

## **Watsonville Municipal Airport: Headed for a Crash?**

### ***Synopsis***

Watsonville Municipal Airport is a valuable asset to the City of Watsonville and to the entire County of Santa Cruz. While land-use planning around most airports is monitored by regional commissions specializing in airport issues, a unique loophole in California State law permits the Watsonville City Council to serve in this capacity for the airport. The airport's existence is now threatened because the city is meeting its mandated housing goals by planning housing developments in airport safety zones, which could lead to increased noise complaints and untold liability in the event of an accident.

The airport is economically valuable to the city, providing steady employment, business opportunities, a substantial tax base, and drawing business and recreational visitors. Strategically, the airport is a key asset in low frequency but high impact disaster relief efforts, as was demonstrated following the Loma Prieta earthquake. Before any irrevocable decisions are made, the benefits of the airport to the entire region must be carefully evaluated through the formation of an independent Airport Land Use Commission. Such a commission will provide an opportunity for community input and to make impartial land use decisions more frequently to protect this critical regional resource.

### ***Definitions***

**ALUC:** Airport Land Use Commission

**ALUP Handbook:** State of California Department of Transportation, Division of Aeronautics, Airport Land Use Planning Handbook, 2002

**AMBAG:** Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments; a forum for study of regional problems of the counties and cities in Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz

**APV:** Action Pajaro Valley; a consensus-based, nonprofit planning organization based in Watsonville

**Blast pad:** a section of asphalt placed at the end of a runway to prevent erosion from the blast of jet engines or large twin-engine aircraft as they are preparing for takeoff

**CalTrans:** in this document exclusively refers to State of California Department of Transportation, Division of Aeronautics

**City Council Resolution 00-00:** the first two or three digits represent the resolution number and the second two represent the calendar year, thus -00 is 2000, -99 is 1999.

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**Crosswind runway:** a second airport runway at an angle to the first runway. This permits aircraft activity when the wind is blowing across the first runway, rather than parallel to it. At Watsonville Airport, this is Runway 8-26.

**Direct economic impact:** spending in the local area for goods and services by airport tenants

**FAA:** Federal Aviation Administration

**Indirect economic impact:** the perception that the business community has on the airport's impact on local business operations

**Induced economic impact:** the multiplier effect that results from the re-spending of the direct impact

**LAFCO:** Local Agency Formation Commission, governmental entity created by State law in 1963 to regulate the boundaries of cities and special districts within a county

**Low activity runway:** a runway with less than 2,000 takeoffs and landings a year. The ALUP Handbook allows elimination of the outermost Safety Zone 6 (Traffic Pattern Zone) for a low activity runway.<sup>1</sup>

**Measure U:** Urban Limit Line and Timing Initiative, City Council of Watsonville, Resolution, 199-02, presented to the voters in June 2002

**OES:** Office of Emergency Services

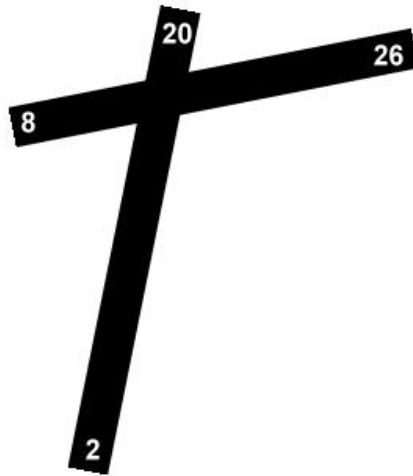
**PUC:** Public Utilities Commission

**Runway 26:** southeast end of Runway 8-26

**Runway 8:** northwest end of Runway 8-26

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<sup>1</sup> Frederick - CalTrans letter to Watsonville, April 21, 2006.



**Figure 1: Runway Designators** Each of the two paths of concrete at Watsonville Airport contains two runways, depending upon the direction the aircraft is heading when using the runway. The runway designators (e.g. “8”) refer to the compass direction divided by 10. Thus, an airplane landing on Runway 8 will approach from the west (left side of figure) landing near the “8” with a compass heading of (approximately) 80 degrees. Runway 8-26 refers to the entire path of concrete, consisting of Runway 8 and Runway 26.

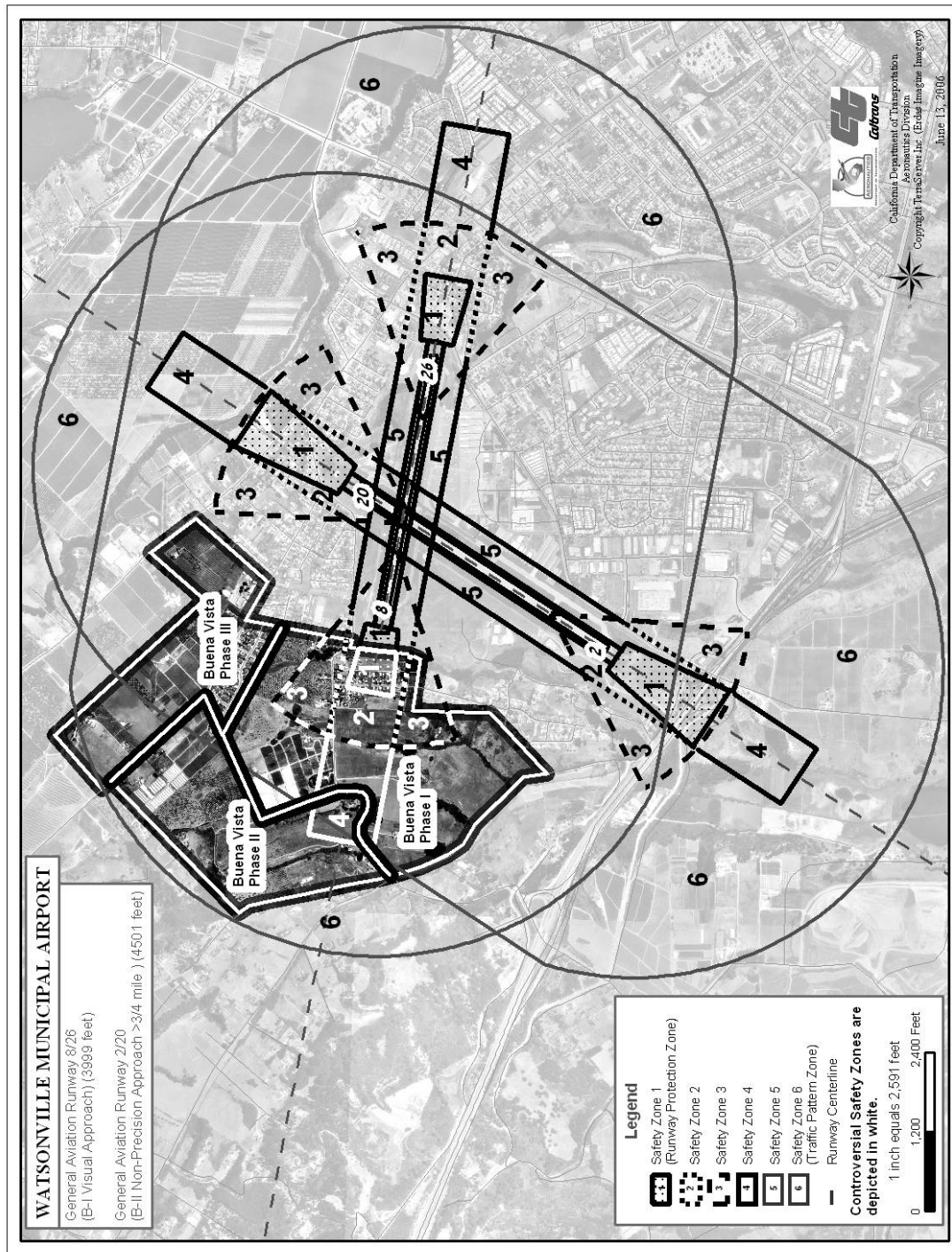
**Safety zones:** land near the airport where construction of buildings is limited. These restrictions are mandated by the ALUP Handbook. [See Figure 2.]

