

CHAPTER G

Environmental Review

1. Introduction

This chapter provides guidance on future environmental studies that will be required prior to implementing improvement recommendations described in previous chapters of the Master Plan. The chapter also presents existing and future noise contours associated with forecasted operational levels presented in Chapter B, *Aviation Activity Forecasts*, and identifies existing and recommended land use restrictions in areas substantially affected by aircraft noise.

Key Terms

Categorical Exclusions (CATEX) – Categories of actions that normally do not individually or cumulatively have significant adverse effects on the human environment and which have been found by the federal agency to have no such effect.

Connected Actions – Expected future actions that are closely related to the action considered by a Federal environmental review. Actions are connected if they automatically trigger other actions which may require environmental review; cannot or will not proceed unless other actions are taken previously or simultaneously; and/or are interdependent parts of a larger action and depend on the larger action for their justification.

Environmental Assessment (EA) – A concise document that takes a hard look at expected environmental effects of a proposed Federal action and determines whether or not the action has the potential to cause significant environmental effects.

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) – A detailed document that is prepared if a proposed major Federal action is determined to significantly affect the quality of the human environment. The regulatory requirements for an EIS are more detailed and rigorous than the requirements for an EA.

Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) – Issued at the end of the EA process, a FONSI presents the reasons why a Federal agency has concluded that there are no significant environmental impacts projected to occur upon implementation of the proposed action.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) – A federal law passed by Congress in 1969 that requires federal agencies to assess the environmental effects of their proposed actions prior to making decisions. The range of federal actions covered by NEPA is broad and includes making decisions on permit applications, adopting federal land management actions, and constructing highways, airports, and other publicly-owned facilities.

Noise Sensitive Area – An area where noise interferes with normal activities associated with its use. In the context of noise from airplanes and helicopters, substantial impacts may occur when noise sensitive areas are within the 65 dB (decibel) day-night average sound level (DNL) noise contour. Normally, noise sensitive areas include residential, educational, health, and religious structures and sites, and parks, recreational areas, areas with wilderness characteristics, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and cultural and historic sites.

Record of Decision (ROD) – Issued at the end of the EIS process, a ROD explains the agency’s decision, describes the alternatives the agency considered, and discusses the agency’s plans for mitigation and monitoring, if necessary.

Special Purpose Laws and Requirements – Federal laws, regulations, Executive Orders and DOT and FAA administrative directives that protect certain aspects of the environment (e.g. air quality, water quality, wetlands, endangered species, and historic sites).

2. Environmental Review of Proposed Major Projects – Existing Airport Site

This section provides an environmental screening review of the major projects identified for the existing Airport site in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) presented in Chapter F, *Financial Feasibility Analysis*. This includes a summary of the general environmental resources associated with the recommended Plan in a non-quantified fashion and identifies the likely environmental processing necessary for implementing the improvements. The focus of this review is on Federal environmental processing requirements; additional state and local requirements, if they exist, are not identified.

General site descriptions are presented in the following subsections for each major project, with a focus on environmental conditions that could be affected by recommended Plan actions and would require consideration of NEPA-related special purpose laws and requirements. These descriptions draw on information presented in Chapter A, *Inventory of Existing Conditions*, regarding environmental resources.

2.1. Commercial Apron Expansion (1 parking position)

This project is currently planned for construction in 2017 and involves adding one aircraft parking position to the immediate west of the existing commercial apron, which would require configuration of the passenger parking lot and access road system. A Categorical Exclusion (CATEX) checklist was prepared for this project and approved by the FAA in January 2016. No further Federal environmental review is required for this project.

2.2. Land Acquisition – Airport Development, RPZ, & Obstruction Mitigation

This project is planned for 2018/2019 and involves acquisition of land south and west of the Airport’s current property boundary, as described in Chapter D, Existing Airport Site Alternatives. An Environmental Assessment (EA) will be required for this project, which will be initiated in 2017.

