



WASTE REPORT for January 25, 2016

Model of Government Waste

From historic battle strategies, to counter intelligence, to the technologies of war military, history can be fascinating. **What is also fascinating - and troubling - is why the U.S. Department of Defense spent nearly \$40,000 for an 11-foot, historical model of Fairchild Air Force Base (AFB).**¹

To be fair, the U.S. Air Force is in a difficult situation. You see, there are 16 buildings at Fairchild AFB, which is outside Spokane, WA., that the Air Force would like to demolish “in order to decrease the cost of maintaining infrastructure by reducing the inventory of underutilized and deteriorated buildings and accommodate mission changes that have occurred or are forecasted to occur at the base.”² So how does an effort to save money result in new costs for giant models?

The problem seems to be that these 16 buildings, along with four others, potentially constitute a historic flight line district, and **though, not actually a registered historic district, federal law requires that the Air Force seek to mitigate the impact of tearing down these buildings would have on history...at a still active military installation.**

So what is the historical significance that needs preservation? According to the solicitation’s Statement Of Work (SOW), “[t]he scale model represents the physical impact of the height of Cold War Deterrence policy and Strategic Air Command readiness.” The SOW goes on to note the model should include the maintenance and storage of several Cold War era, which is defined as 1958 to 1994, aircraft that were stationed at Fairchild.³

So rather than note any specific event, this seems to be an effort to preserve for posterity is the fact that this base, or at least the flight line, existed during the Cold War. It should not go unnoticed that as an active military base, Fairchild AFB has limited public access - not that the average person would likely find themselves at the Wing Headquarters where the model will be displayed anyway.

Consider, that while the military is currently engaged in operations around the world, and Fairchild AFB is seeking to do the right thing by reducing costs and meeting current strategic needs. Nevertheless, the Air Force invested resources - both in tax dollars and man hours - on dubious historic preservation activities.

¹ *Historic Scale Model*, Department of the Airforce, Fairchild Air Force Base; Washington; September 2015 Solicitation Number FA4620-15-T-A096

² *Memorandum of Agreement Between...Fairchild Air Force Base and...The Washington State Historic Preservation Officer...*,
<http://www.fairchild.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-120725-095.pdf>

³ *Statement of Work Fabrication and Installation of Historic Flight Line District Scale Model Fairchild Air Force Base, WA;* U.S. Air Force- Fairchild Airforce Base, Washington. <https://www.fbo.gov/utills/view?id=7835c793ee06b92fb8a849b88a520b5e>