



TOWN OF NEW CASTLE

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April 26, 2019

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Dear Honorable County Executive Latimer:

On behalf of the Town of New Castle, we wanted to thank you and your staff for taking time out of your busy schedules to meet with us on Monday to discuss issues related to Westchester County Airport operations. We all found the meeting very productive and promising.

We look forward to your response regarding the engagement and funding of an independent consultant, as part of the Master Plan RFP, but in advance of the final Master Plan RFP. We appreciate your recognition that the timeline of the Master Plan and related RFP does not lend itself to a timely analysis of this important issue. Such analysis should provide vital information to enable us to formulate and advocate effectively for New Castle, and neighboring towns. A response within the month, as we discussed, would not only be greatly appreciated, but demonstrate to residents that Westchester County is listening to them and willing to take the necessary steps, both now and in the future, to protect and prioritize their health, safety and quality of life.

During this same period, we would also request that you re-examine the items in Section 3 of our detailed agenda (attached). This section describes action items that might allow for near term steps that would dampen the current environmental impact of the airport on New Castle and other neighboring communities that are beyond the outer marker. Anything we can do to create tangible progress for county residents who have been waiting patiently would accrue to all of our benefit.

We also look forward to the FAA's response to your invitation to discuss ways we can work together to help alleviate local environmental impacts related to Westchester County Airport operations. As we mentioned, we would welcome the opportunity to host this meeting at the Chappaqua Performing Arts Center.

Lastly, we look forward to attending a meeting with our elected officials at the Federal level on this issue.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Very truly yours,

New Castle Town Board
New Castle Airport Advisory Board

Attachment

cc: Ken Jenkins, Deputy County Executive
Joan McDonald, Director of Operations
Susan Spear, Intergovernmental Affairs
John M. Nonna, County Attorney
Mike Kaplowitz, County Legislator
Vic Mallison, Director of Government Relations
Aviva Meyer, Assistant to the County Executive, Public Health and Infrastructure

Meeting with County Executive Office and Town of New Castle Representatives – 4/22/19

1. **Engagement and funding of an independent consultant** to provide an analysis of changes that have taken place with respect to air traffic over the New Castle community and neighboring communities during the past 10 years.

- a. The Master Plan process is much broader and the timing of that process is uncertain.
- b. New Castle and other Northern Westchester communities cannot wait on this analysis and have inquiries that may not be focused on as part of a broader Master Plan context.
- c. Changes in aircraft operations that are not transparent to the County hurt all parties.
- d. Discussion of scope, staging and procurement of the analysis.
 - i. flight paths - gate analyses that look at the number of flights passing through different areas, analyses of flight paths from planes originating from the North, South, East and West, changes in the dispersion of the flight paths around the ILS (how many with 1 mile, 0.5 miles, 1,000 ft. and 500 ft.), analyses of where planes intersect the ILS)
 - ii. flight frequencies - how often do we see “x” planes in a “y” hour window, “x” planes in a day, “x” miles of flight overage in a given day, etc.
 - iii. operator breakdowns by year
 - iv. origination and destination breakdowns by year
 - v. flights / flight paths from local airports (within ‘x’ miles from HPN) – these flights are often empty, breakdown of operators in this category. We believe 10% of arrivals and departures during the month of June 2018 fell into this category
 - vi. altitude analysis - distribution of altitudes, by year, by month and by operator at different points on the ILS
 - vii. equipment breakdowns by year and operator (passengers per commercial flight have gone up dramatically), understanding of the impact of commuter airlines and private jet companies (e.g. Tradewinds, Cape Air, Planesense, Jetsmarter, etc.) that are not operating from the main terminal – including their growth and flight paths
 - viii. runway usage analysis – preliminary data provided by the County indicates a steady move toward increased usage of runway 16 compounding the impact of higher overall traffic volumes in recent years
 - ix. time analysis that shows any changing distribution of arrivals by month and year including a breakdown of operators arriving between 9pm-12am
 - x. wind data analysis including runway selection criteria during calm winds
 - xi. usage of runway 11/29 - where this traffic has moved to and how many planes that have landed on runway 16 are eligible to land on runway 11
 - xii. MTOW analysis of planes landing on runway 16 broken down by operator

- xiii. analysis of noise data from location 5 which is the most northern noise monitor on the ILS path – example attached as an exhibit and the impact of the patterns of noise exposure indicated by such data

Not looking to replace AAB effort in this area, but this really requires a dedicated expert to accelerate time frame and guaranty quality of output. Putting this important analysis solely on well-intentioned, local volunteers is not the best course of action.

