



# BWI-Thurgood Marshall Airport Operations and Noise Exposure

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

## Monthly Report for April 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



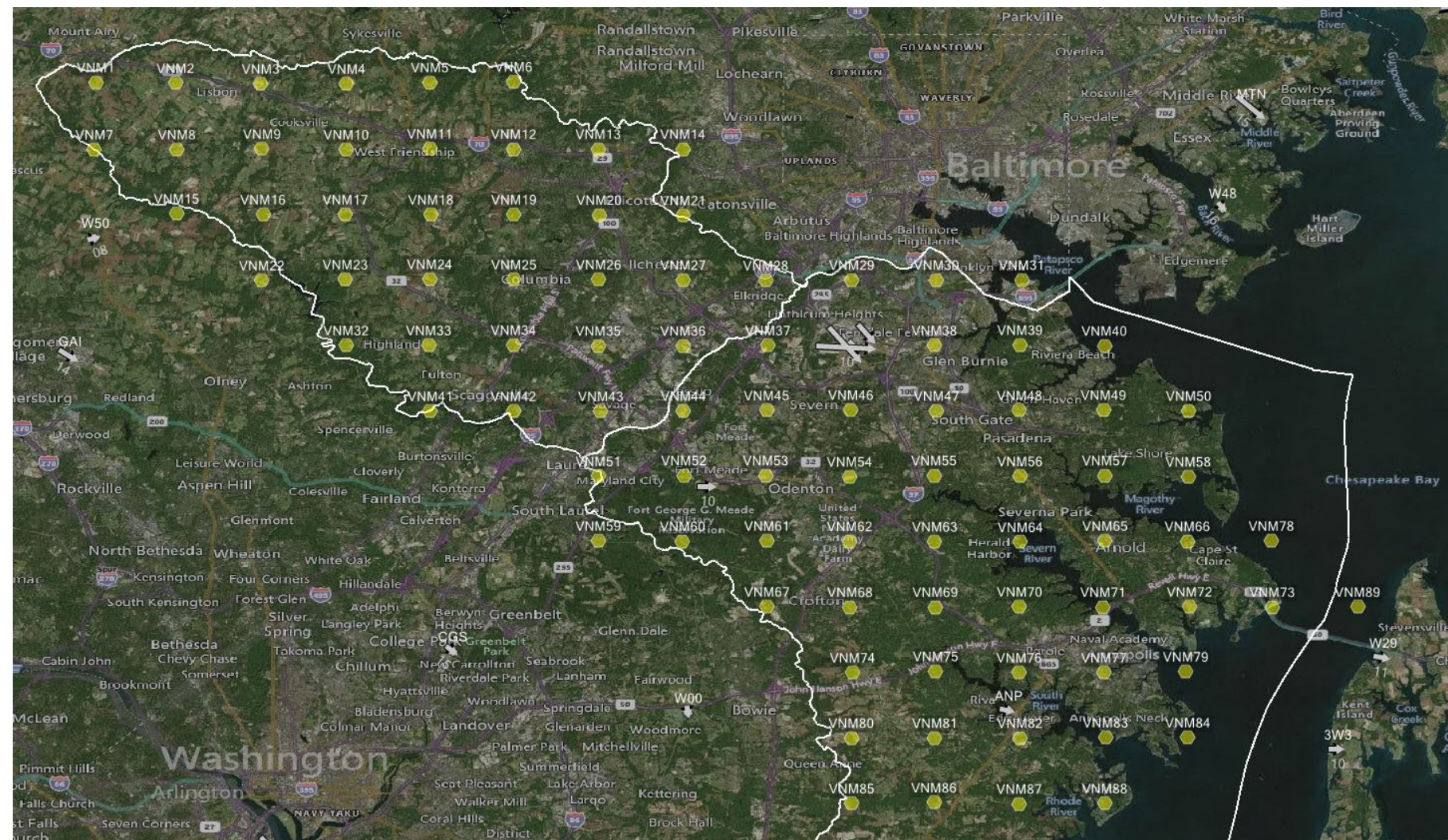
This is a summary of a larger report (the “Monthly Report”) prepared by Vianair, Inc. (“Vianair”) for the benefit of the DC Metroplex BWI Community Roundtable (the “BWI Roundtable”).

**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>

- 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

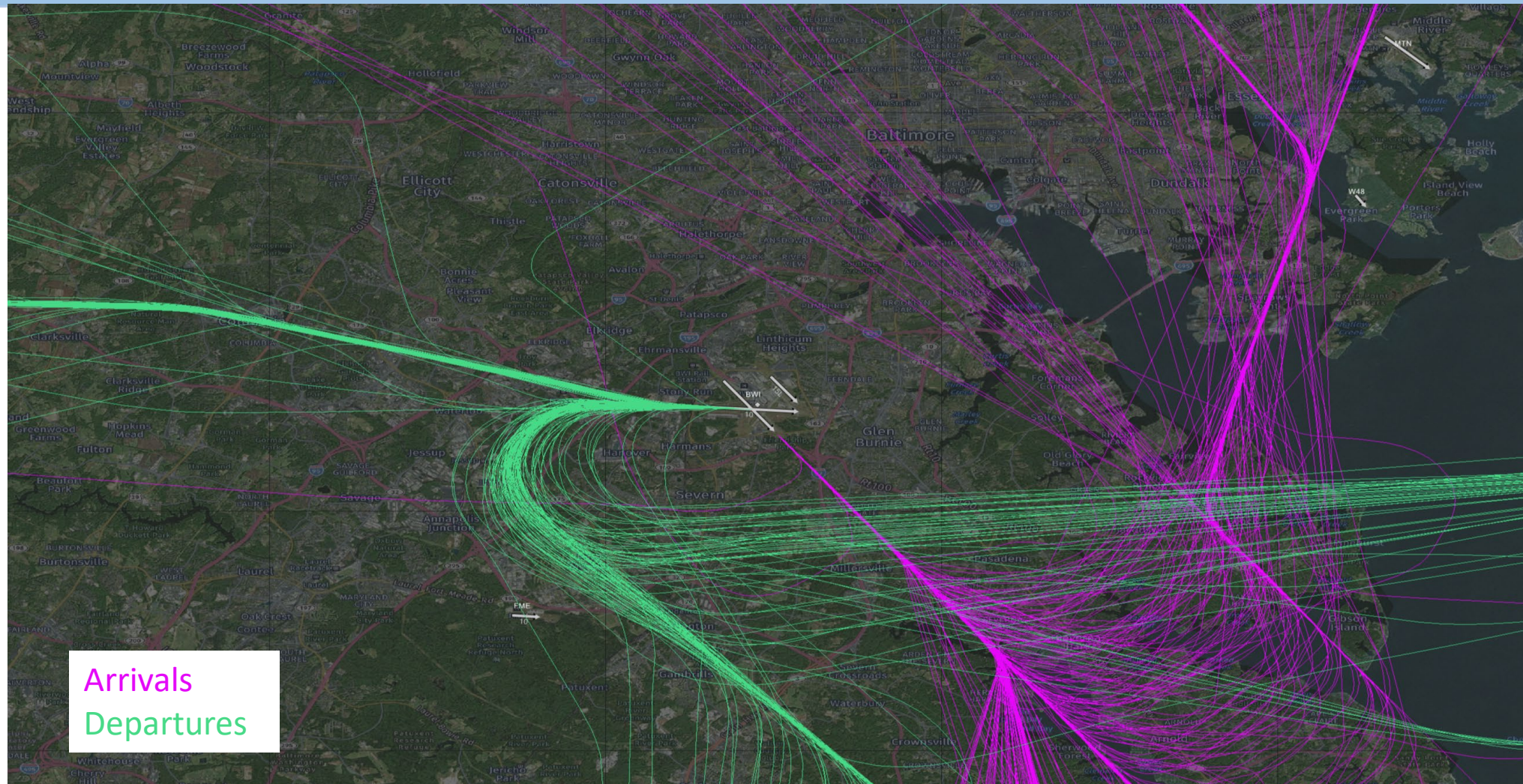
Prevailing wind speed, direction and weather factors determine the direction of air traffic flow from BWI Marshall airport. Aircraft usually take off and land into the wind to meet safety and operational requirements.

