

Public Input Meeting Responses – July 29, 2008 (Questions are in **bolded**)

Click [here](#) for the summary memorandum that was forwarded to members of the MSP Noise Oversight Committee (NOC) regarding the July 29, 2008 Public Input Meeting.

We've been told we are not in the flight pattern, or noise contour, but planes go right over our home. Who or what determines what the noise contours are?

To develop the noise contour lines, the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) uses the federally developed and federally approved Integrated Noise Model (INM), which is the industry standard for determining predicted noise impacts around the vicinity of an airport. INM develops the contours by utilizing input files consisting of information relative to runway use, flight track use (for both arrivals and departures), aircraft fleet mix, aircraft performance/thrust settings, topography information, atmospheric conditions and specified noise abatement procedures. INM also incorporates a standardized aircraft noise database that includes aircraft noise levels that have been determined by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) as part of the aircraft airworthiness certification process. FAA Regulation "Part 150" Airport Noise Compatibility Planning requires the Day-Night Average Sound Level (DNL) metric be used to describe the cumulative or total noise exposure during an annual average day. The ability of an airport authority to use Part 150 funds, or any aviation-generated funds, for the purpose of noise mitigation hinges upon completion and federal acceptance of approved noise mitigation measures and noise exposure maps developed by the INM (or an approved substitute program) proposed in a Part 150 study.

How is eligibility for the noise mitigation program determined?

Typically, an airport will develop a noise mitigation program through the Part 150 Study process. The FAA Regulation "Part 150" was designed by the FAA in the early 1980s to make neighborhoods located near airports more compatible with airport noise. The MAC completed its first Part 150 study for MSP in 1987 and the FAA approved the first update in 1993. The 1993 Part 150 Update, in accordance with FAA regulations, established the 1996 65 Day-Night Average Sound Level (DNL) Noise Exposure Contour line which defined the boundaries of the MAC's previous Residential Sound Insulation Program.

The federal standard for noise mitigation eligibility is the 65 DNL contour area. Under the new noise mitigation program, the MAC is providing mitigation to homes out to the 60 DNL contour (beyond the federal standard). The boundaries of the new noise mitigation program were developed under the auspices of "Part 150", using the INM program previously mentioned. However, final eligibility was defined in a court approved Consent Decree that settled a noise mitigation lawsuit brought by the cities of Minneapolis, Richfield and Eagan.

Is there anything that can be done to change the noise contours?

No. Eligibility was finalized in the court approved Consent Decree that settled a noise mitigation lawsuit brought by the cities of Minneapolis, Richfield and Eagan.

Is there a reason why aircraft can't follow a track down Cedar Avenue, to put noise over that highway?

Arriving aircraft use a straight-in approach path, known as a final approach course, and it cannot be changed to track over Cedar Avenue. Aircraft being lined up for arrivals on any of the runways (including Runway 35) at MSP track inbound on a navigational aid comprised of equipment on the ground (Instrument Landing System – ILS) interacting with instrumentation onboard the aircraft. The navigational equipment ensures that an aircraft follows a straight line that will align the aircraft with the

touchdown point of the runway. It also keeps the aircraft at a precise angle and slope while descending that will bring them in perfectly to the touchdown point of the runway. This procedure is an FAA standard and is used at airports all around the country.

Is there a nighttime curfew for operations at the Minneapolis-St Paul International Airport?

MSP is a public use facility and is available for use 24 hours per day. The MAC does not have the authority to impose operationally restrictive policies at MSP (such as implementing a curfew). As a result, the MAC has very little if any flexibility with respect to restricting operations at our system of airports without violating federal guidelines.

The MAC has, however, implemented voluntary restrictions at MSP and recommended procedures for those operations when they do occur during the nighttime hours (10:30 pm to 6:00 am). On December 18, 2007 letters were sent to all of the carriers requesting that they “put forth their best efforts to avoid scheduling operations between the nighttime hours of 10:30 P.M. and 6:00 A.M. and avoid the use of hushkitted Stage 3 aircraft for flights that are scheduled to occur during the nighttime hours.”

