Part 150 Noise Compatibility Study

Study Advisory Committee (SAC) Meeting #3 Summary

February 19, 2026, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Coast Inn at Lake Hood, 3450 Aviation Ave, Anchorage, AK 99502

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 & Overview (Slides #1-6)

- Introductions/Roll Call (see complete list under "Participants" list below)
    - Study team
    - Study Advisory Committee Roll Call
- Study Purpose
    - The study team presented a brief overview of the Noise Study; additional information is available on the project website and the presentation slides. Key study elements include:
        - ***Noise Exposure Maps*** to model noise around the airport and assess noise compatibility by land use. The Noise Exposure Maps must be accepted by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).
        - ***Noise Compatibility Program*** to identify how to mitigate noise effects; these noise mitigation measures, called "alternatives," are individually approved or disapproved by FAA.
- Study Process Status
    - The study team has developed draft noise contours and started to discuss alternatives to mitigate effects from noise.

B. Emerging Winter Noise Measurement Findings and Results (Slides #7-14)

- Overview
    - The study team reviewed the noise measurement program goals, process, and key noise terminology.
    - After monitoring is complete, the study team correlates noise levels to when aircraft flew over noise monitors based on flight data and calculates a total noise level for each event.
    - The monitoring objectives include measuring Day Night Average Sound Levels (DNL) and measuring Sound Exposure Levels (SELs) for individual flight events.
    - The study team displayed a map showing both long-term and short-term noise monitoring locations that were placed around the airport and surrounding areas.
- Winter Noise Monitoring Results
    - During December 2025 winter noise monitoring, most weather conditions resulted in a North-East flow (i.e., flight departures to the North, arrivals to the East).
    - Anchorage experienced strong winds on the last two days of winter monitoring, so those two days were dropped from the data.
    - Most measured DNLs were below 65 DNL.
    - **Q:** If the noise monitoring equipment is not designed for measuring noise in conditions with more than 10 MPH sustained winds, did the study team consult with weather experts before selecting monitoring dates?
        - **R:** The noise measurements are not in the development of the noise contours, the contours are created in the FAA's required computer modeling software known as the Aviation Environmental Design Tool (AEDT). Overall takeoff and departure decisions are driven by weather conditions, so weather conditions are taken into account. Wind is considered in the model for the noise contours.

C. Forecast and Fleet Mix (Slides #15-21)

- Aviation Activity Forecast
    - The study team reviewed the inputs used to prepare the fleet mix.
    - **Q:** Does the forecast consider current and proposed development, such as air cargo facilities under construction?
        - **R:** It does not consider specific developments. However, new development is generally accounted for because it is captured in the overall forecasted trends for the airport. The forecasts are based on assumptions included in the Airport Master Plan, which typically does consider overall growth trends and patterns.
    - **Q:** Has the Airport Master Plan and Airport Layout Plan been approved?
        - **R:** The Airport Layout Plan (one of two Master Plan components which the FAA approves) has been approved by the FAA. The FAA has also approved the forecasts for use in this Part 150 Study. The final documentation is neither approved nor denied by the FAA, just accepted. The appendices are being finalized now, and the full plan will be available on the airport's website soon.
- Draft 2031 Noise Contours
    - The study team shared the 2031 Draft Noise Contours, which will be used to develop the Noise Exposure Maps. Key changes from the previous study include:

    - Growth in the southern portions of the contours toward Sand Lake.
        - The contours are slightly more expansive. This is expected given growth in operations. Nighttime departures have increased, which are weighted to account for the increased disruption of nighttime noise. This also contributed to the growth of the contours.
- There are still very few locations where the 65 DNL contour leaves the Airport property boundary– the contours are still mostly on Airport property. The contour does extend beyond airport property to the South.
    - **C/Q:** The issue with planes taking off to the South is not just their flight path, it is also their method of ascent. Since the Westpark subdivision was constructed, pilots are increasing their power earlier, before they fly over Westpark. How is this reflected in the modeling?
        - **R:** The growth in cargo operations is accounted for in the forecasts and in the model.
        - **R:** Ground noise is not addressed here; a related Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) with details has been added to the study website.
        - **R:** DNL is a cumulative noise level measurement; it is abstract. What people hear is the L_{max}. Usually, you will have an L_{max} higher than the DNL (e.g., one might hear a noise of 85dB). DNL is an average over a 24-hour period. See Slide 10 for noise terminology definitions.
- Noise contours do not define impact. They are used to define land use compatibility – specifically, whether a certain type of land use is compatible or not compatible with certain levels of aircraft noise.
    - Noncompatible land uses are defined as those land uses which are noise sensitive within the 65 or greater DNL noise contour. These include uses such as residential structures, hospitals, schools, etc.
    - **Q:** On the east side of the airfield, on the approach end, the draft contour line moves to the west. Why is this?
        - **R:** There are a few possible explanations for this change. The first is due to changes in FAA's required noise model since the previous study was conducted. There were also slightly fewer arrivals coming from the east than were previously modeled.
    - A few key reminders from the study team:
        - The noise contours are not driven by the noise measurements.
        - The loudest noise contours are closest to the runway, and the contours get larger as the noise levels decrease as you move away from the runway.
- This study looks most closely at the 75, 70, and 65 DNL contours. 65 DNL is the federal threshold DNL for land use compatibility.

