Online Survey Summary Report

May 2009

Overview and Purpose

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), in partnership with Knowledge Networks and PRR, conducted an online survey to help the Washington State Aviation Planning Council develop recommendations to the Governor and Legislature for laws and policies to govern the future of Washington aviation. This survey is part of a comprehensive public outreach program that is an integral part of Phase III of the Long-Term Air Transportation Study (LATS). The survey will serve to cross-check findings from regional public meetings held in July 2008 and March 2009 and Electronic Town Hall meetings held in August 2008 and November 2008 in a statistically valid, representative survey of Washington residents.

The 15-minute online survey was conducted April 3-17, 2009. Knowledge Networks recruited participants using KnowledgePanel®, a probability-based panel used for academic and public policy research. Participants were randomly drawn from the 1,300+ panelists in the state of Washington. Knowledge Networks selected households for the panel using random-digit-dialing (RDD) technology and address-based sampling methods. The panel consists of both Internet-connected households and those without connections as Knowledge Networks provides Internet access to those that do not have it.

Knowledge Networks invited 1,322 Washington residents to complete the survey. We received 938 completed surveys, for a 71% completion rate. Some of the respondents (15%) also participated in the E-Town Halls in August and November 2008.

Questions were designed to gather opinions on aviation system funding and issues relating to meeting future aviation capacity needs.

Following is a summary of key findings[1].

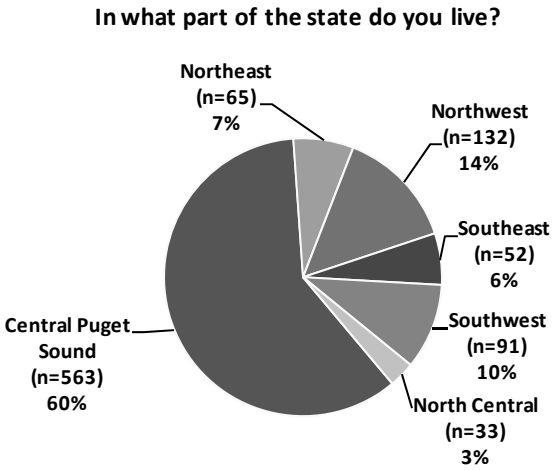
[1] Throughout the report the Pearson *r correlation* statistic, along with t-test used for significance, is used to test the strength of significant relationships between variables. *R* ranges from 0 to +1 and indicates the strength of a relationship.

Part 1: Respondent Geographical & Travel Characteristics

At the beginning of the online survey respondents were asked background questions such as what part of the state they lived in, the type of community they lived in, their proximity to a commercial airport, and how often they fly.

Respondent geographic characteristics are as follows:

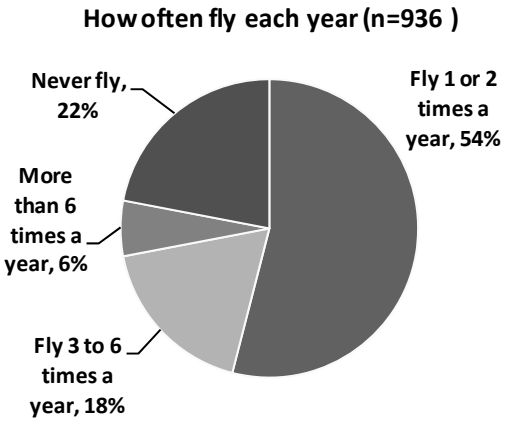
- 60% live in the Central Puget Sound Region (40% live in areas outside of the Puget Sound region, as indicated in the chart to the right)
- About 52% of participants considered their community to be suburban, 28% considered their community to be rural, and 21% considered their community to be urban.
- At least half of respondents (50%) live between 10 and 30 miles of a commercial airport



Since there were some regional differences found in the previous E-Town Hall results, differences in responses between those living in Central Puget Sound and Non-Central Puget Sound were analyzed. Differences of those in suburban, rural, and urban areas were also analyzed. Only a few notable (r >.17 <.13) regional differences were found and are noted throughout the report. Differences were not analyzed between the different regional groups (i.e. central Puget Sound, southwest, northwest, and northeast Washington) because many of the categories had very small sample sizes, especially when compared to the Central Puget Sound region that had 563 respondents.

When it comes to preferred mode of travel to reach a Washington destination, 63% percent of respondents prefer a 2.75 hour car trip, 32% prefer taking a 20 minute flight and just 5% prefer a 4.5 hour train ride. The majority (50%) of respondents make that decision based on total the trip cost and total trip time (20%).

Respondents were also asked how often they fly each year. About half of the respondents (54%) fly about once or twice a year, 18% of respondents fly 3 to 6 times and 22% of respondents never fly.

