



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
AIRPORT LAND USE COMMISSION

September 03, 2015

TO: Pat Modugno, Chair
Stephanie Pincetl, Vice Chair
Esther L. Valadez, Commissioner
David W. Louie, Commissioner
Curt Pedersen, Commissioner

FROM: Carmen Sainz, Supervising Regional Planner
Communities Studies East Section
Advance Planning Division

PROJECT NO. R2015-02527-(4); AVIATION CASE NO. 201500003; AIRPORT LAND USE COMMISSION REVIEW OF THE LOS ANGELES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT NORTHSIDE PLAN UPDATE; SEPTEMBER 16, 2015 – AGENDA ITEM #4

At your public hearing meeting on **September 16, 2015**, your Commission, as the Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC), will hold a public hearing to review the Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) Northside Plan Update referred by the City of Los Angeles for a consistency determination with the adopted Los Angeles County Airport Land Use Plan. Attached please find the Staff Report and all other documents that comprise the ALUC hearing package. The project materials are also available at the following project website: <http://planning.lacounty.gov/case/view/r2015-02527/>.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me at (213) 974-6425, or via e-mail at csainz@planning.lacounty.gov. Our office hours are Monday through Thursday from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Thank you.

CS:mc:ems

Attachments

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.

AIRPORT LAND USE COMMISSION (ALUC) REVIEW OF THE LOS ANGELES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (LAX) NORTHSIDE PLAN UPDATE

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project is the Los Angeles County Airport Land Use Commission's (ALUC) review of the Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) Northside Plan Update (Project). The Project was referred to ALUC by the City of Los Angeles. The review focuses on how the proposed amendments to the Project relate to the policies contained in the Los Angeles County Airport Land Use Plan (ALUP), also known as the Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

ALUC review is necessary because the Project site is owned by the airport and within the airport influence area (AIA) or planning boundary established for LAX and within the 65 CNEL and higher noise contours (**Attachment A: AIA and Noise Contour Map**). The project is not however, airport related beyond its ownership. ALUC review is also necessary because amendments to general and specific plans of local jurisdictions that include public use airports must be reviewed for consistency with the policies of the adopted ALUP) as required by state law (Public Utilities Code 21676).

ALUC review of the Project is limited to aspects of the document where new/future land uses could affect or be affected by the operations and impacts of the airport. The ALUC has no authority or jurisdiction over existing development.

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Section 21676(b) of the Public Utilities Code (PUC) requires that general and specific plan amendments be reviewed by the ALUC when the Plan covers areas within the AIA of an airport. The proposed Project includes amendments to existing regulations as well as establishing new ones and requires an ALUC consistency determination pursuant to Section 21676(b) of the PUC.

STAFF EVALUATION

Staff conducted a consistency review analysis of the LAX Northside Plan Update with all ALUP policies. This analysis revealed that the Project presents no known conflicts or inconsistencies with the ALUP. The Project is a set of regulations for future development proposals. It does not propose zone or land use changes to allow new construction. The Project is an amendment to the LAX Specific Plan, which is deemed an ordinance amendment. The purpose for the Project is to 1) introduce new land uses that are compatible with LAX and create a buffer for the residential community; 2) comply with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to return the land to economically beneficial use consistent with compatibility and revenue diversion requirements; 3) promote the latest best-practices in urban design and sustainability; 4) reflect community stakeholder interests; and 5) update current regulations that are outdated.

Overview

In 1984, the City of Los Angeles approved 4,450,000 square feet of commercial development on approximately 340 acres of under-utilized land in the Northside area of LAX, which is owned by the Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA), the City of Los Angeles department that manages LAX. LAWA purchased the Project site with FAA funding to develop the area with land uses that buffer the airport from the surrounding noise sensitive uses. In 1989, the Design Plan and Development Guidelines for the LAX Northside area of the LAX Specific Plan (Specific Plan)

was prepared to provide additional guidance for future development of the site (**Attachment B: 1989 LAX Northside Design Plan and Development Guidelines**). Both the entitlement and Specific Plan were subsequently incorporated into planning documents, including the adopted 2004 LAX Specific Plan. The LAX Northside Plan Update is an amendment to the Specific Plan and replaces the 1989 Design Plan and Development Guidelines with the proposed LAX Northside Design Guidelines and Standards (**Attachment C: LAX Northside Design Guidelines and Standards**).

In order to allow flexibility for future development and to respond to changing market conditions, the transfer and exchange of uses and development rights will be allowed within limited areas of the site, not to exceed certain specified environmental constraints, and in compliance with all applicable development and design standards are met. To implement the proposed Project, the LAX Specific Plan will be amended and the 1989 Design Plan and Development Guidelines for LAX Northside will be replaced.

The Project would set forth new and amend existing regulations for future development within the Northside Sub-area of the LAX Specific Plan (**Attachment D: Northside Sub-area Map**). The proposal would redevelop approximately 340 acres of under-utilized land owned by (LAWA) to provide a long term viable use that provides a buffer with noise sensitive residential communities by responding to current and future demand for use of the property, and to satisfy all FAA requirements for a compatible land use plan adjacent to the airport which achieves fair market value. The Project is intended to create a vibrant, sustainable center of employment, retail, restaurant, office, hotel, research and development, education, civic, airport support, recreations, and buffer uses that support the needs of surrounding communities and LAWA. Implementation of the Project may also include a street vacation of Cum Laude Avenue.

The Plan updates existing design standards, responds to current and future market conditions, incorporates the latest best-practices in urban design and sustainability, and reflects community stakeholder interests. It would substantially reduce the amount of development currently allowed on the property from 4,500,000 square feet under the 1989 Plan to 2,320,000 square feet as proposed, and permit the creation of new buffer areas adjacent to homes, community and civic uses, and substantial open space and recreation areas in conjunction with commercial uses.

Future development at the project site is currently governed by the LAX Plan and the LAX Specific Plan (Specific Plan), which established the zoning regulations and development standards. The Specific Plan requires that development on the project site comply with design and development standards originally written in the 1980's. These standards are outdated and have not been approved by the FAA, do not reflect current best-practices in urban design and sustainability, and do not respond to current community and LAWA interests, or to market conditions.

The Project would modify existing regulations to substantially reduce the total amount of development allowed by the 1989 Plan, provide for opportunities for open space, recreation and civic uses, create new design and sustainability guidelines reflecting current best-practices, and guide the transformation of this under-utilized site.

Project Site

The Project site is located directly north of the LAX North Airfield, generally bounded by Sepulveda Westway and Sepulveda Boulevard to the east, LAX to the south, Pershing Drive to the West, and generally by 91st Street, Manchester Avenue, and 88th Street to the north.

The Project site is comprised of approximately 340 acres within the City of Los Angeles, located approximately 15 miles southwest of downtown Los Angeles. The Project vicinity includes the Westchester community in the City of Los Angeles to the immediate north, the City of El Segundo and unincorporated community of Del Aire to the south of LAX, the City of Inglewood and unincorporated community of Lennox to the east of LAX, Playa del Rey community in the City of Los Angeles to the immediate west, and the Pacific Ocean further west. (**Attachment E: Vicinity Map**)

Environmental Setting

The Project site is located within a highly-developed, urbanized area consisting of airport, commercial, and residential uses. While the majority of the Project site is currently vacant, the land was previously disturbed and in some areas paving and roads remain from previous development. Existing development within the LAX Northside Plan Update area includes a fire station, airport support uses, a child care facility, golf course, and an animal quarantine facility. Portions of the Project site are covered with vegetation, including shrubs, trees, and grasses. The southern portion of the Project site is relatively flat. North of Westchester Parkway, the Project site is moderately sloping.

ALUP Airport Influence Area (AIA)

The Project area includes parcels located within the Los Angeles County Airport Land Use Plan AIA (**Attachment F: Airport Influence Area**) for LAX. The consistency review analysis concluded that there are no inconsistencies between the proposed Project and the Los Angeles County ALUCP policies.

Consistent: The Project introduces new land uses that are compatible with airport operations in lieu of what is currently allowed under the adopted LAX Specific Plan and is therefore consistent.

ALUP Noise Policy

Proposed Project Land Uses

A portion of the Project site is located in the Runway Protection Zone (RPZ) of LAX and is not expected to be in the future. The majority of the Project site is currently located within the 65 dBA CNEL to 70 dBA CNEL noise contour, with limited portions of the Project site south of Westchester Parkway located within the 70 dBA CNEL to 75 dBA CNEL noise contour.

Attachment G lists the proposed Project land uses that would be included in each CNEL noise contour present on the Project site and whether these are compatible or not with the County of Los Angeles Airport Land Use Commission and FAA Part 150 guidelines for land uses located within the AIA.

The ALUC land use compatibility guidelines stipulate that educational land uses should be avoided in these areas, unless related to airport services. FAA Part 150 states that schools are incompatible, however, where the community determines that schools must be allowed, measures to achieve outdoor to indoor noise level reduction of at least 25 dB and 30 dB should be incorporated into building codes and be considered in individual approvals. FAA Part 150 notes that these measures will not eliminate outdoor noise problems. The project design features include that prior to the issuance of building permits for any proposed higher

educational uses, the Project applicant shall utilize an acoustical engineer to demonstrate to the City of Los Angeles that the 45 dBA interior noise standard and an outdoor to indoor Noise Level Reduction of at least 25 dB and 30 dB has been achieved. Outdoor areas associated with higher educational uses shall be designed to minimize noise exposure. Additionally, should the property owner of any land proposed for higher educational use, be any entity other than LAWA, the property owner shall be required to grant LAWA a permanent and irrevocable aviation easement.

