LIVERMORE
CALIFORNIA

CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT **ITEM NO. 7.1**

DATE: April 14, 2025

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: Brandon Cardwell, Innovation and Economic Development Director

SUBJECT: Update on the Airport Land Use and Development Study Including Next Steps

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Staff recommends the City Council receive a presentation on the Airport Land Use and Development Study and Next Steps.

SUMMARY

Staff conducted an Airport Land Use and Development Study (Study) to identify potential development approaches in response to the needs of the City, Airport, and the surrounding community, and to guide the implementation of the Airport Leasing and Development Policy. The Study drew three key conclusions:

- **Mix of uses** –There is a desire for a range of uses at the Airport balancing the needs of current and potential Airport users, as well as the broader community.
- **Hangars and Supporting Infrastructure** – There is a need for aircraft storage and related infrastructure to support operations and reduce potential impacts to the community.
- **Forecast and Comprehensive Planning** - There may be a need to identify current and long-term aviation demand to facilitate non-aeronautical uses in compliance with FAA requirements.

Based on this information, staff plans to pursue the following four projects to improve operational efficiency, leverage the Airport as a community asset, and generate revenue consistent with the Airport operational policies established in Resolution 2010-058:

1. Develop an approach and move forward with hangar development to address longstanding demand.
2. Explore the potential of a multi-agency public safety complex to improve local and regional emergency response.
3. Pursue an Aviation Innovation Center to foster new technologies in aviation and related sectors.
4. Explore electric aircraft technologies (including EVTOLS) and other advance aviation mobility

(AAM) to help facilitate advancement in sustainable transportation and improve mobility.

If there is suitable acreage remaining after exploring these four areas, staff will evaluate whether it is necessary to conduct additional demand analysis to allow for potential mixed-use and non-aeronautical development. Based on the outcome of the demand analysis, the City would decide whether to prepare a comprehensive long-range plan to establish a vision and strategy for Airport development.

Staff recommends the City Council receive a presentation on the Land Use and Development Study, which is found in Attachment 1, and an update on staff's proposed next steps.

DISCUSSION

Staff initiated the Airport Land Use and Development Study (Study) to identify available and advisable uses of Livermore Airport (Airport) land. The Study differs from the existing Livermore Airport Leasing and Development Policy (Development Policy) in that the Development Policy identifies a process for reviewing development applications, but it does not identify the types of development projects that best address site conditions, use constraints, and community needs, which was the intent of the Study. The Study incorporates provisions of federal, regional, and local requirements, including Resolution No. 2010-058, which establishes operational policies for the Airport, as well as extensive community engagement.

Background and Surrounding Context

The Airport is located in the western portion of the city, south of I-580 generally between El Charro Road and Isabel Avenue and north of Jack London Blvd. The Airport encompasses approximately 590 acres and is immediately surrounded by industrial and commercial uses and sand and gravel mining operations. The Airport is regulated by federal, state, and local policies and planning documents, all of which influence use of Airport lands.

Federal Aviation Administration Requirements

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) designates the Airport as a General Aviation Reliever Airport that does not provide passenger service on commercial airlines.

The FAA categorizes Airport land use into 4 categories and prioritizes Aeronautical and Airport Purpose uses:

- **Aeronautical:** Highest priority for airport land. Directly support the operation of aircraft: runways, taxiways, aprons, hangars, and facilities related to the storage, maintenance, and fueling of aircraft.
- **Airport Purpose (Aeronautical-Related):** Related to, but not directly involved in the operation of aircraft: terminal buildings, aircraft manufacturing and maintenance facilities, and training facilities.
- **Mixed Use:** Combination of aeronautical and non-aeronautical activities: air cargo, research and development facilities, warehouse, office, or other space used for non-aeronautical purposes.
- **Non-Aeronautical:** Uses unrelated to aviation that do not support aircraft operations: commercial development, shopping centers, hotels, and office buildings.

The Study identified and evaluated 14 undeveloped sites on Airport land, totaling 165 acres. Because

the Airport is obligated by FAA under grant assurances, uses are limited to Aeronautical and Airport Purpose to support Airport functions and operations unless otherwise approved by the FAA. FAA may approve mixed use and non-aeronautical uses on Airport land with proper justification, including an aviation demand assessment that demonstrates adequate land or facilities remain to meet current and future needs of the Airport.

