



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

Western-Pacific Region  
Office of the Regional Administrator

777 S. Aviation Blvd., Suite 150  
El Segundo, CA 90245

**AUG 27 2019**

Ms. Mary-Lynne Bernald  
Chairperson  
Santa Clara/Santa Cruz Counties Airport/Community Roundtable  
PO Box 3144  
Los Altos, CA 94024

Dear Ms. Bernald:

Thank you for your letters dated April 10, 2019, and May 13, 2019, in which you asked 23 questions regarding numerous Northern California procedures and processes.

Below are the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) responses to the eight questions listed in your April 10, 2019, letter:

Question 1: *Why is the LOUPE Four IDP being replaced?*

FAA Response: The LOUPE FOUR was amended to the LOUPE FIVE because some pilots who manually flew the procedure were inadvertently turning onto the San Jose Very High-Frequency Omnidirectional Range with Distance Measuring Equipment (SJC VOR/DME) 340° degree radial northbound without Air Traffic Control (ATC) clearance, due to the plan view graphic they found confusing. The objective of the amendment to the procedure, renamed the LOUPE FIVE, is to add clarity for pilots to help ensure they continue southbound until they receive instructions from ATC, rather than turning northbound on their own.

Question 2: *Why is the LOUPE FIVE IDP an improvement on the LOUPE FOUR IDP?*

FAA Response: The LOUPE FIVE adds a named fix (BLNCH), as well as clarity to the course instructions that will keep aircraft on a southerly heading until it is safe for the aircraft to be turned back to the north via ATC instruction.

Question 3: *What environmental analysis was performed to evaluate the potential impacts of the LOUPE FIVE IDP?*

FAA Response: The FAA performed an environmental analysis of the proposed action. The FAA determined the LOUPE FIVE is a categorically excluded action pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and FAA Order 1050.1F. The FAA evaluated the proposed action and a Categorical Exclusion (CATEX) was issued.

Question 4: *Please provide a copy of the environmental analysis to the SCSC Roundtable for its review.*

FAA Response: The FAA conducted the NEPA analysis with assistance from the Instrument Flight Procedure Environmental Pre-Screening Filter (Filter). According to FAA Order 7400, Chapter 32, the Filter can assist the FAA in determining the appropriate level of environmental documentation after reviewing the results. It was determined a CATEX was the appropriate level of environmental documentation based on the Filter results, proposed action details, and other environmental review information used in the NEPA analysis. The NEPA analysis for the LOUPE FIVE was completed and a CATEX (attached) was issued.

Question 5: *What is the FAA's process for developing new or replacement arrival and departure procedures?*

FAA Response: The process and timeline were provided in the Phase Two response to the Select Committee (SC) and the San Francisco International Airport (SFO)/Community Roundtable (SFO Roundtable) recommendations, as well as the FAA's response to the San Jose International Airport (SJC) Ad Hoc Committee on South Flow Arrivals' (SJC Ad Hoc Committee) recommendations.

Question 6: *Is there a Gantt chart of this process that the FAA can share with the SCSC Roundtable?*

FAA Response: A Gantt chart (attached) was presented to the Santa Clara/Santa Cruz Counties Airport/Community Roundtable (SCSC Roundtable) on June 26, 2019, by the Western-Pacific Regional Office.

Question 7: *Would the FAA give a presentation on this process at a future SCSC Roundtable Meeting?*

FAA Response: This presentation (attached) was given at the June 26, 2019, meeting.

Question 8: *Would the FAA be able to regularly update the SCSC Roundtable on future proposed procedures within the airspace of its member cities and counties?*

FAA Response: The FAA cannot commit to briefing every procedure change/amendment; however, individuals may sign up for notifications of procedure amendments and track their status on the Instrument Flight Procedures (IFP) Information Gateway at: [https://www.faa.gov/air\\_traffic/flight\\_info/aeronav/procedures/](https://www.faa.gov/air_traffic/flight_info/aeronav/procedures/).

Below are the FAA responses to the 15 questions listed in your May 13, 2019, letter:

Question 1: *What is FAA's timeline to identify, design, and implement flight procedures?*

FAA Response: The process and timeline were provided in the Phase Two response to the SC and the SFO Roundtable recommendations, as well as the FAA's response to the SJC Ad Hoc Committee's recommendations.

Question 2: *Please provide the Roundtable with a map that shows the LOUPE FIVE departure procedure on the ground, that depicts the communities that will be overflowed, and the relevant changes in flight track locations, aircraft altitudes, and aircraft noise exposure also on the ground.*

FAA Response: A map with flight tracks of both the LOUPE FOUR and LOUPE FIVE procedures was provided to the SCSC Roundtable during the May 22, 2019, meeting. The SJC airport can also provide information on aircraft operations in the area.

Question 3: *Where does a member of the public find a depiction of the LOUPE FIVE IDP (or any other proposed procedure) on street map which shows the cities along the route and shows the change in aircraft noise exposure on the ground from the old procedure to the new procedure?*

FAA Response: The FAA does not maintain a publicly accessible database that displays such information. SJC airport is a good source of information regarding operations such as this. In general, and depending on the level of environmental review required by applicable FAA Orders and Federal Regulations, the FAA does not show or maintain a database of the changes in noise exposure following the implementation of flight procedures.

Question 4: *On a publicly accessible website, please provide a depiction of the PIRAT TWO STAR on street map which shows the cities along the route and shows the change in aircraft noise exposure on the ground from the old procedure to the new procedure.*

FAA Response: A depiction of the PIRAT Standard Terminal Arrival Route (STAR) over Google Earth is attached to this document. No depiction of noise exposure on the ground was created. However, potential noise impacts were considered during the required environmental review.

