



To	Town of Middlebury Selectboard
From	Vermont Agency of Transportation
Date	March 20, 2023
Subject	Responses to comments on the Middlebury State Airport Master Plan (1/17/23)

Please see below responses to the Town of Middlebury Selectboard comment letter (dated January 17, 2023) regarding the Master Plan Update:

Comment: Protection of environmental resources, including the water source protection area and emergency spill protocols.

Response: The Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) agrees with the importance of environmental protection. In this regard, VTrans follows the comprehensive State of Vermont permit and regulatory requirements that are explicitly designed to protect the water supply and natural resources.

For Middlebury Airport, the applicable state permits include the following:

- Act 250 Land Use and Development Law
- Vermont Agency of Natural Resources
 - Operational and construction stormwater permits
 - Wetland and Permitting Rules
 - Wastewater Systems and Potable Water Supply Program Permits
 - Aboveground Storage Tank Rules
- Vermont Agency of Agriculture Food and Markets, Pesticide Permits

The Master Plan is a FAA planning document. The goal of a master plan is to provide the framework needed to guide future airport development that will cost-effectively satisfy aviation demand, while considering potential environmental and socioeconomic impacts. Note that the Master Plan is only the first step, or the prerequisite, for potentially implementing airport projects in the future.

Recommendations in the Master Plan must still be evaluated for environmental acceptance, may be subject to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and requirements, and must certainly satisfy all applicable permitting and Act 250 review process.

The airport planning studies can be misconstrued as they include a limited environmental overview to screen potential considerations. However, please be assured that all regulatory requirements for protection of the water quality and other resources will be followed by VTrans prior to implementation. This detailed environmental and permitting process, occurs during the design process, once actual project specific details are available for evaluation.

Comment: Provide consideration to the placement of additional structures to minimize the impact on the view scape of neighbors.



Response: In 2019 the state legislation passed a Bill, S-0162 , to promote economic development at State-owned airports. In compliance with this legislative initiative, VTrans began a state-wide Master Permitting effort for Act 250 permits seeking partial findings for hangars at Vermont-owned airports. At Middlebury, the northern hangars shown on the ALP are from that effort.

The Master Plan Update, which started after the state-wide Master Permitting effort, assessed the need and found that the airport is in need of additional hangar space, independent to the state-wide Master Permitting effort. The master plan reviewed the locations of hangars included in the Master Permitting and other hangars proposed by developers from an airspace and FAA design standard standpoint and found them to be compliant. As such, each of these hangars are illustrated in the Master Plan; changes in the layout or location of hangars would be the subject of the ongoing permitting effort.

However, based on demand, it is anticipated that only some of the hangars illustrated will be constructed during the 20-year planning period. The number and size of the hangars depicted is intended to provide multiple options for potential development in the future (and comply with S-0162). As actual hangar construction is privately-funded, the market will determine the number of future hangars to be built at the airport. Based on recent history in Vermont, hangars designed for light aircraft have the greatest market potential.

Comment: Airport Road Improvements – safety and cost sharing.

Response: VTrans has reviewed this comment with regard to state policy and has concluded that the portion of Airport Road located on state property must be maintained/improved by the state. However, VTrans does not have the ability to share responsibility for the remainder of Airport Road (between Route 116 and the Airport) not on state property under current state policy. This road will have the exact same treatment as other town road in the state

Comment: Maintain ongoing communication and Town participation into the master plan implementation process.

Response: Per this comment, VTrans expanded the Master Plan Update Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) membership to include representation of the Middlebury Airport Neighborhood Association (MANA) and an additional TAC and public meeting were held. An email address was created to collect comments from the public. The draft and final reports include all written comments and provide written responses. The study documents are available online at the following website:

<https://vtrans.vermont.gov/aviation/airports/middlebury>

VTrans increased the communication and outreach for this study to well above that required for a master plan update.

Comment: Semi-annual report by the State of any complaints from the airport activities.

Response: The State of Vermont Agency of Transportation’s mission is “through excellent customer service, provide for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods in a socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable manner.” To that end, VTrans addresses complaints from any transportation activity on a case-by-case basis and will continue to do so, as it has, for all State run Airports.



Comment: Infrastructure for Electric Charging Stations/Energy Efficiency.

Response: VTrans is adding ground vehicle and aircraft charging stations to the study's recommended plan. The charging stations will require extension of 3-phase power from State Route 116 to the airport parking area. For the proposed hangars, it is anticipated that most future facilities will be 'cold storage' for aircraft, with power for lights, but no heating/cooling or water/wastewater systems. Any future hangar or building developed for occupancy will be held to current code requirements.