

ACCF Airport Issues Committee

The Arlington County Civic Federation (ACCF) has established an Airport Issues Committee (AIC) to address a wide range of airport-related issues of interest to Arlington County that have arisen as a result of the proximity to Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport. This committee is composed of representatives from seventeen Civic Associations.

The ACCF recognizes the importance of the airport to the economic well being of Arlington County and the Washington Metropolitan region as a whole, as well as the convenience afforded by the proximity of the airport. However, aircraft noise has increased dramatically in many Arlington neighborhoods during the past few years, even with the switch to Stage 3 aircraft that was mandated by Congress. This has been caused by an increased number of flights, flight paths that no longer follow the river pathway, flights operating earlier in the morning and later in the evening, and steeper ascent rates during takeoffs.

There is a Part 150 Noise Study underway at the airport. This study is sponsored by the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA) and Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOC). The noise study will model current levels of aircraft noise, and evaluate noise abatement ideas received from residents of the surrounding communities (Arlington County, Alexandria, Fairfax County, Montgomery County, DC, and Prince George's County) as well as local businesses, the airlines, and airline pilots. Telephone and focused surveys have been conducted to gather residents impressions of the airport noise situation, and a series of public meetings were held in the Summer of 2003 to obtain ideas relating to noise abatement.

The Part 150 Noise Study represents the best chance we will have within the next ten to fifteen years to have a real influence on airport noise. To this end, the Airport Issues Committee, in conjunction with other interested organizations located both East and West of the Potomac River, has reviewed the recommendations for noise abatement that are being actively considered by the Part 150 Advisory Committee. From this list of recommendations, we have selected a subset that we believe will 1) have the most impact on providing aircraft noise abatement to the region and to citizens of Arlington County, 2) be realistic from the standpoint of airport and aircraft operations, and 3) can be implemented in a cost-effective manner. We would like to see the Part 150 Advisory Committee include in the Reagan National Airport Noise Compatibility Plan the following noise abatement proposals:

1. The use of the Global Positioning System for all departures and arrivals from and to the main runway so that aircraft fly over the center of the Potomac River from the end of the runway until reaching the noise abatement boundary. This will also serve to enhance national security by assisting crews to stay clear of prohibited air space (i.e. P-56). It should be noted that this system has been successfully tested at Reagan National Airport, and is in use at other airports around the country. [*See this January 2005 letter to Congressman Moran recommending that this effort be put on a fast track.*](#)
2. A more noise beneficial departure climb profile within safety limits provided it does not increase the Day Night Level (DNL) noise for close-in residents.

3. The use of steeper descent rates for arriving flights so that gravity is used instead of heavy engine power to control descent. It should be noted that gravity descents have been tested successfully by the FAA at Louisville, KY.
4. Arriving flights should have mandatory and enforceable minimum arrival altitudes.
5. For nighttime operations (10 p.m. to 7 a.m.) a reduction of the noise restriction levels from 72 dBA (departures) and 85 dBA (arrivals) to 67 dBA and 80 dBA, respectively. The current restrictions are over 15 years old, and need to keep up with current aircraft technology.
6. The use of a nighttime (10 P.M. to 7 A.M.) noise cap in DNL to prevent an increase in nighttime noise from the present nighttime hours DNL noise levels.
7. Firm enforcement of nighttime engine maintenance run up operations with sanctions for violations.
8. Addition of new noise monitoring sites, particularly in line with runways 22 and 33, and in the south Arlington area.
9. Upgrading of existing noise monitoring equipment with best available technology, including pattern recognition to identify aircraft directly and not by inference via radar.
10. The use of a system for on-line viewing of aircraft flight activity similar to that in use at the San Francisco airport, coupled with a scoring system for airline compliance with designated flight paths.

Steve Baur (co-chair of the ACCF Airport Issues Committee) has been appointed as a citizen representative to the Part 150 Noise Study committee by Barbara Favola, who is the chair of the committee. Other airport-related issues that the Airport Issues Committee is studying are the effects of airport operations on regional air quality, and runoff from de-icing fluid (ethylene glycol) into the Potomac River. For more information concerning the Airport Issues Committee's activities and/or the Part 150 Noise Study, please contact the committee co-chairs: [Steve Baur](#) (703-525-5+580; or [Steve Geiger](#) (703-522-0026.