



PUBLIC WORKSHOP

August 22, 2001

The City of Mesa held a Public Workshop regarding the Proposed New Aircraft Flight Patterns for Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport at Red Mountain Multigenerational Center Multipurpose Room, 7550 E. Adobe Road, Mesa, Arizona on August 22, 2001 at 7:30 p.m.

1. Welcome.

Mayor Hawker acknowledged the presence of Councilmember Bill Jaffa and Councilmember Claudia Walters at the meeting. Councilmember Walters said that Councilmember Whalen asked her to offer his apologies for not being in attendance and explained that he was at another meeting that she had just left.

2. Introductions and purpose of the meeting.

Mayor Hawker provided the members of the audience with a brief overview of the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Northwest 2000 Plan. He explained that the Plan is the first phase of an evaluation process being conducted by that agency for the aircraft approach and departure patterns for Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport. Mayor Hawker noted that the Plan only addresses aircraft approaches/departures to the north of Sky Harbor and added that in the future, the FAA will focus its efforts on aircraft approaching and departing Sky Harbor Airport from the south.

Mayor Hawker said that City representatives will present options regarding FAA's proposed Alternative 3 and also respond to questions from residents and business owners relative to proposed changes to flight paths over the East Valley and their impact on the City of Mesa. The Mayor commended representatives of the FAA for their cooperation during this on-going process.

3. Summary of FAA's Northwest 2000 Plan for altering flight patterns.

Mayor Hawker introduced Jim Harris, a consultant with the firm of Coffman and Associates and said that Mr. Harris will provide a summary of Alternatives 2 and 3 as well as the Community Alternative Plan. Mr. Harris explained that his firm has been working with the City of Mesa in an effort to develop a Community Alternative plan. He reported that the Northwest 2000 Plan is part of a nationwide effort in response to a request from Congress to the FAA that the aircraft flight management system be updated. Mr. Harris reviewed the primary goals, which included enhanced aircraft safety, reduced aircraft delays and increased aviation efficiency. Mr. Harris also stated that the Northwest 2000 Plan was developed in response to the Congressional mandate to address such concerns in the Phoenix metropolitan area.

Discussion ensued relative to the fact that the FAA drafted an Initial Environmental Assessment (EA) for public review prior to the implementation of Alternative 2; the fact that on June 25, 2001 as a result of community and air traffic concerns, the FAA released a Supplemental Draft EA; the fact that Alternative 3, which was derived from the Supplemental Draft, was deemed unacceptable by the City of Mesa; the fact that no FAA sponsored public hearings were scheduled to discuss and receive input on Alternative 3; the fact that various East Valley communities forwarded a joint letter to the FAA requesting additional time for public comment and to develop a community alternative; the fact that the FAA did in fact grant a 45-day extension, and the fact that Senator John McCain supports the efforts of the East Valley leaders in reaching an equitable solution regarding this matter.

Mr. Harris referred to graphics displayed in the room depicting the Albuquerque Air Route Traffic Control Center; Alternative 2 and Alternative 3 proposed east-flow operations and proposed west-flow operations and proposed arrival/departure tracks, and the Community Alternative east-flow departure route draft.

Mr. Harris informed the members of the audience that earlier this year, the FAA developed a Northwest 2000 recommendation (Alternative 2) for revised approach and departure routes for Sky Harbor. He indicated that as a result of citizen comment received at public meetings held in Scottsdale and Fountain Hills and also from other reviewing agencies, the FAA developed Alternative 3 and is currently in the process of seeking comment regarding this option.

Mr. Harris explained that as part of Alternative 3 the FAA is proposing to combine two flight paths (the Chili/Silow Departure and the St. Johns Departure) into a single path that would follow the current St. Johns route and provided additional information relative to this proposal. He noted that the St. Johns departure would go over or near the greatest combined number of Mesa and Tribal residential areas of the two routes and at a lower altitude. Mr. Harris added that the use of a single departure path would contribute to aircraft delay for aircraft departing Sky Harbor to the northeast.

4. The proposed community alternative.

Mr. Harris explained that the proposed Community Alternative would relocate Alternative 3's proposed combined departure route to a more central location. He advised that such a route would more closely follow the Salt River bed and the Beeline Highway; the route would be farthest from the residential areas on the north and south sides of the Salt River in both Mesa and the Indian Community, and that all of the communities affected by the aircraft overflight under the Community Alternative (Mesa, Scottsdale, Fountain Hills and the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community) support such a proposal.

Mr. Harris discussed disadvantages associated with the proposed Community Alternative, including the fact that aircraft would fly further northeast and require more time and space in order to complete their departures; aircraft on the modified Chili/Silow departures may come closer to aircraft approaching Sky Harbor from the northeast than the FAA would prefer; a change in an aircraft arrival route may be needed to allow the use of unrestricted climb and flight idle descent procedures, and the use of a single departure path would contribute to aircraft delay for aircraft departing Sky Harbor Airport to the northeast. He emphasized the fact that the proposed Community Alternative is not in a completed form and that additional refinement will be necessary.

Mayor Hawker thanked Mr. Harris for his presentation.

5. Why and how to express your opinions.

Mayor Hawker encouraged the members of the audience to submit their written comments and suggestions regarding the proposed plan on comment cards which have been placed on tables in the room and said that the citizens' input is extremely important and will be forwarded onto the FAA for that agency's review and consideration. The Mayor also invited the citizens to pose questions to City representatives present at the meeting.

6. Question and Answer Period.

Mayor Hawker listed two points raised by the citizens regarding noise impacts on their residential communities and urged the citizens to put their suggestions and comments in writing. The Mayor introduced Dean Cooley to the members of the audience. He discussed the 4 DME gate and clarified aspects of the proposed Community Alternative.

Carol Owens expressed appreciation to Mayor Hawker and the Council for their efforts to protect the citizens and the communities in Mesa.

The Mayor also suggested that the citizens prioritize in writing the routes they prefer and stated the opinion that if the four communities that are affected by the flight paths are able to reach an acceptable compromise solution, the FAA will be more amenable to accepting a compromise proposal.

Mayor Hawker also introduced Sandy Murdock to the members of the audience and noted that Mr. Murdock was the former Chief Counsel for the FAA and has significant experience in this area.

In response to a question from a citizen in the audience, Mayor Hawker explained that a letter signed by the Mayors of all four impacted cities will be forwarded to the FAA. He added that all of the members of the audience who signed in and provided an address will be notified of the status of this issue.

Mayor Hawker thanked all of the citizens for their attendance and interest in this important matter and expressed the opinion that the FAA will review and give significant consideration to their concerns and suggestions.

7. Adjournment.

Without objection the public workshop adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

KENO HAWKER, MAYOR

ATTEST:

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK

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I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Public Workshop regarding Proposed New Aircraft Flight Patterns for Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport held on the 22nd day of August 2001.

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK