



BWI-Thurgood Marshall Airport Operations and Noise Exposure

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

Monthly Report for May 2025

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



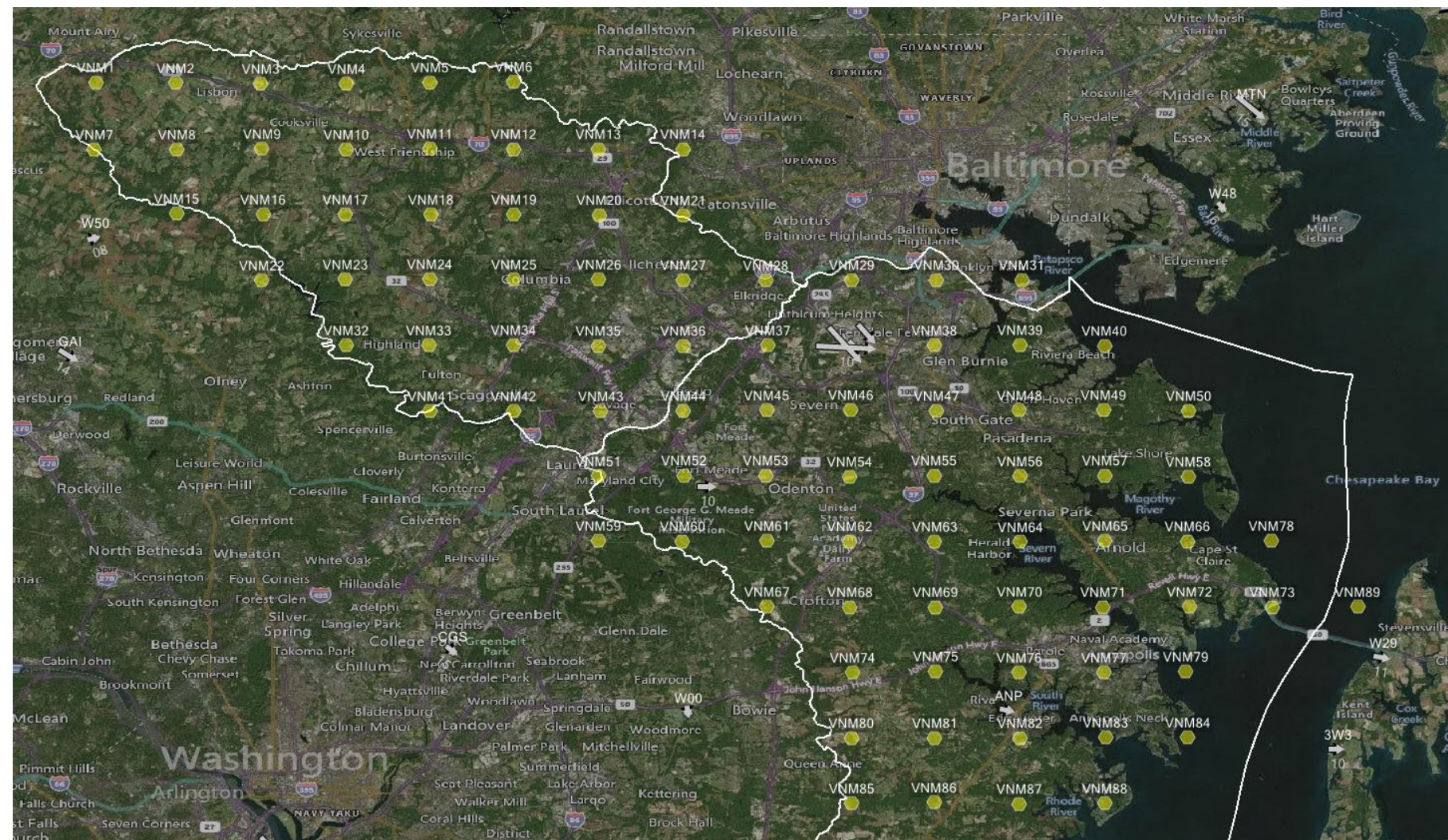
This is a summary of a larger report (the “Monthly Report”) prepared by Vianair, Inc. (“Vianair”) for the benefit of the DC Metroplex BWI Community Roundtable (the “BWI Roundtable”).

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 March 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 2nd 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

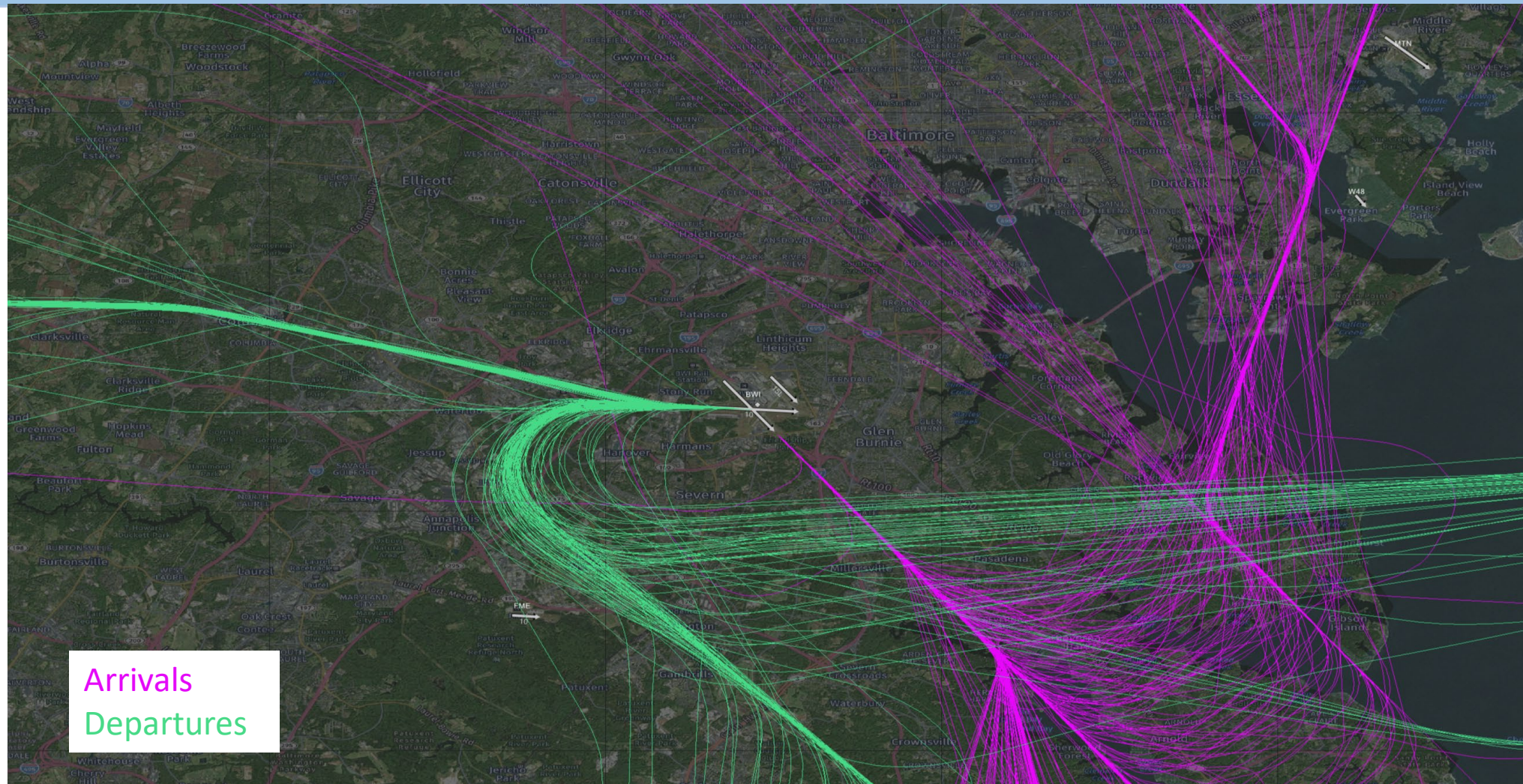
Prevailing wind speed, direction and weather factors determine the direction of air traffic flow from BWI Marshall airport. Aircraft usually take off and land into the wind to meet safety and operational requirements.

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.

