

Q: What is the purpose of the workshops?

A: We're holding these workshops to inform people about changes we're proposing to make as part of an agreement we reached with the City of Phoenix and some historical neighborhood associations.

Q: What exactly are the changes?

A: The FAA, City of Phoenix and certain city historic neighborhood associations jointly developed a plan to address noise concerns that resulted from new routes the FAA implemented in September 2014 at Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport. The agreement calls for the FAA to create interim flight routes that return, to the extent possible, to the westerly departure paths that were in place prior to September 2014.

Q: You say the changes are occurring in two steps. Can you explain that?

A: The agreement calls for the FAA to first return, to the extent possible, to the westerly departure paths that were in place prior to September 2014. The FAA will then adopt long-term replacement procedures.

During Step One, the FAA would create new, temporary instructions for departures to the west that would route aircraft near the airport in a manner to approximate, to the extent possible, the pre-September 2014 routes. Under our plan, we would implement the Step One routes in two phases – tentatively scheduled for March 29, 2018, and on May 24, 2018

During Step Two, the FAA would develop new, permanent satellite-based procedures that replace the temporary Step One routes. The FAA would consider permanent routes that approximate the pre-September 2014 routes within a 15-mile radius of the airport. As part of Step 2, the FAA also would consider feedback on procedures throughout the Phoenix area – not just on the westerly departure routes.

Q: What effect did the August 2017 court ruling have?

A: The court ruling called for the cancellation of certain routes that the FAA implemented in September 2014. The agreement we reached with the City and the neighborhood associations would allow us to maintain much of the efficiencies we gained from those routes while addressing community noise concerns with those routes.

Q: What will you do with the feedback you receive from these workshops?

A: We will consider all applicable comments in completing the environmental review for the proposed changes to the westerly departures. People can also submit comments about procedures throughout the Phoenix area – not just on the westerly departure routes. It's important to note that while the FAA has specific proposals for changes to the westerly departure routes, we do not have any current proposals for changes to other routes in the Phoenix area and we have not committed to making any. Comments also may be submitted through the FAA's website at https://www.faa.gov/nextgen/nextgen_near_you/community_involvement/. They will be given the same weight and consideration as comments submitted in person during the Phoenix workshops.

Q: What does the FAA's preliminary analysis show?

A: The goal of Step One is to provide interim noise relief at the request of the City of Phoenix and historic neighborhood groups. The interim flight routes would return, to the extent possible, to the westerly departure paths that were in place prior to September 2014. Since the departure routes are changing, this interim relief would also shift the noise effects to where the pre-September 2014 routes were located. However, the FAA's preliminary environmental review shows the proposed changes would not result in noise increases that exceed the FAA's threshold of significance, or any other environmental effects that exceed standards in federal environmental law or FAA policies. This is not our final determination.

Q: What has to happen before the FAA makes a final environmental determination?

A: We need to complete consultation under the National Historic Preservation Act, including with local tribes and the city and state historic preservation officers, and consider the feedback we receive from people at these workshops as well as the feedback we receive online.

Q: Does making the changes depend on the court approving the agreement? What if the court doesn't accept the agreement?

A: We intend to proceed with the plan outlined in the agreement unless the court directs us otherwise.

Q. How does this court decision and resulting agreement affect other communities that have aircraft noise concerns?

A. The facts of this case are limited to Phoenix. The court's opinion has precedential value in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit.