

1.1 Purpose

The Kalispell City Airport Master Plan Update has been undertaken to evaluate the airport's capabilities and role, to forecast future aviation demand, and to plan for the timely development of new or expanded facilities that may be required to meet that demand. The ultimate goal of the master plan update is to provide systematic guidelines for the airport's overall maintenance, development, and operation.

The master plan update is intended to be a proactive document which identifies and then plans for future facility needs well in advance of the actual need for the facilities. This is done to ensure that the City of Kalispell can coordinate project approvals, design, financing, and construction to avoid experiencing detrimental effects due to inadequate facilities.

An important result of the master plan update is reserving sufficient areas for future facility needs. This protects development areas and ensures they will be readily available when required to meet future needs. The intended result is a detailed land use concept which outlines specific uses for all areas of airport property.

The preparation of this master plan update is evidence that the City of Kalispell recognizes the importance of air transportation to the community and the associated challenges inherent in providing for its unique operating and improvement needs. The cost of maintaining an airport is an investment which yields impressive benefits to the community and the region. With a sound and realistic master plan, Kalispell City Airport can maintain its role as an important link to the national air transportation system for the community and maintain the existing public and private investments in its facilities.

1.2 Objectives

The primary objective of the master plan update is to provide the City of Kalispell, Airport Advisory Board, and local community with guidance for future development in a manner that will satisfy aviation demands and be compatible with the environment. The accomplishment of this objective requires the evaluation of the existing airport and determination of what actions should be taken to maintain an adequate, safe, and reliable airport facility to meet the general aviation needs of the area. This master plan update will provide an outline of necessary development and provide “decision makers” advance notice of future airport funding needs so that appropriate steps can be taken to ensure that adequate funds are budgeted and planned. Specific objectives of the Kalispell City Airport Master Plan Update are:

- ✚ To preserve and protect public and private investments in existing airport facilities;
- ✚ To enhance the safety of aircraft operations near and at the airport;
- ✚ To be reflective of community and regional goals, needs, and plans;
- ✚ To ensure that future development is environmentally compatible;
- ✚ To establish and prioritize future airport development and prepare a financial plan to meet the funding needs of the proposed improvements;

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- ✚ To develop an overall plan that is responsive to general aviation demands;
- ✚ To develop an orderly plan for growth of private-use areas on the airport;
- ✚ To coordinate this master plan update with local, regional, state, and federal agencies, and;
- ✚ To develop active and productive public involvement throughout the planning process.

The master plan will accomplish these objectives by carrying out the following:

- ✚ Determining projected needs of airport users through the year 2032;
- ✚ Identifying existing and future facility needs;
- ✚ Evaluating future airport facility development alternatives which will optimize airport capacity and aircraft safety; and
- ✚ Developing a realistic, commonsense plan for the use and/or expansion of the airport.

1.3 Master Plan Elements

The Kalispell City Airport Master Plan Update is being prepared in accordance with FAA guidelines and industry-accepted principles and practices. The master plan update for Kalispell City Airport has seven chapters that are intended to assist in the discovery of future facility needs and provide the supporting rationale for their implementation.

Chapter 2 – RECOMMENDED AIRPORT PLAN provides both a graphic and narrative description of the recommended plan for the use, development, and operation of the airport. An environmental overview is also provided. This chapter also includes the official Airport Layout Plan (ALP) and detailed technical drawings depicting related airspace, land use, and property data. These drawings are used by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in determining grant eligibility and funding.

Chapter 3 – INVENTORY summarizes current facilities and aviation activity at the airport. The inventory efforts are focused on collecting and assembling relevant data pertaining to the airport and the area it serves. The inventory summarizes existing airport conditions including a brief history of the airport, FAA classification, existing airport facilities description, airspace management, meteorological conditions, land use, existing laws and ordinances, and existing studies. Planning studies which may have relevance to the master plan are also collected.

Chapter 4 – AVIATION FORECASTS examines the potential demand for aviation activity at the airport. This analysis utilizes local socioeconomic information, as well as national air transportation trends to quantify the levels of aviation activity which can reasonably be expected to occur at Kalispell City Airport through the year 2032. Local economic and demographic data is collected to define the local growth trends. The results of this effort are used to determine the types and sizes of facilities which will be required to meet the projected aviation demands on the airport through the planning period.

Chapter 5 - FACILITY REQUIREMENTS defines the physical facilities needed to safely and efficiently accommodate the current and future aviation demands at Kalispell City Airport. This chapter reviews the airport classification, runway length requirements, airport dimensional standards, pavement strength, wind conditions, tie-downs and apron requirements, navigational aids, lighting, signage, fencing, and access issues surrounding the airport. The intent of

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this analysis is to compare the existing facility capacities to forecast aviation demand and determine where deficiencies in capacities (as well as excess capacities) may exist. Where deficiencies are identified, the size and type of new facilities to accommodate the demand are identified. The airfield analysis focuses on improvements needed to serve the type of aircraft expected to operate at the airport in the future, as well as navigational aids to increase the safety and efficiency of operations. This element also examines the general aviation terminal, hangar, apron, and support needs.

Chapter 6 – AIRPORT ALTERNATIVES considers a variety of solutions to accommodate the projected facility needs. This element proposes various facility and site plan configurations which can meet the projected facility needs. An analysis is completed to identify the strengths and weaknesses of each proposed development alternative, with the intention of determining a single direction for development.

Chapter 7 – CAPITAL PROGRAM focuses on the capital needs program which defines the schedules, costs, and funding sources for the recommended development projects.

1.4 Master Plan Process

The Kalispell City Airport Master Plan Update is of interest to many within the local community. This includes local citizens, community organizations, airport users, airport tenants, local planners, and aviation organizations. As the fourth largest general aviation airport in Montana, the Kalispell City Airport Master Plan Update is of importance to both state and federal agencies responsible for overseeing air transportation.

To assist in the preparation of the master plan update, draft sections of the report were prepared at various milestones in the planning process. The “draft-review” process allowed for timely input and review at key stages of the planning effort to ensure that all master plan issues were fully addressed as the recommended program developed.

Master plan update workshops were held throughout the planning process as part of the plan coordination. These workshops were open to the public and designed to allow any and all interested persons to become informed and provide input concerning the master plan update. Planned workshop timing is shown in relation to the overall master update process on **Figure 1-1**.

FIGURE 1-1
Master Plan Update Process Flowchart

