

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR SHEILA KUEHL

January 25, 2022

Whiteman Airport FAA 1st Step

In recent years, many communities adjacent to small airports have raised a number of concerns about the impacts their local airports are having on health and safety. The residents of Pacoima who live near the Whiteman Airport have raised these issues and it is incumbent on the County to explore all the options for this airport. With this in mind, on December 8, 2020, I brought a Motion [here](#) before the Board of Supervisors, following a Civil Air Patrol airplane crash on November 12th in the San Fernando Valley residential community of Pacoima, just a few hundred feet short of the Whiteman Airport’s Runway 12, that, tragically, ended the life of the pilot. Currently, the National Transportation Safety Board is investigating that accident.

My motion, which was adopted by the Board, established a Community Advisory Committee (CAC) that has spent the last several months reviewing numerous concerns pertaining to Whiteman Airport. The CAC is continuing to meet and is expected to submit recommendations to the Board of Supervisors later this summer. The goal of the CAC is to conduct an extensive analysis of the airport and participate in the

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development of a plan, including a sustainability management plan, informed by independent environmental studies, to assess noise pollution, exhaust, air quality and health risk. The plan will also consider other ways in which the Airport impacts the community and how those impacts can be mitigated or enhanced, and may also make recommendations concerning hours of operation, how existing facilities could be used differently such as a potential role in disaster operations, community emergency notification systems, creation of recreational amenities, landscape improvements, additional community benefits and Whiteman's economic impact on the community. The CAC will also consider whether to recommend that the County begin the extensive process of asking the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to close the Airport, a process which, in other venues, has taken a decade or more, which may make it prudent to explore the sort of information that will need to be gathered to enter into this lengthy process.

On January 9th of this year, there was another plane crash, this one involving a small single engine airplane, which landed on the Metrolink Antelope Valley Line train tracks near Whiteman Airport. Thankfully, the pilot was pulled to safety by quick-thinking Los Angeles Police Department officers and is now recovering at home. Given this recent incident, I am recommending that, in addition to the important wide-spread deliberations and expected report from our CAC, our Department of Public Works begin to identify the data and documents that might be required in order to meet the first step in the FAA's process for airport closure. It is important to point out that there has been no determination to close the airport. However, it may be prudent to at least identify what may be involved should the County decide to embark on putting together an

application because the process is so onerous and time consuming. The initial report by Public Works is designed to complement the work of the CAC and further inform the County's thinking about how to move forward.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE the Board of Supervisors direct the Department of Public Works to collaborate with the Chief Executive Office to take the following actions related to Whiteman Airport:

1. Direct the Director of Public Works to report to the Board in sixty days on information that may need to be gathered and assembled in order to prepare an initial step for the FAA's application process, how that data and documentation may be gathered, and by whom, and the overall cost of gathering such information, including, but not limited to:
 - a. The history of Whiteman Airport, how the land was acquired, previous federal grants, and federal obligations.
 - b. The airport's multiple roles in the community and regional airport system.
 - c. Appraisal of the fair market value of the land and existing improvements.
 - d. Next steps in the process.