



Environmental Assessment for Runway 4-Left RNAV (GPS) Approach Procedure

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is conducting an Environmental Assessment for a proposed new satellite-based approach procedure for Runway 4-Left at Boston Logan International Airport. The agency expects to issue the environmental determination in 2021. The [Draft Environmental Assessment \(EA\)](#) indicates that the procedure would have no significant impact in any environmental category including aviation noise.

The proposed new procedure closely follows the path of the existing visual approach for Runway 4-Left. It will enhance safety and flight efficiency by providing vertical and lateral guidance to pilots and by enabling air traffic controllers to more precisely monitor arriving aircraft, especially in bad weather. The proposed procedure would allow flights to land on the runway when visibility is low. Currently, aircraft can land on the runway only in good weather.

The agency posted the Draft EA on Sept. 21, 2020 and held two virtual public workshops in late October to help educate the community about the Draft EA and the proposed new procedure.

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and FAA policy require the agency to conduct an environmental review before implementing new procedures. NEPA requires federal agencies to inform the public about proposed changes and allows for community input through public workshops and a public comment period.

Purpose and Need for the Procedure – Safety and Efficiency

Implementing the Runway 4-Left RNAV GPS approach procedure is critical for flight safety. It is an operational necessity for Boston Logan International Airport and the National Airspace System (NAS.) The runway does not have an instrument approach procedure.

The proposed new procedure will follow existing flight tracks it will enable pilots and air traffic controllers to guide aircraft to land on Runway 4-Left using the latest available technology.

The RNAV GPS Approach for Runway 4-Left will enhance safety and efficiency by:

- Allowing air traffic controllers to more precisely monitor arriving aircraft vertically and laterally along the approach path.

- Enabling air carriers to make instrument approaches to Runway 4-Left during bad weather or low visibility conditions and when Runway 4-Right is not available due to vessels in the harbor, an emergency on the runway, or construction on the airfield.
- Significantly reducing the need to use the Instrument Landing System (ILS) approach to Runway 15R with a transition to a Visual Approach to Runway 4-Left. This procedure is safe, but the maneuver increases workload for the pilots. They must see other aircraft approaching Runway 4-Right, while identifying and avoiding other runways and taxiways during the visual approach to Runway 4-Left.
- Reducing delays during bad weather. Flights that would be delayed waiting for an Instrument Approach to Runway 4-Right, would be able to land on Runway 4-Left. This means that during bad weather, flights could land earlier in the evening, avoiding late night arrivals at the airport.
- Implementation is projected for late 2021/early 2022 (calendar year) based on a favorable environmental determination.

Background

The FAA proposed the permanent implementation of the procedure in 2015. Since that time, the agency has been coordinating with Massport, elected officials of potentially affected communities and community advisory committees on the need for the procedure. Initial environmental reviews indicated that the proposed procedure would not result in a reportable or significant noise impacts over noise-sensitive areas. In September 2019, the agency contracted with a consultant to develop an Environmental Assessment for the proposed procedure.

[Graphic of the Procedure \(PDF\)](#)

News Release - [FAA Posts Study, Plans Workshops for New Boston Procedure](#)

Fact Sheet – August 18, 2020 – [NextGen and Performance Based Navigation \(PBN\)](#)

