

Airport & Land Use Compatibility Project



PROJECT OVERVIEW

The county is currently working on a state-mandated project to discourage incompatible land uses around the county's general aviation airports. This will primarily be accomplished by implementing the county comprehensive plan policies related to airport compatibility for the unincorporated areas around the six general aviation airports in the county, which direct the county to "protect public use airports in the county from nearby incompatible land uses and development."

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Sections 36.70.547 and 36.70A.510 of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) direct the county to discourage the siting of incompatible uses adjacent to public or privately owned general aviation airports operated for the public benefit through plans and regulations.

In 2004, the county adopted text and policy amendments to the Growth Management Act (GMA) Comprehensive Plan that specifically addressed airport compatibility (Amended Ordinance No. 04-125). The goals, policies and objectives under General Policy Plan (GPP) Goal LU 12 and Goal LU 13 outline and direct the county on issues related to airport compatibility. Many of those policies have not yet been implemented in regulations.

RCW 36.70A.130 of the GMA requires that county comprehensive plans and development regulations are consistent with state law and are internally consistent, and requires a periodic compliance review. The next compliance review deadline is June 30, 2015.

In May 2014, the Snohomish County Council identified Airport and Land Use Compatibility as a work item to be completed by June 2015 as part of the GMA compliance review.

GENERAL AVIATION AIRPORTS

There are six public or privately owned general aviation airports operated for the public benefit within Snohomish County:

- Arlington Municipal (located in Arlington)
- Darrington Municipal (located in Darrington)
- First Air Field (located in Monroe)
- Harvey Field (located outside of Snohomish)
- Paine Field (located outside of Everett/Mukilteo)
- Sky Harbor (located in Sultan)

PROJECT SCOPE

Out of consideration for the GMA compliance review schedule, the scope of work is limited to tasks that can be completed within the compliance deadline of June 2015. The county may choose at a later date to complete additional related projects that extend beyond the June 2015 deadline. The project scope may be refined following receipt of guidance from formal consultation and feedback from stakeholder outreach.

The scope of work includes:

Identify an Airport Influence Area that would likely be impacted by airport operations around each airport and apply disclosure notice requirements. The area would be defined in the text of the Snohomish County code along with circumstances under which a disclosure notice would be required and its form. Implements GPP policy LU 12.B.1.

Within the Airport Influence Area, identify a smaller area adjacent to airports where regulations would be applied to discourage uses that are incompatible with airport operations. The area would be defined in the text of the code. Implements GPP policy LU 12.A.2, with a proposed amendment to the current policy to remove language that the area be designated on the Future Land Use Map in the county comprehensive plan. That proposed amendment will provide flexibility in how the area is identified consistent with state law. The proposed policy amendment is being processed with the proposed GPP amendments in the 2015 Comprehensive Plan Update.

Incorporate proof of airspace analysis pursuant to Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) height hazard regulations into permit process. Implements GPP policy LU 12.C.2.

Develop special permit criteria to be applied for specific uses or intensity of uses adjacent to airports, as defined through this project, to discourage incompatible uses and help uses adjacent to airports to be compatible with airport operations. Implements GPP policies LU 12.A.1 and LU 12.C.1.

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STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH

The project includes stakeholder and community outreach appropriate to the scope and timeline of this project. State law requires a formal consultation process with WSDOT Aviation Division, affected airports, pilots, and ports. PDS staff has already begun consulting with WSDOT and the airports. PDS staff has also identified other stakeholders and community groups to reach out to over the summer and fall of 2014. The consultation and stakeholder outreach process is expected to help refine and shape the code drafting process.

WSDOT Aviation Division provides technical guidance to jurisdictions to help meet the requirements of the state law. That guidance includes suggestions for steps to follow for meeting the state law, delineating areas to apply regulations to discourage incompatible uses, types of uses or intensity of uses that may be of concern, and outreach. PDS staff has taken this guidance as well as examples from other jurisdictions into account in developing the project scope.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

County General Policy Plan:

<http://snohomishcountywa.gov/1566/General-Policy-Plan>

PDS Code Development Projects Webpage:

<http://snohomishcountywa.gov/2177/Code-Development-Projects>

WSDOT Aviation Resources:

<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/aviation/Planning/ACLUguide.htm>

PROJECT TIMELINE

In order to meet the June 2015 deadline, PDS plans to go to Snohomish County Planning Commission with proposed code amendments and transmit an ordinance to the County Council in the first quarter of 2015. The proposed policy amendment will be included in the formal Planning Commission briefing and hearing for the 2015 Comprehensive Plan Update.



PROJECT CONTACT

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