

# CITY OF SUNNYVALE

*The Heart of Silicon Valley<sup>sm</sup>*

456 WEST OLIVE AVENUE SUNNYVALE, CALIFORNIA 94086 (408) 730-7473

May 4, 2012

Anthony (Tony) Spitaleri  
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Administrator Charles F. Bolden, Jr.  
National Aeronautics and Space Administration  
Office of the Administrator  
Washington, DC 20546-0001

RE: Moffett Federal Air Field and Hangar One

Dear Administrator Bolden:

This is in response to your April 6, 2012 letter to the Honorable Anna Eshoo regarding Moffett Federal Airfield and Hangar One. We are deeply troubled that in your letter you state that, "... because NASA determined that these properties no longer have a mission need and are therefore excess to the Agency, NASA's Enhanced Use Lease authority are not available for these properties." We do not agree with, and are strongly opposed to this statement, and to any plan to excess these valuable assets.

It is critical that Moffett Field be maintained as a secure federal airfield. Moffett Federal Airfield is critical to national security, to the local 129<sup>th</sup> Rescue Mission, and to disaster preparedness throughout the Bay area. The men and women serving in the 129<sup>th</sup> Rescue Wing are an invaluable part of our community, and it is critical that they continue to support the mission of the Air National Guard for the safety of the entire Bay Area. Sunnyvale Council Policy 7.3.27 specifically underscores the City's support for NASA/Ames as the lead tenant of the Moffett Complex and steward of a federal limited-use airfield.

Hangar One has been a regional landmark since its construction in 1933 and the City of Sunnyvale is committed to its preservation and future use. The Hangar is one of the most identifiable, architecturally distinguished landmarks of Silicon Valley, which makes it critically important to our visual landscape; it also has great historical value and is well worth preserving for future generations. The Sunnyvale community regards Hangar One as a defining symbol of the important role aviation and space advancement has played in our history.

We cite the following specific concerns:

### Moffett Federal Airfield

- 1) Any significant change to the Airfield by NASA would result in serious national security implications. The defense contractors, on behalf of the U.S. Air Force and other government customers, produce spacecraft and critical national security components that regularly use the secure Moffett Federal Airfield for their shipment to launch sites. Use of alternative sites would pose great costs and risks in transit, either at a commercial airfield or over public roads and highways.
- 2) Under Administrator Bolden's leadership, on September 30, 2009, the California Air National Guard signed a 50-year-old lease with NASA. The 129<sup>th</sup> Air National Guard Rescue Wing uses the secure Moffett Federal Airfield as its base for conducting personnel search and recovery missions. This Unit not only performs important missions in California—they also have been deployed to Afghanistan and successfully recovered 345 servicemen and women in combat zones. The 129<sup>th</sup> Air National Guard Rescue Wing has collaborated with NASA on a variety of projects including airlift for the Houghton Mars Project and the Leonid Multi-Instrument Aircraft Campaign. They also provide rescue support of manned space flights. Future projects would involve the employment of airborne sensors to measure the effects of global climate change in remote locations.
- 3) Moffett Federal Airfield is designated by FEMA as a "Base Support Installation" making it essential for movement of federal personnel and materials in response to an emergency. FEMA has partnered with NASA and maintains a warehouse with emergency supplies and equipment at Moffett Federal Airfield. The Airfield is located on bedrock which makes it one of the few stable locations in the Bay Area suitable for evacuations or relief missions should a natural or manmade destructive force hit the region. During the Loma Prieta Earthquake in 1989, Moffett Airfield was chosen to coordinate all military aircraft activities within the Bay Area, and provided air transportation for state and federal government officials.
- 4) We vigorously disagree with the assessment that "these properties no longer have a mission need." NASA currently manages three airfields including Moffett Federal Airfield in California. NASA not only uses the Airfield for innovative green aviation work, unmanned aerial systems, and other technology programs; it has also built strategic partnerships with over a dozen organizations that depend on this successful collaboration. These collaborations further our nation's understanding and progress in space and aeronautics, and the Airfield is an essential component to future innovation. We believe NASA's strong and dynamic partnerships at Moffett Federal Airfield are important not just for the Agency, but for the strength and vitality of the Bay Area, and for the entire country.
- 5) These partners contribute financially to NASA's maintenance of the airfield, so there is virtually no impact on the Agency's budget. In fact, there is nothing preventing NASA from pursuing future space-related partnerships that build on the successful collaborations in place today.

### Hangar One

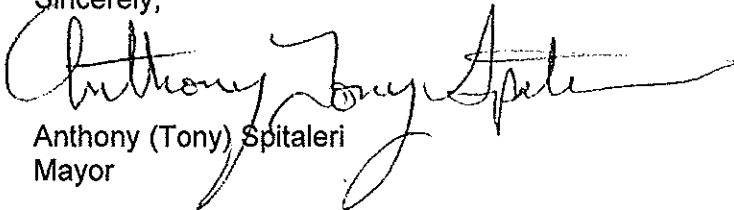
- 1) Sunnyvale strongly supports the preservation of the Hangar and is exploring a private-public partnership for use and funding of the restoration. Currently, the H<sub>211</sub> proposal would not involve one single tax dollar. If NASA moved forward now, not only would community interests be served, but unnecessary bureaucracy and federal expenses would be avoided.

In our December 19, 2011 letter, Sunnyvale requested NASA to evaluate the H<sub>211</sub> proposal out of concern that the private funding to restore the Hangar would no longer be on the table, leaving Hangar One as a gigantic skeleton in the heart of Silicon Valley.

- 2) By summer of this year, with \$25 million tax dollars spent for the clean-up, the Navy will complete "de-skinning" of Hangar One and time is of the essence. NASA must consider the impact of any additional delays that would allow the structure to sit idle and exposed to the elements. NASA must also consider the impact of its decision on the investment already made by the federal government.
- 3) From information provided by GSA, NASA could use its Historic Preservation Act authority to lease Hangar One to a qualified tenant should NASA choose not use its Enhanced Use Lease (EUL) authority. NASA made a commitment to the preservation of Hangar One, and, given the historic value of this property, using the Historic Preservation Act authority should be strongly considered.
- 4) NASA HQ has approved the current and future use of NASA Ames' property plans multiple times. In 2002, HQ approved a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement and filed a Record of Decision for the NASA Ames Development Plan that specifically highlighted the NASA Research Park and also outlined plans for the Eastside Airfield property. This action followed a three-year planning and environmental review period in close collaboration with NASA HQ and with considerable public input. In 2003, the General Services Administration awarded NASA its "Best Innovative Policy" for the NASA Ames Development Plan and NASA Research Park. In 2006, NASA HQ approved a 20-year Ames Center Master Plan that provided a business case analysis and land use plans. In 2010, HQ approved Ames' updated Master Plan.

It is critical that NASA leverage the taxpayer dollars that have already supported the Navy's clean-up activities to date, and evaluate options for continued use of Hangar One. Moffett Federal Airfield is critical to the Bay Area security, and to national security. We oppose any action to deem these properties excess, and strongly urge you to reconsider this plan.

Sincerely,



Anthony (Tony) Spitaleri  
Mayor

cc: Congresswoman Anna Eshoo  
Senator Dianne Feinstein  
Senator Barbara Boxer  
Sunnyvale City Council  
Sunnyvale City Manager, Gary Luebbers  
Mountain View City Council  
Mountain View City Manager, Daniel H. Rich