

Airport considers expansion plans Public workshops discuss alternatives

By Catherine Hawley
Emerald Reporter

Mahlon Sweet Airport needs to expand to accommodate the increased air traffic expected in Eugene over the next 20 years, airport officials said at a public workshop Wednesday.

A trend toward more regional and commuter flights, combined with aggressive marketing aimed at attracting more airlines and more air travelers to Mahlon Sweet, means the airport will need more runway space, an expanded terminal and more room for both planes and travelers, according to presentations made at the workshop.

Officials working on a master plan for airport development presented three alternative plans for expansion at the Valley River Inn workshop, which was designed to give Eugene residents an opportunity to comment on long-term development at Mahlon Sweet.

"Most people have been really supportive," said Barbara Fritsche, project manager for Aviation Planning Associates, Inc., the consulting firm working with Mahlon Sweet officials to develop a master plan for the airport. "I think most of them realize a good airport is an integral part of any community."

The master plan, required by the Federal Aviation Administration, will guide planning at the airport through the year 2009. So far, officials have evaluated the airport's current facilities, forecasted future activity for the next twenty years and determined how much the airport needs to expand to accommodate more traffic — in the air and on the ground.

Mike Boggs, airport manager, said the airport has tried to keep nearby residents informed of plans and changes at Mahlon Sweet by letter and by telephone, but added the workshop was an opportunity for airport officials to meet with citizens

face to face.

"The workshops are really just an opportunity for us to get to know our neighbors," said Mike Boggs, airport manager.

John and Jan Brooks were two of the airport's neighbors who came to the public workshop to see how possible expansion would affect them.

"We had heard rumors about the expansion, about which side the new runway would go on," said John Brooks. "We came to observe and to see what impact the plans would have."

The Brooks said they were encouraged by the fact that the plan most likely to be recommended would not expand runways in the direction of their home in Clear Lake Estates.

The three alternative plans presented at Wednesday's workshop ranged from a "Do-Nothing Plan" that would not alter the airport's present state aside from a few minor improvements, to a plan that would add almost 3,000 feet of runway and require the airport to add 675 acres to its property.

The second alternative is currently most favored because it would increase airport safety and provide the most flexibility for expansion, said Drew Daniluk, vice president of Aviation Planning.

"It takes projected demand into consideration," Daniluk said. "It protects the airport for future expansion, and it protects the neighborhoods."

The second plan would extend the main runway to a total of 9,200 feet and add a new runway to the east to serve smaller planes.

A separate runway for the smaller aircraft would improve airport safety significantly, said Daniluk.

To extend the existing runways and build a new one, the airport would need to add 675 acres to its property and would close Greenhill Road and Bond Road.

A third alternative would

place a new runway for smaller aircraft west of the existing runway and would require the airport to add 342 acres.

One of the three alternatives will be recommended to the FAA for approval, probably within the next 30 days, Fritsche said. Once approval is received, an environmental review will be required to determine the impact of the proposed expansion.

"There are about twenty categories on the checklist, including noise, wetlands, coastal zones, endangered species and historic preservation," Fritsche said.

Two of the three proposed plans could affect the wetlands on airport property.

The master plan should be completed by May, and the environmental assessment finished by November.

Federal funds from the FAA, generated by taxes on airline tickets, will pay for 90 percent of the improvements outlined in the master plan, once the FAA approves it.

Two more public workshops are planned to keep citizens informed of progress in the development of the master plan.

Workshop set for future grad students

MEETINGS

EMU Budget Committee informational meeting will be held tonight at 5 in EMU Century Room B.

Campus Information Exchange council will meet to-

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night from 6 to 8 in EMU Century Room F.

Chi Alpha Christian ministry meets tonight at 7:30 in EMU Century Room E. Everyone is invited to attend.

Student United Nations Organization meets tonight at 6 in EMU Century Room D.

Students for the Ethical Treatment of Animals meets tonight at 5 in EMU Cedar Room D.

Oregon Commentator is holding a staff meeting tonight at 5:30 in EMU Century Room E. All are invited.

Opal Creek Defense Coalition meets tonight at 5:30 in the Survival Center office, EMU Suite 1.

Student Senate meets tonight at 6 in the EMU Board Room.

SPEAKERS AND LECTURES

Dr. Harry Edwards, sports activist and author of *Sociology and Sport* and *The Revolt of the Black Athlete* will speak tonight at 7:30 in the EMU Fir Room.

MISCELLANEOUS

A workshop on applying to graduate school will be held today at 3:30 in Room 164 Oregon Hall. Finding the right graduate school and taking entrance exams will be discussed.

Taize Prayer will be held tonight at 9 at the Newman Center, 1850 Emerald St.

Deadline for submitting Et als to the Emerald front desk, EMU Suite 300, is noon the day before publication. Et als run the day of the event unless the event occurs before noon.

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