



**CITY OF LOS ALTOS
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
October 13, 2015**

DISCUSSION ITEM

Agenda Item # 7

SUBJECT: Adopt Resolution No. 2015-35, requesting the Federal Aviation Administration address increased aircraft noise in the City of Los Altos and Santa Clara County

BACKGROUND

At its September 8, 2015 meeting, the City Council directed staff to prepare a resolution in support of the regional efforts requesting that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) address increased aircraft noise affecting the City of Los Altos and neighboring areas of Santa Clara County.

This growing issue that involves the Bay Area region is currently being addressed by Congresswoman Anna Eshoo in her efforts and communications with the FAA. The increase of aircraft noise is largely due to the re-routing of large commercial aircraft pursuant to the NextGen air traffic control modernization program. This change is impacting residents in various ways. Residents have reached out to members of the Los Altos City Council and urged the Council to support the regional efforts to request the FAA address the aircraft noise issue.

On August 24, 2015, the City of Palo Alto adopted a resolution urging the FAA to address the issue of increased aircraft noise as did Santa Clara County on August 25, 2015, and the City of Saratoga on September 16, 2015.

EXISTING POLICY

None

PREVIOUS COUNCIL CONSIDERATION

None

DISCUSSION

The recent changes in the flight arrival and departure paths at Bay Area commercial airports is intended by the FAA to improve safety, efficiency and reduce carbon emissions through the use of new technologies to establish more direct flight routes. The FAA issued findings that these changes would not have significant noise impacts on communities and surrounding areas. However, residents in various Bay Area towns and cities report increased number of flights at lower flight altitudes each day resulting in a significant increase of aircraft noise experienced on the ground.

Adoption of Resolution No. 2015-35 will support the efforts occurring at the county, city and at the congressional level to urge the FAA to immediately mitigate the increased aircraft noise at ground level caused by recent changes in aircraft flight paths and to identify short- and long-term solutions that will address concerns of the impacted residents of the Bay Area.

PUBLIC CONTACT

Posting of the meeting agenda serves as notice to the general public.

FISCAL/RESOURCE IMPACT

None

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Not applicable

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt Resolution No. 2015-35, requesting the Federal Aviation Administration address increased aircraft noise in the City of Los Altos and Santa Clara County

ALTERNATIVES

1. Modify the resolution
2. Do not adopt the resolution

Prepared by: Jennifer Savage, MTEP Special Projects Manager
J. Logan, Assistant City Manager

Approved by: Marcia Somers, City Manager

ATTACHMENT:

1. Resolution No. 2015-35

Adopt Resolution No. 2015-35, requesting the Federal Aviation Administration address increased aircraft noise in the City of Los Altos and Santa Clara County

RESOLUTION NO. 2015-35

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LOS ALTOS
REQUESTING THAT THE FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION
ADDRESS INCREASED AIRCRAFT NOISE IN THE CITY OF LOS ALTOS
AND SANTA CLARA COUNTY**

WHEREAS, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is implementing a planned transition to the Next Generation Air Transportation System (NextGen) to standardize arrival and departure routes through the use of GPS-based technologies in 21 identified metroplexes, including the Northern California Metroplex of San Francisco International Airport (SFO), Oakland International Airport (OAK), Mineta San Jose International Airport (SJC), and Sacramento International Airport (SMF); and

WHEREAS, as part of the transition to NextGen, the FAA recently changed the flight paths followed by commercial aircraft flying into and out of SFO, OAK, and SJC, as well as other airports in the Northern California Metroplex under a project the FAA calls the Northern California Optimization of Airspace and Procedures in the Metroplex (NorCal OAPM); and

WHEREAS, according to the FAA, the NorCal OAPM consists of new procedures and technologies to establish more direct flight routes intended to significantly improve safety and efficiency, and reduce fuel burn and carbon emissions; and

WHEREAS, on July 31, 2014, the FAA issued a Finding of No Significant Impact that NorCal OAPM would not have any significant noise impact on communities and surrounding areas; and

WHEREAS, due to the considerable increase in the number of flights overhead every day and lower flight altitudes, there is a significant increase in the amount of aircraft noise experienced on the ground and is impacting the residents of Los Altos, as well as Saratoga, Los Gatos, Palo Alto, Los Altos Hills, and Mountain View; and

WHEREAS, as evidenced by the number of complaints received by the City of Los Altos, the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors, and the SFO Noise Abatement Office, the new routes have created noise impacts that appear to be far more adverse than those of the former routes for Los Altos residents.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council of the City of Los Altos requests the FAA to immediately mitigate the increased aircraft noise at ground level in Los Altos and Santa Clara County caused by the NorCal OAPM project by identifying all short-and long-term solutions and the expected timetable for the implementation;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Los Altos requests the FAA, as part of the above analysis of aircraft noise mitigation measures, immediately raise the altitude of all flight paths over the city, reduce the number of night time flights into SFO, and as part of the longer-term solutions, redesign the flight paths within the Northern California Metroplex so that the noise burden is borne equitably by all communities that benefit from air travel, and reconfigure the final approach paths so that descent over the bay waters is maximized;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Los Altos requests that the FAA urge Congress to amend the FAA Modernization and Reform Act to eliminate the availability of a categorical exclusion and bar the presumption of no significant effect on the quality of the human environment that currently apply to navigation performance and area navigation procedures;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Los Altos requests that the Congress of the United States implement statutory changes to the FAA that require more robust community engagement before flight paths are changed, more accurate measures of noise experienced on the ground, and independent research on the health impacts of aviation noise;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Los Altos requests that the FAA continue to meet with community representatives and impacted residents from Los Altos to discuss further and address these matters.

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a Resolution passed and adopted by the City Council of the City of Los Altos at a meeting thereof on the ____day of October, 2015 by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

Janis C. Pepper, MAYOR

Attest:

Jon Maginot, CMC, CITY CLERK