



Memorandum

Memorandum No: 23-159

Date: December 18, 2023

To: Honorable Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Commissioners

From: Greg Chavarria, City Manager 
Greg Chavarria (Dec 18, 2023 10:42 EST)

Re: Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport – Noise Compatibility Program

The Airport has continually conducted detailed reviews of the implementation of the Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport (FXE) Noise Abatement Program measures to address citizens' concerns related to aircraft noise and the City's efforts to implement reasonable noise abatement procedures effectively. This includes monitoring, evaluation, education, and follow-up.

FXE operates an Aircraft Noise Reporting Line that is available 24 hours a day for neighbors to report excessively loud aircraft. The Airport also offers an online Aircraft Noise Reporting Form as an alternative to calling to report aircraft noise. Residents are expected to report the exact date and time of the noise event, along with their name, address, and phone number. This information allows FXE staff to quickly identify issues and follow up with pilots if the aircraft activity falls within an unsafe operation.

The Airport provides a flight tracking system called WebTrak, which provides near real-time and historical flight information and noise levels for aircraft operating near FXE. The web-based system even provides easy access for neighbors to view aircraft operations and noise data. The Noise Compatibility Program (NCP) relies on a partnership between the community, Airport users, and City staff to minimize aircraft noise over neighboring communities.

The NCP measures were developed through extensive public involvement and are approved by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Some of the NCP measures currently implemented by the Airport include the following:

- I-95 Turn - Runway 09 jet departures, heading north or westbound, are instructed to turn left to fly over I-95, 24 hours;
- Nighttime I-95 Turn – All Runway 09 jet departures are instructed to turn left between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m., except for emergency aircraft, weather conditions, or operational requirements;

- Voluntary Runway 27 departures turn right to a heading of 315 degrees after passing N.W. 31 Avenue;
- Voluntary nighttime preferential runway for departures is Runway 27 for all aircraft, wind permitting;
- Voluntary nighttime preferential runway for arrivals is Runway 9 for all aircraft, wind permitting;
- Voluntary restriction of jet aircraft use on Runways 13 and 31.

The overall traffic activity at FXE has experienced a 5% decrease from 2022 to 2023 and is anticipated to either stabilize or increase. Since January 1, 2016, the number of excessively loud noise events generated by jets has dramatically dropped, and the quieter Stage 3 jets now represent 100 percent of the jet activity at the Airport.

The Airport predominantly operates in west-to-east flow (Runway 9) for departing and arriving aircraft traffic. Wind direction determines which runway will be active, and aircraft will take off and land into the wind for safety reasons. The wind helps to slow the aircraft's ground speed on approach and landing, making it easier to control and reduces the landing roll distance. On take-off, the wind helps pilots attain flying speed more quickly, which allows pilots to clear obstacles and attain a higher altitude before flying overpopulated areas.

Recently, the Airport experienced increased noise reports from the Lofts of Palm Aire Village, located near the Airport in the northwest quadrant of Runway 27 departure area. Airport staff have researched the increase in noise complaints and identified a small number of aircraft initiating turns prematurely and deviating from the recommended voluntary departure procedure for Runway 27.

Typically, December through April is considered the busy season for the South Florida region, and air traffic activity is expected to increase during these months. Along with the anticipated increase in air traffic, the Noise Reporting Line tends to receive an increase in noise reports during the same period. Due to the change in wind direction that typically occurs during these months, more aircraft will be arriving and departing (Runway 27) towards the west.

The temporary changes in wind direction cause the flow of air traffic to shift from a predominately west-to-east flow to an east-to-west flow, as aircraft need to operate into the wind for the safety of the flight. With cooler temperatures during the winter and spring months, more residents will be in their yards and have their doors and windows open. The increase in noise reports is partly due to the changes in the weather patterns, with strong winds from the west requiring aircraft to arrive from the east and depart to the west.

Weather forecasters have predicted an El Niño weather pattern is seemingly more possible across the United States, which means Florida may experience higher-than-usual rainfall and more frequent cold fronts during the winter and spring months. In El Niño patterns, the prevailing weather track across the country moves from west to east, bringing more cold fronts and frequent aircraft departures towards the west. As a result of the El Niño weather pattern, the Airport anticipates receiving numerous inquiries and complaints about increased aircraft activity and noise over their neighborhoods.

FXE considers aircraft noise a priority issue, and the Airport is fully engaged in maintaining the NCP to ensure safe aircraft operations and to benefit the surrounding neighborhoods. As part of FXE's proactive approach, the staff will continue to make extensive efforts to contact aircraft operators, Airport businesses, pilots, and the Air Traffic Control Tower, reminding them of the Noise Abatement Program procedures and to be conscientious of the noise-sensitive communities.

If you have any questions, please contact Rufus James, Airport Director, at rjames@fortlauderdale.gov.

c: Anthony G. Fajardo, Assistant City Manager
Susan Grant, Assistant City Manager
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Commission Memo 23-159 Noise Compatibility Program

Final Audit Report

2023-12-18

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