



**SANTA CRUZ/SANTA CLARA COUNTIES  
AIRPORT/COMMUNITY ROUNDTABLE**

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**Strategic Plan**

**Adopted December 19, 2019**



## Introduction

The Santa Clara/Santa Cruz Counties Airport/Community Roundtable (Roundtable) has prepared this Strategic Plan to define a vision for its work and to identify long-term goals for the Roundtable. Upon adoption, the Strategic Plan will be used to help guide the Roundtable's work over the next three years. To support that work and in keeping with Objective 3 of the Roundtable's Memorandum of Understanding (*insert link to MOU*), a separate Work Plan [*insert link to Work Plan*] has been developed. That Work Plan lays out the initial actions needed to evaluate, address, and reduce aircraft noise and environmental issues. It includes areas in which the Roundtable may make recommendations to appropriate agencies, and/or advocate for policy changes to achieve its goals. Follow up should ensure that actions are taken, and that they achieve the desired results. Both documents will be employed by the Roundtable to guide its efforts in addressing noise and environmental issues.

## Background

In 2007, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) began modernizing the nation's air transportation system through implementation of the Next Generation Aircraft Transportation System (NextGen). As part of NextGen, the FAA implemented the Northern California Optimization of Airspace and Procedures in the Metroplex (NorCal OAPM or Metroplex) project. Beginning in 2015, the NorCal Metroplex Project introduced new aircraft arrival and departure procedures serving San Francisco International Airport (SFO), Oakland International Airport (OAK), Norman Y. Mineta San Jose International Airport (SJC), and Sacramento International Airport (SMF). Several of the new procedures utilize area navigation (RNAV) technology, which relies on GPS technology and flight management systems. These navigation tools allow for reduced separation between aircraft in flight, but also lead to narrowly concentrated flight corridors. Consequently, people living in communities beneath these new procedure corridors, and associated vectored flight paths, are experiencing a substantial increase in aircraft noise. The Roundtable recognizes that it is contrary to FAA policy to move a flight path and the associated noise from over one community to another in order to alleviate noise. The Roundtable further notes that implementation of some NextGen procedures did both move and concentrate noise from over one community to another. The Roundtable does not consider reverting to pre-NextGen as contrary to FAA's current policy.

In response to complaints from communities in the South Bay and Santa Cruz areas, Congressional Representatives Anna Eshoo, Jackie Speier, and former Congressional Representative Sam Farr, in coordination with the Cities Association of Santa Clara County, convened the Select Committee on South Bay Arrivals (Select Committee) in May 2016 to address noise complaints arising from aircraft arrival procedures serving SFO and SJC. The Select Committee issued its final report in November 2016, which included several recommendations for addressing aircraft noise in the South Bay Area. The SFO Roundtable issued their own report and recommendations on SFO arrivals and departures in November 2016. Subsequently, the City of San Jose formed the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee on South Flow Arrivals (Ad Hoc Committee) in 2017 to address noise issues associated with South Flow aircraft operations at SJC. The Ad Hoc Committee issued its final report in May 2018. Final reports from both the Select Committee and Ad Hoc Committee were submitted to the FAA for its consideration in making changes, which included recommendations for how aircraft operate in and out of regional commercial service airports (SFO, SJC, OAK).

One of the recommendations made in the Select Committee's final report was the formation of a permanent roundtable to address aircraft issues in the South Bay area and Santa Cruz County. In June 2017, Congressional Representatives Anna Eshoo, Jimmy Panetta, and Ro Khanna asked the Cities Association of Santa Clara County (Cities Association) to form a permanent Roundtable.

In October 2018, the Cities Association Board of Directors voted to initiate the formation of the Roundtable. The Roundtable commenced work in February 2019 with voting representatives from Santa Clara and Santa Cruz Counties, the Cities of Capitola, Cupertino, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Monte Sereno, Mountain View, Palo Alto, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Saratoga, and Sunnyvale. Current non-voting participants include SFO and the FAA.

The authority to control aircraft in flight and on the ground is vested exclusively in the FAA. The FAA, however, cannot control the number of flights or the time of day aircraft operate. Federal law preempts any local government agency from implementing any action that is intended to control the routes of aircraft in flight. Neither the Roundtable, nor local elected officials, nor airport management can control the routes of aircraft in flight or on the ground.

## **Proactive Approach**

This Strategic Plan describes a proactive approach to reducing aircraft noise and environmental issues. Through this proactive approach, the Roundtable will effectively engage member communities, the FAA, policy makers, airlines, and the three regional commercial service airports (SFO, SJC, OAK) in advancing its mission and goals. To further this aim, the Roundtable will serve as the regional forum for addressing Roundtable member community concerns regarding noise and environmental issues from aircraft operating to and from regional commercial service airports (SFO, SJC, OAK). While the Roundtable is focused on the concerns of its member communities, it is receptive to learning about noise and environmental concerns from other communities in the region.

The Roundtable will actively engage with the FAA on past or future actions, or inactions, related to the recommendations made by both the Select Committee and the Ad Hoc Committee to address aircraft noise issues that have already occurred or will occur in the future due to changes in procedures and air traffic control practices. The Roundtable will also take prompt and timely actions on issues that may adversely affect member communities, including but not limited to FAA updates or IFP Gateway postings. In addition, the Roundtable will work to establish effective community participation as it responds to FAA plans and actions.

The Roundtable will monitor, comment on, and influence proposed local, state, and federal legislative and regulatory actions associated with aircraft noise and airport land use compatibility. This may include actively tracking proposed aircraft noise legislation/regulations (such as new rule making and the FAA reauthorization bill), providing comments to the relevant agency, and working closely with Congressional staff to propose language for new legislation or policies that are consistent with the Roundtable's mission and goals. In addition, the Roundtable will work to establish effective community participation that affects FAA plans and actions.

The Roundtable will track the development of aircraft noise reduction technologies and encourage compatible land use planning efforts among member communities.

The Roundtable will provide ongoing training for new and existing members as necessary to inform and integrate them into the Roundtable.

## **Guiding Principles**

The Roundtable will use these guiding principles in conducting business:

1. The Roundtable serves as a public forum and a focal point of information and discussion among local, state, and federal legislators, federal agencies, and policy makers, regarding airport/aircraft related noise and environmental issues to its member communities.
2. The Roundtable is dedicated to discussion, study, analysis, evaluation, and making recommendations regarding policies, procedures, vectoring, and mitigation actions in a timely manner that will minimize aircraft noise and environmental issues to residents of Santa Clara and Santa Cruz Counties.
3. The Roundtable will work to maintain communication and cooperation among the regional commercial service airports (SFO, SJC, OAK) and local governments in noise-sensitive and/or overflight areas, while recognizing the autonomy of local governments and of commercial service airports (SFO, SJC, OAK) to make decisions within their respective jurisdictions.

## **Mission Statement**

The Roundtable's mission is to address community noise concerns and make recommendations to the Regional Airports and FAA on noise-related issues.

## **Goals, Actions, Resources, and Desired Results**

The following goals are listed in order of general priority; however, specific actions may take higher or lower priority depending on importance, impact, and urgency that reflects the changing nature of the member communities' needs:

### **Goal A – Monitor and Ensure that Progress is Being Made on Prior Committees'**

#### **Recommendations and Reports to Address Aircraft Noise and Environmental Issues:**

The Roundtable will actively monitor and engage with the FAA on past or future actions, or inactions, related to the FAA addressing the recommendations and reports made by the Select Committee, the Ad Hoc Committee, and the SFO Roundtable.

#### **Action Items:**

- The Roundtable will actively monitor and follow up on the status of FAA actions related to the recommendations and reports of the Select and Ad Hoc Committees and of the SFO Roundtable through proactive and regular communication with the FAA.

- The Roundtable will review and evaluate FAA responses to the recommendations and reports to understand the reasoning behind the FAA's position. As appropriate, the Roundtable will identify impacts that may adversely affect member communities, respond, and propose alternatives in a timely fashion.
- The Roundtable will report to members and the community on the FAA responses/actions taken to address the recommendations and reports made by the Select and Ad Hoc Committees and the SFO Roundtable.
- The Roundtable will not reopen recommendations from the former Select Committee.
- The Roundtable will establish a Technical Working Group. If any additional technical subcommittees are formed, their recommendations will be reviewed by the Technical Working Group before coming to the Roundtable for action.
- Desired Results: Evaluate and provide input on the FAA's proposed or actual implementation of the recommendations in the reports cited above. Reduction in the noise and environmental impacts of aircraft on residents in Santa Clara and Santa Cruz Counties.

