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Noise study favors airport

Air traffic at Don Scott Field isn't too loud, report says

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THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

A noise report that the Ohio State University Airport released late Wednesday did nothing to calm complaints about loud jets, despite its finding that aircraft do not cause most of the background noise near the airport. Some Worthington-area residents

object to the study that Wyle Laboratories conducted for OSU in February, saying planes are roaring overhead more often now that the weather is warmer.

Nonetheless, officials at Don Scott Field likely will cite the report in their efforts to receive federal support for expanding the airport's northern runway. Neighbors worry the plan will result

in more air traffic and less sleep at night.

The data came from 11 noise monitors placed in neighborhoods near the airport. Six of the monitors were in Worthington.

Kim Nixon-Bell, a Worthington resident who allowed sound engineers to place one of the monitors in February in her yard on Olentangy River Road, said more aircraft are screeching across the sky this month.

An outdoor party this month at her home was interrupted several times.

"There were times that we just literally had to stop, wait for a plane to go by, then start talking again," Nixon-Bell said.

Nights are even more difficult.

"I have air conditioners running, and I'm still awakened," she said.

The Federal Aviation Administration

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considers an average decibel level of 65 to be too high.

Although the report acknowledged that some aircraft noise reached that mark, the researchers concluded that the 24-hour average falls below that.

The report says that on average, airport noise is less than 60 decibels while community noise in some areas rises well above

that level.

Nixon-Bell's monitor showed that, on average, 22 aircraft a day created a noise level greater than 65 decibels.

Of those, one plane a day generated 80 decibels of noise at Nixon-Bell's home, which is louder than a bus passing someone on a sidewalk.

Area resident Tony Pelo said he was on Le Anne Marie Circle on Wednesday night in Linworth when a jet roared above. "It was deafening," Pelo said.

"I couldn't believe it."

A monitor stationed on that street recorded a daily average of 45 aircraft reaching more than 65 decibels, and of those, five reached 85 decibels.

A neighbor on Le Anne Marie told Pelo that he had heard a "small one."

"She says many evenings — many evenings — her home shakes," Pelo said, referring to the resident. "I just couldn't imagine that someone could live out here."

Worthington resident Dennis Hennen, who continues to report loud aircraft to the city, disagrees with averages being used to support the airport's conclusions.

"That might be standard procedure," Hennen said, "but average noise isn't what wakes people up at night."

Calls to airport director Doug Hammon were not returned yesterday.

University spokeswoman Elizabeth Conlisk said the airport's

advisory committee will discuss the noise data Wednesday.

"This is very preliminary data," Conlisk said. "It's all pretty technical information."

Worthington officials needed time to evaluate what the data mean and were not ready to comment yesterday, city spokeswoman Anne Brown said.

Resident Mike Duffey, who has been following the issue closely, asserted that the data mean nothing.

"It doesn't address the quali-

ty-of-life issue," Duffey said. "Is 65 decibels the magic number? That should be decided by the community."

Duffey also thinks more monitors should have been used to ensure accuracy.

Like others, Pelo questioned the timing of the study.

"February is a stormy, windy month, and there's not as much traffic," Pelo said. "But the past two weeks, it's been jet after jet after jet."

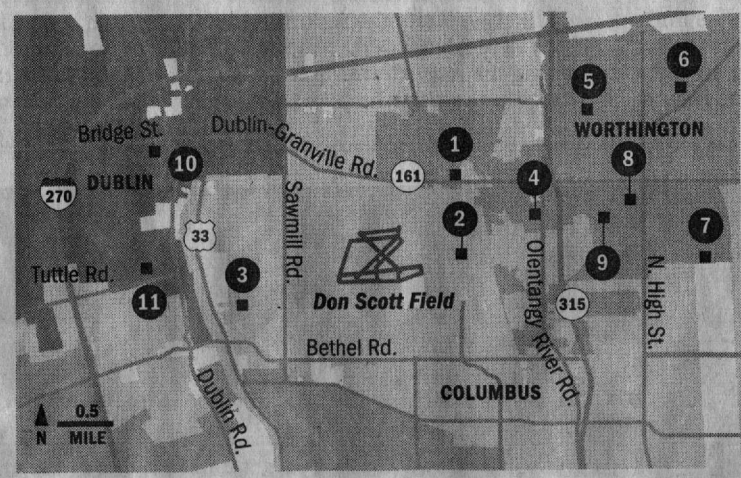
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Sound study

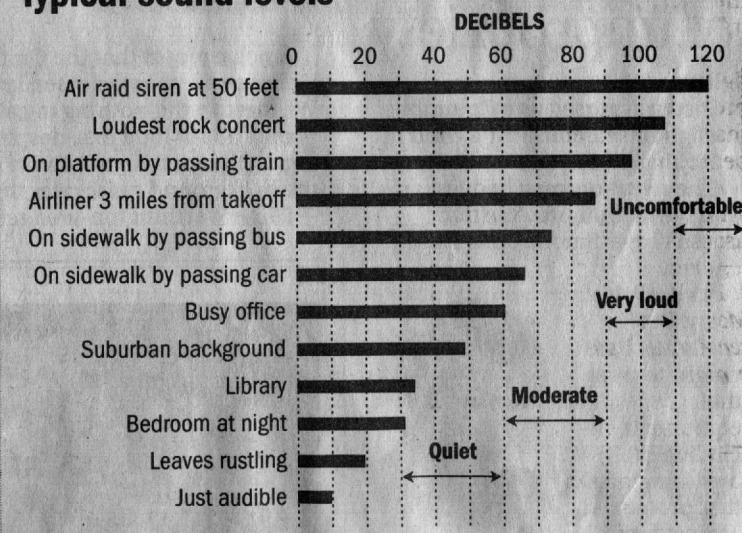
While a study of noise levels at several sites near the Don Scott Field shows the average daily airplane noise did not exceed the Federal Aviation Administration's limit of 65 decibels, individual events often did. Here are the recording sites and the average number of times per day the decibel level was louder than the accepted threshold:

RECORDED DECIBEL LEVELS

SITE, ADDRESS	66-70	71-75	76-80	81-85	86+
1. 2609 McVey Blvd. W.	15	5	1	0	0
2. 1328 Le Anne Marie Circle	12	9	9	10	5
3. 3159 Alderridge Court	16	11	4	2	1
4. 6077 Olentangy River Rd.	10	8	3	1	0
5. 6760 Rieber St.	10	3	0	0	0
6. 380 Highland Ave.	18	12	4	1	0
7. 555 Selby Blvd.	10	8	2	0	0
8. 117 W. New England Ave.	7	10	2	0	0
9. 585 Keyes Lane	11	3	2	0	0
10. City of Dublin Cemetery	7	3	0	0	0
11. Llewellyn Farms Park	14	5	2	0	0



Typical sound levels



Sources: Ohio State University, Wyle Laboratories, Handbook of Environmental Acoustics