



# NEWPORT BEACH

## City Council Staff Report

May 28, 2019  
Agenda Item No. 14

**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** Grace K. Leung, City Manager - 949-644-3001,  
gleung@newportbeachca.gov

**PREPARED BY:** Tara Finnigan, Deputy City Manager,  
tfinnigan@newportbeachca.gov

**PHONE:** 949-644-3035

**TITLE:** John Wayne Airport General Aviation Improvement Program Update

---

### **ABSTRACT:**

At its March 12 meeting, the City Council heard an overview of the proposed John Wayne Airport General Aviation Improvement Program (GAIP) and authorized the Mayor to send a letter to the Orange County Board of Supervisors stating the City of Newport Beach's support for project Alternative 3. At the May 7 Board of Supervisors meeting, a motion to approve Alternative 3 failed and a compromise solution, a "modified Alternative 1," was proposed. Staff is recommending the City change its position from solely supporting Alternative 3 to supporting the proposed compromise or one that best protects the Newport Beach community from additional noise and air quality impacts related to the airport's operations.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

- a) Determine this action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15060(c)(2) and 15060(c)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines because this action will not result in a physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly;
- b) Authorize the Mayor to send a letter to the Orange County Board of Supervisors requesting the Supervisors adopt the project alternative proposed at the May 7 Board meeting for the JWA General Aviation Improvement Program; and
- c) Authorize the Mayor and City Manager to support any other alternative proposed that most closely aligns with the direction provided in City Council Policy A-17.

### **FUNDING REQUIREMENTS:**

There is no fiscal impact related to this item.

## **DISCUSSION:**

The County of Orange is considering modernizing the general aviation (GA) facilities at John Wayne Airport (JWA). The proposed JWA General Aviation Improvement Program (GAIP) would provide a framework for updating the airport's GA facilities. After reviewing the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the GAIP, City of Newport Beach staff and consultants believe the GAIP would expand and intensify operations in areas of the JWA that now support light GA. It will also increase the number of corporate and private jets that depart JWA, resulting in potentially negative impacts on communities surrounding JWA.

At its March 12 meeting, the City Council heard an overview of the proposed GAIP and authorized the Mayor to send a letter to the Orange County Board of Supervisors stating the City of Newport Beach's support for project Alternative 3.

As presented in the draft Environmental Impact Report, Alternative 3 would bring the airport's GA facilities up to current Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) design standards, but it would not expand the airport's Fixed Base Operators (FBOs) or significantly alter the airport's current GA aircraft mix. An FBO is a private business, permitted to operate on airport property, that provides aeronautical services such as fueling, aircraft storage, parking, tie downs, aircraft maintenance, flight instruction and aircraft rental. Alternative 3 would also have the least amount of GA jet operations by the year 2026. The City Council determined that this project alternative, if implemented, would be the least impactful on Newport Beach neighborhoods.

Subsequently, other cities along the airport's arrival and departure corridors, including Costa Mesa, Huntington Beach, Laguna Beach and Tustin, sent letters in support of Alternative 3 to the Board of Supervisors.

## **County Review of the GAIP**

The JWA Airport Commission held public hearings on the GAIP on April 17 and May 1. The Commission took public comments and deliberated, but was unable to reach consensus on a project alternative to recommend to the Board. The Commission voted to continue the item for 30 days to allow for further discussion and consideration.

Though the Commission continued the item, the GAIP was already scheduled for, and remained on, the May 7 Board of Supervisors meeting agenda.

At the May 7 Board meeting, Mayor Diane Dixon and Council Members Jeff Herdman and Joy Brenner spoke in favor of Alternative 3. Costa Mesa Mayor Katrina Foley did as well. Dozens of community members also provided public comment, but there wasn't a clear consensus behind one alternative or concept. Some supported the So Cal Pilot's proposal (which called for three FBOs and more space for light GA), others sought to delay the Board's vote, and some supported Alternative 3. No one spoke in favor of Alternative 1.

Supervisor Michelle Steel spoke in support of Alternative 3, but her motion to approve that alternative failed. The Board also discussed aspects of Alternative 1.

Alternative 1 includes provisions for bringing JWA’s GA facilities up to current FAA design standards, but it also calls for three FBOs, a new GA terminal, and adding an international GA facility (GAF). Alternative 1 would reduce the storage capacity for the lighter GA aircraft and make way for more storage space for GA jets. Further, the additional amenities, such as customs and immigration, would increase the appeal of JWA for those who travel via private or corporate jets, particularly those returning from international destinations. Thus, in addition to having more GA jets based at the airport, this alternative would likely also increase the number of itinerant GA jets utilizing JWA.

Supervisor Andrew Do proposed a compromise solution, a “modified Alternative 1,” which combines some elements of Alternatives 1 and 3. The table below (using the EIR’s 2026 forecasts for the alternatives) compares Alternative 1, Alternative 3 and the Proposal presented at the May 7 Board meeting.

<b>Alternative 1</b>	<b>Alternative 3</b>	<b>Proposed Compromise</b>
3 new full service FBOs	2 existing full service FBOs	2 new full service FBOs
1 new limited service FBO		1 new limited service FBO
1 existing limited service FBO	2 existing limited FBOs	1 existing limited service FBO
New GA Terminal/GAF	No GA Terminal/GAF	No GAF
Correction of existing, non-standard design features	Correction of existing non-standard design features	Correction of existing non-standard design features
76 Based Turbo Jets	58 Based Turbo Jets	65 Based Turbo Jets
26 Based Turboprop	19 Based Turboprop	26 Based Turboprop
200 Based Single Engine	360 Based Single Engine	339 Based Single Engine
37 Based Multi Engine	37 Based Multi Engine	35 Based Multi Engine
		Increase hangar space for small GA planes

After further discussion, the Board continued the item to give airport staff time to analyze the proposal and determine if it is aligned with the GAIP’s environmental document. The Board was initially scheduled to hear the item again on May 21, but it has since been rescheduled to the Board’s June 25 meeting.

The County has not yet finished its evaluation of the proposal or publicly provided its findings. Thus the City has not yet had the opportunity to review the findings, determine if any modifications were necessary, and fully analyze the proposed compromise.

### **Further Council Direction Needed**

Due to the apparent lack of Board support for Alternative 3, staff is returning to the Council for further direction.

City Council Policy A-17 states that the City will “support any plan or project that maintains, and oppose any plan or project that proposes any significant changes to, the existing level of general aviation operations, [or] the current level of general aviation support facilities. . .” at JWA. (See, City Council Policy A-17, Section E, Subsection 4). Thus, throughout this process, the City has sought a solution that would best maintain the current mix of based GA aircraft, the number and nature of GA operations, and the number of GA facilities.

The proposed compromise appears promising, as elements – such as limiting the number of FBOs to two, eliminating the GAF, and providing for a lower number of based turbo jets than proposed in Alternative 1 – are similar to Alternative 3. The City would have to make some concessions, however, because the proposal does call for seven more based turbo jets than Alternative 3 contains.

Realizing that Alternative 3 likely will not be the alternative selected, staff believes the City should support the proposed compromise or a solution that best addresses the concerns of our community and other cities along the airport’s arrival and departure corridors.

Staff is recommending the City amend its position from solely supporting Alternative 3 to supporting the compromise proposed on May 7 and give the Mayor and City Manager the authority to represent the City, and some flexibility to amend the City’s position as necessary, to reach a compromise.

### **NOTICING:**

The agenda item has been noticed according to the Brown Act (72 hours in advance of the meeting at which the City Council considers the item).

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

None