

7.0 ALTERNATIVES

As required by Section 15126.6(a) of the State CEQA Guidelines, this EIR examines a range of reasonable alternatives to the proposed project that could "feasibly attain most of the objectives of the proposed project, but would avoid or substantially lessen significant effects of the project and evaluates the comparative merits of the alternatives." The City considered seven alternatives. Alternatives analyzed herein include: (1) a no project alternative; (2) continuance of the site in agricultural use; (3) residential/ commercial retail mixed use alternative 1; (4) residential/ commercial retail mixed use alternative 2; (5) a recreational use amenity alternative; (6) an alternate site project that incorporates the commercial component into a redeveloped San Luis Obispo Promenade shopping center; and (7) an alternative that involves the same amount of development at the site, where the footprint of the commercial portion would be decreased.

The alternatives selected and analyzed in the EIR came from a variety of sources, including consultation with the public over time. Each has been reviewed and confirmed by City staff and the consultant team. Some alternatives may require land use regulatory modifications, but this alone is not considered reason enough to make them infeasible. Instead their selection was predicated on their ability to provide decision-makers with a reasoned choice of alternatives to the proposed project, which could alleviate a range of expected significant effects. Seven alternatives were examined in the EIR. This is considered a reasonable range of options to inform decision-makers.

The California Supreme Court, in *Citizens of Goleta Valley v. Board of Supervisors* (1990), indicated that a discussion of alternative sites is needed if the project "may be feasibly accomplished in a successful manner considering the economic, environmental, social, and technological factors involved" at another site.

As suggested in *Goleta*, several criteria form the basis of whether alternative sites need to be considered in detail. These criteria take the form of the following questions:

1. *Could the size and other characteristics of another site physically accommodate the project?*
2. *Is another site reasonably available for acquisition?*
3. *Is the timing of carrying out development on an alternative site reasonable for the applicant?*
4. *Is the project economically feasible on another site?*
5. *What are the land use designation(s) of alternative sites?*
6. *Does the lead agency have jurisdiction over alternative sites? and*
7. *Are there any social, technological, or other factors which may make the consideration of alternative sites infeasible?*

Based on discussions between the applicant and City staff, an alternative project site is not evaluated in this EIR because the project site is large enough to accommodate changes that might result from the implementation of any of the project alternatives. In addition, no other comparable site is available to the applicant where the project objectives, including the provision of commercial uses, retail uses (including a hotel), business/office park, open space preservation, could be accomplished. The site is also uniquely situated adjacent to the San Luis Obispo Promenade shopping center.



7.1 NO PROJECT ALTERNATIVE

7.1.1 Description

This alternative assumes that no development on the site occurs and that the existing agricultural operations at the site would remain. Analysis of this alternative is required under Section 15126.6(e) of the *State CEQA Guidelines*. It should be noted, however, that the underlying retail commercial, open space, and residential designations, as well as the inclusion of the property within the City's urban reserve, would remain. Therefore, annexation and development of the site in the future would remain a possibility. Also, this alternative would not preclude the applicant from seeking future development of the site through the County of San Luis Obispo.

7.1.2 Impact Analysis

Geology/Hazards. Although all identified project impacts relating to the exposure of people to the presence of geological hazards and health hazards associated with hazardous materials can be reduced to less than significant levels, under this alternative no increase in exposure to geologic hazards would occur. Therefore, this alternative is considered *superior* to the proposed project.

Drainage and Water Quality. No development would occur that would have the potential to collect hydrocarbon waste products and contribute additional downstream flows, nor would any new areas of impervious surface be created that affect groundwater recharge. In addition, the beneficial impacts to downstream water quality due to the reduction in uncontrolled agricultural pollutant runoff and reduction in flood hazards associated with the proposed project would not occur under this alternative. Therefore, because the no project alternative would not improve current drainage and untreated runoff water conditions, it is considered *inferior* to the proposed project with respect to drainage and water quality.

Air Quality. Since no additional vehicle trips would be generated by this alternative, air quality impacts based on trips made to the area would be substantially reduced. In addition, no construction related emissions would occur. However, the continued agricultural use of the site under this alternative would result in greater dust emissions when compared to the proposed project, which would remove existing agricultural areas from production. Therefore, this alternative is considered *both better and worse* than the proposed project from an air quality perspective.

Noise. Because the trips forecasted to be generated by the proposed project would not be added to the local roadway system under this alternative, the project's effects on the noise environment in the area would not occur. In addition, no construction related noise would be generated by this alternative. The continued agricultural use of the site under this alternative would result in agricultural noise emissions. Nevertheless, on balance, noise generated under this alternative would be less than that generated by the proposed project. Therefore, this alternative is considered *superior* to the proposed project from a noise perspective.



Agricultural Resources. This alternative would retain the agricultural operations at the site. Likewise, this alternative would retain the existing soils of statewide importance on the site, which are considered highly productive agricultural soils. Overall, agricultural impacts would be generally less than expected under the proposed project. It should be noted that this alternative would not remove the existing commercial and residential land use designations on portions of the Dalidio property and would not preclude future development of the Dalidio property, nor would it permanently preserve the 58.8 acres of on-site open space, which could be retained for agricultural uses, or dedicate 20 acres off-site for agricultural preservation. Nevertheless, because this alternative would not directly affect existing agricultural operations in the foreseeable future, it is considered *superior* to the proposed project from an agricultural perspective.