The land in question is currently unincorporated ranchland and therefore a farmland impacts analysis would need to be conducted as part of the EA for compliance with the Federal Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA). This analysis will need to be coordinated with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). Also, there are numerous mature cottonwood trees that are recommended for removal, to provide clearer approaches and departures. Removal of these trees should be evaluated to determine what, if any, environmental impacts may result.

The planned GA development described in Section 2.7 could be included as part of the proposed action for this EA to streamline environmental review, at the discretion of the FMAA and FAA. However, if the GA development is included as part of the proposed action but does not occur within a reasonable timeframe after FAA approval of the EA, a re-evaluation of this EA would be required prior to commencing GA development activities.

2.3. Replacement Air Traffic Control Tower

This project will be phased over several years, currently planned for initiation in 2017 and completion in 2023. A preferred site has not yet been identified, which will be determined in coordination with FAA through their formal siting process as described in Chapter D. Depending on whether the preferred site identified by the formal siting process has been previously disturbed, this project would require either a CATEX or an EA. If construction of the tower requires the removal of historic age structures, the environmental document would need to include an architectural history survey to determine whether they are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Environmental review for this project is planned for initiation in 2019.

2.4. Runway Rehabilitation

This project is planned for 2021 and is expected to require a documented CATEX. Because it would take place in previously disturbed areas, no environmental impacts are expected for this project.

2.5. Remote Surface Parking (including land acquisition)

This project is planned to take place in two phases and involves constructing new remote surface parking lots outside the existing passenger terminal area and Airport property footprint. Phase 1 is planned for 2022 and would add 286 remote parking spaces. Phase 2 is planned for 2030 and would add 125 parking spaces. Although auto parking is not eligible for FAA funding participation, Federal environmental review is required for this project because the FAA must approve the addition of the property acquisition and remote parking lots to the Airport Layout Plan. Depending on whether the FAA considers it a “substantial expansion” of existing facilities, the project would require either a CATEX or an EA.

The parcels on which the proposed remote surface parking would be built are privately owned and are currently zoned by the City of Hailey within a Service Commercial Industrial (SCI) district. There are no known environmental concerns associated with these parcels.

2.6. Commercial Apron Expansion (3 parking positions)

This project is planned for 2023/2024 and involves adding three aircraft parking positions to the immediate north of the existing commercial apron, which would require removal of at least two hangar structures. Due to its similarity to the apron expansion project planned for 2017 as described in Section 2.1, this project is expected to require a documented CATEX. Depending on the age of the hangar structures, the CATEX may need to include an architectural history survey to determine whether they are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

2.7. General Aviation (GA) Apron Expansion & New Hangar Area

This project is planned to take place in two phases and involves adding new GA facilities to the immediate south of the existing fixed base operator (FBO) apron. Phase 1 is planned for 2024 and would include site preparation, access road, and auto parking construction. Phase 2 is planned for 2027 and would include expansion of the FBO apron to meet anticipated 20-year demand for transient and based aircraft parking.

As discussed in Section 2.2, this project could be included as part of the proposed action for the land acquisition EA to streamline environmental review, at the discretion of the FMAA and FAA. However, if the GA development is included as part of the proposed action but does not occur within a reasonable timeframe after FAA approval of the EA, a re-evaluation of the EA would be required prior to commencing GA development activities. If not

included as part of the proposed action for the land acquisition EA, this project is expected to require an independent EA document.

2.8. Terminal Expansion – Security Checkpoint & Concourse

This project is planned to take place in three phases and involves expanding the security checkpoint and secure concourse areas. Phase 1 is planned for 2025 and would include adding a second checkpoint lane and associated equipment. Phase 2 is planned for 2026 and would include expanding the secure concourse to the east. Phase 3 is planned for 2033 and would include expanding the secure concourse to the west, and relocating the baggage claim area that would be displaced as a result. Because they are not expected to be identified by FAA as a “substantial expansion” to the existing terminal building and would occur within previously disturbed areas, these projects are expected to require a documented CATEX.

