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COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"

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February 5, 2024

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Mark Pestrella, 
Director of Public Works

BOARD MOTION OF NOVEMBER 7, 2023, AGENDA ITEM 20 REIMAGINING WHITEMAN AIRPORT

On November 7, 2023, the Board approved a motion directing (1) Public Works to report to the Board in 90 days with a plan to implement measures to reduce and ultimately eliminate the impacts related to the use of leaded aviation gasoline at Whiteman Airport and to move the aircraft runup areas further away from the runway ends; and (2) Public Works to implement a County administered curfew restricting the use of the runway during nighttime hours from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. at Whiteman Airport except for emergency, lifesaving, firefighting, law enforcement, governmental agencies, and services to the public, such as news media, and report back in 90 days on the steps necessary to implement a mandatory curfew restriction.

Public Works has made considerable progress in implementing these measures. The attached report outlines these efforts and information on a mandatory curfew restriction.

If you have any questions, please contact me or your staff may contact Steve Burger, Deputy Director, at (626) 458-4018 or sburger@pw.lacounty.gov.

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Attach.

cc: Chief Executive Office
County Counsel
Executive Office

REIMAGINING WHITEMAN AIRPORT

Measures Concerning Leaded Aviation Gasoline

Efforts are underway by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the aviation and energy industries to transition all piston-engine aircraft to unleaded fuel, primarily through their Eliminate Aviation Gasoline Lead Emissions collaborative initiative. Through this initiative, industry partners are addressing supply chain infrastructure and deployment issues and conducting research and development for potential unleaded fuels that can be used by all piston-engine aircraft. Concurrently, the FAA is addressing the programmatic aspects of evaluating, authorizing, regulating, and establishing policy for the use of such an unleaded fuel. The initiative's goal is to eliminate leaded aviation fuels in piston-engine aircraft safely by the end of 2030.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) presented its endangerment finding on October 7, 2023, which determined that lead emissions from aircraft that operate on leaded fuel cause or contribute to air pollution that may reasonably be anticipated to endanger public health and welfare. This finding allows the US EPA and the FAA to regulate and ultimately eliminate the use of leaded aviation gasoline. However, while the US EPA's final endangerment finding is a vital step toward regulation and ultimately the ban of leaded aviation gasoline, it does not currently ban or impose restrictions on the use, sale, distribution, dispensing, and general availability of leaded fuel, nor does it establish any new control measures regarding aircraft lead emissions.

Currently there is an unleaded aviation gasoline that is commercially available to the Southern California region, Swift Fuels UL94. This gasoline is usable by approximately 60-70 percent of the piston aircraft fleet after obtaining a supplemental type certificate from the FAA certifying that the aircraft and engine type can safely operate using the fuel.

Public Works will provide Swift Fuels UL94 unleaded aviation gasoline, in addition to the 100 low lead aviation gasoline currently available at the five County airports, until an unleaded aviation gasoline supported by the FAA and the aviation and energy industries is commercially available for all piston aircraft.

Public Works is currently working with Swift Fuels UL94 to enter into a master agreement to allow the County to purchase UL94. Efforts are also underway to prepare an underground storage tank and fuel dispenser at Compton/Woodley Airport to store and dispense UL94 at the airport. Once these initiatives are complete, Public Works will purchase UL94 from Swift Fuels, store and dispense the fuel from Compton/Woodley Airport, and transport it from Compton/Woodley Airport for sale at all County airports. Public Works anticipates that the plan will be fully implemented with UL94 available for sale at all County airports by June 1, 2024.

Once UL94 is available, Public Works will promote and incentivize the use of the unleaded aviation gasoline by assisting aircraft operators with obtaining the required supplemental

type certificate from the FAA and by offsetting the higher price of UL94 to bring the retail price to the customer in line with the price of 100 low lead.

Ultimately, when an unleaded aviation gasoline supported by the FAA and the aviation and energy industries becomes commercially available for all piston-engine aircraft, Public Works will ensure that it is made available at the County airports and that the storage and sale of leaded aviation gasoline is ceased altogether at the airports.

Moving the Aircraft Runup Areas

An aircraft runup area is a location on the airport where pilots can safely perform a preflight check primarily of the aircraft engine, instruments, and control surfaces. Aircraft runup areas are required to meet certain FAA design standards that ensure safety, operational efficiency, and are typically located close to the end of each runway to allow pilots to perform runup procedures just prior to departing the airport. The aircraft runup area for Runway 12 on the north end of Whiteman Airport is approximately 240 feet from the closest residential areas north of Pierce Street. The aircraft runup area for Runway 30 on the south end of the airport is approximately 960 feet from the closest residential areas located south of Osborne Street.

