
Aurora State Airport Master Plan Website Comments - David Mauk

From Brandy Steffen <brandy.steffen@jla.us.com>
Date Tue 12/17/2024 1:07 PM
To dave@charbonneaucountryclub.com <dave@charbonneaucountryclub.com>
Cc BEACH Anthony <Anthony.BEACH@odav.oregon.gov>

Hi Dave,

Thank you for sending your comments to us. I will make sure that the rest of the technical team starts reviewing this and drafting responses to your comments and questions.

Thanks,

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JLA Public Involvement's mission: To create collaborative, meaningful and exceptionally effective public processes that lead to better, more inclusive outcomes.

I will be on vacation starting Monday, 12/23/24 and will return on Monday, 01/06/25.

JLA will be closed December 24 through January 1 to allow our entire team time to rest and recover. Please get in touch early with any anticipated needs during this time. Wishing you a lovely end to 2024!

From: David Mauk <noreply@jotform.com>
Sent: Monday, December 16, 2024 11:21 AM
Subject: Re: Aurora State Airport Master Plan Website Comments - David Mauk

Aurora State Airport Master Plan Website Comments

Name	David Mauk
Organization	Charbonneau Country Club
Comments or questions?	There are many ways to assess the proposed Aurora State Airport master plan. Before that, I'd like to put this in context from the participants' points-of-view.

Flight operators see safety, services and ease of operations as priorities. Property owners want utilization and positive return on their assets. Nearby communities view it through the lens of noise disturbance, potential accidents in their neighborhoods, negative impacts on property values, and preservation of farmland. FAA's view is through the microscope of compliance to its standards. And ODAV's point of-view has an eagle eye focused on promoting airport growth, above its safety and efficiency goals, good neighbor policies, and benefits to a greater number of Oregonians.

What has been witnessed during the decade-plus struggle of devising a master plan for Aurora State Airport demonstrates that ODAV has diverted from its 'mission to provide infrastructure, financial resources, and expertise to ensure a safe and efficient air transportation system.' The agency presses forward as an advocate for Aurora Airport's growth, bypassing infrastructure, financial stability and safety aspects.

Somewhere along the way, ODAV's mission morphed into being a 'chamber of commerce'-like agency for the aviation industry. Its dual mandates - aviation safety and aviation growth - are proving to be incompatible with each other. As a public agency, it has a core duty of providing safety for that industry and the public who use and are impacted by it. ODAV is failing in this primary duty at Aurora Airport.

Before final consideration, it seems useful to untangle the web of why the plan for this airport is now in its second decade, all the while universally unpopular with community stakeholders,

and now it seems, operators and property owners, too.

Twenty-eight general aviation airports are owned by ODAV, who is responsible for providing infrastructure and safe usage for those airports. Some of these airports are more important lifelines to their communities than others, connecting recreation, commerce, healthcare, and disaster assistance. Many of those airports have needs that exceed allocated funds. In total, this state agency has a role in nearly 100 public use airports in Oregon.

One airport emerged to receive extra attention, funds and a push to grow it beyond the limits of its constrained site. A tower was built at that one airport. Users of this airport began flying larger aircraft under compliance waivers. To meet standards for these non-compliant larger aircraft, this airport would need to expand its runway and make other costly improvements. This airport would need a master plan enabling it to meet the demands of few, large, mainly transient, non-compliant aircraft, despite its constrained site, over 90% usage by light aircraft, and objections of community stakeholders. This is where Aurora State Airport is now and has been for years. ODAV is flying outside the boundaries of its mission. Excuse the use of mixed metaphors, but the master plan for Aurora Airport has been a runaway train. And there is no light at the end of its tunnel.

ODAV's ambition as an advocate and property developer, is misguided and not compatible with its core duty of aviation safety. ODAV is not held accountable to the citizens of

Oregon in its current structure. ODAV's lack of budgetary restraint and financial accountability is reckless when other state agencies are counting pennies and reevaluating spending priorities. ODAV does not provide adequate benefits for the funds it receives and the communities it serves. And it's safe to say that a development strategy to use this airport for unmanned air commerce will also crash-land.

Without substantial FAA financial backing it would not be feasible for ODAV to fly beyond its core mission. ODAV's empire-building at a general aviation airport in the north edge of Marion County is irresponsible when a 750 acre, full service, modern, underutilized airport sits dead center in this same county. Salem-Willamette Valley Airport, as well as McMinnville Municipal Airport, are well-positioned, and more than capable and ready to accept large aircraft, and subsequent revenue growth that may come from it. This alternative deserves serious due diligence and consideration.

ODAV's preferred alternative is a solution looking for a problem, not a solution that fits Aurora Airport's constrained site, nor the region's aviation budget. Stuffing ten pounds into a five-pound sack doesn't make sense. Finding ways to make the sack fit more makes it undependable. Putting ten pounds into a twenty-pound sack, or better yet, having two twenty-pound sacks, is preferable, with plenty of extra room for safety. Aurora Airport is a flawed location for expansion. Salem and McMinnville are ideal solutions for larger aircraft and space without breaking the bank.

In conclusion, ODAV is misguided, underperforming and wasting resources in its aviation promotion activities. This jeopardizes its core mandate of 'providing infrastructure, financial resources and expertise to ensure a safe and efficient air transportation system.'

Its preferred plan for Aurora State Airport is no plan at all. Not when it's irresponsibly expensive, opposed by every neighboring community, will invariably lead to costly lawsuits that further delays compliance with FAA standards, and when regional, underutilized airports are readily available at low cost to ODAV.

As history has shown over the past decade, opponents of expanding Aurora State Airport to accommodate larger, mainly transient jet aircraft, while ignoring environmental, noise, safety, and land use directives, as well as community objections, are not going away. ODAV directors, board members and staff have come and gone, but we are, and will still be here, to protect our community from the ambitions of an unaccountable agency, out-of-state parties, and the greedy few who insist their self-interest is more important than thousands of local stakeholder citizens of Oregon.

The Charbonneau District of Wilsonville, my constituency of several thousand citizens, is year-in and year-out, the highest voter turnout in Oregon. We care about what happens in Oregon, and make sure our voices are heard. This letter gives voice to what we're saying, as adamantly as ever.

We don't want to lose value in the thousands of properties we call home. We don't want to

see the quality of our air, water and soil suffer more environmental degradation. We don't want to lose valuable farmland. We don't want our municipal governments and state regulations to be run over by big moneyed interests. We don't want the peace and quiet of country living to be ruined. We don't want another pretext to expand the airport and do this all over again.

It's the duty of the ODAV board of directors and governor to consider airport options in the region as preferred alternatives to this colossally fanciful plan, to clip ODAV's wings in its non-essential activities, and return it to a safety mandate that can benefit all Oregonians, instead of in this case, only a few operators who have reasonable alternatives, and affluent, transient out-of-state users.

David E. Mauk
Charbonneau Country Club | Board Member
Chair, Civic Affairs Committee

If you would like a
response, please tell us
the best way to contact Email
you:

Email dave@charbonneaucountryclub.com

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