WHITEMAN AIRPORT

LAND USE STUDY AND ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS

October 2026



Whiteman Airport
Land Use Study and
Economic Impact Analysis

Commissioned by:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY





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At a Glance

Whiteman Airport (WHP or the Airport) is a 184-acre general aviation airport in Pacoima, a densely populated residential community in the northeast San Fernando Valley area of Los Angeles.

Los Angeles County (County) owns WHP and operates it through the Department of Public Works (DPW or Public Works). As owner and operator, the County manages the property, leases, budget, and capital program, and is responsible for maintaining the airfield in safe and compliant conditions. The County does not control the airspace, certify pilots or aircraft, write flight rules, or direct air traffic. Those functions belong to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). That division of authority shapes every question in this Study. Because WHP has accepted federal grants, the County cannot close it unless the FAA first releases the County from its federal obligations or Congress does so by statute.

The County commissioned a team of independent subject matter experts to prepare the Whiteman Airport Land Use Study and Economic Impact Analysis (Study) to inform County decision making on the future of the Airport. The Study analyzes land use, financial, economic, safety and community considerations for keeping WHP open compared with pursuing redevelopment and closure. While the Study does not include new public health impact or air quality analysis, it does cover known environmental conditions, shares stakeholder concerns regarding such impacts, and identifies the additional environmental due diligence any redevelopment would require.

The Study is a data-backed decision-making framework, not a final set of recommendations. It evaluates three scenarios on equal terms, without preference for any one of them:

- **Scenario 1, Preserve and Improve**
- **Scenario 2, Transform and Optimize**
- **Scenario 3, Transform and Repurpose**

Safety is the foremost concern of the community surrounding WHP and aviation stakeholders. Recent airplane crashes have reinforced a long-voiced fear that a plane will come down on a home, a school, or a person on the ground. That concern is a legitimate response to real events.

Three findings frame the Study.

First, safety improvements are needed now, under every scenario. Aircraft will continue flying over Pacoima for years regardless of which long-term scenario the County chooses, including throughout a closure transition. Near-term safety work will not wait for a long-term land use decision.

Second, the status quo does not work, financially or for the community. Operating WHP as it is today produces a projected net loss to the County of about $27.0 million on a net present value (NPV) basis through 2050, and it leaves unaddressed the safety, noise, and land use concerns residents have raised for years.

Third, closure is not the County's decision to make alone. Only the FAA, or Congress through legislation, can release the County from its federal obligations. In weighing a release request, the FAA looks at the Airport's role in the national aviation system, continuing aeronautical need, prior federal investment, environmental review, and whether identified safety risks can be corrected while the Airport stays open. The safety record is one input the FAA considers among several, not the deciding one on closure.

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The Study gives the County an objective, data-driven basis for evaluating the long-term future of the Airport property. It does not recommend an outcome. It sets out what each option would require, what it would cost, how long it would take, and which decisions rest with the County and which rest with the federal government.

The Study weighs trade-offs across several dimensions, in this order of emphasis: public safety; community priorities, land use compatibility and community-serving opportunities; aviation system function and regional capacity; financial feasibility; long-term economic outcomes; and jurisdictional complexity, timing, and risk. While community concerns about environmental risk are included in the trade-offs weighed across scenarios, the Study does not include new environmental impact analysis. The Study Team reviewed previous environmental studies and publicly available data and identified additional environmental due diligence that would apply depending on the redevelopment path.[1]

Throughout, the scenarios show that land use is shaped not only by local priorities but also by a layered federal regulatory and jurisdictional framework.

Community-Driven Origin and Board Direction

In November 2020, an aircraft on approach to WHP struck power lines about 175 feet short of the runway and crashed into the adjacent Pacoima neighborhood. In response to that accident and the community concerns it brought forward, the Board of Supervisors (Board) adopted a motion in December 2020 commissioning the Re-envisioning Whiteman Airport Process (Re-envisioning Process) and establishing a Community Advisory Committee (CAC). The CAC met 17 times over 21 months and identified priorities including reducing community exposure to airport impacts, improving transparency, expanding economic and community-serving opportunities, reviewing lead and air quality studies, and evaluating long-term land use options, including potential closure.[2]

In January 2022, the Board directed County departments to evaluate the process and implications of a potential closure. On April 9, 2024, the Board directed preparation of this Study, including an assessment of economic impacts to the County and the Pacoima community. On June 30, 2026, Supervisor Lindsey Horvath introduced a motion calling for immediate safety actions at WHP while the County evaluates the Airport's long-term future. Taken together, these actions reflect a sustained County effort on community safety at WHP rather than a response to any single event. Section 1.7 of the Report, Previous Plans and Studies, catalogs the County's previous WHP studies and actions.

Study Team and Approach

This effort is led by Trifiletti Consulting (TC), an airport and land use advisory firm, with Ricondo & Associates (aviation planning and FAA compliance), BAE Urban Economics (market analysis, financial feasibility and economic impact), WJ Advisors (airport finance), and Geosyntec Consultants (environmental planning) (collectively, the Study Team).

The Study Team worked in phases. First, it established a baseline of existing conditions and constraints, then it developed three land use scenarios informed by stakeholder input, then it analyzed the financial, economic, and implementation implications of each.

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1 See Appendix 8 Environmental Summary Memo.

2 See Appendix 18 References and Sources Cited for a link to the Re-envisioning Process report.

The technical investigations behind the Study include:[3]

- **Existing Conditions**: Physical, operational, and financial conditions at WHP as a baseline.
- **Jurisdiction and Roles**: Which agency holds which authority over the Airport, the airspace, pilots, aircraft, and accident response.
- **Safety Record**: Review of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) accident and incident record at WHP and at comparable airports.
- **Environmental Site Conditions**: Review of historical records, regulatory databases, and prior environmental investigations.
- **FAA Closure Process**: The federal procedures and grant obligations that govern the Airport, and the record of past FAA closure decisions, including closures accomplished by act of Congress.
- **Market Demand Analysis**: Demographic, economic, employment, and real estate conditions that determine which land uses the site can support.
- **Land Use Development Scenarios**: Three scenarios shaped by stakeholder input.
- **Financial and Economic Impact Analysis**: Modeling the financial feasibility and economic impacts of the baseline condition and each scenario.
- **Community Engagement**: Two-phase outreach program (Phase 2 forthcoming).

Detailed analyses supporting each conclusion are in the technical appendices and incorporated by reference. Where this summary states a figure, the underlying methodology and sources are documented therein.

Public Input

The Study Team built directly on the CAC process. It returned to the same stakeholder groups the CAC had convened, carried the CAC's recommendations forward as inputs to scenario development, and used the CAC's priorities as the starting framework for Phase 1 Outreach.

Phase 1 gathered broad input, identified stakeholder concerns, and informed scenario development and analytical scope. Activities included a public website with published study materials at whplandusestudy.com; more than 50 one-on-one meetings; three facilitated focus groups with more than 50 participants representing aviation users, community organizations, and workforce partners; a public open house on December 3, 2025, with approximately 175 attendees; and a guided tour of West Los Angeles College's Aviation Technology and Maintenance Program and of The Park VNY at Van Nuys Airport (VNY).

Phase 1 spanned the full stakeholder universe: residents, neighborhood councils, and schools; community-based organizations and environmental justice advocates; Airport tenants and aviation businesses; aviation associations and advisory groups; public safety and emergency service agencies; workforce and education partners; city and regional agencies; and federal, state, and County elected officials. Appendix 14 lists the organizations engaged. This breadth allowed the scenarios to reflect community values, aviation user perspectives, regional system needs, and regulatory feasibility together.

3 The Study Team also reviewed publicly available third-party analyses of a potential WHP closure, including the analysis published by ICON CDC, and addressed them in the Report.

2. EXISTING CONDITIONS AND NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT

Airport History

Marvin E. Whiteman established Whiteman Airpark as a private airport in 1946, serving the post-World War II general aviation and pilot boom. The Board purchased the 32-acre airport in 1970 to keep it from being redeveloped as an industrial park, converted it to public use, and renamed it Whiteman Airport. The FAA approved an air traffic control tower (ATCT) in 1988, and the County constructed it the following year. In 1999, the County acquired two parcels at 12642 and 12648 Osborne Street, primarily with FAA Airport Improvement Program (AIP) funds. Those parcels lie within the Airport's Runway Protection Zone (RPZ) and were purchased to remove obstructions and serve as a safety buffer. WHP occupies approximately 184 acres today.

Neighborhood Context

WHP sits in a dense, largely built-out urban neighborhood within the City of Los Angeles's Pacoima neighborhood, home to 69,600 residents. It lies between the I-5 and I-210 freeways, just south of the 118 freeway, roughly seven miles from Hollywood Burbank Airport and eight miles from Van Nuys Airport. Single-family and multi-family homes, commercial uses, and light industrial uses abut the site. San Fernando Road and the Metrolink Antelope Valley line border it to the west, and Osborne Street is to the south.

Pacoima is a predominantly Hispanic/Latino community, about 89 percent in 2024, with a median household income below the San Fernando Valley average and a workforce concentrated in manufacturing, construction, transportation, and skilled trades. It also carries a documented concentration of environmental and industrial burdens relative to the rest of the Valley. Residents and community organizations have consistently framed WHP in those terms: one more source of exposure in a community that already bears more than its share, and a County-owned asset that has not delivered proportionate benefits to the people living next to it.

Community stakeholders have raised four concerns consistently over many years:

- **Safety**: Proximity of takeoff and landing operations to homes and schools, and the risk of an aircraft coming down in the neighborhood.
- **Noise**: Aircraft noise over residential blocks, particularly from flight training and pattern flying.
- **Air quality and lead**: Emissions from piston aircraft using leaded aviation gasoline, in a community already affected by freeway and industrial sources. The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (Public Health) assessed separate studies on lead and air quality in conjunction with the Re-envisioning Process.
- **Equity**: Whether the burdens and benefits of a County-owned facility are fairly distributed.

These concerns are the backdrop against which the Airport's long-term role is being weighed, and they shaped the land use scenarios in Section 6.

