
Introduction

1.1 OVERVIEW OF THE PLAN

The basic function of airport land use compatibility plans (ALUCPs or compatibility plans) is to promote compatibility between airports and the land uses that surround them "to the extent that these areas are not already devoted to incompatible uses" (Pub. Util. Code §21674(a)). With limited exception, California law requires preparation of ALUCPs for each public-use and military airport in the state. Most counties have established an Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC), as provided for by law, to prepare compatibility plans for the airports in that county and to review land use plans, development proposals, and certain airport development plans for consistency with the compatibility plans. In Santa Barbara County, the ALUC function rests with the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG).

This Compatibility Plan,¹ prepared for Santa Barbara County Airports, is the fundamental tool used by the SBCAG, acting in its capacity as the Santa Barbara County ALUC, in fulfilling its purpose of promoting airport land use compatibility. Specifically, this Compatibility Plan: (1) provides for the orderly growth of the Airports and the area surrounding the Airports; and (2) safeguards the general welfare of the inhabitants within the vicinity of the Airports and the public in general (Pub. Util. Code §21675(a)). In essence, this Compatibility Plan serves as a tool for the ALUC to use in fulfilling its duty to review land use plans and development proposals within the Airport Influence Area (AIA) at the Airports. In addition, this Compatibility Plan provides compatibility policies and criteria applicable to local agencies in their preparation or amendment of general plans and to landowners in their design of new development.

Details regarding the purpose, scope, and applicability of this Compatibility Plan are provided in Chapter 2, which also includes the procedural requirements for the review of development proposals. These procedures, together with the compatibility criteria, maps, and other policies in Chapter 3, comprise the tools the ALUC uses in reviewing proposed land use actions. Finally, Chapters 4 through 9 provide

¹ Relevant terms of art are defined in Section 2.2, Definitions, of this Compatibility Plan. Reference should be made to that section of Chapter 2 when interpreting and applying this Compatibility Plan.

background information on each of the Airports in Santa Barbara County, including information regarding the existing and planned facilities at each of the Airports, and existing and future conditions in each of the Airport"s environs.

Use of the Compatibility Plan is not solely limited to the ALUC. As noted above, the compatibility criteria included in this Compatibility Plan must be used by local agencies during their preparation or amendment of general plans. State law requires each local agency to modify its general plan to be consistent with the Compatibility Plan or to take special steps to overrule the ALUC. Furthermore, this Compatibility Plan applies not just to Santa Barbara County and the cities located within the County, but also to school districts, community college districts, special districts, and other local agencies when these entities consider the siting and design of new facilities or expansion of existing ones. Finally, private parties are subject to this Compatibility Plan either directly or as required in the general plans of Santa Barbara County and the Cities of Goleta, Santa Barbara, and Lompoc.

This Compatibility Plan replaces the Santa Barbara County Airport Land Use Plan, adopted in 1993, by the SBCAG.

1.1.1 Statutory Requirements

Powers and Duties

Requirements for creation of ALUCs were first established in 1967 under the California State Aeronautics Act (Pub. Util. Code §21670 et seq.). Although the law has been amended numerous times since its enactment, the fundamental purpose of ALUCs has remained unchanged. As expressed in the present statute, this purpose is "to protect public health, safety, and welfare by ensuring the orderly expansion of airports and the adoption of land use measures that minimize the public's exposure to excessive noise and safety hazards within areas around public airports to the extent that these areas are not already devoted to incompatible uses" (Pub. Util. Code §21670(a)(2)).

The law defines the powers and duties of ALUCs in terms that parallel the ALUC's purpose:

- To assist local agencies in ensuring compatible land uses in the vicinity of airports to the extent that land is not already devoted to incompatible uses.
- To prepare and adopt an airport land use compatibility plan for each airport within its jurisdiction.
- To review the plans, regulations, and certain other actions of local agencies and airport operators for consistency with that plan.
- To coordinate planning at the state, regional and local levels, so as to provide for the orderly development of air transportation, while at the same time protecting the public health, safety and welfare.

(Pub. Util. Code §21674.)

