



**COUNTY OF SAN MATEO**  
Inter-Departmental Correspondence  
Public Works



**Date:** March 23, 2016  
**Board Meeting Date:** April 26, 2016  
**Special Notice / Hearing:** None  
**Vote Required:** Majority

**To:** Honorable Board of Supervisors

**From:** James C. Porter, Director of Public Works

**Subject:** Status Update on the San Carlos Airport Aircraft Disturbance Study

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Review and provide input on the status of the San Carlos Airport Aircraft Disturbance Study and next steps.

**BACKGROUND:**

The San Carlos Airport is owned and operated by the County of San Mateo and is home to approximately 500 aircraft and over 25 aviation-related businesses generating over 130,000 flights per year. Over the past several years, the County has received a significant number of complaints and comments from residents about aircraft disturbance issues at the San Carlos Airport. In response to community concerns, your Board requested staff to meet with the community and Airport businesses to assess the nature of the problem and recommend possible actions to address community concerns.

On March 8, 2016, your Board initiated a San Carlos Airport Aircraft Disturbance Study (Aircraft Disturbance Study) to look at options to provide meaningful relief for affected communities. Your Board directed staff to define the problem precisely, explore reasonable alternatives, seek input from the community, and return to your Board in June 2016 with recommendations that are carefully tailored to the needs of this community and this Airport.

At the March 8, 2016 Board meeting, over sixty community members spoke both in favor and against the options listed in the Comprehensive Plan to Address Aircraft Disturbances (Attachment A). It is clear, based on community input, that noise reduction efforts to date have not resolved the considerable community concern over aircraft disturbances.

**DISCUSSION:**

In furtherance of the Aircraft Disturbance Study, staff has secured the services of two aviation consultants. Some of the tasks assigned are:

- Review policies, procedures, and minimum standards.
- Identify best practices in analogous general aviation airports.
- Review and analyze flight data over the last five years.
- Analyze impacts of proposed operational changes; including reducing hours of operation, reducing the number of flights per day, and imposing landing fees.
- Develop more refined noise reduction options specific to this community and to this Airport.

Staff will also hire a consultant to conduct a survey of residents and Airport businesses on impacts of aircraft overflights. Staff will then hold a Town Hall meeting to receive community input on proposed options to reduce aircraft disturbances.

In addition, staff will continue to work with the offices of Congresswoman Jackie Speier and Congresswoman Anna Eshoo, the Federal Aviation Administration and the Business and Pilots Associations of San Carlos Airport to identify and receive approval for alternative flight routes that may serve to minimize aircraft impacts.

The timeline for the Aircraft Disturbance Study is as follows:

<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Action</b>
March 2016	Study Session on aircraft disturbances at San Carlos Airport.
March 2016	Hire aviation and noise assessment consultants to research and analyze policies, procedures, airport operations, and refine noise reduction options.
April 2016	Report back to your Board with a status update and next steps.
April 2016	Hire a consultant to develop and conduct a survey of impacted residents and Airport businesses.
May 2016	Hold community outreach meetings and update Department website.
June 2016	Report findings to your Board, including recommendations for further action.

County Counsel has reviewed and approved this item as to form.

The proposed options to reduce aircraft disturbances contributes to the Shared Vision 2025 outcome of a Livable Community by allowing residents, business owners, and Airport customers to help shape airport noise reduction measures in a way that best meets the needs of the community.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

Staff estimates the cost of hiring a consultant to analyze data, refine noise reduction options, and conduct a survey of impacted residents is approximately \$165,000. The Airport Enterprise Fund currently does not have sufficient funds to fully support this project, due to revenue requirements for upcoming capital projects. Funding is

therefore shared between the General Fund (\$90,000) and the Airport Enterprise Fund (\$75,000).

Attachment A: Possible Components of Comprehensive Plan to Address Aircraft Disturbances at San Carlos Airport

# Possible Components of Comprehensive Plan To Address Aircraft Disturbances at San Carlos Airport

Presented on March 8, 2016

		A	B	C	D	E
OPTION	POSSIBLE MEASURE	DESIRED IMPACT	ESTIMATED TIME FRAME	COST	NOTES	MAY IMPACT*

## ***GROUP I – RULES, REGULATION AND POLICY***

1.	<i>Adopt</i> revised County policy on role of airport, safety, and community impact objectives	Establish clear County policy on airport matters	4 months	Low	Require researching best practices, community outreach, and BOS approval.	None
2.	<i>Conduct inventory</i> of existing Airport rules/regulations, minimum standards	Background research on current status of safety and noise protections	2 months	Low	Would need to be included as part of the process.	None
3.	<i>Research best practices</i> for analogous airports that need to address safety and community impacts	Background research on current status of safety and noise protections	3 months	Low	Would need to be included as part of the process.	None

