
4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

This chapter presents an assessment of the environmental impacts of the proposed Project, as described in Chapter 2, *Project Description*. This chapter describes the physical environment at and within the vicinity of LAX that may be affected by the proposed Project; the potential impacts to that physical environment; and the measures proposed to mitigate those impacts, as warranted.

As identified in the Notice of Preparation (NOP) published on August 22, 2013 for this EIR, LAWA initially determined, based on a preliminary review of the proposed Project, that seven categories of environmental resources could potentially be affected by construction of the project and would require additional review. These categories of environmental resources were:

- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Greenhouse Gases
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Noise
- Traffic/Transportation

Organization

Each of the environmental disciplines addressed in this chapter is discussed in a separate section using a common organization. Sections are numbered 4.1 through 4.7. Several sections are divided into subsections to simplify and clarify the discussion. Within each environmental topic section, discussion of the following is provided:

- The **Introduction** briefly describes the issues addressed in the analysis and identifies related topics. The Introduction also identifies any specific issue area of the topic that is not being addressed as part of the EIR and provides a discussion explaining the reasons why. In many cases, a number of specific issue areas were evaluated and impacts determined to be less than significant, as documented in the EIR Notice of Preparation/Initial Study (August 2013), which is included as **Appendix A**. In accordance with Sections 15063(c)(3)(A) and 15128 of the State *CEQA Guidelines*, further analysis of specific issue areas where impacts were determined to be less than significant in the Initial Study is not required and is not provided in this EIR.
- The **Methodology** describes how the issue was approached, including explanations of any assumptions, equations, or calculations; identification of information sources used for the analysis; and delineation of the study area considered for each environmental discipline. This section also identifies the environmental baseline used to determine the significance of potential impacts. A discussion of the environmental baseline is provided below under Analytical Framework.
- The **Existing Conditions** discusses the existing conditions for the environmental discipline in the study area, including relevant activities, facilities, and regulations. The environmental baseline is described below under Analytical Framework.

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- The **CEQA Thresholds of Significance** are quantitative or qualitative measures used to determine whether an environmental impact that would occur as a result of the Project would be considered significant. This section identifies the origins of the thresholds of significance used in the analysis. In general, and unless otherwise noted, the thresholds of significance used in the analysis of proposed Project impacts reflect guidance provided in Appendix G of the State *CEQA Guidelines*¹ and/or criteria or guidance included in the *L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide*.²
- The **Applicable LAX Master Plan Commitments and Mitigation Measures** section lists the LAX Master Plan commitments and mitigation measures applicable to the proposed Project. As background, in conjunction with approval of the LAX Master Plan and certification of the Final EIR in December 2004, the Los Angeles City Council adopted a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP)³ to ensure that mitigation measures and LAX Master Plan commitments identified in the Final EIR are implemented. Mitigation measures are activities, policies, or practices designed to avoid or minimize significant environmental impacts. Besides mitigation measures, the MMRP for the LAX Master Plan includes Master Plan commitments. LAX Master Plan commitments were determined to be more appropriate than mitigation measures where: (1) standards and regulations exist with which compliance is already required by the applicable regulatory agency; (2) impacts would be adverse but not significant; and (3) design refinements could be incorporated into the project to reduce or avoid potential impacts. The timing of implementation of LAX Master Plan commitments and mitigation measures is set forth in the LAX Master Plan MMRP. Unless otherwise noted, the impacts analysis for the proposed Project assumes that the applicable LAX Master Plan commitments and mitigation measures would be implemented concurrently with and as part of the Project. To the extent that the LAX Master Plan commitments and mitigation measures would not reduce significant environmental impacts to a level that is less than significant, Project-specific mitigation measures, if feasible, are separately identified in the Mitigation Measures section (described below). In addition, mitigation measures identified in other LAWA or City documents are identified, if applicable.
- The **Impact Analysis** section presents the analysis of impacts for the proposed Project for the build-out horizon year 2015. Impacts were compared to the thresholds of significance to determine whether they would be, under CEQA, significant or less than significant. For purposes of determining significance, potential impacts were compared to the environmental baseline conditions, as further described in the Analytical Framework below.
- **Cumulative Impacts** are the impacts of the proposed Project in conjunction with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects. The environmental impacts of the proposed Project may be individually minor, but collectively significant when considered in conjunction with other projects.

