

## **Notice of Preparation**

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**Date:** January 13, 2005

**To:** Interested Party

**Lead Agency:** City of Los Angeles  
Los Angeles World Airports, Forecasting and Analysis Division  
P.O. Box 92216  
Los Angeles, CA 90009-2216

**Subject:** Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Assessment /  
Environmental Impact Report for Palmdale Regional Airport

The City of Los Angeles (City) will be preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for future development recommended by the proposed Master Plan for Palmdale Regional Airport (PMD). The City is also preparing an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). In order to eliminate unnecessary duplication and in accordance with provisions of the State CEQA Guidelines (§§ 15222 and 15226) and with federal regulations promulgated by the Council on Environmental Quality (40 C.F.R. §§ 1500.2 and 1506.2), the EIR is being prepared jointly with the EA and the necessary environmental documentation is planned to be included in an integrated document.

CEQA sets forth a series of procedural requirements, including the requirement for the Notice of Preparation (NOP). The NOP is used to help determine the scope of an EIR and to foster intergovernmental coordination. The NOP provides a brief description of the project, identifies its potential environmental effects, and provides the address where written comments can be sent.

The Lead Agency must prepare and distribute a NOP after it decides to prepare an EIR. The NOP solicits participation in determining the scope of the EIR from responsible public agencies (those which may have discretionary approval power over the proposed project or an aspect of it), trustee agencies (agencies with jurisdiction over a natural resource held in public trust that the project may affect), and from local governments, regional agencies, private individuals and organizations which may have concerns about the project. This NOP is intended to inform all those parties of the City's intent to prepare a Draft EIR on the proposed Palmdale Regional Airport Master Plan. The NOP solicits comments regarding the proposed scope and content of the environmental studies and other information that will be included in the EIR. The City has prepared this NOP in accordance with the State CEQA Guidelines and the City of Los Angeles CEQA Guidelines.

On receipt of comments on the NOP, the City will consider those comments and prepare the joint Draft EA/EIR. The EA/EIR will analyze the potential adverse impacts that are anticipated to result from the project, identify potential mitigation measures where reasonable and feasible, and analyze reasonable and feasible alternatives to the proposed project that could reduce or avoid identified impacts while still achieving the basic project objectives.

A public and agency scoping meeting is encouraged by CEQA and NEPA to hear comments on issues that need to be considered in the EA/EIR. LAWA will hold one (1) joint CEQA/NEPA public and one (1) governmental agency scoping meeting to solicit input from the public and various Federal, State, and

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local agencies that have jurisdiction by law or have specific expertise with respect to any environmental impacts associated with the proposed projects. **A coordination meeting specifically for governmental and public agencies will be held on February 9, 2005 from 1:00 to 3:00 P.M. in the Manzanita Ballroom at the Chimbole Cultural Center, 38350 Sierra Highway, Palmdale, CA 93550. A coordination meeting for the public will be held at the same location on February 9, 2005 from 6:00-8:00 P.M.**

The City is requesting input from interested government and quasi-government agencies, other organizations and private citizens regarding the scope and content of the environmental information to be included in the EA/EIR. Public agencies receiving this notice may need to use the EA/EIR prepared by the City when considering their permits or other approvals for the proposed project.

Any public agencies that respond to this Notice are requested, at a minimum, to:

1. Describe significant environmental issues, reasonable alternatives and mitigation measures which they would like to have addressed in the EA/EIR.
2. State whether they are a responsible or trustee agency for the project, explain why and note the specific project elements that are subject to their regulatory authority.
3. Provide the name, address and phone number of the person who will serve as their point of contact throughout the environmental review process for this project.

Due to the time limits mandated by State law, responses from public agencies, other organizations and private citizens must be sent at the earliest possible date and must be ***received no later than 5:00 p.m. PST on Wednesday, February 23, 2005.***

Please send your response to Ms. Paula McHargue, Manager, Forecasting and Analysis Division, at the address shown above.

