

# Airport initiatives on the November ballot – MYTHS VS. FACTS

**Measure LC** -- The City's measure provides for local control of the airport land and prohibits new development, except for parks, public open spaces, and public recreational facilities, until the voters have approved limits on the uses and development. **In other words, no new development would be allowed at the Airport without voter approval, except for parks and play fields.** The measure will also allow the City, as owner and proprietor, to continue to manage the airport property, including lease management and the option to close all or part of the airport, if legally possible.

For more information and the actual "City Airport Charter Amendment" ballot measure language, visit: <http://www.smvote.org/BallotMeasures/detail.aspx?id=48691>

Campaign Committee website: ItsOurLand.org

**Measure D** -- The aviation lobbyist-sponsored initiative requires voters to pass another ballot measure or measures in order to change aviation land uses to non-aviation use, including partial or total closure of the runway. It seems to be designed to maintain the *status quo* and to make it extremely difficult for the City to manage the airport or mitigate noise, air pollution or safety impacts on thousands of residents in Los Angeles and Santa Monica. **And, if the airport were to close, Measure D would do nothing to prevent development.**

For more information and the actual "Airport Charter Initiative" ballot measure language, visit: <http://www.smvote.org/BallotMeasures/detail.aspx?id=47354>

Campaign committee website – SMVotersDecide.com

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## Myths and Facts

### Preamble to Measure D – AOPA-sponsored Airport initiative

1) WHEREAS, Santa Monica Airport land is a low-density land use that benefits the entire City of Santa Monica; and

**Fact:** The Airport does not benefit the entire City of Santa Monica, but Airport operations impact much of the city. The 27,000 residents of zip code 90405 (Sunset Park and Ocean Park) probably bear the brunt of the noise, air pollution, and worries about safety, along with residents of West Los Angeles, Mar Vista, and Venice.

2) WHEREAS, the City of Santa Monica has engaged in costly and unsuccessful litigation and has sought to close the airport to redevelop the land for other purposes; and

**Fact:** Santa Monica's annual budget is more than \$500 million. At the time of the FAA 250-heading test (2009-2010), the City Attorney estimated that the City had spent about \$1.5 million over the previous ten years in legal expenses involving Santa Monica Airport. Much of the funds expended by the City over the decades on litigation has been spent on defending itself against lawsuits by aviation interests.

3) WHEREAS, City staff reports indicate that redevelopment of the airport land will likely result in high-density development causing increased traffic congestion, noise and pollution; and

**Fact:** The City Council members clearly indicated on March 25, 2014 that they have no intention of approving high-density development at Santa Monica Airport. And if Measure LC passes, no new development would be allowed at the Airport without voter approval, except for parks and play fields.

4) WHEREAS, recent approval by the City of large, high-density developments has shown a disregard for the concerns expressed by nearby residents and ignored the will of the people of Santa Monica to prevent excessive development; and

**Fact:** The largest project approved recently by the City Council was the Bergamot Transit Village, and they rescinded the development agreement after Residocracy organized a successful petition drive.

5) WHEREAS, the City has made threats to close local businesses based at the airport and nearby business park that provide jobs for people, facilities for local businesses and tax revenue for the community; and

**Fact:** All current leases at the Airport expire on July 1, 2015, and the City Council has discussed the possibility of halting sales of leaded aviation gas at Santa Monica Airport after that date. The proposed leasing policy was sent back to the Airport Commission for review by the City Council on August 12.

Most of the 177 businesses at Santa Monica are non-aviation businesses. Only 178 jobs at the Airport are aviation-related. The total direct and indirect revenue generated by the 178 aviation jobs was estimated by HR&A Advisors in 2011 as approximately \$41 million, but that was apparently based on a computer model that assumes the same ratio of passengers arriving at SMO are **tourists** as at LAX.

In reality, few tourists arrive at SMO, and much of the activity involves pilots practicing touch-and-go landings and takeoffs. Therefore, \$41 million is probably a gross overestimate. The total Santa Monica economy is apparently \$13.9 billion, so aviation at SMO is less than a half percent, about 0.2 or 0.3% of the economy.

6) WHEREAS, the City has taken actions to harm local aviation related businesses as part of an effort to destabilize the airport; and

**Fact:** After subsidizing the local flight schools for decades, the City Council finally voted in 2013 to charge landing fees to aircraft based at Santa Monica Airport.

7) WHEREAS, the City has taken actions to reduce the services and facilities available to the airport and its users in an apparent attempt to achieve closure or partial closure of the airport; and

**Fact:** The City's general fund has been subsidizing airport operations over the years for a total of \$13.6 million, according to a June 2013 staff report to the City Council.

8) WHEREAS, the City of Santa Monica has exposed taxpayers to costly litigation with the federal government and to potential payment of legal damages to airport businesses harmed by their actions; and

**Fact:** It is the AOPA-sponsored initiative that will give standing to aviation businesses at the Airport to sue the City if Measure D passes.

9) WHEREAS, the Santa Monica Airport has already instituted rules that restrict noise, operating hours and type of aircraft using the airport in order to be a better neighbor; and

**Fact:** Planes are allowed to land 24/7, and the jets' use of reverse thrusters when they land is as noisy as the takeoff blasts. The voluntary takeoff curfew lasts only from 11 PM to 7 AM during the week, and from 11 PM to 8 AM on the weekend. The only aircraft that have been banned are the old, noisy Stage II jets.

