

J. NOISE

Noise can be generated from a variety of sources. Noise can originate from linear sources such as highways, or from a single or point source where a specific activity exists such as a service station or restaurant. Noise may also originate from an area of activity such as an industrial plant or an airport.

As discussed in Section VII, Future SEQR Actions, site specific impacts generated by individual projects will need to be addressed on a case by case basis. This is true for any noise which will be generated by individual projects or roadway improvements. Therefore, the purpose of this section is to address noise impacts generated by aircraft operations at Albany County Airport.

Since commercial jet aircraft began operations in 1958, the effects of noise on lands surrounding airports have been a concern. As a result, the effects of aircraft noise have been extensively studied and procedures have been developed to estimate the magnitude and extent of noise from airport operations and determine the impacts on the surrounding community.

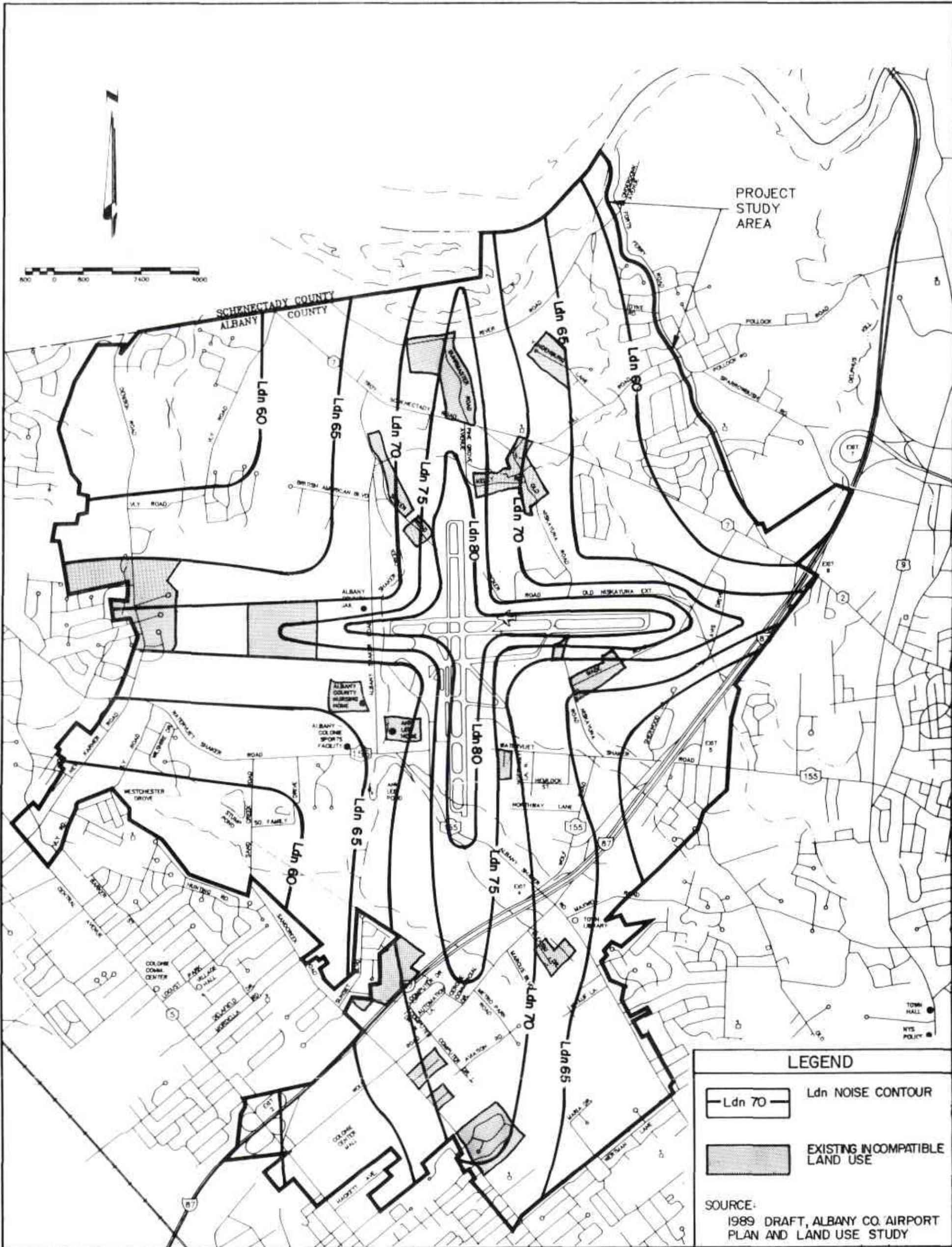
Beginning in 1972, Albany County Airport began taking steps to reduce the impacts of aircraft noise on the community. In 1972, the Airport instituted a noise abatement program which established specific approach and departure routes for aircraft in order to direct them away from densely populated areas. In 1981, Albany County completed the Airport Noise Control and Land Use Compatibility Study (ANCLUC), a comprehensive study on the impact of aircraft noise associated with the Airport on the surrounding area.

