LAX Community Noise Roundtable

Aviation Noise News Update
March 13, 2013
After 45 years, American Airlines has unveiled a new paint scheme for its aircraft as it exits bankruptcy.

The new paint scheme features the profile of a sleek eagle, and a tail representative of the U.S. Flag.

- The unveiling came as American Airlines was deciding whether to merge with US Airways.
- “This look sort of speaks for itself,” said American Chief Executive Tom Horton, “This is, I think, a very powerful image for the new American, whether we proceed with the combination or not.”

American Airlines has 550 aircraft on order from Boeing and Airbus and needed to move away from the polished metal look and pick a paint scheme that will be usable on aircraft made of composite materials instead of aluminum.

The board of directors of American Airlines parent AMR Corp. and US Airways have approved a merger agreement.

Key items from the merger include:
- The new combined airline will be called American Airlines
- An equity value of $11 billion
- Based at Dallas/Ft. Worth International Airport
- Expected to generate $1 billion in annual net synergies by 2015
- Have more than 1,500 aircraft (additional 600 aircraft on order)
- Operate 6,700 daily flights to 336 destinations in 56 countries
- Maintain all current hubs

The merger now leaves the U.S. with three full-service (legacy) air carriers, down from six five years ago.
Schiff, Feinstein Reintroduce Bill to Fight Helicopter Noise

• Senate and House Representatives reintroduce bill to keep the L.A. Residential Helicopter Noise Relief Act in the legislative pipeline

• The Bill had to be reintroduced with a new congress in session
  – Representatives proposing the Bill Include: Adam Schiff, Henry Waxman, Brad Sherman, Barbara Boxer, and Dianne Feinstein

• The bill would require the FAA to set and implement guidelines on flight routes and height limitations for aircraft such as news helicopters

• The bill would not restrict helicopters operated by the L.A. Police Department, or other emergency responders
  – A report is expected in May with recommendations for height and route restrictions that were a result of meetings held between local communities and the FAA

Lomita Endorses Bills to Reduce Helicopter Noise

- Lomita has become the first city in the county to endorse both the House and Senate bills to reduce helicopter noise
  - Lomita City Council voted unanimously to support the bills that would establish helicopter routes and minimum altitudes
  - Lomita is located near the Torrance Municipal Airport which is home to the largest helicopter manufacturer in the world

- When discussing the noise complaints, City Manager, Michael Rock says, “Every single day one of the council members gets a phone call about it. It’s a big deal. They’re very anxious to get something in place.”
Airports Across the Country May Feel the Effects of Sequestration

- The FAA will be forced to cut $600 million from their budget that could cause flight delays, longer lines, and air traffic control closures at airports in the Los Angeles area
  - The effects will not take hold until April, giving the President and Congressional leaders time to make a deal

- The TSA head says lines at security gates could grow longer during peak spring and summer travel seasons
  - This is a result of having to cut overtime pay for TSA employees, reducing the number of screening officers

- National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA) says the cuts could lead to fewer flights and delays of up to 90 minutes during peak hours
  - Safety will remain key, and with fewer controllers, fewer airplanes will be allowed in the sky

- The FAA has plans to shut down towers with less than 150,000 annual operations which would mean the closure of Santa Monica’s control tower
  - Pilots can still use the airport by making radio calls with their intentions

The FAA issued Program Guidance Letter (PGL) 13-04 announcing a Pilot Program for Redevelopment of Airport Properties

- Up to four eligible airports that have an FAA-approved Part 150 airport noise compatibility program may apply to the agency to receive discretionary Airport Improvement Program (AIP) grants up to $5 million each
- The funding will be drawn from the AIP noise set-aside under the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012
- Airports have until January 15, 2015 to submit applications, with final decisions by the FAA being made on September 30, 2015

As part of the grant funding, an eligible airport can submit a Passenger Facility Charge (PFC) approval request to fund allowable costs

- The FAA will fund 80 percent of the pilot program, the airports must fund the remaining 20 percent, but can use PFC charges for that purpose

To be eligible for the pilot program, airports must be working in partnership with a neighboring jurisdiction on their pilot program project
A Task Group of the NextGen Advisory Committee says that it has identified a potential way to comply with the Categorical Exclusion (CatEx) 2 provision.

- CatEx2 was a provision as a result of the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012 that seeks to accelerate the introduction of NextGen Performance-based Navigation (PBN) procedures by giving them Categorical Exclusion (CatEx) from environmental review.
- Last September, the FAA told the NAC that it has not been able to identify a “technically sound approach” to measuring reductions in noise on a per flight basis as required to meet the CatEx2 provision using DNL.

The Task Group is in the process of developing and refining an approach to comply with CatEx2 called “Modified Contour Overlay” still utilizing DNL.

- “It uses a grid analysis to show what the population exposure to various DNL noise levels would be with and without a PBN procedure.”
- The Modified Contour Overlay would allow communities to see the number of people that would get increases, decreases, or no change in noise level in 5-dB increments ranging from 45-50 DNL to 75-80 DNL.
Task Group Identifies Potential Way to Comply with CATEX2 Provision

• **The Task Group told the NAC that the approach for compliance is a two-step process:**
  – 1. Determine the noise-sensitive “area of concern”
  – 2. Determine the “change in contribution to DNL on a per-flight basis”
    • Detailed grid computations, comparing existing procedure to the proposed procedure at noise sensitive locations

• **Four Key Issues Raised:**
  – Requires a noise analysis that takes time and resources to prepare
  – It is possible for one procedure to be found in compliance, while another, or even perhaps the same procedure to a different runway, may be found non-compliant
  – Should existing NEPA significance criteria be applied before CatEx2 and this metric be considered
  – This approach may be difficult to explain to communities
The Department of Transportation (DOT) defended the Noise Set-Aside in the Airport Improvement Program (AIP) in a recent letter to Congress

- This letter was in response to the Government Accountability Office (GAO) report that questioned whether the Noise Set-Aside will remain relevant in the future
- The GAO found that since 1982, the FAA has provided $5.8 billion in AIP noise grants to 481 airports, but a number of indicators point to a decline in future demand

The DOT response letter to the GAO included the following statements:

- “The Noise Set-Aside within the AIP remains a vitally important part of the FAA’s capability to mitigate noise to a level that does not constrain the growth of the nation’s air transportation system,” DOT Assistant Secretary for Administration Brodi Fontenot wrote in the December 12, 2012 letter
- “While commercial aircraft are significantly quieter…, there are still more than 300,000 people living and going to school within significantly noise-impacted areas…”, Fontenot told Congress
- “At current funding levels, FAA estimates it will take 15-20 years to mitigate noise for the population of residents and students remaining within significantly-impacted areas”
The Los Angeles Board of Airport Commissioners (BOAC) authorized staff to enter into a Letter of Agreement with the City of El Segundo for its Residential Sound Insulation Grant Program and to release $9,225,000 for its eligible noise mitigation project.

- The LAWA grant, along with $5 million from the FAA, will enable the City of El Segundo to soundproof 329 single and multi-family dwellings.
- Completion of the 329 units will result in the City of El Segundo having treated a total of 1,702 residences.

The grant is in accordance with the LAX Master Plan Stipulated Settlement Agreement reached in February 2006.

- The agreement calls for LAWA to provide up to $22,500,000 annually through 2015 to the Cities of El Segundo, Inglewood, and the County of Los Angeles for noise mitigation projects.