

Committee Report

Transportation Committee



Committee Meeting Date: August 11, 2025

For the Metropolitan Council: August 27, 2025

Business Item: 2025-192

Flying Cloud Airport 2040 Long Term Comprehensive Plan (LTCP) Review

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council find that the Final Draft Flying Cloud Airport 2040 Long-Term Comprehensive Plan (LTCP) has a multi-city impact as well as conforms to the Met Council systems and is consistent with Met Council policies.

Summary of Transportation Committee Discussion/Questions

Metropolitan Transportation Services Senior Transportation Planner Joe Widing presented this item. Council members discussed the size of the aircraft using the airport, the runway safety features and noise impacts.

Motion by Cameron, seconded by Obisakin. Motion carried, consent to Council.



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Flying Cloud Airport 2040 Long Term Comprehensive Plan (LTCP) Review

District(s), Member(s): District 3, Tyronne Carter, Anjuli Cameron (MAC Liaison)
Policy/Legal Reference: MN Statutes 473.165 and 473.611
Staff Prepared/Presented: Joe Widing, Senior Transportation Planner, 651-602-1822
Amy Vennewitz, Director, 651-602-1058
Charles Carlson, Executive Director, 651-602-1761
Division/Department: Metropolitan Transportation Services (MTS)

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council find that the [Final Draft Flying Cloud Airport \(FCM\) 2040 Long-Term Comprehensive Plan \(LTCP\)](#) has a multi-city impact as well as conforms to the Met Council systems and is consistent with Met Council policies.

Background

Under MS 473.165 and MS 473.611 the Council reviews the individual Long-Term Comprehensive Plan (LTCP) for each airport owned and operated by the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC). The Council reviews and comments on all plans for consistency with the metropolitan development guide including Thrive MSP 2040 and the Transportation Policy Plan (TPP). As the Flying Cloud LTCP was developed under the direction of Thrive MSP 2040 plans, the LTCP is being reviewed for consistency with the 2040 TPP and not Imagine 2050 TPP, adopted in February 2025.

Flying Cloud is one of the main reliever airports to MSP International Airport in the region, hosting business jet, flight training, and recreational general aviation operations. The airport has three runways, ranging in length from 2,690 feet to the maximum 5,000 feet, and can serve aircraft from small general aviation propeller aircraft to small-to-medium sized business jets. The airport's primary role in the airport system is to relieve air traffic congestion at MSP International Airport for both general aviation and business jet activity in the region. The airport is classified as a national reliever in the federal system, a key general aviation airport in the state system, and a minor airport in the regional system.

The FCM 2040 LTCP anticipates steady growth in operations through 2040 due to regional population and economic growth, and anticipated growth in activity, most notably for business jets. Business jet activity is being driven primarily by the location of the airport. Located in Eden Prairie in the southwest metro, the airport is the closest to the concentration of corporate offices and executive homes. Additionally, this growth will occur as the airport's air traffic control tower (ATCT) moves to allow for additional jet hanger development on the south side of the airfield. Growth is also being seen at the now three pilot training organizations that operate at FCM, training pilots for future commercial jobs and recreational use. However, this growth will not require significant new

airside (runways and airfield including support facilities) improvements or capacity enhancements. Other than the ATCT, airside improvements will focus on safety improvements to the main runway and taxiway additions to improve operational efficiency of the airfield. Landside improvements are limited and include new roadway access to the north side of the airport. Airport improvements may have additional environmental impacts, it is noted that a full understanding of potential impacts will be studied in the follow-up environmental review for outlined projects found in this plan. The public and the Council will have additional opportunities to understand and weigh in on these impacts in the future.

The MAC approved the FCM 2040 LTCP at its June 16, 2025, Commission meeting and authorized its submittal for Council review. The FCM 2040 LTCP replaces the 2030 plan approved in 2010 and moves the planning horizon to 2040. The TAB and technical committees reviewed and discussed the LTCP at their previous meetings. Members commented on noise considerations, engagement conducted for the plan and historical activity data at the airport.

The full plan can be found on the MAC's website at [FCM Long-Term Plan | Metropolitan Airports Commission](#).

The Plan is supported by the MAC and airport stakeholders. Community engagement efforts have solicited community opinions around the airport and its future plans. The Plan included a 60-day public comment period (July – August 2023) in addition to in-person and virtual engagement sessions from 2019 to 2023. Citizens and adjacent communities expressed support the plan with comments specific to considerations for environmental impacts, specifically noise impacts, from ongoing operations at the airports.

