

5 ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Section 15126.6(a) of the State CEQA Guidelines requires EIRs to describe “... a range of reasonable alternatives to the project, which would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project, and evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives. An EIR need not consider every conceivable alternative to a project. Rather it must consider a reasonable range of potentially feasible alternatives that will foster informed decision making and public participation. An EIR is not required to consider alternatives which are infeasible. The lead agency is responsible for selecting a range of project alternatives for examination and must publicly disclose its reasoning for selecting those alternatives. There is no ironclad rule governing the nature or scope of the alternatives to be discussed other than the rule of reason.” This section of CEQA also provides guidance regarding what the alternatives analysis should consider. Subsection (b) further states the purpose of the alternatives analysis as follows:

Because an EIR must identify ways to mitigate or avoid the significant effects that a project may have on the environment (Public Resources Code Section 21002.1), the discussion of alternatives shall focus on alternatives to the project or its location which are capable of avoiding or substantially lessening any significant effects of the project, even if these alternatives would impede to some degree the attainment of the project objectives, or would be more costly.

The State CEQA Guidelines further require that the alternatives be compared to the proposed project’s environmental impacts and that the “no project” alternative be considered (CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e)). In defining “feasibility” (e.g., “... feasibility attain most of the basic objectives of the project ...”). State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(f)(1) states, in part:

Among the factors that may be taken into account when addressing the feasibility of alternatives are site suitability, economic viability, availability of infrastructure, general plan consistency, other plans or regulatory limitations, jurisdictional boundaries (projects with a regionally significant impact should consider the regional context), and whether the proponent can reasonably acquire, control or otherwise have access to the alternative site (or the site is already owned by the proponent). No one of these factors establishes a fixed limit on the scope of reasonable alternatives.

In determining what alternatives should be considered in the EIR, it is important to acknowledge the objectives of the project, the project’s significant effects, and unique project considerations. These factors are crucial to the development of alternatives that meet the criteria specified in CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(a). As noted in Section 3.0 of this EIR, the project applicant’s stated objectives include:

- ▶ Increase Rocklin’s housing supply in close proximity to existing transportation corridors in a manner that responds to market desires and is consistent with the planning goals, objectives, and policies of the City of Rocklin;
- ▶ Maximize housing opportunities that integrate and transition into the surrounding community while achieving higher densities in proximity to existing transportation corridors and commercial uses;
- ▶ Develop an economically viable project that is compatible with surrounding uses;
- ▶ Protect Secret Ravine and provide opportunities for passive recreation and other open space uses through visual and pedestrian links; and,
- ▶ Locate housing proximate to retail with a pedestrian linkage to shorten or reduce vehicle trips and accommodate pedestrian access to shopping opportunities.

5.2 ALTERNATIVES EVALUATED IN THIS EIR

Project alternatives are intended to reduce or eliminate the potentially significant adverse environmental effects of the project, while attempting to meet most of the project objectives. An EIR is required to contain a discussion of a reasonable range of alternatives to the project, or to the location of the project, that could feasibly attain the basic objectives of the project (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6[a]). The comparative merits of the alternatives should also be presented. CEQA provides the following guidelines for considering alternatives to the project.

- ▶ The “no project” alternative shall be evaluated. If the environmentally superior alternative is the no project alternative, the EIR shall also identify an environmentally superior alternative among the other alternatives (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6[e]).
- ▶ The discussion of alternatives shall focus on alternatives to the project or its location which are capable of eliminating significant adverse environmental effects or reducing them to a level of insignificance, even if these alternatives would partially impede the attainment of the proposed objectives, or would be more costly (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6[b]).
- ▶ If an alternative would cause one or more significant environmental effects in addition to those that would be caused by the project, the significant effects of the alternatives shall be discussed, but in less detail than the significant effects of the project (State CEQA Guideline Section 15126.6[d]).
- ▶ The range of alternatives required by an EIR is governed by the “rule of reason” that requires the EIR to set forth only those alternatives necessary to permit a reasoned choice. The key issue is whether the selection and discussion of alternatives fosters informed decision-making and informed public participation. An EIR need not consider an alternative whose effect cannot be ascertained and whose implementation is remote and speculative (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6[f]).

Several alternatives were considered at the outset of the EIR based on probable environmental impacts and project objectives. Four alternatives are analyzed relative to the proposed project and presented as a part of this EIR:

- ▶ **The No Project: No Development** – assumes that the Rocklin 60 project would not be implemented and that the project site would remain in its current undeveloped state.
- ▶ **The No Project: Existing General Plan** – assumes that a project would be developed on-site consistent with the Medium Density Residential, Low Density Residential, Retail Commercial, and Recreation/Conservation land use designations specified in the City’s General Plan.
- ▶ **Avoid Constraints by Removing Proposed Lots** – assumes certain on-site biological resource areas would be avoided, additional buffering from the Secret Ravine area would be provided, while still accommodating approximately 80 to 90 dwelling units on lots averaging roughly 6,000 to 6,500 square feet, with the same lot size as the proposed project.
- ▶ **Avoid Constraints through Clustering** – assumes certain on-site biological resource areas would be avoided, additional buffering from the Secret Ravine area would be provided, and approximately half as much land would be disturbed (compared to the proposed project), while still providing 179 dwelling units on approximately 3,000 to 3,200 square-foot lots (average) instead of 6,500-square foot lots proposed as a part of the project.

5.3 ALTERNATIVES REJECTED FOR FURTHER EVALUATION

The City considered and eventually dismissed an alternative site from further consideration in this EIR. After research of existing land uses, development under construction, and entitlements previously approved, it was determined that vacant land designated for future residential development similar to the proposed project site is available in the northwest portions of the city. However, the available land is not controlled by the applicant and according to the City, the land not likely to become available to the applicant. Further, because the site is designated for residential development in the General Plan, it is likely it would develop with this use in the future with or without this project. Thus, an alternative site would not provide an expansion of reasonable alternatives to the project.

Rocklin is currently updating its General Plan but is not anticipated to include additional land being identified for urban development. However, there is vacant land with land use designations and zoning in the northwest portions of the city that could accommodate the proposed project. However, the available vacant land with such land use designations is entitled or otherwise committed to other land development projects.

The City considered alternative sites that could, compared to the proposed project, reduce traffic noise exposure, reduce biological resources impacts, reduce aesthetic impacts, and reduce exposure to toxic air contaminants. However, for the reasons cited above, an alternative site is not available and this alternative was dismissed from further consideration.

