



City of  
**Santa  
Monica**

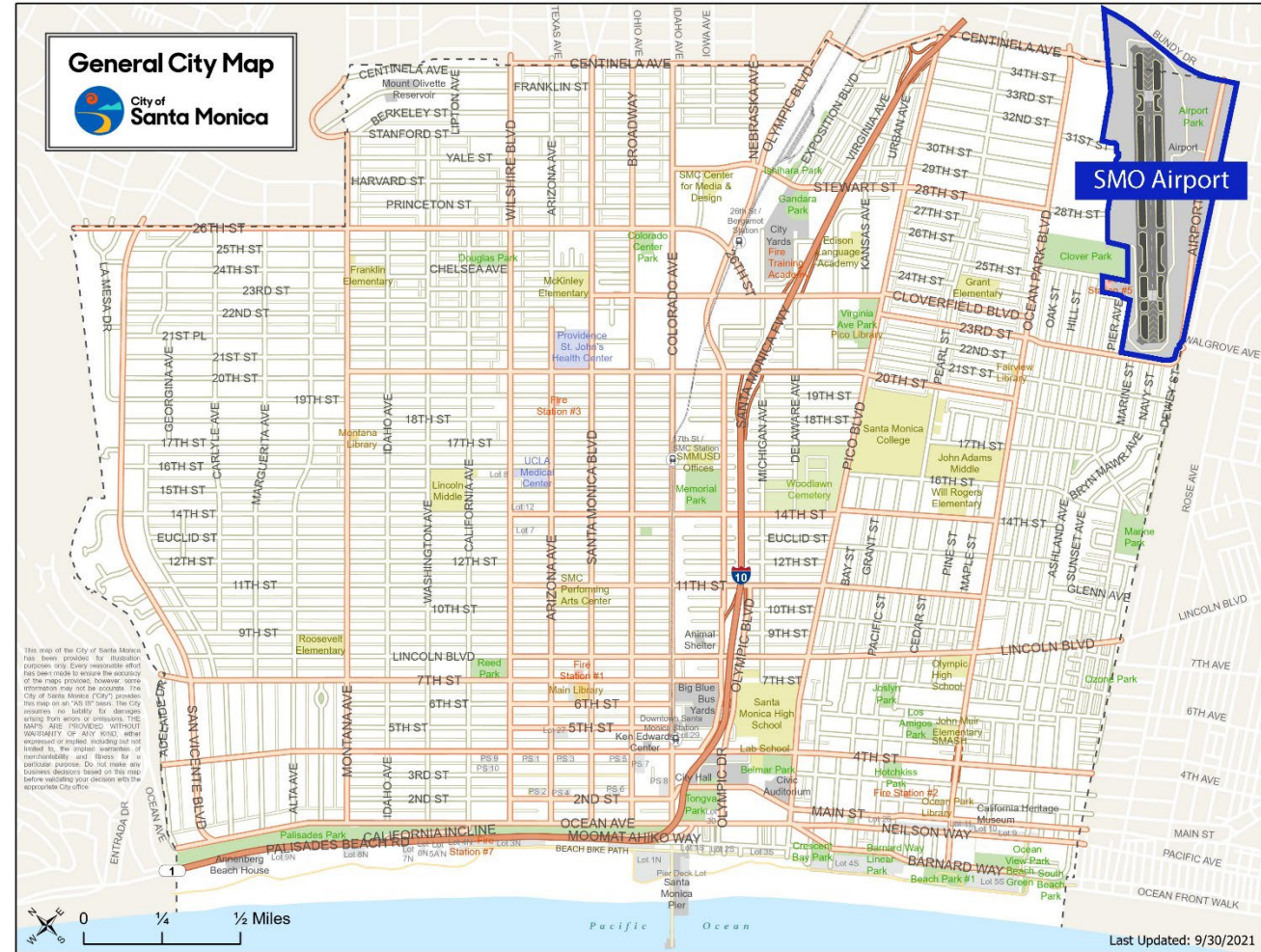
## **A Public Process to Determine the Future of the Santa Monica Airport**

Landmarks Commission  
February 13, 2023

<http://www.santamonica.gov/future-of-santa-monica-airport-project>

## INTRODUCE PUBLIC PROCESS TO PLAN THE FUTURE OF THE SANTA MONICA AIRPORT

- Process for community engagement, testing and refinement
- Scope of work including Existing Conditions and Scenario Planning
- Historic Resource Analysis





