

SECTION 5.0 ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Section 15126.6 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines addresses the discussion of alternatives in an EIR. Key provisions of the CEQA Guidelines are identified throughout this section to explain the basis for the alternatives evaluation in this EIR. Section 15126.6(a) states:

An EIR shall describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project, or to the location of 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.

5.1.1 PROJECT SUMMARY

The proposed project is the comprehensive update to the City of Rancho Cucamonga's General Plan pursuant to State Planning, Zoning and Development Laws (California Government Code, Title 7, Sections 65000-66037). The current General Plan was last updated and adopted by the City in 2001. Based on the collective goals and needs of residents, business owners, stakeholders, community groups, City staff and leaders, the proposed 2010 General Plan Update has been guided by the following principles:

- Balanced Growth and Development
- Connectivity
- Neighborhood Character
- Schools
- Cultural Diversity
- Environmental Sustainability
- City Services
- Changing Housing Needs
- Economic Health
- Preservation of Special Assets

The proposed Rancho Cucamonga 2010 General Plan Update is divided into 8 Chapters: Introduction to the Rancho Cucamonga General Plan; Land Use, Community Design, and Historic Resources; Community Mobility; Economic Development; Community Services; Resource Conservation; Public Facilities and Infrastructure; and Public Health and Safety. Refer to Section 3.0, Project Description, for a complete summary of the proposed Land Use Plan and associated goals and policies for each updated General Plan Chapter.

5.1.2 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

CEQA Guidelines Section 15124(b) indicates that an EIR should include “a statement of objectives sought by the proposed project.” The following are the objectives for the proposed 2010 General Plan Update as set forth by the City of Rancho Cucamonga.

The following objectives have been established by the City relative to the 2010 General Plan Update:

- Establish a planning framework that incorporates the City’s Healthy RC initiative: Healthy Mind, Body, and Earth
- Maintain well-established land use patterns for most of the City while creating new opportunities for mixed-use development at strategic locations in Rancho Cucamonga to facilitate use of transit, encourage walking as an alternative to automobile travel for short trips, and allow more people to live and shop in close proximity to their homes.
- Create opportunities for the provision of varied housing types that meet the needs of all household income levels and lifestyle choices.
- Recognize, promote, and preserve Rancho Cucamonga’s history as represented by buildings, agricultural landscapes, and unique community features.
- Enhance community mobility by implementing comprehensive and connected citywide network of streets, bikeways, and pedestrian trails; accommodating bus rapid transit along Foothill Boulevard and other location as demand dictates; and increasing use of commuter rail through land use policies.
- Move forward with initiatives that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, including land use and mobility planning practices, programs that promote sustainable building practices, and City purchasing decisions.
- Conserve natural resources through land use regulations that respect hillside habitats and policies aimed at reducing water consumption, energy use, and refuse generation.
- Promote policies that provide for City compliance with applicable Federal and State laws.
- Provide clear direction for use of lands within the City’s sphere of influence.
- Designate lands for a variety of beneficial open space purposes: for recreation, for resource conservation, for public safety enhancement, for the managed production of resources, and for preservation of historic landscapes.

5.1.3 SIGNIFICANT AND UNAVOIDABLE IMPACTS

As previously mentioned, an EIR should consider a range of feasible alternatives that would attain most of the project objectives, listed above, while reducing one or more of the significant and unavoidable impacts of the project. The significant impacts associated with the proposed 2010 General Plan Update, are summarized below:

- Conversion of farmland to other uses and cumulative loss of Important Farmland;

- Loss of regionally important mineral resources and cumulative loss of mineral resources;
- Changes in the visual quality of the hillsides and scenic vistas and cumulative changes to aesthetics;
- Project level and cumulative increases in noise levels; and,
- Cumulative contribution to climate change.

5.1.4 ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT

In accordance with the CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(a), this section summarizes the range of alternatives considered in the EIR. The following alternative has been considered and eliminated from detailed consideration for the reasons identified in Section 5.2, below.