Jurisdiction and Roles

Responsibility for WHP is divided among federal, state, and County agencies. Understanding that complex jurisdictional division is a precondition to evaluating any scenario, because several of the actions called for by local residents are not within the County's authority.

- **Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)**: Regulates aircraft design, maintenance, and operation; regulates the airspace and manages air traffic control; certifies pilots, flight schools, and airports; administers federal airport grants and the obligations attached to them; and investigates accident scenes to determine potential causes and enforce its regulations.
- **National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB)**: Independent federal agency that typically manages an accident scene, investigates every civil aviation accident in the United States, determines probable cause, and issues safety recommendations.
- **Caltrans Division of Aeronautics**: Issues state permits, conducts safety inspections of public-use airports, and confirms compliance with state and federal regulations.
- **Los Angeles County Public Works**: Owns, operates, and maintains the County's five general aviation airports in a safe, secure, and compatible manner, keeps them financially self-sustaining, and maintains compliance with federal, state, and local rules and with the grant assurances associated with accepting federal funds. After an accident or incident, Public Works reports the event to police, fire, the FAA, the NTSB, and County leadership; notifies Board offices and the media; supports lifesaving operations; secures and preserves the site as evidence; assists the FAA and NTSB with cleanup and aircraft removal; and provides affected residents and businesses with contact information and mental health resources.

Figure ES.1, Airport Jurisdiction

FEDERAL: Oversees Safety, Accidents, Grants, Airport Closures

- Controls airspace, enforces safety and funding obligations (FAA)
- Regulates airspace and flight safety (FAA)
- Oversees federal grant compliance (AIP obligations) (FAA)
- Must approve any closure or repurposing of the airport (FAA)
- Enforces NEPA and other federal environmental requirements (FAA)
- Accident investigation (NTSB)

STATE: Caltrans Aeronautics, CEQA, Land Use Compatibility

- Regulates airport safety and operations
- Provides oversight for permitting, safety, and planning
- Enforces CEQA for environmental review
- Ensures land use compatibility between WHP and surrounding development
- Coordinates with counties and cities to uphold the State Aeronautics Act

COUNTY: Owner Operator, Local Planning Operations

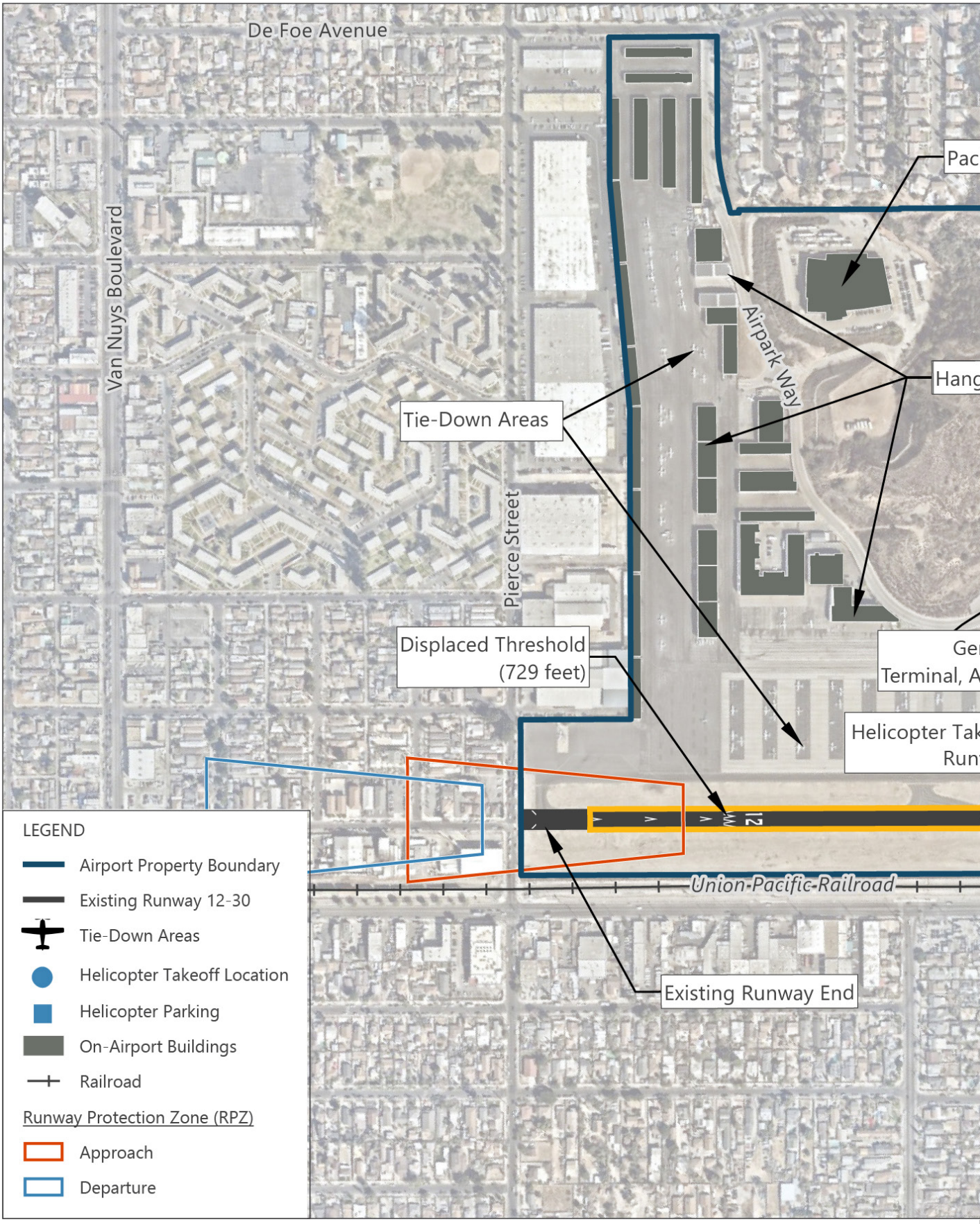
- Owner/operator; manages land use, local policy, and community engagement
- Directly manages airport operations, maintenance, and local land use decisions
- Leads community engagement, local planning, and repurposing studies
- Must coordinate with both state and federal authorities on regulatory and funding compliance

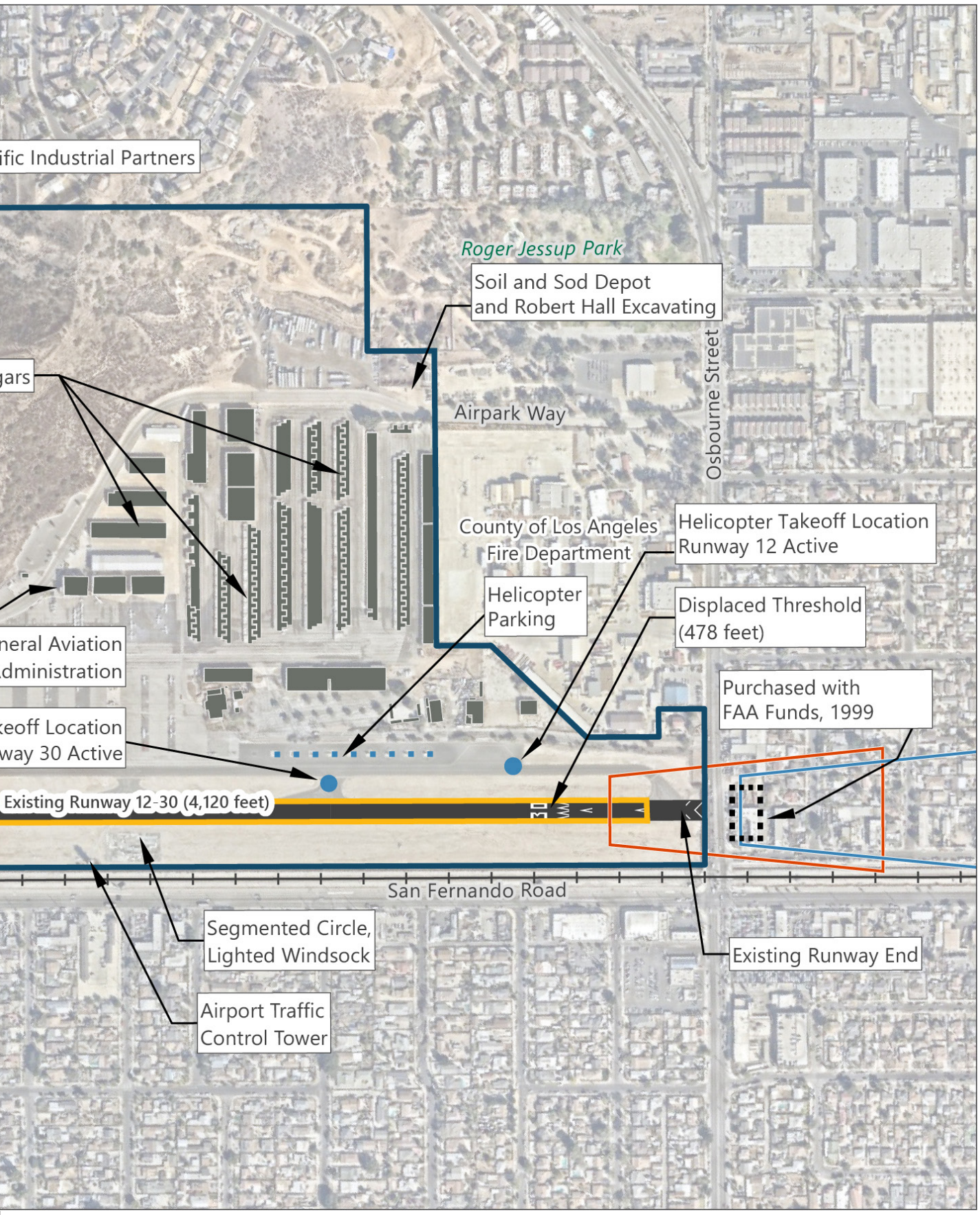
County Airport System and WHP's Role

WHP is one of five general aviation airports the County operates through the Public Works Aviation Division, alongside Brackett Field, General William J. Fox Airfield, San Gabriel Valley Airport, and Compton/Woodley Airport. The County-owned system is managed through a single Aviation Enterprise Fund that pools revenues and expenses and draws no support from the County General Fund. As described in Section 2.12 Existing Financial Conditions, that fund currently operates at a deficit.

