

April 2010 Update- All things Aviation:



The last month has been an extremely busy one and what you read below represents only the brief highlights. If you'd like additional information please let the City know.

City of Irvine Supports the John Wayne Airport Corridor City Coalition and its Position Statement

On Tuesday April 13, 2010, the Irvine City Council unanimously and formally endorsed the John Wayne Corridor City Coalition and its position statement. The Corridor Cities Coalition is an important and mutually beneficial organization that works to promote the shared objectives of the affected cities of Orange County while concurrently mitigating any existing and future negative externalities associated with living in close proximity to JWA. Moreover, the capacity of JWA to keep up with consumer demand for air transportation without expanding beyond its current footprint is impossible. To that effect, the combined strength of the cities can be used to effectively promote the use of alternative methods of transportation. Special thanks to the people who worked at obtaining the Irvine vote: Mayor **Keith Curry**, former Mayor **Ed Selich**, City Manager **Dave Kiff**, and the members of **AWG** and **AirFair**.

Irvine joins the cities of Newport, Costa Mesa, Anaheim, Santa Ana, Orange, Tustin, Laguna Beach and the Foothill Community Association and Orange Park Association in adopting the Corridor City Principles.

FAA Meeting- April 1, 2010:

About nine of us from Newport Beach (as well as Alan Murphy, Eric Freed, and Courtney Weircoch from the Airport and Kim Brandt from the City of Costa Mesa) traveled to the FAA regional office in Hawthorne to meet with the FAA to discuss the DUUKE departure procedure. The FAA had assembled a team of 10 from Los Angeles to San Diego to attend, including his Deputy Director Lirio Liu. This meeting as most of you are aware has been in the planning stages for months. The meeting was informative and the FAA explained how they developed the DUUKE ONE, now the DUUKE TWO departure procedures, which affect flight going to the east of Las Vegas.

Initially it is important to note that the DUUKE TWO departure procedure and its predecessor the DUUKE ONE were at the insistence of the Federal Aviation Administration ("FAA") and not at the urging of either the County of Orange or the City

of Newport Beach. The new procedure also applies to only a percentage of the flights departing the airport. The City recognizes that for many in the community the DUUKE ONE procedure has been of great concern to you and many of you have voiced your concerns regarding the newly implemented DUUKE TWO. As you are aware the City in conjunction with the County has worked diligently to bring to the attention of the FAA the complaints that the residents have shared with the City about the newly implemented departure procedures and whether the existing procedure guided the current departures nearer the middle of the bay as advertised or in fact that the aircraft utilizing the DUUKE have actually shifted aircraft to the eastern side of the bay. However, to be clear the middle of the bay is defined as noise monitor seven, the monitor farthest from the airport and not those monitors closer to the airport.

According to the FAA, the Next Generation Air Transportation System (NextGen) will modernize the nation's air traffic system increasing capacity and efficiency while reducing environmental impacts and improving safety. The largely ground based system will be migrating to an airborne navigation system by 2020. We learned that RNAV is definitely the wave of the future, and that to save fuel and impact the environment less, "fanning" is part of the past. However it is the departure track that has been introduced by the DUUKE that most interested those in attendance.

Again, as explained by the FAA, the new DUUKE TWO will shift from "a vector to altitude" to a "vector to intercept" to the 175 heading. For the record, that is the only change. The FAA's thinking is that the change will eliminate the early turns at the 540' altitude which were allegedly pushing the east bound planes farther towards the eastern shores of the bay. However as pointed out by some of our local pilots that unless there is a waypoint established closer to the end of the runway, the problem will not be resolved.

However the FAA did commit to continue to reevaluate the departure system or "tweak" it until they get it right.

Looking at the meeting as the "Glass Half Full," the meeting accomplished three things:

1. The FAA met the group and realized that the group is a responsible group and to be taken seriously;
2. The FAA said it would continue to tweak DUUKE TWO until got it right;
3. The FAA stated that it would be willing to meet with City Aviation Committee in the future on an on going basis which bodes well for future dealings with the FAA.

The County intends on presenting at least three (3) days of departure tracks to share with the Aviation Committee on April 26, 2010.

Common Complaints Heard in the Community

As expressed by some residents in the community there are two recurring themes:

