

# Airport

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## THE NEED

Since twice as many people are flying through the city-owned airport than did a decade ago, Bass said there's not enough space for baggage claim, queue lines are cramped and there's often not enough seating at gates, in food areas and outside security.

And much of the space they have is poorly designed. Not many travelers take advantage of the views and food options on the second floor of the airport, because travelers can't see or hear updates from their gate.

"We have limited hold room," Bass said.

"Not a great option of retail and concessions and food. Bathrooms are getting too small and so we know we need more space to accommodate this growth."

Though the COVID-19 pandemic decreased air travel temporarily, the number of travelers using the Redmond Airport has already bounced back, with no signs of waning.

"The overall story is we've done better than we expected with COVID and we came back quicker than most of the country," Bass said.

He expects to the number of travelers to continue ticking up and believes now is the time to plan that continued growth.

## THE PLAN

The first phase of the airport expansion will add more retail options, as well as additional places to get food and drink on both sides of security.

Bass said they have designed an expanded "hold area" past security that will have more space for passengers for queuing in ticket lines or waiting to board. They also plan a complete redesign of the second floor, which would reduce the number of flights that passengers would board outdoors on the tarmac.

Plans call for six or seven jet bridges that would make for more efficient loadings and un-



Concept art of a possible design for the expanded Redmond Airport.

loadings, especially in winter.

The cost of the first phase of the expansion will be in \$90-100 million range, which Bass said the airport can pay for with saved funds and federal grants.

Additional phases of the expansion are subject to change, and dependent on how much money the airport is able to acquire.

According to the November 2021 concept plan, the second phase of expansion would enlarge and redesign the ticket area and air control tower. Phase three would expand and reconfigure the baggage claim area and the next phase would revamp and expand the east side departure lounge. A final phase would focus on an interior reconfiguration and relocate airport administration offices.

If the airport is able to get all five phases finished, Bass said there could be roughly 12 additional gates at the airport, which he said would likely be attractive for airlines to add additional connections to RDM.

Bass emphasized that, despite hundreds of millions in upgrades, airport administrators want it to keep the same feel that it has now.

"We're still going to be a smaller airport," he said. "We still want to have that feel of this lodge feel ... this Central Oregon feel."

## IMPACT ON ECONOMY

An expanded airport would be an asset for increased busi-

*"The airport, in some ways, is as important as the Deschutes River or the Cascade Mountains when it comes to determining the success of Central Oregon. It's essential that we make sure that this airport is as successful as it can be and can accommodate the demand that we're seeing."*

— Keith Witcosky, Redmond city manager

ness investment and opportunities for the region, according to Jon Stark, CEO of Economic Development for Central Oregon. He said the more Central Oregon is integrated into the wider transportation network, the more it makes sense to build and expand in the area.

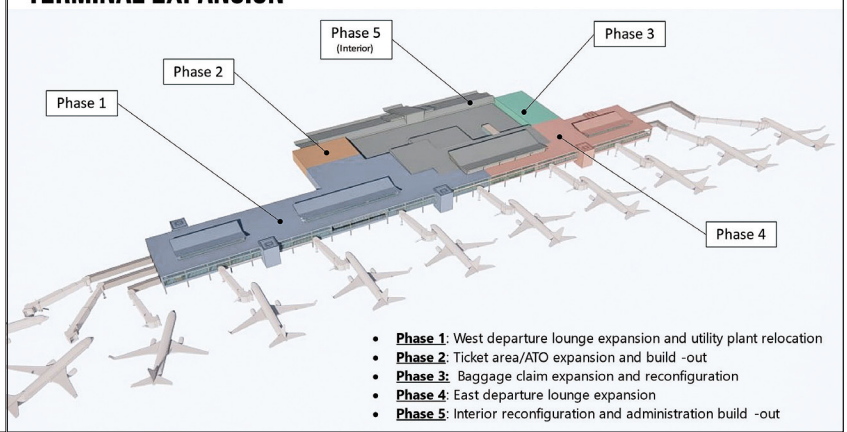
"The airport is a major component to the success of the economic development in the region," Stark said. "Without it, we're an island."

With Central Oregon one of the fastest growing regions in the country, he said, the airport expansion is timely and will help attract more flights. Destinations such as Chicago and Dallas/Ft. Worth are on the radar, he said.

Additionally, an expanded airport can bring in more tourists, and offer Central Oregon residents a wider variety of direct destinations.

"As the marketing arm for the region, Visit Central Oregon is really excited for the expansion and the flights it will support,"

## TERMINAL EXPANSION



Architectural rendering

2023. It is expected to take two years to finish. Most of that cash is already in hand, including \$25 million in savings from fees paid by travelers and 75 percent likely to come from state and federal grants.

