

# MILITARY COMPATIBILITY

## RIDGECREST GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

### *Military Compatibility*

As the closest urban area to China Lake, Ridgecrest enjoys a symbiotic relationship with the installation. As the largest employer for the City, the installation provides approximately 4,400 jobs to civilians. Through varying economic cycles, this relationship provides the City with a degree of economic stability providing the opportunity to continue to prosper in difficult times. As such, the ability to maintain and foster this relationship will be important as the City moves forward with its General Plan update.

As an urban area in proximity to a vital military installation, development decisions occurring locally have the potential to impact the installation. In addition to the many positive interactions occurring as a function of this relationship, development decisions can result in land use conflicts that can have negative impacts on community safety, economic development, and sustainment of military readiness activities. Nationwide, incompatible development has been a factor in curtailing training operations, moving (realigning) mission-critical components to other installations, and, in extreme cases, closing installations.

**Joint Land Use Study.** Currently being developed, the R-2508 Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) includes China Lake, Edwards Air Force Base, Fort Irwin, and the land beneath the Joint Service R-2508 Special Use Airspace Complex. This 20,000-square mile area includes portions of Fresno, Inyo, Kern, Los Angeles, San Bernardino, and Tulare Counties.

In relation to Ridgecrest and China Lake, the purpose of this JLUS is to:

- Encourage cooperative land use planning between China Lake, surrounding local jurisdictions and state and federal land management agencies to ensure future development is compatible with the training and/or operational missions of the installation;
- Seek ways to reduce operational impacts on adjacent lands;
- Manage development in the vicinity of China Lake that would potentially interfere with continued military operations;
- Maintain the economic vitality of the community; and
- Promote the health, safety, and welfare of the military and civilian personnel living and working on or near China Lake.

The JLUS will be addressing and developing strategies and planning tools that address encroachment and compatibility issues. Several of these issues include:

- Incompatible Development
- Frequency Spectrum Impedance and Interference
- Overflight and Operational Noise
- Dust and Air Quality Considerations
- Height Obstructions
- Light and Glare
- Water Quality
- Environmental Considerations (Threatened and Endangered Species, Cultural Sites)
- Local Housing Availability
- Alternative Energy Development
- Competition for Natural Resources
- Competition for Air Space or Land
- Competition for Ground Transportation Capacity
- Interagency Coordination

**Air Installation Compatible Use Zone.** The Air Installations Compatibility Use Zones (AICUZ) program is a Department of Defense (DoD) planning program developed in response to incompatible urban development and land use conflicts around military airfields. The AICUZ program seeks to provide information on compatibility, develop a cooperative relationship between communities and military installations, and provide land use compatibility guidelines that protect public health and safety and maintain military readiness by:

- Protecting investment by safeguarding China Lake's operational capabilities;
- Protecting the health, safety, and welfare of civilians and military personnel by encouraging land use which is compatible with aircraft operations; and
- Informing the public about the AICUZ program and seek cooperative efforts to minimize noise and aircraft accident potential impact by promoting compatible development in the vicinity of military air installations.

China Lake's 1977 AICUZ study defines standard Accident Potential Zones (APZs) and evaluates other key issues associated with flight safety for Armitage Airfield. The Navy is currently in the process of conducting an updated AICUZ study.

