

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Westover Air Reserve Base Joint Land Use Study, 2018

PREPARED BY THE PIONEER VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION



JLUS OVERVIEW

The Westover Air Reserve Base Joint Land Use Study (WJLUS) is a cooperative effort between the Westover Air Reserve Base (WARB) and the surrounding communities. The goal of this JLUS is the promotion of compatible community growth around the installation to preserve military capabilities. The primary aim of the WJLUS is to mitigate existing and prevent future incompatibility issues between base operations and the local communities. The most recent WJLUS update was prepared by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) in 2004.

PVPC is serving as the WJLUS project sponsor. The Cities of Springfield and Chicopee; the Towns of Ludlow, Granby and South Hadley; Westover Metropolitan Development Corporation, and MassDevelopment are key stakeholders represented on the WJLUS Steering Committee. This JLUS was funded by the Department of Defense (DoD) Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) with contributions from PVPC, surrounding communities and partners.

Study Area

The focus of this JLUS is the surrounding communities of Chicopee, South Hadley, Ludlow, Granby and Springfield. This study specifically analyzes compatibility and land uses concerns within the APZs (Accident Potential Zones) and CZs (Clear Zones), which extend from each runway. The APZs are areas of concern due to safety issues related to WARB operations.

Westover Air Reserve Base

The WARB is the nation's largest Air Force Reserve base in geographic area and is the closest fully operational U.S.-owned military base to Europe. WARB is home to the 439th Airlift Wing. The installation consists of approximately 2,100 acres of land in Chicopee and Ludlow. It is operated under a joint-use agreement, with the Department of Defense hosting the Westover Metropolitan Development Corporation (WMDC), a nonprofit industrial development corporation established in 1974 to oversee the civilian operations at Westover Airport and to undertake development of surplus land from the WARB.

Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement is a significant component of this JLUS. Engagement efforts included a community survey, public meetings, base and community tours, a new WJLUS webpage, and use of social media and the press. Overall, responses to the community survey and at public meetings were very positive. However, there are specific areas of concern to the public including pollution, noise and property values (See the full report for details).

Through this process information was presented to the general public and input was gathered about concerns and issues related to base operations.

A WJLUS webpage is now located on PVPC's website, http://www.pvpc.org/westover_jlus. The webpage will function as a source of information about WARB and the surrounding communities into the future. The website houses a GIS Data Portal, <http://westoverjlus-pvpc.opendata.arcgis.com>, which includes 51 different layers of data from tax parcels to water resource data to C-5 noise contours and APZs. The Data Portal is a significant new resource now available to the general public.



COMPATIBILITY ISSUES AND STRATEGIES

The goal of this JLUS is to address compatibility concerns with the communities surrounding the WARB. A series of Land Use Strategies have been developed in response to concerns that were voiced throughout the public engagement process and in conjunction with the WJLUS Steering Committee.

Land Use Strategies	
Municipal Master Plans	Incorporate WJLUS related concerns into local Master Plans
Municipal Maps	Request that communities highlight CZs and APZs on all applicable town maps.
Aircraft Flight Overlay Districts	Establish new zoning districts designed to prohibit large congregations of people in the both APZs and CZs.
Avigation Easements	Consider purchasing Avigation Easements at appropriate locations to ensure continued access of aircraft.
Work with MA DCR / Chicopee State Park	WARB shall work with the MA Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) to address compatibility issues within Chicopee State Park.
Property Impact Notification	Consider requesting notification in deeds or other disclosure before title transfer of properties within APZs.
Joint WARB/Community Meetings	Recommend that WARB and the surrounding communities meet regularly, once or twice per year.

Additional strategies related to transportation, housing, natural resources, and economic development have also been developed through this JLUS process. See the full report for additional information and details.