

Airport board sets Bowman tree-study vote

By James Bruggers

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The Louisville Regional Airport Authority Board is scheduled to vote this afternoon on whether to proceed with a study of trees and other obstructions near Bowman Field.

The meeting will be at 3 p.m. at the authority's administrative office, 700 Administration Drive at Louisville International Airport.

Trish Burke, the authority's spokeswoman, said a new Airport Layout Plan for Bowman Field and the proposed Bowman Field Airport Area Safety Program will be taken up by the board as part of the authority's five-year capital improvement plan.

Approval of both the layout and safety plans are needed before the authority can proceed with hiring consultants to study obstructions within expanded airspace zones off the ends of each runway, said Charles T. "Skip" Miller, the agency's executive director.

Tree removal and any other obstruction mitigation would not occur until at least early 2013, airport officials

have said.

Miller has said the safety program would involve identifying all trees and other obstructions that may extend into the larger protected airspace zone required by the Federal Aviation Administration to accommodate modern instrument landing systems.

Working with the FAA, it would also involve the authority purchasing airspace easements above some of its neighbors' property to make sure that the airspace remains open and safe for pilots flying in and out of the airport, Miller has said.

But the safety plan has stirred opposition from some neighbors who fear that as many as 1,000 trees may need to be trimmed or removed.

Airport officials have said they won't know how many trees will be affected until they conduct the survey.

Burke said people who want to speak at authority board meetings must sign up in advance. The board chairman has discretion to decide whether to allow speakers, she said.

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