
IV. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

E. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The following section is based upon the 1992 El Segundo General Plan and the General Plan EIR. Prior to preparation of this Draft EIR, the City of El Segundo prepared an Initial Study for the proposed Circulation Element Update. It was determined that the proposed Circulation Element Update would not have an impact on any adopted Habitat Conservation Plans, Natural Conservation Community Plans, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plans. Therefore, these issues are not discussed below. A copy of the Revised Initial Study that was prepared for this project is provided in Appendix A.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The City of El Segundo is located in an urbanized and almost completely developed setting. Much of the native plant and animals have been displaced and replaced with those typical of an urbanized setting. The following summarizes the existing biological resources setting.

Vegetation

The native vegetation cover in the City has generally been displaced by urban structures, surfacing, and plant species typical of the residential and commercial landscaping of the region. Ornamental landscaping and naturalized exotic species, including grasses and thistles are the common forms of vegetation. In addition to these ground covers, shrubs and trees have also been planted for their ornamental and functional qualities. These planted areas include residential, commercial, and public landscapes. Close to 5,000 street trees are maintained by the City's Parks and Recreation Department and notable specimen trees can be found on the El Segundo High School grounds and at Library Park.¹ Additionally, the perimeter of the Chevron/Texaco Refinery is landscaped. A 2,500 foot row of mature eucalyptus trees border the refinery on the north and south, and the eastern boundary along Sepulveda Boulevard consists of a landscaped berm.²

Remnants of coastal strand vegetation, once abundant along the dune areas, exist only in scattered patches within and near El Segundo. These include a 277-acre site west of LAX, a 1.6-acre sanctuary at the Chevron/Texaco Refinery, and a 4-acre park in Manhattan Beach. The southern dune scrub plant community exists on the stabilized dunes and flat terraces of the El Segundo Dunes. Within the City of El Segundo, this community is limited to the sanctuary established at the Chevron/Texaco Refinery and

¹ *The City of El Segundo General Plan, 1992.*

² *EIP Associates, City of El Segundo General Plan Draft Environmental Impact Report, Volume One, December 1991.*

potentially the disturbed dunes east of Hyperion. Common plants within this community include lupine, bladderpod, lemonade berry, and buckwheat. Annual grasslands/Ruderal Fields are a naturalized plant community, consisting of exotic annual grasses and forbs. The most common species include wild oats, rye grass, barley, brome, fileree, California poppy, and fescue grass. This plant community is limited to the few remaining open fields in El Segundo.³

Sensitive Plant Species

The beach spectacle pod is a perennial plant with purplish to yellowish flowers and is found along the coast between Los Angeles and San Luis Obispo. It had historically been observed in the City of El Segundo, but the last time it was observed there was 1932. There were no plants observed in El Segundo during a survey taken in 1983.⁴

Wildlife

Forty-six species of birds are common to the area, sixteen of which are considered year-round residents. Many species of birds feed in the near shore waters of Santa Monica Bay. No coastal strand birds are known to likely to breed in the City's coastal area, due to its disturbed nature and absence of specific habitat. The shoreline area provides a feeding and resting zone, particularly in rocky areas. Common mammal and reptile species found in the area are the California ground squirrel, house mouse, and Western fence lizard.⁵

Sensitive Species

Two endangered bird species, the California least tern and the brown pelican, are known to likely to feed, fly over, and rest along the near-shore waters or beach areas. No nesting sites are known to have been established in El Segundo.

The El Segundo Blue Butterfly is listed on the federal endangered species list, and is dependent upon and rarely strays from coastal buckwheat plants. At this time, the butterfly occurs on a 1.96 acre preserve adjacent to and maintained by the Chevron/Texaco Refinery and in the dune area under the flight path of the Los Angeles International Airport in the City of Los Angeles.⁶ In addition, the Pacific pocket mouse was identified in the Natural Diversity Database as being observed in the El Segundo area.

Five other sensitive insect species are known to occupy the El Segundo Dunes and could potentially inhabit the Chevron Sanctuary or the dunes east of the Hyperion Treatment Plant. The hennes

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *The City of El Segundo General Plan, 1992.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

eucosman moth and the Langes El Segundo dune weevil are endemic to the El Segundo Dunes. The rest are endemic to coastal sand dunes and include the loras abnoras moth, globose dune beetle, and Dorothy's El Segundo dune beetle.⁷

Wetlands/Vernal Pools

There are some indications that wetlands or vernal pools may be located on or near the Sepulveda/Rosecrans site in the City of El Segundo.⁸

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Threshold of Significance

The proposed Circulation Element Update would have a significant impact on biological resources if the project would:

- 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 regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- 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.
- 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.