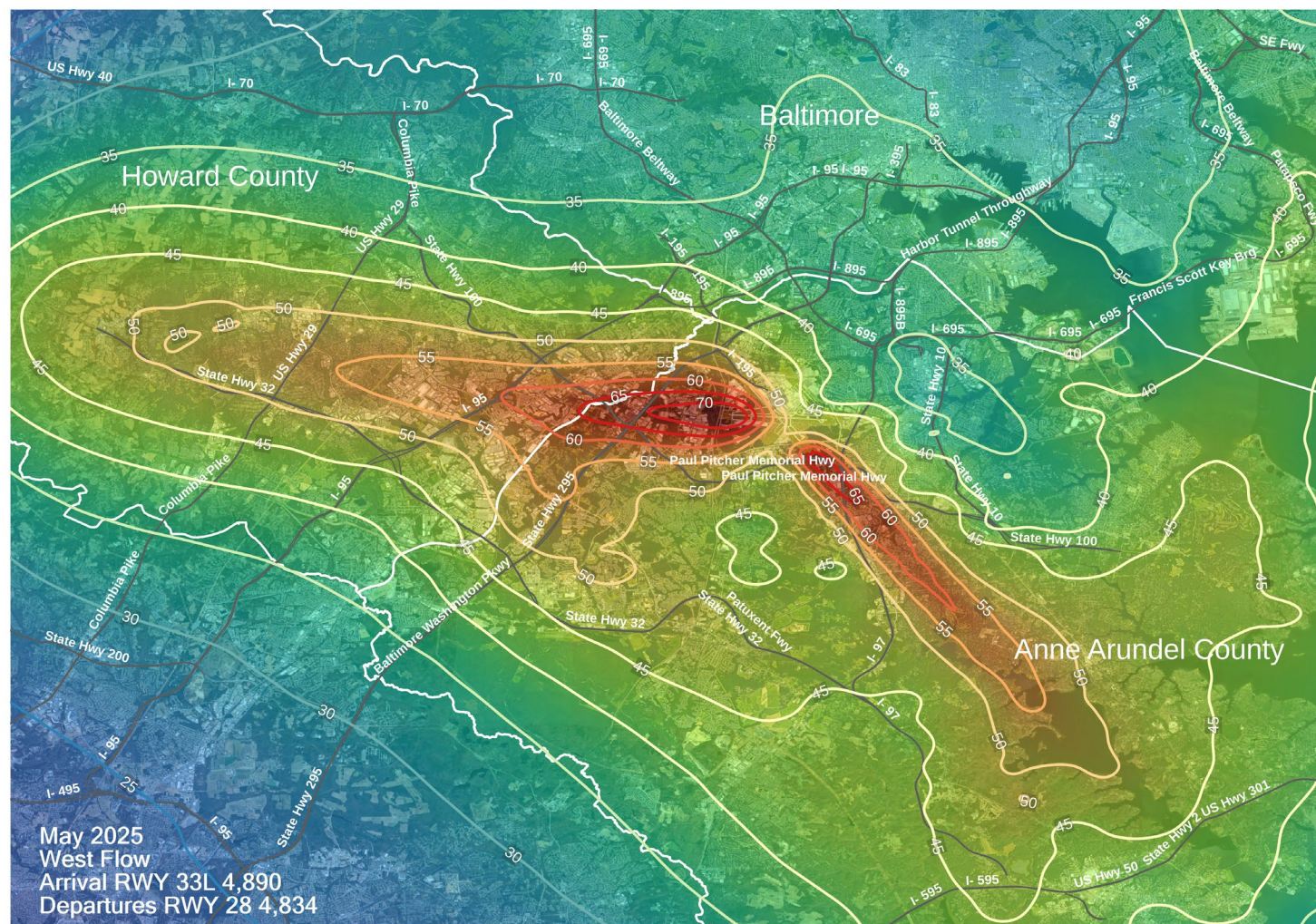
Visual representation of a typical day of traffic over the Baltimore region during West Flow operations at BWI-Marshall



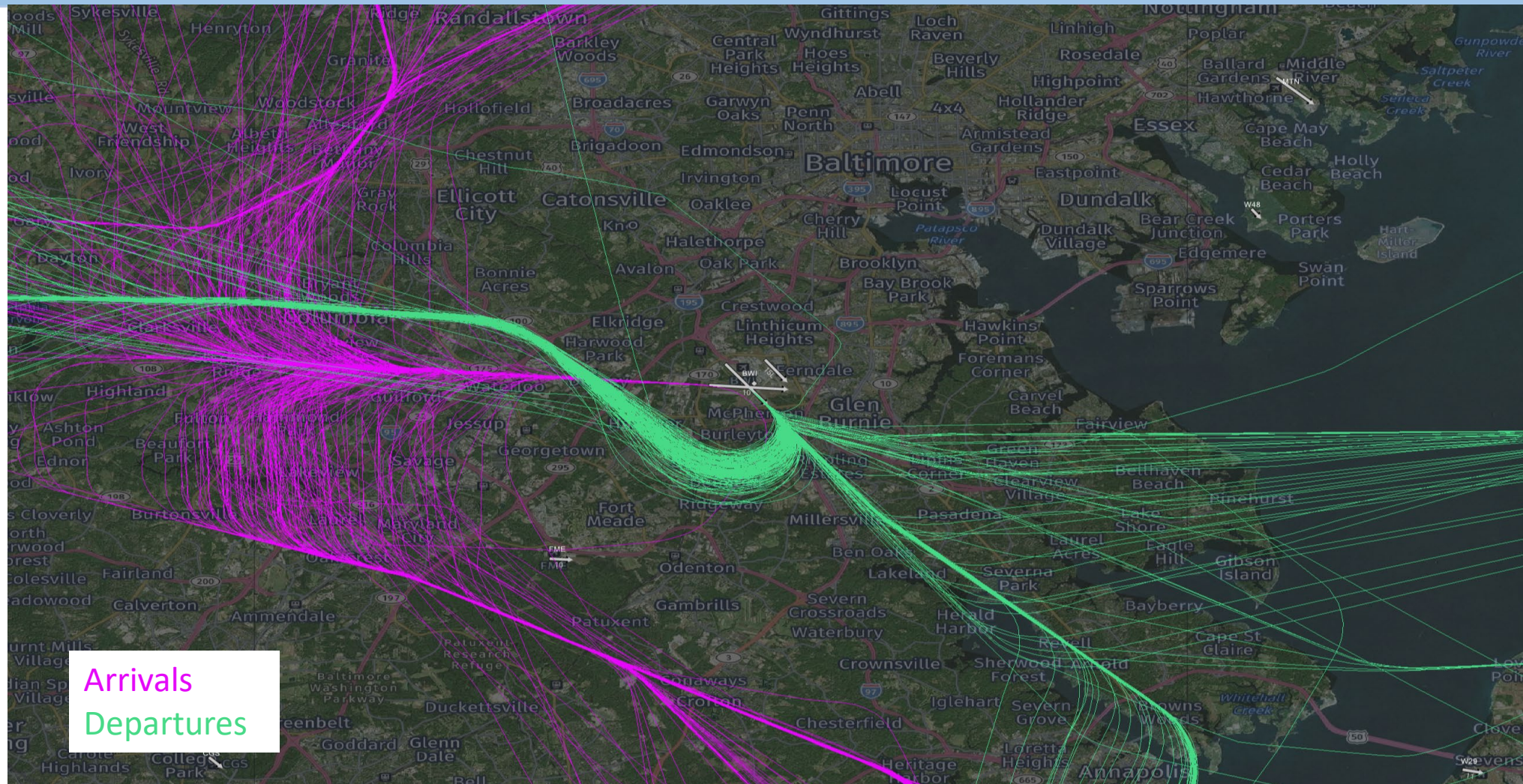
West Flow Operations – DNL Noise Exposure

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.



