



U.S. Department
of Transportation
Federal Aviation
Administration

Airports Division
Western-Pacific
Region
California

Los Angeles
Airports District
Office:
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El Segundo, CA
90245

January 21, 2026

Krystin Hence
Assistant Director, Capital Development
Department of Economic Opportunity
County of Los Angeles
510 S. Vermont Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90020

RE: Whiteman Airport

Dear Ms. Hence:

Thank you for contacting the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). We received your November 11, 2025, request seeking formal clarification regarding the duration and scope of the County of Los Angeles' (County) regarding its federal obligations associated with Whiteman Airport (WHP) and potential long-term planning implications.

You are correct in identifying that the County has accepted multiple Airport Improvement Program (AIP) grants for Whiteman Airport, including a land acquisition grant for approaches in 1999. Additionally, the County's system of airports, Brackett Field (POC), Compton-Woodley (CPM), General William J. Fox Field (WJF), and San Gabriel Valley (EMT) airports have also accepted grants for capital improvements. WHP is listed as a public-use, "Regional" airport in the current National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS) (2025–2029), Appendix A¹, and is currently home base to approximately 43% of the County airport's aircraft.

Specifically, you ask the following questions:

- 1) In your opinion, is the term of AIP Grant 005-1999 20 years or does it remain in effect in perpetuity, unless released by the FAA?**

As the County's grant terms provide, when federal grant funds are used to purchase land (AIP Grant 005-1999) or when federal surplus or non-surplus property is conveyed, the obligations tied to that land do not expire (the useful life of land is presumed not to expire), and the property remains federally obligated until released by the FAA. Separately, certain assurances (e.g., airport revenue, civil rights, and exclusive rights) extend so long as the airport is used as an airport.

¹ https://www.faa.gov/sites/faa.gov/files/airports/planning_capacity/npias/current/ARP-NPIAS-2025-2029-Appendix-A.pdf

- 2) **If you are of the opinion that AIP Grant 005-1999 has a perpetual duration, do the obligations of that grant apply only to the RPZ parcels acquired in 1999, or does that grant require the County to operate Whiteman Airport in perpetuity, or until released by the FAA?**

Grants issued for land purchase under the Federal Airport Program or the Airport Development Aid Program, as well as the current Airport Improvement Program (AIP), may also impose continuing obligations on airport property. Such property remains federally obligated until released by the FAA. This means that an **airport sponsor that has used grant funds to purchase land** or that has received a conveyance of property from the Federal government **must use the airport as an airport until released by the FAA [emphasis added]**. The FAA's overarching requirement for approving any airport closure is that the action must demonstrate a net benefit to civil aviation. It is critically important to understand that non-aviation interests cannot serve as justification for a release or closure of the airport.

The County, as the airport sponsor, remains responsible for conducting its own analysis and providing justification for any long-term planning requests, including the pursuit of release and or closure. The general FAA processes and principles are reflected in FAA Compliance Guidance Letter (CGL) 2022-1, *The Process for the Release and Permanent Closure of Federally Obligated Airports*².

Ultimately, the FAA will not issue a decision unless and until such a request is thoroughly reviewed and approved by the FAA Associate Administrator for Airports.

Should you have any questions regarding this information or require additional clarification, please do not hesitate to contact our office.

Sincerely,

Cathryn G. Cason
Manager
Los Angeles Airports District Office

² https://www.faa.gov/airports/airport_compliance/compliance_guidance/cgl-2022-01-permanant-airport-closures