A general aviation airport is a public-use facility serving civil flights that are not scheduled commercial airline service. General aviation covers business, personal, and recreational flying, flight training, firefighting, law enforcement, disaster relief, search and rescue, medical transport, pipeline patrol, agriculture, and aerial survey work. As a federally designated reliever airport, WHP reduces congestion at commercial-service airports.

Figure ES.2, Whiteman Airport Layout




ific Industrial Partners
Roger Jessup Park
Soil and Sod Depot
and Robert Hall Excavating
gars
Airpark Way
Osbourne Street
County of Los Angeles
Fire Department
Helicopter Takeoff Location
Runway 12 Active
Helicopter
Parking
Displaced Threshold
(478 feet)
neral Aviation
dministration
Purchased with
FAA Funds, 1999
keoff Location
way 30 Active
Existing Runway 12-30 (4,120 feet)
30
San Fernando Road
Segmented Circle,
Lighted Windsock
Existing Runway End
Airport Traffic
Control Tower

Beyond routine general aviation, WHP hosts the Civil Air Patrol and youth aviation education programs and served as an aircraft staging node during the January 2025 wildfire events when neighboring airports were capacity constrained.

The scope of WHP's emergency role should be stated precisely. Los Angeles County Fire Air Operations is headquartered at Barton Heliport, a separate facility adjacent to WHP and not on Airport property, as shown in Figure ES.2. County Fire's air operations do not depend on WHP's general aviation activity and would not be eliminated by a change in WHP's status. County Fire does coordinate with the WHP air traffic control tower (ATCT) for air traffic services. WHP's own emergency contribution, however, is separate from County Fire and is situational when regional demand exceeds capacity elsewhere.

Airport Layout, Facilities, and Infrastructure

As depicted in Figure ES.2, WHP has a single runway, Runway 12-30, with associated taxiways, aprons, hangars, tie-down areas, helicopter pads, and the ATCT. The airfield substantially conforms to FAA design standards applicable to a reliever airport of this type, set out in FAA Advisory Circular 150/5300-13B, Airport Design, and to the state standards Caltrans enforces through its permit and inspection program. Appendix 2 and Sections 2.4 and 2.8 of the Report discuss the Airport layout and conformance in detail.

A 2022 assessment rated airfield pavement at an average Pavement Condition Index of about 61, with the runway at 59, aprons at 60, and taxiways at 67. This is the range where rehabilitation is typically recommended. The runway and taxiways currently satisfy state and federal regulatory requirements. Caltrans inspects the airfield annually under its state permit program, and Public Works conducts periodic pavement condition assessments. Pavement will require sustained maintenance and rehabilitation in the years ahead, and in May 2026 the County applied for an FAA AIP grant to fund pavement repair.

The ATCT and its systems are of comparable age to the airfield. The County has identified approximately $1 million in ATCT maintenance projects, ranging from HVAC upgrades to modernizing the communications equipment, which are included in the Airport's Asset Renewal Plan.

Lighting and navigational systems are consistent with FAA design standards and support current visual flight operations. The Study identifies a focused evaluation of airfield lighting, approach visibility, and obstructions, including potential Pilot-Controlled Lighting, as an option to improve situational awareness at night and in low visibility.

Uses, Leases, and Occupancy

WHP facilities include approximately 324 County-owned and 133 privately owned hangars, 239 tie-down positions, and 9 helicopter pads, supporting roughly 31 aeronautical and non-aeronautical businesses including flight training, aircraft and helicopter maintenance, avionics, and aerial survey, along with non-aviation uses ranging from film production to vehicle storage. The Study Team estimates the Airport's operations and related activities contribute approximately $66.3 million in annual economic activity, 280 jobs, and $29.6 million in labor income to the County. Twelve tenants generate roughly 60 percent of total lease revenue; eight of those tenants are aeronautical (aviation-related) businesses.

Occupancy in the County-owned hangars is uneven. Executive hangars are nearly full, nearly full, at about 5 percent vacancy; older portable T-hangars run 25 percent to 31 percent vacant; and only 80 of 239 tie-down positions are occupied. Demand is strongest for enclosed, modern hangar space and weakest for open tie-downs and aging portable structures.



Photo by Marietta Torriente

Lease structure shapes the redevelopment timeline. Most tenancies are month-to-month with a 10-day termination clause, giving the County substantial near-term flexibility to reconfigure or repurpose space. There are also 26 long-term ground and office leases; seven of these leases extend past FY2031, with tenant-held options running to FY2059. One contract contains a negotiated buyout right. Otherwise, the County may terminate a long-term lease only for cause, meaning a tenant's material breach such as nonpayment, unauthorized use, or failure to maintain the premises. The County cannot terminate a long-term lease for convenience or to enable redevelopment. Therefore, several parcels would not become available for comprehensive redevelopment until their lease terms run out, largely in 2050 and beyond.

Aviation Operations and Forecast

In 2025, WHP recorded roughly 126,976 aircraft operations. General aviation accounts for more than 99 percent of activity, and there is no scheduled commercial service. There are 391 based aircraft; about 87 percent are single-engine piston with 40 helicopters and 10 multiengine piston aircraft making up the balance.

It must be noted that 2025 is not a representative year for annual operations. A temporary runway closure at VNY pushed its operations to WHP. Over the preceding decade, WHP averaged about 97,060 annual operations, which is the more reliable basis for judging activity levels. The Study's forecasts exclude the 2025 spike.

The majority of aircraft operations at WHP are local operations, typically short training, practice, or pattern flights that stay in the airport's immediate vicinity. In 2025, local operations were more than two-thirds of total operations, while itinerant operations (aircraft arriving from or departing to other airports) were less than one-third of total operations.

Excluding the 2025 spike, forecasts project total operations growing at roughly 2.3 percent per year from 2024, from about 91,508 operations in 2024 to about 118,143 in 2035, with helicopter activity edging up as a share of the fleet. FAA policy weighs reasonably foreseeable aviation demand rather than current vacancy, so this outlook is directly relevant to how the FAA would evaluate WHP's continued role.

Financial Conditions

WHP is the strongest performer among the County's five general aviation airports. Between FY2022 and FY2025, WHP generated about $18.7 million in operating revenue, roughly 32 percent of the County's airport system revenue. During that same time period, WHP had about $17.7 million in operating expenses. The cumulative operating surplus for WHP for these fiscal years was about $1.1 million, averaging $300,000 per year.

WHP is the only County general aviation airport that ran a surplus over that period. Every other County airport operated at a deficit, and the Aviation Enterprise Fund as a whole operated at a deficit. WHP's performance effectively supports the rest of the County airport system.

Three factors account for WHP's performance relative to the other County general aviation airports: its location in a dense, high-demand part of the region; a base of long-term lease agreements; and strong demand for its enclosed hangar space. Lease and rental income of about $13.1 million from FY2022 to FY2025 is WHP's largest revenue source. In FY2024, Public Works transferred fuel operations to a private company, which let the County keep earning fuel flowage revenue while removing County responsibility for the cost of operating the fueling system, including fuel cost.

Table ES.1, Los Angeles County Airport System Operating Revenues and Expenses FY2022-2025

County General Aviation Airport	Operating Revenue FY22-25 ($ millions)	Operating Expense FY22-25 ($ millions)	Share of System (revenue)	Net Result
Whiteman Airport	**$18.70**	**$17.70**	**32%**	**Surplus (~$1.1M)**
Brackett Field	$13.00	$13.70	22%	**Deficit**
General William J. Fox Airfield	$10.90	$15.30	19%	**Deficit (largest)**
San Gabriel Valley	$9.80	$11.70	17%	**Deficit**
Compton/Woodley	$6.30	$7.60	11%	**Deficit**
System Total	**$58.70**	**$66.00**	**100%**	

Source: Appendix 9 LA County GA Financial Analysis

Capital Needs

The County's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) identifies approximately $53.5 million in capital improvements at WHP needed through 2050, including runway rehabilitation, taxiway and apron work, pavement management, and airfield safety improvements, along with additional asset renewal projects, including ATCT upgrades. Airfield safety improvements in this context means physical work on the airfield itself: pavement condition and markings, signage, lighting, obstruction removal, and RPZ protection.

A Pause in Federal Grants

At the start of the Re-envisioning Process in 2020, in response to community concerns and the CAC's consideration of closure, the County paused its pursuit of new FAA Airport Improvement Program (AIP) grants. Every AIP grant carries assurances that typically obligate the owner or operator of the airport (also referred to as the airport sponsor) to operate the airport for 20 years, while land acquired with AIP funds carries obligations that do not expire. The County paused new grants to avoid deepening those obligations while a long-term decision about the future of the Airport was pending. That choice to forgo grants was intended to preserve flexibility. Yet, it also reduced access to one of the largest available capital funding sources and increased the share of capital project costs the County would have to carry itself.

Leaving WHP as is and continuing not to pursue FAA grants produces a projected net loss of about $27.0 million on a net present value (NPV) basis through 2050. That figure is the gap between projected revenue and the full cost of operating the Airport, renewing aging assets, and delivering the $53.5 million CIP without federal grant participation. It is a shortfall the County would have to cover from other sources. Inaction also increases the risk that WHP falls out of compliance with FAA standards over time.

Safety Record and Recent Incidents

Safety is the community's principal concern, and the discussion here rests on the federal accident record rather than on impressions.

The NTSB distinguishes between an accident and an incident. An accident is an occurrence associated with the operation of an aircraft in which a person suffers death or serious injury, or in which the aircraft receives substantial damage. An incident is an occurrence other than an accident that affects or could affect the safety of operations. The NTSB does not investigate aircraft incidents. It only investigates aircraft accidents.

