



# BWI-Thurgood Marshall Airport Operations and Noise Exposure

*Presented by DC Metroplex BWI Community Roundtable in cooperation with Vianair, Inc*

## Monthly Report for January 2025

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DC Metroplex BWI Community Roundtable link to Noise Exposure Monthly Reports below.

The reports can be found at the bottom of the page within the tab labeled “Noise Exposure Monthly Reports (Howard/Anne Arundel County Contractor)”.

<https://marylandaviation.com/environmental/environmental-compliance-sustainability/dc-metroplex-bwi-community-roundtable>



# Introduction



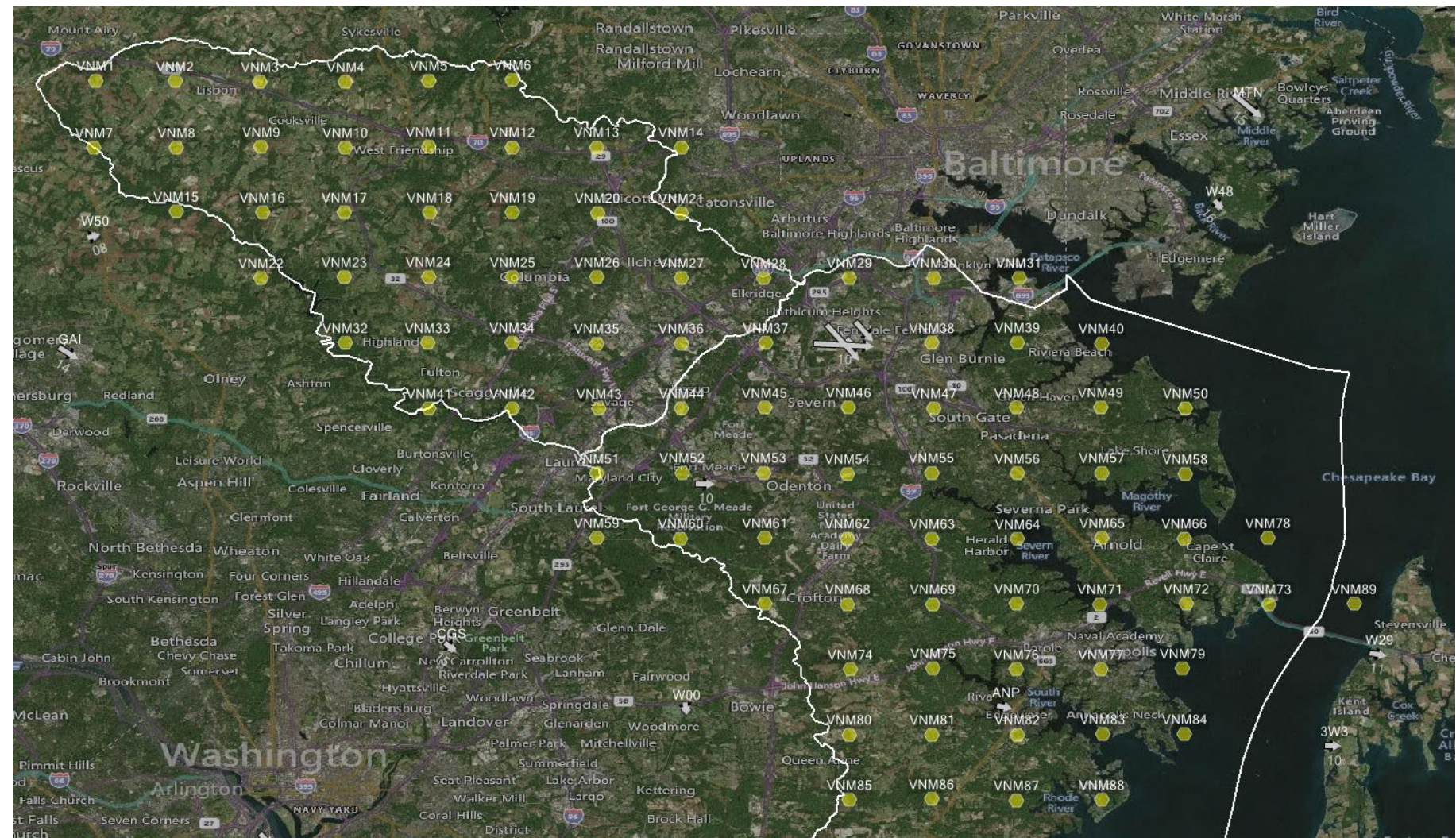
This is a summary of a larger report (the “Monthly Report”) prepared by Vianair, Inc. (“Vianair”) for the benefit of the DC Metroplex BWI Community Roundtable (the “BWI Roundtable”).

**The Monthly Reports are the first comprehensive data detailing the noise pollution generated by daily commercial jet plane operations across the entire geography of significantly overflowed communities in our region. The BWI roundtable believes that the analysis of the full environmental impact of airport operations on overflowed communities has been understudied, but it is essential information in order to improve the likelihood of success in achieving balanced solutions for the complex set of stakeholders involved in airport operations.**

Howard and Anne Arundel Counties hired Vianair to help analyze flight activity in and out of BWI Thurgood Marsha Airport (“BWI-Marshall”). In coordination with representatives from the two counties and support from the BWI Roundtable, Vianair developed the Monthly Report which includes the analysis of key elements (operational and acoustic) to help the wide array of stakeholders understand the existing noise exposure and to provide the ability to track changes over time.

While comprehensive, the elements in the report were selected by those who contributed to the report development (representatives from the two counties and the BWI Roundtable). This report will be published monthly, beginning with April 2022. Report content may change based on input from the contributors and/or the community. This report uses A-weighted decibels or dBA and DNL, described later within this summary report.

# What is the Virtual Noise Monitoring Grid?



The BWI Roundtable could locate no single data source covering the entire region for the noise pollution generated by commercial aviation at BWI-Marshall. Although the Maryland Aviation Administration (MAA) maintains noise 24 permanent monitors in areas immediately surrounding the airport, these monitors are not widely dispersed across the entirety of overflowed communities. Therefore, the Roundtable asked Vianair, Inc. to establish a **virtual noise monitoring grid** with a total of 89 monitors evenly spread at 2.5-mile intervals covering most of Anne Arundel and Howard Counties (see the map on this page). An additional 36 locations in each county were selected, representing specific areas of interest or “Landmarks” (see pages 5 and 6 of this Executive Summary). The result is a total of 125 discrete locations for which aircraft noise data is collected and analyzed. These locations are referred to as “virtual noise monitor locations” in this report and result in more comprehensive coverage of the study area.



# Definitions

**Decibel (dB(A)):** A unit of measurement of sound pressure adjusted for the human ear's response to particular frequencies

**Day-Night Average Sound Level (DNL):** A descriptor of 24-hour noise (midnight to midnight) that adds a ten-decibel (dB) nighttime penalty to noise events which occur between the hours of 10 p.m. and 7 a.m. to account for the intrusive nature of noise at night. DNL is the standard metric used by the Federal Aviation Administration (" FAA" ) as required by federal regulation. Federal guidelines require DNL 65 as the level of aircraft noise exposure that is incompatible with noise-sensitive applications including residential development. This metric is required by FAA and COMAR

**The Noise-above (NA):** A noise metric that counts the number of times the noise level exceeds a specific threshold. In this report, the Number-of-Events-Above 55 metric (NA55) is calculated. NA55 quantifies the number of aircraft events resulting in noise exposure of 55 decibels or higher at each location depicted.

**Day-evening-night level (Lden):** It is a descriptor of noise level defined by the European Environment Agency ("EEA") and based on energy equivalent noise level (Leq) over a whole day with a penalty of 10 dB(A) for night-time noise (11.00 pm -7.00 am) and an additional penalty of 5 dB(A) for evening noise (7.00 pm -11.00 pm).

**Airport Noise Zone (ANZ):** An area of land surrounding the airport within which noise levels are equal to or greater than DNL 65 dBA.

**Maryland Department of Transportation Maryland Aviation Administration (MDOT MAA):** Operator of Baltimore/ Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport (BWI Marshal Airport).

**Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR):** Requires MDOT MAA to control development in areas where noise levels are DNL 65 dBA or more.

# Disclaimer and Information Sources and Disclosures

**Disclaimer:** The views and opinions expressed in this document are those of the BWI Roundtable and do not necessarily reflect the views or positions of the state senators who appoint voting members to the BWI Roundtable, the MDOT/MAA, the FAA, Howard or Anne Arundel County elected or appointed officials, commercial carriers or Vianair, Inc. Technical presentations prepared by Vianair Inc. are labeled with the Vianair logo.

## Information Sources and Disclosures:

Page 7 - Economic Impact of BWI-Marshall. **Regional Economic Impact of BWI Marshal Airport, December 2017, a brochure of the Maryland Aviation Administration.** In response to a Public Information Act (PIA) request made on November 1, 2022, MDOT/MAA provided "The Economic Impact of Public Use Airports in Maryland", July 2015. The study was prepared by Martin Associates and Landrum and Brown, consultants. MDOT/MAA states that "The 2017 Economic Impact Brochure [..] is an update to the 2015 Economic Impact Report. The 2015 Economic Impact Report and Monthly BWI Statistical Report Summaries serve as the source for the 2017 Economic Impact Brochure." Once the BWI Roundtable verifies the underlying sources of the brochure's statements, we will update this section.

