

3.3 Biological Resources

This section evaluates the potential long-term effects of the No Build Alternative and the Build Alternative on biological resources. Short-term construction effects are discussed in **Section 3.17** (Construction).

The assessment of reasonably foreseeable effects in this section is based upon the temporal proximity parameters detailed in **Chapter 3.0** (Introduction), and the geographic proximity parameters detailed in **Section 3.3.1** (Affected Environment).

3.3.1 Affected Environment

Biological Resources Study Area

- **Build Alternative Buffer:** 500-foot buffer from the alignment, stations, railroad system facilities, construction staging areas, Maravilla Crossover, and MSF site options (See **Figure 3.3-1**)
 - Focuses on the immediate vicinity of where project activities are occurring, where biological resources impacts typically occur

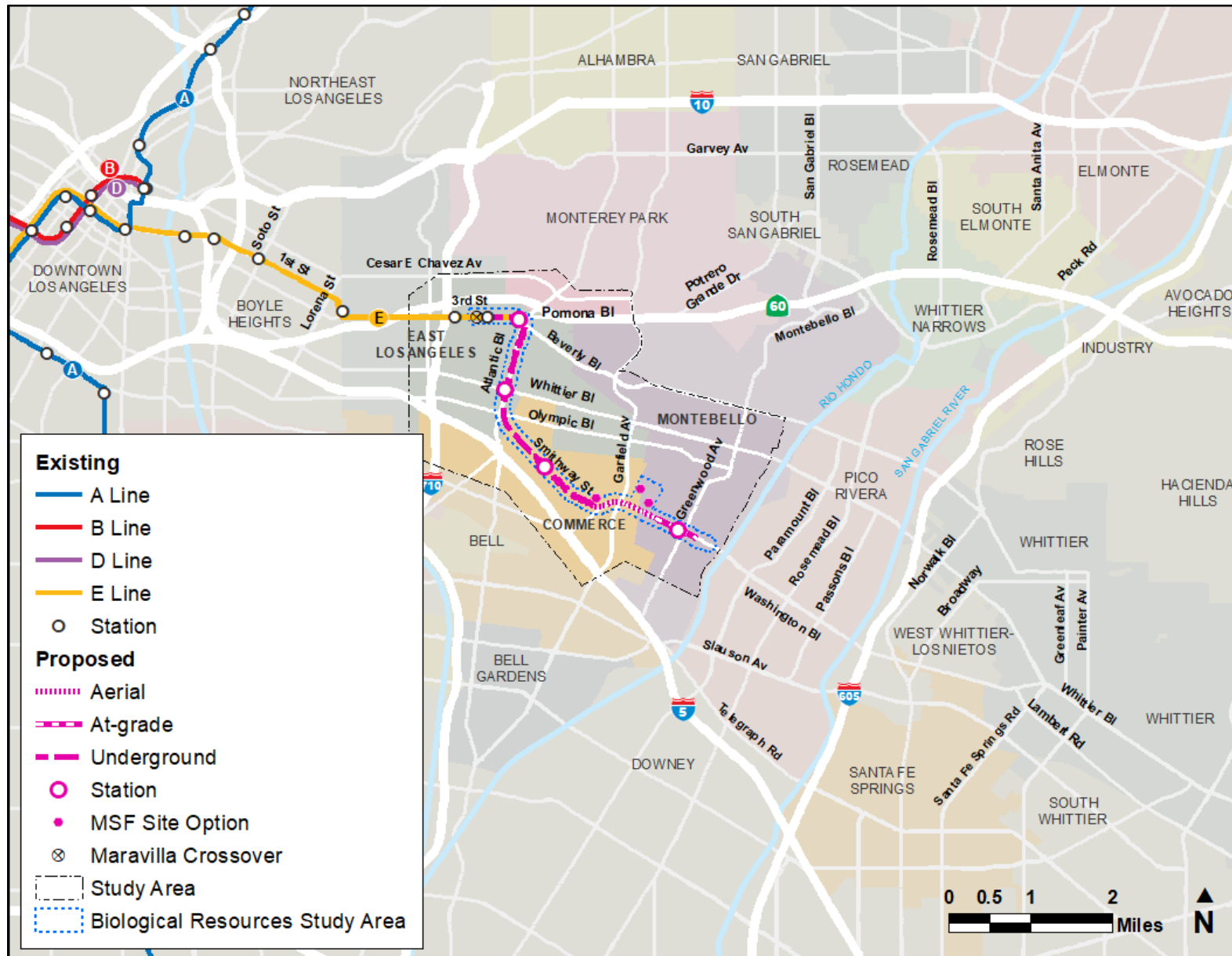
The United States Fish and Wildlife Service Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) tool was used to generate a list of federally listed species with potential to occur in the Biological Resources Study Area. The IPaC tool identifies any designated critical habitat for federally listed species (United States Fish and Wildlife Service 2026). The California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) was also used to identify federally listed plants and animals with the potential to occur in the Biological Resources Study Area (California Department of Fish and Wildlife 2025). Results of the IPaC and CNDDDB searches are provided in **Appendix G** (Biological Resources Database Search Results).

