



ACCIDENT POTENTIAL ZONES (APZS) AND THEIR POTENTIAL IMPACT ON CENTRAL WHIDBEY

What are APZs?

APZs are areas around active airfields that the Department of Defense has identified as the most likely areas for potential aircraft accidents.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the military conducted studies of historical accident and operations data. The studies showed that most aircraft mishaps occur on or near the runway, diminishing in likelihood with distance from the runway. Based on these studies, the DOD identified APZs as areas where an aircraft accident is most likely to occur, if one occurs. They do not reflect the probability of an accident. APZs follow departure, arrival, and flight pattern tracks and are based on analysis of historic data. The dimensions and parameters for depicting APZs in Air Installation Compatible Use Zone (AICUZ) studies are provided in DOD Instruction 4165.57 and OPNAVINST 11010.36C. For NASWI runways with a sufficient number of operations, three accident potential zones may be implemented, as follows:

- *Clear Zone* - extends 3,000 feet beyond the runway end and has the highest potential for accidents. They are required for all active runways.
- *APZ I* - extends 5,000 feet beyond the Clear Zone and has a measurable potential for aircraft mishaps relative to the Clear Zone.
- *APZ II* - extends 7,000 feet beyond APZ I and is always present when there is an APZ I.

APZs may also bend along flight tracks to reflect operations such as Field Carrier Landing Practice (FCLP). An accident is more likely to occur in the Clear Zone than in either APZ I or APZ II. The purposes for APZs as defined by AICUZ policy are to:



- Promote the health, safety, and welfare of persons in the vicinity of and on air installations by minimizing aircraft noise and safety impacts without degrading flight safety and mission requirements.
- Promote long-term compatible land use on and in the vicinity of air installations by encouraging State and local governments to adopt enabling legislation and compatible land use regulations into their land use planning and control processes and by partnering with communities and other eligible entities to protect land through restrictive use and conservation easements.

How are APZs determined?

APZs are based on a predetermined number of flights in a particularly direction around an airfield.

The type and number of projected flight operations determine how APZs are developed and depicted within an AICUZ Study. Typically, the Navy prepares an AICUZ study using DOD Instruction 4165.57, OPNAVINST 11010.36C, and UFC 3-260-01 to analyze local land use patterns and provide recommendations to the local jurisdiction, including the criteria for the application of APZs. The criteria for an APZ is when a specific flight track experiences 5,000 or more annual fixed wing operations (departures or approaches, but not both combined).

NASWI's most recent AICUZ study was completed in 2005 and at that time, due to the potential phasing out of VAQ expeditionary squadrons, projected operational tempo at OLF Coupeville was not expected to exceed the flight track criteria for the application of APZs. It is important to note that the 1986 AICUZ study did recommend APZs at OLF Coupeville based on the operations levels at that time; however, these recommendations were not adopted by the local jurisdictions. AICUZ Studies are advisory only and the authority to regulate land use remains with the local government.

Will there be APZs in Central Whidbey?

The Navy only recommends establishment of an APZ. The Island County government will determine whether or not they want to establish an APZ around OLF Coupeville.



The final development of APZs for OLF Coupeville would be part of the AICUZ study process. The criteria for the application of an APZ is numerically based, when a specific flight track experiences 5,000 or more annual fixed wing operations (departures or approaches, but not both combined).

With the proposed increase in EA-18G aircraft and airfield operations, the criteria for the application of an APZ will be met for many alternative/scenario combinations for Runway 32. The Growler Draft EIS did show conceptual APZs for OLF Coupeville on Runways 14 and 32; however, the operational changes announced in September 2017 had beneficial effect of 30% reduction in Field Carrier Landing Practice. As a result, the Growler Final EIS, when released, will show a conceptual APZ for OLF Coupeville for Runway 32 only for many alternative/scenario combinations.

As is mentioned above, the local government is responsible for implementing the recommendations of the AICUZ study however they deem applicable to their context. We don't know exactly how the local government will implement the AICUZ APZs nor do we know how they will address pre-existing incompatible uses. Updating local zoning ordinances is up to them through their work docket system.

How do APZs restrict land use?

Island County will determine what land use restrictions they will adopt if they decide to establish an APZ.

Per OPNAVINST 11010.36C, the Navy recommends low-density land uses in an APZ. APZs depicted in an AICUZ study do not restrict land use. APZs are spatial planning areas that come with compatible land use recommendations. In most cases, residential land use is not recommended within the APZs. Again, it is up to the location government to choose to restrict land use in the APZ. However, there are two scenarios when single family detached units are considered compatible within APZ-II: when a maximum density of one to two dwellings per acre or when clustered housing does not exceed 20 percent of the total acreage of Planned Unit Developments (PUDs), thus resulting in large open areas. Further details regarding land use compatibility analysis, like how many parcels are within the prescribed density or what PUDs exist, would be analyzed under an AICUZ study update. Recommendations from that study would be made to the municipality and/or county as land use control fall under their responsibility.



A comprehensive study may be necessary to understand local land use patterns and existing zoning and consider appropriate changes, if necessary. Island County has already established zoning and building codes in many of the areas surrounding OLF Coupeville. For instance, Island County has already established zoning for light manufacturing and agriculture. An example of compatible land uses with the application of an APZ is Island County Transit, which is largely a repair and bus storage area. If an APZ were to be established after Navy's recommendations, there would be no loss of commercial land around the OLF and under the APZs because it is not currently zoned as commercial. However, over the years we have worked with the Island County, City of Oak Harbor and the Town of Coupeville to find compatible land uses so finding compatible land use solutions is not as challenging as it may have once been.

What has been the cost to other communities?

Island County government will need to consider the benefits and costs of establishing new land use controls.

For instance, the situation around NAS Oceana is completely different than around the OLF in Coupeville. NAS Oceana was on the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) list and once the State and local governments recognized the potential loss of a major economic contributor they decided to enact measures to prove they were committed to fighting encroachment and preserving the economic stability that the Navy presence provided. The Navy did not require the State and local governments to do this. They did it voluntarily because they saw the need.

The relationship between NAS Whidbey Island and the local planning bodies has been so solid over the past 30 years that the community has already implemented some zoning to support our mission. Sometimes, at their own expense because they recognize the value of the installation.

How will APZs affect Central Whidbey?

Island County government will need to consider the benefits and the costs of establishing new land use controls.

The AICUZ study will develop and depict APZs based on the projected type and number of flight operations, and provide compatibility land use analysis and recommendations.



Currently, the Growler Draft EIS has Table 4.5-16 showing the amounts of acres under the conceptual APZs. The operational changes announced in September 2017 had beneficial effect of 30% reduction in Field Carrier Landing Practice. As a result, the Growler Final EIS, when released, will show a conceptual APZ for OLF Coupeville Runway 32.