Local Planning and Policy Documents

In addition to FAA requirements, there are local Airport plans and regulations:

- **Alameda County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan:** Encourages compatibility between airports and the various land uses that surround them.
- **Livermore General Plan:** Policy goals to maintain safety, minimize noise impacts, and ensure safe airspace through compatible development.
- **Livermore Development Code:** Identifies permitted aviation-oriented uses and appropriate development standards.
- **Livermore Resolution 2010-058:** Establishes policy framework (to the extent feasible under federal law) which authorizes development of the Airport in response to demand for aviation services and hangars or in support of the local community (such as law enforcement and emergency or disaster relief services), subject to the recommendation of the Livermore Airport Commission.
- **Airport Layout Plan:** Detailed graphical and written plan providing a blueprint for the development of an airport.
- **Airport Leasing and Development Policy:** Processes/procedures to evaluate and approve or reject proposals related to the leasing and/or development of aeronautical and non- aeronautical land at the Airport.

<u>Community and Stakeholder Engagement</u>

The project team conducted a variety of community and stakeholder engagement processes through a range of channels:

- **Focus Groups** - The consultant team interviewed 18 participants from community, environmental, and Airport user groups. Staff did not meet with these groups directly. The consultant team conducted anonymous interview sessions and collected key themes and takeaways.
- **Open Houses** - Staff hosted two open houses. 91 members of the community attended. Participants were asked to rank the types of uses they would most like to see at the Airport. Staff was available to answer questions and discuss the Study objectives.
- **Online Survey** - Staff posted a month-long online survey with a similar activity to the open houses for those who could not attend. Staff received approximately 850 responses.

Participants were not limited to one channel and in some cases may have attended multiple events.

General themes and topics included the following:

- **Growth & Development:** Responsibly manage Airport growth, addressing demand for new hangars in accordance with the 2010 Resolution, and explore the feasibility of supportive non-aeronautical uses including research and development, workforce development, and other

services on the Airport property.

- **Sustainability & Innovation:** Explore opportunities for renewable energy generation (e.g., solar, hydrogen), aviation research and development, and emerging technologies like Advanced Air Mobility, electric vertical takeoff and landing (eVTOL) aircraft. These technologies operate without emission and have minimized noise profiles but also require infrastructure upgrades for future integration. Address environmental justice, environmental impacts, and air quality through unleaded aviation fuel at the Airport (which has now occurred).
- **Community Engagement:** Expand regular community engagement at the Airport including aviation-related educational programs, STEM centers, increased communication regarding Airport activities and events to foster public interaction.
- **Noise & Safety:** Manage aircraft and operational noise management through noise reporting and pilot education. Limit future Airport development due to safety, noise, and concerns about environmental and health impacts.

Sites Potential and Opportunities

The results of the Study are summarized in a technical memo found in Attachment 1. The Study investigated the site and regulatory attributes of each of the 14 undeveloped areas. Based on the site's characteristics, location, and regulatory constraints, the Study classified recommended uses at each site as: no development recommended, allowable uses, and conditional uses.

- **No Development** - Sites that were not recommended for development were generally natural open space and currently provide flood protection.
- **Allowable Uses** - Sites classified as Allowable uses are suited for the Aeronautical or Airport Purpose land use category, which may require taxiway or airside access. Suitable uses may include hangars, aircraft maintenance, aviation businesses and services consistent with current FAA regulations.
- **Conditional Uses** - Sites recommended for Conditional uses are suitable for Mixed-Use or Non-Aeronautical land uses, which may include manufacturing, warehousing & distribution, fuel and energy production, hospitality, as well as STEM or aviation training and research and development facilities. The Conditional option can only be considered once necessary information is available and clearly demonstrates the site is not needed for foreseeable aeronautical purposes and FAA land use approval is granted.

Some sites were identified with a dual Allowable and Conditional designation, which acknowledges Aeronautical and Airport Purpose uses are allowable under the current FAA regulatory conditions, but conditional uses may be feasible and even desirable pending FAA approval. Overall, sites along the southern portion of Airport property identified allowable and conditional uses. Undeveloped sites to the west were not recommended for development due to their open space characteristics, and sites around existing Airport Facilities are identified as Allowable Uses with limited exceptions.