## Page 7 - Commercial Aviation and Health.

- Zafari Z and Park, J. "Projecting the health and economic burden of aircraft noise". University of Maryland School of Pharmacy, 2022

<https://www.pharmacy.umaryland.edu/media/SOP/wwwpharmacyumarylandedu/about/depts/p-shor/pdf/projecting-the-health-and-economic-burden-of-aircraft-noise-final-report.pdf>

- Quarterly Noise Reports, Maryland Aviation Administration

<https://marylandaviation.com/environmental/environmental-compliance-sustainability/quarterly-noise-reports/>

- World Health Organization: Environmental Noise Guidelines for the European Union. 2018

[https://www.euro.who.int/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0008/383921/noise-guidelines-eng.pdf](https://www.euro.who.int/data/assets/pdf_file/0008/383921/noise-guidelines-eng.pdf)

- European Environment Agency: European Noise Directive. 2018

<https://www.eea.europa.eu/airs/2018/environment-and-health/environmenta1-noise>

## Seeking Balance at BWI-Marshall Airport

The growth in operations at BWI-Marshall brings a number critically important social and economic impacts to communities surrounding the airport and to the State of Maryland, including economic development, jobs, and taxes collected. However, this also results in significant negative impacts, especially for residents of Anne Arundel and Howard counties, including stress, likely adverse health outcomes and a diminished quality of life. **Over the course of our almost six (6) years of existence, the BWI Roundtable has come to believe those impacts are unsustainably unbalanced in favor of economic impacts in our region.**



## Economic Impact of BWI-Marshall

Airport-Generated	Visitor-Generated
\$4.4 B Total Impact	\$4.9 B Total Economic Impact
<u>Total Jobs 24,211</u> Direct 12,753 Indirect 11,458	<u>Total Jobs 82,277</u> Direct 46,857 Indirect 35,420
\$1.6 B Total Earnings	\$2.5 B Total Earnings
\$175.4 M Total State/Local Taxes	\$416.5 M Total State/Local Taxes

State taxes are estimated to be \$336.3 million and Local taxes are estimated to be \$255.7 million

## Commercial Aviation and Health

University of Maryland- Baltimore study shows over \$800 million (2022 dollars) in health costs over 30-years from current BWI-Marshall operations

123,133 BWI-Marshall noise complaints (230 individuals) during 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter of 2022. The airport received a total of 620,276 noise complaints in 2021.

The World Health Organization recommends aircraft noise levels in Europe to below 45 dB during the day (40 dB at night). Higher levels of noise is associated with adverse health effects.

55 dB Lden is the EU threshold for excess exposure defined in the Environmental Noise Directive

FAA has adopted 65 dBA DNL as the threshold of significant noise exposure, below which residential land uses are compatible

BWI Airport Noise Zone is noise above 65 dBA DNL

# Runway Use

BWI has six runways: 10, 15R, 15L, 28, 33R, and 33L. Runway selection is based primarily on wind direction. BWI operates in two flows. When winds are out of the east or south, aircraft will arrive and depart in an **EAST FLOW** and when winds are out of the west or north, aircraft will arrive and depart in a **WEST FLOW**. Aircraft noise levels vary when below an aircraft landing or taking-off. Runway use also influences routes to and from the airport, which also affects aircraft noise for communities below.



EAST FLOW



WEST FLOW



## East and West Flow

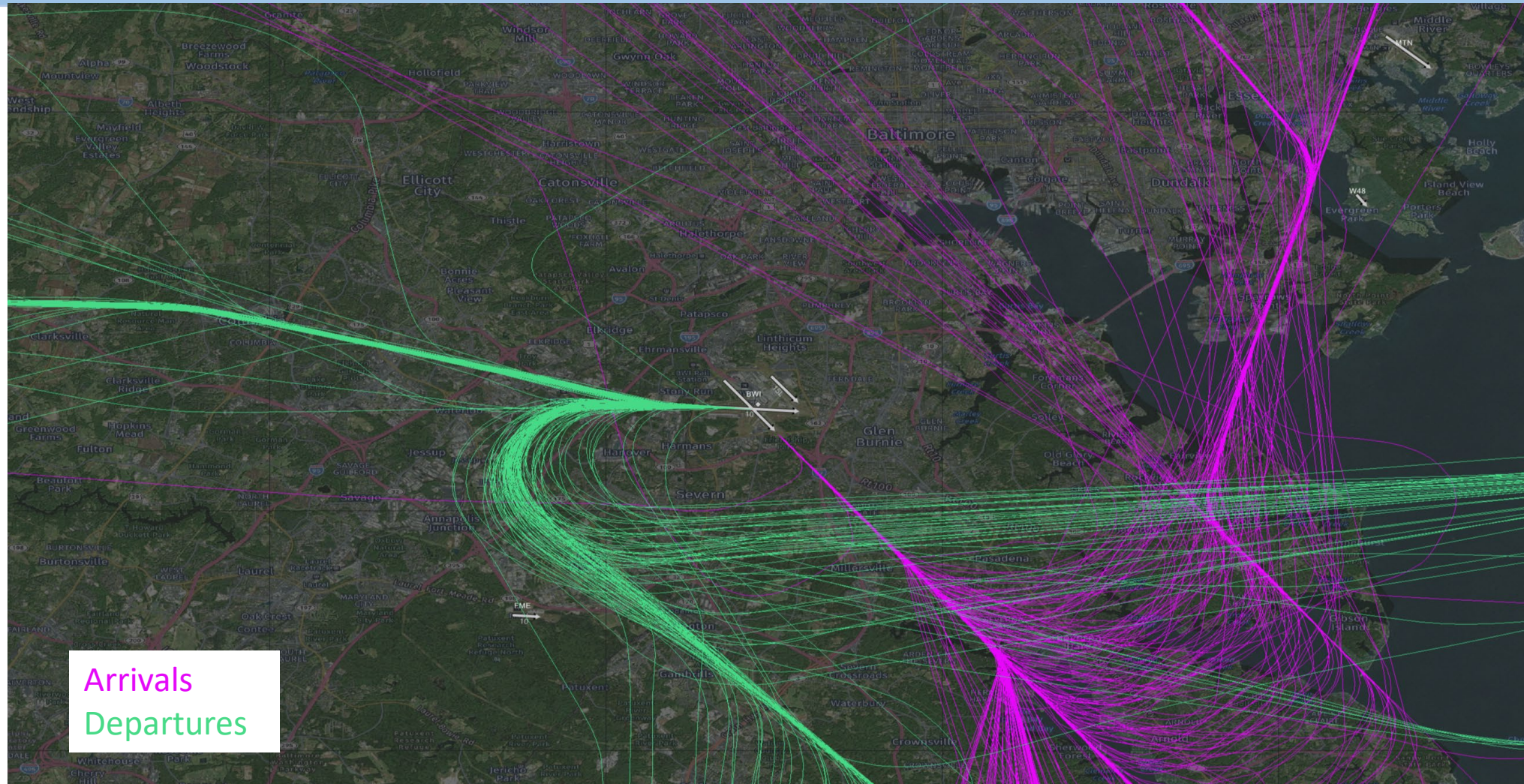
Prevailing wind speed, direction and weather factors determine the direction of air traffic flow from BWI Marshall airport. Aircraft usually take off and land into the wind to meet safety and operational requirements.

During **EAST FLOW** conditions (winds from the south or east), aircraft arrive and depart toward the east. This includes runways 15L, 15R, and 10.

During **WEST FLOW** conditions (winds from the north or west), aircraft arrive and depart toward the west. This includes runways 33L, 33R, and 28. The following slides are intended to illustrate arrival and departure flight paths across the region during sample EAST and WEST flows days.

The next two pages illustrate a typical East Flow day and a typical West Flow day at the airport. Sample days were analyzed by Vianair and then depicted as all arrivals and departures consistent with a specific flow on a given day. While these flight patterns are typical, they may vary on other days based on operational conditions.

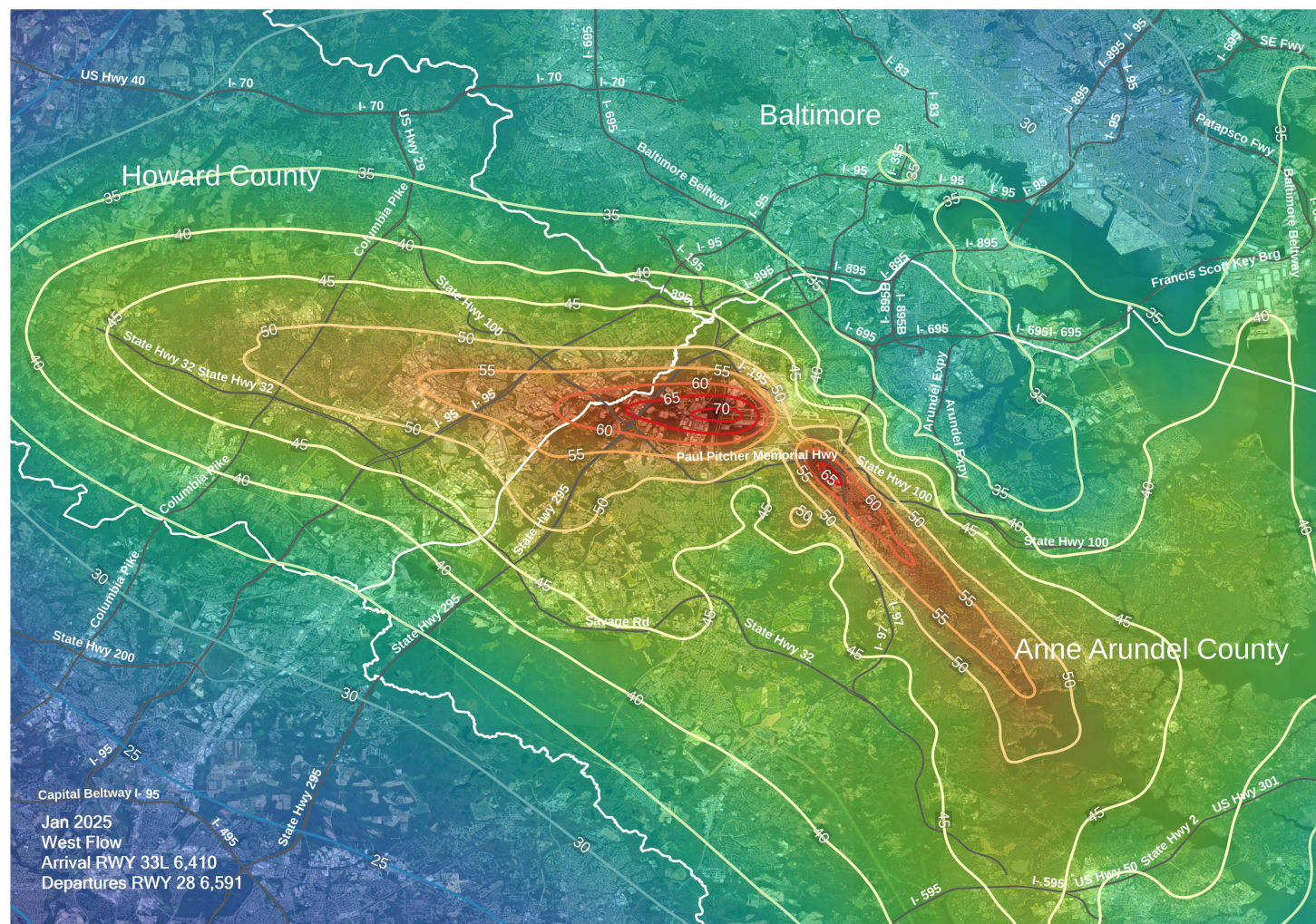
## Visual representation of a typical day of traffic over the Baltimore region during West Flow operations at BWI-Marshall



