

# Military Compatibility Policy Framework

## Introduction

The City of Palmdale has embarked on a comprehensive update to its General Plan, called “Envision Palmdale 2045: A Complete Community,” to create a forward-looking document that will serve as the blueprint for the City’s vision through the year 2045. The goals, policies, and actions in Palmdale 2045 will serve as a compass for decision-makers and will shape future plans and actions of the City. This revised policy document will replace the 1993 General Plan.

This Military Compatibility policy framework is an interim step in the General Plan Update process prior to drafting the element (or chapters). This framework highlights key outcomes and performance metrics related to military activity and includes a draft policy framework that includes goals, policies, and implementation activities. This policy framework was developed by compiling feedback from key stakeholders, community members, General Plan Advisory Committee members, Planning Commission, and City Council. This framework synthesizes critical issues and policy approaches by describing key strengths and opportunities, challenges, and threats, and what we heard from the community.

## Where We Are Now

The following are strengths, opportunities, challenges, and threats that have been identified by the planning team throughout the course of the General Plan update process, as well as input heard from community members, that have shaped the military compatibility policy framework.

**Strengths.** Palmdale is home to some of the most innovative research and development in the Aerospace industry. Air Force Plant 42 supplies high quality STEM jobs for the region and is one of the City’s largest employers.

**Opportunities.** Plant 42 brings weekly visitors to Palmdale. Several long-range major transportation improvements are planned, which will make travel to Palmdale faster and more efficient, opening the opportunity for further aerospace collaborations, local suppliers, and workers to travel to the City.

**Challenges.** The nature of the work performed at Plant 42 presents compatibility issues or limitations to land in the immediate area. The Accident Potential Zones—as mapped below—have restrictions to building height and use, among others.

**Threats.** While buffered from residential neighborhoods, noise, testing, and overflight activities from Plant 42 have the potential to impact resident quality of life.

## What We Heard About This Topic

The General Plan Update (GPU) incorporates stakeholder input and feedback from the residents, businesses, and property owners of Palmdale. At various points, comments were made regarding military compatibility, including:

- Preserve the mission of Plant 42
- Limit incompatible uses around Plant 42
- Preserve and expand aerospace jobs in Palmdale
- Attract aerospace and supportive businesses to locate in Palmdale

## Where We Want To Be In The Future

### Vision Themes and Guiding principles

Through the first phase of community engagement, the General Plan team explored how individuals envision the future of Palmdale, what makes it unique and special, and what things residents and businesses would like to change. Summarized into a stand-alone document, the General Plan Vision and Guiding Principles illustrate the future of Palmdale, capturing key values and aspirations, and providing a framework for future decision-making.

The list below represents vision themes and guiding principles that are most relevant to the topics of military compatibility. Visit the Palmdale 2045 website at <https://www.palmdale2045.org/resources> for the complete vision and guiding principles document.

#### ***Diverse and resilient local economy***

- Retain and support aerospace industry presence in Palmdale
- Leverage economic opportunities from an expanded transportation center and potential passenger air service at Palmdale Regional Airport
- Attract new sustainable employers and industries to Palmdale

- Maintain and enhance smart city technology in Palmdale to support local businesses and telecommuting
- Support local small businesses

***Safe, healthy place to live and work***

- Improve neighborhood safety
- Address crime and safety concerns
- Improve access to parks and open space
- Support local foster youth and those experiencing homelessness
- Foster active living with improvements to the pedestrian environment
- Prioritize walking, biking, and access to local and regional transit
- Promote living and working in Palmdale and reducing commute times

## Definitions

**Military Influence Area (MIA)** An MIA is a geographic planning or regulatory area that can be defined jointly by local governments and neighboring military installations. The MIA covers the areas where military operations may impact local jurisdictions and, conversely, where local activities may affect the military’s ability to carry out its mission. Military planners should work with local city and county planning agencies to incorporate mapping and other aspects of the MIA into the General Plan where appropriate. This overlay pertains to areas that are located within the military operating areas.

## Military Compatibility Context

California Government Code Section §65302 (a)(2), states that the land use element: “shall consider the impact of new growth on military readiness activities carried out on military bases, installations, and operation and training areas, when proposing zoning ordinances or designating land uses covered by the General Plan for land, or other territory adjacent to military facilities, or underlying designated military aviation routes and airspace.”

