

# Questions asked by members of the public

*\*Questions from CACC virtual public meeting 2022*

## **1. How would the destruction of wetlands be mediated if the South King County site is selected?**

Further environmental study would be required for any site that moves forward toward becoming a new or expanded airport. Identifying potential locations is one very early step in the process and is based on a high-level look at the technical aspects of being able to site a new airport or expand an existing one. If a greenfield site is selected and further supported by legislators and an airport sponsor, the FAA would subsequently conduct a thorough environmental review process that would include potential mediation requirements.

## **2. The foothills in South King County hold air pollutants and give our area a higher amount of unhealthy air quality days. How would the increased pollutants be mediated as we would have more traffic as well as aviation pollution?**

Per the answer provided above in Question 1, Further environmental study would be required for any site that moves forward toward becoming a new or expanded airport. Identifying potential locations is one very early step in the process and is based on a high-level look at the technical aspects of being able to site a new airport or expand an existing one. If a greenfield site is selected and further supported by legislators and an airport sponsor, the FAA would subsequently conduct a thorough environmental review process that would include potential mediation requirements. Additionally, there are parallel efforts currently taking place to reduce aircraft emissions through the use of sustainable aviation fuels and emerging aeronautics technologies.

## **3. No red on East King County? Where is the essential factor determination info and how did you come to these outcomes?**

The options for greenfield sites were provided by the consultant team working on the parallel but separate Washington State Aviation System Plan (WASP).

The supporting information behind the essential factors are being provided by the consultant and will be posted on the CACC website.

The eight essential factors used for the first level of screening were:

- Terrain impact: Is the site too hilly to develop?
- Property acquisition: How much property needs to be purchased?
- Environmental justice: Would this location disproportionately impact people who are BIPOC, people with low incomes, or people who use languages other than English?
- Floodplain impact: Is the site likely to flood in heavy rain events?
- Wetland impact: Would development impact wetlands?
- Incompatible land use: Are there land uses such as residences, schools, or places of worship nearby?
- Population served: How many people are within a 90-minute drive?
- Unaccommodated passenger demand: How many people who are beyond a 90-minute drive from Sea-Tac or Paine Field could be served by this location?

**How do you justify SE Site Environmental Justice all green when no EIS completed, F failure ground transportation, and much of the land encumbered by Ag and conservations easements?**

There are several attributes the consultant examined: Historic and archeological resource impacts, Hazardous material impacts Section 4(f) resource impacts, Wetland impacts, Floodplain impacts, and Protected wildlife habitats and species. King county scored Yellow for Floodplain; all other were green. The analysis conducted at this point is based on the consultants first level analysis as they continue their work on the Washington State Aviation System Plan (WASP). This is very early in the process. Any sites recommended as an option to move forward will be studied in more detail before a final recommendation is made to the legislature in June 2023. Beyond the commission's work, additional environmental analysis most likely requiring an EIS will be conducted by the FAA.

**4. If Environmental Responsibility is one of the Commission's top guiding principles, why is this not reflected in the eight criteria. Only wetlands are included as a criterion. What about agricultural lands and protected wildlife and habitats?**

There are several attributes the consultant examined; Historic and archeological resource impacts, Hazardous material impacts, Section 4(f) resource impacts, Wetland impacts, Floodplain impacts, and Protected wildlife habitats and species. Further environmental study would be required for any site that moves forward toward becoming a new or expanded airport. Identifying potential locations is one very early step in the process and is based on a high-level look at the technical aspects of being able to site a new airport or expand an existing one. If a greenfield site is selected and further supported by legislators and an airport sponsor, the FAA would subsequently conduct a thorough environmental review process that would include potential mediation requirements. Additionally, on behalf of the Commission, WSDOT is working with local planning organizations to better understand protected areas that were not identified in the initial high-level analysis by the consultant.

**5. Have the high winds and close proximity to the 4000' foothills complicate airspace and flight approaches to SE King site? These will have big negative impact on pilots and safety.**

At this point, WSDOT is working with both the FAA and military departments to analyze any airspace conflicts, impacts to military operations and any potential safety concerns associated with terrain and/or airspace.

**6. What was the basis for assuming that the land for the two Skagit County sites would be easy to acquire? The development rights for most of the land in those locations is owned by the Skagit Land Trust. Developing that land is legally not possible.**

There were no assumptions made that land acquisition at any given site would be easy to acquire. The land acquisition required for the two Skagit County sites are on the lower end in comparison to all of the greenfield options. The Commission is considering protected lands in addition to the technical analysis conducted by the Washington State Aviation System Plan (WASP) consultant.

