Washington State Aviation Planning Council Regional Public Meetings on Draft Alternative Strategies Summary Report

April 2009

Background

The Washington State Aviation Planning Council and WSDOT Aviation hosted regional public meetings on March 24 and March 26, 2009 to seek public comment on draft alternative strategies developed as part of the Long-Term Air Transportation Study (LATS). LATS is a statewide air transportation planning study designed to understand existing capacity in aviation facilities and identify what is needed to meet future demand for air transportation. LATS is being developed in three phases. Each phase answers one of three basic questions fundamental to the development of a system-wide approach to managing Washington's aviation resources: what do we have, what do we need, and how will we get there?

Public participation is an important part of the Long-Term Air Transportation Study. The Aviation Planning Council will consider technical findings of LATS along with public and stakeholder involvement as it works to develop its recommendations. The regional public meetings are one element of a comprehensive public outreach program that will enable the public to learn about, comment on, and contribute to the LATS Phase III project. The following outreach opportunities are available during LATS Phase III:

- Regional Public Meetings – July 2008 and March 2009
- Electronic Town Halls – August 2008 and November 2008
- Online Survey – March 2009
- Briefings to organizations – upon request
- E-Newsletters – up to four throughout Phase III
- Aviation Planning Council Meetings/Workshops – 10 meetings throughout the project
- LATS project Web site - http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Aviation/lats

The purpose of the March 2009 regional public meetings was to provide an opportunity for the public to learn about draft alternative strategies designed to address key issues facing the Washington State Aviation System in the areas of capacity, stewardship, and incompatible land use. These key issues represent major long-term challenges to the Washington air transportation system and impact both commercial and general aviation users across the state. The regional meetings were also an opportunity to interact with members of the Aviation Planning Council and WSDOT Aviation staff.

The first meeting occurred on Tuesday, March 24, 2009 from 4 p.m. – 6 p.m. at WSDOT Aviation Headquarters in Olympia. Approximately 11 people attended. The second meeting occurred on

Thursday, March 26, 2009 from 4 p.m. – 6 p.m. at the Ramada Inn at 8909 West Airport Drive in Spokane. Approximately six people attended. The meeting format and information presented was the same at each meeting.

The regional public meetings coincided with a 45-day public comment period which extended from March 4 – April 17, 2009. The purpose of the comment period was to gather feedback on the draft alternative strategies. Members of the public were encouraged to complete a comment workbook (Appendix A) which provided background information on the draft alternative strategies. WSDOT and the Aviation Planning Council also encouraged the public to submit general comment letters. Workbooks and comment letters were accepted by mail, fax, e-mail, or in person by attending a regional public meeting.

Public Information and Announcements

WSDOT Aviation advertised the meetings and 45-day comment period using a variety of methods. A notice was sent on March 3, 2009 to approximately 4,000 subscribers to the WSDOT Aviation News Service e-mail list serve. WSDOT Aviation posted a meeting notice on the WSDOT Aviation LATS Web page and distributed a press release to media outlets statewide. In addition, the meetings were announced via notices distributed to the following organizations:

- Public Use Airport Managers
- Washington Airport Managers Association (WAMA)
- Washington Community Airport Association (CAA)
- Washington Public Ports Association (WPPA)
- National Business Aircraft Association (NBAA)
- Washington Transportation Commission
- Washington Association of Counties
- Washington Association of Cities
- Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA)
- National Association of State Aviation Officials (NASAO)
- Washington Planners Yahoo List Serve
- Washington Pilots Association (WPA)

Meeting Format

The meeting was structured as an open house, with one station for each of the three issue areas. Displays at each station provided background information about each issue area and presented the draft alternative strategies.

Participants were asked to provide comments by completing a workbook, in which they were asked to indicate their level of support for each draft alternative strategy and provide written comments. Participants were also invited to provide comments verbally to Aviation Planning Council members and staff, by writing comments on an easel pad provided at each display station, or by completing a comment form.

Information Stations included:

- Sign-In

  Upon arrival, project staff asked participants to sign in and pick up an informational packet containing an open house guide, the alternatives workbook, and a comment form.

- Project Overview

  Participants reviewed general information about the Long-Term Air Transportation Study (LATS).

- Draft Alternatives Stations

  Participants reviewed display boards for each of the issue areas addressed by the draft alternative strategies - capacity constraints, airport closures, loss of service at small commercial airports, stewardship, and land use. The display boards contained background information about each issue area, along with the draft alternative strategies. Participants provided comments in their workbooks, by writing comments on an easel pad provided at each display station, or by completing a comment form.

- Comments

  Tables were available where attendees could sit to complete workbooks and comment forms. Project staff members were able to answer questions and assist with comment collection.

Comment Sources

E-mail, mail or faxed comment letters: 46
Informal open house comments (i.e. anonymous flip chart notes): 6
Completed workbooks: 192

Agencies and organizations that provided comment letters:

- Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA)
- Bluff Homeowners Association
- City of Tumwater
- Everett Area Chamber of Commerce
- Hawthorne Hills Community Council
- Regional Commission on Airport Affairs (RCAA)
- Reid Middleton, Inc.
- Save Our Community
- South Snohomish County Chamber of Commerce
- Snohomish County
- Snohomish County EDC
- The Everett Clinic
- Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Summary of Comment Letters

We received a total of 46 comment letters by e-mail, mail or fax. Of those, 18 letters were from the Puget Sound Special Emphasis Area and one letter was from the Southwest Special Emphasis Area.[1] The remaining letters were from other areas of the state (counties not in Special Emphasis Areas) or from writers who did not provide an address. Following is a summary of key themes.

Airport-Specific Comments

We received nine letters regarding Olympia Airport expansion and eight letters regarding Paine Field expansion. Six letters expressed opposition to expanding the Olympia Airport to relieve capacity constraints at SeaTac International Airport, including a letter from the Mayor of the City of Tumwater. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife for Thurston County expressed concern about the impact of increased operations at Olympia Airport on state listed species and federal candidate species. Two comment letters from the Olympia area supported expansion of commercial service at Olympia Airport.

Four letters expressed opposition to expansion of commercial service at Paine Field. Two letters were submitted in support of Paine Field expansion. One letter supported making Paine Field an Aerospace Center of Excellence as a means to preserve aerospace industry jobs. The Snohomish County Council submitted a letter expressing concern about the impact of commercial service expansion at Paine Field on the aerospace industry and its opinion that Paine Field's primary use should be to serve the aerospace industry. The County also expressed opposition to changes that would place the State in the position of determining land uses by certifying local land use plans.

Comments provided in the workbooks also expressed opposition to Olympia, SeaTac, and Paine Field expansion.

Land Use

With regard to land use, one respondent encouraged that the Council consider a proposal to change legislation protecting essential public facilities to require that Counties name essential public facilities in their comprehensive plans and capital facilities plans. Another person commented that most compatibility issues concerning general aviation airports are the result of the owner/operator selling vital safety and approach land and then later faulting local government for failing to preempt incompatible land use. The commenter suggested that a better approach would be to encourage the owner/operator to develop these areas as low-intensity business or industrial parks noting that this

[1] As part of LATS, the Washington State Legislature designated four geographic areas as warranting more detailed analysis than the remainder of the state because they constitute key centers of population, employment, and economic activity. Activity within these areas has been recognized as being vital to the overall economy of the state. The four designated areas are: The Puget Sound Region, consisting of King, Snohomish, Pierce, and Kitsap Counties; Southwest Washington, consisting of Clark and Cowlitz Counties; Spokane Region, consisting of Spokane County; and the Tri-Cities area, consisting of Benton and Franklin Counties.

approach would also generate income. The commenter suggested that tax incentives would be a useful tool to implement this strategy.

Environmental Review

A few comments expressed concern that this process is not compliant with NEPA/SEPA process, particularly as it relates to expansion of service at airports such as Olympia and Paine Field. Another respondent expressed the opinion that the current approach appears to lock in a preferred strategy prior to consideration of alternatives, and makes sweeping policy determinations in the absence of environmental review.

Non-Aviation Solutions

We received a few comments in both letters and in the workbook comments expressing the opinion that the alternative strategies do not fully assess the potential for high speed rail or mass transit to alleviate airport traffic. Others noted that there should be more emphasis on surface transportation solutions.

Legislative Intent

The Hawthorne Hills Community Council expressed the opinion that the draft alternative strategies deal mostly with minor airport and general aviation issues and do not fulfill the Council's legislative mandate to develop a full, balanced comprehensive strategic plan. The Hawthorne Hills Community Council requested that the final plan address the following points:

- A list of all potential air passenger facilities needed by 2030, with estimated capacity and location options.
- A list of associated ground routes and ground transportation capabilities for each named air passenger facility, as well as potential funding sources.
- A comparable list of air freight facilities and supporting ground transportation routes and capabilities, as well as funding sources.
- A 20-year schedule for each location and regional area with selected schedule options.

General Comments

We received 13 comment letters expressing the following opinions regarding LATS and the draft alternative strategies:

- Concern that the LATS process and draft alternative strategies appear to be biased towards airport expansion without considering the impact on local communities.
- Several respondents, both within these 13 comment letters and in the comment workbooks questioned SeaTac capacity forecasts for the year 2030 given the newly opened third runway, advent of technologies such as NEXTGEN, the 8% decline in air passenger service from March 2008 – March 2009 (per FAA), and the start up of light rail, which will bring new ground transportation options into SeaTac International Airport.
- Suggestion that LATS should explore ways to improve bottlenecks and other constraints in the system before looking at expensive solutions, such as converting Paine Field to a scheduled air service field or building new airports.

- Suggestion that LATS give more consideration to Growth Management Act/land use decisions instead of emphasizing airport needs.
- Concern that the draft alternative strategies limit local input and shift accountability and responsibility from local officials to the state.
- Concern that LATS does not account for all issues involved in a comprehensive airport siting or airport use decision.
- Concern that the LATS process is designed to protect airports, subsidize airlines, and centralize decision-making away from local communities.

The Regional Commission on Airport Affairs submitted a detailed memo. Key points are as follows:

- The RCAA believes that the Council should directly address the issues posed by the Legislature and that the workbook does not respond to the Council's Legislative mandate. It believes that SeaTac should be at the top of the list of issues to address directly, and should be the subject of the draft strategies.
- The RCAA expressed the opinion that the draft alternative strategies are not specific to the special emphasis areas.
- The RCAA believes using expansion as the main strategy for dealing with SeaTac capacity issues is misguided.
- The RCAA does not believe that the adverse impacts of airport expansion and aircraft overflights are addressed.
- The RCAA believes that the Council is too focused on what it believes is the false notion that neighbors are encroaching on airports.
- The RCAA is concerned that non-aviation alternatives for in-state travel are not addressed in the strategies.
- The RCAA outlined what it perceives to be methodological failures relating to the alternative strategies, including: lack of cost estimates for each strategy, lack of cost-benefit analysis, that funding sources are not identified, the need for and fairness of small airport subsidies, too much focus on general aviation, that the strategies appear to provide subsidies of hobby aircraft, and in general, a lack of data to support the need for the strategies.
- The RCAA recommends that the Council produce an actionable set of recommendations that match the Legislature's mandates, point by point, including, in order of priority: 1) Commercial air service in the four special emphasis areas and the rest of the state 2) business travel by private aircraft 3) Remote aircraft, recreational airports, and emergency landing strips.

Letters of Support

We received letters from the South Snohomish Chamber of Commerce, The Everett Clinic, Everett Area Chamber of Commerce, and the Snohomish County EDC expressing support for LATS and the work that is going into this comprehensive statewide planning effort to address future aviation capacity needs.

Comments on Draft Alternative Strategies

Following are results of public feedback on the draft alternative strategies compiled from the completed workbooks submitted during the public comment period. Participants were asked to indicate their level of support for each of 26 proposed draft alternative strategies by selecting support, neutral, or against. Participants were also encouraged to provide written comments for each strategy. Level of support for each strategy is reported for all respondents as well as broken out by the following geographic categories:

- Puget Sound Special Emphasis Area, consisting of King, Snohomish, Pierce and Kitsap counties
- Spokane Special Emphasis Area, consisting of Spokane County
- Tri Cities Special Emphasis Area, consisting of Benton and Franklin counties
- Other/Not in a Special Emphasis Area, consisting of all counties within the state that are not part of a Special Emphasis Area
- Geography Not Identified, which summarizes responses from respondents who did not provide an address or who responded anonymously.

WSDOT received 192 completed comment workbooks. Sixty-four workbooks were submitted by residents of the Puget Sound Special Emphasis Area, eleven workbooks were submitted by residents of the Spokane Special Emphasis Area, and seven workbooks were submitted by residents of the Tri-Cities Special Emphasis Area. Fifty-eight workbooks came from residents of counties not included in a Special Emphasis Area and 51 respondents did not provide an address. We did not receive any completed workbooks from the Southwest Washington Special Emphasis Area, which consists of Clark and Cowlitz counties.

Where relevant, results from the Electronic Town Halls (held in July and August of 2008) and the online survey (conducted in March 2009) are included for comparison purposes.

Table 1: Results of Voting on Alternative Strategies – All Respondents

	Alternative Strategy	Support	Neutral	Against
Key Issue 1-1: Capacity Constraints Anticipated by 2030				
1.	Should the state invest in advanced aviation technology? (n=184)	86%	8%	5%
2.	Should the state use demand management techniques? (n=181)	16%	10%	73%
3.	Should the state redistribute demand to nearby airports? (n=183)	22%	8%	70%
4.	Should the state expand airports with capacity constraints? (n=182)	46%	3%	51%
5.	Should the state construct new airports? (n=177)	42%	10%	49%
Key Issue 1-2: Airport Closures				
6.	Should the state initiate an educational campaign? (n=181)	51%	2%	47%
7.	Should the state add assurances to the airport grant program? (n=180)	52%	3%	45%
8.	Should the state introduce new legislation to prevent airport closures? (n=182)	48%	4%	48%

9.	Should we authorize expanded state ownership? (n=181)	80%	8%	12%
Key Issue 1-3: Loss of Service at Small Commercial Airports				
10.	Should the state encourage local negotiations between small communities and airlines? (n=181)	46%	44%	9%
11.	Should local, state, and/or federal support be provided to small communities? (n=181)	35%	14%	51%
Key Issue 2: Stewardship				
12.	Should the state prioritize system investments? (n=179)	77%	14%	9%
13.	Should the state improve instrument approach capabilities? (n=182)	84%	5%	10%
14.	Should the state establish incentive programs to remove obstructions and enhance safety? (n=184)	84%	7%	9%
15.	Should the state install weather reporting equipment? (n=183)	90%	7%	4%
16.	Should the state improve management of airport pavement? (n=179)	49%	46%	6%
17.	Should the state establish a program for landing aids and aircraft turnarounds at small airports? (n=181)	46%	46%	7%
18.	Should the state establish a grant assurances program? (n=178)	47%	7%	46%
19.	Should the state increase its investment in planning? (n=179)	38%	15%	47%
20.	Should the state focus on having projects “shovel ready?” (n=181)	24%	64%	13%
21.	Should the state establish a revolving loan program? (n=180)	44%	46%	10%
Key Issue 3: Land Use				
22.	Should the state coordinate the planning process with local and regional agencies? (n=182)	52%	4%	45%
23.	Should the state develop funding eligibility criteria? (n=184)	35%	15%	50%
24.	Should the state add assurances to the airport grant program? (n=182)	47%	7%	46%
25.	Should the state strengthen legislation to protect public investments in airports? (n=183)	56%	1%	43%
26.	Should the state require land use certification? (n=182)	44%	8%	48%

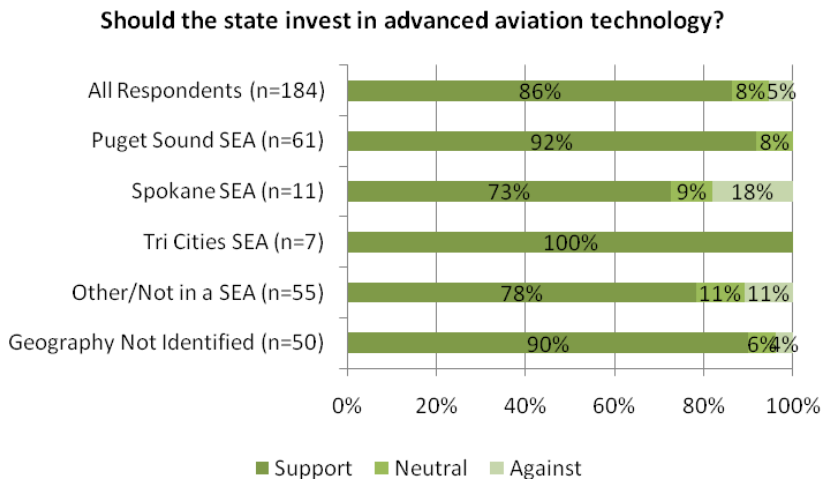
Key Issue 1-1: Capacity Constraints Anticipated by 2030

Should the state invest in advanced aviation technology?

