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Airport foe returns - as a candidate

By Alex Dobuzinskis, Staff Writer
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BURBANK - After criticizing Burbank's deal with the Bob Hope Airport over development there, David Gordon is making his first run for City Council on a pledge to stop airport expansion and prevent the "Los Angelization" of Burbank.

An optometrist and a 22-year resident of the city, Gordon was a member of the Burbank Planning Board from 1995-99. He contends the public has not been given enough chances to weigh in when developments could affect their neighborhoods.

"The heart of my campaign is to put people first, and people can't be put first if they're excluded from the process," he said.

In the run-up to the council's approval of an agreement with the airport on development, Gordon, 50, criticized the pact at public meetings. At one point, the optometrist accused city officials of being myopic for leaning toward the deal, which blocks the building of a new terminal for 10 years but allows the airport to keep 60 acres that could eventually be used to build a terminal.

The city could still force the airport to sell the land in 10 years. But Gordon and other critics said the city gave away the upper hand in the deal.

"I have no problem with modernizing the existing terminal. I think the airport provides very important benefits to the community as it is," Gordon said. "But I am opposed to any relocation or expansion of the airport."

Gordon also opposes what he refers to as the "Los Angelization" of Burbank, or the tendency for the city to allow high-density condos and office buildings to go up without adequate parking and other controls. He also cites the increased traffic related to development.

Howard Rothenbach, chairman of Restore Our Airport Rights, said Gordon has ideas to keep the city from becoming too built up. "He is more in touch with what residents and small business people would want in the community," Rothenbach said. "And he's independent."

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