

County of Sonoma Level II Trauma Contract Community Meeting January 24, 2022
Responses to Q&A and submitted comments

Community Meeting Level II Trauma Services email questions submitted by DS:

DS1. Why did the EIR for the parking garage (if one was done) not take into account the impact of a four story building, both on flight patterns and on sound, for the surrounding neighborhood?

This is not a question for the County of Sonoma. We have no control over the parking garage construction. This question should be directed to the City of Santa Rosa or the hospital.

DS2. Why have flights increased so dramatically in recent years? Transfers from other hospitals have particularly increased. Are all of these transfers patients who must be flown in to the hospital? Is it possible that some stable patients might be able to be flown to SR Airport or to the fairgrounds and driven to the hospital to reduce the impact of overhead helicopters on the neighborhood?

Please see flight data graph provided on page 7 of this Q&A.

The transfer of patients from one hospital to another (inter-facility transfers) is evaluated and determined by the physician at the sending facility providing care for the patient and the receiving physician who will accept patient and provide ongoing care at the new facility.

Off sight landing are an option and are utilized when both the sending and receiving physician deem appropriate. All flight are monitored by the Coastal Valleys EMS Agency.

DS3. Why is conversation about a 10 year agreement being limited to a small group of neighbors who happened to sign up a decade ago to be on the hospital's email list? Why isn't there widespread notification of impacted residents, perhaps within 1/4 mile of the hospital and/or to all homes directly under the flight path?

The neighbors group requested the County of Sonoma host a community meeting and requested that leadership from the Department of Health Services, County Counsel, and Board of Supervisors be represented. The contract will be subject to full public process and notification per standard board process at the County of Sonoma BOS meeting. Everyone will have an opportunity to provide comment at the regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors.

DS4. Why are we being told that there is an "imminent discontinuation of all level II trauma capabilities for the North Bay" other than Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital? Is it not possible to reduce the impact on our neighborhood by creating a plan for another Level II trauma facility? Does Memorial Hospital have enough clout to block such an agreement? Are there no other hospitals willing to step up?

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All hospitals in Sonoma County were contacted to determine if there was an interest in additional trauma centers. Trauma centers are costly and time consuming to establish. All hospitals in Sonoma County declined interest to establish additional trauma centers. Coastal Valleys EMS Agency is responsible for EMS services within Sonoma and Mendocino Counties. In Mendocino County, we have also authorized two (2) Level IV trauma centers to help offset patient volume in our Level II trauma center in Sonoma County.

DS5. Why is the City Council not involved this time around?

This is an agreement between the County of Sonoma and SRMH. The city of Santa Rosa was represented in the Community Meeting by Santa Rosa Fire Department. The city's level of participation is a decision the city made.

DS6. Will there be any plan for oversight re: the mitigation of impacts on the neighborhood? To date, there has just been a "reminder" to pilots to fly the appropriate course, but no recourse when they do not. Will there be an impartial third party who ensures that SRMH keeps to their agreements to the neighborhood and who regularly evaluates the impact of flights to the helipad?

Yes, the mitigation plan was included with the current contract and is expected to be included in the next contract. Mitigation measures are taken with each occurrence of a flight that deviates from an approved approach and documented by the provider. Data illustrates that very few flights deviate from the approved flight paths into the SRMH helipad. The EMS Agency verifies this information. The EMS Agency is the Agency responsible for monitoring all aspects of the trauma agreement including flights. Additionally, the American College of Surgeons conducts an extensive review of the trauma center every three years.

DS7. In recent months, the process for complaints re: noise has been changed. I know that Stephen told us what to do.... and honestly, don't know where that email is or whom I am supposed to contact. Silence from the neighborhood does not necessarily mean that everything is fine; it just means that we've lost track of where and with whom to speak up when things are not working.

A recommendation would be to reach out to the neighbor meeting liaison at SRMH (Stephen) so he can ensure you have the updated contact information and process instructions.