With this strategy, the State would take an active role in advancing the implementation of new technologies that increase capacity and relieve congestion at airports, including the Next Generation Airport Transportation (NEXTGEN) technology.

Respondents expressed clear support for this strategy, with 86% of respondents indicating support. Just 8% of respondents indicated a neutral opinion and 5% of respondents were against this strategy. Responses were similar across different regions of the State.

Many respondents who indicated support for advanced aviation technology noted that it would help to increase capacity and safety at existing airports and support economic development. Several respondents indicated support for the state providing incentives to encourage airport and aircraft owners install advanced technology resources.



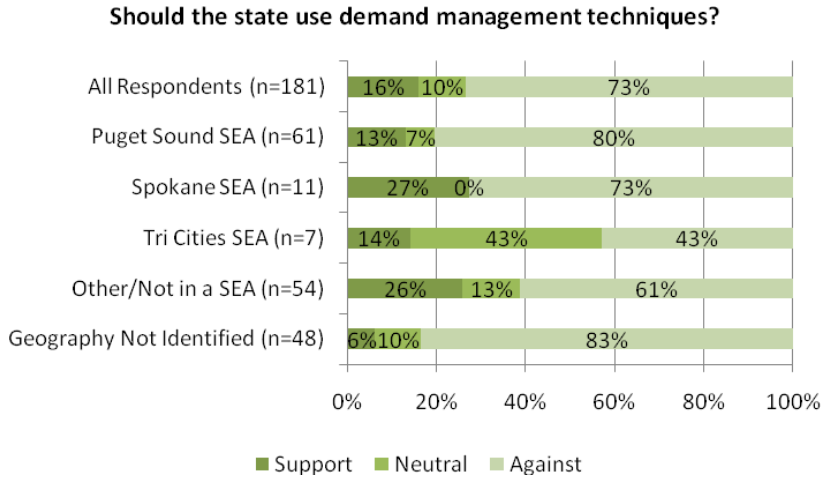
A number of respondents indicated support for NEXTGEN, but commented that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) should lead its implementation with the state playing a support role to the FAA. Others felt that while NEXTGEN was important, other improvements such as improved instrument approaches, WAAS, weather reporting equipment, or other physical capacity improvements should be undertaken as well, or even take priority over implementation of NEXTGEN.

For those respondents who expressed a neutral opinion or who were against this alternative, they expressed concern about the high cost associated with strategies such as NEXTGEN and questioned whether the benefits of NEXTGEN would outweigh the high cost of implementation.

Online survey respondents expressed a similar level of support for investing in advanced aviation technology, with 74% of respondents somewhat to strongly supporting increasing the capacity of existing airports through investments in advanced aviation technology.

Should the state use demand management techniques?

With this strategy, the State would support the evaluation of demand management techniques at its busiest airports to allow for more efficient use of available capacity in a manner that does not unreasonably impair airlines or other users of the system.



Respondents expressed clear opposition to this strategy. Nearly three-quarters of respondents (73%) were against the use of demand management techniques as a means to address capacity constraints. Sixteen percent of respondents indicated support for this strategy and 10% were neutral. Responses

were similar across different regions of the State.

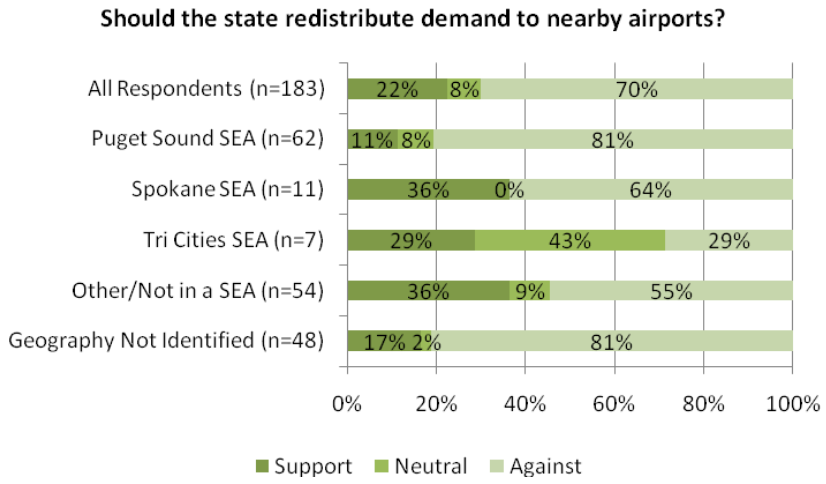
A number of respondents who were against the use of demand management techniques expressed concern about the impact of increased flights at non-peak times on the communities that surround airports. A large number of respondents were also concerned that demand management would be detrimental to general aviation and would limit general aviation access to the state's aviation system. Respondents who were against this strategy also expressed the opinion that demand should be determined by the free market, and expressed concern about government's ability to be effective in helping to manage demand. Others felt that making physical improvements or adding new airports to the system would be a preferable means of adding capacity to the system.

We received few written comments from those in support of this strategy. One respondent noted that it was important to make more efficient use of existing resources. Another person who expressed support for this also strategy cautioned against forcing airport users to use airports they do not want to use. One respondent who was neutral about this strategy recommended that the State evaluate any techniques that are implemented to assess the impact on users, especially general aviation users.

Should the state redistribute demand to nearby airports?

Under this strategy, the State would balance the aviation system by advocating and taking actions to support the redistribution of excess demand from capacity-constrained airports to surrounding facilities that have available capacity.

Respondents expressed clear opposition to this strategy. Seventy percent of respondents were against this strategy. Responses were similar across different regions of the State, except for in the Tri Cities Special Emphasis Area, where opinion was divided, with 29% of respondents indicating support, 43% neutral, and 29% against this strategy.



Those against this strategy expressed concern about the negative impact of increased air traffic on communities near the airports that would be receiving the overflow demand. Respondents specially mentioned Paine Field and Olympia Airport. Others who were against this strategy expressed doubt that the receiving airports would have the infrastructure necessary to support increased traffic and be able to fund the necessary infrastructure improvements. Numerous respondents commented that the market should determine demand allocation. Several respondents questioned the capacity forecasts for SeaTac Airport.

We received few written comments from those in favor of this strategy. Two respondents expressed support for increased commercial service to Olympia. One respondent commented that this would be a good way to move the state toward system-wide planning. Another respondent commented that the strategy would bring economic development opportunities to the airports receiving excess demand. Another respondent commented that the strategy would make better use of the existing system.

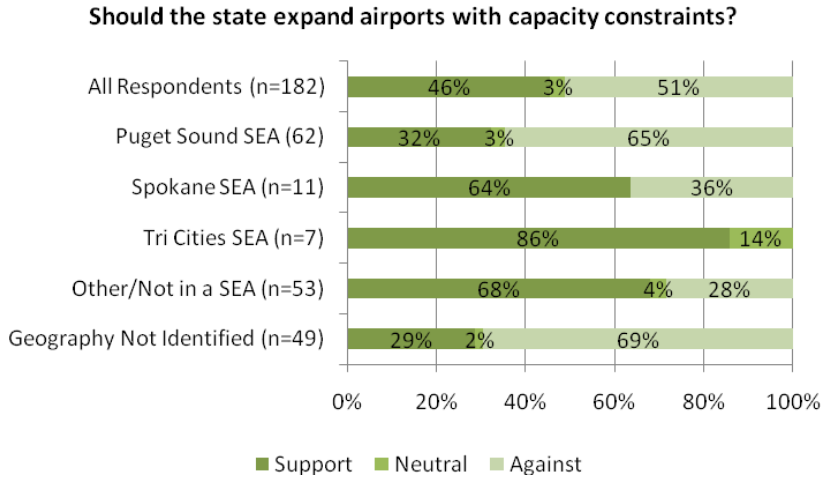
Respondents also expressed concern about the potential for this strategy to negatively impact general aviation users.

Approximately 72% of online survey respondents supported or strongly supported moving some types of services to other airports as a way to meet future capacity needs. E-Town Hall 1 participants expressed divided opinion about the idea of redistributing flights to other airports. Approximately half of respondents supported this idea, rating is as good (30%) or excellent (21%) and approximately half were less supportive of this idea rating it as fair (38%) or poor (11%).

Should the state expand airports with capacity constraints?

With this strategy, the State would work with airports, regional authorities and federal agencies to support and fund infrastructure improvements at airports with capacity constraints and would take a stance to support the expansion of those airports to accommodate forecasted demand.

Opinion was divided about this strategy when looking all responses. Slightly more than half of all respondents (51%) were against this strategy, while 46% supported this strategy. Just 3% were neutral. Opposition to expanding airports with capacity constraints was greatest among respondents within the Puget Sound Special Emphasis Area, with 65% of respondents against this strategy. Outside of the Puget Sound Special Emphasis Area, respondents generally supported this strategy, with 64% of respondents in the Spokane Special Emphasis Area and 86% of respondents in the Tri-Cities Special Emphasis Area indicating support for this strategy.



Numerous respondents who were opposed to expansion of capacity-constrained airports, especially those within the Puget Sound area, questioned the validity of the capacity forecasts, especially for SeaTac International Airport. Others commented that better use should be made of off-peak capacity before physically expanding airports, while others preferred using reliever airports over physical expansion. Other respondents urged consideration rail or ground transportation as a means to reduce demand for air travel.

Several respondents who supported expanding airports with capacity constraints commented that it is important to maximize use of the existing system first. Others commented that capacity should be available where the demand is, and where it benefits the most people. Two respondents indicated support for this strategy, but questioned what expansion would entail. For example, the City of SeaTac noted that while they would not be opposed to terminal expansion to increase efficiency at SeaTac, they would have serious concern about further runway expansion because of the neighborhood impacts associated with increased air traffic.

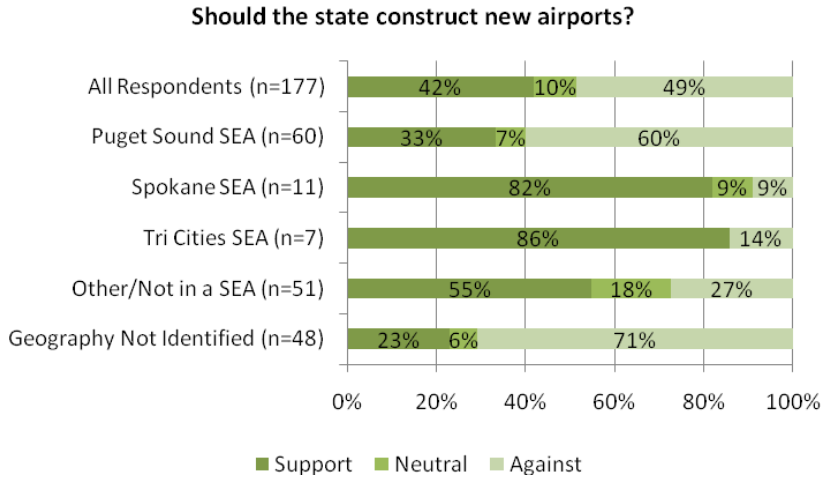
Slightly less than half (46%) of online survey respondents supported converting a current airport to commercial service *through expansion* as a way to meet future capacity needs. Sixty-eight percent of E-Town Hall 2 participants supported or strongly supported this strategy, though participants who lived outside the Puget Sound region were more likely than those living in the Puget Sound region to support this strategy. Just over half (54%) of online survey respondents supported or strongly supported converting a current airport to commercial service *without expanding its size*. E-Town Hall 2 participants expressed divided opinion about this idea, with 46% supporting it, 21% expressing a neutral opinion, and 33% opposing the idea.

E-Town Hall 1 participants indicated support for expanding the use of some airports to include more commercial service, with 90% of participants rating this idea as 'excellent' or 'good.' E-Town Hall 2 participants were also supportive of this idea, with 93% of participants rating this idea as 'excellent' or 'good.'

Should the state construct new airports?

With this strategy, new general aviation or commercial airports would be built to address long-term demand, such as a new commercial and/or general aviation airport in the Puget Sound Region, a new general aviation airport in Southwest Washington and possibly a new general aviation facility in Northeast Washington.

Opinion was divided about this strategy. Just under half of all respondents (49%) were against this strategy compared to 42% who supported this strategy. Ten percent were neutral. Support for this strategy was stronger outside of the Puget Sound area. Within the Puget Sound area, just 33% of respondents supported this strategy, compared to 82% support in the Spokane Special Emphasis Area and 86% support in the Tri Cities Special Emphasis Area. Less than one-third of respondents were opposed to this strategy outside of the Puget Sound area.



Several respondents, both for and against new airport construction, questioned how the state would obtain funding for new airport construction. Comments indicated that respondents understanding of the high cost of new airport construction. As such, even those who supported this strategy did so with the caveat that new airport construction should be a strategy of last resort, after other strategies were exhausted, such as use of reliever airports.

Two respondents commented that new airport construction should not be funded by the state, but instead by user fees. One respondent commented that this was not an appropriate role for state government. Many who supported construction of new airports commented that the system already faces capacity constraints and capacity will be further constrained as the state's population is forecast to increase. Several respondents indicated a need for more general aviation capacity in the Puget Sound region.

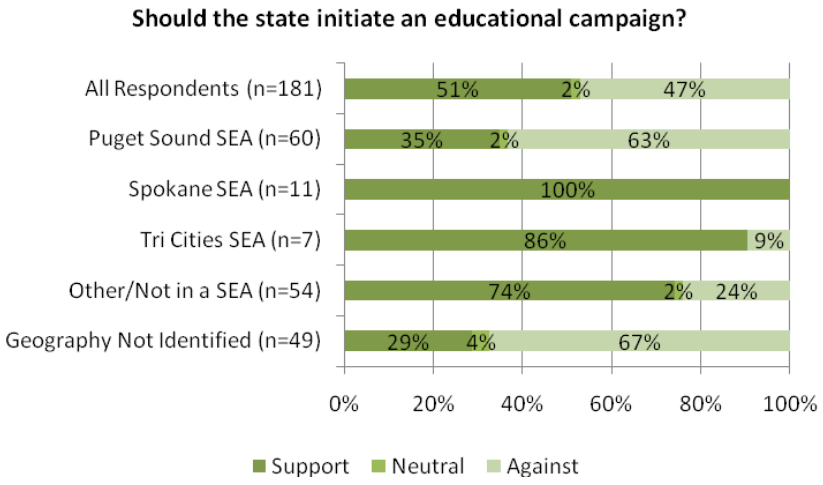
While 46% of E-Town Hall 2 participants supported the idea of building one or more new airports as a way to meet future capacity needs, only 18% of online survey respondents supported this idea. E-Town Hall 1 participants felt strongly that the state should look first at ways of making more efficient use of existing airports before building a new airport, with nearly all participants rating this idea as 'excellent' or 'good.'