I’ve noticed a difference in reduced operations during the nighttime since adherence to the RUS was addressed, and it’s been wonderful.

Comment noted.

There have been times when the airport’s been in a southeast flow but departures between 8:00-10:30pm have been mostly off of the parallel runways, but there are times when the departures are off of Runway 17 – why the inconsistency?

Runway use is determined by several factors including wind, weather, capacity needs, inbound and outbound traffic and runway availability. For the specific timeframe that you referenced in a recent message that was left on the Noise Complaint and Information Hotline, there were a total of 27 arrival operations on Runways 12L/R during a 30-minute timeframe on July 23rd from 7:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. During that timeframe, Runway 17 appears to have been the best available option for departure operations to maximize capacity and minimize delay.

How were the way points for departures off of Runway 17 determined for the RNAV departure procedures.

MAC staff first analyzed the effect of the 215-degree departure heading off of Runway 17 that was implemented by the FAA. MAC staff imported radar flight track data into the Integrated Noise Model (INM) and, based on the wide swath of actual 215-degree heading flight tracks, used INM to develop a single flight track that represented the precise center of the actual 215-degree heading tracks. The single flight track representing the center of the 215 heading flight tracks follows the approximate center of the Minnesota River Valley as it heads southwest from the airport. MAC staff also worked cooperatively with Northwest Airlines and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to determine the feasibility of the 215 flight track to determine the final way points that would be included in the Runway 17 departure procedure.

Recently, I was taxiing out for departure at about 7:55pm and requested departure off of one of the parallel runways. I was directed by ATC to use Runway 17 for noise abatement – why was that?

This question is primarily for the FAA regarding the use of Runway 17/35. MAC staff has forwarded this question to the FAA for their review and/or response.

Why can't aircraft follow the Minnesota River Valley, using the RNAV procedure for departures to the southeast, and climb to approximately 3000 feet before making their turns?

The Runway 17 RNAV procedure is intended to be utilized by aircraft that would normally fly to the MCONL and RUMLE fixes. Requiring aircraft that would normally be directed to other fixes to fly the procedure has the potential to increase flight time and fuel consumption, impact capacity, and derogate efficiency and safety and would not be consistent with FAA on-course routing practices.

When the new runway opened, we experienced a lot of overflights of our area, but overflights eventually lessened. I've noticed, though, that overflights of my area have increased dramatically this summer, specifically departures off of the new runway – why is that? Is there construction taking place right now at the airport that would account for the increase in overflights of my area?

Review of the radar flight track data over your neighborhood shows there were a total of 1,455 aircraft departing Runway 17 from Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP) that flew within ¼ mile of your home from January – June 2008. This is compared to 2,105 aircraft from January – June 2007 and 3,754 aircraft from January – June 2006. The data suggest that aircraft operations over your neighborhood have decreased since the opening of Runway 17/35.

However, you may be noticing an increase in operations over your neighborhood due to seasonal changes in weather and wind patterns. Wind speed and direction primarily determine runway selection and operational flow as aircraft typically need to land and depart into the wind. During the spring and summer months, we typically see winds out of the south/southeast which will result in increased departures off of Runway 17.

Where were the departures from before the new runway opened?

In the 12-month period prior to the opening of Runway 17/35, over 99% of all departures and arrivals occurred on the parallel runways (12L/30R, 12R/30L). In 2004 MSP was the only facility in the United States to conduct over 500,000 operations from only two runways. In 2004 delay levels at MSP averaged about 8.9 minutes per operation, with about 17.4% of flights delayed by 15 minutes or more. Even though operations peaked in 2004 and have steadily declined since, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) will continue to utilize Runway 17/35 in order to capitalize on the efficiency and additional capacity that is offered by the new runway.

Many of us in Eagan were here before Runway 17 existed. I feel that the quality of life in Eagan has been diminished by all of the operations occurring off of Runway 17. I feel there must be a more equitable distribution of aircraft-related noise among all the communities surrounding the airport.

