

Saint Paul Downtown Airport

DAAC

St. Paul Downtown Airport Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 15, 2025, at 3:00 p.m.
644 Bayfield Street, St. Paul, MN 55107
St. Paul Downtown Airport (STP) Terminal Building

Call to Order

A regularly scheduled meeting of the St. Paul Downtown Airport Advisory Council (DAAC) was held Tuesday, April 15, 2025, at the STP Terminal Building. In attendance were:

Representatives: J. Fure, District 17 Planning Council - Capitol River; J. Gadiant, Minnesota National Guard; L. Gregg, Best Jets International (via Teams); L. Hinsperger, Carlson Companies (via Teams); T. Marino, District 4 Planning Council - Dayton's Bluff (via Teams); D. Napier, Mayor - West St. Paul (via Teams); Y. Robinson, City of St. Paul; D. Schaab, District 5 - Payne Phalen;

MAC Staff: J. Lewis, Community Relations Coordinator; C. Metcalfe, Assistant Manager - Community Relations; B. Peterson, Airport Manager; M. Ross, Director - Stakeholder Engagement;

Other: L. Reidt - SEH; J. Ronken, FAA; R. Ziegler, Recording Secretary; J. Zunker, Advantage Court Reporting (via Teams)

1. Introduction and Roll Call

Chair Fure called the meeting to order at 3:03 p.m. Those present were invited to introduce themselves. There was a total of 16 participants.

A quorum of three User Representatives, two Public Representatives, and one Government Representative was established.

User Representatives: J. Gadiant, L. Gregg, L. Hinsperger,

Public Representatives: J. Fure, T. Marino, D. Schaab

Government Representatives: D. Napier, Y. Robinson

Approved 4-21-2026



2. **Consent Items**

a. **Approval of Meeting Minutes: October 15, 2024**

b. **STP Aircraft Noise Complaints and Operations Summary**

Chair Fure opened a discussion of the consent agenda items.

Representative Napier moved and Vice Chair Gregg seconded to:

Approve the consent agenda items as presented.

No further discussion was had.

The motion passed by unanimous vote.

3. **Business Items**

a. **Approval of Draft Bylaws 2025**

Ms. Lewis reviewed the history and a brief summary of the proposed bylaws changes, including the reasons for the proposed changes. She noted that the most substantive changes relate to the membership makeup of the Council.

Chair Fure asked for clarity as far as what motion was being sought.

Ms. Lewis explained that a motion could be to change the full set of bylaws as proposed. She noted that the full bylaws draft was included in the meeting packet.

Representative Schaab inquired regarding use of the word “staff” and what that verbiage means for voting purposes, reporting purposes, and for general delineation of power. He sought confirmation that use of the word “staff” is simply referring to a downstream reporting structure.

Ms. Lewis clarified that MAC staff does not vote and that all voting power rests with the Chair, Vice Chair, and Representatives. She agreed that the reference to “staff” is administrative in nature.

Representative Schaab noted that the document had some missing punctuation.

Ms. Lewis and **Mr. Peterson** commented that, after Council approval, the document would be reviewed for formatting and punctuation.

Representative Schaab inquired whether there would be another approval vote after that final go-through.

Ms. Lewis indicated that there would not be another vote.



Chair Fure sought confirmation that the major changes related to the membership makeup of the Council and that other proposed changes are more technical and less substantive in nature.

Ms. Lewis agreed that his understanding of the proposed changes was correct.

Representative Marino noted appreciation for the work done on the bylaws and for the proposed increase to community member representation.

Chair Fure called for any further discussion or questions and, hearing none, called for a motion.

