Part 150 Noise Compatibility Study

Study Advisory Committee (SAC) Meeting #2 Summary

October 7, 2025, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

North Terminal, ANC, 4600 Postmark Drive, Anchorage, AK 99502, Flattop Conference Room & Via Teams

Discussion Summary

Summary Shortcuts:

"Q" = SAC Questions

"C" = SAC Comments

"R" = Project Team Responses

"Note" = Additional Notes or Clarifications Not Presented in Accompanying Slides

"Slide #" = Corresponding Guiding Slide – Click HERE for full slide presentation.

***NOTE**: The questions, responses, and comments in this summary are presented for clarity and technical accuracy.*

A. Welcome & Introductions (see complete list under "Participants" below)

- Agenda
- Study Team
- Study Advisory Committee Roll Call

B. Study Overview and Reminder of Process (Slides #4-8)

- The study team presented a brief overview of the Noise Study; additional information is available on the project website and in the meeting presentation slides. Key elements of the project include:
    - Noise Exposure Map to model noise around the airport and assess noise compatibility by land use. This must be accepted by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).
    - Noise Compatibility Program to identify how to mitigate noise impacts; these measures are individually approved or disapproved by FAA.
    - This Study process is voluntary for airports. One of the benefits of participating in the Noise Study is that for noise compatibility measures approved by FAA, the airport is eligible for federal funding to support implementation.
    - Noise compatibility measures that are disproved by FAA can still be included in the Study but will not be eligible for FAA funding.

- Where are we at in the study process?
    - The Study is still in its early stages, and the draft contours are anticipated in early winter.
    - The study team is also refreshing data from the previous Study.

C. Summary of Comments/Trends to Date (Slides #9-11)

- The study team has hosted one community open house and has sent two e-newsletters to date. The public can also submit comments via the project website.
- The study team shared a summary of comments received so far, open house attendance, and some of the overarching themes from comments received to date.
- **Q**: Would it be possible to have public comments made available to the public for transparency?
    - **R**: All comments are reviewed, considered, and categorized by the study team; this input is used to inform the Study's Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on the website. When the public review draft of the Study is released and at the public hearing, there will be a formal public comment period; comments submitted during this time will be included in the appendix of the final Study.

D. Airports 101 (Slides #12-21)

- Airspace and Area Airports
    - The study team shared information about how airspace is managed (by FAA). Shared a map of Anchorage airspace; airspace management is complex in Anchorage.
- Safe Altitudes, Runway Usage, and Approach/Departure Procedures
    - The study team shared information on minimum safe altitude requirements.
    - Shared information on how runway usage is decided. These decisions are primarily determined by wind. Aircraft must take off into the wind; if wind is minimal, then ANC implements a preferential use runway system that seeks to minimize noise intrusion.
    - Shared information on how approach and departure procedures are guided (navigation aids, etc.)
    - **Q**: Is there an effort to change the airspace rules around Anchorage? Can the study team share details?
        - **R**: There is an ongoing study examining airspace in the region known as the Anchorage Terminal Area Airspace and Procedures Study (ATAAPS), locally referred to as the Class C Airspace Study. More information is available on the project website: www.faa.gov/air_traffic/community_engagement/ataaps. The project began in January 2025, and initial recommendations have been shared with the FAA. Public meetings were held in late September to share and gather input on the current proposal, which are available on the project website. The final formal proposal will also be released through a public notice process. If changes move forward, implementation is anticipated in February 2027. Additional clarity on any expected airspace changes is anticipated later this year or early next year; if there are changes, they

would need to be considered when developing alternatives for this Noise Study. Final findings are expected sometime next year.

- **Q**: Does the ATAAPS Study impact Class D?
  - **R**: This is a Class C Study but changes to Class C could impact Class D.
- To learn more about the ATAAPS Study, including status of the project and to submit comments, visit the website above. A link to the ATAAPS site will also be linked to the Noise Study website.
- **Q:** Is this type of airspace study routinely done?
  - **R**: Yes. This type of airspace study is conducted periodically across the country, though not on a frequent schedule. The study team is not aware of the last time Anchorage's airspace was formally updated, but it is our understanding that there have not been significant substantive changes since the 1960s. As such, this effort represents a rare, "once-in-a-generation" opportunity to review and modernize procedures.
- **Q**: This Study is happening at the same time. Could airspace changes impact this project?
  - **R**: Yes, airspace changes could affect this project in some areas, but any impacts are expected to be limited. Potential adjustments would likely involve minor modifications to existing flight corridors, such as refining routing to better separate international traffic and Lake Hood operations. At this time, the study team does not anticipate these changes would significantly alter the scope or overall direction of this Study.

