



SECTION 6.0

Alternatives to the Proposed Project



6.0 ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT

CEQA requires that an EIR include an analysis of a range of project alternatives that could feasibly attain most of the basic project objectives, while avoiding or substantially lessening any of the significant effects identified for the proposed project. The Lead Agency must disclose its reasoning for selecting each alternative. The Lead Agency must also identify any alternatives that were considered, but rejected as infeasible during the scoping process, and disclose the reasons for the exclusion. The range of alternatives is governed by a “rule of reason”, which requires the EIR to set forth only those alternatives necessary to permit a reasoned choice. Specifically, *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.6(a) requires that:

“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 selection of 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.”

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(f)(1) provides the following information regarding the “feasibility” of a project alternative:

“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.”

Within every EIR, the *CEQA Guidelines* require that a “No Project” Alternative is analyzed. The “No Project” Alternative allows decision makers to compare the impacts of approving the proposed project with the impacts of not approving the proposed project. In addition, the identification of an “Environmentally Superior” Alternative is required. The “No Project” Alternative may be the “Environmentally Superior” Alternative to the proposed project based on the minimization or avoidance of physical environmental impacts. However, the “No Project” Alternative must also achieve most of the basic objectives of the projects in order to be considered the “Environmentally Superior” Alternative. Thus, the *CEQA Guidelines* require that if the “Environmentally Superior” Alternative is the “No Project” Alternative, the EIR shall identify a superior alternative from the remaining alternatives analyzed.



In order to provide background regarding the selection or rejection of a project alternative, the discussion below provides a summary of project objectives, in addition to a description of the significant and unavoidable impacts found to occur upon project implementation. An explanation behind each selected project alternative is provided, in addition to a discussion of alternatives that were considered during the scoping process but not selected for further analysis.

Throughout the following analysis, impacts of the alternatives are analyzed for each of the issue areas examined in [Section 5.0](#) of this EIR. In this manner, each alternative can be compared to the proposed action on an issue-by-issue basis.

The alternatives to the proposed project under consideration within this EIR consist of:

- Existing UDC Alternative
- Reduced Density Alternative

Table 6-1, Comparison of Alternatives, which is provided at the end of this section, provides an overview of the alternatives analyzed and a comparison of each alternative's impact in relation to the proposed action.

SUMMARY OF PROJECT OBJECTIVES

As stated above, an EIR must only discuss in detail an alternative that is capable of feasibly attaining most of the basic objectives associated with the action, while at the same time avoiding or substantially lessening any of the significant effects associated with the proposed project. Thus, a summary of the objectives, as provided within [Section 3.0, Project Description](#), is provided below.

LAND USE PLANNING

1. Create a new community that allows for residential development, while preserving significant natural resources and open areas.
2. Provide development that is compatible with surrounding land uses and is consistent with residential communities within the Sand Canyon area.
3. Provide for adequate flood protection for the purposes of public safety and preservation of public and private property.
4. Provide for the long-term maintenance of landscaping, storm drains, etc., which serve the project site.
5. Ensure compatibility with the City of Santa Clarita's (City) Urban Stormwater Mitigation Plan.
6. Ensure compatibility with the Sand Canyon Special Standards District.



ECONOMIC

7. Develop the site to include lots of varying sizes.
8. Create an economically feasible project that offers single-family residential lots to serve the current and projected market.

MOBILITY

9. Provide a safe, efficient, and aesthetically attractive street system, which is consistent with all requirements of the Sand Canyon Special Standards District.
10. Provide two points of ingress and egress that minimizes impacts on adjacent residential neighborhoods.
11. Provide equestrian trails throughout the project that connect with the City's equestrian backbone trail system.

PARKS AND RECREATION

12. Provide space for an equestrian-oriented City park.
13. Provide space for an equestrian trail head that connects to the City's equestrian backbone trail system.
14. Provide space for a City community park.

RESOURCE CONSERVATION

15. Maintain approximately 30 acres of open space.
16. Provide a site-specific evaluation of the biotic resources of the site in compliance with the provisions of the City's *Unified Development Code* and *General Plan* with regard to significant ecological areas.

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT UNAVOIDABLE IMPACTS

Pursuant to *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.6(a), an EIR shall 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. Only those impacts found significant and unavoidable are relevant in making the final determination of whether an alternative is environmentally superior or inferior to the proposed project. Based on the analysis provided within Section 5.0, Environmental Analysis of this EIR, the only significant and unavoidable impact identified for the proposed project is for noise during the short-term construction process.