1. What factors affect noise at JWA?
2. Why can't the flight paths merely be moved?

Factors Affecting Noise

1. **Departure Climb Profiles/** Including the close in and/or distant departure procedure; Several airlines were contacted regarding the departure profiles including Southwest Airlines, Northwest Airlines, Delta Airlines, United Airlines. All of the airlines use the Close In procedure tailored to their individual aircraft type. Some airline representatives have indicated that they are studying the adjustment of the thrust reduction point from 800 feet to a higher altitude for some of their higher performance aircraft. (As long as an airline can meet the Single Event Noise Limits at the Monitors at departure, they can depart as such. Some of the airlines have apparently done so and get higher altitudes upon departure as a result and therefore less noise.)
2. **Aircraft Performance/Climb Rates-** The climb rate and flight profile of departing aircraft will vary considerably based on aircraft type and the other factors identified in this section. New, modern aircraft (e.g. Airbus A320, Boeing 737-800, 757) have higher-thrust engines. In general, the higher the altitude, the less noise will likely be perceived by the receiver on the ground. The Class E aircraft have higher altitudes for the most part and therefore less noise to the community below.
3. **Departure Ground Tracks/** ie. RNAV versus MUSEL SIX other departure procedures.
4. **Airport Facilities-** The facilities available for aircraft operations play a role in the amount of noise that is generated over a community. The major factor of an airport design which impacts the amount of noise over a community is the amount of property separating the runways from the noise sensitive areas in a community and runway length.
5. **Meteorological Conditions-**The propagation of aircraft noise is dependent on meteorological conditions including temperature, humidity, and wind. During warm temperatures, the air density (air molecules per cubic foot) decreases significantly, thereby reducing aircraft performance and lift.
6. **Geographic and Topographic Conditions-**As sound energy spreads out over an increasingly larger area, the amount of noise decreases. Additionally, the noise from low-level aircraft operations are affected by absorption and deflection from the Earth's surface as well as by intervening objects like hills and buildings. In addition, areas located in canyons or with prevalent high terrain features create areas in which noise can echo. In a south flow, departing aircraft follow the Upper Newport Bay to the Pacific Ocean. The bay is located in a canyon and is several hundred feet lower than the airport elevation. Noise from departing aircraft may possibly echo in this area.
7. **Airline Specifications and Air Space and Air Traffic Control Requirements** also affect noise. The FAA Air Traffic Organization has the sole authority and responsibility for routing and separating aircraft through the National Airspace System (NAS). The first priority of Air Traffic Control is always safe and efficient separation of

aircraft. The SNA terminal is in the jurisdiction of SNA Air Traffic Control Tower and the Southern California TRACON. The SNA ATCT provides ground, approach, and departure service for aircraft operating in the terminal area. The SoCal TRACON provides departure and approach services. Departing aircraft are provided clearance and initial departure headings and altitude clearances from SNA ATCT. Aircraft are “handed off” to SoCal TRACON approximately 1NM from the runway end upon radar coverage identification. At that point aircraft fly the remainder of the assigned SID and are then vectored to the en route environment. Initial departure clearances for commercial aircraft are to fly the MUSEL, CHANNEL and now DUUKE departure procedures and are assigned an altitude clearance of 5,000 feet MSL.

Bottom line in any attempt at changing the departure procedure is the fact that the airline once it leaves the airport is being controlled by the FAA in terms of airspace and has to get to the next transition point such as the Imperial or Thermal transition in East Bound Departures as efficiently as possible. Unless more efficient for airlines, they would likely oppose. It should also be noted that each airline has a proprietary departure procedure.

Why Can't the Flight Paths be Moved

Initially, the City has no control over the flight paths. They are indirectly controlled first by the airport, as a result of noise abatement procedures and secondly by the FAA and to a lesser extent the airlines. Moreover, moving flight tracks is subject to stringent air traffic, flight standards and safety, and environmental requirements. Assuming air traffic and flight safety issues are addressed, if movement of a flight track results in an increase in noise in another area of more than 3 decibels, an Environmental Assessment (EA) is required. An EA would assess the effects of a procedural or flight track change and study impacts associated with the proposed changes or action. If significant impacts are identified with the proposed action in the EA an Environmental Impact Statement would likely be required. In general an action that simply redistributes noise from one impact area to another will not be approved.

The flight paths over Newport Beach are well established and are associated with either the final segment of an approach or a departure procedure designed to keep aircraft in an established noise corridor. The JWA tracks follow the Newport Bay from the end of the runway to the Coast Highway and crosses over Balboa Island and the peninsula northwest of the Newport Channel. According to the land use and zoning maps of the City, the majority of the area is Single Family Residential. Moving the flight path anywhere northwest or southeast of the Coast Highway would only spread noise from one residential area to another and would likely result in a 3db increase in noise in new areas thereby requiring an EA or EIS and would likely not be approved because it would provide no total net gain in noise abatement. The County specifically and the FAA in general will oppose any change in departure tracks which merely moves noise from Point A to Point B.

JOHN WAYNE AIRPORT POSTS MARCH STATISTICS

Airline passenger traffic at John Wayne Airport increased in March 2010 as compared to March 2009. In March 2010, the Airport served 736,104 passengers, an increase of 3.2% when compared to the 713,196 passenger traffic count of March 2009. Commercial aircraft operations increased 1.5%, while Commuter aircraft operations decreased 58.7% when compared to the levels recorded in March 2009. Meanwhile, total aircraft operations decreased in March 2010 as compared to the same month in 2009.

Airport execs still look to land airlines in San Bernardino

The effort to transform the former Norton Air Force Base into a commercial airport is a gamble of more than \$200 million that may well determine if San Bernardino can rediscover prosperity. Success would mean domestic and international flights landing and taking off from San Bernardino International Airport. It would mean travelers spending money at local hotels and restaurants. It would mean a busy airport employing well-paid professionals like air traffic controllers and aircraft mechanics.

