**LETTER FROM CURT CASTAGNA, LA COUNTY AVIATION COMMISSIONER**

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From: Curt Castagna <ccastagna@nata.aero>

Date: 10/29/23 8:28 PM (GMT-08:00)

To: thirddistrict@bos.lacounty.gov, firstdistrict@bos.lacounty.gov, hollyjmitchell@bos.lacounty.gov, fourthdistrict@bos.lacounty.gov, kathryn@bos.lacounty.gov

**Honorable County Supervisors Horvath, Solis, Mitchell, Hahn and Barger**

As a member of the Los Angeles County Aviation Commission, business owner in the county, and the president of one of the major national aviation trade associations in Washington DC, that oversees national regulatory and legislative efforts for aviation business and general aviation airports, please permit me to share a perspective as the BOS contemplates a board agenda item on the Whiteman Airport. The LA County Aviation Commission has not yet been provided an opportunity to submit formal comments on the Re-Envisioning of the Whiteman Airport, a report completed by a specifically formed Community Advisory Committee (CAC).

***At the October 2023 meeting of the Los Angeles County Aviation Commission, there was a formal vote for the commission to submit to the LA County Board of Supervisors a request: “That the BOS take no action on the Department of Public Works report (Re-Envisioning of the Whiteman Airport and accompanying staff report) until such time the LA County Aviation Commission has had an opportunity to review and respond to the report. As the subcommittee chair on this effort, I was asked to submit this letter and wish to deliver that request in this email.***

The members of the LA County Aviation Commission learned after the fact that the Re-Envisioning of Whiteman Airport Report was released to the Board of Supervisors for a potential action: [1148085\_BoardMotionof12.08.2020Item14-WhitemanAirport\_2023.09.25.pdf (lacounty.gov)](https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/bc/1148085_BoardMotionof12.08.2020Item14-WhitemanAirport_2023.09.25_.pdf). The report refers to a second link that for a separate 10 page document and recommendations reflected in the report’s exhibit, but not deliberated or reflected in the final recommendation by those members of the CAC who voted to move a recommendation of closure forward with no real consideration of the alternatives provided. Strangely, The only member of the CAC that was representing the LA County Aviation Commission, was restricted from, and not permitted to vote on the Re-Envisioning of Whiteman Airport Report.

The CAC process and vote on member Veronica Padilla’s motion, which was adopted, is not consistent with member Penny Alderson’s motion, that more closely aligns with all the neighborhood group around Whiteman Airport, all of which oppose the closure and unanimously rejected that suggestion. Please see the attached Whiteman Airport Minority Report that should be part of any further consideration. It appears the CAC recommendation does not appear to be reflective of the community input taken for Re-Envisioning Whiteman Airport, and thus the report appears skewed and did not adequately consider community interests. A link to the City of Los Angeles City Clerk’s website contains a City of LA Council resolution supporting closure of Whiteman Airport, where four LA Neighborhood Councils’ (including the Pacoima Neighborhood Council) opposed that City Council resolution.  [https://cityclerk.lacity.org/lacityclerkconnect/index.cfm?fa=ccfi.viewrecord&cfnumber=21-0002-S13](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fcityclerk.lacity.org%2flacityclerkconnect%2findex.cfm%3ffa%3dccfi.viewrecord%26cfnumber%3d21-0002-S13&c=E,1,n8e1__QMfIcqSypyzr_gMt9bsOoM2nS9vxM3TF6JG50V26q7Hx4rwSBCiTAe99Z-5llGKwinMGpOl1AcGmRTjZVPNSiL0InuPXtOTVJOrAbSthsGDwIc8wTpfewu&typo=1)  We understand that all of the neighborhood councils in the region have voted against closure of the Whiteman Airport, including the Van Nuys Airport Citizen’s Council that reviews VNY Airport matters, but not all neighborhood councils filed a Community Impact Statement with the City Council.<https://clkrep.lacity.org/onlinedocs/2021/21-0002-S13_CIS_06172022064214_06-17-2022.pdf> <https://clkrep.lacity.org/onlinedocs/2021/21-0002-S13_CIS_11182022093812_11-18-2022.pdf>

In the spirit of full transparency, and to support the County’s mission and agenda for its commissions to provide the BOS input, I appeal to you now provide opportunity for the LA County Aviation Commission to review the Re-Envisioning of Whiteman Airport Report, and all this aviation advisory commission to provide the BOS formal comment. Also attached for reference is a letter sent to you by the Whiteman Airport Association.

