



**ASE Vision Process**  
**Airport Advisory Groups Meeting #5:**  
**Safety Panel Discussion and Shaping our Shared Values into a Vision**  
**June 6, 2019 | 4pm – 7pm**  
**Aspen High School**

Meeting Goals and Purpose

- Address safety questions, establish what makes an airport safe, and better understand how airport improvements affect safety.
- Explore summary of the shared values exercise from April 29<sup>th</sup> and preview working group meetings and discussions for July, August and September.

Welcome and Introductions

*Note: A video recording of the meeting can be viewed [here](#).*

County Manager Jon Peacock opened the meeting, inviting Airport Vision Committee (AVC) chairman/pilot John Bennett to review the meeting agenda and purpose. AVC co-pilot/vice-chair Meg Haynes introduced the meeting's panelists:

- Greg Feith, former Senior Air Safety Investigator, National Transportation Safety Board
- Wayne Hall, Air Traffic Manager, Aspen Tower
- Alec Seybold, President, Flight Tech Engineering

While not participating on the panel, John Kinney (Airport Director), Elizabeth McQueen (Kimley Horn) and Mr. Peacock were also available to answer questions.

Panel Discussion: Maintaining and Enhancing Safe Operations at ASE

Ms. Haynes moderated the panel discussion and the panelists' responses and discussion regarding questions on safety submitted prior to the meeting by advisory group members.

Pre-submitted questions generally fell within four categories:

- Safety questions related to aircraft performance
- Safety questions related to airspace
- Safety questions related to ASE's ability to implement site-specific safety standards
- Emergency management and safety data questions

These questions, as well as additional questions asked by airport advisory group members during the meeting, are captured below. Answers to all questions are available in the [meeting video](#).



### *Safety Questions Related to Aircraft Performance*

- AOPA and Honeywell Aerospace studies list ASE as the #1 most challenging airport in the country. How does that rating influence the kind of equipment that is safe to fly in here? For example, what is the turning radius of different designs, and at what speed and load in case of an aborted landing or take off?
- Are larger or smaller aircraft inherently any safer or easier to maneuver in the approach and departure airspace around ASE?
- Does performance data exist for the newest regional jets, specifically the CRJ550, the E-175SC and the prototype Mitsubishi MRJ70? If not, when do we expect such data to be available?
- If Aspen upgrades its airport to full Group 3 status, and this accommodates larger commercial aircraft such as Airbuses and 737's, would these aircraft be able to safely abort a landing from low altitude and go around, if they needed to, on a single engine?
- The Boeing 737 Max 8, in addition to its tragic and well-publicized design flaws, is apparently unable to operate at "hot/high" airports. Does our airport meet the definition of a hot/high facility? Are other existing larger regional jets subject to the same operational limitations?
- If larger jets are allowed, will that not put pressure on the curfew, since aircraft would want to wait for cooler late or very early morning and evening temperatures to help mitigate the density altitude issue?

### *Safety Questions Related to Airspace*

- Is the airport's airspace "expandable" or is it at its maximum based on the unique characteristics of the airport, the proximity of Eagle/Vail and other factors?
- Assuming most are private, and given citizen demands likely falling on deaf ears for increased pilot hours for private aircraft, can we direct private flights to Rifle, a much more user-friendly valley and altitude?
- If the Aspen Airport needs to increase the separation between its runway and taxiway, would moving the runway west increase the hazard represented by Shale Bluffs? For safety reasons, would moving the taxiway east make more sense than moving the runway west?
- Are there any other Colorado airports at equivalent ASE elevation that take commercial traffic?

### *Safety Questions Related to ASE's Ability to Implement Site Specific Safety Standards*

- Since all accidents have been private (GA) aircraft, can we direct private (GA) flights to Rifle, a much more user friendly valley and altitude?
- Because ASE is rated by some pilot surveys as being the most challenging airport in the U.S, could the FAA require GA pilots flying into Aspen for the first time to review special informational material about approaching and departing from the airport and the various unique challenges of flying in and out of ASE? If the FAA cannot require GA pilots to review such information, could such information be made available online as an option for GA pilots to review before flying to ASE?
- Landing in high tailwind has caused general aviation accidents and near accidents at ASE. Could the Aspen Tower give more strongly worded warnings to GA aircraft when potentially dangerous tailwinds pose a threat? Could the tower actually direct an aircraft to go around if the tailwind is excessive?



### *Emergency Management and Safety Data Questions*

- Is there an accurate and accessible record of all airplane accidents into ASE in the last 10 years?
- Can we deal with an emergency crash of a 737?
- What interim safety improvements are we or can we do now since the terminal won't be built for over five years?

