

plan. Further, they might specifically authorize funding to acquire ownership or highly restrictive aviation easements in certain airport-impacted zones, existing and prospective. Strong support from state level can be helpful to diffuse the impact of local "politics" and its effect on land use decisions.

XII. Apparent Existing or Planned Incompatible Land Uses at Each of the Four Airports in Prince George's County and Recommended Actions and Rationale for Actions

Having looked at some of the strategies used by local governments to either mitigate or prohibit incompatible land uses, this Study now undertakes to specifically address some of the issues in Prince George's County. It is apparent that a number of airport-incompatible land uses, around all four of the county airports, are already in place or planned.

Consultant has undertaken to:

- 1) List the primary incompatibilities;
- 2) List the rationale for mitigating the situations.
- 3) Suggest mechanisms for such mitigation.

Each airport is treated separately as each offers a unique set of problems and issues. The following actions are recommended and the rationale is provided in each case.

• Potomac Airfield:

Apparent Existing Incompatible Land Uses:

- 1) Houses in Accident Potential Zones (Off-Airport);
- 2) Berm at the end of the Runway 24 (Off-Airport);
- 3) Trees at end of Runway 24 on both sides (Off-Airport);
- 4) Overlapping "traditional" approach patterns with Washington Executive/Hyde Field (Off-Airport);
- 5) Displaced runway threshold (On-Airport).

Apparent Planned Incompatible Land Uses

None observed or mentioned.

RECOMMENDED ACTION if Airport Continues in Business:

Change runway length, adding approximately 200 feet to the 6/24 runway, if possible, and displace the threshold by approximately 200 feet further toward the north on Runway 6, by modification of Special Exception.

RATIONALE:

This proposed runway extension, together with displacing the threshold further to the north on Runway 6 creates a situation where aircraft would be approaching higher over the houses on Featherstone Drive, and would be beginning the take-off roll further away from the houses if an aircraft is departing on Runway 24, thereby achieving a higher altitude by the time the aircraft is over the houses.

In case of engine failure or a faulty approach to Runway 6, such as "too low," there would be less chance of an aircraft crashing into a residence with a displaced runway as suggested. In the case of an aircraft departing from a point further north on Runway 24, perhaps in the event of an emergency, the pilot could seek an opportunity to land someplace other than into the houses because some additional altitude gives the pilot some possible additional options, particularly if the trimming of trees suggested below is accomplished.

RECOMMENDED ACTION if Airport Continues in Business:

Trim or remove trees, shrubs from the berm, and grading berm down by 10 or 15 feet and keep growth trimmed to the ground on the berm (On/Off Airport).

RATIONALE:

Height of berm plus the trees and shrubs could create a hazard on both landing and taking-off. Reducing the berm and keeping growth off the berm would add a margin of safety, particularly for the pilot and occupants of aircraft in the event of an emergency situation.

RECOMMENDED ACTION if Airport Continues in Business:

Trim or remove trees to the left side (east) of Runway 24. (Off Airport on land owned by the M-NCPPC).

RATIONALE:

A pilot could make a left-hand turn after takeoff and avoid going directly over the homes on Featherstone Drive, both in a normal operation, and in an emergency situation, and have a better opportunity to clear tree obstructions.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

The listed items above are moderate and relatively inexpensive. What really needs to be done is for the County to buy out Potomac Airfield and close it down. This is a Draconian move, but one Consultant believes is the only long-term solution to the problem created by the Featherstone Drive situation and other houses in the area. As can be seen on the overlay charts and the photographs, the most critical Accident Potential Zone has a number of houses directly in the path of departing/arriving aircraft.

Buying out the houses is an alternative, but according to the Baker study, that is likely to be more costly than buying the airport. More work needs to be done on that issue, including what other uses the airport land could be put to and how much the “net” cost would be to the County if a subsequent sale could bring some money to the County—but in the meantime, the County would be able to exert absolute control over future use of the land. Consultant recognizes that some of the land is in a flood plain, limiting its use.

- **Washington Executive/Hyde Field**

Apparent Existing Incompatible Land Uses:

- 1) Existence of a few houses in Accident Potential Zones (APZ-2 and APZ-3) just east of the centerline extension of Runway 5 (Off-Airport);
- 2) Standard pattern for inbound flights for Runway 5 puts aircraft in potential conflict with traffic patterns for aircraft departing Potomac Airfield on Runway 6 (Off-Airport).

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

- 1) Approach owner/manager of Washington Executive/Hyde Field to restrict flight pattern to right-hand pattern only.

RATIONALE:

Anytime a flight pattern overlaps with another airport, even for short distances, the potential of a mid-air collision is present.