- Safety Zone 1: Runway Protection Zone
- Safety Zone 2: Inner Approach/Departure Zone
- Safety Zone 3: Inner Turning Zone
- Safety Zone 4: Outer Approach/Departure Zone
- Safety Zone 6: Traffic Pattern Zone

**Tie-down:** parking space for an airplane on the tarmac with facility to allow the airplane to be literally tied down in place

**Urban Limit Line:** the boundary for city-provided services

**WatsonvilleVISTA 2030:** the City of Watsonville’s general plan for housing development extending to the year 2030. This updated the “Watsonville 2005 General Plan.”



**Figure 2:** Watsonville Municipal Airport Safety Zones and Buena Vista Areas I, II, and III, showing how Runway 8 Safety Zones overlap Buena Vista Area I and how Zone 4 intrudes into Buena Vista Area II. (Special thanks to California Department of Transportation, Division of Aeronautics for providing this map.)

## **Background**

The Watsonville Municipal Airport was constructed by the Navy during World War II on land purchased by, and incorporated into, the City of Watsonville. In 1947 the airport was transferred back to the city for \$1 provided the land would be used as an airport in perpetuity. Initial construction consisted of two runways, both built to military specifications that make them suitable for use by heavy aircraft such as C-130s and business jets. Two runways are needed to accommodate weather variations. The primary runway, Runway 2-20, is the longest and can be used ninety-four percent of the time. The shorter runway, Runway 8-26, can be used ninety-eight percent of the time and is necessary not only for wind variations, but particularly in summer fog conditions.

Economic factors that make the airport valuable include revenue from taxes, businesses, fuel sales, tie-down and hangar rentals, and direct fiscal impact from itinerant business and pleasure aircraft. Two studies were conducted on the economic impact of the airport to the City of Watsonville and the region. The first was conducted by citizens appointed by the City of Watsonville in 1991.<sup>2</sup> This study found the Watsonville Airport had an estimated economic impact of more than \$19 million annually to the region. It also presented employment figures of sixty-one jobs at the airport and 188 induced and indirect jobs, with taxes of \$1.4 million, of which \$1 million was retained locally. The second study was conducted by AMBAG in 2003 and estimated that \$35 million annually accrued to the region as both direct and induced income.<sup>3</sup> The AMBAG study estimated that the indirect economic impact of the airport on the region could be as high as \$600 million a year, with 291 direct jobs, 329 induced jobs, and 1,030 indirect jobs.

The Watsonville Airport played a vital role in the disaster relief efforts following the Loma Prieta earthquake. Both four-lane roads into the county were closed due to earthquake damage, although Highway 17 opened a few days later to limited traffic while major repairs were carried out. During that time, the airport was the county's major conduit for incoming supplies. At present, many state, federal, and local government entities have aircraft based at the airport for local emergency response.<sup>4</sup>

Housing development is a priority for the City of Watsonville: 2,283 units were mandated by AMBAG in its 2002 report on regional housing needs.<sup>5</sup> State law requires that adequate sites be identified during the 2002-2007 planning period. These goals necessitate increasing the Urban Limit Line for the city, which is where conflicting economic interests come into play. There is strong public support for preserving agricultural land to the east and west without encroachment by housing. The

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<sup>2</sup>Watsonville Airport, *Airport Economic Impact Study*, p. 3, 1991.

<sup>3</sup>AMBAG, *Airport Economic Impact Study for Monterey, San Benito and Santa Cruz Counties*, p. 4, August 13, 2003.

<sup>4</sup>Watsonville Airport: *Airport Economic Impact Study*, June 9, 1991.

<sup>5</sup>City of Watsonville, *Housing Element*, chart 4, p. 4-1.

compromise negotiated by Action Pajaro Valley includes environmentally sensitive lands, open space, and relatively undeveloped land around the north side of the airport, some of which is currently under agricultural use.

The City of Watsonville addressed the land acquisition issue by amending the “Watsonville 2005 General Plan” with Watsonville City Council Resolution 199-02. This resolution was presented to, and passed by, Watsonville City voters as Measure U in 2002. The measure outlined several areas for increasing the Urban Limit Line, including the Buena Vista areas (on the map referred to as phases – see Figure 2) designated as I, II, and III, with Area I to be developed first. This area overlaps parts of the safety zones to the north of Runway 8-26.

## **Scope**

This investigation originated as a survey of California airport runways that had been closed due to safety issues and noise complaints after housing densities had increased nearby.

This report examines Watsonville Municipal Airport’s current importance to the entire county as well as to the City of Watsonville. Federal and state regulations governing airports were examined, particularly as they pertain to safety requirements around an airport. City of Watsonville housing plans for areas contiguous to the airport were also studied.

## **Sources [see Appendix]**

## **Findings**

1. AMBAG has declared that the City of Watsonville must plan for 2,283 new housing units in the 2000-2007 period.<sup>6</sup>
2. City Council Resolution 199-02 was the text for Measure U and amended 1994’s “Watsonville 2005 General Plan” (now replaced by Watsonville VISTA 2030) by extending the city boundaries to include Buena Vista areas I, II, and III as proposed locations for meeting mandated housing goals.
3. Santa Cruz County’s Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) must approve any city boundary extensions.

### **Response: LAFCO AGREES.**

4. Measure U as presented in the pre-election voter information pamphlet reduced the text of Resolution 199-02 from eighteen (18) pages to a single sentence with a generic analysis by the City Attorney regarding Urban Limit Lines:

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<sup>6</sup>City of Watsonville Housing Element, chart 4, p. 4-1.

“Shall the City of Watsonville amend the Watsonville 2005 General Plan thereby imposing certain restrictions on growth, as specified, and restricting later amendments all as provided in the Watsonville Urban Limit Line and Development Timing Initiative?”

A copy of the full text of Resolution 199-02 was only available upon request.<sup>7</sup>

5. A group called the Friends of Buena Vista presented their opposition to Measure U on the voter’s information pamphlet, but because the area is currently outside the city limits, none of the residents of the areas to be annexed were able to vote on the measure.

**Response: The Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors AGREES.**

6. The Friends of Buena Vista and other entities hired an attorney in 2005 to challenge the City of Watsonville’s draft environmental impact document regarding construction in the Buena Vista areas.
7. Neither City Council Resolution 199-02, nor Measure U, mentioned any possible impact on the airport nor possible conflicts between housing and the airport, such as safety and noise pollution.

