

SSMCP Studying How to Increase Safety in 'McChord Field North Clear Zone'

October 5, 2016

The South Sound Military & Communities Partnership (SSMCP) is studying how to increase safety in the area known as the “McChord Field North Clear Zone” near Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM).

“This is important for JBLM moving forward. It’s an easy investment in the safety, security and prosperity of our community,” said State Senator Steve O’Ban upon learning his request that appropriations be made for an appraisal of the North Clear Zone (NCZ) was included in the Senate budget.

A Clear Zone is a federally-designated, 3,000-by-3,000-foot safety area adjacent to the end of a runway. This area has the highest statistical possibility of aircraft accidents. Department of Defense guidelines call for Clear Zones to be undeveloped, meaning they should not contain any buildings, businesses, people or flight obstructions. This protects the public’s safety and the military’s ability to carry out its missions. The North Clear Zone does not currently meet these guidelines. SSMCP is studying a number of potential strategies to address this, including acquiring properties and providing assistance for businesses to relocate elsewhere in the vicinity.

SSMCP has hired Montro & Johnston, an independent appraisal firm, to develop cost estimates for property acquisition and business relocation assistance. The firm will contact property owners and tenants in the North Clear Zone to discuss acquisition and relocation considerations and request a site visit in September or early October.

Initial research on potential strategies for the North Clear Zone will be completed this winter.

Questions can be referred to Col. (Ret.) William (Bill) Adamson, Program Manager for South Sound Communities & Military Partnership, (253) 983-7772.