Apparent Planned Incompatible Land Uses

- 1) Proposed realignment of Runway 5 by some 5 degrees to the north, to approximately 360 degrees (0 degrees) would force a further confluence of aircraft flight paths departing from Potomac Airfield runway, about one mile away;
- 2) Proposed extension of the runway to 4,800 feet would create the opportunity for larger, noisier aircraft to land here.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

- 1) Seek voluntary cooperation from owner/operator of airport to decide NOT to orient the runway further in a northerly direction, nor extend it, as long as Potomac Airfield is in business. Failing that, interpose objections with FAA when owner/operator seeks federal funding for airport improvements, and consider passing a county ordinance which would prohibit action to modify runway orientation or length.

RATIONALE: Potential for mid-air collisions will exist and, in fact, be heightened beyond the present conflict if there is another 5 degree change toward the north in runway alignment, regardless of the fact that an automatic unicom response mechanism is in place. Any runway extension would further add to the acreage in the APZs and, in Consultant’s opinion, create additional noise and flight hazards.

NOTE: Obviously, if Potomac Airfield is closed, the potential for mid-air collisions based on airport proximity is no longer a factor.

- College Park Airport

Apparent Existing Incompatible Land Uses:

None except some existing buildings, including multiple dwellings located in APZ-3 on the north side of a line that extends from the centerline of Runway 33, and some structures in APZ-4.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: The existing structures are likely to remain for the foreseeable future. However, it is strongly urged that, to reduce the potential for loss or damage to persons or property, that no additional development be approved by the planning authority in APZ-3 or APZ-4 areas in the future, except as might be approved under the Compatible Land Use guidelines on pages 45-46.

Other Concerns:

- 1) Deer have habitat in the woods adjoining the airport property.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

- 1) Erect an eight foot or higher fence along the northeastern boundary of the airport. (*Note: M-NCPPC commenced construction of a final section of fencing around the airport perimeter in October, 2000, and expects to have it completed before the end of the year.*)

RATIONALE: This action would provide protection for aircraft from deer that have habitat in the woods on that side of the airport, and could create a hazard for aircraft.

Apparent Planned Incompatible Land Uses:

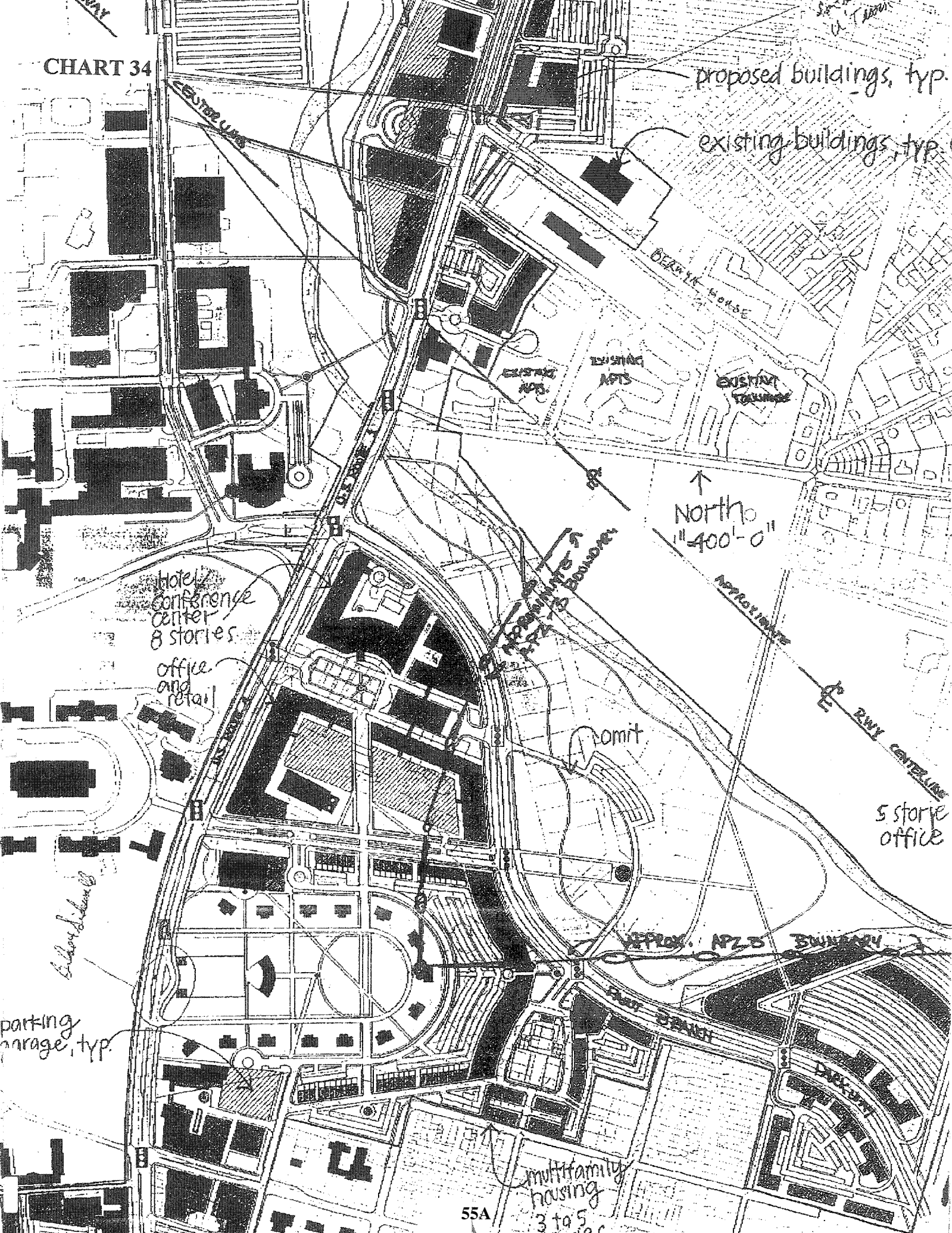
The University of Maryland is planning to develop property in what this Report calls part of Accident Potential Zones (APZs) 3 and 4. Plans are not fully complete at this time, and the Consultant has only limited information about the development plan, but a Planning Group composed of citizens, University officials, representatives of the town of College Park, the M-NCPPC, and others are preparing "The College Park US-1 Corridor Sector Plan." Consultant has obtained a copy of the current "illustrative concept plan" created by the Planning Group that shows proposed land uses.