Public Works met with the FAA on December 6, 2023, to discuss how the aircraft runup areas at Whiteman Airport may be moved further away from the runway ends while still meeting the FAA's requirements and design criteria. This would help to minimize the impacts related to aircraft runups on the surrounding residential communities, particularly those on the north side of the airport along Pierce Street. A preliminary map showing the potential relocation of the runup areas is attached as Exhibit A. It is proposed that the north runup area be relocated approximately 600 feet southerly and the south runup area be relocated approximately 300 feet northerly. Public Works will be meeting with the FAA in March 2024 to further review this proposal to determine if the proposal would meet design standards. With FAA concurrence, the work could be completed as early as fall 2024.

County Administered Voluntary Nighttime Curfew

Effective November 9, 2023, Public Works implemented a voluntary nighttime curfew at Whiteman Airport requesting that all aircraft operators, except for flights related to emergency, lifesaving, firefighting, law enforcement, government agencies, and services to the public, such as news media, avoid aircraft arrivals and departures between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. daily.

Public Works subsequently notified all airport tenants at Whiteman Airport and at the other four County airports of the voluntary nighttime curfew and posted notices and signage regarding the new curfew in the airport terminal building and at all airport vehicle and pedestrian access gates. Information regarding the curfew was also posted on the Whiteman Airport and AirNav.com websites, which are frequently used by pilots for flight planning purposes.

Steps Necessary to Implement Mandatory Nighttime Curfew

Airport sponsors are prohibited from enacting local mandatory restrictions on aircraft operations, including nighttime curfews by the Airport Noise and Capacity Act of 1990 without FAA approval. To obtain FAA approval of any new mandatory restrictions on aircraft operations, an airport sponsor must complete a Federal Aviation Regulations, Part 161 Study – Notice and Approval of Airport Noise and Access Restrictions, which constitutes an application to the FAA for approval of the proposed restriction. In addition, any restriction on operations must comply with the County's FAA grant obligations that generally prohibit unreasonable restrictions to access County airports.

A Part 161 Study is a comprehensive technical and legal analysis of proposed noise or operational access restrictions on aircraft at an airport. The study process must include: (1) public notice, (2) opportunity for public input, (3) scientific study of the noise environment, (4) a benefit-cost analysis of the proposed restriction(s), and (5) analysis of the impact of the proposed restriction on the national aviation system. The study is the core of an application to the FAA requesting approval of local airport noise and access restriction and authorization to enact and implement the proposed restriction(s). No new airport noise or access restriction may be adopted unless the Part 161 Study is successfully completed, and the restriction is approved by the FAA. The typical time to complete the Part 161 Study exceeds 4 to 5 years at an estimated cost of approximately \$5 million, which may be funded up to 90 percent by an FAA Airport Improvement Program grant.

Historically, the FAA has not approved any Part 161 applications,¹ and only a few airport sponsors have successfully submitted a complete application. The Burbank-Glendale-Pasadena Airport authority began a Part 161 Study in 2000 to replace its voluntary nighttime curfew with a mandatory curfew at Hollywood Burbank Airport. The study was completed and submitted to the FAA in May 2009 at a cost of \$7 million. The FAA issued its finding in November 2009 that the authority's Part 161 Study did not justify the imposition of a mandatory curfew. The authority's voluntary nighttime curfew remains in place today. In 2014, the FAA denied the Los Angeles World Airports' Part 161 application to require nighttime departures at the Los Angeles International Airport to depart to the west over the ocean.

Although not required, the FAA allows an airport sponsor to use the Federal Aviation Regulations Part 150 Study – Airport Noise and Compatibility Planning process to meet many of the requirements of Part 161 application. The Part 150 process could allow the County to prepare a more robust Part 161 application and maximize opportunity for public input and comment. The Part 150 Study is a formal but voluntary process that ultimately produces two deliverables (1) Noise Exposure Map Report showing existing and future aircraft sound exposure levels and identifying land uses that are not compatible with aircraft noise, and (2) Noise Compatibility Plan (NCP) identifying the airport sponsor's

