
Chapter 7 – Airport Land Use Compatibility



Introduction

This chapter describes land use associated with Ephrata Municipal Airport and its surroundings, land use controls, and other issues related to airport compatibility and jurisdictional responsibilities.

Government Roles in Airport Land Use

FEDERAL

Land use regulation is a local responsibility and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has a technical advisory role based on its interest in protecting the airspace associated with an airport as part of the national airspace system. The FAA does not have authority to regulate off airport land use, including the construction of built items. The FAA has a role in regulating on-airport land use through approval of the Airport Layout Plan (ALP) and airport sponsor compliance with FAA Airport Improvement Program (AIP) grant assurances, which include measures to maintain airport land use compatibility and protect the aeronautical function of an airport by restricting the location of non-aviation land uses.

Under 14 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 77, the FAA has the authority to review proposed construction through its 7460-1 (Notice of Construction or Alteration) process. The FAA review is advisory and addresses compatibility both on and off airport based on the potential for creating a “hazard to air navigation” associated with obstructions/penetrations in the defined airspace. FAA airspace reviews include FAR Part 77 surfaces; Terminal Instrument Procedures (TERPS) surfaces, visual runway traffic patterns, and visual navigation aid (e.g., VASI, PAPI, etc.) protected airspace. When a proposed structure penetrates navigable airspace, the FAA will issue a letter objecting to the proposed action (determination of presumed hazard to air navigation) for the consideration of local authorities. When proposed actions

do not present a hazard to air navigation, a “no objection” finding is issued. It is important to note that this analysis is based on an obstruction evaluation and is not intended to address land use compatibility in terms of noise exposure or proximity to an airport or runway.

In cases where the airport sponsor is also the local land use authority, local land use actions are reviewed for compliance with the FAA grant assurances intended to protect airports from incompatible land uses.

The FAA recommends that local jurisdictions include the following language in their development codes: “Nothing in this chapter shall diminish the responsibility of project proponents to submit a Notice of Construction or Alteration to the Federal Aviation Administration if required in accordance with Federal Aviation Regulations Part 77, “Objects Affecting Navigable Airspace.”

FAR Part 150 (Airport Noise Compatibility Planning) provides guidance for land use compatibility around airports. The 1990 Airport Noise and Capacity Act (ANCA) defines federal policy on the regulation of airport noise (operating curfews, aircraft restrictions, etc.), with the intent of standardizing noise controls throughout the national system.

STATE

Washington State’s goals for land use planning are defined by the Growth Management Act (GMA), adopted by the Washington State Legislature in 1990. In 1996, the GMA was amended to assist in preserving the social and economic benefits of aviation. The GMA requires towns, cities, and counties to address airport land use compatibility, and identifies airports as “essential public facilities.”

The following summary developed by the Washington Department of Transportation – Aviation Division (WSDOT Aviation) explains the intent of GMA, as codified in Revised Code of Washington (RCW) Chapter 36.70:

“RCW 36.70.547 and RCW 36.70A.510 require all cities and counties to adopt comprehensive plan goals, policies, and regulations to discourage development of incompatible land uses adjacent to public use airports. Local jurisdictions must consult with aviation interests, including WSDOT Aviation, when adopting comprehensive plan amendments to address airport land use compatibility during GMA updates, subject to the schedule designated by state law.”

WSDOT Aviation Division reviews comprehensive plans and regulations; provides technical assistance on aviation issues; and provides land use compatibility guidelines to help local jurisdictions protect airports from incompatible uses. The Aviation Division recommends that local jurisdictions consider three primary areas in determining potential land use compatibility: height hazards, noise, and safety. The specific measures used by each jurisdiction are locally determined based on the guidelines provided by the Aviation Division. Although local compliance with RCW 36.70 is required, the means and degree to which local jurisdictions (cities and counties) achieve compliance are not mandated.

An airport’s surrounding land use may extend beyond the immediate jurisdiction to include unincorporated county land areas, or nearby municipalities. It is critical that effective communication and

coordination occur between the airport and all local jurisdictions since the responsibility for land use controls may involve more than one jurisdiction.

WSDOT Aviation recommends that local land use jurisdictions develop practices that protect the airspace surrounding airports within the FAA Part 77 Imaginary Surfaces and establish when it is appropriate to submit an FAA Form 7460-1 prior to construction. Airspace protection can be accomplished by:

- Incorporating FAR Part 77 airspace surface layers into GIS mapping to automatically flag land parcels located beneath a defined surface to determine whether a new development will impact the airspace.
- Requiring that applicants for all proposed development located within the boundaries of the defined FAR Part 77 airspace surfaces submit FAA Form 7460-1 Notice of Proposed Construction or Alternation and receive a “no hazard” finding from FAA, prior to issuing local permits.