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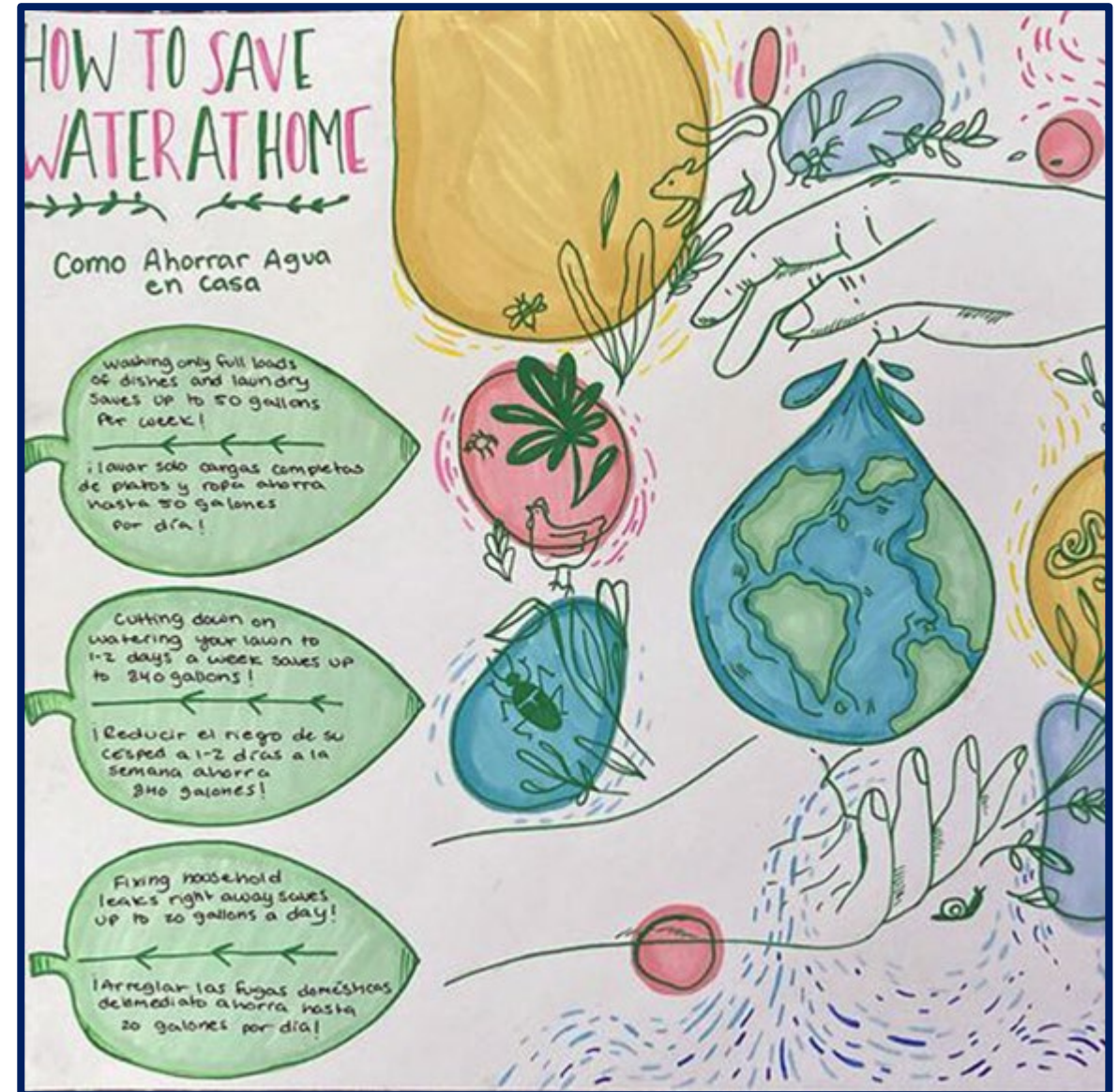
# The Role of Sustainability

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## PROJECT PRESENTS SUSTAINABLE, GENERATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR SANTA MONICA

- Sustainable land management
- Resource conservation
- Regenerative design
  - Water, Energy, Nature & Wildlife
- Equity and inclusion
- Health and happiness





