

The **D**ane **C**ounty **A**irport and **S**ASYNA



BACKGROUND

The SASY neighborhood lies directly south of the main runway at the Dane County Regional Airport. Neighborhood borders are between 1 and 2.5 miles from the airport. Incoming flights are low enough to read names off the sides of the plane and cause conversations come to a halt while the noise subsides. Besides the obvious environmental impacts on the neighborhood, the airport has a significant impact on the economic well-being of the east side of Madison. It occupies more than 4,000 acres of urban land and controls zoning within 27 square miles.

As Dane County grows, so will the traffic at the airport and its impacts on the SASY neighborhood. Airport staff report that air traffic from 2001 to 2002 increased 8.4%. At this rate, flights will double in 9 years.

NOISE CONTROL PLAN

For the airport, the primary noise control method is to direct aircraft to land from and take off to the north. This reduces air traffic and its noise above the populated areas of the city such as the SASY neighborhood. This method requires that weather and air traffic cooperate. If there are northerly winds or a lot of air traffic, this method no longer protects Madison residents. The airport recently completed construction of a \$26 million Runway 3/21. This runway was to allow more flights to land from and take off to the north.

When weather or air traffic is not favorable, residents in the SASY neighborhood can expect frequent flights. When planning backyard picnics, residents need to wish for pleasant weather, including southerly winds to encourage air traffic to be diverted to the north.

Airport staff also expect to see reductions in noise due to the transition to quieter aircraft. The current noise standards are referred to as Level 3. In the future, airplanes will be implementing Level 4 noise control designs.



MAKING A NOISE COMPLAINT

When noise from air traffic over the neighborhood becomes unacceptable, it is time to call in a complaint to the airport "Noise Hotline". The noise hotline telephone number is 246-5841. The answering machine prompts the caller to answer questions including the day and time of the complaint, type airplane, commercial or military flight, and whether it was incoming or outgoing. The noise complaint officer at the airport will typically call you back to explain the airport's response. A written response may also be sent.

Every six months, the complaints are reviewed and summary is presented at the meeting of the airport Noise Control Committee.

MEETINGS OF THE NOISE CONTROL COMMITTEE

Every six months the airport Noise Control Committee meets to review the noise complaint history, discuss future plans for the airport, and accept public comments. The meetings are usually held in the spring and fall. If you would like to be notified of the next meeting, contact the airport administration office.

As of the spring 2002, the airport planned to add the minutes of committee meetings to its web site of the [Dane County Regional Airport](#).

NEIGHBORHOOD ISSUES

NOISE IMPACTS

The obvious airport impact on the SASY neighborhood is noise. Incoming flights are low enough to read names off the sides of the plane. Conversations come to a halt while the noise subsides. In some cases, airplanes and especially helicopters will cause a house to shake. Besides the nuisance, noise reduces the quality of life in the neighborhood, and may impact the health of residents.

Here are some actions residents and SASYNA can take to reduce the impacts of airport noise on the SASY neighborhood:

- File noise complaints.
- Attend noise committee meetings.
- Encourage airport staff to improve access to the complaint process by allowing email submission of complaints and addition of the complaint history and noise control committee meeting minutes to the airport web page.
- Encourage airport staff to find better ways to monitor the success of its noise control strategy. When \$26 million is spent on a new runway to reduce noise impacts, the airport should spend more than \$10 on an answering machine to record complaints. Noise measurements are needed to verify noise model predictions and establish noise levels caused by air traffic over the neighborhood.

ECONOMIC IMPACTS

Besides the obvious environmental impacts on the neighborhood, the airport has a significant impact on the economic well-being of the east side of Madison. It occupies more than 4,000 acres of urban land and controls zoning within 27 square miles.

With one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country, Madison needs more residential housing. But the airport consumes urban land that could be used for housing and opposes future residential development near the airport. People that could live in Madison must live in outlying communities encouraging sprawl in Dane County. The income of these potential new residents and the businesses they will generate would improve the economic health of the east side of Madison

SASYNA INVOLVEMENT

SASYNA members attend the Airport Noise Committee meetings held every six months.

SASYNA wrote to Dane County Executive Kathleen Falk on October 5, 2002 requesting improvements in the airport's noise control program. These improvements included installation of an active noise monitoring program, improvements in the counter-flow strategy, establishing a curfew for excessively loud aircraft, improving public access to the success of the program by publishing meeting minutes and creating a web page, improving the composition of the Noise Committee to be more sensitive to neighborhood impacts, and elimination of the F-16 training flights. The full text of the letter can be read [here](#).

On November 4, 2002, County Executive Falk responded to SASYNA. You can read her response in .pdf format [here](#).

JOIN THE DISCUSSION

If you would like to share your opinion on the control of aircraft noise and other airport impacts on the neighborhood, here are several people to contact and their email addresses:

[John Hendrick, District 6 County Supervisor](#)

[Kathleen M. Falk, Dane County Executive](#)

[Sue Bauman, Mayor of Madison](#)

[Judy Olson, 6th District Alder](#)

[SASYNA Home](#)