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New flight path changes Point Loma landscape

by ROBERT BATES, Loma Portal

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New flight path changes Point Loma landscape

As reported by the Beacon over the past several weeks, San Diego Lindbergh Field's Taxiway C construction will alter the flight path of westerly aircraft departures. To accommodate timely aircraft operations during peak periods, the traditional 275-degree departure track will be supplemented by an additional 250-degree departure track.

This new track will launch jet aircraft directly over a new set of homes, businesses and schools.

The Peninsula Community Planning Board Airport Committee [PCPB] (check out www.pcpb.net) has been working hard at mitigating the new noise challenges that this change will bring to our community, but with little success to date.

As reported following the PCPB's Aug. 20 meeting, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the Airport Authority will not budge on their plans to add this more southerly departure path, negatively impacting this new section of Point Loma.

Although the new 250-degree track is allowed by law and has always been available, the airport has chosen not to use it based on a handshake agreement with the surrounding community years ago. However, FAA manager David Borcalli has stated, "We've never signed anything."

Apparently, the FAA and the Airport Authority are determined to break this handshake agreement and implement a new swath of noisy departures. In my thirteen years living in Loma Portal I had, until last week, never seen a jet depart Lindbergh south of the 275 track, but that's now changed with the taxiway construction. And once the additional gates and capacity are added to the airport over the next several years, you can bet these 250-degree departures will become commonplace. Going forward, this issue's negative ramifications have the potential to grow exponentially. We are fortunate that Taxiway C construction has afforded us an opportunity to develop long-term plans.

I implore Point Loma residents to challenge this additional noise signature across our neighborhoods. The Quieter Home Program does not account for this southwesterly track, so our homes, businesses and schools will surely feel the brunt of this wholesale change to the peninsula's landscape. If a handshake agreement isn't strong enough, let's get something in writing to protect our property values, businesses, and quality of life.

Robert Bates

Loma Portal resident, airline pilot, naval aviator

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