5.4 NO PROJECT: NO DEVELOPMENT

The No Project: No Development Alternative assumes that the proposed project would not be implemented. Under this alternative, existing land uses on the project site would continue. The project site consists of undeveloped areas, interspersed with oak trees and oak woodlands. This alternative would not develop the project site with urban land uses and the site would remain in its existing condition.

5.4.1 LAND USE

This alternative would not result in division of an established community or conflicts with plans, policies, or regulations adopted to accomplish environmental goals. This alternative would not conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan. The level of impact for this alternative is similar to that of the proposed project *[Similar]*

5.4.2 TRAFFIC AND CIRCULATION

This alternative would not add land uses that generate or attract vehicular trips. Traffic volumes on local roadways would not change as a result of this alternative. This alternative would not generate any increased daily vehicle trips and would not cause any impacts to local roadways or intersections. The project would add traffic to local roadways, but the addition would not result in any significant intersection or roadway impacts. Some intersections and roadway segments will operate at unacceptable levels of service, but this would occur with or without development of the project. This alternative has no impact to traffic/circulation, whereas the project's impacts are less than significant. This alternative would substantially lessen traffic and circulation impacts compared to the proposed project. *[Less]*

5.4.3 AIR QUALITY

Implementation of this alternative would not cause any construction- or operational-related air pollutant emissions (e.g., ROG, NO_x, PM₁₀, TAC). The project would cause various short-term and long-term air quality impacts

(please refer to Section 4.3 of this EIR for more information). Implementation of the No Project: No Development Alternative would avoid all these air quality impacts. *[Less]*

5.4.4 NOISE

No construction activities would occur with this alternative because no land development would occur. As a result, this alternative would eliminate the project's construction-related noise impacts. Mobile-source noise impacts associated with traffic on I-80 would not occur because no residential land uses would be located in close proximity to this noise source. Implementation of this alternative would avoid the significant impacts associated with the project. *[Less]*

5.4.5 POPULATION AND HOUSING

This alternative would not induce substantial unplanned population growth, generate a substantial demand for new housing, displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, or otherwise result in impacts related to population and housing. This alternative does not involve housing construction or land use change of any type. Although the project's impact related to population and housing is considered less than significant, this alternative would have no impact. This alternative would avoid any impact related to population and housing. *[Less]*

5.4.6 PUBLIC SERVICES AND UTILITIES

This alternative does not include housing construction or other improvements that require public utilities or services. Although compliance with existing regulations would ensure a less-than-significant impact for public utilities and services for the project, this alternative would not require any public utility extension to the project site. Similarly, this alternative would not create any additional demand for water supply or wastewater treatment. Public services would not have to be provided. Therefore this alternative would avoid public service and utility related impacts. *[Less]*

5.4.7 AESTHETICS

This alternative does not involve any land use change and does not add any structures to the project site. This alternative would not alter in any way the existing views of the project site from surrounding areas including I-80 and Sierra College Boulevard. This alternative does not involve the removal of oak trees or modification of the landscape. Overall, aesthetic resource impacts would be avoided. *[Less]*

5.4.8 PUBLIC HEALTH AND HAZARDS

Under this alternative, no new development would occur; therefore, no residents or tenants on the site would be exposed to any potential health or safety hazards. There would be no exposure to any potential agricultural chemical residue, hazardous materials related to on-site electricity infrastructure (PCBs), construction-related use of hazardous materials, hazards associated with mosquitoes and the proposed detention basin, wildfire, or any other potential risk. This alternative would avoid all health and hazards impacts without the need for mitigation. *[Less]*

5.4.9 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Under this alternative, there would be no development of urban land uses. Therefore, impacts related to construction erosion and risks from seismic and soil hazards would not occur. This alternative would not construct any buildings or structures on the project site and, as a result, no soil limitation impacts (e.g., liquefaction, soil expansion) would occur. Overall, the no project alternative would avoid geology and soils impacts. *[Less]*

5.4.10 HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Implementation of this alternative would reduce the amount of stormwater discharges from the project site since development of urban land uses with impervious surfaces would not occur. This alternative would avoid hydrology and water quality impacts on the project site, although the adjacent approved commercial project known as “Rocklin Crossings” would involve construction of a potentially smaller detention basin in the same location as proposed for the Rocklin 60 project, even if the “no project” alternative is pursued by the City on the remainder of the Rocklin 60 site. Overall this alternative would substantially lessen hydrology and water quality impacts compared to the proposed project. *[Less]*

5.4.11 AGRICULTURE

Agricultural operations do not currently occur on the project site and the project site does not consist of any Important Farmland. Implementation of the proposed project would have less than significant impacts to agriculture resources. Overall, this alternative would avoid any impact to agricultural resources. For the purpose of this alternatives analysis, impacts are considered to be similar to those of the proposed project. *[Similar]*

5.4.12 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

This alternative would not develop any urban land uses on the project site and existing biological and wildlife habitats on the project site would remain unchanged. This alternative would avoid the projects impacts to Waters of the United States, Native Oak Trees and Heritage Trees, Oak Woodland, Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle, Special-Status Fish Species, Western Pond Turtle, and Special-Status Birds, even without the need for mitigation. *[Less]*

