

State Airport System Plan Update

Public Meeting

Wednesday, October 17th, 2018

Addison County Regional Planning Commission Offices

Introductions – Michele Boomhower (VTrans)

Power Point Presentation – Costa Pappis (VTrans)

Answering Project / Operational Questions – Paul Libby and Chris Beitzel (VTrans)

Questions/Comments:

- What is a seaplane base, heliport base? Costa explained that these are private aircraft bases for seaplanes, helicopters, and other types of aircraft.
- What does runway geometry encompass? Paul explained that it encompasses the safety and alignment clearances for aircraft to be able to properly navigate on the runway, and removing direct ramp connections to the runway when they are redundant.
- How do we keep track of how we did with in the implementing of the prior plan recommendations? Costa explained that there will be an accomplishments section which will detail the implementation of activities which were recommended in the 2007 plan. This will also include an assessment of how well we did relative to the goals that were established at the time.
- Costa explained that funding for Aviation at the federal level has a lot of uncertainty, the federal program is primarily grant-bases, the FAA funding priorities change, and the state's match commitment has to obtain legislative approval.
- In my business there are siting criteria for developing plants and we take into consideration whether there are airports nearby, whether there will be instrument approaches, lighting, etc. Paul indicated that VTrans is working with the FAA to determine if the FAA will contribute to the investments in lighting, instrument approach, etc. We are currently working on the feasibility study, which we will be presenting to the FAA, and hope to have more information relative to the outcome of this investigation sometime next year. Costa explained that projects we propose need to line up with the FAA priorities if they are going to fund them.
- Does the recent FAA funding Authorization Bill assist with any of this? Costa explained that Congress passed a bill with recommended funding levels for the next 5 years, there then need to be annual appropriations made by Congress to fund the FAA – hopefully at the levels recommended under the Authorization Bill. It is therefore important to have the needs identified in the plan(s). Even in cases where projects do not fit the FAA priority criteria, we should determine how to prioritize them and identify other potential funding sources to implement these projects.
- If you don't build hangars, how are you going to attract new users?

- We had a person trying to build a hangar but was hung up with state permitting requirements through Act 250, ANR – Stormwater, etc. Costa explained that permitting requirements of other state agencies apply to VTrans as well.
- Paul indicated that VTrans would like to hear from folks who may want to undertake development at airports, there may be opportunities for pre-permitting.
- There is a summer study committee on rural economic development. We could potentially seek to obtain designation for rural airports in this area.
- Suggestion that the state pre-permit locations for hangars when they are developing other projects so hangar development can become more streamlined.
- How does the State fit into the FAA categorization system in terms of future FAA goals? Costa explained that the FAA interests is in the orderly development of airports that are part of the national airport system. Vermont has mostly General Aviation airports. The FAA prioritizes their funding based on the needs of the entire system and the ability to support the needs across the system from a national perspective.
- Hard to see what drives the Agency decision other than the buckets of federal funding available. It would be helpful for users to understand how the Agency prioritizes its investment decisions.
- The recent improvement of 700' and overlay of existing runway resulted in the loss of 400' of runway due to displacement.
- Going from a 48' wide taxiway to a 24' wide taxiway is harder for larger planes.
- Based on how hard it was to get the 700' extension, it seems that a longer runway is unlikely – the neighbors were very unhappy.
- Costa noted the need to demonstrate a certain use in class of airport before the FAA will fund some improvements – it is a chicken and egg issue, however, the FAA requirement change over time, we need to hear about what airport long term needs are.
- In the past we have brought out potential users and businesses who would like a longer runway. Cisco gets a lot of calls from charters who would like to fly in – and do, but they lease a smaller plane instead of their jets.
- Further runway extensions and widening of the taxiways is needed.
- The Avionics and other airport businesses need to have longer runways and wider taxiways for the scale of planes that want to land here.
- Adam noted that the comments should be as specific as possible, including the justification of why this need has been identified.
- We need to understand that it has been in our plan as long as there has been that this airport should have a runway length of 3,700' and that is the longest length which could be built. All but one homeowner purchased their property adjacent to the airport moved there since that was identified in the plan.
- There has been interest in folks constructing 10 T Hanger facilities, siting larger helicopter hangar storage.
- I've been at the airport 30+ years and the best thing you have going is Cisco and Chris – they listen to our needs and let us know what is going on. Having people on the ground, day to day is critical.
- The current state of the airport is causing a loss of local business in the avionics shop – we can demonstrate that now and this should be articulated in the plan – the avionics, paint shop, maintenance shop are all affected (Pizzigalli painting).