Question 5: *Please explain how the PIRAT TWO STAR flight procedure changes implement the Select Committee's recommendation to keep aircraft at 8,000 feet MSL over the Woodside VOR when safety permits.*

FAA Response: Prior to the implementation of the PIRAT STAR, oceanic arrivals to SFO and Oakland International Airport (OAK) were brought in one of two ways: 1) via the private tailored arrival, or 2) via ATC instruction to cross the PIRAT waypoint and subsequently Woodside VOR (OSI) (most OAK arrivals were vectored north prior to reaching OSI). The SC recommended aircraft at OSI be restricted to 8,000 feet Mean Sea Level (MSL) (SC Recommendation 2.3, R1). The SC also recommended revision of the private tailored arrival so it, too, would be restricted to cross OSI at 8,000 feet MSL (SC Recommendation 2.3, R2). The FAA chose to combine the two arrival methods (the tailored arrival and ATC instruction) by creating the public PIRAT STAR, which restricts all oceanic aircraft assigned to the procedure to cross the ARGGG waypoint at 8,000 feet MSL. ARGGG and OSI are within approximately 100 feet of each other over the ground.



Question 6: *How will aircraft be routed after leaving the ARGGG waypoint, what communities will they flyover, and at what altitudes will aircraft be over each community?*

FAA Response: Prior to the implementation of the PIRAT STAR, oceanic aircraft arriving at OSI, and not on the tailored arrival, departed OSI heading 060° at 8,000 feet MSL. ATC would then assign radar vectors to the assigned instrument approach. The PIRAT STAR has not changed this, other than OSI has been replaced with the ARGGG waypoint. Altitudes and flight paths between ARGGG and the assigned instrument approach remain unchanged.

Question 7: *Was the PIRAT TWO arrival procedure proposed previously in another form and was it rejected?*

FAA Response: Prior to the PIRAT TWO was the PIRAT ONE (each amendment to a procedure upticks the number). The PIRAT ONE was not rejected: it was published on February 28, 2019, and immediately made unavailable for safety considerations due to the absence of an altitude restriction at the PIRAT waypoint. The PIRAT TWO corrected this when it was published on April 25, 2019. On May 15, 2019, it was discovered the altitude restriction of at or below 15,000 feet MSL at the PIRAT waypoint created conflicts with aircraft departing the Bay Area airports. As such, the PIRAT STAR is currently being used for lateral guidance only. Vertical guidance for all oceanic aircraft is provided via ATC instruction.

Question 8: *What are the Record of Decision dates for PIRAT ONE and PIRAT TWO STARs? If there are none, what starts the 60-day clock for filing a formal petition for review?*

FAA Response: The FAA signed a Record of Decision (ROD) for the PIRAT ONE STAR on July 17, 2018; a CATEX/ROD was not issued for PIRAT TWO because the FAA only corrected a charting error. Your second part of question 8 seeks a legal opinion as to what FAA action may trigger the 60-day clock to file a petition for review if the FAA does not issue a ROD. Please know that the FAA cannot provide legal opinions to outside parties. If your members have such legal questions, they should address them to their respective legal representatives.

Question 9: *What was the FAA's success criteria that was used to develop the PIRAT TWO STAR and was that success achieved?*

FAA Response: FAA Order 7100.41 governs the process by which Performance Based Navigation procedures are created. Procedures published as a result of this process are, by definition, viewed as successful. However, as noted above, a problem was found with the PIRAT STAR and it is currently being reviewed during the standard Post-Implementation and Analysis Review period.

Question 10: *What is the impact to noise and people on the ground as a result of the implementation of the PIRAT TWO STAR?*

FAA Response: A noise pre-screening was conducted for PIRAT ONE, and there were no lateral changes in ground tracks for the PIRAT TWO STAR, as it was only a correction of altitude. The PIRAT TWO altitude modification occurred at the PIRAT waypoint which is located over water; this type of change over water does not typically impact noise and people on the ground.



Question 11: *Where is the publicly accessible link that would allow the community to see the change in noise impacts on the ground from the PIRAT ONE to the PIRAT TWO STAR especially after the ARGGG waypoint?*

FAA Response: The FAA does not maintain a publicly accessible database of noise/environmental graphics. The procedure amendment was analyzed during the required environmental review that included potential noise impacts.

Question 12: *Please provide responses to letters previously provided to the FAA by Mountain View, Los Altos, and Palo Alto (attached) regarding the PIRAT TWO STAR.*

FAA Response: Attached are the FAA responses to the Mountain View, Los Altos, and Palo Alto letters that were included with your May 13, 2019, letter – with the exception of our response to the May 6, 2019, Palo Alto letter, which has not yet been signed.

Question 13: *What were the previous procedures that individual airlines were using that are being replaced by the PIRAT TWO STAR?*

FAA Response: Only a few select airlines had access to the private tailored arrival. The remaining aircraft arrived via ATC instruction over the PIRAT waypoint at 10,000 feet MSL, followed by OSI at 8,000 feet MSL. OAK arrivals were typically vectored north prior to reaching OSI.

Question 14: *What is the likelihood that flights using the PIRAT TWO STAR will be vectored either up or down the San Francisco Peninsula and what is the impact of that vectoring on the communities under the expected vectored tracks?*


FAA Response: Prior to the implementation of the PIRAT STAR, oceanic aircraft arriving at OSI, and not on the tailored arrival, departed OSI heading 060° at 8,000 feet MSL. ATC would then assign radar vectors to the assigned instrument approach. The PIRAT STAR has not changed this, other than OSI has been replaced with the ARGGG waypoint. Altitudes and flight paths between ARGGG and the assigned instrument approach remain unchanged.

Question 15: *Please provide the SCSC Roundtable with environmental analysis that was performed to evaluate the potential impacts of the PIRAT TWO STAR.*

FAA Response: A CATEx/ROD was signed July 17, 2018, for the PIRAT ONE STAR. The ROD considered the FAA's Initial Environmental Review that was completed for the PIRAT ONE STAR (part of a multiple procedure evaluation). Because the PIRAT TWO STAR corrected a charting error by inserting "at or below crossing altitude of 15,000 feet MSL at PIRAT waypoint," an additional environmental review was not conducted.

