

State Airport System Plan Update

Public Meeting

Monday, October 29th, 2018

Springfield Municipal Office

Introductions – Dan Delabruere, Michele Boomhower - VTrans

Power Point Presentation – Costa Pappis (VTrans)

Questions/Comments:

- From a perspective of 4.5 years as the former Airport Manager - #1 thing that could be done would be dependable, consistent ground transportation from the airport to the local communities. The operations of many charters and fractional aircraft do not recommend overnighing in Springfield due to the lack of ground transportation.
- The 5,500' runway can accommodate sizable jets, but there is no location to store the airplanes overnight. Dan explained about hearing this at most meetings we have been to. The FAA does not see the construction of hangars as an essential element for them to participate in funding, therefore, there is a need to secure other types of funding.
- There is the need to remove barriers and incentivize someone to set transportation services, without the state taking a cut of the funding, this type of business will take time to become established. Most traffic will be folks traveling to second homes at ski areas. A dependable rental operation would be ideal. Perhaps having National Car Rental (White River Junction) have a satellite location at the airport. What about having a rental company located directly at the airport? Dan explained that at another airport we were trying to attract a car rental service, but they were going to require a facility, a car wash, etc.
- How about partnering with the destination locations to site a rental facility at the airport, which would benefit from attracting folks who want to use rentals?
- If we want to get more aircraft into this airport we are going to need a "localizer performance with vertical guidance" (LPV) so that aircraft can have an easier approach to the runway. If we use a GPS system, that would certainly attract more aircraft.
- This is a fair weather airport and many pilots don't want to have to rely on visual line of sight approaches.
- Dan discussed FAA funding priorities - currently, the safety areas, the obstructions, and the runway surface conditions would likely need to be upgraded before the FAA would fund a new instrument approach.
- There is likely an interest in entities to come in and build their own hangars if they can get in during inclement weather, with a new instrument approach.
- The difficulty is that many aircraft either won't schedule operations to land in Springfield, or they will divert at the last minute. Diversion to Lebanon, NH, take not only funding out of the airport, but out of the State as well.

- Dan explained that there will need to be a prioritization of the elements which need to be taken, the obstructions, the safety, the runway upgrades, will all need to be addressed.
- Isn't the obstructions issue already taken care of? Dan indicated that there was an obstructions study undertaken 3 years ago. A lot of tree obstructions were identified, and in many cases, the Agency does not have easements to access and cut the trees. The Agency is working on attaining the easements, and removing the obstructions. There are many easements that the State does not have, but we are working on it.
- The Airport Commission, working with Jacobs, were told that the Agency was working on this and there was a target date of 2019. Dan explained that the study was conducted 3 years ago, and the process is underway, including negotiations, which is a process that we are working on.
- A member of the Weathersfield Planning Commission indicated that the Planning Commission seldom hears anything about the airport unless there is an Act 250 hearing.
- A citizen indicated that there should be no more housing built on Runway Road, these could become obstructions in the future.
- How can the State do more to communicate with communities adjacent to State Airport communities?
- Should communities be asked to designate areas adjacent to airports as industrial areas so that appropriate planning and zoning could be planned for and permitted near airports?
- There was a suggestion that the Airport Commission could invite adjacent boards of communities to Commission meetings, RPCs and RDCs could become involved to assist the Planning, Zoning, and Selectboard members with having conversations regarding future development at airports.
- There was a prior conversation between the Commission and the former VTrans Aviation Director regarding securing water and sewer for the airport – this is something that needs to be continued. Dan indicated we would be happy to restart those conversations.
- The Weathersfield zoning is currently being updated, this could be an ideal time for the Airport Commission to bring feedback to the Weathersfield Planning Commission. Michele indicated that VTrans would be happy to participate in such a meeting.
- What percentage of the easements have been completed? Dan will have to let folks know.
- How many total easements need to be acquired? Dan explained that there are over 20 easements which need to be addressed. Would it be helpful for the Town(s) or the Commission to assist in getting folks together to talk about this as a group – this could help move things along?
- You mentioned that there was a problem with the Stormwater permit – what was the issue, has it been resolved? Dan explained that the Stormwater Rules had changed, we were no longer compliant due to the fact that water was running off the wrong size of a hangar, there needed to be stone lined ditches installed and the run off directed from the hangar gutters to the drainage ditch.
- How many more parcels of land are allowed to be built on the airport, and how many more hangars? Dan indicated that we have a significant amount of land that could be developed. The Jacobs project provided an Airport Layout Plan of how many could potentially fit.
- How many are permitted and ready to go? Dan explained that it depends on what size hangars are proposed.

