

4.1

ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES DETERMINED TO BE LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT

Section 15128 of the CEQA Guidelines states that an EIR “shall contain a statement briefly indicating the reasons that various possible significant effects of a project were determined not to be significant and [are] therefore not discussed in detail in the EIR.” The following section presents a discussion of the environmental resource areas that were identified as not having the potential for significant impacts as a result of the VNY Noisier Aircraft Phaseout project during the initial review of the project by the CEQA lead agency, LAWA, the CEQA lead agency. In addition, the scoping process for the project, described in Chapter 1 of this EIR, did not indicate the need to address the environmental resources discussed below.

Because the project does not propose or require any development or other physical modification at VNY or the other airports anticipated to receive diverted aircraft over time, many of the environmental considerations that are typically evaluated as part of the CEQA process are not applicable to this project. For the reasons stated below, the proposed project would have no impact or a less-than-significant impact on aesthetics, agricultural resources, biological resources, cultural resources, geology/soils, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology/water quality, land use/planning, mineral resources, population/housing, public services, recreation, transportation/ traffic, and utilities/service systems.

4.1.1 Aesthetics

Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines states that a project would have a significant environmental impact if it would

- Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.
- Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings along a scenic highway.
- Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.

- Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect daytime or nighttime views in the area.

The project proposes no physical development; modification of land, structures, or features; or other prominently visible elements. Therefore, the project would have no effect on scenic vistas, scenic resources, or visual character, and there would be no impact pursuant to the first three criteria listed above. Changes to the visual environment resulting from project implementation would be limited to a slight reduction in aircraft takeoffs and landings at VNY and a very minimal increase in takeoffs and landings at the diversion airports. On average, the increase is anticipated to be less than one aircraft operation per day at each of the diversion airports, which would not be noticeable to viewers in the vicinity of the airports, who are already accustomed to views of aircraft operations in their vicinity. Additional aircraft operating at the diversion airports would not create a substantial new source of light or glare. Some activity may occur at night time, including in the vicinity of residences. Aircraft are equipped with headlamps and other lights for safety purposes, but nighttime aircraft activity would be extremely seldom and, furthermore, would not result in lights being shined into residential receptors. Therefore, there would be no aesthetic impacts.

4.1.2 Agricultural Resources

Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines states that a project would have a significant environmental impact if it would

- Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland) to non-agricultural use.
- Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or conflict with a Williamson Act contract.
- Involve other changes in the existing environment that, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use.

The project proposes no development, change in land use, or other component that would affect agricultural resources. Therefore, the project would not result in direct conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural uses or conflict with agricultural zoning or a Williamson Act contract. Of the affected airports, CMA, CNO, and WJF are located in areas that support agricultural operations, with row crops grown adjacent to the airport sites at CMA and CNO. However, the minimal increase in operations projected at those airports (forecasted at less than one per day at each of the diversion airports) would have no direct or indirect effect on agricultural operations, and would not result in changes that could indirectly result in conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses. Therefore, there would be no agricultural resources impacts.

4.1.3 Biological Resources

Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines states that a project would have a significant environmental impact if it would

- Have a substantial adverse effect on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means.
- Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites.
- Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance.
- Conflict with the provisions of an adopted habitat conservation plan, natural community conservation plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan.

The project proposes no development, clearing, excavation, or other components that would affect vegetation, plants, or wildlife. None of the diversion airports is located adjacent to open space preserves or other areas featuring sensitive biological resources that could be affected by the minimal increase in flight operations, and the associated aircraft activity would have no effect on any such resources. Therefore, the project would have no impact on candidate, sensitive, or special-status species; would have no impact on riparian or other sensitive habitat; would have no impact on wetlands; would not interfere with wildlife movement, migration, or nursery sites; and would not conflict with local plans—including habitat conservation plans—related to biological resources. There would be no biological resources impacts.

4.1.4 Cultural Resources

Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines states that a project would have a significant environmental impact if it would

- Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in Section 15064.5?
- Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?

- Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?
- Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?

