

**Re-envisioning Whiteman Airport Community Advisory Committee Meeting:
Summarized Public Comments, June 21, 2021**

David:

I was hoping that you know there are other youth organizations. I know that Young Eagles and Civil Air Patrol have youth organizations, whether or not they were tapped to actually bring some type of youth voice from the other side...

Roberto:

CCEDA is a statewide network of development corporations and financial institutions focused on revitalization, incubators, low-income communities and communities of color. We are involved in a statewide identification of large infrastructure and public projects and properties in low-income communities of color throughout the state of California. CCEDA is involved, will continue to be involved in the sessions, and has already previously spoken out about Whiteman airport. There are specific examples of negative environmental impact upon those communities, as well as unrealized economic development and job creation. Whiteman Airport is a prime example of decades of negative environmental impact on the community of color, and the retention of a public facility. A public-owned facility that benefits barely 600 plane owners and keeps prime real estate focused-job producing uses and recreational uses. Understanding the intent to consider all options including closure, as stated by the Director of Public Works and is laid out in your PowerPoint. I want to express gratitude to the CAC for participation.

Sonia:

I was born and raised in Pacoima, my family still lives there. My comment is about making an effort to keep the airport open. I feel like a lot of the rhetoric about closure is because there is no community interaction. I see that they are doing things the youth would be glad about, the younger youth. I see the airport has reached out to them. I feel like a lot of the rhetoric on social media has been geared towards a social justice narrative, and, in fact, there are many social issues in the community. However, at the same time, I feel like the airport is an asset. Unfortunately, the community does not use it. It is evident that the council member has had, I guess, some issues with communication with them. Nevertheless, that is a side issue. For me as a resident and as a mother of a young son and nephews always feel it is important for them to participate in some of the programs that they have. I would like to see more efforts made by the local community colleges to have pilot, education activities there. I think that is what the community is missing. It is missing much more involvement from different members of the community. At the same time, I do feel it should be kept open. It is an asset. I feel like logistically, it does many things for the County.

x5417:

I like the airport. I would like it to stay. I think it is a great asset to the community especially during emergencies. If we had an earthquake or some kind of devastation, it would be a great asset to the community because first responders can activate right there. We can do triage there; we can do a lot of things there. I think it is an asset to the community. I hope they keep it. A lot of the pollution seems to be coming from a lot of the semi-trucks that are in the area; we have a lot of industry around there. We are surrounded by freeways. A lot of that pollution comes from those freeways. We have a lot of 7-Eleven stores that have a lot of semis that deliver beer in huge trucks. They put out a lot of pollution. I do not know how much pollution the airplanes put out. I do not see very many planes going back and forth from there. I think it is very important for the kids to get involved in the Navy aviation too. It is a great learning opportunity for them.

Craig:

I am pleased to hear all the support from the community for the airport. I have been a longtime tenant of the airport. My first question is I did not see a lot of representation on the board for actual airport tenants. I saw maybe one person that I recognized the name. I did not see any representations of the actual tenants of the airport, which are hundreds, and hundreds. How does somebody get on the CAC to represent the actual users of the airport? I also just want to say this is an asset that cannot be replaced. There will never be another airport built in the City of Los Angeles. We have to be very circumspect when we consider closing or giving up an asset that cannot be replaced. There are tremendous opportunities to be here for job creation, but job training, flight training, training for future pilots training for future aircraft maintenance technicians. That is really an untapped resource. Additionally, the County has done nothing to upgrade the facilities of the airport; all of the airports under county management, in fact, have really been kind of the redheaded stepchild for just decades. You look at other airports like San Gabriel's, San Bernardino, they made substantial investments in the airport and have gained, substantial returns. I am wondering what the impetus is now to do something about it. It is better late than never, but one accident in which the only person injured was the occupant just does not seem a reason to be reactionary about it. If you look at the history of accidents at the airport, there has been miraculously no real damage to the community is because of it. So I do not know if that is just good fortune or what but it's something to seriously look at. You got to look at the numbers and make rational decisions.

Robert:

My firm is the Polaris Group. I do economic and financial consulting with particular emphasis on aviation. In looking at the title of the program, I was a bit concerned. It is titled Re-envisioning Whiteman Airport, a community driven master plan. From an

analytic standpoint, I have to say that the existing airport is not the baseline in this analysis the way the way the title is described. I would like to get some assurance if it is possible, to know that the existing airport will be the baseline for this study. We will not be marching into this study very smartly considering the airport to be a facility not to be considered. I think that the airport does have some very commendable values to it. It is my hope that those values will be considered and not lost in the characterization of the title of this study.