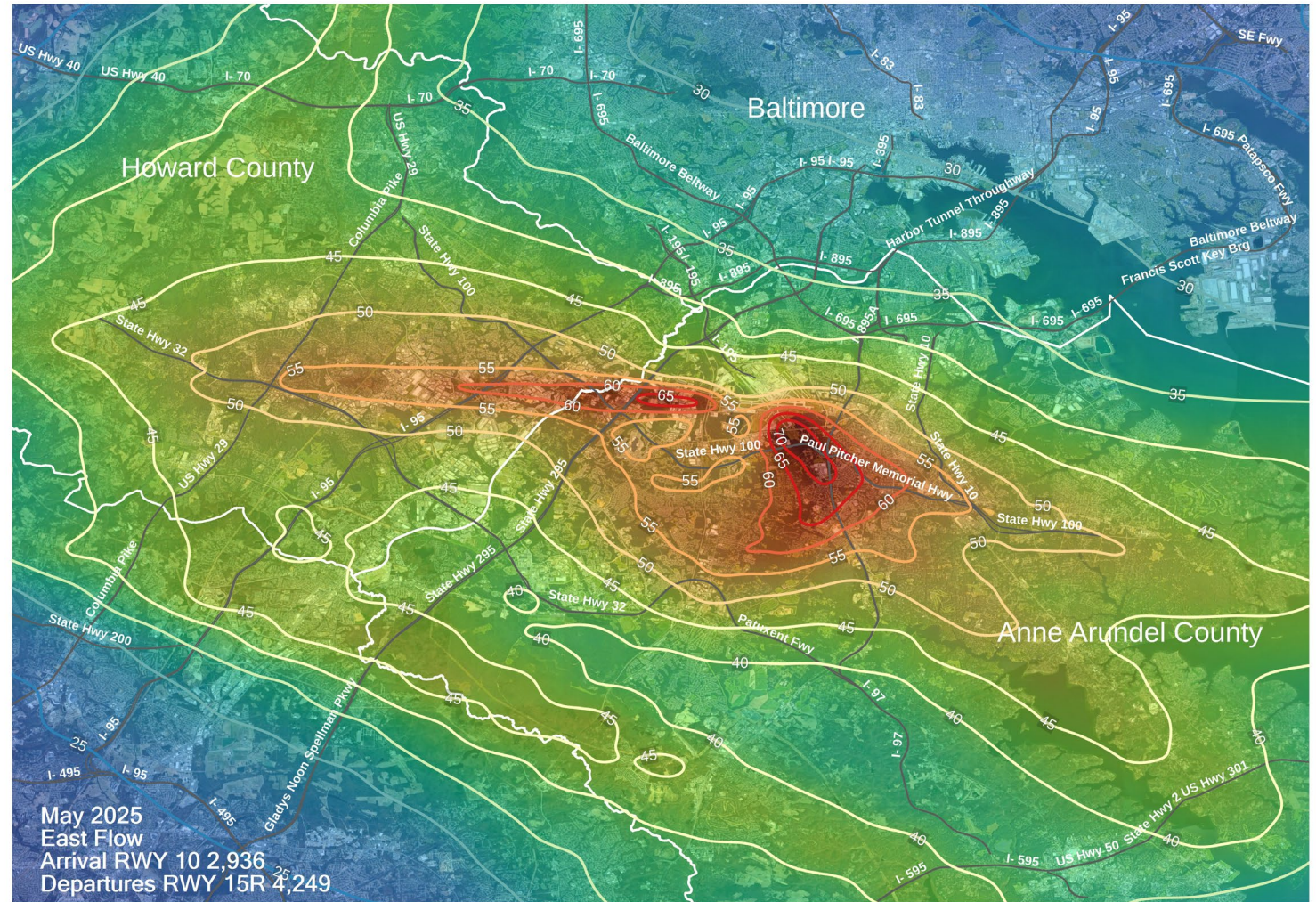
Visual representation of a typical day of traffic over the Baltimore region during East Flow operations at BWI-Marshall



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

May 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	2	14.65
AAR_VNM2	JETNA	1	0	6	20.37
AAR_VNM3	Arden on the Severn	5,261	170	27,157	55.31
AAR_VNM4	London Public House	379	12	1,572	35.96
AAR_VNM5	Annapolis Middle School	260	8	1,417	35.59
AAR_VNM6	West Annapolis Elementary	1,050	34	5,680	42.94
AAR_VNM7	Herald Harbor	1	0	5	13.44
AAR_VNM8	Eastport Terrace	389	13	2,150	36.27
AAR_VNM9	Truxton Park	352	11	1,927	37.29
AAR_VNM10	Shipley's Choice Elementary	6,208	200	31,948	57.58
AAR_VNM11	Robinwood	212	7	1,111	33.85
AAR_VNM12	Wordour Bluffs	1,044	34	5,233	42.14
AAR_VNM13	Millersville Elementary School	681	22	3,912	42.36
AAR_VNM14	Sherwood Forest	1,882	61	9,163	48.13
AAR_VNM15	Brookeville, Montgomery County	23	1	36	26.65
AAR_VNM16	Rolling Knolls	1,972	64	11,466	43.96
AAR_VNM17	Maryland State House	864	28	4,692	40.86
AAR_VNM18	I-97 and MD 178 Crownsville	431	14	2,311	41.57

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 34 flight per day over 55 decibels (**5,680 such flights year-to-date in 2025**).

Monthly Noise Exposure – Howard County Landmark Locations

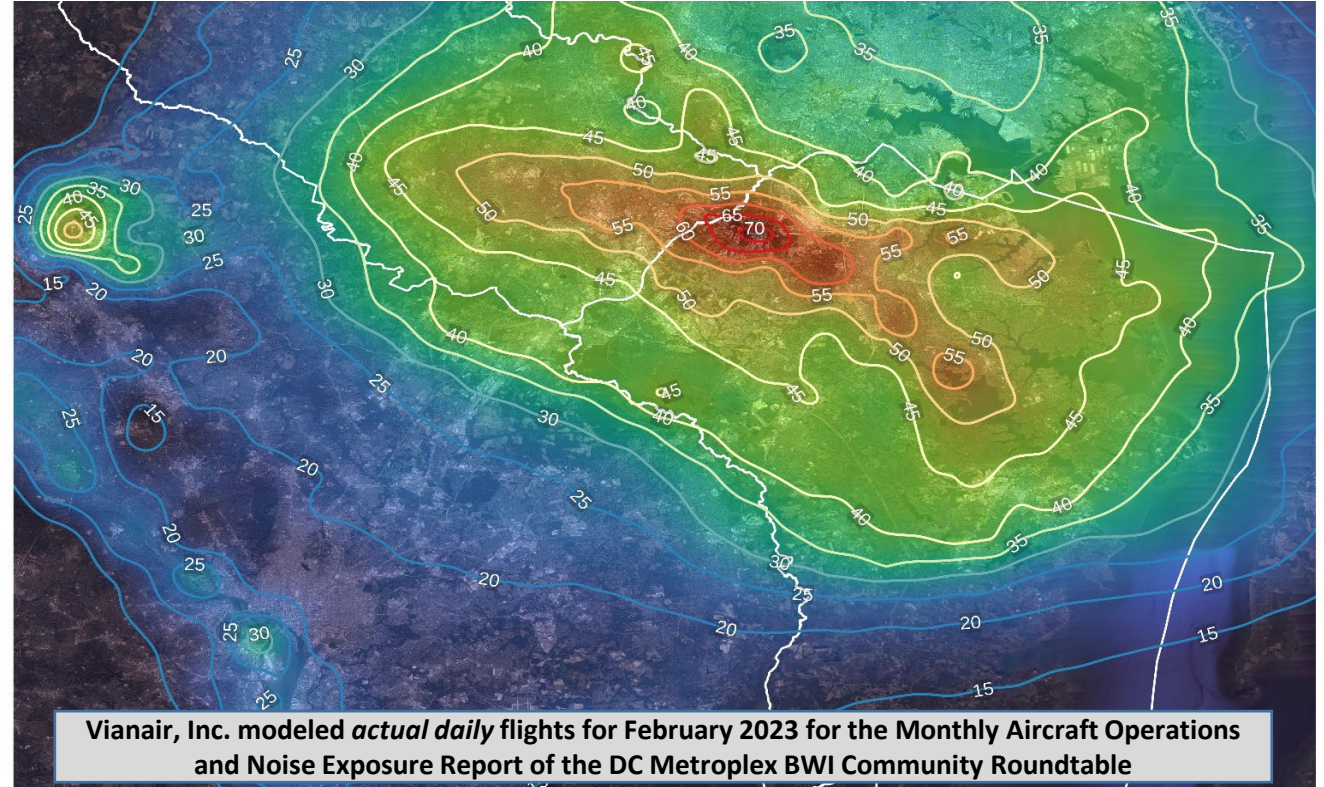
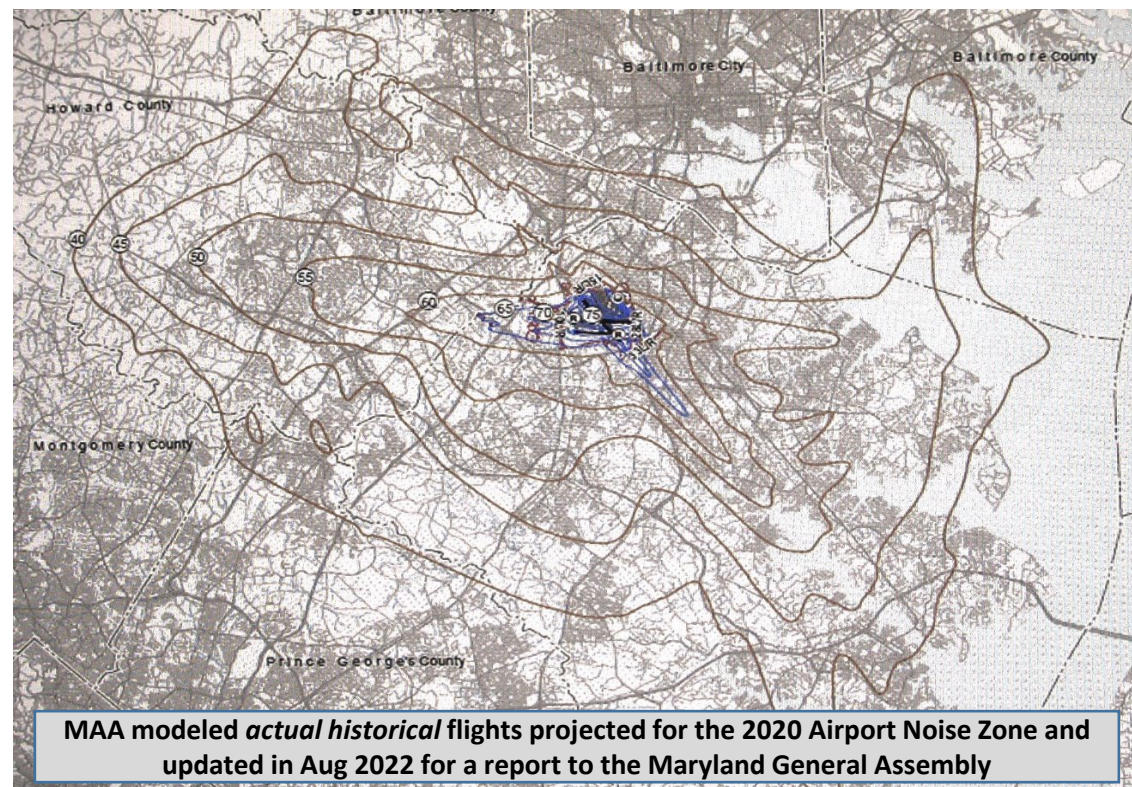
May 2025 – Both East and West Flow Operations

