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Airlines/Airport Examiner

More questions raised at Peninsula Community Planning Board San Diego Airport meeting

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Last Friday the [Peninsula Community Planning Board \(PCPB\) Airport Committee](#) chaired by **Suhail Khalil** held an open meeting at [San Diego International Airport \(SAN\)](#) at the Airport's [Commuter Terminal](#) third floor conference room.

The agenda included projections of the Airport's operations to 2020 and beyond, and a presentation by [FAA](#) Air Traffic Manager **Jeff Tittle** on allowed use and management of the 250 degree departure vector.

Also present were key staff members from the [San Diego County Regional Airport Authority \(SDCRAA\)](#), the agency which operates and manages SAN. These included **Dan Frazee**, Director of Airport Noise Mitigation, **Ryan Hall**, Manager of Strategic Planning, and **Garret Hollarn**, Senior Airport Noise Specialist and Geographic Information System (GIS) Coordinator.

CAPTION: (Above) Peninsula Community Planning Board (PCPB) Airport Committee chaired by Suhail Khalil at meeting of 25 September 2009 (Original photo by Joel Siegfried)

[A slide show follows this article with environmental images of Point Loma.](#)

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CAPTION: (Right) Peninsula Community Planning Board (PCPB) Airport Committee meeting at San Diego International Airport (Original photo by Joel Siegfried)

About a dozen members of the community were present and offered comments. Some raised concerns over potential air quality impact from jet fuel residue. There were also suspicions about the increased departures being a way to accustom the public to more future flights.



CAPTION: (Left) FAA Air Traffic Manager Jeff Tittle (Original photo by Joel Siegfried)

The technical presentations were informative and insightful. Not to diminish their importance, one might conclude, to borrow a title from a children's tale, that San Diego has the "*Little Airport that Could*".

San Diego International Airport (SAN) sits on 661 acres, compared with 20,000 acres for Dallas - Ft. Worth (DFW), and 14 square miles for Denver International Airport (DEN). Its single runway handles about 300 departures and 50,000 passengers a day.

With so little ground space, it's all about flow control. The current 42 gates, which will be upped to 52 after the Green Build Terminal Development Program finishes in 2012, has to be constantly accessible. There can't be aircraft grid lock on the ground, or runway incursions. The single East/West runway 27/9 must remain clear for arrivals as well as departures. Controlling flow is all about aircraft speed, efficiency, and above all else, safety. That's the FAA's mandate.

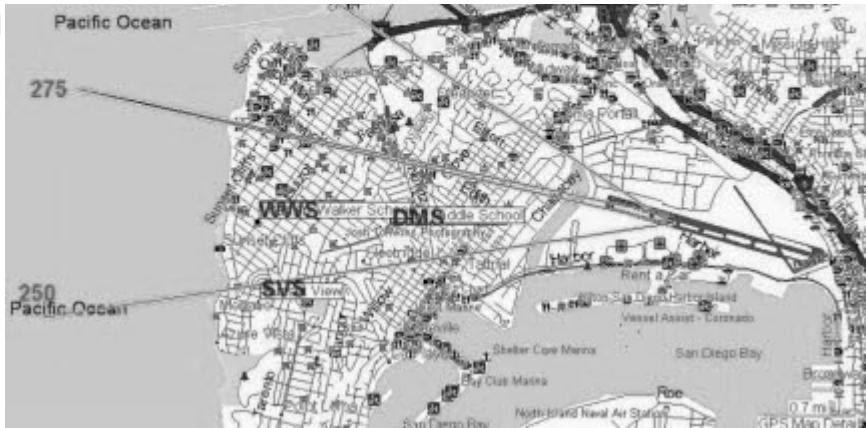
In fact, the FAA's Jeff Tittle, a veteran of over 30 years experience managing aircraft movement stated candidly, "*This airport is too small for this City.*" Yet he also added that his controllers are doing a magnificent job, safety is never compromised, and realistically, as many as 50 departures and arrivals an hour may be accommodated.

CAPTION: (Below Right) GPS map showing San Diego International Airport Departure vectors 250, 275, and 290 degrees. Secondary schools within the flight path are marked by their initials. (Original image by Joel Siegfried)

Speaking about the 250 degree departure heading, Tittle added, "*I don't think we would need to use this*" Vector 250 is used for protection, as a feed off to slower moving traffic, to expedite departures when there is



taxiway congestion on the ground and aircraft start to clog runway access, and for missed approaches, bad weather and go rounds. The resurfacing of taxiway Charlie also impacts ground congestion. There are assertions this currently happens no more than 10 times each day. The FAA manager added, "*The 250 degree heading is not a long term solution.*"

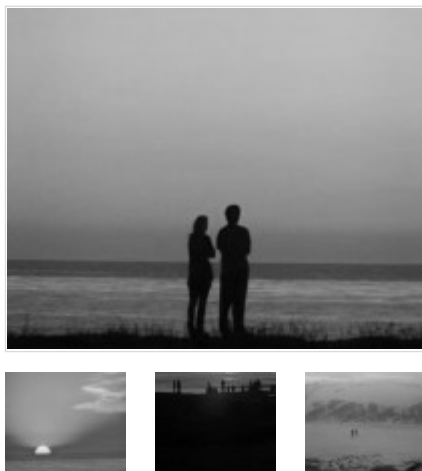


Residents of Point Loma, south of the Ocean Beach fishing pier, which is approximately on the 275 degree departure vector, disagree. One member of the community with whom I spoke counted 15 aircraft over his home one morning between 6:30 a.m. and 7:20 a.m.

Background information and technical details are contained in the next article.

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Slideshow: Environmental images showing the natural beauty of Point Loma



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