Note on the attached map the estimated lines of APZ-3 and APZ-4 overlaid on the latest version of the "illustrative concept plan" for this area.

If one looks at the matrix of the Airport Land Use Compatibility chart in connection with the overlays of the APZs onto the "illustrative concept plan" map, there are office buildings, multi-story apartments, and other structures planned within those APZs which are NOT airport-area compatible uses.

CHART 34

proposed buildings, typ.
existing buildings, typ.



Hotel
conference
center
8 stories
office
and
retail

EXISTING
APTS

EXISTING
TOWNHOUSE

North
1/400'-0"

APRIL 1971
PROPERTY'S BOUNDARY

5 story
office

APPROX. APTS BOUNDARY

parking
garage, typ.

multifamily
housing
3 to 5
units

55A

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Urge the Planning Group to put forth and implement a plan consistent with the Airport Land Use Compatibility matrix, and in addition, determine whether the County Council has any zoning or regulatory authority it can exercise on the property being considered for structures. If so, the Council should take appropriate action to establish an overlay zone or enact regulations to have the uses conform with the Airport Land Use Compatibility matrix, OR seek an aviation easement that might accomplish the same purpose. See other discussion in this Report.

RATIONALE: Any high-rise office structure or multiple dwelling structure would be clearly incompatible with the Airport Land Use Compatibility matrix and would, on the basis of this Report and other similar studies, put occupants/residents at risk if such uses are allowed in APZ-3, and be “marginally” or “conditionally” acceptable in APZ-4. Acceptable uses in either zone would be warehouses and recreation uses, for example. Any land use should be restricted to uses that would *not* have a high density of occupants, day or night. Additionally, it would not be feasible to expect pilots using College Park Airport to simply “re-route” their flight patterns, given the prevailing wind conditions and other constraints (such as an existing “high-rise” building) around the airport. Safety of the aircraft and its occupants require “straight in” or “straight out” line of flight in alignment with the runway, which means they would fly directly over APZ-3 and APZ-4.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

Although no trees or other obstructions near the College Park Airport are in violation of FAA regulations—that is, extending above the limitations in Part 77 of the FARs, it is suggested that a regular program of monitoring tree growth and trimming be established to keep obstructions below the established FAA standards.

• **Freeway Airport**

Apparent Existing Incompatible Land Uses:

- 1) High Tension power lines running alongside the west side of the airport, creating a need for pilots to execute a right-hand turn before reaching normal altitudes for such turns when departing on Runway 36. (Off-Airport);
- 2) A major highway (US 50) runs perpendicular to the end of runway and is within the APZ-1 zone. (See previous APZ discussion). (Off-Airport).