**Response: City of Watsonville:**

*Measure U was circulated to establish a voter approved Urban Growth Boundary to protect important agricultural lands and environmentally sensitive habitats within the Pajaro Valley while providing the City with some assurance as to the opportunity to meet the housing and employment needs of its residents. The initiative established a phased approach to development along with assuring a public review mechanism (Specific Plan) for future development proposals. It is of note that citizen initiatives, such as Measure U, are not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).*

8. The Watsonville Air Show is a significant regional event, generating annual revenue between \$500,000 and \$3 million.<sup>8</sup>
9. Studies show the overall annual economic impact of the airport to the region is a minimum of \$45 million (in 2006 dollars) and could range as high as \$600 million when indirect economic impacts are included.<sup>9</sup>

**Response: The Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors:**

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<sup>7</sup>City of Watsonville Voter Information Pamphlet, Measure U, 2002.

<sup>8</sup>[www.watsonvilleairport.com](http://www.watsonvilleairport.com); Don French, quoted in Register-Pajaronian, p. 6, June 18, 2005.

<sup>9</sup>AMBAG Airports Economic Impact Study, p 14, 2003.

*The County agrees that Watsonville Airport has significant economic benefit to the County, but cannot confirm the specific dollar amounts cited. The source cited for this finding is AMBAG's 2003 Airports Economic Impacts Study, which is likely the most recent and authoritative study on this topic. The County cannot find any reference to the airport's annual regional economic benefit being a "minimum of \$45 million (in 2006 dollars)" in the AMBAG Airport Study, however, we note that it states that the annual benefit would top \$662 million if indirect as well as direct impacts are counted.*

10. Businesses and independent owners from all over the county base their aircraft at the airport.<sup>10</sup>
11. Itinerant aircraft use the airport, bringing business and recreational visitors who add approximately \$9 million a year to the area.<sup>11</sup>
12. Watsonville Airport is used in the day-to-day operations of local government entities including the California Highway Patrol, Civil Air Patrol, Drug Enforcement Agency, FEMA, the FBI, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Services, and the Department of Fish and Game.
13. The Watsonville City Council has discussed the possibility of shortening Runway 8-26. This would limit the number of aircraft that could land there, particularly in restrictive weather conditions. The Watsonville City Council rejected this option.

**Response: Caltrans Division of Aeronautics:**

*Caltrans Division of Aeronautics AGREES that this would limit the number of aircraft that could land there but PARTIALLY AGREES about shortening the runway. Shortening a runway can potentially limit the type of aircraft able to utilize the runway. Limiting the type could also be said to therefore, limit the number. Caltrans Division of Aeronautics PARTIALLY AGREES to "particularly in restrictive weather conditions." Local pilot users of the airport have indicated that the fog bank often covers Runway 2-20, but often does not reach Runway 8-26. Therefore, pilots who do not have a Federal Aviation Administration issued instrument rating, which would be required to use Runway 2-20 in this example, are still able to utilize the airport under visual conditions by using Runway 8-26. Caltrans Division of Aeronautics AGREES that "the Watsonville City Council rejected this option."*

14. One of the guiding principles of Watsonville planners is to "encourage development patterns that protect and are compatible with agricultural lands"<sup>12</sup> which also exist in the Buena Vista areas I, II, and III. In addition, these areas are part of aircraft

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<sup>10</sup> AMBAG Monterey Bay Regional Airport System Plan, Table 2-10, 2005.

<sup>11</sup> AMBAG Airports Economic Impact Study, p. 12, 2003.

<sup>12</sup> Watsonville VISTA 2030.



safety zones. In Buena Vista I, this space includes Safety Zone 1, 2, and 3 (Runway Protection Zone, Inner Approach Zone, and Inner Turning Zone) for Runway 8.

**Response: The Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors:**

*The County has no jurisdiction over Watsonville planners and cannot comment on the accuracy of this finding.*

**Response: City of Watsonville:**

*Measure U established the Buena Vista Area as the preferred future growth area after exhaustive consultation with various stakeholders including the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau, California Association of Family Farmers, Santa Cruz County and Watsonville Wetlands Watch. Measure U amended the Watsonville 2005 General Plan (since replaced) and was most recently, as required by the initiative, incorporated in the adopted Watsonville Vista 2030 General Plan and evaluated as part of the general Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR). It is not unusual for airports within the State to have residential uses near them. The California Airport Land Use Planning Handbook (CALUP) fully contemplates residential development in proximity to airports and provides examples of ways that local jurisdictions might address this. The Handbook establishes strategies to employ when local considerations result in decisions to allow residential development that might normally be considered incompatible.*

**Response: Caltrans Division of Aeronautics:**

*Caltrans Division of Aeronautics PARTIALLY AGREES to “One of the guiding principles of Watsonville planners is to ‘encourage development patterns that protect and are compatible with agricultural lands’ which also exist in the Buena Vista areas I, II, and III.” This is not within the area of expertise of the Division of Aeronautics. However, the California Land Conservation Act, better known as the Williamson Act, has been the State’s premier agricultural land protection program since its enactment in 1965. The California Legislature passed the Williamson Act in 1965 to preserve agricultural and open-space lands by discouraging premature and unnecessary conversion to urban uses. It is our understanding that property within the Buena Vista development, may be subject to the Williamson Act.*

*Caltrans Division of Aeronautics PARTIALLY AGREES to “In addition, these areas are part of aircraft safety zones.” It is unknown how much of the agricultural lands are part of “aircraft safety zones.” However, portions of the Buena Vista I, II, and III development are within what the California Airport Land Use Planning Handbook refers to as Safety Compatibility Zones 1, 2, 3, part of 4, and 6.*

*Caltrans Division of Aeronautics PARTIALLY AGREES to “In Buena Vista I, this space includes Safety Zone 1, 2, and 3 (Runway Protection Zone, Inner Approach Zone, and Inner Turning Zone) for Runway 8.” The Safety Compatibility Zones under which the Buena Vista I project lies are Zones 1, 2, 3, part of 4 and 6 for Runway 8, and are referred to as the following:*

*Zone 1: Runway Protection Zone*

*Zone 2: Inner Approach/Departure Zone*

*Zone 3: Inner Turning Zone*

*Zone 4: Outer Approach/Departure Zone*

*Zone 6: Traffic Pattern Zone*

15. Watsonville Airport provided essential logistical support during the Loma Prieta earthquake disaster relief operation. County emergency planners assume the airport, if available, will be used again in this capacity during future major disaster relief operations.

**Response: The Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors and the Office of Emergency Services AGREE.**

16. County emergency planners believe that in the event of a massive evacuation, all highways would be gridlocked with outbound traffic, as happened in Houston during the 2005 Hurricane Rita evacuation. Should a massive evacuation occur here, Watsonville Airport will be the only practical means of getting significant disaster relief assistance into Santa Cruz County.

**Response: The Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors and the Office of Emergency Services AGREE.**

*In the unlikely need for a massive evacuation, local highways would indeed be of limited utility in moving large numbers of people or resources. While Watsonville Airport would be a vital asset in the response effort, and would remain the only facility capable of handling fixed wing cargo aircraft, other air support could be staged in multiple areas of the County using helicopters. Additionally, in an event that would require massive evacuation, it is possible that seaborne logistical support may also be activated.*

17. The airport is not included in the county’s OES planning process. Although it is acknowledged as an essential facility in the Santa Cruz County Operational Area Emergency Management Plan, there has been no significant direct contact between county or city emergency planners and airport personnel regarding the coordination of emergency efforts.