Community Meeting Level II Trauma Services email questions submitted by MFP:

MP1. First of all, I am wondering why only some of our neighborhood was invited to this meeting. *Many of my neighbors didn't know anything about it.* The only people invited were the people on the email string from Stephen. It seems to me with something of this importance, a 10 year contract, that neighbors would have proper notice via the mail, like SRMH did when they were cutting down some trees!

Please refer to questions DS3 above.

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MP2. I have questions from the letter that was emailed with the revised agenda. It states that SRMH as a Level II Trauma center is "essential to address the risk to public health and safety presented by Imminent discontinuation of all level II trauma center capabilities for the North Bay." What other trauma centers are going to be "discontinued imminently"? Is SRMH planning on expanding its service area?

Please refer to question DS4 above

MP3. We've lived on Doyle Park Drive for 18 years. I have never experienced such low helicopter flights flying right over my house as I have in the past few years. We have been told over and over that helicopters won't fly over residential areas, yet they do regularly. We were told that helicopters will Never use the creek as a flight path, although they do, especially in the middle of the night.

Please see item DS6 above

MP4. How many different companies providing helicopter transport services land at SRMH?

The EMS Agency authorizes global medical response (REACH and CALSTAR), Sonoma County Sheriff's helicopter (H1) and the California Highway Patrol (CHP). There is the potential for outside aircraft to access SRMH and the outside providers are tracked by the hospital.

MP5. How are pilots informed of approved flight paths? Many are not following the approved flight paths. Are there any consequences when flight paths are not followed or are ignored? We keep hearing it's the wind. If it's too dangerous to fly over 4th St, then it's too dangerous to fly over our neighborhood, too. I am in support of helping others during trauma, but while the helicopter crew is busy saving a life in the helicopter, others are absolutely *terrified* below when flights fly over our homes.

All pilots responding as an authorized provider are required to orient to the approved flight paths. Instructions for the approved approaches to SRMH are included on the CALTRANS heliport website as they are responsible for the authorization of the helipad. All mitigations taken with the pilots are documented and reviewed by the EMS agency and the EMS aircraft provider is responsible for ensuring staff are trained to our local flight paths.

MP6. I know that we have asked for various reports and we still have not gotten to read them, especially environmental process reports. Why haven't we received this information? SRMH was built a decade *after* our neighborhood. We should be given respect, full transparency and we should be heard.

If your request was for a copy of draft documents related to compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act for the Board of Supervisor's consideration of a proposed agreement to extend the level II trauma center designation for Memorial Hospital, then in response we note that such draft records are not public and are withheld under the deliberative process privilege and because they are not drafts kept in the ordinary course of business where the public interest in disclosure outweighs the public interest in non-

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disclosure. Any draft reports and documentation specific to the renewal of the trauma agreement are currently being developed and once in final form will be presented with full public access at the regular meeting of the County of Sonoma BOS, tentative date March 15, 2022.

Community Meeting Level II Trauma Services email questions submitted by MM:

MM1. I have previously requested in writing drafts or copies of all correspondence, including emails, to date between the Sonoma County EMS Agency and staff, Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital staff and consultants, REACH, City of Santa Rosa representatives or staff regarding all matters concerning the discussions and negotiations on a new EMS Trauma II Agreement with Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital/Providence.

MM2. Did not receive any "draft" agreement on a new EMS Trauma II agreement to review in advance of this meeting.

All reports and documentation specific to the renewal of the trauma agreement are currently being developed and once final will be presented with full public access at the regular meeting of the County of Sonoma BOS, tentative date March 15, 2022.

MM3. At previous neighborhood meetings and with SCEMS staff, neighbors were told that "deal points" or issues to be a part of a NEW AGREEMENT NOT A RENEWAL OF THE EXISTING AGREEMENT, since there were so many important issues and impacts raised by the neighborhood residents? What has changed now, since we have not even received a list of deal points or a draft agreement so neighbors can review and provide comments or concerns?

The EMS Agency is confused by this question. Negotiations and terms of the next contract are ongoing between the agencies named in the contract.

