

CITY OF ANN ARBOR
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2009 MAR 27 AM 9:28

City of Ann Arbor City Council
P.O. Box 8647
Ann Arbor, MI 48107

CITY OF ANN ARBOR
CITY CLERK
REC'D

March 15, 2009

MAR 27 AM 9:28

Dear ladies and gentleman,

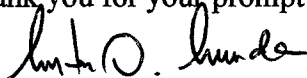
I am writing to express my strenuous objections to spending substantial federal and state taxpayer dollars to extend the primary runway at Ann Arbor Municipal Airport and urge you to intervene during these critical economic times to stop this wasteful project.

While the City of Ann Arbor has argued that the proposed 800-foot runway extension would provide safety benefits, a closer examination of the record shows that the current 3,500-foot runway has had only five incidents in almost 600,000 landings during the last eight years, a record experts consider quite good for an airport with as significant a number of student pilots as Ann Arbor has. In reality, the extended runway is an invitation to more, larger and heavier aircraft – including more jets and charters coming to Ann Arbor – posing substantial noise and safety risks to my neighboring community, which surrounds the airport, as well as residents of Ann Arbor along the airport's primary flight path.

The proposed change would bring planes dangerously low and much closer to our homes, places the airport's boundary fences directly across from homes on the west end of the field, and raise the noise exposure to our homes substantially.

As a resident of that surrounding community, a constituent of yours, and one of the taxpayers who would be paying for this airport extension, I strongly object to this use of my tax dollars. It is especially troublesome that these dollars could be granted to the City of Ann Arbor by only the vote of Ann Arbor elected officials, when most Ann Arbor residents will occur none of the consequential results of this decision and pay almost none of the cost of the airport preparation studies and construction, 97.5 percent of which is funded by federal and state tax dollars. This is a poor use of taxpayer monies when a superb airfield alternative already exists – constructed with federal and state taxpayer dollars – just five miles away at Willow Run for these larger aircraft, which makes any extension of the Ann Arbor field both unnecessary and wasteful. For that reason, I urge you to intervene and help steer these tax dollars to better use.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.



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EDWARD & NANCY NASZRADI

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March 18, 2009

City of Ann Arbor City Council
P. O. Box 8647
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48107

Dear Council Members,

We are writing to express our strong objections to spending substantial federal and state taxpayer dollars to extend the primary runway at Ann Arbor Municipal Airport that is unnecessary and will decrease the quality of life for the residents that adjoin the airport. During these distressed economic times we are sure that you can find a more needed use of the funds that would benefit a much larger taxpayer base.

The attached letter published in the Ann Arbor News on March 13, 2009 provides an expert opinion why the airport should not be extended and refutes the issues that are being used to convince people that there is a need to expand the airport.

We ask that you do not support this expansion that will use needed funds for other projects, may increase potential for more safety issues with larger planes during lower plane takeoffs and landing over area homes and would result in a decrease in quality of life. The nearby Willow Run Airport provides all the needs of an expanded airport and does not cost us a cent which seems like a pretty good deal for all taxpayers not just a few.

Sincerely,

 
Edward J. Naszradi Nancy M. Naszradi

Keep Ann Arbor airport small so that quality of life stays big

OTHER VOICES

BY SOL CASTELL

I have read with great interest the Feb. 4 article about the city's initial allocation of \$550,000 for "assessment and preliminary engineering for the runway changes" to the Ann Arbor Municipal Airport.

Let me start by saying that I have nothing against airplanes or those who fly them. After all, I have been flying for 25 years and still look up at the sky when I hear an airplane.

With this in mind, after reading the article twice, the only thing that made sense is that the article smells of special interest while taking Ann Arbor area residents for fools.

One fact is obvious, the logic behind this project is flawed and "safety" is used to justify the project in the eyes of Average Joe Taxpayer.

