

Public Input Meeting Responses – January 23, 2007 (Questions are in **bolded**)

Click [here](#) for the summary memorandum that was forwarded to members of the MSP Noise Oversight Committee (NOC) regarding the January 23, 2007 Public Input Meeting

**From my perspective, hours of “reasonableness” – in terms of hours of operation and the amount of noise that can be tolerated – are between 6:00am and roughly 11:00pm. Over the past several months, I’ve noticed aircraft arriving and departing before 6:00am and after 11:00pm. What are the hours of “reasonableness” from the FAA’s and from the MAC’s perspective? Do the hours of “reasonableness” apply to non-commercial aircraft as well as commercial aircraft? How does the MAC determine what the standards are for hours of operation?**

Nighttime operations at Minneapolis – St. Paul International Airport (MSP) continue to be a concern for residents affected by them and, specifically, for those who have attended the MAC quarterly public input meetings and provided comments.

By way of background, significant considerations exist and must be understood relative to the operation of a public use airport and the realities of federal policy related to airport access. Because MSP is a public use facility that uses federal aviation dollars for improvements and development, federal policy supersedes local authority with respect to access and use of the facility. Availability of federal monies for airport expenses is subject to grant assurance provisions. Under those provisions the facility must provide access free of arbitrary and capricious restrictions. This makes it virtually impossible for airport operators to impose mandatory use or access restrictions at an airport.

Although federal policy virtually prohibits mandatory restrictions at airports, such as nighttime curfews, several steps have been taken at MSP to reduce nighttime noise impacts. Although voluntary in nature, efforts like voluntary agreements with airlines not to schedule nighttime flights, and a newer initiative, the Voluntary Nighttime Limits on Flights, (which is modified Noise Abatement Measure NA-3 in the November 2004 Part 150 Update document and includes additional language requesting that no hushkitted aircraft be scheduled during the nighttime hours) provide some degree of nighttime relief. Nighttime hours at MSP are defined as 10:30 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. in the Part 150 Update document and apply to both commercial and non-commercial aircraft.

An additional measure is the Runway Use System (RUS; NA-5) which established runway selection preferences based on impacted population (i.e. the runway that impacts the fewest people receives the highest preference). Noise benefits utilizing the RUS can be obtained during mid- and low-demand periods, which usually occur during the night. Under the RUS the first priority for operations during the nighttime hours is over the Eagan/Mendota Heights Corridor (an area that contains the Minnesota River and commercial and industrial land immediately east of MSP). Although the RUS defines noise sensitive runway use preferences employed by Air Traffic Control in prioritizing runway selection, it does not preclude the use of Runway 17/35 during the nighttime hours. It should be noted that Runway 17/35 has been used minimally during the nighttime hours since it’s opening; however, greater use of the runway than what exists presently was planned and anticipated prior to the runway’s opening, as evidenced by the runway use percentages outlined in the planning documents leading up to the runway opening.