Gregory:

I just wanted to say, I think it is wonderful that you are affording the ability for others to weigh in on this study. I'd like to point out I actually keep an airplane at the Whiteman Airport, so I'm paying taxes that I think the city benefits from; but I will also say that in talking about the environmental impact that this has, the 405, the 5 and the 210 freeway is all surrounds the city of Pacoima and I'm wondering what environmental studies are being done on those freeways as a source of pollutants? If you are looking at redeveloping land, then why are not all forms of transportation considered in that, and I realized how silly that might seem to many of you. But looking at an airport, and this is a form of transportation, this is a mechanism to keep the city of Pacoima available and safe in the event of an emergency. There is tremendous amount of learning and opportunity for economic and development for the youth; there is currently a pilot shortage around the world. So, for underprivileged youth to be able to take on something new and find careers, I think there is tremendous opportunities. Finally, I will just close with the fact that I know that it has been publicly stated that accidents are one of the reasons to look at shutting down this airport. If you look again, at the 5, the 405 and the 210 freeways, let us look at the number of accidents that have happened on those and not get ourselves and say that the airport here is a bit too extreme. Thank you again for the opportunity to speak. I really urge this committee to look at the amount of dollars that Santa Monica has spent on fighting and litigating to try to shut down the Santa Monica airport. In the end, was that really worth it or should that money have been placed in the hands of the city as a whole for economic development?

Matthew:

I am a pilot who has been involved with Whiteman for 25 years. Basically, I understand that the airport is simply too important and too valuable to the community to shut it down. As others have said, you cannot replace this airport because the land just is not there. Emergency services respond out of this airport. LA County Fire has their base at the airport and it is at the helipad that is immediately to the east of the airport. That helipad relies on the airport. Some people confuse the separation it has there with meaning that it can be operated independently. It just does not work that way. I suppose maybe the fire department might be able to get some choppers in there but the fire

department is a) not the only Emergency Services Agency there and b) if there's, if the area is built up around it, you're not going to be able to get the choppers in there; certainly not with the safety they currently have with the airport being there to shepherd them. What I found looking into a post by Pacoima Beautiful on Instagram a few months back, April, I believe, is they said that there were 85 accidents at Whiteman. I looked at the documentation NTSB, FAA logs, even combining accidents, and incidents, which are separate terms in aviation--they have very different meanings--I could only come up with 58, which most of them were accidents that were really doing nothing to anybody except insurance adjusters. I think they just made a typo there. But that is a very glaring mistake, and I do not understand how they could have made that. But I will circle back on some more concerns with Pacoima Beautiful later. The fact is, is that overall closure advocates just do not seem to understand the importance of this airport. Councilmember Monica Rodriguez, in December mentioned in a comment to a constituent on Facebook that there were not any fire operations. Obviously, we know that is not true. So I do not understand how she could possibly understand the airport if she does not understand basic facts like that. Now, regarding Pacoima Beautiful, when I looked into this matter, what I found on their website was that they had said the land of the airport is the most developable piece of land in the San Fernando Valley. This was repeated in the San Fernando Sun some months later, which I did bring up at an airport meeting a few months ago.

Robert:

I think would be helpful for me because I am really undecided to some extent. It would be nice to know how many tenants live in the northeast San Fernando Valley, for the airport. It would also be interesting to know how many people from the northeast San Fernando Valley, more specifically Pacoima, are employed at the airport. It would be nice to know the numbers of people that have come to their open houses, how many of them had come from the local community. What I hear from the community is that they have not done a very good job of reaching out to the community. This is not property. By the way, when we talk about crashes, I am a mental health worker, we have to take into account the trauma that is created in the local community when anything occurs, that relates to a crash. To downplay that is insulting to the community. So I am looking forward and I will try to use compassion and candor, I promise. But some of the logic and the arguments here are just unfounded analysis. It is what you choose to analyze. I've got two master's degrees. So do not tell me there is only one way to look at what we are going to be analyzing. So that needs to be open ended. Finally, I just want to get a sense of really talking about use of property. What is the greater good? Is an airport? We are going to find out how is really serving? Is it serving nearly the dominant culture? Or is it serving the communities, more specifically are communities of color benefiting from the airport? And could there be a better use of the property? That is what we are here to

discuss.

Michael:

I am a pharmacist. I used to work at Laurel pharmacy on the corner of Van Nuys and Laurel Canyon. I would encourage attending the open house that is coming up. It is a great resource for kids. I was one of those kids a long time ago to get involved in highly technical careers. It could be aviation, it could be IT, electronics, and it could be aircraft design. It could be healthcare, like what I do. I would encourage people to come to the airport with an open mind and see what it has to offer your kids because kids can get really turned on by stuff like this and from that launch very successful careers in highly technical areas.

