



CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH CITY HALL

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TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: Carrie Tai, Community Development Director

MEETING: City Council Regular Meeting, March 2, 2021

SUBJECT: Agenda Item No. 9 – Discuss Comments on Los Angeles World Airports Proposed Airfield and Terminal Modernization Project at Los Angeles International Airport.

DATE: March 2, 2021

SUPPLEMENTAL ATTACHMENT

- LAWA Discussion Points (January 8, 2021 – City of El Segundo)

El Segundo discussion items: Los Angeles World Airports - South Bay COG

Background

- Los Angeles World Airports is a quasi-independent agency of the City of Los Angeles. It is governed by a 7-member commission appointed by the LA Mayor. It runs LAX and Van Nuys Airport.
- LAWA has been engaged in a massive expansion plan at LAX for the last 10 years. There are two major components to the expansion.
 - The first, which is approved and underway, is the LAMP, the Landside Access Modernization Plan. The main features of this plan are the people mover to connect the Crenshaw and Green light rail lines to the Central Terminal Area, which stops at new parking garages and a new consolidated rental car facility.
 - The second, is an expansion of the terminals. This plan is known as the Airfield Terminal Modernization Program. The main features of this plan are a new terminal, a new concourse, and a new satellite concourse, plus a plethora of new roadways to serve these new facilities. In addition, there are a few improvements and expansions to a variety of taxiways.
- These improvements, taken together, will allow the airport to handle tens of millions of additional passengers per year.

Accommodation or Inducement

- LAWA has claimed for years that these expansion projects are simply an accommodation of growth that is coming to LAWA regardless of whether the projects are done or not. LAWA claims that the result of not doing the project is simply a bad passenger experience but that the growth would occur regardless.
- However, this position belies logic. Of course, creating gleaming new facilities, improving access and significantly expanding capacity will induce growth in traffic. If you make it easy to use LAX, there is less incentive to use the many alternative airports in the region.
- But this is not a simply philosophical argument. By taking the position that they are not “inducing” growth, LAWA may claim under CEQA that the project does not require mitigations for the impacts, because the Project, in and of itself, does not produce any. LAWA is using a legal fiction to avoid the impacts of its expansion projects.

Impacts of Growth

- This growth in air traffic will result in similar increases in air pollution, noise, and traffic, putting additional stress on roads in and around the airport, including the 405, Sepulveda, La Cienega, and Aviation. Noise and air pollution will affect the south Bay in varying degrees.
- The brand new terminal (to be known as Terminal 9) will be primarily for the use of United Airlines and its Star alliance partners. The terminal will be massive, and will be the first terminal to be located east of Sepulveda Boulevard, representing a serious expansion of the central terminal area footprint. It will be located on the south side of Century Boulevard. It will be accessed from Century Boulevard, but LAWA is planning on providing temporary access from Sepulveda as well.
- The new concourse is also a very large facility. Known as Concourse 0, it will be attached to Terminal 1 (the Southwest Airlines Terminal) and will not have direct access from the CTA road. In order to build this the access road to the upper and lower levels from southbound Sepulveda will be demolished and the concourse will be built on that land, plus all of the old Park One lot (which has been closed for a year or two).
- The planned Concourse 0 and Terminal 9 will receive reallocated, lightly used, gates currently located midfield and create high utilization, high capacity, gates in the main area.
- In addition, there is a project called the Midfield Satellite Concourse, which will provide additional capacity, especially for international travelers.
- The expansion will have major impacts on the residents of the City of El Segundo and the surrounding communities.
- The Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Project was released in November, and comments are due next month.

Mitigation of Impacts

- In addition to the legal fiction of “accommodation” versus “inducing” of growth, LAWA is also using the shift in state law from Level Of Service (LOS) to Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) to claim that it cannot study impacts to intersections throughout the South Bay. Again, the addition of 10 of millions of passengers annually will undoubtedly negatively impact the South Bay.
- Regardless of whether it is technically required under CEQA or NEPA, LAWA needs to consider ways to address these unavoidable traffic impacts.

- Potential ideas could be to improve the Flyaway system and to implement a Transportation Management Organization for the South Bay (especially for airport-related employment)

Cargo

- While not specifically addressed in this project, the south Bay should be deeply concerned about LAWA's plans to increase its cargo operations, which bring additional air traffic (with noise and pollution), and significant truck traffic.
- Increased cargo operations are not compatible with the densely populated Westside and South Bay, and LAWA should seriously consider discouraging cargo growth at LAX. Other airports in the region, especially Ontario International, are better suited to serve not only the national goods movement market, Southern California as well.

Next Steps

- El Segundo is preparing a detailed comment letter to express its concerns about the project and has been negotiating with LAWA on changes El Segundo would like to see.
- It is our understanding that the Los Angeles Department of Transportation is conducting a project review of the ATMP and that the Westchester Neighborhood Council has requested a 60-day extension of the DEIR comment period in order to have the benefit of that review. El Segundo believes this extension makes sense and that the COG should also echo that extension request.
- As you know, LAWA is a powerful and well-funded organization. Significantly, even with airline traffic continuing to be down by more than half since the start of the pandemic, LAWA is moving full-speed ahead with environmentally clearing this project. It is not clear how the pandemic will affect construction schedules.
- Both the LAMP project and the ATMP appear to be much more concerned about traffic on the southbound 405 than with the northbound 405 or the westbound 105. There are very few improvements to access to the LAMP facilities or the new terminals from the northbound 405.
- El Segundo is particularly concerned about congestion on the 405, Sepulveda/PCH (including the Sepulveda Tunnel), Aviation, and other north-south routes. In particular, El Segundo is concerned that LAWA will attempt to open the new United Terminal 9 prior to the completion of the associated roadway network.
- It is not clear that, given the pandemic, that these projects are in fact necessary at this time. Terminal 9, in particular, seems oversized and potentially unnecessary. LAWA should consider scaling back or eliminating Terminal 9.

- In addition, El Segundo would prefer that Southwest Concourse 0 be constructed first, and Terminal 9 go second.
- If Terminal 9 is built, it is critical that the roadways intended to serve the project be completed and opened before Terminal is opened to operations. This would eliminate the need for any access from Sepulveda and would ensure that the Sepulveda Tunnel and other local streets are not subjected to frequent gridlock conditions.
- Finally, El Segundo is very concerned about construction impacts, including haul routes, and wants such haul routes to avoid El Segundo and the South Bay as much as possible.