5.4.13 CULTURAL RESOURCES

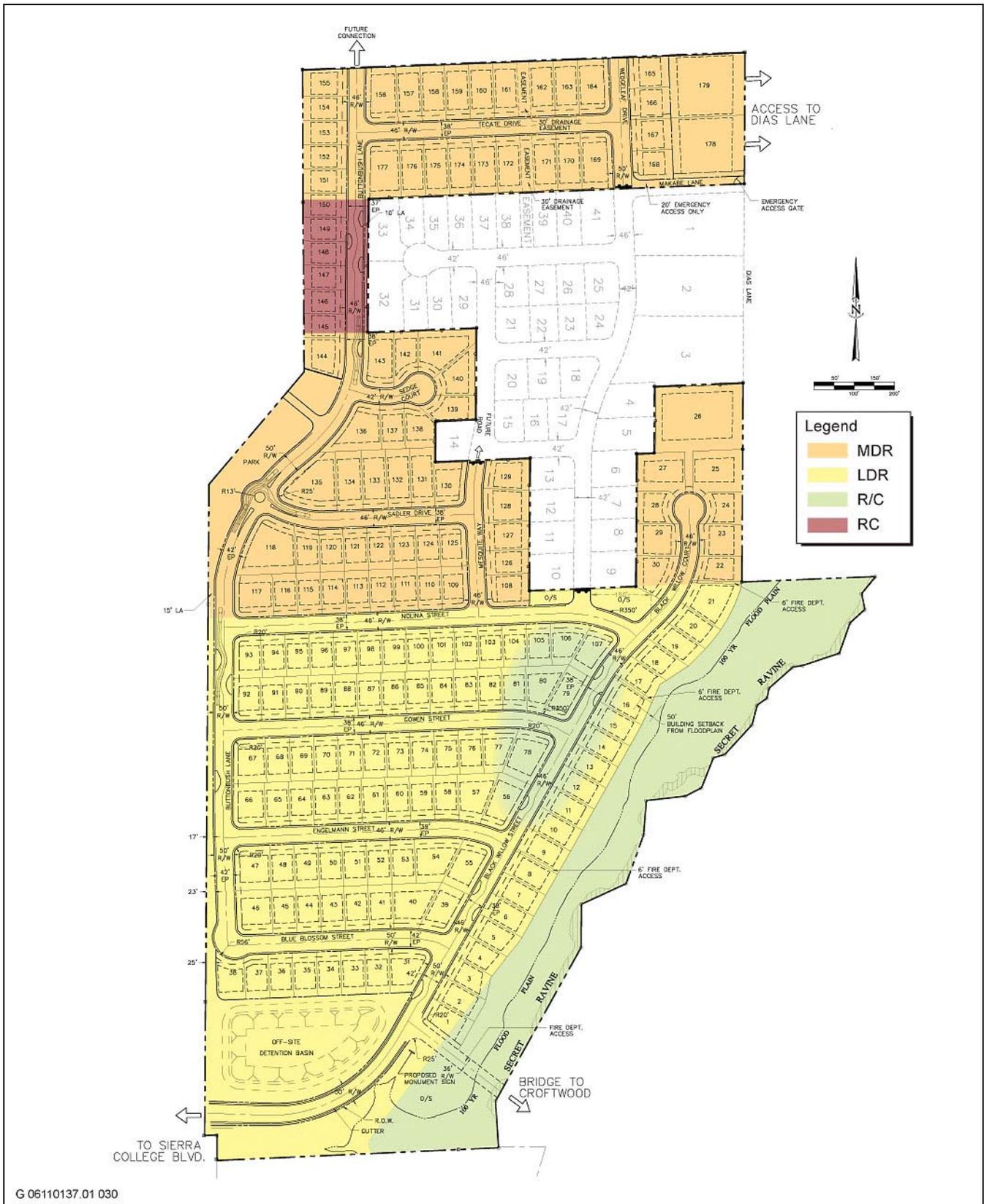
This alternative would not result in development of the project site and no ground-disturbing activities would occur. Therefore, this alternative would avoid impacts related to discovery of previously undiscovered cultural resources. Although mitigation recommend for the project would reduce these impacts to a less-than-significant level, this alternative would not have the potential to disturb any cultural resources, even without mitigation. This alternative would avoid cultural resource impacts. *[Less]*

5.4.14 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The No Project: No Development Alternative would not increase Rocklin’s housing supply or provide housing near transportation corridors, and would not provide housing proximate to retail. However, this alternative would protect the existing water quality and biological resources associated with Secret Ravine and would not obscure any existing visual links with this area, although no new visual or pedestrian links would be provided. Therefore, this alternative would attain some of the project objectives related to Secret Ravine, but would not meet objectives related to providing new housing opportunities.

5.5 NO PROJECT: EXISTING GENERAL PLAN

The previously described no project alternative anticipates that the site would remain in its existing state, without any urban development. This alternative, the No Project: Existing General Plan Alternative, assumes that a project would be developed on-site consistent with the Medium Density Residential, Low Density Residential, Retail Commercial, and Recreation/Conservation land use designations specified in the City’s General Plan (Exhibit 5-1). This alternative assumes that roughly 12 acres would be developed consistent with the Medium Density Residential land use designation. Another 33 acres



Source: City of Rocklin 2007, EDAW 2007

No Project: Existing General Plan

Exhibit 5-1

would be developed consistent with the Low Density Residential land use designation. Recreation/Conservation designated areas on-site, which encompass roughly 10 acres, would remain in their current, undeveloped state. The project preserves roughly 8 of the 10 acres, whereas this alternative preserves all of the approximately 10 acres. Roughly 1 acre onsite is designated by the General Plan for Retail Commercial Development and would be developed consistent with this designation, under this alternative scenario (City of Rocklin 2007).

If the project were developed near the midpoint of the allowable density ranges, this would result in approximately 108 new dwelling units. For the purposes of this analysis, it is assumed approximately 13,500 square feet of retail building space could be added on areas of the site designated for Retail Commercial development.

5.5.1 LAND USE

This alternative would be consistent with on-site land use designations without the need for any General Plan amendment or rezoning. This alternative would not divide any existing community. In addition, the alternative would not conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan. Overall, the impact of this alternative relative to land use is considered similar compared to the proposed project. *[Similar]*

5.5.2 TRAFFIC AND CIRCULATION

Implementation of this alternative would reduce the number of housing units developed on the project site by approximately 40%, resulting in a corresponding 40% reduction in daily residential traffic volumes on local roadways compared to that anticipated under the proposed project. The project is forecast to generate 1,713 average daily trips (134 AM peak hour and 181 PM peak hour trips), but would not result in any significant traffic impacts. Although no significant traffic impacts are forecast with implementation of the proposed project, it is assumed that this alternative would result in a 40% reduction in average daily and peak hour trips (approximately 1,028 average daily, 80 AM peak hour and 109 PM peak hour trips) attributable to the residential development onsite under this alternative. Using average trip generation rates for “Specialty Retail” from ITE’s Trip Generation Manual, the retail portion of the site, under this alternative, might generate another 30 to 40 trips during the afternoon peak hour of the surrounding roadway network (ITE 1997). While this alternative would have a reduced number of residential trips compared to the proposed project, this difference may be erased by the retail trips envisioned under this alternative. Whether or not there would be an actual difference between this alternative and the proposed project relative to trip generation, distribution of trips during peak hours, and other factors depends on the exact land use, and the design and relationship of this neighborhood scaled commercial property with the surrounding neighborhood. While the No Project: Existing General Plan Alternative reduces residential trips compared to the proposed project, overall, the traffic and circulation impacts are considered to be similar for the purpose of this alternatives analysis. *[Similar]*

5.5.3 AIR QUALITY

Both the No Project: Existing General Plan Alternative and the proposed project would generate construction- and operations-related air pollutant emissions, including criteria pollutants. This alternative could reduce slightly the number of daily vehicle trips compared to the proposed project, since the development yield would be reduced by roughly 40% and since vehicle trips are typically calculated on a per unit basis (for residential development). As noted above, including neighborhood serving commercial development could erase the difference in the number of vehicle trips overall, depending on design, tenancy of commercial uses, and site planning. Overall, operational air quality impacts would be similar under this alternative compared to the project.

