



OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL
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January 3, 2023

Commercial Aviation Coordinating Commission
ATTN: Commission Chair Warren Hendrickson
Washington State Department of Transportation
310 Maple Park Avenue S.E.
P.O. Box 47300
Olympia, WA 98504-47300

Dear Chair Hendrickson:

The Yakima City Council requests consideration and study of the Yakima Air Terminal/McAllister Field Airport (YKM) by the WSDOT Aviation Divisions and the Commercial Aviation Coordinating Committee (CACC) as the single preferred new airport location in the state. YKM has a historic partnership with SeaTac Airport, including serving as the emergency backup site for aircraft unable to land at SeaTac. Our community would enthusiastically welcome the consideration of YKM for enhanced cargo and commercial air service.

We understand how challenging the site location study process has been for WSDOT Aviation Division, and we appreciate the efforts of the CACC to find an alternative on the west side of the State. Yakima provides an excellent option because of its central location with easy transportation access to the west and east sides of the State.

Here are just some of the reasons which support further study of YKM:

- A railyard for BNSF is located within 2 miles of the airport, allowing for easy access to move freight from the airport via rail. With the anticipated 800,000 metric ton air cargo gap, this rail line connects to the heart of the Kent/Auburn industrial valley.
- Given the substantial savings of utilizing existing infrastructure in Yakima, the project will likely save billions of dollars of investment needed to build the airport itself, let alone build all the public infrastructure necessary to support the expanded airport. With easy access to I-82 and 40 miles south of I-90, along with easy access to commercial rail, YKM is strategically positioned to handle a significant amount of the cargo demand forecasted for the State.
- Amtrak's passenger service previously operated from Yakima to Seattle. Upgrades to the existing rail lines would permit the return of passenger rail service that will provide an excellent customer experience between Yakima and the west side of the State.
- The City's significant workforce population will enable it to meet the needs for an expanded airport. Additionally, J.M. Perry Tech, Yakima Valley College, and Heritage University are well-positioned to develop the necessary training to support workforce development in the skills needed for an expanded facility.
- YKM has a 7,700 linear foot runway, with the expanding capability of 13,000 linear feet with the purchase of approximately 1,000 acres of available agricultural land abutting the airport. The acquisition of this abutting property would enable the investment and development of the

necessary terminals, hangars, and businesses that play a crucial role in supporting a new state airport. Due to the growth that has already occurred, it is less likely that there will be significant ecological or habitat concerns. Additionally, the City recently completed an environmental review for a planned new terminal at YKM. In our efforts to fund the new airport terminal, the City secured \$10 million in direct federal spending.


- YKM has no conflicts with military training routes (see attached map).
- WSDOT identified the City as a beta test site for electric aviation, and the City is keenly interested in developing this opportunity. To better position the City for future funding regarding this opportunity, we joined the Sustainable Aviation Technologies Energy Cluster with the Washington State Department of Commerce, one of the Innovation Cluster Accelerator Programs. Also, the City applied as part of a statewide consortium for a federal Build Back Better grant to prepare YKM for the future but did not receive funding for that project.
- The Yakima Valley has a strong agricultural history, producing approximately 70% of the nation's hops and fruits. The expansion of YKM will allow larger aircraft to deliver Yakima Valley's produce directly to overseas markets, thereby addressing ongoing transport challenges local agribusinesses face.
- Ample land is available within a 5-mile radius of the airport, which is prime for developing long-term parking, rental cars, hotels, and other industrial and commercial uses.

Most importantly, our community strongly supports this significant public investment in Yakima. Historically, Yakima's primary industries are agriculture and tourism. We believe an investment to expand YKM will enhance these sectors and positively impact wages and employment in Yakima and Central Washington, an area with a significant BIPOC community.


The Yakima City Council respectfully requests that YKM be strongly considered and studied as the single preferred location for the new state airport. We believe this project can be completed in Yakima at a substantially smaller overall cost while significantly improving passenger rail service. This project will enable the State to achieve two important enhancements in the state transportation network for the price of one.

Thank you for carefully considering the request from the Yakima City Council to study YKM's viability as a location for a new state airport. We look forward to working with you to solve the challenges facing the WSDOT Aviation Division and the CACC.

Respectfully,



Janice Deccio
Mayor




Danny Herrera
Council member



Soneya Lund
Assistant Mayor



Patricia Byers
Council member



Eliana Macias
Council member



Matt Brown
Council member

Holly Cousens

Holly Cousens
Council member

Attachments