



**LAKE ELMO AIRPORT FEDERAL EA / STATE EAW**

# Community Engagement Panel

## Meeting #3 Minutes

Baytown Community Center

August 8, 2017

6:00 P.M.

### **Panel Attendees**

John Renwick  
Marlon Gunderson  
Mary Vierling  
Dave Schultz  
Kent Grandlienard  
Stephen Buckingham  
Ann Pung-Terwedo  
Chad Leque  
Neil Ralston  
Michael Madigan

### **Other Attendees**

Dana Nelson  
Joe Harris  
Brad Juffer  
Evan Barrett  
Stephanie Ward  
Chris Rossmiller  
Robert Sims

### **Public Observers**

Alison Griffin  
Tom Vierling  
Jennifer Foreman  
Jim Aronson  
Laura Bracklein  
Carl Bracklein  
Molly Olson  
Laura Kaschmitter  
Mick Kaschmitter

### **Representing**

Airport Tenant/User  
Airport Tenant/User and City of Lake Elmo Resident  
West Lakeland Township Resident  
West Lakeland Township Supervisor  
Baytown Township Supervisor  
Baytown Township Resident  
Washington County Public Works Planner  
Metropolitan Airports Commission Director of Environment  
Metropolitan Airports Commission Airport Planner  
MAC Commissioner District F

### **Representing**

Metropolitan Airports Commission  
Metropolitan Airports Commission  
Metropolitan Airports Commission  
Mead & Hunt  
Mead & Hunt  
Mead & Hunt  
Mead & Hunt

### **Resident of**

Minneapolis  
West Lakeland Township  
West Lakeland Township

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Lori Gergen  
Lynette Spitzer

West Lakeland Township  
West Lakeland Township

## **Absent Panel Members**

Keith Bergmann  
Stephen Wensman  
Robin Anthony

## **Representing**

City of Lake Elmo Resident  
City of Lake Elmo Planning Director  
Greater Stillwater Chamber of Commerce

*The attached report represents this writer's interpretation of items discussed during the meeting. Any corrections or additional information should be brought to our attention for clarification.*

## **The purpose of the meeting was to:**

- Conduct a debrief on the efforts to address stakeholder input received at May meetings.
- Present the alternatives evaluation process and get feedback from the CEP on the material presented.
- Continue to equip CEP members to be the point of contact for information sharing, both to and from the community and MAC, and to respond to inquiries from their constituent groups.

## **The presentation was as follows:**

Evan Barrett opened the meeting by welcoming everyone, reviewing the agenda and explaining the format for the meeting. He proposed that the presentation take place first followed by CEP comments and questions, and then a ten-minute public comment period would take place at the end of the meeting. The CEP agreed to the proposed format.

Dana Nelson explained the new format proposed for the next public meeting. Changes include a local consultant hired to act as a facilitator; non-verbal options for the public to express their concerns; and changes to the question and answer session. Dana also mentioned the FAQs on the website were updated to reflect recent questions and concerns from the public and provided the CEP with the FAQ document. She then asked for any concerns or other ideas. Upon receiving no responses from the CEP, she turned the meeting back over to Evan Barrett.

Evan Barrett provided a review of baseline and forecast aircraft operations by aircraft category, the method of collecting data through the MAC Noise and Operations Monitoring System (MACNOMS), and how the preferred alternative should meet existing and anticipated aviation demand.

Evan then discussed efforts to respond to stakeholder concerns about the 30<sup>th</sup> Street North realignment, including coordinating with the Baytown fire chief to review emergency response considerations and meeting with West Lakeland Township CEP members and homeowners most affected by new roadway alternatives.

Kent Grandlienard asked about the direction of fire response shown in the alternative. He believed fire response would not approach from the west. Evan Barrett stated that there are several different scenarios for fire response and, depending on who responded, they may come from different directions. Neil Ralston also mentioned that water shuttles to the nearest hydrant may necessitate trucks going to and approaching from the west, and fire response to the airport itself would require Bayport Fire

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Department to use the realigned portion of 30<sup>th</sup> Street North. Kent agreed that the direction of approach would depend on who was responding.

Evan Barrett discussed the project team's effort to evaluate alternate designs for 30<sup>th</sup> Street North to address the primary concerns from the CEP and the community, which included increased travel time, safety and project cost. Evan said based on the CEP response at its May meeting, the alternatives that included a cul-de-sac and potential round-about will not be considered further.

Evan Barrett then reviewed the schedule, purpose and need, and the criteria used to determine whether an alternative would be considered further. He emphasized the purpose of the Environmental Assessment (EA) and how the alternatives analysis fits into that process. Evan then introduced the five categories of alternatives that would be discussed: no-action, primary runway, 30<sup>th</sup> Street North realignment, crosswind runway and instrument approaches. Evan stated that, as the primary runway would impact the rest of the alternatives, it would be examined first and subsequent decisions made on the other alternative categories.

