



**AIRCRAFT OWNERS AND PILOTS ASSOCIATION**

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November 30, 2007

Honorable Jack Lanners, Chairman  
Metropolitan Airport Commission  
6040 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue South  
Minneapolis, MN 55450

Reference: Crystal Airport (MIC) Comprehensive Plan

Dear Chairman Lanners:

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) represents the general aviation interests of 415,000 members, more than two-thirds of the nation's pilots – including over 7,800 who reside in the state of Minnesota. On behalf of our membership, AOPA is committed to ensuring the future viability and development of general aviation airports and their facilities as part of a balanced state and national transportation system.

It is our understanding that on December 5, 2007, the Metropolitan Airport Commission's (MAC) Finance, Development and Environmental Committee and the MAC Management and Operations Committee will review and take action on the Crystal Airport Comprehensive Plan with the full Commission hearing and acting on this issue at their December 17, 2007 meeting.

I am writing you and members of MAC to urge immediate approval and implementation of this very important plan for this airport. Local pilots and MAC staff have worked diligently to develop a plan that will allow Crystal Airport to continue to play a valuable role as one of the Twin-Cities general aviation reliever airports. Local pilots and tenants have made compromises in working with the MAC staff to develop the new plan – compromises, which we believe, are in the best interest of all parties and that allow additional development in and around the airport. The plan before MAC also provides the airport with the necessary resources to increase economic sufficiency and to contribute to the overall system of airports owned and operated by MAC.

Unfortunately, there are some who would prefer to see Crystal closed. We have heard from our members locally, that the Mayor of the City of Crystal believes the airport is unsafe and should be closed. However, there have been no facts provided nor do the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) or Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) have any data that would suggest the Mayor's concerns are in any way valid.

Interesting too is the fact that the opinions of local Crystal residents, in responding to a survey developed and conducted by the City of Crystal, do not seem to support the beliefs of the Mayor. When asked how important of an asset Crystal Airport is to the city, 61%

Honorable Jack Lanners  
Page 2  
November 30, 2007

of respondents answered that the airport was an asset to the city while only 23% felt the other way. These results were presented to the city in October 2007.

We do not believe this could be accomplished without a change in enabling state legislation, which created MAC; something which AOPA would strongly oppose since the loss of a critical reliever airport like Crystal would have a detrimental impact on the entire Twin-Cities airport system.

According to FAA data, the six MAC general aviation airports in the MAC system are home to roughly 1,638 aircraft and account for nearly 900,000 operations per year. Any reductions in capacity within this system would have an impact on every other airport – including Minneapolis-St Paul International Airport.

Again, we urge the Commission and Committees that are scheduled to hear this matter in December look favorably on the Crystal Comprehensive Plan and take action to approve and implement the plan before year's end.

We appreciate your consideration of our views and support for the Crystal Comp plan. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact my office at 301-695-2205.

Sincerely,



Bill Dunn  
Vice President  
Airports

cc:

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