



U.S. Department
of Transportation
Federal Aviation
Administration

Office of Airports
Northwest Mountain Region
Colorado, Utah, Wyoming

Denver Airports District Office
26805 E 68th Ave., Ste. 224
Denver, Colorado 80249

April 27, 2023

The Honorable Aaron Brockett
Mayor, City of Boulder
1777 Broadway
Boulder, Colorado 80302

Dear Mayor Brockett,

This letter is to remind the City of Boulder, Colorado, of its contractual obligations with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to operate and maintain the airport as an airport. The FAA received an email from the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) stating that during a citizen's work group meeting on April 11, 2023 Mayor Pro Tem Wallach stated "*we are going to close the airport.*"

Since 1982, the City has entered into agreements with the FAA for the acceptance of Federal funds for airport development projects and land acquisition under the Airport Improvement Program (AIP), 49 U.S.C. 47101 *et seq.* In accepting over \$12.7 million in AIP funds, the City has agreed to specific Federal obligations, including a commitment to keep the Airport open and make it available for public use as an airport. Since the City acquired land with AIP funds, this obligation runs in perpetuity. Thus, the City may not close the Airport without FAA's consent and without a formal release of the City from the terms of the applicable Federal regulations.

Boulder Municipal Airport is a Local general aviation airport with 59 based aircraft and over 50,000 annual operations. This is a healthy activity level by any standard for a general aviation airport in the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS). Boulder Municipal Airport provides a very important role within the NPIAS, therefore it is very unlikely the FAA would find any justification to release the City of its obligation to maintain and operate Boulder Municipal Airport.

It is FAA's policy to strengthen the national airports system and not to support the closure of public airports. The FAA has rarely approved an application to close an airport. Such approvals were only in highly unusual circumstances where closing the airport provided a benefit to civil aviation.

We encourage you to review your Federal obligations before taking steps that are counter to your contractual obligations with the FAA. If you have any questions regarding your obligations or this letter, please contact me at john.bauer@faa.gov or (303) 342-1259. We are willing to come up to Boulder and speak to you and the City Council to answer any questions you might have regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

John P. Bauer
Manager, FAA Denver Airports District Office

cc: John Kinney – Airport Manager, Boulder Municipal Airport