

Airport Community Roundtable

Unapproved (Draft) Summary Minutes: December 20, 2017

Attendees:

Bob Cameron, Chair, Davidson
Brian Cox, Charlotte
Patrece Lanier, City 3
Bobbi Almond, City 5
Sayle Brown, Cornelius
Sara Nomellini, County 2
Calvin McGuirt, County 3

Bob Petruska, County 6
Thelma Wright, Mecklenburg
Benjamin Miley, Mint Hill
Jill Taylor, York
Stuart Hair, City of Charlotte (ex-officio)
Brent Cagle, City of Charlotte (ex-officio)
Mark Clark, FAA (ex-officio)

Call-in Participants

Erin Denison, Gaston

Summary Minutes:

- Meeting started at 6:05 PM
- No quorum. Delaying approval of minutes to January.
- Special Priority Item: Flight Data Analyses Presentation by Bob Petruska
 - Data provided by Daniel Gardon from the Airport. Petruska then analyzed the data
 - Many have seen lower altitudes since implementation of NextGen; however, some days aircraft seem to depart at higher altitudes
 - Conclusion: don't see a reason why FAA cannot instruct planes to fly at higher altitude
 - Used statistical analysis to analyze data, looking at Mann-Whitney test to look at median – better indication than average which can be distorted by extremes.
 - Data points were taken from a two-mile bubble around Petruska's house.
 - Initial results didn't seem to reflect lived reality. Looked at two specific days when Petruska noticed a difference, cleansed the data, and then found a significant difference in the departure altitudes on these two days.
 - Leads to the question of why is there a difference in departures on these days? What was different? Maybe a difference in temperature.
 - Can we have planes depart and gain altitude higher faster? Regression analysis did not seem to indicate the size and weight of the aircraft makes a difference.
 - Brown: suggest looking at the winds for the day. Significant headwinds will allow aircraft to climb higher faster. Petruska will take another look at the data and incorporate the wind as a variable.

- Brown: load factor of the aircraft could also make a difference. Different days of the week have different amounts of travelers
- Petruska notes that he parsed out the data at times to look at specific times of day.
- Cameron inquired of Brown how much decision is in the hands of the pilot. Brown noted safety and comfort of the passengers are foremost in decision making. Controllers often want pilots to speed up quickly. Orange County has a strategy where pilots cut back on power during take off to minimize noise but this can be a security issue.
- Cox: did you look at Pre-NextGen data? Petruska noted that he looked Pre-NextGen and Post-NextGen and there was a difference between the altitude of both arrivals and departures with aircraft flying higher in both cases Pre-NextGen.
- Cox: data proves indisputable fact that planes are lower Post-NextGen.
- Cagle: Dennis Roberts of FAA noted that one of the primary factors of lower altitude in departures is a faster turn, particularly in the Steele Creek area.
- Cox: days of the week? Cagle: Wednesday is one of the lighter days for passenger traffic. Fewer business and leisure travelers. Cox: seems the data is inconclusive when it comes to days of the week and weights
- Petruska: Wind Speed on Nov 6th was lower than on Dec 31st. Brown: Would need to look winds in the air – not on the ground.
- Petruska: Since NextGen, both arrivals and departures are lower. Post-NextGen, there is also variability in altitude between days. No reason we can't ask aircraft to ascend more quickly since there seems to be no safety issue. Cox agrees this could improve the lives of community members.
- Clark offered to address this issue in his presentation later in the meeting.
- Wright inquired whether the merger of American Airlines and US Airways had any impact – perhaps different aircraft types fly lower than others.
- Cagle: Southwest quadrant of the city is experiencing a difference due to a change in when aircraft are turning. Brown: the performance of the aircraft will require specific measures to make that turn sooner. Amount of power required will also be different.
- Cagle: From 2006 – 2016, CLT grew almost 50% and was the third fastest growing airport in the country.
- Taylor: is this general growth, growth operations? Cagle: ACI measures rankings in both operations and passengers. This metric was passengers, but there is a correlation between passengers and aircraft operations.
- Update on N.O.I.S.E. membership
 - During November meeting, ACR requested CLT research membership in N.O.I.S.E.
 - Daniel Gardon of the Aviation Department provided overview of research he found when doing outreach to multiple airports listed on NOISE website as members

