



TORRANCE AIRPORT ASSOCIATION

2785 Pacific Coast Highway

Torrance, CA 90505

TAAinfo.org

01/18/2021

Hon Mayor and Members of the Torrance City Council
Via e-mail

Subject: Automated Aviation Weather Observation System (AWOS)

Dear Mayor Furey and Council Members:

I write to suggest a project that could greatly increase safety at our airport and, at the same time, save the City some money. Shifting funding from one of the approved airport capital projects would pay for the acquisition and operation of a AWOS system for several years and would cost much less than the currently-approved project (which has little support from the aviation community).

As a pilot approaches a destination airport, he/she needs some critical information to make a safe arrival:

- Altimeter setting (so that the pilot has accurate information about clearance from obstacles and can fly the traffic pattern at the correct altitude above the ground)
- Wind speed, direction and gusts (so that the pilot can prepare to apply the appropriate procedures to counter them)
- Ceiling and visibility (so the pilot knows if he/she can legally approach and land at that airport)
- Runway in use (so that the pilot can safely merge into any existing traffic)
- Common traffic advisory frequency (so that the pilot can announce his location and intentions to other traffic and understand their locations and intentions)

When the control tower is operating, this information is provided via recorded announcements over a frequency published for that airport (the automatic terminal information system--ATIS). When there is no control tower or when the tower is closed, this information is not available unless there is an AWOS system at that airport. Although every other airport in the Los Angeles Basin has an automated weather observation system, Torrance Airport DOES NOT!

Our Association surveyed all of the tie-down and east T-hangar tenants to determine if they wanted a AWOS system; 94% of the respondents said "YES." When we asked our members to rank AWOS with the three currently-approved airport projects (fire extinguishers, bathroom remodel, and east-Ts pilot lounge), 78% ranked AWOS as their top priority. The pilot lounge project ranked at the bottom with very little interest--57% said it was their lowest priority.

We recommend that the pilot lounge project (budget \$352,000) be scrapped in favor of installing an AWOS (estimated \$150,000 acquisition cost and annual \$1,000 maintenance/calibration cost).

Sincerely,
Jim Gates, President

AWOS/ASOS status at Los Angeles Basin airports

| Airport | Has Control Tower? | Has AWOS/ASOS? |
|-----------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Torrance | YES * | NO |
| Santa Monica | YES * | YES |
| Los Angeles | YES | YES |
| Hawthorne | YES * | YES |
| Santa Ana | YES * | YES |
| Van Nuys | YES | YES |
| Whiteman | YES * | YES |
| El Monte | YES * | YES |
| Brackett | YES * | YES |
| Fullerton | YES * | YES |
| Chino | YES * | YES |
| Cable | NO | YES |
| Compton | NO | YES |
| Catalina | NO | YES |
| Corona | NO | YES |
| Camarillo | YES * | YES |
| Long Beach | YES * | YES |
| Riverside | YES * | YES |
| Burbank | YES | YES |
| French Valley | NO | YES |

* Indicates control tower operates part-time

Our members' ranking of planned airport capital projects

TAA asked its members to rank these four projects from highest to lowest priority. The rankings shown are total points from 4 (most desirable) to 1 (least desirable). 79% of those who responded picked the AWOS as their top priority.

| AIRPORT PROJECT | RANKING (4=HIGHEST PRIORITY; 1=LOWEST PRIORITY) | PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO PICKED THIS PROJECT AS TOP PRIORITY |
|--|---|--|
| Install automated system to provide aviation weather when tower is closed (\$150,000 estimated acquisition cost; \$1,000 estimated annual maintenance) | 3.66 | 79% |
| Remodel General Aviation Center and East Ts bathrooms (\$275,000 budgeted) * | 2.39 | 8% |
| Fire extinguishers for City-owned hangars (\$150,000 budgeted) * | 2.14 | 3% |
| East Ts pilots' lounge (\$352,000 budgeted) * | 1.67 | 7% |

* Currently approved capital airport projects