

OLYMPIA REGIONAL AIRPORT MASTER PLAN UPDATE

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

UPDATED JUNE 6, 2022

General Master Plan

Is the master plan an update?

Yes, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) recommends that Airport Master Plans be updated every 5-10 years. An airport master plan is an important tool in determining an airport's current and future development needs. The most recent Olympia Regional Airport (OLM) Master Plan Update (MPU) was completed in 2013.

Will this master plan be redlined to see what differences there are between this master plan and the last master plan?

No, the 2013 airport master plan will not be redlined as this master plan is a completely new technical document.

Is the master plan a living document?

An airport master plan is not a living document, thus requiring updates every 5-10 years, but it is an important tool in determining an airport's current and future development needs. However, the airport will adjust the timing of projects in the capital improvement program as necessary to meet development and infrastructure needs and the Exhibit A – Property Plan as needed.

Can the airport control where planes fly and at what height?

The airport does not control where planes fly. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Air Traffic Control (ATC) Tower controls the aircraft when operating within the airspace surrounding the airport during ATC operating hours (8am-8pm). During non-ATC operating hours (8pm - 8am) aircraft are operating under FAA general flight rules at uncontrolled airports.

What is the airport's benefit to the community?

Airports are classified as Essential Public Facilities. The Olympia Regional Airport is part of the National Program of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS). The NPIAS identifies nearly 3,310 existing and proposed airports that are included in the national airport system. This airport serves the state capital and provides access from all over the state and the nation. Airport anchor tenants include the Washington State Patrol Aviation Section, Washington State Department of Transportation Aviation Division and Aviation Emergency Coordination Center, Washington Department of Natural Resources Helicopter Fire-Fighting Division, and Airlift Northwest Medical Helicopter Response Aircraft. The Airport hosts multiple aircraft maintenance and service facilities and provides career pilot training. Local businesses operate their aircraft to and from Olympia.

The Olympia Airport is a key economic engine for the community and the region. The annual economic impact of the airport was determined to be \$105.9M through a statewide study.

Airport Economic Impacts

Impact Types	Jobs	Labor Income	Value Added	Business Revenues
On-Airport Activity	187	\$16,360,000	\$25,937,000	\$54,590,000
Visitor Spending	78	\$2,336,000	\$4,223,000	\$6,798,000
Total Direct Effects	265	\$18,696,000	\$30,160,000	\$61,388,000
Supplier Sales	105	\$7,596,000	\$11,521,000	\$19,989,000
Re-Spending of Worker Income	153	\$8,322,000	\$15,050,000	\$24,597,000
Total Economic Impact	523	\$34,614,000	\$56,730,000	\$105,974,000

Impacts derived based on: 2018 Airport Manager's Survey, 2018 Airport Tenant's Survey, FAA 5010 Airport Master Record, FAA Terminal Area Forecast, Airline Data, Inc. Impacts modeled using IMPLAN by EBR. Analyses based on 2018 study year. **Notes:** Totals may not add due to rounding. Metrics (jobs, labor income, value added, and business revenues) represent various components of an airport's economic impact and are not additive.

TAX IMPACTS

Airports' direct economic impacts result in local and state tax revenues. On-airport businesses pay business and operating (B&O) taxes. Visitor spending generates taxes and fees associated with sales; hotel stays; and use of transportation services including rental cars, Transportation Network Companies (TNCs), and taxis.

Airport's Estimated Taxes to Each Jurisdiction

Impact Types	Local (County & Municipal)	State	Total
On-Airport Activity	\$27,970	\$564,150	\$592,120
Visitor Spending	\$111,650	\$592,250	\$703,900
Total	\$139,620	\$1,156,400	\$1,296,020

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding.

Source: <https://wsdot.wa.gov/publications/fulltext/aviation/OLM-OlympiaRegional.pdf>

Do electric aircraft carry cargo?

Electric aircraft, in the future, may be able to carry cargo and people. At this point, the electric aircraft industry is in the early development and testing phases, and not into a full production and utilization of such aircraft, but it is anticipated that electric aircraft will be able to transport cargo in the future.