Melissa:

Being a youth myself and growing up in a Pacoima and having siblings on elementary school, I live five minutes from the airport and I have never heard of these programs mentioned today until today. So it is very worrisome to see how they are saying how it is an important part of the community; but me being so close to it, I have never been exposed to these types of resources. Also, there is danger in landings every day with being able to fly 24/7. Living so close to the airport, I can literally hear my window shake. It is very upsetting to see our members come in the meetings and think it is not a big deal, and that these crashes are like numbers and only numbers when they are not taking into account the children and the impacts it has on them.

Jasmine:

I have recently just graduated from high school. I have been living here for mostly all my life, have gone to school around this area, and I have not heard about any of these opportunities. If I would have, I would have loved to bet on these opportunities, like rides and different educational purposes. I have some concerns of the logs and accounts of the airplanes used or their use, as previously mentioned; about emergency use and leisure's and different things like that. I would also like to see the log of how much percentage is going into within those things, as it was not mentioned, and it was just stated, these are what was being used for. If we can also show an accounted log of the people who own these airplanes that are parked in the airport, as well as the communities they are coming from, as most of the use is not coming from anywhere from Pacoima that I've heard of. I have had many talks to friends of different families and have heard nothing of the use of these airports. So, I would like to hear about that. I am very open minded to the different aspects and as well as the different opportunities that will bring to either closing or just having more concerns of the airport.

Andy:

My comments primarily focus on two things. First of all, the vast opportunities for education. If the airport association, owners, pilots, and people who have a stake in it would do more community outreach to the locals, they would have a greater opportunity to teach at risk kids about aviation in both flying and mechanics. That's one thing, the other thing is there is a very high possibility of air mobility in Los Angeles because people just will simply--and this is pretty far in the future--they will just simply not want to get stranded on the freeway. They will get off an airplane at LAX, and they will want to be taken to a hub where they can pick up a car or something. Whiteman poses a very good opportunity to become an air mobility of the future because basic infrastructure with moderate improvements is there; it has perhaps what it needs. Air mobility aircrafts are supposed to be close to zero carbon footprints. So, I unfortunately do not have the website with me here now, but I will be glad to present some of this at the next meeting.

Dean:

My name is Dean from Glendale Community College. I am a flight instructor and resident of Santa Monica. I would echo the previous speaker that the baseline of his plan study should be the existing airport use, and I would encourage the community to check the facts on Whiteman Airport. Whiteman Airport has an enormous community and public benefit. Number one, public safety. Base there is LAPD air division, helicopters, LA County Fire five plus LA area TV stations, news helicopters, Civil Air Patrol part of the Air Force Reserve medical evacuation. All those resources are critical in earthquakes and other natural disasters. Number two employment. The airport directly supports 246 jobs. Accounting for the multiplier effect the airport creates roughly 400 new total jobs and the associated labor income nearly 19 million annually from LA County's website. The economic impact is right around \$54.5 million, so before you consider another use for this airport find something that will generate more than \$54 million in economic impact and provide all the safety impact awareness and education. Glendale Community College Program generates 100 plus students per year employing 14 local equivalent full time jobs like mine and launching high paying aviation careers. Glendale Community College is the largest consumer of aviation cooling weapon generating community revenues and taxes. And additionally for education, the airport open house and the EAA Young Eagles program all contribute to community education. Aviation has one of the highest industry average annual starting salary around \$69,000. Compared with retail if you are thinking of turning this into a shopping center or hospitality if you are thinking of turning it into some kind of hotel complex, so aviation has some of the highest paying jobs. Addressing community concerns on pollution. Numerous other studies and other local airports e.g., Santa Monica, have demonstrated some small aircraft pollution is last among the major causes of freeway, industry and commerce. On noise, two local airports have noise monitoring systems--Santa Monica and Torrance--and they showed the aircrafts comply with the applicable state and federal guidelines showing that greater than 90% of

aircrafts using these airports are compliant with state and federal guidelines. On accidents, anywhere you measure it, airplanes and airports are at least 100 times safer than automobiles. You can check that with all the government websites you like. On the future, as another speaker said, just like cars, electric and hydrogen powered aircraft will revolutionize community transport, driving clean job creation, economic activity and more clean travel options. Cities with airports will have a key advantage for future just like Whiteman. Lastly, I would ask is Pacoima Beautiful driven by property developers or homeowners looking to increase their property values? What are the true motivations behind these people who wish to close Whiteman?

