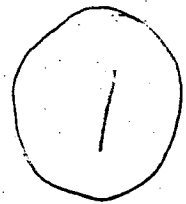




CITY OF SACRAMENTO



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
1231 "I" Street Sacramento, Ca. 95814

Administration
Room 300 449-5571
Building Inspections
Room 200 449-5716
Planning
Room 200 449-5604

February 11, 1986

CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE
RECEIVED
FEB 5 1986

Transportation and Community
Development Committee
Sacramento, California

Members in Session:

SUBJECT: Helistops in Downtown Sacramento (M86-002)

SUMMARY

The Transportation and Community Development Committee requested an assessment of the potential for helistop facilities downtown. The Zoning Ordinance and the City Code regulate helicopter facilities by requiring issuance of a Special Permit. State law requires both regional review and State approval as well as local and federal coordination of permits. The federal government has established certification standards and prepares an airspace analysis for each proposal.

The only helistop facilities currently operating in downtown Sacramento are those emergency helistops required by the City Fire Department on top of high-rise structures. The Planning Division recently received the first application for conversion of an "emergency only" helistop to private use at 770 L Street.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

According to the Sacramento City Zoning Ordinance (Section 2F and 2G) helistop activity outside of an existing airport is considered a special and conditional use subject to the granting of a Special Permit. The Zoning Ordinance specifically states that no Special Use Permit shall be granted until the applicant has first obtained approval from the appropriate federal and State agencies. Furthermore, the local entitlement shall be granted expressly subject to the limitations, conditions, and restrictions imposed by these agencies, and may include other regulatory suggestions made by these or other local entities.

In addition to the City Zoning Ordinance, the City Code, Chapter 4, Article III, also addresses helistop operations, including providing definitions:

Heliport: An area of land or water or a structural surface which is used or intended for use, for the landing and take-off of helicopters, and any appurtenant areas which are used, or intended for use, for heliport buildings and other heliport facilities. Refueling, maintenance, repair, and storage of helicopters is permitted.

Helistop: A helistop is the same as a heliport, except that no refueling, maintenance, repair, or storage of helicopters is permitted (includes "helipad").

Touchdown Area: That area of a roof structure, or platform above the roof, or ground surface, which is intended and designed for landing and take-off of helicopters.

State aeronautics law requires airport/heliport (and helistop) developers to submit their proposals to the Airport Land Use Commission for review as part of the State approval process. Consequently, the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG), as the ALUC for the Sacramento area, has the responsibility to review and make comments on all proposed helicopter facilities within the region.

In November 1984, the ALUC completed a Draft Heliport Policy Guide to assist local jurisdictions in making decisions on proposed heliport development. This document does not contain any official ALUC policies, and is strictly advisory. It describes helicopter operations, helicopter usage in the Sacramento region, regulatory relationships, planning criteria and guidelines, and recommendations.

The Policy Guide provides a Model Helicopter Ordinance developed by the San Diego Association of Governments for use by local governments. The Ordinance contains standardized criteria for the development of helicopter facilities in the Sacramento region. Included are term definitions that essentially match those adopted in the Sacramento City Code.

Helicopter facilities in California are further regulated by the State Department of Transportation Division of Aeronautics. The Public Utilities Code (Section 21661.5) requires applicants for heliport permits to first obtain City Council approval. Following receipt of local approval including ALUC review, a heliport permit issued by the State Division of Aeronautics is required before a permanent heliport or helipad, public or private, can begin operation. A federally-prepared airspace analysis of the proposed heliport placement and flight paths is required as part of the permit procedure.

Additionally, the specific problem of noise associated with heliport operations is regulated by of the California Administrative Code, Title 4 beginning with Section 5000. These regulations, which are implemented at the local level, establish airport noise limits and standards for measuring and monitoring this noise.

The federal government, through the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has established standards for certification of helicopters and pilots, rules for helicopter operations, and standards for heliport development. The FAA analyzes each proposed new heliport proposal on a case-by-case basis.

