



City of Phoenix
OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL

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TO: PHX-MODERNIZATION-comment@faa.gov
SUBJECT: Opposition to Phoenix Area FAA Modernization Project

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Laura Pastor. I am the Phoenix City Councilmember for Council District 4, which includes numerous neighborhoods, including several historic districts and places, negatively impacted by the FAA's proposed project. These neighborhoods were the petitioners in *Phoenix v. Huerta* 2015, and the subsequent U.S. Court of Appeals decision (2017) and Settlement Agreement requiring PHX western departures (SIDs) adherence to the 43rd Avenue Gate.

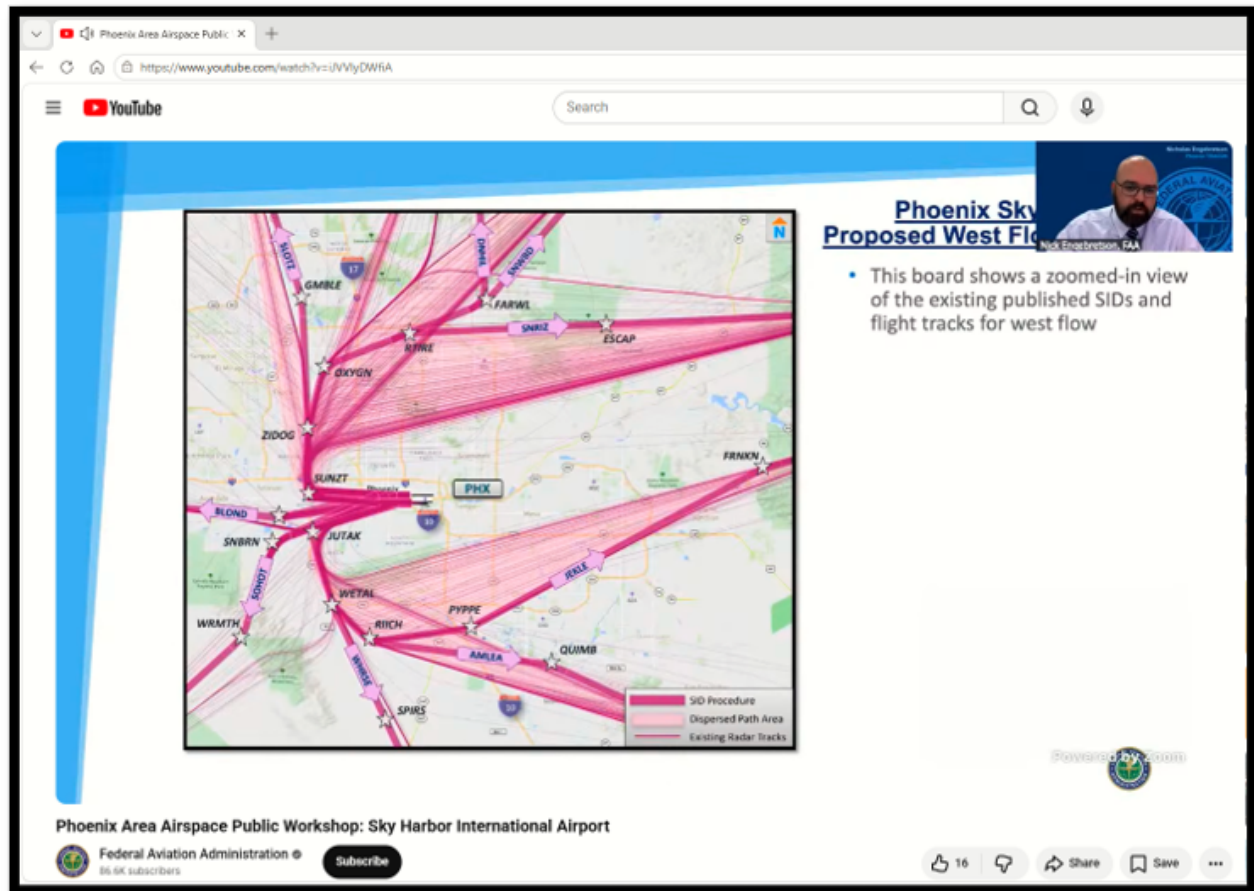
As the Councilmember representing tens of thousands of residents severely impacted by the FAA's 2014 airspace changes, it is my duty to communicate to you that the trauma that action caused and the lack of trust created by the FAA within our community still very much exists today.