Limitations

The above fundamental purpose and the powers and duties notwithstanding, the Aeronautics Act cites three important limitations on an ALUC's authority: (1) ALUCs have no authority over existing land uses regardless of whether such uses are incompatible with airport activities (Pub. Util. Code §21670 (a)(2) and §21674(a)); (2) ALUCs have no jurisdiction over the "operation of airports" (Pub. Util. Code §21674(e)); and (3) ALUCs have no jurisdiction over federal lands, such as military bases and lands controlled by the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, or lands under the authority of American Indian tribes and bands (Pub. Util. Code §21675(b)). A fourth, less absolute limitation on ALUC authority concerns the types of land use actions subject to ALUC review. The law emphasizes that local general plans are the primary mechanism for implementing the compatibility policies of an ALUC's compatibility plan. Thus, each local agency with land located within the AIA for an airport is required to make its general plan consistent with the compatibility plan, or to take special steps to overrule all or part of an ALUC's compatibility plan (Pub. Util. Code §§21675.1(d), 21676, 21676.5(a)). If a local agency fails to take either action, then the ALUC may require each local agency with land located within the AIA for an airport to submit all land use development actions involving property located within the AIA to the ALUC for review (Pub. Util. Code §21676.5(a)). Once the ALUC has determined that the local agency's general plan is consistent with the compatibility plan, or the local agency overrules the ALUC's compatibility plan, the ALUC's authority to review projects within that agency's jurisdiction is limited. After this point, submittal of individual projects for ALUC review is voluntary and ALUC determinations on these projects are advisory and not subject to the overruling provisions associated with mandatory reviews (Pub. Util. Code §21676.5(b)). However, ALUC review remains mandatory for the proposed adoption or amendment of general plans affecting land within the AIA.

1.1.2 Santa Barbara County Airport Land Use Commission

As noted earlier in this chapter, the SBCAG serves as the ALUC in Santa Barbara County. The SBCAG assumed the ALUC duties from the Santa Barbara County-Cities Area Planning Council (APC) when the APC was renamed the SBCAG in 1990. (APC had served as the Santa Barbara County ALUC since December 31, 1970 when the ALUC function was first established.)

1.1.3 Relationship of the ALUC to Local Agencies

The fundamental relationship between the Santa Barbara County ALUC and the local agencies that may be affected by this Compatibility Plan is set forth in the Aeronautics Act. The ALUC does not need approval of the County or any city in order to adopt this Compatibility Plan or to carry out the ALUC project review responsibilities; however, the ALUC must coordinate its activities with local agencies. In one particular respect, this coordination is mandatory. State law requires "hearing and consultation with the involved agencies" with regard to establishment and modification of AIA boundaries (Pub. Util. Code §21675(c)).

Another aspect of the relationship between the ALUC and local agencies concerns implementation of the Compatibility Plan. Although the ALUC has the sole authority to adopt this Compatibility Plan and to conduct consistency reviews, the authority and responsibility for implementing the compatibility policies rests with the local agencies that control land uses within the AIA. Actions that these local agencies can take to implement the Compatibility Plan's policies are outlined later in this chapter.

1.2 POLICY FRAMEWORK

The policies in Chapters 2 and 3 of this Compatibility Plan are based on the following primary sources: the Aeronautics Act, the ALP and the airport diagram for each of the Airports that are a subject of this Compatibility Plan and other State laws, regulations, and guidelines, including those in the California Airport Land Use Planning Handbook (Handbook) published by the Division of Aeronautics in October 2011. A copy of the Handbook is available on the Division of Aeronautics website at (<http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/planning/aeronaut/documents/AirportLandUsePlanningHandbook.pdf/>).

1.2.1 State Laws and Guidelines

Many of the procedures that govern how ALUCs operate are defined by State law. Statutory provisions in the Public Utilities Code require ALUC adoption of compatibility plans for each public-use and military airport, and establish certain steps to be taken during the plan adoption process (see Pub. Util. Code §21675). The law also dictates the requirements for airport land use compatibility reviews by ALUCs and the types of actions that local agencies must submit to ALUCs for consistency reviews (see Pub. Util. Code §§21675.2, 21676, 21676.5).