**Vice Chair Gregg moved and Representative Marino seconded to:
Approve the 2025 Draft Bylaws as presented.
No further discussion was had.
The motion passed by unanimous vote.**

b. Approval of STP Noise Abatement Best Practices

Ms. Lewis gave a brief history of the best practices document and explained that the name change was made to avoid conflicts with other FAA regulations and guidance. She reviewed the document's six main bullet points: Takeoff and Approach, Traffic Patterns, Maintenance Run-ups, Helicopter Operations, Nighttime Operations (2200-0700), and the Fly Neighborly Guide. She indicated that the changes being proposed are intended to better coordinate with FAA recommendations, standardize language, standardize practices across the MAC system, and add the Fly Neighborly Guide.

Representative Schaab asked whether the move away from using terms like "planning" and "procedure" to "best practices" allowed more wiggle room for remaining compliant.

Ms. Lewis answered that the change is to avoid conflict with existing FAA definitions and terms.

Representative Schaab noted that noise abatement discussion is often human-driven. He inquired whether or not any studies have occurred regarding the impacts on nonhuman species of airport noise.

Mr. Peterson stated that he was unaware of any long-term study on that subject other than more general environmental studies, which wildlife is a part of. He expressed willingness to double-check to see if studies like that have previously occurred.



Representative Schaab noted that human-derived complaints often come from particular people and that reporting from other species may be likewise not uniformly received.

Ms. Reidt said that the environmental process typically comes after the planning study and specified that noise and wildlife are both part of the environmental reviews.

Representative Schaab inquired about the environmental impact that the airport has on landscape and native foliage. He asked whether there was any effort to replace non-native species and foliage with native species to better harmonize with the environment.

Ms. Ross indicated that the long-term planning process is just starting to look into what needs the airport might have. She informed the Council that there is environmental analysis after the long-term plan is completed and that both processes include public engagement. She further commented that there are no thresholds of significance established for impacts on nonhuman species, which makes evaluation and comparison more difficult as there are no standard measurable metrics currently established.

Representative Marino noted that passage of the cumulative impacts law in 2023 may impact future environmental work and/or set standards. He inquired whether or not any long-term plan could be reopened or whether it would be locked in.

Ms. Ross answered that the environmental review is a joint federal-state process and that all metrics and criteria put in place by a regulatory agency will be followed. She noted that the process won't change but that the methodology or levels of significance determined to be appropriate for assessment and disclosure will be followed.

Chair Fure indicated that safety always has to be the first priority.

Mr. Ronken concurred that safety is always the biggest concern. He recommended adding additional references to clarify that the traffic pattern guidance only applies when the air traffic control tower is not in operation. He suggested adding such language to the document's introduction and/or the beginning of the traffic pattern section for increased clarity and to avoid confusion. He inquired regarding the guidance for turbine-powered aircraft and whether it replaced current guidance or was new in the best practices.

Ms. Lewis explained that there was not previous guidance specific to turbine-powered aircraft and that it came about because of changes made in the AIM and other documents.

Ms. Lewis and **Mr. Ronken** discussed altitudes listed in the document, including topics of turbine-powered aircraft, ground elevation, and potential conflicts with MSP airspace.



Representative Gadiant commented that altitude calculation issues could also affect departures.

Mr. Ronken noted that care is needed to avoid potential conflicts with MSP Bravo airspace.

Ms. Ross clarified the meaning of terms being used.

Mr. Ronken discussed the different airspaces and their requirements and controls.

Chair Fure inquired if the group wanted to discuss further revisions to the best practices.

Representative Schaab made a motion that the STP Noise Abatement Best Practices be withheld from current ratification and that it be revised for review and approval at a later date so the discussed concerns could be addressed.

[Motion later amended. See page 7.]

Representative Schaab noted wanting to ensure that the concerns were addressed and the information harmonized to avoid any potential negative outcomes.

Chair Fure stated that the motion being made is to request that the document be revised and brought back to the Council at a later date.

Representative Gadiant seconded the motion.

Ms. Lewis inquired as to whether it was only the discussed issues that would need to be changed in the document.

Chair Fure stated that, if so, it possibly could be approved by a vote today with the noted changes suggested by the Council.

Ms. Ross added that a future vote on the matter could be done via email.

