

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

800 Independence Ave., S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20591

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(Addressed to Various Organizations and interested Parties)

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is announcing a package of land-use planning initiatives designed to reduce the problems of aviation noise around airports. The five packages include a number of communication improvements for conveying FAA noise policies and noise compatibility information to communities near airports and to state aviation organizations. The initiatives are based upon responses from local communities, aviation interests, and environmental groups, following FAA's solicitation for land use options in the *Federal Register* in May 1998.

Effective land use management in the crucial noise exposed areas near airports is essential to both the continued viability of the airports and the comfort of the communities' residents. Too often in the past, communities and airports have worked at cross-purposes due, as much as anything else, to a lack of communication and a lack of information on noise compatibility planning. FAA is convinced that in any given community there are a range of viable and productive uses for these noise impacted lands that can live quite comfortably with that noise, and that effective planning can place noise sensitive uses, such as homes and schools, into areas unaffected by aviation noise. Where noise sensitive uses are already in place there, the communities and the airports can work effectively to mitigate the impacts using the fairly comprehensive kit of "tools" that are provided in various FAA programs or that are a normal part of the urban planning and urban economic processes.

A particular concern is that noise reductions won through the very costly phase out of noisy Stage 2 airplanes may be wasted if communities permit new noise sensitive uses to follow the retreating noise contours too quickly and too closely. Effective land-use planning takes into account both the existing noise and future growth of the airport by reserving these lands for uses that are compatible with the airport, both now and in the future. The purpose of the initiatives is to enable communities and airports to work together to manage these areas in such a way that they are both economically productive and protective of the airports' futures.

The first initiative calls for distribution of a land-use planning information package for use by FAA regional offices, national planning organizations, and local planning offices. To better target local concerns, the package will include materials for regional personnel to use in furnishing land-use information at local meetings and other opportunities. These materials may include examples of talks and generic presentations on noise compatibility, position papers on FAA noise policies, videos, sample zoning and ordinances, videos, as well as other materials. These packages should be available within six months.

The second initiative, developed in cooperation with the National Association State Aviation Officials (NASAO), is to prepare an information package containing State statute information for delivery with land use planning information to State aviation organizations. The package will

reflect FAA's aviation noise policies, the effects of the Stage 3 transition, and pertinent reference materials. The FAA hopes to have the packages available in six months.

The third initiative is to provide a single-point clearinghouse for information. A stand-alone, compatible land use web site will also be established. In addition to publishing specific documents and data, the site will link to other related noise and compatible land-use planning sites within and outside the federal government. The web site is expected to be on-line in four months.

The fourth initiative will establish a process to communicate FAA policies more rapidly in response to requests from local communities. This would make the FAA more effective in assisting those airports and surrounding areas attempting to resolve conflicts between aviation and community needs. The new procedures are expected to be activated within six months.

The FAA has received many requests for providing current information and additional guidance for noise assessment methodologies. The fifth initiative will issue a revision to an existing FAA order to update and expand current FAA guidance on complying with the National Environmental Policy Act and related requirements. This action will facilitate communication between all interested parties affected by airport and aviation noise. The revision is expected to be published within the next six months.

The FAA believes that these initiatives will go a long way in helping the FAA better meet the environmental needs of local communities around U.S. airports. We will keep you informed on these initiatives as they develop.

Sincerely,

/s/

James D. Erickson

Director of Environment and Energy

cc: Distribution List