Airport noise office not designed for this type of exercise or task.

2. Request for Public Meeting with New Castle Residents to review data, discuss future direction, and respond to questions.

3. Bring together Airport stakeholders to discuss what can be done with and without FAA involvement to disperse flight traffic immediately, in the short term and in the long term.

Potential examples:

- Letting the largest operators at the airport know that this is an issue of importance to the County and bringing them together as a group or individually to ask what they can do to help – Jetblue, Netjets, etc.
- Allocating more Light GA airplanes to runway 11. Having small prop planes on the same landing approach as larger and faster jets creates the need for additional spacing which pushes planes landing from the North on 16 much farther Northward due to traffic on the ILS approach.
- Creating a chartered visual approach to minimize flight time over residential areas that is similar to the scheme used for takeoffs.
- Working with the NJ airports to see what can be done to create more direct approaches to the airport which is done for flights landing on runway 34. These planes are typically smaller (not commercial airlines) and cross the Hudson over Croton Point before changing heading to turn South and land at the airport.
- Critically review the increasing commercialization of private and commuter aviation to determine what the County's response should be to minimize the environmental impact on residents.
- Working with TRACON to have them consistently minimize flight paths and air time over residential areas for flights originating from the South. Understanding that the safety of the public is paramount, too many planes travel many miles North above the outer marker before turning South to land at the airport creating unnecessary fuel burn, emissions and noise pollution. Sometimes this is caused by traffic and the need to create safe distances between aircraft, but many times there is no obvious traffic in the sky. This example and the NJ example above are potentially low hanging fruit for quickly improving the traffic over communities North of the outer marker and dispersing it over a broader area. They could also provide some relief to communities closer to the airport.

- Exploring the 2,000 ft altitude target. Given the high elevation of both the airport and many points along the ILS (much of New Castle under the ILS is approx 500 above MSL and more in some places), increasing altitude targets outside of the outer marker does not seem to be something that would be dangerous or problematic. The skies should be clear from any other traffic at that level. The variation of planes today between 7-10 miles from the airport ranges broadly from 1,600 ft to 2,700 ft MSL. When a plane in the lower range passes over a point that is 500 ft plus MSL, the plane is just slightly 1,000 ft above the residents.

4. **Landing fees at HPN:** This is a project that has been ongoing at the County and which we would like to see implemented prior to the upcoming summer. Current fees are significantly lower at HPN than at other regional airports – see attached. We request a restructuring of the fees to reflect the superior attractiveness of the HPN location (proximity to Westchester, Fairfield and New York Counties), discounts to other airports (especially TEB who we should never be at a discount to) and potential to increase revenue for other airport and environmental related priorities. Fees should be applicable to all non-based aircraft. Together, current policies subsidize and attract transient aircraft to our airport. It is unclear how much money is being foregone by these policies but the amount could be very significant.

5. **Improved data transparency** with all parties. The AAB filed a request with the County last summer – see attachment – for access to reports and data that is already being filed with the County and which should not be deemed confidential, including items like reports filed with regulatory bodies, requests for contract / lease modifications or new leases, violation notices issued to operators at the airport, changes in airport policies or procedures, detailed airport financial statements, etc. This request has turned into a much more complicated discussion than it should be and hampers the ability of the AAB to advise the County and local communities to communicate areas of potential concern. AAB should not be required to FOIL data for access. Inconsistent with a well-functioning operation and creates an unnecessary tension and runs counter to how the County seeks and should be perceived. What is the status of this request? The previous level of oversight allowed massive changes at the airport without proper input from impacted communities.

6. **Master Plan RFP:** Status update. How will the AAB and New Castle be included in the procurement process (e.g., reviewing the draft, evaluating responses, etc.), as per the Good Neighbor Policy.

7. **County outreach to FAA/TRACON:** Request for the County to follow-up with FAA/TRACON to have them explain to the AAB, in either a public meeting or as part of visit to TRACON on Long Island, their methodologies regarding how planes are routed.

8. **Outreach to other elected officials** who represent this area: Coordinated efforts between town boards, mayors, counties (CE and BOL), state senators, members of the US House of Representatives, and Senators are required to maximize outcomes for constituents. CE Latimer's office should work with colleagues at all levels of government to implement improvements.