The approach surface of any helicopter landing site specified by FAA, extends upward at a slope of 8 to 1 for a horizontal distance of 4,000 feet. Depending on the angle established between approach and departure path, the ALUC has recommended that no heliport be allowed closer than 1.5 miles to another. The Central City portion of Sacramento is approximately two miles square (see Exhibit A). If a radius of one and half miles is used as a guide for siting heliport facilities, the operation of one helicopter in the central downtown area could preclude other such facilities in the same area.

The Planning Division is currently processing an application for a Special Permit to allow an existing emergency helistop to be converted from "emergency only" use to private use. The helistop is located on top of a 13-story building known as One City Centre at 770 L Street in the Central Business District (C-3) zone (see Exhibit B). The applicant's proposal (P85-168) limits operations to ten per month, Monday through Friday only, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. The most likely type of helicopter to be used is the Aerospatiale Twin Star.

Although no other proposals exist, it is likely that in the future the City will receive additional requests for helistops. Also, ALUC staff has indicated an interest in establishing a permanent public-use heliport to serve the downtown business district. The potential exists that the operation of this proposal could conflict with establishment of other helistops, as well as with establishment of a permanent public-use heliport in the area.

In September 1985, staff contacted several other jurisdictions and agencies involved with approval of helicopter facilities in order to determine what criteria exists elsewhere that could be useful in reviewing current and future applications within Sacramento. Specifically, nine localities returned a staff prepared Helicopter Usage Survey, investigating helicopter facilities in other downtown areas (see Exhibit C). All of the Cities questioned have helicopter usage in their downtown areas, primarily emergency related. Seven listed corporate-airport shuttles, hospital police emergencies, and media news coverage as three top uses of helicopters. Two of the eight (Houston and San Diego) have expanded local review to include a specific and detailed application and qualification process monitored by trained personnel. The remaining six Cities regulate helicopter operations through their Zoning Ordinances as special or conditional uses, monitored by planning staff. The results of the survey identified two major concerns in the approval process that are shared by all localities: noise impacts and air safety.

As previously mentioned, the criteria for evaluating helistop proposals in Sacramento are found in two different sets of regulations -- the Zoning Ordinance and the City Code. While some of the criteria and conditions

outlined in the Ordinance are duplicated in the Code, other standards appear only in one or the other. The City has no single set of criteria to be used in evaluating helistop proposals.

Based on the general criteria discussed in City, State, and federal aviation regulations, staff has established a list of conditions that will ensure the protection of public health and safety for the helistop proposal at 770 L Street (P85-168). By limiting the type of helicopter and frequency of use, the potential impacts of this application can be reduced to a less than significant level.

Staff has a concern, however, over the prospect of allowing private use of every (or even several) emergency helistop in the downtown area. The presence of an emergency helistop should not establish a precedent for private use. These emergency helistops are required by the City Fire Department on every high-rise over 150 feet (see Exhibit D). They are for emergency fire response only.

Location of a heliport in the downtown is another issue of concern to staff. Because refueling, maintenance, repairs, and storage of helicopters would be involved, siting such a facility is a difficult issue to mitigate. Important locational concerns include adequate parking, accessibility, traffic generation, and noise impacts. The intensity of heliport use effectively precludes location on top of a building or structure, thus available land is another concern. Furthermore, pursuant to the ALUC minimum spacing criteria of only one heliport every 1.5 miles, the one heliport located in downtown Sacramento should be a public-use facility.

Attached to this report for the Committee's information are:

- Exhibit A - Downtown Sacramento 1.5 Mile Area Map
- Exhibit B - Flight Map for Helistop Proposal at 770 L Street
- Exhibit C - Staff Research Summary
- Exhibit D - Response from Chief Powell on Emergency Helistop Requirements
- Exhibit E - Sacramento County Helicopter Usage Information

RECOMMENDATION

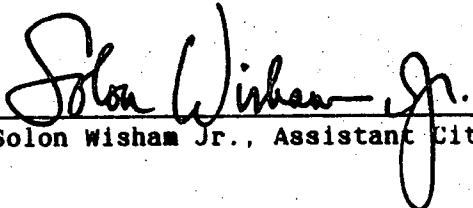
- o The Committee should direct staff to develop one set of standard criteria in the form of a "Helistop Ordinance" specifying the evaluation process for future helistop special permit applications including:
 - Application Procedures
 - Definitions
 - Locational Criteria
 - Development Standards

- o The Committee should direct staff to complete processing on the Special Permit application for 770 L Street, and to process all future applications for helicopter facilities based on the standards established in the newly developed "Helistop Ordinance.
- o The Committee should give support to the ALUC concept of locating one public-use heliport in the downtown area.

