



CRYSTAL AIRPORT FEDERAL EA / STATE EAW

Airport Community Panel

Meeting #1 Minutes

Crystal Airport Meeting Room

August 28, 2018

6:30 P.M.

Panel Attendees

Dan Olson
Cindy Sherman
Ginny McIntosh
Julie Deshler
Warren Batzlaff
Kyle Lewis
Katie Clark-Sieben
Gary Schmidt
Neil Ralston (via phone)

Representing

City of Crystal
City of Brooklyn Park
City of Brooklyn Center
Local Citizens/Crystal
Airport Tenant/User
Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association
MAC Commissioner District C
Metropolitan Airports Commission
Metropolitan Airports Commission

Other Attendees

Dana Nelson
Melissa Scovronski
Brad Juffer
Naomi Pesky
Phillip Tiedeman
Evan Barrett
Sarah Emmel

Representing

Metropolitan Airports Commission
Mead & Hunt
Mead & Hunt

Public Observers

John Krack
John Grosen

Representing

Reliever Airports Advisory Council
Reliever Airports Advisory Council

Absent Panel Members

Jason Gottfried

Representing

Hennepin County

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:

- Introduce the role and goals of the Airport Community Panel.
- Provide background on the MAC, previous Crystal Airport planning efforts, and an overview of the environmental assessment process.

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- Introduce the Purpose & Need and Alternatives portions of the environmental process, and answer questions from the ACP on the material presented.
- Outline future public engagement opportunities.

Items discussed and Q&A were as follows:

Dana Nelson began by going over introductions and the purpose of the meeting and the panel. Some of these materials were sent to the panel in advance. The panel was assembled to promote stakeholder engagement during the environmental review process and includes people with diverse backgrounds and expertise who represent a broad range of stakeholders. Panel members may provide technical advice and best practices for outreach to their constituents and the broader public.

Dana went over a slide with guidelines for the panel, including its advisory role. ACP meetings will include fairly technical information, and public meetings will be held where information will be more accessible to a broader audience. Meeting minutes will be shared after each meeting, so that any panel members can be kept up to date if they are unable to attend. Dana asked whether there were questions or concerns on the listed guidelines—there were none.

Dana discussed the orientation packet materials, including a handout about what the ACP is, a write-up of various key stakeholders and their roles, and a flow chart graphic depicting stakeholders and authorities involved in airport regulation, maintenance, operations, planning, funding, and review. The chart shows that there are many people and entities involved in airport functions. The packet also included a list of FAQs and a glossary of terms that cover technical terms and acronyms.

Dana gave an overview of the stakeholder engagement plan and its objectives to strengthen relationships, build trust, and identify potential concerns so that resources can be allocated to address or respond to the concerns effectively throughout the process. Tools for this process include a project website that hosts FAQs, project and contact information, and the eventual draft EA/EAW document for public comment. Project updates will be sent out via e-news updates to people who sign up to receive them. In addition, area homes will receive a newsletter prior to the first public meeting. There will also be a public meeting and public hearing to record testimony on the draft EA/EAW document. The stakeholder engagement plan is meant to be flexible, and if the ACP feels more meetings are necessary, more can potentially be added.

Cindy Sherman asked if the locations for the public meetings have been set. Dana responded that locations have not yet been determined and they will be near, but not at, the Airport.

Councilwoman Julie Deshler asked if a similar process was completed recently, as it seems familiar. Dana responded that a stakeholder engagement process was conducted for the recently updated long-term comprehensive plan (LTCP). The current environmental review process is a first step in implementing the plan, while the previous process was for the planning effort.

Dana presented a slide with background information about the MAC, its formation, its status as a public entity, its leadership structure, and its legislative mandate. The legislative mandate is important because it states that the MAC should develop and promote safe and efficient aviation in the metro area, and also promote the overall goals of state environmental policies. This is partially why the environmental processes are taken so seriously by the MAC.

Warren Batzlaff noted that it is important to have the airports in the reliever role, to separate smaller, slower planes from the larger, faster jets that use MSP for safety reasons.

Evan Barrett presented slides describing the previous LTCP process. The LTCP was published in 2016 and approved in 2017 after multiple public meetings. A refined alternative was developed based upon public

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and user comments. The LTCP recommendations didn't propose changing the role of the Airport or the aircraft that use the facilities. LTCP goals were to right-size the Airport facilities for current users, to improve operational capabilities, and to enhance safety. The existing four runways at Crystal are more than is needed for existing and projected operations. The environmental document will draw from the goals and recommendations in the LTCP.

