The flight path 

A recent study conducted by Communities for a Better Environment, an environmental justice advocacy group, indicates that there are significant differences in the region's proposed airport expansion plans and how they impact minority communities. An earlier study directed by the Southern California Association of Governments had reported that the plans would have a similar impact on minority communities. 

Effects of white and minority neighborhoods of expanding airport operations in the Los Angeles area: 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minority</th>
<th>White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scenario 1: 1.11%</td>
<td>1.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenario 2: 1.40%</td>
<td>1.40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ethnic composite of neighborhoods near area airports: 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minority</th>
<th>White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barham</td>
<td>Finite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Wayne</td>
<td>Ontario</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Southern California Association of Governments projects anticipate in the region to grow 154 and 157 million annual passengers in 2020. Here are the various projects being studied: 

Scenario 1: Los Alamitos Field which would expand to 1,500 feet. 

Scenario 2: Targeted at 70 million annual passengers and 5 Tens at 200 acres. 

Scenario 3: Targeted at 70 million annual passengers and 5 Tens at 800 acres. 

Scenario 4: Targeted at 70 million annual passengers and 5 Tens at 1,000 acres. 

LAX Must Answer Questions About Minority Communities 

By Sherwin Leung 

Staff Reporter of the Wall Street Journal 

Los Angeles—Airport expansion in the Los Angeles area faces a new obstacle: "environmental justice." 

The issue has emerged in recent months as a critical problem facing regional officials planning the expansion of Los Angeles International Airport. According to a six-year-old federal executive order, airports seeking funding for expansion from the Federal Aviation Administration must consider the health and environmental effects of the expansion on nearby communities—and ensure that expansion doesn't unduly harm minority areas. Failures to do so could result in the loss of federal funding or lawsuits by airport opponents. 

Although the order is years old, LAX officials didn't devote much attention to it until this summer. They considered the order's wording vague, and on top of that they feared they didn't yet have enough data to measure the impact of expansion on minority areas. 

But, last fall, environmental groups and anti-expansion associations began writing letters to airport officials raising serious concerns about expansion on environmental justice grounds. Then, earlier this year, Boston's Logan International Airport came under federal scrutiny for failing to adequately consider the environmental justice effects in its plan to add a runway. 

Now LAX is taking a closer look at the issue. The airport has convened a task force to consider environmental justice concerns surrounding the expansion. The panel, which began meeting this summer, includes environmental attorneys, airport staff and hired consultants who are experts on environmental justice and demographics. Officials have devoted 10 pages of their 2,000-page draft master plan, which is to be released in the next few weeks, to the issue. 

"Environmental justice is an evolving and relatively new area of examination," says Jim Bichette, deputy executive director for long-range planning at Los Angeles World Airports, which oversees Los Angeles International. "We're taking it very seriously." 

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The Wall Street Journal, CA 

Wed., Nov 15, 2000 

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But the airport clearly has its work cut out. A new study to be released this month by Communities for a Better Environment, a Huntington Park environmental-justice advocacy group, found that regional aviation planners may be underestimating the effects of airport expansion on minority communities. The report argues that an airport expansion planned for Los Angeles International Airport could negatively impact nearby black and Latino neighborhoods.

"This is an emerging issue nationwide, and LAX may be ground zero," says Steve Bowie, director of the Urban Studies and Planning Program at University of California, San Diego, who is writing a book on the region's infrastructure projects, including the LAX master plan. "This will be a cutting-edge project in terms of environ-

Airport officials, Los Angeles Mayor Richard J. Riordan and local business leaders have long expanded Los Angeles International. The airport staff is rec-

ommending that the airport grow to 88 million passengers a year by 2015, a 35 percent increase from today. Supporters want to reconfigure existing runways or add new ones, build a new terminal, improve roads, and extend the Metrolink transportation Authority's Green Line to the airport. The total project is estimated to cost $2 billion to $2.5 billion.

Surrounding communities are 80 percent minority, according to the Huntington Park study, and critics say it's unfair that this group will suffer the brunt of the proposed expansion, which the airport says will only increase traffic from the expansion. An environ-

mental group and a coalition of cities and counties opposed to the expansion are con-

sidering filing lawsuits over environmental-justice concerns if those concerns aren't addressed.

"This project is one of the most controversial of the year," says one opponent of the expansion say that predominantly white communities that block airport expansions in their areas are contributing to the prob-

lem because the additional air traffic would make it difficult for residents to go to the airport that have the greatest effects on minority com-

munities.