Although the FAA may not have publicly available databases or repositories for specific items requested, I want to reiterate that you may make specific requests within our established process and we will try to provide you with the information. Thank you for this opportunity to answer your inquiries.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Raquel Girvin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Raquel" being more prominent than the last name "Girvin".

Raquel Girvin  
Regional Administrator

7 Attachments:

CATEX

Gantt chart

FAA presentation from the June 26, 2019, meeting

PIRAT STAR Google Earth depiction

February 22, 2019, FAA response letter to Palo Alto

May 20, 2019, FAA response letter to Palo Alto

May 24, 2019, FAA response letter to Mountain View and Los Altos

cc: Congresswoman Anna G. Eshoo

Congressman Jimmy Panetta

Congressman Ro Khanna

# Federal Aviation Administration Categorical Exclusion Declaration

<b>Date:</b> 09/25/2018
<b>IFP: Thompson, Kyle (kyle.thompson@faa.gov)</b>
<b>Airport Contact:</b> N/A
<b>Request ID:</b> KSJC_180911_44 <b>Single or Multiple Procedure:</b> Multiple <b>Procedure Name(s):</b>  LOUPE DEPARTURE <b>Procedure Request Description:</b>  LOUPE DEPARTURE will be changed from "turn right heading 123°. Expect vectors to SJC VOR/DME," to "turn right on heading 090 and on OAK R-120 to NEWFIX (OAK 120/27), then turn right heading 180°. Expect vectors to SJC VOR/DME..." Additionally, a CHART NOTE will be added to state:: "Do not turn Direct SJC or intercept SJC R-340 until instructed to do so by ATC."

<b>Declaration of Exclusion:</b> The FAA has reviewed the above referenced proposed action and it has been determined, by the undersigned, to be categorically excluded from further environmental documentation according to FAA Order 1050.1, "Environmental Impacts: Policies and Procedures." The implementation of this action will not result in any extraordinary circumstances in accordance with FAA Order 1050.1.
<b>Basis for this Determination:</b> This review was conducted in accordance with policies and procedures in Department of Transportation Order 5610.1, "Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts" and FAA Order 1050.1.
<b>The applicable Categorical Exclusion is:</b>  <b>5-6.5.k:</b> Publication of existing air traffic control procedures that do not essentially change existing tracks, create new tracks, change altitude, or change concentration of aircraft on these tracks. (ATO, AVS)
<b>The above flight procedure has been developed within the accepted parameters.</b>
<b>Concurrence/Reviewed By:</b>  Signed by: Katherin Matolcsy, Leidos, NISC III Contract Support Signed for: Marina Landis, Environmental Protection Specialist, WSC/OSG



_____ Date: _____	
Title:	_____
Approved By: _____	
Date:	_____
Title:	_____

# Presented to the SCSC Roundtable June 26, 2019



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- IFP Gateway process precedes IFP design and development processes defined in FAA O: 8260.43 and ATO O: 17100.41

The screenshot displays the FAA's Instrument Flight Procedure (IFP) Request Process form. The page is titled "Instrument Flight Procedure (IFP) Request Process" and is part of the "Aeronautical Information Services" section. A red box highlights the "Role Selection" section, which contains three radio button options: "Internal FAA", "Airport/Owner/Manager", and "Others (Pilot/NBAA, AOPA)". Below the role selection, there are "Back <<" and "Next >>" buttons, and a "Start Over" button. The left sidebar lists various aeronautical information services, including "IFP Request Form", "IFP Announcements & Reports", "PBN Implementation Plan", "IFP Initiation", and "IFP Inventory Summary". The bottom of the page shows the date "April 25, 2019" and the FAA logo.

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IFP Request Form  
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### Instrument Flight Procedure (IFP) Request Process

Role Selection:

- ☐ Internal FAA
- ☐ Airport/Owner/Manager
- ☐ Others (Pilot/NBAA, AOPA)

