
Rochester International Airport Master Plan

Community Input Committee Meeting #1

May 30, 2018

1:30-3:00 p.m.

University of Minnesota-Rochester University Square, Room 419

Meeting Notes

Committee Attendees

Randy Staver
Jeff Ellerbusch
Doug Drescher
Kyle Schmaltz
Jay Dean
Nick Fancher
Dave Nelson
Thomas Griffin
Paul Drucker
Patrick Seeb
Jon Bowman (on behalf of Julie Reeves)
Bill Schimmel
Dan Millenacker
Gina Mitchell
Karrie Krear-Klostermeier
Mark Schoenfelder
Steve Rymer
John Reed

Other Attendees

Kurt Claussen
Ellen Sorensen
Tiana O'Connor
Mark McFarland
Matt Blankenship
Matt Wagner
Colleen Bosold
Paul Strege

Representing

Rochester City Council
Rochester-Olmsted Planning Department
Signature Flight Support
Signature Flight Support
Signature Flight Support
Great Planes Aviation
Hangar Owners
Mayo Medical Lab
Mayo Medical Transport
Destination Medical Center (DMC)
FedEx
City of Stewartville
FAA Dakota-Minnesota Airports District Office
FAA Dakota-Minnesota Airports District Office
FAA Air Traffic Control
MnDOT District 6
Rochester City Administrator
Executive Director, Rochester International Airport

Representing

Rochester International Airport
Rochester International Airport
Rochester International Airport
Mead & Hunt
Mead & Hunt
Mead & Hunt
Mead & Hunt
Mead & Hunt

Absent Committee Members

Tim Geisler
Mark Bilderback
Mike Busch
John Gressett
Brad Jones
Roger Tuttle
Ken Oehlke
Kevin Carlson
Spencer Evans

Representing

Rochester Airport Company
Rochester-Olmsted Council of Governments (ROCOG)
Landside/Lessee
General Aviation
Experience Minnesota's Rochester
Airlines
High Forest Township
MnDOT Aeronautics
FedEx

The attached report represents this writer's interpretation of items discussed during the meeting. Any corrections or additional information should be brought to our attention for clarification.

The purpose of the meeting was to:

- **Introduce the project team and Community Input Committee; define the roles of each**
- **Provide an overview of the master planning process, expected outcomes, project approach and schedule**
- **Discuss and get input on the work done so far: inventory of existing conditions and forecasts of aviation activity**
- **Identify key planning issues**
- **Outline next steps**

Mark McFarland, the consultant team Project Manager from Mead & Hunt, presented and facilitated the meeting. A copy of the meeting presentation can be found at: <https://flyrst.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/RST-Input-Committee-Meeting-1-Presentation-5.30.18.pdf>

Prior to the meeting, the [RST Master Plan Working Paper One](#) was made available to the committee via the [Documents and Links page](#) of the RST Master Plan Project Webpages. The content of this paper constitutes much of the discussion for today's meeting.

The Committee discussion occurred as follows:

Randy Staver asked how forecasts are developed and if the forecasts allow for volatility in the numbers, such as when an airline comes or goes. Mark McFarland responded that we do our best to choose a methodology that allows some room for movement, but we must use the best information that we have to determine the most likely outcome. Forecasting is not an exact science but an educated analysis predicting a likely outcome. Randy also asked what the shelf life of a master plan is. Mark responded it's approximately 5-10 years, or when the airport experiences significant changes.

Dave Nelson asked if—when developing the forecasts—the project team is thinking about autonomous or semi-autonomous aircraft? He suggested the group Google “flying bathtub.” Mark stated that some

large drone activity (military) is accounted for in the Terminal Area Forecast (TAF) numbers but since autonomous vehicles that transport passengers do not currently exist and are not regulated, we will investigate methods of capturing that activity.

John Reed cautioned Gina Mitchell not to be nervous when reviewing the forecasts as he suspects the forecast numbers might be more aggressive than normal due to new airline service. Gina stated the FAA is most interested in the forecast narrative telling the story of what's happening at Rochester International Airport (RST) and explaining why the numbers being predicted are reasonable, logical and support the forecast numbers. Mark McFarland suggested the current forecast numbers may be a little low, and perhaps with the story that could be told, the team could be more aggressive with the forecast numbers for the next five or ten years, as the DMC would have a big impact, but then the numbers may normalize beyond that timeframe.

Dave Nelson asked if there is a separate forecast estimate for General Aviation (GA) activity? Mark McFarland responded affirmatively, and noted it was coming up shortly in the presentation.

Jon Bowman noted that for FedEx, taxiway availability was an issue (but cited no runway issues). FedEx may potentially be moving up to an Airbus 300, with four operations a day (vs. two currently). He said, in the short-term, the Airbus 300 would be replacing the 757. He cited the reason for this is their relationship with the Mayo is continuing to grow, as is community use of their services. Matt Wagner asked if it was the turning radii with the Airbus on the taxiway that was the issue, and Jon confirmed it was.