The 95 decibel noise limit is extremely loud, as anyone who has spent time within a few blocks of the departure flight path, which extends from 23<sup>rd</sup> and Navy Street to the shoreline. It's equally loud on the east side of the runway, from the Sardis cul-de-sac on the east side of Bundy Avenue to the intersection of the 10 and 405 freeways.

10) WHEREAS, the City has failed to consider the wishes of the entire community by collaborating with a small group of special interests who seek airport closure;

**Fact:** The “special interests” in this situation are not the residents, but rather

-- The **Aviation Lobbies** (the 400,000-member Washington, DC-based **Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association** and the 8,000-member Washington, DC-based **National Business Aviation Association**) have already spent almost (and will likely exceed) **a million dollars** bankrolling the petition signature gathering drive and the Measure D campaign committee,

-- the fractional ownership business jet companies,

-- the aviation businesses based at Santa Monica Airport,

-- the small number of pilots who use SMO, and

-- the wealthy executives and individuals who can afford the convenience of avoiding the security hassles at LAX by flying in and out of SMO.

In 2011, the city undertook an Airport Visioning process regarding possible alternate uses of SMO after 2015. The Ocean Park Association ([www.opa-sm.org/airport/](http://www.opa-sm.org/airport/)) and Community Against Santa Monica Airport Traffic ([www.casmat.org](http://www.casmat.org)) conducted online surveys about the airport's future. The results of all three were that about 80% of participants wanted to either a) mitigate the negative SMO impacts or b) close the airport.

11) NOW THEREFORE, the voters of the City of Santa Monica shall have a right to express their views before the City of Santa Monica takes any action to redevelop Airport land.

**Fact:** The City's **Measure LC** states that “the City Council shall have full authority, without voter approval, to regulate use of the Santa Monica Airport, manage Airport leaseholds, condition leases, and permanently close all or part of the Airport to Aviation use. If all or part of the Airport land is permanently closed to aviation use, no new development of that land shall be allowed until the voters have approved limits on the uses and development that may occur on the land.”

The aviation lobbyists' **Measure D** does not mention “development.” It states that,

“a) Voter approval shall be required before any City decision becomes effective that changes the use of land currently used for the Santa Monica Municipal Airport and related aviation services to non-aviation purposes, or that closes or partially closes Santa Monica Airport. The term ‘voter approval’ means a majority of the voters of the City voting ‘Yes’ on a ballot measure approving such a change at a general municipal election.

b) Unless the voters have approved the closure of the airport...the City shall continue to operate the Santa Monica Municipal Airport in a manner that supports its aviation purposes, and shall not impose additional restrictions on providers of aviation support services to tenants and airport users that inhibit the sale of fuel or the full use of aviation facilities.”

I seems that any ballot measure to approve any changes at the Airport would probably be opposed once again by the deep-pocketed aviation lobbies.

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**AOPA August 2014 mailer:**

“640. People’s Right to Vote.

“(a) Voter approval shall be required before any City decision becomes effective that changes the use of land currently used for the Santa Monica Municipal Airport and related aviation services to non-aviation purposes, or that closes or partially closes Santa Monica Municipal Airport. The term “voter approval” means a majority of the voters in the City voting “yes” on a ballot measure approving such a change at a general election.”

**12) Myth:** They really meant a majority of voters who vote in a particular election.

**Fact:** The initiative language they submitted is what will be added to the City Charter if their initiative passes, not what they now say they meant. A “majority of voters in the City” may mean a majority of registered voters (63,613 as of May 19, 2014), or 31,807 voters. No ballot measure in the history of the City of Santa Monica has ever received 30,000 votes. So this could mean that the Airport will always remain open, and that land currently used for aviation services will never be changed to non-aviation purposes.

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**13) Myth:** “We’re fighting for your right to vote on the most significant land-use decision in Santa Monica history.”

**Fact:** “640 (b) Unless the voters have approved the closure of the airport pursuant to paragraph (a) of this section, and such decision has become effective, the City shall continue to operate the Santa Monica Municipal Airport in a manner that support its aviation purposes....”

If any measure appeared on the ballot that allowed Santa Monica voters to vote to close Santa Monica Airport, AOPA and NBAA (the aviation lobbies based in Washington, DC) would undoubtedly be willing to spend additional hundreds of thousands of dollars to ensure that the Airport will remain open forever.

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**14) Myth:** “The broad open space of the airport provides for 175 businesses employing 1,500 people. And it generates \$250 million in economic impact for our local economy every year.”

**Fact:** “General fund subsidies, as of June 30, 2013, reached \$13.6 million. Of the leases at the Airport, **11** are aviation businesses, and **114** are non-aviation businesses. (8/12/14 City Council staff report -- <http://www.smgov.net/departments/council/agendas/2014/20140812/s2014081208-A.htm>)

In 2011, HR&A Advisors reported that there are roughly 177 businesses at Santa Monica Airport representing **42 industry sectors** -- restaurants, legal services, scientific research, and the entertainment industry -- not just aviation-related businesses. They noted 894 jobs, including non-aviation employees at attractions such as Barker Hangar, Ruskin Theatre, Santa Monica Art Studios and Arena 1 Gallery, the SMC Airport Arts Campus, two restaurants, an auto design center, etc. HR&A reported the number of

aviation-related jobs as 178.

[http://www.smgov.net/uploadedFiles/Departments/Airport/About/HRA\\_Advisors\\_Presentation.pdf](http://www.smgov.net/uploadedFiles/Departments/Airport/About/HRA_Advisors_Presentation.pdf)

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**15) Myth:** “The entire City is protected from high-rise canyons like Century City because of building-height restrictions for miles around the airport.

