

## V. ALTERNATIVES

The *CEQA Guidelines* require the analysis of a reasonable range of alternatives to the proposed project which would feasibly attain most of the proposed project's basic objectives and avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the proposed project. The range of alternatives required in an EIR is governed by a "rule of reason" that requires the EIR to set forth only those alternatives necessary to permit a reasoned choice.<sup>1</sup> CEQA states that an EIR should not consider alternatives "whose effect cannot be ascertained and whose implementation is remote and speculative."

The proposed project and its objectives are described in detail in Chapter III, Project Description, and the potential environmental effects of implementing the proposed project are analyzed in Chapter IV, Setting, Impacts and Mitigation Measures, with an emphasis on significant impacts resulting from the project and mitigation measures recommended to avoid or substantially reduce these impacts to the extent feasible. The following discussion is intended to inform the public and decision-makers of the relative impacts of three potentially feasible alternatives to the proposed project. A discussion of the environmentally superior alternative is also provided.

The three alternatives to the proposed project that are discussed in this chapter include the following:

- The **No Project alternative**, which assumes the continuation of existing conditions within the project site.
- The **Existing Zoning alternative**, which would comply to the existing zoning designations on the project site. A 15,000 square foot grocery store would be situated along the San Pablo Avenue frontage on Block A. Block B would include two buildings: (1) a mixed-use building with 16,000 square feet of retail on the ground floor and senior living units on the second floor that fronts on San Pablo Avenue, and (2) a building with senior housing that fronts on 10<sup>th</sup> Street.
- The **Reduced Residential alternative**, which would include 85 senior housing units and the same grocery and retail component as the proposed project.

For each alternative, a brief discussion of its principal characteristics is followed by an analysis of anticipated environmental impacts. The emphasis of the analysis is on the alternative's relative adverse effects compared to the proposed project and a determination of whether or not the alternative would reduce, eliminate, or create new significant impacts.

### A. NO PROJECT ALTERNATIVE

#### 1. Principal Characteristics

The No Project alternative assumes that the project site would not be subject to redevelopment, and would generally remain in its existing conditions. The Gill House would remain on the project site

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<sup>1</sup> *CEQA Guidelines*, 2009, Section 15126.6.

and not to be demolished. This alternative would not include any site improvements (including pedestrian and bicycle facilities), and the project site would remain largely unused and vacant.

The No Project alternative would not achieve key objectives of the proposed project, including:

- Locate a mixed-use project on the San Pablo Avenue corridor within Block B of the project site.
- Build a grocery store within the San Pablo Avenue frontage of University Village located within Block A of the project site.
- Offer retail space and outdoor seating as a local amenity designed to connect with the surroundings and serve local residents and new residents of the project.
- Improve the visual quality of the site.
- Provide senior housing.
- Within the project site, provide a pedestrian/bicycle path along Codornices Creek.
- Facilitate pedestrian/bicycle movement across San Pablo Avenue.

## 2. Analysis of the No Project Alternative

The potential impacts of the No Project alternative are described below.

**a. Transportation, Circulation and Parking.** Under this alternative, the project site would remain vacant and would not generate any vehicle trips. Implementation of this alternative would avoid all the significant traffic-related impacts of the project. The traffic conditions for this alternative are as described in the existing conditions section of Section IV.A, Transportation, Circulation and Parking. While this project would not contribute to significant traffic impacts, it would also not result in the construction of pedestrian and bicycle facilities across San Pablo Avenue, along Village Creek, and along 10<sup>th</sup> Street. Traffic impacts under this alternative would be reduced compared to the proposed project.

**b. Air Quality.** Under the No Project alternative, the project site would remain vacant and unused. As such, this alternative would not generate any trips or associated vehicle emissions. The No Project alternative would not generate construction-period emissions of particulate matter and other pollutants, and would not require mitigation measures to reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level. Air quality impacts under this alternative would be reduced compared to the proposed project.

