

# Oakland Airport-Community Noise Management Forum

## Meeting Minutes – January 15, 2025

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### 1. INTRODUCTIONS

The January 15, 2025, Oakland Airport-Community Noise Management Forum (Noise Forum) meeting was called to order at 6:36 p.m. by the Noise Forum’s facilitator, Rhea Hanrahan. Ms. Hanrahan noted that this meeting was a regular meeting and that there was a quorum. Roll was taken.

#### **Noise Forum Members/Alternates Present**

Tracy Jensen, Councilmember, Alameda - Alternate  
Jay Seaton, Community Representative, Alameda  
James Nelson, Community Representative, Berkeley  
Edward Bogue, Community Representative, Hayward  
Bart Lounsbury, Community Representative, Oakland  
Co-Chair Benny Lee, Community Representative, San Leandro

Gopal Krishnan, Community Representative, County of Alameda  
Craig Simon, Director of Aviation, Port of Oakland

**Staff Members/Advisors/Officials Present**

Doug Mansel, Acting Assistant Director of Aviation, Port of Oakland  
Matt P. Davis, Airport Operations Manager, Port of Oakland  
Jesse Richardson, Airport Noise and Environmental Affairs Supervisor, Port of Oakland  
Matthew Davis, Chief Public Engagement Officer, Port of Oakland  
Diego Gonzalez, Manager-Government Affairs, Port of Oakland  
Marjon Saulo, Government Affairs, Port of Oakland  
Joan Zatopek, Manager, Planning and Development, Port of Oakland  
Rhea Hanrahan, Noise Forum Facilitator, HMMH  
Doreen Stockdale, HMMH  
Sarah Yenson, HMMH  
Paul Hannah, Lean Technology Corporation  
Perry Olek, Lean Technology Corporation  
Christian Valdes, Technical Consultant to the Noise Forum, Landrum & Brown  
Brian McGuire, City of Alameda  
Bert Ganoung, Noise Manager, San Francisco International Airport  
Carl Stallone, Spirit Airlines

**FAA Representatives Present**

Moifair Chin, Community Engagement Officer  
Carlette Young, Supervisory Senior Advisor, Western-Pacific Regional Administrators Office  
Harley Aronson, OAK Air Traffic Control Tower

Ms. Hanrahan reminded everyone that the meeting was being transcribed by a court report. She asked everyone to speak clearly and slowly and speak one at a time.

## 2. ANNOUNCEMENTS

### A. Meeting format for 2025

Facilitator Hanrahan began by acknowledging the great turnout for the evening's meeting. She then mentioned that their previous hybrid meeting did not reach a quorum. She opened the floor for discussion on the meeting format for 2025, asking if there was still interest in alternating between a fully virtual and hybrid format for each meeting.

Benny Lee said that he attended the previous hybrid meeting and acknowledged that they did not reach quorum. He noted that they have always reached quorum during virtual meetings, which is an important consideration. While he is not opposed to hybrid meetings, he emphasized the challenge of not reaching quorum since members are required to attend in person to reach quorum during hybrid meetings. He expressed interest in finding ways to achieve quorum, suggesting that the virtual format seems more likely to succeed, but he deferred to his colleagues to hear their perspectives.

James Nelson expressed his preference for in-person meetings. However, he acknowledged that the current virtual format seems to be working well and suggested maintaining it. Jay Seaton expressed his support for in-person meetings but raised a concern about the quorum rule. He noted that the current rule requires quorum to be achieved only by those physically present during a hybrid meeting, which contributed to not reaching quorum last time. He suggested changing the rule to allow quorum to be counted with both in-person and virtual attendees during hybrid meetings. He pointed out that the current rule, intended to encourage in-person attendance, actually worked against them, preventing binding decisions.

Facilitator Hanrahan explained that part of the reason for the current quorum rule is if the Port is going to make the monetary investment in conducting in-person hybrid meetings, Noise Forum members need to make a concerted effort to attend in person. If hybrid meetings cannot reach quorum, she suggested switching to fully virtual meetings to save resources, rather than having the desire to meet in person but then not attend the meeting.

