Comments on the FAA Aviation Noise Complaint and Inquiry Response (ANCIR) Portal

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The Aviation-Impacted Communities Alliance (AICA) appreciates the opportunity to submit these comments on the FAA's Aviation Noise Complaint and Inquiry Response (ANCIR) Portal. AICA is a bipartisan coalition of local, regional, and national organizations representing aviation-impacted communities across the United States. AICA advocates for aviation policy that reflects the lived experience of affected communities, reduces harmful noise and health impacts, and promotes the safe and accountable management of the National Airspace System. These comments are supported by 76 organizations with direct lived experience of aircraft noise impacts.

As the FAA undertakes its Noise Policy Review and evaluates how aviation noise metrics and engagement practices should evolve, the analytical use of community-derived information, including data collected through the ANCIR Portal, has become increasingly consequential.

What's the Point of the FAA Noise Portal?

In its current form, the ANCIR Portal functions primarily as a centralized complaint intake and reporting mechanism rather than as an analytical tool that informs operational review, mitigation discussions, or aviation noise policy evaluation.

Absent analysis of ANCIR data linked to operational and noise exposure conditions and transparently reported to the public, the FAA cannot substantiate claims that the portal informs operational decisions, mitigation, or noise policy or that it functions as a meaningful community engagement mechanism.

Analysis of the ANCIR Portal identifies three systemic gaps in the design and operation of the system:

- **The portal does not function as a meaningful community engagement mechanism as characterized by the FAA.** FAA materials describe the ANCIR Portal as a tool that "streamlines the process, allowing us to provide a comprehensive and timely response to each submission," with a commitment that "extends beyond merely acknowledging complaints" and is intended to "foster transparency and understanding." In practice, the portal functions primarily as a complaint intake mechanism. Responses to complainants are largely informational, providing general explanations of aviation operations or existing policies rather than examining the reported aircraft activity. The FAA states that the ANCIR Portal allows members of the public to submit "questions, comments, or concerns," yet the submission form does not provide a mechanism to ask questions or engage in dialogue. FAA responses often refer complainants to airport operators or other resources and do not explain how concerns are evaluated or what actions may result. As a result, ANCIR response communications do not provide situation-specific information on

relevant FAA authorities, how concerns are evaluated, or how such information may inform operational review, coordination with airport operators and air traffic control, or broader policy evaluation.

- **Complaint information collected through the portal is not analyzed in its operational or noise exposure context.** FAA reporting on the ANCIR Portal primarily summarizes statistics about complaint submissions. However, the reporting does not analyze complaints in relation to the aviation operational conditions affecting the complainant's location, such as DNL contour placement or N-Above noise event exposure. FAA documentation describes how repeat submissions may be categorized or consolidated for reporting purposes but does not explain how they are evaluated as indicators of recurring aircraft operations affecting specific locations or communities. The U.S. Government Accountability Office has observed that aviation noise complaints frequently become concentrated among a smaller number of affected residents, reflecting repeated noise exposure at specific locations rather than isolated events.

- **The portal is an underutilized source of community evidence for aviation noise analysis and action.** The FAA states that ANCIR data are used to identify "trends, patterns, and potential areas of concern" and to "explore avenues to address them." However, the FAA does not demonstrate how ANCIR data are used to inform operational responses, noise mitigation actions, or aviation noise policy evaluation. This includes the FAA Noise Policy Review of whether DNL remains the appropriate metric. Without demonstrated analytical use and public reporting of results, ANCIR data do not function as a source of evidence for decision-making. Only where ANCIR data are analyzed in relation to operational conditions and noise exposure, and transparently reported through ANCIR outputs, can the FAA reasonably state that such data inform operational review, mitigation, or aviation noise policy evaluation or that the portal functions as a meaningful community engagement mechanism. Absent such analysis and public reporting, such statements are not supported.

This assessment is corroborated by a survey of AICA member organizations in which 81 percent of respondents indicated that the FAA Noise Portal does not improve community engagement.

These limitations are particularly significant in the context of the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024, including the Noise Policy Review (Sec. 187), the Aviation Noise Advisory Committee (Sec. 792), and community engagement objectives (Sec. 793), all of which should benefit from analysis of community-derived information. In its current form, the ANCIR Portal does not support these efforts, as complaint information is not analyzed in a way that can inform these processes.

The following targeted improvements address identified gaps and support meaningful community engagement:

- Reform ANCIR Portal responses to provide meaningful operational and noise exposure context and evaluate reported concerns, and identify the actions the FAA can or will take in response.

- Modify the ANCIR Portal complaint structure so that repeated submissions are evaluated as indicators of recurring aircraft noise exposure affecting specific locations, rather than being consolidated primarily for reporting purposes.

- Integrate airport-level complaint data with ANCIR reporting and revise FAA restrictions on third-party submissions to allow complaint data to be evaluated in relation to airport operations.

- Connect ANCIR complaint locations to DNL contours and N-Above exposure characterization in summary reporting to better understand how reported concerns correspond to actual noise exposure conditions and current policy metrics and thresholds.

- Conduct a systematic survey of ANCIR Portal users to evaluate engagement effectiveness and identify improvements to the complaint and response process.

- Expand ANCIR summary reporting to include analysis that evaluates complaint patterns in coordination with airport operators and air traffic control, rather than reporting only statistics describing complaint submissions, including analysis linked to operational conditions and noise exposure and the public reporting of those results through ANCIR outputs.

- Ensure ANCIR complaint data, once analyzed under the improvements described above, are incorporated into current and future aviation noise policy evaluation processes and public reporting on aviation noise impacts.

- Ensure ANCIR complaint data, once analyzed under the improvements described above, are used to inform the FAA Noise Policy Review.

Many of these recommendations can be implemented through refinements to existing response protocols, reporting practices, and the integration of operational and noise modeling datasets already maintained by the FAA. By enhancing the analytical use of ANCIR data, public confidence would be strengthened by demonstrating that community-reported information meaningfully contributes to FAA operational insight, aviation noise policy evaluation, and advisory processes.

AICA Requested Action

The AICA respectfully requests that the FAA implement the targeted improvements to the ANCIR Portal, as outlined above, so that it can (1) function as a credible source of documented community noise impacts reflecting lived experience, and (2) fulfill its intended role as a transparent community engagement tool, while also supporting operational analysis, feasible noise mitigation action, and aviation noise policy evaluation.

Submitted by,

Darlene Yaplee
President and Co-Founder
Aviation-Impacted Communities Alliance (AICA)

Supporting Organizations

The following organizations support the AICA comments submitted regarding the ANCIR Portal:

National Organizations

AiREFORM.com
Aviation-Impacted Communities Alliance (AICA)
Citizens for Quiet Skies
Quiet Communities
Sky Justice National Network
Stop the Chop NYNJ

State and Local Organizations

Advocates for Viable Airport Solutions, CA
Airport Concerned Citizens (ACC) of Georgetown, TX
Airport Impact Relief, Inc. (AIR, Inc.), MA
Alliance for a Regional Solution to Airport Congestion (ARSAC), CA
Arlington County Quiet Skies Coalition, VA
ATL Neighbors Needing Quiet Skies (ATLNNQS), GA
Brooklyn Quiet Skies, NY
Bucks Residents for Responsible Airport Management, PA
Cassell Community, CA
Citizens 4 Quiet Skies – Goodyear, AZ
Citizens For Airpark Safety, AZ
City of Newport Beach, CA
Concerned Residents of Palo Alto, CA
Eco Infinity, WA
FAiR Chicago, IL
Fly Safe Napa Valley, CA
FumeFighters United VNY, CA
GRRift (Gilpin Residents Refuse Increased Flight Traffic), CO
Groton Ayer Buzz, MA
H.A.R.N.E.S.S. (Helping Aviation Respect Neighbors, Environments, Sustainability, and Silence), OR
Huntington CALM, CA
Keep It Down Up There, CA
Logan Aircraft Noise Working Group, MA
Long Beach SANER Group, CA
Los Angeles Area Helicopter Noise Coalition, CA
Lower Makefield Township Airport Review Panel, PA
Melrose Place Against Nuisances, CA
Monterey Fly Safe Coalition, CA
Montgomery County Quiet Skies Coalition (MCQSC)
Neighbors for Reform & Safety at Pompano Beach Air Park, FL
Northwest Bayside Civic Association, NY

