

Pros and Cons of Moving onto the New Runway as I see them

Let me start by stating I for one voted for, and still in favor of runway improvements at the Scenic RC site.

I have had the chance to fly off of the new runways and find them to be greatly lacking in the improvements we were seeking.

1. It is true the new main runway is longer than the old. It is also much more narrow than the existing but the lengths and widths match the proposed changes.

2. The new runways are not near so smooth as we expected and desired. One of the big reasons for building new runways was to try and get something with less bump that would be a little more friendly to smaller aircraft and those using retractable landing gear. At this point in time the new runway is not less bumpy than the old. In looking closely at the new runways I see lots of holes where the grading simply was not done correctly and left many places where it is not smooth. Perhaps good grass growth would help to fill these areas but I think it will take more.

3. Lets talk about runway/housing clearances. Part of the issues for building new runways was to get better clearance between our flight line and houses located on Wall Road. In looking at and doing some measuring using Google Earth I do find in fact that our current runway and zero flight path do in fact line up with the fourth house to the north of our field. I come up with approximately 400 yards from center of current runway to the edge of that fourth house. When I measure from the new runway I come up with 465 yards to the fifth house which would be on zero line for the new runway. This is only an additional 65 yards of clearance. As I understand our site flying rules the zero line and trees are the boundaries beyond which we are not suppose to fly. If we observe these rules the houses are taken out of the picture. Even though we are all guilty of flying beyond the trees on the north end of the field I have never seen anyone go far enough beyond to be approaching the houses. The new runway only offers a slight 65 yard advantage over the existing runway in this area.

4. How about grade. The new runways were suppose to be flat and level with a minimum (I forget the exact number) of slope. As it turns out I find the new runways to have more grade than the existing and the new main runway slopes away from the pilot with a cross field grade running west to east downhill on the northern 1/3 of the runway. 40-50 feet of the new main runway on the south end is not even usable due to the severity of the slope. I also do not like standing at a higher elevation than the runway. This feels awkward when trying to land.

5. I do like the view from the new flight line in that you can see more of our field. I do not like the feeling that Hwy 316 is now crowding in a little on my front and right side.

6. Flying conditions. On Saturday a few of us gathered to try out the new main runway. With no winds blowing it seemed ok. Once the breeze began to pick up a little out of the north west I experienced dead air several times while trying to land. The winds coming from the NW roll over the crown of the existing flying area which is at a higher elevation to then cross over the new flight area which is located at a lower elevation. I found this to cause dead areas over the runway where just a moment before you are in the cross winds and then when getting down to runway elevation you dropped below the turbulence area causing the aircraft to have less lift and doing some funny things. If I tried to use the northern most end of the runway when coming in for a landing I felt like the trees were much closer than current.

7. Changes already voted in. I do agree with the statements being tossed around about the fact that the club has already voted on making improvements to the flying site. My contention in this area is the fact that the club did not get what it voted for. I for one do not believe this is the fault of anyone but due more to the company that did the work simply not being suited for the job at hand. In stating that I am sick and tired of finger pointing and for one will no longer listen to such talk and will do every thing in my power to stop it including asking the club to remove from its membership anyone that continues to cast blame or make someone look bad for the work that has been done. Perhaps more involvement from the membership of this club would have helped get the needed improvements done in a way that would have greatly benefited the club.

8. Money taken from AMA. This club applied for and was granted a request for funds supplement from the AMA for the proposed improvements at the site. I believe we have a legal obligation to inform the AMA that the new field is not being used should the membership decide to not move. The club had to present to the AMA the reason for the funds request and should the new field not be used we may have to return the grant. I believe it was in the amount of \$500.

9. Money contributed from membership and nonmembers. Again here we have a problem. Numerous members along with potential members donated additional funds to help with runway improvements. I am not going to try and state whether there are legal obligations here or not. Again we have to consider the facts that the improvements made were not what was presented but fell far short. I do feel however that there is a morale obligation to greatly consider the facts that contributions were made for the improvements. Would it make since to throw away what has already been spent? Does it make since to throw good money after bad? Is it possible we would have to consider returning the money contributed from individuals for improvements if in fact the improvements are not there? The money was given in good faith just like the club accepted the proposal from the company doing the work in good faith. The faith was broken on both accounts. The landscape company did not deliver what we voted for.

10. Growing the club. Another part of the proposal for improvements was to help grow the club by having a better facility with longer smoother runways to accommodate larger and more expensive aircraft. I believe we need the growth. The club in a lot of ways has become stagnant. New membership helps to improve the quality of experience when at the flying site. New membership also helps to keep from the same old group of people making all the decisions about how the club should operate and trust me it has been the same group more or less since I joined the club. We need growth and we need change. Without growth we lessen our exposure and value to the community at large. Flying sites are becoming increasingly difficult to find. We have a valuable piece of property at our disposal for use as an RC site. We need the membership growth to help insure we maintain our flying site.

In closing let me state I will go along with the decision made by the membership on the up coming vote. My personal opinion is that I like the existing runways more than the new. Could the new become better than the current? You betcha, but it will take work! Possibly more work than this club's membership is prepared to put forth.