

Airport needs to be a good neighbor

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By KEVIN FAULCONER



We all know that living around San Diego International Airport is a mixed blessing. Lindbergh Field is close, convenient and generally well operated. But it can be noisy and it brings traffic to nearby neighborhoods.

Now with “The Green Build” — Lindbergh Field’s largest expansion — under way, these impacts are sure to increase.

I joined many of you in protesting the five-story, 5,000-space airport parking structure planned for North Harbor Drive. Traffic studies showed this would bring more traffic and downgrade some surrounding intersections to an

“F”-rated level of service. Thanks to your vigilance, the San Diego County Regional Airport Authority did not include this ill-conceived parking structure in its expansion plans.

Taxiway C — a construction project separate from The Green Build — has been bothering many beach and bay residents. Since August, residents and businesses from Mission Beach to Sunset Cliffs have been hearing more flights over head.

The airport and FAA have been sending additional flights over Midway/Mission Beach and south Point Loma because of Taxiway C construction. The Airport Authority notified the affected homeowners and has publicly said the flights will stop when construction ends in May. Still, I have heard complaints from many residents about the increased noise.

I am urging the Airport Authority and FAA to keep their commitment to return to the standard departure path once the taxiway improvements are complete. It wouldn’t be fair to permanently disrupt neighborhoods that have not

historically been under the most heavily used departure paths. I will insist the Airport Authority keep its pledge to the community.

Finally, the Airport Authority is expected to update the Lindbergh Field land-use compatibility plan soon. This update will set zoning and density parameters around the airport. Similar updates for Brown Field and Montgomery Field put unrealistic restrictions on private property under the flight paths.

The Lindbergh Field plan update is our chance to get it right. I want to see a fact-based process that respects our community plans and does not tie the hands of residential and business property owners.

There will be significant activity at Lindbergh Field this year. I can assure you that I will be there working for our neighborhoods and fighting to protect our quality of life.

— Kevin L. Faulconer is San Diego City Council President Pro Tem and represents District 2, which includes Point Loma, Ocean Beach, Mission Beach, Pacific Beach and other neighboring communities.