Oregon Aviation Watch, OR
Plane Sense 4 Long Island, NY
Quiet Florida, FL
Quiet Skies Alabama, AL
Quiet Skies Boulder County, CO
Quiet Skies Coalition, WA
Quiet Skies Hawaii, HI
Quiet Skies La Jolla, CA
Quiet Skies LA, CA
Quiet Skies Maui, HI
Quiet Skies Over Arapahoe County, CO
QuietSkiesPacifica94044, CA
Quiet Skies Puget Sound, WA
Quiet Skies Southern Maine, ME
Quiet Skies Woodland Hills, CA
Safe and Quiet Skies Southwest Portland, OR
Save Our Skies Alliance, CO
Save Our Skies Santa Cruz, CA
Save Our Skies Los Angeles, CA
SCANA Scottsdale Coalition for Airplane Noise Abatement, AZ
Sherman Oaks & Encino for Quiet Skies (SOEQS), CA
Sky Justice Miami, FL
Sky Posse Los Altos, CA
Sound Defense Alliance, WA
South Flow Alliance, VA
Stop OAK Airport Expansion, CA
STOP Jet Noise NOW S.F. Oakland Bay Area North, CA
Studio City For Quiet Skies, CA
Sunnyvale / Cupertino Airplane Noise Group – Save My Sunny Skies, CA
The Salvador E. Alvarez Institute for Non-Violence, CA
Trenton Threatened Skies Inc, NJ
Truckee Communities for a Better Airport, CA
UproarLA, CA
Vashon Island Fair Skies, WA
Verde Valley Aviation Impact Relief (VVAIR), AZ
West Adams for Quiet Skies, CA
West Sonoma County Jet Noise Coalition, CA

These comments are submitted in addition to, and do not replace, any prior comments submitted to this docket by AICA or organizations supporting this submission.

The sections below provide supporting analysis for the systemic gaps identified above and explain how these limitations affect the analytical use of ANCIR data.

Key Findings

Analysis of the Portal indicates that the system functions primarily as a complaint intake mechanism rather than as an analytical tool for understanding aircraft noise impacts and informing operational and aviation noise policy evaluation.

Specifically:

- The portal collects detailed complaint information from residents but provides limited analysis of the operational or noise exposure conditions associated with reported aircraft events.
- ANCIR reporting emphasizes statistics describing complaint submissions rather than evaluating how complaints relate to airport operations, flight procedures, or community noise exposure environments.
- Repeat submissions are primarily treated as reporting artifacts rather than analyzed as indicators of recurring aircraft operations affecting specific communities.
- Complaint information collected through the portal is not systematically integrated with airport-level complaint reporting or operational data.
- The ANCIR Portal does not demonstrate, document, or publicly report how complaint information is translated into operational insight, mitigation actions, or policy evaluation, despite FAA statements that the data are used to identify trends, patterns, and potential areas of concern and to explore avenues to address them.

Absent analysis of ANCIR complaint data linked to operational and noise exposure conditions and transparently reported through ANCIR outputs, the FAA cannot substantiate claims that such data inform operational decisions, mitigation, community engagement, or aviation noise policy evaluation.

As a result, the information collected through the ANCIR Portal does not currently function as a reliable source of community evidence for operational analysis, mitigation actions, or aviation noise policy evaluation, despite the FAA's statements that the system is used to identify trends, patterns, and potential areas of concern.

1. The ANCIR Portal Functions Primarily as a Complaint Intake Mechanism Rather Than the Engagement System the FAA Describes

FAA Characterization of the ANCIR Portal

The FAA describes the ANCIR Portal as a tool for meaningful community engagement. The agency states that the portal "streamlines the process, allowing us to provide a comprehensive and timely response to each submission," that its commitment "extends beyond merely acknowledging complaints," and that the portal is designed to "foster transparency and understanding" and support "building a stronger community

through open and respectful communication.” The FAA further indicates that complaint data are analyzed to “identify trends, patterns, and potential areas of concern" and to "explore avenues to address them effectively.” [1][2]

The FAA states that its “careful analysis of this data allows us to identify trends, patterns, and potential areas of concern,” and that “by delving into the information received through the ANCIR Portal, we can discern recurring issues and explore avenues to address them effectively.” [1] However, the FAA does not disclose what recurring issues have been identified through this analysis, how those issues were evaluated, or what actions were taken in response.

Portal Function and Limitations in Practice

In practice, the portal functions primarily as a one-way complaint intake mechanism rather than a system that analyzes complaint information and translates it into operational insight, supports mitigation actions, and informs aviation noise policy evaluation. Individuals submitting complaints are required to provide information about specific aircraft events such as date, time, and location, yet the system provides no field for narrative questions or comments. This is inconsistent with the FAA's own acknowledgment email, which states that the agency appreciates the opportunity to address “questions and comments” (see Appendix A-2).

FAA communications associated with the transition to the ANCIR Portal indicate that prior pathways for submitting general inquiries were discontinued and replaced with the portal, despite the portal’s inability to accept non-event-based input (see Appendix A-3).

The complaint form focuses on a single reported event and does not allow residents to indicate that their concern relates to the frequency or number of aircraft overflights affecting their location. Many aircraft noise concerns arise from repeated overflights occurring throughout the day or night, rather than from a single aircraft event.

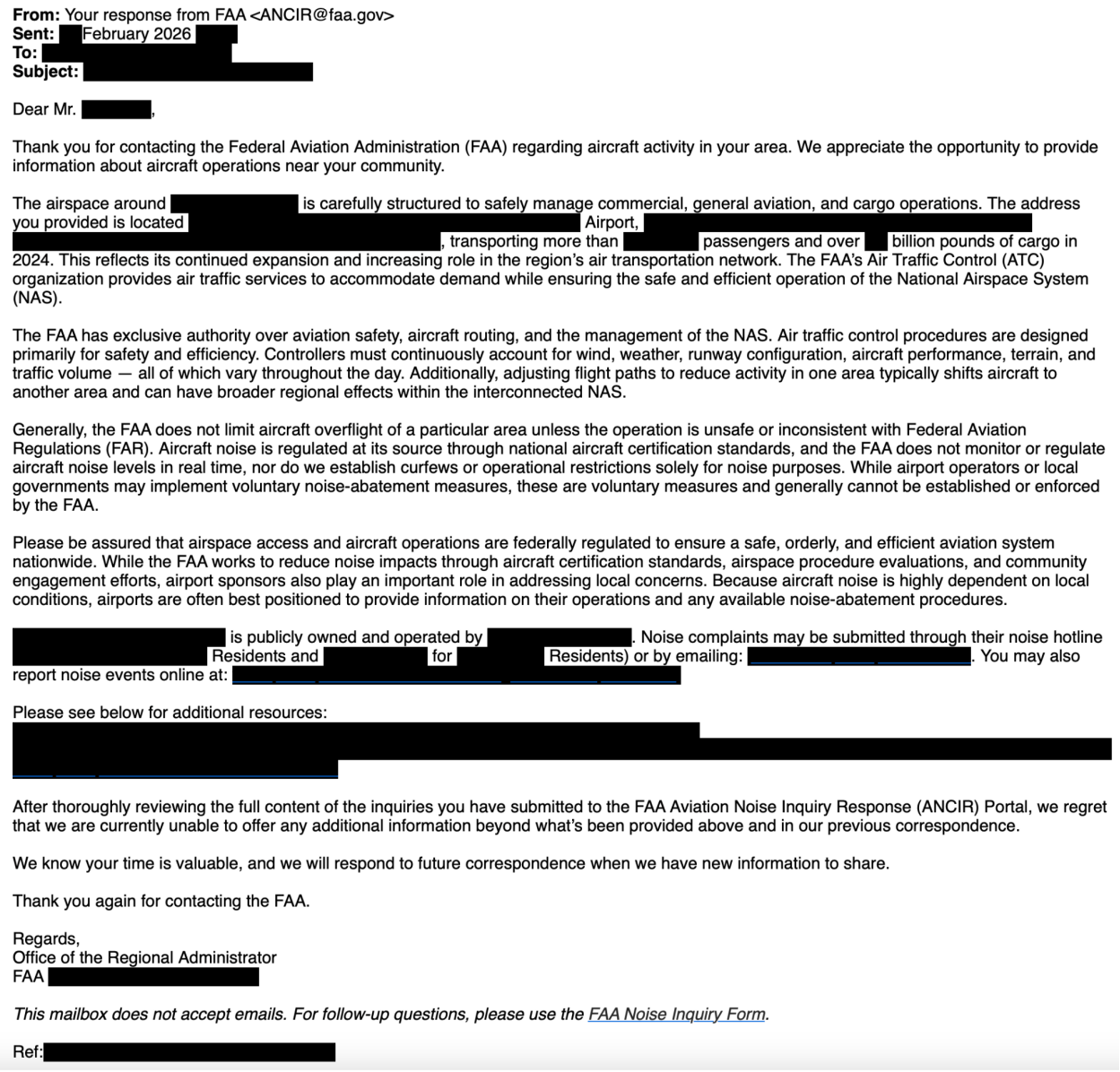
Responses provided through the portal typically consist of general descriptions of FAA authority over aviation operations, explanations of how airspace is managed, or referrals to airport noise offices rather than providing operational or noise exposure context for the specific aircraft event reported by the complainant. The responses also do not address whether the reported event reflects a broader pattern of recurring aircraft operations affecting that location.