Biological Resources. Wildlife and plant populations would remain at their existing levels under this alternative. No impacts to the eucalyptus groves, riparian habitat, or wildlife would occur. Impacts would be less than significant and much lower than expected under the proposed project, which would have significant biological impacts. Therefore, this alternative is considered *superior* to the proposed project from a biological resource perspective.

Aesthetics. This alternative would not result in changes to any existing aesthetic condition and would not affect the character of existing views from the surrounding area, including U.S. Highway 101. Additionally, no nighttime lighting impacts would occur, as the site would remain unlit. Aesthetic and light/glare impacts under this alternative would be lower than those of the proposed project, which are considered significant but mitigable. Therefore, this alternative is considered *superior* to the proposed project from an aesthetic perspective.

Public Utilities. The no project alternative would not create demand for additional public utilities. However, the continued agricultural use of the site would result in continued groundwater demand. Since this alternative includes no urban development, it would result in reduced impacts related to City potable water supplies. Nevertheless, overall water use related to this alternative would be greater than with the proposed project. This alternative would result in reduced impacts related to wastewater and solid waste generation when compared to the proposed project. Therefore, this alternative is considered *both better and worse* than the proposed project from a utilities perspective.

Cultural Resources. No cultural resources would be affected under this alternative. Although the proposed project would not disturb any known archaeological resources, on-site grading has the potential to disturb as yet unidentified resources. Implementation of the proposed project has the potential to result in significant but mitigable impacts to historic structures on-site, whereas the no-project alternative would not. Therefore, overall impacts to cultural resources would be lower under this alternative, because no effect on the on-site historic structures would occur. Therefore, this alternative is considered *superior* to the proposed project from a cultural resources perspective.

Traffic and Circulation. No additional trips would be added to background traffic under this alternative. Therefore, the Ten-Year and Buildout scenarios without the project as analyzed for the proposed project reflect the operational characteristics of the study area under the no project alternative. Consequently, this alternative is considered *superior* to the proposed project from a

traffic perspective. It should be noted that the planned interchange improvements to Prado Road would remain part of the City's General Plan Circulation Element and could be implemented in the future without the annexation of the Dalidio property. Since under the proposed project the applicant would fund the interchange, under this alternative another funding source would be required.

7.2 CONTINUING AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION ON-SITE

7.2.1 Description

This alternative would involve the annexation of the site to the City of San Luis Obispo. After annexation the part of the site not currently designated Open Space would be so designated and could be zoned Conservation/Open Space. This land use designation and zoning allow agriculture. Another approach could be zoning the property Agriculture, which is also consistent with the Open Space land use designation. Both of these approaches would accomplish the same goal of preserving the site in agricultural use. However, the Agriculture zoning would more effectively earmark the site for continued agricultural uses, rather than other "open space" uses on the site, such as parks. **In addition, with the annexation of the site under this alternative, the City would be able to oversee improvements to existing deficient storm drainage conditions on the site.** Either of these zoning alternatives would preclude development of the site with urban uses under the City's jurisdiction.

7.2.2 Impact Analysis

Geology/Hazards. This alternative would result in no further development on-site than is already present. Therefore, although all identified project impacts relating to the exposure of people to the presence of geological hazards can be reduced to less than significant levels, under this alternative no increase in exposure to geologic hazards would occur. Therefore, this alternative is considered *superior* to the proposed project.

Drainage and Water Quality. Similar to the no-project alternative, impacts related to parking lot pollutant runoff, increases in stormwater runoff, and the reduction in groundwater recharge would be avoided under this alternative. Therefore, because this alternative would not result in an increase in urban runoff or a decrease in groundwater recharge, it is considered *superior* to the proposed project with respect to water quality drainage.

Air Quality. Since no additional vehicle trips would be generated by this alternative, air quality impacts based on trips made to the area would be less than significant. In addition, no construction related emissions would occur. However, the continued agricultural use of the site under this alternative would result in greater dust emissions when compared to the proposed project, which would remove existing agricultural areas from production. Therefore, this alternative is considered *both better and worse* than the proposed project from an air quality perspective.

Noise. Because the trips predicted to be generated by the proposed project would not be added to the local roadway system under this alternative, the project's effects on the noise environment in the area would not occur. In addition, no construction related noise would



occur. The continued agricultural use of the site under this alternative would result in agricultural noise emissions. Nevertheless, on balance, noise generated under this alternative would be less than that generated by the proposed project. Therefore, this alternative is considered *superior* to the proposed project from a noise perspective.

Agricultural Resources. This alternative would continue the agricultural activity on-site, and would preclude future development of the site with urban uses. This alternative would retain the existing soils of statewide importance on the site, which are considered highly productive agricultural soils. Overall, agricultural impacts would be less than expected under the proposed project. Therefore, this alternative is considered *superior* from an agricultural resources perspective.