6.1 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT NOT CARRIED FORWARD FOR ADDITIONAL ANALYSIS

In determining an appropriate range of alternatives to be evaluated in the EIR, five possible alternatives were considered but not carried forward for additional analysis, since they could not accomplish most of the basic objectives of the project or were considered infeasible. These scenarios include the following.

“NO BUILD” ALTERNATIVE

Under the “No Build” Alternative, no development would take place on-site. The site would remain in its current undeveloped condition, with the exception of the existing Metrolink railroad right-of-way, Southern California Gas Company transmission pipeline easement, and abandoned railroad alignment that traverse the site.

If left as open space, the site would not be consistent with the City’s vision for low-density single-family residential development. Thus, the City would be responsible for identifying an alternate location or locations for replacement housing to maintain housing supply as identified within its *General Plan*. Furthermore, retention of the project site in its existing condition would not fulfill any of the basic project objectives identified above. Consequently, the “No Build” Alternative was rejected from further consideration in the EIR.

“ALTERNATIVE SITE” ALTERNATIVE

The “Alternative Site” Alternative would involve relocating the proposed project to another site within the City. The Alternative Site Alternative would generally retain the same characteristics (acreage, number of dwelling units, amenities, etc.) of the project. The Alternative Site Alternative would require adequate land, access, infrastructure, and must be compatible with existing General Plan and zoning designations for the site. Although other suitable sites may be available that could accommodate the project, it is not anticipated that the Alternative Site Alternative would substantially lessen the significant noise impact associated with the proposed project. Although the proposed project could potentially reduce impacts associated with short-term construction noise, it is considered infeasible since: 1) no other sites in the project area are under the Applicant’s ownership; and 2) relocation to another site may result in similar or elevated noise impacts depending on the proximity of sensitive receptors. Consequently, the Alternative Site Alternative was rejected from further consideration within the EIR.

“SANTA CLARA RIVER BRIDGE” ALTERNATIVE

The “Santa Clara River Bridge” Alternative would involve the construction of a roadway bridge over the Santa Clara River in order to provide primary access to the project site. This access scenario was considered as part of an earlier development proposal for the project site that included a total of 299 single-family dwelling units. Under this alternative, vehicular access to the site would no longer be provided by Lost Canyon Road, Oak Springs Canyon Road, or Robinson Ranch Road.



The Santa Clara River Bridge Alternative has not been carried forward for further consideration within the EIR since it would not result in the reduction or elimination of the significant impact identified for construction noise, since surrounding sensitive receptors would remain affected by the grading and excavation process.

Moreover, this Alternative would likely result in substantially increased impacts related to hydrology, water quality, biology, and aesthetics due to direct impacts to the Santa Clara River. Consequently, the Santa Clara River Bridge Alternative was rejected from further consideration within the EIR.

10-ACRE LOT ALTERNATIVE

The 10-Acre Lot Alternative would propose no development north of the existing gas pipeline easement and 10-acre lots on the remainder of the site south of the easement. In addition, this Alternative would have no access from Lost Canyon Road.

The 10-Acre Lot Alternative has not been carried forward for further consideration in this EIR, as this Alternative is not consistent with the *General Plan* designations of Non-Urban 5 and Urban Residential 1 or the *UDC* designations of Residential Very Low (RVL) and Residential Low (RL). Under the existing *UDC* designations, 229 homes could be constructed. Under this Alternative, approximately 50 percent of the 172.6 acres available for development, 86.3 acres, could be developed. Thus a total of nine lots would be permitted under this Alternative.

While this Alternative would result in the reduction or elimination of the significant impact identified for construction noise, it is considered a down-zoning of the subject property and it not consistent with the City's vision for low-density single-family residential development. Thus, the City would be responsible for identifying an alternate location or locations for replacement housing to maintain housing supply as identified within its *General Plan*. Furthermore, implementation of this Alternative would not fulfill any of the basic project objectives identified above. Consequently, the 10-Acre Lot Alternative was rejected from further consideration within the EIR.

