

RESOLUTION NO. 9543
Resolution of the City Council of the City of Palo Alto
Urging the Federal Aviation Administration to
Address Increased Aircraft Noise in Palo Alto, CA

1. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is implementing a transition to the Next Generation Air Transportation System (NextGen) to standardize arrival and departure routes through the use of GPS-based technologies in 21 identified metroplexes, which are regions with multiple airports serving major metropolitan areas.

2. The Northern California Metroplex includes four commercial airports, San Francisco International Airport (SFO), Oakland International Airport (OAK), Mineta San Jose International Airport (SJC) and Sacramento International Airport (SMF).

3. As part of the transition to NextGen, the FAA recently changed the flight paths followed by commercial aircraft flying into and out of SFO, OAK, and SJC, as well as other airports in the Northern California Metroplex under a project the FAA calls the Northern California Optimization of Airspace and Procedures in the Metroplex (NorCal OAPM).

4. According to the FAA, the NorCal OAPM consists of new procedures and technologies to establish more direct flight routes intended to significantly improve safety, efficiency, and reduce fuel burn and carbon emissions.

5. On July 31, 2014, the FAA issued a Finding of No Significant Impact that NorCal OAPM would not have any significant noise impact on communities and surrounding areas based on inadequate sound metrics which do not reflect disturbance on the ground.

6. The noise generated by flights in the Northern California Metroplex is primarily impacting Santa Clara County residents of Los Gatos, Palo Alto and the Summit/Skyline area, and to a lesser degree the residents of Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Mountain View, and Saratoga. The considerable increase in the number of flights overhead each day and the lower flight altitudes result in a significant increase in the amount of aircraft noise experienced on the ground.

7. As evidenced by the increasing number of complaints received by the City of Palo Alto City Council and staff, the new routes have created noise impacts that appear to be far more adverse than those of the former routes for our residents.

8. The number of noise complaints submitted to the SFO Noise Abatement Office from Palo Alto residents has increased significantly in the last year, as shown in this table:

	May 2014	May 2015	June 2014	June 2015
Complaints	45	1397	60	2733
Complainants	3	318	11	150

The number of complaints from Los Gatos and Summit/Skyline increased from zero in January/February 2015 to 3553 complaints, from 89 callers, in June 2015.

NOW, THEREFORE the Council of the City of Palo Alto does resolve as follows:

SECTION 1:

A. The City Council requests the FAA immediately mitigate the increased aircraft noise at ground level in Palo Alto caused by the NorCal OAPM project by identifying all short- and long-term solutions and the expected timetable for their implementation.

B. The City Council of the City of Palo Alto requests the FAA, as part of the above analysis of aircraft noise mitigation measures, raise immediately the altitude of all flight paths over our city, reduce the number of night time flights into SFO, and, as part of the longer-term solutions, redesign the flight paths within the Northern California Metroplex so that the noise burden is borne equitably by all communities that benefit from air travel, and reconfigure the final approach paths so that descent over the bay is maximized.

C. The City requests that the FAA urge Congress to amend the FAA Modernization and Reform Act to eliminate the availability of a categorical exclusion and bar the presumption of no significant affect on the quality of the human environment that currently apply to navigation performance and area navigation procedures.

D. The City Council of the City of Palo Alto requests that the Congress of the United States implement statutory changes to the FAA that require more robust

community engagement before flight paths are changed, more accurate measures of noise experienced on the ground, and independent research on the impacts of aviation noise on health and learning.

E. The City Council of the City of Palo Alto requests that the FAA continue to meet with community representatives and impacted residents from Palo Alto to discuss further and address these matters.

SECTION 2: The Council finds that the adoption of this resolution does not meet the definition of a project under Section 21065 of the California Environmental Quality Act and, therefore, no environmental review is necessary.

INTRODUCED AND PASSED: August 24, 2015


AYES: BERMAN, BURT, DUBOIS, FILSETH, HOLMAN, KNISS, SCHARFF, SCHMID,
WOLBACH

NOES:

ABSTENTIONS:

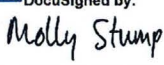
ABSENT:

ATTEST:


City Clerk


Mayor

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

DocuSigned by:

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City Attorney

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CITY MANAGER