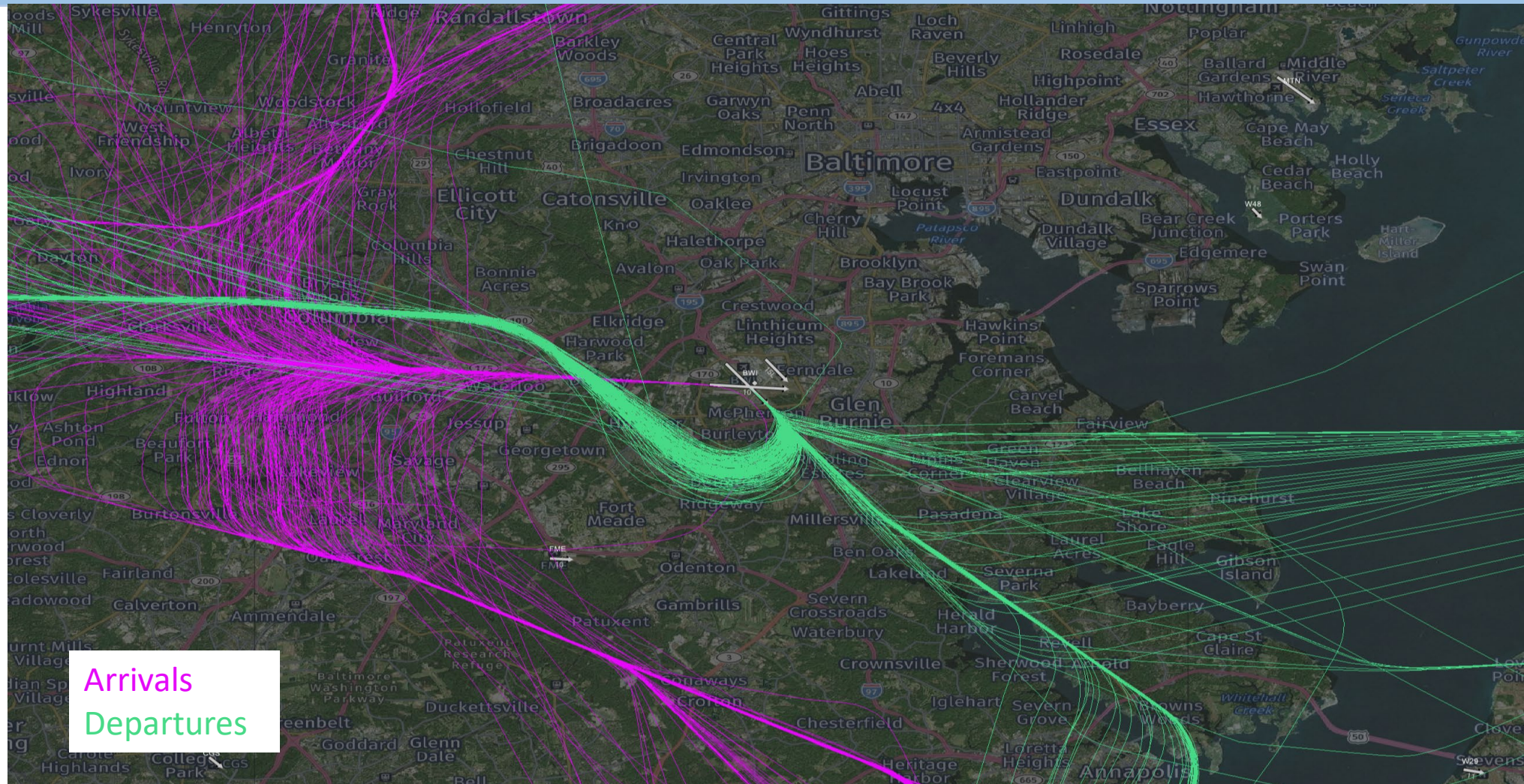
## West Flow Operations – DNL Noise Exposure

West Flow: Arrivals Runway 33L & Departures Runway 28

Note: The DNL Map for KBWI West Flow is calculated for Arrivals to Runway 33L only, and Departures from Runway 28 only, over the entire month, which equals the sum of all time periods when the airport was in a West Flow and these specific runways were in use. Arrivals/Departures to/from other runways during this time period are excluded from this calculation.



## Visual representation of a typical day of traffic over the Baltimore region during East Flow operations at BWI-Marshall





# Monthly Noise Exposure – Anne Arundel County Landmark Locations

*January 2025 – Both East and West Flow Operations*

Name	Description	Number of Events Above 55dBA (Monthly)	Daily Average (Monthly)	Number of Events Above 55 dBA (YTD)	DNL (Monthly)
AAR_VNM1	RAVNN	0	0	0	12.25
AAR_VNM2	JETNA	0	0	0	17.88
AAR_VNM3	Arden on the Severn	6,001	194	6,001	55.88
AAR_VNM4	London Public House	241	8	241	35.03
AAR_VNM5	Annapolis Middle School	306	10	306	35.05
AAR_VNM6	West Annapolis Elementary	1,141	37	1,141	42.98
AAR_VNM7	Herald Harbor	0	0	0	8.3
AAR_VNM8	Eastport Terrace	484	16	484	36.14
AAR_VNM9	Truxton Park	423	14	423	37.27
AAR_VNM10	Shipleys Choice Elementary	7,180	232	7,180	57.44
AAR_VNM11	Robinwood	247	8	247	33.18
AAR_VNM12	Wordour Bluffs	920	30	920	40.92
AAR_VNM13	Millersville Elementary School	1,000	32	1,000	41.47
AAR_VNM14	Sherwood Forest	1,695	55	1,695	47.35
AAR_VNM15	Brookeville, Montgomery County	5	0	5	20.63
AAR_VNM16	Rolling Knolls	2,686	87	2,686	45.03
AAR_VNM17	Maryland State House	938	30	938	41.26
AAR_VNM18	I-97 and MD 178 Crownsville	588	19	588	41.78

This table shows the noise pollution metrics at the “Landmark” locations identified by the Roundtable for Anne Arundel County, which primarily experiences arrivals to the airport.

Locations closest to the airport and/or concentrated flight corridors many miles away from the airport will typically see the highest noise exposure. For instance, **West Annapolis Elementary School (WAES)** is approximately 23.4 miles from the end of Runway 33L, the dominant runway for arrivals. Yet, the DNL is over 42, there were an average of 37 flight per day over 55 decibels (**1,141 such flights year-to-date in 2025**).

# Monthly Noise Exposure – Howard County Landmark Locations

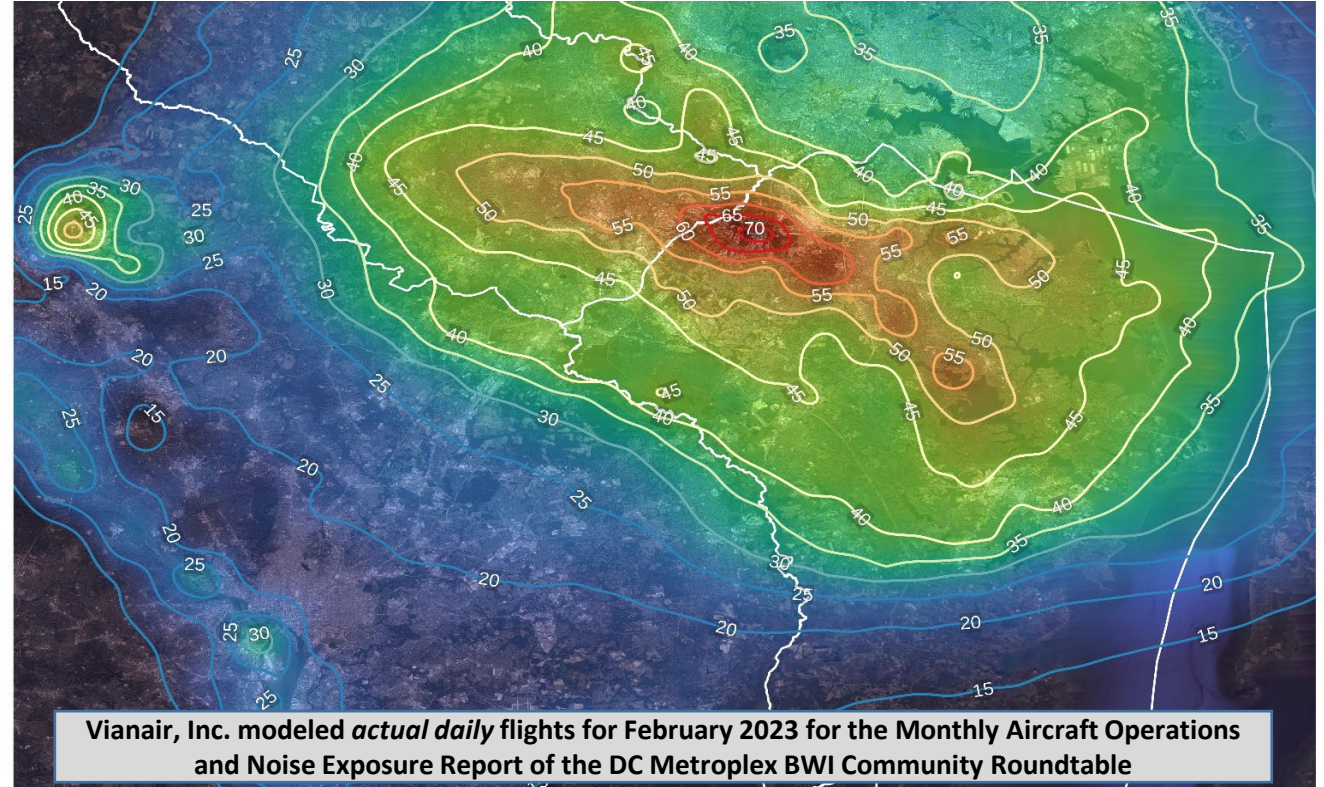
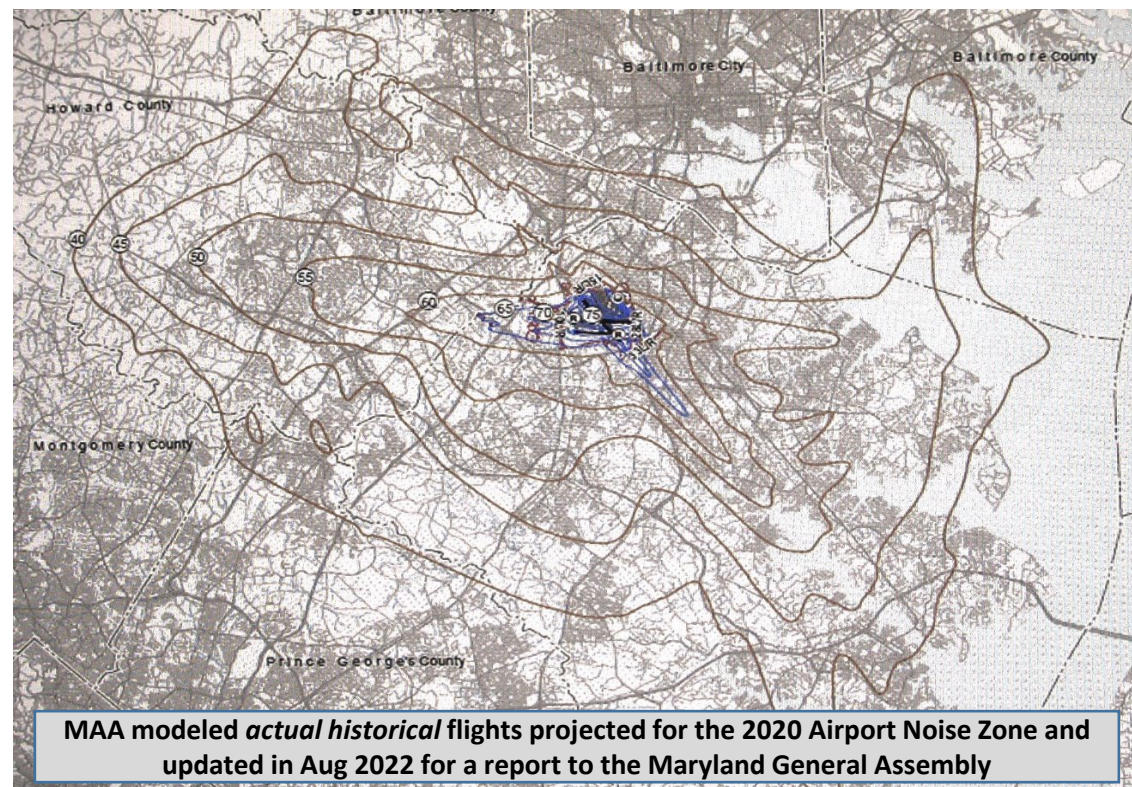
January 2025 – Both East and West Flow Operations

