

The Airport Authority has been less than forthcoming with information about its plans.

While the Airport Authority may not have been as vocal as other groups, it is not true that the Authority has been secretive about its plans.

Beginning in 1999 and continuing up through 2004, as part of the Master Plan process, there were five meetings of a Citizen Advisory Committee to obtain input from the community. In addition, there were three well-publicized open public meetings: one in April 2002 at the Court House in Doylestown, one in December 2004 at the Buckingham Township building, and one in May 2005 at Cold Spring Elementary School.

That last meeting included: the entire senior staff of PennDOT's Bureau of Aviation, the Deputy Secretary for Aviation for PennDOT, the engineering firm that conducted the traffic study of Stony Lane, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, and various other engineers and planners. The purpose of the meeting was to make sure members of the community had full and accurate information about the Airport improvement and open space preservation project.

As this issue continues to move forward, the Airport Authority will make a concerted effort to further increase the level and frequency of communication with the community.

Do the members of the Airport Authority Board stand to gain from this project?

Not at all. All Authority Board members serve as unpaid volunteers devoting their time to managing the Authority and its business as a matter of public service. Each Authority member receives an expense allowance of \$50 for each month he attends the monthly meeting.

Who are the Friends of Doylestown Airport? Are they the mouthpiece of the Airport Authority?

Friends of the Doylestown Airport (FODA) is a Pennsylvania non-profit organization formed to support the open-space aspects of the Master Plan and voice its concerns about quality of life, congestion, water quality, taxes and property values. FODA is a bipartisan group of citizens, including some pilots, from

Buckingham Township, Plumstead Township, Doylestown Borough, Doylestown Township and other nearby townships.

FODA is completely separate from the Airport Authority and does **not** speak for the Authority. For the most accurate and up-to-date information about the Airport Master Plan, please go to the Authority's website at www.bcaanet.org.

I am confused by the various websites that deal with the Airport.

That is understandable. Here are the facts: The official website of the Airport Authority is www.bcaanet.org. The website of Leading Edge Aviation, the business that operates the air taxi, flight school, and aircraft maintenance services at the Airport, is www.doylestownairport.org, and the website of the Friends of Doylestown Airport is www.friendsda.org.

Why do we need the Doylestown Airport? Wouldn't it be better if it just closed?

There are many reasons to have a modern airport for Doylestown and Central Bucks:

1. The Airport creates jobs and has a positive economic impact on our community.

According to a recent economic impact survey of the 142 public-use airports in Pennsylvania, Doylestown Airport created 48 jobs, had an annual payroll impact of \$726,000 and an overall annual economic impact of \$3.4 million.

2. Under the proposed improvement plan, many acres of land will remain open and undeveloped around the Airport. In the past 25 years many small local airports have closed (Warrington, 3M Airport in Bristol, Buehl Field in Langhorne, etc.), and the land was developed into malls, industrial parks, housing and quarries. The result was more sprawl, more traffic and congestion, and more pollution.

3. The Airport provides our community with vital access to the nation's air transportation system.

4. Just like highways, the Airport is used by businesses, by people making sales calls, people going to out-of-town meetings, people going on vacation, people visiting friends and people learning to fly.

5. As is the case with highways, there is more traffic at the Airport as the area population grows, and traffic increases and decreases with the ebb and flow of the economy. No one proposes getting rid of Route 611 or I-95 because the amount of traffic they handle has increased.

6. The Doylestown Airport provides a vital resource to send and receive emergency assistance in times of natural or other disaster. Substantial amounts of relief aid and material were flown from this airport to help the victims of Hurricane Katrina. If a large-scale disaster were to strike here, we would want relief flights to be able to land in our community.

7. Pilots at the Doylestown Airport serve in the Angel Flight network. This organization provides free air transportation to local residents who need to travel to distant medical centers for specialized care.

8. The Airport serves as part of an education system for today's commercial pilots. The Doylestown Airport has produced a number of private pilots who have gone on to continue their education and experience and fly commercially.

Simply put, the Doylestown Airport is a vital part of the nation's transportation infrastructure and serves many needs, including emergency services, business, recreational, humanitarian and educational.

Conclusion

Since 1963, the Doylestown Airport has been a good neighbor and an asset to the community. The Airport Authority Board is committed to working with the community and Buckingham Township to resolve any outstanding issues and move forward with a plan that is overwhelmingly positive for all involved.

The primary achievement will be to guarantee that more than 160 acres of land will remain open and undeveloped. While the Airport will use a modest percentage of the land acquired through the initiative, most will be preserved as open space of one sort or another.

For regular updates on Airport news, go to www.bcaanet.org.

