



## DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING RECOMMENDATION REPORT



### City Planning Commission

**Date:** June 25, 2015  
**Time:** After 8:30 A.M.  
**Place:** Van Nuys City Hall  
Council Chamber, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
14410 Sylvan Street  
Van Nuys, CA 91401

**Public Hearing Completed:** March 26, 2015  
**Appeal Status:**

**Case No.:** CPC-2014-437-SP  
**CEQA No.:** State Clearinghouse No. 2012041003  
**Incidental Cases:** VTT-72148  
**Related Cases:** None  
**Council No.:** 11 - Hon. Mike Bonin  
**Plan Area:** Los Angeles International Airport  
**Specific Plan:** LAX Specific Plan  
**Certified NC:** Westchester-Playa  
**General Plan:** Airport Northside  
**Zone:** LAX-N

**Applicant:** Los Angeles World Airports  
**Representative:** Lisa Trifiletti

### LIMITED PUBLIC HEARING

**PROJECT LOCATION:** 6400-7901 W. Westchester Parkway, 9201 S. Sepulveda Blvd, 9320 S. Lincoln Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90045 (LAX Northside Sub-Area, generally bounded by Sepulveda Westway and Sepulveda Boulevard to the east, the (LAX) Airport to the south, Pershing Drive to the west, and generally 91<sup>st</sup> Street, Manchester Avenue, and 88<sup>th</sup> Street to the north)

**PROPOSED PROJECT:** Establishment of new development regulations for the LAX Northside Sub-Area of the LAX Specific Plan that would reduce the amount of development allowed on the approximately 340 acre project site to a maximum of 2,320,000 square feet of new development for office, retail, research and development, community and civic uses, airport support, recreation and open space and buffer uses. The new regulations include design guidelines and standards for all building heights, massing and setbacks, as well as permitted densities and land use and vehicle trips.

### REQUESTED ACTIONS:


1. Pursuant to Section 11.5.7G of the Municipal Code, amend the LAX Specific Plan, as shown in the proposed LAX Specific Plan Amendments (Exhibit A).

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:


1. **Find** that the City Planning Commission has reviewed and considered the Environmental Impact Report (EIR), and Errata (State Clearinghouse No. 2012041003), (Exhibit D1), in its determination of the proposed project and **Recommend** that the City Council **Certify** that it has reviewed and considered the information contained in the EIR and Errata and **Affirm** 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 **Adopt** the EIR for use in reviewing and approving the project;

2. **Instruct** staff to **Modify** the "LAX Northside Design Guidelines and Standards" to a) replace all references to the Administrative Clearance procedure with the LAX Compliance Review procedure, and b) delete the "Additional Permitted Uses" category and box from the "Permitted Land Use Table".
3. **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 (Exhibit D2) 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 (Exhibit D3), b) the Project Design Features, Commitments, and Mitigation, Monitoring and Reporting Program (Exhibit D4), and c) Statement of Overriding Considerations (Exhibit D5). 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.
4. **Recommend** that the City Council **Approve** the amendments to the LAX Specific Plan referenced as Exhibit A, including the modifications recommended by the Department of City Planning.

MICHAEL J. LOGRANDE  
Director of Planning

  
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Charles J. Rausch, Jr., Associate Zoning Administrator

**ADVICE TO PUBLIC:** \*The exact time this report will be considered during the meeting is uncertain since there may be several other items on the agenda. Written communications may be mailed to the *Commission Secretariat, 200 North Spring Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012* (Phone No. 213-978-1300). While all written communications are given to the Commission for consideration, the initial packets are sent out the week prior to the Commission's meeting date. If you challenge these agenda items in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the public hearing agendized herein, or in written correspondence on these matters delivered to this agency at or prior to the public hearing. As a covered entity under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the City of Los Angeles does not discriminate on the basis of disability, and upon request, will provide reasonable accommodation to ensure equal access to this programs, services and activities. Sign language interpreters, assistive listening devices, or other auxiliary aids and/or other services may be provided upon request. To ensure availability of services, please make your request not later than three working days (72 hours) prior to the meeting by calling the Commission Secretariat at (213) 978-1300.

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### Exhibits:

**A** – LAX Specific Plan - Draft Ordinance

**B** – LAX Northside Design Guidelines and Standards

#### **C – Maps**

- 1) Vicinity Map
- 2) Radius Map
- 3) Specific Plan Map
- 4) Existing Land Use Map
- 5) LAX Northside Sub-Area Map
- 6) LAX Northside Land Use Map

#### **D – Environmental Review (CD)**

- 1) Draft and Final Environmental Impact Report, Errata, SCH No. 2012041003,
- 2) BOAC Resolution certifying EIR
- 3) Environmental Findings
- 4) Project Design Features, Commitments, and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program
- 5) Statement of Overriding Considerations

**E** – Letters Received from the Public

## **PROJECT ANALYSIS**

### **Proposed Project Summary**

The Project Applicant, Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA), a City Department under its Board of Airport Commissioners (BOAC), is responsible for the management, supervision, and control of all airports and airport facilities under the jurisdiction of the City of Los Angeles, including Los Angeles International Airport (LAX). They are requesting amendments to the LAX Specific Plan that would specifically address development regulations for property in the northerly portion of the specific plan area designated as the LAX Northside Sub-Area that would incorporate new regulations and design guidelines.

The Northside Sub-Area is generally bounded by Sepulveda Westway and Sepulveda Boulevard to the east, the LAX Airport to the south, Pershing Drive to the west and generally 91<sup>st</sup> Street, Manchester Avenue and 88<sup>th</sup> Street to the north and is identified on the Specific Plan Map as the LAX-N Zone. When established in the 1980's, the Northside Sub-Area was intended to serve as a new business community and commercial center with approximately 4,500,000 square feet of office, recreation, hotel, restaurant and airport related uses. The proposed Specific Plan Amendment would limit the amount of development allowed on the approximately 340-acre project site to a maximum of 2,320,000 square feet of new development for office, retail, research and development, community and civic uses, airport support, recreation and open space and buffer uses. The new regulations include new design guidelines and standards for all building heights, massing and setbacks, as well as permitted densities and land use and vehicle trips.