- Springfield has a Civil Air Patrol and a Springfield has a Technical Training Center. If this airport had a flight school, we could advance aviation education.
- From the Civil Air Patrol point of view, the CAP can and will teach youth under 18 to fly, to receive their Pilot's License, with only the cost of the fuel and aircraft use. Dan and Costa indicated that this issue has come up at every public meeting we have attended. The FAA does not have funding for education and training, but we will need to incorporate this into the plan and come up with strategies for finding funding and linking up programs.
- Bob Flint indicated as Chair of the Regional Career Technical Center, he would be interested to bring aircraft maintenance training into the mix.
- Springfield has a Young Eagles and Walters Glider Program Aviation Career Education (ACE Camp).
- The FAA supports the concept of ACE and they have a program and a website, videos, etc. and they stand behind ACE in a visual manner to support bringing youth to aviation which adds credibility and influence to directing youth to the program. The basic funding of the ACE program needs to be advanced. Industry has helped fund a program in NH. This is a model which could potentially work for Vermont. Michele indicated that perhaps the Agency could assist by hosting a convening of all the volunteer organizations at State Airports, and perhaps bringing in education groups working in aviation in the State (VTC, Burlington Tech program, etc.) to brainstorm how to connect with funding.
- I graduated from the VTC pilot program, there is so much need in the industry and there are so few young people who know what the job and earnings potential are. I was in the 3rd group to graduate the VTC program, we had 10 when we started, now in the 5th year VTC is maxed out on the enrollment at 25 students.
- I worked at the largest flight school in the state in Burlington, it is expensive to learn how to fly privately, but there is so much need.
- The FBO has donated many, many flights to youth in the area, this has had an impact, and there is more interest as a result. We are interested in sparking an interest. We are not in this to get rich, we are looking at the big picture. We need to find ways for the airports around the state to harness this ability.
- I've learned a lot here tonight, I had no idea what the level of community involvement of the Aviation community in Springfield was – I have not heard about all the great things you are doing. All I hear about is the noise! You need to find more ways to communicate your efforts to the community.
- Who puts the pressure on the FAA? VTrans needs to get the pressure on the FAA. There is a need to grow the community to put pressure on the FAA as well.
- Costa indicated that at these meetings, we have learned about the sheer amount of involvement in economic activities at State airports, which is impressive. We will definitely convey the initiatives we've heard about and needs you've identified to federal officials, including our Congressional Delegation.
- The number of tenants I have at the airport come from all over Vermont, a lot of the local interest is engaged with pilots donating their time to youth.
- What is the State's match for federal funding. Costa and Den explained that it is 10% for infrastructure projects (weather systems, aviation easements, runway improvements, other

capital projects). They do not provide funding for maintenance, education, most equipment, most terminal buildings.

- What are maintenance activities? Costa explained that maintenance includes activities such as snow plowing, mowing, building maintenance, etc.
- Are any groups going into the local technical schools and participating in the career fairs? CAP does do this, others could also participate. Michele explained that VTrans has sent Aviation staff to fairs around the state and would be happy to attend more.
- I heard that the State was at its limit for solar energy siting. I have an energy development company which may be interested in siting at the airport – is there any chance of this going forward? Michele and Dan explained that if there were a private developer who wanted to site at the airport, then the State could potentially lease property to that entity if they make their own contract with the utility, and it aligns with goals for the airport.