JOINT LAND USE STUDY PROGRAM

Office of Economic Adjustment
Department of Defense

Military installations and associated mission activities have good and bad effects on nearby communities. Operations can cause adverse impacts from aircraft, which generate noise and pose accident potential. Ground training (e.g., artillery fire) also generates noise that can adversely affect the surrounding community.

Most major military installations were originally located outside urban centers or in sparsely populated rural areas. However, urban growth attracted by the location of the installation and the economic activity generated by it has resulted in the establishment of an adjoining community or the closer proximity of neighboring communities to the military facility. This encroachment on the installation has caused more people and development to be exposed to noise and potential hazards. Certain land developments, particularly residential zones, are often not compatible with military operations. Cooperative planning by military and civilian communities can anticipate the potential for land development conflicts and avoid the encroachment problem, but this is not always done.

When people and communities are exposed to noise and accident potential, they will seek relief. This typically places pressure on the military base to modify operations, which could ultimately lead to total elimination of noise generating activities, and a commensurate reduction in personnel and mission assignments. It also could result in reduced economic benefits to the community. Both parties lose. However, modifications to surrounding land uses can also help to resolve the conflict. If adjustments are made on both sides of the fence, both parties can be winners.

Program Evolution: Early in the 1970's, the Department of Defense established an Air Installation Compatible Use Zone (AICUZ) program in response to existing and potential incompatible land development. Its purpose is to promote community growth which is compatible with the military installation operations. The program includes a study of noise levels and a delineation of the areas in the vicinity of the installation likely to be affected by noise or a potential accident. The studies are based on standard planning criteria. They recommend compatible community land uses in noise and accident potential zones.

Because the recommendations from the AICUZ studies are not binding on communities and generally were not being included in area planning activities, the Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) concept was initiated in 1985. It was designed to provide financial and technical incentives to help resolve the conflict that has occurred between mission objectives and community growth patterns.

Program Purpose: The intent of a JLUS is to develop a plan as the basis for implementing land use recommendations, including AICUZ, around a military installation. The fundamental objective is to protect both community health, safety and welfare, and the military mission. Implementation measures may include amending building codes to require added sound attenuation, land exchanges, fair disclosure of noise levels to property buyers, or traditional development controls like zoning, subdivision regulations, height restrictions, and other measures.

Project Initiation: The military departments determine which installations are experiencing serious incompatibilities or that are likely to have increased encroachment of surrounding development that will adversely affect the mission operation. Then the community or communities are offered the opportunity to embark on a JLUS. The objective is to fix the problem before it gets worse or, best of all, before it occurs. The financial incentive is cost-shared grants that are made available through the Defense, Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA), Community Planning Assistance Program.

Consensus: An important ingredient to a successful JLUS is community consensus. Each local governing body within the proposed JLUS area must agree with the need for compatible growth around the military installation. If the JLUS is to have positive results, the communities must also agree to adopt those measures needed to achieve compatible growth. Success assumes that both the military department and the community see a long term benefit from the JLUS program and sustained economic activity that continued presence of the installation assures.

Sponsor: Once there is consensus that a JLUS is desirable, the community(ies) must decide what body or sponsor will serve as the focal point for the study. council of governments. The sponsor must develop a scope of work, that outlines the contents of the study, including goals and objectives, components of the study, methods of public involvement, and a plan of implementation. The scope also includes a an estimate of cost, including the amount of funds or in-kind resources that will be pledged by the sponsor. The work can be done by in-house staff or it can be a contracted effort. OEA and the military department involved can help with a grant application.

