

Transportation Committee

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of March 21, 2018

Subject: Final Airlake Airport 2035 Long Term Comprehensive Plan (LTCP)

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council determine that the Airlake Airport Long Term Comprehensive Plan (LTCP) conforms to the metropolitan aviation system plan and is consistent with Council policy.

Summary of Committee Discussion/Questions

Metropolitan Transportation Services Senior Planner Russ Owen and Metropolitan Airports Commission Airport Planner Neil Ralston presented this item.

CM Dorfman asked why the runway isn't being extended another 150 feet to the full 5,000 foot runway allowed under MN State Statute. She mentioned that longer runways are safer and pilots prefer them. Mr. Ralston answered that extending the runway to the full 5,000 feet would require moving either Cedar Avenue or the railroad. The preferred alternative that MAC selected to advance, provides the longest runway, with minimal impact on the environment off airport property.

Motion by Dorfman, seconded by Reynoso. Motion carried, **consent to Council.**

Transportation Committee

Meeting Date: March 12, 2018

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of March 21, 2018

Subject:	Final Airlake Airport 2035 Long Term Comprehensive Plan (LTCP)
District(s), Member(s):	District 15, Wendy Wulff
Policy/Legal Reference:	MS 473.165, 473.611
Staff Prepared/Presented:	Russ Owen, Sr. Planner, 651-602-1746 Amy Vennewitz, Deputy Director MTS, 651-602-1058
Division/Department:	Metropolitan Transportation Services

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council determine that the Airlake Airport Long Term Comprehensive Plan (LTCP) conforms to the metropolitan aviation system plan and is consistent with Council policy.

Background

Under MS 473.165 and MS 473.611 the Council reviews the individual LTCP's for each airport owned and operated by the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) and airports in the region. The Council reviews and comments on all plans for consistency with the metropolitan development guide including Thrive MSP 2040 and the Transportation Policy Plan. There is only one runway at Airlake Airport, and it does not have a control tower. The previous plans recommended that MAC extend the airport's one-runway from an existing 4,099 feet to 5,000 feet. This LTCP focuses on solutions for accommodating business aircraft needs, by maximizing the airfield's operational capabilities, as well as maintaining and improving Runway Protection Zone land use compatibilities. The majority of Airlake Airport currently lies outside the city limits on Lakeville, with a small exception of an area around the fixed base operator. In order for MAC tenants to receive municipal utilities for sanitary sewer and water, MAC will need to have the city of Lakeville annex property or enter into a Joint Powers Agreement for the extension of utilities beyond the city border. The LTCP states that the MAC has begun the process to have Lakeville annex the property.

The MAC approved the Final Airlake Airport LTCP at its October 16, 2017 Commission meeting and authorized its submittal for Council review. The 2018 Update of the LTCP replaces the 2008 Plan and moves the planning horizon to 2035.

Rationale

Under the aviation planning process and TPP policy all airport LTCP's are to be periodically updated. The LTCP serves as the basis for identifying needed projects, maintaining funding eligibility to meet state and federal financial and plan consistency requirements, and to ensure that projects are responsive to system needs and conditions. LTCP's are used as input to the Council's update of the regional aviation system plan and community comprehensive plans.

Thrive Lens Analysis

This LTCP will continue to provide the citizens in the southern area of the region an outstanding minor airport to use for business and private flying activities (prosperity).

Funding

This action has no funding implications for the Council. Future facility development costs estimated in the LTCP will be used by MAC in preparing future annual capital improvement programs to match revenue with annual development costs.

Known Support / Opposition

Supported by MAC and airport users. There are a few citizens that expressed concern due to noise at during the public comment period (July- Aug 2017). Many of the municipalities either had no comment or supported the plan. TAB has reviewed and supports the findings and the recommended motion.

ATTACHMENT 1

Airlake Airport 2035 LTCP Proposal

The Airlake Airport is located in Dakota County, approximately 17 miles south of MSP, 20 miles south of the City of Minneapolis, and 25 miles southwest of the City of St. Paul. The Airlake Airport is located primarily in Eureka Township, and a small portion of the airport lies within the municipal boundary of the City of Lakeville. (Attachment 1).

The Airlake Airport is classified as a Minor Airport in the regional aviation system. The airport's primary role in the airport system is to attract general aviation traffic away from Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP) to relieve congestion, which helps reduce operating costs and promotes sustainability. Airlake Airport accommodates personal, recreational and some business aviation users within Dakota County and the southern portion of the metropolitan area. The plan states that the airport will continue its current role in the system, and the aircraft type that the plan is designed for is not changing. There is currently one runway at Airlake Airport. The previous LTCP recommended that MAC extend the airport's one-runway from an existing 4,099 feet to 5,000 feet. This LTCP focuses on solutions for accommodating business aircraft needs, by maximizing the airfield's operational capabilities, as well as maintaining and improving Runway Protection Zone land use compatibilities. The primary runway (12/30) is 4,099 feet long. Based on FAA guidance, along with airplane operational manuals, the recommend primary runway length should be 4,800-5,400 feet. However, due to Minnesota Statue 473.641 subdivision 4, it prohibits MAC from extending runway lengths at its minor airports beyond 5,000 feet, without prior legislative authorization. The FAA has published a memo with guidelines for RPZ compliance since the last LTCP was adopted. Because of these new guidelines, the MAC has taken a fresh approach at options to provide operational enhancements at the airport.

The 2035 LTCP Preferred Alternative Summary (Attachment 2)

- Items included in the draft 2035 LTCP Preferred Alternative
 - Displace Runway 12 threshold to provide airspace clearance over railroad tracks (RPZ compliance)
 - Extend Runway 12/30 with declared distances to maximize overall airfield utility (technical changes to the airfield)
 - Expand fixed base operator (FBO) apron
 - Reconfigure the taxiways

Advantages of the preferred alternative include:

- Primary Runway 12/30 is extended to 4,850' consistent with FAA runway length guidelines
- Does not impact the existing ILS (Instrument Landing System) approach procedure.
- Modify some taxiway configurations
- Apron expansion and possibly developing the South Building Area and access roadway
- No Relocation of Cedar Ave., Highview Ave. or railroad track.
- Current Minor Airport classification does not change

Disadvantages of this preferred alternative include:

- Runway extensions move departing aircraft closer to the airport boundary, possibly increasing ground noise for those closest to the ground.
- MAC will need to educate pilots about runway takeoff and landing distance, complexity for pilots.
- Increases operational impacts during construction.
- Increases existing pavement maintenance burden by adding taxiway extensions.

The preferred alternative is responsive to the most prominent stakeholder concerns while still meeting the stated planning goals to: 1) better accommodate business aircraft needs by maximizing the airfield's operational capabilities and property footprint; 2) maintain or improve RPZ land use compatibility; and 3) mitigate existing issues with airspace penetrations, such as trees and buildings.

MAC has also begun the annexation process, so the airport will be within the city of Lakeville. This will also give the surrounding communities assurance of the airport's future footprint for comprehensive community planning. MAC staff will continue discussions with the city of Lakeville about offering municipal utilities to tenants on the airfield.