Name	Description	Number of Events Above 55dBA (Monthly)	Daily Average (Monthly)	Number of Events Above 55 dBA (YTD)	DNL (Monthly)
HOCO_VNM1	Howard Square Apartments	7,020	226	7,020	55.86
HOCO_VNM2	HCPSS Administration Campus	1,293	42	1,293	44.62
HOCO_VNM3	Centennial Park	419	14	419	43.76
HOCO_VNM4	HoCo General Hospital	3,900	126	3,900	49.34
HOCO_VNM5	Merriweather Post Pavillion	4,200	135	4,200	50.49
HOCO_VNM6	Oakland Mills HS	4,367	141	4,367	51.4
HOCO_VNM7	Long Reach HS	4,378	141	4,378	51.44
HOCO_VNM8	Troy Park	6,645	214	6,645	54.11
HOCO_VNM9	Harwood Park N'hood	7,239	234	7,239	55.09
HOCO_VNM10	Abiding Savior Lutheran	4,429	143	4,429	50.45
HOCO_VNM11	Tridelphia Ridge ES	59	2	59	31.01
HOCO_VNM12	Atholton HS	4,230	136	4,230	50.27
HOCO_VNM13	Christ Church Episcopal	5,105	165	5,105	54.2
HOCO_VNM14	Mayfield Woods MS	5,026	162	5,026	53.94
HOCO_VNM15	Manor Woods ES	46	1	46	32.82
HOCO_VNM16	Gateway Site	5,264	170	5,264	55.11
HOCO_VNM17	Wordour Bluffs	8,111	262	8,111	60.84
HOCO_VNM18	St. Louis Catholic	2,198	71	2,198	44.73

This table shows the noise pollution metrics at the “Landmark” locations identified by the Roundtable for Howard County, which primarily experiences departures from the airport.

Due to the high level of thrust required for take-offs, Howard County noise metrics are generally quite high, especially under concentrated flight corridors. For instance, **Oakland Mills High School (OMHS)** is approximately 8.3 miles from the end of Runway 28, the dominant runway for departures. Yet, the DNL is over 51 and there were an average of 141 flight per day over 55 decibels (**4,367 such flights year-to-date in 2025**).

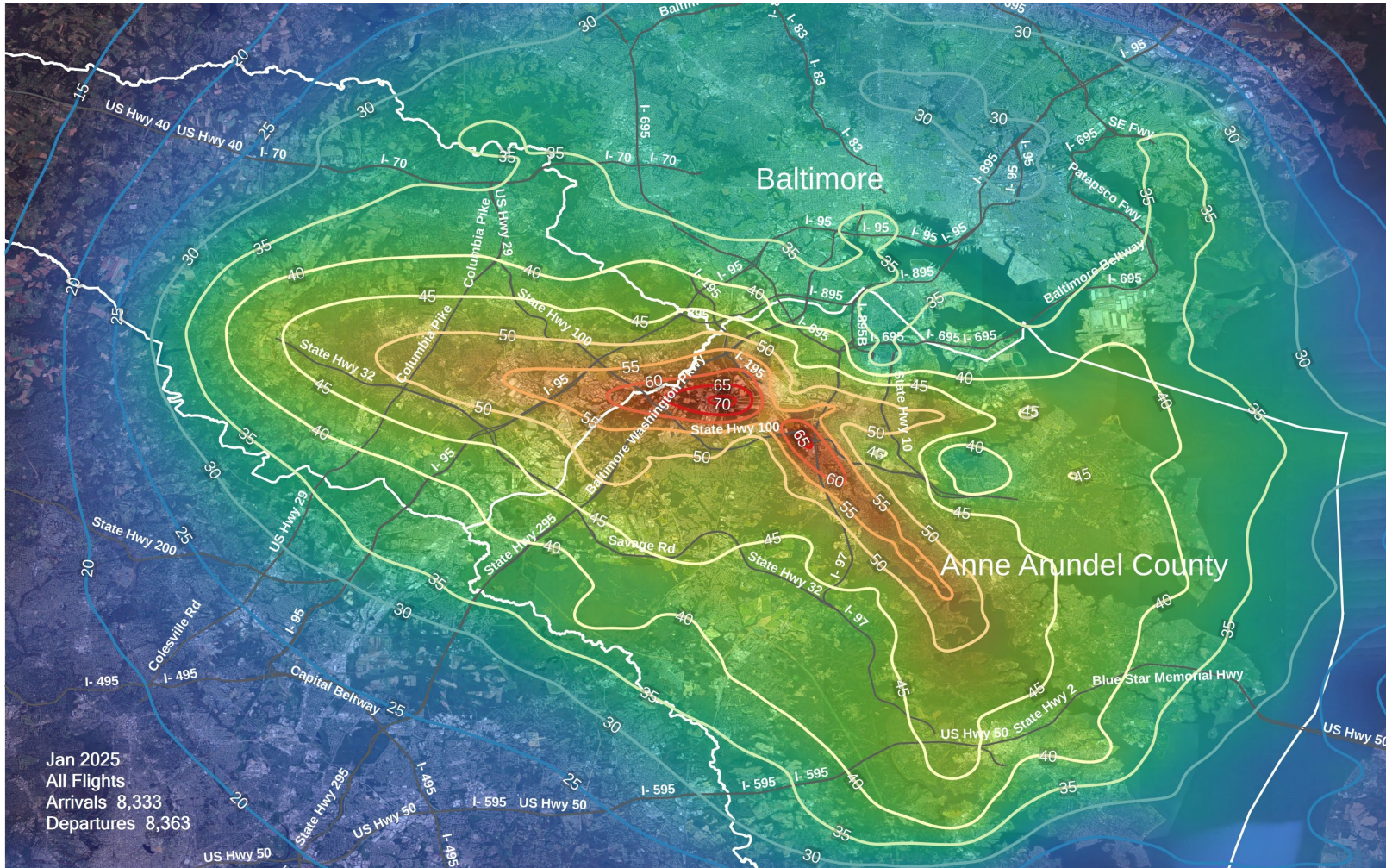
# REGIONAL MAPS OF BWI-MARSHALL NOISE POLLUTION



These images represent two versions of the mapped regional noise pollution generated by commercial flight operations at BWI-Marshall. The map on the left was generated by MDOT-MAA based on actual **historical** operations collected by the MDOT MAA's Airport Noise and Operations Monitoring System (ANOMS) with computer modeling of future expected noise. It is focused on the 65 DNL contour of the Airport Noise Zone. The Vianair-generated map on the right is based on **actual daily flights** from the airport with computer modeling of the resulting expected noise, creating a more in-depth look at all DNL noise contours.

# Noise Exposure – DNL Contours

*Howard and Anne Arundel Counties*



In this Vianair-generated map, noise is expressed in DNL contours. For reference, the **50 DNL** contour stretches westward to encompass the approximate boundaries of **Columbia/Clarksville**, eastward to **Fort Smallwood/Lake Shore/Annapolis** and south to **Crownsville /Millersville/Fort Meade**.

