

**CONTRA COSTA COUNTY**  
**Aviation Advisory Committee**  
**(AAC)**  
**2025 Annual Report**

**Advisory Body Meeting Time and Location:** 10:00 am on the 2nd Thursday of every other month at either Buchanan Field or Byron Airport.

**Advisory Body Chair:** Shawn Stappen

**Airport Staff:** Greg Baer, Russell Milburn, and Elke Soberal

**I. Activities**

- Bi-monthly review of noise statistics, operations report, airport development projects, airfield updates, community events.
- Discussions of airport projects and programs to disseminate information and solicit input from members and public.
- Discussions of issues facing the airports and airport community.
- Input to the Airports Director, Airport Committee, and Board of Supervisors on issues affecting the Contra Costa County Airports and surrounding communities.
- Participation in community outreach efforts.

**II. Accomplishments**

The AAC discussed and advised on the following:

- Hosted Discussions on Transition to Unleaded Fuel
  - The AAC began detailed discussions in 2022 on the national issue of general aviation's transition to unleaded fuel; those discussions continued throughout 2025. The passage of SB 1193 in 2024 set a January 1, 2031, as the date leaded aviation fuel sales are banned in California; which also aligns with the FAA's deadline of the same. Tangible progress toward the first ever availability of unleaded fuel at Buchanan Field took shape in 2025. Pacific States Aviation (PSA) collaborated with Airport Staff and engaged the AAC to establish the logistical and distribution support needed to bring Swift's unleaded fuel known as UL94 to aviation gas customers. Sales are expected to begin in early 2026. The AAC will continue to assist in facilitating discussions between all stakeholders and recommend potential ways forward as the landscape continues to develop.
- Hangar Waiting List Fees Introduction
  - Airport Staff and the AAC took interest in the large number of airport users awaiting the opportunity to rent airport hangar space. Specifically, it was observed that many had to wait years, while others, when contacted, had withdrawn interest in renting a hangar. Everyone agreed the waitlist process was ripe for improvement. After active

engagement by Airport Staff, AAC members and airport stakeholders, a new process involving a small fee charged to those interested in renting hangar space had its intended effect. The hangar space waitlist fee not only motivated prospective applicants to remain engaged in the process, but it also created a revenue stream to help offset the administrative costs of managing hangar space applications. This new procedure was hailed by Airport Staff and aircraft owners alike in that it dramatically reduced the waiting list applicants and more importantly reduced the wait time applicants have to wait for a hangar opening. This effort was a win-win for all interested parties, and the idea was proposed and developed through AAC meetings with Airport Staff and the community at large.

- Hosted Discussions on Airport Economic Development
  - The AAC hosted numerous discussions with local aviation-related businesses and airport key stakeholders to understand the needs and the draw the airports provide to the aviation-supportive technology industries. A sample of engagements include presentations by Patriots Jet Team and Foundation, Pacific States Aviation, Concord Plaza Hotel and Birdstop.
  - The AAC continues to express strong support for all potential development projects. Each of these projects will contribute to the Enterprise Fund and will provide jobs and other economic benefits to the area surrounding Buchanan Field and Byron Airport.
- Property Commercial Development
  - Commercial Development of Aeronautical and Non-Aeronautical Sites at Buchanan Field and Byron Airports. Increasing development is an important continuing item significant to the Airport Enterprise Fund. Several undeveloped parcels, designated for non-aviation use, are part of the Buchanan Field.
- Community Outreach and Volunteering
  - Staff hosted a successful “Santa’s Jolly Landing” at the end of 2024 at Buchanan Field. The event attracted over 230 community members and children. Staff, AAC members, and other volunteers engaged with attendees that helped to raise funds for 1,430 meals for the Contra Costa County Food Bank.
- Airport noise impact on communities
  - AAC continues to engage in various Buchanan Field and Byron Airports’ noise inquiries through phone conversations and in-person meetings between residents and airport staff and/or AAC members. What is key is consistency in reminding pilots of designated training hours according to the airports' noise abatement ordinance.

- Continuing on last year's 16% decrease in noise inquiries, 2025 inquiries were down 30% despite a 3% increase in flight operations. Similarly to previous years, the number of callers remains relatively low, with the same callers making repeated calls over the year.

### III. Attendance/Representation

- AAC is composed of members representing each of the supervisorial districts, the cities of Concord and Pleasant Hill, the Airport Business Association, community of Pacheco, surrounding communities of Byron Airport (Brentwood, Byron, Knightsen, Discovery Bay), and three at large positions for a total of 13 members.
- In 2025 the AAC was unable to make a quorum once, in large part due to three enduring vacancies that are expected to persist into 2026. While the AAC's bylaws identify a member to be appointed for the Airport Business Association, that entity does not exist. The AAC, in consultation with Airport Staff engaged with the airport business community to explore various ways to resolve this issue. A final solution is expected in early 2026. The AAC, in partnership with Airport Staff and the Board of Supervisors, actively recruits with hopes of an early 2026 appointment for these vacancies.
- The AAC is a diverse group of aviation professionals, retired and current community leaders, members of the public, consultants, and educators. There is a balanced mix of pilots and nonpilots.
- Public participation varied throughout the year. Most public comments centered on unleaded fuel and noise related topics.

| AAC members<br>(as of Nov 2025) | Representing          | Term Expiration Date |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Vincent Salimi                  | District 1            | 2/28/26              |
| Elizabeth Leddy                 | District 2            | 2/28/27              |
| VACANT                          | District 3            |                      |
| Gareth Ashley                   | District 4            | 2/28/26              |
| Christopher Baker               | District 5            | 2/28/26              |
| Keith McMahon                   | City of Concord       | 2/28/28              |
| Richard Celestre                | City of Pleasant Hill | 2/28/27              |
| Shawn Stappen                   | Member At Large 1     | 2/28/27              |
| Eric Meinbress                  | Member At Large 2     | 2/28/26              |
| Emily Barnett                   | Member At Large 3     | 2/28/28              |
| Peter Baker                     | Pacheco Neighbor      | 2/28/27              |

|        |                              |  |
|--------|------------------------------|--|
| VACANT | Byron Neighbor               |  |
| VACANT | Airport Business Association |  |

#### **IV. Training/Certification**

- It is mandatory for all members to complete county training regarding the Ralph M. Brown Act, County's Better Government Ordinance, which includes Implicit Bias for County Officials and the County's Ethics Orientation, each within 90 days of the appointment and every 2 years thereafter.
- All members completed the training within the required timelines and associated documentation was forwarded to the Clerk of the Board.

#### **V. Proposed Objectives for 2026**

- Encourage the growth of business and general passenger service for our surrounding communities.
- Continue to support the unleaded fuel transition.
- Continue to support the Bay Area Test Sites (BATS) program.
- Continue to advise, monitor, and review the Buchanan Field and Byron Airports' construction and maintenance projects.
- Continue to advise, monitor, and review activities and incidents impacting airport security.
- Continue to grow and develop community and tenant outreach efforts for both airports.
- Continue to advise, monitor, and review, noise statistics, and overall operations.
- Continue to work with the surrounding communities regarding noise inquiries and other aviation-related issues.
- Continue regular discussions with Airport Staff on various airport developments (current and future), projects and issues, as well as disseminate information and offer recommendations.
- Continue to provide the general public with an open forum for discussions on aviation-related matters.
- Continue to support the Airports Division through the planning, outreach, and attendance at community-based events. These events are key for AAC members to engage with the public and highlight the regional benefits our two airports bring to northern California.