D. Alternatives Discussion (Slides #22-28)

- Developing alternatives is an essential component of a Part 150 Noise Study. These alternatives explore ways to mitigate or abate noise. The study team shared an overview of the goals of developing alternatives. There are some alternatives that must be evaluated according to regulation. Some of the regulations contradict one another – for example, the more recent Part

161 restricts airports' ability to regulate airport access based on noise, even though this must be considered in the Part 150 Study.

- The reason noise studies are updated every five years is because it is challenging to accurately forecast flight operations more than five years out. If an airport sees an increase in operations by more than 15% within those five years, it triggers an earlier update.
    - **Q:** If it turns out forecasts are off by a significant amount, how is the plan adapted?
        - **R:** The airport will need to update the noise contour maps. If there are new noncompatible areas on the map, those facilities could be eligible for federal funding for sound abatement.
- The study team reviewed the different types of alternatives that are available in a Part 150 Noise Study, and a list of questions to consider when exploring and prioritizing alternatives.
- **C:** In the supplemental slide in the handout showing the status of past recommended alternatives, the table shows the alternatives labeled Land Use 1, 2, and 3 as "implemented." However, those disclosure statements were not implemented.
    - **R:** Regarding the preventative land use overlay: implementation of this alternative is out of the airport's control. However, it is still important to make sure the status table is accurate (the study team will correct as appropriate). The study team will also explore why this alternative was not implemented, and what can be done to implement it in the future, if the community decides to keep it in the study.
- **Q:** What is a noise overlay zone?
    - **R:** This is a land use compatibility measure that is a zoning overlay. It does not change underlying zoning, but rather, adds a layer on top with restrictions for properties within that area. The area could be drawn to line up with a contour or matched up with other geographic features/boundaries on the ground. An example might be prohibiting new residential construction within an overlay zone or prohibiting new residential construction without noise restrictions.
    - **R:** Municipalities can use the 65 DNL to determine the overlay area, although some places opt for lower restrictions such as 60 DNL or 55 DNL.
    - **R:** Some communities opt to have zoning overlays that define corridors for frequently flown trajectories.
    - **R:** In this case, the Anchorage Assembly would be the policymakers that would make the final decision to create an overlay zone.
    - **R:** FAA will sometimes disapprove land use measures because they are not within their purview, but communities can still include them in the study (they will not be eligible for implementation funding from FAA).
- **Q:** Can the public expect that cargo jets will get quieter over time because of new technology or requirements?
    - **R:** Current airplanes must meet federal noise requirements. Airplanes being produced today are considered Stage 5. There are still airplanes certified Stages 3 and 4 flying in Alaska, but they are slowly being retired, and more are from the Stage 5 fleet. Stage 2 airplanes have been phased out, as mandated by Congress. There were originally exemptions for Stage 2 aircraft in Alaska, Hawaii, and a subset of locations; while the exemption is still active, most remaining Stage 2 aircraft have since aged out of the fleet. Not all aircraft within a Stage have the same noise level; it is based on the date the

plane was certified, not their actual noise (e.g., there are some Stage 4 planes that meet Stage 5 criteria).