**Fact:** The airport is surrounded primarily by residential neighborhoods (Sunset Park, Mar Vista, and the North Westdale neighborhood of West Los Angeles) which are not zoned for commercial development. Whether or not Santa Monica Airport remains in operation, no one can build Century City high-rises in R1, R2, or R3 residential districts.

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**16) Myth:** “From the beach all the way to the Westside, the airport puts limits on the development potential of surrounding land.”

**Fact:** *From Stelios Makrides, Santa Monica Airport Manager:* The short answer is yes. Federal Aviation Regulation Title 14, Part 77 - Objects Affecting Navigable Airspace, Subpart 77.19 - Civil airport imaginary surfaces. This subpart describes the dimensions, characteristics, and criteria of the five Part 77 surfaces, which include: horizontal, conical, primary, approach, and transitional. Each imaginary surface has certain height criteria.... I have provided two links below. The first is the regulation itself, and the second is a link to NOAA that provides drawing with the dimensions of the imaginary surfaces. Please note that SMO has a non-precision instrument runway.

[http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=ae2f39efb1b1cbb62eb2da1f19a2f6&node=pt14.2.77&rgn=div5#se14.2.77\\_119](http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=ae2f39efb1b1cbb62eb2da1f19a2f6&node=pt14.2.77&rgn=div5#se14.2.77_119)

<http://www.ngs.noaa.gov/AERO/oisspec.html>

*Stelios Makrides*

Santa Monica Airport I Airport Manager

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While the basic rule seems to be 1 foot in height for every 20 feet from the runway within 3.9 miles of the Airport, all of these buildings are probably within 3.9 miles of the Airport:

*The data used for the statistics in this section is entirely based on content provided by Emporis.com*

#	Building	Floors	Height	Year built
1	<a href="#">100 Wilshire</a> (Wilshire & Ocean)	21	300 ft	1971
2	<a href="#">Pacific Plaza</a> - 1431 Ocean Ave.	15	180 ft	1963
3	<a href="#">Bay Cities Guaranty Building</a> - 225 SM Blvd. (clock tower)	13	173 ft	<b>1931</b>
4	<a href="#">First Federal Square</a> - 401 Wilshire	12	160 ft	1981
5	<a href="#">Ocean Towers I</a> - 201 Ocean Ave.	17	160 ft	1971

#	Building	Floors	Height	Year built
6	<a href="#">Ocean Towers II</a> - 201 Ocean Ave.	17	160 ft	1971
7	<a href="#">Radisson Huntley Hotel Santa Monica</a>	17	<b>160 ft</b>	1964
8	<a href="#">1221 Ocean Avenue</a> -	16	159 ft	1971
9	<a href="#">The Shores I</a> - 2700 Neilson Way	<b>17</b>	<b>156 ft</b>	<b>1965</b>
10	<a href="#">The Shores II</a> - 2800 Neilson Way	<b>17</b>	<b>156 ft</b>	<b>1966</b>
11	<a href="#">2001 Santa Monica Boulevard [Medical Center]</a>	12	155 ft	1976
12	<a href="#">Westminster Towers</a> - 1112 7th St.	17	152 ft	1969
13	<a href="#">Santa Monica Medical Plaza</a> - 1260 15th St.	14	150 ft	1973
14	<a href="#">Wilshire Palisades</a> - 1299 Ocean (Ocean & Arizona)	11	143 ft	1980
15	<a href="#">Santa Monica Towers</a> - 1233 6th St.	13	125 ft	1964

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**16a) Myth: Santa Monica Airport provides a “protective dome against over development.”**

**Fact:** Development standards, agreements, and decisions surrounding the airport are vested with the Cities of Santa Monica and Los Angeles.

***The Authority to Regulate Development is 100% Local and 0% Federal***

“While the FAA can provide assistance and funding to encourage compatible land development around airports, it has no regulatory authority for controlling land uses to protect airport capacity. The FAA recognizes that state and local governments are responsible for land use planning, zoning, and regulation including that necessary to provide land use compatibility with airport operations.”

--*Land Use Compatibility and Airports, A Guide for Effective Land Use Planning, FAA Guidance Materials* (<http://tinyurl.com/n4xz87o>)

***The Purpose of 14 CFR Part 77 is to Identity Airspace Obstructions, not to Approve or Reject Projects***

“The FAA is not authorized to grant or deny construction projects. Rather, Part 77 defines a number of obstruction standards that are used to identify obstacles that may have an adverse impact on the navigable airspace. Even upon the issuance of a ‘Determination of Hazard’, the developer is free to continue construction.”

--*Federal Register, Vol. 79, No. 81, 23300-23303* (<http://tinyurl.com/p4srjg3>)

***An Example from Las Vegas and the 1150 ft. Stratosphere Tower***

“The real issue comes after the FAA has made its determination. By congressional mandate, the FAA cannot prohibit any construction activities. Instead, The FAA evaluates the proposed construction, and as necessary, works with the proponent to mitigate any impact that may result, even if it finds the obstruction to be a hazard and to be objectionable.

A good case in point, again, comes from Las Vegas, with the Stratosphere Tower, completed in 1996, and the second-tallest structure west of the Mississippi River. When the Stratosphere was proposed, the FAA said it would present a hazard for air traffic control. But the tower was built anyway. And now, air traffic controllers account for the Stratosphere when guiding incoming and outbound traffic using Las Vegas McCarran’s north-south runway.