Information Needed to Support Operational and Policy Analysis

For complaint reports to contribute meaningfully to operational analysis or policy evaluation, they must be interpreted within the operational and noise exposure context of the reported aircraft event. This context includes the airport and procedure associated with the event, the aircraft type involved, whether the operation was an arrival or departure, and the altitude of the aircraft over the complainant’s location. It also includes the noise exposure environment at that location, including the applicable Day–Night Average Sound Level (DNL) contour and N-Above exposure levels.

When analyzed in this way, complaint information can support FAA policy evaluation, including the Noise Policy Review and related advisory and engagement processes, and inform operational review of flight procedures, which may in turn support potential operational adjustments, mitigation actions, or other actions taken in coordination with airport operators and air traffic control.

Figure 1. illustrates a typical response provided through the ANCIR Portal. When evaluated against the operational and noise exposure context described above, the response demonstrates how the portal does not provide sufficient information necessary to interpret the reported aircraft event or to analyze it in relation to recurring operational conditions.



From: Your response from FAA <ANCIR@faa.gov>
Sent: [redacted] February 2026 [redacted]
To: [redacted]
Subject: [redacted]

Dear Mr. [redacted],

Thank you for contacting the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regarding aircraft activity in your area. We appreciate the opportunity to provide information about aircraft operations near your community.

The airspace around [redacted] is carefully structured to safely manage commercial, general aviation, and cargo operations. The address you provided is located [redacted] Airport, [redacted], transporting more than [redacted] passengers and over [redacted] billion pounds of cargo in 2024. This reflects its continued expansion and increasing role in the region's air transportation network. The FAA's Air Traffic Control (ATC) organization provides air traffic services to accommodate demand while ensuring the safe and efficient operation of the National Airspace System (NAS).

The FAA has exclusive authority over aviation safety, aircraft routing, and the management of the NAS. Air traffic control procedures are designed primarily for safety and efficiency. Controllers must continuously account for wind, weather, runway configuration, aircraft performance, terrain, and traffic volume — all of which vary throughout the day. Additionally, adjusting flight paths to reduce activity in one area typically shifts aircraft to another area and can have broader regional effects within the interconnected NAS.

Generally, the FAA does not limit aircraft overflight of a particular area unless the operation is unsafe or inconsistent with Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR). Aircraft noise is regulated at its source through national aircraft certification standards, and the FAA does not monitor or regulate aircraft noise levels in real time, nor do we establish curfews or operational restrictions solely for noise purposes. While airport operators or local governments may implement voluntary noise-abatement measures, these are voluntary measures and generally cannot be established or enforced by the FAA.

Please be assured that airspace access and aircraft operations are federally regulated to ensure a safe, orderly, and efficient aviation system nationwide. While the FAA works to reduce noise impacts through aircraft certification standards, airspace procedure evaluations, and community engagement efforts, airport sponsors also play an important role in addressing local concerns. Because aircraft noise is highly dependent on local conditions, airports are often best positioned to provide information on their operations and any available noise-abatement procedures.

[redacted] is publicly owned and operated by [redacted]. Noise complaints may be submitted through their noise hotline [redacted] Residents and [redacted] for [redacted] Residents) or by emailing: [redacted]. You may also report noise events online at: [redacted]

Please see below for additional resources:
[redacted]

After thoroughly reviewing the full content of the inquiries you have submitted to the FAA Aviation Noise Inquiry Response (ANCIR) Portal, we regret that we are currently unable to offer any additional information beyond what's been provided above and in our previous correspondence.

We know your time is valuable, and we will respond to future correspondence when we have new information to share.

Thank you again for contacting the FAA.

Regards,
Office of the Regional Administrator
FAA [redacted]

This mailbox does not accept emails. For follow-up questions, please use the FAA Noise Inquiry Form.

Ref:[redacted]

Figure 1. Example ANCIR Portal Response (Redacted)
Personal and location-specific information removed.

Rather than addressing the specific aircraft operation reported by the complainant, the response consists primarily of general information about FAA authority and airspace management. Specifically, the response omits basic operational information that would be necessary to address the complainant's concern, including:

- the aircraft type, operator, and flight identification associated with the reported event
- the altitude of the aircraft over the complainant's location and the arrival or departure procedure being flown, including the name of the flight procedure and whether it is a Performance-Based Navigation (PBN) procedure
- the measured or modeled Day–Night Average Sound Level (DNL) at the complainant's location
- the measured or modeled number of aircraft events over that location (N-Above) during the most recent full calendar year, including the estimated N-Above exposure levels across Lmax ranges from 45–80 dB in 5 dB increments, representing the aircraft noise exposure environment for that location
- the airports whose operations contribute aircraft overflights at that location and the number of aircraft operations each airport contributes
- how the complainant's location compares to other communities affected by the same airport(s), including complaint patterns by city or area and their corresponding DNL and N-Above exposure levels
- whether the reported aircraft operation complied with applicable flight procedures or safety requirements

Taken together, these limitations indicate that the ANCIR Portal does not function as the type of engagement mechanism described by the FAA and does not provide a mechanism for submitting or addressing general inquiries or comments beyond event-specific complaint inputs (see Appendix A-2 and Appendix A-3). Instead, it operates primarily as a centralized intake system, with little capacity to provide meaningful information in response to community concerns.

This assessment is consistent with the experience of aviation-impacted communities nationwide. In a survey conducted by AICA of its member organizations, 81 percent of respondents indicated that the FAA Noise Portal does not improve community engagement. Only 5 percent of respondents left the question blank, and 14 percent were not familiar with the portal. The finding that a substantial majority of communities with direct experience of the portal do not consider it an effective engagement mechanism reinforces the structural concerns documented in this section.

Figure 2. illustrates community assessment of FAA national engagement programs, including the ANCIR Portal, as reported by AICA member organizations.