Failure would likely result in continued economic stagnation. The city's economy never fully recovered from the job losses that accompanied the closure of Norton, and airport supporters say passenger travel would be the best way to reignite the economic engine that once was there.

But the hundreds of millions that have been spent on runway, terminal and road improvements in and around the airport are not enough in themselves to guarantee success. No commercial carriers have yet announced plans to do business in San Bernardino, and any airline doing so in the near future would also be taking a gamble at a time when their own industry and the Inland Empire economy are suffering.

"Where are you going to get the new airlines? Airlines already serve Ontario and Los Angeles," said Jack Keady, a former American Airlines marketing executive who now has a Playa del Rey-based travel and airline consulting company.

OC-Hawaii flights

When the airline started service between John Wayne Airport and Hawaii in March, Continental announced it would provide daily service to Honolulu and four-times-a-week service to Kahului on Maui. The Maui service would become daily on May 31.

What wasn't announced at the time — but was evidently part of the plan all along — was that Continental will stop service temporarily Sept. 12. No flights to Honolulu for two months. No flights to Maui for three months.

Continental will start flying again during the usually lucrative holiday season. The Honolulu flights will re-start Nov. 20, just in time for the Thanksgiving season.

O.C.-to-Canada flights start

"Service to Canada will be popular with Orange County travelers, and we are excited to add a new nonstop destination to our offerings," said Jenny Wedge, airport spokeswoman for JWA. A search online found round-trip flights starting at more than \$1,000 in coming days, although fares around \$500 started popping up on trips in late April. Best deals require a 14-day advance purchase and are a midweek departure and return.

In contrast, direct weekend flights costing slightly more than \$500 are offered by multiple airlines at Los Angeles International Airport, with a one-week advance purchase. For travelers willing to take a connecting flight at LAX or JWA, weekend flights under \$500 are abundant. Meanwhile, customs for all Orange County-Toronto flights will be handled in Canada for the time-being, but John Wayne will gain international-screening capabilities when it completes a terminal expansion in 2011.

Randy Babbitt, FAA chief intervenes, says some LAX runways too close

The head of the Federal Aviation Administration said failing to further separate two runways at Los Angeles International Airport would be a serious mistake. The warning by FAA Administrator Randy Babbitt came two months after an academic panel concluded there was no need to reconfigure the north field runways because altering them wouldn't make them much safer. "The status quo is not good enough for the FAA, and the city of Los Angeles should not view it as good enough for the traveling public," Babbitt wrote to Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa in an April 2 letter.

A federal study done two years ago showed the airport had more runway incursions — incidents in which aircraft strayed into areas designated for takeoffs and landings — than any U.S. airport. Villaraigosa had hoped the recent academic study would put to rest more than two decades of dispute between the FAA and locals who worried that runway changes would cost millions of dollars and prompt airport expansion into neighborhoods.

Babbitt, a former airline pilot, said he had flown into the airport hundreds of times, and there should be more space between the two north runways. He noted two close calls occurred on the runways last month, and the current layout is too cramped for jumbo jets such as the Airbus A380 and Boeing 787. He also said a drop occurred in the number of near collisions after south airfield runways were separated. The \$333 million project was completed two years ago.

Babbitt criticized the academic safety study as flawed and outlined a list of technical concerns, even though it was supported by simulations conducted at NASA's Ames Research Center. Villaraigosa said he opposed reconfiguring the north airfield unless it's clearly demonstrated that safety demands it. However, he said Babbitt's letter has raised serious safety questions that cannot be ignored. The mayor has asked the Board of

Airport Commissioners and Los Angeles World Airports, the city agency that operates LAX, to review the issues.

The real question is whether or not this action portends other FAA intervention in similar local disputes?

Air Quality- Santa Monica

A professor at the University of California Los Angeles conducted a pollution study to see what emissions could be detected around Santa Monica Airport in Southern California. The study found that aircraft operating there spew ultra-fine particles into the atmosphere at average concentrations of 10 times the background level measured 100 meters downwind from the airport's east end and 2.5 times background at 660 meters. (Traffic on nearby roads causes the background emissions.)

People who live near the airport have complained for years about growing noise due to a fourfold increase in jet traffic, but now they have latched onto the UCLA study as another tool to fight the field. Many claim that airport emissions cause cancer and other diseases, although no federal or state standard limits ultra-fine particles, nor has research been conducted to assess what harm they might do.

2010 air traffic shows a glimmer of hope but is still way down

Air travel at the six commercial airports making up the SCAG Southern California region - LAX, SNA, ONT, BUR, LGB and PSP - picked up a bit with traffic for January and February totaling approximately 5 percent more than for the same period last year. Los Angeles International Airport led the way with a year-to-year improvement of 6.3 percent. Traffic in the first two months of 2010 is still approximately 8 percent below what it was in 2001, prior to the 9-11 terrorist attacks.

Meanwhile, there are continuing signs of a rebounding airline industry and also suggestions that certain airlines are now engaged in merger talks- i.e., Continental and United Airlines.