**c. Global Climate Change.** Under the No Project alternative the project site would remain vacant and would not increase vehicle emissions, construction emissions, or operational emissions on the project site. No additional fuel would be burned on energy used. Global climate change impacts under this alternative would be reduced compared proposed project.

**d. Noise.** Construction activity would not take place as part of the No Project alternative, and sensitive receptors surrounding the project site would not be exposed to construction-related noise. Additionally, residential uses would not be located on the project site, and would not be subject to unacceptable interior noise levels requiring mitigation. Noise impacts under this alternative would be reduced compared to the proposed project.

**e. Biological Resources.** The No Project alternative would not include construction activity, so the Central Coast Steelhead habitat in the Codornices Creek would not be impacted. Additionally, the

No Project alternative would not result in the removal of any trees within the project site, so that there would be no potential impacts to foraging and nesting habitat for bird species of special concern or Monarch butterfly winter colonies. Biological resources impacts under this alternative would be reduced compared to the proposed project.

**f. Hydrology and Water Quality.** The No Project alternative would remain largely undeveloped, so that the amount of impervious surface associated with this alternative would be significantly less than under the proposed project. The No Project alternative would avoid construction period impacts to water quality, including degradation of water quality and dewatering. Additionally, this alternative would not conflict with the Lower Codornices Creek Improvements Plan and would not place structures within a 100 year special flood hazard area. Hydrology and water quality impacts under this alternative would be reduced compared to the proposed project.

## **B. EXISTING ZONING ALTERNATIVE**

### **1. Principal Characteristics**

The Existing Zoning alternative would redevelop the project site with the type and intensity of uses currently allowed under the Zoning Ordinance. The existing zoning of the project site includes San Pablo Avenue Commercial (SPC), Residential Medium Density (R-2), and Watercourse Overlay District.

The SPC designation applies to the project site within 100 feet of the San Pablo Avenue. This designation allows for both commercial and residential uses. The maximum residential density allowed under this designation is 63 units per acre. The maximum building height allowed under this designation is three stories, or 38 feet above grade, except where the rear property line abuts a residential district. If the property abuts a residential district, the maximum height at the rear setback lines shall be 20 feet plus a 45 degree daylight plane.

The R-2 designation applies to the remainder of the project site. Under this designation, commercial uses are not permitted, although parking uses for the adjacent commercial area are allowed within the R-2 designation with a Conditional Use Permit. The maximum residential density allowed under this designation is 35 dwelling units per acre.

Under this alternative, a 15,000 square foot market would be located within the area designated as SPC on Block A. This market would front on San Pablo Avenue. A large surface parking lot, with approximately 164 spaces, would be located on the R-2 designated area of Block A. This parking lot would be accessed off of 10<sup>th</sup> Street and no driveways to the parking lot would be provided on San Pablo Avenue. A pedestrian path would be located along Village Creek.

As the SPC zoning designation requires a building setback for adjacent residential designation (as is located on Block B), the Block B component of the Existing Zoning alternative would include two buildings. One mixed use building would front on San Pablo Avenue and include 16,000 square feet of retail on the ground floor with senior housing units on the second floor. This structure would be approximately 30 feet tall. The second structure on Block B would front on Monroe Street and 10<sup>th</sup> Street. This structure would be three stories tall. Combined, the buildings would include 70 senior housing dwelling units.

Approximately 86 parking spaces would be provided in a garage under the structures on Block B, and 164 spaces would be provided on the surface lot on Block A. Parking spaces provided on Block A would be shared among all uses on the project site.

This alternative would include the same San Pablo Avenue crossing as proposed under the project, and include the same storm drainage facilities as proposed under the project.

This alternative would meet most of the project objectives, but would not incorporate outdoor seating into the site design. Additionally, this alternative would provide significantly less retail and grocery square footage and fewer dwelling units.

## **2. Analysis of the Existing Zoning Alternative**

The potential impacts of the Existing Zoning alternative compared to the proposed project are described below.

