

Solano County **Airport Land Use Commission**

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Planning Services Division

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Stephen Vancil Chairman

DATE: October 10, 2013

MEMORANDUM:

To: Solano County Airport Land Use Commission

From: Jim Leland, Principal Planner

Subject: ITEM 9B:

Conduct a Public Hearing to consider

RECOMMENDATION

Staff is recommending that the Commission:

- Authorize staff to begin work on the 2002 Travis Plan Update; approve the general scope of work and conceptual timeline; authorize staff to develop a detailed work program and budget for the Comprehensive Update to the 2002 Plan, including an option for a Joint Land Use Study for the Commission's review and approval, and
- 2. Approve the development of administrative items and interim measures described in this report for the Commission's consideration as follows:
 - A. Adopt recommended additions (See Exhibit A) to the submittal requirements for a consistency determination to require:
 - 1) An analysis of the potential effects from glint and glare,
 - 2) An analysis of the potential effects on radar, and
 - 3) An analysis of the potential operational impacts to the Base mission and operations

- 4) Submission of the final or certified copy of the environmental review document
- B. Direct staff to develop recommendations for additional interim measures focused on protection of the Assault Landing Zone Training Area for consideration by the Airport Land Use Commission prior to the ends of the calendar year.

BACKGROUND

Airport Land Use Commission Actions

At the Regular Meeting of September 12, 2013, the Solano County Airport Land Use Commission received a presentation from Travis Air Force Base regarding the utilization of the newly constructed and dedicated Assault Landing Zone. This area, generally located between the Base and Highway 12, contains low level tactical flight training by the Base. C-17's will be engaged in combat arrival/departure simulations with a minimum elevation of 500 feet above ground level. The Base has identified a clear zone of 300 feet that should be maintained between any structures and the 500 foot flight elevation. The effect of this requirement is to limit all structures for any land use to a maximum of two hundred feet in height.

The Commission directed staff to return with options for updating the 2002 Travis Air Force Base Land Use Compatibility Plan (Travis Plan) with respect to the Assault Landing Zone Training Area and to notify the Board of Supervisors of the need for potential funding to implement this request. The Commission expressed concern over the timing of the comprehensive update to the Travis Pan and the JLUS Study relative to short term issues associated with protecting the Assault landing Zone Training Area.

Solano County Actions

The Solano County Board of Supervisors, at its Regular Meeting of September 24, 2013, authorized the Department of Resource Management to begin assisting the ALUC in performing a comprehensive update to the 2002 Travis Plan. The comprehensive update will focus primarily on renewable energy projects located throughout the county as well as housecleaning amendments to improve the Plan. In addition, the Board authorized the Department of Resource Management to apply for a grant to conduct a Joint Land Use Study as a part of the 2002 Travis Plan update. The Department is required to return to the Board with a detailed budget and work program for Board approval. The County would administer the grant while the ALUC would be responsible to coordinate the Joint Land Use Study.

DISCUSSION

The Board of Supervisors has authorized County staff to begin mobilizing to support the Airport Land Use Commission's effort to update the 2002 Travis Plan. Staff has prepared an outline of the scope and timing for such an update for the Commission's review and comment. It is anticipated that the update will include participation in a Joint Land Use Study under a grant from the Department of Defense Office of Economic Adjustment. These items are discussed below.

Preliminary Scope of Work

Since the adoption of the 2002 Travis Plan, most local jurisdictions have brought their general plans into conformance. Significant residential and commercial development either has occurred or is still planned in areas around the Base in conformance with the 2002 Plan. There has only been one instance of a local agency overriding the Commission's actions during the past eleven years in order to approve a large scale retail store. Otherwise, the plan has worked to prevent incompatible land uses from encroaching on Travis.

Current Land Use Issues

Over the last seven years, there have been numerous wind energy projects before the Commission. With each new project, additional understanding was developed about the potential impacts wind turbines could have on radar facilities at Travis. To the credit of the industry, wind energy developers worked cooperatively with the Base and the County of Solano to further the understanding of wind turbine impacts and to secure mitigation measures to maintain the desired detection capability of the radar installations.

Notwithstanding these prior efforts, the minimum standard for the probability of detection is being approached as increasing demands are placed on the radar. The continuing development of utility-scale wind turbines throughout the County has the potential to erode the radar reception further. In addition, there is some evidence that utility-scale solar projects can have an adverse effect on radar reception. One utility scale solar project is in process just south of Cypress Golf Course and one other similar utility scale solar project on Ryer Island has been presented conceptually to the Planning Commission.

