

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
Federal Aviation Administration
Finding of No Significant Impact and Record of Decision
for
Environmental Assessment for Amazon Prime Air Proposed Drone
Package Delivery in Texas

Summary

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) prepared the attached final Environmental Assessment (EA) to analyze the potential environmental impacts of amending the Operations Specifications (OpSpec) of Amazon Prime Air (Prime Air), per its 49 United States Code (U.S.C.) Section 44807 exemption and Part 135 certificate that allow Amazon to carry the property of another for compensation or hire beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) using its MK30 Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS).

Amazon is seeking to amend its OpSpec to expand its unmanned aircraft (UA; also referred to as a drone) commercial package delivery operations in multiple metropolitan areas in Texas to include:

- SAH1 – Located at 1202 E FM 1960 Road, Houston, Texas 77073
- SAT1x – Located at 810 Rosillo Creek Boulevard, San Antonio, Texas, 78219
- SAHx – Located at the northwest corner of Beltway 8/Sam Houston Tollway and Highway 90, Missouri City, Texas, 77489
- STX2 – Located at 1625 Hutton Drive, Suite 120, Carrollton, Texas 75006
- STX3 – Located at 4445 Rock Quarry Road, Dallas, Texas 75221
- STX4 – Located at 10611 Red Bluff Road, Pasadena, Texas 77507
- STX5 – Located at 5215 Campbell Road, Houston, Texas 77041
- STX6 – Located at 18625 Schultz Lane, Pflugerville, Texas 78660
- STX7 – Located at 2218 Corner Ridge, San Antonio, Texas 78219
- STX8 – Located at 3051 Research Drive, Richardson, Texas 75082
- STX9 – Located at 9900 Decker Lane, Austin, Texas 78724
- AUS2 – Located at 2000 East Pecan Street, Pflugerville, Texas 78660
- AUS3 – Located at 2000 Exchange Parkway, Waco, Texas 76712
- DAL3 – Located at 1301 Chalk Hill Road, Dallas, Texas 75211
- DFW7 – Located at 700 Westport Parkway, Fort Worth, Texas 76177
- ELP1 – Located at 12101 Emerald Pass Avenue, El Paso, Texas 79928
- FTW4 – Located at 15201 Heritage Parkway, Fort Worth, Texas, 76244

- HOU2 – Located at 10550 Ella Boulevard, Houston, Texas 77038
- HOU6 – Located at 10507 Harlem Road, Richmond, Texas 77407
- IAH1 – Located at 9155 Southlink Drive, Dallas, Texas 75241
- SAT2 – Located at 1401 East McCarty Lane, San Marcos, Texas 78666
- SAT3 – Located at 6806 Cal Turner Driver, San Antonio, Texas 78220

The EA was prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (42 United States Code §§ 4321 – 4355)); and FAA Order 1050.1F, *Environmental Impacts: Policies and Procedures*.

After reviewing and analyzing available data and information on existing conditions and potential impacts, the FAA has determined that the Proposed Action would not significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Therefore, the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not required, and the FAA is issuing this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and Record of Decision (ROD). The FAA has made this determination in accordance with applicable environmental laws and FAA regulations. The EA is incorporated by reference into this FONSI/ROD.

Purpose and Need

The purpose of Prime Air's proposal is to implement drone delivery operations in Texas, and is related to the FAA's role and responsibility to review applications for safe flight and certification under Part 135.

The proposed action is needed to meet consumer demand for package deliveries in Texas as identified by Prime Air, and to implement BVLOS for those drone package delivery operations.

Proposed Action

The FAA would amend Prime Air's OpSpecs to enable commercial drone package deliveries in new locations. Accordingly, Prime Air has requested the FAA to approve its OpSpecs amendment so that it can begin drone commercial delivery operations in new operating areas throughout Texas. The B050 OpSpecs, Authorized Areas of En Route Operations, Limitations, and Provisions, includes a reference section titled Limitations, Provisions, and Special Requirements. The FAA's approval of this OpSpecs amendment – including the paragraph in the B050 OpSpecs's reference section with descriptive language about the operating area boundaries, including the specific locations and operational profile proposed in Prime Air's request – is the proposed federal action for this EA. The B050 OpSpecs will restrict Prime Air to these 22 locations; any future expansion beyond the authorization and limitations for the area of operations described in the B050 OpSpecs may require additional OpSpecs amendments from the FAA, and may be subject to appropriate NEPA review, as necessary.