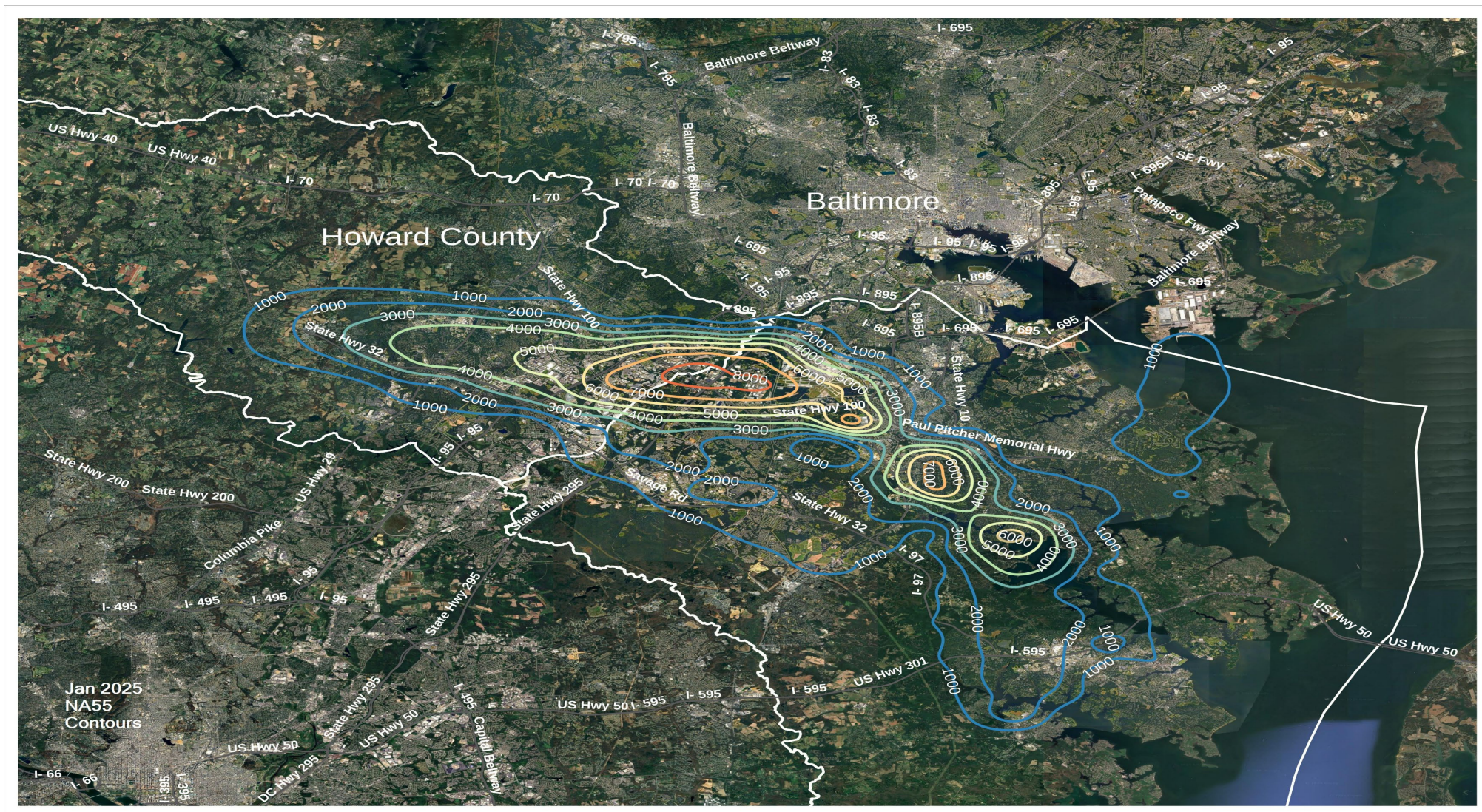
The WHO has identified adverse health effects at this noise level.

## Flight Track Density – Heat Map of Anne Arundel and Howard Counties



Flight track density analyzes the concentrations of flight activity in and out of BWI. Flight track density is calculated based on reviewing all flights for the month, then analyzing the concentration of flights within the study area. Concentration (or density) is then depicted using color. Red represents the highest density, fading to white as density lowers.

# January 2025 Contours for Number Of Events Above 55 Decibels (NA55)

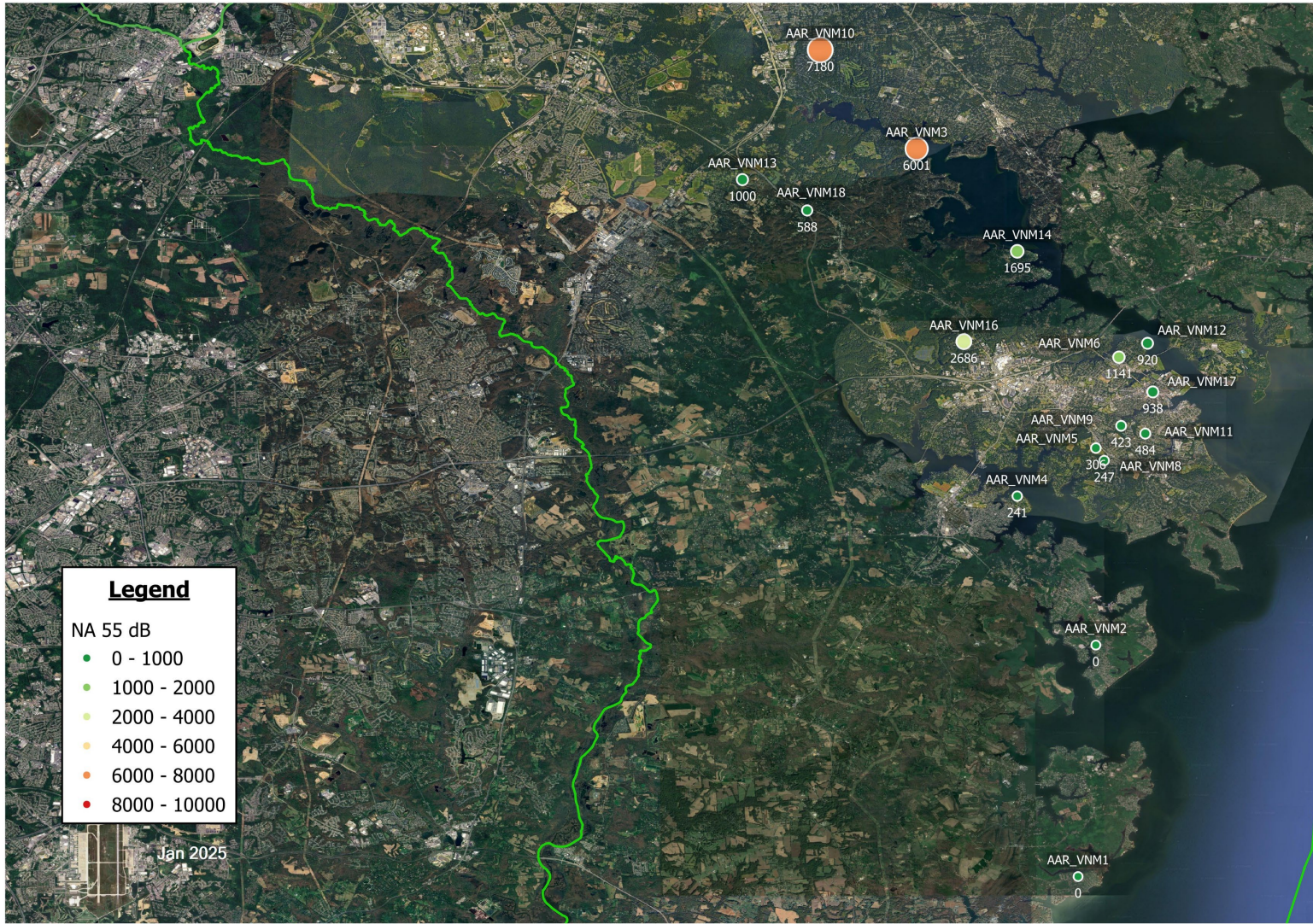


# Noise Exposure – Number of Events Above 55 dBA

*Anne Arundel County - Landmark Locations Only*

This map shows the Number of Events (single flights) at the local Landmarks during the month above the 55 decibel Threshold (NAT) for Anne Arundel County.

Note that the Annapolis peninsula and other communities along the Severn River experience many events above threshold.



# Noise Exposure – Number of Events Above 55 dBA

*Howard County - Landmark Locations Only*

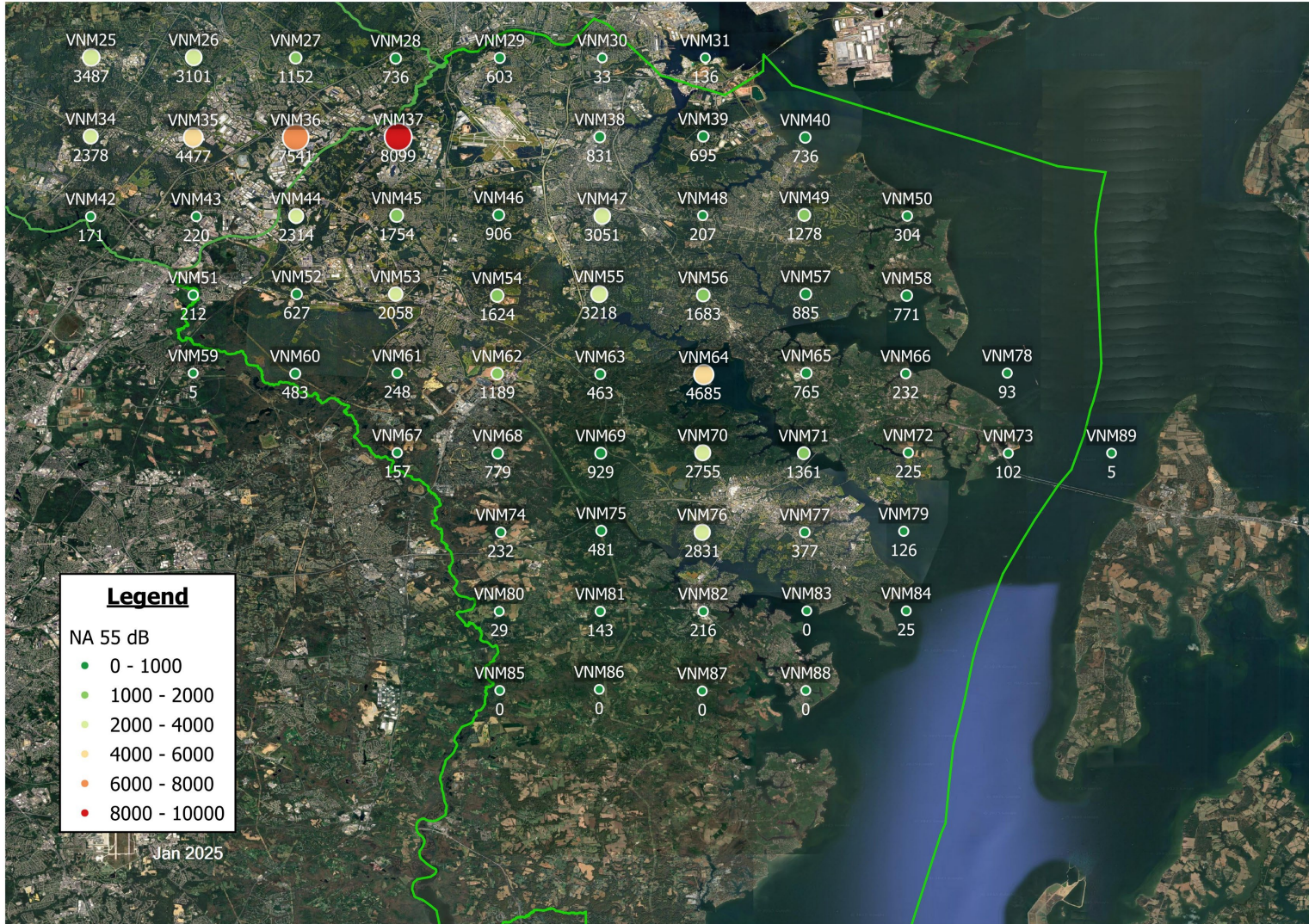
This map shows the Number of Events (single flights) at the local Landmarks during the month above the 55 decibel Threshold (NAT) for Howard County.

