# City of Camarillo

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON CAMARILLO AIRPORT
April 15, 2024

What is the City's jurisdiction as it relates to the Camarillo Airport?

The City of Camarillo does not own or operate Camarillo Airport, and the Camarillo City Council does not have any decision-making authority over the Airport. The City has a Joint Powers Agreement from 1976 in place with Ventura County that retains Camarillo Airport as a general aviation airport and established an advisory role for the City through the Airport Authority.

What is the Airport Authority?

The Airport Authority is an advisory body who makes recommendations to the County Board of Supervisors. The Board of Supervisors have final decision-making authority on managing and improving the Camarillo Airport.

Does the City have any representation on the Airport Authority?

Yes. The JPA establishes that the City shall have two Councilmembers on the Camarillo Airport Authority. Currently, Mayor Tony Trembly and Councilmember Susan Santangelo represent the City on the Camarillo Airport Authority.

What is the 1976 Agreement?

The City of Camarillo and the County of Ventura entered into an Agreement in 1976 for the operation of the Camarillo Airport. This Agreement, which is available on the City's website, imposes restrictions listed in Exhibit B on the airport operations including, but not limited to: limiting the weight of aircraft; limiting the hours of operation; and ensuring that the airport remains a general aviation airport, not a commercial airport with airline service.

What is the County of Ventura's Position on the 1976 Agreement?

In a letter dated January 19, 2022, from former Ventura County CEO Mike Powers to City Manager Greg Ramirez, Ventura County has stated in writing that the County concurs that the 1976 Agreement is valid and enforceable. The County expressly stated that they are "no longer asking the City to explore changes to these restrictions." This means no scheduled airline service and no changes to the runway length.

How Can the Public Stay Informed?

*Information from the City of Camarillo:*

- Trending Topics webpage on the Camarillo Airport: cityofcamarillo.org/trending/
- Sign up for City email alerts for Camarillo Airport Layout Plan: cityofcamarillo.org/notifyme

*Information from the County of Ventura:*

- Join the Ventura County Department of Airports Community Communications email mailing list by completing the online form at vcairports.org.
- County's Airport Layout Plan Update Project Website: https://cma-alp-update.airportstudy.net/
- Camarillo Airport Part 150 Study: https://cma-noise-study.airportstudy.net/

What is the relationship between the Part 150 Study and the ALP?

There is no formal relationship between the ALP Update and Part 150 Study.

At a general level, the County is obligated to make the Airport available for aeronautical use, to maintain an ALP, and to improve the Airport in conformity with the FAA-approved ALP. At a more detailed level, the County further is obligated to maintain facilities improved with federal grants (such as the airfield pavements), to operate the Airport safely, and to consider requests from private entities to make improvements with private funds (such as aircraft hangars).

The Part 150 Noise Compatibility Planning Study is a voluntary study to update the Airport Noise Exposure Maps and Noise Compatibility Program ("NCP"). Typically, a Part 150 Study will not, by itself, result in specific noise abatement or mitigation, but rather may lead to further efforts (e.g., coordination with FAA Air Traffic, adoption of land use and zoning measures, etc.)

The studies are independent. The FAA will review the NCP Update according to federal law and policy, and its decision will be unaffected by whether the ALP Update has been approved or not.

Is the County obligated to construct improvements simply because those improvements are depicted on the FAA-approved ALP?

No. The County is the owner and operator of the Airport and will decide whether and when to apply for FAA grant funding and/or to use other airport revenues or debt to make the identified improvements.

Does the ALP include any airport expansion?

No. The focus is on infrastructure, parking, ramps, maintenance.

Should the ALP Update be accompanied by some form of environmental analysis?

Typically, the FAA's review and approval of a submitted ALP will be limited to considering the safety, efficiency and utility of the identified improvements (e.g., do the identified improvements conform to FAA's airport design standards). The FAA often issues a "conditional approval", meaning that the construction of identified improvements will be conditioned on compliance with environmental review requirements, notably NEPA and CEQA, closer to the point at which the County intends to proceed with construction.

Can the County extend the curfew currently in effect at the Airport?

The 1976 Joint Powers Agreement, at Exhibit B, provided that "the airport operating hours will be from 7:00 AM to 10:00 PM." However, the County subsequently amended the curfew, as now codified in the County Code (Section 6506-17), to say that "the airport shall be open for public use at all reasonable hours of the day and night, subject to the following restrictions: . . . (b) no aircraft shall depart from the Camarillo Airport between the hours of 12:00 midnight and 5:00 a.m. [with exceptions]."