### *Additional questions were posed during the meeting, as follows:*

- When will the information on airlines assessing new planes be available to us?
- If a private pilot who has never been here wants to land, can they?
- Who has the authority to update the approaches? What options do the airport operators have to determine if the procedures are updated? Is there any local option to choose not to update?
- Air space seems to be shrinking during the high summer/busy days. Can you address that?
- Have you reviewed implications related to realigning the runway?
- If the community and airport decides just to stick with the 95' limit, would we have these new jets available to us?
- Are there any safety/design issues with the terminal that could limit what could fly in here? Will sky/jet bridge(s) be required?
- What aircraft did United recently purchase? What is its life?
- Is there a safety/terminal angle we can use to keep the 737s out since everyone is concerned about noise?
- People have stated that other airports don't want our business. Garfield stated to Ellen Anderson that they would like to be invited although they couldn't commit. Are you going to facilitate a meeting with fellow airports to see about serving the whole area?
- The CRJ 700 operates here, but the study says that it can't continue to without the runway realignment is that accurate?
- Regarding pilot error and pilot recruitment, how often is pilot error responsible for deaths? How is recruitment going? Are we overly concerned about pilots?
- How often do we have missed approaches? Have you ever in your experience had a missed approach and engine failure, which is what everyone has to train for?



## Review Summary of April 29<sup>th</sup> Exercise for all Working Groups

Following the panel discussion, Mr. Bennett summarized the common values and themes that were identified by all advisory groups at the April 29<sup>th</sup> Vision meeting. These themes are captured below:

- Safety in the Air and on the Ground
- Adaptable, Flexible, Future-Proof
- Environmental Responsibility
- Community Character: Reflect our culture and values: 'Just big enough' 'Right-sized'
- Economic Vitality
- Warm & Welcoming
- Design Excellence
- Efficiency. An Airport that Works Well.
- Preserve High Quality of Life

• **Community Values**  
from April 29 Airport  
Vision Meeting

• **Common Themes**  
from all Airport  
Advisory Groups

## Breakouts: Debrief of Safety Panel Discussion

Attendees separated into their respective advisory groups to discuss key takeaways from the panel discussion and identify remaining questions regarding safety and other topics.

### *Airport Vision Committee*

#### *Key Takeaways*

- FAA's removal of the modified standards is why we're doing this (not to accommodate bigger planes). Need to focus on improvement of the runway which should make it safer. Controlling the airspace is really about what we do with aircraft when they get here.
- Heartened by community's desire to convey heart and soul of the community on any improvements.
- Not possible to bring in smaller aircraft at some times and larger aircraft at other times because we don't control the airspace. Need to consider GA movement/operations. Opening door to bigger commercial side might open door to the GA side and they will park elsewhere.
- Want new, quieter, more fuel-efficient aircraft because that would reduce number of aircraft. Stuck with window where older, louder aircraft are also still in operation. Seems like the older 737 is the big issue, and we can't exclude them. Landing these planes could mean we drop down to an ADG II.
- In our last meeting, folks asked for people like Amory Lovins to come talk about the future of the fleet. The general trend we hear about is lighter, more composite aircraft with wider wings.
- Like the special use permit idea. Since that is a source of safety issues, we should do it.



- Overwhelming response: would love more efficient, functional terminal. Resistance to increase the 95' wingspan variance. Concern if that is expanded, it will explode the fleet into larger aircraft and more of them.
- Should advance better, more efficient planes into the airport.
- Safety for employees and airport working environment should be prioritized. The right size for the airport is not really for today, it's for the next 30 years.
- Component of terminal should be tied to mass transit element. This came up in multiple groups and is something we should address. Ideas discussed included light rail, gondola or tram, and how BRT and underpass serve the airport.
- If we aspire to more of a national airport where somebody flies here from Ft. Worth or Atlanta and then goes on to LA, that is a character change. Now it's a real destination, not a pit stop. The pilot who flies from Denver is going to be smarter about our conditions rather than one from the east coast.

