

METROPOLITAN AIRPORTS COMMISSION
ST. PAUL DOWNTOWN AIRPORT ADVISORY COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, 10 June 2008, 4:00pm
St. Paul Airport

Call to Order

A meeting of the Downtown Airport Advisory Council (DAAC), having been duly called, was held Tuesday, 10 June 2008, in the Administration Building of the St. Paul Downtown Airport. Chair Jacob Dorer called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. The following were in attendance:

Representatives: G. Berquist, G. Burke, F. Clayton, J. Dorer, J. Englin, M. Grealish, B. Hagerty, J. Jungwirth, J. Kummer, L. Lencowski, J. Miersch, T. Netzell, C. Peterson, , K. Schmaltz

Staff: G. Fries, C. Leqve, P. Mosites

Others: A. Hunt – City of St. Paul; M. Howard - FAA

Excused Absence: P. Adamson; D. Lessard; G. Weibel

1. Approval of the 10 June 2008 Meeting Agenda

IT WAS MOVED BY REPRESENTATIVE CLAYTON AND SECONDED BY REPRESENTATIVE JUNGWIRTH TO APPROVE THE AGENDA FOR THE 10 JUNE 2008 MEETING.

THE MOTION CARRIED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE.

2. Approval of the 11 March 2008 Meeting Minutes

IT WAS MOVED BY REPRESENTATIVE BERQUIST AND SECONDED BY REPRESENTATIVE KUMMER TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE 11 MARCH 2008 MEETING.

THE MOTION CARRIED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE.

3. Review Updated STP Noise Abatement Plan

Scott Skramstad, Technical Advisor, reminded the group that, at the 11 March 2008 Council meeting members were provided copies of the proposed updates to the St. Paul Downtown Airport (STP) Noise Abatement Plan. He reminded the group that the intent of the Plan is to incorporate the elements of the 19 June 2006 Supplemental Conditions of Agreement reached by the City of St. Paul and the Metropolitan Airports Commission; to incorporate procedures that could be implemented in a safe and efficient manner while achieving a positive noise reduction benefit for communities around STP; to identify noise-sensitive areas around STP and maximize over flight of compatible land use areas; and to make the Plan as understandable as possible to both aviation and non-aviation individuals. **Skramstad** noted that suggestions were made at the 11 March meeting for the following to be included in the Plan:

- Mention of bird hazards over the River Valley for departures off of Runways 14 and 13
- Explanation of the requirements for maintaining nighttime flight currency

- Explanation of how runway headings are determined
- STP ATC hours of operation
- Aerial representation of STP
- Diagram laying out the details and intricacies of STP and Minneapolis-St. Paul International (MSP) airspace

Skramstad pointed out that the first five points were included in the updated Plan in a manner understandable to both aviation and non-aviation individuals. He noted that the diagram of the STP and MSP airspace is not included in the Plan. **Skramstad** said he met with air traffic controllers, who provided six, highly-technical points regarding the intricacies of the airspace. He noted that creating a diagram that incorporates those points would be extremely technical and difficult to achieve in a manner that would be understandable by non-aviation individuals. **Skramstad** noted he had a list of the six points and would be happy to meet with any Council members who are interested in reviewing them, or to arrange a meeting with air traffic controllers for further explanation. In addition, he reminded members that Diane Langer, FAA STP Air Traffic Control, had invited members to tour the control tower at STP. **Skramstad** encouraged members to visit the tower as doing so would provide, in his opinion, an understanding of the considerations that STP traffic controllers must make in regard to MSP airspace.

Skramstad reminded the Council that he had requested, at the 11 March meeting, members take the proposed Plan updates back to their constituencies for review and feedback prior to today's meeting. He noted that he received one request to look into including possible noise abatement arrival procedures similar to those used by the National Guard when it approaches STP from the north or the south. **Skramstad** said he met with the MAC Director of Environment, who is also an Air National Guard helicopter pilot and a fixed-wing aircraft pilot, to discuss possible arrival procedures. Next, he met with St. Paul Airport Air Traffic Control to further discuss the possible procedures. As a result, section 3.4 of the Noise Abatement Plan now states that, during non-tower hours, aircraft flying under VFR should follow the below detailed procedures while approaching to land at STP on Runway 14 or Runway 32 to minimize impact on the surrounding community. **Skramstad** noted that utilizing these runways during non-tower hours minimizes the possibilities of overflying nearby residential areas. In addition, **Skramstad** pointed out that section 3.4.1 of the Plan states that, during non-tower hours, aircraft landing on Runway 14 should follow the preferred noise abatement arrival routes (Interstate 35E or Mississippi River) and avoid noise sensitive residential areas. **Skramstad** noted that figures are included in the Plan showing those routes, the VFR reporting points and the noise-sensitive areas around the airport. **Skramstad** pointed out that section 3.4.2 of the Plan states that, during non-tower hours, aircraft landing on Runway 32 should follow the preferred noise abatement routes (Mississippi River/Downwind over Highway 61) and avoid noise sensitive residential areas.