Key Issue 1-2: Airport Closures

Should the state initiate an educational campaign?

With this strategy, the State would initiate an educational program about the economic contribution of airports. Opinion was divided on this strategy when looking at all responses, with 51% of all respondents indicating support and 47% indicating opposition. Two percent expressed a neutral opinion. Respondents living outside of the Puget Sound area were more supportive of this strategy than those within the Puget Sound area. Within the Puget Sound area, just 35% of respondents supported this strategy, compared to 100% support in the Spokane Special Emphasis Area and 86% support in the Tri Cities Special Emphasis Area.

Those who expressed support for this strategy commented that there is a strong need for education about the contribution of airports to local and the state economies. Several respondents specifically mentioned the lack of awareness of the economic importance of general aviation airports. A number of respondents who were supportive of this strategy noted that it is not a stand-



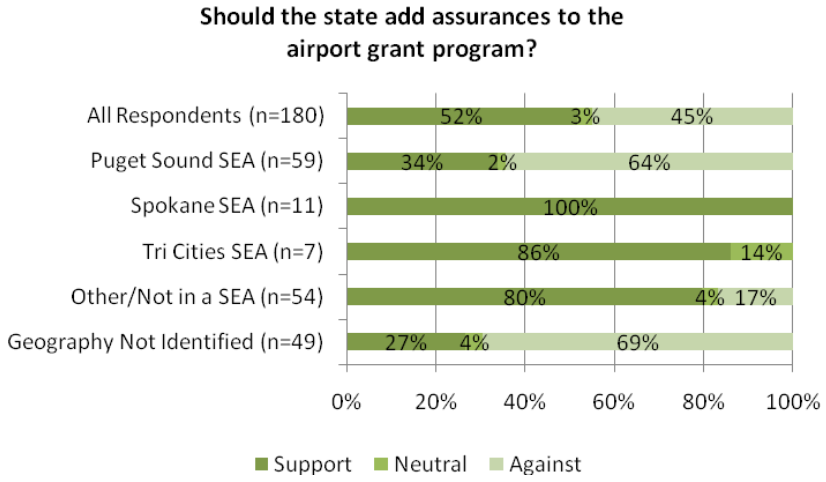
alone strategy, and as such it needs to be part of a comprehensive strategy in order to be effective. One respondent noted that the education campaign should focus on the importance of airport zoning, while another respondent suggested partnering with the Washington State Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development (CTED) to deliver an education campaign focused on the economic benefits of aviation. Others noted that an education campaign can help save money in the long run and that it is a relatively low cost strategy can have a strong impact.

The common concern expressed by respondents opposed to this strategy was that the campaign would be a lobbying effort for airports and airplane owners, and would not focus on protecting the communities that are negatively affected by noise and other aviation-related effects. One respondent commented that this is not a good use of public funds at a time when other public services are being cut. A few respondents commented that this is not an appropriate role for the State, noting that local governments, ports, or elected officials should be responsible for education.

Should the state add assurances to the airport grant program?

This strategy would require all recipients of State grants to formally agree to grant assurances that guarantee the airport remains open for a period of time necessary to justify the State's investment.

Opinion was divided on this strategy, with just over half of all respondents (52%) indicating support and slightly less than half indicating opposition to this strategy (45%). Three percent of respondents were neutral. Support for this strategy was stronger outside of the Puget Sound Special Emphasis Area. While nearly two-thirds (64%) of Puget Sound respondents were against this strategy, the majority of respondents outside of Puget Sound supported this strategy, with support ranging from 80% to 100% of respondents.



Those in support of this strategy commented that airports receiving public funds should be held accountable. Numerous respondents commented that it was appropriate to require a long term commitment to ensure airports remain open. Two respondents stated that assurance requirements should be reasonable, and cautioned that assurances could prevent airports from accepting funds due to unwillingness to agree to requirements that are outside of the owner's control. A number of respondents commented that grant assurances can help to overcome short term political situations from closing airports. Another respondent commented that this strategy will help to ensure that funding generated by aviation sources is used for aviation-related projects.

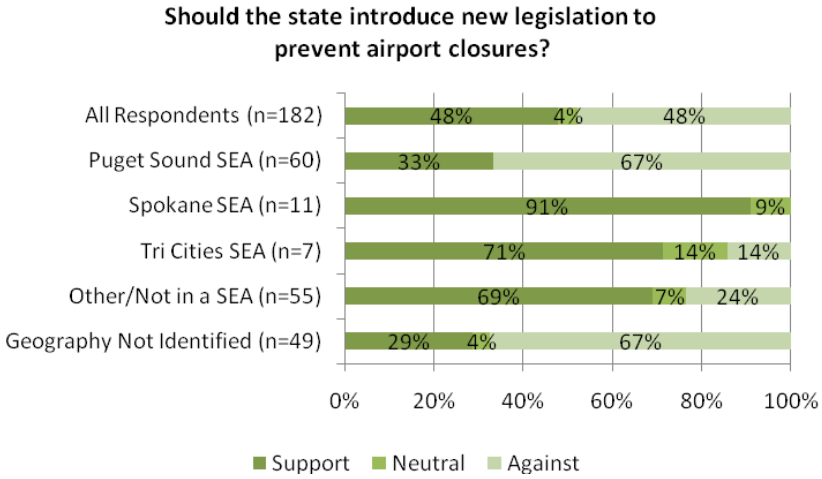
A large number of respondents against this strategy objected to the underlying premise of using state funding for airports. Many respondents commented that airports should be self-sufficient. A number of respondents objected to using state funds to help an industry that is harmful to communities. One

respondent comment that these funds should be directed toward surface transportation projects. Another respondent commented that this strategy assumes that the state is better suited to run an airport than the airport manager.

Should the state introduce new legislation to prevent airport closures?

Under this strategy, the State would introduce new legislation that would: 1) Reduce the tax burden on privately owned public use airports, 2) Expand the state airport grant program to allow funding for essential private airports that are open to the public, and 3) Allow the State to purchase development rights from airports to prevent owners from converting to alternative uses.

Opinion was divided this strategy, with 48% of all respondents indicating support and 48% indicating opposition. Four percent of respondents were neutral. Once again, support for this strategy was stronger outside of the Puget Sound Special Emphasis Area. While the majority of Puget Sound respondents (67%) were against this strategy, the majority of respondents outside of the Puget Sound area were supportive of this strategy (69% to 91% support).



A common theme for those in support of this strategy was the importance of airport preservation and the notion that once an airport closes, it is gone as it is too costly to replace it. A few respondents commented that once an airport gets to the point of considering closing, it is already too late to work to prevent the closure. Instead, respondents encouraged more proactive measures, such as expanding the grant program to include essential privately-owned, public use airports or giving local airports greater ability to expand or purchase development rights to protect against encroachment. A number of respondents encouraged reducing the tax burden on privately owned airports as a means of preservation. One respondent suggested that the legislature enact a moratorium on airport closures while more permanent solutions are developed and standardized, such as master plans.

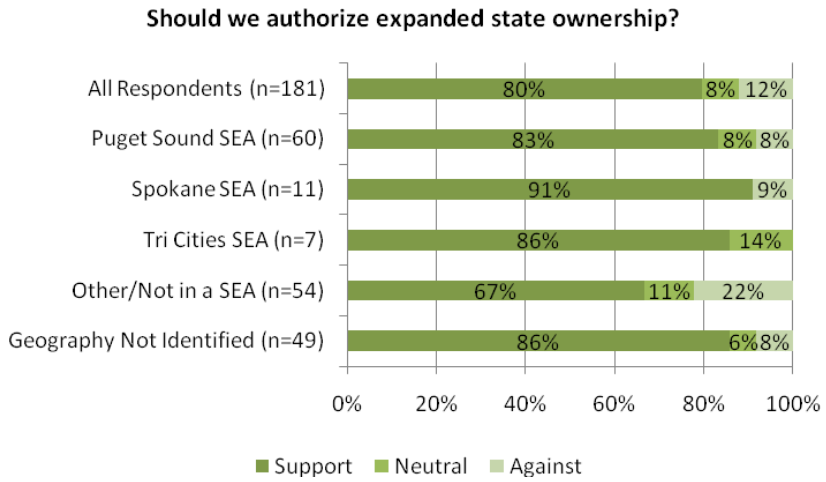
A common theme among those against this strategy was the idea that an owner's decision to close an airport should be based on free market considerations and that the State should not interfere in a private property owner's decision to convert an airport to another use. Several respondents commented that the state should purchase its own airports if it wants to have greater control over closure decisions.

When asked to identify priorities for addressing the issue of airport closures, at least half of online survey respondents agree (somewhat to strongly) that active steps should be taken to identify the most vulnerable airports (61%), that a funding priority should be placed on airports necessary to assure

statewide access to the aviation system regardless of size (52%), and for giving funding priority to the projects that provide the greatest economic benefit to the state (51%).

Should we authorize expanded state ownership?

With this strategy, the State would purchase and operate airports in danger of closing, or work with new sponsors to assume ownership and keep airports open. This strategy would require the State to develop criteria to assess the financial feasibility and the significance of the airport to the statewide system. Respondents expressed clear support for authorizing expanded state ownership of endangered airports, with 80% of respondents in support, 8% neutral, and 12% against this strategy. The level of support for this strategy was similar across all areas of the state.



Several respondents commented that this is an acceptable strategy if funding is available and if it can be accomplished while meeting other demands for state funding. Several respondents indicated that this was a good strategy to preserve airports at risk of closing. A number of respondents who supported this strategy also commented that it should be a strategy of last resort to be used only after other preservation strategies had failed. A few respondents commented that this would be an acceptable strategy only if the State could recoup its investment, while another respondent commented that it would be preferable for the state to support new airport sponsors (either public or private) than assume ownership itself. Another respondent commented that the airports should be treated as part of the state's transportation infrastructure, like roads, and that it is appropriate for the state and federal governments to take responsibility. One respondent noted the importance of dedicating a funding source to maintain airports if it is to take on a greater ownership role.

Respondents against this strategy questioned how the state would fund this proposal given current economic conditions and competing demand for limited and decreasing State resources. Respondents did not see expanded state ownership as a priority for limited state resources.

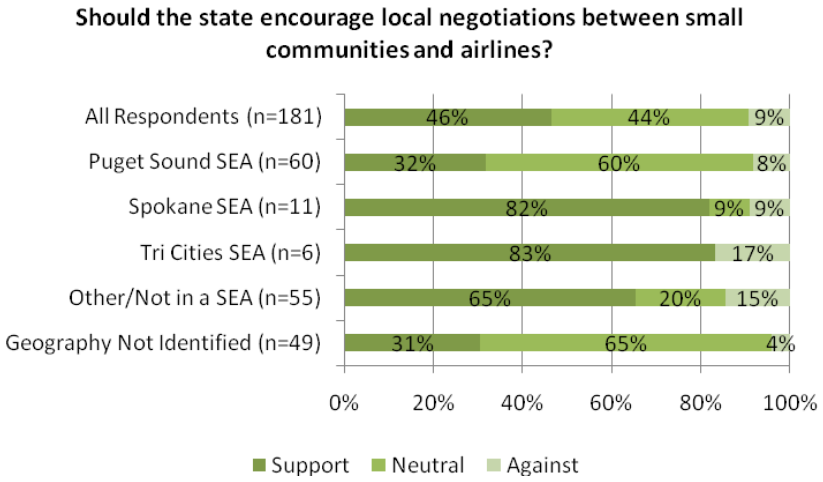
Almost one-third (28%) of online survey respondents opposed the state purchasing select airports in danger of closing. E-Town Hall participants were not asked this question.

Key Issue 1-3: Loss of Service at Small Commercial Airports

Should the state encourage local negotiations between small communities and airlines?

With this strategy, the State would encourage small communities to work closely with airlines before a loss of service to take steps to enhance the economic viability of the services, including potential funding support.

Respondents indicated moderate support for this strategy. When looking at all responses, the majority of respondents were supportive (46%) or neutral (44%) about this strategy, and just nine percent of respondents were against this strategy. However, there was stronger support for this strategy outside of the Puget Sound area. While just 32% of Puget Sound area respondents indicated support and 60% indicated a neutral opinion, support for this strategy in other areas of the state ranged from 65% to 83%.



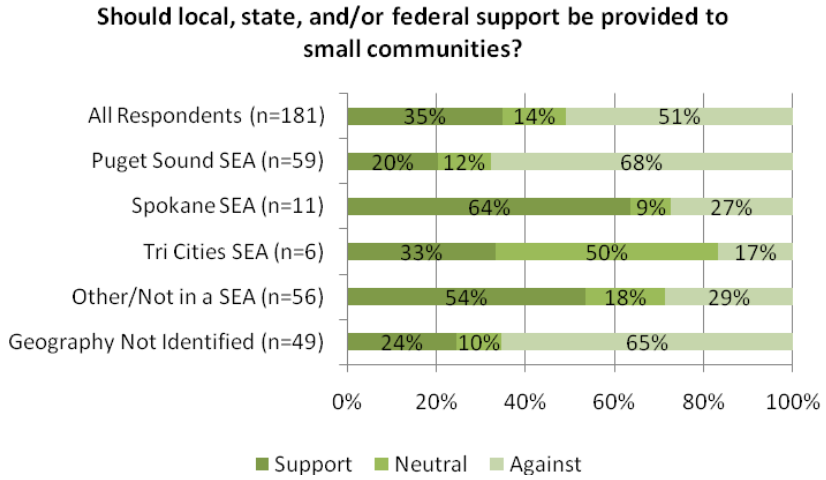
A common theme among respondents in support of this strategy was the importance of airports to economic development in smaller communities and in the state's transportation infrastructure. A few respondents commented that it would be helpful if WSDOT had in-house expertise to help small airports, as consultants are typically too expensive. A few respondents commented that education on the importance of air transportation along with government financial support would enhance commercial air service to small communities. One respondent who was neutral about this strategy commented that this strategy should be part of an overall strategy that includes aviation, passenger rail, intercity transit and automobiles.

The most common theme amongst those against this strategy was the opinion that the free market should be allowed to work free from government intervention. One respondent commented that the local community should be the driving force to attract commercial service if it deems it necessary, while another respondent commented that airport owners should take the lead in working with airlines if that owner wants to bring commercial service to the airport. One respondent commented that this would be an expensive strategy that would help relatively few people. Another respondent recognized the desire of small communities to improve commercial service, but commented that it was not an appropriate use of tax dollars.

Should local, state, and/or federal support be provided to small communities?

With this strategy, the State would develop an aggressive program, potentially leveraging federal grants, to maintain or enhance scheduled airline services.

Opinion was divided when looking at all responses, with the majority of respondents being against (51%) or neutral (14%) about this strategy. There was stronger support for this strategy outside of the Puget Sound area. While 68% of Puget Sound area respondents were against this strategy, 64% of Spokane area respondents and 54% of respondents in counties outside of the Special Emphasis Areas supported this strategy. There was more limited support for this strategy in the Tri Cities Special Emphasis Area, with 33% of respondents supporting it and 50% of respondents indicating a neutral opinion.