**a. Transportation, Circulation and Parking.** The Existing Zoning alternative would result in a significant reduction in development on the project site. Table V-1 summarizes the vehicular trip generation under this alternative. As shown in the table, this alternative would generate about 70 percent fewer trips than the proposed project during the weekday AM and PM and Saturday peak hours.

The alternative would most likely not cause as many significant impacts as the proposed project. However, it would most likely continue to cause some significant unavoidable transportation-related impacts; however, the magnitude of these impacts would be reduced compared to the proposed project.

**b. Air Quality.** The Existing Zoning alternative would result in construction emissions similar, but slightly reduced, from those associated with the proposed project. This reduction would be due to the decrease in the amount of development associated with this alternative. Mitigation measures to reduce the release of dust and diesel exhaust would still be required. Similar to the proposed project, this alternative would not result in any new sources of Toxic Air Contaminants (TACs) or CO hot spots. This alternative would not exceed thresholds for regional emissions and would be consistent with the Clean Air Plan. Air quality impacts under this alternative would be reduced compared to the proposed project.

**c. Global Climate Change.** Given its reduced size, this alternative would reduce greenhouse gas emissions of the project. However, this alternative would still conflict with the goals of AB 32 and would require Mitigation Measure GCC-1 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to a less-than-significant level. Global climate change impacts under this alternative would be reduced compared to the proposed project.

**d. Noise.** Construction activities would still occur as part of this alternative, and would require mitigation. Under this alternative, the residential component of the project would be located closer to San Pablo Avenue, a traffic noise source. Sensitive receptor exposure to traffic noise would be greater under this alternative as the residential component would be closer to San Pablo Avenue. However, it is likely that design features could be incorporated into the proposed project to reduce the potential

**Table V-1: Existing Zoning Alternative Trip Generation Estimates**

Land Use	Size <sup>a</sup>	Weekday AM Peak Hour			Weekday PM Peak Hour			Saturday Peak Hour		
		In	Out	Total	In	Out	Total	In	Out	Total
Grocery Store <sup>b</sup>	15 ksf	54	35	89	99	104	203	101	101	202
Proposed New Retail <sup>c</sup>	16 ksf	10	6	16	29	31	60	41	37	78
Proposed Senior Housing <sup>d</sup>	70 d.u.	3	6	9	7	4	11	7	4	11
<b>New Project Trips</b>		<i>67</i>	<i>47</i>	<i>114</i>	<i>135</i>	<i>139</i>	<i>274</i>	<i>149</i>	<i>142</i>	<i>291</i>
Pass-By Vehicles – Grocery Store <sup>e</sup>		<i>-16</i>	<i>-16</i>	<i>-32</i>	<i>-37</i>	<i>-37</i>	<i>-74</i>	<i>-37</i>	<i>-37</i>	<i>-74</i>
Pass-By Vehicles – New Retail <sup>f</sup>		<i>-3</i>	<i>-3</i>	<i>-6</i>	<i>-10</i>	<i>-10</i>	<i>-20</i>	<i>-10</i>	<i>-10</i>	<i>-20</i>
<b>Net New Project Trips</b>		<i>48</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>76</i>	<i>88</i>	<i>92</i>	<i>180</i>	<i>102</i>	<i>95</i>	<i>197</i>
<b>Net New Original Project<sup>g</sup></b>		<i>160</i>	<i>87</i>	<i>247</i>	<i>283</i>	<i>294</i>	<i>577</i>	<i>310</i>	<i>299</i>	<i>609</i>
<b>Net Difference</b>		<i>-112</i>	<i>-59</i>	<i>-171</i>	<i>-195</i>	<i>-202</i>	<i>-397</i>	<i>-208</i>	<i>-204</i>	<i>-412</i>
		<i>-70%</i>	<i>-68%</i>	<i>-69%</i>	<i>-69%</i>	<i>-69%</i>	<i>-69%</i>	<i>-67%</i>	<i>-68%</i>	<i>-68%</i>