The FAA's proposed Draft Environmental Assessment (DEA) should have clearly communicated in both narrative and mapping that the 43rd Avenue Gate, at the very minimum as an olive branch in helping the community move forward, would not be modified as part of the project —the FAA chose not to do that. The FAA's choice to exclude any confirmation of the agreed upon noise abatement procedure is both outrageously out of touch, and frankly, it is insulting to our entire City. The FAA must rectify this problem above anything else as its exclusion from the DEA guaranteed the proposed action would be "highly controversial".

Throughout the Public Workshops, the FAA, in contrast to the DEA, made it quite clear multiple times that it has no intention of modifying the 43rd Avenue Gate for air carrier west flow departures (SIDs). For example, during the Sky Harbor focused Workshop on May 13, 2026, at minute 1:03:54 the FAA stated (and showed this exhibit):

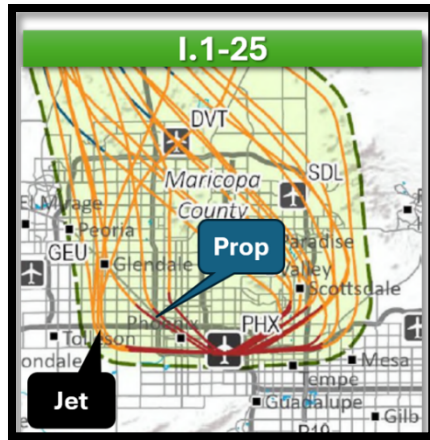
"Okay, the next one. "Some procedures, including procedures going over historic communities in downtown Phoenix, list that the procedure is for turboprops and turbojets. Does that mean commercial jet aircraft will be allowed to fly the procedures over these historic neighborhoods?" "I'm gonna turn it over to you, Nick, 'cause I know you know the answer to that question. - Okay. I'd like to use another slide here. Let me figure out which one it is. It's a West Flow Sky Harbor departures, say P8 I think, or P9. Either one of those. So I kind of referenced the turboprop and turbojet difference earlier in the Group B conversation. But the westbound departures off of Sky Harbor will fly relatively the same pattern or same departures for turbojets straight out to 43rd Avenue or just past 43rd Avenue. And then they turn north and fly north as they continue to climb and get higher, which again reduces noise. There will be those turns depending on traffic and safety, whatever other aircraft are out there in the area. So to specifically answer the question, the 43rd Avenue and Tempe 4 DME will still be used. So there aren't many changes for the

turbojet departures off of Sky Harbor. The turboprops will fly that other SID that I showed in those boards earlier. - Yeah. And again, I think just to reiterate, right, commercial jet aircraft, they're gonna follow these procedures that we're showing on the screen right. Correct. - Yeah. So hopefully that answers that question.”



In addition to the concerns above regarding how the DEA fails to document the 43rd Avenue Gate noise abatement procedure, there are numerous new issues and problems created by the proposed action:

- None of the proposed route mapping (Appendix I of the DEA) delineates between aircraft groups; specifically, some proposed procedure maps combine aircraft groups (ie, Jets and Turboprops), which unnecessarily muddles the perception of 43rd Ave Gate adherence going forward as proposed Turboprop departure routing from PHX is not required to comply with the Gate yet the linework for these routes is identical to the linework for west flow Jets departing PHX which must comply with the Gate. Examples of this problem from Appendix I are shown below, note the problem also applies to proposed procedure maps for certain arrival routes impacting the Historic Districts.



- The FAA’s proposed procedures for west flow Turboprop departures from PHX shift the general routing to the east (from Grand Ave, east of over neighborhoods) and concentrates those operations relative to the current VFR diffusion. The DEA does not provide any explanation as to how or why this modification meets the stated purpose and need, nor does the DEA provide any alternatives for this action or attempt to explain what environmental impacts are specific to this action.
- In 2014, at great expense and time, the City of Phoenix was forced to develop supplemental noise metrics to help the community understand changes to the environment. The standard NEPA noise metric DNL hides individual spikes as a single thunderous jet and a constant low hum can yield identical DNL values; defies human perception as humans do not experience noise as a 24-hour mathematical average; and provides misleading low averages as quiet background periods mathematically dilute intense, highly disruptive bursts of traffic. FAA’s NEPA Order identifies supplemental metrics that can be developed and presented in the DEA to make up for the DNL metric’s shortcomings and help residents better understand issues like peak impacts, single events and duration at specific noise levels or provide heavier nighttime model weighting.
- The Draft EA does not appear to give any special consideration of impacts to Historic Districts. FAA’s Section 106 consultation with the State and Tribal Historic Preservation Offices was not completed or shared with the Community during the public comment period. The absence of this key agency input during the public review makes the community’s involvement in this entire process less meaningful and transparent.
- The Draft EA does not appear to comply with FAA’s NEPA Order in several substantive areas. Of particular concern, the DEA doesn’t identify alternatives for any proposed procedure, it excludes VFR operations from noise modeling, and the noise model appears to be based on a single, and seemingly unrealistic, operational environment where almost no vectoring occurs. The latter concerns FAA admitted to throughout the public workshops, claiming this was good for the community as it results in a more conservative

