

State Airport System Plan Update

Public Meeting

Monday, October 15th, 2018

Highgate Town Office

Introductions – Dan Delabruere, Michele Boomhower (economic development) - VTrans

Power Point Presentation – Costa Pappis (VTrans)

Questions/Comments:

- Is this presentation available on the VTrans website? Costa explained that the presentations and meeting summaries will be posted to the project website.
- Who is the consultant and what is their background? Costa stated that the project consultant is McFarland-Johnson, a civil engineering firm which includes an aviation specialty. They have offices throughout New England.
- Is there a need for an expansion at Highgate? Costa explained that the consultant has recommended a series of minimum and recommended facilities and service levels for different categories.
- I see that there are 68 planes based at the Franklin Airport. Have they been polled regarding the need for an expansion? Costa noted that individual aircraft owners have not been polled, and that the minimum and recommended facilities and service levels are based on the consultant's recommendations.
- Will the planes based there now really need the additional thousand feet?
- The airspace for the approach – will that expand? Dan noted that it's likely that the same approach would be used, and the flight pattern will not be changing.
- Planes are currently flying directly over our house and we get the roar from the planes circling – if the flight path was changed, this could help reduce our concerns.
- The National Guard flights of this past weekend caused our house to vibrate – wondering if they were supposed to be that low.
- If the category of airport is elevated, is there a need for expanded emergency services to respond to the new categories of jets? Would there be additional training and investment in any unique equipment that would be needed? Dan explained that VTrans works closely with Vermont Emergency Management to identify any unique needs that may require training and support.
- If there is an increase in the air traffic, including small jets, will there be the need for additional air traffic control and who pays for that? Dan explained that the increase in the category that is recommended would not result in the need for an air traffic control tower or additional related infrastructure. Jet activity, if any, would likely be small private jet flights.
- Having difficulty understanding the methodology of integrating the input if the consultants are an out of state firm. Costa explained that the consultants are undertaking analysis and assuring

we are meeting the FAA requirements. This series of public meetings is intended to generate input that we will evaluate as we move forward developing the Plan.

- Are you going to reach out to pilots and landowners adjacent to the airport to let them know what that this is occurring? Michele explained that we will continue to seek public input, we are collecting email addresses from interested parties, we are notifying the Regional Planning Commissions, notices through the towns and other venues.
- From the standpoint of a casual airport user, this has been a bit under the radar – glad to hear that the Messenger is here and that there will be more outreach.
- Has the consultant finished their recommendation list yet? Costa explained that it will not be until late winter until that occurs.
- Where did the extension of the runway by 1,001' come from? Mr. Coy explained that the length of the runway improvements are driven by insurance carrier standards which are associated with the length of runway required for certain classes of airports.
- What are the steps of the process with regards to submitting information to the FAA for approval and how will the public continue to provide input? Costa explained how additional information will flow to the public and interested parties.
- Helicopter flights were once occurring in the early evening. Now they seem to be flying more frequently. Why? Cliff Coy explained that there are no helicopters based at the airport, and that they are coming from other locations (i.e. National Guard, Border Patrol).
- The helicopters are flying low and creating vibrations. Dan explained that as a public use airport helicopters are allowed to use the airport.
- Do we have any data regarding how the helicopters are going to use the airport going forward and how many? Not specifically, but Jennifer Davis from VTrans explained that there has been an increase related to the Guard's preparing for upcoming deployments.
- Michele asked that staff explain the difference between the Statewide Airport Systems Plan and the Airport Layout Plan (Master Plan) process. Costa provided an overview of the two planning activities and how these plans inform decisions about actual investments that will be made at individual airports. There is a public process which occurs during the Master / Airport Layout Planning process as well.
- What is the status of the Franklin County Airport Layout Plan? Dan explained that VTrans is in the process of updating the Environmental Constraints document, which will include an update to the Airport Layout Plan. This will occur over the next year.
- When was the last Airport Layout Plan completed? Audience member response: In 2008/2009 – the 4,001' runway expansion was in that Plan 20 years ago.