
1 Introduction

1.1 CEQA Compliance

This document is a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed LAX Northside Plan Update (proposed Project) at Los Angeles International Airport (LAX or Airport). LAX is owned by the City of Los Angeles and operated by the Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA), whose Board of Airport Commissioners (BOAC) oversees the policy, management, operation, and regulation of the Airport, as well as Ontario International Airport, Palmdale Regional Airport, and Van Nuys General Aviation Airport. This Draft EIR has been prepared by LAWA, as the Lead Agency, in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).¹ The Project site is located entirely within the boundaries of the LAX property.

In accordance with CEQA, all discretionary projects within the State of California that could have a physical effect on the environment are required to undergo environmental review to determine their potential environmental impacts before they are implemented.² CEQA was enacted in 1970 by the California legislature to require lead agencies to disclose to decision makers and the public the significant environmental effects of proposed activities and ways to avoid or reduce the environmental effects either through implementation of feasible mitigation measures or project alternatives. CEQA applies to all California government agencies at all levels, including local agencies, regional agencies, and state agencies, boards, commissions, and special districts. LAWA is the Lead Agency for the proposed Project and as such is required to conduct an environmental review to analyze the potential environmental effects associated with the proposed Project.

1.2 Environmental Review Process

One of the primary objectives of CEQA is to enhance public participation in the planning process. The environmental review process provides several opportunities for the public to participate through public notice and public review of CEQA documents and in public hearings. Additionally, lead agencies are required to consider comments from the scoping process in the preparation of the Draft EIR and to respond to public comments on the Draft EIR in preparation of the Final EIR.

An Initial Study (IS) was prepared in April 2012 for the proposed Project and is attached as Appendix A in this Draft EIR. The IS evaluated all the environmental topics required by CEQA as outlined in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. The findings of the IS determined that an EIR would be prepared. Any environmental topics that were found to have no impacts or less than significant impacts without mitigation were not carried forward for further analysis in this Draft EIR. These topics include agricultural and mineral resources and are summarized in Chapter 5 Other CEQA Considerations.

LAWA issued a Notice of Preparation (NOP) (Appendix A) to provide early consultation in the preparation of the Draft EIR and invite public agencies and the public to comment on the scope of analysis in the Draft EIR. The NOP was filed on April 2, 2012 with the California Office of

¹ CEQA Guidelines, Section 15050.

² *Ibid.*

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Planning and Research (OPR) State Clearinghouse and with the Los Angeles County Clerk's Office. This began a 30-day scoping period that ended on May 4, 2012. In addition, copies of the NOP and IS were mailed to federal, state, regional, and local agencies, airlines, and other leaseholders at LAX. The IS and NOP were also made available on the LAWA website (www.OurLAX.org). Finally, the NOP was published in the Los Angeles Times on April 4, 2012 and in The Argonaut, Hometown News, Hoy (Spanish Language) and Daily Breeze on April 5th and April 9th, 2012.

Two public scoping meetings were held on April 18, 2012 and April 21, 2012 at St. Bernard High School in Playa del Rey to receive public comment regarding the scope and content of the environmental information to be included in the Draft EIR. In response to the public outreach and participation program undertaken by LAWA, 55 comments from the general public and 14 comment letters from public agencies were received (Appendix B), which were considered in the preparation of this Draft EIR.

1.3 Relationship to LAX Master Plan

There are several other projects besides the proposed Project that are also being studied and/or implemented at LAX. Some of these projects are part of the LAX Master Plan, which is a program document that provided direction for the first major new facilities for, and improvements to, the Airport since 1984. The LAX Master Plan also outlines how LAWA can accommodate an activity level of 78.9 million passengers and projected cargo growth at LAX. The approved LAX Master Plan includes airfield modifications, development of new terminals, and new landside facilities to accommodate passenger and employee traffic, parking, and circulation. The LAX Master Plan serves as a broad policy statement regarding the conceptual strategic planning framework for future improvements at LAX and the Project site. The LAX Master Plan also provides working guidelines to be consulted by LAWA as it formulates and processes site-specific LAX Master Plan projects. LAWA prepared a Program EIR for the LAX Master Plan, which, according to CEQA Guidelines Section 15168, is an EIR that applies to a series of actions that can be characterized as one large project. LAWA certified the LAX Master Plan Final Program EIR in December 2004.³ The Final Program EIR for the LAX Master Plan included consideration of development at the Project site, based on adopted development standards and guidelines.

The proposed Project is a component of the LAX Master Plan. As such, LAWA has incorporated the same commitments and mitigation measures identified in the LAX Master Plan EIS/EIR Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) as part of the design and construction guidelines of the proposed Project. The LAX Master Plan EIS/EIR mitigation commitments to be implemented as part of the proposed Project are identified in the individual sections within Chapter 4, Environmental Impact Analysis. Relevant information from the LAX Master Plan Program EIR is incorporated in this document by reference.

³ City of Los Angeles, [LAX Master Plan Final EIR/EIS](#), 2004.

1.4 Organization and Content of this Draft EIR

This Draft EIR follows the preparation and content guidance provided by CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines.

