

5 Public Involvement

The Port of Camas-Washougal conducted a variety of public involvement and outreach activities to gather community feedback regarding the Grove Field Airport Environmental Assessment project. The program consisted of a series of interactive open houses, a stakeholder Advisory Committee, and an easily accessible website for the project containing all materials handed out at meetings, all presentation slides and meeting notes.

Public interest in the project was received mostly from area residents and those potentially impacted by proposed improvements. Concerns focused mainly on impacts to private property, the environment, and roadway and airport safety.

The Port, in conjunction with the project consultant team from WHPacific, Inc. and JLA Public Involvement, coordinated a variety of public outreach activities over the course of this project. Outreach efforts targeted local residents, government agencies, businesses, airport users and property owners in the immediate project vicinity.

5.1 Public Involvement and Outreach Overview

A variety of public involvement tools were used to provide broad-based, ongoing public participation throughout the development of the project to engage a wide range of community stakeholders. The following public involvement methods were used in addition to the public EEAC meetings.

- *Project Website:* A project website was launched in August 2008 to serve as an information hub for the project. Information contained on this site included the purpose and need statement, project background, frequently asked questions and answers, public involvement activities such as committee and public meetings, various project documents and contact information. The website can be found at www.grovefieldalp.org.
- *Media:* Project related press releases were distributed by the Port of Camas-Washougal in August 2008 and April 2009. Press releases advertised public meetings and notified the public of opportunities for input. News articles about the project appeared in *The Columbian* newspaper on September 18 (letter to the editor), September 21, November 17 and December 8, 2009.
- *Project Mailing:* A postcard mailing was distributed to local residents, property owners and impacted businesses at the initiation of the project to inform them of the purpose, process, timeline and opportunities for participation. The mailing was sent to over 1,100 addresses on September 2, 2008.
- *Interested Parties Contact List:* A contact list of approximately 80 individuals was developed based on meeting sign-in sheets and other comments received.

The materials and comment summary generated through the April 2009 open house were distributed via e-mail to those contacts.

5.2 Public Open Houses

Several public meetings were hosted throughout the project in order to provide a venue for interested citizens to gather, ask questions of the project team and provide feedback. The following public meetings were held at specific project milestones.

5.2.1 Open House #1

The project was kicked off at an initial public meeting on September 9, 2008 at Camas High School Auditorium. The purpose of the meeting was to notify citizens that the project was starting up, to provide project background, including the current airport layout plan, the purpose and need for the project, a summary of the NEPA and SEPA process.

Approximately 60 people attended the meeting. A formal presentation was provided that included information about the Airport Layout Plan and the Environmental Assessment process. Attendees were invited to ask questions, provide comments and raise concerns related to the project. Port of Camas-Washougal and consultant staff provided answers when applicable. The discussion included the following areas of interest related to the Environmental Assessment process:

- *Natural Environment* – Two attendees raised concerns about water quality and related runoff. One person added that air quality was a concern due to the loss of trees and increased air traffic. Noise pollution was also a concern. Another person felt that closing Delp Road could hinder emergency vehicle access to area residents.
- *Built Environment* – At least one person inquired about the future need to relocate mobile home park residents. Another person inquired about the impact to area property values. One attendee inquired about insurance requirements for homes near an airport. Other comments and questions were related to the impact of microjets, bird safety, the economic viability of the airport, and the possibility of flight increases.
- *General Information* – Two attendees raised questions about the ability to stop the project. One person inquired about project funding and the possibility of a local tax increase.

5.2.2 Open House #2

A public open house for the Grove Field Airport Improvement Project was held on April 10, 2009 from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Camas High School Commons. The purpose of the open

house was to present and explain the four draft alternatives being considered and to generate public input and preferences for the alternatives.

Approximately 43 people attended the event. The format of the open house was drop-in style, including a PowerPoint presentation and several display boards. Display materials included project background information and explanations of each of the four proposed alternatives. Project team members were available throughout the meeting to explain the displays, listen to comments and answer questions.

Attendees were invited to complete comment forms and provide input on flip charts adjacent to the alternatives on display. Four written comments were provided on flip charts and twelve people completed comment forms. Comments are summarized below:

- *Alternative 1* – One person felt that the airport should be left as is with the exception of widening 20' to the south. Several people favored this option due to the lack of impact to area neighborhoods. Of those who commented, many did not favor this option since it did not bring the airport into compliance with FAA standards or address important safety issues. Another person felt that not improving the airport would have more economic cost in the long run.
- *Alternative 5* – One person commented that this alternative would cut through their property, including lowering area property values. Two people favored this option because it would bring the airport up to FAA standard. Several people commented on the sharp curves involved in Alternative 5 and the concern for safety. Another person favored the small amount of additional land acquisition needed. One person felt that valuable land shouldn't be used to relocate Delp Road. Another person raised concern over the loss of trees and wildlife habitat.
- *Alternative 6* – One person had concerns about increased vehicle speed on 252nd. Two people favored this option because it would bring the airport up to FAA standard, and one likes that this alternative does not impact wetlands. Another person favored the small amount of additional land acquisition needed and one supported the minimal curves on Delp Road. One person raised concerns about the impacts to the stream, and another said there was too much right-of-way acquisition. One person felt Delp Road shouldn't be closed and another felt valuable real estate shouldn't be used for a road.
- *Alternative 7* – Many people favored this option due to the least amount of impacts to area homes and the environment. Two people commented on their concerns about the cost involved in this alternative. One person felt a tunnel would be difficult to maintain.