Less-than-significant air quality impacts identified for the project related to off-site stationary and mobile sources of TAC emissions, odors, and local mobile source carbon monoxide (CO) concentrations would continue under this alternative because development at a reduced yield would not directly affect these impacts. The impact here is similar to the proposed project.

Impacts associated with construction activities would be reduced under this alternative compared with the project because construction activities would occur in a smaller area (45 acres versus 48.7 acres). As a result, emissions of PM₁₀ would be reduced. In addition, emissions of ozone precursor emissions (ROG and NO_x) and CO would be reduced because a fewer number of housing units would be constructed which would require the fewer construction worker trips and less use of construction equipment, application of architectural coatings, and asphalt paving. However, given the relative size of this alternative compared to the project, the reduction in emissions would not be substantial. Therefore, the short-term construction related impacts of this alternative are considered to be similar to that estimated for the proposed project.

Implementation of this alternative would result in exposure to potentially significant mobile-source TACs as a result of the site's proximity to I-80 and to the approved adjacent commercial land uses (project commonly known as "Rocklin Crossings"). Due to the anticipated types of land uses that would occupy the project site, there is a potential that the public could be exposed to substantial levels of toxic air contaminants (TACs). The impact of this alternative is considered to be similar to the proposed project.

Overall, the air quality impacts would be similar when compared to the proposed project. *[Similar]*

5.5.4 NOISE

Both the No Project: Existing General Plan Alternative and the project would result in construction-generated temporary increases in ambient noise levels, increases in traffic-generated ambient noise levels, and development of sensitive land uses (i.e., residential) that would be exposed to noise levels exceeding City standards.

This alternative would reduce the project area and land use intensity by decreasing the number of housing developed; therefore, the number of noise-sensitive sources would similarly be reduced.

Traffic generation would be similar to the proposed project, and therefore off-site traffic related noise impacts would be similar.

Overall, the noise impacts of this alternative would not be substantially lessened compared to the proposed project. The impacts are considered to be similar. *[Similar]*

5.5.5 POPULATION AND HOUSING

This alternative would not induce substantial unplanned population growth, generate a substantial demand for new housing, displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, or otherwise result in impacts related to population and housing. The project's impact related to population and housing is considered less than significant. With a similar, albeit slightly lower amount of housing with this alternative compared to the project, this alternative would have less than significant impacts, also. The impact is similar to that estimated for the proposed project. *[Similar]*

5.5.6 PUBLIC SERVICES AND UTILITIES

Under the No Project: Existing General Plan Alternative, utility and public service demand would be reduced generally in proportion to the 33% dwelling unit reduction of this alternative compared to the proposed project. However, the nonresidential land uses onsite under this alternative would create demand for public services and utilities that may make up for the difference in residential yield. The same basic facilities and services would be required for this alternative as with the proposed project (e.g., water and wastewater pipelines, electrical lines). No significant utilities impacts were identified for the proposed project and this alternative would not substantially lessen or avoid any significant utilities impacts of the project. Overall, the public service and utilities impacts of this alternative would be similar to those disclosed for the project. *[Similar]*

5.5.7 AESTHETICS

Under this alternative, there would be the same alteration of views as with the project. Placing structures within existing expansive views and views of currently undeveloped lands would substantially change the view shed compared to existing conditions, despite this alternative having slightly fewer housing units.

The density reductions of this alternative are applied to relatively less visible portions of the project site. Lighting would be slightly reduced under this alternative because fewer housing units would require less developed area, but lighting impacts were not identified as a significant project impact.

Overall, the aesthetic impacts of this alternative are considered to be similar to those anticipated for the proposed project. *[Similar]*

5.5.8 PUBLIC HEALTH AND HAZARDS

Under this alternative, the reduced number of housing units (compared to the proposed project) would expose fewer residents to any potential health or safety hazards onsite. Less than significant public health and hazards impacts were identified for the proposed project after mitigation. This alternative would not avoid or substantially lessen risks to any hazards (e.g., hazardous materials) compared to the project since the same risks would be present under this alternative and the same land uses are involved. *[Similar]*

5.5.9 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Under this alternative, development of urban land uses would occur similar in nature to the proposed project. Impacts related to construction and operation related erosion, and risks from seismic and soil hazards would occur in the same manner as anticipated for the proposed project, since the same land area is involved with the same land uses (with the exception of the small neighborhood shops under this alternative).

This alternative would involve construction of buildings on the project site and, as a result, potential hazards related to soils (e.g., liquefaction, soil expansion) could still occur. This alternative would construct slightly fewer housing units on the same site with the same geology and soils limitations, exposing slightly fewer residences to any potential geologic risk and soil limitations.

The same mitigation measures would be available for this alternative was with the proposed project. This alternative avoids development of Recreation/Conservation designated land that the proposed project would grade and develop. Since a slightly smaller area is subject to grading under this alternative, the impacts are reduced slightly. For the purposes of this analysis, the impacts overall are considered to be similar to those disclosed for the proposed project. *[Similar]*

5.5.10 HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

This alternative would involve fewer housing units and within a slightly smaller land area, compared to the project, but implementation of this alternative would still involve stormwater discharges. Urban land uses with impervious surfaces would occur. This alternative would develop land uses (e.g., homes, structures) that could be subject to flooding risk during storm events.

Constructing fewer housing units and within a smaller overall area would not substantially lessen or avoid any hydrology and water quality impacts of the proposed project. Overall, this alternative would result in similar hydrology and water quality impacts compared to the proposed project. *[Similar]*

5.5.11 AGRICULTURE

Agricultural operations do not currently occur on the project site and the project site does not consist of any Important Farmland. Implementation of the proposed project would not result in any significant impacts to agriculture resources and this alternative would have the same impact related to agricultural resources. *[Similar]*

5.5.12 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Both the proposed project and the No Project: Existing General Plan would develop vacant land with residences, streets and other infrastructure, and other urban improvements. This alternative would also include a small amount of nonresidential development, as well.