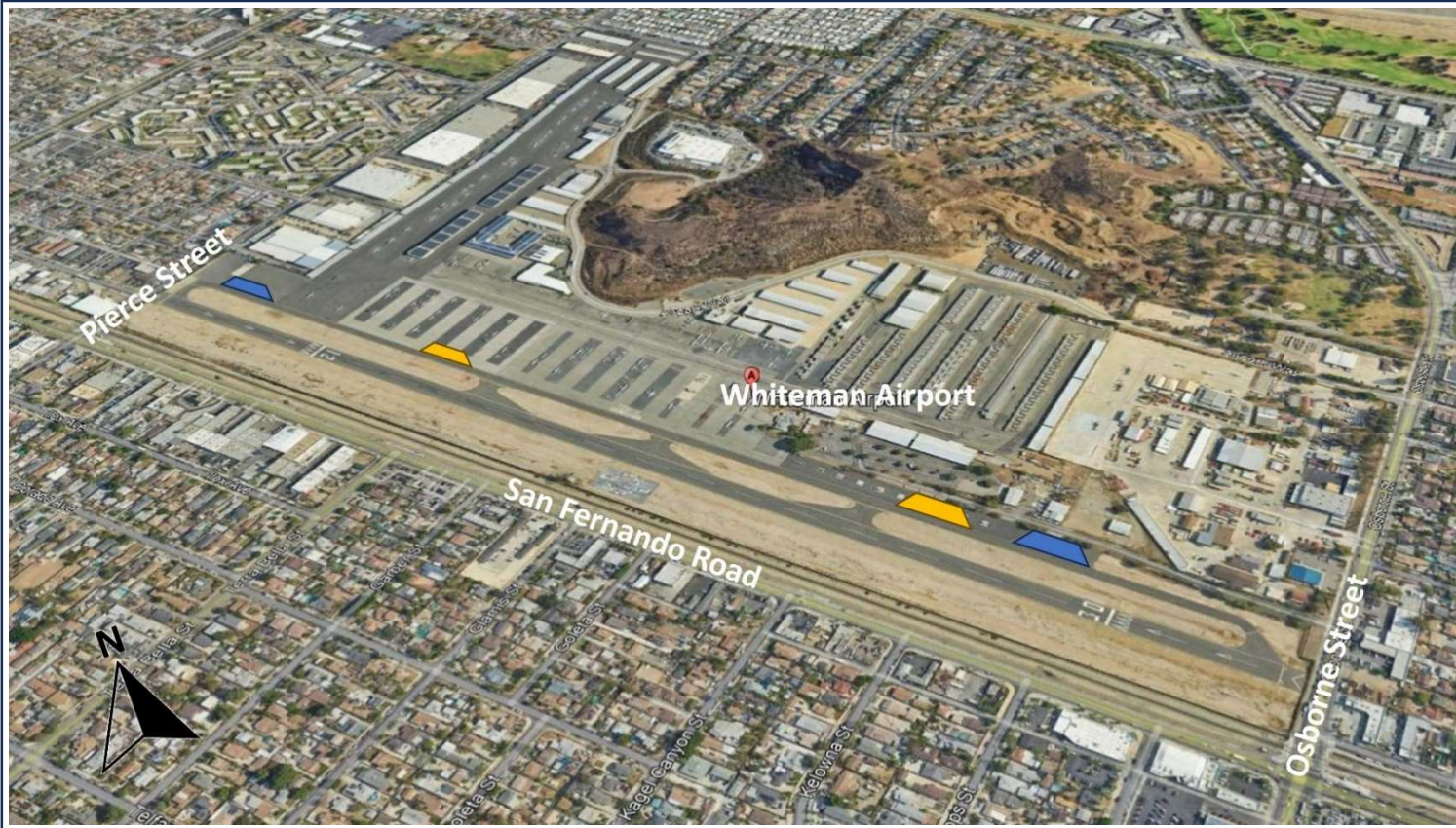
¹ The City of Naples (Florida) Airport authority adopted a ban on Stage 2 aircraft in 2004, following years of litigation. That restriction fell under special procedures for Stage 2 aircraft that did not require FAA approval. Subsequently, all Stage 2 aircraft have been phased out and those special procedures are no longer available.

recommended measures that could be implemented to reduce noise impacts to noise sensitive and incompatible land uses. Any new local restrictions on aircraft operations must ultimately be approved by the FAA, which has 180 days to respond to an airport sponsor's completed and submitted Part 150 Study, specifically its NCP. The FAA will not approve any measure that would discriminate among aircraft operators, create an unsafe situation, hinder air navigation, or interfere with commerce.

The typical timeline to complete a Part 150 Study is approximately 3 years, which includes the time needed to gather data, conduct extensive public outreach, and allow for FAA review. The estimated cost to conduct a Part 150 Study is about \$2 million dollars, which may be funded up to 90 percent by the FAA Airport Improvement Program grant. The FAA may approve an airport sponsor's proposed measures that meet the FAA's criteria and are justified by the airport sponsor's noise exposure map and Noise Compatibility Plan consistent with Part 150. However, any proposed mandatory airport noise or access restrictions must be submitted to the FAA through a Part 161 Study.

In the near term, the County could choose to pursue Federal funding for, and initiate, a Part 150 Study for Whiteman Airport. The study is a responsible step toward improving the compatibility between the airport and the surrounding communities and may assist in justifying a mandatory curfew. It is also consistent with the Community Advisory Committee re-envisioning process for Whiteman Airport report and recommendations recently presented to the Board. Federal grant funding for Parts 150 and 161 Studies would result in grant assurances requiring the airport to remain operational for the duration of these studies.

