FAA Southern California Metroplex Environmental Assessment Process

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Southern California Metroplex Environmental Assessment

- OAPM Study Team Completes Recommendations
- Issue Notice of Intent to Prepare Draft EA (Jan 2014)
- Notional Designs Completed by D&I Team (June 2014)
- Agency Briefing Meetings (Fall 2014)
- Complete Draft EA (Spring 2015)
- Circulate Draft EA for Public Review (30 Days)
- Conduct Public Workshops (Summer 2015)
- Review Comments and Prepare Responses (Summer 2015)
- Circulate Final EA (Summer 2015)
- FONSI (Proposed November 2015)
- Implement Metroplex Procedures (Proposed March 2016)

Source: FAA
FAA’s Approach to Public Outreach and Input

- The FAA’s approach to public outreach and receiving public input for the Southern California Metroplex process is consistent with other Metroplex efforts throughout the country.

- The FAA will release the proposed arrival and departure routes, and receive public comment during the Draft Southern California Metroplex EA process.

- The Draft Southern California Metroplex EA will evaluate and disclose any potential environmental impacts (e.g., noise and air emissions) resulting from the proposed Metroplex procedures based on NEPA requirements.
Draft Metroplex EA Public Comment Period

• During the 30-day (minimum) public comment period, which begins June 10, 2015, interested members of the public may:
  – Download and review the Draft EA
  – Attend at least one of the public workshops to learn more about the proposed airspace changes and to speak with the FAA directly about the Metroplex process
  – Submit written comments regarding the aspects of the Metroplex process that concern them

http://www.metroplexenvironmental.com/socalMetroplex/socal_introduction.html
## Draft Metroplex EA Public Workshop Schedule

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Source: FAA
The Metroplex procedures may include:

- **Optimized Profile Descent (OPD)**
  - Uses flight-idle throttle settings and keeps the aircraft “clean” until several miles from touchdown

- **Performance Based Navigation (PBN), Required Navigation Performance (RNP), and Area Navigation (RNAV) departures and approaches**
  - Reduces distance flown, increases precision and repeatability, and reduces pilot/controller communications
Optimized Profile Descent Compared to a Conventional Descent

Exhibit 1-6

Source: Final Environmental Assessment for Northern California Optimization of Airspace and Procedures in the Metroplex, July 2014
Depictions of Conventional, RNAV, and RNP Procedures

Exhibit 1-5  Navigational Comparison – Conventional/RNAV/RNP

**Current Ground NAVAIDs**
- Limited Design Flexibility

**RNAV**
- Increased Airspace Efficiency
- Waypoints

**RNP**
- Seamless Vertical Path
- Highly Optimized Use of Airspace
- "Curved" Paths

Legend
- Navigational Aid
- Aircraft
- Route
- Route Deviations
- Airport
- Waypoint

Notes:
- NAVAID – navigational aid
- RNAV – Area Navigation

Because the airspace changes are expected to occur above 3,000 feet mean sea level, aircraft noise exposure will likely be presented in a grid format using census blocks and summarized in tables.

Changes in aircraft noise exposure will be evaluated in three distinct Day-Night Average Sound Level (DNL) zones as follows:

- DNL 65 and greater
- DNL 60 to 65
- DNL 45 to 60
### Table 1: Criteria for Determining Impact of Changes in Aircraft Noise Exposure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DNL Noise Exposure Level</th>
<th>Increase in DNL with Proposed Action</th>
<th>Aircraft Noise Exposure Change Consideration</th>
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<tr>
<td>DNL 65 and higher</td>
<td>DNL 1.5 dB or higher (^1)</td>
<td>Exceeds Threshold of Significance</td>
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<tr>
<td>DNL 60 to 65</td>
<td>DNL 3.0 dB or higher (^2)</td>
<td>Information Disclosed When Evaluating Air Traffic Actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DNL 45 to 60</td>
<td>DNL 5.0 dB or greater (^3)</td>
<td>Information Disclosed When Evaluating Air Traffic Actions</td>
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</tbody>
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**Notes:**


3/ Source FAA Order 1050.1E, Appendix A, Paragraph 14.5e.


Prepared By: ATAC Corporation, November 2013.
Increases of 1.5 dB or greater over noise sensitive land uses exposed to DNL 65 and greater are considered significant per guidance in the FAA’s environmental orders and would trigger further environmental review.

Increases in aircraft noise exposure in the DNL 45 to 60 and DNL 60 to 65 zones will be disclosed in the Draft Metroplex EA, but do not exceed the NEPA significance threshold.

As previously stated, in order to avoid preparing the more costly and time-consuming EIS, the Metroplex process will eliminate procedures that result in increases of 1.5 dB or greater within the DNL 65 zone.
Completion and Publication of the Final Metroplex EA

• After the public comment period closes, the FAA will consider and collectively respond to all of the public comments received on the Draft EA in the Final Metroplex EA

• The Final EA will be published on the Metroplex website

• The FAA will prepare a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and Record of Decision (ROD)

• Notice of the FONSI/ROD will be published in the Federal Register
After the FONSI/ROD is issued, the FAA will undertake the work required to implement the Proposed Action which may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Training air traffic controllers on the new procedures
- Publishing the new approach and departure procedures

Aircraft operators will:

- Train flight crews and update their Flight Management Systems with the new procedures

This process may take several months before the new procedures are implemented
Once the new procedures are implemented, the community may notice:

- Nothing at all
- Decreased aircraft overflights and noise levels
- Increased aircraft overflights and noise levels
- Concentrated flight tracks over a narrow area
- Increased aircraft altitudes/distance from flight tracks
- Decreased aircraft altitudes/distance from flight tracks
- Aircraft where they have not flown previously on a regular basis

The exact effects will depend on the types of changes the FAA plans to make and where those changes are made.
Examples of Community Reaction to Airspace Changes

- Community reaction to FAA’s implementation of NextGen RNAV/RNP procedures has been mixed:
  - Boston RNAV Procedures
  - Denver Airspace Redesign
  - Houston Metroplex
  - New York Airspace Redesign
  - Northern California Metroplex
  - Phoenix RNAV Procedures
  - Portland RNP Approach
  - Seattle Greener Skies
Example of Radar Flight Tracks Before and After Implementation at Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport

Before & After September 18, 2014 Flight Path Arrivals from the West

Purple = Before
Blue = After

Source: City of Phoenix
Example of Radar Flight Tracks Before and After Implementation at Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport

Before & After September 18, 2014 Flight Departures to the West

Purple = Before
Blue = After

Source: City of Phoenix
On September 24, 2012, the LAX Community Noise Roundtable sent a letter to the FAA recommending noise abatement measures for FAA to consider in the Metroplex process.

On January 8, 2014, the FAA sent a letter to the Roundtable indicating that the Roundtable’s recommendations were forwarded to the Southern California Metroplex Design and Implementation team “for consideration during the procedure design process.”

FAA plans to report back to the LAX Community Noise Roundtable on how the recommendations were considered in the Metroplex process.
SUMMARY

• The Southern California Metroplex Draft EA is scheduled to be available June 10, 2015

• The 30-day (minimum) public comment period begins with the release of the EA

• The interested public should provide written comments on the Draft EA before the public comment period closes

• FAA will publish the FONSI/ROD in the Federal Register

• Implementation of the proposed procedures could take several months
Questions?