### **Background**

#### *Project Site*

The Northside Sub-Area is predominately vacant, with the exception of four facilities, including: Jet Pets, an animal transport company, occupies a site at the far western end, near Pershing Drive. Further east, north of the intersection of Lincoln Boulevard and Westchester Parkway, is the Westchester Golf Course and the First Flight child care facility. Fire Station 5 is located just west of the golf course on Emerson Avenue, between 88<sup>th</sup> Place and Westchester Parkway. In addition, various locations on the south side of Westchester Parkway are used for navigation equipment and construction staging for LAX's development program. (Exhibits C1, C2)

#### *Surrounding Area*

North: Multi-family residences in the R3-1 zone, west of Falmouth; St. Bernard's High School, in the R1-1 zone between Falmouth Avenue and Cum Laude Avenue; single-family residences in the R1-1 zone, between Hastings Avenue and Loyola Boulevard; a multi-family residential complex in the C4-1 zone between Loyola Boulevard and Lincoln Boulevard; the Westchester Recreation Center and Senior Center in the OS-1XL zone between Lincoln Boulevard and Georgetown Avenue; the Emerson Adult School in the PF-1XL zone between Emerson Avenue and Liberator Avenue; single-family residences in the R1-1 and R2-1 zones between Liberator Avenue and El Manor Avenue.

South: Airfields, terminals and LAX airport support uses in the LAX-L zone.

East: Retail and commercial uses in the C2-1-CDO zone along Sepulveda Boulevard.

West: The northerly boundary of the LAX Dunes in the OS-1XL zone, with the Pacific Ocean further west.

### *Community Plan*

The Project Site is governed by the LAX Plan, a component of the Land Use Element for the City's General Plan, as well as other General Plan elements (Transportation, Noise). It provides the goals, objectives, policies, and programs that establish a framework for the development of this area.

According to Section 3.2.3 of the LAX Plan, "*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.*"

As envisioned by the LAX 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.*"

LAX Northside development is governed by the following policies and programs:

- P1. Provide and maintain landscaped buffer areas along the northern boundary of LAX Northside that includes setback, 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.*
- P2. 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.*
- P3. Orient LAX Northside development to encourage access from Westchester Parkway and other roadways internal to LAX Northside.*

### *Specific Plan*

The LAX Specific Plan (adopted December 2004) implements the goals and objectives of the LAX Plan through zoning and development standards. It includes land use provisions and regulations for three sub-areas: Airport Airside, Airport Landside, and LAX Northside. The intent of the Specific Plan is to provide regulatory controls and ensure orderly development of the airport and related infrastructure while simultaneously recognizing the relationship between LAX and the adjoining community.

The LAX Specific Plan characterizes the LAX Northside Sub-Area as providing for the redevelopment of land to serve airport needs and also serving as an airport buffer zone for the Westchester Community immediately to the north. Zoning restrictions specified in the prior zoning ordinances were generally incorporated into the specific plan. Design guidelines adopted by the BOAC in 1989 also directs the development of the property. Consistent with the LAX Plan, the allowable uses envisioned in the LAX Plan are permitted within the LAX Northside.

### *Site History*

The approximately 340 acre project area was acquired by LAX during the 1970's and early 1980's using Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) grants for the purpose of converting incompatible residential land uses adjacent to the airport to compatible land uses that could serve as a buffer from potential airport noise at LAX. (Exhibit C4)

Planning for the development of the LAX Northside began in the 1980's. In 1984, a tract map (TT-34836) and zoning ordinance (Ordinance No. 159,526) were approved for the project area. The tract map consolidated the residential lots into twelve parcels and resulted in the construction of a new street, Westchester Parkway, constructed to Major Highway street standards to support the planned development.

One of the "Q" zoning conditions specified in Ordinance No. 159,526 required that a design plan and development guidelines be prepared. The Board of Airport Commissioners (BOAC) awarded a contract to A.C. Martin to draft a plan intended to provide future developers with guidance on how to implement the zoning and tract map conditions. BOAC adopted the LAX Northside Design Plan and Development Guidelines in 1989 (1989 Guidelines).

These design guidelines envisioned that the Northside Sub-Area would consist of two major development areas: the Westchester Center and the Business Park (separated by the Westchester Golf Course). Westchester Center, generally the areas east of Lincoln Boulevard, with its proximity to the Westchester Business District, allows a mixed use urban center consisting of office buildings and hotels with a limited amount of supporting services, retail and restaurants. To reinforce their urban character, the buildings were to be more densely situated and open spaces were to be relatively small.

The Business Park, generally the areas west of Lincoln Boulevard, was to be a business and research park of relatively low density, with two-story research buildings containing a mix of office and light industrial uses. Commercial uses are allowed to serve the needs of the business park. Development was to front onto Westchester Parkway with building setbacks intended to create a band of open space to serve as a linear park.

Additionally, the 1989 Guidelines imposed a vehicle trip cap of no more than 6,340 project-related inbound daily trips in the a.m. peak hour and 7,000 project outbound daily trips in the p.m. peak hour. Based on traffic generation estimates used in the EIR prepared for the 1989 Guidelines, this would equate to approximately 4,500,000 square feet of development for an average floor area ratio of 0.43 for the development parcels.

In 2004, as part of the LAX Master Plan effort, the Northside entitlements were incorporated into the LAX Plan and the LAX Specific Plan documents for a comprehensive development program for all Airport properties and created the LAX-N Zone. The Specific Plan incorporated the restrictions for the Northside from the 1984 zoning ordinance and the 1989 Guidelines. As part of this comprehensive planning effort, the LAX Specific Plan reduced the total number of permitted vehicle trips generated by development in the Northside to 3,922 project related vehicle trips in the a.m. peak hour and 4,421 project related vehicle trips in the p.m. peak hour.

### **Proposed Specific Plan Amendment**

The current Specific Plan Amendment proposed by LAWA requests amendments to the existing LAX Specific Plan (Exhibit A) and replacing the 1989 Guidelines referenced in the specific plan with new guidelines (LAX Northside Design Guidelines and Standards - Exhibit B).

*Northside District Areas.* As mentioned above, the 1989 Guidelines envisioned two major development areas within the Northside: Westchester Center and the Business Park. The proposed LAX Northside Design Guidelines and Standards now envisions three district areas: the LAX Airport Support District, the LAX Northside Campus District, and the LAX Northside Center District.

*LAX Northside Center District.* The LAX Northside Center District is generally east of Lincoln Boulevard and north of Westchester Parkway. The Westchester Golf Course, First Flight Child Development Center and Los Angeles Fire Station No. 5 are located in the western portion of the district. Under the proposed Design Guidelines, Community and Civic uses and Recreation and Open Space uses would continue to be permitted.