		A	B	C	D	E
OPTION	POSSIBLE MEASURE	DESIRED IMPACT	ESTIMATED TIME FRAME	COST	NOTES	MAY IMPACT*
4.	Strictly <i>enforce</i> County code, rules and regulations that accord with best practices and County policies	Improve compliance with safety and noise objectives	4 months	Low	May require adoption of revised County policies. Currently, enforcement related to safety, not noise.	T, N
5.	<i>Revise</i> County code, rules/regulations as necessary to accord with results of best practices research	Improve compliance with safety and noise objectives	4 months	Low	Require researching best practices, community outreach, and BOS approval.	F, T, N, A
6.	<i>Revise</i> Airport minimum standards as necessary to accord with best practices	Ensure that airport commercial enterprises are operating in accord with industry standards	4 months	Low	Require researching best practices, community outreach, and BOS approval.	None
7.	<i>Revise</i> rates and charges as appropriate to accord with best practices	Ensure that rates and charges reflect cost of airport operations	4 months	Low	Benchmark fees, set new rates, BOS adoption.	F, N

		A	B	C	D	E
OPTION	POSSIBLE MEASURE	DESIRED IMPACT	ESTIMATED TIME FRAME	COST	NOTES	MAY IMPACT*
8.	Reevaluate landing fees	Ensure that current fees appropriately reflect cost of actual operations	4 months	High	Benchmark fees, community outreach, BOS adoption. Staff intensive, or will need automated camera/billing system.	F, N

**GROUP II – MANDATORY OPERATIONAL RULES**

9.	Time of day restrictions	Tailor restrictions to specific problem times	3 months	Low	Non-stage rated aircraft only.	F, T, N
10.	Nighttime curfew	Reduce or eliminate nighttime noise	3 months	Low	Non-stage rated aircraft only.	F, T, N
11.	Implement a reservation/slot system for aircraft arrivals	Limit total number of commercial aircraft arrivals per day	6 mo – 1 yr	High	Staff time intensive, unless an automated online system is available.	F, T, N
12.	Implement restrictions on the number of flights by carrier	Limit total number of commercial aircraft arrivals per day	6 mo – 1 yr	Medium	Staff time intensive, or will need a camera system to ensure compliance	F, N

		A	B	C	D	E
OPTION	POSSIBLE MEASURE	DESIRED IMPACT	ESTIMATED TIME FRAME	COST	NOTES	MAY IMPACT*
13.	Restrictions on stage 2 aircraft (including helicopters) through Part 161 procedures	Reduce overall helicopter noise	1-year +	High	Requires Part 161 study.	F, N

**GROUP III – VOLUNTARY MEASURES**

14.	Research other similar airports' best practices for voluntary measures, fees and charges, operational rules	Background research on current status of safety and noise protections	6 months	Low		None
15.	Increase hours of voluntary curfew	Reduce the number of flights in early morning and nighttime hours	3 months	Low	Non-stage rated aircraft only.	F, T, N
16.	Request higher altitude approaches	Reduces the noise level over noise sensitive neighborhoods	3 months	Low	Request aircraft increase altitude on approach an additional 1,000 feet when safe.	N, A
17.	Develop and publicize a program to discourage night flying	Public and pilot education. Reduce the number of night flights	3 - 6 months	Low		F, T, N

		A	B	C	D	E
OPTION	POSSIBLE MEASURE	DESIRED IMPACT	ESTIMATED TIME FRAME	COST	NOTES	MAY IMPACT*
18.	Implement a monetary reward program for compliant operators	Encourages compliance with noise abatement procedures	3 – 6 months	Low/ Medium	Can be achieved through reduction in fees for compliance. May impact revenues.	F, T, N, A
19.	Establish advisory/oversight committee	Establish permanent mechanism for community input and oversight of airport-related decisions	3 months	Low	“Surf Air Noise Working Group” has been in existence since Oct. 2013. New group would require approx. 3 months to establish.	None

#### **GROUP IV – NOISE MITIGATION**

20.	Change runway geometry to accomplish County objectives	Ensure that arrivals and departures are over non-residential areas, if possible	1 year	Varies	Requires FAA approval and may have unintended consequences.	F, N
21.	Sound insulation	Reduce noise in individual households impacted	1-2 years	High	Doesn't meet FAA noise threshold. FAA won't reimburse. Cost per home is approximately \$150k. Household still impacted when open window or outside.	N



		A	B	C	D	E
OPTION	POSSIBLE MEASURE	DESIRED IMPACT	ESTIMATED TIME FRAME	COST	NOTES	MAY IMPACT*
22.	Prepare FAA Part 150 Noise Compatibility Program	Increase community awareness	2 – 4 years (to complete study, depending on level of community involvement)	High	Grant application submitted to the FAA. Study expected to begin Sept. 2016. FAA unlikely to fund program since noise is less than FAA threshold.	N

#### GROUP V – FLIGHT TRACKS AND PROCEDURES

23.	Preferential runway use procedures	Reduce overflights of noise-sensitive areas	1+ years	Low	Currently only have GPS arrivals to 30 runway. GPS arrivals to Runway 12 would require FAA approval.	N
24.	New routes / Charted Visual Flight Procedure (CVFP)	Reduce overflights of noise-sensitive areas in good weather conditions	1+ years	Low/ Medium	Needs approval by FAA.	F, N