



TOWN OF NEW CASTLE

200 South Greeley Avenue, Chappaqua, New York 10514 • (914) 238-4771 • Email: townboard@mynewcastle.org • mynewcastle.org

Supervisor

Robert J. Greenstein
(914) 238-4774

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Council Members

Lisa S. Katz
Deputy Town Supervisor
(914) 238-4774

Honorable George Latimer
Westchester County Executive
148 Martine Avenue
White Plains, New York 10601

Hala Makowska
(914) 238-4774

Honorable Michael Kaplowitz
Westchester County Executive
148 Martine Avenue
White Plains, New York 10601

Ivy A. Pool
(914) 238-4774

Jeremy M. Saland
(914) 238-4774

Re: **Request for Proposals - Supplement to the Westchester County Airport Master Plan**

Town Administrator

Jill Simon Shapiro
(914) 238-4742

Dear Honorable County Executive Latimer and County Legislator Kaplowitz:

The purpose of this letter is to respond to the draft Request for Proposals for the Supplement to the Westchester County Airport Master Plan ("RFP") on behalf of the Town of New Castle. As you are aware, we have significant concerns as to the current operations of the Westchester County Airport ("HPN"), as well as the plans for its future. It is our hope that Westchester County re-examines and revises the RFP as set forth herein to ensure that HPN conforms to the standard inherent in the County's "Good Neighbor" policy which is the symbol of how this administration has communicated it would work with the residents and communities of Westchester County.

Noise Pollution

Consistent with the feedback provided to you first hand by our residents on April 14, 2018, along with the sentiments of Westchester County residents expressed to you during three (3) separate public hearings this summer, we are deeply concerned that the RFP does not meaningfully address the environmental impact of HPN on the quality of life for residents of New Castle or any of HPN's surrounding communities. The only mention is in Task 3 (d), where the consultant is only asked to "evaluate the noise monitoring program at the airport and make recommendations for improvement."

During the aforementioned meetings, Westchester County residents expressed that the environmental impact of the airport with respect to noise pollution was completely unacceptable and needed to be urgently and meaningfully addressed, not merely monitored as the RFP contemplates. The need to take affirmative steps to explore every single avenue to minimize noise pollution and all environmental impacts should permeate every aspect of this document. Each task performed or analysis conducted should recognize that HPN's operations and plans for the future need to proactively address this issue. The RFP needs to make it exceedingly clear to any outside consultant contemplating working on this project that addressing the legitimate concerns of residents with respect to the growing and very real problem of noise pollution is a primary focus of this process.

Further, as part of this process, and based upon the Town of New Castle's consultation with one of the nation's leading aviation law experts, we believe that that Westchester County should immediately commission a thorough, detailed study of available flight data to determine the root causes of the increase in noise pollution. This study should include but not be limited to a thorough review of the impact of (a) new technology that tightens the dispersion of flight paths and/or changes in altitudes, (b) flight path changes (including flight path changes that reflect both the actual flight paths taken by aircraft as well as the impact of increased private traffic that is not governed by the Westchester County

Airport Terminal Use Procedures), (c) fleet mix changes and (d) increases in activity by private fractional operators at HPN (on both a company specific and aggregate basis). We ask that you consider adding this task to the scope of work in the RFP.

Airport Capacity

As currently drafted, Task 2 of the RFP appears to accept an increase in capacity at Westchester County Airport, merely specifying that the consultant shall “improve operational safety and efficiency at the airport, including facility modifications and modernizations as necessary.” We believe the RFP must make it crystal clear with an affirmative statement that no increase in overall capacity at Westchester County Airport will be considered, a statement that conforms to the Board of Legislators policy articulated in 2003 when passing Resolution 245-2003: “[T]he policy of the Westchester County Board of Legislators is and continues to be one of supporting no increase in the total capacity of the Airport’s runways, taxiways, ramps, gates, hangars, terminal, motor vehicle parking areas, or access roads, in order that we may protect our fragile environment, including the drinking water for almost nine million people [emphasis added].”

Priority of Environmental Impact

The RFP does not reflect that minimizing environmental impacts are a priority for the Westchester County. Instead, evaluation of HPN as a “unique resource and economic generator for the county and region” is “Task 1” and inherently subordinates all environmental considerations. We fully reject this subordination and are confident that the residents of Westchester County echo our sentiment. The RFP must clearly stress the importance of minimizing the environmental impact of HPN as a primary objective that is at least equal to any other objective in the RFP. We believe that Westchester County must identify specific, meaningful and measurable reductions in noise, air and water pollution as specific objectives of the supplement to the Airport Master Plan. This is the only way that the Town of New Castle can ensure that current and future economic activity at Westchester County Airport is no longer borne at the unfair expense of New Castle residents in the form of increased noise, air and water pollution.

The subordination of environmental issues anywhere in this document will skew the types of consultants who reply to the RFP, the evaluation of which consultants to hire and undermine the ultimate work product that is produced by such consultants.

With the above in mind, although we recognize that there may be timing constraints facing the County with respect to the finalization of the RFP, we ask that the County immediately open the RFP drafting process to all surrounding communities so that all interested parties can ensure the final document reflects the ideals inherent in its “Good Neighbor” policy. The current operation and future of HPN is a critically important issue for the Town of New Castle. Our legitimate concerns must be incorporated into the RFP accordingly.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Very truly yours,

Town Board, Town of New Castle

Robert J. Greenstein, Town Supervisor
Lisa S. Katz, Deputy Town Supervisor
Hala Makowska, Councilmember
Ivy Pool, Councilmember
Jeremy Saland, Councilmember

cc: Susan Spear
Norma Drummond
Ayiva Meyer