

# T Transportation Committee

Meeting date: March 22, 2010

Metropolitan Council Meeting: April 14, 2010

## ADVISORY INFORMATION

**Date:** March 15, 2010  
**Subject:** St. Paul Downtown Airport Long-term Comprehensive Plan  
**District(s), Member(s):** Districts: 13 Aguilar, 14 Sersland Beach, 15 Wolter  
**Policy/Legal Reference:** MS 473.146, 473.165,  
**Staff Prepared/Presented:** Arlene McCarthy, Director MTS; 651-602-1754  
Amy Vennewitz, Dep. Director MTS; 602-1058  
Connie Kozlak, Mng. Transportation Planning; 602-1720  
Chauncey Case, Sr. Planner - MTS/Aviation; 602-1724  
**Division/Department:** Metropolitan Transportation Services –Air Transportation

### Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council:

- Approve the Metropolitan Airport Commission's (MAC) St. Paul Downtown Airport 2025 Long-term Comprehensive Plan (LTCP).
- Recommend MAC complete efforts in establishing a joint airport zoning board with St. Paul, So. St. Paul and West St. Paul to prepare an airport zoning ordinance as defined under state requirements that reflects the airport's LTCP and system role.
- Recommend amendment of the LTCP and review by the Council when non-aviation development parcels on-airport are implemented.

### Background

Under MS 473.611 and MS 473.165 the Council reviews the individual LTCP's for each airport owned and operated by the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC). The 2009 Update of the LTCP replaces the 1992 Plan and moves the planning horizon to 2025. The MAC has adopted a preferred development alternative for the airport that retains its system role as a *Minor* general aviation facility which is consistent with the TPP.

### Rationale

Under the aviation planning process and TPP policy the airport LTCP's are to be periodically updated. MAC plans are to be consistent with the Council's metropolitan development guide. LTCP's are used as basic input to the Council's update of the regional aviation system plan and referral reviews including community comprehensive plans.

### Funding

This action has no funding implications for the Council.

### Known Support / Opposition

The LTCP was adopted by the MAC and included a public involvement process. Airport users support the preferred concept. The MAC has responded to concerns raised by affected communities and general public prior to adopting the 2030 LTCP. The TAB recommended this LTCP on March 17, 2010.

## ST. PAUL DOWNTOWN AIRPORT 2025 LTCP REVIEW

**Authority:** MS 473.611 indicates that any LTCP adopted by the Commission shall be consistent with the development guide of the Council; also, MS 473.165 states that if a plan or any part thereof is inconsistent with the guide the Council may direct the operation of the plan or such part thereof be indefinitely suspended.

**Background:** The St. Paul Downtown Airport is located in the city limits of St. Paul in southern Ramsey County, Figure 1-3. The airport opened originally as a municipal facility and much of it is still owned by the city; the MAC has operated the airport since 1943. The airport is 576 acres in size, has three paved runways and 93 based aircraft (civil and military), with 125,254 operations conducted in 2007. It is classified as an *Intermediate* airport serving corporate business aviation in the Central metro area. A LTCP was prepared in 1992, runway 14/32 extended with precision landing aids, an elevated south building area developed, new air-traffic control tower constructed, airfield sub-drain system and Mississippi River floodwall completed by 2009.

**Public Involvement:** The St. Paul Downtown Airport 2025 LTCP Update included meetings with the adjacent community representatives, coordination with Ramsey County, meetings with airport users, and public informational meeting for residents living around the airport. A full draft LTCP, defining the preferred alternative, was made available for a 30-day public comment period. Responses were prepared and reviewed by the MAC prior to their adoption of the LTCP.

