



Memorandum

TO: MAYOR & CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Councilmember Donald Rocha

**SUBJECT: WEST SIDE OF AIRPORT
DEVELOPMENT**

DATE: March 19, 2012

Approved

Don Rocha

Date

3/19/12

RECOMMENDATION

Approve the recommendations provided in the Memo from the Mayor and Councilmembers Herrera, Pyle, and Liccardo on March 16, 2012 with the following modified direction:

1. Direct staff to pursue *Option #1 – The Planning-First Approach* as stated in Airport Staff's Supplemental Memorandum from March, 2 2012 and incorporate the recommendations from the Mayor and Councilmembers Herrera, Pyle, and Liccardo in the planning process where appropriate.

ANALYSIS

I want to start out by thanking the Mayor and Councilmembers Herrera, Pyle, and Liccardo for their recent memo recommending changes to the RFP process for the Airport's West Side lands. I agree with them that welcoming proposals for a variety of different types of uses is a smart approach.

Just as important as how we do the RFP, however, is when we do it. I believe there are important questions we need to answer on this issue before releasing an RFP. For any development project, the size and configuration of the site is basic and vital information: it is very difficult to determine how best to develop a site if you don't know how big it is. Unfortunately, at this time we do not know how much land at the Airport will be developable—the size of the site depends on the fate of runway 11-29, which has yet to be decided.

In their supplemental memo dated March 2, 2012, staff lays out a detailed and methodical “planning-first approach” for the West Side lands, which would allow us to answer basic questions about the site before issuing an RFP. I believe this approach follows a more traditional decision tree process, which will take the first steps in unbundling the complex issues regarding land use and development at the airport. Furthermore, the “planning-first approach” allows for greater input from the community and our business partners before moving forward immediately with an RFP process. This direction will hopefully address the concerns that have already been raised and give us the best chance of developing the site in a way that will maximize its long-term value to the Airport and the public.

I can understand that in difficult times there is a temptation to make short-term decisions, but it is my belief that when it comes to a major facility like the Airport, which will be around long after all of us have left the Council, we have an obligation to make decisions that will hold up not just over the next three years, but over the next three decades.