

## Transportation Committee

Meeting date: July 25, 2016

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of August 10, 2016

**Subject:** Final Draft Lake Elmo Airport 2035 Long Term Comprehensive Plan (LTCP)

**District(s), Member(s):** District 11 and 12, Harry Melander

**Policy/Legal Reference:** MS 473.165, 473.611

**Staff Prepared/Presented:** Russ Owen, Senior Planner, 651-602-1724

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**Division/Department:** Metropolitan Transportation Services

### Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council determine that the Lake Elmo 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). The Council reviews and comments on all plans for consistency with the metropolitan development guide including *Thrive MSP 2040* and the *Transportation Policy Plan*. The primary runway and crosswind runway at Lake Elmo Airport are the shortest in the system. The existing runway pavement has reached the end of its useful life, and the MAC decided to move and extend the primary runway, instead of reconstructing the current runway. The FAA guidance on runway length states that the primary runway should be between 3,300' and 3,900'. FAA policy also states that runway protection zones (RPZs) should be clear of incompatible land uses, to the greatest extent possible. Attachment 1 summarizes the Lake Elmo LTCP alternatives. The MAC has selected a preferred development alternative for the Lake Elmo Airport (Attachment 2) that retains its system role as a Minor general aviation facility, which is consistent with the *Thrive MSP 2040* and the *Transportation Policy Plan*. The preferred development alternative provides solutions to both, RPZ incompatibilities and the desired runway length for the MAC and airport users.

The MAC approved the Final Draft Lake Elmo Airport LTCP at its April 18, 2016 Commission meeting and authorized its submittal for Council review. The 2016 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.

### 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. Washington County is in support of the plan and voted 3-1 in a resolution supporting the plan. TAB has reviewed and supports the findings and the recommended motion. There were 2 members of the public who spoke at the TAC-Planning opposing the plan. The same two members of the public spoke at TAC, opposing the plan, while there was one citizen who spoke in support of the plan. Citizens from W. Lakeland Township have opposed the plan, and the townships of W. Lakeland and Baytown have voted on resolutions opposing the plan. MN House of Representative Kathy Lohmer has sent a letter of continued dialogue between the MAC, Metropolitan Council and communities.

## ATTACHMENT 1

### Lake Elmo Airport 2035 LTCP Proposal

The Lake Elmo Airport is located primarily in Baytown Township (Attachment 3). 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. The aircraft that the plan is designed to serve 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 for 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 2,750', 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).

Below is a description and a list of advantages / disadvantages of the preferred alternative.

- Alternative B1 – Refined Concept: Reconstruct Crosswind Runway 04/22 to 2,750', 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.

The preferred alternative plan would relocate the Primary Runway 14/32 615 feet to the northeast and extend it to 3,500', reconstruct and extend Crosswind Runway 04/22 to 2,750', construct a new Connector Rd., convert existing Runway 14/32 to a Taxiway and realign 30<sup>th</sup> St. N around the new RPZ and reconnect to the existing 30<sup>th</sup> St. N intersection with Neal Avenue.

#### Advantages:

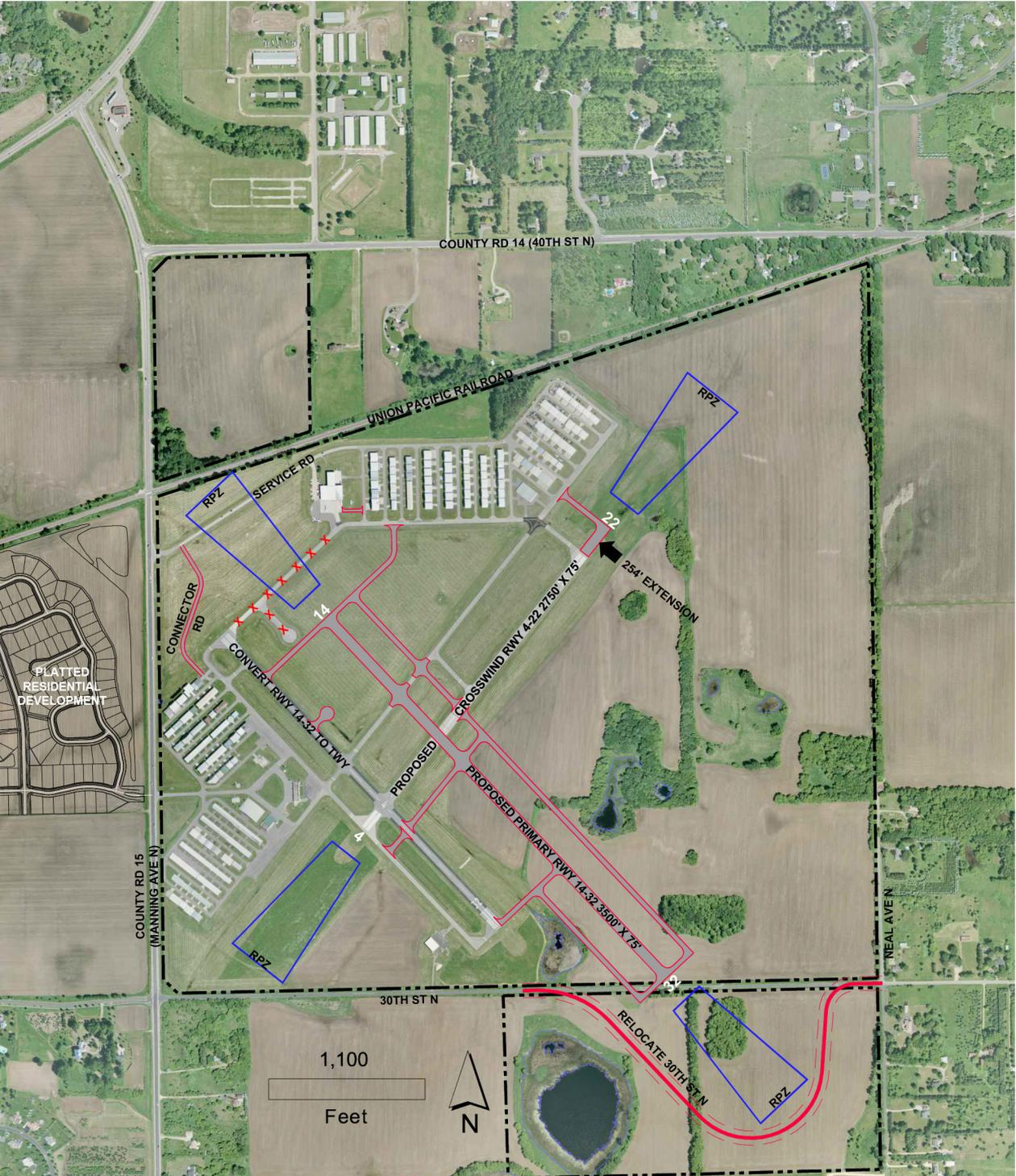
- Primary Runway 14/32 is extended to 3,500' consistent with FAA guidelines
- Runway 14/32 RPZ will comply with FAA compatibility criteria
- Runway 14/32 alignment retains optimal wind coverage
- Runway 14/32 can be constructed in new location while existing Runway 14/32 remains in operation prior to conversion to a taxiway, allowing for minimal operations disruptions of operations

- 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

The preferred development 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.



2013 AERIAL PHOTO

**LEGEND:**

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

Figure ES-1: Existing Airport Layout