2.9. Parking Structure

This project is planned for the end of the planning period in 2034. Although auto parking is not eligible for FAA funding participation, Federal environmental review is required for this project because the FAA must approve the addition of the parking structure to the Airport Layout Plan. Because it would occur in a previously disturbed area, the project is expected to require a documented CATEX.

2.10. Summary

Major projects and associated environmental processing requirements identified in the sections above are summarized in **Table G1**. Expected timing for environmental review is also identified, which is based on a minimum one-year lead time that would allow FAA to issue required Findings of No Significant Impact (FONSI) prior to project implementation.

Table G1 ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW OF PROPOSED MAJOR PROJECTS – EXISTING AIRPORT SITE

Project	Project Completion Year(s)	Environmental Review	
		Expected Type	Timing
Commercial Apron Expansion (1 parking position)	2017	CATEX	2016
Land Acquisition - Airport Development, RPZ, & Obstruction Mitigation	2018/2019	EA	2017
Replacement Air Traffic Control Tower	2023	CATEX or EA	2019
Runway Rehabilitation	2021	CATEX	2020
Remote Surface Parking (including land acquisition)	2022/2030	CATEX or EA	2021
Commercial Apron Expansion (3 parking positions)	2023/2024	CATEX	2022
GA Apron Expansion & New Hangar Area	2024/2027	EA	2023
Terminal Expansion - Security Checkpoint & Concourse	2025/2026/2033	CATEX	2024
Parking Structure	2034	CATEX	2033

3. Environmental Review of Proposed Projects – Replacement Airport

The FAA issued a Notice of Intent (NOI) in 2007 to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for a replacement airport. A total of 18 potential replacement airport sites were identified in the 2008 EIS Phase I Planning Study, including the existing Airport site. In 2011, the FAA suspended indefinitely any further work on the EIS, citing anticipated costs of the project and potential impacts to wildlife.

Chapter E, *Siting Evaluation for Replacement Airport*, reconsidered the previously identified 18 sites with regard to their ability to survive regulatory review, among other criteria. The analysis ultimately concluded that, when combining these evaluation criteria and accounting for their limitations, only Site 12 is a viable replacement airport site located within Blaine County.

In order for the replacement airport to move forward, the FAA would have to restart the EIS process and issue a Record of Decision (ROD) for a specific site before any projects identified in the Replacement Airport CIP are initiated. The minimum typical duration of an EIS process is three years; therefore the EIS process would need to be restarted at least three years prior to planned implementation of any replacement airport projects. Chapter E discusses likely environmental issues to be studied as part of a new EIS process, including Bureau of Land Management (BLM) regulatory requirements; consideration of newly identified Federal sage-grouse habitat management areas; potential impacts to the Silver Creek watershed; and compliance with Blaine County plans and ordinances. As time passes, new environmental issues may emerge or other conditions may change that may warrant a fresh look at replacement airport sites.

4. Aircraft Noise Analysis

Aircraft noise has been a consistent concern of communities and residents surrounding the Airport. This section presents an update to existing and forecasted aircraft noise contours based on the aviation activity projections developed for the Master Plan. These contours are updated versions of contours prepared for the airline operations specifications EA completed in 2012 that initiated regional jet service at the Airport. This noise contour update did not include any changes to the runway usage and flight track assumptions used for the EA. While the 2012 noise contours were created using the FAA Integrated Noise Model (INM), the contours developed for this Master Plan were created using the FAA's recently released Aviation Environmental Design Tool (AEDT).

Noise is generally defined as unwanted sound; therefore the determination of acceptable levels is subjective. The day-night average sound level (DNL) methodology, expressed in decibels (dB), is the standard Federal metric for determining cumulative exposure of individuals to noise. The DNL represents the average sound exposure during a 24-hour period rather than the sound level for a specific noise event. A 10 dB correction is applied to nighttime hour sound levels (from 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.) to account for increased annoyance during the night hours. The computation of DNL involves weighting and averaging of each modeled noise event to achieve the DNL level in a particular location. DNL levels are typically depicted as contours.

