

Frequently Asked Questions

McCall Municipal Airport - Taxiway Separation Environmental Assessment (EA)

Airport Master Plan Questions

1. What percent of the overall increase in air traffic is attributed to large jets/aircraft?
The forecast shows about 1/3 of the overall operation as air taxi or commercial, which are the types of flights that typically use larger aircraft. The average annual growth rate for these is shown as 2.9%
2. Where does funding for this project come from?
The EA is funded 95% by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), 2.5% by the State Aeronautics office and 2.5% by the City of McCall. Construction would be funded on similar percentages.
3. What direction would a runway extension go? South? Would an extension to the south impact Brown's Pond?
Correct, although an extension is not being discussed at this time. Modeling was prepared in the Master Plan that shows the grading impacts, if any, to Brown's Pond.
4. If we've been out of compliance on separation since 1989, why is it an issue now?
Over 20 years have passed since the design standards changed and the FAA has said it's time to correct the deficiency.
5. Currently, the airport is classified as B-II. There must be a lot of elements that make up the overall compliance. Are we out of compliance on other elements, and why is runway/taxiway separation a big deal?
The only other non-compliance issue – beyond small maintenance items – is the width of the taxiway, which is wider than what FAA requires. Runway/taxiway separation has been identified by the FAA as a prime safety concern, so they have been funding many projects similar to this across the country.
6. Do hangars have to be moved?
No, the hangars are outside of the taxiway object free area. Depending on the amount of relocation, some of the apron area will be impacted.
7. Would the FAA be more inclined to give us grants for other projects if compliance is made?
The FAA prioritizes projects based on the agency's goals. At this time, the runway/taxiway separation deficiency is the FAA's primary focus at McCall. Once this deficiency is corrected they will be able to look at funding other projects.

8. Is the pavement on the taxiway failing as a trigger to make the shift?
No, currently the taxiway pavement is in good condition. Pavement condition is only one criterion the FAA looks at: other criteria include safety, timing, and compliance with grant assurances.
9. What is the end of the “grace period” for noncompliance with the separation standard?
There is no set grace period, per se. Enough time has passed that the FAA is now saying it needs to be fixed.
10. What are the consequences of non-compliance?
The FAA does not typically put down a heavy hand regarding non-compliance. However, they do like to see progress. Absolute worst-case scenario is becoming non-compliant with the grant assurances and losing funding.
11. When was the taxiway built or extended?
The original section of the taxiway (northern portion) was constructed in 1985. The 1,000 foot extension to the south was constructed in 1990.
12. What is 2.5% in dollars to the City for construction and EA?
The EA fees are \$273,300 and construction of the separation has been estimated at \$2,200,000 in the Master Plan. 2.5% would amount to \$61,832.
13. If City spends the 2.5% to get the Airport into compliance, would that open up FAA funds for maintenance and other projects?
Yes.
14. Is there a safety benefit to the wider separations?
Yes.
15. We don’t want to go through this process again. Are there any anticipated changes to the B-II standards?
The FAA updates its standards on an infrequent basis. We believe the FAA may be reviewing some of the standards, including runway/taxiway separation, for aircraft types that are less commonly used. As soon as we have more information, including its relevance to McCall, we will include it.
16. Is the Master Plan “preferred alternative” the same as the Environmental Assessment’s “preferred alternative?”
No. The preferred alternative in the Master Plan is a development guide for the entire airport. The EA’s preferred alternative strictly relates to the runway/taxiway centerline separation deficiency.

17. What is the rationale for the Master Plan's Preferred Alternative?

As part of the Master Plan, aeronautical activity forecasts were prepared. These forecasts predicated the facility requirements needed to accommodate demand. The EA will take another look at the Master Plan forecasts to determine their validity.

18. The taxiway configuration should not be looked at until a decision on the Airport's Reference Code (ARC) is made.

A decision on the ARC was made in the Master Plan, showing the airport as a B-II.

Environmental Assessment Questions

1. When is the Draft EA due out?

Approximately 9 months.

2. How does the Advisory Committee engage the public?

All Committee meetings will be open to the public and the public will have an opportunity to ask questions at the end of every meeting. If requested, a formal public hearing will be held while the draft EA is out for public review.

3. The City just did a new Comprehensive Plan. How will the EA relate to it? Does the Master Plan dictate the Comprehensive Plan or visa versa?

As part of the EA, we will review the Comprehensive Plan in the discussion of compatible land use, as well as discussions of social impacts. We have not reviewed the Comprehensive Plan at this time. Typically, the Comprehensive Plan is a broad scale plan for the city as a whole, while an Airport Master Plan is a site-specific plan for the airport sub-area of a city, taking into account the land use and transportation goals from the Comprehensive Plan.

4. If we increase separation, how will it affect noise?

Noise is primarily dictated by aircraft taking off. Runway length is the most critical factor in changing aircraft operations. The location of the taxiway will not affect noise levels. Relocating the taxiway does not increase the amount of larger aircraft operating at the airport.

5. If we want to stay as a B-II airport, why even look at other separation alternatives?

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) guidelines require that additional alternatives be analyzed to determine if there are methods that produce less environmental impact than a single alternative that meets a minimum standard.

6. Does the noise study include the impacts on local growth?

The noise study was completed as part of the Master Plan. Noise contours were prepared for existing operations and those forecasted in the 5-year future.

7. We have not decided on the final configuration of the airport. Is this project premature?
No, regardless of any other projects (i.e. runway length) the runway/taxiway separation is in non-compliance with FAA design standards for the current classification (B-II) of the airport.
8. How does the classification of an airport get changed?
Airport classification (Airport Reference Code) changes when at least 500 annual itinerant operations of an aircraft larger than the airport's existing critical aircraft occur at an airport.
9. Is there a preferred taxiway separation distance yet? What criteria will be used to determine the preferred distance?
No, a preferred alternative for the taxiway relocation has not yet been determined. The 20 criteria considered in determining the preferred alternative are outlined by NEPA.
10. What would determine moving to a 400 foot runway/taxiway separation?
Reduced environmental impacts would determine if relocating the taxiway beyond the minimum B-II standards is favorable.
11. Are all other projects at the airport considered as cumulative impacts? If so, to what level are they analyzed in the EA?
Yes, they are. Cumulative impacts are analyzed on a qualitative level, rather than quantitative.
12. Will a Cost-Benefit Analysis be completed?
No, Cost-Benefit Analyses are not required for projects of this size.
13. Will we have an opportunity to comment on what we think about the EA at the advisory committee meetings?
The committee meetings will allow time at the end of each meeting for the public to ask questions or comment.

Comments from the Public

1. Have we sold our soul to the FAA? If we plan for larger aircraft, we will get them.
2. Several years back the FAA paid to relocate Deinhard Lane because the runway safety area was out of compliance. FAA would not fund any other projects until it was complete. This could be like that.
3. The Master Plan is flawed. It uses circular logic to come to conclusions on growth rates. The use of income level to correlate to C-III aircraft use is flawed and significantly overstates the number of County residents in that income bracket. The economy has radically changed and that should negate the forecasts.

4. Chapter 3 of the Master Plan has been superseded by the economy.
5. The preferred alternative in the Master Plan is \$74 million. The EA is shown at over \$250,000. This is a lot of money.
6. City Council cannot knowingly put the Airport into non-compliance for liability purposes.
7. Many airports around the country are out of compliance, but they aren't closed. This argument of safety is wrong.
8. We have a petition signed by 170+ people stating that the only acceptable alternatives to be looked at are the no action and B-II compliance. (Petition posted on City's Airport website)
9. The scope of work is too broad; it looks at too many alternatives.