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FAA Makes Airspace Changes for Cleveland/Detroit Metroplex Project

WASHINGTON—Starting in mid-September, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) will make airspace changes in and around Cleveland and Detroit airports. These changes are part of the Cleveland-Detroit Metroplex project, which will bring updated satellite procedures to improve traffic flow.

In most cases, aircraft will follow the same tracks that they do today. The difference is that aircraft will be using modernized procedures that replace dozens of decades-old conventional air traffic control procedures. In all, the Cleveland/Detroit Metroplex project includes 71 new satellite-based procedures. This project is a key component of the FAA's Next Generation Air Transportation System (NextGen) and a nationwide effort to build the foundation for future safety and efficiency improvements.

Travelers will benefit from safe and more efficient routing. Prior to making the decision, the FAA conducted a thorough environmental assessment and held public meetings and stakeholder briefings. The agency also evaluated and responded to public comments. The FAA issued its Final Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact/Record of Decision for the Cleveland/Detroit Metroplex project earlier this year.

The project expands the number of entry and exit points into and out of the Cleveland/Detroit airspace, which is like creating more on- and off-ramps in the sky. It includes two major airports and 10 satellite airports.

The FAA's environmental analysis for the project calculated noise at locations throughout the study area. It showed the proposed action would not result in any significant noise increases under the National Environmental Policy Act. However, there would be a reportable noise increase that could potentially affect approximately 335 residents in the Sumpter Township, Wayne County, southwest of Detroit Metro Airport.

The FAA held six public workshops on the project before releasing the Draft Environmental Assessment in November of 2017. Agency officials conducted approximately 78 briefings for stakeholders including community groups, airport officials and local, state and federal officials.

Six additional workshops were held after the release of the Draft Environmental Assessment on November 10, 2017.

Additionally, following a 30-day public comment period, the FAA evaluated and responded to comments before making a final decision on the project.

When the Cleveland/Detroit Metroplex procedures are put into effect, some people might see aircraft where they did not previously fly. This is because some air route changes will occur, and because satellite-based procedures create more concentrated flight paths than conventional procedures.

Some people will experience slight noise decreases, some will see no changes, and some will experience small noise increases.

Some flight track dispersion will continue to occur after the new procedures begin, because the Metroplex project would not change a number of existing procedures. Also, air traffic controllers will need to occasionally vector aircraft for safety or efficiency reasons or to reroute them around weather systems.

The Finding of No Significant Impact/ Record of Decision, as well as the Final Environmental Assessment, are available on the Cleveland/Detroit Metroplex website, as well as local libraries. You may see them here:

http://www.metroplexenvironmental.com/cle_dtw_metroplex/cle_dtw_docs.html

A complete list of libraries with electronic copies is available here: http://www.metroplexenvironmental.com/cle_dtw_metroplex/cle_dtw_introduction.html

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