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**Project Title:** Palmdale Regional Airport Master Plan

**Project Location:** Air Force Plant 42 Complex, Antelope Valley, Los Angeles County, California

### **1. Project Description:**

The City of Los Angeles proposes to develop Palmdale Regional Airport (PMD) in accordance with a new Airport Master Plan that will guide development at the airport through the year 2030. The Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA), a self-supporting department of the City of Los Angeles, is responsible for the operations and development of Palmdale Regional Airport. LAWA leases 61.75 acres of land from the United States Air Force (USAF) under a Joint Use Agreement (JUA) that allows civilian operations on Air Force Plant 42 (AF Plant 42). LAWA also owns 17,500 acres adjacent to and to the east of AF Plant 42. Both expansion of facilities on AF Plant 42 and development of facilities on the adjacent LAWA property are considered in this project.

### **2. Regional Context**

The Southern California Association of Governments' (SCAG) 2004 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) predicts a doubling of regional passenger demand by the year 2030. The SCAG RTP also predicts that air cargo will more than triple during the same time frame. The Regional Aviation Plan included in the SCAG RTP proposes to accommodate this growth through expansion of outlying airports in the region, rather than increasing capacity at Los Angeles International Airport (LAX). The proposed LAX Master Plan supports this concept. It contains plans to modernize the airport facilities but maintains the airport's capacity at about 78 Million Annual Passengers (MAP). LAWA is also developing a new master plan for Ontario International Airport which would allow that airport to reach its airfield capacity of about 30 MAP by 2030. Other airports in the region are also constrained from growth, generally by either the limitations of their facilities, or by court settlements that restrict growth in order to control environmental impacts to surrounding communities.

Given the capacity limitations and constraints at other airports, SCAG proposes that a share of the total regional passenger and air cargo demand in the future be accommodated at PMD. The 2004 SCAG RTP Regional Aviation Plan proposes that PMD could play a significant role in accommodating passenger demand beyond its traditional service area if a Maglev or High Speed Rail system were developed that would allow easy access to PMD from the Los Angeles Basin. SCAG also proposes significant changes in the way both the airports and the airlines do business today to stimulate growth of airline service at PMD. Many of these proposed changes will require changes in federal regulations regarding the ways that airports can set fees and spend money. The ability of the region to fully implement the SCAG Aviation Plan is uncertain at this time.

LAWA has forecasted the demand for passenger air services at PMD to be 1.14 MAP in 2030. The proposed PMD Master Plan and EA/EIR are based on the facilities necessary to accommodate this forecasted demand. This forecast was based on expected population and employment growth within the airport's anticipated service area. The service area primarily covers the Antelope and Santa Clarita Valleys and portions of the San Fernando Valley. To address growth in passenger demand beyond 1.14 MAP, LAWA will also develop a strategic plan to show how LAWA will accommodate higher aviation demand levels at PMD. The airport facilities necessary to serve greater demand levels will be outlined in the strategic plan and will undergo the environmental review process should regional developments or passenger growth at PMD indicate the need for additional facilities prior to 2030.

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### 3. Current Conditions at Palmdale Regional Airport

Palmdale Regional Airport facilities are located on AF Plant 42 in close proximity to the City of Palmdale, in the northern portion of Los Angeles County. As shown in **Figure 1**, State Route 14 (Antelope Valley Freeway) and State Route 138 provide major regional access to the airport. North-south arterials such as 10<sup>th</sup> Street West, Sierra Highway, 50<sup>th</sup> Street East, 70<sup>th</sup> Street East, and 90<sup>th</sup> Street East provide both regional and local access. In addition, east-west arterial access is provided by Avenue M, Avenue P and Palmdale Boulevard.

