



Lake Elmo Airport

Federal Environmental Assessment/State Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EA/EAW)

Public Event

Thank you for attending tonight's public event for proposed improvements at the Lake Elmo Airport.

Public engagement is important to the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) as part of its evaluation of this project.

Based on comments received at previous public meetings we've identified three categories of concerns associated with this project. Responses to those concerns can be found in this handout. ■

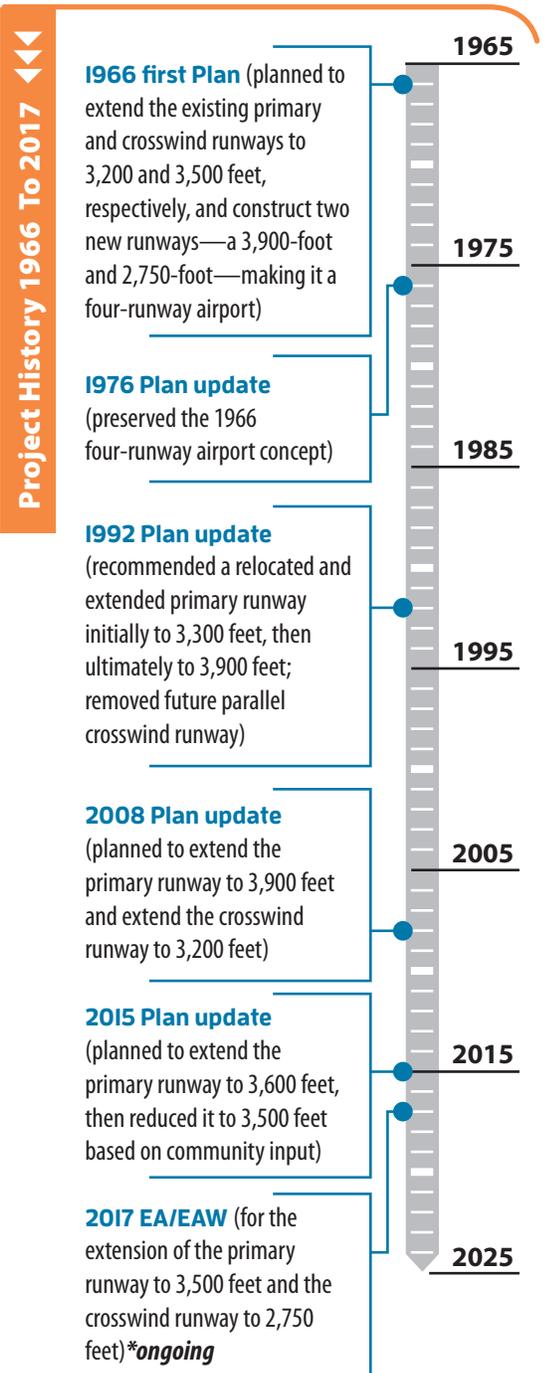
Justification for the Airport Improvements

Almost 75 years ago, the State Legislature created the MAC to promote efficient, safe, and economical handling of air commerce and to fully explore how the seven-county metropolitan area could be developed as an aviation center. This means the MAC is responsible for ensuring our airports are as safe as possible, their infrastructure is up to regulations and standards, and that they are accessible to pilots. The MAC is also responsible for promoting the state's environmental policies and minimizing exposure to noise and safety hazards for airport neighbors.

Purpose & Need for the Airport Improvements

Why is the MAC proposing these improvements? The airport's most recent Long Term Comprehensive Plan (LTCP) identifies deficiencies with the existing airfield. The LTCP provides the foundation for the environmental review's Purpose & Need statement, which establishes goals and objectives that explain, in clear terms, why the project is needed. The purpose of the Lake Elmo Airport improvements are threefold: **update the airport's failing infrastructure; enhance safety for airport users (pilots) and neighbors; and improve operational capabilities for the types of aircraft using, and expected to use, the airport.**

The airport improvements will address the following deficiencies (the "need"): **existing runway pavements are deteriorating and, for safety's sake, need to be replaced; the primary runway has incompatible land uses within its runway protection zones (RPZs) including a railroad and two public roads; the existing runway lengths do not meet the needs of current aircraft operators and their aircraft; and the airport lacks the most current navigational technology for landing aircraft.**



