

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

Notice of the Federal Aviation Administration's Intent to Prepare an Environmental Assessment for the Phoenix Area FAA Modernization Project

SUMMARY:

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is issuing this notice to advise the public that it is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Phoenix Area FAA Modernization Project, which involves flight procedure optimization for the following 10 airports, referred to as the "Study Airports:"

- Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport (PHX)
- Phoenix Deer Valley Airport (DVT)
- Falcon Field Airport (FFZ)
- Mesa Gateway Airport (IWA)
- Chandler Municipal Airport (CHD)
- Phoenix Goodyear Airport (GYR)
- Glendale Regional Airport (GEU)
- Scottsdale Airport (SDL)
- Buckeye Municipal Airport (BXK)
- Stellar Airpark (P19)

The Phoenix Area FAA Modernization Project would seek to improve the efficiency and safety of the national airspace system in the Phoenix area airspace by optimizing aircraft arrival and departure procedures using satellite-based navigation technology called Area Navigation (RNAV) serving a number of airports that meet the defined environmental analysis criteria in FAA Order 1050.1F *Environmental Impacts: Policies and Procedures*. The 10 Study Airports that met the defined criteria will be assessed in the EA, which will be prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, FAA Order 1050.1F, FAA Order JO 7400.2R *Procedures for Handling Airspace Matters*, and United States Department of Transportation (DOT) Order 5610.1D *Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts*. The FAA has not made any decisions about the Final EA content.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Existing and proposed air traffic procedures for the airspace above and near the Study Airports will be evaluated in the EA. RNAV-based Standard Instrument Departures (SIDs) and Standard Terminal Arrivals (STARs) have been in effect in the Phoenix region for over a decade. However, since these procedures were first implemented, RNAV design criteria and guidance have been regularly updated as experience has been gained in the design and use of RNAV procedures. As a result, older RNAV procedures do not take full advantage of current RNAV design capabilities and have become increasingly less efficient. The arrival and departure procedures serving the Phoenix area can be improved to increase the efficient use of the airspace to the benefit of pilots, controllers, and the general public. Amendments to existing RNAV Global Positioning System (GPS) approaches would be considered in the EA, along with the creation of new RNAV Required Navigation Performance (RNP) approaches. Air traffic procedures using ground-based navigation aids (NAVAIDS) (referred to as "conventional procedures" to signify their differentiation from RNAV procedures) will also be considered in the EA.

Proposed Action

The EA is expected to evaluate at least two alternatives, the No Action alternative and the proposed Phoenix Area FAA Modernization Project alternative (the Proposed Action). The FAA has not finalized the Proposed Action at this time. The Proposed Action as it is currently configured consists of

optimizing aircraft routes within the controlled airspace into and out of the Phoenix area. The primary components of the proposed Phoenix Area FAA Modernization Project Proposed Action would include:

- **Establishing Updated Departure Routes and/or Fixes/Waypoints from the EA Study Airports.** Aircraft departing from Study Airports would transition to air traffic procedures using optimized routes based on RNAV technology. A “fix” (or fixes) or a “waypoint” (or waypoints) refers to a geographical position determined by reference to one or more radio NAVAIDS, or by some other means such as satellite navigation.
- **Establishing Updated Arrival Routes and/or Fixes/Waypoints into the EA Study Airports.** Aircraft bound for Study Airports would transition from a cruise (or en route) altitude to optimized air traffic procedures, then to localized air traffic patterns and optimized runway approaches. Optimized approaches may include amendments to existing RNAV GPS approaches or newly created RNAV RNP approaches, or a combination of both.

Implementation of the proposed Phoenix Area FAA Modernization Project is not anticipated to increase the number of aircraft operations at Study Airports and would not involve physical construction of any facilities.

Project Study Areas

Using radar data for the Study Airports and the proposed procedure changes, the FAA has identified a General Study Area and a Supplemental Study Area in which changes to aircraft routing would occur as a result of the Proposed Action (see **Exhibit 1**).

The General Study Area will be used to evaluate and compare the potential impacts of the Proposed Action and at least one alternative (the No Action alternative). The FAA requires consideration of impacts of airspace actions from the ground surface to 10,000 feet Above Ground Level (AGL) if the study area is larger than the immediate area around an airport or involves more than one airport or up to 18,000 feet AGL if the proposed action or alternative(s) are over a national park or wildlife refuge where other noise is very low and a quiet setting is a generally recognized purpose and attribute. High altitude changes to flight paths, at altitudes greater than 18,000 feet AGL, may occur as part of the Phoenix Area FAA Modernization Project as far as 200 miles from the Study Airports, but such changes generally are not included in the Study Areas.

Since the General Study Area includes portions of the following national parks or wildlife refuges (Kofa National Wildlife Refuge and Casa Grande Ruins National Monument) and various cultural properties (the Gila River Indian Reservation, Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community, the Ak-Chin Indian Community of the Maricopa, and the Tohono O’odham Indian Community) where other noise is very low and a quiet setting is a generally recognized purpose and attribute, a Supplemental Study Area has been identified to assess potential impacts to these noise sensitive areas. Using the same evaluation criteria for the General Study Area, an 18,000-foot Supplemental Study Area was developed.

