

Frequently Asked Questions
Draft Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP)
Sacramento International Airport
(April 19, 2013)

Basics: Airport Land Use Commission, the Plan and Process

What are Airport Land Use Compatibility Plans (ALUCPs)?

This ALUCP for Sacramento International Airport is one of a series of plans adopted by SACOG serving as the Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) for Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba counties. This plan will replace the one originally adopted in 1984 and last amended in 1994. The basic function of the plan is to promote compatibility between the airport and the land uses surrounding it to the extent that these areas have not already been devoted to incompatible uses. The plan serves this function by establishing a set of compatibility criteria applicable to new development around the airport. Existing land uses are not subject to the ALUCP.

What Role does SACOG have as the Airport Land Use Commission?

The California Aeronautics Act (Public Utilities Code Section 21670 et seq.) requires establishment of an ALUC in every county in the state 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. Placer and El Dorado counties each have their own ALUCs. The Act's ALUC requirements are intended to ensure that proposed land uses near public-use airports are compatible with airport uses in terms of safety, noise and air space. A compatibility plan is required for each public use and military airport in the state.

One of the ALUC's primary functions is to develop and adopt a plan that identifies zones for safety, noise contours, and height restrictions, along with associated compatible land uses, for each public-use airport. These plans are referred to as Airport Land Use Compatibility Plans (ALUCPs). They are not plans for airport development. Rather, state law requires future land use development near airports to be consistent with compatibility criteria included in an ALUCP. Once an ALUCP is in place, each local jurisdiction submits affected land use development applications to the ALUC for review and response. The purpose of the ALUC review is to determine whether the application is compatible with the plan.

Why is it being updated for Sacramento International Airport?

There are a number of reasons why the ALUCP is being updated. First, the current Comprehensive Land Use Compatibility Plan (now called ALUCP) was amended in 1994. Since that time, operations have changed, the airport has made several improvements and traffic volume is higher. Meanwhile, urbanized land uses in the region have grown and are encroaching within the surrounding lands. Finally, the Caltrans Division of Aeronautics updated its guidelines for ALUCs and provided a grant funds to SACOG within a limited opportunity to update the plan, with local matching funds from Sacramento County Airport System, the Sacramento County department that owns and operates the airport.

What's the difference between an airport master plan and an Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan?

Airport Master Plans and ALUCP are closely connected yet distinct. Master plans primarily pertain to lands on the airport, whereas compatibility plans are concerned with off-airport lands. The ALUCP's main purpose is to ensure that incompatible development does not occur on lands surrounding the airport. The master plan is prepared by the airport owner or operator, while the ALUCP is the responsibility of the designated ALUC.

Generally, what's in the draft Sacramento International ALUCP?

The plan contains background information on the ALUCP, on the state and federal aviation laws, data and background information about the airport, and, most importantly, the policies that provide compatibility criteria for land use activities surrounding the airport. The compatibility criteria relate to noise, safety, airspace (height limits and wildlife attractants), and overflight. Each of these policy areas is described later in this FAQ.

How was the ALUCP developed?

The draft updated ALUCP was developed through SACOG and working with the Sacramento County Airport System. The staffs from the two agencies advertised for and selected a consultant, Mead and Hunt, to lead the preparation of the plan. The basis of the plan is the Statewide Airport Land Use Compatibility Handbook from Caltrans, which provides guidance and standards for the all ALUCPs in California.

The substantive ALUCP update process started by the summer of 2011. A technical advisory committee was formed shortly afterwards to provide outside guidance and input on the components of the plan. It met five times by March 2013 to review drafts and provide input on behalf of the local governments and input on the plan's development process.

Who was represented on the plan's Technical Advisory Committee?

The technical advisory committee was established to give guidance and feedback on draft policies for the plan. The TAC members were members of planning departments from the local governments within the influence area of the airport. Specifically, they were from the following jurisdictions: the cities of Davis, Roseville, Sacramento, West Sacramento, and Woodland, and the counties of Sacramento, Sutter, Placer and Yolo. Staff from the Caltrans Division of Aeronautics also served on the TAC.

What public outreach has been done and what is planned?

