

## California Department of Transportation

DIVISION OF AERONAUTICS  
P.O. BOX 942873, MS-40 | SACRAMENTO, CA 94273-0001  
(916) 654-4959  
[www.dot.ca.gov](http://www.dot.ca.gov)



July 8, 2024

Thomas Dearborn  
Senior Planner  
Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning  
320 West Template Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Electronically Sent: [tdearborn@planning.lacounty.gov](mailto:tdearborn@planning.lacounty.gov)

**Re: SCH #2023100445 – Los Angeles County South Bay Area Plan  
Project No.: PRJ2022-0004615**

Dear Mr. Dearborn:

The California Department of Transportation, Caltrans Division of Aeronautics (Division) has reviewed the Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) for the Los Angeles County South Bay Area Plan (Project), Project No.: PRJ2022-0004615. One of the goals of the California Department of Transportation, Aeronautics Program, is to assist cities, counties, and Airport Land Use Commissions (ALUC) or their equivalent, to understand and comply with the State Aeronautics Act pursuant to the California Public Utilities Code (PUC), Section 21001 et seq. Caltrans encourages collaboration with our partners in the planning process and thanks you for including the Aeronautics Program in the review of the PEIR.

The proposed Project would guide regional-level growth and development in the unincorporated communities of the South Bay Planning Area through 2045. The South Bay Area Plan is in accordance with the Los Angeles County 2035 General Plan to direct long-range land use planning, informing various stakeholders of the County's future land use plans, and ensure accountability for achieving the Project's goals. The Project area is located within two miles of three public airports: Torrance Municipal Airport, Hawthorne Municipal Airport, and Los Angeles International Airport (LAX).

In accordance with CEQA, Public Resources Code Section 21096, the California Airport Land Use Planning Handbook (Handbook) must be utilized as a resource in the preparation of environmental documents for projects within airport land use compatibility plan boundaries, or if such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of an airport. The Handbook is a resource for all public use airports and is

"Provide a safe and reliable transportation network that serves all people and respects the environment"

Mr. Thomas Dearhorn, Senior Planner

July 8, 2024

Page 2

available online at: <https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/aeronautics/documents/californiaairportlanduseplanninghandbook-ally.pdf>

### **Safety Compatibility Policies**

The proposed Project is located in the southwest corner of Los Angeles County. There are seven unincorporated communities within the South Bay Planning Area: Alondra Park/El Camino Village, Del Aire/Wiseburn, Hawthorne Island, La Rambla, Lennox, West Carson, and Westfield/Academy Hills. Parcels within the unincorporated community of Lennox are within the LAX Airport Influence Area. Therefore, the project must adhere to the safety criteria and restrictions defined in the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP) adopted by the ALUC pursuant to the PUC, Section 21674.

The creation of safety compatibility zones within Airport Influence Area is an exercise predominantly driven by aeronautical considerations. That is, the geography of risk is determined by the runway configuration, approach and departure procedures, and other factors that determine where aircraft fly and where accidents occur. The Division recommends the Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning should consider the Safety Zone(s) in Compatibility policies stipulated in the Los Angeles County ALUCP.

### **Noise Compatibility Policies**

Portions of the project area may be partially located within the 55-75 decibels (dB) Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) contour for the Torrance Municipal Airport, Hawthorne Municipal Airport, and Los Angeles International Airport as shown in the Los Angeles County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP).

All developments located in an Airport Influence Area are subject to review by the Los Angeles County Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) for compliance with noise and safety regulations, per Title 21 of the California Code of Regulations. Aircraft noise contours that pertain to Lennox affect the compatibility of land uses that can reside within the exposure areas due to noise-sensitive land uses, such as residential and schools, cannot be located within areas exposed to aircraft noise levels of Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) 65 dB and greater, which pertains to large portions of Lennox.

