

## Introduction

The San Diego International Airport (SAN) is one of the nation's busiest single-runway airports. It serves not only the local San Diego County area, but a vast region in the Southern California. Since January 2003, SAN has been owned and operated by the Regional Airport Authority (RAA). The agency is in charge of protecting public health and safety in area surrounding airports. In order to do so, it promotes the development of airport facilities where they minimize environmental impacts and safety hazards. The RAA has, moreover, the goal of extending the airport activities at a regional level so that the whole province will benefit from its expansion and prosperity.

The SAN has progressively increased in air traffic and is predicted that it will exceed its capacity by 2012. The Federal Aviation Administration defines standard for runways to be 4,300 feet apart from each other, therefore the present airport is too small to accommodate an extra runway. Expansion of the existing airport would signify destroying thousands of buildings, rerouting a major interstate, and leveling of hillsides (Marks, Expanding airport would be challenging, Nov.9, 2004). But even if the land was available to expand the existing footprint of SAN, other obstacles would exist. The current location of the airport requires the aircrafts to approach the landing flying at low quota through Balboa Park and residential buildings just north of downtown, and even avoiding a television antenna. An extension of the airport would also mean further development of the existing infrastructure and consequently more land and noise impact to the local community. Moreover, the current ground transportation services available from and to the current airport site is limited to bus, taxicab, shuttles, and car rentals ([www.san.org](http://www.san.org)). Those who want to take public transportation to the airport so to skip long-term parking expenses, are required to make a multi-stop trip, which is very inconvenient for travelers with a lot of luggage. It would be wise that public ground transportation services of the future airport meet the

needs of the growing number of people willing to use convenient transit systems other than private transportation, in order to reach the airport.

The RAA is therefore analyzing options for an alternative site for an international airport that will either contain an additional runway to compliment the current location, or serve as an entirely new development for the airport. The operation has been called Airport Site Selection Program (ASSP) and it to date has identified 8 possible locations, two of which are found outside San Diego County (one in Riverside Co. and the other in Imperial County). The five sites located within San Diego County are the following: Camp Pendleton, North Island, Campo, Borrego Springs, Corte Madera Valley, Miramar 2, and East Miramar. Full analyses have been prepared for the Camp Pendleton, North Island, Miramar 2, and East Miramar sites. A full environmental and economic analysis for Campo, Borrego Springs, and Corte Madera Valley is underway. The goal of the RAA is to come up with a single recommendation that will then be selected by direct election through a countywide ballot in November 2006.

The present study looks at the 5 sites proposed within San Diego County and evaluates each of them in terms of transportation infrastructure (existing, planned, and of possible development), land use within and surrounding each site, topography, and other environmental issues. The study also provides a website with detailed maps and reports that can be used by individuals to understand our decision-making process and provide useful information for developing their own voting preference. We believe that our impartial point of view will provide essential information that is otherwise neglected by the interested parties, and could in turn, promote additional public discourse for what regards the impact of the airport growing business on local communities and the environment.