

# Updating Minnesota's Airport Safety Zoning Laws

The 2012 Minnesota State Aviation System Plan included, based on input received during its preparation, a strategy to evaluate the state's zoning standards. An essential part of the process includes considering the appropriate balance between public safety and compatible development near airports. To that end, in November 2013, MnDOT's office of Aeronautics initiated an effort to update the statutes and rules governing airport zoning in the state. An ad hoc advisory committee was formed to guide this effort, make recommendations and provide key stakeholder input.

## Zoning Advisory Committee

The advisory committee is comprised of various stakeholders including airport managers, airport board members, pilot associations, city managers, zoning professionals and legislators. Over the course of several meetings the advisory committee learned about the issues surrounding airport zoning and safety at airports, compared airport zoning to other types of zoning. They also learned about various crash studies and data, and identified goals for the update.

## Goals

The primary goals of this effort include, but are not limited to:

- Making it easier for local officials to understand roles
- Streamlining processes for enacting an Airport Safety Zoning ordinance
- More closely integrating airport zoning with other local zoning and planning processes
- Ensuring airport safety zones are appropriately sized

## Progress and Timeline

The committee convened on November 14, 2013 and met four additional times in March, May, June and July 2014. August was the first of several key deadlines for submitting legislative proposals for consideration by the 2015 Legislature Session. Prior to the deadline two key stakeholders submitted letters to MnDOT requesting MnDOT re-evaluate the effort's timeline. MnDOT honored this request.

In November 2014, MCOA convened a special subcommittee that met monthly with a goal of submitting (to MnDOT) its own statute and administrative rule proposals. In March 2015 MCOA's proposal was received along with additional comments from other stakeholders. In May-June 2015 MnDOT will host a series of outreach meetings in Greater Minnesota to gather additional input with the intent of submitting a legislative proposal for the 2016 Minnesota Legislative session.

## Draft Proposal

Based on input comments received MnDOT has developed a draft proposal for comment. The proposal largely achieved the goals above as they relate to Minnesota Statutes. All references to zone names, sizes, and uses were removed to allow for unconstrained future rulemaking. Further, it includes complimentary modifications to municipal and county planning statutes.

## For More Information

Visit: <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/aero/planning/zoning.html>

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