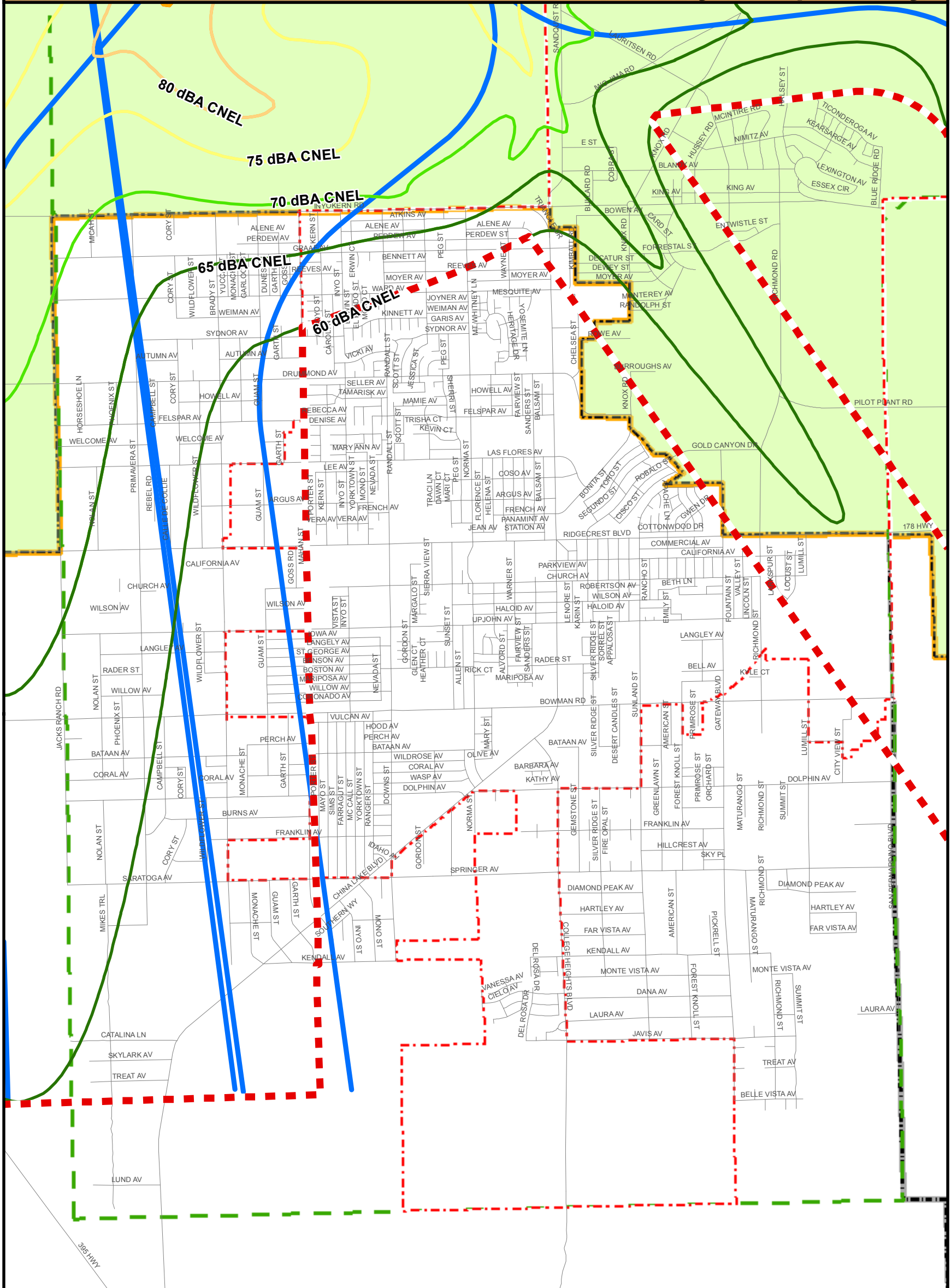


**Approach/Departure Tracks.** For arrivals, the generalized tracks approach in a common corridor from the south over lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The tracks split from each other for final approach once over China Lake.

For departures, three general departure tracks are used. The western-most track is used solely by Runway 03/21, departing southwest and turning to south as it exits China Lake. Runway 03/21 also has a second departure track it shares with the other two runways (08/26 and 14/32). Departures from the runways turn south (to about 175°). This track continues south over a mix of BLM and private property, staying just outside the west side of the City of Ridgecrest.

While the military constraints map shows the generalized arrival and departure tracks used for the AICUZ, it is important to note that aircraft do not strictly follow these lines, and the aircraft typically arrive and depart within a corridor for which these tracks represent "centerlines." Arrivals and departures are also only part of the overflight picture at China Lake. Other overflight activity occurs in association with operations once the aircraft is airborne. The entirety of the Ridgecrest Planning Area lies beneath an overflight pattern.

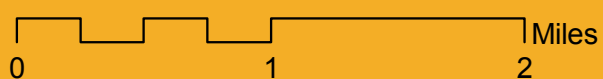




**Legend**

- City Limits
- Existing Planning Area
- NAWS China Lake
- County Boundaries
- Streets

**AICUZ Noise Contours**



Source: Kern County GIS  
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Acres

80	40
20	10
	10