Notes:

<sup>a</sup> ksf = 1,000 square feet, d.u. = dwelling unit

<sup>b</sup> Trip generation based on door counts and mode split surveys conducted at the Berkeley Whole Foods Market in September 2003 for weekday rates, and September 2008 for Saturday rates:

AM: T = 5.93 (X); Enter = 61%, Exit = 39%

PM: T = 13.50 (X); Enter = 49%, Exit = 51%

Saturday: T = 13.46 (X); Enter = 50%, Exit = 50%

Where: T = trips generated, X = 1,000 square feet

<sup>c</sup> Trip generation based on Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE), *Trip Generation*, (8th Edition) average rates for Shopping Center (Land Use Code 820) :

AM: T = 1.0 (X); Enter = 61%, Exit = 39%

PM: T = 3.73 (X); Enter = 49%, Exit = 51%

Saturday: T = 4.89 (X); Enter = 52%, Exit = 48%

Where: T = trips generated, X = 1,000 square feet

<sup>d</sup> Trip generation based on ITE *Trip Generation*, (8th Edition) regression equations for Senior Adult Housing-Attached (Land Use Code 252):

AM: T = 0.13 (X); Enter = 36%, Exit = 64%

PM: T = 0.16 (X); Enter = 60%, Exit = 40%

Saturday: no Saturday rates available, Weekday PM rates were assumed.

Where: T = trips generated, X = 1,000 square feet

<sup>e</sup> Trip pass-by rate based on ITE *Trip Generation Handbook* (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) average pass-by for Supermarket (Land Use Code 850). Average Weekday PM pass-by rate = 36%; Average Weekday AM or Saturday pass-by rate not available, weekday PM pass-by rate was assumed.

<sup>f</sup> Trip pass-by rate based on ITE *Trip Generation Handbook* (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) average pass-by for Shopping Center (Land Use Code 820). Average Weekday PM pass-by rate: 34%; average Saturday pass-by rate: 26%; average Weekday AM pass-by rate not available, Weekday PM pass-by rate was assumed.

<sup>g</sup> Based on Table IV.A-11.

Source: Fehr & Peers, 2009.

noise impact to the residential units on San Pablo Avenue under this alternative, so that the potential noise increase would not be discernable. Noise impacts under this alternative would be slightly greater compared to the proposed project.

**e. Biological Resources.** This alternative would result in similar biological resource impacts as the proposed project. Under this alternative, Central Coast Steelhead habitat in the Codornices Creek could still be impacted, which would require mitigation. Additionally, removal of trees within the project site could potentially impact foraging and nesting habitat for bird species of special concern or

Monarch butterfly winter colonies; as with the proposed project, this alternative would require mitigation measure to reduce this potential impact. Biological Resources impacts under this alternative would be similar to the proposed project.

**f. Hydrology and Water Quality.** The Existing Zoning alternative would generally have the same hydrology impacts as the proposed project. This alternative would require mitigation measures to address construction period impacts to water quality (including degradation of water quality and dewatering). Additionally, the project could conflict with the Lower Codornices Creek Improvements Plan and potentially place structures within a 100 year special flood hazard area, both of which would require mitigation measures. Hydrology and water quality impacts under this alternative would be similar to the proposed project.

## **C. REDUCED RESIDENTIAL ALTERNATIVE**

### **1. Principal Characteristics**

Under the Reduced Residential alternative, Block A would remain the same as the proposed project, and would include 2,000 square feet of retail, a 55,000 square foot Whole Foods Market, and a parking lot. Under this alternative Block B would include 85 residential units, which is a 90 unit reduction over the proposed project. The height of the residential component of the Block B building would be reduced to 3 stories. The retail component of Block B would remain as proposed under the project. This alternative would include the same San Pablo Avenue crossing and pedestrian/bicycle facilities as proposed under the project, and include the same storm drainage facilities as proposed under the project. This alternative would meet all the objectives of the proposed project but would provide significantly fewer residential units.

