7 ALTERNATIVES

7.1 INTRODUCTION

7.1.1 CEQA AUTHORITY FOR CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVES

Section 15126.6(a) of the State CEQA Guidelines requires EIRs to 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." This section of CEQA also provides guidance regarding what the alternatives analysis should consider. Subsection (b) further states the purpose of the alternatives analysis, as follows:

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

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

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

In determining what alternatives should be considered in the EIR, it is important to acknowledge the objectives of the project, the project's significant effects, and unique project considerations. These factors are crucial to the development of alternatives that meet the criteria specified in Section 15126.6(a). Although, as noted above, EIRs must contain a discussion of "potentially feasible" alternatives, the ultimate determination as to whether an alternative is feasible or infeasible is made by the lead agency's decision-making body, here the Rocklin City Council. (See Pub. Resources Code, § 21081[a][3].) At the time of action on the project, the City Council may consider evidence beyond that found in this EIR in addressing such determinations. The Council, for example, may conclude that a particular alternative is infeasible (i.e., undesirable) from a policy standpoint, and may reject an alternative on that ground provided that the Council adopts a finding, supported by substantial evidence, to that effect, and provided that such a finding reflects a "reasonable balancing of the relevant economic, environmental, social, and technological factors." (*City of Del Mar v. City of San Diego* (1982) 133 Cal.App.3d 401, 417; see also *Sequoyah Hills Homeowners Assn. v. City of Oakland* (1993) 23 Cal.App.4th 704, 714-716 (court upholds findings rejecting alternatives for not fully satisfying project objectives).)

7.1.2 FACTORS CONSIDERED IN IDENTIFYING PROJECT ALTERNATIVES

The proposed project is unique due to its large size and in its need to be located near a major transportation corridor due to the type of uses and tenant mix anticipated and its need to avoid being sited in an area (such as the Highway 65 corridor) in which the existence of numerous competing large retailers would adversely affect its chances for success. In identifying potentially feasible alternatives to the proposed project, the following project objectives were considered:

- To develop regional shopping facilities on commercially-designated land within the City consistent with City of Rocklin General Plan policy,
- To create a high-quality commercial development near a major transportation corridor within the City of Rocklin serving western Placer County in order to meet the growing regional demand for commercial retail services,
- To develop a property of sufficient size to accommodate two major anchor tenants and sufficient to support smaller tenants to create a regional shopping destination,
- To provide a shopping facility that maximizes visibility from Interstate 80 for all buildings and tenants,
- To construct a facility near a major freeway interchange in order to minimize traffic generation on local streets,
- To construct a facility with access to adequate existing or anticipated utility infrastructure to support planned operations,
- To create a new net public fiscal benefit for the City of Rocklin,
- To maximize the economic benefit to the City of Rocklin by attracting patronage from both within and outside of the City, and
- To provide new employment opportunities to the residents of the City of Rocklin and the surrounding areas.

Under CEQA Guidelines section 15126.6, as noted earlier, the alternatives to be discussed in detail in an EIR should be able to "feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project[.]" For this reason, the objectives described above provided the framework for defining possible offsite alternative project locations. Based on these objectives, potentially feasible offsite locations were limited to undeveloped sites located within the City of Rocklin and of sufficient size to accommodate the proposed project (i.e., a minimum of approximately 40 developable acres). These sites needed to be sufficiently close to Interstate 80 in order to minimize traffic generation on local streets and provide easy access. The sites should also be visible from Highway 80 in order to attract customers. Although sites with a Retail Commercial (RC) land use designation were identified as preferable, the selection process did not preclude sites with other land use designations. Properties along State Route 65 were not considered as feasible alternatives due to the presence of existing large commercial uses along this corridor that already contain all of the same large retailers (e.g., Wal-Mart) as the proposed project.

7.2 PROJECT ALTERNATIVES EVALUATED IN THIS EIR

7.2.1 DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVES

Based on the requirements of State CEQA Guidelines §15126.6 and the project's objectives, the following alternatives to the proposed project were identified:

- No Project Alternative,
- Reduced Size Alternative,
- Building Realignment Alternative,
- Offsite Alternative #1,
- Offsite Alternative #2, and
- Offsite Alternative #3.

Alternatives along Highway 65 were not included because of the existing large number of competing major retailers already located within that corridor. The City also determined not to include Offsite Alternative # 4, an approximately 20-acre site between China Garden Road and Hidden Glen Drive south of the Rocklin Road/ Interstate 80 interchange, because of its small size, its potential access problems, its location near existing residential development, its environmental sensitivity, and the fact that the project applicant does not own or control the property. (See Section 7.4 below for more details.)

7.2.2 NO PROJECT ALTERNATIVE

State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e)(1) requires that the no project alternative be described and analyzed "to allow decision makers to compare the impacts of approving the proposed project with the impacts of not approving the proposed project." The no project analysis is required to discuss "the existing conditions at the time the notice of preparation 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" (Section 15126.6[e][2]). "If the project is . . . a development project on identifiable property, the 'no project' alternative is the circumstance under which the project does not proceed. Here the discussion would compare the environmental effects of the property remaining in its existing state against environmental effects which would occur if the project is approved. If disapproval of the project under consideration would result in predictable actions by others, such as the proposal of some other project, this 'no project' consequence should be discussed. In certain instances, the no project alternative means 'no build' wherein the existing environmental setting is maintained. However, where failure to proceed with the project will not result in preservation of existing environmental conditions, the analysis should identify the practical result of the project's non-approval and not create and analyze a set of artificial assumptions that would be required to preserve the existing physical environment." (Section 15126.[e][3][B].)

DESCRIPTION

The project site is currently undeveloped. However, based on the high demand for commercial/retail uses and sites with direct freeway access in western Placer County and the availability of adequate infrastructure at the site to support commercial development, the No Project Alternative assumes that development of the site consistent with its existing land use and zoning designations would reasonably be expected to occur in the near term. In light of existing planning and zoning on the property, including a small area planned and zoned for residential uses (which would be modified under the proposed project), the No Project Alternative assumes that the 1.23 acres of the site currently designated for Medium Density Residential uses would develop with residential uses rather than commercial uses. Therefore, this alternative would include a small residential component. Based on the current zoning, approximately 7 to 10 homes could be constructed within this 1.23-acre area. The inability to construct commercial development on this 1.23-acre area, absent general plan and zoning changes, would reduce the total commercial buildings by approximately 13,500 square feet for a total of approximately 530,000 square feet.

IMPACTS OF THE NO PROJECT ALTERNATIVE

With the implementation of the No Project Alternative, the adverse environmental impacts anticipated with the proposed project would continue to occur, although the development plan would be slightly altered. Instead of having a perimeter wall that extends along the entire eastern boundary of the property, within the 1.23-acre area, the wall would extend along the western side of the future residences. Because the commercial uses would be slightly reduced to accommodate for the residential uses, some variation in impacts would be anticipated. For example, for traffic, commercial development on approximately 1.23 acres would generate approximately 50 vehicle trips during the p.m. peak hour while residential development on the same property would generate approximately 10 vehicle trips during the same period. This would represent a reduction in p.m. peak vehicle trips of less than 3 percent when compared to the proposed project. Residential development would also slightly reduce air pollutant emissions and localized noise levels when compared to commercial development due to the reduction in vehicle trips and reduced overall activity level associated with residential uses. However, for air quality, the reduction in air emissions would be less than 3 percent of those generated by the proposed project. Therefore, the implementation of this alternative would represent a relatively negligible change in the proposed land uses on the site and would not be expected to reduce any significant environmental impacts of the proposed project to less-than-significant levels.

CONCLUSION

The No Project Alternative would have impacts that are slightly reduced although substantially equivalent to those of the proposed project. Therefore, it would not be considered the environmentally superior alternative. Because the No Project Alternative is substantially equivalent to the proposed project, it would be consistent with the project objectives.

7.2.3 REDUCED SIZE ALTERNATIVE

DESCRIPTION

This alternative includes a 50% reduction in the project's proposed square footage and the elimination of one of the two primary tenants. Because Wal-Mart stores typically consume more square footage than Home Depot stores, this alternative would likely include a Home Depot but not a Wal-Mart. The total building square footage with this alternative would be approximately 272,000 square feet, spread among the single primary tenant and secondary tenants. The total developed area would be reduced to approximately 35 acres. A 50% reduction in the square footage was assumed in order to reduce the project's significant traffic and biological resource impacts by substantially reducing the project's trip generation and allowing sensitive resources areas (i.e., oak trees and wetlands) to be preserved. With this alternative, no development is assumed within the wetland areas along the property's northeastern boundary or within the south-central portion of the property. The primary site entrance would continue to be provided from the reconfigured Interstate 80/Sierra College Boulevard eastbound exit ramp. However, parking and building pads would not be provided south of the south-central portion of the site. A single secondary vehicle access is assumed to extend from the central portion of the site south to Croftwood Road, which connects with Sierra College Boulevard.

