

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 (<i>Entrance on west side of building</i>)	March 26, 2009 4:00 - 6:00 p.m. Ramada Inn 8909 West Airport Drive Spokane, WA
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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
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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?

Perform a statewide airport facilities and capacity assessment, including an analysis of current utilization.

Completed
September 2006

Phase II: What do we need?

Develop 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.

Completed
July 2007

Phase III: How will we get there?

The Washington State Aviation Planning Council will consider the LATS Phases I and II findings as well as public input. The 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.

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
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

Agree. Millions have been spent on the NexGen technology and we should use it to increase safety and capacity at our major airports such as Sea-Tac. NexGen would allow for better flight path planning, improved through-put capacity and better safety for our air system.

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
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

To the extent that demand management techniques improve overall capacity by amortizing demand better, then that may be good. However to the extent that this might penalize air carriers for offering flights at peak times, and encourage them to fly more during off-peak hours that may impact their surrounding communities and other stakeholders, then this should be evaluated further for the overall impacts both on the air system and on all affected stakeholders.

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
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

No! This question assumes that "the State would ensure adequate facilities are in place at surrounding airports.. to accommodate the excess demand." How can the State do this? To transfer demand means ensuring ALL supporting infrastructure is in place, such as parking, security, ground transportation, connections to other airlines, etc. Demand cannot be easily transferred like a fungible item.

Further, even if airports within 60 miles of Sea-Tac might be able to accommodate commercial air service, what else is needed? Will they have connecting flights like Sea-Tac has? Will they have all the infrastructure in place? What about the communities there? Will they readily accept this shift of demand? Most likely, no. None of these issues are considered in this simplistic approach.

Even more importantly, this question assumes that Sea-Tac is capacity-constrained. Why? WA-DOT needs to re-evaluate the capacity demand analysis for Sea-Tac before it imposes multi million dollar, or billion dollar, "solutions" on the State and other communities while simultaneously cannibalizing Sea-Tac. Why is Sea-Tac constrained when it has a new third runway, a new NexGen system, plenty of terminal space at the south terminal and a new light rail ground transportation system? All of this was paid for with billions of dollars from the State and local communities. Please, rethink your capacity analysis before you impose costly solutions that may do more harm than good.

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:

First, question the notion of "capacity constraints" since many capacity assumptions today are based on highly outdated models. They are also based on 2005/2006 data during growth years, using straight line projections of ongoing growth. They fail to consider the revised negative growth. According to the FAA, the U.S. experienced an 8% passenger reduction from March 2008 to March 2009. Second, Sea-Tac just expanded with a third runway and has ample air capacity, especially when the new NexGen system capabilities are factored in. It has ample ground capacity with most of the South terminal still not used. WA DOT needs to evaluate "capacity" in terms of dynamic through-put (much like manufacturing companies) before it jumps to other more expensive solutions. +

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:

Let's state the obvious: the State is in a deep recession facing large budget shortfalls. Where will it find the money to build new airports? Bond issues? The State is backing the bonds for Sea-Tac's third runway, even as air capacity, demand and therefore revenues to support the bonds are dropping. The State is making plans based on faulty assumptions about capacity. The State must do a better job of capacity analysis before it starts to build multi-billion dollar airports that might not be needed. (Remember: it was faulty assumptions that got us into this financial crisis to begin with.) First build better capacity models. Then look at ways to overcome individual bottlenecks in the system, which will alleviate the need to build entirely new systems from scratch.

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:

Absolutely not. Educational programs are code words for "lobbying efforts" on behalf of airlines and airport operators. We need a more balanced approach that considers all the stakeholders, notably communities that live, thrive and support the airports with their taxes and commerce dollars. What we don't need is funding state agencies to use tax dollars against the very communities that are being taxed. Everything in this commentary, such as the previous page's comment on the GMA and airports as EPF's, speaks to the bias in this report about using tax dollars to promote airports at the expense of anyone opposing them. There's no balance here and that's wrong.

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:

No. Why should we insulate aviation infrastructure from short term political or economic expediency? What makes aviation so special as to warrant such insulation, when every other industry must face ongoing scrutiny? If aviation infrastructure cannot survive with ongoing scrutiny, then maybe that alone should suggest it has serious flaws. The lack of scrutiny and transparency in the financial industry has caused this country a great deal of harm. Why would we grant insulation to the aviation industry now?

