



Cameron County Airport



Appendix D

Draft Height/Hazard Zoning Ordinance

Appendix D

Draft Height and Hazard Ordinance

This appendix includes a height and hazard zoning ordinance based on the guidance included in Appendix D of the Texas Department of Transportation-Aviation Division's (TxDOT) Airport Compatibility Guidelines.¹

It is important to note that adoption of a height and hazard zoning ordinance requires several steps which must be completed in a specific sequence. Prior to proceeding with the process, the text of the draft ordinance should be reviewed by legal counsel. The steps are presented below and are preceded by the following note in the Texas Department of Transportation-Aviation Division's (TxDOT) Airport Compatibility Guidelines.

“IMPORTANT: Do not deviate from the numerical order of procedural steps and assure no step is taken before the preceding step is finished.”

Checklist of Procedural and Legal Actions required for the Adoption of an Airport Zoning Ordinance:

1. City Ordinance creating a Joint Airport Zoning Board (JAZB) and appointing city's representatives to that board.
2. County Order creating a JAZB and appointing county's representative to that board.
3. Oaths of office administered to members of the JAZB.
4. Election of 5th member of the JAZB who shall serve as chairperson of that board.
5. Oath of office administered to chairperson of the JAZB.
6. JAZB sets date of public hearing.
7. Notice of public hearing published in local newspaper(s).
8. Proof of publication collected for each newspaper.
9. *Note: The above steps 7 & 8 should be repeated for each political subdivision affected by the zoning.*
10. Notice of public hearing posted in city hall and/or county courthouse for reach jurisdiction participating in the zoning.
11. Conduct public hearing.
12. Adopt zoning ordinance.
13. Attorney's certification.
14. Adopted ordinance filed with County Clerk for each county participating in the zoning.
15. Copy of procedural forms and adopted ordinance provided to each political subdivision participating in the zoning process.

¹ https://ftp.txdot.gov/pub/txdot-info/avn/avninfo/Airport_Compatibility_Guidelines.pdf

AIRPORT HAZARD ZONING ORDINANCE

CAMERON COUNTY AIRPORT HAZARD ZONING REGULATIONS

Regulating and restricting the height of structures and objects of natural growth and otherwise regulating the use of property in the vicinity of the Cameron County Airport, Los Fresnos, Texas, by creating the appropriate zones and establishing the boundaries thereof; providing for restrictions of such zones and the enforcement of such restrictions; defining certain terms used herein; referring to the Cameron County Airport Hazard Zoning Map dated , which is incorporated in and made a part of these regulations; providing for a board of adjustment; and imposing penalties.

Whereas, these regulations are adopted pursuant to the authority conferred by the Airport Zoning Act, Texas Local Government Code, §§241.001 et seq.

Whereas the Legislature of the State of Texas finds that:

- an airport hazard endangers the lives and property of users of the airport and of occupants of land in the vicinity of the airport;
- an airport hazard that is an obstruction reduces the size of the area available for the landing, taking off, and maneuvering of aircraft, tending to destroy or impair the utility of the airport and the public investment in the airport;
- the creation of an airport hazard is a public nuisance and an injury to the community served by the airport affected by the hazard;
- it is necessary in the interest of the public health, public safety, and general welfare to prevent the creation of an airport hazard;
- the creation of an airport hazard should be prevented, to the extent legally possible, by the exercise of the police power without compensation; and
- the prevention of the creation of an airport hazard and the elimination, the removal, the alteration, the mitigation, or the marking and lighting of an airport hazard are public purposes for which a political subdivision may raise and spend public funds and acquire land or interests in land.

Accordingly, it is declared that Cameron County benefits from the use of the Cameron County Airport and the Commissioner’s Court of Cameron County, Texas, permits the Cameron County Airport to be used by the public to an extent that the airport fulfills an essential community purpose; therefore, the Cameron County Airport is **used in the interest of the public**.