IMPACTS OF THE REDUCED SIZE ALTERNATIVE

Aesthetics/Visual Resources

The visual resource impacts of this alternative would be reduced when compared to the proposed project because the total development footprint would be reduced. The proposed project would result in significant and unavoidable changes in the site's visual character and significant and unavoidable cumulative visual resource impacts. By avoiding the on-site wetlands and the majority of the oak woodlands on the site, the changes in the site's visual character would be reduced when compared to the proposed project. However, as with the proposed

project, this alternative would significantly alter the visual character of the site by converting relatively undeveloped land to urban uses. This alternative would also contribute to the cumulative change in the visual character of the Interstate 80 corridor. Therefore, although this alternative would reduce visual impacts when compared to the proposed project, it would not eliminate the significant and unavoidable visual resource impacts anticipated with project implementation.

Air Quality

The air quality impacts associated with construction activities would be reduced when compared to the proposed project due to a reduction in total area graded and the smaller total building square footage. The two-year construction period assumed for the proposed project would be reduced by six to eight months, limiting the duration construction emissions would be generated. However, similar to the proposed project, the generation of daily emissions would result in a significant air quality impact. Both the proposed project and this alternative would be expected to generate approximately 75 lb/day of ROG, 43 lb/day or NO_X, 127 lb/day of PM_{10}, and 66 lb/day of CO. Daily construction-generated emissions would not exceed PCAPCD's significance thresholds of 82 lb/day for ROG or NO_X or 550 lb/day of CO. However, emissions of PM_{10} would exceed PCAPCD's significance threshold of 82 lb/day. Therefore, although this alternative would reduce the duration of construction emissions, it would not reduce the project's significant construction-emission air quality impacts to a less-than-significant level.

The proposed project operations would result in significant and unavoidable regional air quality impacts. For this alternative, the emissions generated from daily operations would be reduced when compared to the proposed project. This alternative would likely reduce the approximately 18,800 daily vehicle trips anticipated with the proposed project to approximately 10,000 daily trips. Based on the modeling conducted, project operations would result in worst-case maximum daily emissions of approximately 196 lb/day of ROG, 311 lb/day of NO_X, 281 lb/day of PM_{10}, and 2,196 lb/day of CO. These daily operational emissions would exceed PCAPCD's significance thresholds of 82 lb/day for ROG, NO_X, and PM_{10}, or 550 lb/day for CO during both the winter and summer periods. For this alternative, these emission levels would be reduced by approximately 45 percent due to the smaller size of the development and the reduced vehicle trips. This alternative would be expected to generate approximately 108 lb/day of ROG, 171 lb/day of NO_X, 155 lb/day of PM_{10}, and 1,208 lb/day of CO. Daily unmitigated operational emissions would exceed PCAPCD's significance thresholds of 82 lb/day for ROG, NO_X, and PM_{10}, or 550 lb/day for CO during both the winter and summer periods. Implementation of the identified mitigation measures would not reduce these emission levels to a less-than-significant level. Therefore, although this alternative would reduce the total operational emissions generated from the site, it would likely not reduce the significant and unavoidable operational air quality impacts to a less-than-significant level.

This alternative would also reduce the toxic air contaminants generated from diesel trucks accessing the site by reducing the total building square footage. However, the generation of toxic air contaminants is not considered a significant project impact.

Although this alternative would reduce the total operational emissions generated from the site, it would continue to contribute cumulatively to the significant and unavoidable regional emissions generated in the air basin. Therefore, this impact would continue to be cumulatively significant and unavoidable.

Biological Resources

Implementation of this alternative would eliminate significant biological resource impacts anticipated with implementation of the proposed project. The proposed project would result in significant impacts related to the loss of wetlands, the loss of valley elderberry longhorn beetle habitat, disturbance of raptors and migratory birds, and degradation of sensitive fish habitat. The project would also result in the significant and unavoidable short-term loss of mature oak woodlands. The implementation of this alternative would avoid the loss of approximately 0.4 acre of wetlands on the site and would avoid the removal of the majority of the beetle habitat and oak trees on

the site. By maintaining the majority of the oak trees on the site, the project's impacts on oak trees, raptors and migratory birds would be reduced, although not to a less-than-significant level. However, the project's significant impacts on wetlands and beetle habitat would be reduced to a less-than-significant level with this alternative. Because this alternative would include grading and excavation on the site that could contribute sediments to Secret Ravine Creek if not controlled, it would not eliminate the project's significant impact on sensitive fish habitat. However, these impacts would be reduced due to the greater distance between construction activities and Secret Ravine Creek.

The proposed project would contribute cumulatively to the loss of biological resources in the region. This cumulative impact would be considered significant and unavoidable. Although this alternative would disturb less total area than the proposed project, it would also contribute to the cumulative loss of biological resources in the region. Therefore, this impact would not be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Cultural Resources

The potential impacts on cultural resources anticipated with this alternative would be reduced when compared to the proposed project because of the smaller development footprint. However, because no sensitive cultural resources have been identified on the site, the difference in cultural resource impacts between this alternative and the proposed project would be negligible.

Energy

The reduction in total building square footage associated with this project would directly reduce the anticipated energy usage at the site by approximately 50%. However, neither the proposed project nor this alternative would be expected to result in significant energy impacts.

Geology and Soils

The proposed project would result in significant seismic and erosion hazards with project implementation. These hazards would be reduced with this alternative because a smaller area of the site would be disturbed by grading and excavation activities and fewer buildings would ultimately be exposed to seismic hazards. However, grading and excavation activities associated with this alternative would continue to cause significant erosion potential and would continue to expose structures and people to significant seismic hazards. Therefore, this alternative would not reduce these significant geology and soils impacts to a less-than-significant level.

Hydrology and Water Quality

The project's proposed storm water collection includes a detention basis that has been sized to accommodate the projected peak storm water generated from the proposed development. By capturing peak storm water on the site, the proposed project would not contribute to downstream flooding. Therefore, the storm water impacts of the proposed project are identified as less than significant. Implementation of this alternative would reduce the total amount of new impervious surfaces by approximately 35% when compared to the proposed project. This would decrease the peak storm water volumes generated at the site and would reduce the necessary size of the offsite detention basin, though the reduction could be minimal in light of the fact that the basin is intended to serve not only the project site but also the proposed Rocklin 60 residential development. However, the storm water impacts of the proposed project are not considered significant; therefore, this alternative would not reduce a significant storm water impact.

The proposed project would contribute pollutant loads to storm water runoff from construction and operational activities. These short- and long-term water quality impacts would be considered significant. The reduction in the development footprint associated with this alternative would decrease the area of disturbance during construction activities and would decrease the urban pollutant source areas during site operations. However, because this

alternative would continue to include a substantial development footprint, it would not eliminate the significant short- and long-term water quality impacts of the proposed project.

Land Use

Because this alternative would reduce the total development footprint, it would reduce the anticipated changes in land use. However, the proposed project would not be anticipated to cause significant land use impacts. The project would not conflict with plans or policies specifically adopted to protect the environment and would not physically divide an established community. Therefore, the land use impacts of this alternative would not differ substantially from the proposed project.

Public Health and Hazards

Excavation and construction activities associated with the proposed project could expose construction workers and the public to hazardous materials if they are encountered on the site. This potential for exposure is considered a significant project impact. By reducing the total size of the project, this alternative would reduce the risk associated with the potential exposure of construction workers and the public to hazardous materials because less total area would be disturbed. However, because exposure to hazardous materials could continue to occur with this alternative, this significant project impact would not be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Public Services and Utilities

The construction of the water conveyance facilities necessary to serve the proposed project could result in short-term significant environmental impacts including noise generation, construction equipment emissions and traffic delays. The proposed project would not result in any other significant utility or public service impacts. The implementation of this alternative would reduce the demand on utility services such as electricity, natural gas, telecommunications, water, and wastewater services when compared to the proposed project. This alternative would also reduce the demand on police and fire protection services, emergency response services, and solid waste collection and disposal services, though this alternative would also generate for the City less sales tax revenue, which can be used to help to fund police, fire protection, and emergency response services. However, due to peak fire-flow requirements, the reduction in water demand associated with this alternative would not eliminate the need for the extension of the offsite water conveyance facilities anticipated with the proposed project. Therefore, although this alternative would reduce the demand on public services and utilities, it would not eliminate the one potentially significant public utility impact anticipated with the proposed project.