**Response: The Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors and the Office of Emergency Services DISAGREE.**

*The airport is included in the County's emergency planning process and it is considered an essential asset in area plans. As a fixed facility with known capacities, the airport would be utilized by command authorities in the most flexible manner for a given incident. Detailed plans are not required for the airport to be tasked accordingly. Additionally, Watsonville's emergency personnel are actively engaged with the County's emergency management agencies and are well aware of how the airport facility could be tasked in a disaster through the Standardized Emergency Management System. There is close coordination between the County and the City of Watsonville.*

**Response: City of Watsonville:**

*The City believes that the level of coordination has been appropriate. Furthermore, the Airport is under the direct supervision of the Public Works and Utilities Director who is directly involved with the City's emergency response program as well as those of neighboring jurisdictions. The City is willing to provide any additional information or details as deemed necessary by the Santa Cruz County OES.*

**Response: The City of Santa Cruz DISAGREES.**

*The airport is included in the County's emergency planning process, and it is considered an essential asset in area plans. As a fixed facility with known capacities, the airport would be utilized by command authorities in the most flexible manner for a given incident, and detailed plans are not required for it to be tasked accordingly. Additionally, Watsonville's emergency personnel are actively engaged with the County's emergency management agencies and are well aware of how the airport facility could be tasked in a disaster and how that would occur through the Standardized Emergency Management System. The City of Santa Cruz is required to coordinate with County OES when requesting use of the Watsonville Airport.*

**Response: The City of Capitola PARTIALLY AGREES.**

*For emergency planning purposes the Airport comes under the jurisdiction of the City of Watsonville for local emergency planning and then County OES for regional planning. The logistical use and planning around that use of the Watsonville airport for regional emergency response matters is the responsibility of County OES.*

**Response: The City of Scotts Valley AGREES.**

18. Runway 8-26 has been used to significantly increase capacity during disaster relief operations.

**Response: City of Watsonville:**

*We do not believe that Runway 8-26 has been used to significantly increase capacity. Runway 8-26 is intended for use during certain weather conditions (wind/fog), which may or may not limit use of Runway 2-20. Runway 2-20 is and continues to be the principal runway providing 24-hour access to general aviation. These runways continue to function as intended and there would be neither an increase nor decrease in proportion during disasters.*

19. Runway 8-26 is used in twelve percent (12%) of all takeoffs and landings at the airport.<sup>13</sup>

**Response: City of Watsonville:**

*This is true. It is of note that takeoff and landing figures for Runway 8-26 include what are considered “optional” operations such as practice (touch and goes) and shortcut flights that are not dictated by weather conditions. We would recommend that footnote 13 be revised to reflect the most recent adopted Airport Master Plan (dated April 12, 2005).*

20. Runway 8-26 can be used by all aircraft currently based at the airport. The importance of the runway to future airport operation is demonstrated by the improvements planned, such as the blast pads built at each end of the runway to protect against erosion from heavier aircraft taking off.

**Response: City of Watsonville:**

*The Airport Master Plan includes a Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) that identifies potential airport improvements and potential timing of those improvements. Blast pads and the other airport improvements are typical airport improvements regardless of the type of runway. Furthermore, these improvements are planned to coincide with proposed industrial development next to Runway 8-26.*

21. Runway 8-26 increases airport availability from ninety-four (94%) to ninety-nine percent (99%). Crosswind Runway 8-26 is particularly important during adverse wind and fog conditions<sup>14</sup> prevalent in the summer. Summer weekends tend to be the busiest time at the airport.

**Response: City of Watsonville:**

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<sup>13</sup>Watsonville Municipal Airport Master Plan, p. 26, 2002.

<sup>14</sup>Watsonville Municipal Airport Master Plan, p. 36, 2002

*Runway 2-20 is adequate and available to serve General Aviation needs. Runway 8-26 provides additional availability above and beyond general aviation needs and FAA guidelines. In fact, the FAA would not likely fund construction of a Runway 8-26 if Watsonville Municipal Airport were to be built today because Runway 2-20 is more than adequate. Furthermore, the City has initiated improvements to Runway 2-20 including extension and installation of an Instrument Landing System (ILS) that will increase the availability of Runway 2-20.*

22. Runway 8-26 can keep the airport open during maintenance of Runway 2-20 or if an accident closes 2-20 again.

**Response: City of Watsonville:**

*Runway 8-26 is a secondary crosswind runway for use when wind/fog preclude use of Runway 2-20. Runway 8-26 is an inferior runway to Runway 2-20 for a number of reasons notably its length and lack of night lighting. Proper planning and scheduling of maintenance of 2-20 would eliminate material downtime of Runway 2-20 much as what occurs on major transportation facilities such as Highway 1. For these same reasons, an accident on 2-20 would not necessarily require use of Runway 8.26. Single runway airports exist throughout the state, many of which also serve commercial air traffic and experience similar weather conditions. These airports include Camarillo, Half Moon Bay, Lake Tahoe, Lompoc, Marina, Oxnard, San Carlos, Santa Monica and Visalia to name just a few. Single runway airports throughout the state are able to address both maintenance and accident scenarios.*

23. The proposed densities for Buena Vista I specified in Watsonville VISTA 2030 will result in more households being exposed to the risks of off-airport accidents and subject to noise pollution.

**Response: City of Watsonville:**

*There are no proposed densities under the Watsonville Vista 2030 General Plan, only potential densities. The General Plan calls for the entire Buena Vista Area to be studied under a future Specific Plan process with full public dialogue on potential densities. The Specific Plan process includes an extensive public process and evaluation under CEQA.*

**Response: Caltrans Division of Aeronautics PARTIALLY AGREES.**

*As referenced in Finding 14 and our response, Buena Vista I is within Safety Compatibility Zones 1, 2, 3, part of 4, and 6, according to the California Airport Land Use Planning Handbook (“Handbook”). The Handbook recommends certain Basic Safety Compatibility Qualities for each Safety Compatibility Zone (Table 9-B). They are as follows:*

**Zone 1: Runway Protection Zone**

*Risk Factors / Runway Proximity*

- *Very high risk*
- *Runway protection zone as defined by FAA criteria*
- *For military airports, clear zones as defined by AICUZ criteria*

*Basic Compatibility Qualities*

- *Airport ownership of property encouraged*
- *Prohibit all new structures*
- *Prohibit residential land uses*
- *Avoid nonresidential uses except if very low intensity in character and confined to the sides and outer end of the area*

**Zone 2: Inner Approach/Departure Zone**

*Risk Factors / Runway Proximity*

- *Substantial risk: RPZs together with inner safety zones encompass 30% to 50% of near-airport aircraft accident sites (air carrier and general aviation)*
- *Zone extends beyond and, if RPZ is narrow, along sides of RPZ*
- *Encompasses areas overflown at low altitudes — typically only 200 to 400 feet above runway elevation*

*Basic Compatibility Qualities*

- *Prohibit residential uses except on large, agricultural parcels*
- *Limit nonresidential uses to activities which attract few people (uses such as shopping centers, most eating establishments, theaters, meeting halls, multi-story office buildings, and labor-intensive manufacturing plants unacceptable)*
- *Prohibit children's schools, day care centers, hospitals, nursing homes*
- *Prohibit hazardous uses (e.g. aboveground bulk fuel storage)*

**Zone 3: Inner Turning Zone**

*Risk Factors / Runway Proximity*

- *Zone primarily applicable to general aviation airports*
- *Encompasses locations where aircraft are typically turning from the base to final approach legs of the standard traffic pattern and are descending from traffic pattern altitude*
- *Zone also includes the area where departing aircraft*