The most common theme for those against this strategy was the belief that the free market should be allowed to work without government intervention. Several respondents questioned why the government should subsidize unprofitable businesses. A few respondents commented that this strategy has been tried before and failed. A few respondents commented that this strategy would be too costly compared to the benefits it would bring.

We received few comments from those who were supportive of this strategy, though a few respondents commented that the service would be welcomed by small communities. Another respondent commented that increasing service at smaller, local airports could relieve demand on large airports. One respondent who supported this strategy commented that the support does not necessarily have to be monetary, but could also be in the form of legislation to protect and create aviation infrastructure.

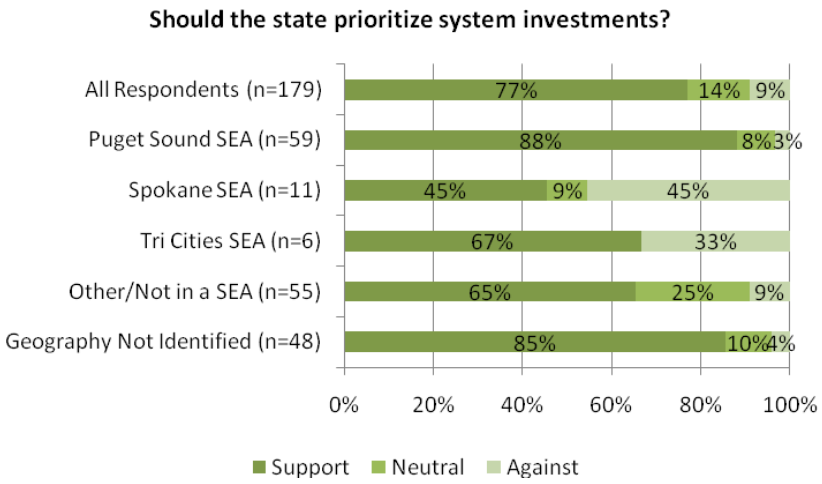
About one-third of online survey respondents (31%) indicated a low priority for supporting commercial service to smaller communities. However, 52% of E-Town Hall 2 participants rated maintaining service to smaller communities as a 'high' or 'very high' priority aviation system need. When asked to identify the highest and lowest funding priorities, 28% of online survey respondents and 20% of E-Town Hall 2 participants gave the lowest priority to maintaining commercial service to smaller communities. Approximately 55% of E-Town Hall 2 participants supported or strongly supported funding projects to continue air service to smaller communities.

Key Issue 2: Stewardship

Should the state prioritize system investments?

With this strategy, the State would only fund projects that help meet performance objectives. Priorities would be set for the objectives, and the weighting of priorities could consider community support, airport classification hierarchy, level of aviation activity, or similar factors. The number of years required to meet all performance objectives would depend on funding levels.

Respondents indicated clear support for this strategy. Approximately 77% of all respondents indicated support for this strategy, 14% of respondents were neutral, and 9% of respondents were against this strategy. Responses were generally similar across different regions of the State except for in the Spokane Special Emphasis Area where opinion was divided. .



Fairness was a common theme among all respondents whether they were in support or against this strategy. A large number of respondents supported this strategy as long as the prioritization system was fair and properly balanced. Those against this strategy expressed concern that it would it would shift funding to the Puget Sound region or to the largest airports and at the expense of smaller, general aviation airports.

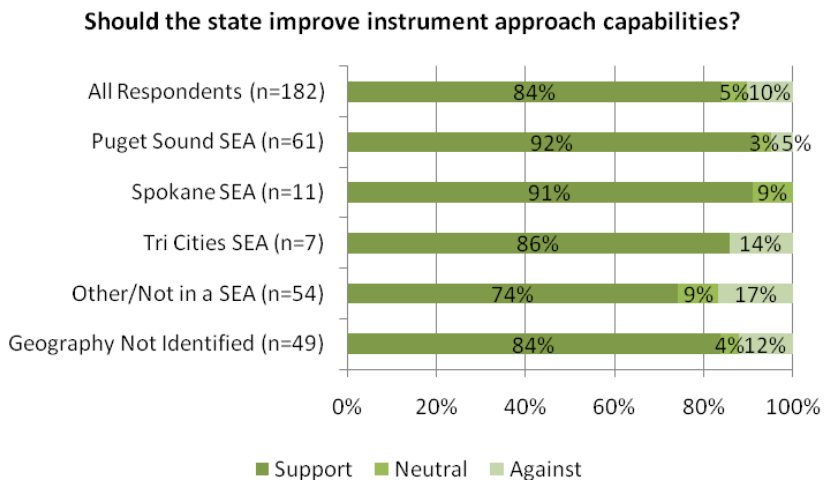
A few respondents commented that any prioritization system needs to recognize the needs of individual cases and that the state's classification system be balanced with local needs. Other respondents expressed concern that funding based on performance objectives could prevent airports that need funding in order to meet performance objectives from obtaining it.

Should the state improve instrument approach capabilities?

With this strategy, the State would take an active role in enhancing instrument approach capabilities at airports, to improve access to communities and facilitate economic development. Program implementation would focus on facilitating precision approach capabilities at Commercial and Regional Service airports and non-precision approach capabilities at Community Service airports.

Respondents indicated clear support for the state improving instrument approach capabilities. Approximately 84% of all respondents were supportive and 5% neutral. Ten percent of respondents were against this strategy. Responses were similar across different regions of the State.

For those in support of this strategy, primary factors were the effect of instrument approaches on improving safety, in creating all-weather access, and on increasing throughput. Others commented that instrument approaches were essential to operations.



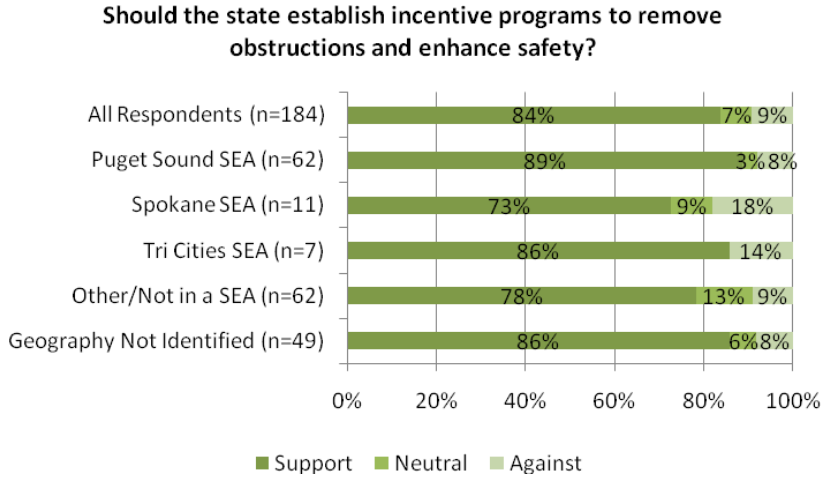
A number of respondents supported instrument approaches, but felt that funding for them should be the FAA's responsibility. A few respondents encouraged the state to push for FAA funding of instrument approaches.

One respondent who was neutral about this strategy commented that the emphasis should be on increasing the number of airports that have one approach instead of improving and adding additional approaches. Another respondent who voted against this strategy commented that airports should fund this kind of improvement through user fees.

Should the state establish incentive programs to remove obstructions and enhance safety?

With this strategy, the State would enhance airport safety by developing incentives to provide runway safety areas and remove obstructions from penetrating critical airspace surfaces around the airport. The program would also investigate methods to maximize preservation of runway protection zones, address obstructions such as trees and cell towers, and mitigate wildlife hazards through development incentives and maintenance programs.

Respondents indicated clear support for the state establishing incentive programs to remove obstructions and enhance safety. Eighty-four percent indicated support for this strategy, 7% were neutral, and 9% were against this strategy. Responses were similar across different regions of the State. Among those who supported this strategy, there was strong consensus that removing obstructions is vital to enhancing aviation safety. A number of respondents commented that existing laws do not address hazards to flight in a meaningful way. A number of respondents



commented that the onus should be on the property owner to remove obstructions after the state has identified the safety hazard.

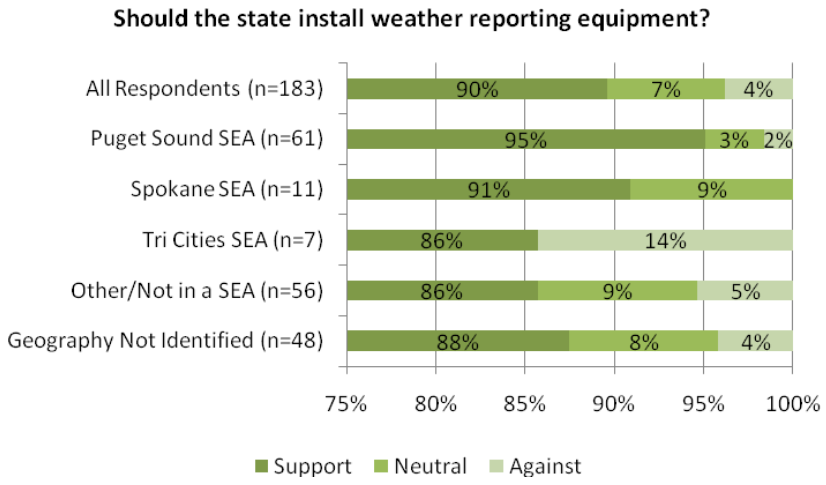
Some respondents supported the use of incentives to help in the removal of obstructions while others felt that regulation was the preferred solution.

When asked about funding priorities for various aviation system needs, nearly half (48%) of online survey respondents placed a high priority on funding projects that improve aviation safety. Approximately 15% of respondents indicated that this should be the highest funding priority. There was also strong consensus among E-Town Hall 2 participants about this topic, with 83% of participants placing a 'high' or 'very high' funding priority on projects that improve airport landing safety. Fifteen percent of E-Town Hall 2 participants indicated that this should be the highest priority aviation system need.

Should the state install weather reporting equipment?

With this strategy, the State would focus resources on installing weather reporting equipment at airports and in specific regions of the state that have frequent occurrences of adverse weather conditions. This program would include an assessment and installation of new technologies to help detect and transmit information to pilots crossing mountainous and coastal regions in the state.

Respondents indicated clear support for this strategy. Ninety percent of respondents supported this strategy, 7% were neutral and 4% were against this strategy. Responses were similar across different regions of the State.



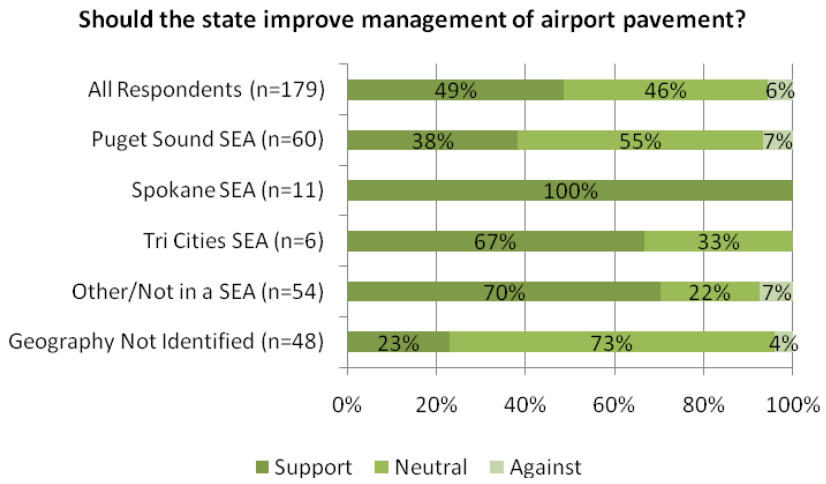
Respondents identified specific areas where weather reporting equipment is needed, such as in the mountains in general, and specifically in the in the Cascades, in the areas adjacent to Stampede Pass and in the mountains surrounding Republic. Other areas identified included the Gorge and northeastern Washington.

A few respondents commented that expansion of airport webcams and internet access to data would be helpful as well, and one respondent suggested that installation of cameras would be a viable and more cost-effective solution than installing weather reporting equipment. A few respondents encouraged the state to look at all options, not just ASOS. Several respondents commented that we cannot have too much information, and encouraged the state to work to aggregate the many sources of weather information currently available into an interconnected weather environment.

Should the state improve management of airport pavement?

With this strategy, the State would focus on maintaining airport pavements at their lowest life cycle costs and maintaining a Pavement Condition Index (PCI) at the following minimum levels: Runway PCI 75 Taxiway and Apron PCI 70 The program would focus on supporting airports to maintain their pavement through an effective maintenance program.

Respondents expressed moderate support for the state improving management of airport pavement. Approximately half (49%) of all respondents indicated support for this strategy, while 46% were neutral. Six percent of respondents were against this strategy. There was stronger support for this strategy outside of the Puget Sound area. While just 38% of Puget Sound area respondents supported this strategy, more than two-thirds of respondents in other regions of the state supported improving management of airport pavement.



Several respondents commented about the importance of maintaining infrastructure, noting that it can help save money in the long run. Others suggested providing funding to smaller, heavily-used general aviation airports. Several respondents commented that since asphalt projects are built with a known lifespan, it is important to require periodic maintenance measures to extend lifespan.

A few respondents commented that pavement management must be part of a larger, comprehensive plan. One respondent while in support of the strategy cautioned that enforced maintenance programs that depend on local tax dollars could work against local airport longevity intensions.

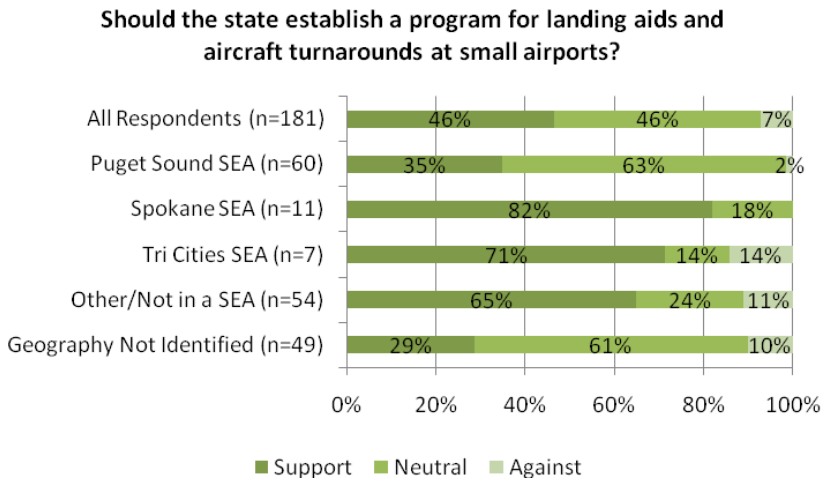
We received few comments from respondents against this strategy. One respondent commented that this is not an appropriate state role, and questioned where the state would find the funding to devote to this kind of program.

Approximately 77% of online survey participants supported (somewhat to strongly) prioritizing spending to preserve the aviation system through proper maintenance. E-Town Hall 1 participants were also supportive of the idea of preserving the existing system through property maintenance, with 86% of participants rating this idea as ‘excellent’ or ‘good.’

Should the state establish a program for landing aids and aircraft turnarounds at small airports?

With this strategy, the State would establish a program to provide visual landing aids and aircraft turnarounds at the ends of runways to facilitate access and enhance safety to small community, rural, and remote areas of the state.

Respondents expressed moderate support for this strategy. Forty-six percent of respondents indicated support for this strategy and 46% were neutral. Just 7% of respondents were against this strategy. There was stronger support for this strategy outside of the Puget Sound area. While about one-third of Puget Sound area respondents supported this strategy, more than two-thirds of residents in other Special Emphasis Areas and other regions of the state supported this strategy.



