

9 - Regional Aviation System

Introduction

The Regional Aviation System chapter of the Regional Transportation Systems Plan includes:

- a general inventory of the regionally significant aviation service and facilities in the SKATS area;
- an estimation of the transportation demand associated with the aviation system;
- a list of the regional goals, objectives, and policies established for the Regional Aviation System;
- recommended service and facility improvements needed on the aviation system in the area; and
- a general picture of funding sources for the potential improvements.

The Regional Aviation System Inventory

McNary Field

McNary Field is the only regional aviation facility in the SKATS area. It is located four miles south of the downtown core in the city of Salem. In a broader context, the airport is located 55 miles south of the Portland International Airport and 65 miles north of Mahlon Sweet Airport in Eugene. McNary Field comprises about 749 acres and is owned and operated by the city of Salem.

The primary function of the airport at this time is as a General Aviation Transport airport, meaning that the airport activity is neither primarily military nor conducted by regularly scheduled air carriers. The Federal Aviation Administration has classified it as an air carrier basic transport category airport. Most users of the airport come from Marion and Polk counties, with several corporate aircraft based there. However, corporate aircraft also operate at Aurora State, Independence State, Albany Municipal, and other public-use airports in the general area. The airport is currently a joint-use facility with the Oregon National Guard. In general, the airport is in very good condition and is well operated and maintained. Currently, there is no commercial air passenger service at the airport, but Hut Limousine Service provides regularly scheduled ground transportation between McNary Field and Portland International Airport (PDX). There is also a Federal Express office and package reload facility at the airport.

Airport Classification

The airport has been defined as an air carrier basic transport category airport by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS), and by Oregon Department of Aviation in the Oregon Continuous Aviation System Plan (OCASP). This classification identifies the airport (by means of its runway length, width, and pavement bearing capacity) as a commercial aviation airport. The city of Salem, although not required to do so, has maintained the airport in accordance with federal certification standards. This status is maintained in order to facilitate air carrier service when such opportunities become available.

Airfield Description

McNary Field comprises approximately 749 acres and is located in southeast Salem. It is bordered by Mission Street to the north, Turner Road to the east, and Airway Drive SE and 25th Street to the west. The compatibility of existing and planned land uses in the vicinity of an airport is generally a function of the level of noise impacts related to the airport. Properties surrounding the McNary Field Airport have been designated as industrial, commercial, and government land uses in the Salem Area Comprehensive Plan. These designations are compatible with airport activities.

It should be noted that current zoning and land use to the southeast of the airport property is residential, which is not generally considered compatible with airport activities without mitigating measures. In the event commercial airline service returns to the SKATS area, long-term noise impacts could make these residential properties incompatible with the airport's expanded operations. In 1978, the city of Salem adopted the "Airport Clear Zones and Approach Surfaces." Additionally, an "Airport Overlay Zone" has been established to ensure that new development does not interfere with aircraft operations.

Airfield infrastructure consists of Runways 13-31 (the primary runway) and 16-34, a partial parallel taxiway, and miscellaneous taxiways providing access to both runways and apron areas. The primary runway is 5,811 feet long and 150 feet wide. Runway 16-34 is 5,145 feet long and 140 feet wide.

The primary runway is lighted with High Intensity Runway Lights and has a Medium Intensity Approach Lighting System with Runway Alignment Indicator Lights (MALSR). This runway also has a full instrument landing system (ILS), including a localizer, glide slope, and locator markers. Additionally, it has an omnidirectional approach lighting system (ODALS). Runway 13-31 also has nonprecision approaches; Visual Approach Slope Indicators (VASI) exist on both runways. Runway 16-34 has Medium Intensity Runway Lights (MIRL).

Terminal Areas

The terminal building is located on the west side of the airport off 25th Street and is in good condition. The primary tenant of the terminal at the present time is Hut Limousine Service. The automobile parking lot is marked to hold 48 cars. The terminal building includes ticket

counter space, a baggage claim counter, waiting area, and rest rooms. Other buildings in the terminal area include the FAA Air Traffic Control Tower (which operates 14 hours a day), an Oregon Aeronautics Section office building, and the National Weather Service building. A city-owned and operated fire station is also located in the north terminal area. An airport restaurant is located approximately 1,000 feet south of the terminal.

General Aviation Area

The general aviation area of the airport includes three conventional hangars housing a variety of aircraft service companies. These businesses provide maintenance service, charter service, a flight school, and aircraft refueling operations.

