

CHAPTER ONE

PURPOSE AND NEED

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) proposes to modify an existing departure procedure that was implemented as part of the Four Corner-Post Plan at McCarran International Airport (LAS), Las Vegas, Nevada, in October 2001. The Four Corner-Post Plan was developed and implemented to address growing airspace and air traffic control inefficiencies caused by increases in air traffic in the Las Vegas TRACON airspace.

This Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA) has been developed to assess the potential environmental impacts that may be associated with the proposed modification of the STAAV Area Navigation (RNAV) Standard Instrument Departure (SID) to accommodate eastbound departures from Runway 25.

An SEA requires analysis and documentation similar to that of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), but with somewhat less detail and less intensive coordination than is required with an EIS. Depending upon whether certain environmental thresholds of significance are exceeded, an SEA will either lead to a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) or to the subsequent preparation of an EIS.

This Final SEA is made available for review and comment as part of the *National Environmental Policy Act* (NEPA) of 1969, as amended (42 U.S.C., § 432 et seq.). This Final SEA has been produced after review and preparation of responses to the public comments on the Draft SEA (see **Appendix F, Response to Comments**). The federal decision-makers will use this Final SEA in their determination to approve or disapprove the Proposed Action.

The format and content of the SEA conforms to the regulations of the President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA (title 40, CFR 1500-1508). The document also conforms to the environmental orders of the US Department of Transportation (DOT), DOT Order 5610.1C, *Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts*, and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Order 1050.1E, *Environmental Impacts: Policies and Procedures*.

This Final SEA is organized as follows:

Chapter 1 – Purpose and Need

This chapter includes a description of the general environmental regulations under which this SEA is to be prepared, the purpose of and need for the project, and a detailed description of the Proposed Action.

Chapter 2 – Alternatives

This Chapter is a review of the possible alternatives evaluated as part of the SEA analysis, including the Proposed Action and the No Action Alternatives. It describes the criteria used to evaluate the alternatives and summarizes the alternatives carried forward for detailed environmental impact assessment.

Chapter 3 – Affected Environment

This chapter's primary function is to describe pre-project conditions, not action-induced impacts. The chapter provides a description of the existing environment's biological, economic, physical, and social conditions. This enables the reader to clearly understand the environmental characteristics that would be affected by the Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative.

Chapter 4 – Environmental Consequences

This chapter evaluates the potential for environmental impacts associated with the Proposed Action, the No Action Alternative, and any other considered alternatives on a number of specific resource categories.

Chapter 5 – List of Preparers

This chapter contains a list of those who contributed to the preparation of the SEA.

Technical Appendices

The appendices of this SEA contain information regarding the technical analyses used in the development of the document, as well as documentation of the public and agency coordination process and other supporting information. They include:

- Glossary of Terms (**Appendix A**)
- Noise Analysis Technical Report (**Appendix B**)
- Supporting Data for Analysis of Affected Environment and Air Quality Technical Report (**Appendix C**)
- Agency Coordination and Public Involvement (**Appendix D**)
- Document Distribution List (**Appendix E**)
- Response to Comments on the Draft Supplemental Environmental Assessment (**Appendix F**)

1.2 PURPOSE OF THIS SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The Purpose of this Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA) is to assess the potential environmental impacts of a proposed modification to the Four Corner-Post Plan that was implemented at McCarran International Airport (LAS), Las Vegas, Nevada, in October 2001. The Four Corner-Post Plan was developed and implemented at LAS in 2001 as a direct result of the past and projected growth of air traffic at LAS. In furtherance of the Purpose and Need of the 2001 Four Corner-Post Plan Final Environmental Assessment, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) proposes to adjust the Four Corner-Post Plan by modifying the STAAV Area Navigation (RNAV) Standard Instrument Departure (SID) to a right-turn from Runway 25 for eastbound departures from LAS.¹ The Proposed Action is limited to adding an additional departure route to transition aircraft to the existing en-route structure that is currently used today (there would be no changes to the existing en-route structure). Because this document is a supplement to the 2001 Final Environmental Assessment (FEA) for the Four Corner-Post Plan, the Purpose and Need outlined in the 2001 FEA has been carried forward to this Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA) document for informational purposes.

For a further understanding of the Purpose and Need presented in the 2001 Four Corner-Post Plan Final Environmental Assessment, the Purpose and Need discussion from that document is included below in the shaded section for informational purposes; please note that the shaded section was taken directly from the 2001 FEA.²

PURPOSE AND NEED

The following section identifies the airspace problems associated with the Los Angeles Air Route Traffic Control Center (ARTCC) and the Las Vegas Terminal Radar Approach Control (TRACON) (the *need* for the Proposed Action) and the proposed solution to the problem (the *purpose* of the Proposed Action). In addition, the proposed time frame for the implementation of the Proposed Action is described.

Need for the Proposed Action

The need for the Las Vegas Four Corner-Post Plan (Proposed Action) is a direct result of the increasing demand at LAS, resulting in higher levels of operation. As demand increases, existing procedures become less efficient and increase the chances of inducing significant airspace delays.

¹ Standard Instrument Departure (SID) procedures were formerly referred to as Departure Procedures (DP) by the FAA. However, that nomenclature has changed since the issuance of the FONSI/ROD for the 2001 Four Corner-Post Plan at Las Vegas.

² FONSI/ROD for the Las Vegas Four Corner-Post Plan, McCarran International Airport, Las Vegas, Nevada. U.S. Department of Transportation, FAA, Western-Pacific Region. June 2001.

The City of Las Vegas is unique in that it is recognized as a world-class resort destination and the foremost gaming and entertainment center in the United States. It is also the site of many large conventions and trade shows that bring large numbers of business travelers to Las Vegas in concentrated time frames. This continued demand for hotel and convention services is the primary reason for the increase in demand at LAS.

McCarran International Airport is the 9th busiest airport in the United States and is served by 28 air carriers. Based on data contained in the *Northeast Extension of Concourse D*, prepared for Clark County, the following demand forecasts are provided:

"Passenger activity at LAS has increased from approximately 8.6 million enplanements in 1989 to approximately 16.9 million in 1999 – a total increase of 96 percent. This increase represents an average annual growth rate of about 7 percent. This large increase year after year can be attributed primarily to the rapid expansion of the Las Vegas economy, resident population growth, the development of major new resort complexes, and airlines providing service to Las Vegas at attractive fares. Also, a strong correlation has existed and continues to exist between the number of available hotel/motel rooms in the Las Vegas area and the number of passengers enplaned at LAS. Passenger enplanements are expected to increase to approximately 37.9 million by 2020, representing an average annual growth rate of 3.9 percent. The capacity of LAS has been estimated at 27.5 million annual enplaned passengers. Aircraft operations at LAS are projected to increase from 542,922 in 1999 to 705,000 by 2011. If airfield capacity did not constrain operations at LAS it is anticipated that annual aircraft operations would reach 724,160 by 2011 and 868,080 by 2020."

Less than optimum airspace design and procedures have created an impediment for air traffic controllers to efficiently manage the existing and forecast high traffic demand. Airspace inefficiencies in the Las Vegas TRACON are created because the existing approach and departure procedures use the same flight path corridors to the northeast, northwest, southeast, and southwest. This results in departing aircraft not being able to climb unrestricted and arriving aircraft being restricted to higher altitudes.

Purpose of the Proposed Action

The purpose of the Las Vegas Four Corner-Post Plan (Proposed Action) is to address the air traffic/airspace inefficiencies resulting from increased demand at LAS. The Proposed Action developed by the Los Angeles ARTCC and the Las Vegas TRACON includes a number of recommendations to improve the use of airspace, air traffic control procedures, reduce interaction with Nellis Air Traffic Control Facility, and reduce noise exposure to communities in the Las Vegas valley.

Existing coordination with Nellis Air Traffic Control Facility would be relieved because the majority of departing aircraft would be making left turns away from Nellis Air Traffic Control airspace. This left turn has the added benefit of reducing noise exposure over the city of Las Vegas. The proposed departure corridors were specifically designed to be located over sparsely populated areas initially and then transition to areas of no population.

The existing structure of the Las Vegas TRACON is an East Corner-Post system and has been in place since 1998. The East Corner-Post system was created to solve an aircraft sequencing problem that was occurring within Los Angeles ARTCC. The East Corner-Post system has only been an interim step to solving the greater airspace inefficiencies within the Los Angeles ARTCC and the Las Vegas TRACON. Thorough review of the existing approach and departure procedures at Las Vegas TRACON (in today's high demand environment) has determined that the Las Vegas TRACON needs to develop a Four Corner-Post Plan.