Note that while highly significant noise pollution extends to St. Louis Catholic School in Clarksville (HOCO\_VNM18), areas as far west as Tridelphia Ridge Elementary School (HOCO\_VNM11) also experienced many events above threshold.



# Noise Exposure – Number of Events Above 55 dBA

## Anne Arundel County – Full Virtual Noise Monitor Grid



This map shows the Number of Events (single flights) during the month above the 55 decibel Threshold (NAT) for the total grid of Virtual Noise Monitors in Anne Arundel County.

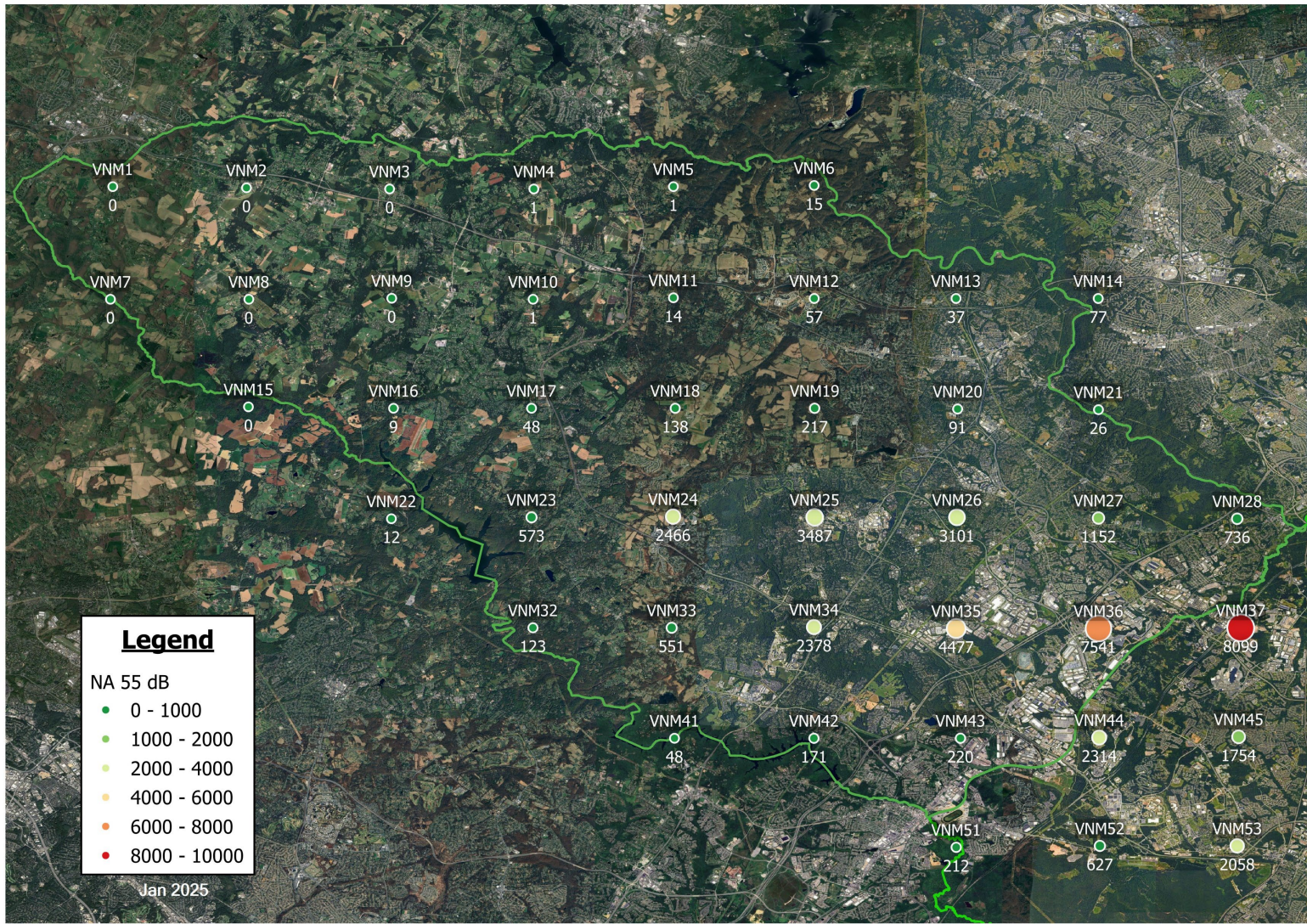
For individuals who wish to use this map to gauge the NAT for their location of interest (home, school, hospital, etc.) there will be noticeable differences in noise pollution between each Virtual Noise Monitor.

# Noise Exposure – Number of Events Above 55 dBA

## Howard County – Full Virtual Noise Monitor Grid

This map shows the Number of Events (single flights) during the month above the 55 decibel Threshold (NAT) for the total grid of Virtual Noise Monitors in Howard County.

For individuals who wish to use this map to gauge the NAT for their location of interest (home, school, hospital, etc.) there will be noticeable differences in noise pollution between each Virtual Noise Monitor.



# Noise Exposure – Full Virtual Noise Monitor Grid, All Operational Flows

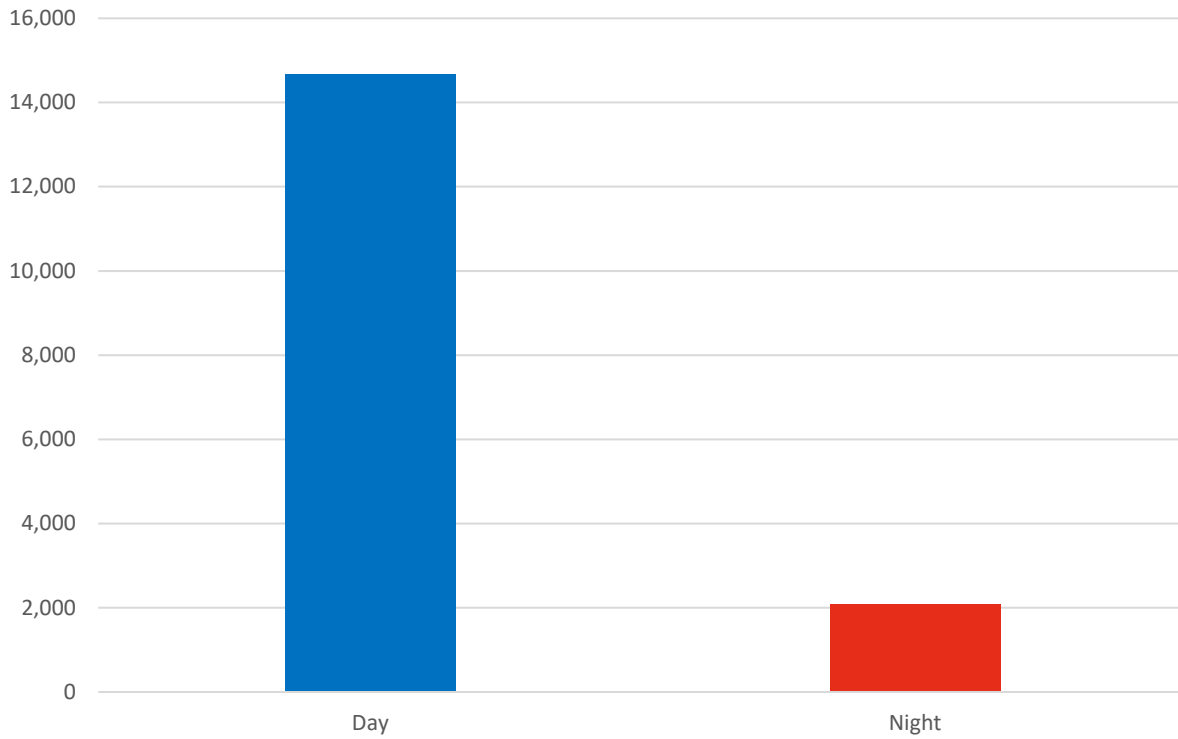
*January 2025*

Name	Number-of-Events-Above 55dBA (Total)	Daily Average	DNL	Name	Number-of-Events-Above 55dBA (Total)	Daily Average	DNL	Name	Number-of-Events-Above 55dBA (Total)	Daily Average	DNL
VNM1	0	0	9.49	VNM31	136	4	37.08	VNM61	248	8	39.46
VNM2	0	0	12.28	VNM32	123	4	33.72	VNM62	1,189	38	42.75
VNM3	0	0	15.82	VNM33	551	18	41.32	VNM63	463	15	41.7
VNM4	1	0	20.22	VNM34	2,378	77	47.07	VNM64	4,685	151	51.05
VNM5	1	0	24.69	VNM35	4,477	144	51.41	VNM65	765	25	44.25
VNM6	15	0	30.23	VNM36	7,541	243	57.34	VNM66	232	7	38.92
VNM7	0	0	10.16	VNM37	8,099	261	67.13	VNM67	157	5	36.12
VNM8	0	0	13.52	VNM38	831	27	47.48	VNM68	779	25	40.34
VNM9	0	0	17.91	VNM39	695	22	42.39	VNM69	929	30	43.36
VNM10	1	0	23.83	VNM40	736	24	42.01	VNM70	2,755	89	46.17
VNM11	14	0	29.33	VNM41	48	2	34.66	VNM71	1,361	44	43.4
VNM12	57	2	33.98	VNM42	171	6	39.07	VNM72	225	7	35.75
VNM13	37	1	34.52	VNM43	220	7	41.82	VNM73	102	3	30.62
VNM14	77	2	36.08	VNM44	2,314	75	49.25	VNM74	232	7	34.36
VNM15	0	0	14.82	VNM45	1,754	57	47.89	VNM75	481	16	41.34
VNM16	9	0	21.17	VNM46	906	29	48.34	VNM76	2,831	91	44.9
VNM17	48	2	30.18	VNM47	3,051	98	49.07	VNM77	377	12	37.25
VNM18	138	4	37.01	VNM48	207	7	39.05	VNM78	93	3	32.96
VNM19	217	7	39.3	VNM49	1,278	41	44.84	VNM79	126	4	32.04
VNM20	91	3	39.64	VNM50	304	10	39.43	VNM80	29	1	29.39
VNM21	26	1	36.83	VNM51	212	7	39.05	VNM81	143	5	34.09
VNM22	12	0	23.06	VNM52	627	20	40.89	VNM82	216	7	33.63
VNM23	573	18	36.32	VNM53	2,058	66	46.44	VNM83	0	0	24.36
VNM24	2,466	80	45.3	VNM54	1,624	52	44.38	VNM84	25	1	24.96
VNM25	3,487	112	48.83	VNM55	3,218	104	49.04	VNM85	0	0	20.55
VNM26	3,101	100	49.08	VNM56	1,683	54	47.64	VNM86	0	0	20.47
VNM27	1,152	37	47.25	VNM57	885	29	44.42	VNM87	0	0	20.14
VNM28	736	24	46.43	VNM58	771	25	41.92	VNM88	0	0	17.23
VNM29	603	19	41.62	VNM59	5	0	31.73	VNM89	5	0	22.01
VNM30	33	1	34.05	VNM60	483	16	40.15				