The Record

From 2015 to 2026, there were 12 accidents investigated by the NTSB at or in the vicinity of WHP, including on-airport events such as hard landings and ground handling, and off-airport accidents in nearby residential and commercial areas. Most of these accidents occurred during takeoff and landing, the most demanding phases of flight. Across all 12 accidents, there were four fatalities to aircraft occupants and no fatalities or injuries to persons on the ground.

The Causes

The NTSB found that pilot error, aircraft operational factors, and mechanical failure caused these accidents. Specific findings included loss of engine power, fuel exhaustion, improper maintenance, and loss of aircraft control. The County reviewed 25 years of NTSB records for WHP and found the same pattern throughout: every accident was traced to pilot error or aircraft malfunction. In no case has the NTSB attributed an accident at WHP to the design, layout, condition, or operation of the Airport, or to the WHP ATCT. This finding shapes the safety measures discussed in Section 10.5, because it identifies the safety risk to be addressed as pilot proficiency, aircraft maintenance, and operator standards rather than the airfield itself.

Recent Events

Two recent crashes intensified attention to the Airport's future. On April 20, 2026, a single-engine aircraft crashed into a Pacoima parking lot about a mile from the runway. On June 16, 2026, a single-engine aircraft crashed on the runway. NTSB review of both events was ongoing as of August 2026.

Peer Comparison

Table ES.2 is a summary of accidents at 11 general aviation airports in the greater Los Angeles, Orange, and Ventura county region from 2009 to 2026. During that time, the number of accidents at WHP is similar to or in some cases fewer than the number of accidents at regional airports.

Table ES.2, Aircraft Accident Summary 2009 - 2026

Aircraft Accident Summary as Reported by the NTSB | Years 2009 to 2026							
	Accidents			On Airport		Off Airport	
Airport	On Airport	Off Airport	TOTAL	Fatalities	Injuries	Fatalities	Injuries
LA County System Airports							
Compton/Woodley	8	3	11	2	3	0	4
San Gabriel Valley	9	4	13	1	3	0	0
Brackett Field	12	4	16	2	3	1	3
Whiteman	11	6	17	1	5	3	1
General William J. Fox	10	5	15	0	3	0	2
Regional Airports							
Camarillo	16	7	23	1	5	4	3
Santa Monica	15	6	21	3	2	4	2
Van Nuys	17	6	23	2	1	3	2
Hawthorne Municipal	5	4	9	1	2	3	1
Torrance Municipal	12	4	16	1	3	3	2
Fullerton Municipal	17	3	20	1	5	1	2

Source: LA County review of NTSB records.

Table ES.3 compares the accidents at WHP with five similarly situated urban airports across the nation with similar levels of activity. WHP recorded 12 accidents from 2015 to 2026, against an average of 9, a high of 13 at Glendale Regional and Pompano Beach Airport, and a low of 6 at Concord and Brown Field. Normalized for activity, WHP's rate is 1.13 accidents per 100,000 operations, second only to Glendale Regional at 1.44 and above the group average of 0.81. Part of that gap reflects airfield operational volume rather than frequency of events.. WHP recorded four fatalities, more than any peer airport, and all four were aircraft occupants. As at WHP, no peer airport reported ground casualties.

Pilot error, operational factors, and mechanical failure account for every accident at WHP and for most accidents at the peer airports. Three peer airports show causes outside that pattern: weather at Glendale Regional, air traffic controller error at Brown Field, and challenging ground layout at McClellan-Palomar. None of these were factors at WHP.

Table ES.3, Comparable Safety Events, 2015 to 2026

Metric	WHP (documented)	Peer Airports Comparison
Reportable accidents (2015-2026)	12 events	**Average**: 9 events **High**: 13 events (Glendale and McClellan-Palomar) **Low**: 6 events (Concord and Brown)
Fatalities	4 fatalities limited to aircraft occupants; no confirmed ground casualties among residents	**Average**: 1 **High**: 2 (Pompano Beach) **Low**: 0 (Glendale)
Off-airport crashes (residential/commercial)	Multiple, including 2020 residential, 2022 and April 2026 parking-lot events	Accidents at peer airports occurred both on and off-airport
Accident rate per 100,000 operations	1.23	**Average**: 0.81 **High**: 1.44 (Glendale) **Low**: 0.50 (Pompano Beach)
Primary causes (NTSB)	Pilot decision-making, mechanical condition, loss of engine power/ control	Operational/pilot errors and mechanical failures (Concord, Glendale, Pompano, and McClellan-Palomar) Environmental/weather (Glendale) Air traffic controller error (Brown) Challenging ground layout (McClellan-Palomar)
Average Annual Aircraft Operations (10-yr avg)	97,060	**Average**: 114,764 **High**: 148,615 (McClellan-Palomar) **Low**: 90,346 (Glendale)

Source: Appendix 7 Operations and Accidents Summary.

What the County Controls, and What It Does Not

The County faces limits on its authority over safety at WHP. Federal law governs access to public-use airports and restricts a sponsor's ability to limit the transient and itinerant aircraft that use the field; therefore, the County cannot turn those aircraft away or dictate how they are flown. Pilots, aircraft, airspace, and access are under federal authority.

The County's authority extends to the condition and modernization of the airfield, as well as to its tenants through the leases and permits: based aircraft owners, tie-down and hangar lessees, flight schools, maintenance operators, and aviation businesses. Because the NTSB record locates the correctable risk in pilot proficiency, aircraft maintenance, and operator standards, the tools to reduce safety risk that the County holds through its leases, permits, and capital program reach a meaningful share of that risk even though the County does not regulate flight.

Actions Taken and Underway

The safety work described below is independent of scenario and already underway. Aircraft will operate over Pacoima for as long as WHP is open, including throughout a closure transition; therefore, all three scenarios require these measures.

In response to recent crashes, the Board directed Public Works to identify near-term measures to strengthen safety, building on the CAC's recommendations and clarifying jurisdictional responsibilities and the federal rules governing operations and pilots. On June 30, 2026, Supervisor Lindsey Horvath introduced a motion calling for immediate safety actions at WHP while the County evaluates the Airport's long-term future, including evaluation of operational practices, infrastructure improvements, tenant standards, and other risk-reducing measures.

The Public Works report responding to Supervisor Horvath's motion identified quarterly pilot safety seminars, a capital project to maintain runway and taxiway pavement and markings, community outreach focused on safety, and an FAA Part 150 Noise Compatibility Study.

The current status of the recommended actions as of August 2026:

- **Pilot safety seminars**: Underway. Scheduled on a quarterly basis, addressing the pilot proficiency and decision-making factors the NTSB identified. Public Works held the first pilot safety seminar at WHP on July 27, 2026.
- **Pavement and markings**: Underway. Resuming acceptance of federal funds, the County applied for an FAA AIP grant for pavement repair in May 2026. Runway and taxiway pavement currently satisfies state and federal requirements, and Caltrans inspects the airfield annually.
- **Community safety outreach**: Underway. The County is developing an enhanced community outreach program to provide regular updates and public safety announcements to the community through the Airport's website, e-mail newsletters, and social media platforms.
- **Part 150 Noise Compatibility Study**: Not yet initiated. This is the federally funded pathway to residential sound insulation and to a data-based response to noise concerns.

Section 10.5 of the Report sets out a comprehensive preemptive safety program in four areas: infrastructure and runway improvements; operations and pilot training; policy and oversight; and transparency and community accountability. Measures that depend on new leases or on a development or public-private partnership agreement, including higher tenant insurance and liability thresholds and expanded audit rights, would be secured contractually as those agreements are negotiated and would take effect as leases turn over.

Environmental Conditions

The Study Team reviewed historical records, regulatory databases, and prior environmental investigations to assess environmental conditions at WHP and identify issues relevant to potential redevelopment.

Environmental data for the Airport is limited. Only one subsurface soil investigation has been conducted onsite, and large portions of the property, including historical fuel, maintenance, and operations areas, have never been evaluated. Therefore, information gaps exist regarding current soil, soil vapor, and groundwater conditions.

Regional conditions also impact future land use. WHP sits within the San Fernando Valley Groundwater Basin, and a portion of the southeastern part of the Airport appears to be within the North Hollywood Operable Unit Superfund site boundary of investigation, which has been under EPA-overseen remediation since 1989 for groundwater contamination from industrial solvents (PCE, TCE), 1,4-dioxane, and hexavalent chromium. Facilities north of the Airport, particularly the SDI Systems facility, have documented contamination, but no site-specific testing at WHP has been conducted.

Any redevelopment at WHP, whether industrial, commercial, or residential, would require Phase I and Phase II environmental site assessments and potentially subsurface remediation before sensitive uses could proceed. Additional work may include soil vapor screening, groundwater sampling, methane testing (required because the Airport lies in a Methane Hazard Zone), and building materials surveys for lead paint and asbestos. Findings could materially affect project costs, permitting, remediation, and redevelopment schedules under any scenario.

Air Quality and Lead

As part of the Re-envisioning Process, Public Health assessed studies of lead and air quality in the vicinity of WHP. Based on this review, the County concluded that there is no evidence of elevated blood lead levels in children living near the Airport relative to countywide conditions. Public Health also reviewed air quality monitoring studies by the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD), which found that airborne lead concentrations were well below the United States Environmental Protection Agency National Ambient Air Quality Standard of 150 nanograms per cubic meter and were consistent with regional background levels observed across the South Coast Air Basin. The existing environmental conditions are discussed in Section 2.10 and Appendix 8 Environmental Summary Memo.

Noise

State and federal guidelines identify residential, school, hospital, and place of worship land uses as potentially incompatible at 65 dB Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) or greater. A preliminary noise screening was conducted as part of the Re-envisioning Process. It identified approximately 335 residential units and about 1,635 residents within the 65 dB CNEL contour. This screening is a planning-level estimate. It does not indicate a regulatory violation, and it is not a substitute for an FAA Part 150 Noise Compatibility Study, the federal process for measuring noise exposure and identifying eligible mitigation. Noise was among the concerns stakeholders raised most frequently during Phase 1 outreach conducted as part of this Study.

