

HOW CAN INTERESTED RESIDENTS PARTICIPATE?

Public meetings will be held during the study process to solicit input from the surrounding communities. Additionally, a project website with study materials, graphics, and a comment submittal page will be available throughout the study process. The project website can be found here: <https://ilmpart150.airportstudy.net/>

Interested residents are encouraged to participate by visiting the project website mentioned above and/or by attending public workshops held periodically throughout the study process. Advance notice of the meetings will appear in social media, local newspapers, and on the project website.

WHERE CAN PEOPLE GET MORE INFORMATION?

For general questions or information about the study, you may email or call the airport. In the subject line of an email, please list the Part 150 Study and the appropriate person will get back to you:



Wilmington International Airport
info@flyilm.com
910-341-4333

For specific technical questions about the study, please contact:



Kory Lewis
Project Manager
Coffman Associates, Inc.
klewis@coffmanassociates.com
800-892-7772



ILM

Wilmington International Airport



INTRODUCTION

Wilmington International Airport (ILM) is an integral part of the regional aviation system. The New Hanover County Airport Authority acknowledges that aircraft operations generate noise and seeks to play a role in balancing airport activities with aircraft noise exposure in the areas where noise impacts are identified.

To better understand the extent of airport noise and to assist airports in their efforts to reduce noise impacts, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) established the Noise Exposure Map (NEM) process within Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 150 (14 CFR Part 150). This voluntary program outlines the process for evaluating airport noise impacts on communities near airports. In spring 2024, Wilmington International Airport began preparing a noise compatibility planning study, in accordance with 14 CFR Part 150, which will take 18 to 24 months to complete. This study is a cooperative effort between Wilmington International Airport, the FAA, and the surrounding community. This voluntary Part 150 study – which is funded by a grant from the FAA – will include Noise Exposure Maps (NEM) and a Noise Compatibility Program (NCP) for ILM.

BACKGROUND

ILM, located approximately three miles northeast of Wilmington's central business district in unincorporated New Hanover County, North Carolina, is classified as a small-hub, commercial service airport. It supports the passenger demands of Wilmington and southeastern North Carolina. Situated on 1,800 acres of land at an elevation of 32 feet above sea level, the airport has two runways, Runway 6-24 (150 feet wide and 8,016 long) and Runway 17-35 (150 feet wide and 7,754 feet long). Originally a grass strip, the county-owned airport evolved into a two-runway airfield named Bluethenthal Field in the late 1920s. During World War II, it was enhanced for operation as an Army air base. After the war, the federal government designated Bluethenthal Field as surplus property, and under the Surplus Property Act of 1944, the facility was deeded to New Hanover County at no cost. The airport is owned by New Hanover County, with operational control granted by statute to the New Hanover County Airport Authority (NHCAA). The airport is home to 114 based aircraft, two fixed-base operators, commercial airline service and an intermodal business park.

All pilots, including military, operating at the airport are encouraged to comply with voluntary noise abatement procedures and avoid flights over noise-sensitive areas. In a cooperative effort with local, state, and federal officials, a noise abatement memorandum of understanding between the military and the FAA's Wilmington-based Air Traffic Control Tower was reached in 2022 to implement noise abatement procedures at Wilmington International Airport.

WHAT IS A NOISE COMPATIBILITY PROGRAM?

In response to concerns about the environmental impacts of aviation noise, Congress adopted full-scale federal support for airport noise compatibility programs with the Aviation Safety and Noise Abatement Act of 1979. In response to the Act, the FAA established program guidelines under 14 CFR Part 150 to set minimum standards for the preparation of such studies.

A community's Noise Compatibility Program is intended to promote aircraft noise control and land use compatibility. Three characteristics make such a study unique:

1. It is the only comprehensive approach to prevent and reduce airport and community land use conflicts;
2. Eligible items in the approved plan may be funded from a portion of the federal Airport Improvement Program; and
3. It is the only FAA study conducted primarily for the benefit of airport neighbors.

The principal objectives of the Noise Compatibility Program are to:

- **Identify the impacts** of current and projected noise levels in the airport area using FAA software. This information is documented in the Wilmington International Airport Noise Exposure Maps volume.
- Where impacts are documented, **propose strategies** to reduce the impacts of aircraft noise through changes in aircraft operations or airport facilities. This information is evaluated and summarized in the Noise Compatibility Plan volume. It is important to note that the noise impact evaluation only includes operations occurring at Wilmington International Airport.
- In undeveloped areas where aircraft noise is projected to remain, **encourage zoning designations** compatible with the noise and operation of an airport, such as agricultural, commercial, or industrial.

HOW IS THE STUDY BEING CONDUCTED?

The Noise Compatibility Study is sponsored by the New Hanover County Airport Authority. Technical assistance for the study is provided by Coffman Associates, Inc., an airport planning firm founded in 1979 with extensive experience preparing airport noise compatibility studies.

The consultants are responsible for all technical analyses associated with the study. At each step in the process, they will prepare working papers to document their evaluation, findings, and recommendations. Airport management and a steering committee will review and comment on the work as it progresses.

The steering committee, known as the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC), is an especially important part of the planning process. It enables the direct involvement of representatives of all parties who may be affected by the final recommendations of the study. The PAC includes representatives from the following groups:

- Neighborhood and homeowner organizations
- Airport tenant and aviation representatives
- Local community planners
- Federal, state, and local agencies
- Community stakeholders

WHEN WILL THE STUDY BE COMPLETED?

The study began in Spring 2024 and is expected to take 18 to 24 months to complete. Final recommendations will be presented to the New Hanover County Airport Authority for consideration and adoption. The final study documents will be forwarded to the FAA for consideration. At the conclusion of the study process, the study will be distributed to airport user groups and local governments for implementation.