

Charlotte Douglas International Airport

Airport Community Roundtable

History of the ACR (2017-2025)

The ACR Launch

The Airport Community Roundtable (ACR) was formed in 2017 by Charlotte Douglas International Airport (CLT) at the request of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). This airport-convened and community-led group of residents had as its initial mission: *To provide the City of Charlotte Aviation Department (Airport) and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) with broad-based community input into airport-related noise impacts and to find, where possible, practical solutions and recommendations for the FAA to consider when determining aircraft operating procedures at Charlotte Douglas International Airport.*

The ACR was comprised of 23 positions, held by local residents, and meetings would involve key stakeholders including CLT, the FAA, and representatives of the carriers. There had been a significant airspace redesign that was implemented in 2016, and the ACR's focus early on was creating a common understanding of those changes and the noise effects on the local community.

Chronological History of the ACR

2017: Establishing the ACR's Structure and Mission

A draft Mission statement was created in May 2017 which outlined the group's Mission, Guidelines as well as Governing Rules – including member composition and voting structure.

The first meeting was held on June 7 at CLT Center, with the primary intention of the meeting involving the setup of the ACR, an expected time commitment, future meeting schedules, roles of the FAA and CLT staff, the makeup of the ACR, and role and selection of Chair and Vice Chair. This meeting served primarily as an introduction with 12 ACR members in attendance. The group agreed to meet in July to undergo training in Robert's Rules of Order and to nominally accept monthly meetings moving forward.



The second meeting had a higher level of attendance with 16 ACR members present. At this meeting, several milestones were completed: the ACR formally adopted Robert’s Rules of Order, future meeting dates were set to the 3rd Wednesday of each month, meeting quorum was set to 12 members, and Bob Cameron was selected to be the first Chair.

The August meeting of the ACR was the first working meeting of the group and started the general trend moving forward for the group – namely, the meeting opened with a presentation by the FAA on background of noise abatement, ACR members discussed presentation and offered questions, and then follow-up requests were recorded for the next meeting.

The September meeting represented a fundamental change in the focus of the group as a whole. At the beginning of the meeting, then CEO Brent Cagle indicated that the focus of the group was to suggest alternatives to the FAA for implementation, not as a method to gain information to lead a suit against the FAA. This also led to the acknowledgment that the FAA would not change flight patterns back to pre-Metroplex procedures. These general concepts would be continued in the ACR through the current time.

Other notes from 2017 meetings:

- ❖ The noise-reducing concept of Optimized Profile Descents (OPDs) was introduced in the October meeting – and this was the ACR’s first formal ask for consideration. Additionally, the ACR received presentations from groups N.O.I.S.E. and A4A in November, as possible organizations for the ACR to consider joining. The ACR ultimately declined to join either organization.
- ❖ Regular updates on noise complaint statistics, opening the group to public input, and mention of adding technical consultant and facilitator to the ACR were included as part of the December agenda.

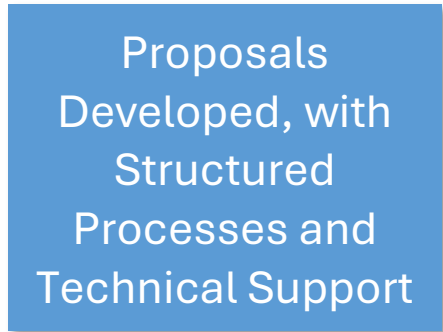
2018: Building ACR Knowledge and Early Initiatives

In 2018, the group addressed member education, as most members of the ACR were residents concerned with aircraft noise but with no experience in airport management or flight patterns. There were numerous requests for information and modifications to airspace proposed, yet few were carried forward.

In February, the definition of quorum was modified to reflect a majority of active members, instead of a fixed number. Then in March, two motions were discussed – delaying turns on Southbound departures, and maintaining 6,000 feet altitudes prior to turning final approach course. This time also included the establishment of the motions/requests database used to track requests by the ACR.

At the May meeting, CLT announced that HMMH and CSS, Inc. had been contracted as technical consultant and facilitator, respectively, for the group moving forward. This was to be a 3-year contract with the option for two one-year extensions. The selection team was headed by CLT staff with input from ACR Chair and Vice-Chair.

Later, under direction from both HMMH and FAA, the ACR agreed to develop several measures and submit to the FAA at one time for efficiency purposes. This document became informally known as “the Slate.” The June meeting introduced Gene Reindel with HMMH and Ed Gagnon with CSS.



