

**MEMORANDUM**

To: Local Agency Planners  
From: Stephen Kiehl  
Subject: Airport compatible land use and your comprehensive plan  
Date: September 8, 2004

In 1996 the legislature amended the Growth Management Act and Planning Enabling Act to protect public use general aviation airports from land use encroachment. The new law requires local agencies to use their comprehensive plans and development regulations to discourage the siting of incompatible land uses near these airports. The State Department of Transportation Aviation Division and the State Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development (CTED) have primary responsibility for monitoring local agency implementation of the law. The Puget Sound Regional Council reviews airport compatible land use as part of its comprehensive plan review and certification process. The process requires cities and counties to identify airports located within or adjacent to their boundaries, provide an inventory of existing and planned land use near these airports, report on actions taken to discourage the siting of incompatible land uses, and identify future airport ground transportation access needs.

As part of its plan review and certification process, Regional Council staff provides comments on policy and plan language, and offers technical assistance to land use planners to assist them in identifying key airport land use compatibility issues and to help in developing policies and planning provisions to address those issues. Information about the plan review process and criteria can be found on the PSRC web site at the following address: <http://www.psrc.org/projects/planreview/index.htm>.

This year's state-mandated plan update requirements create an opportunity for Regional Council staff to coordinate with local planners to strengthen their planning policies and development regulations related to airport compatible land use. In July 2004 Regional Council staff completed a review of existing plans for communities where airport compatible land use provisions are needed (e.g., the community has an airport within its boundaries or is affected by a nearby airport). This work identified areas where planning policies and development regulations could be strengthened to improve the relationship between airports and their host communities, and where additional information may be needed to meet the Regional Council's requirements. During the remainder of 2004 Regional Council staff plans to use the results of this work in its plan review and certification process.

To give agency planners a head start, we're sending the results of our analysis to local agencies to help them address these issues during their current plan review and amendment process. In addition, we're sending some background information we hope will be useful. We've attached the following two documents:

**Attachment A** - *Summary Of PSRC Comprehensive Plan Review Comments Related To Airport Compatible Land Use Provisions In Local Comprehensive Plans (July 15, 2004)*

The plan evaluation summary outlines the Regional Council's airport compatible land use information requirements (see Table 1), summarizes staff's analysis of existing comprehensive plans with respect to meeting the requirements, and includes comments and suggestions for improving plan content and language.

**Attachment B** - *Airport Compatible Land Use and Local Comprehensive Plans Background and Guidelines for Local Agencies (July 15, 2004)*

This report contains background information, including a statement of the Regional Council's interest and role in addressing airport compatible land use, a discussion of the major issues related to airport compatible land use, and guidelines to help local agency planners address airport compatible land use in their comprehensive plans and development regulations. The guidelines include references to numerous technical resources produced by FAA, WSDOT Aviation Division, CalTrans Division of Aeronautics, and others. These materials are offered as resources which may be helpful as agencies prepare comprehensive plan policies and other provisions.

Understanding that many local agencies have already begun their plan amendment process to meet the December 31, 2004 deadline, the comments, suggestions, and information requirements contained in ***Attachment A*** are intended to be advisory. However, local agencies are encouraged to incorporate as much required information as possible in their current planning efforts. Starting in 2005 this airport compatible land use information will be factored into Regional Council staff review of plan amendments and used in preparing recommendations for plan certification.

If you have any questions about the results of our review, our information requirements, or would like assistance, please contact Stephen Kiehl (1-206-464-6715 or [skiehl@psrc.org](mailto:skiehl@psrc.org)) or Rocky Piro (1-206-464-6360 or [rpiro@psrc.org](mailto:rpiro@psrc.org)).