

ACTION TRANSMITTAL – 2016-37

DATE: June 24, 2016
TO: Technical Advisory Committee
FROM: TAC-Planning Committee
PREPARED BY: Russ Owen, Senior Planner, MTS/Aviation, 602-1724
SUBJECT: Final Draft Lake Elmo Airport 2035 Long Term Comprehensive Plan Review

REQUESTED ACTION: State statute requires the MAC to request a determination of conformance of the Final Draft Lake Elmo Airport 2035 Long Term Comprehensive Plan with Council systems and consistency with Council policy.

RECOMMENDED MOTION: Recommend to TAB that the Final Draft Lake Elmo Airport 2035 LTCP has a multi-city impact as well as conforms to Council systems and is consistent with Council policies.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF ACTION: 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). The Final Draft Lake Elmo Airport 2035 LTCP replaces the 2008 plan and moves the planning horizon to 2035. The MAC has adopted a preferred development alternative for the Lake Elmo Airport that retains its system role as a Minor general aviation facility, 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 periodically updated. MAC plans are to be consistent with the metropolitan development guide (Thrive MSP 2040) and the metropolitan system plans. 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.

STAFF ANALYSIS: The Lake Elmo Airport is located primarily in Baytown Township (Attachment 1). A small amount of the airport and the Runway Protection Zone (RPZ) overlay area is in West Lakeland Township and on the west side of Manning Ave. in Lake Elmo. This small section of RPZ overlay is private property which is planned for development in the City of Lake Elmo.

The Lake Elmo Airport is classified as a Minor Airport in the regional aviation system. The airport's primary role in the airport system is to accommodate personal, recreational and some business aviation users within Washington County and the eastern portion of the metropolitan area. The plan states that the airport will continue its current role in the system, and the aircraft that the plan is designed for is not changing. The primary runway (14/32) and the crosswind runway (04/22) at the Lake Elmo Airport are the shortest in the system and some of the shortest in the state in relation to airport classification. The

primary runway length is 2,850 feet and the crosswind runway is 2,497 feet today. Based on FAA guidance of runway length, the primary runway length should be between 3,300 feet and 3,900 feet. MAC has envisioned a longer primary runway at Lake Elmo Airport for years.

Four Alternatives were initially developed for consideration in the LTCP.

- Base Case – Reconstruct existing runways
- Alternative A – Reconstruct existing runways, and extend Crosswind Runway 04/22 to 3,600'
- Alternative B – Reconstruct Crosswind Runway 04/22 to 2,496', relocate Primary Runway 14/32 700 feet to the northeast and extend it to 3,600', construct a new Connector Rd., convert existing Runway 14/32 to a Taxiway and relocate the Service Rd. and 30th St. N.
- Alternative C – Same as Alternative B except relocated Primary Runway is extended to 3,900'.

The original preferred alternative recommended by MAC was Alternative B. However, after multiple community meetings, and opposition, MAC developed and selected Alternative B1 (Attachment 2). Below is a description and a list of advantages / disadvantages of the preferred alternative.

- Alternative B1 – Refined Concept: Reconstruct Crosswind Runway 04/22 to 2,496', relocate Primary Runway 14/32 615 feet to the northeast and extend it to 3,500', construct a new Connector Rd., convert existing Runway 14/32 to a Taxiway and realign 30th St. N around the new RPZ and reconnect to the existing 30th St. N. intersection with Neal Avenue.

Advantages:

- Primary Runway 14/32 is extended to 3,500' consistent with FAA guidelines
- Runway 14/32 RPZ will comply with FAA compatibility criteria
- Runway 14/32 alignment retains optimal wind coverage
- Runway 14/32 can be constructed in new location while existing Runway 14/32 remains in operation prior to conversion to a taxiway, allowing for minimal operations disruptions
- Washington County can proceed with Manning Ave. improvements without delay associated with an RPZ Alternatives Analysis
- Existing airport operational footprint is maintained with no additional property acquisition
- Current Minor Airport classification does not change

Disadvantages:

- Relocation of 30th St. N will alter established traffic flows in the vicinity of the airport
- Existing north side end taxiway must be relocated
- Shifts existing air traffic patterns and noise impacts to the southeast to align with the relocated/lengthened Primary Runway, moving the Runway 32 end closer to an established West Lakeland Township residential neighborhood (from approximately 0.6 miles today to approximately 0.3 miles)
- Requires wetland mitigation

Alternative B1 provides compatible RPZs entirely on airport property for the relocated Runway 14/32. The Base Case and Alternative A do not satisfy this key objective of the LTCP. Alternative B1 also provides a runway length of 3,500 feet, which is the optimal length identified in the Facility Requirements analysis for the long-term demand at Lake Elmo Airport. Once the 3,500 foot length runway is constructed, the primary runway will be fully built-out in terms of RPZ compliance, with no further extensions contemplated during the 20-year planning horizon. This will give the surrounding communities assurance of the airport’s future footprint for comprehensive community planning.

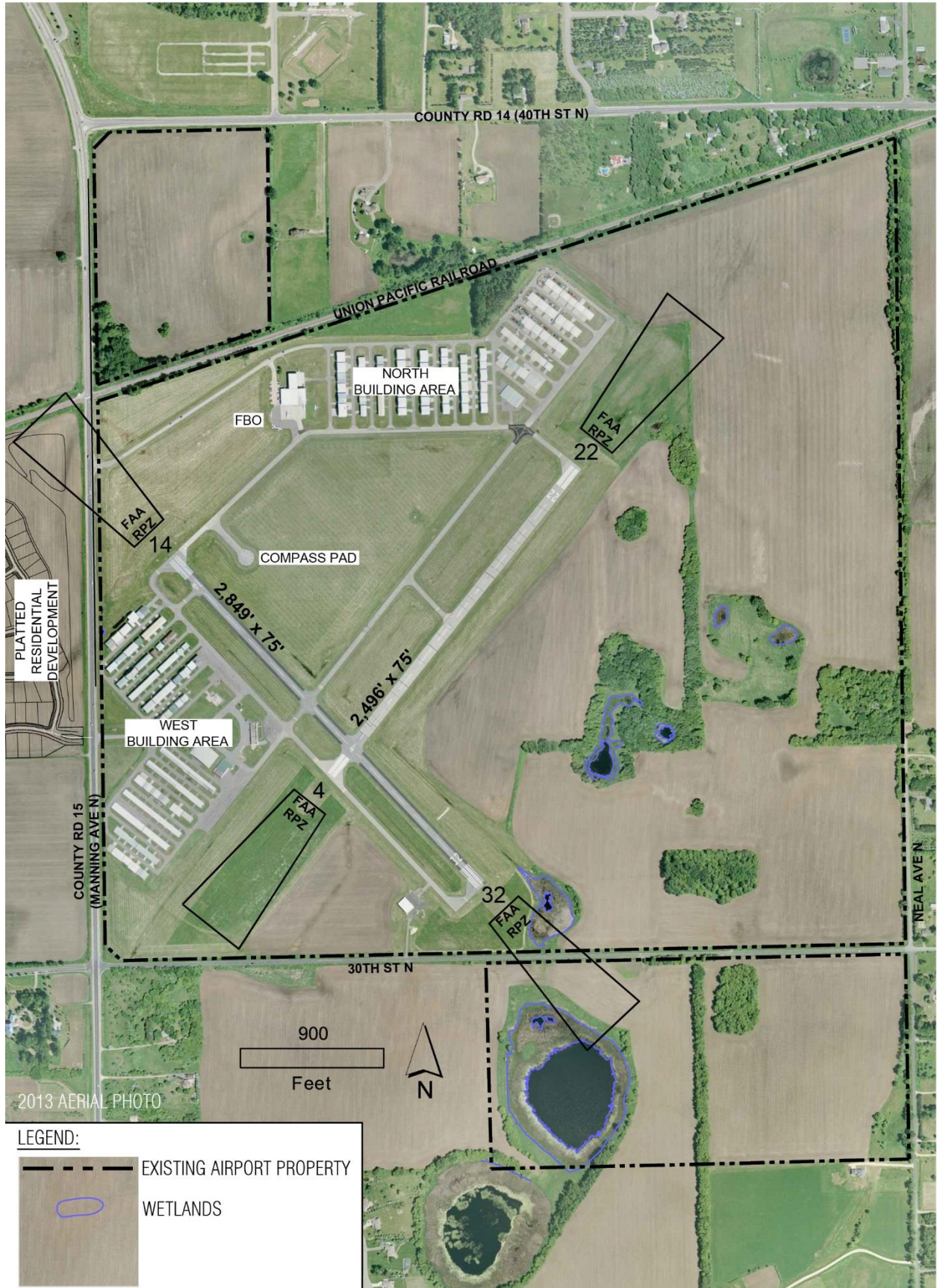
COMMITTEE COMMENTS AND ACTION:

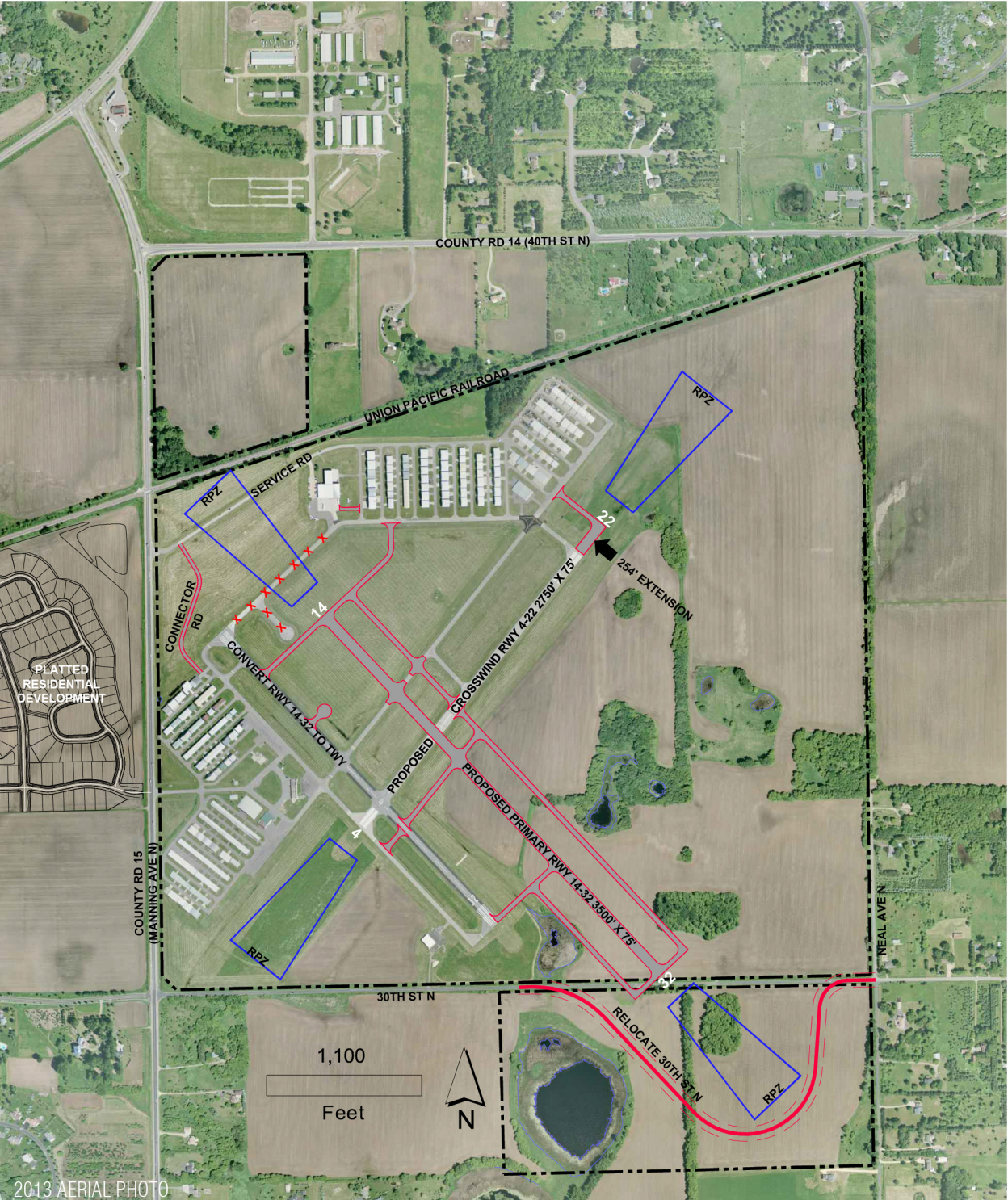
Russ Owen from MTS and Neil Ralston from MAC presented this item. Questions from committee members included looking at different runway alignments, who owns 30th St. N, operation levels at the airport, and expansion of Manning Ave. MAC staff was able to answer these questions. Council staff explained that reviewing the plan from Thrive MSP 2040 and TPP perspectives, and the plan’s purpose is to bring runways toward compliance with FAA standards. There will be future elements to provide review and feedback, specifically the environmental process and capital improvement program process. The recommended motion passed.