The ANCLUC study included a field monitoring program for noise as well as an extensive land use analysis of surrounding municipalities. Future noise impacts were also estimated based on information on aviation traffic growth and physical changes at the Airport as documented in the 1975 Albany County Airport Master Plan. The goals of the ANCLUC study included the institution of actions to reduce aircraft noise impacts on the population around the Airport and provisions for ensuring land uses in the remaining noise affected areas would be compatible with the degree of expected noise exposure.

The ANCLUC study conducted noise monitoring at 20 separate stations around the Airport which recorded the noise exposure for all approach and departure routes producing potentially intrusive noise exposures. This data was then incorporated into a computer program that utilized a noise prediction model to describe the average long-term noise exposure for selected operations scenarios at Albany County Airport.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Integrated Noise Model-Version 2 was utilized in the ANCLUC study to generate noise contours for Albany County Airport which depicted existing conditions in 1980 and projected future conditions for 1985 and 1995. The projected noise contours generated by the ANCLUC study for 1985 and 1995 are shown in Exhibit II-J-1 and Exhibit II-J-2.

The noise contours shown on Exhibit II-J-1 represent the average sound pressure level (measured in decibels) integrated over a 24-hour period, with an arbitrary weighting of 10 applied to noise levels occurring in nighttime periods. Noise generated by aircraft during the nighttime period is assumed to be more intrusive, therefore, the model assigns a greater noise impact value to these flights. For example, this computer model assigns the same noise impact to an



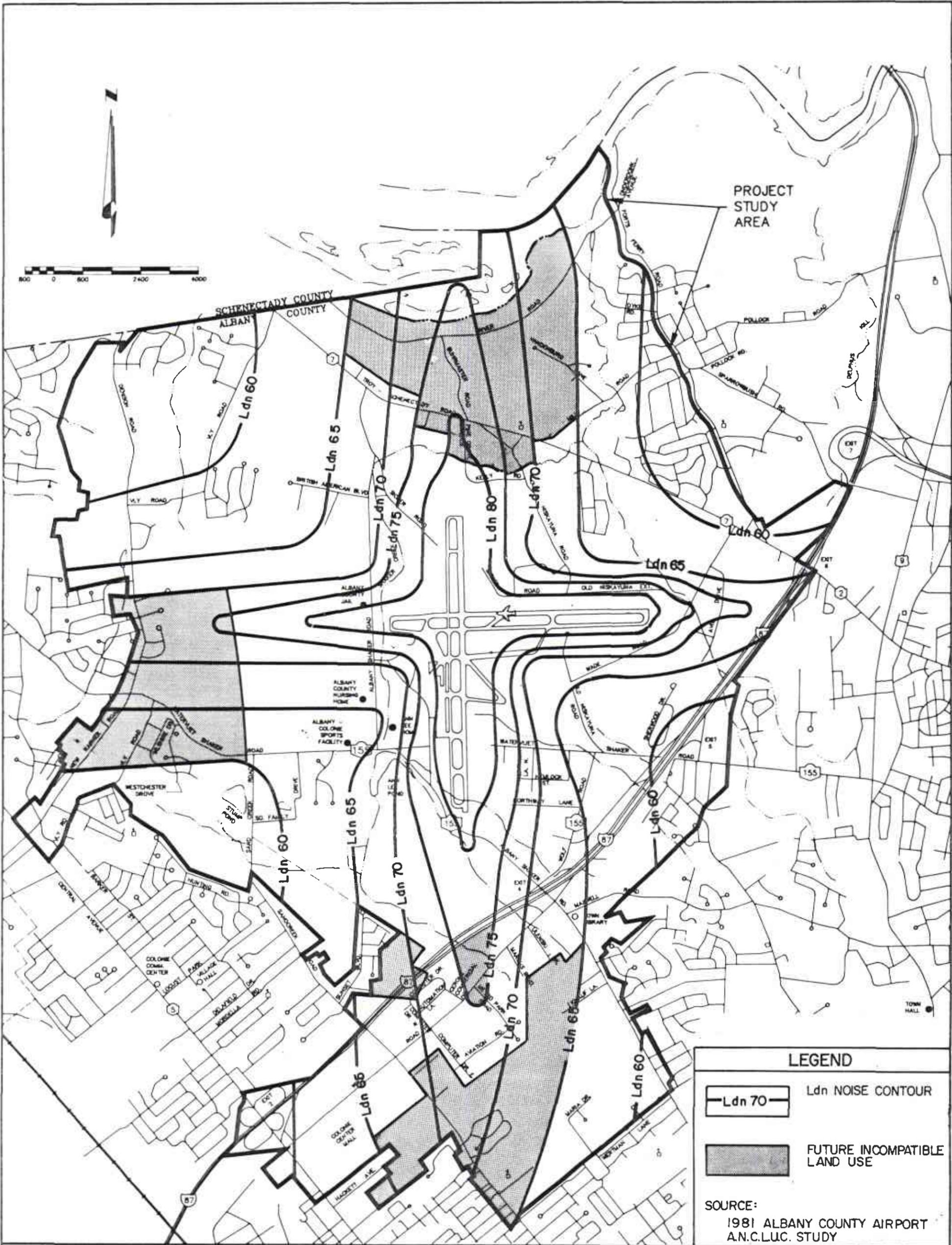
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1985 NOISE CONTOURS

