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Chamber supports limited runway extension

Chamber board votes to endorse two alternatives that would increase take-off length at Aurora Airport

By: Patrick Johnson
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The Wilsonville Area Chamber of Commerce has come out in favor of limited expansion of the Aurora State Airport.

The chamber, which remained quiet during a Oregon Department of Aviation planning meeting earlier this month, sent a letter to the ODA, Clackamas County and city of Wilsonville saying they would support two scenarios that would increase the length of the airport by 800 feet using "displaced thresholds."



Aurora State Airport
The Wilsonville Area Chamber of Commerce sent a letter of support for a longer runway with limited use at the Aurora State Airport.
Photo By: Ray Hughey

Displaced thresholds allow pilots to use the extra length for emergency stops on takeoff, but not for landing usually.

Chamber CEO Steve Gilmore said the reason for supporting the two original scenario, and not the 1,000 foot runway expansion was that airport users were in favor of the displaced threshold option.

"We want to support our members that are airport users and also keep in line with what the city has said they would prefer at the airport," Gilmore said Monday morning.

Scenario 1 adds a 600-foot displaced threshold to the south and a 200-foot displaced threshold to the north. Landing distance for either runway under this scenario will continue to be 5,004-feet.

Scenario 2 adds 800-foot displaced threshold to the north.

Both scenarios would also include strengthen the runway to allow planes that weigh up to 60,000 pounds.

Neither scenario is expected to impact future development at Columbia Helicopters or close Keil Road which is south of the airport.

State aviation officials have pointed out that the changes to the master plan doesn't mean the runway extensions would happen soon, as there is no state funding for the project. The Federal Aviation Administration has also hinted that federal funding would not be used for displaced thresholds, and suggest there is enough justification for a full runway extension.

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The chamber's letter comes before an Oregon Aviation Board Thursday, where the seven-member board is expected to make a decision about the runway extension for the airport's master plan. The meeting will be from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Chinook Conference Room in the Port of Portland headquarters at Portland International Airport.

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