

Transportation Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes of December 14, 2023

A meeting of the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) was held over Zoom and in-person in the Terminal Building at the Springfield Hartness State Airport. It was held as a joint meeting with the Springfield Airport Commission.

Attendance

TAC Members Present : Kristi Morris, Springfield; Wayne Wheelock, Baltimore; Peter Hudkins, Chester; John Saydek, Cavendish; Christine Howe, SEVT (via Zoom).

Others Present: Jason Rasmussen, MARC (via Zoom); Logan Nicoll, MARC; Lauren Masseria, VTrans; Christopher Beitzel, VTrans.

Springfield Airport Commission: Bruce Johnson; Paul Bladyka; Don Shattuck; Alasdair Crawford, Peter MacGillivray, Bob Flint.

Kristi Morris called the meeting to order at 5:11 PM.

1. Welcome and introductions

The members of both boards and all guests introduced themselves.

2. Changes to the agenda

No changes were necessary

3. Acceptance of September 27 minutes

Peter Hudkins made a motion to approve minutes. Seconded by John Saydek. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Update on Route 5 Bike Corridor Survey Submission Results

Lauren Masseria gave an update on the results of the Route 5 Bike Corridor Survey. Survey went out in October to gauge preliminary interest in going forward with a bike corridor on Route 5. There were 36 responses, from 22 towns, among 3 RPCs. Resounding support for the corridor moving forward. 97% Very Important to Somewhat Important.

5. Update from VTrans Agency

No other updates.

6. Work Session with Springfield Airport Commission

Bruce gave a brief overview of the structure and role of the Springfield Airport Commission, and talked about the current biggest concerns for the Commission.

The structural condition of the runway has been developing for many years. Core samples were taken which showed that the runway needs to be rebuilt.

The growth of the forests at the ends of the runway is overgrowing normal plane approaches and there are complications in the negotiations with the landowners.

The FAA determined based on traffic that they would only financially support rebuilding the runway at 4700ft long and 75ft wide as opposed to its current 5501ft long and 100ft wide. There was discussion about the air traffic that currently uses the airport that may not be able to if the runway was shortened and narrowed. There was discussion about the efforts to maintain the existing dimensions.

Bob said VTrans has found some funding for the redesign and rebuild project, but we are still around \$4M short of the funding necessary to rebuild at the current dimensions, current funding would still only support a 5000ft runway.

There was discussion about the opportunities and challenges. There was discussion about the economic importance of the airport to for the region.

Bob talked about some of the hurdles with building hangars and the permitting issues inherent in that process for various reasons.

There was discussion about some of the logistical hurdles with using the airport for larger events and reconsidering access to the airport.

Jason asked about the Airport Master Plan and whether it could be used to highlight the need to consider improvements to infrastructure and the access roads.

Chris clarified that there is an Airport Master Plan and an Airport Layout Plan. While the layout plan does deal with infrastructure components, it does not really extend beyond the boundaries of the airport property.

Kristi asked about broadband connectivity at the airport and other uses for the property.

Bob said there were some recent upgrades that brought fiber to the property but there a lot of structural concerns with some the buildings on the property and it would need improvements to many structures to handle some of those other uses.

There was further discussion about current use of the airport and the impact of the loss of the runway length on the local economy.

The joint boards watched a promotional YouTube video about the airport which provided further context to the discussions. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FrZR0qAfAvo>

Further discussion about the economic opportunities the airport offers that would be lost if the length of the runway is lost.

Discussion about a process by which the state used to employ an “Ombudsman” that help shepherd people through the Act 250 permitting process and how valuable that was.

Bob said around February or March there may be an opportunity for towns and the TAC to assist with letters of support for potential Federal funding.

7. Future agenda items & next meeting date

Next meeting date is to be determined.

8. Adjourn

Peter Hudkins made a motion to adjourn. Second by John Saydek. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 6:33 pm.