



TOWN OF BELMONT
Logan Airport Community Advisory Committee

OVERVIEW

This document is intended for Belmont residents and answers frequently asked questions relating to the recent increase in noise from airplanes taking off from Logan Airport and flying over Belmont. Flight patterns at Logan are overseen by the FAA and Massport and this issue has an extensive history. To understand it fully – it is recommended that you review the Q&A below and explore the links listed under the Additional Resources heading below.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS:

Q1: WHY HAVE I BEEN NOTICING MORE AIRPLANES FLYING OVER BELMONT?

Answer: The FAA has made changes to the flight paths used by planes taking off from Logan Airport using runway 33L. Though these new paths had been tested previously - they officially went into effect in mid-June of 2013 after a lengthy review period. The FAA's published a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) in May that enabled them to proceed with this change (see link under Additional Resources).

Q2: WHY WAS THIS CHANGE MADE AND WHY DOES IT SEEM LIKE THERE ARE MANY MORE PLANES THAN BEFORE?

Answer: In 2002, the FAA issued an order regarding environmental and safety improvement goals for Logan Airport. Several of the proposed actions were to make adjustments to takeoff and landing patterns and incorporating new "performance-based navigation" technology. These new "area navigation" flight paths are called RNAV. Prior to the adoption of these new RNAV patterns, flights departing on runway 33L, which is used about 20% of the time when the wind is coming from the North West, Air Traffic control would direct departing flights along a range of routes depending on air traffic and their destination. This method distributed the planes and resulting noise across a number of communities. The new runway 33L RNAV narrows the number of flight paths to three very narrow routes. Two of the runway 33L RNAV departure routes now go directly over the Town of Belmont. Runway 33L is used approximately 17% of the time for departures of large and heavy jets because of the wind direction. There are 400-500 daily departures from Logan and two of the four RNAV routes traverse directly over Belmont when runway 33L is in use. (Note: These statistics are from the FAA Environmental Impact Report - link to report below).

Q3: WERE THERE STUDIES DONE TO ASSESS THE IMPACT?

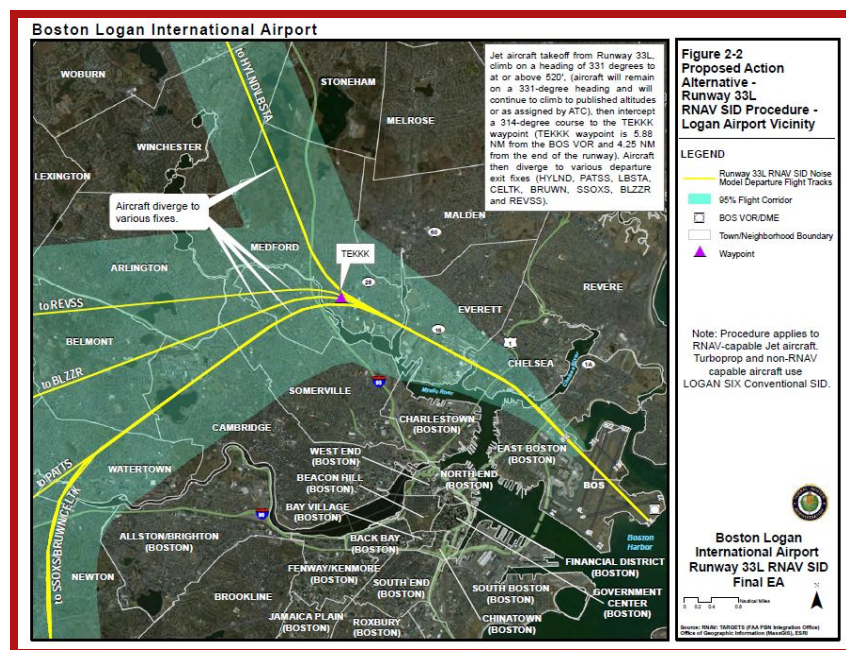
Answer: The FAA has been actively studying the noise and other environmental impact of proposed flight path changes to Logan's runways. The Boston Logan Airport Noise Study or BLANS has been going on since 2008 and there has been a Logan Community Advisory Committee (CAC) working with the FAA and Massport on providing community representation. Detailed information from the studies can be found at: <http://www.bostonoverflightnoisestudy.com>. The FAA issued their Finding of No Significant Impact in May of 2013 prior to implementing 33L RNAV in June.