- Metro Washington Aviation Authority has no affiliation, correspondence, or familiarity with NOISE. Similar experience with other authorities.
 - No major communities are N.O.I.S.E. members – most are small neighboring towns around airports
 - Those who are affiliated with NOISE are looking only at high-level noise legislation rather than specific actions within a community.
 - Can make his notes available to anyone interested
 - Hair: CLT has engaged intergovernmental relations specialist on retainer who can act as resource for any city policy that requires intergovernmental relations. ACR members as individuals can participate in NOISE. If members provide receipt of membership, CLT can provide reimbursement, but CLT staff recommendation is that the ACR as a body does not join NOISE.
 - Cagle: ACR can request City Council to add noise issues to their legislative agenda. There is a process to do this.
 - Cameron: if individual member(s) want to participate, that allows ACR to understand what they are doing with other airports and use that information moving forward. Could be a benefit to the roundtable. Let's consider this at the next meeting.
- Technical Support for ACR
 - Hair: Staff recognizes a need for additional technical expertise for roundtable to be success. Two areas where expertise is needed: meeting and process facilitation and technical analysis of information. Noted other airports around the country are using technical support for their roundtables. Staff has drafted a Request for Qualifications for these two areas of expertise. This RFQ is working its way through City procurement process. Will be an A/B process where a firm responds to one or both parts. Once staff has a firm timeline, we will ask some of the roundtable members to participate in the selection process.
 - Cagle: if we issue RFQ in January and depending on the dollar amounts received, we estimate three to four months to complete the procurement process.
 - Hair: we will share the scope of work with the ACR once it is finalized.
- Updated on ACR Request/Recommendation 2017-01.
 - This was a motion put forth by Bob Cameron related to Continuous Descent Approach
 - Mark Clark of the FAA presented:
 - Airplanes are flying lower in key places than they have in the past as well as opposed to flying lower in the entire area.
 - Optimized Profile Descent was designed to eliminate periods of powered flight.
 - Controllers want planes to climb as quickly as they can. Goal is to get planes up and out of CLT airspace as quickly as possible. We have no restrictions on climb

rate in the Charlotte region. One instruction is a minimum climb rate for prop aircraft departing east over city in order to clear the buildings.

- We can instruct different air speeds for different aircraft depending on traffic.
- Initial instruction is for aircraft to climb to 8,000 ft.
- Variability in RNAV paths can be attributed to changes in equipment type. RNAV off the ground was used for a while prior to NextGen implementation but this created a rail and caused a lot of concern in community. This is why FAA looked at more dispersion as part of NextGen.
- Need to define dispersal since different people interpret dispersal differently.
- Since the ACR has requested a formal response, FAA will provide a formal response but this will come from Atlanta and requires review. In the meantime, Clark provided some information based on his knowledge:
 - Local FAA staff validated data that Cox presented last month.
 - Biggest concern is the shift in altitude between 2015 and 2016
 - Local FAA then looked at all arrivals from the Northeast to look at more data points.
 - Staff looked at changes made at CLT ATC made since 2013, but found no changes since 2013 that would account for the lower altitude
 - Clark presented video showing ebb and flow of operations over a 24-hour period followed by a map showing the altitudes each controller owns on arrivals.
 - With triple approach capability, controllers must turn aircraft in at different altitudes to maintain separation. ATC "owns" little airspace so it is challenging to get the aircraft to the appropriate altitude on each side. The east side is lower than the west and center approaches.
 - 4,000 ft is critical level. To join ILS, aircraft must have two miles of level flight so 4,000 ft is the minimum altitude.
 - In 2015, procedure implemented that aircraft automatically begins to descend when it hits a particular fix (PELOY). The fix was moved 2.7 miles to the north which is why residents south of this fix are seeing aircraft about 800 ft lower than previous.
 - To answer the question if we can go back to pre-NextGen procedures? Yes, but it must go through the entire process again, including an environmental assessment. The result to going back to the old process and raise the aircraft, there will be a period of powered flight which will be louder and there will be an additional three miles in the route, resulting in a reduction in efficiency.