Instead, to make up for the lack of veto power, the FAA depends on collaboration with local jurisdictions to reduce conflicts between new structures and airspace.”

--Aviation & Airport Development Law News (<http://tinyurl.com/pr8g77x>)

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**17) Myth:** “The politicians have had lots of plans for airport land over the years. The VOTERS DECIDE INITIATIVE puts the power back in your hands.”

**Fact:** Measure D requires that voters approve nearly every change at the Airport, so the end result would actually be taking power away from the voters and putting it in the hands of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association and the National Business Aviation Association, which can afford to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on campaign consultants, glossy mailers, and paid phone callers to influence election results. So a company such as Atlantic Aviation, which leases Airport property from the City for \$200,000 per year, and then turns around and subleases it for \$4 million per year, would probably be happy to continue doing so in perpetuity.

([https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B\\_xmzTNXnK13X19QaXpuUkdDUm8/edit?pli=1](https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B_xmzTNXnK13X19QaXpuUkdDUm8/edit?pli=1))

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**18) Myth:** “A report commissioned by the City recommended a large regional Shopping Center.”

**Fact:** This apparently happened in **1971**, according to SMVotersDecide.

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**19) Myth:** “Developer Del Webb proposed a large gated residential community.”

**Fact:** Del Webb died in **1974**. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Del\\_Webb](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Del_Webb)

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**20) Myth:** “The City approved, but then canceled, a plan for office buildings and parking garages with Reliance Development Group.”

**Fact:** This happened in **1990**. “**Santa Monica Shelves Plan for Airport Project: Development: A petition drive had raised the prospect of a referendum on the office plan. City Council decided that there is not enough time to devise alternative proposals.**” – 4/12/1990 -- *Los Angeles Times* – [http://articles.latimes.com/1990-04-12/news/we-1653\\_1\\_santa-monica-city-council](http://articles.latimes.com/1990-04-12/news/we-1653_1_santa-monica-city-council)

“The Santa Monica City Council has closed the book for now on a three-year controversy over plans to build a large commercial office project on city-owned land at Santa Monica Municipal Airport by deciding not to pursue the project.”

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**21) Myth:** “The City once presented its own plan for offices, shopping and parking garages.”

**Fact:** This happened in **1990**. “**Santa Monica Shelves Plan for Airport Project: Development: A petition drive had raised the prospect of a referendum on the office plan. City Council decided that there is not enough time to devise alternative proposals.**” – 4/12/1990 -- *Los Angeles Times* – [http://articles.latimes.com/1990-04-12/news/we-1653\\_1\\_santa-monica-city-council](http://articles.latimes.com/1990-04-12/news/we-1653_1_santa-monica-city-council)

“The council had approved an 822,000-square-foot project in the airport’s southeast corner in October, 1989, but rescinded its approval in January after residents opposed to the development collected enough



signatures to force a referendum on it in the November election. The council then directed city staff to contact community leaders and develop a process in which a new proposal could be presented and discussed.

“The project was envisioned as consisting of a half-dozen six-story office buildings, several parking structures and related facilities. In addition to the opposition from Santa Monica residents, the proposal also caused an outcry in nearby neighborhoods of Los Angeles that, because of the development's location along Bundy Drive, would get the brunt of the traffic it generated.”

“Mayor Dennis Zane, one of the project's staunchest supporters because of the millions of dollars in revenue it would generate for the city, had hoped to pull together a plan for a scaled-down project in time to place it on the November ballot as an alternative to the residents' initiative.

“But [City Manager] Jalili said in a report to the council that, after meeting with some community leaders, a ‘succinct process resulting in a ballot issue’ for November ‘does not appear to be feasible.’ ”

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**22) Myth:** Closing Santa Monica Airport would bring “low-flying, large commercial jets” over Santa Monica at 2,500 feet in altitude.

**Fact: “Airport Theory Doesn’t Fly”** – 6/11/14 – *Santa Monica Daily Press* –

<http://smdp.com/airport-theory-doesnt-fly/135200> -- “In response to pilot Reynold Dacon’s May 27 letter, in which he warns that closing Santa Monica Airport (SMO) would bring “low-flying, large commercial jets” over Santa Monica at 2,500 feet in altitude, I disagree. Here’s what our airport manager has to say on the subject:

“During the May 8, 2012 council meeting, Mayor Pro Tempore Glean Davis directed staff to investigate potential unintended consequences as a result of the airport closing. Specifically, would the closure of the airport allow the air carrier aircraft arriving at Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) from the northwest to fly at a lower altitude?”

“Staff asked the FAA’s Operations Support Group to analyze the potential impact of a reconfigured airspace if the Santa Monica Airport were to close.

“The Operations Support Group is a division of the Air Traffic Organization. Airport Support Group’s main duty is to provide operational and procedural oversight and support while promoting the effectiveness and efficiency of the National Airspace System.

“After their review, we received an e-mail from the Regional Administrator’s Office stating that their team did not have the ability or resources to speculate how the air traffic patterns or operations might look like in a ‘no airport’ scenario and that, because of the many variables that they need to consider, the resulting modeling would likely not be representative of the ultimate end result. Judging from their response, the impact from such a reconfiguration is unknown at this time.”

In addition, he states that, “VFR Aircraft [aircraft flying under visual flight rules, i.e., prop planes] using the LAX Special Flight Rules Area, located directly above LAX, have two designated altitudes — 4,500 feet northwest bound and 3,500 feet southeast bound.”

