

From: 9-AWA-NoiseOmbudsman (FAA)
Sent: Thursday, March 02, 2017 12:57 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Flight Track Information

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your emails dated January 3 and 20, 2017 regarding air traffic in the vicinity of Geneva, IL and changes in air traffic as a result of the City of Chicago's O'Hare Modernization Program (OMP).

The OMP pursued by the City of Chicago as the airport owner/operator and approved by Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), is a multi-year, comprehensive redesign of the runways, taxiways, and other associated infrastructure. In your emails you expressed concern whether impacts to the communities surrounding Chicago O'Hare International Airport (ORD) were considered in the development of the project. The FAA completed an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for O'Hare Modernization in 2005. The EIS process sought public input and included a series of public meetings. All comments received were considered by FAA. Additionally, in 2015, FAA completed a Written Re-Evaluation of the EIS, to evaluate if the conclusions and findings of the EIS were still valid based on a runway construction schedule modification to the OMP. The complete EIS and Re-Evaluation documents are included on FAA's web site at www.faa.gov/airports/airport_development/omp/.

In enacting the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Congress recognized that nearly all Federal activities affect the environment in some way and mandated that before Federal agencies make decision, they must consider the effects of their actions on the quality of the human environment. Under the NEPA, the Council on Environment Quality works to balance environmental, economic and social objectives in pursuit of the NEPA goal of "productive harmony" between humans and the human environment. The EIS and the Re-Evaluation were prepared in accordance with FAA's environmental regulations. There is no environmental impact category or significant threshold for determining what is an appropriate "quality of life". However, the EIS and the Re-Evaluation do present analyses for individual environmental categories such as noise, air quality and water quality which contribute to quality of life.

Regarding your question about FAA's ability to regulate the frequency, altitudes of flights and the operation of flights; the general frequency and scheduling of flights throughout the day are

largely driven by airlines and are based on passenger demand, the need to coordinate with schedules of connecting flights and other factors. The FAA does not and cannot mandate scheduling practices. Which runway and which flight path an aircraft then uses during the day is determined primarily by wind direction, other weather conditions and efficiency of traffic flows. The projected noise, air quality and other impacts resulting from the frequency and scheduling of the aircraft operating, as well as which runways are used throughout the day and night were modeled and are addressed in the EIS and the Re-Evaluation. Regarding aircraft altitudes, aircraft approaching to land may be at different altitudes depending on the number of parallel runways in use, the location of the runway, weather conditions and other factors.

Aircraft arriving into the O'Hare airspace use a number of different arrival routes and procedures that are dependent on the location of their originating airport, the predominant winds, visibility and weather at O'Hare and surrounding area, and their assigned arrival runway. Regarding your questions about air traffic operations in the past five to six months; no changes have occurred in how aircraft are being operated to/from O'Hare during daytime hours. The commissioning of Runway 10R in October 2015 has allowed for a more balanced use of east and west flow (arrivals landing towards the east or landing towards the west) for O'Hare. Looking at January 2, 3, 19 and 20 as specifically as noted in your emails, the location of and type of aircraft on these dates is typical of average conditions at O'Hare. Specific to overnight operations, O'Hare conducted a Fly Quiet Runway Rotation Test from July 6, 2016 through December 25, 2016. Please reference information concerning this test here:
<http://www.airportprojects.net/flyquiettest/about/>.

The arrival and departure routes used a majority of the time since November of 2015 are depicted in Appendix A of the 2015 Re-Evaluation of the O'Hare Modernization Environmental Impact Statement available at https://www.faa.gov/airports/airport_development/omp/eis_re_eval/, starting at page A-23. Additional information on airspace routing planned and evaluated for the O'Hare improvements is also available in the original 2005 O'Hare Modernization Environmental Impact Statement in Appendix E at https://www.faa.gov/airports/airport_development/omp/eis/feis/, starting at page E-53.

Lastly, I want to take a moment to highlight the importance of the role the O'Hare Noise Compatibility Commission (ONCC) plays in today's discussions about O'Hare noise issues. ONCC membership includes 42 municipalities, Cook County, and 16 school districts near O'Hare. The 58 members are represented by mayors, Chicago aldermen, Cook County, and school superintendents at public meetings that the ONCC and its committees hold. For more information

about the ONCC, including its membership, committee work, meeting schedule, and accomplishments, please visit the ONCC website at www.oharenoise.org.

The modernization of O'Hare International Airport is needed to meet Chicago's aviation demands of the future in a manner that provides improved safety and efficiency for the airport and public. Through its analysis of the OMP, the FAA took great care to examine health and safety concerns to ensure that all appropriate impact mitigation actions are taken. While we acknowledge that impacts such as noise cannot be completely eliminated, the FAA has taken significant steps to minimize those impacts, including providing funding for sound insulation, and we will continue to do so as technological advancements in the aviation industry provide those opportunities.

Thank you for sharing your perspective with the FAA.

Rick Riley
Assistant to the Noise Ombudsman
Federal Aviation Administration
Washington, D.C.