

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION  
CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DECLARATION**

**VAN NUYS AIRPORT  
EAST-SIDE TRAFFIC PATTERN EVALUATION**

**Van Nuys Airport  
Van Nuys, California**

**Description of Proposed Action:**

The FAA is proposing to conduct a temporary evaluation in which it would lower the Van Nuys Airport (KVNY) east-side traffic pattern from current conditions (1,000 feet above ground level [AGL]) for 180 days in order to study whether lowering the traffic pattern would reduce the volume of Traffic Alert and Collision Avoidance System (TCAS) resolution advisories (RA).

Aircraft on final approach to Runway (RWY) 8 at Bob Hope “Hollywood Burbank” Airport (KBUR) and in the vicinity of KVNY have the highest volume of TCAS alerts in the National Airspace System (NAS).<sup>1</sup> Many of these TCAS alerts are due to flight configuration. The close proximity of aircraft climbing at KVNY relative to aircraft descending into KBUR results in TCAS alerts that predict a loss of separation (not an actual loss of separation) between aircraft operations that utilize KVNY’s east-side traffic pattern, and aircraft operations on the KBUR final approach course that cross above the KVNY east-side traffic pattern. Aircraft landing at KBUR typically approach from the west due to the mountainous terrain located south and east of the airport.

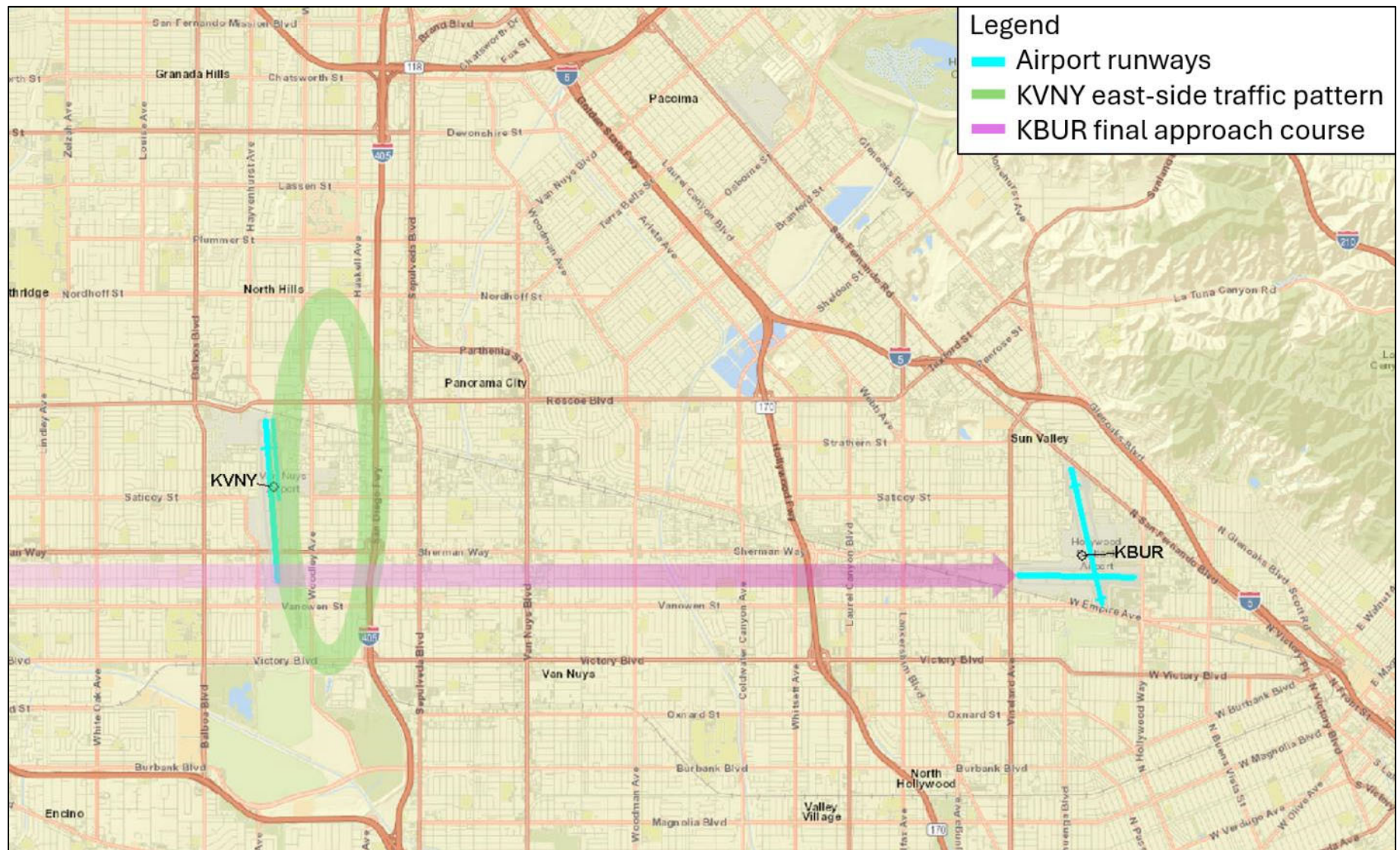
The Proposed Action would be a 180-day evaluation in which the KVNY east-side traffic pattern would be temporarily lowered from 1,000 feet AGL to 900 feet AGL for 90 days, followed by a subsequent 90-day evaluation period where the KVNY east-side traffic pattern would be temporarily lowered to 800 feet AGL.

