



Outlook

Fw: Letter to Chair Stephens & Aviation Board re: Aurora Airport Master Plan

From Jen Winslow <Jen.winslow@jla.us.com>
Date Mon 2024-09-16 1:05 PM
To Ashley Balsom <ashley.balsom@jla.us.com>

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I typically work Mon - Fri | 9 am - 5 pm

From: W. Matt Rogers <WRogers@CenturyWest.com>
Sent: Friday, September 13, 2024 2:48 PM
To: Brandy Steffen <brandy.steffen@jla.us.com>; Jen Winslow <Jen.winslow@jla.us.com>
Cc: Samantha Peterson <SPeterson@CenturyWest.com>
Subject: FW: Letter to Chair Stephens & Aviation Board re: Aurora Airport Master Plan

Brandy and Jen,

Here is additional communication on the UAO AMP that we received from ODAV that we would like to add to the record.

Thanks,
Matt

From: SUGAHARA Kenji <Kenji.SUGAHARA@odav.oregon.gov>
Sent: Thursday, September 12, 2024 2:33 PM
To: Samantha Peterson <SPeterson@CenturyWest.com>; W. Matt Rogers <WRogers@CenturyWest.com>; BEACH Anthony <Anthony.BEACH@odav.oregon.gov>; THOMAS Alex R <Alex.R.THOMAS@odav.oregon.gov>; Cathryn.E.Stephens@ci.eugene.or.us
Subject: FW: Letter to Chair Stephens & Aviation Board re: Aurora Airport Master Plan

From: Ben Williams <fofp99@gmail.com>
Date: Thursday, September 12, 2024 at 10:17 AM
To: Oregon Department of Aviation <mail.aviation@ODAV.oregon.gov>
Cc: Governor.Kotek@oregon.gov <Governor.Kotek@oregon.gov>, WARNER Chris * GOV <Chris.WARNER@oregon.gov>, Sydney_Beasley@wyden.senate.gov <Sydney_Beasley@wyden.senate.gov>, Caitlin_Yntema@merkley.senate.gov <Caitlin_Yntema@merkley.senate.gov>, Sara_Schmitt@merkley.senate.gov <Sara_Schmitt@merkley.senate.gov>, Jihun.Han@mail.house.gov <Jihun.Han@mail.house.gov>, Benjamin.Owens@mail.house.gov <Benjamin.Owens@mail.house.gov>, MCCOLAUGH Annie * GOV

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Subject: Letter to Chair Stephens & Aviation Board re: Aurora Airport Master Plan

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Chair Stephens;

I'm sure that burned into your memory, as it is the memories of all of us who were on the Teams call for the State Aviation Board (SAB) meeting last week, was among the final comments made by Board member Jim Knight: "What a conundrum."

As you subsequently pointed out when you agreed to carry the Aurora State Airport Master Plan agenda item forward to the October SAB meeting for continued discussion: "Those of us operating airports understand that there are finite resources for airport improvement projects and there's just not enough money to go around... Millions and millions of dollars going to a general aviation airport would take away funds from other airports across the entire system."

The sad reality is that once again as a master plan process for the Aurora State Airport draws to a conclusion, the options are appalling and terribly expensive. I would point you to page 9 of draft Chapter 5 of the master plan which states: "**Aurora State Airport is located on a constrained site.**"

This fundamental reality was a recurring theme in the 2010–2012 master plan process. One that was acknowledged in the recommendation by ODAV and the engineering consultant to select a No Build alternative. That recommendation was overruled by Chair Gardener and the SAB, which led to over a decade of pursuing unattainable expansion alternatives and incurring huge, budget-busting legal expenses to defend those illegal expansion decisions at the Land Use Board of Appeals and the Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court — where each government body ruled against ODAV's expansion plans as a violation of state laws.

I write this letter to you and the Aviation Board not just to recapitulate the history of the last master plan process of which you were not a part, but also to correct some of the statements, inferences and implications made to the Board at last week's meeting by Century West and ODAV personnel.

After the PAC was assembled for the current master plan and the first meeting was held, I sent the following to then-Chair Meeker and the Board on December 2, 2021:

My comments have to do with the Public Advisory Committee, whose first meeting on November 16 [2021] kicked off the current master planning process for the Aurora State Airport.

In case you are not aware of the contents of that meeting, I want to share with you what was presented to the PAC by the lead Century West consultant on a slide titled "Decision-Making Process":

- *PAC will provide input at key decision points in an advisory level; as a sounding board. No recommendations will be made*
- *ODA staff will be the final decision-making authority*

I am here to say to you that this is a travesty. It is quite evident that no one at OAB or Century West or JAL, the facilitator, owns a dictionary or knows how to use one. Because if you look it up, you will learn that Recommendation is a synonym of Advice.

So, the notion that you can have an "Advisory" committee that will make no recommendations is a contradiction in terms and outlandish.

I share this to make sure you understand that some of the PAC members are on record noting that the PAC was not intended to provide recommendations, but only to be a sounding board.

This is important given the implications of what the Board was told last week. Matt Rogers, Century West project manager, spoke of “Extensive public involvement” and listed 6 PAC meetings, 2 Open Houses and 3 Work Sessions. For the record, the earliest PAC meetings had no public involvement because the Zoom calls were limited to PAC members. Then after complaints, members of the public were allowed to participate, but they had to pre-register before the meeting in order to attend. Finally, members of the public were allowed to speak in the public comments section at the end of the meeting. ODAV appears to have failed to promote the ONE Open House event held on June 13, 2024; however, due to a massive mailing by the City of Wilsonville alerting the public to the Open House event, public attendance was high, but then JLA Public Involvement ran out of public comment forms after about one hour into the three-hour event, thereby preventing a majority of attendees from providing written public comment.

The implications made by David Miller of Century West were that PAC input specifically shaped the draft chapters in the master plan, and particularly the iterations of the alternatives. That is not the case. The draft chapters were presented to the PAC as completed documents in lecture format, and the only adjustments made were after the fact following challenges to data and data errors pointed out.

In early June, draft Chapter 5 was provided to the PAC with 7 alternatives, four that promoted C-II ARC designation and three that maintained the current “as built” reality of B-II. Then, just prior to the Open House held at North Marion on June 13, the PAC was notified that the three alternatives to maintain B-II had been withdrawn and would no longer be considered “after coordination with FAA.” You can imagine the surprise! The majority of PAC members and the public arrived at the Open House event to learn that nearly half of the alternatives had been removed from consideration.

Then at the next PAC meeting on July 30, 2024, the members were informed that the four alternatives that remained and were on display at the Open House had been unilaterally reduced to three—all done without consultation with the PAC.

To summarize, the PAC has been informed (and mainly after the fact) from start to finish, but never consulted or asked for recommendations. Additionally, the fundamental flaw of trying to force not just a C-II ARC designation (per an FAA approved airport layout plan) but airfield build out to C-II standards continues to ignore the fundamental reality noted above: this is a constrained site.

That very reality in addition to a decade of legal battles and now the “conundrum” that the three final alternatives will cost “hundreds of millions of dollars” and negatively impact the regional aviation system cries out for the recognition of reality.

Accompanying that recognition of reality would be a formal revision to B-II and ceasing the futile efforts to expand the Aurora State Airport into something it can never be.

Sincerely

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Ben Williams
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