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# Background and History

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Sunset Park

Business Park

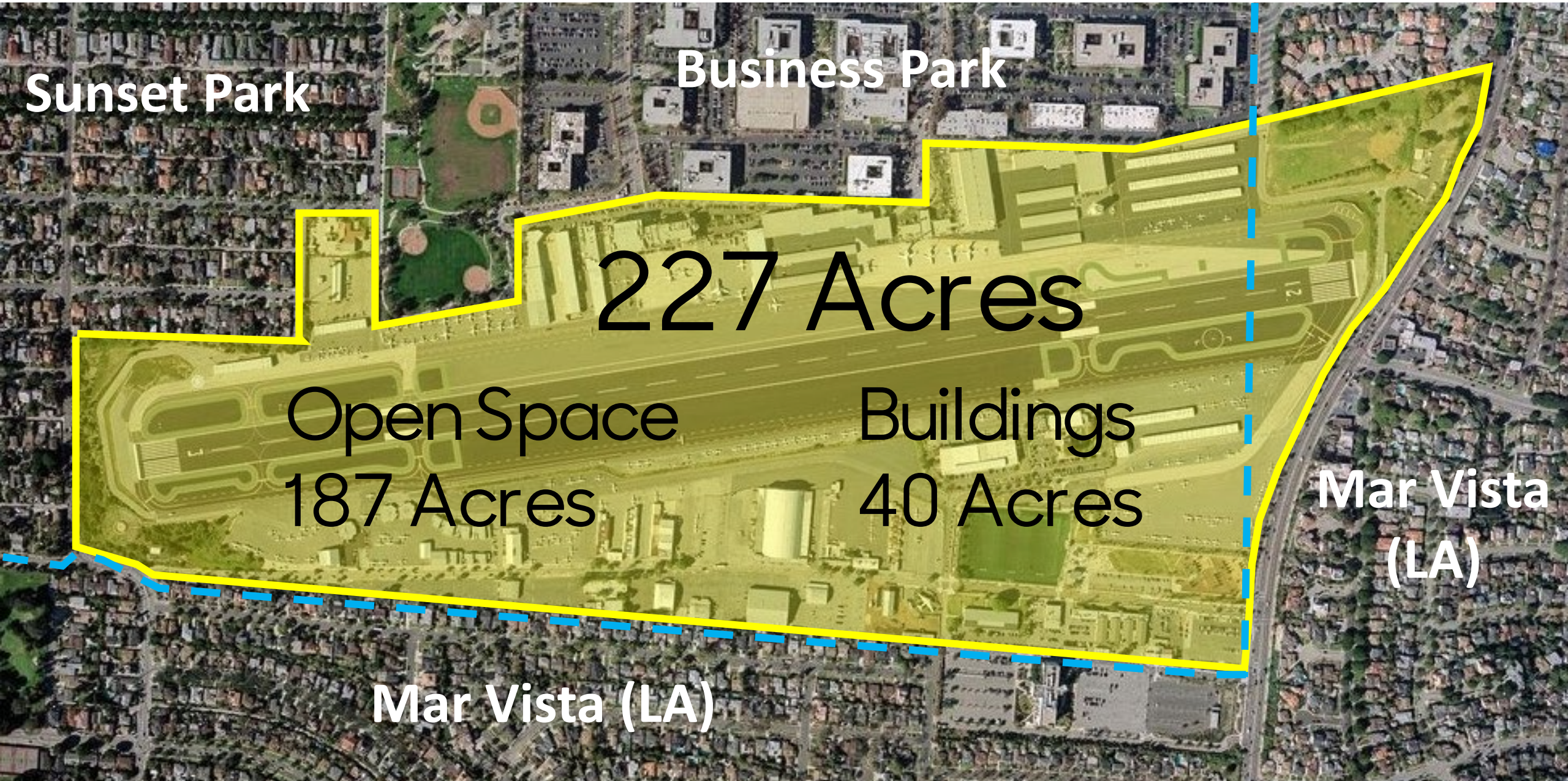
227 Acres

Open Space  
187 Acres

Buildings  
40 Acres

Mar Vista  
(LA)

Mar Vista (LA)



## AIRPORT IS HOME TO AVIATION AND NON-AVIATION INDUSTRIES

- 166 total businesses
- 43 industry sectors
- \$20M annual revenue  
(Airport Fund)
- Recreational uses
- Arts, culture, education
- Retail and restaurant
- Many more...



## CITY HAS LEGAL AUTHORITY TO CLOSE AIRPORT, IF DESIRED

- Authorized for closure after December 31, 2028
  - Requires Council action
- Budget established for planning process to determine future use of land
- History of local measures and community preferences

GENERAL AVIATION

### FAA Caves In to City Demand To Close Santa Monica Airport

by Matt Thurber - January 29, 2017, 8:14 PM



*After the city of Santa Monica shortens SMO airport's runway to 3,500 feet, large business jets like those in the background will no longer be able to use the iconic airport. (Photo: Matt Thurber)*



California's Santa Monica Airport (SMO), both historically important and a key part of the National Airspace System (NAS), will close at the end of 2028, the FAA said on Saturday following two weeks of negotiations between city leaders and the agency. Somewhat sooner, possibly within a year, the city of Santa Monica, which owns the 227-acre airfield, will cut the 4,973-foot runway down to 3,500 feet, effectively eliminating access to the larger jets that currently fly there.

Before Saturday's surprise settlement, the city and FAA had been embroiled in multiple lawsuits, with the city council and its airport commission firmly arguing for closing the airport while the FAA and pro-airport proponents repeatedly pointed out that after World War II, the city had signed an instrument of transfer to keep the airport



## FROM FARMLAND TO AVIATION AND MANUFACTURING CENTER

- Airfield dedicated 1923 as "Clover Field."
- 50,000 people attended the event
- Santa Monica expands airport land in 1926

pg. 111

### NATION ACCEPTS AIRPLANE FIELD

*Fifty Thousand Persons See Dedication*

*Santa Monica Landing-Place Pleases Army Chief*

*Dozens of Flyers Give Thrill to Spectators*

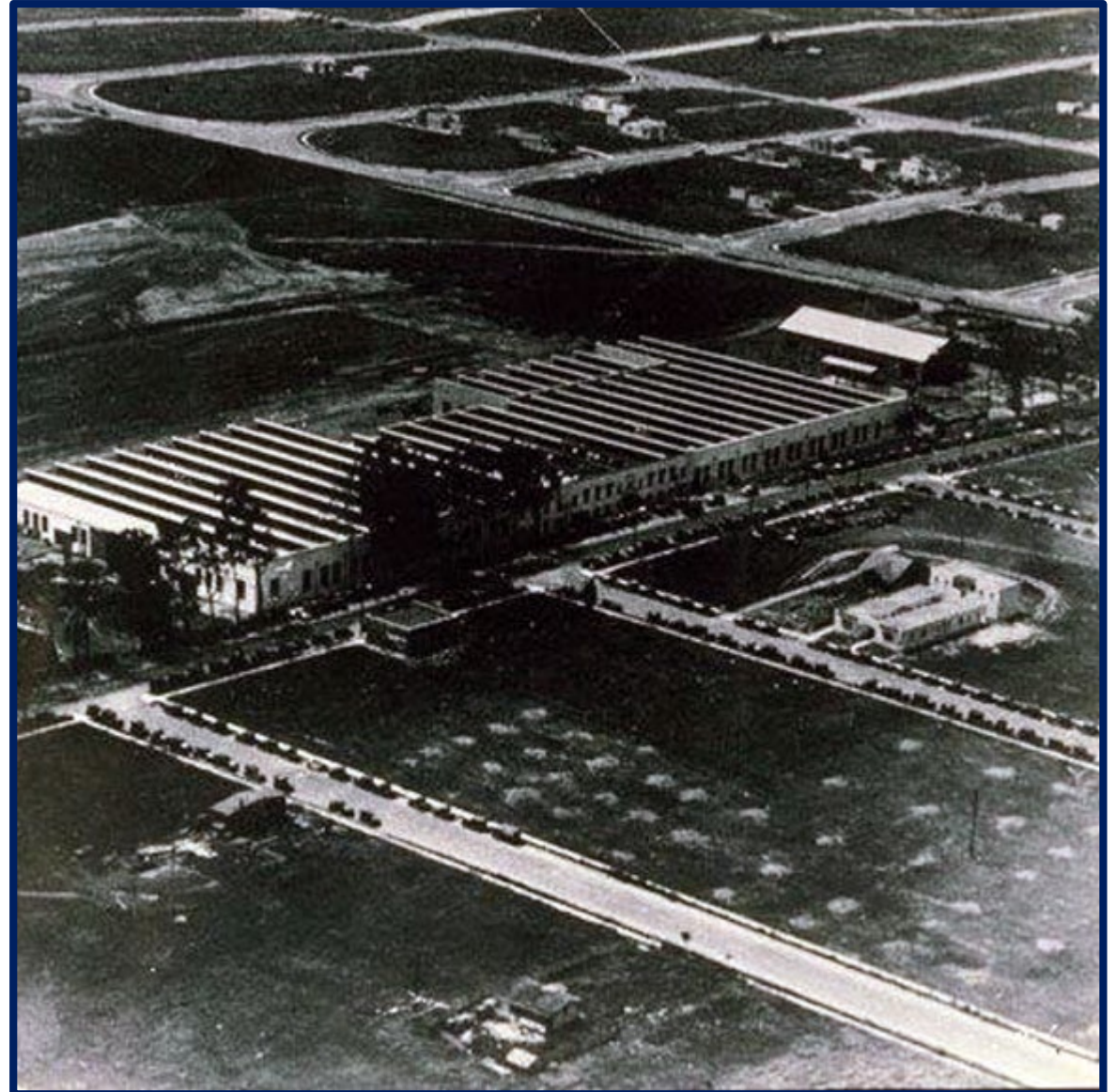
**NOTABLES AT BANQUET**  
 The banquet was attended by about 100 reserve officers and was held at the Miramar Hotel. Many officers flew their own planes from Rockwell Field at San Diego, Crissey Field at San Francisco and Mather Field at Sacramento to attend. The ceremonies at the field began at 3 p.m. when S. L. Berkeley presented the new field on behalf of the City of Santa Monica. In the group that surrounded him were members of the County Board of Supervisors, of the Santa Mon-