Lastly, the attached “KWHP Closure – Pros and Cons” summary document contains thoughts that would likely apply to most general aviation airports in the Los Angeles region. This report and information was ignored by the CAC and that sets the case for further environmental justice questions and the concern on the CAC process that appeared to dismiss the formally recognized neighborhood community groups. Those groups formal vote opposing the closure of the Whiteman Airport was published in their feedback to the motion by the City of Los Angeles City Council, who was looking to force a vote of impacting the County’s own Whiteman Airport. While it was not known what motion may come from the now published Re-Envisioning of Whiteman Airport Report, the discussion of closure, and any further restrictions at Whiteman Airport must include a discussion on those measures and improvements that could instead be adopted to mitigate negative impacts. Whiteman Airport is a valuable asset to the County and region, and its imperative to recognize those many valuable attributes the Whiteman Airport has and will provide. We wonder if the City Council of Los Angeles made their Van Nuys Airport residents aware that their efforts for closure of Whiteman would direct more aircraft to their own airport? What about the other communities with airports in the LA County region? A transparent communication with all of the LA County communities should be presented, and the LA County Aviation Commission should be permitted to provide feedback before there is an effort that would redirect aircraft operations in the County to other neighborhoods to absorb the impact. Especially since the Re-Envisioning of Whiteman Airport Report outlined several proactive mitigating measures to address community impacts, and maximize the value of that Airport for the County.

Thank you for your leadership and public service.

Respectfully,

Curt Castagna  
President and CEO

AVIATION BUSINESS ADVOCATES

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+1 800.808.6282 / M: 562.824.8554 / [**NATA.AERO**](http://www.nata.aero/)  
818 Connecticut Ave. NW, Ste 900 / Washington, DC 20006

**additional documents (3):**

1. **letter from the kwhp airport association to the board of suppervisors**

**DEAR COUNTY SUPERVISORS:** 10/23/23 HORVATH, SOLIS, MITCHELL, HAHN, BARGER

From: The 465 Members of the Whiteman Airport Association

This letter is in regard to the gem of the San Fernando Valley, Whiteman Airport. You, being part of the five strong women, that the voters have chosen to make the right and informed decisions on our behalf, instead of listening to a small group of monetarily motivated, small-minded activists. Pacoima Beautiful has been awarded over 2 million dollars to beautify Pacoima, not to close down a priceless piece of infrastructure in the area. If we close down all of the airports in economically challenged areas, there will be no access for Blacks, Latinos, or other economically challenged youth to have a safe space to learn how to fly close enough so they can walk, skateboard or bicycle to get there. You are being called on to vote on the future of Whiteman Airport. The following are important things to consider before making your decision. Safety – Every airport has accidents; however, the statistics are very good in comparison to other similar airports. Out of the number of crashes listed attributable to Whiteman, almost half happened miles away from the airport with Whiteman being either the destination airport or the airport they took off from. Just because there are fatal accidents on ALL of the freeways, we DON’T CLOSE THEM DOWN. The accident that started this whole media circus was a flight with a pilot unfamiliar with this airport on a government-sanctioned flight. Air Quality – In the first CAC Meetings, the councilwoman’s office stated that for years the Freeways and Industrial factories have been polluting Pacoima. But now it is ALL being blamed on the airport. Tests were performed in Pacoima to test the lead levels and they were 1/10th of the national standard. Problems in Pacoima are not due solely to airplanes, but the 3 major freeways and trains that surround it. Unleaded aviation fuel is being developed now, so this issue won’t be an issue in a couple of years. Auto-dismantling businesses had gone unchecked for decades wreaking havoc on pollution in Pacoima, that’s why it was granted special designation by the U.S. government as a Federal Empowerment Zone. Noise – Noise studies have also been done, and only a very few of the closest houses are being affected. Noise is also from the traffic and trains as well as traffic from Burbank Airport. Whiteman’s runway is so short that there will never be larger planes taking off or landing here. Reasons for Keeping the airport – Whiteman is part of the important Aviation infrastructure and an integral part of the area’s emergency response network. It is used for medical flights, animal rescue flights, fire-fighting flights, pipeline flights, and news reporting flights and is used by governmental agencies such as the Secret Service, U.S. Marshalls, U.S. Air Force, County Fire, Highway Patrol, and LAPD. Our airport was even used during 9/11 when all flights were grounded, for transporting blood to the San Francisco area. (The lone airplane given special dispensation). Whiteman is also home to many non-profits, Civil Air Patrol for adults and teens (creating responsible citizens through an aviation-based program), two Aviation Explorer groups (teaching teens how to fly at a low cost), EAA (aviation group focused on safety), Young Eagles Program(giving free airplane rides to kids in the community exposing them to the world of aviation, over 10,000 kids flown), Ninety-Nines (group of women pilots who, through scholarship and mentoring, encourage youth to become pilots), Project “Jackpot” build-a-plane workshops (help mentor youth to actually build a real plane). ALL OF THESE NON-PROFITS ARE RUN BY VOLUNTEERS, NO ONE IS PAID. It would be very short-sighted to vote for the removal of Whiteman Airport, an important infrastructure that can never be replaced. We don’t close down Freeways because they have accidents, or they create smog. It is called progress. Don’t listen to the lies and rhetoric put out by groups using scary tactics and trying to play a political power game. They used donor funds to pay people to go door to door to stir up the community, but when surveyed, the majority of community residents were in favor of keeping the airport. Also, all the surrounding Neighborhood Councils are all for keeping the airport open. Thank you for your attention. Whiteman Airport Association Shellie Hagopian, Secretary [shelliehagopian@earthlink.ne](mailto:shelliehagopian@earthlink.ne)