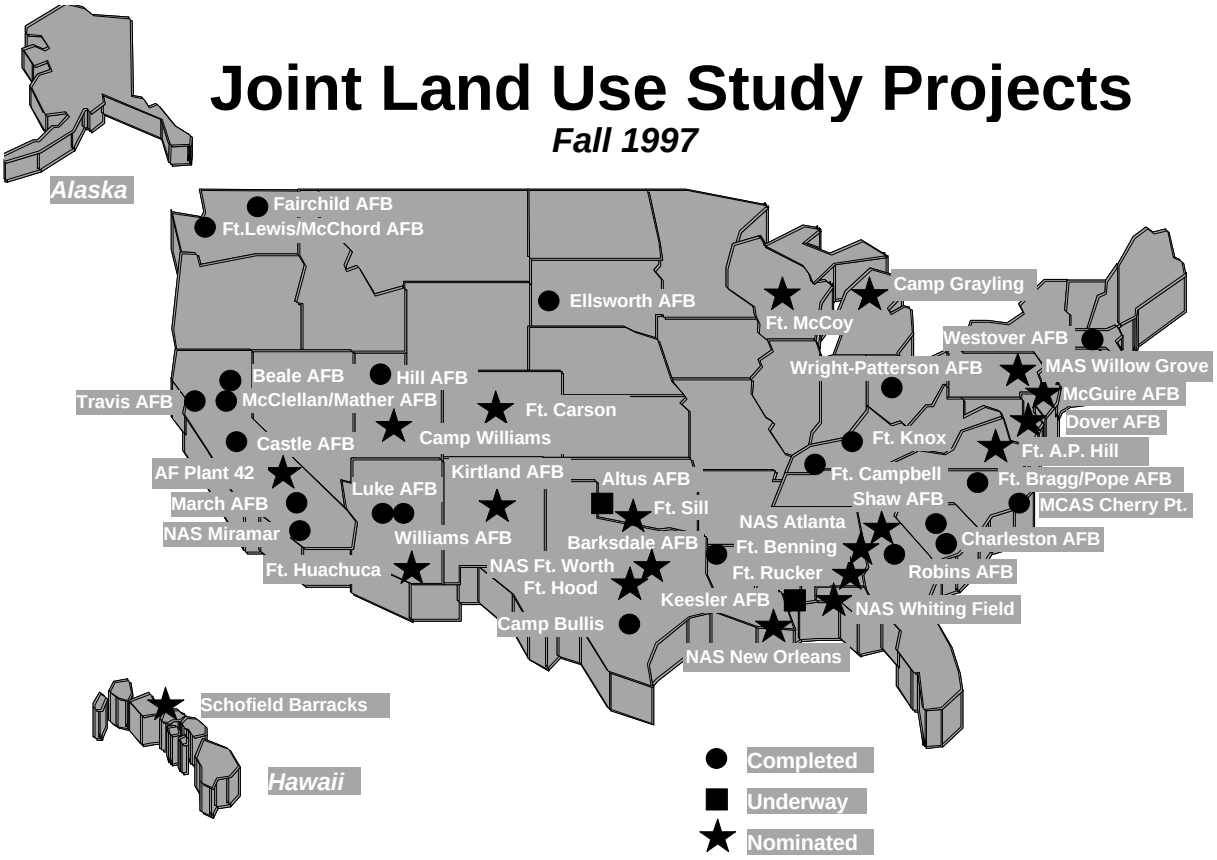
Program Experience: A JLUS is usually completed in a year, although the degree of coordination and complexity may dictate that a longer period of time is needed to achieve the necessary consensus and commitment to implementation. Through the JLUS process, communities voluntarily adopt land development controls to implement the plan and assure the overall goal of mutually beneficial coexistence is achieved.

Experience from these studies show a high success rate. The JLUS efforts have the potential to spawn mutual benefits, some beyond those directly anticipated. Common benefits include:

This can be any public organization, like a community planning office, a regional planning agency, or a

- Protection of the health and safety of residents near military installations from the impacts of military operations.
- Preservation of the long term compatibility of the installation and the community surrounding it.
- Greater emphasis on community comprehensive planning.
- Increased cooperative spirit between the base and local officials.
- Integration of community comprehensive plans with the installation, and when the JLUS involves several jurisdictions, with one another.

A *Joint Land Use Study, Program Guidance Manual* for community leaders, military departments and others was published in November 1993.

Joint Land Use Study Projects

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