Could OLM serve air cargo carriers?

Many airports across the state receive operations from cargo air carriers. These aircraft vary in size and frequency of operations. OLM's existing runway will not accommodate large cargo aircraft. OLM could be served by smaller single or twin-engine aircraft bringing packages to the area. The aviation demand forecast did not identify a significant demand for cargo operations.

Can the Port provide the FAA sponsor grant obligations?

The FAA sponsor grant assurances are available [here](#).

Do FAA sponsor grant obligations only last 20 years?

Facilities and equipment developed/acquired utilizing federal funds usually have a twenty (20) year obligation. There is no limit on the duration of the assurances regarding Grant Assurance 23, Exclusive Rights and Grant Assurance 25, and Airport Revenues so long as the airport is used as an airport. There is no limit on the duration of the terms, conditions, and assurances with respect to real property acquired with federal funds. Furthermore, the duration of the Grant Assurance 30, Civil Rights shall be specified in the assurances.

What grants has the port accepted from the FAA to date?

Historical information about grants accepted by the Port is available [here](#).

Public Outreach

How is the master plan conducting public outreach?

While the Airport MPU process is driven by the FAA standards and grant assurances, the Project Team will inform and consult the public in accordance with the IAP2 Spectrum. The Project Team will use a variety of public engagement tools throughout the course of the study.

- Study webpage with study documents, FAQs and information.
- Formation of a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) comprised of Airport stakeholders to provide technical guidance throughout the MPU process. The TAC membership list is available [here](#). The TAC will meet four times and all meetings will be open to the public. (May 2021, July 2021, December 2021, March 2022)
- Three Public Open Houses where the public can learn about the study and ask questions of the Project Team. (September 2021, February 2022, and Spring 2022)
- Study electronic mailing list.

What is the level of public engagement in the master plan?

The master plan update will be conducted within the “Inform” and “Consult” levels of public participation, as per the [Public Involvement Plan](#).

		INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION 				
		INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL		To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
	PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

How were members of the community notified of the study?

All subscribers to the Port's electronic mailing list were notified via email of the project commencing. A press release was sent and posts were made to all Port social media platforms. The master plan information has been updated on the airport website and Port of Olympia social media. Press releases and electronic mailer notifications have been sent to all subscribers for public open houses.

Where does the discussion happen about proposed flight path changes?

There are no proposed flight path changes associated with the Master Plan Update. Airport flight paths in controlled airspace are determined by the FAA. Flight routing in uncontrolled airspace is left to individual pilots. Airspace questions should be directed to the FAA.

When will there be an in-person open house for the master plan?

In-person open houses will be able to occur when deemed safe with regard to the Covid-19 guidelines issued by the State and Thurston County, and adopted by the Port of Olympia. Until that time, virtual meetings will continue.

What role will the public have in master plan comments?

Comments will be accepted from the public throughout the master planning process. Per the [Public Involvement Plan](#), "We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision."

Commercial Aviation Coordinating Commission (CACCC)

What is the CACC?

The Commercial Aviation Coordinating Commission (CACCC) was created by the Legislature to develop recommendations to meet Washington state's critical aviation system capacity needs. The CACC aims to recommend a single preferred location for a new commercial service airport by February 15, 2023. In addition to recommending a new primary commercial aviation facility, the commission will recommend additional ways to accommodate capacity needs at other facilities. The legislation requires a single preferred site but also asks for recommendations on improvements at other locations and a strategic view of future aviation facility needs. More information on the CACC can be found [here](#).

Who is conducting the CACC's work?

The Commercial Aviation Coordinating Commission was created by the Legislature and tasked WSDOT Aviation to provide staff support for coordinating and administering the commission and technical assistance as requested by commission members. A full list of the CACC members can be found [here](#).

How is the master plan update working with the CACC?

The master plan update is not working with the CACC. They are two separate studies being completed by two different entities and are not tied together. The master plan update aviation forecast alternatives are not considering commercial passenger air service.

Aviation Forecast

Will the amount of aircraft traffic increase?