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.

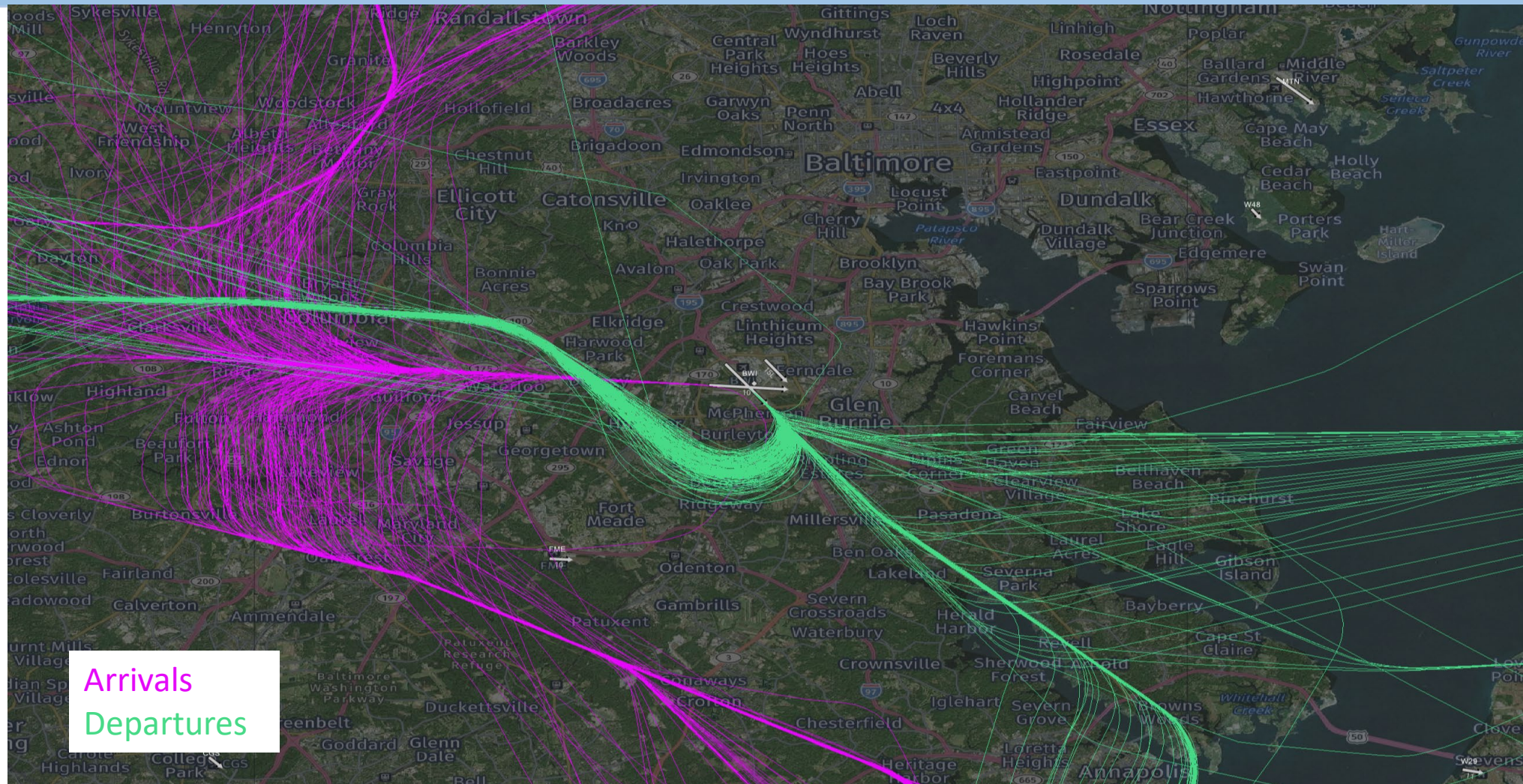
The next two pages illustrate a typical East Flow day and a typical West Flow day at the airport. Sample days were analyzed by Vianair and then depicted as all arrivals and departures consistent with a specific flow on a given day. While these flight patterns are typical, they may vary on other days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

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





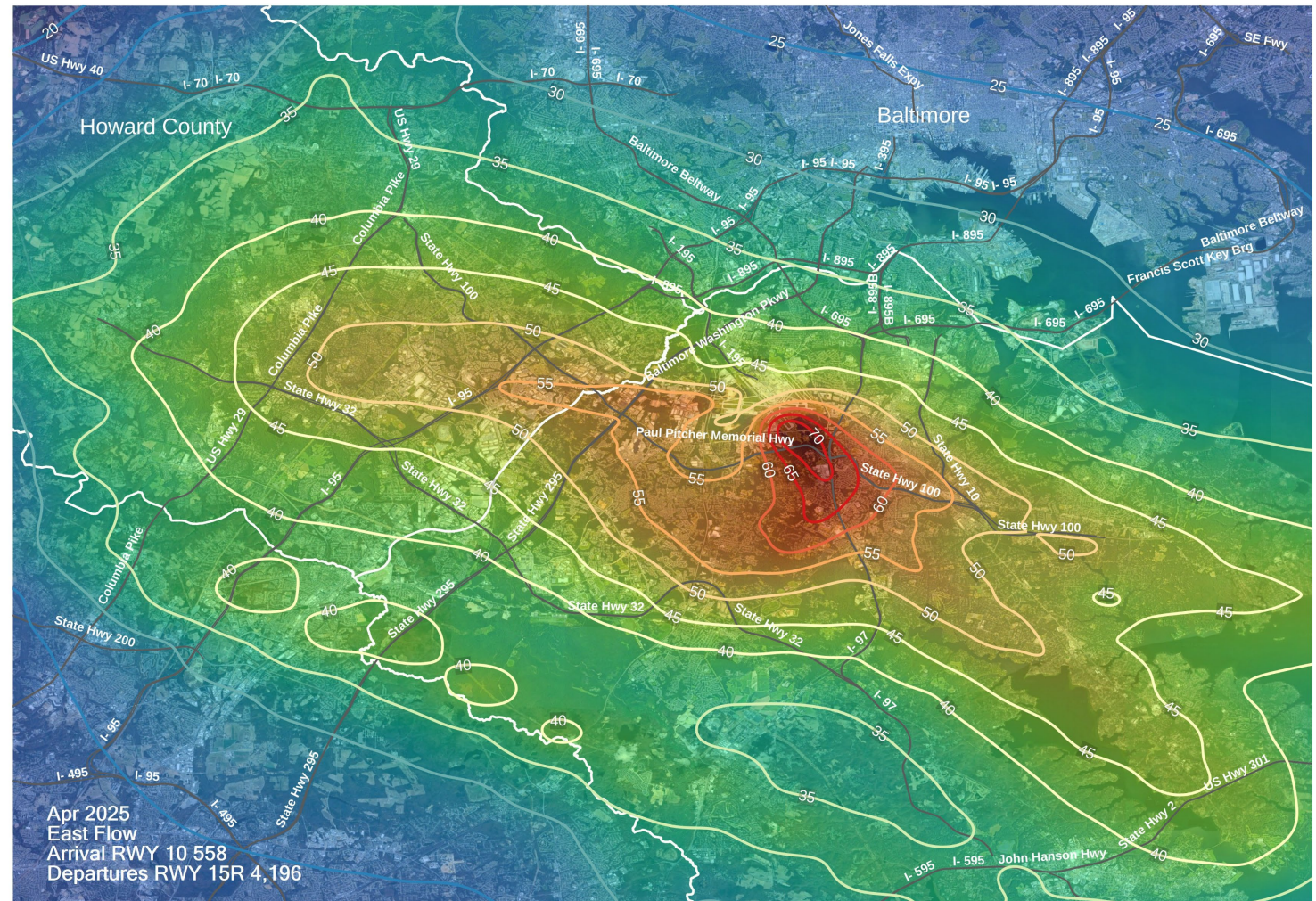
## Visual representation of a typical day of traffic over the Baltimore region during East Flow operations at BWI-Marshall



# East Flow Operations – DNL Noise Exposure

East Flow: Arrivals Runway 10 & Departures Runway 15R

Note: The DNL Map for KBWI East Flow is calculated for Arrivals to Runway 10 only, and Departures from Runway 15R only, over the entire month, which equals the sum of all time periods when the airport was in an East Flow and these specific runways were in use. Arrivals/Departures to/from other runways during this time period are excluded from this calculation.