#### 3.1 Joint Use Agreement

LAWA currently leases 61.75 acres of land from the USAF and also owns an additional 17,500 acres adjacent to AF Plant 42. Under the existing JUA with the USAF, LAWA may utilize the airfield facilities at AF Plant 42. The JUA sets forth procedures for the use of AF Plant 42 as a joint military/civilian use airport, defines the level of commercial operations that can take place by domestic civilian operators, and specifies guidelines for the use of the acreage owned by LAWA. The USAF has determined that 50 civilian commercial operations per day can be accommodated without detriment to the military mission of AF Plant 42. The USAF and LAWA have agreed to a tiered structure for the level of aircraft operations conducted by non-military operators at AF Plant 42 as follows:

- LAWA civilian commercial operations may increase from 50 per day to a 3-month average of 200 operations per day subject to USAF Operations Committee review. LAWA must notify the Operations Committee when operations reach a 1-month average of 150 operations per day;
- The process allows for 60 to 180 days of review for the decision on raising the 3-month average number of operations per day from 200 to 300.
- The review process would be repeated when the level of civilian use reaches a 1-month average of 250 operations per day. A decision as to whether to raise the 3-month average number to 400 operations per day will be rendered using the same review process.
- LAWA is released from its agreement responsibilities under the JUA when the operations review procedures have been exhausted and the USAF determines that it cannot permit any greater number of civilian operations at AF Plant 42 without detriment to its operations.

#### 3.2 Existing Facilities

Two runways are available for use on AF Plant 42: Runway 7/25 is 12,002 feet long and 150 feet wide and Runway 4/22 is 12,001 feet long and 150 feet wide, each equipped with a full parallel taxiway. Access to and egress from the runways is provided by numerous taxiways that serve various Air Force tenant facilities.

LAWA owns and operates a 9,000-square foot passenger terminal located on the leased property and an 11,000-square yard apron for parking civilian aircraft. The terminal has been used on an intermittent basis and is suitably sized for small airline operations. Limited space is available on the 61.75 acre leased site for expansion, development or redevelopment of the passenger terminal facility and for development of future cargo facilities. There is also land available to the south of the terminal area to expand the leasehold with Air Force approval.

Some facilities are also located on the adjacent LAWA property. The SR Technics Site #9 is owned and operated by LAWA and consists of approximately 312 acres. Accessed via Avenue P and 30<sup>th</sup> Street East, a little over half of the area is developed with buildings, an aircraft apron, and vehicle surface lot parking, with the remainder as undeveloped open space. Four buildings on the site are prominent and comprise the majority of the site's building space. These consist of buildings, #701 -

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approximately 87,000 square feet, #702 - approximately 260,000 square feet, #703 - approximately 282,000 square feet, and #704 - approximately 160,000 square feet. Buildings #703 and #704 have adjacent apron area and access to the airfield via Taxiway Sierra. A large apron is also located to the north of the buildings along Taxiway Sierra and is approximately 20,000 square yards in size. **Figure 2** depicts the existing facilities at PMD and AF Plant 42.

### 4. Palmdale Regional Airport Master Plan

The development of a new Master Plan for PMD was initiated by LAWA to analyze the local and regional issues that impact the airport and to address the following considerations: 1) determine the need to develop additional capacity at PMD through 2030, given the airport's current local market area; 2) determine the potential for PMD to play a larger role in the regional aviation system by accommodating demand beyond its market area considering the distance and travel time from the population centers; and 3) develop a plan that balances airport, economic and community goals in an environmentally sensitive and fiscally responsible manner.

The PMD Master Plan is being developed in three phases. Phase I, Determination of Airport Requirements, includes the collection and documentation of data regarding existing facilities at PMD, other aviation facilities in the region, and the community and community issues at large; the development of forecasts of aviation demand for the next 30 years; an analysis of existing airport capacity; and a determination of future airport facility requirements. Phase II, Analysis of Alternative Development Plans, includes the development of alternative development scenarios for the entire airport site, recommendations for use of land not required for aviation purposes and an analysis of the local and regional roadway systems affecting PMD. Phase III, Airport Improvement Implementation Plan, includes a 30-year implementation plan and environmental analyses, the Airport Layout Plan, cost estimates and an Airport Capital Improvement Plan and financial implementation strategy. The Master Plan is currently in Phase II that includes the release of this NOP and the collection of comments on the proposed plan and alternatives that should be considered.