*Basic Compatibility Qualities*

- *Limit residential uses to very low densities (if not deemed unacceptable because of noise)*
- *Avoid nonresidential uses having moderate or higher usage intensities (e.g., major shopping centers, fast food restaurants, theaters, meeting halls, buildings with more than three aboveground habitable floors are generally unacceptable)*
- *Prohibit children's schools, large day*

*normally complete the transition from takeoff power and flap settings to a climb mode and have begun to turn to their en route heading*

- *care centers, hospitals, nursing homes*
- *Avoid hazardous uses (e.g. aboveground bulk fuel storage)*

**Zone 4: Outer Approach/Departure Zone**

*Risk Factors / Runway Proximity*

- *Situated along extended runway centerline beyond Zone 3*
- *Approaching aircraft usually at less than traffic pattern altitude*
- *Particularly applicable for busy general aviation runways (because of elongated traffic pattern), runways with straight-in instrument approach procedures, and other runways where straight-in or straight-out flight paths are common*
- *Zone can be reduced in size or eliminated for runways with very-low activity levels*

*Basic Compatibility Qualities*

- *In undeveloped areas, limit residential uses to very low densities (if not deemed unacceptable because of noise); if alternative uses are impractical, allow higher densities as infill in urban areas*
- *Limit nonresidential uses as in Zone 3*
- *Prohibit children's schools, large day care centers, hospitals, nursing homes*

**Zone 6: Traffic Pattern Zone**

- *Risk Factors / Runway Proximity*
- *Generally low likelihood of accident occurrence at most airports; risk concern primarily is with uses for which potential consequences are severe*
- *Zone includes all other portions of regular traffic patterns and pattern entry*

*Basic Compatibility Qualities*

- *Allow residential uses*
- *Allow most nonresidential uses; prohibit outdoor stadiums and similar uses with very high intensities*
- *Avoid children's schools, large day care centers, hospitals, nursing homes*

*routes*

*Public Utilities Code 21674.7(b) states in pertinent part:*

*“It is the intent of the Legislature to discourage incompatible land uses near existing airports. Therefore, prior to granting permits for the renovation or remodeling of an existing building, structure, or facility, and before the construction of a new building, it is the intent of the Legislature that local agencies shall be guided by the height, use, noise, safety and density criteria that are compatible with airport operations, as established by this article, and referred to as the Airport Land Use Planning Handbook, published by the division... .”*

*Safety compatibility criteria are a reflection of the potential consequences of an accident. Basic safety compatibility qualities for each zone are based on risk factors and runway proximity. Therefore, since most of the Buena Vista I project is in conflict with the recommended Basic Safety Compatibility Qualities in the Handbook, more households will be exposed to the risks of off-airport accidents.*

24. The Watsonville City Council has eliminated Safety Zone 3 (Inner Turning Zone), northwest of Runway 8 to justify greater housing density in Buena Vista I.<sup>15</sup> This action has been opposed by Santa Cruz County Second District Supervisor Ellen Pirie, CalTrans, and others.<sup>16</sup>

**Response: City of Watsonville:**

*Safety Zone 3 has been eliminated following extensive public review and hearings. The City determined that Runway 8 is a low activity runway and that, based upon the CALUP handbook and unique operational conditions of Watsonville Municipal Airport, in consultation with the Director of the Caltrans Division of Aeronautics, Gillfillan Associates, the Federal Aviation Administration, the Airport Manager, local pilots, airport business owners and other interested parties, Safety Zones 1, 2, 4 and 5 were adequate. City Council, Caltrans and the FAA were provided notice of the hearing of April 12, 2005 in which revisions to Runway 8 were proposed. No comments were received from Caltrans or the FAA.*

**Response: Caltrans Division of Aeronautics PARTIALLY AGREES.**

*Eliminating Safety Zone 3 is not necessarily **justification** for greater housing density, rather its elimination **would allow for** greater housing density.*

25. Construction of additional housing northwest of Runway 8-26 will increase the danger from an off-airport landing. Such an event occurred to aircraft N23039 in

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<sup>15</sup>City Council Resolution 74-05, p.3 & p. 5

<sup>16</sup>Pirie letter to Watsonville, May 5, 2006; Frederick - CalTrans letter to Watsonville, April 21, 2006; agenda packet for Watsonville City Council meeting, May 23, 2006.



the late 1970's in the Buena Vista area. At that time, there were no serious consequences because the aircraft was able to land safely in a plowed field.<sup>17</sup>

**Response: City of Watsonville:**

Off airport landings are rare, but unavoidable. Additional housing does not increase danger for off airport landings. Obviously, open space, no matter where located, provides opportunities for safe off field landings. The city is complying with the recommendations of the CALUP for safety compatibility zones with emphasis, based upon expert advice and the CALUP handbook, that the City focus protection in a linear manner extending from Runway 8.

**Response: Caltrans Division of Aeronautics PARTIALLY AGREES.**

*Construction of additional housing northwest of Runway 8-26 will decrease the open space available for an off-airport landing. With respect to near-airport aircraft accidents, the consequences have historically most often been minimal because of the extent of undeveloped or low-intensity uses near many airports. Allowing more intensive nearby development can only increase the frequency with which more severe consequences occur. The Division of Aeronautics has no information on the accident referenced in Finding 25.*

26. Watsonville VISTA 2030 proposes a school in the Buena Vista II area within Zone 6 (Traffic Pattern Zone), less than a mile from the northwest end of Runway 8-26. CalTrans has stated that Watsonville City Council cannot omit school placement safety investigation requirements within Zone 6.<sup>18</sup>

**Response: City of Watsonville:**

*Watsonville Vista 2030 does not propose a school site within the Buena Vista II area. The City Council did nothing to remove the State's statutory obligations to perform school placement safety assessments.*

**Response: Caltrans Division of Aeronautics AGREES.**

27. Discussion has occurred by attendees at Watsonville City Council meetings regarding the possibility of shortening Runway 8 to reduce Safety Zones 2 (Inner Safety Zone) and 4 (Outer Safety Zone).

**Response: City of Watsonville:**

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<sup>17</sup>Maintenance log of aircraft N23093, January 1, 1976.

<sup>18</sup>Frederick - CalTrans letter to Watsonville, April 21, 2006.

*There has been no discussion regarding the shortening of pavement on Runway 8. There has, however, been discussion of relocating the landing threshold of Runway 8. This alternative would have placed the FAA mandated Runway Protection Zone (RPZ) and State designated Safety Compatibility Zone 1 entirely within airport property per FAA regulations. This was one of the alternatives identified by Gillfillan and Associates. There was public response on the alternative, followed by City Council deliberation and debate. This option was not recommended by the Airport Committee and was not adopted by City Council.*

28. A shortened runway could raise safety concerns, as was demonstrated when an aircraft had to abort a takeoff from Runway 8. The extra length of the runway allowed the aircraft to land safely, just barely within the confines of the airport.<sup>19</sup>

**Response: City of Watsonville:**

*It is possible that a significantly reduced runway length could raise concerns. There is not currently nor has there ever been a proposal to shorten any runway. In fact, the City is in the process of extending the primary runway, Runway 2-20, by 800 feet.*

**Response: Caltrans Division of Aeronautics PARTIALLY AGREES.**

A shortened runway is a concern; however, we have no information on the incident referred to.