The easterly most parcel in this district is currently used as a temporary construction staging area for LAX projects. Under the 1989 Guidelines, Office, Hotel, Restaurant and Retail uses are permitted. Under the proposed Design Guidelines, Commercial and Retail uses are also permitted, along with Community and Civic uses. The Northside Center District's adjacency to the Westchester Business District along Sepulveda Boulevards lends itself to the continuation of these uses in this area. The existing soundwall along La Tijera will be preserved and all new building frontages will be required to step back as height increases in order to provide privacy for adjacent neighbors.

*LAX Northside Campus District.* The LAX Northside Campus District is north of Westchester Parkway between Pershing Drive and Lincoln Boulevard. Jet Pets, and animal transport and quarantine facility occupies approximately 22 acres at its western end just east of Pershing Drive. The remaining approximately 83 acres to the east is currently vacant.

The 1989 Guidelines envisioned the area between Pershing Drive and Loyola Boulevard (Areas 1 and 2) as a Research Park. For the area between Loyola Boulevard and Lincoln Boulevard (Area 3), Office, Hotel, Retail and Restaurant uses are permitted.

The proposed Guidelines require two separate landscaped buffers within this District, both directly adjacent to existing residential uses. Pedestrian access within these buffer areas would be prohibited, except for maintenance and a 10-foot high fence would secure the perimeter. Landscaping would adhere to specific landscaping requirements contained in the Proposed Guidelines.

A 20-foot landscaped buffer would be required along the northerly boundary of the District between Pershing Drive and Falmouth Avenue. A 100-foot landscaped buffer would be required along the northerly boundary of the District between Hastings Avenue and Loyola Boulevard.

Under the proposed Guidelines, Jet Pets would remain and Recreational and Open Space uses would be permitted within Area 1 and the western most portion of Area 2 adjacent to Saint Bernard High School, introducing more open space than currently planned. Recreation areas would accommodate active and passive forms of recreation, including, but not limited to soccer, lacrosse, baseball fields and dog parks within a secured perimeter fence.

The remainder of Area 2 and Area 3 would allow Office or Research and Development uses, with the center portion of Area 2 having Community or Civic uses. This is consistent with current regulations. Vehicular access would be prohibited from Lincoln Boulevard, Pershing Drive and all local streets along the northern edge of the District.

*LAX Northside Airport Support District.* The LAX Northside Airport Support District is north of the LAX airfield and south of Westchester Boulevard and runs the whole length of the LAX Northside Sub-area between Pershing Drive and Sepulveda Westway and Sepulveda Boulevard. An airport radar is located within this District on the east side of Mc Connell Avenue, between Westchester Parkway and Lincoln Boulevard and an electrical utility substation is located at the southwest corner of Westchester Parkway and Colegio Drive. The predominate uses within this District are the temporary construction materials and staging areas for the various LAX-related construction projects.

Currently, Light Industrial uses, Airline and Airport Support Services, Business Parks, Research and Development are permitted. Under the Proposed Guidelines, it would be limited to Airport Support uses. Business Park, Research and Development, and Office uses permitted by the 1989 Guidelines would no longer be allowed under the Proposed Guidelines. Given the proximity to the LAX airfield and the necessity of enhanced safety and security requirements of the airport, this change would be beneficial to the continued use of the airport and the protection of the community.

*Proposed Amendments.* The core changes proposed in the specific plan are in Section 11, which contain regulations pertaining exclusively to the Northside Sub-area. Table 1 summarizes the key areas that are being changed.

**Table 1**

Specific Plan Comparison			
Subject	Existing	Proposed	
Review & Approval Procedure	Project Permit Compliance (LAMC Sec 11.5)	BOAC: Administrative Clearance	LAWA: LAX Plan Compliance Review
Design Guidelines	1989 Design Guidelines	LAX Northside Design Guidelines and Standards	
Land Use	No Prohibited Uses List*	Prohibited Uses	
	No Permitted Uses List*	Permitted Uses	
Land Use and Floor Area Transfers & Equivalency	None	Transfer & Equivalency Program for land use and floor area between parcels within a district.	
Total Floor Area	None Limited by trip generation	Campus District: 1,075,000 SF Center District: 645,000 SF Airport Support District: 600,000 SF  Total: 2,320,000 SF	
Max. Vehicle Trips	3,922 am peak hour trips 4,421 pm peak hour trips	2,009 am peak hour trips 2,542 pm peak hour trips	
Height	No height limitation*	Campus District: 60 feet Center District: 60 feet Airport Support District: 30 feet	

\*Relied primarily on the Design Guidelines and prior Q conditions in Ord. 159,526 incorporated by reference.

Administrative Clearance. Development projects in the Northside Sub-area currently are subject to the Project Permit requirements pursuant to LAMC Section 11.5.7. The Director of

Planning has the decision-making authority to decide whether the proposed project is in conformance with the applicable regulations of the specific plan and grant a project permit.

As proposed by BOAC, this procedure would be amended to instead permit an Administrative Clearance from the Executive Director of LAWA. Prior to an approval by Executive Director, the Director of Planning shall review the application and determine, by signature, that the Project complies with the proposed Site Development Standards proposed in a new subsection G of Section 11 in the proposed LAX Specific Plan.

Subsequent to BOAC's action, LAWA and Planning staff had further discussions regarding the Administrative Clearance procedure. It was mutually agreed upon by both staffs that the LAX Northside Sub-Area be subject to the LAX Plan Compliance Procedure already established in Section 7 of the specific plan. The LAX Plan Compliance Procedure would uniformly apply to the entire specific plan area instead of having two separate procedures within one specific plan.

*LAX Northside Design Guidelines and Standards.* The existing "LAX Northside Design Plan and Development Guidelines" prepared by A.C. Martin and Associates, dated April 20, 1989 would be superseded by the "LAX Northside Design Guidelines and Standards". The revised guidelines also specify a procedure for amending the document that includes notification requirements prior to a revision and action by BOAC. A comparison between the requirements between the 1989 Guidelines and the Proposed Guidelines is provided in more detail further below.

*Prohibited Uses.* The existing specific plan regulations do not expressly prohibit certain land uses. The proposed amendment would include specific prohibitions of the following land uses: residential or dwelling units of any kind; K-12 education; individual retail stores over 100,000 gross square feet; auto dealerships; adult businesses; massage parlors; parking as a primary use, except in the Airport Support or Mixed Use sub-zones; and hazardous materials testing.