Respondents in support of this strategy indicated that it would improve safety in a relatively inexpensive way. One respondent indicated that using state funds at airports that are not eligible for Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) funds is a way to enhance safety of the entire state aviation system. Numerous respondents suggested that other improvements would be helpful as well, such as VASI lights and reflectors. One respondent indicated that VASI is more important than aircraft turnarounds.

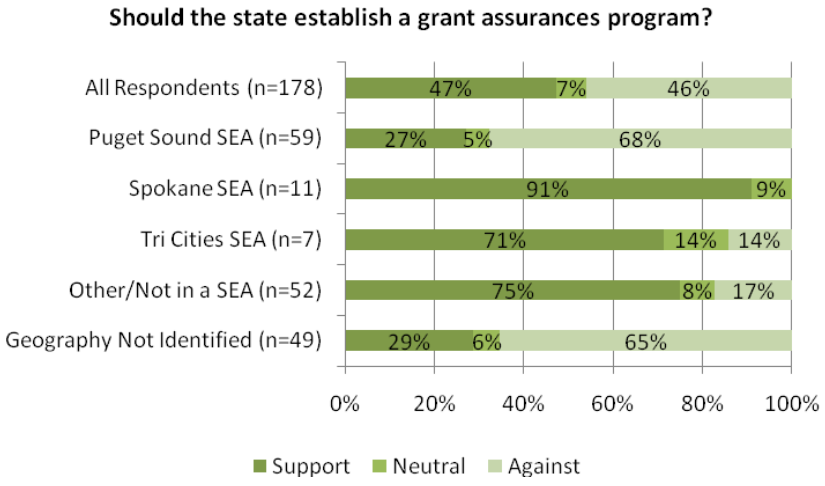
Those who were neutral about this strategy questioned the need for these improvements, commenting that runway lighting is a more important improvement on which to focus resources. Another respondent commented that many good systems are available to enhance safety, and that decisions should be made on a case by case basis according to the needs of the individual facility. Another respondent echoed this sentiment commenting that local sponsors' needs should be more important than the state establishing an arbitrary emphasis in one area.

We received few comments from respondents against this strategy. Two respondents commented that these improvements should be paid for by airport owners, not tax payers.

Should the state establish a grant assurances program?

With this strategy, the State would establish a grant assurances program that would require maintaining an airport as a public use facility for a minimum of 20-years or for the life of the project, if longer.

Opinion was divided about this strategy. When looking at all responses, 47% of respondents indicated support and 46% of respondents indicated opposition. Seven percent of respondents were neutral. Support was stronger for this strategy outside of the Puget Sound area. While nearly 70% of Puget Sound area respondents were against this strategy, the majority of respondents in other parts of the state supported this strategy.



Accountability was the most common comment made by respondents who supported this strategy. Nearly all respondents who supported this strategy commented that it is reasonable for the state to require a long term commitment from grant recipients and that the state should take steps to ensure a return on its investment. Another respondent commented that enforceable grant assurances are a necessary component of maintaining a strong system of airports. A few respondents suggested that a 20-year commitment was too short. One respondent recognized the importance of assurances in protecting public investment, but stressed the importance of reasonable assurance provisions that do not put undue burden on airport sponsors. One respondent commented that the state should institute a pro-rated charge if an airport closes early.

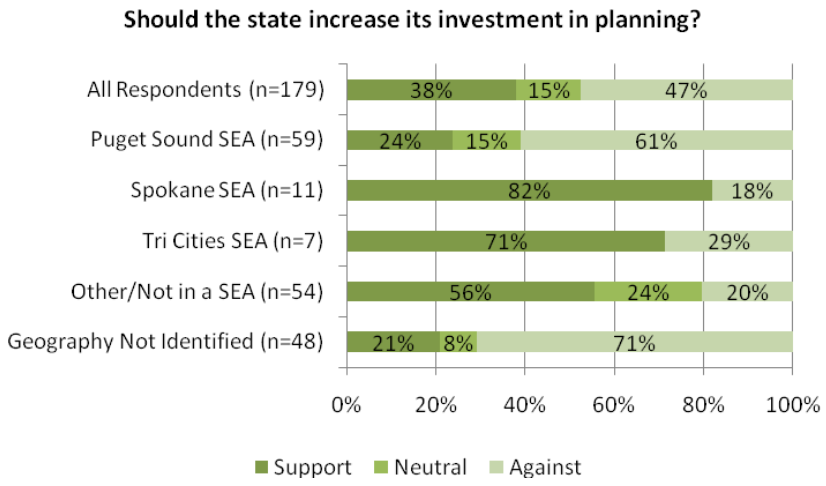
One respondent who was neutral about this strategy commented that it may be advisable to discontinue or expand certain airports rather than merely maintain them in their current state. The respondent also suggested that airport operations be guided by a consistent and workable regional plan, not a broad regulation that makes no allowances for individual circumstances. Another neutral respondent also commented on the potential for unintended consequences and questioned if the 20-year commitment period was arbitrary.

Several respondents who indicated they were against this strategy objected to the use of state funds to support airports, commenting that private businesses should not be subsidized by the state. One respondent saw this as an attempt by the state to gain control of local airports. Another respondent who was against this strategy commented that tax relief would be a more efficient means of preserving airports.

Should the state increase its investment in planning?

With this strategy, the State would target its efforts on system planning, individual airport planning, collaborative planning and site selection with the FAA, regional transportation planning organizations, and communities.

Opinion was divided about this strategy. Nearly half (47%) of respondents were against this strategy. Thirty-eight percent supported this strategy and 15% of respondents were neutral. However, while the majority of respondents in the Puget Sound area were against this strategy, the majority of respondents in other parts of the state supported this strategy, with support ranging from 56% to 82%.



Respondents who supported this strategy commented that planning is important for long-term system stewardship. One respondent commented that aviation infrastructure is in poor condition because of a lack of planning and government commitment. Another respondent indicated that it helps guide local decision-making. Other respondents commented that state level support is necessary to prevent airport closures. Another respondent commented that plans need to have real teeth to ensure that they are implemented.

One respondent expressed support for state investment in planning, but commented that it should be in the form of local planning grants, and not by direct state involvement in local planning, based on the opinion that local planning is best carried out by those who understand local issues. The state could be most helpful in strengthening statutes to give local planners the tools needed to work with the decision-makers that make airport protection and enhancement choices.

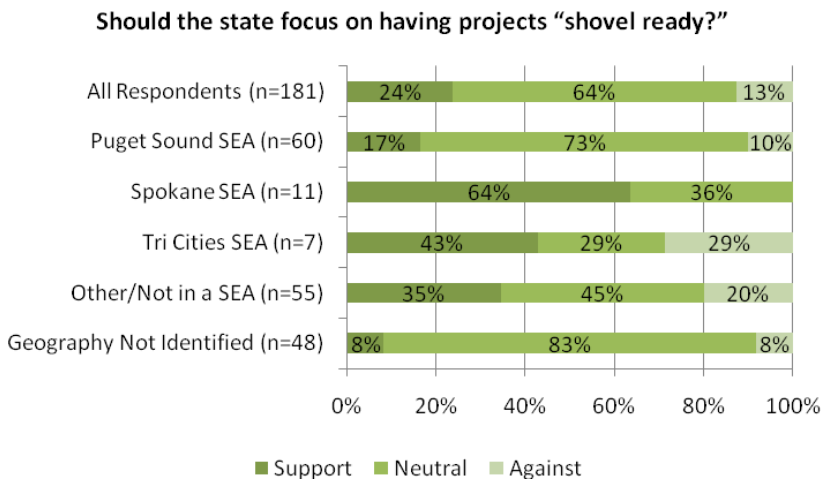
A large number of respondents against this strategy expressed concern about one of the advantages stated in the comment workbook, that this strategy would enable the State to buffer local politicians from controversial projects. Respondents commented that buffering local politicians from controversial projects also buffers them from accountability to affected stakeholders and constituents. Numerous comments also stated the need for the state to develop better capacity and demand models and to stop using outdated FAA demand models.

A number of respondents against this strategy commented that good planning is important, but that it should not be used as a shield for accountability. Other comments from respondents against this strategy indicated that too much money is directed toward planning, and that the state should infrastructure projects instead.

Should the state focus on having projects "shovel ready?"

With this strategy, the state would target its funding program on the pre-construction (environmental and design) phases of projects consistent with the Airport Classification System instead of on construction.

Approximately 64% of all respondents were neutral about this strategy. Twenty-four percent of respondents indicated support and 13% were against this strategy. Support was strongest for this strategy in the Spokane Special Emphasis Area, where 64% of respondents indicated support, 36% were neutral, and no respondents indicated opposition. However, in most areas, support was moderate or neutral.



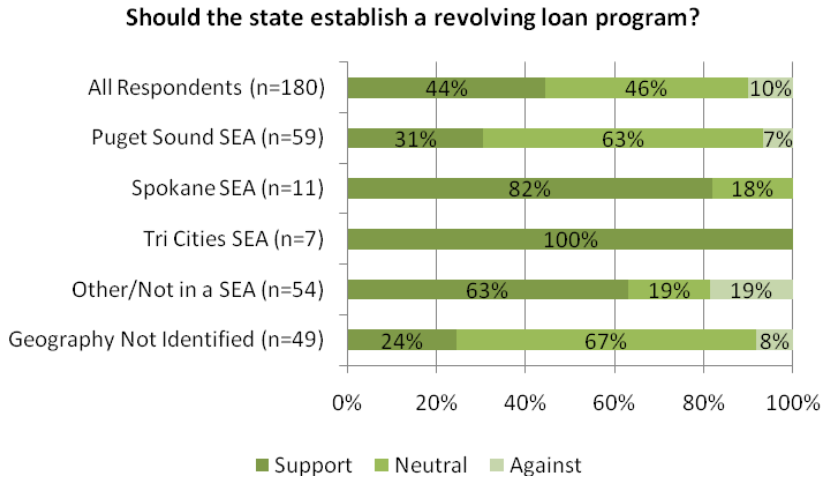
Several respondents commented that projects should already be identified in airport master plans and that WSDOT should prioritize its funding based on the projects identified in the individual airport master plans.

One respondent who was against this strategy commented that projects should proceed based on state priorities, not on how far along planning has proceeded. Another respondent commented that just because a project is ready, does not mean that it is better than another project that is not as far along in planning.

Should the state establish a revolving loan program?

With this strategy, the State would establish a low interest loan program for public and private airport owners to fund airport improvement projects. Eligibility requirements would include keeping the airport open to public use.

Looking at all responses, 44% indicated support for this strategy and 46% were neutral. Ten percent of respondents were against this strategy. Respondents outside of Puget Sound expressed stronger support for this strategy than those within the Puget Sound region.



A number of respondents who supported this strategy commented that providing seed money is a good way to jump start projects. One respondent commented that it is a critical strategy to help small airports stay open, and an efficient use of state money to protect aviation

infrastructure. Others supported the strategy as it would provide a funding source to privately-owned public use airports not eligible for federal funding. A number of respondents commented that assurances should be attached to the program.

One respondent suggested extending the existing grant program to privately-owned public use airports, (with a requirement for continued aviation usage) as an alternative to establishing a new revolving loan program. Another respondent expressed concern that public resentment would outweigh the benefits of such a program and suggested that a loan guarantee program would be a better strategy.

A large number of respondents agreed with the strategy in concept, but raised a number of questions about the cost of the program and whether or not it would be funded at the expense of potentially more important programs. Respondents also questioned whether it was necessary for the state to take on this role, in place of other financial intermediaries.

A number of respondents against this strategy commented that it was not appropriate for the state to fund private businesses. One respondent against this strategy commented that a grant program is a better solution.

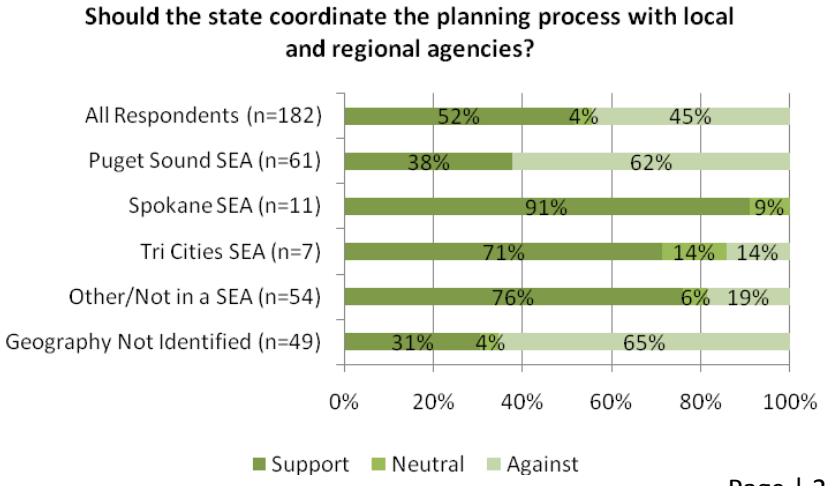
Approximately 53% of online survey respondents supported (somewhat to strongly) developing a revolving loan fund to help airport sponsors finance airport improvement projects as a means to maintain the State's existing aviation system.

Key Issue 3: Land Use

Should the state coordinate the planning process with local and regional agencies?

With this strategy, the state would initiate a funding program to support local and regional agencies in coordinating and development airport master plans and land use comprehensive plan policies and supporting regulations to discourage the encroachment of incompatible development. The State would also expand its technical assistance program by proactively engaging airports and local jurisdictions at the earliest states of the planning process and developing new tools and educational materials to assist jurisdictions with evaluating land use issues.

When looking at all responses, opinion was divided about this strategy. Just over half of respondents (52%) supported this strategy, while 45% were against this strategy. Four percent were neutral. Within the Puget Sound region, 38% of respondents supported this strategy and 62% were against it. Support is greater outside of the Puget Sound



region, ranging from 71%in the Tri Cities Special Emphasis Area to 91% in the Spokane Special Emphasis Area.

Those in support of this strategy commented that it is important that the local and regional agencies coordinate with the state. Others commented that a state role is needed since local government record of addressing airport land use compatibility is poor. Others commented that coordination leads to better land use decisions for all parties concerned.

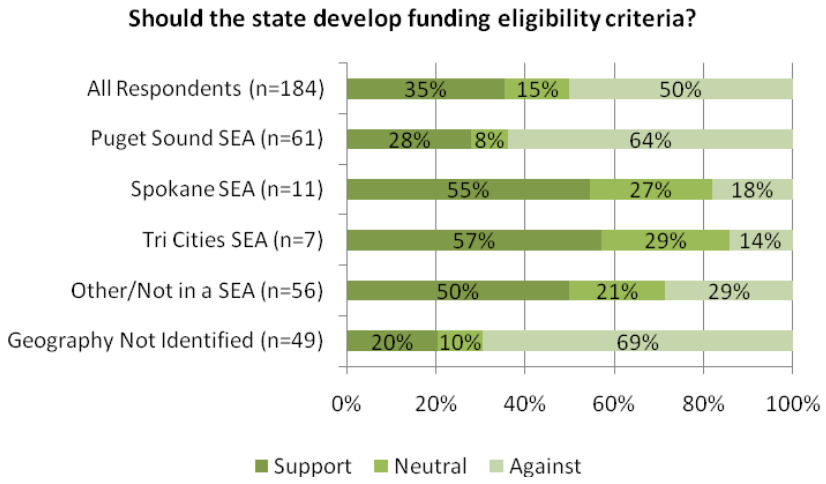
A large number of respondents were against this strategy based on the belief that it is slanted toward protecting the aviation system and against community interests. Numerous respondents cited the Mediated Role Determination for Paine Field as an example. Others commented that cities and counties need to maintain the autonomy to make land use decisions compatible with local plans – this was specifically mentioned in City of SeaTac and Snohomish County Council comments.