Evan described that the no-action alternative would not involve any improvements beyond maintaining the existing airfield and although it does not meet the purpose and need, the alternative must be carried forward throughout the process for comparison with the preferred alternative. Evan then walked through the evaluation process for the primary runway alternatives using a funnel graphic to depict the criteria used to first identify alternatives, and second, to screen the alternatives based on the purpose and need, compliance with FAA policies, and compatibility with a viable 30<sup>th</sup> Street North realignment alternative. He then described that the finalist alternatives were compared with one another based on objective practicability and environmental factors. Evan then detailed each of the eight primary runway alternatives and explained the results of the screening process, which identified Alternatives B and B1 as the two alternatives that met the screening criteria.

Ann Pung-Terwedo asked about the implications of the proposed improvements for Manning Avenue. Evan Barrett stated that one of the objectives of the proposed improvements is to clear Manning Avenue from the RPZ. Its planned expansion to four lanes would trigger an RPZ study by FAA. Stephen Buckingham asked how that is justified, as expansion to a four-lane road would not necessarily affect the amount of traffic on the road, but instead development in the area was driving the increase in traffic. Neil Ralston replied that the road expansion was the trigger point for the FAA analysis. Stephen then clarified his point by saying the traffic would occur regardless of the expansion from two to four lanes. Evan Barrett replied that the RPZ policy states any proposed change in the land use within the RPZ would trigger a study.

Dana Nelson explained the concept of a displaced threshold and how it may be used to mitigate aircraft noise. She provided background on the FAA noise policies, including how aircraft noise is measured. She stated that FAA policy considers the 65 Day-Night Average Sound Level (DNL) to be the threshold of significance for noise impacts around airports. Dana discussed how noise impacts were analyzed for Alternative B1 and for the displaced threshold alternative (Alternative B2) and in both scenarios, the 2025 forecast 65 DNL noise contour did not extend beyond airport property. Additionally, the project team calculated the DNL level at the nearest residential area under the extended runway centerline and found that a 200-foot displaced threshold would not change the DNL level in that location and would result in a less than 20-foot difference in altitude for arriving aircraft. Based on the result of this analysis, the FAA would not support Alternative B2. Dana stated that there are specific noise abatement procedures that the MAC encourages pilots to observe. She mentioned the MAC's voluntary Noise

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Abatement Plan for Lake Elmo Airport, the signs that are on the airfield to remind pilots to fly neighborly, and pilot outreach and communication efforts, and concluded by mentioning upcoming events for pilots and members of the community.

Evan Barrett then discussed the finalist alternatives with respect to practicability factors and environmental factors. A summary of the three alternatives was displayed and Evan summarized why Alternative B1 was selected to be carried forward in the environmental evaluation as the preferred alternative.

A review of preferred alternatives for the primary runway, 30<sup>th</sup> Street North, the crosswind runway and instrument approaches was provided before Evan displayed a composite graphic of all preferred alternatives. He ended the presentation by opening discussion by the CEP.

### **The CEP discussion occurred as follows:**

Stephen Buckingham stated that the purpose and need appeared to be tailored to select a predetermined alternative and expressed concern that the purpose and need does not consider the needs of the community. Kent Grandlienard stated that the alternatives evaluation process for Lake Elmo Airport has been going on for several years and that the alternatives have changed over time based on community involvement. Chad Leqve stated that the team working on the project has looked in detail at multiple options and that if the CEP were to support a specific alternative for 30<sup>th</sup> Street North, he would advocate for it at the MAC.

John Renwick stated the pavement is at the end of its useful life and that the purpose and need is based on actual issues with the existing airfield, including inadequate runway length and incompatible land uses. Stephen Buckingham reiterated his concern that the purpose and need did not consider impacts to residents. Chad Leqve stated that the runway length has been reduced and roadway alternatives have been examined to account for community concern and that the constraints of the existing site limit what can be done.

Marlon Gunderson stated that 30<sup>th</sup> Street has no shoulders and cars must share one lane to accommodate bicyclists. He asked if there would be shoulders added to the road to accommodate bicycles. Interest was also expressed for a bike trail. Kent Grandlienard stated that interest in bicycle trails and shoulders have been expressed in the past and are generally desirable but usually cost prohibitive. Evan stated that the new alternatives were designed using appropriate state and local design standards, including expanded shoulders.

Dave Schultz stated that, based on airnav.com, the pavement at Lake Elmo Airport appears to be in good condition and expressed concern that the pavement at Lake Elmo did not require as much repair as expressed by the purpose and need. Evan Barrett stated that airnav.com uses a different set of FAA criteria than the industry-standard engineering pavement condition criteria used by the purpose and need. Chad Leqve asked for clarification whether Dave was concerned that the condition of the Lake Elmo Airport pavements was being misrepresented. Dave confirmed that was his concern. Joe Harris stated the pavement was in poor condition, that frost heaving during the spring was negatively affecting the runways, and that the pavement was at the end of its useful life. Dave Schultz asked if constructing the pavement in place was examined. Evan Barrett stated that this was the no-action alternative. Dave Schultz thanked everyone for the clarification and stated he was glad that this was being considered.