Proposals
Developed, with
Structured
Processes and
Technical Support

Several milestones were accomplished at the July 2018 meeting: Ground Rules were set for future meetings, HMMH provided a first look at flight track density plots, and Bob Petruska was elected as second Chair of the ACR. Several meetings involved analysis relating to raising altitudes along downwind arrival. This would ultimately be accepted by the FAA as part of Recommendation 3A.

Bob Petruska resigned as Chair prior to the October 2018 meeting, and Brian Cox became the third Chair of the group, and in late 2018, the formal request to raise altitudes along the CHSLY arrival was submitted to the FAA independent of the full Slate.

2019: Refining Recommendations and Strengthening Processes

In 2019, the ACR continued to utilize HMMH to analyze Slate requests prior to sending to the FAA. CSS continued to facilitate meetings as well as to resolve open data requests. An initial draft of an 8-item Slate was first proposed at the March 2019 meeting.

Guiding Principles for decision-making were also solidified. The next several meetings were used to examine the potential outcomes from the Slate and to refine recommendations. The FAA mentioned the TSAS (Terminal Spacing and Sequencing) system expected to be implemented at CLT.

Noise Reduction
Policies/
Procedures
Published and
Promoted

Sara Nomellini became the fourth Chair of the ACR during the April 2019 meeting. In this meeting, HMMH defined four metrics of determining usefulness of recommendations – Lmax, DNL, Na70, and total overflights.

A nighttime noise restraint policy (i.e., voluntary ‘curfew’) was created by CLT. Under this program the Airport would send regular requests to operators asking to limit operations at night when possible. This program was well-received by Airport operators, many of which do not schedule night flights. The ACR also committed to sending a letter to congress indicating their support of the FAA Reauthorization Bill.

At the June 2019 meeting, two additional seats were added to the group representing York County (central) and Lincoln County, bringing total membership up to 25. During the July meeting, the ACR decided to formally request operators utilize the NADP-2 procedure at CLT.

The first mention of the desire from the ACR to seek ways to equalize North/South flow occurred at the September 2019 meeting. CLT met with the FAA in December 2019 for a first look at the current list of 9 Slate items. After conferring with CLT, the ACR would ultimately decide in 2020 to submit 6 total recommendations.

2020: Submitting the Slate and Refocusing Efforts

Early 2020 was spent organizing the Slate of recommendations prior to submitting to the FAA. Some notable events before the Slate submission in June:

- ❖ FAA indicated measures with greatest chance of success as divergent departure headings and removal of the 2-mile restriction on South departures.
- ❖ The March 11, 2020 meeting was cancelled as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. Virtual meetings began in May.

Slate of Noise
Reduction
Measures
Submitted to the
FAA

The final Slate of Recommendations consisting of 6 measures was approved by ACR vote at the July 8, 2020 meeting. Following this submission, the work of the ACR in the short term changed immediately. At this time, the FAA indicated that analysis of the Slate may take as long as 18 months, and they prepared to update the group quarterly.

In the meantime, much discussion was had on both the new goals of the group and the ongoing meeting schedule. A concept based on three key words – Engage, Monitor, Improve – was first introduced at the August 2020 meeting and became the focus of the ACR moving forward. Under this concept, the ACR would be tasked with *Engaging* with the local community and government officials, *Monitoring* the process of the FAA on the Slate as well as other initiatives and noise-related measures, and finding local areas of *Improvement*. This led to the creation of the Community Engagement Project Team, Government Engagement Project Team, and Local Operations/Improvement Project Team.

In terms of additional items of note:

- ❖ The FAA had formed a core group to analyze the Slate by the October meeting. ACR leadership also attended a meeting of the LAWA (Los Angeles World Airports) Roundtable during this month.
- ❖ Meeting schedule was changed from monthly to bimonthly.
- ❖ Kurt Wiesenberger was elected Chair of the ACR in December.

2021: Monitoring Slate Review and New Initiatives

The 2021 year was dedicated to the concept of Engage, Monitor, and Improve. The group received regular updates from the FAA on the progress of the Slate at this time. At the January meeting, the FAA again indicated the core team for analyzing the Slate was formed, as well as a technical support group. The initial strategy was to address recommendations relating to arrivals.

