

C. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Existing Conditions

The Project site is a developed property which currently houses commercial structures, a plaza area, underground parking and associated facilities. Two eight-story commercial buildings occupy the northwest and southwest corners of the Project site (2020 and 2040 Avenue of the Stars respectively). Two 44-story office buildings occupy the northeast and southeast corners. The site is largely covered by impervious surfaces, and vegetation is limited to ornamental landscaping around the outside of the buildings and in planters throughout the Project site. The existing landscaping consists of a variety of ornamental/exotic type vegetation, including flowers, ground covers, shrubs, and trees.

Site investigations conducted by Envicom Corporation and SWA identified several different tree species located in the landscaped areas of the Project site (see **Appendix 1**). As shown on **Figure BR-1** ornamental fig (*Ficus sp.*) trees are present along the front of the 2020 and 2040 Avenue of the Stars buildings and along Constellation Boulevard adjacent to the 2020 Avenue of the Stars building. At the time of the investigations, the trees were not in flower; therefore, a determination of species could not be made. The arborist onsite indicated that they were likely to be either Morton Bay fig (*Ficus macrophylla*) or rustyleaf fig (*Ficus rubiginosa*). Along the perimeter of the site near the sidewalks are several London plane (*Platanus acerifolia*) trees. Along the southern edge of the 2040 Avenue of the Stars buildings is a circular area containing the following tree species: Canary Island pine (*Pinus canariensis*); laurelleaf snailseed (*Cocculus laurifolius*); and Strawberry (*Arbutus unedo*). Additionally this area has some *Xylosma congestum* shrubs. In large planted areas within the plaza levels are evergreen pear (*Pyrus kawakamii*), Brazillian pepper (*Schinus terebinthifolius*), goldenrain (*Koelreuteria paniculata*), coast redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*), sweet gum (*Liquidamber styraciflua*), sweetshade (*Hymensporum flavum*), Chinese flame (*Koelreuteria bipinnata*), and ornamental fig trees. No oak trees or other tree species native to Southern California exist onsite. The coast redwood is the only tree native to California located on the site, and its range extends from southwest Oregon, south to the Santa Lucia Mountains (the Coast Mountain Range between Monterey and Morro Bay).

None of the tree species nor any of the shrubs or other plants hold special status in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The existing ornamental vegetation does not provide habitat for any threatened rare, protected, or sensitive species. The California Natural Diversity Database has been reviewed for the Beverly Hills 7.5-Minute USGS Topographic Quadrangle, within which the Project resides. The results (**Appendix 6**) show several species of varying listing status throughout the quadrangle; however, the occurrences or location of the habitats is not within the immediate vicinity of the subject property.

The Project site is located in Century City, an intense urban environment, and has been developed for urban use for many years. The site is not located within any conservation plan areas. The proposed Project site does not currently provide habitat or features that are conducive to wildlife movement, and there are no wildlife migration corridors within the Project area. Almost the entire Specific Plan area has been developed with a variety of urban uses and impervious surfaces.

There are no water courses on the site or in the nearby vicinity. The area has been served by a system of storm drains and channels for over 30 years. It does not contain any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community as identified in City or regional plans, policies, regulations by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The subject property does not contain federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

Threshold of Significance

Based upon criteria established in the City of Los Angeles Draft CEQA Thresholds Guide (1998, p. G-5), the proposed Project would have a significant impact on biological resources if it resulted in:

Figure BR-1 Existing Onsite Trees

- 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.

Project Impacts

Within the area to be redeveloped, a total of 113 trees would be removed during construction. Of these, sixty-seven are mature trees with trunk diameters of twelve inches or greater and forty-six have trunk diameters of less than twelve inches (**Figure BR-1**). The majority (nearly seventy-five percent) of trees to be removed are either ornamental fig trees (*Ficus* sp.), laurelleaf snailseed (*Cocculus laurifolius*), or London plane (*Platanus acerifolia*) trees. The specific number of each tree species to be removed is shown in **Table V.C-1**. Other trees to be removed include Canary Island pine (*Pinus canariensis*), Brazilian pepper trees (*Schinus terebinthifolius*), evergreen pear trees (*Pyrus kawakamii*), goldenrain (*Koelreuteria paniculata*), coast redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*), sweet gum (*Liquidamber styraciflua*), sweetshade (*Hymenoporus flavum*), and Chinese flame (*Koelreuteria bipinnata*).

Replacing this vegetation would be a diamond-shaped central lawn area, flanked by jacaranda and poplar trees along the northwest and southern edges. Additional rows of jacaranda trees would be planted between the lawn and the restaurant on the north side of the Project. Pine trees would be planted on the slopes to the south and east of the cultural facility and on the east and west sides of the garage access from Constellation Boulevard. Both the existing and proposed vegetation consists of non-native ornamental species and is not considered habitat for any state or federal listed endangered, threatened, rare, protected, candidate, or sensitive species or a Species of Special Concern.

The Project site does not contain any locally designated natural habitat or plant community, wetland habitat, or wildlife movement/migration corridors. The potential impacts associated with implementation of the proposed Project would be the loss of mature trees and landscaping throughout the site. The loss of ornamental landscaping is potentially significant. Implementation of mitigation measure BR-1 would reduce this impact to a less than significant level.

Mitigation Measures

- BR-1** Prior to the issuance of a grading permit, a plot plan prepared by a reputable arborist, indicating location, size, type, and condition of all existing trees on the site shall be submitted for approval to the Department of City Planning and the Street Tree Division of the Bureau of Street Services. All trees in the public right-of-way shall be subject to the current Street Tree Division Standards. The plan shall contain measures recommended by the tree expert for the preservation of as many trees as possible. Mitigation measures such as replacement by a minimum of 24-inch box trees in the parkway and on the site on a 1:1 basis, shall be required for unavoidable loss of trees greater than 12" diameter at breast height on the site, and to the satisfaction of the Street Tree Division of the Bureau of Street Services and the Advisory Agency.

Table V.C-1 Existing Onsite Trees to be Removed

Significant Project Impacts After Mitigation

The proposed Project would not result in significant unavoidable impacts to biological resources after mitigation.

Cumulative Impacts

The Environmental Setting Section (Section IV) provides a list of related projects that are planned or are under construction in the Project area. Most of the development planned for the area is within the intensely developed portions of West Los Angeles, Century City, and Beverly Hills. The proposed Project does not result in impacts to any valued biological resource, and therefore would not contribute to any cumulative effects.