The proposed Las Vegas Four Corner-Post Plan is also a direction-based system that organizes aircraft from similar directions over a specific geographic position (referred to as fix). The proposed Las Vegas Four Corner-Post Plan further organizes airspace so that aircraft arriving from similar directions are directed over a specific fix and aircraft departing to similar directions are directed over a different fix. This separates arrival traffic from departure traffic eliminating the need for altitude restrictions. The location of a fix is defined for pilots and controllers (in Classic procedures) by the location of a radio navigation aid or determined by reference to one or more radio navigation aids. Aircraft operating with advanced navigation equipment utilize RNAV procedures with fixes defined by earth-based coordinates (latitude and longitude).

As mentioned previously, National Airspace Redesign (NAR) is a growing initiative to allow for more efficient air traffic management. NAR has recognized the Four Corner-Post Plan as following its strategy of creating a more efficient airspace environment; one that will enable aircraft to enter enroute and TRACON airspace more efficiently. This recognition has given the Las Vegas Four Corner-Post Plan national support, and the funding needed to see the project through to implementation.

Finally, the Las Vegas Four Corner-Post Plan would allow aircraft to benefit from advanced navigation systems by developing Area Navigation (RNAV) procedures in addition to the classic procedures that utilize ground-based navigation aids. RNAV procedures do not rely upon such fixed facilities, but rely upon advanced on-board navigation computers capable of accurately identifying the aircraft's position and course along its route. RNAV equipment can compute aircraft position, actual track and ground speed, and information relative to a flight route selected by a pilot. RNAV procedures would alleviate operational complexity and increase controller flexibility. When fully implemented, RNAV would simplify operations for pilots and

controllers and provide more defined flight paths that are intended to decrease noise exposure to the communities.³

In conclusion, the purpose of this Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA) is to study only the potential environmental impacts associated with modifying the STAAV RNAV SID (the Proposed Action). See **Section 1.5** for detailed information regarding the Purpose and Need for this Proposed Action.

1.3 PROPOSED FEDERAL ACTION

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) proposes to adjust the Four Corner-Post Plan by modifying the STAAV RNAV SID to a right-turn from Runway 25 for eastbound departures from LAS. The Proposed Action is limited to adding an additional departure route to transition aircraft to the existing en-route structure that is currently used today (there would be no changes to the existing en-route structure). **Exhibit 1.7** provides a graphic representation of the Proposed Action.

The Proposed Action, a modification to the STAAV RNAV SID, would provide the ability to navigate an aircraft by use of sophisticated on-board flight management computers, providing for precise navigation of aircraft along pre-determined tracks over the ground, without reliance on conventional ground-based navigational aids. Therefore, the Proposed Action would improve efficiency in the use of the LAS airspace and produce a reduction of potential future delays.

During west traffic flow at LAS (i.e. wind and weather conditions dictate that Runway 25 is the preferred departure runway), approximately 33 percent of all Runway 25 departures are bound for destinations east of Las Vegas and would therefore, be eligible for the modified STAAV RNAV SID.⁴ **Table 1.6** presents the total number of Runway 25 departures during successive days in April 2005, as well as the number of departures that would be eligible for the Proposed Action.

The FAA actions required to implement the Proposed Action include:

- Modify STAAV RNAV SID procedure for a right-turn from Runway 25 for eastbound departures from LAS;
- Mimic the route of the OVETO SID (see **Exhibit 1.2**), which was in place prior to implementation of the Four Corner-Post Plan;
- Ensure the developed procedures meet all FAA and air carrier criteria for flight operations standards;
- Refine specific parameters and language defining the procedure;
- Flight-test the procedure for conformance with safety standards;

³ For clarification purposes, references to the City of Las Vegas include the entire Las Vegas Metropolitan area.

⁴ LAS TRACON. May 24. 2005.

- Modify air traffic control orders and operational procedures by the Las Vegas TRACON;
- Provide appropriate briefings to airport and interested community representatives;
- Publish appropriate controller training materials required for airspace and procedural changes;
- Train controllers in the use of the procedure;
- Accomplish the necessary coordination for the publication of the modified STAAV RNAV SID for use by all eligible segments of the aviation community;
- Publish of the procedure in the FAA's U.S. Terminal Procedures publication.

1.3.1 Study Area for the Proposed Action

For the purpose of this Supplemental Environmental Assessment, the Study Area (or Area of Potential Effect), that encompasses the modification to the STAAV RNAV SID for Runway 25 departures, begins at the western end of Runway 25 of McCarran International Airport and continues on a five mile radius through the west, northwest, and northeast quadrants encompassing airspace also currently used for aircraft operations from North Las Vegas Airport and Nellis Air Force Base.

The Study Area encompasses airspace beginning at ground level and extending upward to 10,000 feet Above Ground Level (AGL). The STAAV RNAV departure from Runway 25 currently departs and continues to a point approximately four miles west of the airport, and then turns right. To account for any aircraft navigational equipment that might facilitate a slightly wider turn radius, the width of the Study Area as extended to consist of a five mile radius. See **Exhibit 1.1** for the Study Area associated with the Proposed Action.

During this projects scoping process, several Federal agencies requested that the study area be expanded to include public lands beyond the original identified Study Area. Therefore, the document has been prepared to include an Expanded Area that extends from the 10,000 foot AGL point to the outer limits of the Las Vegas Terminal Radar Approach Control (TRACON), a distance of approximately 40 Nautical Miles (NM). This Expanded Area is shown as a dashed line to indicate the flight paths for the Proposed Action. For the purposes of this document, a full environmental analysis will only be conducted within the Study Area, beginning at ground level and extending up to 10,000 feet Above Ground Level (AGL). The Expanded Area (dashed-line areas) will only analyze potential environmental impacts upon public lands (potential noise impacts and impacts to Department of Transportation Act, Section 4(f) lands). See **Exhibit 1.1** for the Expanded Area associated with the Proposed Action.

1.4 THE LAS VEGAS FOUR CORNER-POST PLAN

In June 2001, the FAA released a Final Environmental Assessment (2001 FEA) to implement the Four Corner-Post Plan at McCarran International Airport (LAS), Las Vegas, Nevada. The Four Corner-Post Plan is a system designed with the Airport at the center and corner posts positioned in the airspace around the Airport. The corner-post "fixes" (i.e. geographic points in airspace) at LAS are each located approximately forty miles from the Airport and each serves a specific geographic quadrant of the airspace surrounding LAS, which is controlled by the Las Vegas Terminal Radar Approach Control facility (TRACON). Departing flights are routed over corner-posts through published Standard Instrument Departure (SID) procedures before diverging along multiple paths to their destination. Similarly, the corner-posts provide a means to merge arriving aircraft from several directions into a single flow of traffic in preparation for landing at LAS through the use of published Standard Terminal Arrival (STAR) procedures. The SIDs and STARs developed as part of the Four Corner-Post Plan apply only to aircraft departing from and arriving at LAS.

The established corner-posts in the northeast, southeast, southwest, and west quadrants of the airspace surrounding LAS (Four Corner-Post Plan) alleviated the potential for airspace conflicts by organizing the LAS airspace to allow for the orderly flow of departing and arriving aircraft over specific corner-posts. This means that arriving aircraft were allowed to descend more efficiently and departing aircraft to climb to en-route altitudes more expeditiously. Specifically, use of the right-turn procedure for eastbound departures from Runway 25 was reduced with the implementation of the Four Corner-Post Plan in October 2001. Also, with the implementation of the Four Corner-Post Plan, the vertical limit of the Las Vegas TRACON airspace boundary was raised from 15,000 feet above Mean Sea Level (MSL) to 19,000 MSL (Flight Level 190)⁵ to improve the transition between terminal and en-route airspace.

One important goal in developing and implementing the Four Corner-Post Plan at LAS in 2001 was to establish Standard Instrument Departure (SID) and Standard Terminal Arrival Route (STAR) procedures, which require use of advanced Area Navigation (RNAV) technology to guide departing and arriving aircraft over more precise ground tracks than was possible with the conventional arrival and departure procedures in place at LAS prior to implementation of the Four Corner-Post Plan. Due to the lack of developed RNAV procedural criteria prior to the Four Corner-Post Plan, RNAV departure procedures could not be created that would meet the terrain and existing airspace constraints of the Las Vegas area. However, since the implementation of the Four Corner-Post Plan, the procedural criteria have changed. In addition, an airspace-use agreement has been made with Nellis Air Force Base, which provides a small "shelf" of airspace to accommodate LAS departures and ensure further separation from Nellis air traffic.

⁵ Altitudes above 18,000 feet MSL are referred to as Flight Levels (FL) in hundreds of feet. Below 18,000 feet MSL aircraft set their altimeter to a local pressure setting while above 18,000 feet MSL a standard altimeter setting is used by all aircraft.

