

Racial Equity and Social Justice (RESJ) Impact Statement

Office of Legislative Oversight

BILL 24-23: AIRPARK COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE – ESTABLISHED

SUMMARY

The Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) anticipates Bill 24-23 will have a minimal impact on racial equity and social justice (RESJ) in the County as there appear to be no disproportionalities by race among constituents who could benefit from the establishment of the Airpark Community Advisory Committee. Further, given its proposed scope, the committee is unlikely to address racial and social inequities that may be coming from Airpark operations.

PURPOSE OF RESJ IMPACT STATEMENTS

The purpose of RESJ impact statements (RESJIS) is to evaluate the anticipated impact of legislation on racial equity and social justice in the County. Racial equity and social justice refer to a **process** that focuses on centering the needs, leadership, and power of communities of color and low-income communities with a **goal** of eliminating racial and social inequities.¹ Achieving racial equity and social justice usually requires seeing, thinking, and working differently to address the racial and social harms that have caused racial and social inequities.²

PURPOSE OF BILL 24-23

The Montgomery County Airpark is a general aviation airport located in Gaithersburg and opened in 1959.³ A general aviation airport serves small civilian aircraft but not aircraft operated by companies transporting passengers on regularly scheduled routes. Typically, general aviation airport users include private aircraft owners, charter services, and flight schools.⁴ In 2022, the Office of Legislative Oversight published OLO Report 2022-2 regarding the Airpark's regulatory framework and community impacts.⁵

Prior to 2021, the Airpark Liaison Committee (ALC), established by the Council in 1990, served as the primary forum for communication among individuals concerned with Montgomery County Airpark operations. In 2021, the ALC was dissolved and the Montgomery County Revenue Authority (MCRA), who owns and operates the Airpark, assumed responsibility as the main agency conducting public outreach for the Airpark.⁶

The purpose of Bill 24-23 is to establish an Airpark Community Advisory Committee to advise the County Executive, County Council, and the MCRA regarding the community impacts of Montgomery County Airpark operations. The committee would be comprised of representatives from the community, the Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation, flight schools operating at the Airpark, and business owners in the County. If enacted, Bill 24-23 would:⁷

- Establish an Airpark Community Advisory Committee, which would meet at least four times annually;
- Specify the membership, responsibilities, and staffing of the committee; and

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- Generally amend the laws regarding airports within the County and regarding an advisory committee concerning airports.

Bill 24-23, Airpark Community Advisory Committee – Established, was introduced by the County Council on May 2, 2023.

ANTICIPATED RESJ IMPACTS

To consider the anticipated impact of Bill 24-23 on RESJ in the County, OLO recommends the consideration of two related questions:

- Who are the primary beneficiaries of this bill?
- What racial and social inequities could passage of this bill weaken or strengthen?

For the first question, OLO considered the demographics of constituents who are most impacted by Airpark operations, as they could benefit from the establishment of a committee focused on Airpark operations, community concerns, safety, and community impact. OLO Report 2022-2 found that constituents living within a two-mile radius of the Airpark (i.e., the “Airpark community”) are most likely to be impacted by noise pollution and other quality of life impacts from the Airpark.⁸ Census data summarized in Table 1 demonstrates that the demographics of these constituents by race are similar to the demographics of the County.

Table 1: Percent of Airpark Community Constituents and County Constituents by Race

Race	Percent of Airpark Community Constituents	Percent of County Constituents
Asian	13.8	15.0
Black	20.2	19.0
Native American	0.2	0.04
Pacific Islander	0.1	0.02
White	50.5	51.1

Source: Calculated in OLO Report 2022-2 from 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Census Bureau.

For the second question, OLO considered how the committee would address potential racial and social inequities stemming from Airpark operations. The scope of the Airpark Community Advisory Committee prescribed in Bill 24-23 does not specify activities related to RESJ. Thus, it is unlikely racial and social inequities would be addressed through this committee.

OLO anticipates Bill 24-23 will have a minimal impact on RESJ in the County as there appear to be no disproportionalities by race among constituents who could benefit from the establishment of the Airpark Community Advisory Committee. Further, given its proposed scope, the committee is unlikely to address racial and social inequities that may be coming from Airpark operations.

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RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS

The Racial Equity and Social Justice Act requires OLO to consider whether recommended amendments to bills aimed at narrowing racial and social inequities are warranted in developing RESJ impact statements.⁹ OLO anticipates Bill 24-23 will have a minimal impact on RESJ in the County. As such, OLO does not offer recommended amendments. However, if the Council seeks to improve the RESJ impact of the Bill, one item is offered for consideration:

- **Consider items offered for Bill 8-23 to advance RESJ through Boards, Committees and Commissions (BCCs).** Considerations include amending the RESJ Act to require BCCs to undergo RESJ training and develop RESJ action plans; amending Executive Regulations to require BCCs to develop RESJ action plans; and requesting a diversity audit of BCCs. Particularly for the Airpark Community Advisory Committee, integrating a RESJ focus and ensuring diversity could help address potential racial inequities and disparities stemming from Airpark operations.

CAVEATS

Two caveats to this racial equity and social justice impact statement should be noted. First, predicting the impact of legislation on racial equity and social justice is a challenging analytical endeavor due to data limitations, uncertainty, and other factors. Second, this RESJ impact statement is intended to inform the legislative process rather than determine whether the Council should enact legislation. Thus, any conclusion made in this statement does not represent OLO's endorsement of, or objection to, the bill under consideration.

CONTRIBUTIONS

OLO staffer Janmarie Peña, Performance Management and Data Analyst, drafted this RESJ impact statement.

¹ Definition of racial equity and social justice adopted from “Applying a Racial Equity Lens into Federal Nutrition Programs” by Marlysa Gamblin, et.al. Bread for the World, and from Racial Equity Tools. <https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary>

² Ibid

³ [About the Airpark](#), Montgomery County Airpark.

⁴ [Airport Categories](#), Federal Aviation Administration.

⁵ Kaitlyn Simmons and Aron Trombka, “[The Montgomery County Airpark: Regulatory Framework and Community Impacts](#),” Montgomery County Office of Legislative Oversight, January 25, 2022.

⁶ Ibid

⁷ [Introduction Staff Report for Bill 24-23](#), Montgomery County Council, Introduced May 2, 2023.

⁸ Simmons and Trombka

⁹ Bill 27-19, Administration – Human Rights – Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice – Racial Equity and Social Justice Advisory Committee – Established, Montgomery County Council