



NEWS RELEASE

HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Eric Solomon – Public Information Officer
esolomon@howardcountymd.gov
(410) 313-1143

DC Metroplex Community Roundtable Working Group Convenes with Stakeholders Focused on BWI Noise Issues in Howard County

Ellicott City, MD (March 22, 2017) – Last night, the District of Columbia (DC) Metroplex Community Roundtable Working Group met for the first time at the Maryland Aviation Administration (MAA) offices in Linthicum, Maryland. The group is made up of community stakeholders who are impacted by air traffic noise from BWI-Thurgood Marshall Airport.

In April 2015, BWI-Thurgood Marshall Airport launched the NextGen satellite-based air control system. Since then, planes have been taking off over more densely populated areas and turning at lower altitudes, resulting in a significant increase in aircraft noise in Elkridge, Ellicott City, Hanover, Columbia, and other parts of Howard County.

During the meeting, aviation officials admitted that mistakes were made during the implementation of the DC Metroplex/NextGen procedures and stated that they remain committed to addressing these issues by working through the Roundtable process. Before the end of the night, members of the Roundtable passed a motion requesting that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) return to the pre-DC Metroplex/NextGen flight patterns immediately.

“The meeting was long overdue and hopefully provided the information that the MAA and the FAA need to take action,” said Council Chairman Jon Weinstein. “From this point forward, both organizations need to demonstrate that they have heard the community and are working on effective measures to mitigate the ongoing noise problems affecting the lives of many constituents throughout Howard and neighboring Counties. The Council’s legislation authorizing our Solicitor to pursue legal avenues remains an option for us to seek relief as well.”

For more than two years, local officials have been searching for opportunities to speak with FAA and MAA officials over flight noise issues. As stated in its charter, the Community Roundtable is an initiative of the MAA, at the request of the FAA. The working group consists of 19 voting members, which includes 14 representatives from Maryland State Legislative Districts and County Officials from Howard, Anne Arundel and Baltimore Counties. In addition, other organizations will serve on the Roundtable in an advisory role, including Southwest Airlines, FAA, MAA, Air Cargo Association, National Business Aviation Association, and BWI-Thurgood Marshall Air Traffic Control Tower.

The Roundtable will focus on the following:

- Monitoring the implementation of air traffic procedures established by FAA in the DC Metroplex Project;
- Identifying possible alternative routings and procedures;
- Evaluating noise effects of possible route changes; and
- Making recommendations to the FAA for further consideration.

-more-

“With the work of the committee underway, I was pleased to see they have already taken swift action to request the FAA immediately revert back to the flight patterns prior to the implementation of NextGen and the DC Metroplex policies,” said Council Vice Chairman Calvin Ball. “There is no doubt these changes caused a negative impact in our neighborhoods, with many residents experiencing difficulty sleeping due to increased noise and airplane traffic. With the expansion of BWI-Thurgood Marshall Airport on the horizon, I’m hopeful this committee will work diligently and collaboratively to address these concerns which span through multiple jurisdictions.”

Communities and residents across Howard County are not alone in their suffering. Several elected leaders in Montgomery County have expressed to the FAA that the “constant overflight of aircraft [from Reagan National] is intolerable.” In addition, Senator Chris Van Hollen, who also joined on as a signatory to Montgomery County’s letter, called the NextGen flight procedures “disastrous” and noted that the already intolerable noise worsened from narrowing and concentrating the flight paths.

On February 6, 2017, the County Council passed Council Bill 8-2017, which authorized the Howard County Office of Law to take legal action against the Federal Aviation Administration related to the implementation of the NextGen system. The legislation becomes effective on April 11, 2017. In the meantime, the County’s factual legal investigation is ongoing.

The Roundtable will meet monthly and make recommendations to the MAA for transmission to the FAA. For more information on the Roundtable, including meeting minutes, visit www.maacommunityrelations.com.

###