



# long beach airport

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**Date:** February 2, 2016

**To:** Patrick H. West, City Manager *T.M.*

**From:** Bryant L. Francis, Director, Long Beach Airport *B.F.*

**For:** Mayor and Members of the City Council

**Subject:** Long Beach Airport Runway Use

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Questions have recently been asked by Councilmembers and the public regarding the appropriateness of diverting more commercial Air Carrier traffic to Runway 25R/7L, instead of relying primarily on Runway 12/30. There are several reasons why diverting more Air Carrier flights to Runway 25R/7L would be inappropriate.

## BACKGROUND

Runway 12/30 has been the Airport's primary arrival and departure runway for commercial Air Carrier traffic since the early 1950s. It is slightly more than 10,000 feet in length and 200 feet wide. Runway 25R/7L is approximately three-quarters of a mile shorter at 6,191 feet, and is 150 feet wide. Runway 25R/7L is an east/west runway and is located north of Wardlow Road and south of Conant Street. This runway is normally used for smaller/lighter general aviation aircraft, and is only occasionally used by commercial air carriers, if the main runway is unavailable for use because of construction, runway maintenance, unusual weather conditions or emergencies.

## ANALYSIS

When the Airport Noise Compatibility Ordinance (Chapter 16.43) was adopted after 12 years of litigation in 1995, Runway 12/30 was specifically recognized as the main runway for Air Carrier landings and take-offs, and is the only runway with noise budgets in place to limit cumulative noise exposure. Any substantial diversion of Air Carrier traffic to Runway 25R/7L would require that the Noise Ordinance be amended, which could affect the City's "grandfathered status under the

Airport Noise and Capacity Act of 1990 (ANCA). Since adoption in 1995, the Airport Noise Ordinance has not been amended and it is not recommended that such an amendment be undertaken at this time.

If a decision were made by the City Council to amend the Noise Ordinance for the purpose of diverting more Air Carrier traffic to Runway 25R/7L, an extensive environmental analysis would have to be undertaken. This is because the diversion of flights would directly impact homes and businesses on this east/west route that currently are impacted only when the main runway (12/30) is unavailable for one of the reasons mentioned above. Affected areas would include California Heights, Wrigley, Carson Park, El Dorado Park Estates and others.

There are several other reasons why altering current Airport landing and takeoff operations is not advisable. Runway 12/30 is a precision instrument runway with full instrument landing and lighting systems in place. Runway 25R/7L currently does not have these full capabilities and, therefore, Runway 12/30 provides much better pilot "visibility" on approach. The pavement strength on Runway 12/30 was specifically designed to accommodate the larger Air Carrier type traffic. Frequent use of Runway 25R/7L by larger commercial jets would lead to premature pavement stress and runway degradation. Upgrading the weight bearing capacity of Runway 25R/7L would be extremely costly and would result in significant "downtime" for this runway during construction.

Although the occasional use of Runway 25R/7L by the larger commercial aircraft remains appropriate, a permanent diversion of such traffic to this runway would significantly complicate air traffic control operations, which increases air traffic controller workload and risks. For instance, an instrument landing on Runway 25R/7L requires a low altitude crossing of the Los Alamitos Army Airfield, which requires coordination between the Los Alamitos Tower, the Long Beach Tower and the Southern California Terminal Radar Approach Control (TRACON). This level of coordination among agencies is not required when Runway 12/30 is used. In addition, taxiway maneuvers for planes landing on Runway 25R/7L are much more complicated than if a landing is made on Runway 12/30, which can result in extended time on the runway and the potential for unwanted aircraft ground conflicts. Furthermore, portions of the taxiway for runway 25R/7L are not readily visible from the air traffic control tower, which limits the ability of the controllers to track the movement and progress of aircraft in some instances.

CONCLUSION

For the reasons set forth above, Runway 12/30 should continue to be used as the preferred primary runway for the larger Air Carrier traffic, and Runway 25R/7L should remain as the secondary or "backup" runway when Runway 12/30 is temporarily unavailable for use.

If you have any questions, please contact me at extension 8-2605.

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