

CAC – October 13, 2011 Forecast Workshop Meeting Notes

Introduction – group

The meeting convened at 1:30 p.m. in the Airport Terminal Building. Members in attendance were:

Catherine “Cathy” Reed - WA Department of Ecology

V. K. Best – Greater Yakima Chamber of Commerce

Jon R. Mulveoven – Greater Yakima Chamber of Commerce

David Spurlock – City of Union Gap

Dan Olson – City of Union Gap

Bill Wheeler – YAT Board

Lee Rimmel - YAT

Robert Peterson - YAT

John Yarnish - URS

Erik Pruneda - URS

Stephanie Ray - HLA

Consultant’s Presentation – John Yarnish, URS

The purpose of the meeting was to conduct a workshop to gather information about current and future activity levels at YKM. The meeting opened with a presentation by URS (copy attached) that concentrated on three major topics;

1. Presentation of the national and regional trends in aviation, both commercial and general aviation, that are affecting activity today.
2. Discussion of the factors that influence growth at an airport.
3. Presentation of the FAA forecast for YKM contained in the current Terminal Area Forecast (TAF).
4. Discussion of the unique factors at YKM and within the Yakima Valley Area that could lead to traffic levels different from those forecast by FAA.

The following factors were cited by the committee members as being important considerations when preparing the forecast of aviation demand.

Commercial Aviation

What Local Factors will Influence Passenger Growth?

- The passengers flying to/from YKM are a mixture of business travelers and families taking casual trips.
- What are the factors that you consider when choosing whether to fly out of YKM or use an alternative airport such as Tri-Cities (Pasco) or Sea-Tac?
 - Looking for a direct flight that doesn’t require a long layover at SEA.
 - Layover times in SEA can be very long due to the fact that there are only 3 flights per day in Yakima.

- The ability to conveniently connect to another flight at SEA is difficult due to limited number of flights.
- Schedule, cost, and convenience are the three primary factors.
- It is generally cheaper to drive to Pasco than to Seattle.
- The reintroduction of eastbound flights such as the Delta service to Salt Lake City would attract more passengers.
- The shuttle bus service to and from SEA results in fewer passengers on the YKM flights.
- Some people living and working in Seattle maintain small apartments in Yakima and come here on the weekends.
- Improve the ambiance of the Yakima airport terminal
 - There is currently no restaurant or bar where passengers can wait.
 - Need to bring more development and improve the overall attractiveness of the terminal.
- Improved marketing of the airline service is important to attracting new passengers. If the public is educated about how it can be cheaper to fly out of YKM than to drive to SEA they will be more likely to use the local service.
- A second airline would drive fare prices down and increase demand levels.
- YKM is not owned by a Port Authority and therefore does not have the ability to raise money for a marketing campaign.
 - Walla Walla has increased wine tourism which has increase airport activity. The region could implement wine tasting tours and elevate the region's presence in this market.

Other Notes

- Regional Commercial and Industrial growth would increase air traffic.

General Aviation

How does Yakima Differ from the FAA's Assumptions for GA?

- Cub Crafters is very important to YKM.
- Creating a Port District and having it own and operate the airport would be a big improvement.
 - How big would it be? What are the limits?



- The idea has been turned down in the past due to fear from local businesses.
- YKM is not tax funded it operates on user fees only
- Some west side (Puget Sound Region) corporate jets are housed here in YKM because it is cheaper.

Other Notes

- The Chamber of Commerce offered to help market the region to help get additional flights into and out of YKM.
- The Chamber of Commerce is a great place to present Airport Master Plan topics and get feedback.