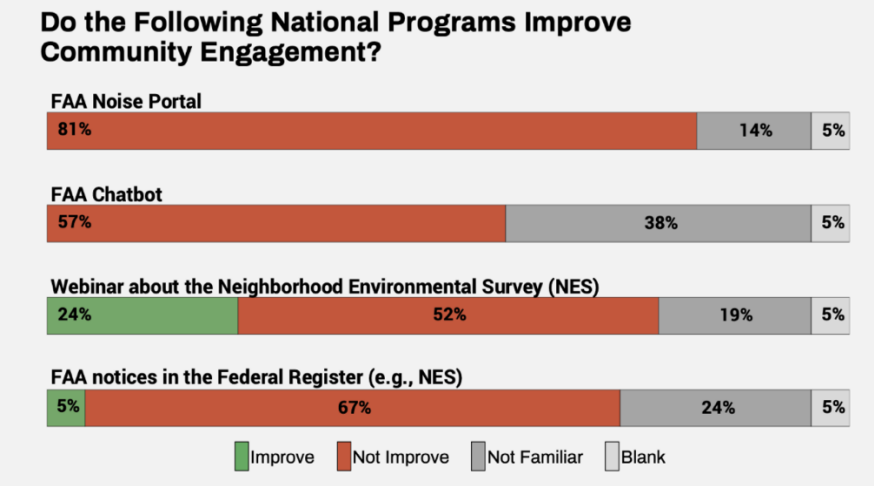


Figure 2. Community Assessment of FAA National Engagement Programs [3]

The FAA states that it "routinely engage[s] the public through Community Engagement initiatives, such as our Noise Complaint Initiative (NCI), to understand specific challenges and propose solutions to alleviate concerns." [4] Figure 3. illustrates the FAA's community engagement framework, which identifies the Noise Portal as one of three primary mechanisms through which the agency engages with the public, alongside community roundtables and collaborative forums. This framing reinforces the expectation that the portal should function as a meaningful channel for understanding community concerns and identifying operational issues affecting specific locations, and for informing operational review, supporting mitigation actions, and contributing to aviation noise policy evaluation.

Figure 3. FAA Community Engagement Framework showing Noise Portal, Roundtables, and Collaborative Forums. Source: Federal Aviation Administration, *Community Engagement* webpage [4]

2. The Portal's Complaint Structure Obscures the Recurring Nature of Aircraft Noise Exposure and Limits Analytical Use of Complaint Data

Aircraft noise exposure is inherently repetitive. Residents affected by aircraft operations may experience dozens or even hundreds of aircraft overflights each day. A complaint system intended to understand community concerns must therefore allow residents to report recurring aircraft noise events over time.

Aircraft noise complaints frequently increase following the implementation of Performance-Based Navigation (PBN) procedures that concentrate flight tracks over specific communities. Figure 4. illustrates the relationship between RNAV track concentration and the geographic distribution of complaints before and after implementation of RNAV procedures in the Boston area. The increase in complaints reflects the concentration of repeated aircraft overflights affecting the same communities, rather than isolated individual events.

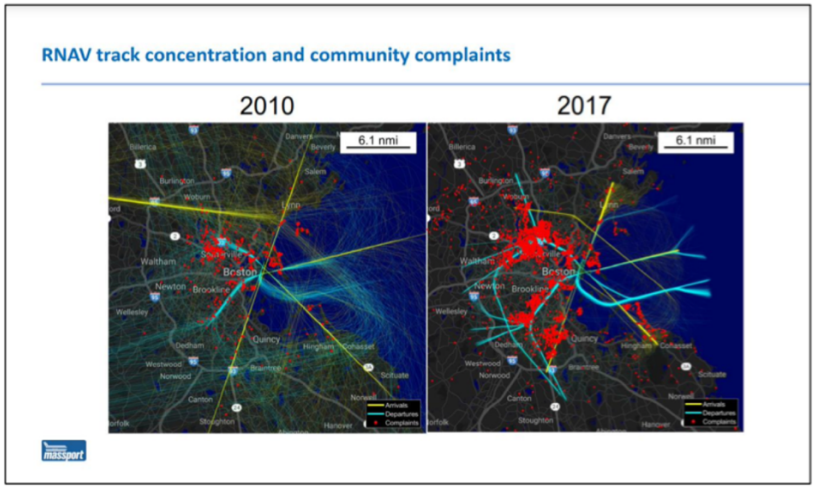


Figure 4. Community complaints before and after implementation of RNAV procedures (adapted from [5])

However, the portal's design effectively limits each individual to one qualifying complaint per category over their lifetime. Once a complaint is submitted regarding a specific type of aviation activity, subsequent submissions are typically categorized as duplicates rather than treated as separate qualifying records.

This structure creates ambiguity in how complaint data are interpreted and reported. While individuals may continue to submit reports of aircraft noise events occurring on different days, those submissions may be treated as duplicates or otherwise consolidated rather than as distinct complaints, making it unclear how repeated aircraft noise events experienced by residents are reflected in FAA complaint statistics.

The design limits the ability of the portal to reflect the frequency and persistence of aircraft noise events experienced by residents. Aircraft noise is experienced as a sequence of individual overflight events, not as a single occurrence. A complaint system that limits each resident to a single qualifying record cannot

capture the frequency of aircraft operations affecting a given location, and by treating recurrence as a data artifact rather than an operational reality, it structurally understates community exposure.

FAA policy states that the agency will not respond to "the same general complaint or inquiry from the same individual more than once," defining a "same general complaint or inquiry" as one that "does not differ in general principle from a previous complaint" and "would generate the same FAA response." [6] This approach does not distinguish between distinct operational events occurring on different days or at different times and may result in repeated reports being treated as a single complaint.

As a result, FAA complaint summaries may not accurately reflect the volume, persistence, or temporal patterns of aircraft noise exposure experienced by affected communities. Residents may believe they are continuing to report ongoing aircraft noise activity, while the system may categorize those submissions as duplicates rather than as additional complaint records.

Treating recurring reports as duplicate complaints may therefore obscure patterns of repeated aircraft operations affecting the same communities over time and limits the ability of the dataset to support meaningful operational analysis.

3. The FAA Does Not Integrate Airport-Level Complaint Data with ANCIR Reporting, Limiting Operational Analysis

Aircraft noise complaints are reported through two primary channels: local airport noise mechanisms and the ANCIR Portal. However, the FAA does not appear to integrate or analyze complaint information across these mechanisms.

Airport noise programs that maintain their own reporting mechanisms allow residents to report events repeatedly and publish detailed operational summaries. As illustrated in Figure 5. (San Francisco International Airport), these reports can associate complaint patterns with specific airports, flight procedures, aircraft types, and time-of-day operations, providing contextual analysis absent from ANCIR reporting.

In contrast, the FAA's ANCIR reporting focuses primarily on the number of submissions received through the portal, including counts of total submissions, repeat submissions, and the state from which complaints originate, with little analysis of how those submissions relate to specific airports, operational activity, or community noise exposure conditions.

FAA materials indicate that the agency coordinates with airport sponsors in responding to aircraft noise complaints [7] and may refer individuals to airport noise offices, community roundtables, or airport-operated reporting systems, see Figure 1. The ANCIR reporting also identifies only the top five airports associated with higher volumes of submissions [7]. These references indicate that airport-level operational information is available to the FAA. However, the ANCIR summaries do not provide systematic reporting of complaint activity by airport or analysis linking complaints to the operational environments associated with those airports. [7] As a result, the current reporting provides limited visibility into how

complaint activity relates to specific airports and the operational conditions associated with those locations and therefore limits the ability of ANCIR data to support operational review and mitigation discussions.

Because complaints may be submitted through both airport mechanisms and the FAA portal, as well as through third-party reporting tools that may or may not be integrated with airport systems, the absence of integrated reporting reduces the usefulness of complaint data for operational analysis.

Without integration across these two reporting channels, the FAA cannot reliably assess whether its own portal captures the full scope of aircraft noise concerns, or whether the complaints it receives represent a fraction of reported events already documented at the airport level. This gap also limits the agency's ability to identify the operational drivers of community concerns, which is directly relevant to the ongoing Noise Policy Review.

As a result, the information collected through the portal does not provide a clear basis for understanding the operational causes of aircraft noise complaints. It also does not provide information that would support constructive dialogue between the FAA, air traffic control, and airport operators regarding the operational conditions generating those concerns to inform policy development, operational adjustments, or other potential solutions.

Figure 5. illustrates example airport noise complaint reporting published by the San Francisco International Airport (SFO) Aircraft Noise Office.