**Goal B - Work Collaboratively with the FAA to Address Community Concerns about Aircraft Noise and Environmental Impacts Not Described in the Reports of the Select and Ad Hoc Committees and the SFO Roundtable:**

The Roundtable will serve as the regional forum for receiving input and addressing concerns of Roundtable member communities regarding noise and environmental impacts from aircraft operating to and from regional commercial service airports (SFO, SJC, OAK). While the Roundtable is focused on the concerns of its member communities, it is receptive to learning about noise concerns and environmental issues from other communities in the region.

**Action Items:**

- The Roundtable will actively listen to and respond to member community concerns related to aircraft noise and environmental issues.
- The Roundtable will evaluate changes proposed by FAA and propose modifications where needed to reduce impacts on communities.
- The Roundtable will make timely recommendations that could mitigate adverse results.
- The Roundtable will establish a Technical Working Group. If any additional technical subcommittees are formed, their recommendations will be reviewed by the Technical Working Group before coming to the Roundtable for action.

**Desired Results:** To reduce, alleviate, and prevent further adverse aircraft noise and environmental issues affecting member communities through identification of recommendations that could mitigate such adverse impacts in a timely manner. In addition, Roundtable members will work to develop a better understanding of the various factors and issues associated with aircraft noise and environmental issues in the region.

**Goal C – Pursue policy or legislation changes that reduce aircraft noise or environmental impacts:**

The Roundtable may advocate for changes in legislation and policies at the local, state, and federal level (FAA operates under federal rules and regulations approved by Congress) that would reduce aircraft noise and environmental impacts. Such changes are necessary because the current policies and legislation on aircraft impacts, established decades ago, are no longer adequate in the NextGen environment. The Roundtable will monitor research into aircraft noise reduction, including advances in aviation technology that will help reduce aircraft noise exposure and environmental issues.

**Action Items:**

- The Roundtable will establish a Legislative Committee.
- The Roundtable will work with elected officials and their staff to propose and pass legislative and policy changes on how the FAA defines and calculates aircraft impacts on the ground.
- The Roundtable will monitor and advocate for proposed legislation at the local, state, and federal level that addresses, or has the potential to reduce, aircraft noise exposure and environmental effects on its member communities.
- The Roundtable may also oppose proposed legislation that could exacerbate noise and environmental impacts.
- The Roundtable will monitor and advocate for research and technical advances that produce solutions for aircraft noise reduction and alleviating environmental issues.

**Desired Results:** Adoption of new legislation, policy changes, and improved technology that reduce aircraft noise exposure and environmental issues of Roundtable member communities. In addition, the Legislative Committee will keep the Roundtable members and the communities they represent informed about changes to the law and technology that may affect the way aircraft operate at regional commercial service airports (SFO, SJC, and OAK).

**Strategic Plan Amendment Process**

The Strategic Plan is intended to provide guidance to the Roundtable over the next three years. The Work Plan, intended to be used in tandem with the Strategic Plan, has an annual, action item focus, allowing for adjustments and changes in the short term while achieving the long-term goals of the Strategic Plan.

Because of the long-term nature of the Strategic Plan and the dynamic nature of the environment in which Roundtable communities are situated, there may be need to amend the Strategic Plan before completion of the three-year period of applicability. In this event, the Roundtable will convene a Strategic Plan Committee to discuss any changes that may be needed to the Strategic Plan, and to identify and develop proposed changes to be recommended for full consideration by the entire Roundtable. If the majority of Roundtable voting members agree with the recommended changes, the Strategic Plan shall be amended as appropriate.

Notwithstanding changes made to the Strategic Plan during its three-year period of applicability, the Roundtable will update the plan once every three years. To allow enough time for a thorough update, a Strategic Plan Committee will be appointed one year in advance of the expiration of the Strategic Plan to conduct the necessary work to complete the update.