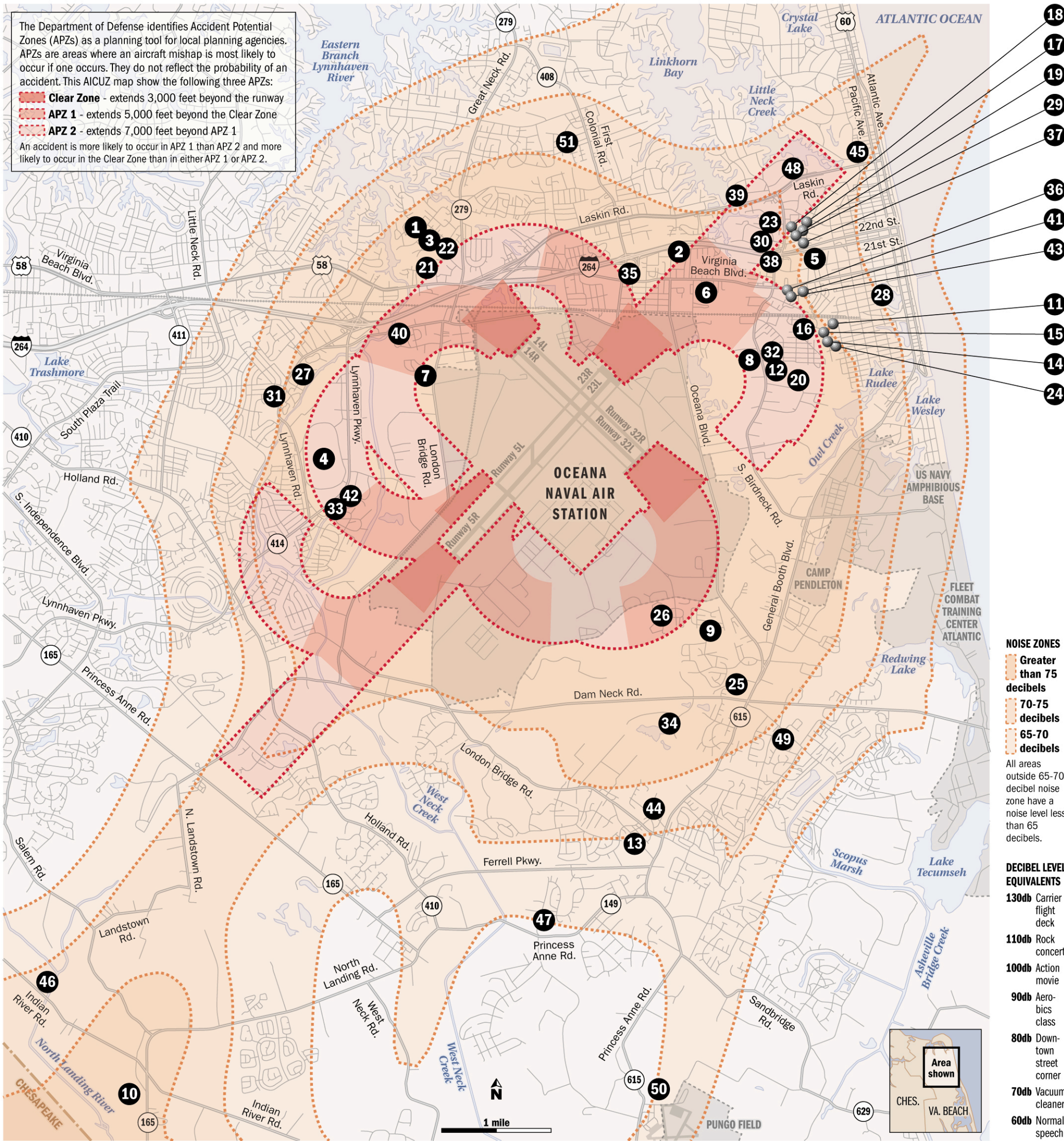


HEMMING IN OCEANA

For the past three decades, the Virginia Beach City Council has failed to heed Navy warnings against allowing homes in high-noise and accident-potential zones around Oceana Naval Air Station. Now, nearly one-third of the city's 439,467 residents live in areas where the Navy views housing as incompatible with the base's mission.

In 1978, the Navy created an Air Installations Compatible Use Zones map, or AICUZ, to help local governments limit residential growth in areas exposed to loud jets and the risk of crashes. The Navy's current AICUZ map, last updated in 1999 and depicted here, designates zones where jet noise over 24 hours averages 65 to 70 decibels, 70 to 75 decibels and 75 and greater decibels. Residents, however, are exposed to much louder "single-event" jet noise. An F/A-18 Hornet, for instance, can expose homeowners to around 114 decibels of sound - louder than a rock concert. The accident-potential zones, or APZs, are areas where jets fly over at least 5,000 times a year and the risk of crashes is highest.



This time line, based on city and Navy records, shows development city officials have approved since 1975 despite Navy objections that it was incompatible with Oceana Naval Air Station. Not included are council votes to approve development the Navy discouraged but viewed as compatible if equipped with noise insulation and noise-disclosure for buyers.