- Alternative Site

Alternatives that are considered in detail in this EIR include:

- Alternative 1: No Project/No Development
- Alternative 2: No Project/Existing General Plan
- Alternative 3: Alternative Land Use Plan

5.2 ALTERNATIVES ELIMINATED FROM DETAILED CONSIDERATION

Section 15126.6(c) of the CEQA Guidelines specifies that an EIR should (1) identify alternatives that were considered by the lead agency but were eliminated from detailed consideration because they were determined to be infeasible during the scoping process and (2) briefly explain the reasons underlying the lead agency's determination. Among the factors that may be used to eliminate alternatives from detailed consideration in an EIR are (1) failure to meet most of the basic project objectives; (2) infeasibility; or (3) inability to avoid significant environmental impacts.

5.2.1 ALTERNATIVE SITE

Section 15126.6(f)(2)(A) of the CEQA Guidelines indicates that, in determining the consideration of an alternative location, "The key question and first step in analysis is whether any of the significant effects of the project would be avoided or substantially lessened by putting the project in another location. Only locations that would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project need be considered for inclusion in the EIR." Section 15126.6(f)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines further states "an EIR need not consider an alternative whose effect cannot be reasonably ascertained and whose implementation is remote and speculative." Because the 2010 General Plan Update goals and policies are specific to, and encompass, the entirety of the City of Rancho Cucamonga and its Sphere of Influence, an alternative site where the City has no jurisdiction is not feasible. Therefore, further analysis of an alternative site in this EIR is not appropriate or required.

5.3 ALTERNATIVES CARRIED FORWARD FOR DETAILED CONSIDERATION

The analysis of each of the project alternatives identified includes the following:

- A description of the alternative.

- An analysis of environmental impacts and a comparison to the possible impacts of the proposed project. Pursuant to the CEQA Guidelines, if an alternative would cause one or more significant effects in addition to those that would be caused by the project as proposed, the significant effects of the alternative shall be discussed, but in less detail than the significant effects of the project as proposed.
- An assessment of the alternative's ability to meet the project objectives (previously identified in Section 5.1.2).

The comparison of impacts between each alternative and the proposed 2010 General Plan Update assumes that the general nature and types of existing Standard Conditions/Requirements (SCs), as well as proposed General Plan goals and policies and Mitigation Measures (MMs) identified in Section 5.0 of this EIR would also be applicable to each of the alternatives, where appropriate. No SCs or MMs are applied to the No Project/No Development Alternative, which basically assumes that the existing conditions in the City remain.

5.3.1 ALTERNATIVE 1: NO PROJECT/NO DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVE

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e) requires that an EIR evaluate a "no project" alternative, to allow decision makers to compare the impacts of approving a proposed project with the impacts of not approving that project. CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e)(3) describes the two general types of no project alternative: (1) when the project is the revision of an existing land use or regulatory plan, policy or ongoing operation, the no project alternative would be the continuation of that plan and (2) when the project other than a land use/regulatory plan, such as a specific development on an identifiable property, the no project alternative is the circumstance under which that project is not processed (i.e., no development). Alternative 1 represents the no project alternative assuming that no additional development would occur in the City.

Description of the Alternative

This alternative assumes that no development will occur in the City and existing land uses and environmental conditions will remain as is, indefinitely. The No Project Alternative is not feasible due to private ownership of lands in the City and the need to protect individual property rights.

Comparative Analysis of Environmental Impacts

Agricultural Resources

Alternative 1 would not result in any modifications to the agricultural uses in the City. No impacts related to the loss of agricultural resources would occur. This impact is less than the impact of the proposed 2010 General Plan Update and less than significant.

Aesthetics

Alternative 1 would not result in any changes to existing developments in the City and SOI (Study Area). No impacts related to aesthetics, including new hillside development, changes to scenic resources, scenic highways, or introduction of light and glare would occur. This impact is less than the impact of the proposed 2010 General Plan Update and less than significant.