Staff is recommending that the primary focus of the update to the Travis Plan should respond to the increasing number of renewable energy projects which are being stimulated by federal and state policy favoring the deployment of renewable energy projects. Wind and solar energy projects have unique characteristics that can, in certain locations, become a nuisance to the activities and missions at the Base. For this reason, the Commission may want to focus the update on a careful review of the land use characteristics and potential impacts of renewable energy projects. This analysis would then be incorporated into the final recommendations for updated land use policies within the Travis Plan.

In addition, staff recommends that the Travis Plan update examine the Assault Landing Zone Training Area requirements and seek land use requirements which protect the long term viability of this recently dedicated facility. Finally, the update will necessarily address any other emerging land use issues identified during an outreach process.

Current Limitations of the 2002 Travis Plan

Staff has had experience administering the Travis Plan for approximately eleven years since its adoption. Through the course of this work, staff has identified issues and limitations within the plan that need to be addressed, including:

- 1. Integrating review policies and procedures directly into the Travis Plan to acknowledge necessary variations for a military airfield,
- 2. Adopting necessary housecleaning amendments to strengthen the plan,
- 3. Amend the Compatibility Map to reflect certain countywide review requirements

Relationship to the Joint land Use Study

The Department of Defense has published a Joint Land Use Study Program Guidance Manual (2006) which describes in detail the purpose for conducting a JLUS, including:

The JLUS program is a basic planning process designed to identify encroachment issues confronting both the civilian community and the military installation and to recommend strategies to address the issues in the context of local comprehensive/general planning programs.

The JLUS program relies on strong community planning and land use regulatory (zoning) capabilities to implement the compatibility recommendations through local community's comprehensive planning programs and processes. The JLUS program is community controlled and community directed.

The JLUS will assist communities and other stakeholders in developing solutions to potential land use conflicts. The JLUS does not produce a completed compatibility plan. Under the JLUS, implementation is left to the local agencies. The resulting recommendations from the JLUS process most likely will be folded into the recommendations to be derived through the Travis Plan update process.

The Joint Land Use Study will be subject to numerous requirements which will impact the timing of work plan items. For example, in order to be reimbursed under the program, the RFP and Contracts for consultants cannot be completed prior to the approval of the grant application. In addition, the RFP and contract will require review for compliance by the DoD OEA.

Staff envisions that the JLUS will occur within a middle period of the Travis Plan update program (See Table A next page). The Commission could authorize the staff to proceed with project mobilization, preliminary outreach efforts, information gathering and GIS base mapping pending the approval of the JLUS grant and funding. The Board of Supervisors has already provided this authorization. Upon completion of the JLUS, staff and consultants will then finalize the land use recommendations for the Commission's consideration and final plan adoption.

Financing

The Board of Supervisors has authorized the department of Resource management to make an application for grant funding to conduct the Joint Land Use Study. Staff is preparing a detailed budget for the Board's review later this year.

Preliminary Timeline

Staff anticipates that completing the entire update process will require approximately two years (see Table A next page).

TABLE A: TIMELINE FOR TRAVIS UPDATE INCLUDING JLUS EST. LAND USE COMPATIBILITY COMPLETION JOINT LAND USE STUDY PLAN UPDATE DATE Issue RFP, select firm or team, Dec 2013 complete contracting Jan 2014 **Apply for DoD Grant** Data gathering/Mapping, Initial Jan 2014 public outreach for key issues Create RFP and contract for Feb 2014 JLUS, obtain DoD approval Receive/ review initial data. issue supplemental request, Mar 2014 review key issues from public outreach Study of impacts from wind/ Jul 2014 solar energy projects on radar/glare **Draft ALUCP is prepared Development of recommended** Aug 2014 w/policies from JLUS policies/ land use measures Sep 2014 Follow-up public relations Final JLUS/recommended land Oct 2014 use policies Nov 2014 **Begin CEQA process** Additional public outreach (if Dec 2015 substantially different from JLUS) Prepare and circulate CEQA Feb 2015 document for Draft ALUCP Additional public vetting May 2015 through CEQA process Finalize ALUCP and the CEQA Jun 2015 document

POTENTIAL ITERIM ACTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

As previously discussed, solar and wind energy facilities have the potential to impact Travis Air Force Base in several ways, including:

- 1. The potential for glint and glare from both solar and wind facilities
- 2. The potential for degradation of radar detection capability from both solar and wind facilities
- 3. The potential for obstruction and nuisance to mission operations

Of particular concern is the potential for obstructions and nuisances to the newly dedicated Assault Landing Zone and its training area. The Commission asked the staff to provide recommendations for interim measures which could be considered and implemented while awaiting the results of the Comprehensive Update to the 2002 Travis Plan. Staff is providing both administrative actions and compatibility plan amendments for the Commissions review.