Biological Resources. Wildlife and plant populations would remain at their existing levels under this alternative. No impacts to the eucalyptus groves, riparian habitat, or wildlife would occur. Impacts would be less than significant and much lower than expected under the proposed project, which would have significant biological impacts. The continued agricultural operations under this alternative would be expected to result in continued runoff from the site that contains agricultural chemicals and could affect downstream habitats and sensitive species. Nevertheless, on balance, this alternative is considered *superior* to the proposed project from a biological perspective.

Aesthetics. This alternative would retain the existing aesthetic character of the site and would preclude future development of the site. Therefore, although identified project impacts relating to the urbanization of the site could be reduced to less than significant levels, under this alternative no significant impacts to the aesthetic character of the site would occur at all. Therefore, this alternative is considered *superior* to the proposed project from an aesthetic perspective.

Public Utilities. This alternative would not create demand for additional public utilities. However, the continued agricultural use of the site would result in continued groundwater demand. Since this alternative includes no urban development, it would result in reduced impacts related to City potable water supplies. Nevertheless, overall water use related to this alternative would be greater than with the proposed project. This alternative would result in reduced impacts related to wastewater and solid waste generation when compared to the proposed project. Therefore, this alternative is considered *both better and worse* than the proposed project from a utilities perspective.

Cultural Resources. No cultural resources would be affected under this alternative. Although the proposed project would not disturb any known archaeological resources, on-site grading has the potential to disturb as yet unidentified resources. Implementation of the proposed project has the potential to result in significant but mitigable impacts to historic structures on-site, whereas this alternative would not. Therefore, overall impacts to cultural resources would be lower under this alternative, because no effect on the on-site historic structures would occur. Therefore, this alternative is considered *superior* to the proposed project from a cultural resources perspective.



Traffic and Circulation. No additional trips would be added to background traffic under this alternative. Therefore, the Ten-year and Buildout scenarios without the project as analyzed for the proposed project reflect the operational characteristics of the study area under this alternative. Therefore, this alternative is considered *superior* to the proposed project from a traffic perspective. It should be noted that the planned interchange improvements to Prado Road would remain part of the City's General Plan Circulation Element and could be implemented in the future without the annexation of the Dalidio property. Since under the proposed project the applicant would fund the interchange, under this alternative another funding source would be required.

7.3 RESIDENTIAL/COMMERCIAL MIXED USE PLAN 1

7.3.1 Description

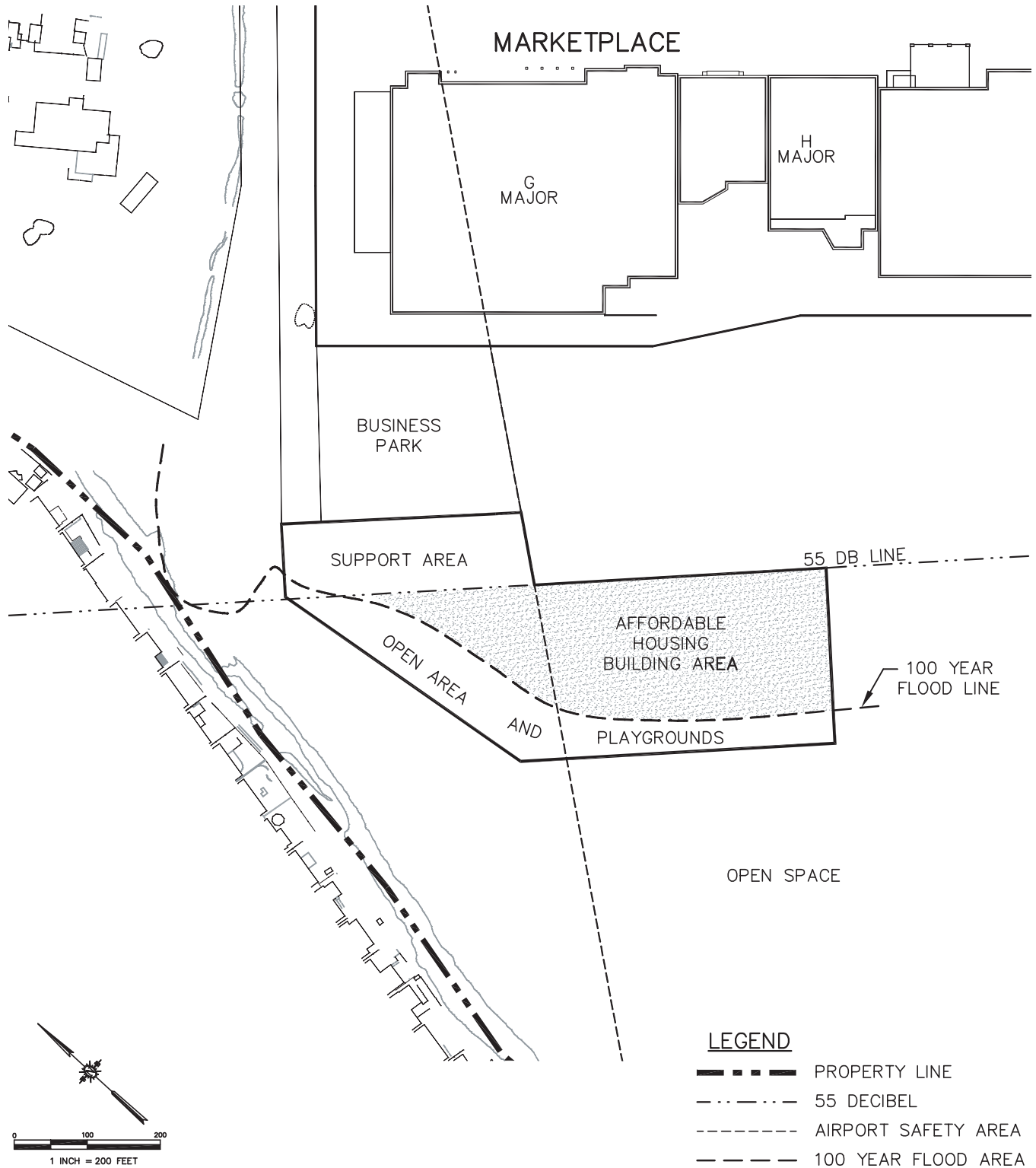
This alternative would involve the annexation of the Dalidio property to the City, and the development of a mixed use project on the site. This mixed use alternative would have a similar development footprint when compared to the proposed project. The City's Housing Element requires the provision of affordable housing at the ratio of one unit for each acre of commercial development. This equates to 60 units given the proposed commercial retail development of 47 acres and 13 acres of business park. This alternative proposes the development of these 60 units on a 4-acre site adjacent to the commercial center as identified in Figure 7-1. Units would be built by the developer at a ratio of 20 units per acre. The 4-acre housing site is located outside of the 55 decibel contour indicated in the Airport Land Use Plan. Development of affordable housing would require a Medium-High Density Residential (R-3) zoning designation over the 4-acre site. The current zoning designation in this area is Conservation/Open Space (C/OS). The remaining area would be retained in agricultural use. The Prado Road Interchange would be constructed as part of this alternative.