Noise contours for the base year (2014) of the Master Plan operations forecast are depicted in Figure G1, and noise contours for the 20-year operations forecast (2034) are depicted in Figure G2.

SOURCE: BASE: Google Maps, 2014. LAND USE: City of Hailey, City of Bellevue & Blaine County.

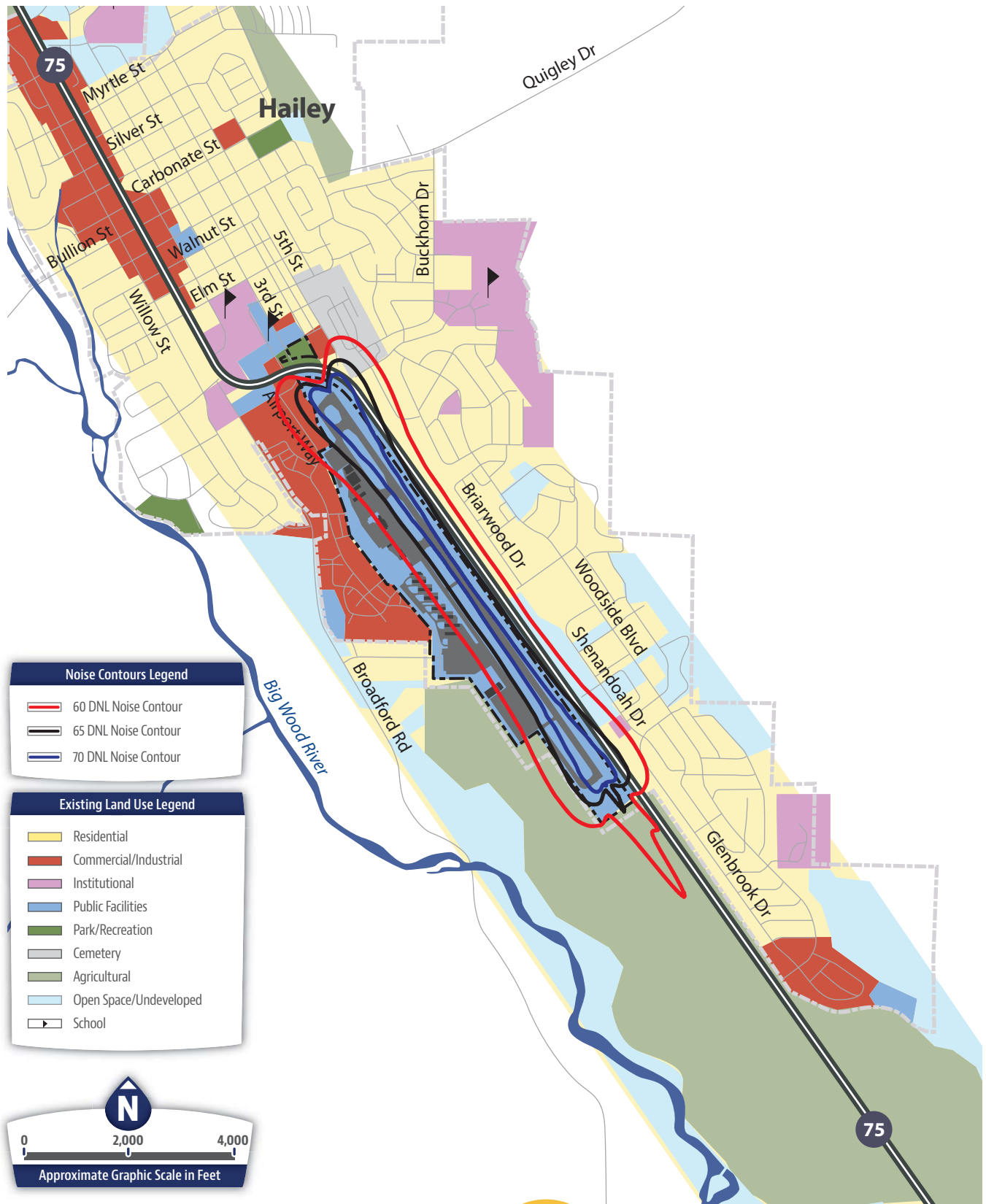


FIGURE G1 2014 Noise Contours with Generalized Existing Land Use

SOURCE: BASE: Google Maps, 2014. LAND USE: City of Hailey, City of Bellevue & Blaine County.