MM4. Limiting public comments to 2-3 minutes each seems unreasonable as we have waited for months for this public meeting with the EMS Agency members to express our concerns regarding any new agreement. If this is a workshop format isn't there opportunity for a bit more time for public comments and questions?

We modified the speaker timeframe prior to the community meeting based on this comment. This was established as an early ground rule to ensure all speakers had an opportunity to speak.

MM5. Without any knowledge of what issues are being considered in a new agreement, how can the neighbors feel respected and listened to regarding important issues and impacts?

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This contract is going through standard county board process, which affords the public an opportunity to participate and voice comments to the final decision-maker, which is the Board of Supervisors.

MM6. Will there be a presentation or discussion of the Environmental Review process that will be completed as a part of this new agreement?

This contract is going through standard county board process. The material provided to the public and the Board in conjunction with the standard county board process, will address compliance with applicable laws. As indicated during community outreach, staff expects to recommend one or more exemptions from the California Environmental Quality Act. An environmental impact report (EIR) is not required to extend the hospital's current designation.

MM7. As a part of the Environmental Review, will there be a detailed plan for "Mitigation Measures" of the environmental impacts as an integral part of any new agreement? Neither SC EMS or SR Memorial Hospital had copies of the Mitigation measures referenced in the last 10 year agreement so it was next to impossible to identify existing mitigation measures and more importantly whether SR Memorial/REACH were operating in accordance with these mitigation measures?

All reports and documentation specific to the renewal of the trauma agreement are currently being developed and once final will be presented with full public access at the regular meeting of the County of Sonoma BOS, tentative date March 15, 2022.

MM8. Will the new agreement have "Enforcement Measures" penalties for failure to follow terms, conditions and mitigation measures in any new agreements and how will they be enforced? The previous 10 year agreement had no such enforcement measures against SR Memorial?REACH.

Responsibilities were included in the previous contract and staff will be recommending that the Board of Supervisors include them in the next contract. The EMS Agency is responsible for monitoring and compliance.

MM9. It would be helpful for all parties and decisionmakers to show how EMS medical helicopter trips into SR Memorial Hospital have increased in the last ten years. Request that either SR Memorial or SC EMS staffs present a written report of such trips, including origins of such flights per month from 2000 to 2021?

Please see flight data graph provided on page 7 of this Q&A.

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MM10. Will the City of Santa Rosa be involved in the review or approval of any new agreement since they had a significant role in the previous 10 year agreement?

This is an agreement between the County of Sonoma and SRMH. The city of Santa Rosa was represented in the Community Meeting by Santa Rosa Fire Department. The city's level of participation is a decision the city made.

MM11. What is the timeline for circulation of a recommended draft agreement ?

Board of Supervisors date, tentative March 15, 2022.

MM12. Will be further public workshops or meeting with the neighborhood residents in an open and transparent process to promote respect and cooperation between all parties?

Yes, regular meeting of the County of Sonoma Board of Supervisors

MM13. What special studies will SR Memorial Hospital be REQUIRED to perform in advance of any new service agreement regarding issues such as: Noise attenuation studies for surrounding neighborhoods, air pollution studies of fumes from low flying helicopters coming into and departing from SR Memorial Hospital a situation that has gotten worse in recent years since SRMH has constructed 5 story Medical Office Building and Parking Structure directly across the street from the EMS Helicopter Landing Zone? To date, such studies to determine such impacts and appropriate mitigation measures have never been done by SR Memorial Hospital since it began EMS Helicopter services decades ago.

Negotiations and terms of the next contract are ongoing.

