Oakland Airport-Community Noise Management Forum Meeting Minutes – April 16, 2025

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1. INTRODUCTIONS

The April 16, 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

Greg Boller, Councilmember, Alameda
Jay Seaton, Community Representative, Alameda
James Nelson, Community Representative, Berkeley
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
Joan Zatopek, Manager, Planning and Development, Port of Oakland
Rhea Hanrahan, Noise Forum Facilitator, HMMH
Doreen Stockdale, HMMH
Thann McLeod, 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
None

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. ANNOUCEMENTS

A. New Elected Members

Facilitator Hanrahan welcomed Greg Boller as the newly appointed elected member from the City of Alameda. The new members from the cities of Berkeley and San Leandro were not present.

B. Noise 101 Held April 9, 2025

Facilitator Hanrahan reported that the Port of Oakland (Port) hosted a “Noise 101” session on April 9, 2025, to help new Forum members understand the history of noise abatement efforts at Oakland International Airport (OAK), which date back to the 1970s. The session aimed to bring everyone up to speed on past initiatives and current strategies. The presentation materials, which are consistent with previous versions, are available on the flyquietoak.com website for those interested in reviewing the slides.

C. Runway 28L Construction Project

Joan Zatopek provided an update on the rehabilitation project for Runway 28L. She said that a contractor has been approved by the Board, and initial contracting and project mobilization are underway. Construction is expected to begin in June 2025 and continue through August 2025. Ms. Zatopek reported that there will be periods, dates yet to be confirmed, when work on Taxiway Bravo will temporarily eliminate the connection between the North and South Fields. She said stakeholders will be notified once the schedule is finalized.

Matt Davis added that there are no further updates from an airport operations standpoint. He emphasized that the project is being carefully phased to minimize disruption to both the community and airport tenants. Coordination between Planning & Development and Operations teams will continue to ensure impacts are kept to a minimum.

D. Fourth Quarter 2024 Noise Abatement Report

Facilitator Hanrahan reported that the Noise Abatement Report for the fourth quarter of 2024 was posted on the flyquietoak.com website. She asked if there were any questions about the report. Co-Chair Benny Lee commended staff for the significant improvement in compliance with the Runway 12 nighttime departure procedure—rising from 60 percent in the fourth quarter of 2023 to 98 percent in the fourth quarter of 2024—despite a fourfold increase in flight volume. He inquired about what changes led to this improvement and how similar strategies could be applied to other areas. Jesse Richardson credited the success to proactive coordination with NorCal TRACON, particularly during inclement weather. He highlighted the efforts of Thann McLeod and her team at TRACON in ensuring the noise abatement procedures were implemented effectively. Jay Seaton asked for clarification on whether noncompliance occurred only during inclement weather. Mr. Richardson confirmed this and explained that the increase in flight numbers was largely due to weather-related operational changes.

Mr. Seaton inquired about the previously discussed changes to IFR and VFR flight classification and whether those changes are reflected in the current report data, particularly for North Field operations. Mr. Davis responded that the classification method was updated on June 18, 2024. He said the previous system likely undercounted VFR flights, which contributed to a temporary drop in compliance rates. He reported that the new method uses transponder codes and actual flight behavior to more accurately distinguish between IFR and VFR departures. He added that preliminary analysis by HMMH supports the improved accuracy of the updated reporting method. Mr. Richardson explained that while comparisons before and after the change are not directly equivalent, starting June 1, 2025, year-over-year comparisons will be valid using the updated methodology. Mr. Seaton acknowledged the update and confirmed he would review the data with this context in mind.

