



# PALOMAR AIRPORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

*McClellan-Palomar Airport ♦ 2192 Palomar Airport Road ♦ Carlsbad, California 92011 ♦ (760) 431-4646*

Vacant  
*General Public*

Shirley Anderson  
*Vice Chair*

Clifford Kaiser  
*Chairperson*

Howard Krausz  
*General Public*

Clayton Lackey  
*Industry Representative*

Gordon Nesbitt  
*Oceanside Representative*

Armen Kurdian  
*Vista Representative*

Gary Greening  
*Carlsbad Representative*

Kevin Karpé  
*San Marcos Representative*

## MINUTES

**Thursday, March 19, 2026**

Chairperson Kaiser called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. on Thursday, March 19, 2026.

### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Cliff Kaiser, Shirley Anderson, Gary Greening, Clayton Lackey, Howard Krausz, and Kevin Karpé were present, which represented a quorum.

### **MEMBERS ABSENT**

Armen Kurdian and Gordon Nesbitt

### **COUNTY STAFF PRESENT**

Present were Cathe Johnson, Ursula Null, Jamie Abbott, Mark Reiner, and Yadira Aguilar.

Chairperson Kaiser noted for the record the addition of two items from the San Diego County Administrative Code — Sections 730 and 731, and Article XL — governing PAAC rules, procedures, and operations. These documents are publicly available on the County website. No changes were made to existing rules; they were entered into the record for public reference.

Chairperson Kaiser stated that, to allow additional time for the VNAP presentation, the Financial Report would be tabled until the next meeting.

### **APPROVE MINUTES FOR January 2026 MEETING**

The PAAC members reviewed the minutes for the January 2026 meeting.

Mr. Karpé moved the minutes to be approved, Mrs. Anderson seconded. Minutes were approved with 5 votes in favor. Cliff Kaiser, Shirley Anderson, Clayton Lackey, Garry Greening, and Kevin Karpé. 1 abstention from Howard Krausz, and 2 absent members, Armen Kurdian and Gordon Nesbitt.

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## VNAP Subcommittee Update- G. Greening

Chairperson Kaiser introduced the VNAP Subcommittee, which spent nine months conducting a comprehensive review of the Voluntary Noise Abatement Program (VNAP) at McClellan Palomar Airport (CRQ). The subcommittee, chaired by Mr. Gary Greening, included pilots, community residents, and aviation professionals.

Mr. Greening explained that over the past nine months, the subcommittee has conducted extensive work reviewing multiple aspects of noise abatement at CRQ. The team organized its efforts into several focused modules, studied each in depth, and developed supporting statistical analyses. With this foundation in place, the subcommittee presented a clear summary of its findings, outlined its recommendations, and proposed next steps. Key presentation areas included Pilot awareness and the redesigned VNAP Pilot Flyer, the Jet Pilot Incentive Program, improvements to the Noise Complaint Process, an update on the FAA Part 150 Study, and additional noise abatement recommendations.

Mr. Greening outlined the proposed pathway forward as follows:

- Term 1–3 months: Establish shared goals with airport staff and community groups, define key performance indicators, and confirm stakeholder commitments.
- Term 3–12 months: Implement updated VNAP materials, launch the pilot incentive program, and enhance the noise complaint portal and reporting process.
- Term 1–2 years: Complete the FAA Part 150 Study, pursue structural noise abatement improvements, and develop a long term, sustainable community engagement framework.

Mr. Greening received comments and answered questions from the committee and from the public.

Mrs. Anderson moved to approve the VNAP Subcommittee action items for staff consideration, Mr. Greening seconded. Motion was approved with 6 votes in favor: Cliff Kaiser, Shirley Anderson, Clayton Lackey, Garry Greening, Howard Krausz and Kevin Karpé. 2 absent members, Armen Kurdian and Gordon Nesbitt.

## AMERICAN AIRLINE NEW LEASE AGREEMENT– J. Abbott

Mr. Abbott provided an update on the proposed new lease agreement with American Airlines, which includes adding two additional daily flights to Phoenix from Palomar Airport. He noted that American Airlines has been operating at Palomar for one year, and the new agreement would increase their total service to four daily flights. As part of the expansion, two aircraft would remain overnight at the airport. Mr. Abbott also reported that the FAA has expressed support for American Airlines' continued operations at Palomar. If approved by the Board of Supervisors, the new lease would take effect on May 7, 2026, replacing the current agreement.

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Proposed Flight Schedule (pending Board of Supervisors approval):

- 4 daily departures, 4 daily arrivals to/from Phoenix Sky Harbor
- Aircraft: Embraer E175, 76-seat configuration (same as current operations)
- 2 aircraft remain overnight (RON) following last evening arrivals

Mr. Abbott read the recommended motion “Palomar Airport Advisory Committee recommends to the Board of Supervisors to authorize the Director of Airports to execute a lease with American Airlines.”

Mr. Abbott received comments and answered questions from the committee and from the public.

Mr. Lackey moved to approve the recommended motion “Palomar Airport Advisory Committee recommends to the Board of Supervisors to authorize the Director of Airports to execute a lease with American Airlines”. Mr. Karpé seconded. 3 committee members voted in favor: Chairperson Cliff Kaiser, Clayton Lackey, and Kevin Karpé. 3 committee members opposed: Shirley Anderson, Howard Krausz, and Garry Greening. 2 members absent: Armen Kurdian and Gordon Nesbitt. 1 Vacant seat. The motion did not pass. The Committee was informed the Board would hear this item on May 6, 2026.