Respectfully submitted,


Marty Van Duyn
Planning Director

RECOMMENDATION APPROVED:

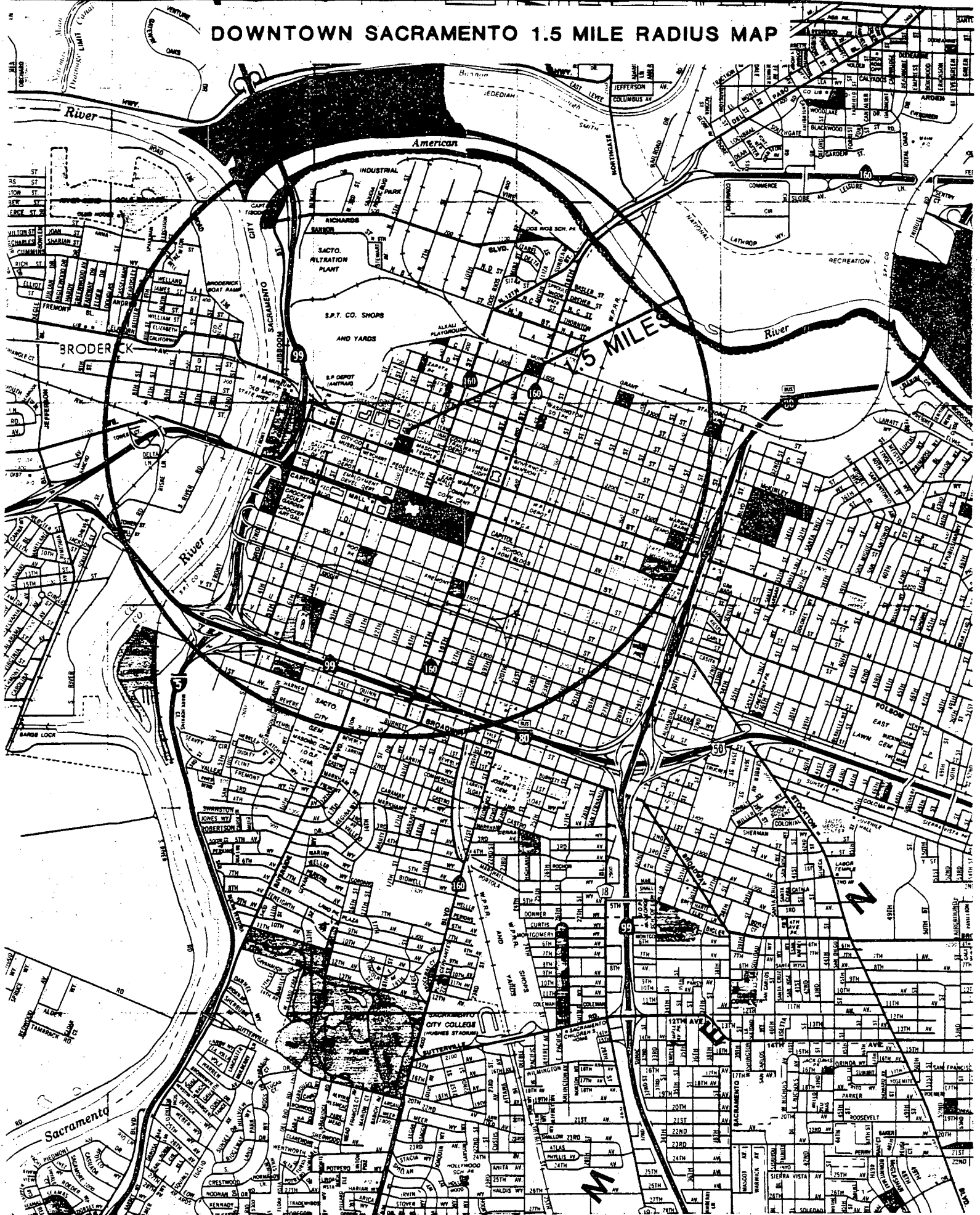