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	9,123	294	35,816	57.07
HOCO_VNM2	HCPSS Administration Campus	1,880	61	9,106	46.84
HOCO_VNM3	Centennial Park	617	20	3,678	44.72
HOCO_VNM4	HoCo General Hospital	5,248	169	22,902	50.75
HOCO_VNM5	Merriweather Post Pavillion	5,430	175	23,854	51.52
HOCO_VNM6	Oakland Mills HS	5,547	179	24,534	52.21
HOCO_VNM7	Long Reach HS	5,592	180	24,581	52.08
HOCO_VNM8	Troy Park	7,392	238	33,627	54.47
HOCO_VNM9	Harwood Park N'hood	7,146	231	34,761	54.93
HOCO_VNM10	Abiding Savior Lutheran	6,311	204	25,842	52.34
HOCO_VNM11	Tridelphia Ridge ES	161	5	462	35.38
HOCO_VNM12	Atholton HS	6,633	214	25,298	54.1
HOCO_VNM13	Christ Church Episcopal	7,783	251	29,608	57.47
HOCO_VNM14	Mayfield Woods MS	6,240	201	27,521	54.54
HOCO_VNM15	Manor Woods ES	628	20	2,562	41.28
HOCO_VNM16	Gateway Site	7,971	257	29,956	58.03
HOCO_VNM17	Wordour Bluffs	10,733	346	44,481	61.75
HOCO_VNM18	St. Louis Catholic	2,980	96	11,621	47.98

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 52 and there were an average of 179 flight per day over 55 decibels (**24,534 such flights year-to-date in 2025**).

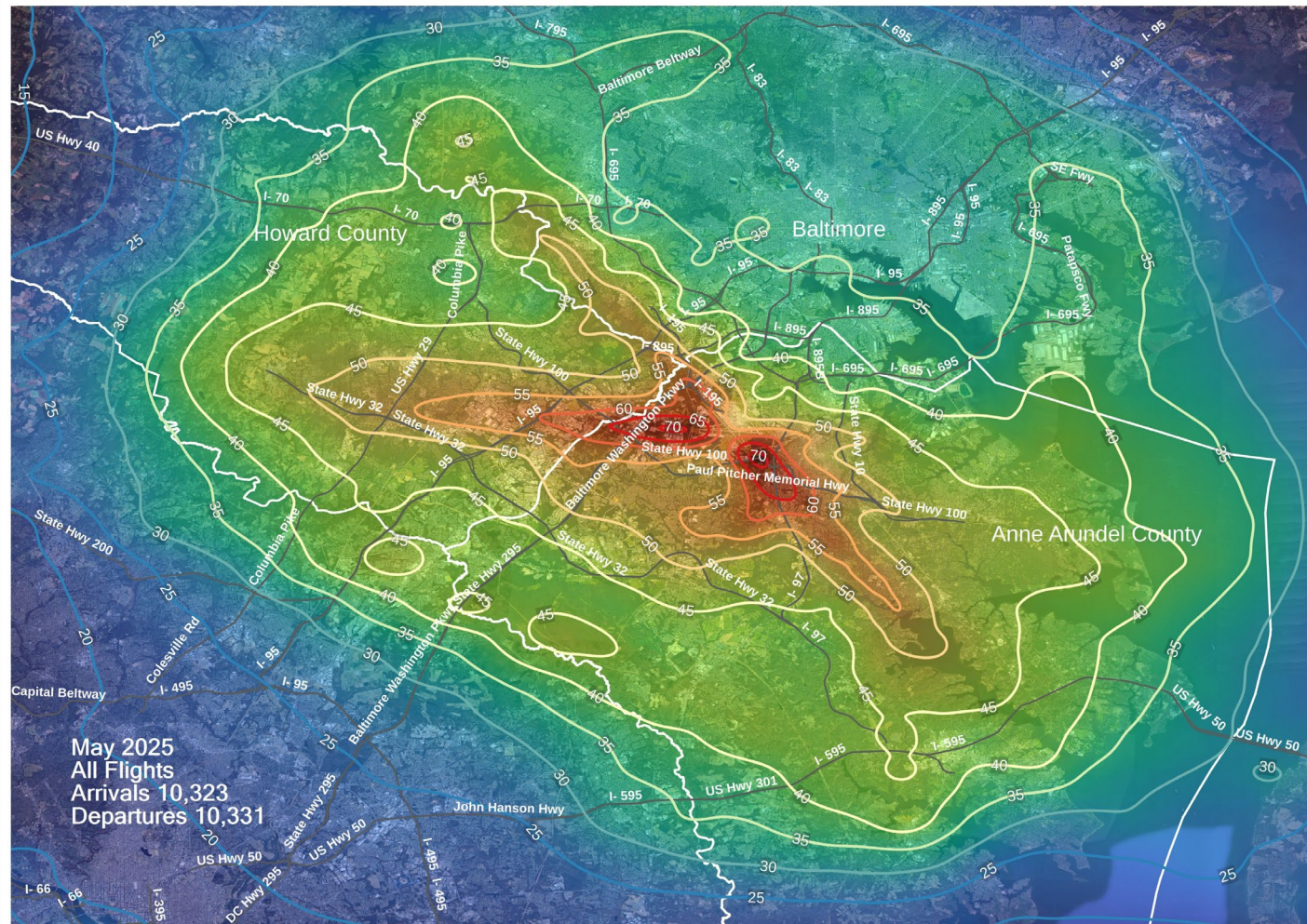
REGIONAL MAPS OF BWI-MARSHALL NOISE POLLUTION



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**.

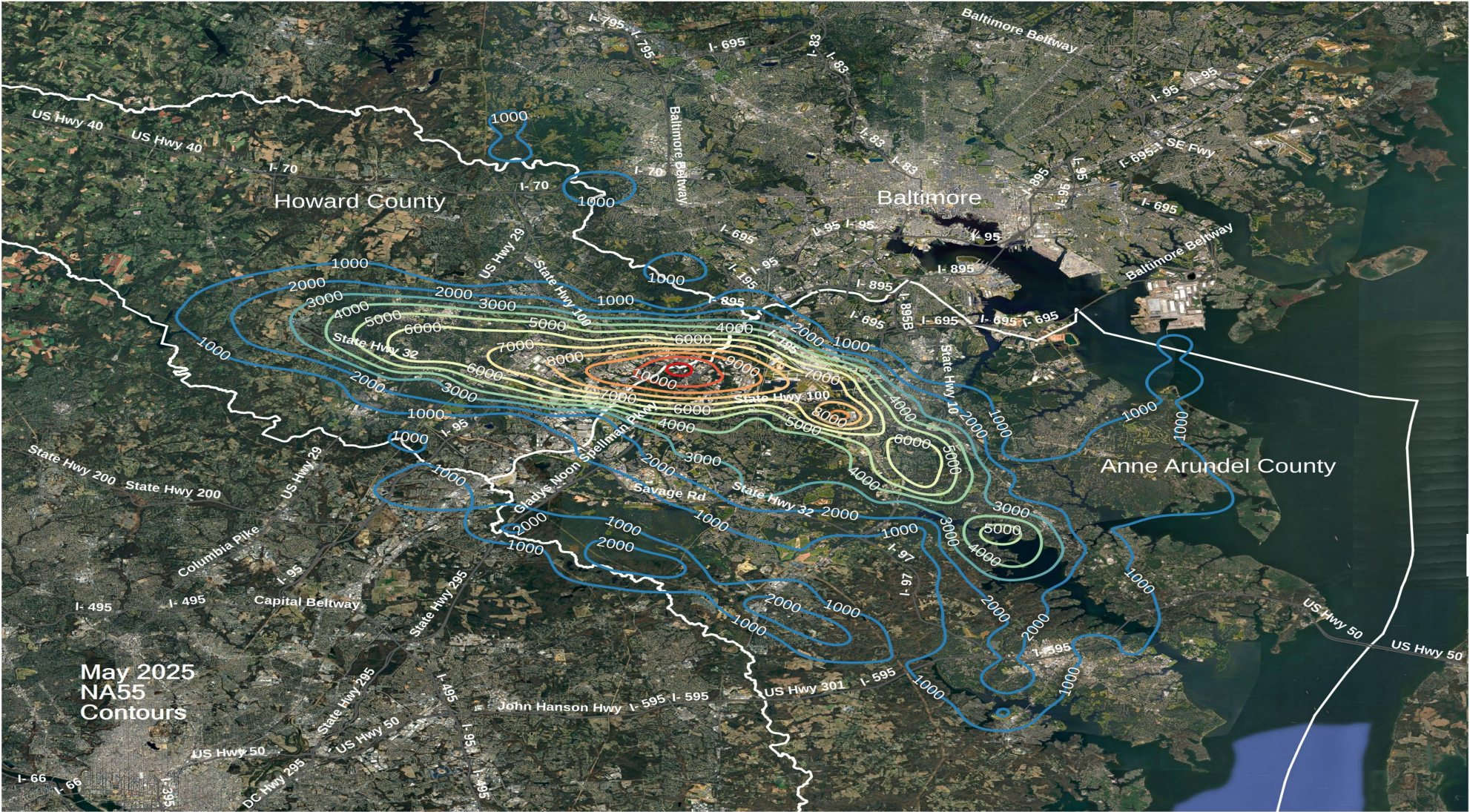
The WHO has identified adverse health effects at this noise level.