- How Airport Operations and Arrival/Departure Decisions Are Made
  - The study team presented information on flight and operational authority as defined by FAA.
  - The study team outlined the role of the airport sponsor (ANC), including responsibilities related to identifying and addressing operational needs and coordinating with local and federal partners.
  - Reviewed the grant assurances that ANC agrees to when accepting FAA funding.

E. Inventory of Existing Conditions (Slides #22-25)

- The study team outlined the methodology used to develop the inventory and forecast of airport operations, including inputs such as historical data, field observations radar data, and current planning documents.
- **Q**: How is the City's transition to smaller, more dense residential development considered such as when additional units (e.g., accessory dwelling units) are added to existing properties?
  - **R**: Properties that are classified as a single-family residence remain categorized as such for the purposes of this analysis. Parcel-level counts are used, and population assumptions are based on Census data for persons per housing unit. These Census-based values provide a mechanism for reflecting changes in density over time.
- **Q**: For noise complaints, is there a specific period of time that is being analyzed? The neighborhood south of the airport held a meeting earlier this year to talk about increased concerns; are those complaints being considered?

    - **R**: Yes. ANC reviewed a full calendar year of noise complaints obtained from the airport's reporting database. The data indicate a notable increase in complaints during the month of July. Noise complaint data are valuable to the study team as they enable the identification of trends and the formulation of targeted inquires, such as investigating the underlying causes of spikes at particular times and locations. This information helps to identify areas where potential mitigation alternatives should be explored, allowing the team to evaluate measures that may address community concerns effectively.
- **Q:** Why does the airport not use noise complaints to inform decision-making?
    - **R**: The number and placement of complaints does not determine the noise contours for the Study. During a Part 150 noise study, there is occasionally a misperception that submitting additional complaints will influence the noise contours; however, that is not the case. Nevertheless, noise complaint data can be valuable in identifying areas within the 65 DNL noise contour that may benefit most from the development and implementation of noise mitigation measures.
- **Q**: When discussing noise, does this include ground noise, or is it limited to aircraft operational noise?
    - **R**: Noise complaints encompass all sources. Some complaints relate to aircraft run-ups, and others are specifically referencing operations at Lake Hood (LHD), while some pertain to takeoffs. During the summer, when LHD experiences higher activity levels, the volume of complaints originating from LHD typically increases. Additionally, when the "South Flow" departure procedure is implemented (i.e., air traffic directed to use the North-South runway due to wind or other conditions), there is typically an increase in complaints from neighborhoods to the south of the airport.
- **Q**: What is Part 150? Where is it cited in the enabling legislation?
    - **R**: It is in 14 CFR Part 150. There are more details in the slides and notes from the first SAC meeting, and the FAQs on the project website.
- Preliminary Aircraft Forecasts
    - The study team presented preliminary aircraft forecasts to be used in the Study. The Master Plan forecast is estimated to be slightly higher than the FAA's Terminal Area Forecast, however the two forecasts are closely aligned, differing by approximately 6%. The forecasts will undergo FAA review and approval for use in this Part 150 Study.
    - These forecasts incorporate detailed considerations, including the composition of as the fleet mix.
- The study team presented a comprehensive list of all Noise Compatibility Study Measures from the previous Study (slide 24). The table includes each recommendation, the FAA's determination (approved or disapproved), and the current implementation status.
- A reminder was provided regarding the definition of the noise contour. This cumulative metric accounts for both daytime and nighttime operations with nighttime operations being weighted more heavily. The measurement considers other factors such as aircraft type and runway usage. For this Study, the FAA's 65 Day-Night Average Sound Level (DNL) line is used, which serves as the federal threshold for evaluating land use compatibility and will guide the assessment of potential mitigation alternatives.