Therefore, be it ordered by the Cameron County-Bayview-Brownsville-Laguna Vista Joint Airport Zoning Board of the City Council of the Cities of Bayview, Brownsville, and Laguna Vista, Texas, and the Commissioners Court of Cameron County, Texas.

Section 1. Short Title

These regulations shall be known and may be cited as the “**Cameron County Airport Hazard Zoning Regulations**.”

Section 2. Definitions

As used in these regulations, unless the context otherwise requires:

- A. Administrative Agency.** The appropriate person or office of a political subdivision which is responsible for the administration and enforcement of the regulations prescribed herein. The administrative agency is set forth in Section 3 of these regulations.
- B. Airport.** The **Cameron County Airport**, Los Fresnos, Texas; including the ultimate development of that facility.
- C. Airport Elevation.** The established elevation of the highest point on the runway, either existing or planned, at the airport measured in feet above mean sea level (MSL). The airport elevation of the Cameron County Airport is 18.6 feet above mean sea level (MSL).
- D. Airport Hazard.** Any structure, tree, or use of land which obstructs the airspace required for the flight of aircraft or obstructs or interferes with the control, tracking, and/or data acquisition in the landing, takeoff, or flight at an airport or any installation or facility relating to flight, tracking, and/or data acquisition of the flight craft; is hazardous to, interferes with or obstructs such landing, takeoff, or flight of aircraft; or is hazardous to or interferes with tracking and/or data acquisition pertaining to flight and flight vehicles.
- E. Approach Surface.** A surface longitudinally centered on the extended runway centerline, extending outward and upward from each end of the primary surface and at the same slope as the approach zone height limitation slope set forth in Section 5 of these regulations. In plan, the perimeter of the approach surface coincides with the perimeter of the approach surface.
- F. Approach, Conical, Horizontal, and Transitional Zones.** These zones are set forth in Section 4 of these regulations.
- G. Board of Adjustment.** A board so designated by these regulations as provided in Texas Local Government Code, §241.032. Provisions for the board of adjustment are set forth in Section 9 of these regulations.
- H. Conical Surface.** A surface extending outward and upward for the periphery of the horizontal slope at a slope of twenty (20) feet horizontally for each one (1) foot vertically for a horizontal distance of four thousand (4,000) feet.
- I. Hazard to Air Navigation.** An obstruction or use of land determined to have a substantial adverse effect on the safe and efficient utilization of navigable airspace.
- J. Height.** For the purpose of determining the height limits in all zones set forth in these regulations and shown on the hazard zoning map, the datum shall be height above mean sea level (MSL) elevation as measured in feet.

- K. Horizontal Surface.** A horizontal plane one hundred fifty (150) feet above the established airport elevation which in plan coincides with the perimeter of the horizontal zone.
- L. Nonconforming Use, Structure, or Tree.** Any structure, tree, or use of land which is inconsistent with the provisions of these regulations, and which exists as of the effective date of these regulations.
- M. Nonprecision Instrument Runway.** A runway having an existing instrument approach procedure utilizing air navigation facilities or other equipment that provides only horizontal guidance or area type navigation equipment. This also includes a runway for which a nonprecision instrument approach procedure has been approved or planned. Runway 13-31 is considered a nonprecision instrument runway.
- N. Obstruction.** Any structure, tree, or other object, including a mobile object, which exceeds a limiting height set forth in Section 5 of these regulations or is an airport hazard.
- O. Person.** An individual, firm, partnership, corporation, company, association, joint stock association, or body politic and includes a trustee, receiver, assignee, administrator, executor, guardian, or other representative.
- P. Primary Surface.** A 1,000-foot-wide surface at Runway 13-31 and a 500-foot-wide surface at Runways 17-35, 8-26, and 3-21, longitudinally centered on the runway extending the full length of the ultimate runway configuration plus two hundred (200) feet beyond each ultimate end of the runway. The elevation of any point on the primary surface is the same as the nearest point on the existing or ultimate runway centerline.
- Q. Runway.** A defined area on the airport prepared for the landing and taking off of aircraft along its length. The existing length of Runway 13-31 at the Cameron County Airport is 8,001 feet. The ultimate length of Runway 13-31 at the Cameron County Airport is 6,000 feet. The existing and ultimate length of Runway 17-35 at the Cameron County Airport is 4,200 feet. The existing length of Runway 8-26 at the Cameron County Airport is 5,317 feet. The existing length of Runway 3-21 at the Cameron County Airport is 5,000 feet. Runways 8-26 and 3-21 are in the process of being decommissioned.
- R. Structure.** An object, including a mobile object, constructed or installed by man including, but not limited to, buildings, towers, cranes, smokestacks, poles, earth formations, overhead power lines, and traverse ways. Traverse ways are considered to be the heights set forth in 14 C.F.R. Part 77.17.
- S. Transitional Surfaces.** Surfaces extending perpendicular to the runway centerline and the extended runway centerline outward from the edges of the primary surface and the approach surfaces at a slope of seven (7) feet horizontally for each one (1) foot vertically to where they intersect the horizontal surface. Transitional surfaces for those portions of the precision approach surface which extend through and beyond the limits of the conical surface extend at a slope of seven (7) feet horizontally for each one (1) foot vertically for a distance of five thousand (5,000)