Executive Summary. The Executive Summary Chapter presents a brief summary of the proposed Project and alternatives, impacts, mitigation measures, and areas of controversy known to the lead agency.

1.0 Introduction. Chapter 1 describes CEQA compliance requirements, the environmental review process, relationship to the LAX Master Plan, the organization of the Draft EIR, intended uses of the Draft EIR, and availability of the Draft EIR.

2.0 Project Description. Chapter 2 describes the boundaries of the proposed Project, proposed Project objectives, a list of the agencies expected to use this Draft EIR, proposed Project permits and other discretionary actions, and a list of related environmental review and consultation requirements.

3.0 Overview of Project Setting. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the existing environmental setting at and around the Project site, and describes other projects proposed in the nearby area that may, in conjunction with the proposed Project, need to be considered in order to assess cumulative impacts.

4.0 Environmental Impact Analysis. Chapter 4 describes: the existing conditions including regulatory settings; methodology used in the impact analysis; thresholds of significance; project design elements particular to the environmental topic; impacts that would result from the proposed Project; cumulative impacts, applicable mitigation measures that would eliminate or reduce significant impacts; and the residual impacts after mitigation for each environmental issue.

5.0 Other CEQA Considerations. Chapter 5 includes a discussion of issues required by CEQA that are not covered in Chapter 4. This includes: growth-inducing impacts; irreversible environmental changes; unavoidable significant impacts; reasons why the project is being proposed, notwithstanding unavoidable significant impacts; potential secondary effects; and impacts found not to be significant.

6.0 Alternatives. Chapter 6 describes the proposed Project alternatives, evaluates the environmental effects of alternatives to the proposed Project including the required No Project Alternative, compares alternatives, and identifies the Environmentally Superior Alternative.

7.0 List of Preparers, Agencies, Organizations, and Individuals Consulted. Chapter 7 lists the individuals involved in preparing this Draft EIR, identifies the agencies, organizations, and individuals consulted in preparing this Draft EIR.

8.0 References. Chapter 8 identifies the documents reviewed in preparing this Draft EIR.

9.0 Acronyms and Definitions. Chapter 9 presents a list of the acronyms and definitions used in this Draft EIR.

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Appendices. The Appendices present data supporting the analysis contained in the Draft EIR. The appendices in this Draft EIR include:

- Appendix A Initial Study/Notice of Preparation
- Appendix B Scoping
- Appendix C Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Technical Report
- Appendix D Noise Technical Report
- Appendix E Traffic Study
- Appendix F Biological Resources Technical Report
- Appendix G Mature Tree Survey
- Appendix H Geotechnical Report
- Appendix I Paleontological Resources Assessment
- Appendix J Hazardous Materials Technical Memorandum
- Appendix K Hydrology Technical Memorandum
- Appendix L Land Use Consistency Analysis
- Appendix M Shade-Shadow Analysis
- Appendix N Water Supply Assessment and Will Serve Letter

1.5 Intended Uses of this Draft EIR

This Draft EIR will be circulated for agency and public review and comment. A Final EIR will be prepared which will incorporate responses to comments received on the Draft EIR. In addition, the Final EIR will provide minor revisions to the Draft EIR, as necessary. LAWA, the BOAC, and the City of Los Angeles City Council will use the Final EIR and associated documents to evaluate and consider the environmental impacts of the proposed Project prior to certifying the Final EIR and prior to taking action on the proposed Project or one of the alternatives. Certification of the Final EIR would complete the project-level CEQA compliance review for the proposed Project as described in this Draft EIR. Information in this Draft EIR and the Final EIR may also be used by LAWA and its contractors as input for permit and other approval applications.

In addition, the Final EIR may be used by various federal, state, and local agencies in their respective decision-making and approval processes for discretionary actions (e.g., permits) regarding the proposed Project.

1.6 Availability of the Draft EIR

The Draft EIR for the proposed Project is being distributed directly to numerous agencies, organizations, and interested groups and persons for comment during the formal review period. The Draft EIR is also available for review at the following locations during regular business hours:

- LAWA Administrative Offices, One World Way, Suite 218, Los Angeles, CA 90045
- Westchester-Loyola Village Branch Library, 7114 West Manchester Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90045
- Playa Vista Library, 6400 Playa Vista Dr., Playa Vista, CA 90094
- El Segundo Library, 111 West Mariposa Avenue, El Segundo, CA 90245
- Inglewood Library, 101 West Manchester Boulevard, Inglewood, CA 90301
- Culver City Library, 4975 Overland Avenue, Culver City, CA 90230

In addition, this Draft EIR is available online at the LAWA website (www.OurLAX.org). On the website, the Draft EIR can be accessed through the “Current Projects” link.

Due to the time limits mandated by state law,⁴ comments must be sent to LAWA at the earliest possible date but not later than June 30, 2014. Agency responses to the Draft EIR should include the name of a contact person within the commenting agency. Please send your comments by mail, fax, or email to:

Lisa Trifiletti, Director, Environmental and Land Use Planning
City of Los Angeles
Los Angeles World Airports
1 World Way, Room 218
Los Angeles, CA 90045
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⁴ CEQA Guidelines, Section 15205(d).

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