In other words, prop planes flying north and south across Santa Monica (to and from other airports such as Van Nuys and Long Beach) must be at least 3,500 feet above mean sea level. As aircraft have to maintain 1,000 feet vertical separation, Mr. Dacon’s theory that, if SMO were closed, commercial jets could fly southeast across Santa Monica at 2,500 feet, would result in them flying along below the prop planes. That seems like a completely unrealistic scenario.



In the real world, a more likely scenario is that the runway would be shortened far ahead of any closure, and a reduced runway would not lead to any alteration of flight altitudes. Even if SMO were to close, in order to maintain the required 1,000 feet vertical separation, it seems that commercial jets flying southeast across Santa Monica to get into the LAX landing pattern would still have to fly at least 5,500 feet above mean sea level, not at 2,500 feet.

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**23) Myth: Only a few residents want to close Santa Monica Airport.**

**Fact:** There are about 135,000 people who live in ZIP codes either adjacent to Santa Monica Airport or under the landing, departure, or loop flight paths, who are exposed to health and safety risks by SMO.

90405 – 27,350 (Centinela to the shoreline, Pico to the south city limit)

90064 – 25,633 (Centinela to La Cienega, Olympic to National)

90066 – 56,210 (Walgrove to the 405, Airport Avenue to Jefferson)

90401 – 6,531 – (Pico to Wilshire, 12<sup>th</sup> St. to the shoreline)

90404 – 20,123 (Pico to Wilshire, 7<sup>th</sup> St. to Centinela)

[http://www.zipmap.net/California/Los\\_Angeles\\_County/Santa\\_Monica.htm](http://www.zipmap.net/California/Los_Angeles_County/Santa_Monica.htm)

<http://www.city-data.com/zips/90405.html>, <http://www.city-data.com/zips/90066.html>, etc.

Approximately 80% of residents surveyed by the City of Santa Monica (during its Airport Visioning process), the Ocean Park Association, and Community Against Santa Monica Airport Traffic (CASMAT.org) either wanted the Airport closed, or operations reduced to mitigate negative impacts.

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**24) Myth: Residents who want to close Santa Monica Airport are only interested in increasing their property values.**

**Fact:** “Closing Santa Monica Airport is a quality-of-life issue” -- “To imply that two Santa Monica airport commissioners who live near the airport and want to change the facility’s status have a conflict of interest because their homes’ value could increase if the airport ceases operation is akin to saying that anyone who serves on a commission that advises a city council to take actions resulting in uplifting municipal quality of life has a conflict of interest because those actions would enhance property values all over town. (“Foes of closing Santa Monica Airport accuse city officials of conflict,” June 28) By the way, why would thousands of homes’ values go up if Santa Monica Airport was closed? Probably because of the cleaner air, relief from invasive corporate jet and helicopter noise, and freedom from constant fear of catastrophic aircraft crashes that would result.” -- Leigh Brumberg, *Santa Monica*

<http://www.latimes.com/opinion/readersreact/la-le-0704-friday-santa-monica-airport-20140704-story.html>

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The following addresses errors and omissions in the July 21 letter to the *Santa Monica Daily Press* about Santa Monica Airport (SMO) from Ed Bolen, President/CEO of the Washington-based National Business Aviation Association.

**History:**

**25) Myth:** Douglas Aircraft operated at Santa Monica Airport for many years, therefore the Airport should remain open forever.

Douglas built thousands of military planes during World War II, but the war ended in 1945. In the late 1950's, Douglas began developing the DC-8 jetliner. The company proposed lengthening SMO's runway to accommodate the DC-8 and wanted additional land for offices. Santa Monica said no, and Douglas began the long process of moving to Long Beach, ending in 1975.

[http://www.smgov.net/Departments/Airport/Airport\\_History.aspx](http://www.smgov.net/Departments/Airport/Airport_History.aspx)

## **Economics:**

**26) Myth:** "The airport's operations, based on an annual budget of \$4.3 million, support 175 local businesses, 1,500 jobs, and generate an annual economic impact in the community of \$250 million."

**Fact:** "General fund subsidies, as of June 30, 2013, reached \$13.6 million. Of the leases at the airport, 11 are aviation businesses, and 114 are non-aviation businesses. (8/12/14 City Council staff report -- <http://www.smgov.net/departments/council/agendas/2014/20140812/s2014081208-A.htm>)

In 2011, HR&A Advisors reported that there are roughly 177 businesses at Santa Monica Airport representing 42 industry sectors -- restaurants, legal services, scientific research, and the entertainment industry -- not just aviation-related businesses. They noted 894 jobs, including non-aviation employees at attractions such as Barker Hangar, Ruskin Theatre, Santa Monica Art Studios and Arena 1 Gallery, the SMC Airport Arts Campus, two restaurants, an auto design center, etc. **HR&A reported the number of aviation-related jobs as 178.**

[http://www.smgov.net/uploadedFiles/Departments/Airport/About/HRA\\_Advisors\\_Presentation.pdf](http://www.smgov.net/uploadedFiles/Departments/Airport/About/HRA_Advisors_Presentation.pdf)

## **Increasing/decreasing air traffic**

**27) Myth:** "Annual flight operations at the airport have declined from the 1966 peak...."

**Fact:** While propeller plane operations have declined at Santa Monica Airport, particularly since the City adjusted its landing fees in 2013 to end the subsidy of flight operations, jet traffic has grown from 1,176 landings and takeoffs in 1983 to 14,284 in 2013. The peak was 18,575 jet operations in 2007 (an average of 50 jet landings and takeoffs over residential neighborhoods every day), and it appears that 2014 jet operations may equal or surpass that number. <http://www.jetairpollution.com/>

## **Noise**

**28) Myth:** "The noisier Stage 2 aircraft that have used SMO in the past will soon be a thing of the past, replaced by quieter...airplanes."

