

Dear Homeowner,

It was not supposed to be this way

Newport Beach residents once believed that commercial aircraft would never be allowed at JWA. That is what they were told. Now they live with big jets overhead every day from 7am to 10pm. For the year ending June 30, 2017, an average of 170 jets per day departed over Newport Beach. Recent changes to altitudes and departure paths have only made the problem worse. JWA is the number one quality-of-life issue for those of us who live near it.

Over the years, concerned citizens have worked to secure permanent passenger caps, noise limits, and curfews. Had it not been for their efforts, the problem would be much worse today.

Early 1980s: The Newport Beach City Council, at the initiative of two members of SPON (Stop Polluting Our Newport) who are still actively working today to constrain JWA, acknowledged the devastating effects and growth potential of JWA, and initiated a lawsuit against the County of Orange, owner of the airport.

1985: The suit was successful and resulted in a Settlement Agreement signed by the County of Orange, the City of Newport Beach, SPON, and Airport Working Group. Still in effect today following several extensions, **the Agreement, the only one of its kind in the country, provides vital protections for residents:** curfew from 10pm to 7am, limitation on the number of passengers (the only control for the total number of flights per year), and a limitation on the noisiest flights.

As the time came to negotiate an extension of the 1985 Agreement in the early 2000s, SPON was busy with other environmental matters and did not have the time and volunteer resources to negotiate the best possible terms. The 2003 Settlement Agreement allowed the airport to build an additional terminal, add more gates, and raise the number of passengers allowed per year, thereby increasing the number of flights over Newport Beach.

2003 **Seeing that no one else was going to advocate for residents in the face of pressure to expand JWA,** SPON and other community activists founded AirFair, a political action committee, to start preparing for the next Agreement and make sure residents got the best possible deal. Negotiations began in 2012.

2014: A new Settlement Agreement was adjudicated, effective January 2016. It locks in restrictions on passenger traffic and flight numbers through December 31, 2030 and keeps the curfew in place through December 31, 2035. However, amendments to the Settlement Agreement are regularly proposed. AirFair seeks legal advice on each proposed change and weighs the potential effects so it can act in the best interest of all residents. For more information, please go to <http://spon-newportbeach.org/tag/settlement-agreement/>

Today, Newport Beach residents face a new kind of problem: NextGen

The FAA began implementing NextGen, a new nationwide air traffic control system, in 2017. Ostensibly designed to enhance the safety and efficiency of the national airspace, the system has resulted in new, narrower flight paths and lower altitudes that negatively impact neighborhoods below. Cities across the US have initiated legal action against the FAA.

Actions the City of Newport Beach has committed to take

In October of 2016, the City of Newport Beach sued the FAA, saying the impacts NextGen could have on local residents had not been sufficiently analyzed. Negotiations are ongoing. **In the best case, a “win” would result in a new environmental impact report being prepared, possibly over several years. It is very possible that the conclusion would be the same as the first time: No Impact.**

In October of 2017, AirFair hosted two forums for residents to share their concerns with Mayor Kevin Muldoon and Councilman Jeff Herdman. At around the same time, a community group held a petition drive asking for noise and pollution relief, garnering about 1,250 signatures. These three events have been catalysts for more interest from residents and the City.

Undoubtedly in response to community outrage about NextGen’s impact on our quality of life, the City has made several commitments:

- Hire a Washington lobbyist to talk to the FAA and airlines on behalf of the community
- Continue with the lawsuit filed against the FAA and its accompanying mitigation
- Have a sound engineering firm confirm the accuracy of the existing microphones at the noise monitoring stations and test noise levels in other parts of the community
- Work with the FAA to achieve the best departure path for all neighborhoods

Actions Newport Beach residents can take

The best weapon residents can bring to this fight is knowledge. A well-informed public can channel the stress caused by living with increased noise and pollution into actions that produce change. The SPON and AirFair websites contain a wealth of information about the airport and the history of citizen action. The City website is also a good resource for information on NextGen.

AirFair will continue its two-fold mission of stopping expansion of JWA by establishing a strong political base focused on maintaining the current footprint, curfew, and passenger caps and by being the watchdog of JWA for the community.

Meanwhile, **residents can play a vital role:**

Call the Noise Abatement office to report noisy or low-flying planes: **949-252-5185**.

Write letters to the airlines that fly from JWA. Sample letter enclosed.

Write letters to City officials, County Supervisors, especially Michelle Steel and Todd Spitzer.

Write letters to the Daily Pilot, StuNews, OC Register and LA Times.

All addresses can be found at: <http://www.jwairfair.com/linksotherwebsites.html>

Attend City Council and Aviation Committee meetings and forums where JWA issues are discussed. Speak up if you can, but even if you don’t, your presence will send a message about our commitment to stand up when our health and quality of life are at risk.

If the people lead, the leaders will follow. Make your voice heard today.

Sincerely,

Board of Directors