1975

1 Rezoning for apartments within 6,000 feet and on the centerline approach to Oceana's runway 14.

1976

2 Permit for a church in an Accident Potential Zone (APZ) and the loudest noise zone.

3 Rezoning for apartments, then in an APZ, and in a high-noise zone.

4 Rezoning to allow construction of Lynnhaven Mall, now partially in an APZ and in the loudest noise zone.

5 Approval of the Pavilion convention center, then partially in an APZ and in a medium-noise zone.

1977

6 Rezoning of 5 acres from business to apartments in an APZ "severely impacted" by jet noise.

1978

7 Rezoning of 72 acres from industrial to residential for 160 homes.

8 Rezoning of 9 acres in an APZ and high-noise zone from industrial to apartments.

9 Rezoning of 10 acres from agriculture to residential in an APZ.

OCT. 18 - Oceana's new skipper asks city for mandatory noise-disclosure law, but city defers to real-estate industry's voluntary disclosure.

1980

10 Rezoning of 68 acres in loudest noise zone.

1981

11 Rezoning for apartments that triples the housing density, then in the loudest noise zone.

12 Rezoning for apartments in the loudest noise zone.

13 Rezoning for up to 300 homes on 64 acres.

14 Rezoning of 23 acres already zoned for apartments to allow more units in a high-noise zone and under the flight path of runway 23.

15 Rezoning of 15 acres increasing the density for a condominium project in the highest noise zone.

1982

16 Rezoning of 13 acres to a higher housing density in loudest noise zone.

17 Rezoning for apartments, then in an APZ, and in a high-noise zone.

18 Rezoning for a 12-unit apartment building triples the density in an APZ and high-noise zone.

19 Rezoning for apartments, then in an APZ, and in a high-noise zone.

1983

20 Rezoning of 15 acres at a higher density for apartments in the loudest noise zone.

21 Rezoning of 4 acres from business to apartments in loudest zone and directly under the flight path of runway 14.

22 Rezoning of 8 acres from community business to apartments in the loudest noise zone beneath the approach to runway 14.

23 Rezoning of 1.24 acres from business to apartments in an APZ and high-noise zone.

1984

24 Rezoning of 1.5 acres for a denser apartment development in the loudest zone near the flight pattern for runway 23.

25 Rezoning of 10 acres from business to residential for single-family homes, then in an APZ, and in a medium-noise zone.

1985

26 Rezoning of 12 acres of farmland to apartments in the loudest zone.

27 Rezoning of 30 acres in medium- and high-noise zones.

28 Rezoning to allow a denser residential development, then in the loudest noise zone.

29 Rezoning of an acre, then in an APZ, and in the loudest noise zone for apartments less than 2 miles from the ends of runways 5 and 23.

30 Rezoning of 8 acres to allow up to 123 apartment units in an APZ and loudest noise zone.

31 Rezoning of 10 acres from business to apartment district where jet noise is "unacceptably high."

32 Rezoning of 2 acres for condos in the loudest noise zone.

MAY 22 - A Navy A-6E bomber skids across Oceana Boulevard, killing two Navy pilots and a woman in a car. It's the first time a civilian dies in a jet crash at Oceana.

33 Rezoning of 2 acres from business to hotel for a proposed 96-unit hotel.

1987

34 Rezoning of a 148-acre farm for a proposed 444-home subdivision partly in the loudest noise zone under the landing pattern for runway 32. (The owner later sold the property for the city's Corporate Landing Business Park.)

35 Permit for a day care in the loudest noise zone under the landing pattern for runway 23.

AUG. 31 - Navy warns that development threatens Oceana's future.

1988

36 Rezoning of nearly an acre from business to apartment district for a group home in an APZ and the loudest noise zone.

37 Rezoning for apartments, then in an APZ, and in a medium-noise zone.

38 Rezoning of 16 acres to a higher density for up to 153 apartments in an APZ and loudest noise zone.

39 Rezoning of 13 acres to a higher density for a 96-unit apartment complex in an APZ and the loudest noise zone.

1993

40 Rezoning of industrial land for a single-family home in the highest noise zone directly under an Oceana flight path.

41 Permit allowing more mobile homes in the loudest noise zone at a trailer park.

42 Permit for a bingo hall in the loudest noise zone and lying under the landing pattern of Oceana's busiest runway.

AUG. 23 - A year after Oceana escapes a base realignment and closure scare, the City Council adopts a noise-disclosure law and requires insulation in new homes built in noise zones - more than 16 years after the Navy began requesting it.

1995

OCT. 10 - City manager writes letter raising no objections to a developer's request for federal tax credits to finance a 174-unit apartment complex in loudest noise zone on Harpers Road.

43 Permit granted to expand a group home in an APZ and the loudest noise zone.

1996

44 Rezoning for an independent living facility for seniors on 6.2 acres in a medium-noise zone and under a flight pattern.

45 Rezoning of 1 acre from single-family to apartments under the flight path to one of Oceana's busiest runways.

46 Rezoning of about 27 acres from agriculture to single-family homes under the flight path flown by training pilots.

2002

DECEMBER - The Defense Department, without telling the city, adopts a policy to oppose new housing in all noise zones around military air bases.

2003

JUNE 27 - Navy officials meet with Planning Commission to explain a new policy opposing homes in jet-noise zones.

47 Rezoning of 1.5 acres of farmland for two single-family lots in a low-noise zone.

48 Rezoning of a 10-building, 90-unit condo project in an APZ and medium-noise zone, in the first major test of the Navy's new policy.

DECEMBER - The council agrees to a land-use study with the Navy in hopes of ending development disputes.

2004

49 Rezoning of 5 acres in a medium noise zone for 17 single-family homes.

50 Rezoning of 474 acres of farmland partially in a low-noise zone for 490 homes.

MARCH 23 - Council indefinitely defers rezoning of three development proposals in noise zones.

51 Rezoning approved for a 20-unit condo in a medium-noise zone.

SOURCES: City of Virginia Beach; Navy
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The Virginian-Pilot