Gina Mitchell asked the committee to help her understand how operations work with the Mayo concerning tissue samples, transplants, etc., asking where those operations are captured in the forecasts. Thomas Griffin responded that tissue samples are sent via FedEx overnight service as of January 1, 2018, whereas they used to be mailed through the US Postal Service. He noted there are approximately 90,000 outbound air shipments that are likely not reflected in the forecast counts. Thomas said Mayo Medical Labs (MML) is testing branching out to clinics as well. He stated this is less efficient in terms of volume per foot because it's often bulkier packaging with very little weight to it and typically may be only one sample in a box. Gina asked what part is captured through FedEx vs. through other channels? She noted she was trying to understand how RST operates where Mayo is concerned. Thomas responded that 95 percent of Mayo freight activity goes through FedEx. Doug Drescher added that transport/transplant teams typically operate through the fixed-base operator (FBO).

Dave Nelson noted that the forecasts are only accounting for current technology, not thinking about what's coming – electric aircraft, autonomous aircraft, drones, etc.

Nick Fancher stated there's a lot of pent-up GA demand at RST, and said that if the DMC initiative takes root, there will be significant additional demand for mid-sized companies for air charters or corporate aircraft. Mark McFarland added that the Mayo is looking to add a King Air in the near-term, and possibly another in the longer-term, as well as possibly a jet.

Paul Drucker noted the growth of fixed-wing operations for Mayo patients—some portion by Mayo aircraft—is something to be considered and said the Mayo’s Florida and Arizona operations are growing. He said the Mayo has unique needs from a medical perspective for airfield space separate from the traditional GA operations, as they have many patients that deserve privacy. He also cited federal prison transports that require high-security, as well as approximately 50 air ambulance operations per month and there is no secure, climate-controlled, private space for them to load/unload. He suggested the master plan should look at putting high-demand needs into a segregated area. He also said RST would be a staging area in the case of a mass casualty event, and it needs to be able to safely manage an outflow of high-priority patients to other medical facilities.

Gina Mitchell suggested the medical story/needs should be separated out from the typical GA needs/story. She also stated that other airports may unofficially serve as relievers to RST. She then asked the question, “Should RST serve all needs—be all things to all people?” John Reed responded, “I want it all, Gina!” John then noted that separating or segregating for high-profile GA users includes small GA aircraft up to Airbuses from the Middle East.

Nick Fancher added that retail flight training is on the rise. He noted that when Great Planes Aviation opened, they expected to do 100 hours of flight training in the first six months but did 340 hours. They anticipate 700-800 hours for this year, which is their third year. Additionally, he mentioned that they are working with Rochester Community and Technical College (RCTC) to support their new 2-year aviation program. Beginning in the Fall of 2019, the program will operate three aircraft each flying 25 hours a week, for a total of 675 operations annually. In Fall of 2020, they will have six aircraft serving approximately 48 students for 1,300+ operations annually.

John Reed noted that RST, at times, has experienced a waiting list of up to a dozen for private hangars, but said that hangars and ramp space are both built out.

Dave Nelson asked if the GA forecasts slide was missing a Piston aircraft column? Mark McFarland responded that the table in reference was just for Mayo, and he was unaware of any piston activity from Mayo. Dave also asked if there was a mechanism in place for sharing info and commenting on the Draft Working Paper One. Mark responded that any comments or further input should be submitted via the email address listed on the [Contact Us page](#) of the project website (www.flyrst.com/masterplan) or directly to John Reed, RST Executive Director, at JReed@flyrst.com.

Patrick Seeb stated that the DMC has done a lot of forecasting via their Transportation Master Plan that looks at population growth and he is willing to share it with the project team. Mark McFarland thanked him for that offer and said the team would greatly appreciate it. Gina Mitchell noted it will be good to have consistent data for consideration in the two planning processes.

Gina Mitchell asked if there was any other information or data the project team wanted or needed from other interest groups and asked the committee what data isn’t captured and how/where would they find it? Karrie Krear-Klostermeier suggested that medical flights (often called “compassion flights” or “mercy flights”)—transporting patients/organs/family members when Mayo can’t handle them—should

not be lumped in with other GA operations. Mark McFarland asked how those flights can be identified and pulled out of the GA operations counts? Karrie responded that they have an “air taxi” call sign and suggested that FAA Air Traffic Management may be able to provide. Paul Drucker added that many of those require an ambulance, so the team may be able to cross-reference the air taxi/FAA database with ambulance data to account for some of those operations. He offered that Mayo Medical Transport may be able to provide some of this data.

Nick Fancher also noted support for segregation between medical GA and traditional GA operations and suggested considering a high-touch ramp.

Mark McFarland ended the meeting with an overview of the next steps in the process and told the committee a save-the-date for the next Community Input Committee meeting (tentatively planned for late July or August) would be sent out by June 8th. Colleen Bosold asked the committee for feedback on the meeting space/location for today’s meeting or other suggestions for future meetings. Most agreed it had worked fine. Mark Schoenfelder offered the MnDOT District 6 Headquarters building as an option for the next meeting, noting they had a similar-sized space as well as free parking. The project team will investigate this option for the next meeting.