

## MEMORANDUM

To: Belmont Board of Selectmen  
From: Myron Kassaraba, Appointed Representative Logan Community Advisory Committee (LCAC) and Massport Community Advisory Committee (MCAC).  
Date: June 13, 2017  
Subject: Update on Airplane Noise

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### Background:

The Town of Belmont joined the Logan CAC in September of 2013 in response to changes made to flight paths from departures on runway 33L from Logan airport that put many more airplanes over Belmont in concentrated flight paths. This new procedure is known as 33L RNAV SID (standard instrument departure).

A working group (33L Municipal Working Group or 33L MWG) was formed in 2015 with Arlington, Cambridge and Watertown participating with Belmont to advocate for getting the 33L RNAV SID procedure re-examined since it has had significant negative impacts from higher frequency and concentrated flights.

### Current Events:

If you have noticed more planes and noise over the past 4 weeks – you are not imagining things – runway 4R, one of the major arrival runways at Logan has been closed for repaving. This is something done every 10 years or so and requires a complete stripping and reconstruction of the runway surface. With runway 4R closed – the flight volume – that starts to ramp in June with vacation travel – has been redistributed to the other runways including 33L. This has also caused some major delays at Logan that as pushed flights later into the day and past midnight on some days. Combine this with the fact that 33L does not typically get a lot of summer use and that people are out in the nice weather and have their windows open – lead to more complaints. We were told last week that the project was on-schedule for be completed by the end of June when things should get back to a more normal pattern. Residents can continue to register complaints at about aviation-related noise at Boston Logan, by using their [online form](#). First-time users will have to register on the portal before submitting their initial complaint. Residents may also call Massport's Noise Complaint Line at (617) 561-3333. This line is staffed by Massport's Noise Abatement Office from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on business days.

### RNAV Study Update:

As mentioned in my October 2016 update – Massport and the FAA entered into an MOU for an RNAV Study to look at options for dealing with the issues caused by 33L RNAV and other problematical situations caused by RNAV at Logan. This included enlisting the services of MIT's International Center for Air Transportation to explore/investigate alternatives to the concentrated flight paths. A public meeting was held by the Massport/Study Team in Boston in February and was attended by a number of Belmont residents. The initial findings were presented to the Massport CAC Aviation Subcommittee at a meeting held at Logan on May 5<sup>th</sup>. A copy of the presentation can be found here: <http://massportcac.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/RNAV-Study-MIT-Presentation-05-05-2017-with-MP-Introducton.pdf>.

For Belmont residents impacted by the 33L RNAV concentration – there are two possible options being investigated that could provide some relief. The first has to do with finding an optimal speed that could reduce or eliminate airframe noise from the departing planes. The Study Team found that reducing the speed of departing flights from 200-220 mph to 180 mph had a significant beneficial impact on the noise on the ground (based on computer simulation models). This potential remedy – called Delayed Acceleration Climb - was placed in Block 1 for the things that the FAA could implement more easily. The second has to do with re-introducing dispersion to the departure routes. In Charlotte, the FAA was able to introduce something that is called Open SID (standard instrument departure) where rather than following only the current four RNAV paths – departing flights that reached a certain altitude could be vectored more randomly by Air Traffic Control (ATC) based on their destination. This is a Block 2 opportunity that will require more study and discussions with the FAA. Though this process is progressing and shows some real promise – realistically – any possible remedies are likely 2018 events.

#### Massport CAC:

The MCAC has made some significant progress in the past 5 months. We launched the website: <http://massportcac.org/>. At our meeting in March the General Membership approved four motions from an now permanent and active Aviation Subcommittee (that I serve on) that were submitted to Massport regarding:

- Establishing a FlyQuiet program similar to O'Hare or SFO
- Considering implementing noise-based landing fees at Logan
- Encouraging airlines to retrofit their A320's with vortex generators
- Requested a review of compliance with a Record of Decision for some south shore flight paths.

The Executive Committee also approved a recommendation that I authored for establishing an improved community complaint procedure. These are all being worked-on by Massport. As we looked at the MCAC mandate from the Legislature we became sensitive to the fact that the budget allocated to the MCAC (\$250K) was going to be inadequate to fully staff and fulfill our mission. In conjunction with the process of preparing to recruit for an Executive Director – we prepared a request to the Legislature to double our funding to \$500K (comes from Massport). It can be viewed here: <http://massportcac.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Massport-CAC-Petition-of-MA-Legislature-06-12-2017.pdf>. This funding level is more comparable to that received by other similar State Advisory agencies like the MBTA and MWRA Advisory Boards. The Petition with the funding Amendment was submitted to the Speaker and the Transportation Committee on June 13<sup>th</sup>.

#### Logan CAC:

The BLANS (Boston Logan Airport Noise Study) was officially ended by the FAA in April with the issuance of the Final Report:

[http://www.bostonoverflight.com/phase3\\_documents.aspx#finalreport](http://www.bostonoverflight.com/phase3_documents.aspx#finalreport). The Phase 3 effort failed to produce a runway use plan, which is unfortunate since some of the tests showed positive results in reducing repetitive use of runway configurations. The President of the Logan CAC feels that the FAA and Massport did not meet all of their obligations. The Massport CAC has agreed to review the final BLANS reports to assess what if any of the initiatives should be continued. It is unclear if Belmont should continue

to participate in the both CAC's. I am checking with other communities and their representatives to see what the prevailing sentiment is regarding future participation.

BWFS and Citizen Noise Monitoring efforts:

We were able to purchase a small portable noise meter (\$500) to see how it might be used to collect sample noise measurements from various locations in Town. The initial experience is that it is a difficult process to be managed by volunteers and that doing the analysis of the noise measurements is not easy. David Waite of the Boston West Fair Skies (BWFS) citizen's group and I continue to discuss how something like a sampling effort might be best accomplished. BWFS ([www.bostonwestfairskies.org](http://www.bostonwestfairskies.org)) continues to meet every few months and other communities like Medford have held their own meetings as their officials become more engaged in airplane noise issues.

I look forward to discussing this update with you further and answering any questions when we meet. I would like to recognize the continued support of these efforts by Representative Dave Rogers, Senator Will Brownsberger and Congresswoman Clark.

Respectfully submitted,

//Myron Kassaraba