

City of Palo Alto
Office of the Mayor and City Council

June 11, 2019

Hon. Mary-Lynne Bernald, Chair
Santa Clara/Santa Cruz Roundtable
P.O. Box 3144
Los Altos, CA 94024

Dear Chairwoman Bernald:

I am writing on behalf of our City Council to inform you and all member communities of the Santa Clara/Santa Cruz (SC/SC) Roundtable of our decision last night not to take legal action at this time against the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regarding the PIRAT arrival route. This was a difficult decision for us, as our community is heavily impacted by airplane noise and deeply frustrated by the lack of responsiveness from the FAA over the past several years since Next Gen greatly exacerbated the aircraft problems we experience.

After two hours of closed session debate – preceded by more than half an hour of public comment –one of the most compelling factors that influenced our decision not to sue was the nascency and potential of the SC/SC Roundtable. We did not want to risk dampening the level of engagement by the FAA through the Roundtable and we did not want to risk our neighboring communities mistaking our actions as an effort to unfairly shift noise or to circumvent the collaborative problem-solving potential of the Roundtable. Palo Alto is committed to participating as a constructive and cooperative member of this regional partnership.

We appreciate that the Roundtable is still developing its norms and priorities, and that it must juggle the competing interests of the region. We appreciate your efforts to address PIRAT as an agenda topic and look forward to a substantive Roundtable conversation with the FAA in which their representatives can explain why they anticipate no increase in volume when the proposed changes to PIRAT include opening a previously restricted route to all carriers and more airports, and to help us explore whether any refinements to the vectoring procedures between the ARGGG waypoint and San Francisco Airport (SFO) might provide some relief to our community through quieter flying practices. As you can see from the adjacent map, recently prepared by a consultant for SFO analyzing data from four sites in our city, Palo Alto remains squarely in the center of these flights. We also hope the Roundtable will explore ways to reduce night flights over communities like ours.



As our representative at the Roundtable, Council Member Lydia Kou, with the assistance of city staff, will continue to keep us informed of the Roundtable's progress and represent the concerns of our community and our council. Thank you for the leadership and considerable time you and all members of the Roundtable are committing to the important issue of aircraft impacts.

Sincerely,

Eric Filseth, Mayor

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cc: Hon. Anna G. Eshoo, U.S. House of Representatives
Hon. Ray Mueller, Mayor, City of Menlo Park
Hon. Lisa Gauthier, Mayor, City of East Palo Alto

