

Commercial Aviation Coordinating Commission Report to Legislative Transportation Committees

2023 Final Recommendation

Prepared June 15, 2023

Introduction

Per [SSB 5370](#) (2019), as revised by [SSB 5165](#) (2021), the following survey information below is provided as the final report to the Legislature from the [Commercial Aviation Coordinating Commission](#) (CACC). At the onset, it is important to note that as a result of legislative action in 2022, the timeline for the Commission's work was extended to June 15, 2023.

Executive summary

The Commercial Aviation Coordinating Commission's final hybrid in-person and online meeting June 9, 2023, focused on how to ensure that the work of the CACC provides a solid foundation and baseline of information to be used by the follow-on work group established by [ESHB 1791](#).

The CACC voted to use their last survey as the final report to the Legislature.

This report has the survey results and comments for the work group in ESHB 1791 to use as a guide as they continue the work CACC started.

Survey Overview

Note: The data and commentary in the survey below is subjective and to be used as a guide for the upcoming work group in ESHB 1791.

The 16-question survey was completed by 16 Commissioners: 10 voting members and 6 non-voting members.

The majority did not prefer a “No Action” alternative as the CACC’s response to the Legislature and believe the future of commercial aviation capacity needs (passenger and cargo) can only be met with a greenfield site that has yet to be identified. The majority also believe Paine Field will continue to add commercial capacity regardless of the CACC’s recommendations and the inability to make any recommendations located in King County or near a military installation has been a hindrance to the CACC process.

The CACC recognized Yakima Air Terminal-McAllister Field as the only existing airport interested in becoming the solution, however the majority do not believe that should be the location for the new primary commercial aviation facility.

The CACC was evenly divided in whether it is possible to have a new primary commercial aviation facility complete and functional by 2040 – most believe it will only be possible beyond 2050.

Survey data and responses:

The order of importance, once a commercial aviation facility site is selected:

1. Identification of airport sponsor.
2. Commitments of funding to build the facility.
3. Airport Master Plan creation.
4. Commitment of funding to build the supporting infrastructure (roads, rail, utilities, stormwater, wastewater, etc.) to the facility.
5. Industry commitments to operate from the new site.
6. Environmental approvals (NEPA, SEPA).

Additional items include:

- Sustainability / Emerging technologies.
- Airspace.
- Legislature should create the airport sponsor.
- Adhere to the FAA Part 139 process to create a commercial airport.
- Lack of support from the business community is notable.
- Simultaneous construction of airport and infrastructure.

In regard to ESHB 1791, some comments included:

- More study required.
- The new law will supersede the process of the CACC; our work to date and opinions should be "packaged" and transferred. We are not in a position to make a recommendation with the substantial community opposition at the three finalist sites.

- The legislature has all but ensured the sunset of the CACC without consideration of its work.

The Legislature charged the CACC with providing a list of recommendations on the future facilities needs to meet anticipated commercial aviation, general aviation, and air cargo demands. CACC member recommendations include:

- Sustainable aviation support.
- UAS support.
- Passenger vehicle charging stations.
- Training site for enhancing workforce development.
- Connectivity to the Link/train infrastructure for passengers.
- Highway connectivity for delivery of goods and services.
- The use of JBLM land must be part of the long-term commercial aviation capacity solution.
- Ensure that all HST/PPT revenues derived from aviation fuel sales are directed to the state aeronautics account (rather than the general fund), as required for FAA compliance; this is the single most important recommendation for general aviation.
- Develop and implement mandatory statewide compatible land use requirements around airports. As essential public facilities, airports cannot be subject to the whims of local land use decisions. This is the second most important recommendation for general aviation.
- Plan, prepare, and equip all airports with the necessary infrastructure for emerging aviation technologies and sustainable fuels.
- While utilizing and expanding existing commercial service facilities will not fully solve the capacity issue, this should be an interim measure taken while a new commercial airport is cited and developed.
- Let the new regional airport authority figure this out in cooperation with other agencies operating airports in the region as well as MPOs.
- Outreach program to be developed based on the site selection process.
- Inclusion of other types of aviation including E-VTOL/uncrewed passenger and/or cargo.
- Necessary infrastructure to get people and cargo to the site: road/passenger rail/etc.
- Sustainability focus - SAF, electric, hydrogen, hybrid.
- Must front-end the possibility of high-speed rail or similar to reach more distant locations.
- The legislature has all but ensured the sunset of the CACC without consideration of its work; time to move on with the same consideration of the decision.
- Put more options on the table to adequately assess other greenfield sites; keep eastern Washington locations as an option.
- Must front-end the willingness for community agreements regarding noise, etc., and the extensive economic benefits possible for a community, to adequately promote to communities a rational balance between a new airport and the negative impacts.
- The necessity for an alternative to SEATAC.
- The site must be in western WA.
- Federal compliance (or ability to address/achieve it).
- Accessibility.
- Capacity (terminal and air side operations).

- Detail the needs as specified in the PSRC's most recent report on commercial aviation.
- Provide data on local airport capacity and response to potential expansion as developed by CACC staff.
- Share the consultants research on potential greenfield sites.