Noise

Similar to the proposed project, development of this alternative would generate construction noise associated with the use of heavy equipment for site grading and excavation, installation of utilities, paving, and building fabrication. However, because less area would be disturbed with this alternative and fewer buildings would be constructed, the duration of the construction-related noise impacts would be reduced. Also, because construction would not occur within the northern portion of the project directly adjacent to the existing rural residences, the construction noise impacts anticipated with the proposed project at these residences and at future residences within the proposed Rocklin 60 residential development would be minimized. Similarly, because development would not occur along the southern perimeter of the site, the construction noise impacts experienced by rural residents to the southwest and future residents directly to the east would be reduced when compared to the proposed project. Although the project's construction noise impacts would be considered less than significant, these impacts would be reduced with this alternative.

Based on a 6 dBA decrease in noise levels for each doubling of distance, the noise levels at the northeastern and southern property boundaries would be reduced by approximately 18 dBA with implementation of this alternative, when compared to the proposed project. However, the projected construction and operational noise levels along the central portion of the eastern site boundary would not change when compared to those of the proposed project.

Therefore, although this alternative would result in fewer existing and future residents experiencing elevated noise levels associated with project operations, it would not reduce the project's significant operational noise impacts to a less-than-significant level.

Traffic

The project as currently proposed is anticipated to generate approximately 18,800 vehicle trips per day. The reduction in total square footage associated with this alternative would correspondingly reduce the anticipated daily vehicle trips generated by the project site as well as the a.m. and p.m. peak hour trips. The proposed project would result in significant traffic impacts at the following three intersections: Rocklin Road/I-80 westbound ramps, Rocklin Road/I-80 eastbound ramps, and Sierra College Boulevard/Rocklin Road. With the implementation of this alternative, the significant traffic impacts at the Rocklin Road/I-80 westbound ramps and Rocklin Road/I-80 eastbound ramps would be reduced to a less-than-significant level because the projected increase in vehicle trips at these intersections would not exceed five percent of the total traffic traveling through these intersections. However, the vehicle trips generated by this alternative at the Sierra College Boulevard/ Rocklin Road intersection would exceed this five percent threshold. Therefore, this significant impact would not be eliminated with this alternative.

Urban Decay

This alternative would include fewer commercial uses than the proposed project. Therefore, its potential to contribute to urban decay by reducing the financial viability of existing commercial establishments would be reduced when compared to the proposed project. However, the proposed project is not anticipated to cause significant urban decay within the site's market area with operation of the proposed commercial uses at the site.

Cumulative Climate Change

Long-term operation of the proposed project would generate associated greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from area- and mobile-sources, and indirectly from stationary sources associated with energy consumption. This alternative would include fewer commercial uses than the proposed project. Therefore, its potential to generate GHG emissions would be reduced when compared to the proposed project.

CONCLUSION

The Reduced Size Alternative would reduce the severity of impacts anticipated with the proposed project for the following resource areas: aesthetics/visual resources, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, energy, geology and soils, hydrology and water quality, public health and hazards, public utilities, noise, traffic, urban decay and global climate change. This alternative would specifically reduce the significant project impacts on wetlands and valley elderberry longhorn beetle habitat to less-than-significant levels. This alternative would also reduce the significant traffic impacts at the Sierra College Boulevard/Interstate 80 ramps to a less-than-significant level. For these reasons, this would be considered the environmentally superior alternative. However, by eliminating one of the major tenants and substantially reducing the total proposed building square footage, this alternative would be creating a much smaller shopping center that would be considered less of a regional shopping destination. This would directly conflict with the objectives of developing a property of sufficient size to accommodate two major anchor tenants and sufficient supporting smaller tenants to create a regional shopping destination, and maximizing the economic benefit to the City of Rocklin by attracting patronage from outside of the City.

7.2.4 BUILDING REALIGNMENT ALTERNATIVE

DESCRIPTION

This alternative includes the same total building square footage as the proposed project but includes realigning the buildings on the project site. The purpose of this alternative is to relocate the largest loading dock areas away from the eastern site boundary in order to reduce the significant truck traffic noise for existing and future residents to the east. Instead of being located on the eastern site boundary, the proposed Wal-Mart and Home Depot buildings would be relocated to the western and northern site boundary. The Wal-Mart building would be located directly north of the project entrance and directly east of the eastbound Interstate 80 onramp. The Home Depot building would be located directly northeast of the Wal-Mart building adjacent to Interstate 80. The front facades of these buildings would face to the east and southeast, respectively. The medium-sized buildings identified as D through G would be located adjacent to Interstate 80 in the northern portion of the site and would face toward the southeast. The smaller retail buildings currently located in the western and northern portions of the site would be relocated to the eastern site boundary. Parking would continue to be provided through the center of the site and access would continue to be provided from the west and south. The project's proposed eastern perimeter wall is assumed to be included with this alternative.

IMPACTS OF THE BUILDING REALIGNMENT ALTERNATIVE

Aesthetics/Visual Resources

The proposed project would result in significant and unavoidable changes in the site's visual character and significant and unavoidable cumulative visual resource impacts. As with the proposed project, this alternative would significantly alter the visual character of the site by converting undeveloped land to urban uses. However, the visual resource impacts of this alternative would be more adverse than anticipated with the proposed project due to the realignment of the proposed building configurations. Instead of travelers on Sierra College Boulevard and Interstate 80 viewing several small retail buildings and a landscaped parking lot in the foreground with the front facades of the larger commercial buildings in the background, the views would primarily consist of the back of the larger commercial buildings, which would face toward the freeway. Because the back of the larger commercial buildings would generally not include appealing or extensive architectural treatments and would include the loading dock areas, the waste dumpsters, and other visually unappealing uses, the views from the roadways of the backs of the buildings would be considered less visually pleasing than views of the proposed project. Also, due to the size of the larger commercial buildings, their physical mass would create a visual barrier along Sierra College Boulevard and Interstate 80 that would limit views of the site's internal landscaping and architectural amenities. Therefore, the visual impacts of this alternative would be more adverse than the proposed project.

Air Quality

The air quality impacts associated with construction activities would be similar to those anticipated with the proposed project because the same approximate acreage would be graded to accommodate site development. Both the proposed project and this alternative would be expected to generate approximately 75 lb/day of ROG, 43 lb/day or NO_X, 127 lb/day of PM_{10}, and 66 lb/day of CO during project construction. Daily construction-generated emissions would not exceed PCAPCD's significance thresholds of 82 lb/day for ROG or NO_X or 550 lb/day of CO. However, emissions of PM_{10} would exceed PCAPCD's significance threshold of 82 lb/day. The two-year construction period assumed for the proposed project would also be required on this alternative site. Therefore, the same types and volumes of construction emissions would be generated.

Also, because the site would include the same type of operational activities, the same general operational air quality impacts would be anticipated. Based on the modeling conducted, operations for this alternative would result in worst-case maximum daily emissions of approximately 196 lb/day of ROG, 311 lb/day of NO_X, 281

lb/day of PM_{10}, and 2,196 lb/day of CO. These daily operational emissions would exceed PCAPCD's significance thresholds of 82 lb/day for ROG, NO_X, and PM_{10}, or 550 lb/day for CO during both the winter and summer periods. Similar to the proposed project, these operational emissions would also contribute cumulatively to significant and unavoidable regional emissions.

Biological Resources

The proposed project would result in significant impacts related to the loss of wetlands, the loss of valley elderberry longhorn beetle habitat, disturbance of raptors and migratory birds, and degradation of sensitive fish habitat. The project would also result in the significant and unavoidable short-term loss of mature oak woodlands. Because this alternative would develop the same area as the proposed project, the biological resource impacts associated with this alternative would be the same as those anticipated with implementation of the proposed project.

Cultural Resources

The potential impacts on cultural resources anticipated with this alternative would be the same as those of the proposed project. No sensitive cultural resources were identified on the proposed project site, although there is the potential that as yet undiscovered subsurface cultural resources could be disturbed by site development. The development of this alternative has the same potential to disturb as yet undiscovered subsurface cultural resources.

Energy

This alternative would include total building square footage equivalent to the proposed project. Therefore, the energy impacts associated with this alternative would be similar to the proposed project. Neither the proposed project nor this alternative would be expected to cause significant energy impacts.

Geology and Soils

The proposed project would result in significant seismic and erosion hazards with project implementation. This alternative would include total building square footage equivalent to the proposed project and would disturb the same area during site grading and excavation. Therefore, the geology and soils impacts associated with this alternative would be the same as those of the proposed project.

Hydrology and Water Quality

This alternative would have the same total new impervious surface area as the proposed project and would require the same onsite detention facility. Therefore, the effects of this alternative on peak storm water discharge and downstream water quality would be the same as those of the proposed project.

