

California Department of Transportation

AERONAUTICS PROGRAM
DIVISION OF TRANSPORTATION PLANNING
P.O. BOX 942873, MS-40 | SACRAMENTO, CA 94273-0001
(916) 654-4959
www.dot.ca.gov



February 9, 2024

Hannah Thomas
Planner
County of Santa Barbara, Planning and Development
Planning and Development 123 E. Anapamu Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Electronically Sent <pullenh@countyofsb.org>

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

Feb 12 2024

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

Re: SCH #2022070490 County of Santa Barbara 2023-2031 Housing Element Update

Dear Ms. Thomas:

The California Department of Transportation, Caltrans Aeronautics has reviewed the Draft EIR for the County of Santa Barbara 2023-2031 Housing Element Update. One of the goals of the California Department of Transportation, Aeronautics, is to assist cities, counties, and Airport Land Use Commissions or their equivalent (ALUC), to understand and comply with the State Aeronautics Act pursuant to the California Public Utilities Code (PUC), Section 21001 et seq. Caltrans encourages collaboration with our partners in the planning process and thanks you for including the Aeronautics Program in the review of the Draft EIR.

In accordance with CEQA, Public Resources Code Section 21096, the Caltrans California Airport Land Use Planning Handbook (Handbook) must be utilized as a resource in the preparation of environmental documents for projects within airport land use compatibility plan boundaries, or if such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of an airport. The Handbook is a resource for all public use airports and is available online at: <https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/aeronautics/documents/californiaairportlanduseplanninghandbook-ally.pdf>

The Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) serves as the Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) for Santa Barbara County, in this capacity it has adopted airport land use compatibility plans (ALUCP) for four airports: Santa Barbara Airport, Santa Maria Airport, Lompoc Airport, Santa Ynez Airport, as well as the Vandenberg Space Force Base pursuant to the PUC, Section 21674. An ALUCP is crucial in minimizing noise nuisance and safety hazards around airports while promoting the orderly development of airports, as declared by the California Legislature. A responsibility of the ALUC is to assess potential risk to aircraft and persons in airspace and people occupying areas within the vicinity of the airport.

General Plans

Per the California Public Utilities Code Section 21001 et seq. relating to the State Aeronautics Act, Section 21676(b) prior to the amendment of a general plan...within the planning boundary established by the airport land use commission pursuant to Section 21675, the local agency shall first refer the proposed action to the commission. If the commission determines that the proposed action is inconsistent with the commission's plan, the referring agency shall be notified. Any proposed development in the defined safety zones, therefore, must adhere to the safety criteria and restrictions defined in the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan(s) adopted by the ALUC pursuant to the PUC, Section 21674.

Housing

The Draft EIR for the County of Santa Barbara 2023-2031 Housing Element Update outlines new housing development in airport Safety Zones 2, 4, and 6 of the Santa Barbara Airport and the Santa Maria Airport. The Housing Element should meet the requirements of these safety zones, which stipulates density and intensity measures, and land use restrictions including the restriction of new residential development in Safety Zone 2 per the ALUCPs. The implementation of MM HAZ-3 (Compliance with ALUCP Density and Open Land Requirements) aims to ensure compliance with the requirements of ALUCPs and restrict the use of future development of sites in airport safety zones.

Caltrans Aeronautics stresses the importance of considering the compatibility policies in the ALUCPs, with references in the Caltrans Aeronautics Handbook for supplemental guidance. Caltrans Aeronautics understands that the County is facing affordable housing supply shortages and is looking for new areas to accommodate residential developments. Increased residential development in airport safety zones would have the potential to introduce new residents to airport safety hazards. Consequently, environmental justice and equity concerns should also be reviewed for consistency with goals identified in the California Transportation Plan 2050 (CTP 2050) and the California Aviation System Plan 2020 (CASP 2020).

Caltrans Aeronautics notes that new laws regarding the provision of housing do not supersede existing laws, including Section 21670 of the California Public Utilities Code, which require counties to establish ALUCs and compatibility plans to protect public health, safety, and welfare.

Hazards to Flight

Proposed projects may also be subject to 14 CFR Part 77 Conical Surface standards and CNEL contours noise compatibility of an airport, which may require noise reduction measures. Please be aware, Public Utilities Code, Section 21659, "Hazards Near Airports Prohibited" prohibits structural hazards near airports. To ensure compliance with Federal Aviation Regulation, Part 77, "Objects Affecting Navigable Airspace," submission of a Notice of Proposed Construction or Alteration (Form 7460-1) to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) may be required.

Compatibility concerns regarding airport obstructions and hazards to flight (such as wildlife attractants, lighting, or glare i.e., solar, etc.) should also be considered for further review upon site specific updates or projects. In addition, any proposed projects identified as hazardous material sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5, compatibility restrictions should be reviewed per the ALUCP of an airport.

Closing Statements

The protection of airports from incompatible land use encroachment is vital to California's economic future. Airports are an economic asset that should be protected through effective airport land use compatibility planning and engagement with stakeholders and the community. Although the need for compatible and safe land uses near airports is both a local and State issue, it is crucial to adhere to the requirement that airport staff, airport land use commissions and airport land use compatibility plans are vital to protecting an airport and the people residing and working in the vicinity of an airport. Consideration given to the issue of compatible land uses in the vicinity of an airport aims to relieve future conflicts between airports and their neighbors.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on this proposal. If you have any questions, please contact me at (916) 879-6596 or by email at tiffany.martinez@dot.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Tiffany Martinez
Transportation Planner

c: State Clearinghouse <state.clearinghouse@opr.ca.gov>