*Total Floor Area Limitation.* Development within the Northside Sub-Area is currently limited through trip generation and not floor area. Based on the maximum AM and PM peak hour thresholds, the allowable floor area would roughly equate to 4,500,000 square feet. As such, the maximum buildable density is defined not in terms of floor area ratios, but in terms of the traffic which the project generates. The proposed specific plan amendment would restrict development to a total of 2,320,000 square feet, and would also include a vehicle trip cap. Moreover, each District would be restricted to the following floor area limitations:

Campus District (Areas 1-3):	1,075,000 square feet
Center District (Areas 11-12):	645,000 square feet
Airport Support District (Areas 4-10):	600,000 square feet

*Transfer and Equivalency Program.* The specific plan amendment proposes a Transfer and Equivalency Program that allows the transfers of floor area and/or the exchange of land uses between Areas within the same District. While the guidelines envision certain densities and uses within each Area, the Transfer and Equivalency Program would provide flexibility to respond to market conditions. At no time would the maximum allowable square footage within each District or the total maximum floor area be exceeded and must be consistent with the Land Use Equivalency Matrix of the LAX Northside Design Guidelines and Standards. Requests for Transfer or Equivalency Exchange must be indicated at the time of application for project approval.

*Project Trip Generation.* The proposed specific plan reduces the LAX Northside Sub-Area vehicle trip cap from 3,922 project-related trips in the a.m. peak hour to 2,009, and the 4,421 project-related trips in the p.m. peak hour to 2,542. Section 12 of the Specific Plan requires LADOT and LAWA to jointly conduct traffic counts to determine the traffic impacts of projects within the LAX Specific Plan boundaries. The conclusions of these counts and other determinations must be incorporated into a traffic generation report which must be approved by the LADOT General Manager and annually submitted to the Board of Airport Commissioners, City Council, and the Department of City Planning.

As part of the annual traffic generation report, the number of trips generated by each project within the LAX Northside Sub-Area must be documented so that the total number of trips generated by on-going development is monitored and reviewed by the LADOT General Manager and the Executive Director of LAWA for consistency with the maximum allowable number of a.m. and p.m. peak trips. These are existing procedures and will not be affected by the amendment to the specific plan, except that the maximum allowable peak hour trips will be reduced. These requirements are also included in the Project Design Features, Commitments, and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program adopted by the Board of Airport Commissioners on March 12, 2015.

### **Proposed LAX Northside Design Guidelines and Standards**

The proposed LAX Northside Design Guidelines and Standards would supersede the 1989 Guidelines and are in addition to the restrictions contained in the specific plan.

*Environmental Impact Report.* An Environmental Impact Report was prepared analyzing the potential development the new guidelines would allow. The Notice of Preparation and the Initial Study were released for public review on April 2, 2012 for public comment ending on May 2, 2012. Two public scoping meetings were held on April 18 and 21, 2012 to facilitate the submittal of comments.

The Draft EIR was circulated for an extended public review period ending on June 11, 2014. A public workshop was held on June 11, 2014 to facilitate the submittal of comments. Thirty-nine comments were received during the comment period. And on December 15, 2014, the Final EIR was released with an Errata to the Final EIR released on March 2, 2015.

The EIR was certified by the Board of Airport Commissioners on March 12, 2015. BOAC also adopted a Statement of Overriding Considerations addressing the anticipated significant and unavoidable environmental impacts that the proposed development may have on air quality, traffic and construction noise.

A Project Design Features, Commitments, and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) was also adopted to ensure that development projects incorporate features and measures that would reduce the environmental impacts the proposed development would otherwise cause. The MMRP includes 221 Project Design Features and 10 Mitigation Measures specific to the proposed project and 66 Commitments and Mitigation Measures as part of the overall LAX Master Plan development.

*Vision and Design.* LAWA's overall vision for the LAX Northside Sub-Area is composed of three main components: (1) reshaping the topography and introducing low-scale development to reinforce the LAX Northside as a buffer area between LAX and surrounding uses, (2) introducing a consolidated pedestrian infrastructure for passive and active recreation to preserve and enhance an already vibrant recreation culture, and (3) implementing an

appropriate landscape palette that promotes sustainability and livability in overt and specific ways.

The LAX Northside Design Guidelines and Standards were developed in keeping with the vision for LAX Northside and through an extensive stakeholder engagement process with input from a variety of community groups, resident organizations, business associations, environmental leader, recreation advocates, the development community, and regulatory agencies, including the FAA and other City departments.

The LAX Northside Design Guidelines and Standards provides the framework for the development of the built environment within the LAX Northside, as well as shapes the design of future individual development projects to provide a seamless transition and buffer adjacent to the Westchester and Playa del Rey neighborhoods and will establish secure boundaries between future developments and existing neighbors.

Five primary design elements have been incorporated into the LAX Northside Design Guidelines and Standards:

- 1) Concentrating building density closest to Westchester Parkway to create a buffer from the adjacent neighbors and to establish a vibrant and active street frontage.
- 2) Preserving and enhancing existing recreational activities in the community through the creation of a pedestrian paseo along Westchester Parkway.
- 3) Creating a comfortable and active pedestrian experience along the length of the paseo, spacing development entrances at walkable distances, providing variable depths of space to accommodate a variety of active and passive activities, and providing pedestrian amenities throughout the project area.
- 4) Complementing the established linear character of the adjacent runways by planting a double row of trees across the LAX Northside to buffer future development.
- 5) Using massing strategies that address the pedestrian scale.

*Other Design Requirements.* The LAX Northside Design Guidelines and Standards were developed using a comprehensive approach to ensure that future development is compatible with airport operations and that it provides a proper transition and a buffer with the existing residential uses to the north. As such, the following components of a development are also regulated by the Proposed Guidelines.

- Height. Building heights and grading strategies required in the Proposed Guidelines would ensure that: a) building heights comply with applicable Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) restrictions for the safety of individuals adjacent to an active airfield, b) existing residential uses are protected and maintain their privacy, and c) the focus and connectivity with Westchester Parkway as the spine of the LAX Northside.
- Paseo. The main unifying design feature of the LAX Northside is a pedestrian accessible paseo that connects all areas of the LAX Northside Center and Campus Districts from east to west along Westchester Parkway. Starting from Sepulveda Westway adjacent to the Westchester Business District and downtown Westchester,

the paseo will continue west along Westchester Parkway until it reaches Pershing Drive, where it will connect with an existing recreation path to the beach.