"These opponents are especially critical of cities in Orange County that oppose the expansion of the former El Toro Marine Corp Air Station into a commercial air-

port. The communities within several miles of El Toro are more than 80 percent white, according to the Huntington Park study.

"If every region adopted the attitude [that] they would not assume their fair share of regional travel, we couldn't have any airports," says Mike Colmber, Mayor of El Segundo and head of a coalition of nearly 80 cities and counties fighting the expansion of LAX. "We will use whatever potential means to make Or-

cane County responsible for its share."

The advantage of an airport expansion proposed by Occidental College's Environmental Sci-

cence and Studies Program, says that the scenario that would have a negative effect on the largest minority population is one in which Los Angeles International expands as planned and El Toro isn't built. The sce-
nario with the least impact: LAX is capped at 78 million passengers a year, a 15 percent increase over today, and El Toro is opened and accommodates about 20 mil-

lion passengers a year.

The Occidental study challenges the re-

tsults of a similar study prepared in March by the Southern California Association of Governments, the region's transportation agency.

"WE WILL USE WHATEVER potential means to make Orange County responsible for its share."

of airport traffic, says the mayor of El Segundo

planning agency, that found little differ-

ence in the environmental effects on minor-

ity communities among four regional avia-

tion scenarios. The SCAG study found only

minute differences in the percentage of minority residents that would be affected by each of the four scenarios. Both the SCAG and Occidental studies measured the effects of the expansion of LAX and not traffic and pollution.

The Occidental study authors—Manuel Pastor from the University of California, Santa Cruz and Jim Sidd from Occidental College in Los Angeles—say the SCAG study doesn't take into account the in-

crease in the number of flights that airport expansion would add.

It raises an equity issue," says Carlos Porras, Communities for a Better Environ-

ment's executive director. "It makes more


sense to distribute the economic benefits regionally and distribute the environ-

mental burdens regionally.

A spokesman for SCAG says the num-

bers used in the Occidental study are old figures, which SCAG released in March, and represent only a small portion of the agency's environmental-justice analysis.

The association is updating its figures and conducting a more thorough examination of environmental justice, which it plans to release as part of its own environmental-justice impact report of its regional transportation plan next month.

As for fairness, LAX officials say that even if El Toro and other airports were developed, they couldn't force airlines to fly into LAX. The reality is, they say, that airlines want to fly out of Los Angeles, and the region can't develop alternative air-

ports if the carriers don't choose to play

along.

Under the executive order, LAX has to demonstrate that expansion won't dispro-

portionately affect minority communities and that it can mitigate—through such measures as flight programs or sound-

proofing nearby homes—any disproportionate harm that is caused. Environmen-

tal justice is also concerned about the San Fran-

cisco International Airport, which is also in the midst of a master plan to reconfig-

ure its runways.

To help it address environmental jus-

tice concerns, LAX in June hired Comey Fu-

rue, the former western regional counsel for the NAAE's Legal Defense Fund, to work with the task force. Mr. Garcia, formerly the director of the Los Angeles City Project office for New York based Environ-

mental Defense, a nonprofit environmen-
tal group, for the past year had been one of the airport's toughest critics in urging aviation planners to examine environmen-
tal-justice issues.

"At LAX, they say that the current task force is looking at a dozen categories of how an expanding airport would impact society, including airqual-

ity and land use. In terms of mitigation, the draft gives a general overview, such as a job-training program and small business assistance. Once the draft is released, air-

port officials will work with local communi-

ties to come up with a final plan.

For areas such as Huntington Park, a city of 75,000 that is 89 percent Hispanic and sits beside the airport, the prospect of ex-

pansion of the airport looms on residents' minds. Several months ago, the City Council passed a resolution opposing ex-

pansion.

Rick Loy, a city council member who keeps a noise meter by his side to measure jet noise overhead, says the "sound is re-

ally, really miserable." He says the city sits too far away to qualify for airport-spon-

sored sound proofing in homes. And when jet make a turn, Mr. Loy says the city knows. "Sometimes you smell [the jet fuel]. It's gross. Smells like everyone on the plane is having a barbeque." Mr. Loy says there's always talk of mitigating impacts, but he says he doesn't think it will help. "When you take all the pollutants in the air now, and you add airplanes, and you add jet fuel, he says, "I say we're going to increase considerably LAX, that means more sound, more pollutants."