The project proposes no excavation, construction, or other work that would potentially affect archeological resources that may be present above or below the ground surface at any of the airports. Therefore, there is no potential for the project to affect archaeological resources, paleontological resources, or human remains. The project would not demolish or modify any structures, or entail any other work that would potentially affect any historical resources that may exist at the airports, and there is no potential for the project to affect historical resources. Therefore, there would be no cultural resources impacts.

4.1.5 Geology/Soils

Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines states that a project would have a significant environmental impact if it would

- Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving rupture of a known earthquake fault, strong seismic groundshaking, seismic-related ground failure, and landslides.
- Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil.
- Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable or that would become unstable as a result of the project and potentially result in an onsite or offsite landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse.
- Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property.
- Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems in areas where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater.

The project would not entail any earthwork, erection of structures, or other components that could affect or be affected by the local geological conditions and on-site soils. Because there are no structures proposed by the project, seismic rupture, ground shaking, and ground failure have no bearing on the project, nor do landslides, unstable geologic units, expansive soil. Because the project proposes no earthwork, there would be no impacts with respect to top soil. Because the project proposes no septic tanks, there would be no impacts related to such facilities. Therefore, there would be no geology/soils impacts.

4.1.6 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines states that a project would have a significant environmental impact if it would

- Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials.
- Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment.
- Emit hazardous emissions or involve handling hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school.
- Be located on a site that is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment.
- Be located within an airport land use plan area or, where such a plan has not been adopted, be within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, and result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area.
- Be located within the vicinity of a private airstrip and result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area.
- Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.
- Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands.

Hazardous materials related to the project are limited to the fuel and other common petroleum products used to power and maintain the aircraft that currently operate at VNY. By shifting aircraft operations from VNY to the diversion airports, the project would slightly reduce the volumes of these chemicals transported, used, and stored at VNY, while minimally increasing such transportation, use, and storage at the diversion airports, in order to accommodate additional operations. No new storage tanks or fueling facilities would be necessary to accommodate this minimal increase in usage, and on-site use and storage of hazardous materials would continue to conform to all relevant federal and state regulations. The proposed project would not entail the use, transport, storage, or disposal of any other hazardous materials, and the minimal increases in materials storage and uses would not create a significant hazard through foreseeable upsets or accidents. Therefore, the impact would be less than significant.

As discussed in Section 4.3.3.5 of this EIR, there are no schools or other sensitive receptors located within ¼ mile of any diversion airports. Therefore, there will be no impact related to hazardous emissions within ¼ mile of a school. The project does not propose any significant source of hazardous emissions or entail handling acute

hazardous substances. The project would result in minimal increases in jet exhaust at the diversion airports, but, as discussed in Section 4.3.5.2 of this EIR, this emission would not constitute a significant health risk. Therefore, the hazardous emissions impact is less than significant.

The project proposes no development or land modification and, therefore, would have no bearing on any hazardous materials location that may be located on or around VNY or the diversion airports. Therefore, there would be no impact.

The project entails a reduction in air traffic volume at VNY and a very minor increase in operations at the receiving airports, all within or in the vicinity of airport land use plans. The project-related increase at the receiving airports, as projected for the 2014 and 2016 planning periods, averages less than one flight per day at each airport—a minimal increase that would not be enough to cause a significant hazards impact due to operation in proximity to existing or planned development.¹ Therefore, this impact would be less than significant. The project is not located in the vicinity of any private air strips, and would have no related impact.

The project proposes no development or other physical components that would affect any emergency response plans existing or place persons or structures in proximity to areas prone to wildfires. Therefore, there would be no impact.

4.1.7 Hydrology/Water Quality

Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines states that a project would have a significant environmental impact if it would

- Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements.
- Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge, resulting in a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level.
- Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner that would result in substantial erosion or siltation onsite or offsite.
- Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner that would result in flooding on or offsite.
- Create or contribute runoff water that would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff.
- Otherwise substantially degrade water quality.