**(2) SUMMARY OF PROS AND CONS OF AIRPORT CLOSURE**

**Whiteman Airport**

**Summary of Pros and Cons of Airport Closure**

**March 2023**

## Arguments in favor of closing the Airport

* **Addressing community concerns over safety, environmental and health impacts associated with the airport**
  + Elimination of aircraft accidents, potential increased safety in Pacoima and surrounding communities due to aircraft using the Airport
  + Potential decrease in air pollution in the surrounding community due to aircraft
  + Potential resolution to health issues concerns resulting from the Airport operations (effects of air pollution, lead exposure, mental health effects, etc.)
  + Potential elimination of noise pollution around the community
  + Closing of the airport eliminates the potential impact of Airport noise on the approximately 335 homes within the 65 CNEL noise contour of the Airport
* **Addressing community concerns over highest and best use of the land**
  + The Airport is the largest undeveloped area in the Pacoima community
    - The community would be able to participate in the process to determine how to redevelop the site
    - Potential economic opportunity to expand housing and jobs for the surrounding community; increased tax revenue for City of Los Angeles
    - Potential creation of new park or open space on the property
    - Potential creation of new homes, mixed-use, or commercial property
    - Ability to evaluate the potential to return land to the Tataviam Nation
* **Addressing community concerns over the Airports role in the community**
  + Responsive to the portion of the Pacoima community who see the Airport as an eyesore
  + Responsive to the portion of the Pacoima community members who do not use the Airport and would like to see a land use with broader community appeal
  + Responsive to the portion of the Pacoima community who do not directly benefit from the operation of the Airport
  + Responsive to LACD-7 Councilmember Monica Rodriguez’ Resolution adopted December 9, 2020, supporting any legislation or administrative action that would shut down the Airport

