


**REPORT OF THE
CHIEF LEGISLATIVE ANALYST**

DATE: December 6, 2018

TO: Honorable Members of the Rules, Elections, and Intergovernmental Relations
Committee

FROM: Sharon M. Tso 
Chief Legislative Analyst

Council File No.: 18-1162
Assignment No.: 18-12-1081

SUBJECT: Flight Path Changes at Hollywood Burbank Airport

CLA RECOMMENDATION: Adopt the attached revised Resolution to include in the City's 2019-2020 Federal Legislative Program OPPOSITION to the proposed OROSZ THREE and SLAPP TWO amended departure routes for Hollywood Burbank Airport and the FAA Draft Environmental Review's determination of Categorical Exclusion for the Standard Instrument Departure procedures.

SUMMARY

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has proposed amending two existing Standard Instrument Departure (SID) procedures at Hollywood Burbank Airport. SID procedures are published instructions for pilots that include established departure routes and procedures used to expedite clearance and standardize departure routes out of airports. The FAA released a Draft Environmental Review for the proposed satellite-based routes, OROSZ THREE and SLAPP TWO, with a determination of Categorical Exclusion under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review process. A Categorical Exclusion determination indicates that the FAA has determined that neither an Environmental Assessment nor an Environmental Impact Statement are necessary for the proposed routes as they will not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment.

The City Attorney and multiple Council offices requested that the public comment period be extended for the two departure routes and requested a more robust environmental review and analysis of the routes. Public comment for the Draft Environmental Review of the two departure procedures was closed on November 18, 2018.

According to Resolution (Ryu – Koretz – Krekorian), introduced on November 30, 2018, these proposed satellite-based routes will reduce long established, wide dispersion flight paths and create a singular narrow path that concentrates flights at lower altitudes directly over schools and residential areas in parts of the San Fernando Valley. The Resolution states that there have been procedural errors and insufficient community dialogue and transparency in the FAA's process to review and implement these routes. The revised Resolution seeks an official position of the City to oppose the proposed OROSZ THREE and SLAPP TWO departure routes for Hollywood Burbank Airport and the FAA Draft Environmental Review's determination of a Categorical Exclusion under NEPA.

BACKGROUND

The Southern California Metroplex project is part of the FAA's NextGen Initiative to modernize air traffic control and flight routing, using newer technologies and airspace procedures, including satellite-based routing. As part of the Metroplex project, the FAA introduced new flight paths and procedures for flights in and out of the airports in Southern California. In August 2016, the FAA announced a Finding of No Significant Impact for the Metroplex project. The FAA began implementing the new flight paths in March 2017, including the OROSZ TWO and SLAPP ONE departure procedures out of Hollywood Burbank Airport.

A flight path analysis done for the Hollywood Burbank Airport and released in October 2018, concluded that since the March 2017 implementation of the Southern California Metroplex, departing flights had been flying further south of the 101 Freeway. However, the flight path analysis also listed other factors contributing to this southward shift, including seasonal temperature fluctuations and increased air traffic out of the airport.

Multiple lawsuits were filed against the FAA over their Finding of No Significant Impact for the Metroplex project and the FAA settled one of these lawsuits with a homeowners association regarding the OROSZ TWO and SLAPP ONE routes. As part of the settlement, and in conjunction with new FAA regulations regarding departure procedures, the FAA developed the proposed OROSZ THREE and SLAPP TWO routes, which require departures to turn northward "as soon as practicable after take-off."

OROSZ THREE and SLAPP TWO use "Open" SID procedures where the initial path is satellite-based before transitioning to an "open" segment where air traffic controllers direct the planes. In the satellite-based portion of the departure route, waypoints are programmed into an aircraft's flight management system which then routes the planes to those waypoints automatically. As the initial leg of the departure route uses specific, programmed waypoints over Studio City (the JAYTE waypoint) and Sherman Oaks (the TEAGN waypoint), air traffic departing Hollywood Burbank Airport will be more concentrated over these areas of the City.

Prior to the Metroplex implementation, departures from Hollywood Burbank Airport followed more conventional SID procedures with published compass headings and altitude directions and radar vectoring given by air flight controllers, resulting in a wide dispersal of flight paths. In March 2017, area navigation procedures were introduced, which rely on satellite-based navigation equipment and likely resulted in more concentrated flight paths for pilots that opted for this departure procedure and were more likely to use the autopilot function of their flight management systems on the initial leg of the procedure. The "open" SID procedures currently being proposed would significantly concentrate departing air traffic even further along a defined flight path.

The City Attorney filed an amicus brief in March 2018 in a consolidated case against the FAA stating that the City supported a request to remand the FAA's Finding of No Significant Impact for the Southern California Metroplex project. On November 20, 2018, Council passed a motion requesting that the City Attorney prepare a strategy to engage with the FAA and ensure that all appropriate State and Federal laws are followed in the implementation of changes to air traffic control procedures, "specifically including flight patterns around Hollywood Burbank Airport."



Matthew Shade
Analyst

Attachments: 1. Revised Resolution

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, any official position of the City of Los Angeles with respect to legislation, rules, regulations or policies proposed to or pending before a local, state or federal governmental body or agency must have first been adopted in the form of a Resolution by the City Council with the concurrence of the Mayor; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has proposed amending two existing departure routes (OROSZ TWO and SLAPP ONE) from Hollywood Burbank Airport to include flyover, satellite-based navigation waypoints JAYTE (near Colfax Ave & Ventura Ave in Studio City) and TEAGN (near Hollyline Ave & Valley Vista Blvd in Sherman Oaks); and

WHEREAS, the FAA's Draft Environmental Review for the two proposed departure routes (OROSZ THREE and SLAPP TWO) stated a Finding of No Significant Impact and that the proposed routes would "not significantly increase noise over noise sensitive areas;" and

WHEREAS, these satellite-based routes reduce long established wide dispersion flight paths that historically occur on the initial portion of the aircraft routes, creating a singular narrow path that will concentrate flight paths at low altitudes directly over schools and residential areas in parts of the San Fernando Valley, including over parties, protected open spaces, recreation areas, and wildlife habitats of the Santa Monica Mountains; and

WHEREAS, residents who live south of Burbank Airport and Van Nuys Airport are reporting the presence of aircraft over their homes at low altitudes, and with dramatically increased frequency; and

WHEREAS, the number of noise complaints related to departures from Burbank Airport and Van Nuys Airport have risen dramatically, and there are significant environmental and process concerns in the FAA's review of these new departure routes;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, with the concurrence of the Mayor, that by the adoption of this Resolution, the City of Los Angeles hereby includes in its 2019-2020 Federal Legislative Program OPPOSITION to the proposed OROSZ THREE and SLAPP TWO amended departure routes for Hollywood Burbank Airport and the FAA Draft Environmental Review's Finding of No Significant Impact under the National Environmental Policy Act.