Any development or new construction that seriously impacts or hinders the military operating areas’ function and viability is considered an incompatible land use. Planning to ensure that all future land uses are compatible must be an overarching goal of the General Plan. Incompatible land use adjacent to military installations can produce serious conflicts, such as:

- Increased interference with air routes and communications through construction of cell towers, wind turbines, power lines, and other structures;

- Increased competition for, and interference with, data and communications frequencies;
- Displacement of threatened and endangered species to remaining open space, including military ranges;
- Need to alter training and testing due to residential neighbors' concerns regarding noise and safety;
- More rapid depletion of critical ground or surface water supplies, water treatment capacity, and other necessary resources; and/or,
- Increased air emissions in areas that may have finite air emission thresholds.

In guiding growth and development in the City of Palmdale, it is important to consider the critical role of military operating areas in support of national defense. Within Palmdale there is one military operating area:

- Lancaster-Palmdale Air Force Military Installation (i.e. USAF Plant 42)

In addition, there are military operating areas that function as “highways in the sky” used by military aircraft to practice high- and low altitude training exercises and routes used to traverse between military installations:

- Military Training Route (between 1000-1500 feet Above Ground Level) that passes above the City's southern border. Military training routes and special use airspace with a floor of 1500 feet or below is considered low-level military airspace. Low-level military airspace is particularly susceptible to impacts from tall structures and any proposed tall structure will need to be carefully analyzed for potential impacts to Department of Defense (DoD).
- Risk of Adverse Impact on Military Operations and Readiness Area (RAIMORA) zone covering the Restricted Airspace R2508 and the Nevada Test and Training Range. These are areas where the introduction of structures associated with wind power development could have an adverse impact on military operations and readiness.

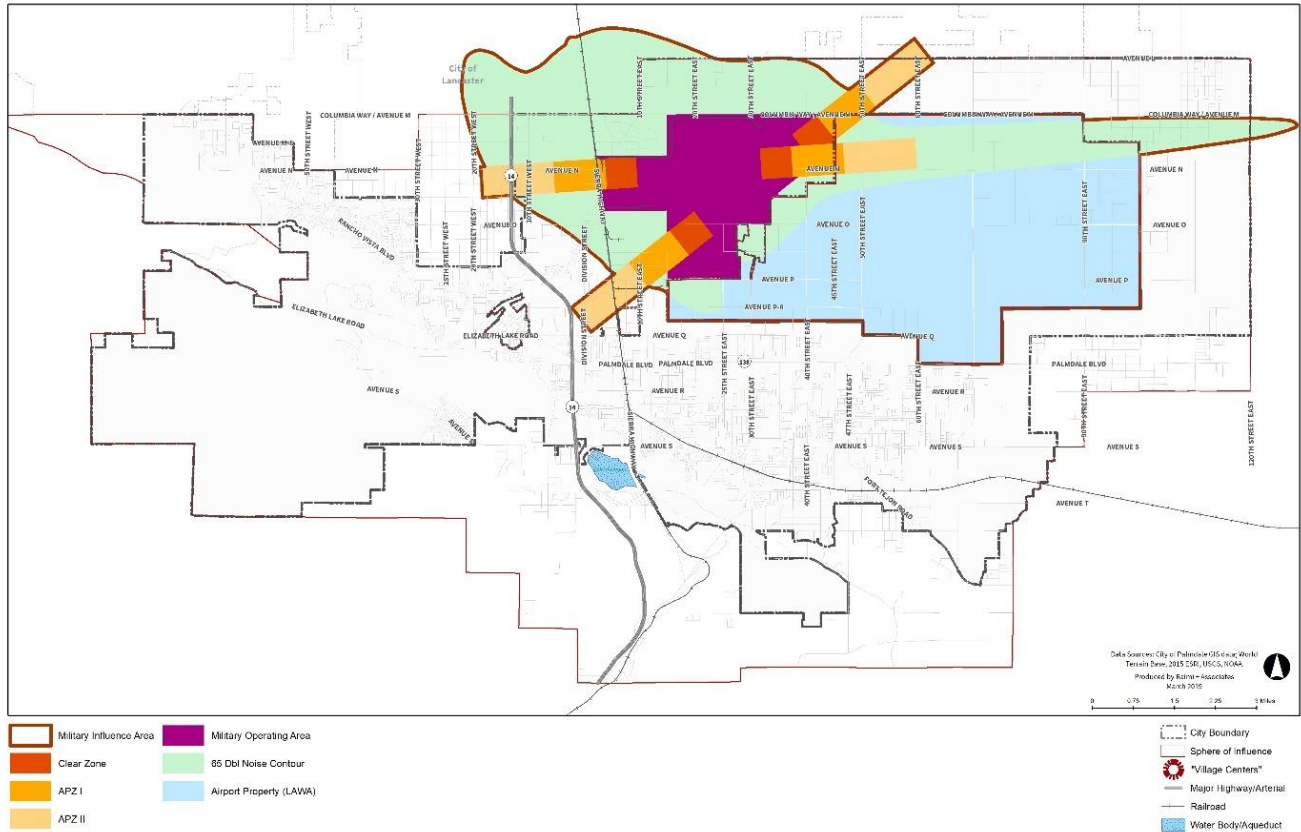
State legislation relevant to military operations and compatibility include AB 1108, AB 2776, SB 1462, and SB 1468.