The forecast estimates that aircraft traffic will increase over the planning period by 0.57% annually. For comparison, 2020 had 70,466 operations and the airport is forecasted to have 84,665 operations by 2040. This results in a forecasted average increase of 39 operations per day over the planning period. An operation is one takeoff or one landing of an aircraft or a transit through tower-controlled airspace.

Can you put a cap on operations or tell certain aircraft they cannot land at OLM?

Due to FAA grant assurances, the airport cannot tell an aircraft it cannot use the airport or limit the number of aircraft that utilize the airport. It is up to each pilot to determine if the airport's infrastructure is sufficient for the safe operation of their aircraft.

What is the definition of commercial aviation activity?

With regard to the forecast, commercial aviation activity is generally referring to scheduled airline services and commuter flights. The FAA considers commercial aviation activity as operating an aircraft for hire to transport passengers or cargo (i.e. charter flights, medical transports), but in most cases it is referring to regular scheduled airline services.

What is the confidence in the airport master plan update forecast? What are the lower and upper limits?

A general aviation forecast is established from a snapshot in time and comparisons and justification to the FAA's forecast. The forecast is based on the current inventory of based aircraft and operational activity and comparisons of population trends, and specific local, regional, and national aviation data along with other previous and current forecasts. The data establishes a baseline and forecasts for specific operations and based aircraft at the Airport, including itinerant and local GA aircraft operations, military operations, and instrument operations. Factors that affect the forecasts include future hangar development, fuel prices, the economy, political climate, etc.

What types of aircraft are expected to visit OLM over the forecast period?

This forecast anticipates that the aircraft that are currently utilizing the airport (small single-engine aircraft, twin-engine aircraft, helicopters, and corporate jets) are expected to continue through the planning period. The master plan does not propose any changes that would alter the types of aircraft that would use the airport.

Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP)

What is the habitat conservation plan (HCP)?

Per the HCP website: “The Bush Prairie Habitat Conservation Plan is being developed to balance growth and the preservation of endangered species within the City of Tumwater and its urban growth area. The Habitat Conservation Plan will conserve these species by providing long-term habitat protection across a system of managed reserve areas. The City of Tumwater and the Port of Olympia are jointly developing the Habitat Conservation Plan through the terms of an Interlocal Agreement.

The Habitat Conservation Plan will provide for long-term preservation and management of three species, protected under the federal Endangered Species Act, that occurs in Tumwater: Olympia pocket gopher, streaked horned lark, and Oregon spotted frog. Protection of habitat for these species will also mitigate for the impacts of ongoing development, maintenance, and other activities performed by the City of Tumwater or the Port of Olympia, which have the potential to harm these species or their habitat.

The affected species will benefit from assured, long-term habitat protection. The people of Tumwater and the customers of the Port of Olympia will benefit from a federal permit authorizing impacts to these species, which will facilitate planned development and maintenance work. The [Habitat Conservation Plan](#) is expected to reduce the costs and time that would otherwise be needed for individual landowners to comply with the provisions of the Endangered Species Act.”

Who is completing the HCP?

The HCP is being completed by a consulting firm that was hired by the Port of Olympia and the City of Tumwater. The master plan study team (The Aviation Planning Group and its subconsultants) has followed the progress of the HCP, but is not integrating the HCP into the master plan or vice versa. The HCP team can be contacted [here](#).

How will the HCP interact with the proposed alternatives? When will the public see how the HCP interacts with the proposed alternatives? When will the public get to comment on that?

The HCP will be completed after the master plan and the two studies are not directly related. The master plan will determine a preferred alternative in the coming month. Any development on the airport will need to meet the mitigation standards from the HCP. The preferred alternative will be brought back at a future public open house for public comment.

Development Alternatives

Why is the study team looking at three different development alternatives?

There are numerous ways to meet the design standards set by the FAA. The master plan team needs to evaluate various taxiway geometric layouts to determine which one is the best path

forward. The master plan team is also examining where certain types of aeronautical development should go and where best small general aviation T-hangar areas could be developed versus box-type hangars.