Mr. Seaton acknowledged that while virtual meetings save resources, in-person meetings offer greater public participation and opportunities. He encouraged everyone to attend in person, if possible, as it provides a chance to interact with the public and fellow Noise Forum members. Bart Lounsbury suggested considering whether virtual votes should count toward a quorum, noting the unfortunate lack of quorum in person. He agreed with others about the benefits of in-person meetings and hoped that relaxing the rules to allow virtual votes would not reduce in-person participation. He emphasized that his attendance is driven by the desire to interact with Noise Forum members, airport staff, and the public, rather than just voting. He hoped this change would not lead to a drop-off in participation.

Co-Chair Lee pointed out the challenge of getting elected officials to attend meetings. He noted that only one alternate elected member is attending this meeting. He expressed concern that no representatives from other cities, including his own, are present. He emphasized the need to solve this problem to ensure the work gets done. Facilitator Hanrahan clarified that there would be no voting today and that the discussion was to gather input. She mentioned that the decision on the meeting format would involve the Port staff and co-chairs. She assured everyone that they would receive ample notice about the next meeting in April, whether it would be virtual or hybrid. She reminded everyone to block out the meeting time on their calendars.

### [B. Third Quarter 2024 Noise Abatement Report](#)

Facilitator Hanrahan reported that the Noise Abatement Report for the third quarter of 2024 was posted on the flyquietoak.com website. Co-Chair Lee noted that on page 3, there was a significant increase in flights for the north field operations, and compliance decreased from 94 percent to 83 percent. He requested an explanation and asked what steps would be taken to improve compliance despite the increased number of flights.

Jesse Richardson explained that the Visual Flight Rules (VFR) Noise Abatement Procedure (NAP) saw a significant increase in noncompliance during the third quarter of 2024. He noted that the violation rule in the Airport Noise Operations Monitoring System (ANOMS) had to be updated

because the old Beacon Code Rule was no longer viable. The Port has asked the noise consultant to research why the VFR NAP departure compliance rate decreased by 12 percent compared to last year. Once the consultant completes the investigation, they will report back to the Noise Forum. He noted that the report for the fourth quarter of 2024 shows the VFR NAP compliance rate trending back upward to 90 percent and assured Mr. Lee that they are investigating the sharp decrease.

Mr. Seaton asked whether the VFR NAP update was applied retroactively to identify past mislabeling or if the rule update would only be used going forward. He sought clarification on the implementation of the rule update. Mr. Richardson explained that the rule was updated on July 1, 2024, and will be applied going forward. He noted that retroactively applying the update would require significant effort, as it would involve going back a couple of years. Mr. Seaton asked if the consultant is considering the rule change as one of the possible reasons while investigating the inquiries. Mr. Richardson concurred.

### 3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

#### A. July 17, 2024

Facilitator Hanrahan noted that Noise Forum members have received copies of the draft minutes for the July 17, 2024, Noise Forum meeting. She asked if there were any questions or comments. If there were no questions, comments, errors, or omissions, the Facilitator said she would entertain a motion to approve. Moved: Benny Lee, second: James Nelson.

#### B. October 16, 2024

Facilitator Hanrahan noted that Noise Forum members have received copies of the draft minutes for the October 16, 2024, Noise Forum meeting. She asked if there were any questions or comments. If there were no questions, comments, errors, or omissions, the Facilitator said she would entertain a motion to approve. Moved: Benny Lee, second: Edward Bogue.

### 4. ACTION ITEM – Election of Elected Co-Chair

Facilitator Hanrahan introduced Action Item Number 4, which is the election of a co-chair to fill a current vacancy for an elected member. She noted that this would be a partial term, as full voting for both chair seats occur in July. She then opened the floor for nominations. Co-Chair Lee asked for this item to be tabled to a future meeting as there were no elected members present. Moved: Benny Lee, second: Jay Seaton.

### 5. PUBLIC COMMENT

Facilitator Hanrahan opened the public comment period with an announcement that it was an opportunity for the public to speak on issues not on the agenda but relevant to airport noise at the Oakland International Airport (OAK). The following individuals provided a public comment:

- Sandra Harrison, Hayward – Ms. Harrison expressed her ongoing concern about planes flying over her house, describing it as very scary, especially when they fly over at 3:00 AM. She requested any possible action to stop the planes from flying over her house and thanked everyone for holding the meetings.