Forecasts were developed as part of the Master Plan study based on several different methodologies and growth scenarios. Under the Master Plan forecast, the local market area can generate the activity levels projected. This forecast can be realized without relying on significant contingencies, such as the development of a Maglev system. The Master Plan forecasts were therefore limited by the existing and forecasted population and employment growth within the airport's defined market area and the isolation of the airport from the regional population center in the general Los Angeles Basin.

The Master Plan forecasts estimate that the demand for aviation services at PMD in 2030 will be about 1.14 million annual passengers (MAP) and 230,555 enplaned cargo tons served by 115,119 annual aircraft operations. These forecasts were used to determine what airport facilities would be required to serve the future demand and the level of expansion necessary given the capacity of the existing facilities. The following summary lists the facilities required to serve 1.14 MAP in 2030.

#### 4.1. Airfield Requirements

- Existing AF Plant 42 airfield has adequate capacity to accommodate forecasted aircraft operations and will continue to be utilized for all aircraft operations
- Existing runway length is sufficient to accommodate projected types of aircraft operations
- Existing taxiway system meets Design Group V standards that can accommodate aircraft such as B-757, B-747, DC-8
- An approach lighting system to decrease approach minimums on Runway 25

### 4.2. Passenger Terminal Facility Requirements

- Passenger terminal of approximately 100,000 square feet by the year 2030
- Up to seven passenger terminal gates to serve 1.14 MAP in 2030
- Approximately 1,100 vehicle parking spaces by the year 2030

### 4.3. Air Cargo Facility Requirements

- 400,000 square feet of building space for cargo processing by the year 2030
- Two aircraft parking positions for Design Group IV aircraft

### 4.4. Development Requirements

- Large areas designated for both aviation-related and non-aviation development
- Support facility requirements

## 5. Proposed Project Alternatives

Three basic alternative improvement concepts were developed in the PMD Master Plan that could accommodate the forecast of demand for the year 2030: Alternative 1 - Proposed Action and Alternatives 2 and 3. The EA/EIR will also present a No Action/No Project Alternative to study the conditions that would occur at PMD without proposed Master Plan improvements. The No Action/No Project Alternative will be used as a basis of comparison for the other Alternatives.

### 5.1. Description of the No Action/No Project Alternative

The No Action/No Project Alternative represents the conditions that would occur at PMD without the comprehensive Master Plan improvements. This alternative would include any new facilities or improvements to existing facilities that are unconnected actions to the comprehensive Master Plan improvements.

### 5.2. Description of Improvement Alternative Concepts

Three alternative improvement concepts have been developed to expand PMD facilities to meet the forecasted demand and are depicted on **Figure 3**. All concepts include airside, landside and roadway improvements built in phases keyed to passenger and cargo growth. It is assumed all improvements will be in place by 2030. Project phases may include demolition of existing facilities, site preparation and construction of new facilities. Reasonable and feasible mitigation measures for any alternative may be phased to correspond to the phases of project development.

Improvements will include passenger terminal expansion; additional aircraft gates for passenger and cargo operations; construction, relocation and/or expansion of airside facilities such as aprons and taxiways; construction and/or expansion of automobile parking lots; construction and/or expansion of access roads; construction of air cargo facilities; and construction of support facilities.

