



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Aviation  
Administration**

September 22, 2023

Commissioner Jamie Rhee  
Chicago Department of Aviation  
10510 W. Zemke Road  
Chicago, IL 60666

Dear Commissioner Rhee,

Thank you for submitting, on behalf of the Chicago Department of Aviation (CDA), the modernized FlyQuiet Program proposal for Chicago O'Hare International Airport. CDA's proposal for a redeveloped FlyQuiet Program requests implementing operating configurations over a 12-week repeating schedule during the nine-hour nighttime period between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m. (FlyQuiet Hours). The CDA's proposal is based on the recommendation from the O'Hare Noise Compatibility Commission (ONCC).

The FAA has completed a feasibility review of CDA's FlyQuiet proposal on community nighttime noise exposure. As in all actions the FAA takes, safety must always remain our primary responsibility and we appreciate the recognition in your proposal that "[t]he Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), at its sole discretion, can deviate from the preferential noise abatement runways and departure flight paths to maintain safe conditions." This flexibility is of critical importance to effectively manage safety under unpredictable conditions and circumstances that might warrant deviations and can be essential during inclement weather or times of runway construction or closures.

The FAA concurs with the feasibility of the proposed FlyQuiet Alternative B3 and associated recommendations; but with the clarifications and understanding described below. Please note that this response addresses the feasibility of the proposal and should not be considered as a final approval.

### **FAA Response to Operational Recommendations:**

1. Recommend modifying the FlyQuiet program to minimize and equally distribute aircraft noise at night.  
**FAA Response: Concur with feasibility as proposed.**
2. Recommend Alternative B3 preferential noise abatement operating configurations be utilized in a 12-week repeating schedule. See Section 4, Alternative B3 Overview for additional information.

- a. For each week, a primary preferential noise abatement runway operating configuration is designated with an alternate (secondary) configuration designated to provide additional wind coverage only if needed.  
**FAA Response: Concur with feasibility as proposed.**
  - b. The preferential noise abatement runway operating configurations are utilized to alternate between east flow and west flow configurations.  
**FAA Response: Concur with feasibility as proposed.**
  - c. The preferential noise abatement runway operating configurations are also utilized to alternate between north airfield configurations and south airfield configurations.  
**FAA Response: Concur with feasibility as proposed.**
  - d. Recommend the FAA and the CDA balance air traffic for east and west flow to the greatest extent possible by utilizing primary designated preferential noise abatement runways in all wind conditions up to at least a 5-knot tailwind and a 25-knot crosswind unless significant winds or crosswinds affect operating conditions that mandate a change.  
**FAA Response: Concur with the feasibility for use of preferential runways under wind conditions of up to 5-knot tailwinds and up to a 25-knot crosswind; or to the maximum cross-wind thresholds of specific aircraft types, pilot training limitations, and individual airlines' operational guidelines. While these cross-wind thresholds vary and can be up to 25-knots, an average across the fleet is typically around 15-knots.**
  - e. Recommend a weekly preferential noise abatement departure procedure rotation schedule to compliment the runway rotation schedule.  
**FAA Response: Concur with feasibility as proposed.**
  - f. Recommend the designated long runway identified in each primary and secondary preferential noise abatement operating configuration only be used if operationally necessary and that the CDA close all other runways not identified in each primary and secondary preferential noise abatement operating configuration as scheduled for noise abatement purposes during FlyQuiet.  
**FAA Response: Concur with feasibility as proposed.**
3. Recommend all departures utilize the full length of the runway when feasible. When not feasible, departures should utilize the following taxiway intersections to maximize takeoff distance:
    - a. Runway 9C (FF)      **FAA Response: Concur with feasibility as proposed.**
    - b. Runway 9R (SS)      **FAA Response: Concur with feasibility as proposed.**
    - c. Runway 27C (TT)      **FAA Response: Concur with feasibility as proposed.**
    - d. Runway 27L (TT)      **FAA Response: Concur with feasibility as proposed.**
    - e. Runway 10L (SS)      **FAA Response: Concur with feasibility as proposed.**