- **Q**: Do the measurements account for trees losing their leaves in winter?
    - **R**: This Study includes two rounds of noise monitoring. The first round is conducted during the summer and the second round is conducted during the winter to account for seasonal variations. The results being shared during this meeting are from the summer noise monitoring session. FAA's noise model does not specifically consider whether the surrounding trees have leaves; instead it relies on an annual average of local weather conditions that influence sound propagation. While foliage can affect noise from ground operations, it has a minimal impact on aircraft operations.
- **Q**: Why conduct a study if ANC does not consider complaints when guiding flight path decisions?
    - **R**: Noise complaints are a critical component of this Study as they help to identify areas where noise is particularly intrusive and where mitigation may be warranted. However, while noise complaints do not alter the modeled noise contours which are based on aircraft operational data such as fleet information, flight paths and time-of-day, they still provide important insight into locations that may benefit from noise mitigation measures.
- **Q**: If trees can serve as a noise buffer, especially ground noise, can FAA or ANC put in land management restrictions when leasing airport property to prohibit the removal of trees?
    - **R**: Research indicates that foliage on trees can reduce noise levels. A study conducted in the 1970s, sometimes referred to as the "white diaper study," examined the density of trees required to achieve a noticeable noise reduction, typically 3 to 5 dB. The study concluded that trees can meaningfully reduce noise when the foliage is dense enough to obscure a visual line of sight from the noise source to the receiver. However, it is unlikely that FAA or ANC would impose land management restrictions to prevent tree removal, as tree height can present potential safety concerns.
- **Q**: Can building code requirements, such as insulated windows, be mandated?
    - **R**: While some developers might choose to incorporate construction materials of higher quality, they are currently not required. As a result builders do not always choose to install such features. However, Anchorage's colder climate generally necessitates stricter building code requirements for insulation, which can help mitigate noise.

F. Noise Monitoring (Slides #26-32)

- Members of the study team conducted noise monitoring fieldwork, deploying noise monitors in late July and early August.
- The monitoring objectives include measuring Day Night Average sound levels (DNL) and measuring sound exposure levels (SELs) for individual flight events.
- Noise monitoring was conducted at each site for three hours per day and the results were correlated with flight operations during the monitoring period.
- The study team provided examples of comparable noise levels relative to familiar sounds and clarified noise measurement terminology. When calculating DNL, the measurements account for the added disruption of noise at night by increasing the measurement by 10 decibels.

- The airport operated under multiple traffic flows over the course of the week, allowing for observation of how variations in traffic flow influence noise levels.
- The strongest winds were often when the airport was operating in South Flow. Air traffic controllers adjust operations based on anticipated wind events, which may result in slight delays in response to sudden changes in wind conditions.
- The study team displayed a map showing both long-term and short-term noise monitoring locations. For the short-term locations to the south, the team specifically targeted monitoring for known South Flow conditions based on homeowner input, to ensure these conditions were captured.
    - **Q:** How were the monitoring locations chosen?
        - **R**: More than 60 households expressed interest in participating. The study team mapped these household locations and compared them against typical flight patterns to select sites that would be of greatest relevance, and were representative of the area, intentionally avoiding sites in close proximity to each other.
- The study team shared the results of the noise monitoring, including observations of increased noise during South Flow; these South Flow occurrences are included into and averaged across a full year of runway use when incorporated into the analysis.
- **Q**: In addition to hearing planes, I can sometimes feel them when they are overhead. Are these sensations measured or considered in this Study?
    - **R**: The Single Event Level (SEL) considers the total noise energy of the individual aircraft operation. Noise is defined as unwanted sound and this Study measures only what can be heard. Physical sensations such as vibrations, while often typically correlated are not measured in this Study.
- **Q**: Can the data for a single noise event at the highest decibel level be observed? General aviation aircraft can be very loud, and even infrequent events are significant.
    - **R**: The SEL measurements will be included in the final noise level report, which will be shared after the completion of winter noise monitoring. The data is not available currently.
- **Q**: In some parts of town, noise from Lake Hood can be just as loud or louder than noise from ANC. Will impacts of aircraft noise at Lake Hood be given the same consideration as ANC?
    - **R**: Noise measurement data are not used to develop the noise contours. The contours are generated using a full year of operational data, which averages busier seasonal periods with quieter times. Lake Hood operations are captured in the same manner as ANC operations. While typically each airport conducts its own modeling for a Part 150 Study, approximately 20 years ago the FAA allowed an exception for Anchorage due to the proximity of ANC and LHD. As a result, both airports are included in the noise contours, which is beneficial for residents affected by operations from both locations, as the contributions are combined in the data. The contours for the updated Study have not yet been determined, but historical future noise contours from the previous Study do incorporate Lake Hood operations.

- **Q**: When aircraft are arriving in quick succession, does the Study examine the noise associated with just one plane, or all planes that arrive within a short window?
    - **R**: Noise monitors measure all noise that occurs during the measurement period. If multiple aircraft operate in close succession, each event is recorded and included in the measurements.
- **Q**: How fixed are the monitoring sites?
    - **R**: The study team intends to maintain the same locations for the long-term monitoring sites. Short-term sites may be adjusted, or additional sites may be added as needed. Site selection was generally based on proximity to known flight paths.
    - **C:** Consideration should be given to adding a site in the Sand Lake area, preferably closer to where aircraft make their turns. The project team will coordinate with the SAC representative for Sand Lake to identify the optimal location for an additional monitoring site.

G. Schedule/Next Steps

- See summary on slides.

