

Noise readings part of airport debate

By Dean Narciso
THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

Noise readings that could help determine whether Ohio State University expands Don Scott Airport near Worthington neighborhoods are to be released on Wednesday.

But drawing conclusions from the data might be a challenge, both experts and residents say.

"It's my understanding that the information they have is not going to be understandable by you or I," said Kimberly Nixon-Bell, a Worthington resident and outspoken critic of airport expansion.

The release of data on the airport's Web site will begin a rigorous process of analysis and interpretation that pits the airport's wish to lengthen a runway

Some Worthington residents oppose OSU's plans to lengthen a Don Scott Airport runway.

against residents who believe that the roar of jets diminishes their quality of life.

Data will include the number of flights, types of aircraft and flight paths. It will be collected for OSU by Wiley Labs, an industrial research company based in Washington, and DLZ Corp., a Worthington engineering and architecture company. Noise-level readings from sensors placed throughout Worthington in February also will be included, said Doug Hammon, airport director.

"The data really wasn't intended to be released to the general public," Hammon said. "But it will be in a format that nonaviation people will be able to understand."

Members of an advisory group that includes city planners, township trustees and others will meet June 23 to determine which information to include in a computer model that will interpret the noise data, for example, by giving greater weight to aircraft noise between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m.

"I'd like to have the next advisory board meeting and public workshop sometime in September," Hammon said. "We're not holding anything back here. I'd rather be comfortable with the results than to just put something out there."

Nixon-Bell says she's convinced the noise results will reveal a problem.

"I do think there are areas of our city that are getting pounded," she said.

"Slowly, over time, it's getting bigger and bigger, louder and louder," she said of the airport. "There are days when jets are going off every five minutes. This is more than making more than one runway longer. They are trying to make this into something it wasn't before."

Noise readings are to be available Wednesday on the Internet at www.osuairport.org; the citizens group opposing airport expansion is online at www.woose.org.

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