

# Action Transmittal

Transportation Advisory Board



**Committee Meeting Date:** July 16, 2025

**Date:** July 2, 2025

## Action Transmittal: 2025-23

Review of Flying Cloud Airport 2040 Long Term Comprehensive Plan

**To:** Transportation Advisory Board

**From:** TAB Technical Advisory Committee

**Prepared By:** Joe Widing, Senior Transportation Planner, 651-602-1822

### Requested Action

State statute (473.165, 473.611) requires the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) to submit a determination of conformance of the Final Draft Flying Cloud Airport (FCM) 2040 Long-Term Comprehensive Plan with Council systems and consistency with Council policy.

### Recommended Motion

Recommend to the TAB that the Metropolitan Council find that the Final Draft Flying Cloud Airport 2040 LTCP has a multi-city impact as well as conforms to the regional systems and is consistent with regional policies.

### Background and Purpose

The Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) prepares a Long-Term Comprehensive Plan (LTCP) for each airport in their system regularly to update activity forecasts, identify airport needs, and potential impacts to the surrounding community and environment.

Under MS 473.165 and MS 473.611, the Council reviews the individual LTCP for each airport owned and operated by the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC). The FCM International Airport 2040 LTCP replaces the 2025 plan approved in 2010 and moves the planning horizon to 2040. The MAC has adopted a preferred development alternative for FCM Airport that retains its system role as one of three primary reliever airports for the region and a Minor Airport, and plans for modest capacity enhancements and airfield improvements, which is consistent with the Transportation Policy Plan.

### Relationship to Regional Policy

Under the aviation planning process and TPP policy, airport LTCP's are to be regularly updated. MAC plans are to be consistent with all components of the metropolitan development guide. LTCP's are used as a basic input to the Council's update of the regional aviation system plan and in reviewing community comprehensive plans. The 2040 FCM LTCP anticipates slow and steady growth in total aircraft operations through 2040, with the airport anticipated to attract almost a majority of all regional corporate and business jet activity (45% by 2040). This growth will not require significant new airside (runways and airfield including support facilities) improvements or capacity enhancements, instead the anticipated projects will be focused on safety, and efficiency enhancements on the airfield and continued build out of jet hangers on the southside of the airfield

following the relocation of the air traffic control tower. Operations are anticipated to grow slowly through the planning period but remain in the range of previous activity peaks for overall operations with additional growth in the share of regional reliever jet activity. As such, environmental impacts are expected to be similar to those experienced in the past and expected in previous LTCPs. As part of the aviation planning process, the preferred alternative will undergo required environmental review with further specifics. FCM's footprint is not planned to increase, and its role in the regional system is not anticipated to change as a result of this LTCP. As such, the FCM 2040 LTCP conforms to the regional aviation system and is consistent with regional policy.

## Staff Analysis

Flying Cloud Airport is located entirely within Hennepin County and Eden Prairie, approximately 14 miles southwest of downtown Minneapolis. Flying Cloud is an important regional reliever to MSP airport, seeing the highest overall activity levels of the regional relievers and significant corporate and business jet traffic. The airport has three runways, ranging from 2,690 feet to 5,000 feet in length, and the airport can serve up to C-II types of aircraft (small to medium sized business jets like the Bombardier Challenger 300). Flying Cloud also has an air traffic control tower that operates on a part-time basis, three flight schools, fixed-based operators, and many recreational users.

Flying Cloud Airport is classified as a Minor Airport in the regional aviation system and a Key General Aviation airport in the state system. The airport's primary role in the airport system is to be a secondary reliever airport for MSP Airport, primarily serving air taxi, business jet, recreation, flight training, and other piston aircraft. Flying Cloud Airport has become the most active reliever in the regional system, with over 140,000 operations in 2023. The role and classification of the airport will not change with this LTCP.

The FCM 2040 LTCP has been in development since 2021. The planning process hit delays as certain elements in the proposed preferred alternative required additional review from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). MAC conducted continual community engagement through this process to help inform the planning process. This process included stakeholder and public meetings through 2025. A full summary of the engagement process can be found in attachment 5.

The Plan identified three main objectives to be achieved through the 2040 LTCP:

- Enhance airport safety.
- Preserve and, if possible, improve operational capabilities for the current family of aircraft using the airport.
- Promote financial sustainability of the Metropolitan Airports Commission Reliever Airport system by exploring revenue opportunities for aeronautical and non-aeronautical development.

## Activity Forecasts:

The aviation industry has changed since the previous plan was adopted. This includes robust growth in passenger airline demand and the need for substantially greater pilot training. Industry trends have most affected airports within large population and business centers that host pilot training or business jet operations. FCM lies in the heart of the southwest metro which is home to many major corporate campuses and hosts substantial training fleets.

Overall, the plan projects continued growth in operations and based aircraft at the airport through 2041, and outlines investments in order to facilitate that growth. The updated forecasts project that operations will increase from a 2021 baseline of 133,217, to 143,298 in 2041. The based aircraft forecast reflects existing conditions and growth commensurate with forecast operations growth, resulting in an increase from 333 to 354 aircraft over the planning period. The main driver of this activity and fleet growth is on account of an increase in business and corporate jet activity at the airport. This growth will make FCM the main base for corporate jet activity in the region, with its share of this type of aircraft in region growing to 45% of all operations from 33% today.