However, this alternative would avoid development of an area designated by the General Plan for Recreation/Conservation, whereas the project proposes to develop this area. A roughly two-acre Recreation/Conservation area near the central portion of the site is comprised of wetlands, the conversion of which is considered a potentially significant impact. Although mitigation in the Biological Resources section of this EIR mitigates potential impacts of the project to a less-than-significant level, this alternative would avoid these impacts for this particular area, even without mitigation. This would substantially lessen the impact on biological resources in this specific area compared to the project. In other areas of the site, the biological resource impacts are similar. For the purposes of this alternatives analysis, this alternative has reduce biological resources impacts compared to the project. *[Less]*

5.5.13 CULTURAL RESOURCES

Although this alternative would result in a slightly reduced development footprint, compared to the proposed project, ground-disturbing activities would still occur across the majority of the site. Therefore, potential impacts to unknown archaeological resources would be the same with this alternative as compared to the project. Implementation of the same mitigation measures recommended for the project would ensure potential impacts are kept at a less-than-significant level. The same mitigation measures would be available for this alternative. Overall, cultural resource impacts under this alternative would be similar to those anticipated for the project. *[Similar]*

5.5.14 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

This alternative would increase Rocklin's housing supply, provide housing near transportation corridors, would protect Secret Ravine, and could be designed to provide passive recreational opportunities. Since there would be fewer housing units included as a part of this alternative, the overall density near transportation corridors would be lower compared to the proposed project. This alternative does not include larger lots in areas of the project site near rural residential scale development in the Town of Loomis. In this way, the transition between on-site land uses and those in the surrounding area is less gradual. There is no reason to believe this alternative could not be designed as an economically viable alternative. This alternative would provide housing near retail land use designations, also. In short, this alternative would attain all but one of the project objectives.

5.6 AVOID CONSTRAINTS BY REMOVING PROPOSED LOTS

Two alternatives have been developed that use site design to consider and avoid on-site constraints to development (Exhibit 5-2). The Avoid Constraints by Removing Proposed Lots Alternative provides roughly the same size lots as the proposed project with roughly half the number, while the Avoid Constraints through Clustering Alternative provides the same number of residential lots as with the proposed project, while reducing the size of each residential lot. The development areas of each of these alternatives are illustrated in Exhibit 5-2.

The Avoid Constraints by Removing Proposed Lots alternative assumes that similar sized residential lots would be subdivided, as compared to the proposed project, but that oak woodlands, heritage trees, wetlands, ponds, some on-site elderberry shrubs, intermittent drainages, and other on-site resources would be avoided. Additional setback from proposed loading docks at the adjacent approved Rocklin Crossings project would also be provided. These on-site constraints would be avoided while still accommodating approximately 80 to 90 dwelling units on lots averaging roughly 6,000 to 6,500 square feet. This range of lot sizes is similar to that of the proposed project. This residential yield is roughly half of what is envisioned under the proposed project.

5.6.1 LAND USE

The project would not result in division of an established community. The project would not conflict with land use designations on-site and would not conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan. This alternative would preserve Recreational/Conservation areas on-site that contain wetlands, unlike the proposed project, thereby reducing land use impacts slightly by comparison. However, the land use impacts overall of this alternative are considered similar to that anticipated for the proposed project. *[Similar]*

5.6.2 TRAFFIC AND CIRCULATION

Implementation of this alternative would cut in half the number of housing units developed on the project site, resulting in a corresponding reduction in daily traffic volumes on local roadways. The project is forecast to generate 1,713 average daily trips (134 AM peak hour and 181 PM peak hour trips) and has less-than-significant traffic impacts. It is assumed that this alternative would result in about half the average daily and peak-hour trips (since trip generation is normally calculated for any given project on a per-unit basis). Therefore, the Avoid Constraints by Removing Proposed Lots Alternative reduces traffic generation, but it would not substantially lessen impacts on the local roadway network compared to the project. *[Similar]*

5.6.3 AIR QUALITY

Both the Avoid Constraints by Removing Proposed Lots Alternative and the proposed project would generate construction- and operations-related air pollutant emissions, including criteria pollutants. This alternative would reduce the number of daily vehicle trips compared to the proposed project, since the development yield would be reduced by roughly ½ and since vehicle trips are typically calculated on a per-unit basis (for residential development). Overall, operational air quality impacts would be substantially lessened under this alternative, compared to the project.

Less-than-significant air quality impacts identified for the project related to off-site stationary and mobile sources of odors, and local mobile source carbon monoxide (CO) concentrations would continue under this alternative because development at a reduced yield would not appreciably affect these impacts.

TAC exposure impacts related to I-80 would be substantially lessened under this alternative since homes would be at least roughly 600 feet from I-80, as measured at the closest point (rather than 150 feet, as with the proposed project). At this distance, the project would be consistent with the recommendations of the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Land Use Handbook. Impacts associated with construction activities would be substantially lessened under this alternative compared with the project because construction activities would occur over a smaller area. Reduced grading would be involved since the area of the site proposed for development would be substantially decreased. As a result, emissions of PM₁₀ would be substantially lessened. In addition, emissions of ozone precursor emissions (ROG and NO_x) and CO would be reduced because a fewer number of housing units would be constructed, requiring fewer construction worker trips and less use of construction equipment, application of architectural coatings, and asphalt paving. Short-term, construction-related impacts would be substantially lessened under this alternative, compared to the proposed project, since earthmoving activities are the major source of criteria pollutants and since those air pollutants are largely tied to the amount of land being disturbed on any given day.

Implementation of this alternative would result in exposure to the same level of mobile-source TACs as the project relative to the commercial land uses approved for development next to the site (project commonly known as “Rocklin Crossings”). Due to the anticipated types of land uses that would occupy the project site, there is a potential that the public could be exposed to substantial levels of toxic air contaminants (TACs) associated with adjacent commercial land uses (e.g., intensive commercial trucking, loading dock activities). This alternative provides buffering space between the adjacent loading docks associated with the Rocklin Crossings project, which could reduce potential impacts. Without conducting a health risk assessment, it is not possible to determine exactly what this reduction would be or whether it would substantially lessen or avoid these impacts compared to the project.