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.

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



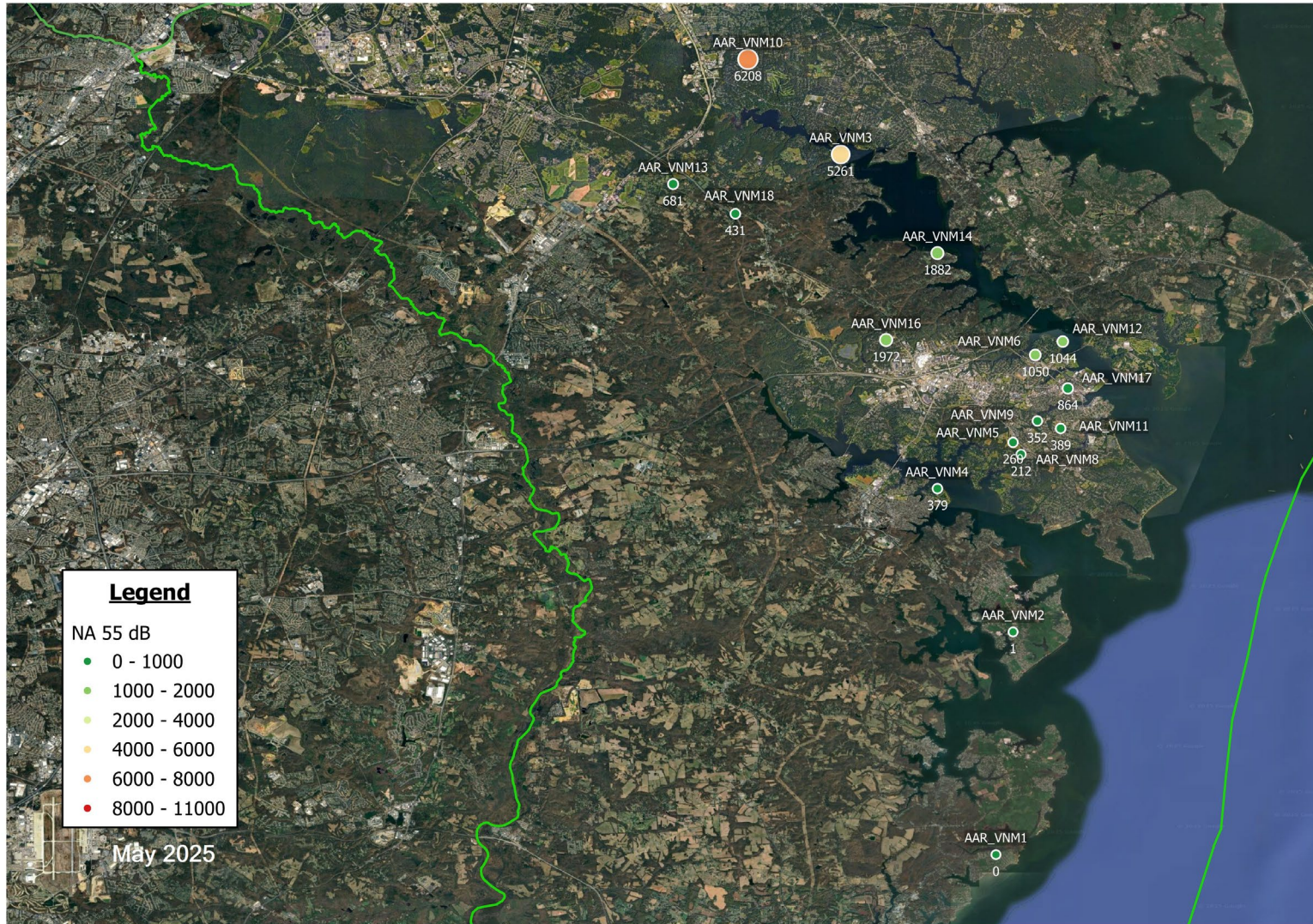
May 2025
NA55
Contours

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.

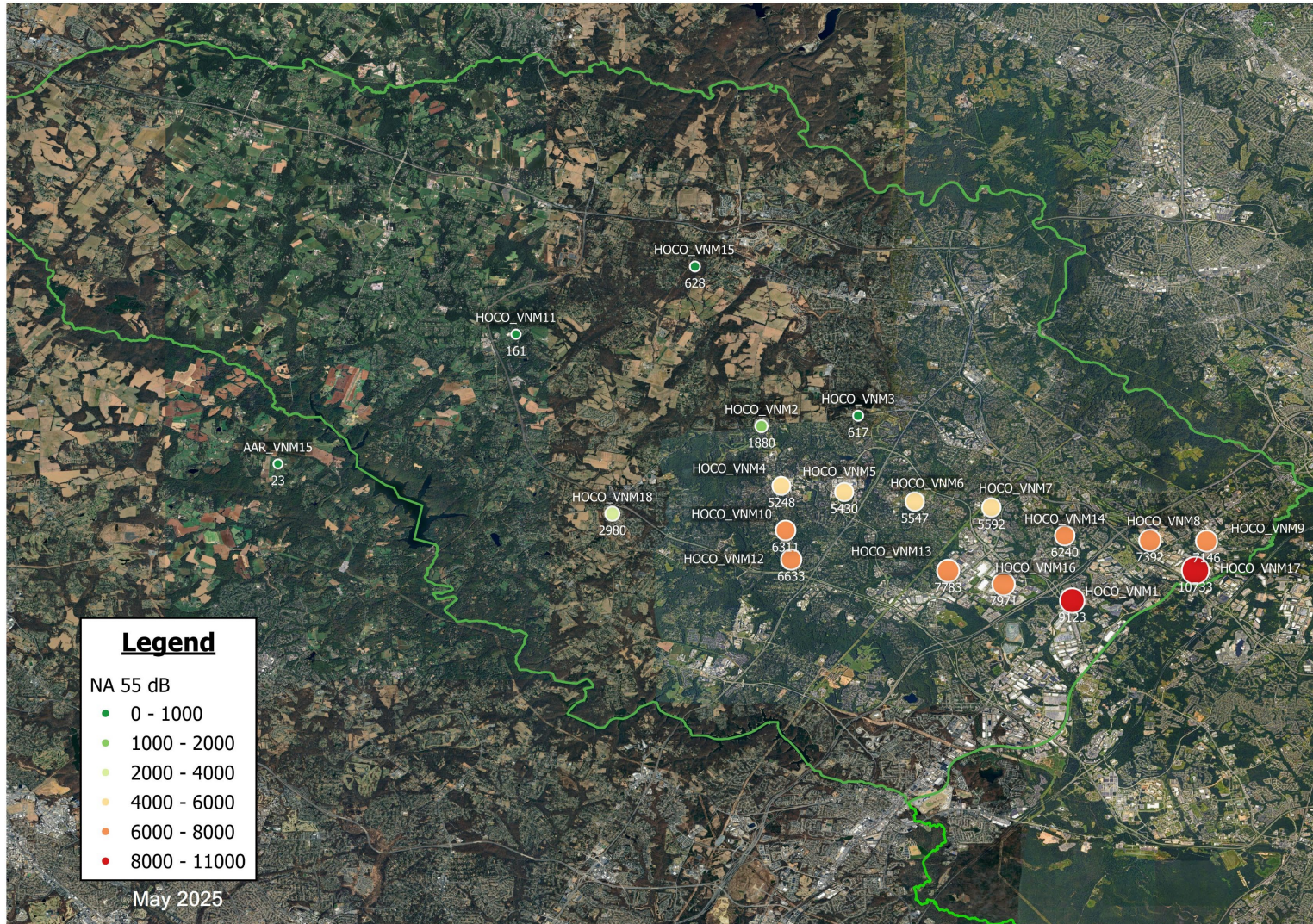


Noise Exposure – Number of Events Above 55 dBA

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.

