
IV. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

A. IMPACTS FOUND TO BE LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT

The City of Los Angeles has determined through the preparation of an Initial Study (see Appendix A) that the proposed St. Regis Project would not result in potentially significant impacts related to the environmental topics listed below. Section 15128 of the State CEQA Guidelines states:

An EIR shall contain a statement briefly indicating the reasons that various possible significant effects of a project were determined not to be significant and were therefore not discussed in detail in the EIR. Such a statement may be contained in an attached copy of the Initial Study.

It has been determined that there is no substantial evidence that the proposed St. Regis Project could cause significant environmental effects in the following areas: Agricultural Resources, Air Quality (specific to odors), Biological Resources (excluding trees), Cultural Resources (excluding paleontology and archaeology), Geology and Soils (specific to septic tanks), Hazards and Hazardous Materials (specific to airport land use plans), Hydrology and Water Quality, Land Use Planning (specific to habitat conservation plans and natural community conservation plans), and Noise (specific to airport land use plans). Therefore, no further environmental review of these issues is necessary for the reasons described below. For further analysis of each issue, see the Initial Study that was prepared for the proposed project, which is contained in Appendix A.

The Initial Study also determined that some issues may have potentially significant impacts on the environment, including Aesthetics, Air Quality (excluding odors), Biological Resources (trees), Cultural Resources (paleontology and archaeology), Energy Conservation, Geology and Soils (excluding septic tanks), Hazards and Hazardous Materials (excluding to airport land use plans), Land Use Planning (excluding habitat conservation plans and natural community conservation plans), Mineral Resources, Noise (excluding airport land use plans), Population and Housing, Public Services, Transportation and Traffic, and Utilities and Services Systems. Analyses of these issues are not included below, as each issue is analyzed in greater depth in Section IV (Environmental Impact Analysis) of this Draft EIR.

AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

The project would not convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use. The project site is currently developed, does not contain any agricultural uses, and is not delineated as such on any maps prepared

pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program.¹ Therefore, the development of the proposed project would not convert any farmland to a non-agricultural use, and no impact would occur.

The project would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act Contract. The project site is currently zoned for commercial land uses. No Williamson Act Contract applies to the project site. Therefore, the development of the proposed project would not conflict with an agricultural zoning designation. Therefore, no impact would occur.

The project would not involve other changes in the existing environment, which due to their location or nature, could result in the conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use. As discussed above, the project site is currently developed and does not contain any agricultural uses. Therefore, development of the proposed project would not convert any farmland to a non-agricultural use, and no impact would occur.

AIR QUALITY

The project would not create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people. Odors are typically associated with the use of chemicals, solvents, petroleum products, and other strong-smelling elements used in cleaning activities. In addition, odors related to potential kitchen uses associated with the proposed restaurant may result. However, any odors that may be generated by the proposed project would be consistent with odors generated in the vicinity associated with residential and commercial uses. Therefore, impacts associated with objectionable odors would be less than significant.

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The project would not have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulation, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The project site is located within an urban area and is developed. The project site is not expected to contain any species identified as candidate, sensitive, or special status by local or regional plans, policies, or regulation, or by the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Therefore, no impact would occur.

The project would not have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, and regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The project site does not contain any

¹ State of California Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource Protection, Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, website: http://www.consrv.ca.gov/dlrp/FMMP/images/fmmp2002_300.pdf, July 21, 2005.

riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community. Therefore, development of the proposed project would not adversely affect any such community, and no impact would occur.

The project would not 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. The project site does not contain any wetlands. Therefore, development of the proposed project would not adversely affect any federally protected wetlands, and no impact would occur.

The project would not 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. No resident or migratory fish or wildlife species are expected to occur on the project site. Therefore, development of the proposed project would not interfere with the movement of any fish or wildlife species, and no impact would occur.

The project would not conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan. The project site is not within an area designated by an adopted habitat conservation plan, natural community conservation plan, or other approved habitat conservation plan. Therefore, development of the proposed project would not conflict with any such plan, and no impact would occur.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

The project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5. The St. Regis Hotel was constructed in 1984, and is not considered to be a historic resource. Therefore, the implementation of the proposed project would not result in a change in the significance of a historic resources and no impact would occur.

The project would not disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries. The project site has been previously developed and, thus, the underlying soil has been previously disturbed. Therefore, it is unlikely that any human remains are present on the project site. If human remains that were not previously disturbed are found on the project site during construction activities, then they would be dealt with in accordance with applicable State and federal laws. Therefore, the potential impact associated with human remains would be less than significant.

GEOLOGY AND SOILS

The project would not have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater. The project site is located in a developed area of the City of Los Angeles, which is served by a wastewater collection, conveyance and treatment system operated by the City of Los Angeles. Furthermore, no septic tanks or

alternative disposal systems are necessary, nor are they proposed with the project. Therefore, no impact would occur.

HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

The project would not be located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, and the project would not result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area. The project site is not located within an airport land use plan or within two miles of a public airport.² Therefore, no impact would occur.

HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

The project would not violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements. Construction activities associated with the proposed project would be subject to City inspection. Any construction work would be required to meet the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) requirements for storm water quality. The contractor would also be required to implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) for erosion control. In addition, the contractor would file a Notice of Intent with the State Water Resources Control Board and prepare a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) prior to any construction activity. Implementation of the BMPs in the project's SWPPP and compliance with the City's discharge requirements would ensure that the project construction would not violate any water quality standards or discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade water quality. Therefore, the project's construction-related water quality impacts would be less than significant.