Evan outlined the LTCP recommendations, accompanied by slides. These included closing the parallel runway and converting it to a taxiway, reducing the length of the turf runway, and simplifying the taxiways to reduce incursions at the Airport. Evan defined incursions as when there is something or someone on the runway that shouldn't be, and noted that there have been several of these incidents at Crystal. The project is aiming to simplify the taxiways to reduce the likelihood of this occurring. The project also includes adding perimeter roads to improve ground circulation so that vehicles can go around runway ends. Neil Ralston pointed out that the perimeter roads were not included in the LTCP, but were suggested through comments on the refined LTCP, and then included in the proposed project and the alternatives for the environmental document.

Evan covered other project elements, including the conversion of blast pads to lengthen the primary runway, which will also center the runway on Airport property. Warren Batzlaff noted that this increases safety for airplanes that currently use the Airport in scenarios involving high humidity, high temperatures, and maximum takeoff weight.

An instrument approach will be added to allow straight-in approaches on both ends of the primary runway. In addition, the project will increase aircraft parking, as there is not much available for transient aircraft today. Neil pointed out that the apron and parking expansion is being evaluated in the environmental review, but will not be funded by MAC. The FBO will build the additional apron to serve their business. The last piece of the project is to develop some Airport property along 63rd Avenue North for non-aeronautical use.

Evan outlined the environmental process. Two agencies are the primary drivers of the environmental review. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is the lead federal agency under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and will need to make a finding about whether the project has significant environmental impacts. The MAC is the responsible government unit under the Minnesota Environmental Policy Act (MEPA), which has a separate but similar set of rules. The document will be a joint federal/state document that meets both sets of requirements.

Evan presented the project timeline and noted that the first ACP meeting is being held about half way through the process to keep the stakeholder engagement events closer together. This ACP meeting will provide a sense of what might come up at future community meetings and give the panel members time to reach out to their constituents regarding the public event.

Evan noted that the review document will have three pieces, the purpose and need (which is why the project is occurring), the alternatives (how the project will be accomplished), and the environmental effects. This meeting will focus on purpose and need and alternatives, and the next meeting will have more information about the environmental impacts. This meeting and the public meetings will help to ensure that no potential environmental effects are overlooked.

Commissioner Katie Clark-Sieben asked if the dates for the public meeting are known yet. Evan responded that dates are not yet set and the date for the first public meeting will be determined in the next few weeks. Dana suggested that panel members contact her if there are dates that don't work for them.

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Evan explained that when the draft is complete, the FAA will complete a legal review, and some adjustments will be made to the document. The next ACP meeting will be held at around this time. There will then be a 45-day public comment period on the draft document and a public hearing, after which the EA/EAW will be refined, finalized, and re-published.

Evan presented information about the purpose and need, including FAA guidance regarding this important statement. The goals of the LTCP are distilled into simple statements that are easily communicated. The purpose includes the overarching project goals that came from the LTCP, and the need involves the specific problems to be solved by the project. Evan spoke about the six objectives of the project individually.

Simplify airport geometry: Evan explained the concept of hot spots, and that hot spots at Crystal Airport result from two sets of closely spaced parallel runways. Each hot spot is at a location where a pilot must decide whether to cross a runway. Warren Batzlaff noted that current FAA standards would place the runways twice as far from each other as they are right now. Evan agreed and noted that close spacing of runways and the number of runway crossings contribute to runway incursion issues. Neil noted that there is no option other than to address this issue, and that the FAA has been very active in addressing runway incursions nationwide. The project will reduce the number of hot spots, which the FAA strongly encourages.

Meet runway needs for existing users: Evan reviewed the group of design aircraft for Crystal Airport. He noted that the primary runway, 14L/32R, should be designed to meet the needs of the more demanding aircraft using the Airport. A slide with a chart depicting useful loads and associated runway lengths was presented. Evan explained that weather conditions can also affect the needed runway length beyond what is depicted on the chart. The intent is to accommodate more of the existing Airport users in more scenarios.

Cindy Sherman asked about what the chart represented—the dashed red line is the current length of the runway, and it appears to not accommodate several of the aircraft depicted on the chart. Does that mean that these are not currently operating at the facility, or that they do and operate marginally? Warren Batzlaff explained that it depends upon circumstances. If the weather is hot and humid, or the aircraft are at gross weight, they couldn't operate on the existing runway length. However if there's a headwind, it is cold and the pavement is dry, the aircraft would have enough room to operate. It depends upon the weather and the capability of the aircraft. Evan noted that there is more activity at the Airport in the summer, so at peak times aircraft tend to be more limited. A pilot could reduce the amount of fuel, passengers, or cargo to below 75% weight, but it may not be effective to fly at all if the capacity is reduced too much. Neil pointed out that the listed aircraft types are all currently at the Airport, and that the plan is not attempting to attract other types of aircraft. With a longer runway, the Airport could allow aircraft that are already there to fly more often or operate more efficiently—meaning that they could carry enough fuel to get to their destination without stopping to refuel.