ROUTING

TO	ACTION REQUESTED	DATE COMPLETED
TAC Planning	Review & Recommend	June 9, 2016
Technical Advisory Committee	Review & Recommend	
Transportation Advisory Board	Review & Recommend	
Metropolitan Council Transportation Committee	Review & Recommend	
Metropolitan Council	Review & Determine	

Figure ES-1: Existing Airport Layout





2013 AERIAL PHOTO

LEGEND:

-  EXISTING AIRPORT PROPERTY
-  WETLANDS
-  PROPOSED RWY/TWY EXTENSIONS
-  PAVEMENT REMOVAL
-  RUNWAY PROTECTION ZONE

White, Katie

From: Vince Anderson <vjanderson@presenter.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 28, 2016 12:15 PM
To: White, Katie
Cc: Owen, Russell; Vennewitz, Amy; Melander, Harry
Subject: TAC Review - Lake Elmo Airport LTCP - comments.
Attachments: Met Council - Lake Elmo Airport.docx

Katie: Would you kindly include the attached word document in your packet in preparation for the upcoming TAC meeting and also include a copy of this email with that document? If I am sending this to the wrong person would you please forward it to the correct address with a copy to me

Please confirm receipt of the file, and your ability to successfully open it.

Thank you

Vince Anderson

H 651-436-5184
C 651-270-9066

TAC Members:

Attached please find my comments to TAC in review of the compliance of the Lake Elmo Airport LTCP with the Metropolitan council THRIVE.

I am a resident of West Lakeland who has submitted lengthy comments to MAC on both versions of the LTCP, pointing out inconsistencies and asking questions. Certain key questions remain open. I do understand that the public may not still meaningfully effect changes to that plan so am submitting points to you, the TAC for your consideration.

I (and others) did attend the TAC Planning meeting on June 9th and at that meeting was advised that indeed we could submit written comments to be considered at the next meeting in the process - the TAC meeting on July 6th, and that we would be allowed to speak as members of the public at that meeting. I do intend to make the meeting and if afforded the opportunity will likely want to speak.

Thank you

Vince Anderson

June 28, 2016

This document covers some of the Met Council THRIVE documents and their applicability to the review of the Lake Elmo Long Term Comprehensive Plan (LTCP) update under current review by the Met Council for compliance with THRIVE. MN 173.146.3.8 as documented in the Met Council Transportation plan – Airport section requires planning for developing trends that MAY impact airport development.

I note Lake Elmo is not a transportation airport. There is no real business use at L.E. In MAC's own words 'Lake Elmo is considered a primarily personal, recreational and flight training facility ... ' I ask you to keep this in mind in your review of the plan to expand the airport.

In that same document it states the Met Council is to review community plans and public/private projects for compatibility with regional airports and aviation policies. Significant past and current residential development surrounding the Lake Elmo facility is not compatible with larger aircraft. Apparently such required review has not taken place.

That plan acknowledges that public airports in the counties beyond the seven-county region would provide future capacity for growing areas on the edge of the region. In the case of Lake Elmo that would include New Richmond, WI. While New Richmond is outside of the Met Council and MAC's jurisdiction, its location and facilities should be considered when analyzing potential Lake Elmo expansion.