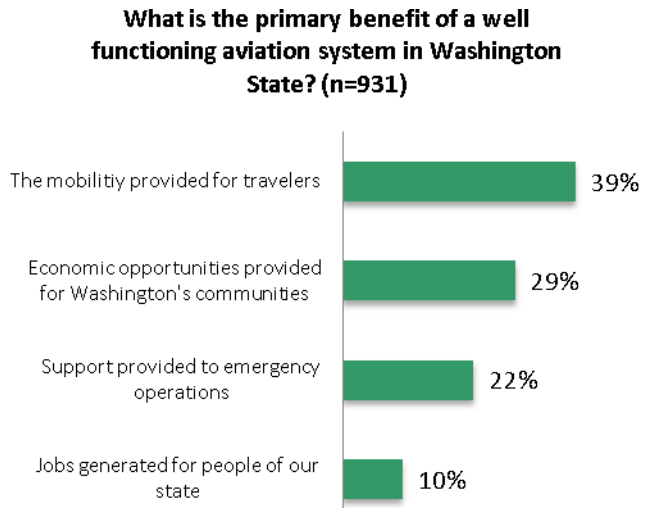


Part 2: Background on Washington's Aviation System

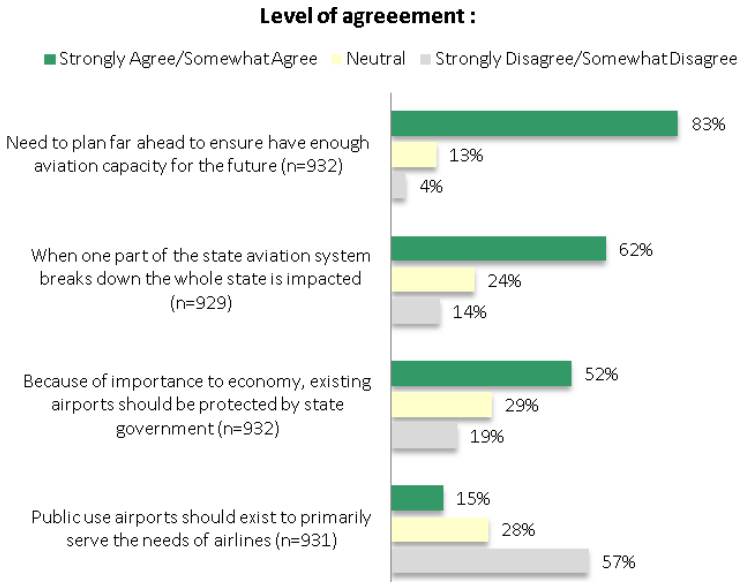
The online survey provided some brief background information on Washington's aviation system to help participants understand its size and structure, the role of the different types of airports in the system, and the contribution that airports make to the state's economy. Respondents were asked to indicate their opinions about funding priorities for various aviation system needs and their level of support for various ways of preserving Washington's airports.

What is the primary benefit of a well functioning aviation system in Washington State?

Overall respondents feel that the mobility provided for travelers (39%) and the economic opportunities provided for Washington communities (29%) are the primary benefits of a well-functioning aviation system in Washington.

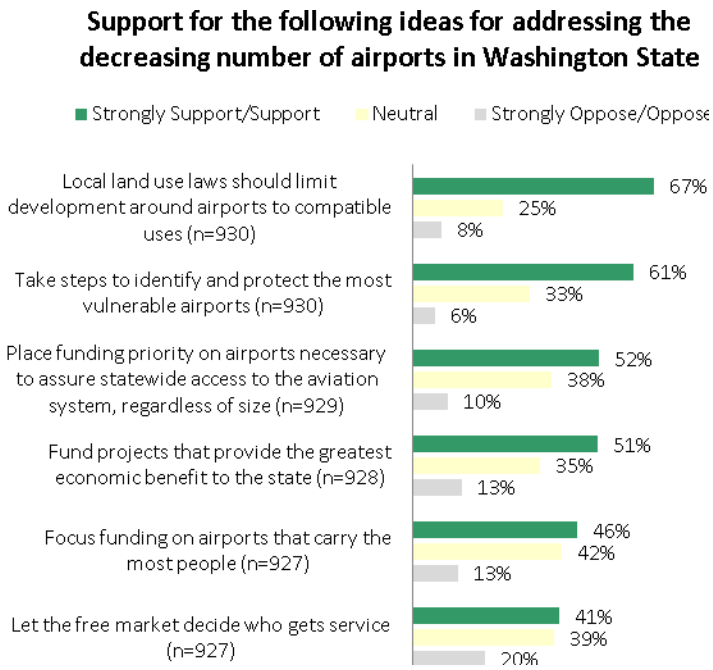


At least half of the respondents agree (somewhat to strongly) that when one part of the state aviation system breaks down the whole state is impacted, that existing airports should be protected by state government because of their importance to the economy, and we should plan ahead to ensure we have enough aviation capacity. The most agreement (83%) was with need to plan ahead to ensure we have enough aviation capacity for the future. There was very little agreement (15%) that public use airports should primarily exist to serve the needs of airlines.

