



# AVIATION ACTIVITIES UPDATE

June 4, 2021

## City Thanks Airlines for Investing in Quieter Technologies

The City of Newport Beach (City) and its Aviation Committee continue to investigate and identify operational changes to help reduce the noise levels of aircraft departing John Wayne Airport (JWA). Some of the most significant noise reductions come from air carriers updating their fleets to newer-generation aircraft, such as the Airbus Neo or the Boeing Max. These newer aircraft have engines that are more fuel efficient, less polluting, and generate about half the amount of noise as previous generation aircraft.

The City continues to advocate for federal incentives to encourage carriers to invest in this new equipment, and we think it's important to recognize carriers when they make these investments. We especially appreciate it when they bring these newer generation to Orange County for their JWA routes. In 2019, the City sent a letter to Delta Airlines applauding its fleet modernization efforts and for flying the A220-100 for its five nonstops from JWA to Salt Lake City. And, last month, the City wrote to [Spirit Airlines](#) and [Frontier Airlines](#) to thank them for their significant investments in noise and pollution reducing technologies and for operating the A320 neo for most of their JWA flights. Spirit Airlines sent a nice [reply](#).

## John Wayne Airport Posts April 2021 Statistics: Air traffic is increasing, but remains below pre-pandemic levels

John Wayne Airport recently posted its monthly passenger count and operations data for [April 2021](#). Commercial air traffic continues to steadily increase as travel restrictions and closures related to the COVID-19 pandemic are gradually scaled back, but commercial operations and passenger counts remained below pre-pandemic levels. The table below includes the monthly statistics for April 2019, April 2020 and April 2021.

	April 2021	April 2020	April 2019
Total Passengers (emplaned and deplaned)	495,592	25,313	899,276
Commercial Operations	5,409	1,646	7,608
Commuter Operations	413	114	396
General Aviation Operations	20,946	11,306	18,850
Military Operations	30	19	68
Total Aircraft Operations	26,798	13,085	26,922

In April 2021, the top three airlines serving JWA, based on passenger count, were Southwest Airlines (201,922), American Airlines (102,403) and Alaska Airlines (66,171).

## **Aviation Groups Continue to Track, Forecast Travel Demand Recovery**

Air traffic continues to increase as the country slowly emerges from the COVID-19-related restrictions and closures, as evidenced by the monthly statistics reported by JWA. Industry groups continue to closely track travel demand and cautiously forecast as to when they expect travel to return to pre-pandemic, 2019 levels. Two key factors influencing the rate of rebound are business and international travel.

In a June 4 update titled, [Tracking the Impacts of COVID-19](#), Airlines for America (A4A) notes that while airline bookings are improving, the demand for corporate and long-haul, international travel is lagging. This is keeping air carrier revenues well below their 2019 levels and causing industry cash burn (the rate of negative cash flow) to continue. A4A's presentation indicates that a return to 2019 passenger volumes is largely dependent on business travel. As to when it expects passenger volumes to reach 2019 levels again, the organization provides an optimistic forecast of 2022 and pessimistic forecast of 2024. The report also notes, however, that air cargo demand reached a historic high last year and continues to rise in 2021.

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) and Tourism Economics recently released a forecast for post-COVID-19 travel demand recovery in a presentation titled, [An Almost Full Recovery of Air Travel in Prospect](#) by Brian Pearce, IATA's Chief Economist. The forecast indicates global passenger numbers are expected to surpass pre-COVID-19 levels in 2023.

## **House Subcommittee Holds Roundtable on ATC Modernization**

Channon Hanna, the City's federal lobbyist, reports that the House Aviation Subcommittee of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee held a roundtable titled ["Final Approach: An Update on ATC Modernization."](#) Witnesses included representatives from the FAA, DOT, NextGen Advisory Committee, Airlines for America, National Air Traffic Controllers Association, and the Air Line Pilots Association. Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton, Co-Chair of the Quiet Skies Caucus, expressed her concerns during the hearing that NextGen has further concentrated aviation flight paths without consideration to the people below those flight paths, explaining that millions still suffer from sleep disruption, acerbation of blood pressure, and economic loss to businesses due to aviation noise. In response to the Congresswoman's question about when there will be relief from aviation noise for these communities, FAA representatives discussed their work on improving community engagement practices with local communities, highlighted the numerous airport roundtables around the country, and noted that FAA regional administrators and ombudsmen are the primary sources of community outreach.

