

Letter to the VCB Membership

6/25/2023

VCB'ers,

I am asking every member of the Valley Circle Burners ***to help keep our flying field.*** You can do this by accessing an on-line survey and making your voice heard. Do this right away. Time is not our friend here. The details on how to do this are below, along with details of things to watch out for.

This past Tuesday morning I participated along with the Valley Flyers leadership in a 90 minute teleconference with consulting company Geosyntec who is conducting the "reVisioning of Sepulveda Basin." And Tuesday evening I attended in person a community meeting held at the YMCA in Van Nuys. The study is being done at the behest of the City of LA, which is trying to make changes to user activities and amenities at the Basin. When complete, they will need to present their changes to the US Army Corp of Engineers for review, likely requiring an update to their Master Plan which approves activities on the land. The last Master Plan consideration/update was in 2012, so a new one is due, but it seems the city and their financial sponsors are driving the current process, not the USACE.

I got to see the faces and names of many of the people involved. They presented a slide deck of what they have done so far (we are coming to the party late again....) and showed a timeline of where they are going. It is more compressed than the similar previous effort at Whitter from the 2008-2012 timeframe.

Of the three draft proposals on the table, ***one proposal is a complete non-starter for us: model flight activities would be relocated "somewhere else."*** Either they didn't appreciate how hard that would be or they believe that they can justify this repurposing based on usage/needs. We have work to do there to show them that the overall flying field gets plenty of usage, and that usage has spinoff benefits. As far as an alternate location I simply don't believe it. In my view it would be next to impossible to find a new location for a flying field until you were past Newhall or out into the Antelope Valley.

The current push seems to come from several study sponsors in the environmental community. The study is currently strongly worded for the improvement of nature/wild lands etc. This is our biggest threat.

We've been through this before at Whittier back in 2008-2012. It was tedious and takes time. But a presence is necessary or else any crazy idea can replace model flying in the park. The current effort at the Basin feels to me like we are in a weaker position now than we were at Whittier, so I am concerned.

What can each of you do? I am asking each of our members to fill in an on-line survey concerning changes to the park. You can access it from your computer, by logging in at:

Sepulveda Basin Vision Plan Early Ideas Survey ([surveymonkey.com](https://www.surveymonkey.com))

As a minimum, please answer questions 11, 17, 22 and 28.

11. Relocate model airplane flight field to another Valley site.

0—I like (moving) it!

0—No opinion

0—Opposed

[This is a no-brainer. There is almost no chance they will ever find us another field within 50-75 miles—if they bother to try helping us at all after they boot us out. Don't fall for this bait and switch tactic.]

17. Upgrade model airplane flight field.

0—I like it!

0—No opinion

0—Opposed

[I suggest “I like it” although what we really want is for more maintenance and repairs to the current facility, not for some improvement that no one will likely want to pay for which makes us a liability]

22. Maintain model airplane flight field as it exists today.

0—I like it!

0—No opinion

0—Opposed

[Absolutely vote “I like it!” This is the most important question in the survey for any modeler that wants to keep flying.]

24. Which trail and path types are you most excited about?

0—LA River trail

0—Community trails

0—Bridges

0—Loop trails

0—Footpaths

0—Equestrian multi-use

[Just don't vote for Loop Trails. They are currently shown as incompatible with the R/C overflight area as best I can tell. I am also skeptical of Footpaths. The others do not seem to pose a conflict at this point in time.]

28. Which Alternative are you most excited about?

0—The Wildlands

0—The Terraced Floodplain

0—The River Valley

0—None

[Pick the River Valley as it is the closest to the current land use and the model field impacts will hopefully be minimal. You might pick “None” but remember that these are city leaders and they want to spend money and show they did something. But absolutely do not vote for the Wildlands proposal. If that wins, modeling is gone in the San Fernando valley.]

You can read about the process at: Sepulveda Basin Vision Plan | Bureau of Engineering (lacity.org)

If you have questions about what is in each proposal or what a survey question means you can call me. Be careful about entering and leaving the survey as it might not let you back in?

If you have ideas about further defense of the flying field, call me to discuss. I can also provide info on other things that we and the Valley Flyers are already doing, or already planning. For now, we need as many modelers to reply to the survey as possible.

Dave Hull

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