

Chewelah Airport Land Use Compatibility Study

Comprehensive Plan and Compatibility Zoning Revisions



The Chewelah Airport is an important asset to the community and the region. Ensuring compatibility between current and future aviation activities and surrounding development has emerged as a top priority of the city and the airport.

Project Overview:

The City of Chewelah is conducting a study of the Chewelah Airport which will define airport overlay zones and land use compatibility in and around the airport property. The study aims to gather data, implement public participation and develop and adopt airport compatibility zoning and an airport overlay map. This process will require:

1. Code development planning process
2. Public participation
3. Comprehensive plan amendment
4. Zoning code amendments

The City of Chewelah has initiated this important project in order to:

1. Help ensure future uses and structures near the airport do not create health and safety risks to those living and working nearby
2. Protect airport users from aviation hazards
3. Ensure the future viability of the Chewelah Airport
4. Meet Washington State requirements and guidelines

This project will utilize the [Guidelines for Compatibility Zones](#) published by the Washington State Department of Transportation, Aviation Division (WSDOT/AD). This guiding document provides tools and criteria to address airport land use compatibility ***“...in a variety of ways based on the specific characteristics of an individual airport facility as well as numerous other factors that are unique to their area.”***

Anticipated Timeline:

The table below provides the project timeline. There are several tasks which include public meetings and engagement. Use the key below to identify the different public engagement activities.

Key: FC = Formal consultation PW = Public Workshop CCW = City council workshop CCH = City council hearing HE = Hearings Examiner

	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Phase 1 – Getting Started and Gathering Data										
1.1.1 Initiate and facilitate compatibility planning work group and meetings										
1.1.3 Design the planning process, identify stakeholders										
Phase 2 – Gather Data										
1.2.1 Describe airport role, features, and activity										
1.2.2 Identify existing land use and current plans										
1.2.3 Identify the study area										
Phase 3 – Airport Compatibility Analysis										
1.3.1 Determine land use compatibility										
Phase 4 – Update Comp Plan for Consistency										
1.4.1 Evaluate Strategies				PW						
1.4.2 Determine compatibility										
1.4.3 Consider land use compatibility measured										
Phase 5 – Adoption										
5.1.1 Formal Consultation				FC						
5.1.2 Implement type III amendment procedure, SEPA review and adoption					CCW		CCW	CCW	HE	CCH

A Brief History of the Chewelah Airport:

Chewelah Municipal Airport is located within the boundaries of North Chewelah and is located on an 86-acre site. Prior to being purchased by the City of Chewelah in 2017, the Airport was known as the Sand Canyon Airport. Currently, the City of Chewelah manages the airport with the assistance of a volunteer airport board whose members are appointed by the city.

In 2007, the Airport Layout Plan and Narrative Report (ALP) was funded through a sponsorship by the City of Chewelah. The report examines existing conditions of the airport at that time, forecasts future aviation activity, recommends improvements to ensure that the airport can serve projected demand and identifies sources of funds to pay for those improvements. Since the time of the ALP report, the city has continued to support the development of the airport site.

Amongst other efforts, in 2019 the city was awarded grant funding by the Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB) to complete an economic feasibility study for developing approximately 30 acres of vacant land adjacent to the east side of the Airport. The study will address future development of the area including potential expansion of the number of individual hangers, compatible commercial and light industrial lands, and public infrastructure necessities.

The Airport is an asset to the community in Chewelah and region. Compatibility between aviation activities and land use is a top priority of the city and the airport.

Is Land Use Compatibility Around Airports a Requirement?

Yes. Washington state law (*RCW 36.70.547*) requires all towns, cities, and counties in the state to **discourage development of incompatible land uses** adjacent to general aviation airports. The state also requires that:

“Such plans and regulations may only be adopted or amended after formal consultation with: Airport owners and managers, private airport operators, general aviation pilots, ports, and the aviation division of the department of transportation. All proposed and adopted plans and regulations shall be filed with the aviation division of the department of transportation within a reasonable time after release for public consideration and comment.”

What Does Airport-Compatible Land Use Mean?

Airport-compatible land uses are defined as those uses that can coexist with a nearby airport without either constraining the safe and efficient operation of the airport or exposing people living or working nearby to unacceptable levels of noise or hazards. Uses of concern in proximity to airports are generally related to noise and safety:

- ◆ **Noise:** The goal is to limit noise sensitive land uses to avoid issues such as annoyance and sleep disturbance to persons on the ground
- ◆ **Safety:** The goal is to limit uses that have potential impacts in the following two categories:
 - ◆ Those uses hazardous to airspace and overflights
 - Tall structures (cell towers, wind turbines, vegetation, tall buildings)
 - Visual obstructions (smoke, glare, steam, dust, lights)
 - Wildlife and bird attractants (wetlands, crops, open water)
 - ◆ Those uses that affect accident severity
 - High concentrations of people (schools, churches, arenas)
 - Risk-sensitive uses (nursing homes, hospitals, flammable materials)
 - Open Lands

“It is easy to overlook the need for airport-protective zoning and land use planning at rural airports that do not have existing adjacent development. It is at such a time, when the need is not obvious, that it is most effective to address this subject.”

—Airport Layout Plan and Narrative Report, Pg. 4:10

What is an Airport Overlay Zone?

An overlay zone is a district that is applied over one or more previously established districts that creates additional standards or criteria for development. Airport overlay zones are intended to protect aviators from flight hazards and to protect people living or working nearby from health and safety risks such as noise and aviation related accident severity. Recommended airport overlay zones are typically based on crash risk data and flight paths as they pertain to runway length and the class of the airport.



SCJ ALLIANCE
CONSULTING SERVICES

Additional Information:

- ◆ [Chewelah Airport Technical Memo](#)
- ◆ [WSDOT-Aviation Division Land Use Guidelines Website](#)
- ◆ [2007 Chewelah Airport Layout Plan](#)

Questions or Concerns?

Please contact Alicia Ayars: alicia.ayars@scjalliance.com