

RECAPPING 2019 DC METROPLEX BWI COMMUNITY ROUNDTABLE (RT)

By Paul Verchinski

In 2019, after 3 years representing Senator Guy Guzzone on the RT, I stepped back and became an Alternate for George Lowe. Mr. Drew became the new Chair of the RT. Ms. Deb Jung became the new representative for the Howard County Council as a result of changes on the Council. Ms. Kim Pruum was appointed to represent County Executive Dr. Calvin Ball.

On January 25, 2019 a letter was sent from the RT addressing FAA suggestions for departures from Runway 28. This is the major runway impacting Columbia since 70% of the flights leaving BWI use this runway to fly to western destinations.

Mr. Drew took a collaborative approach through the RT Technical Committee to address approaches to BWI. The MAA, Southwest, and the RT Technical members came up with changes for approaches. After a year of deliberations, a letter was sent to the FAA on November 25, 2019. Modeled noise impacts were presented to the RT in November, and the RT voted to accept the proposed approach changes. The letter is attached. It will be up to the FAA to review the proposals and decide when and if it will implement the proposals. Any changes could take up to 3 years to implement.

“The proposal is for four modifications to arrivals, each of which raises the altitudes for arrivals. This will discourage the practice of planes cruising long distances at low altitudes before landing. Noise impacts are reduced because the planes will be flying higher, and because the planes will be gliding in a continuous descent at low engine thrust. These modifications are consistent with the Roundtable position that flight paths should revert to the state prior to NextGen.” The changes noted in the January 25 RT letter are also to be addressed.

Howard County continues to be active in litigation regarding NextGen and introduced new litigation over the Midfield Cargo Expansion stating that the environmental impacts were not properly addressed. This cargo expansion will have bays for 93 tractor trailers to be used by Amazon. Package handling thru air and truck delivery will be substantially increased.

Ms. Deb Jung and I briefed the Howard County State Delegation on the status of proposals for airplane departures and approaches at BWI. A request was made to have the General Assembly authorize a noise and environmental study of the changes made by NextGen. Senator Lam intends to introduce this legislation.

The next meeting of the RT will be held on January 21 at the MAA offices at 7 PM. Meetings are open to the public and there is a public comment period built into the agenda. All previous RT meetings, agendas, minutes are posted at www.maacommunityrelations.com