

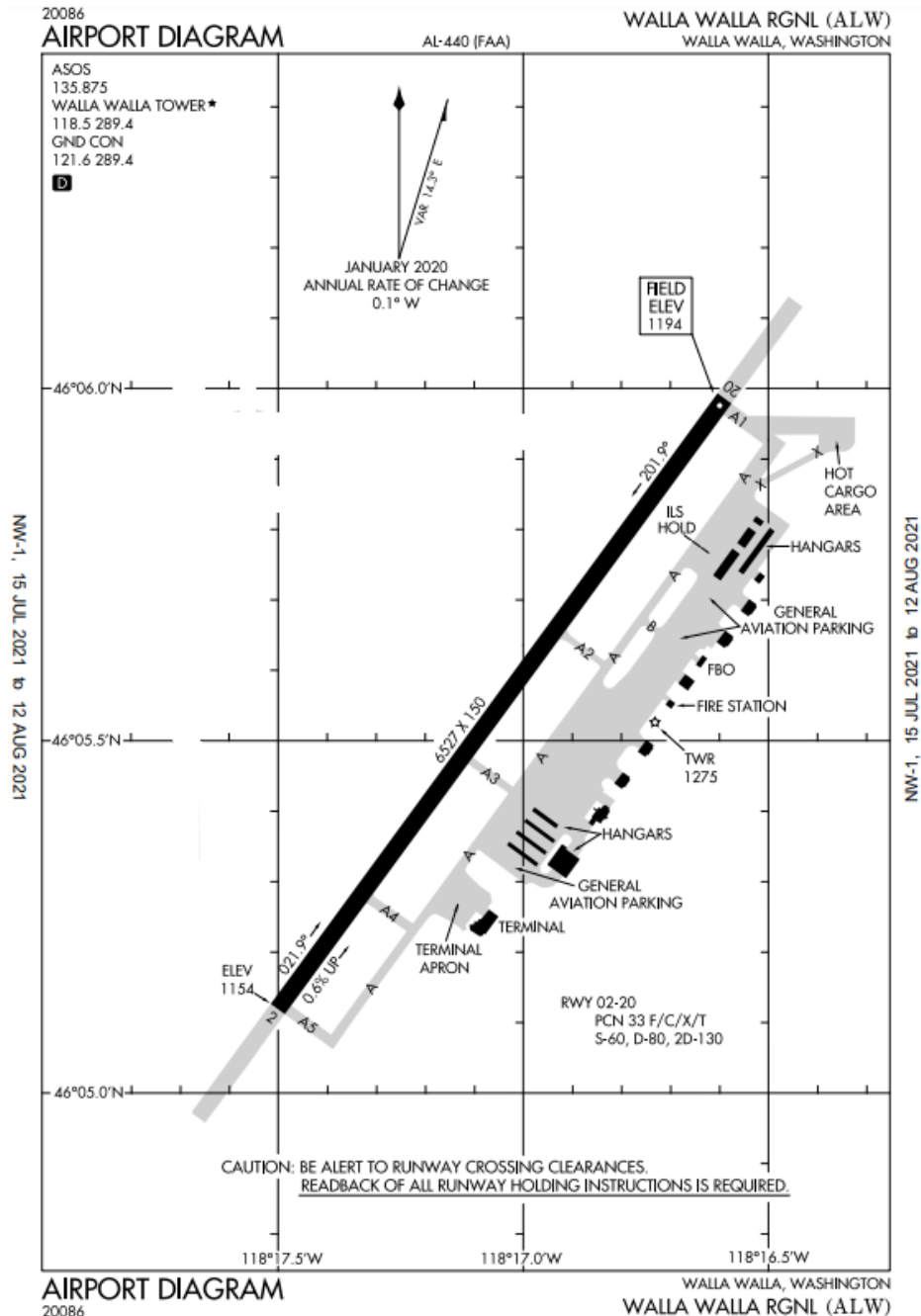
# WALLA WALLA REGIONAL AIRPORT

## Aircraft Noise & Low Flying Aircraft FAQs

### What is Walla Walla Regional Airport's runway configuration?

Walla Walla Regional Airport has (1) runway. Runway 2/20 has a northeast-southwest orientation. Runway alignment is determined by the prevailing winds. Runway 2/20 is 6,526 feet in length with Runway 20 end having a precision approach instrument landing system (ILS) and Runway 2 end having a non-precision GPS and VOR/DME approach procedure. See Exhibit "1" below for diagram and heading of Runway 2/20.

