

# City of Palo Alto

*Office of the Mayor and City Council*

July 7, 2017

Michael P. Huerta, Administrator  
Federal Aviation Administration  
800 Independence Ave SW  
Washington D.C. 20024

**Subject: FAA response to reports of the Select Committee on South Bay Arrivals and San Francisco International Airport (SFO)/Community Roundtable**

Dear Administrator Huerta,

On behalf of the Palo Alto City Council, I would like to recognize the hard work of FAA staff to address aircraft noise over the skies of Palo Alto and Silicon Valley. This was evident by former Western Regional Director Glen Martin's commitment to the local Select Committee meetings.

The city of Palo Alto is located approximately 20 miles from SFO and is the birthplace of Silicon Valley. We are the location for many of our nation's top companies, neighbor to Stanford University, and home to approximately 66,000 residents. The impacts from aircraft noise have a negative impact on the quality of life and health of the people who live and work in our city. Palo Alto places a high value on working with other communities to maintain Silicon Valley's important role in the national and international economy. It is critical that no single community be disproportionately affected by aircraft flights.

It is our understanding that in the coming weeks the FAA will submit for Department of Transportation (DOT) review your agency's response to the reports of the Select Committee on South Bay Arrivals and SFO Community Roundtable.

On several occasions the City has recommended that the FAA should:

1. Create more "points" for aircraft to use while entering SFO. There is currently one point (MENLO waypoint) used for flights coming in from the north, west, and south. This point centralizes all arrival aircraft and noise over Palo Alto. *(Aligns with Select Committee report sections 1.2, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9 and SFO Roundtable report recommendations 16 and 17.)*
2. Redirect flights arriving from the south to the east; away from the Pacific Ocean coast to the hills west of Interstate 5 and have aircraft enter the Bay from the east. *(Aligns with Select Committee report sections 2.14 and SFO Roundtable report recommendations 8 and 9.)*

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3. Shift the flights arriving from the north away from the Peninsula to the Bay. *(Aligns with Select Committee report sections 2.2 and SFO Roundtable report recommendations 1, 7, and 11.)*
4. Encourage the divisions and staff within FAA to work in partnership with each other to minimize noise through efficient organization of aircraft schedules and routes while also utilizing arrival descents that limit speed brakes. *(Aligns with Select Committee report sections 1.6, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8 and SFO Roundtable report recommendations 6 and 8.)*

We sincerely hope the FAA takes these recommendations into account. Additionally, we ask that the FAA:

1. Create a permanent forum or ad hoc committee to address aircraft noise and the health risk concerns of residents of cities not represented by the SFO Community Roundtable. If not, then amend the SFO Community Roundtable structure to be inclusive of cities beyond San Mateo County. *(Aligns with Select Committee report sections 3.1.)*
2. Adopt supplemental metrics in recognition of the limitations of the Day-Night Average Sound Level (DNL). *(Aligns with Select Committee report sections 3.3.)*

The Palo Alto City Council is committed to working with the FAA, SFO, San Jose International Airport, neighboring cities, counties and all stakeholders to ensure a reasonable solution is identified for Silicon Valley.

Sincerely,



Greg Scharff  
Mayor

Cc: Dianne Feinstein, California Senator  
Kamala D. Harris, California Senator  
Anna G. Eshoo, Congresswoman California's 18<sup>th</sup> Congressional District  
Dennis Roberts, Federal Aviation Administration, Regional Administrator  
Palo Alto City Council  
James Keene, City Manager  
Molly Stump, City Attorney