



# FRIENDS OF SUNSET PARK

A California nonprofit corporation of Sunset Park residents • Box 5823, Santa Monica, California 90409-5823 • (310) 358-7117

## MAY 2007 NEWSLETTER

Layout by Bill Josephs

### ***Why We Have a Right to Complain about Santa Monica Airport***

There is a common misperception that Santa Monica Airport was here before the neighborhood grew around it; however, in reviewing a recent UCLA legal analysis of the 1984 Agreement between Santa Monica and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), I was surprised to find that the existence of homes preceded the airport. Furthermore, Santa Monica Airport was not designed for jets, and the agreement between the City and the FAA was predicated upon a fleet mix which did not include jets at the level of their current presence. Now, larger and larger jets, and more and more of them, use the airport each year. This represents an increase of over 1,500% since 1983.

Homes around Santa Monica Airport are closer to the runway ends than any other airport in the state. In addition, the airport has no buffer zones, which are considered to be so important that Congress recently required all commercial airports to install Runway Safety Areas. By the FAA's own guidelines, if Santa Monica Airport were newly built, it would require 1,000 feet of clearance on both ends of the runway in order to accommodate the kind of jets that are currently in use.

A USC environmental scientist used mapping technology to show that several square blocks of homes adjacent to Santa Monica Airport would be destroyed in the event of a runway overrun akin to one that occurred in 2005 at a comparable airport in Texas,

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Photo by Marty Rubin

April 21<sup>st</sup> rally protesting the environmental and safety risks caused by the increase of private jets using Santa Monica Airport.

## JOIN FRIENDS OF SUNSET PARK

### **2007 MEMBERSHIP FORM**

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Today's date \_\_\_\_\_

I will help with:

- Airport Committee
- Annual Meeting
- Crime/Safety/Graffiti
- Emergency Preparedness
- Membership Committee
- Neighborhood Mailings
- Planning and Development
- Santa Monica College
- Traffic, Parking, Pedestrian Safety
- Website/Internet

Membership Dues:

- \$30 Regular Household Dues
- \$50 or \$100 for Sponsor
- \$10 Minimum Household Dues
- Additional Donation

(Please check):

- New  Renewal

*Please make check payable to  
"Friends of Sunset Park"  
and return in the enclosed envelope.*

My greatest concerns are \_\_\_\_\_

***If you received this newsletter by mail, the date on which you last paid dues is on the mailing label.***

## **S.M. Airport Commission Recommends Runway Safety Areas at Both Ends of Airport**

**600-foot Safety Zones Would Contain  
Newly Developed System to Snag  
Runaway Aircraft**

BY BRIAN BLAND, FOSP AIRPORT COMMITTEE

In an effort to prevent aircraft, including executive jets, from overrunning the Santa Monica Airport's runway, the city Airport Commission has made its formal recommendation to the City Council for safety modifications.

At its April 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting, the commission recommended that 600 feet at both ends of the 5,000-foot runway be declared Runway Safety Areas. Both would contain an aircraft "arresting" system called an EMAS (Emergency Material Arresting System).

EMAS consists of a kind of concrete composite that would collapse under a runaway aircraft, giving both ends of the runway, in effect, a barrier. The commission wants the combined systems to be at least 90 percent effective at stopping permitted aircraft at their maximum weight and speed.

The project would shorten the runway's operational length, possibly preventing its use by some larger jets that currently use the facility, or forcing them to carry less fuel or fewer passengers.

The proposal, if approved by the City Council, would then require FAA approval. Friends of Sunset Park and Rep. Henry Waxman asked the FAA for safety modifications seven years ago. For the last five years, the city's airport staff has had off-and-on discussions with the FAA, but airport commissioners say the agency has not negotiated in good faith. The commission wants the City Council to press the FAA for its approval by August third.

Commission Chair Mark Young says residents can't wait another five years, particularly with the spike in jet traffic and the size of the planes.

At their March meeting, commissioners accused the FAA of "blindsiding" them after an FAA representative revealed the agency wanted changes to a runway safety measure it had seemed to agree to earlier.

The city's relationship with the FAA continues to be governed by a 1984 agreement under which the city can only request safety improvements, while the FAA can veto any proposal or require it to have an Environmental Impact Report. By contrast, the FAA can (and has) allowed the mix of aircraft using the airport to grow in ways never anticipated

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## **Friends Meeting Neighbors: The Buck Stops Here**

Celebrate your neighborhood with Friends of Sunset Park! The FOSP Annual General Membership meeting arrives June 16<sup>th</sup> — your chance to renew your membership, elect Board members, and hear various committees explain the ways they support your neighborhood. Plus, you can enjoy entertainment, treats, and a free raffle of great prizes!