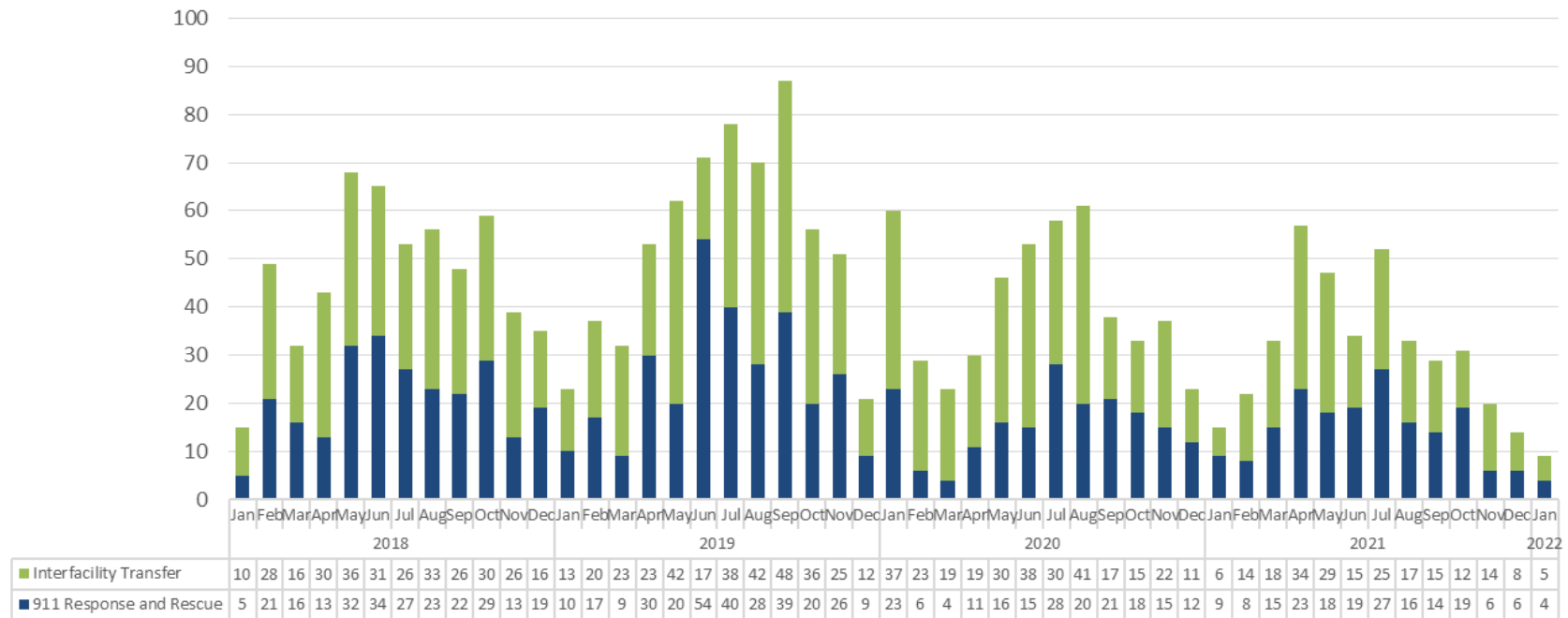
MM14. Who is the lead agency in this process going forward, SC EMS, SR Memorial Hospital, REACH, City of Santa Rosa?

County of Sonoma Department of Health Services, Coastal Valleys EMS Agency

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FLIGHT DATA SLIDE:

Aircraft Transports to SRMH (all agencies, all call types) by Month 2018 - Present



Community Meeting Level II Trauma Services email questions submitted by KS

KS1. How was this **first** meeting noticed? A designated radius or another perimeter measurement from SRMH? And how were the notices delivered? Who decided these guidelines of notification? I, as a regular (22 year) neighborhood meeting member received only an email that showed about 43 other emails in the link, I did not get any snail mail or other notification. This is not the entire neighborhood affected and many folks may not have email services, or may not have been able to fully access the meeting like me or not been notified at all.

The neighbors group requested the County of Sonoma host a community meeting and requested that leadership from the Department of Health Services, County Counsel, and Board of Supervisors be represented. Future public meetings of the Board of Supervisors to consider a proposed contract will be noticed as required by law. The public will have an opportunity to provide comment at the regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors.

