



Ordinary Meeting of Council

Tuesday, 24 June 2008

BAULKHAM HILLS SHIRE COUNCIL

Vision Statement

The Garden Shire – a dynamic, diverse and vibrant, family-oriented community working together to enjoy life in a high quality, open environment that reflects our heritage.

ITEM-22 SUBMISSION TO ISSUES PAPER - NATIONAL AVIATION POLICY (FP 99)

OUTCOME: Planning

BUSINESS PROGRAM: FORWARD PLANNING

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HISTORY**21/12/2007** Draft North West Subregional Strategy released for public comment.**25/03/2008** Council considered a report on the Draft North West Subregional Strategy and resolved (in part) to:

“forward a copy of this report and the following recommendations to the Department of Planning:

14. Planning for expansion of Richmond Airport should be considered.”

10/04/2008 Issues Paper: Towards a National Aviation Policy Statement released by Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government for comment.**07/05/2008** Correspondence received by Mayor from the Hon Phillip Ruddock MP advising of the release of the Issues Paper.**28/05/2008** Correspondence to Hon Phillip Ruddock MP from Mayor in response to previous correspondence.**REPORT**

The Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, the Hon Anthony Albanese MP, announced on 10 April 2008 the Australian Government's commitment to the development of a National Aviation Policy Statement. The National Aviation Policy Statement will provide greater planning and investment certainty for the industry and provide clear commitments for users of aviation services and communities affected by aviation activity. An Issues Paper, provided as Attachment 1, has been prepared as a basis for consultation and engagement in this process. Submissions close on 27 June 2008.

The purpose of this report is to provide a brief summary of the Issues Paper and to enable Council to formulate a submission.

1. Towards a National Aviation Policy

Aviation activity has grown strongly over the last twenty years, driven by broader economic growth, increased tourism, regulatory reform, and enhanced industry efficiency including investment in aviation infrastructure and technology. Governments play a vital role ensuring appropriate policy and regulatory frameworks are in place, with settings that support the development of the sector consistent with the broad objectives of efficiency, safety, security and environmental responsibility.

The Issues Paper is broken into five broad themes: Aviation Industry, Infrastructure, Safety, Security and Community Protection. Questions focus on some of the major issues facing the industry, governments and stakeholders in meeting current challenges and planning for a successful future.

Section 2 - Aviation Infrastructure focuses on airport planning and development. Key challenges for aviation infrastructure planning include building a network of airports and an integrated strategy to service domestic and international passenger and freight needs. Issues canvassed include land use planning and development approvals at major sites, non-aeronautical development of sites i.e. for shopping, safeguarding key infrastructure, understanding future airport needs, pricing services and the challenge of managing the air traffic control system. This section is of most relevance to Council's area of operation.

Following consideration of submissions, the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government will prepare a National Aviation Policy Green Paper to be released in the September 2008, with further opportunity for stakeholder input prior to finalisation of a detailed National Aviation Policy Statement in mid-2009.

2. Matters for Consideration

The Federal Government's initiative to develop a national policy for the future of the aviation industry is supported and Council welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Issues Paper. The comments below focus on Section 2 Aviation Infrastructure and form the basis of a submission on the Issues Paper.

(i) Landuse Planning and development approvals at major airports

In considering land use planning and the relationship of development approvals to local authorities, the Issues Paper asked what mechanisms might be used to ensure ongoing effective dialogue between airport operators and local communities. In this regard, the 'Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Bankstown Council' model used for Bankstown Airport, is an appropriate framework for consultation and planning with local councils.

Local planning of Local, State and Federal transport projects and initiatives need to be linked, planned and integrated. Some of these transport projects are further discussed below. Local planning decisions can compromise the ability of aviation infrastructure to expand either physically or in the services offered and conversely, expansion and intensification of aviation infrastructure can lead to overloading of local infrastructure. Diversification of airports to retail

uses can also have detrimental impacts on local centres. In this regard, early communication is essential and the local government planning context needs to be acknowledged. The formulation of a National Policy is seen as an important step in commencing this communication and embedding local government's role.

(ii) Future Airport Needs

The Issue Paper acknowledges the need for additional airport capacity for Sydney in the future. As the Federal Government does not support building an airport at Badgerys Creek, it is important to look at other models for providing additional capacity for Sydney. In considering the North West Subregional Strategy, Council's submission suggested that investigations ought to be carried out to consider the ability of Richmond RAAF base in providing a limited range of services utilising existing aviation infrastructure.

In December 2007, the New South Wales Department of Planning released the Draft North West Subregional Strategy for public comment. The document outlines the broad vision for the future planning of the North West subregion to 2031. The subregion incorporates the Baulkham Hills, Blacktown, Blue Mountains Hawkesbury and Penrith local government areas, with Penrith identified as the 'Regional City'. It contains a growing business and residential population with a high percentage of residents in the professional / managerial job sector that use air travel as part of business.

It is noted the apparent success of the model seen in airports such as Williamtown, which is meeting the aviation services needs for Newcastle. Perhaps a similar co-location at Richmond Airport for a limited range of domestic commercial flights be considered. Williamtown RAAF base currently provides regular commercial flights to major domestic locations such as Brisbane, Canberra and Melbourne, as well as regional cities of Coffs Harbour, Port Macquarie and Tamworth. Services to destinations such as Norfolk Island and Coolangatta provide for local tourism opportunities. The airport is serviced by regional, low cost or smaller carriers such as Jetstar, Virgin Blue, AeroPelican, and Brindabella Airlines, and significantly contributes to the domestic and international growth of business and tourism in the Hunter region. Since the introduction of jet services into Newcastle Airport, the number of passengers using the Airport has increased from 214,000 in 2003 to more than 1,000,000 in the 2007 calendar year.

The Newcastle model, where an agreement exists with the RAAF to provide landing and take-off rights, services, and use of Airport infrastructure appears to be a successful formulae in providing a limited range of commercial flights without compromising the military operations of the site.

CONCLUSION

The initiative to develop a national policy for the future of the aviation industry is commended by Council. Council looks forward to considering the Green Paper foreshadowed by the Federal Government. Air travel, in particular domestic business travel, is becoming increasingly important to the development of a modern local economy in Baulkham Hills Shire.

In this regard, Council considers that the Richmond RAAF Base has the potential to be a significant regional air transport asset, if it could permit a small scale operation of commercial flights, similar to Williamtown. Access to conveniently located inter-state air travel will have significant economic benefits for employment areas such as Norwest and the transport of local goods and produce. Council believes the matter ought to be at least investigated.

IMPACTS:

Financial

This matter has no direct financial impact upon Council's adopted budget or forward estimates.

Social

This report outlines Council's submission to the Issues Paper and the potential social benefits of a secondary airport within the North West Subregion.

Environmental

This report has no direct environmental impact.

RECOMMENDATION

Council forward a copy of this report as its submission to the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Issues Paper: Towards a National Aviation Policy Statement

ITEM-22

SUBMISSION TO ISSUES PAPER - NATIONAL AVIATION POLICY (FP 99)

1 RESOLUTION

Council forward a copy of this report as its submission to the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government.