## 6. FAA REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR'S UPDATE

Moifair Chin said that there was no update from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

## 7. NEXTGEN UPDATE

Paul Hannah briefed the Noise Forum on four topics:

1. WNDSR Arrival Procedure
2. CNDEL Departure
3. HUSSH Departure
4. Higher Glide Path Angle (GPA) Approaches

Mr. Hannah discussed the opportunity to explore potential changes to the WNDSR arrival. In recent meetings, including the December North Field/South Field Working Group meeting and the last NextGen subcommittee meeting, Lean Technology Corporation (Lean team) had preliminary conversations with key FAA stakeholders about the status of the airspace near the WNDSR arrivals. During these conversations, the Lean team discovered new challenges that the FAA are mitigating, particularly with aircraft using the airspace north of OAK, near Richmond and Vallejo. He explained that there is now more aviation activity in the area where they had considered moving the arrival path to gain altitude, presenting new challenges. These changes are not published procedures but are safety actions taken by FAA air traffic stakeholders to ensure safe separation of increased arrivals and departures in the Bay Area airspace. He explained that consequently, exploring changes to the WNDSR arrival will take longer than was originally anticipated and will require further and more in-depth investigation.

Mr. Hannah next covered the CNDEL departure. He discussed the request, which involves aircraft departing from Runways 30, 28L, or 28R, heading west and north of OAK, then turning left over downtown San Francisco. The community requested a change like the successful OAKLAND departure, which makes a six-degree left turn flying farther from Bay Farm Island. The airport requested the FAA to explore this change, and the FAA responded promptly. They are now working on different options, with at least one or two successful possibilities identified. This is promising news for residents. Further updates will be provided at the next North Field/ South Field Working Group meeting.

Mr. Hannah next briefed on the HUSSH departure procedure, which involves collaboration with cargo carriers like FedEx, UPS, and Boeing Corporation. The goal is to improve aircraft performance during takeoff and achieve the net engagement altitude, allowing them to follow automated paths and reduce noise for residents, especially on Bay Farm Island. Mr. Hannah noted past issues where some aircraft did not make the necessary turn until after leaving airport property, causing noise disturbances. The ongoing experiment aims to improve performance, not change the procedure itself. However, recent Boeing layoffs have affected team members involved in the analysis, delaying progress. The Lean team is awaiting new Boeing team members to assist and will provide updates as they become available.

Finally, Mr. Hannah provided an update on the opportunity for higher flight path angle approaches, which could be implemented in the near term (one to two years). This involves raising the approach angle for aircraft landing on both the north field runways (28L and 28R) and the south field runways (30). Small changes to meet FAA instrument procedures and adjustments to visual navigation lights on the runway could help pilots fly higher over residential areas, benefiting residents in places like Hayward. Farther south and east, there is an even greater potential for increasing aircraft altitudes.

Mr. Nelson asked if the increased air traffic for the WNDSR arrival changes is a result of separation efforts by the FAA. Mr. Hannah explained that there is increased air traffic in the area where the NextGen subcommittee was exploring changes to the WNDSR arrivals, west of Travis Air Force Base and north of Richmond. This area is used by aircraft arriving at airports north of the Bay and aircraft departing underneath them. Air traffic control has taken safety actions to keep these aircraft over the water, but this complicates the process of making path changes to gain altitude. While solutions may exist, they will be more challenging to implement than initially hoped. Mr. Nelson asked if the issue was Napa Airport. Mr. Hannah remarked on the impressive distance from which airports can manage incoming traffic, noting that it is not just one airport but five or six, from Sonoma to Napa. This includes both general aviation and scheduled airline traffic. The challenge lies in how these aircraft navigate Bay Area airspace and begin their descent when coming from the south. He explained that many safety mitigations are coordinated between different air traffic stakeholders and are not published for pilots or the public, as they follow vectors rather than published procedures. After discussing with FAA stakeholders, the Lean team realized that their intended changes would be more complicated than initially thought.