Description of Proposed Operations

Prime Air anticipates operating up to 1,000 delivery flights per operating day, 7 days per week, from each of the 22 PADDs. These operational levels would result in a projected total of approximately 365 operating days and 365,000 delivery operations per year for each PADD, based on the scope of the Proposed Action. The operations would occur between 7 A.M. and 10 P. M. and are anticipated to be distributed evenly across each operating area. The MK30's operating range is 7.5 mi from the PADD, with a potential operating area of 174 sq mi. The drone departure and arrival paths from and to each PADD would generally correspond to the geographical location of the package delivery address.

The generally proposed operating areas for the 22 PADDs, which also serve as the Study Areas for the EA, are consolidated on a single map, as described in the EA.

Drone Specifications

The MK30 is an electric powered drone that has a vertical take-off and landing, and transitions to wing borne flight using wing lift during en route flight. The drone systems include hardware and software designed for safety and efficiency. The airframe is composed of staggered wings, the propulsion system includes a rechargeable lithium-ion battery, and six (6) motors that include propellers designed for noise reduction, the package delivery system contains the package in a two-door interior receptacle, and a camera and avionics system that has redundancy for critical systems. The drone weighs approximately 78 lbs. and has a maximum takeoff weight of 83.2 lbs., which includes a maximum payload of 5 lbs. It has a maximum operating range of 7.5 mi and can fly up to 400 ft above ground level (AGL) at a maximum cruise speed of 73 mph (64 knots) during horizontal flight.

Flight Operations

A typical flight profile can be broken into the following general flight phases: launch, en route outbound, delivery, en route inbound, and landing. After launch, Prime Air's MK30 drone would rise to an altitude of less than 400 ft AGL and follow a predefined route to its delivery site. Aircraft would typically fly en route at between approximately 180 and 377 ft AGL, except when descending to drop a package. Packages would be carried internally in the drone's fuselage. When making a delivery, the drone descends, opens a set of payload doors, and drops the package to the ground from approximately 13 ft AGL. Prime Air's drone would not touch the ground in any place other than the PADD (except during safe contingent landings) and will remain airborne throughout the operation including the delivery stage. After the package is dropped, the MK30 drone climbs vertically and follows its predefined route back to the PADD at its assigned altitude. See Section 1.3 of the EA for detailed discussion.

See Chapter 2 of the EA for further information.

Alternatives

The FAA considered the No Action alternative and the Proposed Action in its NEPA analysis. Thus, the No Action alternative serves as a baseline to compare the impacts of the Proposed Action. Under the No Action alternative, the FAA would not issue the approvals necessary (e.g., the OpSpecs amendment) and Prime Air would not be authorized to conduct commercial drone package delivery flights from the 22 proposed PADDs throughout the state of Texas. This alternative does not support the stated purpose and need.

See Chapter 2 of the EA for further information.

Environmental Impacts

The potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Action and no action alternative were evaluated in the EA for each environmental impact category identified in FAA Order 1050.1F. Chapter 3 of the EA describes the affected environment within the project study area and identifies the following environmental impact categories that are not analyzed in detail: Air Quality and Climate; Biological Resources (Fish and Plants); Coastal Resources; Farmlands; Hazardous Materials, Solid Waste, and Pollution Prevention; Land Use; Natural Resources and Energy Supply; Socioeconomics; Children's Environmental Health and Safety Risks; Visual Effects (Light Emission Only); and Water Resources (Wetlands, Floodplains, Surface Water, Groundwater, and Wild and Scenic Rivers).

Chapter 3 also evaluates the potential environmental consequences of the Proposed Action for each of the remaining environmental impact categories and documents the finding that no significant environmental impacts would result from the Proposed Action. A summary of the documented findings for each impact category, including requisite findings with respect to relevant special purpose laws, regulations, and executive orders, is presented below.

Biological Resources

The Proposed Action is not anticipated to significantly influence wildlife within the affected area. Operations would occur mostly in an urban environment, typically well above the tree line and away from sensitive habitats. Individual areas would only briefly experience increased ambient sound levels during transit and delivery operations. A direct line of communication would be established with Texas Parks & Wildlife to discuss any potential concerns regarding impacts on wildlife or habitat in the action area. In addition, Prime Air would also specifically coordinate with the managing entities of state parks and natural areas within the action area on the thoughtful placement and use of delivery sites within these areas as necessary.

