

What would change?

In the event of the planning applications being permitted, we believe that there would be several significant changes at the airport:

Air Traffic

It appears that the airport is determined to attract significantly more jet aircraft traffic in general, and larger jet aircraft types that cannot currently use the runway. The expansion of an Instrument Landing System, as well as the new Tower at the Airport, is expected to attract literally thousands of additional take-offs and landings. The airport was originally, and for many years, predominantly used by light aircraft. A dramatic increase in the proportion of jet aircraft using the site would represent a significant change in the nature of the noise and pollution generated by the site.

Commercial Training

The airport predicts significant additional commercial training approaches each year. At Gloucestershire Airport in England, where a remarkably similar airport expansion battle is underway, last September 4th a visiting EMB-135, a 37 seat jet aircraft (in the loudest of the four categories used by the City of London airport to regulate their noise levels) spent several hours making approximately 12 take-offs and landings. The next day the airport admitted that they had received numerous complaints about the intensity and duration of the noise. We believe that this type of training, and noise etc. could become commonplace here in Easton as well.

Pollution

The predicted increase in jet traffic would lead to a corresponding increase in pollution. We are concerned about the magnitude and the type of pollution caused by jet aircraft. Light aircraft consume roughly the same amounts of fuel as a large family car. It is clear that jet aircraft consume far more. The small number of jet aircraft currently operating from the airport already leave plumes of nauseous exhaust as they take off and land. We are particularly worried about the known carcinogens and particulates in jet aircraft exhaust fumes. All of which will increase dramatically as the air traffic increases and the size of the aircrafts increase.

Global Warming

Aircraft, jet aircraft in particular, are a major source of CO₂, which is the gas blamed for global warming. At a time when every effort must be made to reduce emissions, the proposed changes would lead directly to an increase.

Noise

The predicted increase in jet traffic would lead to a corresponding increase in noise nuisance. This is due in part to noisier aircraft, but the noise would also be increased by aircraft flying lower and nearer the airport perimeter when landing. The nature of the noise will also change. Instead of the occasional short bursts of high intensity noise, the near constant take-offs and landings will create an environment of more constant noise.

Opening Hours

Starting in the fall of 2007, due to the new Control Tower (NOT strictly required and not paid for directly from Airport operating profits), the Airport hours will change from the early morning until dusk schedule to 16 hours a day, seven days a week, fully operational until 10:00 PM. This is a radical change in the Airport's operating history, and one all residents in the area will see the impact of. An increase in corporate jet traffic will by design lead to even more early morning, evening and night time operations. The airport management has stated that they would be prepared to increase opening hours if demand makes doing so viable.

Ground Traffic and Road Closings

The Airport Expansion Plan includes the complete closing of Airport Road. Additionally, Goldsborough Neck Road will no longer be a continuous thoroughfare, but rather be dead-ended on either side of the extended runway that is part of the airport expansion plan. Other "alternative" plans for the re-routing of Goldsborough Neck Road seem impractical and obtrusive to existing properties. Any of these proposed changes will have an immediate and negative impact on all traffic in the area and further congest the already overburdened area around the new Lowes, Target store, and causing further traffic issues on Route 50, etc. Residents thorough out the area will be forced to take different routes around the airport area, and residential areas can expect a dramatic increase in traffic through and around their communities as alternate routes are established (Glebe Road, Unionville area and many others will be significantly impacted).

Further Expansion

If the currently proposed expansion goes ahead it will require a significant amount of financial backing from the County, State and Federal Governments as well as "private contributions". The airport is owned and operated by Talbot County and should be run as a business, driven by its requirements to return a profit without relying on public subsidies from ANY source, be it local tax-payers, Federal or State funding. Funding that still, after all, originates from the tax paying public. There will be ongoing pressure to further increase the capabilities and profits of the airport, which the airport will try to justify in the light of the 'investment' by the Government and the private "contributors".