Land Use

The proposed project would not be anticipated to cause significant land use impacts. The project would not conflict with plans or policies specifically adopted to protect the environment and would not physically divide an established community. The land uses associated with this alternative would not differ from the proposed project. The only difference is in the layout of the buildings. Therefore, the land use impacts of this alternative would be the same as those of the proposed project.

Public Health and Hazards

The development of this site would include the same uses as would occur with the proposed project. Therefore, the public health and hazard impacts associated with site operations would not substantially differ.

Public Services and Utilities

The implementation of this alternative would generate the same demands on utility services such as electricity, natural gas, telecommunications, water, and wastewater services as the proposed project. This alternative would also have the same demands on police and fire protection services, emergency response services, and solid waste collection and disposal services. Therefore, the public service and utility impacts of this alternative would not differ from those of the proposed project.

Noise

Similar to the proposed project, development of this alternative would generate construction noise associated with the use of heavy equipment for site grading and excavation, installation of utilities, paving, and building fabrication. By relocating the largest buildings to the western and northern portions of the site, the majority of the construction noise would occur in these areas rather than near the eastern site boundaries. Therefore, existing and future residents to the east would likely be exposed to high construction noise levels for a shorter duration with this alternative. Although the project's construction noise impacts would be considered less than significant, these impacts would be reduced with this alternative.

For project operations, the proposed project would result in a significant (but mitigable) noise impact for future residents within the proposed Rocklin 60 residential development being exposed to significant truck delivery noise. By relocating the large commercial buildings to the western and northern portions of the site, the truck delivery noise would be relocated away from these future residents. In addition, because the truck loading and unloading operations would occur on the western and northern sides of the buildings, the buildings themselves would effectively attenuate the noise experienced by future residents to the east. The building structures would be expected to reduce loading dock noise levels to the east by as much as 15 decibels. Also, based on a 6 dBA decrease in noise levels for each doubling of distance, the noise levels associated with loading dock operations at the eastern property boundaries would be reduced by approximately an additional 18 decibels with implementation of this alternative, when compared to the proposed project. Therefore, this alternative would reduce the project's significant noise impacts on existing and future residences to the east to a less-than-significant level.

Traffic

This alternative would include the same uses as the proposed project and would be expected to generate the same traffic volumes. Therefore, the traffic impacts associated with this alternative would be the same as those of the proposed project.

Urban Decay

The proposed project is not anticipated to cause significant urban decay within the site's market area with operation of the proposed commercial uses at the site. This alternative would include the same commercial square footage as the proposed project. Therefore, its potential to contribute to urban decay by reducing the financial viability of existing commercial establishments would be equivalent to the proposed project.

Cumulative Climate Change

Long-term operation of the proposed project would generate associated greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from area- and mobile-sources, and indirectly from stationary sources associated with energy consumption. This alternative would include the same uses as the proposed project. Therefore, its generation of GHG emissions would be the same as those generated by the proposed project.

CONCLUSION

The Building Realignment Alternative would have the same impacts as the proposed project for the following resource areas: air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, energy, geology and soils, hydrology and water quality, land use, public health and hazards, public services/utilities, traffic, and cumulative climate change. For aesthetic/visual resources, the impacts of this alternative would be more adverse than the proposed project due to the backs of the larger commercial buildings facing Sierra College Boulevard and Interstate 80. However, the anticipated significant (but mitigable) operational noise impacts for existing and future residents to the east of the project site would be reduced to a less-than-significant level with the implementation of this alternative.
The development of this alternative would directly conflict with the objective of provide a shopping facility that maximizes visibility from Interstate 80 for all buildings and tenants.

7.2.5 OFFSITE ALTERNATIVE #1

DESCRIPTION

This Offsite Alternative is located on approximately 50 acres directly northwest of the project site and is assumed to include commercial square footage roughly equivalent to the proposed project. This site was selected as a project alternative based on the lack of adjacent residential uses and the ability of this alternative to eliminate the significant noise impacts associated with the proposed project on existing and future residential uses. This site is bordered on the north and west by Granite Drive, on the south by Interstate 80 and on the east by Sierra College Boulevard. The land use designation of the site is Retail Commercial (RC) and direct access to Interstate 80 would be provided from Sierra College Boulevard. The topography of the site is gently rolling with elevations ranging from approximately 315 to 345 feet msl. The site includes a mix of dense oak woodlands, grasslands and the remnants of an old orchard. A channelized drainage parallels Interstate 80 along the site's southeastern boundary. Separate applications have been submitted to develop the different parcels on this property with commercial uses. The parcels on this property are owned by three separate entities, one of which includes the project applicant. However, the environmental review process is just being initiated for these applications and no development approvals have been given for these parcels.

IMPACTS OF THE OFFSITE ALTERNATIVE #1

Aesthetics/Visual Resources

Similar to the proposed project, this site is directly visible from Interstate 80. Following release of the Notice of Preparation for the proposed project, construction of the Interstate 80/Sierra College Interchange Improvement Project, and specifically construction of the mounded westbound on-ramp, has substantially obstructed views of this site from the freeway. Views of the proposed project are similarly obstructed by the mounded eastbound on-ramp.

The proposed project would result in significant and unavoidable changes in the site's visual character and significant and unavoidable cumulative visual resource impacts. As with the proposed project, this alternative would significantly alter the visual character of the site by converting undeveloped land to urban uses. However, the visual resource impacts of this alternative would be more adverse than anticipated with the proposed project due to the dense landscape of native oak trees on this site. The loss of this dense landscape of native oak trees would be considered a significant and unavoidable change in the site's visual character. This alternative would also contribute significantly to the cumulative change in the visual character of the Interstate 80 corridor.

Air Quality

The air quality impacts associated with construction activities would be similar to those anticipated with the proposed project because the same approximate acreage would be graded to accommodate site development.

Both the proposed project and this alternative would be expected to generate approximately 75 lb/day of ROG, 43 lb/day or NO_X, 127 lb/day of PM_{10}, and 66 lb/day of CO during project construction. Daily construction-generated emissions would not exceed PCAPCD's significance thresholds of 82 lb/day for ROG or NO_X or 550 lb/day of CO. However, emissions of PM_{10} would exceed PCAPCD's significance threshold of 82 lb/day. The two-year construction period assumed for the proposed project would also be required on this alternative site. Therefore, the same types and volumes of construction emissions would be generated.

Also, because the site would include the same type of operational activities, the same general operational air quality impacts would be anticipated. Based on the modeling conducted, operations for this alternative would result in worst-case maximum daily emissions of approximately 196 lb/day of ROG, 311 lb/day of NO_X, 281 lb/day of PM_{10}, and 2,196 lb/day of CO. These daily operational emissions would exceed PCAPCD's significance thresholds of 82 lb/day for ROG, NO_X, and PM_{10}, or 550 lb/day for CO during both the winter and summer periods. Similar to the proposed project, these operational emissions would also contribute cumulatively to significant and unavoidable regional emissions.

Biological Resources

The proposed project would result in significant impacts related to the loss of wetlands, the loss of valley elderberry longhorn beetle habitat, disturbance of raptors and migratory birds, and degradation of sensitive fish habitat. The project would also result in the significant and unavoidable short-term loss of mature oak woodlands. This alternative site includes a mix of remnant orchards, grasslands, wetlands and dense oak woodlands. Due to the oak woodland density, development would result in substantially more adverse impacts on oak woodland habitat than anticipated with the proposed project. Due to access constraints on this site, the total acreage of wetlands and whether valley elderberry habitat is present on this site could not be determined. Also, it is unknown whether this alternative is tributary to any drainages containing sensitive fish habitat. On balance, the biological resource impacts associated with this alternative would be more adverse than anticipated with the proposed project due to the substantial number of oak trees and raptor habitat that would be removed with development.

Cultural Resources

The potential impacts on cultural resources anticipated with this alternative are assumed to be similar to those of the proposed project. No sensitive cultural resources were identified on the proposed project site, although there is the potential that as yet undiscovered subsurface cultural resources could be disturbed by site development. The development of this alternative site has the same potential to disturb as yet undiscovered subsurface cultural resources.

Energy

This alternative site would include total building square footage equivalent to the proposed project. Therefore, the energy impacts associated with this alternative would be similar to the proposed project. Neither the proposed project nor this alternative would be expected to cause significant energy impacts.

Geology and Soils

The proposed project would result in significant seismic and erosion hazards with project implementation. This alternative site would include total building square footage equivalent to the proposed project and would include an approximately equivalent area of disturbance due to site grading and excavation. Because the soil characteristics of this alternative site do not substantially differ from the proposed project, the geology and soils impacts associated with this alternative would be generally similar to the proposed project.