The Open House comment form requested that attendees rate which alternative they preferred most and why. The following is a summary of their responses:

Alternative	Number of Attendees Preferring the Alternative	Reasoning
Alternative 7	7	Least impact to residents, the community and the environment.
Alternative 6	2	Safety for pedestrians and pilots.
Alternative 5	1	Brings airport up to FAA standards.
Alternative 1	1	Airport should be left as is due to cost for taxpayers.

5.3 Environmental Assessment Advisory Committee Meetings

An Environmental Assessment Advisory Committee (EAAC) was assembled to ensure that the project considered key community interests and public sentiments were conveyed to the project consultant team. The EAAC met regularly throughout the process and meetings were open to the public. The EAAC consisted of the following groups and organizations:

- Washougal Resident
- Johnston Dairy
- Airport Advisory Committee
- Camas Realty
- Camas-Washougal Airport Association
- Clark County Public Works Department.
- City of Camas
- Underwriters' Laboratories
- Busch Pfeifle Timber Farm

The EAAC met five times between October 2008 and March 2010 (**Appendix I** contains the summaries for these meetings). The meetings consisted of:

- EAAC Meeting #1 (October 7, 2008) – Project Overview
- EAAC Meeting #2 (December 9, 2008) – Initial Alternatives Discussion and Results of Field Investigations
- EAAC Meeting #3 (February 24, 2009) – Alternatives Review
- EAAC Meeting #4 (July 27, 2009) – Alternatives Recommendation
- EAAC Meeting #5 (March 8, 2010) – Alternatives Reconsideration

The first meeting was held at the Airport, while subsequent meetings were held at the Port of Camas-Washougal administrative offices. The EAAC's role was to collaborate with the project consultant team and other stakeholders on project alternatives and provide feedback at different project milestones. The EAAC helped identify project issues and gave input on project alternatives.

5.4 Port Commission Briefings

Multiple Port Commission Briefings were given to present the alternatives recommendation from the EAAC and for the Port Commission to make a motion on the Sponsor's Preferred Alternative. The Port Commission briefings were presented by the consultant team on the following dates (all meetings were open to the public):

- August 3, 2009
- August 17, 2009
- November 2, 2009
- November 16, 2009
- December 7, 2009

As a result, the Port Commission selected Alternative #7 as the Sponsor's Preferred Alternative.

5.5 Sponsor's Preferred Alternative Recommendation

Through the public involvement process described above, the Port has selected Alternative 7 as the Sponsor's Preferred Alternative. Alternatives 5 and 6 will be analyzed throughout the entire EA document, as they too are reasonable project alternatives.

Selection of the Sponsor's Preferred Alternative was a deliberate action on behalf of the Port to reflect the community's concern over impacts presented by the other build alternatives. From the public meetings, it became clear the community would be willing to support the tunneling of Delp Road so the area could maintain its rural character; whereas other alternatives would have relocated Delp Road closer to several residences. Several members of the EAAC and the public expressed that the No Action Alternative was favored; however, of the build alternatives Alternative 7 was believed by participants in the process to meet the community's needs the best.

Notwithstanding the community's concerns over the induced impacts the road relocations present, the Port selected the Sponsor's Preferred Alternative based on safety aspects since safety improvements are the impetus for the proposed actions. By tunneling Delp Road, the roadway would be completely out of the Runway Protection Zone (RPZ) of Runway 7. The FAA discourages roadways intersecting the RPZ, which would be the scenario for both Alternatives 5 and 6.

While the rationale for not selecting Alternatives 5 or 6 as the Sponsor's Preferred Alternative may not meet NEPA significance thresholds, the Port and the EAAC believe the following has merit:

- *Alternative 5*: This alternative, while meeting County design standards, would likely not be approved by the County. The curves presented in Alternative 5 are

perceived to be a safety concern and limit the County's ability to meet future road classifications. Since the road alignment could not meet future requirements, it is possible the County would have to construct another road alignment in the long-term future that would be 100% locally funded, thereby placing an undue burden on the community.

Additionally, Alternative would relocate Delp Road closer to two residences, of which the community did not support. It would also place the roadway within the Runway 7 RPZ.

- *Alternative 6:* The alignment of Alternative 6 would create two long, straight stretches that the community felt would be a speeding attractant and safety hazard. It also relocates Delp Road closer to three residences, which are currently well protected from Delp Road. The proposed road alignment would also be within the Runway 7 RPZ.

5.6 Public Comment (Draft Environmental Assessment)

The Draft EA was released for public comment on November 18, 2010 and was available for review and comment until February 8, 2011. A public hearing was requested by the Port of Camas Washougal, which was held on February 8, 2011 at the Port of Camas Washougal office. All comments received during the comment period, as well as testimony given at the meeting, is located in **Appendix L**.