The paseo will be composed of ten feet wide sidewalks and twelve feet wide stabilized decomposed granite paths. Entry plazas and shared common spaces that complement adjacent land uses, such as outdoor restaurant patios, fountains and green spaces, plaza spaces would connect buildings to the pedestrian realm along Westchester Parkway. The introduction of the paseo would consolidate pedestrian traffic and activity in the LAX Northside away from the residential neighborhoods, reinforcing the overall concept of the Northside serving as a buffer between LAX and adjacent residential neighborhoods.

- Landscaping. Landscaping within the Northside serves to unify the area but also would be compatible with aircraft operations, is sustainable, and responds to the local plant palette. Landscaping at the LAX Northside must not promote the proliferation of wildlife that may disrupt or endanger the functioning of the airfield. Landscaping requirements were developed in consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

In compliance with the Los Angeles World Airports Sustainable Airport Planning, Design and Construction Guidelines and the City of Los Angeles' Low Impact Development Ordinance, the landscaping guidelines were designed to advance sustainability. The use of drought tolerant plant materials, stormwater management, and bioswales has been incorporated into the Proposed Guidelines.

The planting palettes presented in the Proposed Guidelines seek to respond to the native plant communities. Planting materials that are locally native to the surrounding coastal area have been considered, and where appropriate, integrated into the required plant palettes.

- Pedestrian Orientation. All areas fronting Westchester Parkway, La Tijera and Sepulveda Westway are designated as "pedestrian oriented" in the Proposed Guidelines. The pedestrian circulation system connects buildings, streets, parking area and public transit stops to create an environment that supports public transportation, carpools, biking and other forms of transportation. A direct pedestrian connection designated by distinct landscaping and paving materials would be required between parking areas and the buildings they serve and between the primary building entrance and the paseo.
- Architectural Design. The Proposed Guidelines articulate the design expectations for the LAX Northside Campus and Center Districts and address the minimum requirement for creating quality development. They address Building Form, Façade Articulation and Materials, Roofs, Parking Structures, Pedestrian Amenities and Infrastructure, Building Lighting and Stormwater Management.
- Signage and Graphics. The Signage and Graphics portion of the Proposed Guidelines refers to all graphic information that conveys location or direction. The purpose of the guidelines is to establish a framework for the design and character of signage for tenants and the public realm of the LAX Northside. Size, location and materials for signage is defined in the Proposed Guidelines for Address Signs, Tenant Identification Signs, Temporary Signs, and Maintenance.

The key land use elements contained in the proposed LAX Design Guidelines and Standards is provided below by topic and contrasted with the requirements in the 1980 Guidelines.

Land Use. Table 2 below summarizes the permitted land uses of the existing and proposed guidelines.

**Table 2**

Permitted Land Use Comparison		
Area Number	1989 Guidelines	Proposed Guidelines
1	Offices, business park, research and development center	Buffer Uses, including underground infrastructure and utilities; Community or Civic Uses, such as recreational uses, government buildings, including senior center, police and fire stations, and libraries, cultural institutions, non-profit club or lodge; Office, Research & Development, business, professional, scientific school/college, media, post production or broadcast studio, animal care or boarding; Recreation and Open Space uses; Transit Station; Parking; Radars and surveillance facilities; All C2 Zone uses (LAMC 12.14)
2		
3		
	Commercial uses, including hotel, offices, restaurant, service and retail uses	
4	Light industrial uses, airline and airport support services, including flight kitchens, caterers, ticket reservation centers, custom house brokers, warehouse, airport maintenance and ground services (excluding engine shops), freight forwarders, package delivery services, security services, import/export services and other similar accessory or support services; business park and research and development center; and offices	Transit station; Airport Support Uses, such as maintenance and repair shops, indoor and outdoor storage, warehouses, administrative offices, radars and surveillance facilities, utilities and related structures, temporary construction storage, recycling sorting and storage, parking, underground infrastructure and utilities; Recreation and Open Space uses; Mixed Use Commercial, including banks, retail, local services, professional office, restaurants, hotel, transit station, medical or dental office, animal medical clinic, parking, underground infrastructure and utilities;
5	Offices, business park and research and development center; airport view site; airline and airport support and accessory uses.	Radars and surveillance facilities All C2 Zone uses (LAMC 12.14) All M2 Zone uses (LAMC 12.19)
6		
7		
8	Commercial uses, including office and restaurant uses; and automobile service station	
9	Commercial uses, included office and restaurant uses; automobile service station in the western portion only; public automobile parking in the eastern portion only; and an Airport view site	

10	Public automobile parking	
11	Commercial uses, including hotel, office, restaurant, service and retail uses and a movie theater complex	Community or Civic Uses, such as recreational uses, government buildings, including senior center, police and fire stations, and libraries, cultural institutions, non-profit club or lodge; Recreation and Open Space uses; Wholesale stores, Auto Repair or Service and Auto Fueling with conditions; Underground infrastructure; Radars and surveillance facilities; Mixed Use Commercial, including banks, retail, local services, professional office, restaurants, hotel, transit station, medical or dental office, animal medical clinic, parking, underground infrastructure and utilities;
12A	Commercial uses, including offices, hotel, restaurant, service and retail uses	
12B	A commercial golf course, including golf driving tees and ranges and similar commercial golf uses	
All Areas		
		All Conditional Uses in LAMC 12.24 by right; All uses and operations deemed necessary for the safe and efficient operation of the airport as determined by the Executive Director.

Setbacks and Landscaped buffer setbacks. Table 3 below summarizes the setbacks required by the existing and proposed guidelines. There are two types of setbacks in the Northside, a building setback, which allows certain intrusions (such as walkways, outdoor furniture, parking) and landscaped buffer setbacks, which do not allow any intrusions and must be entirely landscaped. The landscaped buffer setback as proposed in the Proposed Guidelines must be landscaped and requires a 10-foot high fence to secure the perimeter of the buffer area to prevent pedestrian access.

