

July 10, 2002

Mr. Raleigh Jenkins
276 Spring Green Road
Warwick, RI 02888

Dear Mr. Jenkins:

Thank you for your letter of July 7. As I read your letter, I empathized with your frustration as an airport neighbor. I value your participation and involvement in the SRC process and was encouraged that you would prefer the process not to end. It is absolutely critical that you and others who feel as you do about the airport remain active and stay with the EIS process. Your input does make a difference and the master plan study is testimony to public scrutiny. The alternatives now under consideration are smaller in scope than could be justified using industry planning standards, and as such demonstrate FAA and RIACs commitment to both the SRC as well as the planning process. I do, however, want to clarify some of the confusion I read in your letter. The FAA EIS is not "postponed" as you indicated. The first EIS meeting will be held, as scheduled, on the 25th of July. The meeting is a public scoping session and an airport environmental workshop. So that everyone may have all the information before him or her, RIAC is also holding a concurrent Master Plan Informational Workshop at the same location. The public agencies and members of the airport community will be present to express their concerns and share information to enable FAA and the consultant to produce a comprehensive analysis for the reconstruction of Runway 16-34 as well as any anticipated airport development within the reasonable and foreseeable future.

The master plan advisory circular you have referred to in your letter dates back to the 1980s. As we explained at the last Study Resource Committee meeting, the circular is in many respects outdated and is in the process of a complete revision. We have not been preparing master plans in accordance with the circular because we recognized a need to be more innovative and offer more clarity in our approach to the planning process. I am proud to say that FAA New England continues to be heavily involved in rewriting the federal guidance with regard to airport master planning. The approach to the planning process at TF Green exemplifies the type of planning we are working toward for the future. Our airport master plans in New England are scoped and designed to resolve comprehensive planning issues particular to each airport. We look far beyond the minimum airport design standards and airfield requirements and in a real and practical way consider the airport passenger and cargo market as well as airport community needs that the airport will likely face in the future. The plans we support are not intended to sit on a shelf and collect dust, but rather to be used to enable the airport to make development and financial commitments for the prudent, responsible management of the airport. Airport master plans often include a brief environmental overview when another, more thorough environmental analysis is not taking place. In the case of TF Green, the EIS will conduct a comprehensive environmental investigation, rendering a cursory look at environmental impacts of development unnecessary.

The environmental stakeholders you mentioned will absolutely be significantly involved in the environmental study. And, because the environmental scoping is published in the Federal Register, all federal agencies are invited to participate. As you know, the Study Resource Committee membership for the TF Green Master Plan is a large. The members, like you, have afforded the study a significant amount time and energy required to prepare for the meetings and to contribute to the meetings. Since the process is a public one and the documents produced are available, we would be pleased for you or any member of the committee to share the study and solicit input from HUD, RIAR or any other interested agency or organization. Most of our SRC members represent a constituency and are accustomed to information sharing with them.

We actually are financially supporting only a small portion of the airport master plan at TF Green. The FAAs portion of the study funding originates entirely from airport user fees. While these fees could be considered a tax on airline tickets, they are imposed on the traveling public only and not on the general taxpayer. It was the airport that insisted on a great many advisory committee meetings and the airport again who established a second tier of review in the technical advisory committee. We support their initiative and continue to encourage this type of open process at all our airports.

TF Green is a critical aviation resource to the Northeastern United States and absolutely vital to the New England Regional System. We appreciate your interest in a continuing dialogue regarding the growth and development of the airport, and truly respect and honor your right to express your opinion.

Sincerely,

Gail Lattrell
Airport Planner

Cc: Mary Soderstrum