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City Hall (213) 473-7011 West LA (310) 575-8461 Westchester (310) 568-8772

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Dear Friends,

This morning, the [Argonaut](#), the newspaper of record in the southern half of our district, published a column I wrote, updating residents on the LAX Master Plan revision process, and outlining my vision of where the process needs to go and how it needs to unfold.

The text of my column follows:

## **LAX MODERNIZATION: SIX PRINCIPLES**

*By Bill Rosendahl*

In December 2005, Mayor Villaraigosa and I announced an historic legal settlement that ended LAX expansion, stopped the much-reviled Alternative D, and ushered in a new era of partnership with airport neighbors.

The cornerstone of the agreement was a provision capping the number of gates at LAX at 153 through 2020, effectively ensuring that the airport cannot grow beyond 78 million annual passengers (MAP). It was a major victory for residents of airport-adjacent communities.

It was a wonderful moment, but we also knew that much work remained. The settlement mandated that Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA) sit down with the former litigants – Alliance for a Regional Solution to Airport Congestion, LA County, El Segundo, Inglewood and Culver City – and come up with proposals for a better way to modernize the airport. That's a tough task, as evidenced by generations of debate and controversy.

For 16 months, LAWA and the former litigants have been working on modernization proposals. As soon as next month, LAWA will unveil a menu of plans, and our hard work – yours *and* mine -- will begin.

Let me be clear: there will be things about some proposals we will like. And there are some things we will dislike a great deal. We'll need to study everything, and speak clearly

and strongly to ensure we get community-friendly modernization.

As we decide how to modernize LAX, there are several questions I will be asking – and six principles I will insist on and defend:

**1) LAWA must minimize and mitigate all traffic impacts on Westchester and Playa del Rey.**

Even if we do nothing to the airport, it will grow from its current 63 MAP to 78 MAP, which is about 24 percent. How will those people get to and from the airport? How is LAWA going to mitigate those traffic impacts? We cannot tolerate this choking gridlock in our downtown business district and on our residential streets.

**2) Vacant “Northside” properties must be dedicated to community friendly use.**

For generations, Westchester and Playa del Rey have given more than their fair share. Anyone who drives Pershing Drive can see the foundations of former homes and old neighborhoods. In the legal settlement, Inglewood, El Segundo and even LA County got theirs. Now it is our turn. I want to see a sizeable chunk of the Northside properties dedicated to community use, such as open space and youth recreation. And I want the three holes returned to the Westchester Golf Course immediately.

**3) There must be no Western Terminal.**

LAWA officials have been making noise about their desire for a massive new terminal along the airport’s western border. It is a bad idea. Such a facility would subject Playa del Rey residents to noise and jet fuel emissions. It would make it easier to add gates and expand the airport in the future. And it would be a logistical nightmare for travelers, who would have to shuttle back and forth with their luggage from “LAX West” to “LAX East.”

There is a better way. Along with El Segundo, Inglewood, LA County, and ARSAC, I support construction of a new terminal at the mid-field. This would accommodate the immediate need for gates to handle the new large aircraft, and it would allow LAWA to quickly replace inconvenient remote gates. Significantly, since this is a green-lighted project under the settlement agree, LAWA could move on this without delay – provided the airport does not burden our neighborhoods with increased ground access traffic problems.

**4) There should be no reconfiguration of the Northern Airfield unless there is a clear and compelling public safety issue.**

If there is a genuine public safety threat, I will be the first to call for reconfiguring the Northern Airfield. But to date, no one has shown me any compelling evidence that we need to move the north runways to improve safety. LAWA has commissioned a “peer review” to justify north runway movement. But such an approach is hardly thorough or comprehensive, and the airlines and airport neighbors are appropriately skeptical.

When we suspected that the southern runways posed a safety problem, NASA extensively

studied the issue and made recommendations. That's good policy-making. I would expect no less on the Northern Airfield, and the residents that live around those runways should accept no less.

If there is no safety issue, there should be no runway movement, period. If there is indeed a safety issue, then we in Westchester and Playa del Rey need to determine what sort of movement makes sense: north or south? Intuitively, moving south sounds right to me, but it does raise issues we need to consider: Would moving the runways south reconfigure the airport in a way that made a Western Terminal more necessary? Would such movement be so costly that LAWA would try to use the Northside for revenue-generating industrial or commercial development? We'll need to fully vet those issues in order to protect our neighborhoods.

#### **5) The Green Line must connect to the airport.**

This has been one of my mantras since I first became a candidate. This is common sense, and the time is now. The project could be done quickly, relatively cheaply, and have a direct impact on commuter traffic. It also gives us a foundation for future mass transit directly into the airport from the north and from the south. Any LAX modernization plan that does not include a Green Line connection is incomplete.

#### **6) Any negative impacts on Westchester and Playa del Rey must be met with significant and meaningful givebacks.**

I don't mean a pocket park, or a traffic light, or a new speed hump. I mean significant and meaningful givebacks – such as an extension by twenty years of the gate cap, or perhaps even a further reduction in the number of gates.

To those who are frustrated with another round of battles over LAX, I offer some encouragement:

The last time we faced LAX modernization, it was an expansion plan -- and our local elected leaders were fighting us. Since then, we've stopped expansion by capping gates in the settlement agreement. And this time, along with congresswomen and county supervisors, the mayor and the councilman are standing with the community, demanding a common-sense, community-friendly proposal for modernizing LAX

As long as we stay strong and stay together, I like those odds.

***Bill Rosendahl is the city councilman for the 11<sup>th</sup> District, which includes LAX. You can share feedback on LAX issues with him at [councilman.rosendahl@lacity.org](mailto:councilman.rosendahl@lacity.org).***

This message was sent to by:

Councilman Bill Rosendahl

200 N. Spring Street, Room 415  
Mailstop 218  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

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