

## C. VEGETATION, WILDLIFE AND WETLANDS

### 1. Existing Conditions

The project site is an existing shopping center, and approximately 89% of the site is comprised of impervious surfaces. Due to the extent of existing development on and surrounding most of the existing shopping center site, many of the ecological communities are urban in nature and have degraded habitats.

There are 288 existing trees which are part of the site's landscaping, placed throughout the site, particularly in the walkway areas and adjacent to interior roadways. There is landscaped shrubbery that is maintained around the sidewalk/walkways of the shopping center islands and concourses. There is vegetation around the perimeter of the shopping center, most likely a combination of landscape plantings during the initial construction of the shopping center as well as "fill in" growth.

The project site does not contain any wetland areas. The site does not provide habitat for wildlife other than perhaps typical urban species, some of which might be considered "nuisance" species.

### 2. Potential Impacts

#### a. Removal of Vegetation

Because the site does not contain any wetlands, there are no impacts to wetlands.

Because the site does not contain any significant natural communities or significant habitats, no impacts are anticipated.

Since this is an existing shopping center site with little vegetation, the removal of vegetation will be minimal. An effort will be made to protect where possible the

more significant tree growth within the shopping center site. The existing mature trees within the east-west pedestrian via will be preserved. 96 of the existing trees will be removed as part of the new construction, and 354 new trees will be provided.

**b. Increase In Rodent Population During Construction**

Rodents are an unavoidable part of life in any city. The number of rats and mice, and their subsequent behavior, changes throughout the year. These changes are generally attributable to the passing seasons and the varying environments – winter brings snow and the disappearance of vegetation, spring brings rain and plant growth, summer brings hot weather and ample vegetation, and fall brings cooler temperatures and the annual disappearance of vegetation.

During the winter, rodent populations are at their annual low and breeding is minimal. Many rodents do not survive during the period of extreme cold and snow because of the temperatures and the difficulty in finding natural food sources, such as seeds and insects. The annual breeding cycle begins around March as the winter weather begins to get warmer. The spring rains bring about vegetation growth which provides ample breeding areas and additional food sources. There is another peak in the breeding cycle in early September as summer temperatures begin to cool. Natural food sources and the dense vegetation cover begin to diminish throughout the fall season as the weather slowly turns colder. As this occurs, rodents will begin to seek out shelter in warmer places.

By taking advantage of the seasonal changes, rodent control can be maintained. If rodents are controlled throughout the winter, there will be fewer around to breed in the spring. All existing buildings will need to be inspected carefully, especially in the early fall, to assure that there are no holes or other openings for the rodents to gain entry. Existing and new garbage containers will need to have tight-fitting lids and the overall site will need to be kept clean to minimize the shelter and food sources sought out by the rodents for their survival.

Rodents are generally not disturbed by routine road, renovation and/or sitework, but rather by construction activities that involve extensive demolition or mass excavation. As portions of this project will involve significant sitework activities and building demolition, a rodent control protocol will be established prior to the approval of demolition permits and building permits involving excavation activities.

### **3. Mitigation Measures**

#### **a. Description Of Landscape Plan**

The Preliminary Landscaping Plan (Figure IV.C-1) depicts areas of the renovated Shopping Center that will be planted with a variety of deciduous and evergreen trees, flowering trees, shrubs, perennials and annual flowers (Figure IV.C-2) to provide visual and aesthetic interest to the site. The existing mature trees within the east-west pedestrian via will be preserved and supplemented with additional trees and understory plantings to provide a functional and aesthetically pleasing landscape theme. The parking lot will be improved by the addition of numerous landscaped islands to help mitigate the existing visual expanse of asphalt, and to help define vehicular and pedestrian circulation routes. The proposed trees will help provide aesthetic value and shade for the at-grade parking areas. 354 new trees will be provided which, combined with the 192 trees to remain, will yield a total of 546 trees on-site. In addition, the site will be extensively landscaped with a variety of deciduous and evergreen shrubs, flowering shrubs and perennials which will provide visual interest and aesthetic appeal. A detailed Landscaping Plan will be provided at the time of Site Plan Approval depicting the exact quantities, species, sizes and location of all proposed plant material.

The Preliminary Landscaping Plan (Figure IV.C-1) depicts a variety of proposed landscaping, with the final landscaping plan to propose a wide variety of deciduous trees (such as sugar maple, river birch, dogwood, honey locust, and green ash), and

evergreen trees (such as Norway spruce, kwanzan cherry, Douglas fir, white pine, and Serbian spruce). In addition, shrubs such as white azalea, forsythia, rhododendron, and viburnum are proposed, as well as perennials such as coneflowers and groundcovers such as purple leafed winter creeper and myrtle (Figure IV.C-2).

Buffer plantings are proposed along Vredinburgh Avenue to supplement the transitional plantings between the shopping center and the residences that were put in by Stop & Stop as part of their new construction, and along the Kimball Avenue site frontage south of driveway C, across from the residences on the east side of Kimball Avenue.

The site's interior tree plantings will help provide shaded areas on the surface parking lots, and trees and other plantings along the pedestrian walkways will also help provide shade and a pleasing visual appearance.

**b. Construction Phase Extermination Plan**

A rodent control program based on a field investigation by a New York State licensed exterminator will be established prior to the commencement of demolition and construction work. Prior to the demolition of any structure, the structure will be fumigated and rodent bait will be placed throughout the structure and the immediate site area. Bait stations will also be placed at regular pre-determined intervals around the perimeter of the site. The rodent control program will be monitored and maintained during the demolition, construction and post construction phases of work.