



Idaho Department of Commerce • Economic Development Division

Idaho Joint Land Use Study

Technical Working Group Summary

Mountain Home Air Force Base

Range Training Complex

August 19, 2009 • 10 a.m.

Introduction and Background

The Idaho Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) is a joint venture planning effort between the military, the Idaho Department of Commerce and area stakeholders. It involves identifying strategies and developing recommendations to encourage compatible land use planning around military installations, airfields, ranges and military-controlled airspace in southwestern Idaho. The study will be complete in Winter 2010.

Two focus areas are included: Idaho National Guard at Gowen Field/Orchard Training Area (OTA) and the Mountain Home Air Force Base (AFB) and Range Complex. Each area is guided by two committees of city, county, Air Force, Idaho National Guard and other stakeholders.

- The JLUS Technical Working Group identifies technical issues to assist in development and evaluation of JLUS strategies and tools.
- The JLUS Policy Committee guides development of the study, approves policy recommendations, approves draft and final reports, and monitors implementation of policies.

This document summarizes the fourth workshop of the JLUS Technical Working Group for the Mountain Home Air Force Base and Range Training Complex. The workshop was held at the Rimrock Senior Center in Grand View on August 19. Summaries of previous workshops and the Gowen Field/Orchard Training Area committees are available separately.

Workshop Objectives & Format

The purpose of the August 2009 workshop was to:

- Provide a study update
- Present Section 5 of the study
- Gather input on Sections 1 through 5

Handouts included:

- Workshop agenda
- Working draft of section five, highlights from strategy summary and a map showing military influence areas (MIA).

Committee members were seated at tables arranged in a U-shape. A PowerPoint presentation was provided.

Attendance

- Roy Swearingen, City of Mountain Home
- Rich Scheuch, Mountain Home AFB
- Byron Schmidt, Mountain Home AFB
- Katie Dennis, Idaho Dept. of Lands
- Becky Evans, Idaho Dept. of Lands
- Mary Huff, Owyhee County Planning and Zoning Administrator
- Rick Solander, Office of Economic Adjustment
- Greg Seibert, Idaho Department of Commerce
- Gloria Mabbutt, Idaho Department of Commerce
- Rick Rust, Matrix Design Group
- Jon Vlaming, Matrix Design Group
- Chereen Langrill, RBCI

Workshop Highlights

Welcome and introductions

- The Idaho Department of Commerce and Matrix consulting team were introduced.
- Rick Rust of Matrix distributed excerpts from Section 5 of the study.

Duck Valley Indian Reservation update

- Rick Rust shared highlights from a meeting held August 18 with representatives from the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes at the Duck Valley Indian Reservation.
- The tribes are interested in becoming involved in the study. They will go through the same process followed by the committees, but instead of joining existing committees they will meet on their own.
- The tribes will follow their own Wings and Roots process.
- Ted Howard was designated the tribes' lead staff person, and Doug McConnaughey is the contact.

- Two sets of workshops will be held at the reservation between September and November 2009.
- Input gathered from the tribes will be incorporated into the document
- This will extend the process into January or February 2010. Committees will meet again to discuss the outcome of tribes' meetings. The public will comment on the study in January or February 2010.

Discussion:

Question: Will this be a time-specific process? If we don't set time limits it could be carried out further and further.

Rick: The time won't be open ended. We'll know more when we sit down and schedule meetings.

We hope we finish meetings with the tribes in early November.

Question: What time limit will we have before this goes public?

Rick: You could have the document in early fall and have it until early January.

We expect their involvement to be more specific to their circumstances

They understand that our position is to protect these military installations.

Review and Comments on Sections 1 – 4

- Jon Vlaming told the group that so far 91 comments have been received from a total of 10 people on the committees.
- Matrix will continue to accept comments on Sections 1 – 4 until the end of September.
- One comment indicated there was some confusion on Section 3 (Page 3-3). Matrix will go through that section again and try to improve it. Suggestions on how to make this section easier to follow are welcome.
- Matrix is also gathering additional information for areas where more mapping is needed (based on comments).
- Areas where more data is needed are indicated with a text box that says "We don't have anything on this." Committee members are asked to provide data to make those sections complete.

Discussion:

Question: Some people on the policy committee seem to think this will be a regulatory document. They want to add language to the document that says certain people should do specific things. There might be some value in telling folks that this isn't a regulatory document, that this is a study.

Rick Rust: This document doesn't require anyone to do anything.

Greg Seibert: The follow up could lead to regulatory action.

Rick Rust: We can't say that enough. And we will make sure we cover that.

Comment: It could be decided that Boise changes their ordinance.

Greg:: We would like to see the mayor and council schedule a normal working session to brief their decision-making board. The idea is to increase the buy-in. This could be the advantage of having a few extra months.

It is up to Boise to make the decision on their own. We can't make the decision for them (on changing the noise ordinance).

Comment: The technical committee and policy committee don't meet together. If the two committees don't talk is there a flaw in the process?

Rick Rust: We normally bring this information forward to them.

Greg Seibert: Some of that is your initiative to talk with policy members that you are representing.

Comment: There could be major gaps in the process because attendance hasn't been consistent among some committee members. That is the challenge.

Comment: We could advise or make suggestions. But there doesn't seem to be a reverse process. We don't see changes and feedback that the policy committee might have after they meet. There might be leadership that won't talk to us.

Comment: There is a disconnect there. The policy group does its own thing and makes their own decisions. If there could be a joint meeting where everyone gets a consensus...

Rick Rust. There could be an opportunity to bring both groups together.

At this point the policy committee hasn't done anything substantial to the document.

Comment: The concern I have is that someone will speak up at the end and think the process is all wrong.

Rick Rust: We will meet in early January and that is when we'll have the chance to bring up everyone's concerns and questions.

Greg Seibert: There is no legal authority that says this has to happen.

Question: What if the tribes disagree with the language in the document?

Rick Rust: Again, this is just a recommendation. Fine-tune the wording so you are comfortable. This is somewhat like a comprehensive plan.

Question: What is the minimum the Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) expects once the document is finished?

Rick Rust: One of the first things we'll do is look at what we can do in-house and what we'll need OEA's support for. There is a lot of flexibility in how far and how quickly to move forward. If we can get all your comments in the next few weeks we will put it all together and present it in January.

Comment: I have done some head thumping with some policy committee members over the last few weeks about what should be in this document.

Greg Seibert: We rely on you to engage in these conversations. We hope we can count on you to get this stuff out on the table and make sure there are no land mines out there.

Now that the strategies are there, I think people will pay more attention to what is coming their way.

Overview of Section 5 (provided by Rick Rust)

- Review of strategy table.
- It is important to be specific about properties so every house in the county isn't required to do sound attenuation; only those that need it.
- When commenting on the strategy section, consider the area it applies to, who is doing the activities and the time frame.
- Sensitive land uses are defined.

Discussion:

Comment: Number 69 seems problematic (to ensure compliance with FAA Part 77 height limit requirements to minimize vertical obstructions). We have to ensure what happens below the Part 77 Compliance.

Rick Rust: This is the part that will play into the tribes.

Question about sensitive land uses list: Why is manufactured home parks on there?

Rick Rust: Because they typically have poor insulation. They are more sensitive to vibration.

Rick Rust: Did the MIAs make sense?

Question: Are noise contours you are depicting here based on data?

Rick Rust: These are the contours established by the committees.

Comment: In Elmore County, we don't know what is going to happen in the future and if we show contours that aren't accurate it will be an issue. Right now we're dealing with hypothetical situations. We don't know what Elmore County is going to build in the future.

The Air Force is intent on putting up F-35s up somewhere, so that contour is going to be different. That F-35 is noisier than an F-15.

Comment: The Air Installation Compatibility Use Zone (AICUZ) map seems outdated. Is that going to be updated at all?

Comment: I think if we are doing something hypothetical then let's expand it to show all the contours.

Rick Rust: We could show them in plain black lines.

Greg: Let's think about that and see what we can do.

Rick Rust: The actual AICUZ will eventually be on the technical appendix.

Comment: From the county's perspective this noise thing is the most important part. I'd rather deal in worst-case scenarios.

Comment: The other thing it doesn't show is the pattern traffic of the jets. It just shows the departure and arrival noise. That's important. Especially if you're talking about F-35s and F-22s. Does Mountain Home want to build out that way? This doesn't really capture the noise compliance issue. It needs to be factored into this.

Comment: The Air Force is always more conservative. If we are going to use this as a planning tool, the Base will never say anything about an F-35 until it has landed out there. We understand that (from the city/county perspective).

Note: Rick Rust explains what Matrix did with Fairchild Air Force Base in connection to "annoyance noise":

This is something we could do: Create a larger area based on noise contours and patterning that picks up annoyance noise. It can be expanded. AICUZ does show pattern areas, although it isn't in their average.

Note: Rick Rust is referring to a red shaded area on the Mountain Home AFB MLA Figure 5-3.

Comment: I could see a valid argument for us to come up with a noise modeling study. It would give the city and county a better idea of what to expect. I don't know how we insert that into the JLUS, but I think we need to make a policy decision and set aside some money to do that.

Rick Rust: We should ask the AICUZ committee to put that on their list to update noise modeling.

Question: Could you put another line up there to indicate potential for additional noise?

Comment: The Air Force can't afford to be evasive anymore. There isn't the cash to do something like a noise modeling study unless we set aside the money to do it, but it needs to be done.

Rick Rust: Fairchild actually did some noise contouring. They did some modeling to get these shapes but they had commercial airlines they could model from. If you get whatever contours you have and pattern information, we can add it to our area.

We will insert another map to show how the area was created.

Discussion regarding MIA 3: I don't see much activity in there, and that's not the only consideration for the Mountain Home Range Complex. A good portion of the Mountain Range Complex overlaps with Owyhee County.

If re-zoning happens I want to know who the property owners are so I can contact them directly.

In Owyhee County where are our areas that need to be restricted? Where are our boundaries that will be affected?

Rick Rust: There aren't a lot. There is a bit of land on the south end with some restrictions.

Question: How can this regulate someone's property? Would a ranch owner have to get special permission if they wanted to remodel?

Rick Rust: No, they wouldn't. There's nothing in there that says you can't build or insulate your house.

Note: Discussion continues regarding noise studies at the Mountain Home Range Complex. Studies belong to a representative from the Air Force. It can be provided to Matrix.

Rick Rust: In the next document, the goal will be to broaden the map.

Question: Would it be possible to look at training ranges out of state?

Rick Rust: It would create an increase in funding and time. It would be a great idea as a next step.

Action Items

- All final comments on Sections 1 – 4 are due by the end of September.
- Before the end of the year, committee members should meet with their decision makers to review the study. The goal is to make sure everyone is on the same page when the process moves forward at the first of the year.
- Handouts and copies of the PowerPoint will be posted to www.landusecompatibility.com. Committee members are encouraged to look at studies in other areas for reference.

Next Committee Workshops

- A meeting will be arranged in November or December for the technical and policy members to attend together.
- The goal is to have a final meeting in January or February, when the study will be presented to the public for comment.

Administrative Information

- The workshop PowerPoint will be placed on study website www.landusecompatibility.com. The website is being used as a major communication tool as the study progresses.
- Contact Gloria Mabbutt or Greg Seibert, Idaho Department of Commerce, with any questions or concerns. To reach Gloria, call (208) 334-2650 ext. 2139 or e-mail gloria.mabbutt@community.idaho.gov. To reach Greg, call (208) 334-2650 ext 2131 or e-mail greg.seibert@business.idaho.gov.