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www.aopa.org

November 24, 2014

The Honorable Andrew M. Fellows
Mayor, City of College Park
4500 Knox Road
College Park, MD 20740

Re: Preliminary Plan and Detailed Site Plan for The Hotel at the University of Maryland

Dear Mayor Fellows:

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) is the world's largest aviation organization representing the general aviation interests of pilots and aircraft owners, including 5,782 of our members in the state of Maryland. 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 national transportation system.

The Association is writing to you with respect to the above-mentioned project. It is our understanding that this hotel is significantly higher than allowed under City and County zoning guidance and at its proposed height of 161 feet or 13 stories, it significantly penetrates Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) obstruction surfaces around the College Park Airport. Specifically it penetrates the Airport's Horizontal Surface, which is 150 feet above the airport's elevation of 48 feet above mean sea level (AMSL) or 198 feet AMSL. The Hotel site elevation is 72 feet AMSL for a total project height of 233 feet AMSL. While the FAA has not completed the obstruction evaluation of the four corners of The Hotel, as proposed it will penetrate 35 feet above the Horizontal Surface.

14 CFR Part 77 is the part of the Federal Regulations that requires notification to the FAA of proposed construction on and around airports as well as laying out the criteria for these safety surfaces around airports. It also requires the FAA to conduct an evaluation of the obstruction and render a determination of whether it is a hazard or not a hazard to air navigation. It does not give the FAA any authority to stop incompatible construction, only to study the obstruction and make a determination. Therefore, the FAA relies on the airport sponsor and its partners at the state and municipal levels to implement compatible land use regulations around airports that can prevent incompatible land use. Otherwise, they can only take mitigation measures that will affect the utility and viability of the airport such as raising instrument approach minima, displacing runway thresholds, cancelling instrument approaches and prohibiting night operations. The State of Maryland uses COMAR 11.03.05.05 to help with protecting against height hazards. The County has their zoning regulations and development plans that seek to provide protection for the College Park airport through compatible land uses and height restrictions.

The Honorable Andrew M. Fellows

November 24, 2014

Page 2

AOPA strongly urges the City Council to require as conditions of approval for the detailed site plan that the developer builds The Hotel to a height no greater than 198 feet above mean sea level. We also respectfully request that the developer obtain a "no hazard/no obstacle" determination from the FAA based on the new height of The Hotel. Finally, we request that the City Council require the developer to file notice with the Maryland Aviation Administration as required by COMAR 11.03.05.05 and obtain a "no hazard" determination from that agency.

The Association is not opposed to the construction of The Hotel; we believe that it is a complimentary use to the airport and a benefit to the community at large. We do however, disagree with the proposed height of the project and respectfully request that the City Council take every action possible to protect the College Park Airport, its users and neighbors.

Thank you for considering our views on this matter. If we can be of any further assistance, please contact our staff at 301-695-2200.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John L. Collins', written over a horizontal line.

John L. Collins
Manager
Airport Policy

Cc:

Mr. John Robson, College Park Airport Authority Chair
Mr. Ashish Solanki, MD DOT Office of Regional Aviation Assistance Director
Mr. Lee Sommer, AOPA Airport Support Network Volunteer College Park Airport