

The Commission developed a preliminary list of six existing airports with the potential to meet some of the projected demand for air passenger service, air cargo, or general aviation.

- Arlington Municipal Airport
- Bremerton National Airport
- Paine Field/ Snohomish County Airport
- Shelton/ Sanderson Field
- Tacoma Narrows Airport
- Toledo Airport

Staff elaborated on the attributes of each airport and provided analysis of the possible role each airport could fulfill in providing additional capacity.

- Arlington Municipal
  - The airport sponsor views the future of the airport as a robust GA airport
  - Substantial infrastructure development on both ends of the runway restricts expansion opportunities
  - The runway length is well below the length needed for larger planes that provide passenger service and air cargo
- Bremerton National Airport
  - Bremerton is 30 miles from I-5 and beyond a 90-minute travel time for two of the five county communities
  - Air carrier industry partners have indicated Bremerton travel time is too long, distance too far for both freight and passengers
  - Bremerton could provide additional general aviation aircraft storage capacity and expand business aviation support
- Paine Field/Snohomish County Airport
  - Paine Field is currently limited on the volume of commercial air passengers
  - The existing 9,000 foot runway is sufficient for most passenger service and air cargo aircraft, including international flights
  - The airfield has a robust general aviation presence and numerous T-hangars
  - With passenger service already provided, it is likely airlines could support additional service and associated belly cargo
- Sanderson Field
  - Shelton is a distance from the population centers and 22 miles from I-5
  - Travel times for most passengers and freight are likely to exceed one hour and may be 90 minutes or greater for some communities.
  - Both passenger and air cargo industry partners are unlikely to be interested in providing service at Sanderson Field
  - The Port owns sufficient land to develop significant GA storage
- Tacoma Narrows Airport
  - Tacoma Narrows is relatively close to Tacoma and I-5, but requires crossing the Narrows Bridge
  - There is substantial residential development around the airport where the runway would need be extended to accommodate commercial capacity.

- There is strong opposition to airport commercial expansion from Pierce county, the City of Gig Harbor, and the local community
- The airport's current runway length of just over 5,000 feet is the preferred length for business aviation aircraft
- Ed Carlson Memorial Field-South Lewis County Airport/ Toledo
  - Toledo Airport is quite distant from high-density population areas, and scored the lowest of the six preliminary sites for travel time
  - Passenger and air cargo industry partners have indicated they do not see a business case for the site because of the travel times and the airports' location between SeaTac and Portland airports
  - Airport expansion would require substantial land acquisition, and there are environmental concerns near the airport, particularly widespread wetlands
  - The Cowlitz Indian Tribe has expressed cultural concerns and Lewis County has communicated they see the airport's future role as a general aviation airport

Staff explored other existing airports that had the potential to provide additional capacity

- Opportunities within the Puget Sound Region
  - Apex [Silverdale]
  - Auburn
  - Boeing Field [Seattle]
  - First Air Field [Monroe]
  - Harvey Field [Snohomish]
  - Norman Grier Field [Kent]
  - Olympia Regional
  - Renton Municipal
  - Thun Field [Puyallup]
- Opportunities Elsewhere in Washington State
  - Other commercial air passenger service airports (statewide)
  - Other air cargo airports (statewide)
  - Other General Aviation airports (statewide)

Greenfield Sites - Planners will continue to survey the Puget Sound region for possible sites for a new airport. In many parts of the region the infrastructure build-out is substantial. In addition, wetlands, species habitat, airspace and other factors influence the potential for sites to be viable. It is worthwhile to note that a greenfield site could be an important part of the solution. Expanding existing airports, such as the six already identified by the commission, are possible solutions. However, many of these sites have constraints that could limit the amount of capacity they could ultimately provide. Improving and expanding these airports is likely to be an expensive investment, and federal, state and local funds are expected to be limited. If the region supports expansion to meet the full level of forecasted demand, a comparison of options could result in a limited emphasis on expansion and a greater emphasis on the greenfield option. For these reasons, WSDOT Aviation is seeking to address some of these topics in the upcoming Aviation System Plan Update.

Aviation System Plan Update - The primary purpose of airport system planning is to study the performance and interaction of an entire aviation system to understand the interrelationship of the

member airports. WSDOT will begin a system plan update study in 2022. Several aspects of the commission's work align well with the FAA's criteria for a system plan. With that in mind, WSDOT Aviation Division planners are developing the study's scope of work and will deliver a future presentation to the commission on work planners will seek to accomplish in the study.

Conclusion - The capacity situation for passenger service, air cargo and general aviation is likely to remain concentrated in the Puget Sound. However, there are opportunities to expand some airports in the region and perhaps also reduce demand by integrating excess capacity at other airports across the state. Given the limitations described in this whitepaper, a greenfield site new airport may still be an important part of the solution.