

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
BUILDUP OF LAWNSDALE ANNEX
LOS ANGELES AIR FORCE STATION, CALIFORNIA

1.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

At maximum buildout, the proposed project involves the construction and operation of up to 400,000 square feet (ft²) of administrative/research space on the 13.34-acre Lawnsdale Annex site located in the City of Hawthorne, Calif. Construction of up to four buildings may be phased over a 10- to 15-year period. One building is programmed for construction in Fiscal Year (FY) 90 for 500 people. Another building for 650 people is projected for construction sometime after FY90. In order to meet the short-term demand, Bldg. 80 and modular buildings will be utilized in 1987. These modular buildings will be removed as permanent space is available; however, Bldg. 80 will remain in service.

At full buildout, parking structures would be required. The typical building will be 4 to 5 stories with approximately 100,000 ft². At full buildout (mid-to-late-1990s), the proposed project will accommodate approximately 2,500 military, civilian, and contractor personnel. This environmental analysis is based on maximum buildout to assess the worst-case environmental impacts associated with the proposed project.

The proposed project is designed to eliminate the deficit in administrative/research facility space at Los Angeles Air Force Station (LAAFS). Currently, U.S. Air Force (USAF) facility space is not adequate in either quantity or condition to meet USAF requirements. As a result, 498 people are currently working in non-USAF facilities, and 150 people are working in temporary modular buildings constructed on Area A of LAAFS. Additionally, the USAF Space Division (SD) projects a personnel growth of approximately 1,300 people at LAAFS through FY 92.

1.1 ALTERNATIVES AND NO ACTION

The analysis of alternatives to the proposed action included construction at other locations, leased office space, and no action. Alternative construction locations included Areas A and B on

LAAFS, Edwards Air Force Base (AFB), Calif., Vandenberg AFB, Calif., Norton AFB, Calif., and Kirtland AFB, N. Mex. Areas A and B on LAAFS were eliminated due to lack of available space. Construction of the proposed facilities at another AFB in the region with sufficient land would transfer environmental impacts to that location. Construction costs would be approximately the same at any of the locations. If the facilities were located at another AFB, logistical problems would be created by the physical separation of the proposed facilities from SD Headquarters and the ongoing operations at LAAFS. For these reasons, construction at other locations was eliminated as an alternative action.

The alternative action of leased office space was eliminated because the leasing alternative is more expensive than construction costs when considered over the projected life cycle of the proposed buildings. Additionally, the availability of office space with capacity large enough to centralize operation would be a problem.

The no-project alternative would mean that LAAFS could not support the expanded mission of SD. Additionally, the current situation would remain, whereby 498 people are working in non-USAF facilities and 150 people are working in temporary modular buildings on Area A of LAAFS. If the project is not undertaken, the Lawndale Annex site would likely remain in its semi-vacant state for several years. The land could be turned back over by LAAFS to General Services Administration (GSA) control; therefore, a complete assessment of the impact of the no-action alternative is not possible.

2.0 SUMMARY OF PROJECT IMPACTS

The following paragraphs briefly summarize the potential impacts of the proposed project. The summary discussion is segregated into environmental effects and effects on the manmade environment.

2.1 ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

2.1.1 TOPOGRAPHY

Due to the relatively level characteristic of the site, the development of the proposed project is likely to require only minimal earthmoving activity, including minor cut and fill operations. The actual extent of this activity is not known at this time as grading plans for the project have not yet been prepared. Grading for the site is expected to be balanced, with no significant importation or exportation of soil materials. The general topography of the site will not be significantly altered by the project.

2.1.2 GEOLOGY

Due to the low permeability of the surface, clayey, silty soils, adverse seepage, and/or surface instability is not anticipated. Additionally, the small amount of fill material on the site does not present a significant potential for settlement or surface instability. The surface clays and silts, however, may exhibit expansive characteristics. Expansive soils can have adverse effects on structures by cracking and causing problems with foundations, slabs-on-grade, and concrete/brick deck areas. Prior to construction of the proposed project, a geotechnical report will be prepared including site-specific investigations of subsurface geology and soils.

2.1.3 SEISMOLOGY

The development of the site will expose additional people and structures to earthquake ground shaking hazards. This is a hazard which is experienced by people and structures in varying degrees throughout California. All new structures will conform to the seismic requirements of the Uniform Building Code.

2.1.4 PALEONTOLOGY

A search of records at the Los Angeles County Museum revealed no fossil localities present onsite. Based on the fossil localities in the area (closest site is 2.5 miles and east-northeast), there

is a low to moderate probability that significant paleontological resources will be encountered at this site. To mitigate potential impacts, a qualified professional will be onsite to monitor construction activities involving earth movement or excavation.

2.1.5 HISTORIC/ARCHAEOLOGIC

The State Historic Preservation Office has determined that the proposed project will not impact any features of historic or prehistoric interest.

