

Sisters Eagle Airport Criteria

ORS 836.610 (1)(b) & OAR 738-090-0030(1)(b):

Privately owned public-use airports specifically identified in administrative rules of the Oregon Department of Aviation that:

- (A) Provide important links in air traffic in this state;
- (B) Provide essential safety or emergency services; or
- (C) Are of economic importance to the county where the airport is located.

OAR 738-090-0050

Information to be Considered in Determining Airport Listings

The Board shall consider the information listed below in determining whether an airport meets the criteria in ORS 836.610(1)(b). The Department shall provide this information to the Board.

(1) To determine whether an airport provides important links in air traffic in this state, the Board shall consider, but is not limited to, the following information:

(a) Number and type of based aircraft;

Response: There are currently 34 aircraft based at 6K5; 15 are based on the airport property, 19 are distributed among the hangar homes adjacent to the airport runway. The airport's Master Plan approved with annexation into the City of Sisters allows for the development of 58 hangars, and there is currently a wait list of 19 people for hangar space. There are 10 tie-down spaces with chains on the paved ramp area, and additional aircraft parking both on and off pavement. Several of the tie down spaces are long term rentals that are not counted in the based aircraft number. All of the aircraft currently based at 6K5 are small single-engine or twin-engine airplanes, and one gyrocopter.

(b) Annual operations;

Response: Annual operations vary greatly with the seasons. The summer/fall may average 20+ operations per day, while the winter sees the number drop to 0-6 per day. It is estimated that there are approximately 7,500 operations per year, with the number increasing annually as the airport grows as a business link, destination for group fly-ins,

charter flights, tourism, and recreational aeronautical activities. The Sisters Eagle Airport was depicted on aeronautical charts beginning in 1936.

(c) Whether an airport is included in the National Plan of Integrated Airports System as identified by the FAA;

Response: Sisters Eagle Airport is not designated as part of the National Plan of Integrated Airports System.

(d) Classification of the airport in the state aviation system plan;

Response: Sisters Eagle Airport is classified as a Category IV Local General Aviation Airport open for public use and privately owned.

(e) The location of the airport in relation to other airports in the area and whether the airport is remote due to geographic features;

Response: The Sisters Airport, located within the rural community of Sisters, is geographically the closest airport to the eastside crest of the Cascade Mountain range. As such, its location provides the first access point for fuel and emergency services east of the mountains. Transient aircraft often utilize 6K5 for fuel services before flying westbound over the mountains. As an important Emergency Diversionary Airport, there are several emergency landings at 6K5 every year for aircraft encountering inclement weather, mechanical failures, or low-fuel emergencies over the Cascades.

The rural setting of the town of Sisters makes access to other airports tedious. The closest airport is Redmond, which takes over 30 minutes driving time. Driving times to other airports are even longer, often taking well over an hour.

Flight distances “as the plane flies” and direction from Sisters Airport (6K5) to other airports as follows;

Redmond (RDM): 18 mi to the East

Bend (BDN): 20 mi to the Southeast

Sunriver (S21): 26 mi to the Southeast

Madras (S33): 28 mi to the Northeast

Prineville (S39): 28 mi to the East

(f) Whether the location of the airport is conducive to providing an efficient alternative mode of transportation and has adequate links to other modes of transportation;

Response: The Sisters Airport is located less than 1 mi from Hwy 20, which is the main corridor access to the Central Oregon region from the west. During peak tourist seasons and special events (i.e. Sisters Rodeo, Quilt Show, July 4th Fly-in), the Sisters Airport accommodates many small aircraft (up to 50+) bringing visitors and attendees, alleviating

significant traffic congestion on Hwy 20. The Sisters Airport provides one vehicle, and 10 bicycles to patrons arriving in aircraft, all free of charge. There is a bike path from the Airport to downtown Sisters, linking airport users to shopping, dining, and accommodations in town.

