



LOS ANGELES CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

200 N. Spring Street, Room 272, Los Angeles, California, 90012-4801, (213) 978-1300
<http://planning.lacity.org/>

Determination Mailing Date: AUG 11 2015

CASE NO.: CPC-2014-437-SP
CEQA: SCH#2012041003

Location: 6400–7901 W. Westchester Parkway,
9201 S. Sepulveda Blvd., 9320 S. Lincoln Blvd.
Council Districts: 11 – Bonin
Plan Area: Los Angeles International Airport
Request: Specific Plan Amendment

Applicant: Los Angeles World Airports
Representative: Lisa Trifiletti

At its meeting of June 25, 2015, the Los Angeles City Planning Commission took the following action:

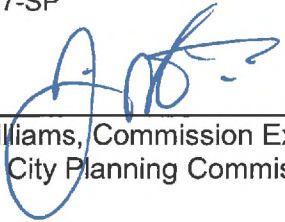
1. **Approved** the amendments to the LAX Specific Plan.
2. **Found** that the City Planning Commission reviewed and considered the Environmental Impact Report (EIR), and Errata (State Clearinghouse No. **2012041003**, in its determination of the proposed project and certified that it reviewed and considered the information contained in the EIR and Errata and affirmed that the EIR prepared for the Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) Northside Plan Update was certified by the Board of Airport Commissioners on March 12, 2015 and that the EIR was prepared in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act and reflects the independent judgment of the lead agency and **adopted** the EIR for use in reviewing and **approving** the project.

Recommendations to City Council:

1. **Recommend** that the City Council **approve** the amendments to the LAX Specific Plan.
2. **Recommend** that the City Council CONCUR with the Board of Airport Commissioners' action of March 12, 2015, affirm the adoption and certification of the Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) Northside Plan Update EIR by the Board, including the EIR Errata and Los Angeles World Airports' Response to Comments submitted to the Board and certify that a) the EIR has been completed in compliance with CEQA, b) the EIR was presented to the City Council and the City Council reviewed and considered the information contained in the EIR prior to approving the Project, c) the EIR reflects the lead agency's independent judgment and analysis, and adopt the a) Environmental Findings b) the Project Design Features, Commitments, and Mitigation, Monitoring and Reporting Program, and c). Statement of Overriding Considerations. Pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15091(e), the location and custodian of documents and materials related to the EIR (State Clearinghouse No. 2012041003) is the Los Angeles World Airports, Capital Programming and Planning Division, One World Way, Suite 218B, Los Angeles, CA 90045.

This action was taken by the following vote:

Moved: Ambroz
Seconded: Choe
Ayes: Ahn, Katz, Mack, Millman, Perlman, Segura, Dake-Wilson
Vote: 9 - 0



James K. Williams, Commission Executive Assistant II
Los Angeles City Planning Commission

If you seek judicial review of any decision of the City pursuant to California Code of Civil Procedure Section 1094.5, the petition for writ of mandate pursuant to that section must be filed no later than the 90th day following the date on which the City's decision became final pursuant to California Code of Civil Procedure Section 1094.6. There may be other time limits which also affect your ability to seek judicial review.

Attachments: Draft Ordinance, Findings, Resolution
Hearing Officer: Karen Hoo

FINDINGS

A. General Plan/Charter Findings

General Plan Land Use Designation

The LAX Plan is one of 35 Community Plans that are part of the Land Use Element for the City of Los Angeles General Plan. The LAX Plan identifies the project site as the LAX Northside Sub-Area, an area that provides for the development of uses consistent with Airport needs and neighborhood conditions, while also serving as an Airport buffer zone for the Westchester community located immediately to the north.

The LAX Specific Plan zoning for the LAX Northside Sub-Area is LAX-N. The uses permitted by the LAX-N zone are in keeping with the LAX Plan. "The LAX Plan categorizes the allowable uses within the LAX Northside to include commercial development; office; light industrial, research and development; hotel and conference facilities; retail and restaurant use; school and community facilities; open space; bicycle paths; and greenway buffers." These same uses are reflected in the Specific Plan Amendment.

General Plan Text

Section 3.2.3 of the LAX Plan explains the vision for the LAX Northside Sub-Area:

"LAX Northside includes a variety of land uses of an appropriate scale and level of activity to provide a buffer and transition between the Westchester community and the airport. The primary allowable uses within LAX Northside include, but are not limited to: commercial development; office; light industrial; research and development; hotel and conference facilities; retail and restaurant uses; school and community facilities; open space; bicycle paths; and greenway buffers.

