

State-Operated Airport Study – Communication Plan

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) Aviation is preparing to evaluate, analyze and develop a strategic plan for the 17 state-operated airports within Washington State. It is necessary for WSDOT Aviation to examine why it operates these airports and what role they serve in the statewide aviation system. The State-Operated Airport Study will help WSDOT understand the comparative benefit of investing in these airports versus others in the statewide system.

Project Goals:

- Define the purpose and role of the State-operated airport system through an independent assessment
- Conduct a detailed assessment of existing facilities
- Standardize airport operating agreements
- Identify policies, standards and operating procedures
- Integrate with the current statewide system plan effort LATS

Community Involvement

(Why is public outreach an important and necessary component of this study?)

- WSDOT's Long-Term Air Transportation Study (LATS) is putting a spotlight on the agency's policy direction for the aviation system. Analysis of the state-operated airport system must be transparent and accountable.
- Several communities and pilot groups are involved with the state-operated airports and feel a sense of ownership over them. It will be necessary to keep these stakeholders informed about the study process and ensure that they have opportunities to provide input.

- The results of this study could influence a shift in policy for WSDOT. Stakeholder involvement is necessary to fully understand potential impacts of policy changes.

Key dates

Winter 2007	Project begins
July 2007	Draft Working Paper #1, <i>Independent Assessment</i> , released for public comment
January 2008	Final draft documents released for public comment
Spring 2008	Project completed

Team members and affiliations

- Nisha Marvel, WSDOT Aviation Communications, (360.651.6310)
- John Shambaugh, WSDOT Aviation Senior Planner, (360.651.6306)
- Kerri Woehler, WSDOT Aviation Planner, (360.651.6312)

Key messages

- WSDOT is conducting this study because it needs to better understand the role state-operated airports play in the state aviation system.
- The recommendations of this study will lead to an evaluation of WSDOT policy regarding the state-operated airports.
- The results of this study will be integrated into the Long-Term Air Transportation Study (LATS) which is currently underway.

Audiences

- Airport users: pilots, disaster management
- Adjacent communities: towns, cities, counties,
- State airport property owners and neighbors: National Parks, Forest Service, Army Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Land Management
- Transportation policy: RTPOs (Regional Transportation Planning Organizations), Washington Transportation Commission, Washington State Legislature

Desired outcome of public outreach program

- Prevent surprises. Keep pilots, communities, the state legislature and other stakeholders apprised of the agency’s work.
- Obtain feedback. Allow stakeholders to voice concerns throughout the project and use input to inform the study.

Communications tools

<u>Activity/ tool</u>	<u>Audience</u>	<u>Team members</u>	<u>Due date</u>	<u>Done</u>
Create stakeholders mailing list and send project updates, meeting notices, etc. Aviation Advisory Committee Study Advisory Committee Post project information on the Web site Present updates at aviation association meetings throughout the state Solicit public comment on the draft document prior to final adoption Press releases Team member conference calls				

Roles & responsibilities in public outreach

The Responsibility of WSDOT Aviation

- Form Study Advisory Committee
- Make meeting arrangements
- Attend each committee meeting and present information and answer questions as required.

- Transmit all advance mailings to committee members prior to each meeting
- Participate in a planning session for each meeting
- Provide needed supplies for meetings
- Distribute press releases
- Post public information materials and meeting notices on the WSDOT Aviation website

The Responsibility of Wilbur Smith Associates:

- Advise WSDOT Aviation on selection of Study Advisory Committee
- Develop concept, agenda and content of each meeting
- Participate in planning session for each meeting
- Prepare handouts, background and display materials for committee meetings
- Present technical information at committee meetings
- Facilitate committee meetings
- Prepare a summary of each meeting and advise project team members on follow-up activities based on the content of each meeting

Formation of the Study Advisory Committee (SAC)

Purpose of the SAC

The primary role of this SAC will be to bring policy decision makers together to help discuss policies, standards and operating procedures of the state airport system. It is anticipated that two SAC meetings will be held throughout the Study. The SAC will participate in the presentation of study recommendations and findings to WSDOT's Aviation Advisory Committee. The first meeting will take place after completion of the independent assessment. The second will take place toward the end of the study to review draft policies and plan recommendations. WSDOT Aviation will select 10-15 individuals to serve on the SAC. The following factors should be considered in this selection:

- The committee should reflect the broad interests of the community, and represent an appropriate mix of skill sets to adequately consider study recommendations from a variety of perspectives.
- The committee should consist of committed individuals willing to actively participate.

- The committee members should be able to credibly represent their particular interest group, but also be able to take a “system” perspective of needs throughout the state aviation system.
- The committee members should be willing to help “get the word out” to their constituency groups and throughout the community.

Selection Criteria

Representatives must demonstrate an ability to present their view with positive, yet objective attitudes towards airport policy issues and development for Washington. They may possess active experience in aviation within Washington including but not limited to an aviation user (GA aircraft owner or flyer), career in airport, airline or aviation-related (defense, manufacturing, etc.) business, or demonstrate experience working on an airport board, planning council working directly with aviation / airport issues, etc. Specific qualities include:

- Demonstrated leadership abilities within local community and throughout career/chosen profession.
- Interest in aviation and/or transportation policy issues that will shape the future of Washington.
- Experience should point to the fact they are an effective contributor to an overall decision making, group process and can work well in a team setting.
- Representative of their interest group, show they can speak with respect to the positions and overall opinions of their stakeholder group.
- Interface comfortably and show experience interacting with the public and decision-makers.