**2025 LTCP Proposal:** The LTCP serves as the basis for identifying needed projects, maintaining funding eligibility to meet state and federal financial and plan consistency requirements, and to ensure that projects are responsive to system needs and conditions. The 2025 airport development evaluations indicated no need for additional runway or building areas, but focused on the following improvements depicted in Figure ES-1:

- Keep the three existing runways
- Continue pavement reconstruction and rehabilitation program
- Improve external sub-drain system for basement of Terminal/Administrative building
- Improve electrical vault for code compliance
- Plan for on-going maintenance, operations and monitoring/permits for floodwall
- Continue effort to develop non-aviation uses on airport property currently not needed for aviation use

### Existing Aviation Activity and Future Demand

Forecasts were completed for both aircraft operations and based aircraft. A baseline forecast (2007 base-year) forecast assumed reasonable growth in the economy, fuel costs, fractional ownership, new very light jets (VLJs) just coming on the market, and general aviation taxes and fees. In addition to the baseline forecast, high and low range forecasts were prepared. In the high forecasts, it is assumed that the economy thrives, VLJs are very successful and fractional ownership increases; the opposite, is used for the low forecasts

Aircraft operations for 2007 were estimated at 125,254. Baseline aircraft activity by 2025 is projected to be 137,310 annual operations, and 156,458 for the high forecast. The maximum number of operations the airport can handle, the annual service volume, is about 265,000 operations. Therefore, from an airside standpoint, the airport is currently at about 45 % capacity. Even under the high scenario, the forecasted number of operations in 2025 does not trigger the need for additional runways. The historical high for operations at St. Paul Downtown Airport occurred in 1990 with approximately 190,000 annual operations.

### Existing Conditions and Future Airside Facility Needs

The existing primary runway 14/32 is 6,491 feet in length as allowed for at *Intermediate* role airports in the metro system. The existing runway length accommodates about 75% of the category DIII aircraft types, at 60% useful load, currently using the airport. The forecasts assume some VLJ and other business jet aircraft operations at the airport.

### Existing Conditions and Future Landside Facility Needs

Based aircraft in 2007 numbered 93, growing to 132 by 2025; the historical high number of based aircraft was in 1979 with 308 aircraft. Total capacity within existing hangars is estimated at 159 indoor aircraft storage spaces. All new hangar space is to be provided by private developer funding. There is sufficient hangar building area and capacity to meet demand through the planning period. Physical constraints of the site severely limit building expansion beyond the planning period.

### **Conformity with Aviation System Plan:**

The MAC development recommendations reflect the Council's regional socio-economic data in preparing the aviation forecasts. Annual runway capacity essentially stays the same, and based upon the aviation demand forecasts there is no need for additional runways at this time. The development recommendations retain the precision runway approach capability and improve airport utilization. St. Paul Downtown will retain its *Intermediate* airport system role as a reliever serving general aviation in the Central portions of the region. The development recommendations maintain the airports long-term capabilities, and are in conformance with the regional aviation system plan.

### **Compatibility of Airport/Community Plans**

#### Environmental Considerations

- 1) Aircraft Noise - a 2007 noise contour was prepared as well as 2025 noise contour for the preferred alternative. Most of the future noise area is on airport property or within areas that need to be controlled by the airport for safety reasons. The Council's land use compatibility guidelines for aircraft noise apply to community areas within the noise contours. The communities and the MAC should continue to coordinate their planning efforts concerning future land use changes and noise effects.
- 2) Sanitary Sewer and Water – adequate sewer and water services are available to the airport; changes due to implementation of non-aviation development should be included in any amendment to the LTCP.
- 3) Wetlands - there are wetlands in existence at or near the airport that are affected by the increase in impervious surfaces and runoff from potential new on-airport development. The MAC has indicated that development implemented at the airport will be studied closely to prevent wetland impacts. If wetlands are unavoidable, designs will need to be adjusted as much as possible to minimize impacts.

#### Land Use Considerations

- 1) Ground Access – capacity of the roadways adjacent to the airport are adequate to handle projected traffic needs of the airport. The MAC and MnDOT are coordinating on the new Lafayette Freeway bridge span as concerns short and long term safety issues.
- 2) Parks – the airport development is within the Mississippi River National Park and state Critical Area; the LTCP update does not change the manner in which the airport operates or any airfield modifications that would potentially affect any parks or open space.
- 3) Airport Safety Zoning – there are several areas off-airport where runway safety zoning and airspace protection need to occur. The Council has provided input concerning

potential zoning considerations as affects existing and future development and operation of the metro plant, the Central Corridor LRT maintenance facility, and protection of runway 14/32 instrument approaches. The MAC, working with the affected communities through a joint zoning board should complete the airport zoning ordinance. Application of the state airport safety zoning requirements should reflect the approved LTCP for the airport and its system role.