Overall, air quality impacts are considered to be substantially lessened under this alternative compared to the proposed project. *[Less]*

5.6.4 NOISE

Both the Avoid Constraints by Removing Proposed Lots Alternative and the project would result in construction-generated temporary increases in ambient noise levels, increases in traffic-generated ambient noise levels, and development of sensitive land uses (i.e., residential) that would be exposed to excessive stationary- and/or area-source noise levels exceeding City standards.

This alternative would place the closest home at roughly 600 feet from Interstate 80, rather than approximately 150 feet, as with the proposed project (as measured at the closest point). This increased distance from the I-80 noise source would substantially lessen noise exposure at onsite residences compared to the proposed project. Although the project includes mitigation to reduce noise impacts associated with exposure of proposed residences to highway noise, this alternative would reduce this potential impact even without constructing soundwalls (as required for the proposed project). Although soundwalls may still be required to achieve City noise standards for this alternative, this impact is substantially lessened in this alternative compared to the proposed project. Similarly, on-site residences with this alternative would be set back from anticipated noise sources at the adjacent approved Rocklin Crossings large-scale commercial project.

This alternative would reduce the area affected by noisy construction equipment and decrease the number of housing units developed; therefore, the number of noise-generating and noise-sensitive sources would similarly be reduced. Areas proposed for development would be located at a greater distance from existing nearby sensitive noise receptors, compared to the proposed project, thereby substantially lessening short-term construction-related noise impacts. Overall, noise impacts of this alternative are substantially lessened when compared to these impacts for the proposed project. *[Less]*

5.6.5 POPULATION AND HOUSING

This alternative would not induce substantial unplanned population growth, generate a substantial demand for new housing, displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, or otherwise result in impacts related to population and housing. This alternative would have similar population and housing impacts as compared to the proposed project. *[Similar]*

5.6.6 PUBLIC SERVICES AND UTILITIES

Under the Avoid Constraints by Removing Proposed Lots Alternative, utility and public service demand would be reduced generally in proportion to the dwelling unit reduction of this alternative compared to the proposed project. The same facilities and services would be required for this alternative as with the proposed project (e.g., water and wastewater pipelines, electrical lines).

Water demand may be slightly reduced with fewer lots and less anticipated landscaping. Wastewater conveyance and treatment demand would be slightly reduced with fewer lots proposed on-site. Demand for stormwater collection, detention, and conveyance would be reduced with the reduced footprint of this project since impervious areas would be reduced compared to the project. This alternative would substantially lessen public service and utility demand and the need for public service and utility extensions and expansions compared to the project. *[Less]*

5.6.7 AESTHETICS

Placing structures within existing expansive views and views of currently undeveloped areas would substantially change the view shed compared to existing conditions, despite this alternative having fewer housing units. However, aesthetic impact analysis relates not only to the character of changes on a project site, but also how these changes are experienced from public viewing vantage points near the project site.

Areas of the site nearest and most visible from Interstate 80 would be preserved under this alternative, thereby substantially lessening visual impacts from this public viewing location.

Some areas of the site along Dias Lane would also be preserved under this alternative, substantially lessening visual impacts as experienced by this public viewing area, compared to the project.

Lighting would be slightly less under this alternative because fewer housing units would require less developed area, but lighting impacts were not identified as a significant project impact. This alternative, to the extent that it avoids impacts to aesthetic natural resources on-site, such as the surface waters, heritage trees, and other trees, would reduce the visual impact onsite compared to the proposed project.

With the greatly reduced footprint of urban development under this alternative, the visual change onsite as experienced from public viewing locations near the site is substantially lessened, compared to the proposed project. *[Less]*

5.6.8 PUBLIC HEALTH AND HAZARDS

Under this alternative, the reduced number of housing units (compared to the proposed project) would expose fewer residents to any potential health or safety hazards. Less than significant public health and hazards impacts were identified for the proposed project after mitigation. This alternative would not avoid or substantially lessen risks to any hazards (e.g., hazardous materials) compared to the project, since the same site and the same land uses are involved. Overall, public health and hazards impacts of this alternative are considered to be similar compared to that anticipated for the proposed project. *[Similar]*

5.6.9 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Under this alternative, development of urban land uses would occur similar in nature to the proposed project, although a much smaller area of the site would have earth disturbance. This alternative would involve construction of buildings on the project site and, as a result, potential hazards related to geologic hazards and soil limitations (e.g., liquefaction, soil expansion) could still occur. This alternative would construct fewer housing units, but with the same geology and soils limitations as the proposed project, exposing fewer residences to any potential geologic risk and soil limitations. The same mitigation measures would be available for this alternative as with the proposed project.

Since a substantially smaller area is subject to grading under this alternative, the impacts are substantially lessened compared with the proposed project. *[Less]*

5.6.10 HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

This alternative would involve fewer housing units and within a substantially smaller land area, compared to the project. However, this alternative would still create stormwater discharges. Urban land uses with impervious surfaces would occur. However, with the substantially smaller overall development footprint and substantially reduced amount of impervious surfaces, hydrology and water quality impacts of this alternative would be substantially lessened compared with the proposed project. *[Less]*

5.6.11 AGRICULTURE

Agricultural operations do not currently occur on the project site and the project site does not consist of any Important Farmland. Implementation of the proposed project would not result in any significant impacts to agriculture resources and this alternative would have the same impacts to agricultural resources. *[Similar]*

5.6.12 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

This alternative is designed to avoid several on-site biological resource areas, including oak woodlands, heritage trees, wetlands, elderberry shrubs, intermittent drainages, and other areas. The loss of these areas is considered potentially significant for various resources under the proposed project and the strategy of avoiding on-site sensitive resources through site design would substantially lessen biological resource impacts. *[Less]*

5.6.13 CULTURAL RESOURCES

Although this alternative would have a reduced development footprint compared to the proposed project, ground-disturbing activities would still occur across portions of the site. Since impacts to cultural resources are focused on unknown, buried resources, this impact would be similar to that of the project. Implementation of mitigation measures recommended for the project would ensure potential impacts are kept at a less-than-significant level. The same mitigation measures would be available for this alternative. Overall, cultural resource impacts would be similar to the project under this alternative. *[Similar]*

5.6.14 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The Avoid Constraints by Removing Proposed Lots Alternative would provide housing near transportation corridors, as with the proposed project. This alternative would protect Secret Ravine and could be designed to provide passive recreational opportunities. This alternative would provide transition between this part of Rocklin and the surrounding community by preserving open space at the edges of the project site. This alternative has the same lot sizes, but fewer lots. Therefore, this alternative may not achieve “higher densities in proximity to existing transportation corridors and commercial uses” to the same degree as the proposed project. This alternative would provide housing near retail land use designations, also, and pedestrian linkages to such areas could be provided. Depending on how this alternative is designed, financed, and implemented, it could be economically viable. While it would provide far less housing than the project, it would attain perhaps all but one of the project objectives.

