

8. AIR TRANSPORTATION PLAN

8.1 OVERVIEW

This chapter documents a review and assessment of needs, deficiencies, policies and improvement options affecting the aviation system within the Battle Ground Urban Growth Area (UGA). Included is a discussion of the local and regional policy context for developing and maintaining this travel mode, an evaluation of needs and deficiencies in the existing aviation system, and a discussion of various term improvement recommendations for preserving this system.

Information contained in this memo was largely obtained from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the Washington State Department of Transportation's (WSDOT) airport records, the Clark County *Comprehensive Plan Transportation Element*, and the *Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)*.

8.2 CONSISTENCY WITH PLANS AND POLICIES

Airports and air transportation services are provided in the context of a complex set of federal, state, and local governmental regulations, and each level of government has a certain degree of control over parts of the air transportation system. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) deals primarily with issues of safety and air traffic control. The Washington State Department of Transportation's (WSDOT) Aeronautics Division currently focuses primarily on general aviation airports and has some direct involvement with major passenger airports. Local jurisdictions (either city, county, or port district) influence land use and usually are the airport operating authorities.

8.2.1 County Plans and Policies

The Clark County *Comprehensive Plan* includes several goals, supporting policies and implementation strategies relating to air transportation. One of the goals is to “develop a multi-modal transportation system”. The goal is supported by a policy to include all affected jurisdictions in regional airport planning in order to provide compatibility with surrounding land uses and to support adequate ground transportation for the movement of people and goods to and from airports. As an implementation measure, the County should participate in any new airport site selection process that is led by the Ports, WSDOT's Aviation Division or any other governmental entity.

Land use plans that incorporated airport issues were completed in 1979 (countywide) and in 1987 (Ridgefield Subarea Plan) and 1988 (South County Subarea Plan). These plans have identified the location of existing airports and have recommended certain land use regulations be considered to protect the airports from being compromised by surrounding incompatible land uses. However, no county or city ordinances were specifically implemented. Generally, applicable federal and state laws affecting land use around airports have been acknowledged.

8.2.2 Metropolitan Transportation Plan

The *Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)* for Clark County is the region's principal transportation planning document. It is developed through a coordinated process involving all local jurisdictions with the objective of identifying regional solutions to transportation needs. Specific goals and policies of the MTP that are relevant to the air transportation plan include an emphasis on providing for a balanced

transportation system that includes aviation and that considers safety as a prime concern in developing the regional transportation system.

8.2.3 State Plans and Policies

Airports are recognized as essential public facilities under the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA). One of the several requirements of the GMA is that the comprehensive plan of each jurisdiction should include a process for identifying and siting essential public facilities, including airports and state and regional transportation facilities. Furthermore, *Washington State Bill 6422* requires every city, town, code city, charter city and county having a general aviation airport in its jurisdiction to discourage the siting of land uses that are incompatible with the airport. The provision applies to every jurisdiction under RCW 36.70A.200 (Siting of Essential Public Facilities), RCW 36.70A.510 (General Aviation Airports-Siting of Incompatible Uses). The local planning authority and the airport sponsor should work together to ensure that the needs of both the local and aviation communities are met and compatible land uses are planned for the future.

WSDOT also has an Airport Land Use compatibility Technical Assistance Program through the development of resource information regarding safety; land use decision making and a “best practices” handbook to serve as a desktop reference guide for cities, counties and airport sponsors to provide technical examples and model approaches to protecting aviation infrastructure and balancing quality of life. The Airport Land Use compatibility Program identified three areas that embody critical quality of life and safety issues relevant to airport operation and community health and welfare; they are concerns surrounding height hazards, safety and noise. In Washington State, the state standard for height hazards accepts the national standard, *14 CFR Part 77 Objects Affecting Navigable Airspace*. Any object that penetrates these imaginary surfaces is considered an obstruction.