Cleopatra:

I was past president of the North Valley Golden Bears, and I wish I had known about the use of the airport so some of the children who cannot participate in sports could have another outlet. I thought the airport was already scheduled to be closed, and I reached out to Alex Padilla to suggest it could be a Metrolink station and parking lot with a Starbucks or Coffee Bean and Tea and the current store. If the plan is to no longer close the airport, I am willing to listen to whatever plans are set to improve the area.

Dave:

If this organization or the people in Pacoima lived in Westminster, El Segundo, or some of the communities there would they really be considering closing LAX just because they don't like all the noise and where people are going? I think we need to look beyond just the local Pacoima community and the impact this whole operation has. Second point, battery powered aircraft are coming along. So far, for at least as far as I can see, their range is going to be quite limited, which means they are going to be training aircraft. And if Whiteman conserves a training point, with silence, so electric airplanes, and a lack of pollution of electric airplanes, that will be a good thing. Third, many years ago, I was chairman of the board of Angel Flight. Angel Flight is a group of hundreds of pilots around the entire country who donate all of their flying to fly people with medical needs, if anybody knows where Shoshone is, near Death Valley. I flew a fellow up there and back, who got cancer treatment at UCLA. His body was not capable of handling the travel. I know of many flights that originated out of Whiteman. I think we have to be careful to look at the impact far broader than just the local Pacoima Community if we're going to be seriously considering alternatives to the airport.

Veronica:

I was wondering if you can describe how you define community outreach. I am also very curious about where the agenda was placed or where it will be placed going forward to know where we can find it and direct people to it. I was wondering how this meeting was promoted. I know I got the information at the last minute, but I am very happy to see that there is a lot of participation, which is great. But just wondering how it was

promoted and to who. Also, I noticed that Mr. Rudy Ortega was on and I am not sure if he is still on. I think he is a really important representative to his group. He represents the Tataviam Band of Mission Indians. I think he was overlooked a few times in the queue. He needs to be here next time. So I hope that we can reach out to him, because he does represent an important voice like we all do here. I agree with Mr. Bobby and with Jasmine in regards to the need for data, this group really needs the data from the airport, in terms of the usage and the flight cuts and all that information, because I think that's what we've always lacked is the information and transparency. I really hope that we can see that as we move forward. I want to recommend that the CAC members are not treated as general participants, but if we can be panelists. I think it is important for us to have that flexibility to really engage and be given the opportunity to be panelists just to better engage with the department and with each other. Lastly, I am coming here with an open mind and really wanting to work together collaboratively with community. I have been a little disheartened with some attacks on Pacoima Beautiful, which I think is unfortunate. I really want to say I am here as a community member and really wanting to work with all of us. I hope the community can be respectful of us, of the time that we are all dedicating to this process so together, we could come up with the best possible way forward.

Jalon:

I am shocked at this meeting and like many other attendees here just received the meeting notice one business day ago. I am shocked that there is even a meeting to try to close Whiteman Airport. I have kept my plane there for about 15 years now. Again, the financial impact that we in the aviation community do have on the Pacoima area is profound. Coming to and from the area, we frequently stop and utilize businesses and shops that route those businesses in that area. Though I may not reside there, I do reside close by. But in regard to re-envisioning Whiteman Airport. I think Whiteman Airport could use the big makeover, and I hope that the participants on this committee will actually go visit some of the other airports in and around Los Angeles, Ventura and Orange County. Many of them have wonderful viewing areas for the community. Many of them like Santa Paula Airport, Camarillo Airport, El Monte Airport, now called San Gabriel Airport, Brackett airfield down in La Verne. Many of these also have wonderful restaurants that have waiting lists to get into by the local community on Saturday and Sunday mornings for breakfast and lunch. All the while, the families get to sit and enjoy watching the airplanes come and go. Again, because you have families coming to the airport, that is where all the local children can actually see the programs and see the advertisements for them. That to me is what is missing for Whiteman airport. If you are going to be looking at re envisioning it, please re envision it with a way to bring the community there not erase it from the map. It is an economic benefit. We pay a lot of money to house planes there; we pay property taxes on our planes. Those of us coming to the area frequent those businesses. We do bring something to that local community

even if we are not there. Again, if you want to re-envision the airport, please make it more welcoming for the community like so many other airports have taken the time, energy and money to do. Again, please participants go visit Camarillo Airport, go visit Brackett airfield, go visit San Gabriel airfield. Go see how those communities are interacting with the airport and aviation. You will see what is missing.