29. Excessive noise is already becoming an issue at the new Pajaro Valley High School.<sup>20</sup>

**Response: The Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors:**

*The County has no jurisdiction over the High School and is not in a position to comment on this finding.*

**Response: City of Watsonville:**

*To the best of our knowledge there has been no significant credible complaints regarding noise and its negative impact on school operations. The Airport Manager did receive one complaint from a PVUSC official since the school opened and it was concerning one specific outdoor weekend event. The school site was the subject of significant review by the State of California as required by State law and the City's Local Coastal Plan and Program.*

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<sup>19</sup>Chauvet, power point presentation to APV, February 25, 2005.

<sup>20</sup>Frederick - CalTrans letter to Watsonville, April 21, 2006.

30. The purpose of an Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) is “to protect public health, safety, and welfare by ensuring the orderly expansion of airports and the adoption of land use measures that minimize the public’s exposure to excessive noise and safety hazards within areas around public airports to the extent that these areas are not already devoted to incompatible uses.”<sup>21</sup> Santa Cruz County is specifically exempted from requiring the formation of an ALUC by Public Utilities Code, PUC, Section 21670.1 (e), provided that they follow the requirements of Section 21670.1 (d)(2) that “height, use, noise, safety, and density criteria that are compatible with airport operations” are adopted as part of the general plans of the county and city.<sup>22</sup>

**Response: The Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors AGREES.**

**Response: City of Watsonville:**

*The California Legislature specifically said that no ALUC was required in certain California counties under certain conditions. There is no ALUC required for Watsonville Municipal Airport.*

**Response: LAFCO AGREES.**

31. The Watsonville City Council has been acting in the capacity of an ALUC. Because it is acting as an ALUC, the Watsonville City Council is mandated by PUC Section 21670.1 (e) to incorporate height, use, noise, safety, and density criteria that are compatible with airport operations, as described in the ALUP Handbook.

**Response: City of Watsonville:**

*The City Council is not acting as an ALUC nor is it required to act as an ALUC. The City is the sole owner and the City Council is the governing body of the Watsonville Municipal Airport. ALUCs, where required, are an advisory body that is charged to develop compatibility plans, review master plans and to review and advise on development activity in and around the airport. Per State law, no airport owner is bound by the recommendations of an ALUC. The City (and County) has met the requirements established by the legislature under PUC Section 21670.1 including the preparation of compatibility plans and an Airport Master Plan.*

32. Because Watsonville Airport does not have a separate ALUC, CalTrans often has not received timely notifications of Watsonville City Council actions, especially those outside the guidelines of the ALUP Handbook. CalTrans has stated that this has hampered its ability to offer expert opinions, and has precluded it from timely

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<sup>21</sup>ALUP Handbook, p 1-1, 2002.

<sup>22</sup>California Public Utilities Code 21670.1(e).

oversight of planning decisions.

**Response: City of Watsonville:**

*Omitted in report.*

**Response: Caltrans Division of Aeronautics PARTIALLY AGREES.**

*Often in the past, Caltrans has not received timely notifications of Watsonville City council Actions. An example regarding the CEQA process was discussed in the Division of Aeronautics' letter to the City of Watsonville dated April 21, 2006.*

33. Without adequate documentation to support the critical change to this designation, the Watsonville City Council designated Runway 8 as a low activity runway.<sup>23</sup>

- Waddel Engineering Corporation provided data in 1994 to the airport showing that Runway 8-26 carried twelve percent (12%) of all airport traffic, with five percent (5%) on Runway 8 and seven percent (7%) on Runway 26.<sup>24</sup> Watsonville's City Council Airport Committee reported an adjustment of this pattern [two percent (2%) on Runway 8 and ten percent (10%) on Runway 26] based solely on the estimates of the airport manager.<sup>25</sup>
- Extrapolating from a ten-day airport count, total annual aircraft operations (takeoffs and landings) were estimated at 120,000 in 1991,<sup>26</sup> and were later estimated at 122,500 annually.<sup>27</sup> Two percent (2%) of this number (2,450) exceeds the guidelines for a low activity threshold (less than 2,000 annual operations)<sup>28</sup> by twenty-two percent (22%). However, the new estimate is less than 100,000 aircraft operations annually, again based solely on the estimates of the airport manager without a published study.

**Response: City of Watsonville:**

*Don French, Airport Manager was the source of both data sets (1994 and 2005). Mr. French confirmed that the 2005 data, provided to the Airport Committee and City Council, represents the most appropriate percentage split for Runway 8-26 usage. Mr. French has, following release of the Grand Jury Report, reaffirmed that the information was correct at the time and remains reliable and accurate.*

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<sup>23</sup>Boyle, Principal Planner, "Final EIR Comments", citing Don French, Airport Manager, March 22, 2006.

<sup>24</sup>Watsonville Municipal Airport Master Plan 2001-2020, p. 28, August 2002.

<sup>25</sup>Recommendations on Revision to the Watsonville Airport Crosswind Runway (8-26), City Council Airport Committee, April 1, 2006.

<sup>26</sup>Watsonville Airport: Airport Economic Impact Study, Appendix, 1991.

<sup>27</sup>Watsonville Municipal Airport Master Plan 2001-2020, p.30, August 2002.

<sup>28</sup>ALUP Handbook, p. 9-42

34. In its April 12, 2005 report, the City Council Airport Committee claims “CalTrans confirmed that the policies in the ALUP Handbook are intended as guidelines and that variations in design, configuration and land use compatibility was [sic] available and within the scope of the City Council.”<sup>29</sup> This authority is used to eliminate Safety Zone 3 (Inner Turning Zone), thereby overriding housing densities mandated by the ALUP Handbook.

**Response: City of Watsonville:**

*The CALUP clearly and repeatedly notes that the handbook is a policy document intended solely to provide guidance. The CALUP also states that compatibility policies differ from airport to airport and community to community and that no single solution is universally acceptable (CALUP Summary Page 6). Per the CALUP, no ALUC in California is required to amend its plans to comply with the Handbook nor are they implementing agencies. An ALUC need only to examine and consider the Handbook and make their recommendation. The City spent extensive time and effort to evaluate options, their implications and the opinions of experts and stakeholders. The City Council formed a Committee to more fully evaluate Runway 8-26 and the specific conditions of Watsonville and Watsonville Municipal Airport. Consultation was sought from many sources over several months from parties including the Caltrans Division of Aeronautics, Gillfillan Associates, the Federal Aviation Administration, the Airport Manager, local pilots, airport business owners and other interested parties. A community workshop was held and four City Council hearings were held to consider options and recommendations from the experts in the aviation field, the public and ultimately the City Council Committee. Only upon this extensive public dialogue and information gathering process did the City Council determine that Safety Compatibility Zones 1, 2, 4 and 5 were adequate.*

**Response: Caltrans Division of Aeronautics PARTIALLY AGREES.**

*The City of Watsonville is always required to comply with the laws of the State of California. In particular, Public Utilities Code 21670.1(e)(B)(i) requires that the city of Watsonville adopt the height, use, noise, safety and density criteria of the Airport Land Use Planning Handbook. The city of Watsonville is responsible for ensuring land use compatibility between the Watsonville airport and its environs. Pursuant to Public Utilities Code 21670(a)(1), the city of Watsonville must prevent the creation of new noise and safety problems.*

35. CalTrans has stated that formally designating a runway as low activity does not justify the elimination of Safety Zone 3.<sup>30</sup> Enforcing lower population densities in

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<sup>29</sup>Recommendations on Revision to the Watsonville Airport Crosswind Runway (8-26), City Council Airport Committee, p. 4, April 1, 2006.

<sup>30</sup>ALUP Handbook, fig. 9K; Frederick - CalTrans letter to Watsonville, April 21, 2006.

