

Exhibit A

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

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TO:	Charles County Planning Commission
FROM:	Amy Blessinger, Planner III <i>Department of Planning and Growth Management</i>
SUBJECT:	Amendment to the 2016 Comprehensive Plan: Maryland Airport
DATE:	June 17, 2021

On May 3, 2021, the Charles County Planning Commission held a public hearing on a proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendment to redesignate properties around the Maryland Airport to the Employment and Industrial land use district. Please see separate memorandum with summary of public comment.

After the public testimony, the Planning Commission asked several questions. Following is staff's response to the Commission's questions.

Health impacts/environmental assessment

Planning Commission members had questions regarding the impacts from air and noise pollution from the airport on nearby schools and residents. As part of the airport's expansion project, a federally mandated Environmental Assessment (EA) was conducted to determine the potential environmental impacts and any mitigation necessary for development of the new runway and associated airport facilities. Environmental Assessments typically evaluate impacts to environmental resources as well as noise and air quality impacts. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the airport improvements. The airport is also required to comply with FAA regulations for noise.

While airport impacts are an understandable concern, it should be emphasized that impacts from the operations and expansion of the airport itself are not the subject of this Comprehensive Plan Amendment. Furthermore, a large part of the airport expansion has already been completed.

Mattawoman watershed/impervious surface

Planning Commission members inquired about the status of the Mattawoman watershed and the level of impervious surface in the watershed. According to the most recent (2017) data obtained from county consultant Spatial Systems, the amount of impervious surface within Charles County's portion of the watershed is 4,102 acres, or 9.2%. Recently released 2020 aerial imagery will allow the county to update impervious surface calculations, however this data will likely not be available until December 2022. As discussed previously, the county continuously works to mitigate the impact of impervious surface in the watershed with stormwater restoration capital projects and other pollutant reduction efforts including road sweeping, inlet vacuuming and septic pumping programs.

Staff also notes that within the 558-acre amendment area, there are considerable environmental constraints that limit the lands' developability. This includes approximately 115 acres of land in steep slopes and approximately 27 acres located in the Resource Protection Zone (RPZ). After subtracting these approximate 142 acres of land from the amendment area, the remaining land that would be considered developable is approximately 416 acres. Furthermore, any future development in this area would be subject to stormwater management and forest conservation requirements, further limiting the amount and impacts of impervious surface. Refer to attached map in BoardDocs.

Economic development

Airport Industrial Market Analysis: The county retained the services of an independent consultant, RKG Associates, Inc., to conduct an analysis to determine the market potential for industrial development for the area surrounding the airport. The analysis finds that demand for industrial land has increased since the 2015 Airport Land Use Study and further concludes that the lands around the airport could capture more than half of the projected 117,100 square feet to 175,600 square feet of annualized absorption of industrial development in Charles County.

Economic Development Department staff also note that there has been an increase in economic activity at the airport over the past several years, in terms of the number of aircraft using the airport and the number of takeoffs and landings. In addition, two other airports in the region have recently closed, thereby increasing the Maryland Airport's economic potential.

Justification/business plan: Planning Commission members asked whether there was a business or development plan for the airport and the properties subject to the amendment. The airport property and other properties in the subject area are privately owned, thus the county does not have ready access to this information. Based on the RKG market analysis and increased interest expressed by various companies, it would appear there is increased demand for land around the airport for development of airport-supporting uses. In order to rezone the properties to allow such development, the county is proposing this Comprehensive Plan Amendment to make the land use consistent with the future zoning.

Vacant/available commercial space in Bryans Road: Planning Commission members asked why the county proposes to change the land use around the airport to employment/industrial when there is available vacant land in Bryans Road for commercial development. The Bryans Road center is primarily zoned for commercial, mixed use and residential development and is not the best location for all airport supporting uses. It is preferable to locate the airport supporting uses closer to the airport where they can take full advantage of proximity to the airport.

A Planning Commission work session has been scheduled for June 21, 2021. At this meeting staff will review public comment received and next steps.

Attachments: Maryland Airport Industrial Market Analysis (RKG Associates, Inc.)
Aviation District map: Steep slopes and RPZ
June 4 Memorandum to Planning Commission with summary of public comment