## Outcomes

- **Key Performance Indicators:** Aerospace Jobs
  - **Rationale:** Continued economic vitality is tied to the success of Palmdale's aerospace industry. Expansion of these uses indicates that the City continues to attract skilled employment and the associated fiscal benefits.
  - **Target:** Jobs within or adjacent to Plant 42

# Draft Goals and Policies

Figure 1: Military Influence Area



- **Goal 1: Adjacent future land uses that are compatible with the continued operation of Plant 42.**
  - Maintain Aerospace Industrial, Industrial, and Employment Flex land use designations surrounding Plant 42 to limit incompatible uses and to ensure continued safe operation of airport activities.
  - Continue to buffer Plant 42 from adjacent, non-compatible residential and commercial uses by reviewing development applications in the Military Influence Area for potential conflicts.
  - Limit non-industrial uses from locating in the Aerospace Industrial area (aside from uses that directly support Plant 42 or airport operations).
  - Use overlay maps of the Air Installation Compatibility Use Zones (AICUZ) noise contours and Air Force Land Use Compatibility Guidelines to evaluate existing and future land use proposals.

- Ensure that there is no potential conflict between the operational mission of USAF Plant 42 and proposed adjacent solar energy facilities.
- Do not allow development in the Military Influence Area that would restrict access to military facilities, physically obstruct any portion of the Military Operating Area, or pose a health or safety hazard to military personnel.