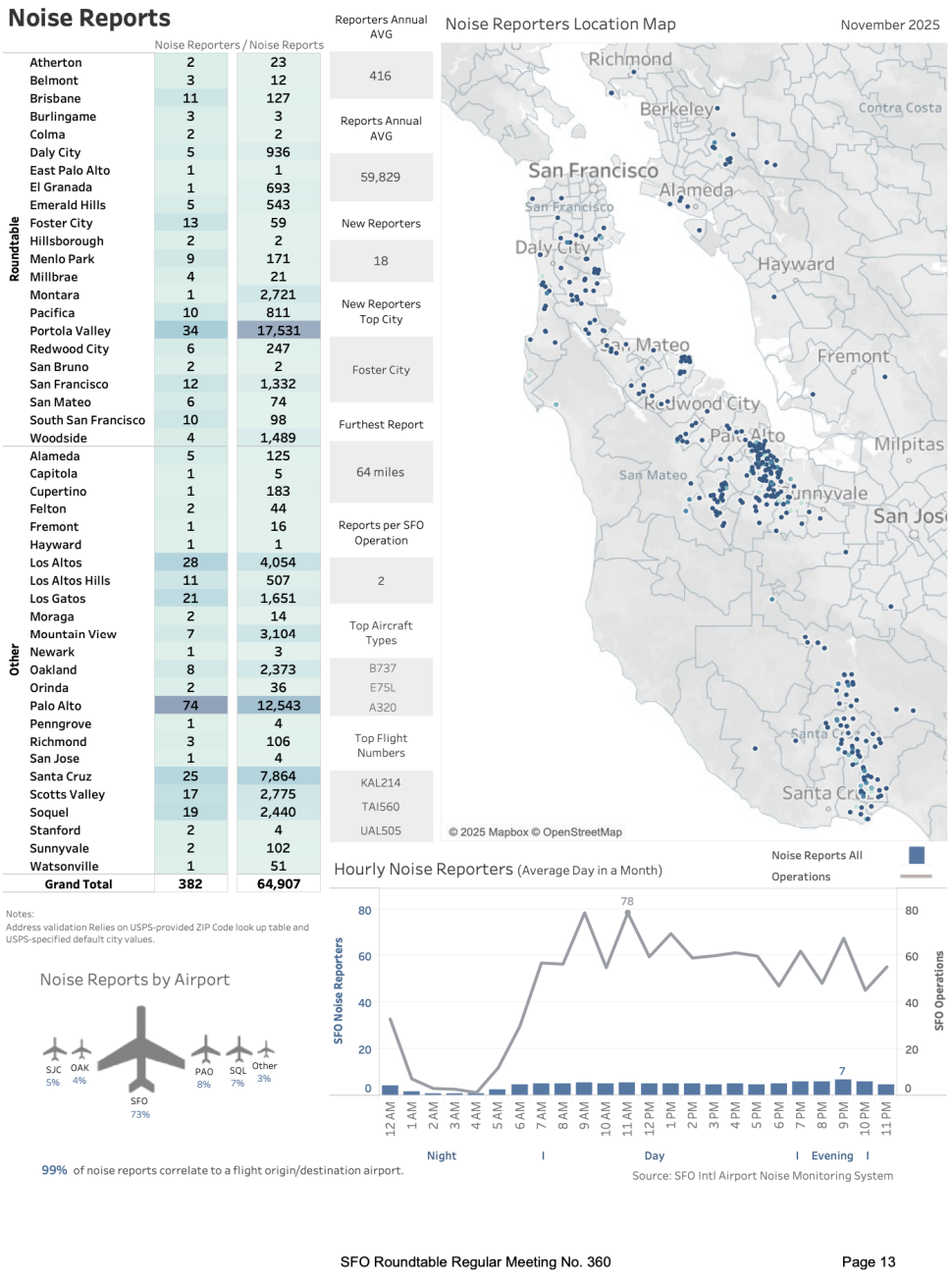


Figure 5. Example Airport Noise Complaint Reporting (San Francisco International Airport) [8]

4. ANCIR Summary Reports Count Complaints But Provide Limited Analysis of the Operational Conditions Generating Them

The FAA collects a significant volume of complaint information through the ANCIR Portal, yet the public reporting provides limited analysis of those data.

FAA ANCIR summaries primarily report submission totals, repeat submissions, and the states from which complaints originate. While these statistics describe submission volume, they provide limited insight into the operational conditions generating those concerns [7]. The report also identifies only the five airports associated with the highest complaint volumes, indicating that airport-level complaint data are available but not systematically reported beyond those limited examples. As shown in Figure 6., the summary reporting focuses on aggregate counts and repeat submissions without linking those data to specific operational or noise exposure conditions.

In the absence of analysis linking complaint data to operational and noise exposure conditions, the information collected through the ANCIR Portal cannot support meaningful analysis of the reported conditions, operational review, or identification of potential mitigation actions or other responses among the FAA, airport operators, and air traffic control regarding the aircraft operations generating reported noise concerns.

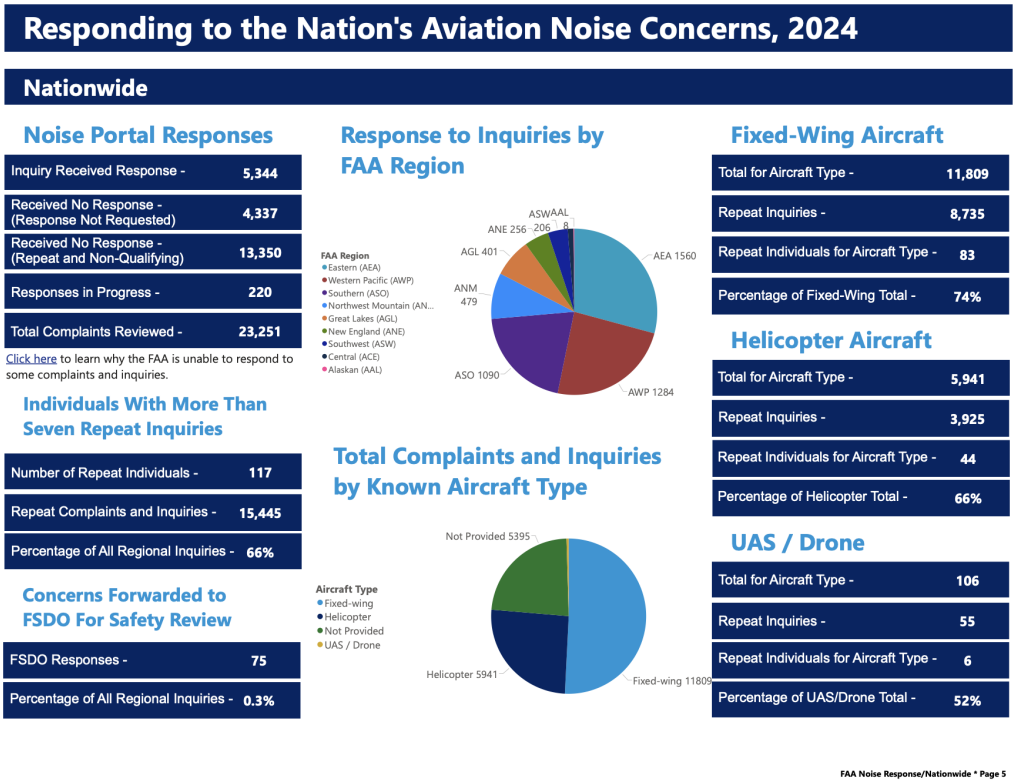


Figure 6. Example FAA ANCIR summary reporting [7]

In available reporting, repeat submissions are treated primarily as a data management issue rather than as potential indicators of recurring aircraft operations affecting specific communities. However, the reporting does not analyze whether repeat submissions correspond to ongoing aircraft operations affecting particular communities, airports, or operational patterns.

FAA policy states that the agency will not respond to “the same general complaint or inquiry from the same individual more than once” [6]. In ANCIR reporting, however, individuals submitting more than seven inquiries may be classified as “repeat complainants,” and their submissions may be consolidated

and marked “resolved” in the reporting system [9]. The relationship between this seven-inquiry threshold, the formal policy described in [6], and the treatment of repeated submissions in ANCIR reporting is not clearly explained.