When preparing compatibility plans for individual airports, ALUCs must be guided by the information in the Handbook (Pub. Util. Code §21674.7). To be guided by the Handbook, ALUCs must have at least examined and duly considered the material contained in it. The burden is on ALUCs to demonstrate their reasons for deviating from the guidance that the Handbook provides. These requirements notwithstanding, ALUCs have a significant degree of flexibility and discretion to make planning decisions they deem appropriate for the airports within their jurisdiction. Except to the extent that it explicitly refers to State laws, the Handbook is not regulatory in that it does not constitute formal State policy. Rather, the Handbook provides guidance and is intended to serve as the starting point for compatibility planning around individual airports. When in doubt regarding the Handbook's guidance, ALUCs are encouraged to contact the Division of Aeronautics staff. The policies and maps in this Compatibility Plan take into account the guidance provided by the current edition of the Handbook, dated October 2011.

An additional function of the Handbook is established elsewhere in California State law. The Public Resources Code creates a tie between the Handbook and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) documents. Public Resources Code section 21096 requires that CEQA lead agencies use the Handbook

as "a technical resource" when assessing airport-related noise and safety impacts of projects located in the vicinity of airports.

1.2.2 Relationship to Airport Master Plans

ALUCPs are distinct from airport master plans in function and content. Broadly, the issues addressed by airport master plans are primarily on-airport, whereas those of concern in an ALUCP are generally off-airport. The purpose of airport master plans is to assess the demand for airport facilities and to guide the development necessary to meet those demands. An airport master plan is prepared for, and adopted by, the agency that owns and/or operates the airport. In contrast, the major purpose of an ALUCP is to ensure that incompatible development does not occur on land surrounding the airports.

This distinction notwithstanding, the relationship between the two types of plans is close. State law requires that ALUCPs be based on a long-range airport master plan or ALP, as determined by the Division of Aeronautics, which reflects the anticipated growth of the airport for at least the next 20 years. The relationship between an ALUCP and an airport master plan or ALP, therefore, centers on the current and future airport layout and existing and projected airport activity.

The responsibility for the master plans for Santa Barbara County airports lies with the airport proprietors. In the absence of a current airport master plan, State law allows an ALUC's compatibility plan to be based on an ALP with the approval of the Division of Aeronautics. In letters dated _____, 2012, _____, 2012, and _____, 2012, the Division of Aeronautics approved the ALUC's request to use the airport operator's most recent ALP for _____, _____, and _____ airports. The approval letters are provided in Appendix I.

1.2.3 Relationship to AICUZ Studies

Federal regulations require the military services to prepare an AICUZ study for each military airfield. The AICUZ program was established by the Department of Defense (DOD) in response to increasing incompatible urban development around military airfields. DOD Instruction Number 4165.57 (November 8, 1977) (Basic Instruction) provides the overall guidance for the program. Each military service has its own individual guidelines for implementing the Basic Instruction.

AICUZ plans prepared for individual military airfields serve as recommendations to local agencies. However, California State law (Pub. Util. Code §21675(b)) not only requires that ALUCs prepare an ALUCP for each military airport in their jurisdiction, but also that such plan "be consistent with the safety and noise standards ..." in the AICUZ for that airport.

1.3 FORECASTING METHODOLOGY

State law requires that a compatibility plan reflect "the anticipated growth of the airport during at least the next 20 years" (Pub. Util. Code §21675(a)). In addition, as discussed above, the compatibility plan is to be based on the airport sponsor's adopted airport master plan, where one exists, or an ALP that has been accepted by the Division of Aeronautics for airport compatibility planning. ALUC planning assumptions regarding future aircraft activity at an airport must be consistent with the role of the airport as identified in an airport master plan or ALP.

Frequently, unless the airport master plan is recent, the forecasts cannot be used directly because they do not cover the requisite 20-year period. This issue is addressed in the Handbook (pages 3-46 and 3-47):

A potential shortcoming of [airport master plans] is that the forecasts may not extend far enough into the future to adequately serve the purposes of airport land use compatibility planning. ...

Since land uses tend to endure for long periods of time, it is appropriate for aviation forecasts to anticipate activity levels at the high end of the range of plausible levels. Forecasts that are somewhat high will help preserve an envelope within which future aviation activities can take place in harmony with nearby land uses.

The caveat to this methodology, as also stated in the Handbook, is that the forecasts must remain consistent with the role of the airport as envisioned by the airport proprietor: "Ultimately, state law forces ALUCs to accept plans adopted by airport owners, even if the ALUC considers the plans either unrealistically grandiose or too modest." (Handbook, p. 3-47.)