**Table 3**

Setbacks and Buffer Area Comparison				
Area	Type	1989 Guidelines	Type	Proposed Guidelines
1	Landscaped	50 ft along north property line	Landscaped	20 ft along north property line
1	Building	100 ft from north property line	Building	80 ft from north property line, 38 ft from Pershing Dr & Westchester Pkwy 30 ft from Falmouth Ave
2A	Landscaped	15 ft wide along Cum Laude Ave and 92 <sup>nd</sup> St	Building	15 ft from 91 <sup>st</sup> St, Bernard St, 92 <sup>nd</sup> St, 20 ft from Cum Laude Ave and the boundary line between areas 2A & 2C

2B	Building	50 ft from north property line	Landscaped	100 ft along north property line
2C, 2D, 2E			Building	20 ft from 100 ft landscaped buffer on the north, 20 ft between areas 2C & 2D and 2D & 2E 15 ft from Loyola Blvd, 38 ft from Westchester Pkwy
3			Building	15 ft from Loyola Blvd, 38 ft from Westchester Pkwy, 20 ft from north & west area boundary line
4			Building	50 ft from Pershing Dr & Westchester Pkwy, 15 ft from other streets, 20 feet from westerly portion of airfield
5, 6			Building	50 ft from Westchester Pkwy, 15 ft from other streets,
7, 8, 9, 10			Building	15 ft from street,
11	Landscaped	30 ft wide along 88 <sup>th</sup> St.	Building	15 ft from Sepulveda Westway & La Tijera Blvd, 30 ft from 88 <sup>th</sup> St, 50 ft from the runway setback
12A East	Landscaped	30 ft wide along 88 <sup>th</sup> St.	Building	30 ft from 88 <sup>th</sup> St, 15 ft from La Tijera Blvd, Liberator Ave & 88 <sup>th</sup> Pl, 18 ft from Westchester Pkwy, 20 ft from internal boundaries
12A West			Building	15 ft from Westchester Pkwy, 20 ft from internal boundaries
13			Building	For the southerly half of Area 13, 15 ft from Lincoln Blvd, 20 ft from internal boundaries

Building Heights. Table 4 summarizes the building height limitations in the existing and proposed guidelines.

**Table 4**

Allowable Height Comparison		
Area	1989 Guidelines	Proposed Guidelines
1	45 feet, 3 stories 55 feet, 4 stories	45 feet, 4 stories
2A, 2C, 2D, 2E		45 feet, 4 stories
2B	45 feet, 3 stories	
3	N.A.*	60 feet, 5 stories
4 – 10	N.A.*	30 feet, 2 stories
11, 12A East	N.A.*	60 feet, 5 stories
12A West	N.A.*	20 feet, 2 stories
13	N.A.*	45 feet, 4 stories

\*The 1989 Guidelines did not provide additional height limitations.

### **On-Site Related Cases**

VTT-72148. On April 22, 2015, the Deputy Advisory Agency approved Vesting Tentative Tract Map VTT-72148 permitting the merger and resubdivision of five lots into 58 lots for future development within the LAX Northside Sub-Area.

Ordinance No. 168,999. The LAX Northside is located within the Coastal Transportation Corridor Specific Plan and is subject to its requirements to fund specific transportation improvements due to transportation impacts generated by new commercial and industrial development within the corridor.

LAX Master Plan Program Plans. Ordinance No. 176,345, the LAX Specific Plan, created the LAX-N zone and related zoning restrictions and limitations.

Zoning Consistency Program Ordinances. Ordinance No. 169,768 rezoned a major portion of the Westchester Golf Course from (T)(Q)C2-1 to OS-1-1XL. Ordinance No. 169,254 changed the "T" and "Q" limitations from a temporary and qualified condition to permanent conditions and incorporated by reference the "Q" conditions in Ordinance No. 159,526.

Ordinance No. 159,526. On November 7, 1984, the City Council approved a zone change from R1-1, R2-1, R3-1, C1-1 and (T)(Q) M2-1 to (T)(Q) C2-1 and (T)(Q) M2-1.

TT-34836. On August 6, 1984, the Deputy Advisory Agency approved Tentative Tract No. 34386 permitting the consolidation of individual single-family lots into twelve lots.

### **Public Comments**

A joint public hearing was held on March 26, 2015 by the Deputy Advisory Agency to consider the Vesting Tentative Tract Map and by the City Planning Commission Hearing Officer to consider the proposed Specific Plan Amendment. No one from the public spoke at the hearing. However, five letters were submitted via U.S. Mail and two letters and one comment were received via e-mail. Two letters of support were received, one from the Westchester Town Center and the second from the Westchester Streetscape Improvement Association. Praise was given for the outreach and community involvement in developing the plan and for the land uses that will have a positive impact on the existing commercial area along Sepulveda Boulevard and the paseo component that will create a link for employees to shop and dine

without getting into their cars. The following is a summary of the key issues raised as well as a response to these issues:

Parking. A comment was received that on-site parking requirement be sufficient for 110% of all employees, workers or visitors to the businesses and other developments. The commenter also wanted prohibitions on parking and passing through the residential area by vehicle or on foot.

*Staff's Response:* Section 13.B of the Specific Plan requires that "all projects within the LAX Northside Sub-Area shall provide off-street parking per LAMC 12.21.A.4". In addition, developments are required to comply with bicycle parking requirements per LAMC 12.21.A.16. The LAX Northside has been designed to promote alternative modes of transportation, including bicycling and walking. In addition, the specific plan limits the number of automobile trips that can be generated within the LAX Northside Sub-area and high traffic generating uses are not allowed and no new pedestrian or vehicular access points are proposed through the residential neighborhoods to the north.

The EIR prepared for the project concluded that there will not be a significant parking impact and mitigation is not required. However, LAWA has included the following project commitment as a Project Design Feature, which is reflected in the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for the LAX Northside:

- LAXN-PDF 154: Once 50% of Area 11 and Area 12 are occupied on a square foot basis, LAWA will conduct a parking study to evaluate potential parking impacts of the proposed Project. Should significant parking impacts be found at that time, LAWA will mitigate them to a level less than significant.

Fences and walls. A comment was received that an eight-foot barrier wall be constructed along the entire northern edge of LAX Northside to prevent vehicular access and traffic congestion in the residential neighborhoods to the north.

*Staff's Response:* Project Design Features have been adopted as part of the LAX Northside's Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, which requires that proposed landscaped buffer areas adjacent to existing residences be secured by a 10-foot tall fence and not be publicly accessible. Direct access to and from the LAX Northside to the area north of Area 2 is also prohibited.

The following are other relevant PDFs that restrict site access:

LAXN-PDF-1: Direct access to and from the proposed Project is restricted from residential areas to the north of Area 2.