An additional benefit of conducting the Part 150 Study for Whiteman Airport is that the residences identified through the study as incompatible land uses may qualify for Federal funding to receive sound insulation. An initial study conducted as part of the Community Advisory Committee re-envisioning process for Whiteman Airport identified 335 residential units as potentially impacted land uses. A formal Part 150 study would confirm all impacted land uses surrounding the airport and enhance the opportunity to obtain Federal funding to implement an effective residential sound insulation program for the impacted residences around Whiteman Airport.



Legend



Current Location
of Aircraft
Runup Areas



Potential New
Location for Aircraft
Runup Areas



North Aircraft Runup Area



South Aircraft Runup Area

Whiteman Airport
10000 Airpark Way
Pacoima, CA 91331

**Maps are not to scale or
to be used for navigational
purposes.*

November 07, 2023

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR LINDSEY P. HORVATH

“Reimagining Whiteman Airport”

On October 7, 2022, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed an endangerment finding regarding leaded aviation gasoline which underwent public notice and comment. As lead emissions from aircraft are an important and urgent public health issue, the Board of Supervisors subsequently instructed the Interim County Counsel on January 10, 2023, to send a five-signature letter to the Administrator of the EPA urging the EPA to eliminate lead from aviation gasoline and supporting EPA's strong endangerment finding on leaded aviation gasoline.

Piston-engine aircraft operate on leaded aviation gasoline and are the primary users of the five airports owned by Los Angeles County: (1) Brackett Field Airport in La Verne, (2) Compton/Woodley Airport in Compton, (3) San Gabriel Valley Airport in El Monte, (4) General William J. Fox Airfield in Lancaster, and (5) Whiteman Airport in Pacoima.

The EPA announced its final determination on October 18, 2023, that emissions of lead from aircraft that operate on leaded fuel cause or contribute to air pollution which may reasonably be anticipated to endanger public health and welfare under the Clean Air Act. With this final determination, the EPA now becomes subject to a duty to propose and promulgate regulatory standards for lead emissions from aircraft engines. Additionally, the Federal Aviation

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Administration (FAA) is also now subject to a duty to prescribe standards for the composition or chemical or physical properties of aircraft fuel to control or eliminate aircraft lead emissions.

Several other initiatives in support of the objective to remove lead from aviation gasoline are currently underway separate from the EPA's endangerment finding. Various general aviation industry associations, the American Petroleum Institute, and the FAA established the Eliminate Aviation Gasoline Lead Emissions (EAGLE) initiative in 2022 with the goal of eliminating aviation gasoline lead emissions before the end of 2030 or sooner. Additionally, Congressman Tony Cardenas, who has long represented the Pacoima Community shares these views and is currently working to develop the tools necessary to eliminate the use of lead fuels in the aviation industry nationally.

While the EPA's final endangerment finding is a fundamental step toward regulation of leaded aviation gasoline, it does not ban or impose restrictions on the use, sale, distribution, dispensing, and general availability of leaded fuel, nor does it establish any new control measures regarding aircraft lead emissions. However, until the EPA and FAA are able to regulate and ultimately eliminate aircraft lead emissions, there are measures that can be taken today that can minimize aviation gasoline lead emissions at the airports across the nation and particularly at the County-owned airports.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors

1. Direct the Department of Public Works to report back to the Board within 90 days with a plan to implement measures to reduce and ultimately eliminate the impacts related to the use of

leaded aviation gasoline at Whiteman airport. The report should include measures that are not limited to increasing the use and availability of 94UL; moving the aircraft runup areas further away from the runway ends; and ultimately restricting the sale of 100LL when a drop-in unleaded replacement aviation gasoline becomes commercially available for all piston-engine aircraft; and

2. Direct the Department of Public Works to implement a County administered curfew, restricting the use of the runway, during nighttime hours from 10:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. at Whiteman Airport, except for emergency, lifesaving, firefighting, law enforcement, governmental agencies, and services to the public such as news media. Report back in 90-days with the steps necessary to implement a mandatory restriction; and
3. Direct Department of Public Health to assess existing and available blood lead level data and air quality monitoring data surrounding Whiteman Airport and make recommendations to further characterize ambient lead levels in the surrounding area. Their findings should be shared with relevant regulatory authorities, including the California Department of Public Health, for further review to ensure the safety of residents living in proximity to Whiteman airport.
4. Direct the Los Angeles County Chief Executive Office - Legislative Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations Branch to advocate to the California Department of Public Health to undertake a study to assess statistical association between the blood lead levels of sampled children living within 1.5 miles of Whiteman Airport.