APPENDIX 2:
Project Communications Plan
Airport Investment Study Communication Plan

Washington’s economy, transportation system and quality of life are directly linked to a healthy and sustainable aviation system. Washington’s diverse aviation system is comprised of 134 public-use airports, ranging in size from large, commercial airports to backcountry grass strips. Each year the system serves over 34 million passengers arriving and leaving in planes with 3.7 million aircraft landing/departures and more than 600,000 tons of air cargo. The system directly generates 248,500 jobs, $15.3 billion in wages, $792 million in tax revenue ($548 million credited to the general fund and $50.9 billion in economic activity.

The Washington State Department of Transportation will spearhead the Airport Investments Study to evaluate the need for preservation and safety projects at the state’s 134 public-use airports.

Background

- **In 2005**, a WSDOT-sponsored airport pavement study estimated a backlog of nearly $163 million in essential pavement maintenance in our state.
- **In 2009**, the Governor’s Aviation Planning Council determined that Washington’s aviation system suffers from a significant funding shortfall. $600 million is needed to bring all public use airports into compliance with performance objectives.
- **In 2012**, WSDOT conducted an updated pavement study- released July 2013. Study findings: Pavement conditions have declined statewide; with current funding the backlog will increase to $257 million and PCI will decline to 71 by 2020
- **In 2012**, the FAA Modernization and Reform Act increased the required state and local match from 5% to 10%. This placed a greater financial burden for airport investments on state and local governments.
- This change alone could require an additional $1.7 million biennially in state matching funds.
- **In 2012**, WSDOT’s Airport Aid Grant program, which only has $1 million available per year, fell far short of funding the $4 million requested.
- In 2013, initial, unrefined State Capital Improvement Program data indicates airports requesting nearly $500 million in projects during 2014-2018.
Objectives

- Evaluate current funding levels for airport preservation and safety projects
- Assess short-term and long-term airport improvement needs
- Determine consequences of doing nothing in terms of economic and aviation system impacts

How will WSDOT meet these objectives?

- **Evaluate current funding levels**
  - State aeronautics account
  - Federal funds (FAA)
  - Local funds (County, City, Port District)
- **Assess short-term and long-term airport needs**
  - Incorporate data from the Statewide Capital Improvement Program (SCIP), Airport Master Plans, 2012 Pavement Study, 2012 Economic Impact Study
  - Develop short-term (0-5 years) and long-term (6-20 years) airport investment needs
  - Determine if there is a significant gap
- **Determine consequences of doing nothing**
  - Economic impacts on jobs, wages, total economic activity, and tax revenue
  - User derived value impacts in terms of the 17 aviation-related activities
  - Impacts to airports in safety, operations, capacity, and sustainability
  - Determine if there are significant consequences
- WSDOT will invite representatives from commercial and general aviation; airport associations and organizations; airport sponsors; federal, state, and local agencies; and the airline, aerospace, emergency medical air transport and aerial agricultural industries to participate in the airport investment study.

Target audiences

- Advisory committee
- Interested party list
- Aircraft owners/pilots
- Legislators
- Aviation Associations
- State/local government agencies
- General public
Key messages

- It’s important to understand the statewide aviation system needs and funding levels to adequately plan for the future.
- Airports provide an essential link to the nation's air space, commerce, and emergency services and are an important part of Washington State's transportation system and economy.
- If the study reveals gaps and consequences of doing nothing, the project team will consider additional efforts to evaluate solutions.
- We want stakeholder input and will actively seek input from an advisory committee throughout the study. We will also keep the public informed via the web site and through email alerts.

Key outreach tools

- Project website
- Aviation ListServ
- Targeted emails and touch points
- Solicitation for document review and input
- Two advisory committee meetings
- Project folio
- Advisory committee brochure
- Advisory committee notebooks
- Aviation association publications

Advisory committee

- Act as a sounding board for understanding of project research and analyses.
- Share perspectives and expertise in areas including: the state’s aviation system, current funding levels, short-term and long-term needs, and consequences.
- Provide advice on how best to present and communicate project findings.
- Be a conduit for external project communications to their respective stakeholder groups.

Key milestones

- Sept. 3, 2013 – Study kick off meeting with consultant
- Oct. 30, 2013 - First advisory committee meeting
- Nov. 30, 2013 – Airport surveys distributed
- March 20, 2014 – Second advisory committee meeting
- April 2014 – Final input on draft report
- May 2014 – Final report/study ends
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