Safety Zone 3 by limiting housing construction is intended to reduce the consequences of an off-airport accident. Safety zones are intended to delineate higher probabilities of an off-aircraft accident based on large numbers of operations at airports across the country.

**Response: The Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors:**

*The County is familiar with the Airport Land Use Planning Handbook guidelines, but does not necessarily agree with the rest of the finding. The County believes that the issue of how best to address safety issues regarding Zone 3 requires a more complex interpretation of the guidelines.*

**Response: City of Watsonville:**

*This finding is incorrect. The April 21, 2006 letter indicates that the action violated the Division of Aeronautics interpretation of the CALUP Handbook. The FAA has no regulation authority over Safety Compatibility Zones 3, 4, 5 and 6. We would note that the footnoted Figure 9k from the CALUP clearly notes that the “examples are for general guidance only.” It is also of note that relocating the Runway Protection Zone entirely on airport property to comply with FAA regulations was a large part of the City’s consideration of Runway 8-26 modifications.*

**Response: Caltrans Division of Aeronautics PARTIALLY AGREES.**

*Safety Zones are intended to delineate higher probabilities of an off-airport accident, not an “off-aircraft” accident.*

*Safety Zones were derived from concentrations of historic accidents. Safety Zone compatibility criteria are a reflection of the potential consequences of an accident and that potential does not change even if the activity is low. Basic safety compatibility qualities for each zone are based on risk factors and runway proximity.*

36. The recommendation approved by Watsonville’s City Council Airport Committee was inconsistent with the report prepared by their airport planning consultant, Walter Gillfillan and Associates. That report’s Option 3 presents the pros and cons for shortening Runway 8 and moving Safety Zone 3 (Inner Turning Zone) onto airport property. The Gillfillan report did not recommend eliminating Safety Zone 3 in any of its options.

**Response: City of Watsonville:**

*The Committee recommendation was consistent with the Gillfillan Report, although not specifically called out. Gillfillan was directly involved in the Committee process and identified the ultimate approved option. The Gillfillan report clearly indicated that it was not an exhaustive evaluation of options and during the presentations Mr. Gillfillan also noted this fact.*

**Response: Caltrans Division of Aeronautics:**

*Caltrans Division of Aeronautics AGREES that “the recommendation approved by Watsonville’s City Council Airport Committee was inconsistent with the report prepared by their airport planning consultant, Walter Gillfillan and Associates.”*

*The Division of Aeronautics PARTIALLY AGREES “that report’s Option 3 presents the pros and cons for shortening Runway 8 and moving Safety Zone 3 (Inner Turning Zone) onto airport property.” The report’s Option 3 does present the pros and cons for shortening the east end of Runway 8 by approximately 500 feet. However, it would not move Safety Zone 3 in its entirety onto airport property. Approximately half of Zone 3 would remain off airport property.*

*The Division of Aeronautics DISAGREES that “the Gillfillan report did not recommend eliminating Safety Zone 3 in any of its options.” Option 2 of the Gillfillan report was to permanently close Runway 8-26. This would in fact result in the elimination of Safety Zone 3, the Inner Turning Zone. Other than Option 2, there were no other recommendations in the Gillfillan report for eliminating Safety Zone 3.*

37. The maximum densities recommended by the ALUP Handbook in Safety Zones as shown in the following table:<sup>31</sup>

Safety Zone	Maximum Density (dwelling units per acre)
1: Runway Protection Zone	0
2: Inner Approach/Departure Zone	.05 to .10
3: Inner Turning Zone	.20 to .50
4: Outer Approach/Departure Zone	.20 to .50

**Response: City of Watsonville:**

*As noted in response to Finding No. 23, the Watsonville Vista 2030 does not propose 2,250 homes in the Buena Vista area. The finding is purely hypothetical and should be left to the public process for the Specific Plan and Environmental Impact Report. As noted in response to Finding No. 34, the action of the City Council was taken only after extensive review and public deliberation.*

**Response: Caltrans Division of Aeronautics PARTIALLY AGREES.**

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<sup>31</sup>ALUP Handbook, Table 9-C p 9-47.

*The maximum residential densities in the Handbook are as follows:*

Current Setting	MAXIMUM RESIDENTIAL DENSITY Safety Compatibility Zones <sup>a</sup>					
	(1) Runway Protection Zone	(2) Inner Approach/ Departure Zone	(3) Inner Turning Zone	(4) Outer Approach/ Departure Zone	(5) Sideline Zone	(6) Traffic Pattern Zone
<i>Average number of dwelling units per gross acre</i>						
Rural Farmland / Open Space (Minimal Development)	0	Maintain current zoning if less than density criteria for rural / suburban setting				No limit
Rural / Suburban (Mostly to Partially Undeveloped)	0	1 d.u. per 10 – 20 ac.	1 d.u. per 2 – 5 ac.	1 d.u. per 2 – 5 ac.	1 d.u. per 1 – 2 ac.	No limit
Urban (Heavily Developed)	0	0	Allow infill at up to average of surrounding residential area <sup>b</sup>			No limit

<sup>a</sup> Clustering to preserve open land encouraged in all zones.

<sup>b</sup> See Chapter 3 for discussion of infill development criteria; infill is appropriate only if nonresidential uses are not feasible.

*Using the table for Zone 3 as indicated, the maximum density would be one dwelling unit per 2 -5 acres. Either of the density scenarios given in the finding would exceed the dwelling units per acre in Zone 3 as depicted in the Safety Compatibility Criteria Guidelines in the Handbook.*

38. If the proposed 2,250 homes are built on the 458 acres in the Buena Vista areas, the resulting average housing density (approximately 5 dwelling units per acre) will exceed the maximum density in Safety Zone 3 by a factor of 10 to 25. Any of the planned “medium” (10-17 dwelling units per acre) density occurring within Safety Zone 3 will exceed by 20 to 80 times the maximum density permitted.

**Response: The Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors:**

*While the County is familiar with the Airport Land Use Planning Handbook guidelines, the issue of how best to address safety issues regarding Zone 3 requires a more complex interpretation of the guidelines.*

**Response: City of Watsonville:**

*The City Council has acted in the best interest of the airport consistent with the Public Utilities Code and no ALUC is necessary. There is no reason to believe that an ALUC would have come to a different conclusion. There is no reason to believe that, given the unique Watsonville circumstances, CALUP guidance and a seated ALUC advising, that the City Council would have come to a different conclusion.*



**Response: Caltrans Division of Aeronautics AGREES.**

39. CalTrans has recommended that an independent ALUC be formed.<sup>32</sup>

***Conclusions***

1. While the City of Watsonville has a mandated housing goal, it does not have a mandated location for the housing.
2. Watsonville Municipal Airport is not sufficiently valued as an economic asset to the City of Watsonville and to Santa Cruz County.
3. Watsonville Airport is an essential regional asset in future disaster relief operations in Santa Cruz County.
4. Crosswind Runway 8-26 is critical to the vitality and efficacy of Watsonville Municipal Airport.
5. If development proceeds according to WatsonvilleVISTA 2030, noise pollution may become a serious issue in the Buena Vista areas.
6. If development proceeds according to WatsonvilleVISTA 2030, the risk that an engine failure will have life threatening consequences to those on the ground is unacceptably increased.
7. In the event of an off-airport accident in the Buena Vista areas, there will likely be a significant demand for closure of Crosswind Runway 8-26 or even the airport itself.
8. The Watsonville City Council's failure to enforce the maximum population densities in airport safety zones may increase Watsonville's exposure to legal liability in the event of an off-airport accident in these areas. The fact that there are high populations within the safety zones of other runways at the airport does not justify continuing the practice of violating airport safety zone building densities northwest of Runway 8.
9. WatsonvilleVISTA 2030 threatens the viability of the Crosswind Runway 8-26.
10. The Watsonville City Council has chosen to fulfill its housing planning needs at the expense of airport safety and noise pollution.
11. Failure to enforce ALUP Handbook regulations to achieve the planning goals of Measure U demonstrates an inherent conflict of interest in the City of Watsonville's ability to serve in the role of an ALUC.
12. The Watsonville City Council has not given appropriate weight to either the airport's or Santa Cruz County's interests while serving as Watsonville Airport's ALUC.

