



Legislation Text

File #: 23-1048, **Version:** 1

Recommendation to request City Manager to work with the Long Beach Airport and relevant City of Long Beach departments to report back to the City Council with a comprehensive report detailing the operations of general aviation at LGB, its ties with the City, the Federal Aviation Administration, and privately-owned flight schools, within the next 45 days.

Long Beach Airport (LGB) has a storied history, dating back to its inception with fabric-covered biplanes gracing the shores during the early 1900s. Today, this city-managed airport serves as a transportation gateway to Southern California-strategically located between Orange and Los Angeles counties. Known for its convenience and close proximity to renowned destinations in Southern California, LGB offers both domestic and general aviation services.

Owned and operated by the City of Long Beach (City), LGB covers 1,166 acres and has three runways, with the largest extending 10,000 feet. It is a hub of corporate activity with more than 200 businesses located on airport property, including nearly 100 acres of mid-rise business park and hotel uses, several fixed base operators, and specialty aviation service companies.

In LGB's vicinity are the cities of Lakewood, Signal Hill, as well as many Long Beach neighborhoods who collectively contribute to the diverse character of Long Beach. While generations have grown up understanding LGB and its affiliated private flight schools, there remains ambiguity regarding the precise relationship shared between these flight schools, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), and the City. The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a significant uptick in general aviation traffic, consequently affecting the nearby communities.

As a result of the pandemic, work and life patterns changed. Many residents began working from home who had not done so before and spent more time in their homes. Adding to these pattern changes, ongoing runway construction at LGB has significantly impacted the take-off and landing patterns of both commercial and general aviation.

Over the last eight months, residents have reported their concerns that there has been an increase of near constant flyovers of general aviation planes over their homes. These

concerns come from residents of varying ages and neighborhoods, many of whom are strong supporters of our local airport. For many, the noise continues to be significant, even when all windows are closed. Many homes, especially in our historic districts, do not have air conditioning and rely on the moderate Southern California weather and opening their windows to cool their homes. This becomes near impossible when planes are frequently taking off and landing. Residents have claimed that the daily take offs and landings are sometimes 30 seconds or a minute apart for hours on end. Everyone who buys a home near the airport understands that there will be impact from both commercial and general aviation, however the near-constant low flying general aviation planes is a newer phenomenon and needs to be evaluated more closely.

We have heard from residents all across the City, parents with young children at home, professionals trying to work from home, retired residents who spend their days at home, all echoing the same questions around the increase in general aviation and the City's ability to regulate it. The constant general aviation operations have become a stressful disruption to daily lives both inside and outside the home. The following list of questions is a summary of the questions submitted to the Fifth Council District Office via email, phone, and in-person connections; while not exhaustive, they demonstrate the need for more transparent communication and information to be shared with impacted residents and our greater community.

This recommendation requests the City Manager to return to the City Council with a report on general aviation operations at LGB and the interconnected dynamics involving the City, the FAA, and private flight schools, specifically focusing on these questions from our community and asking our City team to help provide any other relevant data and information for the community:

- **Data**

- o Detailed breakdown of general aviation operations, emphasizing flight schools and flight frequency, over the past several years up to the present.

- **Business Operations**

- o What is the current business licensing process for general aviation/flight schools?
- o Once the business license is granted who oversees regulation of the named businesses?
- o Is there capacity for more general aviation at LGB, if so, what type?

- o What are the fee schedules for operating a general aviation business at LGB?
- o How does a flight school lease space on airport property?
- o What are the current operating hours of the flight schools?
- **Noise Abatement:**
 - o What ability does the city have to adjust noise abatement regulations?
 - o Does the current Noise Ordinance apply to General Aviation?
 - o How is the noise of General Aviation operations captured?
 - o How are the General Aviation relationships to the noise ordinance impacted by the closure of the main runway during necessary maintenance periods?
 - o In what ways are Airport staff working with the general aviation businesses around the current noise abatement regulations?
- **Federal Obligations/Regulations**
 - o As a commercial and general aviation airport what are our obligations ie: grants, loans, and commercial practices with respect to hours and operational impacts?
 - o What is the decision-making process for General Aviation flight patterns, best practices, and altitude?
 - o How have other airports addressed these types of concerns and what ability does Long Beach have to take similar actions?
- **Staffing**
 - o Are we adequately staffed to manage inquiries over general aviation?
- **Unleaded Fuel**
 - o The FAA is committed to phase out leaded fuel by 2030.
 - § What is Long Beach doing to incentivize general aviation operators to use the unleaded fuel that is now available at LGB?

This recommendation aims to provide clarity and ensure we can continue the conversation around harmony between LGB's operations and the welfare of surrounding communities.

This matter has been reviewed by Budget Analyst Joe R. Guerrero on September 1, 2023.

This recommendation requests the City Manager to work with the Long Beach Airport (LGB), and relevant City departments, to report back to the City Council with a comprehensive presentation detailing the operations of general aviation at LGB, its ties with the City, the

Federal Aviation Administration, and privately owned flight schools, within the next 45 days. It is requested that as part of the report, City staff help summarize the public input received and orient the report to best address the stakeholder concerns and questions received by the City. The requested action is expected to require a moderate level of staff hours beyond the normal budgeted scope of duties and moderate impact on existing City Council priorities.

Approve recommendation.

MEGAN KERR, COUNCILWOMAN
FIFTH DISTRICT

DARYL SUPERNAW, COUNCILMAN
FOURTH DISTRICT