Hydrology and Water Quality

This alternative would be expected to generally have the same total new impervious surface area as the proposed project and would likely require some sort of onsite detention facility. Therefore, the effects of this alternative on peak stormwater discharge would be similar to the proposed project. Modifications would be necessary to the channelized drainage on the site. However, changes to this man-made channel would not be expected to substantially alter the local hydrologic cycle or downstream water quality. Therefore, the hydrology and water quality impacts of this alternative would be similar to those anticipated with the proposed project.

Land Use

The project site is surrounded on the southeast by Interstate 80, on the east by Sierra College Boulevard, on the north and west by Granite Drive, and on the southwest by an existing commercial property. Two existing gas stations are located east of the project site and undeveloped land is located to the north. The site is undeveloped. The development of this alternative site would be generally compatible with the surrounding commercial uses. The development would also be compatible with the site's Retail Commercial (RC) land use designation. Therefore, similar to the proposed project, this alternative would not result in any significant land use impacts.

Public Health and Hazards

The development of this site would include the same uses as would occur with the proposed project. Therefore, the public health and hazard impacts associated with site operations would not substantially differ.

Public Services and Utilities

The implementation of this alternative would generate similar demands on utility services such as electricity, natural gas, telecommunications, water, and wastewater services as the proposed project. This alternative would require the extension of offsite water and sewer lines that would be different than anticipated with the proposed project. However, it is difficult to determine whether anticipated impacts associated with necessary water and sewer line extensions would be similar to, greater than, or less than the proposed project. The development of this site would at a minimum require the same water conveyance facilities as the proposed project and would result in the same significant environmental impacts associated with the construction of these facilities as would occur with the proposed project. This alternative would also be expected to have similar demands on police and fire protection services, emergency response services, and solid waste collection and disposal services. Therefore, this alternative is assumed to have generally similar impacts to the proposed project on public services and utilities.

Noise

Similar to the proposed project, development of this alternative would generate construction noise associated with the use of heavy equipment for site grading and excavation, installation of utilities, paving, and building fabrication. However, this construction would not occur adjacent to existing residences. Also, the installation of a noise wall would likely not be necessary to minimize operational noise impacts on the adjacent land uses. Because this alternative would not expose sensitive receptors (i.e., residences) to noise levels in excess of applicable standards, the construction and significant (but mitigable) operational noise impacts anticipated with the proposed project would not be anticipated with this alternative.

Traffic

Due to the site's direct access to Interstate 80 from Sierra College Boulevard, it would be expected to generate traffic volumes generally equivalent to those of the proposed project. However, the traffic impacts would be shifted to the northern portion of the interchange. The Interstate 80 on- and off-ramps and the Sierra College Boulevard/Granite Drive intersection would experience the bulk of traffic impacts. Access to the site would likely be provided from both Sierra College Boulevard and Granite Drive. Because the traffic would be more

concentrated north of the freeway, other intersections on the northern stretch of Sierra College Boulevard, including Brace Road and Taylor Road, may experience greater traffic volumes than with the proposed project. However, the traffic volumes on Sierra College Boulevard intersections south of the freeway (e.g., Rocklin Road) would experience substantially lower traffic volumes when compared to the proposed project. Therefore, although the traffic impacts would shift north with this alternative, they would still likely cause significant impacts at affected intersections. However, without a detailed traffic analysis of this alternative site, it cannot be determined what specific intersections or road segments would exceed the established significance thresholds.

Urban Decay

The proposed project is not anticipated to cause significant urban decay within the site's market area with operation of the proposed commercial uses at the site. This alternative would include the same commercial square footage as the proposed project. Therefore, its potential to contribute to urban decay by reducing the financial viability of existing commercial establishments would be equivalent to the proposed project.

Cumulative Climate Change

Long-term operation of the proposed project would generate associated greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from area- and mobile-sources, and indirectly from stationary sources associated with energy consumption. This alternative would include the same commercial square footage as the proposed project. Therefore, its generation of GHG emissions would be equivalent to the proposed project and its cumulative climate change impacts would be the same.

CONCLUSION

The impacts for Alternative Site #1 would be similar to those anticipated with the proposed project for the following resource areas: air quality, cultural resources, energy, geology and soils, hydrology and water quality, public health and hazards, public services and utilities, traffic, urban decay and global climate change.
For aesthetic/visual resources and biological resources, this alternative would cause significant impacts to be more severe than anticipated with the proposed project due to the loss of a substantially greater number of native oak trees. The construction and significant (but mitigable) operational noise impacts on existing and future residents with the proposed project would be eliminated with this alternative. Overall, the impacts of this alternative would be reduced for some resources and increased for others when compared with the proposed project.
The development of this alternative site would meet the objectives of the proposed project. However, the project applicant does not own this property and has no ability to affect its development. Therefore, implementation of Offsite Alternative # 1 is not likely to result in the timely and successful completion of the project or the satisfaction of the project objectives. Notably, the fact that the City has previously imposed a retail commercial designation on the property suggests that the City's intent has been to allow both this site and the project site to develop as complementary retail sites, and that the City never intended an "either/or" choice between the two sites. Thus, consistent with this approach, there appears to be sufficient market demand to develop retail uses on both properties. The City therefore expects Offsite Alternative #1 to proceed independently of the proposed project.

7.2.6 OFFSITE ALTERNATIVE #2

DESCRIPTION

This Offsite Alternative is located on approximately 70 acres northwest of the project site and is assumed to include commercial square footage roughly equivalent to the proposed project. This site was selected as a project alternative based on the lack of adjacent residential uses and the ability of this alternative to eliminate the significant noise impacts associated with the proposed project on existing and future residential uses. This site is bordered on the south by Granite Drive, on the west by Dominguez Road, on the northwest by Taylor Road, on

the north by Brace Road, and on the east by Sierra College Boulevard. This site includes multiple parcels that are designated in the northern portion of the site as Retail Commercial (RC) and in the southern portion as Light Industrial (LI). Two small drainages flow southwest through the length of the site and converge before crossing under Dominguez Road. These drainages are designated as Recreation/Conservation (R-C) on the general plan land use map. The topography of the site is gently rolling with elevations ranging from approximately 290 to 325 feet msl. The site includes a mix of dense oak woodlands, grasslands and riparian corridors along the two drainages. The site includes an existing office development (Horizon West) adjacent to Sierra College Boulevard and small commercial properties (e.g., bars and auto shops) along Taylor Road. The site is identified on signs posted on the site as a future commercial development by Granite Bay Ventures and a portion of it is currently being used as a soil stockpile site. This site does not include the developed Heavy Industrial (HI) designated parcels southeast of the Taylor Road/Dominguez Road intersection that are accessed from Taylor Road by way of Anthony Court. The project applicant does not own this property.

IMPACTS OF OFFSITE ALTERNATIVE #2

Aesthetics/Visual Resources

The proposed project would result in significant and unavoidable changes in the site's visual character and significant and unavoidable cumulative visual resource impacts. As with the proposed project, this alternative would significantly alter the visual character of the site by converting undeveloped land to urban uses. However, the visual resource impacts of this alternative would be more adverse than anticipated with the proposed project due to the dense landscape of native oak trees, riparian vegetation and wetlands on this site. The southern portion of this site is visible from Interstate 80. Thus, this alternative would also contribute to the cumulative change in the visual character of the Interstate 80 corridor. However, the majority of the site would not be visible from the freeway due to intervening vegetation on properties between the site and the freeway. Also, components of the Interstate 80/Sierra College Interchange Improvement Project block views of the site from the freeway. Therefore, although more adverse than the proposed project, fewer people would experience the visual impacts of its development.

Air Quality

The air quality impacts associated with construction activities would be similar to those anticipated with the proposed project because the same approximate acreage would be graded to accommodate site development. Both the proposed project and this alternative would be expected to generate approximately 75 lb/day of ROG, 43 lb/day or NO_X, 127 lb/day of PM_{10}, and 66 lb/day of CO during project construction. Daily construction-generated emissions would not exceed PCAPCD's significance thresholds of 82 lb/day for ROG or NO_X or 550 lb/day of CO. However, emissions of PM_{10} would exceed PCAPCD's significance threshold of 82 lb/day. The two-year construction period assumed for the proposed project would also be required on this alternative site. Therefore, the same types and volumes of construction emissions would be generated.

Also, because the site would include the same type of operational activities, the same general operational air quality impacts would be anticipated. Based on the modeling conducted, operations for this alternative would result in worst-case maximum daily emissions of approximately 196 lb/day of ROG, 311 lb/day of NO_X, 281 lb/day of PM_{10}, and 2,196 lb/day of CO. These daily operational emissions would exceed PCAPCD's significance thresholds of 82 lb/day for ROG, NO_X, and PM_{10}, or 550 lb/day for CO during both the winter and summer periods. Similar to the proposed project, these operational emissions would also contribute cumulatively to significant and unavoidable regional emissions.

