

Public Input Meeting Responses – October 28, 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 October 28, 2008 Public Input Meeting.

What altitude are aircraft supposed to be at as they pass over a residence? When some aircraft pass over my residence, they cast a large shadow but other aircraft do not – why the inconsistency in altitude?

The actual altitude of an aircraft will vary based on several factors. Arriving aircraft use a straight-in approach path, known as a final approach course, when landing at MSP. The straight-in approach path permits the use of an Instrument Landing System (ILS), allows Air Traffic Control (ATC) to safely and efficiently separate aircraft, and permits the pilot to establish a safe, stabilized descent to the runway. The altitude will vary slightly as pilots try to maintain the final approach course and maintain the speed and separation assigned by ATC.

The altitude of departing aircraft will also vary due to a number of factors. Wind, weather, temperature and aircraft type all influence overall climb performance. Older hush-kitted aircraft (DC-9, B727) do not perform as well and are not as efficient as newer aircraft and thus do not climb as well. In addition, aircraft will have an increased climb rate with stronger headwinds and cooler temperatures. To minimize noise impact during this phase of flight, the MAC has specified that pilots use the Distant Noise Abatement Departure Profile. This departure profile consists of a unique combination of aircraft configuration and thrust settings that optimize climb rate and minimizes noise impact for residents living beyond 3.5 miles from the airport.

Finally, all aircraft coming into and out of Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP) are under radar control and are monitored by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to ensure safe and efficient aircraft separation and compliance with FAA regulations. These aircraft are performing consistent with FAA procedures and regulations as they overfly the City of Inver Grove Heights.

Has the 65 DNL Contour map been changed in the past 2-3 years? It seems that not as much of Inver Grove Heights is included in the 65 DNL as used to be.

The DNL contour lines and the boundaries of the noise mitigation program were finalized in late 2007 as part of a noise mitigation lawsuit settlement between the MAC and the cities of Minneapolis, Richfield, and Eagan. The contours that were approved as part of the settlement Consent Decree were developed under the auspices of “Part 150” and as part of that process were updated to incorporate the latest forecasting information relative to the number of operations at the airport, updated fleet mixes of aircraft, changes in operational procedures and the addition of Runway 17/35 at Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP). Due to the previously mentioned changes at MSP, the Forecast Mitigated 2007 65 DNL contour is closer to airport property and further west of Inver Grove Heights than the previous Part 150 65 DNL contour (1996 65 DNL contour).

It’s my understanding that federal funds are available now for “tightening up” homes for noise – is that the case? Are there any residences in Inver Grove Heights that qualify for that program?

The MAC is currently implementing a new noise mitigation program that was finalized as part of a noise mitigation lawsuit settlement between the MAC and the cities of Minneapolis, Richfield, and Eagan. Under the new noise mitigation program, the MAC is providing mitigation to homes out to the 60 DNL contour (beyond the federal standard).

The 2007 mitigated DNL contour, which defines the MAC's new noise mitigation program and provides varying levels of mitigation out to the 2007 60 DNL contour, does not touch any residential areas in the City of Inver Grove Heights (just west of the western boundary of Inver Grove Heights). The 2005 60 DNL contour, which provides a limited amount of mitigation reimbursement under the final phase of the new noise mitigation program, touches one residential block on the western border of Inver Grove Heights.

How close are Inver Grove Heights residences to the 65 DNL and to the 60 DNL?

The western border of Inver Grove Heights along Yankee Doodle Road is approximately ¼ mile east of the 2007 60 DNL contour.

Are homes that have been mitigated now going to be considered, in terms of airport design and development, noise-compatible areas?

A residential mitigation program is considered a corrective land use measure designed to make affected structures compatible with airport operations.

Seeing as some homes along the southern part of the Eagan-Mendota Heights Corridor have been mitigated, will that corridor now be expanded?

No – there are no plans to expand the boundaries of the Eagan-Mendota Heights Corridor. Three options relative to the Eagan-Mendota Heights Corridor were analyzed as part of the November 2004 Part 150 Study Update. In the absence of better alternatives, the study recommends that the Eagan-Mendota Heights Corridor Procedure continue in its existing form.

Why spend the money to mitigate those homes if those areas aren't going to be used?

The homes that have been mitigated under the previous mitigation program and the homes that will be mitigated under the new noise mitigation program do, in fact, experience aircraft overflights. These homes are located closer to the airport than those within the City of Inver Grove Heights.

As a member of the Inver Grove Heights Aircraft Noise Abatement Commission, it is my understanding that the MAC primarily promotes aviation interests in the region and represents the entire community when it comes to noise issues. However, it seems that, historically, the MAC has allowed Eagan and Mendota Heights to decide what those cities wanted to do about the Eagan-Mendota Heights Corridor, i.e., to situate the corridor so that those cities are impacted at a minimum and flights are directed over Inver Grove Heights and the MAC has embraced that situation. Does the MAC intend to continue to say that the corridor was collaboratively developed over a long period of time when Inver Grove

Heights was not included in the decision-making process? When did Inver Grove Heights have any voting power over the development of the Eagan-Mendota Heights Corridor? Inver Grove Heights has the majority of flights dumped over it but no voting power – how does the MAC, as a public body, allow this situation to continue?