### **2. Analysis of the Reduced Residential Alternative**

The potential impacts of the Reduced Residential alternative compared to the proposed project are described below.

**a. Transportation, Circulation and Parking.** The Reduced Residential Alternative would have very similar traffic impacts as the proposed project. Under the proposed project, the majority of the new trips are associated with the Whole Foods Market and retail components of the project. While this alternative would result in fewer residential units, this reduction would not significantly reduce trips to the site. Under the AM Peak Hour calculations for the proposed project (which is the scenario under which the senior housing components represent the greatest percentage of project trips), trips associated with the senior housing component represent only 7 percent of net new project trips. Even with the residential reduction under this alternative, most of the significant unavoidable traffic impacts identified for the project would remain. Traffic impacts under this alternative would be slightly reduced but largely similar to the proposed project.

**b. Air Quality.** The Reduced Residential alternative would result in construction emissions that are similar but slightly reduced from those associated with the proposed project; mitigation measures to reduce the release of construction related dust and diesel exhaust would still be required. Similar to the proposed project, this alternative would not result in any new sources of Toxic Air Contaminants (TACs) or CO hot spots. This alternative would not exceed thresholds for regional emissions and

would be consistent with the Clean Air Plan. Air quality impacts under this alternative would be slightly reduced but similar to the proposed project.

**c. Global Climate Change.** Given its reduced size, this alternative would reduce greenhouse gas emissions of the project. However, this alternative would still conflict with the goals of AB 32 and would require Mitigation Measure GCC-1 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to a less-than-significant level. Global climate change impacts under this alternative would be slightly reduced but similar to the proposed project.

**d. Noise.** Construction activities would still occur as part of this alternative, and would require mitigation. Additionally, the residential component under this alternative would be similarly situated as the proposed project and would require alternative forms of ventilation to ensure that windows can remain closed for prolonged periods. Noise impacts under this alternative would be similar to the proposed project.

**e. Biological Resources.** This alternative would result in similar biological resources impacts as the proposed project. Central Coast Steelhead habitat in the Codornices Creek could be impacted, which would require mitigation. Additionally, removal of trees within the project site could potential impact foraging and nesting habitat for bird species of special concern or Monarch butterfly winter colonies; mitigation measure would need to be implemented under this alternative. Biological Resources impacts under this alternative would be similar to the proposed project.

**f. Hydrology and Water Quality.** The Reduced Residential alternative would generally have the same hydrology impacts as the proposed project. This alternative would require mitigation measures to address construction period impacts to water quality (including degradation of water quality and dewatering). Additionally, the project could conflict with the Lower Codornices Creek Improvements Plan and potentially place structures within a 100 year special flood hazard area, both of which would require mitigation measures. Hydrology and water quality impacts under this alternative would be similar to the proposed project.

## **D. ENVIRONMENTALLY SUPERIOR ALTERNATIVE**

CEQA requires the identification of the environmentally superior alternative in an EIR. The No Project alternative is considered the environmentally superior alternative in the strict sense that environmental impacts associated with its implementation would be the least of all the scenarios examined (including the proposed project). To maintain the project site at baseline conditions would avoid each of the significant impacts that would result from the proposed project. However, while this alternative would be environmentally superior in the technical sense that contribution to these aforementioned impacts would not occur, the No Project alternative would also fail to achieve any of the project's objectives.

In cases like this where the No Project alternative is the environmentally superior alternative, CEQA requires that the second most environmentally superior alternative be identified. In this case the Existing Zoning alternative would be considered the environmentally superior alternative. This alternative would achieve most of the project objectives. While this alternative could increase residents' exposure to traffic noise when compared to the proposed project, it would result in a significant reduction in trips, and which would also reduce air quality and global climate change impacts.