Ms. Lewis inquired as to whether any further changes were being requested at this time.

Chair Fure asked whether the current motion would need to be withdrawn and whether anyone had further information or feedback on the topic.

Representative Gadiant inquired regarding the intent of the turbine-power aircraft guidance.

Ms. Lewis clarified her understanding that its intent was to apply to fixed-wing aircraft.



Representative Gadiant noted his assumption that helicopters would fall under best practices for propeller-driven aircraft.

Ms. Lewis proposed removing specific numerical altitude references and instead using “traffic pattern altitude” to avoid confusion or potential conflicts.

Mr. Ronken agreed that such a change would be beneficial.

Ms. Lewis further clarified her suggested revision to eliminate the numerical altitude references.

Ms. Ronken again agreed with **Ms. Lewis’s** suggested change.

Representative Schaab highlighted the difficulties for those less familiar with the rules and regulations in evaluating the information to ensure compliance standards are met. He noted his chief concern would be any potential computational errors. He questioned if there may be a need for a deeper dive into the document to ensure it is error-free.

Ms. Lewis clarified that, while only some specific altitudes were listed on the slide, all the information was provided in the packet. She indicated that she would be happy to make the identified changes and discuss further suggestions now or also to give the Council more time to review and comment. The original review deadline was 12/31/24, but she suggested 6/30/25 for another deadline and that the group could then further discuss at the September meeting.

Representative Schaab noted his concern that any traffic pattern references that occur in the document be accurate and consistent.

Mr. Ronken discussed the traffic pattern section, specifically regarding the use of Runway 4 and landing/departure locations, and inquired regarding the intent of that provision.

Ms. Lewis responded that the intent of the provision is to maximize use of as much of the runway as possible. She indicated she would be happy to receive suggestions for rewording for clarity if needed.

Mr. Ronken inquired whether the word “arrivals” was necessary in Section D of the traffic pattern section.

Ms. Lewis clarified the suggestion and proposed that Item D be changed to “Use full length of runway for departures; avoid stop and go operations and avoid intersection takeoffs.”

Mr. Ronken agreed that would fix his concern.



Chair Fure called for further questions or comments and sought clarification on the exact motion that had been made.

Ms. Ziegler repeated the motion made by **Representative Schaab**.

Mr. Peterson proposed using the May 20 airport tour date as a time when the revised document could be reviewed and potentially voted upon.

Chair Fure agreed that would be a workable option.

Representative Schaab sought clarity about motion procedure.

Chair Fure suggested that **Representative Schaab** could modify his motion.

Representative Schaab modified his original motion as follows: that the document be withheld from current ratification and that a revised version be prepared for later review to occur on May 20.

Representative Gadiant seconded the motion as revised.

Ms. Lewis restated the motion to be voted upon.

Mr. Peterson sought clarity on the May 20 date being added to the motion.

Ms. Ziegler indicated that the minutes would reflect the added date.

Chair Fure called for further questions or comments, and there were none at this time. He then called for a vote.

The motion passed by unanimous vote.

4. Information Items

a. Airport Manager Update

Mr. Peterson, Airport Manager, gave an update regarding the 14/32 Runway construction coming up from June 2 through August 9, depending on weather. He added that nighttime closures will be needed at least 30 days after the initial closures for runway grooving. He reviewed how updates would be provided as the construction proceeds.

Representative Napier asked for clarification of the date of the airport tour.

Mr. Peterson and **Ms. Ross** clarified the date is May 20 and that a reminder will be sent out.



Mr. Peterson then gave brief additional information regarding the airport tour.

Mr. Peterson noted that the bid opening for construction work for Taxiway Bravo, Eaton Street, and edge lighting had occurred today. He stated that construction will happen in the July timeframe and that more updates will be forthcoming.

Representative Schaab asked about any potential outpouring of traffic onto city streets resulting from the airfield construction projects.

Mr. Peterson clarified that some traffic impact is expected but that there are plans in place to help mitigate some of the truck traffic impacts.