Depending on the outcome of the evaluation and the data collected, the FAA may take steps to move forward with permanent implementation of a lower east-side traffic pattern altitude, either 900 feet AGL or 800 feet AGL, which would require a separate environmental review.

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<sup>1</sup> TCAS alerts can be either traffic alerts (TA) or resolution advisories (RA). RAs require compliance with TCAS RA instructions.

Figure 1. KVNY East-Side Traffic Pattern and KBUR Arrivals



### **Summary of Environmental Review:**

An Initial Environmental Review (IER) was conducted by Western Service Center personnel in accordance with policies and procedures in Department of Transportation Order 5610.1C, *Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts*, FAA Order JO 7400.2R, *Procedures for Handling Airspace Matters*, and FAA Order 1050.1F, *Environmental Impacts: Policies and Procedures*.

The Proposed Action is an air traffic action only. There would be no land acquisition, construction activities, or other physical ground disturbance with the implementation of the Proposed Action. Implementation of the Proposed Action involves aircraft flight procedures and would not include any project components that would touch or otherwise directly affect the ground surface. Therefore, potential effects are limited to effects from aircraft overflights, primarily noise and visual effects.

The IER includes a review of the Proposed Action's potential to affect the environmental impact categories as defined by FAA Order 1050.1F. Historical radar track data was obtained from the Performance Data Analysis and Reporting System (PDARS) database for visual flight rules (VFR) aircraft in the traffic pattern.<sup>2</sup> Sixty random days were selected from the period between January 15, 2024, and January 14, 2025. The random days are assumed to represent average traffic volume, flight tracks, and day/night ratios by capturing a range of temperature and wind conditions.

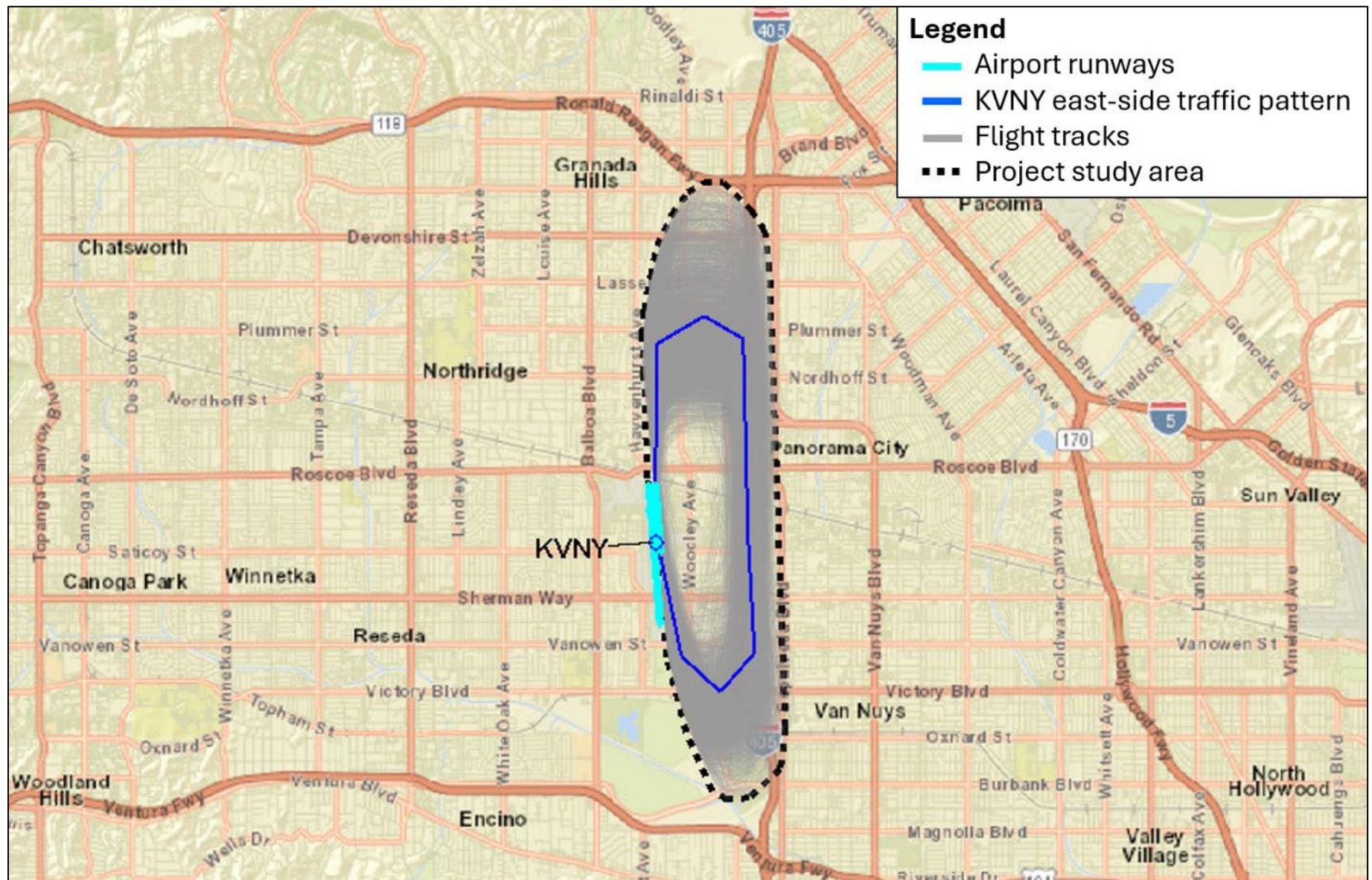
The project study area was developed by examining historic flight tracks from January 15, 2024, through January 14, 2025, then creating a boundary that encompassed the KVNY east-side traffic pattern flight tracks. The Proposed Action would not result in a change to the east-side traffic pattern laterally. Thus, no new areas would be overflown with the implementation of the Proposed Action. An increase in operations and a change to the fleet mix are not part of the purpose and need of the Proposed Action. See **Figure 2**.