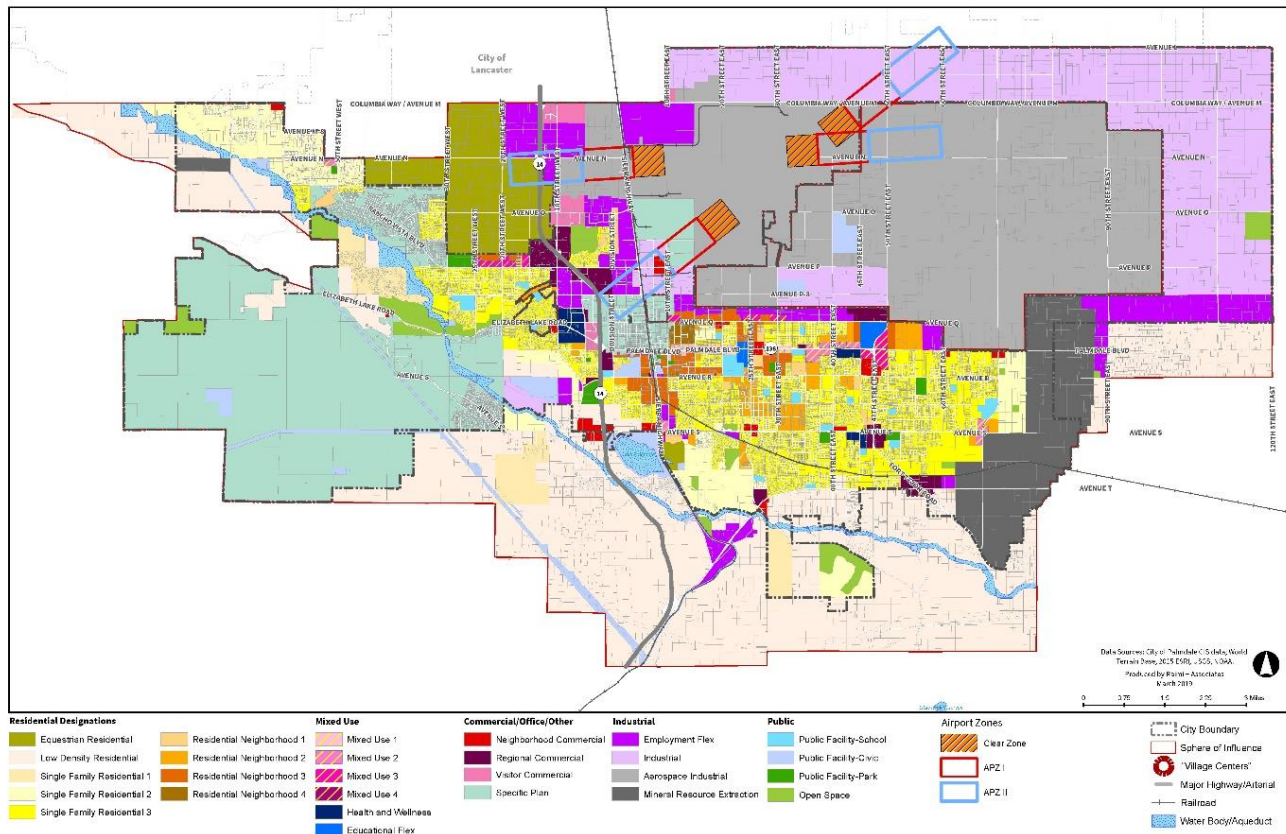
*Implementation Measure: Periodically review the zoning ordinance, subdivision ordinance, and other infrastructure plans to ensure they do not conflict with the continued viability of Plant 42. Incorporate AICUZ policies and guidelines into future specific plans within the City of Palmdale.*

- **Goal 2: Mitigated and/or avoided encroachment of incompatible development into space utilized by Plant 42 air operations.**

- Within the Accident Potential Zones (APZ), review all development proposals for hazards to aircraft in flight including uses that release into the air any substance such as steam, dust or smoke, which could impair pilot visibility; uses that produce light emissions, glare or distracting lights, which could interfere with pilot vision or be mistaken for airfield lighting; sources of electrical emissions, which could interfere with aircraft communications or navigation; and uses that could attract birds or waterfowl to the extent that they would pose a danger to aircraft operation in the vicinity of Plant 42. Require project applicants to notify Plant 42 of any potential hazards, including but not limited to the above list.
- Require all development to be consistent with DoD regulations as outlined in the Plant 42 AICUZ Report and to comply with regulations which affect development in the Clear Zones/Accident Potential Zones.
- Figure 1 identifies the areas that are included within the Accident Potential Zones. Within the safety zones of US Air Force Plant 42 in the City of Palmdale:
  - Discourage public assembly or high intensity uses in APZ I or II
  - Encourage open space uses that are low intensity and passive, such as Joshua tree and nature preserves, in these zones.
  - Aviation easements must be obtained wherever possible in the Accident Potential Zones.
  - Disclosure statements that declare the property is located within the Accident Potential Zone and is exposed to aircraft noise must be required on the sale or transfer of property in these zones.
  - Examine areas occupied by incompatible uses to determine the potential of the redevelopment process to convert those land uses to airport compatible uses.
- Within APZ I:

- New residential uses must not be approved in this zone.
- Most commercial uses should be prohibited in this zone.
- Industrial uses within this zone should be encouraged with the restriction that average employee density must not exceed 25 persons per acre per hour and lot coverage by buildings must not exceed 30 percent of the site.
- Within APZ II:
  - Residential uses should be discouraged but, if allowed, must not exceed one dwelling unit per net acre in this zone.
  - Commercial uses that do not draw large numbers of customers to the site should be encouraged in this zone. Customer intensive retail operations should be avoided. Average employee density should not exceed 25 persons per acre per hour.
  - Industrial uses should be encouraged with the restriction that average employee density must not exceed 25 persons per acre per hour and lot coverage by buildings must not exceed 40 percent of the site.
- Through the development review process, require that all new projects within the APZ's of Air Force Plant 42 provide an aviation easement. An aviation easement typically includes some or all of the following elements:
  - Right of flight over the property at any altitude above the acquired surfaces;
  - Right to cause noise, vibrations, fumes, dust and to emit fuel particles;
  - Right to prevent the landowner from erecting or growing any objects (trees, structures, etc.) that would penetrate the acquired surface;
  - Right to enter the property to remove, mark, or light any structures or growth above the acquired surface; and/or,
  - Right to prohibit the creation of electrical interference or directed lighting or glare from the property.