The amendments to the specific plan would continue to allow the land uses identified in the LAX Plan. Greenway buffers as envisioned by the LAX Plan would be increased compared with the requirements of the existing specific plan.

As directed by the LAX Plan, the LAX Northside development shall be governed by the following related policies and programs:

P1. Provide and maintain landscaped buffer areas along the northern boundary of LAX Northside that include setbacks, landscaping, screening, or other appropriate view sensitive uses with the goal of avoiding land use conflicts, shielding lighting, enhancing privacy, and better screening view of airport facilities from adjacent residential uses."

P3. Orient LAX Northside development to encourage access from Westchester Parkway and other roadways internal to LAX Northside.

The amendments to the specific plan fulfill both policies. The LAX Specific Plan requires compliance with the setbacks and landscape buffers as specified in the LAX Northside Design Guidelines and Standards. Detailed planting and fencing standards are also included in the Design Guidelines and Standards.

1. Findings under Charter Section 556: Conformance with the General Plan.

Los Angeles City Charter Section 556 and Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) Section 12.32(C)(7) require that prior to adopting a land use ordinance, the City Council finds that the ordinance is in substantial conformance with the purposes, intent and provisions of the General Plan and is in conformity with public necessity, convenience, general welfare and good zoning practice.

The proposed specific plan amendment is in substantial conformance with the purposes, intent, and provisions of the General Plan.

The subject property is located within the area covered by the LAX Plan, adopted December 14, 2004 by the City Council (pursuant to Council File 00-1774-S4). The LAX Plan designates the subject property as the LAX Northside and is zoned LAX-N under the LAX Specific Plan. The LAX Plan is the community plan, or General Plan component, that establishes the land use policy framework for LAX.

As described in the LAX Plan, the “LAX Northside includes a variety of land uses of an appropriate scale and level of activity to provide a buffer and transition between the Westchester community and the airport. It may also serve as a relocation area for businesses displaced by the implementation of the LAX Master Plan. The primary allowable uses within LAX Northside include, but are not limited to commercial development; office; light industrial; research and development; hotel and conference facilities; retail and restaurant uses; school and community facilities; open space; bicycle paths; and greenway buffers. The proposed amendments to the LAX Specific Plan would not conflict with the LAX Plan but would provide more clarity for achieving development that serves as a buffer and transition between airport uses to the south and the residential neighborhoods to the north through additional requirements and the LAX Northside Design Guidelines and Standards (Proposed Guidelines) that replace the 1989 Guidelines. The new guidelines include height and setback restrictions, design requirements (including building materials, lighting and street furniture), conservation methods, and landscape parameters. The Proposed Guidelines are a comprehensive guide to creating cohesive and compatible development between two incompatible land uses.

2. Findings under City Charter Section 558 and LAMC Section 12.32 C 2: The Proposed Specific Plan Amendment Would Serve the Public Necessity, Convenience and General Welfare of the City of Los Angeles.

In accordance with Los Angeles Charter Section 558 and LAMC Section 12.32 C 2, the City finds that the proposed amendments to the LAX Specific Plan are justified in terms of public necessity, convenience, general welfare, and good zoning practice.

The LAX Specific Plan is the primary planning and zoning tool that provides “regulatory controls and incentives for the systematic and incremental execution of the LAX Plan, an element of the General Plan, to provide for public needs, convenience and general welfare as the development of the airport necessitates”. As noted in the LAX Plan, the LAX Specific Plan “is a principal mechanism by which the goals and objectives of the LAX Plan are achieved and the policies and programs are implemented. It establishes procedures for

processing future specific project and activities that are anticipated under the LAX Master Plan Program.” “The LAX Plan is intended to allow the airport to respond to emerging new technologies, economic trends and functional needs.”

The amendment to the LAX Specific Plan provides regulations that reflect current and future needs and priorities. Significant public outreach was conducted by LAWA as part of the planning process to formulate updated plans for Northside. More than 50 individual and community meetings were held over the course of four years to provide project information and to gather comments and suggestions that contributed to the development of the proposed specific plan amendment and to the Proposed Guidelines.