A very brief history summary for any newcomers and apologies to those who are aware: our houses were built mostly in the 1930s & 1940s with some later infill sites. Memorial Hospital was built in 1950. The helipad was built and approved in 1985 with a cap of 175 flights per year. The 2000 Trauma Center designation was approved despite much contentious opposition from us neighbors and a strong fight for it by Sutter Hospital. This designation removed any flight cap numbers for the helipad at Memorial. The EIR mandated that regular meetings with the neighbors & hospital take place. Because of these mandated meetings with a city rep, neighbors, Memorial, EMS reps & providers we worked out flight paths that seemed to benefit the majority. These paths have been in use during these past two decades, with us neighbors monitoring & chiming in when errant flights occur and getting feedback & corrections from the providers. The quarterly meetings have been ongoing and I feel mostly beneficial in the long run.

Many of us have lived with the Trauma Center for 22 years. As part of the original agreement in 2000, it was mandated that a member of the city planning commission would attend and moderate the meetings. This worked well and helped with the contentious atmosphere for several years. I believe Andrea Learned from Memorial can attest to this. She is the only hospital representative I know of still working at the hospital since the trauma designation. She would be a valuable asset to this discussion, as most other involved personnel, including CEOs have only been in their positions for an average of 3 years or so. This makes the historical continuity often difficult & frustrating for us neighbors.

So we are not NIMBYS now, the Trauma Center has already been in our back yards for 22 years. We have done our civic duty and are wanting to proceed with some mitigation efforts for some relief as 2021 flights were particularly bad so we have questions about the affect of the build out of the Medical Office Bldg & parking garage on Montgomery Dr. I don't believe there was any helicopter noise testing done in the approval of these buildings. I thought that the proposed buildings being further from our neighborhood and near the hospital's core zone was good, but did not have any understanding of the potential sound ramifications of the tall buildings. Still don't, but are they now possibly affecting the noise level around the landing pad - Doyle Park Dr, Parker Dr., Fair Oaks and north

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Talbot potential Ave area? Is it a direct affect of the build out or coincidence? We'd like to know. The EMS rep said at a neighborhood meeting in 2021 that a sound study would be considered by the hospital. Nothing has been done to date.

Your comments have been captured, and will be forwarded to the Board of Supervisors.

KS2. Question - Does the City of SR play any part in this redesignation, any Conditional Use Permit issues?

The County of Sonoma and the EMS Agency authorize trauma designation. Questions related to any zoning or land use permits should be directed to the City of Santa Rosa, which has land use authority over the site.

KS3. What triggers the need for another EIR to be done, given all the changes that SRMH has made over the last 21 years without one and noise level complaints rising?

Staff is recommending that the Board rely on one or more exemptions under the California Environmental Quality Act when approving a proposed agreement to continue the trauma center designation. If members of the public believe an EIR should be prepared, they may direct those comments to the Board of Supervisors as part of public comment.

KS4. Are there any better flight pattern options that would benefit the neighborhood without compromising flight safety? Maybe there's something we're missing here?

The current flight paths were selected after partnering with the neighbors group to conduct fly-overs to best identify appropriate flight paths to reduce noise. In 2013/2014, flight elevation adjustments were also adopted and revised on the CALTRANS heliport page, per a request from the neighbors group.

KS5. This came up during the meeting and was asked to be clarified by I believe Supervisor Coursey, what are the annual number of flights now compared to years past? We, as neighbors know that 2020 was an anomaly on the low end (one small thank you to Covid), but that 2021 went way up - was it only up from 2020 or up overall say from 2018 & 2019? Let's see some totals for maybe 10 years?

The County of Sonoma has been able to provide vetted data since 2018 when Sonoma County/EMS Agency adopted an electronic data system, Image Trend. Please see the flight graph on page 7 providing flight data since 2018.

KS5. Any possibility of using the west tower as the landing pad instead of the east tower? I ask this knowing full well the location logistics as they exist now, but future options? A better option all around? Less conflict down the road? Could Memorial endure the cost (long term) or move emergency & helipad to the 1111 Sonoma property (in a commercial zone) and develop a new completely

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redesigned & integrated trauma/ER facility? We neighbors have asked over the years for a master plan of their intended build out, mainly because of their encroachment into the neighborhood, but truly as a city and county shouldn't we be clued in to some sort of plan for a facility that could impact all of us?