EXHIBIT NO.

II - J - I

AIRPORT AREA GENERIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT



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1995 NOISE CONTOURS

EXHIBIT NO.

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aircraft which departs the Airport between 10:00 pm to 7:00 am as it would 10 of the same type of aircraft which depart during daylight hours using the same runway and flight path. The contours on the map show the limits of these average 24 hour noise levels in decibels and are abbreviated as "ldn". The areas above 65 ldn are most significant because this generally marks the level at which some direct land use controls are recommended to reduce noise impacts.

To utilize the Integrated Noise Model, certain data needed to be collected as part of the ANCLUC study. This included flight tracks for arrivals and departures using each of the airport's four runways, distribution of runway usage based on historical observations, characteristics of aircraft used or planned for use at Albany County Airport and the number of actual and projected operations for different types of aircraft including air carriers, commuter airlines, general aviation, and military traffic.

The Integrated Noise Model produced projected noise contours for the years 1985 and 1995 based on changes in the above mentioned data. While flight tracks and runway usage remained the same throughout the study period (1980-1995), certain assumptions were developed based upon increased aircraft traffic and a change in the overall mix of the type of aircraft operating at the airport. To test the validity of the projected noise contours in the ANCLUC study, current data on the number of operations at the airport and the aircraft mix were collected for this DGEIS. Through the interpolation of data presented in the ANCLUC study for the years 1985 and 1995, both actual and projected data can be compared to determine if the noise contours prepared in the 1981 study are reasonably accurate. Table II-J-1 shows the similarities between both sets of data.

The commercial airlines servicing Albany County Airport in 1989 operated 94 flights per day utilizing five different types of jet aircraft, the DC-

9, DC-9-80, B-727-200, B-737, and Fokker F-28. This compares favorably with the ANCLUC projection of 92 flights per day for 1989. These aircraft are, by far, the greatest noise generators at the airport.

TABLE II-J-1
COMPARISON OF DATA FROM ANCLUC STUDY
AND CURRENT OPERATIONS AT
ALBANY COUNTY AIRPORT

OPERATIONS	ANCLUC ESTIMATE ¹	ACTUAL OPERATIONS ²
1988 TOTAL ANNUAL AIRCRAFT OPERATIONS		
AIR CARRIER	33,580	27,803
AIR TAXI (COMMUTER)	13,624	68,122
GENERAL AVIATION	124,300	69,834
TOTAL	171,504	165,759
1989 DAILY TAKEOFFS AND LANDINGS BY AIR CARRIER JET AIRCRAFT		
DC-9	52	26
DC-9-80	2	18
B-727-200	26	24
NEW TECHNOLOGY STANDARD BODY ³	10	26
NEW TECHNOLOGY WIDE BODY ⁴	2	0
TOTAL	92	94
1989 ANNUAL GENERAL AVIATION JET AIRCRAFT OPERATIONS	4,171	1,825

- 1 Estimates for the years 1988 and 1989 were derived through the interpolation of projections for 1985 and 1995.
- 2 Actual operations were derived from data provided by FAA offices at Albany County Airport.
- 3 New technology standard body aircraft presently flown out of Albany include the Boeing 737 and Fokker F-28.

- 4 Presently no airline operates wide body jets out of Albany Airport on a regularly scheduled basis.

