



## **LAX/COMMUNITY NOISE ROUNDTABLE**

Recap of the Regular Meeting of September 10, 2014

### **Roundtable Members Present**

Denny Schneider, Chairman, Westchester Neighbors Association  
Carl Jacobson, Vice Chairman, City of El Segundo  
Blake LaMar, City of Palos Verdes Estates  
Petra Schneider, City of Rancho Palos Verdes  
Danna Cope, LAX Area Advisory Committee  
Yvonne Bedford, Ladera Heights Civic Association  
JoAnn Williams, United Homeowners Association  
John Bailey, Southeast Torrance Homeowners' Association  
Martin Rubin, North Westdale Neighborhood Association  
June Lehrman, City of Culver City  
Faviola Garcia and Rolan Morel, Federal Aviation Administration  
Kathryn Pantoja, LAWA

### **LAWA, Airline, and Consultant Staff**

David Chan, LAWA  
James Duke, LAWA  
Lisa Trifiletti, LAWA  
Steve Alverson, Roundtable Facilitator

A quorum of the members was present.

### **1. Welcome/Review of the Meeting Format**

Roundtable Facilitator Steve Alverson welcomed everyone to the meeting and reviewed the meeting format. Mr. Alverson indicated that the Roundtable meetings are facilitated in order to stay on topic and on schedule. He added that there would be a period for public comments and the Chair may entertain questions from the audience as time permits.

### **2. Call to order**

Roundtable Chairman Denny Schneider called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm PDT in the Samuel Greenberg Boardroom at LAX. Chairman Schneider announced the passing of long-

time Roundtable member Beverly Ackerson and indicated that tonight's meeting would be adjourned in her memory.

### **3. Comments from the Public**

There were no comments from the public.

### **4. Welcome New Member**

LAWA staff member David Chan said that he had received a letter from the City of Rancho Palos Verdes confirming the change in the City's representation at the Roundtable. He indicated that the letter identified Ms. Petra Schneider as the new representative and Ms. So Kim as the new alternate. He asked the Roundtable to join him in welcoming Ms. Schneider and Ms. Kim to the Roundtable. He then presented the new members with Roundtable binders and asked Member Schneider if she had any comments.

Member Schneider said she was glad to be a member of the Roundtable. She added that she has been involved in environmental issues for a number of years, including issues related to the Chevron refinery, and looks forward to learning more about noise from LAX aircraft operations.

### **5. Air Traffic Control 101**

LAX Air Traffic Control Tower (ATCT) Support Manager Rolan Morel started his presentation by indicating that he has worked in the LAX ATCT for ten years. He said the goal of his presentation was to provide the Roundtable members with an overview of how the air traffic control system works. He indicated that the national airspace system has numerous jurisdictional boundaries or sectors and that aircraft must have permission to move from one sector of airspace to another. He said that permission is requested and granted by the air traffic controllers responsible for each airspace sector.

He said as an aircraft moves from the gate to the taxiways to the runway and departs for the en route airspace, the first controller "hands off" the aircraft to the next controller and so on until the aircraft is back on the ground and at the gate at its destination airport. The en route airspace is for high-speed, high-altitude operations while the terminal airspace is for aircraft descending to the airport or ascending to the en route airspace. LAX ATCT receives an aircraft on arrival when it is on about a four-mile final. At that point ATCT provides the wind speed and direction, traffic advisories, and clears the aircraft to land.

He displayed a map covering the airspace around the Los Angeles area. He said that the en route airspace typically begins at 13,000 feet above mean sea level (MSL) and the terminal airspace typically extends from 13,000 feet MSL down to 2,500 feet MSL. He explained that the en route airspace is handled by Los Angeles Center, the terminal airspace is handled by Southern California Terminal Radar Approach Control Facility (SCT or TRACON) and the airspace near the airport is handled by LAX ATCT. He explained that coordination is exercised between these facilities to ensure safe aircraft operations.

He then reviewed a radar scope image and described the different attributes on the scope including the aircraft "tag" which provides the airline name, flight number, altitude, speed, runway, and aircraft type. He used the image to illustrate that, due to the high volume of north arrival aircraft on approach to LAX, that it would not be possible for them to make a

“short turn” He explained that clearance to make a visual approach is given by controllers in the SCT.

Member Schneider asked for clarification on the meaning of airspace ownership. Mr. Morel explained that each controller “owns”, figuratively speaking, a piece of airspace for which he or she is responsible. Chairman Schneider inquired who makes the arrival runway selection. Mr. Morel responded that the SCT assigns the arrival runways. He added the LAX ATCT assigns the departure runways with a primary goal of avoiding crossing runways whenever possible.