The identification of tree species, vegetation communities, and current site conditions within the Biological Resources Study Area is based on tree surveys and site visits conducted in 2025 and the results of prior surveys conducted along the Project alignment since 2019. These surveys and site visits utilized field observations from the right-of-way and aerial imagery. **Section 3.3.1.2** describes the findings in detail.

3.3.1.1 Federally Listed Species

Federally listed species include wildlife and plant species listed as threatened, endangered, and/or proposed for listing. Using IPaC and CNDDDB data, ten federally listed species were identified as having the potential to occur within the Biological Resources Study Area (**Table 3.3-1**). The potential occurrence of each species was evaluated based on the presence of suitable habitat. The Biological Resources Study Area is developed with minimal vegetation and contains no surface waters, wetlands, or floodplains as discussed in **Section 3.10** (Water Resources).⁹ Photographs of existing conditions are provided in **Section 3.8** (Visual Resources). No federally listed species, suitable habitat, critical habitat, or proposed critical habitat were identified during the survey, site visits, or the desktop review. Full database search results are provided in **Appendix G**.

⁹ The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act does not apply because the Biological Resources Study Area is not mapped within or adjacent to the boundaries of any Essential Fish Habitat (National Marine Fisheries Service 2026).



Source: Metro; CDM Smith/AECOM JV 2026.

Figure 3.3-1 Biological Resources Study Area

Table 3.3-1 Federally Listed Wildlife and Plant Species Potentially in the Biological Resources Study Area

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status	Potential to Occur in the Study Area
Slender-horned spineflower	<i>Dodecahema leptoceras</i>	Federally Endangered	No potential to occur. Suitable habitat includes sandy and gravelly soils within alluvial scrub (United States Fish and Wildlife Service 2022). These conditions do not occur within the Biological Resources Study Area.
Nevin's barberry	<i>Mahonia nevinii</i>	Federally Endangered	No potential to occur. Suitable habitat includes sandy and gravelly washes, alluvial terraces, canyon bottoms, and steep slopes (United States Fish and Wildlife Service 2009). These conditions do not occur within the Biological Resources Study Area.
California Orcutt grass	<i>Orcuttia californica</i>	Federally Endangered	No potential to occur. Suitable habitat includes vernal pools and wetlands (California Department of Fish and Wildlife 2025). These conditions do not occur in the Biological Resources Study Area.
Coastal California gnatcatcher	<i>Polioptila californica</i>	Federally Threatened	No potential to occur. Suitable habitat includes coastal bluff scrub and coastal scrub (California Department of Fish and Wildlife 2025). These conditions do not occur within the Biological Resources Study Area.
Least Bell's vireo	<i>Vireo bellii pusillus</i>	Federally Endangered	No potential to occur. Suitable habitat includes riparian forests, riparian scrub, and riparian woodlands (California Department of Fish and Wildlife 2025). These conditions do not occur within the Biological Resources Study Area.
Southwestern willow flycatcher	<i>Empidonax traillii extimus</i>	Federally Endangered	No potential to occur. Suitable habitat includes riparian woodlands, which do not occur within the Biological Resources Study Area (California Department of Fish and Wildlife 2025).
Western yellow-billed cuckoo	<i>Coccyzus americanus occidentalis</i>	Federally Threatened	No potential to occur. Suitable habitat includes riparian forests, which do not occur within the Biological Resources Study Area (California Department of Fish and Wildlife 2025).
Southwestern pond turtle	<i>Actinemys pallida</i>	Proposed Threatened	No potential to occur. Suitable habitat includes aquatic habitat (e.g., ponds, lakes), adjacent upland habitat, and basking sites (e.g., shorelines and substrate near aquatic habitat) (United States Fish and Wildlife Service 2023). These conditions do not occur within the Biological Resources Study Area.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status	Potential to Occur in the Study Area
Western Spadefoot	<i>Spea hammondi</i>	Proposed Threatened	No potential to occur. Suitable habitat includes woodlands, coastal scrub, grasslands, vernal pools, and wetlands (California Department of Fish and Wildlife 2025). These conditions do not occur within the Biological Resources Study Area.
Monarch butterfly	<i>Danaus plexippus</i>	Proposed Threatened	No potential to occur. Requires flower-rich meadows and grasslands, with significant populations of milkweed for host plants in larval stages, as well as over wintering tree groves (United States Fish and Wildlife Service 2024b). These conditions do not occur within the Biological Resources Study Area.

Source: United States Fish and Wildlife Service 2009, 2022, 2023, 2024b, 2026; California Department of Fish and Wildlife 2025.

