
IV. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

D. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES (TREES)

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Currently, the project site is developed and is largely comprised of impervious surfaces. It is currently occupied by the former St. Regis Hotel and associated open deck/pool area, garden, landscaping, and natural vegetation. Although the majority of the project site contains the former hotel building, the landscaping includes a large variety of vegetation, including: trees, shrubs, and various types of ground cover. However, the main vegetative component is the large quantity and variety of trees currently existing on the project site.

There are a total of 486 trees, consisting of both foreign and native tree species. Traditionally, the species identified as the Palm and Sycamore, both found on the project site, are considered to be native to the region. In all, there a total of eight different tree types on the project site. The types that were found include the Eucalyptus, Fig, Jacaranda, Lemon, Palm, Sycamore, and Ornamental. As shown in Table IV.D-1, Tree Summary, the most common tree on the project site is the Pine, while the least common is the Fig. The Pine accounts for over half of the total number of trees on the project site. Furthermore, Figure IV.D-1, Tree Survey, shows that the majority of the trees are located on the perimeter of project site, primarily on the southern, western, and eastern boundaries of the property. According to the topographic tree survey conducted by Fuscoe Engineering (depicted in Figure IV.D-1), there are no rare, threatened, or endangered tree species currently on the project site.

**Table IV.D-1
Tree Summary**

Tree Type	Quantity
6" Eucalyptus	2
2" Fig	1
3" Fig	7
4" Fig	3
6" Fig	1
12" Fig	18
18" Fig	4
24" Fig	3
3" Jacaranda	7
4" Jacaranda	5

Table IV.D-1 (Continued)
Tree Summary

Tree Type	Quantity
4" Lemon	5
4" Palm	9
18" Palm	2
24" Palm	4
36" Palm	4
3" Pine	3
6" Pine	47
12" Pine	247
18" Pine	55
2" Sycamore	9
3" Sycamore	2
4" Sycamore	10
4" Ornamental	14
18" Ornamental	15
24" Ornamental	9
Total	486
<i>Source: Fuscoe Engineering, St. Regis Hotel Topographic Tree Survey, June 29, 2005.</i>	

Figure IV.D-1, Tree Survey

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Thresholds of Significance

In accordance with Appendix G to the State CEQA Guidelines, a project could have a significant impact on biological resources if it would:

- a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either or through habitat modification, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service;
- b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, or regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service;
- c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means;
- d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites;
- e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance; or
- f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state Habitat Conservation Plan.

As discussed in the Initial Study (see Appendix A), the proposed project would have no impact with respect to Thresholds (a), (b), (c), (d), and (f), listed above. As such, no further analysis of these topics is required (see also Section IV.A of this Draft EIR).

Furthermore, as set forth in the City of Los Angeles Draft L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide, the determination of significance shall be made on a case-by-case basis, considering the following factors:

- (a) 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;
- (b) The loss of individuals, or the reduction of existing habitat of a locally designated or a reduction in a locally designated natural habitat or plant community;

- (c) Interference with wildlife movement/migration corridors that may diminish the chances for long-term survival of a sensitive species;
- (d) The alteration of an existing wetland habitat; or
- (e) 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.

Project Impacts

The proposed landscape design would incorporate sustainable practices, which would include: the re-use of existing materials on the project site, the use of drought-tolerant plants, and the use of efficient irrigation systems to limit the usage of water. Specifically, many of the existing trees would be stored on the project site during construction and then would be incorporated in the proposed landscaping. The tree species currently on the project site would be re-used and would be further supplemented by trees and drought-tolerant plants. Refer to Figure III-3 in Section III (Project Description) of this Draft EIR for a conceptual depiction of the proposed landscape plan.

As previously stated, the topographic tree survey conducted by Fuscoe Engineering found that there are no rare, threatened, or endangered tree species currently on the project site. Also, the project site does not contain any locally designated natural habitat or plant community, wetland habitat, or wildlife movement/migration corridors. Considering the proposed re-use of existing trees described above and the absence of natural habitat, the loss of trees as a biological resource would be minimal. As such, the potential impacts associated with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance, would be less than significant.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

The proposed project in combination with the 66 related projects would further urban growth in an already heavily urbanized area. Most of the related projects are located within the developed portions of West Los Angeles, Century City, and Beverly Hills. As such, it is anticipated that the overall impact on biological resources due to the development of the related projects would be less than significant. As discussed above, the proposed project's impacts on biological resources would be less than significant. Therefore, the cumulative impact of the proposed project and the related projects would be less than significant.

MITIGATION MEASURES

The proposed project would have a less-than-significant impact with respect to biological resources. Therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION

The proposed project's impacts on biological resources would be less than significant.