8.3 NEEDS AND DEFICIENCIES

8.3.1 Existing Facilities

There is one privately-owned, public access airport in the Battle Ground Urban Growth Area (UGA) – the Cedars North Airpark. This airpark is located south of NE 199th Street and approximately one-half mile east of SE. Grace/SE 142nd Avenue. According to FAA Form 5010 (which is used to summarize inventory information about every public access airport in the United States) this general aviation airport sits on approximately 15 acres and currently has a 2,400-foot by 50-foot mowed grass runway. Navigation aides are limited to a wind sock and visual flight rules apply. The airpark has nine based single-engine aircraft, an 80-foot by 100-foot tie down area for three aircraft, one small hangar and a storage building. The airpark has approximately 500 local and 2,500 itinerant aircraft operations per year for a total of 3,000 annual aircraft operations.

Regional aviation needs are provided through Portland International Airport (PDX), approximately 20 miles south of the Battle Ground UGA on the south side of the Columbia River in the State of Oregon. This regional air carrier airport provides regularly scheduled domestic and international passenger service, as well as air cargo service. Passenger airlines serving PDX include Air Canada, Alaska Airlines, America West, American, Continental, Delta, Frontier Hawaiian, Horizon, Lufthansa, Mexicana, Northwest, Skywest, Southwest, Sun Country, United and United Express. Cargo carriers serving PDX include Airborne, Air China, Kitty Hawk, AmeriFlight, BAX Global, Cargolux Airlines International, DHL Worldwide Express, Emery, Empire, Evergreen, Federal Express, and Korean Air.

8.3.2 Future Needs

A number of studies have been undertaken in the past 20 years regarding the provision of air transportation service to Clark County residents. An airport system plan was developed in 1984. Land use plans that incorporated airport issues were completed in 1979 (county-wide) and in 1987 (Ridgefield Subarea Plan) and 1988 (South County Subarea Plan). The Washington State Department of Transportation's Aviation Division, as well as local pilots' associations, have requested that an additional airport be sited in Clark County. In the late 1980's, a study was conducted to examine the feasibility of siting an airport in the Ridgefield Junction area. Public concern about the noise and traffic impacts of this airport resulted in not considering a new airport at that time. The February 2000 Clark County Airport Advisory Task Force Report concluded that there are inadequate general aviation capacity in the county and protection and preservation of existing facilities is needed. The report also stresses the need for a two-way dialog with the Port of Portland and the Oregon Department of Transportation as Clark County depends economically on the proximity to Oregon airports.

One of the several requirements of the State Growth Management Act is that the comprehensive plan of each jurisdiction should include a process for identifying and siting essential public facilities, including airports and state and regional transportation facilities. The local planning authority and the airport sponsor should work together to ensure that the needs of both the local and aviation communities are met and that land uses compatible with airport operations (both noise and safety) are planned for the future. Currently, the City of Battleground has an Airpark District zone in its Development Code that allows for airport development and operation. The City also identifies the Cedars North Airpark on its comprehensive plan map. However, there are currently no city ordinances specifically protecting navigable air space surrounding the airport or the approach slopes, nor are there regulations that address restrictions on incompatible land uses to preserve the function of the airport.

8.4 AIR TRANSPORTATION ACTION PLAN

8.4.1 Goals, Objectives and Action Strategies

Transportation Goal 4. A transportation system that provides for the efficient movement of goods and services

TO4.4. The City will work with property owners surrounding the Cedars North Airpark and with the appropriate state and federal agencies to develop a plan for the airstrip area

TA4.4.1. The City will establish criteria for locating compatible land uses and property adjacent to the Cedars North Airpark.

Land Use Goal 8. To provide for general aviation needs within airparks in a way that will minimize impacts to the surrounding area

LO8.1. The City will work to determine the potential demand for general aviation needs and the future use of the airpark

LUA8.1.1. The City will create an airport overlay zone to balance the future operations of the current airpark and any future airparks with the surrounding uses.

8.4.2 Recommendations

The City should consider developing specific ordinances consistent with state and FAA guidelines and regulations to protect navigable airspace surrounding the airpark when this area is annexed to the city. The ordinance should include specific height restrictions and specify slope protection.

The City should also consider where future residential, educational facilities, hospitals or other similar land uses might be permitted under current and proposed zoning within areas subject to aircraft noise or accidents.