

Rocky Mountain Metropolitan Airport Noise, Operations and Roundtable

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Background

Rocky Mountain Metropolitan Airport (RMMA) has been owned and operated by Jefferson County since 1960, and the airport has grown along with the surrounding region. As a business that seeks to be part of the community, RMMA listens closely to community concerns about flight operations, noise and other topics and have worked with the community over the years to address concerns and continue to do so. As the number of communities has grown around the airport and as more residents are at home during the COVID-19 pandemic, we have received a corresponding increase in complaints about noise.

What Is Being Done

- We have formed an internal RMMA airport noise task force to evaluate potential voluntary noise abatement procedures
- RMMA always encourages pilots to fly quietly to the extent possible consistent with flight safety and the federal preemption of airspace. For example, pilots are requested to:
 - Overfly major road corridors and open space when able
 - Climb at best rate of climb
 - Reduce RPM when safe
 - Fly standard (or higher) glide path
- We participated in the Town of Superior/City of Louisville Airport Noise Study
- We published a [revised voluntary noise abatement procedures in late 2019](#)
- An [ESRI story map was created by the City of Louisville and Town of Superior](#) to share some basic information with their communities about the airport. It contains a noise map, the airport influence area and traffic pattern maps, flight traffic and training information and more.
- We are implementing an Airport Community Noise Roundtable to engage the community

Community Noise Roundtable

Jefferson County, RMMA and the surrounding municipalities are supporting the formation and implementation of a community roundtable process to address the concerns raised by members of local communities. This is also the FAA's preferred venue for considering changes in airspace procedures and routing so that all surrounding communities must vet any changes in airport operations and aircraft routing. The Community Roundtable process ensures representation from all potentially impacted stakeholders, including surrounding communities and jurisdictions, airport users, and the FAA, so that any requested change in aircraft operations by one community does not negatively and unfairly impact another.

The Airport Noise Community Roundtable is being formed and staff is currently reviewing possible priorities, details of representation, scope of work, timeline and more. We will be placing more information about this roundtable, the meetings and how you can get involved on our [RMMA website](#) soon, so please check there for more information.

Data Points

- **Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)**
 - While Jefferson County owns RMMA, the FAA has control over all aircraft operations and routing.
 - As a recipient of Federal Airport Improvement Program (AIP) funds, RMMA is subject to [FAA Airport Improvement Program \(AIP\) sponsor assurances](#) that prohibit the airport from restricting airport operations or discriminating against classes of airport users.
 - For more information about the Federal government's exclusive sovereignty over airspace, please see Title 49, Section 40103 of the United States Code.
- **Operations**
 - How many aircraft take off or land at RMMA?
 - Activity levels at airports are measured by "aircraft operations," which is defined by the FAA as a takeoff or a landing.
 - In 2019, RMMA had 191,533 aircraft operations.
 - In 2018, RMMA had 170,340 aircraft operations.
 - In 2017, RMMA had 165,767 aircraft operations.
 - The highest annual aircraft operations at RMMA occurred in 1977, with over 248,000.
 - There has been an increase of one flight school at RMMA in the last five years.

- The number of aviation flight schools operating at regional airports generally corresponds to the demand for new pilots from the aviation industry.
 - Is there an operations cap at a regional airport?
 - There is no specific operations cap at a public-use airport, just as there are no specific operations cap on public highways.
 - The number of aircraft allowed is constrained by the available runways and airspace/air traffic control capacity.
 - As more aircraft are accommodated in the traffic pattern, aircraft begin to be spaced further apart for traffic sequencing.
 - Are there restrictions on hours in which aircraft operations can occur?
 - RMMA is a public-use airport operating 24 hours per day, 7 days a week, like a public highway (i.e. US 36). Aircraft, like vehicles, are not restricted to certain operating hours.
 - Aircraft operations at night are often related to FAA requirements for pilot training or nighttime currency, which is the FAA requirement to maintain pilot proficiency.
 - Weather can also play a factor in aircraft operations. During summer months, higher afternoon temperatures and a greater chance for thunderstorms result in a preference for flying earlier in the morning for safety reasons. Conversely, in winter the warmest part of the day is preferable, which increases flights in the afternoon.
 - What is the routing/flight paths of the aircraft? Did it change recently?
 - Pilots and aircraft follow specific, highly procedural flight patterns when operating into and out of RMMA that have not changed for at least 20 years.
 - At RMMA, arrivals, departures and traffic pattern operations are dictated by a FAA Air Traffic Control Tower and national procedures. The standard traffic pattern involves a takeoff, upwind, crosswind, downwind, final and landing.
 - These procedures are standardized globally for improved safety and traffic flow. The runway in use is chosen by air traffic control based on existing wind conditions.
 - No, the FAA has not changed flight paths recently. However, the COVID-19 pandemic means more people are at home during the day than normal.

● **Surrounding Region**

- In the past 30 years (1990-2019), airport operations have increased about 35% while the population of the five towns located under RMMA’s airspace has increased 68%.
- The Town of Superior has increased over 5,000% in the same time period, from 255 residents to 13,087 residents, many of whose homes were built under the extended centerline of the primary runways.
- Through the years, RMMA has expressed concerns about residential encroachment when notified of proposed development nearby. RMMA continues to request that prospective homebuyers and tenants be made aware of the airport’s location and typical flight patterns overhead.

Growth of RMMA and Surrounding Community Residents							
	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2019	% increase 1990-2019
Arvada	49,844	84,576	89,235	102,153	106,433	121,272	36%
Broomfield	7,261	20,730	24,638	38,272	55,889	70,465	186%
Louisville	2,409	5,593	12,361	18,937	18,376	20,816	68%
Superior	171	208	255	9,011	12,483	13,087	5032%
Westminster	19,512	50,211	74,625	100,940	106,114	113,166	52%
Total	79,197	161,318	201,114	269,313	299,295	338,806	68%
Operations		163,048	142,341	172,460	120,363	191,533	35%

● **Economy**

- According to the latest CDOT Aeronautics Economic Impact Study (2020), RMMA provides
 - Over 3,000 jobs totaling \$190 million in annual payroll (averages \$63,333 salary per job)
 - Over \$700 million in annual business revenues to the region
 - Approximately \$27 billion in indirect annual economic value