Yes – it is the position of the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) that the Eagan-Mendota Heights Corridor was developed collaboratively over the years with many different community/airport user stakeholders involved. The Eagan-Mendota Heights Corridor procedure dates back to 1968 and was developed with extensive input from MASAC, which has always had representatives from Inver Grove Heights.

The Eagan-Mendota Heights Corridor is approximately three miles long. Is it the MAC's position that it has no objection one way or the other if the FAA were to begin fanning aircraft out after they reach the end of the corridor?

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is ultimately responsible for how the airport operates, runway use and where the airplanes will fly. The FAA has previously stated that they can not turn all aircraft after three miles to avoid Inver Grove Heights. MAC staff believes the FAA's position is based on safety, capacity and efficiency. As a result of input received, the MSP Noise Oversight Committee has added a specific item to the 2009 work plan to conduct an analysis of 12L and 12R departure turns at three miles.

Does the MAC support the City of Inver Grove Heights following-up on the noise issue and airport operations with the Federal Aviation Administration?

MAC staff is more than willing to coordinate a meeting with the FAA and the City of Inver Grove Heights to discuss its concerns. The MAC is also willing to work with the City to get its concerns on the MSP Noise Oversight Committee's 2009 work plan.

If aircraft can be fanned out on departure off of one runway, such as you do for Minneapolis, why can't they be fanned out at the end of the runway that affects Inver Grove Heights?

The Eagan-Mendota Heights Corridor procedure incorporates a turn restriction for jet aircraft prior to three miles off of Runways 12L/R. The Corridor procedure is a long-standing noise mitigation operational procedure at the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP) that is designed to direct as many aircraft operations as possible over the more noise compatible land use areas of Eagan and Mendota Heights, southeast of the airport. Significant industrial, office, and commercial zoning and development has been purposely concentrated in this commercial/industrial corridor.

As a result of input received, the MSP Noise Oversight Committee has added a specific item to the 2009 work plan to conduct an analysis of 12L and 12R departure turns at three miles.

If some aircraft can be turned in a certain direction as they come off the end of the runway, why can't more of them be turned?

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is ultimately responsible for how the airport operates, runway use and where the airplanes will fly. The FAA has previously stated

that it can not turn all aircraft after three miles to avoid Inver Grove Heights. MAC staff believes the FAA's position is based on safety, capacity and efficiency.

My residence is impacted by noise from aircraft from Minneapolis-St Paul International Airport, the South St. Paul Airport and military helicopter operations. In terms of home mitigation, is any consideration given to residences that are impacted by multiple airports when the MAC and the FAA consider how much noise an area receives?

The residential mitigation program only considers noise from operations at the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP). The noise contours that are used to develop the boundaries of the mitigation program are specific to MSP.

Can air traffic be re-routed in order to lessen the volume of operations?

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is ultimately responsible for how the airport operates, runway use and where the airplanes will fly. The airspace has been designed to maximize safety and efficiency and to incorporate the complexities of MSP, St. Paul Downtown Holman Field (STP) and South St. Paul Municipal Airport Flemming Field (SGS).

What is the forecasted estimate of the increase in flights over my area?

Predicting future airport activity at this time is difficult due to uncertainties and challenges currently facing the airline industry and the national economy. Total operations at Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP) decreased 4.6% in 2007 compared to 2006 and are trending slightly downward for 2008. In the context of historical annual operations at MSP, the 2007 operations level is the lowest annual operations at MSP since 1994.

I believe an Inver Grove Heights council member mentioned that the City of Eagan had voted to move more flights over Inver Grove Heights – can you explain more about that?

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has sole authority for determining where aircraft will fly and how the airport will operate. These decisions are made solely upon standard air traffic control procedures (including several noise abatement procedures). Per the approved Runway Use System (RUS), when MSP is in a southeast operational flow, during the nighttime hours of 10:30 p.m. and 6:00 a.m., use of Runways 12L and 12R for departure operations into the Eagan\Mendota Heights Departure Corridor should be the primary departure runway configuration. When capacity dictates, per the RUS, Runway 17 should be used as a secondary option to Runways 12L and 12R.

In 2007, at the request of the Eagan representative, the MSP Noise Oversight Committee (NOC) reviewed compliance with the RUS. After reviewing the analysis on RUS compliance the NOC approved a recommendation to forward a letter to the FAA. On November 16, 2007 a letter was sent to the FAA Air Traffic Control Tower (ATCT) requesting that supervisors be briefed on the importance of maximizing adherence to the approved RUS during nighttime operations. At no point was a vote taken to move more flights over Inver Grove Heights; rather a vote was taken to send a letter to emphasize the importance of adhering to a long-standing noise mitigation operational procedure.

At what point, in terms of the number of noise complaints received from Inver Grove Heights residents, will Inver Grove Heights have a voice on the MSP Noise Oversight Committee?

The MSP Noise Oversight Committee (NOC) is a policy advisory group to the MAC on airport noise issues. The membership of the NOC includes those cities that are impacted by airport noise, including the City of Inver Grove Heights, which is represented by an at-large member.

Membership on the committee is not determined by airport noise complaints, rather it is specified in the by-laws that the communities with a permanent seat on the NOC will be determined by the most recently developed and submitted Part 150 DNL 65 contour and the cities of Apple Valley, Burnsville, Inver Grove Heights, St. Paul, St. Louis Park and Sunfish Lake will be represented through an at-large membership position.