Consider adding or modifying language to the Comprehensive Plan to strengthen airport protection:

- Establishing the airport as an Essential Public Facility “EPF”, WAC 365-196-550 to protect the Airport and surrounding areas. Cities and counties should create their own lists of EPFs to include the minimum set forth in RCW 36.70A.200;
- Include the airport in the Transportation System Inventory;
- Recognize the significance of the airport for economic development;
- Create policies that discourage the development of incompatible land uses adjacent to the airport.

LOCAL

The role of local government is to ensure their comprehensive plans, goals, policies, and regulations discourage development of incompatible land uses near airports. As noted earlier, these rules are codified in RCW 36.70.547 and 36.70A.510 for all local jurisdictions in Washington.

Land Use Jurisdiction

The City of Ephrata has land use jurisdiction for the majority of airport property. A small piece of airport property that previously contained the Runway Protection Zone (RPZ) for Runway 21 extends beyond the city limits and Urban Growth Area (UGA) boundary. The RPZ location has shifted as part of a previous runway project and it is recommended that the property boundary be adjusted to include the current Runway 21 RPZ location. The city may consider extending the UGA around this portion of land. The Ephrata city limits and UGA boundary overlap for the most part, with only a few small areas identified for future annexation, none of which is on airport property.

The City of Ephrata has land use authority for the Port owned airport and industrial park. The airport and industrial park are situated on approximately 2,206 acres of land. As noted earlier, a portion of the Runway

21 RPZ and the airport’s imaginary surfaces extend beyond city limits and UGA boundary into Grant County.

City of Ephrata and Grant County zoning and land use designations are depicted in **Figure 7-1**, presented at the end of this chapter.

City of Ephrata

LAND USE

The City of Ephrata’s Comprehensive Plan identifies the runways and the runway protected areas as *Airport Facilities*. “Airport Facilities are those protected areas of the Ephrata Municipal Airport, which are protected from development and incompatible land uses.”

The majority of airport property outside of the Airport Facilities land designation within the airport property boundary is designated *Employment Area Manufacturing Industrial*. This designation “provides for the creation and support of industrial areas, which function as integrated employment activity areas. This includes a core of industrial uses and other related businesses and services, transit facilities and amenities.”

A small area of airport property that is currently leased for a local gun range is designated *Public Facilities*. Public Facilities include “public parks and recreation areas, and wildlife preservation areas.”

ZONING

The majority of airport property is zoned *Airport Enterprise (AE)*. The AE zone “is established to provide for the coordinated, managed, and safe development of land adjacent to the Ephrata Municipal Airport. The development and use of land shall be as provided in the Airport Master Plan, the document adopted by both the Port of Ephrata and the City of Ephrata to establish development and land use standards on port property.”

There are several parcels within the Airport Industrial Park that are zoned *Airport Industrial I* and *Airport Commercial*. An on-airport parcel in the approach to Runway 3 and 4, but outside of the RPZ’s is zoned *Airport Unclassified*.

AIRPORT OVERLAY ZONE

The City of Ephrata, Ephrata Municipal Code establishes an *Airport Clear Zone (CZ) Overlay District* for Ephrata Municipal Airport. The CZ zone “ensures that any proposed development or use of land in that area within the approach or departure pattern of the Ephrata Municipal Airport is consistent with aviation and personal safety, limiting the exposure of persons on the ground to injury due to aviation accidents and reducing hazards to flight during approach and departure. Obstructions within the clear zones have the potential for endangering the lives and property of users of the Ephrata Municipal Airport and property of

occupants of land in its vicinity. Obstructions may affect future instrument approach minimums to the airport and may reduce the size of the area available for landing, take-off, and maneuvering of aircraft. Obstructions would tend to destroy or impair the utility of the airport and the public's investment and are potential public nuisances.”¹

The Airport Clear Zone includes existing and future uses, use restrictions, and height limitations. The current height limitation “prohibits any construction or maintenance of any structure or growth of any tree to a height up to 35 feet above the surface of the land.”

See **Appendix D** for a copy of the Ephrata Municipal Code, Chapter 19 Zoning Code for full details on the Airport Overlay Zone and underlying zoning.

