

# CONTRA COSTA COUNTY Aviation Advisory Committee

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## 2022 Annual Report

**Advisory Board Meeting Time/Location:** 10:00am on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of every one (1) month at either Buchanan Field or Byron Airport. Under the County's shelter-in-place order, these meetings have moved to a virtual format via Zoom.

**Advisory Body Chair:** Emily Barnett

**Airport Staff:** Greg Baer/Beth Lee/Russell Milburn

### **Activities**

- Monthly review of noise statistics, operations report, airport development projects, airfield updates
- Discussions of airport projects and programs to disseminate information and solicit input from members and public
- Discussions of issues facing the airports and airport community
- Input to the Airports Director, Airport Committee, and Board of Supervisors on issues affecting the Contra Costa County Airports and surrounding communities
- Participation in community outreach efforts
- Quarterly review of the Airports' year-to-date and end-of-year forecast financial reports
- Annual review of input on the Part 150 Noise Mitigation recommendations

### **Accomplishments**

Discussed and advised on the following:

Buchanan Airport Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting (ARFF)/Administration/ Terminal Building

- Construction of the new Buchanan Airport ARFF/Admin/Terminal building. The long-awaited construction of the new Buchanan Airport Terminal project continues to progress despite supply chain issues causing some delays. Funded by the FAA and began construction in September 2021, with summer 2023 as the project's expected completion date.

### Buchanan Airport Security Fencing Project

- Delay in Security Fencing project enhancements at Buchanan due to lack of FAA funding. This project rerequested FAA funding in 2022 and was granted funds. The contractor will begin work in December 2022.

### Hosting Key Discussions on Fuel Prices / Transition to Unleaded Fuel

- The AAC hosted detailed discussions on rising fuel prices and the aviations' transition to unleaded fuel. The hope is to position Contra Costa County Airports as an early adopter when unleaded aviation fuel becomes available. Additionally, researching more ways to provide fuel to the aviation community at an affordable rate, including through a County-provided self-serve fueling station, was identified as a potential strategy. Future discussions on fuel will continue throughout 2023.

### Hosting Key Discussions on Economic Development in and Around the Airports

- The AAC hosted discussions with local aviation-related start-up business Birdstop to understand the needs and the draw the airports provide to the aviation-supportive technology industries. Additional discussions were had on the County's Envision 2040 project, including the possibility of moving the urban limit line near the Byron airport, helping to create local aviation-related jobs in East County, and reducing the excessive commuting on Highway 4.

### Discussing Airport Administration Activities To Enhance Airport Economic Development

- Final completion of the Byron General Plan Amendment to bring conformity between the adopted Airport Master Plan and County General Plan relative to allowable uses at both Airports. Including completion of the Plan Amendment, request for public comment, and response to public comment.
- The Bay Area Test Site (BATS) initiative, started in 2019 by airport management to attract new aviation technology startups to both airports, has had several successes. The airport's proximity to Silicon Valley and San Francisco has created a significant opportunity to serve as preferred engineering, development, and test sites, with the ultimate goal of growing production and operation bases, with the corresponding potential for new jobs in both the Buchanan and Byron communities. Several new BATS tenants are now in discussion, including XWing, Elroy Air, Pyka, Opener, BirdStop, and MightyFly, to expand their testing operations. The AAC strongly and enthusiastically continues to support the BATS initiative.
- Commercial Development of Non-Aviation Sites at Buchanan Field. Increasing development is an important continuing item significant to the Airport Enterprise Fund. Several undeveloped parcels, designated for non-aviation use, are part of the Buchanan Field and Byron Airport properties. These include sites at the corners of Marsh Drive and Solano Way, and Marsh Drive and Sally Ride Drive, as well as other sites not needed for aviation use. Airport staff has requested releases from the FAA to allow for the non-aviation development of these sites

and has also solicited proposals for the commercial or light industrial development of these sites. The AAC continues to express strong support for the projects. Each of these projects will contribute to the Enterprise Fund and will provide jobs and other economic benefits to the area surrounding Buchanan Field and Byron Airport.