Air Quality

Alternative 1 would not involve any changes to the land uses in the City and SOI or generate new sources of pollutant emissions. No impacts to air quality would occur. This impact is less than the impact of the proposed 2010 General Plan Update and less than significant.

Biological Resources

Alternative 1 would have no impact on existing biological resources since no new development or redevelopment would occur in the City and SOI. This impact is less than the impact of the proposed 2010 General Plan Update and less than significant.

Climate Change

Alternative 1 would not involve any new development in the City or SOI and would not generate any new vehicles trips; therefore, GHG emissions would remain consistent with existing conditions. This alternative would not involve development with reduced emission factors integrated into the development nor would it incorporate the green technologies planned to accompany new development in the City. Without new development the retrofit of older, less energy structures without energy efficient technology would not be developed. Therefore, although the new trips associated with new development would not occur, the benefits associated with new development would not occur either. Both Alternative 1 and the proposed project would result in significant cumulative impacts.

Cultural Resources

Alternative 1 would avoid any future impacts to known and unknown archaeological and paleontological resources since no future development and redevelopment activities would occur in the City and SOI.

This alternative would not involve additional future development and would, therefore, not directly or indirectly impact any known historic resources through development and redevelopment activities. However, under this alternative proposed General Plan policies guiding the care and maintenance of existing historic structures would not occur, thus allowing neglect and deterioration of the City's historical resources. Therefore, implementation of the No Project/No Development alternative would not be as supportive of preservation efforts as the proposed General Plan.

Geology and Soils

There would be no grading or building activities with Alternative 1; therefore, no impact on geology and soils would occur. This impact is less than the impacts associated with implementation of the proposed 2010 General Plan Update.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Under Alternative 1, the risk from existing hazards including wildland fires, aircraft hazards, and hazardous materials would remain the same as existing conditions. The No Project/No Development alternative would not increase the resident population; therefore, the number of people exposed to these existing hazards would remain the same. No impacts related to hazards and hazardous materials would occur. This impact is less than the impact of the proposed 2010 General Plan Update and less than significant.

Hydrology and Water Quality

Alternative 1 would not involve any changes to the hydrological conditions in the City and SOI. There would be no new sources of urban runoff or increases in stormwater pollutants; therefore, no impacts related to water quality would occur. This impact is less than the impact of the proposed 2010 General Plan Update and less than significant.

Land Use and Planning

Under Alternative 1, no changes to existing land uses or land use designations would occur. This impact is less than the impact of the proposed 2010 General Plan Update and less than significant.

Mineral Resources

Alternative 1 would not result in any ground disturbance in the City and SOI. No impacts related to loss of access or demand for mineral resources would occur. This alternative would decrease the impact to less than significant.

Noise

No new development would occur with Alternative 1; therefore, no new noise impacts would occur. This impact is less than the impact of the proposed 2010 General Plan Update.

Population, Housing, and Employment

Implementation of Alternative 1 would not create any new jobs, involve development of additional housing, or cause increases in the resident population; therefore, no impacts related to population, housing, and employment would occur. This impact is less than the impact of the proposed 2010 General Plan Update.

Public Services

Alternative 1 would not involve any changes to existing land uses nor would it create new demand for public services. No impact to public services would occur. This impact is less than the impact of the proposed 2010 General Plan Update and less than significant.

Recreation

Alternative 1 would not create an impact on recreation since no new residential development or redevelopment, which may generate a demand for recreation, would occur in the City and SOI. This impact is less than the impact of the proposed 2010 General Plan Update and less than significant.

Traffic and Circulation

Alternative 1 would not involve any changes to the land uses in the City or SOI or generate additional vehicle trips. No impacts related to traffic and circulation would occur. This impact is less than the impact of the proposed 2010 General Plan Update and less than significant.

Utilities and Service Systems

Alternative 1 would not involve any changes to existing land uses nor would it create new demand for utilities and service systems. No impact to utilities would occur. This impact is less than the impact of the proposed 2010 General Plan Update and less than significant.

