



LAKE COUNTY FOREST PRESERVES  
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Preservation, Restoration, Education and Recreation

**DATE:** June 26, 2017

**MEMO TO:** Carol Calabresa, Chair  
Planning Committee

**FROM:** Alex Ty Kovach  
Executive Director

**REQUEST:** Provide policy direction regarding a request from the Waukegan Port District (WPD) to consider the transfer of 13.6 acres of fee simple interest, in lieu of a permanent easement, at Waukegan Savanna Forest Preserve, required for WPD's proposed expansion of the runway at the Waukegan National Airport.

**STRATEGIC DIRECTION SUPPORTED:** Leadership

**FINANCIAL DATA:** At this time there is no financial impact.

**BACKGROUND:** The Port District has been working for more than a decade on the extension and replacement of its Runway 5/23, to allow larger airplanes to utilize the airport, enabling direct flights to Europe without refueling stops. In addition, the current length of the 6,000 ft. runway is near the end of its usable life, and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) now requires 7,000 ft. runways to meet safety requirements. The Illinois Department of Transportation's planned improvements to Green Bay Road (Illinois Route 131) will result in a reduction of the existing runway's length (below 6,000 ft.) unless a new re-configuration of the road can be agreed upon.

Grant B. Farrell, the chairman of WPD, notes that existing FAA standards require that WPD acquire fee-simple transfer to 38.7 acres of District land, with an additional 13.6 acres of Waukegan Savanna Forest Preserve subject to an Aviation Easement. At its April 3, 2017 meeting, the Planning Committee approved a Letter of Intent that outlined the terms for negotiating an Intergovernmental Agreement with WPD that included the fee-simple transfer of 38.7 acres and a permanent easement over 13.6 acres. The full board approved the term sheet at the April 11, 2017 board meeting. However, after further discussions with WPD, it was conveyed that the FAA will only provide limited funding assistance for the acquisition of an easement and WPD will be responsible for 70% of the cost. With a fee simple transfer of land, the FAA will cover 95% of the acquisition costs.

District staff is recommending a change in the original term sheet and permission to negotiate with WPD for the fee simple sale of the 13.6 acres in lieu of granting the permanent easement. The use restrictions for the permanent easement would be nearly the same as fee-simple ownership. Doing so will allow WPD a higher percentage reimbursement on the property rights.

**REVIEW BY OTHERS:** Chief Operations Officer, Director of Planning and Land Preservation, Corporate Counsel.