

## Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG)/Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC)

### Public Review of Draft Mather Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP)

#### FAQ – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

(Updated July 14, 2022)

Draft Mather Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan download at: <https://www.sacog.org/airport-planning>

#### 1. What role does SACOG have related to airports?

The State Aeronautics Act (Public Utilities Code sections 21670 *et seq.*) requires the establishment of an **Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC)** in every county in the state with a public use or military airport and identifies the role and responsibilities of the ALUCs in land use planning. The SACOG Board of Directors serves as the ALUC for four of the six SACOG counties – Sacramento, Sutter, Yuba, and Yolo. Placer and El Dorado counties each have their own ALUCs. The Act's ALUC requirements are intended to ensure that proposed land uses in areas around airports are compatible with airport operations. Compatibility is focused on policies addressing safety, noise, airspace protection, and overflight notification.

One of the primary functions of the ALUC for Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba counties is to develop and adopt a plan that includes land use policies and compatibility criteria for safety, noise, airspace protection, and overflight notification for each airport under its jurisdiction. These plans are referred to as **Airport Land Use Compatibility Plans (ALUCPs)**. These plans are not used for airport development. Rather, state law requires future land use development near and around airports to be consistent with the policies and compatibility criteria included in an ALUCP. Once an ALUCP has been adopted, each affected local agency has 180 days to either make their own land use plans (i.e., general plans, specific plans, etc.) consistent with the ALUCP or to take certain steps to overrule the ALUCP. If a local agency fails to take either step, the ALUC may require that the affected local agency submit all land use development actions involving areas within the ALUC's jurisdiction (aka the **Airport Influence Area** or **AIA**) for review of consistency with the ALUCP. Local agencies include counties, cities, special districts, school districts, and community college districts.

#### 2. Why is the Mather Airport (MHR) ALUCP being updated?

Mather Airport is in unincorporated Sacramento County, immediately southwest of the City of Rancho Cordova and south of US Highway 50. The Mather ALUCP is being updated for several reasons. First, the current Comprehensive Land Use Plan (now called ALUCP) is 25 years old, being last updated in 1997. Since that time, Caltrans guidance on preparation of ALUCPs has been updated, airport operations have changed, the airport Master Plan has been updated, the Airport has made several improvements, and traffic volume is higher. Meanwhile, urbanized land uses in the region have expanded and are encroaching into areas surrounding the airport. Local funds from Sacramento County Department of Airports are being used to pay for the ALUCP Update.

**3. How is the draft Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP) structured?**

Most ALUCPs contain background information about the airport, information about the areas around the airport, and policies and compatibility criteria focused on four compatibility factors: safety, noise, airspace protection, and overflight notification. Additionally, an ALUCP may contain a set of appendices that elaborate on specific background topics, such as relevant state and federal laws, methods for calculating intensities of land use, sample enabling documents, and technical data supporting the compatibility factors presented in the main document. The main component of the ALUCP contains the policies by which the ALUC operates and conducts consistency reviews for proposed land use and development actions. The key policy areas revolve around the four compatibility factors and cover noise, safety, airspace protection (including wildlife hazards), and overflight. Each is described further below.

**4. How are lands around the airport affected by the ALUCP?**

Undeveloped lands located in the AIA are subject to ALUC authority and the policies of the ALUCP. The AIA is defined as land in which current or future airport-related noise, overflight, safety or airspace protection factors may place certain conditions on or restrict future land uses. Proposed land use projects in this area are subject to ALUC review to determine consistency with the ALUCP policies.

**5. How does an updated ALUCP affect existing land uses?**

Existing land uses are not affected by the ALUCP. Neither the ALUC nor the ALUCP have jurisdiction over land uses that either physically exist or for which a local agency has made commitments to a proposal entitling the project to go forward.

**6. What noise compatibility policies are in the ALUCP?**

The purpose of noise compatibility policies is to avoid establishment of noise-sensitive land uses in areas around the airport exposed to unacceptable levels of aircraft noise. The ALUCP uses the Community Noise Level (CNEL) metric, which is a metric that measures noise cumulatively over a 24-hour period. Cumulative exposure to aircraft noise is depicted as a set of contours that have been developed for the Draft ALUCP. The contours depict the anticipated noise generated by the aircraft operating at the airport over the planning time frame. The planning horizon for an ALUCP is typically 20 years. The Draft ALUCP includes a noise compatibility criteria table that identifies whether land uses are considered compatible, conditionally compatible, or incompatible within each noise contour.