**Fact:** In 1967, when Santa Monica Airport jet operations numbered five or six per day, 232 homeowners sued the City for damages from jet noise, fumes and nuisance.

[http://www.smgov.net/Departments/Airport/Airport\\_History.aspx](http://www.smgov.net/Departments/Airport/Airport_History.aspx)

Stage 2 aircraft have been banned from Santa Monica Airport for some years, but noise from the daily average of 50 jet takeoffs and landings disrupts life for thousands. On October 6, 2013 *Bloomberg News* reported: "Aircraft noise has been tied to heart disease in two studies....The second found seniors on Medicare exposed to the most airplane noise were also more likely to have been hospitalized for heart

disease.” <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-10-08/aircraft-noise-tied-to-heart-disease-in-two-studies.html>

## **Air pollution:**

29) Myth: “Aircraft activity at SMO is lower, quieter, cleaner and more economically beneficial to the community than it’s ever been.

**Fact:** During World War II, the Douglas Aircraft Company employed 44,000 workers at its Santa Monica Airport facility. In 2011, according to HR&A Advisors, there were 178 aviation jobs at Santa Monica Airport. How does that make current aviation activity at the Airport “more economically beneficial to the community than it’s ever been”?

And while total aircraft activity may be lower overall, jet traffic has increased from 1,176 landings and takeoffs in 1983 to 14,284 in 2013. [www.jetairpollution.com](http://www.jetairpollution.com)

Leaded gas (“avgas”) used by most piston airplanes is the single largest source of lead emissions in the United States. <http://earthjustice.org/blog/2014-july/the-right-to-know-reader-epa-still-allowing-use-of-toxic-lead>

As the *Los Angeles Times* reported in Nov. 9, 2009, “UCLA scientists have found that people who live and work near Santa Monica Airport are exposed to high levels of air pollution.... The study...shows ultrafine particle emissions were 10 times higher than normal about 300 feet downwind of the runway's east end, where takeoffs generally start. The levels were 2.5 times higher than normal at a distance of about 2,000 feet.” <http://articles.latimes.com/2009/nov/19/local/me-santa-monica-air19>

According to a 2010 UCLA Health Impact Assessment, elevated levels of black carbon, ultrafine particles, and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons are found around SMO. Air operations, particularly jet take-offs and landing, are contributing to elevated levels of **black carbon**. Such exposure is associated with increased rates of respiratory and cardiovascular disease and increased carcinogenic risk.

Elevated exposure to **ultrafine particles** (UFP) is associated with increased inflammation and blockage of blood vessels, as well as lung inflammation. Elevated exposure to **polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons** (PAH) has been associated with increased cancer risk, disruption of adult hormonal balance, reproductive abnormalities with exposure during pregnancy, and lower IQ scores in children.

Excessive noise is associated with hearing loss, higher levels of psychological distress, and impaired reading comprehension and memory among children. And, there is **no buffer zone** between the airfield and the surrounding communities. <http://www.healthimpactproject.org/resources/document/Santa-Monica-Airport-Final-HIA.pdf>

A 2012 EPA-funded study found long-term impact of aircraft emissions on communities surrounding SMO, lead (from avgas) and ultrafine particle concentrations substantially higher than background levels, and sharp one-minute ultrafine particle peaks downwind of the airport runway, correlating with jet takeoffs. <http://www.epa.gov/ttnamti1/files/2012conference/3BPolidoriSanta.pdf>

According to the December 13, 2013 *Los Angeles Times*: “A zone of the Westside neighborhood of Mar Vista downwind of Santa Monica Airport...has much higher levels of those pollutants in the air than the Eastside’s freeway-choked Boyle Heights....”

"(Researchers) focused their measurements...on an especially troubling type of soot called ultrafine particles... (which) can lodge deep in the lungs and move into the bloodstream and the brain, posing a health risk to people with respiratory and cardiovascular disease. The study found that while concentrations of ultrafine particles in Boyle Heights are about three times higher than in West Los Angeles, they are even worse in the North Westdale neighborhood (just east of SMO), where researchers detected concentrations between 10 and 20 times higher."

<http://articles.latimes.com/2013/dec/13/science/la-sci-sn-air-pollution-neighborhood-ultrafine-particles-20131213>

## **Safety:**

**30) Myth:** "The record on safety of operations for general aviation aircraft, like those at SMO, has been one of continual improvement."

**Fact:** According to "The Dangers of Private Planes" (July 17, 2014, *New York Times*), "The National Transportation Safety Board found that in 2011, **94 percent of fatal aviation accidents occurred in...general aviation**. That category includes private small planes flown by amateurs as well as professionally piloted corporate flights in high-powered aircraft, such as the [Gulfstream IV jet](#) that crashed in May...killing all seven people on board." <http://nyti.ms/1zKe6Yh>

In 2010, a pilot practicing touch-and-go landings at Santa Monica Airport took off, but died moments later when he crashed at Penmar Golf Course.