AIRPORT VICINITY ZONING

- The land located immediately north of the airport is zoned *Heavy Industrial (I-2)* by the City of Ephrata.
 - Heavy Industrial lands ensure adequate land area exists for a variety of commercial and lighter industrial uses in the City of Ephrata. This district is characterized by permitting all uses permitted in the C-2 (General Commercial) district as well as a range of more land-intensive light industrial uses, such as warehousing or materials storage.
- The land to the west of the airport has a mixture of City of Ephrata *Residential (R-1, R-2, and R-3)*, *Industrial 1 (I-1)*, and *General Commercial (C-2)* zoning. Single Family Residential (R-1) and Attached Housing Residential (R-2) are located adjacent to the Airport Enterprise Zone.

ESSENTIAL PUBLIC FACILITIES

The City of Ephrata Comprehensive Plan identifies Ephrata Municipal Airport as an essential public facility with the following goals and policy:²

- Goal 27: “Recognizing the Ephrata Municipal Airport is an Essential Public Facility, the City of Ephrata will discourage land uses that may promote incompatible development adjacent to the airport.”
- Policy 27: “Ephrata shall protect the Ephrata Municipal Airport from adjacent incompatible land uses and/or activities that could impact the present or future use of the airport as an essential public facility.”

¹ Ephrata Municipal Code, Chapter 19, Zoning Code (Page 54)

² City of Ephrata Comprehensive Plan, Land Use Page 38 (2007 Update)

Grant County

AIRPORT VICINITY ZONING

Grant County has land use jurisdiction for lands outside of the airport property boundary and the City of Ephrata Urban Growth Area, including portions of the airport’s Part 77 surfaces.

- Lands to the east and south of the airport are within Grant County and outside the city’s UGA. The lands east of the airport are zoned *Rural Remote (RRem)* and to the south of the airport are *Rural Residential 1 (RR-1)*.
 - Rural Remote: The purpose of Rural Remote (RRem) zoning district is to differentiate from the higher density land.
 - Rural Residential 1: The purpose of the Rural Residential 1 zoning district is to preserve the residential character and rural aspects of rural residential areas, to provide buffering or transitions between existing rural developments and areas of higher or lower densities, and to provide for low density, single- or two-family residential development. Rural Residential 1 (RR1) areas are characterized by:
 - (1) Small –scale farms; (2) dispersed single-family homes on large parcels; (3) being distant from community services necessary to support development of a suburban or urban character; and (4) large areas of open space.

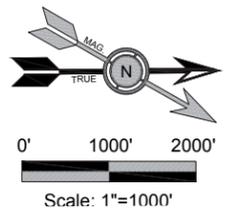
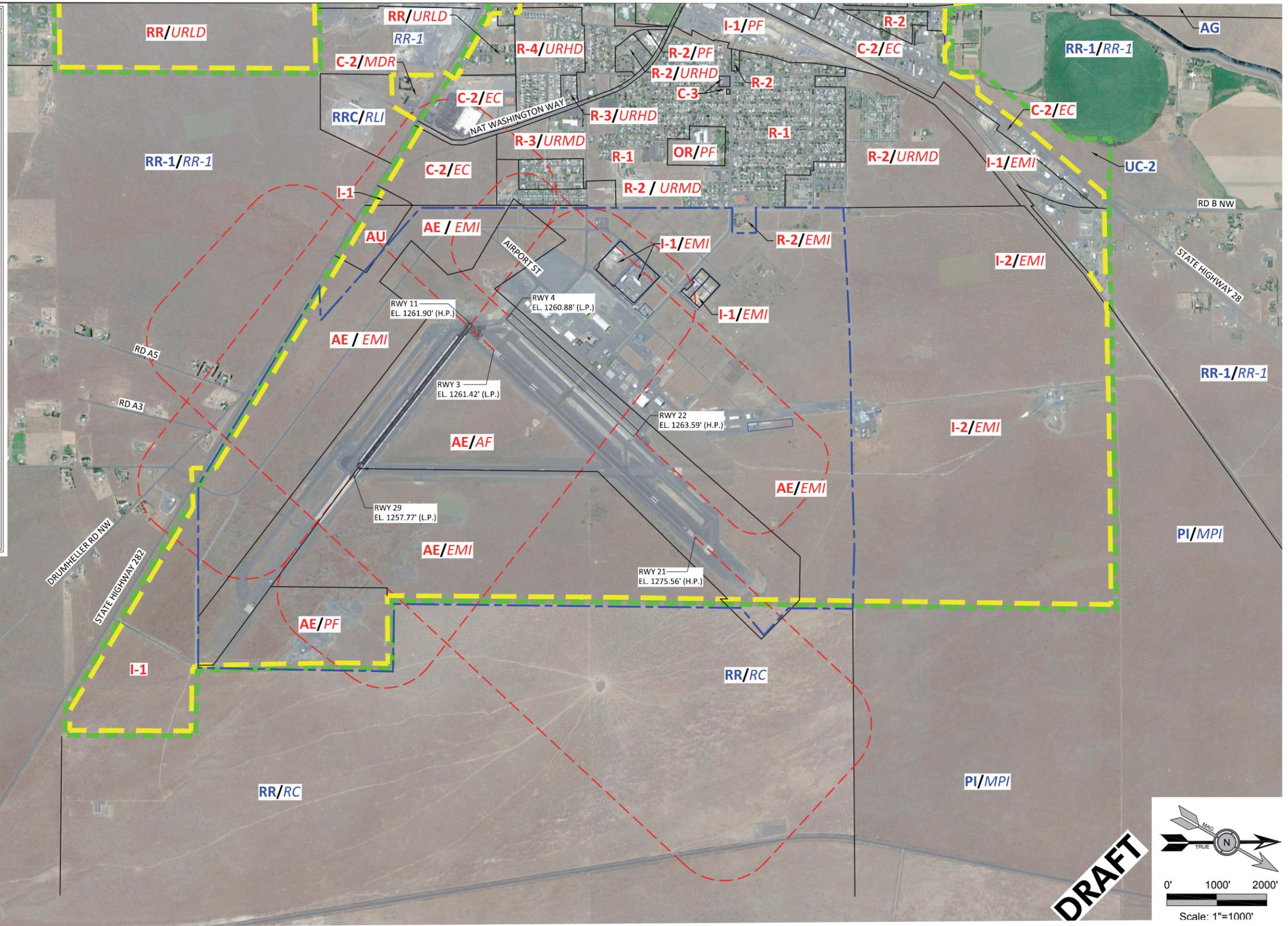
ESSENTIAL PUBLIC FACILITIES