A limited amount of public outreach has already occurred, but the main input stage will take place with the public release of the draft plan. In September 2012, a public workshop was held at the Natomas Library to introduce the updated plan to the public. Notices were mailed to over 400 stakeholders identified by the affected local jurisdictions primarily in the city of and county of Sacramento. In addition, individual briefings were given to large landowners and other known stakeholders or their representatives in the surrounding area, and to local elected officials who have the airport in their districts. The public release of the draft ALUCP by the ALUC, anticipated in May 2013, will trigger a number of public input opportunities. First, the project team will re-double its outreach to large landowners and their representatives, local jurisdictions, other affected property owners and

stakeholders identified by local jurisdictions. Secondly, another public workshop will be held, tentatively in mid-July. This workshop will inform the public about specific recommendations in the plan, including maps and corresponding policies. Third, the environmental process will commence with the proposed release of the Initial Study by the ALUC at the June meeting. A series of public notification steps must be taken in the formal 30 day circulation period. Finally, the ALUC will be given the opportunity in August to review the responses and the final draft of the ALUCP. In September, the final version of the ALUCP is scheduled to be brought to the ALUC for adoption.

What does the adoption of an updated plan mean for local governments?

The responsibility of the implementation of ALUC-adopted compatibility plans rests with the affected local agencies. However, the ALUC must consult with the involved agencies regarding establishment of airport influence areas (Public Utilities Code Section 21675(c)). Each city and county affected by a compatibility plan must make its general plan and applicable specific plans consistent with the ALUCP, or the jurisdiction may take a series of prescribed steps established in the State Aeronautics Act to overrule the ALUC policies. Local agencies' other responsibility is to refer their plans and certain proposed land use actions to the ALUC for review and determination of consistency with the ALUCP.

For instance, actions associated with individual development proposals are subject to ALUC review only until the local agency's general plan and specific plan(s) have been made consistent with the compatibility plan or the agency has overruled the ALUC. It has been a common practice that local jurisdictions have been sending development proposals to the ALUC for administrative review for consistency.

What if a local government wants something inconsistent with the ALUCP?

The State Aeronautics Act (Public Utilities Section 21676) allows a local agency to overrule the ALUC with a two-thirds vote of its governing body. The local agency must also make findings that its plans are consistent with the intent of the Act, notify the ALUC and Caltrans, and hold a public hearing on the matter.

The Plan Contents

How is the plan structured?

There are three chapters to the plan: 1) Introduction, 2) Policies, and 3) Airport Background Information. The appendices section elaborates on specific background topics, including state and federal aviation laws, elaboration on the compatibility concepts in the policies chapter, and a discussion on wildlife hazards. By far the most important chapter in the plan is Chapter 2 on Policies. That chapter contains the policies by which the ALUC operates and conducts compatibility reviews of proposed land use and airport development actions. The key policy areas are: noise, safety, airspace protection, and overflight. Each is described in questions below.

Which geographic areas does the ALUCP impact most?

Lands that are considered in the Airport Influence Area are affected by the ALUCP. The Airport Influence Area is defined as land in which current or future airport-related noise, overflight, safety or airspace protection factors may significantly affect land uses or necessitate restrictions on those uses. Proposed

land use projects in this area are subject to ALUC review to determine consistency within the ALUCP policies.

Each of the following jurisdictions have jurisdiction over lands within parts of Sacramento International Airport Influence Area: the counties of Sacramento, Sutter and Yolo; and the cities of Davis, Sacramento, West Sacramento and Woodland.

The attached Map 1 shows the Airport Influence Area with the affected jurisdictions.

How does an updated ALUCP affect existing land uses?

Existing land uses are not affected by the ALUCP. The plan has no jurisdiction on land uses that either physically exists or for which a local agency has made commitments to a proposal entitling the project to go forward.

What are two different Referral Areas within the Airport Influence Area?

The Airport Influence Area is divided into two sub-areas shown on Map 1 which have different requirements for review by the ALUC.

Referral Area 1 encompasses locations where noise and/or safety represent compatibility concerns. If potential actions proposed to a local agency are consistent with the general plan or specific plan, it still may not be compatible with the ALUCP until specificity is provided on the proposed action. In this case, within this referral area, the ALUC may need to review the proposed action against ALUCP compatibility criteria for noise and safety. A partial list of actions that may require review include annexation, expanded sphere of influence, proposed residential development, projects that attract 100 or more people, buildings or structures with heights that may interfere with Federal Aviation Administration regulations, or anything that may create electrical, lighting, glare or visibility.