Conclusion

Alternative 1 would result in less of an impact on most environmental issue than the proposed General Plan. Alternative 1 would also avoid the significant unavoidable impacts that would occur with implementation of the proposed project, including the conversion of farmland to other uses and cumulative loss of Important Farmland; loss of regionally important mineral resources and cumulative loss of mineral resources; changes in the visual quality of the hillsides and scenic vistas and cumulative changes to aesthetics; cumulative increases in noise levels; and cumulative contribution to climate change. For the remaining topical issues, the proposed 2010 General Plan Update would result in less than significant impacts or potentially significant impacts that can be mitigated to a level considered less than significant.

While Alternative 1 would result in less environmental impacts than the proposed 2010 General Plan Update on most environmental issues and would not result in unavoidable impacts that would occur with the proposed General Plan, this alternative would not meet any of the project objectives identified in Section 5.1.2. This alternative would also not protect the City's historical resources.

5.3.2 ALTERNATIVE 2: NO PROJECT/EXISTING GENERAL PLAN ALTERNATIVE

As discussed previously in Section 5.3.1, CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e) requires than an EIR to evaluate a "no project" alternative, to allow decision makers to compare the impacts of approving a proposed project with the impacts of not approving that project. Alternative 2 represents the no project alternative that assumes continued development according to the existing General Plan.

Description of the Alternative

Because the proposed project is the revision of an existing Land Use Plan (contained in the City's General Plan), pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e)(3)(A) this No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative considers the comparative environmental impacts of the continued implementation of the existing General Plan through the year 2030, (the projected build out year of the updated General Plan). In addition, Section 15126.6(e)(2) of the CEQA Guidelines specifies that the "No Project analysis shall discuss the existing conditions at the time the Notice of Preparation (NOP) is published, as well as what would be reasonably expected to occur in the foreseeable future if the project were not approved, based on current plans and consistent with available infrastructure and community services."

This alternative assumes the existing General Plan would remain as the adopted long-range planning policy document for the City of Rancho Cucamonga, and development pursuant to the City's existing General Plan goals and policies and Land Use Policy Map would continue to occur.

Comparative Analysis of Environmental Impacts

Agricultural Resources

Similar to the proposed 2010 General Plan Update, implementation of Alternative 2 would allow for the development of land throughout the Study Area, including areas designated as Important Farmland. As with the proposed 2010 General Plan Update, Alternative 2 would result in significant and unavoidable impacts related to the conversion of farmland to other uses and the cumulative loss of Important Farmland.

Aesthetics

Alternative 2 would allow for development of the Study Area in accordance with the existing Land Use Plan in the 2001 Rancho Cucamonga General Plan. Due to the overall similarities between the existing and proposed land use plans, this Alternative would result in similar aesthetics impacts as the proposed 2010 General Plan Update. As with the proposed 2010 General Plan Update, buildout of Alternative 2 would focus on infill development and redevelopment. Development within the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains would be limited based on the allowable development densities, which are the same under both the existing and proposed General Plans. Alternative 2 would also result in similar impacts from light and glare as with the proposed 2010 General Plan Update. The 2010 General Plan Update and Alternative 2 would each result in significant and unavoidable impacts due to changes in the visual quality of the hillsides and scenic vistas and cumulative changes to aesthetics.

Air Quality

Alternative 2 would generate pollutant emissions from stationary and mobile sources that would accompany future development under the existing Land Use Plan. While this impact is the same as the proposed General Plan, Alternative 2 allows a different mix of land uses in the City, which is projected to result in less pollutant emissions than the proposed General Plan. The existing General Plan is also consistent with the AQMP. Thus, this alternative would have less impact on air quality than the proposed 2010 General Plan Update due to the lower potential for pollutant emissions.

Biological Resources

Alternative 2 would allow for development of the Study Area in accordance with the existing Land Use Plan in the 2001 Rancho Cucamonga General Plan. Due to the overall similarities between the existing and proposed land use plans, this Alternative would result in similar impacts to biological resources as the proposed 2010 General Plan Update. The 2010 General Plan Update and Alternative 2 would each result in less than significant impacts related to biological resources.

Climate Change

Alternative 2 would generate greenhouse gases from future development and redevelopment in the City and SOI, similar to the proposed General Plan. This alternative would not involve development with reduced emission factors integrated into the development nor would it incorporate the green technologies planned to accompany new development in the City. Without new development the retrofit of older, less energy structures without energy efficient technology would not be developed. Therefore, although the new trips associated with new development would not occur, the benefits associated with new development would not occur either. With implementation of the proposed mitigation measures, impacts associated with the existing and

proposed General Plans are anticipated to be the very similar, with significant and unavoidable cumulative impacts related to climate change.

Cultural Resources

As with the proposed 2010 General Plan Update, Alternative 2 would allow for continued development throughout the City and SOI. Potential impacts to historic resources would be similar to the proposed 2010 General Plan Update; however, under this alternative, the proposed General Plan policies would not necessarily be implemented, thus allowing for neglect and deterioration of historic resources rather than promoting preservation and rehabilitation. Therefore, implementation of the No Project/Existing General Plan alternative might not be as supportive of preservation efforts as the proposed 2010 General Plan Update.

Alternative 2 would set aside a slightly larger amount of conservation area (1,348 acres under Alternative 2 versus 1,336 acres under the proposed 2010 General Plan Update) that would not be subject to grading or development. Therefore, approximately 12 additional acres would be preserved and set aside for conservation. This slight reduction in conservation area would mean greater potential for disturbance of known and unknown cultural resources. However, Alternative 2 would be subject to the same standard conditions and mitigation measures regarding archaeological and paleontological resources as with the proposed 2010 General Plan Update, and potential impacts would be reduced to less than significant levels.

Geology and Soils

Implementation of Alternative 2 would involve development throughout the Study Area, similar to the proposed 2010 General Plan Update. As with the proposed 2010 General Plan Update, any grading activities would be compliant with existing Federal, State, and local regulations. As with the proposed 2010 General Plan Update, impacts related to geology and soils for Alternative 2 would be less than significant. While slightly less area would be disturbed under Alternative 2, impacts related to geology and soils would be the same as those of the proposed General Plan.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Impacts associated with hazards for Alternative 2 would be slightly less to those associated with the proposed 2010 General Plan Update. As stated in Table 3-2, the number of residents at risk from wildland fires, aircraft hazards, or exposure to hazardous materials under Alternative 2 would be less than the those potentially at risk under the proposed 2010 General Plan Update due to the difference in projected population at buildout for Alternative 2 and the 2010 General Plan Update. However, as with the proposed 2010 General Plan Update, impacts associated with hazards and hazardous materials would be less than significant due to compliance with applicable regulations.

Hydrology and Water Quality

Implementation of Alternative 2 would result in changes in hydrology and water quality due to future development. While slightly less area would be disturbed under this alternative, than the proposed General Plan, implementation of the standard conditions would avoid downstream and off-site impacts and would reduce stormwater pollutants from development. As with the proposed 2010 General Plan Update, impacts associated with hydrology and water quality would be less than significant.

Land Use and Planning

Alternative 2 includes a different mix of land uses in the City at buildout than the proposed General Plan. Less residential development and more commercial and industrial uses are proposed under this alternative. This difference does not change the level of impact between Alternative 2 and the proposed General Plan and impacts would be less than significant.

Mineral Resources

Implementation of Alternative 2 would involve development throughout the Study Area, similar to the proposed 2010 General Plan Update. Impacts to mineral resources, including a significant and unavoidable cumulative impact related to the loss of mineral resources, would be the same as the proposed 2010 General Plan Update.

Noise

Buildout of Alternative 2 would result in fewer residents in the City that would be exposed to traffic noise levels along major roadways. Therefore, noise impacts are expected to be less than those evaluated for the proposed 2010 General Plan Update. However, under both scenarios, cumulative noise impacts would be significant and unavoidable due to existing noise levels that exceed City standards.