LAXN-PDF-2: Vehicular access is prohibited from Lincoln Boulevard, Pershing Drive, and all the local streets along the north edge of the Northside area, including locations at Rayford and Stanmoor Drives, excluding the existing golf course on Manchester Avenue. Primary access drives, allowing left turns, along Westchester Parkway shall be limited to enhance traffic flow and to reduce the disruption of the landscaping, pedestrian recreation paths, and Westchester Parkway medians. Reciprocal ingress and egress access with adjacent properties shall be provided for all properties. This requirement may be waived due to extreme site constraints or unusual conditions.

LAXN-PDF-3: The proposed Project does not introduce any new streets, or open up existing streets that dead-end into the Project site adjacent to residential areas, thereby minimizing potential new traffic-related noise sources in existing residential areas.

LAXN-PDF-4: Vehicular access is prohibited from Lincoln Boulevard, Pershing Drive, and all the local streets along the north edge of the Northside area, including locations at Rayford Drive and Stanmoor Drive, excluding the existing golf course on Manchester Avenue.

Landscaping and buffer areas. A comment was received that the proposed Recreation and Open Space uses permitted in Area 1 (north of Westchester Parkway, between Pershing Drive and Falmouth Avenue) be conducive to a quiet and low foot traffic area for the northwest portion of the area and that the development of game fields, dog parks, playgrounds would be restricted to the southeast portion of Area 1 bordering Westchester Parkway.

*Staff's Response:* As explained in Response to Comment number LAXN-PC17-3 in the Final EIR, the proposed land uses were developed through a series of design charrettes, open houses and community leaders meetings held in 2012 and 2013 with community stakeholders. During these meetings, community members expressed support for open space and recreation uses including, but not limited to soccer fields and dog parks. The purpose of the identifying the Recreation and Open Space uses on the maps and in the Specific Plan is to allow the possibility of allowing these uses to be permitted.

Additionally, as discussed in Section 4.10.2.6.2 of the Draft EIR, the amended Specific Plan would require a 20-foot landscaped buffer and 80-foot setback in Area 1 and a 100-foot landscaped buffer and 20-foot setback in Area 2. No recreation uses would be allowed within the landscaped buffer or setbacks. The EIR also determined that introducing a playing field to this area would not cause ambient noise to increase such that significance thresholds for noise would be exceeded.

Sight lines from the residential area adjacent to Area 1 to the ocean. A comment was received that sight lines to the ocean be preserved by ensuring that proposed foliage and structures do not obstruct existing views.

*Staff's Response:* Views of the ocean are partially blocked and limited by the dunes area west of Area 1 and mainly are of the horizon, even from the upper floors of adjacent residences.

Currently, chain link fencing separates Area 1 from the residential properties to the north. Fencing requirements specified in the Proposed Guidelines would maintain view penetration of the landscaped buffer area and beyond. Though the landscaped buffer area is currently devoid of much vegetation, the Proposed Guidelines require that "Plantings shall be dispersed evenly throughout the Landscape Buffer and shall not be limited to the perimeter". In addition, "Trees planted within the Area 1 Buffer shall be planted to minimize obstruction of views from adjacent residences." "Landscaped Buffers shall be landscaped in accordance with the Landscape Zones and Required Palettes established in Chapter 7" of the Proposed Guidelines.

Airport Noise. A comment was received that aircraft noise has increased to unacceptable levels and that triple-paned windows be installed.

*Staff's Response:* The EIR prepared for this project found that "the existing ambient noise levels at the LAX Northside Campus District due to aircraft noise exposure range from below 65 CNEL to 70 CNEL, and, as shown in Table 4.10-8, measured existing ambient noise levels at sensitive receptors in the vicinity of the LAX Northside Campus District range from 59.7 Leq dBA to 70.7 Leq dBA (noise receptor 1,2,3,4,5,6,7, and 12). Introducing land uses with presumed ambient noise levels ranging from 60 dBA Leq to 55 dBA Leq would not cause the ambient noise level measured at the property line of affected uses to increase by 3.0 dBA in CNEL to or within the "normally acceptable" or "clearly unacceptable" category as shown on Table 4.10-7, or any 5 dBA or greater noise increase. Therefore, the operational impacts related to stationary noise sources in the LAX Northside Campus District would be less than significant."

Increased noise, traffic and congestion, air pollution, and crime rates. A comment was received opposing the proposed development allowed in the LAX Northside because of the increased traffic, noise, congestion, air pollution and crime it would produce.

*Staff's Response:* The EIR prepared for this project found that the project would have Significant and Unavoidable Air Quality, Traffic, and Construction related Noise Impacts. As stated in the Environmental Findings (Exhibit D3), LAWA is committed to mitigate these impacts to the extent feasible and has established Project Design Features and Mitigation Measures to reduce these impacts. In the Statement of Overriding Considerations adopted by the Board of Airport Commissioners, they found that based on the substantial evidence in the whole of the administrative record for the proposed Project, the unavoidable significant adverse environmental impacts associated with the proposed Project are acceptable in light of the economic, operational, legal, technological, and other project benefits.

## **Recommendation**

Planning staff concludes that the amendments to the LAX Specific Plan generally further the goals and policies of the LAX Plan. In most instances, the amendments go beyond current requirements. The vision for the LAX Northside to serve as a buffer area between the residential uses to the north and the LAX Airport to the south and to provide a linkage with the Westchester Business District to the east is strengthened with the additional design guidelines proposed.

Planning staff has reviewed and considered the amendments to the LAX Specific Plan transmitted by the Board of Airport Commissioners (BOAC) and has had discussions with Los Angeles World Airport (LAWA) staff regarding the program and the changes requested. Planning staff agrees in principle with the goals and objectives of the LAX Northside program and both LAWA staff and DCP staff recommend the following modifications to the specific plan ordinance. These changes include:

- Table of Contents. A technical change to delete Appendix A from the specific plan to allow for future modifications to this document. A technical change to the correct naming of Map 3.
- Technical change throughout the specific plan by deleting the word "Exhibit" while prefacing the name of the LAX Northside Design Guidelines and Standards. The use of the word "Exhibit" makes it a static document tied to the date of approval of the specific plan. Also a correction to the name of the document.

- Section 5. Removal of the definition of “Administrative Clearance” and all subsequent references to it in the document to reflect the substitution with the LAX Plan Compliance procedure. Addition of two items to the definition of a “Project”, numbers 16 and 17, for infrastructure improvements that would not be considered a project under the specific plan.
- Section 7 and throughout the document. Modifications that would include the LAX Northside Sub-Area in the LAX Plan Compliance process in place of the Administrative Clearance procedure recommended by the BOAC.

