

Aviation System

THE REGIONAL AIRPORT SYSTEM

The 2050 Transportation Policy Plan is the metropolitan system plan for highways, transit, bicycles, freight and aviation. The Twin Cities region is served by one major airport with commercial air service – Minneapolis-Saint Paul (MSP) International Airport – and eight reliever airports for general aviation, business and recreational users spread around the region. The system also includes two seaplane bases.

OTHER AVIATION FACILITIES

In addition to the regional airports which comprise the regional aviation system that communities must conform to, there are additional locations in the region where aviation activity takes place like helipads, private turf runways and waterbodies where aircraft may land or take off from. These facilities can be found in the 2050 TPP Aviation System Plan and may be incorporated into local comprehensive plans but are not required to be. Communities can also consider any potential policies or other efforts to mitigate any issues from these facilities, if necessary.

Metropolitan Council Responsibilities

Aviation roles and responsibilities vary among various levels of government. The Metropolitan Council:

- Prepares a guide for the orderly and economic development, private and public, of the region
- Prepares and maintains a regional aviation system plan
- Reviews MAC's airport, environmental and capital plans/programs
 - Airport Comprehensive Plans must be reviewed for consistency with regional policies and systems
- Reviews community plans and public/private projects for compatibility with regional airports and aviation policies
- Provides coordination, funding and technical assistance for planning activities

COMMUNITIES REQUIREMENTS

A community's comprehensive plan update needs to be in conformance with the *Council's 2050 Transportation Policy Plan* and consistent with the Council's aviation policy. The Local Planning Handbook outlines minimum aviation requirements for communities, including mapping requirements for communities impacted by an airport. This Fact Sheet provides guidelines for mapping airports and aviation facilities, noise and safety zones, and surrounding guided land use.

GUIDELINES FOR MAPPING AIRPORTS AND AVIATION FACILITIES:

We have current GIS data containing all airport and aviation facilities in the region. Aviation facilities include public use airports (the regional airport system), navigational aids and other private aviation facilities. These airports and facilities should be mapped by using the most up to date data, which can be retrieved from the Met Council, located at the following link: [add link when data is available]

GUIDELINES FOR MAPPING NOISE AND SAFETY ZONES:

Mapping noise and safety zones is an important tool in assessing future compatible land uses. You can get the most up to date noise contour data from the Met Council or directly from the Metropolitan Airport Commission at the following link: <https://www.macnoise.com/contact-noise-program-office>. The following list will note the status of noise contour data for each regional airport. Contour data is only available for MAC owned and operated airports. Local governments should incorporate the projected contours into future land use maps to understand any potential future compatibility issues. Local communities which also own and operate airports can consider developing noise contour data for airports within their own 2050 comprehensive plan.

- Minneapolis St Paul International Airport: 2040 contours adopted in 2024
- Downtown St Paul Airport: 2025 contours adopted in 2010 (2045 contours anticipated in 2026)
- Flying Cloud Airport: 2040 contours adopted in 2025

- Anoka County-Blaine Airport: 2025 contours adopted in 2010 (2045 contours anticipated in 2027)
- Airlake Airport: 2035 contours adopted in 2018
- Lake Elmo Airport: 2035 contours adopted in 2017
- Crystal Airport: 2035 contours adopted in 2016
- South St Paul Airport: N/A
- Forest Lake Airport: N/A

Safety zones are established by the MnDOT Aeronautics division and are intended to restrict land uses that may be hazardous to the operational safety of aircraft using the airport, and to protect the safety and property of people on the ground in the area near the airport. These zones are important for establishing land use directly around an airport, and help to illustrate how to comply with compatible land uses. The dimensions of these safety zones typically vary by airport, but you can find out more information at this link: [MN Rules Part 8800.2400](#). Airport Long Term Comprehensive Plans will also contain more information about each airport.

The FAA also has mandated safety zones, but land within those zones is usually owned by the airport, or the airport has navigation easements over the land. If you would like to know more about FAA Safety zones, there is more information at this link: [Advisory Circular 150/5300-13A, Airport Design](#).

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