

## 2. Lighting and Glare

The Lighting and Glare analysis in this Section addresses the two issues of nighttime illumination and reflected light (glare). Nighttime illumination impacts are evaluated in terms of the Project's net change in ambient lighting conditions and proximity to light sensitive land uses. Reflected light impacts are analyzed to determine if Project related glare would create a visual nuisance or hazard.

Nighttime lighting of varying intensities with a potential for glare of reflected light are characteristic of locations throughout Century City. The impact of nighttime lighting depends upon the type of use affected, the proximity to the affected use, the intensity of specific lighting, and the background or ambient level of the combined nighttime lighting. Nighttime ambient light levels may vary considerably depending upon the age, condition, and abundance of point-of-light sources present in a particular view. The use of exterior lighting for security and aesthetic illumination of architectural features may contribute substantially to ambient nighttime lighting conditions.

Spill-over of light onto adjacent properties has the potential to interfere with certain activities including vision, sleep, privacy and general enjoyment of the natural nighttime condition. Light sensitive uses include residential, some commercial and institutional uses and, in some situations, natural areas. Changes in nighttime lighting may become significant if a proposed project increases ambient lighting conditions beyond its property line and project lighting routinely spills over into adjacent light-sensitive land use areas.

Reflective light (glare) is caused by sunlight or artificial light reflecting from finished surfaces such as window glass, or other reflective materials. The reflectivity of glass can have many different reflectance characteristics. Generally, darker or mirrored glass would have a higher visible light reflectance factor than clear glass. Buildings constructed of highly reflective materials from which the sun reflects at a low angle commonly cause adverse glare. Reflective light is common in urban areas.

### Existing Conditions

#### *Nighttime Illumination*

The Century City area, including the Project site, is generally brightly illuminated at night. The ambient nighttime lighting condition in the immediate Project vicinity is created by a combination of lighting types and sources, including street lights, security lighting, illuminated restaurant and other retail business signs, architectural illumination, and spillover lighting from the interiors of towering commercial and residential buildings, traffic signals, and the glow of moving vehicle lights on public streets.

Century City is heavily populated by high- and mid-rise commercial structures. The majority of these structures are well lit for both security and aesthetic purposes. The nearby 44-story Century Plaza Towers, 30-story St. Regis Hotel, 19-story Century Plaza Hotel, 39-story Fox Plaza, 22-story Watt Towers, and 38-story Constellation Place (once construction is completed) are all significant illumination contributors.

With respect to the proposed Project site, existing on-site sources of night lighting are the spill over of interior lighting from the Century Plaza Towers, security lighting in the plaza and the exterior signage and front entrances to the Shubert Theater and multi-screen movie theaters. The existing theater signage, which fronts onto Avenue of the Stars and faces the Century Plaza Hotel, is large, bright and multi-colored. Vehicle lights exiting the parking structure sweep out onto adjacent sidewalks and streets. Landscaping, particularly along the northern and southern sides of Olympic Boulevard helps to shield the residential units to the south from direct illumination.

Commercial properties in the Project vicinity benefit from the added incidental nighttime illumination in terms of security of property and patrons. Uses in the Project area that may be

considered sensitive to nighttime light are: the Park Place condominiums to the south; Century Woods residential area to the southwest; Century Plaza Hotel to the west; St. Regis Hotel to the southwest and Century Park East condominiums and Century City Hospital to the east.

### Glare

The existing 2020 and 2040 Avenue of the Stars buildings are constructed of travertine, a low-reflective stone covering. The existing structures do not reflect light in amounts sufficient to be considered either a hazard or visual nuisance. The mature landscaping that borders the site further reduces the effects of glare.

### **Threshold of Significance**

The City of Los Angeles Draft CEQA Thresholds Guide (1998, p. L.4-2), with reference to findings of significance involving night lighting states, "... the determination of significance shall be made on a case by case basis, considering the following factors:

- The change in levels of ambient illumination as a result of Project sources; and
- The extent to which Project lighting would spill off the Project site and effect adjacent light-sensitive areas."

The City of Los Angeles Draft CEQA Thresholds Guide does not identify a threshold of significance involving reflected daytime lighting. However, the Los Angeles Department of City Planning has accepted that a determination of significant impact resulting from glare would occur if a project "would produce glare which would create a visual nuisance, or a hazard, as it distracts or interferes with vision and concentration, or results in differential warming of adjacent residential properties."<sup>14</sup>

### **Project Impacts**

#### ***Nighttime Illumination***

The proposed Project would change the land uses of the site and its nighttime appearance. The nighttime entertainment uses currently on the site would be eliminated and replaced by Project office facilities, which primarily generate activity during the day. The two existing eight-story buildings would be replaced by a single 15-story structure with a similar footprint. The new building would be oriented such that its longer side would run parallel to Avenue of the Stars.

