

Project Brief: FAA Community Engagement Scorecard (FAACES)



A Community-Based Project to Evaluate FAA Community Engagement Efforts Between 2020-2022

SUMMARY

The FAA has asserted that it has improved its community engagement efforts over the past few years.¹ To determine if these efforts have been adequate and resulted in improvements, from the perspective of local community groups, the Aviation-Impacted Communities Alliance (AICA) developed the project FAA Community Engagement Scorecard (FAACES).

Key elements of the AICA FAACES project:

- Solicit local community groups who are substantially impacted by aviation operations to provide direct input on experiences with FAA community engagement in 2020, 2021, and 2022.
- Develop a “scorecard” that analyzes and summarizes those experiences.
- Publish the findings from the scorecard process in a report that will include recommendations to help the FAA fulfill its commitment to “...give the public an opportunity to be informed, become involved, and have their concerns and views considered as the FAA makes aviation decisions that may affect them”² and its declaration “The FAA recognizes we must adapt our community involvement practices to effectively identify and address community concerns.”³

The AICA will begin the direct input phase of FAACES in January 2023 and expects the report to be available by the end of April 2023.

BACKGROUND

Commercial and General Aviation Impacts

Aircraft noise impacts caused by commercial and general aviation operations continue to be a major problem for vast numbers of people across the country. These impacts have been magnified and exacerbated since the FAA began implementation of a comprehensive redesign and update of the National Airspace System (NAS), known as the Next Generation Air Transportation System, or NextGen. Examples of community impacts include increased flight activity on existing flight paths, very high concentration of air traffic at low altitudes over residential areas, and new flight paths over neighborhoods and communities that had no prior impacts from aircraft operations. Simultaneously, airports serving general aviation have seen volume increases in private jet traffic, helicopter operations, and general aviation flight training. Subsequently, various types of aviation-impacted community groups, social-media groups, advocacy organizations, and advisory committees have formed, some with formalized connections to the FAA and airports, e.g., “roundtables”.

¹[“How Airports Can Work with Their Communities on Noise Abatement Procedures”](#) Panel at Airport Noise and Emissions (ANE) Symposium 2022, Beth White FAA. [Department of Transportation letter to the Congressional Quiet Skies Caucus, June 30, 2022.](#) [FAA Administrator Dickson letter to the Congressional Quiet Skies Caucus, May 10, 2022.](#) [“What is ‘Meaningful’ Community Engagement”](#) Panel at Airport Noise and Emissions (ANE) Symposium 2022, Justin Biassou, FAA.

²FAA Community Involvement Manual, 2016, <https://www.faa.gov/sites/faa.gov/files/2021-11/FAA-Report-on-Community-Involvement-Manual-and-Plan-9.20.16.pdf>

³Ibid.

FAA Community Engagement

Over the last few years, the FAA has made efforts to improve its community engagement strategy by implementing tools and programs to address community engagement concerns.

In a letter to Congress dated September 20, 2016, the FAA reaffirmed its commitment to community involvement and published the FAA Community Involvement Plan and Manual.

- “The FAA is committed to informing and involving the public and to giving meaningful consideration to community concerns,” FAA Community Involvement Plan, 2016.⁴
- “...the FAA’s commitment to give the public an opportunity to be informed, become involved, and have their concerns and views considered as the FAA makes aviation decisions that might affect them,” FAA Community Involvement Manual, 2016.⁵

Local community groups, as defined herein, are organized groups of residents who are typically not elected officials, do not belong to airport roundtables recognized by the FAA, are not affiliated with an airport, and are directly and substantially affected by aircraft noise (substantially affected does not mean “significantly impacted” as interpreted by FAA to be DNL 65 dB).

AVIATION-IMPACTED COMMUNITIES ALLIANCE (AICA)

The Aviation-Impacted Communities Alliance (AICA) was formed in 2020 to help protect communities from harmful levels of aviation noise and emissions. The national group of more than 60 participating community groups, develops and implements selective projects to carry out its mission. For more information about the AICA, visit: <https://aviationimpactedcommunities.org>

⁴FAA Community Involvement Plan, 2016, https://www.faa.gov/air_traffic/community_engagement/media/CIP.pdf

⁵FAA Community Involvement Manual, 2016, <https://www.faa.gov/sites/faa.gov/files/2021-11/FAA-Report-on-Community-Involvement-Manual-and-Plan-9.20.16.pdf>