⁷ *EIP Associates, City of El Segundo General Plan Draft Environmental Impact Report, Volume One, December 1991.*

⁸ *United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Letter from Jim A. Bartel, Assistant Field Supervisor, regarding Draft Environmental Impact Report for El Segundo Circulation Element Update, El Segundo, Los Angeles County, California, November 28, 2000 (See Appendix E).*

Project Impacts

The proposed Circulation Element Update consists of changes in roadway designations, physical changes to the existing roadway network (e.g., new roadway system on the Sepulveda/Rosecrans site), and intersection improvements. These intersection improvements have been identified at 14 existing intersections to accommodate growth in future traffic levels and include such things as intersection widening, increased number of turning lanes, installation of lights and traffic signals, etc. Additional information regarding the types of improvements can be found in Section II, Project Description.

No impacts to biological resources would occur as a result of changes in roadway designations. These changes are changes that would occur “on paper”, but would not result in a physical change to the existing environment.

Changes to the physical roadway network include 1) converting Nash and Douglas Streets to two-way operations; 2) modifying intersections along Nash and Douglas to accommodate two-way traffic; and 3) developing an internal roadway network on the Sepulveda/Rosecrans site. The changes to and along Nash Street and Douglas Street would not impact biological resources. The entire area adjacent to these streets is completely developed and does not contain any sensitive biological resources. The area bounded by Nash Street, Douglas, and Mariposa Avenue is the future site for the Campus El Segundo project. This area is an open field which contains non-native weedy vegetation which is periodically cleared for fire control.⁹ No sensitive or endangered plant or animal species, including the El Segundo Blue Butterfly, exist in this area, no riparian/wetland habitat is present, and the area is not known to be a wildlife corridor. Therefore, no biological resources impacts are anticipated to occur as a result of the roadway changes and modifications along Nash Street and Douglas Street.

The Sepulveda/Rosecrans site is relatively undeveloped. The site does not contain the El Segundo Blue Butterfly or its habitat. However, the development of a roadway network on the Sepulveda/Rosecrans site has the potential to impact biological resources. This area may contain wetlands/riparian habitat or vernal pools that could potentially be affected by construction of new roadways. In addition, this site may include other sensitive species in areas that have not been disturbed. Development of the proposed Circulation Element Update roadway in this area could significantly impact biological resources.

Additionally, intersection improvements would be implemented at 14 existing intersections within the City. These intersection improvements could include the following: the widening of the intersections, the addition of more turning lanes, installation of additional traffic signal and street lighting, etc. Most of the intersections where these improvements would be implemented are located in areas that are completely developed and contain no biological resources. However, one intersection is located in an area that may have biological resources. This intersection is as follows:

⁹ Chris Joseph & Associates, *Draft Environmental Impact Report for the El Segundo Corporate Campus Project, September 2001.*

- #25 – Sepulveda Boulevard/Rosecrans Avenue

As discussed above, Intersection #25 is located in an area that may contain wetlands/riparian habitat or vernal pools. Any modifications to this intersection would have a potentially significant impact.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

The proposed Circulation Element Update, in conjunction with future development projects within the City of El Segundo, has the potential to produce cumulative biological resources impacts. The proposed Circulation Element Update would include components that would affect one of the few remaining, relatively undeveloped areas within the City and could potentially impact sensitive species and wetlands. These impacts when combined with the potential impacts of future projects would be significant.

SUBSEQUENT ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION

Subsequent environmental documentation shall be prepared for any proposed construction of a new roadway system on the Sepulveda/Rosecrans site and any proposed improvements to the Sepulveda Boulevard/Rosecrans Avenue intersection to identify potential biological resources impacts. Prior to the construction of new roadways on the Sepulveda/Rosecrans site and any proposed improvements to the Sepulveda Boulevard/Rosecrans Avenue intersection, impacts associated with biological resources shall be examined in light of this Program EIR to determine whether a new Initial Study would be required to be prepared leading to either an EIR or Negative Declaration. The subsequent environmental documentation shall address the following:

- A general biological assessment shall be conducted to determine the presence/absence of sensitive biological resources and wetlands. If sensitive biological resources are identified, measures shall be identified to reduce impacts to these resources to less than significant levels.

MITIGATION MEASURES

Impacts of the conversion of Nash and Douglas Streets from one-way to two-way operations and the other components of the Circulation Element Update, except as identified above, would be less than significant and no mitigation measures are required.

LEVEL OF IMPACT AFTER MITIGATION

Impacts of the conversion of Nash and Douglas Streets from one-way to two-way operations and the other components of the Circulation Element Update, except as identified above, would be less than significant and no mitigation measures are required.

Impacts of the improvements at the Sepulveda Boulevard/Rosecrans Avenue intersection and the roadway network on the Sepulveda/Rosecrans site would be determined by the subsequent environmental documentation described above.