Aircraft departing Runway 17 that have initial departure headings east of runway heading (headings ranging from 95° to 170°) are directed to initiate their turns as soon as possible when departing Runway 17. This recommendation was made due to the fact that there is no

one flight path considered “better” than another when departing to the southeast over the existing residentially-developed areas. Redistributing these aircraft operations has the potential to shift operations to non-impacted residential areas and the possible redistribution of noise impacts from one community to another.

Due to capacity needs, Air Traffic Control (ATC) is required to use the parallel runways (12L/30R, 12R/30L) in conjunction with Runway 17-35, through most of the day. From January - June 2008, departure operations were distributed on the following runways: 12L/R (Eagan/Mendota Heights) – 20.8%, 30L/R (S. Minneapolis/N. Richfield) – 54.8%, Runway 17 (Bloomington/Eagan) – 24%, and Runway 4/22 (St. Paul/Bloomington) 0.4%.

ATC also uses the Runway Use System (RUS) to direct the loudest operations (when capacity and wind conditions allow) over the more compatible land use areas off of Runways 12L/R (Eagan/Mendota Heights Corridor).

I feel there must be a better solution to the airport noise issue.

Comment noted. The MAC works closely with representatives from the local, regional and national Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), a critical relationship for the furthering of aircraft noise reduction. This cooperative relationship with the FAA, the airlines operating at MSP, and the MSP Noise Oversight Committee has helped to foster cooperative solutions in noise reduction and the development of innovative procedures like the Eagan-Mendota Heights Departure Corridor, the Minneapolis Straight-Out Procedure and the Runway 17 2.5 nm Departure Procedure. Working with these groups, the MAC will continue these noise abatement efforts and will work towards feasible noise abatement programs and/or solutions.

If the FAA is ultimately responsible for control of the airspace at the airport, to whom is the FAA accountable?

The Federal Aviation Act of 1958 created the Federal Aviation Agency and they adopted their present name in 1967 when the FAA became a part of the Department of Transportation. The FAA reports to the US Secretary of Transportation, Mary E. Peters, who was nominated by President George W. Bush on September 5, 2006, and confirmed by the U.S. Senate as the 15th Secretary of Transportation on September 30, 2006.

Do you have any comments or updates regarding the low-frequency noise issue in the east side of Richfield?

Presently, from a scientific and funding perspective, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has not established a standard or guidance for land use compatibility or mitigation associated with low frequency noise. The MAC is supportive of adequately describing low frequency noise; however, any local initiative to quantify and mitigate low frequency noise must be consistent with established FAA standards or guidelines as set forth in an FAA Order, regulation, Advisory Circular, Handbook or Program Guidance Letter. The establishment of applicable FAA standards and/or guidance on low frequency noise around airports is required before the MAC can undertake any meaningful and effective efforts at MSP on this issue.

The noise mitigation contour line appears to go through my house on the interactive map available at www.macnoise.com. How do I find out if my home is eligible to receive noise mitigation?

Your residence located at 7245 17th Avenue South, Richfield, is located in the 2005 60-64 DNL contour. A total of \$7 million will be reserved for homes located between the 2005 and 2007 60 DNL Noise Contours and for homes that opted out of the previous mitigation program. Single-family homes whose owners opted out of the already completed MAC noise-mitigation program but that now have new owners would be eligible to “opt in” and receive noise mitigation. If the total cost to the MAC of opt-in mitigation is less than \$7 million, any remaining monies would be used to reimburse owners of single-family homes in the 2005 60-64 DNL contours for purchase and installation of products included on a menu provided by the MAC. The amount each homeowner receives will be determined by subtracting dollars spent for the opt-in program from the total \$7 million budget and dividing the remainder among the total number of single-family homes within the 2005 60-64 DNL contours. The MAC would begin to issue reimbursements by March 1, 2010 and would complete them by July 31, 2014. The total the MAC will spend on the opt-out and 2005 program all together is capped at \$7 million.