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Inside ExploreLI

**TOP STORIES**

# FOR FLYING OUT LOUD

## Nassau communities seek relief from jets thundering over their homes

BY AISHA AL-MUSLIM  
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The earsplitting roar of low-flying jets is fraying nerves and patience in 13 Hempstead Town communities.

Residents who have lived with airplane noise from Kennedy Airport for decades say it's gotten worse, especially at night, as use of Runway 22L — the so-called runway of last resort for late-night flights — has increased.

The number of arrivals on that runway have nearly doubled from 3,213 in January to 6,209 in May, according to Port Authority statistics.

"The situation has kind of deteriorated in the past year," Christina O'Keeffe, 36, said while standing on her Stewart Manor deck as planes flew low overhead.

She can often clearly read the names of carriers flying above her home. JetBlue. Delta. American. Sometimes late in the day, they're just minutes apart.

Peter Damiano, of Garden City, said sometimes the planes wake up his 2-year-old at night.

"We don't want to be barricaded in our homes," he said.

The increased noise has reenergized the Town-Village Aircraft Safety Noise Abatement Committee — a 40-year-old coalition of Hempstead communities —

to push the FAA and the Port Authority to provide some relief.

The group represents nearly 145,000 people living in Atlantic Beach, Cedarhurst, East Williston, Floral Park, Garden City, Hewlett Harbor, Island Park, Lawrence, Long Beach, New Hyde Park, Stewart Manor, Valley Stream and Woodburgh.

In April and May, 22L accounted for more than a third of Kennedy arrivals on its eight runway approaches — which is about normal for that runway at that time of year, according to the most-recent Port Authority reports. It was used for nearly half of the arrivals between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m. in April, the most recent month for which data is available.

Use of Runway 22L increased from 19.8 percent of overnight landings on the eight runways in 2007 to 24.6 percent in 2009, according to Port Authority records. In 2010, construction projects closed two runways for months, increasing flights on all of the remaining six runways.

According to the 2000 Kennedy Tower Agreement — an aircraft noise abatement plan developed by the Port Authority, the Aviation Development Council, the Air Transport Association and the Federal Aviation Ad-



PHOTO BY CHRIS WARE

Christina O'Keeffe said of planes that fly low overhead, "The situation has kind of deteriorated in the past year."

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ministration Eastern Region — Runway 22L should not be used for arrivals between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m. unless traffic, delays, weather or construction prevent the use of every other runway. That agreement making 22L the runway of last resort at night is based on the large swath of residential areas in its flight path.

Garden City Trustee Laurence Quinn, a noise abatement committee member, ac-

knowledged the challenge of having several communities fighting the same noise problems: A solution for one community could mean sending planes over another. What all the communities want, he said, is "an equitable distribution of flights."

The local officials want arriving aircraft to rotate among all JFK runway approaches as much as possible. They also want a ban on lower-flying planes and the reduction of late-night arrivals on Runway 22L by distributing them to other runways.

"Residents understand there will always be rotations. . . . What we don't understand is when the weather permits, why there isn't a frequent runway rotation," said Floral Park Village Trustee Mary-Grace Tomecki, a committee member.

Neither the Port Authority, which is responsible for noise complaints, nor the FAA, which handles low-flying aircraft concerns, would specifically address Runway 22L usage.

"We want to know why they are doing what they are not supposed to be doing," in using 22L so often late at night, Quinn said.

Arlene Salac, an FAA spokeswoman, said runway usage is determined by factors such as wind direction, weather conditions, airport construc-