

LOCAL NEWS

Burlington International Airport unveils vision

BY JOEL BANNER BAIRD, FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER • WEDNESDAY, JULY 21, 2010

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WINOOSKI — Within 20 years, the easiest route for motorists to reach Burlington International Airport might be via a spanking-new exit 14N off Interstate 89 in South Burlington.

Download: [Vision 2030: Airport Master Plan Update \[PDF\]](#)

Flight-bound passengers might scoot effortlessly onto a new loop road and — if they arrive the night before their flight — they could spend the night in an airport hotel.

The scenario came to life Wednesday night on a vivid series of PowerPoint slides at the Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization (CCMPO) meeting in Winooski, as part of the airport's presentation of its "Vision 2030 Master Plan."

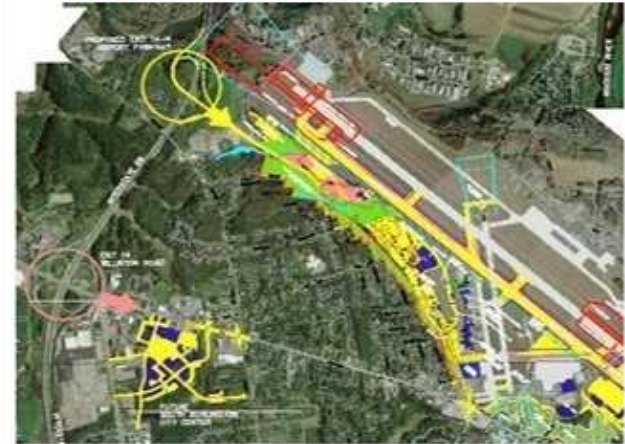
New highway access to the airport would help relieve traffic on U.S. 2 and pave the way for a greater share of the already booming Canadian market, said George Paris, who has been working with the airport on behalf of Chantilly, Va.-based Campbell and Paris Engineers.

Exit 14N would be built between the Patchen Road overpass and where the Winooski River flows under I-89 in South Burlington. The advantages of a limited-access exit are obvious, he said. "It might take 20 years," he said. "We think it's feasible. Whether it's political and environmentally feasible, it's hard to say."

Much of the airport's ambitious vision stems from predictions of steady increases in regional population and airline passengers (recession-related stalls notwithstanding), as well as the junction of Canadian Autoroute 35 with Interstate 89 at Highgate Springs, which is set to be completed in several years.

Director of Aviation Brian Searles told board members the airport annually plays host to the comings and goings of about 1.5 million people, including passengers, employees and military personnel. In 2030, at a conservative estimate, he said, that number easily could rise to 4 million.

Many improvements aimed to accommodate that growth are under way; for example, a towering crane at the airport is hauling into place beams for the extension of the parking garage.



Courtesy photo

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A full array of proposed upgrades and their phased deployment surfaced on a series of colorful, annotated maps in the PowerPoint (available through the CCMPO for private viewing):

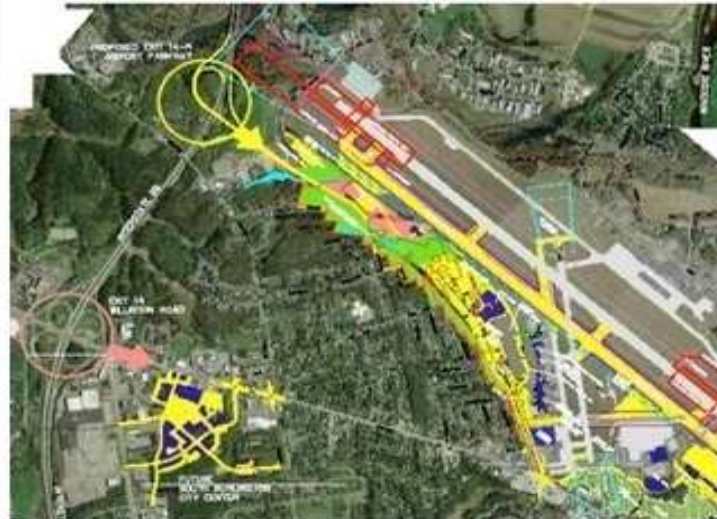
- Sound-dampening "living walls" along the airport's western edge are in keeping with ongoing negotiations with South Burlington to reduce jet noise in residential communities.
- Properties purchased by the airport for demolition and re-use under a federal program appear on the new maps as additional buffer zones, and the underlay for a streamlined Airport Drive.

Some of Vision 2030's proposed structures likely will fly below the public's radar, such as new facilities for air cargo, security, fuel storage and maintenance. The map also shows that surrounding communities will endure no runway expansion.

Vision 2030 remains a work in progress. The airport emphasized that any new plans will remain consistent with regional planning efforts.

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