It is therefore unclear whether repeat submissions are evaluated as indicators of recurring aircraft operations or managed primarily as a reporting or data management convention.

To interpret complaint data in relation to cumulative noise exposure, complaint locations can be evaluated against modeled DNL contours. Figure 7. illustrates how those locations are distributed across different DNL exposure levels, showing the extent to which reported complaints are concentrated within higher cumulative noise contours.

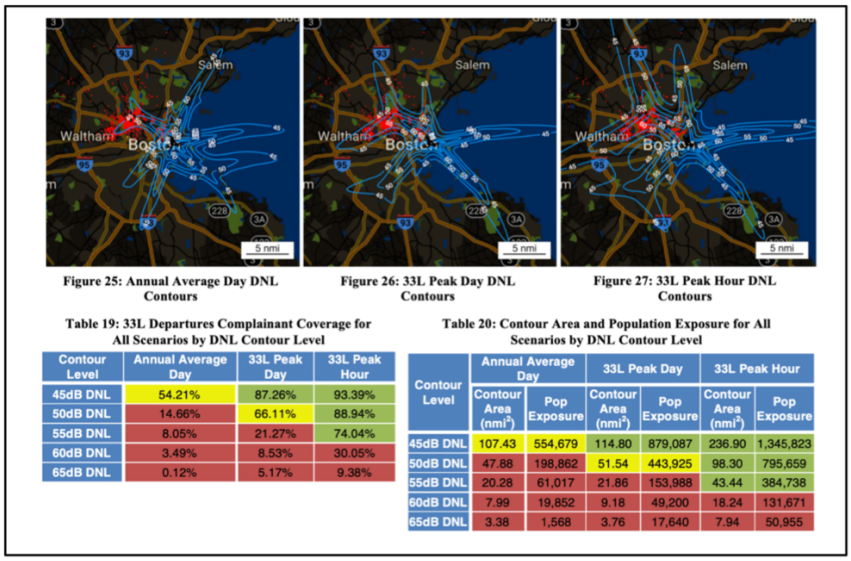


Figure 25: Annual Average Day DNL Contours

Figure 26: 33L Peak Day DNL Contours

Figure 27: 33L Peak Hour DNL Contours

Table 19: 33L Departures Complainant Coverage for All Scenarios by DNL Contour Level

Contour Level	Annual Average Day	33L Peak Day	33L Peak Hour
45dB DNL	54.21%	87.26%	93.39%
50dB DNL	14.66%	66.11%	88.94%
55dB DNL	8.05%	21.27%	74.04%
60dB DNL	3.49%	8.53%	30.05%
65dB DNL	0.12%	5.17%	9.38%

Table 20: Contour Area and Population Exposure for All Scenarios by DNL Contour Level

Contour Level	Annual Average Day		33L Peak Day		33L Peak Hour	
	Contour Area (nmi^2)	Pop Exposure	Contour Area (nmi^2)	Pop Exposure	Contour Area (nmi^2)	Pop Exposure
45dB DNL	107.43	554,679	114.80	879,087	236.90	1,345,823
50dB DNL	47.88	198,862	51.54	443,925	98.30	795,659
55dB DNL	20.28	61,017	21.86	153,988	43.44	384,738
60dB DNL	7.99	19,852	9.18	49,200	18.24	131,671
65dB DNL	3.38	1,568	3.76	17,640	7.94	50,955

Figure 7. Relationship between aircraft noise complaint locations and modeled DNL contours in the Boston region (adapted from [5])

While DNL reflects cumulative noise exposure, it does not capture the count of individual aircraft overflight events. To evaluate the count and distribution of those events underlying reported complaints, event-based metrics such as N-Above provide additional context. As shown in Figure 8., N-Above contours illustrate the number of aircraft noise events exceeding specified sound levels, including 50 dB Lmax during daytime periods and lower thresholds such as 40 dB Lmax at night, and allow complaint locations to be interpreted in relation to recurring overflight activity affecting those locations.

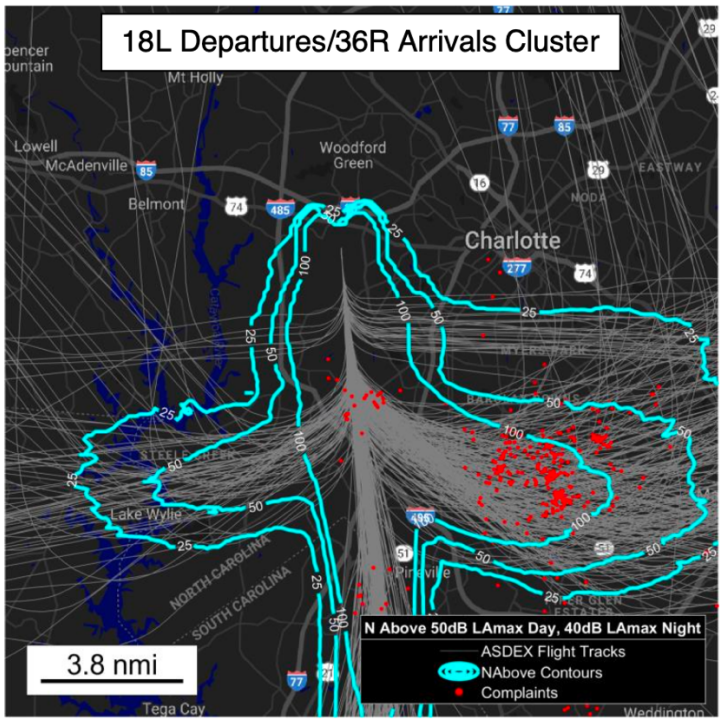


Figure 8. Event-based aircraft noise exposure (N-Above 50 dB Lmax) and complaint locations near Charlotte Douglas International Airport (adapted from [10])

N-Above contours showing the number of aircraft noise events exceeding 50 dB Lmax overlaid with flight tracks and complaint locations. The figure illustrates how complaint locations correspond to areas with high frequencies of individual noise events. Without such analysis, the information collected through the ANCIR Portal provides limited value for addressing aircraft noise concerns.

5. The ANCIR System's Structural Limitations Reduce Its Value as Community Evidence for the Noise Policy Review

Section 5 focuses specifically on how the design and operation of the ANCIR Portal influence the interpretation and usefulness of the complaint information collected through the system. The analytical issues associated with noise exposure characterization and complaint data analysis are discussed in Section 4.

The FAA is currently undertaking a comprehensive Noise Policy Review. This effort is examining whether to continue using DNL as the primary metric for assessing aircraft noise exposure, whether the 65 dB DNL threshold remains appropriate for determining significant noise impacts, and whether alternative metrics should be used in lieu of or in addition to DNL to better inform agency decisions and improve disclosure of noise impacts [11].

Complaint data submitted through the ANCIR Portal could provide an important source of community evidence for this effort. Complaints represent direct reports from residents experiencing aircraft overflights and may help identify locations where aircraft operations are producing noise impacts and recurring patterns of exposure.

The FAA has stated that complaint volume is not used to justify altering current practices, procedures, or routes. This comment does not challenge that policy. However, complaint data serve a distinct function from complaint volume: they can identify where and when recurring aircraft noise exposure occurs and what operational conditions are associated with those events. The failure to analyze ANCIR data at that level is therefore a separate question from how complaint counts are weighted in operational decisions and is directly relevant to this policy review, which depends on understanding how aircraft noise is experienced across affected communities.

As discussed in Section 4, current ANCIR reporting does not link complaint locations to the operational and noise exposure conditions associated with those locations. Consequently, complaint data cannot be systematically connected to the metrics under review, including DNL contours and N-Above exposure levels across different Lmax ranges.

Without this connection between complaint reports and the operational and noise exposure conditions in which they occur, the ANCIR system cannot fully support evaluation of how aircraft noise is experienced across different communities and operational environments or inform potential policy adjustments.

These limitations also reduce the ability of the FAA to support ongoing efforts under the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024, including the Noise Policy Review (Sec. 187), the Aircraft Noise Advisory Committee (Sec. 792), and community engagement objectives (Sec. 793), as they prevent complaint information from being analyzed and used to inform these processes.

