



**South
Metro
Airport
Action
Council**

PO Box 19036, Minneapolis, MN 55419

June 10, 2010

Mr. Bob McFarlin, Metropolitan Council
Chair, Transportation Committee
390 Robert Street North,
St. Paul, MN 55101-1805

E-mail: data.center@metc.state.mn.us

Dear Chair McFarlin:

The South Metro Airport Action Council, a not-for-profit citizens' association monitoring operations at MSP since 1968, has reviewed the MSP 2030 LTCP Update. Our Analysis of the LTCP was discussed with Met Council staff; we furnished various documents and commented on the LTCP Update and implications for the Transportation Policy Plan update. The SMAAC Board of Directors asked me to attend the Transportation Committee review on June 14 to answer any questions the committee or staff may have about our concerns.

Neither Met Council nor MAC addressed the 1996 law authorizing but limiting MSP expansion based on forecasts of passenger capacity needed in 2020 for State economic growth. The MAC's new 20 year forecasts (2010-2030) are based on national airline data, in a time of both economic uncertainty and regional disparity.

The projected demand for gates and slots is based on assumptions about Delta Airlines' plans, rather than on Delta's minimal commitments recently negotiated in revised covenants associated with the State loan and lease agreements. Delta's short-term plans involve more operations by regional subsidiaries or contract operators using smaller regional jets (fewer passengers per operation). This would further increase safety risks at MSP, particularly by increasing or maintaining high rates during hub operations at peak hours.

The MSP LTCP assumes, incorrectly, that operational rates at MSP can be continued indefinitely without timely Federal investments in improved ground and air traffic control systems. In fact, the LTCP adds gates in the next few years in anticipation of Delta Airlines restoring its hub operations and high rates before 2015. This course threatens safety -- if the hub is reestablished to 2005 levels -- or inadequate revenue from operations -- if the hub is not restored.

We therefore urge the Met Council to direct MAC to revise the LTCP into two parts, 2011-2020 and 2021- 2030. Sooner or later, growth in the Metro area and nationally will need more air transportation services than can be squeezed into the small urban MSP site, and the Met Council should carefully plan for that eventuality, not postpone planning for another decade.

The Met Council, we believe, has already approved the 2010 CIP projects at MSP. SMAAC's full analysis can be found at <http://quiettheskies.org>.

Sincerely,

James R. Spensley
President, SMAAC