

Carol DeSoto

From: Alex Winter <alexbillwinter@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 30, 2021 4:52 PM
To: Carol DeSoto
Subject: Comments for record of Sept. 22 hearing re: Amendment to 2016 Comp Plan-Airport.

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Request for an Environmental Assessment -
A true Environmental Assessment is still needed. .

Environmental Assessment

In order to protect and serve the interests of the residents of Charles County, the Planning Commission must necessarily be given an objective and scientific environmental assessment which will consider the effects that may result from the removal of the Watershed Conservation District from 558 acres in the environmentally sensitive area around the airport. To be valid, this assessment must include secondary and cumulative impacts, such as the future pollution that would be linked to the airport expansion, more flights and larger planes, including the effect of those potential impacts on the health of current and future students and teachers and staff at J.C. Parks Elementary School, and Matthew Henson Middle school, which are only four-tenths of a mile from the airport. Also included, the environmental justice and potential impacts on the immediate community, their health, safety, quality of life, and the value of their homes. Also, there needs to be a disclosure of all potential county taxpayer responsibilities and an estimate of costs.

Removal of the WCD would inevitably result in secondary and cumulative impacts, such as the replacement of forest with impervious surface – the reason that after years of debate and careful consideration the WCD was enacted, as forward-thinking and critically needed protection for the key County resource that is Mattawoman Creek and its watershed. The removal of this high-value MD Targeted Ecological Area would come with great loss of ecological services. (see CC ecological service study https://dnr.maryland.gov/ccs/Documents/Charles_Co_Ecosystem_Service_Report_Final.pdf)

The development **supported/delivered/allowed?** by the removal of the WCD, and the cost of sewer lines and an access road to 210, and other costs, including the cost of the 2015 airport study, the tech park study, and the cost of the latest "shotgun study".

These costs should be disclosed, and any that have yet to accrue should not be imposed on current and future residents in a hasty maneuver made possible by the reduced public participation resulting from Covid 19. This amounts to a sneak attack on the waters of the United States, benefiting a few people in the short term, and harming all in the medium and long term. The people who live in the Chesapeake Bay system watersheds should not suffer the result of the loss of ecological services that are now being produced by the existing forest and streams that would be fragmented and lost were this amendment to go forward. Linked to the loss of ecological services, an estimate is also needed of the restoration costs associated with the proposal to remove the WCD in this critical area.

The assessment is needed to address the fact that Mattawoman Creek is at a "tipping point" – this is due to poor planning of the past, in spite of warnings such as documented in the Mattawoman Briefing Booklet in

https://dnr.maryland.gov/fisheries/Documents/tredmanAlliance_Presentation.pdf

https://dnr.maryland.gov/fisheries/Documents/Mattawoman_Ecosystem_Final_Report_March_2012.pdf

a 1992 report from Maryland DNR, if continued would cause the loss of a great and valuable environmental and economic asset. The 2016 Comprehensive Plan with the introduction of the WCD was developed over years of planning and represents Charles County finally starting to get on top of the sprawl development/stormwater pollution problem. The origin and enactment of the WCD was accomplished with a tremendous amount of citizen participation, over time, and in spite of the obstacle that well-financed short-term interests fought against it. The removal of the WCD, if done, will be done hurriedly, disregarding the work and accomplishment of the past, done in a way to limit public information and participation. A glaring example of this is that in previous campaigns to get expansion of the airport, the County commissioned an economic report which determined that claims of economic benefit for the general public was dubious at best. Now, the County is to have an economic study which is to be, according to the PC discussion, delivered on the day the record of the recent hearing closes – if this is the case, absolutely timely foreclosing public comment. The purpose of this "shotgun" study is to override the 2015 Airport market Study (draft) that recommended against taxpayer investment in the private airport.