REDUCED BUILDING FOOTPRINT ALTERNATIVE

The Reduced Building Footprint Alternative would avoid disturbance to the areas north of the Metrolink Railroad right-of-way along the south bank of the Santa Clara River and west/southwest of the Oak Spring Canyon Wash, along with a 500-foot buffer area along the site's eastern boundary. As with the proposed project, this Alternative would require two points of access for public safety. This Alternative would eliminate more than 40 residential lots in the eastern portion of the site, and two residential lots and the five-acre park north of the Metrolink Railroad right-of-way. This Alternative would permit a total of 44 residential lots and would increase the on-site open space acreage.

The Reduced Building Footprint Alternative has not been carried forward for further consideration within the EIR since it would not result in the reduction or elimination of the significant impact identified for construction noise, since surrounding sensitive receptors would remain affected by the grading and excavation process. Implementation of this Alternative would not be consistent with the City's vision for low-density single-family residential development, and as result, the City would be responsible for identifying an alternate location or



locations for replacement housing to maintain housing supply as identified within its *General Plan*. Consequently, the Reduced Building Footprint Alternative was rejected from further consideration in the EIR.

6.2 EXISTING UDC ALTERNATIVE

DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVE

Pursuant to *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.6(e)(2), a No Project Alternative must be analyzed within the EIR. The No Project Alternative should discuss what would be reasonably expected to occur in the foreseeable future if the proposed project were not approved, based on current plans and consistent with available infrastructure and community services. In the context of this EIR, the Existing UDC Alternative is the No Project Alternative in compliance with *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.6(e)(2), and assumes that the proposed Mancara at Robinson Ranch Project would not be implemented at the site.

Non-approval of the proposed project would not preclude the site from being developed at a later time. Based on the City's *General Plan* designation for the site, the City's goals for development on the site consist of low-density single-family residential development on-site. The project site has historically been subject to various iterations of multiple development proposals. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that in the absence of the proposed project, residential development would still occur on-site in the foreseeable future. For the purposes of this analysis, the Existing UDC Alternative assumes that on-site development would consist of development consistent with the City's *Unified Development Code (UDC)*.

Two *UDC* designations apply to the site: Residential Very Low (RVL) and Residential Low (RL). The RVL designation allows for a maximum density of 1.0 dwelling unit per gross acre, while the RL designation allows for a maximum of 2.2 dwelling units per gross acre. The 187.3-acre project site includes 172.6 acres proposed for residential development. Of this 172.6 acres, 123.6 acres are designated RVL and 49 acres are designated RL. Thus, applying applicable densities to each designation, a total of 232 single-family dwelling units would be constructed.¹ Since the proposed project includes 99 dwelling units, this alternative represents an increase in development intensity.

Thus, the Existing UDC Alternative would include 133 more units than the proposed project (representing an increase of approximately 143 percent). This increase in development would require that a portion of the area designated for recreational, open space, and equestrian uses under the proposed project would instead be developed with residential uses.

IMPACT COMPARISON TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT

Aesthetics, Light, and Glare

Analysis conducted for the proposed project concluded that impacts related to short-term construction, scenic vistas and resources, aesthetics and visual character, light and glare, and

¹ 123.6 acres of RVL x 1.0 dwelling unit/acre = 124 dwelling units; 49 acres of RL x 2.2 dwelling units/acre = 108 dwelling units.



cumulative impacts would be less than significant upon implementation of recommended mitigation measures.

The Existing UDC Alternative would result in an increased development intensity in comparison to the proposed project. An additional 133 dwelling units would be constructed, and this increase would result in greater aesthetics, light, and glare impacts. The area and duration over which construction activities would occur would be increased, resulting in greater short-term impacts related to grading, excavation, stockpiling, and construction equipment. The amount of area utilized for residential development would also be expanded, resulting in a decrease in the amount of open space, recreational, and equestrian area provided. This would result in an increase in long-term impacts. Thus, impacts related to aesthetics, light, and glare would be increased under the Existing UDC Alternative in comparison to the proposed project. The Existing UDC Alternative is considered environmentally inferior to the proposed project in this regard.

Biological Resources

Analysis for the proposed project concluded that impacts related to biological resources would be less than significant. Analysis within Section 5.2 found that effects on special-status plant/animal species, oak trees, jurisdictional waters, and cumulative impacts would be less than significant upon implementation of recommended mitigation measures.