3. AIRPORT CLOSURE PROCESS

Closing a federally obligated public-use airport requires a federal administrative process, not a local legislative action. Section 3 of the Report contains the full closure analysis, including a review of other airport closure cases and legal discussion.

WHP's Federal Obligations

The County has accepted multiple FAA AIP grants for WHP, including one in 2013 for fencing and one in 1999 for the land acquisition on Osborne Street.

Under 49 U.S.C. § 47107, sponsors accepting AIP funding agree to binding grant assurances. Three are consequential at WHP:

- **Assurance 5, Preserving Rights and Powers**: Bars actions, including closure, sale, or lease, that would impair the sponsor's ability to operate the airport without FAA approval.
- **Assurance 22, Economic Nondiscrimination**: Requires the airport to remain available to all types, kinds, and classes of aeronautical users on reasonable and not unjustly discriminatory terms. In practice, the County cannot exclude a category of aircraft or operator, cap operations, or set rates and conditions favoring some users over others.

This is why the County cannot implement some measures raised by residents, such as banning flight training or turning away transient aircraft.

- **Assurance 25, Airport Revenues**: Requires all revenue generated by the airport, including proceeds from any land sale, to be used for airport purposes. Proceeds would be reimbursed to the FAA in proportion to its original funding share or reinvested in eligible airport facilities.

In a written response dated January 21, 2026, to a query from the County, the FAA confirmed that the County's use of AIP funds to acquire Airport land creates obligations tied to that land that do not expire. Under FAA regulation, WHP is federally obligated in perpetuity unless and until the FAA formally releases the sponsor. A sponsor is the public agency that accepted the federal grants and assumed the resulting obligations. At WHP, the County is the sponsor. Therefore, the County must obtain FAA approval for any permanent closure, partial closure, or conversion to non-aviation use.

What the FAA Weighs in a Release Decision

FAA Order 5190.6B states that the FAA may approve closure only where closure benefits civil aviation, for example where it enables a modern, more capable replacement facility.

The Study Team reviewed FAA-approved closure cases dating back to 1999. Across that record, the FAA has consistently held that local redevelopment, housing, or economic development objectives alone are not sufficient grounds for release. The FAA stated the point directly in correspondence regarding a comparable request: "It is critically important to understand that non-aviation interests cannot serve as justification for a release or closure of the [A]irport."

When the FAA evaluates a release request, it weighs:

- The airport's role in the national aviation system, including National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS) and reliever designation
- Continuing and reasonably foreseeable aeronautical demand
- Applicable grant assurances and prior federal investment
- Federal property obligations and fair market value owed back to the aviation system
- Environmental review requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- Whether identified safety and compatibility risks can be corrected while the airport remains in operation

Where a release is sought on safety grounds, the FAA asks whether the risks are correctable through operational changes, pilot education, procedural improvements, or capital investment; whether RPZs are adequately protected and can be brought onto airport property; whether the airport meets FAA design and operational standards; whether land use compatibility is being addressed through tools such as a Part 150 Noise Compatibility Study, local land use controls, avigation easements (recorded property rights permitting aircraft overflight, typically acquired by a sponsor from nearby landowners), or disclosure requirements; and whether closure would reduce aviation risk or relocate it elsewhere in the region.

The NTSB has attributed every accident at WHP to pilot error, operational factors, or mechanical failure, and none to the airfield or the tower. The airfield substantially conforms to FAA design standards. Together, these point toward risks capable of mitigation rather than conditions demonstrating that continued operation is inherently unsafe.

Potential Air Traffic Impacts of Closure

WHP's arrivals and departures are part of the Southern California regional air traffic system managed by the FAA. Aircraft displaced from WHP would likely relocate to Hollywood Burbank Airport (BUR) and VNY. Flight paths would change, but general aviation activity would continue across the northeastern San Fernando Valley and portions of the airspace now used by WHP operations would continue to support aircraft arriving at and departing from those airports. Closure would largely redistribute operations and associated risks rather than remove them from the community around WHP.

What This Means for the County

The FAA regulates pilots, aircraft, airspace, and access. The County controls WHP leases, tenant standards, the capital program, and the physical condition of the airfield. The preemptive safety measures available to the County, summarized in Section 10.5, are also the measures that the FAA would expect the local sponsor to evaluate and implement before considering a safety-based release. Pursuing these measures does not foreclose closure; it is a prerequisite to a credible closure request. The County has called for immediate safety actions at WHP, including evaluation of operational practices, infrastructure improvements, and tenant standards, while the County evaluates WHP's long-term future.

Procedural Requirements

A closure request is initiated formally by the sponsor and submitted to the FAA Airports District Office, with final approval authority resting with the Associate Administrator for Airports. The cases reviewed for this Study reflect a consistent, multi-step federal review:

1. Local sponsor requests closure
2. Determination of federal obligations, including AIP grants, surplus property conveyances, and grant assurances
3. FAA aviation system analysis covering capacity, reliever role, NPIAS designation, aeronautical demand, and emergency services
4. Environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and NEPA
5. Public and agency coordination
6. Federal interest and grant repayment analysis, including independent fair market valuation and reimbursement or reinvestment of the FAA's proportional share
7. FAA release decision
8. Property disposal and redevelopment, including a Part 157 deactivation notice so aeronautical charts and the National Airspace System can be updated

Why Whiteman Airport is a Challenging Closure Case

The closures the FAA has approved since 1999 fall into two narrow categories: replacement with a superior facility, where aviation service was upgraded rather than eliminated, and obsolescence, where airports had few or no based aircraft and negligible operations. WHP fits neither. It is not being replaced; it supports 391 based aircraft and an active flight training and maintenance base, and it retains its NPIAS reliever designation with forecast demand rising. A WHP closure proposal would therefore have to meet a materially higher threshold than a conventional local land use decision.

Throughout this process, the sponsor carries the burden of demonstrating that closure will not adversely affect aviation safety, regional or national system capacity, or reasonable user access, supported by technical documentation on aircraft operations, based-aircraft relocation, runway and hangar capacity at surrounding airports, airspace impacts, and system redundancy.

4. KEY INPUTS TO LAND USE SCENARIOS

The three land use scenarios in Section 6 of the Report were grounded in three factors. The first is market demand: what the site could realistically support given regional economic, employment, and real estate conditions described in Section 4. The second is stakeholder input: what residents, tenants, agencies, and elected officials said about redevelopment and closure, set out in Section 5. The third is regulatory and legal feasibility: whether a scenario is consistent with the FAA obligations and regulations, grant assurances, and lease constraints described in Sections 2 and 3. A scenario had to hold up against all three factors to be carried forward. For example, an option with strong market support but no realistic path through FAA approval would not survive that test, and neither would one with strong community support and no economic basis.

Market Demand Analysis

The market analysis answers a specific question: which land uses could the WHP site actually support under current and projected market conditions? Its purpose was to ground the three scenarios in realistic market demand rather than general economic aspirations, to ensure that the County and the community are not choosing among options the market cannot deliver. The analysis assessed demographic, economic, employment, and real estate conditions in Pacoima, the broader Pacoima-Arleta-San Fernando area, and the San Fernando Valley. The market demand analysis conducted for the Study is discussed in more detail in Section 4 of the Report and Appendix 13 Economic Trends and Market Analysis.

Whiteman Airport sits in an established industrial and employment corridor. The Study identified roughly 251 businesses in the immediate vicinity, several with direct aerospace and aviation ties. Manufacturing, construction, retail, transportation and warehousing, and healthcare together employ more than half of working Pacoima residents. Manufacturing alone employs about 4,100 local residents, nearly double the Valley-wide share on a percentage of total employment basis.

Several sectors have a regional competitive advantage that would value proximity to this site. Aerospace and defense support about 57,000 County jobs with average earnings above $136,000, with aerospace activity nearly three times more concentrated locally than nationally. The transportation and logistics sector supports about 80,000 jobs, with warehousing projected to add nearly 29,000 County jobs between 2022 and 2032. The County is projected to add approximately 424,000 jobs overall over that period.

Even with long-term demand, not every viable land use would be financially feasible today. A residual land value analysis tests what a developer would pay for land by taking what a finished project would sell or lease for and subtracting what it costs to build. Under current construction costs and market rents, aviation hangars (about $3.5 million per acre) and warehouse/light industrial (about $0.4 million per acre) are the only uses with positive land value. Residential, medical office, and biotechnology currently return negative land values, meaning development costs exceed what the finished buildings are worth.

This describes current cost and rent conditions, rather than being a long-term assessment of which uses might be viable under different market and cost conditions. Residential, healthcare, and life sciences development at this site would likely be feasible with public-sector financial support, land write-downs, strategic phasing, or improved market conditions: Los Angeles County routinely utilizes a variety of tools to support development of key industry sectors across market cycles. Appendix 13 contains full market analysis, data tables and figures, sources, and assumptions.

FAA and Legal Planning Parameters

Three sets of regulatory and legal parameters set the outer boundary of what any scenario could realistically include. Airport tenant lease terms govern timing: most tenancies are month-to-month and can be reconfigured on short notice, while 26 long-term ground and office leases, terminable only for cause, hold their parcels until terms and options run out to 2050 and beyond. FAA obligations govern use: the RPZ parcels acquired with 1999 AIP funds cannot convert to non-aviation use without a federal release; Assurance 22 bars restrictions on aeronautical users, so no scenario could propose operating caps or bans; and Assurance 25 requires any land proceeds to stay in the aviation system. Airspace and compatibility standards govern placement: RPZs, runway safety and object-free areas, and Part 77 imaginary surfaces determine how close to the runway a building may sit and how tall it may be; and the 65 dB CNEL contour limits where noise-sensitive uses such as housing, schools, and medical facilities can go. These parameters determined which parcels could be available, when, and for what purpose, before any land use concept was drawn.

