

## COVER MEMO

**Briefing Date/Time:** June 22, 2026  
**Staff Contact/Title:** Chris Paolini, Airport Senior Manager, 360.528.8074, [chrisp@portolympia.com](mailto:chrisp@portolympia.com)  
**Subject:** Resolution 2026-XX: Port commitment to provide WSDOT grant matching funds for a WSDOT grant funded Electric Aircraft Charging Station project grant application  
**Purpose:**  Information Only  Decision Needed

### **Type of Agenda Item:**

- Advisory

### **Background:**

At the request of the Port commission, airport staff have prioritized exploring infrastructure projects that would support the aviation industry's transition to electric aircraft as a renewable energy alternative. Key questions included identifying the type of Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) aircraft would most likely operate at the Olympia Regional Airport and determining the ground support services required, and selecting the optimal on-airfield location while complying with FAA regulations. To this end, in 2026 staff have identified the most feasible location on the airfield to install electric aircraft charging equipment and partnered with one of our aviation tenants to provide a full-service solution to support electric aircraft at the Olympia Regional Airport.

On May 15, 2026, WSDOT announced a Notice of Funding Opportunity under the Sustainable Aviation Grant program to fund projects during the 2027-2029 biennium. The application deadline under this grant is July 17, 2026. In preparation for this grant application, airport staff, consultants, and the Director of WSDOT Aviation met with Beta Technologies, a charging station and electric aircraft manufacturer, on May 21, 2025 for an on-airport site visit to discuss the feasibility of an electric aircraft charging station project. The site visit was very encouraging with all parties being in full support of the proposed project.

In 2025 there were insufficient details available to include this project in our 2026 Capital Investment Plan for the 2026 budget year. As a result, per policy 1008, commission approval is required to apply for a WSDOT grant to fund this project. Additionally, as part of the grant application, WSDOT requires a resolution from the sponsor entity affirming funds availability and commitment to providing grant match funds for the capital project. The proposed resolution will be submitted as part of the WSDOT grant application, which is due by July 17, 2026.

**Summary and Financial Impact:**

This project would consist of increasing PSE electrical power at the edge of airport property from 208-volt 3-phase power to 480-volt 3-phase power, installation of approximately 750 feet of underground electrical conduit from the PSE equipment to the new electric aircraft charging station site, and installation of a fully operational electric aircraft charging station.

This project would place the Port of Olympia at the forefront of the electric aircraft transition by being one of the first airports in the Pacific Northwest, and West Coast, to install electric aircraft charging infrastructure adding to the national electric aircraft charging network.

This project would provide opportunities to support quieter zero emission electric aircraft to Thurston County in support of flight training programs, business and personal transportation, and support local tourism. It also offers a zero-emission alternative for transporting residents to the region’s major commercial airports. Additionally, this infrastructure may support tourism by offering environmentally friendly transportation options that reduce vehicle congestion in surrounding areas.

The WSDOT Sustainable Aviation Grant can fund up to 100% of total eligible project costs. However, WSDOT has informed applicants that a voluntary grant match for a percentage of the project cost will make the application package more competitive. Based on this information, we are suggesting a ten-percent sponsor match to make our application more competitive. The ten-percent match will be funded by airport capital project funds. Estimated Project cost and funding are as follows:

Estimated Project Cost:

Planning/Engineering:	\$150,000
Charging Station:	\$350,000
Infrastructure and Installation:	\$700,000
<b>TOTAL PROJECT COST:</b>	<b>\$1,200,000</b>

Funding Sources:

WSDOT Grant:	\$1,080,000
Airport Capital Project Funds:	\$ 120,000

This item will be brought before the commission as an action item during the July 13, 2026, commission meeting.

**Alignment with Vision 2050:**

This project aligns with the following Vision 2050 focus areas, goals, and action items:

#### Countywide Economic Development and Real Estate Framework

Goal: Leverage the Port's unique statutory authority to catalyze economic opportunities in partnership with local jurisdictions and economic development organizations.

