

NEWS

Aircraft noise committee to include local reps

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Courtesy of San Francisco International Airport

Noise complaints to San Francisco International Airport, shown above as yellow dots, indicate the impact of new flight paths to residents at ground level.

are very angry."

According to San Francisco International Airport's most recent noise abatement report, 1,455 Bay Area residents issued 219,000 complaints in October 2015. In Los Altos, 163 individuals submitted 20,790 complaints; eight Los Altos Hills residents sent 2,746 complaints.

Comparatively, in February 2015 before the area's flight paths changed, 95 residents called in 2,209 complaints. One was from Los Altos.

"My No. 1 priority as Los Altos representative is to have quick relief. This happened all of a sudden without warning," Mordo said. "Then we can study a long-term solution."

Waldeck intends to push for increased funding for measures like increased noise-measurement tests.

"There have to be realistic measurements of what's going on and how it's affecting people," he said.

In the meantime, while some advocacy groups recommend returning to the former flight path, Waldeck isn't optimistic the FAA would – or even could – return to the old ways.

"It's not just about moving this and everything is done," he said. "A quick solution may work, but the FAA needs to test its safety."

Over the coming months, the committee comprising 12 officials from three impacted congressional districts will compile a set of recommendations for congress members to present to the FAA.

Residents' united input

As elected officials embark on the committee process, various Midpeninsula advocacy groups united their voice earlier this month with one letter to Eshoo and Rep. Sam Farr. Instead of offering solutions, the groups suggested

A new committee of local elected officials will recommend solutions to the increased airplane noise caused by flight paths that concentrate planes in narrower, lower and reportedly louder overhead highways.

U.S. Rep. Anna Eshoo, who represents Los Altos, Los Altos Hills and Mountain View, appointed two officials including Santa Clara County Supervisor Joe Simitian. At Eshoo's request, the Santa Clara County Cities Association appointed two more representatives including Los Altos Hills Councilman Gary Waldeck, a former pilot. Los Altos Councilman Jean Mordo will serve as an alternate.

"What we're looking for is a way for this thing to be fixed in a way that's meaningful and equitable for everybody," Waldeck said. "It's so complex."

One new flight path implemented in March 2015 streamlined planes over Los Altos in what some have dubbed a "sacrificial noise corridor."

"Los Altos had absolutely no noise overhead," Mordo said. "The new route brought noise over Los Altos, and the people

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principles: prioritizing noise pollution over operational efficiency, adding metrics that characterize the true impact of noise, aiming to reduce noise to a historical baseline and demonstrating evidence that mitigation is effective.

“We recognize that other communities in our nation are experiencing similar distress due to increased aircraft noise pollution,” wrote the residents. “We hope we can help you create a model process and solution that can be implemented across the country.”

The letter captures the consensus of groups representing Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Menlo Park, Palo Alto, Portola Valley and Woodside. Residents called for a regional solution that wouldn’t create unintended negative consequences for other communities.

“We do not want the advocacy of our representatives to shift noise to other areas,” Charlene Mercante, a member of Sky Posse Los Altos Hills, told the Town Crier. “We want the FAA to reduce noise by recognizing that minimizing aircraft noise is more important than airline operational efficiency.”

Residents can file noise complaints with SFO at [flysfo.com/community-environment/noise-abatement/file-a-complaint](https://www.flysfo.com/community-environment/noise-abatement/file-a-complaint).

of hoey and you know it. No one wants a giant box looming over their house.

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