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<sup>2</sup> Throughout the environmental review document, the term "flight path" refers to a line, course, or track along which an aircraft is flying or intended to be flown, and the term "track" is the actual flight path of an aircraft over the surface of the earth. Source: FAA Pilot/Controller Glossary, [https://www.faa.gov/air\\_traffic/publications/atpubs/pcg\\_html/glossary-f.html](https://www.faa.gov/air_traffic/publications/atpubs/pcg_html/glossary-f.html), effective February 20, 2025. FAA orders referenced in this document may not utilize these exact definitions.



Figure 2. KVNy East-Side Traffic Pattern Flight Tracks and the Project Study Area



Categorical Exclusion (CATEX)  
 Van Nuys Airport East-Side Traffic Pattern Evaluation  
 Van Nuys, California

In addition, a noise screening analysis was conducted, which indicates that there would be no reportable and no significant noise impacts if the Proposed Action were to be implemented. Specifically, the noise analysis was completed to assess potential impacts resulting the Proposed Action using the TARGETS Environmental Plug-in tool and the Aviation Environmental Design Tool (AEDT).

Historical radar track data was used to create a baseline scenario. After the baseline scenario was built, aircraft operations were reassigned to the proposed procedures, which provided the alternative scenario. Once the baseline and alternative scenarios were built, the TARGETS Environmental Plug-in Tool was used to generate noise outputs for both scenarios using AEDT. The scenarios were then compared to determine the potential for significant noise impacts. In the case of the proposed KVNy east-side traffic pattern evaluation, the noise screening analysis determined that there would be no reportable and no significant impacts as a result of the implementation of the Proposed Action.

#### **Extraordinary Circumstances:**

In accordance with FAA Order 1050.1F, *Environmental Impacts: Policies and Procedures*, Paragraph 5-2, Extraordinary Circumstances, the FAA has reviewed the Proposed Action for factors and circumstances in which a normally categorically-excluded action may have a significant environmental impact requiring further analysis. The FAA has determined that no extraordinary circumstances exist that warrant additional environmental review.

#### **Declaration of Exclusion:**

The FAA has reviewed the above referenced Proposed Action and it has been determined, by the undersigned, to be categorically excluded from further environmental documentation according to FAA Order 1050.1F, *Environmental Impacts: Policies and Procedures*. The implementation of this action will not result in any extraordinary circumstances in accordance with FAA Order 1050.1F.

The applicable categorical exclusion is:

*5-6.5.i. Establishment of new or revised air traffic control procedures conducted at 3,000 feet or more above ground level (AGL); procedures conducted below 3,000 feet AGL that do not cause traffic to be routinely routed over noise sensitive areas; modifications to currently approved procedures conducted below 3,000 feet AGL that do not significantly increase noise over noise sensitive areas; and increases in minimum altitudes and landing minima. For modifications to air traffic procedures at or above 3,000 feet AGL, the Noise Screening Tool (NST) or other FAA-approved environmental screening methodology should be applied.*

### **Facility Manager Review/Concurrence**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name: Sarah Fletcher  
Title: Air Traffic Manager  
Facility: Los Angeles Air Route Traffic Control Center

### **Service Center Environmental Specialist Review/Concurrence**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name: Emily Sturnfield  
Title: Environmental Protection Specialist, Operations Support Group  
Location: Western Service Center

### **Service Center Director Review/Concurrence**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name: B. G. Chew  
Title: Group Manager, Operations Support Group  
Location: Western Service Center