Mr. Lounsbury expressed appreciation for the optimism provided, despite the disheartening news. He asked if the increased air traffic in the last 9 to 12 months is a temporary or permanent change and the reasons behind it. He also inquired whether the WNDSR preset arrival approach could be moved, with vector traffic around it accommodating the change by adjusting altitudes as needed. Mr. Hannah explained that while the traffic has always been present, its volume has steadily increased, as shown by historical data. This includes both scheduled airline traffic and general aviation, with airports like Sonoma County Airport seeing a rise in flights. Air traffic control is continuously monitoring these trends and seeking solutions. Regarding the second question, Mr. Hannah clarified that the vectors are managed by two different air traffic control groups: Northern California TRACON and Oakland Center. These groups coordinate to ensure safe transitions between airspaces. Although the WNDSR arrival approach is not completely off the table, it will require additional coordination with the FAA, adding complexity to the process.

## 8. NOISE OFFICE REPORT

### A. Update on Action Items from North Field/South Field Research Group

Mr. Davis gave reports on the following action items from the North Field/South Field Research Group meeting held on December 18, 2024:

- The first Action Item involved analyzing whether Whispertrack needs to be updated to reflect Runway 28R as the preferred touch-and-go runway. Mr. Davis discussed the use



of Runway 28R as a preferred touch-and-go runway for training activities. He mentioned that the Whispertrack website is currently nonfunctional. He noted that the designation of a preferred runway for departures is not universally agreed upon, with preferences varying based on if training activities include left or right turns. This requires further analysis beyond Whispertrack's technological aspects to determine the best approach for pilots and the community. The research group will continue to work on this and ensure all stakeholders are comfortable with any decisions.

- The second Action Item involved adding additional language to letters sent to aircraft owners and operators for noncompliant operations regarding the health effects of noise. Mr. Davis discussed the ongoing effort to improve communication with owner/operators regarding noncompliant operations. He emphasized the importance of how noise abatement procedures are expressed in these letters, whether the tone should be friendly or forceful, and how to convey the significance of compliance. The goal is to find the most effective message that resonates with pilots to achieve better compliance.

Co-Chair Lee asked when Whispertrack went down and if there was an estimated time for when it will be available again. Mr. Davis explained that he does not know when Whispertrack will be operational again, as the vendor is uncertain about their future plans. Meanwhile, noise procedures are available on the flyquietoak.com website, and Port staff are exploring other ways to engage, including adding the Insightful product to improve user interface and multimedia content. He expressed hope that Whispertrack will continue but acknowledged the uncertainty.

Mr. Richardson said that the website went down approximately in the third week of November. Mr. Davis clarified that this is an issue with Whispertrack globally, this is not just an OAK issue. He explained that despite the absence of Whispertrack, Port staff can still monitor and capture all necessary data. Whispertrack was a convenient tool for pilots to access graphical information about procedures, but its absence does not affect their ANOMS performance, which is used to track and detect noncompliant operations. Noise abatement information is still accessible through the flyquietoak.com website, airport facility directories, and other sources. While Whispertrack was a useful repository, its absence will not hinder the ongoing monitoring and operations.

Mr. Seaton inquired if there is a specific date by which the Port will accept that Whispertrack is permanently unavailable. He also asks about the proportion of pilot traffic that previously relied on Whispertrack for information compared to other sources. He asked about the extent of the loss and how long the Port will wait for Whispertrack to return before considering alternative solutions. Mr. Davis said that the Port plans to update their website but lacks analytics to compare traffic between Whispertrack and their site. He acknowledged that pilots get information from various sources, including the FAA's Airport Facility Directory. He said he does not know the actual impact of Whispertrack's absence but emphasized the Port is not waiting for it to return. If a suitable alternative is found, the Port will switch to it immediately. Mr. David said that staff continue to provide information through the flyquietoak.com website and other accessible sources and are open to exploring new resources.

## B. Update on Action Items from October 16, 2024 Noise Forum Meeting.

Mr. Davis reported that the only action item from the October meeting is being covered by Agenda Item 9.