2.1.6 FLORA/FAUNA

Due to the limited existing habitat on the site and the location of the site in a developed industrial area, potential impacts on biota would be minimal. The proposed project will include development of courtyard areas consisting of plantings of trees and ornamental shrubs and grasses. These will replace portions of the existing, large asphalt-paved parking area. These trees, shrubs, and grasses would provide additional habitat over that currently existing onsite. The site does not offer habitat for threatened or endangered plants or animals.

2.1.7 AIR QUALITY

Regional air quality will not be affected by the proposed project. Total air emissions (mobile plus stationary) will only increase regional levels by a maximum of one-fourth of one percent (0.0025).

2.2 EFFECTS ON THE MANMADE ENVIRONMENT

2.2.1 LAND USE

The proposed office land use will be consistent with the existing land uses in the surrounding areas. The proposed use is also consistent with the current zoning on the site. The proposed project is not expected to create any changes in future land use in the surrounding communities.

2.2.2 POPULATION

The proposed project may result in a total population increase of approximately 4,200 persons in the region. The potential population increase will be distributed over a broad geographical area and large population base. Therefore, the proposed project will have only minimal impact on the current and forecasted population growth patterns in the area.

2.2.3 HOUSING

The impact on local and regional housing markets due to the proposed project is expected to be minimal relative to existing and forecasted housing trends. However, any increase in housing demands in the local area has the potential to further escalate housing costs and increase development densities.

2.2.4 EMPLOYMENT/ECONOMY

The existing public will create approximately 1,850 new employment opportunities in the area and will have positive effects on both employment and the overall economic conditions in the area.

2.2.5 SCHOOLS

The existing public school facilities in the area will be adequate to serve the anticipated increase in enrollment.

2.2.6 PARKS AND RECREATION

The proposed project will not affect the park and recreation facilities in the area.

2.2.7 POLICE SERVICE

The traffic-related police service requirements will increase slightly due to increased traffic in the vicinity of the site. The increase in service requirements is expected to be minimal compared to current conditions, and no additional police manpower needs are anticipated.

2.2.8 FIRE PROTECTION

The proposed project will not affect fire protection facilities in the area, and no additional personnel will be needed.

2.2.9 MEDICAL FACILITIES

The existing medical facilities in the area are adequate to serve any increases in medical needs due to the proposed project.

2.2.10 SERVICE SYSTEMS

The existing water, natural gas, and electrical lines are adequate to supply the projected utilization rates of the proposed site. The waste collection systems (i.e., sewage and solid waste disposal) are also adequate for the additional wastes estimated to be generated by Lawndale Annex. Stormwater drainage for the full buildout scenario may require some mitigative measures to alleviate potential capacity problems of the existing offsite drainage system. The necessary measures, if required, will be included in the design of the proposed project.

2.2.11 CIRCULATION/TRANSPORTATION

A traffic study conducted for the proposed site had the following principal findings. At full development, the project is estimated to generate 6,000 daily trip ends with 900 occurring during the a.m. peak hour and 1,075 during the p.m. peak hour. Traffic conditions in the area are currently at unacceptable levels of service during peak hours. The addition of project generated traffic will further reduce the level of service in the area. With recommended intersection improvements, traffic operations can be improved at two of the three principal intersections impacted by this project.

The USAF in conjunction with local agencies will evaluate measures to mitigate potential impacts to include: intersection improvements listed in Sec. 5.2.7; the widening of Aviation Blvd.; and modifications to the site plan as necessary. Access restrictions on Aviation Blvd. should remain and be considered in the site planning. The feasibility of a

crossing of the Sante Fe Railroad to Hindry Ave. will be examined and considered in the planning for this project. The proposed light rail transit facility on the Sante Fe right-of-way will be encouraged with provisions for a station to serve the subject project.

2.2.12 NOISE

Short-term impacts include those associated with construction activities. These impacts will only be temporary impacts will only be temporary impacts created by equipment, transportation vehicles, and other construction-related noise. Longer-term impacts will result from increases in traffic. Because urban growth is anticipated and planned for in the City of Hawthorne's General Plan, the inherent additional noise impacts are not considered significant.

2.2.13 VISUAL

All lands immediately surrounding the Lawndale Annex site currently are zoned light or heavy manufacturing or industrial. The 4- and 5-story buildings and parking planned for the proposed site should not cause adverse effects to the 6-story Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Bldg. or the State of California Records Storage Facility, which are the only buildings close enough to the site to be affected by the proposed structures.

2.2.14 ENERGY

Energy will be consumed on the site during construction, upon completion, and by travel generated by the project. A list of conservation measures has been included in the energy section.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the Environmental Assessment, a Finding of No Significant Impact is made for the Buildup of the Lawndale Annex, Los Angeles Air Force Station, Calif. An Environmental Assessment on the proposed action, dated April 1987, is on file at:

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