

MEMORANDUM

City of Wilsonville – Aurora Airport Good-Neighbor Policies



Date: April 18, 2022
To: Miranda Bateschell, City of Wilsonville
From: Brad Kilby and Chris Green, HHPR
Subject: **City of Wilsonville-Aurora Airport Good-Neighbor Policies
Project Update Memo #2
Summary of Community Engagement and Draft Policy Concepts**
Attachments: Survey Response Report
Preliminary Draft Objectives for Proposed Area of Special Concern

Harper Houf Peterson Righellis (HHPR) is working with the City of Wilsonville on a planning process to develop goals and policies addressing the relationship between Aurora Airport operations, impacts, and benefits and the Wilsonville community. Since the initial project work sessions with the City Council and Planning Commission, HHPR has proceeded with the following steps in the planning process:

- Community outreach about airport-related planning topics, including interviews with key stakeholders, a survey, and online open houses;
- Additional research about the approaches used by other communities in adopting good-neighbor policies related to nearby airports; and
- Development of draft policies and objectives in order for the City to adopt the area in the vicinity of the Aurora Airport as an Area of Special Concern in the Wilsonville Comprehensive Plan.

This memorandum summarizes the recent phases of community engagement and the recommendation to adopt the Airport Good-Neighbor Policies within a mapped “Area of Special Concern.”

Community Engagement and Feedback

HHPR and the City of Wilsonville have used a variety of approaches and platforms to engage interested stakeholders and the community-at-large in the planning process to develop the Airport Good-Neighbor Policies. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, community outreach for the project has taken place remotely, through the *Boones Ferry Messenger* print newsletter, City webpage and social media, and a variety of online tools linked from the project page at the *Let’s Talk, Wilsonville!* (LTW) virtual engagement platform.

Overall, the engagement process has identified issues within two overarching categories: concerns about aviation and other airport operations, and concerns about the potential for further development on the airport grounds and beyond.

Online Survey

Between February 13 and March 14, a survey was available on the LTW project page, with 98 responses. The survey was promoted via the March 2022 *Boones Ferry Messenger*, a press release, on the LTW home



page and City's social media platforms, and by the project team at online open houses and other events. Almost all responses were from Wilsonville residents, with 65 percent identifying as living near the airport. Roughly one in four respondents used the airport for work, air travel, cargo transport, flight school, or as pilots. Priority areas for airport-related policies were distributed fairly evenly, but neighborhood compatibility issues such as noise and pollution received the highest average ranking from respondents. The survey also collected open-ended, qualitative responses from many participants, elaborating on positive and negative airport impacts and policy priorities. A full report of survey results is included as Attachment A.

Stakeholder Interviews

During the outreach process, HHPR has conducted phone interviews with stakeholders from government agencies, local neighborhood groups, economic development, agriculture, and local businesses. Not surprisingly, feedback from stakeholders in interviews has varied according to each respondent's position within the ongoing discussions about future airport plans.

Respondents without a direct connection to the airport or local aviation all expressed concern about future expansion of airport operations, and the potential for farmlands adjacent to the airport to be lost to development or impacted by adjacent development in the airport vicinity. These respondents also raised issues with present operations, especially traffic and road access impacting farm operations, and environmental and public health threats raised by inadequate waste disposal at the airport site.

Respondents from businesses located on or adjacent to the airport tended to view future expansion of airport operations or development around the airport as less certain, due to the existing site boundary of the airport and surrounding EFU-zoned land. For airport-based stakeholders, an exception to the more static vision of future airport operations is the role of the airport in the event of an emergency such as a major earthquake, in which first responders and emergency relief supplies would use Aurora State Airport as a hub to reach the general area, then fan out to communities in the vicinity. These respondents also described the potential benefits of the airport as a resource for corporate travel for Wilsonville-based companies, and they identified Wilsonville as the closest business center for purchasing supplies, employee meals, and professional services for their companies.

Online Community Conversations

The project team held online Community Conversations using Zoom Webinar on March 9 and 10. The March 9 meeting was held at 12 noon and the March 10 meeting was held at 6 pm to accommodate different schedules of community members interested in attending. Each meeting included a presentation by HHPR land use planners introducing project goals, background about the airport and land use planning, and opportunities to stay involved in the process. Attendees had the opportunity through live polling and question-and-answer sessions to provide feedback during the meetings.

A total of five attendees joined the Community Conversations, and shared concerns mostly related to airport noise and potential industrial development near the airport.

Approach to Draft Policies

The full text of draft proposed policies is included as Attachment B.

Areas of Special Concern

Existing policies in the Comprehensive Plan relevant to airport good-neighbor planning and policies include those in Urban Growth Management, Public Services and Facilities, Fire Safety and Emergency Management, Transportation, Economic Development, and Environmental Resources and Community Design. These existing policies apply across land within the Wilsonville city limits and Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). The Comprehensive Plan also includes Section F, which identifies fourteen Areas of Special Concern (Areas A-N), and adopts special considerations specific to each of these areas that apply in addition to the general policy language of the Plan. Some Areas of Special Concern are outside of the city limits or were outside of the city limits when originally adopted. When planning or development actions are proposed in one of these areas, it triggers review of the proposal against the relevant Comprehensive Plan Area of Special Concern to ensure it complies with the Plan and the specific considerations for that area.

