



Los Angeles Area  
Chamber of Commerce

TUESDAY | Dec. 6, 2005

THE BUSINESS PERSPECTIVE:

## Will the New LAX Plan Fly?



### Coming up at the Chamber

[View all upcoming events on our web calendar.](#)

**THU | Dec. 8**  
Entertainment Industry Business Council  
[more info](#)

**FRI | Dec. 9**  
Technology Industry Council  
[more info](#)

**FRI | Dec. 9**  
Accenture Pancakes & Politics  
With Councilmembers Jose Huizar, Bill Rosendahl and Herb Wesson  
[more info](#)

**TUE | Dec. 13**  
Referral Network  
A Growing Companies program sponsored by Wells Fargo  
[more info](#)

**THU | Dec. 15**  
Economic Development and Land Use Committee Meeting  
[more info](#)

**THU | Dec. 15**  
Environmental Quality Committee Meeting  
[more info](#)

**TUE | Dec. 20**  
Transportation and Goods Movement Committee Meeting  
[more info](#)

**THU | Jan. 19**  
Export Seminar Series Session #1: Fundamentals of Export  
[more info](#)

**SAT | Jan. 21**  
L.A. Cash for College Day  
[more info](#)

**THU | Jan. 26**  
117th Inaugural Dinner  
[more info](#)

The Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce is the voice of business in L.A. County. Founded in 1888, the Chamber promotes a prosperous economy and quality of life in the Los Angeles region. For more information, visit [www.lachamber.org](http://www.lachamber.org)

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You can't always believe everything you read in the media. So, with regard to last week's LAX articles: some were accurate, others were somewhat off-target.

[The media widely reported last week](#) that the LAX modernization plan has been shelved, and that planning needs to begin anew. Fortunately for taxpayers, travelers and business users, that's not exactly what has happened. LAX will still be pursuing a plan that incorporates infrastructure improvements and modernization to will make the airport safer and more convenient, but with more emphasis on a regional solution.

The Chamber has advocated modernizing—and expanding—LAX since Mayor Riordan first unveiled his plans in 1995. After 10 years of hearings, elections, false starts, lawsuits and FAA approval, we're finally going to get something off the ground.

Last year the L.A. City Council passed an \$11 billion master plan for LAX, usually referred to as the "consensus plan," which was largely based on the recommendations of the L.A. Area Chamber. Thanks to the leadership of former Councilwoman Cindy Miscikowski and a mayor willing to compromise, a common sense plan emerged, and the L.A. City Council approved it 12 to 3.

Everyone agreed that what were called "green-light" projects could begin soon. More controversial "yellow-light" projects—primarily, the massive check-in center at Manchester Square—would be subject to greater public review. Most of us did not think that the yellow-light projects would ever come to fruition.

As with nearly every proposed development, lawsuits followed—for the most part, filed by LAX area residents who apparently did not do their due diligence before purchasing their homes. Not only did they go to court, they helped elect a vocal opponent to the yellow-light projects—and the green-light projects—to replace Miscikowski on the city council.

With the election of City Councilmember Bill Rosendahl and Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa came many changes. The airport commission was overhauled and placed in the hands of the very capable Alan Rothenberg. The airport director was then replaced by the well respected Lydia Kennard, who ran the airport under Riordan. Airport residents seemed to have renewed trust in the airport leadership again and began to re-evaluate their opposition.

After the election, none of us expected the yellow-light projects to move forward. What we did fear was that lawsuits would continue, stalling the green-light projects that are so needed, particularly one to move LAX's south runway.

So, after further review of the mayor's announcement last week to take the yellow-light (and some of the green-light) projects off the table, it's not so bad. The only surprise—and it's a welcome one—was the announcement that airport opponents had dropped their lawsuits (at least for now.) And for this we thank them, and we express our appreciation to Villaraigosa, Kennard and Rothenberg for restoring trust in the community that LAX is sensitive to its neighbors.

With the yellow-light projects now officially off the table, we can move forward on the regional approach that Villaraigosa talked about during his campaign. This includes further developing Ontario and Palmdale airports, both of which are owned and operated by the city through Los Angeles World Airports. However, some of the green-light projects need to find the way back into the equation, particularly extending the Metro Green Line to the airport and making traffic congestion improvements connecting LAX with the 405 freeway.

But the other story that we must note was in [The Wall Street Journal last month](#) (subscription required.) They reported that LAX is behind all of the nation's major airports in preparing for the newer and larger jets that will soon come to market. If we don't watch ourselves, we will be mired in controversy while other airports take market share and economic development away from the L.A. region. We can't afford to let this happen.

We support a regional approach, and we will help the mayor advocate for expansion of other airports. But make no mistake: the southern runway must be moved at due speed, and we must make the airport significantly safer—and ready to receive flights from a new generation of jetliners. Otherwise, we risk being left at the gate—the airline gate.

*The Business Perspective* is an award-winning weekly opinion column by Rusty Hammer, President & CEO, L.A. Area Chamber

### L.A. Business THIS WEEK

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And that's *the Business Perspective*.



Russell J. Hammer  
President & CEO  
Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce

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### TALK BACK TO THE CHAMBER

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