Representative Schaab asked whether there were any planned road closures.

Mr. Peterson answered that the impact was not expected to include closures.

Mr. Peterson and **Ms. Reidt** discussed the history of maintenance on the runway.

Mr. Peterson noted that the tenant appreciation barbecue is scheduled for September 17 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. He then reviewed the 14/32 construction map, including information regarding the planned phases, laydown areas, and contractor locations.

Representative Schaab inquired about a St. Paul Art Collective email regarding an upcoming installation at the airport.

Chair Fure and **Mr. Peterson** both stated they were unaware of an airport event and that it may be referring to an installation at the restaurant. **Mr. Peterson** said that he would look into it further to ensure that all were properly informed regarding any potential event or installation.

Chair Fure called for further questions or comments, and there were none at this time.

b. Annual STP Sound Study Update (2025)

Ms. Ross gave a brief history and introduction to the sound study, which has typically been done in August each year. She informed the Council that a change is being made this year from a mobile study method with physical monitoring equipment in the field to a modeling study method and noted that they will try to avoid any construction period to give a more accurate snapshot. She stated that results will be prepared and shared when available, hopefully by the fall meeting.

Representative Schaab asked about the possibility of doing the study before construction begins.



Ms. Ross agreed that May or April could be options and that August has historically been used to better compare results from year to year.

Representative Schaab stated that, because there's already a change to the study method, maybe a timing change could be appropriate as well.

Ms. Ross indicated that, if the Council prefers, the study could be moved into May and then the report could be completed by the September meeting.

Ms. Lewis highlighted the additional flexibility allowed with the modeling study method.

Ms. Ross clarified that no motion would be needed to change the study timing.

Chair Fure called for further questions or comments, and there were none at this time. He stated that the study will be moved up to occur in May.

5. Public Comment Period

Chair Fure introduced the public comment period and reminded attendees of the ground rules for public comment. There were no public comments.

6. Member Announcements

Ms. Ross reminded the Council that the first meeting of the Stakeholder Advisory Panel for longer-term planning will be held May 13 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. The panel will be convened approximately three times over 12 to 18 months, and there will be events to inform the public about the process and share outcomes of the plan.

Chair Fure called for further questions or comments, and there were none at this time. He then inquired regarding the public events.

Ms. Ross noted that all members of the Council are invited, as well as additional entities. She discussed that no voting occurs, so any additional or alternate representatives would also be welcome to participate to get input and perspectives of tenants and community members and to foster a robust process.

Representative Schaab inquired regarding whether meeting locations within the communities may be better for public engagement. He asked if greater effort could be made to present at district council meetings to foster ground-level community engagement and give the citizenry a chance to voice concerns and be informed.

Ms. Ross indicated that has been done in the past and that she would welcome the opportunity to do so again.



Representative Schaab discussed communication between the stakeholders and that it needs to be both ways, although he noted that the timelines of differing groups can be difficult to sync up.

Ms. Ross confirmed that she would keep all stakeholders informed. She stated that the public events utilize the lure of seeing the airports as a draw for more public engagement.

Representative Schaab discussed wanting to make it more of a draw and also wanting to find ways to most effectively engage the public.

Ms. Ross noted that historic attendance has been best at the airport sites as opposed to other locations. She expressed that she would be happy to come to any location to present and give further information.

Representative Schaab inquired about notice for such opportunities.

Ms. Ross expressed that the MAC wants to take every opportunity to get feedback and keep all stakeholders informed.

Chair Fure thanked **Ms. Ross** and **Representative Schaab** for their discussion and positive suggestions. He then called for further questions or comments, and there were none at this time.

7. Review Meeting Schedule 2025

Chair Fure reminded the Council of the upcoming schedule, including the May 20 date for the airport tour and further discussion of the best practices document and the September 16 date for the fall meeting.

8. Adjournment

Chair Fure adjourned the meeting at 4:19 p.m.

