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MAKING SPACE FOR SPACE: AIRPORT OPERATORS' PERSPECTIVES

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DISCUSSION OVERVIEW

- ✈ Why Do Airports Care About Commercial Space?
- ✈ Varied Airport Perspectives
- ✈ Key Areas that Need Industry and Regulator Attention
- ✈ Looking Forward



Source: Virgin Galactic.

WHY DO AIRPORTS CARE ABOUT COMMERCIAL SPACE?



At my airport, commercial space is...

- ✈ ...a way to bring in additional revenue!
- ✈ ...a way to attract economic development!
- ✈ ...a way to attract (or retain) high paying technical jobs in our region!
- ✈ ...really cool!

OR

- ✈ ...activity that could interfere with airport operations!
- ✈ ...activity that could impede airspace access!
- ✈ ...activity that can cause adverse environmental or safety impacts in the communities near my airport!
- ✈ ...really concerning!

DIFFERENT AIRPORTS— DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES



THE ESTABLISHED COMMERCIAL SERVICE AIRPORT

- ✈ Seeking to maintain or grow air service for the community it serves
- ✈ Making considerable investments in both facilities *and* in building political/public support for these facilities
- ✈ Concerned that these constraints undermine their investments

THE UNDERUTILIZED GENERAL AVIATION AIRPORT

- ✈ Seeking to supplement traditional revenue sources—fuel, landing fees, hanger/tie-down rentals—that are stagnant or declining
- ✈ Compelled to seek new types of operators for a sustainable business model
- ✈ Under pressure from local governance to demonstrate the airport is viable

DIFFERENT AIRPORTS— DIFFERENT SPACEPORT CONCERNS



THE ESTABLISHED COMMERCIAL SERVICE AIRPORT

- ✈ Commercial space activity will get in the way of air traffic that uses my airport
- ✈ Commercial space may pose safety risks
- ✈ Commercial space could undermine the value of the investments we've made in airfield, terminal, and support infrastructure

THE UNDERUTILIZED GENERAL AVIATION AIRPORT

- ✈ Commercial space operations can bring revenue
- ✈ Commercial space can make use of infrastructure that might be overbuilt for our current general aviation fleet
- ✈ Commercial space also may generate broader economic benefits through STEM jobs/support facilities, etc.

THE CASE OF COLORADO SPACEPORT



Source: Final Programmatic Environmental Assessment for Front Range Airport Launch Site Operator License, FAA, August 2018.



SO, WHAT'S MISSING HERE?

(a partial list)



- ✈️ Clarity regarding the operational characteristics of the future fleet of commercial space vehicles
- ✈️ Mutual understanding between the commercial space community and “traditional” aviation community regarding operational constraints, concepts of operation, and facility needs
- ✈️ Fully mature technologies and decision support tools that enables dynamic, real-time management of space and “traditional” aviation activity
- ✈️ Common(ish) regulatory frameworks for spaceports and airports
 - Safety and risk assessment approaches
 - Planning & design standards
 - Environmental/NEPA process

LOOKING FORWARD



- ✈️ FAA and industry have made great inroads to a more collaborative and integrated National Airspace System over the past 18 months
 - Airspace Access Priorities and Spaceport Categorization Aviation Rulemaking Committee have brought disparate stakeholders together
 - Clearer understanding of the need to bring space and traditional aviation operators together from the initial planning of spaceports
 - Broader understanding of site characteristics that make a spaceport truly viable
 - Investment plans for technologies that enable dynamic airspace management of space and traditional aviation operations
- ✈️ Additional work is needed
 - More integrated and straightforward regulatory frameworks
 - Better tools for understanding environmental and safety impacts of space operations on the National Airspace System and communities underneath it
 - Better understanding the capabilities and characteristics of future space vehicles

THANKS FOR YOUR TIME



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