

TO: JAMES L. APP, CITY MANAGER  
FROM: BOB LATA, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR  
SUBJECT: DRAFT AIRPORT MASTER PLAN AND LAND USE PLAN  
DATE: MARCH 16, 2004

Needs: For the City Council to consider the recommendations of the Planning Commission, Airport Advisory Committee and ad hoc Committee regarding the two subject draft documents.

Facts:

1. The current Airport Master Plan and Airport Land Use Plan date back to the mid-1970s. Over about the past two years, the City has been refining draft updates to both documents.
2. The new draft Airport Master Plan is designed to be adopted by the City Council. The Master Plan anticipates what future improvements would be made to the physical facilities at the Airport. The timing of this work will be contingent upon both demand and the availability of funding.
3. The companion draft Airport Land Use Plan is being prepared by the City for consideration by the County Airport Land Use Commission. The Land Use Plan is intended to establish restrictions that will minimize / avoid incompatibilities between the future use of the Airport and the use of properties within a specified Airport Land Use Review Area that surrounds the Airport.
4. The content of the draft Land Use Plan is consistent with the land use designations contained in the City's General Plan update that was adopted December 16, 2003.
5. On January 27, 2004, the Planning Commission considered the two draft plans and unanimously recommended City Council support for the plans. Their recommendation included a strong emphasis on avoiding residential land uses within the Airport Land Use Review Area.

Analysis  
and

Conclusion:

The Planning Commission consideration of the draft Airport Master Plan and draft Airport Land Use Plan was part of a process that has been underway for approximately three years. During that three-year period, there have been extensive opportunities for public input and discussion:

- 12 Airport Advisory Committee meetings
- 10 ad hoc Committee meetings
- 7 additional public workshops / meetings

The draft plans reflect the work of an ad hoc Committee consisting of representatives of the City's Airport Advisory Committee and City Council members, plus input from all of the City's Airport Advisory Committee.

Over the past months, and particularly in response to input from business and property owners at a series of public meetings, the two draft plans have been modified and refined to reflect a balance between priorities. The proposed refinements have been reflective of the City's dual goals of economic development and protection of the long-term viability of the Paso Robles Regional Airport.

During the formulation of their recommendations, the ad hoc Committee and Airport Advisory Committee considered and responded to a number of inquiries from business and/or property owners. Attached is a copy of the staff report to the Airport Advisory Committee that summarizes both the comments and responses to comments.

The Airport Master Plan anticipates future expansion of Airport facilities in response to demand and the availability of Federal funding. Because implementing the plan is driven by both demand and funding, there is no firm schedule for the described improvements. The Master Plan is, however, designed to anticipate the maximum feasible future operational capacity of the Airport within the Council's adopted vision as a Regional Airport.

The related Airport Land Use Plan is intended to protect the long-term viability of the Airport, addressing safety and land use compatibility. A primary concern during discussions over past months has been the number of persons per acre that would be permitted for future business / commercial land uses within the Airport Land Use Review Area.

The number of persons per acre for business / commercial uses is primarily an issue of public safety, particularly in areas that are directly in flight paths.

The recommended policy amendments to the draft Airport Master Plan and Airport Land Use Plan are contained in the pages labeled “Exhibit A”. The table, text, and matrix in Exhibit “A” reflect the recommendations of the Airport Advisory Committee and the Planning Commission.

As noted above, a related concern of both the Advisory Committee and the Planning Commission is the avoidance of new residential land use entitlements within the Airport Land Use Review Area.

The City’s General Plan currently prohibits subdivision of property to create new residential entitlements. In its present form, the Draft Airport Land Use Plan is consistent with the City’s General Plan. The Airport Advisory Committee and Planning Commission are recommending retention of this restriction and avoidance of new residential entitlements within the area around the Airport.

It is important to stress that the City is not the adopting agency for the Airport Land Use Plan. Once approved by the City Council, the draft Airport Land Use Plan will be forwarded to the County Airport Land Use Commission for their consideration. They have the option of adopting, modifying or rejecting the draft plan.

One should also note that the Airport Land Use Plan, once adopted, will apply to both the City and County Unincorporated Areas. Hence, protective measures would extend beyond the City’s jurisdiction. Hence, reducing restrictions on incompatible land uses in the City would have implications for a much larger geographic area.

Policy

Reference:

General Plan, Airport Master Plan, Airport Land Use Plan

Fiscal

Impact:

Adoption of the Airport Master Plan does not commit the City to any specific expenditures, however to implement the plan will generally require the City to provide matching funds for Federal participation in Airport Improvements. Recommending the Airport Land Use Plan does not have direct fiscal impacts, but establishment of incompatible land uses within the Airport Land Use Review Area or any other location that could conflict with future Airport operations could have significant adverse impacts on Airport operations which, in turn, could have fiscal implications on the City.