Aircraft parking is separated into two distinct areas. The terminal apron includes approximately 260,000 square feet of pavement with adequate parking for 737 and MD-80 type aircraft. The southernmost area of the airline apron is reserved primarily for the larger-type aircraft and helicopter parking. The second aircraft parking area is devoted to general aviation aircraft with tie-downs for over 200 aircraft, including both transient and long-term rental spaces.

Located on airport property and directly adjacent to the airfield are several other businesses, such as II Morrow, West Coast Fastener, Microflect, and Federal Express. Some of these firms are aviation related, but do not actively participate in aviation-related operations at McNary field. The Fairview Industrial Park is located west of 25th Street and south of Madrona Avenue.

Air Trade Area

The area served by an airport is commonly designated as its "air trade area" and may have its limits fixed by the proximity of other airports offering comparable types of service. It is important to determine the approximate boundaries of an air trade area because the demand for aviation services depends, to a large extent, upon the socioeconomic characteristics of the trade area. The air trade area for an airport typically encompasses the location of 80 to 90 percent of the facility's users, airline passengers, or the owners of general aviation aircraft based at the airport. The precise shape of the air trade area is dependent on cost, type, and availability of desired services; population density; and ground transportation facilities. In the case of McNary Field, the size of the air trade area is substantially impacted by the air trade areas of the Portland and Eugene airports. In Eugene, Mahlon Sweet Airport currently provides commercial air service through United Airlines and Horizon Air, while PDX provides service via many of the major airlines.

Air trade areas are defined in two ways – commercial service air trade area and general aviation air trade area. The NPIAS defines air trade areas in terms of "reasonable access" which exists relative to scheduled air service and the community's CBD or center of user population. The NPIAS suggest that "reasonable access" (also called door-to-door travel time) to general aviation facilities is 30 minutes' surface travel time. For commercial service airports, 60 minutes' surface travel time is more appropriate. The commercial aviation air trade area for McNary Field is estimated to be bordered by Woodburn to the north, Lincoln City to the west, Corvallis to the south, and Detroit to the east. The general aviation air trade area for McNary Field is estimated

to be similar to the commercial aviation air trade area, with the exception that the southern boundary would be north of Albany, creating a horseshoe-like contour.

Other public aviation facilities within McNary Field's air trade area include Independence and Aurora State Airports and Albany Municipal Airport. These facilities, while sharing a portion of McNary's air trade area, do not seriously impinge upon its market or operations. These fields are best suited to private and commercial training operations of single engine aircraft and some helicopter activity.

Airport Access

Currently, nearly all Salem area commercial air passengers depart from Portland International Airport. Many passengers travel to Portland International Airport via the Hut Airport Limousine Service, which provides 18 regularly scheduled round trips daily between McNary Field in Salem and Portland. Style and Presidential Limousine Services also offer limousine service to Portland International Airport.

Transit service to McNary Field is provided by Cherriots, via the "State and Fairview" bus route number 7. This bus does not stop at the terminal building, but instead stops near the intersection of 25th Street and Madrona Avenue SE. Bus service is hourly during off-peak times and is provided on the half-hour before 9:00 a.m. and after 3:00 p.m. Connections to Salem's Greyhound bus or Amtrak passenger rail depots, the former located approximately five miles from the airport's terminal and the latter being approximately four miles away, require transferring at the downtown "pulse" center for "door-to-door" service if area transit services are used. The Chemeketa Area Regional Transit System (CARTS) stops at the airport four times a day on weekdays via the Canyon Connector route. Area taxicab companies offer true on-call door-to-door service to the airport's facilities.

Access from the airport to area highways via 25th Street allows direct access to Mission Street/Oregon Highway 22 and indirect access via Oregon Highway 22 to Interstate 5, Oregon Highway 213, Oregon Highway 219, Oregon Highway 221, and Oregon Highways 99E and 99W. The distance to Interstate 5 from the terminal at McNary Field via Oregon Highway 22 is approximately 2.5 miles.