Back << Next >>

Start Over

Page last modified: February 28, 2019 8:16:42 AM EST

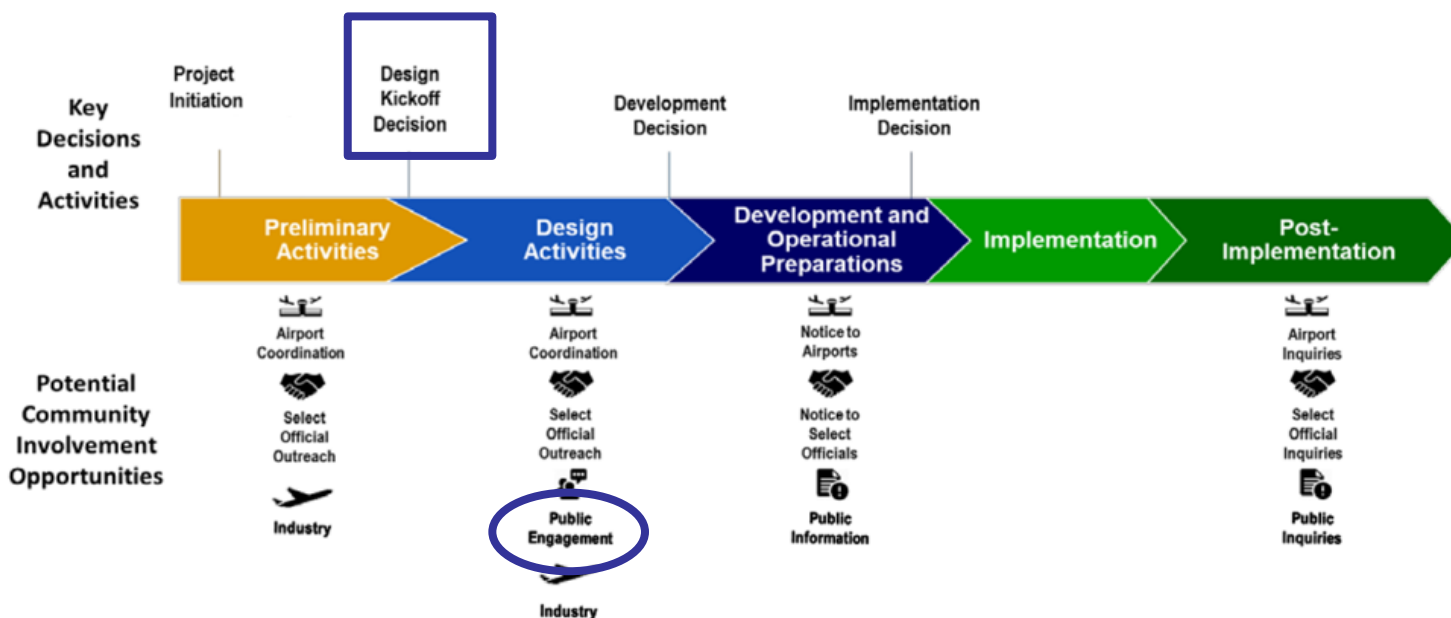
April 25, 2019

Federal Aviation Administration





# Performance Based Navigation Process Timeline



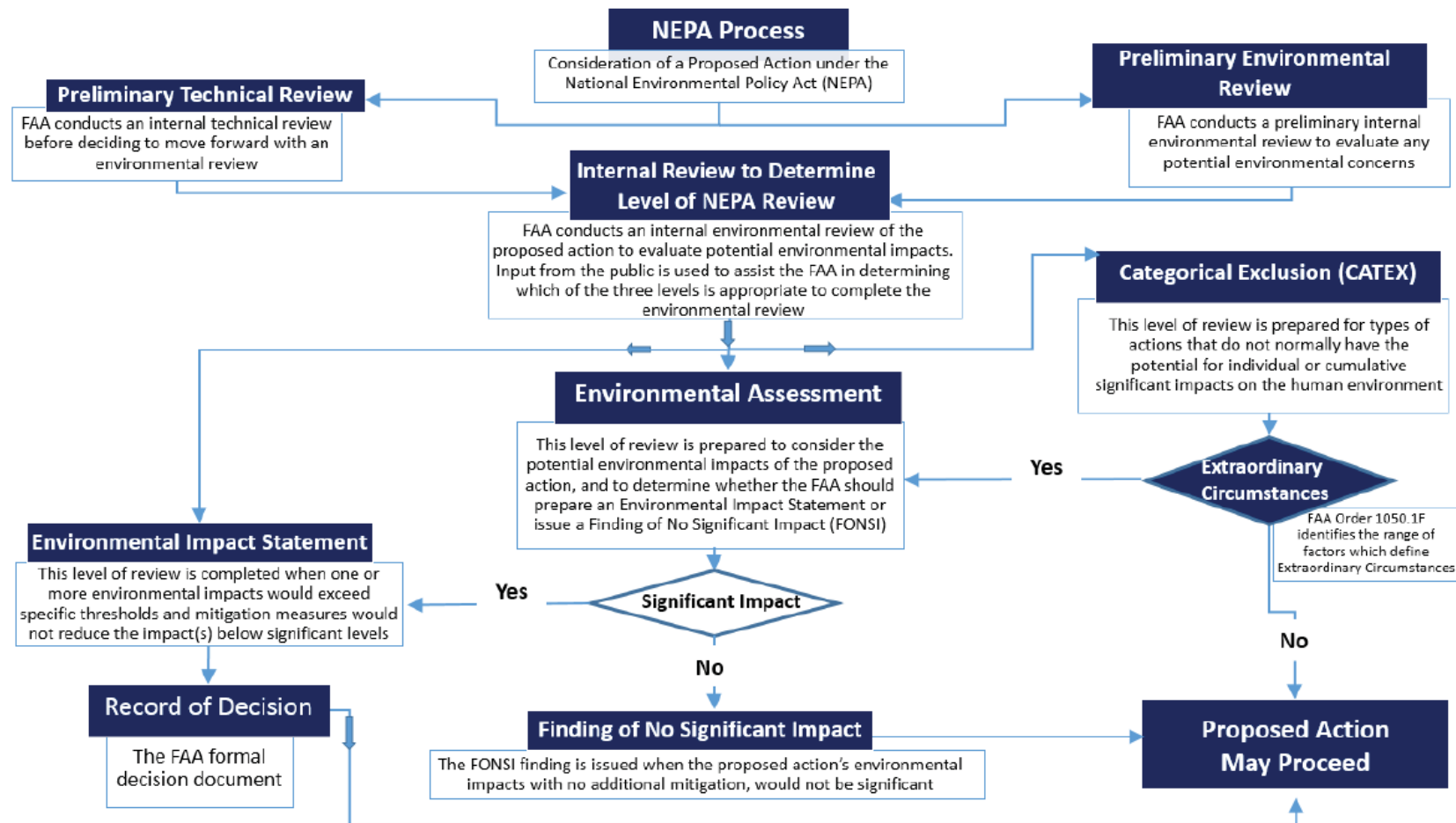
*Note: The need for and level of engagement will vary based on project circumstances*

- Any changes made to RNAV procedures are contingent upon successful completion of the JO 7100.41 Performance Based Navigation (PBN) process.



