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Flight paths

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Now the [Federal Aviation Administration](#) wants to reroute this traffic over western Connecticut and some Westchester County communities.

The plan was approved by the FAA on Sept. 5, without proper consultation with the communities that will be hearing more of this air traffic.

"One of the proposed changes is to move the north arrival gate for LaGuardia closer to the Connecticut line," said FAA spokesman [Jim Peters](#). "By doing that we can create a more efficient flow of arrival traffic into Newark."

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The north arrival gate, of course, is in the sky. By moving the LaGuardia arrival gate east, the FAA will make adjustments in the flight paths for other airports. It expects these changes will save 200,000 hours of delays each year at Kennedy, LaGuardia, Newark and Philadelphia airports.

The FAA has been considering this plan for a decade and has had some public hearings. But plans to make these changes were not widely known. With the changes approved, many communities are only now learning about what is to come -- and not liking it.

The right approach would be for the FAA to listen to the concerns and complaints of its critics, but that apparently won't happen. FAA officials say one reason they can't have more hearings is that Connecticut has gone to court to stop the plan and so their agency can't engage in public conversation about it.

It is a wondrous bureaucratic excuse.

Danbury and its neighboring towns have joined the legal effort to stop the FAA plan, as they should. As [Paul Estefan](#), administrator of [Danbury Municipal Airport](#), puts it: "It's like taking Interstate 95 and moving it 22 miles, directly over Danbury."

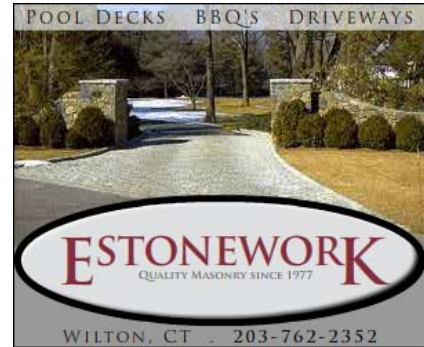
The rerouting also creates a problem for Danbury Municipal Airport and its neighbors. The small aircraft that use the local airport will have to fly at lower altitudes to accommodate the increased air traffic headed for LaGuardia, raising noise levels for the neighborhoods below.

It will be easy for this dispute to dissolve into a border dispute between Connecticut and New York, but that shouldn't happen. Westchester officials and residents are as upset as their neighbors in Connecticut. This is really about poor planning and a lack of communication by the FAA.

Connecticut Attorney General [Richard Blumenthal](#) points to other problems. He says the FAA, eager to do what it wanted, failed to follow a federal law that requires it to consider the impact

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of aircraft noise when rerouting flights. He also says the FAA could revise landing and takeoff angles and better manage nighttime flights to reduce the impact of the new flight paths, but did not do this.

It's always better to resolve disputes without legal action. But given the FAA's many failures, perhaps a federal courtroom is the only place to settle this.

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