## 9. ACTION ITEM – UC Davis Noise Symposium Attendance

Facilitator Hanrahan thanked Mr. Seaton for previously bringing the Noise Forum conference attendance topic to her attention. She explained that the Noise Forum by-laws allow Forum members to attend noise-related conferences. She mentioned the upcoming Aviation Noise and Emissions Symposium organized by UC Davis, scheduled for March 10–12 at the Flamingo Hotel in Las Vegas. According to the by-laws, co-chairs have the first option to attend, followed by other Forum members, if interested. She noted that the Port would reimburse travel expenses, but attendees must initially cover costs and submit receipts for reimbursement. She invited comments, questions, or discussions about the symposium and the process.

Co-Chair Lee said he would defer to the members who are interested in attending. Gopal Krishnan mentioned that he is available to attend but is willing to let other members have the opportunity first. Facilitator Hanrahan noted that having a fresh perspective at these conferences is beneficial. Attendees typically include representatives from airports across the country, not just California, along with FAA members. The content presented and discussions are very informative. Recently, the conference focus has expanded to include more sessions on emissions and air quality, balancing with noise topics. She mentioned that HMMH always attends and helps with planning, reporting back to the Port on the latest developments. Co-Chair Lee suggested that if Mr. Krishnan is interested, he should submit his application. He said the Noise Forum members will be very supportive. Mr. Seaton said that the Noise Forum has been discussing this for nearly a year and suggested that if someone attends, they should provide a small summary of the top ideas or interesting things they learned.

## 10. NOISE NEWS UPDATE

Christian Valdes reported on the current news of the aviation and noise industries. The following items were discussed:

- In response to Mr. Nelson's request during the October 2024 Noise Forum meeting, Mr. Valdes provided an update on hydrogen use in aviation. He noted that aviation's contribution to global carbon dioxide emissions is projected to rise from 2.5 percent to 25 percent by 2050 as other sectors decarbonize. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) aims for net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, estimating costs up to \$4 trillion and encouraging member nations to regulate aviation emissions. In 2021, the U.S. released its Aviation Climate Action Plan, outlining measures to achieve net-zero emissions through coordinated efforts by the aviation industry and government. The FAA is committed to making aviation cleaner and more sustainable by improving fuel efficiency, developing new engines, and reducing emissions. Hydrogen is a potential future fuel for decarbonizing aviation. It can be used in gas turbines or fuel cells to power electric motors. However, hydrogen is about four times more expensive and requires four times the volume of traditional jet fuel. Currently, hydrogen propulsion is mainly used in small and regional aircraft, with larger aircraft facing more significant challenges. Producing hydrogen also requires a substantial amount of green electricity. He explained that using hydrogen fuel can reduce aircraft payload by 15 to 40 percent, which would mean a significant loss in seats, area, or revenue. Current aircraft designs are not effective for hydrogen storage, but blended-wing designs seem promising. There is no infrastructure to supply hydrogen



at airports yet. Hydrogen can be produced greenly using renewable energy sources like wind and solar, but commercial-scale use is challenging due to transportation requirements. The hydrogen must be kept at -423°F during transport from the production plant to the airport. The FAA has released a roadmap for hydrogen fuel aircraft safety and certification, highlighting technical challenges, safety concerns, policy gaps, and research needs. Near-term actions (2023–2028) include completing hazardous regulations, gap analyses, airworthiness requirements, and research plans, while collaborating with international authorities and institutions. Mid-term actions (2028–2032) involve completing research and development and certification requirements for fuel cells and progressing on hydrogen-powered gas turbines, with a long-term goal (by 2036) of completing certification for hydrogen-powered gas turbines. Leading companies in hydrogen testing and efforts include Airbus for larger, long-range aircraft, and ZeroAvia for regional jets and propeller turboprops. He mentioned that testing on hydrogen fuel will continue. Although there are no current plans for operators to use hydrogen at OAK, First Element opened a hydrogen filling station at the Port in May 2024, capable of fueling up to 200 trucks daily. Airbus forecasts that at least one hydrogen aircraft will begin commercial service in 2035. They are working on three concepts: a turboprop for 100 passengers or less, a turbo-connect for under 200 passengers, and a blended-wing design. These concepts could be realized in the next 10–20 years. Airbus is also conducting hydrogen testing on an A380 by adding a fifth engine on top of the fuselage, showing their advanced and significant investment in hydrogen technology.