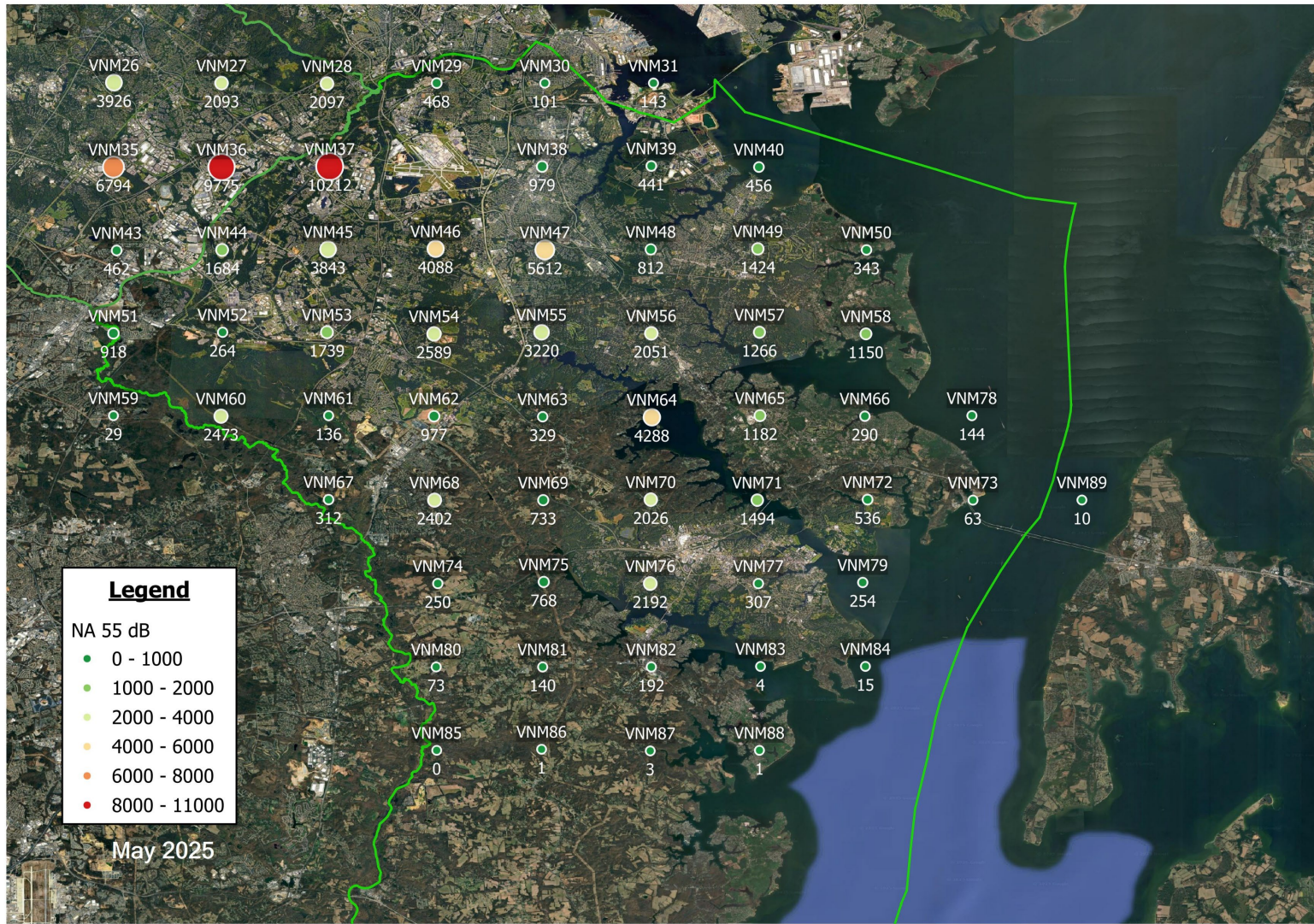


Noise Exposure – Number of Events Above 55 dBA

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

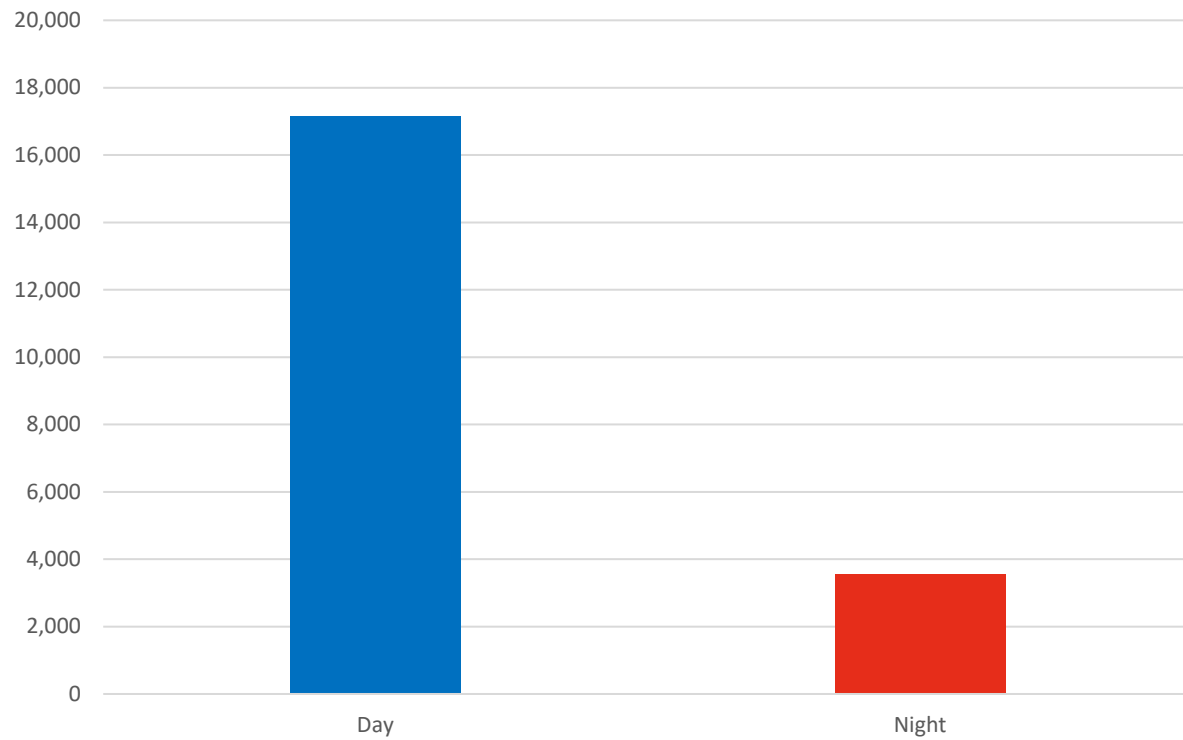
May 2025

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	11.49	VNM31	143	5	38.11	VNM61	136	4	41.51
VNM2	0	0	14.25	VNM32	313	10	37.4	VNM62	977	32	43.59
VNM3	2	0	19.27	VNM33	918	30	44.28	VNM63	329	11	41.86
VNM4	19	1	25.9	VNM34	3,990	129	50.75	VNM64	4,288	138	51.08
VNM5	83	3	33.3	VNM35	6,794	219	53.38	VNM65	1,182	38	45.67
VNM6	179	6	36.99	VNM36	9,775	315	58.95	VNM66	290	9	40.19
VNM7	0	0	12.42	VNM37	10,212	329	69.31	VNM67	312	10	41.22
VNM8	2	0	16.82	VNM38	979	32	50.17	VNM68	2,402	77	44.4
VNM9	1	0	20.51	VNM39	441	14	41.72	VNM69	733	24	42.87
VNM10	8	0	27.89	VNM40	456	15	40.71	VNM70	2,026	65	45.17
VNM11	276	9	38.95	VNM41	249	8	39.06	VNM71	1,494	48	44.35
VNM12	551	18	43.2	VNM42	1,099	35	45.52	VNM72	536	17	38.73
VNM13	242	8	40.21	VNM43	462	15	44.57	VNM73	63	2	31.78
VNM14	1,354	44	45.76	VNM44	1,684	54	50.05	VNM74	250	8	36.89
VNM15	5	0	20.32	VNM45	3,843	124	53.52	VNM75	768	25	42.48
VNM16	36	1	27.08	VNM46	4,088	132	56.75	VNM76	2,192	71	44.21
VNM17	152	5	35.1	VNM47	5,612	181	55.02	VNM77	307	10	37.33
VNM18	402	13	41.46	VNM48	812	26	48.4	VNM78	144	5	34.25
VNM19	692	22	43.37	VNM49	1,424	46	46.02	VNM79	254	8	33.08
VNM20	267	9	40.59	VNM50	343	11	41.14	VNM80	73	2	31.88
VNM21	160	5	41.85	VNM51	918	30	43.5	VNM81	140	5	33.86
VNM22	44	1	28.79	VNM52	264	9	42.18	VNM82	192	6	34.3
VNM23	1,583	51	41.29	VNM53	1,739	56	48.03	VNM83	4	0	26.36
VNM24	3,176	102	48.46	VNM54	2,589	84	47.84	VNM84	15	0	25.58
VNM25	4,805	155	50.12	VNM55	3,220	104	49.9	VNM85	0	0	22.44
VNM26	3,926	127	49.55	VNM56	2,051	66	49.09	VNM86	1	0	22.52
VNM27	2,093	68	47.52	VNM57	1,266	41	46.25	VNM87	3	0	22.71
VNM28	2,097	68	49.39	VNM58	1,150	37	45.05	VNM88	1	0	19.9
VNM29	468	15	41.22	VNM59	29	1	37.79	VNM89	10	0	27.79
VNM30	101	3	37.29	VNM60	2,473	80	47.13				