Skramstad noted that discussions with the FAA and air traffic controllers clarified that the arrival procedures can only be flown under Visual Flight Rules (VFR) because a pilot will need to look out of the cockpit window for visual reference, and because aircraft flying under IFR will need to use the Instrument Landing System and be separated from other aircraft by air traffic control. In addition, the arrival procedures can only be used during non-tower hours because:

- Standard Operating Procedures and standard traffic patterns are used in aviation to enhance safety of flight
- Defined legs of the traffic pattern allow ATC the ability to safely sequence and separate traffic. The pattern is a vital way to separate traffic and keep things orderly.
- During tower hours helicopters can be kept separate from the fixed-wing flow of traffic because of their maneuverability and operational flexibility; most airports (including STP) will have separate approaches/patterns for helicopters to account for low airspeeds

Skramstad clarified that the approach procedures being discussed are for use only by fixed-wing aircraft during non-tower hours and under Visual Flight Rules.

Representative Berquist, District 3 Planning Council – West Side Citizens Organization, said it seems to him that air traffic control at the St. Paul Downtown Airport has a great degree of latitude and choice in determining where it will direct aircraft, and asked for clarification as to whether or not the tower can choose to default to its standard operating procedures as opposed to what some neighborhoods surrounding the airport would prefer. He noted he does not see a lot of aircraft coming in to the airport and wondered why the controllers can't make sure aircraft fly routes that minimize impacts to surrounding communities. **Skramstad** replied that safety considerations are the first and foremost concern of air traffic control, and that deviating from standard operating procedures at STP, which has overlapping air space with the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport and reliever airports, introduces risk to safety. **Mike Howard, FAA**, stated that air traffic controllers must abide by FAA standard operating procedures and are not permitted to make up procedures on an airport-by-airport basis. **Representative Dorer, District 4 Community Council – Dayton's Bluff**, asked for clarification as to whether or not the FAA operates under its own jurisdiction and that the Downtown Airport Advisory Council (DAAC) cannot impact its policies. **Skramstad** said it is correct the Council cannot change FAA regulations, and noted that any attempts to modify standard operating procedures are heavily scrutinized by the FAA. **Berquist** suggested that language be included in the Plan that makes it clear that the outlined procedures must be conducted in the manner noted because of the FAA and that the DAAC has no power to change that, and stated that it will otherwise appear to communities that the procedures are being implemented simply because the Metropolitan Airports Commission is taking the easy way out. **Skramstad** cautioned against including such language, noting that, while neither the DAAC nor the MAC can change FAA regulations, the group can have a positive impact on noise-related issues at the airport by suggesting procedures for the FAA to consider. **Representative Englin, West St. Paul**, noted it has not been his experience with the FAA that it does not care about communities surrounding airports, and suggested that the community representatives may be doing their communities a disservice by portraying the FAA as implementing regulations without any regard to such communities. **Englin** noted that it is important not to discount the fact that STP is impacted by air traffic from other airports such as South St. Paul (whose traffic transitions to the north through STP's airspace) Lake Elmo (whose traffic transitions through the northern edge of STP's airspace) and Anoka County Blaine, as well as air traffic from two hospitals close to STP. He stated it is important to inform community residents that it is not just air traffic in to and out of STP that must be considered by the FAA when managing the airspace. **Englin** noted that he would be happy to join community representatives in meeting with residents to explain the impacts to STP's airspace as they relate to the Noise Abatement Plan. **Representative Clayton, District 17 – CapitolRiver Council**, asked if there is a significant deviation between flight tracks during tower hours and flight tracks during non-tower hours that would explain why there are more noise complaints during certain times. Skramstad noted that such a differentiation is, ideally, what will arise from implementation and use of the Plan. He reminded Council members that it is not always possible to implement noise abatement procedures.

