

2.X RUNWAY USAGE

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SFO operates on two sets of parallel runways that intersect midfield at a ninety degree angle. Approximately 83 percent of the time aircraft depart on either Runway 01L (left) or 01R (right) and arrive on either Runway 28L (left) or 28R (right). Under this flow of traffic, SFO's acceptance rate for arriving traffic is 60 aircraft per hour. This arrival rate can be accommodated because with good visibility and weather, aircraft land side-by-side on Runways 28L and 28R as the pilots are able to see the other aircraft arriving on the parallel runway and can maintain visual separation.

The arriving traffic to Runway 28L is closer to the western edge of the San Francisco Bay (Bay), proximate to the bayside communities of Redwood City and Foster City. Runway 28R is further removed from those communities. Greater use of Runway 28R has a reduced noise exposure for these bayside communities; however, the FAA advised the Committee that, for the most efficient operations at SFO (i.e., accommodating the greatest number of aircraft), Runways 28L and 28R are used simultaneously.

As detailed in this Report (Item 2.4 Overnight Flights), during the overnight hours the overall amount of air traffic is dramatically reduced. It has been suggested that, to the extent possible, 100 percent of nighttime flights should be directed by air traffic control in a single stream to Runway 28R to reduce the noise exposure on the communities of Redwood City and Foster City.

It has also been suggested that regardless of the time of day, and when conditions permit (including, but not limited to, the number of operations), air traffic control should direct aircraft to use Runway 28R. This includes use of the "noise friendlier" offset approach, which takes aircraft farther into the Bay before joining the final approach to SFO. Use of the offset approach not only benefits Foster City and Redwood City, but because aircraft are joining the final approach farther into the Bay, it could allow for higher altitudes while the aircraft are crossing over the Mid-Peninsula area.

Recommendation: The Select Committee recommends that all feasible measures be taken to reduce the noise exposure to bayside communities, including Foster City

and Redwood City, by directing air traffic to Runway 28R whenever possible. During the important overnight hours, every effort should be made to create a single stream of traffic, and to assign that traffic safety permitting to fly a “noise friendlier” offset approach to Runway 28R.

(Vote: Aye, Nay, Absent or Abstain)

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