Eli:

My name is Eli, and I am the president of the Lake View Terrace Improvement Association. I am on the board of the Foothill Trails Neighborhood Council. Right now, I am at the educating stage and trying to get information on exactly what is happening. I am trying to determine if the goal is to redevelop the location, is the goal to close the location, or is the goal to improve the location. I have not made a decision or formed an opinion. Initially, I am kind of leaning towards keeping the airport but at the same time, I also understand the concern of the impact to the community. So I am trying to understand why some want to close the airport. And if it's closed, then what is the plan for that location? Is it for development and more density in our area? I am trying to get an idea of why someone wants to close the airport and if it is closed, what is the plan for that location and the impact to the community.

Corona:

*Yo tengo muchas quejas; vivo enfrente del aeropuerto por la pista donde se paran todos los días lo aviones. Antes de despegar se amontonan aquí, hacen un ruidazo, una contaminación que uno no puede salir de la casa por todo el olor a combustible. No sabe usted como se siente. Es insoportable. En la noche uno no puede dormir cuando despegan y se paran aquí enfrente y duran 5 a 10 minutos acelerados. Esas personas que dicen que están muy a gusto, yo les invito a que se vengán a vivir un año en estas casas aquí alrededor, verán que no pueden con el ruido ni con la contaminación. ¿Que pudieran hacer para que no se paren aquí los aviones tan cerca así acelerados antes de despegar? Porqué no se paran a una distancia más retirada; porque se paran aquí enfrente de las casas y es una contaminación de humo como no se imagina. **Translation:** I have many complaints. I live in front of the airport near the runway where the planes stop every day. Before taking off they pile up here, make a lot of noise; the pollution is such that one cannot leave the house because of all the smell of fuel. You have no idea how it feels. It is unbearable. At night, you cannot sleep; before they take off, they wait for takeoff in front of our homes for at least 5 to 10 minutes accelerating. Those people who say they are ok with the way things are, I invite them to come and live for a year in these houses around here. They will find out that they cannot stand the noise or the pollution. What can be done so that the planes do not stay (accelerating) so close to the homes before takeoff? Why don't they wait at a greater distance? They stop here in front of the houses and the smoke pollution is unimaginable.*

Mark:

I had the great experience of visiting Whiteman Airport last four months. I had no idea what kind of programs they have, and how friendly an airport could feel. Everybody that I met, including an 18-year-old Hispanic pilot, who just got his pilot license, was so serious and so friendly, and so willing to share information that I studied this whole situation. I came to the conclusion that the lady earlier from Pacoima Beautiful, who talked about Pacoima Beautiful being attacked...well, I was on the PB meeting about the airport and the only attacking I noticed was misinformation spread about the Whiteman Airport safety record. All the information was opinion, and presented, as fact. Towards the end of the meeting, they clarified that there still has not been an impact report. So all of that was opinion that they were presenting as fact. So I suggest perhaps that Pacoima Beautiful before they suggest doing something like this to an institution, like the Whiteman Airport, please gather your data and your facts and why don't we wait until the community impact report comes out so that we can all get a fair understanding of what the airport does for the community. There is no evidence of a substandard safety record at the Whiteman Airport, compared to any other. Now, if that is the argument, then you would logically conclude that they want to close all airports. People who moved there, moved there after the airport was there. They knew the airport was there. I feel for them, and I absolutely would advocate having discussions with the community and making it better for the community and finding out ways to make the airport more tolerable for the people in the area. But good Lord, this is so irresponsible trying to close an airport that is responsible for search and rescue, and the fire department and the police department. It is just irresponsible.

Elisa:

I live four blocks away from the airport. When my parents moved me to Pacoima, the airport was already there. That's one of the good things that Pacoima has to offer because when anybody gets rescued from the search rescue team, I always say there's Pacoima...Late at night when the helicopters are passing by its police officers. It is LAPD that is driving by. And if there is an emergency, there is the youth. One of the great things is that whenever there is an emergency, they can leave from Pacoima. Now, I will be the first one to say they can do better work in outreach. They can do better work, but when you talk to the pilots that are from Pacoima and became pilots because of the airport, at least it makes me feel good about it. Because Pacoima has many things to offer. If we want to talk about air quality, why don't we talk about the 5g's. There is two big 5g's in the middle of Pacoima. The Metro, there is a cross across the street from the airport. Why? Because many people have gotten run over by the train. We are not talking about closing the train. There are many car accidents that happen on San Fernando Road. We are not talking about closing San Fernando Rd. I am not for closing the airport but I do feel that they can do better outreach.