

To be discussed at the April 2019 PIC meeting.



State of New Jersey
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
OFFICE FOR PLANNING ADVOCACY
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Governor

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GUARAGGIO
Lieutenant Governor

CHARFENBERGER, PH.D.
Director

Recommendation from 2017

TO: **which was not acted upon**
FROM: Colleen McGurk, Government Representative, Office for Planning
Advocacy **by the SPC**
RE: Eagles Nest Airport Transportation Node recommendation

DATE: August 4, 2017

The Office for Planning Advocacy recommends a map change to include a heavy-industrial-transportation-utility node in Eagleswood Township at the Eagles Nest Airport and surrounding properties. The map amendment would result in the creation of a transportation node on approximately 111.29 acres. The area would consist of Block 34 Lot 1.01, Block 35 Lot 3, Block 36 Lot 13.02, Block 37 Lots 1-3 and 2.02 and 2.03 (formerly 2.01), Block 38 Lots 7 and 9.

The proposed node meets several of the State Development and Redevelopment Plan goals:

Goal # 3 To promote beneficial economic growth – The airport is an existing business that in order to remain viable needs to be recognized as an important transportation facility in to upgrade and make certain improvements. Eagles Nest Airport serves the community and region by providing tax ratables, economic output and providing jobs both direct and indirect. According to a 2015 New Jersey Statewide Airport Economic Impact Study, Eagles Nest Airport has a payroll of \$5,414,600 for its 70 employees and generates a total output into the regional economy of \$17,937,600. The report was prepared for the New Jersey Department of Transportation Bureau of Aeronautics by AECOM Technical Services, Inc.

Goal # 5 Provide Adequate Public Facilities and Services at a Reasonable Cost – The existing airport provides additional infrastructure that has been deemed necessary by the DOT. New

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Jersey has lost smaller private airports over the years and would like to retain the existing airports which also provide public services. The airport helps to serve the needs of the community especially in times of emergency.

Goal # 7 Preserve and Enhance Areas with Historic, Cultural, Scenic, Open Space and Recreational Value – The airport has recreational value for the region by providing services for private pilots, those who want to obtain their pilots license and for passengers who hire small planes or helicopters for sightseeing tours.

Public Comments: The following are concerns raised by the public. There were approximately 26 people that attended the meeting in Eagleswood Township on June 28, 2017. There were many concerns that were repeated by different residents so I have compiled them into different categories but please keep in mind that several of these were raised by multiple residents.

- The property has been cleared of forested area (according to DEP approximately 13 acres of woods) which has caused soil erosion and increased stormwater runoff and the lack of wooded area has reduced the environmental attributes of the property. Also there is an underground stream and above ground stream which is drying up.
- The airport hurts property values and does not create a benefit to the local economy.
- The airport is a safety hazard, two flights recently crashed at the site. The airport does not serve local residents in Eagleswood.
- The applicant does not follow through on promises made to the township, its residents or the local fire department. Members of the public stated that the owner promised to supply materials to the local fire department in case of emergencies caused by the airport and the planes that utilize it. The resident stated that this was a part of a prior township Planning Board resolution.
- A representative from Save Barnegat Bay stated that they do not support this transportation node because it will increase the allowable impervious coverage and expressed concerns regarding the existing wetlands and the endangered pine snake. *A representative from DEP determined that this was not an issue and that the airport was an extremely unlikely habitat for the pine snake. It was determined that it was probable the pine snake is located to the north of this property.*
- Any economic benefit that can be achieved is outweighed by the detriments to safety, the environment and reduction in property values. The resident wanted requested that a study be performed (fiscal impact statement) to show how this airport will improve the local and regional economy. The resident was also concerned about the environmental impacts caused by unleaded gas contaminates in the air, soil and water. Residents in the area utilize well water and was concerned that the water could become contaminated by the unleaded gas.

Many of the above mentioned issues such as safety, the environment and stormwater runoff could be addressed and most likely resolved to the benefit of the residents during the required site plan process at the Township level and also the State permitting process under DOT and DEP.

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I have attached the 2016 study done by AECOM Technical Services, Inc. for the DOT which supports the airport's significant and beneficial economic impact on the region.

Sincerely,

Colleen McGurk, PP/AICP
Government Representative
Office for Planning Advocacy