

MIAMIBEACH

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

NO. LTC # 239 - 2020

LETTER TO COMMISSION

TO: Mayor Dan Gelber and Members of the City Commission

FROM: Jimmy L. Morales, City Manager

DATE: July 7, 2020

SUBJECT: **FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION'S SOUTH-CENTRAL FLORIDA METROPLEX PROPOSED CHANGES TO MIAMI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT FLIGHT PATHS AND THE POTENTIAL IMPACT TO MIAMI BEACH**

The purpose of this Letter to Commission is to update the Mayor and City Commission on the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) South-Central Florida Metroplex proposed changes to Miami International Airport (MIA) flight paths and the potential impact to Miami Beach.

The FAA is proposing various changes to the airspace and procedures for flight paths in the South-Central Florida Metroplex, which is one of 12 Metroplex projects in the U.S. The objective of the Metroplex projects is to enhance the way aircrafts navigate complex air space, improve airport access, and make flight routes more efficient. The South-Central Florida Metroplex includes MIA and about 20 other airports in the southern half of Florida.

In 2019, during the Design and Procedure Development Phase of the South-Central Florida Metroplex project, the FAA and its consultants held four public workshops in the Greater Miami area from April 29 to May 2, 2019 to discuss the proposed air traffic changes. City staff attended the workshop in Miami Springs on May 2, 2019 to understand the project and the potential impacts of the proposed flight path changes on the City. Subsequently, the City's Transportation and Mobility Department engaged Kimley-Horn and Associates (KHA), a firm with aviation experience, to review all available project material from the FAA and develop a technical memorandum outlining the potential impacts to Miami Beach. On July 3, 2019, KHA provided a technical memorandum to the City's Transportation and Mobility Department documenting that no adverse impacts to Miami Beach are anticipated based on the Metroplex proposed flight path changes.

Subsequently, the FAA refined the proposed Metroplex flight path changes as part of an Environmental Assessment. In May 2020, the FAA completed its Draft Environmental Assessment report for the South-Central Florida Metroplex proposed air traffic changes and held various virtual public workshops to obtain community and stakeholder feedback. City staff attended the June 9, 2020 virtual workshop and again consulted with KHA on the recommendations of the Draft Environmental Assessment and the potential impact on the City.

Based on staff's and KHA's review, the changes to MIA flight paths proposed by the Metroplex project are anticipated to benefit the City from a noise, visual, air quality, and environmental perspective based on the following considerations:

1. Pursuant to feedback received at the public workshops, including from City staff, the FAA is proposing to shift the east flow departure path further south over the industrial portion of Virginia Key rather than over South Beach (South of Fifth) and Fisher Island as originally proposed (and as per current conditions).
2. The FAA is proposing that east flow departures turn north over the Intracoastal Waterway or further east over the Atlantic Ocean such that Miami Beach airspace is not affected.
3. The proposed Metroplex arrival paths (both east flow and west flow) are not anticipated to adversely impact Miami Beach as compared to current conditions.

It is also important to note that these proposed airspace changes will not cause an increase in air traffic.

The FAA opened a 60-day public comment period for the Draft Environmental Assessment on May 11, 2020. The comment period will end on July 10, 2020. The agency will review and consider all comments it receives before issuing an environmental determination in September 2020, followed by a training period and implementation. Additional project details, including the Environmental Assessment report and online public comment forms, can be found on the FAA's website at https://www.faa.gov/air_traffic/community_involvement/florida/.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

JLM/ATH/JRG/JFD