# Environmental Review Process

This chart shows the environmental steps the FAA would follow if the agency develops any of the conceptual changes



# FAA Response and Updates to Select Committee Recommendations



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NorCal Update  
December 2018

FAA Initiative to Address Noise Concerns of  
Santa Cruz/Santa Clara/San Mateo/San Francisco  
Counties

## **FURTHER UPDATE ON PHASE TWO**

Compiled at the Requests  
of Representatives Farr (Panetta),  
Eshoo and Speier

**December 2018**

- **FAA Initial Response Nov. 2017**
- **April 2018**
- **December 2018**
- **April 2019**
- **Summer 2019 (pending)**

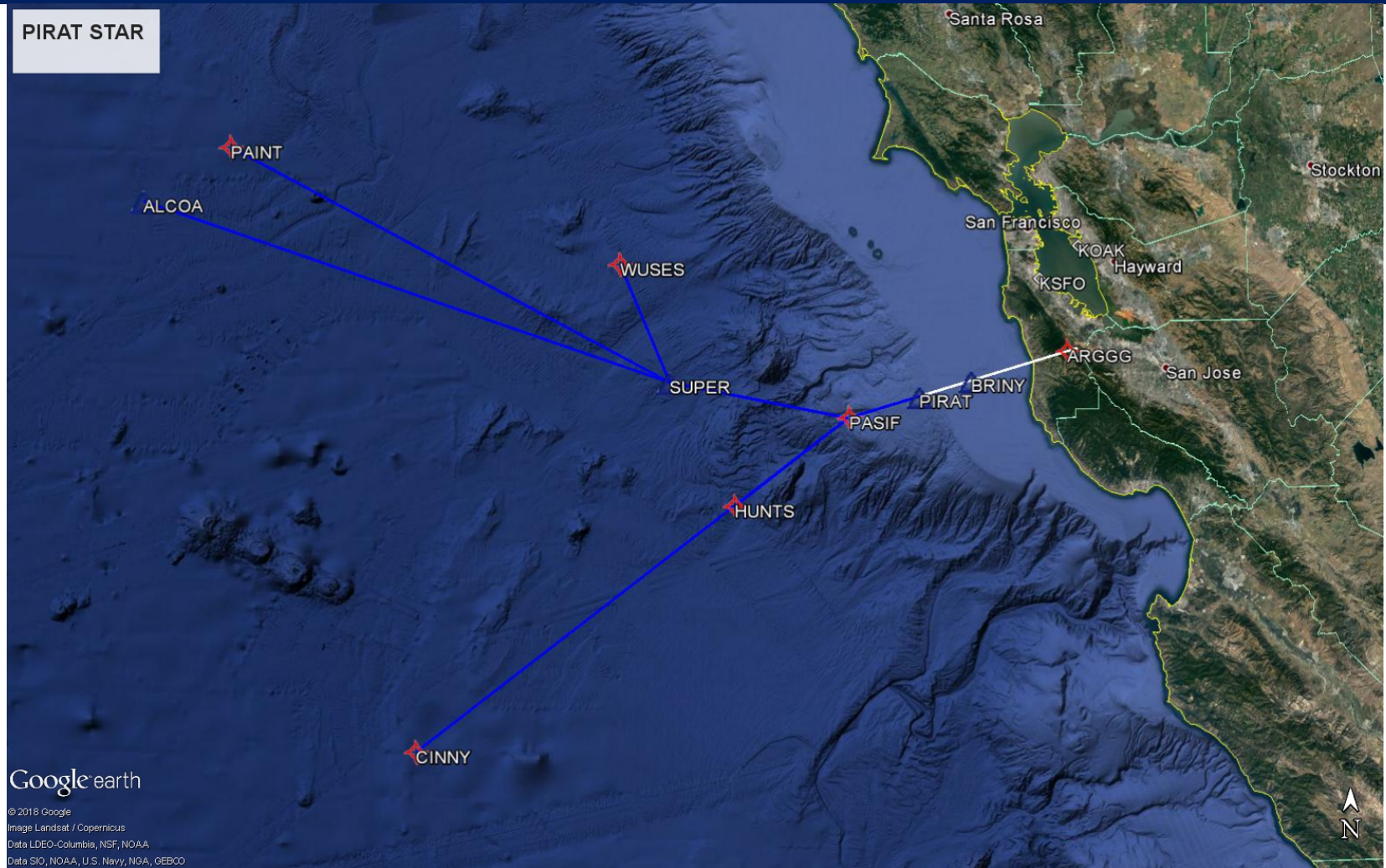


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# PIRAT STAR

PIRAT STAR

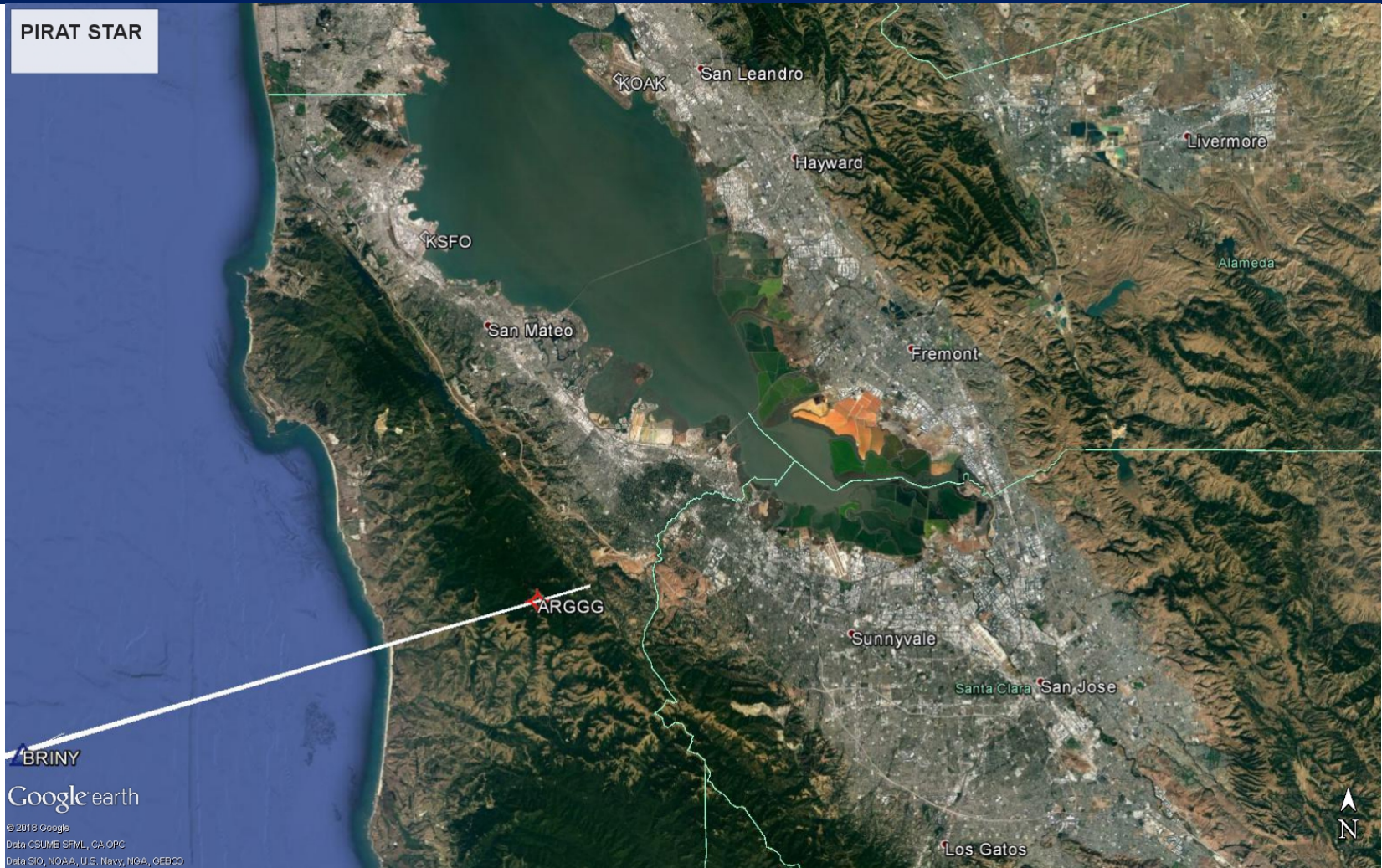


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# PIRAT STAR

PIRAT STAR



BRINY

Google earth

© 2018 Google  
Data CSUMB SFML, CA OPC  
Data SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO



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Western-Pacific Region  
Office of the Regional Administrator

777 S. Aviation Blvd., Suite 150  
El Segundo, CA 90245

*closed*

February 22, 2019

The Honorable Eric Filseth  
Mayor of the City of Palo Alto  
P.O. Box 10250  
Palo Alto, CA 94303

Dear Mayor Filseth:

This is in response to former Mayor Liz Kniss' letter dated November 13, 2018, regarding the proposed PIRAT Standard Terminal Arrival Route (STAR). This letter identifies a number of concerns that we have addressed below.

### **Community Engagement**

During the spring of 2016, U.S. Representatives Eshoo, Speier, and Farr designated local representatives to serve on a Select Committee to address community noise concerns. The 12 representatives were elected officials from Santa Cruz, Santa Clara, San Mateo and San Francisco Counties and were chosen, in part, to facilitate community involvement within their respective districts. The development of the PIRAT STAR is in response to the Select Committee recommendation 2.3-2, which stated, "The Select Committee recommends revision of the Woodside Omni-directional Radio Range (VOR) Ocean Tailored Arrival to honor the existing noise abatement procedure to cross the Woodside VOR at 8,000 feet."

Since this recommendation was voted upon unanimously by the Select Committee, on behalf of their constituents, community engagement was completed through 3 community meetings, 10 working meetings (hosted by the City of Palo Alto), and 5 technical briefings. In addition, this proposed action was part of the FAA Initiative Phase 2 and included in multiple updates provided to the 3 Congressional Representatives.

The development of the PIRAT STAR is in compliance with FAA Order 7400.2, Appendix 10, Community Involvement Policy which states "to promote an active public role to minimize potential adverse community reaction to agency plans that are necessary for safe, effective, and environmentally responsible management of our airspace."

### **Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Request**

The FAA received a FOIA request from Peter J. Kirsch, Kaplan Kirsch & Rockwell, dated October 29, 2018, for records related to the PIRAT STAR. In response, the FAA sent Mr. Kirsch an acknowledgment e-mail on November 2, 2018. This communication was followed by a request for fee concurrence on November 14, 2018, followed by telephone call to the requester that was returned on December 12, 2018, regarding the scope of the request. The FAA is currently reviewing records responsive to the request.



### **Ambiguity of Vectoring Route, Altitudes and Impacts**

The PIRAT STAR would be used by eastbound aircraft approaching San Francisco International Airport (SFO) and Metropolitan Oakland International Airport (OAK) over the ocean. It would overlay and replace the current Pacific 2 Tailored Approach, which arrives at the Woodside VOR (OSI). The PIRAT STAR would end at the ARGGG waypoint, located approximately 100 feet west of OSI along the existing track. Currently, aircraft cross the OSI at 6,000 feet mean sea level (MSL). However, aircraft would cross the ARGGG waypoint at 8,000 feet MSL on the PIRAT STAR. After ARGGG, aircraft would be vectored to final and into the arrival sequence. We anticipate SFO and OAK oceanic arrivals will follow the same ground track as they do today, including being vectored after the OSI. Due to the dynamic nature of air traffic control, there may be times where aircraft will be at varying altitudes, as they are today, to ensure safe operations into SFO and OAK. There are a number of factors including which runways are in use, air traffic volume, and weather conditions that may impact the path an aircraft takes even when flying a particular route.