How is the MAC fulfilling its responsibility to minimize exposure to noise and safety hazards for airport neighbors? The 2015 LTCP Update process began with an examination of the previous plan (2008), which recommended an initial 3,200-foot primary runway, with an ultimate extension to 3,900 feet, and a 3,200-foot crosswind runway. The 2015 planning process determined that a 3,900-foot runway is not necessary to meet the objectives of the plan for enhancing safety and improving operational capabilities, and rather recommended extending the primary runway to 3,600 feet and the crosswind runway to 2,750 feet. These lengths are based on FAA guidance and manufacturers' performance charts for several aircraft using Lake Elmo Airport. In the end, after receiving additional community input, the final recommended primary runway length was and is 3,500 feet, a length that will sufficiently serve the aircraft types operating at the airport today – but with a higher margin of safety. This shorter runway length also allows 30th Street North to tie in with the existing four-way intersection at Neal Avenue North and eliminates the need for a new intersection – a point of concern for the community. Additional 30th Street North concepts were added during this environmental review in order to address the primary concerns expressed by the Community Engagement Panel: travel time and safety. The new concepts effectively reduce travel time compared with the original plan, and softened the curve; however, the proposed concepts were not supported by some members of the panel who expressed concerns about introducing a cul-de-sac and potentially a round-about in the roadway design. ■

Impacts from a Relocated & Extended Primary Runway

The airport improvements call for the primary runway to be relocated 615 feet to the northeast and extended by 650 feet to the southeast. These runway improvements are not expected to change the types of aircraft using the runways nor the frequency of flights. In the relocated and extended primary runway scenario, the federal threshold for significant noise impact does not reach any residential homes and remains on airport property. The MAC has a voluntary Noise Abatement Plan in place to promote aircraft operating procedures that help reduce aircraft noise in the neighborhoods surrounding the airport. The details of this noise abatement plan will be revisited as part of this environmental review. The improvements are designed to increase the margin of safety for and accommodate the needs of aircraft operating at the airport today. The runway's final length would not be sufficient to meet the requirements of most large aircraft. (See the *Typical Runway Length Requirements for Different Types of Aircraft* infographic in the newsletter.) The realigned primary runway will not substantially change aircraft traffic patterns, nor do we anticipate that these changes will have an impact on property values. We are not aware of any property devaluations that can be attributed to recent airport improvements at the Flying Cloud or Anoka County-Blaine airports. Neighborhoods exist near both airports and, in both cases, the runways were extended to 5,000 feet to accommodate increases in corporate jet activity.

The final runway length and location minimize impacts to wetlands, wildlife, trees, and residents when compared with other alternatives that meet the Purpose & Need. A full analysis of environmental impacts will be presented at the public event, tentatively planned for November 2017.

Note: no local sales or property taxes will be used to fund airport improvements. ■

Impacts from a Realigned 30th Street North

The proposed plan calls for 30th Street North to be realigned around the runway protection zone (RPZ), effectively lengthening the road. While this requires the street to have a reduced speed limit (to 30 miles per hour), drive times are expected to increase less than one minute in either direction. The realigned road has been designed to meet local and State department of transportation standards for a 30-mph road, given existing and expected traffic levels. The realignment does not result in additional traffic on Neal Avenue. The MAC will pay for construction of the realigned section of 30th Street North, which would move the current shared boundary between West Lakeland and Baytown Townships fully into West Lakeland's jurisdiction. However, the Baytown Township draft 2040 Comprehensive Plan document states: *"Baytown has offered to continue the current shared maintenance if the land area between the relocated road and the Baytown Township boundary becomes part of Baytown Township after the roadway is relocated. The boundary relocation would result in the entire airport remaining in Baytown Township."*

Note: no local sales or property taxes will be used to fund the 30th Street North realignment. ■

FAQs Updated

Based on input received at the public event in May 2017, we have updated the frequently asked questions (FAQs) on the project website. Please visit the website listed below for more information. ■

Project Website 

www.metroairports.org/General-Aviation/Lake-Elmo-Environmental-Assessment.aspx