



MEMBERS:

- City of Lacey
- City of Olympia
- City of Rainier
- City of Tenino
- City of Tumwater
- City of Yelm
- Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation
- Nisqually Indian Tribe
- Town of Bucoda
- Thurston County
- North Thurston Public Schools
- Olympia School District
- Tumwater School District
- Intercity Transit
- LOTT Clean Water Alliance
- Port of Olympia
- PUD No. 1 of Thurston County

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS:

- Lacey Fire District #3
- Puget Sound Regional Council
- The Evergreen State College
- Thurston Conservation District
- Thurston Economic Development Council
- Timberland Regional Library

MEMORANDUM

TO: Thurston Regional Planning Council
FROM: Marc Daily, Executive Director
DATE: November 23, 2022
SUBJECT: Council Discussion on Potential Airport Siting in Central Thurston County

PURPOSE

On November 9, 2022, the Transportation Policy Board (TPB) voted to recommend that the Council formally oppose potential airport siting in Thurston County. Council will discuss the recommendation and potentially take action.

Summary:

- In 2019 the Legislature created the Commercial Aviation Coordinating Commission (CACC) and charged them with producing a plan to meet the state’s projected commercial passenger and freight needs. Demand for air travel is projected to roughly double by 2050.
- The Legislature directed the CACC to provide a single preferred location for a new primary commercial aviation facility by June 15, 2023.
- The first Phase of the CACC’s work in 2020 and 2021 consisted of evaluating existing airport locations for expansion potential.
- Both Thurston County and the Port of Olympia took action that did not support expansion of the existing Olympia Regional Airport.
- Olympia Airport was not included in the [CACC’s Phase 1 report issued in February 2022](#).
- In the February 2022 report, the CACC notes that a newly developed or “greenfield” airport location would need to be identified, as there is not enough service potential at the six existing airport sites evaluated in the report.
- In August 2022 the CACC issued the [Airport Site Selection Study](#), which identified 10 potential greenfield airport locations including two in Thurston County.
- The CACC hosted an online open house from August 15 through September 11, 2022, to take input on the 10 locations.
- In September 2022 the CACC issued the Online Open House and Virtual Public Meeting Report summarizing the public input received on the 10 locations.
- On September 23, 2022, the CACC voted to move three of the locations forward for additional analysis. The sites are Thurston County Central, Pierce County Central, and Pierce County East. Figures of the three sites are included in the Background section.
- The CACC reported its recommendation in its [October 15 update to the Legislature](#).
- At the November 9, 2022, meeting, the TPB voted to recommend that TRPC take a formal position of opposition to airport siting. A draft letter for Council consideration is attached.

REQUESTED ACTION

If Council agrees with TPB’s recommendation, the action would be to authorize the Council Chair and Transportation Policy Board Chair to sign a letter of opposition to siting a new airport in Thurston County.

md:bl



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Executive Director

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EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS

How has equity been considered in this agenda item?

Potential development of a new airport facility would dramatically impact all Thurston region residents. The rural areas of Thurston County includes a greater proportion of lower income households and individuals with disabilities. Therefore, the proposal may disproportionately impact disadvantaged communities in the region.

BACKGROUND

The [Commercial Aviation Commission's Phase 1](https://wsdot.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2022-02/Commercial-Aviation-Coordinating-Commission-Report-February2022.pdf) Report provides the best background information.
<https://wsdot.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2022-02/Commercial-Aviation-Coordinating-Commission-Report-February2022.pdf>

The following figures are from the Washington Aviation System Plan Airport Site Selection Study

Figure 13: Thurston County Central Representative Location

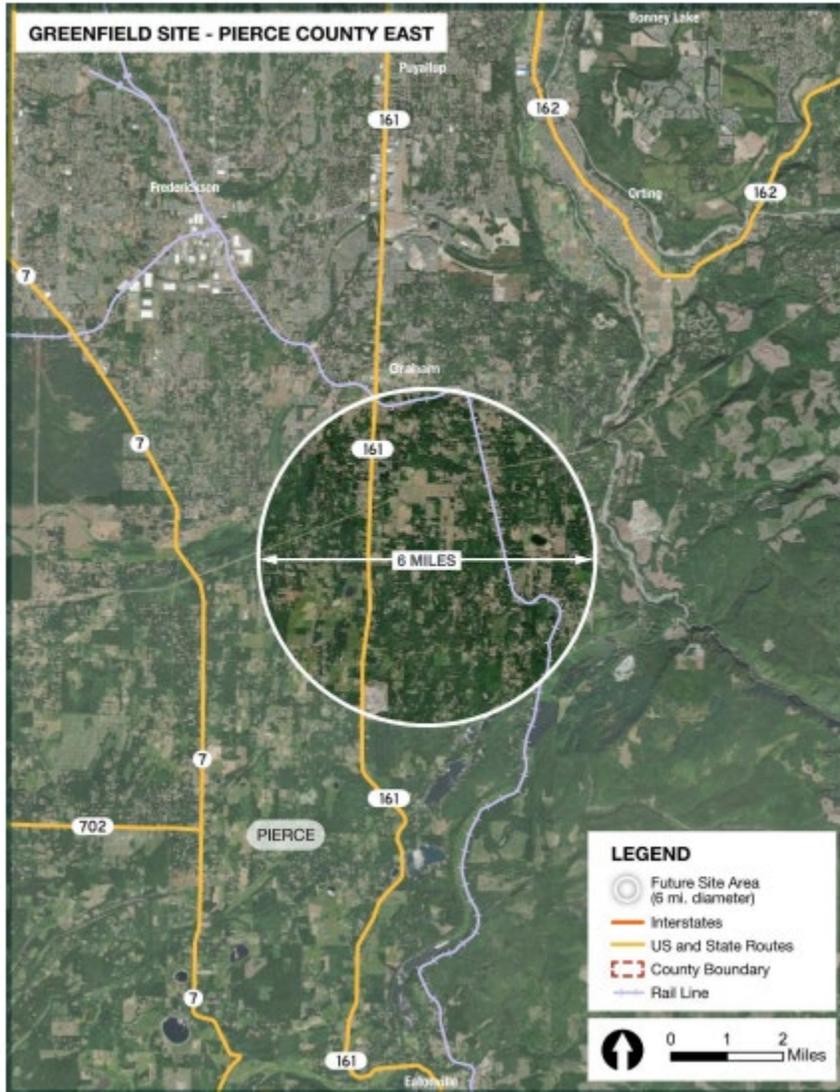


Figure 12: Pierce County Central Representative Location



Source: Kimley-Horn

Figure 11: Pierce County East Representative Location



Source: Kimley-Horn