



Lake Elmo Airport
ADVISORY COMMISSION
LEAAC

Regular Meeting

May 11, 2026



Goal & Purpose of LEAAC

Advise/Recommend/Engage

We will work on ways to engage the neighbors who live and work in the surrounding communities to:

- Show the value of the airport to the community
- Maximize the positive educational, recreational, and economic aspects
- Use the airport and airport events to create community with the airport users and neighbors



Communication/Coordination

We will monitor what is happening at and around the airport and advise the MAC on how to best respond

- Noise and operations
- Development
- Other community interests



Education/Orientation

We will educate the LEAAC, MAC staff, and public attendees on airport operations, the users and the surrounding committees

- Airport operations
- Who uses this specific airport
- Who lives around this specific airport
- The various roles of operating and regulating organizations (e.g., MAC, FAA, USDA, MNDOT, etc.)



Agenda

1. Welcome & Introductions
2. Consent Items
3. Public Comment
4. Business
5. Information
6. Member Announcements
7. Review Meeting Schedule



1. Welcome & Introductions





Lake Elmo Airport
ADVISORY COMMISSION
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2. Consent



Approval of Meeting Minutes: February 9, 2026



3. Public Comment Period

Members of the public:
Please state your name and address for the record, then share your remarks for the benefit of the Commission.

Limit remarks to 3 minutes





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4. Business



Youth Engagement Update





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5. Information



Stakeholder Spotlight





PATHWAYS
EXPLORING AVIATION



Chapter 54: Advocating for the Lake Elmo Airport

Engaging with our neighbors

BY MARLON GUNDERSON, EAA CHAPTER 54 PRESIDENT

THE LAKE ELMO AIRPORT has been around since before World War II, when it was a circular grass landing area in farming country east of the Minneapolis/St. Paul Twin Cities metro area in Minnesota. The airport actually lies completely outside, but abutting, the current Lake Elmo city limits in an adjacent township (Baytown) on the east side of Lake Elmo, and it abuts another township (West Lakeland) on its southern border. In the 1960s, the airport became part of the Metropolitan Airports Commission's regional airport system as one of six smaller reliever airports established to reduce GA operations at the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (KMSP). It had a 2,850-foot paved primary runway and a 2,500-foot crosswind runway and was still surrounded by open fields at that time, including in Lake Elmo, which evolved after 1950 from a small village to a city of 24 square miles, though still largely rural. The regional airport system bought an 80-acre farm parcel on the

eastern half of the airport's southern border in West Lakeland to enable eventual extension of the primary runway to a length of greater utility for a wider range of GA aircraft. Despite Lake Elmo being only 15 miles east of downtown St. Paul, it retained most of its rural village character until about 2010, when rapid eastern metro suburban development combined with a court-enforced regional government mandate that the city accept greater growth. Lake Elmo did a good job of zoning so that residential development did not occur close to the airport under the flight paths of current or planned runways. West Lakeland on the other hand did no zoning to discourage residential development right across the road from the airport. The township has minimal government or services, including no sewer, so the majority of the township is zoned with minimum residential lot sizes of 2.5 acres, large enough for a private household underground septic waste system. Individuals began

buying lots and building homes across the street from the airport in the late 1980s on these large lots, apparently oblivious to or uncaring of how the airport would evolve in coming decades. The current West Lakeland comprehensive plan was written prior to the recent airport update and in Section 5.c only mentions that it has "concerns" about the airport update plans, and its only stated concession to the existence of the airport is to assure that no structures would be built to a height that would interfere with a flight path under FAA rules.



How Are You Making a Difference at Your Local Airport?

MOST OF US HAVE A STORY about that local airport where we enjoyed flying, but it's not around anymore. It closed because of urban sprawl, budget issues, false information, public indifference, or other factors. How do we keep our favorite local facility from becoming one of those on the list of "late" airports?

There are EAA chapters throughout the country doing just that, and we'll occasionally be featuring not only what they do, but how they did it. In coming issues of *EAA Sport Aviation*, look for features here that highlight the solid and/or growing relationships between local aviators, the community, and its shared airport resource.

Their success might be through airport open houses, Young Eagles rallies, public information campaigns, or a combination of all of them. One thing is certain — they didn't build a relationship by waiting for someone else to do it.

