

**Aviation and Airport Planning Issues at Burke Lakefront Airport**  
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Aviation and Airport Planning issues related to Burke Lakefront Airport (and its systemic relationship to Hopkins) will be presented. The key facts and issues are:

**Hopkins and Burke are Part of a National and Regional Aviation System.**

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is responsible on a national level for maintaining a plan which identifies existing airports that are important to national transportation. It identifies the roles and functions of airports, and estimates the type and cost of development that will be required at each airport for the next ten years. Hopkins and Burke are part of this national system.

**Hopkins and Burke Work in Tandem.** Burke is part of an interdependent airport system with Hopkins. It is an FAA-designated reliever to Hopkins, and handles approx. 90,000 annual flights. It is a reliever, or “relief valve”, in that a large percentage of its flights would use Hopkins if Burke is not available. No discussion of Burke can be separated from the larger issue of the existing and future capacity of Hopkins

**Hopkins Capacity is Crucial to the National Airspace System.** Due to its geographic location, the airspace above Hopkins is the busiest in the country. The high altitude airspace in the upper Midwest is managed by the Oberlin Air Route Traffic Control Center (ARTCC), and covers approx. 70,000 square miles, parts of five states and 3 million flights per year (includes the large airports in Cleveland, Detroit and Pittsburgh, as well as transcontinental traffic from New York to the West Coast). Delays at Hopkins have a “domino effect” causing delays to other flights in this airspace. Due to this factor, FAA has invested over \$140 million to date in Hopkins’ \$1.4 billion expansion program. The closure of Burke would result in negative effects on Hopkins capacity to handle flights, and result in an acceleration of the planning of another new runway at Hopkins.

**Protecting the FAA’s Investment of Federal Dollars.** The FAA has a great deal of interest in every aspect of maintaining and improving the capacity of Hopkins, including the existence and improvement of Burke. It has spent over \$6 million on federal grants for improvements to Burke. Any decision to close Burke would have to be approved by FAA, and include a viable means of handling the flights at Burke today. This is a lengthy, complex process, and could involve identifying a site at a comparable distance from Hopkins for a replacement airport, and the reimbursement to FAA of Federal funds spent to improve Burke.

**Burke has been a Factor in the Planning of Several Major Downtown Projects.** All runways have three-dimensional areas at their ends and to their sides which are protected airspace, i.e. encroachments are not permitted. These areas exist today, and have been a factor in several downtown projects. The preliminary designs for the Rock-N-Roll Hall of Fame and the New Browns Stadium had to be revised to accommodate Burke’s protected airspace. These areas need to be reflected in any future planning for the land near the airport.

**Burke is the Host to the Grand Prix and Cleveland National Air Show.** These special events would have to be relocated or cancelled. Hopkins is not suitable for the Air Show, and the Grand Prix would need to find another location. The events are signature summer events in Cleveland, and are beneficial to the local economy.

**Facts About the Creation of the Current Burke Lakefront Airport Site  
Ted Esborn, Shareholder, McDonald, Hopkins, Burke & Haber Co., L.P.A.**

- Contrary to popular belief, most of the current Burke Lakefront Airport site is not built on a garbage dump. The area where municipal trash was deposited comprises less than 10% of the current site's acreage.
- In an article in the November, 1927 "The Clevelander" magazine, then City Manager, W.R. Hopkins, wrote an article entitled "Realizing on our Lakefront." In that article, Hopkins wrote, "The City's property just east of Twelfth street would furnish an admirable downtown landing place for aircraft and hydroplanes as well as an extremely accessible harbor for small craft." In 1928, Hopkins introduced legislation in Cleveland City Council to create a Lakefront Plan. The legislation was tabled and never acted upon, and Hopkins tenure as City Manager ended in 1930.
- In 1942, Cleveland City Council adopted a Lakefront Plan by ordinance, but that plan did not include an airstrip.
- In 1946, Council passed legislation amending the Lakefront Plan to include an airstrip. Ordinance No. 2705-45 calls for the relocation of the U.S. harbor line around a newly constructed portion of filled land in the eastern basin of the harbor running from the center line of East 13<sup>th</sup> Street to the center line of East 26<sup>th</sup> Street.
- From 1946 until 1953, Cleveland City Council passed a series of ordinances authorizing contracts with Cleveland Slag Company and L.A. Wells Construction for the construction of a bulkhead out into the eastern basin of the harbor between East 13<sup>th</sup> and East 26<sup>th</sup> Street, and the infilling of the completed bulkhead with dredgings from the Cuyahoga River, the harbor basin, and shipping lanes of the lake. Approximately 5 million cubic yards of dredge materials are placed within the constructed slag bulkhead to create approximately 111 acres of land between East 13<sup>th</sup> Street and East 26<sup>th</sup> Street north of the shoreway for a new airfield.
- At about the time that infilling of the slag bulkhead was completed (1953-1954), the City began to burn and dispose collected burnable trash at a lakefront location directly east of East 26<sup>th</sup> Street. The burned trash and ash were used to construct additional land for the Burke site east of East 26<sup>th</sup> Street.
- According to newspaper accounts, cover soil for the newly created land between East 13<sup>th</sup> and East 26<sup>th</sup> Street was brought to the site from nearby federal highway projects, and from the excavation of the new site for the Cleveland Press building at the northeast corner of East 9<sup>th</sup> Street and Lakeside Avenue.
- In 1957, a taxpayer's lawsuit is filed by Cleveland resident John Neubauer of 1802 East 36<sup>th</sup> Street, seeking to ban the trash burning and dumping practices along the lakeshore. Mr. Neubauer prevails in both Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court and in the Court of Appeals. The City is ordered to cease using the lakefront for the burning and dumping of trash by December 31, 1957.
- The July 13, 1957 edition of the *Cleveland Press* runs a page 1 story headlined "Dump Fire Tied to Crash, City Sued for Fifty Thousand Dollars." The article describes a lawsuit brought by Mr. Joseph Lindic of 19401 Mohawk Avenue, seeking \$50,000 against the City of Cleveland and three motorists. The article states: "Lindic's petition in Common Pleas Court said he was driving west on East Shoreway at 7 a.m. Feb. 14 when at about E. 26<sup>th</sup> the smoke off the dump forced him to stop his car. Three cars following him plowed into his in accordion-fashion, he said. He said he suffered injury to his back and nervous system."

- The City of Cleveland seeks and receives from Common Pleas Court a 60-day extension on the deadline to cease dumping activities along the lakefront. During that 60 days, the City is permitted to bring trash to the lakefront site, but it is prohibited from conducting burning activities and is authorized only to bury trash in excavated trenches. On March 2, 1958, trash disposal ceases at the Burke lakefront site.
- After March of 1958, land creation activities for the Burke site continue eastward toward East 40<sup>th</sup> Street through the deposition of construction and demolition materials generated from large urban renewal projects in the City of Cleveland. Filling eastward is authorized by permits granted by the Army Corps of Engineers calling for the creation of bulkheading consisting of heavy demolition material topped with one-half to one ton stone on its slopes and infilled with selected demolition materials.
- The northeast portion of the current Burke lakefront site consists of contained dike facility 10A, constructed by the Army Corps of Engineers in the 1970s to receive dredgings from the Cuyahoga River, inner harbor and shipping lanes of Lake Erie.
- Currently, contained dike facility 10B is receiving dredged materials from the Cuyahoga River shipping channel and Cleveland harbor, to create additional land to the north of the outer runway of the Burke Lakefront Airport site.