5. COMMUNITY-GUIDED THEMES

Section 5 of the Report describes how outreach was conducted. This section describes what the Study Team heard and how it shaped the scenarios. Throughout Phase 1 there was no consensus on the desired future of the Airport, with advocates arguing strongly for and against closure.

Areas of General Consensus

The status quo is not acceptable. Residents, community organizations, aviation tenants, and public safety agencies all said, in different terms, that leaving WHP as it is today does not work. Disagreement was about direction, not about whether change is needed.

Safety comes first. No stakeholder group disputed that safety improvements are warranted and urgent. This shaped the Study's treatment of safety as a condition applying to all three scenarios rather than a feature of one.

Areas of Disagreement

Residents and community organizations emphasized safety, noise, air quality and lead exposure, environmental justice, and equitable economic opportunity. Many framed the issue as one of disparate impacts: risks are concentrated in Pacoima while benefits, including aviation access, jobs, and training, are distributed regionally. Several asked what direct, measurable benefit the community receives from WHP in its midst.

Aviation users, tenants, flight schools, and public safety agencies described WHP as a workplace, a public safety asset, a training pipeline, and a piece of regional aviation capacity. Many who spoke in these terms live in the surrounding community. They raised concern that closure would eliminate accessible aviation careers where such pathways are already scarce, and displace businesses and jobs held by local residents.

On the issue of closure specifically, some stakeholders advocated for it, but there was no clear consensus for immediate closure. Participants with differing positions stressed that closure must be judged by what redevelopment would actually deliver, how the local community will have real access to redevelopment opportunities, on what timeline, and for whom. Concerns were raised about displacement and gentrification following redevelopment, including by participants otherwise supportive of closure.

Political and Institutional Context

In response to recent aircraft accidents, the Board directed Public Works to identify near-term measures to strengthen safety, building on the CAC's recommendations and clarifying jurisdictional responsibilities and the federal rules governing operations and pilots. Supervisor Horvath called for operations to cease pending a thorough investigation and urged the FAA and NTSB to provide corrective actions. City officials have raised similar concerns. Airport advocates have proposed modernization in place of closure.

The Public Works report identified quarterly pilot safety seminars, a capital project to maintain runway and taxiway pavement and markings, community outreach focused on safety, and a Noise Compatibility Study. Several of these are already moving: the County applied for an FAA AIP grant for pavement repair in May 2026, and pilot safety outreach and community safety engagement are underway. The Part 150 Noise Compatibility Study has not yet been initiated.

How These Themes Shaped the Scenarios

- **Safety concerns** became a lens applied to all three scenarios rather than a feature of any single one, and drove the finding that safety work proceeds under every path.
- **Noise, air quality, and environmental concerns** shaped the good-neighbor commitments in Scenarios 1 and 2, including the Part 150 study, residential sound insulation, electrification, and the transition away from leaded aviation gasoline.
- **Equity and community benefit concerns** shaped the community-serving components of Scenario 2, including workforce development, education and training, healthcare, and recreation.
- **Aviation value and workforce concerns** shaped the retention and consolidation of an aviation core in Scenarios 1 and 2.
- **Displacement concerns** shaped the phasing analysis and the treatment of redevelopment timing in Scenario 3.
- **Demands for transparency and realism** shaped the requirement that every scenario carry explicit assumptions about cost, timing, FAA requirements, funding, and implementation.

Phase 2 outreach carries these findings back to the same stakeholders through targeted briefings and a public open house, to validate the technical, financial, and land use results and ground the decision in a shared factual record.

6. LAND USE SCENARIOS

The Study evaluated three scenarios, each a potential path the County could pursue, and each evaluated on the same terms without preference or priority. Scenarios 1 and 2 present options for improving and reinvesting in an operating Airport. Scenario 3 examines full closure and comprehensive redevelopment.

Each scenario is evaluated through six lenses, used in the same order throughout:

1. **Safety**
2. **Proposed Land Use Plans: compatibility with FAA regulations, market demand and community feedback**
3. **Environmental Considerations**
4. **Financial Performance and Economic Impact**
5. **Timing of Delivery**
6. **Risk**

The scenarios are not mutually exclusive in the near term. Scenarios 1 and 2 proceed on the month-to-month areas of the site, concentrated in the older T-hangar rows, the tie-down apron, and the non-aeronautical parcels along the site's edges. Those areas can be improved or repurposed without triggering FAA land release for full closure and without waiting out long-term leases. It should be noted that Scenarios 1 and 2 are still subject to FAA approval for non-aeronautical uses and for compatibility with FAA regulations. Improvements there can be structured to remain compatible with a later comprehensive redevelopment. Parcels under long-term leases, largely ground and office tenancies with terms running to FY2059, are not available under any scenario until those terms expire. This structure lets the County capture near-term value while preserving future flexibility.

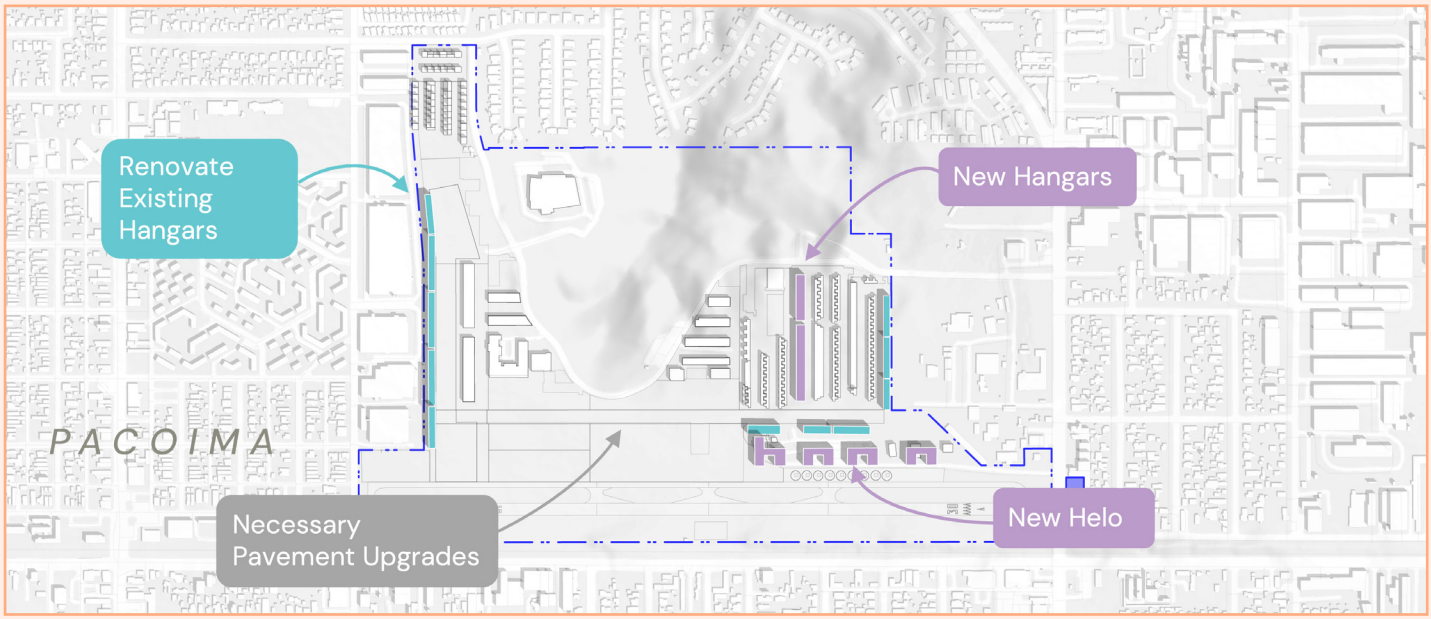
Section 6 of the Report contains the full scenario descriptions, site plans, phasing assumptions, and modeling detail. The summaries below are condensed.



Photo by Marietta Torriente

SCENARIO 1: Preserve and Improve: *Retain and modernize the Airport*

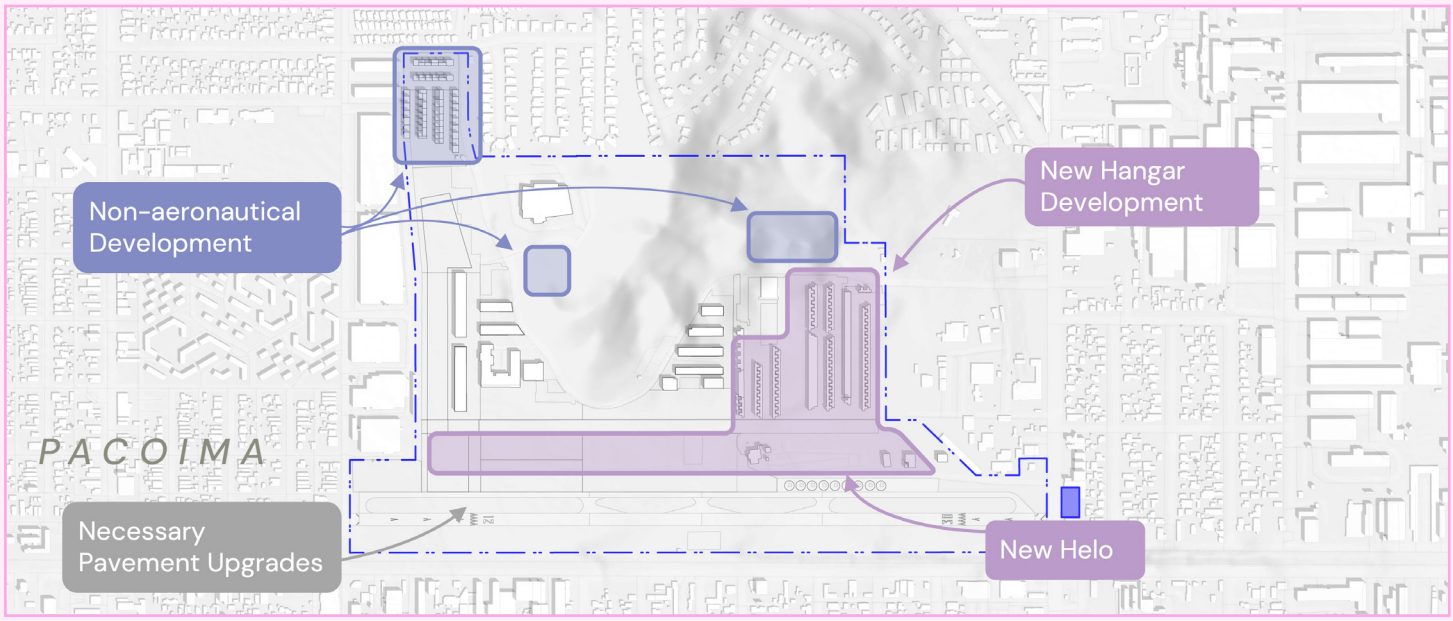
DEVELOPMENT ASSUMPTIONS



The Airport footprint and layout stay substantially as they are. Aging hangars are rehabilitated in place, vacant month-to-month units are replaced with new hangar capacity, and a dedicated third-party helicopter hangar area is added. While existing non-aeronautical uses would continue, no major new land converts to non-aeronautical use and no parcels are released from aviation purposes. Revenue stays tied to aviation leases, so gains are real but modest, and the employment effect is principally aviation and aviation-support work: maintenance technicians, avionics specialists, flight instructors, and line service, plus construction employment during build-out. This is the closest of the three scenarios to the existing base case; however, safety and good-neighbor improvements would be pursued.