**7. Why, given the likelihood of significant changes in how warfare will change over the next 40 years, was JBLM not considered? Particularly for cargo.**

JBLM, specifically McChord Field, was identified as an option early on in the Commission's work. Pierce County executives, the military, and congressional delegations currently do not support commercial operations at McChord Field. In addition, the legislation creating the CACC specifically directed that recommendations from the CACC could not have an impact on military operations.

**8. There would be HUGE negative wildlife impact here in East King County. I cannot believe that that is not part of the criteria. It certainly is for our landowners and building on their property.**

The WASP consultant examined wildlife habitat in two categories; protected wildlife habitat and under Section 4(f) which includes wildlife and waterfowl refuges. Further environmental study would be required for any site that moves forward toward becoming a new or expanded airport. Identifying potential locations is one very early step in the process and is based on a high-level look at the technical aspects of being able to site a new airport or expand an existing one. If a greenfield site is selected and further supported by legislators and an airport sponsor, the FAA would subsequently conduct a thorough environmental review process that would include potential mediation requirements.

**9. Is the commission taking into consideration the impact on local farmers, ranchers, and food producers who are a vital part of our local food systems and who could be displaced by such a large development in rural areas?**

At this early point in the process, our initial screening for greenfield sites is intended to show what might be technically possible. Any sites that remain under consideration would need significant additional study to understand potential impacts on surrounding communities and ecosystems. Further environmental study would be required for any site that moves forward toward becoming a new or expanded airport.

**10. Why not look further afield? For example, the airport in Moses Lake is much larger in acreage than SeaTac. A high-speed rail line from Seattle to Spokane would bring the Moses Lake Airport within a 30-minute ride from Seattle, and a large airport there could serve millions of passenger trips from both the Seattle area and all of Eastern Washington.**

The Commission and others have studied high-speed rail as well as other airports, like Moses Lake. Studies have found that rail is not a feasible option to meet the projected demand, and that airports like Moses Lake may have potential to take some air cargo demand but cannot meet the projected passenger demand or full air cargo demand.

**11. Without back up data, the public has no transparency into why a certain status was given (red, yellow, green). Can we get access to the facts so that we have a fair ability to understand the process.**

All Commission meetings are open to the public, and meeting materials and recordings are posted to our website at <https://wsdot.wa.gov/travel/aviation/commercial-aviation-coordinating-commission> - we also continue posting new data as it becomes available to allow for full transparency. Information pertaining the red, yellow and green chart data can be found here:

<https://wsdot.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2022-09/WASP-Screening-Process-Method-Results-30AUG22-FINAL.pdf>.

**12. Since we are "ignoring" the CACC and presenting ideas that are outside the boundary of what was requested then why does a statewide plan ignore expansion for air cargo and/or passengers at central or eastern Washington locations such as Moses lake or tri-cities?**

This Commission and others have studied options for expansion of air cargo and passenger aviation in central and eastern Washington. Feedback from those studies and private industry is that options in central and eastern Washington do not meet demand needs for air cargo or passenger demand.

**13. Why not look at 2 smaller airport options, for example Skagit and Thurston, spreading out the impact on traffic both north and south?**

This work and similar endeavors before it have studied the possibility of looking at two smaller airport options. Generally, we have found that existing airports do not have the space to expand to the extent needed to take on a meaningful amount of the projected demand, with the exception of Paine Field.

**14. How do we voice our comments to WASP also?**

The WASP is an objective, technical analysis that follows strict FAA criteria. The purpose of a system plan is to capture factual information and develop forecasts for future aviation needs that may identify potential gaps. The method for communicating public comments is to the Commercial Aviation Coordinating Commission.

**15. Who are the agencies, partnerships, sponsorships and companies behind this development?**

For clarification, there is no project or development currently. The Commission is undertaking a planning effort to identify sites that may be suitable for a new or expanded airport. Additional study would be needed even after the Commission issues its recommendation, and a sponsor for any new airport site would need to be identified.

**16. Did I hear you say that the greenfield sites local government has the final say on the site's choice?**

Yes, many parties would need to be involved before any site moves forward with development. An airport sponsor would need to be identified, which is typically a local government entity.

