

**Greater Accokeek Civic Association
(GACA)
P.O. Box 176
Accokeek, MD 20607**

30 August 2021

Re: Comprehensive Plan Amendment – Lands Surrounding Maryland Airport

Board of Charles County Commissioners
200 Baltimore Street
La Plata, MD 20646

Dear Board of Charles County Commissioners:

I am writing on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Greater Accokeek Civic Association (GACA) for the public record to voice our opposition and to ask you to reject the proposed amendment that rezones the Maryland airport, specifically the proposed Amendment to the Charles County 2016 Comprehensive Plan - Maryland Airport. Our civic association was established in 1985 to serve citizens in southern-most Prince George's County and northern-most Charles County, and many of us work, shop, recreate, and align ourselves with southern Maryland, so this proposal is of great concern. It would (1) increase volume of air traffic and size of the aircraft, exacerbating air and noise pollution that already threatens southern Maryland; (2) result in degradation of Mattawoman Creek and other natural resources including Piscataway National Park and the 5,000 acres within the viewshed of Mount Vernon; (3) compromise and reduce the quality of life of area residents; (4) and offer only questionable economic feasibility or potential.

Studies and scientific research have confirmed the negative impact of air and noise pollution caused by aircraft. Currently, many in southern Maryland are already working to mitigate the impact of those pollutions caused by Reagan National Airport; to add flights, especially from larger planes, at Maryland Airport would mean additional hardship and risk to the health of residents. Of particular concern is the location of J.C. Parks Elementary School and Matthew Henson Middle school very close to Maryland Airport and the source of noise and air pollution; research has made clear that children are particularly vulnerable to air pollution and increased health risks such as asthma.

The hard-won protection the Watershed Conservation District designation now provides Mattawoman Creek and other nearby resources would be compromised by the proposed zoning changes, allowing for uses that are incompatible in the rural area and reducing wooded areas around the airport that now mitigate air pollution. The greater Accokeek area is painfully aware of the negative impacts that can occur to local waterways as we have experienced in our own Piscataway Creek, once a source of viable recreation and wildlife habitat, now deteriorated to the extent that residents fear to even enter the water. Charles County must continue to responsibly manage and protect Mattawoman Creek to avoid a similar situation.

The viability of economic expansion proposed by the Amendment is unrealistic as illustrated in the market study. Closure of the Safeway Grocery Store in nearby Bryans Road is an example of the current economic situation in the area. Without responsible economic development, residents' quality of life is diminished rather than enhanced. For example, Accokeek has seen more people travel through our community, but they do not shop, recreate, or contribute to the fabric of life in any constructive way. There is increased vehicular traffic with its associated air and noise pollution, as well as increased trash, but travelers through do not contribute to economic viability, the tax base, or the quality of life for taxpayers. It is unrealistic, as we have experienced, to expect MGM or its patrons who might choose to use an expanded Maryland airport to add to the local economy; the beneficiaries will be the venues at National Harbor and other tourist destinations to the north.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this letter and express our opposition. We appreciate your serious consideration of our concerns about the proposed Amendment's potential for negative impacts on health, quality of life, and natural resources, while at the same time not contributing significantly to the long-term economic viability of the area.

Respectfully,

[Judith Allen-Leventhal](#)

Judith Allen-Leventhal
President