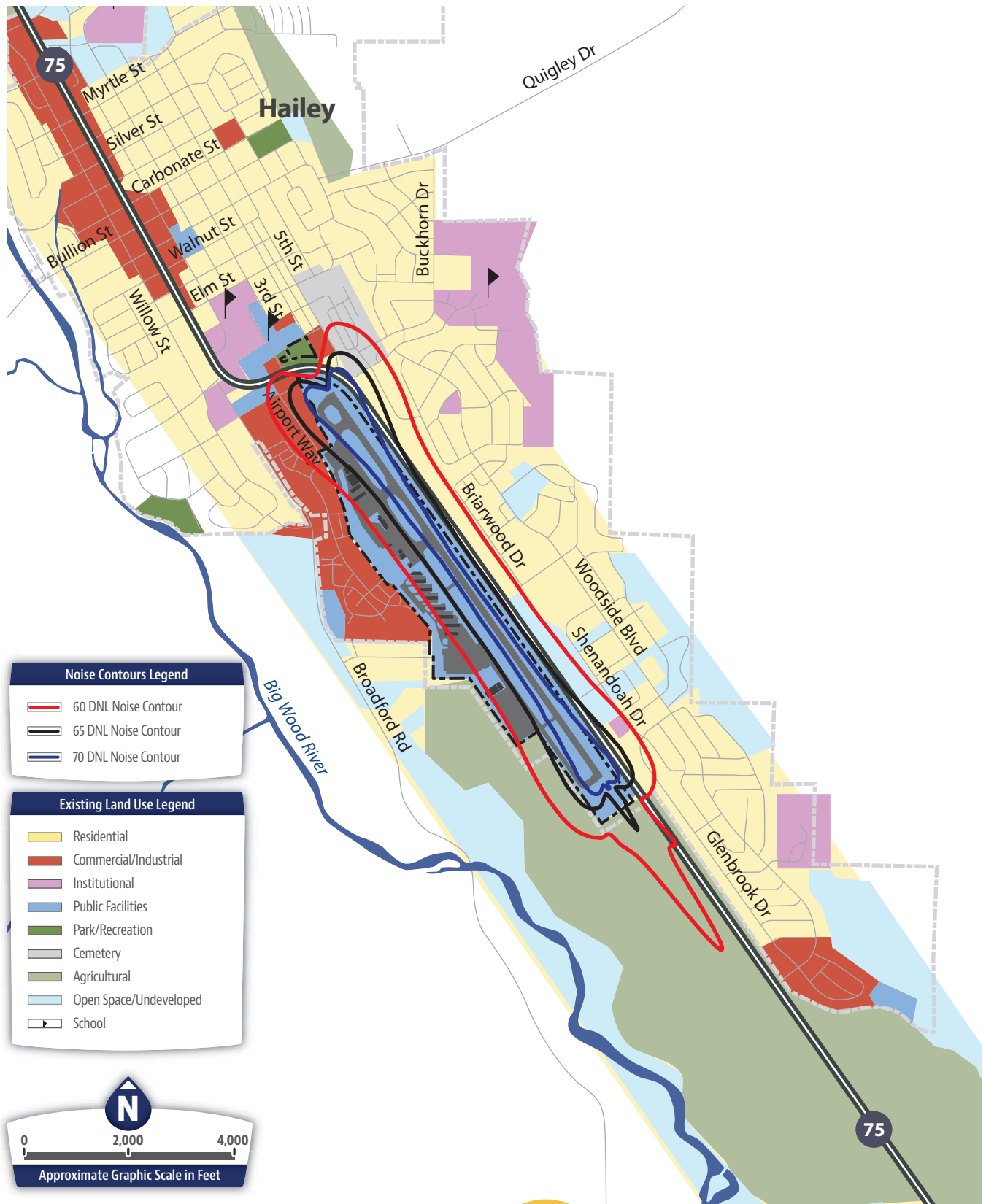


FIGURE G2 2034 Noise Contours with Generalized Existing Land Use

By creating and analyzing these contours, the Airport can identify areas that are most likely to be impacted by aircraft noise, and can plan accordingly. These impact areas, referred to as noise corridor zones, can be defined as a severe noise impact area and a substantial noise impact area. Severe noise impact areas include those contained within the 70 DNL contour and above, while substantial noise impact areas include those between the 65 DNL and 70 DNL contours. According to the FAA, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the threshold of significance for a significant impact occurs when noise exposure over sensitive areas is at or above 65 DNL. In both the 2014 and 2034 noise contour scenarios, the 70 DNL contour is contained entirely on Airport property, and nearly the entire 65 DNL contour is confined to Airport property. However, there are small portions of non-Airport property on either side of the runway that fall between the 65 and 70 DNL contours and should therefore be considered substantial noise impact areas. These areas include commercial and industrial uses west of the runway, and residential and undeveloped areas east of the runway.

5. Existing and Recommended Land Use Plan

Existing land use and zoning are discussed in the Airport Environs section of Chapter A, beginning on page A.25. As described in that section, two entities have zoning authority over the airport and its environs. The City of Hailey zoning includes an Airport Zone District, which includes only the airport property. Blaine County code defines an Airport Vicinity Overlay District, which defines appropriate uses and zoning for areas off both ends of the airport, but does not define any height restrictions in these areas. In addition to these jurisdictions, the City of Bellevue is impacted by the airport, but does not have any current airport-related zoning or land use restrictions in place.