**17. Have you considered that the impact to the MIT? They are BIPOC.'**

WSDOT's Tribal Liaison office has been in touch with the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe and other tribes throughout the state to gain their input.

**18. Is there any local government support for any of the potential greenfield sites?**

There is currently no support for any of the existing or greenfield sites as the CACC is still in the very early stages of research.

**19. Is existing vehicle infrastructure considered in determining MAP?**

No, only enplaning and deplaning passengers.

**20. Will the legislation that created the Farmland Protection Program be ignored when choosing a greenfield site?**

Nothing is currently being ignored, further environmental study would be required for any site that moves forward toward becoming a new or expanded airport. Identifying potential locations is one very early step in the process and is based on a high-level look at the technical aspects of being able to site a new airport or expand an existing one. If a greenfield site is selected and further supported by legislators and an airport sponsor, the FAA would subsequently conduct a thorough environmental review process that would include potential mediation requirements.

**21. Will the community affected by the airport placement have a say if they want the economic opportunity CACC is suggesting as a benefit of the airport?**

The CACC is working to hear from people who live near all the proposed airport locations and will continue to do so throughout the life of the Commission. Any future airport sponsor wishing to expand an existing location or construct a new airport would also work with the community.

**22. You mentioned economic benefits will be calculated to offset funding costs. But do the environmental costs also get considered to add to the funding cost equation?**

The WASP consultant will develop planning-level rough order of magnitude costs. These typically include estimates of various aspects of development, including environmental costs.

**23. Under environmental responsibility are you also considering the impact to the environment of implementing the infrastructure needs and the airport building and runways themselves? It sounded like the main focus was limited to aircraft impacts to the environment.**

Yes, environmental studies - which would primarily be conducted as a next phase by a potential airport sponsor - would look at impacts of infrastructure needs in addition to aircraft impacts.

**24. Are all 8 factors equal weight?**

At this point, no "weighting" has been applied to the factors. There is potential for Commission members to request "weighting" be applied to the factors.

**25. Why is preserving agricultural lands for the entire state of Washington not a priority under consideration?**

Further environmental study would be required for any site that moves forward toward becoming a new or expanded airport. Identifying potential locations is one very early step in the process and is based on a high-level look at the technical aspects of being able to site a new airport or expand an existing one. If a greenfield site is selected and further supported by legislators and an airport sponsor, the FAA would subsequently conduct a thorough environmental review process that would include potential mediation requirements. Additionally, on behalf of the Commission, WSDOT is working with local planning

organizations to better understand protected areas that were not identified in the initial high-level analysis by the consultant.

**26. "what dictates incompatible land use?..... something in this row in red, probably doesn't indicate a good place to build obviously, right?"**

Please see the information contained in this report on the WASP Screening Process:

<https://wsdot.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2022-09/WASP-Screening-Process-Method-Results-30AUG22-FINAL.pdf>.

**27. If environmental issues are what happens to "people" what about the wildlife? This is a defined wildlife corridor. Will it be wiped out?**

Wildlife would be part of environmental issues. Wildlife habitats were documented and scored during the WASP evaluation process. Further environmental study would be required for any site that moves forward toward becoming a new or expanded airport. Identifying potential locations is one very early step in the process and is based on a high-level look at the technical aspects of being able to site a new airport or expand an existing one. If a greenfield site is selected and further supported by legislators and an airport sponsor, the FAA would subsequently conduct a thorough environmental review process that would include potential mediation requirements.

**28. If you choose two sites and then with more research find that those sights are incompatible, what will the process be to start over with other sites?**

It is possible that none of the potential greenfield options will be recommended by the Commission. If this occurs legislators could direct the Commission to consider additional options that will most likely be further away from the population base servicing less people.

**29. How are the devastating impacts to existing agriculture be addressed at the various "greenfields" sites? Ag will be lost, and the infrastructure that keeps them going may be lost.**

We are at the very beginning of a process that would include additional environmental studies for any site that an airport sponsor wishes to expand or develop further. Impacts to the surrounding environment and potential mitigation would be a part of those studies.

**30. Why are there only 2 members of the public on the Committee - should it not be an even split public and commercial air interests?**

The CACC includes representatives from a variety of organizations, including elected officials, representatives from planning organizations, and representatives' environmental organizations in addition to representatives from the aviation and freight industries as directed by the Legislation that established the Commission.