Solon Wisham Jr., Assistant City Manager

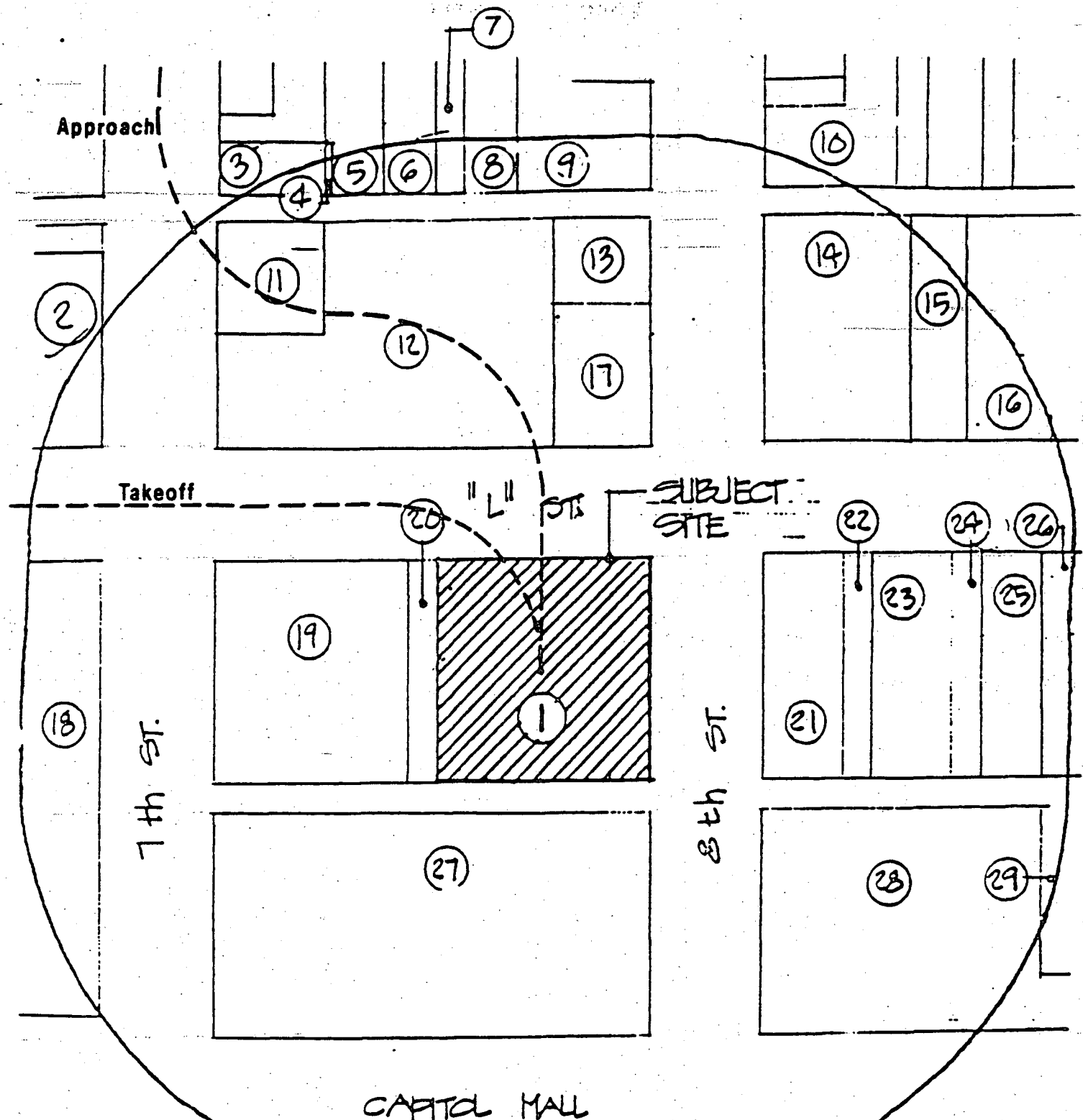
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Attachments
M86-002

