COAL COALITION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN LEADERS
COMMENTARY

Legislative and Investment Imperatives (cont'd)

III. Complete the Southland Airport
(an overdue and much-needed economic generator)



The **September 2011** and **February 2019** Coalition Power Breakfasts were devoted to articulating the need for the Southland Airport as an economic generator for Chicago Southside and South Suburban communities. See 2012 Press Release -COAL Backs ALNAC Airport Plan and COAL News - Economic Generator: South Suburban Airport

The **March 28, 2019** Issue of COAL NEWS included the following: State Lawmakers Press Gov. Pritzker to Support South Suburban Airport

A strong case has been made over and over again for developing the Southland Airport and this initiative continues to be the investment to make for Illinois officials committed to placing an economic generator in an area of significant benefit to black communities, from the southside of Chicago through numerous south suburban municipalities and beyond.

So, what has prevented the airport from being built? For years, Chicago Mayors, Daley and then Rahm, successfully blocked this major development, even as Illinois governors acquired the acreage for the Airport and the FAA supported a third airport for the Chicagoland area. And those elected officials whose constituents would benefit most lacked the political will, courage and a strategic plan of action, to force the initiative coming to fruition.

Now in 2022, with infrastructure and other funds readily available, with both the Mayor of Chicago and the Governor having at one point or another expressed support for the Southland Airport, with support from numerous elected officials, support from impacted communities, support from organizations and others interested in improving opportunities for Black people, with the need for good-paying jobs and opportunities for small business growth, and the unrealized need for a major economic engine to spur sustained economic growth in the Southland areas, **the funding of the Southland airport, represents the most pressing of investment imperatives.**

Recently, COAL, along with partners Delmarie Cobb and Mark Wallace, met with State Rep. Sonya Harper, Chair of the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus (ILBC) to discuss the Southland Airport and its importance in economic growth for the Black community. This group committed to meeting with the full ILBC in the near term for further discussion towards moving this development forward. A presentation for candidates for the 1st Congressional seat is also in motion.

Bottom line: The Southland Airport needs to be funded and the development launched immediately, and before one dime is expended on a Rockford airport or one more dime committed to O'Hare or Midway upgrades/expansions.