The Proposed Action is not expected to cause any of the following impacts: A long-term or permanent loss of unlisted plant or wildlife species, i.e., extirpation of the species from a large action area; Adverse impacts to special status species (e.g., state species of concern, species proposed for listing, migratory birds, Bald and Golden Eagles) or their habitats; Substantial loss, reduction, degradation, disturbance, or fragmentation of native species' habitats or their populations; or Adverse impacts on a species' reproductive success rates, natural mortality rates, non-natural mortality (e.g., road kills and hunting), or ability to sustain the minimum population levels required.

The FAA initiated Section 7 consultation with the USFWS on June 11, 2025, which included a single transmittal to several sub-offices under the Texas Coastal and Central Plains Ecological Services Field Office, including those that serve the Dallas-Fort Worth, Houston, Austin, El Paso, and San Antonio areas.

On June 17, 2025, the Austin sub-office issued a concurrence with the FAA's determination that the Proposed Action *may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect* the Tricolored bat, Golden-cheeked warbler, Whooping crane, Southwestern willow flycatcher, Yellow-billed cuckoo and the Northern aplomado falcon

The Austin sub-office indicated that the piping plover and rufa red knot were excluded from consultation because the Proposed Action does not involve a wind energy project.

On July 2, 2025, the Fort Worth sub-office issued a concurrence with the FAA's determination that the Proposed Action *may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect* the golden-cheeked warbler and whooping crane within the action areas subject to this consultation.

On August 28, 2025, Texas Coastal and Central Plains Ecological Services Field Office concurred with the determination that the project, as proposed, *may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect* the Eastern Black Rail, Piping Plover, Rufa Red Knot, Whooping Crane, and the Red Cockaded Woodpecker.

Copies of all agency correspondence are provided in Appendices.

This concluded the FAA's obligations under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. In addition, the Proposed Action would not result in long-term or permanent loss of wildlife species; would not result in substantial loss, reduction, degradation, disturbance, or fragmentation of native species' habitats or populations; and would not have adverse impacts on reproductive success rates, natural mortality rates,

non-natural mortality, or ability to sustain the minimum population levels of any species. Therefore, no significant impacts on biological resources are expected under the Proposed Action.

Department of Transportation Act Section 4(f)

The FAA has determined that drone operations would not cause substantial impairment to Section 4(f) resources that could occur in the study area and would not be considered a *constructive use* of any Section 4(f) resource. Occasional flyovers would not result in significant noise levels at any location within the study area, and the short duration of en route flights (approximately 15 seconds) would minimize any potential for significant visual impacts. There would be no physical use of Section 4(f) resources because the Proposed Action has no direct interaction with any resources on the ground. Constructive use could occur when a project would produce an effect, such as excessive noise, that would result in substantial impairment to a property where the features of that property are substantially diminished. However, as discussed in Section 3.6, the Proposed Action would not result in a significant increase in noise levels at any location within the study area. As further described in Section 3.8, the short duration of en route flights would minimize any potential for significant visual impacts.

The FAA is responsible for soliciting and considering the comments of the DOI and, where appropriate, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), or Housing and Urban Development (HUD), as well as the appropriate official(s) with jurisdiction over the Section 4(f) property. Evaluations and determinations under Section 4(f) must reflect consultation with these Departments and officials. However, the ultimate decisionmaker for Section 4(f) determinations is the FAA. Consultation with agencies having jurisdiction over any public parks, recreation areas, waterfowl or wildlife refuges, or historic sites assists in identifying Section 4(f) properties. When a draft Section 4(f) evaluation is prepared, it must be provided to the official(s) with jurisdiction over the Section 4(f) resource, DOI, and as appropriate, to the USDA and HUD. FAA distributed the Notice of Availability (NOA) of the published draft EA for the public comment period to all identified appropriate official(s) with jurisdiction over the Section 4(f) properties.

Therefore, the FAA has determined that the Proposed Action would not cause substantial impairment, or direct or constructive use, as defined in Section 3.4.1, to any of the Section 4(f) resources in the study area. Therefore, the Proposed Action would not result in significant impacts on Section 4(f) resources.

Historical, Architectural, Archaeological, and Cultural Resources

The Proposed Action would not significantly influence historical, architectural, archaeological, and cultural resources. Drone effects on historic properties are limited to non-physical, reversible impacts (i.e., the introduction of audible and/or visual elements).

