



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Aviation
Administration**

Air Traffic Organization
Central Service Center

10101 Hillwood Pkwy.
Fort Worth, TX 76177



July 28, 2022

The Hon. Kyle Kutscher
Guadalupe County
211 W. Court St.
Seguin, TX 78155

Reference: San Antonio Airspace Modernization Project Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA)

Dear Judge Kutscher:

This notification letter is to inform you that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is undertaking preparation of an Environmental Assessment (EA) to consider potential environmental impacts of the San Antonio Airspace Modernization project implementation. Attached is the Legal Notice that will be published in primary newspapers in the San Antonio region of Texas to notify the general public.

The San Antonio region has multiple civilian and military airports and complex air traffic flows. In these areas, heavy air traffic and other constraints can combine to hinder efficient aircraft movement. The San Antonio Airspace Modernization project would seek to improve the efficiency of the national airspace system in the San Antonio airspace by optimizing aircraft arrival and departure procedures serving various airports within the San Antonio Airspace Modernization project General Study Area.

The San Antonio Airspace Modernization project would involve changes in aircraft flight paths and altitudes in certain areas. The FAA has established a General Study Area (attached) to evaluate potential impacts of changes in aircraft routing, including those that would occur below 10,000 feet above ground level (ft. AGL). 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 San Antonio Airspace Modernization project beyond the General Study Area, but such changes are not included in the environmental study area.

The EA will study potential environmental impacts to those airports within the General Study Area that meet environmental analysis criteria identified in FAA Order 1050.1F, *Environmental Impacts: Policies and Procedures*, and the 1050.1F Desk Reference. These airports are:

- San Antonio International Airport (SAT)
- Kelly Field Airport (SKF)
- Randolph Air Force Base (RND)
- New Braunfels National Airport (BAZ)

The FAA has begun preparation of an EA within established laws, regulations, FAA Orders, and guidance. The FAA welcomes your input and is sending this new notification letter for the following reasons:

1. To advise you of the initiation of the EA study
2. To provide you an opportunity to offer any background information that you may have regarding the included General Study Area established for this EA
3. To provide you an opportunity to advise the FAA of any issues, concerns, policies, or regulations that you may have regarding the environmental analysis that will be undertaken in the EA

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. The FAA plans to hold separate consultations with Tribal Governments in accordance with Executive Order 13175, and will consult with their Tribal Historic Preservation Offices as appropriate.

The FAA is currently working on additional details related to this project, and will be coordinating with other agencies as appropriate. If you desire to provide comments and/or have any questions about the information provided, please provide them by letter or email, to be received on or before August 29, 2022, at the following address:

**Attn: San Antonio Airspace Modernization
Operations Support Group
FAA-ATO Central Service Center
10101 Hillwood Pkwy.
Fort Worth, TX 76177
E-mail: 9-ASW-CSA-SAT-PBNSINGLESITE-Comment@faa.gov**

Sincerely,



Robert W. Beck
Director, Central Service Center, AJV-C

Attachments:

1. Notice Regarding the FAA's Preparation of an Environmental Assessment
2. Graphic of General Study Area

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

Notice of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Intent to Prepare an Environmental Assessment for the San Antonio Airspace Modernization Project

SUMMARY: The FAA is issuing this notice to advise the public that it is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the San Antonio Airspace Modernization project, which involves flight procedure optimization for a number of airports, referred to as the “EA Study Airports,” that are:

- San Antonio International Airport (SAT)
- Kelly Field Airport (SKF)
- Randolph Air Force Base (RND)
- New Braunfels National Airport (BAZ)

The San Antonio Airspace Modernization project would seek to improve the efficiency of the national airspace system in the San Antonio regional airspace by optimizing aircraft arrival and departure procedures serving a number of airports that meet the defined environmental analysis criteria in FAA Order 1050.1F “Environmental Impacts: Policies and Procedures.” The EA Study Airports that meet the defined criteria will be assessed in the EA. 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. The purpose of the proposed San Antonio Airspace Modernization is to improve the efficiency of the airspace using satellite-based navigation technology called Area Navigation (RNAV). The FAA has not made any decisions about the Final EA content.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Existing and proposed 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 Arrivals (STARs) have been in effect in the San Antonio region for over a decade. 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. Air traffic procedures using ground-based navigation aids (NAVAIDS) (referred to as “Conventional procedures” to signify their differentiation from RNAV procedures) will also be considered in the EA. The arrival and departure procedures serving the San Antonio region 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 San Antonio Airspace Modernization 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 San Antonio Region. The primary components of the proposed San Antonio Airspace Modernization would include:

- **ESTABLISHING UPDATED DEPARTURE ROUTES AND/OR FIXES/WAYPOINTS FROM THE EA STUDY AIRPORTS.** Aircraft departing from the EA Study Airports would transition to air traffic procedures using optimized routes based on RNAV technology. A “fix” (or fixes) or a “waypoint” (or waypoints) are a geographical position determined by reference to one or more radio NAVAIDS, or by some other means such as satellite navigation.

- **ESTABLISHING UPDATED ARRIVAL ROUTES AND/OR FIXES/WAYPOINTS INTO THE EA STUDY AIRPORTS.** Aircraft bound for the EA Study Airports would transition from a cruise (or en route) altitude to optimized air traffic procedures, then to localized air traffic patterns and optimized runway approaches.

Implementation of the proposed San Antonio Airspace Modernization project is not anticipated to increase the number of aircraft operations at the EA Study Airports and would not 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 San Antonio Airspace Modernization project as far as 200 miles from the Study Airports, 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 at a later date. The FAA will provide public notice of the public workshops and the availability of the Draft EA when appropriate to disclose the draft results of the FAA's analysis.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Attn: San Antonio Airspace Modernization

Operations Support Group

FAA-ATO Central Service Center

10101 Hillwood Pkwy.

Fort Worth, TX 76177

E-mail: 9-ASW-CSA-SAT-PBNSINGLESITE-Comment@faa.gov

