

## TAC – October 13, 2011 Forecast Workshop Meeting Notes

### Introduction

The meeting convened at 10:00 a.m. in the Airport Terminal Building. In attendance were:

Cindy Fahsholtz  
Les Flue  
Ron Schwartz  
Jack Greif

Ola Vestad  
Ken McAllister  
Lee Rimmel  
Robert Peterson

John Yarnish  
Erik Prunda  
Stephanie Ray

### 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 SERVICE

- **Reliability of Service**
  - Return flights from Seattle are unpredictable during winter weather due to delays caused by weather. This lessens the overall reliability of the service and leads to less use by the travelers.
  - Driving over the mountain passes can be difficult during the winter.
  - When SEA is fogged in, Portland usually isn't. This is another reason to diversify destinations from YKM.
- **Ticket/Travel Cost**
  - One of the biggest factors in deciding whether to fly out of YKM is the cost of flying versus the cost of driving.

- It can be perceived as less expensive to drive to Seattle than fly from Yakima. Generally if you are connecting with a flight and travelling beyond SEA the price difference isn't as great.
  - More and more passengers are driving to Pasco to fly because they have better, cheaper and more reliable service.
  - Online search results where ticket price is used as the primary search factor reveal that tickets from YKM are listed at bottom of list, below the airports in Pasco and Wenatchee (and in one case Moses Lake).
  - How can we get YKM prices lowered so they move to the top of the local search results?
  - 400 people per month use the shuttle bus from YKM to/from SEA to get flights.
- **Time of Flights**
    - Currently Horizon is only providing 3 flights per day. This can cause time delays due to long layovers in SEA and make a trip more difficult.
    - Horizon used to provide 6 flights per day.
- **Available Destinations**
    - Make flights available to destinations other than Seattle (e.g., Portland, Spokane, Boise)
    - YKM used to fly to Portland and Boise, but the airline has to be confident that flights will be full and profitable before they would consider reintroducing them.
    - Airlines seem focused on business travelers these days and are not offering discount tickets.

#### Other Notes

- YKM is less crowded than SEA.
- Allegiant Airlines flies out of Pasco. If you have a flexible schedule, they are a cheaper option to the destinations where they fly.

## GENERAL AVIATION

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

- Yakima is likely to exceed FAA growth curve because there hasn't been a drop-off in the number of aircraft at the airport.
- West side (Puget Sound Region) growth and congestion could cause spillover to the East side (i.e., YKM) as people look for less crowded airspace, cheaper hangars and better flying weather.
- Small corporate flights will increase. The Cessna 182 is the example of the size of aircraft that companies in Yakima are flying for business purposes.
- Currently the closest place to get a charter flight is in Wenatchee.
  - Improve Marketing of the airport. YKM geographically is in a good location with good weather and a high number of days of sunshine. It has unrestricted space

to fly, lots of it! The wide runways are preferable to the shorter, narrower runways at other facilities in the region.

- Elevate knowledge of YKM airport to businesses in order to entice them to move to YKM.
- Wine tourism is increasing Walla Walla airport activity. Why not YKM?
- We need to tie our agricultural community to the airport
- Fuel
  - There is only one fuel vendor in operation at the airport.
  - Training aircraft based in YKM will fly to Sunnyside for cheaper fuel.
  - A MoGas facility would attract aircraft to YKM. Pullman is the closest airport that has MoGas available.
- Sport Aviation is expected to grow in Yakima
  - Cub Crafters builds 50 sport aircraft per year and provides training and repairs.
  - Sport aircraft can go anywhere except Class B airports.
  - Cheaper to fly.
  - No different than other recreational hobbies such as snowmobiling or boating. Although it takes some time to get licensed.
- Hangars
  - At the moment hangar space is about even (supply / demand).
  - Cost to build hangars is going up.
  - Cost to rent hangars could hinder GA and airplanes could start disappearing.
  - YKM hangars are cheaper than Boeing Field. Some plane owners have moved their planes to YKM
- Improve industrial access to airport