Mr. Seaton inquired about the temporary closure of the Hush House (Ground Run-Up Enclosure or GRE) and its current status. Facilitator Hanrahan explained that the GRE, used for high-power aircraft engine run-ups, was temporarily closed to accommodate Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)-mandated testing of new firefighting foam. Mr. Davis added that, due to environmental and health concerns, the closure was necessary to test fluorine-free foam (F3), which is replacing the older Aqueous Film-Forming Foam (AFFF) that contains Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS). He explained the testing required a large, contained area to safely discharge and recover the foam, and the GRE was the only suitable location. Mr. Davis reported that the enclosure has since reopened but will close again briefly in May 2025 to complete testing on the remaining two of six firefighting vehicles. He said this is a one-time requirement and will not be a recurring disruption. Mr. Seaton asked whether any run-ups occurred outside the enclosure during the closure. Mr. Davis confirmed that, fortunately, no such run-ups were needed during the initial

closure. He said tenants were notified in advance, and alternate locations were identified to minimize community noise if needed.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. January 15, 2025

Facilitator Hanrahan noted that Noise Forum members have received copies of the draft minutes for the January 15, 2025 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: Gopal Krishnan.

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. Mr. Seaton nominated Greg Boller, a new City of Alameda councilmember, citing his residence in a high-noise area (Harbor Bay Isle) and relevant legal experience with a small airline. Co-chair Lee seconded the nomination. Mr. Boller accepted the nomination. Facilitator Hanrahan asked for additional nominations. Hearing none, a vote was held. Greg Boller was elected unopposed as the new co-chair for the elected member's position. Facilitator Hanrahan noted that Mr. Boller would be invited to a meeting with Co-Chair Lee and Port staff before the July meeting to review the agenda and would be contacted as needed. Mr. Boller expressed his thanks.

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 OAK. The following individual provided a public comment:

- Sandra Harrison, Hayward – Ms. Harrison expressed her ongoing concern about aircraft flying over residential areas, particularly during the rainy season when storms amplify the disturbance. She described the situation as frightening and asked whether there is any possibility of rerouting flights or increasing their altitude to reduce the impact. She emphasized the fear of potential accidents and urged the forum to explore solutions to minimize or eliminate flight paths over homes.

6. FAA REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR'S UPDATE

Hanrahan noted that FAA representatives were not present on the call due to last-minute scheduling changes, despite prior confirmation. As a result, no formal update from the FAA was available. However, communication with the FAA is ongoing. Mr. Davis confirmed continued coordination between the Port and the FAA. He emphasized that FAA staff, particularly at the local level, remain committed to the noise program. Efforts such as issuing noise advisories and

encouraging the use of Runway 30 to reduce community noise impacts are ongoing. James Nelson inquired about staffing changes within the FAA, particularly regarding air traffic controllers and those reviewing community recommendations. Mr. Davis and Ms. Hanrahan responded that while local tower staffing appears stable, there have been national level staffing reductions and shifting priorities, especially in administrative and regional offices. Mr. Seaton mentioned media reports suggesting a reduction in staff focused on route analysis, though this has not been officially confirmed. Carl Stallone added that airlines have observed staffing-related delays in regions like Florida and the Northeast, but not on the West Coast. Facilitator Hanrahan concluded by reaffirming that the group will continue to engage with the FAA and follow up on any action items through their regular post-meeting check-ins.

7. NEXTGEN UPDATE

Thann McLeod provided an update on airspace procedure changes:

- The CNDEL departure procedure has been approved and is scheduled for publication in June 2025. This change includes a six-degree left turn for daytime departures off Runway 30, which is expected to reduce noise impacts on surrounding communities. This complements the existing Oakland Six departure and will apply to a larger share of flights.
- The nighttime departure procedures (e.g., HUSSH) remain unchanged.
- The FAA has placed a temporary hold on all new procedure requests due to resource constraints. While new requests can still be submitted and analyzed, no implementation timeline has been provided. A similar delay in the past lasted approximately three months.
- The Lean team continues to evaluate potential improvements to the WNDSR procedure, including a possible new RNP approach with a higher altitude and shorter turn-in, though this remains in the early evaluation phase.

Mr. Seaton asked whether the June publication of the CNDEL procedure would be final. Ms. McLeod confirmed that it would take effect immediately upon publication.