3.3.1.2 Migratory Birds and Vegetation

Based on surveys and site visits described in **Section 3.3.1**, the Biological Resources Study Area is primarily developed and lacks distinct vegetation communities. Most trees occur as individual street trees and do not form a canopy.¹⁰ Understory vegetation also occurs as sparse plantings, isolated in street medians or sidewalks. Tree survey data, site visit observations, and aerial imagery indicate that approximately 650 trees occur along the Build Alternative alignment and construction staging areas. Additionally, approximately 165 trees are within MSF Site 1, 270 trees are within MSF Site 2, and 20 trees are within MSF Site 3. The tree species that were identified within the Biological Resources Study Area are primarily ornamental species such as jacaranda (*Jacaranda mimosifolia*), palms (family *Arecaceae*), and eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus* spp.). Native trees occur only sparsely and consist mainly of species such as sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*) and oak (*Quercus* spp.). Understory vegetation is primarily ornamental species such as turf grass and box hedges and does not form distinct vegetation communities.

Because of the lack of distinct vegetation communities and density of urban development, the vegetation that occurs within the Biological Resources Study Area provides only limited habitat for migratory birds. However, migratory birds still have potential to occur and use existing street trees and understory shrubs as nesting habitat. Both native and ornamental vegetation can serve as suitable nesting habitat for migratory birds.

3.3.2 No Build Alternative

The No Build Alternative, as described in **Section 2.2** of the EA, would include already planned and funded roadway and transit projects but would not provide a rail transit option for communities in eastern Los Angeles County. As shown in **Table 3.3-2**, the No Build Alternative would have no effect on federally listed species and no long-term adverse effect on migratory birds or related to the spread of invasive species or pathogens.

¹⁰ Individual street trees were not considered a vegetation community unless they were grouped together to form a canopy.

Table 3.3-2 Biological Resources Impact Summary – No Build Alternative

Topic	Impact	Rationale
Federally Listed Species	No Effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Biological Resources Study Area is highly developed and does not support habitat or critical habitat for federally listed species
Migratory Birds	No Adverse Effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Already planned regional transit and roadway projects would be required to comply with the MBTA and local tree protection policies and undergo separate environmental reviews to determine environmental effects and mitigation, as necessary
Invasive species or pathogens	No Adverse Effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of equipment for planned transit and roadway projects could spread invasive plant seeds or tree diseases in exposed soil or vegetation. However, these projects would primarily occur within developed and paved areas with limited to no natural areas

Source: Metro; CDM Smith/AECOM JV 2026.

Key: MBTA = Migratory Bird Treaty Act

3.3.3 Build Alternative

As discussed in **Section 3.3.1**, the Biological Resources Study Area does not support habitat or critical habitat for federally listed species as it is highly developed. Thus, there would be no long-term effect on federally listed species from the Build Alternative.

Disturbing vegetation during the bird nesting season could disrupt migratory bird nesting activities. However, long-term vegetation disturbance would primarily be from tree trimming, which is expected to be minimal. Additionally, the Build Alternative would comply with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, which protects against the take of migratory birds. Therefore, there would be no long-term adverse effect on migratory birds.

As discussed in **Section 3.3.1.2**, no vegetation communities exist within the Biological Resources Study Area and vegetation along the alignment is sparse. Any tree-related maintenance activities under the Build Alternative would comply with the Metro Tree Policy and local tree protection policies, which include provisions for tree protection. Therefore, the Build Alternative would not have long-term adverse effects on vegetation.

Equipment used for maintenance has the potential to transport invasive plant seeds if used in areas of exposed soil and spread tree disease pathogens. However, the majority of areas that could be affected by the Build Alternative consist of structures, roads, and other hardscaped areas. Further, the majority of street trees along the alignment are isolated from each other and therefore less susceptible to insect pests and tree disease pathogens (Garcia et al 2022). Thus, the Build Alternative would have no long-term adverse effects related to the spread of invasive species or tree disease pathogens.

3.3.4 Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures for the Build Alternative

The measures identified in Table 3.3-3 would be implemented for the Build Alternative in the long term. Construction measures are provided in **Section 3.17**.

Table 3.3-3 Long-Term Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures

Topic	Potential Effect	Proposed Measure	Measure Type	Effects After Implementation of Measure(s)
Federally Listed Species	No Effect as Biological Resources Study Area does not provide suitable habitat for federally listed species	No avoidance, minimization, or mitigation measures needed	None	No Effect
Migratory Birds	Build Alternative would comply with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and long-term vegetation disturbance would be minor	No avoidance, minimization, or mitigation measures needed	None	No Adverse Effect
Vegetation	Vegetation within the Biological Resources Study Area is sparse and Build Alternative would comply with Metro Tree Protection Policy and local ordinances	No avoidance, minimization, or mitigation measures needed	None	No Adverse Effect
Invasive species and pathogens	Equipment could transport invasive plant seeds and tree disease pathogens; however, the Biological Resources Study Area is developed with minimal vegetation and there is very limited potential for spreading invasive species or tree pathogens	No avoidance, minimization, or mitigation measures needed	None	No Adverse Effect

Source: CDM Smith/AECOM JV 2026.