

## Complaints down, but Longmont residents still question airport noise

**By John Fryar**

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Despite data showing a [drop in Longmont-area complaints about the noise of aircraft](#) using the city's Vance Brand Municipal Airport, two residents told the City Council on Tuesday night that they still consider it a nuisance.

Joann Burton said that while the number of complaints the city logged in 2016 were far fewer than it reported were made in 2015, she is still "sad and disillusioned" about the noise from planes flying over her home on the 700 block of Strawberry Street.

"A simple solution," Burton suggested, would be for Mile-Hi Skydiving, an airport tenant, to replace its Twin Otter aircraft with a quieter plane.

Scott Stewart, who lives on the 200 block of Grant Street in Old Town Longmont, said the council should be aware that increasing aviation activity at the airport may also cause an increasing noise nuisance "for those of us on the ground."

Burton and Stewart spoke during the council meeting's public-comment opportunity before Vance Brand Municipal Airport Manager David Slayter presented an annual report about the facility.

Slayter said city records showed that Longmont got 257 complaints about noisy aircraft last year, down from 969 such complaints in 2015.

All but 15 of last year's complaints were about noise from Mile-Hi Skydiving's flights, Slayter said, with noise from touch-and-go landing and takeoffs constituting most of the 15 objections.

Councilman Brian Bagley noted during Slayter's presentation that the 257 complaints came from 33 people — ranging from one person who complained 16 separate times to one person who complained 103 times last year.

Slayter said he tries to talk to every complainant and explain what the city can control — and what it cannot — when it comes to applicable Federal Aviation Administration regulations.

Stewart, however, said he personally had complained about noise twice last year but hadn't gotten his phone calls returned.

Some council members said they'd heard from constituents about how hard it is — or how long it takes — to register noise complaints online through a [Link2Longmont service-request system](#) the city put in place in mid-2015.

"I've heard a lot of people say they won't complain because it takes five minutes," said Councilman Jeff Moore, the council liaison to the Airport Advisory Board, although he said the online system gives the city a better way of tracking such complaints.

Councilman Gabe Santos said there's a link at the bottom of the Vance Brand Municipal Airport website, at [bit.ly/2kvLEFS](http://bit.ly/2kvLEFS), that directs people to that Link2Longmont site to report comments or concerns about airport operations.

Bagley told Stewart that he sympathizes with Stewart's continuing frustration over the aircraft noise.

"I empathize with you," Bagley said. "I hear it. I get it."

But Bagley said when he asks people with complaints like Stewart's what they think should be done about it, they frequently say that's up to the elected council members to resolve.

Aircraft noise has been an issue he's heard during his five years on the council, Bagley said, adding that "I don't know" the solution.

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