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<sup>32</sup>Frederick - CalTrans letter to Watsonville, April 21, 2006.

## **Recommendations**

1. Santa Cruz County should form an ALUC, with the help of the City of Watsonville, Action Pajaro Valley, Watsonville Pilots Association, and LAFCO.

### **Response: The Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors:**

*This recommendation will not be implemented. The County believes that the goals of public health, safety and welfare for issues related to the Watsonville Airport can best be accomplished as was envisioned in State law — through updating both the County's and City's land use regulations to reflect the regulations contained in the Airport Land Use Planning Handbook. The County is currently in the early stages of changing its land use regulations for the unincorporated areas in the airport vicinity to be consistent with the Handbook, which would make the County regulations consistent with the State standards. The County has encouraged the City to take similar efforts. The County believes the City and County should be given more time to bring our respective airport vicinity land use regulations into compliance. However, in the event that the City or County are unable to bring their land use regulations into compliance, the creation of an ALUC should be reconsidered.*

### **Response: City of Watsonville:**

*An ALUC would be an unnecessary additional level of government. It is not appropriate for Watsonville and similarly situated communities as recognized by the Public Utilities Code (Aeronautics Act).*

### **Response: LAFCO:**

*LAFCO has no opinion on the advisability of either forming an Airport Land Use Commission or maintaining the current system of the City and County addressing airport safety issues directly in their general plans. LAFCO does not have statutory responsibility to conduct formation proceedings for Airport Land Use Commissions. Those proceedings are specified in the Public Utilities Code (see attachment).*

*If technical advice regarding special district formations is desired, LAFCO staff is available to consult with the staffs of the County, the City of Watsonville, and other parties. LAFCO does not know whether the County and City will implement this recommendation.*

### **Response: Caltrans Division of Aeronautics AGREES.**

*This recommendation has not been implemented.*

2. The City of Watsonville should comply with the Airport Land Use Planning requirements of the FAA and the State of California.

**Response: City of Watsonville:**

*The FAA regulates use and operation of aircraft and airport operations; it does not regulate land use compatibility. There is no airport land use planning requirements in the CALUP Handbook. There are policies; Watsonville has reasonably applied the policies based upon the CALUP guidance and the specific Watsonville circumstances in accordance with State law.*

**Response: Caltrans Division of Aeronautics AGREES.**

*This recommendation has not been implemented.*

3. When LAFCO considers extending the Urban Limit Line to include the Buena Vista areas, it should evaluate all aspects of the airport's importance to the entire county of Santa Cruz as well as to the City of Watsonville, its housing needs, and the safety of the citizens.

**Response: The Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors:**

*The County has no jurisdiction over LAFCO.*

**Response: LAFCO:**

*LAFCO will implement this recommendation when reviewing the City's future Sphere of Influence amendments and annexations in the Buena Vista areas. State laws require LAFCO to consider a broad range of issues when reviewing an application. Key sections of law that identify, but not limit, LAFCO's review responsibilities and criteria are Government Code Sections 56001 (Legislative findings), 56425e (Sphere of Influence determinations), and 56668 (Annexation factors). Concerning the timing of City's applications in the Buena Vista areas, LAFCO does not currently have any sphere of influence amendment or annexation application on file for the Buena Vista areas. LAFCO believes that the City will file an application or applications after it completes the Buena Vista Specific Plan. The drafting and adoption of a specific plan for Buena Vista could easily take the City more than twelve months.*

*LAFCO thanks the Grand Jury for the many hours of work it spends each year in investigating local government.*

4. Santa Cruz County should officially recognize the importance of the airport to its general welfare, both financially and in disaster response, by helping form an ALUC. This will help in ensuring the airport's preservation as an asset to the entire county.

**Response: The Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors:**

*See response to Recommendation #1 above.*

5. The Santa Cruz County Office of Emergency Services and the city managers of the Scotts Valley, Santa Cruz, Capitola, and Watsonville must interact with Watsonville Municipal Airport personnel to include the airport in all emergency preparedness plans that could require use of the airport.

**Response: The Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors and the Office of Emergency Services:**

*This recommendation will be implemented. Meetings have been scheduled with the Emergency Coordinators from each city and the County's Emergency Services Administrator in September 2006 to review current Concepts of Operation for use of the airport. Follow-up discussions with airport personnel are planned to begin shortly thereafter.*

**Response: City of Watsonville:**

*Santa Cruz County OES and the Cities of the county do interact on airport and other related emergency issues. The City is open to additional dialogue with OES and other jurisdictions.*

Runway 8-26 is a vital component of Watsonville Municipal Airport and its current operational capacity should be fully maintained.

**Response: City of Watsonville:**

*Runway 8.2 is a component of the airport and its current operational capacity is being fully maintained. The primary runway, Runway 2-20 is adequate and available to serve the general aviation needs with or without Runway 8.26.*

**Response: The City of Santa Cruz:**

*The recommendation has not yet been implemented. However, meetings have been scheduled with the emergency coordinators from each city and the County's Emergency Services Administrator in September 2006 to recap current Concepts of Operation for use of the airport. Follow-up discussions with airport personnel are planned to begin shortly thereafter. The City of Santa Cruz will incorporate any specific Watsonville Airport concepts of operation into our Emergency Management Plans by February 1, 2007.*

**Response: The City of Capitola:**

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*Will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is unreasonable. Under SEMS and NIMS county OES has the responsibility of coordinating with the Watsonville airport for use in an emergency outside the City of Watsonville.*

**Response: The City of Scotts Valley AGREES.**

***Responses required***

<b>Entity</b>	<b>Findings</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Respond Within</b>
Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors	5, 9, 14-17, 29-30, 35, 37	1, 3, 4, 5	60 Days (September 1, 2006)
City of Watsonville	7, 14, 17-38	1, 2, 5, 6	90 days (October 1, 2006)
City of Santa Cruz	17	5	90 days (October 1, 2006)
City of Capitola	17	5	90 days (October 1, 2006)
City of Scotts Valley	17	5	90 days (October 1, 2006)
LAFCO	3, 30	1, 3	90 days (October 1, 2006)
Office of Emergency Services County of Santa Cruz	15-17	5	90 days (October 1, 2006)

***Responses requested but not required***

<b>Entity</b>	<b>Findings</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Respond Within</b>
Action Pajaro Valley	30	1	90 days (October 1, 2006)
California Department of Transportation, Division of Aeronautics	13-14, 23-26, 28, 32, 34-38	1, 2	90 days (October 1, 2006)
Watsonville Pilots Association	30	1	90 days (October 1, 2006)

## **Appendix - Sources**

### **Interviews**

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Santa Cruz County personnel.  
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