

2010 Olympic Airspace – HAC Meeting
July 28, 2009 – London Air Services Boardroom, Richmond, BC

Notes

- Convened 13:15 - Chaired by Steve Flynn – Steve thanked LAS for the use of their boardroom.
- Steve informed the group that discussions with Whistler Heli-ski were underway for the possible use of two of their three heli-pads which could potentially increase the number of itinerant helipads from three, to five in Whistler;
- Unlike past Olympic venues, Whistler's heliport is the ONLY proposed landing area, which will mean intense periods of demand on a facility with very little capacity. Add to this other challenges presented by Whistler's mountainous terrain, and challenging weather during the Olympic period, the venue will present some safety risks that will need to be carefully managed. What's more, in the absence of clearly articulated arrival SOPs and contingency plans, the potential for this facility to be overwhelmed is very real.
- London Air Services, Helijet & Whistler Heli-ski able were able to provide a preliminary estimate of their projected traffic flow. Other operators in attendance were unable to predict their requirements for access to the Whistler Heliport at this time.
- Even based on a preliminary survey of these operators, it became clear that screening capacity is likely to be a choke point for departing aircraft, particularly during peak hours of demand. Screening capacity at Whistler should at least be doubled to accommodate 120 passengers per hour. The arrival of one or more S-61s with 24 passengers in addition to other aircraft (i.e. S76's, A139's and light aircraft) could quickly overwhelm the proposed screening capacity of 60 passengers per hour.
- Concerns were raised that 120 persons per hour screening capacity was planned in Victoria, Nanaimo, and Powell River for example, while Whistler - one of the only two venues with Olympic events and likely to experience the most intense demand for screening service is only scheduled to receive service at the 60-persons per hour level. This proposed level of screening service is likely to be woefully inadequate.
- Screeners should be instructed to attach a priority to passengers who will be boarding an aircraft on the pad, to avoid extended occupancy times, and attendant delays for arriving aircraft
- Sierra Helicopters has access to land between the heliport and the Cougar gravel pit for a possible parking area, which could mean another potential landing/shut-down area for itinerant aircraft, or for contingency operations, but aircraft would have to be staged back to the heliport to pick-up screened passengers. It was discussed that this area could be used to allow some operators to shutdown off-site rather than occupy Whistler pads that will be in high demand.
- Require another trailer for quarantined "Holding Area" for screened passengers, and a separate area for their screened checked-bags – particularly during the cold weather. Consider using 'quarantined buses' as back-up plan, since this method is potentially 'scalable' and buses could arrive and depart as demand changed.

- CATSA is mandated by RCMP for screening although one operator is currently exploring the possibility of a private off-site location for arrivals and departures and privately-sourced screening
- Heli-skiers will be wearing full ski gear, including boots. Likely to delay the screening process.
- CTV considered Essential Service. Credentialed vs. Screened
- Operators who qualify to provide essential services in the Olympic airspace will have the opportunity to apply in August. Details will follow in early August. Private/Corporate helicopters will be arriving, also from the US – difficult to gauge their traffic flow, passenger capacity, and timing. Everyone in attendance expects the demand on the Whistler heliport from US operators during this period to be intense and to arise with little notice
- HAC to put out a Communiqué and info on website. HAC was asked to connect with HAI to disseminate info to US operators and to enquire about plans for a NOTAM.

ACTION: HAC

- Consider baggage carts requirement tagged for incoming next flight out. No consideration currently being given to the storage, transportation and security of screened bags
- Operators in attendance asked if consideration has been given to vehicle parking and arrival/departure logistics?
 - Parking – CTV, Shaw Cable, EHS, and possibly RCMP
- Steve commented that aircraft will be metered by NAV in to the area during adverse weather
- There was a concern that CATSA may not be available for screening to allow the maximum possible use of the heliport during daylight hours. Limited hours of daylight at that time of year will only allow operations between 0800 and 1600, roughly.
- Screening and Holding areas in Vancouver harbour are likely to be problematic given the use of medium and heavy aircraft from these sites.
- HAC's Air Taxi Committee has received Olympic presentations for the past two years although none of these issues have come to light until recently.
- HAC was asked to send out a one-page survey to operators to gather information for estimating traffic flow at Whistler in support of a Business Plan for additional screening.

ACTION: HAC

- HAC to draft a letter to the Sgt. Kowalski of the RCMP on the major issues raised herein

ACTION: HAC

- An Olympic Working Group was formed to build a Business Case for additional security screening – The Working Group is to be composed of Steve Flynn, Teri Northcott, Dylan Thomas, Phil Kemp, Fred Jones & Rick Hill
- As there was no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 15:30

List of Attendees

Steve Flynn

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