



Loudoun County, Virginia

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NEWS RELEASE

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Planning Commission to Consider Amendments Related to Airport Impact Overlay District at June 28 Public Hearing

At its June 28, 2022 public hearing, the [Loudoun County Planning Commission](#) will consider proposed changes to the county's [2019 Comprehensive Plan](#) and the [Revised 1993 Zoning Ordinance](#) that would amend the county's policies and zoning regulations regarding airport noise impacts around Dulles International Airport.

The Airport Impact Overlay District (AIOD) indicates anticipated noise levels and related land use regulations. The current overlay district was implemented by the Board of Supervisors in the early 1990s to prevent residential development in areas that would be affected by aircraft noise and to mitigate impacts to prospective homebuyers. The current AIOD is now outdated.

Why is This Occurring Now?

The Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA) updated the noise exposure maps for Dulles International Airport in 2019. The update reflects changes in the aviation environment over the last 30 years and prepares for future changes in airport usage. Based on the airport's updated noise contours, Loudoun County is amending its 2019 Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance to update the policies and zoning regulations that are related to the AIOD. Over the last year, Loudoun County has been studying MWAA's noise exposure maps and developing recommendations for consideration by the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors.

Who is Impacted?

The proposed amendments to the AIOD that are under consideration by Loudoun County potentially affect more than 50,000 property owners around and near Dulles Airport. The Department of Planning and Zoning distributed letters directly to affected property owners. Virginia law requires the county to provide notice to property owners any time new zoning designations are proposed as that action may impact future development on the property. The purpose of the letter is to notify affected property owners about proposed amendments to the AIOD that would impact their property and notify the affected property owners about the upcoming public hearing concerning the proposed amendments.

Public Hearing, June 28

Members of the public have the opportunity to provide input to the Planning Commission that will inform its recommendation to the Board of Supervisors. The Planning Commission's public hearing on this topic is scheduled for **Tuesday, June 28, 2022, at 6:00 p.m.** in the Board Room of the Government Center, 1 Harrison St., SE, in Leesburg. The meeting also may be viewed on Comcast Government Channel 23, Verizon FiOS Channel 40, and via livestream at loudoun.gov/meetings.

Members of the public may provide their comments to the Planning Commission by mail, email, in person, or virtually during the meeting. Instructions for providing input to the Planning Commission, including how to sign up to speak in advance, are posted on the [county's website here](#).

- View [Planning Commission agendas and minutes](#).

What Do I Need to Know?

Loudoun County government cannot regulate airport noise or control flight paths and the construction of a fifth runway; however, the county can update its policies that regulate the use of land around the airport. The AIOD is a zoning tool to plan appropriate land uses in the areas where airport noise is known to occur.

There are three Aircraft Noise Impact Area designations within the AIOD that the county uses to indicate the level of impact. The designations indicate an approximate level of noise residents may hear from airport traffic. The AIOD regulations prescribe specific land use rules for each designation, which aim to mitigate the impact of noise. The county refers to these levels using the symbol "Ldn," which stands for "yearly day-night average sound level." The Ldn is calculated using a specific formula specified in the county's zoning ordinance. The designations are:

1. **One-Mile Buffer:** Properties located within this area are farthest from the airport while still being located within the AIOD. This designation requires a disclosure notice to be included with each sale of residential property.
2. **Ldn 60-65:** Properties located within this area are closer to the airport. Any residential development in this area requires disclosures at the time of sale; acoustical treatments for new residential construction and new additions to existing residences; and an easement established prior to construction of a new residence granting the right of overflight in the airspace above the property.
3. **Ldn 65 or Higher:** Properties located within this area are closest to the airport. New residential development is not permitted in this area.

[View the interactive map illustrating the current and proposed Airport Overlay Districts.](#)

Understanding these designations will help property owners interpret how the proposed changes to the AIOD would impact their properties. Property owners in the impacted areas may want to note:

- New residential development on properties within the Ldn 65 or higher is not permitted. As a result, any property moving into the Ldn 65 or higher area would see a reduction in development potential. This area is generally located west and south of Washington Dulles International Airport.
- Under the proposed amendments, approximately 600 existing homes that are not currently located within the Ldn 65 or higher area would become located within the new Ldn 65 or higher area. If the proposed amendments are adopted, the homes could continue as they

existed on the adoption date of the proposed amendments; however, any additions to the property after the adoption date would be subject to the new zoning rules.

The letters sent to impacted property owners indicate their current AIOD designation and the proposed AIOD designation.

What is Proposed to Change?

The current process is intended to update the boundaries of the overlay district based on updated maps of noise contours for Dulles International Airport. The currently adopted noise contours for the airport are based on a 1992 noise study. MWAA published an updated noise study in 2019 to reflect current airport operations and flight paths. No change is proposed for the Leesburg Executive Airport.

The county is also seeking to clarify the overlay district regulations. The proposed update would clarify that disclosures of the AIOD areas for a property are required for each sale of a home within the overlay district, not just the initial sale. The proposed update also clarifies that changes to the boundaries does not invalidate previously approved residential rezonings.

Next Steps

Following the Planning Commission's June public hearing, the commission will submit its recommendations to the Board of Supervisors for consideration. Pending any additional work on this initiative that the Planning Commission chooses to conduct, the Board of Supervisors could consider the proposed AIOD and associated policies as early as September 2022.

More Information

To learn more about the proposed changes to the Airport Impact Overlay District, including to sign up for email and text updates on the project, visit loudoun.gov/airportdistrict.

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