



**Federal Aviation  
Administration**

**Interim Response to  
SJC Ad Hoc Advisory Committee on  
South Flow Arrivals**

**February 2019**

## **Introduction**

This is intended to be a high-level interim response that provides the FAA’s current efforts regarding the May 2018 “Report of the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee on South Flow Arrivals.”

In a future detailed response, the FAA intends to provide full and complete information about the FAA’s processes, procedures and timeframes. Even if there is no legal requirement to do so, the FAA remains willing to address community noise concerns, if operationally possible. The FAA undertakes its community outreach efforts and considers potential adjustments to address community concerns.

The Northern California airspace is very complex, with traffic arriving and departing from several major airports, smaller regional airports and military facilities as well. All arrival and departure procedures within the airspace are interconnected and interdependent, and were designed to improve safety and efficiency within the National Airspace System (NAS). This complexity often means that creating new or amending existing procedures will affect other procedures, creating a ripple effect through much of the Northern California airspace. Therefore, while we have been evaluating the Committee’s recommendations, it is likely that some of the airspace procedure recommendations submitted by the Committee will not be achievable because of the complexity of the Northern California airspace. Additionally, predominant weather does not often dictate the use of South Flow arrivals for SJC, on average it is in use less than 25% of the year. The FAA must weigh the impact of these recommendations and whether they would benefit the safety of the NAS.

## **National Environmental Policy Act**

In addition to its mandate to ensure the safe and efficient use of the NAS, the FAA complies with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (“NEPA”). Although not specifically detailed within this high-level interim response, the FAA’s processes and standards for evaluating noise impacts associated with potential amendments to currently published procedures—consistent with FAA Order 1050.1F (effective July 16, 2015)—will be followed before implementing any airspace or procedural changes. Finally, this interim response does not constitute either a final decision of the FAA or a re-opening of the FAA’s August 6, 2014 final decision for the NorCal Optimization of Airspace and Procedures in the Metroplex (OAPM).

## **Foreword**

The following response tables are intended to provide the current status of the FAA’s efforts regarding the recommendations presented in the SJC Ad Hoc Advisory Committee on South Flow Arrivals report. The table also includes references to the report pages associated with each recommendation.

Those recommendations listed below whose status is listed as 'Under Evaluation' means that a response has been prepared, but is currently being reviewed. The status 'Addressed Concern' means the FAA considers the recommendation completed and in-use today to the extent practicable.

## RESPONSE TABLES

### Request to the FAA 1

<b>Recommendation</b>		<p>The Ad Hoc Advisory Committee requests the FAA to explore options and procedure changes that will still allow for the safe landing of aircraft at SJC AND return to a more dispersed distribution of aircraft. (Using the success criteria listed below)</p> <p>Dispersion of the existing air traffic can mean different things in each of the impacted cities. Directionally the Committee recommends that the FAA drive towards: 1) do not route airplanes over narrow rails; 2) reversion to ground noise patterns prior to 2012 in the same geographic proportions as before.</p> <p>Additional criteria by City:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• San José</li> <li>• Cupertino</li> <li>• Sunnyvale</li> <li>• Mountain View</li> <li>• Palo Alto</li> <li>• Santa Clara</li> </ul>
<b>Status</b>		Under Evaluation
<b>Reference</b>	Roundtable	Page 9-10

### Request to the FAA 2A

<b>Recommendation</b>		The Ad Hoc Advisory Committee requests the FAA maintain the use of the Eastern vectoring for south flow arrivals as much as operationally feasible. This is an important tool in the controller's toolkit.
<b>Status</b>		Addressed Concern
<b>Reference</b>	Roundtable	Page 11

**Request to the FAA 2B**

<b>Recommendation</b>		The Ad Hoc Advisory Committee requests the FAA study the usage of the Eastern vectoring for south flow arrivals for the past 5 years and provide an explanation for any changes, increases and/or decreases.
<b>Status</b>		Under Evaluation
<b>Reference</b>	Roundtable	Page 11

**Request to the FAA 2C**

<b>Recommendation</b>		The Ad Hoc Advisory Committee requests the FAA to document why, when, and how an Eastern vectoring is used into SJC during south flow.
<b>Status</b>		Under Evaluation
<b>Reference</b>	Roundtable	Page 11