The first mention of an upcoming FAR Part 150 study was made at the June 2021 meeting. The FAA indicated that the three recommendations related to departures would likely be better served as part of that process. At this same meeting, the FAA indicated Recommendation #1 (CDAs - Continuous Descent Approaches) as described were not possible, yet they offered an alternative to Recommendation #3 (Raising Waypoints).

Slate Review
Progress
Monitored, and
Collaboration
Began on
Refinements

At the July meeting, the ACR shared a document with a formal response to the FAA’s initial analysis of the Slate. This “reaction document” was shared with the FAA following this meeting. During the September meeting, the FAA returned to the group to address the Slate document and discuss the upcoming Part 150 program. During this meeting, CLT began preparing key metric data for the ACR.

At the last meeting of 2021 in November, recently introduced Recommendation #3A (from the FAA) was discussed and approved. This was expected to raise flights on multiple downwind arrivals around the Airport.

2022: Advancing Technical Advocacy and Community Engagement

Early in 2022, the ACR formalized its structure by adopting a full-year meeting schedule and revising its Mission and Charter to reflect a broader scope. These internal decisions were paired with a strategic pivot toward collaboration with the stakeholders such as the FAA to refine and resubmit key proposals. The ACR encouraged CLT to improve its public complaint submission system and sought clarity on how CLT airspace was part of an FAA explanation of the national rollout of Optimized Profile Descents.



Additionally, the ACR voted to submit Alternative Proposal #3A to the FAA immediately following the March 2022 meeting, requesting raised arrival altitudes at multiple waypoints - a key recommendation that eventually gained FAA approval. The ACR was asked by the FAA to continue examining Recommendation #1 and to find potential updates to make the recommendation more suitable for the FAA.

The May meeting marked the first in-person meeting since March 2020. The EA (Environmental Assessment) for the new 4th parallel runway/terminal expansion project was completed shortly before this meeting, which allowed CLT to kick off the 2022 Part 150 program with a briefing scheduled for July. CLT sponsored member participation in the national Aviation Noise & Emissions Symposium.

On the technical front, requests for clarity on Continuous Descent Approaches (Recommendation #1) and analysis of NADP-2 usage illustrated the ACR’s ongoing interest in flight procedure optimization. Tools for measuring aircraft noise were also identified and shared with members. Process improvements were pursued with scheduling support for Project Teams and requests for material sharing from CLT and FAA, including documentation of noise data and presentations.

The first Part 150 Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting was held in September 2022, and the ACR was briefed on it during the October meeting. The ACR Chair and Vice Chair represented the ACR as members of the TAC.

To enhance efficiency, the ACR adopted a quarterly meeting schedule and began efforts to better coordinate Project Team meetings and deliverables, and the year closed with the FAA predicting Recommendation #3A would be implemented by end of 2024.

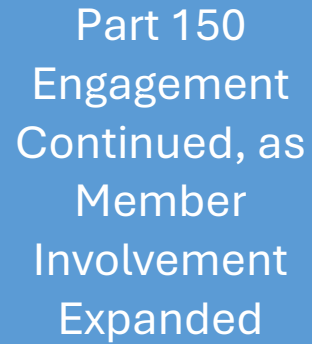
2023: Expanding Influence and Engagement

By 2023, the ACR deepened its involvement with the FAA's Part 150 process and expanded internal collaboration efforts. Early motions focused on refining representation - most notably by converting the Central York County seat to an at-large position - and creating a Technical Working Group to explore alternative noise reduction strategies, with an initial focus on Recommendation #1A.

The year began with requests for projected flight path information related to the new runway and calls for expanded between-meeting member communication. In parallel, the ACR began actively contributing to formal FAA processes, empowering its Chair/Vice Chair to submit official comments on both the Part 150 draft recommendations and the FAA's Noise Policy Review, as members submitted feedback and received presentations and analysis on trends in complaints and complainants. These submissions were refined in consultation with members and supported by technical partners such as CLT and HMMH.

As the year progressed, the ACR advanced its role in community and government engagement. The group endorsed communication materials from the Community Engagement Project Team for sharing with neighbors and the press, and later adopted a plan from the Government Engagement Team to interact with Charlotte City Council ahead of decisions on the Part 150 recommendations, including an ACR member speaking at the December City Council meeting. A resolution was also passed to recognize a long-standing airport partner, illustrating a balance of formality and appreciation.

