

## C. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

### ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

#### Project Site

The Project Site is square-shaped, consisting of approximately 35.5 acres, located in an urban, built-out portion of the western San Fernando Valley. The Project Site is bounded by Prairie Street to the north, Corbin Avenue to the west, Nordhoff Street to the south, and Shirley Avenue to the east. The Site is developed with an approximately 310,000-square-foot building used for research and development, a maintenance building, a machine shop, a storage facility, and associated surface parking. Approximately 20 percent of the entire property is covered by landscaping, trees, or other non-paved surfaces. Approximately 40 percent of the Project Site is covered with surface parking lots and other paved areas, and approximately 40 percent is covered by buildings on the Site.

The community surrounding the Project Site is urban in nature and currently developed. Land uses in the area are primarily commercial and industrial. There are no lands designated for agricultural use or open space located adjacent to the Project Site. According to the Chatsworth - Porter Ranch Community Plan, in which the Project Site is located, the closest designated open space is located approximately 1.0 miles southwest of the Site. However, the closest designated open space is located within the Northridge Community Plan, approximately 0.7 miles southeast of the Site. The Los Angeles Citywide General Plan Framework has not identified the Project Site or adjacent properties as Biological Resource Areas. The closest Biological Resource Area designated by the Framework EIR is located approximately 1.7 miles north of the Project Site and is part of the Limekiln Canyon Park. Due to the urban and developed nature of the Project Site, there are no known or identified significant biological resources on the Site.

In addition to Biological Resource Areas, the Los Angeles Citywide General Plan Framework EIR has identified a number of Significant Ecological Areas (SEAs) throughout the City. Lands identified as Significant Ecological Areas are thought or known to host significant ecological and biological resources such as threatened and endangered species of plants and wildlife and their associated habitat. Additionally, these areas are used for the movement of wildlife. The General Plan Framework EIR identifies the following Significant Ecological Areas (SEA) in the Northwest Valley Planning Subregion:

### ***Chatsworth Reservoir Significant Ecological Area***

The Chatsworth Reservoir, owned by the City of Los Angeles DWP, abuts the foot of the Simi Hills in the western San Fernando Valley. The Chatsworth Reservoir is one of five areas in the San Fernando Valley that is used regularly by wintering Canadian geese. Many-stemmed dudleya have been sighted in rocky areas on the south side of the reservoir.<sup>43</sup> The Chatsworth Reservoir SEA is located approximately 2.8 miles west of the Project Site.

### ***Proposed Santa Susana Mountains/Simi Hills Significant Ecological Area***

The proposed Santa Susana Mountains/Simi Hills Significant Ecological Area (SEA) is located northwest of the San Fernando Valley within unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County and an incorporated area of the City of Los Angeles west of Chatsworth. This SEA covers approximately 26,795 acres, 3,370 acres of which is within the City of Los Angeles, and includes a variety of topographic features. Several blue-line streams occur within these canyons, as well as many natural springs. The majority of the land is natural open space with very sparse disturbances from ranches, oil wells, and unimproved access roads.

### ***Proposed Santa Monica Mountains Significant Ecological Area***

The proposed Santa Monica Mountains SEA is located within the Santa Monica Mountains in a mostly unincorporated area of Los Angeles County. In addition to the County jurisdiction, the SEA is also located within portions of the Cities of Malibu, Los Angeles, Calabasas, Agoura Hills, Hidden Hills, and Westlake Village. The proposed Santa Monica Mountains SEA covers 99,431 acres and includes most of the Santa Monica Mountains Range. The majority of the proposed SEA consists of undisturbed open space with scattered rural residential communities and a few high density residential developments.

### ***Plant Life***

Due to the urban nature of the Project Site and vicinity, vegetation on the Project Site is limited to landscaped grassy areas, street trees, and a small stand of trees. Larger, contiguous landscaped areas are located along the north side of Nordhoff Street, in front of the main building on the Project Site. Approximately two hundred twenty trees are located across the Project Site. There are no oak trees located on the Project Site that would be addressed by the City of Los Angeles Oak Tree Ordinance.

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<sup>43</sup>Los Angeles Citywide General Plan Framework EIR, Page 2.18-7.