# Monthly Noise Exposure – Anne Arundel County Landmark Locations

*April 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	2	0	2	14.28
AAR_VNM2	JETNA	3	0	5	20.34
AAR_VNM3	Arden on the Severn	5,378	179	21,896	55.3
AAR_VNM4	London Public House	302	10	1,193	36.24
AAR_VNM5	Annapolis Middle School	297	10	1,157	35.92
AAR_VNM6	West Annapolis Elementary	1,442	48	4,630	44.16
AAR_VNM7	Herald Harbor	3	0	4	14.04
AAR_VNM8	Eastport Terrace	563	19	1,761	37.16
AAR_VNM9	Truxton Park	471	16	1,575	38
AAR_VNM10	Shipleys Choice Elementary	6,238	208	25,740	57.72
AAR_VNM11	Robinwood	234	8	899	34.24
AAR_VNM12	Wordour Bluffs	1,463	49	4,189	43.5
AAR_VNM13	Millersville Elementary School	775	26	3,231	42.84
AAR_VNM14	Sherwood Forest	2,287	76	7,281	48.55
AAR_VNM15	Brookeville, Montgomery County	6	0	13	22.54
AAR_VNM16	Rolling Knolls	1,979	66	9,494	45.14
AAR_VNM17	Maryland State House	1,214	40	3,828	42.13
AAR_VNM18	I-97 and MD 178 Crownsville	397	13	1,880	42.12

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 44, there were an average of 48 flight per day over 55 decibels (**4,630 such flights year-to-date in 2025**).

# Monthly Noise Exposure – Howard County Landmark Locations

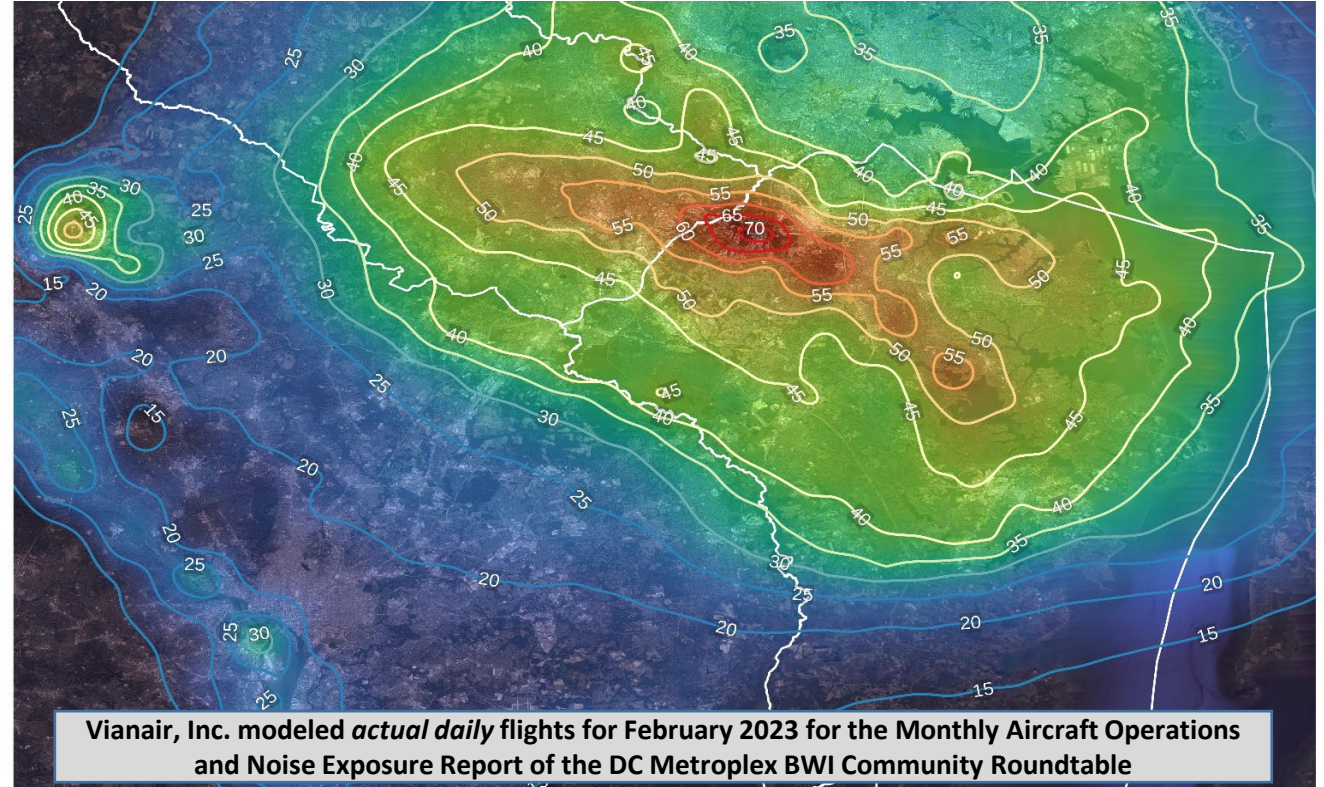
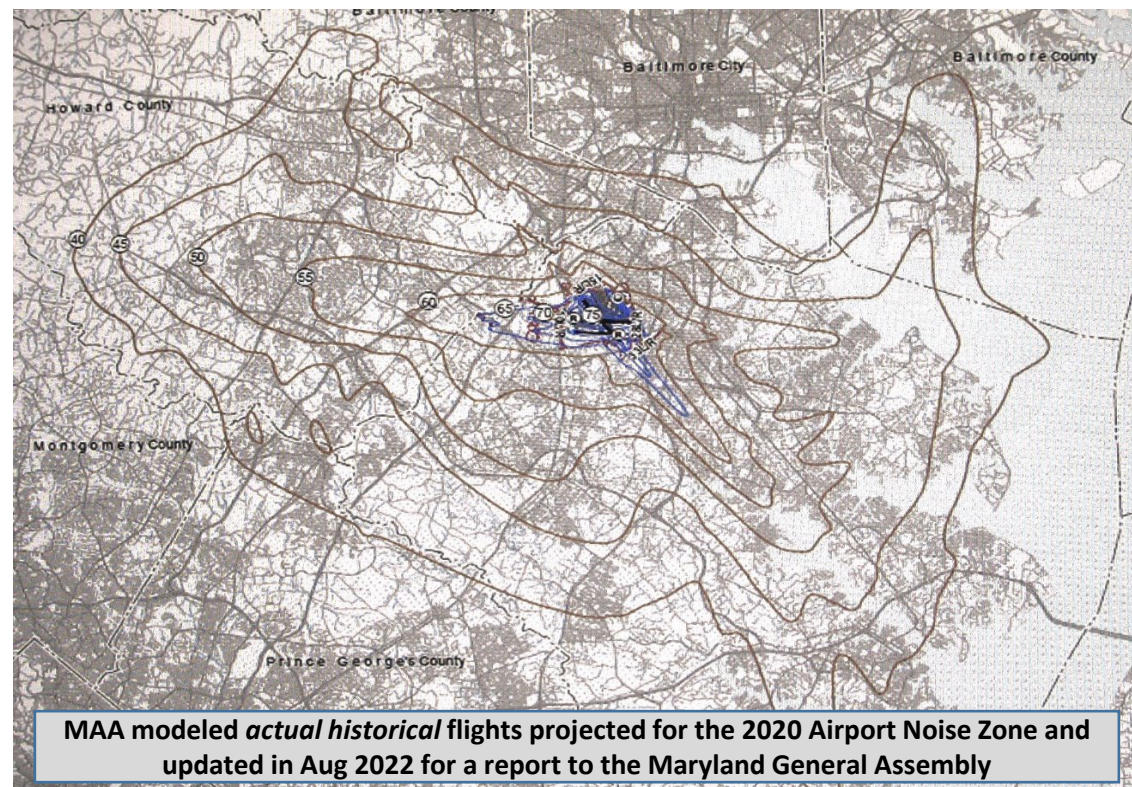
*April 2025 – Both East and West Flow Operations*