Classification	No Development	Allowable	Conditional
Site Number	2,10W,12,13,14	3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10E	3,7,8,9,10E,11

A thorough site assessment is located on Table 2 - Application of Key Findings to LVK Sites on pages 23-24, and site identification is found on the corresponding map on page 26 of the Study’s technical memo. (Attachment 1).

Key Findings and Next Steps

The Study (and engagement process) resulted in the following Key Findings:

- **Mix of uses** –There is a desire for a range of uses at the Airport balancing the needs of current and potential Airport users, as well as the broader community.
- **Hangars and Supporting Infrastructure** – There is a need for aircraft storage and related infrastructure to support operations and reduce potential impacts to community.
- **Forecast and Comprehensive Planning** - There may be a need to identify current and long-term Airport demands to facilitate other uses in compliance with FAA requirements.

Based on the above findings, staff plans to pursue the following four projects to improve operational efficiency, leverage the Airport as a community asset, and generate revenue consistent with the Airport operational policies established in Resolution 2010-058:

1. Develop an approach and move forward with hangar development to serve the existing waitlist.
2. Explore the potential of a multi-agency public safety complex to improve local and regional emergency response.
3. Pursue an Aviation Innovation Center to foster new technologies in aviation and related sectors.
4. Explore electric aircraft technologies (including EVTOLs) and other advance aviation mobility (AAM) to help facilitate advancement in sustainable transportation and improve mobility.

If there is suitable acreage remaining after exploring these four areas, staff will evaluate whether it is necessary to conduct additional demand analysis to allow for potential mixed-use and non-aeronautical development. Based on the outcome of the demand analysis, the City would decide whether to prepare a comprehensive long-range plan to establish a vision and strategy for Airport development.

AIRPORT COMMISSION

On March 19, 2025, staff presented the Land Use Study to the Airport Commission. The Commission asked questions regarding the process and the next steps. Staff explained the advisory role of the Airport Commission in the preparation and implementation of the four-part development strategy. Additionally, staff provided an overview of the role of the Commission when reviewing specific development proposals in compliance with the Airport Development Policy.

The Commission recommended using language that was more agnostic when discussing the Land Use Study's next steps rather than focusing on any one aviation technology.

Ultimately, the Commission accepted the report, agreed with the conclusions drawn, and supported staff's next steps to prepare a four-part development strategy. The Commission further directed staff to prepare a FAQ in response to public comments and questions received at the meeting.

Public Comments

Approximately 15 members of the public provided comments and asked questions at the Commission meeting. Comments varied. Some speakers supported the Study and the four-part development strategy, expressing interest in new technologies, training programs, and increased public safety. Other

speakers expressed concerns about noise, safety, air quality, and eVTOL technology.

Some commenters recommended moving forward with a master plan to determine feasibility of non-aeronautical uses at the Airport. Additionally, speakers asked questions about the ongoing PFAS reporting, specific details regarding hanger development, sizes, and locations as well as details regarding the Innovation Center. Finally, speakers requested additional outreach and asked that environmental analysis prepared by local stakeholder groups be included in the Study.

FISCAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE IMPACTS

Preparation of the Airport Land Use Study required staff resources from both the Innovation and Economic Development and Community Development Departments. Consultant costs were approximately $149,000.

In the next phase, Staff will prepare the four-part development strategy with some input from economic development consultants. The development strategy will include evaluation of capital, service, and operational costs compared to potential tax revenues or other revenue streams (lease rents, etc.). The development strategy will assess whether development associated with hangar development, safety complex, innovation center, and AAM technologies can generate sufficient revenue to cover its costs, and/or provide additional benefit to the Airport and the General Fund.

COMMUNITY PILLAR

5: A City that Works

GOAL

14: Develop, operate, and maintain the City's Infrastructure

ATTACHMENTS

1. Airport Land Use Study Memo

Prepared by: Andy Ross
Principal Planner

Approved by:

Marianna A. Burch
City Manager

Fiscal Review by:

Tina Olson
Administrative Services Director