

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
Federal Aviation Administration

Notice of the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) intention to prepare a Draft Environmental Assessment for the Optimization of Airspace and Procedures in the Cleveland-Detroit Metroplex (CLE-DTW Metroplex).

SUMMARY: The FAA is issuing this notice to advise the public it intends to prepare a Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the CLE-DTW Metroplex, which involves flight procedure optimization for EA Study Airports including: Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport (DTW), Cleveland Hopkins International Airport (CLE), Akron-Canton Regional Airport, Oakland County International Airport, Willow Run Airport, Toledo Express Airport, Cuyahoga County Airport, Burke Lakefront Airport, Coleman A. Young Municipal Airport, Selfridge Air National Guard Base Airport, Wayne County Airport, and Windsor Airport (Canada).

Windsor Airport is located in Canada – thus exempt from U.S. regulations. However, U.S. controlled airspace (a generic term referring to airspace where air traffic control service is provided) extends over Canadian territory including that above and near Windsor Airport, thus necessitating the inclusion of Windsor Airport as an EA Study Airport.

The EA will be conducted pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and its implementing Regulations found at Title 40, Code of Federal Regulations, Sections 1500-1508. A “Metroplex” is a major metropolitan area with multiple airports, where heavy air traffic and environmental constraints combine to hinder efficient aircraft movement. The purpose of the proposed CLE-DTW Metroplex is to improve the efficiency of the controlled airspace using more current navigation technology called Area Navigation (RNAV). The FAA has not made any decisions about the final EA content.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Air traffic procedures operating in the airspace above and near CLE and DTW in addition to the EA Study Airports will be evaluated in the draft EA. The current procedures, which are intended to provide an orderly flow of traffic in and out of a busy metropolitan area, are largely dependent upon navigational aids on the ground and/or air traffic controller issued radar vectors. Ground-based navigational aids have limited capabilities, which dictate the location of a route in/out of the airspace. Radar vectors involve multiple communication transmissions between an air traffic controller and a pilot. RNAV technology is not limited to ground-based navigational aids and not subject to the same limitations. Therefore, RNAV-based procedures can direct pilots along more direct routes with predictable location and altitude information. A predictable procedure would involve less communication between an air traffic controller and a pilot; thereby reducing workload for both individuals. The application of RNAV technology for the CLE-DTW Metroplex would enhance efficient use of the airspace.

Proposed Action

The EA is expected to evaluate at least two alternatives, the No Action and the proposed CLE-DTW Metroplex alternative (the Proposed Action). The FAA has not finalized the proposed

CLE-DTW Metroplex at this time. The proposed CLE-DTW Metroplex as it is currently being configured consists of optimizing aircraft routes within the controlled airspace into and out of the CLE-DTW Metroplex. The primary components of the proposed CLE-DTW Metroplex would include:

- **ESTABLISHING UPDATED DEPARTURE ROUTES AND/OR FIXES FROM THE EA STUDY AIRPORTS.** Aircraft departing from the EA Study Airports would transition to the high altitude routes using optimized routes based on RNAV technology.
- **ESTABLISHING UPDATED ARRIVAL ROUTES AND/OR FIXES INTO THE EA STUDY AIRPORTS.** Aircraft bound for the EA Study Airports would use optimized procedures to transition from a high altitude route to an existing approach route.

Implementation of the proposed CLE-DTW Metroplex is neither anticipated to increase the number of aircraft operations at CLE or DTW; nor involve physical construction of any facilities.

General Study Area

Using radar data for the EA Study Airports and the initial proposed design changes, the FAA will identify a General Study Area in which changes to aircraft routing would occur as a result of the Proposed Action.

The General Study Area will be used to evaluate and compare the potential impacts of the Proposed Action and reasonable alternatives. This evaluation will exclude all Canadian territory. This evaluation will occur where departing aircraft are anticipated to be at altitudes below 10,000 feet above ground level (AGL) and arriving aircraft at altitudes below 7,000 feet AGL under the Proposed Action or the No Action alternative. The FAA may also consider traffic flying over tribal lands, national parks or national wildlife refuges below 18,000 feet AGL to evaluate and compare the potential impacts of the Proposed Action and the No Action alternative.

PUBLIC WORKSHOPS:

FAA intends to hold public workshops following publication of the Draft EA. FAA will provide public notice of the public workshops and the availability of the Draft EA at a future date.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Federal Aviation Administration, Central Service Center, Operations Support Group, Attn: Mr. Gregory Hines, 2601 Meacham Blvd., Fort Worth, TX, 76137. E-mail: 9-ASW-CLE-DTWOAPM-Comment@faa.gov.