We're proud of what these EAA member and chapters have done to grow the visibility of their local airports. And you should be, too. Enjoy these features, and maybe we'll all learn a few things that will help us in our hometowns, too! It's all a part of the long tradition of EAA grassroots advocacy used in local issues ranging from airport desires to landing fees and more.

P.S. If your EAA chapter is doing something that has made your local airport more vibrant and appreciated by your community, let us know! We'd love to hear your stories at edlovins@EAA.org or via EAA.org/Submissions.

Lake Elmo Airport's owner, the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC), implemented the long-planned and long-delayed airport update over several years starting in 2020. The primary runway was extended to 3,500 feet and was realigned several hundred feet to the northeast to center it better on the airport property, align it with the 80-acre expansion parcel, and contain the runway safety zones completely within airport property. This airport development was vigorously opposed by a small vocal group consisting mostly of a handful of people who live on West Lakeland township lots adjacent to the airport that are now much closer to the end of the realigned and lengthened runway.

After the airport update, the MAC created the Lake Elmo Airport Advisory Commission

(LEAAC) consisting of community stakeholders and airport users to advise MAC about community and user concerns. Each of seven neighboring local government bodies has a representative on this commission, typically a mayor or city or county council person, and an equal number of airport users are on the commission, including me and several other EAA Chapter 54 members. The LEEAAC meetings have come to be the primary mechanism for disgruntled neighbors to express their ire with airport noise, and they are a venue for MAC to present data on airport noise and complaints and demonstrate that they are listening and collecting data and making pilots and users aware of how their activity affects their neighbors' lives and suggesting ways for pilots to mitigate noise impacts on residential neighbors.

At the June 2025 LEEAAC meeting, the community representative co-chair, Jeff Holtz, a Lake Elmo city councilman, shared his intent to focus the coming year's meetings on identifying how the airport can better engage with the surrounding communities and show how the airport provides value to the community. In answer to what is currently being done, I was able to share many of the things the EAA chapter does for the community, and it was pretty apparent that the EAA chapter was really the only source of outreach by airport users to engage with its neighbors and community. LEEAAC members and attending public learned about what our EAA chapter does to benefit the local community: Young Eagles flights monthly to introduce youngsters to aviation, scholarships for local youths to attend summer aviation camp or get local pilot training (we've sponsored three Ray scholars now), an annual pancake breakfast fly-in to give neighbors a chance to see a variety of aircraft and enjoy an inexpensive meal hosted by airport users/pilots, and the building and maintenance of an observation area where the public can sit comfortably to view aircraft operations.

On the previous page are satellite images of how the airport has changed between 2018 and 2024. The images show how the primary runway has changed as a result of the airport update and also how in those six short years an entire community of 320 homes sprouted right across the road from the airport in Lake Elmo to the west. These new homes are primarily occupied by young couples with



growing children so it's like the airport has almost instantly gained over 1,000 new neighbors just across the road. Fortunately, because of good zoning, these homes are not directly under the flight path of aircraft from either runway. Perhaps surprisingly, we get no noise complaints from this new community of airport neighbors.

For our annual EAA Chapter 54 pancake breakfast fly-in and fundraiser this year, on August 10 our MVP member Bob Collins hatched the idea to print up door hanger notes to distribute to our hundreds of new neighbors, inviting them to come to our pancake breakfast to be served by local pilots and learn about what our EAA chapter can do for them if they or their children have an interest in aviation. Bob really wanted to make sure we establish and keep friendly relations with these new neighbors as a counterweight against the few disgruntled neighbors on the other side of the airport. The door hanger included a QR code to find more information about us and about our breakfast and was worth \$8 off a family's meal if presented at the breakfast.

Lake Elmo also hosted a "National Night Out" event on the first Tuesday of August, just before our chapter fundraiser breakfast, and one of our members, Mike Graczyk, set up a booth there to share information about our EAA chapter and advertise the fly-in breakfast event. These outreaches were a success judging by the increase of about 150 more attendees this year compared with last year despite worse weather that kept few aircraft from flying in this year. Overall our fundraiser was a success and enables us to continue our tradition of sending a few kids to the EAA Air Academy next summer. You'll find pictures and other descriptions of our fly-in pancake breakfast fundraiser on our Chapter 54 website at Chapters.EAA.org/EAAS4.