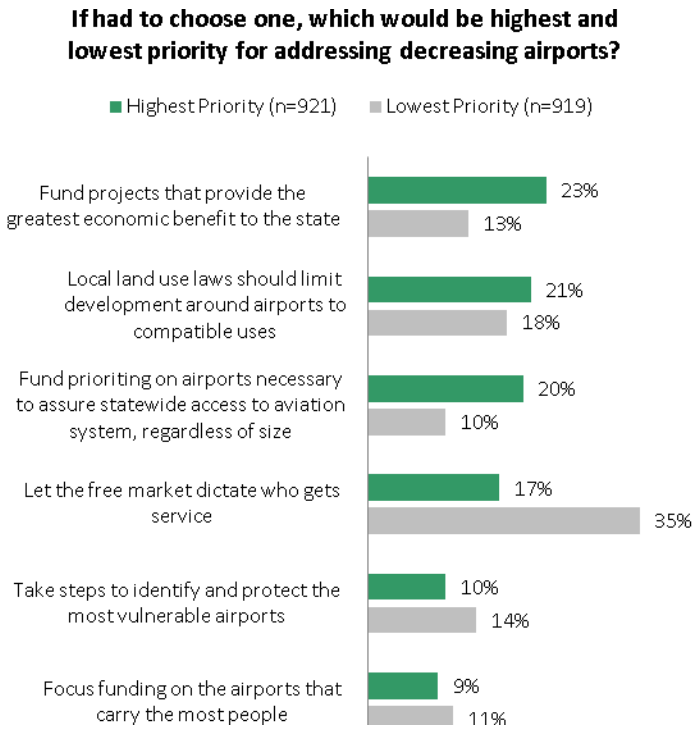


What is your level of support for the proposed ideas to address the decreasing number of airports in Washington State?

When it comes to priorities for addressing the problem of airport closures in Washington State, at least half of respondents agree (somewhat to strongly) that local land use laws should limit development around airports to compatible uses (67%), that there be active steps taken to identify and protect the most vulnerable airports (61%), that a funding priority be placed on airports necessary to assure statewide access to the aviation system (52%), and to place a funding priority on the projects provide the greatest economic benefit (51%). About half (46%) agree that a funding priority should be placed on airports that carry the most people, and that the free market should dictate which airports remain in service. Respondents in the Central Puget Sound Region are more likely to support a funding priority for airports that carry the most people.[2]



Although the results cannot be compared statistically, it should be noted that participants in the E-town Hall agreed with the online survey participants in strongly supporting local land use laws, but the E-town Hall participants provided more support for funding projects with the greatest economic benefit. E-Town Hall participants also provided less support for taking steps to identify vulnerable airports and to fund projects for continued air service to smaller communities than did the online survey respondents.



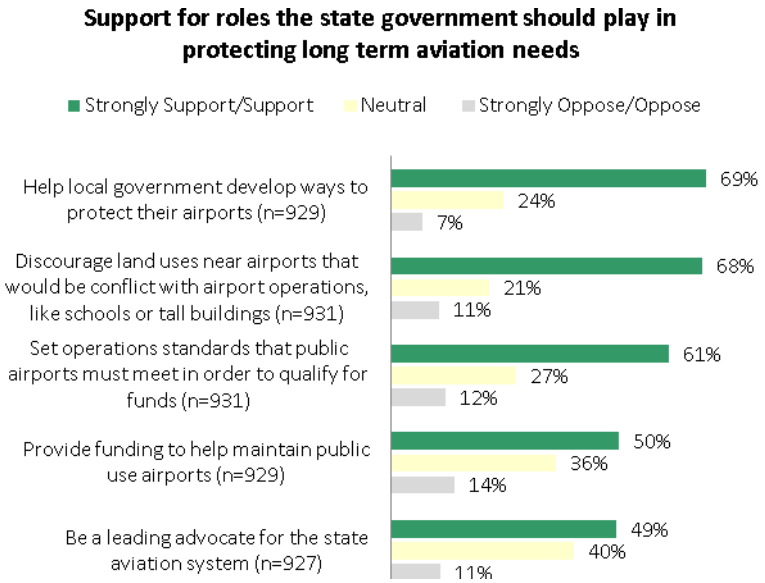
Online survey respondents were then asked which of the ideas for addressing the decreasing number of airports should be the highest priority and which should be the lowest priority. When

[2] T-test, r=-.16

asked to choose which priority should be the highest, respondents chose projects that provide the greatest economic benefit (23%), laws limiting development around airport uses (21%), and placing a funding priority on airports necessary for assuring statewide access (20%) and the highest priorities. The lowest priority (35%) is to allow the free market to dictate which airports remain in service.

What role should the state play in protecting the long term transportation needs of Washington State?

Close to half or more of respondents support (somewhat to strongly) all the roles proposed for the state to protect the long term air transportation needs of Washington State. The roles of helping local government develop ways to protect their airports (69%), discouraging incompatible land uses near airports (68%), and setting operation standards that public airports must meet for funding (61%) received the most support.