- Airport noise impact on communities including:
  - Addressing various Buchanan Field & Byron noise inquiries through phone and in-person meetings between residents and airport staff and/or AAC members.
  - Reminding pilots of training at designated hours according to the airports' noise abatement stipulations.
  - Airport staff continues to increase overall communication with the FAA-operated tower controllers to minimize the use of training on runways adjacent to noise-sensitive communities.
  - While there was an overall increase in airport operations in 2022 compared to 2021, overall complaints decreased over the previous year. The decrease indicates more positive public/airport interactions.
- The AAC supported a partnership with Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) GoMentum facility with the county's Bay Area Test Site (BATS) program in 2021. The AAC continues to support efforts to create jobs locally and support economic development.
- Encouraged AAC members and the Board of Supervisors, as well as the general public, to be more involved with Contra Costa County Airports and aviation communities.

### **Attendance/Representation**

- AAC is composed of members representing each of the supervisorial districts, the cities of Concord and Pleasant Hill, the Airport Business Association, community of Pacheco, surrounding communities of Byron Airport (Brentwood, Byron, Knightsen, Discovery Bay), and three at large positions for a total of 13 members.
- In 2022, quorums were more difficult to achieve as several vacancies created issues. The AAC, in partnership with Airport Staff and the Board of Supervisors, actively recruited for those seats. Only one seat remains vacant, with a strong interest in each seat that has been appointed.
- AAC members continue to be highly engaged despite virtual meetings. Public participation has also increased as individuals have found the virtual format's ease and safety conducive to participation. Overall the AAC has welcomed more public comments on average with virtual meetings than recent 2020 and 2021 meetings.

- The AAC is a diverse group of aviation professionals, retired executives, members of the public, consultants, and educators. There is a balanced mix of pilots and non-pilots.
- Several committee members are also involved in other county and city advisory bodies, committees, and commissions.

**Current AAC member roster is as follows:**

<u>AAC Members</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>2022 Appointment Status</u>	<u>Term Expiration Date</u>
Vacant	District I	Recruiting	2/29/2020
Michael Bruno	Airport Business Association	Reappointed	2/28/2025
Eric Meinbress	Member at large	Reappointed	2/28/2023
Ronald Reagan	District III	Reappointed	2/29/2024
Richard Celestre	City of Pleasant Hill	Appointed	2/29/2024
Christopher Baker	District V	Appointed	2/28/2023
Keith McMahon	City of Concord	Reappointed	2/28/2025
Roger Bass	District II	Reappointed	2/29/2024
Shawn Stappen	Member at large	Appointed	2/29/2024
Gareth Ashley	District IV	Appointed	2/28/2023
Emily Barnett	Member at large	Reappointed	2/28/2025
Donna Dietrich	Pacheco Neighbor	Reappointed	2/29/2024
Vacant	Byron Neighbor	Recruiting	2/29/2024

**Current AAC Officers:**

<u>AAC Member</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Election Status</u>
Emily Barnett	Chair	Elected
Roger Bass	Vice-Chair	Elected
Eric Meinbress	Secretary	Elected

**Training/Certification**

- It is mandatory for all Committee members to complete County training regarding the Ralph M. Brown Act and the County’s Better Government Ordinance, and complete the County’s Ethics Orientation within 90 days of the appointment and every two years thereafter.

**Proposed Objectives for 2023**

- Completion of the New Terminal at Buchanan Airport
- Implementation of the Byron Airport General Plan Amendment

- Continue to advise and review the Economic Development Incentive Program (EDIP) including promoting progress on EDIP and strategic priority projects
- Continue to support and grow the BATS and GoMomentum partnerships and projects
- Continue to advise, monitor, and review the Buchanan Field and Byron Airports' construction and maintenance projects
- Continue to advise, monitor, and review activities and incidents impacting airport security
- Continue to grow and develop community and tenant outreach efforts for both airports
- Continue to advise, monitor, and review the Airports' budget, noise statistics, and overall operations
- Continue to work with the surrounding communities regarding noise inquiries and other aviation-related issues
- Continue regular discussions with Airport Staff on various airport developments (current and future), projects and issues, as well as disseminate information and offer recommendations
- Continue to advise Airport Staff on the design of the new Buchanan Airport Terminal
- Continue to provide the general public with an open forum for discussions on aviation-related matters

c: Beth Lee, Assistant Director of Airports-Administration  
Russell Milburn, Assistant Director of Airports-Operations  
Emily Barnett, AAC Chair  
Roger Bass, AAC Vice-Chair  
Eric Meinbress, AAC Secretary