estimate of noise impacts; this statement is preposterous on its face to anyone living under the areas where aircraft will be vectored with the proposed action.

In summary, on behalf of the nearly 200,000 residents in District 4 who concur with these comments, I make the following requests:

1. The FAA's public workshop comments and public display boards posted to the project website clearly indicate FAA's intent to continue to adhere the 43rd Avenue Gate noise abatement procedure; to ensure this intent is part of the public record the FAA must update the Draft EA and include in the Final EA maps showing the abatement procedure and narrative explaining how the 43rd Ave Gate was established and its importance going forward.
2. The FAA should delay implementation of the project so that the DEA can be modified to include either separate procedure maps (Appendices H and I) for different aircraft groups (Jets vs. Turboprops) or maps that differentiate between groups through the use of linework variation (eg, dash vs. solid lines). These revised map sets need to be reviewed with the community for their input before the Final EA is published.
3. The FAA should forgo changing Turboprop west flow departure procedures from PHX and continue to use vectoring in the initial departure segments to ensure the general tendency of these operations with respect to lateral location and altitude do not change. If the FAA is unwilling to forgo new IFR procedures for west flow Turboprop departures from PHX, then FAA should delay implementation of the project and develop alternative procedures for the purpose of routing rotation (to avoid concentration impacts), including an alternative more consistent with the existing "Average Track" of these operations. Finally, FAA must delay implementation so the alternative rotation procedures can be developed, modeled for noise impacts and reviewed with the Community for their input before the FEA is published.
4. The FAA should delay implementation of the project so FAA can republish the DEA with supplemental noise modeling including Sound Exposure Level (SEL), Time Above a Specified Level (TA) and Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) for proposed west flow Turboprop IFR departures. These supplemental noise metrics and mapping must be provided and reviewed with the Community for input prior to the Final Environmental Assessment.
5. The FAA should delay implementation of the project so the results of agency consultation under Section 106 can be reviewed by and commented on by the public. Additionally, the DEA environmental analysis should be modified to account for the fact that the Historic Districts and 4(f) resources (like public parks) within the Historic Districts are "managed for quiet". The results of this re-evaluation need to be reviewed with the Community for their input before the Final EA is published. The criticality of managed for quiet in these Districts also supports the need for supplemental noise metric mapping and modeling as mentioned previously.

6. The FAA should delay implementation of the project and develop alternatives for proposed procedures (particularly procedures that impact City of Phoenix Historic Districts as well as procedures impacting the nearly 80,000 residents elsewhere in the City where reportable noise increases of 5+ dB are expected) that may reduce environmental impacts and still meet the stated purpose and need of the Draft EA. In addition, Draft EA noise modeling must include VFR operations and a more realistic airspace vectoring presumption alternative, to provide an accurate accounting of impacts to the community. Proposed alternatives and related noise modeling, noise modeling with VFR operations that account for cumulative impacts and noise modeling with more realistic vectoring presumptions needs to be reviewed with the community for their input prior to publishing the FEA.

In closing, I am hopeful that the FAA will see these comments and requests as critical to successfully moving forward and developing a revised project that can meet its purpose and need without unnecessary detriment and harm to the residents of Phoenix. I am committed to seeing this process through and working with the FAA on developing alternative procedures and raising the level of the Draft EA's meaningfulness in terms of public understanding and input. Thank you in advance for your recognition that this important project should not move forward hastily or without the public's full understanding of the potential impacts and alternatives for mitigation of those impacts. In short, I simply ask that the spirit and technical requirements of NEPA be implemented by FAA and that FAA recognize in its official documents the unique nature of the current west flow departures from PHX in the context of the significant community harm, stress and litigation history that underpins the situation.

Respectfully,



Laura Pastor
District 4 Councilwoman
City of Phoenix

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