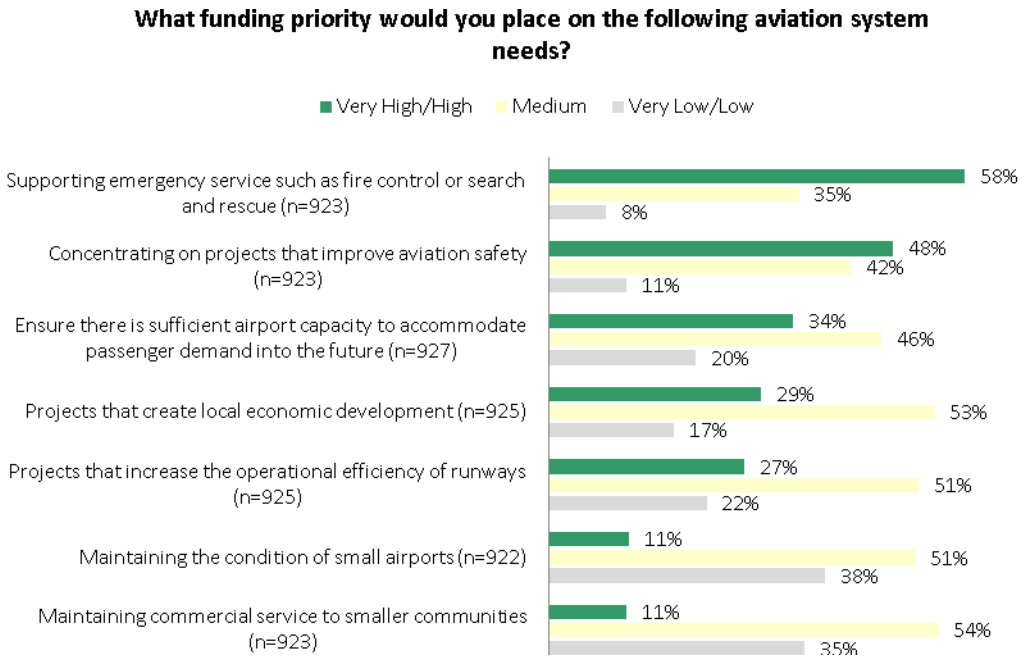


What funding priority would you place on ways to preserve our aviation system?

Overall, close to half (48% to 58%) of the respondents placed a high priority on supporting emergency service such as fire control and search and rescue and concentrating on projects that improve aviation safety. Approximately half of respondents placed a medium priority on the remaining funding priorities. At least a third (35% to 38%) indicated a low priority for supporting commercial service to smaller communities and to maintaining the condition of small airports. Respondents in the Central Puget Sound Region are more likely to give higher priority to ensuring that there is sufficient airport capacity to accommodate passenger demand.[3]

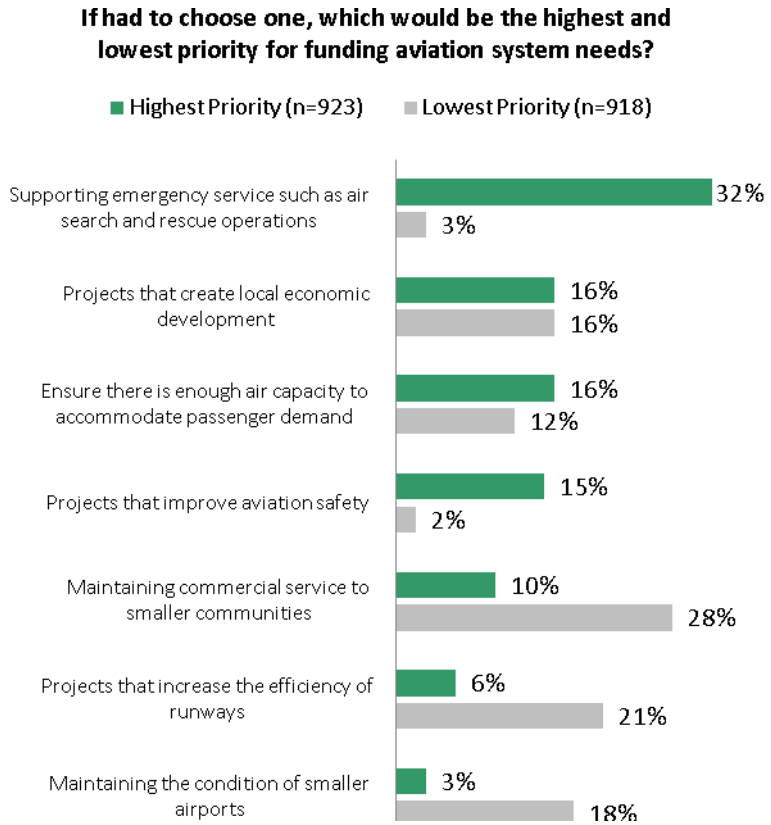
Whereas online survey respondents gave the highest priority to supporting emergency services, the E-Town Hall participants did not. E-town Hall participants placed a higher priority on improving airport landing safety and creating local economic development higher funding priorities.

[3] T-test, r=-.13



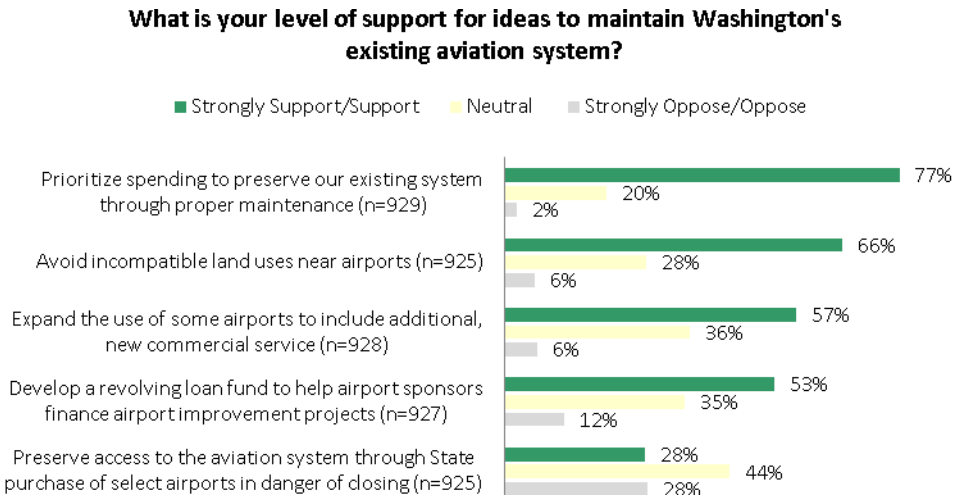
When asked to choose which preservation method should be the highest priority, online survey respondents again choose to give the highest priority to supporting emergency service operations. The lowest priority was placed on maintaining commercial service to smaller communities.

