

Common questions about the formal consultation process

Who should be involved in formal consultation process?

Airport owners and managers, private airport operators, general aviation pilots, ports, and WSDOT Aviation should be included in the formal consultation process.

How long does it take?

The level of consultation should be consistent with the level of potential impacts. Policies, standards, and/or regulations with potentially greater impacts may involve several meetings, while those with lesser impacts may be addressed through other forms of communication.

How do I know if my action needs consultation?

The Airports and Land Use Compatibility Guidebook (Appendix A) has an easy to use flow chart that can help planners in determining a project's need for formal consultation.

How can aviation advocates participate in the planning process?

Contact your local airport manager or owner and let them know of your willingness to participate in the process. Stakeholder participation is critical to the planning process.

How does formal consultation differ from the public participation requirements (RCW 36.70A.035) or the 60-day notification requirements (RCW 36.70A.106)?

Formal consultation is a requirement under RCW 36.70.547. This is a separate action required by Washington state law. The requirement is to ensure that decision makers have the best available data when making decisions that could potentially impact the long term viability of a public use airport.

Who is required to adopt comprehensive plan policies and regulations to protect general aviation airports from adjacent incompatible land use activities?

The law applies to each public-use airport within a jurisdiction operating under chapter 35.63, 35A.63, 36.70 or 36.70A RCW, or under a charter.

For more information

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Formal consultation process



The main goals of formal consultation are to avoid, minimize, and resolve potential land use conflicts with airports through the development and adoption of comprehensive plan and development regulations.

What is formal consultation?

Local jurisdictions are required by Washington state law (RCW 36.70.547) to formally consult with WSDOT Aviation, airport owners, managers, private airport operators, general aviation pilots and ports prior to adopting comprehensive plan policies or development regulations that may affect property adjacent to public uses airports¹.

The Oxford dictionary defines the term "consultation" as "to seek information or advice, refer to a person for advice, to seek permission or approval for a proposed action."

Consultation is a process by which a local jurisdiction seeks input on actions that may jeopardize a public-use airport's role as an essential public facility.

Why is formal consultation needed?

- Formal consultation is needed to:
- Provide a bridge between local decision makers and airport interests.
- Gather technical information on the airport and aircraft operations.
- Facilitate informed land use decisions based on how airports function and operate within communities.
- Create intergovernmental cooperation and relationships between communities, airports, airport users, and aviation interests.
- Reduce conflicts between airports and land use activities.
- Safeguard airports as essential public facilities.

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¹ Airports are defined as "any area of land or water which is used, or intended for use, for the landing and take-off of aircraft..." RCW 47.68

What are the basic steps for formal consultation?

Step 1.

Towns, cities, and counties should contact the airport and the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) Aviation Division when considering amendments to the comprehensive plan or development regulations and request their assistance.

Step 2.

Review the *Airports and Land Use Compatibility Guidebook*. The guidebook outlines the consultation process and provides information on airport operations, land use, and planning tools to assist in developing compatible land use solutions adjacent to public use airports.

Step 3.

Local jurisdiction requests formal consultation by contacting airport owners, managers, private airport operators, general aviation pilots, ports, and the WSDOT Aviation Division.

**Jurisdictions are encouraged to provide supporting information and advanced notification of the proposal and schedule, ideally ten days in advance.*

Step 4.

During the consultation meeting, all parties will identify issues and concerns regarding the proposal in an effort to reach a consensus on project objectives, project alternatives, modifications, or other specific measures that avoid, minimize, or resolve potential incompatible land uses adjacent to the airport.

**The local jurisdiction, airport, and state should document the consultation process and keep a record of the proceedings.*

Step 5.

Local jurisdictions and airports should jointly work with all parties throughout the comprehensive plan or development regulations amendment process, and provide adequate notice of public participation processes, workshops, hearings, and recommended or final actions.

What types of actions would require formal consultation?

Consultation should occur when the local jurisdiction proposes amendments to its comprehensive plans or development regulations that:

- Alter existing land uses, density and the intensity of uses.
- May create airspace, or height hazard obstructions within the airport influence area.

Cities and counties should request formal consultation when there are amendments on the following actions:

- Comprehensive plans and comprehensive plan maps
- Subarea plans
- Development regulations, zoning map or rezones
- Master plan communities, master planned resorts or other planned or special permits that would amend the comprehensive plan or development regulation

What materials should jurisdictions bring to a formal consultation meeting?

To fully inform meeting participants, city and county jurisdictions should provide:

- A description of proposed amendments with supporting written documentation, maps, and drawings.
- A summary description of existing comprehensive plan and development regulations.
- Supporting resource maps, such as: existing land uses, transportation network topography, parcel and environment sensitive or critical areas.
- Graphics and other visual aids of areas within the airport influence area.
- Other resources and materials that will assist in promoting dialog on the proposal.



What should aviation stakeholders bring to a formal consultation meeting?

Aviation stakeholders should provide the following materials and be prepared to discuss the airport characteristics/operations:

- Airport Master Plan or facility plan, Airport Layout Plan, and/or other related industrial/business plans.
- Summary of airport facilities, operations, activities and services
 - Airport facility description
 - Number of runways
 - Number of based aircraft and fleet mix
 - Aircraft operations
 - Airport facility drawing, i.e., runways, taxiways, apron, hangars
 - Airport traffic patterns

- Airspace drawing
- Proposed expansion plans
- Airport services and activities

Where can I find more information about the consultation process?

The Airports and Compatibility Land Use Guidebook contains recommendations on the formal consultation process and airport land use compatibility planning. The guidebook is designed to help airports, communities, and jurisdictions work cooperatively and proactively toward discouraging incompatible development within the airport operating environment.
<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/aviation/Planning/ACLUguide.htm>

