



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Aviation  
Administration**

Great Lakes Region  
2300 East Devon Avenue  
Des Plaines, IL 60018

**DEC 21 2015**

The Honorable Steve Morley  
Mayor of Elmhurst  
209 North York Street  
Elmhurst, IL 60126

Dear Mayor Morley:

Thank you for the opportunity to present information regarding the O'Hare Modernization and O'Hare operations at a recent meeting in your community. Since we did not have enough time to answer all the questions that were submitted that evening, we are providing responses to the questions your staff submitted in writing following the meeting.

1. Can you explain the current and future operations regarding Runway 4R/22L and its effects on the City of Elmhurst?

Runway 22L is currently used as a departure runway when O'Hare is operating in a West Flow condition. O'Hare operates in this condition approximately 70% of the year. This runway will continue to be used in the way it is used today. When the O'Hare Modernization is complete, additional departure runways will be available for West Flow, and some (not all) of the volume of departure traffic currently on Runway 22L will be on other runways. Runway 4R is used very infrequently for arrivals. It will continue to be available for arrivals, but used infrequently, after O'Hare Modernization completion.

2. Why did the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) decide to close cross-runways NW to SE instead of those running NE to SW?

As part of the O'Hare Modernization Program (OMP), the City of Chicago Department of Aviation (CDA) proposed the airfield configuration currently under construction. It includes six east/west parallel runways and the northeast/southwest runways (Runways 4R/22L and 4L/22R.) Six parallel runways eliminate many runway intersections, thus enhancing safety of operations. By maintaining the 4/22 runway combination, many fewer runway intersections occur as compared to the same east/west configuration with the northwest/southeast runways (Runways 14R/32L and 14L/32R.)

The CDA, as owner and operator of the airport, determines what runways are available. The FAA reviewed the CDA's OMP plan in the FAA's O'Hare Modernization Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), along with many additional alternatives and after thorough analysis approved the OMP in FAA's Record of Decision issued in September 2005.

3. Will the air traffic be equally shared with areas all around the airport? Or will it be more concentrated in Elmhurst?

When the O'Hare Modernization is complete, O'Hare will have six parallel east/west runways and two cross wind runways oriented in a northeast/southwest direction. Of these eight runways, only one aligns with Elmhurst, Runway 4R/22L. Please see the answer to question 1, above.

Please reference the FAA's (EIS), and the 2015 Written Re-Evaluation (Re-Evaluation) of the EIS for details on how the airfield is used, including graphs which illustrate East and West Flow with percentages of use. This information is in Appendix D of the EIS and Appendix C of the Re-Evaluation. These documents are on FAA's web page: [http://www.faa.gov/airports/airport\\_development/omp/](http://www.faa.gov/airports/airport_development/omp/).

4. Will Runway 4R/22L be used for inbound or outbound flights? Which is noisier?

Please reference:

[www.flychicago.com/sitecollectiondocuments/ohare/aboutus/noisemanagement/noise101/ordaircraftnoisecomparison2013.pdf](http://www.flychicago.com/sitecollectiondocuments/ohare/aboutus/noisemanagement/noise101/ordaircraftnoisecomparison2013.pdf)

for information on the aircraft noise footprints for the types of aircraft operating at O'Hare.

5. Will this noise be constant or intermittent?

Please see question 1.

6. Has an evaluation been done on air pollution outside of the O'Hare boundaries?

The FAA's EIS and Re-Evaluation analyzed air quality impacts. The information is in Section 5.6 and Appendix J of the EIS. Section 3.3 and Appendix E of the Re-Evaluation contains some updated analysis and information on the EPA monitoring network. These documents are posted on FAA's website:

[http://www.faa.gov/airports/airport\\_development/omp/](http://www.faa.gov/airports/airport_development/omp/)

See also:

[www.epa.illinois.gov/topics/air-quality/outdoor-air/air-monitoring/network/index](http://www.epa.illinois.gov/topics/air-quality/outdoor-air/air-monitoring/network/index) for information on the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) air quality monitoring network and data.

7. Is the FAA considering a change in the algorithm calculation being used to measure noise changes?

As mentioned in our meeting, the FAA is undertaking research to analyze public perception of noise impacts from air transportation. The FAA is continuing its work on surveying community residents around airports to inform an update to the scientific evidence on the relationship between aircraft noise exposure and its effects on communities around airports. FAA anticipates completing the survey in late 2016 and the analysis of survey results in early to mid-2017.

