

## Report of Travis AFB visit by commissioners from Solano Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC)

Date of visit: January 14, 2020

Time of visit: 2:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Location: 60<sup>th</sup> Air Mobility Wing Command Conference Room

ALUC representatives: Chair Thomas Randall, Commissioner Stephen Vancil, Commissioner Catherine Cook, Commissioner Dan Sarna, ALUC Staff Member Jim Leland

Travis representatives: 60<sup>th</sup> Air Mobility Wing Commander (installation commander) Colonel Jeffrey Nelson, 60<sup>th</sup> Air Mobility Wing Command Chief Master Sergeant Chief Derick Crowder, 60<sup>th</sup> Mission Support Group Commander Colonel Victor Beeler, 60<sup>th</sup> Operations Group Commander Colonel Greg Johnson, 60<sup>th</sup> Air Mobility Wing Judge Advocate General Colonel Julie Rutherford, plus several staff members supporting the mentioned base leaders.

1. The leadership of Travis Air Force Base normally serve on two-year tours, with commanders rotating in and out of other bases. The base had previously coordinated issues through a senior civil service (and retired Wing Commander) Gary Gottschall, who had hand been in place throughout the lengthy process to update the Travis Airport Land Use Plan completed in 2015. Mr. Gottschall transferred to a new position in Alabama in the spring of 2019. As of January 2020, his position had not been filled.
2. In 2019 the Solano ALUC has created two new committees to address emerging issues.
  - a. First, is a Wind Turbine committee. There are continuing questions about requested wind turbine development in the wind resource area. Additionally, Travis is participating in a trial development program with a secondary radar system to mitigate or eliminate wind turbine interference with the Travis Approach Radar. The committee chair is Commissioner Catherine Cook.
  - b. Second is a Wildlife Committee. Efforts are underway to restore fish habitat in eastern Solano county, and these efforts will increase the number of birds and bird activity affecting Rio Vista airport and Travis Air Force Base. The committee chair is Commissioner Dan Sarna.
3. Commissioner Vancil thought it would be a good idea to update Travis leaders with the role and operation of the ALUC and advise the creation and status of the new committees. Additionally, the Commissioners sought feedback from the Travis leaders with their concerns and questions. Commissioner Vancil with the approval of ALUC Chair Thomas Randall coordinated the meeting.
4. Meeting minutes:
  - a. Chair Randall introduced ALUC members. Col Nelson introduced Travis members. The purpose of the meeting was discussed.

- b. County Staff Jim Leland discussed why ALUCs were formed and explained the 1972 Farrells' Ice Cream Parlor accident near Sacramento Executive Airport that served as a catalyst for legislation. He discussed how the ALUC is organized and while supported by county staff, is a separate entity from the Solano county government. The ALUC develops Airport Land Use Plans (ALUP) for the three airports in Solano county – Nut Tree, Rio Vista, and Travis AFB. Proposed projects and changes to cities and county general plan and are measured against the three airport ALUPs and found to be consistent, consistent with conditions, or not consistent. The quasi-regulatory nature of the ALUC was explained, where the ALUC has regulatory guidance over local government agencies, but that can be overridden by a two thirds majority of that jurisdiction's governing body, i.e. city council or county board of supervisors.
- c. Commissioner Vancil explained the 2002 Travis ALUP was a reaction to the 1995 BRAC which coded Travis as "caution" for development encroaching on the base. The most recent 2015 ALUP was a result of the new assault runway, and continuing wind turbine and solar development. The 2015 plan established new criteria: (1) A new low altitude maneuvering area supporting the newly built assault runway was established north of Highway 12 with a 200-foot height limit. (2) A new line of sight condition from the ASR radar antenna was added as a condition for any new wind turbine project. (3) Solar glare analysis was more specifically directed for new solar projects. (4) Added specific inner wildlife zone at 10,000 feet from the base, and outer wildlife zone at 5 miles from the base. This latter criterion comes from more specific FAA guidance following the US Air bird strike that failed both engines resulting in the water landing on the Hudson river.
- d. Staff Member Leland and Commissioner Sarna displayed a map showing proposed areas of increased flooding to restore fish habitat along the Sacramento river. This expanded fish habitat increases bird activity, particularly larger birds that feed on fish. The location will impact both Rio Vista and Travis airports. While the flooding area is beyond the Travis wildlife area, it is under the extended approaches to Runways 21L and 21R, and in the low altitude maneuver area of the new assault runway. The ALUC wildlife committee is reaching out to agencies and groups involved with the increased wetlands and trying to mitigate potential increased bird activity.
- e. Commissioner Cook and Staff Member Leland discussed the line of sight criteria for new proposed wind turbines, which would include any proposal that removes old wind turbines and installs newer replacements. A proposed SMUD project was discussed as being subject to review under this condition, but no discussion was made about any pending ALUC or Travis action. There was some discussion about the Light Wave secondary radar system and the hope that it would eliminate or greatly reduce wind turbine interference with the Travis Approach Surveillance Radar, but that system still is under development.
- f. It was also mentioned that by prior coordination, two of the ALUC's newer commissioners who had some air traffic control background would tour the Travis approach control facility and observed the radar scope in operation. These were Commissioner Catherine Cook, a

former Air Force officer supervising air traffic control, and Commissioner Ross Sagun, a former tower controller at the nearby Concord airport. That visit was to occur on January 16, 2020.

- g. ALUC Chairman Thomas Randall provided concluding remarks that the ALUC looks to work with the base and protect the mission of Travis. Colonel Nelson thanked the ALUC for their efforts and noted the base would continue to reach out to the ALUC within the guidelines of the US Air Force and their own command.

Prepared and submitted by Commissioner Vancil, 6 April 2020.