Do the three different alternatives allow for different types of aircraft to serve the airport or different numbers of operations?

No. There are no differences in the three alternatives in terms of types of aircraft or number of operations. Each of the alternatives accommodates the same number of aircraft operations and type of aircraft.

Will an alternative of no expansion or contraction be considered?

The property boundaries are not being considered for expansion or contraction within this master plan. The alternatives are focused on the same areas of existing land that the previous master plan used, all which is in the current boundaries of the existing airport property. The three alternatives presented all represent a reduction in taxiway/runway pavement as compared to what was approved in the last master plan update and shown on the existing Airport Layout Plan (ALP).

Pavement	Development Alternative 1	Development Alternative 2	Development Alternative 3
TOTAL	885,000 SF less taxiway/runway pavement than existing ALP	911,500 SF less taxiway/runway pavement than existing ALP	490,000 SF less taxiway/runway pavement than existing ALP

Is a runway extension planned in this master plan update?

No, a runway extension is not planned with the current alternatives of this master plan update.

What role can or will the public play in determining which of the alternatives is shown as the preferred?

The public comments will be heard by the Port, but the selection of the preferred alternative is completed based on the alternative evaluation analysis and will be completed by the Port and approved by the FAA.

Are there capacity-enhancing projects proposed in the alternatives?

No, the proposed alternatives shown in Alternatives 1 thru 3 are focused on meeting FAA design standards and creating efficient taxiway routes. None of the changes will change the capacity of the airport

Runway 8/26 used to be used as a noise mitigation runway. Will reducing the length of the runway change the noise mitigation plan?

No. Reduction in length to align with Taxiway W will not affect the utilization of the runway.

Why is shrinking the airport to accommodate the residential needs of the community not in the plan?

The master plan update evaluates the aviation demand at the airport and needs of the airport. The master plan update is funded by the FAA and the scope is defined by the FAA process.

How is any expansion of the airport going to benefit the community and its citizens?

The property boundaries are not being considered for expansion in this master plan update. The alternatives are focused on the same areas of existing land within the current boundaries of existing airport property. The airport contributes to the overall economic health of the community. The airport supports jobs in the community. By allowing the businesses on the airport to continue to grow, it creates more jobs in the community and ensures the existing jobs stay in the community. According to the most recent [airport economic impact study](#), the airport supports 187 on-airport jobs.

What are the next steps in the alternatives (after February 2022)?

The study team will evaluate each alternative against a set of evaluation criteria and draft a preferred alternative. The TAC will meet in mid-March to review the draft preferred alternative. The draft preferred alternative will be presented to the public at the Spring public open house.

Are parallel runways being proposed?

No. The only changes considered in these alternatives to the existing runway system are with respect to reduced width and shortening the crosswind Runway. There is no forecasted demand for a parallel runway at OLM.

Do parallel taxiways facilitate larger aircraft?

No. Parallel taxiways provide for airfield geometry in which the FAA has set the standards. They provide for 90-degree taxiway intersections and are a safety measure that allow aircraft to exit the runway and taxi to their destination, rather than taxiing on the runway. Parallel taxiways would not increase the number of aircraft taking off and landing.

With a relocation of Taxiway W will access still be provided to existing hangars and WSDOT Aviation? Yes, the Preferred Alternative shows that Taxiway W will be relocated in the future to be more parallel with Runway 17/35. Some of the existing Taxiway Pavement will be removed, but access to the taxiway system for existing hangars and WSDOT Aviation will be accounted for.

Why are emerging technologies such as electric aircraft discussed within the master plan?

Advancements in electric aviation technology have been rapidly progressing over the last decade. As technology has developed with electric vehicles and the ability to create lighter and more powerful battery sources, the knowledge has also been applied to aircraft. The FAA and the aircraft industry are recognizing that the progress and technical developments have outpaced some initial expectations, and therefore must be considered in the long-range planning for the airport over the planning period of this study (20 years).

The airport may see these electric aircraft flying into the airport in the future, and with that comes the responsibility of planning for the future to ensure there are mechanisms in place to provide the ground work for planning for the future electricity and infrastructure requirements.