Figure G3 compares the forecasted 2034 noise contours presented in the previous section with approach zones identified in the Blaine County Airport Vicinity Overlay District, as well as existing off-airport land use zoning, Runway Protection Zones (RPZs), Part 77 approach surfaces, and the instrument departure surface beyond the south end of the runway. As shown in the figure, the primary and secondary overlay zones identified in the Blaine County zoning ordinance provide adequate protection for preventing future incompatible land uses within the approaches to the runway. However, the area immediately east of Highway 75 should be considered by future land use planning efforts, as this area is close to the airport, yet outside of the areas covered by the Overlay District. The FMAA and its sponsors should seek to prevent establishment of non-compatible land uses in this area.

Additionally, zoning should be improved when possible to consider not only land use but also the height of structures and objects. Title 14, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 77 ('Part 77') is the federal law intended to preserve navigable airspace. Part 77 describes imaginary surfaces around airports designed to prevent object heights that would have an adverse effect on safe aviation operations. To the extent practical, zoning should be written to limit the height of objects near the airport, taking into consideration the requirements of Part 77. Blaine County is currently in the process of updating their comprehensive plan. This update should consider the airport-related planning requirements of Title 67, Chapter 65 of Idaho State Code. It is recommended that any planning updates undertaken by the City of Hailey and City of Bellevue consider applicable portions of this same section of code, as well.

In general, the FMAA should work cooperatively with the County and Cities of Hailey and Bellevue to ensure that land use and zoning are compatible with the airport.

SOURCE: BASE: Google Maps, 2014. LAND USE: City of Hailey, City of Bellevue & Blaine County.