1.4.1 Conventional Navigation and Area Navigation (RNAV)

Traditionally, Standard Instrument Departure (SID) procedures and Standard Terminal Arrival (STAR) procedures at an airport were based upon navigation via signals emitted by Very High Frequency Omni-directional Range (VOR) stations. A VOR is an earth-based radio Navigation Aid (NAVAID) that provides a means for pilots to navigate via reference to one VOR signal or to an airspace location (or "fix") derived from reference to two or more VOR signals or other radio NAVAIDs.

Today's modern aircraft are equipped with sophisticated on-board computer systems that allow pilots to navigate via RNAV procedures using a succession of waypoints, which are defined as coordinates (latitude and longitude), but do not require flying over ground-based VORs. Therefore, RNAV waypoints and procedures are significantly more accurate than conventional VOR-based procedures. As an example, conventional procedures are greatly impacted by the accuracy of the associated Navigation Aid (NAVAID), the distance of the aircraft from the NAVAID, the accuracy of the aircraft's on-board instruments, the pilot's individual skills, and outside forces such as wind effects. RNAV equipment derives position information from satellites and/or ground-based Distance Measuring Equipment (DME) and compensates for wind effect, making it considerably more accurate than conventional VOR-based procedures.

Additional benefits of RNAV technology include the capability to improve airspace efficiency by producing more predictable aircraft ground tracks, thereby reducing an aircraft's noise footprint over any one ground area, as well as reducing pilot and controller workload. Because the majority of commercial air-carrier and corporate aircraft in operation today are RNAV-equipped, a primary goal of the LAS Four Corner-Post Plan was to capitalize on available technology by development of RNAV procedures. Additionally, the conventional departure and arrival procedures in place at LAS were also modified to accommodate non-RNAV-equipped aircraft. Approximately 95 percent of aircraft in operation at LAS are RNAV-equipped and regularly use RNAV procedures.⁶

1.4.2 Airspace Inefficiencies Prior to Implementation of the Four Corner-Post Plan

The Four Corner-Post Plan was developed and implemented at LAS to improve airspace efficiency by alleviating the potential for airspace conflicts within Las Vegas TRACON airspace. Aircraft arriving at LAS follow one of several Standard Terminal Arrival (STAR) procedures developed for the Airport.

A Standard Terminal Arrival (STAR) is a coded air traffic control route defined by a series of fixes (i.e. geographic points in airspace) that facilitates transition from the en-route airspace to the terminal (arrival) airspace. The STAR ends when it joins a

⁶ Federal Aviation Administration, Las Vegas TRACON. April 14, 2004.

Standard Instrument Approach Procedure (SIAP).⁷ Similarly, departing aircraft follow a Standard Instrument Departure (SID) that defines a series of fixes to aid in transitioning from the departure phase to the en-route phase of flight. STAR and SID procedures are published for use by all pilots and depict the route to be flown graphically and textually. The use of STAR and SID procedures reduces controller and pilot workload and the potential for confusion by reducing communication and the need for confirming lengthy instructions.

Prior to the development of the Four Corner-Post Plan at LAS, all of the Airport's STARs and SIDs were conventional procedures, which utilize earth-based navigational aids (see **Section 1.4.1, Conventional Navigation and Area Navigation (RNAV)**, of this SEA for detailed information about conventional navigational procedures). The inefficiencies in Las Vegas TRACON's airspace prior to implementation of the Four Corner-Post Plan existed because the approach and departure procedures at LAS used the same flight-path corridors to the northeast, west, southeast, and southwest, which increased the potential for airspace conflicts. Several factors contributed to the design and evolution of these procedures; among them include:

- The limitation of conventional earth-based navigational aids
- The predominant runway configurations in place at LAS prior to implementation of the Four Corner-Post Plan
- Informal noise abatement procedures at McCarran International Airport
- The adjacent Nellis Air Force Base (LSV)

In addition to the limitations of conventional earth-based navigational aids previously discussed in **Section 1.4.1**, only two such facilities are in place in the Las Vegas Valley; 1) the Las Vegas VORTAC, located at LAS, and 2) the Boulder City VORTAC located 2.9 nautical miles (NM) south of the Boulder City Municipal Airport.⁸ A third conventional earth-based navigational aid is located at Nellis Air Force Base. However, only Nellis Air Force Base's Distance Measuring Equipment (DME) has been certified for use by civilian pilots/aircraft in the National Airspace System (NAS).

⁷ A Standard Instrument Approach Procedure (SIAP) is a chart that provides instruction on how to navigate to the runway surface using a specific navigation aid or RNAV capabilities.

⁸ A VORTAC is a Very-High Frequency Omnidirectional Range (VOR) Station with Tactical Air Navigation capabilities (i.e. VOR azimuth and Tactical Air Navigation distance measuring equipment at one site).

1.4.2.1 Proximity to Nellis Air Force Base

Nellis Air Force Base is located approximately eight nautical miles (NM) north of LAS. The Nellis Air Traffic Control Facility (NATCF) provides Air Traffic Control (ATC) services for aircraft operating to and from Nellis and, at times, North Las Vegas Airport. The airspace delegated to NATCF is immediately adjacent to Las Vegas TRACON and both share a common airspace boundary. As depicted on **Exhibit 1.2** and in **Figure 1.1**, there is a portion of airspace delegated to NATCF identified as Area A-4; this portion of airspace is vertically divided with NATCF responsible for the airspace from the surface to 6,000 feet MSL and Las Vegas TRACON responsible for 7,000 feet MSL through 9,000 feet MSL. Area A-4 is also shown on **Exhibits 1.2 through 1.7**.

	Altitude 9,000' MSL
Airspace Controlled by Las Vegas TRACON (7,000' MSL - 9,000' MSL)	7,000' MSL
Standard Vertical Separation (6,000' - 7,000' MSL)	6,000' MSL
Airspace Controlled by Nellis Air Traffic Control Facility (NATCF) (Area A-4) (Surface - 6,000' MSL)	Surface

Note: Mean Sea Level (MSL) is the average height of the surface of the sea for all stages of the tide and is used as a reference for elevations/altitudes.

**FIGURE 1.1
DIVISION OF AIRSPACE RESPONSIBILITY IN THE VICINITY OF MCCARRAN
INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AND NELLIS AIR FORCE BASE**

In order to ensure proper separation of aircraft controlled by NATCF and those controlled by Las Vegas TRACON, each control facility is required to ensure aircraft operating within their respective airspace boundaries remain at least 1.5 nautical mile (NM) from the common airspace sector boundary. When this cannot be accomplished, controllers at each facility must directly communicate to ensure coordination, adding to controller workload. **Figure 1.2** depicts aircraft separation between sector boundaries.