This is not a question for the County of Sonoma and should be addressed to Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital.

KS6. Question - What is the "tipping point" of the capacity of a level 2 trauma center? How much does a neighborhood have to take on and for how long? When do we as a **community** and **Sonoma County** look at the need to develop another trauma center (a regional issue not just county, I know) to alleviate the number of flights impacting an inner city neighborhood? Solano County (similar population count to ours) has 2 trauma centers. What motivated that county to support 2? Memorial Hospital is located directly on the Rodgers Creek fault line. Would we not be wise to have another option for trauma services in the event of the inevitable? Many questions on this topic alone that I feel need addressing at least the county, and probably regional level. At our quarterly meetings with the hospital, EMS and providers, these topics have often come up over the years but it's only a discussion, nothing moves into looking at the reality of a solution, which I and others feel we should be addressing. It's truly a North Bay issue to be considered for all of us.

Your comments have been captured, and will be forwarded to the Board of Supervisors. As part of public comment, comments regarding or requests for the County to explore designation of additional level II trauma centers may be submitted.

Suggestion - we have been looking at the break down of flight types for two decades now and feel that while there is no way nor desire (we neighbors all know the importance of on scene emergency flights) to control on site rescues, there may be some way to encourage the number of inter facility transfers to go through other hospitals/trauma centers, depending on specific needs. Also, encouraging as many off site transfers as possible. We think these deserve further study by EMS and in fact have been offered as possible alternatives to lower Memorial's flight volume at one of our quarterly meetings last year.

Your comments have been captured, and will be forwarded to the Board of Supervisors. The transfer of patients from one hospital to another (inter-facility transfers) is evaluated and determined by the physician at the sending facility providing care for the patient and the receiving physician who will accept patient and provide ongoing care at the new facility.

Off sight landing are an option and are utilized when both the sending and receiving physician deem appropriate. All flight are monitored by the Coastal Valleys EMS Agency.

Suggestion - any new helicopters being purchased should be mandated to be of the lowest, unleaded fuel emissions available at the time of purchase and lowest noise ratings possible. Electric on the horizon??

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Your comments have been captured, and will be forwarded to the Board of Supervisors. Global Medical Response upgraded their aircraft fleet in 2013 with sound reducing engines.

Suggestion - require, not request (as has been our only option to date) that **all** pilots that fly into Memorial (including non-regular providers such as UCSF, Stanford, UC Davis, CHP, Sonoma County Sheriff) receive regular, mandatory & publicly documented training on approved flight paths into & out of Memorial.

Your comments have been captured, and will be forwarded to the Board of Supervisors. All recommended flights into Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital are located on the CALTRANS heliport webpage. All local pilots are trained to use the approved flight paths unless safety is a concern (please see flight path chart on page 12).

Sonoma County nor the EMS Agency can control the rates, routes or schedules of our EMS aircraft. Those are controlled by the Federal Aviation Administration.

Suggestion - I really think that Supervisor Gorin's question about approving a shorter renewal period is key as we have so many questions to get answers to, some that may require lengthy tests, also still wondering how many in the affected vicinity even got notified of the January meeting.

Your comments have been captured, and will be forwarded to the Board of Supervisors. As part of public comment, any additional comments regarding or requests for the County to explore designation of additional level II trauma centers may be submitted to the Board of Supervisors.

I think it's obvious, but not one of my neighbors thinks the Trauma Center is not needed, period. We know that no other hospital will be stepping up at the moment to apply for Trauma designation, so it will remain to Memorial to fill the much needed position and I thank them for their honest commitment to our community. But we need some relief here in our beloved neighborhood, 2021 was tough and contentious. Having an active helipad in the midst of our regular lives is disruptive, can be scary or worse if you're a new parent or war Vet. That being said, after 22 years, I'm hoping we can move forward to mitigate what we can and maintain that wonderful quality of neighborliness that we all benefit from.

Your comments have been captured and will be provided to the Board of Supervisors, thank you.

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Santa Memorial Flight Paths:

Current Flight Paths into SRMH

