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Noise issues cloud airport study

Residents weigh in as Land Use Commission looks at updated compatibility plan

BY GUS THOMSON
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

Residents near Auburn Municipal Airport have spoken up about noise from planes, and Placer County Airport Land Use Commission staff will be providing answers to the board Wednesday.

In letters to the commission and at a public hearing Jan. 22

in Auburn, residents near North Auburn's city-owned airport expressed concerns about noise coming from planes and helicopters.

Neighbors had until the end of January to express concerns on airport issues as part of the adoption process for a new planning document that fine-tunes a 2000 compatibility plan for airports in Lincoln and Blue Canyon as well as Auburn. Blue Canyon is located about 30 miles northeast of Auburn, in the Sierra.

Fran and Dale Kehoe of Auburn commented that after 39 years of living in the North-park subdivision adjacent to the North Auburn airport, the change in flight patterns is noticeable.

"We have aircraft flying very low and flying directly over our house," the Kehoes said. "There have been times that we have even run out of the house to check as it sounds like the aircraft is headed directly for us."

The Kehoes added that with

the addition of small jets now departing and landing, the noise level has steadily increased.

On the other side of the issue, pilots and airport proponents have long defended the facility, which was established in 1938. The flight strip was there before houses were built in the vicinity, they note.

Rick Mohr, a Placerville pilot who landed in Auburn on Friday for lunch at the airport, said that most airports have to

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contend with similar complaints.

"It makes no sense to me to buy a house near an airport and then start sniveling," Mohr said.

Country Meadows Court's David Noel III wrote in a letter received after the hearing that he moved into a North Auburn home 2 miles from the airport a decade ago.

"The air traffic and noise at the time was not too bad," Noel said. "Now planes are flying directly over my home at relatively low elevations and many of them are actually circling our house to fly a loop back to the airport."

Planning staff with the Placer County Transportation Planning Agency were required to respond to all submissions on the compatibility plan within 10 days of Wednesday's airport commission meeting. The planning agency's



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Auburn Municipal Airport still fielding noise complaints from residents.

board doubles as the airport commission panel. It includes representatives from the city of Auburn and Placer County. Auburn owns and operates the airport. Unincorporated county land surrounds the facility.

In comments on submissions from the public,

consultants Mead & Hunt state that neither the Airport Land Use Commission or the proposed compatibility plan have authority over airport operations, including where and when aircraft fly or the types of aircraft flown.

"As the airport operator, the city of Auburn is

the appropriate entity to address noise and safety concerns related to existing and future operations," Mead & Hunt states.

The commission is to meet at 9 a.m. Wednesday in the Board of Supervisors Chamber, 175 Fulweiler Ave., Auburn