FAA initiated consultation with the TX SHPO (the Texas Historical Commission [THC]) on May 19, 2025, seeking concurrence with the FAA's definition of the APEs and for its finding of no adverse effects. The THC concurred with the FAA's determination and issued a finding of no adverse effects on June 18, 2025. The THC noted that the HOU2 PADDC is located 1,000 feet east of the Houston National Cemetery, which was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2017. Because it is an exceptionally significant, highly noise-sensitive historic property, the THC recommends avoiding drone overflights in this area. Copies of the THC consultation are included in Appendices

The FAA also initiated consultation with Federally Recognized Indian Tribes (on May 15, 2025, via email, and on May 21, 2025, via regular mail), that may potentially attach religious or cultural significance to resources in the APEs, which include the following: • Absentee Shawnee Tribe • Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas • Alabama-Quassarte Tribal Town • Apache Tribe of Oklahoma • Caddo Nation • Cherokee Nation • Cheyenne & Arapaho Tribes • Choctaw Nation • Comanche Nation • Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana • Delaware Nation • Jena Band of Choctaw Indians • Jicarilla Apache Nation • Kialegee

Tribal Town • Kickapoo Traditional Tribe of Texas • Kickapoo Tribe of Oklahoma • Kiowa Indian Tribe • Mescalero Apache Tribe • Muscogee Nation • Osage Nation • Quapaw Nation • Seminole Nation of Oklahoma • Shawnee Tribe • Thlopthlocco Tribal Town • Tonkawa Tribe • Tunica-Biloxi Tribe • United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians • Wichita and Affiliated Tribes • Ysleta del Sur Pueblo

Copies of representative correspondence with potentially interested Tribal Governments are included in Appendix D-2.

Noise and Noise-Compatible Land Use

The Proposed Action is not anticipated to result in any significant changes in the overall noise environment within the affected area.

The maximum noise exposure levels within the action area would occur at the PADDC site where noise levels at or above DNL 50 dB would extend approximately 600 feet from each PADDC. Noise levels at or above DNL 65 dB would extend approximately 100 feet from the PADDC, although this is within the PADDC property. In at least one case, residential land use falls within the DNL 55 contour, making it the only PADDC location where homes are located within that noise exposure level.

Additionally, the estimated noise exposure for en route operations could reach up to DNL 43 dB at any location within any action area. When two or three PADDC operating areas overlap, the estimated en route noise is DNL 46 dB and 48 dB, respectively. *Furthermore, the estimated noise exposure for delivery operations, including en route overflights, would not have the potential to exceed DNL 54 dB at any location in the action area and is below the FAA's threshold of significance for noise.*

The FAA has an established noise significance threshold, defined in FAA Order 1050.1F, which is used when assessing noise impacts in a particular action area. A significant noise impact is defined as an increase in noise of DNL 1.5 dB or more at or above DNL 65 dB noise exposure or a noise exposure at or above the 65 dB level due to a DNL 1.5 dB or greater increase. Based on the results of the noise analysis performed for this EA, the DNL 65 dB contour is expected to extend approximately 100 feet from the launch pads and be contained within each PADDC property. *Noise impacts from operations are not expected to result in a significant impact.* Nor is the noise generated by the operations expected to be incompatible with noise sensitive resources within the action area. The resulting noise exposure for delivery site locations at a distance of 25 feet between drone and receiver is DNL 52 dB. Noise exposure from deliveries includes the outbound en route overflight of 200 feet AGL and inbound en route overflight at 345 feet AGL, as modeled in Appendix E-1. *The maximum noise exposure at any residential-zoned property line would not be expected to exceed DNL 54 dB.* In one instance, residential-zoned property falls approximately 50 feet within the DNL 55 dB contour; however, both remain well below the FAA's DNL 65 dB significance threshold.

Residential areas within the DNL 55 dB noise contour remain eligible for drone delivery service. To maintain operational consistency and navigational safety, drones follow a standard flight profile during departure, delivery, and return to the PADDC. In such areas, the maximum possible noise exposure generated by the number of deliveries and associated overflights is estimated to be DNL 53.5 dB at 16.4 feet. When combined with the noise exposure for PADDC operations, the total cumulative noise level may reach up to DNL 57.3 dB. *This combined level remains well below the FAA's significance threshold of DNL 65 dB, confirming that drone operations would not introduce a significant noise impact at residential areas near PADDC locations.*

Visual Effects (Visual Resources and Visual Character)

Impacts on visual resources are expected to be less than significant. The Proposed Action would make no changes to any landforms or land uses; thus, there would be no effect on the visual character of the

area, as the nests would be located in established commercial areas. Drone operations would not introduce new light emissions, and the short duration of overflights as well as the low number of overflights within any given location would minimize the potential for substantial visual impacts. *Therefore, no significant impacts on visual effects are expected under the Proposed Action.*

Please refer to Chapter 3 of the EA for a full discussion of the analysis for each environmental impact category.