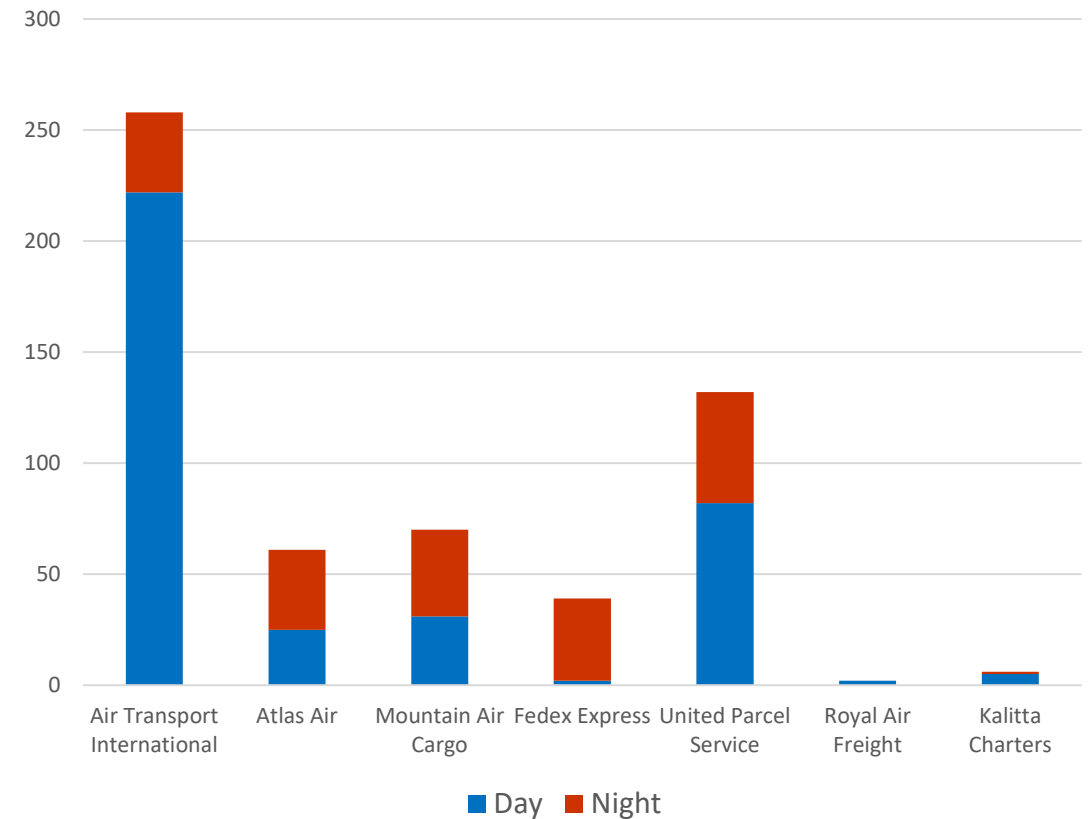
Monthly Operations – Daytime vs. Nighttime

