TERMINAL

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Passengers disembark a Southwest Airlines jet to the newly opened terminal on Tuesday at Hollywood Burbank Airport. **PHOTOS BY ROB CURTIS**

or activities of the site itself. They're also very in tune with the architecture of the large canopy that unites this whole airport."

As passengers made their way through security, parents took breaks from managing their children to take in the new terminal.

Robin Johnson, who travels twice a year from Texas to visit her son in Reseda, said she uses the Hollywood Burbank Airport out of convenience, and that her son would have to take an entire day off work to drop her at LAX. Other than the inconvenience of some TSA workers having to wear sunglasses and shield their eyes from the rising sun, she said the new terminal maintained its efficiency and convenience.

"Getting through check-in and everything was smooth, and dropping off was a little smoother than the old one because it was such a tiny place," she said. "It's easy to maneuver and you can easily tell where the gates are."

David Leight, who was traveling from Maryland to visit family, echoed that he chose Burbank's airport out of convenience and to avoid the hubbub of LAX.

Hampton said that he hopes the new terminal will convince people to fly from Hollywood Burbank even if it means a slightly longer travel day.

"It takes me an hour and 20 minutes to get to LAX," Hampton said. "My ultimate goal is to get people to come here and see the convenience of it. But beyond the convenience of it, when they see how people are treating them here, they're going to say, okay, it may be worth a 30-minute layover somewhere, or maybe an hour layover somewhere, just to be treated like a human being when you walk into the airport."

Hollywood Burbank Airport came in fifth among medium-sized airports, rising four spots from 2025, according to an annual survey by JD Power of North America released earlier this month. Ontario International Airport, meanwhile, remained No. 2 in the medium category.

LAX, amid a mammoth construction boom in preparation for the 2028 Olympics, ranked 14th among mega-sized airports, handling 33 million or more passengers per year. That's an improvement of one spot over last year.

In Orange County, though, John Wayne Airport dropped 10 slots in the large airport rankings — the biggest tumble of all. (Long Beach and Van Nuys airports do not qualify for the rankings, which rate 24 larger airports in North America.)

LAX is racing to the finish line to complete an ambitious slate of improvements before the Olympics' third engagement in L.A. in 2028.

In 2018, Los Angeles officials planned an wide array of 28 bus and rail projects to transform public transit. Some were scrapped but others moved forward, including the extension of a subway line to connect Downtown with UCLA, the planned home of the Olympic Village, and the much ballyhooed Skylink system, formerly known as the Automated People Mover.



An Alaska Airlines plane departs from the upgraded, 355,000-square-foot terminal at Hollywood Burbank Airport, which opened Tuesday in Burbank.

Overall, the program has grown into $30 billion in capital improvements to sweepingly improve access at LAX before 2028's Olympic and Paralympic torches are lit. Improvements under way also include a new rental car center, upgrades to roadways and curbs and major improvements at terminals, including the Tom Bradley Terminal modernization.

Skylink, LAX's long-awaited system to move travelers around terminals and transit stops at the sprawling complex, started running without passengers in April. It was initially targeted to be operational before fans arrived for the World Cup games at Inglewood's SoFi Stadium in June and July, but is still not welcoming travelers on board.

Construction on the people mover began in 2019 with an original target debut of 2023. The project has since been delayed multiple times due to technical challenges and disputes between Los Angeles World Airports and the contractor, LAX Integrated Express Solutions. It is now more than 99% complete, according to officials.

Those disputes have resulted in significant financial claims and contributed to delays in testing timelines. Officials said they remain hopeful outstanding issues can be resolved without further postponements.

Airport officials said the 2.25-mile people mover will be tested on a full schedule until it opens for passengers. The trains will circulate through the airport's central terminal area, linking terminals with parking facilities and pickup and drop-off zones. Six stations will be open to ticketed passengers, their guests and airport employees for free.

City News Service contributed to this report



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