

There are many different community engagement mechanisms that can be used to address aircraft noise or other concerns, depending on the circumstances. This information sheet provides information on one of those mechanisms, Community Roundtables.

What is a “Roundtable”?

- “Roundtable,” in the aviation context, is generally a term for an organization designed to address community concerns over a sustained period of time regarding aircraft operations often associated with a nearby airport.
- Most roundtables are voluntarily formed by an airport, local government, or through an agreement among multiple jurisdictions. The most productive roundtables are typically made up of representatives from multiple communities around an airport, who are or may be affected by aircraft operations, and the airline industry and other stakeholders – often in an advisory role or on technical committees and working groups, who can offer additional perspectives and expertise.
- Roundtables typically have group-approved charters or bylaws that provide an agreed upon structure for membership, running meetings, the scope of the issues being addressed by the roundtable, and making decisions.

How can a Roundtable help?

- A roundtable brings together airport, community, and airline industry representatives to collaboratively identify and discuss issues of concern and possible resolutions at the same time.
- A roundtable may elect to make recommendations, including possible changes in operations, which could address community noise or other concerns. Ideally, applicable recommendations are first coordinated through the airport who will then, as appropriate, forward them to the applicable entity (e.g., the FAA, airlines, or zoning authority).
- A roundtable can assist and advise the FAA on community outreach or information needs, and help the FAA understand community priorities.

What is FAA’s Role?

- FAA representatives can participate in roundtable meetings to provide technical information and advice, but should not be members and do not vote on roundtable recommendations. The most productive roundtables invite FAA representatives either as regular attendees or on an as-needed basis, providing a clear agenda topic with sufficient advance notice to enable FAA to identify appropriate representation and prepare information.
- The FAA can support roundtables in several ways. For example, the FAA Air Traffic Organization can provide technical expertise on operational issues and airspace procedural design when requested by the roundtable. Similarly, the FAA Office of Airports can provide information about airport operations, airport design, and grant assurances, as well as important information regarding an airport’s role in the [voluntary Part 150 noise compatibility planning program](#), and the regional and national system of airports.
- The FAA looks to the roundtable to make recommendations, ideally in coordination with the airport, that have some recognition of the impacts (e.g., to the airspace and all potentially affected communities) and reflect thorough discussion/vetting before raising them to the applicable entity (e.g., potential airspace operational changes to the FAA, flight schedule concerns to the airlines) for consideration.
- After the FAA determines a thoroughly discussed/vetted recommendation for an airspace operational change to be initially feasible and flyable, from a safety and efficiency perspective, the FAA has to conduct mandated environmental and safety reviews. If the FAA determines it can proceed with the recommendation, these reviews can have many steps, are dependent on available resources and may take a period of months or years to begin or accomplish. The FAA can provide the roundtable with more detailed information about the processes, timetables, and milestones where the roundtable can expect to be updated by the FAA on the environmental and safety reviews.
- In the FAA’s experience, the most effective roundtable recommendations reflect consensus among its membership – which includes considering issues and inputs from all potentially affected communities. Consensus recommendations tend to result in long-term, satisfactory solutions and often reflect the need to balance competing interests.