**SANTA MONICA.** — Clover, M., To SE. of city. Alt. 150 ft. Rectangular. 63 A., asphalt surface. Runways, 3,000 by 200 ft., entire field available. Pole line, buildings, radio towers. N. Beacon, boundary, approach, obstruction, landing area flood lights. Beacon, rotating green. Service day and night. Left hand turns permitted in landing and taking off SE.; right hand turns in landing or taking off to E. or N.

AIRPORT AT S.E. CORNER OF SANTA MONICA.

## DONALD DOUGLAS (1892-1981)

- Central figure in US aerospace history.
- Instrumental in Santa Monica's industrial development during 1<sup>st</sup> half of 20<sup>th</sup> century



## A PLACE OF HISTORIC “FIRSTS”

- The first circumnavigation of the world by air took off from Clover Field on St. Patrick's Day, March 17, 1924 and returned after nearly 28,000 miles!



## A PLACE OF HISTORIC “FIRSTS”

- Santa Monica hosted the first sanctioned race for female pilots in 1929 flying from Santa Monica to Cleveland, 15 of 20 finished (Earhart placed third).
- Amelia Earhart wrote, “We are still trying to get ourselves called just ‘pilots.’”



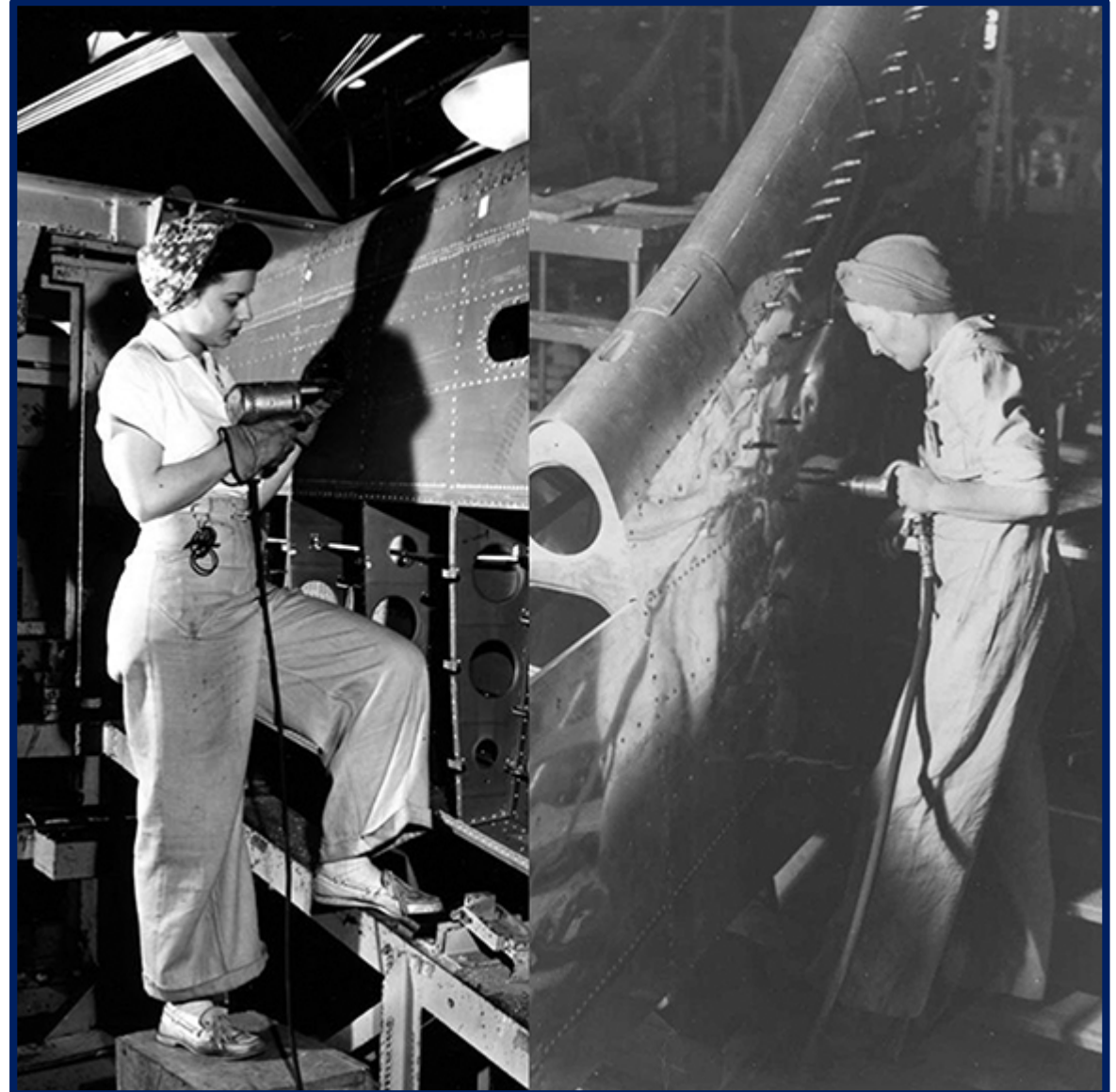
## A PRODUCTION CENTER OF INNOVATION AND INDUSTRY

