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November 28, 2017

Council Member Amy Murray, Chair
Major Transportation and Regional Cooperation Committee
City of Cincinnati City Council
City Hall, 801 Plum St.
Cincinnati, OH 45202

RE: Displacement of General Aviation Hangars at Lunken Municipal Airport

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) is the world's largest aviation organization, representing nearly 350,000 pilots, aircraft owners, and aviation enthusiasts. On behalf of our membership, AOPA is committed to ensuring the safety, future viability, and development of general aviation as an integral part of a national transportation system.

We have become aware of a potential development at Lunken Airport that would result in the displacement of nearly 45 general aviation "T-Hangars" from the airport. These T-Hangars house over 50 business and personal aircraft. As far as we can determine, the development in question has not been made public knowledge, but tenants have noticed survey crews taking core samples from the area known as the "South Line" and rumors abound. This would indicate early planning stages for construction. In our discussions with the airport manager, Fred Anderton, he has indicated he has no detailed information regarding the development other than a concept proposed by Mr. Dan Schimberg to members of the city council.

This concept, as you may know, would create a third Fixed Base Operator (FBO) at Lunken Airport, which in the traditional sense, would offer fuel sales, aircraft storage, flight instruction, aircraft maintenance services and aircraft management. AOPA, along with tenants of the airport, has concerns on what this third "FBO" would offer for services and whether said development would conform to the airport's existing Minimum Standards for Commercial Aeronautical Services. The developer of this proposed concept, to our knowledge, has no ties to aviation businesses other than owning an aircraft for his own business purposes. We fear this is nothing more than a land grab to construct a facility to house his personal business aircraft and those of potential business partners. We have significant concerns as to whether this third "FBO" would even offer any services for other users of the airport or transient aircraft operators.

AOPA, along with the tenants and users of Lunken Airport, support further development of aviation-related uses. However, we ask that the potential developer and the city follow the proper avenues that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has implemented for federally obligated airports across the United States. The city must act within these "Grant Assurances" extended by the FAA to the airport sponsor upon receipt of grant funds for airport improvement.

Although the City of Cincinnati may own and manage the property of Lunken Airport, there are a number of processes to which a project like this must conform.

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The FAA must approve any land use changes for such construction, approve any changes to the current "ALP" Airport Layout Plan, and the city must have a plan to relocate and accommodate the displaced hangars and tenants. Part of this FAA process requires involving stakeholders of the airport.

These tenants purchase fuel, provide flight instruction, host a very active flying club, and use their aircraft in support of education initiatives along with personal business use.

The general aviation community at Lunken Airport is active and vibrant, which is something we strive to emulate at airports across the country. Over a forty-year period at Lunken Airport, private aircraft owners have been pushed off the property making way for corporate hangar development. The Airport Master Record indicates that there are currently 133 light piston aircraft and 58 jet aircraft based at Lunken. As of now, there is not adequate room on the field to accommodate and replicate the current T-Hangars on the South Line of the airport. If the airport were to lose these based aircraft, it would result in a nearly 40% decrease in total based fixed wing aircraft. A net loss of fuel sales and operations for the airport would decrease accordingly. Will the sacrifice of these hangars be worth the gain of another corporate aircraft?

Another issue to consider is the loss of Cincinnati Blue-Ash Airport several years ago. Small general aviation airports with available hangar space are becoming rare around the Cincinnati area. With Blue-Ash Airport now being non-existent, the tenants of Lunken have serious concerns relating to the storage of their aircraft. To put this in perspective, Lunken Airport has a T-Hangar waiting list with the wait time measured in years, not weeks or months. Some of these aircraft owners resort to outdoor storage of their aircraft, which increases maintenance costs over the long term.

AOPA is asking City Council to have a full and open discussion with the tenants and users of Lunken Airport. The tenants have formed a group known as Lunken Airport Action Group (LAAG). These tenants want to have positive communication with city administration and discuss options on how to lessen the impact on their on-airport community.

AOPA is working with the FAA to schedule an onsite meeting with local tenants and city officials to further discuss the current situation at Lunken Airport. We are hopeful that such a meeting will result in a constructive communication process and positive outcome for Lunken Airport the city and tenants with a completely transparent planning process going forward.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further, please do not hesitate to call my office or contact me by e-mail at Bill.Dunn@AOPA.org.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



Bill Dunn
AOPA
Government Affairs

CC:

Honorable John Cranley, Mayor
David Mann, Vice Mayor
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Council Member Chris Seelbach
Council Member P.G. Sittenfeld
Council Member Christopher Smitherman
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