The air-taxi or commuter airline business at the airport has grown dramatically since 1980. In 1988, there were 68,122 air-taxi operations at the Airport. (A takeoff and landing is counted as two operations). This is a 500 percent increase over the projections developed for the ANCLUC study for 1988. These aircraft are almost exclusively powered with twin turbo-prop engines which are substantially quieter than jet aircraft which operate from the Airport. The noise impact which commuter aircraft have on the surrounding community, under normal conditions, is limited and is very similar to the noise impact produced by those single and twin-engine general aviation aircraft which operate out of Albany.

In 1988, there were 69,834 operations by general aviation aircraft at Albany County Airport in comparison to the 124,300 operations projected in the ANCLUC study during the same period. Aircraft in this category include single and multi-engine piston and turbo-prop used for both personal and business travel. Like the aircraft used by the commuter airlines, these aircraft have a limited noise impact on the surrounding community.

In addition to the various types of aircraft mentioned above, other jet power aircraft operate from Albany. Corporate jet and air cargo jet aircraft were projected to perform 4,171 operations in 1989. This projection is significantly higher than the 1,825 operations which occurred at the Airport during this period. These aircraft do contribute a significant level of noise generated by operations at the airport.

Finally, military aircraft operations at the airport in 1989 consisted of C-130 training flights, small twin engine turbo-prop aircraft, and three types of helicopters. The ANCLUC study projected that military aircraft operations would remain consistent throughout the forecast period (1995). However, military aircraft operations could increase dramatically during periods of war, civil unrest, natural disaster, or other national emergencies. According to the FAA, at Albany County Airport, military aircraft operations totalled 15,007 during 1989. The Air National Guard from Schenectady County Airport performs Instrument Landing System (ILS) approaches to Albany County with C-130 cargo transport aircraft for pilot training purposes. These operations only use runway 1/19 (the north-south runway) and account for no more than 20 approaches/departures per month. This level of activity has remained constant since the ANCLUC study was completed in 1981.

The Army National Guard has 32 aircraft stationed at Albany County Airport, 31 of which are helicopters. The fixed winged aircraft which is assigned to the Army National Guard consists of a twin engine turbo-prop Super King Air 200. The remaining aircraft are all helicopters consisting of 15, AH-1 Cobra attack helicopters; three, UH-1 Huey helicopters; and 13, LOH observation helicopters. The Army National Guard has indicated that the number of pilots, aircraft, and total hours of operations at the facility has remained fairly constant since 1980. Furthermore, they anticipate no major change in the number of aircraft assigned to Albany County Airport through the year 2005. The New York State Police also have several helicopters at the Airport, but noise impacts associated with these aircrafts are negligible in relation to the number of helicopter operations conducted by the Army National Guard.

As shown on Exhibit II-J-3, six separate air routes have been specifically designated for helicopter arrivals and departures at Albany County Airport. It should be noted that these helicopter air routes are not single lanes, but rather indicate a corridor in which helicopters fly. The air routes follow prominent landmarks and vehicular roadways. The accuracy in which these routes are consistently followed varies according to pilot technique, helicopter performance, visual flight regulations, and weather conditions. The noise prediction model used in the ANCLUC study did not include any provision to incorporate helicopter operations into the noise calculations. However, since the level of helicopter operations has remained constant and is expected to continue at or near the present level, noise impacts from helicopters are likely to remain unchanged through the year 2005.

In early 1991, three airlines terminated air service from Albany County Airport. This included Eastern Airlines, Midway Airlines, and Trans World Express. This termination of service currently reduces the number of flights which arrive and depart on a regularly scheduled basis. Nevertheless, this change in service is anticipated to have only a short-term impact on operations at the airport and should not be considered when evaluating the effects of aircraft noise in the Study Area. This reduction in service should be viewed as an industry reaction to current economic conditions, especially in light of terrorist threats caused by the war in the Persian Gulf.

Impacts and Mitigation Measures:

In general, the assumptions made in the ANCLUC study appear accurate, and based on present operations at the Airport, the noise contours developed for 1995 can be considered a realistic view of the noise which will be generated at Albany County Airport in the future. Exhibit II-J-2 shows the anticipated noise contours for 1995.

