

**Airport growth**

# Homes targeted

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ONTARIO - There isn't a day that goes by that Julian Marquez doesn't see the belly of an airplane fly over his home.

Marquez, who lives on Nevada Avenue near the former Sunkist plant, has grown accustomed to the noise of the roaring jet engines which reminds him of the situation he faces.

He is among more than 700 residents who live near LA/Ontario International Airport concerned about a revised city plan to allow development of industrial and commercial parks in their neighborhoods.

The neighborhoods identified for the change in the general plan are one that surrounds Bon View Park - between Mission Boulevard and Woodlawn Street, east of Campus Avenue and west of Greenwood Avenue - and another between Cypress and Sultana avenues as well as between Mission Boulevard and State Street.



Julian Marquez of Ontario stands outside his home near Sultana Avenue on Friday in Ontario. He is one of more than 700 residents who would be affected by the city's proposed general plan that would allow their neighborhoods to be rezoned for commercial and industrial development. (Jennifer Cappuccio-Maher/Staff Photographer)

The proposed general plan update would allow for the neighborhoods to have a mixed-use of residential plus industrial as well as commercial use.

The city would eventually like to see commercial or industrial component in the neighborhoods because of their proximity to the airport, Blum said.

By 2030, airport air traffic is expected to grow from 7 million passengers a year to 30 million passengers annually, Blum said.

At a recent meeting, Blum told the residents that the area could become undesirable because of the increased flights, coming as often as every five to 10 minutes, he said.

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The notion of more planes coming to the area does not faze Paul Marin, 68, who grew up near Hofer Ranch just south of the airport and has lived near Sam Alba Memorial Park for the past couple of years.

Airport noise is not an issue for him and said he does not plan to leave despite the city's recent warning.

"What is the difference between people that live here and the people that live in Los Angeles by LAX?" he said.

Marin said it is all part of the city's plan to work with developers and not residents.

Former resident Joe Ochoa, 40, who grew up in the community near the park, said he got to use to the noise.

A majority of those who live in the area have been there for at least 25 years, as is the case with his parents, said Ochoa.

"My parents have coped with the noise and lived there forever. They are not going to move. Why would you want to sell and go into a brand new mortgage?" he said.

The revised plan is expected to be considered by the council in March.

If the plan is adopted, Blum said it would be at least a year before the zoning changes would be implemented.

The timeline on a plan of action is now being placed on the residents. Neither the city nor the airport is offering to either relocate or purchase the homes in the affected areas, Blum said.

"If you want to start to sell your house next week it's up to you," Blum told residents at a neighborhood meeting.

With the recent news, Marquez said he is not sure what action he wants to take: continue to live under those proposed conditions or try to sell his home before it loses its value.

Moving out is not an option for Marquez - nearly four generations of his family have lived on the property.

"Who is going to give us an adequate compensation for the property?" Marquez said. "The city needs to be more sensitive, the people feel their property has devalued."

Many of the neighbors, including Thania Mendez feel their homes will lose value because no one will want to purchase a home in an area that has been described by the city as "unliveable."

The news isn't comforting for Mendez, 25, who lives with her parents and four children in the neighborhood near Bon View Park.

Mendez' parents own the home, and she said they are very "disillusioned," by the city's revision to the plan. And they are not the only ones.

"My two neighbors have told me they don't know

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what they want to do because they are not in the best condition to move," she said.

The issue is reminiscent to one the city had about 10 years ago. At that time a similar effort to change the land use was attempted, but Blum said no action was taken because a majority of the residents were opposed to the idea.

The proposal is being introduced again because of the expected growth in the airport and the possible poor living conditions to which the residents may be subjected.

If the plan is passed, Blum said he doesn't expect industrial or commercial development to begin in those areas for at least another five to 10 years.

The reason is that in the last few years the strongest development in the city has been industrial but a lot of that development has now been pushed back two to three years.

Also, there is still vacant property in the city that can be used for either type of development before they move into the neighborhoods, he said.

If the new zone is created, Marquez said he is concerned with the type of uses that could go in and what effect it will have in the neighborhood.

The city will attempt to ensure the uses will be a good fit with the existing neighborhood, Blum said.

Another concern of Marquez is that a developer will work with the city to try to acquire property through eminent domain. Blum said he could not rule out that option.

To circumvent that occurring, a developer must have purchased an entire block before there is any attempts to get approval for projects, Blum said.

Residents will have another opportunity to discuss their concerns about the plan as the Planning Commission and City Council will hold public hearings on the plan in the next couple of weeks, Blum said.

"It's disheartening to think this is going to be pulled underneath us," Marquez said. "Right now, if they continue with the plan they leave us with no choice."

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