As the debate over the airport’s future continues, there are a number of misconceptions being circulated about LAX by those who oppose some of the renovation alternatives being considered. Below are five of those myths:

**Myth:** A greater push toward regionalization will eliminate the need for many of the improvements being discussed at LAX. The failure of L.A. City Hall and Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA) to grow Ontario or Palmdale, but San Francisco, Las Vegas and Phoenix. Regionalization, especially for domestic flights, continues to be a top priority. The Board of Airport Commissioners offers incentives to encourage airline service at Ontario and Palmdale and is subsidizing a United Airlines service from Palmdale to San Francisco. These airports will continue to grow as the populations they serve continue to grow.

**Myth:** Taxpayers in Los Angeles will be stuck with the bill for airport improvements.

**Fact:** Passenger travel to LAX causes much of the traffic congestion on the 405 freeway.

**Fact:** Congestion on the 405 Freeway is due to the thousands of daily commuters heading to and from jobs on the west side and along the 405 corridor from Ventura County to the South Bay and Orange County. The peak time for arrivals and departures at LAX is between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. – one of the best times to be on the 405 Freeway.

**Myth:** The north runways do not need reconfiguration. Runway incursions and near-misses are due to pilot error and the limited number of air traffic controllers.

**Fact:** Safety experts from the FAA, National Transportation Safety Board and the Airline Pilots Association all concluded that LAX must increase the distance between the two north airfield runways to make the airport safer. Several months ago LAWA, at the recommendation of a citizens’ advisory group, commissioned NASA to do another report on this subject and recommend action. That report should be available in mid 2008.

**Myth:** Los Angeles will do just fine without LAX as a major international gateway.

**Fact:** A major international airport is a prerequisite for any world-class city. The passengers and cargo that flow in and out of an international airport are one of the major job generators in the region. Each regularly scheduled international flight at LAX generates $623 million in economic output and supports 3,120 jobs. Under its current configuration, LAX cannot fully accommodate the Airbus A380 and Boeing’s 747-800 and new 787 Dreamliner, which are all Group VI aircraft. LAX’s south runways are a Group V airfield and the northern runways are only certified for Group IV aircraft. As a result, significant improvements to LAX must be made in order to handle these international aircraft of the future.
Good jobs, passenger safety, and our position in the global economy are all at stake when it comes to the future of LAX. I hope you will share these facts with your colleagues and, most importantly, make sure that Mayor Villaraigosa and the Los Angeles City Council know that you support making LAX a 21st century airport by sending them an e-mail today.

And that's the Business Perspective.

Gary Toebben
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The Business Perspective is a weekly opinion piece by Gary Toebben, President & CEO of the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, produced with the input of Senior Policy Advisor Rusty Hammer.