Mr. Morel then reviewed how the ATCT processes the flight strips. He said the strips are used to confirm aircraft routing with the pilot, which is critical to safety. He described the information on the strip, which includes the aircraft type, airline, beacon code, time, altitude, and route of flight. He added that the strips, which used to be paper, are now electronic. He said the strips are used for departures only.

He showed an image and described the air traffic controller position, showed a close up of the ground radar, and views of LAX from the ATCT to give the Roundtable members a better perspective of aircraft traffic coordination from the FAA standpoint.

The complete Air Traffic Control 101 presentation can be found on the Roundtable webpage at <http://www.lawa.org/LAXNoiseRoundTable.aspx>.

## **6. Briefing on FAA Categorical Exclusion**

Roundtable Facilitator Steve Alverson gave a briefing on the so-called “CatEx2” provision, which was contained in the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012. He explained that the provision was intended to speed up environmental reviews of Performance Based Navigation (PBN) procedures that demonstrate neutral or positive noise and air emissions benefits on a “per flight basis.” He added that the legislation provided no guidance to the FAA on how to implement the provision, since existing FAA regulations and guidance rely on cumulative noise metrics such as the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL). He said that the FAA requested the assistance of the Radio Technical Commission for Aeronautics (RTCA) in implementing the CatEx2 provision. He explained that RTCA appointed a CatEx2 Task Group to conduct research and recommend a solution. The Task Group was composed of a broad set of interest groups, including, but not limited to: community representatives, airports, airlines, and aircraft manufacturers. He noted that LAWA’s Scott Tatro was a member of the CatEx2 Task Group.

Mr. Alverson explained that the CatEx2 Task Group agreed on the scope of their effort, conducted research on what methods would meet the intent of the legislation, and unanimously recommended the Net Noise Reduction (NNR) Method. He then provided the details of the method, which is to examine the cumulative noise exposure levels in a noise sensitive area of concern, determine the change in the total number for people exposed to noise on an average per flight basis, and then compare the total number of people exposed under the existing procedure versus the proposed procedure. He added that according to the NNR method, if the net number of people exposed to noise overall decreases and the number of people in the DNL 65 dB contour band decreases (or does not increase), the PBN procedure qualifies for CatEx 2. He said that the Task Group further recommended that if the net number of people exposed to noise overall decreases, but the number of people in the DNL 65 dB contour increases, FAA should consider whether the increase in

noise exposure in the DNL 65 dB contour has a “significant impact”; a significant impact is considered to be a 1.5 dB or greater increase within the 65 dB DNL contour.

Mr. Alverson said that the Task Group had also found that the NNR Method could be implemented with existing noise modeling tools and be applied to single or multiple procedures, that the CatEx2 process could take three to four months, and that stakeholder input in the process is important. He noted that FAA was seeking public input on the NNR Method as well as two alternate methods: Noise Change and Population Weighted Noise Change. He noted five specific questions the FAA was requesting input on, which are detailed in the CatEx2 presentation on the LAX Community Noise Roundtable website.

He then identified three possible areas of concern for the Roundtable to consider including:

- the use of the CatEx2 provision may result in the adoption of PBN procedures with increased noise exposure without public input;
- the use of the NNR method could shift noise from one community to another, which is contrary to the Roundtable’s Bylaws; and
- an exceedance of the 65 CNEL impact threshold could occur, but a CatEx could still be granted as long as the total change in population is neutral or shows a decrease.

He provided three different methods of submitting comments on the NNR Method as described in Docket Number FAA-2014-0510. Comments can be submitted online at <http://www.regulations.gov>, by mail, or by fax at 202-493-2251. He noted that comments were due by September 18, 2014. Note: FAA later granted an extension for receipt of comments to October 20, 2014.

The Roundtable members expressed interest in providing comments to the FAA on the NNR Method, but noted that the comment period was scheduled to close in eight days. Vice Chairman Jacobson noted that the short response period could make it difficult to develop a set of robust comments. Member Lehrman’s motion to request that the FAA extend the comment period and to authorize Chairman Schneider to prepare and send a letter to the FAA on the Roundtable’s behalf was seconded by Member Cope and was approved unanimously.

FAA representative Faviola Garcia said she would reach out to her colleagues at FAA’s Office of Environment and Energy in Washington, D.C. to give them a heads up that the Roundtable would be seeking an extension to the public comment period. Subsequent to the Roundtable meeting, Ms. Garcia notified the Roundtable Facilitator on September 11, 2014 that the FAA had extended the public comment period to October 20, 2014. Mr. Chan then notified the Roundtable via email about the extension.

The complete FAA Categorical Exclusion presentation can be found on the Roundtable webpage at <http://www.lawa.org/LAXNoiseRoundTable.aspx>.