Requests from the ACR spanned topics such as projected flight paths for the upcoming runway, updates on noise complaints, and implementation of Quarterly ACR Member Newsletters. The year marked the ACR's transition into an active policy participant, simultaneously working to influence regulatory processes and strengthen channels for member and community engagement.



Part 150
Engagement
Continued, as
Member
Involvement
Expanded

2024: Advocating for ACR Proposals and Process Improvements

In 2024, the ACR continued involvement in the FAA's Part 150 process. The year began with the FAA responding to ACR comments submitted the prior year, with the ACR requesting follow-up analysis by consultants such as HMMH on proposals likely to pass evaluation. The ACR worked with CLT to explore how to address proposals excluded from the FAA's consideration and sought baseline data to assess the effects of newly implemented FAA procedures. To increase clarity and accountability, the ACR submitted letters and Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests to the FAA. Motions passed unanimously to formally reply to FAA FOIA responses and escalate questions regarding North vs. South Flow configurations and who specifically reviewed ACR feedback, underscoring the group's assertive stance on transparency and community advocacy.

Slate
Recommendation
Implemented, and
2 Others Included
in Part 150

These efforts were supported by a set of strategic motions. The ACR authorized its Chair to formally communicate with the FAA and created a Temporary Working Team to craft a collective response to the draft Part 150 proposals. The Local Operations/Improvement Project Team was tasked with reviewing FOIA responses and recommending further questions, which were submitted to the FAA in the Fall.

Members reviewed new FAA procedures implemented in May (based on Recommendation #3A) and requested baseline data to support ongoing evaluation of proposed v. actual increases in altitudes at waypoints.

A Leadership transition began, as the 2-year ACR Chair – Natalie Rutzell – resigned, and Phil Gussman assumed leadership responsibilities while maintaining his Vice Chair position. The ACR also began developing talking points to support future communication with Charlotte City Council and residents.

Late in 2024, the ACR engaged many government officials as well as media to discuss its perspectives and positions on information included in the draft Part 150 document. The Vice Chair spoke at the City Council meeting in December 2024, conveying ACR support of the proposals from the Slate that were included in the draft Part 150 as well as voicing concerns about excluded ACR proposals and aspects of the Part 150 process.

2025: Finalizing ACR Accomplishments and Reimagining for the Future

At the January 2025 meeting of the ACR, members received updates on the CLT Part 150 Noise Compatibility Program and engaged in significant discussion regarding the ACR's past contributions and future direction. Representatives from American Airlines and CLT expressed appreciation for the ACR's diligence and role in advancing community-focused recommendations throughout the multi-year Part 150 process.

ACR Completed
its Mission, and
Began Transition
to New Entity

With Charlotte City Council's recent approval to submit the Part 150 Study to the FAA, a major milestone was achieved. Airport staff shared that technical coordination with the FAA was underway, with potential FAA approval in the Fall. Acknowledging the ACR's role in shaping the Slate of recommendations – with Slate departure recommendations included in the Part 150 - CLT officials emphasized the importance of the group's engagement and technical expertise. However, they also noted that with many FAA airspace-related changes including review/implementation of the Part 150, design of flight tracks associated with the new 4th Parallel Runway, and another potential airspace redesign being discussed, the FAA would not be in a position to consider another Slate of recommendations for several years.

Given this shift, the discussion focused heavily on reevaluating the ACR's structure and Mission moving forward. CLT noted the need to reform the group into a more flexible, advisory-oriented body with expanded membership opportunities, allowing passionate and informed community members - regardless of district representation - to participate. A new Mission statement would be developed with a focus on noise advocacy and technical consultation rather than formal voting processes

There was consensus that the ACR's original Mission has been largely fulfilled, and momentum should be carried forward through more inclusive engagement and better public visibility. Members reflected on their advocacy during the Part 150 review, acknowledged challenges in public communication, and emphasized the need for continued work through technical groups and community outreach.

CLT hosted past and current ACR members as well as other airport stakeholders in an April 2025 celebration marking the conclusion of the current ACR structure, with a new advisory body expected to launch in July 2025.