Consistent: The proposed Project will comply with all applicable ALUP noise policies, Caltrans, and FAA standards and guidance regarding land use compatibility and is therefore consistent.

ALUP Safety Policy

A small portion of the site on the southeast corner along Lincoln Boulevard and Sepulveda is located within the Runway Protection Zone (RPZ) for LAX. The adopted LAX Specific Plan allows for commercial land uses, which include mid-density hotel, office, retail, while the proposed Project will replace those uses with airport support land uses, which are uses deemed more appropriated and compatible to airport operations. Construction within the RPZ is prohibited and is to be maintained free and clear of any structures.

Consistent: Airport support type of land uses are designated within this area and therefore the project is consistent.

Land Use Element

Existing Land Use

The LAX Plan provides the long-range land use policy framework and serves as the land use element for Los Angeles General Plan for LAX, including the LAX Northside. The currently adopted LAX Plan land use designation for the Project site is LAX Northside. This land use designation provides for the development of a variety of uses that are consistent with airport needs and neighborhood conditions, subject to the limits and conditions approved in the 1984 entitlements. The primary uses allowed within the LAX Northside by the 2004 LAX Plan include: commercial development; office; light industrial; research and development; hotel and conference facilities; retail and restaurant uses; schools and community facilities; open space; bicycle paths; and greenway buffers.

Consistent: The proposed Project does not change the LAX Plan land use designation for the LAX Northside and is therefore consistent.

Existing Zoning

The LAX Specific Plan implements the goals and objectives of the LAX Plan by defining zoning and development standards, and contains specific provisions for the Project site. The currently adopted LAX Specific Plan zoning for the Project site is Los Angeles International Airport Northside Zone (LAX-N Zone). The purpose of the LAX-N Zone is to provide for development that is consistent with airport needs and neighborhood conditions. The Specific Plan requires that all projects within the Project site comply with the 1989 Northside Design Plan and Development Guidelines for LAX Northside (Section 11E) and other development requirements contained in Appendix A of the Specific Plan. Additionally, the LAX Specific Plan limits the intensity of development within the site by establishing a vehicle trip cap of no more than 3,922 project-related a.m. peak hour trips (or 3,152 inbound trips) and 4,421 project related p.m. peak hour trips (or 3,040 outbound trips) (Section 12-C(2)). The proposed Project amends the LAX Specific Plan and replaces the 1989 Northside Design Plan and Development Guidelines for

LAX Northside with the LAX Northside Design Guidelines and Standards. (**Attached H: LAX Specific Plan text amendments**)

Consistent: The Specific Plan requires that all projects comply with the 1989 Northside Design Plan and Development Guidelines for LAX Northside (Section 11E) and other development requirements contained in Appendix A of the Specific Plan and is therefore consistent.

Environmental Documentation

Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA) prepared an environmental impact report (EIR) for the LAX Northside Plan Update pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements.

CONCLUSION

The ALUC staff consistency review analysis concludes that there are no conflicts or inconsistencies between the Plan and the ALUP policies. Therefore, staff recommends that the ALUC deem the LAX Northside Plan Update; Project No. R2015-02527-(4) / Aviation Case No. 201500003 is **CONSISTENT** with the adopted 1991 Los Angeles County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan for LAX.

LEGAL NOTIFICATION

Notice of the public hearing was provided by placing an advertisement in the Daily Breeze and La Opinion newspapers a minimum of ten days prior to the hearing.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No comments have been received from the public.

STATUS OF PROJECT

The City of Los Angeles Planning Commission conducted a public hearing regarding the Project on June 25, 2015. A public hearing before the Los Angeles City Council is anticipated in October 2015.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Staff recommends that the Airport Land Use Commission find the proposed amendments to the LAX Northside Plan Update **CONSISTENT** with the policies of the Los Angeles County Airport Land Use Plan.

SUGGESTED MOTION

*"I move that the Airport Land Use Commission close the public hearing and, based on the evidence presented, find the amendments proposed by the City of Los Angeles to their LAX Northside Plan Update is **CONSISTENT** with the adopted Los Angeles County Airport Land Use Plan."*

ATTACHMENTS

- A: AIA and Noise Contour Map
- B: 1989 LAX Northside Design Plan and Development Guidelines
- C: LAX Northside Design Guidelines and Standards
- D: Northside Sub-area Map
- E: Vicinity Map
- F: Airport Influence Area
- G: Land Uses
- H: LAX Specific Plan text amendments

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