## Arguments in favor of the Airport remaining open

* **Addressing community support of the Airport**
  + From what we observed at Santa Monica, the County can expect significant opposition and legal challenges from aviation interests, the business community, FAA, and perhaps municipalities where environmental and operational impacts would be relocated
    - National and State trade organizations like Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) and CalPilots have stated they were tracking the CAC process and will engage in the future as needed
  + We’ve heard that all the City of Los Angeles Neighborhood Councils in the region have expressed support for the airport and are opposed to closure, including the Pacoima Neighborhood Council
    - The Pacoima Neighborhood Council has since filed a Community Impact Statement with the City Council opposing the closure of the airport
* **Addressing the day-to-day operations of the Airport**
  + Ability to respond to emergencies and disasters will be significantly impacted.  The LA County Fire Department opposes the closure of the Airport for those reasons
  + The closure of the Airport would displace the numerous aircraft, aviation businesses, and not-for-profit aviation organizations, and governmental agencies operating at the Airport; these aircraft would need to relocate to other airports in the region, such as Van Nuys Airport; the Van Nuys Airport Citizens Advisory Council is strongly opposed to the closure of Whiteman Airport
    - Several non-profit organizations operate at the Airport that benefit local youth, including the EAA Young Eagles Program, Civil Air Patrol, Air Explorer Program, and San Fernando Valley 99s
    - Numerous local, State, and Federal agencies utilize the airport, including the Sheriff’s Department, Cal Fire, U.S. Marshall Service, FBI, DEA, Department of Homeland Security, and the Secret Service
  + Closure would require the termination and buyout of all commercial and development leases; for example, there are five long-term development leases with remaining terms between 20-40 years; in addition to purchasing the buildings and improvements, the County can expect to receive claims for loss of revenue
* **Addressing the community benefit of the Airport**
  + Existing programs at the Airport and the recommended improvements provide community benefit:
    - Local opportunity for job creation and familiarization with community asset
    - Educational opportunities for students and aviation enthusiast; allows community to support STEM education initiative and provides potential pathway careers
    - Will serve as a hub for community events and activities
  + A recent Economic Impact Analysis concluded that the airport directly supports 246 jobs with an additional 166 employment opportunities created because of economic multipliers; a total of $19 million of income is generated annually for the total workforce while an estimated $54.5 million of annual airport-related spending benefits the airfield and the surrounding community each year
* **Addressing the impact to other airports and communities**
  + Whiteman Airport serves as a reliever airport for Hollywood Burbank Airport and LAX, allowing them to better serve the commercial airlines; closure of the airport would significantly impact operations at these airports
  + The precedent set at Whiteman Airport, could set expectations or precedent for similar efforts to close other County-owned airports
  + The closure of Whiteman Airport is likely to negatively impact the County's relationship with the FAA and Caltrans; consequently, the County's ability to obtain needed federal and state grant funding for the maintenance and improvement of the other County-owned airports may be impacted

