

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
Federal Aviation Administration**

Notice of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)'s Preparation of an Environmental Assessment for the Las Vegas Metroplex Project

SUMMARY: The FAA is issuing this notice to advise the public that it is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Las Vegas Metroplex (LAS Metroplex) project, which involves flight procedure optimization for a number of airports, referred to as the "EA Study Airports," including McCarran International Airport (LAS), Henderson Executive Airport (HND), and North Las Vegas Airport (VGT).

The EA will be prepared 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 LAS Metroplex is to improve the efficiency of the 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 for the airspace above and near the EA Study Airports will be evaluated in the EA. RNAV-based Standard Instrument Departures (SIDs) and Standard Terminal Arrival Routes (STARs) have been in effect in the Las Vegas Metroplex for nearly 20 years. However, since these procedures were first implemented, RNAV design criteria and guidance have been regularly updated as experience has been gained in the design and use of RNAV procedures. As a consequence, older RNAV procedures do not take full advantage of current RNAV design capabilities and have become increasingly less efficient. The arrival and departure procedures serving the Las Vegas Metroplex can be improved to increase the efficient use of the airspace to the benefit of pilots, controllers, and the general public.

Proposed Action

The EA is expected to evaluate at least two alternatives, the No Action alternative and the proposed LAS Metroplex alternative (the Proposed Action). The FAA has not finalized the Proposed Action at this time. The Proposed Action as it is currently being configured consists of optimizing aircraft routes within the controlled airspace into and out of the LAS Metroplex. The primary components of the proposed LAS Metroplex would include:

- **ESTABLISHING UPDATED DEPARTURE ROUTES AND/OR FIXES¹ FROM THE EA STUDY AIRPORTS.** Aircraft departing from the EA Study Airports would transition to high altitude routes using optimized routes based on RNAV technology. ¹A geographical position determined by reference to one or more radio NAVAIDS, celestial plotting, or by some other means such as satellite navigation.
- **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 LAS Metroplex is not anticipated to increase the number of aircraft operations at the EA Study Airports or involve physical construction of any facilities.

General Study Area

Using radar data for the EA Study Airports and preliminary proposed design changes, the FAA has identified 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 at least one alternative (the No Action alternative). 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. Additionally, any areas where FAA policy requires special consideration regarding potential noise impacts—these can include, for example, areas in national parks, national wildlife refuges, and historic sites (including traditional cultural properties)—will be studied where flight path changes occur below 18,000 ft AGL. High altitude changes to flight paths, at altitudes greater than 18,000 ft AGL, may occur as part of the LAS Metroplex project in an approximately 200-mile radius around Las Vegas, but such changes generally are not included in the environmental study area.

PUBLIC WORKSHOPS:

The FAA intends to hold public workshops following publication of the Draft EA. The 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, Western Service Center, Operations Support Group, Attn: Mr. Augustin Moses, 2200 S. 216th St. Des Moines, WA 98198-6547. E-mail: 9-las-metroplex-ea@faa.gov