Exhibit "1"



### **What determines the direction aircraft arrive and depart on the runway?**

There are many factors that go into selecting a runway for a specific operation:

**Wind.** Prevailing wind is the most influential factor in determining north or south aircraft flow direction. On average, the prevailing all-weather winds are from the south, with the peak-gusty winds from the south-southwest and south-southeast. Per the wind studies Runway 2/20 has prevailing wind coverage 98% of the time. An aircraft will depart Rwy 20 to fly into the wind.

**Air Traffic congestion and safe separation requirements.** Aircraft under the advisement of an air traffic controller will often be directed to a runway that creates the least amount of congestion and provides safe aircraft separation.

**Instrument approach procedures.** During low visibility operations, aircraft will rely on Runway 20's precision approach instrument landing system (ILS) for arrivals.

*\*14 CFR 91.123 - The pilot in command of an aircraft is directly responsible for, and is the final authority as to, the operation of that aircraft.*

### **Why is Walla Walla Regional Airport so close to residential neighborhoods?**

The Walla Walla Regional Airport has been in its current location since the 1930's. In 1942, during the WWII war effort, the U.S. Army Air Forces took control of the airport and substantial infrastructure improvements were constructed to train military aviators. After WWII in 1947 the City and County took over ownership of the airport. From 1962-1974 a portion of the airport was again used by the military for the Vietnam war effort with F-106's stationed at the airport. In 1989 the Port of Walla Walla took over ownership and operational responsibility from the City-County. During this 80-year period (1942-2022) the community and neighborhoods have continued to expand near the airport.

### **What is the minimum altitude an aircraft can fly over my residence?**

In accordance with 14 CFR 91.119, except when necessary for takeoff or landing, no person may operate an airplane over a congested area of a city, town or settlement at an altitude less than 1,000 feet above the highest obstacle or within a horizontal radius of less than 2,000 feet of an aircraft; or an altitude of less than 500 feet from any person, vessel, vehicle or structure in non-congested areas. A helicopter may be operated at less than the prescribed minimums provided each person operating the helicopter complies with any routes or altitudes specifically prescribed for helicopters by the FAA.

### **When does the Walla Walla Regional Airport close?**

In accordance with federal law and to comply with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) grant assurances, the airfield is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to all users of the National Airspace system. The Air Traffic Control Tower, operated by an FAA contractor, is open from 6 a.m. – 6:30 p.m. seven days per week.

### **Who controls what flight path aircraft fly and at what altitude?**

Walla Walla Regional Airport has a FAA contract Air Traffic Control Tower (ATCT) that is staffed daily from 6 a.m. – 6:30 p.m. and is responsible for issuing taxi, departure and arrival/approach clearances to aircraft using the airfield. While ATCT is open it operates

in a Class D controlled airspace controlling a 5-mile radius around the airport and up to 2,500 ft. above airport elevation. The airport elevation is 1,194 ft.

When ATCT is closed the Class D airspace reverts to a Class E airspace. Class E airspace encompasses airspace up to 14,500 Mean Sea Level (MSL). Aircraft flying under Instrument Flight Rules (IFE) in Class E airspace is controlled by an Air Route Traffic Control Center while aircraft flying under Visual Flight Rules (VFR) are not controlled by a center. Weather and speed restrictions make sure that IFR and VFR aircraft can see and avoid each other. *14 CFR 91.119 for flight altitudes remain in effect even when ATCT is closed.*

Neither the airport, nor the Port of Walla Walla, has authority over the National Airspace System (aircraft in flight). The Port, as owner of the airport, is charged with the responsibility of maintaining and assuring that the physical facilities of the airport (runway, taxiways, aprons, lighting, markings, etc.) are safe for aircraft to use in compliance with strict FAA standards.

*14 CFR 91.123 - The pilot in command of an aircraft is directly responsible for, and is the final authority as to, the operation of that aircraft.*

### **Do aircraft have to comply with local city, county and state noise ordinances?**

City, county and state noise regulations, as they pertain to noise generated by aircraft in flight and activities related to flight operations, are preempted by the Federal Aviation Administration.