**Request to the FAA 2D**

<b>Recommendation</b>		The Ad Hoc Advisory Committee requests the FAA to explore a Chartered Visual Approaches from the east and west. See item V in Appendix A.  Additional criteria by City: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Milpitas</li> <li>• San José</li> </ul>
<b>Status</b>		Under Evaluation
<b>Reference</b>	Roundtable	Page 12

### Request to the FAA 3

<b>Recommendation</b>		The Ad Hoc Advisory Committee requests the FAA initiate a full procedure evaluation to implement item E and F, the purpose being to implement the concept of item D.
<b>Status</b>		Under Evaluation
<b>Reference</b>	Roundtable	Page 13

### Request to the FAA 4

<b>Recommendation</b>		Implement aircraft noise monitoring (by appropriate entity) in areas throughout Santa Clara County to measure the effectiveness of noise mitigation solutions. Noise data captured by sound monitoring should be used by the FAA to validate the modeling tools the FAA uses as part of its environmental impact evaluations.
<b>Status</b>		The FAA defers to SJC to determine whether and to what extent the Ad Hoc's request for a noise-monitoring program in Santa Clara County can be addressed.
<b>Reference</b>	Roundtable	Page 14

### Request to the FAA 5

<b>Recommendation</b>		<p>The Ad Hoc Advisory Committee on South Flow Arrivals is aware that for each new potential aviation route into the San Francisco Metroplex a noise simulation and prediction is/was required. The Committee requests that the FAA provide those simulation results that include predicted noise levels and all other associated data.</p> <p>Further, The Committee requests that when the FAA posts a procedure for public comment at the Instrument Flight Procedures (IFP) gateway, environmental analyses, including noise assessments, pertaining to that procedure shall be posted along with it, and at the same time.</p>
<b>Status</b>		Under Evaluation
<b>Reference</b>	Roundtable	Page 14

**Request to the FAA 6A**

<b>Recommendation</b>		The Committee is requesting that the FAA improve the notification mechanisms to better alert potential affected communities when procedures are being reviewed. Simply posting to the FAA’s IFP Gateway website at the National level is not sufficient to provide clear, layman understandable language and transparent information to the public. There needs to be better regional and local outreach process that informs public officials and members of the public when changes are being proposed in their region.
<b>Status</b>		Under Evaluation
<b>Reference</b>	Roundtable	Page 15

**Request to the FAA 6B**

<b>Recommendation</b>		The Committee is requesting the FAA to ask all affected Airlines to participate along with FAA, SJC, and interested public constituents when discussions regarding existing and proposed flight path changes are being considered for adoption.
<b>Status</b>		The FAA will defer to the San Jose International Airport (SJC) to reach out to and hold discussion(s) with their Airline partners, affected communities and interested public constituents regarding existing and proposed flight path changes. If/when SJC invites and asks, the FAA is willing to participate — consistent with available resources-- in such discussion.
<b>Reference</b>	Roundtable	Page 15

**Request to the FAA 7**

<b>Recommendation</b>		The Committee is requesting the FAA review these suggestions and provide a written response about the feasibility of implementation.
<b>Status</b>		Appendix A Recommendations are under evaluation.
<b>Reference</b>	Roundtable	Page 16

**Request to the FAA 8A**

<b>Recommendation</b>		The Ad Hoc Advisory Committee requests the FAA to initiate a study to look at creating or adopting a single Aircraft Noise Reporting System for the area, including, but not limited to: Ease of reporting by the public; transparent agency analysis; agency response; and publicly access reporting results. The user interface for this system should minimize the number of “clicks” required to log a complaint.
<b>Status</b>		The FAA defers to the SJC airport to consider whether and to what extent it is practicable to address this Ad Hoc recommendation to establish an Aircraft Noise Reporting System.
<b>Reference</b>	Roundtable	Page 18

**Request to the FAA 8B**

<b>Recommendation</b>		The Ad Hoc Advisory Committee requests that the FAA initiate a study to use the information collected in 8A to identify and analyze noise trends that should be addressed.
<b>Status</b>		The FAA defers to the SJC airport to consider whether and to what extent it is practicable to address this Ad Hoc recommendation to establish an Aircraft Noise Reporting System.
<b>Reference</b>	Roundtable	Page 18

**Appendix A: Noise Mitigation List**

<b>Recommendation</b>		Recommendations A – WW.
<b>Status</b>		Under Evaluation
<b>Reference</b>	Roundtable	Page 1-7