

**Night flight plan over Lachine could be dropped**  
**Problems with new path. A decision will be made during a meeting next month**  
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A proposed new path over Lachine for night flights from Trudeau airport could be quashed even before tests get under way, the airport has revealed.

The airport had proposed to test a new route for the three to five flights that normally take off in between 6 and 7 a.m. Until 2006, those flights were normally limited to a flight path over the western part of the island, as planes took off and headed over Lake St. Louis. However, in 2006, the airport adopted a new flight path that directed planes over the northern part of the island.

Christiane Beaulieu, a spokesperson for Aéroports de Montréal, the private, non-profit organization that runs the airport, said there have been problems with that new path, and it could, therefore, be abandoned. If that's the case, tests on a new path over Lachine set for next month would be cancelled, Beaulieu said.

At a June 13 meeting of the airport's soundscape committee, which comprises representatives of the airport, Transport Canada and elected officials, the airport will present data on how well pilots have adapted to a flight path over the northern part of the island.

Beaulieu said many pilots had trouble adapting to the new route. She said the route restricts planes to fly over Highway 13.

"But we have seen some planes have been up to two kilometres off the target," she said. "If the path would work every time, it would reduce the number of people affected by the planes by about 30 per cent."

Beaulieu said it's still too soon to say if the airport's so-called left-turn route would be abandoned, but if that were the case, then planes would also not try to turn right, a path that would take them over the rail yards in Lachine.

"We have to look at the data," she said. "Is it just one company that is having problems, or one type of plane."

News the airport might abandon testing Lachine was greeted with cautious optimism by Lachine Mayor Claude Dauphin.

"It's good news, if that's the case," he said. "But we are definitely against any tests, because when tests start, they become permanent."

Lachine council has passed a resolution saying it is against night flights. It has also appealed to the Federal Transport minister to intervene.

If the new flight paths are cancelled, however, that would reroute them back to Pointe Claire and Dorval.

Pointe Claire Mayor Bill McMurchie said he doesn't think that would seriously affect his residents.

"The city of Pointe Claire will be in favour of any flight pattern that would reduce the noise footprint in terms of area and number of people affected," he said. "But Pointe Claire residents realize the airport is a neighbour. Does that make it easier to accept when you get waken up at night? Of course it doesn't."

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