Again, this is different from the E-Town Hall participants, who indicated that projects that create local economic development and ensuring there is enough air capacity to accommodate passengers should be the highest funding priorities. Both groups agree that increasing the efficiency of runways and maintaining the condition of smaller airports should be given lower priority when making funding decisions.



What is the level of support for ideas to maintain Washington's existing aviation system?

When considering ways to maintain Washington's existing aviation system, at least half or more of respondents support (somewhat to strongly) all the proposals, except the proposal to preserve access to the aviation system through State purchase of select airports in danger of closing. Just over one-quarter (28%) of respondents opposed this idea and 44% indicated a neutral opinion. The most support is given to prioritizing spending to preserve our existing system with proper maintenance (77%) and avoiding incompatible land uses near airports (66%).



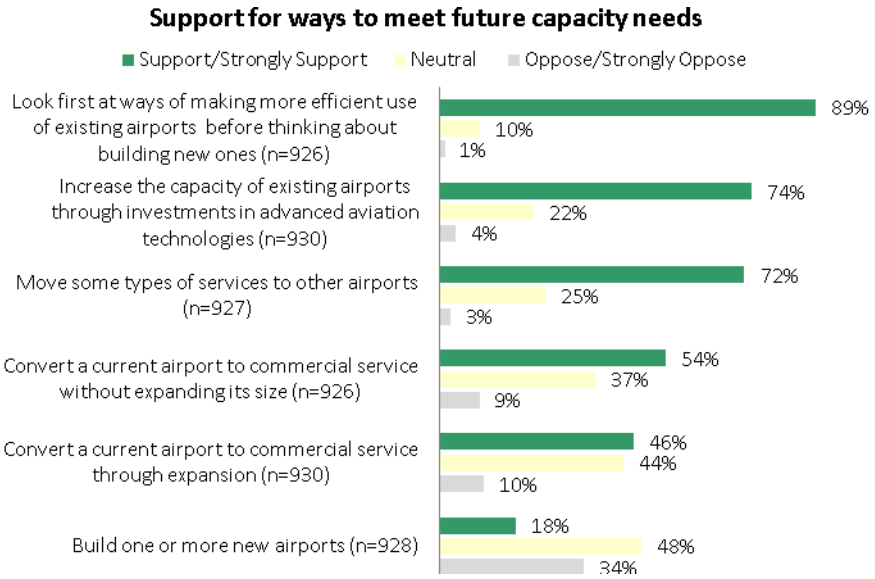
E-Town Hall participants were not asked about prioritizing spending to preserve the existing system through proper maintenance, but they had similar levels of support for avoiding incompatible land uses and expanding the use of airports to include more commercial service.

Part 3: Future Airport Capacity

The online survey provided information to participants on airfield capacity constraints facing the Washington aviation system and potential ways the State could address the capacity shortfall. Respondents indicated their level of support for potential ways to address future aviation capacity needs in Washington State.

What is the level of support for ideas to meet the State's future capacity needs?

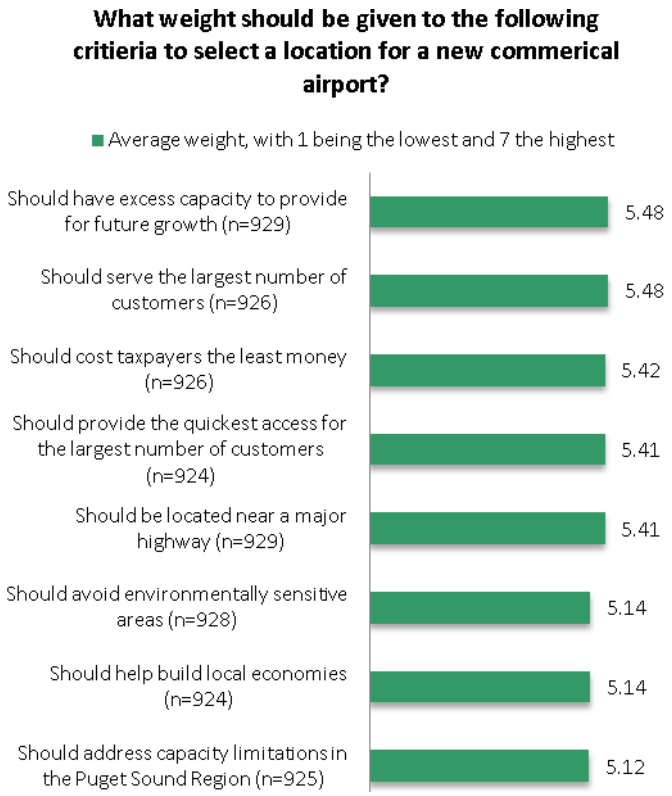
Almost half (46% or higher) of the respondents support (somewhat to strongly) all the proposals for meeting future capacity needs, except to build one or more new airports. Few (18%) support this idea. Just over a third of respondents opposed the idea of building one or more new airports (34%) and nearly half (48%) indicated a neutral opinion. The strongest support was given to looking first at ways of making more efficient use of existing airports before thinking about building new airports (89%), to increasing the capacity of existing airports through investments in advanced aviation technology (74%), and to moving some types of services to other airports (72%).



