

February 2, 2016

**Chair McKeown and members of the House Committee on Transportation and Economic Development:**

We understand that your committee is likely to pass HB 4039 out of the Transportation Committee and ask the Speaker not to sequentially refer this bill to the House Committee on Rural Communities, as previously scheduled.

We further understand that the truncated timeframe of the 2016 Session does not allow discussion of larger policy issues, but we do want it in the Committee record for HB4039 that there are many land use and transportation policy aspects concerning the future development of the Aurora Airport that should receive legislative review in the future.

We understand that HR 4039 is offered as a technical fix created by the building of the Aurora Airport tower, to permit Aurora Airport to be qualified for the 'Through the Fence Program at Rural Airports'.

BUT AURORA AIRPORT IS **NOT** A RURAL AIRPORT EVEN BY ODA STANDARDS AND SHOULD NOT COME UNDER THE 'THROUGH THE FENCE' PROGRAM. The 2012 Oregon Department of Aviation Master Plan of 2012 confirms that on Page 2 of the Executive Summary (bold emphasis in the original):

**"Airport Role Analysis**

**Aurora State Airport fits well within the OAP 2007 description of an Urban General Aviation Airport**, which supports all general aviation aircraft and accommodate (sic) corporate aviation activity including business jets, helicopters, and other general aviation activity. It is one of five GA airports in the region with facilities and services appropriate for business jets. The five airports are Aurora State, Hillsboro, McMinnville, McNary Field in Salem and Troutdale.

On page 1-5 in Chapter One it states:

**"Aurora Airport's Role within the State of Oregon's System**

The Oregon Aviation Plan 2007 (OAP 2007) classifies the Airport as a Category II, Urban General Aviation Airport. A Category II airport supports all general aviation aircraft and accommodates corporate aviation activity, including business jets and helicopters, and other general aviation activity."

**Scans of these pages are attached**

Aurora Airport is designated an Urban Airport and as such should not be part of the Through the Fence Program for Rural Airports.

There are other aspects of the 2012 Master Plan that are of concern and we respectfully recommend that these be examined. They are as follows:

Aurora Airport fits the designation of an Urban Airport, and the final Master Plan outcome includes future strengthening and lengthening of the runway, lengthening of the airport to the south to extend the runway safety zone, closure of Kiel Road to extend the runway safety zone, and resulting safety zone extension over private agricultural land south of the airport.

This explains why the Aurora Airport Tower was built despite the Rural 'through the fence' criteria. It was not oversight or misapplication of the standard, it is what is done with urban airports.

The Aurora Airport Master Planning Process and Monday's Hearing leaves many questions unanswered:

1. No definitive plans for traffic mitigation was planned or discussed, beyond vague descriptions of rerouting Kiel Road to the south to join Ehlen Road east of Hwy 551 – notwithstanding major traffic problems on that road already as it serves the south end of the airport and is the main access road for Helicopter Transport Corp.
2. All questions raised about conducting an Environmental Impact Assessment were skirted by stating either that a) airport expansion is under the purview of the FAA, or 2) environmental assessments will be done in the future when ground is broken.
3. The proposed airport expansion will have direct impact on EFU farm land to the south of the airport, as well as impacts on water due to run off from the runway and taxiway, etc. There are also significant other potential environment impacts from long term aviation fuel storage and sale on site, etc.
4. Presence of an air traffic control tower does improve safety and structures flight patterns, we agree, but the Aurora Airport is already seeing more, larger aircraft, and no concerns about noise impacts were seriously addressed in the Master Planning process or at Monday's hearing.
5. At Monday's hearing Mr. Ted Millar stated that the Airport is limited by the roads that surrounded it. Can ODA confirm that **private** airport related development will not be allowed to expand beyond the four roads currently surrounding the Airport?
6. Given that Mr. Ted Millar has purchase the 'Reef' church property we would like to know his development plans over the next 10 years. Are there active plans to grow the Aurora Airport outside the boundaries of Arndt Road on the north, Ehlen Road on the south, State Highway 551 on the west and Airport Road on the east?

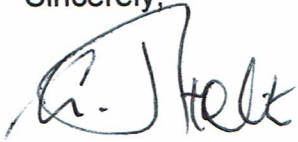
7. During the Aurora Airport Master Planning process following all the public meetings and surveys conducted by WH Pacific, they and ODC recommended to the Oregon Aviation Board that the No-Build Alternative found in Chapter 5 of the Aurora Airport Master Plan should be accepted. This recommendation was overturned by the OAB, begging question about public involvement in the process. **Will future of the Aurora Airport be determined with the Oregon Aviation Board ignoring public input, as was done with the current Master Plan?** This is a land Use issue where Goal 1, public involvement was entirely ignored in the final outcome.
8. Traffic congestion generated by the urbanization of the Aurora Airport makes congestion at the 'already beyond capacity' Boone Bridge worse. Before additional development at Aurora Airport is considered this problem must be addressed. Additionally, the increase in Aurora Airport activity produces increased traffic congestion on unimproved, farm-to-market county roads for which no new revenues are available to improve surface streets. Hence, Oregon law wisely calls for municipal governance for areas of economic activity so that mechanisms are available to capture revenue needed to fund the necessary infrastructure to accommodate the urban-scale development.
9. Ted Millar raised the issues of sewer and water provision at the Aurora Airport, these are issues at the core of the question of urbanization of this airport. By allowing a situation where only the core essence of urban services—water and sewer—can be provided to an airport in an unincorporated county EFU zone, additional city mechanisms are unavailable to provide the total necessary "infrastructure package" to accommodate new development and business operations in a rural high value EFU area. That is, a city provides other necessary components of urban-level development in addition to water and sewer such as adequate roads and sidewalks, transit service, storm water management, and a host of other city-provided services. Providing urban services to urban standards without municipal governance is how the intractable land use problems are created. Until the Aurora Airport is annexed into either the City of Aurora or the City of Wilsonville, urban service should not be provided by cobbled together means, in our view.