Washington County Fair



July 29-August 2, 2026

Guest Speaker: Paul Hendrickson

Lake Elmo Airport



ADVISORY COMMISSION

MAC Update



21D Total Households, Total Complaints, and Total Operations - 1Q 2026

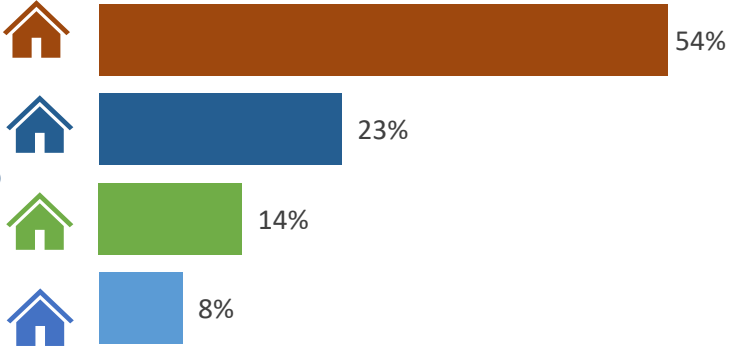


Households

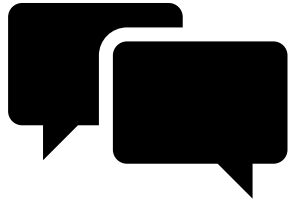


9

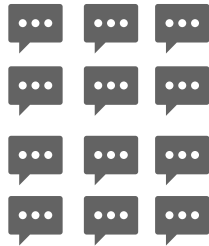
Percent of Total Complaints



99%



Complaints



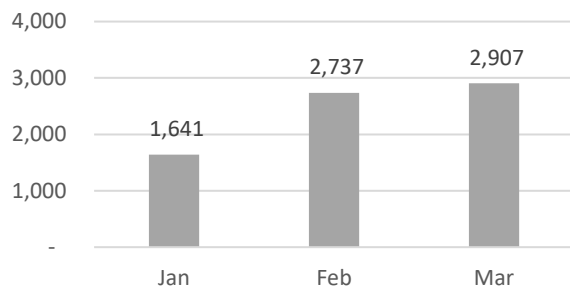
1,760

New Households since January 2025

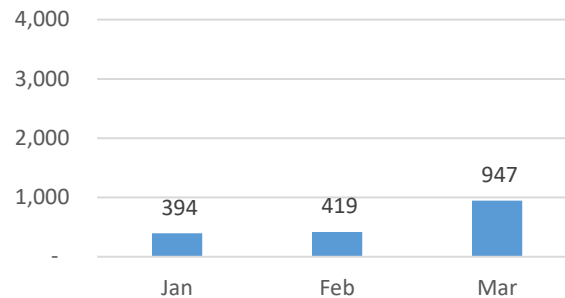


3

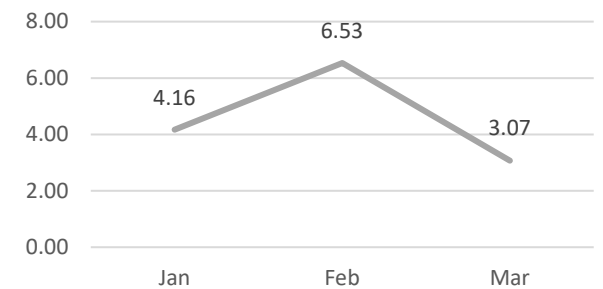
Operations



Complaints



Ratio (Ops to Complaints)



Operations & Complaints

Airport Manager Update



2026 Construction

Runway 4/22 Reconstruction

The Runway 4/22 Reconstruction Project includes a 254-foot extension of the runway, and installation of runway edge lighting, Precision Approach Path Indicators (PAPIs) and Runway End Identifier Lights (REILs).

Key construction elements involve removal of existing pavement, surface grading, installation of new bituminous pavement and markings, and turf restoration.