- Action Item #20: Evaluate and pursue green-energy production alternatives

#### Airport Functions

Goal: Maximize the economic and community value of the Olympia Regional Airport in accordance with FAA Master Plan regulations.

- Action Item #30: Research strategies used by other airports of similar size to determine best practices and opportunities.
- Action Item #32: Evaluate options for private charter, tourist and freight transportation.

#### Environmental Sustainability

Goal: Emphasize sustainability in all planning and actions and provide regular updates to the community.

- Action Item #37: Study and implement priority climate adaptation and mitigation strategies in concert with local partners.

#### **Environmental Considerations and Review:**

This project provides critical infrastructure to enable the aviation industry's transition from jet fuel and leaded aviation gasoline (AvGas) powered aircraft to zero-emission electric powered aircraft. Also aligned with the 2022 WSDOT Electric Airport Feasibility Study, which identifies Olympia (OLM) as a priority site for early adoption, this infrastructure will serve to reduce local carbon and lead emissions. By supporting electric aircraft that also generally operate quieter than traditional combustion engine aircraft, OLM advances its environmental stewardship goals and directly improves air quality for the surrounding Tumwater community.

NEPA and SEPA are currently underway for this project and would be completed before any construction activity occurs. Based on the scope of this project, we anticipate NEPA and SEPA exemptions may be granted under the following:

#### NEPA

FAA Order 1050-1G; B-2.4. *"Categorical Exclusions for Facility Siting, Construction, and Maintenance. This category includes the list of CATEXs for FAA actions involving acquisition, repair, replacement, maintenance, or upgrading of grounds, infrastructure, buildings, structures, or facilities that generally are minor in nature.*

*(f) Federal financial assistance, licensing, Airport Layout Plan (ALP) approval, or FAA construction or limited expansion of accessory on-site structures, including storage buildings, garages, hangars, t-hangars, small parking areas, signs, fences, and other essentially similar minor development items. (ATO, ARP, AST)*

*(n) Minor expansion of facilities, including the addition of equipment such as telecommunications equipment, on an existing facility where no additional land is required, or when expansion is due to remodeling of space in current quarters or existing buildings. Additions may include antennas, concrete pad, and minor trenching for cable. (ATO, AST)*

*(o) Minor trenching and backfilling where the surface are restored and the excavated material is protected against erosion and run-off during the construction period. (ATO, ARP, AST)"*

### SEPA

Per the following Washington State Administrative Code (WAC), the entirety of this project may be SEPA exempt:

WAC 197-11-800 (23) exempts: *"Utilities. The utility-related actions listed below shall be exempt... The exemption includes installation and construction, relocation when required by other governmental bodies, repair, replacement, maintenance, operation or alteration that does not change the action from an exempt class.*

*(c) All electric facilities, lines, equipment or appurtenances, not including substations, with an associated voltage of 55,000 volts or less; the overbuilding of existing distribution lines (55,000 volts or less) with transmission lines (up to and including 115,000 volts); within existing rights of way or developed utility corridors, all electric facilities, lines, equipment or appurtenances, not including substations, with an associated voltage of 115,000 volts or less; and the undergrounding of all electric facilities, lines, equipment or appurtenances.*

*(e) All developments within the confines of any existing electric substation, reservoir, pump station vault, pipe, or well: Additional appropriations of water are not exempted by this subsection."*

### **Staff Recommendation:**

None at this time, tonight's agenda item is advisory only. However, the recommended motion below will be brought before the commission during the July 13, 2026 commission meeting for consideration.

*"Adopt resolution 2026-XX affirming the Port's commitment to provide grant matching funds for the Olympia Regional Airport's Electric Aircraft Charging Station project and authorize the Executive Director to submit an application for a WSDOT grant for the Airport's Electric Aircraft Charging Station project."*

**Document(s) Attached:**

Resolution 2026-XX: Port commitment to provide WSDOT grant matching funds for a WSDOT grant funded Electric Aircraft Charging Station project