

Oregon Department of Aviation
3040 25th Street SE
Salem, OR 97302

December 22, 2024

To whom it may concern,

Good morning. My name is Hannah McLaughlin. I am a local pilot who regularly flies in and out of Aurora State Airport (UAO). I am also an employee of Aerometal International, Inc. (AMI) located at UAO. I am writing regarding the proposed airport master plan for UAO and some concerns I have about it.

My first concern is the tearing down of private hangars. As you know, hangars and land are both owned by the hangar owner (as opposed to Salem, where owners own the building but lease the land underneath. In plane 1A, it states that "South apron aeronautical properties are acquired, and hangars removed to accommodate parallel taxiway and vehicle service road"

How does the state intend to acquire these properties? To the best of my knowledge, these are all privately owned properties. Does the state have grant money? As an Oregon taxpayer and someone employed at the airport, I cannot say that I condone my tax money being used to destroy my place of employment.

Why does there need to be a vehicle service road next to the taxiway? In my opinion, this is dangerous and will lead to more runway and taxiway incursions by unauthorized vehicles and pedestrians. There is already an internal access road that is partially constructed behind these hangars, that has already been approved. Why not simply finish constructing this through-road? Proposal 1B, while not destroying any hangars, still includes this road right in front of the hangars closest to the taxiway. This takes up valuable ramp space for the businesses located there and poses a huge safety risk. How does the state propose to provide training for delivery drivers and anyone else who may need to use the access road? Having a road going directly through a very active ramp poses a huge safety issue for anyone not properly trained and who may leave the road, cause taxiway or runway incursions, cut off aircraft that have right of way, or damage aircraft on the ramp with their vehicle(s)

My second concern is the economic impact of this master plan. The hangars that are intended to be torn down under 1A include AMI, Vans Aircraft, and Life Flight. How does the state intend to handle hundreds of employees either temporarily or permanently losing their jobs? Working for AMI, I cannot think of another airport we could move to and still conduct business out of while our current hangar is torn down. We work on large vintage aircraft that are hard to find hangar space for as it is. Where does the state suggest companies like AMI move during this process?

Is the state going to cover me and my coworkers' lost wages for the time that we are unable to work? AMI employs 30+ people. What about Vans? Wilson Construction? Are you going to force businesses to close for an indefinite period when they cannot find other places to operate out of? How does the state propose that Life Flight continue to operate when their base of operations is destroyed? Removing Life Flight's hangar would be a huge disruption to the lifesaving services they provide and create a huge burden on a non-profit organization.

I see in 1A that the state claims this will provide hundreds of thousands of square feet of new land for hangars to be developed, however, this space only exists because of the hangars that are being torn down. Will businesses that are forced to sell their hangars to the state be given funds to rebuild? Or will the state force businesses to lease the land back and build new hangars at their own expense? This is not economically feasible for many.

AMI also supports many local businesses in Canby, Aurora, and Wilsonville, whether we are purchasing raw materials, need specialty machining or welding done, or need graphics work. That support disappears if AMI is forced to shut down.

I love working at UAO. I have worked for AMI for almost 7 years, and it is an amazing place to work. I have built my life around working here, and losing not just my job, but the community I have built for myself there would be detrimental to me.

The Oregon Department of Aviation's mission is to provide infrastructure, financial resources, and expertise to ensure a safe and efficient air transportation system. How does using taxpayer money to acquire private property, shut down local businesses, and force people out of work in an already tough economy align with this mission? Your vision to provide an integrated Aviation System benefiting all Oregonians doesn't work when you are forcing Oregonians who work in the aviation industry to lose their jobs.

This is an absolute waste of taxpayer dollars, and I cannot fathom why ODA would choose to take this course of action. Like many employed both in Oregon and at UAO, I cannot afford to lose my job. I strongly encourage the ODA to reconsider this master plan and consider the economic impacts on taxpayers, those employed on the airport, and the local economy surrounding the airport.

Thank you,

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