



Frequently Asked Questions

Q 1: What is the proposed project and why is it being considered?

A: Like cities, the MAC evaluates long-term facility needs to guide future development at each of its airports. In 2017, the MAC completed and adopted a Long-Term Comprehensive Plan (LTCP) for Crystal Airport. The LTCP identified three key airfield improvement objectives:

- **Better align airfield infrastructure to match existing and forecasted activity levels**
- **Preserve and improve operational capabilities for the family of aircraft currently using the Airport**
- **Enhance safety for airport users by simplifying the runway and taxiway layout**

To achieve these objectives, the LTCP recommends the following:

- **Close Runway 14R/32L and convert to a parallel taxiway**
- **Convert portions of Runway 14L/32R blast pads to useable runway**
- **Reduce the length of Runway 06R/24L (turf) to clear Taxiways D and F from the runway safety area (RSA)**
- **Establish an LNAV (GPS) approach for Runway 32R**
- **Improve and remove various taxiway segments**
- **Expand the fixed base operator (FBO) apron**
- **Construct segments of perimeter road around each runway end**
- **Develop airport land for non-aeronautical use along 63rd Avenue North**

The federal Environmental Assessment (EA) and state Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW)—jointly referred to as the “environmental review” or “EA/EAW”—will assess the environmental effects of the recommendations of the LTCP and is necessary to accomplish in order to receive project approval and funding from the Federal Aviation Administration.

The three airfield improvement objectives above will be carried forward into the environmental review as the purpose statement, or general statement of over-arching goals. The purpose, combined with a statement of need – or more detailed description of the problems that would be solved by implementing the project – serve as the foundation of an environmental review. Put simply, the Purpose and Need should clearly and concisely explain why a project is being proposed and should be understandable to those unfamiliar with aviation.

Q 2: What is a Federal Environmental Assessment (EA) and why is one being completed?

A: The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires federal agencies to assess the environmental effects of proposed actions prior to making decisions. Based on the nature of the proposed project, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has determined that an Environmental Assessment (EA) is required. An EA takes a close look at environmental effects that can be expected and addresses the purpose and need of the project with various alternatives. It then determines whether or not the proposed project has the potential to cause significant environmental effects compared to a no-action alternative.

Q 3: What is a State Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) and why is one being completed?

A: The Minnesota Environmental Policy Act and the related Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (EQB) guidelines require project proposers complete environmental reviews for various types of projects. According to Minnesota Statutes Chapter 473, Section 614, an Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) is required for MAC reliever airport projects that involve construction of a runway or taxiway extension and the expenditure of more than \$2,000,000. An EAW provides an analysis of the potential environmental impacts of a specific project. The standard EAW form issued by the EQB will be completed and included as an appendix to the Federal EA.

Q 4: Why is Crystal Airport important?

A: Like all of its airports, Crystal Airport plays an important role in the MAC's airport system, helping MAC fulfill its legislative mandates. The MAC has six General Aviation (GA) airports to alleviate congestion at MSP and provide infrastructure to accommodate the region's GA needs. Crystal Airport's primary role is to serve personal, recreational, and some business aviation users in Minneapolis downtown and northwestern suburbs. It is primarily used by smaller propeller-driven aircraft; however, the existing runway length can accommodate some small business jets. Example business services include flight training, aircraft rentals, charter flights, aircraft and propeller maintenance, sale of aircraft parts, and medical flight transportation. Crystal also operates as a training facility for FAA air traffic control tower personnel.

The MAC's system of airports also support economic development in the communities in which they are located. According to a recent economic impact study completed by InterVistas in 2018, the operations at Crystal Airport supports approximately 320 direct and indirect jobs, paying about \$14 million in wages. The total economic output that the airport stimulated in 2016 was estimated to be \$71 million.

To view the full report, *Economic Impacts of the Reliever Airports*, visit www.metroairports.org/Airport-Authority/Metropolitan-Airports-Commission/Administration/Publications/MAC-Reliever-Airport-Econ-Impact-FINAL-Report-3Apr.aspx.

Q 5: How will Crystal Airport development projects be funded?

A: Future development will continue to be self-funded by aviation users via FAA and/or Minnesota Department of Transportation grant programs, as well as Metropolitan Airports Commission funds. No local sales or property taxes will be used to fund airport improvements.

Q 6: Will a longer runway mean larger airplanes?

A: No, that is not what projections indicate, and it is not the MAC's intent to extend Runway 14L/32R to accommodate a larger aircraft family. The purpose of the project is to conform to FAA guidance and standards, to enhance safety and better meet the needs of existing airport users. Information regarding past, current, and projected future operations and aircraft types operating at the airport, and associated aircraft noise levels, will be presented to the Airport Community Panel and the public as part of the public involvement effort for this environmental review process, as described below.