Evan discussed the turf runway, and how the shortened length was determined to meet user needs. This will remove crossing taxiways out of the runway safety area, eliminating hot spots. Councilwoman Deshler asked whether the turf runway would be removed completely. She noted that at the last meeting she attended it was very important to commenters to keep the turf runway. Evan responded that the turf runway will be maintained but at a shorter length. Evan noted that it is the only turf runway in the Twin Cities metro area, which can be important from a training perspective.

Instrument approach for Runway 14L: Evan explained that the project will establish a straight in approach to both ends of the primary runway; there is currently only one. With GPS advancements this is becoming more cost effective, as you don't need to install expensive ground-based instruments. From

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an environmental perspective, the instrument approach means looking at obstructions that may need to be removed.

Evan touched briefly on the last three objectives: **improving ground circulation, increasing aircraft parking capacity, and developing Airport property for non-aeronautical uses**. Cindy Sherman asked about the non-aeronautical land use development in Brooklyn Park and whether the MAC would lease the land, sell the land, or develop the non-aeronautical project itself. Gary Schmidt explained that the MAC would typically lease the property for someone else to develop. Cindy surmised that this would be a long term 99-year lease, or something similar, and asked whether these areas are shown in the LTCP. Evan noted that there are several areas designated for non-aeronautical use by the LTCP, but only one area will be assessed by this environmental review for this purpose due to its location and existing surrounding land uses. Neil agreed and reiterated that the other parcels are marked for non-aeronautical uses, but their development will occur farther in the future. The area along 63rd Avenue is most ripe for near-term development. Dan Olson asked whether a similar environmental review process will be undertaken when the other parcels are developed. Evan explained that there is no state requirement, but there would be a federal approval required. It would likely be a smaller review effort, depending upon what is proposed. Neil agreed that it wouldn't be the full EA process for a future non-aeronautical development proposal, and that the FAA land-release process includes a streamlined environmental review. Commissioner Clark-Sieben noted, as background, that the MAC Commission discussed this topic during a recent strategic planning process and found that land releases are often a response to a developer approaching them with a project. The MAC intends to think more strategically about developing their property for such uses rather than responding to offers. There are no specific projects planned for this land, but it is part of a broader vision to think more strategically about appropriate uses. Cindy Sherman explained that Brooklyn Park will need to consider this because their draft comprehensive plan shows airport use only, and they will need to plan for non-aeronautical uses. Gary Schmidt noted that the area shown is already separated from the airside. He also noted that the MAC tries to work with communities so that proposed development won't violate their zoning or interfere with how development is planned within the community.

Warren Batzlaff noted that the runway planned for decommissioning is at the end of its useful life and would need to be replaced anyway, which would not be eligible for federal dollars. By rolling the projects together, there will be funding partnership with the FAA.

Evan next explained alternatives analysis and how each alternative was identified. The FAA guidance does not require a specific number or range of alternatives. The alternatives analysis draws heavily from previous planning work and is meant to thoroughly explain how the preferred alternatives were identified and why other alternatives were ruled out. Evan explained the no-action alternative, and how it provides a baseline for assessing environmental impacts. The no-action alternative does not mean no impacts, as it still involves repairs to existing facilities and continued aircraft operations at the Airport. This alternative will be carried through the environmental review for comparison purposes. The document will also analyze off-site alternatives, such as relocating the Airport, or using a different MAC airport in lieu of improving Crystal Airport. These alternatives were eliminated early on, as they are not reasonable and do not meet the project purpose and need.

Evan explained the environmental resource categories, as shown on a slide, and noted that the ones listed on the slide were the ones that will be examined most carefully considering the location and conditions of the Airport. The FAA establishes significance thresholds for each category. If a threshold is exceeded, then an environmental impact statement would be necessary. Not all impacts are considered significant by FAA guidance. The EA will document the impact in each category and compare it to the significance threshold. The MAC does not anticipate that any impacts would exceed those thresholds.