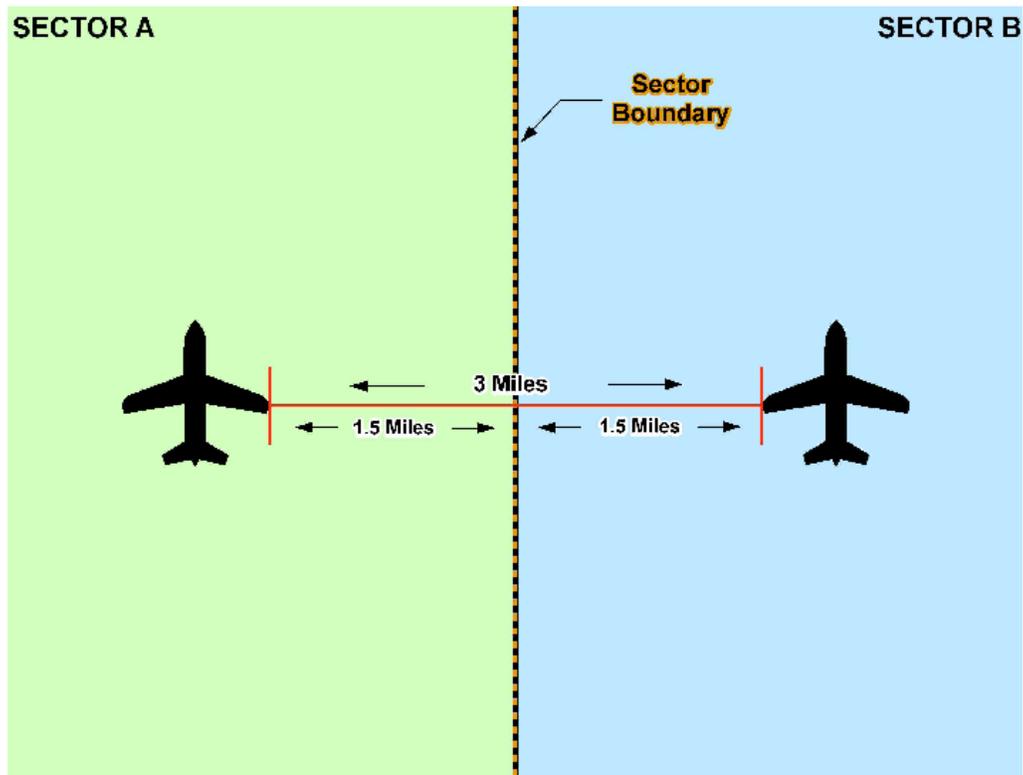


FIGURE 1.2
EXAMPLE OF AIRCRAFT SEPARATION BETWEEN SECTOR BOUNDARIES

1.4.2.2 Noise Abatement Procedures and Preferential Runway Use System at McCarran International Airport

The Informal Noise Abatement Procedures and Preferential Runway-Use Program in place at LAS were established prior to implementation of the Four Corner-Post Plan in an effort to minimize aircraft noise impacts on surrounding communities. However, such programs do not relieve the pilot of final authority for the safety of the flight or compliance with FAA air traffic control instructions. Therefore, unless the safety of a flight would be compromised, FAA air traffic control procedures typically adhere to the Airport's recommended noise abatement procedures and runway use preferences.

Elements of the informal noise abatement procedures and preferential runway use program at LAS that affect Runway 25 departures are listed below.⁹

- Runway 25R is the preferred runway for air carrier aircraft departures;
- Runway 25L/R turbojet departures are to fly runway heading until reaching a distance of 3 nautical miles from the LAS VORTAC before executing a left turn to depart the LAS area;
- Runway 25L/R turbojet departures are to fly runway heading until reaching a distance of 4 nautical miles from the LAS VORTAC or an altitude of 4,000 feet MSL before executing a right turn to depart the LAS area.

Runway Usage at McCarran International Airport

LAS has two pairs of parallel runways, one oriented east-west (Runways 7L/R-25L/R), the other oriented north-south (Runways 1L/R-19L/R). The manner and extent to which each runway is used is determined by the prevailing wind, existing weather conditions, and the Airport's Informal Noise Abatement Procedures.

The predominant traffic flow for aircraft operations is to the west and south. As shown in **Table 1.1**, during Visual Meteorological (VMC)¹⁰ conditions, west and south traffic flow at LAS since October 2004 occurs approximately 80 percent of the time; during Instrument Meteorological Conditions (IMC)¹¹ conditions, approximately 30 percent of the time.¹² In October 2004, a second Instrument Landing System (ILS) was added at LAS to support Runway 1L. Prior to the installation of that second ILS, west and south flow during VMC occurred approximately 80 percent of the time and approximately 82 percent of the time during IMC. At LAS, IMC occurs less than two percent of the time, compared to an average of approximately 10 percent for most U.S. airports.¹³ **Table 1.2** depicts the average daily runway use by category of operation.

⁹ FAR Part 150 Update, McCarran International Airport, Brown Buntin Associates, Inc, January, 1994.

¹⁰ Visual Meteorological Conditions exist when cloud ceiling heights are at or above 1,000 feet Above Ground Level (AGL) and visibility is equal to or greater than 3 Statute Miles (SM).

¹¹ Instrument Meteorological Conditions exist when cloud ceiling heights are less than 1,000 feet Above Ground Level (AGL) and visibility is less than 3 Statute Miles (SM).

¹² Runway Capacity and Aircraft Delay Analysis, Ricondo and Associates, Inc, July, 2000.

¹³ Runway Capacity and Aircraft Delay Analysis, Ricondo and Associates, Inc, July, 2000.

Table 1.1
RUNWAY USAGE - SOUTH AND WEST FLOWS

Time Period	Visual Meteorological Conditions (VMC)	Instrument Meteorological Conditions (IMC)
Prior to October 2004	80%	82%
October 2004 to Present	80%	30%

Notes:

- Second Instrument Landing system (ILS) added to Runway 1L in October 2004.
- During IMC, Airport will generally move to a west and north flow to favor the use of both ILS approaches, except when wind or weather preclude use.

Source: Federal Aviation Administration Control Tower, Las Vegas, Nevada. July 2005

Table 1.2
RUNWAY USE PERCENTAGES AT MCCARRAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT 2003

Runway	Air Carrier Operations				Commuter/General Aviation Operations			
	Arrivals		Departures		Arrivals		Departures	
	% Day	% Night	% Day	% Night	% Day	% Night	% Day	% Night
01L	2.4%	0.8%	1.6%	0.3%	7.8%	3.6%	5.8%	2.3%
01R	7.2%	2.9%	3.8%	2.9%	4.5%	3.6%	2.2%	1.8%
19L	5.6%	13.0%	22.1%	1.7%	8.8%	10.0%	35.7%	29.8%
19R	3.9%	4.1%	0.7%	0.2%	61.9%	58.7%	38.2%	43.8%
07L	0.0%	0.4%	7.0%	2.3%	0.2%	2.1%	5.2%	2.2%
07R	0.2%	0.4%	0.1%	0.0%	0.4%	1.0%	0.4%	0.3%
25L	78.9%	68.5%	0.4%	1.7%	16.0%	11.0%	0.4%	1.3%
25R	1.8%	9.9%	64.3%	90.9%	0.4%	9.9%	12.1%	18.5%

Note:

- Day is defined by the Integrated Noise Model (INM) as 7:00 AM to 9:59 PM local time.
- Night is defined by the Integrated Noise Model (INM) as 10:00 PM to 6:59 AM local time.

Source: Clark County Department of Aviation. June 2005, *Terminal 3, Environmental Assessment Administrative Draft Report*.

1.4.3 Airspace Conflicts Prior to Implementation of the Four Corner-Post Plan

The purpose of the Four Corner-Post Plan at LAS was to enhance airspace and air traffic control efficiency by eliminating airspace conflicts and reducing controller workload. It was intended to increase safety and efficiency and lead to a reduction in aircraft delay by realigning the STAR and SID procedures. It was further intended to take full advantage of technology developments. The procedures in use prior to the Four Corner-Post Plan created airspace conflicts because they required arrivals

and departures to use the same flight path corridors. The result was that departing aircraft were unable to climb unrestricted to cruising altitude and arriving aircraft were unable to descend in a timely manner. This operation required rigorous attention by the air traffic controllers to monitor altitudes, ensure safe separation was maintained, and ensure aircraft remained within delegated airspace. Aircraft unable to climb caused a greater noise impact on the community. Additionally, descending aircraft were precluded from applying power-off, fuel-efficient descent techniques.

1.4.4 Runway 25 Departure Procedures in Place Prior to Implementation of Four Corner-Post Plan

Prior to the implementation of the Four Corner-Post Plan at LAS in 2001, aircraft departing Runway 25 for eastern destinations maintained runway heading until reaching a point three miles west of the Airport for aircraft turning left and four miles west of the Airport for aircraft turning right, as measured from the LAS VORTAC (a conventional navigational aid) before starting their turn to the east to depart LAS airspace. This was the requirement of both the MEAD and OVETO conventional SIDs and had been in use for many years. **Exhibit 1.2** shows these Runway 25 departure procedures that were in place prior to implementation of the Four Corner-Post Plan.

The MEAD and OVETO SIDs were restricted to a narrow corridor, approximately 4.8 NM wide, between Las Vegas TRACON airspace and that airspace controlled by the Nellis Air Force Base Air Traffic Control Facility (NATCF). LAS TRACON air traffic controllers had to ensure that departing aircraft did not violate airspace delegated to NATCF, which required additional controller coordination.

1.4.5 Implementation of the Four Corner-Post Plan - Runway 25 Departure Procedures, October 2001

Implementation of the Four Corner-Post Plan at LAS in October 2001 alleviated the potential for airspace conflicts by redesigning arrival and departure routes to take advantage of technology advances by establishing RNAV arrival and departure procedures, while retaining conventional routes for those aircraft that were not RNAV-equipped.

With the implementation of the Four Corner-Post Plan, use of the OVETO SID was reduced in favor of the newly designed RNAV SIDs. The RNAV SIDs established a waypoint west of the Airport where all affected aircraft would initially turn left. A waypoint is a predetermined geographical position defined in terms of latitude/longitude (earth-based). A waypoint is most often used to indicate a change in direction, speed, or altitude along the desired path. RNAV procedures employ both fly-by and fly-over waypoints. A fly-by waypoint is used to delineate when an aircraft should begin a turn to the next course prior to reaching the waypoint separating the two route segments. This can best be described as turn anticipation. A fly-over waypoint is used when the aircraft must fly over the precise

point prior to starting a turn. Pilots are able to identify the waypoints using the GPS system, with the assistance of onboard, computerized Flight Management System (FMS) equipment.