- f. Runway 10C (SS)     **FAA Response: Concur with feasibility as proposed.**
- g. Runway 28R (GG)     **FAA Response: Runway 28R does not utilize taxiway intersection GG<sup>1</sup>**
- h. Runway 28C (HH)     **FAA Response: Concur with feasibility as proposed.**
4. Recommend the FAA minimize to the greatest extent possible any impacts to the program's scheduled preferential noise abatement runway use due to flight inspection impacts and schedule routine flight inspections to avoid program interruptions.  
**FAA Response: Concur with the feasibility of minimizing disruption of the preferred noise abatement runway due to flight inspection; subject to also managing traffic volume and operational demands and appropriate conditions for conducting flight inspections. Flight inspections at ORD typically commence around 10pm when traffic demand decreases. While inspections at other hours is possible, FAA will maintain sole discretion to identify when inspections can be conducted based on the daily operational environment and other factors including wind direction, visibility, and other meteorological conditions which could impact the efficacy of flight inspection.**
5. Recommend the CDA minimize to the greatest extent possible any impacts to the program's scheduled preferential noise abatement runway use due to construction impacts.  
**FAA Response: This request is directed to CDA and not FAA.**
6. Recommend the CDA minimize to the greatest extent possible any impacts to the program's scheduled preferential noise abatement runway use due to maintenance impacts and schedule routine maintenance to avoid program interruptions.  
**FAA Response: This request is directed to CDA and not FAA.**
7. Recommend the CDA minimize to the greatest extent possible any impacts to the program's scheduled preferential noise abatement runway use due to rubber removal impacts and schedule to avoid program interruptions.  
**FAA Response: This request is directed to CDA and not FAA.**
8. Recommend all ground run-ups be conducted in the Ground Run-Up Enclosure.  
**FAA Response: This request is directed to CDA and not FAA.**

**FAA Response: For requests 5 through 8, the FAA defers to CDA, but would note that ORD is currently undergoing extensive construction projects in addition to its need to maintain critical maintenance requirements, vital for the current and future functionality and efficiency of the airport. These projects may necessitate runway closures or restrictions that could temporarily impact the FlyQuiet Program. The**

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<sup>1</sup> Departures from Runway 28R are assigned to the N5 intersection to allow arrivals on Runway 28C to cross behind at intersection GG when they taxi back on taxiway P. This maximizes efficiency, minimizes delays, and is the main crossing point for those arrivals. Also note that intersection GG is not part of the sunset-to-sunrise Line-Up and Wait authorization.

**FAA encourages the CDA to continue its participation in the weekly Short Term Operational Phasing/Planning (STOP) meeting in order to help collaboratively manage the challenges associated with maintenance and construction activities.**

### **FAA Response to Procedural Recommendations:**

1. Recommend the CDA expeditiously advance these recommendations to the FAA for review and approval.  
**FAA Response: This request is directed to CDA and not FAA.**
2. Recommend the CDA and FAA provide monthly updates to the ONCC throughout the review process.  
**FAA Response: Concur with feasibility and maintain our commitment to continuing participation as an invited guest of the ONCC to provide updates and briefings at their scheduled general and committee meetings.**
3. Recommend the CDA and FAA conduct public workshops in each of the four geographic quadrants surrounding O'Hare and present the findings of the review before finalizing.  
**FAA Response: This request is directed to CDA. Acknowledge the recommendation and will work with the CDA on community engagement strategy.**
4. Recommend the FAA expeditiously review and approve these recommendations.  
**FAA Response: Acknowledge the recommendation.**
5. Request the FAA and the CDA communicate and collaborate on any issues with the proposed FlyQuiet recommendations with the ONCC prior to any final decisions.  
**FAA Response: Concur with feasibility and maintain our commitment to continuing participation as an invited guest of the ONCC to provide updates and briefings at their scheduled general and committee meetings, including on the review status of this proposal as appropriate.**

### **FAA Response to Implementation Recommendations:**

1. Recommend the CDA provide outreach materials for ONCC review for distribution to the FAA, airlines, and communities about changes to the Program.  
**This request is directed to CDA and not FAA.**
2. Recommend the CDA install and maintain at least eight (8) airfield Noise Abatement signs for pilots that effectively communicate the existence and expectations of the program.  
**This request is directed to CDA and not FAA.**