Special guest speakers' theme: THE BUCK STOPS HERE. Ever wonder how decisions get made in Santa Monica? Ever question the value of some of those decisions? This is your chance to ask the decision makers themselves as FOSP hosts City Manager Lamont Ewell, SMC president Chui Tsang and Police Chief Tim Jackman.

Many of the biggest decisions in our city cross the desks of these officials. FOSP addresses many concerns to them all, sometimes with great frustration. Here's your chance to ask and discover directly how they do their jobs — and how they address the issues that concern you, your family, and your neighborhood.

So, bring your friends, neighbors, children, and curiosity to Ocean Park Blvd. at 14<sup>th</sup> Street, in the Fellowship Hall of Mt. Olive Lutheran Church. Mark the date: Saturday, June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2 to 4 PM. Find out how you are represented by FOSP, ways you can support the neighborhood, and the latest on what's happening in your home town. Don't pass the buck—come see where it stops!

## **A Little Light on the Subject of Street Lighting**

BY PHYLLIS CHAVEZ

Good street lighting in our neighborhood is a must for personal safety when walking or driving after dark. It is also a deterrent to crime. In other words...it's a good thing! Taking the time to report a streetlight out can often seem time consuming and a hassle. So to take some of the hassle out of reporting, I wanted to share a few numbers and tips that could make it a bit easier to report and maybe a one call task!

To avoid two calls when reporting, check the kind of pole. Is it concrete or wood?

Then proceed as follows:

- If the light is on a CONCRETE POLE, it is reported to the City of Santa Monica, Streetlight Repair on 310 458-8528. (They usually repair quickly.)
- If the light is on a WOODEN POLE, it is reported to the Edison Company on 1-800- 684-8123. To facilitate a quicker response jot down the POLE NUMBER. It is a rectangular strip of metal several feet up on the pole with numbers stamped on it. (They get it fixed but it could take a few weeks).

I hope I was able to put a little light on the subject!

## **Right to Complain, continued from page 1**

involving a type of plane that uses Santa Monica Airport.

My main concern is the jet pollution, which I have been able to smell consistently from my home for the past 10 years. When my son was in 7<sup>th</sup> grade, he did a study with the guidance of environmental scientists from UCLA, USC, and the California Air Resources Board, and found that jets from Santa Monica Airport spew forth gobs of highly toxic ultrafine particles that infiltrate the community. The levels that he found were five times higher than what you would find near a freeway and 40 times more concentrated than what you would find in a sample of air. My son found peak levels to be associated with fumes, particularly from idling and taxiing. This spawned a series of studies by distinguished scientists that have confirmed his findings. A recent UCLA-USC study reported that the number of ultrafine particles in jet exhaust, during idle or take-off mode, is about one quadrillion (that's ten followed by 15 zeroes!) per kilogram of jet fuel burned.

Scientists have shown that ultrafine particles are highly toxic because they lodge deeply in the lungs and release chemicals into the bloodstream that can damage cells in other parts of the body, such as the brain and liver. It is no wonder that

the South Coast Air Quality Management District (the local Environmental Protection Agency, if you will) has established the Brain/Lung Tumor and Air Pollution Foundation. Chronic inhalation of fine particle matter can aggravate lung conditions such as asthma and bronchitis, suppress lung development in children, trigger infant death, harden arteries, cause respiratory failure, and increase general risk of death.

Ultrafine particles also come from automobiles, but California is allowed to regulate auto emissions more strictly than federal standards. Planes, however, cannot be regulated more strictly because they cross state and international borders. Pollution from automobiles is expected to decline over the next 15 years; pollution from aircraft (and ships) has been forecast to rise. Air quality authorities in California believe that in order to achieve ozone standards, they must regulate airport sources of pollution beyond current federal standards.

This is why we have the right—and responsibility—to complain.

*Ms. Ping Ho, MA, MPH, is Director of Educational Outreach at the UCLA Pediatric Pain Program and is a member of the FOSP Airport Committee.*

## **FAA, Continued from page 2**

in 1984, with no EIR required. Jet operations alone now total about 18,000 per year.

Studies have shown that a large executive jet overshooting the currently unprotected ends of the runway would destroy dozens of homes. The commission's recommendation would result in greater protection for residents and possibly a quieter airport with reduced jet fuel pollution.

The FAA acknowledges that a similar airport, built today, would be required to have runway extensions of up to 1,000 feet at each end. But the FAA allows older General Aviation airports to do without. In the Santa Monica Airport's case, that means homes are located less than 100 yards past both ends of the runway.