Based on the ANCLUC study and as shown on Exhibit II-J-2, the noise environment around the airport is expected to change slightly in the future. Generally, noise levels will increase primarily due to the increasing number of aircraft operations at the airport. The impacts are lessened somewhat due to the introduction of quieter jet aircraft over time. Furthermore, Albany County, the commercial air carriers and the Army National Guard have all taken steps to reduce the noise impacts which are experienced by area residents. Albany County Airport has established a policy which prohibits nighttime engine run ups at the airport. The FAA at Albany has also established runway 1 (north runway) as the preferred runway when winds are light and variable. This runway directs aircraft departing Albany to take-off to the north over the most sparsely populated area around the facility. Commercial air carriers at Albany County Airport are now operating quieter aircraft than in 1981 and, over time, newer jets will begin to replace older and noisier aircraft like the Boeing 727-200. The Army National Guard has also been sensitive to the noise impacts which helicopters have on surrounding neighborhoods.

According to officials of the Army National Guard, helicopter pilots are ordered to uphold a "fly neighborly policy" which requires them to maintain a minimum altitude of 1,500 feet until reaching the boundary of the airport. This minimum altitude policy greatly reduces the noise impact which these aircraft have on the surrounding community.

According to the Albany County Airport Economic Development Director, the airport control tower has begun transmitting air traffic information to all arrivals requesting all heavy jet aircraft to maintain a minimum altitude of 2,000 feet mean sea level before turning onto the final approach course. This requested minimum altitude policy will reduce noise impacts on surrounding residential areas.

All of the above actions have helped to minimize the impacts associated with noise generated by the Airport. However, these measures will not decrease the average day-night sound levels due to the anticipated rise in the number of operations at Albany County Airport. Noise impacts associated with nighttime engine run ups, however, are still a problem for area residents based on complaints received by the airport management.

In December, 1990, Clough, Harbour & Associates attended a meeting with the Albany County Airport Director's Office and representatives of the three major commuter airlines which operate and maintain their aircraft at Albany. This included Business Express, Trans World Express and American Eagle (Command Airways). The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the operational requirements of the commuter airlines and to determine the impacts on nighttime engine run ups at the airport. Although other airlines operate from Albany Airport, the Director's Office identified these three airlines as the ones which are most frequently involved in nighttime run up incidents. Based on information from the Airport Director and a review of noise complaints, it would appear that jet aircraft are not normally involved in nighttime run up incidents.

All three airlines operate various twin engine turbo prop aircraft at Albany. None operate regularly scheduled jet aircraft. The types of aircraft involved and the number of aircraft remaining overnight on a typical basis are described in the table below.

TABLE II-J-2

TYPICAL AIRCRAFT MAINTAINED OVERNIGHT BY
MAJOR COMMUTER AIRLINES

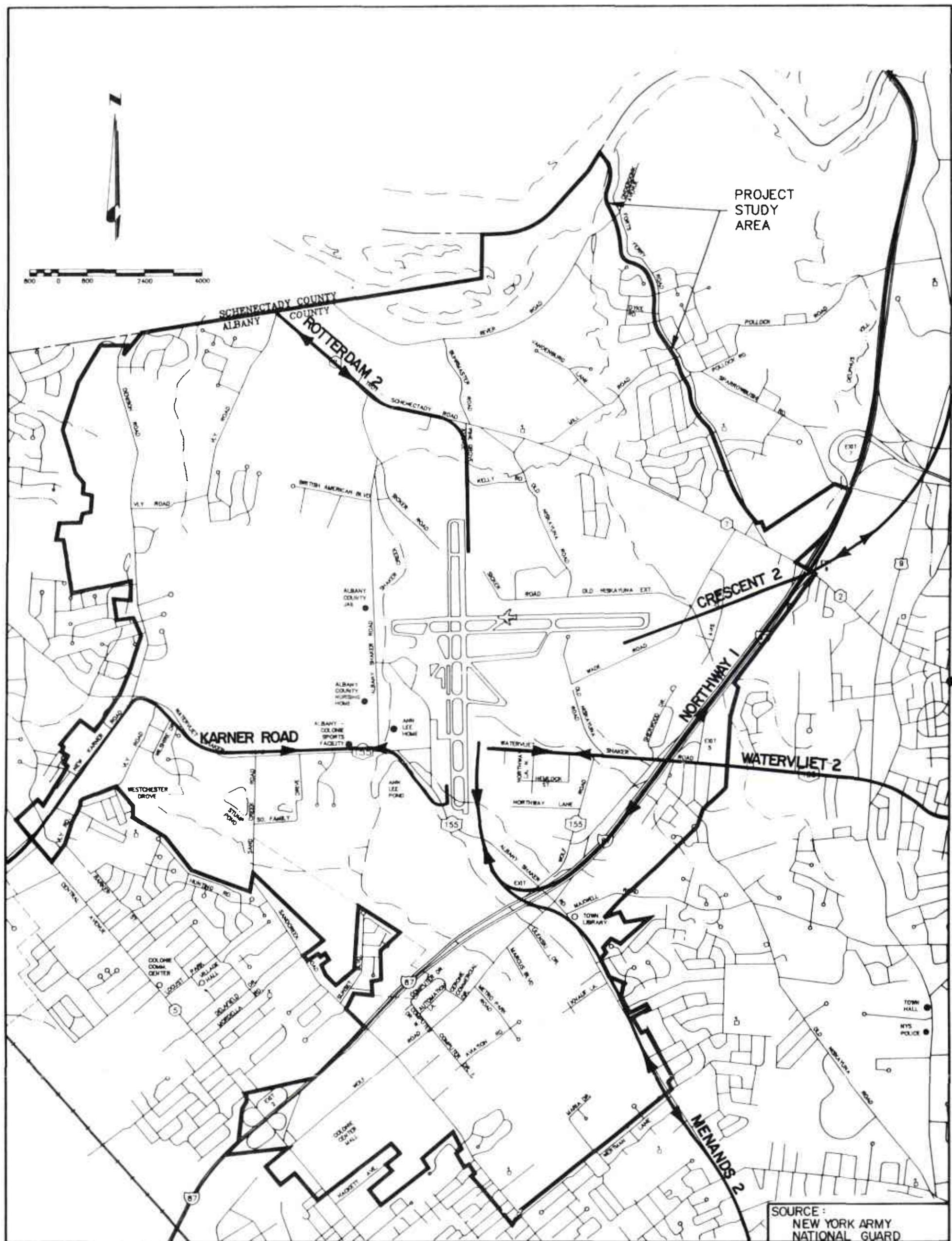
OPERATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS	AIRLINE		
	BUSINESS EXPRESS	TRANS-WORLD EXPRESS	AMERICAN EAGLE
TYPES OF AIRCRAFT	BEEHCRAFT 1900	BEEHCRAFT 1900 SAAB 340	ATR SHORT 360
AIRCRAFT OVERNIGHT (MON.-FRI.)	4	1-2	4
AIRCRAFT OVERNIGHT (WEEKENDS)	5-8	2-4	6