These issues, and many others discussed during the 2015 Legislative Session related to SB 534, show that a complete policy review of the transportation, land use and governance aspects of the Aurora Airport should be reviewed in a comprehensive way where ALL of the affected parties have an opportunity to participate in the making of policy related to the Aurora Airport.

We understand that HR 4039 is offered as a technical fix created by the building of the Aurora Airport tower. We believe there is much more to this issue. More than the 2016 Legislature can address in the brief time allowed

We urge that the Committee DO NOT PASS HR 4039, and that instead a work group be formed to review the many issues related to the Aurora Airport during the 2016 interim.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tony Holt". The signature is stylized, with a large, looped initial "T" and "H".

Tony Holt

7670 SW Village Greens Circle

Wilsonville, OR 97070

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Benjamin D. Williams". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Ben Williams

23013 Yeary Lane NE

Aurora, OR 97002

## Master Plan Goals

The Master Plan goals guided the future development of the Airport. When it became time to evaluate alternative layouts for airport development, the goals were used as the evaluation criteria.

- Goal 1: Enhance safety
- Goal 2: Meet the current and projected needs of airport users, as feasible
- Goal 3: Consider all the off-airport impacts of Airport development; minimize negative impacts and maximize positive impacts

## Issues

- Runway Extension
- Air Traffic Control Tower
- Impact of Airport Expansion on Surrounding Areas
- Calm Wind Runway Change
- Precision Instrument Approach
- Helicopter Operations (location on public property)

These goals and issues were used throughout the planning process to ensure the Master Plan acknowledged and incorporated concerns from the PAC and general public.



## Airport Role Analysis

**Aurora State Airport fits well within the OAP 2007 description of an Urban General Aviation Airport**, which supports all general aviation aircraft and accommodate corporate aviation activity, including business jets, helicopters, and other general aviation activity. It is one of five GA airports in the region with facilities and services appropriate for business jets. The five airports are Aurora State, Hillsboro, McMinnville, McNary Field in Salem, and Troutdale. These airports are appropriately spaced to provide good accessibility to the population and businesses in the region without substantial service area overlap that might undermine the long-term viability of any of the airports.

The Airport has grown at a faster rate than past planning efforts expected. It has become popular for both personal and business GA use. The growth in business use is likely due to the Airport's location with access to Interstate 5, along with private development adjacent to the state-owned airport property. Considering prior investment in the Airport, its large and growing number of based aircraft, its eligibility for FAA funding, and its proven record for attracting private funding for landside facilities, it appears likely that Aurora State will remain a viable GA airport long into the future.

Business aviation is anticipated to grow more than personal and recreational aviation, but the Airport's role in the future should not change from its current role—a busy airport handling a full range of GA, including helicopters and business jets.

The Master Plan recommends that Aurora State Airport continue to fulfill its role as an Urban General Aviation Airport.

## AIRPORT ROLE ANALYSIS

This section identifies the current role of the Airport and analyzes whether or not that role should change in the future. First, the current role assignment for the Airport within the national and state system of airports is described. Then, the Airport's role within the regional system of airports is examined in depth, including analysis of other airports in the region. Finally, the appropriate future role of the Airport is recommended.

### Aurora State Airport's Role within the National System

The Airport is identified by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) as one of 2,564 General Aviation (GA) facilities nationwide and is included within the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS). GA airports do not have scheduled passenger service. There are several criteria allowing an airport to be included in the NPIAS; however, the general criteria are that the airport has at least 10 based aircraft and is located at least 20 miles (30 minutes drive time) from another NPIAS airport. Aurora State Airport meets the based aircraft criteria; however, the Airport is within 13 miles (approximately 19 minutes drive time) of another NPIAS airport (Mulino State). This closer than 20-mile spacing of NPIAS airports is not unusual in urban areas where it is justified by the need for additional airport capacity.

Since it is in the NPIAS, the Airport is eligible to receive Federal grants under the Airport Improvement Program (AIP). Under the current AIP, federal grants cover up to 95% of GA airport eligible costs. Eligible costs include planning, development and noise compatibility projects. As part of receiving AIP grants, the ODA must accept all conditions and obligations under the FAA grant assurances. In general, such assurances require ODA to operate and maintain the Airport in a safe and serviceable condition, not grant exclusive rights, mitigate hazards to airspace, and use airport revenue properly.

### Aurora State Airport's Role within the State of Oregon's System

The Oregon Aviation Plan 2007 (OAP 2007) classifies the Airport as a Category II, Urban General Aviation Airport. A Category II airport supports all general aviation aircraft and accommodates corporate aviation activity, including business jets and helicopters, and other general aviation activity. The primary users of these airports are personal and business related, and the airports serve a large geographic region. Key performance criteria associated with these airports are a FAA Airport Reference Code of C-II<sup>1</sup>, minimum runway size of 5,000 feet by 100 feet, a precision instrument approach, and full service fixed base operations (FBOs).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Generally, this means the airport is designed to handle medium-sized business jets.

<sup>2</sup> A full-service FBO is a business that provides a wide range of services, such as fuel sales, aircraft repair and maintenance, hangar and tiedown rentals, aircraft charters and rentals, flight training, and amenities for pilots and passengers.