



AIRCRAFT OWNERS AND PILOTS ASSOCIATION

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August 20, 2007

Mr. Roger Krieger
Director of Community Services
City of Deer Park
Post Office Box F
Deer Park, WA 99006

Dear Mr. Krieger:

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) represents the general aviation interests of 414,000 members, more than two-thirds of the nation's pilots – including 12,100 members who live in the state of Washington. On behalf of our members, AOPA is committed to ensuring the continued viability, growth and development of general aviation and airports in Washington and the United States as part of a balanced, national transportation system.

The State of Washington relies on a comprehensive system of airports to fully access the National Airspace System. In order to continue to have such a system the State recognized the need to protect these vital airports from incompatible land uses. To achieve that goal the Washington State Legislature amended the Washington State Growth Management Act in 1996 to require cities and counties to protect airports from incompatible land uses. This requirement is found in RCW 36.70.547 / 36.70A.510.

AOPA is concerned with a request currently before the city (file number 2007-2) that would change the zoning of 40+/- acres of land from Light Industrial to Diversified Commercial. This change will allow for the creation of potential non-compatible residential development closer to the Deer Park Airport (DEW) than currently exists. It is our firm belief that residential development less than one mile from an airport boundary leads to significant negative impacts on airports to include casting the airport as an irritant to its neighbors, limiting access to the airport, increasing the risk of injury or death in an aircraft accident, and in certain extreme cases, closure of the airport.

Washington State Department of Transportation Aviation Division's published guidance on airports and compatible land provides a generic template of airport safety zones and land use guidelines that planning agencies and airport sponsors should use when considering zoning requests. The property in question in this case lies entirely within Zone 6, otherwise known as the traffic pattern zone, which would be subject to over-flight from aircraft utilizing Runway 16/34 at DEW. The state guidelines recommends a maximum of one dwelling unit per 5 acres in rural area, and one dwelling unit per 2.5 acres in urban area. Based on the application for change of zone, residential development is almost a certainty.

Mr. Roger Krieger
Page 2
August 20, 2007

While the applicant addresses some of the land use planning strategies outlined in the WSDOT guidelines, AOPA believes that adherence to the current zoning designation is a much more compatible use for this property and is in the best interests of the airport and the City of Deer Park as the airport sponsor. The City would be fulfilling its contractual obligations with the Federal Aviation Administration and the State of Washington by retaining the Light Industrial zoning designation in this area.

To that end, AOPA strongly encourages the City of Deer Park to deny file number 2007-2 application for change of zone.

Thank you for your consideration of our views on this issue. If we can be of further assistance please contact our staff at 301-695-2200.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill Dunn", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Bill Dunn
Vice President
Airports

cc:

Ms. Penni Loomis, Manager, Deer Park Airport
Mr. John Shambaugh, Senior Planner, Aviation Division, Washington State DOT
Mr. Wade Bryant, Manager, FAA Seattle Airports District Office
Mr. Mike Ferguson, AOPA Northwest Regional Representative
Mr. Phil Costello, AOPA Airport Support Network Volunteer, DEW