Biological Resources

The proposed project would result in significant impacts related to the loss of wetlands, the loss of valley elderberry longhorn beetle habitat, disturbance of raptors and migratory birds, and degradation of sensitive fish

habitat. The project would also result in the significant and unavoidable short-term loss of mature oak woodlands. This alternative site includes a mix of grasslands, dense oak woodlands, riparian vegetation and wetlands. Due to the oak woodland and riparian tree density, and the variety of riparian/wetland habitats on the site, development would result in substantially more adverse biological resource impacts than anticipated with the proposed project. Due to the size of the buildings and the associated parking requirements, in order to accommodate the proposed development, the majority of the two drainages on the site would need to be diverted or put into an underground culvert. Also, the majority of the trees on the site would need to be removed. Therefore, the significant biological resource impacts associated with this alternative would be considered more adverse than anticipated with the proposed project.

Due to access constraints, it could not be determined whether valley elderberry habitat is present on this site. Also, it is unknown whether this alternative site is tributary to any drainages containing sensitive fish habitat.

Cultural Resources

The potential impacts on cultural resources anticipated with this alternative are assumed to be similar to those of the proposed project. No sensitive cultural resources were identified on the proposed project site, although there is the potential that as yet undiscovered subsurface cultural resources could be disturbed by site development. The development of this alternative site has the same potential to disturb as yet undiscovered subsurface cultural resources.

Energy

This alternative site would include total building square footage equivalent to the proposed project. Therefore, the energy impacts associated with this alternative would be similar to those of the proposed project. Neither the proposed project nor this alternative would be expected to cause significant energy impacts.

Geology and Soils

The proposed project would result in significant seismic and erosion hazards with project implementation. This alternative site would include total building square footage equivalent to the proposed project and would include an approximately equivalent area of disturbance due to site grading and excavation. Because the soil characteristics of this alternative site do not substantially differ from the proposed project, the geology and soils impacts associated with this alternative would be generally similar to the proposed project.

Hydrology and Water Quality

This alternative would be expected to generally have the same total new impervious surface area as the proposed project and would likely require some sort of onsite detention facility. Therefore, the effects of this alternative on peak storm water discharge would be similar to those of the proposed project. However, because the two drainages generally flow directly through the center of this site, the development of this alternative would directly alter the local drainage network by diverting or culverting these creeks on the site. By filling the length of these drainages on the project site, the hydrologic cycle and downstream flooding characteristics within these creeks could be substantially altered. These significant storm water discharge impacts would not be anticipated with implementation of the proposed project. Also, due to the substantial modifications of the site's drainage characteristics, the significant downstream water quality impacts of this alternative would likely be more adverse than anticipated with the proposed project. Therefore, the hydrology and water quality impacts of this alternative would be substantially more severe than anticipated with the proposed project.

Land Use

The project site is surrounded on the northwest by Taylor Road and small commercial uses (e.g., bars and auto shops), on the north by Brace Road, on the east by Sierra College Boulevard, on the south by Granite Drive and

on the southwest by Dominguez Road and the Sierra Pine plant. Existing light industrial buildings are located adjacent to the property's southwestern boundary. The site is primarily undeveloped with the exception of an existing office development (Horizon West) adjacent to Sierra College Boulevard. The development of this alternative site would generally be compatible with the surrounding commercial/industrial uses and would not require the relocation of the existing onsite office building. The development would also be compatible with the portion of the site designated Retail Commercial (RC). However, in order to develop this site with commercial uses, the Light Industrial (LI) land use designation on the southern portion of the site would need to be amended to Retail Commercial (RC). However, similar to the proposed project, this alternative would result in less-than-significant land use impacts.

Public Health and Hazards

The development of this site would include the same uses as would occur with the proposed project. Therefore, the public health and hazard impacts associated with site operations would not substantially differ.

Public Services and Utilities

The implementation of this alternative would generate similar demands on utility services such as electricity, natural gas, telecommunications, water, and wastewater services as the proposed project. This alternative would require the extension of offsite water and sewer lines that would be different than anticipated with the proposed project. However, it is difficult to determine whether anticipated impacts associated with necessary water and sewer line extensions would be similar to, greater than, or less than the proposed project. The development of this site would at a minimum require the same water conveyance facilities as the proposed project and would result in the same significant environmental impacts associated with the construction of these facilities as would occur with the proposed project. This alternative would also be expected to have similar demands on police and fire protection services, emergency response services, and solid waste collection and disposal services. Therefore, this alternative is assumed to have generally similar impacts to the proposed project on public services and utilities.

Noise

Similar to the proposed project, development of this alternative would generate construction noise associated with the use of heavy equipment for site grading and excavation, installation of utilities, paving, and building fabrication. However, this construction would not occur adjacent to existing residences. Also, the installation of a noise wall would likely not be necessary to minimize operational noise impacts on the adjacent land uses. However, a wall would likely be installed between the site and adjacent uses to limit access from these properties. Because this alternative would not expose sensitive receptors (i.e., residences) to noise levels in excess of applicable standards, the construction and significant (but mitigable) operational noise impacts anticipated with the proposed project would not be anticipated with this alternative.

Traffic

Due to the site's direct access to Interstate 80 from Sierra College Boulevard, it would be expected to generate traffic volumes generally equivalent to those of the proposed project. However, the traffic impacts would be shifted to the northern portion on the interchange. The Interstate 80 on- and off-ramps and the Sierra College Boulevard/Granite Drive intersection would experience the bulk of traffic impacts. Access to the site would likely be provided from Sierra College Boulevard, Granite Drive and Taylor Road. Because the traffic would be more concentrated north of the freeway, other intersections on the northern stretch of Sierra College Boulevard, including Brace Road and Taylor Road, may experience greater traffic volumes than with the proposed project. However, the traffic volumes on Sierra College Boulevard intersections south of the freeway (e.g., Rocklin Road) would experience substantially lower traffic volumes when compared to the proposed project. Therefore, although the traffic impacts would shift north with this alternative, they would still likely cause significant impacts at affected intersections. However, without a detailed traffic analysis of this alternative site, it cannot be determined what specific intersections or road segments would exceed the established significance thresholds.

Urban Decay

The proposed project is not anticipated to cause significant urban decay within the site's market area with operation of the proposed commercial uses at the site. This alternative would include the same commercial square footage as the proposed project. Therefore, its potential to contribute to urban decay by reducing the financial viability of existing commercial establishments would be equivalent to the proposed project.

Cumulative Climate Change

Long-term operation of the proposed project would generate associated greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from area- and mobile-sources, and indirectly from stationary sources associated with energy consumption. This alternative would include the same commercial square footage as the proposed project. Therefore, its generation of GHG emissions would be equivalent to the proposed project and its cumulative climate change impacts would be the same.

CONCLUSION

The impacts for Alternative Site #2 would be similar to those anticipated with the proposed project for the following resource areas: air quality, cultural resources, energy, geology and soils, public health and hazards, public services and utilities, traffic, urban decay and global climate change. For aesthetic/visual resources, hydrology and water quality, and biological resources, this alternative would cause significant impacts to be more severe than anticipated with the proposed project. The construction and significant (but mitigable) operational noise impacts on existing and future residents with the proposed project would be eliminated with this alternative. Overall, the impacts of this alternative would be greater than anticipated with the proposed project.
The development of this alternative site would generally meet the objectives of the proposed project, although not as effectively as the proposed project due to the greater distance of this site from the freeway interchange. Also, the development of this site would conflict with the objective of developing regional shopping facilities on commercially-designated land within the City due to the need to amend the Light Industrial (LI) land use designation for the southern portion of the site. The project applicant does not own this site and has no ability to affect its development, which is a factor the City Council can consider in ultimately determining whether this alternative is feasible. (See CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6[f][1].).

7.2.7 OFFSITE ALTERNATIVE #3

DESCRIPTION

This Offsite Alternative is located on approximately 65 acres west of the project site and is assumed to include commercial square footage roughly equivalent to the proposed project. This site was selected as a project alternative because it is more remotely located than the proposed project and would not be visible from Interstate 80. Fewer people would experience the visual impacts of its development and it would not contribute to the significant and unavoidable cumulative change in the visual character of the Interstate 80 corridor that would be anticipated with project implementation. This site is bordered on the west by Del Mar Avenue, on the south by Taylor Road, on the west by Americana Way and Lakebreeze Drive, and on the north by rural land within the Town of Loomis. The land use designation of the site is Light Industrial (LI) and access to Interstate 80 would be provided from Sierra College Boulevard by way of Taylor Road. The topography of the site is gently rolling with elevations ranging from approximately 270 to 320 feet msl. The site includes a mix of grasslands, dense oak woodlands, ponds, wetlands, remnants of an old orchard, and a well-established riparian corridor along Antelope Creek, which flows southwest through the center of the site. The project applicant does not own this property.

