



Minneapolis
City of Lakes

Office of the Mayor

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October 23, 2009

Mr. Dennis Probst, Deputy Executive Director
Metropolitan Airports Commission
6040 28th Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55450-2799

Re: MSP LTCPU/Forecasts and Facility Requirements

Dear Mr. Probst,

We have reviewed the forecast information prepared by HNTB as a part of the MSP Long Term Comprehensive Plan Update for the planning period through 2030. The forecast is based on a conservative annual growth rate of approximately 1.5% for operations at MSP. This results in approximately 547,000 operations by 2020 and approximately 630,000 operations by 2030.

As determined by the Airport Capacity Design Team in its *Capacity Enhancement Plan*, the estimated annual capacity of MSP is approximately 640,000 operations with acceptable levels of delay. The forecast operations for 2030 represent 98% of airfield capacity while the forecast for 2020 represents 85% of airfield capacity. FAA Order 5090.3c, "Field Formulation of the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems", recommends that planning activity for a new runway or supplemental airport commence when activity levels are in the range of 60-75% of annual capacity. Very clearly, MSP is in that range even now with traffic at 2008 levels and will only continue to increase that with future growth.

While we are aware that MAC cannot advocate for a third parallel runway under the terms of the third parallel agreement, we are concerned that airfield capacity has not been identified as an issue in this update. We believe that MAC is on track with addressing the issue of balance between terminal use, parking, and eventually runway use, the City is also concerned with long term balance between airfield capacity and terminal capacity.

The proposed increase in the number of gates concerns us since we question whether the significant terminal expansion proposed for this update sets ourselves up for a situation where again MSP becomes an "unbalanced" airport constrained by inadequate airfield

capacity? Is there an optimum or saturation level of activity at this facility? If so, what is it and what are the options at that point?

We believe that MAC should at least identify the issue of airfield capacity as a future concern and address potential alternatives to accommodate future demand which will need to be explored. As part of this comprehensive plan, MAC should formally commit its intent to update the plan every five years.

In 2000, MSP experienced over 520,000 operations and 36.7 million passengers with 45 fewer gates than now available. Comparing gate utilization at MSP to other airports, it appears that MSP gate utilization could be better optimized thus requiring a lesser expansion than proposed in this update. Will alternative operational strategies be evaluated to determine whether gates might be used more efficiently?

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the early phases of work thus far presented during this update and look forward to commenting on future efforts.

Sincerely,

R.T. Rybak, Mayor
City of Minneapolis

Sandra Colvin Roy, Chair
Transportation and Public Works

cc: Glen Orcutt, FAA ADO
Chauncey Case, Metropolitan Council