

Sully District Council of Citizens Associations



**P.O. Box 230042
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Testimony on the Proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendment to the Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan (2020-CW-3CP Airport Noise Policy)

Provided on 18 May 2022

Good evening Chairman Murphy, members of the Fairfax County Planning Commission and other attendees. My name is Jeffrey Parnes and I live in Oak Hill, Virginia, representing, as President, the Sully District Council of Citizens Associations, and as co-chair, the Joint Sully District Land Use and Transportation Committee.

I first want to inform the commission of the passing of a longtime member and officer of both organizations. Mark McConn, who, on occasion, has addressed this body previously, passed this month. Our organizations, Sully District and our county will be diminished by the passing of this long-time community volunteer and leader.

Our two organizations have strenuously objected to previous county proposals to allow residential development in the Washington Dulles International Airport noise contours. We have repeatedly requested the county to adopt the revised Dulles Airport 2019 noise contours rather than ignoring them.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA) have both recommended that no new residential construction be allowed within the 65 LdN. Via a letter dated 18 April 2019, MWAA informed the county of updated Dulles Airport noise contour lines. That same year you, the

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Plan Amendment to the Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan
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Fairfax County Planning Commission, reviewed the updated MWAA noise contour lines and recommended that the Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan be amended to include the revised contours.

Over the past couple of years we have sent you, the Board of Supervisors and others in the county and commonwealth our positions on this matter:

- A) On 13 January 2020 the Joint Committee considered the rezoning application for Retreat at Westfields (RZ 2019-SU-009) which would allow residential development within the noise contours. The Joint Committee recommended that the subject rezoning not go forward
- B) On 18 May 2020 the Joint Committee urged the Board of Supervisors to immediately amend the Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan to reflect the updated Dulles Airport noise contour lines that were communicated in the 18 April 2019 MWAA letter.
- C) On 18 May 2020 the Joint Committee considered the Stanley Martin Stonebrook Rezoning and Final Development Plan (RZ/FDP 2019-SU-005 & PCA 78-S-063-08). Based on the proposal, almost all of the proposed new residential development is located within Dulles' updated 65 LdN contour. Therefore, the Joint Committee recommended that the subject rezoning not go forward.
- D) On 15 June 2020 the Joint Committee considered the Boulevards at Westfields (RZ 2019-SU-010). Based on the Boulevards at Westfields proposal, almost all of the proposed new residential is located if not within Dulles' updated 65 LdN contour, so close as to be moot. Therefore, the Joint Committee recommended that the subject rezoning not go forward.
- E) On 21 September 2020 the Joint Committee considered the Stonebrook/Stanley Martin application, located within the “highly annoying” 65-70 noise contour of the updated 2019 MWAA noise contour map. The Joint Committee opposed the further weakening of Fairfax County environmental policies to facilitate approvals of additional residential development, such as the Stonebrook/Stanley Martin application, on inappropriate sites which would aggravate the conflicts between residential and airport uses, and might impair and jeopardize future airport operations.

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The Board of Supervisors has authorized study of this amendment to the Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan (2020-CW-3CP Airport Noise Policy) to relax the noise protection policy countywide, and allow new residential development between the 60 and 65 DNL noise contours countywide, not limited to Land Unit J.

The Joint Committee:

- Recognizes the paramount importance of the Northern Virginia airports (Dulles International and Reagan National) to the economy of the Washington Metropolitan region.
- Strongly supports facilitation of citizen and neighborhood engagement and participation in the development and amendment of Fairfax County's Comprehensive Plan and zoning ordinance, incorporating the best and most recent scientific data available regarding the health and safety of county residents;
- Strongly supports long-standing environmental noise policy, protecting residential uses and their occupants' safety and health from the detrimental impacts of airport noise, including the Comprehensive Plan text recommending the use of updated noise contour data, so that the best and most current noise contour data must be considered during the review of land use applications; and
- Requests that the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors authorize for advertising the updated noise contours, and maintain the long-standing policies protecting residential uses from airport noise, endangering residents' safety and health. Instead, the Board has failed to do so, instead retaining the outdated noise contours from 1993 (which do not reflect the addition of the fifth runway, and other operational changes), and relaxing the noise protection policy in the Comprehensive Plan, to allow additional new residential development in Land Unit J, between the 60 and 65 DNL noise contours.
- Requests that the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors forthwith authorize the necessary advertising for adoption and incorporation of the updated 2019 MWAA noise contour map into applicable County documents, including immediate authorization of any applicable Comprehensive Plan and zoning ordinance amendments, so that the best available scientific data, including the most recent and accurate noise contour delineations, will safeguard residents' safety and health, and must be considered by County staff and decision makers in a timely

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fashion, in the review process for pending rezonings and other land use applications.

- Strongly requests that the Board of Supervisors comply with the requests of MWAA to provide it with notice, upon acceptance or authorization, of all land use applications, and including any pertinent ordinance or Comprehensive Plan amendments, located either within the 60-65 DNL noise contours or higher, or within the Airport Noise Impact Overlay District (ANIOD), and to provide MWAA staff with copies of any corresponding staff reports upon publication.
- Requests that the Board of Supervisors require, in any residential development approvals within the noise contours of 60-65 DNL or higher, the provision of aviation easements, as well as comprehensive written disclosures to prospective purchasers, including potential safety and health consideration and a legible diagram depicting flight paths in proximity to the development.
- Strongly opposes the further weakening of Fairfax County environmental policies to facilitate approvals of new residential development on inappropriate sites impacted by airport noise, which approvals aggravate the conflicts between residential and airport uses and may impair and jeopardize future airport operations.
- Strongly opposes further delays by the Board of Supervisors and its committees in the adoption of the updated 2019 MWAA noise contour map, while significant land use applications affected by the noise contours continue to be reviewed and approved ignoring the best scientific data available, using outdated noise contours from 1993.

On 21 February 2022 the Joint Committee considered the Fairfax County's Comprehensive Plan Amendment which our estimation would cause potential impairment to the county's residents' safety and health, and the fact that the county has still has refused to adopt the updated MWAA noise contours. The Joint Committee recommends the Fairfax County's Comprehensive Plan Amendment 2020-CW-3CP Airport Noise Policy not be adopted.

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Submitted by:

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Note that this document is posted at

http://www.sullydistrict.org/testimony/20220518_Testimony2020-CW-3CPAirportNoisePolicy.pdf

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