(g) Whether the airport is used frequently by businesses as an origination, transfer or destination airport;

Response: There are several businesses based at the Sisters Airport which use airplanes extensively for business purposes, including Energyneering Solutions, Inc., one of the largest private employers in Sisters. Additionally, there are 4 hangar tenants who use their airplanes weekly for business travel, as well as several hangar-home owners who regularly use their aircraft for business. There are two flight training businesses based at 6K5; Outlaw Aviation, and Tailwheel Town. There is a skydiving business which is based at 6K5 and operates during the summer tourist season. There is an aviation engineering business, Innovator, also based at the Sisters Airport. With the growing Sisters economy, business travelers utilizing 6K5 as a travel destination are common, including arrivals by general aviation and charter aircraft.

(h) Whether the airport relieves congestion at other airports.

Response: Sisters Eagle Airport relieves some of the traffic at both Bend and Redmond airports, especially for the traveler that is visiting or doing business near Sisters. Sisters Airport was called upon to accommodate a significant number of planes recently when the Redmond airport was closed and the hangar tenants there had no way to leave the Redmond airport. Some of the transient air traffic simply prefers to land at a smaller, less commercialized airport. The availability of aviation fuel, and easy access to downtown Sisters, makes 6K5 a more desirable general aviation airport than the busier ones nearby.

(2) To determine whether an airport provides essential safety or emergency services, the Board shall consider, but is not limited to, the following information:

Sisters Eagle Airport provides many Life Safety Services to the rural community of Sisters.

(a) Whether the location of the airport makes it operationally feasible for efficient use as a search and rescue base and the history of its use as a search and rescue base;

Response: Sisters Eagle Airport is ideally located as a search and rescue (SAR) base due to its close proximity to the Cascade Mountains. In recent years, there have been SAR missions based out of 6K5 to the three Sisters peaks, Mt. Jefferson Wilderness, Mt. Washington, and various locations in the Deschutes National Forest. In addition, the Civil Air Patrol utilizes 6K5 as a SAR training location. The Sisters Pilot Association is in the process of forming and training a Disaster Airlift Response Team (DART) of local pilots, in association with the Civil

Air Patrol and American Red Cross, to provide emergency services and supplies in the event of the Cascadia Earthquake along the west coast of Oregon.

(b) Whether the airport is an emergency landing location due to its geographic location;

Response: Sisters Eagle Airport is geographically the closest airport to the crest of the Cascade Mountain range. As such, its location provides the first access point for fuel and emergency services east of the mountains. As an important Emergency Diversionary Airport, there have been several emergency landings at 6K5 every year for aircraft encountering inclement weather, mechanical failures, or low-fuel emergencies over the Cascades.

(c) Whether the airport provides medical evacuation support due to its proximity to significant highway and transportation corridors and its geographic location;

Response: Sisters Eagle Airport is used often as a medical evacuation location. Its proximity to the Cascade mountain range makes 6K5 the closest access point for helicopter evacuation for accidents occurring on the mountain passes. There is a designated helicopter landing area and lights on the ramp specifically for emergency services. In addition to ground-to-air transfer, the Sisters Airport is less than a mile from Hwy 20, making it an ideal location often used as a ground-to-ground transfer area for a small ambulance meeting a more robust medical unit.

(d) Whether the airport may be used as a location for fire patrol and suppression aircraft and activities and the history of the airport's use for such activities; and

Response: Sisters Eagle Airport has long been a location for fire suppression and patrol. Virtually every summer in recent history has seen some form of fire suppression activity, including providing an extensive basecamp for multiple aircraft and personnel. Pictures attached for examples of 2016 fire-fighting activities.

(e) Whether the airport is a location for law enforcement operations or law enforcement training.

Response: The Civil Air Patrol uses the Sisters Airport on a weekly basis for training, and as needed for a mission base. The Oregon Air National Guard, and US Fish and Wildlife Service, have performed training maneuvers at 6K5 in recent years.

(3) To determine whether an airport is of economic importance to the county where the airport is located, the Board shall consider, but is not limited to, the following information:

(a) Whether the airport supports the economy of the county by providing aviation facilities for aeronautical related activities or businesses, including, but not limited to, hangars, tie downs, maintenance and training facilities;

Response: Sisters Eagle Airport currently maintains 10 new hangars for rent, with a master plan approval to provide up to 40 additional hangars. There are two hangars in existing multi-use buildings, 10 tie-down spots (with chains) on asphalt, and room for several additional planes parked on asphalt or grass. There is a designated campground for fly-in camping. The airport has a designated helicopter parking circle in the ramp area. There is aviation fuel available for public purchase. There are 2 flight training businesses which operate out of 6K5.