- 4) Non-Aviation Development – potential non-aviation development of airport parcels was discussed during the LTCP process; as parcels and specific land uses are selected for this revenue enhancement program a plan amendment should be reviewed by the Council and LTCP amended as appropriate to reflect the change in land use.

**Consistency with Council Policy:**

Aircraft operations under the baseline forecast are expected to stabilize at current levels but aircraft types operating at the airport are expected to include more business jets. The preferred alternative recognizes the need to keep the airport viable, but within the region's ability to support the investments over time.

The preferred alternative preserves the safety and usability of the facility within its assigned system role. However, the airport is no longer certified for Part 139 operations and the seaplane base deactivated. Environmental and land use considerations have been recognized and a process for implementation addressed. The proposal appears to be consistent with metro systems in general and consistent specifically with aviation policies.

**Development Costs and Implementation of Preferred Alternative**

Recommendation	Estimated Cost	Timeline
Pavement maintenance and replacement program, On-going	\$4,400,000	Continuous throughout planning period
Terminal sub-drain	\$600,000	0-5 years
Electrical Vault Improvements	\$700,000	0-5 years
Pavement Joint and Crack repairs, On-going	Every other year \$100,000	Continuous throughout planning period
MAC Building maintenance, On-going	every other year \$200,000	Continuous throughout planning period
Non-Aeronautical Land Use Development	(Developer Costs)	0 -10 years