feet measured horizontally from either edge of the approach surface and perpendicular to the extended runway centerline.

- T. Tree.** Any type of flora and an object of natural growth.

Section 3. Administrative Agency

It shall be the duty of the office of the Cameron County Engineer, Department of Transportation to administer and enforce the regulations prescribed herein and is hereby designated as the administrative agency.

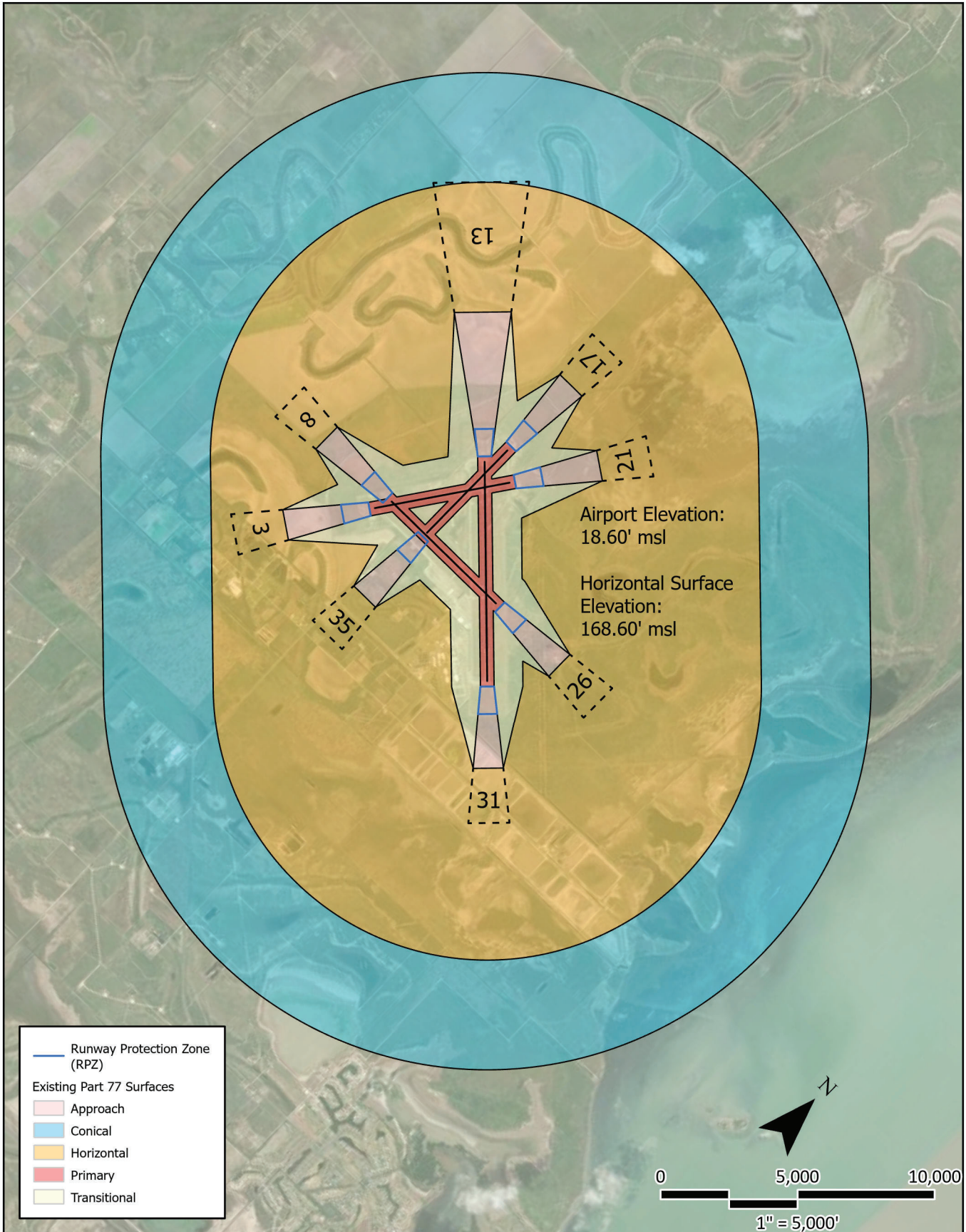
Section 4. Zones

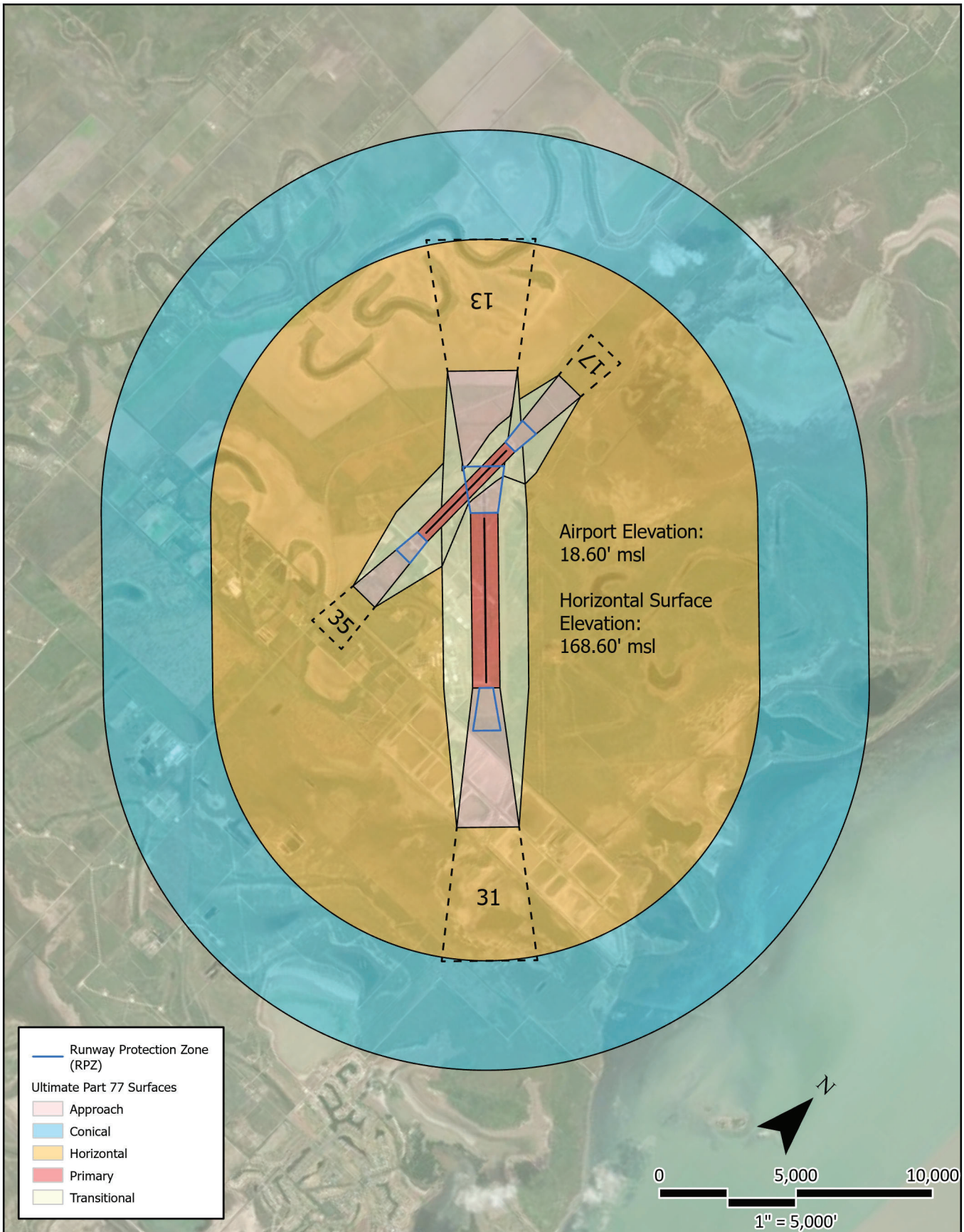
In order to carry out the provisions of these regulations, there are hereby created and established certain zones which include all of the land lying beneath the approach surfaces, conical surface, horizontal surface, and transitional surfaces as they apply to the airport. Such surfaces are shown on the Cameron County Airport Hazard Zoning Map dated [REDACTED], and depicted on **Exhibits D1 and D2**, which are hereby attached to these regulations and made a part hereof. An area located in more than one of the following zones is considered to be only in the zone with the more restrictive height limitation. The various zones are hereby established and defined as follows:

- A. Approach Zones.** Approach zones are hereby established beneath the approach surfaces at each end of Runway 13-31, Runway 17-35, Runway 8-26, and Runway 3-21 at the airport. The approach surface for Runways 17-35, 8-26, and 3-21, shall have an inner edge width of five hundred (500) feet, which coincides with the width of the primary surface, at a distance of two hundred (200) feet beyond each runway end, widening thereafter uniformly to a width of three thousand five hundred (3,500) feet at a horizontal distance of ten thousand (10,000) feet beyond the end of the primary surface.

The approach surface for Runway 13-31 shall have an inner edge width of one thousand (1,000) feet, which coincides with the width of the primary surface at a distance of two hundred feet beyond each runway end, widening thereafter uniformly to a width of four thousand (4,000) feet at a horizontal distance of ten-thousand (10,000) feet beyond the end of the primary surface. The centerline of the approach surface is the continuation of the centerline of the runway.

- B. Conical Zone.** A conical zone is hereby established beneath the conical surface at the airport which extends outward from the periphery of the horizontal surface for a horizontal distance of four thousand (4,000) feet.
- C. Horizontal Zone.** A horizontal zone is hereby established beneath the horizontal surface at the airport which is a plane one hundred fifty (150) feet above the established airport elevation, the perimeter of which is constructed by swinging arcs of ten thousand (10,000) feet radii from the





center of each end of the primary surface and connecting the adjacent arcs by lines tangent to those arcs.

- D. Transitional Zones.** Transitional zones are hereby established beneath the transitional surfaces at the airport. Transitional surfaces, symmetrically located on either side of the runway, have variable widths as shown on the Cameron County Airport Hazard Zoning Map. Transitional surfaces extend outward perpendicular to the runway centerline and the extended runway centerline from the periphery of the primary surface and the approach surfaces to where they intersect the horizontal surface.