Population, Housing, and Employment

Implementation of Alternative 2 would result in buildout according to the 2001 General Plan which would result in the development of fewer housing units but more commercial and industrial floor area when compared to the proposed 2010 General Plan Update. As with the proposed 2010 General Plan Update, impacts on population, housing and employment would be less than significant.

Public Services

Alternative 2 would generate additional demand for public services; however this demand would be less than those anticipated for the proposed 2010 General Plan Update due to the smaller buildout population. Despite the reduced demand, both Alternative 2 and the proposed 2010 General Plan Update would result in less than significant impacts related to public services.

Recreation

Alternative 2 would have less impact on recreation since buildout under the existing General Plan would result in a lower resident population in the City than the proposed General Plan. This impact is less than the impact of the proposed 2010 General Plan Update.

Traffic and Circulation

Buildout of Alternative 2 would result in more vehicle trips than under the proposed 2010 General Plan Update due the greater amount of non-residential development capacity. Therefore, traffic-related impacts are expected to be greater than those evaluated for the proposed 2010 General Plan Update. However, under both scenarios, traffic impacts would be less than significant.

Utilities and Service Systems

Alternative 2 would generate additional demand for utility services; however this demand would be less than those anticipated for the proposed 2010 General Plan Update due to the smaller buildout population. Despite the reduced demand, both Alternative 2 and the proposed 2010 General Plan Update would result in less than significant impacts related to public services.

Conclusion

Continued implementation of Alternative 2 would create significant and unavoidable adverse impacts, including the conversion of farmland to other uses and cumulative loss of Important Farmland; loss of regionally important mineral resources and cumulative loss of mineral resources; changes in the visual quality of the hillsides and scenic vistas and cumulative changes to aesthetics; direct and cumulative impacts related to long-term regional emissions of PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}; cumulative increases in noise levels; and cumulative contribution to climate change. For the remaining topical issues, the proposed 2010 General Plan Update would result in less than significant impacts or potentially significant impacts that can be mitigated to a level considered less than significant.

Alternative 2 would result in less environmental impacts related to air quality, hazards and hazardous materials, noise, public services and utilities than what would occur with implementation of the proposed project. This alternative would have the same impacts on agricultural resources, aesthetics, hydrology and water quality, geology and soils, land use and planning, mineral resources and population, housing, and employment. On the other hand, the exiting General Plan does not contain goals and policies for reducing greenhouse gases and for preserving historical resources. Traffic impacts would also be greater.

Alternative 2 would result in lower environmental impacts than the proposed 2010 General Plan Update on some environmental issues. It would also meet most of the objectives of the City as outlined in Section 5.1.2. However, this alternative would not protect the City's historical resources and does not include goals and policies for sustainability and energy conservation that would reduce greenhouse gas emissions from future development and redevelopment.

5.3.3 ALTERNATIVE 3: ALTERNATIVE LAND USE PLAN

Description of the Alternative

Alternative 3 assumes that an alternate Land Use Plan will be adopted as part of the proposed 2010 General Plan Update. Specifically, this alternative proposes a land use plan that would reduce some of the significant and unavoidable impacts associated with the proposed General Plan. Alternative 3 includes a land use plan that calls for the preservation of existing agricultural areas and vineyards in the City, preventing the loss of Important Farmland. This alternative also calls for no development in areas identified to contain regionally significant mineral resources (along Cucamonga Creek, Day Creek, Deer Creek and San Sevaine Wash). To prevent changes in the visual quality of the hillsides and the preservation of scenic resources in the City, this alternative would redesignate Hillside Residential to Open Space, thus limiting development within the hillside areas to no more than one dwelling unit per 40 acres pursuant to the City's Development Code.

Comparative Analysis of Environmental Impacts

Agricultural Resources

Alternative 3 would not result in any modifications to the agricultural uses in the City. No unavoidable impacts related to the loss of Important Farmland would occur. This impact is less than the impact of the proposed 2010 General Plan Update.