E-town Hall participants indicated similar levels of support for converting current airports to commercial service with and without expansion; however E-town Hall participants indicated a lot more support (46%) for building one or more new airports.

If Washington State decided to build a new commercial service airport outside of the Puget Sound area, what weight would you give to each of these criteria?

When considering what criteria should guide the selection of a new commercial airport outside of the Puget Sound area, at least half or more gave a high weight (5 or more out of 7) to all the criteria proposed, with average weight scores of 5.12 to 5.48. This means that for respondents, most of these criteria have about the same weight. However, the criteria that a new airport should serve the largest number of customers, should have excess capacity for future growth, and cost taxpayers the least money were given slightly higher average weights. The criteria of being near a major highway, serving the largest number of customers, to have excess capacity for growth, and to address capacity limitations in the Puget Sound region were more likely to be weighted higher by respondents in the Central Puget Sound Region.[4]



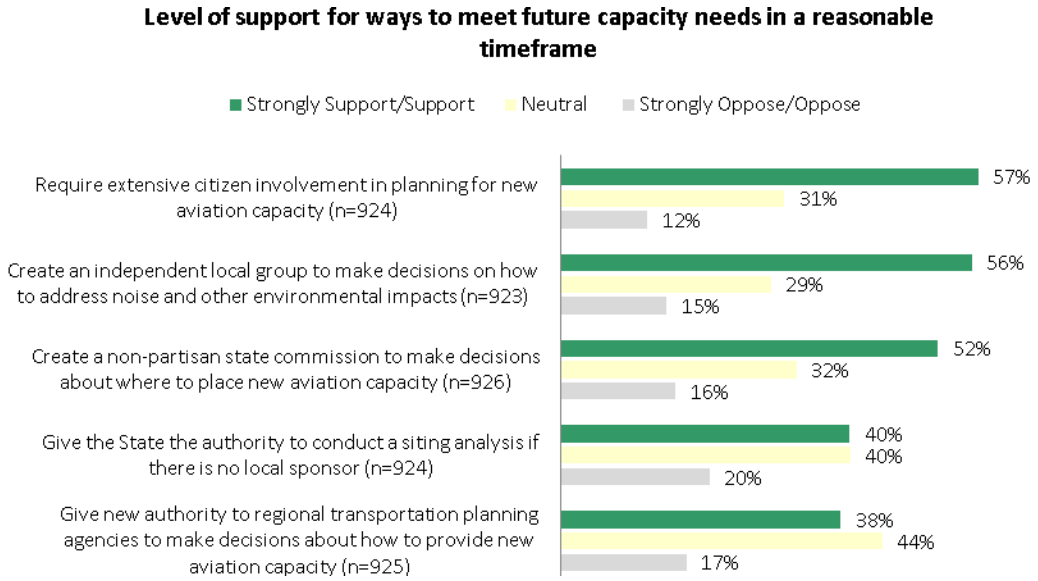
[4] T-test, r=-.16, r=-.17, r=-.15, r=-.14

E-Town Hall participants also gave most of these criteria the same overall weight, but they indicated avoiding environmentally sensitive areas as having more weight than did online survey respondents.

What is the level of support for ideas that meet aviation capacity needs within a reasonable timeframe in a way that is fair to surrounding communities?

At least half of the respondents support (somewhat to strongly) requiring extensive citizen involvement, creating an independent local group to make decisions on how to address noise and other environmental impacts, and creating a non-partisan state commission to make decisions about where to place new aviation capacity. At least a third support (somewhat to strongly) giving new authority to regional transportation agencies and in giving the State authority to conduct siting analysis if there is no local sponsor.

E-Town Hall participants indicated similar levels of support for these proposals.



About the Participants

Gender
- Female: 58%
- Male: 42%

Age
- 18-29 years old: 5.8%
- 30-44 years old: 23%
- 45-59 years old: 38%
- 60+ years old: 33%

Income
- Under $50K: 32%
- At or over $50K: 68%

Marital Status
- Married: 66%
- Not married: 34%

Educational Level
- Less than High School: 3%
- High School: 13%
- Some College: 41%
- Bachelors Degree or higher: 43%

Race/Ethnicity
- White, Non-Hispanic: 87%
- Black, Non-Hispanic: 1%
- Other, Non-Hispanic: 4%
- Hispanic: 3%
- Two or more races, Non-Hispanic: 4%

Internet Access
- Have internet access: 93%

Appendix A – Survey Questionnaire

Appendix A: Questionnaire - Washington Statewide Survey

[DISPLAY]

Thank you for participating in this statewide survey about the future of Washington State's aviation system. You are one of over 1000 people statewide who have been selected to provide feedback on recommendations that are currently being considered by the Washington State Aviation Planning Council. Using your input, the Council will submit final recommendations to the Governor and legislature. The Aviation Planning Council was appointed by the Governor in 2007 to develop recommendations on the long-term management of Washington's Aviation System.

