

D1LG, Airport Commissioner Pyle Update (Views My Own) March 9th, 2019 #FLYSJC

To be clear, the words and how they are organized below are Ken Pyle's and do not necessarily reflect the Airport Staff's view.

First, the good news, SJC keeps growing and is projected to reach 15+ million passengers in 2019. This growth is mostly from domestic carriers as evidenced by Alaska's new flight to Paine Field in Everett, Washington (outside of Seattle) and Southwest Airlines announcement of flights to Long Beach Nashville, Raleigh Durham, El Paso and Hawaii. I haven't heard anyone say this, but I suspect that Southwest will be using San Jose as a gateway to Hawaii from these and its other non-stop SJC destinations (SJC is closer than LAX or San Diego to Hawaii).

Now, the bad news and why Airport Commissioners get paid the big bucks (queue the laughter, it's a volunteer position like all the other commissions). At the January 14th meeting, we were slated to vote on the Airport's recommendation for Scenario 4, which would **allow raising of building heights in the downtown and Diridon Station Area by changing the current buffer needed for One Engine Inoperative** (airlines' flight plan in case an engine fails on take-off). Based on the materials provided to the Commission, we probably would have voted for the Airport Staff's recommendation, but there was a technicality and the vote had to be postponed for a special meeting.

That gave four Commissioners time to dig into the material and compare it to the 2007 *San Jose International Obstruction Clearance Study*. Other than the lower temperatures assumed in 2018 compared to the 2007 study (81.3°F vs. 88°F, 85% versus 95% reliability factor), we couldn't see why the conclusion would be any different today versus then.

<https://www.flysanjose.com/sites/default/files/commission/2009%20Fact%20Sheet%20on%20OEI.pdf>

Our conclusion, which the majority of the Airport Commission agreed with when we reconvened on 1/24/19, is that if the Council adopts Scenario 4, it **will render SJC as a regional airport, putting flights to Asia, European and some transcontinental flights in financial jeopardy**. This may be OK, but we aren't having that discussion, which is amazing, considering we are reviewing the Airport Master Plan right now. See this link for some thoughts on what is missing from the Airport Master Plan process:

<https://winchesterurbanvillage.wordpress.com/2019/01/14/comments-on-sjc-eir-2037-master-plan/>

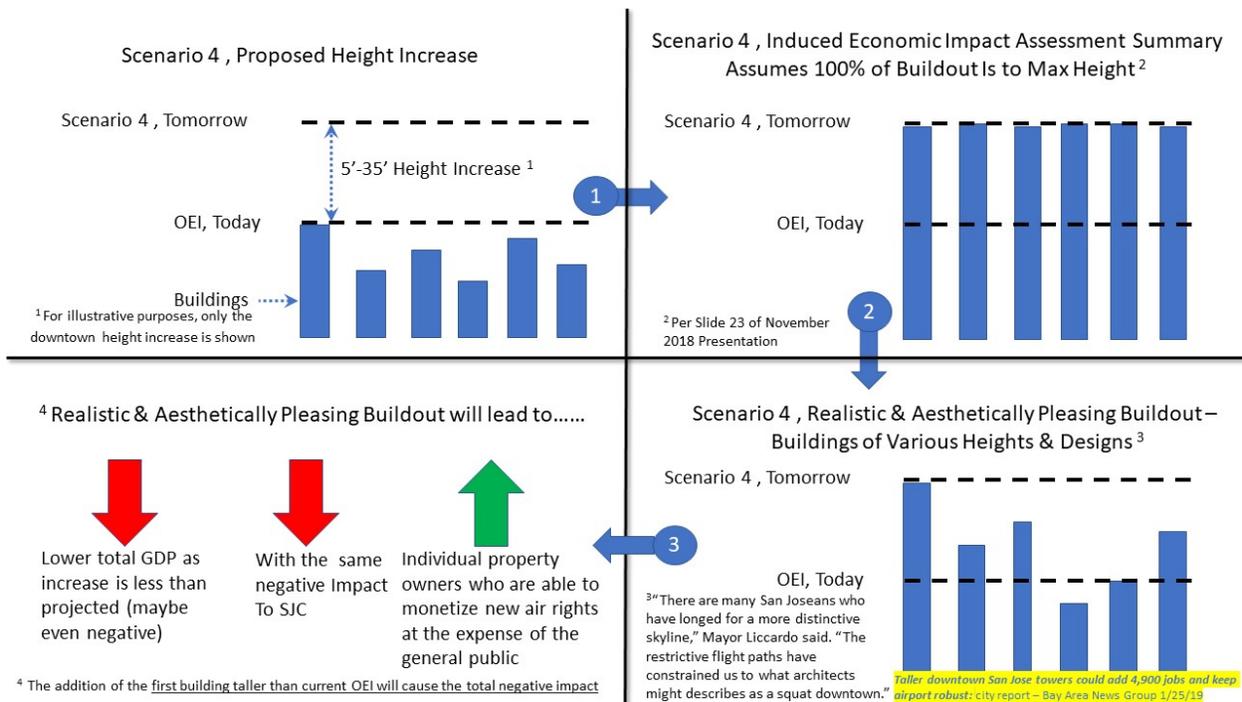
And the Airport's proposal may not even have the positive economic impact it is purported to have, as illustrated in this graph (the study estimates a -\$26 to -\$203M negative impact depending upon load factor). In a nutshell, the study is assuming a 100% build-out above the current height limit to the new proposed height limit.

The Commission voted for Scenario 10B and the reasons why are detailed in this document found at this link:

https://drive.google.com/open?id=0Bx53_RYEFZifWm5DXzEyZmlUSzJiaFhnTnp0RXJlQnRQeWtr

Also, for a view of the economic impact, see

<https://winchesterurbanvillage.wordpress.com/2019/02/19/who-will-benefit-the-most-from-raising-oei-limits/>



Several commissioners argued these and other points about the study and the study process before the Community Economic Development Committee on January 28th and, as a result, CED delayed bringing it to Council until February 26th.

<https://winchesterurbanvillage.wordpress.com/2019/01/29/why-the-rush-to-adopt-scenario-4/>

Subsequent to the 1/28 meeting, we requested additional documentation to fill in the blanks and found another 30+ documents. Additionally, there have been several Freedom of Information Requests. As we have studied these documents, the process has become as much a concern as the actual result of the impending decision. Some examples of questionable process and practice include:

- Google was briefed on 11/2/18, a full 60+ days before the Airport Commissioners received materials to prepare for its 1/14/19 vote.
- A group called Project Spartan, which seems to be directing the study at some level, and, may be affiliated with Google, according to the 2/26/19 Council meeting. "Additional impacts that shall be calculated include employment/jobs, City of San Jose tax revenue and other economic impacts that may be directed by the Project Spartan Team." Landrum Brown Agreement SO4
- The Airport Commission Chair was assured that the airlines and pilots would be directly represented on the committee; they weren't. Hence, the Air Line Pilots Association letter on Feb. 27th stating that they had just become aware of the study and requesting documentation so they could "evaluate the impacts on safety from the proposals and are prepared to do so for the SJC proposals expeditiously once we have all pertinent documentation."

Lastly, kudo to Vice Mayor Jones for listening to our concerns and pushing successfully to change the 2/26 council vote to an information session. It looks like the vote is now set for Tuesday, 3/12/19.

Respectfully submitted by Ken Pyle, District 1 Airport Commissioner