Under the Existing UDC Alternative, residential development would be expanded to include an additional 133 units on-site. This increase in development would require a reduction in areas designated for open space, recreational, and equestrian uses under the proposed project. Thus, the impact to biological resources and habitat would be increased in comparison to the proposed project. The increased amount of development would also require the removal of additional oak trees existing on-site.

Given the increased impact area associated with the Existing UDC Alternative, impacts to special-status plant/animal species, oak trees, jurisdictional waters, and cumulative effects would be greater when compared to the proposed project. Thus, this Alternative is considered environmentally inferior to the proposed project in regards to biological resources.

Traffic and Circulation

Analysis conducted for the proposed project found that impacts related to local roadways, project access, the Los Angeles County Congestion Management Program, and cumulative impacts would be less than significant. Mitigation measures were identified for local roadways and cumulative impacts.

The Existing UDC Alternative would result in an approximate 143 percent increase in development over the proposed project. Given this increase in intensity, an associated increase in trip generation would also occur under this Alternative. Impacts to local roadways, project access, Congestion Management Plan intersections, and cumulative effects would be incrementally greater in comparison with the proposed project. Thus, the Existing UDC Alternative is considered environmentally inferior to the proposed project.



Air Quality

Section 5.4 of this EIR examines potential project impacts related to air quality management plan consistency, short-term construction impacts, long-term operational impacts, localized impacts, carbon monoxide hotspots, odors, and cumulative effects. Based on the analysis, the proposed project would not result in any significant impacts. Mitigation measures were identified for short-term construction, localized impacts, and cumulative effects.

Given the expansion of residential development associated with the Existing UDC Alternative, an incremental increase in air quality emissions would also occur. The amount, area, and duration of construction would be increased. Moreover, the implementation of 133 additional dwelling units would result in greater mobile emissions due to the higher trip generation associated with the Alternative. The increased area where residential development would occur would also enhance the potential for localized air quality impacts to occur. Impacts related to odors at the site would be similar under this Alternative, since neither the proposed project nor this Alternative would involve uses capable of generating substantial odors. Since this Alternative would generally result in an incremental increase in short-term and long-term operational emissions, the Existing UDC Alternative is considered environmentally inferior in comparison to the proposed project.

Greenhouse Gases

Analysis conducted for the proposed project concluded that impacts related to greenhouse gas emissions, consistency with plans/policies/regulations, and cumulative effects were less than significant upon implementation of recommended mitigation measures.

The increase in development associated with the Existing UDC Alternative would also result in an incremental increase in greenhouse gas emissions. Construction emissions, area sources, and mobile sources would all be increased in comparison with the proposed project. Indirect greenhouse gas emissions (electricity/water consumption) would also be higher given that 133 additional residential units would be constructed.

This Alternative would also be consistent with the Attorney General's recommended measures since design and efficiency measures would be unchanged. Impacts related to plan consistency would be similar to the proposed project, since the City does not have an applicable plan, policy, or regulation for the purpose of reducing greenhouse gases. As with the proposed project, this Alternative would also comply with the *2010 California Green Building Code* and would include design features to reduce energy and water consumption, reduce vehicle trips, and achieve LEED certification and green building certification from the State. Greenhouse gas mitigation measures applicable to the proposed project would also be required for the Existing UDC Alternative. However, since this Alternative would generally result in an incremental increase in greenhouse gas emissions, the Existing UDC Alternative is considered environmentally inferior in comparison to the proposed project.



Noise

Section 5.6 of the EIR analyzes potential project impacts related to short-term construction, long-term operations, and cumulative effects. Despite the implementation of recommended mitigation, short-term construction impacts were determined to be significant and unavoidable.

The Existing UDC Alternative would generally result in greater noise impacts during both construction and long-term operations. Under this Alternative, the amount, area, and duration of construction activities would be expanded since an additional 133 dwelling units would be constructed. Residential dwellings to the west would be exposed to increased noise during the construction process. Thus, construction-related impacts would be incrementally higher under the Existing UDC Alternative, and the significant and unavoidable impact would remain. Long-term operational impacts would be increased in comparison to the proposed project, given the larger area where residential development would occur, and the higher trip generation related to the Alternative.

Thus, the Existing UDC Alternative is considered environmentally inferior to the proposed project in regards to noise impacts.

Hydrology and Water Quality

Analysis conducted for the proposed project concluded that impacts related to water quality, hydrology, groundwater, and cumulative effects would be less than significant upon implementation of recommended mitigation measures.