Reasonably Foreseeable Impacts

Chapter 4 of the EA provides an analysis of the reasonably foreseeable impacts of the Proposed Action. *The FAA has determined that the the Proposed Action is not expected to result in significant reasonably foreseeable effects.*

Public Involvement and Coordination

On August 20th, 2025, the FAA published the draft EA for a 30-day public comment period scheduled to end on September 20, 2025. At the request of a member of the public, the public comment period was extended to October 1, 2025. The FAA received comments during the comment period for this EA, which are documented in appendices. The FAA considered all public comments when preparing the EA. Comments were received in writing at 9-FAA-Drone-Environmental@faa.gov.

See Section 1.5 and Appendix F of the EA for further information.

Finding of No Significant Impact

The FAA finding is based on a comparative examination of environmental impacts for each of the alternatives studied during the environmental review process. The EA discloses the potential environmental impacts for each of the alternatives and provides a full and fair discussion of those impacts. Based on the FAA's review and analysis and consideration of comments, it has determined that there would be no significant impacts on the natural environment or surrounding population as a result of the Proposed Action.

The FAA believes the Proposed Action best fulfills the purpose and need identified in the EA. In contrast, the no action alternative fails to meet the purpose and need identified in the EA. An FAA decision to take the required actions and approvals is consistent with its statutory mission and policies supported by the findings and conclusions reflected in the environmental documentation and this FONSI/ROD.

After careful and thorough consideration of the facts contained herein and following consideration of the environmental impacts described, the undersigned finds that the proposed Federal action is consistent with existing national environmental policies and objectives as set forth in Section 101(a) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and other applicable environmental requirements, and will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment or otherwise include any condition requiring consultation pursuant to Section 102(2)(C) of NEPA. As a result, an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared by the FAA.

Decision and Order

The FAA recognizes its responsibilities under NEPA and its own directives. Recognizing these responsibilities, the undersigned has carefully considered the FAA's goals and objectives in reviewing the environmental aspects of the Proposed Action to approve Prime Air's request to expand drone delivery

services in the Texas. Based upon the above analysis, the FAA has determined that the Proposed Action meets the purpose and need.

The environmental review included the purpose and need to be served by the Proposed Action, alternatives to achieving them, the environmental impacts of these alternatives, and conditions to preserve and enhance the human environment. This decision is based on a comparative examination of the environmental impacts for each of these alternatives. The EA provides a fair and full discussion of the impacts of the Proposed Action. The NEPA process included appropriate consideration for avoidance and minimization of impacts, as required by NEPA and other special-purpose environmental laws, and appropriate FAA environmental orders and guidance.

The FAA has determined that environmental concerns presented by interested agencies and the public have been addressed in the EA. The FAA believes that, with respect to the Proposed Action, the NEPA requirements have been met. FAA approval of this environmental review document indicates that applicable Federal requirements for environmental review of the Proposed Action have been met.

Accordingly, under the authority delegated to me by the Administrator of the FAA, I approve and direct that agency action be taken to carry out implementation of the Proposed Action.

Issued on: February 5, 2026

Joseph K. Hemler Jr

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Hemler Jr
Date: 2026.02.05 15:30:54 -05'00'

Joseph Hemler

Manager, AFS-752 General Aviation and Commercial Operations Branch
Emerging Technologies Division
Office of Safety Standards, Flight Standards Service

Right of Appeal

This FONSI/ROD constitutes a final agency action and a final order taken pursuant to 49 U.S.C. §§ 40101 et seq., and constitutes a final order of the FAA Administrator, which is subject to exclusive judicial review by the Courts of Appeals of the United States in accordance with the provisions of 49 U.S.C. § 46110. Any party having substantial interest in this order may apply for a review of the decision by filing a petition for review in the appropriate U.S. Court of Appeals no later than 60 days after the order is issued in accordance with the provisions of 49 U.S.C. § 46110.