Trees are located along the street frontage in various locations:

- Approximately 350 feet southward from Teledyne Way along Corbin Avenue,
- Along Shirley Avenue northward from Nordhoff Street to Prairie Street,
- Along Teledyne Way approximately 700 feet westward from Shirley Avenue, and
- Along Prairie Street approximately 350 feet westward from Shirley Avenue.

The remaining portions of the Site are currently improved with either pavement or buildings and do not support plant life. The USGS Map - Canoga Park Quadrangle does not identify any blue line streams on the Site that might support plant habitat on the Project Site. The nearest blue line stream is the Limekiln Canyon Wash, approximately .15 miles west of the Project Site.

### *Wildlife*

The City of Los Angeles Citywide General Plan Framework EIR has identified the project area as urbanized and does not identify the Project Site or the vicinity as a Biological Resource Area. As identified by the Framework EIR, the closest Biological Resource Area is part of the Limekiln Canyon Park, located approximately 1.7 miles north of the Project Site. The closest Significant Ecological Area is the Chatsworth Reservoir located approximately 3.1 miles west of the Project Site.

Due to the urban nature of the Project Site and vicinity, wildlife communities and associated habitats are not found on or adjacent to the Project Site.

### **Add Area**

The Add Area is located in an urban, built-out portion of the western San Fernando Valley. The Add Area is bounded by commercial properties that front Plummer Street to the north, Corbin Avenue to the west, Prairie Street to the south, and Shirley Avenue to the east. The Add Area is improved with one- and two-story commercial and industrial buildings, associated parking, and other paved areas. Almost 100 percent of the Add Area is covered with pavement or other impervious surface. Trees within the Add Area are located along the western side of Shirley Avenue north of the intersection with Prairie Street and along the eastern side of the Melvin Avenue cul-de-sac.

The community surrounding the Add Area is urban in nature and currently developed. Land uses in the area are primarily commercial and industrial. There are no lands designated for agricultural use or open space located adjacent to the Add Area. According to the Chatsworth - Porter Ranch Community Plan, in which the Add Area is located, the closest designated open space is located approximately 1.0 miles southwest of the Add Area. However, the closest designated open space to the Add Area is within the Northridge Community Plan, located approximately .7 miles to the southeast.

Review of the USGS Canoga Park Quadrangle map and historic aerial photographs indicates that the Add Area has been developed in the current configuration since at least 1989. Due to the urban and developed nature of the Add Area, there are no known or identified significant biological resources on the Site. The Los Angeles Citywide General Plan Framework has not identified the Add Area or adjacent properties as a Biological Resource Area. The closest Biological Resource Area designated by the Framework EIR is part of Limekiln Canyon Park, approximately 1.7 miles north of the Add Area.

In addition to Biological Resource Areas, the Los Angeles Citywide General Plan Framework EIR has also identified Significant Ecological Areas (SEAs) throughout the City. Lands identified as significant ecological areas are thought or known to host significant ecological and biological resources such as threatened and endangered species and associated habitat. The General Plan Framework EIR identifies various Significant Ecological Areas (SEA) in the Northwest Valley Planning Subregion. Due to the proximity of the Add Area to the Project Site, SEAs within the sphere of influence of the Add Area are the same as those identified above for the Project Site.

#### **THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE**

According to the City of Los Angeles CEQA Thresholds Guide, a project would normally have a significant effect on biological resources if it could result in:

- The loss of individuals, or the reduction of existing habitat, of a state or federal listed endangered, threatened, rare, protected, candidate, or sensitive species or a Species of Special Concern;
- The loss of individuals or the reduction of existing habitat of a locally designated species or a reduction in a locally designated natural habitat or plant community;
- Interference with wildlife movement/migration corridors that may diminish the chances for long-term survival of a sensitive species;
- The alteration of an existing wetland habitat; or
- Interference with habitat such that normal species behaviors are disturbed (e.g., from the introduction of noise, light) to a degree that may diminish the chances for long-term survival of a sensitive species.

## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

### Project Site

The Project Site has been developed with the existing buildings since at least 1968. Due to the existing urban development on and around the Site, the amount of impervious surface at the Site, and the length of time that these conditions have existed, there are no known or identified significant biological resources, including endangered or threatened species, on the Site. Additionally, the City of Los Angeles Citywide General Plan Framework EIR does not identify the Project Site as a Biological Resource Area which are commonly known for providing habitat for threatened or endangered species. The Project Site is not located within an existing or proposed Significant Ecological Area (SEA). Therefore, the proposed Project at the Project Site will result in a less than significant impact to biological resources due to conflicts with local environmental plans or the loss or destruction of listed, endangered, threatened, rare, protected, candidate, or sensitive species or their habitats. Further, the proposed Project at the Project Site will not interfere with the movement of wildlife.

There are no wetlands that have been identified on the Project Site. Therefore, alteration of an existing wetland habitat will not occur.

The potential development scenarios may relocate or remove a small stand of trees located at the southwestern corner of the Project Site, near the intersection of Nordhoff Street and Corbin Avenue. Additionally, trees located along street frontages of the Project Site and in the visitor parking lot may be altered or removed as a result of the proposed development. Mature pine trees located on the north side of Nordhoff Street in front of the existing main building may be relocated or removed as a result of the proposed Project. The removal of trees as well as some grassy, landscaped areas on the Project Site may result in a significant impact to biological resources. However, the applicant has posted a bond with the DPW, Bureau of Street Maintenance, Street Tree Division for the installation of approximately 100 street trees at the Project Site. Further, with the incorporation of the proposed mitigation measure, any significant impacts to biological resources will be reduced to a less than significant level. Therefore, the proposed Project at the Project Site will result in a less than significant impact to biological resources as a result of the loss of trees, open space or agricultural lands.

### Add Area

The City of Los Angeles Citywide General Plan Framework EIR does not identify the Add Area as a Biological Resource Area. The Add Area is not located within an existing or proposed Significant Ecological Area (SEA). Further, due to the existing urban development on and around the Add Area and the nearly one hundred percent imperviousness of the Add Area, there are no known or identified significant biological resources, including endangered or threatened species, on the Add Area properties. Therefore, the development scenarios analyzed for the Add

Area will result in a less than significant impact to biological resources due to conflict with a local environmental plan or the loss or destruction of listed, endangered, threatened, rare, protected, candidate, or sensitive species or their habitats. Further, the development scenarios analyzed for the Add Area will not result in interference with the movement of wildlife.

There are no identified wetlands within the Add Area properties. Therefore, alteration of an existing wetland habitat will not occur.

Although the Add Area can be considered approximately one hundred percent impervious, some trees are located along the western side of Shirley Avenue north of the intersection with Prairie Street. Removal of these trees could result in a significant impact on biological resources. However, with the incorporation of the proposed mitigation measure, development scenarios analyzed for the Add Area will result in a less than significant impact to biological resources as a result of the loss of trees, open space or agricultural lands.

#### **MITIGATION MEASURES**

Environmental impacts from project implementation may result due to the loss of trees on the Project Site. However, potential impacts will be mitigated to a less than significant level by the following measure:

23. Any tree removed from the Site will be replaced at a 1:1 ratio, by a minimum of 24-inch box tree, as required by the City of Los Angeles Code of Regulations. (O, C, R)

#### **LEVEL OF IMPACT AFTER MITIGATION**

Less than significant.

#### **CUMULATIVE IMPACTS**

##### ***Related Projects***

Related projects identified, with the exception of Porter Ranch and Deer Lake Ranch, are located within previously developed, urban areas that do not have significant biological resources. Each of the related Project Sites are independent of the Project Site and Add Area and would not share biological resources with the project that could be considered significant. The alteration, relocation, or removal of biological resources at a particular related Project Site may result in a significant impact on biological resources. However, biological resources must be identified and mitigated on a project-specific basis. Therefore, related projects will result in a less than significant impact to biological resources.

***Proposed Project, Add Area, and Related Projects***

Due to the developed, urban nature of the area within which the Project Site and Add Area are located, a significant impact to biological resources is not anticipated as a result of new development at either the Project Site or Add Area. Further, related Project Sites would not share potentially significant biological resources with the Project Site or Add Area and any potential impacts must be identified and mitigated on a project-specific basis. Therefore, a significant cumulative impact on biological resources is not anticipated.