- The first flight of the Douglas DC-1 prototype predecessor of the DC-3. Clover Field. July 1, 1933.



## ENORMOUS WORKFORCE CREATED DEMAND FOR HOUSING, PARKS, SCHOOLS AND SERVICES

- During its peak years, Douglas employed up to 44,000 employees working three shifts - 24/7.



## EVOLUTION OF AIRPORT CONTRIBUTED TO SANTA MONICA'S DEVELOPMENT

- Douglas Aircraft Company factory along Ocean Park Boulevard in Sunset Park community.



## BELOVED INSTITUTIONS BORN FROM WORKFORCE DEMAND

- In 1939 Douglas built the Aero Theater on Montana in Santa Monica so employees could watch movies 24 hours a day.





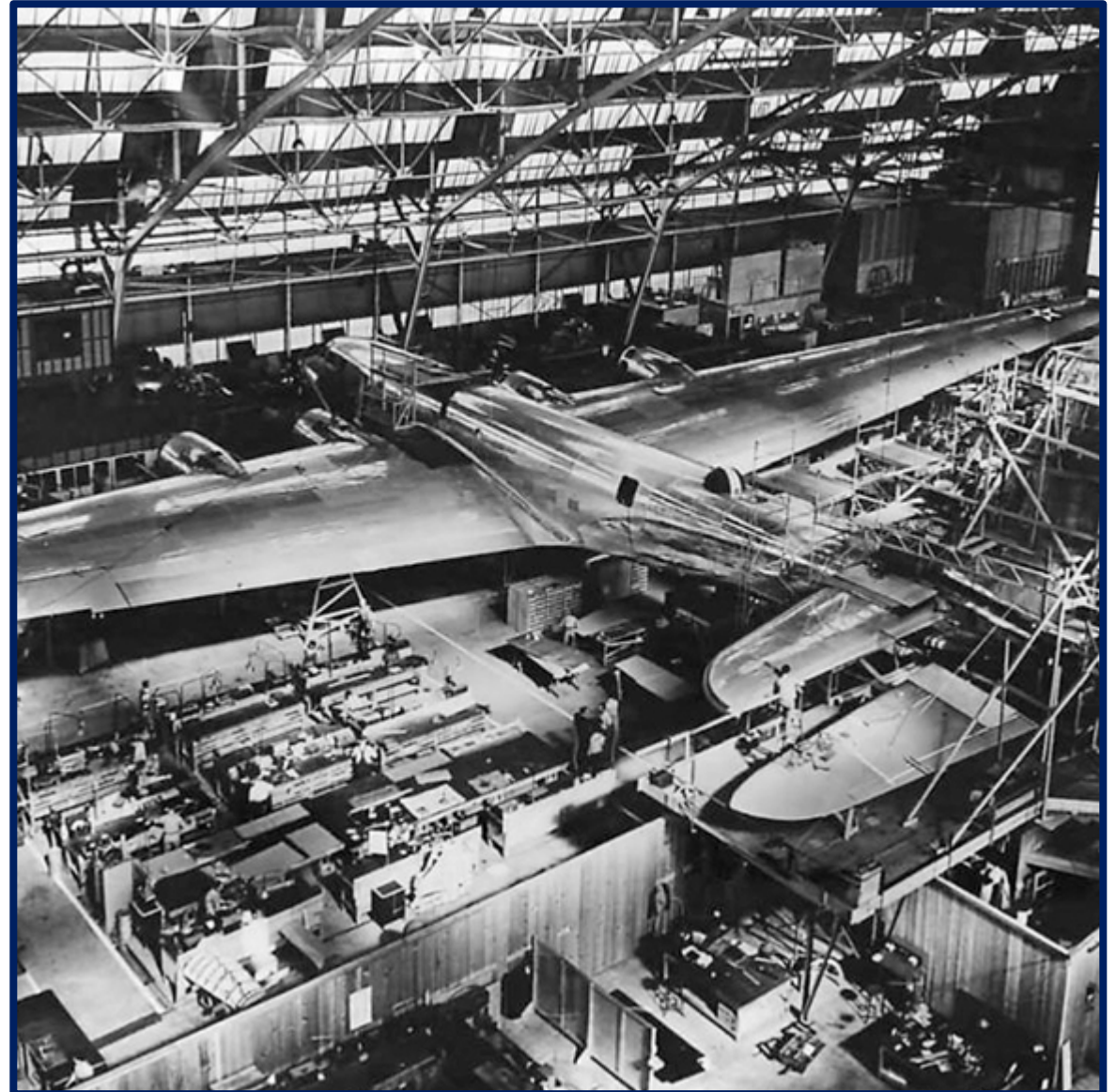
## WAR TIME PRODUCTION

- A fake residential community was built on top of the Douglas factory during World War II to disguise it in case of a Japanese invasion.