7.3.2 Impact Analysis

Geology/Hazards. Impacts associated with geological hazards are related to ambient soil and geotechnical conditions. This alternative is substantially similar from a building program perspective. However, the residential component of this alternative would expose additional people to such hazards. In addition, the residential component of this alternative would expose additional people to potential health risks associated with identified hazardous materials. Residential uses also have higher health risk requirements than office/business park or general retail uses. The residential uses under this alternative would also expose more people to airport safety hazards. Therefore, this alternative would be *inferior* to the proposed project with regard to geology and hazards.

Drainage and Water Quality. This alternative would result in similar development intensity in the proposed commercial area as compared to the proposed project, but would add development in the 4-acre residential area. Because no specific site plans for this alternative are available at this time it is assumed that the alternative would implement similar flood and stormwater pollutant reduction measures as in the proposed project. Under this alternative the beneficial impacts of the project would also be realized due to the reduction in agricultural pollutant runoff. This alternative would involve the placement of additional impervious





Alternative 3: Residential/Commercial
 Mixed Use Plan 1
 (Affordable Housing Site)

Figure 7-1

Source: Cannon Associates, December 18, 2003

City of San Luis Obispo



surface at the site for the residential development, increasing the development's effect on groundwater recharge and urban runoff when compared to the proposed project.

Therefore, overall impacts would be *inferior* to those of the proposed project. As with the proposed project all impacts could be mitigated to less than significant levels with implementation of the measures recommended for the project.

Air Quality. This alternative is expected to result in greater local and regional air quality impacts than the proposed project, due to the increase in trip generation as a result of the additional residential development. Because construction activity required to build this alternative is expected to be similar to, but slightly greater than that of the proposed project, this alternative is expected to generate slightly greater amounts of construction related emissions. Therefore, this alternative is considered *inferior* to the proposed project from an air quality perspective. As with the proposed project air quality impacts could be partially reduced using the mitigation measures recommended.

Noise. Because this alternative would generate more trips than the proposed project, it is expected to result in increased roadway noise level increases. Implementation of this project would result in the exposure of new residential units to roadway noise levels. However, the residential units under this alternative would be located outside the 55 Ldn noise contour associated with San Luis Obispo Airport flight activities (refer to Figure 7-1). Nevertheless, adding residential units in close proximity to the commercial activities could result in significant impacts from loading activities and vehicles moving through the commercial area. ~~Additionally, the residential units under this alternative could be exposed to severe noise from U.S. Highway 101.~~ Therefore, this alternative is considered *inferior* to the proposed project from a noise perspective.

Agricultural Resources. This alternative would result in the conversion of a greater amount of prime agricultural lands when compared to the proposed project, since the 4-acre residential area under this alternative would occur on prime soils. With this alternative, an additional 4 acres of prime agricultural soils would be preserved off-site in conjunction with the 20 off-site acres designated for conservation under an open space easement with the proposed project. With this off-site agricultural preservation, this alternative would result in the loss of a similar amount of prime soils. Due to the distance between ongoing agricultural operations and residential uses to be constructed with this alternative, this alternative would not be expected to result in substantial land use incompatibilities between residential uses and agricultural operations. Therefore, on balance, impacts would be considered *inferior* to the proposed project from an agricultural resources perspective.