Q4: HOW COULD THIS HAVE HAPPENED? DIDN'T WE KNOW ABOUT IT?

Answer: Elected and Town Officials were informed of the study and proposed changes over the years - though it was hard to gauge the impact of both the new flight patterns and the fact that these new flight paths are so concentrated. Belmont had never really experienced anything like this with aircraft noise before. There was a public comment period called for by the FAA regarding the proposed changes earlier this year but there were very few complaints/comments from Belmont and surrounding towns now experiencing significant increases in flight volume and resulting noise from these changes.

Q5: WHAT OTHER COMMUNITIES ARE IMPACTED?

Answer: Flights departing Logan using the runway 33L RNAV departure routes travel to a GPS way point in Medford and then depending on their destination – they take one of four narrow flight paths highlighted in yellow in the image below:



As you can see, two of these yellow paths traverse directly over Belmont. The Environmental Impact study shows that the communities of Arlington, Belmont, Waltham, Watertown and Winchester all have seen significant increases (10%-60%) to the population being impacted by airplane noise above 45 DNL (Day/Night Noise Level). The Towns of Dedham, Milton, Needham and Newton are also affected by one of the new departure routes. The full Environmental Assessment report can be viewed here: <http://www.bostonrnavea.com/>.

Q6: NOW THAT THE CHANGE HAS BEEN MADE – IS IT PERMANENT?

Answer: Any change such as this has a federally mandated review period of 6 months. Regarding these recent changes to runway 33L, because of significant community opposition from citizens in Milton (over 300 complaints), the review period has been extended to 12 months. This will provide communities with the opportunity to experience the effects of these changes over all four seasons and variety of weather conditions.

Q7: WHAT IS THE TOWN DOING ABOUT THIS?

Answer: The Board of Selectmen recently appointed Myron Kassaraba and Bob Reardon, Jr. to represent Belmont on the Logan CAC. They are planning to hold a public information meeting in the near future to inform residents about the impacts of runway 33L RNAV. They are also reaching out to our neighboring communities and elected officials. An email address had been set up for the committee – it is: LoganCAC@belmont-ma.gov.

Q8: THIS IS AWFUL, WHAT CAN I DO?

Answer: At this point, since we are in the 12 month review period for these changes – if you feel that the noise from these flights is excessive or having an impact on your quality of life, the best thing that concerned citizens can do is file a complaint with Massport's Noise Abatement Office. This can be done by calling Massport's Noise Complaint Line at (617) 561-3333 or by filling out the online form here: <http://bit.ly/YF9f8C>.

LINKS & RESOURCES:

Logan Airport Monitor: Web application that shows active runways and real-time data about flights: <http://bit.ly/15BdvqB>

Massport Logan Noise Complaint online form: <http://bit.ly/YF9f8C>

FAA Boston Logan International Airport Runway 33L RNAV SID Environmental Assessment (EA) <http://www.bostonrnavea.com/>

Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) & Record of Decision (ROD) <http://bit.ly/15BgoaV>

Boston Logan Airport Noise Study (BLANS):

<http://www.bostonoverflightnoisestudy.com>

Logan Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

http://www.bostonoverflight.com/study_participants.aspx#CAC

Video explaining RNAV: <http://bit.ly/15BirvB>

ARTICLES IN THE NEWS:

Boston Globe – March 11, 2013: <http://b.globe.com/15BexD0>

Milton Patch – Sept. 17, 2013: <http://bit.ly/15BeSWH>

Patriot Ledger – Sept. 17, 2013: <http://bit.ly/15BukSe>

Boston.com – Sept. 21, 2013: <http://bo.st/15Bu0mm>