

Washington State Department of Transportation - News

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Community input shapes Methow Valley State Airport Layout Plan

ARLINGTON - The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) Aviation has developed a preferred alternative for the Methow Valley State Airport Layout Plan (ALP) that has been informed by significant public comment and input from Methow Valley community leaders.

As the airport sponsor, WSDOT is required by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to update Methow's ALP on a recurring basis to properly plan for future airport needs. Methow's ALP was last updated in 1995. Over the past 15 months WSDOT has held four public meetings with a local airport advisory committee to develop and review alternatives for the ALP. WSDOT has also solicited public feedback on the draft and preliminary preferred alternatives.

Recently John Sibold, WSDOT Aviation Director, and staff met with Bud Hover, Okanogan County Commissioner, Jason Paulsen, Methow Conservancy Executive Director, and Craig Boesel, Methow agricultural land owner, to discuss community concerns regarding the future plans for the Methow Valley State Airport. Together, these parties worked to help shape a preferred alternative that would balance future airport capacity and safety needs with the interests and vision of the local community.

“Productive farmland is an important resource and we take seriously our responsibility to support the private landowners who partner with us to steward this land,” said Jason Paulsen. “We were committed to working cooperatively with WSDOT to arrive at a revised airport layout plan that would keep this private farmland in production, meet the safety needs of the airport, and not impact the existing conservation easement.”

After hearing such comments echoed by the Methow residents, WSDOT selected an alternative that considers the following:

- ALP will indicate no future impacts to agricultural and riparian land currently protected by a conservation easement
- Runway length will be maintained within existing airport property
- Runway safety areas will be contained within existing airport property
- ALP will show partial taxiway to the north of the US Forest Service ramp on existing airport property
- ALP will not indicate future property purchases to expand the airport

“Citizens from the Methow Valley that attended the meetings on the ALP made it clear to me that, though most recognized the value of the airport to the Valley, expansion beyond the current footprint was not desirable,” said County Commissioner Bud Hover. "The county recognizes the economic significance of the airport and is willing to work with WSDOT on enhancements to Evans Road to address FAA safety concerns."

WSDOT Aviation's Land Use Compatibility Program identifies agricultural land as a preferred use near airports.

The final ALP will incorporate the Preferred Alternative and be submitted to the FAA for agency review and approval. The Methow Valley State Airport Preferred Alternative is available for reference at

www.wsdot.wa.gov/aviation/AllStateAirports/WSDOTUpdatesMethowALP.htm.

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