Boeing Executive Says Sonic Cruiser Will Be A 'Good Neighbor' Airplane

Boeing's potential new " sonic cruiser" airplane will have fuel effeciency similiar to today's long-range jets, and will offer several other environmentally-friendly advantages, said John Roundhill, Boeing Commercial Airplanes vice president of Marketing for the new airplane program.

Speaking to members of the Royal Aeronautical Society in honor of the historical contributions to aviation of Sir Thomas Sopwith, Roundhill addressed the environmental requirements of the proposed new airplane.

"The sonic cruiser's fuel efficiency will be similar to the newest, similarly-sized airplanes being delivered today," he said.

Boeing also projects the proposed airplane will have lower nitrogen oxide emissions than today's airplanes, Roundhill said. Local air quality near airports also should be improved because the airplane's unique configuration and improved climb performance will mean less time spent in airport holding patterns.

Envisioned as a long-range airplane linking more pairs of cities directly, the sonic cruiser will allow more direct flights. This, in turn, will mean fewer takeoff and landing cycles, greater fuel efficiency and a reduction in the associated emissions.

It also will reduce airport community noise, making it a "good neighbor" for those living near airports, Roundhill said. It will be quieter than upcoming Chapter 4 noise standards and current airport-specific requirements.

The proposed airplane will fly at speeds of up to Mach .98 (approximately 98 percent of the speed of sound) or about 15 to 20 percent faster than current commercial jet airplanes. Higher cruising altitudes -- in the mid-40,000-foot range - will offer a smoother, more comfortable ride. This should allow the airplane to fly over slower air traffic, transporting travelers sooner to their destinations all over the world.

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