Representatives of American Eagle have indicated that the company may shift some additional aircraft to Albany in 1991 for maintenance. This will increase the number of overnight American Eagle aircraft to eight on any given night.

In 1985, the Airport Director's office issued a memo to all airlines indicating that nighttime run ups were henceforth prohibited between the hours of 12 am to 6 am. Representatives of all three major commuter airlines are aware of the night time prohibition of run ups and according to the airport manager and the airlines, largely conform to the curfew. However, all admitted that, on occasion, some engine run ups are performed during this period. This testing is necessary (and required by the FAA) when a mechanical malfunction in the particular aircraft occurs and engine power checks must be performed to avoid delaying or cancelling flights the following day. The airlines advised that each aircraft flies a number of regularly scheduled routes and a delay or cancellation of an am flight can affect the operations of that aircraft for the rest of the day. Typically, the commuter aircraft taxi around the airport at 60 percent of power and most engine run ups are required to be performed at 100 percent or full power.



PROJECT
STUDY
AREA



SOURCE :
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NATIONAL GUARD

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HELICOPTER ARRIVAL / DEPARTURE ROUTES

EXHIBIT NO.

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To determine the degree to which nighttime engine run ups can affect surrounding residents, limited testing was conducted in residential areas around the airport. An electronic instrument which measures noise levels in decibels (Metrologger dB-306A manufactured by Metrosonics, Inc.) was employed to record noise levels. Three locations were selected for monitoring. Each location was chosen because noise complaints were received from residents in that area and because each location represented a different geographic area around the airport. These areas are identified in Table II-J-3 and Exhibit II-J-4.

Testing was conducted on January 3, 1991 between the hours of 9:00 pm and 11:00 pm. At each test site, the background noise was monitored to obtain baseline noise levels over a 5 minute period as recommended by the equipment manufacturer. Both an average and maximum noise level were recorded during this period to compare with noise levels recorded during an actual engine run up of a commuter aircraft. While the major commuter airlines at Albany operate three types of aircraft, the Beechcraft 1900 is the most frequently used equipment according to commuter airline operators. This concurs with information available from the FAA and field observations during the period in which the GEIS was prepared. For this reason, noise monitoring was conducted at all three locations using a Beechcraft 1900 for engine run ups. Since jet aircraft have not, as of this time, been involved in nighttime run up incidents, no jet aircraft were included in the January 3, 1991 noise monitoring.