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	3,868	129	26,693	52.04
HOCO_VNM2	HCPSS Administration Campus	3,090	103	7,226	48.74
HOCO_VNM3	Centennial Park	1,789	60	3,061	47.56
HOCO_VNM4	HoCo General Hospital	5,414	180	17,654	51.42
HOCO_VNM5	Merriweather Post Pavillion	5,320	177	18,424	52.62
HOCO_VNM6	Oakland Mills HS	5,395	180	18,987	53.64
HOCO_VNM7	Long Reach HS	5,390	180	18,989	54.53
HOCO_VNM8	Troy Park	6,473	216	26,235	56.26
HOCO_VNM9	Harwood Park N'hood	6,760	225	27,615	59.33
HOCO_VNM10	Abiding Savior Lutheran	5,415	181	19,531	50.59
HOCO_VNM11	Tridelphia Ridge ES	97	3	301	34.76
HOCO_VNM12	Atholton HS	4,681	156	18,665	49.98
HOCO_VNM13	Christ Church Episcopal	4,461	149	21,825	52.42
HOCO_VNM14	Mayfield Woods MS	5,732	191	21,281	54.24
HOCO_VNM15	Manor Woods ES	1,312	44	1,934	44.46
HOCO_VNM16	Gateway Site	3,966	132	21,985	52.54
HOCO_VNM17	Wordour Bluffs	7,896	263	33,748	57.79
HOCO_VNM18	St. Louis Catholic	2,139	71	8,641	45.65

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 53 and there were an average of 180 flight per day over 55 decibels (**17,654 such flights year-to-date in 2025**).

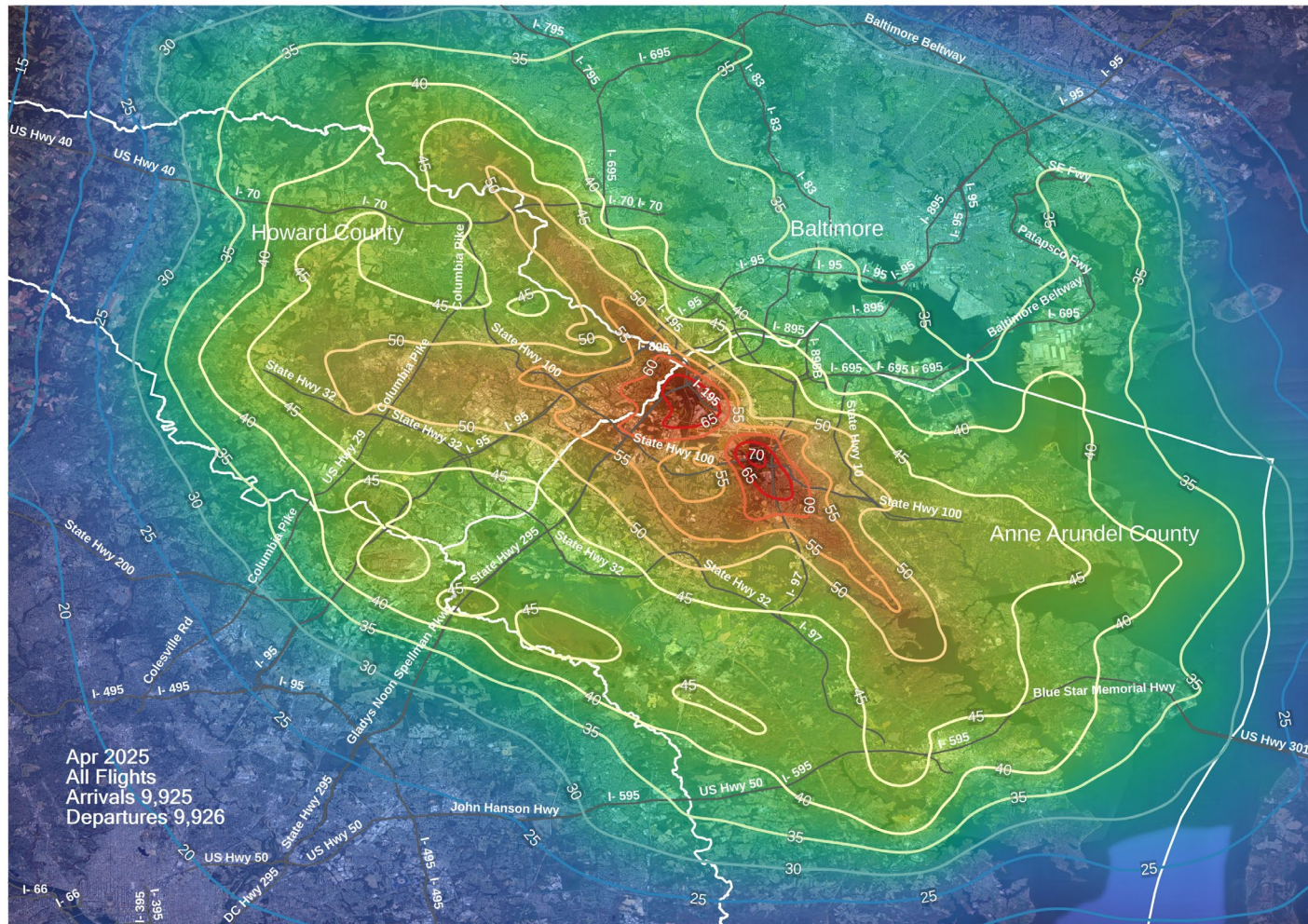
# REGIONAL MAPS OF BWI-MARSHALL NOISE POLLUTION



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.