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Categories began with air quality and aircraft noise. Evan then explained the DOT Section 4(f) category regarding the use of any public park resources. There are a number of parks on and around the Airport, including MAC Park, the recreational trail on the west side, and parks along the sides of the Airport. One park, Edgewood Park in Brooklyn Park, is in the approach for Runway 14L. Some trees will need to be removed or trimmed in the park. More detailed survey work will be conducted in the park in the fall to determine which trees will be affected, and conversations have begun with the City of Brooklyn Park concerning how to reach a positive outcome. Cindy Sherman expressed agreement with this. Evan noted that the FAA will be involved in this process because they need to issue a specific determination on the significance on impacts to the park. Melissa Scovronski asked if tree removal was associated with the project or if it would need to be conducted regardless. Neil explained that the majority of the removals are trees that would become problematic under the no-action alternative as they grow, but the timing of removal is affected by the runway shift by a couple of years. Ultimately there would need to be some action on most or all of the trees that will be discussed in the coming months. Commissioner Clark-Sieben suggested exploring giving trees to the city for replanting. Neil noted that this has been discussed regarding Edgewood Park, and that the MAC also provides homeowners with the fair market value of the trees when they are on private property, as they did with previous tree removals around Crystal Airport. Evan explained that the goal is to identify trees that need to be removed or trimmed by the next time the group meets. Cindy Sherman pointed out that the discussions so far had been very selective regarding trees, and hadn't suggested any clear cutting, which would be more concerning. Dan Olson asked if any trees would be taken from MAC Park. Evan responded that they would not. There would be a few dozen additional targeted trees on private property, but no others on park property. Councilwoman Deshler noted that residents she's spoken with that have had trees removed by the MAC have seemed pleased with the process and the compensation.

Warren Batzlaff asked if the non-aeronautical use area was taxable to the city it is in, or if it is no tax because it is on the Airport. Gary Schmidt explained that it would pay a personal property tax on improvements to the taxing district, in this case, Brooklyn Park. The Airport will receive rent for use of the land.

Evan described the rest of the resource categories including hazardous materials, and an overview of a recently completed historical and archeological resources study. Evan explained land use compatibility and that the existing airport zoning ordinance will need to be updated. He noted that the environmental justice category is being examined because there are low income and minority populations close to the Airport.

Evan explained that a wetland delineation report has been completed, and that the findings will need to be submitted to the local government unit designated by the Wetland Conservation Act. He asked if the City of Crystal was the reviewer for projects within the city limits. Dan Olson said that they haven't done a lot of wetland review, and that it may be useful to get in touch with the city engineer, who may refer to the local watershed district.

There are several other NEPA and MEPA categories, but those Evan discussed specifically are the primary issues for this project. The final analysis will also identify cumulative effects when considering other past, present, and future projects in the area.

Evan noted that the next steps include sending a newsletter to residents near the Airport. Dana said that the MAC has previously reached out to those within two miles of the Airport and asked the panel for feedback on whether this radius is suitable. She noted that there are minority areas around the Airport and asked if there are any languages that the cities typically use for engagement that may be relevant to these areas. Evan explained that the newsletter will provide an overview of the project and notify the public of the upcoming event.

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Commissioner Clark-Sieben asked how the panel makes a decision about what their recommendations will be without taking a vote. Dana explained that the important piece is understanding what the concerns are and considering differing opinions throughout the process, ensuring that the team takes the viewpoints into consideration, and then communicating the justification for decisions around those viewpoints to the FAA.

John Grosen clarified that the environmental document was not a go/no-go for the implementation of the project. Evan confirmed this and said that after environmental approval the MAC will take steps towards design and implementation. Some preliminary design will be done in order to determine impacts.

Warran Batzlaff asked whether the existing ponds or retention basins that ice over will change. Evan pointed out that one basin will be filled in for a proposed taxiway, and its function will need to be replaced because the project can not result in a net runoff increase. Warren noted that these areas are a concern for wildlife such as geese in an air traffic control blind spot, and due to slippery areas if aircraft happen to leave a runway, especially at the ten o'clock position off the 32 runway. If a plane goes off the runway, it goes into a large ditch rather than level ground. It may be useful to extend the culvert out to change the ditch. Evan noted that this is not currently planned but could be considered. Neil said this could be looked at in the preliminary design phase, and it seems like this could be improved.

Dan Olson asked if the cities should publicize the public meetings through social media and other means. Evan responded that the MAC appreciates and encourages any outreach assistance the cities can provide.

Gary Schmidt asked who approves the study. Evan explained that the FAA makes the federal finding, and the MAC makes the determination for the state EAW.

John Grosen asked if the assessment is an approval document, or just a step for approval of the implementation of the project. Evan said that the environmental process is not typically undertaken without intent to implement the project. Neil agreed that the MAC is invested in the environmental process with the intent of moving the project forward, and the FAA is supporting the project in order to reduce the runway incursion potential.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:00 p.m.