The waypoint west of the Airport where all affected aircraft would initially turn left replaced the previous three Nautical Mile DME "fix" (i.e. geographical point in airspace) that was measured from the Las Vegas VOR. The Four Corner-Post Plan did not eliminate the three nautical-mile restriction for departures from Runway 25 utilizing conventional departure procedures. Instead, the intent was that aircraft using the conventional procedure would be vectored to emulate the new RNAV departure route. However, it was also the intent that at least five percent of the RNAV traffic would use the right turn departure procedure. The implementation of the Four Corner-Post Plan RNAV procedures also reduced the coordination required between Las Vegas TRACON and Nellis Air Force Base controllers.

It is important to note that the OVETO (conventional) SID was never cancelled as a result of implementation of the Four Corner-Post Plan in October 2001. Instead, a Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) was issued stating that the OVETO SID was "not available." It is also important to note that the STAAV 1 RNAV SID was created to mimic the OVETO SID for approximately 6 miles immediately after departure. Additionally, during periods of light traffic, some eastbound aircraft are turned right after departure and radar vectored to join the enroute structure. **Exhibit 1.3** shows the Runway 25 departure procedures implemented as part of the Four Corner-Post Plan at LAS. For a more thorough description of the Four Corner-Post Plan, refer to the FONSI/ROD for the Final Four Corner-Post Environmental Assessment, issued by the FAA on June 26, 2001.¹⁴

1.4.6 Interim Changes made to Runway 25 Procedures after Implementation

Implementation of the Four Corner-Post Plan at LAS accomplished the purpose and need of the project, which allowed air traffic to be managed more efficiently, resulting in benefits for the users and managers of the National Airspace System (NAS). However, after implementation, several deficiencies were experienced.

The original RNAV SIDs employed fly-by waypoints designed to emulate the three nautical mile fix. After implementation, however, it was found that aircraft were turning too far west of the intended route, which created a wider dispersion impact and significant variations in ground tracks. Consequently, the FAA suspended the RNAV departure procedures for a 30-day period starting October 4, 2002, and vectored all departures. A summary matrix of all interim changes made since the implementation of the Four-Corner Post Plan in October 2001 is presented in **Table 1.3**. Upon review, each proposed interim change was deemed to be categorically excluded from the environmental analysis process in accordance with FAA Order 1050.1E, Environmental Impacts: Policies and Procedures.

¹⁴ FONSI/ROD for the Las Vegas Four Corner-Post Plan, McCarran International Airport, Las Vegas, Nevada. U.S. Department of Transportation, FAA, Western-Pacific Region. June 2001.

1.4.6.1 First Interim Change Made in January 2003

In January 2003, the FAA issued the first revised RNAV departure procedures in an attempt to reconcile the initial turning point for aircraft departing LAS. As shown in **Exhibit 1.4**, the new procedures required aircraft to fly-over a waypoint, either LODZY or EYENE, located 2.5 miles west of the Airport. The fly-by waypoint designated ANDYY, located six miles west of the Airport, was eliminated. Aircraft were then routed from LODZY or EYENE south to the IDALE waypoint.

The amended RNAV SID procedures were published as the AACES TWO, the WYLLD TWO, the IDALE TWO, the MINEY TWO, and the STAAV TWO procedures. While these changes simplified the procedures and began producing operational efficiencies, it was determined that the left-turn for aircraft departing LAS was now occurring too early. See **Table 1.3** for more information.

1.4.6.2 Second Interim Change Made in November 2003

The FAA continued to review the procedures to address both the concerns of the communities surrounding LAS and of the Clark County Department of Aviation (CCDOA). The FAA and CCDOA agreed to identify a departure gate southwest of the Airport through which all aircraft would be routed, as a potential solution to the problems encountered with the left turn for aircraft departing LAS. In November 2003, the FAA published a second revised RNAV procedure for departures from Runway 25 at LAS. As shown in **Exhibit 1.5**, these revised departure procedures defined fly-by waypoints at new locations as the initial waypoints.

The new waypoints, designated as RBELL and PIRMD, directed aircraft six miles west of the Airport, resulting in the aircraft making a steeper southerly turn before heading to the next fly-by waypoint, designated as ROPPR. The revised RNAV SID procedures were renamed to allow the FAA to revert to the previous edition if problems were encountered. The TRALER ONE replaced the AACES TWO and the COWBY ONE replaced the WYLDD TWO procedures. The IDALE TWO procedure was replaced by the BOACH ONE and SHEAD ONE procedures, which modified the IDALE TWO for aircraft southbound and westbound departures, respectively. Although these latest changes accomplished the FAA's desired operational efficiencies, aircraft noise continued to impact areas in the vicinity of the Airport. See **Table 1.3** for more information.

1.4.6.3 Third Interim Change Made in March 2005

The third and latest interim change to the Runway 25 procedures at LAS was implemented on March 17, 2005. These changes were made to more accurately contain the departure tracks within the Cooperative Management Area (CMA) and ensure aircraft would exit the CMA through the egress gate required by CCDOA. The most recent changes involved slight modifications of the latitude and longitude of the RBELL, PIRMD, ROPPR, CESAR, BOACH, MDDGG waypoints. Review of flight tracks by the CCDOA indicates the changes have accomplished the desired effect of containing approximately 98 percent of the flight tracks within the CMA.¹⁵ The FAA continues to work with CCDOA to refine the Runway 25 departure procedure at LAS.

Exhibit 1.6 presents the current Runway 25 departure procedures in place at LAS and the expanded view of flight tracks over Enterprise (see also **Exhibit 4.8** in **Chapter Four, Environmental Consequences**, for a close-in view of the current Runway 25 departure procedures in place at LAS in relation to major roadways). See **Table 1.3** for more information.

¹⁵ Clark County Department of Aviation. May 2005.

**Table 1.3
SUMMARY MATRIX OF INTERIM PROCEDURE CHANGES SINCE IMPLEMENTATION OF FOUR
CORNER-POST PLAN IN OCTOBER 2001**

Interim Change Number	Date Implemented	Original Procedure Name	New Procedure Name	Modification
N/A	October 16, 2001	AACES ONE RNAV WYLLD ONE RNAV IDALE ONE RNAV	N/A	Initial implementation of the Four Corner Post Plan. Established waypoints west of the airport for initial departure routing. Runway 25R departures were routed over the LODZY waypoint, 3 NM west of the airport while Runway 25R departures were routed over EYENE waypoint, 2 NM west of the airport. Aircraft assigned AACES ONE, IDALE ONE and WYLLD ONE were routed over ANDDY waypoint, located 6 NM west of the airport before turning south to the IDALE waypoint. The LODZY, EYENE and ANDDY waypoints were designated fly-by waypoints.
		STAAV ONE RNAV	N/A	The STAAV ONE procedure routed Runway 25 departures to LODZY and EYENE waypoints, however the waypoints were designated as fly-over waypoints. After passing the appropriate waypoint aircraft turned right northbound to the STAAV waypoint.
		MINEY ONE RNAV	N/A	The MINEY ONE procedure was applicable only to runway 7 departures.
1	January 23, 2003	AACES ONE RNAV WYLLD ONE RNAV IDALE ONE RNAV STAAV ONE RNAV MINEY ONE RNAV	AACES TWO RNAV WYLLD TWO RNAV IDALE TWO RNAV STAAV TWO RNAV MINEY TWO RNAV	This change modified the location of the EYENE waypoint to 2.5 NM west of the airport. It modified the designation of the LODZY and EYENE waypoints from fly-by to fly-over and eliminated the ANDDY waypoint. Departures from Runway 25R would now fly over LODZY, departures from Runway 25L would fly over EYENE. After crossing the appropriate waypoint the aircraft turned directly to the IDALE waypoint located southwest of the airport, while STAAV departures turned right.

