

Levi C. Maaia – Airport Commission Applicant
October 30, 2018

Good afternoon Mayor Murillo and Honorable Members of the City Council.

My name is Levi Maaia. I live in Santa Barbara on the Mesa with my wife and four-year-old daughter. For the past 14 years I have worked in the telecommunications and media industry serving in chief technology and public relations roles. I also served as the part-time outreach and communications director for Anacapa School for several years. I recently completed a major project preparing for and executing the sale of an internet and cable television service provider on the East Coast with which I was intimately involved in the transaction. I earned a PhD in education from UCSB and I am presently working on a documentary film and research project.

Since my first flight lesson at Santa Barbara Airport in 2007, I have logged more than 2,000 takeoffs and landings into and out of Santa Barbara for work, pleasure and as a volunteer pilot for Angel Flight West, a Los Angeles-based nonprofit providing air transport for children and adults with serious medical conditions. I have since earned a private pilot certificate and instrument and seaplane ratings as well as a commercial small unmanned aerial system certificate for drone operation. When I first learned to fly, we were still using paper in the cockpit and relying largely on voice-based weather forecasts. Just a decade later, the FAA's NextGen systems have brought the radar and weather scopes into my panel and iPads have replaced a flight bag full of paper.

Over the years, I have watched the many physical improvements at the airport and followed the airport commission by attending its meetings on occasion. I have read the Recommended Airport Master Plan Concept and I am familiar with many of the issues as a frequent airport user. What we call general aviation, non-scheduled or private air operations are an important lifeblood to our community, providing essential medical care, firefighting operations, flight training and business travel.

As an aviator, I am excited to be living on the brink of another great revolution in air travel. Safe, efficient and economical electric-powered aircraft that are designed for short-distance hops are not far over the horizon. In fact, there are Silicon Valley startups planning to launch flying, on-demand transportation in Los Angeles in less than two years!

In much the same way that ridesharing revolutionized ground transportation in cities, the technological changes coming to air transportation will change how people view air travel. The airport must continue to be prepared to ensure that resources are developed and maintained to allow existing commercial and general aviation as well as new GA technologies to thrive, while meeting the economic, environmental and lifestyle needs of local residents.

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My business experience – particularly in the operations of a customer-centric service provider – as well as my understanding of mergers and acquisitions, coupled with my decade-long tenure as a private pilot on the Central Coast and in Southern California, all make me an excellent candidate to advise this council on these matters. I am willing and able to take on the responsibilities of an airport commissioner. I have served on non-profit boards in the past and I would be capable of managing my schedule to attend commission meetings. As an entrepreneur, I am familiar with setting goals and managing my schedule to accomplish them.

Thank you for your time.