



## *Town of Indian Head, Maryland*

Charles County Board of County Commissioners

**Re: Maryland Airport; Proposed Amendments to Comprehensive Land Use Map and Zoning**

Dear Commissioners:

We strongly urge you to adopt the proposed amendment to the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map re-designating the land around the airport from residential use to light industrial, employment and business park use.

The light industrial, employment and business park designations surrounding the Maryland Airport serve two (2) purposes. First and most importantly, the land serves as a buffer between the dedicated airport property and surrounding residential and commercially zoned properties. The biggest threat to an airport is encroachment from incompatible uses, such as residential development. The Maryland Airport is a significant component of the Federal and State air infrastructure. It is one of eight relievers designated within the State of Maryland. To date, over \$20 million dollars of federal and state monies have been invested in this important asset. Designation of residential uses poses serious encroachment issues which threaten the future of the airport and the significant public investment. The Airport Land Use Study recognized such a concern and appropriately retained such designations.

The secondary purpose of the land retaining light industrial, employment and business park land is to provide the citizens of Charles County and the State of Maryland to finally recognize the economic benefits of having one of only five privately owned/public use airports in the United States. This land allows the thru-the fence operations to exist that are compatible with the Airport and create jobs, tax revenue and educational opportunities for our children. For this reason and the reasons set forth in Paragraph Two, the Maryland Department of Planning strongly encouraged the Commissioners to ensure sufficient employment and light industrial lands be maintained around the Maryland Airport.

Located amid a regional hub of air transportation, it is important to note the following facts which should already be part of the public record:

1. According to the 2014 the United States Government Accountability Office Report to Congress on the current and Future Availability of Aviation Engineering and Maintenance Professionals there may be a shortage of aviation engineers, maintenance professionals and avionic technicians over the next 10 years.
2. According to the **FAA AEROSPACE FORECASTS FISCAL YEARS 2020 – 2040** “general aviation hours flown is projected to increase by 16% (an average of 0.7 percent per year). With increasing numbers of regional and business jets in the nation’s skies, fleet mix changes, and carriers consolidating operations in their large hubs, we expect increased activity growth that has the potential to increase controller workload.” The report further found that “light-sport-aircraft (created in 2005), is forecast to grow by 3.4 percent annually, adding about 2,730 new aircraft by 2040, more than doubling its 2018 fleet size...” and “light sport aircraft category is forecasted to see an increase of 4.2 percent a year in hours flown.”
3. Located 20 miles from Washington D.C. and 23 air miles from the White House, the Maryland Airport is the closest regional airport outside the no-fly zone. With easy access to National Harbor and Downtown D.C., it is ideally located to take advantage of the increased demand for corporate air travel.
4. Growth in the Aviation Sector remains positive. For example - according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics - overall employment of aircraft and avionics equipment mechanics and technicians is projected to grow 5 percent from 2019 to 2029, a faster growth rate than the average for all occupations.

It should also be noted that as a Federally regulated entity, the Airport is required to meet the highest environmental standards and has state of the art stormwater management facilities installed on and around the facility. In addition, existing regulations imposed by the Charles County Building and Zoning Codes also provide more than adequate protections for any environmental features that may exist in the surrounding area. Therefore, despite the comments to the contrary that inevitably seem to dominate the public comment period of hearings regarding proposed changes in zoning in this County, allegations that the airport and businesses activities that would support the airport will have an adverse impact upon the surrounding environment are simply not accurate.

The Maryland Airport has been an essential part of the Charles County Community and has served its Nation, State and County since 1945 when Charles Bauserman, his neighbors and members of St. John’s Church petitioned the State to designate it as a flight school and

airport. It is a vital part of Charles County's past, present and future. It is unclear, therefore, why the Commissioners would take action that could eventually lead to the extermination of this important asset.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Brandon Paulin".

Mayor Brandon Paulin

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ron Sitoula".

Vice Mayor Ron Sitoula

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Randy Albright".

Councilman Randy Albright