

PALO ALTO AIRPORT ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

PALO ALTO AIRPORT



Volume No. XIX Issue No. 3 July 5, 2005

PALO ALTO CITY COUNCIL MEETS JULY 11, 7:00 PM, TO DISCUSS AND TAKE POSSIBLE ACTION ON THE FUTURE OF THE PALO ALTO AIRPORT.

**MARK THIS DATE ON YOUR CALENDAR AND
BE PREPARED TO SPEND THE EVENING AT
THE CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 250
HAMILTON AVE. PALO ALTO. IT'S THAT
IMPORTANT!**

Background

In early June, Palo Alto City Manager Frank Benest refused to sign a federal grant assurance affirming that the Palo Alto Airport would continue to serve as an airport for at least 20 years from the effective date of the grant. The result was that the date for filing was missed and approximately 1.3 million dollars in federal funding was lost for this year.

The City of Palo Alto owns the airport and leases it to the County of Santa Clara for a nominal fee, but that lease ends in April of 2017. Mr. Benest was sufficiently unsure of the future of the airport after 2017 that he was unwilling to take responsibility for signing the assurance. He also received the request only a few days before it had to be sent to the FAA.

The implication of this action for the future of the airport cannot be overemphasized. Much of the money used for maintenance and upgrades or improvements to the airport comes from federal grants. For example, most of this 1.3 million was to pay for security fencing in response to concerns about

airport security related to the perceived terrorist threat of GA aircraft. Without this source of money, the airport will deteriorate and ultimately become unusable. Thus it is critical that the City affirm that it will continue operation for at least 20 years, regardless who operates it.

PAAA and the Joint Community Relations Commission members immediately contacted the City Council, and on June 18, acting on a Colleague's Memo, written by vice mayor Judy Kleinberg and council member Vic Okajian, it unanimously acted to place the Airport's future on the agenda for the July 11, Council Meeting. The Council meets in the City Council Chambers, City Hall, 250 Hamilton Avenue, at 7:00 PM. PAAA member Peter Carpenter will represent the JCRC, presenting information relevant to determining the airport's future.

History

In 1923 the first Palo Alto airfield was situated near Newell Road and Embarcadero. In 1929 Stanford University was designated by the Aeronautics Branch of the Department of Commerce as Aviation Ground School Number 1 and the airport then moved to a location near El Camino on Stanford land (the current site of the football stadium parking lot). In 1934 Palo Alto residents filed a lawsuit to force the airport to move off Stanford land because of the noise level. In 1935 the airport moved to the Baylands in what was then San Mateo County. In 1954 the airport was moved further into the Baylands to its present location in order to make way for the new Palo Alto

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golf course. In 1963 the county boundaries changed and the airport was back in Santa Clara County and Palo Alto. Also in 1963, the airport was leased to Santa Clara County, which currently operates the Palo Alto, Reid Hillview and South County airports.

Current Situation

The current Palo Alto Comprehensive plan specifically includes the airport as a matter of policy; the relevant section is:

POLICY T-57:

Support the continued vitality and effectiveness of the Palo Alto Airport without significantly increasing its intensity or intruding into open space areas. The Airport should remain limited to a single runway and two fixed base operators. Palo Alto will allow for improvement and only minor expansion of existing Airport facilities. In the sensitive baylands area, and immediately adjacent to homes in East Palo Alto, traffic and aircraft noise should be minimized.

Accordingly, the Council could choose to direct the staff to sign grant assurances that the airport will continue operation for the 20 year period required, consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Show of Support Needed

If you know a Council member, please talk to them before Monday night, asking for their support. In Palo Alto, nothing happens without more than ample discussion. *Numbers count at these meetings.* There may be people coming to the meeting to speak out against the airport, but a strong showing for the airport can make a difference. Peter Carpenter will present an analysis stressing the value of the airport to the community and explaining its economic impact and viability. City staff is also expected to make a report. People who wish to speak to an agenda item are generally be limited to 2 minutes and must submit a request card. We ask that airport supporters who wish to speak hand their card to either Peter or to Ralph Britton, so that we can arrange them in logical order before handing them to the clerk. Please also let us know the gist of what you're going to say. It is not necessary, however, to speak to give support. During the presentation, supporters will be asked to

stand, dramatically showing the level of support at the meeting.

PLEASE DO YOUR PART TO SUPPORT YOUR AIRPORT BY ATTENDING THIS MEETING.

LEEVE REPAIRS ORGANIZED. PROJECT PLANNED FOR OCTOBER COMPLETION

As reported in the last issue, the dike system protecting the airport is in need of extensive repair. Staff from the Santa Clara County Roads and Airports Department, in cooperation with the City of Palo Alto and the Santa Clara Valley Water District, have proposed a project to raise the low spots in the levee in order to bring it up to a minimum elevation. The project is scheduled to start in early September and will take approximately six weeks to complete. Best Management Practices will be followed during the work in order to minimize environmental impacts. During the construction, the levee trail will be closed to pedestrians and bicyclists.

In keeping with the Palo Alto Process, the County and City staff managing the project will conduct a public forum on the project Wednesday, July 13 at 7:00 PM, at the Lucie Stern Community Center - Fireside Room, 1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto. While two meetings in one week is a bit much, you are urged to attend this meeting, if you can. This critical project deserves the support of the airport community. Good attendance by airport constituents will help to push it through.

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome new members Reynold Lewke, Michael Mayon, and Michael Silvertan, Nick Ulman and Richard Whitacre. Thanks for joining the organization. We need and appreciate your commitment to helping preserve our airport!

CONTACT!

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**DON'T FORGET AIRPORT DAY, SEPTEMBER
11, 10:00 AM TO 4:00 PM!**

**PALO ALTO AIRPORT ASSOCIATION
NEXT AIRPORT DAY MEETING
WEDNESDAY, JULY 20, 12:00 PM
WEST VALLEY FC MEETING ROOM**

PALO ALTO CITY COUNCIL MEETING AIRPORT'S FUTURE ON THE AGENDA!

MONDAY JULY 11, 7:00 PM
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
250 HAMILTON AVENUE
PALO ALTO