**31. Does Unaccommodated Passenger Demand criteria assume only existing population in proximity to an area? or does it assume passenger willingness to travel to that location, who reside outside that area?**

Unaccommodated Passenger Demand criteria looks at the population within a 90-minute drive of a given site.

**32. I moved from Seattle to escape health issues due to sea tac pollution impacts. An airport moving into this area is my worst nightmare. Will air quality studies be considered?**

We are at the very beginning of a process that would include additional environmental studies for any site that an airport sponsor wishes to expand or develop further. Impacts to the surrounding environment and potential mitigation would be a part of those studies.

**33. Do you already have “sponsors” for the listed new airport sites?**

No, no airport sponsors have been identified for any of the greenfield sites.

**34. Were road expansion estimates to get to these greenfield sites considered? Some of these locations would require highway expansion, hence increased traffic and pollution through all the surrounding residential areas. (South King County and Pierce County East.)**

We recognize that every location the CACC is studying would likely need significant transit and roadway investment. This is part of the CACC's criteria and would be part of future planning and studies for any new or expanding location.

**35. Is Greener skies part of the plan?**

Greener Skies is an overall FAA plan to improve the environmental impacts of commercial aviation. The CACC is seeking an ‘airport of the future’ that will incorporate several technological improvements to address both noise and emissions.

**36. What percent of people using SeaTac airport come from connecting flights? Why are we considering passenger demand from passengers that originate in Seattle and making 90 minutes from Seattle a priority? Wouldn't an airport anywhere in Washington work for all connecting flights?**

Thirty percent of Seattle passenger flights are connecting passengers. In 2019 SeaTac airport had 17.3 Million passengers begin their air travel originating from Seattle. 90-minute drive times are not tied to Seattle; rather to an existing or new airport site, wherever in the Puget Sound region it may be. These travel times are in line with anticipated ground travel in the greater Seattle area in 2050.

**37. What weight does WASP's work carry in this decision-making process? compared to the weight of CACC. That is very confusing**

The WASP work is technical analysis that is part of a normal system plan. Many items examined by a system plan support the technical analysis needs of the CACC. The WASP has no role in the CACC's decisions; the WASP is merely a means to provide commission members with additional information they may need to make informed decisions.

**38. WSDOT is one vote on the commission. How many votes is there? and how do we reach each person on the commission to voice our concerns?**

The full list of Commission members is available on our website:

<https://wsdot.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2022-04/CACC-members-4-1-2022.pdf>

**39. Does aviation industry have a plan to eliminate the chemical in rubber that kills salmon? I know that there is an industry to remove the burned rubber from runways from landings?**

We are not aware of any plan to eliminate the rubber referenced. There is ongoing work to improve fuel efficiency, reduce aircraft noise and lower harmful emissions associated with aircraft. The Commission has recommended that legislators pursue the concept of an “airport of the future” incorporating many of these advances in technology should they choose to site and build a new airport.

**40. Several comments from people. Who speaks for the wildlife? The EIS process does not eliminate a project — it only requires mitigation.**

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**41. Has there been conversations between the CACC/WADOT and the Muckleshoot Tribe?**

WSDOT's tribal liaison has been in conversation with the Muckleshoot and other tribes.

**42. How can you recommend two sites w/ so much work left to do?**

The Commission met on Sept. 23 and as part of the recommendation it approved the continued analysis on three potential greenfield sites based on the technical analysis provided by The WASP consultant team. The Commission agrees there is much work left to do in analyzing each of the sites.

**43. Most analysts expect costs for air cargo and passenger flights to greatly increase as the full environmental and climate costs are included. Are their alternative projections for demand for new airports that can also be included before a preliminary decision is offered?**

One of the primary tool's airport planners use in developing their estimates is the FAA's terminal forecast. The projections developed by the WASP consultant blended the 2019 pre-pandemic and the 2021 corrected-for-pandemic terminal forecasts. While its possible future demand will differ from the FAA's forecast, historically these forecasts are the most reliable method of estimating future demand.

**44. Is Amazon a sponsor for the Bremerton site, since it's right beside it? How much money is Amazon going to contribute to this?**

No, the Port of Bremerton is the airport sponsor for Bremerton National Airport.

**45. So sponsors have public taxing options?**

This is not our level of expertise however some airport sponsors could have taxing authority depending on what entity becomes the sponsor. For example if a County is the airport sponsor, it could utilize its taxing authority.