## **7. Update on LAX Heliport**

LAWA staff member, James Duke, provided a brief update on the LAX Heliport. He noted that in October 2010 the heliport was closed due to nearby construction activity. In April 2012, LAWA received several requests from helicopter operators to reopen the heliport. At

the same time, LAWA prepared a cost analysis that indicated operating the heliport does not make financial sense for LAWA. As such, LAWA issued a Request of Expression of Interest (EOI) to determine if any firm would be interested in leasing the heliport facility. Three firms responded to the EOI.

More recently, LAWA examined the possible uses of the heliport including leasing the heliport to a private operator, converting it to a public parking lot or designating it as an emergency helicopter landing facility. LAWA decided to designate a small portion of the area as an emergency helicopter landing facility and convert the rest of the area for public parking. Mr. Duke indicated this option is possible as public emergency helicopter landing is infrequent and the footprint of the helicopter facility for emergency use is much smaller than for commercial use. Therefore emergency use of the heliport is compatible with public parking.

He explained that LAWA can earn more revenue from the vehicle parking spaces, which are in high demand, than with a heliport operation. He also noted that helicopters can still use the Fixed Based Operator sites located on the south side of LAX for regular landing and takeoff.

Member Cope asked how many emergency helicopter landing facilities are there in Los Angeles. Mr. Duke said that there are many; probably more than 70.

Member Bailey noted that the revenue from a non-emergency heliport operation was projected to be approximately \$147,000 per year, while the parking revenue would be over \$1 million per year. Member Bailey also noted that the last applicant for the LAX heliport was a tour operator that intended to conduct helicopter sightseeing tours out of LAX.

The presentation on the LAX Heliport can be found on the Roundtable webpage at <http://www.lawa.org/LAXNoiseRoundTable.aspx>.

## 8. Statistical Update on Aircraft Operations

LAWA staff member David Chan presented updated statistics for Roundtable Work Items A6, A7, and A8. Mr. Chan's presentation is summarized below.

### Work Program Item A6: Improperly Flown LOOP Departures

<p><b>Description:</b> The LOOP departure procedure directs aircraft on westerly departures to turn back and re-cross the shoreline at the LAX VOR at or above 10,000 ft. to head to eastern destinations.</p>
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Mr. Chan reviewed LOOP departures that did not meet the minimum altitude requirement of 10,000 ft. at the shoreline. He noted that on an annual basis the number of LOOP operations not meeting the minimum altitude is declining due to newer aircraft having improved climb performance. He then reviewed the monthly statistics for the past 13 months and noted there is a recurring trend with the loop operations: the number of aircraft flying under 10,000 ft. at the shoreline tends to increase during the summer months when temperatures are higher, which degrades aircraft climb performance. Mr. Chan noted that most aircraft are at altitudes between 10,000 and 15,000 feet when they re-crossed the shoreline.

## Work Program Item A7: Extended Downwind Approach

**Description:** Aircraft arriving to LAX from the west and the north utilize an extended downwind approach at times causing aircraft to overfly Monterey Park and neighboring communities at low altitudes. Usually, the greater the number of north arrivals, the greater the need for aircraft to travel further east on the downwind leg. Weather conditions that produce low visibility can also cause this operation to increase as the FAA would need to increase the separation distance between aircraft for safety.

Mr. Chan reviewed the annual trends for the Extended Downwind Approach noting the increase from 2005 to 2007 was due to a construction project that closed one runway on the south airfield complex. He said the closure caused additional traffic on the north complex requiring aircraft on the downwind leg to fly further east over Monterey Park. He also said the slight uptick in 2013 was also a result of increased runway closure on the south complex. Chairman Schneider noted that the upcoming construction work related to the Runway Safety Area (RSA) projects could cause an increase in Extended Downwind Approaches. Mr. Chan noted that the runway closures for the RSA will be occurring on the south as well as the north complex. Mr. Duke explained that LAWA has a plan in place to ensure all runway safety areas at LAX are compliant with FAA guidelines by December 31, 2015.

Mr. Chan reviewed the monthly trends indicating that the peak in overflights of Monterey Park in June 2014 was a result of the low visibility during "June Gloom." He reviewed the comparison of altitudes for aircraft overflying Monterey Park and noted that aircraft are flying in the same altitude range as before with most aircraft at altitudes between 2,400 and 3,000 feet MSL. He indicated that there is a peak hour of arrival operations occurring at 9 AM and at 9 PM. He indicated that SkyWest had the most Extended Downwind Approaches because it has the most north arrivals.

## Work Program Item A8: Aircraft Arrivals Outside Regular Approach Paths

**Description:** The short turn procedure refers to jet arrivals on the north downwind leg that turn to base leg and final prior to reaching the Harbor Freeway. This operation usually increases when a high-visibility condition exists and/or when the north arrival traffic is light. Conversely, short turn operations decrease when there is an increase in traffic and/or when there is a low-visibility condition. Short turn is also inversely related to the Extended Downwind Approach.