5.7 AVOID CONSTRAINTS THROUGH CLUSTERING

As with the Avoid Constraints by Removing Proposed Lots Alternative, the Avoid Constraints through Clustering Alternative is designed to avoid on-site sensitive biological resources, while providing additional setback (in the same areas) from the adjacent approved Rocklin Crossings project.

Less than half of the land disturbed by the project would be disturbed under the assumptions guiding this alternative. The alternative, however, would still provide 179 dwelling units (same as the proposed project) on

approximately 3,000 to 3,200 square-foot lots (average), instead of the 6,500-square foot lots (average) proposed as a part of the project.

5.7.1 LAND USE

The project would not result in division of an established community. The project would conflict with residential densities established by the General Plan for the project site, as well as Retail Commercial and Recreation/Conservation designations onsite. However, this diversion from current land use designations would not necessarily create any physical adverse environmental impact. The conflicts with land use designations onsite, with the clustering strategy, could reduce environmental impacts compared with a site design that did not consider such onsite resources. This alternative would not conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan. This alternative would preserve Recreational/Conservation areas on-site that contain wetlands, unlike the proposed project, thereby reducing land use impacts slightly by comparison. Overall, the land use impacts of this alternative are considered to be similar to that anticipated for the proposed project. *[Similar]*

5.7.2 TRAFFIC AND CIRCULATION

Implementation of this alternative would add roughly the same daily traffic volumes on local roadways as with the proposed project, given the number of dwelling units would remain constant (and the fact that normally trip generation is calculated on a per-unit basis for residential development). The project is forecast to generate 1,713 average daily trips (134 AM peak hour and 181 PM peak hour trips) and to not result in any significant traffic impacts. It is assumed that this alternative would result in the same level of average daily and peak hour trips. The impacts of this alternative would be similar to that of the proposed project. *[Similar]*

5.7.3 AIR QUALITY

Both the Avoid Constraints through Clustering Alternative and the proposed project would generate construction- and operations-related air pollutant emissions, including criteria pollutants. This alternative would have roughly the same number of daily vehicle trips compared to the proposed project since vehicle trips are typically calculated on a per-unit basis (for residential development). Because the operational air quality impacts of this alternative and the project are attributable to the vehicle trips of project residents, operational air quality impacts would be the same under this alternative compared to the project.

Less-than-significant air quality impacts identified for the project related to off-site stationary and mobile sources odors, and local mobile source carbon monoxide (CO) concentrations would continue under this alternative.

TAC exposure impacts related to I-80 would be substantially lessened under this alternative since homes would be located at least 600 feet from I-80, as measured at the closest point, rather than 150 feet, as with the proposed project. At this distance, the project would be consistent with the recommendations of the CARB Land Use Handbook.

Impacts associated with construction activities would be substantially lessened under this alternative compared with the project because construction activities would occur over a smaller land area. Less grading would be involved since the area of the site proposed for development would be substantially decreased. As a result, emissions of PM₁₀ would be reduced. In addition, emissions of ozone precursor emissions (ROG and NO_x) and CO would be reduced because the reduced footprint approach would require less use of construction equipment and asphalt paving. Short-term construction related impacts are substantially lessened under this alternative compared to the proposed project, since earthmoving activities are the major source of criteria pollutants and since those air pollutants are largely tied to the amount of land being disturbed on any given day.

Implementation of this alternative would result in exposure to the same mobile-source TACs as the project, due to the potential commercial land uses approved for development adjacent to the project site. Due to the anticipated

types of land uses that would occupy the project site, there is the potential that the public could be exposed to substantial levels of toxic air contaminants (TACs) associated with adjacent commercial land uses (e.g., intensive commercial trucking, loading dock activities). It is not certain as to whether the increased setback from sources of contaminants provided under this alternative would substantially lessen or avoid such risks.

Overall the air quality impacts of this alternative are substantially lessened compared to the proposed project. *[Less]*

5.7.4 NOISE

Both the Avoid Constraints through Clustering Alternative and the project would result in construction-generated temporary increases in ambient noise levels, increases in traffic-generated ambient noise levels, and development of sensitive land uses (i.e., residential) that would be exposed to excessive stationary- and/or area-source noise levels exceeding City standards.

This alternative would place the closest home at roughly 600 feet from Interstate 80, rather than approximately 150 feet, as with the proposed project (as measured at the closest point). The increased distance between noise sources and receptors attenuates noise as experienced at the receptor. Although the project includes mitigation to reduce noise impacts associated with exposure of proposed residences to highway noise, this alternative would reduce this potential impact even without constructing soundwalls. Although soundwalls may still be required to achieve City noise standards, this impact is substantially lessened in this alternative compared to the proposed project. Similarly, on-site residences with this alternative would be set back from anticipated noise sources at the adjacent approved Rocklin Crossings large-scale commercial project, substantially lessening this impact.

Areas proposed for development may be located at a slightly greater distance from nearby existing sensitive noise receptors compared to the proposed project, thereby reducing short-term construction-related noise impacts.

Overall, noise impacts of this alternative are substantially lessened compared to the proposed project. *[Less]*

5.7.5 POPULATION AND HOUSING

This alternative would not induce substantial unplanned population growth, generate a substantial demand for new housing, displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, or otherwise result in impacts related to population and housing. With the same number of dwelling units, this alternative would have similar population and housing related impacts as with the proposed project. *[Similar]*

5.7.6 PUBLIC SERVICES AND UTILITIES

Under the Avoid Constraints through Clustering Alternative, utility and public service demand would be similar to that which is anticipated for the proposed project.

Water demand may be slightly reduced with smaller lots and reduced levels of landscaping. Wastewater conveyance and treatment demand may be slightly reduced if the smaller lots proposed on-site correspond to slightly smaller housing units. However, since home sizes are not known for the project or this alternative as of the writing of this EIR, this potential difference is not considered in this analysis.

Demand for stormwater collection, detention, and conveyance would be reduced with the more compact design of this project since impervious areas would be substantially reduced compared to the project.