SCENARIO 2: Transform and Optimize: *Illustrative site plan*

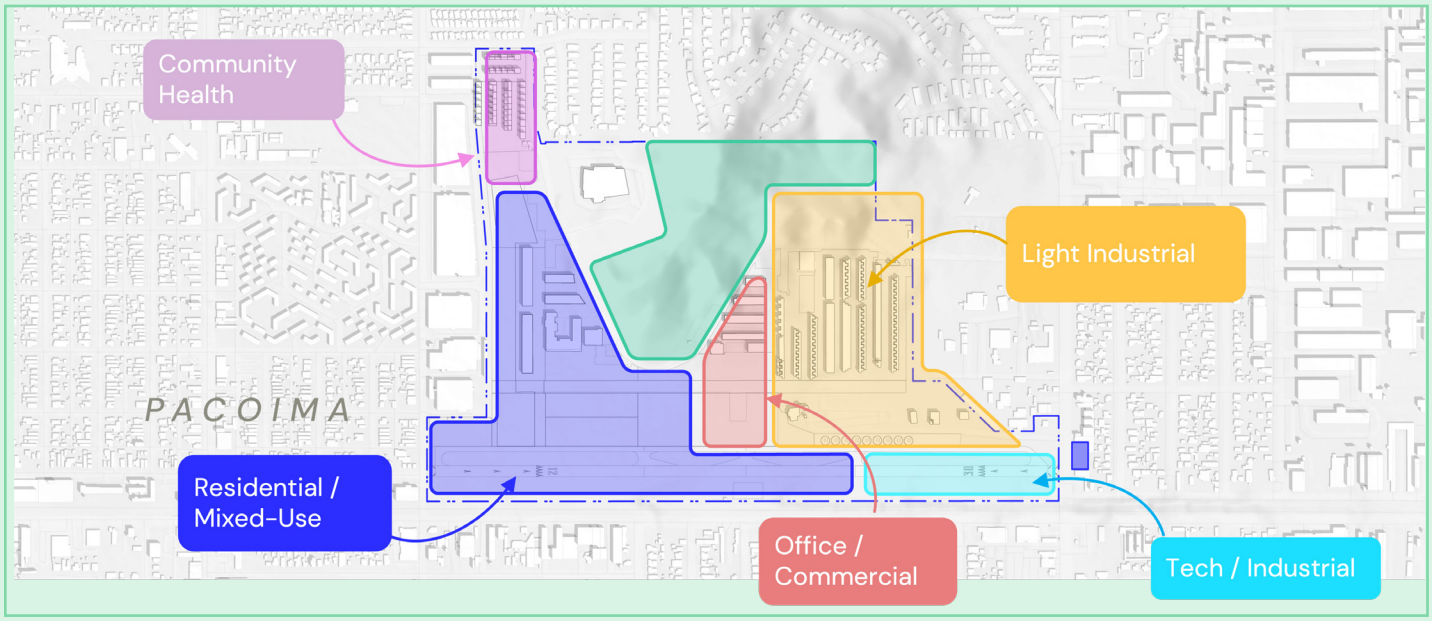
DEVELOPMENT ASSUMPTIONS



Aviation activity consolidates into a compact, modernized core along the runway. Consolidation frees land farther from the runway and outside the aeronautical fence, currently occupied by underused tie-downs, aging structures, and surface parking. Four development sites are opened on that land. The Airport continues operating. This is consistent with the market analysis in Section 4, which found strong demand for aviation and industrial uses. That demand is what makes a consolidated aviation core financially productive, and consolidation is what makes the non-aeronautical land available for warehouse, flex, and eventually institutional uses. The employment mix broadens beyond aviation to include healthcare, life sciences, logistics, and retail positions on the parcels to be developed. Scenario 2 is still subject to FAA approval and to the CEQA and NEPA process.

SCENARIO 3: Transform and Repurpose: *Close the Airport and redevelop the site*

DEVELOPMENT ASSUMPTIONS



If the FAA approves full closure, aviation use ends under Scenario 3 and the site converts to a mixed-use district. This is the scenario that commits the County to seeking FAA closure, and the timing assumption of 2050/51 is driven by two constraints described earlier: the long-term ground and office leases, which the County cannot terminate for convenience; and the multi-year federal process set forth in Section 3, covering system analysis, environmental review, valuation, and agency coordination. Comparable closure cases in Section 3.4 took years to a decade from request to release, and almost none involved an airport of WHP's activity level. Full build-out of the redevelopment program would follow closure, extending realization to 2075 or later. Because residential, medical office, and biotechnology uses return negative land values today, that program would depend on public participation, phasing, and market timing.

Table ES.4, Land Use Scenario Planning Assumptions

Planning Assumption	SCENARIO 1 Preserve and Improve	SCENARIO 2 Transform and Optimize	SCENARIO 3 Transform and Repurpose
Proposed land use changes	Footprint and layout substantially unchanged. Roughly 90,000 sq ft of hangars rehabilitated in place, about 17,200 sq ft of new hangars, and an 85,000 sq ft third-party helicopter hangar area. No major land converts to non-aeronautical use.	Aviation consolidated into a compact core along the runway, including about 97 new hangars. Four development sites opened on available land outside the aeronautical fence: workforce and healthcare, biotechnology and life sciences, logistics and industrial-flex, and recreation and retail.	Aviation use ends. About 102 of 184 acres redeveloped into roughly 8 million sf, including approximately 4,232 residential units, senior housing, a health and wellness district, office and industrial-innovation space, and open space.
Regulatory and FAA obligations	No FAA closure action required. County resumes FAA and state grant participation. Limited entitlement; established design-bid-build and environmental processes.	No closure approval required but FAA approval required to convert northwest portion of Airport to non-aeronautical use. Sustained FAA coordination plus a P3 in which the County retains ownership, sponsorship, and FAA compliance responsibility. CEQA and NEPA process of roughly 3 to 4 years precedes construction.	FAA closure approval required. Must meet the net-benefit-to-civil-aviation standard, resolve obligations that do not expire, reimburse or reinvest the FAA fair market share, and complete NEPA and CEQA review.
Regulatory and legal risk	Lowest of the three.	Moderate.	High. FAA approval far from certain.
Timing	Near term. Proceeds on month-to-month areas without waiting on lease expirations.	Near to medium term for the aviation core; development parcels phased as demand matures.	Closure approval assumed 2050/51, constrained by leases with options to FY2059 and the multi-year federal process. Full build-out 2075 or later.
Safety	Grant participation funds pavement, lighting, marking, and obstruction work. Tenant standards strengthened as hangar leases turn over.	Most direct route to higher operating standards. New hangars allow new leases setting tenant qualification, insurance, and maintenance requirements as a condition of tenancy. Gains arrive as leases turn over.	Airport keeps operating over the neighborhood throughout the transition, so the same obligations apply. No major modernization or new FAA grants. Improvements available through hangar replacement and lease turnover are largely unavailable.
Financial performance (NPV to 2050)	+$14.3M, or +$31.4M including the 2051 residual. Third-party helicopter hangar area is the largest new revenue source. Revenue remains tied to aviation leases.	+$24.3M, or +$46.2M including the 2051 residual. Much of the aviation capital and maintenance burden shifts to a private partner. Converted tie-down-to-hangar area alone delivers more than $1.2M per year by Year 25.	–$16.2M through the transition. Excludes roughly $90M of demolition and remediation and the estimated $3.46B redevelopment program. FAA less likely to award discretionary grants once closure is signaled.
Community commitments and good-neighbor policies	To fund sound insulation, must initiate the FAA Part 150 Noise Compatibility Study, which allows for FAA funding and approval for residential sound insulation for eligible homes. Expanded engagement and transparency. Electrification, air quality monitoring, stormwater management, and transition to unleaded avgas.	All Scenario 1 commitments retained and expanded, with added workforce development, education and training, healthcare, recreation, and community-serving amenities funded by new revenue.	Same good-neighbor obligations apply because the Airport operates throughout the transition. Full community benefits from redevelopment realized over decades rather than years.
Long-term economic impact	About 382 jobs, $40.7M labor income, and $64.5M output, realizable within roughly 5 years.	About 1,933 jobs, $165.2M labor income, and $361M output, realizable within roughly 10 years.	About 12,102 jobs, $1.085B labor income, and $3.16B output at full build-out, not likely to be realized until 2075 or later.

Financial figures are net present value through FY2050 unless noted. Economic impact figures are annual average jobs, labor income, and output in 2026 dollars, at the timeframe shown. Source: Appendices 10, 15, 16, and 17. See Sections 6, 7, and 8.