- **Q:** How are stages related to aircraft design groups?
    - **R:** They are unrelated. Aircraft design groups are based on plane design and specifications. Stages are just related to noise.
- **Q:** Can the study require changes to departure climb profiles?
    - **R:** Yes, this is a possible noise abatement option, although we can't "require" it. Close-in departures reduce noise close to airport, and distant departures reduce noise further from airport. The previous study examined this alternative to see if it could positively impact noise but not as much for South departures.
    - **C:** SAC members expressed interest in exploring how departure climb profiles might help mitigate noise to the South.
- **Q:** Does this study consider changes to military bases and airspace changes?
    - **R:** Airspace changes are not reflected in the forecast conditions because they are not final; the FAA requires they can only be considered once final. Once changes to the airspace are approved by FAA, there may need to be updates to the flight tracks and modeling assumptions for this study.
- Lake Hood Operations – Observed Changes
    - **C:** There are fewer general aviation (GA) pilots in the departure mix, and more air taxis with professional pilots. The professional pilots typically come in and depart with lower power. As a result, the noise may have been reduced a bit.
- **C:** Some residents around Lake Hood hear frequent touch-and-gos in the morning (7:00 am) and wish the tower would restrict them at certain times. Even if this could not be regulated, it could be proposed on a voluntary basis.
    - **C:** Sportfishing to the south of Anchorage used to be more popular. There used to be many more flights in the late 80s that were taking off and going south. Now fishing seasons are spread out longer and more people are going north. This aligns with noise data for Lake Hood.
    - **C:** From the Turnagain neighborhood perspective, there does not seem to be an improvement. Touch-and-gos are very disruptive and planes circle endlessly.
    - **C:** One pilot was restricted from early morning (4:00 am) departure at Lake Hood and was told by the tower they could not fly in the direction they wanted to go but given an alternative. The tower did not say why, but suggested they cut across the Inlet instead, called a "Beluga departure." This route took the plane directly across the water and avoided the neighborhood.
- **C:** Among commercial air taxis who use Lake Hood, they have overall been much cleaner, followed the recommended flight paths, and avoided flying low over houses. It is the GA pilots who are doing touch-and-gos. These are typically more sporadic flyers who are less aware. A good publicity campaign could be helpful.
    - **C:** Overall, it seems like there may also be fewer planes on the lake in summer.
    - **C:** Alaska Airman's Association (GA membership group) is doing what they can to help with pilot education. This includes producing a "From the Cockpit" video series that features etiquette and rules of getting in and out of the area. Some recommended

arrivals and departures will be changing. There is a lot of variation in the noise produced by different planes; some can be very loud.

- **Q:** Are noise barriers effective, like the ones North Link Aviation is putting in?
    - **R:** This was explored extensively in the previous Part 150 Study. At that time, the study team found it was only effective if the noise barrier was close to the source, and it needed to be above the height of the engine. Once an aircraft leaves the ground, no physical barrier can mitigate the noise, so these tools will have limited benefit. Noise barriers are most beneficial to mitigate noise from ground run-up procedures (e.g., areas where aircraft are conducting engine runs for maintenance purposes), but those are located away from residential areas. If there is interest in noise barriers, the project team can evaluate. However, the noise contours suggest the most impactful noise on the community is departure noise, and in that case, noise barriers would offer limited to no benefit. (related to Part 150).
- **Q:** Could a ground noise study be a recommendation that emerges from this noise study?
    - **R:** Yes, the Part 150 study could recommend another ground noise study be completed, but there would need to be sufficient justification that ground noise generated today is significantly different than was assumed in a prior ground noise study.
- **Q:** Slide 26 includes as a potential alternative, “Denial of Use of Airport for Aircraft Not Meeting Federal Noise Standards.” Has that ever happened?
    - **R:** Before the 1990 Airport Noise and Capacity Act (ANCA), some airports had local noise restrictions and planes had to meet individual airport rules/requirements. ANCA now says airports cannot have any individual noise restrictions. This is an example where the regulations are complicated and not necessarily in alignment: Part 150 requires planners to consider this as a potential alternative, but Part 161 doesn’t let us consider it.
- Land Use & Administrative Alternatives
    - **Q:** If the community wants to implement some of the land use and administrative alternatives shared here as examples, who writes the policies? Is this something that would be led by the airport? By the Municipality of Anchorage (MOA)?
        - **R:** As part of the Part 150 Study, the study team can work with the MOA to make recommendations. This can include providing example language and policies from other locations. The best preventative measures are the ones that are implementable.
        - **R:** One of the biggest challenges is financial. The study team has sometimes worked with communities to help develop and implement policies; they can take multiple years to put into place.
    - **C:** The West Anchorage District Plan includes a recommendation to do airport zoning. However, this has historically been politically contentious.
        - **R:** Some communities opt to exclude policies in the Comprehensive Plan or Area Plans and instead focus on construction. It would be best to have a follow-up conversation with the MOA Planning Department to understand options and what seems most feasible.
    - **Q:** A few years ago, there was funding to replace/better insulate windows. Is that funding still available?