Table 1.3, Continued
SUMMARY MATRIX OF INTERIM PROCEDURE CHANGES SINCE IMPLEMENTATION OF FOUR CORNER-POST PLAN IN OCTOBER 2001

Interim Change Number	Date Implemented	Original Procedure Name	New Procedure Name	Modification
2	November 12, 2003	AACES TWO RNAV WYLLD TWO RNAV IDALE TWO RNAV	TRALER ONE RNAV COWBY ONE RNAV BOACH ONE RNAV	This change modified the location of the initial RNAV waypoints for Runway 25 departures. The LODZY (Runway 25R) waypoint was relocated 6 NM west of the airport and renamed RBELL. The EYENE (Runway 25L) waypoint was relocated 6 NM west of the airport and renamed PIRMD. The waypoint designation was changed from fly-over to fly-by for both waypoints. The IDALE waypoint was relocated to the east and renamed ROPPR. The new procedures specified a course to fly between RBELL or PIRMD to ROPPR. A crossing altitude of below 7,000 feet MSL was established at ROPPR. The IDALE TWO RNAV SID was replaced by BOACH ONE RNAV SID for southbound flights and SHEAD ONE RNAV SID for west-bound flights. The MINEY TWO RNAV SID was cancelled. The PRFUM ONE RNAV SID was developed for aircraft departing runways 25/19 destined to the Phoenix area.
			SHEAD ONE RNAV PRFUM ONE RNAV	
		MINEY TWO RNAV	CANCELLED	
		SHEAD ONE RNAV	SHEAD TWO RNAV	
3	March 17, 2005	TRALER ONE RNAV COWBY ONE RNAV BOACH ONE RNAV SHEAD TWO RNAV PRFUM ONE RNAV	TRALER TWO RNAV COWBY TWO RNAV BOACH TWO RNAV SHEAD THREE RNAV PRFUM TWO RNAV	The latest change relocated the RBELL (Runway 25R) and PIRMD (Runway 25L) waypoints to 6.2 NM west of the airport for all but the STAAV RNAV SID. It specifies a specific course to fly from RBELL/PRIMD WAYPOINTS TO ROPPR waypoint and eliminated the JEBBB waypoint for Runway 25 departures. The new course to ROPPR is farther east than the previous course to conform to the CMA.

1.5 PURPOSE AND NEED

The following section identifies the Purpose and Need of the Proposed Action.

1.5.1 Need for the Proposed Action

The implementation of the Proposed Action at LAS is needed as a direct result of increases in total passengers and operation levels. Aviation activity at LAS has recovered from the events of September 11, 2001 faster than at other U.S. airports and annual operations are projected to increase at this elevated rate over the coming years. An unanticipated impact of the implementation of the Four Corner-Post Plan has been the inducement of departure delays stemming from the separation distances required for departures from two different runways over the same waypoint. Coupled with the continual increase in traffic demand, these departure delays have contributed to reduced overall airspace efficiency and prevented the full attainment of the airspace efficiency envisioned in the Four Corner Post Plan. Further, these delays have caused operators serving destinations east of Las Vegas to operate at reduced efficiency which affects overall airspace efficiency. The final need for the Proposed Action is to recapture the effectiveness that was lost from the reduction in the use of the right-turn procedure from Runway 25 for eastbound traffic as part of the implementation of the Four Corner-Post Plan.

Las Vegas is recognized as a resort destination and the foremost gaming and entertainment center in the United States. It is the site of many large conventions and trade shows that attract large numbers of business and leisure travelers in concentrated time frames. Prior to implementation of the Four Corner-Post Plan in 2001, LAS passenger traffic had increased by an average of 5.7 percent per year between 1989 and 1999.¹⁶ The large increase year after year was attributed primarily to the rapid expansion of the Las Vegas economy, residential population growth, the development of major new resort complexes, and operators providing service to Las Vegas at attractive fares. A strong correlation exists between the number of available hotel/motel rooms in the Las Vegas area and the number of enplaned passengers at LAS.¹⁷ As a direct result of these increased enplaned passengers, higher levels of operations were recorded at LAS, which further supported the need to implement operational changes. The historic passenger counts and forecast passenger levels at LAS are presented in **Table 1.4**.

A study entitled, Aviation Activity Forecast Report for Ivanpah Valley Airport was prepared by URS Corporation in November 2003. This study was updated by URS in June 2005 and re-titled Forecast of Commercial Service Airport Activity in the Las Vegas Metropolitan Area (approved by FAA, October 2005). The June 2005 study found that aviation activity at LAS has recovered from the events of September 11,

¹⁶ FONSI/ROD for the Las Vegas Four Corner-Post Plan, McCarran International Airport, Las Vegas, Nevada. U.S. Department of Transportation, FAA, Western-Pacific Region. June 2001.

¹⁷ Final Environmental Assessment for the Construction of Terminal 3 at McCarran International Airport, Ricondo and Associates, September 2005. FONSI/ROD, November 4, 2005.

2001, faster than other US airports. Within the document, annual operations were forecast to increase at a rate of 2.26 percent throughout the Las Vegas region over the next 20 years and the growth rate at LAS was forecast to be slightly higher, at approximately 2.41 percent per year. Refer to **Table 1.5** for the aviation activity forecast at LAS. The study also validated CCDOA's determination that a supplementary commercial services airport in southern Nevada would be required to serve CCDOA's needs sometime before the year 2020.

Table 1.4
HISTORIC AND FORECAST PASSENGER LEVELS AT LAS

Historic Passenger Counts		Forecast Passenger Levels	
Year	Number of Passengers	Year	Number of Passengers
1989	17,109,000	2005	42,130,000
1990	19,084,000	2006	43,270,000
1991	20,172,000	2007	44,440,000
1992	20,913,000	2008	45,640,000
1993	22,492,000	2009	46,880,000
1994	26,850,000	2010	48,140,000
1995	28,027,000	2011	49,510,000
1996	30,460,000	2012	50,780,000
1997	30,306,000	2013	52,160,000
1998	30,227,000	2014	53,570,000
1999	33,669,000	2015	55,020,000
2000	36,866,000	2016	56,510,000
2001	35,181,000	2017	58,040,000
2002	35,009,000	2018	59,610,000
2003	36,265,000	2019	61,220,000
2004	41,442,000	2020	62,870,000
		2021	64,580,000
		2022	66,320,000
		2023	68,120,000
		2024	69,960,000
		2025	71,850,000
Percent Change 1989 - 2004	142%	Percent Change 2005 - 2025	71%
Percent Change 1989 - 2025		320%	
Historic Average Annual Growth Rate		5.7%	
Forecast Average Annual Growth Rate		2.7%	

Source: *History and Future of Operations at McCarran*, presented by Clark County Department of Aviation at FAR Part 150 Update Public Working Group. September 27, 2005.

Table 1.5
FORECAST OF TOTAL AIRCRAFT OPERATIONS AT LAS

Year	Type of Operation						TOTAL
	Air Carrier	Commuter	Cargo	Air Tour	General Aviation	Military	
2004	357,388	16,800	6,436	89,393	70,000	2,200	542,217
2005	363,185	16,495	6,760	93,018	71,730	2,000	553,188
2006	371,852	20,105	7,280	96,836	71,283	2,000	569,356
2007	380,634	23,691	7,280	100,618	70,886	2,000	585,109
2008	390,360	25,016	7,280	104,618	70,536	2,000	599,810
2009	400,635	25,836	7,800	108,800	70,230	2,000	615,301
2010	408,776	25,748	8,320	113,200	69,964	2,000	628,008
2011	419,626	26,445	8,320	117,818	69,738	2,000	643,947
2012	431,076	26,594	9,360	122,400	69,548	2,000	660,978
2013	442,657	27,249	9,360	127,200	69,393	2,000	677,859
2014	454,352	28,810	9,880	132,436	69,272	2,000	696,750
2015	457,611	30,193	9,880	137,818	69,182	2,000	706,684
2020	518,654	37,524	11,440	167,797	69,162	2,000	806,577
2025	588,526	44,727	13,000	204,297	69,766	2,000	922,316
AACGR (2004-2030)	2.4%	4.8%	3.4%	4.0%	0.0%	-0.5%	2.6%

Note: AACGR stands for Average Annual Compound Growth Rate.

Source: *Forecast of Commercial Service Airport Activity in the Las Vegas Metropolitan Area*, prepared by URS. June 2005.

During the design and implementation of the Four Corner-Post Plan, CCDOA expressed reservations that elimination of the right-turn departure procedure from Runway 25 for eastbound traffic would have a potentially negative effect on the sustainable capacity of LAS Airport. CCDOA reserved judgment on the implementation of the RNAV procedures, as an air traffic efficiency enhancement, because the initial operational impacts from the procedures were unknown.

An unanticipated impact of the implementation of the Four Corner-Post Plan has been the inducement of departure delays negating some of the intended airspace efficiencies. The requirement for all Runway 25 and Runway 19 departures to fly over a single waypoint (ROPPR) southwest of LAS has required Air Traffic Control (ATC) to provide additional spacing for a Runway 19 departure when preceded by a Runway 25 departure. In other words, for safety reasons, aircraft departures from two different runways flying over the same waypoint must maintain a minimum separation distance. Because of the separation required, delays result and contribute to reduced airspace efficiency. This circumstance, coupled with the continual increase in traffic demand, has caused operators serving destinations east of Las Vegas to operate at reduced efficiency which also impacts overall airspace efficiency.

