

# Federal Aviation Regulation Part 150 Noise Compatibility Program

## **Background**

In 1994, the City of Austin's Aviation Department completed a Federal Aviation Regulation (FAR) Part 150 Noise Study in preparation for the 1999 opening of Austin-Bergstrom International Airport (ABIA).

This study was designed to determine noise impacts associated with the new airport. Community input played a vital role in the study's successful completion. The issues raised and recommendations brought forth were implemented by the City.

In 1998, the City initiated an update to the 1994 Study. The update was required to accurately reflect airport operational changes such as an increase in passengers and expanded airline services. Additionally, the previous study included operations for the Air Force Reserve's F-16 aircraft that no longer operate at ABIA.

## **Study Overview**

The FAR Part 150 Noise Study has two basic elements. The first involves the development of Noise Exposure Maps (NEMs). These maps indicate noise exposure levels within the vicinity of the airport.

The second element involves the development of a Noise Compatibility Program. This program is used to evaluate and recommend various operational noise abatement and land use mitigation measures that reduce noise impacts and ensure land use compatibility within the airport vicinity.

On April 5, 1999, the Federal Aviation Administration announced that the 1998 Noise Exposure Maps submitted for ABIA were in compliance with applicable FAR Part 150 requirements. The Austin City Council adopted the 1998 Noise Compatibility Program on Sept. 9, 1999, and final Federal Aviation Administration approval was granted on Nov. 7, 2000.

## **Recommendations**

Operational noise abatement measures implemented as part of the 1998 Noise Compatibility Program include:

- All heavier commercial aircraft must depart away from residential areas.
- Departing aircraft must reach a certain height above residential areas prior to initiating turns.
- Required safety checks that are done on commercial aircraft, which include running up aircraft engines, must be done at the center of the airport to minimize disruption to residential areas located within the airport vicinity.

When the new airport opened, these operational noise abatement measures were begun. The number of people affected by aircraft noise dropped from 1,119 to 937.

Under the 1998 Noise Compatibility Program the following land use mitigation measures will soon be implemented:

1. Purchasing homes in the following noise impact areas:
  - Linda Vista Road.
  - Moores Bridge Road/FM 973.
  - FM 973/Elroy Road.
  - U.S. 183 South.
  - Del Valle, north of Texas 71 and adjacent to Cardinal Loop;
  - Colton Road/FM 812/U.S. 183 South.
  - Bain Road.
  - McAngus Road/Towery Lane.

Once purchased, these properties, currently zoned as residential, will be rezoned to commercial and/or industrial. These latter uses are considered more compatible with airport operations.

2. Installing sound insulation in the following residences whose owners indicated a desire to remain in their homes:

- United Pentecostal Church.
  - Bergstrom Arms Apartments.
  - Sunscape Apartments.
  - Silverstone Inn.
  - Richard Moya Park Ranger's Residence.
3. Residents living in the Patton Avenue, Jet Lane and Richland Estates neighborhoods have a choice of three options: (a) selling their home to the City at appraised value for subsequent resale by the City without changing the land use, but subject to an avigation easement, (b) receiving sound insulation at no cost, but the owner will be required to grant the City an avigation easement, or (c) granting the City an avigation easement at a percentage of the property's appraised fair market value. *(An avigation easement is an interest in the real property that will run with the title of the land. In an avigation easement, the property owner grants the City certain rights in the airspace over their property and gives up the right to sue for noise or nuisance damages associated with the normal operation of an aircraft to and from the airport over their property.)*

### **Public Outreach**

The City will host a series of public open house and homeowner meetings to provide information and help answer questions about the Noise Compatibility Program. As part of the outreach effort, an information line (512) 530-2222 has been created.

In addition, a project newsletter and information brochure will be produced and information will be provided on an interactive Web site, *abia.org*, by May 2001.

### **Schedule**

Typically, completion of the Noise Compatibility Program takes up to five years. A more detailed implementation plan and schedule will be developed by spring 2001.