The proposed project areas may be subject to aircraft overflights and subsequent aircraft-related noise impacts due to the proximity to an airport. Since communities

vary greatly in size and character from urban to rural, the level of noise deemed acceptable in one community is not necessarily the same for another community.

Federal and State regulations regarding aircraft noise do not establish mandatory criteria for evaluating the compatibility of proposed land use development around airports (with the exception of the 65 dB CNEL "worst case" threshold established in the California Code of Regulations (CCR: Title 21 CCR, §5006, §5012) for the designated "noise problem" airports). For most airports in California, 65 dB CNEL is considered too high a noise level to be appropriate as a standard for land use compatibility planning. This is particularly the case for evaluating new development in the vicinity of the airport. The 60 dB CNEL, or even 55 dB CNEL, may be more suitable for new development around most airports. If new residential development is allowed within the airport's 65dB CNEL contour, all residential units should be constructed to ensure an interior CNEL due to aircraft noise of 45 dB or less in all habitable rooms.

While airports do not have mitigation requirements for single event noise occurrences under FAA regulations, aircraft operations may cause noticeable noise annoyance from single events that result in impacts such as sleep disturbance. Consideration should also be given to cumulative noise impacts associated with the project site's proximity to roadways and railway lines.

Sound insulation, buyer notification and avigation easements are typical noise mitigation measures. These measures, however, do not change exterior aircraft noise levels. It is likely that some future homeowners and tenants will be annoyed by aircraft noise in the Project area.

### **Airspace Protection Policies**

Any potential project being constructed within the South Bay Area Plan Project limits must also address requirements from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), specified in Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 77. (14 CFR Part 77). Title 14 CFR Part 77.9 provides vertical and horizontal criteria for construction near an airport. The California Public Utilities Code Section 21659 prohibits structural hazards near airports. The Plan should avoid any structures that exceed 200 feet AGL (above ground level) in height. Future development will require a Notice of Proposed Construction or Alteration (Form 7460-1) from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in accordance with Federal Aviation Regulation, Part 77.9 "Objects Affecting Navigable Airspace." To ensure compliance notices should be submitted to the FAA's Obstacle Evaluation Group (OEG) online at the following site:

Mr. Thomas Dearhorn, Senior Planner  
July 8, 2024  
Page 4

<https://oeaaa.faa.gov/oeaaa/external/portal.jsp>. OEG Determinations are not building permits, but the Determinations may specify obstruction mitigation.

Further, in accordance with California Public Utilities Code (PUC), Sections 21656 "Permit for Extension of Structure More Than 500 Feet Above Ground" and 21659 "Hazards near Airports Prohibited", a permit is required by Caltrans Aeronautics unless the FAA has determined that the construction does not constitute a hazard to air navigation or would not create an unsafe condition for air navigation.

### **Amending a General Plan / General Plans**

Per the California Public Utilities Code Section 21001 et seq. relating to the State Aeronautics Act, Section 21676(b) prior to the amendment of a general plan within the planning boundary established by the airport land use commission pursuant to Section 21675, the local agency shall first refer the proposed action to the ALUC. If the ALUC determines that the proposed action is inconsistent with the ALUCP, the referring agency shall be notified. Any proposed development in the defined safety zones, therefore, must adhere to the safety criteria and restrictions defined in the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan(s) adopted by the ALUC pursuant to the PUC, Section 21674.

These comments reflect the areas of review by Caltrans Aeronautics with respect to airport-related noise, safety, and land use planning issues. Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment. If you have any questions, please contact me by email at [vincent.ray@dot.ca.gov](mailto:vincent.ray@dot.ca.gov).

Sincerely,



Vincent Ray  
Aviation Planner

c:

California State Clearing House, [state.clearinghouse@opr.ca.gov](mailto:state.clearinghouse@opr.ca.gov)

Mathew Friedman, Office Chief Aviation Planning DOT,  
[matthew.friedman@dot.ca.gov](mailto:matthew.friedman@dot.ca.gov)