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May 20, 2009

Ms. Sharon Gamble
Multifamily Finance Division
Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs
P.O. Box 13941
Austin, TX 78711-3941

RE: Proposed Goldshire Townhome Application for Housing Tax Credit for Multifamily
Low-Income Rent Units Project

Dear Ms. Gamble:

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), represents the general aviation interests of more than 416,000 members, including more than 30,500 of our members in the state of Texas. On behalf of our membership, AOPA is committed to ensuring the future viability and development of general aviation airports and their facilities as part of a national transportation system.

The purpose of this letter is to share AOPA's concerns with the proposed development known as the Goldshire Townhomes housing project, located approximately one mile north of the Sugar Land Regional Airport (SGR) and the possible significant impacts it will have.

The proposed Goldshire Townhomes housing project lies directly under the approach path to Sugar Land Regional Airport, which is the fourth largest regional airport in the Houston area and an important hub for the Fort Bend County business community. Approximately 200 aircraft, including corporate jets, land at or take off from Sugar Land Regional Airport on a daily basis. Many of these aircraft fly over the location of the proposed Goldshire Townhomes project as low as 500 feet above the ground when flying to or from the airport. Residential development this close to an airport is a matter of poor public policy and we strongly encourage the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs to not encourage residential development so close to SGR.

The City of Sugar Land executed grant assurances with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) when they accepted Airport Improvement Program funds for various development projects at the airport. Two of those grant assurances require that the airport sponsor take appropriate actions to:

1. "...assure that such terminal airspace as is required to protect instrument and visual operations to the airport will be adequately cleared and protected by removing, lowering, relocating, marking, or lighting or otherwise mitigating existing airport hazards and by preventing the establishment or creation of future airport hazards."¹

¹ FAA Airport Sponsor Assurances #20 Hazard Removal and Mitigation,
http://www.faa.gov/airports_airtraffic/airports/aip/grant_assurances/media/airport_sponsor_assurances.pdf.

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2. "...take appropriate action, to the extent reasonable, including the adoption of zoning laws, to restrict the use of land adjacent to or in the immediate vicinity of the airport to activities and purposes compatible with normal airport operations, including landing and takeoff of aircraft."²

The Association believes that compatible land use around airports should be a high priority for airport sponsors in order to adequately provide for the health, welfare and safety of its citizens both on the ground and in the air. We are pleased to see that the City of Sugar Land's number one objective for a well-planned community is compatible land use zoning. We hope you agree that allowing residential development under the aircraft approach and departure operations for SGR's busy runway will diminish the existing protection and safety of the airport and create additional noise concerns in the future.

Since Sugar Land Regional Airport is an active general aviation airport with more than 85,000 operations annually and 129 based aircraft, residential units in close proximity to the airport simply are not in the best interest of the airport or local residents who would be living near it.

AOPA respectfully requests that the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs not encourage this proposed development to continue. We appreciate your prompt action to stop an incompatible land use in such close proximity to this viable transportation asset.

Sincerely,



Heidi J Williams
Senior Director
Airports

cc: Mr. Steve McHale
Mr. Seth Riklin, Airport Support Network Volunteer, SGR
Mr. Dave Fulton, Texas Department of Transportation, Director of Aviation
Mr. Phillip Savko, SGR Airport Manager

² FAA Airport Sponsor Assurances #21 Compatible Land Use,
http://www.faa.gov/airports_airtraffic/airports/aip/grant_assurances/media/airport_sponsor_assurances.pdf.