Although the Existing UDC Alternative would result in an increased construction impact area, impacts are anticipated to be similar to the proposed project since National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) requirements (such as compliance with the Construction General Permit and preparation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan [SWPPP]) would remain applicable and reduce impacts to less than significant.

Water quality and hydrology impacts during long-term operations would be increased under the Existing UDC Alternative. This Alternative would generally result in greater impacts during both construction and long-term operations, since increased amounts of residential development would result in greater urban runoff and additional alteration of natural topography. Given the increase in long-term operational impacts, the Existing UDC Alternative is considered environmentally inferior to the proposed project in this regard.

Geology, Soils, and Seismicity

Section 5.8 of this EIR examines potential project impacts related to seismicity, ground failure, landslides/slope stability, expansive soils, grading, and cumulative effects. All impacts were determined to be less than significant upon implementation of the three mitigation measures pertaining to ground failure, landslides/slope stability, and grading.

Impacts related to seismicity would be similar to the proposed project, since all development would be consistent with the *California Building Code*. However, all other impacts would be increased under the Existing UDC Alternative. Under this Alternative, residential development would be increased by approximately 143 percent. The amount of area utilized for residential



development would be expanded, resulting in a decrease in the amount of open space, recreational, and equestrian area provided. Thus, the increased amount of area subjected to grading and excavation would result in an associated increases in hazards related to ground failure, landslides/slope stability, expansive soils, grading, and cumulative effects. Thus, this Alternative is considered environmentally inferior to the proposed project.

Public Services and Utilities

Section 5.9 through Section 5.17 of the EIR analyzes potential project impacts related to a range of public services and utilities, consisting of:

- Fire Protection;
- Police Protection;
- Schools;
- Parks and Recreation;
- Solid Waste;
- Water Supply;
- Wastewater;
- Electricity; and
- Natural Gas.

All impacts under the proposed project were determined to be less than significant.

The Existing UDC Alternative would result in greater demand for public services and utilities. The approximately 143 percent increase in residential development intensity would result in increased service/emergency calls for fire/police protection. Additional students would be generated by the project, resulting in increased demand for school services. Demand for utilities (water, wastewater, electricity, solid waste, and natural gas) would also be increased. The need for parks and recreational facilities would be increased not only by the greater development intensity, but by the fact that less area for recreational, open space, and equestrian uses would be afforded under the Alternative. Thus, the Existing UDC Alternative is considered environmentally inferior to the proposed project.

ABILITY TO MEET PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The majority of the 16 project objectives identified above would be at least partially met by the Existing UDC Alternative, with the exceptions of:

1. Create a new community that allows for residential development, while preserving significant natural resources and open areas; and
15. Maintain approximately 30 acres of open space.

Given the substantial increase in residential development under the Existing UDC Alternative (approximately 143 percent higher in comparison to the proposed project), this Alternative would not allow for the provision of significant natural resources/open areas or 30 acres of open space. The increase in residential development would require that areas designated for recreational, open space, and equestrian uses under the proposed project would be eliminated or partially eliminated to provide area for an additional 133 dwelling units.



6.3 REDUCED DENSITY ALTERNATIVE

DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVE

As stated above, significant impacts identified for the proposed project relate to construction-related noise and short-term construction/long-term operational solid waste generation. Thus, an alternative addressing a reduction in development intensity in comparison to the proposed project is likely to reduce the identified significant impacts.

For the purposes of this analysis, the “Reduced Density” Alternative assumes that development on the site would only occur south of the Southern California Gas Company natural gas pipeline/easement that exists on-site. This pipeline and easement traverse the site in a southwest to northeast orientation, bisecting the project site approximately in half. The project proposes “D” Street over this pipeline and easement. Under the proposed project, 20 dwelling units would be constructed north of the pipeline/easement that would no longer be implemented under the Reduced Density Alternative. Instead, this area would be utilized for open space, recreation, and equestrian uses similar to what is proposed north of the Metrolink alignment. Thus, this alternative assumes that 79 dwelling units would be constructed. This would result in a reduction of 20 dwelling units (or approximately 20 percent) in comparison to the proposed project. Under this Alternative, no off-site grading would occur and off-site disturbance would be limited to the construction access points to the site (i.e., the Lost Canyon Road extension to the northwest and Mancara Road extension to the south).