6. Recommendations for Improving the Analytical Use of ANCIR Complaint Data

The gaps described above can be addressed through targeted improvements to the design, reporting practices, and analytical use of the ANCIR Portal. Many of the data needed to support these reforms already exist within FAA operational datasets, airport noise monitoring systems, and FAA noise modeling tools, such as the Aviation Environmental Design Tool (AEDT). The following recommendations would allow the portal to better support meaningful community engagement, operational analysis, and aviation noise policy evaluation.

A. Reform ANCIR Portal responses to provide operational and noise exposure context and identify potential FAA actions

Each response should include the aircraft type; the commercial operator and flight number where applicable; the airport associated with the operation, particularly where multiple airports affect the location; whether the aircraft was operating on an arrival or departure; the name of the flight procedure being flown where applicable; including whether the procedure is a Performance-Based Navigation (PBN) procedure; the altitude of the aircraft over the complainant’s location.

B. Characterize ANCIR complaint locations using DNL contours and N-Above exposure

ANCIR reporting should characterize complaint locations in terms of the noise exposure environment affecting those locations, including the applicable Day–Night Average Sound Level (DNL) contour and N-Above exposure levels across Lmax ranges from 45–80 dB in 5 dB increments. This characterization should identify the airports, procedures, and aircraft types contributing to those conditions.

Where measured airport noise monitoring data are available, those data should be used. Where monitoring data are not available, FAA noise modeling tools should be used to characterize the exposure environment at the complainant's location. The FAA already maintains noise exposure information for certain locations, including DNL characterization in some areas, and should provide that information where available, including at aggregated geographic levels such as by community or zip code. Where such data are not currently available, the FAA should use existing modeling tools or phased approaches to expand coverage over time.

This characterization should also indicate whether complaint locations fall within or outside the noise contours used in FAA environmental analysis, allowing both the FAA and affected communities to understand how reported aircraft noise concerns relate to existing noise exposure metrics.

C. Modify the ANCIR Portal complaint structure so recurring submissions can be evaluated as indicators of repeated aircraft noise exposure

Eliminate the one-qualifying-complaint-per-category limitation. Record each submission describing a distinct overflight event on a different date as a separate operational record rather than consolidating such submissions as duplicates.

Provide clear, publicly accessible information describing how repeated submissions are categorized, including how submissions beyond initial entries (e.g., subsequent submissions by the same individual) are treated, consolidated, or classified within ANCIR reporting.

These changes would allow the portal to record recurring aircraft noise events in a manner more consistent with airport and third-party noise reporting systems, where repeated events affecting the same location can be documented over time.

D. Integrate airport-level complaint data with ANCIR reporting and revise FAA restrictions on third-party submissions

Establish a systematic process for incorporating complaint data collected at the airport level into ANCIR reporting. This includes data from airport-operated complaint systems, records of repeated noise events maintained by airport noise offices, and data collected through third-party reporting tools. Not all airports maintain such programs, but where they exist, the complaint information they contain should inform national ANCIR reporting and analysis.

Revise FAA policy at Section 2(g), which excludes all third-party submissions on the grounds that automated applications can generate artificially high complaint volumes. [6] That concern is legitimate,

but the policy as written is broader than necessary to address it. Some airport noise programs, such as SFO, publish complaint data collected through a third-party tool and review and screen submissions to verify that they reflect reports from individual residents rather than automated generation, demonstrating that such a distinction is operationally feasible. Additionally, third-party reporting tools incorporate direct validation of complaint data against ADS-B flight tracking records, providing an independent basis for verifying that a reported event corresponds to an actual aircraft operation. The FAA has the capability to audit or otherwise verify the screening and validation practices of third-party reporting systems before accepting their data and should do so as an alternative to a blanket exclusion of all third-party submissions.

Revise FAA policy to reflect these distinctions and ensure that community complaint data collected through airport programs and third-party reporting tools can contribute to national ANCIR reporting and analysis.

E. Conduct a systematic survey of ANCIR Portal users to evaluate engagement effectiveness

Survey individuals who have submitted complaints through the ANCIR Portal to assess whether the responses they received were meaningful, whether they understood the noise environment context provided, and whether the portal functioned as an effective engagement mechanism from their perspective. AICA's FAA Community Engagement Scorecard (FAACES) survey found that 81 percent of aviation-impacted community organizations do not consider the FAA Noise Portal an improvement to community engagement. A user-level survey would provide the FAA with direct evidence of whether the portal is meeting its stated goals and what specific changes would most improve its value to complainants.

F. Expand ANCIR summary reporting to include operational analysis of complaint patterns in coordination with airports and air traffic control

Identify complaint activity by airport in ANCIR summary reports rather than reporting only national totals and the top high-volume airports. Include in reporting the number of submissions associated with each airport, the geographic distribution of complaints by community or region, and the operational characteristics associated with those complaints, including procedures, aircraft types, and time-of-day patterns. This reporting should include analysis linked to operational conditions and noise exposure, and the results of that analysis should be publicly reported through ANCIR outputs.

G. Require systematic analysis of ANCIR complaint data and incorporation of results into aviation noise policy evaluation and advisory processes and public reporting

Systematically analyze ANCIR complaint data to identify operational patterns and recurring aircraft noise exposure conditions affecting specific locations. Conduct this analysis in coordination with airport operators, airport noise programs, and air traffic control so that complaint patterns are evaluated alongside operational data and local knowledge. The analysis should incorporate the operational and noise exposure context described in Recommendations B and F. Incorporate the results of this analysis into aviation noise policy evaluation and advisory processes and reflect them in public reporting on aviation noise impacts.

H. Ensure ANCIR complaint data are analyzed to inform the Noise Policy Review

Analyze ANCIR complaint data in a manner that allows those data to inform the Noise Policy Review. Conduct this analysis in relationship to the applicable noise exposure environment, including the relevant DNL contours and N-Above exposure levels and the airports and operational activity contributing to those conditions. This would allow ANCIR complaint data to function as a direct source of community evidence regarding aircraft noise exposure across different operational environments.

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https://www.faa.gov/noise/inquiries/noise-complaint-inquiry-policy/index

[10] Yu A., Hansman R. John Aircraft Noise Modeling of Dispersed Flight Tracks and Metrics for Assessing Impacts, May 2019.
https://dspace.mit.edu/handle/1721.1/122382

[11] Federal Aviation Administration. *Aviation Noise Policy Review.* Federal Aviation Administration. Accessed March 15, 2026.
https://www.faa.gov/noisepolicyreview

Appendix A

Appendix A-1. Example FAA Response to General Aviation Training Complaint (Redacted)

This appendix provides an additional example of an FAA response to an aircraft noise complaint involving general aviation training activity. The response describes the nature of flight training operations, explains the role of traffic patterns and pilot training requirements, and provides general information regarding FAA authority over aviation operations. The response also refers the complainant to the local airport operator regarding potential noise abatement procedures.

Like the example discussed in Section 1, the response primarily provides general explanatory information about aviation operations rather than analysis of the operational circumstances or noise exposure conditions associated with the reported aircraft noise event. The response does not identify the aircraft involved, the altitude of the operation over the complainant's location, the specific procedure being flown, or the noise exposure conditions affecting that location. As a result, the response provides little information that would allow the reported event to contribute to analysis of recurring operational conditions or to the type of community engagement process the FAA describes for identifying patterns, understanding community concerns, or exploring potential solutions.

Figure A-1. Example FAA response to general aviation training complaint (redacted)

From: Your response from FAA <ANCIR@faa.gov>
Date: [redacted] Feb [redacted] 2026 [redacted]
Subject: [redacted]
To: [redacted]

Dear [redacted],

This is in response to your January [redacted] 2026, inquiry regarding low-flying propeller aircraft conducting exercises over your home. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) appreciates engaging with residents to clarify how flight operations are managed.