IMPACTS OF OFFSITE ALTERNATIVE #3

Aesthetics/Visual Resources

The proposed project would result in significant and unavoidable changes in the site's visual character. As with the proposed project, this alternative would significantly alter the visual character of the site by converting undeveloped land to urban uses. However, the visual resource impacts of this alternative would be more adverse than those anticipated with the proposed project due to the dense landscape of native oak and riparian trees on this site. The loss of this dense landscape of native oak and riparian trees would be considered a significant and unavoidable change in the site's visual character. Because this site is more remotely located, fewer people would experience the visual impacts of its development. Also, due to its distance from Interstate 80, it would not be visible from the freeway. Therefore, it would not contribute to the significant and unavoidable cumulative change in the visual character of the Interstate 80 corridor that would be anticipated with project implementation.

Air Quality

The air quality impacts associated with construction activities would be similar to those anticipated with the proposed project because the same approximate acreage would be graded to accommodate site development. Both the proposed project and this alternative would be expected to generate approximately 75 lb/day of ROG, 43 lb/day or NO_X, 127 lb/day of PM_{10}, and 66 lb/day of CO during project construction. Daily construction-generated emissions would not exceed PCAPCD's significance thresholds of 82 lb/day for ROG or NO_X or 550 lb/day of CO. However, emissions of PM_{10} would exceed PCAPCD's significance threshold of 82 lb/day. The two-year construction period assumed for the proposed project would also be required on this alternative site. Therefore, the same types and volumes of construction emissions would be generated.

Also, because the site would include the same type of operational activities, the same general operational air quality impacts would be anticipated. Based on the modeling conducted, operations for this alternative would result in worst-case maximum daily emissions of approximately 196 lb/day of ROG, 311 lb/day of NO_X, 281 lb/day of PM_{10}, and 2,196 lb/day of CO. These daily operational emissions would exceed PCAPCD's significance thresholds of 82 lb/day for ROG, NO_X, and PM_{10}, or 550 lb/day for CO during both the winter and summer periods. Similar to the proposed project, these operational emissions would also contribute cumulatively to significant and unavoidable regional emissions.

Biological Resources

The proposed project would result in significant impacts related to the loss of wetlands, the loss of valley elderberry longhorn beetle habitat, disturbance of raptors and migratory birds, and degradation of sensitive fish habitat. The project would also result in the significant and unavoidable short-term loss of mature oak woodlands. This alternative site includes a mix of old orchards, grasslands, dense oak woodlands, ponds, wetlands, and a well-established riparian corridor along Antelope Creek, which flows southwest through the center of the site. Due to the oak woodland and riparian tree density, and the variety of vegetation communities on the site, development would result in substantially more adverse biological resource impacts than anticipated with the proposed project. Due to the size of the buildings and the associated parking requirements, in order to accommodate the proposed development, the entire length of Antelope Creek on the site would need to be diverted or put into an underground culvert. Also, the majority of the trees on the site would need to be removed. Therefore, the biological resource impacts associated with this alternative would be considered more adverse than anticipated with the proposed project.

Due to access constraints, it could not be determined whether valley elderberry habitat is present on this site. Also, it is unknown whether this alternative site is tributary to any drainages containing sensitive fish habitat.

Cultural Resources

The potential impacts on cultural resources anticipated with this alternative are assumed to be similar to or potentially more severe than those of the proposed project. No sensitive cultural resources were identified on the project site, although there is the potential that as yet undiscovered subsurface cultural resources could be disturbed by site development. The development of this alternative site has the same potential to disturb as yet undiscovered subsurface cultural resources. Also, this site includes historic orchard areas and several residences that would need to be removed to accommodate development. These human-occupied areas could contain historic features, the removal of which could be considered adverse. Therefore, the cultural resource impacts associated with this alternative could be considered more adverse than anticipated with the proposed project.

Energy

This alternative site would include total building square footage equivalent to the proposed project. Therefore, the energy impacts associated with this alternative would be similar to the proposed project. Neither the proposed project nor this alternative would be expected to cause significant energy impacts.

Geology and Soils

The proposed project would result in significant seismic and erosion hazards with project implementation. This alternative site would include total building square footage equivalent to the proposed project and would include an approximately equivalent area of disturbance due to site grading and excavation. Because the soil characteristics of this alternative site do not substantially differ from the proposed project, the geology and soils impacts associated with this alternative would be generally similar to the proposed project.

Hydrology and Water Quality

This alternative would be expected to generally have the same total new impervious surface area as the proposed project and would likely require some sort of onsite detention facility. Therefore, the effects of this alternative on peak storm water discharge would be similar to the proposed project. However, because Antelope Creek is located directly in the center of this site, the development of this alternative would directly alter the local drainage network by diverting or culverting this creek on the site. By filling the length of Antelope Creek on the project site, the hydrologic cycle and downstream flooding characteristics within this creek could be substantially altered. These significant storm water discharge impacts would not be anticipated with implementation of the proposed project. Also, due to the substantial modifications of the site's drainage characteristics, the significant downstream water quality impacts of this alternative would likely be more adverse than anticipated with the proposed project. Therefore, the hydrology and water quality impacts of this alternative would be substantially more severe than anticipated with the proposed project.

Land Use

Several rural residences are located on this alternative site and to the north in the Town of Loomis. Directly to the west is a residential subdivision along Americana Way. Railroad tracks traverse the southern border and a building materials facility and car wash are located directly south of the railroad tracks. To the east is a light industrial area along Del Mar Avenue. The development of this alternative would require removal of the onsite residences, which is not required with implementation of the proposed project. Similar to the proposed project, the installation of a noise wall between the development and the existing residential uses to the west and north would likely be required. The installation of this wall would minimize commercial/residential land use conflicts. Also, the land use designation for this site is Light Industrial (LI). In order to develop this site with commercial uses, the general plan land use designation for the site would need to be amended to Retail Commercial (RC). However, similar to the proposed project, this alternative would result in less-than-significant land use impacts.

Public Health and Hazards

The development of this site would include the same uses as the proposed project. Therefore, the public health and hazard impacts associated with site operations would not substantially differ. However, because of the large volume of traffic generated by the proposed development and the need to cross an active railroad track to access the site, placing the development at this site would substantially increase the potential for train vs. passenger vehicle or train vs. truck accidents. Therefore, the potential for public hazards associated with the development of this site would be greater than anticipated with the proposed project.

Public Services and Utilities

The implementation of this alternative would generate similar demands on utility services such as electricity, natural gas, telecommunications, water, and wastewater services as the proposed project. This alternative would require the extension of offsite water and sewer lines that would be different than anticipated with the proposed project. However, it is difficult to determine whether anticipated impacts associated with necessary water and sewer line extensions would be similar to, greater than, or less than the proposed project. The development of this site would at a minimum require the same water conveyance facilities as the proposed project and would result in the same significant environmental impacts associated with the construction of these facilities as would occur with the proposed project. This alternative would also be expected to have similar demands on police and fire protection services, emergency response services, and solid waste collection and disposal services. Therefore, this alternative is assumed to have generally similar impacts to the proposed project on public services and utilities.

Noise

Similar to the proposed project, development of this alternative would generate construction noise associated with the use of heavy equipment for site grading and excavation, installation of utilities, paving, and building fabrication. Also, similar to the proposed project, this construction would occur adjacent to existing residences. The installation of a noise wall is assumed to be necessary along the western and northern property boundaries to minimize operational noise impacts on the existing residential uses. Because similar noise impacts would be anticipated with this alternative site and similar mitigation measure would be required, the significant noise impacts would not differ substantially from those of the proposed project.

Traffic

The project as currently proposed is anticipated to generate approximately 18,800 vehicle trips per day. This alternative would be expected to generate traffic volumes generally equivalent to those of the proposed project. From Interstate 80, vehicles would be required to travel north on two-lane Sierra College Boulevard and west on two-lane Taylor Road to access the site. Because the traffic would be more concentrated north of the freeway, other intersections on the northern stretch of Sierra College Boulevard, including Brace Road and Taylor Road, may experience greater traffic volumes than with the proposed project. However, the traffic volumes on Sierra College Boulevard intersections south of the freeway (e.g., Rocklin Road) would experience substantially lower traffic volumes when compared to the proposed project. Therefore, although the traffic impacts would shift north with this alternative, they would still likely cause significant impacts at affected intersections. However, without a detailed traffic analysis of this alternative site, it cannot be determined what specific intersections or road segments would exceed the established significance thresholds.