**(3) WHITEMAN AIRPORT MINORITY REPORT (9 PAGES)**

Re-envisioning Whiteman Airport Community Advisory Committee Minority Report March 14, 2023 In November 2020, an aircraft arriving at Whiteman Airport suffered an engine failure. The pilot attempting to reach the airport hit powerlines across Sutter Avenue, crashed into two parked cars and caught on fire. The pilot, the only person on board, was killed in the accident. No one on the ground was injured. Homes nearby were slightly damaged by the fire and the parked cars were destroyed. The aircraft came to rest approximately 150 feet North of the airport property. Employees from American Airports, the contracted management company for the airport, responded with emergency equipment. They were asked to depart the area by responding Los Angeles City Fire Department personnel. Immediately following the Accident, Monica Rodriquez, Councilwoman, Los Angeles City Council District Seven and Veronica PadillaCampos, Executive Director of Pacoima Beautiful publicly demanded that Whiteman Airport be immediately closed. They cited the following reasons; safety, pollution, noise and the belief that the airport did not provide any benefit to the Pacoima community. In response to this incident and public call for closure, Supervisor Sheila Kuehl, Los Angeles County Supervisory District 3, on December 8th, 2022, made a motion to the Los Angeles Board of Supervisors, which was passed unanimously. In the preamble of the motion she noted, “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. “ She moved 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 (emphasis added) 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 Page 2 of 9 accidents that includes a streamlined approach for reimbursement for damages. The protocol shall include the support of mental health counseling when appropriate. The Department of Public Works formed a Community Advisory Committee originally comprised of 22 members. Two Representatives from Los Angeles County Supervisor District 3, two from Los Angeles City Council Office 7 (Monica Rodriguez’s District Director), four from Pacoima Beautiful (Veronica Padilla-Campos), and 13 additional members selected by Monica Rodriguez. There were two representatives of Whiteman Airport (a pilot and a business owner), a representative from the Los Angeles County Fire Department and a representative from the LA City Fire Dept. And finally, a Los Angeles County Aviation Commissioner as a non-voting member. In the end, 18 members remained. At meetings taking place over more than 20 months, it was immediately clear that the Council Office and Pacoima Beautiful representatives had no interest in keeping the airport open and would not even consider it, regardless of how the community would benefit. Other members claimed to be undecided, but early on stated they were leaning toward closure. A press conference was held at the corner of Osborne and San Fernando Rd. with Veronica PadillaCampos and Robert Arias, both CAC members about closing the airport in Jan. 2022. Clearly, they were not remaining open-minded. Veronica Padilla-Campos as the head of Pacoima Beautiful was involved in conducting several protests, numerous airport closure media events, hiring individuals at $22.00/hr to canvas the neighborhood to spread their opinions, and post inaccurate information on their website. All pushing for the closure of the airport. In fact, the Pacoima Beautiful website renamed the entry advertising the “Reenvision Whiteman Airport meetings” to “Shutdown Whiteman Airport meetings”, which was not the purpose of the CAC committee. During over 20 months of meetings, including a “Workshop” and four “Open Houses” in the community, the Department of Public Works developed a draft of recommendations that listed a number of recommendations made by the community and CAC members. The items were voted upon by CAC members to determine those items which were most important and also to identify issues which were supported the most. Those items were grouped by area of concern. The Department of Public Works then split them into two groups as a result of the demands of members of the CAC to allow the issue of closure to be voted upon. The resulting recommendations had three components; those which were not impacted by the airport remaining open or closed, those impacted by the closure, and those impacted by the airport remaining open. Two scenarios emerged which were identified as Scenario 1 (Closure) and Scenario 2 (Remain Open). By the very design of these Scenarios, the CAC and community divided into the two factions. A review of the motions shows that they both support mitigating the noise issue, addressing leaded fuel and enhancing the value of the airport to the local community. Contrary to statements for Councilwoman Rodriguez and Veronica PadillaCampos, the airport does provide benefits to the community and will continue to a greater amount with the airport open. By listing closure of the Airport as Scenario 1, it implies this is the desired or recommended Scenario. This is clearly at odds with the direction of the motion to develop a plan which keeps the airport open. Page 3 of 9 At the January 26, 2023, in person CAC meeting, scheduled to be the final meeting where the CAC members would vote on any motions put forth, Councilwoman Rodriguez was afforded as much time as she needed to address the CAC members concerning her desire for the airport to be closed. No time was provided for any rebuttal to her comments. This was the second time she was afforded time to address the CAC without any time limit being imposed or opposing view being allowed. During Public Comment speakers were limited to 2 minutes. The majority of speakers supported keeping the airport open. The public comment caused the meeting to be adjourned without any votes on the two motions presented. One motion was published prior to the meeting, calling for the airport to remain open. The second was presented verbally, calling for closure and having a large number of points in addition to closure. This precluded the public from having time to research and address the motion. This was a possible Brown Act violation. A new meeting was scheduled for February 23, 2023. Prior to the meeting four motions were published. Three motions recommended keeping the airport open and one recommended closure. One motion did not receive a second and another was withdrawn, leaving one motion for closure and one for remaining open. Ms. Alderson’s motion: Therefore, I MOVE, 1. Whiteman Airport remain open supporting its critical role in the local and regional transportation network. 