## DOUGLAS RELOCATES TO LONG BEACH IN 1967

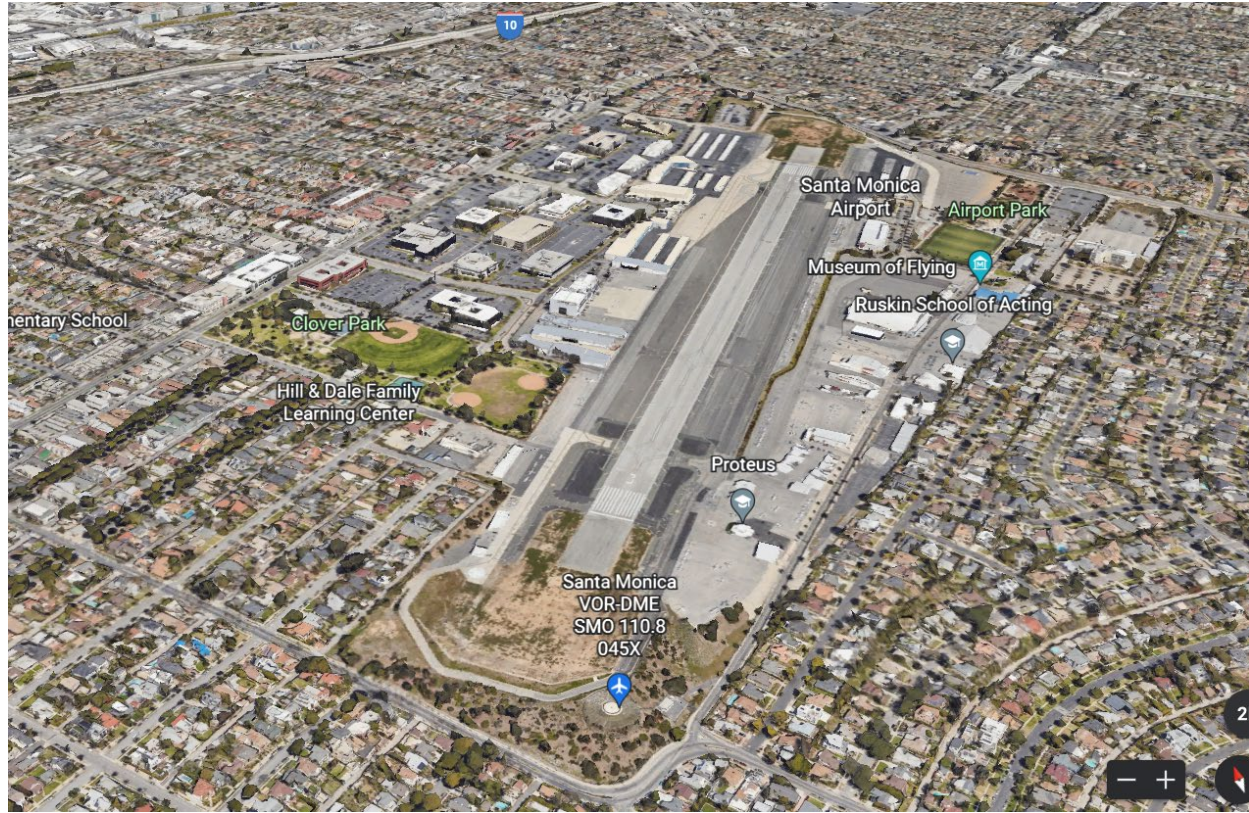
- In 1958, Donald Douglas asked the city to lengthen the airport's runway.
- Acknowledging the objections of residents, the City refused.
- In 1967 Douglas closed the plant, moving airliner production to Long Beach.



