



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Aviation
Administration**

Western-Pacific Region
Office of the Regional Administrator

P.O. Box 92007
Los Angeles, CA 90009

APR 14 2015

Mr. Ed Zuercher
City Manager, City of Phoenix
200 West Washington Street
12th Floor
Phoenix, AZ 85003

Dear Mr. Zuercher:

On April 13, the FAA met with city representatives to discuss possible route adjustments and other strategies that could potentially address community concerns about noise caused by the west departure flight paths from Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport. In that meeting, City representatives said they intended to present the FAA's suggestions to the City Council on Wednesday, April 15. To assist in that, I am providing you a recap of our recommendations.

In September 2014, the FAA transitioned from radar-based departure procedures to Performance Based Navigation (PBN) departure procedures in Phoenix. The new procedures make a safe system even safer by automatically keeping arrival routes and departure routes separated from one another. Airlines program the procedures into their flight computers, and planes fly the routes automatically. This decreases communications between controllers and pilots, which reduces the chances for miscommunications. The radar-based procedures, by contrast, were inefficient given today's technology, requiring aircraft to fly further than necessary. Additionally, the procedures were interdependent, meaning air traffic controllers had to issue instructions to keep aircraft safely separated.

The FAA continues to support a collaborative approach towards addressing the community's concerns with the new procedures and is hopeful for more involvement from the City to work through the suggestions for alternatives we have put forward. During the week of April 6, the FAA provided data and a total of 14 alternatives to the City's representatives on the Phoenix Performance Based Navigation Working Group, and understood the City would offer its own ideas or suggestions for the FAA to consider. However, that did not happen. For this approach to work, it's critical that the city partner with the FAA and provide input about specific measures you would like us to consider and analyze. We strongly believe the City needs to consider alternatives other than just returning to or overlaying the procedures that were in place before Sept. 18, 2014.

The FAA presented possible adjustments for the departure procedures to the northwest and southwest. Our preferred alternatives – Alternatives NW2 and SW2 in the attached report –

reduce aircraft speeds and increase aircraft rates of climb, so altitudes would generally be higher than they are under the current procedures. The higher altitudes potentially decrease noise levels. Additionally, these alternatives maintain efficiency while enhancing safety by increasing vertical separation between Phoenix turbojet and turboprop departures, and between Phoenix turboprop departures and aircraft flying at low altitudes to and from satellite airports.

The alternatives for the northwest departures procedures (LALUZ, YOTES, SNOBL and MAYSA) –included (*Please note NW 1-7 correspond with alternatives in the attached report*):

- No Action (Alternative NW1)
- Add RNAV Waypoint (New WP1) and Speed and Altitude Restrictions to LALUZ, YOTES, SNOBL, and MAYSA – Preferred Alternative (Alternative NW2)
- Revert to Pre-September 18, 2014 Non-RNAV Routings (Alternative NW3)
- Revert to Pre-September 18, 2014 Using PBN RNAV Routings (Alternative NW4)
- Immediate Turn Direct TWNSD Waypoint (Alternative NW5)
- Add RNAV Waypoint to Extend Upwind Leg (Alternative NW6)
- Add Radius to Fix (RF) Leg (Alternative NW7)

The alternatives for the southwest departure procedures (BNYRD, FTHLS, JUDTH, KATMN) included (*Please note SW 1-5 correspond with alternatives in the attached report*):

- No action (Alternative SW1)
- Add Speed and Altitude Restriction to BNYRD, FTHLS, JUDTH, and KATMN – Preferred Alternative (Alternative SW2)
- Revert to Pre-September 18, 2014 Non-RNAV Routings (Alternative SW3)
- Move DAVZZ Waypoint (Alternative SW4)
- Runway Heading to Intercept Course to DAVZZ Waypoint (Alternative SW5)

In addition to requesting your feedback on the potential adjustments to existing routes, the FAA has suggested a number of other strategies the City could explore that, when combined, could help reduce noise. The ideas that the working group laid out are based on finding ways to adjust routes, altitudes, and volume while maintaining safety and efficiency without shifting noise over other noise-sensitive areas.

These include:

- Voluntary noise abatement flight and runway use. We discussed identifying the geographic areas the City feels may benefit from these procedures, as well as possible night-time measures. A number of large airports use such measures to address noise issues.
- Community involvement in understanding, identifying and recommending possible solutions to airport issues. Other large airports provide excellent examples of how community roundtables are used to accommodate the diverse interests in and around a metropolitan airport. These organizations provide a forum in which the FAA, airlines and communities can share information and ideas.
- Accept the FAA's offer to assist the airport noise office. We are aware the office is receiving an unprecedented number of noise complaints, and are requesting again to meet with airport representatives to analyze its procedures to ensure complaints are logged, analyzed and processed as efficiently as possible.
- Presenting other recommendations the City has for route adjustments, beyond the FAA's preferred alternatives.

The FAA believes the best approach going forward is a multi-pronged strategy that combines possible adjustments to the routes with some of the additional kinds of noise abatement measures identified above. Several of these strategies need to be initiated by the City. Per the DOT/FAA's Aviation Noise Abatement Policy, airport proprietors are primarily responsible for planning and implementing actions designed to reduce the effect of noise on residents of the surrounding area.

This approach would establish a comprehensive set of measures for consideration that might be helpful in the near and long term. We believe it is important for the FAA and the City to work together to complete a comprehensive plan within two months. This plan needs to lay out any FAA route changes as well as any strategies the City intends to undertake and timelines for their implementation. The FAA is willing to work with the City to identify voluntary measures to reduce noise beyond what is legally required, consistent with the FAA's statutory mission and its policy against merely shifting noise from one community to another.

Additionally, the FAA would like to work more effectively with the City of Phoenix and Sky Harbor International Airport to anticipate and address issues that could arise during the development of the Phoenix Metroplex project. We are requesting a meeting with the appropriate representatives to ensure key officials in the airport and City understand the Metroplex process. Furthermore, the City Council has identified communications with the FAA as an issue of concern. We believe the City should establish a formal process in which the City can provide information for the FAA to consider, and in which the FAA, the City, the airlines and the community can collaboratively share information and ideas.

We look forward to working collaboratively with the City to address issues related to the current Phoenix procedures, as well as any future issues that may arise.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Glen A. Martin". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Glen Martin
Regional Administrator