¹ State of California, [Guidelines for California Environmental Quality Act \(State CEQA Guidelines\)](#), California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, Sections 15000-15387.

² City of Los Angeles, [L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide, Your Resource for Planning CEQA Analysis in Los Angeles](#), 2006.

³ City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles World Airports, [Alternative D Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program](#), September 2004.

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- **Mitigation Measures** are specified procedures, plans, policies, or activities proposed for adoption by the lead agency to reduce or avoid the significant impacts identified in the analysis of environmental impacts. This section identifies Project-specific mitigation measures proposed to address significant impacts that would occur with implementation of the Project. In accordance with the requirements of CEQA, an MMRP would be adopted as part of the Project, to ensure that implementation of mitigation measures is properly monitored and documented.
- **Level of Significance After Mitigation** is a CEQA determination of the significance of a particular impact after implementation of the proposed mitigation measures. This section identifies any significant impacts that cannot be mitigated to a level that is less than significant. These "significant unavoidable impacts" are also listed in Section 6.1, *Significant Unavoidable Impacts*, of this EIR. The level of significance after mitigation is not included for those environmental topics where no significant impacts would occur and, as a result, where no mitigation measures specific to the Project are required.

Analytical Framework

Environmental Baseline

Section 15125 of the State *CEQA Guidelines* requires that an EIR describe the physical environmental conditions in the vicinity of a proposed project "as they exist at the time the notice of preparation is published..." and further states that "[t]his environmental setting will normally constitute the baseline physical conditions by which a lead agency determines whether an impact is significant."

The Notice of Preparation (NOP) for this EIR was published on August 22, 2013. In accordance with the provisions of CEQA, 2013 is the baseline year for characterizing existing conditions in the environmental analysis. Where existing conditions data specific to 2013 were not available or where 2013, by itself, was not an appropriate representation of baseline conditions, this EIR identifies this fact, explains what data was used to determine existing conditions, and provides evidence of why this information is representative of baseline conditions.

For certain analyses, a full year's worth of data was considered necessary and appropriate to characterize existing baseline conditions. Such is the case relative to existing aircraft-related air pollutant emissions and existing airport traffic generation, whereby the variability in airport operations throughout the year, especially seasonal variations, results in "existing" conditions for those topics being very different depending on time of year. Similar to the approach used in the LAX Master Plan Final EIR, airport operations data for the prior calendar year, which in the case of this EIR is 2012, were used to define existing baseline conditions for those topics.

Description of Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts are the impacts of the Project in conjunction with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects. The environmental impacts of the Project may be individually minor, but collectively significant when considered in conjunction with other projects.

In accordance with the State *CEQA Guidelines*, the proposed Project must be evaluated for cumulative impacts for each environmental discipline to determine if they would be significant. This EIR provides an analysis of cumulative impacts associated with construction and operation

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of the proposed Project in conjunction with other nearby construction projects both on and off LAX property. In addition to evaluating these environmental resources for impacts as a result of the proposed Project this EIR also includes information related to past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects in its analysis of construction and operational impacts related to hydrology and water quality and noise.

As documented throughout Chapter 4, operational impacts would not occur to the following resources: air quality, biological resources, greenhouse gases, hazards and hazardous materials, noise, and surface transportation. Therefore, cumulative impacts associated with the proposed Project will only be evaluated for construction impacts to these environmental resources.

As documented in Chapter 3 of this EIR, construction of several LAX development projects (LAX Master Plan projects and other LAX projects) and non-LAX development projects could occur simultaneously with the proposed Project construction. These projects are described in Section 3.6 of this EIR.