

## **Commercial Aviation Coordinating Commission Summary of Work**

The Washington State Department of Transportation, Aviation Division, has two similar and parallel aviation planning activities underway. The first is the Washington Aviation System Plan (WASP) update, which is a study conducted approximately every five to seven years, primarily funded by the Federal Aviation Administration and thus required to comply with FAA requirements. A system plan typically examines airport capacity needs across the state to provide concepts for meeting future air transportation needs. Some of these airport capacity needs align with the tasks of the Commercial Aviation Coordinating Commission.

WSDOT Aviation Division, as directed by legislation, is also providing staff support to the Commercial Aviation Coordination Commission (CACC). Created by the state Legislature in 2019, with Commission members appointed by the Governor, the CACC is charged with providing recommendations to the Legislature for how to solve the forecasted shortage of capacity for commercial air passenger service, air cargo, and general aviation.

The CACC began in October 2019 and is required to meet three deadlines:

- Provide an initial list of six possible locations to the Legislature by January 1, 2021  
[Completed]
- Provide a list of the top two locations by October 15, 2022
- Provide a single preferred location recommendation by June 15, 2023

The following excerpt from the legislation describes the overall task for the CACC.

“The state commercial aviation coordinating commission will review existing data and conduct research to determine Washington's long-range commercial aviation facility needs and the site of a new primary commercial aviation facility. Research for each potential site must include the feasibility of constructing a commercial aviation facility in that location and its potential environmental, community, and economic impacts. Options for a new primary commercial aviation facility in Washington may include expansion of an existing airport facility. The work shall include recommendations to the Legislature on future Washington State long-range commercial aviation facility needs including possible additional aviation facilities or expansion of current aviation facilities. The Legislature also recognizes any preferred location will require substantial environmental, land use, governance, and funding decisions from state and local governments.”

The WASP began in December 2021 and is conducting technical analysis and providing options to the CACC. The final recommendations from the CACC are due to the Legislature, June 2023 and will likely include recommendations for improvements of one or more airports and/or airport sites that have the potential to meet future capacity needs, along with recommendations to improve the environmental sustainability of aviation including Sustainable Aviation Fuels, Electric/Alternate Propulsion, and other considerations for reducing the impacts of aviation. The state cannot direct the expansion of an existing airport or construction of a new one; that authority resides with local governments. However, the state can support such an action, and provide technical assistance, along with the Federal Aviation Administration who has the authority to prescribe the development of an airport and the federal funding source to support it.

In 2020, the CACC adopted a strategy, seeking to expand one or more existing airports to meet near-term demand and to identify a suitable new ‘greenfield site’ to construct a new airport of the future. The CACC has identified Paine Field as the only existing airport with the potential to provide additional commercial air passenger service and air cargo capacity. The WASP consultant

has identified 10 initial greenfield sites, which will likely be reduced to three or four and undergo the next round of analysis for air cargo and airspace capacity. The initial analysis of these 10 sites included the following:

- Terrain impact: Is the site too hilly to develop?
- Property acquisition: How much property needs to be purchased?
- Environmental justice: Would this location disproportionately impact people who are BIPOC, people with low incomes, or people who use languages other than English?
- Floodplain impact: Is the site likely to flood in heavy rain events?
- Wetland impact: Would development impact wetlands?
- Incompatible land use: Are there land uses such as residences, schools, or places of worship nearby?
- Population served: How many people are within a 90-minute drive?
- Unaccommodated passenger demand: How many people who are beyond a 90-minute drive from Sea-Tac or Paine Field could be served by this location?

As part of the continued public engagement efforts the CACC will hold an online open house beginning August 15<sup>th</sup>, and two virtual public meetings on August 23<sup>rd</sup> and August 31<sup>st</sup>. Please consult the CACC [website](#) for more information.