Aesthetics

Alternative 3 would reduce development in the hillside areas of the City, better preserving the undeveloped visual quality of the hillsides and protecting scenic vistas in the City. This will reduce unavoidable direct and cumulative impacts on aesthetics. However, infill development and redevelopment in the rest of the City will still occur, resulting in the introduction of new sources of light and glare. This impact is less significant and less than the impact of the proposed 2010 General Plan Update.

Air Quality

Alternative 3 would prevent development in existing agricultural areas and areas with regionally significant mineral resources and reduce allowable development in the hillside areas. Thus, less development would occur in the City and SOI at buildout. This translates to less pollutant emissions and fewer residents. This impact is less than significant and less than the impact of the proposed 2010 General Plan Update.

Biological Resources

Alternative 3 would have less impact on biological resources in the hillside areas since the allowable development density would be reduced to one dwelling unit per 40 acres for the all hillside areas. With more areas remaining undeveloped, this alternative would have less impact than the proposed 2010 General Plan Update.

Climate Change

With less development capacity than the proposed General Plan, less greenhouse gas emissions would be generated at buildout of this alternative. This alternative also assumes that the goals and policies for sustainability and energy conservation would be adopted by the City, resulting in a lower contribution to global climate change.

Cultural Resources

With future development in the hillsides reduced, impacts to known and unknown archaeological and paleontological resources would be less under Alternative 3 than the proposed General Plan. This alternative also assumes that the goals and policies for historic resource preservation would be adopted by the City, resulting in less impact on cultural resources than the proposed General Plan.

Geology and Soils

With no new development in existing agricultural areas and areas with regionally significant mineral resources and with reduced development in the hillside areas, impacts related to geology and soils would also be less. This impact is less than the impact of the proposed 2010 General Plan Update.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

The revised Land Use Plan for this alternative would not allow new development in agricultural areas, some of which are currently designated as Industrial Park and General Industrial. Thus, a lower potential for increased hazardous material users would result in the City. Also, reduced development density in the hillside areas would reduce exposure to wildland fire hazards in this area. This impact is less than the impact of the proposed 2010 General Plan Update.

Hydrology and Water Quality

With future development in the hillsides reduced and no new development in agricultural areas and areas with regionally significant mineral resources, changes in existing hydrology patterns and storm water pollutant sources would be less. This alternative assumes that future development would comply with standard conditions for hydrology and water quality and impacts would be less than significant, similar to the proposed General Plan.

Land Use and Planning

Alternative 3 proposes a different mix of land uses in the City at buildout than the proposed General Plan. Less residential and industrial development would occur under this alternative due to no new development in agricultural areas and areas with regionally significant mineral resources and reduce development in hillside areas. This difference does not change the level of impact between Alternative 3 and the proposed General Plan and impacts would be less than significant.

Mineral Resources

Alternative 3 has been specifically designed to reduce unavoidable adverse impacts to regionally significant mineral resources. With no development allowed in and near the creeks that contain mineral resources, no significant impacts on mineral resources would occur under this alternative. This impact is less than the impact of the proposed 2010 General Plan Update.

Noise

This alternative would reduce residential development in the City, resulting in fewer residents at buildout (noise sensitive receptors) that may be exposed to traffic, railroad, airport, and stationary noise sources in the project area. This impact is less than the impact of the proposed 2010 General Plan Update.

Population, Housing, and Employment

With no new development in agricultural areas and areas with regionally significant mineral resources and reduced residential development in the hillside areas, a decrease in the buildout population of the City could be expected under this alternative. Even with reduced housing capacity, future housing allocations under RHNA could still be met under this alternative. As with the proposed 2010 General Plan Update, impacts on population, housing and employment would be less than significant.

Public Services

Alternative 3 would generate additional demand for public services; however this demand would be less than the demands anticipated for the proposed 2010 General Plan Update due to the smaller buildout population. Despite the reduced demand, both Alternative 3 and the proposed

2010 General Plan Update would result in less than significant impacts related to public services.

Recreation

Alternative 3 would have less impact on recreation since buildout under the existing General Plan would result in a lower resident population in the City than the proposed General Plan. This impact is less than the impact of the proposed 2010 General Plan Update.

