



**PUBLIC REQUEST TO ADDRESS
THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA**

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

HILDA L. SOLIS
HOLLY J. MITCHELL
LINDSEY P. HORVATH
JANICE HAHN
KATHRYN BARGER

Correspondence Received

			The following individuals submitted comments on agenda item:	
Agenda #	Relate To	Position	Name	Comments
16.		Favor	Marie Rumsey	
		Oppose	Jared Yoshiki	
			Matthew Stone	<p>Whiteman Airport is a critical piece of local and national infrastructure in Los Angeles, California and the United States. Suggesting to close the airport for 'economic opportunities' is patently ludicrous...will we close other fire stations and transport hubs--Whiteman has both--for such a specious reason too?</p> <p>This motion acknowledges the Decemeber 8th, 2020 Board of Supervisors motion which formed the 2021-2023 County-led Whiteman Airport Community Advisory Committee (CAC), but ignores that the explicit and specifically mentioned purpose of that CAC was to enhance Whiteman while maintaining its function as an airport. This proviso is present in that 2020 motion and this 2024 motion carries it.</p> <p>The April 9th, 2024 motion references the CAC as having recommended airport closure, but this is irrelevant for two reasons:</p> <p>1) that recommendation was not reflective of the majority community reaction (an overwhelming majority of respondents supported keeping Whiteman open and operational)</p> <p>2) the 2020 motion the CAC was established by explicitly excluded such a recommendation</p> <p>("On December 8, 2020, the Board adopted a motion directing Public Works to engage local stakeholders 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")</p> <p>Any CAC recommendation which encouraged or suggested closing Whiteman Airport had no legitimacy because of these factors and should be dismissed. It is not right to ignore the will of the People nor the terms of advisory committee as it was established.</p> <p>The LA County Fire Department (LACoFD) Barton Helipad is co-located with Whiteman and operates in tandem with Whiteman Airport's control tower. As the LACoFD chief described in CAC meetings, the helipad relies heavily upon the airport for its proper, timely function to conduct public safety operations in emergency situations. If Whiteman was closed, the helipad would (at best) be severely hobbled or also shut down. Who would sell out emergency preparedness for the sake of 'economic opportunities'? We cannot allow this to occur.</p>

				<p>Whiteman Airport and the Barton helipad that relies upon it are worthier uses of the land thanks to their public infrastructural value than any commercial or housing use could bring.</p> <p>LA County administers five airports--Whiteman, Fox, Compton, Brackett and El Monte--and all are subject to receiving FAA grant monies. As one such recipient, Whiteman Airport serves as a representative of LA County airports to the FAA; Whiteman is currently restricted from accepting FAA money due to a political injunction tied into politics around the airport (this injunction should be overturned--Whiteman should receive whatever necessary and obtainable monies it needs).</p> <p>Closure of Whiteman could discourage and dissuade federal officials from sending vital monies to LA County facilities like Whiteman in the future. For the sake of infrastructure and public safety in LA, this is not an advisable move. All monies should be respected and avenues to using resources kept open.</p> <p>Through the Whiteman CAC meetings, Angelenos were loud and clear in their wish for the airport to remain operational. There is no need to waste taxpayer dollars looking into how the public may be defied and their land parceled off.</p> <p>Whiteman Airport belongs to Angeleno and American taxpayers, not profiteers looking to swipe its land in the name of 'economic opportunity'. The Board of Supervisors must not pander to self-interested real estate interests savoring over our resources and should certainly not be doing developers' work on the public dime with a land use study.</p> <p>Protect Whiteman Airport and the Barton Helipad!</p>
			Victor Berrellez	Whiteman Airport is a vital asset in the North SFV providing jobs, airport-related spending of over \$50 million annually, and valuable job training and recreational and transportation activities. While thousands are hurt in other modes of transportation each year, private airplane activities out of Whiteman harm very few people. It is a necessary and important asset of the community.
		Item Total	4	
Grand Total			4	



April 9, 2024

Honorable Lindsey Horvath, Chair
Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: Agenda Item #16 – Re-envisioning Whiteman Airport: Expanding Economic Opportunities - REJECT

Dear Supervisor Horvath and Members of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors:

We respectfully request the Board to REJECT agenda item 16 concerning the Re-envisioning of Whiteman Airport.

The Whiteman Airport is a designated reliever airport included within the National Integrated Plan of Airport Systems (NPIAS). Its primary role is to provide additional capacity to an area when the primary commercial airport needs more capacity. Just like California's roads and highways, airports are constructed as a transportation infrastructure network to support the state and regional transportation needs. Exploring the removal or repurposing of an airport carries the same downside as if the county were considering the removal of a highway and its impacts on congestion and commute times.

Whiteman Airport and Los Angeles County have received federal Airport Improvement (AIP) Grant funds for the upkeep and maintenance of the airport under a contractual obligation of 20 years. In 2020, Los Angeles County accepted an AIP grant for the Whiteman Airport, which under federal law, obligates the airport sponsor (LA County) to operate the airport as an airport until 2040. With another 16 years remaining on this obligation, it would seem entirely premature for the County to dedicate valuable staff time exploring the future uses of land already required to be occupied, and utilized, as an airport.

It is also worth noting that the continued negligence by the Board to make essential improvements to the airport jeopardizes the safety of the pilots in the air and the neighborhoods below. CalTrans consistently requires safety inspections of its airports and can cite required improvements for airport sponsors at great cost to the county should it choose to not accept federal grant funding. California has, for the past several years, missed out on over \$50 million in federal dollars which can help alleviate the financial burdens of operating and maintaining an airport. Refusals by the County to accept federal funds for needed safety infrastructure improvements will inevitably force it to make difficult funding priorities in the future.

Additionally, the county has identified correctly, albeit misguidedly, the continued tensions between airports and the communities in which they reside. Does the county believe that by closing an airport those tensions will subside? Since 1970 over 2,000 airports have closed across the country leaving the remaining airport infrastructure to support the needs of the aviation industry. The noise and other nuisance issues displayed in communities throughout southern California, from Torrance, Long Beach, Santa Monica, Van Nuys, and Burbank, are no doubt directly impacted by the continued consolidation of these aviation assets into other communities – creating and moving environmental injustices from one community to another. If the county were truly interested in alleviating the concerns of its residents it would seek to create more infrastructure, not less.

Finally, commercial aviation has never been safer, and air travel has become almost as routine as driving your car. The foundation of aviation safety starts at small airports like Whiteman – where solid flight training and continuing education are based. Aviation technology also requires incubators and sandboxes, which airports like Whiteman are precisely suited to meet. Tomorrow's generation of aviators need community airports to make it easier for them to chart their aviation careers. With education costs already imposing a significant barrier, actions like those proposed in Item 16 force young people out of their communities to find cheaper alternatives away from their families and hometowns.

For all these reasons, we urge you to truly consider the County's responsibility as an airport sponsor to abide by its contractual agreements and to consider the considerable impacts these decisions will have on, not just the San Fernando Valley, but the Southern California region. Approving this agenda item will only exacerbate the existing tensions between communities and airports throughout the region by elevating future complaints about airports in every other part of the region and increasing the congestion in an already congested airspace system.

Respectfully,

Jared Yoshiki, **Western Pacific Regional Manager, AOPA**
Carol Ford, **President, California Pilots Association**
Phil Derner, **Director Western Region, NBAA**
Karen Huggard, **Vice President of Government Affairs, NATA**
Katia Veraza, **Manager of Government Affairs, VAI**