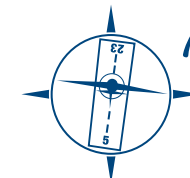
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Background

In 2001, the Bucks County Airport Authority (operator of the Doylestown Airport) and Buckingham Township signed an agreement to preserve more than 160 acres of open space and allow for improvements to the Airport, including an 800-foot extension of its runway.

At the time, both parties believed that this was a “win-win” proposition: the community would get a huge amount of open space at little to no cost to the taxpayers of Buckingham Township, and the Authority would be able to provide much needed improvements to the Doylestown Airport, including a modest runway extension.

In 2005, in response to political pressure from a small group of individuals, the Township supervisors declared that agreement void and now oppose the Airport improvement and open space plan.

Recently the Airport Authority released the Doylestown Airport Master Plan. This plan — which reflects community input — is based on the needs of the local aviation and business communities, as well as issues

important to the Airport’s neighbors.

It is designed to provide a long-range (15 to 20 year), proactive strategy to maintain and improve the existing Airport facilities. It is also designed to maximize safety and efficiency for the future. The Master Plan can be read in its entirety at www.bcaanet.org.

It is important to remember that each project shown on the Master Plan is subject to continuing needs assessment, funding availability, and township approval. Thus, the Master Plan shows the *maximum* development that would occur, if each and every project were to secure funding and township approval. In reality, it is likely that only some portion of the projects shown will ultimately be completed.

Over the past year there have been many rumors and much misinformation spread about the Airport Authority’s plans. This Q&A, along with the recently released Master Plan, will help clarify the issues and present the facts.

Questions & Answers:

Why does the Authority want to extend the Doylestown Airport runway by 800 feet?

For safety and efficiency reasons the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) provides formulas and standards for the determination of optimal runway length at U.S. airports. Using the FAA standards (based on the aircraft currently using Doylestown Airport), it was determined that the runway should be 3,800 feet long (it is currently 3,000 feet). This will allow the aircraft using the Airport to operate with maximum safety. Since safety is of utmost importance, the Airport Authority would like to do what is right and comply with this recommendation.

As an added benefit, a longer runway will allow planes to achieve higher altitudes after takeoff before they reach populated areas. This will help cut down on engine noise that people hear from the ground.

Is it true the Authority wants to extend the runway at Doylestown Airport to 5,000 feet?

Absolutely not. The Authority has never proposed an extension of that length and has declared numerous times that it will not do so. The Authority’s Master Plan, the 2001 written agreement with the Township, and all of the Authority’s public statements have consistently made it clear that the proposed runway extension is to 3,800 feet.

The “5,000 foot rumor” was started due to a misunderstanding of Pennsylvania’s 2002 Statewide Airport System Plan (SASP), a planning document that inventoried the state’s airports and established a tier system to qualify them for funding.

Because the SASP classified Doylestown as an “Advanced Airport” which *could* justify having a 5,000-foot runway, some have claimed that this will “force” the Airport to expand the runway to 5,000 feet.

In fact, SASP has **no** bearing on what the Airport Authority chooses to do with Doylestown Airport. In 2005, and again in 2007, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation Bureau of Aviation, including the Deputy Secretary for Aviation, verified that SASP does **not** force or require the Authority to extend its runway to 5,000 feet, and the SASP has been misinterpreted.

Does the Master Plan call for closing Stony Lane?

In order to lengthen the runway, Stony Lane would either have to be closed or relocated. The 2001 agreement between the Airport Authority and Buckingham Township clearly states, “If it is deemed necessary by the Township and the Airport Authority to provide a replacement road, the parties shall cooperate in good faith in the planning, funding and construction.” The Airport Authority affirms its commitment to that agreement.

If the runway is lengthened, will larger planes start using the Airport?

No. As it has always been, the weight limit on planes flying in and out of the Airport will remain at 12,500 pounds (the FAA’s definition of a small airplane). The 2001 agreement between the Airport Authority and Buckingham Township clearly states that the Authority has committed to not alter the weight bearing capacity of the Airport’s runway.

Are there plans for commercial airline or commuter service at the Airport?

No, there are absolutely no plans to bring in commercial airline or commuter service to the Doylestown Airport. There is no demand for this service, and none is anticipated in the future. In fact, no air carrier or commuter service has ever expressed interest to the Airport Authority about establishing scheduled service at the Airport.

Will jets start using the Airport if the runway is lengthened?

No airline or commuter-type jets could use the lengthened runway because they would far exceed the 12,500 pound weight limit. Additionally, smaller airplanes with jet engines (4 to 6 passengers) are coming onto the market now and will be able to use the runway even without an extension. No matter the type of plane (jet or piston-driven) using the Airport, the weight limit will remain in effect, thus limiting the

size of the planes using the Airport. In addition, most modern jet engines are actually *quieter* than piston-driven planes of the same weight.