Referral Area 2 includes locations where airspace protection and/or overflight are compatibility concerns, but not noise and safety. Essentially, any proposed actions that increase hazards in wildlife attraction, electrical interference, lighting, glare, or visibility, or are of a height that may interfere with FAA regulations.

What noise compatibility policies are in the ALUCP?

The purpose of noise compatibility policies is to avoid establishment of noise-sensitive land uses near the airport that are exposed to significant levels of aircraft noise. The ALUCP uses the Community Noise Level (CNEL) metric, which measures more than just loudness over a single event. It also considers the number of noisy events over time. Cumulative exposure to aircraft noise is depicted in a set of contours. The contours depict the anticipated noise generated by the aircraft operating at the airport over the planning time frame.

Map 2 shows the noise contours based on those adopted by Sacramento County for land use planning purposes. The ALUCP contains a table that shows different land use categories and what is compatible, conditionally compatible or incompatible for each CNEL level. The table is based on guidance from the California Airport Land Use Planning Handbook. One of the most significant criteria in the ALUCP is that new residential uses are not allowed within the 60 CNEL contour or higher areas.

What safety compatibility policies are in the ALUCP?

The purpose of the safety compatibility policies is to minimize the risk associated with an off-airport aircraft accident or emergency landing. The policies focus on reducing the potential consequences of such events. The policies in the ALUCP evaluate two types of risks: (1) the likelihood that an accident may happen in terms of geographic location near the airport; and (2) the potential consequences of the risk including the number of people in harm's way. The ALUCP identifies six safety zones that are identified based on their physical proximity to the airport runways. The ALUCP contains a safety compatibility table. There are six safety zones that show what is compatible, conditionally compatible or incompatible for each type of land use category. Map 3 attached shows the different safety zones.

What are the airspace protection policies in the ALUCP?

The airspace protection policies seek to prevent land use features that pose a hazard to aircraft in flight such as tall buildings near runways and antenna towers in flight pattern areas. Airspace hazards can be physical (e.g., tall structures), visual (e.g., glare) or electronic (e.g., interference for 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 the regulations and standards enacted by the Federal Aviation Administration and the State of California.

What policies that relate to wildlife are in the airspace protection section?

The areas on or surrounding Sacramento International Airport have the potential to attract wildlife that could interfere with aircraft operations. The ALUC's role and policy with regard to regulating wildlife hazards near the airport is limited to new development and general plans, specific plans, master plans and zoning ordinances that set standards for new development. The ALUC has no role in regulating existing land uses.

Any proposed land use project within the Airport Influence Area that would attract wildlife is a potential concern. The ALUCP divides the Airport Influence Area into two zones. Map 5 shows the 10,000 foot radius. For land use projects within 10,000 feet of the airport, the ALUCP will adhere to the FAA standards on wildlife attractants. The ALUC shall deem incompatible uses that the FAA or other federal regulations and guidelines recommend against.

For the area outside of the 10,000 foot radius but inside Airport Influence Area, the draft policy says that the ALUC shall seek input to determine compatibility. The ALUC should consider if the proposed development would attract birds, type and number of birds, whether a net increase to the number would occur, the location relative to aircraft flight paths, and features designed to reduce the attraction. This compatibility assessment would also involve consultation among the project proponents, the local agency, the ALUC staff, and the airport staff. The current draft would also have the local government and project proponents evaluate the potential aeronautical hazards as part of the CEQA environmental analysis of the project.

What overflight compatibility policies are in the ALUCP?

The overflight compatibility policies in the ALUCP are for informational purposes only and do not constitute ALUC regulatory policies. Overflight deals with noise of individual aircraft operations. The

policies in the plan serve primarily to establish the form and requirements for notification about airport proximity as dictated by state law.

Next Steps

What happens next now that the plan has been drafted?

The ALUC will be asked to release a public draft of the ALUCP at its May 2013 meeting. After that action is taken, then at its June meeting, the ALUC will be asked to release the Initial Study for public review. In July, a public workshop will take place describing the contents in the plan and seeking public input. The ALUC could review proposed changes to the draft plan and potentially adopt the plan at its September meeting.