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Sent Via E-mail

Mr. Andy Swanson
Palo Alto Airport
City of Palo Alto
250 Hamilton Avenue
Palo Alto, CA 94301

Subject: San Francisquito Creek

Dear Mr. Swanson:

As requested, we prepared this brief analysis of the impact that widening or realigning San Francisquito Creek to the south would have on the Palo Alto Airport.

Today, the Airport is home to over 400 aircraft, with approximately 180,000 aircraft operations occurring there in 2013. The Airport and its only runway are currently constrained on the north by San Francisquito Creek and the levee associated with it. Any action that would widen the creek or shift the levee to the south would require the runway to be shortened. The current runway length already limits the type of aircraft that may operate at the Airport. Typically, smaller turboprops and piston aircraft utilize the Airport, but many do so below maximum takeoff weight (with less than full tanks of fuel, or other weight restrictions) to help with performance on the short runway. Shortening the runway would effectively close the Airport. Closing the Airport would displace over 400 aircraft and 180,000 annual operations.

The Federal Aviation Administration would fight closure through litigation and seek reimbursement for its investment in the airfield, since the Airport is a part of the national transportation network. Should the Airport become unusable, millions of dollars of local, federal and private investment in the airport's facilities would be wasted.

A proposed solution is to shift the runway to the south and build into open water. This action would not be consistent with the Bay Lands Master Plan. It would require construction over an environmentally sensitive area and require substantial infill of open water and coastal marshlands with substantial environmental mitigation efforts. These actions would likely be met with severe opposition from the public.

In summary, any southerly shift in the present alignment of the levee serving San Francisquito Creek would likely require closure of the Airport. This would be a major loss to the Bay Area's air transportation network and would have significant financial impacts.

Sincerely,

MEAD & HUNT, Inc.

David P. Dietz, ACIP
Senior Airport Planner