If the runway is lengthened, will aircraft traffic increase?

The length of the runway will have little effect on the number of aircraft flying in and out of Doylestown Airport. Local population growth and economic conditions drive increases in air traffic far more than the length of a runway. Regardless of whether the runway is lengthened or not, there will most likely be incremental growth in aircraft traffic since the population of middle and upper Bucks continues to swell. Over the past 16 years, the Airport’s traffic count has increased at an average of less than ½% per year — *far less than the growth rate of automobile traffic and housing developments in the area*. The actual traffic counts at the Airport over the past 10 years are available on the Authority’s website, www.bcaanet.org.

Will the runway extension increase airplane noise?

Because the runway extension will not affect the weight limit of airplanes using the Airport and is not expected to increase the amount of air traffic, the extension should not result in an increase in noise. This fact is backed by a noise analysis that was completed as part of the Master Plan.

That said, the Airport Authority acknowledges that some neighbors have concerns about the moderate amount of noise associated with the airport’s current aircraft volume. To address these concerns the Airport Authority has adopted noise reduction procedures which include requesting pilots to avoid flying over densely populated areas to the extent they can, consistent with safe operations. The Doylestown Pilot Association is undertaking an intensive new effort to remind its members of these procedures and seek their cooperation to fly as good neighbors.

The Airport Authority is committed to addressing the concerns of the community and is pleased to announce that an Environmental Assessment is being completed that looks at all potential environmental effects of the Airport, including noise. There will be a public hearing on the results in the near future.

Are more hangars being added at the Airport?

The Master Plan recommends the addition of 10 new T-hangar buildings for single engine and small twin engine airplanes over the next 15 to 20 years, and five unit hangar buildings for twin engine corporate aircraft.

There are several important things to note about the proposed hangars:

- These hangars would be built over the 15 to 20 year life of the Master Plan and only if and when financing and township approval are obtained. It could well turn out that fewer hangars will be built.
- These hangars help to maximize the amount of open space that can be preserved for the community as a by-product of this project since they provide an additional aviation use to bring in federal and state aviation trust funds for land acquisition.
- There is a large waiting list of existing plane owners who would like to house their planes inside a hangar, rather than being parked on the aircraft apron. The proposed hangars simply allow those who already have a plane at the airport to house them inside, out of the elements.
- When the last group of hangars was built in 1997 - 2001, they caused little increase in traffic at the airport. There were 9% more operations in 2002 than in 1995, even though the number of hangars nearly doubled.

Will anything in the Master Plan raise my taxes?

No local tax dollars will be used for this project. 95% of the funding will come from federal and state airport improvement funds (paid for by aviation fuel taxes). The remaining 5% of costs will be borne by the Airport Authority.

What if this project isn’t completed? Is it true that the Airport Authority threatened to develop the open space if it doesn’t get its way?

No, that isn’t true. The Airport Authority has no plans for developing the ground other than what is stated in the 2001 agreement with the township.

However, the Airport Authority used borrowed money to purchase the land in anticipation of the runway extension and open space initiative. While this land was very expensive, state and

federal monies may become available to pay for the aviation use of it, if this project is given the green light.

If the Airport Authority’s plan cannot be completed, however, these grant monies will not be available and the properties held by the Authority would have to be sold due to the high cost of holding the land. Once these properties are sold, the new owners would be free to develop them in any manner that was in compliance with local ordinances.

To prevent development, it has been rumored that the township would purchase any of the land owned by the Authority. However, to date, the township has not made any such assurances or promises to purchase this land. Presumably, if the township were to purchase the land from the Airport Authority, it would have to use township funds to pay the purchase price.

What’s all this about rezoning?

Because they are now opposed to the runway extension, the Buckingham Township supervisors rezoned property across Stony Lane from the Airport last October in order to exclude a runway extension as a permitted use. This rezoning, however, now allows things like solid waste disposal, housing developments and fuel storage as permitted uses for the land. The zoning was changed despite recommendations against doing so by the state, all three Bucks County Commissioners, and Buckingham Township’s own planning commission.

Is it true that the Airport Authority stands to make millions of dollars off this project?

Absolutely not. The Airport Authority is a municipal authority and, as a governmental unit, is non-profit. The Airport’s operations are budgeted to essentially break even. The Authority exists to provide public service in the form of transportation infrastructure and not to make money. For at least the past 15 years, the Authority has operated on a self-sufficient basis without any funding from the county or local governments. The Authority will continue to operate on an essentially break-even basis after completion of the runway extension and other improvements. Any improvements recommended in the Master Plan are not designed to increase the income of the Authority, but rather to better serve the needs of the community.