



NCWP Airport Relations White Paper on LAX

The following "white paper" authored by the Neighborhood Council of Westchester/Playa's Airport Relations Committee addresses flaws in the airport's effort to move the northernmost runway closer to our community and underscores NCWP's support for SPAS DEIR Alternative 2.

Why moving forward on LAWA's preferred alternative means giving up on regionalism:

- LAWA is not compliant with the Stipulated Settlement Agreement. LAWA has not proactively and substantively pursued a regional airport working group to achieve regional distribution of air traffic. LAWA has also failed to develop a meaningful Regional Strategic Planning Initiative.
- Even at the airports it does control, LAWA has given up on regionalism. It walked away from service at Palmdale, and has allowed passenger traffic at Ontario to decline by 5.4% in 2012 according to aviation consultant Nick Johnson in his report to the Ontario International Airport Authority in early February. Mr. Johnson's outlook is even more pessimistic for 2013 despite a slowly recovering economy.
- Instead, LAWA has focused inward, towards increasing its capacity at LAX to 78.9 million annual passengers (MAP), and beyond. LAWA is effectively running out the clock on the Settlement Agreement's gate caps, which expire in 2020.
- The extra \$500M+ cost of LAWA's Preferred Alternative (which moves the outboard runway 260 feet north and adds a taxiway between runways) makes no sense economically at the target capacity of 78.9 MAP. It would make economic sense only if capacity is expanded well beyond its current capacity limits. LAWA's Preferred Alternative would further concentrate aviation activity at LAX regardless of its effects on local or regional traffic,
- The result is that LAWA's preferred airport alternative predicts "significant and unavoidable" traffic impacts at 39 major intersections throughout the region, including Los Angeles, El Segundo, Lennox, Inglewood, Culver City, and on the major highways leading to and from LAX. LAWA predicts a failing ("F") level of service at many of those impacted intersections.
- Instead of choosing the plan that was designated in their EIR as the "Environmentally Superior Alternative," LAWA chose a plan to expand the North Runways that is dirtier, noisier, and not justified by the facts in its EIR. LAWA chose an expansion plan that would continue to turn its back on regionalism, and move towards centralizing air traffic at LAX.
- One of the seven airfield / terminal alternatives considered by LAWA (Alternative 2) makes most of the safety-enhancing airfield changes that LAWA's Preferred Alternative does and does so at less than one-third the cost. This Alternative is eminently feasible and is identified in LAWA's EIR as the Environmentally Preferred Alternative. Failure to choose a feasible Environmentally Preferred Alternative may violate CEQA. We ask County Counsel to explore this issue.
- Regionalizing air traffic is the key to mitigating for impacts of growth at LAX, and LAWA's rejection of regionalism means that it is giving up on the most effective tool we have for managing the environmental costs associated with one of the most important economic engines of our region.
- Regionalism promotes safe airfield operations by limiting congestion due to excessive aircraft traffic increasing the possibility for human error and ground accidents caused by overcrowding.
- The FAA predicts air traffic will double in 20 years. At 3,500 acres, LAX is the smallest major airport and the busiest origin-destination airport in the U.S. Regionalizing air traffic is essential to preserving LAX as a viable origin and

destination airport. If increasing passenger capacity by 50-100% does not strangle airport operations, it certainly will strangle nearby roads and freeways.

The Rationale in favor of SPAS DEIR Alternative 2:

- Every alternative studied in LAWA's Draft EIR is designed to achieve a practical capacity of 78.9 million annual passengers. Alternative 2, which does not move the North Runways, allows for safe, cost-effective and efficient operation at LAX.
- Alternative 2 is a "first-things-first" approach and sets up logical priorities that can be realistically achieved. It frees up funds for comprehensive modernization of aging LAX facilities and for a renewed focus on regionalism.
- It also frees up funds that can be directed to building mass transit that goes directly into LAX and improves ground transportation access as well, thus helping to reduce traffic and gridlock.
- The cost effectiveness of Alternative 2 allows LAWA to focus on improving airfield safety through runway safety light systems and aggressively hiring Air Traffic Controllers until there is 100% staffing. It is documented that more airfield incursions occur due to human error than for any other reason and the current understaffing cannot help but contribute to the problem.
- What Alternative 2 does NOT do is set the stage for future expansion at LAX and should be used as a way to drive regionalization.
- Alt 2 is focused on providing for passenger conveniences and a greater passenger experience instead of future airport expansion.

Regionalization leads to Southern California Economic Stability:

- Allows air transport services to be conveniently available to the high growth areas of Southern California.
- Insulates Southern California from adverse economic impacts in the event LAX is out-of-commission for any length of time due to man-made or natural disaster.
- Distributes a portion of the economic benefit of air transportation and related commerce to the Inland Empire.
- Sets the stage for increased tourism revenue for the inland empire and mountain areas like auto racing, boating, LA County Fair, cycling, fishing, hiking, skiing and special events by having convenient air and ground transportation access.
- Supports the access to and growth of the local colleges and universities in the San Gabriel Valley and beyond, as well as, for the fast growing high-tech sector in the Inland Empire.

Suggestions to make regionalization a reality:

- Use Alternative 2 as a mechanism to help manage the limited funds available, so they provide the widest benefit and fastest return on investment to the citizens of Southern California.
- Use Alternative 2 as a way to limit the passenger cap at 78.9 million annual passengers and a gate cap of 153 gates. These limits will serve as key motivators to drive regionalization.
- A call for help from all levels of government to work together to actively seek cooperative results in the regionalization effort.