In 2011, a student pilot took off from Santa Monica Airport and crashed into a house at 21<sup>st</sup> and Navy.

In April 2013, two Cessnas took off from Santa Monica Airport and collided in midair near Calabasas.

In September 2013, a jet landing at Santa Monica Airport crashed into a hangar across an alley from homes. The private pilot and all three passengers died; the airplane burned. (National Transportation Safety Board aviation database and synopses -- <http://www.nts.gov/aviationquery/>)

A list of aircraft accidents/incidents associated with Santa Monica Airport, with summaries of the National Transportation Safety Board reports, is posted at <http://www.friendsofsunsetpark.org/airport/safety-concerns/>

In 2008, SMO Director Bob Trimborn addressed safety concerns at SMO before a committee of the Southern California Association of Governments. Trimborn said SMO, surrounded by homes, has no space for FAA-required 1,000-foot safety areas needed at the ends of its runway for fast Category C and D jet aircraft.

In 2000, a consultant examining SMO's layout cited the lack of **Runway Safety Areas** as a major deficiency. Trimborn noted that **the cost to build them would be nearly \$1 billion**.

He also noted that while Runway Safety Areas are designed to protect *aircraft*, Runway Protection Zones are designed to protect *communities*. **Building Runway Protection Zones for SMO would require buying 28 acres of residential land and spending approximately \$750 million**.

<http://web.scag.ca.gov/aviation/pdf/atac/atac061208fullagn.pdf>

## **Conclusion:**

Wealthy individuals and business executives enjoy the convenience of using SMO; it spares them being restricted by commercial airline schedules and having to deal with LAX's traffic, parking, and security lines. The tradeoff is a degraded quality of life for thousands of residents in West Los Angeles, Santa Monica, and Venice.

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**31) Myth:** Closing Santa Monica Airport will bring low-flying, large commercial jets over Santa Monica at 2,500 feet in altitude.

**Fact: "Airport Theory Doesn't Fly" – Zina Josephs**

6/11/14 – *Santa Monica Daily Press*

<http://smdp.com/airport-theory-doesnt-fly/135200>

In response to pilot Reynold Dacon's May 27 letter, in which he warns that closing Santa Monica Airport (SMO) would bring "low-flying, large commercial jets" over Santa Monica at 2,500 feet in altitude, I disagree. Here's what our **airport manager** has to say on the subject:

"During the May 8, 2012 council meeting, Mayor Pro Tempore Glean Davis directed staff to investigate potential unintended consequences as a result of the airport closing. Specifically, would the closure of the airport allow the air carrier aircraft arriving at Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) from the northwest to fly at a lower altitude?"

"Staff asked the FAA's Operations Support Group to analyze the potential impact of a reconfigured airspace if the Santa Monica Airport were to close.

"The Operations Support Group is a division of the Air Traffic Organization. Airport Support Group's main duty is to provide operational and procedural oversight and support while promoting the effectiveness and efficiency of the National Airspace System.

"After their review, we received an e-mail from the Regional Administrator's Office stating that their team did not have the ability or resources to speculate how the air traffic patterns or operations might look like in a 'no airport' scenario and that, because of the many variables that they need to consider, the resulting modeling would likely not be representative of the ultimate end result. Judging from their response, the impact from such a reconfiguration is unknown at this time."

In addition, he states that, "VFR Aircraft [aircraft flying under visual flight rules, i.e., prop planes] using the LAX Special Flight Rules Area, located directly above LAX, have two designated altitudes — 4,500 feet northwest bound and 3,500 feet southeast bound."

In other words, prop planes flying north and south across Santa Monica (to and from other airports such as Van Nuys and Long Beach) must be at least 3,500 feet above mean sea level. As aircraft have to maintain 1,000 feet vertical separation, Mr. Dacon's theory that, if SMO were closed, commercial jets could fly southeast across Santa Monica at 2,500 feet, would result in them flying along below the prop planes. That seems like a completely unrealistic scenario.

In the real world, a more likely scenario is that the runway would be shortened far ahead of any closure, and a reduced runway would not lead to any alteration of flight altitudes. Even if SMO were to close, in order to maintain the required 1,000 feet vertical separation, it seems that commercial jets flying southeast across Santa Monica to get into the LAX landing pattern would still have to fly at least 5,500 feet above mean sea level, not at 2,500 feet.

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**32) Myth:** Residents should be afraid of overdevelopment at the airport.

**Fact: “No More Jets” -- Letter to the Editor**

6/5/14 – *Santa Monica Daily Press*

<http://smdp.com/letter-jets/135050>

Regarding the petition to strip the city of Santa Monica of their ability to control the airport property: I read the letter to the editor in the Santa Monica Daily Press May 28 written by a self proclaimed pro-airport petitioner. He was engaged in gathering signatures.

In order to support his position, to save the airport, the petitioner introduced fears of certain future overdevelopment at the airport site which is speculative at best given the current (and past) development climate among the residents of Santa Monica.

His petition and his fear mongering obfuscate the real issue. The issue is simply that Santa Monica should be able to control the uses of the airport for the good of the city and the electorate. This, regardless of how the airport is ultimately utilized; be it a park, a development or an airport (minus the ever increasing jet traffic).

The immediate facts are that jet traffic has grown at an exponential rate in recent years. The jets fly over our city and they emit toxins that are poisonous to the residents of Santa Monica as well as our unfortunate West Los Angeles neighbors. That needs to be dealt with now and the city of Santa Monica has stated and demonstrated their intention to do so. The proper governmental infrastructure is in place to take control of the airport property and along with it the rights of the citizens to decide what happens there.