[RADIO]

Q1. In what part of the state do you live?

1. North Central (Chelan, Douglas, Okanogan, Grant, and Kittitas counties)
2. Northeastern (Spokane, Stevens, Ferry, Adams and Lincoln counties)
3. Central Puget Sound (King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish counties)
4. Northwest (Clallam, Grays Harbor, Island, Mason, Skagit, Thurston, and Whatcom counties)
5. Southeast (Benton, Columbia, Franklin, Garfield, Klickitat, Whitman, and Yakima counties)
6. Southwest (Clark, Cowlitz, and Lewis counties)

[RADIO]

Q2. Did you participate in either of the Knowledge Networks Aviation E-Town Halls that were held last year?

1. Yes
2. No

[RADIO]

Q3. Do you consider your community to be urban, suburban or rural?

1. Urban
2. Suburban
3. Rural

[RADIO]

Q4. How close do you live to a commercial airport?

1. Under 10 miles
2. Between 10 and 30 miles
3. Over 30 miles

[RADIO]

Q5. If you had a choice of taking a 20 minute flight to a Washington destination, a 2.75 hour car trip, or a 4.5 hour train ride, which would you be more likely to use?

1. 20 minute flight on an airplane
2. 2.75 hour car trip
3. 4.50 train ride

[RADIO]

Q6. What single consideration would <u>most</u> factor into making that choice?

1. Total trip cost
2. Total trip time
3. More relaxing
4. Environmental considerations
5. Safety
6. Other (please specify):

[RADIO]

Q7. How often do you fly each year? (choose one)

1. Never
2. Once or twice a year
3. 3-6 times a year
4. More than 6 times a year

[DISPLAY]

SOME BACKGROUND ON WASHINGTON'S AVIATION SYSTEM

Today Washington State has 138 public use airports. Some airports are large, like SeaTac International, and some are very small, like Davenport in the southeast corner of the state. No matter what the size, each airport plays a role in the system and feeds the economy with both jobs and sales revenues.

The Aviation Planning Council, which was appointed by the Governor in 2007 to develop recommendations on the long-term management of Washington's Aviation System, seeks to answer two major questions:

- What should we do to ensure that Washington's aviation system has enough capacity to accommodate the state's growing population and increased demand for aviation services?

- What should be done to ensure that we take good care of our existing system?

[RADIO]

Q8. What, in your opinion, is the primary benefit of a well functioning aviation system in Washington State? (choose one)

1. The jobs generated for people in our state
2. The mobility provided for travelers
3. The economic opportunities provided for Washington's communities
4. The support provided to emergency operations (medical evacuation, fire control, search and rescue, etc) and access to isolated communities

[FOR Q9, Q10, Q11, Q12, Q13, Q14 AND Q16, SCRIPT SCALE LABELS AS THEY ARE SHOWN FOR HALF OF SAMPLE AND IN REVERSE ORDER FOR OTHER HALF OF SAMPLE – RECORD WHICH ORDER WAS SHOWN FOR EACH RESPONDENT]

[GRID – RADIO BUTTONS]

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements:

"Select one answer for each row in the grid."

Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Q9_1. When one part of the state aviation system breaks down, the whole state is impacted.

Q9_2. Public use airports should exist primarily to serve the needs of airlines.

Q9_3. Because of its importance to our entire economy, the existing system of airports should be protected by state government.

Q9_4. We need to plan far ahead to ensure we have enough aviation capacity for the future.

[GRID – RADIO BUTTONS]

The number of airports in Washington State has been steadily decreasing over the last several decades. Each closed airport reduces local access to the aviation system. Please indicate your level of support for the following ideas for addressing this issue:

"Select one answer for each row in the grid."

Strongly Support	Support	Neutral	Oppose	Strongly Oppose

Q10_1. Local land use laws should limit development around airports to uses that are compatible with airport operations

Q10_2. A funding priority should be placed on airports that carry the most people

Q10_3. A funding priority should be placed on airports necessary to assure statewide access to the aviation system, regardless of size

Q10_4. Active steps should be taken to identify and protect the most vulnerable airports

Q10_5. The free market should dictate which airports remain in service

Q10_6. Projects that provide the greatest economic benefit to the state should receive funding priority

[NUMBER BOXES – RANGE 1 TO 6]

If you had to choose one, which of the following choices should be the LOWEST priority? Which should be the HIGHEST priority?

1. Local land use laws should limit development around airports to uses that are compatible with airport operations
2. A funding priority should be placed on airports that carry the most people
3. A funding priority should be placed on airports necessary to assure statewide access to the aviation system, regardless of size
4. Active steps should be taken to identify and protect the most vulnerable airports
5. The free market should dictate which airports remain in service
6. Projects that provide the greatest economic benefit to the state should receive funding priority

Type the number of your selection below

Q10A. Highest priority [ ]

Q10B. Lowest priority [ ]

[GRID – RADIO BUTTONS]

Strong Support				No Support

What type of role do you think that state government should play in protecting the long term air transportation needs of Washington State?