Grant County Comprehensive Plan identifies airports as “Type One” essential public facilities.³ Type One facilities include:

- “These are major, multi-county facilities serving or potentially affecting more than one county. These facilities include, but are not limited to, regional transportation facilities, such as regional airports; state correction facilities; regional hydroelectric and irrigation facilities; and state educational facilities.”

³ Grant County Comprehensive Plan, Chapter II Essential Public Facilities (2006 Update)

LEGEND	
	ZONING BOUNDARY
	AIRPORT TRAFFIC PATTERN (TYP.)
	RUNWAY PROTECTION ZONE
	APPROACH SURFACE
	AIRPORT PROPERTY LINE (EXISTING)
	CITY LIMITS
	URBAN GROWTH BOUNDARY
CITY OF EPHRATA ZONING	
I-1	INDUSTRIAL 1
I-2	INDUSTRIAL 2
R-1	RESIDENTIAL 1
R-2	RESIDENTIAL 2
R-3	RESIDENTIAL 3
R-4	RESIDENTIAL 4
AC	AIRPORT COMMERCIAL
C-2	COMMERCIAL 2
C-3	COMMERCIAL 3
AE	AIRPORT ENTERPRISE
AU	AIRPORT UNCLASSIFIED
OR	OPEN SPACE RECREATION
RR	RURAL RESIDENTIAL
CITY OF EPHRATA LAND USE	
PF	PUBLIC FACILITIES
MDR	MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
URLD	URBAN RESIDENTIAL LOW DENSITY
URMD	URBAN RESIDENTIAL MEDIUM DENSITY
AF	AIRPORT FACILITIES
EC	EMPLOYMENT AREA COMMERCIAL
URHD	URBAN RESIDENTIAL HIGH DENSITY
EMI	EMPLOYMENT AREA MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIAL
GRANT COUNTY ZONING	
RR	RURAL REMOTE
RR-1	RURAL RESIDENTIAL 1
RRC	RURAL RECREATION COMMERCIAL
AG	AGRICULTURE
PI	MASTER PLANNED INDUSTRIAL
GRANT COUNTY LAND USE	
RC	RURAL COMMUNITY
RR-1	RURAL RESIDENTIAL 1
MPI	MASTER PLANNED INDUSTRIAL
RLI	RURAL LIGHT INDUSTRIAL



AIRPORT LAND USE
FIGURE 7-1

EPHRATA MUNICIPAL AIRPORT
AIRPORT MASTER PLAN