IMPACT COMPARISON TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT

Aesthetics, Light, and Glare

Analysis conducted for the proposed project concluded that impacts related to short-term construction, scenic vistas and resources, aesthetics and visual character, light and glare, and cumulative impacts would be less than significant upon implementation of recommended mitigation measures.

Since the Reduced Density Alternative would result in a lower development intensity and smaller impact area, impacts related to aesthetics, light, and glare would also be reduced. Short-term construction activities and residential development would be focused further south, with a greater distance between the site and the Santa Clara River and State Route (SR) 14. Moreover, the area north of the Southern California Gas Company easement would be utilized for open space, recreational, and equestrian uses, which would further enhance the aesthetic quality of this Alternative. Thus, impacts related to aesthetics, light, and glare would be reduced under the Reduced Density Alternative in comparison to the proposed project. Thus, this Alternative is considered environmentally superior to the proposed project in this regard.

Biological Resources

Analysis for the proposed project concluded that impacts related to biological resources would be less than significant. Analysis within [Section 5.2](#) found that effects on special-status plant/animal species, oak trees, jurisdictional waters, and cumulative impacts would be less than significant upon implementation of recommended mitigation measures.



Under the Reduced Density Alternative, residential development would be limited to an area south of the existing Southern California Gas Company easement. The area to the north of the easement would be utilized for open space, recreational, and equestrian uses. Although portions of the site to the north of the easement would still be disturbed for recreational improvements, the overall area to be disturbed by this Alternative would be reduced in comparison to the proposed project.

Given the reduced impact area associated with the Reduced Density Alternative, impacts to special-status plant/animal species, oak trees, jurisdictional waters, and cumulative effects would be reduced when compared to the proposed project. However, it is anticipated that all mitigation measures applicable to the proposed project would remain applicable to this alternative. Thus, this Alternative is considered environmentally superior to the proposed project in regards to biological resources.

Traffic and Circulation

Analysis conducted for the proposed project found that impacts related to local roadways, project access, the Los Angeles County Congestion Management Program, and cumulative impacts would be less than significant. Mitigation measures were identified for local roadways and cumulative impacts.

The Reduced Density Alternative would result in the development of 79 dwelling units (as opposed to 99 under the proposed project). This represents a reduction in residential development of approximately 20 percent. Given this reduction in intensity, an associated reduction in trip generation would also occur under this Alternative. Impacts to local roadways, project access, Congestion Management Plan intersections, and cumulative effects would be incrementally reduced in comparison with the proposed project. However, it is anticipated that all mitigation measures applicable to the proposed project would remain applicable to this alternative. Notably, the requirement for improvements at the Lost Canyon Road/Sand Canyon Road intersection (four-way stop, signalized intersection [look ahead signal], roundabout, or standard signalized intersection) would still be required. Since the trip generation of the Alternative would be incrementally lower due to reduced residential development, it is considered environmentally superior to the proposed project.

Air Quality

Section 5.4 of this EIR examines potential project impacts related to air quality management plan consistency, short-term construction impacts, long-term operational impacts, localized impacts, carbon monoxide hotspots, odors, and cumulative effects. Based on the analysis, the proposed project would not result in any significant impacts. Mitigation measures were identified for short-term construction, localized impacts, and cumulative effects.

Given the reduction in residential development associated with the Reduced Density Alternative, an incremental decrease in air quality emissions would also occur. The amount, area, and duration of construction would be reduced. Moreover, the implementation of 20 fewer dwelling units would result in lower mobile emissions due to the reduced trip generation associated with the project. The smaller area where residential development would occur would also reduce the potential for localized air quality impacts to occur. Impacts related to odors at the site would be



similar under this Alternative, since neither the proposed project nor this Alternative would involve uses capable of generating substantial odors.

Air quality mitigation measures applicable to the proposed project would also be required for the Reduced Density Alternative. However, since this Alternative would generally result in an incremental decrease in short-term and long-term operational emissions, the Reduced Density Alternative is considered environmentally superior in comparison to the proposed project.

Greenhouse Gases

Analysis conducted for the proposed project concluded that impacts related to greenhouse gas emissions, consistency with plans/policies/regulations, and cumulative effects were less than significant upon implementation of recommended mitigation measures.