Nearly 70% of E-Town Hall 1 participants and online survey respondents supported the state government playing a role in discouraging land uses near airports that conflict with airport operations. Nearly 70% of E-Town Hall 1 and online survey respondents supported state government helping local governments develop ways to protect their airports.

Should the state develop funding eligibility criteria?

This strategy proposes that the state, in partnership with local jurisdictions and airports, develop funding eligibility criteria as a means to monitor and assess the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of comprehensive plan policies, development regulations, and permitting activities.

When looking at all responses, just 35% of respondents were supportive of this strategy and 15% were neutral. Half of respondents were against this strategy. Support is weakest for this strategy within the Puget Sound Special Emphasis Area. Just over one-quarter of respondents (28%) within the Puget Sound region support this strategy, while support increases to over 50% in other areas of the state.



As with the previous land use strategy, those who indicated support commented that there is a need for state role in dealing with airport land use compatibility issues based on the opinion that local government has a poor record of addressing these issues. Others commented that this strategy will help provide greater knowledge and understanding of land use issues as they relate to airports.

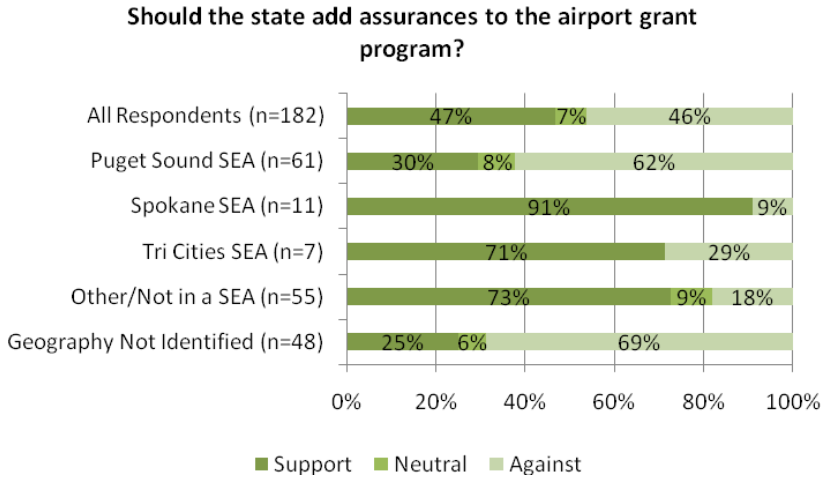
Some of the respondents who indicated a neutral opinion expressed concern for the possibility that this strategy could disfavor small airports. One respondent suggested that the funding criteria be developed in collaboration with stakeholders.

A large number of respondents who were against this strategy expressed the opinion that funding can be used as a wedge to drive communities apart, that it is too one-sided, and is not a means to help jurisdictions and airports work together cooperatively. Respondents also expressed the belief that funds are primarily slated for airport improvements or other subsidies to help the airlines, and not for communities. Respondents noted that local communities must rely on local tax revenue or individual efforts if they oppose such efforts. Others commented that cities and counties need to maintain the autonomy to make land use decisions compatible with local plans – this was specifically mentioned in City of SeaTac and Snohomish County Council comments.

Should the state add assurances to the airport grant program?

This strategy would require all recipients of State grants to adopt comprehensive plan policies and consistent development regulations to discourage incompatible development adjacent to airports. The goal of the grant assurances would be to formally commit an airport to maintaining comprehensive land use policies and supporting regulations over the life of the project.

Opinion was divided this strategy when looking at all responses. Forty-seven of respondents supported this strategy and 46% were against this strategy. Seven percent were neutral. Support was strong for this strategy outside of the Puget Sound region, with more than 70 percent of respondents supporting the strategy, compared to just under one-third of Puget Sound respondents.



Those in support of the strategy commented that it would help insulate airports from local political pressure and that it is common sense to make grant recipients accountable. Others commented that the assurances need to be reasonable, enforceable, and permanent.

One respondent who indicated a neutral position on this strategy commented that regulations and policies should focus on the good of the community and not just the economic health of the airport. Another commented that it could be difficult for small communities who have limited funding to be able to comply with many grant assurances that might be added.

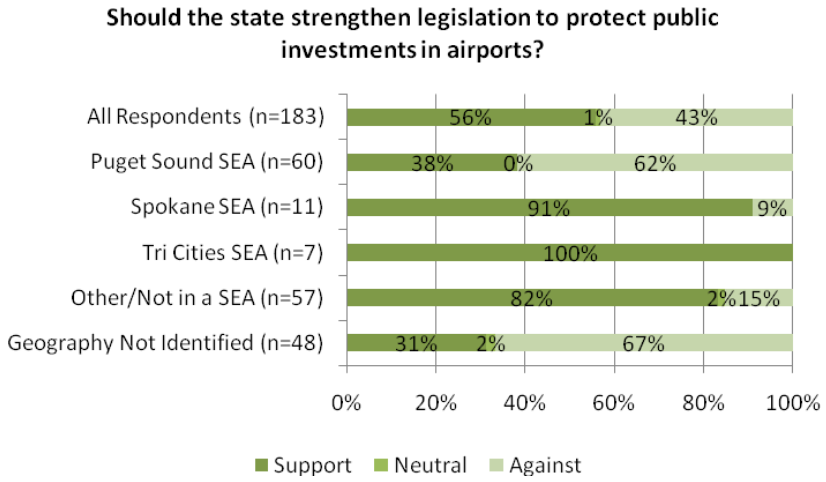
A large number of respondents who were against this strategy disagreed with premise of proving grants to airports in the first place, commenting that state government should not be subsidizing private businesses.

As with previous strategies, some respondents commented that land use decisions are the purview of local government and that cities and counties need to maintain the autonomy to make land use decisions compatible with local plans – this was specifically mentioned in City of SeaTac and Snohomish County comments.

Should the state strengthen legislation to protect public investments in airports?

This strategy proposes to enact and amend legislation that would require towns, cities, and counties to: protect public use airports from incompatible development by 2012, prohibit airspace obstructions within critical airspace, regulate the placement of state of federally funded medical facilities or K-12 public schools within the air traffic pattern, and impose penalties for non-compliance.

When looking at all responses, opinion was divided on this strategy, with 56% support and 43% opposition. While the majority of respondents in the Puget Sound area opposed this strategy, support is strong in other areas of the state. While just 38% of Puget Sound respondents indicated support for this strategy, and 62% were opposed to it, support outside of Puget Sound ranged from 82% to a high of 100% in the Tri Cities Special Emphasis Area.



Those in support of this strategy commented that this is an important role for the state to play and that because airports are essential public facilities, it is important to protect them and the public investments made in them. A few respondents commented that the state needs to take a stronger enforcement approach to airports that have accepted state funding, and one respondent commented that simply allowing the airport to repay funds does not provide ample protection for these public investments. Another respondent commented that small communities, in particular, need the help that this strategy will offer to combat incompatible development near airports.

A large number of respondents criticized this strategy for favoring the needs of airports over community concerns, particularly as it relates to the impacts on schools and medical facilities. Respondents called for a more balanced approach, one that considers the needs of community and transportation on an equal basis. One respondent who criticized this strategy suggested that the determination of which airports should be protected as regional transportation facilities should be made on a case by case basis, not by sweeping legislation that impairs local decision making. As with previous strategies, respondents

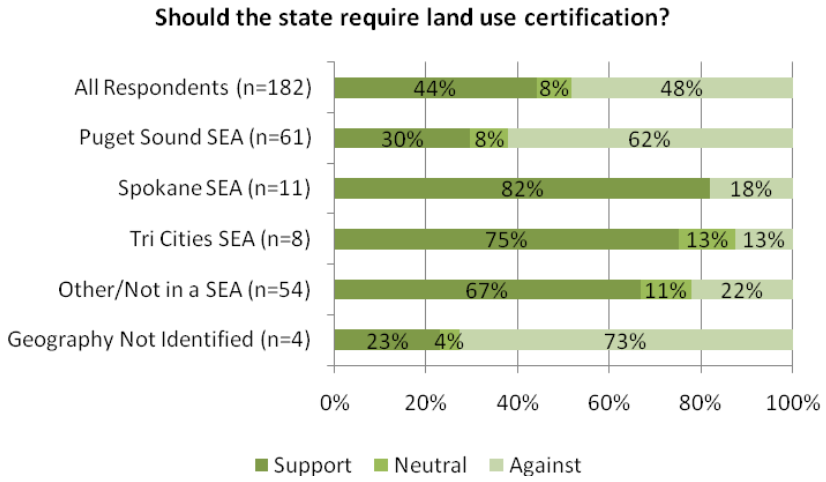
against this strategy commented that land use decision-making needs to remain the responsibility of local government.

Nearly 90% of E-Town Hall 1 participants rated the idea of avoiding incompatible land uses near airports as 'excellent' or 'good.' Approximately 66% of online survey respondents supported or strongly supported avoiding incompatible land uses near airports s a means to maintain Washington's aviation system and 70% of E-Town Hall 2 participants supported or strongly supported local land use laws limiting development around airports to uses that are compatible with airport operations as a means to preserve Washington's existing airports.

Should the state require land use certification?

With this strategy, the State would enact legislation that would require Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs) to certify that the land use and comprehensive plan policies and development regulations discourage incompatible land uses within the airport influence area of a public use airport. Failure to receive certification would impact aviation and other transportation funding.

Opinion was divided on the strategy when looking at all responses. Slightly less than half (48%) of respondents were against this strategy and 44% supported this strategy. Eight percent of respondents were neutral. Opposition to this strategy was strongest in the Puget Sound Special Emphasis Region, where 62% of respondents were against the strategy. However, respondents outside of the Puget Sound area indicated strong support for this strategy, with the percentage of respondents who indicated support ranging from 67% to 82%.



Some respondents in support of this strategy commented that the language should be stronger, that incompatible land uses should be prohibited, not just discouraged. One respondent in support of this strategy commented that all affected stakeholders should be involved in the process, as airports use a lot of a land and airspace. Another respondent commented that the state needs to restrict airports to aviation-related businesses and those that rely on aviation for conducting their business. Another respondent who supported this strategy commented that while airports need to be protected from encroachment, state funding should be focused on non-aviation projects, and local governments should take more responsibility for protecting individual airports.

A large number of respondents who were against this strategy echoed the comments provided in response to the other land use strategies, that it favors airports to the detriment of local communities. A few respondents expressed concern about adding too many regulations and layers of bureaucracy. One respondent commented that land use should be more locally controlled, and that more emphasis should

be placed on what airports can do to be more compatible neighbors to adjacent communities. One respondent commented that this might make it difficult to build small airports, as sponsors would have to navigate through a difficult regulatory process. Another comment, while supportive of strengthening protection requirements, opposed this particular strategy, commenting that if the Growth Management Act is strengthened as proposed in a previous strategy, this strategy might be counterproductive in certain circumstances. Another respondent commented that requiring land use certification by RTPOs would place an unfair burden on the local government.

Appendix A – Alternatives Comment Workbook

Washington State Aviation Planning Council

The Washington State Aviation Planning Council seeks public input on potential strategies for meeting Washington State's long-term aviation needs.

Use this workbook to tell us what you think!

Washington State Department of Transportation

We Want to Hear From You

The Washington State Aviation Planning Council seeks public input on potential alternative strategies for meeting Washington State's long-term aviation needs. The Council will consider your comments as it develops its recommendations to the Governor and Washington State Legislature.

The draft alternative strategies are designed to address key issues facing the Washington State Aviation System in the areas of capacity, stewardship, and land use. The Council will use its proposed statewide aviation policies to evaluate the potential alternative strategies as it develops its final recommendations. The statewide aviation policies are available on pages 38-42 of the draft Aviation System Plan Summary, which is available at for review at www.wsdot.wa.gov/aviation/lats. The Aviation Planning Council collected public comment on the draft statewide aviation policies in July and August 2008. During that public comment period, WSDOT provided several briefings and hosted two regional open houses in Mukilteo and Wenatchee in July 2008.

The final set of strategies will ultimately become part of the Washington Aviation System Plan, which supports the management of Washington's public airports as an integrated system. The plan will guide the strategic investments necessary to preserve aviation capacity and provide facilities that effectively accommodate future demand. The Aviation System Plan will become the aviation portion of the Washington Transportation Plan (WTP), the blueprint for transportation programs and investment in Washington State.

How to Comment

The public comment period for the draft Washington Aviation System Plan and draft alternative strategies extends from March 4, 2009 – April 17, 2009. Please submit comments on or before April 17, 2009 to allow timely consideration of your issues and concerns by the Aviation Planning Council as it develops its final recommendations.

Attend a Public Meeting

Learn more about the Long-Term Air Transportation Study and the alternative strategies and discuss your issues of interest at a Regional Public Meeting:

March 24, 2009
4:00 - 6:00 p.m.
WSDOT Headquarters
310 Maple Park Avenue SE
Olympia WA
Commission Board Room
First floor *(Entrance on west side of building)*

March 26, 2009
4:00 - 6:00 p.m.
Ramada Inn
8909 West Airport Drive
Spokane, WA

Submit a Comment Form

Tell us what you think about the draft alternative strategies by filling in the worksheet for each key issue area on pages 4-24. You may also use the comment form provided at the back of this packet to provide your feedback. Additional background information is available in the draft Aviation System Plan Summary at www.wsdot.wa.gov/aviation/lats.

You may mail, fax or e-mail your comments using the contact information listed below or submit them in person at a regional public meeting.

Mail: WSDOT Aviation
Attn: Nisha Marvel
P.O. Box 3367
Arlington, WA 98223
E-mail: aviation@wsdot.wa.gov
Fax: (360) 651-6319
Phone: (360) 651-6310

Understanding the Project

What is the Aviation Planning Council?

The Aviation Planning Council is a 10-member board appointed by the Governor in 2007. In accordance with Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill (ESSB) 5121, the Council is required to:

- Make recommendations based on LATS I and II findings regarding how best to meet statewide commercial and general aviation capacity needs;
- Determine which regions of the state are in need of improvement regarding the matching of existing or projected airport facilities, and the long-range capacity needs at airports within the region expected to reach capacity before the year 2030;
- Make recommendations regarding the placement of future commercial and general aviation airport facilities to meet future aviation needs;
- Include public input in making final recommendations.

Aviation Planning Council Members

Carol Moser (Chair),
Washington State Transportation Commission Member

Paul A. Roberts (Vice Chair), *General Public Representative (west)*

John Sibold, *WSDOT Aviation Director*

Larry Williams, *Director, Washington State Department of Community Trade and Economic Development (CTED)*

John Townsley, *General Public Representative (east)*

David Field, *FAA Technical Expert*

Gratton O. Sealock (Neal), *Commercial Airport Operator*

James McNamara, *Western Growth Management Hearings Board (GMHB) Member*

Penelope L. Loomis, *Washington Airport Management Association Representative*

Donald Garvett, *Airline Representative*

What is the Long-Term Air Transportation Study (LATS)?

The Long-Term Air Transportation Study (LATS) is a three-phase study to understand existing capacity in aviation facilities and identify what is needed to meet future demand for air transportation. LATS is being developed in three phases. Phases I and II were completed in 2006 and 2007. Phase III will be completed in July 2009.

