

RESOLUTION NO. 67,692–N.S.

REQUESTING THE FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION TO ADDRESS
INCREASED AIRCRAFT NOISE IN BERKELEY

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 GPSbased technologies in 21 identified metroplexes, which are regions with multiple airports serving major metropolitan areas where heavy airport activity and environmental constraints combine to hinder the efficient movement of air traffic; and

WHEREAS, the Northern California Metroplex is comprised of four commercial airports, 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 improve safety, efficiency, and reduce fuel burn and carbon emissions; and

WHEREAS, modernizing air space using a sophisticated satellite controlled system and precision flying can embrace FAA goals alongside minimizing and equitably distributing noise impacts experienced on the ground; 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 based on sound metrics which did not reflect the true disturbance to the communities on the ground; and

WHEREAS, rather than acting to take advantage of geography and equitably distributing and minimizing the cumulative noise impacts over neighborhoods, the FAA has created great disturbance of certain areas in failing to consider noise and environmental impacts on a per flight basis; and, instead, developing the flawed Net Noise Reduction Method; and

WHEREAS, the new flight paths out of SFO, entitled TRUKN, GRTFL, DEDHD, HYPEE, and COSMO, the new flight path into OAK, entitled WNDSR, and increasing vectored OAK departures are impacting residents of the City of Berkeley, especially along the Berkeley hills due to the considerable increase in the number of flights overhead each day from narrowed flight corridors, lower flight altitudes, and powered descent procedures resulting in a significant increase in the amount of aircraft noise experienced on the ground; and

WHEREAS, significant environmental impacts created by the new flight paths adversely impact the enjoyment, preservation, and protection of natural, cultural, and scenic resources of the East Bay Regional Park District parklands, trails, and open spaces; and

WHEREAS, as evidenced by the increasing number of complaints received by the City of Berkeley City Council and staff, as well as the complaints received by the SFO and OAK Noise Abatement Offices, the new routes have created noise impacts that appear to be far more adverse than those of the former routes for our residents.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that it hereby requests the FAA immediately mitigate the increased aircraft noise at ground level in Berkeley caused by the NorCal OAPM project by expeditiously identifying all short and long-term solutions and the expected timetable for their implementation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Berkeley City Council requests the FAA, as part of the above analysis of aircraft noise mitigation measures, consider the immediate solutions of raising altitudes on the SFO departure flight paths from TRUKN, vector a portion of SFO departures from TRUKN to disperse flights more equitably, vector a portion of OAK arrivals along WNDSR to echo previous dispersed flight paths, reduce OAK departures over the East Bay hills, work to reduce cargo flights over the East Bay hills as these operations use noisier aircraft, and, as part of the longer-term solutions, consider a redesign of the flight paths within the Northern California Metroplex to disperse flights equitably, minimize single event overflight noise, use continuous descent approaches, and take advantage of the Bay as a flight corridor provided, however, that such efforts shall not include "noise shifting," i.e., simply moving the noise from one community to another.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Berkeley City Council requests that the Congress of the United States amend the FAA Modernization and Reform Act to eliminate the availability of a categorical exclusion and bar the presumption of no significant impact on the quality of the human environment that currently applies to navigation performance and performance based navigation (PBN) procedures.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Berkeley City Council requests that the Congress of the United States implement statutory changes to the FAA that require more robust and substantive community engagement before flight paths are changed, more accurate measures using updated metrics and full spectrum acoustic impacts of aviation noise experienced on the ground and independent research on the health and environmental impacts of aviation noise, and requirements that the FAA take such research into account when making decisions regarding airspace design.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Berkeley City Council requests that the FAA continue to meet in good faith with community representatives and impacted residents from Berkeley to further discuss and address these matters.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be distributed to the offices of the members of the Bay Area Congressional Delegation, the Oakland Airport Community Noise Management Forum, and the offices of United States Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer.

The foregoing Resolution was adopted by the Berkeley City Council on September 27, 2016 by the following vote:

Ayes: Arreguin, Capitelli, Droste, Maio, Wengraf, Worthington and Bates.

Noes: None.

Absent: Anderson and Moore.



Tom Bates, Mayor

Attest: 

Mark Numainville, City Clerk