Q 7: What type of aircraft operate at the airport today? Is this expected to change?

A: For the next 20 years, Crystal Airport is expected to experience between 35,000 and 45,000 flights annually.

A review of the number of aircraft currently based at the Airport, operations data, and flight track information indicates that the majority of flights at the Airport today are by single-engine piston aircraft (about 92.1%). The remaining 8% are flown by multi-engine piston aircraft (3.0%), helicopters (4.6%), turboprop aircraft (0.3%) and light jets (less than 0.1%).

Future estimates, based on the proposed scenario to close one of the runways, extend the main runway to 3,750 feet, and shorten the turf crosswind runway, are similar to what is occurring today. Single-engine piston aircraft are expected to continue operating with the most regularity, contributing to 90.3% of flights. Multi-engine piston aircraft are anticipated to account for 4.3% of flights, helicopters for 4.6%, turboprop aircraft for 0.6%, and light jets for 0.2%.

Q 8: What do you mean by 'no-action alternative?'

A: The no-action alternative is essentially a scenario with no changes to the airfield or Airport. It's important to note, changes are both needed and planned for Crystal. The no-action alternative would maintain the existing facilities but would not include the runway extension or shift, the closure of Runway

14R/32L, the reduction in length of the turf runway, or any taxiway improvements. The no-action alternative would not address the desired safety enhancements or simplify the airfield. Taxiways would remain in the Runway Safety Areas for the turf Runway 06R/24L. Incompatible land uses in the runway protection zones (RPZs) would not be reduced. Runway lengths would continue to not meet standards for the aircraft operating at the Airport. The no-action alternative serves as a baseline for which to compare the environmental effects of the preferred alternative. While the no-action alternative does not meet several of the project objectives identified in the Purpose & Need, it will be evaluated across the range of environmental categories required by federal and state regulations.

Q 9: How can I stay up to date on what is happening with the project?

A: The best way to keep current is to sign up to receive updates via our e-news subscription. Regular updates will be sent to this email list, including notices about public meetings. Sign up to subscribe at www.metroairports.org/General-Aviation/Crystal-Airport-Environmental-Assessment/Overview.aspx. For meeting information and materials, visit the Documents and Links page.

Q 10: Will the public have an opportunity to view and comment on the document and its findings before it is finalized?

A: Yes. Public involvement and public input are important parts of this project. Two events are being planned to provide relevant information throughout the process: a public meeting and a public hearing.

The public meeting will provide an opportunity to introduce the environmental review requirements and process, share the objectives of the airport improvements (“Purpose & Need”), review the project design alternatives, present preliminary findings on the environmental effects of the preferred alternative and the “No-Action” alternative, outline next steps for the public to submit comments during the subsequent public comment period, and give community members an opportunity to ask questions.

A public hearing will be held during the public comment period to provide the general public with an opportunity to comment on the draft environmental review document. Comments recorded during the public comment period (including at the public hearing) will be responded to in the environmental review document. General responses may be developed and included in the document to address similar questions and comments received.

Once the dates, times and locations of these events are determined, they will be posted to the project website, as well as published in the Sun Post, Robbinsdale/Crystal/New Hope edition. A notice will also be sent to subscribers who’ve asked to receive email notices about the project.

Q 11: How can I share my ideas?

A: Throughout the process, interested citizens can submit comments via the “Contact Project Team” link on the project website, in writing sent to the address or email address posted on the project website, and/or in person at the public event and public hearing described above

Q 12: How will the MAC respond to and/or use public comments submitted about the project?

A: Response to comments will be addressed in one or more of the following ways:

- Comments may be addressed by updating the FAQs on the project website.
- Comments received prior to release of the draft environmental document will be considered in development of the document.
- Comments received during the public comment period after release of the draft environmental document will be responded to and considered during its finalization.
- Comments may be answered verbally as part of a question and answer session in a public meeting.

Q 13: What is the role/objective of the Airport Community Panel?

A: The objective of the Airport Community Panel (ACP) is to involve major stakeholder groups and ensure public concerns and aspirations are heard and considered by the Project Team. The Stakeholder Engagement Plan describes the ACP’s role and responsibilities as an advisory board representing major stakeholder groups and is more closely involved in the environmental review than the public at large. The ACP serves several important functions, including: representing a broad range of stakeholder groups; receiving information about the environmental review and sharing it with constituencies; providing input to the environmental review as the voice of key stakeholders; ensuring public concerns and aspirations are considered; and, in some cases, providing technical advice to the Project Team.

It is important to note that the ACP is advisory only to the environmental review. That is, the ACP may offer opinions, advice and guidance, but the MAC has the sole discretion to act on the ACP recommendations.

Project Website 

www.metroairports.org/General-Aviation/Crystal-Airport-Environmental-Assessment/Overview.aspx