2. The County of Los Angeles address safety and potential environmental impacts from other unsafe condition the County identifies in the operation of the facility. 3. The County of Los Angeles pursue the sale of 100UL unleaded fuel at all County Airports, as soon as possible. 4. That the County pursue the “General Improvements” and “Scenario 2 options” identified by the County Department of Public Works, the Community Advisory Committee, and the Community at large. This should include the establishment of community meeting space, educational space, a restaurant, and open space for viewing airport activities. 5. That all available federal, state and local funding be pursued to mitigate residential and community impacts, including federal funds already identified for soundproofing and insulation for residents as identified by a FAA Part 150 study. 6. That a reconstituted Community Advisory Committee consisting of members from the community of 2,000,000 residents served by the airport, Airport Stakeholders,, as well as, representatives of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, continue to meet regularly, maintaining an open dialog to address community and airport concerns, as well as, to increase utility and interaction between the airport and the local community. Page 4 of 9 7. That the County pursue bring job training programs, such as, Aircraft and Power Plant Mechanics School, Aviation Programs associated with local Community Colleges and Universities. Outreach should be made to the local School District to offer High School STEM Classes on the airport. This motion follows the mandate of the motion from the Board of Supervisors to keep Whiteman Airport open and addresses every other issue discussed by the community, in the motion. Funding for noise mitigation is identified and the motion gives direction to the items that are most important to the community to move forward with. Ms. Padilla-Campos Motion Recommend to the Board of Supervisors that Scenario 1 (Airport closure is pursued) and the following recommendations be implemented to move forward immediately to ensure public health and safety measures are prioritized in the timeframe leading up to airport closure. • LA County shall not accept Federal grants that will extend the operational timeline at Whiteman Airport. • Prohibit the sale, storage, and use of leaded aviation gas and cease all operations requiring the use of leaded aviation gas at Whiteman Airport until there is a commercially viable product available to replace leaded aviation gas. • LA County shall enact a Noise Abatement and Curfew Ordinance restricting stage 2 aircraft departing between the hours of 10 p.m. and 7 a.m. at Whiteman Airport (medical emergency and military flights are exempt). No restrictions on landings or helicopters. • New Air conditioning units and door bottom seal strips shall be installed in all housing units adjacent to the Whiteman Airport and LA County Fire Department boundaries along Pierce Street, San Fernando Road, Osborne Street, Airpark Way, and in all housing units at the San Fernando Gardens paid for by LA County or other non-FAA funding. • Air Purifiers and noise cancelling windows shall be installed in all units for residents that live adjacent to the Whiteman Airport and LA County Fire Department including along Pierce Street, San Fernando Road, Osborne Street, Airpark Way, and in all housing units at the San Fernando Gardens paid for by LA County or other non-FAA funding. • The County will fund the installation and maintenance of a sound barrier along San Fernando Road from Pierce Street to Osborne Street utilizing nature-based solutions to reduce noise pollution coming from the airport and to increase carbon capture, reduce air pollution, promote the use of the pedestrian walkway and bike path as well as improve its overall aesthetic. • Require LA County to sponsor a peer-reviewed study in cooperation with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Branch (CLPPB) to assess statistical associations between the blood lead levels of sampled children living within a Page 5 of 9 mile radius of Whiteman Airport and indicators of aviation gasoline exposure risk around Whiteman Airport. • The Department of Public Works shall implement an emergency response protocol for both onairport 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, per Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors motion on December 8, 2020. • LA County will conduct a redevelopment study, including renderings, of closed Airport property for reuse in a planned manner including suggested uses such as open space, retail, mixed income housing, community gardens, public services, education centers, and evaluating the potential to return land to the Tataviam Nation. The redevelopment study will be informed by focus groups, needs assessments, and visioning sessions with the local community including tribal community members and leaders, schools, resource centers, local businesses, and residents living within a 3-mile radius from Whiteman Airport to ground truth recommendations to determine the plans after closure of the airport. Recommendations shall prioritize local hire and a job transition plan for local workers currently employed at Whiteman Airport. • Since pilot training consumes the vast majority of the local environmental impact. Restrict touch and goes to one per day. • LA County to begin proper enforcement of all airport rules, but especially related to noise. • The Airport Commission cannot be stacked with pilots. Add a minimum of 2 community residents (non – airport related) to the Commission. • Require all non-emergency flights from and to Whiteman + heliport to follow FAA rules related to Above Ground Level (AGL) and Helicopter Association International recommendations about AGLs. Ms. Padilla-Campos’ motion does not follow the mandate of the Board of Supervisors by recommending the closure of the airport which does not support position that