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:

This seems like an approach that's antithetical to a free market. See item 3 above. If an airport owner wants to convert an airport to an alternative use, that owner probably has a more efficient, cost effective and profitable use in mind. The State should not interfere in the invisible hand of the free market. If the State wants an airport badly enough, then the State can purchase its own airports (provided the current budget allows for that.)

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:

See prior question/answer. To the extent that the State has the funding and can make a case for the need to do this, then fine. But only with legislation that proves this a good use of funds versus all the other demands for state funds.

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:

No comment.

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:

Why is it so important to subsidize businesses, such as airlines, that cannot make it without subsidies? If an airline cannot make a profit in a small community, either let them find a way to make a profit or let them go.

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
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

As long as the prioritization system is fair and properly balances the various factors needed to allocate the funding.

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
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

No further comment.

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
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

No comment.

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
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

No comment.

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
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

Should be included in the previous item (page 15) whereby runway paving would be one of the factors considered if the state would prioritize system investments.

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
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

No comment.

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
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

No. Refer to previous item on Page 10 regarding grant assurances.

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
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

The problem with the State "buffering" or "insulating" politicians from controversial projects is that it also "buffers" everyone from accountability to affected stakeholders, such as the voters. Certainly we need good planning by staff such as WA DOT. See earlier comments about the need to go back and create better capacity and demand models. WA DOT should be doing more work along those lines and not accepting outdated FAA demand models. However good planning should not be used as a shield for accountability.

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
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

No comment.

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
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

This sounds good conceptually. But financially, if the state is providing low interest loans, what is the cost of funding those loans? Can the state afford the cost? What are the benefits to the State? And why would the state need to take the place of other financial intermediaries? This again amounts to a subsidy and it's not clear whether such a subsidy is needed given all the other demands on state funding.

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
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

How would this work? Is this meant to address a community such as that which existed in 1978 in South Snohomish County, as it entered into the Mediated Role Determination? In that case, the priority was on new housing developments and over 8000 acres were re-zoned from industrial to residential use. Are you assuming that the State would be in a position to monitor and/or pro-actively address those issues now if placed in a similar position back in 1978? Or is this issue suggesting the State would help to fight the community that now surrounds Paine Field, since it is now the "community" that's "encroaching" on the aviation community, and not the the other way around? Since this question seems slanted towards protecting the aviation system from "adverse impacts," it seems highly biased against a balanced approach and against community interests.

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
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

No. The experience in communities around Paine Field show that funding is used as a wedge to drive communities apart, not as a means to help jurisdictions and airports work together cooperatively. This is because the funds are primarily slated for airport improvements and/or subsidies that will help the airlines, while the communities have no subsidies other than their own tax base or individual efforts if they oppose these actions. Funding is used in these cases too much as a one way effort to drive a one sided policy.

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:

No. Why has this question been asked repeatedly? (See pages 10 and 19.) Here is the answer again.

Why should we insulate aviation infrastructure from short term political or economic expediency? What makes aviation so special as to warrant such insulation, when every other industry must face ongoing scrutiny? If aviation infrastructure cannot survive with ongoing scrutiny, then maybe that alone should suggest it has serious flaws. The lack of scrutiny and transparency in the financial industry has caused this country a great deal of harm. Why would we grant insulation to the aviation industry now?

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:

No. Again this shows a complete failure to consider both sides of the equation. K-12 schools and medical facilities might also have a high degree of public funding from school districts, Medicare, etc. Health care will be increasingly important as baby boomers enter retirement over the next 40 years. Are we going to prioritize aviation over medical facilities? The State should emphatically NOT grant airports the "authority to protect themselves." The State should consider a more balanced approach, considering the demands from the community for K-12, medical and transportation on a holistic approach. Definitely don't give a huge weighting towards a transportation item when education and health care arguably can be considered equally, if not more, important.

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
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

Again, this gives heavy weight to an airport against all other land use compatability issues. Imagine an entrepreneur opens up a public use airport near a crowded community. Under the system proposed here, that airport operator could then discourage "incompatible land uses" within the airport influence area. This is a perfect scheme for real estate developers. It again shows the lack of balance throughout this survey.

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



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Department of Transportation**

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WSDOT Aviation

Attn: Nisha Marvel

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Arlington, Washington 98223