Here is why:
Out of 136 aircraft at the Ann Arbor airport today, 85 percent are single engine. (See www.airnav.com/airport/KARB) Those aircraft

can take off and land on a runway less than one-half of the existing 3,500-foot runway. Obviously, the existing runway is sufficient for the remaining 15 percent of the planes.

Now let's continue with the what article claims:

1. Claim: "Now 3,500 feet long, the runway requires pilots to make a much steeper descent than recommended by the Federal Aviation Administration."

The fact is that runway length has nothing to do with the glide path. In fact, as per all available public information, Runways 6 and 24 have a 3-degree VASI (Visual Approach Slope Indicator) or PAPI (Precision Approach Path Indicator) and instrument approach glide slope, which is the norm all over the world. Yes, the FAA tells us there are some trees, but the trees can be trimmed for much less than what this project will cost the taxpayer.

Once runway 24 is extended closer to surrounding houses, however, a pilot may now be faced with a steeper approach if he or she is aiming to touch down at the required touchdown zone.

About the writer

Sol Castell is a professional pilot who has flown a wide range of aircraft from single engines to wide-body jets. He currently flies a Boeing 747-400. He resides in the Ann Arbor area.

2. Claim: "Five planes have overshoot the runway since 2000. The airport handles about 75,000 takeoffs and landings a year." Let's see - 75,000 takeoffs per year for eight years = 600,000. Five of them ran off the runway. Not a bad record. Even an excellent one, considering the fact that much of the traffic is flown by student pilots. Also consider this: Because a longer runway will allow faster and heavier aircraft to land at Ann Arbor, the chances of overruns will most likely increase or at best remain the same. Just take a look at past overruns at Chicago, Dallas-Fort Worth, and Amsterdam's airports to name a few.

3. "The runway expansion wouldn't affect the size of planes using the airport." Not true. For example, a Cessna Citation 510 has a maximum takeoff weight of 8,645 pounds. It needs 3,110 feet for takeoff. Now let's look

at the Citation Ultra with a maximum takeoff weight of 16,300 pounds. It will need 3,510 feet of runway for takeoff and 3,817 feet to land. It is well within the proposed 4,300-foot runway, yet unable to use the existing runway.

Larger aircraft carry more fuel, often are more noisy and have a potential to cause more damage in an emergency. Since the concentration of airplanes is larger around airports, so are the chances for mishaps.

aircraft to use the airport. Hence the chance for runway overruns remains, if not increases.

Example: Dare County Regional Airport in North Carolina had 800 business jet departures on a 4,300-foot runway during 2005 - the same runway length Ann Arbor is looking for. Do we really need all this noise pollution and associated risks in close proximity to downtown and residential areas?

"Classification," however, is relevant when it comes to airport facilities and services, such as a full-time fire and rescue team or 24-hour control tower, which Ann Arbor does not have and will not be required to have, even with the longer runway. So, more traffic, faster traffic, yet the same level of service. Obviously, less safe.

With these points in mind, and because the majority of the project will be financed with tax dollars, taxpayers should ask their elected officials why are they proposing what appears to be a special-interest project with "safety" as its sugar coating where safety is not an issue? It would seem a small group of individuals could benefit

from the increase in business while most of us in the community will see our tax money being used to reduce our quality of life.

One last, yet very important fact to consider: How can any such spending be justified when we have a perfectly good airport with much longer runways, precision instrument approaches, more sophisticated services and facilities than Ann Arbor will ever have, right next door at Willow Run?

Ann Arbor will never be able to duplicate Willow Run, but the beauty of this situation is that we don't have to. So let's demand some common sense from our elected representatives, keep Ann Arbor Municipal Airport small, and our quality of life big. Let Willow Run continue to handle the larger aircraft and air commerce while we reap the benefits. Let's stop the money pit environmental study and use the money where it could make a positive difference.

To contribute essays to Other Voices, contact Bob Needham, opinion editor, at 734-994-6825 or bneedham@annarbornews.com.