Mr. Chan indicated that on an annual basis, short turn operations have been declining as the overall traffic has been increasing for the past five years. He said the monthly trends show short turns are at the lowest level in June and are inversely related with the extended downwind approaches. He showed a depiction of short turn flight tracks for July 2014 to provide an idea of which communities near LAX are affected by this operation. Mr. Chan concluded his presentation by explaining that SkyWest had the most Short Turns because it has the most north arrivals.

The complete presentation on the Statistical Update on Aircraft Operations can be found on the Roundtable webpage at <http://www.lawa.org/LAXNoiseRoundTable.aspx>.

## 9. Aviation Noise News Update

Mr. Alverson reviewed several recent aviation noise news items for the Roundtable including articles:

- On the progress made by the FAA and industry partners toward the Continuous Lower Energy, Emissions and Noise (CLEEN) program goals.
- Noting that NASA has turned over its Terminal Sequencing and Spacing (TSS) air traffic management tool to the FAA.
- Regarding the initiation of an Airport Cooperative Research Program study to investigate the effects of noise on student achievement.
- On new design features of the Boeing 777X including one that will eliminate the distinctive “saw tooth-shaped” chevrons on the engine nacelles, while providing similar noise levels in the community.
- On NASA’s research on “how people on the ground perceive low sonic booms,” which NASA undertook with the intent of encouraging reconsideration of the current ban on supersonic aircraft over land.
- Summarizing some of the comments received by FAA on LAWA’s proposed FAR Part 161 restriction on east departures during west-flow and over-ocean operations.

The complete Aviation Noise News Update can be found on the Roundtable webpage at <http://www.lawa.org/LAXNoiseRoundTable.aspx>.

## 10. Roundtable Member Discussion

Member Williams said she had received a notice from LAWA indicating that FAA was planning on conducting a test that would extend Loop Departures from 9 pm to midnight for a six-month period. She asked why the FAA was conducting this test as her community already has aircraft noise 24/7. Member Lamar noted that aircraft will be climbing to 12,000 MSL before overflying the LAX VOR, which is 2,000 feet higher than the current Loop Departure. He said the aircraft flying the Loop Departure between 9 pm and midnight will be quieter than they are now because they will be at least 2,000 feet higher before flying over Windsor Hills. FAA representative Rolan Morel said that the benefit of the extended period of Loop Departures is to save fuel and time. Vice Chairman Jacobson asked Mr. Morel if the aircraft on the Loop Departure were being turned earlier after takeoff. Mr. Morel said there has been no change in the altitudes that aircraft are turning at.

Member Lehrman said she felt that the text on Page 9 of the July 9, 2014 meeting recap did not accurately reflect what she had said regarding aircraft overflights of Culver City. The Roundtable Facilitator asked Member Lehrman to offer a suggestion for changing the text. Member Lehrman offered the following underlined changes to the sentence: “Member Lehrman said she understands LAWA’s position is that the data show no changes in aircraft altitudes, but she believes that if LAWA analyzes additional data, the results will show aircraft flying higher over Culver City two years ago.”

Member Rubin noted that the airlines are focused on the economics of air travel. He suggested that they should be focused on the environment. Member Williams returned to the discussion of the 9 pm to midnight Loop Departure test noting that it would cause more noise over her community. Mr. Chan re-emphasized that aircraft would fly farther out over the ocean to gain altitude before turning back toward the airport and, therefore, aircraft would be higher than 12,000 feet over Windsor Hills. Mr. Morel said that the 9 pm to midnight Loop Departure test should reduce the number of aircraft backed up for departure on the airfield as well as the number of aircraft flying around the Palos Verdes Peninsula.

Member Williams said that her community is opposed to operating the LOOP on an extended timeframe.

Member Schneider said that she had been provided some information on Airbus 320 noise by a member of the Chicago O'Hare Noise Commission and asked if she should analyze it and share the results with the Roundtable. Chairman Schneider said that she should do so.

## **11. Review of Roundtable Action Items**

### **Formal Action Items**

The Roundtable members unanimously voted to authorize Chairman Schneider to submit a letter to the FAA conveying the Roundtable's concerns regarding the Categorical Exclusion (CatEx2) on Performance Based Navigation procedures. The Roundtable Facilitator will assist with preparing the letter for submission. The deadline for public comment has been extended to October 20, 2014.

### **Requests from Members**

The Roundtable requested that LAWA send out the CatEx2 presentation to the Roundtable members as soon as possible. Note: The presentation was emailed to the members the day after the meeting.

Member Lehrman requested a modification on the July 9, 2014 Roundtable Meeting Recap to more accurately reflect her views on overflights of Culver City.

## **13. Adjournment**

LAWA staff member David Chan identified November 12, 2014 as the next Roundtable meeting date. Chairman Schneider adjourned the meeting in memory of Beverly Ackerson at 9:17 pm.