

## Waukegan National Airport

# SAFETY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT



### WHAT WOULD CHANGE AT THE AIRPORT?

- ✓ A new 7,000-foot replacement runway would be about 1,000 feet longer than the current one and meet all federal safety laws and regulations
- ✓ New taxiways would be located at required distances from the runway for safe operations
- ✓ New runway safety areas would extend the airport boundary and act as buffers at the ends of the runway to enhance safe operations

### WHAT WOULD NOT CHANGE AT THE AIRPORT?

- ✗ No commercial passenger operations (No United, American, Southwest, etc.)
- ✗ No large cargo operations (No UPS, FedEx, Amazon, etc.)
- ✗ No significant increase in flights. Today's 50 takeoffs and landings would only increase two or three per day over the next 10 years.
- ✗ No change in type of aircraft using the airport

## Keeping Lake County's economic engine running

### The Waukegan National Airport needs safety improvements in order to continue serving Lake County.

Runway 5/23 has reached the end of its useful life. The airport is required to update its infrastructure to meet today's federal safety regulations.

The airport is a foundational pillar of Lake County's economy, as it is used by law enforcement and emergency responders, critical healthcare providers, flight training schools, and local businesses, all of whom depend on the airport.

Fortunately, due to careful planning, the airport can complete the project while continuing to operate by building the replacement runway alongside the existing Runway 5/23.

Once the safety improvements are completed, the Waukegan National Airport will continue to serve Lake County for decades to come and make an even greater economic contribution to the region.



2601 Plane Rest Drive  
Waukegan, IL 60087

847-244-0055

# Waukegan National Airport's impact on the local economy

## \$181 million

Annual contribution to the local economy (estimated)

## 900 jobs

Number of local jobs the airport currently supports

## \$11 million

Annual tax revenue to state and local governments generated by the airport

## \$236 million

Annual contribution to the local economy by 2030 (estimated)

## 25,000+ people

Number of people who work for companies that depend on the airport for business operations

*Data collected by Illinois Department of Transportation*

## Funding the project

### \$143 million

Total cost for the Safety Improvement Project (estimated)

### \$0.00

There would be no local taxes required or raised to pay for this project.

Funding would come from federal and state capital grants. The remainder would be paid by the users of the airport.

## Community benefits

### Five-lane road

The long-sought widening of Green Bay Road near the airport would take place at the same time as the airport project, ending a traffic bottleneck. The five-lane road would go under the replacement runway and through traffic would be maintained during construction.

### Multi-use trail

The Safety Improvement Project can help make possible one of the Lake County Forest Preserve's long-planned trail connections for neighboring communities. A multi-use trail is envisioned on a portion of the Waukegan Savanna south of York House Road.

## WOULD OPERATIONS CHANGE AT THE AIRPORT?

No, operations would not change. The existing runway does not allow enough space for cargo or commercial flights, nor would the proposed replacement runway. The entire airport is not nearly large enough for these types of operations. Furthermore, the Chicago area's need for large-scale flights is more than adequately covered by other airports and there is no need for Waukegan National Airport to take on these operations.

## HOW MUCH LAND WOULD BE ACQUIRED?

To create the FAA-required runway safety areas, new land needs to be purchased by the airport. The airport has been purchasing land for many years as part of this plan. Additionally, about 52 acres of Forest Preserve land, 34 residences, 6 businesses and vacant land would need to be purchased for the project. Property acquisition will follow federal regulations.

## WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT PROCEEDING?

The airport is required to meet FAA standards. Without the new runway replacement project, the airport would be closed for 3 years to reconstruct the existing runway, significantly reducing its economic contributions to the region. A reconstructed runway could be shorter than what exists today, limiting future operations. Companies that depend on the airport may go elsewhere and might not return when the airport reopens. Emergency responders and critical healthcare users would lose an important asset. The future sustainability of the airport would be stymied.

To submit questions and comments to the Environmental Assessment Project Team, email

[WaukeganEAComments@projectpublicmeeting.com](mailto:WaukeganEAComments@projectpublicmeeting.com).