## 100 YEARS OF SMO IN OUR COMMUNITY AS THE REGION GREW AROUND US



1924  
Santa Monica Population: 15,000  
Los Angeles Population: 575,000



2023  
Santa Monica Population: 94,000  
Los Angeles Population: 3,900,000

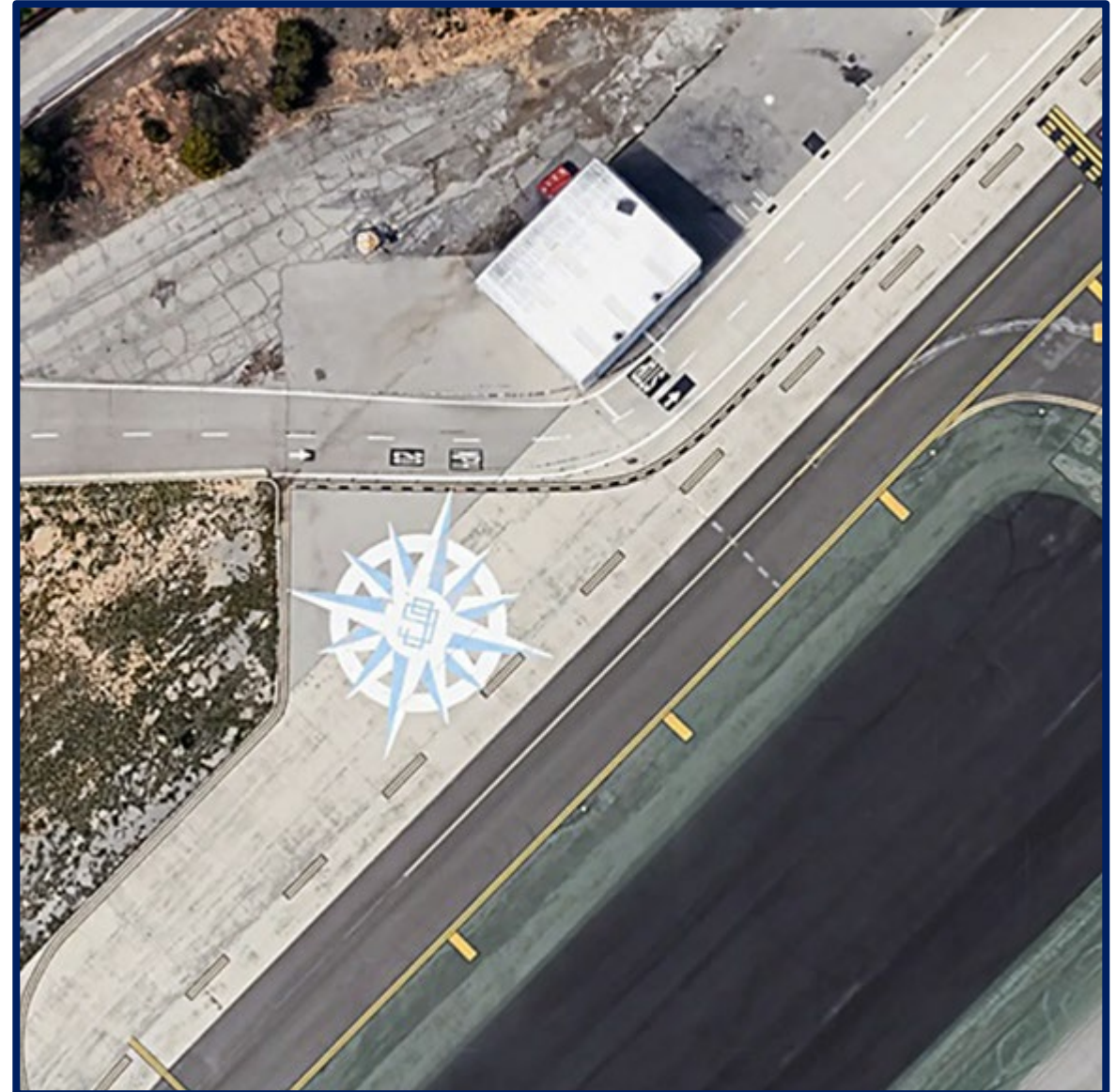
## KNOWN HISTORIC RESOURCES

- Rotating Beacon  
(landmarked 1988)
  - Originally part of San Diego-Los Angeles national airway system and represents one of the earliest navigational tools used in night flying.
  - Moved from its original installation in Downey in 1952.
  - Symbolizes the vital role aviation has played in the economic history of the City for more than 50 years.



## KNOWN HISTORIC RESOURCES

- Compass Rose
  - A visual feature on the ground to help pilots navigate and find airfields
  - Also used to help calibrate (or “swing”) on-board airplane compasses.
  - Critical and necessary navigational aid for pilots of the early aviation era.
  - Emblematic of over 90 years of the history of women in aviation, with roots grounded in Santa Monica
- Landmarked 2019 (under appeal)





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# What We've Heard

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## 2010-2013 FOCUS ON “NON-AVIATION” LANDS

- Community open space
- Access for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit
- Reduce traffic impacts
- New uses for the benefit of the community (arts, culture, education, housing, light retail, etc.)
- Sustainable agriculture projects
- Incubator for green startup businesses
- Green building practices and sustainability
- Infrastructure improvements
- Improve aesthetics



## 2014 - MEASURE LC LIMITS LAND USE AT SANTA MONICA AIRPORT

- No new development until voters have approved limits on uses
- Provides exemptions for:
  - Parks and public open spaces
  - Recreational facilities
  - Maintenance/replacement of existing cultural arts and education uses

"Shall the City Charter be amended to:

- (1) Prohibit new development on Airport land, except for parks, public open spaces and public recreational facilities, until the voters approve limits on the uses and development that may occur on the land; and
- (2) Affirm the City Council's authority to manage the Airport and to close all or part of it"

60% yes, 40% no



# COMMUNITY DIRECTION ON AIRPORT



## HIGH-LEVEL OUTLINE OF PROCESS AND SCOPE FOR FUTURE STUDY

- Global case studies
- Implementation pathways
- Funding approaches
- Staffing and consultant recommendations

\*The Airport Conversion Report was not published due to delays with the Recreation and Parks Masterplan





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# The Planning Process

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## THREE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS TO START THE CONVERSATION

What are We  
Working With?

What work needs to be  
done to prepare the  
land?

What Do We  
Want & Need?

Inclusive, multi-  
generational vision

What Can We  
Afford?

Economic  
Sustainability

## IDENTIFYING CONSENSUS AROUND COMMUNITY PREFERENCES



## THREE SCOPE COMPONENTS RECOMMENDED

1. Establish the baseline.  
Comprehensive site evaluation and existing conditions.
2. Work with the community.  
Outreach and engagement – vision, testing, consensus.
3. Scenario planning.  
Concept exploration, alternatives planning and refinement around a great park and supporting uses.



