

DECEMBER 2017

MAYOR MUSINGS

FIRST, HAPPY HOLIDAYS!



Now, down to business. Many of you have asked what is happening with the NextGen/MetroPlex program that is being implemented by the FAA. The increase in noise that many of you noticed this summer is allowed under the current NextGen program that was approved and implemented in 2013. That is NOT what we are fighting. What I am concerned about, and what has caused huge problems in other cities, is the “next” implementation of NextGen/Metroplex, slated to be implemented in 2018. My concern with the impact on our community and other communities is made more critical with the expansion of Denver International Airport. The NextGen/Metroplex program creates ribbons of concentrated flight paths around the greater Denver metropolitan area. These flight path ribbons will bring concentrated flights, 24/7 one per minute, over residential neighborhoods, parks and schools that have NEVER had extensive aviation noise or pollution in the past. Even homes located many miles from DIA will experience barrages of commercial airplanes continuously flying overhead at low altitudes. Maps made public by the FAA show that Cherry Hills Village and Greenwood Village may be two of several of the communities impacted. The FAA continues to make it difficult, if not impossible, to ascertain the exact location of these ribbons and the elevation of the flights and refuses to provide to the public any meaningful information.

I have recently attended a N.O.I.S.E meeting in Charlotte, North Carolina. My purpose was to listen to speakers from the aviation industry, including the Charlotte airport and the commercial airplane industry. NextGen/Metroplex was implemented in 2016 in Charlotte and has caused a huge uproar in affected neighborhoods. Here is what I learned at this meeting:

- Once implemented no community, other than Phoenix, has been able to stop the implementation of NextGen and Phoenix may have accomplished only a “stay” of execution.
- Complaints from communities where NextGen has been implemented are not taken seriously by either the FAA or the local airport. The complaints are put into a software program that discounts if there are too many complaints from certain households, disregards complaints from neighborhoods that the FAA and/or airport deem “too” far away, and then concludes that so long as there is not an exponential increase in complaints, there is no problem. (“Amazing” how one can manipulate a computer program to get a desired result.)
- Excessive noise is deemed by the FAA to be merely an “annoyance” to neighborhoods, notwithstanding that excessive noise is a serious health issue and decreases the value of homes by 20% or more.
- The FAA is conducting new studies to determine the impact of noise on citizens, but the results are not expected until late 2018, at the earliest. The FAA is not delaying implementation of NextGen pending review of the results of the studies.
- The current head of the FAA committee for the implementation of NextGen is the CEO of Federal Express. I would argue that he has a conflict of interest. The cost savings from fuel, which is one of the stated purposes of NextGen, directly benefits the bottom line of his company.
- The true cost of NextGen will pass to the communities with the misfortune of being beneath these ribbons of flights. The benefits will accrue to the commercial aviation industry and the airports from which they fly. The representative for the commercial airlines stated that the overall benefits to

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the region and the country are clearly costs that the affected communities should bear for the greater good. In essence the impacted communities are considered collateral damage.

- In Congress the FAA's approval of its budget and thus its existence, has been extended until spring. Now is the time that the FAA needs the support of members of the House and Senate.

- In Charlotte and other communities where NextGen/Metroplex has been implemented, the affected communities were provided little or no information by the FAA as to the location of the routes or the impact on their communities. This

is a pattern of behavior designed to push the agenda forward without meaningful community input.

I learned a great deal more, but there is not enough room for all the information in the Crier.

Please join me in writing a letter to each of our Senators and elected representatives (letters are better than emails or phone calls). Noise is a cost of doing business for the aviation industry; it should not be borne by neighborhoods that have never experienced extensive aviation noise in the past. Please go on our website (www.cherryhillsvillage.com) for the addresses of our elected officials. I have also posted a sample letter.

Respectfully submitted,
Laura Christman, Mayor