

Aviation Planning Council Recommendations

What is the Long-Term Air Transportation Study (LATS)?

LATS was authorized in 2005 by ESSB 5121 to plan for Washington State's long-term general aviation and commercial aviation capacity needs. LATS included three phases that addressed what we have, what we need and how we would meet the needs regarding statewide commercial and general aviation capacity.

What was the role of the Washington Aviation Planning Council?

As stated in ESSB 5121, the Aviation Planning Council was charged with using LATS Phases I and II data and public input to determine:

- How best to meet commercial and general aviation capacity needs.
- Which regions of the state are in need of improvement regarding the matching of existing, or projected, airport facilities and the long-range capacity needs at airports within the region expected to reach capacity before 2030.
- Recommendations regarding the placement of future commercial or general aviation facilities to meet the need for improved aviation planning in the region.

The Council's final recommendations were submitted to the Governor, Washington State Legislature, Washington State Transportation Commission, and regional transportation planning organizations on July 1, 2009.

How did the Council arrive at its recommendations?

The Aviation Planning Council's recommendations are based on the following:

- Careful review of the LATS technical data, extensive dialogue with aviation system stakeholders and a thorough and transparent public involvement process.
- WSDOT's mobility program, Moving Washington, which utilizes three strategies: adding capacity where appropriate, operating the system more efficiently and managing demand through more alternatives and choices.
- Overarching statewide aviation guiding principles and policies, which were developed by the Council early in its process and submitted to the public for comment.

How was public outreach conducted?

The Council employed several outreach tools to communicate its efforts and seek input from the public. Among these tools were four regional public meetings, two electronic town hall meetings, press releases, e-mail alerts through the Aviation News Service, a

dedicated project Web page, agency briefings, 12 open public meetings, and an online survey. The Council also submitted its draft public outreach plan, purpose and needs statement, guiding principles, policies and alternative strategies to the public for review and comment.

What were the Council's key findings?

Some highlights of the Council's findings include:

- No immediate capacity constraint exists at any airport in Washington State today.
- Future capacity constraints will exist within the time frame of this study (2030), primarily in the Puget Sound Region.
- Washington's aviation system is threatened by encroachment from land uses that are incompatible with aviation operations, and existing land use laws are inadequate.
- The State must continue to monitor air transportation capacity utilization and market conditions through the periodic update of the Aviation System Plan, Aviation Forecast, and Airport Facility Performance Objectives.

Final recommendations

Some highlights of the Council's recommendations include:

- The State should place a priority of protecting and maximizing the efficiency of the airport system we already have in place before we consider the development of new airports.
- Decisions about the placement or expansion of airports must be primarily a regional and market-driven decision.
- The State role as a steward of the aviation system includes providing adequate land use protections, recommending system improvements, as well as strategic investments to support and maintain critical aviation facilities throughout the state.
- If it is determined, at some time in the future, that future demand cannot be met at nearby airports and there is no interested sponsor to undertake such a study effort, the State should undertake siting studies for new airports.

More information

Read the full list of Council recommendations: www.wsdot.wa.gov/aviation/lats

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