Apparent Planned Incompatible Land Uses:

- 1) Planned major residential and commercial subdivision just across US 50 from the airport (Off-Airport).

THIS REPRESENTS A MAJOR PROBLEM THAT MUST BE SOLVED.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

(Note: the suggestions here are not mutually exclusive and a combination of one or more of the actions could be considered and acted upon. The steps are presented as a sequence which

represents logical steps toward averting the same kind of situation as found in the Potomac Airfield area).

- 1) Consider immediately passing a county overlay zone to enact performance standards affecting the area which would prohibit development in identified APZ-1, APZ-2 and APZ-3, and use suggested Land Use Chart under the APZ discussion as a guideline for uses;
- 2) Under exercise of "police power," work with developer to shift residential density to other parts of the development outside of identified safety zones; this might be done by "agreement" without opening up any "new" subdivision approval program;
- 3) Require potential purchasers to acknowledge the hazard and potentially noisy situation by having certain language in deeds about the airport and overflights, and a release running to the County for any loss or damage that might be suffered in the future;
- 4) Require developer/seller to advise buyers in writing of the hazardous and noise conditions;
- 5) Require sound deadening construction codes for residences which fall within certain sound contours (to be negotiated);
- 6) Have the County obtain and purchase, if necessary, aerial navigation ("avigation") easements above the property;
- 7) Consider having the County purchase the property in APZ-1, APZ-2 and APZ-3; either by agreement or by condemnation, and determine more compatible uses, then sell or lease parcels which are consistent with the compatibility findings to recover some of the funds which would necessarily have to be paid out;
- 8) Consider, as a last resort, purchase of Freeway Airport, if all other measures fail. This land also has development value. Perhaps a purchase of the airport could solve numerous problems.

RATIONALE: Cross-referencing the previous discussion of Accident Potential Zones, the proposed subdivision is located in the most likely zone for an aircraft incursion.

This situation threatens to replicate the unbelievable results of the Potomac Airport area where several houses are located in the most critical Accident Potential Zones (APZ-1), endangering people and property on the ground, and pilots and passengers in the aircraft. Any policy to the contrary should be deemed unacceptable.

Prince George's County Planning Department has drafted a report on Noise Guidance for Land Use Planning and Development. It had not been adopted when this study began, but could be modified to cover land use as well.

It should be noted that this Consultant team met with representatives of Rouse-Fairwood Development near Freeway Airport in July, 2000, and advised them as to the noise and aircraft

hazards, and expressed deep concern about the planned dense development directly in line with the runway at Freeway Airport. It may be that a negotiation could be commenced which would make it possible for some changes to be made in the planned development without a whole new approval process, in view of the overwhelming public interest in this matter. **THE RISKS TO RESIDENTS OF THE PLANNED SUBDIVISION IF FREEWAY AIRPORT CONTINUES TO OPERATE ARE SIGNIFICANT.**

XIII. Suggested Policy Initiatives to Prevent or Discourage Future Incompatible Land Uses In General and As to Each of the Four Airports

A. Establish Recommended Compatibility Criteria, Airport Master Plan modification, or Zoning Ordinance, if Needed, to Define and Circumscribe "Safety" and "Noise Abatement" Boundaries.

Beginning with the two "compatibility" charts on the Accident Potential Zones ("APZs") and noise contours, and looking at the land uses which are recommended under each category, along with viewing the "overlay" boundaries which both of these issues include, is a starting point. The charts can be further explained by a word description such as those accompanying the APZ and noise contours to give some rationale for why certain uses are assigned to the category they are in.

Draft such changes as are necessary in the zoning ordinance to recognize the approved uses and to prevent or strongly discourage uses that are not in concert with the two "compatibility" charts.

Then, create a metes and bounds description of each of the areas, making some modest adjustments for land ownership, natural watercourses, and man-made "boundaries" such as roads and power line. When that is done, and the maps and language are prepared to conform with the "compatibility" charts, then the ordinance or regulation is ready for presentation of the Commission and ultimately to the County Council.

B. Implementation Strategies to Create Compatible Airport Land Uses in Prince George's County: A "Blitz" Program.

Here is a sketch suggested from materials of the North Dakota Aeronautics Commission and contained in its Airport Manager's Manual as to how to get started in implementing a comprehensive airport land use compatibility program.

Step 1:

Establish an "aviation planning" group of citizens, elected officials, planning staff, others within the County to Review Airport Incompatibility Issues identified in this Report and decide it is time to address the issues.

Step 2:

Review Existing State Statutes, County Ordinances; and case law. Ask Legal Counsel to advise how positive action can be taken, consistent with the law.