

# SUBURBAN O'HARE COMMISSION

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To Residents Interested in the O'Hare Noise Issues:

As you may know, the Suburban O'Hare Commission (SOC) commissioned JDA Aviation Technology Solutions (JDA) – led by Joseph Del Balzo, the former Acting Administrator of the FAA – to conduct a study of a number of technical issues relating to community concerns over noise generated by operations at O'Hare International Airport (ORD). JDA in turn retained a group of nationally recognized experts in airport noise analysis and air traffic operations to conduct the individual studies<sup>1</sup>

We have now received the JDA experts' final reports and recommendations. These reports are now available for downloading at <http://oharenoiseproject.com/>. The individual reports are:

*Suburban O'Hare Commission Chicago O'Hare International Airport Summary Report*

*Suburban O'Hare Commission Chicago O'Hare International Airport Final Noise Study Report.* Enclosed with this report are the following reports covering specific topics:

- *Analysis of the Technical Basis of FAA's Noise Regulatory Framework and its Application to the O'Hare Modernization Program*
- *Analysis of Chicago O'Hare Current and Future INM Noise Contours and Impacts Report*
- *Analysis of the Chicago O'Hare Fly Quiet Program and Operational Alternatives to Reduce Noise Impacts*

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<sup>1</sup> JDA retained **Dr. Sanford Fidell**, a nationally recognized expert on measuring aircraft noise impact, to investigate FAA's use of the "DNL" (Day Night Level) noise criterion as well as the selection of the value of "65 DNL" as the metric that was used to define the areas and the population adversely affected by O'Hare noise. JDA retained **Dr. Antonio Trani**, a Civil Engineering professor at Virginia Tech University – who has extensive experience in INM and related modeling issues, including experience as an expert retained by FAA – to conduct an investigation of EIS noise contours and FAA Re-evaluation contours, to model current and future contours and to quantify extent of geographic and population impacts. Finally, JDA assembled a team of air traffic experts with significant experience – both at O'Hare and the FAA's Elgin Regional Air Traffic Center (TRACON) to conduct an analysis and provide recommendations as to potential remedial measures. The JDA team of air traffic experts consists of **Rob Voss**, **Jim Krieger** and **Craig Burzych**. Jim Krieger and Craig Burzych have over four decades of hands on operational experience in air traffic control at the O'Hare tower. Rob Voss has extensive experience with systems operations and the Air Traffic System Command Center and based at the FAA's Great Lakes Regional Office in Des Plaines, IL.

We urge you to read the individual reports. However the following findings and recommendations by these experts stand out.

- The FAA's 65 DNL as a definition of "significant" noise impact was not based on objective analysis or systematic scientific research.
- The scientifically proper method of identifying the extent of noise impact on surrounding communities and populations is through a Community Tolerance Survey which reflects the noise tolerance of the specific O'Hare communities. However, absent such a survey, the minimum DNL criterion should be 55 DNL.
- Because of the FAA's error in using 65 DNL – as opposed to 55 DNL – the EIS of the OMP and FAA's 2015 "Re-Evaluation" significantly understate the size of the geographic area and the size of the population adversely impacted by noise.
- Even at 65 DNL, the OMP Full Build EIS and the FAA's 2015 "Re-Evaluation" significantly understate both the geographic extent of adverse noise impact and the size of the population adversely impacted by O'Hare Noise if the full build configuration is completed. Dr. Trani found that the data input to the OMP EIS and the 2015 "Re-Evaluation" contained significant errors which caused the understatement.
- When corrections are made for these errors, the size of the population *within the 65 DNL contour* (at the full build configuration) rose from 24,694 to 45,449 (an 84% increase in number of people adversely affected).

After detailed analysis the JDA air traffic team of Rob Voss, Craig Burzych and Jim Krieger have submitted 20 separate recommendations as to steps that would provide some noise relief to O'Hare area communities.

Dr. Trani has analyzed several of the ATC teams Fly Quiet recommendations and found that several of the Fly Quiet recommendations offered the O'Hare area communities the potential for modest to significant partial nighttime noise relief. Which communities benefit will depend on which of the Fly Quiet options are implemented and which of the suggested operating configurations are adopted and implemented.

#### **NEXT STEPS**

The noise abatement initiatives described in the JDA Fly Quiet recommendations and in the reports by Dr. Fidell and Dr. Trani should be evaluated by FAA Air Traffic officials in coordination with the Chicago Department of Aviation, the airlines, and community stakeholders such as individual SOC communities ONCC, state and local officials and community organizations such as FAiR. INM modeling should be used to validate and target the best combination of operational parameters to minimize noise impacts.

SOC stands ready to participate with all stakeholders in a constructive dialog which will hopefully implement the recommendations of the JDA expert team as well as other potential remedies for the O'Hare noise problem.

Sincerely,



Craig B. Johnson  
Chairman  
Suburban O'Hare Commission