The Project would retain retail and restaurant uses at the plaza level and would devote space on the street level to a cultural facility. The remaining floors would be dedicated to office space. As currently exists, vehicles exiting the parking structure would direct light out onto adjacent sidewalks and streets. The Project would remove some peripheral landscaping. For both aesthetic and energy conservation reasons, interior lights would be automatically controlled by sensors and timers to reduce usage after hours. The Project would provide additional perimeter landscaping to replace any removed vegetation. This landscaping would partially shield illumination from the plaza.

The illumination of the office building may contribute to the overall perceived "glow" of the site. Illumination from the proposed Project is not likely to affect the Century City Hospital and the Century Park East condominiums due to distance and the presence of the 44-story Century Plaza Towers which are located generally between the proposed building and these uses. Similarly, the Century Woods residential area is unlikely to be adversely affected by nighttime illumination due to distance and the intervening presence of both the St. Regis and Century Plaza Hotels. Portions of the Century Plaza Hotel, St. Regis Hotel and Park Place condominium complex buildings, which front toward the Project site, would be exposed to nighttime illumination from the Project area. The

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<sup>14</sup> Century Project Environmental Impact Report, City of Los Angeles, October 1996.

proposed uses, distance to the proposed structure, and incorporation of proposed design features, would serve to reduce illumination effects. In the short term, elimination of vegetation for construction access may increase the lighting that would be visible from the Park Place condominiums. Without mitigation, this impact would be potentially significant. In the long run, illumination from the site would increase resulting in adverse but not significant impacts. However, this determination assumes no unusual lighting conditions or features. Without additional measures assuring this, the Project could adversely affect adjacent light sensitive areas of the Century Plaza Hotel, St. Regis Hotel and Park Place condominium complex.

#### Glare

Depending on the final building materials, the proposed building might increase glare and reflectivity from the site. The existing stone-covered buildings would be replaced by a taller building utilizing glass and metal cladding as major materials.

Reflected sunlight from the proposed building can be a problem to motorists when the sun is close to the horizon, allowing reflected glare to interfere with a driver's vision. Consequently, glare impacts may occur during morning and early evening hours when the sun is near the horizon. Potentially affected road segments would include portions of Olympic and Constellation Boulevards and Avenue of the Stars. The Project's impact would vary by season and time of day and is of short duration, which without mitigation (such as use of non-mirrored glass) could result in a significant impact.

Reflective glare from sunlight can, in extreme instances, generate minor fluctuations in the local microclimate proximate to the source of the glare. Specifically, reflected glare may cause some differential warming of directly adjacent properties. This warming is sometimes unwelcome during summer months by residential uses where persons are present in and out of doors for extended periods of time and often lack the refuge of air conditioned environs. The nearest residential area is the Park Place condominium complex located across Olympic Boulevard from the Project site. Given that the complex is not located directly adjacent to the proposed building, and that the use of non-reflective materials would be required as mitigation for visual glare impacts, no significant glare-induced warming of adjacent residential areas is anticipated.

#### **Mitigation Measures**

The following measures will eliminate any potential for significant impacts due to Project lighting.

#### ***Nighttime Illumination***

- AE-3** Exterior lighting shall be designed to shield and direct illumination to the Project site, and/or areas which do not include light-sensitive uses.
- AE-4** The Project shall not install flashing, moving, strobe, or blinking outdoor lights along the western and southern boundaries of the Project site or on the south-facing exterior wall of the proposed building.
- AE-5** Landscape plans shall utilize large canopy trees particularly along the southern perimeter of the Project site to the extent feasible.

#### ***Glare***

- AE-6** The exterior of the proposed building shall be constructed of materials such as high-performance tinted non-mirrored glass, painted metal panels and pre-cast concrete or fabricated wall surfaces.

### **Significant Project Impacts After Mitigation**

The proposed Project would not result in significant unavoidable impacts after the implementation of mitigation measures.

### **Cumulative Impacts**

The proposed Constellation Place project located at the corner of Century Park West and Constellation Boulevard, is to be constructed of low reflective building materials. The building would not utilize mirrored glass or other highly reflective exterior coverings. Glare from the Constellation Place building will be directed towards portions of Century Park West and Constellation Boulevard. However, it was determined that with mitigation restricting the use of high reflective exterior materials, any adverse impact would be reduced to a less than significant level. Additionally, none of the same roadway segments would be affected. Therefore, the Constellation Place building would not cumulatively contribute to the Project's less than significant impacts after mitigation. No significant cumulative impact would occur.