

Frequently Asked Questions

about the City of Middleton's Airport Master Plan project

Updated 5/7/19. This is a working document that City staff intends to update periodically.

QUESTIONS (click for responses)

Why do an airport master plan? Why do it now? What could happen when the master plan is completed?

What is the City's position on potential expansion of the airport? What steps have been taken to date?

What type of aircraft could use the airport in the future?

What is the role of the Airport Master Plan Advisory Committee (AMPAC)?

Why isn't the Airport Commission preparing the airport master plan?

The Wisconsin Bureau of Aeronautics already has plans and reports that list various projects pertaining to Middleton. Why is that?

Is the adoption of a resolution binding on the City? How do City positions evolve over time?

Where can I raise other questions that aren't addressed here?

RESPONSES

Why do an airport master plan? Why do it now? What could happen when the master plan is completed?

This is the first master plan being undertaken for the airport since the City purchased it 20 years ago. The previous master plan dates back to the early 1990s, when the airport was privately owned. The City embarked on a comprehensive master planning process in 2018 because it had received numerous inquiries for more hangar space and to improve the utility of the airfield. A master plan enables the City to do a comprehensive inventory of airport facilities and environmental conditions, forecast future aviation activity, identify facility requirements, analyze potential improvement alternatives, and prepare a land use plan, noise analysis, and financial plan (see [consultant scope of services](#)). The final product of the planning process is an updated Airport Layout Plan (ALP). In order for any airport project to receive Federal funding, it needs to be

shown in an FAA-approved ALP and it needs to go through the NEPA (environmental review) process. While the outcome of Middleton's master planning process could influence the Bureau of Aeronautics' multi-year capital improvement plan, one outcome could be that no Federal, State, or local funds are allocated for any airport improvements.

What is the City's position on potential expansion of the airport? What steps have been taken to date?

Since the City completed a reconfiguration of the airport in 2004, there has been substantial growth both on the airfield and in the surrounding area, and the City can no longer accommodate requests for hangar space. **At this time, the City has not decided to proceed with any particular runway or land acquisition project.** It has taken the following steps since deciding to buy the airport:

- **Original Intent:** When it purchased the airport, the City adopted Resolution 1998-20 to declare its intent for the airport property, including "restricting the runway length to 4,000 feet" and not supporting the construction of a crosswind runway. (See [Is this resolution binding on the City?](#))
- **Referendum:** On April 6, 1999, City of Middleton residents defeated a [charter ordinance](#) that would have prohibited expansion of the airport. The vote was 1,281 in favor of prohibition, with 2,326 in opposition. This outcome enabled the City to proceed with making improvements to the airport it had just purchased.
- **Petition to WisDOT:** In 2014, the City [petitioned](#) the Wisconsin Dept. of Transportation to position itself to be eligible for potential Federal and/or State funding assistance for various potential airport-related projects. This list included undertaking the master plan and identified potential airport improvement projects. A petition by itself does not obligate the City to pursue any of the items on the list, nor is it a commitment of funds to undertake a particular project at the airport.
- **Comprehensive Plan:** Middleton's Plan Commission is in the process of updating the city's [Comprehensive Plan](#). While an initial draft of the Economic Development chapter included an action item to support the construction of runway expansion and improvements that can better accommodate corporate jets and small planes, Plan Commission members recommended that the action item be revised to refer to supporting the airport master plan process rather than specifically mentioning any potential airport improvements. The draft Transportation chapter advocates that the City continue to plan for and operate the municipal airport in a manner that supports regional economic development, maximizes financial self-sufficiency, and serves as an attractive gateway to the community. The City will hold at least one public hearing on the draft comprehensive plan before considering its adoption.

What type of aircraft could use the airport in the future?

The City is not seeking to attract larger aircraft—the intent of any potential runway expansion would be to safely accommodate during inclement weather conditions the types of aircraft that use the airport today. Some aircraft do not currently use the airport when the runway is wet due to rain or snow. The master planning project anticipates that Middleton’s airport will **continue to be geared to the “B-II” critical aircraft family**—planes having typical approach speeds between 91 and 121 knots, tail heights of 20-29 feet, and wingspans of 49-78 feet). This is the second lowest (out of five) aircraft approach category and second lowest (out of six) airplane design group.

Aircraft Approach Category (AAC)		Airplane Design Groups (ADG)		
AAC	Approach Speed	ADG	Tail Height	Wingspan
A	< 91 knots	I	< 20 feet	< 49 feet
B	≥ 91 knots, < 121 knots	II	20 – 29 feet	49 – 78 feet
C	≥ 121 knots, < 141 knots	III	30 – 44 feet	79 – 117 feet
D	≥ 141 knots, < 166 knots	IV	45 – 59 feet	118 – 170 feet
E	≥ 166 knots	V	60 – 65 feet	171 – 213 feet
		VI	66 – 79 feet	214 – 261 feet

What is the role of the Airport Master Plan Advisory Committee (AMPAC)?

Mead & Hunt’s scope of services identified the creation of an advisory committee to guide the planning process by serving as a sounding board for possible development alternatives and being a conduit for information among various interest groups. It includes members from a cross-section of the community, including neighboring communities and people with a range of perspectives and opinions about the airport. The list of committee members is on the Airport Master Plan web page. The committee is advisory to the Airport Commission and Common Council, meaning it does not have the authority to adopt any policies or plans on its own.

Why isn’t the Airport Commission preparing the master plan?

The City specifically wanted to broaden participation in the planning process by including members of the greater Middleton community who have an interest in airport planning and operations. For example, the Airport Commission recommended to the Common Council the inclusion of representatives from the Towns of Middleton and Springfield, the Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy, and the business community.

The state’s Bureau of Aeronautics already has plans and reports that list various projects pertaining to Middleton. Why is that?

The State of Wisconsin receives a certain amount of aviation-related money from the federal government each year. This money is used to pay the State’s portion of projects (e.g., 5%, 20% or 50%). The BOA annually updates the “Project Funding Report” for each airport in Wisconsin for fiscal planning purposes—i.e., to manage potential funding allocation requests on a statewide basis. This report has no bearing on the master planning process. Similarly, the BOA periodically updates a state Airport System Plan to reflect statewide aviation conditions, projections, and state government perspectives. In 2014, the City [petitioned](#) the Wisconsin Dept. of Transportation to position itself to be eligible for potential Federal and/or State funding assistance to undertake various potential airport-related projects, and the BOA may consider this list as it independently updates its plans and reports. While the City’s airport master plan will take the State’s and other plans into consideration, those plans do not predetermine the outcome of Middleton’s airport planning process. Similarly, a petition by itself does not obligate the City to pursue any of the items on the list, nor is it a commitment of funds to undertake a particular project at the airport.

Is the adoption of a resolution binding on the City? How can a City policy position evolve over time?

When the Middleton Common Council adopts a resolution, it is taking a position reflecting the will of the majority of the Council at a particular point in time. Resolution 1998-20 reflected the judgment of the Common Council when the City was debating purchasing Morey Airport. To address changes in the community, City plans and policies can be revisited and revised by the adoption at publicly-noticed meetings of new resolutions, ordinances, and agreements. The City holds a public hearing each time it deliberates approving a petition for funding assistance to the Wisconsin Dept. of Transportation as well as each time it considers amending the City’s comprehensive plan. The outcome of the master planning process will represent the City’s updated position statement on the future of Middleton’s airport.

Where can I raise other questions that aren’t addressed here? [Contact City staff](#) or [post a comment online](#). City staff intends to update this FAQ document to add more responses to questions in the future.