



**COUNTY OF MENDOCINO**  
**DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND BUILDING SERVICES**

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**MEMORANDUM**

DATE: NOVEMBER 19, 2020

TO: MENDOCINO COUNTY AIRPORT LAND USE COMMISSION

FROM: PLANNING AND BUILDING SERVICES

SUBJECT: DIRECTION ON THE DRAFT UKIAH MUNICIPAL AIRPORT LAND USE  
COMPATIBILITY PLAN REGARDING POSSIBLE MODIFICATION TO ACCOMMODATE  
FIRE-FIGHTING AIRCRAFT

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A public review draft of the Ukiah Municipal Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (UKIALUCP) was completed on January 31, 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, public review of the document was delayed until July 2020. A joint Planning Commission meeting was held with both City and County Planning Commissions on July 16, 2020 for an update regarding the UKIALUCP and for consideration of a recommendation to the Airport Land Use Commission regarding the UKIALUCP. City and County staff have been working since July 2020 to schedule the remaining City Council and Board of Supervisors meeting. Following the City Council and Board of Supervisors meetings the UKIALUCP would be scheduled for final adoption by the Airport Land Use Commission.

On October 16, 2020, City staff informed County staff of a potential change that was requested to the UKIALUCP to accommodate California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire) fire-fighting aircraft. As County staff understands the issue, there is a potential need for additional runway length to accommodate CalFire fire-fighting aircraft, which in turn requires an additional runway protection zone (RPZ). The additional RPZ would further restrict development on several parcels from that which was shown on the public review draft of the UKIALUCP from July 2020. The challenge with updating the current UKIALUCP to include this change is that there is not a current Airport Layout Plan that reflects this potential runway extension and RPZ. Pursuant to California Public Utilities Code Section 21675(a), an Airport Comprehensive Land Use Plan must be based on the Master Plan or Airport Layout Plan as determined by the Division of Aeronautics. At present, the City of Ukiah Airport Layout Plan does not include this future RPZ.

A couple options have been identified to accommodate the proposed change and today we are seeking direction from the Airport Land Use Commission regarding how to proceed. Identified options for consideration of the Airport Land Use Commission are as follows:

**Option 1:** Put the UKIACLUP update process that is currently underway on hold to allow for an evaluation of a future runway extension for CalFire fire-fighting aircraft. Halting the UKIACLUP update would allow this future extension to be fully evaluated, including under the California Environmental Quality Act, before any action is taken that may prevent the ability of the Ukiah Airport to support these operations in the future.

**Option 2:** City of Ukiah could consider adopting an overlay (combining district) on the affected properties to prohibit development that would be inconsistent with RPZ related criteria if and/or when the Airport Layout Plan is updated to include a runway extension for CalFire fire-fighting aircraft.

**Option 3:** Continue with the current draft of the UKIALUCP and modify the UKIALUCP once the Airport Layout Plan is updated to reflect the runway extension and additional RPZ.

**RECOMMENDATION**

County staff recommends Option 1 as the best approach to address this potential change. It is anticipated that Mead & Hunt will prepare and present an additional memorandum either prior to or at the meeting addressing this same topic.