With respect to the operation of the proposed project, a Standard Urban Storm Water Mitigation Plan (SUSMP) would be implemented which would ensure that potential impacts associated with water quality would be less than significant. Furthermore, the proposed project would not include industrial discharge to any public water system. With appropriate project design and compliance with applicable federal, State and local regulations, Code requirements and permit provisions, a less-than-significant impact would occur.

The project would not substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would not drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted). Stormwater runoff from the proposed project would be accommodated by the existing City storm drain infrastructure. Although groundwater was not encountered in borings down to 98 feet below the ground

² Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning and Los Angeles County Airport Land Use Commission, *Los Angeles County Airport Land Use Plan, adopted December 19, 1991.*

surface, minor amounts of perched groundwater could occur locally at higher elevations.³ The proposed project would involve the development of a 40-story condominium building with several subterranean parking levels. Furthermore, the proposed project would include approximately two acres of landscaped open space. Therefore, the development of the proposed project would not substantially alter groundwater recharge. Project excavation would extend below the existing subterranean levels of the St. Regis Hotel. However, there are no existing water wells on the project site⁴ and no water wells are proposed as part of the project. Therefore, the proposed project would not deplete groundwater supplies and a less-than-significant impact would occur.

The project would not substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner, which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site. The project site is located in a dense urbanized area and no stream or river courses are located in the project vicinity. The closest water body to the project site is the Ballona Creek, located approximately 2.5 miles west of the project site.⁵ The amount of permeable surfaces, including landscaped open space, with the development of the proposed project is anticipated to be similar to the existing amount of permeable surfaces on the site. Runoff from the project site currently flows, and would continue to flow, towards existing City storm drains. Therefore, no impact would occur.

The project would not substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site. Currently, runoff from the project site flows southward along Avenue of the Stars to existing storm drain inlets in Olympic Boulevard.⁶ With the development of the proposed project, runoff would continue to be directed towards existing storm drain inlets in Olympic Boulevard. Therefore, the proposed project would not substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the project area. No project impact would occur.

The project would not create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff. Runoff from the project site currently is and would continue to be collected on the site and directed towards existing storm drains in the project vicinity. As the amount of impermeable surfaces would not

³ MACTEC Engineering and Consulting, Inc., *Preliminary Report of Geotechnical Investigation, Proposed 2055 Condominiums, 2055 Avenue of the Stars, June 29, 2005.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ City of Los Angeles, Bureau of Engineering, *Navigate LA, website: <http://navigate.lacity.org/maps/lamap.mwf>, July 27, 2005.*

substantially change with the development of the proposed project (see response above), the amount of runoff from the project site would not be altered. In addition, all contaminants gathered during such routine cleaning would be disposed of in compliance with applicable stormwater pollution prevention permits. Therefore, the proposed project would not contribute substantial additional sources of polluted runoff to the storm drain system or increase storm water runoff from the project site above existing levels. No impact would occur.

The project would not otherwise substantially degrade water quality. Other than the sources discussed in responses above, the proposed project does not include other potential sources of contaminants which could potentially degrade water quality. Therefore, the proposed project would not degrade water quality, and no impact would occur.

The project would not place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map. The project site is not in an area designated as a 100-year flood hazard area.⁷ Therefore, no impact would occur.

The project would not place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows. The project site is not in an area designated as a 100-year flood hazard area.⁸ Therefore, no impact would occur.

The project would not expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam. According to the Safety Element of the City General Plan, the project site is not within an inundation area.⁹ Therefore, no impact would occur associated with flooding due to the failure of a levee or dam.

The project would not expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow. The Pacific Ocean is located approximately 6.4 miles to the west of the project site. The project site does not lie in a potential tsunami zone.¹⁰ With respect to the potential impact from a mudflow, the project site is relatively flat and is surrounded by urban

⁷ Federal Emergency Management Agency, *National Flood Insurance Program, Flood Insurance Rate Map, City of Los Angeles, California, Los Angeles County, Panel 71 of 112, Community Panel Number 060137 0071 C, effective date December 2, 1980.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *City of Los Angeles, Safety Element of the Los Angeles City General Plan, Exhibit G, Inundation & Tsunami Hazard Areas, March 1994.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

development; thus, it does not contain any sources of mudflow. Therefore, there would be no impact associated with the risk of loss, injury, or death by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow.

LAND USE

The project would not conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan. As discussed in Biological Resources (above), no habitat conservation or natural community conservation plans presently exist which govern any portion of the project site. The project site is located in an area that has been previously disturbed, and is within the urbanized area of Century City. Therefore, the proposed project would not have the potential to cause such effects, and no impact would occur.

NOISE

The project would not be located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, and the project would not expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels. The project site is not located within an airport land use plan or within two miles of a public airport.¹¹ Therefore, no impact would occur.

The project is not within the vicinity of a private airstrip and would not expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels. The project site is not located in the vicinity of a private airstrip. No such facilities are located in the vicinity of the project site. Therefore, no impact would occur.

¹¹ *Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning and Los Angeles County Airport Land Use Commission, Los Angeles County Airport Land Use Plan, adopted December 19, 1991.*