H. SAC Comments and Final Questions

- **C**: The airport values the submission of noise complaints by community members. Staff review and record these complaints and provide responses when possible. As a result of this Study, staff are receiving more frequent reports, often from individuals who have not previously submitted complaints. ANC staff are responding to them as quickly as resources allow. Delays in response may occur due to the limited staff available to respond to them.
- **Q**: Is airport-related construction noise considered or weighted differently by this Study?
    - **R**: The Study focuses on data from a typical operating year. FAA guidance requires that noise modeling be based on normal operating conditions. Periods affected by runway closures or other construction-related disruptions are generally excluded from data collection. Anticipated noise impacts from major construction projects are addressed separately through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process.
- **Q:** Does this Study take into account the effects of the ground being frozen?
    - **R**: The type of surface, whether hard or soft, is most relevant for ground operations. Soft surfaces include grass and dirt, while hard surfaces include pavement, structures, and frozen ground without fresh snow. The noise modeling methodology does not account for frozen ground. However, the study team will conduct aircraft noise measurements this winter to assess whether there is any significant difference in measured noise levels compared to the measurements obtained during the previous summer.
- **C**: Atlas serves hundreds of airports throughout the year; the Atlas team works closely with ANC. As a carrier, if the public has concerns, Atlas encourages the continued sharing of feedback. The comments and engagement are appreciated by Atlas.
- **C**: Thank you for the opportunity to be here, for your patience, and for opportunity to share questions and comments.

- **C**: Rust's Flying Service follows all the rules, and they are a great actor. They are a good example of being a great neighbor at LHD.
- **Q**: Can hard copy versions of the slides be shared at subsequent SAC meetings?
    - **R**: Yes, the project team will bring printed copies to subsequent SAC meetings. The slides will also continue to be made available on the project website after the meeting.
- **Q:** Can SAC meetings be schedule with more advanced notice?
    - **R:** The study team will continue to provide a one month notice at a minimum, but will strive to provide notice earlier if possible. Scheduling of the next SAC meeting is dependent on progress with noise monitoring, which will likely dictate the timing of that meeting.

I. Public Comments

- **Q:** When the study team refers to "operations," are they referring to a flying operation, or any operation? Are baseline ground operations modeled?
    - **R**: The term "operations" refers specifically to aircraft takeoffs and landings. At this stage, it has not been determined whether certain ground noise sources will be included. Monitoring or modeling of ground noise is not required by FAA guidance.
    - **C**: In Sand Lake and other areas, some of the prevailing noise is ground noise.
- **Q**: How do weather inversions impact noise?
    - **R**: Ground operations can be influenced by temperature inversions and wind. For the purposes of this Study, noise modeling relies on typical or nominal conditions rather than specific weather events.
- **C**: All models are inaccurate; not all are useful. Please try to include prevailing circumstances to make the Study accurate for our community (e.g., our unique cold weather conditions).

Adjourn

Participants

SAC Member – *presented in alphabetical order by representative entity/group*	
Representative Entity	***Name***
AK DOT&PF	Erik Hilsinger
AK DOT&PF	Robespierre Howard
AK DOT&PF	Steven Rzepka
Alaska Air Carriers Association	Will Day
Alaska Airlines Inc - *virtual*	Lynae Craig
Alaska Airmen's Association	Priscilla Ribic
Aleutian Airways	Brian Whilden
Anchorage International Airport	Alex Moss
Anchorage International Airport	Larry Swanson
Atlas Air	Tyler Cresswell

Everts Air Cargo	Susan Hoshaw
FAA Alaska Region	Kristi Ponozzo
FAA Alaska Region	Jack Gilbertsen
Member of the Public	Leroy Latta (alternate for Kristin Knudson)
Member of the Public	Randy Hessong
Member of the Public	Sybille Hogan
Member of the Public – *virtual*	Margaret (Maggie) O'Hara
Northern Air Cargo	Gideon Garcia
Sand Lake Community Council	Linda Swiss
Signature Aviation	Valerie Clark
Spenard Community Council	Bob Auth
Turnagain Community Council	Cathy Gleason
Airport Project Team	
Anchorage International Airport	Taylor Beardsley
Anchorage International Airport	Teri Lindseth
Anchorage International Airport	Ian Moore
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Consulting Team	
Name	***Entity***
Kate Andrus	Mead & Hunt
Ryk Dunkelberg	Mead & Hunt
Corbett Smith	Mead & Hunt
Nathan Moran	Mead & Hunt
Gene Reindel	HMMH
Vincent Ma – *virtual*	HMMH
Shelly Wade	Agnew::Beck Consulting
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