Figure 2: General Plan Land Use with Accident Potential Zone (APZ) Overlay



- Goal 3: Protect the residents of Palmdale from excessive noise and protect Plant 42 from noise complaints by preventing incompatible land uses from encroaching upon the site.**

  - All new land use proposals must comply with the noise and overflight policies of the most recent AICUZ for Plant 42.
  - Do not allow new residential zoning and do not permit new schools in the APZs.
  - Prohibit the redesignation of residential land within the 65-DBL noise contour and the overflight area to increased residential densities.
  - Require homebuyer/renter notification or disclosure of aircraft noise for all new residential development located in an APZ, or east of Division Street and south of Technology Drive and north of Avenue Q and west of Sierra Highway.
  - New construction within the 65 DBL noise contour area must adhere to the recommended noise level reductions incorporated into the design and construction.
  - Discourage noise sensitive development clustered adjacent to, but not within, a noise zone.

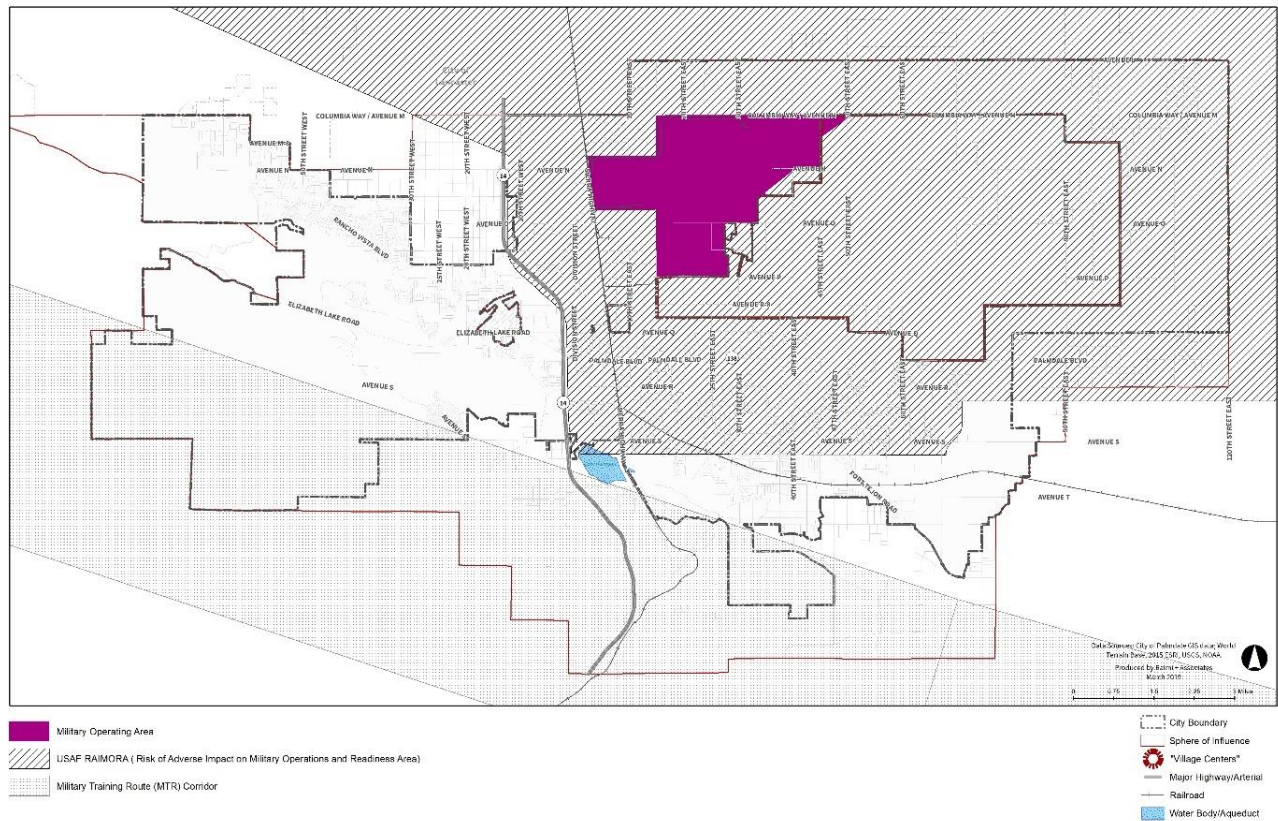


- Through conditions of approval, require that any owner of developed or undeveloped property within the 65 CNEL noise contour that is seeking a land use action from the City, provide an aviation easement to the Los Angeles Department of Airports, the U.S. Air Force, and the City.
- Designate and permit land uses within the 65 CNEL contour that are primarily industrial, business park, commercial and recreational uses that are not noise sensitive; permit other uses only when it is found that no adverse noise impacts will result.

*Implementation: Develop a site-specific review process for noise sensitive uses (e.g., hospitals, housing) to assess proposed noise level reduction techniques.*

- **Goal 4: Continued growth of Plant 42 operations in the Aerospace Industrial land use district.**
  - Maintain sufficient land zoned for the Aerospace Industrial use to accommodate a wide variety of industrial, military and supportive uses.
  - Encourage and recruit businesses that are affiliated with or supportive of aerospace research and development.
  - Maintain and improve circulation to accommodate the unique demands of aerospace workplaces.
  - Reference the Military Influence Area Map (Figure 1) to identify possible City actions in or near Plant 42 installations, operations areas, and/or military training routes and consult with Plant 42 for their input as outlined in other policies within this chapter, as appropriate.

Figure 3: Risk of Adverse Impact Area



- **Goal 5: New development within the Risk of Adverse Impact on Military Operations and Readiness Area (RAIMORA) or Military Training Route (MTR) complies with Federal Aviation Regulations regarding height and obstructions.**