- Dresel Construction
- Construction Start slated for 6.1.2026
- New signs have already arrived at the airport

Taxiway E Edge Lighting & Signage

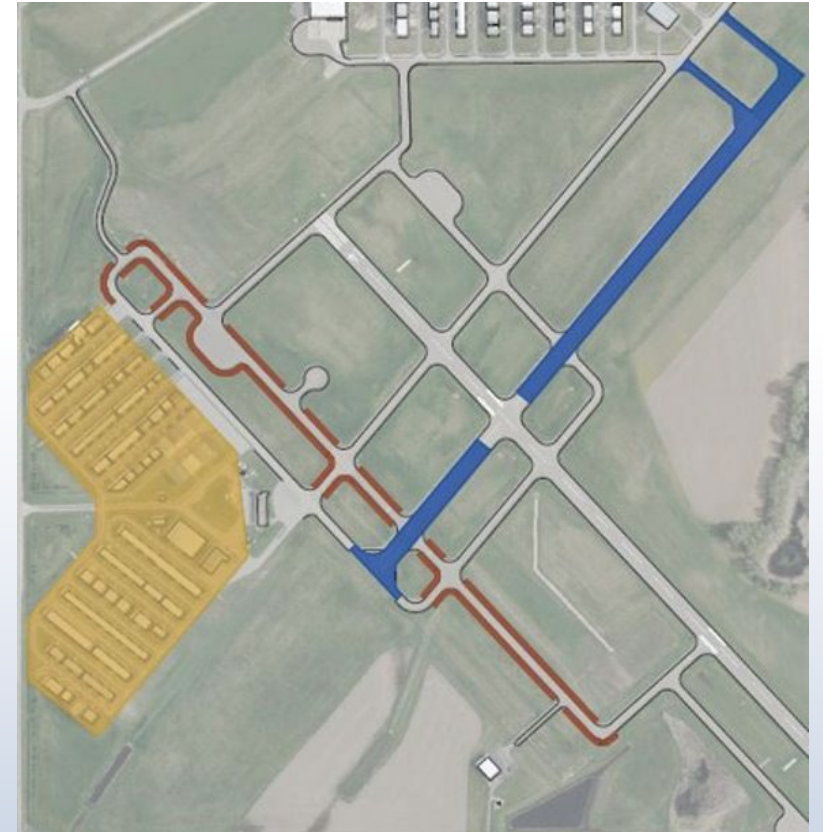
Taxiway E is parallel to the primary Runway 14/32. This project includes adding LED taxiway edge lighting and signage along full length of Taxiway E.

- Neo Electric
- July Construction following Runway 4/22 Reconstruction
- Viewing Area speaker/radio installation and scheduling an event to showcase the improvements

Private Utilities Burial

This project focuses on removal of the overhead powerlines in the south building area, replacing the overhead lines with buried underground line, and converting the electrical services affecting the associated hangars.

- Coordinating with Xcel Energy
- Most likely phases of this work spans a few years
- Proposed Bid date is 6.17.2026



Other Notable Projects

Natural Grass and Wildflower Project

2025 Multi-year MAC Sustainability Pilot Project to turn back some open areas to natural grasses and wildflowers.

- Decrease wear on equipment and reduce emissions
- Lessen the potential impacts to the water table
- Create aesthetically appealing green space for the airport and surrounding communities
- Coordination with consultants, USDA Wildlife Biologists, and MAC Sustainability to identify areas and seed mixes that promote biodiversity but not create hazards
- 2026 (Year 2) strategic mowing and document progress
- 2027 (Year 3) stabilized plot with minimal future maintenance
- 2028+ replicate and scale appropriately at other MAC airports

MAC Crew Quarter Design

Begin the design of a new crew quarter space adding technologies, enhancements to the space, and remodel existing amenities.

Construction is expected to begin in 2027.

Beacon Replacement

Project to replace the aging beacon nearing the end of its useful life. The new beacon will be in the same location as the current beacon.

ATC Electric will be coordinating a date to begin this work.



Upcoming Development and Events Around Airport



Known Upcoming Events:

**Washington County Fair
July 29-August 2**



**EAA Chapter 54 Fly-in
August 9**



**Lake Elmo Aero Open House
September 19**





Lake Elmo Airport
ADVISORY COMMISSION
LEAAC

6. Member Announcements





Lake Elmo Airport
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7. Review 2026 Meeting Schedule



2026 LEAAC Meeting Dates:

May							June							July							August						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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10	11	12	13	14	15	16	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
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31																					30	31					

September							October							November							December						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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13	14	15	16	17	18	19	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30				25	26	27	28	29	30	31	29	30						27	28	29	30	31		

21D LEAAC
Holiday



**Thank
you!**