Appendix – Slate and ACR Chairs

ACR Initial Slate Measures

- ❖ Utilize Altitude-Based Turns
- ❖ Utilize Divergent Departure Headings
- ❖ Modify Use of Departure Profiles
- ❖ Utilize Alternating Arrival Rails
- ❖ On South Departures, Delay Turns off 18L (East) and 18C (West)
- ❖ On South Departures, Change Heading at First Turns off 18L (East) and 18C (West)
- ❖ Remove the 2-mile Restriction on Departures
- ❖ Utilize CDA (Continuous Descent Approach)
- ❖ Maintain 6,000' Arrival Altitude until Final Approach Course
- ❖ Return CAATT Waypoint to Pre-Metroplex location (aka, Raising the Altitude by 1000' at CAATT/EPAYE)

Final Slate as Submitted

- 1) Greater Use of Continuous Descent Approaches
- 2) Maintain 6,000' Arrival Minimum Altitude until Final Approach Course
- 3) Return CAATT Waypoint to Pre-Metroplex location (aka, Raising the Altitude by 1000' at CAATT/EPAYE)
- 4) Remove the 2-Mile Restriction on Departure
- 5) Utilize Divergent Departure Headings
- 6) Change Headings of First Turns off Runways 18L and 18C

ACR Chairs

- ❖ Bob Cameron
- ❖ Bob Petruska
- ❖ Brian Cox
- ❖ Sara Nomellini
- ❖ Kurt Wiesenberger
- ❖ Natalie Rutzell
- ❖ Phil Gussman (Vice Chair/Leader)

Appendix – CLT ACR Top Accomplishments

2017 through July 2020

- 1) **Collaborative Understanding:** Developed a shared understanding among ACR members, airlines, FAA, and CLT regarding the impacts of Metroplex changes on aircraft altitudes and noise.
- 2) **Technical Support:** Identified the need for technical guidance and facilitation support for developing and analyzing noise-related recommendations. Worked with CLT to acquire necessary resources.
- 3) **FAA Reauthorization Bill:** Supported FAA Reauthorization Bill provisions addressing noise issues, particularly the phase-out of Stage 3 aircraft. FAA agreed to comply with noise abatement measures.
- 4) **Noise Improvement Framework:** Created the Noise Improvement Matrix to identify noise reduction opportunities. Conducted a benchmarking study with 10 other airports to evaluate potential approaches.
- 5) **FAA Decision Flow:** Developed a flow chart illustrating the FAA's process for analyzing and implementing noise-related recommendations.
- 6) **Resident-based Noise Evaluation:** Developed noise annoyance metrics based on frequency and noise levels, instead of FAA's 65 DNL, to better reflect community concerns.
- 7) **Expanded Analysis Grid:** Created a 2,400-square-mile grid for evaluating noise recommendations, even in areas not currently affected by airplane noise.
- 8) **Public Outreach:** Published articles in local periodicals to raise awareness about airplane noise and provide avenues for public action.
- 9) **Voluntary Restraint Program:** Requested airlines to participate in a program to reduce night flight scheduling.
- 10) **CAATT & EPAYE Waypoint Request:** Sent a formal request to the FAA to return the CAATT & EPAYE Waypoints to pre-Metroplex locations, which the FAA addressed by raising altitudes at key waypoints by 1,000 feet.
- 11) **Departure Profile Changes:** Requested airlines to adopt NADP-2 profiles for aircraft capable of using it, with American Airlines agreeing to comply.
- 12) **Evaluated Recommendations:** Assessed 10 potential recommendations for submission to the FAA to reduce noise from aircraft departures and arrivals.

Post-July 2020 Accomplishments

- 1) **New Project Teams:** Launched three project teams focused on community engagement, government relations, and operational noise improvements that don't require FAA submission.
- 2) **Policy Adherence Monitoring:** Monitored the 2-mile departure restriction and engaged informally with air traffic controllers on flow decisions.
- 3) **Community Outreach:** Created communication materials to inform the public about noise issues, the Part 150 process, and how to file complaints.
- 4) **FAA Noise Policy Review:** Participated in the FAA's Noise Policy Review initiative, suggesting noise metrics and monitoring methods.
- 5) **Engagement with Airlines:** Re-engaged all primary airlines in late 2022 about NADP-2 usage, with Delta, JetBlue, United, American, and Southwest confirming close to 100% compliance.
- 6) **FAA Actions on Recommendations:** The FAA took action on five of the six recommendations submitted by ACR, with partial implementation on departure restrictions and CDA use. The CAATT & EPAYE Waypoint change was fully approved and implemented by May 2024.
- 7) **Part 150 Engagement:** ACR supported the Part 150 process, submitting 20+ proposals to improve noise conditions and engaging with local officials to ensure community input.