8. NOISE OFFICE REPORT

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

Mr. Davis provided a brief update from the North Field/South Field Research Group held on March 19, 2025, noting that while technical work continues, the main discussion points centered on touch-and-go operations and outreach efforts. He said that the group considered whether to update noise abatement guidance to designate Runway 28R as the preferred touch-and-go runway but ultimately decided to maintain the current preference for Runway 28L, with air traffic retaining discretion to use Runway 28R as needed for safety. Touch-and-go operations, primarily used for pilot training, will continue to be addressed in outreach materials.

Mr. Davis also highlighted ongoing efforts to improve communication with pilots and operators, including recent updates to letters distributed through fixed-base operators (FBOs) and website content. The group continues to monitor chronic noise violators, particularly in the North Field, and refine strategies for engagement and compliance.

Mr. Krishnan raised concerns about the disproportionate focus on private operators, who represent a small percentage of total traffic, questioning the cost-benefit of enforcement efforts. Mr. Davis responded that targeting chronic violators, even if few, can significantly reduce noise issues.

Co-chair Lee added historical context, noting that persistent questioning and collaboration over the years have led to marked improvements in compliance, with many operators now achieving 100-percent adherence to noise guidelines.

B. Update on Action Items from January 15, 2025, Noise Forum Meeting.

Mr. Richardson reviewed the action items from the January Oakland Airport-Community Noise Forum meeting. The first item concerned Forum support for Mr. Krishnan to attend the UC Davis Noise Symposium. Mr. Richardson reported that unfortunately, Mr. Krishnan was unable to attend. Mr. Krishnan said that due to the late timing of the information, he missed the early bird registration rate. He explained that the cost had increased to nearly $1,000, and he felt it would not be a responsible use of funds, especially given the significant price difference from the early bird rate of approximately $150–$200. Mr. Richardson acknowledged and appreciated Mr. Krishnan's consideration.

Mr. Richarson said the second action item involved the Forum's request for the Port to create and present a Certificate of Appreciation to Trish Herrera Spencer, former co-chair, in recognition of her contributions to the Forum. Mr. Richardson thanked HMMH staff, Doreen Stockdale and Ms. Hanrahan, for their assistance in preparing the certificate. He said that signatures from Mr. Davis and Craig Simon have been collected, and the Forum is currently awaiting the final co-chair signatures. Once complete, the certificate will be framed and mailed to Ms. Herrera Spencer.

9. NOISE NEWS UPDATE

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

- Recent developments in commercial supersonic flight, focusing on significant milestones achieved by Boom Supersonic and NASA, Boom Supersonic's XB-1 demonstrator aircraft, a precursor to its planned Overture airliner, successfully broke the sound barrier on January 28 and reached speeds of Mach 1.18 during a second flight on February 10. The Overture, expected to enter commercial service by 2030, has already secured 130 orders and preorders from global airlines. Notably, Boom reported that no sonic boom was heard during the XB-1's supersonic flights, attributing this to a "boomless cruise" effect based on the Mach cutoff phenomenon, where sound waves refract upward and do not reach the ground. The company will now shift its focus to applying these test results toward the development of the full-scale Overture aircraft.
- NASA's X-59 quiet supersonic research aircraft has reached a significant milestone in its development with the successful completion of engine performance tests, conducted in partnership with Lockheed Martin. The tests, completed in January, involved running the aircraft's modified F414-GE-100 engine—originally used in F/A-18 fighter jets—through a

series of evaluations, including idle power checks and full-throttle afterburner tests. The engine, capable of producing up to 22,000 pounds of thrust, is designed to propel the X-59 to cruising speeds of Mach 1.4 (925 mph) at an altitude of 55,000 feet. NASA is currently in Phase 1 of the project, focusing on aircraft development and flight validation. The next phases will include acoustic testing using ground-based microphones to measure the aircraft's sonic footprint, followed by a community response study. In this final phase, the X-59 will fly over selected U.S. communities to gather public feedback on the perceived sound levels, helping to inform future regulations for commercial supersonic travel.