Representative Kummer, 3M Aviation, asked if there is an abatement-related reason why Runway 13/31 is the primary lit runway at night. **Howard** pointed out that Runway 14/32 is pilot-controlled and on a timer, meaning that the lights dim when it is not in use but that pilots can activate the lights if they need to use the runway. He stated that Runway 13/31 is lit consistently, and estimated that 95% of pilots choose to use Runway 14/32 because it is the longest runway at the airport. **Skramstad** added that Runway 14/32 is the preferred runway during non-tower hours for noise abatement purposes as well. **Dorer** asked if there would be any benefit to having the lighting for Runway 13/31 be timed and pilot-controlled. **Greg Fries, MAC**, noted that the MAC has looked into switching that runway lighting but that doing so is, at this time, cost-prohibitive. **Dorer** asked if pilot-controlled lighting is considered better than constant lighting. **Fries** replied

that it is, from a utilities usage perspective. **Representative Hagerty, H/C Inc**, asked if it was true that all aircraft operating at STP have the ability to implement the pilot-controlled lighting on Runway 14/32, thereby making it their preferred nighttime runway. **Fries** replied that that is true. **Dorer** suggested adding language to the Plan's introduction that would indicate FAA regulations are paramount and take precedence over the voluntary measures outlined in the Plan. **Skramstad** said he would look into adding such language.

Skramstad next pointed out that section 3.6 of the Plan, dealing with the noise abatement departure procedure for Runways 14 and 13, has been updated to include language regarding the bird hazard on, and in the vicinity of, the airport, particularly over the river valley. He also pointed out that section 3.7.2 has been updated to indicate that operations may be conducted between 10:00pm and 12:00am for the purposes of meeting nighttime flight currency requirements. **Skramstad** stated that Appendix A has been added to the Plan, showing aircraft headings and runway assignments and including a note to pilots to verify correct compass heading prior to departure, and listing STP's air traffic control tower hours of operation. He also pointed out that Appendices B and C have been added to the Plan, showing the noise abatement departure and arrival procedures in an aerial form.

Skramstad indicated his desire to receive endorsement for the Plan from the Council so that he can begin disseminating the Plan to pilots utilizing STP. **Dorer** asked if the Plan must go to the City of St. Paul for review prior to or after endorsement by the Council. **Skramstad** said that it did not need to be reviewed by the city, noting that the Supplemental Conditions of Agreement reached by the MAC and the City of St. Paul outline that the MAC would collaborate and consult with communities around the airport, as represented on the DAAC. **Dorer** asked how the pilot education portion of the Conditions would be achieved. **Skramstad** said that, based on his experience with similar efforts at other MAC reliever airports, he would: post the endorsed Plan on the MAC's website; send a copy of the Plan to all tenants located at STP; conduct an annual pilot briefing to discuss elements of the Plan, the importance of implementing noise abatement procedures and noise sensitivity in communities surrounding the airport; publish information about the Plan in the Airport Facility Directory, state that the airport is located in a noise-sensitive area and list his direct phone number in the Airport Facility Directory for use by pilots; and develop a brochure regarding the noise abatement procedures that could be distributed at pilot centers or fixed-base operators at STP for use by pilots not based at STP. **Hagerty** and **Kummer** noted that the Plan would be distributed to their respective flight centers and discussed with their pilots.

Berquist stated that he feels the Plan lacks specificity and would like to see a graphic included that shows where each flight track would overfly each community, so as to indicate to residents where aircraft-related noise would be located. **Skramstad** reminded the group that the intent of the Plan is to indicate where aircraft should be flying, but noted that myriad variables such as wind speed, other air traffic, etc. can have an impact on exactly where they end up. He added that including flight tracks is outside the scope of the Plan, but that he would be willing to put together flight track information for Council members to use in communicating with their constituencies. **Dorer** asked if flight track maps are available on-line. **Skramstad** said that he posts the noise complaint maps on line, but that he can post flight track maps as well and referred to the flight track map that was distributed to Council members prior to the meeting. He clarified the flight tracks depicted would be for STP operations – i.e., those that arrive into or depart out of the airport – only. **Representative Jungwirth, District 6 Planning Council – North End**, asked how many arrivals and departures are represented on the map **Skramstad** distributed. **Skramstad** said he would report the exact number back to the Council via e-mail after the meeting. **Dorer** asked if it would be possible to receive two different maps, one showing flight tracks during STP tower hours and one showing flight tracks during non-tower hours. **Berquist** asked if data for the maps could be “smoothed out” so that the maps showed tracks as percentages of the total number of tracks. **Skramstad** stated that the MAC is currently working on long-term plans for the reliever airports and, as part of that planning, is using modeling to develop model flight tracks. He noted that the planning process will take several months, but that he would look into sharing the

flight track models when they become available. He added that the planning process will result in a base case noise contour and a 25-year forecast noise contour for STP and that he would look into sharing those models as well.