- In October 2024, the FAA issued a final rule for the qualifications and training that instructors and pilots must have to fly power-lift aircraft, which have characteristics of both helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft. The rule provided a comprehensive framework for certifying the initial sets of power-lift instructors and pilots. It applied helicopter operating requirements to some phases of flight and allowed pilots to train in power-lift aircraft with a simple set of flight controls, unlike legacy rules that required two sets of controls. The power-lift category of aircraft includes air taxis. The FAA did not propose new noise certification requirements for power-lift aircraft but will examine each new applicant to determine if existing Federal Aviation Regulation (FAR) Part 36 requirements were appropriate. The current noise requirements for tilt-rotor aircraft are in Appendix K of FAR Part 36.
- Last month, Congress advanced federal legislation for the first time acknowledging the disruption of space-launch noise on nearby communities. The legislation outlines steps the Department of Defense should take to mitigate the impact of sonic booms and other disturbances. Communities on the central coast of California, near Vandenberg Air Force Base, have expressed concerns about the frequency of rocket launches. Last year, SpaceX launched 136 rockets and plans to increase that to 180 launches this year from Vandenberg. This marks the first time Congress has formally acknowledged the disruption caused by space-launch noise, potentially enhancing current noise mitigation efforts by the Department of Defense around military bases.
- As package delivery drones travel long distances, the operator's line of sight to the drone is often blocked by vegetation or structures. Last year, the FAA authorized multiple U.S. commercial drone companies and operators to fly drones beyond visual line of sight. This is made possible by using unmanned aircraft system traffic management (UTM), which allows for digital sharing of each drone user's planned flight details. With UTM, each drone user can have the same situational awareness of where drones fly. This technology is now being used by the FAA in approved parts of the Dallas area, allowing commercial drone

companies to deliver packages using UTM research. This technology could likely be used for air taxis in the future.

Mr. Krishnan noted, referring back to the power lift slide, both Joby and Archer (based in Silicon Valley) have public partnerships with Delta and United Airlines to use their aircraft for operations. He asked what impact this has on urban noise when these aircraft are in use. Mr. Valdes acknowledged that American Airlines, United Airlines, Toyota, and many other companies have invested heavily in Joby and Archer, as well as other European companies developing urban air mobility air taxis. He noted that the specific takeoff and landing locations, as well as routes, are still unknown. While some operators are working on routes in Florida, Mr. Valdes has not seen any plans for the Bay Area, including landing spots or vertiports. Initially, the FAA plans for these air taxis to fly VFR routes, similar to helicopters, until the airspace becomes more saturated. At that point, they may establish dedicated corridors for air taxis if the volume of operations increases.

Mr. Seaton asked if there has been any progress on zoning requirements and laws, noting an example of a person wanting to purchase a piece of land and turn it into an air taxi or drone port. Mr. Valdes explained that developers or users looking to build a new vertiport would need to go through the permit process specific to the jurisdiction where the vertiport is to be constructed. Facilitator Hanrahan added that any projects associated with federal access or federal airports must go through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. For more localized projects, such as developing a vertiport on a building or a semi-private or local site, the developers would need to go through local environmental study processes as well.

Brian McGuire said that as someone who enforces zoning rules in a local jurisdiction, he believes cities will regulate commercial activities, including package delivery. While drones passing overhead might be one thing, landing and operating commercially will require new regulations. He anticipates that this will involve significant legal work as the process develops.

## 11. NEW BUSINESS / CONFIRM NEXT MEETING DATE

Co-Chair Lee said that although Trish Herrera-Spencer was not re-elected to the Alameda City Council and is therefore no longer a member of the Noise Forum, she served as co-chair and contributed significantly to the Noise Forum. He suggested creating a certificate of acknowledgment to recognize her years of service and proposed bringing this idea to the Noise Forum members for consideration. Mr. Nelson agreed with that proposal. Facilitator Hanrahan said that she will work with the Port to prepare something for Ms. Herrera-Spencer.

The next Noise Forum meeting is scheduled to be on April 15, 2025. The format of the meeting will be discussed with the Port and will be provided as soon as possible.

## 12. ADJOURNMENT

Facilitator Hanrahan adjourned the meeting at 8:07 p.m.