

August 18, 2020

Dear Commissioner

We hope this finds you well and safe. We serve on the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) for the PDK Master Plan and are writing to share our concerns with you. We take our role on this committee seriously and thank you in advance for taking the time to listen to our concerns. Our concerns fall into a few categories:

Communications issues

- Rarely have meeting agendas or materials been supplied to us in advance and sometimes it is less than 24 hours before the meeting. This does not give us an opportunity to prepare for the meetings.
- Aside from Working Paper #1 from March 2019, we have not received any other working papers from Michael Baker International, only PowerPoint Presentations.
- We have not been given the contact info for all CAC members so we can talk amongst ourselves regarding the Master Plan.
- DeKalb hired the PR firm Smartegies to help advertise the PDK Master Plan, but to our knowledge, Smartegies has not promoted meetings or our committee or the other 2 committees (TAC and GAC). They only share minutes after the fact. When asked about this recently, Director Evans said, "The Law Department and County Clerk has determined that these committees were not created by the BOC and therefore likely not subject to the Open Meetings Act. However, out of an abundance of caution, we decided to have it advertised." This is not acceptable. All meetings should be advertised, especially with our taxpayer dollars paying for Smartegies services.

Not enough input from the public (residential and commercial)

- There was a public Open House last year earlier in the process. We have been told a second Open House about the Master Plan will happen in the fall, but no date has yet been set.
- Independent surveys should be undertaken among residents and businesses within communities impacted by the PDK air traffic.

Lack of oversight

- Our committee does not vote or even take straw polls. We have been told that we cannot vote because our role is advisory only, however, the PDK Airport Advisory Board has an advisory role only and they do get to vote. Director Evans has said our votes have no merit and we are more of a focus group.
- In committee meetings, we have suggested that things like improved communications be included in the Master Plan (after a survey for the Master Plan cited that as a major public concern), but we were told this plan is for airport operations only.
- We have been told we will receive a survey for additional feedback about the Master Plan in the fall, but the results will be presented to the AAB and not our group.

Environmental concerns

- In August of last year, Director Evans promised a PDK Air Quality Round Table, which would likely happen in the fall of 2019. He said that the FAA, EPA, EPD would participate. This kept getting pushed back due to schedules and now it appears to have been forgotten. Much like the PDK Master Plan Open House, this can happen virtually and that would make it more easy to schedule.

- Our understanding is that Open DeKalb is in negotiations with Director Evans on an environmental roundtable and another full environmental study agreement based on current and forecast volumes for growth at PDK. We are asking for this to occur before the BOC votes on adoption of the Master Plan. Incremental National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) studies for each partial phase of expansion is an end-around approach to what the BOC should expect in order to evaluate the full Master Plan: a study of the complete Plan's impact on health outcomes, safety, and property devaluation in the surrounding areas versus the full forecasted costs and economic benefits.
- The effects of air pollution should be measured and taken into consideration, especially airborne lead in heavy children-populated areas nearby such as Buford Highway.
- Quality-of-life issues due to noise should be evaluated; studies have shown that real estate values are more widely and significantly impacted due to noise annoyance.

Unacceptable Growth

- Growth forecasts are ambitious and could create greater demand and air traffic than is in the public interest in a heavily populated and rapidly urbanizing area of the County.
- Changing the airport's basis-of-design (BOD) from the previously litigated and agreed upon 66,000 lb Maximum Take-Off Weight (MTOW) to an aircraft such as the Gulfstream 550 at 93,000 lbs MTOW is unwarranted. The BOD should remain as previously agreed.
- The Master Plan phasing plan includes the largest expansion ever proposed for PDK with its significant increase of hangars and tie-downs for PDK-based aircraft. Hangars proposed to the east of the runways should be reduced or eliminated with that land evaluated for higher public/private use with less negative public impact serving all of Dekalb County, not just private and corporate interests.
- The cost/benefit presentations from Michael Baker International need independent peer reviews before being accepted.
- Other areas of growth should be subject to more public scrutiny such as limiting scheduled charter service and reducing flight school activity, a significant contributor to air-borne lead pollution and noise.

Safety

- We are committed to this process and the success of the Master Plan as a balance between the conflicting forces of airport and business interests and those of negatively impacted residents and small businesses in the surrounding area, an area which is experiencing unprecedented rapid urban growth and must be taken into consideration.
- The Master Plan includes many worthwhile safety improvements which can be supported.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to our concerns. If you would like to reach out to us directly, we are happy to discuss this further with you.

Sincerely,

Jordan Fox
CAC District 2 rep

Jaime Dutro
CAC District 2 rep

Christopher Lee
CAC Chamblee rep