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## **Cincinnati City Council Approves Sale of Airport Property** *Blue Ash voters to decide fate of plans for new park, reconfigured airport*

**CINCINNATI, Oct. 25, 2006** – The City of Cincinnati today approved the sale of Blue Ash Airport property to the City of Blue Ash. Blue Ash will pay Cincinnati \$37.5 million over the next 30 years. The 8-1 vote paves the way for the creation of a 130-acre signature public park in Blue Ash. It also creates a strong future for a reconfigured Blue Ash Airport.

"Today's action represents a giant step forward toward a better Blue Ash," said Blue Ash Mayor Robert J. Buckman. "On Nov. 7, Blue Ash voters can take us the rest of the way."

Nov. 7 is the day that Blue Ash residents vote on raising the city's earnings tax cap by 0.25 percent to fund the land purchase as well as a host of parks and recreational improvements. If approved, Issue 15 will enable Blue Ash to transform the airport property by adding:

- A 130-acre park complete with walking trails, a reflecting pool, an amphitheater, gardens, woodlands and lakes
- A performing arts and conference center
- A World War II memorial anchored by a vintage B-17 bomber
- Two golf-course holes relocated from the Blue Ash Golf Course, allowing for the addition of a driving range at the course
- Several sit-down restaurants
- A reconfigured and improved Blue Ash Airport on the 98 remaining acres

Additionally, raising the earnings tax cap to 1.25 percent from 1 percent would help fund a recreation center expansion and a new golf clubhouse.

Buckman noted that the earnings tax is paid by people who work in the city and by people who live in Blue Ash but work in a non-taxing district. In this way, people who use city streets and other city services contribute to cost of those services. Note that this issue DOES NOT affect property taxes, pensions, annuities, sales taxes, interest, etc.

"This is a long-term commitment that reflects the long-term vision shared by both Blue Ash and Cincinnati," Buckman said, adding that other talks about the property over the years, including recent overtures by out of state investors, fell short in one way or another. "This plan, however, is a solid, workable, well defined agreement that is good for Cincinnati and good for Blue Ash. The fact that we were able to come to this point after two decades of intermittent discussions is a testament to the strong spirit of collaboration that exists between our two cities."

Cincinnati Mayor Mark Mallory agreed.

"This continues to be an excellent deal for everyone involved. The Blue Ash Airport plan is a perfect example of what we can accomplish when we work together in the spirit of regional cooperation and mutual benefit," Mallory said. "Together, the Cities of Cincinnati and Blue Ash have created a win not only for each individual city, but also a win for our community as a whole."

If voters approve the funding for the plan, the two cities will continue to work together as the airport is reconfigured and enhanced.

"Together, Cincinnati and Blue Ash have created a great blueprint for a great future and we are prepared to see it through," Blue Ash City Manager David Waltz said. "It's in the hands of the voters now."

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