Potential Administrative Actions

Staff is recommending that the Commission take several steps to help clarify the existing land use requirements embodied in the 2002 Plan as they pertain to renewable energy projects. These actions do not represent new or additional regulations, but rather, provide notice to the public on two administrative matters, namely:

- 1. The kinds of information required in an application involving renewable energy projects and
- 2. How the Commission interprets certain words and phrases in the 2002 Plan.

The specific recommendations are discussed below.

Application Requirements

The application for a consistency review provides the initial means by which staff and he Commission determine whether or not a proposal is consistent with the applicable land use compatibility plan(s). Our current practice is to require a project description, a draft of the local agency's CEQA documentation and, in the case of commercial wind energy projects, a "radar study".

Staff is recommending that Additional application submittal requirements should be implemented to assist in the review of renewable energy projects, including:

- 1. Analysis of Glint and Glare
- 2. Analysis of Radar Impact
- 3. Analysis of Operational Impact

In addition, staff is recommending that all applications, which include either a Negative Declaration or an Environmental Impact Report, will be required to submit the final or certified copy of the environmental review document with the application for a consistency determination.

The 2002 Plan prohibits "Hazards to Flight", which includes a subset of "Other Hazards to Flight". The following uses are specifically enumerated as Other Hazards to Flight:

- 1. Glare or distracting lights that could otherwise be mistaken for airport lights,
- 2. Sources of dust, steam, or smoke that may impair pilot visibility,
- Sources of electrical interference with aircraft communications or navigation, and
- 4. Any use, especially landfills and certain agricultural uses that may attract an increased number of birds.

The 2002 Plan concerns itself with other hazards to flight that occur within 12,500 feet of the runways. (See the Outer Conical Surface depicted in Figure 2C of the Travis Plan).

Analysis of Glint and Glare

Staff is recommending that the Commission direct the staff to amend the application to require an analysis of glint and glare for solar and wind energy projects.

Analysis of Radar Impact

Staff is recommending that the Commission direct the staff to amend the application to require an analysis of radar for solar and wind energy projects.

Analysis of Operational Impact

Staff is recommending that the Commission direct the staff to amend the application to require an analysis of the operational impacts to the Base for solar and wind energy projects.

Final or Certified Copies of Environmental review Documents

Staff is recommending that the Commission direct the staff to amend the application to require submission of the final or certified environmental review document in order that the Commission has before it the accurate version of environmental analysis and final mitigation measures.

EXHIBITS:

Exhibit A: Administrative Measures

EXHIBIT A: Administrative Measures

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The Application submittal requirements on the Application Form shall be amended as follows:

'THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION MUST BE SUBMITTED AS A MINIMUM REQUIREMENT:			
	JURISDICTION REFERRAL LETTER:		
	ENVIRO	ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION:	
	Include for the p	the final or certified copy of any negative declaration or environmental impact report prepared project.	
	LOCATI	LOCATION MAP:	
	ASSES	ASSESSOR'S PARCEL MAP, with subject property marked in red:	
		AN, drawn to scale and fully dimensioned including topographical information, and 8 1/2 x 11 eduction(s):	
	ELEVATIONS, if located in APZ, clear zones and A, B, C compatibility zones or over 200' in height, plus 8 1/2 x 11 inch reduction(s) :		
	WIND TURBINE STUDY, including cumulative impact studies. Such studies shall include an analysis of (1) the individual effects of the proposed project, and (2) as required by law, an analysis of the cumulative effects of the proposed project considered in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects and proposed projects, and the effects of probable future projects, including (i) the probable build out for wind energy development of the remaining vacant parcels within the wind resource areas described in the Solano County General Plan and (ii) any probable replacement of existing turbines or meteorological towers with structures having different dimensions.		
	SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS:		
	1.	Include an analysis of the potential effects of glint and glare on pilot safety and flight operations.	
	2.	Include an analysis of the potential effects of the proposed land use on radar facilities,	
	3.	including any degradation of the probability of detection. Include an analysis of the operational impacts on the mission and flight training and operations at Travis Air Force Base.	
	FEES:		
	ELECTRONIC COPIES OF ALL APPLICATION MATERIALS ONA CD:"		