Section 5. Height Limitations

Except as otherwise provided in Section 8 of these regulations, no structure shall be erected, altered, or replaced and no tree shall be allowed to grow in any zone created by these regulations to a height in excess of the applicable height limitations herein established for such zone except as provided in Paragraph E of this Section. Such applicable height limitations are hereby established for each of the zones in question as follows:

- A. Approach Zones.** Slope one (1) foot in height for each thirty-four (34) feet in horizontal distance beginning at the end of and at the same elevation as the primary surface and extending to a point of ten thousand (10,000) feet beyond the end of the primary surface.
- B. Conical Zone.** Slopes one (1) foot in height for each twenty (20) feet in horizontal distance beginning at the periphery of the horizontal zone and at one hundred fifty (150) feet above the airport elevation and extending to a height of three hundred fifty (350) feet above the airport elevation, or to a height of three hundred sixty eight (368) feet above mean seal level.
- C. Horizontal Zone.** Established at one hundred fifty (150) feet above the airport elevation, or at a height of one hundred sixty eight (168) feet above mean sea level.
- D. Transitional Zones.** Slope one (1) foot in height for each seven (7) feet in horizontal distance beginning at the sides of an at the same elevation as the primary surface and the approach surfaces.
- E. Expected Height Limitation.** *Nothing contained in these regulations shall be construed as prohibiting the growth, construction, or maintenance of any structure or tree to a height of up to fifty (50) feet above the surface of the land at its location.*

Section 6. Land Use Restrictions

Except as provided in Section 7 of these regulations, no use may be made of land or water within any zone established by these regulations in such a manner as to create electrical interference with

navigational signals or radio communications between the airport and aircraft, make it difficult for pilots to distinguish between airport lights and others, result in glare in the eyes of pilots using the airport, impair visibility in the vicinity of the airport, create potential bird strike hazards, or otherwise in any way endanger or interfere with the landing, taking off, or maneuvering of aircraft intending to use the airport.

Section 7. Nonconforming Uses, Structures, and Trees

- A. Nonconforming Uses.** Nothing contained in these regulations shall be construed as requiring changes in or interference with the continuance of any nonconforming use of land.
- B. Nonconforming Structures.** Nothing contained in these regulations shall be construed as to require the removal, lowering, or other change to any existing nonconforming structure including all phases or elements of a multiphase structure, the construction of which was begun prior to the effective date of these regulations and is diligently prosecuted.
- C. Nonconforming Trees.** Nothing in these regulations shall be construed as to require the removal, lowering, or other change to any nonconforming tree. However, any nonconforming tree which grows to a greater height than it was as of the effective date of these regulations is subject to the provisions of these regulations as described in Section 5 herein above.

Section 8. Permits and Variances

- A. Permits.** Any person who desires to replace, rebuild, substantially change, or repair a nonconforming structure or replace or replant a nonconforming tree must apply for and receive a permit, and **the permit shall be granted.** However, no permit shall be granted which would allow the establishment of an airport hazard or allow a nonconforming structure or tree to exceed its original height or become a greater hazard to air navigation than it was at the time of the adoption of these regulations. Applications for permits shall be applied to and issued by the administrative agency.
- B. Variances.** Any person who desires to erect, substantially change, or increase the height of any structure or establish or allow the growth of any tree which would exceed in the height limitations set forth in Section 5 of these regulations or change the use of property in such a way as to create a hazardous condition as described in Section 6 of these regulations must apply to the board of adjustment and receive a variance. The application for variance must be accompanied by a determination from the Federal Aviation Administration under 14 C.F.R. Part 77 as to the effect of the proposal on the operation of air navigation facilities and the safe, efficient use of navigable airspace.

Such variances shall be allowed where it is duly found that a literal application or enforcement of the regulations will result in practical difficulty or unnecessary hardship and the granting of relief

would result in substantial justice, not be contrary to the public interest, and be in accordance with the spirit of these regulations.

C. Requirements and Reasonable Conditions

- (1) Any permit granted may, at the discretion of the administrative agency, impose a requirement to allow the installation and maintenance, at the expense of the administrative agency, of any markers or lights as may be necessary to indicate to flyers the presence of an airport hazard.
- (2) Any variance granted may, at the discretion of the board of adjustment, impose **any reasonable conditions** as may be necessary to accomplish the purpose of these regulations.