February 11, 1986
District No. 1

EXHIBIT A

DOWNTOWN SACRAMENTO 1.5 MILE RADIUS MAP

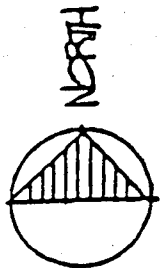




Presumed Flight Tracks
and
Sensitive Receiver Locations

PROPERTY OWNERSHIP MAP

SC. 1" = 100'



HELISTOP AT 770 L STREET

EXHIBIT B

FLIGHT MAP

EXHIBIT C

STAFF RESEARCH RESULTS DOWNTOWN HELICOPTER OPERATIONS SURVEY RESULTS

DENVER, COLORADO

There are two civilian helistop facilities in downtown Denver, and approximately 15 total throughout the City. Most are on rooftops and in suburbs. Of the two downtown facilities, one is used for hospital emergencies and the other for police emergencies and crime control. Helistop locations are restricted to industrial areas and otherwise regulated solely by the Planning Department through the Zoning Ordinance. The Denver Regional Council of Governments employs a Helicopter Specialist to assist in coordinating area helicopter facilities.

PHOENIX, ARIZONA

There are twelve civilian helistop facilities in downtown Phoenix, and approximately 33 total throughout the City. Of the Citywide facilities, 24 percent are located at airports, 15 percent are at hospitals, and 62 percent are private facilities. Eight of the downtown facilities are for emergency hospital use only. Helistops and heliports are considered a special use in the Phoenix City Code subject to Special Permit approval and restricted to commercial, industrial, and high-rise residential districts. There is no particular agency or specialist outside of the Planning Department responsible for coordination of helicopter activities in Phoenix.

HOUSTON, TEXAS

There are nine civilian helistop facilities in downtown Houston, and approximately 58 total throughout the City. Eight of the downtown facilities (10 Citywide) are for emergency use only. The City has established the Helicopter Facility Licensing and Appeals Board to license helistops and heliports with Houston. The Board has published a 100 page Procedures Manual to guide potential applicants through the City's detailed process including license fees, insurance requirements, design criteria, noise regulations and inspection procedures.

PORTLAND, OREGON

There are four civilian helistop facilities in downtown Portland, and approximately nine total throughout the City. Of the downtown facilities, three are private-use only and one is a public facility. The Portland Planning and Zoning Code contains a short chapter specifying general regulatory criteria for helistops and heliports. There is no particular agency or specialist outside of the Planning Department responsible for coordination of helicopter activities in Portland.

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

There are approximately seven civilian helistop facilities in downtown Seattle and a total of eight throughout the City as a whole. Of the downtown facilities, only one is restricted to emergency use. Helicopter facilities are specifically exempted from the Noise Ordinance in Seattle, and the Local Land Use Code prohibits location in two historic districts. The only other regulatory criteria stems from the Uniform Building Code. There is no particular agency or specialist outside of the Planning Department responsible for coordination of helicopter activities in Seattle.

SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

There are two civilian helistop facilities in downtown San Diego and approximately nine total throughout the City. Both downtown facilities are rooftop emergency stops, all others are ground level stops at industrial parks or air fields. There is also a significant amount of military helicopter activity which was not included in the survey. The City of San Diego has codified Helicopter Rules and Regulations and specific Heliport Licensing Procedures. The San Diego Association of Governments (functioning as the local ALUC) has developed advisory guidelines for planning helicopter facilities in the region. Also, the City Planning Department has adopted standards and application procedures for the Conditional Use Permit process for heliports.

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

There are approximately 23 civilian helistop facilities in downtown Los Angeles and 100 total throughout the City. Of the downtown facilities, an estimated 50 percent are for emergency use only. Helicopter facilities in Los Angeles are regulated solely by the Planning Department through zoning and the conditional use permit process. There is no particular agency or specialist outside of the Planning Department responsible for coordination of helicopter activities in Los Angeles.