Other facility installation and maintenance may be somewhat more efficient with the more compact design of this alternative compared to the proposed project. But, the same facilities and services would be required for this alternative as with the proposed project (e.g., water and wastewater pipelines, electrical lines). Overall, although

public service and utility provision would be more efficient compared to the proposed project, the level of impact in this topic area is considered to be similar to the proposed project. *[Similar]*

5.7.7 AESTHETICS

Placing structures within existing expansive views and views of currently undeveloped open areas would substantially change the view shed from existing conditions. However, aesthetic impact analysis relates not only to the character of changes on a project site, but also how these changes are experienced from public viewing vantage points near the project site.

Areas of the site nearest and most visible from Interstate 80 would be preserved under this alternative, thereby substantially lessening visual impacts from this public viewing location.

Some areas of the site along Dias Lane would also be preserved under this alternative, reducing visual impacts as experienced by this public viewing area, compared to the project.

This alternative, to the extent that it avoids impacts to aesthetic natural resources on-site, such as the surface waters, heritage trees, and other trees, would reduce the visual changes onsite compared to the proposed project.

With the greatly reduce footprint of urban development under this alternative, the visual change onsite as experienced at nearby public viewing locations is substantially lessened compared to the proposed project. *[Less]*

5.7.8 PUBLIC HEALTH AND HAZARDS

Under this alternative, the same number of housing units (compared to the proposed project) would expose the same general number of residents to any potential health or safety hazards. Less than significant public health and hazards impacts were identified for the proposed project after mitigation. With the same land uses, the same project site, and the same number of future residents being exposed to any potential hazards, the impacts of this alternative are considered to be similar to those of the proposed project. *[Similar]*

5.7.9 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Under this alternative, development of urban land uses would occur similar in nature to the proposed project, although a much smaller land area of the site would have earth disturbance. This alternative would involve construction of buildings on the project site and, as a result, potential hazards related to geologic hazards and soil limitations (e.g., liquefaction, soil expansion) could still occur. This alternative would construct the same number of dwelling units with the same geology and soils impacts as the proposed project, exposing the same number residences to any potential geologic risk and soil limitations. The same mitigation measures would be available for this alternative as was with the proposed project. Since a substantially smaller area is subject to grading under this alternative, geologic and soils impacts are substantially lessened compared with the proposed project. *[Less]*

5.7.10 HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

This alternative would involve the same number of housing units within a substantially smaller land area, compared to the project. However, this alternative would still create stormwater discharges. Urban land uses with impervious surfaces would occur. Constructing the same number of housing units within a smaller area would reduce runoff and water quality related impacts. Overall, the impacts are considered to be substantially lessened compared to the proposed project. *[Less]*

5.7.11 AGRICULTURE

Agricultural operations do not currently occur on the project site and the project site does not consist of any Important Farmland. Implementation of the proposed project would not result in any significant impacts to agriculture resources and this alternative would have the same impact to agricultural resources. *[Similar]*

5.7.12 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

This alternative is designed to avoid several on-site biological resource areas, including oak woodlands, heritage trees, wetlands, elderberry shrubs, intermittent drainages, and other areas. The loss of these areas is considered potentially significant under the proposed project and the strategy of avoiding on-site sensitive resources through site design would substantially lessen biological resource impacts. *[Less]*

5.7.13 CULTURAL RESOURCES

Although this alternative would result in a reduced development footprint, compared to the proposed project, ground-disturbing activities would still occur across portions of the site. Since impacts to cultural resources are focused on unknown, buried resources, this impact would be similar to that of the project. Implementation of mitigation measures recommended for the project would ensure potential impacts are kept at a less-than-significant level. The same mitigation measures would be available for this alternative. Overall, cultural resource impacts would be similar to the project under this alternative. *[Similar]*

5.7.14 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The Avoid Constraints through Clustering would provide housing near transportation corridors, just as the project would. This alternative would provide transitional areas between the project site and adjacent land uses by preserving open space at the edges of the project site. Depending on how this alternative is designed, financed, and implemented, it could represent an economically viable project for this site. This alternative would protect Secret Ravine and could be designed to provide passive recreational opportunities. This alternative would provide housing near retail land use designations, also, and pedestrian linkages to such areas could be provided. In short, this alternative would achieve all the project objectives.

5.8 SUMMARY OF COMPARATIVE EFFECTS OF THE ALTERNATIVES

Table 5-1 summarizes the environmental analysis provided above for the No Project: No Development, No Project: Existing General Plan, Avoid Constraints by Removing Proposed Lots, and Avoid Constraints through Clustering alternatives, compared with the proposed project. The environmental impacts of the proposed project are addressed in detail throughout Section 4 of this EIR.

**Table 5-1
Comparison of Environmental Impacts of Alternatives in Relation to the Proposed Project**

Environmental Topic	No Project: No Development	No Project: Existing General Plan	Avoid Constraints by Removing Proposed Lots	Avoid Constraints through Clustering
Land Use	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Traffic & Circulation	Less	Similar	Similar	Similar
Air Quality	Less	Similar	Less	Less
Noise	Less	Similar	Less	Less
Population & Housing	Less	Similar	Similar	Similar
Public Services and Utilities	Less	Similar	Less	Similar
Aesthetics	Less	Similar	Less	Less
Public Health & Hazards	Less	Similar	Similar	Similar
Geology & Soils	Less	Similar	Less	Less
Hydrology & Water Quality	Less	Similar	Less	Less
Agriculture	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Biological Resources	Less	Less	Less	Less
Cultural Resources	Less	Similar	Similar	Similar

5.9 ENVIRONMENTALLY SUPERIOR ALTERNATIVE

In addition to the discussion and comparison of impacts of the alternatives to the proposed project, CEQA requires that an “environmentally superior” alternative among the alternatives considered be selected and the reasons for such selection disclosed. In general, the environmentally superior alternative is the alternative that would generate the fewest or least severe adverse impacts.

For the purpose of this alternatives analysis, the No Project: No Development Alternative is considered environmentally superior alternative. This alternative would substantially lessen impacts in 11 of the 13 separate environmental topics areas surveyed. However, CEQA requires the identification of another environmentally superior alternative when the “no project” alternative is identified as environmentally superior (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126[e][2]).

The Avoid Constraints by Removing Proposed Lots Alternative would be the environmentally superior alternative, setting aside the no project alternative. This alternatives, when compared with the proposed project, substantially lessens impacts in seven of the 13 environmental topics surveyed above, compared to the project. This alternative could satisfy all except perhaps one of the identified Project Objectives.