### **Impacts of Increased Volume**

As with every procedure that the FAA implements, the PIRAT STAR was designed utilizing established criteria and has undergone operational, as well as safety evaluations to ensure compatibility within the airspace. The PIRAT STAR would be a public procedure for SFO and OAK, available to any airline that has aircraft that are properly equipped, and crews that are suitably trained and certified to fly it. The Pacific 2 is only available to certain airlines. Oceanic arrivals that currently cannot use the Pacific 2 are vectored to simulate the Pacific 2 flight track to the OSI or another point on the final approach. We anticipate more aircraft will likely use the PIRAT STAR than the Pacific 2 TA. However, the increased volume of oceanic arrivals is generated by the demand at SFO or OAK. Therefore, the FAA defers to SFO or OAK to address the potential increase in oceanic arrivals.

### **Environmental Impacts**

As stated above, the PIRAT STAR is an overlay of the Pacific 2 TA and the current routes flown by oceanic arrivals into SFO and OAK and represents a Proposed Action. The three levels of review under NEPA are Categorical Exclusion (CATEX), Environmental Assessment (EA), and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). A CATEX refers to a category of actions that the FAA has determined, based on previous experience, does not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment except in extraordinary circumstances. The presence of extraordinary circumstances would preclude the use of a CATEX and would merit additional review required in an EA or EIS. A CATEX does not constitute a NEPA review waiver or exemption; rather, it is a level of NEPA review and compliance. FAA Order 1050.1F, Section 5-6.5, Categorical Exclusions for Procedural Actions includes the list of CATEXs involving establishment, modification, or application of airspace and air traffic procedures. Extraordinary circumstances are factors or circumstances in which a normally categorically excluded action may have a significant environmental impact that then requires further analysis in an EA or EIS.

For FAA proposed actions, extraordinary circumstances exist when the proposed action involves any of the circumstances described in Order 1050.1F, Paragraph 5-2(b) and has the potential for a significant impact. The determination of whether a proposed action may have a significant environmental impact under NEPA is made by considering the relevant environmental impact categories and comparing impacts to the FAA's thresholds of significance, where applicable, as well as any other relevant federal laws and statutes, Executive Orders, and regulations as outlined in FAA Order 1050.1F. The following factors, were considered when we evaluated the proposed PIRAT STAR:

- An adverse effect on cultural resources protected under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, 54 U.S.C. §300101 et seq.
- An impact on properties protected under Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act.
- An impact on natural, ecological, or scenic resources of Federal, state, tribal, or local significance.
- An impact on noise levels of noise sensitive areas.
- An impact on air quality.
- Impacts on the quality of the human environment that are likely to be highly controversial on environmental grounds.
- Likelihood to directly, indirectly, or cumulatively create a significant impact on the human environment.

During evaluation of the proposed PIRAT STAR, it was found that no extraordinary circumstances existed that would preclude the use of a CATEX to satisfy NEPA requirements. Therefore, the FAA completed a CATEX on the proposed PIRAT STAR and will publish the new procedure on February 28, 2019.

In closing, the FAA is committed to continuing its collaborative work with the SFO roundtable, the Select Committee's final recommendations, and Members of Congress to address a wide range of concerns. However, the FAA's participation in SFO Roundtable sessions, our responses to SFO/Select Committee recommendations, as well as this communication do not constitute a final decision of the FAA or reopen the FAA's August 7, 2014, Environmental Assessment or reopen the FAA's August 7, 2014, final decision for the NorCal Optimization of Airspace and Procedures in the Metroplex. Any changes to procedures would be a new action and must be subjected to safety and environmental reviews.

If I can be of further assistance, please contact me or Philip Newman, Assistant Administrator for Government and Industry Affairs, at (202) 267-3277.

Sincerely,



Raquel Girvin  
Regional Administrator

## Cc:

Hon. Kamala D. Harris, U.S. Senate

Hon. Dianne Feinstein, U.S. Senate

Hon. Anna G. Eshoo, U.S. House of Representatives

Ivar C. Satero, Director of San Francisco International Airport

Bryant L. Francis, Oakland International Airport



U.S. Department  
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Mission Support Services  
800 Independence Avenue, SW.  
Washington, DC 20591

**MAY 20 2019**

The Honorable Eric Filseth  
Mayor of the City of Palo Alto  
P.O. Box 10250  
Palo Alto, CA 94303

Dear Mayor Filseth:

Administrator Daniel Elwell asked me to respond to your letter regarding a request to extend the comment period for the PIRAT TWO STAR procedure, which closed on March 29, 2019. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) appreciates your concern and continued advocacy on behalf of your constituents.

This particular comment period was the deadline for civil aviation organizations, affected military and civil air traffic control facilities, and airport owners and sponsors to submit technical aeronautical comments regarding the procedure, not as part of the FAA's environmental review process. The comment period for the environmental review was completed in the form of a Categorical Exclusion/Record of Decision (CATEX/ROD) on July 17, 2018. The CATEX/ROD was published to the FAA Community Involvement websites listed below for public review on February 22, 2019.

[https://www.faa.gov/nextgen/nextgen\\_near\\_you/community\\_involvement/sfo](https://www.faa.gov/nextgen/nextgen_near_you/community_involvement/sfo)  
[https://www.faa.gov/nextgen/nextgen\\_near\\_you/community\\_involvement/oak](https://www.faa.gov/nextgen/nextgen_near_you/community_involvement/oak).

Furthermore, the publishing of the PIRAT TWO STAR procedure on April 25, 2019, was in response to the immediate deactivation of the recently published PIRAT ONE STAR on February 28, 2019, due to information unintentionally left off the procedure. The only difference between the PIRAT ONE and PIRAT TWO STAR is an altitude restriction at the PIRAT waypoint.