- Continuous Descent Approaches (CDA) often don't work at high density airports in the United States is because of the need for efficiency and to land aircraft closer together. In good weather, we strive to land aircraft with 2.5 miles of separation.
- Cagle: growth creates demand to be more efficient.
- Cox: can there be multiple paths southbound to create dispersal.
 - Clark – can be done, but not safely. Variance in past was due to controller variability. This variability creates challenges in system so using RNAV is improvement.
- London Heathrow uses holding stacks outside of airport and then has them use a CDA to land. London also has very strict rules on how many aircraft can land, using alternating runways, and imposing fines.
- John asked if possible to use different 'rails' on different days to disperse the traffic over different areas.
 - Clark: I have heard of airports doing this for departures but not for arrivals. Also anticipate this could be challenging for controller performance and training
- Cox: appreciate the education provided. From a public policy standpoint, I think the people who are in the areas that are affected now were owed this explanation before the changes were implemented. If everything is going to have a safety or efficiency roadblock or is going to take a long time to implement, then why are we sitting here?
 - Cameron: we have been constituted for less than six months and I don't think our lack of solutions is a failure. There is a lot of education needed before we can determine whether or not there are solutions available. I don't think there is a magic wand, but I am driving to solutions.
 - Miley: we are a community where the majority of flights are not a benefit to the community, but a benefit to American Airlines. They are profiting on these changes versus the people who live here.
 - Nomellini: quality of life for a substantial part of the community is suffering because of efficiency. Who decided efficiency is the right metric?
 - Petruska: think we should have an open mind for solutions and acknowledge there will need to be trade-offs. Let's put motions together and see what can be done. Encourage the group to be optimistic.
- Clark: I want to clarify my role. Any recommendation you bring, I will bring you an answer. Safety will also be a factor and I will also share the impact to efficiency. I can either have FAA to do a full evaluation or I can provide you an opinion based on my experience if the ACR is spinning its wheels on a particular solution.

Ultimately, it will be up to the ACR to sort out the impacts of any changes and address those impacts with stakeholders.

- Cox: does the local FAA have ideas they can recommend to us? We are flying blind.
 - Clark: I personally experience noise at my home. If I had an idea, I would bring it. In my experience, when we have attempted to solve one area's concern, we cause a problem in another area. This is why we convened the ACR.
 - Hair: This is one of the reasons we are bringing on a consultant to help with idea generation.
- Cameron: would like to consider the use of committees that would meet and focus on specific areas to develop a familiarity of that area. I would also like ACR to have individuals reach out to other ACR's around the country to establish lines of communication and learn from others.
- Cagle: I think the technical expertise will help in identifying solutions. Recognize ACR cannot vote, but if we can get some feedback on whether ACR wants Airport staff to pursue this, we will continue.
 - General consensus was to continue with solicitation process.
- Miley: suggest we revisit the idea of whether call-ins count towards quorum.
 - Cameron: can discuss at January meeting when we have a quorum.
- Public Forum: topic tabled to future meeting when there is a quorum.
- Responding to Participant Inquiries:
 - Hair: CLT's website has a form where resident can submit a form and question which is then forwarded to representatives of that area. Each time a form is generated, staff sends these forms to all representatives so they can respond as they see fit. One inquiry form submitted in last 30 days. Variability in the process due to how many representatives there are in specific geographic areas.
 - Currently no defined process to respond to these.
 - Wright: don't feel I have enough information to respond. I am also concerned about corresponding via my personal email.
 - Cameron: given the limited number of inquiries, I think the entire ACR should see the inquiries and generate the response.
 - Cagle: can print each month or email them. Would consider the time in responding if they are only reviewed monthly
 - Cameron: would like to see all. In the meantime, would like to have staff respond to let them know.
 - Cagle: we can generate an automated response

- Hair: We are creating a tracking system and database to track the requests we are receiving as well as formalizing the communication of these requests to the FAA.
- Cox: Recommend CLT staff review the letter people receive when they submit a noise complaint.
 - Cagle: a first-time complainant will receive a custom letter but complaints that follow are usually answered with an automatic reply that the complaint was received.
- Petruska: our information is on the site.
 - Hair: to clarify, your name and the area you represent are on the site. Your personal information is also part of public record.
- Gardon: I am happy to act as a middleman while we await professional facilitation.
- Wright: In my neighborhood, we have new people moving in. I would be interested in seeing the same data and plots that Mark presented for all of our addresses.
- Complaint Data Being Added to the Agenda:
 - Cameron: working to sort out the best format for complaint and request data. Also looking to track the action items that we have voted on so we can track will be a benefit.
 - Petruska: would like to fortify our meeting minutes and requests.
 - Gardon: I receive both official requests (through ACR meetings) and informal requests. I am creating a form you can complete in person or via email. I will then create a tracking
 - Wright: are we going to fill the empty seats?
 - Hair: I have been working to fill the three vacant seats since October. I continue to work on this and hope to fill the seats in the upcoming months.
 - Cameron: we can also consider redefining the quorum.
- Meeting ended at 8:16 pm.