#### *Additional Questions on Safety or Other Topics*

- Is FAA stopping the modified standards? If they are going to fund the airport, they want it to be to their standards. There was a robust back and forth about modifying the standards or going full ADG III.
- Values are great and we need to balance them. Is there more wiggle room to tighten GA more while getting it right-sized? Interested in additional training requirements or certifications.
- Are the 727's more noisy or less noisy?
- Has anyone queried the airlines if they will use aircraft with reduced power/not max performance? Reduce noise during peak season.
- Has anyone tracked the 737s coming into the airport? We should push for a demonstration for larger planes to come in and monitor them. There was a discussion that it doesn't matter because we can't control what planes come in. Let's start convincing people and proving it.
- If we make a bigger airport, will more beds (as a real growth generator vs. larger airport size) be created? Opening direct flights to the east coast may be a big growth generator, but that's not driven by size of the airport.

### *Community Character Working Group*

#### *Key Takeaways*

- Regarding General Aviation (GA), need to better understand what we can control, and how we can request additional pilot training through the FAA.
- Petition FAA to create a noise footprint and increase GA pilot training.

#### *Additional Questions on Safety or Other Topics*

- What is the scope of airport safety? Is it geographical, airspace, how comprehensive do we have to plan for the FAA?
- What is flight procedure: departure, landing, extraction procedures?



- What are the standards, design for airfield airspace? Are they national or international?
- Is there distinctive/specific training for our pilots (GA)?
- What aircraft are capable of flying here?
- Is it possible to maintain current modification to a standard 95'?
- What are the number of Group 2 airports with commercial service in the U.S.?
- Can we create a matrix and corresponding metrics of potential planes that will be in if we go to Group 3?

### *Airport Experience Working Group*

#### *Key Takeaways*

- Human error is the biggest issue.
- There are a lot of things we have no control over, EX: wind.
- Vital that we maintain economic vitality.
- It needs to be easy to get here.
- Safety and security are covered both in the air and in the terminal.
- Back of house/ensuring our employees are safe.
- Make value-based decisions.
- Willing to trade the "wow" for an easier get-in/get-out.
- Right-sized for our conditions.
- Form follows function.
- Transportation is critical. Multimodal options such as use bus-only lane for hotel/HOV transport. What about the train?
- There is still the choke point of one lane into town.
- Transportation needs to be extended beyond the airport.
- Gondola
- If there are larger planes with more people, we need to know how people are moving around as that will dictate our airport experience decisions such as how many restaurants, a wall for the kids to climb, etc.
- Airlines should be allowed to switch out airplanes as needed when reservations aren't as high.

#### *Additional Questions on Safety or Other Topics*

- Can we get first-hand information on what working at the airport is like or how things operate?
- Can we see scenarios on how number of people affects facilities requirements?



- Are the new, larger planes quieter?
- What is most economical for the airlines? Bigger planes or higher frequency?
- How much traffic does the airport generate?
- What temporary improvements will help in the interim until new terminal is built?
- ADG II allows the smaller planes that are flying now, so we can just increase the number of flights. Is this true?
- What can we do with the people coming in/out when they get stuck?
- Can we separate people from their bags? Deliver them to a hotel/home?
- Still have questions regarding thresholds of ADG II & ADG III.

### *Technical Working Group*

#### *Key Takeaways*

- Safety as having a key human component (pilot expertise, knowledge of Aspen conditions), with more information on human error (safety training is key).
- Concern on planes “bailing.”
- How safety is linked to everything else.
- FAA regulations beyond local and control.
- Large aircraft opportunities don’t dilute safety.
- Improvements expand options.

#### *Additional Questions on Safety or Other Topics*

- No additional safety questions

### *Focus Group*

#### *Key Takeaways*

- Future aircraft/fleet mix is still a guess/unknown.
- More info needed on scope clause regarding regional airport.
- Technical information from airlines on height/heat: have incomplete data on capabilities.
- Potential to elect group chair.
- Safety is purview of the FAA. To some extent ASE is self-regulated. Safety may therefore not need to be top priority in community visioning.
- Safety regulations: agency due diligence; comes down to pilot; business decisions in context of safety



- No pre-determined outcomes as part of this effort.
- Additional runway separation is key to maintain service (commercial). Constrain growth on land side.
- Pilot shortage as it relates to aircraft and economic vitality.
- We have less control over GA operations.
- We aren't safety experts but bring local expertise.
- At this pace we will need more time to complete the process.
- Emergency management: need to address certification, training, etc. to ensure adequate prep and provide hospital stats.
- Nature of ski business and tourism (e.g. Steamboat) can create charter business that could change operations and service (all inclusive).
- Answers to safety have not been thoroughly considered. Need to look at emergency management outside airport boundaries.
- Don't know what future fleet mix will be. It's hard to plan for a moving target and it's complicated.
- Anything bigger than a 700 is "Category D." ERJ 175 would need a "D" approach. Need definition of "Approach Category" and "ADG" standards.