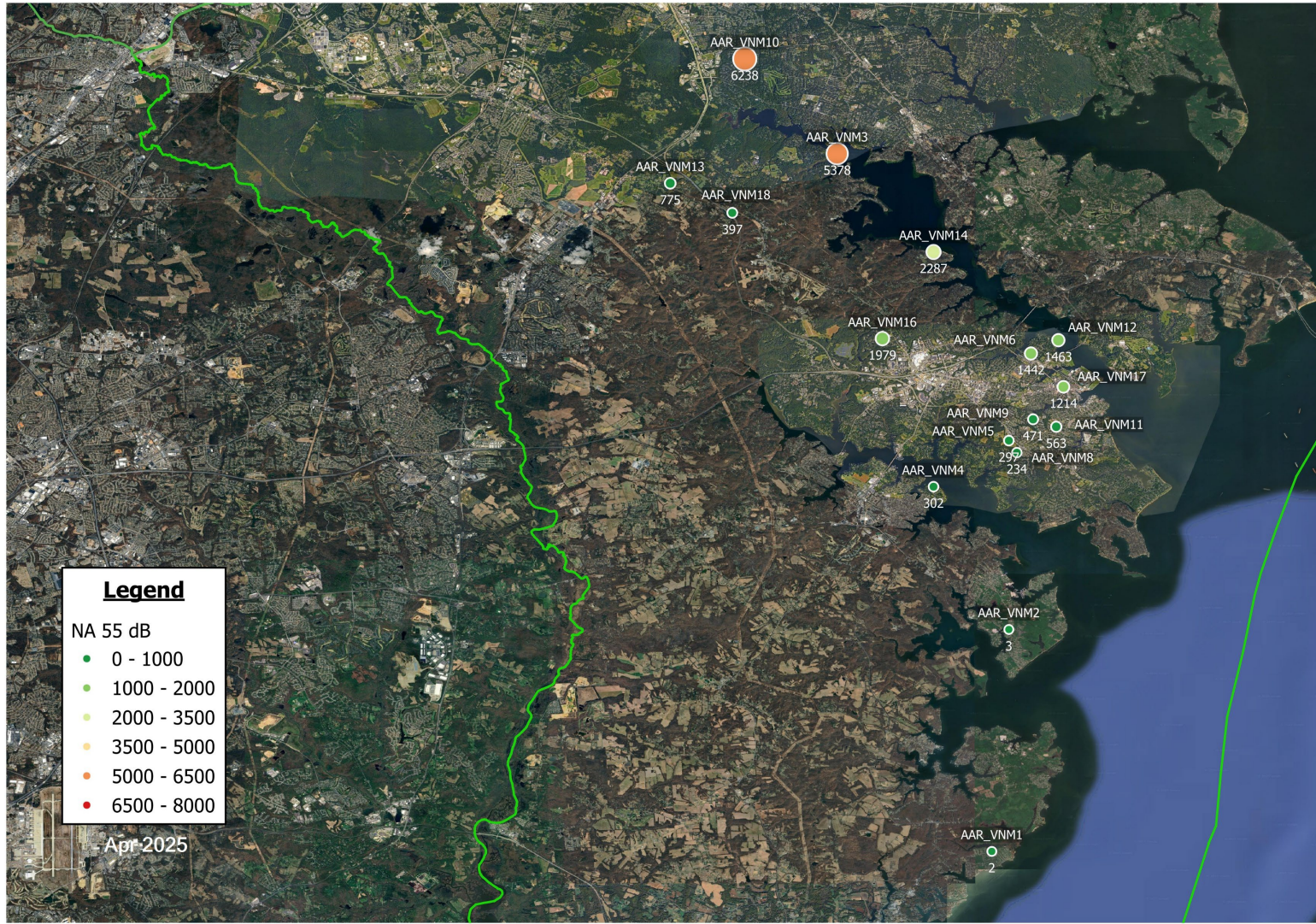


# Noise Exposure – Number of Events Above 55 dBA

*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.

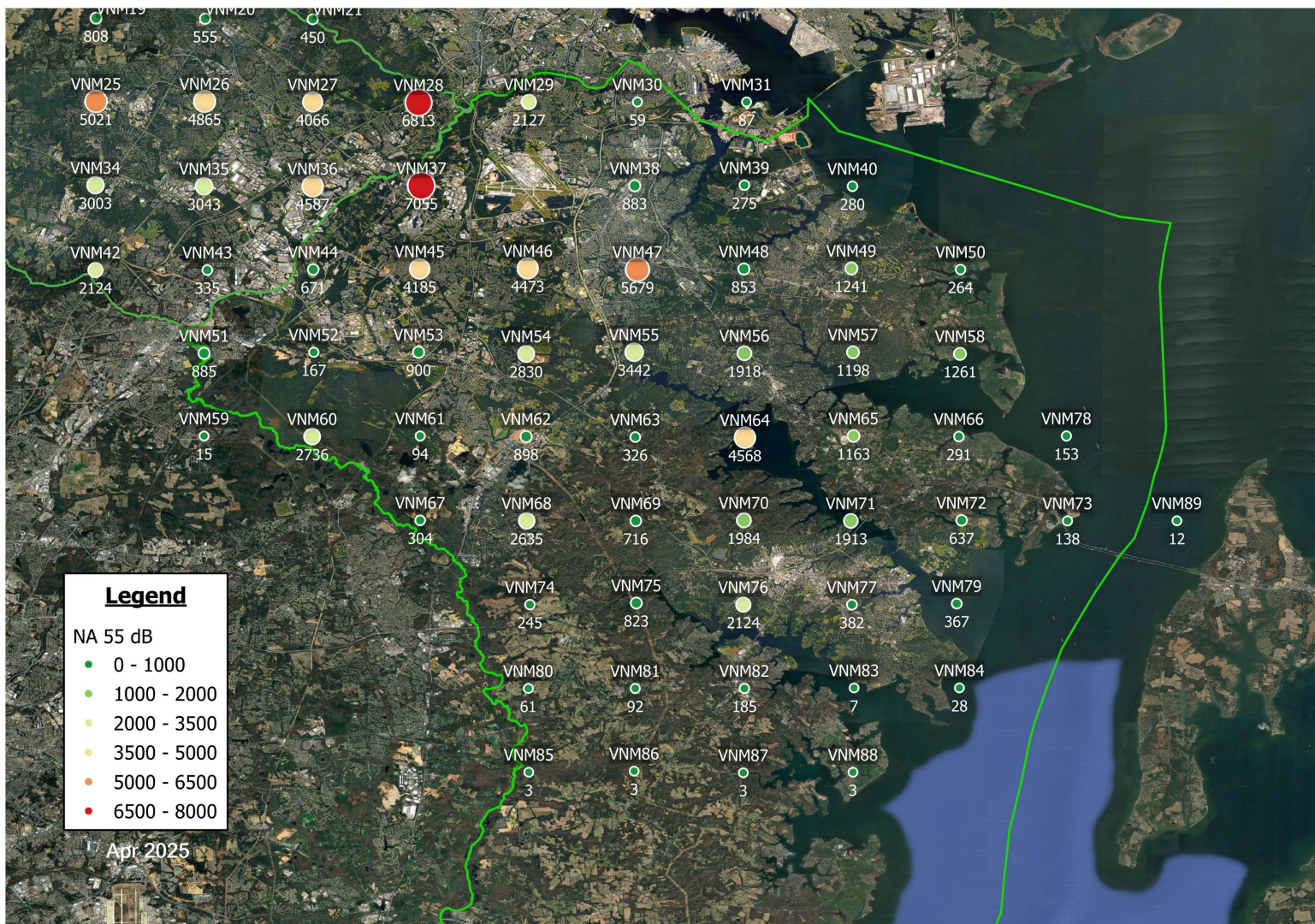


# Noise Exposure – Number of Events Above 55 dBA

## 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.

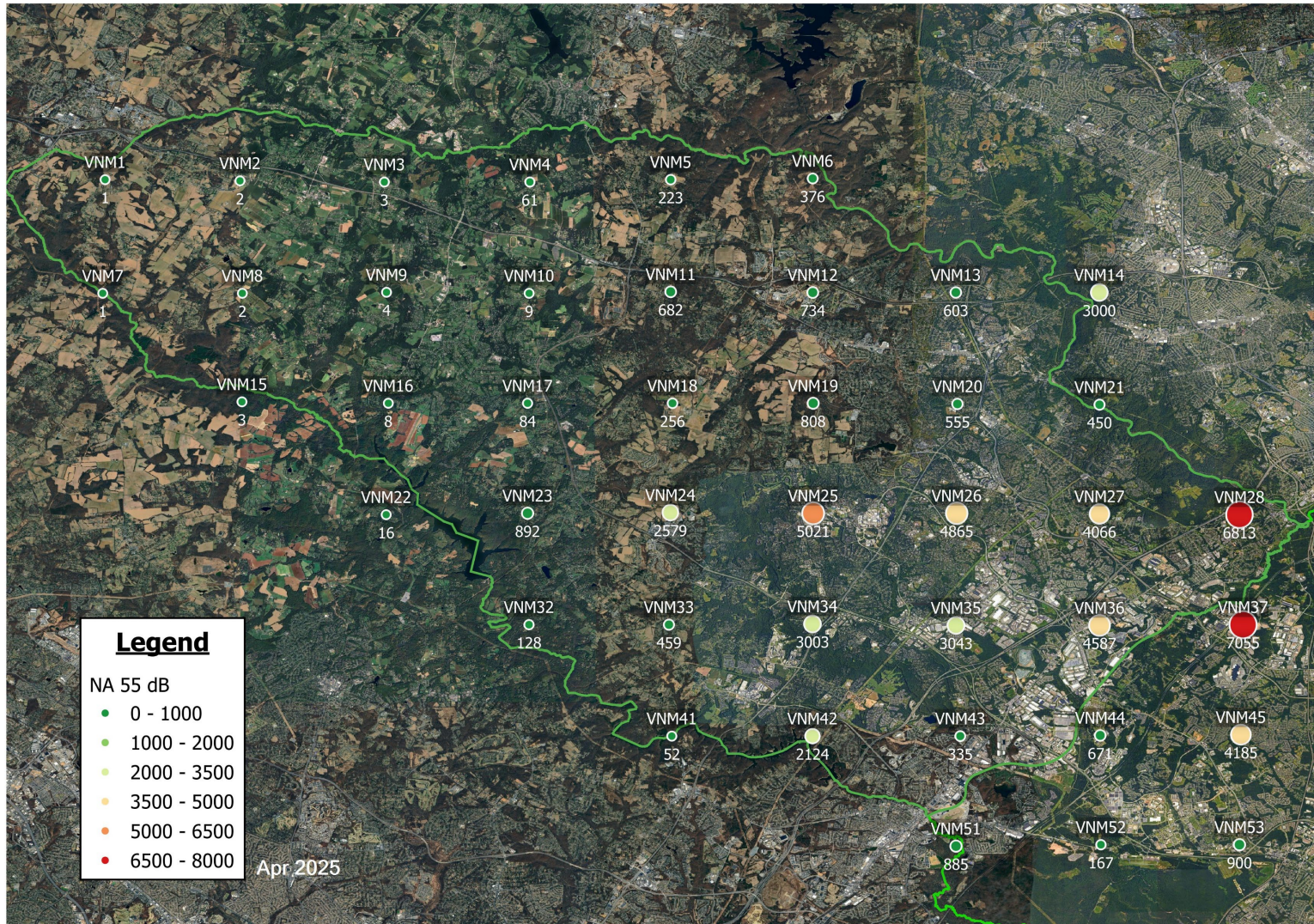


# Noise Exposure – Number of Events Above 55 dBA

## 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

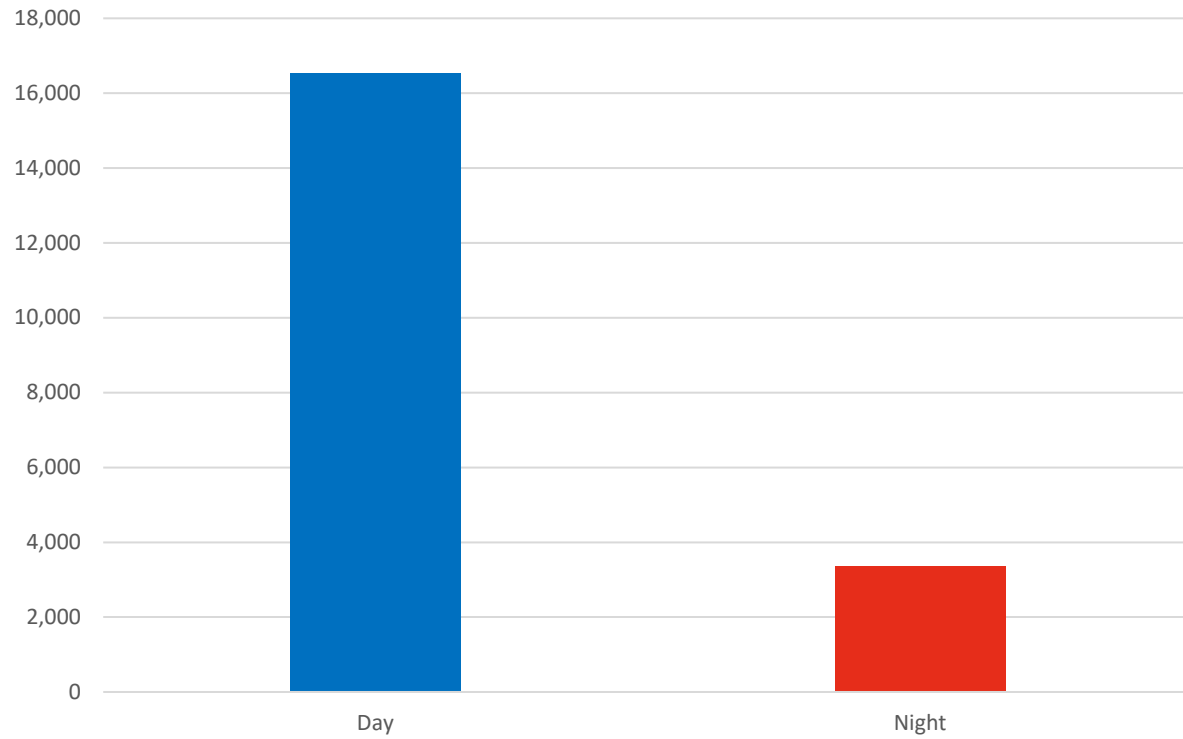
*April 2025*

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	1	0	12.78	VNM31	87	3	36.96	VNM61	94	3	41.24
VNM2	2	0	15.29	VNM32	128	4	33.95	VNM62	898	30	43.82
VNM3	3	0	20.16	VNM33	459	15	41.22	VNM63	326	11	42.74
VNM4	61	2	31.11	VNM34	3,003	100	48.15	VNM64	4,568	152	51.52
VNM5	223	7	38.21	VNM35	3,043	101	49.25	VNM65	1,163	39	45.81
VNM6	376	13	40.46	VNM36	4,587	153	53.55	VNM66	291	10	40.01
VNM7	1	0	13.03	VNM37	7,055	235	63.18	VNM67	304	10	41.69
VNM8	2	0	16.56	VNM38	883	29	50.95	VNM68	2,635	88	45.22
VNM9	4	0	21.47	VNM39	275	9	39.94	VNM69	716	24	43.06
VNM10	9	0	28.89	VNM40	280	9	39.76	VNM70	1,984	66	46.27
VNM11	682	23	42.35	VNM41	52	2	35.92	VNM71	1,913	64	45.27
VNM12	734	24	45.32	VNM42	2,124	71	47	VNM72	637	21	39.82
VNM13	603	20	44.27	VNM43	335	11	43	VNM73	138	5	33.62
VNM14	3,000	100	49.17	VNM44	671	22	45.31	VNM74	245	8	37.71
VNM15	3	0	17.48	VNM45	4,185	140	53.97	VNM75	823	27	42.59
VNM16	8	0	23.72	VNM46	4,473	149	57.22	VNM76	2,124	71	44.98
VNM17	84	3	33.91	VNM47	5,679	189	54.21	VNM77	382	13	37.98
VNM18	256	9	41.59	VNM48	853	28	47.98	VNM78	153	5	35.28
VNM19	808	27	45.37	VNM49	1,241	41	45.27	VNM79	367	12	34.76
VNM20	555	19	43.69	VNM50	264	9	39.68	VNM80	61	2	31.8
VNM21	450	15	45.15	VNM51	885	30	43.83	VNM81	92	3	33.24
VNM22	16	1	24.84	VNM52	167	6	40.19	VNM82	185	6	35.02
VNM23	892	30	38.61	VNM53	900	30	45.04	VNM83	7	0	26.55
VNM24	2,579	86	47.11	VNM54	2,830	94	49.34	VNM84	28	1	26.34
VNM25	5,021	167	51.32	VNM55	3,442	115	50.35	VNM85	3	0	23.16
VNM26	4,865	162	53.27	VNM56	1,918	64	48.84	VNM86	3	0	22.69
VNM27	4,066	136	53.39	VNM57	1,198	40	46.07	VNM87	3	0	22.3
VNM28	6,813	227	54.59	VNM58	1,261	42	44.65	VNM88	3	0	19.7
VNM29	2,127	71	45.57	VNM59	15	1	38.23	VNM89	12	0	25.38
VNM30	59	2	37.55	VNM60	2,736	91	48.19				

