

# Put Anti-Noise Group on O'Hare Commission, City Watchdog Says

By Heather Cherone | January 27, 2016 6:07am

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Mayor Rahm Emanuel will meet with O'Hare noise activists.

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O'HARE — Community groups — like the anti-O'Hare noise group preparing to meet with Mayor **Rahm Emanuel** Wednesday — should have a seat on the **O'Hare Noise Compatibility Commission**, according to a report from the city's inspector general.

In a quarterly **report**, Inspector General Joseph Ferguson urged the Chicago Department of Aviation to give "established community groups full membership or advisory status" on the O'Hare Noise

Compatibility Commission, which was created in 1996 and charged with reducing the noise generated by planes using [O'Hare Airport](#).

The recommendation was based on an examinations of how other airports near major metropolitan airports handle citizen complaints about jet noise, said Rachel Leven, a spokeswoman for Ferguson's office. In particular, the commission overseeing Los Angeles International Airport includes representatives of community groups, Leven said.



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Should community groups have a seat on the O'Hare noise commission?

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Members of the [Fair Allocation in Runways Coalition](#) have long pressed the O'Hare noise commission to be more responsive to citizen complaints and to pay more attention to the nearly 4 million [complaints](#) about jet noise that have been filed with the city since November 2013.

During the meeting set for 10:30 a.m. Wednesday at City Hall, group leaders will demand that Emanuel immediately make changes to airport operations to reduce the noise over the Northwest Side and surrounding suburbs, coalition leader Helen Rosenberg said in a statement.

City aviation officials told the inspector general that while giving community groups seats on the commission was not something they were "pursuing at this time" city officials were "taking steps to more

fully engage community groups" with the commission, according to a statement included in Ferguson's report.

Those actions will give community groups "even greater meaningful participation and the opportunity to provide valuable insight beyond the current model which already provides for public participation," city aviation officials told the inspector general.

Coalition members were allowed an advisory seat on a special committee of commission members working to craft a plan to rotate the runways that are used at night in an effort to spread out the noise that many residents say keeps them from getting a good night's sleep.

Ferguson's recommendation to include community groups was part of his response to a complaint filed by coalition member Ed Phillips, who asked Ferguson to look into the city's practice of excluding data gathered by monitors that officials considered irrelevant while tracking noise generated by planes.

In July, the city [agreed](#) to release more data from the nearly three dozen noise monitors around the airport as part of a "comprehensive effort" to address the outcry about jet noise that began in 2013 when new flight paths sent hundreds of flights over areas of the Northwest Side like North Park, Jefferson Park, Edgebrook, Edison Park and Norwood Park that previously heard little or no noise.

Those plans appeared to address many of the concerns identified during the review conducted by the Inspector General, according to the report.

But the report urged city officials to document every noise event, regardless of whether it is actually used in more comprehensive noise data reports.