The final comments in recommendations include:

- Move JBLM to eastern Washington, in the vicinity of Moses Lake (a C-17 training facility) and Yakima (Army training facilities). Then repurpose JBLM into a new commercial aviation facility.
- The City of Yakima is willing to host the "preferred commercial aviation facility." Given the difficulty of moving 55,000 passengers per day to/from Yakima, consider a different alternative. Make Yakima Air Terminal/McAllister Field a joint military-commercial facility and relocate JBLM aviation assets there.
- Continue to grow Paine Field's commercial capacity.
- A recommendation should be made to the legislature to study the feasibility of a joint military/civilian facility.
- The Legislature must act to create a new regional airport authority and empower it to complete the site selection process, acquire land for the new airport, mitigate impacts and impose zoning and other land use restrictions.
- I understand your desire to receive input from CACC members, however, I am hesitant to provide policy input via a questionnaire rather than in a publicly noticed meeting where topics are fully discussed. I bypassed a couple of questions for this reason.
- Any limitations made on a study (location proximate to an AFB, location prohibitions, etc.) potentially hinder a decision-making process. All potential options (and solutions) should be considered.
- Recommendations for a singular site (greenfield or otherwise) limits the ability to identify a full range of solutions that will likely be needed to meet future demand.
- With enough funding and support, expansion of an existing site may be able to meet a 2040 timeframe. However, completion by 2040 seems unlikely for a greenfield site.
- Regarding Question #6: My answer is no because, as I recall, early analysis and decision by the CACC narrowed the range of considerations to sites west of the Cascades. If eastern region options are to be considered, then a review of all viable options should be further vetted.
- Public engagement and consensus building among local government agencies is critical to the advancement of any potential expansion efforts. Watching that unfold as part of this work reminded me of the importance of a thoughtful and transparent decision-making process (and Warren was incredibly adept in his communication on behalf of the CACC). I would strongly encourage public engagement (as well as industry engagement) in future efforts.
- Number of questions above I could not answer; Nos. 5 and 6. Both require an "other" choice with explanation. I do not believe we have been provided adequate analysis as between the three finalist sites for a final decision - particularly on issues of community public health and environmental impacts. Yakima may be a great idea; we've done no analysis so both a yes and no choice are speculative.

- I think a minority report may be justified and useful, depending upon what the majority has voted. Can't define it in the abstract. I do note that as a citizen representative, with no staff or budget support, it is unclear how to proceed with drafting a useful minority report.
- Could not answer Question #2 because I think it will take a combination of new and greenfield.
- Could not answer Question #6 because it will require studying, which CACC has not conducted.
- In Question #11, (perhaps) a "no action" response is the only way to get Yakima studied.
- I am a voting member, but I do not feel confident I have enough knowledge of the legislative process to prepare a minority report.
- It is unfortunate CACC was prevented from even considering a joint use airport with Lewis McChord Air Force Base. There are examples in other parts of the United States where this model works. Would have the least environmental impact in my view.
- I think we should turn over all the work and research done by and for the CACC to the new legislatively created work group and wish them luck.
- Thank you to all the CACC members for your time and effort over the years.

Conclusion

The CACC wishes the new work group luck in their journey to solve the future of commercial aviation passenger and cargo capacity needs.

Documents and information of the CACC's work can be found at

<https://wsdot.wa.gov/travel/aviation/commercial-aviation-coordinating-commission>.

APPENDIX A

CACC Members and Positions

Voting

Arif Ghouse: Representative of commercial service airports and ports – County with a population of two million or more.

Stroud Kunkle: Representative of commercial service airports and ports – Port in eastern WA with a runway of at least 13,500' in length.

Larry Krauter: Representative of commercial service airports and ports – Commercial service airport in eastern WA located in a county with a population of 400,000 or more.

Jim Kuntz: Representative of commercial service airports and ports – Association of ports.

Shane Jones: Representative from the airline industry and private sector.

Lorin Carr: Representative from the airline industry and private sector.

Andrea Goodpasture: Representative from the airline industry and private sector.

Mark Englizian: Citizen representative from eastern Washington.

Steve Edmiston: Citizen representative from western Washington.

Wendy Janway: Representative from the freight forwarding industry.

Joshua Marcy: Representative from a community organization which understands the impacts of a large commercial aviation facility on a community.

Bryce Yadon: Representative from a statewide environmental organization.

Robin Toth: Representative from the Department of Commerce.

Eric Johnson: Representative from the Division of Aeronautics (Aviation), Dept. of Transp.

Non-Voting

Warren Hendrickson: Representative from the WA state Aviation Alliance (WSAA).

Robert Rodriguez: Representative from the Department of Defense.

Senator Curtis King: Senate member from the two largest caucuses in the Senate, appointed by the President of the Senate.

Senator Karen Keiser: Senate member from the two largest caucuses in the Senate, appointed by the President of the Senate.

Representative Tom Dent: House of Representatives member from the two largest caucuses, appointed by the Speaker of the House.

Representative Tina Orwall: House of Representatives member from the two largest caucuses, appointed by the Speaker of the House.

Lois Bollenback: Representative from an eastern WA metropolitan planning organization.

Jason Thibedeau: Representative from a western WA metropolitan planning organization.

Tony Bean: Representative from an eastern WA regional airport.

Rudy Rudolph: Representative from a western WA regional airport.

Kerri Woehler: WSDOT Multi-Modal Planning.