

Meeting about airport noise leaves some dissatisfied

Some South Seattle residents came away dissatisfied after a session with FAA and Port of Seattle officials Tuesday night over aircraft noise and pollution over South Seattle.

Alexa Vaughn, Seattle Times | November 13, 2012

The meeting hosted by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the Port of Seattle for South Seattle residents Tuesday night couldn't have been more different from the last one.

They let questions about flight paths and noise pollution pour in from a crowd of about 100 people. Though no one used them, there were even six translators on hand, as the South Seattle citizen group Quieter Skies Task Force had requested after the previous, controversial September meeting in Ballard.

At the earlier session, FAA officials refused to answer questions from people curious about the change in air-traffic patterns and a new jet-landing method under a program called Greener Skies Over Seattle. Instead people were directed to someone who would type up their questions and concerns. The FAA said it would respond in an environmental assessment report. The report came out Nov. 1.

Brian Schimpf of the FAA tried to start Tuesday night's meeting with what he called "Aviation 101." He described how South Seattle residents might experience noise increases in the summer because more planes take off over their houses during that time.

But his presentation quickly disintegrated as several people in the crowd, angry there was no printed meeting agenda, pushed the discussion toward concerns that had bothered them for months or longer: Would the FAA and Port of Seattle improve noise monitoring in South Seattle? Why are more planes roaring over my house at 3 a.m.? Why doesn't the FAA do more to consistently get feedback from neighborhoods affected by flight paths?

Eventually, several in the crowd started shouting simultaneously that South Seattle — and never more affluent communities — always gets the worst of it when new flight paths are created.

"We can't let this go into a free-for-all like this," said David Suomi, an FAA administrator moderating the meeting. "But we'll be more than happy to spend the time we have answering as many questions as we can."

Again and again, however, several people told FAA and Port of Seattle officials that they wanted more than a chance to get complaints off their chests; they wanted a discussion, too, about what can be done to reduce or more accurately measure aircraft noise in South Seattle.

"Look, you're taking a lot of rotten tomatoes from us, and we appreciate it," said Beacon Hill resident Tim Callahan. "But what we really want to know is if you can help us? Can you tell us what can be done?"

Stan Shepherd of the Port of Seattle replied that although he did not foresee installation of any new noise monitors in South Seattle anytime soon, he was taking the concerns of the residents seriously and would consider them after the meeting.

Tina Ray of South Seattle's Quieter Skies Task Force called the meeting a disaster because of a fundamental disagreement between the FAA and many in the crowd: The FAA does not think of South Seattle as a community that is greatly impacted by flight noise and flight paths, she said.

Ray disagreed with Schimpf's opinion that noise increases in South Seattle are seasonal.

"We're not crazy. We're not making this up," Ray said. "We've got neighbors using decibel apps to record the noise, and it's getting louder."

**Copied 10/5/2015 from: <http://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/meeting-about-airport-noise-leaves-some-dissatisfied/>
(Highlights, footnotes and minor edits may have been added, but only to add analysis & clarification)**