November 2, 2026

To ODAV Board of Directors,

I am currently the vice president of Charbonneau Country Club, a large Home Owners Association located off Miley Road two miles north of the Aurora State Airport. I also serve as chair of the HOA's civic affairs activities, and as liaison to the City of Wilsonville. Included in this portfolio I act as Charbonneau's representative on PAAM, and on the PAC when it was in session during the public meeting phase of the Airport Master Plan. I am experienced with general aviation, charter, executive jet travel, land development, and jurisdictional economic development.

Several aspects of the Aurora AMP stand out as reasons not to adopt this plan. One is that it uses taxpayer or airline passenger fee revenue to fund improvements that have no public benefits. Secondly, it seeks to change zoning for land designated for exclusive farm use to non-farm use. Next, as a resident and acting on behalf of thousands of community residents, the AMP is a direct threat to the safety, quality of life and property values of those living within the vicinity of the airfield. There are literally thousands of local households firmly opposed to the plan.

Here are specific reasons for making these statements.

Many of the jets being accommodated by modifying standards at this constrained airfield cost more than the annual budget of the agency who owns and operates all of Oregon's state airports. ODAV is in the business of owning and operating general aviation airports, not costly executive jetports. A $40 million agency who has a $3 million deficit and resorts to using general funds of the state has enough on its plate and is not qualified to manage a $185 million improvement plan.

The large cost of this project, at a time when the gap between Oregon's transportation needs and its ability to pay for them is wider than ever, is bad policy-making, and does absolutely nothing to solve the state's transportation problems. Surface roadways already experience heavy volumes of traffic, yet no provision has been made in the AMP that considers the impact of more traffic and safety on local roadways. This is a major oversight of the plan.

The attention given to this airport by the many years of pushing one plan after another at a constrained site when McMinnville, Salem, Hillsboro and Troutdale are fully capable of handling large jets, passengers, charters, air freight, unmanned drones, and vertical takeoff aircraft is a fool's errand chasing a pipe-dream for a small minority of self-interested parties. It is irresponsible for the state to promote this plan requiring the scope of modifications of standards necessary to conform this airport for C-II and larger aircraft, when these airports can already safely accommodate this category of planes.

The cost-benefit analysis doesn't compute. There is minimal if any public benefit despite using FAA funds derived from commercial passenger fees and other sources. The primary benefits are accrued by out-of-state aircraft owners seeking tax breaks by using an airport in Oregon, and transient aircraft who do not contribute to the region in a meaningful way. The select few operators in the metro area can use airports that are currently available to large jets that are minutes from the Aurora airfield.

The AMP is flawed by not providing adequate noise mitigation or abatement measures despite the fact that more frequent flights of larger jets are projected in the plan. The impacted communities have consistently submitted comments on this issue. It appears that a meaningful noise abatement policy is not integrated in the AMP, which is unsatisfactory and likely unlawful.

Aurora State Airport has no fire suppression capacity, nor is it equipped to handle fires and serious accidents. This safety issue is not adequately addressed in the AMP and presents liability to ODAV, and serious risks to workers and communities that would be harmed by an event of this nature

Rezoning farmland to non-farming use is not in the best interest of the region. It's on record that French Prairie has some of the most fertile soil in the nation. Changing land use around the airport for the reasons indicated in the AMP is inappropriate. Furthermore, it sets a dangerous precedent that deserves the careful consideration of public officials. Rezoning EFU land into another use is a slippery slope that will face significant resistance, and likely long-lasting legal challenges, raising the already sky-high costs even higher.

The flight data used in the AMP is inaccurate. As a board, you must be aware of the slight of hand, where data from an airfield in the midwest was used because it was deemed to be similar to Aurora, even though years of data were available since the tower was installed. This means the data used for the AMP is corrupt and not accurate. At the least, it needs to be reverified.

Present data does not support expanding the airport to accommodate C-II and larger aircraft. Air traffic has not grown, nor met the forecasts in the plan. 90% of actual air traffic is category B-II aircraft, not business jets. Keeping the airport as it is, committing to improved safety, upgrading sanitation, and supporting local jobs is more positive for the area than moving ahead with AMP.

Besides the fact that more large jets overhead means more noise pollution, greater risk of accidents, and more surface traffic on already overcrowded roadways in the area, it also diminishes the quality of life and property values in Charbonneau and other communities.

The nearest communities to Aurora State Airport are all on the record opposing the AMP, yet the plan marches on without local support. It's apparent that a handful of affluent special interests, who own real estate or aircraft, are seeking special treatment at the public's expense. Many of these special interests are not residents of the area, and use the airport to save on taxes and fuel costs. The community's thousands of residents deserve a higher consideration than a handful of large jet owners, and the ambitions of ODAV to create a version of Hillsboro Jetport in Aurora.

Aurora State Airport serves a need as a flight center for small and medium aircraft, flight training, civil air patrol, the businesses supporting these enterprises, and other businesses. It is not well-suited for large jet aircraft, nor unmanned drones, when airports within minutes from the airfield can already accommodate them.

In summary, exorbitant costs, weak public benefits, seizing private property, and a negative impact on valuable farm-use land, safety, quality of life, and property values, are failings of the AMP. Taken individually, each of these issues is a bridge too far for adopting the plan. Collectively, it's a fiscal, safety, quality of life, and land use crisis in the making.

I join with leaders of communities effected by the Airport Master Plan who believe that maintaining a B-II general aviation airport is the best option, and strenuously oppose the plan.

Dave

David E. Mauk
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