

Statement of Milwaukee Ald. Jim Bohl
May 24, 2006

A published media report today inaccurately described my position on the future of Timmerman Field, and I would like to clearly describe my position so there's no question about where I stand.

First, I do not in any way advocate moving flights from Timmerman to either Mitchell International Airport or to land occupied by the 440th Airlift Wing. This position was advocated in committee discussion by a colleague of mine on the Common Council and does not represent my views. Second, Timmerman's future use as an airfield is one that is for the County to determine -- not the City of Milwaukee. If it should ever come to the point where Timmerman would no longer be used as an airport, fields such as those in West Bend, Racine and/or Waukesha would serve as likely candidates for absorption of current Timmerman flights.

In terms of the future of Timmerman, I simply cannot ignore Milwaukee County's structural budget deficit and the open discussion and exploration of possibly selling off some county land assets. Also, it is hard to dismiss recent rumblings of creating a regional airport authority for operating Mitchell International, or discussions in the County recently about leasing or selling off Mitchell. In other words, it is entirely possible that the county may consider liquidating Timmerman some day, and it is not out of line to openly discuss what could and should happen to that land. I personally believe that city residents should be allowed to discuss the future of that land and what uses would and would not be appropriate there. The current Northwest Side Comprehensive Planning process is the ideal venue, in my opinion, for those discussions. The planning process is open to any and all northwest side stakeholders, and I have been encouraging residents to be a part of it.

Lastly, the land is currently zoned industrial, meaning it can be used for recycling collection facilities, vehicle storage facilities, heavy motor vehicle repair and body shops, indoor salvage, and other uses. Citizens deserve to at least review the current zoning and recommend a rezoning if they believe that's the best use of the land. It would simply be irresponsible for me to sit by and wait for "some day" to happen, and then wish I had done or said something about the future of Timmerman. I'm not waiting for something to happen or for some day to stumble upon us.

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