Bass noted that the expansion will not be funded by a local general obligation bond or city taxes.

Bass explained that the airport, while owned by the city of Redmond, has a unique setup and acts virtually like its own municipality.

It has its own fire department, employs its own security service, and has its own administration, and oversees dozens of lease agreements with businesses and organizations who operate on its land.

Money from the city doesn't flow into airport coffers, nor does money collected at the airport go back into the city.

There is plenty of federal money heading to the nation's transportation system.

The 2022 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law set aside \$15 billion for airport infrastructure and its smaller terminals program sets aside \$1 billion over five years.

"We plan on competing hard over the next four to five years," Bass said.

A Connect Oregon grant could also be another funding opportunity, Bass said. The program was created in 2005 to finance "non-highway modes of transportation" and has

awarded \$463 million to 221 projects since its inception.

"We're trying our hardest to get every dollar possible to put into this terminal, including our own money," he said.

Additionally, the airport may take out a revenue bond. Separate from a general obligation bond with taxpayers footing the bill, the revenue bond would instead be issued against the airport's revenue and ability to repay the debt service.

"This project most likely will end up with 25 to 30 separate grants supporting it on top of our cash and the revenue bond," said Bass.

## MOVING FORWARD

Bass said he hears a lot from travelers who want to see additional flights and amenities at the airport. He said this plan will provide a clear next step while keeping their options flexible for the long-term future.

"People are excited to keep growing, adding new destinations and frequencies," he said.

Still, Bass said they plan to check in constantly throughout the process, keeping an eye on costs and the economy, as well as the demand from travelers.

"As we go through the design process we'll start to get more and more understanding of what this really will cost," he said. "And we can also start looking at ... do we really need phase four?"

Reporter: nrosenberger@redmondspokesman.com

# Council

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"Although it has been extremely rewarding, I have decided not to seek re-election at this time."

Clark-Endicott's position is one of three council seats up for election in November. The candidate filing period is currently open until August 30.

To run for Redmond City Council, a candidate must be 18 years old, a registered voter and must be a resident of Redmond for at least one year prior to election date.

As of August 10, Fitch joins fellow Charles Baer, Ben Schimmoller and fellow city councilor Jay Patrick in the mayoral race.

Three city council candidates

have officially finished the process of filing to run: Branegan Dixon, John Nielsen and Cat Zwicker.

Two others who declared their candidacy — Kathryn Osborne and Bill Trumble — still need to submit signatures in order to qualify for the November ballot.

Reporter: ttrainor@redmondspokesman.com

# Map

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The Detroit Lake area — which burned to the ground in 2020 and is now a flammable collection of toothpick-like trees — is in the green zone, which designates an area least at risk. Green Ridge — which has seen several fires in recent years — is listed as "yellow."

In comparison, one attendee said, areas that haven't seen fires in years are designated as "high" or "extreme" risk zones.

Other attendees complained about higher insurance rates as a result of a high or extreme risk designation, as well as the costs of additional building code upgrades if their properties were to burn down.

One citizen, who did not give their name, pointed to a larger economic impact.

"There's a huge need in Oregon for affordable housing," he said. "And we're adding another layer of costs to those that developers build."

Even if updated building codes ultimately make residents safer, meeting attendees said they wished they had more of a heads-up before the map was released, so they could better prepare.

Another attendee said they're less concerned with fire risk on their specific property than they are with a lack of federal and state forest management, where large wildfires can start and spread onto private land.

In light of pushback, ODF is taking a step back to reevaluate

its methodology, address complaints and appeals, and improve dialogue with the communities its mapping.

The Redmond meeting marks the fourth ODF community information session since the map's release, with an additional session scheduled for Grants Pass but later canceled due to threats.

Following the meetings, ODF will consider community feedback and corrections to create a second draft of the map, said Tim Holschbach, ODF chief of policy and planning for the fire protection division.

Once the second map is done, ODF will hold additional meetings to solicit feedback and use that to develop a final document.

Holschbach said ODF will do better at public engagement in all steps of the process.

Residents who have submitted an appeal regarding their fire risk designation will not be required to do so a second time. Holschbach said the timeline for this process is not yet set.

"We want the map to be right, too," he said. Reporter: lbaudhuin@redmondspokesman.com

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**DAY 3: DENALI NATIONAL PARK, TUNDRA WILDERNESS TOUR**  
**DAY 4: DENALI, SEWARD**  
**DAY 5: SEWARD, GLACIER & WILDLIFE CRUISE**  
**DAY 6: SEWARD AS YOU WISH, DAY AT LEISURE**  
**DAY 7: SEWARD, ANCHORAGE, FLIGHT HOME**

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