As stated above, the Reduced Density Alternative, given the reduction in development associated with the alternative, an incremental decrease in greenhouse gas emissions would also occur. Construction emissions, area sources, and mobile sources would all be reduced in comparison with the proposed project. Indirect greenhouse gas emissions (electricity/water consumption) would also be lower given that 20 fewer residential units would be constructed. This Alternative would also be consistent with the Attorney General's recommended measures since design and efficiency measures would be unchanged.

Impacts related to plan consistency would be similar to the proposed project, since the City does not have an applicable plan, policy, or regulation for the purpose of reducing greenhouse gases. As with the proposed project, this Alternative would also comply with the *2010 California Green Building Code* and would include design features to reduce energy and water consumption, reduce vehicle trips, and achieve LEED certification and green building certification from the State. Greenhouse gas mitigation measures applicable to the proposed project would also be required for the Reduced Density Alternative. However, since this Alternative would generally result in an incremental decrease in greenhouse gas emissions, the Reduced Density Alternative is considered environmentally superior in comparison to the proposed project.

Noise

Section 5.6 of the EIR analyzes potential project impacts related to short-term construction, long-term operations, and cumulative effects. Despite the implementation of recommended mitigation, short-term construction impacts were determined to be significant and unavoidable.

The Reduced Density Alternative would generally result in reduced noise impacts during both construction and long-term operations. Under this Alternative, residential development would be limited to an area south of the existing Southern California Gas Company easement. The area to the north of the easement would be utilized for open space, recreational, and equestrian uses. Although portions of the site to the north of the easement would still be disturbed for recreational improvements, the overall area to be disturbed by this Alternative would be reduced in comparison to the proposed project.

Although construction-related impacts would be incrementally reduced under the Reduced Density Alternative, the significant and unavoidable impact is expected to remain. Several



residential dwellings to the west would continue to be in close proximity to construction activities, and it is expected that daytime noise levels would still exceed the City's daytime noise standards for residential uses. Long-term operational impacts would be reduced in comparison to the proposed project, given the smaller area where residential development would occur, and the lower trip generation related to the alternative. The mitigation measure identified for the proposed project would remain applicable to the Reduced Density Alternative.

Although the significant construction-related noise impact would remain under this Alternative, it is considered environmentally superior to the proposed project since long-term operational impacts would be incrementally reduced.

Hydrology and Water Quality

Analysis conducted for the proposed project concluded that impacts related to water quality, hydrology, groundwater, and cumulative effects would be less than significant upon implementation of recommended mitigation measures.

Although the Reduced Density Alternative would result in a reduced construction impact area, impacts are anticipated to be similar to the proposed project since National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) requirements (such as compliance with the Construction General Permit and preparation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan [SWPPP]) would remain applicable and reduce impacts to less than significant.

Water quality and hydrology impacts during long-term operations would be incrementally reduced under the Reduced Density Alternative. This Alternative would generally result in reduced impacts during both construction and long-term operations. Under this Alternative, residential development would be limited to an area south of the existing Southern California Gas Company easement. The area to the north of the easement would be utilized for open space, recreational, and equestrian uses. Although portions of the site to the north of the easement would still be disturbed for recreational improvements, the overall area to be disturbed by this alternative would be reduced in comparison to the proposed project. However, all mitigation measures recommended for the proposed project would remain applicable to this Alternative.

Given the incremental reduction in long-term operational impacts, the Reduced Density Alternative is considered environmentally superior to the proposed project in this regard.

Geology, Soils, and Seismicity

Section 5.8 of this EIR examines potential project impacts related to seismicity, ground failure, landslides/slope stability, expansive soils, grading, and cumulative effects. All impacts were determined to be less than significant upon implementation of the three mitigation measures pertaining to ground failure, landslides/slope stability, and grading.

Impacts related to seismicity would be similar to the proposed project, since all development would be consistent with the *California Building Code*. However, all other impacts would be incrementally reduced under the Reduced Density Alternative. Under this Alternative, residential development would be limited to an area south of the existing Southern California Gas Company easement. The area to the north of the easement would be utilized for open



space, recreational, and equestrian uses. Although portions of the site to the north of the easement would still be disturbed for recreational improvements, the overall area to be disturbed by this Alternative would be reduced in comparison to the proposed project. Thus, the reduced amount of area subjected to grading and excavation would result in an associated reduction in hazards related to ground failure, landslides/slope stability, expansive soils, grading, and cumulative effects. However, all mitigation measures recommended for the proposed project would remain applicable to this alternative.