Three Phase Approach to LATS

Phase I: What do we have?	Phase II: What do we need?	Phase III: How will we get there?
Performed a statewide airport facilities and capacity assessment, including an analysis of current utilization.	Developed 25-year market forecasts of each airport in Washington State, including forecast of aircraft operations, passengers, and air cargo. In addition, the role of high-speed passenger rail was assessed for its ability to relieve future constraints in aviation system capacity.	The Washington State Aviation Planning Council will consider the LATS Phases I and II findings as well as public input. This data and information will be used to shape future aviation policy and recommend how best to meet the state's long-term commercial and general aviation airport needs consistent with ESSB 5121.
Completed September 2006	*Completed July 2007*	*To be completed July 2009*

Key Issue 1-1: Capacity Constraints Anticipated by 2030

It is in Washington State's interest that its aviation system has sufficient capacity so that people and goods can get where they need to go efficiently and affordably and so our communities can thrive. To support the state's interest in meeting future aviation capacity, the Council has recommended policies that would have the State take a lead role in addressing long-term aviation system capacity needs from a system-wide and regional perspective. It has also recommended that Washington State place a funding and planning priority on maximizing the efficiency and utility of the existing aviation system before creating new airports. Further, if Washington State's existing system cannot provide sufficient aviation capacity to meet existing and future demand and no sponsor has expressed interest, the Council recommends that the state be given the authority to undertake a site selection process for a new airport.

Problem Statement

By 2030, twelve Washington airports will either approach or exceed critical capacity thresholds. Four airports including Seattle-Tacoma International, Boeing Field, Harvey Field and Kenmore Air Harbor Inc. are forecast to approach or exceed 100 percent of their available operational capacity before 2030. Eight airports including Arlington Municipal, Auburn Municipal, Snohomish County/Paine Field, Crest Airpark, Kenmore Air Harbor SPB, Friday Harbor, Spokane International, and Olympia are forecast to reach at least 60 percent of their operational capacity – an activity threshold where FAA recommends that planning for additional capacity be initiated. Additionally there will be insufficient terminal capacity at Anacortes, Kenmore Air Harbor, Inc., Kenmore Air Harbor SPB, Orcas Island, Seattle-Tacoma International, and Tri-Cities. Thirty-nine airports do not have adequate hangar and tiedown facilities to meet future demand.

Current Practice

Currently local airport government, the FAA and/or the private market drive any growth in capacity. WSDOT focuses primarily on stewardship of the existing airport system, through grants for airfield pavement projects at publicly owned airports.

Potential Strategies
(Presented for public comment prior to consideration by the Council)

SHOULD THE STATE INVEST IN ADVANCED AVIATION TECHNOLOGY?

The State would take an active role in advancing the implementation of new technologies that increase capacity and relieve congestion at airports, including the Next Generation Airport Transportation (NEXTGEN) technology. NEXTGEN technologies include automation information systems, communications, navigation, surveillance and weather, and may contribute to increased runway capacity at congested commercial airport and more efficient use of airspace. The State would work with Congress to accelerate the implementation of NEXTGEN at the national level and explore financial incentives for adoption of NEXTGEN technology.

Advantages

- Encourages more efficient use of existing system resources rather than construction of additional capacity.
- Offers potential to increase operational capacity without physical airport expansion.
- Increases access and mobility cross-state, nationally and internationally.
- Improves safety.
- Reduces system development costs.

Disadvantages

- Although this strategy will increase capacity at certain airports, it will not by itself solve capacity shortfalls at airport facilities requiring runway, taxiway, terminal, storage, or other similar infrastructure improvements.
- Technological improvements must be seen as a partial solution deployed in conjunction with other strategies.
- NEXTGEN is supported by federal programs but portions of the program are not scheduled to be funded until 2015.

What do you think?

Support	Neutral	Against

Comments:

Potential Strategies
(Presented for public comment prior to consideration by the Council)

SHOULD THE STATE USE DEMAND MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES?

The State would support the evaluation of demand management techniques at its busiest airports to allow for more efficient use of available capacity in a manner that does not unreasonably impair airlines or other users of the system.

Advantages

- Encourages more efficient use of existing system resources rather than construction of additional capacity.
- Cost is minimal.

Disadvantages

- Could limit airlines' ability to freely respond to market demand.
- Could have negative impacts on general aviation activity at busy commercial service airports.
- May not provide significant benefits at all capacity constrained airports.
- Likely to be only a partial solution.

What do you think?

Support	Neutral	Against

Comments:

Potential Strategies
(Presented for public comment prior to consideration by the Council)

SHOULD THE STATE REDISTRIBUTE DEMAND TO NEARBY AIRPORTS?

The State would balance the aviation system by advocating and taking actions to support the redistribution of excess demand from capacity-constrained airports to surrounding facilities that have available capacity. The State would ensure that adequate facilities are in place at surrounding airports well-positioned to accommodate the excess demand.

A demand re-allocation analysis conducted in LATS identified airports that are positioned to potentially absorb demand from the Washington airports expected to reach 100 percent capacity by 2030. Airports within 60 miles of Sea-Tac that can potentially accommodate commercial service include Boeing Field, Paine Field, Bremerton, and Olympia. Airports within reasonable proximity to Boeing Field that can potentially absorb general aviation demand from the airport include Renton, Auburn, Paine Field, Tacoma Narrows, and Thun Field. Airports well-positioned to alleviate capacity constraints at Harvey Field include Paine Field and Arlington.

Advantages

- Encourages more efficient and sustainable use of existing system resources.
- Would allow some passengers to use an airport closer to their residence.

Disadvantages

- Airports in proximity to the constrained airports may not have the appropriate facilities or available capacity to handle excess demand.
- May not meet business needs of service providers who want to locate near their markets.
- Local communities may oppose increased traffic at their airports.

What do you think?

Support	Neutral	Against

Comments:

Potential Strategies
(Presented for public comment prior to consideration by the Council)

SHOULD THE STATE EXPAND AIRPORTS WITH CAPACITY CONSTRAINTS?

The State would work with airports, regional authorities and federal agencies to support and fund infrastructure improvements at airports with capacity constraints. The State would take a stance to support the expansion of those airports to accommodate forecasted demand.

Advantages

- Provides capacity to help satisfy the long-term needs of a growing aviation market.
- Preferred solution in cases where expansion is feasible based on physical, environmental and cost considerations.
- Avoids or delays the need to construct a new airport.

Disadvantages

- Airports like Sea-Tac and Boeing Field with the greatest needs have severe geographic and land use constraints.
- High cost (up to $2 billion for a single airport).
- Local communities may oppose increased traffic at their airports.

What do you think?

Support	Neutral	Against

Comments:

SHOULD THE STATE CONSTRUCT NEW AIRPORTS?

New general aviation or commercial airports would be built to address long-term demand, such as a new commercial and/or general aviation airport in the Puget Sound Region, a new general aviation airport in Southwest Washington and possibly a new general aviation facility in Northeast Washington.

Advantages

- Provides capacity to help satisfy the long-term needs of a growing aviation market.

Disadvantages

- Few sites are available where demand exists.
- Highest cost option (up to $3 billion for a single airport).
- May increase airspace conflicts.
- Potential community opposition.

What do you think?

Support	Neutral	Against

Comments:

Key Issue 1-2: Airport Closures

The preservation of existing public use airports is of utmost importance in meeting Washington's system-wide as well as regional capacity needs. Preserving capacity contributed by both privately owned and publicly owned public use airports is especially important in regions with high demand and/or high growth. The Council recommends that the State take a lead role in ensuring that Washington's long-term aviation system capacity needs be met. The Council's policy recommendations on economic vitality and mobility reinforce the need to prevent airport closures, because local communities need access to the national aviation system to sustain their economies and provide essential services to their citizens. Note: The Council has also made land use policy recommendations intended to protect airports from incompatible land use encroachment. These are presented on pages 21-24 of this workbook.

Problem Statement

Since 1971, 16 public use airports (both publicly owned and privately owned) have closed in key regions of Washington State. These airports have been either urban airports that have been converted to non-aviation uses, or relatively low activity rural airports that have lacked funds to maintain operations. The loss of these airports reduced available capacity in high-growth regions in some cases, reduced access to remote areas in other cases, and impacted all key airport facilities in the immediate areas. Two public use airports have closed since the LATS study was initiated in 2005.

Current Practice

The State Growth Management Act recognizes airports as essential public facilities and Washington State provides technical assistance to local jurisdictions. There are no financial incentives or accountability mechanisms at the state level for airport operators or local government to protect airports.

Potential Strategies
(Presented for public comment prior to consideration by the Council)

SHOULD THE STATE INITIATE AN EDUCATIONAL CAMPAIGN?

Initiate an educational program about the economic contribution of airports.

Advantages

- Helps build awareness of the value of all airports to the State.
- Relatively low to medium cost and could be accomplished by WSDOT within the existing budget.

Disadvantages

- Provides no financial relief for the airport owners who may be in need of support.
- Is not a stand alone strategy.
- Does not address underlying forces of local economics that affect the safety, utility, and viability of aviation infrastructure.

What do you think?

Support	Neutral	Against

Comments:

SHOULD THE STATE ADD ASSURANCES TO THE AIRPORT GRANT PROGRAM?

Require all recipients of State grants to formally agree to grant assurances that guarantee the airport remains open for a period of time necessary to justify the State's investment.

Advantages

- Would allow the state to exert influence on airport capacity, airport operations and administration and have a role in improving airport efficiency and utility.
- Creates accountability for recipients and protects public investments.
- Insulates aviation infrastructure from short term political or economic expediency.

Disadvantages

- In some unusual circumstances it may have unintended consequences, by precipitating airport closures prematurely by airport owners/operators that cannot guarantee that the airport will remain open.
- Legislation would be required.

What do you think?

Support	Neutral	Against

Comments:

Potential Strategies
(Presented for public comment prior to consideration by the Council)

SHOULD THE STATE INTRODUCE NEW LEGISLATION TO PREVENT AIRPORT CLOSURES?

Introduce new legislation that would:

1. Reduce the tax burden on privately owned public use airports
2. Expand the state airport grant program to allow funding for essential private airports that are open to the public
3. Allow the State to purchase development rights from airports to prevent owners from converting to alternative uses

Advantages

- Provides both public and private airport operators with additional funding resources to invest in airport maintenance and improve capital facilities.
- Capacity could be preserved without direct state ownership of the airports.

Disadvantages

- Impacts on state and local tax revenue.
- Unprecedented role for State.
- Additional funding would be required.
- Legislation would be required.

What do you think?

Support	Neutral	Against

Comments:

SHOULD WE AUTHORIZE EXPANDED STATE OWNERSHIP?

The State would purchase and operate endangered airports, or work with new sponsors to assume ownership and keep airports open. This strategy would require the State to develop criteria to assess the financial feasibility and the significance of the airport to the statewide system.

Advantages

- Would allow the State to preserve the capacity supplied by airports threatened by potential closure.

Disadvantages

- Shifts financial risk from the airport sponsor to the State or to another airport sponsor.
- Assumes availability of funds.
- Legislation would be required.

What do you think?

Support	Neutral	Against

Comments:

Key Issue 1-3: Loss of Service at Small Commercial Airports

Regional airline services at Washington's small commercial airports provide residents of the communities with access to the national air transportation system. At certain small communities, isolation from surrounding commercial airports makes locally available scheduled airline services important to the economic vitality of the community and the mobility of its residents. The Council has recommended a policy to promote adequate access to the national air transportation system for all Washington State residents.

Problem Statement

Many of the 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 Washington airports include proximity to larger surrounding airports that draw passengers from the natural market areas of the smaller airports, reliance on a single carrier for all or most scheduled services, increases in aircraft size within the fleets of regional airlines that can lead to reductions in flight frequency at smaller airports, and high fuel prices and increasing fare competition at hub airports that have stressed the operating economics of regional carrier feed services from smaller airports.

Current Practice

Today, access to commercial service for small communities rests on the market-driven decisions of airlines.

Potential Strategies
(Presented for public comment prior to consideration by the Council)

SHOULD THE STATE ENCOURAGE LOCAL NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN SMALL COMMUNITIES AND AIRLINES?

Encourage small communities to work closely with airlines before a loss of service to take steps to enhance the economic viability of the services, including potential funding support.

Advantages

- Could help retain scheduled air services
- Demonstrates community and state support for continuation of service.

Disadvantages

- Communities typically do not have experience working with airlines.
- Local and/or State funding might be needed.
- Large differences in fares, or few flights may not provide levels of service that deter passengers from driving elsewhere to board commercial craft.

What do you think?

Support	Neutral	Against

Comments:

SHOULD LOCAL, STATE, AND/OR FEDERAL SUPPORT BE PROVIDED TO SMALL COMMUNITIES?

Develop an aggressive program, potentially leveraging federal grants, to maintain or enhance scheduled airline services.

Advantages

- Local funding requirements can mobilize community to support services.

Disadvantages

- The track record of small community air service development grants is mixed.
- There is a risk that services will terminate after subsidy/support is expended.
- Large differences in fares, or few flights may not provide levels of service that deter passengers from driving elsewhere to board commercial craft.

What do you think?

Support	Neutral	Against

Comments:

Key Issue 2: Stewardship

The Aviation Planning Council defines Washington State's primary role in aviation as stewardship of the aviation system. To this end the Council has recommended policies that support aviation system planning and collaboration with the FAA and regional transportation organizations. Washington's airports are dispersed geographically – some are located in rural areas, some in small communities, and some near urban metropolitan centers. Depending on the location and the type or level of activity, airports fulfill their roles in the transportation system in different ways. The Council recommended implementation of the Washington State Airport Classification System that categorizes public use airports according to their activity levels and roles in the system. The six airport classifications, generally in order of airport size, are: Commercial Service, Regional Service, Community Service, Local Service, Recreation or Remote, and Seaplane Bases. Each classification includes specific criteria called 'performance objectives', which are measurable performance indicators for features such as pavement condition, safety, planning processes, land use compatibility, airfield facilities, and services for aircraft. The airport classification system will help assess the status of the current system and help guide future airport investment decisions.

Problem Statement

Many airports in the State do not meet all of the performance objectives for their classification. Airports that fall short of performance objectives are not equipped with all the features necessary to support their role within the air transportation system. For example, the classification system recommends that Commercial Service, Regional Service, and Community Service airports be "all-weather,"— capable of accepting landings during poor visibility conditions. However, several of these airports lack one or more of the necessary features, such as real-time weather reporting, a parallel taxiway, or greater land use compatibility protection. Why are all-weather airports important?

All-weather airports enhance reliability for scheduled air service and corporate aviation trips, which supports economic vitality. They allow medevac and other emergency flights at night and in bad weather, enhancing community health and safety. An aviation system with well distributed all-weather airports enhances aviation safety by giving pilots more choices for emergency or precautionary landings in bad weather.

Considered on a statewide basis, the system performs best with regard to runway, taxiway, and apron pavement condition. This performance reflects past federal and state investments in pavement preservation. On the other hand, all airport classifications fall short of meeting objectives for land use compatibility protection (See Key Issue 3). Other key stewardship issues that need to be addressed include:

- Only 71 percent of Commercial Service airports meet the objective to have a precision instrument approach, which is a fundamental need for airline service.
- Only 37 percent of Regional Service airports have a precision instrument approach and only 68 percent have a runway at least 5,000 feet long, both factors important for the airports to be "jet capable." The accommodation of jet traffic is important to Regional Service Airports in order to serve corporate aviation, support disaster relief, and possibly accommodate future airline service.
- The Community Service airports are less than 50 percent compliant with the objectives for a non-precision instrument approach, standard runway safety area, and weather reporting. These shortfalls hurt the all-weather capability of Community Service airports, which are relied on by small and medium sized communities for emergency medical service, air cargo, and disaster relief.

- Local Service airports' main shortfalls are standard runway safety area and vertical glide slope indicators—both safety-critical needs.