The LAX Plan Compliance Review Procedure includes a review by the Executive Director of LAWA for a project’s compliance with the Specific Plan. It involves the transmittal of a written project description to the City Engineer, the General Manager for DOT, the Council office, and the LAX Master Plan Stakeholder Liaison for their review, with written comments concerning improvements and circulation issues to be provided within 15 working days. The Executive Director’s recommendation outlines a project’s consistency with CEQA, the provisions of the Specific Plan, traffic generation, and includes findings to support the recommendation. Upon receipt of the Executive Director’s recommendation, BOAC sets the matter for hearing and submits the recommendation to the City Council for consideration. The City Council has 45 days from receipt of the recommendation to act, otherwise the recommendation from BOAC becomes final.

While BOAC has proposed an Administrative Clearance procedure in lieu of the Project Permit Compliance procedures (LAMC Section 11.5.7), staff finds that LAX Plan Compliance Review would appropriately provide consistency to the procedures of the Specific Plan. Moreover, BOAC has Lead Agency status under CEQA, and any necessary or subsequent review, consideration, or action on a project pursuant to CEQA will be undertaken by BOAC. In addition, LAWA’s Capital Programming and Planning division oversees airport planning functions through their project and transportation planning, as well as their capital improvement program services, and is capable of reviewing, interpreting, and applying the provisions of the Specific Plan in a manner that is comparable to that of the Department of City Planning with other Specific Plans.

- Section 11B. Additional language to describe the content of the referenced map.
- Section 11D. Original content of the section was moved or replaced with a new section on Modification Procedures that specify a process for changes to the LAX Design Guidelines and Standards.
- Section G. Staff recommends that “Aircraft under power” be added to the Prohibited Uses List.
- Section H. Additional language to the Transfer and Equivalency Program to provide clarity.

In addition to the modifications listed above, Planning staff recommends the following additional changes to the specific plan:

- Section E. Replacement of the Permitted Uses section as highlighted in Exhibit A with the language proposed by Planning staff. The revised language would be in keeping with the Environmental Impact Report prepared for the proposed project. The modification also excludes the “Additional Permitted Uses” category

proposed by BOAC and LAWA that would have allowed all conditional uses specified in LAMC Section 12.24 and allowed any use deemed as necessary by the Executive Director of LAWA as it is overly broad and inconclusive as being beyond the scope of this project.

- Section F. The addition of “except hotels” to number 1 as hotels are considered residential uses and it has always been the intent to allow hotel uses within the LAX Northside Sub-Area since its inception.
- Section G. An additional provision to the Site Development Standards section to address if and when development reaches the maximum allowable floor area permitted by the specific plan.

The recommended language would read as follows: “3. Undeveloped Parcels. At the time any District reaches the maximum allowable floor area permitted, any undeveloped parcels shall be landscaped and maintained pursuant to Section 7 of the LAX Northside Design Guidelines and Standards.”

- Sections I and J. Reject LAWA’s proposed amendments to delete provisions regarding Setbacks and Building Orientation and maintain these sections as recommended by the BOAC.

In order to reflect the above changes and to maintain consistency between the LAX Specific Plan and the LAX Northside Design Guidelines and Standards, Planning staff recommends that the City Planning Commission direct staff to make the following changes to the LAX Northside Design Guidelines and Standards:

- All discussion and references to the Administrative Clearance be removed and replaced by the LAX Plan Compliance Review and process.
- The removal of the “Additional Permitted Uses” category from the “Permitted Land Use Table”.
- The modification of the “Mixed Use – Commercial” category in the “Permitted Land Use Table” to add an “X” under the Campus District, Areas 1-3, to allow “Animal medical clinic” uses and in recognition of the Jet Pets facility that currently exists within this district.
- Modification of Section H, Prohibited Uses, to be consistent with the specific plan by adding “except hotels”.

## 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 91<sup>st</sup> 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.

## PUBLIC HEARING AND COMMUNICATIONS

### Summary of Public Hearing Testimony and Communications Received

The Public Hearing on this matter was held at Los Angeles City Hall at 200 North Spring Street in Los Angeles, CA 90012 on Thursday, March 26, 2015 at 9:30 AM.

1. Present: Approximately ten people attended consisting primarily of representatives from Los Angeles World Airports, the applicant, and a representative from Council Office 11.
2. Public Speakers: No one from the public spoke.
3. The Applicant's Representative spoke at the hearing and made the following statements:
  - LAX Northside properties were primarily acquired during the 1970's and early 1980's using Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) grants for the purpose of converting incompatible land uses adjacent to LAX to compatible land uses that could serve as a buffer from airport noise.
  - The LAX Northside Plan Update would establish new regulations for future development occurring within the LAX Northside Sub-area of the LAX Specific Plan, an area of approximately 340 acres north of LAX. LAX Northside is generally bounded by Sepulveda Westway and Sepulveda Boulevard to the east, LAX to the south, Pershing Drive to the west, and generally by 91<sup>st</sup> Street, Manchester Avenue, and 88<sup>th</sup> Street to the north.
  - The new design guidelines would establish an appropriate scale for development in compliance with applicable LAWA and FAA requirements and provide certainty and consistency for future development.
  - Adoption of the Specific Plan Amendment would reduce the allowable development from 4,500,000 square feet to 2,320,000 square feet.
  - Maximum allowable height would be reduced from up to 150 feet down to heights ranging from 60 to 45 feet.
  - Includes increased buffer zones for the adjacent residential community to the north.
  - Updates urban design and landscaping requirements.
  - The new development regulations and guidelines accommodates LAWA needs and community interests.
  - Over the course of four years, the preparation of the LAX Northside Plan Update included over 50 public outreach meetings with community groups, agency representatives, and/or concerned individuals to gather comments and suggestions that contributed to the Project's conceptual design. The development of the LAX Northside Design Guidelines and Standards was shaped by those comments and suggestions.

- The project objectives were achieved by incorporating over 300 project design features that reflect community input and resulted in only three significant environmental impacts: air quality, traffic and temporary construction related noise impacts. Moreover, LAWA voluntarily chose to adopt 16 additional project design features to address community concerns, even though they were not triggered or warranted by any significant impacts of the project, but will be made requirements as part of the project and are included in the PDF's, Commitments, and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.
4. Communications Received. See Exhibit E.
- Public comments are available in the case file located at City Hall.