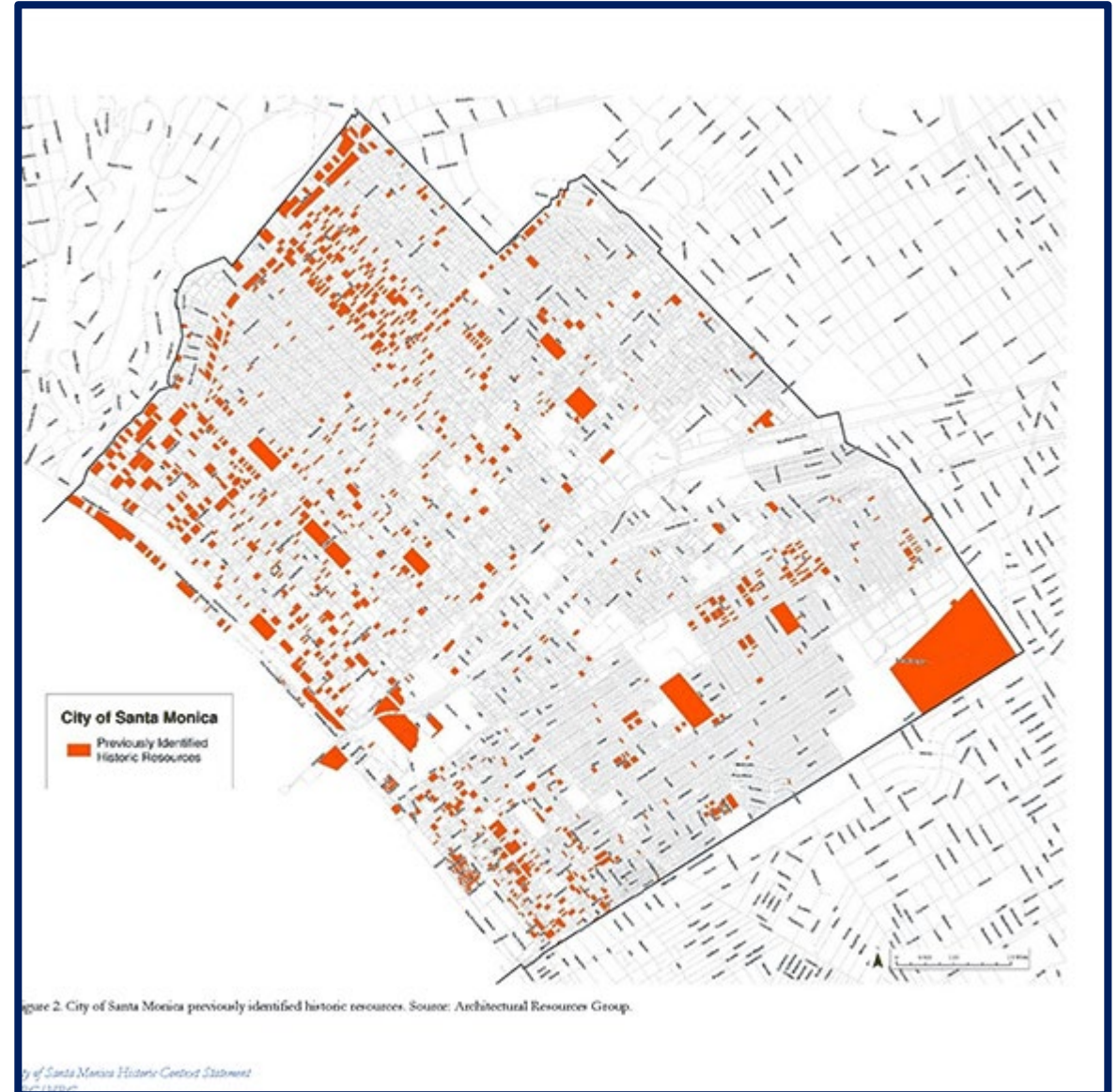
Park – Non-revenue generating. Costly to build/maintain.



Mixed Use – Revenue generating. Growth concerns.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

- Historic Resource Analysis
  - Comprehensive background research and field investigations of buildings, structures and other features
  - Interviews
  - Potential identification of historic structures or features corresponding to Santa Monica's Industrial Development



## PUBLIC – CITY FINANCED

- Scaled up version of conventional park.
- City leads with public funds.
- Traditionally done in large cities, would be challenging for Santa Monica.

Figure 6: Public Approach Example





## PUBLIC + BENEFACTOR

- Requires significant private donations
- More conversion of hardscape to parkland and increased access

case studies.

Figure 7: Public+ Approach Example



## PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

- City partnership with neighborhood development interests.
- Increased access including public transportation connection to the Expo line possible.
- Airport Avenue could be realigned to allow multimodal access and improve intersections.

Figure 8: Public-Private Partnership Approach Example





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# Timelines

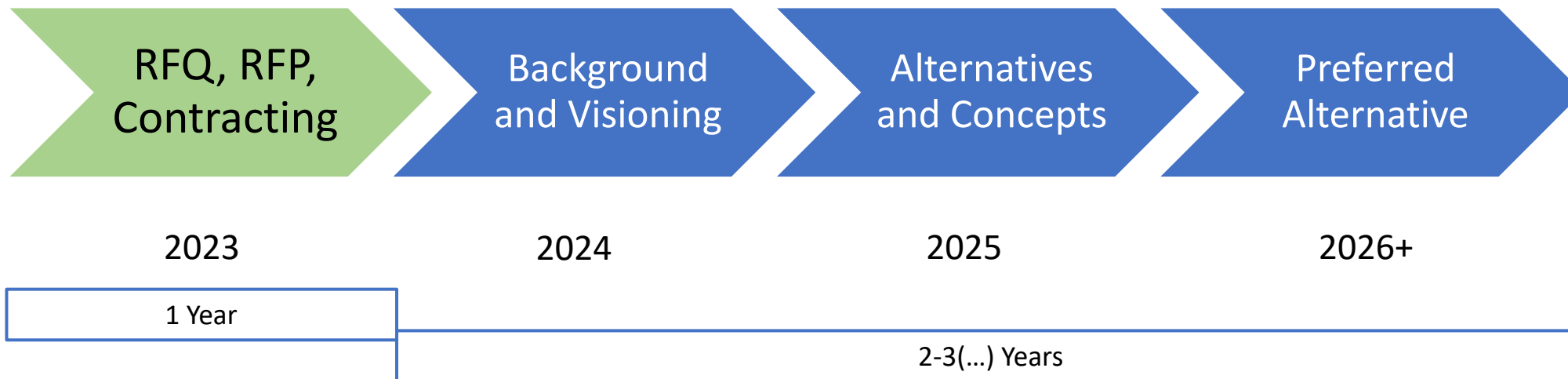
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## Project Initiation - 2023    Project Completion - 2026(ish)

- Council January 24, 2023
- RFQ issued: Today!
- RFQ deadline: March
- Vetting of Quals: April-May
- RFP Issued: April
- RFP Deadline: May
- Candidate interviews: June
- Selection: July
- Council Authorization: August
- Contract Execution: October
- Project Kickoff: October 2023 - January 2024

## Project Process



**QUESTIONS?**

<http://www.santamonica.gov/future-of-santa-monica-airport-project>



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