

FAA Flight Path Changes Will Impact Different Phoenix Neighborhoods

Christina Estes, KJZZ.org | JAN 22, 2018

As some historic neighborhoods in Phoenix prepare to welcome quieter skies thanks to [a deal between the city and Federal Aviation Administration](#), other neighborhoods could soon experience more noise.

A federal court ruled the FAA violated laws three years ago when it [changed flight paths](#) without adequate community outreach. The changes sparked major noise complaints from several historic neighborhoods. Now, [the FAA is changing course](#)¹ and other residents will be affected.



A plane at Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport (Photo by Al Macias - KJZZ)

“As the flight paths go back to almost exactly the way that they were before, there are neighborhoods to the west that are going to be impacted again,” Assistant Aviation Director Deborah Ostreicher said before a recent council subcommittee. “There are also some serious concerns in the north valley.”²

The FAA will hold [three public workshops](#), but Brent Kleinman with the Encanto-Palmcroft Historic Preservation Association said he is disappointed none of the meetings locations is in the [neighborhoods that have been fighting](#) to change the paths.

“The residents are now at a point where they see the finish line,” he said. “We want to make sure we’re helping push in the right direction to get to the results that we want to get to.”

Ostreicher said the [FAA is responsible for the public workshops](#) but the Aviation Department will request they hold a meeting in the historic neighborhoods.³

FAA Airspace Workshops:

- Feb. 6 from 5 to 8 p.m. at Maryvale High School Cafeteria
3415 N. 59th Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85033
- Feb. 7 from 5 to 8 p.m. at Cesar Chavez High School Cafeteria
3921 W. Baseline Road, Laveen Village, AZ 85339
- Feb. 8 from 5 to 8 p.m. at Horizon High School Cafeteria
5601 E. Greenway Rd., Scottsdale, AZ 85254

There will be [information about the proposed changes](#) and representatives on hand to answer questions.⁴ The proposed plan has two steps:

1. The FAA will revert to flight paths used pre-September 2014 “to the extent practicable”.

¹ aiR footnote: No, FAA is not changing course. They continue to work in the dark, aiding industry, sustaining the present imbalance wherein real people have no real say, no local control.

² aiR footnote: The first part of Ostreicher’s statement aims to divide the community, pitting past, present, and future KPHX impact victims against one another. The second part also aims to divide, stirring anxiety at even more communities. Notice how the real root cause of the problems – excessive scheduling for American and Southwest hubbing – is not even addressed.

³ aiR footnote: Implicitly, airport officials are pointing a finger, alleging they have to rely on FAA generosity to get public hearings in impacted communities.

⁴ aiR footnote: These events will be yet one more round of FAA-industry dog-and-pony shows. Routinely, when attendees express concerns or ask hard questions, the smiley-faces there for FAA will refuse to engage. This is the pattern seen at all FAA- workshops sponsored by FAA and/or airport authorities, for airport master plans, environmental studies, etc.

2. The FAA may propose other procedures based on public feedback regarding other routes near the airport.

In September 2014, the FAA changed flight paths as part a national program aimed at improving safety and efficiency.⁵ Phoenix and a coalition of neighborhood groups sued.

The city alleged the FAA never alerted Aviation Department authorities about the changes, but the FAA said it communicated with Department staff two years before the changes took effect. The city argued, and the court agreed — the FAA only spoke with "low level" staffers and did not conduct adequate community outreach. In 2015, Phoenix disciplined four employees⁶ who had knowledge of the flight path changes but did not communicate with city leadership.

Copied 1/22/2018 from: <http://kjzz.org/content/595254/faa-flight-path-changes-will-impact-different-phoenix-neighborhoods>
(Highlights, footnotes and minor edits may have been added, but only for context, analysis & clarification)

⁵ aiR footnote: The implemented changes had nothing to do with safety or efficiency. They were solely to enhance airport capacity, aka 'runway throughput', to enable still more schedule expansion by the two dominant hub airlines, American and Southwest. Notice how, in more than three years, neither American nor Southwest has expressed concerns about the impacts they are imposing upon Phoenix-area residents. Neither airline has demanded a reversion to pre-NextGen routes; neither airline has even advocated for a review by FAA, or a more balanced plan that has less impact on residents.

⁶ aiR footnote: The real bad guys skated, while a few were thrown under the bus. And even for them, the discipline was only for show, a pretend public-flogging to quell rising public outrage.