



- Home
- Columnists
- Entertainment
- Opinions & Letters
- Local News
- Sports
- Calendar
- Classified
- Advertising Info
- Contact Us
- Links

• Burbank in Focus •
By David W. Gordon

Airport Expansion

Denials Don't Fly

Burbank Airport Commissioner and former mayor, Bill Wiggins, could hardly contain his indignation as he addressed the City Council recently. He was adamant in his denial of alleged plans to double capacity at Bob Hope Airport within a decade.

In the early 1990s, the FAA prepared a "Hypothetical Airport Capacity Analysis." Based on a 14-gate model, operating with flight turnarounds every one and a half hours, utilizing the old runway configuration, and Terminal-A as it existed prior to the 45,000 square foot 2002 expansion, the FAA conservatively forecasted a 9.7 million annual passenger capacity at the airport by 2010. Average turnaround time is typically 45 minutes. Highly successful carriers, like Southwest Airlines, have reduced this to 30 minutes or less to maximize gate efficiency. Thus, as the airport stands today, it can easily expand its capacity to 10 million annual passengers.

Wiggins publicly avowed that he, "never, ever, ever heard mention of a plan by staff or any other commissioner to double the passenger rate from 5 to 10 million," while serving on the Airport Authority. During this same time frame, other leading City officials were well aware of and concerned about airport expansion.

"The City is greatly concerned that the Airport Authority intentionally is pursuing individual projects outside the context of a master plan for the purpose of expanding airport capacity without labeling it as such." So decried Burbank's Community Development Director, Sue Georgino, in her Nov. 12, 2002 letter to the Airport Authority. Georgino further warns, "Numerous projects are underway which we believe will have the cumulative effect of increasing efficiency and convenience and thereby induce growth at the airport. The most obvious example is the expansion of Terminal A, which itself might have an incremental impact of capacity."

Are the best interests of Burbank's citizens being adequately safeguarded when our Airport Commissioners claim to be oblivious to Burbank's official position and concerns about airport expansion plans?

Additional plans to increase capacity are outlined in the "Burbank/Glendale/Pasadena Airport Traffic Study" published in June

Take me to ...



2001. It states, "The Burbank-Glendale-Pasadena Airport Authority has proposed the construction of a replacement airport terminal to be located north of the existing terminal facility. Although the precise size and configuration of the proposed terminal is still being determined, it is likely to contain at least 14 gates and as many as 16 gates."

The recently approved Development Agreement offers further proof of intended expanded capacity as it permits the airport to add parking on the southwest quadrant in four years to meet increased passenger demand by simply notifying the city. The FAA's Commercial Aviation Traffic Estimates (2005-2016) reflect a 40 percent increase nationwide by 2015. Meanwhile, the FAA pegs Bob Hope Airport with significantly higher 2015 passenger utilization due to location, economic and social factors. Passenger spillover from LAX has already been earmarked for Bob Hope and other nearby airports as it maxes out. Finally, plans to increase capacity at Bob Hope Airport can be plainly seen with the Authority rolling out a big welcome wagon for Jet Blue. Jet Blue's big budget advertising campaign to entice fliers away from LAX to Burbank is, "Don't even go there."

Let us hope that Burbank residents will be given an opportunity to vote on the Development Agreement. Burbank residents must stay informed and remain vigilant in demanding that city officials and the airport respect their safety and quality of life. When it comes to the airport, remember the admonition to, "never trust anyone who says trust me."

[Return to last page visited](#)

