

Palomar Airport Expansion: The FAA's NextGen Impacts, 186

What is the truth?

By Raymond Bender, Neighbor

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In 2015, the FAA drafted its NextGen (called Metroplex in Southern California) environmental analysis for public comment. NextGen means the Next Generation air traffic control system aircraft will use to reach airports. Think satellites mainly guiding aircraft pilots.

Aircraft will fly more directly to airports, flights ending with gradual descents, not the "step-down stair", old-style flight paths. How will NextGen affect McClellan-Palomar (Palomar) Airport noise, traffic, and pollution?

NextGen Impacts on Airport Communities

The FAA says NextGen will little impact communities near airports. Politicians disagree.

For instance, New York senators have called upon FAA Administrator Michael Huerta to hold public hearings before changing flight procedures. (See *Time Ledger*, "New York senators want FAA to better tackle aircraft noise," by Madina Toure May 26, 2016.")

The FAA has not yet released its final Metroplex Southern California EIR.

The Truth?

The Smithsonian TV series (Time Warner Channel 131) on *Air Disaster* tells a story different from the FAA's. A recent segment -- "*System Breakdown – 5 Aviation Disasters*" -- discusses NextGen impacts. The segment's aviation analyst said two notable things; NextGen will

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- Allow aircraft flights to double, triple, or perhaps even quadruple.
 - Often allow pilots to choose their own flight paths.

Of course, local airport layouts can limit aircraft flight frequency. That is precisely why the county wants to push the McClellan-Palomar (Palomar) Airport runway north about 125 feet, lengthen it to 5800 feet, move airport facilities, and use the area east of El Camino for increased airport parking and support facilities.

What should the public believe? The FAA Metroplex mantra: few flight changes with insignificant impacts? Or independent analysts: quantum leaps in airspace capacity and pilots deciding whether they want to fly over your home? And of course, more noise, pollution, and traffic.