Policies in this Compatibility Plan are based on projected airport activity levels located in the airport master plan and/or ALP for each of the Airports in Santa Barbara County and have been developed in accordance with the forecasting methodology guidance in the Handbook. Specific factors considered when determining the 20+ year future activity levels for each of the Airports are described in Chapter 4.

1.4 PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

1.4.1 General Plan Consistency

As noted previously, State law requires each local agency having jurisdiction over land uses within an ALUC's planning area to modify its general plans to be consistent with the compatibility plan. The other option is to overrule all or part of an ALUC's compatibility plan within 180 days of when the ALUC adopts or amends it. If a local agency fails to take either action, the ALUC may require the local agency

to submit all land use development actions involving property within the AIA to the ALUC for review (Pub. Util. Code §21676.5 (a)).

The local agency may propose to overrule an ALUC's compatibility plan after a hearing by a two-thirds vote of its governing body if it makes specific findings that the local agency's plans are consistent with the intent of State airport land use planning statutes. The local agency must provide both the ALUC and the Division of Aeronautics a copy of the local agency's proposed decision and findings at least 45 days in advance of its decision to overrule the ALUC and must hold a public hearing on the proposed overruling (Pub. Util. Code §21676(a) and (b)). If the ALUC and the Division of Aeronautics choose to provide comments to the local agency, they must do so within 30 days of receiving the proposed decision and findings. All comments received from the ALUC or Division of Aeronautics must be included in the public record of the local agency's final decision to overrule the ALUC (Pub. Util. Code §§21676, 21676.5 and 21677). Similar requirements apply to a local agency's decision to overrule the ALUC's consistency determinations for individual development proposals for which ALUC review is mandatory (Pub. Util. Code §21676.5(a)) and airport master plans (Pub. Util. Code §21676(c)).

General plans do not need to be identical to an ALUC's compatibility plan to be consistent. To meet the consistency test, general plans must do two things:

- Eliminate direct conflicts with compatibility planning criteria.
- Establish procedures that implement and ensure compliance with compatibility policies.

To do this, general plans must:

- Delineate the compatibility criteria to be applied to individual development actions.
- Identify the mechanisms to be used to apply relevant criteria to a particular development.
- Indicate the procedures to be followed in review and approval of development actions affecting lands within the AIA.

Policy 2.8 in Chapter 2 contains additional information, including the methods local agencies can employ to make general plans consistent with an ALUC's compatibility plan.

1.4.2 Project Referrals

The types of land use actions for which referral to the ALUC are mandatory include the adoption and amendment of general plans if land within an AIA, as defined by the ALUC, is affected. This requirement to refer land use actions to the ALUC for review should be indicated in the general plans of all affected local agencies.

Additionally, beginning with adoption of the compatibility plan by the ALUC and continuing until each affected local agency has made the necessary modifications to its general plan or overruled the ALUC's compatibility plan, all subsequent land use actions, regulations and permits within the AIA may be submitted to the ALUC for review. After the local agency has made its general plan consistent with the compatibility plan or has overruled the ALUC's compatibility plan, submittal of individual actions,

regulations, and permits generally is not required. The ALUC and the local agency, however, can agree on continued submittal of certain actions on an informal basis.

Proposed airport master plans, expansion of an existing airport, and plans for construction of a new airport (or heliport) also must be submitted to the ALUC for review in accordance with Public Utilities Code sections 21676 (c), 21664.5, and 21661.5, respectively. This referral requirement is independent of whether the local agency has taken action with regard to the consistency of its general plan.

1.5 PLAN CONTENTS

This Compatibility Plan is organized into nine chapters and ____ appendices. The intent of this introductory chapter is to set the overall context of airport land use compatibility planning, in general, and for the Airports in Santa Barbara County ALUC, in particular.

Chapters 2 and 3 contain the policies by which the ALUC operates and conducts compatibility reviews of proposed land use and airport development actions. The policies in Chapter 2 are written broadly, so as to address overarching compatibility concerns. The compatibility criteria and other policies applicable to the each of the Airports in Santa Barbara County are described in Chapter 3. Chapters 4 through 9 present a variety of background data on each of the Airports and their environs, and documents the data and assumptions on which the compatibility policy maps for each of the airports are based.

The appendices contain copies of supporting information pertaining to airports and airport land use compatibility planning.