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# BELLINGHAM INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

*Port of Bellingham*

## BELLINGHAM INTERNATIONAL TECHNICAL AIRPORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES (TAAC) SEPTEMBER 14, 2017 AT 9:30 A.M. Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) Conference Room

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**Present** Jason Hart, Mathew Janssen, Scott Bethke, Scott Plank, Robert French,  
Bob Brunkow

**Absent** Deb Logan, Randall Ingels

**Guests:** Dan Robbins, Doug Coles, Zachary Rushing, John Crawford

**Staff:**

Sunil Harman A.A.E., IAP	Director of Aviation
Jonathon Perout	Terminal Operations Supervisor
Marie Duckworth	Landside Operations Supervisor
Emily Phillippe	Airside Supervisor
Jonathan Ng	Airport Services Representative

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*The meeting minutes below generally reflect the actions, motions and discussion items addressed by the Committee after a quorum has been established. Electronic recordings shall be available to the public through the Port of Bellingham upon request. To request an appointment to listen to recordings of specific TAAC meetings, please contact the Airport Administrative office at 360-671-5674.*

### **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order in the ARFF Conference Room at 9:30 A.M.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Plank moved and Mr. Janssen seconded that the July 13, 2017 minutes be approved as written. The motion passed with 6 votes in favor and 0 votes against.

### **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

Airport Director's Update:

Mr. Harman provides an update on the forecast for the airport's master plan. The forecast was submitted to the FAA for review and has been accepted through 2037. The existing historic activities reflected in lieu are expecting and planning the budget around 382,000 passenger enplanements. Mr. Harman states that forecasted growth is much more tempered based on changing airline business models, showing at about a half-million enplanements a year in 2037. The line where the airport needs to maintain

demand is 400,000 enplanements. Mr. Harman states that this amount is what this region can support under current market conditions. What continues to inform how enplanement activity works is looking at the rapid ascent of the Canadian exchange rate that started in 2002 and peaked in 2013 where the Canadian and US dollar were at parity; the Canadian exchange rate even slightly surpassing the US exchange rate in 2012, which was then followed by a precipitous descent from 2014 based on average annual exchange rates. The exchange rate today is a little over 80 cents to the dollar which is not where the airport wants to be in terms of recreational travel by Canadian customers. Mr. Harman states that there is no clearer correlation between the trends in enplanement activity and the Canadian exchange rate.

As far as tracking monthly activity, Mr. Harman states that if there is any good news, the airport is starting to see compaction between the numbers in 2016 and the numbers in 2017. There will be slight separations because airlines have reduced their capacity, and SkyWest (which is coming in to start flying some of Horizon's routes due to their difficulties both in terms of passengers and cycling their Q400 for maintenance) has a slightly reduced seat count. In October when SkyWest assumes those services, there will be 115 less seats per day due to the seating configuration of their aircraft. Hawaii seasonal service will return in November, however there will be a slight reduction in November as Alaska is using an 800 series aircraft with a slightly lower seat count. The plateauing is due to the loss of Honolulu service, but there has also been a loss of seasonal Alaska service to Las Vegas, resulting in a slight diminution, according to Mr. Harman.

BLI has hired a company called Volaris, which is a new air service development consultant company. Mr. Harman states that Volaris has had a very successful track record with about 66 airports similar to BLI, and they feel that their relationships with Allegiant may restore the seating capacity that Allegiant reduced this year, which was about a 12.5% seat reduction. The port will also try to get Allegiant to start flying additional seasonal Las Vegas service because that service has now been eliminated by Alaska. The second initiative that the new air service consultant is going to look at is trying to persuade Alaska to add Lihue as a destination so that the airport has Kona, Maui, and now Lihue. This is the first time the airport has hired a consultant without paying them to be on retainer, as they work on a performance based contract and only getting paid if they show results. Volaris' relationship with Denver will encourage talks to begin with United about Denver service, which may not occur until 2018.