Lake Elmo is bordered by a major Washington County road which is in the planning stages for upgrading. It has a Union Pacific railroad running through the airport. It also has a major collector street running through the airport property which is also the boundary between Baytown and west Lakeland townships, and has residential development surrounding the airport with no bordering commercial development in place or planned.

As provided in the referenced Met Council plan, FAA recommends that planning for improvements begin when an airport is projected to reach 60% of ASV – Annual Service Volume; when an airport's operations reach about 80% of ASV project programming and implementation should be initiated. Lake Elmo is NOT anywhere near that level of operations.

This Met Council plan again shows the MAC data from 2014 which reflects 229 based aircraft. The Lake Elmo LTCP actually listed count is not that number – it is 203. You should note that none of the listed aircraft are of the 10 passenger capacity that MAC continually references and uses in justification for a longer runway.

As listed in the Met Council airport transportation plan, the Lake Elmo airport is overdue for its LTCP – and the readers should be aware of the previous plan when measuring accomplishments against that plan. MAC has not met the previous plan with no explanation as to why the shortcoming. The expansion now deemed immediate and critical was listed as beyond the 20 year planning period only a relatively few years ago.

It has been said that the new plan provides assurance of the airport's future footprint... This is by both MAC and Met Council. It is NOT believed by the public based on prior planning efforts and 'assurances.'

To my knowledge there has been no JAZB – Joint Airport Zoning Board ever convened. It is significant to note that MAC land acquisition while completed about 50 (**FIFTY!!!!**) years ago has not ever been zoned as 'airport.' Sitting on property 50 years without definite communicated plans and action is wrong!

The MET Council plan does not list requirements for environmental compatibility but liberally sprinkles the word 'should' leaving too much discretion on the part of airport sponsors. In the case of Lake Elmo that is MAC.

'Airports owned by the MAC can be funded by revenues generated at any of the MAC-owned airports. This cross-funding helps airports adequately support the system by funding the facilities they need to perform their mission. However, in recent years, MAC philosophy has shifted toward a more self-sufficient system for the reliever airports. The MAC also has the authority to issue bonds to support the funding of airport projects.' This is taken from the Met Council plan. LE cannot be self-sufficient. It is not a revenue generating airport. There are no local governmental support moneys either.

In the discussion of funding it is said 'funding sources allow the airports in this mature regional airport system to maintain and, when justified, enhance their facilities to serve their customer's needs.' The key words there are 'WHEN JUSTIFIED' and 'NEEDS.' As would be done in the private sector, there appears to be no real statement of need, nor any differentiation of musts and wants. No evidence exists for pent up demand, or any listing of formal requests for the expansion.

Isn't it wrong to invest in facilities without payback to the community? Isn't it likely the ultimate end of the airport is closing it?

In the Lake Elmo discussion of the transportation plan it is noted that MAC / City of Lake Elmo and MNDOT have been working together. I submit this has not been effective working together with residential development taking place which effectively precludes accommodating the primary runway in its current location. In addition, shouldn't Washington County have been

part of that process? The Lake Elmo City Council has made statements that 'MAC has said' which are in conflict with the plan you are reviewing.

Water quality will undoubtedly be impacted by this expansion. Proximity of the new road to a wetland is an intrusion. You should note there are multiple identified wetlands on airport property. The Met Council water resources plan requires good stewardship. In fact, the water sustainability goal is 'To protect, conserve and utilize the region's groundwater and surface water in ways that protect public health, support economical growth and development, maintain habitat and ecosystem health, and provide for recreational opportunities, all of which are essential to our region's quality of life.'

The Surface Water Management Act among other things calls for action to protect and enhance fish and wildlife habitat and water recreational facilities. The proposed expansion does not protect and certainly does not enhance the wildlife habitat.

I do not think the Lake Elmo Long Term Comprehensive Plan does meet compliance or the intent of the Metropolitan Council Thrive Plans.

The failure to accurately report activity levels including based aircraft as well as flights ought to result in a 'let's see what happens' moment for the council. Sport and hobby flying is decreasing – the number of sport pilots is decreasing - there is NO real business demand for the Lake Elmo expansion. The council ought determine that the LTCP does not meet THRIVE, and should support MAC to do minimal required maintenance, and take another look in a few years.

Vince Anderson

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