



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

JOHN PEYTON
MAYOR

July 29, 2005

ST. JAMES BUILDING
117 WEST DUVAL STREET, SUITE 400
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32202
(904) 630-1776

The Honorable Anthony J. Principi
Chairman
Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission
2521 South Creek Street, Suite 600
Arlington, Virginia 22202

Dear Chairman Principi:

I am writing to inform the BRAC Commission of important information regarding steps which have been taken to improve the infrastructure at Cecil Field since the military departed in 1999, and to provide you with an estimate of the cost to reestablish military operations at the facility.

Since the disestablishment of Naval Air Station Cecil Field, a great deal of effort and spending has gone into improving the infrastructure of the base. Approximately \$133M has been invested through federal, state and city grants to upgrade the facility. The control tower, hangars, utilities, drainage and roads have all been improved and refurbished. Virtually all of the environmental problems have been identified and remediated and wetland mitigation banks have been created which, aside from being of great financial value, will expedite permitting requirements. Cecil Field is now in far better condition than it was when the Navy left and the Department of Defense stands to reap the benefit of this sizeable investment. In addition, the City has secured \$80M in funding for a high speed access route to I-10, giving Cecil Field outstanding accessibility.

Through the advantages of consolidated government, the owners of Cecil Field, the City of Jacksonville and Jacksonville Airport Authority are able to resolve the necessary property issues to permit turnover of the property interests in Cecil Field to the Department of Defense.

A task force of five former Cecil Field Commanding Officers and Wing Commanders who served at the base in its final years of operations, supplemented with a nationally renowned engineering firm that has conducted prior studies of Cecil Field, city planners and infrastructure experts, legal advisors, and representatives of the



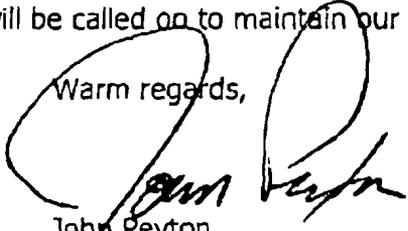
Page 2
July 29, 2005

Jacksonville Airport Authority have worked all week looking at the costs to reestablish Cecil Field as a military installation. They have used the base capacity which existed at Cecil Field when it was in full service as a master jet base in the 1990's as the model. The comprehensive estimate to reestablish Cecil Field as a naval air station is \$240M. This estimate consists of adding a second fuel facility, new hangars, new barracks and dining facilities (655,000 sq. ft), office buildings and public works requirements.

The benefits to the Department of Defense of returning to Cecil Field are great. The City is preparing a submission which will fully disclose the lack of encroachment, significant buffer zones which have been purchased by the state and city, the abundant and unrestricted flight operations areas, the proximity to bombing ranges and other training advantages, the outstanding OLF at Whitehouse (with possibility of developing a second adjacent OLF), the depot level maintenance resources which are at hand, and our suitability for future operations conducted by Joint Strike Fighters. The population density within the FAA mandated AICUZ area is less than 20,000 residents inclusive of Cecil Field and OLF Whitehouse. Compare this with more than 100,000 adjacent to NAS OCEANA exclusive of OLF Fentress. This number will not change appreciably in the decades ahead as future growth has been restricted in these areas due to public purchase of large tracts of land.

While the commercialization of Cecil Field has been successful, its true value to this nation is as a military aviation center of excellence. While returning the base is viable at this time, the next few years will see critical changes in the structure and use of Cecil Field. This is the last best chance for the Navy to return, and the BRAC Commission should fully analyze the capabilities and benefits involved for the brave men and women operating fighter jets that will be called on to maintain our national defense.

Warm regards,



John Peyton
Mayor

cc: Secretary of the Navy
Chief of Naval Operations