

Open Letter to the City Council and the people of Georgetown:

After attending the Georgetown City Council meeting last night (1-26-16), I am compelled to write this letter in response to Mr. Russ Volk's "discussion regarding Airport Educational Materials." As you may know, this was not a discussion but a presentation of a plan to answer frequently asked questions about the airport, something that should have happened long ago and in a much more open manner.

Based on the one example given by Mr. Volk and the questions asked by council members, I am concerned that time and money will be spent on answering questions that have **not** been asked while our true concerns are, once again, deflected, misrepresented, and labeled "crazy rumors". Here again, are some genuine questions for which the people of Georgetown deserve an answer.

1. Mr. Volk explained that the below ground, leaking fuel tanks had to be dug up and replaced with above ground tanks to keep them from polluting the Edwards Aquifer. There is no question that it must be done. In fact, more than one speaker at the October session of the Georgetown Transportation Advisory Board and the only time we have been allowed to express our concerns, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGaEdlqjTec&feature=youtu.be> made the same point, even adding that the pollution was already damaging their Golden Oaks neighborhood.

The real question is: **Why will the new tanks have such a greatly increased capacity for light plane and jet fuel?** The logical answer is that more planes will need the fuel for more takeoffs and landings. If true, that is an **expansion of the airport through increased operations**, something officials have consistently denied.

1. No one disagrees that runways must be maintained. The real question is: **Why must they be appreciably thickened?** Pilots tell us that the most likely reason, in fact, the only one they can think of, is to accommodate heavier aircraft. If the airport expects to serve heavier jets, that is an **expansion of the airport through increased operations**. Again, denied.
2. Officials say that environmental studies have been done and there are no significant impacts. The real questions are: **Where are these studies? Are they for each segment of the overall airport plan separately, or do they include all segments? Where is the results of the government required EIS that would show the overall impact on the airport area and Georgetown as a whole?**

4. If, as all officials say, there are no plans to expand the footprint or operations of the airport, why are there plans to do so at :

<http://records.georgetown.org/weblink8/Browse.aspx?startid=428151&row=1&dbid=0>

#### 4.6.4 Runway and Taxiway Object Free Area (OFA) Encroachments

As discussed in Section Three, Future Facility Requirements, **encroachments** to runway and taxiway OFAs **include trees**, utility poles, fences, **residential houses**, as well as parking aircraft. Exhibit 3.1 and ALP drawings in Appendix "C" graphically depict these encroachments. The development plans proposed in this study create more apron areas for aircraft parking, thus eliminate parking aircraft encroachments to the OFAs. The development plans also recommend, within the existing airport property line, removing these trees and the abandoned Lakeway Drive pavement that fall within the OFAs. The utility poles located south to Runway 36 end are to be relocated outside of the OFA and to be clear of the FAR Part 77 Primary and Approach Surfaces and the Threshold Siting Surface (TSS). The other alternative for the utility pole encroachments is to bury the conductor underground. The 8-foot game fencing encroaches on the OFAs at two locations. One is located south of Runway 11-29, running parallel and west to Runway 18-36. The other is located northeast of Runway 18, running parallel to Runway 18-36. These two parts of the fencing must be relocated outside the OFAs. As illustrated in Exhibit 3.1 and the ALP drawings, the existing airport property line does not include the entire OFAs. The OFAs fall outside the existing airport property line at the northwest side of Runway 18 end, both sides of Runway 36 end, and southwest side of Runway 29 end. **A number of trees, the airport fencing, and houses are within these OFAs. It is recommended that the City acquire the entire OFAs as the ultimate airport property, City of Georgetown Airport Master Plan Update 4.14 removing trees, demolishing houses, relocating the fencing, and clearing any other encroachments.** The City has no current plans or intentions to follow this recommendation.

4.6.5 Runway Protection Zone (RPZ) Encroachments As illustrated in Exhibit 3.1 and ALP drawings in Appendix "C", **a number of residences and public roads are within the runway RPZs.** The discussion in Section 3.1.5, Runway Protection Zone (RPZ), recommends that the City acquire aviation easements for all four RPZs which are not within the existing and ultimate airport property lines. It further suggests a larger RPZ be protected for each end of Runway 11-29, and the associated land to be acquired as aviation easements. **As a part of ultimate development plan, these residences must be removed and the public roads realigned outside the RPZs.** The City has no current plans or intentions to follow this recommendation.

**What is the definition of the word, "current"? This week? This year? Are FAA recommendations being misrepresented as requirements? The citizens of Georgetown deserve to know.**

#### **5. And, if the airport is not expanding operations, why was Mr. Volk, a man who is known for helping airports do exactly that, hired for this work?**

<http://ironcountytoday.com/bookmark/18545531-Regional-jet-service-returning-to-Cedar-City-airport>

Ladies and gentlemen of the Council and citizens of Georgetown, these questions and others must be considered, not just for the negative impacts on neighborhoods, schools, and churches, surrounding the airport, but for the future of Georgetown. **More air traffic sends more fuel and noise pollution into already stressed neighborhoods all the way through Berry Creek and Sun City, into the Williams Drive corridor ("The Gateway to our grand city"), the Rivery developments, San Gabriel Park and River, and even into the downtown square.** What a shame if strolling, shopping, and talking with friends on "The Most Beautiful Square in Texas" were constantly interrupted by noisy jets, helicopters, and noxious fumes. Georgetown families, visitors, and businesses deserve better than that.

There are always opportunities to guide Georgetown into a more desirable future. I urge you to consider the contrast between the area around Love Field, Dallas and the Mueller airport property, Austin. Mueller almost followed the Love Field example, with lowered property values and widespread degraded neighborhoods, until leaders had the courage to take a chance on the future. Now, the old airport property has become an upscale draw with shopping, a children's museum, park area and more.

Although viable options for moving our airport have been suggested, there have been no opportunities for public response to or discussions of this possibility. If that action is to be dismissed out-of-hand, the city should at least consider a compromise assuring that the promise of "no expansion" would be honored. **An agreement/covenant between the airport and city, holding expansions of operations and footprint for a specific, extended time (25-30 years) would allow for proper EIS studies and alternate and/or auxiliary use options to emerge while, at the same time, preserve the things that make Georgetown the "Grand City" we all love and will keep it that way for all those who come in the future.**