



# Federal Aviation Administration

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## Memorandum

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To: Regional Airports Division Managers  
610 Branch Managers  
620 Branch Managers  
ADO Managers

From: *Benito De Leon*  
Benito De Leon, Director  
Office of Airport Planning and Programming (APP-1)  
*Michael J. O'Donnell*  
Michael J. O'Donnell, Director  
Office of Airport Safety and Standards (AAS-1)

Subject: Interim Guidance on Land Uses Within a Runway Protection Zone

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### Background

The FAA Office of Airports (ARP) has identified the need to clarify our policy on land uses within the Runway Protection Zone (RPZ). This memorandum presents interim policy guidance on compatible land uses within Runway Protection Zones (RPZ) to address recurrent questions about what constitutes a compatible land use and how to evaluate proposed land uses that would reside in an RPZ. While Advisory Circular 150/5300-Change 17(Airport Design) notes that "it is desirable to clear all objects from the RPZ," it also acknowledges that "some uses are permitted" with conditions and other "land uses are prohibited."

RPZ land use compatibility also is often complicated by ownership considerations. Airport owner control over the RPZ land is emphasized to achieve the desired protection of people and property on the ground. Although the FAA recognizes that in certain situations the airport sponsor may not fully control land within the RPZ, the FAA expects airport sponsors to take all possible measures to protect against and remove or mitigate incompatible land uses.

ARP is developing a new guidance document for the Regional Office (RO) and Airport District Office (ADO) staff that clarifies our policy regarding land uses in the RPZ. This new guidance document will outline a comprehensive review process for existing and proposed land uses within an RPZ and is slated for publication in 2013. We also intend to incorporate RPZ land use considerations into the ongoing update to the Land Use Compatibility Advisory Circular (AC) which is slated for publication in 2014.

This memorandum outlines interim guidance for ARP RO and ADO staff to follow until the comprehensive RPZ land use guidance is published.

## **Interim Guidance**

### **New or Modified Land Uses in the RPZ**

Regional and ADO staff must consult with the National Airport Planning and Environmental Division, APP-400 (who will coordinate with the Airport Engineering Division, AAS-100), when any of the land uses described in **Table 1** would enter the limits of the RPZ as the result of:

1. An airfield project (e.g., runway extension, runway shift)
2. A change in the critical design aircraft that increases the RPZ dimensions
3. A new or revised instrument approach procedure that increases the RPZ dimensions
4. A local development proposal in the RPZ (either new or reconfigured)

**Table 1: Land Uses Requiring Coordination with APP-400**

- Buildings and structures (Examples include, but are not limited to: residences, schools, churches, hospitals or other medical care facilities, commercial/industrial buildings, etc.)
- Recreational land use (Examples include, but are not limited to: golf courses, sports fields, amusement parks, other places of public assembly, etc.)
- Transportation facilities. Examples include, but are not limited to:
  - Rail facilities – light or heavy, passenger or freight
  - Public roads/highways
  - Vehicular parking facilities
- Fuel storage facilities (above and below ground)
- Hazardous material storage (above and below ground)
- Wastewater treatment facilities
- Above-ground utility infrastructure (i.e. electrical substations), including any type of solar panel installations.

Land uses that may create a safety hazard to air transportation resulting from wildlife hazard attractants such as retention ponds or municipal landfills are not subject to RPZ standards since these types of land uses do not create a hazard to people and property on the ground. Rather, these land uses are controlled by other FAA policies and standards. In accordance with the relevant Advisory Circulars, the Region/ADO must coordinate land use proposals that create wildlife hazards with AAS-300, regardless of whether the proposed land use occurs within the limits of an RPZ.

### **Alternatives Analysis**

Prior to contacting APP-400, the RO and ADO staff must work with the airport sponsor to identify and document the full range of alternatives that could:

1. Avoid introducing the land use issue within the RPZ
2. Minimize the impact of the land use in the RPZ (i.e., routing a new roadway through the controlled activity area, move farther away from the runway end, etc.)

3. Mitigate risk to people and property on the ground (i.e., tunneling, depressing and/or protecting a roadway through the RPZ, implement operational measures to mitigate any risks, etc.)

Documentation of the alternatives should include:

- A description of each alternative including a narrative discussion and exhibits or figures depicting the alternative
- Full cost estimates associated with each alternative regardless of potential funding sources.
- A practicability assessment based on the feasibility of the alternative in terms of cost, constructability and other factors.
- Identification of the preferred alternative that would meet the project purpose and need while minimizing risk associated with the location within the RPZ.
- Identification of all Federal, State and local transportation agencies involved or interested in the issue.
- Analysis of the specific portion(s) and percentages of the RPZ affected, drawing a clear distinction between the Central Portion of the RPZ versus the Controlled Activity Area, and clearly delineating the distance from the runway end and runway landing threshold.
- Analysis of (and issues affecting) sponsor control of the land within the RPZ.
- Any other relevant factors for HQ consideration.

APP-400 will consult with AAS-100 when reviewing the project documents provided by the RO/ADO. APP-400 and AAS-100 will work with the Region/ADO to make a joint determination regarding Airport Layout Plan (ALP) approval after considering the proposed land use, location within the RPZ and documentation of the alternatives analysis.

In addition, APP-400 and AAS-100 will work with the Region/ADO to craft language for inclusion in the airspace determination letter regarding any violations to ensure that all stakeholders (including tenants, operators, and insurers) are fully apprised of the issues and potential risks and liabilities associated with permitting such facilities within the RPZ.

### **Existing Land Uses in the RPZ**

This interim policy only addresses the introduction of new or modified land uses to an RPZ and proposed changes to the RPZ size or location. Therefore, at this time, the RO and ADO staff shall continue to work with sponsors to remove or mitigate the risk of any existing incompatible land uses in the RPZ as practical.

For additional information or questions regarding this interim guidance, please contact either Ralph Thompson, APP-400, at [ralph.thompson@faa.gov](mailto:ralph.thompson@faa.gov) or (202) 267-8772 or Danielle Rinsler, APP-401, at [danielle.rinsler@faa.gov](mailto:danielle.rinsler@faa.gov) or (202) 267-8784.