the “Los Angeles County strives to operate and maintain smart, active, safe and sustainable transportation infrastructure” and “to undertake a community driven master plan for Whiteman Airport that maintains the property’s primary function as an airport.” Ms. Padilla-Campos’ motion should be rejected as nonresponsive to the guidance of the Board of Supervisors’’ motion. Because the motion calls for the closure of the airport, it prohibits the acceptance of FAA grants for any improvements or mitigation activities paid for by the Federal Government due to Grant Assurance clauses which require the airport to remain open for 20 years from the time the money is accepted. This results in the airport potentially falling into disrepair or a huge cost to the Los Angeles County taxpayers by shifting all the costs for maintaining the airport and mitigating the noise and pollution issues to the County. Whiteman Airport must remain open until 2035 due to existing Grant Assurance clauses. Page 6 of 9 A prohibition on the sale of unleaded fuel is a violation of FAA rules. Reid Hillview Airport is currently being prosecuted by the FAA for removing 100 low lead fuel and replacing it with 94UL. The FAA requires 100 Low Lead fuel remain available until a “drop in” 100UL fuel is available. Although approximately 70% of General Aviation Aircraft can use 94UL, they only represent 30% of fuel used. Additionally, the airport can not prohibit aircraft using 100 Low Lead from landing or departing from the airport. It is a public facility open to all aircraft capable of landing or taking off from it. This section would authorize the sale of 100 Low Lead fuel as soon as a commercially viable product to replace leaded aviation gas became available. A noise curfew against the operation of Stage 2 aircraft is unnecessary since the operation of Stage 2 aircraft in the United States occurred in 2017. Two sections direct the County to specifically mandate the County provide new air conditioning units, door bottom seal strips, air purifiers and noise cancelling windows to specific residences adjacent to Whiteman Airport. The identified fall both within and outside of area identified in the noise study and a large number of residences identified in the study are outside the area in the motion. The specificity of what is to be done for noise mitigation does not list items which are generally performed by an FAA financed mitigation. The motion specifically directs the County to pay for this and the costs are estimated to be approximately $30,000,000.00. This motion requires the County to install and maintain a “a sound barrier along San Fernando Road from Pierce Street to Osborne Street utilizing nature-based solutions to reduce noise pollution coming from the airport”. The bike path along San Fernando Road is City of Los Angeles property. There are no residences along this stretch of roadway and any nature based (trees or shrubs) will prove ineffective since the aircraft are at altitudes well above the level of any growth to have an impact on noise. Again the cost is on the County and will continue well after the airport ceases operations. The next item requires the County to sponsor (pay for) a study of the assess statistical associations between the blood lead levels of sampled children living within a mile radius of Whiteman Airport and indicators of aviation gasoline exposure risk around Whiteman Airport. The sources of lead in the area involve everything from contaminated soil, residential paint, commercial exposures, baby food, other farm and dairy products to name a few. Although, any lead is bad for people, the EPA has established acceptable levels of exposure that are well below those experienced in the neighborhoods adjacent to the airport. It is anticipated that 100UL will be available before this study could be concluded. An emergency response protocol for both on-airport and off-airport accidents already exists. The Los Angeles City Fire Department responds to all emergency incidents occurring on or off of Whiteman Airport. They have keys for emergency ingress and egress and routinely practice operations on the airport. The reimbursement of losses associated with an aircraft accident generally falls under the insurance of the involved aircraft. There is no County liability associated with aircraft incidents off of County property and very limited if any liability for incidents on the County property. In the incident which lead to the establishment of the Community Advisory Council, the then airport manager provided contact information for the Page 7 of 9 owner of the aircraft within 48 hours of the incident. The provision of Mental Health services falls squarely on the County of Los Angeles Department of Mental Health. The mandated redevelopment study demonstrates that the CAC did not give serious consideration of how the property should be used. They still have no agreement as to what it should be. They repeatedly state they want open space, yet they are surrounded by open space. There are two parks adjacent to the airport, Roger Jessup Park contiguous with the airport and David M. Gonzales/Pacoima Park. Approximately one mile from Whiteman Airport is Hansen Dam Recreation Area, the second largest open space in the City of Los Angeles with a large swimming area, museum, hiking and biking trails, and an equestrian center to name a few amenities. There are three additional parks within three miles of the airport. Proponents of closure have suggested low income and high end housing, industrial center (although they complain about all the light industry in the area), educational facilities, farmers market, community square, a vacant lot and returning the land to the Tataviam Nation. There was no effort to re-envision the airport, other than to envision the planes gone. The motion says they will recommend job transition for local workers. Does that mean if you don’t live in Pacoima that finding a new job is not of concern? Where will the hundreds of employees at Whiteman Airport find comparable work at the same salary levels? What about the 20+ businesses and their owners? What will happen to them? Will they lose their livelihood? Will they lose their homes due to loans they may have on their businesses? How will they be compensated for this huge loss