2601 Plane Rest Drive  
Waukegan, IL 60087

847-244-0055



# CONNECTING NATURE TRAILS, REVITALIZING LAND

Conceptual rendering of the proposed trail looking northwest towards York House Road

Should the Waukegan National Airport's Safety Improvement Project move forward, it could provide support for a section of a new multi-use trail connector and revitalize a portion of the natural savanna.

Due to careful planning, the Safety Improvement Project can help make possible one of the Lake County Forest Preserve's long-planned trail connections for neighboring communities.

## INCREASING COMMUNITY ACCESS

A new trail is envisioned to run east to west on the Lake County Forest Preserve land adjacent to the Airport's proposed purchase. This trail, along with the completion of other sections, will eventually connect existing regional trails — the Robert McClory Bicycle Path, the Des Plaines River Trail and the Lyons Woods Forest Preserve. Connecting these trails is part of the Lake County Forest Preserve's long-term plans, which could be expedited with funding from the sale of the land to Waukegan National Airport.

**The trail could provide access to communities who have historically not been linked to the county's regional trail system. This trail is one segment of the Lake County Forest Preserve and other agencies' ongoing effort to provide underserved communities with access to regional trails.**

Currently, it is estimated that about 20,000 residents in the area are not connected to the regional trail system. Additionally, the completion of this section of trail, along with other trails currently being planned by the Lake County Forest Preserve, will link together two municipal parks, three forest preserves and will pass through three municipalities.



2601 Plane Rest Drive  
Waukegan, IL 60087

847-244-0055

## A multi-use trail for everyone to enjoy

When complete, this trail connector will provide improved access to the new Waukegan Savanna Dog Park and include an underpass beneath York House Road. Patrons may use the trail for hiking, cycling and cross-country skiing.

This trail connector could look and operate similar to Lake County Forest Preserve's existing trails. With a 12'-wide crushed stone path and frequent benches, the trail connector will wind its way through a portion of the Waukegan Savanna.

## Revitalizing the land, removing invasive species

The Waukegan National Airport's Safety Improvement Project would require the purchase of 52 acres of land from the Lake County Forest Preserve. The land proposed to be purchased would be used for safety areas for aircraft operations. Most of this land would remain as open space and aviation clear zones. The land closest to the runway, north of York House Road, would be fenced, raised and sloped, per federal regulations.

The majority of the area proposed to be purchased by the airport is currently overgrown with invasive plant species such as buckthorn trees, honey suckle and phragmites. These invasive species compete and crowd out native flora and fauna. Pending full approval, the plans for the purchased land furthest from the runway, south of York House Road are to make this land sustainable for native species and revitalize it to its natural state. This aligns with the Lake County Forest Preserve's long-term vision for adjacent Waukegan Savanna lands.



Conceptual rendering of proposed trail underpass looking northwest towards York House Road

## WORKING TOGETHER TO MITIGATE WETLANDS

Currently, a portion of the Lake County Forest Preserve land that would be acquired for the Safety Improvement Project is wetlands. The Waukegan National Airport will follow all federal, state and local regulations for wetland mitigation and work closely with regulatory agencies. If the Waukegan National Airport's Safety Improvement Project is environmentally cleared by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the Airport will pursue mitigation actions approved by federal, state and local environmental resource agencies.

## WHAT ARE THE WILDLIFE IMPACTS?

As part of the ongoing Environmental Assessment, the land has been surveyed for endangered flora and fauna. Invasive species can degrade and stifle native flora and fauna. The Waukegan National Airport intends to improve the quality of and create a sustainable environment, as appropriate, in the land purchased from the Lake County Forest Preserve.

---

This document is a summary of the trail addition and environmental impacts of the Safety Improvement Project. For more details, please refer to the project website: [WaukeganAirport.com/Safety-Improvement-Project](https://WaukeganAirport.com/Safety-Improvement-Project). To submit questions and comments to the Environmental Assessment Project Team, email [WaukeganEAComments@projectpublicmeeting.com](mailto:WaukeganEAComments@projectpublicmeeting.com).



2601 Plane Rest Drive  
Waukegan, IL 60087

847-244-0055