 people. She requested Council Members review the survey questionnaire to ensure that we ask the questions that will be most useful to the Council as it formulates its final recommendations. She also noted that we will also host two regional public meetings in March, which will be used to obtain comment on the draft alternative strategies.

John Shambaugh, Council Staff (WSDOT Aviation) noted that one of the regional public meetings will be held in Olympia. He asked for Council input on the location of the eastern Washington meeting.

Council Member Townsley suggested that we would likely get the best turnout holding the meeting in Spokane, rather than Ellensburg, Moses Lake, or Yakima.

Council Member Sibold expressed concern about the amount of work that needs to be completed before the May meeting.

John Shambaugh, Council Staff (WSDOT Aviation) suggested holding an additional Go To Meeting prior to the May meeting, if it is needed.

Vice Chair Roberts suggested that subcommittee work might be needed to keep the project on schedule.

Rita Brogan, Consultant Team (PRR) committed to preparing a work plan to ensure we stay on track.

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.