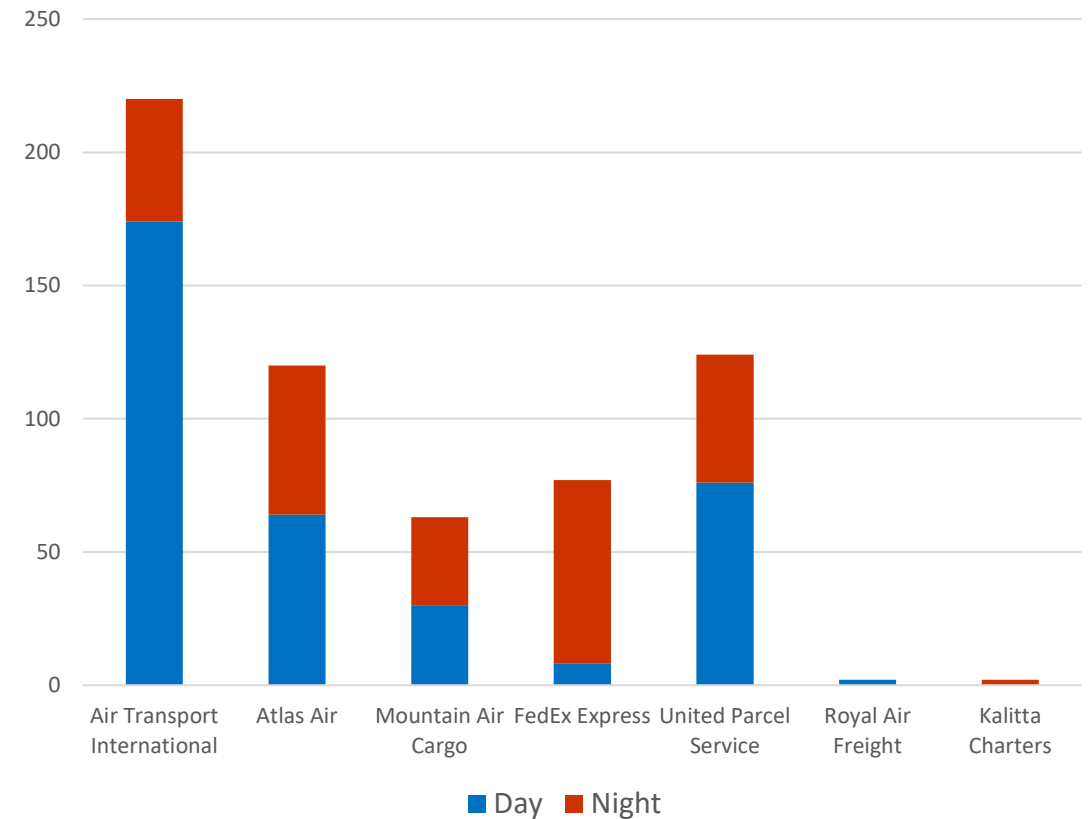
# Monthly Operations – Daytime vs. Nighttime

January 2025

## Monthly Operations - Day vs. Night



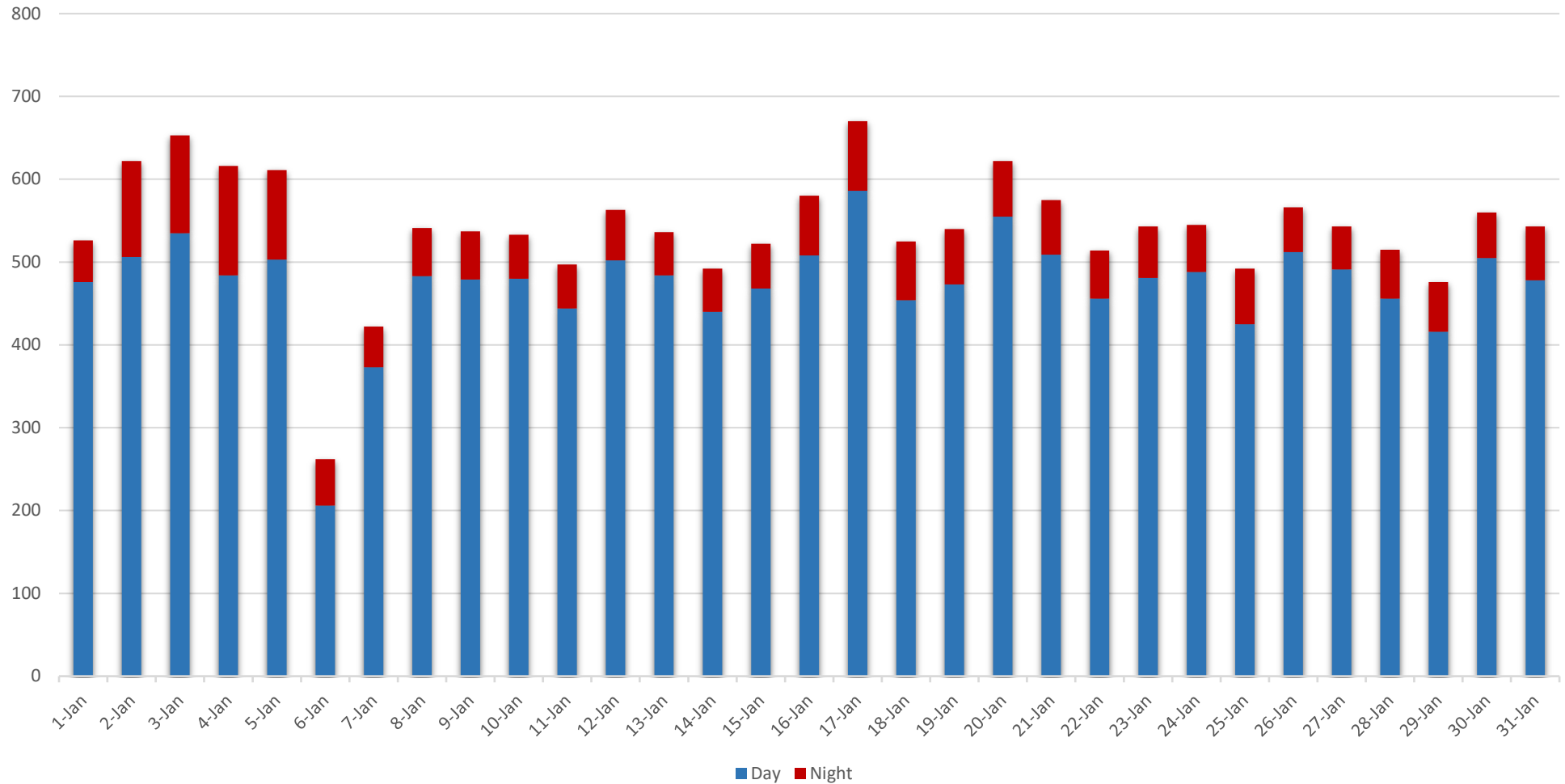
## Cargo Operators - Daytime Vs. Nighttime



# Monthly Operations

January 2025

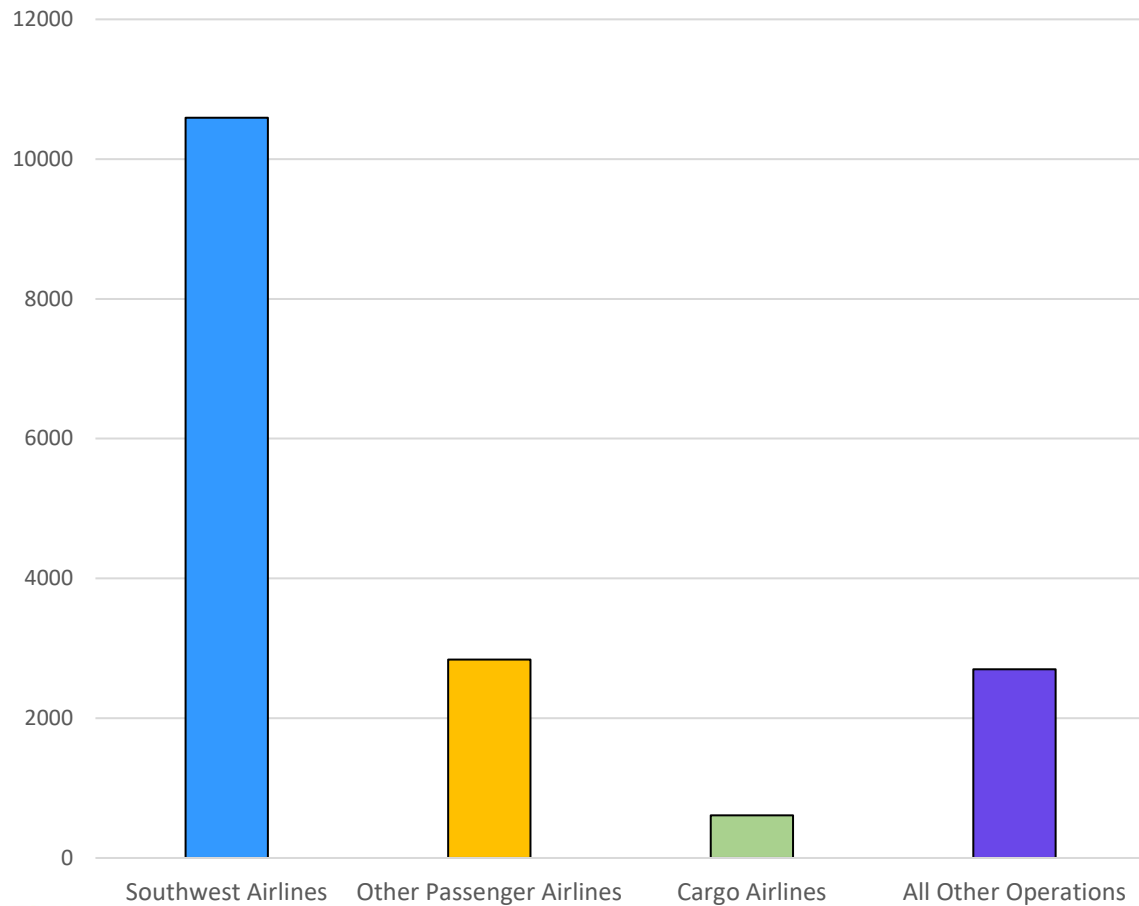
## Daily Operations (Day vs. Night)



