



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
Inter-Departmental Correspondence
Board of Supervisors



Date: September 8, 2015

Board Meeting Date: September 22, 2015

Special Notice / Hearing: None

Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors

From: Supervisor Don Horsley

Subject: Subcommittee to Address Air Traffic Impacts at San Carlos Airport

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a resolution:

- A) Establishing a Subcommittee of the Board to assess and develop solutions to address the impact of increased air traffic at San Carlos Airport (Subcommittee); and
- B) Appointing Supervisors Warren Slocum and Don Horsley to the Subcommittee; and
- C) Directing the Subcommittee to contact and work with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to develop solutions to address air traffic impacts at San Carlos Airport and to review capital planning at the airport.

BACKGROUND:

The County owns and operates a general aviation airport in San Carlos. The airport supports a wide variety of aviation activities with its terminal, runway, hangars, offices and other facilities, including pilot training, aircraft maintenance and charter operations.

The FAA, responsible for managing the national air traffic network, controls air traffic and flight operations at San Carlos Airport. The FAA also monitors aircraft ground operations to ensure safe operation of aircraft. In addition, the FAA tracks the County's use of federal airport improvement funds and the County's compliance with conditions associated with the grant of those funds. County staff manages the airport's ground facilities, including the collection of fees and rents charged to users for use of the facilities, as well as the upkeep and development of all airport property. However, due to federal law and conditions imposed by federal funding for airport improvements, the FAA significantly impacts the County's management of the airport.

The airport has experienced a significant increase in air traffic, particularly within the last year, which has led to growing concerns regarding the impact of airport operations. The growth in air traffic has coincided with the region's growing economy, and has been fueled by, among other things, demand for charter flights carrying passengers to other California destinations.

DISCUSSION:

The growth in air traffic at San Carlos Airport has given rise to concerns expressed by local community members and staff at both the FAA and the County. Community members have expressed concerns regarding matters such as aircraft operations safety, as well as increased noise caused by the significantly expanded numbers of aircraft landing and taking off from the airport.

FAA staff has, in turn, expressed concerns that the higher volume of flights may be adversely affecting ground safety at the airport. In addition, County staff has been concerned that the increase in air traffic will increase demand for the limited space at the airport, which staff manages for the benefit of all airport users. The increased air traffic and corresponding demand for space at the airport also affects development plans for the airport property.

The diverse nature of these potential impacts and related concerns, as well as the FAA's integral oversight role at the airport will require close coordination among County staff and the FAA to identify potential solutions to these challenges. Forming a subcommittee of this Board to address specifically all of these concerns is an important step toward resolving them.

The majority of the flight-related traffic impacts described above affect communities within Supervisorial Districts 3 and 4. In light of this and existing and ongoing efforts to resolve airport concerns, Supervisor Slocum and I are best positioned to work with County staff, the FAA, and the wider community to address these issues and are particularly suited to serve on this subcommittee. I ask that this Board establish a subcommittee to address the airport issues discussed above and appoint Supervisor Slocum and me to the subcommittee.

Approval of this action contributes to the 2025 Shared Vision outcome of Collaborative Community by facilitating the exploration of solutions to air traffic impacts in our County.

County Counsel has reviewed and approved the resolution as to form.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact to the County.