¹ See Tables 2-5 and 2-6 and associated discussion (Chapter 2 of this EIR) for greater detail on the estimates of annual and daily flight increases at the diversion airports.

- Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area, as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map.
- Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures that impede or redirect floodflows.
- Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee/dam.
- Cause inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow.

The project proposes no development, earthwork, alteration of waterways, drainage patterns, or floodplains, or other components that would affect hydrology and water quality in the vicinity of the affected airports. No increases in the amount of impervious surfaces would occur with the proposed project at any of the affected airports. No aspect of the project would result in surface or groundwater pollution or affect groundwater supplies. Because the project entails no construction, it would not place structures within a floodplain, increase flood risk, or cause inundation. Aircraft operations have no bearing on risks related to floods, seiches, tsunamis, or mudflow. Therefore, there would be no hydrology and water quality impacts.

4.1.8 Land Use/Planning

Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines states that a project would have a significant environmental impact if it would

- Physically divide an established community.
- Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to, a general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.
- Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan.

The project does not propose development at VNY or any of the diversion airports, and therefore would not conflict with existing land use plans for any of the affected airports. The proposed project was contemplated in the 2006 VNY Master Plan.² The VNY master plan sets out a noise policy which states: “Establish a maximum daytime noise level for all aircraft operating at Van Nuys Airport of 77 d.b.a., based on takeoff noise levels for each aircraft reported in the most current FAA Advisory Circular 36-3. This measure would effectively eliminate all Stage 2 jets and some Stage 3 jets. Analyze separately the application of a maximum daytime noise limit to Stage 2 and Stage 3 jets to properly assess the costs and benefits of these measures. In addition, evaluate the impact on historic planes” (2006 VNY Master Plan page 12). The proposed project would be consistent with this policy. Consistency with applicable Air Quality Plans is addressed in section 4.3 of this EIR.

² http://www.vnymasterplan.org/docs/vny_draft_mp.pdf

A slight increase in aircraft operations is anticipated at the five diversion airports, averaging less than one aircraft operation per day at each airport. This increase is not large enough to necessitate construction of new facilities to accommodate the redirected aircraft or its passengers, require revision of airport land use plans, or otherwise generate growth at the affected airports or in their surrounding areas. Therefore, there would be no land use and planning impacts.

The project proposes no development or other component that would physically divide a community, and the project would have no bearing on any habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan that may apply to the area surrounding VNY or other alternative airports in the region. Therefore, there would be no related impacts.

4.1.9 Mineral Resources

Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines states that a project would have a significant environmental impact if it would

- Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state.
- Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan.

The project proposes no development, excavation, or other components that would deplete mineral resources, nor does it propose development or any other components that would prevent future extraction of any mineral resources that may be present in the vicinity of the affected airports. Therefore, there would be no mineral resource impacts.

4.1.10 Population and Housing

Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines states that a project would have a significant environmental impact if it would

- Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (e.g., by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (e.g., through extension of roads or other infrastructure).
- Displace a substantial number of existing housing units, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.
- Displace a substantial number of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

The project proposes no demolition of existing development or any other component that would displace any people or housing units, nor does it propose new jobs, extension of infrastructure, or other features that would directly or indirectly induce

growth and require accommodation of future population. Therefore, there would be no population and housing impacts.

4.1.11 Public Services

Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines states that a project would have a significant environmental impact if it would

- Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities or a need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for fire protection, police protection, schools, parks, or other public facilities.

The project includes no physical elements that would alter existing facilities for fire, police, schools, parks, or other public facilities. The slight increase in aircraft activity at the five diversion airports—an average of less than one more operation per day at each of the airports—would translate into a very minor increase in activity on the ground at these facilities. This, in turn, would present an indiscernible increase in demand for emergency response and police protection services provided by local agencies, including:

- BUR: Burbank Fire Department, Burbank-Glendale-Pasadena Airport Authority Police Department
- LAX: Los Angeles Airport Fire Department, Airport Police Division of LAWA
- CMA: Ventura County Fire Protection District, Ventura County Sheriff's Department
- CNO: Chino Valley Independent Fire District, Chino Police Department
- WJF: Los Angeles County Fire Department, Los Angeles County Police Department

The increase in airport activity would occur at facilities already served by these respective agencies, and would not be of a scale that would overburden the police and fire departments or cause the need for new or expanded facilities. Therefore, there would be no impact on fire and police protection services.

