

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR SHEILA KUEHL

December 8, 2020

Whiteman Airport Motion

Privately built in 1946, Whiteman Airport (WHP) was acquired by Los Angeles County in 1970. It is one of five general aviation airports operated by Los Angeles County Public Works. The airport plays an important role in the local and regional transportation networks, with more than 82,000 takeoffs and landings annually. More than 600 general aviation pilots are based at Whiteman Airport, which also hosts numerous Sheriff, Fire, other law enforcement, disaster response and news gathering flight operations each year.

On November 12, 2020, a Civil Air Patrol airplane crashed in a residential neighborhood just short of WHP in the San Fernando Valley community of Pacoima. Preliminary information from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) indicates the plane was approaching the airport’s Runway 12 when it crashed, killing the pilot. The National Transportation Safety Board is currently investigating the accident, which will take approximately 12-18 months to conclude.

Pacoima is a vibrant working-class community in the northeast San Fernando Valley. It is surrounded on three sides by freeways and bifurcated by railroad tracks. Pacoima residents have long voiced concerns about pollution in their community.

MOTION

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Pacoima Beautiful, a grassroots environmental justice organization since 1996, identified safety and potential environmental impacts from WHP as the community's top priority.

Los Angeles County strives to operate and maintain smart, active, safe and sustainable transportation infrastructure. The county needs to work collaboratively with our local partners, residents, and stakeholders to ensure our infrastructure benefits the widest populations possible while not disproportionately burdening any individual community. Whiteman airport is currently operated by American Airports whose contract ends in March 2021 at which time Los Angeles County Department of Public Works will bring the operation and maintenance of the airport in-house. This provides a unique opportunity to reinvest in the community and improve operations at Whiteman Airport in a manner that benefits Pacoima residents.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Department of Public Works to take the following actions related to Whiteman Airport:

1. Engage local stakeholders, including but not limited to, Councilwoman Monica Rodriguez's Office, community-based organizations such as Pacoima Beautiful, residents, businesses, and other government partners to undertake a community driven master plan for Whiteman Airport that maintains the property's primary function as an airport but provides for the creation of local jobs, community beneficial uses, and open space opportunities;
2. Conduct appropriate environmental studies to assess the airport's potential environmental and health risks;
3. Create a Community Advisory Committee (CAC) to provide residents with opportunities for local input on airport operations; and
4. Develop emergency response protocol for both on-airport and off-airport accidents that includes a streamlined approach for reimbursement for damages.

The protocol shall include the support of mental health counseling when appropriate.

S:MCC/WhitemanAirportMotion