(a) Public Necessity

The proposed amendments to the LAX Specific Plan are in keeping with goals identified in the LAX Plan to “recognize the responsibility to minimize intrusions on the physical environment” and to “acknowledge neighborhood context and promote compatibility between LAX and the surrounding neighborhoods”. The proposed amendments to the LAX Specific also do not conflict with other goals in the LAX Plan to “strengthen LAX’s unique role within the regional airport network as the international gateway to the Southern California region”, to “optimize LAX’s critical role in supporting the economy as a major generator of economic activity” and to “improve ground access to LAX and encourage improved access to other regional airports”. The regulations are necessary to protect the valuable contributions a vibrant international airport and stable residential neighborhoods bring to the City of Los Angeles.

The LAX Northside Design Guidelines and Standards ensure that development is compatible with residential neighborhoods to the north. The placement of landscaped buffers adjacent to these sensitive uses are to protect existing established neighborhoods from the intrusion of airport operations and to enhance the liveability and stability of these communities. The specific plan, as a zoning tool, also helps to ensure that two incompatible land uses, the airport and residential uses, can co-exist and maintain their viability without interfering or negatively impacting each other.

(b) Public Convenience

The proposed amendments to the LAX Specific Plan and the Proposed Guidelines were developed with significant input from various stakeholders, including the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), LAWA and the communities surrounding LAX with advice from professionals in airport planning, transportation planning, and urban design. The EIR prepared for the proposed project evaluated the environmental impacts associated with project implementation and resulted in the incorporation of 221 project-specific Project Design Features and ten project specific Mitigation Measures to reduce the level of impact the project may have on the environment. The proposed amendments impose use, intensity, height, bulk and traffic generation limitations and require design and building placement standards, sustainability features and buffer areas to ensure compatibility between uses and neighborhoods, maintain accessibility to the regional transportation network and incorporate a variety of potential community uses. In addition, there are 65 applicable LAX Master Plan commitments and mitigation measures that also apply to LAX Northside developments.

(c) General Welfare

As indicated in the LAX Plan, the "LAX Northside includes a variety of land uses of an appropriate scale and level of activity to provide a buffer and transition between the Westchester community and the airport." "LAX Northside development shall be governed by the following policies and programs."

1. "Provide and maintain landscaped buffer areas along the northern boundary of LAX Northside that include setbacks, landscaping, screening, or other appropriate view sensitive uses with the goal of avoiding land use conflicts, shielding lighting, enhancing privacy, and better screening view of airport facilities from adjacent residential uses.
2. "Orient LAX Northside development to encourage access from Westchester Parkway and other roadways internal to LAX Northside."
3. "Provide community outreach efforts to property owners and occupants through measures such as public notification and public meetings, when new development on airport property is in proximity to, and could potentially affect, nearby residential uses."

The proposed amendments to the LAX Specific Plan would further enhance the general welfare of the residential neighborhoods to the north by creating a buffer from the airport to the south. The specific plan amendment would require a 100-foot-wide fenced and secured landscaped buffer on the northern edge of the property near 91st Street, abutting existing homes and a 20-foot-wide fenced and secured landscaped buffer on the northern edge of the property from Pershing Drive to Falmouth Avenue. The Proposed Guidelines specify the appropriate planting materials for the specific location. Landscaping would be with drought tolerant and native species and be sustainable.

The Proposed Guidelines address the sensitivity of neighboring uses by focusing activity and development along Westchester Parkway to establish boundaries between future development and the existing residential uses to the north. Vehicular access would be prohibited from Lincoln Boulevard, Pershing Drive and all local streets along the north edge.

The Stakeholder Liaison position mandated by the LAX Specific Plan would be maintained and will continue to provide community outreach.

The overall purpose of the Proposed Project is to provide a framework for appropriately scaled development that is consistent with airport needs and neighborhood conditions. They take into consideration Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations, market conditions, sustainability, and the context of the LAX Northside, which includes an active airfield and residential neighborhoods. The Proposed Guidelines will direct land uses and address issues of urban design, architecture, landscape materials and design, pedestrian infrastructures and signage that will serve to improve the general welfare of citizens of Los Angeles.

(d) Good Zoning Practices

The LAX Specific Plan is the land use implementation tool that ensures that development in the project area is developed in accordance with good zoning practices. The amendments to the specific plan are intended to provide detailed guidance tailored to the unique characteristics of the project area and its environs and is in compliance with all applicable FAA regulations.

