



Lois J. Frankel

Mayor

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"The Capital City of the Palm Beaches"

June 13, 2007

Commissioner Jeff Koons, Chair and Board Members of the
Palm Beach County Metropolitan Planning Organization
2300 North Jog Road – 4th Floor
West Palm Beach, FL 33411-2749

**Re: Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Funds for Palm Beach
International Airport (PBIA) Runway Expansion**

Dear Commissioner Koons and MPO Board Member:

It has come to our attention, that at its June 21, 2007 meeting, the MPO Board will discuss its TIP for the next five years which includes close to \$200 million of capital funds allocated for the proposed PBIA runway expansion that is currently being evaluated by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

The City of West Palm Beach wishes to indicate its concerns with such a significant amount of funds being prematurely allocated to a project that is still being evaluated, with the results of the study not expected to be completed until 2009.

While the number of passengers using the airport has increased over the last few years, data reported by PBIA indicates that its total airplane traffic has significantly decreased from 234,788 aircraft operations in 1989 to 160,269 operations in 2006 (a decrease of almost 32%). The Department of Airports has justified the proposed runway expansion on projections that PBIA aircraft operations will increase over the next 13-15 years; however, the City is concerned with these projections given that similar airplane traffic projections used to justify previous runway expansions have proven to be inaccurate and have significantly overestimated future airplane traffic.

The City is also concerned that the negative impacts of this proposed expansion will primarily be felt by the residents and businesses in the City of West Palm Beach. Today, approximately 51% of the residents located within the current PBIA noise contours are in the City of West Palm Beach and this number is likely

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to increase with this proposed airport expansion. Many of the City's historic neighborhoods are currently impacted by the fanning departure procedure and will be further impacted by the proposed expansion. These historic districts contain some of the finest and oldest architectural structures in the County.

The City already lost significant parts of the Vedado-Hillcrest neighborhood (over 360 residences) due to the required noise abatement program for the runway expansion that took place 6-7 years ago and can ill afford to have other neighborhoods significantly impacted due to this new expansion proposal. In addition, a buyout of homes in the areas affected by the proposed expansion could lead to a potential loss of existing workforce housing units.

The City also has significant concerns with the socioeconomic and fiscal impacts of this proposal. Specifically, the City's concerns deal with the potential loss of community tax base that could result from a potential buyout of additional homes and/or businesses within the City as a result of this proposal. In addition, we are concerned about the loss of personal home equity that our residents may experience due to the depreciation of the value of their homes as a result of airplane noise and fallout. We believe that this proposed expansion will increase the amount of noxious particulate matter that is currently being dumped by airplanes on the homes to the east of the airport. This project impacts not only the quality of life of our citizens but also it creates a serious health hazard to the people that live in these areas.

The City requests that the MPO Board does not approve these capital funds for the PBIA runway expansion at this time and instead recommends that the Palm Beach County Department of Airports and the FAA initiate a comprehensive county-wide airport capacity management plan before any runway expansion is decided. As part of this plan, strong consideration should be given to the following:

- 1) Measures that encourage, or require, that most general aviation planes (smaller aircrafts) currently using PBIA be sent to other airports in Palm Beach County (e.g. Lantana Airport or specially North County Airport). Currently, close to 60% of all airplanes using PBIA are general aviation planes, with this number increasing to close to 80% during the high season and weekends. Encouraging general aviation to use other airports instead of PBIA would significantly reduce air traffic at PBIA, potentially decreasing, or completely eliminating, the need for any runway expansions;

- 2) Immigration and custom facilities be provided for the North County and Lantana airports. Every year, thousands of small planes flying from the Bahamas

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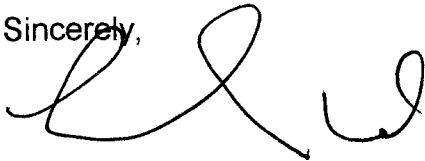
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to regional airports in Florida or the Southeast are required to land at PBIA for customs and immigration procedures and then later depart for their destination airports (including North County and Lantana). This results in many additional landings and departures at PBIA that could be avoided if these immigration and custom facilities were provided at these other airports; and

3) Strong consideration should be given to upgrading the control tower at PBIA with equipment that will increase the efficiency of aircraft landings and departures. These tower equipment improvements should result in a reduction on any potential airplane landing or departure delays, and could eliminate the need to expand the existing runways.

We appreciate your consideration to our position at the June 21th, 2007 MPO meeting. If you have any questions, please contact me at (561) 822-1400.

Sincerely,



Lois J. Frankel
Mayor

C: Senator Mel Martinez
Senator Bill Nelson
Congressman Alcee L. Hastings
Congressman Ron Klein
Congressman Tim Mahoney
Congressman Robert Wexler
Palm Beach County Commissioners
West Palm Beach City Commissioners
Bob Weisman, County Administrator
Ed Mitchell, City Administrator
Claudia McKenna, City Attorney
Bruce Pelly, Airports Department Director
Charles Wu, City Planning and Zoning Director
Randy Whitfield, PBC MPO Director
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