Section 9. Board of Adjustment

- A. The Cameron County Board of Adjustment is hereby designated as the board of adjustment for the purposes of these regulations and shall have and exercise the following powers:
 - (1) to hear and decide appeals from any order, requirement, decision, or determination made by the Administrative Agency in the administration or enforcement of these regulations;
 - (2) to hear and decide special exceptions to the terms of these regulations when the board is required to do so; and
 - (3) to hear and decide specific variances.
- B. The board of adjustment shall be comprised of five (5) members and shall adopt rules for its governance and procedure in harmony with the provisions of these regulations. Meetings of the board of adjustment shall be held at the call of the chairman and at such times as the board of adjustment may determine. The chairman, or in his/her absence the acting chairman, may administer oaths and compel the attendance of witnesses. All hearings of the board of adjustment shall be public. The board of adjustment shall keep minutes of its proceedings showing the vote of each member upon each question or if any member is absent or fails to vote, indicating such fact and shall keep records of its examinations and other official actions, all of which shall immediately be filed in the office of the board of adjustment or in the office of the Cameron County Commissioner's Court. All such records shall be public records.
- C. The board of adjustment shall make written findings of fact and conclusions of law stating the facts upon which it relied when making its legal conclusions in reversing, affirming, or modifying any order, requirement, decision, or determination which comes before it under the provisions of these regulations.
- D. The concurring vote of four (4) members of the board of adjustment shall be necessary to reverse any order, requirement, decision, or determination of the administrative agency, to decide in favor of the applicant on any matter upon which it is required to pass under these regulations, or to affect any variance to these regulations.

Section 11. Judicial Review

Any person aggrieved or any taxpayer affected by a decision of the board of adjustment may present to a court of record a petition stating that the decision of the board of adjustment is illegal and specifying the grounds of the illegality as provided by and in accordance with the provisions of Texas Local Government Code, §241.041. This same right of appeal is extended to the governing bodies of the cities of Bayview, Brownsville, and Laguna Vista, Texas, and Cameron County, Texas, and to the Cameron County-Bayview-Brownsville-Laguna Vista Joint Airport Zoning Board.

Section 12. Enforcement and Remedies

The governing bodies of the cities of Bayview, Brownsville, and Laguna Vista, Texas, and Cameron County, Texas, may institute in a court of competent jurisdiction an action to prevent, restrain, correct, or abate any violation of these regulations or of any order or ruling made in connection with their administration or enforcement including, but not limited to, an action for injunctive relief.

Section 13. Penalties

Each violation of these regulations or of any order or ruling promulgated hereunder shall constitute a misdemeanor and upon conviction shall be punishable by a **fine of not more than \$200**, and each day a violation continues to exist shall constitute a separate offense.

Section 14. Conflicting Regulations

Where there exists a conflict between any of the regulations or limitations prescribed herein and any other regulation applicable to the same area, whether the conflict be with respect to the height of structures or trees, the use of land, or any other matter, the more stringent limitation or requirement shall control.

Section 15. Severability

If any of the provisions of these regulations or the application thereof to any person or circumstance is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions or application of these regulations which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application and to this end, the provisions of these regulations are declared to be severable.

Section 16. Adherence with State Laws

Any actions brought forth by any person or taxpayer as a result of the administration, enforcement, or the contesting of these regulations will be in accordance with the provisions of Texas Local Government, §241.001 et seq and other applicable state laws.

Section 17. Effective Date

Whereas, the immediate operation of the provisions of these regulations is necessary for the preservation of the public health, safety, and general welfare, an emergency is hereby declared to exist and these regulations shall be in full force and effect from and after their adoption by the Cameron County-Bayview-Brownsville-Laguna Vista Joint Airport Zoning Board.

Adopted by the Cameron County-Bayview-Brownsville-Laguna Vista Joint Airport Zoning Board this _____ day of _____ 20_____.

Chairman, _____
Joint Airport Zoning Board

Member

Member

Member

Member

Attest: _____
County Clerk of the County of _____, Texas