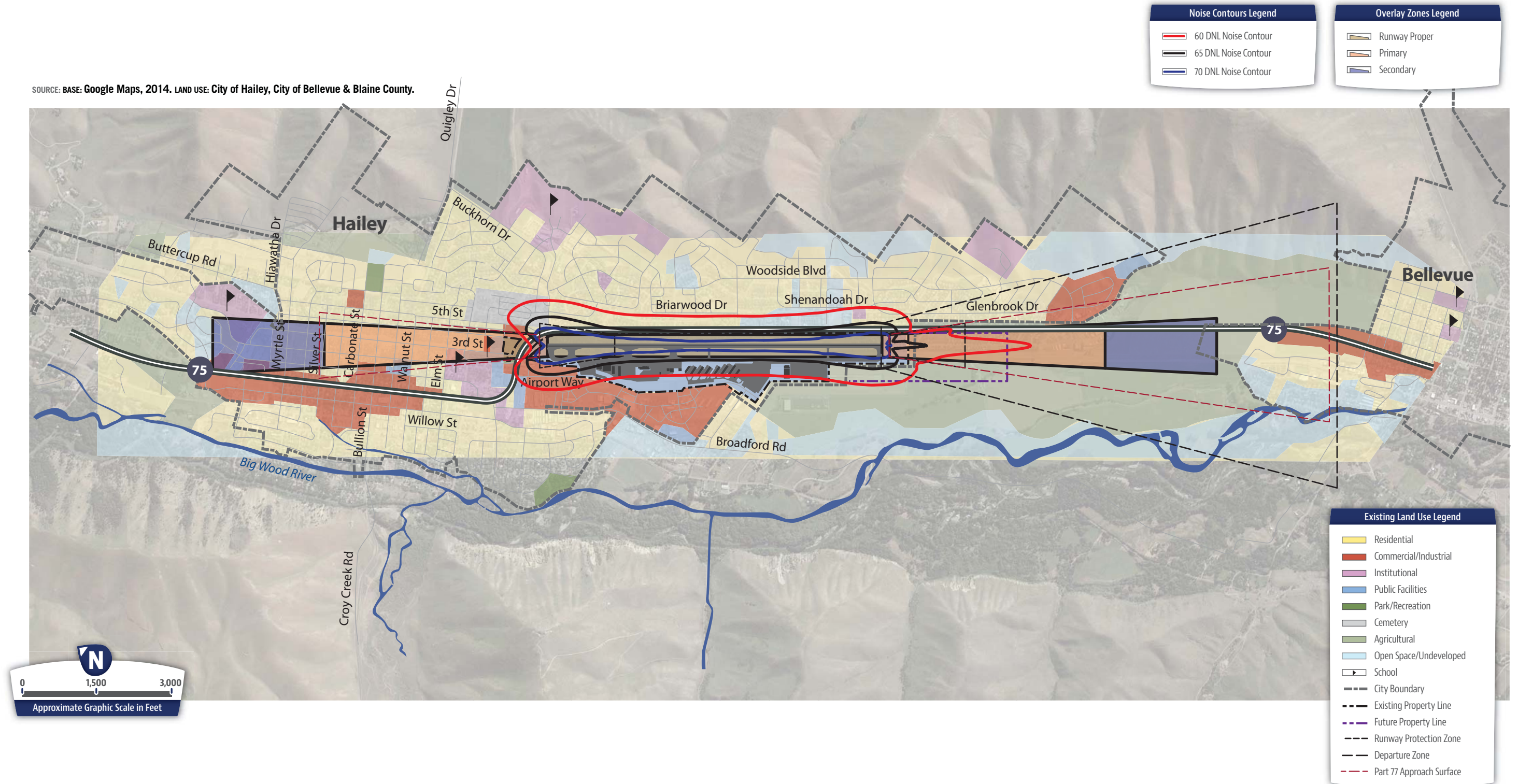


FIGURE G3 20-Year Land Use Plan

6. Summary

This overview identified known potential environmental issues that will need to be addressed as the Airport moves forward with implementation of the “dual-path” approach. Any federal action will require completion of the NEPA process. The NEPA process would identify required permits and mitigation activities.