(b) Whether the airport provides jobs;

Response: The master plan of airport property was designed to support over 100 employees. Airport operations at this time support 3 full-time employees and 4 part-time employees as needed. There are six businesses on the airport grounds that collectively create local and traded sector gross revenue exceeding \$20 million per year, employing 60+ people with an approximate \$2.5 million payroll per year.

(c) Whether the airport provides support to local business and/or governmental agencies. Examples include, but are not limited to, agricultural operations, destination resorts, forest operations, charter flights, military operations and cargo operations;

Response: The Sisters Airport supports helicopters used for local agricultural frost protection and survey. There are several businesses based at the Sisters Airport which use aircraft extensively for business purposes, as well as many self-piloted business flights. After the runway was repaved in 2013, the airport has experienced an increase in charter flights bringing people conducting business, as well as tourists and event attendees. 6K5 is routinely used for forest fire survey and spotting operations. There are occasional military operations, as the Civil Air Patrol uses the Sisters Airport for training, and as needed for a mission base. The Oregon Air National Guard, and US Coast Guard occasionally make an appearance at Sisters. During the 1960's, 6K5 was used heavily for forest bark beetle spraying.

(d) Whether the airport supports a residential airpark;

Response: There are two residential cluster communities that include hangar-homes, and four individual hangar-home properties located adjacent to the Sisters runway.

(e) Whether the airport provides a location for aeronautic recreation, including but not limited to, aircraft displays, parachuting, ultralights and tourism activities;

Response: Sisters Eagle Airport hosts an annual 4th of July celebration with aircraft displays and events that attract 1,000 people or more. There is a skydiving business that operates out of 6K5 during the summer tourist season, attracting up to 400 people a month. There are often ultralights, gyrocopters, LSAs, and other recreational aviation machines utilizing the Airport, especially during the summer. There are often photo shoots for aircraft

manufacturers, videography, and pilot portraits. There are numerous aviation clubs at the Sisters Airport, including an Experimental Aircraft Association chapter which provides Young Eagles flights, the Central Oregon chapter of the 99's (women pilots), the Sisters Pilot Association, AOPA members, and Women in Aviation members. There are also members of several philanthropic flight organizations at 6K5 including Angel Flight, and Pilots and Paws Rescue.

(f) Whether the airport provides location for educational opportunities, such as flight instruction; and

Response: The Sisters Airport is home to Outlaw Aviation, a company that was started to support the Flight Science program at the Sisters High School. The Airport provides Outlaw Aviation with Cessna 172 trainer plane, a classroom, office space for the 2 instructors, and a hangar. As a result of the partnership between Outlaw Aviation and the school, several students have earned their Private Pilot certificate while in high school. The high school has expanded their Flight Science course offerings to accommodate the increasing demand for student enrolment. There are families who have moved into the Sisters school district specifically to participate in the unique program. There are several students who have transferred into the Sisters High School from other districts in order to participate in Flight Science. The Airport conducts the 4th of July Celebration as a fund-raiser to provide high school students with scholarships toward their flight training.

The second flight training business operating out of 6K5 is Tailwheel Town, specializing in Tailwheel endorsements, master flight classes, and mountain flying techniques. Most of the clientele come to Tailwheel Town for multi-day training from distant locations, providing a significant economic contribution to the Sisters economy.

The airport is used by the Sisters High School science and astronomy classes to launch and study stratospheric balloons. The airport hosted the Sisters High School class of 2016 all-night graduation party, the Salem Soap Box Derby championships, and the Oregon Institute of Technology engineering design field testing of cars.

(g) Any comments by the county or others relating to the economic importance of the airport to the county.

Please refer to attached letters of endorsement from Sisters City Council, City/County Economic Development Counsel, and US Representative Huffman.