Source: MAC 2010 Capital Improvement Program

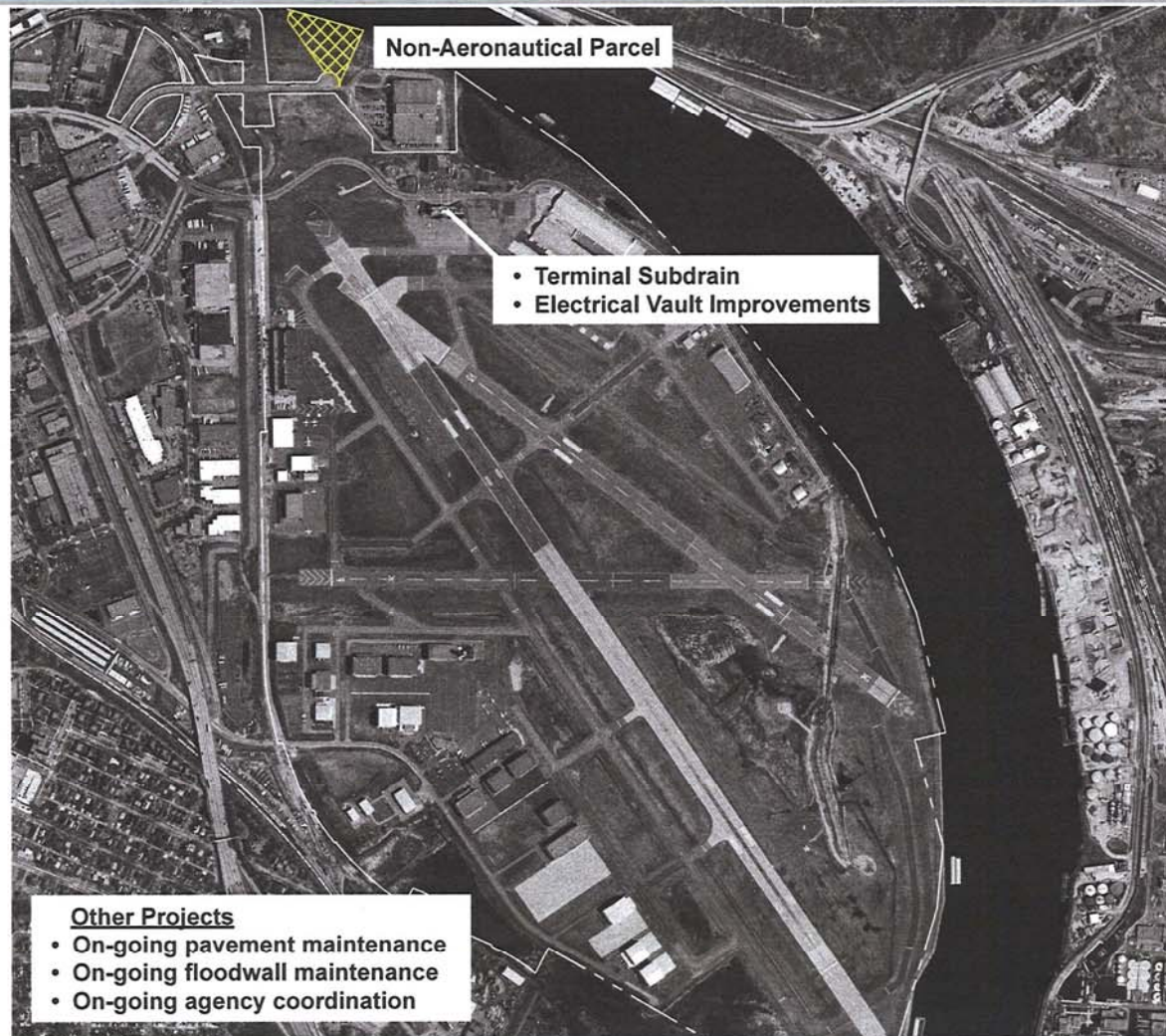
# Airport Layout

Figure 1-3



# LTCP Recommendations

Figure  
ES-1



St. Paul Downtown Airport (STP)

Image Source: USDA, Scale: 1"=1200'

# Transportation Advisory Board

of the Metropolitan Council of the Twin Cities

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Acting Chair

March 18, 2010

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Peter Bell, Chair  
Metropolitan Council  
390 Robert Street No.  
St. Paul, MN 55101

Mr. Bell,

On March 17, 2010, the Transportation Advisory Board voted to recommend approval of St. Paul Downtown Airport 2025 Long Term Comprehensive Plan.

The TAB forwards this action to the Metropolitan Council along with additional information described in TAB action transmittal 2010-21.

Sincerely,



*for*

Bill Hargis, Acting Chair  
Transportation Advisory Board

**Transportation Advisory Committee  
of the Metropolitan Council of the Twin Cities**

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**ACTION TRANSMITTAL**

No. 2010 - 21

**DATE:** March 18, 2010  
**TO:** Metropolitan Council  
**FROM:** Transportation Advisory Board  
**SUBJECT:** St. Paul Downtown Airport Long-Term Comprehensive Plan Review.

**MOTION:** The Transportation Advisory Board recommended the preferred development alternative discussed in the attached 2025 Long-Term Comprehensive Plan (LTCP) for the St. Paul Downtown Airport (STP).

**BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF REVIEW:** The MAC periodically updates the long-term comprehensive development plans for each airport it owns/operates. The LTCP is to be consistent with the Metro Development Framework and the TPP. The MAC has completed the 2025 LTCP Update for STP, selected a preferred development alternative, provided for public input, and has submitted it for Council review. Recommendations from the TAC/TAB review process will be included in the final staff report to the Council's Transportation Committee and Council action.

**ROUTING**

<b>TO</b>	<b>ACTION REQUESTED</b>	<b>DATE COMPLETED</b>
TAC Aviation Tech. Task Force	Review & Recommend	February 19, 2010
Technical Advisory Committee	Review & Recommend	March 3, 2010
TAB Policy Committee	Review & Recommend	March 11, 2020
Transportation Advisory Board	Review & Recommend	March 17, 2010
Metropolitan Council	Approval	