"Select one answer for each row in the grid."

Q11_1. Provide funding to help maintain public use airports

Q11_2. Discourage land uses near airports that would be conflict with airport operations, like schools or tall buildings

Q11_3. Help local government develop ways to protect their airports

Q11_4. Set operations standards that public airports must meet in order to qualify for funds

Q11_5. Be a leading advocate for the state aviation system

[GRID – RADIO BUTTONS]

There is inadequate public funding available to meet all of Washington's system preservation needs. Therefore, the state must establish funding priorities. What funding priority would you place on the following ways to preserve our aviation system?

"Select one answer for each row in the grid."

High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority	No Priority

Q12_1. Maintaining commercial service to Washington's smaller communities

Q12_2. Supporting projects that create local economic development

Q12_3. Supporting emergency service such as fire control or search and rescue

Q12_4. Ensuring that there is sufficient airport capacity to accommodate passenger demand into the future

Q12_5. Maintaining the condition of small airports

Q12_6. Concentrating on projects that improve aviation safety

Q12_7. Funding projects that increase the operational efficiency of runways

[NUMBER BOXES – RANGE 1 TO 7]

1. Maintaining commercial service to Washington's smaller communities
2. Supporting projects that create local economic development
3. Supporting emergency service such as fire control or search and rescue
4. Ensuring that there is sufficient airport capacity to accommodate passenger demand into the future
5. Maintaining the condition of small airports
6. Concentrating on projects that improve aviation safety
7. Funding projects that increase the operational efficiency of runways

Which of these should be the:

Q12A. Highest priority [ ]

Q12B. Lowest priority [ ]

[GRID – RADIO BUTTONS]

The Aviation Planning Council has been considering a variety of ways to maintain Washington's existing aviation system. What is your level of support for the following ideas?

"Select one answer for each row in the grid."

Strongly Support	Support	Neutral	Oppose	Strongly Oppose

Q13_1. Prioritize spending to preserve our existing system through proper maintenance

Q13_2. Expand the use of some airports to include additional, new commercial service

Q13_3. Avoid incompatible land uses near airports

Q13_4. Preserve access to the aviation system through State purchase of select airports in danger of closing

Q13_5. Develop a revolving loan fund to help airport sponsors finance airport improvement projects

[DISPLAY]

PROJECTED CAPACITY ISSUES

Ten airports within the State are projected to reach their commercial service capacity limits by the year 2030. Nine of these airports are in the Puget Sound Region—in King, Pierce and Snohomish counties. Spokane International Airport is projected to reach 60% of its capacity limits by 2030.

[GRID – RADIO BUTTONS]

What is your level of support for the following ways to meet the State's future capacity needs?

"Select one answer for each row in the grid."

Strongly Support	Support	Neutral	Oppose	Strongly Oppose

Q14_1. Look first at ways of making more efficient use of existing airports before thinking about building new ones

Q14_2. Move some types of services to other airports

Q14_3. Convert a current airport to commercial service without expanding its size

Q14_4. Convert a current airport to commercial service through expansion

Q14_5. Build one or more new airports

Q14_6. Increase the capacity of existing airports through investments in advanced aviation technologies

[GRID – RADIO BUTTONS]

If a new commercial airport were built outside of the Puget Sound area, what criteria should guide the selection of a location?

Please indicate on a scale of 1 to 7 the weight you would apply to the following criteria with 7 being the highest weight and 1 being the lowest weight. In other words a criterion with a high score would be more heavily weighted in deciding on a site.

"Select one answer for each row in the grid."

1 Lowest	2	3	4	5	6	7 Highest

Q15_1. Should be located near a major highway

Q15_2. Should avoid environmentally sensitive areas

Q15_3. Should help build local economies

Q15_4. Should serve the largest number of customers

Q15_5. Should have excess capacity for future growth

Q15_6. Should provide the quickest access for the largest number of customers

Q15_7. Should cost taxpayers the least money

Q15_8. Should address capacity limitations in the Puget Sound region

[DISPLAY]

It takes many years to expand an existing airport or to find a site for and build a new airport. It takes about 10 years on the average to build a new airport, and often longer. In the case of SeaTac Airport, it took over 20 years to build an additional runway, due in part to strong community opposition.

[GRID – RADIO BUTTONS]

People have asked what can be done to meet future aviation capacity needs, within a reasonable timeframe, in a way that is fair to surrounding neighborhoods. Several ideas have been discussed. Indicate your level of support in the boxes below for the following ideas:

"Select one answer for each row in the grid."

Strongly Support	Support	Neutral	Oppose	Strongly Oppose

Q16_1. Give new authority to regional transportation planning agencies to make decisions about how to provide new aviation capacity.

Q16_2. Create a non-partisan state commission to make decisions about where to place new aviation capacity.

Q16_3. Give the State the authority to conduct a siting analysis if there is no local sponsor.

Q16_4. Require extensive citizen involvement in planning for new aviation capacity.

Q16_5. Create an independent local group to make decisions on how to address noise and other environmental impacts.

[DISPLAY]

Thank you for your time. For further information about Washington's Long Term Air Transportation Study or the Washington State Aviation Planning Council, go to

http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/aviation/lats/default.htm

Summaries of this survey will be posted at this site.