        - **R:** There could be funding remaining. To be eligible, a home must be within the 65 DNL contour. Other airports have sound insulation programs that are ongoing, with funding from FAA.
        - **R:** One method would be to start by exploring alternatives that involve operational changes. By implementing operational changes, it might be possible to shift the noise contours, so they no longer impact the areas south of the airport as much.
    - **Q:** What is the timeline for implementation of alternatives?
        - **R:** This is a 5-year study, which will hopefully be submitted in 2027. FAA approves within 180 days. Once a measure is approved, the community can request funding to help startup/implement those programs. If there are operational changes, a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process is triggered. Depending on how many homes are within a contour, it can take 3-5 years to initiate a program.
    - **Q:** How could easements be used as an alternative?
        - **R:** There are a few potential alternatives that involve easements. For example:
            - If there is a sound attenuation program, a homeowner would be required to sign an easement in exchange for the funds to provide sound insulation.
            - Another example is cash payments to households within an easement; however, that is discouraged because it does not offer long term protection to the home.
            - Finally, an overlay could include easements where certain uses are discouraged from being built, and if they are built, the construction would require certain insulation or other adaptations to mitigate noise.
    - **Q:** Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER) runs an easement program. Has the airport pursued this, for lands adjacent to the airport, to prevent construction of multi-unit housing? This could reduce noise conflicts. In this case the owner is not relinquishing ownership of the land; maybe in 50 years, that area may not be an issue.
        - **R:** This would likely not be feasible for a Part 150 Noise Study. The FAA requires that any land purchased with FAA funds be purchased in perpetuity. Easements must be purchased at fair market value; this is usually 10% of property value.
    - Administrative Alternatives – the study team opted to discuss these at a future SAC meeting due to time constraints.
    - SAC members are encouraged to review the Alternative Analysis Policies for future discussion/consideration and are invited to send ideas to the team anytime.
    - **Q:** If a homeowner signs a noise release after getting noise attenuation, are there any other actions available?
        - **R:** Once a homeowner has implemented noise attenuation, they are considered compatible. Unless they are in a new contour, there are no additional steps.

E. Wrap-Up

- Reviewed Immediate Next Steps (including tonight's Open House) and Project Schedule
- Final SAC Comments and Public Comments: None

Adjourn

Participants

SAC Member – *presented in alphabetical order by representative entity/group*	
Representative Entity	***Name***
Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (AK DOT&PF) – Anchorage International Airport	Aaron Danielson
AK DOT&PF – Anchorage International Airport	Alex Moss
AK DOT&PF	Erik Hilsinger
AK DOT&PF	Robespierre Howard
AK DOT&PF	Steven Rzepka
Alaska Airlines Inc	Lynae Craig (virtual)
Alaska Airmen's Association	Priscilla Ribic
Aleutian Airways	Brian Whilden
Everts Air Cargo	Susan Hoshaw
Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Alaska Region	Cody Webb
FAA Alaska Region	Jack Gilbertsen
Joint Base Elmendorf Richardson	Jon Scudder
Lake Hood Pilots Association	Steve Fishback
Member of the Public – South	Randy Hessong
Member of the Public – North	Kristin Knudson
Municipality of Anchorage – Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions	Aaron Jongenelen
Municipality of Anchorage	Daniel Mckenna-Foster
Sand Lake Community Council	Linda Swiss
Spenard Community Council	Bob Auth
Turnagain Community Council	Cathy Gleason
UPS	Luke Billingsley
Airport Project Team	
Anchorage International Airport	Taylor Beardsley
Anchorage International Airport	Teri Lindseth
Anchorage International Airport	Ian Moore
Anchorage International Airport	Jennifer Pepin
Consulting Team	
Mead & Hunt	Kate Andrus, Corbett Smith, Ryk Dunkelberg, Marieke Armstrong
HMMH	Gene Reindel, Vincent Ma
Agnew::Beck Consulting	Shelly Wade, Molly Mylius