Does the preferred alternative plan for stopping the sale of leaded fuels?

At this time the FAA has a plan with the EAGLE Initiative to transition to lead-free aviation fuels for piston-engine aircraft by the end of 2030. The FAA's intention is that once a lead-free fuel has been developed and produced it should be compatible with the existing infrastructure. More information on the FAA's plan for lead-free fuels can be found [here](#).

Environmental

How is the master plan considering endangered species?

The Master Plan identifies the species known to occur within Thurston County. Typically, before any projects could be undertaken, the Airport would need to determine if these threatened or endangered species are located within the proposed project area.

The City of Tumwater and Port of Olympia are working jointly on the Brush Prairie Habitat Conservation Plan (Brush Prairie HCP) developed to balance growth and the preservation of primarily three covered species: Olympia pocket gopher, streaked horned lark, and the Oregon spotted frog. The HCP is a detailed plan for achieving this goal and is required under Section 10 of the Endangered Species Act, under which permits can be issued to "take" an endangered species by causing harm to the species or its habitat. Mitigation will be required as a part of the HCP. At the Airport, a "take" is expected to result from new development, from maintenance of City and Port facilities, and from maintenance performed at the conservation reserve sites.

Will the King County Pollution Study be considered in the master plan?

No. The Olympia Airport Master Plan will not directly consider any of the recent pollution studies. There are a number of air pollution studies underway for both Boeing Field and Sea-Tac Airport by various parties, as well as industry studies to examine the effects of pollution. Studies conducted in King County are not specific to the number and type of operations

occurring at OLM; the studies are specific to individual airport conditions. Both Sea-Tac and Boeing Field serve commercial operations with aircraft types much different from that at OLM. However, a wide range of studies, such as these, provide an information base that may have use in future airport environmental studies locally, as well as nationally. That research data, coupled with research underway by the Federal Aviation Administration, the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), and other parties such as the Transportation Research Board's Airport Cooperative Research Program are developing information about the health effects of aviation. Specifically how those will be captured in future environmental studies will be dependent on the scientific community's acceptance of their results, and the applicability of the results relative to conditions at OLM.

Will public health be considered in the decision criteria when evaluating the master plan alternatives?

There is no universal set of evaluation protocol or measurement criteria for considering public health in an airport setting. There is a wide range of studies recently completed and underway that are designed to help understand the health effects of aircraft noise and air pollution. However, no specific methodology exists to predict changes that would occur with proposed infrastructure improvements, which is why the FAA's Master Plan Advisory Circular does not capture public health as a decision criterion. As a result, it is not possible to directly consider public health in this master plan. However, the environmental overview that will be prepared as part of the master plan will consider a number of environmental issues, such as aircraft noise, air quality, and climate that have an effect on public health. At this time, the environmental overview will not specifically quantify those environmental factors, but rather will indicate the potential for the alternatives to create significant impacts, as defined by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Any future development will need to go through the applicable NEPA or SEPA process prior to design and construction. When considering environmental and health issues, airports look to the FAA to establish guidance for the consideration of those issues in planning. As the research is still evolving, the FAA has not established guidance for the consideration of health in airport master planning.

What are the health impacts of airport development?

In general, airport development itself (a physical structure) does not typically have a health effect. However, mobile activity that uses airport facilities, such as aircraft operations and ground vehicles (cars and trucks), emits pollution that can have a health effect. A recent Airport Cooperative Research Program report (ACRP Report 221 Measuring Quality of Life in Communities Surrounding Airports) considered 22 factors associated with considering health in quality of life (ranging from mental health status to level of stress, to diet). Research, such as that being done by the University of Washington about pollutant emissions from aircraft at Sea-Tac Airport or Boeing Field are aiding in the understanding of potential health effects. However, much more research is needed before a specific causal relationship can be established.

Will the noise contours be updated for the airport with this master plan update?

No, the traffic volume and types of aircraft has not changed, nor is it forecasted to change significantly from the previous study. More information on noise contours and how they are computed can be found [here](#).