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Dana Nelson explained that the presentation at the next public meeting would be like what Evan Barrett presented earlier but welcomed new ideas for the team to consider. Mary Vierling asked if the MAC had control over military operations, as what appear to be military helicopters have conducted late night/early morning operations over residential areas. Kent Grandlienard agreed and said medevac and news helicopters may also be a factor. Dana Nelson explained that the MAC does not control military operations or the flying public in general. Chad Leqve stated that, even though legislative control is not possible, successful coordination with the flying community can and has taken place at MAC airports to reduce aircraft noise.

Dave Schultz asked why the crosswind runway extension had been reduced when compared to Alternative A. Evan Barrett replied that Alternative A considered extending the crosswind runway rather than the primary runway. This would not correct the RPZ issue and that extending the crosswind runway instead of the primary runway would not best meet the purpose and need because it is not aligned with the prevailing winds. He further stated that the shorter crosswind runway length is based on the needs of lighter, less crosswind capable aircraft. Neil Ralston stated that hourly wind data from the airport has only been available since 2008 and with improved data it was confirmed that the primary runway is superior to the crosswind runway in terms of wind coverage. Evan Barrett stated that the primary runway alignment at Lake Elmo Airport is common for airports in this area.

Dave Schultz asked why the property under the RPZ hadn't been purchased by MAC in the past. Chad Leqve stated that this has been considered in the past but that it was expensive and there were other options available to address the RPZ issue without affecting Manning Avenue. These other options would also allow MAC to be more responsible with their finances. Dana Nelson added that previous plans over several decades proposed realigning the primary runway in this manner within the existing property boundary so that buying additional property within the RPZ would not be required.

Evan Barrett emphasized the importance of feedback from the local community. Members of the CEP and MAC coordinated schedules for the next CEP meeting, selecting a tentative date of October 19<sup>th</sup>, and the meeting was opened to comments from the public in attendance.

### **The public comment period occurred as follows:**

A citizen stated that she was hearing impaired and microphones should be used to allow everyone to hear the discussion. She asked how many homes were within a two-mile radius when the plan was originally considered compared to today, and requested that MAC personal phone numbers be made available so they can be contacted whenever aircraft noise is an issue. She concluded by saying that recording her request and providing an answer later was adequate.

Another citizen asked how many cars a day use Manning Avenue. Ann Pung-Terwedo replied that it was over 10,000 but she was unsure of the exact number.

Another citizen stated they heard the airport was unsafe. Michael Madigan stated that nobody was claiming the airport was unsafe but that the longer runway would increase the margin of safety. The citizen stated they must have misheard the current condition of the airport. This citizen then asked why the no-action alternative was referred to as "no action", as it includes reconstructing the runway. Marlon Gunderson stated that this was because the airport configuration wouldn't change. Evan Barrett stated that the purpose of the no-action alternative is to provide a baseline to which the other

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alternatives should be compared. Dana Nelson and Chad Leqve stated that the term “no-action” comes from the FAA. The same member of the public asked who was paying for the project. Chad Leqve replied that the funds would be generated by users of the airport system.

Dave Schultz discussed runway lengths at surrounding airports and questioned whether Lake Elmo needed the runway length proposed. Neil Ralston and Evan Barrett replied that, when the longest runway is considered for each airport in the intermediate airport category of the state system plan, Lake Elmo’s primary runway is comparatively short. Neil Ralston stated that the goal of the project was to allow the airport to better fulfill its existing role and not to expand the role of the airport.

A citizen stated that they like having the airport in the area, but that the road is already unsafe and introducing a curve in the road will only make it more dangerous. She stated that she often rides her horse along the side of the road and, during the winter, cars will often lose control and end up in the ditch. Evan Barrett stated that the design for each alternative is based on the local and state standards associated with the specific design speeds. Kent Grandlienard agreed this issue has been examined before but a satisfactory change could not be found and drivers should drive more slowly. John Renwick asked if guard rails were planned for the road. Evan Barrett and Chris Rossmiller stated that the road would be super-elevated to assist cars in cornering, appropriate signage would be posted, and other measures would be considered to maximize safety.

A member of the public asked if airport activity has been declining and, if so, why the runway was being extended. Chad Leqve stated that the proposed runway length is based on the type of operations that require a longer runway and not an increase in activity. This citizen then asked if an alternative has already been selected by the MAC regardless of the outcome of public input. Chad Leqve explained this meeting was part of the process to gather public input and then select an alternative based on the criteria presented and input received. This citizen then asked if the MAC has applied for waivers. Neil Ralston stated there is a process to apply for waivers if necessary. This citizen then asked if Mead & Hunt has been hired as an advocate for the MAC. Evan Barrett stated that Mead & Hunt has been hired to assist the MAC through the required state and federal environmental review process for the proposed improvements.

Marlon Gunderson asked if airport activity has decreased. Neil Ralston stated that numbers have decreased in the past but general stability in aircraft operations is expected in the future. Kent Grandlienard stated new aircraft often require longer runway lengths as technology is changing.

Evan Barrett closed the meeting at 8:14 P.M.