An important policy of the LAX Plan involves safety, which prohibits “ uses that would attract large concentrations of birds, emit smoke, or which may otherwise affect safe air navigation.” Use and development restrictions in the specific plan permit uses that are compatible with the safe operation of an airport. The land uses permitted by the specific plan are generally conducted inside buildings so that they would not attract birds or emit smoke. In addition, the specific plan amendment includes detailed landscaping requirements and standards. The plants allowed within the design guidelines will not promote the proliferation of animals and insects that attract animals that may disrupt or endanger the functioning of the airfield and were developed in consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

A. Environmental Findings

1) Procedural History

Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA) has prepared an environmental impact report (EIR) for the Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) Northside Plan Update (proposed Project) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). An Initial Study (IS) and Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the Draft EIR was circulated for public review from April 4, 2012 to May 4, 2012. During the public review period, LAWA held public Scoping Meetings at St. Bernard High School on April 18, 2012 and April 21, 2012.

On May 15, 2014, LAWA published the Draft EIR which was circulated for public review for 45 days, with the review period originally closing on June 30, 2014. In response to public requests, LAWA extended the public review period until July 21, 2014. A public workshop was held on June 11, 2014, during the public review period.

The City of Los Angeles published the Final EIR for the proposed Project on December 15, 2014. The Final EIR incorporates and responds to comments received on the Draft EIR and includes corrections and additions to the Draft EIR. Project Design Features (PDFs), Project-specific Mitigation Measures, and applicable LAX Master Plan Commitments and Mitigation Measures have been included in a Project Design Features, Commitments, and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for the proposed Project.

On March 12, 2015, at its Special Meeting, the Board of Airport Commissions adopted Resolution No. 25654, stating the following:

“BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Airport Commissioners adopted the staff report attached herein and made part hereof; certified that: (a) The Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) Northside Plan Update (Project), which includes the Draft EIR, has been completed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the State and City of Los Angeles CEQA Guidelines, (b) The LAX Northside Plan Update Final EIR was

presented to the Board of Airport Commissioners (Board), as the decision making body of the lead agency, and the Board reviewed and considered the information contained in the Final EIR prior to approving the Project, and (c) The Final EIR reflects the lead agency's independent judgment and analysis; further adopted the: (a) Statement of Overriding Consideration, (b) CEQA Findings, and (c) Project Design Features, Commitments, and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) for the proposed Project; approved: (a) The "proposed Project" identified in the Final EIR prepared for the LAX Northside Plan Update, and (b) The LAX Northside Design Guidelines and Standards; transmit and recommend that the City Planning Commission: (a) review and consider the Final EIR prepared for the LAX Northside Plan Update, and (b) review and consider the LAX Specific Plan amendments and recommend (in writing) that City Council approve the LAX Specific Plan amendments; transmit and recommend that the City Council: (a) concur with the actions of the Board, (b) affirm the certification of the LAX Northside Plan Update EIR by the Board, and (c) certify that: (i) The Final EIR for the LAX Northside Plan Update, which includes the Draft EIR, has been completed in compliance with CEQA and the State and City of Los Angeles CEQA Guidelines, (ii) The LAX Northside Plan Update Final EIR was presented to the City Council of the City of Los Angeles, and the City Council reviewed and considered the information contained in the Final EIR prior to approving the Project, (iii) The Final EIR reflects the lead agency's independent judgment and analysis, and (d) adopt the: (i) Statement of Overriding Consideration, (ii) CEQA Findings, and (iii) Project Design Features, Commitments, and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for the proposed Project, (e) affirm the Board's approval of the "proposed Project" identified in the Final EIR prepared for the LAX Northside Plan Update and the LAX Design Guidelines and Standards; and (f) approve an ordinance containing the proposed amendments to the LAX Specific Plan; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the certification of the EIR included the EIR Errata and Los Angeles World Airports' Response to Comments submitted to the Board; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15091(e), the location and custodian of documents and materials related to the EIR for the project is the Los Angeles World Airports, Capital Programming and Planning Division, One World Way, Suite 218B, Los Angeles, California 90045."

2) Environmental Impact Findings

The Environmental Impact Findings, including the Statement of Overriding Considerations adopted by the BOAC are contained in Exhibit D of the staff report to the City Planning Commission for Case No. CPC-2014-437-SP.

3) City Planning Commission Action.

On June 25, 2015, the City Planning Commission made a finding that: "the Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) Northside Plan Update was environmentally assessed in Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and Errata (State Clearinghouse No. 2012041003), certified by the Board of Airport commissioners on March 12, 2015 in compliance with CEQA. All recommended changes by the Department of City Planning as set forth herein do not require a subsequent or supplemental EIR as determined under CEQA Guideline 15162." They also made a recommendation to the City Council that they also make the same finding.

DETERMINATION LETTER
CPC-2014-437-SP
MAILING DATE: 08/11/15

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