#### *Additional Questions on Safety or Other Topics*

- How can we better understand forecasted fleet mix information, what resources are available?
- What is the process for electing a group chairperson?
- How do we get more info on scope clause regarding regional airports?
- What is the best source for more technical information on height/heat aircraft capabilities?
- What is being done to look at emergency management outside the airport boundaries with regard to certifications, trainings, etc. to ensure adequate prep?
- What is the current capacity and capabilities of our local hospitals and how does that factor into emergency management of larger aircraft incidents?
- What are the different "Approach Categories" and "Airplane Design Groups" and how do they relate to each other and ASE?

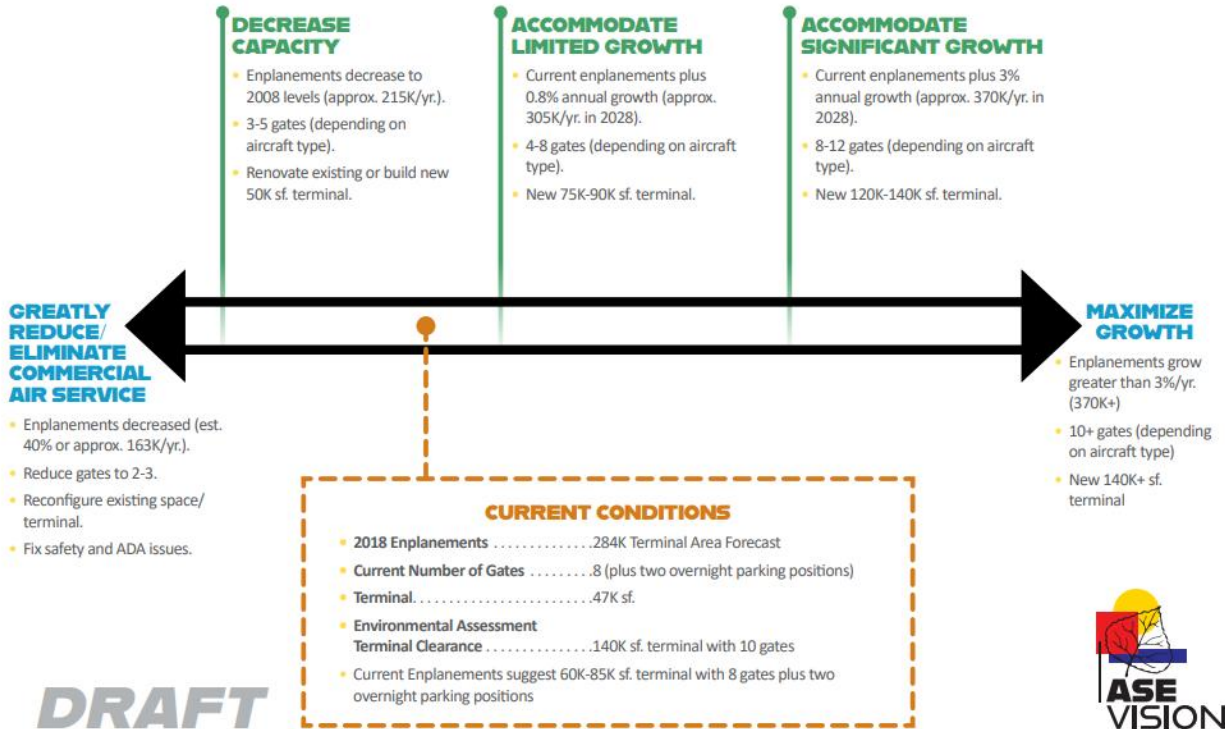
#### Next Steps: Shared Values Exercises

To conclude the meeting, all groups reviewed the sample continuum and additional topics listed below. The sample continuum was informed by discussion of shared values from April 29<sup>th</sup> and similar continua will be considered at the July and August meetings for the additional topics provided. The next joint meeting will be held on July 11.



# DEFINING “JUST BIG ENOUGH” (OR “RIGHT-SIZED”) FOR ASPEN-PITKIN COUNTY AIRPORT

## COMMERCIAL ENPLANEMENTS AND TERMINAL



### OTHER TOPICS COVERED BY CONTINUA

- **COMMERCIAL SERVICE RANGE**
- **GENERAL AVIATION OPERATIONS**
- **COMMERCIAL OPERATIONS**
- **AIR QUALITY/GREENHOUSE GASES**
- **NOISE**
- **USER EXPERIENCE**
- **ARCHITECTURE/DESIGN**