Air Freight Services and Facilities

Aviation-related reload facilities are limited within the SKATS area. Most of these facilities are operated by companies that operate primarily as air freighters or that have air freight operations as part of their larger freight business. The U.S. Postal Service "Express Mail" service, United Parcel Service (UPS), Federal Express (FEDEX), and Jet Delivery Service all offer air freight services. All of these are private concerns and all operate package reload facilities in Salem. The majority are truck-to-truck reload facilities, forming collection points at which their package collection cars (parcel vans) unload and their line haul trucks reload. From the reload facility the line haul trucks generally make their way to Portland International Airport, where the cargo is trans-loaded for air shipment. With the exception of UPS' contract carrier, Sports Air, no freight aircraft currently stop in Salem, as the truck service to Portland adequately meets

the needs of most of the air freight companies. However, Federal Express also operates aircraft from McNary Field on occasion if warranted.

Transportation Demand on the Regional Aviation System

Operations

Aircraft operations (takeoffs or landings) are divided into two categories: local and itinerant operations. Local operations are primarily general aviation activities while itinerant operations are all operations other than local. Examples of itinerant operations would be business flights and personal recreational flights.

Table 9-1
Number of Operations at McNary Field, 1992 to 2006

	Itinerant	Local	Total
1992	40,081	21,673	61,754
1993	35,995	20,635	56,630
1994	36,595	20,860	57,455
1995	41,151	16,639	57,790
1996	40,227	18,329	58,556
1997	38,897	17,392	56,289
1998	35,588	16,434	52,022
1999	35,485	14,627	50,112
2000	35,379	13,862	49,241
2001	34,153	14,832	48,985
2002	34,755	15,742	50,497
2003	31,229	17,558	48,787
2004	29,631	14,289	43,920
2005	35,571	15,917	51,488
2006 - six months	17,475	10,329	27,804

As shown in **Table 9-1**, the number of operations at McNary Field has been decreasing since 1996, with some year-to-year variation. In 1998, gambling excursion charter flights to Nevada casinos ended, further reducing the flight activity. The majority of aircraft operations are civilian in nature, and itinerant.

Most of the aircraft currently flown at McNary Airfield are single-engine aircraft such as the Piper Cherokee, Piper Tri-Pacer, and Cessna 172. Other aircraft types that use the airport facilities include light twin-engine piston aircraft, turboprop aircraft, and some jet aircraft. The airport is capable of serving aircraft as large as Boeing's 757.

Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Goal 1: A regional aviation system that provides an adequate level of facilities and services to meet the needs of the residents and businesses in the SKATS area.

Objective: Encourage the provision of appropriate regional aviation system operations and facilities adequate to serve the demand associated with the residents and businesses of the SKATS area in a cost-effective manner.

Policy: Support appropriate, cost-effective improvements to the region's aviation and related facilities based on sound economic analysis.

Policy: Support efforts to renew commercial airline service for the SKATS area as demand and financial considerations warrant.

Goal 2: A regional aviation facility that can accommodate commercial operations as passenger demand increases.

Objective: Retain the capability to support commercial airline operations as potential ridership increases.

Policy: Support maintenance efforts that will preserve the region's general aviation facility in a manner that makes resumption of commercial aviation activities viable.

Goal 3: A regional aviation facility with adequate multimodal access.

Objective: Ensure adequate multimodal access to the regional aviation facility.

Policy: Support development of an appropriate multimodal transportation infrastructure that provides adequate access to the regional aviation facility.

Potential System Improvements

The responsibility for planning improvements to the Regional Aviation System lies with the City of Salem's Operations Coordinator. The existing Airport Master Plan for McNary Field Airport was completed in 1997. The major capital improvements identified as necessary in the new plan include:

Short-Term Needs

- Porous friction concrete overlay of the primary runway
- Terminal building improvements

Long-Term Needs

- Extension of the primary runway
- Demolition and replacement of the airline terminal

- Staged expansion of general aviation facilities
- Commercial/business development

Short-term needs identified in the existing Airport Master Plan terminal include building improvements and repairs. The FAA does not view extension of the primary runway as a priority at this time, given the current lack of commercial airline activity at the airport.

The terminal building, built in 1952, is generally considered to be in good condition, but requires repairs if it is to continue being functional. Limited repairs to the terminal were made during 1995. Long-term plans for the terminal building call for its eventual demolition and replacement with a new terminal structure. In July/August of 2006, the Salem City Council voted to spend \$500,000 on a mobile structure to supplement the existing terminal. This structure would provide room for the installation of the equipment needed for the airline security to allow for the resumption of commercial flights. Beginning June 7, 2007, Delta Airlines will offer two flights a day providing service from Salem to Salt Lake City using 50-seat regional jets.