As stated earlier, the OVETO (conventional) SID was never cancelled as a result of implementation of the Four Corner-Post Plan in October 2001. Instead, a Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) was issued stating that the OVETO SID was “not available.” It is also important to note that the STAAV 1 RNAV SID was created to mimic the OVETO SID for approximately 6 miles immediately after departure. Additionally, during periods of light traffic, some eastbound aircraft are turned right after departure and radar vectored to join the enroute structure. Thus, the final need for the Proposed Action is to recapture the effectiveness that was lost from the reduction in the use of the right-turn procedure from Runway 25 for eastbound traffic as part of the implementation of the Four Corner-Post Plan.

LAS is now the 5th busiest Airport in the United States presently serving thirty-five scheduled air carriers and five to seven charter operators, depending on the season.¹⁸ According to the *Environmental Assessment for the Construction of Terminal 3*, passenger activity at LAS increased from 9.6 million enplanements in 1990 to approximately 18.4 million enplanements in 2000.¹⁹ Passenger activity has since increased to 41.4 million in 2004.²⁰ The growth is expected to increase to 63 million passengers by 2020.²¹ However, procedural deficiencies associated with the current “left turn” departure procedure have created a hindrance for air traffic controllers’ abilities to efficiently manage the existing and forecasted high traffic demand.

The FAA recognizes the Las Vegas Four Corner-Post Plan as being the foremost strategy for improving airspace efficiency in the southwestern and western regions of the United States. The implementation of this Plan in 2001 allowed air traffic to be managed more efficiently, resulting in benefits for the users and managers of the National Airspace System (NAS). The proposed modification to the Las Vegas Four Corner-Post Plan would continue to benefit all parties involved through the continued use of precise Area Navigation (RNAV) departure procedures.

1.5.1.1 Summary of Needs for the Proposed Action

The following is a summary of the Needs for the Proposed Action:

- The implementation of operational changes at LAS is needed as a direct result of increases in total passengers and operation levels.
- Aviation activity at LAS has recovered from the events of September 11, 2001 faster than at other US airports. Annual operations are to increase at a rate of approximately 2.41 percent over the next twenty years.
- An unanticipated impact of the implementation of the Four Corner-Post Plan has been the inducement of departure delays negating the intended airspace

¹⁸ Clark County Department of Aviation. August 2006.

¹⁹ *Environmental Assessment for the Construction of Terminal 3*, prepared by Ricondo and Associates. March 2003.

²⁰ *Las Vegas Metro Area Forecast, Annual Passengers*. April 21, 2005.

²¹ Clark County Department of Aviation. July 2005.

efficiencies. The requirement for all Runway 25 and Runway 19 departures to fly over a single waypoint (ROPPR) southwest of LAS has required ATC to provide additional spacing for a Runway 19 departure when preceded by a Runway 25 departure. This circumstance, coupled with the continual increase in traffic demand, has caused operators serving destinations east of Las Vegas to operate at reduced efficiency. Increasing operator efficiency by permitting an RNAV right-turn SID from runway 25 for eastbound departures would result in overall airspace efficiency.

- The final need for the Proposed Action is to recapture the effectiveness that was lost from the reduction in the use of the right-turn procedure from Runway 25 for eastbound traffic as part of the implementation of the Four Corner-Post Plan. The proposed solution to the problem is the modification of the STAAV RNAV SID for Runway 25 departures to accommodate eastbound traffic.

1.5.2 Purpose of the Proposed Action

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to improve efficiency in LAS airspace, ensure LAS can meet its forecast future demand, and reduce its potential for future delays, while maintaining a commensurate level of safety. Modifications to the STAAV RNAV SID for eastbound departures from Runway 25 at LAS would meet the needs discussed in **Sections 1.5.1 and 1.5.1.1** of this SEA. As shown in **Exhibit 1.7**, the Proposed Action would route eastbound departures from Runway 25 north of LAS. The design and implementation of the Proposed Action would utilize an area of airspace (A-8) delegated to the Las Vegas TRACON by the Nellis Air Traffic Control Facility (NATCF). The delegation of this airspace would largely maintain the controller workload reduction achieved in the Four Corner-Post Plan. The Proposed Action RNAV SID would be designated STAAV 3 and would provide a right hand turn departure route for eastbound RNAV equipped aircraft departing Runway 25.

Table 1.6
RUNWAY 25 DEPARTURES

Date	Total Number of Runway 25 Departures	Runway 25 Departures that are Assigned a Right Turn After Departure (STAAV)	Number of Runway 25 Departures Eligible for Proposed Right Turn Departure	Percentage of STAAV RNAV SID Departures Proposed for the Right Turn
April 13, 2005	485	25	156	32%
April 14, 2005	488	20	161	33%
April 15, 2005	504	32	168	33%
April 16, 2005	478	21	161	34%
TOTAL	1,955	98	646	33%

Source: LAS TRACON. May 24, 2005.

1.5.2.1 Summary of Purposes of the Proposed Action

The following is a summary of the Purposes of the Proposed Action:

- Improve efficiency in LAS airspace;
- Ensure LAS can meet its forecast future demand;
- Reduce the potential at LAS for future delays;
- Modifications to the STAAV RNAV SID for eastbound departures from Runway 25 at LAS would meet the needs and accomplish the purpose of the Proposed Action.

1.6 TIMEFRAME

If approved, it is anticipated that the proposed modification to the STAAV RNAV SID, which would be designated STAAV 3, would be implemented at Las Vegas McCarran International Airport approximately by December 2006.

1.7 AGENCY COORDINATION AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is committed to agency input and public involvement throughout the development process of a Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA). The FAA *Community Involvement Policy Statement*, dated April 17, 1995, clearly affirms that "The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is committed to complete, open, and effective participation in agency actions. The agency regards community involvement as an essential element in the development

of programs and decisions that affect the public.”²² Additionally, FAA Order 1050.1E, *Environmental Impacts: Policies and Procedures* (Chapter 2, Paragraph 208b), states that “At the earliest appropriate stage of the action and early in the process of preparing NEPA documentation, the responsible FAA official, or when applicable, the project proponent, must provide pertinent information to the affected community and agencies and consider the affected communities’ opinions.”²³ To meet and exceed this guidance, the FAA coordinated with several federal, state, and local agencies, as well as the general public, throughout the preparation of this SEA.

1.7.1 Notice of Intent (NOI) to Prepare a Supplemental Environmental Assessment

In accordance with FAA Order 1050.1E, *Environmental Impacts: Policies and Procedures* (Section 208, Public Involvement), the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) issued a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare a Draft Supplemental Environmental Assessment (DSEA) for the proposed modification to the Four Corner-Post Plan at Las Vegas McCarran International Airport on August 8, 2005.²⁴ The NOI was sent to federal, state, county, and city agencies, as well as local community groups with jurisdictional boundaries that fall within the Study Area for the Proposed Action. All parties on the mailing list²⁵ received the NOI that was distributed by Landrum & Brown on behalf of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Western Terminal Operations.²⁶ The FAA sent specific NOI/Project Coordination letters regarding the Proposed Action to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California/Nevada Operations Office and the Nevada Department of Cultural Affairs, State Historic Preservation Office on August 11, 2005.²⁷ Responses to the NOI and Project Coordination letters are listed in **Appendix D, Agency Coordination and Public Involvement, Section D.1.2**; copies of the response letters are included in **Attachment D-2** of the same Appendix.

²² FAA Community Involvement Policy Statement, April 17, 1995.

²³ FAA Order 1050.1E, *Environmental Impacts: Policies and Procedures*. 40 CFR 1501.2.

²⁴ See **Appendix D, Agency Coordination and Public Involvement, Attachment D-1**.

²⁵ See **Appendix D, Agency Coordination and Public Involvement, Section D.1.1, Agency Coordination Mailing List**.

²⁶ It should be noted that the contact information included in the mailing list for the NOI letter and description of the Proposed Action was obtained through searches of each agency’s public web site. As responses to the NOI letters were received, the Consultant noted all updated contact information and made corrections to the mailing list, as necessary. All updates and corrections to the mailing list have been included in the Document Distribution List for this Supplemental Environmental Assessment, which is included in **Appendix E** of this document.

²⁷ See **Appendix D, Agency Coordination and Public Involvement, Attachment D-1**.