- Recent developments related to the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024, specifically Section 792, which mandates the creation of the Aviation Noise Advisory Committee (ANAC). This committee will provide independent advice and recommendations to the Secretary of Transportation, through the FAA Administrator, on matters concerning aircraft noise exposure and existing FAA noise policies. The FAA filed the ANAC's charter and membership balance plan with the U.S. General Services Administration on January 14, 2025. As required, the committee will eventually submit a report evaluating current noise policies, including the 65 decibel (dB) day-night average sound level (DNL) and community noise equivalent level (CNEL) threshold used in California. While the timeline for soliciting committee members remains unclear, the FAA plans to use both formal and informal channels such as Federal Register notices, social media, and industry recommendations. The committee will consist of up to 24 members, with representation from a broad range of stakeholders including energy manufacturers, air carriers, airport operators, aircraft and advanced mobility manufacturers, academic institutions, and community representatives from diverse geographic regions.
- At the March Aviation Noise and Emissions Symposium held in Las Vegas, the FAA was scheduled to present its paper titled "Aviation Noise in the United States: The Current State of Federal Aviation Administration Research on Community Response." However, due to restrictions from the Trump administration, FAA staff were unable to attend. A former consultant to the Noise Forum stepped in to present and summarize the paper, describing it as both innovative and well-crafted. The paper reaffirmed that DNL remains the most reliable predictor of community response to aircraft noise, but emphasized the importance of supplementing DNL with contextual explanations and additional metrics. One such metric, "Number Above," is favored by communities because it avoids averaging and instead reflects the number of noise events above a certain threshold. The presentation clarified that the current FAA noise policy review is not focused on choosing a new metric, but rather on determining the appropriate threshold for significant noise impact. The FAA's data shows that approximately 286,000 people currently live within the 65 dB DNL contour around U.S. airports. If the threshold were lowered to 60 dB, that number would rise to about 1 million, and at 55 dB, nearly 4 million people would be affected. These findings underscore the potential scale and cost implications of any changes to the FAA's noise policy.
- In January, the Airport Cooperative Research Program (ACRP) hosted a webinar focused on advanced air mobility (AAM) and community outreach, drawing from ACRP Research

Report 261 titled "Advanced Air Mobility and Community Outreach: A Primer for Successful Stakeholder Engagement." The session provided an overview of effective strategies and tools for engaging stakeholders in AAM initiatives. Presenters shared best practices gathered from airport industry professionals, public agencies, and community representatives, emphasizing the importance of coordinated outreach efforts. The report's research methodology included practice scans, case studies, and the development of engagement toolkits. A key feature discussed was the AAM Engagement Roadmap, an eight-step process designed to guide agencies in building meaningful connections with stakeholders. Steps include identifying leadership, developing communication materials, and implementing mechanisms to monitor, assess, and follow up on community feedback.

- A recent research paper from the University of Bristol in England has demonstrated that porous ground treatments—such as grass and moss—can significantly reduce noise levels by up to 30 dB in vertiport applications. This breakthrough is attributed to the ability of porous surfaces to alter airflow dynamics near the ground, creating a stagnation region that traps and mitigates noise. In addition to noise reduction, these treatments were also found to enhance thrust and power coefficients compared to traditional solid ground surfaces. The findings are particularly relevant for vertiport environments, including building rooftops and landing pads, where such treatments could be applied to improve both acoustic and aerodynamic performance.
- Abu Dhabi Aviation, the largest commercial helicopter operator in the Middle East and part of the Emirates conglomerate, is set to deploy the first Archer Midnight aircraft later this year. As the inaugural client in Archer's Launch Edition Program, Abu Dhabi Aviation will help establish a scalable and repeatable deployment model for advanced air mobility, intended for global use in early adopter markets. The Launch Edition includes a comprehensive support package featuring pilots, technicians, and engineers to assist with the initial operational ramp-up. Ethiopian Airlines, Africa's largest carrier, will be the second Launch Edition customer and will also receive Archer's standardized deployment playbook. In the U.S., Archer aircraft are expected to begin operations ahead of receiving full FAA-type certification, which is anticipated by the end of the year.
- The U.S. Air Force's AFWERX program has awarded a Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) grant to ZeroAvia and Reliable Robotics, based in Mountain View, to explore the feasibility of using hydrogen-electric propulsion in heavy unmanned military aircraft. Hydrogen-electric engines offer key advantages over traditional propulsion systems, including significantly lower noise levels and reduced thermal signatures, making aircraft less detectable. Additionally, hydrogen can be produced on site using electricity and water, simplifying fuel logistics and enhancing operational flexibility. In related developments, ZeroAvia has partnered with Stockton Metropolitan Airport to establish a cutting-edge research and development facility dedicated to testing and advancing hydrogen-electric aviation technologies.
- Unither Bioelectronics has successfully completed the first piloted flight of a hydrogen-powered helicopter in Canada, marking a significant milestone in sustainable aviation. The company retrofitted a piston-powered Robinson R44 helicopter with a hydrogen-electric propulsion system powered by a fuel cell. The initial flight lasted just over three minutes