7. COMPARATIVE SCENARIO DISCUSSION

The comparative analyses clarify the ramifications of the County's decision. Scenarios 1 and 2 keep the Airport operating, with different degrees of modernization, risk, and return. Scenario 3 commits the County to pursuing FAA approval for closure and redevelopment, a long-term path contingent on federal approval and the expiration of long-term leases. Section 9 of the Report contains the full comparative analysis.

Comparative Financial Performance

Table ES.5 compares the existing conditions baseline and the three scenarios on a consistent NPV basis through FY2050. Operating figures are NPV; capital, new project, and grant figures are gross over the projection period. The two net revenue rows are the headline indicators.

Three findings stand out:

- **Doing nothing costs money**: The as-is baseline runs a $27.0 million net loss NPV to 2050.
- **Both open-airport scenarios reverse that**: Scenario 1 produces $14.3 million and Scenario 2 produces $24.3 million, largely because both restore access to $95.1 million in FAA funding and $8.2 million in state grant funding, against $4.0 million and $3.4 million in the baseline.
- **Scenario 3 carries a transition-period loss**: The $16.2 million loss through 2050 excludes roughly $90 million of demolition and remediation and the $3.46 billion redevelopment program, which fall outside the projection window.

Table ES.5, Comparative Financial Results

Metric (NPV unless noted)	Existing (as-is)	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3
Revenue	$77.5M	$87.7M	$95.4M	$77.5M
Operating expense	($61.9M)	($61.9M)	($61.9M)	($61.9M)
Net operating income	$17.0M	$30.1M	$38.0M	$13.7M
Asset renewal (gross)	($4.1M)	($6.3M)	($4.1M)	($4.1M)
New projects: safety, sound insulation, good-neighbor, open space (gross)	($5.0M)	($62.4M)	($62.4M)	($5.0M)
CIP (gross)	($53.5M)	($53.5M)	($53.5M)	($30.0M)
Grant funds (State / Federal)	$3.4M / $4.0M	$8.2M / $95.1M	$8.2M / $95.1M	$1.4M / $4.0M
Net revenue (NPV to 2050)	($27.0M)	$14.3M	$24.3M	($16.2M)
With 2051 residual	($17.6M)	$31.4M	$46.2M	($116.2M)

Source: Appendix 9 LA County GA Financial Analysis and Appendix 10 WHP Scenarios Financial Modeling.

Comparative Economic Impact

Section 8 of the Report discusses the economic impacts for each scenario. Economic impacts are expressed in 2026 dollars using Impact Analysis for Planning (IMPLAN), and annual average jobs including part-time and full-time positions. These impacts arrive on different schedules and should be read with their timeframes rather than as simultaneous outcomes.

Scenarios 2 and 3 both deliver materially higher employment, labor income, and output than the base case or Scenario 1, indicating that some level of commercial development on the site would produce meaningful economic benefit. The difference between them is timing: Scenario 2 delivers roughly 1,933 jobs within about ten years, while Scenario 3's roughly 12,102 jobs represent full build-out beyond 2075.

Table ES.6, Comparative Economic Impact

Total Impact	Current Ops	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3
Jobs (annual average)	~215	~382	~1,933	~12,102
Labor income	$21.8M	$40.7M	$165.2M	$1.085B
Economic output	$37.7M	$64.5M	$361.0M	$3.16B
Time to realization	Today	~5 yrs	~10 yrs	2075+

Source: Appendix 17, Scenarios Economic Impact Analysis



Mural: "Forgotten History" by JPmurals

Scenario Trade-offs

Each scenario serves different County and community objectives. Figure ES.3 summarizes their relative position on risk, timing, investment, and long-term outcomes. The pivotal distinction is straightforward: Scenarios 1 and 2 keep the Airport open, and Scenario 3 commits the County to seeking FAA closure.

Figure ES.3, Scenario Trade-Offs

SCENARIO 1: Preserve & Improve

Lowest Risk – Fastest Delivery

Regulatory & legal risk	Low
Time to deliver	~5 yrs
County investment	Lower
Community transformation	Limited

Airport Stays Open — Incremental Modernization

The Trade-Offs

- Airport remains operational; noise & compatibility issues persist
- Limited upside for housing, jobs, and broader redevelopment
- Revenue stays tied to aviation leases; only modest financial gains
- Sound insulation funding likely extends federal grant obligations

SCENARIO 2: Transform & Optimize

Best Balance – Strongest Financial Performance

Regulatory & legal risk	Moderate
Time to deliver	~10 yrs
County investment	Moderate
Community transformation	Strong

Airport Stays Open — Fully Modernized with P3 Strategies Across the Campus

The Trade-Offs

- More complex delivery: multiple procurements and private investment
- Sustained FAA coordination and phased build-out over ~10 years
- CEQA / NEPA review of ~3–4 yrs before construction
- Aviation activity and some impacts continue in a modernized field

SCENARIO 3: Transform & Repurpose

Maximum Redevelopment – Greatest Long-term Benefit

Regulatory & legal risk	High
Time to deliver	~25-40+ yrs
County investment	Very High
Community transformation	Maximum

Requires FAA Closure Approval (~2050)

The Trade-Offs

- FAA rarely approves closures — approval is far from certain
- Airport likely operates in decline until ~2050
- Years of NEPA / CEQA, lease expirations, and litigation risk first
- Then 7–10 yrs demolition and remediation — $100s of millions in County cost
- Full community benefits realized over decades, not years

Scenarios 1 and 2 land use plans do not physically preclude or prevent Scenario 3.

These considerations do not point to a single preferred scenario. They clarify what each path asks the County to take on, when those commitments must be made, and which factors are within or beyond the County's control. Three considerations apply across all three scenarios.

1. **Phasing preserves flexibility**: The parcel-level improvements under Scenarios 1 and 2 can be structured to remain physically and legally compatible with a later comprehensive redevelopment. Choosing Scenario 1 or 2 today does not permanently foreclose Scenario 3; it defers that decision to a point when the County has more information about federal, market, and community conditions. Choosing Scenario 3 does foreclose the incremental, lower-risk path.
2. **Safety investment and environmental review are required regardless of direction**: Safety obligations apply for as long as WHP operates, including through any closure or transition period. CEQA and NEPA review, FAA coordination, and compliance with grant assurances apply whether the County retains the Airport, modernizes it, or pursues closure. These are baseline requirements attaching to every option equally, not costs unique to any one path, and not reasons to defer action.
3. **The scenarios distribute risk, control, and timing differently**: Under Scenarios 1 and 2, the County retains ownership, sponsor authority, and direct control over the pace and scope of capital projects and procurements, with costs and benefits distributed over time and the ability to adjust as conditions change. Under Scenario 3, the County would carry substantial costs early, including environmental remediation, legal and FAA process expenses, and continued airport operation through a multi-year transition, before any redevelopment benefits are realized. Those benefits remain contingent on federal approvals that are neither guaranteed nor predictable in timing.



Six conclusions cut across every path:

1. **Safety improvements are needed now, under every path**. Safety is the community's foremost concern. The federal record shows the identified risks are correctable, and aircraft keep operating over the neighborhood throughout any transition, including a closure transition. The measures the County has already taken, and those still ahead, are set out in Section 10.5 under A Comprehensive Safety Program. The question before the Board is not only whether the Airport stays open or closes, but what the County can demonstrate that it has done to reduce risk while WHP operates.
2. T**he FAA weighs more factors than crash history in a closure decision**. Closure means releasing the sponsor from federal obligations. The FAA judges that request on system role, aeronautical need, prior federal investment, environmental review, and whether safety and compatibility issues can be addressed within continued operation. An accident record alone is unlikely to suffice.
3. **Inaction carries real cost and increasing risk**. An unimproved Airport is projected to lose about $27.0 million NPV to 2050, leaves the community's core safety concerns unaddressed, and increases the risk of falling out of compliance with FAA standards over time.
4. **WHP is a financial asset to the County's airport system**. It is the only County airport running an operating surplus, and it effectively supports a system that otherwise operates at a deficit. Its challenge is funding capital costs in the near term.
5. **Each scenario offers a different balance of risk, cost, and transformation**. Greater transformation carries higher cost, longer timelines, and more uncertainty. Lower risk and faster delivery mean less transformation.
6. **Closure would relocate aviation risk rather than eliminate it**. Closure would end aviation activity at the site and remove the risks associated with operations at WHP, but displaced operations would move to nearby airports, so general aviation activity would continue across the northeastern San Fernando Valley and would occupy the airspace over the community near the Airport. Closure would also mean the loss of an FAA-designated reliever, displaced aviation businesses and jobs, reduced emergency staging capacity, the end of aviation education and workforce pathways at the site, and a long federal approval process with uncertain outcome. Retaining WHP without meaningful reform has been rejected by all stakeholders. Between those positions sits a third: the evidence indicates WHP's safety risks are correctable or mitigable, and the FAA would expect feasible remedies to be pursued within continued operation before considering a release.

Immediate Next Steps

Three actions are warranted now, whichever direction the Board ultimately chooses, because they are required under every scenario and take time to complete:

- **Continue to advance the safety enhancements**. Continue the measures already underway and described in Section 10.5, and establish the oversight and transparency mechanisms that support community confidence.
- **Continue to work with the FAA to secure funding for critical pavement and infrastructure work**. Complete the runway, taxiway, apron, tower, and lighting work needed to keep the Airport safe and compliant under every scenario, including a closure transition.
- **Decide capital funding on the merits**. FAA jurisdiction over WHP is already established through the 1999 AIP land acquisition, which carries obligations that do not expire, and the Airport's long-term leases run through 2050 and beyond. Accepting new FAA capital grants over the next several years for pavement, tower, and lighting work would not meaningfully extend or expand that jurisdiction. The County may choose to weigh grant participation on the merits of the work rather than deferring it to preserve flexibility that is not, in practice, at stake.

Phase 2 outreach will share, test, and validate these findings with the community. The Study Team will then update the draft and finalize the Report for the Board's consideration, so that the decision, whenever it comes, rests on a shared and durable factual record.