Mr. Harman stated another piece of encouraging news is that the person who the port used to have the most interaction with from Allegiant has become the CEO of Sun Country Airlines, which already flies here at as a charter operator. They are looking to become a mainline carrier, so having this individual whom the port has worked with for many years with his definite support of this region is encouraging because the port can now begin talks with Sun Country about destinations that Allegiant has looked at but have not necessarily acted on. Such cities not well-served by Vancouver include Albuquerque, Tucson, and Santa Barbara; Mr. Harman believes that these are strong markets for an Allegiant-type service. The last thing is that out of adversity comes some benefit, with the hurricane and storms in Florida and the Caribbean's. The airline industry will have to start looking at other markets in the meantime and a lot of the recreational markets in Florida and the Keys are no longer recreational markets; they are now recovery markets. Those aircraft have to be repositioned and may be an opportunity to go back and resell some of the Mexico destinations that are not as well-served as they should be, and those talks are to be done with Allegiant and Sun Country.

## Runway Safety Area Update

Mrs. Phillipe provides an update on the current situation of the runway safety area that is currently not in compliance. After reviewing several options with consultants, expanding a small portion into the right-of-way of WSDOT is the port's preferred alternative. On the political front, the port has also been meeting with Congressman Larsen to aid in pursuing this option. All other options are either to take no action or utilize high cost solutions that may not provide a long-term solution to the runway situation as well as substantial impact on airport operations. The best solution to move forward with is to extend into the right-of-way of WSDOT. Continual meetings to get WSDOT onboard are ongoing. The Airport's Technical Advisory Committee hereby resolves to support the port's preferred alternative for addressing the runway safety area with a unanimous vote of 6 in favor and 0 opposed, motioned by Scott Bethke and a second from Bob Brunkow.

## Airfield Construction Update

Mrs. Phillipe states that some of the summer airfield projects were completed internally with Airport Operations staff, including repainting the runway centerlines, commercial ramp T-bars, and general aviation taxiway lines. The port went out to bid in August for bigger projects which include crack-sealing all throughout the movement area and taxiways, pavement rehab by the fuel farm on Williamson Way and some of the pavement in front of the fire station, putting a pseudo blast pad as a stop-gap measure until the port can put in a full blast pad due to erosion from jets taking off, and lastly, repainting runway hold-bars on the majority of the taxiways. Granite Construction was awarded the project; however there was an issue with permitting causing some delays. A pre-construction meeting is scheduled for next week and will hopefully receive a notice to proceed on Monday, September 25 for crack-sealing and painting projects. Mrs. Phillipe states that a lot of this work will entail nightly runway closures and does not anticipate any day-time closures, however the only thing that could possibly cause a day-time closure is if a taxiway needs to have its paint removed before it can be repainted. Mrs. Phillipe assured that no more than one taxiway would be out-of-service at a time and that the port will be coordinating with tower to have minimal impact on airport operations. Mrs. Phillipe states that she hopes to have all if not most projects completed this season.

## Proposed 2018 Tariff

Ms. Duckworth provides an overview for the new proposed changes to the 2018 tariff. Ms. Duckworth states that certain items such as parking rates have already increased and are not subjected to approval. For license to operate (LTO) agreements (taxi cabs, shuttles, etc.), those fees have not been increased in a number of years. From 2012 or 2010 onward, those fees will be increasing 3% a year as the port has not been charging market rates. For aviation fees, transient tie-down fees are seeing a 10% increase. Space and land rental fees are seeing a 5% and 20% increase, and jets will see a 96% increase. Many of these fees have not seen increases for a number of years so these increases are to bring them to market rates. Mr. Harman comments that jets impose the most critical loads on paved areas. When they come in and park at the current rate, they will usually opt to park for the month where the port loses revenue. With this change, the port will charge them what the market will bear for a jet that is already imposing the most critical loads on the GA paved areas. As well, the pricing is in parity with airports like Boeing field and other similar airports that accommodate non-commercial jets.