May 2025

Monthly Operations - Day vs. Night



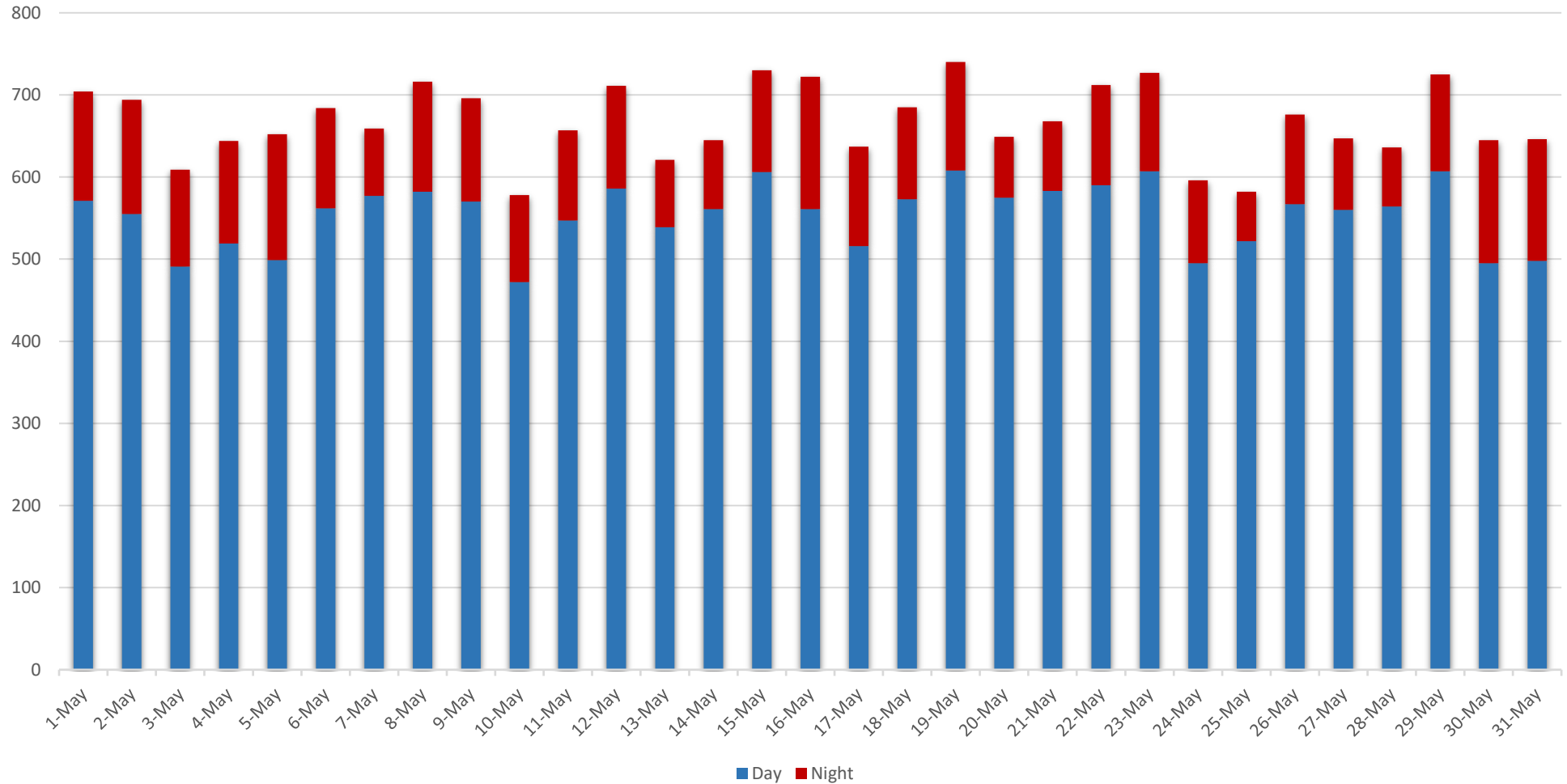
Cargo Operators - Daytime Vs. Nighttime



Monthly Operations

May 2025

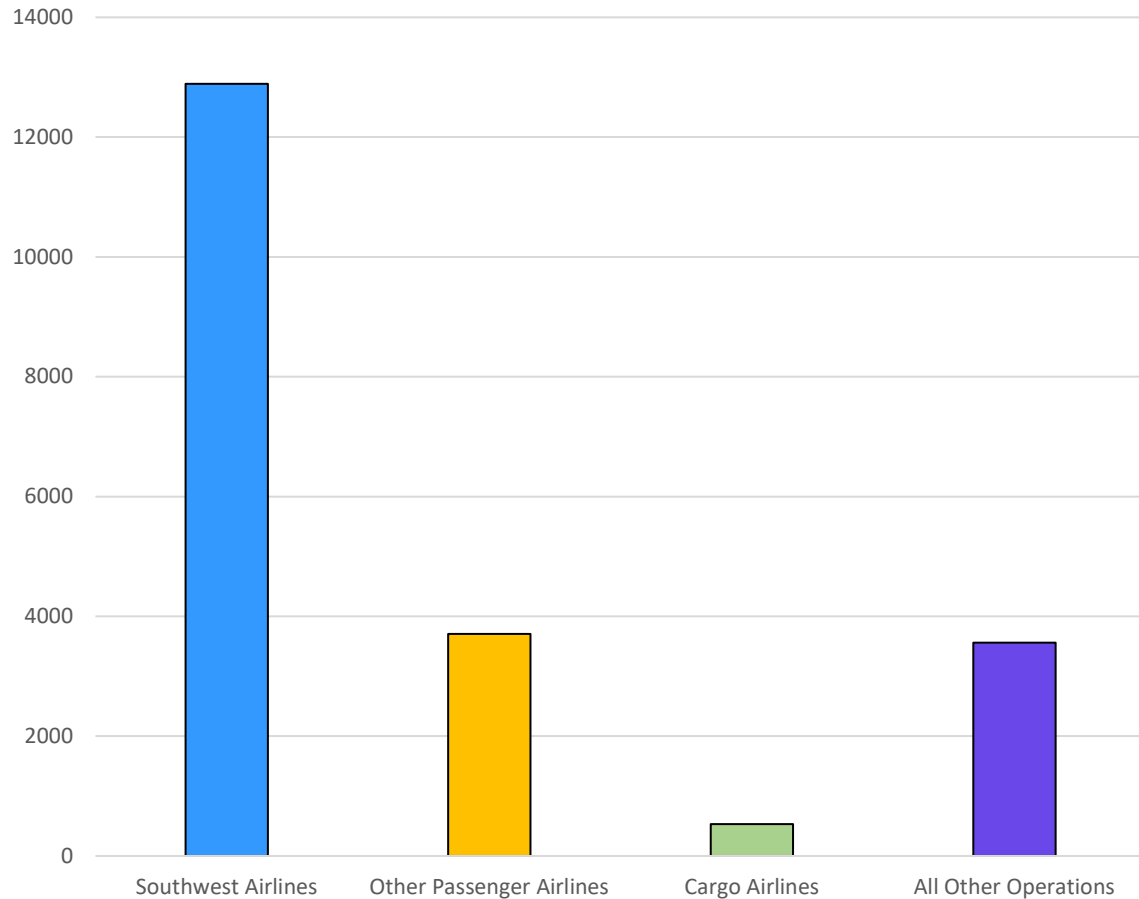
Daily Operations (Day vs. Night)



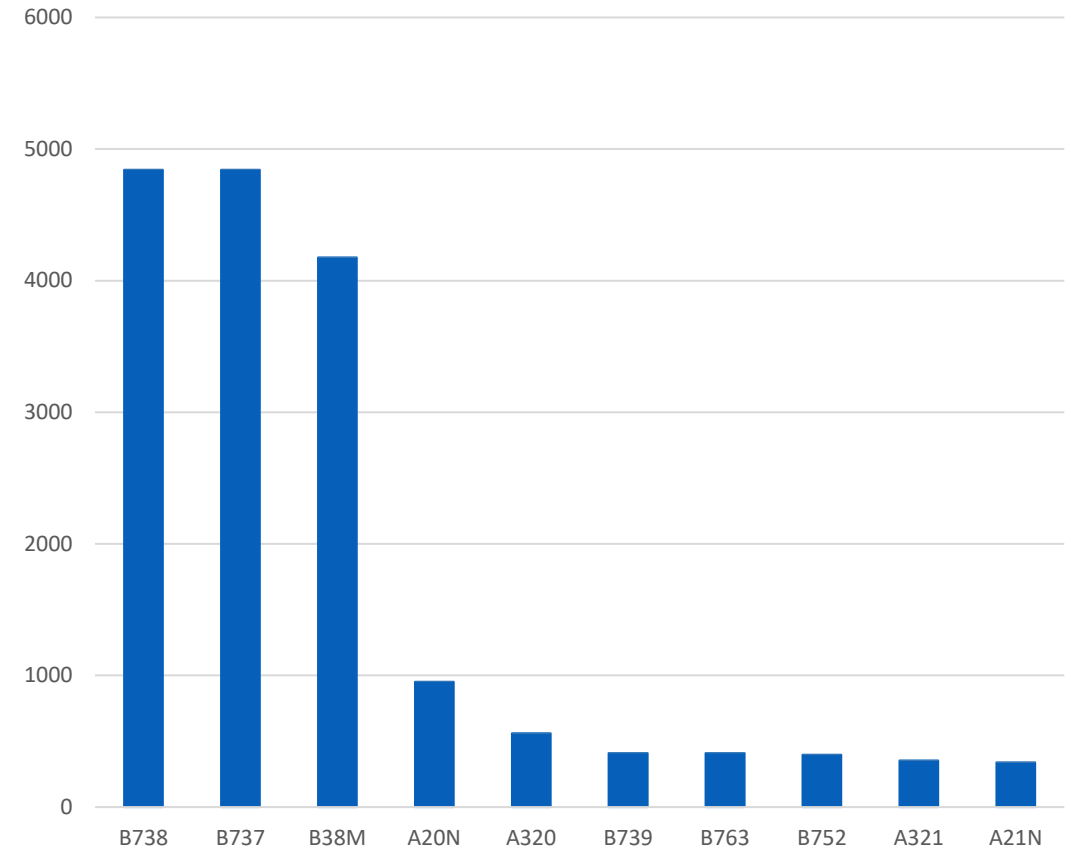
Aircraft Operations

May 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.

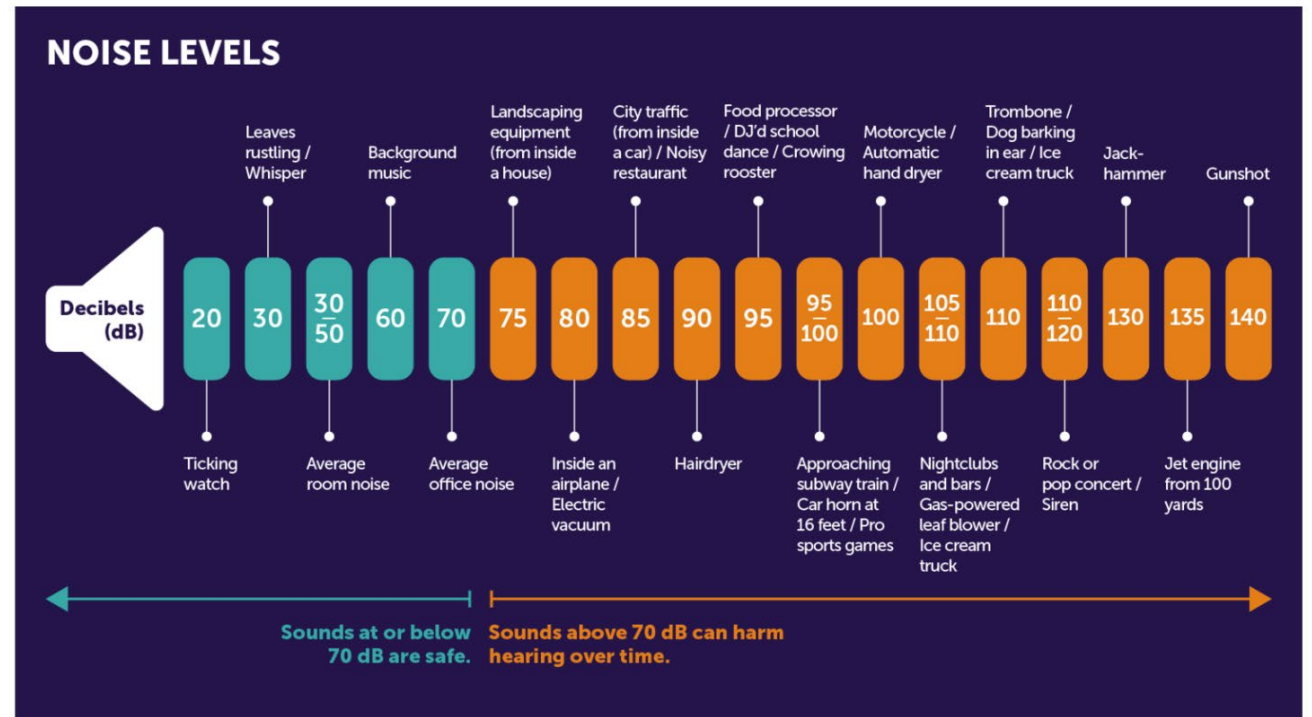
The NA noise metric counts the number of times the noise level exceeds a specific threshold. In this report, the Number-of-Events-Above 55 metric (NA55) is calculated. NA55 quantifies the number of aircraft events resulting in noise exposure of 55 decibels or higher at each location depicted.

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>