

CASE STUDY: FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION



Turning a community from enraged to engaged.

Since 2005, the Chicago Department of Aviation has been improving and modernizing the airfield at O'Hare — no small undertaking. The Federal Aviation Administration assessed the O'Hare Modernization Program in an environmental impact statement and issued a Record of Decision in 2005, conducted a Re-Evaluation in 2015 and a Final Evaluation in 2019. The success of their efforts depended on the affected communities surrounding O'Hare feeling heard and having their concerns validated.

Our Solution

In the summer of 2015, Grisko helped mitigate community pressure from residents affected by O'Hare runway expansions on the mayor, his new aviation commissioner and local aldermen. The regional office of the FAA engaged us to lead public involvement and outreach to manage complaints and concerns from communities surrounding O'Hare. We planned and held a series of eight-hour long public workshops, spanning four days in four different communities around the airport – the ones most affected by airplane noise. More than 3,000 people came to air their concerns. We developed messaging and materials and organized technical experts who could share detailed information with residents and answer specific questions about noise and other environmental impacts at their address. Our team listened and took in feedback, complaints and concerns, documenting more than 10,000 public comments.

In late 2018, we began the entire process again, supporting the final evaluation by planning and holding community meetings, developing messaging and materials, taking comments and assembling and producing the final report.

The Impact

Feedback from the communities on the FAA's outreach process was positive. Residents felt acknowledged and they appreciated the chance to speak out. At the end of both outreach efforts, we had successfully provided cover to the mayor, his team and alderman. O'Hare's runway expansions continue and are expected to be complete in 2020. We are currently leading public involvement efforts for the next round of changes at O'Hare.



Collateral Development



Strategic Council



Event Coordination



Community Outreach

