

AOPA's Guide to Airport Noise and Compatible Land Use

Disclaimer

The information contained in this booklet is intended as a guide in the understanding of the issues, rules, procedures, and policies applicable to airport noise and compatible land use planning. It is not intended to replace the necessary research and review of applicable law that may be required in a particular case. It is not intended to give legal advice or take the place of an attorney who can advise with respect to a particular situation. While every care has been exercised in the preparation of this booklet, AOPA cannot and does not accept responsibility for an individual's reliance on its contents.

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Introduction

As AOPA celebrates its 60th anniversary, we are looking back to how the history of aviation over these years has shaped the face of general aviation as it stands today and how it will look for future generations of aircraft owners and pilots. Through this analysis, AOPA and its members have become increasingly alarmed over the continued loss of our most valuable asset – airports. At a loss rate of over one airport a week, we are evaluating why this is occurring and, most importantly, how it can be stopped.

Airports are valuable assets to our communities. Economic benefits directly associated with airports have been estimated to be in the billions of dollars, and airports continue to be held answerable for an ever-expanding demand for adequate public transportation. However, as communities are becoming increasingly aware of the demand for their airports, they perceive the airport as having a negative impact on their homes, schools, and churches. Public sentiment over the expansion of airports, and continued operation of airports in general, is making itself known, and a profound lack of planned support for these communities to effectively coexist with their airports is at the heart of the problem.

In order to learn how we can stop the closure of our airports, we must learn how airports can be better neighbors in their communities. Most of this responsibility and authority lies with the local communities themselves through responsible land use planning. An equally important responsibility is ours, as users of the airports, to minimize impacts on the nearby airport neighbors.



“Part 1: Airport Noise” (p.2) provides detail on the definition, measurement, and mitigation for airport-related noise. It focuses on the policies the Federal Aviation Administration has adopted to facilitate airport noise programs across the country and methods that we as pilots, flight instructors, fixed-base operators, and residents of the community can adopt to become better neighbors. “Part 2: Airport Compatible Land Use” (p. 12) illustrates the various ways in which communities can effectively plan and prevent noncompatible land use encroachment around their airports. Some of the most effective methods include creating detailed zoning ordinances, housing and building codes, real estate disclosure documents, and land and land/air rights acquisition plans.

Examples of these land use control methods, along with a detailed summary of the FAA’s policy on noise mitigation measures, have been provided in the appendices. “Recommended Reading” (p. 72) has also been included in the appendices, listing several additional available resources that can assist us in educating ourselves and the public of the vital role compatible land use planning plays in the preservation of our airports.