**7. What safety compatibility policies are in the ALUCP?**

The purpose of the safety compatibility policies is to minimize the risk associated with an aircraft accident or emergency landing. The policies focus on reducing the potential consequences of such events. The Draft ALUCP identifies six safety zones that are delineated based on specific airport-related factors such as runway length and represent areas of varying statistical likelihood of aircraft accident during different phases of flight. The policies in the ALUCP include acceptable levels of intensity of use (i.e., number of people per acre) and residential density (i.e., number of dwelling units per acre) for each safety zone. The Draft ALUCP also includes a safety compatibility criteria table that identifies what land uses are compatible, conditionally compatible or incompatible within each safety zone.

**8. What are the airspace protection policies in the ALUCP?**

The airspace protection policies included in the Draft ALUCP seek to prevent development of land uses that obstruct the airspace around the airport and thus may pose a hazard to aircraft in flight. Examples include tall buildings near runway ends and antenna towers in areas where aircraft may operate.

Airspace hazards can be physical (e.g., tall structures), visual (e.g., glare) or electronic (e.g., interference with aircraft navigation and communications equipment). As indicated in the next question, the airspace protection policies also address uses that attract wildlife, particularly birds, to locations where they can pose hazards to aircraft operations either in the air or on the ground. The policies in the ALUCP rely upon federal guidance and regulations promulgated by the Federal Aviation Administration, as well as standards established by the State of California.

**9. What are Overflight Notification policies that will be in the ALUCP?**

Overflight Notification deals with the subjective effects of noise beyond the areas within the noise contours. The overflight compatibility policies in the Draft ALUCP focus on ensuring that prospective purchasers of residential property near the airport are aware that aircraft operate in the vicinity. The policies would not restrict land use development in the manner that the noise, safety, and airspace protection policies do. The policies in the plan would serve primarily to establish the form and requirements for notification about airport proximity as dictated by state law. The areas that surround Mather – the cities of Rancho Cordova and Folsom and the eastern portion of unincorporated Sacramento county – already have overflight notification (for new development) and real estate disclosure (for existing residences) requirements. The overflight notification policies would not change this.

**10. What have been some of the key steps in the development of the ALUCP?**

- Project starts, with Technical Advisory Committee overseeing development of draft ALUCP (2017-2020)
- Prepared Development Displacement Analysis and CEQA Documents: November-December 2020
- Presented recommended CEQA Document to the SACOG board/ALUC: February 2021
- Release the Draft ALUCP and CEQA Document to the Public for a 45-Day Review: February-April 2021

For more details:

- 2017-2018: SACOG, as the ALUC, signs agreement with the Sacramento County Department of Airports, and selects project consultant, Environmental Science Associates (ESA), to complete the ALUCP Update.
- Early 2019 – August 2020: A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was established to provide input on the ALUCP update and discuss how to engage other stakeholders in the process. A total of four TAC meetings were held.
- Late 2020: The SACOG Board/ALUC approved the release of the Draft ALUCP for an initial 30-day public review. Because ALUCPs may affect how and where future land uses are developed, they have the potential to result in environmental impacts, and are thus considered projects for purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Subsequently, an Initial Study (IS)

and supporting development displacement analysis were prepared for the Draft ALUCP. The development displacement analysis focused on how the policies in the Draft ALUCP may affect future land use development in the airport influence area for Mather Airport. With the development displacement analysis and the draft IS completed, a Negative Declaration (ND) was determined to be the appropriate level of CEQA clearance.

- February – April 2021: The SACOG Board/ALUC released the Draft ALUCP and IS/ND for a 45-day public review period. A public workshop was held to present both documents to the public during the public review period. A total of three comment letters were received on the IS/ND. Responses to those comments were prepared and included in the final IS/ND.
- May 2021-mid 2022: Sacramento County and the development community had discussions related to land uses. These discussions have concluded without requiring changes to the draft ALUCP or the IS/ND documents. The Final CEQA document is now being brought before the SACOG Board/ALUC for approval. Simultaneously, the Draft ALUCP is also being brought forward for adoption.

**11. What are the next steps in completing the ALUCP?**

On August 4, 2022, the SACOG Land Use and Natural Resources Committee will be presented with a recap of the project history and documentation. The committee will be given a recommendation to forward the Mather Airport ALUCP to the SACOG board/ALUC for adoption. The SACOG board/ALUC could then take action to adopt the ALUCP on August 18, 2022.

**12. Is there more information available?**

To view or download the draft Mather ALUCP or a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) about the plan, please go to the SACOG website at <https://www.sacog.org/airport-planning>.

Comments or questions: Greg Chew, SACOG staff, (916) 340-6227, [gchew@sacog.org](mailto:gchew@sacog.org)