The FAA's latest position is that it might allow a 165-foot-long EMAS at the west end of the runway. (Ninety percent of aircraft takeoffs and landings are to the west). EMAS is only effective if the aircraft's wheels are on the ground. A departing plane that lifted off, cleared the EMAS, then pancaked back to the ground, would be hurtling toward nearby homes.

The FAA sees no need for modifications at the airport's east end, overlooking busy Bundy/Centinela Avenue, a gas station and homes.

At the March meeting, commissioners asked an FAA representative about the agency's apparent unwillingness to look beyond the desires of jet aircraft operators. Commission Vice Chair Susan Hartley, an FOSP member, said the agency should consider "the bodies," that is, the deaths that will result from

what she sees as the inevitable disaster at an airport where houses sit just yards from either end of the runway.

For further coverage of the March 26<sup>th</sup> Airport Commission meeting, please see the following newspaper articles:

*The LookOut News*—www.SurfSantaMonica.com—  
"EXTRA!!! FAA Warns City: Curb Airport Safety Measures" —3/28/07— Olin Ericksen

*Santa Monica Daily Press*—www.SMPD.com—"FAA puts City Hall on standby" — 3/29/07 — Kevin Herrera

*Santa Monica Mirror*—www.SMMirror.com—"Airport Safety" — 3/29/07 — Terence Lyons

## **FOSP Board of Directors**

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Emmalie Hodgkin  
Gail Myers  
Lorraine Sanchez

## **OPB: Extreme Makeover?**

**S**unset Park residents and City Transportation Management continue to study the best ways to improve Ocean Park Boulevard (OPB) along the stretch between 14th and 18th Streets. At the urging of local businesses and FOSP, the City Council allotted \$75,000 to study the many challenges in this short stretch including speeding traffic, unsafe crosswalks, limited parking, less-than-friendly “walkability,” and meager “street scape.”

To date, two public hearings collected data from residents and business owners — with no shortage of suggested changes. That data is now being compiled and will be presented to the Council when finished.

SM Transportation Manager Lucy Dyke groups all the alternatives into three major categories: street configuration, parking, and crossing.

One of the major options Dyke suggests is to reconfigure OPB from Lincoln to 23rd to be like Main Street or the western sections of Montana and Broadway: one lane in both directions with left turn lanes. “This could have benefits in terms of simplifying ... turning and crossing” said Dyke. “It would also reduce speeding since motorists would not have the option of passing.”

Many residents fear such a change would decrease and delay traffic, creating a cut-through effect on local streets. However, Dyke suggests the experience of Main Street and Montana Avenue does not support that concern. “On neither street was there a significant increase in delay as a result of the reconfiguration,” she said. Additionally, one consulting engineer experienced with this type of street alteration showed the City that traffic volume — but not delay — actually increased as a result of this type of change.

Similar changes in West Hollywood on Melrose and Doheny were successful in creating better volume, less delay. Plus on those streets “an additional benefit was a significant increase in pedestrian safety,” adds Dyke.

However, dissenting professional opinions exist, and have been voiced at the public meetings.

Regarding parking, the Staff is recommending first to make “easy” improvements such as paving and allowing metered parking in the alley north of OPB, east of 17<sup>th</sup>. Other possible first steps: more metering along the stretch, and creation of a parking district including sharing of “hidden” private parking. Should the street be reconfigured as Dyke suggests, residents west of 16<sup>th</sup> Street would have more parking on OPB itself.

The issues related to crossing OPB are not as clear. While Police Chief Jackman has assigned a temporary crossing guard to 16<sup>th</sup> Street at OPB, it’s not known whether the Staff report to Council will suggest immediate changes to any on the intersections in this stretch.

“The reconfiguration will help with (these problems),” Dyke says, “but it may not be enough.” She believes an assessment of the reconfiguration might be a practical first step followed — if necessary — by resorting to more extreme measures such as a roundabout (at 16<sup>th</sup>), or installing signals.

“We all want the crossings to be as safe as possible,” said Dyke “and we are mindful of the need to avoid changes that might divert north/south traffic from 14<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, or 23<sup>rd</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, or 18<sup>th</sup>.”

How soon might residents see changes? “If approved, it may be possible for a pilot reconfiguration and new parking meters to be in place by this fall,” Dyke said. “Any hardscape projects would likely take longer and require the Council to appropriate money.”

At the time Staff presents its report, residents will be able to bring their concerns directly to the Council as it considers the many options, or they may add their voice to the OPB makeover report by contacting the City’s Transportation Management Division at:

1685 Main Street, Room 115,  
 PO Box 2200, Santa Monica, California, 90407  
 Phone: 310-458-8291  
 Fax: 310-576-9170  
 Email: Michelle.Glickert@smgov.net

## **Sunset Park Supporters**

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