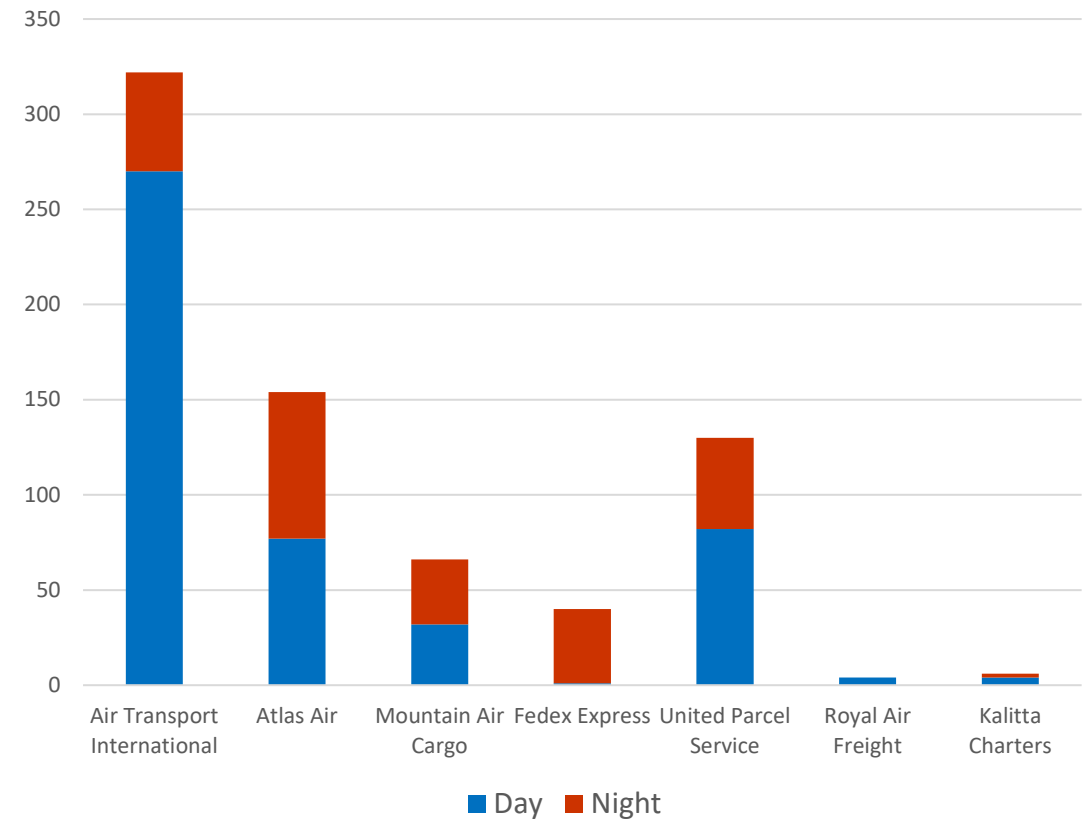
# Monthly Operations – Daytime vs. Nighttime

April 2025

## Monthly Operations - Day vs. Night



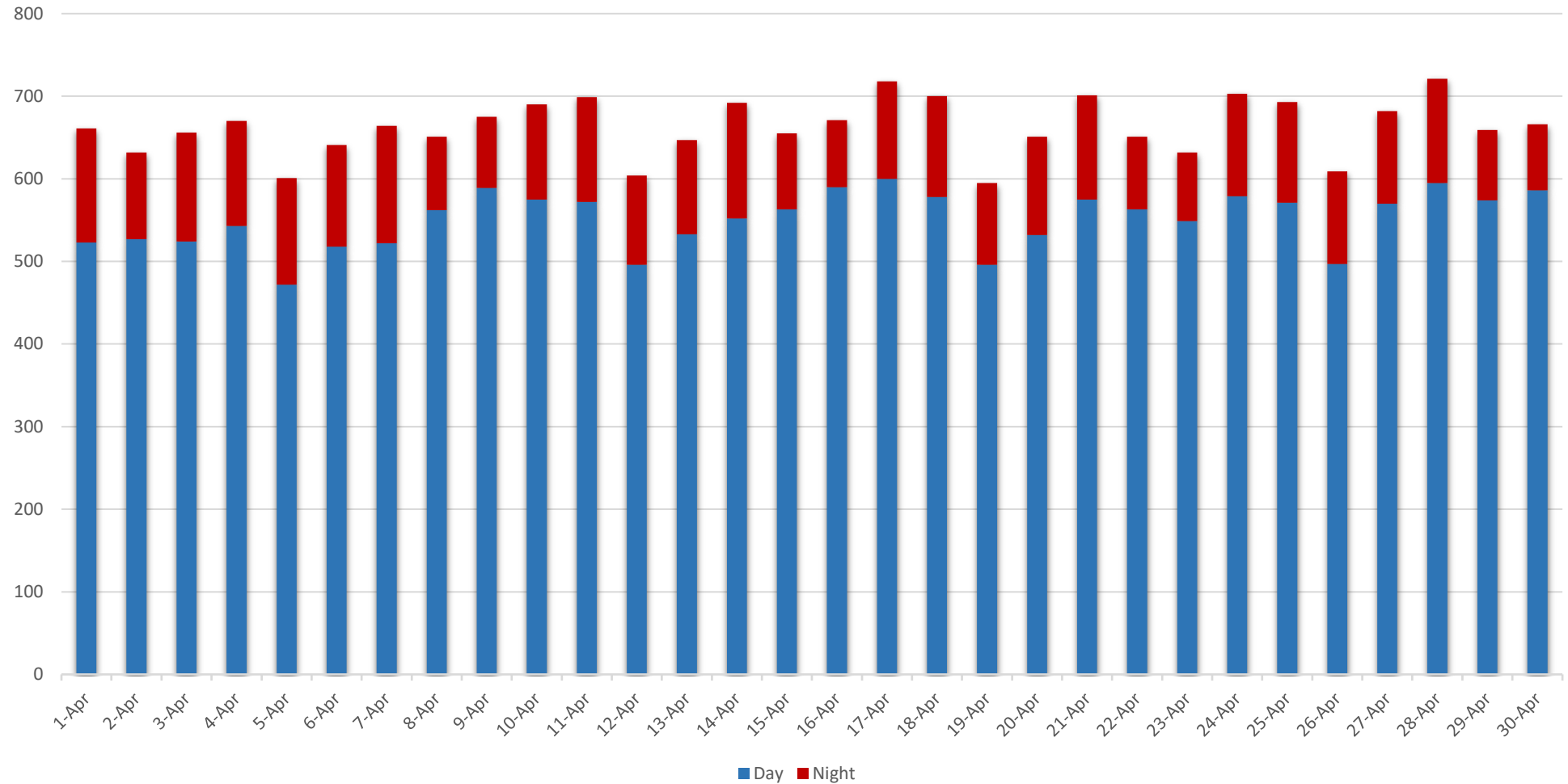
## Cargo Operators - Daytime Vs. Nighttime