[redacted] is a general public aviation (GA) airport owned and operated by [redacted]. The airport offers a range of general aviation services such as flight training, aircraft rental, air taxi/charter, scenic rides, air ambulance, aerial photography, mapping and surveying, search and rescue, aircraft sales, maintenance, and avionics repairs.

Your home is approximately [redacted] nautical miles from [redacted] and lies beneath its local traffic pattern—a rectangular flight path pilots use to safely sequence for landing. This airspace is frequently used by student pilots for "pattern work," where aircraft repeatedly practice takeoffs, landings, and approaches. As multiple aircraft can operate in the pattern simultaneously, this can result in frequent overflights near your home. Pattern work is an essential part of FAA-mandated pilot training and certification.

Flight training is inherently repetitive. The goal is to develop muscle memory, build confidence, and ensure the pilot can perform key maneuvers safely and consistently under various conditions. Flight training involves several phases of flight including takeoff, climb, level flight, turns, descent, and landing. Each of these phases requires specific skills, such as maintaining altitude and speed during different legs of a circuit, making coordinated turns, at precise points, and establishing proper glide paths for safe landings.

By repeating these actions over and over, students gradually internalize the procedures. This makes the maneuvers second nature, helping them react instinctively in real-world situations without having to think about each step. Pitching and banking are critical elements of flight training because they are essential for controlling the aircraft's altitude and maintaining safe efficient flight. In addition, practicing the same maneuvers repeatedly in different conditions builds the ability to adapt to those changes and still maintain safe, controlled flight.

The FAA and airports have limited authority to prohibit or restrict aircraft operating activities. This is to ensure federally funded airports can meet federal grant assurance requirements and adequately serve the aviation needs of their communities.

In accordance with federal guidelines the primary metric the FAA uses to determine noise impacts is the day-night average sound level (DNL). DNL is a metric that reflects a person's cumulative exposure to sound over a 24-hour period expressed as the noise level for the average day of the year on the basis of annual aircraft operations. For a more detailed explanation visit Fundamentals of Noise and Sound | Federal Aviation Administration (faa.gov) and Community Response to Noise | Federal Aviation Administration (faa.gov).

Addressing aviation noise is a shared responsibility between FAA, airport sponsors, the aviation industry, and other aviation stakeholders. We encourage you to share your concerns with community forums and local officials to seek solutions that consider both the operator's right to operate and the interests of the community. Dialogue with local officials and aviation operators about noise issues may lead to agreements, where voluntary noise mitigation measures can be implemented at the local level.

We hope this information is helpful.

Regards,

Office of the Regional Administrator, [redacted]

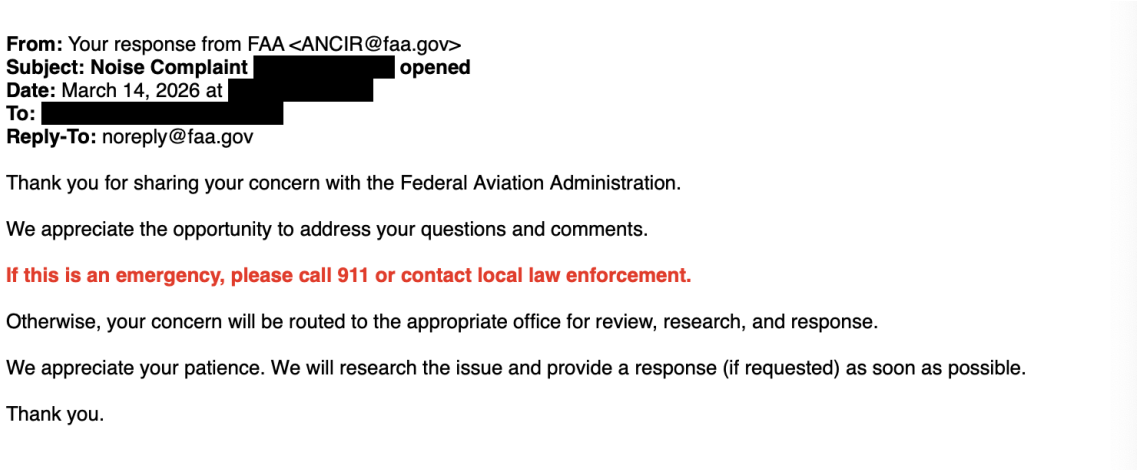
For follow-up questions regarding this response, please use the ANCIR Portal webform and include the ANCIR ID# from the subject line above. Emails sent to this mailbox are not automatically routed back into the system and may take several days or weeks to be reviewed or redirected if the ANCIR ID# is not included.

Appendix A-2. ANCIR Response Referencing "Questions and Comments" Without Mechanism to Submit Them

This appendix provides an example of the automated response issued following submission through the ANCIR Portal. The response states that the FAA appreciates the opportunity to address "questions and comments," although the portal provides no mechanism to submit general questions or comments and instead requires event-specific inputs tied to an individual aircraft noise occurrence.

This illustrates a direct inconsistency between the FAA's response language and the functional design of the portal, which does not support general inquiry or dialogue.

A-2. ANCIR automated response referencing “questions and comments”



From: Your response from FAA <ANCIR@faa.gov>
Subject: Noise Complaint [redacted] **opened**
Date: March 14, 2026 at [redacted]
To: [redacted]
Reply-To: noreply@faa.gov

Thank you for sharing your concern with the Federal Aviation Administration.

We appreciate the opportunity to address your questions and comments.

If this is an emergency, please call 911 or contact local law enforcement.

Otherwise, your concern will be routed to the appropriate office for review, research, and response.

We appreciate your patience. We will research the issue and provide a response (if requested) as soon as possible.

Thank you.

Appendix A-3. FAA Transition to ANCIR Portal Eliminates Pathway for General Inquiries

Based on an August 2025 FAA communication (Figure A-3), the FAA discontinued the Noise Ombudsman electronic mailboxes and directed the public to use the ANCIR Portal as a replacement for both complaints and inquiries. However, the portal is structured as an event-based intake system requiring specific details tied to an individual aircraft noise event and does not support general inquiries or non-event-based input.

As a result, the ANCIR Portal does not fulfill the role of a replacement for prior inquiry channels. Input that does not correspond to a discrete noise event is not captured, is not included in FAA data systems or reporting, and is therefore not analyzed or reflected in public reporting

Figure A-3. FAA communication directing use of ANCIR Portal for inquiries

From: [redacted]
Sent: Monday, August 4, 2025 at 12:40:22 PM PDT
Subject: FW: Update on FAA Noise Complaint Process: Transition to ANCIR Portal

Good Afternoon.

At the request of the FAA, we are forwarding the message below regarding changes to how aircraft noise complaints are submitted.

The FAA has discontinued the Noise Ombudsman email boxes. All complaints and inquiries should now be submitted through the **FAA Aviation Noise Complaint and Inquiry (ANCIR) Portal**, which allows users to report noise issues with specific details like location, time, and type. This centralized system is designed to improve data collection and response efficiency.

Please see the full message from the FAA below. Thank you.

[redacted]

[redacted]

From: [redacted]
Subject: Update on FAA Noise Complaint Process: Transition to ANCIR Portal

Good morning.

This email is sent to our Congressional Representatives and Airport Roundtables on behalf of [redacted], Regional Administrator, Federal Aviation Administration, [redacted] Region.

In the spirit of continued communication and to keep you informed about aviation matters within the region, we want to share that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has discontinued the Noise Ombudsman electronic mailboxes. The public should submit their noise complaints and inquiries through the FAA Aviation Noise Complaint and Inquiry (ANCIR) Portal available on the FAA website.

The FAA's ANCIR Portal allows residents to submit aircraft noise complaints/inquiries through a simple web form, specifying details such as location, time, and noise type. Utilizing the ANCIR portal for all complaints/inquiries will centralize data collection and improve efficiency for the agency.

The FAA continues to manage the National Airspace System in a safe and efficient manner while also continuing to explore measures to reduce noise from aircraft in the future. Residents can review our policy to understand better how the FAA processes noise-related concerns. This resource outlines our process for handling complaints and inquiries.

Please share this information with your communities.

[redacted]

Federal Aviation Administration

Office of the Regional Administrator

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]