Ms. Duckworth continues the 2018 tariff draft overview with the changes to lost

and unreturned employee security badges. Currently, individuals who lose or fail to return their badges are charged a \$100 fee. What's new is that if the individual loses or fails to return their badge, the individual will be charged the \$100 fee; however, if the company fails to collect and turn in the employee's badge, the company will be charged the \$100 fee. Mr. Bethke moved and Mr. Brunkow seconded that TAAC accepts the 2018 Tariff draft as proposed with 6 votes in favor and 0 against.

#### Rental Car Quick Turnaround Facility

Ms. Duckworth reports that the rental cars have been relocated to a space that provides about double the parking spaces for rental cars. The long-term plan that's part of the draft master plan is that the port is going to relocate the current quick turnaround facility (which is a small wash bay for rental car companies to clean returned cars quickly for new customer use) and improve upon them so that there will be two automated wash bays. Customers will be charged a customer facilities charge to help pay for the cost of these facilities.

#### General Taxilane Discussion

Mr. Perout reports that there have been concerns raised by a general aviation tenant about the separation between the hangar and tie-down areas in the GA taxilanes. Doing some research regarding the acceptable width for aircraft to operate currently, there are 62 feet of clearance at the widest point and 59 feet of clearance at the narrowest point. Mr. Perout informs the committee that the FAA does allow taxilanes to go off design standards and provides a formula to determine how wide the taxilanes need to be. The formula is 1.2x the largest aircraft wingspan that is operating in the area plus 20 feet. Right now, the largest aircraft in the area is a Cessna 206. The largest wingspan of aircraft in that area is 36 feet, which would require a 63 foot-wide taxilane. The alternative use of this formula is by using the width of the largest hangar door opening, which is the Solar hangar at 48 feet, requiring a 75 foot taxilane width. There is no GA aircraft nearly that large that would be operating at BLI. The preferred method is to go with the 63 foot width taxilane requirement. At the moment, the taxilane is at 62 feet, so there would be a need to expand that section of the taxilane out by a foot to meet FAA requirements. This will require redrawing the tie-down lines about a foot over.

Mr. Harman also commented that two issues came out of this observation, one of which was that this tenant felt that accidents have occurred before which he wanted to avoid occurring again. The second issue the tenant brought up was that they felt that the striping of the centerline down the taxilane actually created a hazard where if a pilot followed the wheel tracking the centerline, it would give them a false sense of clearance from aircraft that are tied down. Mr. Harman's assertion is that if there is no centerline stripe, there is no frame of reference and as a pilot, you should use your judgment to oversteer that line. If you observe obstacles, you are not required to track that centerline. The centerline serves as visibility and provides a frame of reference. Even if the groups suggest doing away with the striped centerline, that is something Mr. Harman would object to as he has not designed any airport without guidance lines. The second issue is the question of how real is this presumptive hazard is, as there is a great deal of margin of error built into the FAA formula. One example Mr. Harman provided was that a 33.5 foot aircraft tracking a gap that's over 60 feet wide should have no hazardous issues.

There have been no recorded accidents of aircraft accidents in the taxilane due to this issue, and the concern that was raised by this tenant was more due to a feeling than recorded instances in the past. According to Mr. Harman, this is also the first recorded

complaint in two years regarding this particular scenario. Mr. Plank also stated that in the last 20 years, the only incident he remembers occurring had to do with someone leaving the aircraft running, not due to centerlines or insufficient taxilane width. Mr. Harman stated that dotted containment lines could be drawn to help with guidance, as well as warnings posted to caution pilots traversing the taxilane, however Mr. Harman stated that should the port follow through with what is suggested, the port would lose half of the tie-down spaces available, which would be a direct revenue loss, resulting in increased rates to offset the loss.

Mr. Brunkow moved to draft a resolution to leave the taxiway separation as-is and Mr. Plank seconded, passing with 6 votes in favor and 0 opposed.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments

### **ADJOURN**

Meeting was adjourned at 10:15 am.