### *Preferred Alternative:*

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 and projected growth in airport activity informed the outlined facilities found in the preferred alternative. The Final Preferred Alternative can be found in attachment 1.

Advantages of the preferred alternative include:

- Safety enhancements to the main runway 28L-10R and taxiway realignments.
- Expanding operations capacity without the growth of the airport grounds or runways.
- Relocation of ATCT to allow for building area expansion and maintain ATCT line of sight requirements.

The refined preferred alternative is responsive to the most prominent stakeholder concerns while still meeting the stated planning objectives. The 2040 FCM LTCP underwent an extensive public engagement process that included listening to airport tenants, discussions with the city of Eden Prairie, and engaging the community through public workshops. None of the outlined projects in the plan would represent major impacts on the regional system.

### *Environmental compatibility:*

Due to the geographic location and immediate adjacency to developed residential land, the FCM 2040 LTCP includes discussion on land use and environmental compatibility including modeling future noise impacts from projected aviation operations to 2040. The Day-Night Average Sound Level (DNL) noise metric is used to reflect a person's cumulative exposure to sound over a 24-hour period. The Council has established noise compatibility guidelines relating to certain levels of noise and land use which are appropriate within those noise levels. The key levels of DNL which are measured are 75 DNL, 70 DNL, 65 DNL and 60 DNL.

*Table 1. Estimated area impacted by aircraft noise levels*

DNL Level	2021 Acres within Contour	2040 Acres within Contour
75 DNL	32 acres (within airport property)	66 acres (within airport property)
70 DNL	115 acres (within airport property)	141 acres (within airport property)
65 DNL	252 acres (within airport property)	306 acres (within airport property)
60 DNL	545 acres	759 acres

Forecast increases in operations result in an increase in the size of the noise contours however, there are limited expected impacts from the projected contours on surrounding land uses. The increased size of the projected 65 DNL contour, the level at which the FAA considers residential development incompatible with aircraft noise, grows but remains completely within airport property. The MAC also maintains a voluntary noise abatement plan with airport users to ensure the greatest impacts from ongoing operations are mitigated as much as possible.

As this is a long-range plan, similar to community comprehensive plans, direct environmental impacts from the conceptual preferred alternative are not analyzed in the document. Following adoption, the MAC will begin the environmental review process for many of the projects outlined in the preferred alternative which will study potential impacts in depth with additional engagement with the surrounding communities, needed federal and state reviews are identified in the plan. The Council will work with the MAC on this effort to ensure that environmental impacts are minimized and mitigated for future airport development projects.

This plan will also give the surrounding communities assurance of the airport's future footprint and

impacts for comprehensive community planning. The attachments will detail the preferred alternative, runway safety zones, and 2040 noise contours. The Executive Summary of the Plan is also included as an attachment. The full plan can be found on the web at [Long-Term Planning | FCM Airport](#).

### Committee Comments and Action

At its June 12, 2025, meeting, the TAC Planning Committee reviewed and discussed the Flying Cloud 2040 LTCP. Committee members voted to recommend acceptance of the staff analysis of the Flying Cloud 2040 LTCP and to forward to the TAC and TAB that the Metropolitan Council find that the Flying Cloud Airport 2040 LTCP has a multi-city impact as well as conforms to the regional systems and is consistent with regional policies.

At its July 2, 2025, meeting, the Technical Advisory Committee reviewed and discussed the Flying Cloud 2040 LTCP. Committee members discussed noise impacts and activity forecasts with Council and MAC staff. The Committee voted to recommend acceptance of the staff analysis of the Flying Cloud 2040 LTCP and to forward to the TAB that the Metropolitan Council find that the Flying Cloud Airport 2040 LTCP has a multi-city impact as well as conforms to the regional systems and is consistent with regional policies.

### Routing

To	Action Requested	Date Completed
TAC Planning Committee	Review & Recommend	June 12, 2025
Technical Advisory Committee	Review & Recommend	July 2, 2025
Transportation Advisory Board	Review & Recommend	<i>July 16, 2025</i>
Metropolitan Council Transportation Committee	Review & Recommend	<i>August 11, 2025</i>
Metropolitan Council	Review & Adopt	<i>August 27, 2025</i>

### Flying Cloud Airport 2040 Long Term Comprehensive Plan Attachments

The MAC 2040 FCM LTCP materials included in this memorandum reflects the actions of the Metropolitan Airports Commission to submit for the Council's consistency determination review on June 16, 2025.

Materials for the Met Council/TAB review are included in the following summaries:

Attachment 1: FCM 2040 LTCP Preferred Development Plan

Attachment 2: FCM 2040 LTCP Runway Protection Zones and State Safety Zones

Attachment 3: FCM 2040 LTCP Preferred Alternative 2040 Noise Contours

Attachment 4: FCM 2040 LTCP Executive Summary