3. Recommend the CDA and the FAA develop and include a dedicated Noise Abatement chart to the published aeronautical charts.  
**FAA concurs with the feasibility, and will assess the best options for including updated noise abatement information on appropriate charting. Note that due to charting requirement the FAA can only include textual information and not images or graphics.**
4. Recommend the CDA develop a new FlyQuiet Manual for ONCC review for public distribution.  
**This request is directed to CDA and not FAA.**
5. Recommend the CDA prepare nighttime construction awareness brochures, as needed, that include specific projects and periods of time that may impact the Program.  
**This request is directed to CDA and not FAA.**
6. Recommend the CDA provide regular updates on the Program including a dedicated website, schedule with dates, construction alternatives, and other noteworthy issues that would be informative to the communities surrounding O'Hare.  
**This request is directed to CDA and not FAA.**
7. Recommend the CDA conduct regular and no less than quarterly Adherence Reporting on the performance of the Program and present to the ONCC including the following:
  - a. Runway utilization
  - b. Configuration utilization
  - c. Preferential flight track adherence
  - d. Ground Run-Up Enclosure utilization
  - e. Long runway utilization including reasons for use
  - f. Airline fleet quality
  - g. Airline schedule**This request is directed to CDA and not FAA, however the FAA recommends against use of the term "adherence reporting" as this may incorrectly imply an obligatory compliance beyond the scope of the proposed voluntary program.**
8. Recommend the CDA conduct regular audits to the Program including requests from airlines for nonprimary arrival and departure runways and report to the ONCC.  
**This request is directed to CDA and not FAA.**
9. Recommend the CDA continue to seek funding for the sound insulation program for the future condition that includes the recommended FlyQuiet Program in order to mitigate noise to the most impacted residences and schools.  
**This request is directed to CDA and not FAA.**

10. Recommend the ONCC, the CDA, and the FAA, and other stakeholders, as appropriate, meet regularly, but no less than annually, to discuss Program accomplishments, issues, and potential enhancements and participate in annual audits of the program to be conducted by the ONCC FlyQuiet Committee.

**FAA Response:** FAA will maintain our commitment to continuing participation as an invited guest of the ONCC to provide updates and briefings at their scheduled general and committee meetings. Specific actions, such as annual audits, will require further discussion.

### **FAA Response to Alternative B3 Overview:**

**CDA Request:** The runway operating configurations for Alternative B3 are proposed to be utilized in a 12-week repeating schedule. The 12-week rotation schedule utilizes the east/west configurations for 8 weeks and the crosswind configurations for 4 weeks.

Important characteristics of the schedule are:

- The proposed departure runways for the east/west operating configurations have two primary departure vector headings assigned.
- The proposed departure runways for the crosswind operating configurations have two primary departure vector headings assigned.
- The runway operating configurations have an assigned alternate long runway.

#### **FAA Response:**

***For the nighttime runway rotation and identification of a nighttime runway operating configuration with an assigned alternative long runway under Alternative B3:***

FAA finds that the schedule and runway use is feasible; but would also note the role that CDA maintains in defining the runway utilization and desired flow configurations.

#### ***For the preferred headings proposed under Alternative B3:***

The FAA concurs with the feasibility of identifying departure heading ranges which encompass the preferred headings proposed under Alternative B3. However, explicit adherence to the proposed headings cannot be maintained, but they can be guides for departure heading ranges that will allow air traffic to safely manage and disperse flights. It should be noted that the proposal states that utilization of the FlyQuiet program, or any of its elements, is voluntary in nature and its use is at the discretion of the FAA.

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The FAA continues to value the close collaboration with the CDA and their work with the O'Hare Noise Compatibility Commission in considering solutions to help address community concerns from aircraft noise. We look forward to working with you towards the implementation of the FlyQuiet program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Erik Amend". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "E" and "A".

Erik Amend  
Regional Administrator  
FAA Great Lakes Region

Cc: Sean Doyle, FAA  
Dino Hall, FAA  
Katrina Smith, FAA  
Robert Hoxie, CDA  
Aaron Frame, CDA  
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David Winters, CDA  
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