Rationale

Under the aviation planning process and TPP policy, airport LTCPs are to be regularly updated. MAC plans are to be consistent with all components of the metropolitan development guide. The Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) prepares a Long-Term Comprehensive Plan for each airport in its system regularly to update activity forecasts, identify needed projects and potential impacts to the surrounding community and environment, 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. LTCPs are used as a basic input to the Council's update of the regional aviation system plan and in reviewing community comprehensive plans.

The MAC has proposed a preferred development alternative for Flying Cloud Airport that retains its system role as a minor airport that serves as a main reliever for MSP Airport and plans for safety and efficiency focused airfield improvements. FCM's footprint is not planned to increase, its role in the regional aviation system is not anticipated to change and the outlined projects in the Plan will maintain FCM's place as a main reliever of business jet traffic and an important piece of the regional economy. As such, the FCM 2040 LTCP conforms to regional transportation policy and is consistent with the regional development guide.

Thrive Lens Analysis

The Council adopted Imagine 2050 on February 12, 2025, which builds on policy direction in Thrive MSP 2040. Under the Thrive lens, the improvements outlined in the FCM 2040 LTCP will allow the airport to be able to meet projected growth in demand and improve vital facilities for user safety and access. These improvements will ensure FCM remains a key reliever airport for business jet traffic and pilot training. This Plan updates key considerations for the region, will aid adjacent local governments in future planning efforts, and will advance the Prosperity Outcome of Thrive 2040 by promoting the region's economic competitiveness.

The plan is also a reflection of Imagine 2050's Dynamic and Resilient Goal, as the airport's role has shifted with the region's growth patterns and adapted to a new reality. The updated plan and planned improvements reflect this role and build on them to ensure the continued success and sustainability of a key reliever airport to MSP.



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. The projects found in the preferred alternative are estimated to cost \$134M in current dollars. It is expected that as these projects are seen in future year CIPs that the required funding will increase.

Small business inclusion

The Office of Equity and Equal Opportunity did not review for small business goals. This creation of this document was not funded by the Council and not subject to Council requirements. The Metropolitan Airports Commission funds and leads the development of long term comprehensive plans for the airports they own and operate. Small business programs are applied for projects per MAC policies.

Attachment 1

FCM 2040 LTCP Preferred Alternative Summary

The MAC examined several alternatives for FCM based on the identified facility requirements. The alternatives were developed to address the runways, taxiways, taxilanes, building area, fuel facility, ATCT location, and overall capacity and safety improvements. These various alternatives were evaluated against each other in how they meet different evaluation criteria including user convenience, safety, landside, airside, operation and capital expenses and mission/goals of the MAC. Needed safety improvements to better address existing and projected growth in airport activity informed the outlined facilities found in the preferred alternative.

Through the evaluation process, the MAC selected the preferred alternative. The preferred alternative was then vetted and refined with extensive stakeholder input from airlines, airport tenants, MAC staff, other agencies, the stakeholder advisory panel and members of the public. Some elements of the preferred alternative required additional review by the FAA and were approved for inclusion into the final plan after an extensive review.

The 2040 Final Preferred Alternative is split between near, medium- and long-term improvements. The preferred alternative includes the following major items:

Near-Term:

- Additional north side access to Pioneer Trail
- Relocated air traffic control tower (ATCT)
- EMAS beds and blast pads on runway 10R-28L
- New taxiways

Medium-Term:

- Additional new taxilanes
- Ground run-up enclosure for jet maintenance
- Northern hanger development

Long-Term:

- Full southern hanger development
- Full northern hanger development

Full details of the preferred alternative concept can be found in the full plan linked previously.

Advantages of this preferred alternative include:

- Current airport classification does not change.
- Significant safety improvements to the main runway to ensure the aircraft currently using the airport can continue to do so in the safest manner in all weather conditions.
- Improved airfield circulation to improve the efficiency of the airfield and reduce delay.

- Improved and moved air traffic control tower opens up additional development opportunities on the south side of the airfield to accommodate growing business jet operations.
- Improved access to the north side of the airfield.

The refined preferred alternative is responsive to the most prominent stakeholder concerns while meeting the stated planning objectives, improving safety for existing airport users, improving airfield operational efficiency and maintaining sustainable operations at a regional reliever airport. The preferred alternative is designed to meet the existing aircraft types and projected demand through 2040. Flight volumes and overall activity are driven by Federal policies and demand in the nation and the world. Impacts from aircraft operations at FCM are thus not dictated by the MAC. The preferred alternative balances the needs of operators at FCM and mitigating impacts, when possible, to surrounding communities and the environment. The FCM 2040 LTCP underwent an extensive public engagement process that ran for nearly 4 years, from plan kick off in 2021 to the final stakeholder and public meetings in early 2025. The full list of public events and stakeholder meetings held can be found as an appendix item in the Plan.