Options:

- a. Support the consistent recommendations of the ad hoc committee, the Airport Advisory Committee and the Planning Commission with regard to the City Council forwarding a copy of the Draft Airport Master Plan to the County Airport Land Use Commission for their review and comments, and the Draft Airport Land Use Plan to the County Airport Land Use Commission for their formal adoption. The recommended amendments to the draft documents are contained in Exhibit A of the staff report.
- b. Amend, modify, or reject the above option.

**AIRPORT MASTER PLAN, LAND USE PLAN  
Review Process**

<p>Consultant develops draft documents. Airport Advisory Committee review and input plus City Council Ad Hoc committee review. Process underway for about 3 years.</p>
<p>Airport Advisory Committee Public review and recommendation to City Council.</p>
<p>Planning Commission Public review and recommendation to City Council.</p>
<p>City Council was requested to confirm the policies in the documents before referral to outside agencies for their review &amp; comment. Based on public input received at the Council meeting, the Council sent the documents back to Ad Hoc Committee for further review of public testimony and possible modification to land use standards.</p>
<p>Ad Hoc committee met 10 times and held two (2) public workshops to hear public testimony. Based thereon, modifications to land use standards are recommended.</p>
<p>Airport Advisory Committee reviews proposed modifications for recommendation to the City Council. Throughout the process, 12 public meetings to discuss the draft plans.</p>
<p>Planning Commission reviews modifications for recommendation to the City Council.</p>
<p>City Council is requested to authorize the recommended draft documents be referred to outside agencies for review, comment and/or action, as required. The next steps:</p>

<b>Master Plan</b>	<b>Land Use Plan</b>
Airport Land Use Commission reviews Master Plan for consistency with the Land Use Plan	Airport Land Use Commission begins review of draft Land Use Plan document
City consultant prepares environmental documentation	County initiates environmental documentation
Plan is submitted to the FAA and CALTRANS for comment	Plan is submitted to CALTRANS for review and comment
<u>City Council</u> conducts public hearing to adopt environmental determination and to adopt the Airport Master Plan	<u>Airport Land Use Commission</u> conducts public hearing to adopt environmental determination and to adopt the Land Use Plan

## Paso Robles Airport Land Use Plan; Justification - 55dB CNEL Noise Limits

The draft Airport Land Use Plan update adopts the 55dB CNEL noise contour as the limit for compatibility with residential development in the airport area. This seems a reasonable minimum standard for the following reasons:

The Plan identifies the Paso Robles Airport as being located in a quiet, rural setting. Page 4-11 of the Plan cites Public Utilities Code and California Code of Regulations sections mandating the adoption of suitable standards.

The Plan cites the discussion in the State Handbook (pages 7-23 through 7-25) which indicates that 55dB CNEL is the most appropriate value for residential noise compatibility in such settings.

The Handbook identifies a process of *normalization*, or further justification for reduction from the Federal noise standard ( 65dB) to the lower (55dB) criteria when the environment is a quiet suburban area.

The draft Airport Land Use Plan update cites recommendations of the U.S. EPA and its similar discussion of noise impacts on outdoor residential activity. The plan is actually less stringent than the EPA - recommended 50dB limits.

The Plan quotes the study by a task force of the World Health Organization and the similar findings and recommendations listed therein.

The experience of the County Airport Land Use Commission is quoted as it applies to areas of demonstrated incompatibility - areas where noise complaints originate around the Airport. The San Luis Obispo Airport has documented a significant number of complaints from outside the 55dB CNEL line. Although the Paso Robles complaint history is not as substantial, the Commission has stated in open forum that there is no reason to expect any less complaints from the quiet rural setting around the Paso Robles Airport, as airport activity increases.

Table 7C of the State handbook identifies 55dB as the limit for new residential uses in quiet rural locations.

The State handbook, page 7-23, in the opening discussion on variables to the noise criteria contradicts the federal and state policies and regulations which set 65dB as the basic limit of acceptable noise exposure for residential and other noise-sensitive uses by stating: *"... for ... many - if not most - airports in California, CNEL 65dB is too high ... to be appropriate as a standard for land use compatibility planning..."*

The paragraph continues: *" ... the FAA ... will "respect and support" local establishment of a lower threshold of noise exposure acceptability..."*

The State handbook, page 7-30, addresses the single-event noise level in the neighborhood around a low-activity airport. The single event creates much more impact on the quiet environment than a sustained, higher ambient (65dB CNEL) noise level.

Conclusion: There is significant justification for maintaining the 55dB CNEL limit as the minimum standard for residential development around the airport. It should, however, be noted that this is a minimum standard and does not provide a basis to support General Plan Amendments to reduce the amount of protection from incompatible residential development within the Airport Land Use Review Area.

**ALL ATTACHMENTS TO THIS STAFF REPORT MAY NOT BE AVAILABLE  
IN DIGITAL FORMAT FOR VIEWING ON-LINE.**

A hard-copy of the complete agenda packet, along with all staff reports, exhibits and attachments, is available for review in the City Clerk's Office.

**Packets are also available for loan from the City Library,  
beginning on the Friday before each Council meeting.**