With the cooperation of Business Express and Trans World Express, three twin engine Beechcraft 1900s were taxied out to the north of the runway 1-19 (north-south runway) and were operated at full power in accordance with FAA requirements for power checks. These tests were conducted during a 15 minute

interval when noise levels were monitored at each test site as recommended by the noise monitoring equipment manufacturer. Both average and maximum noise levels were recorded. The results of these tests are summarized in Table II-J-3.

TABLE II-J-3
RESULTS OF NOISE MONITORING CONDUCTED ADJACENT
TO ALBANY COUNTY AIRPORT

NOISE LEVELS	MONITORING LOCATION		
	WEST LINDA LN.	NORTH VANDENBURG LN.	EAST LARKSPUR DR.
BACKGROUND NOISE: AVERAGE (db)	51	54	51
MAXIMUM (db)	64	72	68
RUN UP TESTING: AVERAGE (db)	51	55	49
MAXIMUM (db)	76	77	70
WEATHER CONDITIONS: PARTLY CLOUDY, TEMPERATURE 10°F, WINDS 5-10 KNOTS FROM SSW.			

While noise levels were increased during the period in which engine run ups were conducted, the levels are not significantly higher than background noise levels. It was noted that the passing of another motor vehicle during testing resulted in noise levels near the maximum of those which were recorded by the instrument. This is not to discount, however, the effect which repeated engine run ups may have on a individual who is awakened during curfew hours.

The Airport Director's office has indicated that the prohibition on nighttime run ups is limited in its ability to control these occurrences unless civil penalties or fines against the offending airline are enacted. This is one measure which could be implemented to control noise during nighttime hours. Another mitigation measure would be to construct a noise abatement facility in which aircraft could conduct engine run ups. These facilities have been

constructed on military installations to control jet aircraft noise. A similar facility could be built at Albany; however, the financing for such a structure would have to be distributed equitably between those airlines which use it.

Land use guidelines for application in the vicinity of airports have been published by the FAA and the NYSDOT. Suggested land use recommendations for airport noise zones are shown on Table II-J-4. Through the application of these land use recommendations, a comparison of future noise contours and existing land use and zoning districts was undertaken to determine which property within the Study Area may be incompatibly developed and/or zoned. The results of this analysis are shown on Exhibits II-J-1 and II-J-2 presented earlier in this section.

There are areas to the north, west and south of the airport which are incompatibly zoned. Thus, future development in these areas could be adversely effected by aircraft noise. In addition, those areas which are currently incompatibly developed will also continue to be adversely affected by aircraft noise. The following mitigation measures are offered to help reduce the impacts associated with aircraft noise:

TABLE II-J-4

**SUGGESTED LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR AIRPORT NOISE ZONES**

LAND USE CATEGORY	PRIMARY ¹ STANDARD	LOWER ² BOUND
Residential - Single Family, Duplex, Mobile Homes	L _{dn} 65	L _{dn} 55
Residential - Multiple Family, Dormitories, etc.	L _{dn} 65	L _{dn} 55
Transient Lodging	L _{dn} 70	L _{dn} 55
School Classrooms, Libraries, Churches	L _{dn} 65	L _{dn} 60
Hospitals, Nursing Homes	L _{dn} 65	L _{dn} 55
Auditoriums, Concert Halls, Music Shells	L _{dn} 65	L _{dn} 60
Sports Arenas, Outdoor Spectator Sports	L _{dn} 65	L _{dn} 60
Playgrounds, Neighborhood Parks	L _{dn} 65	L _{dn} 60
Golf Courses, Riding Stables, Water Recreation, Cemeteries	L _{dn} 70	L _{dn} 65
Office Buildings, Personal, Business and Professional	L _{dn} 75	L _{dn} 70
Commercial - Retail, Movie Theaters, Restaurants	L _{dn} 75	L _{dn} 70
Commercial - Wholesale, Some Retail, Industrial, Manufacturing, Utility	L _{dn} 80	L _{dn} 75
Manufacturing, Communications (Noise Sensitive)	L _{dn} 70	L _{dn} 65
Livestock Farming, Animal Breeding	L _{dn} 75	L _{dn} 70
Agriculture (except Livestock) Mining, Fishing	L _{dn} 90	L _{dn} 75
Public Right-of-Way	L _{dn} 85	L _{dn} 75
Extensive Natural Recreation Areas	L _{dn} 75	L _{dn} 70
<p>¹ Primary Standard identifies recommendations appropriate for most circumstances.</p> <p>² Lower Bound is provided for discretionary use to account for any special, local circumstances which might exist.</p>		