*Please see the story on the City's requested appropriations language on page 4.*

## Aviation Committee News and Activities

### **2021 Priorities & Assignments**

The City's Aviation Committee set an ambitious agenda of 16 priorities to pursue in 2021. The priorities are divided into four focus areas:

1. Airport Operations and Relations
2. Community Outreach / Communication
3. Government Relations
4. Quieter Departures

Each committee member has been assigned to an Ad Hoc committee or to consult with City staff and officials on advancing one of more of the 2021 priorities. Committee members provide reports on any actions made toward achieving their respective priorities at the monthly meetings. The reports are summarized and recorded on a tracking sheet for the Committee's and public's reference. You can view the priorities and progress made year-to-date toward each on the [Aviation Committee's webpage](#).

### **Dashboard Provides Current Facts & Figures**

Each month, the City will update a "dashboard" that highlights key areas of JWA-related interest that the Committee is following and provides current facts and/or figures on each. The subject areas include the number of airlines using the STAYY departure (currently two), the number of airlines employing Noise Abatement Departure Procedure 1 (currently all but Alaska), air carrier compliance with the 1985 Settlement Agreement (100%) and more. You can view the dashboard on the [Aviation Committee's webpage](#).

### **Aviation Committee Welcomes Julie Johnson**

Julie Johnson is now Citizens Against Airport Noise and Pollution's (CAANP's) representative on the Aviation Committee. She replaces former committee member Sue Dvorak, who resigned in April to focus on her new role as an appointed member of the John Wayne Airport Commission. Sue was appointed by Orange County Supervisor Katrina Foley to represent District 2, which includes Newport Beach. Welcome Julie and congratulations Sue!

### **Committee Reviews, Approves Proposed Preferred Departure**

An Ad Hoc Committee is examining noise-reduction strategies to propose for inclusion in the current John Wayne Airport Standard Instrument Departures. The Ad Hoc Committee developed a recommended departure protocol, which the Aviation Committee reviewed and approved at its April meeting. The proposed procedure includes no increased engine thrust from the initial cutback until passing the first waypoint past the coastline. The Ad Hoc, comprised of Committee members Roger Ham, Alan Guenther and Hugh Logan, believe this procedure would result in a discernable noise reduction for those that live or work under the flight corridor. Preliminary feedback from the air carriers has been positive. The proposed

departure will be discussed in detail at an upcoming workshop comprised of representatives of the Airport Working Group, air carriers, and the City, including Aviation Committee Member Jack Stranberg and City Manager Grace Leung.

#### Fly Quiet Program for General Aviation

In late 2020, the Aviation Committee reviewed and approved a list of potential components for a proposed Fly Quiet / Fly Friendly pilot program for General Aviation at John Wayne Airport. Aviation Committee member Sharon Ray has been working and meeting with JWA and County of Orange staff and officials (including former Aviation Committee member and new OC Airport Commissioner Sue Dvorak who is organizing the group's efforts), City staff, and representatives of Clay Lacy and ACI Jet, to discuss what program components can be implemented in the near-term and which components will take more time and funding. All parties agree that pilot education is the starting point and efforts are already underway to design a new general aviation pilot guide and other communication materials.

#### Congresswoman Forwards City's Requested Appropriations Language

At the May 17 meeting, Committee Member Cameron Verdi reported that Congresswoman Michelle Steel included the City's requested language in her list of priorities to the House Appropriations Committee as a part of the FY 2022 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations Bill.

The City's requested language would require the FAA to report to Congress (within 30 days) on actions taken to meet with members of the public, including community groups and local elected officials, beyond meetings or participation in roundtables, and how the FAA will accommodate all local meeting requests. Newport Beach, as well as other communities, believe that the regional ombudsmen have not adequately engaged with the public as required by Section 180 of the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018.

We appreciate that this issue was important enough to Rep. Steel that she included it in her list of appropriations requests. The inclusion of the City's language in the bill will ultimately be determined by the Appropriations Committee.

#### City Officials Meet with County Supervisor Foley

Newport Beach Mayor Brad Avery, City Council Member Diane Dixon, Aviation Committee Member Cameron Verdi, City government relations consultant Cori Takkinen, and City staff met with Orange County Supervisor Katrina Foley via Zoom to discuss Newport Beach projects and issues, including the City's work to mitigate the noise impacts that John Wayne Airport's operations have on our community. Supervisor Foley is well-versed in aviation matters and supportive of the City's efforts. She has assigned a staff member to work on airport-related issues and to attend the City's Aviation Committee meetings.

#### **Next Meeting**

The Aviation Committee will meet via Zoom on Monday, June 21, 2021 at 5 p.m.