

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

(October 5, 2020)

Draft Mather Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan download at: <https://www.sacog.org/airport-planning>
Public Comments Must Be Received by November 5, 2020 – submit to MHRcomment@sacog.org

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 located 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 more than 20 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 stages have been completed in the development of the ALUCP?

SACOG, as the ALUC, is working with the Sacramento County Department of Airports and the selected project consultant, Environmental Science Associates (ESA), to complete the ALUCP Update. The project started in the first quarter of 2019. Some of the first steps included identifying the local public agencies that could be affected by the ALUCP and establishing a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to discuss the ALUCP update and how to engage other stakeholders in the process. The TAC has met four times during the development of the Draft ALUCP, the last meeting being held in August 2020. The TAC was given the opportunity to review and comment on the draft ALUCP being presented to the ALUC for public release. The ALUCP will take about two years to develop. It is anticipated that the Draft ALUCP will be brought before the ALUC (SACOG Board) to be considered for adoption in April 2021.

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

The SACOG Board of Directors serving as the ALUC approved the release of the initial 30-day public review draft of the ALUCP on September 17, 2020. SACOG will continue outreach with stakeholders and the public on the draft ALUCP. 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). Therefore, an Initial Study will be prepared for the Draft ALUCP, supported by a development displacement analysis. The development displacement analysis will focus on how the policies in the Draft ALUCP may affect future land uses development in the AIA. Once the development displacement analysis and the Initial Study have been completed, a decision will be made on the appropriate level of CEQA clearance (i.e., a Negative Declaration [ND], Mitigated Negative Declaration [MND], or an Environmental Impact Report [EIR]). Once the appropriate CEQA document has been prepared, it will be brought before the SACOG Land Use and Natural Resources Committee and the SACOG Board/ALUC before being released for a 30-day public

review period. Following the 30-day public review period, the Final CEQA document will be brought before the SACOG Board/ALUC for approval and the Draft ALUCP will be brought forward for adoption.

The following provides the key project milestones remaining to be met:

- SACOG Board/ALUC approves release of Draft ALUCP for public review– September 17, 2020
- Release the Draft ALUCP to the Public for a 30-Day Review –October 5 to November 5, 2020
- Prepare Development Displacement Analysis and CEQA Documents – September – December 2020
- Present recommended CEQA Document to the Land Use and Natural Resources Committee – December 3, 2020
- Present recommended CEQA Document to the SACOG Board/ALUC – December 17, 2020
- Release the Draft ALUCP and CEQA Document to the Public for a 30 Day Review – February – March 2021
- Land Use and Natural Resources Committee and ALUC Adoption Hearing – April 2021

12. How do I view the draft ALUCP and submit comments?

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

Written comments or questions must be received by Wednesday, November 5, 2020:

Email to: MHRcomment@sacog.org

Postal mail to: SACOG/Airport Land Use Commission, 1415 L Street, Suite 300, Sacramento CA 95814.