Berquist stated that he believes the Plan should be vetted by the community councils represented at the Council before the Council endorses it. **Skramstad** stated that the FAA has reviewed the Plan and that MAC employees with a combined 35 years' experience in aviation and noise-related issues, as well as pilots and other operators represented at the Council, have provided expertise in working on the Plan. He noted that procedures outlined in the Plan have been developed with safe and efficient operation of the airport and positive noise-reduction benefits as the ultimate goals. **Representative Miersch, District 1 Community Council – Battle Creek**, noted that he has met with his community council after each Downtown Airport Advisory Council meeting and conveyed to them the group's efforts. He stated he has not received any negative feedback about the direction the Council has taken regarding the Plan. He added that he does not see any benefit in delaying Skramstad's ability to begin working with STP operators to implement elements of the Plan. **Dorer** noted that it is summer and more residents are outside and have their windows open and that, therefore, moving forward with the Plan now may provide some noise-reduction benefit sooner rather than later. In addition, he stated that the types of changes his community council would like to see – e.g., restrictions on nighttime operations – cannot be included in the Plan, making the Plan as it stands the best possible product attainable by the Council.

IT WAS MOVED BY REPRESENTATIVE HAGERTY AND SECONDED BY REPRESENTATIVE KUMMER TO ENDORSE THE DOWNTOWN ST PAUL AIRPORT NOISE ABATEMENT PLAN AS PRESENTED AT TODAY'S MEETING.

The motion passed by majority vote.

IT WAS MOVED BY REPRESENTATIVE HUNT AND SECONDED BY REPRESENTATIVE CLAYTON TO ENDORSE SKRAMSTAD MOVING FORWARD WITH THE FIVE (5) COMMUNICATION EFFORTS OUTLINED REGARDING THE PLAN, THOSE BEING:

- **POSTING THE PLAN ON THE WWW.MACNOISE.COM WEBSITE;**
- **PROVIDING A COPY OF THE PLAN TO ALL STP TENANTS;**
- **CONDUCTING ANNUAL PILOT BRIEFINGS;**
- **PUBLISHING PLAN INFORMATION IN THE AIRPORT FACILITY DIRECTORY; AND**
- **DEVELOPING A BROCHURE FOR DISSEMINATION TO PILOTS AND FIXED-BASE OPERATORS AT STP**

The motion passed by majority vote.

IT WAS MOVED BY REPRESENTATIVE HUNT AND SECONDED BY REPRESENTATIVE CLAYTON TO HAVE SKRAMSTAD REPORT TO THE COUNCIL ON THE STATUS OF THE COMMUNICATION EFFORTS, AND TO MEET WITH COMMUNITY COUNCILS AS REQUESTED TO ASSIST IN COMMUNICATING INFORMATION ABOUT THE PLAN TO COMMUNITIES AROUND THE AIRPORT.

The motion passed by majority vote.

4. Noise Monitoring Study Update

Scott Skramstad, Technical Advisor, reminded Council members that at the previous Council meeting he indicated he would have data from the noise monitoring study available at today's meeting. He noted that six (6) monitors were sited in each district council from 7-13 May, but that the monitor located in District 6 malfunctioned such that all the data it recorded were lost. He stated that that particular monitor was sent to the manufacturer for a memory upgrade in anticipation of its use in the monitoring study, but that the upgrade did not function properly, leading to memory and data loss. **Skramstad** pointed out that he queried the Council's community representatives as to whether or not they would like to have monitoring conducted again in District 6 only or in all six districts. He stated the consensus was to re-deploy the monitors in all six districts and re-conduct the monitoring. **Skramstad** said all six monitors were re-deployed on 9 June 2008 and that a report of the study will be provided at the next Council meeting.