The project proposes no new development that would increase population and subsequent demand on local schools or parks. Therefore, there would be no impact on schools and parks services.

4.1.12 Recreation

Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines states that a project would have a significant environmental impact if it would

- Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated.
- Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment.

The project proposes no new development that would increase population and resultant demand on local parks in the vicinity of VNY or any of the diversion airports, nor does the project propose new recreational facilities in these locations. Therefore, there would be no recreation impacts.

4.1.13 Transportation/Traffic

Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines states that a project would have a significant environmental impact if it would

- Cause an increase in traffic that is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system.
- Cause, either individually or cumulatively, exceedance of a level-of-service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways.
- Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks.
- Substantially increase hazards because of a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment).
- Result in inadequate emergency access.
- Result in inadequate parking capacity.
- Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks).

The project would result in a slight shift in regional air-traffic patterns, but not of a scale that would present hazardous conditions, overload the diversion airports' facilities, or cause other significant air-traffic impacts.

The project's impact on ground-based traffic would also be very minor. Project-related decrease in aircraft operations at VNY would result in a minimal, unnoticeable reduction in automobile trips in the vicinity of the airport. For instance, it is estimated that during the planning year 2014, approximately ~~369~~370 aircraft

operations would shift from VNY to other airports (Table 2-3 in Chapter 2, Project Description). Averaged out over the entire year, that is a reduction of slightly more than one operation per day. By the assumption that one aircraft operation equates to one vehicle trip, the project would result in a similar reduction in vehicle trips of slightly more than one per day. This unnoticeable decrease in the amount of vehicle traffic using the local circulation system is a minor beneficial impact of the project. The projected increase of approximately ~~369~~ 370 aircraft operations at the three diversion airports would be less than one per day at each of the facilities during the 2014 planning year (Table 2-5 in Chapter 2, Project Description). In 2016, operations would be even less. This would constitute an unnoticeable increase in roadway traffic around the diversion airports, and not one that would substantially increase the amount of traffic in the vicinity of the airports relative to street system capacity or degrade level of service. Increases in 2016 traffic to CNO and WJF would be similarly inconsequential, with an average of 0.7 additional daily operations at CNO and an average of 0.3 daily operations at WJF.

Small increases in vehicular traffic at the diversion airports would not present a strain on existing parking facilities or require expansion of existing parking areas, and would not affect public transportation service or bike routes that may exist in the respective areas. Therefore, there would be no ground-based vehicular traffic impacts.

The very small increase of less than one aircraft operation per day at each of the diversion airports would not represent a significant hazard to existing or planned development in the areas. The project proposes no physical development or physical changes at VNY or the diversion airports; there would be no design features or incompatible uses that could pose hazardous traffic conditions or result in inadequate emergency access. Therefore, there would be no traffic hazard impacts.

4.1.14 Utilities/Service Systems

Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines states that a project would have a significant environmental impact if it would

- Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?
- Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?
- Require or result in the construction of new stormwater drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?
- Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or would new or expanded entitlements be needed?

- Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider that serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?
- Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?
- Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?

The decrease in aircraft operations at VNY would result in a minor decrease in demand on existing utilities and services provided at the airport, including water, wastewater, and solid waste facilities. The increase in operations at the diversion airports, estimated at less than one per day at each airport, would result in a minor increase in demand on existing utilities and services at the respective facilities, but this demand increase would not be noticeable, and would not burden the existing utilities or cause the need for new or expanded facilities. The project entails no component that would apply to wastewater treatment requirements, require construction or expansion of water or wastewater treatment facilities, require construction or expansion of stormwater drainage facilities. The project would not generate solid waste. Therefore, the utilities and service systems impacts would be less than significant.