

## City will let developer top off tower

**News**

Metro | Latest News

North County

Temecula/Riverside

Tijuana/Border

California

Nation

Mexico

World

Obituaries

Today's Paper

AP Headlines

Business

Technology

Biotech

Markets

In Depth

In Iraq

War on Terror

Pension Crisis

Special Reports

Multimedia

Photo Galleries

Topics

Politics

Military

Science

Education

Health | Fitness

Features

Solutions

Travel

Opinion

Columnists

Steve Breen

Forums

Weblogs

Services

Weather

Traffic

Surf Report

Archives

E-mail Newsletters

Wireless | RSS

Noticias en Enlace

Internet Access

### Building rising near Montgomery Field

**By David Hasemyer**  
UNION-TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER

January 16, 2007

The city of San Diego will allow a roof to be built on a 180-foot-tall office tower under construction near Montgomery Field, even though the FAA hasn't budged from its position that the building is a hazard to planes landing in bad weather and opposition to the project continues to grow.

The city's Development Services Department authorized the roof work in December, two months after it ordered the developer, Sunroad Enterprises, to stop all work on the top two floors, which had already been framed. Sunroad said the roof was needed to protect the lower floors from rain.



HOWARD LIPIN / Union-Tribune  
Federal, state and city officials continue to battle with the developer over the height of the 12-story Sunroad Centrum office building under construction near Montgomery Field.

The Federal Aviation Administration, the City Attorney's Office and the state Department of Transportation have been battling with Sunroad since the FAA notified the company last spring that the building could be no more than 160 feet tall.

Last month, the City Attorney's Office filed a lawsuit demanding that the top two floors be removed. The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, whose 410,000 members are involved in civil aviation, joined the lawsuit last week. So did a group of local pilots and airport users.

Sunroad says the building is not a hazard and that it won't remove the top floors.

Tom Story, the company's vice president of development, said the City Attorney's Office and the pilots organization are distorting and sensationalizing the issues.

"Sunroad Enterprises is fully committed to public safety, and we would not have built the building if it was a public-safety hazard," Story said in a statement.

Marcela Escobar-Eck, director of the city's Development Services Department, says the roofing compromise doesn't mean the city is ignoring the FAA's concerns.

**Quicklinks**

- Restaurants ▶ Bars ▶
- Hotels ▶ Autos ▶
- Shopping ▶ Health ▶
- Eldercare ▶ Singles ▶

**Yellow Pages**

GO ▶

**Free Newsletters**

**SignOn News Alerts**  
*News as it happens*  
Sign Up Now!

Cell Phone Alerts ▶  
Privacy Policy ▶

**Guides**

- Vegas ▶ Spas/Salon ▶
- Travel ▶ Weddings ▶
- Wine ▶ Old Town ▶
- Baja ▶ Catering ▶
- Casino ▶ Home Imp. ▶
- Golf ▶ SD North ▶
- Gaslamp ▶



In a letter to Sunroad, Escobar-Eck warned that the roof is being added at “Sunroad’s own risk” because the FAA hasn’t removed the hazard designation. The letter also puts Sunroad on notice that the city won’t be liable if the company has to remove the roof.

The FAA isn’t likely to remove the hazard designation anytime soon, said Ian Gregor, an FAA spokesman in Los Angeles.

“Our position with regard to the project has not changed,” he said last week.

### Sunroad’s offer

Sunroad executives say their aviation consultants have advised them that the building isn’t a hazard at 180 feet.

To allay the FAA’s concerns, the company has offered to pay for and install a sophisticated electronic navigation system that would allow pilots making bad-weather landings to fly straight onto the runway instead of circling the building.

Escobar-Eck said the city is waiting for Sunroad to provide a detailed plan for the navigation system. If the plan is practical, the city will present it to the FAA, she said.

The FAA has balked at that idea because it could take more than a year to determine whether the proposed change in the landing pattern would conflict with air routes used by jetliners at Lindbergh Field and military aircraft at Miramar Marine Corps Air Station.

The state Department of Transportation also wants the building lowered because Sunroad didn’t apply for a state permit that’s required for any project that doesn’t comply with FAA standards.

Deputy City Attorney Carmen Brock said she has been talking with Caltrans lawyers to develop a joint legal strategy and decide whether to seek an expedited court date for the city’s lawsuit against Sunroad.

“We want to proceed to abate this nuisance no matter what it takes,” Brock said.

---

■ David Hasemyer: (619) 542-4583; [david.hasemyer@uniontrib.com](mailto:david.hasemyer@uniontrib.com)

---

---

Have you been the victim of a counterfeit-ticket scam? If so please contact Union-Tribune staff writer Janine Zuniga at (619) 498-6652 or [janine.zuniga@uniontrib.com](mailto:janine.zuniga@uniontrib.com) for a story on the subject.

---

### Sponsored Links

### Sponsored Links

---

[Contact SignOnSanDiego.com](#) | [Online Media Kit](#) | [Print Media Kit](#) | [Frequently Asked Questions](#) | [Make us your homepage](#)  
[Contact the Union-Tribune](#) | [About the Union-Tribune](#) | [Site Index](#) | [Privacy & Copyright Policy](#) | [Your California Privacy Rights](#)

© Copyright 2007 Union-Tribune Publishing Co. • A Copley Newspaper Site