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

There are three civilian helistop facilities in San Francisco all of which are downtown. Two are tourist related operations located at the edge of the Bay, the other is a rooftop pad for police emergencies. Helicopter operations are regulated in San Francisco through the conditional use permit process and restricted locationally to commercial and industrial districts. There is no particular agency or specialist outside of the Planning Department responsible for coordination of helicopter activity in San Francisco.

SOURCE: Sacramento City Planning Division Staff Survey, September 1985.

EXHIBIT D

CITY OF SACRAMENTO



DEPARTMENT OF FIRE

FIRE ADMINISTRATION

William R. Powell
Fire Chief

January 10, 1986

M E M O R A N D U M

TO : HEIDI TSCHUDIN, Assistant Planner

FROM : WILLIAM R. POWELL, Chief

SUBJECT: **EMERGENCY HELIPAD/HELISTOP REQUIREMENTS**

CITY PLANNING DEPARTMENT
JAN 14 1986
RECEIVED

The Fire Department's position on Emergency Helipad/Helistop Requirements are as follows:

- I. Buildings which are above the reach of our 150 foot Firebirds must have a helipad/helistop for emergency rescue of personnel during a fire or emergency incident.
- II. Helistops can be utilized for private use if they meet specific requirements.

The Uniform Fire Code and the National Fire Protection Manuals spell out requirements for helistops.

- III. On May 16, 1985, we sent information solicited by you regarding a helistop on the 770 "L" Street Building. This information would apply to all requests for use of emergency helistops for private use.

I have listed your questions from your November 21, 1985, memorandum along with our answers below:

1. Will the Fire Department continue to require emergency helistops on high-rise structures?
Yes.
2. If so, is this requirement in response to specific local, State, or federal regulations? Please detail or reference these regulations.

Local, 1982 Uniform Fire Code Article 3, Section 3.101 (attached);
Page 24 of Uniform Fire Code definition of fire hazard (attached).

3. What criteria do you use in deciding whether or not such an emergency facility is necessary? For example, height (anything over 7 stories or 100 feet) or location (downtown only as opposed to suburbs).

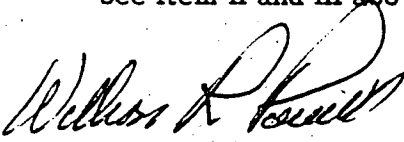
Any building over 150 feet in height cannot be reached above 150 feet with our fire apparatus (Firebirds). A helipad/helistop is required to effect rescue of occupants during a fire or emergency incident requiring rescue.

4. If a proposed building design was such that a helistop facility could not be accommodated (i.e., pyramid-shaped) what would the position of the Fire Department be?

Design the building to facilitate a helipad/helistop.

5. What is the position of the Fire Department with respect to permitting private use of previously emergency-only helistops?

See Item II and III above.



WILLIAM R. POWELL
Chief

WRP:am

Attachments

EXHIBIT E

**SACRAMENTO COUNTY
HELICOPTER FACILITIES INFORMATION**

There are 11 approved helicopter landing sites and one pending approval in Sacramento County (see Table below). Of these facilities one is used for hospital emergencies, three for military use, three for public use, and four for private use. Helistop/heliport locations in the unincorporated areas are restricted to industrial zones (M-1 and M-2) and otherwise regulated solely by the County Planning Department as a conditional use. There is no particular agency or specialist outside of the Planning Department responsible for coordination of helicopter facilities in the unincorporated areas of the County.

| <u>FACILITIES</u> | <u>LOCATION</u> | <u>USE</u> |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|------------|
| U.C. Davis Medical Center Helistop | Sacramento | Emergency |
| Mather AFB Heliport | Rancho Cordova | Military |
| McClellan AFB Heliport | North Highlands | Military |
| Reed Heliport (Sacramento Army Depot) | Sacramento | Military |
| Folsom City Heliport | Folsom | Public |
| Sacramento Executive Heliport | Sacramento | Public |
| Sacramento Metro Heliport | Sacramento | Public |
| Capital Center Helistop | Rancho Cordova | Private |
| Lake Park Heliport | Sacramento | Private |
| One City Centre Helistop | Sacramento | Private |
| Shy Ranch Heliport | Elk Grove | Private |
| Sunrise Air Center Heliport | Rancho Cordova | Private |

HT:lr