The assessment must address the impacts of losing Mattawoman and that devastating impact to the Potomac River and Chesapeake Bay system. The WCD is an innovative and meaningful approach to limiting impervious surfaces in the watershed, but it is just one tool, more, not less, is needed to insure the viability of Mattawoman Creek. How would the loss of the Mattawoman, its vitality, and fish nursery affect the bass fishing tournaments and commercial fishery? ...The value of people's homes and their quality of life? The economic viability and success of the Mallows/Potomac, National Marine Sanctuary? The indigenous archeology and Historic Piscataway Trail?

The county must explain and include information about the outstanding 155 million dollar restoration debt the county taxpayers owe Mattawoman Creek and its fishery due to ecological destruction that has not been restored but is MS4 listed as in need of

restoration, in order to reach our mandated Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Loads.

This assessment needs to be presented publicly to the citizens with a public participation opportunity, to Planning Commission in a timely fashion, and before their work session on the Amendment to the 2016 Comprehensive Plan - MD Airport.

This assessment must be available to the citizens, the communities who live around the airport, and other affected and concerned individuals, including the near communities in Prince George's County, and the many kayakers and sport fishers especially from bordering jurisdictions who also have health, property value, and quality of life interests and concerns regarding the proposal to remove the WCD. This document should incorporate the comments from the State Clearinghouse and respond, and incorporate information from https://dnr.maryland.gov/ccs/Documents/Charles_Co_Ecosystem_Service_Report_Final.pdf

The Case to Protect Mattawoman Creek

https://dnr.maryland.gov/fisheries/Documents/Mattawoman_Ecosystem_Final_Report_March_2012.pdf

power point on the Report:

https://dnr.maryland.gov/fisheries/Documents/tredmanAlliance_Presentation.pdf

the and address the federal and state issues presented in the Inter-agency - Report. Also address each of the excellent concerns expressed during the May 3 public hearing (Amendment to the 2016 Comprehensive Plan - MD Airport). And answer the questions put forward on the record, before and at the May 3 hearing, including the NAACP request for information on the racial makeup of the area and the health impacts for the community...as well as a full disclosure of any and all Charles County agreements with the present airport owner, who with the removal of the WCD, will directly add 183 acres to the size of the airport. MD Airport is presently 212 acres, the publicly-owned airport in St Mary's County is approximately the same size and MD Airport is today and almost one-half the size of National Airport in VA. The removal of the WCD would nearly double MD Airport to 400 acres, inside the "inside the fence". The document should weigh the costs and benefits outlined in the assessment. The assessment should be shared with the public and they should be provided additional public participation opportunities before any decision is made regarding the removal of any of the WCD. This is a dramatically important investment decision for Charles County, impacting the county's finances, and the well-being of their citizens and must be approached in an open and transparent manner.

There was no assessment done on the Indian Head Science and Technology Park until after the project had failed. The county had to bailout the Private part of the Public-Private Partnership, it was unavoidable, at the cost of 6,4 million dollars. Yes! There was an **assessment done on Tech Park after the failure**. This time, with some of the same players to gain by the removal of the WCD, the **assessment must be**

done before any decision is made to go forward with the removal of the WCD. Keeping the WCD in place is the environmental protection that is the only shield strong enough to stand between the airport expansion and the inevitable taxpayer investments in infrastructure.

This assessment must be made before the natural resources of the people are taken from the general population and given to a few insiders for their short-term benefit, and to everybody's medium and long-term damage.

Concerning racial aspects the Mattawoman, Mattawoman Task Force The quote starts on bottom of p. 46:

Based on our observations, Mattawoman Creek supports one of the steadiest and busiest recreational fishing destinations in Maryland. There is ample access for both shore-based and boat recreational anglers in Mattawoman Creek. Shore access is particularly important for low-income anglers and is limited in Maryland.

It is turning into a racial issue in Charles County and that can only benefit the cause.

Mattwoman is a majority-minority watershed... the only one in Charles County.

See attached - shows the racial makeup of all elementary schools zip codes...