  - Ensure that City height and obstruction ordinances reflect current Air Force and FAA Federal Aviation Regulation (FAR) Part 77 requirements related to the RAIMORA zone covering the Restricted Airspace R2508 and the Nevada Test and Training Range and the Military Training Route.
  - For any proposed uses that could penetrate the MTR, provide notification to those responsible for Plant 42 military operations.
    - For the purposes of determining whether a project penetrates the defined floor elevation of the Military Operating Area (MOA), a penetration means a physical obstruction from a structure or object, and/or a visual obstruction such as steam, dust, or smoke.
  - Ensure all new development within the City is constructed in accordance with FAR Part 77 that is generally concerned with any construction or alteration more than 200 feet above ground level.

- For the purposes of calculating height of new proposed structures, the height of all structures (including wind turbines) means the distance from ground to the top of the highest point of the structure. For wind turbines this means the highest point of the turbine blade in vertical position.
  - Provide for specific review recommendation on tall structures in the RAIMORA or MTR.
- **Goal 6: Enhanced communications with City of Palmdale government and its residents.**
  - Prepare residents in case of an industrial accident or release of hazardous materials at Plant 42; distribute instructions/information to the public on actions to take if an incident occurs.
  - Participate in Plant 42 public education programs regarding missions and impacts associated with military aviation operations to increase public awareness.
  - Designate a military liaison function within the City government and/or Economic and Community Development Department to exchange information between the City and Plant 42 on issues of mutual concern including, but not limited to:
    - Early notification of development projects near the Plant;
    - Early notification to the City of potential changes in aircraft operations (flight patterns, operational tempo, etc.); and/or,
    - Housing, recreation, and other issues related to Plant 42 personnel living in the City.
- **Goal 7: Coordinated future development and infrastructure improvements.**
  - Notify and coordinate with USAF Plant 42 on major capital improvement projects or infrastructure expansion plans within the MIA that may impact Plant 42 operations.
  - Notify and coordinate with USAF Plant 42 on City-initiated improvements or expansion plans related to the development of passenger air service at the Palmdale Regional Airport (PMD).
  - Promote the availability and development of affordable and workforce housing in the City of Palmdale to meet the needs of military personnel and their dependents.