In your letter, you noted a concern about the proposed implementation of the PIRAT TWO STAR in the Northern California airspace. The FAA developed this arrival route in response to a unanimous recommendation from the 12-member Select Committee on South Bay Arrivals. The recommendation stated that, "The Select Committee recommends revision of the Woodside VOR ocean tailored arrival to honor the existing noise abatement procedure to cross the Woodside VOR at 8,000 feet." The FAA carried out this recommendation and raised the altitude of oceanic aircraft, within the vicinity of the Woodside VOR (OSI), now known as ARGGG waypoint, to 8,000 feet Mean Sea Level (MSL). Beyond this waypoint, aircraft will be radar vectored to join the approach course and will follow a ground track similar to the one used prior to the publication of the PIRAT STAR.

The FAA prepared a final environmental review to assess the potential environmental impacts of the PIRAT STAR procedure, per the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and found that a CATEX was sufficient given the degree of change. Oceanic aircraft have been arriving over OSI and radar vectored for many years. The FAA does not anticipate this action will cause the number of oceanic aircraft over Palo Alto or its neighboring communities to change.

The FAA remains committed to working collaboratively with communities to address a wide range of issues. We will continue to work to ensure the safety and efficiency of the National Airspace System while maintaining transparency regarding airspace changes and being cognizant of potential impacts to communities.

In closing, this communication does not constitute either a final decision of the FAA or a reopening of the FAA's August 7, 2014, final decision for the Northern California (NorCal) Optimization of Airspace and Procedures in the Metroplex (OAPM).

We appreciate the opportunity to address your concerns. If we can be of further assistance, please contact Philip Newman, Assistant Administrator for Government and Industry Affairs, at (202) 267-3277.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Angela R. McCullough", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Angela R. McCullough  
Vice President, Mission Support Services  
Air Traffic Organization





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

Western-Pacific Region  
Office of the Regional Administrator

777 S. Aviation Blvd., Suite 150  
El Segundo, CA 90245

May 24, 2019

The Honorable Lynette Lee Eng  
Mayor of the City of Los Altos  
Los Altos City Hall  
1 North San Antonio Road  
Los Altos, California 94022

Dear Mayor Lee Eng:

This letter is in response to former Mountain View Mayor Leonard Siegel's and former Los Altos Mayor Jean Mordo's letter dated November 13, 2018, addressed to Ms. Kim Stover, former Director, Air Traffic Operations. In the letter, there are concerns raised about the PIRAT arrival route on behalf of the citizens of Mountain View and Los Altos. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) appreciates your concern and continued advocacy on behalf of your constituents through your participation in the Santa Clara Santa Cruz (SC|SC) Counties Airport Community Roundtable.

Ms. Stover is now in a new position and I am pleased to respond to you on behalf of the FAA.

The FAA developed the PIRAT arrival route in response to a unanimous recommendation from the 12-member Select Committee on South Bay Arrivals. The recommendation stated that, "The Select Committee recommends revision of the Woodside Very High Frequency Omnidirectional Range (VOR) Ocean tailored arrival to honor the existing noise abatement procedure to cross the Woodside VOR at 8,000 feet." The FAA carried out this recommendation and raised the altitude of oceanic aircraft within the vicinity of the Woodside VOR (OSI), now known as the ARGGG waypoint, to 8,000 feet Mean Sea Level. Beyond this waypoint, aircraft are radar vectored to join the approach courses and will follow ground tracks similar to the ones used prior to the publication of the PIRAT.

As explained by FAA representatives at several San Francisco Roundtable meetings, oceanic aircraft have been arriving over OSI and have been radar vectored for many years. The FAA does not anticipate the number of oceanic aircraft over Palo Alto or its neighboring communities to change with the implementation of the PIRAT.

The FAA conducted an environmental review of PIRAT under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 42 U.S.C. section 4321 *et seq.*, and the agency signed the Categorical Exclusion/Record of Decision (CATEX/ROD) on July 17, 2018.

Subsequently, the FAA determined that it needed to make a minor amendment to the PIRAT. The only change it made was to add a 15,000-foot altitude restriction at the PIRAT waypoint, which is 23 miles offshore. The amendment did not change the route's ground track. The

comment period for the amended PIRAT route closed on March 29, 2019. This particular comment period was the deadline for civil aviation organizations, affected military and civil air traffic control facilities, and airport owners and sponsors to submit technical aeronautical comments about the procedure. The comment period was not part of the FAA's environmental review process. The FAA published the amended PIRAT route – known as PIRAT TWO - on April 25, 2019.

Shortly after we implemented the PIRAT TWO, we discovered an operational issue with the procedure. To address this issue, the FAA temporarily lowered the PIRAT waypoint crossing altitude to 10,000 feet. We do not expect to see any reduction in the percentage of aircraft that cross ARGGG at or above 8,000 feet MSL. We will conduct a detailed analysis to determine whether we need to further amend the route to address the operational issue.

The FAA remains committed to working collaboratively with you and members of Congress on the SC|SC roundtable to address a wide range of issues. The FAA will continue to work to ensure the safety and efficiency of the National Airspace System while maintaining transparency regarding potential future airspace changes and being cognizant of potential future impacts to communities.

In closing, this communication does not constitute either a final decision of the FAA or a reopening of the FAA's August 7, 2014, final decision for the Northern California (NorCal) Optimization of Airspace and Procedures in the Metroplex (OAPM), or the FAA's July 17, 2018, final decision for the PIRAT procedure.

A similar letter is being sent to Mayor Lisa Matichak of the City of Mountain View.

We appreciate the opportunity to address your concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Raquel Girvin', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Raquel Girvin  
Regional Administrator  
Western Pacific Region

Cc: Mayor Lisa Matichak, City of Mountain View  
Congresswoman Anna Eshoo  
Congressman Jimmy Pannetta  
Congressman Ro Khanna  
Chairwoman, SC|SC Airport Community Roundtable, Mary-Lynn Bernald