Due to the location of the Aurora State Airport outside of the city limits and UGB, objectives that are specific to aviation and agriculture beyond what is in the existing policy sections of the Plan, and issues specific to the French Prairie geography, the consultant team recommends that the Airport Good-Neighbor Policies be adopted into the Comprehensive Plan as a new Area of Special Concern.

Proposed New Area of Special Concern “O”

The proposed Area of Special Concern (shown in purple on the map below) would include both the Aurora State Airport and Charbonneau, but also the portions of the French Prairie agricultural region between I-5 and the Pudding River. A focus on this larger geographic area allows policy objectives to address issues related to land use, infrastructure, and protection of agriculture in the adjacent area, as well as impacts from airport operations. Other potential boundary options include:

- S Barlow Road as eastern boundary
- Highway 551 as western boundary
- Match boundary to FAR Part 77 Impact Area Map (see map on page 5)
- Limit to area of potential growth or development activities of airport and associated industries

If the priority is on addressing airport operations, the boundaries could focus on land within FAR Part 77 Boundaries for the airport, or areas of Wilsonville within common flight paths. The Area of Special Concern could also be limited to the airport site and adjacent properties with the potential for development relying on through-the-fence access. This would still address development concerns, but focus more closely on the airport itself, rather than the larger French Prairie district.

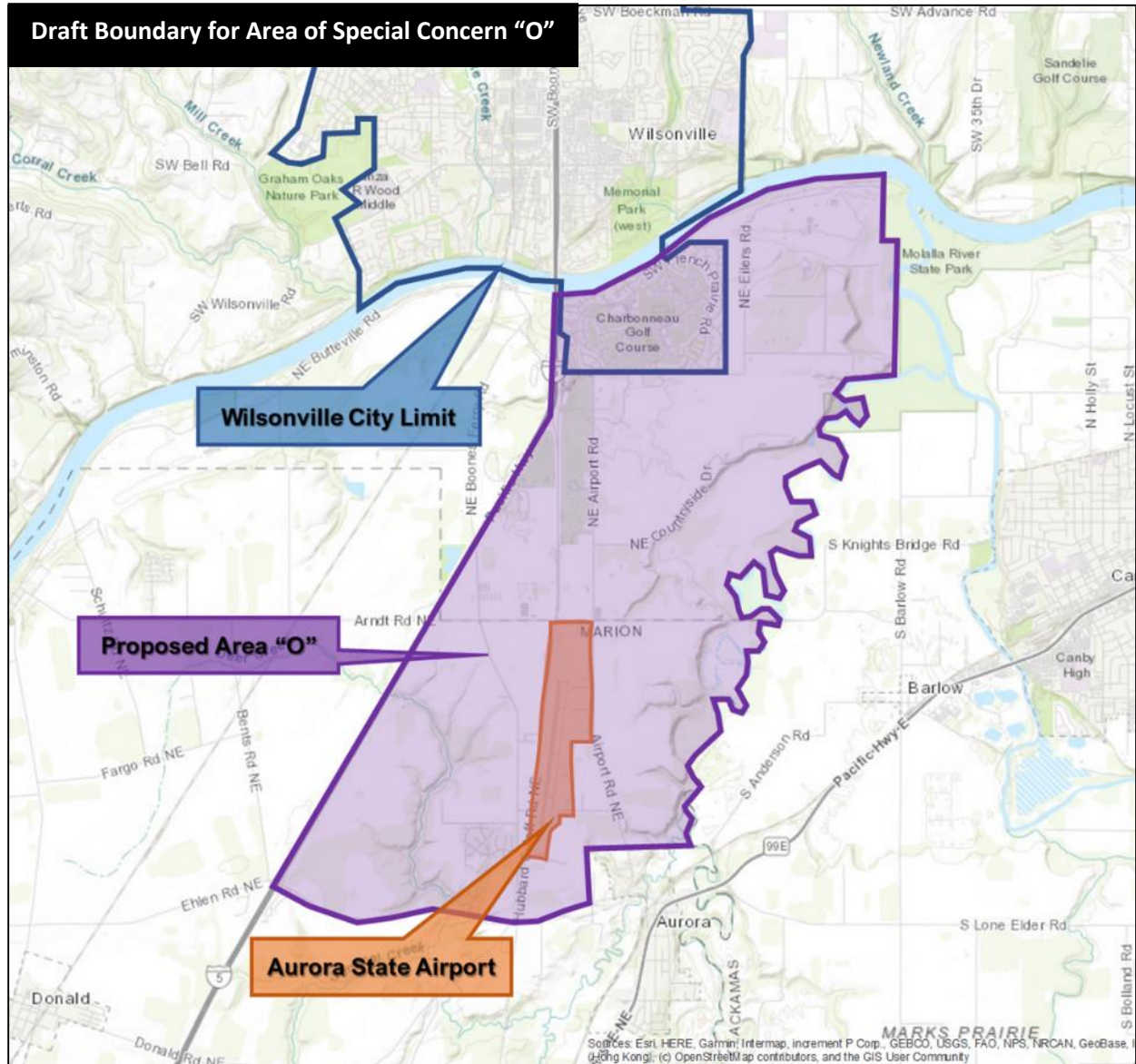
Key Objectives

Objectives for the proposed “Area O” were drafted with the following considerations in mind:

- Reflect feedback received from stakeholders and the Wilsonville community through the public engagement process
- To the extent possible, address future airport operations as well as land use and development-related concerns for the region in and around the airport
- Balance flexibility to address a range of possible situations with enough clear direction to guide the city in future regional conversations about the future of the airport and surrounding area



- Respect the multiple jurisdictions and regional coordination necessary for planning in the vicinity of a significant transportation facility, prime agricultural region, and boundary of the Portland Metropolitan Area
- Maintain consistency with existing policy direction in the Comprehensive Plan and Oregon’s Statewide Planning Goals



An area centered on the French Prairie and Aurora Airport, generally located:

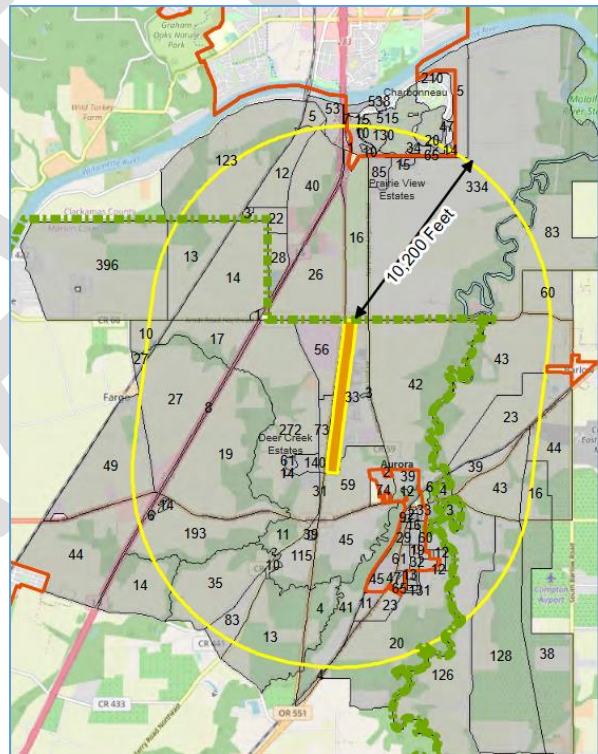
- East of the I-5 freeway
- West of the Pudding River (coinciding with the Clackamas-Marion County line)
- South of the Willamette River (including Charbonneau)
- North of Ehlen Road, just south of the airport boundary



Planning Commission Feedback

The project team held a second Work Session with the Wilsonville Planning Commission on April 13, 2022. The team provided a summary of feedback received during the various community engagement efforts. As part of the Work Session, the project team asked for specific feedback on the overall approach and specific areas where the draft objectives could be clarified or improved. Commissioners generally supported the direction taken in the draft, and offered the following specific suggestions for improvement:

- In response to comments received on the survey, many Commissioners asked for more emphasis on explaining the City's interest in adopting policies addressing impacts from the airport and surrounding area. The introductory paragraphs that precede objectives in the existing Areas of Special Concern sections may be an opportunity to explain the rationale and importance of the City's involvement in the area.
- Commissioners and the project team discussed potential boundaries for the Area of Special Concern, with some concern about:
 - The size of the proposed Area O relative to existing Areas A-N.
 - The rationale for using the Pudding River as an eastern boundary.
 - The location of Area O relative to noise impacts.
- Some Commissioners felt that surface transportation (particularly I-5 congestion) and farmland protection could be addressed more clearly and forcefully in the objectives.
- Some Commissioners noted that noise impacts from aviation extend further into Wilsonville, especially areas north of the Willamette River and east of I-5, which are located outside of the proposed Area O.
- Due to the larger geographic area of impact for things like aviation noise, a citywide policy (in addition to the Area of Special Concern) may be warranted.
- One Commissioner suggested additional specificity on air traffic safety issues mentioned in Policy 2.a, as promotion of FAA-registered flight patterns and flight behavior regulations may not be the most direct way to improve safety related to air traffic.



FAR Part 77 Boundary Identifying Impact Area for Aurora State Airport (10,200-foot distance)

City Council Discussion

Based on feedback from the public and the Planning Commission, the project team seeks direction from the City Council on the following items:

- Do the draft Comprehensive Plan policies reflect the community and stakeholder input?

- Do they reflect the breadth of concerns or are key policy objectives missing?
- Should Comprehensive Plan policies address potential impacts from further development near the airport as well as impacts from airport operations?
- Do the proposed boundaries for Area of Special Concern O align with the issues being addressed or are there alternatives you want the project team to assess?

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