## **DIRECTOR’S REPORT** – J. Abbott

Mr. Abbott announced that Cathe Johnson has been appointed Airport Manager at Palomar Airport, bringing 20 years of aviation management experience to the team. Gillespie Field will continue to be managed by Assistant Airport Manager Cliff Reinhardt until the Airport Manager position is filled.

Mr. Abbott provided an update on Agua Caliente, noting that a nonprofit organization is working with the State to evaluate options for reopening the facility. County Airports is supporting the effort but will not resume ownership of the site.

Mr. Abbott announced that Ramona Airport has appointed a new Airport Manager, Meadow Chase, with Keegan Robilotta serving as Assistant Airport Manager.

Ms. Null provided an update on the Cajon Air Center development project at Gillespie Field. Approximately 55 acres are available for aviation related development, making it one of the last major aviation buildout opportunities within the County airport system. Development will proceed through multiple rounds of RFPs, starting with 5–15 acres. The project is currently in Phase 1, which includes due diligence, preparation of background documents, drafting development agreements, and conducting technical studies. A new project website is being created and will offer

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a signup option for interested parties. Development will be undertaken by master leaseholders who will construct aviation facilities in accordance with County standards. Initial acreage release remains limited due to constraints associated with the Bradley Interchange project.

Mr. Abbott received comments and answered questions from the committee and from the public.

## **STAFF REPORT-C. Johnson**

Ms. Johnson reported that four staff members have been assigned to manage noise-complaint callbacks. The team has been actively returning calls to all residents who request follow-up communication regarding noise concerns. The airport website, noise portal, and Web Trak interface are currently undergoing a comprehensive review to identify opportunities for usability enhancements. Ms. Johnson affirmed that a full pilot focused outreach initiative will be launched once the VNAP materials are finalized. This outreach will include all flight schools, flying clubs, FBOs, and airport businesses. Ms. Johnson stated her intention to formalize and officially distribute the redesigned pilot flyer developed by the subcommittee once finalized. Ms. Johnson provided an in-depth explanation of FAA hot spots, emphasizing that they serve as safety awareness tool and are not indicative of accidents, but serve as a warning sign to be diligent or cautious in the area. She noted that 291 airports nationwide currently have designated hot spots and the FAA actively seeks to add more at annual Runway Safety Action Team meetings.

Chairperson Kaiser adjusted the order of agenda items to accommodate time constraints.

## **PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS REGARDING ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA**

Members of the community expressed concerns regarding aircraft noise, commercial flight operations, Voluntary Noise Abatement Program (VNAP), flight paths and altitudes over residential areas, and Valley Center representation on the PAAC.

- A member of the public requested the airport advocate to Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for a voluntary fly-friendly agreement with flight schools to avoid overflight at residential areas.
- A member of the public requested the airport works with the FAA to increase jet arrival altitudes to account for the surrounding geography.
- A member of the public suggested adding a Valley Center representative to the PAAC.

No motions were taken by PAAC on the above public comments.

A separate community member, representing the Palomar Airport Association (PAA), provided an overview of recent PAA activities. These include monthly aviation social meetings at the Landings Restaurant (held on the second Wednesday from March through October), the Youth Aviation Day

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scheduled for September 2026, and outreach to local high school aviation programs, including access to an FAA-approved flight simulator.

Chairperson Kaiser received comments and responded to questions from both committee members and the public.

## **AIRPORT MONTHLY PERFORMANCE REPORT- M. REINER**

Report for February 2026:

The monthly performance report was not formally presented during the meeting due to time constraints. Chairperson Kaiser announced that C2 and D3 aircraft classifications will be added to future monthly reports to better track aircraft types operating at the B2-designated airport.

- Monthly Airline Passengers: 6, 053
- Annual Airline Passengers: 12, 858
- Monthly Take-Offs and Landings: 12,929
- Annual Take-Offs and Landings: 28, 046
- Monthly Complaints: 186
- Annual Complaints: 486
- Community Noise Complaints by Quadrant: Southwest:5; Southeast:8; Northwest:20; Northeast:10.
- Jet Flights during quiet hours (2200-0700): 99
- Propeller Flights during quiet hours (0000-0600): 49

## **COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS**

Mr. Lackey noted that pilot incentives may benefit private pilots but not commercial operators. He added that individuals appreciate being recognized for their efforts.

Mr. Karpé noted that Orange County no longer operates as it did 20 years ago and now follows a different set of procedures and thanked the VNAP Subcommittee.

Mrs. Anderson noted that Mr. Karpé previously served as a member of the VNAP Subcommittee and has experience working with dashboards.

Mr. Krausz noted that although the Financial Report had been tabled, it has been posted on the website.

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Chairperson Kaiser noted that concerns regarding dirt slopes arise periodically and requested that Ms. Johnson provide a report on the matter in her staff report next meeting. He noted the vacancy of the Vista Representative seat, previously held by Armen Kurdian, and encouraged community members to contact their respective Board of Supervisors to help expedite the appointment process to fill open positions. He also acknowledged public feedback expressing concerns about feeling unheard, emphasizing that the nine-month VNAP subcommittee process was initiated specifically in response to longstanding community issues. Additionally, he clarified that the deferred financial report is publicly accessible on the County website.

## **SET AGENDA FOR THE NEXT MEETING** – May 21, 2026

Chairperson Kaiser mentioned adding Slope Upkeep to the Manager report as well. He also requested that a motion item be added regarding future meeting frequency, noting that the committee previously held ten meetings per year and is now meeting six times annually.

## **ADJOURN**

Mr. Karpé moved the meeting to be adjourned; Mr. Greening seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 PM.

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Yadira Aguilar, Administrative Secretary I