- o In areas of severe noise impact, the only viable approach may be the acquisition of incompatibly used lands, particularly residences proximate to the Airport. Albany County has already begun the acquisition of some dwellings and this process should be continued as outlined in the 1981 ANCLUC study. The acquisition of property depends largely on funding made available by the FAA and Albany County's ability to rapidly implement such a program;

- o Consideration should be given to rezoning certain underdeveloped areas from incompatible to compatible land uses with respect to areas affected by aircraft noise. Special use districts may be the most appropriate mechanism to ensure compatible development in high noise exposure areas. Alternatively, a comprehensive Noise Overlay Zone(s) could be established for the specific purpose of ensuring compatible development;

- o Certain modifications to local building and fire codes could be made to require the installation of additional insulation to reduce noise impacts inside residential dwellings which are located in marginally noise impacted areas (60-65 ldn noise contours). Model regulations are included in the 1981 ANCLUC Study. This additional insulation benefits only interior noise levels, assuming doors and windows are kept closed. However, added insulation can be installed in existing housing and has the added benefit of increasing the energy efficiency of housing as well. Thus there is no real long-term cost to providing noise insulation as energy savings over an average of 5 years would offset the expenditure of insulation;

- o Consideration should be given to the enactment of a municipal ordinance which would require that potential buyers of homes within the 65 ldn noise contour be advised of the potential noise impacts associated with the neighborhood. The ordinance to require disclosure should require the descriptions of noise impacts to be inserted into the deeds of subdivided tracts. One drawback to disclosure is that it is not effective in high noise exposure areas (70 ldn noise contour or higher) since it is often a foregone conclusion that most individuals would avoid these areas. Therefore, the market value of these residences may be unavoidably reduced;
- o Community facilities such as schools, hospitals, and nursing homes should not be located in high noise exposure areas. Further, when the need for closing such facilities is considered, it is preferable to close those facilities in noise impacted areas;
- o Albany County Airport officials could establish capacity limits for the Airport based on aircraft noise, however, such restrictions often have uneven economic consequences and should be employed only after consideration of other alternatives and discussions with the affected parties. Some of the forms that such restrictions might take include:
 - Restrictions based on cumulative impact. Under this strategy, a maximum cumulative impact (such as the total area within the ldn 75 noise contour) is established and airport operations are adjusted so as not to exceed that maximum. This is done

through "capacity limitations", for example, limiting either aircraft types based on their noise impact, or the number and mix of aircraft so as to respect their established cumulative noise exposure restriction.

- Restrictions based upon certified noise levels. The aircraft which currently operate at Albany County Airport have been certificated for noise by the FAA. Consequently, it is possible to develop limitations based upon certified noise data. Such limitations might take the form of threshold noise levels for Albany County Airport or different levels for day and night operations;

- o Albany County Airport officials could restructure landing fees for aircraft based on the noise generated by individual aircraft. This strategy encourages airlines to use quieter aircraft, while producing additional revenue for the Airport to offset noise included expenses. For maximum benefit, noise fees should be used in concert with the other mitigation measures presented herein. Fees which escalate sharply for noisier aircraft would provide an additional disincentive for their continued use. To avoid discrimination, the noise fee for each aircraft should be based upon standard single event noise ratings for the aircraft such as those published by the FAA. The reverse strategy could also be applied. Instead of assessing a fee, officials at Albany County Airport could reward air carriers who go to extra lengths to reduce noise generated by their aircraft by providing discounted landing fees. This could encourage the accelerated replacement of noisier aircraft which is already occurring at the airport;

- o The prohibition of night operations at Albany would eliminate noise impacts during those hours when most residents are sleeping, and therefore, are assumed to be the most sensitive to aircraft noise. This would greatly reduce the number of residential dwellings which would be affected. However, there are numerous disadvantages to this action including the potential loss of air service and overnight express business, reduced airport income, and potential legal action which would likely be taken by air carriers and/or the owners of the Airport. Careful research into the legal ramifications of such an ordinance would have to be undertaken prior to its consideration. According to the FAA, curfews should only be considered as a last resort to curb airport noise; and

- o An ongoing noise monitoring program should be established so that the noise levels of increased air traffic operations can be tracked and noise exposure areas can be updated. Ideally, noise monitoring should be scheduled for the summer months when impacts are at their greatest with sufficient supplemental data during cooler months to provide an accurate range of data. Using the same monitoring locations as used in the ANCLUC study is recommended to facilitate a direct comparison of data. Implementing any mitigation measure to curb airport noise is made more difficult without establishing an ongoing noise monitoring program.