#### 5.2.1. Alternative 1 - Proposed Action

Alternative 1, the Proposed Action, includes expansion of the terminal and apron within the existing terminal area and development or expansion of additional facilities on Plant 42 outside the current leasehold. **Figure 4** illustrates the major components of the Proposed Action that are summarized below:

- Construction of an expansion to the existing terminal and aircraft apron within the existing leasehold
- Demolition, construction and/or expansion of terminal parking lot to the west to accommodate up to 1,100 vehicle parking spaces
- Construction and/or expansion of terminal access roads

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- Construction of an air cargo facility, aircraft apron, access and parking lot on AF Plant 42 but outside of the current leasehold
- Construction of aviation-related facilities including but not limited to airport support facilities on LAWA property and on AF Plant 42 outside the current leasehold
- Construction of an extension of Taxiway S of up to 5000 feet onto LAWA property to provide airfield access from LAWA property to AF Plant 42
- Approximately 125 acres designated as aviation-related development located on AF Plant 42 outside of the current leasehold
- Approximately 107 acres designated as aviation-related development located on LAWA property
- Approximately 100 acres designated as non-aviation development located south of Avenue P on LAWA property

### 5.2.2. Alternative 2

Alternative 2 includes development of a terminal building, apron, and cargo facilities within an area on LAWA property called Site 9 with a connecting taxiway to the AF Plant 42 airfield. **Figure 5** illustrates the major components of Alternative 2 that are summarized below. Improvements would be developed on LAWA property unless otherwise noted:

- Construction of a linear terminal and aircraft apron
- Construction of a terminal parking lot to accommodate up to 1100 vehicle parking spaces
- Construction and/or expansion of terminal access roads
- Construction of an air cargo facility, aircraft apron, access and parking lot
- Construction of aviation-related facilities including but not limited to airport support facilities
- Construction of an extension of Taxiway S of up to 5000 feet onto LAWA property to provide airfield access from LAWA property to AF Plant 42
- Approximately 232 acres designated as aviation-related development on LAWA property.
- Approximately 100 acres designated as non-aviation development located south of Avenue P

### 5.2.3. Alternative 3

Alternative 3 includes development of a terminal building, apron, and cargo facilities east of AF Plant 42, entirely on LAWA property. **Figures 6A and 6B** illustrate the major components of Alternative 3 that are summarized below. All improvements are on LAWA property unless otherwise noted:

- Construction of a linear terminal and aircraft apron
- Construction of an extension of Taxiway D of up to 3000 feet
- Construction of terminal parking lot to accommodate up to 1100 vehicle parking spaces
- Construction and/or expansion of terminal access roads
- Construction of an air cargo facility, aircraft apron, access and parking lot
- Construction of aviation-related facilities including but not limited to airport support facilities
- Construction of an extension of Taxiway S of up to 5000 feet onto LAWA property to provide airfield access from LAWA property to AF Plant 42
- Approximately 232 acres designated as aviation-related development on LAWA property

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- Approximately 100 acres designated as non-aviation development located south of Avenue P

### Initial Study Checklist

An Initial Study Checklist has been prepared for the proposed project. Based on a preliminary review of the project site and in consideration of the proposed project activities, the City has determined that the following environmental factors would potentially be affected by the proposed project and involve at least one impact that is a "potentially significant impact": aesthetics, hazardous materials, public services and utilities, cultural resources, air quality, noise, recreation, population/housing and transportation/traffic. These topics will be addressed in detail in the Draft EA/EIR.

### Comments and Next Steps

Comments regarding the scope and content of the Draft EA/EIR will be accepted until 5:00 P.M. PST on February 23, 2005. The Draft EA/EIR is scheduled to be completed in February 2006. At that time, a Draft EA/EIR Notice of Completion will be filed with the Los Angeles County Clerk and the document will be circulated for a 45-day public review period.

The City will prepare responses to comments received during the public review period regarding the adequacy of the Draft EA/EIR. The comments and responses together with the Draft EA/EIR and its appendices will comprise the Final EA/EIR. In arriving at a decision on whether to proceed with the proposed project, the Los Angeles City Council will consider, among other things, the information in the Final EA/EIR and will determine the adequacy of the environmental documentation under CEQA.

\* All quantities presented are approximate, preliminary, and subject to change as a result of continued planning efforts and the environmental review process.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Title:** Supervising Transportation Planner II

**Telephone:** (310) 646-9181

**Date:** January 13, 2005