The estimated cost of bringing existing public use airports into compliance with the Airport Classification System performance objectives is $600 million, which is far more than the estimated $11 million of federal ($9.4 million), state ($1.3 million), and local ($0.3 million) funding currently available each year to address performance objectives.

Current Practice

No program exists to address the recently identified Washington State Airport Classification System performance objective shortfalls, although federal, state, and locally funded projects for airports are often compatible with the performance objectives. The state grant program is spent mostly on pavement preservation.

Potential Strategies
(Presented for public comment prior to consideration by the Council)

SHOULD THE STATE PRIORITIZE SYSTEM INVESTMENTS?

The State would only fund projects that help meet performance objectives. Priorities would be set for the objectives, and the weighting of priorities could consider community support, airport classification hierarchy, level of aviation activity, or similar factors. The number of years required to meet all performance objectives would depend on funding levels.

Advantages

- Targets investments to meet critical needs.
- Funds projects across the state at different sized airports.
- Meets Council policy recommendation to use the Washington State Airport Classification System to guide decisions on future aviation system needs and investments.

Disadvantages

- For more than half the airports in the state, which are not federally supported, currently available funding is inadequate to make improvements beyond the most critical preservation and safety needs.

What do you think?

Support	Neutral	Against

Comments:

Potential Strategies
(Presented for public comment prior to consideration by the Council)

SHOULD THE STATE IMPROVE INSTRUMENT APPROACH CAPABILITIES?

The State would take an active role in enhancing instrument approach capabilities at airports, to improve access to communities and facilitate economic development. Program implementation would focus on facilitating precision approach capabilities at Commercial and Regional Service airports and non-precision approach capabilities at Community Service airports.

Advantages

- Allows airports to accommodate a more diverse mix of aircraft types and aviation purposes such as passenger airlines, all-cargo aircraft, and air taxi/charter operations.
- Increases accessibility to airports during adverse weather conditions.
- Would facilitate increases in the number of airports capable of handling jet aircraft and facilitate more point-to-point flying.
- Provides real-time weather observation necessary for pre-flight planning and while airborne.
- Enhances safety.
- Meets Council policy recommendation to improve access, mobility and economic development across the system.
- Implements Council safety policy recommendation to provide precision instrument approaches at Commercial Service and Regional Service airports and to provide non-precision instrument approaches at Community Service airports.
- Integrates several improvements to provide all-weather capability at geographically dispersed set of airports that serve most of Washington's population.

Disadvantages

- Some aircraft are not equipped with new technology to utilize the GPS-aided instrument approaches.
- May not improve "minimums" at some airports due to obstructions that cannot be removed, such as mountains.
- Program would not benefit Recreation or Remote airports, Local Service airports, or Seaplane Bases, since instrument approaches are not objectives for these classifications.
- Program would be very costly at airports that need parallel taxiways, new lighting systems, or land acquisition to clear airspace.

What do you think?

Support	Neutral	Against

Comments:

Potential Strategies
(Presented for public comment prior to consideration by the Council)

SHOULD THE STATE ESTABLISH INCENTIVE PROGRAMS TO REMOVE OBSTRUCTIONS AND ENHANCE SAFETY?

The State would enhance airport safety by developing incentives to provide runway safety areas and remove obstructions from penetrating critical airspace surfaces around the airport. The program would also investigate methods to maximize preservation of runway protection zones, address obstructions such as trees and cell towers, and mitigate wildlife hazards through development incentives and maintenance programs.

Advantages

- Enhances safety in the air and on the ground.
- Seeks long-term solutions through development incentives.
- Facilitates visual and instrument landing capabilities by removing obstructions and maintaining clear approaches.
- Benefits airports across the state.

Disadvantages

- May impact private property adjacent to the airport.
- Establishes maximum building height limitations.
- May require redesign of stormwater facilities and other facilities that attract hazardous wildlife.

What do you think?

Support	Neutral	Against

Comments:

SHOULD THE STATE INSTALL WEATHER REPORTING EQUIPMENT?

The State would focus resources on installing weather reporting equipment at airports and in specific regions of the state that have frequent occurrences of adverse weather conditions. This program would include an assessment and installation of new technologies to help detect and transmit information to pilots crossing mountainous and coastal regions in the state.

Advantages

- Facilitates cross-state trips across the Cascades and other mountainous and coastal regions in the State.
- Enhances safety.
- Improves airport access during adverse weather conditions.
- Enhances emergency and disaster management.
- Benefits aviation across the state.

Disadvantages

- If it becomes a primary funding priority, it could delay addressing other critical performance objectives.

What do you think?

Support	Neutral	Against

Comments:

Potential Strategies
(Presented for public comment prior to consideration by the Council)

SHOULD THE STATE IMPROVE MANAGEMENT OF AIRPORT PAVEMENT?

The State would focus on maintaining airport pavements at their lowest life cycle costs and maintaining a Pavement Condition Index (PCI) at the following minimum levels:

Runway	PCI 75
Taxiway and Apron	PCI 70

The program would focus on supporting airports to maintain their pavement through an effective maintenance program.

Advantages

- Saves money over the long-term because it avoids the increased safety risks and increased reconstruction and replacement costs caused by deteriorated pavement condition.
- Enhances safety.
- Assists smaller communities that do not qualify for federal grants.

Disadvantages

- Difficult to enforce maintenance programs and without enforcement pavement conditions would worsen increasing costs beyond the lowest life cycle of the pavement.

What do you think?

Support	Neutral	Against

Comments:

SHOULD THE STATE ESTABLISH A PROGRAM FOR LANDING AIDS AND AIRCRAFT TURNAROUNDS AT SMALL AIRPORTS?

The State would establish a program to provide visual landing aids and aircraft turnarounds at the ends of runways to facilitate access and enhance safety to small community, rural, and remote areas of the state.

Advantages

- Enhances safety and mobility to many smaller airports around the state.
- Assists smaller airports that do not qualify for federal grants

Disadvantages

- Could delay addressing facility improvements needed at larger, more active airports.
- Creates new maintenance costs.

What do you think?

Support	Neutral	Against

Comments:

Potential Strategies
(Presented for public comment prior to consideration by the Council)

SHOULD THE STATE ESTABLISH A GRANT ASSURANCES PROGRAM?

Develop State grant assurances that formally commit to maintaining airport as a public use facility for a minimum of 20-years or life of the project if longer.

Advantages

- Would allow the State to exert influence on airport capacity, airport operations and administration and have a role in improving airport efficiency and utility.
- Creates accountability for recipients and protects public investments.

Disadvantages

- Creates more paperwork for airport owners seeking funding.
- Requires State to monitor and enforce compliance with assurances.
- Could have unintended consequences of precipitating airport closures prematurely by airport owners/operators that can't guarantee that the airport will remain open.

What do you think?

Support	Neutral	Against

Comments:

SHOULD THE STATE INCREASE ITS INVESTMENT IN PLANNING?

The State would target its efforts on system planning, individual airport planning, collaborative planning and site selection with the FAA, regional transportation planning organizations, and communities.

Advantages

- Achievable with current funding levels.
- By taking responsibility for site selection studies, the State would buffer local politicians from controversial projects.

Disadvantages

- Does not directly improve airport infrastructure.
- Airports need many infrastructure improvements that are consistent with existing, well prepared, and up-to-date plans.

What do you think?

Support	Neutral	Against

Comments:

Potential Strategies
(Presented for public comment prior to consideration by the Council)

SHOULD THE STATE FOCUS ON HAVING PROJECTS "SHOVEL READY?"

The State would target its funding program on the pre-construction (environmental and design) phases of projects consistent with the Airport Classification System instead of on construction.

Advantages

- Achievable with current funding levels.
- Environmental feasibility of a project is determined and a fairly reliable construction cost estimate is completed. Both help attain realistic capital improvement programming.
- Projects are ready for funding opportunities, when they arise.

Disadvantages

- Environmental documentation has a three-year shelf life and design packages also require updating if too much time passes.

What do you think?

Support	Neutral	Against

Comments:

SHOULD THE STATE ESTABLISH A REVOLVING LOAN PROGRAM?

The State would establish a low interest loan program for airport owners, public and private, to fund airport improvement projects. Eligibility requirements would include keeping the airport open to public use.

Advantages

- Private owners of public use airports would have access to more funds, since they are not eligible to receive state grants and only one airport (Harvey Field) is currently eligible for federal grants.
- The program would be well suited for revenue-generating projects, such as fuel stations and aircraft maintenance hangars, which are not eligible for federal funding.
- Funding would be self-sustaining over time.
- Addresses preservation and capacity needs of the system.

Disadvantages

- Requires a large amount of seed money to help many projects and airports.
- Less financially feasible for safety and preservation projects that do not generate revenue as compared to grant funding.

What do you think?

Support	Neutral	Against

Comments:

Key Issue 3: Land Use

Despite Growth Management Act (GMA) policy direction, many local governments are not protecting public use airports from incompatible land uses through their comprehensive plans, zoning, and development regulations. Competing land uses often impede airport operations and make it difficult for airports to expand to accommodate growing demand. Some examples of land use problems near airports include noise-sensitive facilities (such as homes, schools, hospitals, etc), tall structures in aircraft approach paths, and activities that attract birds.

The Aviation Planning Council has recommended land use policies that are intended to strengthen compliance with GMA through incentives, legislation, and regulations.

Problem Statement

The Washington State Airport Classification System revealed that many public use airports do not meet objectives derived from the GMA to protect airports from incompatible land uses:

- Only 33 percent of the State's public use airports meet the objective for having compatible land use policies in the local jurisdiction's comprehensive plan.
- Only 47 percent of the airports meet the objective for appropriate zoning of the airport (e.g. Airport, Industrial, or Public Use).
- Statewide compliance is higher (62 percent) for the objective of runway protection zone control, but still too low. Runway protection zones are areas at the ends of runways that should be free of occupied buildings in order to protect people from an aircraft accident. They should also be free of activities hazardous to aviation, such as those that attract wildlife.
- Although the importance of height hazard control has been recognized for more than 60 years in Washington, only 53 percent of the public use airports are protected by zoning that regulates height hazards or by regulations that prohibit penetrations of imaginary surfaces defined in the federal aviation regulation known as Part 77.
- The worst performance is for compatibility control. Statewide, only 22 percent of public use airports have zoning or development regulations that discourage incompatible development near airports.

Current Practice

Local governments control community planning, zoning, and development regulations, with restrictions imposed by the Growth Management Act. For the nearly half of the airports that are federally supported, airport owners commit to protecting their airports from incompatible land use encroachment for 20 years after they accept a federal grant for airport improvements. WSDOT Aviation educates and advocates for compatible land use around airports, and reviews amendments to comprehensive plans and development regulations, as required by the GMA.

Potential Strategies
(Presented for public comment prior to consideration by the Council)

SHOULD THE STATE COORDINATE THE PLANNING PROCESS WITH LOCAL AND REGIONAL AGENCIES?

The State would initiate a funding program to support local and regional agencies in coordinating and developing airport master plans and land use comprehensive plan policies/supporting regulations to discourage the encroachment of incompatible development.

The State would also expand its technical assistance program by proactively engaging airports and local jurisdictions at the earliest stages of their planning process and developing new tools and educational materials to assist jurisdictions with evaluating land use issues.

Advantages

- Addresses land use compatibility issues early in the planning process so that they are considered together with other land use and transportation issues.
- Addresses problems before they occur.
- Use performance tools to evaluate consistently the application of land use compatibility policies and requirements.

Disadvantages

- Land use control remains with local governments under current GMA guidance regarding the protection of airports, so adverse impacts on the aviation system may continue.

What do you think?

Support	Neutral	Against

Comments:

SHOULD THE STATE DEVELOP FUNDING ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA?

In partnership with local jurisdictions and airports, the State would initiate criteria to determine eligibility for airport and other state and local funding. The funding eligibility criteria would be used to monitor and assess the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of comprehensive plan policies, development regulations, permitting activities, etc.

Advantages

- Monitors the effectiveness of local plans and regulations to discourage incompatible development.
- May lead to more effective tools and education materials to assist local jurisdictions and airports.
- Would require local jurisdictions and airports to work cooperatively with each other.

Disadvantages

- Airports not meeting funding eligibility criteria would not qualify for state funds.
- The criteria may not support decisions by local communities and airports.
- May require legislation or state rule-making.

What do you think?

Support	Neutral	Against

Comments:

Potential Strategies
(Presented for public comment prior to consideration by the Council)

SHOULD THE STATE ADD ASSURANCES TO THE AIRPORT GRANT PROGRAM?

Require all recipients of State grants to adopt comprehensive plan policies and consistent development regulations to discourage incompatible development adjacent to airports. The grant assurances should formally commit an airport to maintaining comprehensive land use policies and supporting regulations over the life of the airport.

Advantages

- Would compel airports to work with local jurisdictions to assist in developing consistent policies and regulations.
- Creates accountability for recipients and protects public investments.
- Insulates aviation infrastructure from short term political or economic expediency.

Disadvantages

- Airports not able to meet assurances would not qualify for state funds.
- Legislation would be required.

What do you think?

Support	Neutral	Against

Comments:

SHOULD THE STATE STRENGTHEN LEGISLATION TO PROTECT PUBLIC INVESTMENTS IN AIRPORTS?

Enact and amend legislation that will require towns, cities and counties to:

- Protect public use airports from incompatible development by 2012.
- Prohibit airspace obstructions within critical airspace.
- Regulate the placement of state or federally funded medical facilities or K-12 schools within the airport traffic pattern.
- Impose penalties for non-compliance.

Advantages

- Provides legal authority for airports to protect themselves and assure the ability to meet future service needs.
- Addresses problems before they occur.
- Uses education and incentives to help local government.
- Incorporates many of the Council's recommended and use policies relating to the role of legislation, incentives, and regulation in protecting airports from incompatible land uses.

Disadvantages

- Requires state funding for enforcement.
- Local control of land use is lessened.

What do you think?

Support	Neutral	Against

Comments:

Potential Strategies
(Presented for public comment prior to consideration by the Council)

SHOULD THE STATE REQUIRE LAND USE CERTIFICATION?

The State would enact legislation that would require Regional Transportation Planning Organizations to certify that the land use and transportation comprehensive plan policies and development regulations discourage incompatible land uses within the airport influence area of a public use airport. Failure to receive certification would impact aviation and other transportation funding.

Advantages

- Would help facilitate the land use and transportation element within the airport influence area of an airport.

Disadvantages

- Would add another layer of review to the comprehensive plan and development regulations.
- Many jurisdictions do not consider the airport an important transportation facility.

What do you think?

Support	Neutral	Against

Comments:

Comment Form

The Aviation Planning Council invites your comments on the draft alternative strategies and any other thoughts about the Long Term Air Transportation Study (LATS). The public comment period on the alternative strategies extends from March 4, 2009 – April 17, 2009. Please submit comments on or before April 17, 2009 to allow timely consideration of your issues and concerns by the Aviation Planning Council as it develops its final recommendations.

Please fill out this form and use additional sheets of paper if necessary. Return this form to staff at a Regional Public Meeting or mail it to the address provided on the back. Comments can also be provided by e-mail: aviation@wsdot.wa.gov or fax at (360) 651-6319.

Comments:

Name:

Address:

City / State:

Zip:

Email:

Thank You

Please give this form to project staff or attach postage and mail to the address listed below. Comments must be received by April 17, 2009

www.wsdot.wa.gov/aviation/lats

Washington State Department of Transportation

Fold here

From _____

_____

_____

PLACE STAMP HERE

WSDOT Aviation

Attn: Nisha Marvel

PO Box 3367

Arlington, Washington 98223

Tape here to seal