

March 20, 2024

City of Salem Mayor and City Council  
555 Liberty Street SE, Room 220  
Salem, OR 97301 -3513

Dear Mayor Hoy and City Councilors:

As you are likely aware, the Salem Municipal Airport has engaged its aviation planning consultant, Mead & Hunt, to update the Airport's Master Plan. On January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2024, a draft copy of Chapter 4 – Facility Requirements was provided to the Salem Airport Master Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) and to the Airport Advisory Commission (AAC) for review. In Chapter 4 the consultant correctly states that Runway 16/34 is not eligible for federal grant funding and, as such, all maintenance, rehabilitation, and reconstruction would be the financial responsibility of the City. The consultant will be following up with a report which will attempt to quantify the costs to the City associated with the following options: 1) maintaining the runway in place, 2) permanently closing the runway, or 3) shortening the runway. The report is expected to provide City Council with sufficient information, including cost estimates, to make an informed decision on how best to move forward with the final chapters of the master plan and the future development of the airport. The costs for all three options are anticipated to be substantial.

There are two areas of concern that have been brought to the Airport Advisory Commission by local stakeholder groups. First, sufficient time and effort has not been given to investigating alternative funding options to maintain Runway 16/34. Secondly, the cost estimates that will be provided for future maintenance, rehabilitation and reconstruction of the runway is such a key element of the decision-making process that all efforts should be undertaken to ensure that the cost estimates are as accurate as possible. The scope and funding of the master plan project does not include a robust in-depth analysis of the three options for the runway's future. It is expected that the information presented to the City Council will only be a cursory review with high-level cost estimates.

It is therefore the recommendation of the Airport Advisory Commission that an independent analysis be initiated by another aviation planning consultant, along with a detailed report to confirm the projected costs and ensure that all viable alternative funding sources have been identified. If the Airport's operating funds cannot support an additional study the AAC would recommend that the City fund the analysis through other available funding sources.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this issue. It is one that is of utmost importance to the local aviation community at the Salem Airport, the Willamette Valley, and the Pacific Northwest region. If there are any questions or if additional information is needed, please let me know.

Sincerely,

John Foley  
Chair, Airport Advisory Commission

Cc: John Paskell, Airport Manager  
Mark Becketl, Asst. Public Works Director, Operations Division  
Brian Martin, Public Works Director  
Keith Stahley, City Manager