1.7.2 Notice of Availability (NOA) of the Draft Supplemental Environmental Assessment and Public Comment Period

In accordance with FAA Order 1050.1E, *Environmental Impacts: Policies and Procedures* (Section 208, Public Involvement), the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) issued a Notice of Availability (NOA) of the Draft Supplemental Environmental Assessment (DSEA) for the proposed modification to the Four Corner-Post Plan at Las Vegas McCarran International Airport on November 22, 2005. The NOA included information on two public workshops and advised that the public comment period would end on December 30, 2005. While the NOA was immediately published in the local media, the actual publication in the *Federal Register* did not occur until December 5, 2005.²⁸ Therefore, the decision was made to extend the comment period to January 13, 2006, to allow for more than 30 days of public comment following the initial publication in the *Federal Register*. On January 13, 2006, the FAA again extended the public comment period to March 14, 2006 to allow additional time for public comment. Both extensions of the Public Comment Period were advertised in the *Federal Register* and in the *Las Vegas Review Journal*. As stated in the NOA, the FAA encouraged all interested parties to provide comments concerning the scope and content of the Draft SEA. Written comments could be submitted via U.S. Mail, e-mail, fax, or on Comment Forms provided at the Public Workshops and Meeting held after the issuance of the Draft SEA (see **Section 1.7.3** for additional information). Oral comments could be submitted at the Public Workshops and Meeting held after the issuance of the Draft SEA (see **Section 1.7.3** for additional information).

Upon issuance of the NOA, copies of the Draft SEA were distributed to the following federal, state, county, and local agencies and officials with jurisdictional boundaries that fall within the Study Area for the Proposed Action:²⁹

- **Federal Agencies and Officials**
 - Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
 - Bureau of Indian Affairs
 - Bureau of Reclamation
 - Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)
 - Federal Highway Administration
 - National Park Service
 - Nellis Air Force Base
 - Office of Federal Programs

²⁸ See **Appendix D, Agency Coordination and Public Involvement, Attachment D-3.**

²⁹ See **Appendix E, Document Distribution List.**

- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Senate
 - U.S. Senator John Ensign
 - U.S. Senator Harry Reid
- U.S. House of Representatives
 - U.S. Congresswoman Shelley Berkley
 - U.S. Congressman Jim Gibbons
 - U.S. Congressman Jon Porter
- Native American Tribes
 - Las Vegas Paiute
- **State of Nevada Agencies and Officials**
 - Nevada Department of Agriculture
 - Nevada Department of Business and Industry
 - Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
 - Nevada Department of Cultural Affairs, State Historic Preservation Office
 - Nevada Department of Transportation
 - Nevada Division of Wildlife
 - Nevada State Clearinghouse
 - Nevada State Health Division
 - Governor's Office
 - Nevada State Senate
 - Senator Bob Beers
 - Senator Terry Care
 - Senator Maggie Carlton
 - Senator Barbara Cegavske
 - Senator Joe Heck
 - Senator Steven Horsford
 - Senator Sandra J. Tiffany
 - Senator Dina Titus
 - Senator Valerie Wiener
 - Nevada State Assembly
 - Assemblyman Morse Arberry, Jr.
 - Assemblywoman Barbara Buckley
 - Assemblyman Chad Christensen
 - Assemblyman Jerry D. Claborn

- Assemblyman Marcus Conklin
- Assemblyman Moises Denis
- Assemblywoman Chris Giunchigliani
- Assemblyman Joe Hardy
- Assemblyman Joseph M. Hogan
- Assemblyman William C. Horne
- Assemblywoman Ellen M. Koivisto
- Assemblyman Garn Mabey
- Assemblyman Bob McCleary
- Assemblyman Harvey J. Munford
- Assemblywoman Genie Ohrenschall
- Assemblyman David Parks
- Assemblywoman Peggy Pierce
- Assemblyman Scott A. Sibley
- Assemblywoman Valerie E. Weber
- **Clark County, Nevada Agencies and Officials**
 - Clark County School District
 - County Manager's Office
 - Department of Aviation
 - Department of Air Quality and Environmental Management
 - Department of Comprehensive Planning
 - Department of Parks and Recreation Administration
 - Clark County Board of Commissioners
 - Commissioner Yvonne Atkinson Gates
 - Commissioner Lynette Boggs McDonald
 - Commissioner Tom Collins
 - Commissioner Rory Reid
 - Commissioner Myrna Williams
 - Commissioner Bruce L. Woodbury
- **City Agencies and Local Community Groups**
 - City of Henderson, Nevada
 - City of North Las Vegas, Nevada
 - City of Las Vegas, Nevada
 - Enterprise Town Advisory Board
 - Paradise Town Advisory Board
 - Spring Valley Town Advisory Board
 - Summerlin Community Association
 - Sunrise Manor Town Advisory Board
 - Whitney Town Advisory Board

- Winchester Town Advisory Board

1.7.2.1 Public Availability of the Draft SEA

As stated in the Notice of Availability (NOA) for the Draft Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA), a complete electronic copy of the Draft SEA was posted on the Internet for viewing and downloading by the public at the web address: www.awp.faa.gov/atenviro/. In addition, public review copies of the Draft SEA were available at the following libraries within the Study Area for the Proposed Action:³⁰

- Nevada State Library and Archives
- Las Vegas Branch Library
- Las Vegas Library
- Meadows Library
- Rainbow Library
- Sahara West Library
- Spring Valley Library
- Summerlin Library
- Sunrise Library
- West Las Vegas Library
- Whitney Library

1.7.3 Public Workshops and Meetings

In accordance with FAA Order 1050.1E, *Environmental Impacts: Policies and Procedures* (Section 209, Public Hearings, Workshops, and Meetings), after the release of the Draft Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA), two Public Workshops and one Public Meeting was held to obtain public comments on the Draft SEA and to provide the general public with the opportunity to learn more about the Proposed Action by meeting and speaking personally with FAA project management staff and representatives of the project consultant team. Comment Forms were available at the Public Workshops and Meeting for the submission of written comments on the Draft SEA; a court reporter was available for the submission of oral comments.

1.7.3.1 Notice of Public Informational Workshops and Public Meeting for the Draft Supplemental Environmental Assessment

Legal and Classified notices appeared in the *Las Vegas Review Journal* December 6-9, 2005 announcing the location and times for the public workshops. The notice also appeared on the FAA Western-Pacific Region web site (at the web address: www.awp.faa.gov/atenviro/). In addition, the FAA Public Affairs Office issued an official News Bulletin to all local news media outlets. The purpose of the Public

³⁰ See **Appendix E, Document Distribution List**.

Workshops was to explain the Proposed Action, allow the public to ask questions, and allow the public to submit written comments on the Draft SEA. The two Public Workshops were held December 12 and 13, 2005. The times and locations of the Public Workshops are as follows:³¹

- **Public Workshop #1**, Monday, December 12, 2005, 6:00 – 9:00 PM
Sierra Vista High School, 8100 W. Robindale Rd., Las Vegas, Nevada
- **Public Workshop #2**, Tuesday, December 13, 2005, 6:00 – 9:00 PM
Centennial High School, 10200 Centennial Parkway, Las Vegas, Nevada

On February 14, 2006, the FAA issued a press release to all local news media outlets announcing that a third Public Meeting would be held on February 27, 2006 to provide the public an additional opportunity to learn more about the Proposed Action, to ask questions, and to submit written comments. On February 16, 2006 the Associated Press (AP) issued a brief article based on the FAA's press release announcing the third public meeting, as well as the extension of the public comment period until March 14, 2006.³² In addition, local news station NBC Channel 4 covered the AP story on the evening news. The meeting notice also appeared on the FAA Western-Pacific Region web site (at the web address: www.awp.faa.gov/atenviro). The public meeting was held as follows:³³

- **Public Meeting #3**, Monday, February 27, 2006, 6:00 – 9:00 PM
Veteran's Memorial Center, 101 North Pavilion Center, Las Vegas, Nevada

1.7.4 Response to Public Comments

Approximately 1,800 written comments from government agencies, special interest groups, and the public were received in response to the Draft SEA. The comments were divided into 22 subject categories and were responded to according to subject.³⁴ Responses to the comment subject areas are included in **Appendix F, Response to Comments**. Oral questions presented at the Public Workshops and Meeting were responded to by the FAA at those meetings and are included in the corresponding meeting transcripts.³⁵ All written comments received are included in **Appendix F, Attachment F-1**.

³¹ See **Appendix D, Agency Coordination and Public Involvement, Attachment D-3**.

³² *Las Vegas: FAA adds public hearing on Las Vegas airport flight path plan*. Associated Press. February 16, 2006.

³³ See **Appendix D, Agency Coordination and Public Involvement, Attachment D-3**.

³⁴ See **Appendix F, Response to Comments**.

³⁵ See **Appendix D, Agency Coordination and Public Involvement, Attachment D-3**. Please note that these questions and responses are not presented separately in **Appendix F**, but can only be found within the transcripts.