

## Commercial Aviation Coordinating Commission airport study update

March 9, 2021

11 a.m.

Present: Commissioner Stamper, Commissioner Pollock, Commissioner Swope, County Manager Erik Martin, Commercial Aviation Coordinating Commission (CACC) Chair and Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) Aviation Director David Fleckenstein

Guests: Claudia Yaw, Joni Sellards, Peter Sonne, Di Morgan, Frank Corbin (11:20 a.m.), Julie Zander, Edna J. Fund, Nichole Seroshek and others

Recorder: Rieva Lester

Commercial Aviation Coordinating Commission (CACC) Chair and Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) Aviation Director David Fleckenstein provided a brief history on the group.

He said CACC was created by the Legislature and tasked the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) Aviation to provide staff support for coordinating and administering the commission and technical assistance as requested by commission members.

David said SeaTac is beginning to recover from the huge downturn related to COVID-19. He said business travel remains an unknown, but he said experts have guesstimated that SeaTac will hit its max capacity in 2027.

David outlined the CACC's December 2020 recommendations (Commissioner Swope left at 11:09 a.m. during the overview):

- Review six sites: Arlington Municipal Airport, Bremerton National Airport, Snohomish County Airport / Paine Field, Sanderson Field (Shelton) Tacoma Narrows Airport (Gig Harbor) and Ed Carlson Memorial Field – South Lewis County Airport.
- Phased implementation to meet demand using two to three airports while pursuing a large airport site.
- Legislation to adjust the timeline of the CACC from 2022 to 2024.
- Continue the revolving airport loan program.
- Further the development and use of Sustainable Aviation Fuel within the state.
- Continue the work of the Electric Aircraft Working Group (EAWG) and overall efforts in emerging aerospace technology.

David outlined the group's next steps:

- Use communications firm PRR to assist with public outreach.
- HB 1198 to extend the CACC timeline to 2024 and open up opportunities within King County.

- Project costs and the best use for each of the six identified airports during the CACC's April 29 meeting.
- Use the revolving loan program to help address general aviation capacity.
- Tentatively use the state Aviation System Plan Update to explore greenfield site options.
- Potential for Aviation and Aerospace Advisory Committee (which stems from the electric aircraft work).
- Continue collaborating with stakeholders.

David said UPS, FedEx, Alaska, Delta, Southwest Airlines and others have indicated that they feel South Lewis County is too far away to provide commercial services. David said he feels the commission will find that the best use of the South Lewis County would be to provide industry support, such as hangars.

David said WSDOT has spoken with the Cowlitz Indian tribe twice recently.

David said the CACC has asked to have until 2024 to identify its top choice.

David said roughly 4,000 acres would be needed for a large, SeaTac-sized airport or roughly 1,000 acres for a small, two-runway airport. He said the limited acreage at Lewis County's Toledo site would not make it a prime location.

David said zoning, size, sponsor support and many other factors will be considered as the group reviews its options.

In response to from Commissioner Stamper's hypothetical question asking whether the county could be forced to house the proposed airport even if the county rescinded its letter of interest regarding the project. David said it would be highly unlikely that the area would be considered if there was no support.

David said there have been concerns voiced in other areas, such as Olympia. He said Tacoma Narrows also has indicated it would not be interested in a commercial airport.

David said he would send information about a grant to Josh Metcalf. He said he also would send information about what "general aviation" entails.

David said the only funding linked to the CACC's work would be the loan. He said the county could indicate it is interested in only general aviation.

Meeting ended at 11:49 a.m.