and used a tank filled with gaseous hydrogen. Future versions will incorporate liquid hydrogen to extend flight range. Unither Bioelectronics, a subsidiary of Unither Therapeutics, aims to use these helicopters to transport organs for transplant. Meanwhile, Robinson Helicopter Company sees this initiative as a step toward accelerating the development of quieter, zero-emission helicopters, making the partnership mutually beneficial.

Following the presentation, Mr. Nelson inquired about accessing the research report on the noise-reducing effects of grass and porous ground treatments. Mr. Valdes confirmed he would send the report link to both Mr. Nelson and Co-chair Lee. Co-chair Lee also expressed interest in staying informed about the next steps for the ANAC. Mr. Nelson then asked for clarification on the supersonic aircraft speeds mentioned earlier, specifically whether the aircraft reached Mach 1.2 and whether that was Boom Supersonic or another project. Mr. Valdes clarified that Boom's XB-1 reached a top speed of Mach 1.18, while NASA's X-59 aims for Mach 1.4. Mr. Nelson questioned whether such speeds would significantly reduce flight times and whether the benefits justify the costs. Mr. Valdes explained that Boom views these flights as incremental steps toward achieving higher speeds, potentially up to Mach 4. Mr. Nelson also asked whether aircraft flying at Mach 1.18 would still produce a noticeable sonic boom. Mr. Valdes responded that sonic booms can be quite loud at low altitudes, based on his experience with military aircraft, but the impact is less clear at higher altitudes.

10. NEW BUSINESS / CONFIRM NEXT MEETING DATE

Facilitator Hanrahan opened the floor for new business under Agenda Item 10. With no new items raised, she announced that the next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 16, 2025, and will be held virtually. She noted that Mr. Richardson will not be present for that meeting, so all communications and the Zoom link will come directly from the HMMH team.

Mr. Seaton revisited a previous decision to alternate between in-person and virtual meetings, asking for an update now that the trial period has ended. Facilitator Hanrahan responded that due to logistical challenges and Mr. Richardson's scheduled absence, the July meeting will remain virtual, and the current plan is to consider holding just one in-person meeting per year. Co-chair Lee added that in-person meetings require significant travel and cost, especially for HMMH staff, and are only worthwhile if a quorum is met—something that has been inconsistent. He emphasized the importance of attendance, particularly from council members. Mr. Seaton agreed, stressing that the purpose of the Forum is community engagement, which is better achieved through in-person meetings. He expressed concern that the need to maintain a quorum should not override the Forum's mission. Ms. Hanrahan acknowledged the value of in-person interaction and said the decision could be revisited in the future.

Co-chair Lee thanked the team for including noise complaint filing information at the bottom of the agenda and suggested announcing it at the start of meetings for public awareness. Facilitator Hanrahan confirmed that this was a recent update based on feedback from the Noise 101 session and noted that the agenda had been revised to reflect the change.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Facilitator Hanrahan adjourned the meeting at 7:50 p.m.