Traffic and Circulation

With less development capacity than the proposed General Plan, less vehicle trips would be generated at buildout of this alternative. This impact is less than the impact of the proposed 2010 General Plan Update.

Utilities and Service Systems

Alternative 3 would generate additional demand for utility services; however this demand would be less than those anticipated for the proposed 2010 General Plan Update due to the smaller buildout population. Despite the reduced demand, both Alternative 3 and the proposed 2010 General Plan Update would result in less than significant impacts related to public services.

Conclusion

Implementation of Alternative 3 would avoid the significant and unavoidable adverse impacts related to the conversion of farmland to other uses and cumulative loss of Important Farmland; the loss of regionally important mineral resources and cumulative loss of mineral resources; changes in the visual quality of the hillsides and scenic vistas and cumulative changes to aesthetics. In addition, the decrease in residential development and buildout population would reduce exposure to cumulative increases in noise levels, as well as reduce greenhouse gas emissions and its cumulative contribution to climate change.

Alternative 3 would result in lower environmental impacts than the proposed General Plan on most environmental issues and would avoid and reduce the significant and unavoidable adverse impacts from the proposed General Plan. Since this alternative would include adoption of the goals and policies of the proposed General Plan and would comply with the standard conditions and mitigation measures called out in Section 4.0, it would generally meet the objectives of the proposed General Plan. However, the alternative Land Use Plan does not represent the mix of land uses and development that the residents, stakeholders, City staff and leaders envisioned at buildout of the City and SOI. It may also not provide the housing opportunities to meet demand and lifestyle choices. Thus, it does not respond to the objectives of the City for the 2010 General Plan Update to the same degree as the proposed General Plan.

5.4 ENVIRONMENTALLY SUPERIOR ALTERNATIVE

CEQA requires the identification of an environmentally superior alternative. Section 15126.6(e)(2) of the CEQA Guidelines states that if the No Project Alternative is the environmentally superior alternative, then the EIR shall also identify an environmentally superior alternative among the other alternatives.

The environmental analysis of alternatives above indicates that, through a comparison of potential impacts from each of the alternatives and the proposed General Plan, the No Project/No Development alternative could be considered superior because no new

environmental impacts would be introduced to the City and its SOI. However, this alternative would not meet any of the objectives for the comprehensive update of the General Plan and would not incorporate new goals and policies to address historic resource preservation and sustainability.

Aside from the No Project/No Development Alternative, Alternative 3 or the Alternative Land Use Plan would also be considered environmentally superior. This alternative would result in less residential development in the hillside areas of the City and no new development on agricultural areas and areas with regionally significant mineral resources. This will avoid significant and unavoidable impacts related to the conversion of farmland to other uses and cumulative loss of Important Farmland; the loss of regionally important mineral resources and cumulative loss of mineral resources; and changes in the visual quality of the hillsides and scenic vistas and cumulative changes to aesthetics. Alternative 3 represents the environmentally superior alternative because three of the significant and unavoidable impacts associated with the proposed 2010 General Plan Update would be avoided by this alternative. In addition, it would also reduce impacts related to the other unavoidable impacts related to inconsistency with the Air Quality Management Plan for the South Coast Air Basin; cumulative increases in noise levels; and cumulative contribution to climate change. However, Alternative 3 would not completely avoid or reduce these impacts to less than significant levels.

As discussed earlier, the alternative Land Use Plan does not represent the mix of land uses and development that the residents, stakeholders, City staff and leaders envisioned at buildout of the City and SOI. It may also not provide the housing opportunities to meet demand and lifestyle choices. Thus, it does not respond to the objectives of the City for the 2010 General Plan Update to the same degree as the proposed General Plan. Additionally, due to private ownership within the hillside areas, Alternative 3 would decrease development rights on existing properties thus conflicting with private ownership rights and making the alternative less desirable than the 2010 General Plan Update.