Urban Decay

The proposed project is not anticipated to cause significant urban decay within the site's market area with operation of the proposed commercial uses at the site. This alternative would include the same commercial square footage as the proposed project. Therefore, its potential to contribute to urban decay by reducing the financial viability of existing commercial establishments would be equivalent to the proposed project.

Cumulative Climate Change

Long-term operation of the proposed project would generate associated greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from area- and mobile-sources, and indirectly from stationary sources associated with energy consumption. This alternative would include the same commercial square footage as the proposed project. Therefore, its generation of GHG emissions would be equivalent to the proposed project and its cumulative climate change impacts would be the same.

CONCLUSION

The impacts for Alternative Site #3 would be similar to those anticipated with the proposed project for the following resource areas: air quality, energy, geology and soils, land use, noise, public services and utilities, traffic, urban decay and global climate change. For aesthetic/visual resources, biological resources, cultural resources, hydrology and water quality, and public health and hazards, this alternative would cause impacts to be more severe than anticipated with the proposed project. The project's significant and unavoidable cumulative aesthetic/visual resources impact associated with development along the Interstate 80 corridor would not occur with this alternative because it would not be visible from Interstate 80. Overall, the impacts of this alternative would be more adverse than anticipated with the proposed project. Also, this alternative would conflict with the objectives of developing regional shopping facilities on commercially-designated land within the City and constructing a facility near a major freeway interchange in order to minimize traffic generation on local streets. The project applicant does not own this site and has no ability to affect its development, which is a factor the City Council can consider in ultimately determining whether this alternative is feasible. (See CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6[f][1].).

7.3 SUMMARY OF COMPARATIVE EFFECTS OF THE ALTERNATIVES

Table 7-1 summarizes the environmental analysis provided above for the project alternatives. The environmental impacts of the proposed project are addressed in detail throughout Sections 4 and 6 of this Draft EIR.

Table 7-1
Comparison of Environmental Impacts of Alternatives in Relation to the Proposed Project

Environmental Topic	Proposed Project	No Project Alternative	Reduced Size Alternative	Building Realignment Alternative	Offsite Alternative #1	Offsite Alternative #2	Offsite Alternative #3
Aesthetics - Visual Character	S/U	S/U - Reduced	S/U – Reduced	S/U - Increased	S/U - Increased	S/U - Increased	S/U - Increased
Aesthetics - Cumulative Visual Character	S/U	S/U - Reduced	S/U - Reduced	S/U - Increased	S/U - Increased	S/U - Equivalent	LTS - Reduced
Air Quality - Construction Emissions	S	S - Reduced	S - Reduced	S - Equivalent	S - Equivalent	S - Equivalent	S - Equivalent
Air Quality - Operational Emissions	S/U	S/U - Reduced	S/U - Reduced	S/U - Equivalent	S/U - Equivalent	S/U - Equivalent	S/U - Equivalent
Air Quality - Cumulative Regional Emissions	S/U	S/U - Reduced	S/U - Reduced	S/U - Equivalent	S/U - Equivalent	S/U - Equivalent	S/U - Equivalent
Biological Resources - Wetlands	S	S - Equivalent	LTS - Reduced	S - Equivalent	S - Unknown	S - Increased	S - Increased
Biological Resources - Beetle Habitat	S	S - Equivalent	LTS - Reduced	S - Equivalent	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Biological Resources - Raptors	S	S - Equivalent	S - Reduced	S - Equivalent	S - Increased	S - Increased	S - Increased
Biological Resources - Tree Loss	S/U	S/U - Equivalent	S/U - Reduced	S/U - Equivalent	S/U - Increased	S/U - Increased	S/U - Increased

Table 7-1
Comparison of Environmental Impacts of Alternatives in Relation to the Proposed Project

Environmental Topic	Proposed Project	No Project Alternative	Reduced Size Alternative	Building Realignment Alternative	Offsite Alternative #1	Offsite Alternative #2	Offsite Alternative #3
Biological Resources - Fish Habitat	S	S - Equivalent	S - Reduced	S - Equivalent	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Biological Resources - Cumulative Loss of Resources	S/U	S/U - Equivalent	S/U - Reduced	S/U - Equivalent	S/U - Increased	S/U - Increased	S/U - Increased
Cultural Resources	LTS	LTS - Equivalent	LTS - Reduced	LTS - Equivalent	LTS - Equivalent	LTS - Equivalent	LTS - Increased
Energy	LTS	LTS - Reduced	LTS - Reduced	LTS - Equivalent	LTS - Equivalent	LTS - Equivalent	LTS - Equivalent
Geology and Soils - Seismic Hazards	S	S - Reduced	S - Reduced	S - Equivalent	S - Equivalent	S - Equivalent	S - Equivalent
Geology and Soils - Erosion Hazards	S	S - Reduced	S - Reduced	S - Equivalent	S - Equivalent	S - Equivalent	S - Equivalent
Hydrology and Water Quality - Storm Water Runoff	LTS	LTS - Equivalent	LTS - Reduced	LTS - Equivalent	LTS - Equivalent	S - Increased	S - Increased
Hydrology and Water Quality - Short- and Long-Term Water Quality Degradation	S	S - Equivalent	S - Reduced	S - Equivalent	S - Equivalent	S - Increased	S – Increased
Land Use	LTS	LTS - Equivalent	LTS - Equivalent	LTS - Equivalent	LTS - Equivalent	LTS - Equivalent	LTS - Equivalent
Public Health and Hazards - Exposure to Hazardous Materials	S	S - Equivalent	S - Reduced	S - Equivalent	S - Equivalent	S - Equivalent	S - Increased
Public Services and Utilities - Water Conveyance	S	S - Reduced	S - Reduced	S - Equivalent	S - Equivalent	S - Equivalent	S - Equivalent
Noise - Construction	LTS	LTS - Equivalent	LTS - Reduced	LTS - Reduced	LTS - Reduced	LTS - Reduced	LTS - Equivalent
Noise - Operations	S	S - Equivalent	S - Reduced	LTS - Reduced	LTS - Reduced	LTS - Reduced	S - Equivalent
Traffic - Sierra College Blvd./I-80 ramps	S	S - Reduced	LTS - Reduced	S - Equivalent	S - Unknown	S - Unknown	S - Unknown
Traffic - Sierra College Blvd./Rocklin Road Intersection	S	S - Reduced	S - Reduced	S - Equivalent	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Urban Decay	LTS	LTS - Reduced	LTS - Reduced	LTS - Equivalent	LTS - Equivalent	LTS - Equivalent	LTS - Equivalent
Cumulative Climate Change	S	S - Reduced	S - Reduced	S - Equivalent	S - Equivalent	S - Equivalent	S - Equivalent

Impact Status:
S/U = Significant and Unavoidable Impact
S = Significant Impact
LTS = Less Than Significant Impact
Reduced = Impact reduced when compared to the proposed project
Increased = Impact increased when compared to the proposed project
Equivalent = Impact equivalent to the proposed project
Unknown - If it cannot be determined whether the impact is reduced or increased, it is identified as unknown.

7.4 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED AS INFEASIBLE

In addition to the alternatives described above, an additional offsite alternative was considered for the proposed project. In order to meet the basic project objectives, the potential offsite alternative locations were limited to relatively undeveloped properties with sufficient size to accommodate the proposed project that were located along the major transportation corridor within the City, Interstate 80. Properties along State Route 65 were not considered as feasible alternatives due to the presence of existing large commercial uses along this corridor that already contain some of the same large retailers (e.g., Wal-Mart) as the proposed project. An additional offsite property within the City was considered as a project alternative, but was eliminated from further analysis because its development would not have been feasible and it would not have attained most of the basic objectives of the proposed project. This offsite alternative is described as follows:

7.3.1 OFFSITE ALTERNATIVE #4

This Offsite Alternative is located on approximately 20 acres between China Garden Road and Hidden Glen Drive directly south of the Rocklin Road/Interstate 80 interchange. The land use designation of the site is Retail Commercial and access to this property from Interstate 80 is provided from Rocklin Road to Aquilar Road to China Garden Road. Due to its relatively small size, this site would not have sufficient space to accommodate all of the project's proposed uses. To access the site, vehicles coming from Interstate 80 would be required to travel through four separate intersections. These intersections are not expected to have adequate capacity to accommodate the propose project's anticipated vehicle trips. Also, the property is located directly adjacent to an existing residential subdivision and includes several dense clusters of oak woodlands. Furthermore, the project applicant does not own this property and has no ability to control its development. For these reasons, this site was considered infeasible as an alternative to the proposed project and was eliminated from further consideration.