# Monthly Operations

April 2025

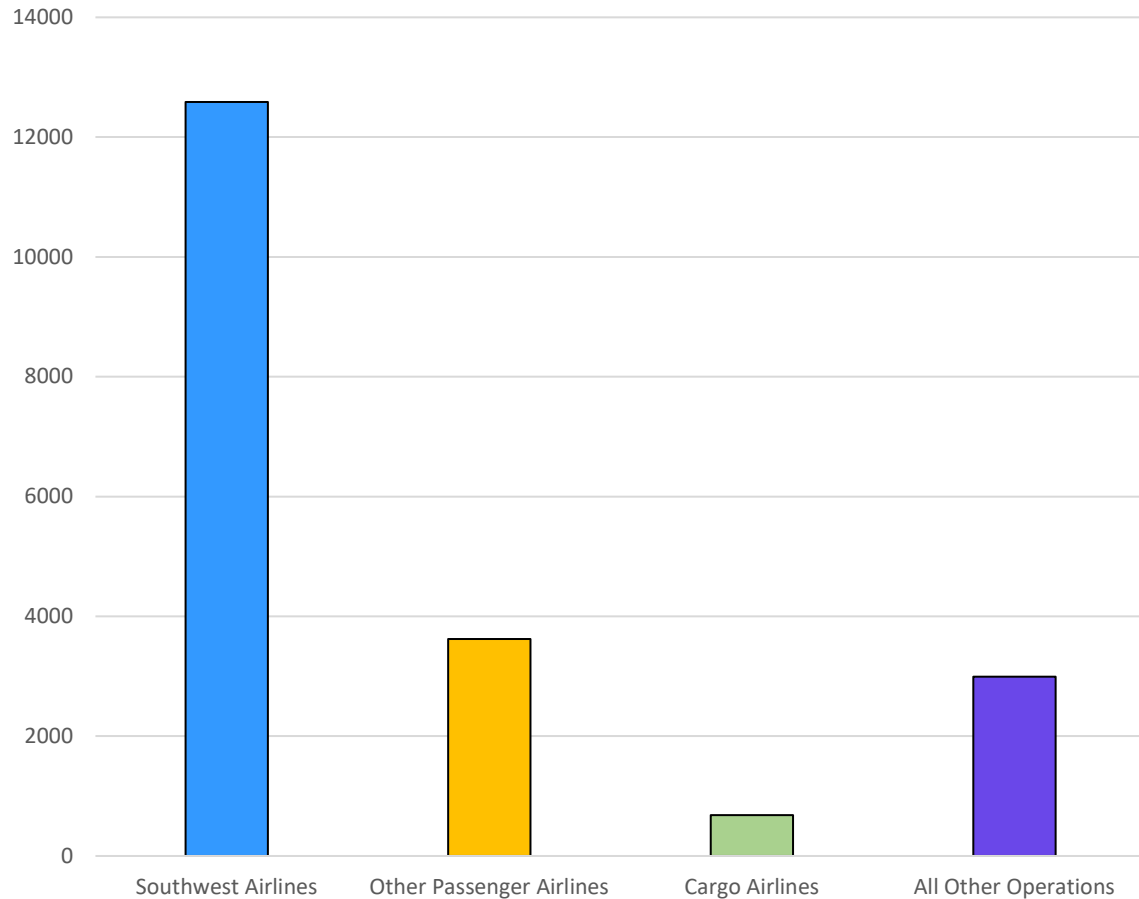
## Daily Operations (Day vs. Night)



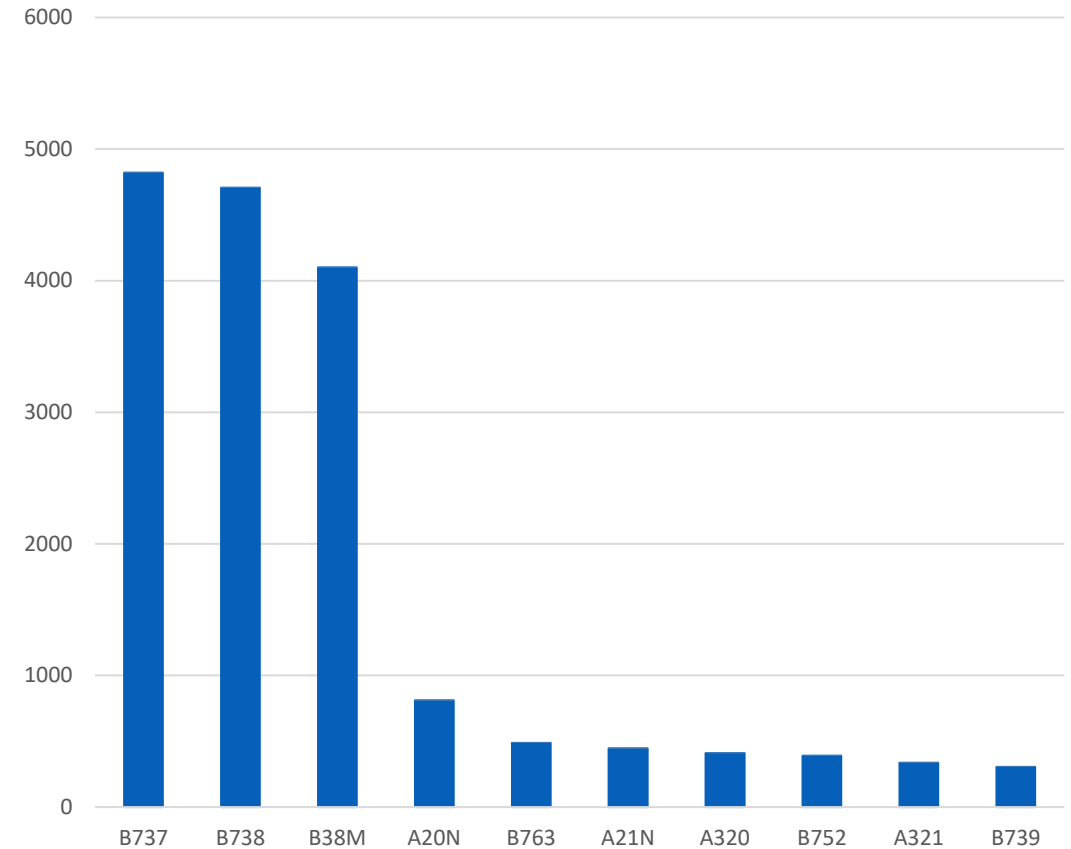
# Aircraft Operations

April 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.

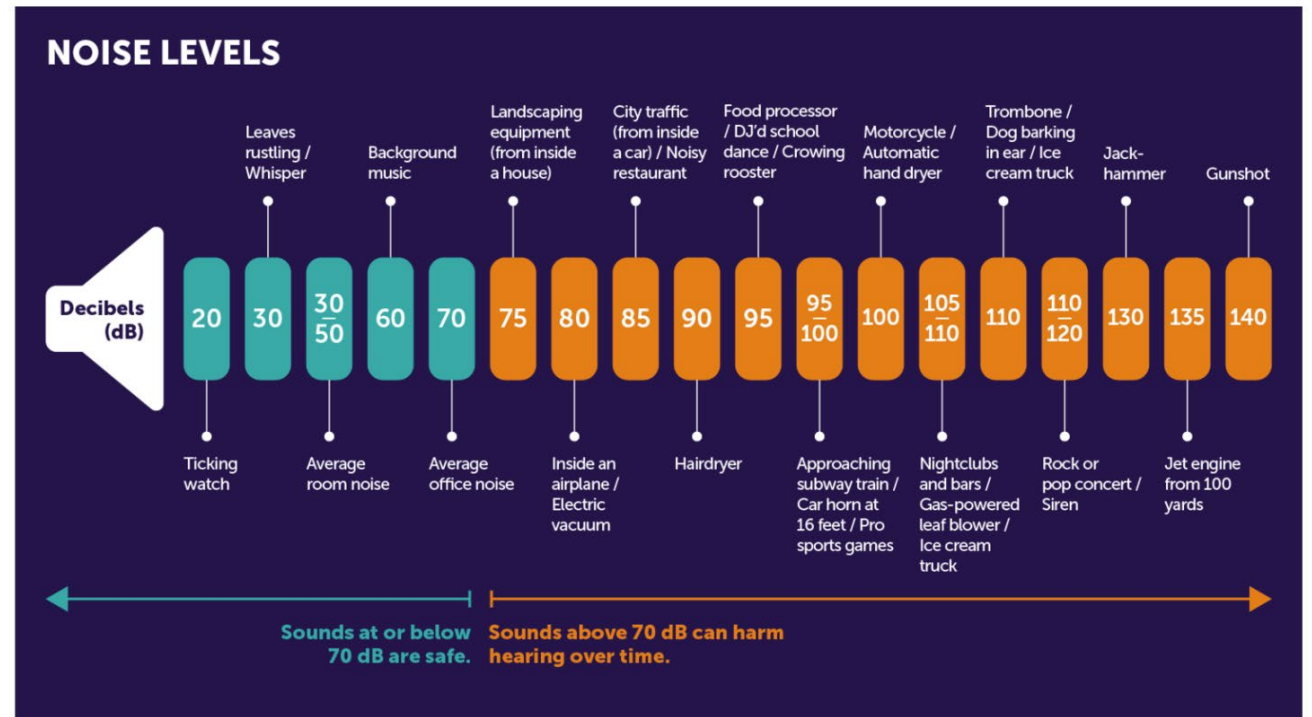
The NA noise metric counts the number of times the noise level exceeds a specific threshold. In this report, the Number-of-Events-Above 55 metric (NA55) is calculated. NA55 quantifies the number of aircraft events resulting in noise exposure of 55 decibels or higher at each location depicted.

# 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>