Any petition that would interfere with that process should be taken for what it is, and that is an attempt by special interests to strip Santa Monica of their ability to control this property.

Fear mongering and speculating about future events is not relevant to the current simple matter. First thing is first. Santa Monica Airport was not intended to be a jet airport although it has become one. The jets need to be curtailed for the health and well being of the residents. -- *David Putnam, Santa Monica*

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**33) Myth:** “They want to redevelop 227 acres of low-density Santa Monica Airport land without voter approval.”

**Fact:** Mayor Pam O’Connor told KPCC on November 6, 2013 that “the status quo will not be tolerated.” A local newspaper quoted Assemblyman Richard Bloom as saying, “I support the process and the litigation that the City has undertaken to test its jurisdiction.” State Senator Ted Lieu posted on his web site, “I commend the City of Santa Monica for filing suit against the FAA.” On September 30, 2013, LA Councilman Mike Bonin, whose district includes West Los Angeles, Mar Vista, and Venice, posted on his Facebook page, “It’s time to shut this airport down.” And a photo in another local newspaper showed Bonin’s predecessor, Bill Rosendahl, at a 2012 rally holding a sign that said “Close SMO for good.”

Meanwhile, an October 31, 2013 web site posting by the Aircraft Owners & Pilots Association (AOPA - 385,000 members worldwide) claimed that the lawsuit “lacks any merit in law and is another desperate bid by the city to close Santa Monica Airport.” And a commenter on the AOPA site envisioned developers salivating over the prospect of 227 undeveloped acres in Santa Monica, and used the massive traffic-generating Playa Vista condo projects that replaced the Hughes Aircraft Company’s 9,000 foot runway in the Ballona Wetlands as a cautionary tale.

The city's 2010 Land Use and Circulation (LUC) update devoted three pages to SMO and the adjacent 52-acre Santa Monica Business Park. The "Strategic Approach" stated that due to the complexity of the issues and the lack of a defined future for SMO, no land use changes were proposed in the LUC. **"However, it is proposed that the City prioritize the creation of a Santa Monica Airport/Business Park Specific Plan for both entities in anticipation of the expiration of the '1984 Agreement' with the federal government in 2015. After that, the use of the airport land will be a local land use matter."**

In 2011, the city undertook an Airport Visioning process regarding possible alternate uses of SMO after 2015. The Ocean Park Association ([www.opa-sm.org/airport/](http://www.opa-sm.org/airport/)) and Community Against Santa Monica Airport Traffic ([www.casmat.org](http://www.casmat.org)) conducted online surveys about the airport's future, and about 80% of their respondents wanted to either mitigate the negative SMO impacts or close the airport.

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**34) Myth:** The airport was here first, residents are only concerned about increasing their property values, and more people die in traffic accidents than in plane crashes.

**Fact:** Residents have responded that there used to be a huge "NO JETS" sign at the east end of the SMO runway, that annual jet landings and takeoffs at SMO increased from 1,725 in 1993 to 18,575 in 2007, that cars don't fall from the sky into houses or garages, and that a jet crash is far more dangerous than a car accident.

How did a busy general aviation airport like SMO end up in the middle of residential neighborhoods?

Pilots began using a grassy field in the southeast corner of Santa Monica as an informal landing strip around 1917. Donald Douglas began testing aircraft there and, in 1926, the City of Santa Monica purchased the property with park bond funds and renamed it "Santa Monica Airport."

In 1941, the federal government leased SMO for the Douglas Aircraft Company, which was manufacturing military aircraft. The X-shaped runways that ran from Centinela to 27<sup>th</sup> Street were replaced with a new 5,000 foot runway that runs from Bundy to 23<sup>rd</sup> Street. This required the demolition of many blocks of Sunset Park homes between 23<sup>rd</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> Streets, and between Ocean Park Blvd. and Airport Avenue.

In 1948, after the war ended, the eastern section of SMO was returned to the city through an "Instrument of Transfer." The western section was returned by way of a quit claim deed in 1949.

The city declined a 1959 Douglas proposal to further lengthen the runway, which would have required the demolition of even more homes. Douglas subsequently closed its Santa Monica facility in 1975. The city banned jets and adopted a night curfew and a noise limit of 100 decibels and, although airport interests sued in 1977, most of the ordinances were upheld except for the jet ban.

After the Douglas plant was demolished in 1979, it was replaced with Clover Park and Santa Monica Business Park. In 1981, the City Council passed Resolution 6296, declaring its intention to close SMO when legally possible. However, to settle ongoing disputes, the City later signed what became known as the "1984 Agreement" with the FAA, obligating the city to continue operating SMO until July 1, 2015.

And if property values increased around the airport after it closed at some point in the future, that would seemingly prove that the airport has had a negative effect on quality of life in those neighborhoods.



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**35) Myth:** Santa Monica Airport is needed for emergencies.

**Fact:** Santa Monica Airport was apparently closed for 3 days at the time of the 1994 Northridge Earthquake. If supplies were needed, they would probably be brought in by helicopter, not executive jet. And helicopters could still land at the airport as well as many other locations in the city.

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**36) Myth:** If Measure LC passed, the City Council could ignore its restrictions on development and build another Century City on airport land.

**Fact:** An amendment to the City Charter, such as Measure LC, which is approved by the voters, cannot be changed or ignored by the City Council.

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