of income? The motion hopes to limit the touch and goes at the airport to one a day. Who is the one who gets to do it? Limiting the landings to full stop only means more time taxiing and more exposure to lead emissions. Practicing landings and take offs is critical to learning how to fly. The motion asks for proper enforcement of all airport rules. There was no information presented that this was not already occurring. There are no “noise” rules at the present. The motion attempts to take away the ability of the Supervisors to select whomever they think would best represent them on the Aviation Committee by dictating that at least two members be “non-airport related”. Which airport and which Supervisors are impacted by this mandate? The Commission deals with a number of complicated issues and persons not involved in aviation many times do not understand all that goes on. Also, what is “Non Airport Related” mean? Does this preclude anyone who has ever flown in an airplane? Been a nonflying member of a volunteer organization that has a relationship with aviation? Former Girl Scouts who earned an Aviation Badge at Whiteman or any other airport? The final section concerns aircraft operations away from the airport. During take offs and landing there are no Above Ground Level limits. If there were no one could ever land or take off. After takeoff and climb out or during the approach aircraft are already required to follow FAA regulations to above Ground clearances. The Helicopter Association International provides guidelines for helicopter operations all over the world and in compliance with the laws of those other countries. The basic rules follow the FAA rules but some above ground clearance recommendations are higher. Following those rules in the airspace over Whiteman would create Page 8 of 9 potential hazards which do not currently exist. This is an example of where a non-pilot does not understand the rules and environment that aircraft operate in. The motion by Ms. Padilla-Campos is ill conceived and poorly thought out. Her goal is the closure of the airport and to shift the expense of operations to the County of Los Angeles until the airport closes. There was no re-envisioning the airport. Her motion certainly does not allow Los Angeles County to “operate and maintain smart, active, safe and sustainable transportation infrastructure” or “maintain the property’s primary function as an airport.” Ms. Padilla-Campos wants the County to spend well over $30,000,000.00 just for noise mitigation. This is just the tip of the iceberg on the costs associated with her proposal. Part of the closure of the airport is facilitating the relocation of aircraft and businesses. Van Nuys Airport does not have any available space to accommodate an influx of 600 aircraft. Burbank Airport is a busy Commercial Airport and will not welcome a large number of piston aircraft disrupting their operations. Aviation businesses at Whiteman Airport hold several distributorship agreements, whose companies allow only one distributor per airport. All of the airports in Southern California have existing distributors, so they cannot be relocated and will be forced out of business. What amount will these actions cost the County? Pacoima Beautiful and Monica Rodriguez were given more than their fair share of time to be heard and their ideas were given weight, but they failed to re-envision an airport that was of greater value to the community, than the airport currently is. The airport currently contributes $110,000,000.00 to the local economy, has eight non-profit groups, five of which support local youth, helping them prepare for employment in high paying fields related to aviation. This all goes away if the airport closes. Although those voting to close the airport claim to represent the community, it was apparent that they do not. The number of community members speaking at the meetings was at least two to one, and sometimes three to one, in favor of keeping the airport open and improving the airports value to the community. Petitions to keep the airport open have been signed by 8088 persons. The petition for closure has only 3026 signatures. That is after Pacoima Beautiful hired persons to canvas the neighborhoods asking residents to sign the petition and required the person going door to door to sign it themselves. Additionally, every Los Angeles City Neighborhood Council, including the Pacoima Neighborhood Council, voted to keep Whiteman Airport open. Neighborhood Councils are elected to represent the local communities, they are not selfappointed “community leaders”. The Department of Public Works was tasked with drawing up a plan that included input for the Community and in particular, Los Angeles City Councilwoman Monica Rodriquez and Pacoima Beautiful. They utilized a Community Advisory Council platform to allow for the collection of input, not just from the members of the Community Advisory Committee, but the whole community which uses and is impacted by Whiteman Airport. This process gave the Department of Public Works a clear picture of the issues facing some Pacoima residents, and the value of Whiteman Airport to the Pacoima community and the entire Southern California Region. The plan must reflect the desires of all the members of the Pacoima community and the Southern California Region, which is to keep Whiteman Airport open. The small vocal minority of the Page 9 of 9 Community wishing for the closure was overrepresented on the Committee and thus given a voice much louder than they deserve. That said, their concerns were heard by the Department of Public Works, as reflected in the General Recommendations and the Recommendations for Scenario 2, keeping the airport open. Those wishing for Whiteman Airport to remain open are in full agreement with the efforts to mitigate the impacts of Whiteman Airport on the Community. Many of these are the same issues addressed in the motion by Ms. Padilla-Campos, but clearly stated as not feasible under Scenario 1. Ms. Padilla-Campos motion disregards this by calling for the County of Los Angeles to undertake the mitigation at their own cost, a cost the County of Los Angeles is not prepared to bear. Again, we believe Ms. Padilla-Campos motion should be viewed as nonresponsive to the Motion by the Board of Supervisors.