Due to the generally reduction in geology/soils impacts under the Reduced Density Alternative, it is considered environmentally superior to the proposed project.

Public Services and Utilities

Section 5.9 through Section 5.17 of the EIR analyzes potential project impacts related to a range of public services and utilities, consisting of:

- Fire Protection;
- Police Protection;
- Schools;
- Parks and Recreation;
- Solid Waste;
- Water Supply;
- Wastewater;
- Electricity; and
- Natural Gas.

All impacts under the proposed project were determined to be less than significant.

Generally, the reduced development intensity of this Alternative would result in decreased impacts related to public services and utilities. Fewer residents would result in fewer service/emergency calls for fire/police protection. A 20 percent reduction in dwelling units would result in a lower student generation rate. Demand for utilities (water, wastewater, electricity, solid waste, and natural gas) would also be reduced. The need for parks/recreational facilities would be reduced, and would be further offset by additional recreational, open space, and equestrian uses that would be incorporated into this Alternative to the north of the Southern California Gas Company easement. Thus, the Reduced Density Alternative is considered environmental superior since public services/utilities impacts would be incrementally reduced in comparison to the proposed project.

ABILITY TO MEET PROJECT OBJECTIVES

All of the 16 project objectives identified above would be met by the Reduced Density Alternative, with the potential exception of:

8. Create an economically feasible project that offers single-family residential lots to serve the current and projected market.



The Reduced Density Alternative would provide for residential development that would be compatible with surrounding uses and City standards. Recreational, open space, and equestrian opportunities would be expanded under this Alternative. Utilities and amenities provided would generally remain unchanged. However, the reduction in residential density by approximately 20 percent may not accomplish the project objective of economic feasibility.

6.4 ENVIRONMENTALLY SUPERIOR ALTERNATIVE

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6 indicates 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 context of an environmentally superior alternative for this EIR is based on the consideration of several factors including the project's objectives, as described in Section 3.3, Project Objectives, and the alternative's ability to fulfill the objectives with minimal impacts to the surrounding environment.

The Reduced Density Alternative has been identified as the environmentally superior alternative. Based on the analysis provided above, it would result in a reduction of impacts related to aesthetics, light and glare, biological resources, traffic and circulation, air quality, greenhouse gases, noise, hydrology and water quality, geology, soils, and seismicity, and public services and utilities. However, the significant and unavoidable short-term noise impact identified under the proposed project would still occur under this alternative.

The goals of the proposed project focus on creating a new community allowing for residential development that preserves significant natural resources and open areas, while maintaining compatibility with surrounding land uses. However, development of this alternative would provide 20 fewer dwelling units than the proposed project. As such, the Reduced Density Alternative would not accommodate projected growth in the Santa Clarita Valley to the extent as the proposed project. Therefore, all of the project objectives identified Section 3.3, Project Objectives, would be at least partially met under the Reduced Density Alternative. However, as noted above, the significant short-term noise impact identified for the proposed project would not be eliminated under this alternative.



**Table 6-1
Comparison of Alternatives**

Issue	Existing UDC Alternative	Reduced Density Alternative
Aesthetics, Light and Glare	▲	▼
Biological Resources	▲	▼
Traffic and Circulation	▲	▼
Air Quality	▲	▼
Greenhouse Gases	▲	▼
Noise	▲	▼*
Reduces Significant Unavoidable Impact?	No	Yes
Eliminates Significant Unavoidable Impact?	No	No
Hydrology and Water Quality	▲	▼
Geology, Soils, and Seismicity	▲	▼
Fire Protection	▲	▼
Police Protection	▲	▼
Schools	▲	▼
Parks and Recreation	▲	▼
Solid Waste	▲	▼
Water Supply	▲	▼
Wastewater	▲	▼
Electricity	▲	▼
Natural Gas	▲	▼
<p>Key:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="300 1291 1230 1318">= Indicates an impact that is equal to the proposed project (neither environmentally superior nor inferior). <li data-bbox="300 1318 1089 1346">▲ Indicates an impact that is greater than the proposed project (environmentally inferior). <li data-bbox="300 1346 1073 1373">▼ Indicates an impact that is less than the proposed project (environmentally superior). <li data-bbox="300 1373 1339 1421">* Note that the significant and unavoidable impact identified for the project is not eliminated under the Reduced Density Alternative. 		



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