

January 20, 2025

Comments Submitted In Reference to the Refined Preferred Alternative:

The role of ODAV advocating for expanding Aurora State Airport appears in conflict with their role in maintaining statewide aviation safety. Over the past dozen years, ODAV has shown a disproportionate interest in Aurora Airport. Its actions in appealing to the special interests of a small, elite group of operators as clients, resemble a chamber of commerce lobbying effort.

The immediate communities impacted by more noise overhead, more surface traffic, and less safety, are not given ample weight in the Refined Preferred Alternative (plan). One would never know that this airport is next to thousands of people living in several residential communities. The plan is heavily weighted to special interests favoring expansion, while ignoring neighbors' concerns.

At what point is it government malfeasance that an agency of the State of Oregon is seriously considering tens of millions spent at a constrained site with a 5,000 foot landing strip, overwhelmingly handling light and medium aircraft, when two under-capacity, flight-ready, full service airports, sized for large, heavy aircraft, are both about 20 nautical miles away?

ODAV is serving the special interests of transient aircraft, wealthy out-of-state operators, and highly affluent owners of multimillion dollar, elite jets. This is while disregarding communities whose quality of life, property values, and safety are at risk by the plan. The airport is in an agricultural district of fertile soils and stable crops. More pollutants in the air and on the ground threaten this. The plan disrespects the local community and disregards the risks it imposes.

Aurora State Airport served as a back-up landing strip for the military during WWII. It provided air patrols, support and training. It did not handle large aircraft and heavy payloads. Today it has a civil air patrol base, is home for a regional air ambulance service, and both an aircraft and avionics manufacturer. All of these activities are supported by our local communities. As are the other jobs and businesses based at the airport, and others that are in the vicinity because of it.

None of these jobs, nor the two helicopter operators, are in jeopardy if the plan is not adopted. This bears repeating. The mechanics and repair shops; aircraft and avionics companies; air ambulance service; flight instruction operations; the two helicopter firms; and, other businesses at the airport who provide services, will all prosper as they do today. One change would be that the airport's relationship with the community would be greatly improved.

Aurora State Airport is currently deficient in its own ability to handle emergencies, fires, security and law enforcement. It has no fire truck. No advanced fire suppression equipment. It has no water source. No sewer. Its drain fields are inadequate. It has no housing, no food service. What it is - is a constrained sight near residential neighborhoods, productive farmland, and adjacent to a busy local arterial road, a even busier state highway, within sight of the congested I-5 interstate. Expanding the airport at this location to attract larger aircraft is a fool's errand with the plan lacking community benefits, when multiple, fully operational airports are 12 minutes away through the air.

Aurora Airport, constructed as a flight strip, is a general aviation facility on a constrained site with that landing strip. Its users are over 90% piston, turbo prop and light to medium jet aircraft. All of which can continue to use this facility without creating a ODAV trophy airport. The years of providing waivers, drawing up expansion plans, litigation, and spending money that the state doesn't have, is evidence that ODAV is not accountable to the citizens or government of Oregon. It is a travesty that the ambitions of a elite operators, and agency charged with maintaining flight safety in our state, are empire building at the expense of the community where it operates and state taxpayers.

In representing, and on behalf of 3,000 voters of the Charbonneau District of Wilsonville, the Refined Preferred Alternative is firmly opposed. Please reject the plan and find a solution that doesn't degrade the quality of life, property values, safety and land where we live and we call home.

Yours,

*Dave*

David E. Mauk

Charbonneau Country Club | Board Member

Chair, Civic Affairs Committee