



## **Noise & Annoyance Frequently Asked Questions**

**November 22, 2016**

The Truckee Tahoe Airport District, as guided by the Airport Community Advisory Team, hosted six neighborhood meetings throughout Truckee and Tahoe City this summer. More than 120 people attended the meetings, and the District received a lot of productive questions and input. The following are some of the most common questions we received along with staff's answers to those questions.

### **Q: I don't fly, so why do I pay taxes to the Airport District?**

A: The community established the Truckee Tahoe Airport District as a California Special District in 1958, seeing a community-wide need for a general aviation airport. Today, each property owner pays a tax in the amount of \$28 for every \$100,000 of assessed value. Funds are used for various purposes including the operation of the airport and programs that we hope decrease annoyance and increase community benefits. Without those funds, the community may still have the Airport and the aircraft using it, but be limited on programs that benefit the community. *Find out more about the Airport's finances here.*

### **Q: Why can't you ban jets, close at night, shorten the runway, or otherwise reduce traffic by restricting Airport functions?**

A: The Airport receives significant funding from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and therefore must follow the FAA's rules and regulations – which means not discriminating against users or limiting hours of operation. It is also critical to our region that emergency services such as CareFlight, California Highway Patrol, and firefighting aircraft have continual access to the airfield. Voluntary curfews and limited service times already exist. Cutting fuel services likely would not reduce air traffic, but could reduce revenue used for noise mitigation, potentially shifting more of the financial burden elsewhere, including to tax payers. Revenue from those services ensures airport users pay their share.

### **Q: Is the Airport driving (or contributing to) growth in the Truckee-Tahoe region?**

A: The Airport is not directly driving growth in the Truckee-Tahoe region. The Airport has no marketing plan and does not encourage operational expansion. Airport operation levels are a reflection of the local economy. A 2016 Demand Driver study found that the natural amenities coupled with the national economy – Lake Tahoe, skiing, Bay Area/L.A. prosperity, etc. – are the key factors driving growth in the area. The Airport has created a long-term plan that results in reduced capacity growth in the future through community Master Planning efforts. *Click here to learn more about the Airport Master Plan.*



**Q: Could the Airport be closed to eliminate noise and annoyance?**

A: While we understand the frustration of some community members with noise and annoyance from aircraft, it is important to know that the majority of the community has not expressed that desire. Additionally, many community members depend on the airport as a regional transportation element, just like highways, trains, and roads. Beyond that, many others throughout the community benefit both directly and indirectly from the economic impact the Airport creates and the non-aviation services it brings. *Find out more about community benefits here.*

**Q: Why can't the Airport control when and where aircraft fly in the region?**

A: As it stands today per FAA rules, the Airport has no authority over aircraft once wheels leave the tarmac and take flight. The Airport does encourage voluntary procedures intended to reduce noise and annoyance on the community, but wind, weather, terrain, and other safety factors can overrule those procedures. The Airport District continues to work on a number of noise-reducing initiatives including studying improved flight paths, installation of a temporary seasonal air traffic control tower, and dedicating staff to discuss fly quiet procedures with pilots. *Learn more here.*

**Q: Why is the Airport getting so busy – why is there so much air traffic?**

A: Nationally, research has shown that air traffic is directly correlated with the economy, and Truckee Tahoe Airport gets a lot of traffic from regions like the Bay Area and Southern California. Personal aircraft use is growing nationally, and fractional and membership air services are expanding. The Airport's planned temporary seasonal air traffic control tower would more efficiently direct traffic during busy periods, meaning less time over the community and we hope less annoyance. *Click here to learn more about the tower.*

**Q: Are planes getting bigger?**

A: Not necessarily. As fractional and club membership jet and turboprop services grow, we are seeing more of that size of aircraft at the Truckee Tahoe Airport, as they are popular among visitors and second home owners in the region. The benefit of these aircraft by the district's measurements is that they tend to be more quiet and gain elevation more quickly, creating a smaller impact on neighborhoods located below flight paths. Fractional and membership aircraft also have the benefit of collecting multiple passengers in one plane, rather than each user in his or her own aircraft.



**Q: I call in or report aircraft to the Airport, but it seems like nothing changes.**

A: The Airport District dedicates a lot of staff time to investigating and addressing each and every noise report by listening to or reading each report, following up with the commenter for more details, studying the flight through flight tracking analysis, and contacting the pilot if they didn't follow TTAD voluntary Noise Abatement Procedures. Staff continually strives to improve the noise and annoyance response program. Currently, the District is exploring new flight paths, planning a temporary seasonal air traffic control tower, and has brought on a new Pilot and Passenger Outreach Coordinator. *Find out more about what we're doing here.*

**Q: Why don't pilots fly the Fly Quiet procedures and continue to fly over my house?**

A: Most pilots are adopting our procedures as they learn about them. In many cases when a pilot does not fly the preferred route, it is due to safety concerns such as wind direction or other air traffic in the area. The voluntary procedures also do not supersede existing FAA routes that pilots not familiar with Fly Quiet procedures may use. The Airport is working to develop official FAA routes that work with our community in conjunction with our planned temporary seasonal air traffic control tower to improve safety and annoyance to our community.

**Q: Why don't all pilots flying in and out of Truckee Tahoe Airport know about Fly Quiet procedures?**

A: The Airport strives to educate every pilot about Fly Quiet procedures through aviation magazines, materials at the Airport, materials given to all hangar tenants, the Airport's website, social media, and a Pilot and Passenger Outreach Coordinator who personally contacts as many pilots on the ramp as possible. But ultimately, new pilots use the Airport all the time, and reaching all of them is akin to finding every person planning to drive up Interstate 80 from the Bay Area to Truckee and contacting them. That's why we're working to develop official FAA approved and published routes, as mentioned above.