

Proposed LGB Airspace Change to Class C Designation Questions and Answers

A. What will the FAA airspace change mean to South Bay cities?

The FAA is considering establishing a significantly more restrictive airspace surrounding Long Beach Airport (“LGB”) based upon reported concerns about safety. It has been reported that JetBlue Airlines has requested the change due to the frequency of traffic collision avoidance alerts it’s experiencing. The FAA’s proposed LGB Class C airspace would be about 3 times larger than the existing Class D airspace.

While passenger safety is of the utmost importance, the City Council, Staff, and the City’s aviation consultants are extremely concerned about the “unintended consequences” that could be experienced by the City and neighboring South Bay coastal communities, including:

- 1) Increased safety risks resulting from a greater number of general aviation (“GA”) aircraft flights compressed in flight areas;
- 2) Environmental impacts, especially increased aircraft noise and air pollution from piston-powered and turboprop aircraft;
- 3) Increase of GA aircraft flights across the entire PV Peninsula, as well neighborhoods in Redondo Beach, Hermosa Beach, Torrance and San Pedro; and
- 4) Increased workload of FAA traffic controllers, possibly impairing passenger flight safety.

B. Why would there be “unintended consequences”?

- 1) Today, GA pilots merely advise the LGB tower when entering its Class D airspace.
- 2) With the change, pilots would be required to obtain authorization from air traffic controllers prior to entering the FAA’s proposed Class C airspace. Because controllers must manage passenger traffic as a priority during peak periods, GA pilots may not obtain authorization timely and divert their flight around or over the PV Peninsula, as well as neighboring communities.
- 3) The same controllers who manage passenger flights for the entire southern CA region, including LAX, San Diego’s airport, John Wayne Airport and Burbank, would now take on responsibility for tracking GA aircraft flying within the FAA’s extended LGB Class C airspace.

C. What would happen as a result of the proposed change?

- 1) Flight instructional aircraft from schools based at Hawthorne Airport, Compton Airport and Zamperini Field (Torrance) would likely move from the LA/Long Beach harbor “practice and instructional area” (a major portion of which would become restrictive Class C airspace) to the entire Palos Verdes coastline.
- 2) A greater number of general aviation aircraft departing from Zamperini Field (Torrance) will avoid the Class C airspace:
 - a) Departing west, turning south along the entire Palos Verdes coastline, over neighborhoods in Redondo Beach, Torrance (Torrance Beach), Palos Verdes Estates and Rancho Palos Verdes; or
 - b) Departing west, turning 180 degrees right and flying along the northeastern and eastern edges of the Palos Verdes Peninsula over and near neighborhoods along the Western Avenue corridor, including Rolling Hills, Rolling Hills Estates, Lomita, San Pedro and Rancho Palos Verdes; or
 - c) Across the Palos Verdes Peninsula.
- 3) A greater number of general aviation aircraft currently flying over coastal southern California using the Mini-Route and visual flight rules (“VFR”) will divert around the Class C airspace, instead flying:
 - a) Along the entire Palos Verdes coastline, over neighborhoods in Hermosa Beach, Redondo Beach, Torrance (Torrance Beach), Palos Verdes Estates and Rancho Palos Verdes; or
 - b) Along the northeastern and eastern edges of the Palos Verdes Peninsula over and near neighborhoods along the Western Avenue corridor, including Rolling Hills, Rolling Hills Estates, Lomita, San Pedro and Rancho Palos Verdes; or
 - c) Across the Palos Verdes Peninsula.

D. How are the cities responding?

- 1) The City of Rancho Palos Verdes has volunteered to take the lead on a coordinated response to this important issue. We have discussed the FAA’s proposed airspace change with the city managers of several of the neighboring cities that will be impacted.
- 2) Six cities—RPV, Rolling Hills, Rolling Hills Estates, Palos Verdes Estates, Torrance and Redondo Beach—have all expressed an interest in working together to advise the FAA that the proposed airspace change appears flawed.

- 3) The goal is to develop a collaborative process that improves passenger safety without compromising the safety of GA aircraft and our residents, or the quality of life of our residents. The coordinated effort includes:
 - a) Providing timely comments to the FAA, followed by an effort to develop a solution with the FAA that will be in the best interest of the aviation community and South Bay residents, as well as the tourism community;
 - b) A plan for each city to provide a public comment letter addressed to the FAA that would be signed by the Mayor or City Manager; and
 - c) A priority effort by Rancho Palos Verdes Staff with its aviation consultant and the community to collect additional technical information that is expected to provide concerns and objections to the FAA prior to its September 21st deadline.

E. What is the consultant doing?

Williams Aviation Consultants has been retained to assist the City of Rancho Palos Verdes and participating neighboring communities with an evaluation of the potential impacts resulting from the FAA's proposed airspace change. WAC is one of the leading aviation consulting groups in the country. The consulting staff includes professionals that worked in the Southern California region of the FAA before leaving public service. They are very familiar with the airspace in the LA Basin.

Williams has the expertise to evaluate technical and flight data to ascertain:

- 1) Whether the FAA's proposed airspace change is necessary;
- 2) The potential impact on FAA air traffic controller staff who primarily manage passenger flights;
- 3) The possibility of an increase of over flights across Rancho Palos Verdes, the Palos Verdes Peninsula, and neighboring cities; and
- 4) The likelihood of whether additional GA aircraft will divert from the Class C airspace over the City and neighboring communities.

F. What should the public do?

Residents are encouraged to let their city and the FAA know what they think on or before September 21, 2010. Residents of the City of Rancho Palos Verdes may provide comments directly to the City (preferably to the attention of Dennis McLean, Director of Finance & Information Technology) by emailing faairspace@rpv.com. City of Rancho Palos Verdes Staff will attach all

written comments it receives to its public comment letter. Residents of the other South Bay cities should contact their city directly with their comments. Comments provided directly to the FAA should be in triplicate and mailed to:

Clark Desing, Operations Support Group, AJV-W2
Western Service Area, Air Traffic Organization
Federal Aviation Administration
1601 Lind Avenue, SW
Renton, WA 98057

Based upon the advice of the City's aviation consultant, a copy of all public comments should also be sent concurrently to:

William C. Withycombe
Western-Pacific Region Regional Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
P.O. Box 92007
Los Angeles, CA 90009-2007

City of Rancho Palos Verdes Staff expects to provide additional information about this important issue using its Aircraft Noise listserver group (<http://www.rpvalert.com>) and its website (<http://www.palosverdes.com/rpv>) as more information becomes available. The public is encouraged to join the listserver group or check the City's website for the most current information regarding this issue.