8. Has soundproofing homes been on hold until OMP is complete?

No, the residential sound insulation program is not on hold. The FAA has issued over \$93 million in Airport Improvement Program grants for OMP residential sound insulation since 2006. The Chicago Department of Aviation continues to implement its residential sound insulation program. More information is available on CDA's website:

<http://www.flychicago.com/OHare/EN/AboutUs/NoiseManagement/SoundPrograms.aspx>

9. Will aircraft noise during nighttime hours increase in the future?

The overall traffic forecast for O'Hare is anticipated to increase. The FAA's EIS and Re-Evaluation took into consideration this expected increase in traffic, and noise contours and sound insulation are based on this forecasted increase in traffic.

10. O'Hare airplane noise, especially in north Elmhurst, was continually loud until Oct 2013 and then it dropped noticeably. Early this year the noise increased but not near previous years and not as regular. Why is this happening and will it get worse in the future?

In October 2013, the FAA completed a major design change to the airspace in Chicago. These changes included a significant change to how O'Hare is operated. October 2013 marked the completion of the fourth east/west runway at O'Hare, and with this runway, the airport changed to a predominant east/west operation. After this happened, Runway 4R (the approach over Elmhurst) has been used very infrequently for arrivals. Prior to that change, it was frequently used for arrivals. Runway 22L (the opposite end of the same runway) is used frequently for departures when the airport operates in West Flow. It has always been used this way, and will continue to be used in this manner.

11. Why doesn't FAA encourage utilization of a 2/1 slope rather than then 3/1 slope? Wouldn't this reduce some noise impact?

The FAA standard approach slope is 3 degrees. The FAA standard is based on safety and aircraft capabilities. Some airports have some procedures with a steeper rate of descent, and this is done for safety purposes to accommodate unusual terrain.

12. I understand that the FAA now requires quieter jet engines for new aircraft. Is there any chance that the law will change to mandate quieter engines on existing aircrafts?

We are unaware of any pending legislation that will further regulate aircraft engine noise levels.

13. Do non-airline airplanes such as Fed-Ex and UPS use 4R/22L? Do they have quieter engines than airline airplanes?

Cargo air carriers use the same runways as passenger air carriers. There are no different engine requirements for cargo vs. passenger aircraft.

14. How do we find out where the noise monitors are and can we ask for new ones to be put in our neighborhood?

The Chicago Department of Aviation operates the noise monitors in the vicinity of O'Hare. More information is on CDA's website:

<http://www.flychicago.com/OHare/EN/AboutUs/NoiseManagement/Pages/Airport-Noise-Management-System.aspx>

Individuals can apply for a portable noise monitor on this website:

<http://www.oharenoise.org/noise-management/noise-monitors>

15. Can the City of Chicago or the State of Illinois pass a law restricting the number of runways at O'Hare and how often they are used?

State and local government have responsibilities and authority in the establishment and operation of airports. The FAA works collaboratively with airport sponsors to ensure safe operations and public access to airports.

16. Noise contours are based on outdated 1982 data. Shouldn't new contours be updated to see what was predicted to what is? Shouldn't maps be re-evaluated and updated?

The FAA published noise contours in its 2005 EIS and 2015 Re Evaluation. These contours are based on forecast traffic. The noise contours are on FAA's website:

EIS - [http://www.faa.gov/airports/airport\\_development/omp/eis/feis/](http://www.faa.gov/airports/airport_development/omp/eis/feis/). Please reference Chapter 5, Sections 5.1 and 5.2, and Appendix F.

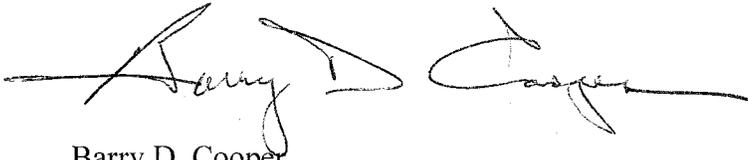
Re-Evaluation - [http://www.faa.gov/airports/airport\\_development/omp/eis\\_re\\_eval/](http://www.faa.gov/airports/airport_development/omp/eis_re_eval/). Please reference Chapter 3 and Appendix C.

17. To what extent does the FAA concur with the findings presented in the Chicago Department of Aviation noise contour map, **Projected Noise Changes at OMP Build-Out**, dated 6/15?

The FAA works collaboratively with the Chicago Department of Aviation (CDA) to ensure accurate information is shared with the public. CDA uses information from documentation the FAA's EIS and Re-Evaluation, and then creates graphics which it uses for public meetings such as the O'Hare Noise Compatibility Commission. We have a copy of an exhibit with this title, dated 6/9/15. If this is the exhibit you are referring to, it appears this graph is based on FAA EIS data. However, the FAA did not check the methodology used to create the graphic.

I hope you find this responsive to the questions from your community. If I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me at 847-294-7294.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barry D. Cooper". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Barry D. Cooper  
Regional Administrator  
Great Lakes Region