

**WATERBURY-OXFORD AIRPORT  
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT  
DRAFT PROPOSED STAGED RELOCATION PLAN**

*Public Hearing  
Monday, July 13, 2009, 7:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.  
Meeting Summary*

Meeting Purpose

- To present the findings of the Draft Environmental Assessment (DEA).
- To present the draft Proposed Stage Relocation Plan for voluntary acquisition and noise insulation of homes within the noise impact area of Waterbury-Oxford Airport (OXC).
- To solicit public comments and answer public questions and concerns regarding the draft documents.

General Summary

- The public hearing was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by the meeting moderator Ms. Jill Barrett of Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc. (FHI). Approximately 90 people were in the audience, including two elected officials, State Senator Robert Kane and First Selectman of Middlebury Thomas Gormley and journalists representing *Waterbury Republican-American* and *Voices*. Mr. Paul McDonnell (Project Manager, CHA, Inc.), Mr. David Head (Project Manager, CTDOT), Mr. James Mason (Supervisory Property Agent, Office of Rights of Way, CTDOT), and Mr. Matthew Kelly (Airport Manager, OXC) served on the panel which presented and answered questions from the public. Mr. Derrick Ireland (Office of Rights of Way, CTDOT) contributed to the right-of-way portion of the presentation. Mr. Robert Bruno (Bureau of Ports and Aviation, CTDOT) and Ms. Gail Lattrell (Federal Aviation Administration) were also present to answer questions. A stenographer attended to provide an official transcript, and the public hearing was also video taped by CT-N television.
- Ms. Barrett explained the purpose of the meeting and public outreach efforts undertaken to date for this and related studies. She reported that the DEA and Draft Proposed Stage Relocation Plan have been available since June 12<sup>th</sup> at town clerk offices and public libraries in Middlebury, Oxford, and Southbury. The documents were mailed directly to affected property owners and elected officials. She noted the methods available to submit comments before the public comment deadline of July 31, 2009 including submission of written comments to CTDOT or via the study website at [www.oxcstudies.com](http://www.oxcstudies.com).

- Mr. McDonnell presented a summary of the DEA and Draft Proposed Stage Relocation Plan. He presented the DEA Purpose and Need Statement; the Alternatives; and social, economic, and environmental impacts. Mr. McDonnell reported no major impacts to natural resources and said the areas of concern are socioeconomic, including community disruption. Mr. McDonnell presented the recommended phased relocation plan. He explained that, to minimize community disruption, the recommended plan considers both noise levels and geography when grouping homes for each phase of the plan. The Area of Impact includes 71 homes in Middlebury and one in Oxford, all north of OXC. The voluntary acquisition program will take place over 7 to 10 years, starting with homes in the runway protection zone (RPZ). Homes acquired will be demolished and the land where homes once stood will be returned to an undeveloped state. Adequacy of available comparable housing will be re-assessed annually. When the study was conducted, there were 191 comparable homes within a 10-mile radius of the study area; 91 comparable homes within the Towns of Middlebury, Oxford, Southbury; and 73 comparable homes within Pomperaug Regional School District.
- Mr. Ireland presented a brief overview of the voluntary property acquisition process. Property owners eligible for the program will be contacted by letter in turn according to the recommended phases. Following the appraisal process, an offer to purchase the home will be made by CTDOT. Those declining to participate at the time of the offer will be contacted again before the program is ended, but only after all other eligible homeowners have had an opportunity to participate.
- Mr. McDonnell discussed the next steps in the process, including the anticipated Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) by the Federal Aviation Administration in the fall of 2009, with implementation of the voluntary relocation program beginning in 2010.
- Ms. Barrett described how speakers could present their public comments and/or questions in an organized manner. Formal public speaker comments began at approximately 8:00 p.m. Elected officials were first offered the opportunity to comment and address the attendees. The elected officials who chose to speak were State Senator Robert Kane representing Middlebury and First Selectman of Middlebury Thomas Gormley (who also read a letter from U.S. Congressman Chris Murphy).
- Some 28 speakers (including four repeat speakers) presented their questions and comments for the record. Common questions and comments included:
  - Concern about the lengthy timeframe for implementation of the voluntary relocation program and urgency of expediting the process.
  - Is there any way to expedite the voluntary acquisition process?
  - Concern about safety of homes currently in the RPZ.

- What is the stability of federal funding for the voluntary acquisitions program?
- How will property assessments be conducted and how will Fair Market Value of homes determined?
- Are there an adequate number of homes of comparable size and in same school district and are they affordable?
- The voluntary acquisition program will negatively impact the cohesive Triangle Hills neighborhood.
- The Town of Middlebury will lose taxes from homes that are removed.
- Specifically state “this airport will not be further developed or expanded” rather than stating that the project will not enable further airport expansion.
- There were also concerns about early morning and nighttime airport operations.
- What actions will be taken to reduce noise at homes outside of the voluntary acquisition/sound insulation area.

Panel members responded to questions asked during the public hearing.

- Ms. Barrett restated that all comments and questions received during this Public Hearing and until the close of comment period (July 31, 2009), including those written comments collected at the public hearing and those submitted subsequent to this hearing, will be responded to in the Final Environmental Assessment.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:30 p.m.