One option for addressing the increased traffic at the Airport is to adjust the curfew, whether to restore the original hours (10pm to 7am) or to restrict nighttime arrivals. Congress amended federal law in 1990 to significantly curtail state and local noise and access restrictions. Although the JPA and subsequent amendment of the curfew are "grandfathered" because they preceded the change in federal law, the law would apply to any amendment that would further reduce or limit aircraft operations. As a result, to maintain the grandfathered status of the curfew, the City and County should not further amend the JPA provisions.

Does the county have legal rights to place restrictions on aircraft in flight (e.g., flight tracks and procedures)?

No, the County cannot impose restrictions or mandatory flight restrictions. This is under the exclusive jurisdiction of the FAA.

Is the City of Camarillo allowed to restrict hours of operation, independent of the JPA?

No, the City does not have authority to restrict airport operating hours through its traditional powers. In the 1976 JPA, the County agreed to use its power to limit the hours of operation. And, as a practical matter, private businesses operating at the Airport can establish their own operating hours.

What is the legal effect of the JPA provision, "Airport development shall be guided to ensure that residential areas are not exposed to noise levels greater than 60 CNEL average and 90 dBA single event noise."

This provision is best understood as a planning tool and should not be understood as a restriction on aircraft operations, such as, aircraft cannot fly over residential neighborhoods if noise monitoring or modeling indicates that the associated noise exposure exceeds 90 dBA or 60 CNEL. The 1976 JPA is limited in scope to restrictions on the development and use of the Airport. Local governments (both before and after the change in law in 1990) lacked the authority to restrict the operation of aircraft in flight. Any effort to enforce this provision as an aircraft operating restriction would be preempted.

What can the City Council do to ensure that aircraft noise does not exceed the 90 dBA decibel level?

The City's enforcement comes into play during planning of the Airport and individual projects. The City Council will continue to monitor Airport planning to ensure that the County does not build or approve projects that are projected to result in noise impacts above the thresholds.

Who controls flight paths and procedures?

The FAA has exclusive jurisdiction over airspace, aircraft and pilots. In practice, the flight of aircraft is a shared responsibility between FAA Air Traffic and the Pilot-in-Command. State and local governments have *no* authority to dictate or control the flight of aircraft. Existing Camarillo Airport noise abatement procedures are voluntary. Changes in procedures also would be voluntary, unless adopted by FAA Air Traffic.

Can Ventura County close the Camarillo Airport?

No. The County is obligated by contracts with FAA requiring County to keep airport open. The County is also obligated to keep the airport open by restrictive covenants in the deed by which the airport was transferred from the United States Government.

Regarding landing patterns, what is normal on any given day?

Director of Airports Keith Freitas explained that a left-hand pattern to south of airport over agricultural land is the typical landing pattern. For jet airplanes, it is a straight in several miles out from east to west. From a safety standpoint, aircraft need to land into the wind. It is difficult to change flight pattern.

What legal authority does the City have over airport. What legal authority does the Airport Authority have over airport?

The City has no control of the operation of airport, only traditional land use and zoning. The City's power comes through 1976 JPA, which was a contractual commitment that the County would operate consistent with restrictions in exhibit. The Airport Authority is an advisory body who makes recommendations to the Ventura County Board of Supervisors. The Board of Supervisors has final decision-making authority over all matters at the Camarillo Airport.

The change.org petition from Save Our Skies Camarillo states "The Camarillo Airport is transitioning to greater number of jet aircraft…projecting a 400% increase from current levels." Is this statement accurate?

The comment that jet traffic will increase by 400% is not correct. It is true that the County's forecast predicts an increase in jet traffic, both in number and as a percentage of airport operations, over the next 20 years. However, the specific claim about a 400% increase (and the related claim that operations will total almost 50,000) refers to the estimated increase in both jet and turboprop aircraft. More generally, the forecast is a projection based on general economic conditions, not on any planned improvement of the airport or effort by the County to encourage jet traffic.

There are assertions that there needs to be an environmental/health study before ALP and that any leverage would be lost if not done first. Is this statement correct?

No. The FAA and County will be responsible for considering the environmental consequences of any planned improvements, under NEPA and CEQA, at such time as the County plans to construct an improvement.