Skramstad noted that data from the five (5) monitors that did not malfunction in the initial monitoring are available if Council members would like to see them. **Representative Jungwirth, District 6 Planning Council – North End**, conveyed that a member of his district council would like to know if the air traffic control towers at STP or at Minneapolis-St. Paul International are aware of when the noise monitors are deployed. **Skramstad** said he did not consult with either tower before the monitors were deployed, and noted that information about the deployment was disseminated to Council members. **Skramstad** clarified that the monitors cannot differentiate between an aircraft and a loud truck operating near the monitor. He noted that a monitor stores a noise event sustained for a certain length of time, and that the data from that event are correlated with radar flight track data for aircraft to determine whether or not the event was generated by an aircraft.

5. STP Noise Complaints

Scott Skramstad, Technical Advisor, noted that the noise complaint map distributed to the group reflects three months' worth of data – March-May 2008 – as opposed to two months' worth as previous maps have shown. There were 78 total complaints received from 13 complainants for this time period. Of the 78, twenty-five were filed via the Internet. Twenty-six complaints were received in March, 34 in April and 18 in May. **Skramstad** noted this is slightly higher than in previous years, noting that 115 total complaints have been received from 17 complainants in the first 5 months of 2008. He pointed out, however, that 63 (or approximately 55%) of those complaints were registered by one resident. During the same time in 2007 there were 11 complaints received from 4 complainants.

Skramstad noted that an increase in complaints prompts an examination of operations to see if there is a corresponding increase in operations. He noted that, during the first 4 months of 2008, operations at STP are down approximately 14% from the same time period in 2007.

Representative Englin, West St. Paul, noted that the noise ordinance for West St Paul is in effect from 10:00pm to 7:00am. **Representative Burke, South St. Paul**, noted the noise ordinance for South St. Paul is the same. **Representative Hunt, City of St. Paul**, stated she believes St. Paul's noise ordinance is the same. **Englin** pointed out that 60 of the 78 complaints received during the March-May 2008 timeframe occurred during hours that are not covered by the noise ordinances in these three cities. **Representative Dorer, District 4 Community Council – Dayton's Bluff**, asked if the time noted on a noise complaint is the time an event occurred or the time when the complaint was received. **Skramstad** stated it is either the time a complainant says an event occurred, or it is the time stamp on the complaint (whether received via the

Internet or phone) if the complainant does not indicate an event time. **Representative Peterson, District 5 community Council – Payne-Phalen**, noted that she works during the day and sleeps during the night and said that she would not necessarily get up in the middle of the night to file a complaint. **Englin** pointed out that, even if she were to file the complaint during the day, she could still note the time of day the noise event occurred. **Skramstad** noted the complaint information received is useful, but he added that it can be taken with a grain of salt given that external factors may have an impact on when and if residents register complaints. **Skramstad** clarified that, on the noise complaint map information distributed, each complaint listed under a complainant ID on the map correlates to the complainant ID in the complaint summary.

6. **Republican National Convention Impacts on Airport Operations**

Scott Skramstad, Technical Advisor, noted he has spoken with Mike Howard, Air Traffic Control Tower Manager at STP, who indicated information related to the Republican National Convention and its impact on operations at the airport would come from the Flight Standards District Office. **Howard** noted that that information has not yet been received but that he will inform Skramstad when it is. **Greg Fries, MAC**, noted a meeting was held with the Secret Service approximately two months ago and, at that time, the Secret Service indicated they were still in the process of formulating a plan regarding operations at the airport during the convention. He noted that initial thoughts were that the airport would remain open for normal operations except during times when the President and Vice-president are in the area, although that is subject to change. **Fries** stated there would be another meeting later in June between the Secret Service and the MAC at which time more specific information should be available and that he would share any information he could with Skramstad.

7. **Next Meeting Date**

Scott Skramstad, Technical Advisor, noted that Council members' schedules may be impacted by the Republican National Convention, which will take place 1-4 September 2008, and queried the group as to when it should next meet.

IT WAS MOVED BY REPRESENTATIVE PETERSON AND SECONDED BY REPRESENTATIVE HAGERTY TO SET THE NEXT MEETING OF THE DOWNTOWN AIRPORT ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR TUESDAY, 16 SEPTEMBER 2008.

The motion passed by unanimous vote.

The next meeting of the Downtown Airport Advisory Council is scheduled for 4:00pm, Tuesday, 16 September 2008.

The meeting adjourned at 5:18pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Christene Sirois, Recording Secretary
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