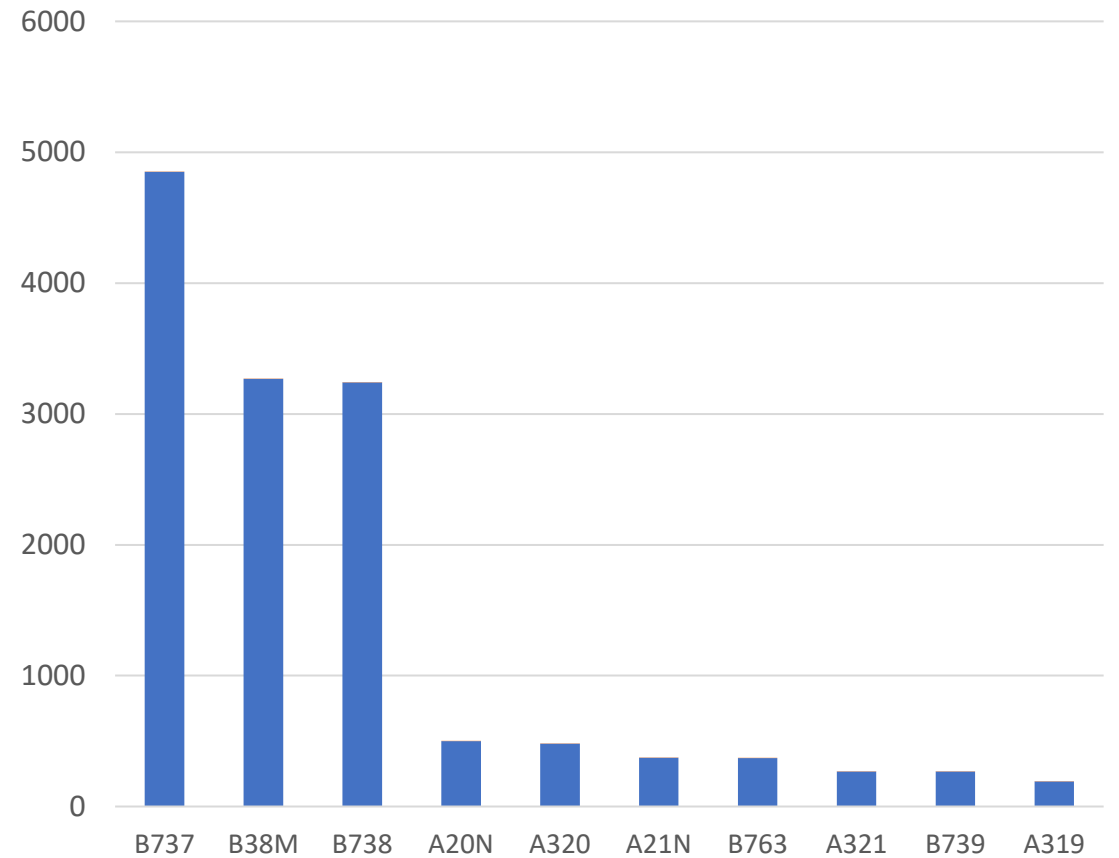
# Aircraft Operations

January 2025

### Southwest vs. All Other Operations



### Total Operations by Aircraft Type (Top 10 Aircraft)



# Aircraft Noise Basics

Noise is defined as “unwanted sound.” There are many ways to measure noise. Two common metrics will be used in these reports: Day-Night Level (DNL) and Number-of-Events-Above (NA).

DNL is the standard metric used by the Federal Aviation Administration as required by federal regulation. Federal guidelines recommend **DNL 65** as the level of aircraft noise exposure that is incompatible with noise-sensitive applications including residential development. A problem with DNL is it is difficult for the public to understand and doesn't seem to reflect what residents experience on a daily basis.

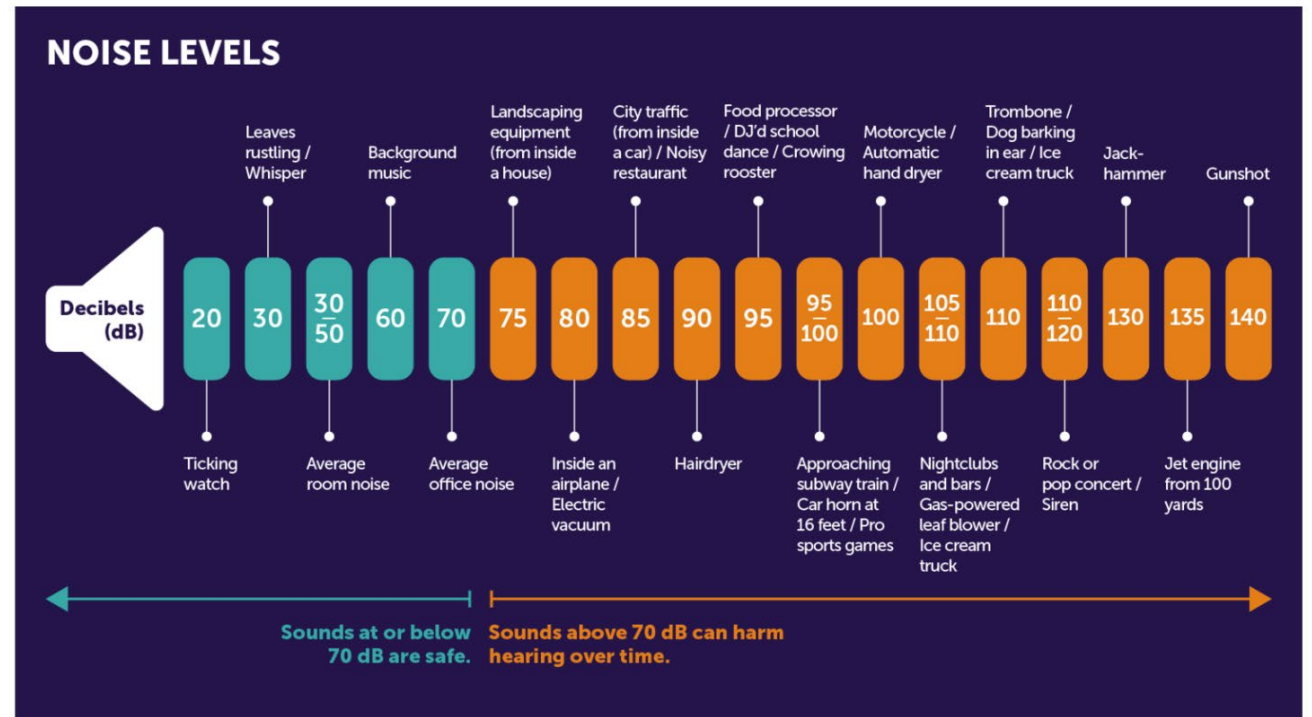
The NA noise metric counts the number of times the noise level exceeds a specific threshold. In this report, the Number-of-Events-Above 55 metric (NA55) is calculated. NA55 quantifies the number of aircraft events resulting in noise exposure of 55 decibels or higher at each location depicted.

# Noise Basics

The scale below is intended to provide a basic understand of noise levels which are expressed in A-weighted decibels (dB or dBA). The purpose of the chart is to provide examples of noise/sound level associated with common events. This is intended to provide the reader with a basic understanding or context of “how loud” 55, 65, 75, etc., decibels is.



It is worth noting that noise (sound) exposure and noise annoyance are different. Noise exposure is based on acoustics and represents a measure of sound energy a person is exposed to. Sound exposure at a specific level (i.e. 65 db) may be perceived differently based on the source of the noise (i.e. music at 65 decibels vs. aircraft noise at 65 decibels). The source of the sound and the individual’s perception of the source is one of the many factors that contribute to our reaction.

Annoyance (annoyed, highly annoyed, not annoyed, etc.) is based on an individual’s multi-factored response to noise exposure and varies by individual. However, aircraft noise consistently generates greater levels of high annoyance among surveyed populations than other types of transportation noise. **Of note for this report, high noise annoyance has been scientifically associated with disease.**



# Why the DNL metric is controversial

In October 2021, the General Accounting Office of the United States Government (GAO) published a review of the FAA's implementation of the precision flight path component of NextGen, which is called Performance Based Navigation (PBN). That analysis showed that because DNL combines the effects of several components of noise into a single metric, it does not provide a clear picture of the flight activity or associated noise levels at a given location. For example, 100 flights per day can yield the same DNL as one flight per day at a higher decibel level, due to the averaging effect of FAA's metric.

Flights per day, by decibel (dB) level	Day-Night Average Sound Level
1 flight per day at 114.4 dB 	65 dB
100 flights per day at 94.4 dB 	65 dB

**Note:** For more details, see fig. 1 in GAO-22-105844.

Source: GAO analysis of Federal Aviation Administration information. | GAO-22-105844

The GAO's analysis and other research demonstrate the limitations of FAA relying solely on DNL to identify potential noise problems. This illustrates why communities often view DNL as a "permissive" measure, designed to allow increased airplane operations.

## For More Information

For more information about the contents of this report or  
for questions about the DC Metroplex BWI Community Roundtable

Please Visit:

<https://marylandaviation.com/environmental/environmental-compliance-sustainability/dc-metroplex-bwi-community-roundtable>