

Methow Valley State Airport Airport Layout Plan

Summary of Preferred Alternative (July 1, 2009)

The preliminary preferred alternative for the Airport Layout Plan Update was presented at a public meeting in Winthrop on May 20, 2009. The Aviation Division established a 30-day public review and comment period for the preliminary preferred alternative. During this period, the Aviation Division also continued the coordination efforts with local stakeholders and the FAA. Based on comments provided by airport users, neighbors, and other members of the public, and the ongoing project coordination, additional refinements were made that led to a final preferred alternative.

The primary elements of the preferred alternative are listed below:

No Extension of Runway 13/31. The existing runway will be reconfigured as needed through the use of declared distances to compensate for nonstandard conditions at the runway ends. A minor reduction in useable runway length for aircraft landing and/or takeoff is required through the use of declared distances.

No Impact on Adjacent Farmland. The preferred alternative does not involve property acquisition and does not affect current use of adjacent farm lands. The previous proposal to route a new dirt roadway around the northern perimeter of the farmland has been eliminated. The existing approach easements for both ends of the runway will remain unchanged.

No Property Acquisition Required for Planned Development. The preferred alternative does not require property acquisition since all planned airfield or roadway improvements are contained within existing airport property. However, in the event that nearby property owners are interested in selling land, the Aviation Division will consider each situation individually based on the potential use and benefit to the airport.

Evans Road Will Not Be Closed. Changes in the existing runway configuration are planned to allow Evans Road to remain in place. The installation of traffic warning signals or signs on the roadway is planned to increase driver awareness to runway operations and low flying aircraft. A project to realign a small section of Evans Road away from the south runway end (within airport property) is recommended as a long term improvement which would allow some of the runway reconfigurations to be eliminated.

North Cascades Smokejumper Base. The existing USFS facilities will remain in place through a modification to FAA standards. Long term options for USFS facility expansion or reconfiguration may provide an opportunity to address runway clearances.

Parallel Taxiway. A partial length parallel taxiway is recommended on the east side of Runway 13/31, north of the USFS facilities. The taxiway will not require property acquisition. The taxiway is intended to reduce taxiing of aircraft on the active runway.

Aircraft Parking and Hangar Facilities. The existing facilities on the west side of Runway 13/31 will be improved to optimize the use of limited developable areas within airport property. The existing aircraft apron and taxilanes will be reconfigured to meet FAA design standards and to increase efficiency for small airplane and business aircraft parking. A limited number of small hangar sites will be available for lease adjacent to the aircraft apron. Three helicopter parking pads and a fire operations area are planned south of the expanded aircraft apron. Improvements in vehicle access and parking are also recommended.

Automated Weather Observation System (AWOS). A site on the west side of the runway has been identified to locate a future FAA-funded AWOS on airport property. The addition of a publicly owned weather observation system will ensure that on-site weather data will remain available to users, including medevac helicopters and fixed wing aircraft operating in the Valley.

Related FAQ /Answers (items that appear on the preferred alternative):

What is a Runway Protection Zone?

A Runway Protection Zone (RPZ) is a defined area on the ground that is intended to protect the area near the ends of a runway from incompatible objects and activities. The function of an RPZ is to enhance the protection of people and property on the ground. Activities within RPZs are often controlled through the use of easements when the property is not owned by an airport. The RPZ boundary generally coincides with the inner portion of the runway approach surface. The measures taken to keep the RPZ free of incompatible objects and activities also protects the airspace surface that extends overhead. Both ends of Runway 13/31 have existing approach easements that were acquired for the areas in the vicinity of the RPZs (see below).

What is an Approach Easement?

An approach easement involves the protection of the airspace (sometimes called avigation easements) that is associated with the inner portion of the approach to a runway end. The easement will limit the height of structures or other objects (trees, etc.) to avoid

penetrating the airspace, but does not affect the underlying zoning of the land area. Both ends of Runway 13/31 have approach easements that were acquired many years ago by WSDOT that are based on 20:1 visual approach slopes.

What is an AWOS Clear Area?

The 500-foot radius that surrounds an AWOS is an FAA-defined clearing standard that is intended to protect the weather system from development that could adversely affect accuracy and performance. Portions of AWOS clear areas that extend beyond airport property should be protected through an easement if possible or through a site specific design that elevates the wind sensors above any nearby structures.

What are Declared Distances?

Declared distances are when specific useable runway dimensions are “declared” to be less than the full runway length. The declared distance concept provides for reduced useable runway lengths for some aircraft operations (takeoff and/or landing) based on specific site constraints that prevent conventional runway designs. For example, the standard cleared and graded area beyond each end of Runway 13/31 would extend 300 feet beyond each end of the 5,049-foot runway. Since both ends are limited by physical features (road) or property ownership, the use of declared distances, in conjunction with runway reconfiguration (e.g., displaced thresholds) will provide a comparable level of safety with less than full runway length. The declared distance dimensions for Runway 13/31 will be published in airport facility directories to ensure that pilots are aware of the runway configuration.

What is a Displaced Threshold?

When a runway threshold (the landing point for aircraft) is located at a point other than at the end of a runway, it may be “displaced.” A displaced threshold changes the configuration within the runway, but does not reduce the overall length of the runway. For Runway 13/31 displaced threshold are planned for both ends based in part on the configuration of the clear areas beyond the runway ends and for obstruction clearance over vehicles travelling on Evans Road.