### **Why are aircraft circling my house every 5 minutes?**

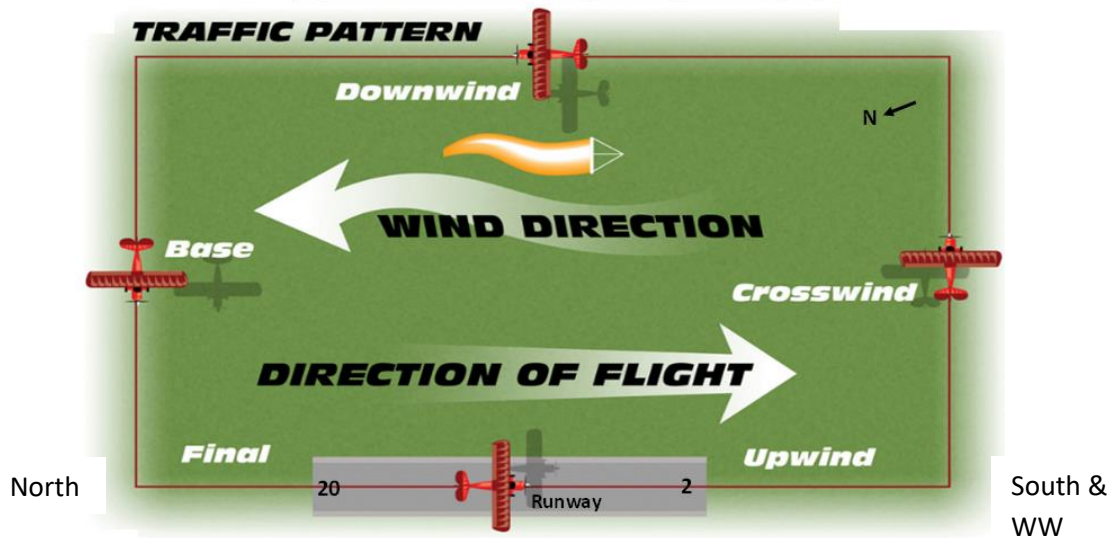
The Walla Walla Regional Airport has a thriving general aviation community. The local GA community is made up of local pilots, Walla Walla University aviation flight center that offers three aviation degrees and flight training, a private flight training business, individual certified flight instructors, Life Flight air medical and cargo operations. During wildfire season Walla Walla Regional may also be used as a helibase for operations.

General aviation flight activity is crucial for a pilot who desires to become a commercial airline pilot. Due to an increase in federal legislation informally known as the "1500 Rule," all commercial airlines are now required to hire pilots with a minimum of 1,500 hours of flight time or 1,000 hours flight time if qualified for a restricted ATP certificate. Nationwide, there is a shortage of commercial airline pilots and the Port of Walla Walla is proud to support its general aviation pilots, especially those who want to move into commercial air, to train, practice and build up flight hours at the Walla Walla Regional Airport.

The most important aspect of flight training is the landing and takeoff of an aircraft. The cost to operate an aircraft is expensive so when pilots are practicing their landings & takeoffs they fit in as many operations as possible into their allotted time. This means that for approximately 98% of the time, due to wind coverage from the south, aircraft will depart Runway 20 from the north, into the wind, and over a portion of the Walla Walla community before making a left-hand turn and returning back to the airport and performing a touch-and-go operation on Runway 20. See Exhibit "2" which depicts a left-hand traffic pattern for Runway 20. The pilot will continue to perform this landing & takeoff pattern for training purposes.

## Exhibit "2"

### Left-Hand Pattern Landing/Takeoff Runway 20



Note: In the event the wind is from a more northerly direction, the reverse for aircraft takeoff & landings is performed. Runway 2 becomes the predominant runway end used.

### Why don't aircraft train over uncongested areas such as the wheat fields?

When not practicing takeoffs and landings pilots prefer to fly over uncongested areas. Pilots will head out past the 5-mile Class D airspace and fly where there is a designated practice area.

### Why is the Walla Walla Regional Airport important for our community?

The Walla Walla Regional Airport and ALL airports throughout the nation are important transportation hubs for communities. Airports generate significant economic activity & growth to a region with the movement of persons, cargo, emergency life flight operations, law enforcement operations and wildfire aviation activity. All of these activities require trained and professional pilots in which Walla Walla Regional serves as a conduit. Nationwide and worldwide a recent Boeing study shows that there is a shortage of pilots with a continued shortage expected that will affect the aviation industry.

### What is the Walla Walla Regional Airport's aviation activity statistics?

See the historical data from 1976 to present for the Walla Walla Regional Airport at <http://wallawallaairport.com/airport-information/aviation-statistics>

In overview, historical data beginning in 1976 from the control tower shows that in 1978 there were 69,183 aircraft operations, the highest count recorded. The lowest aircraft operations count was in 2015 with 22,321. Since 2015, aircraft operations have been increasing at the airport. Potential reasons for growth; flight training due to nationwide

demand for commercial airline pilots, new generation of GA pilots replacing aging GA pilots, population from urban locations moving to suburban/rural communities with aircraft, preference over chartered GA aircraft over commercial air service, and persons taking up a new hobby “2020-2021 Covid effect”. In 2021 the airport ended with 46,464 aircraft operations.