PUBLIC WORKSHOPS:

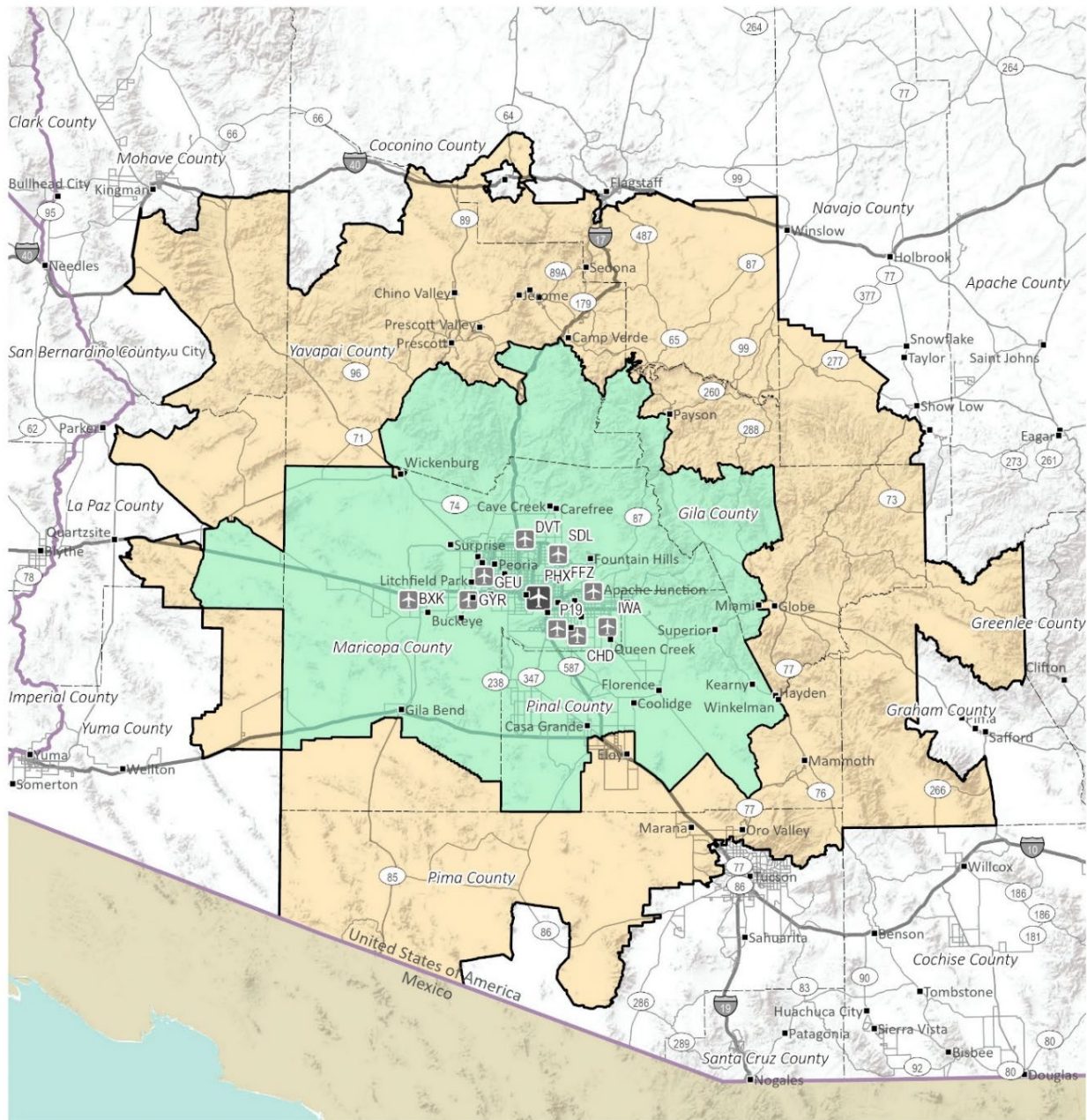
The FAA plans on holding public engagement workshops in late Spring 2026. We encourage you to check back and monitor the FAA Community Engagement website https://www.faa.gov/air_traffic/community_engagement/phx for background information and further project updates, as well as to find out when community meetings will be scheduled in your area. You can also stay up to date by checking out the FAA’s social media sites.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Attn: Phoenix Area FAA Modernization
Operations Support Group
FAA-ATO Central Service Center AJV C-250
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Exhibit 1. Project Study Areas



- Study Airport (Primary)
- Study Airport (Satellite)
- General Study Area
- Supplemental Study Area
- State Boundary
- County Boundary
- Mexico

- Study Airport (Primary)**
- Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport PHX
- Study Airport (Satellite)**
- Phoenix Deer Valley Airport
 - Falcon Field Airport
 - Mesa Gateway Airport
 - Chandler Municipal Airport
 - Phoenix Goodyear Airport
 - Glendale Regional Airport
 - Scottsdale Airport
 - Buckeye Municipal Airport
 - Stellar Airport

- DVT
- FFZ
- IWA
- CHD
- GYR
- GEU
- SDL
- BXK
- P19

Preliminary Study Areas

Sources: Esri, USGS, NOAA
Name: 01_Study_Area_Layout