Biological Resources. The construction of residential uses in the western portion of the site under this alternative would increase disturbance and activity levels near sensitive biological resources areas associated with Prefumo Creek. Impacts to the eucalyptus groves, riparian habitat, and wildlife would be increased with this project. Therefore, impacts would be greater than expected under the proposed project, which would have significant biological impacts. This alternative is considered *inferior* to the proposed project from a biological perspective.



Aesthetics. This alternative would result in impacts to foreground and background views similar to the proposed project. Because no site plans are available it is assumed that the residential portion of this alternative would include a landscape screen similar to that in the proposed project to shield views of the site from U.S. Highway 101. Also, it is assumed that the buildings would not be of a size or scale great enough to exceed the height of the eucalyptus trees shielding views of the site from all other directions. This alternative would result in the conversion of open space and would result in the addition of increased nighttime lighting when compared to the proposed project. As with the proposed project, the impacts from the introduction of nighttime lighting could be mitigated by incorporating the proposed measures. Therefore, aesthetic impacts with this alternative would be *similar* to the proposed project from an aesthetic perspective.

Public Utilities. This alternative would add residential land uses that would increase demand for utilities, including water, wastewater, and solid waste disposal, when compared to the proposed project. Therefore, this alternative would result in increased impacts to water, wastewater, and solid waste disposal service, and is considered *inferior* to the proposed project.

Cultural Resources. As with the proposed project this alternative has the potential to disturb unknown archaeological resources during on-site grading, and would affect historic structures on-site. This alternative would result in a greater area of disturbance, and would accordingly increase the potential for disturbing unknown archaeological resources when compared to the project. Therefore, this alternative is considered *inferior* to the proposed project from a cultural resources perspective. As with the proposed project impacts to the unknown archaeological resources could be mitigated.

Traffic and Circulation. The trip generation of this alternative would be increased compared to the proposed project due to the addition of residential trip generators. This would result in increased effects on arterial, intersection, and freeway ramp junction operations. Because this alternative would increase demand on the street and ramp systems, it is considered *inferior* to the proposed project in the area of traffic and circulation. Also, the mitigation recommended for the proposed project would lessen the impacts of this alternative.

Land Use: It should be noted that this alternative would also result in additional impacts related to schools and parks and recreational facilities, due to the additional demand for such facilities generated by the residential component. In addition, this alternative would be consistent with the original concept of this annexation area having a residential component, given that one of the current General Plan land use designations for the site is Medium-High Residential (although this designation currently applies to a different part of the site). This alternative would also satisfy the City's Inclusionary Housing Ordinance. Consistent with various General Plan Policies, this alternative would provide a superior jobs housing balance when compared to the proposed project.



7.4 RESIDENTIAL/RETAIL MIXED-USE PLAN 2

7.4.1 Description

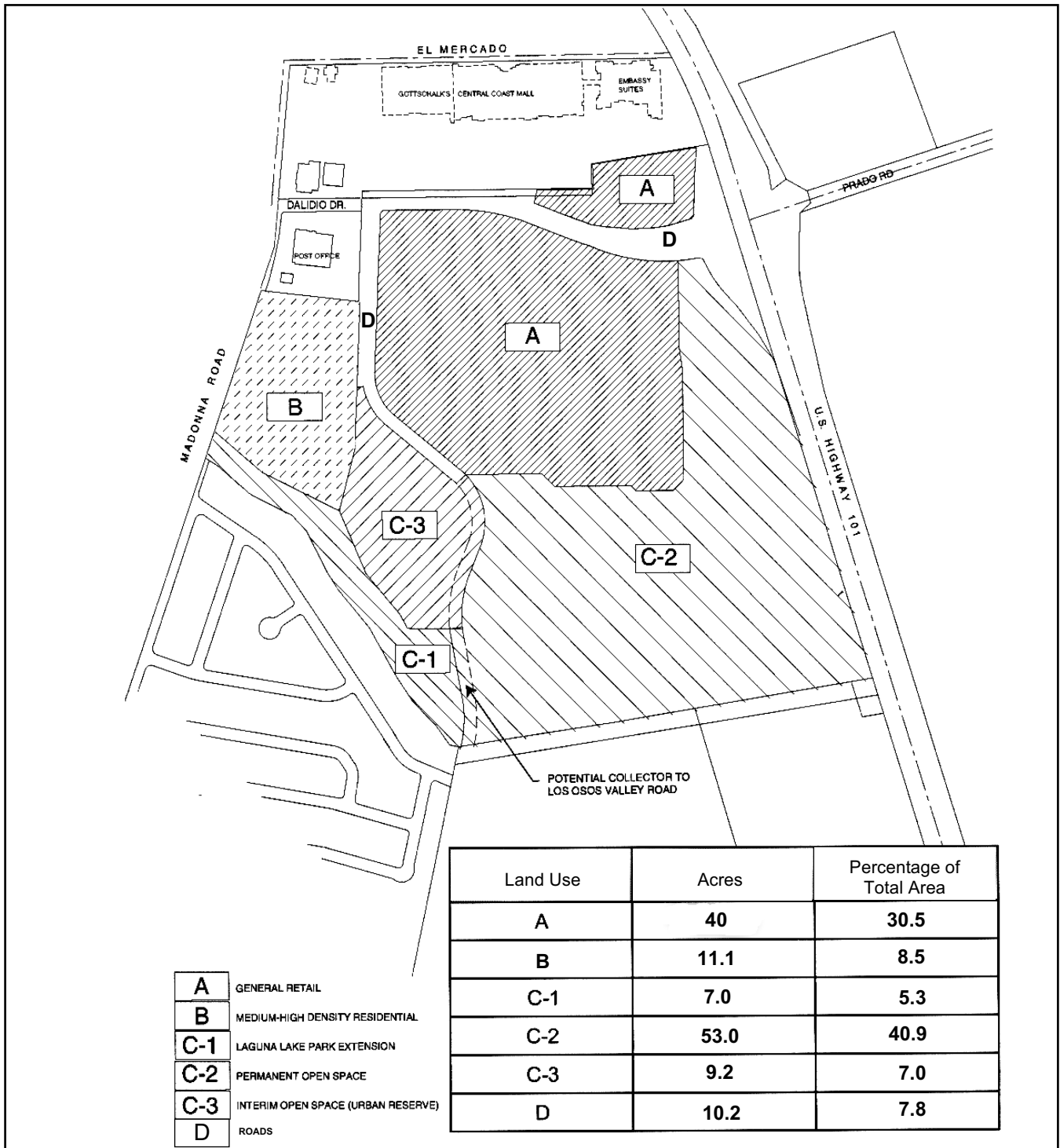
This alternative would involve the annexation of the Dalidio property to the City, and the development of a mixed use project on the site. This mixed use plan for the site was previously evaluated in the Dalidio Property Annexation Revised Draft EIR (April 2000). This mixed use alternative would have a similar development footprint when compared to the proposed project (refer to Figure 7-2). However, this alternative includes less commercial retail development and more residential development, when compared to the proposed project. This alternative would include 515,000 square feet of commercial retail development, which would be 120,200 square feet less retail development than the proposed project, which includes 635,200 square feet of retail development. This alternative would also eliminate the hotel proposed with the project. In addition, this alternative includes 11-acres of medium-high density residential development in the portion of the site proposed for business park use with the proposed project. This alternative would include 180 dwelling units as a senior housing complex in this area. Development of the senior housing complex would require an R-3-PD zoning designation over the 11-acre portion of the site. As with the proposed project, the remaining area would be retained in agricultural use. The Prado Road Interchange would be constructed as part of this alternative.

7.4.2 Impact Analysis

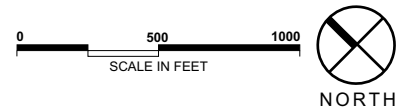
Geology/Hazards. Impacts associated with geological hazards are related to ambient soil and geotechnical conditions. The residential component of this alternative would expose additional people to such hazards, while the reduced commercial component of this alternative would expose fewer people to such hazards. Similarly, the residential component of this alternative would expose additional people to potential health risks associated with identified hazardous materials, while the reduced commercial component of this alternative would expose fewer people to such hazards. Residential uses have higher health risk requirements than office/business park or general retail uses. Therefore, on balance, this alternative would be *inferior* to the proposed project with regard to geology and hazards.

Drainage and Water Quality. This alternative would result in slightly reduced development intensity when compared to the proposed project, since this alternative would include reduced commercial area, and the increased residential site coverage would replace the business park coverage with the proposed project. Because no specific site plans for this alternative are available at this time it is assumed that the alternative would implement similar flood and stormwater pollutant reduction measures as in the proposed project. Under this alternative the beneficial impacts of the project would also be realized due to the reduction in agricultural pollutant runoff. This alternative would involve slightly reduced impervious surfaces at the site, reducing the development's affect on groundwater recharge and urban runoff when compared to the proposed project. Therefore, overall impacts would be *superior* to those of the proposed project. As with the proposed project, all impacts could be mitigated to less than significant levels with implementation of the measures recommended for the project.





Source: Cannon Associates



Alternative 4: Residential/Commercial
 Mixed Use Plan 2

Figure 7-2

Air Quality. This alternative is expected to result in reduced local and regional air quality impacts than the proposed project, due to the decrease in trip generation as a result of the reduced commercial space, and elimination of the office and hotel components, which would substantially outweigh the additional trips generated by the senior housing complex. Because construction activity required to build this alternative is expected to be similar to, but slightly less than that of the proposed project, this alternative is expected to generate slightly reduced amounts of construction related emissions. Therefore, this alternative is considered *superior* to the proposed project from an air quality perspective. As with the proposed project air quality impacts could be partially reduced using the mitigation measures recommended.

Noise. Because this alternative would generate fewer trips than the proposed project, it is expected to result in reduced roadway noise level increases. Implementation of this project would result in the exposure of new residential units to roadway noise levels. The residential units under this alternative would be located within an unacceptable noise level contour associated with San Luis Obispo Airport flight activities. In addition, adding residential units in close proximity to the commercial activities could result in significant impacts from loading activities and vehicles moving through the commercial area. Additionally, the residential units under this alternative could be exposed to severe noise from Madonna Road. Therefore, this alternative is considered *inferior* to the proposed project from a noise perspective.

Agricultural Resources. This alternative would result in the conversion of a similar amount of prime agricultural lands when compared to the proposed project, since this alternative would include similar disturbance of prime soils areas. As with the proposed project, a portion of the site would be preserved as open space and would not directly impact associated agricultural uses. Due to the distance between ongoing agricultural operations and residential uses to be constructed with this alternative, this alternative would not be expected to result in substantial land use incompatibilities between residential uses and agricultural operations. Therefore, impacts would be considered *similar* to the proposed project from an agricultural resources perspective.

Biological Resources. The substitution of residential uses for business park uses in the western portion of the site under this alternative would result in similar levels of disturbance and human activity near sensitive biological resources areas associated with Prefumo Creek. Impacts to the eucalyptus groves, riparian habitat, and wildlife would be similar with this project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to those expected under the proposed project, which would have significant biological impacts.

Aesthetics. This alternative would result in impacts to foreground and background views similar to the proposed project. The residential portion of this alternative would include a landscape screen similar to that in the proposed project to shield views of the site from U.S. Highway 101 and Madonna Road. Also, the buildings would not be of a size or scale great enough to exceed the height of the eucalyptus trees shielding views of the site from all other directions. This alternative would result in similar conversion of open space and would result in a similar addition of increased nighttime lighting when compared to the proposed project. As with the proposed project, the impacts from the introduction of nighttime lighting could be mitigated by incorporating the proposed measures. Therefore, this alternative would be *similar* to the proposed project from an aesthetic perspective.



Public Utilities. This alternative would add a senior housing complex that would increase demand for utilities, including water, wastewater, and solid waste disposal, but would eliminate the business park and hotel components, and reduce the amount of commercial space, which would decrease demand for utilities, when compared to the proposed project. This would result in a net reduction in water usage of about 5 AFY and a net reduction in wastewater generation, estimated at 4.5 mgd of wastewater. Therefore, this alternative would result in reduced impacts to water, wastewater, and solid waste disposal service, and is considered *superior* to the proposed project.

Cultural Resources. As with the proposed project this alternative has the potential to disturb unknown archaeological resources during on-site grading, and would affect historic structures on-site. This alternative would result in a similar area of disturbance, and would accordingly result in a similar potential for disturbing unknown archaeological resources when compared to the project. Therefore, this alternative is considered *similar* to the proposed project from a cultural resources perspective. As with the proposed project impacts to the unknown archaeological resources could be mitigated.

Traffic and Circulation. The trip generation of this alternative would be reduced compared to the proposed project since the trip reduction associated with this alternative's reduction in commercial space (4,141 fewer ADT), elimination of the business park (2,131 fewer ADT), and elimination of the hotel component (1,271 fewer ADT) would far outweigh the additional trips generated by the senior housing complex (930 additional ADT). This would result in decreased effects on arterial, intersection, and freeway ramp junction operations. Because this alternative would decrease demand on the street and ramp systems, it is considered *superior* to the proposed project in the area of traffic and circulation. Also, the mitigation recommended for the proposed project would lessen the impacts of this alternative.

Land Use: It should be noted that this alternative would also result in additional impacts related to schools and parks and recreational facilities, due to the additional demand for such facilities generated by the residential component. In addition, this alternative would be consistent with the original concept of this annexation area having a residential component, given that one of the current General Plan land use designations for the site is Medium-High Residential. This alternative would also satisfy the City's Inclusionary Housing Ordinance. Consistent with various General Plan Policies, this alternative would provide a superior jobs housing balance when compared to the proposed project.

7.5 RECREATIONAL USE AMENITY ALTERNATIVE

7.5.1 Description

This alternative would involve the annexation of the Dalidio property to the City, and the development of a similar project, with similar amounts of commercial and business park development on the site. However, this alternative would also include a recreational amenity within the portion of the site proposed for open space under the proposed project. The remaining area would be retained in agricultural use. The Prado Road Interchange would be constructed as part of this alternative.



This alternative proposes to locate an Asian garden and concourse/recreation area on the 7 acres identified in Figures 7-3A and 7-3B. The location of the gardens and the concourse/recreation area adjacent to existing eucalyptus groves would connect with the Laguna Lake Park extension along Prefumo Creek. The gardens and concourse/recreation area would supplement the business park and commercial areas by providing a nearby outdoor area for use by workers, visitors, and the community.

Asian Garden. A 2.5-acre area would be designated for development as an Asian garden. An option to acquire or lease the land would be provided to a community non-profit organization interested in developing the garden. Through an option, the land would be made available for a defined period of years and if not exercised by the non-profit, would revert to open space as part of the adjacent open space parcel. An access roadway and parking area would serve both the gardens and the concourse/recreation area. Pedestrian access from nearby shopping and the business park would be provided to the garden (refer to Figure 7-3B).

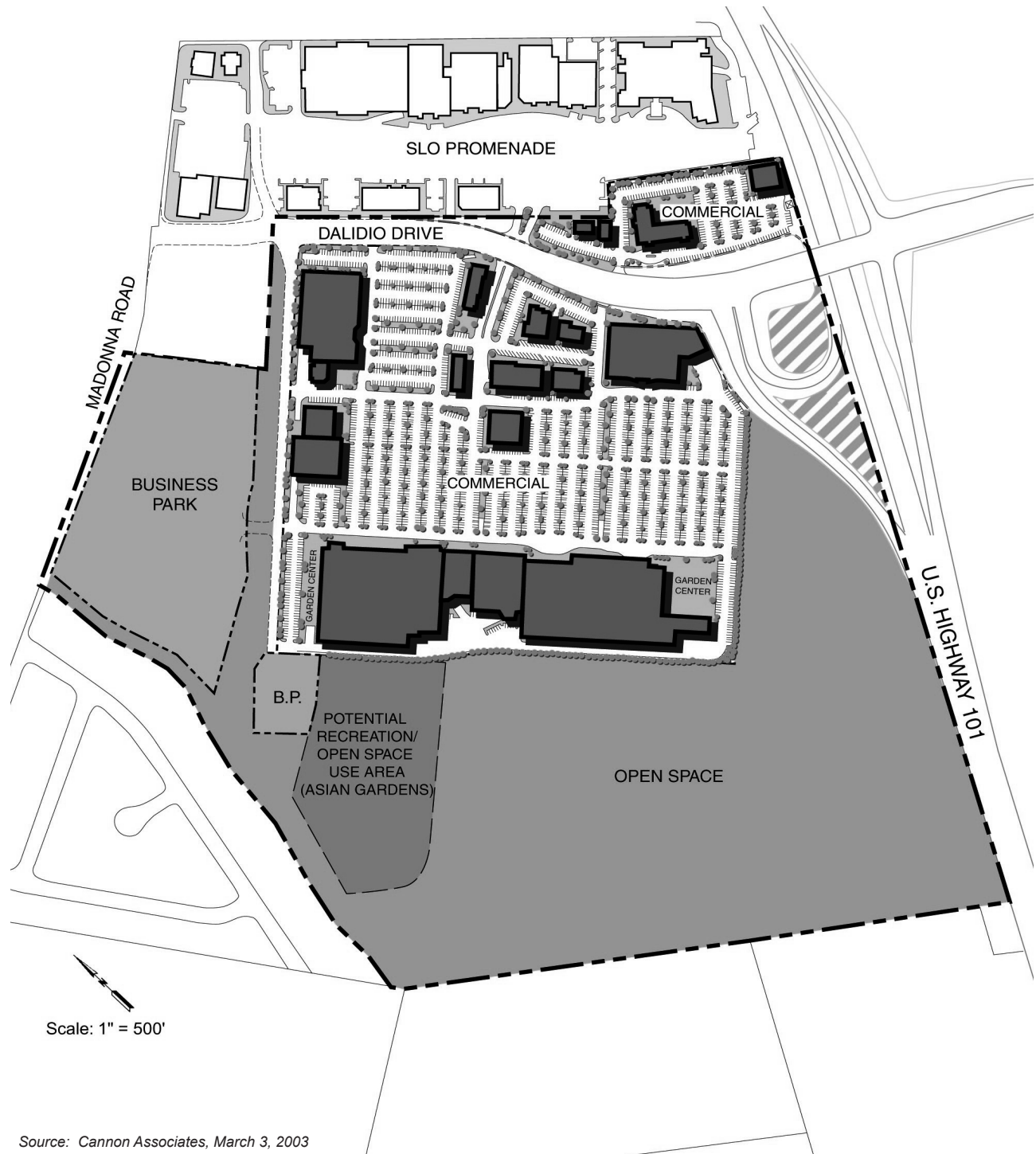
Concourse/Recreation Area. Development of a concourse/recreation area on 4.5 acres would include the replication of the historical oval Laguna Race Track that once occupied the same general location as an event concourse. The concourse would be used for public events such as farmer's market and car shows. The concourse would be large enough to contain a soccer field available for recreation events. Construction of the concourse would include the return and restoration of the historic racetrack viewing stand to its original location close to the concourse. An access roadway and parking area would serve both the gardens and the concourse/recreation area. Overflow parking for weekend events would potentially use the nearby parking area in the business park (refer to Figure 7-3B).

7.5.2 Impact Analysis

Geology/Hazards. Impacts associated with geological hazards are related to ambient soil and geotechnical conditions. This alternative is substantially similar from a building program perspective. However, the construction of the recreational amenities under this alternative would result in the exposure of additional site occupants to such hazards. Therefore, geology impacts would be *inferior* to those of the proposed project, but could be mitigated with implementation of the measures recommended for the project.

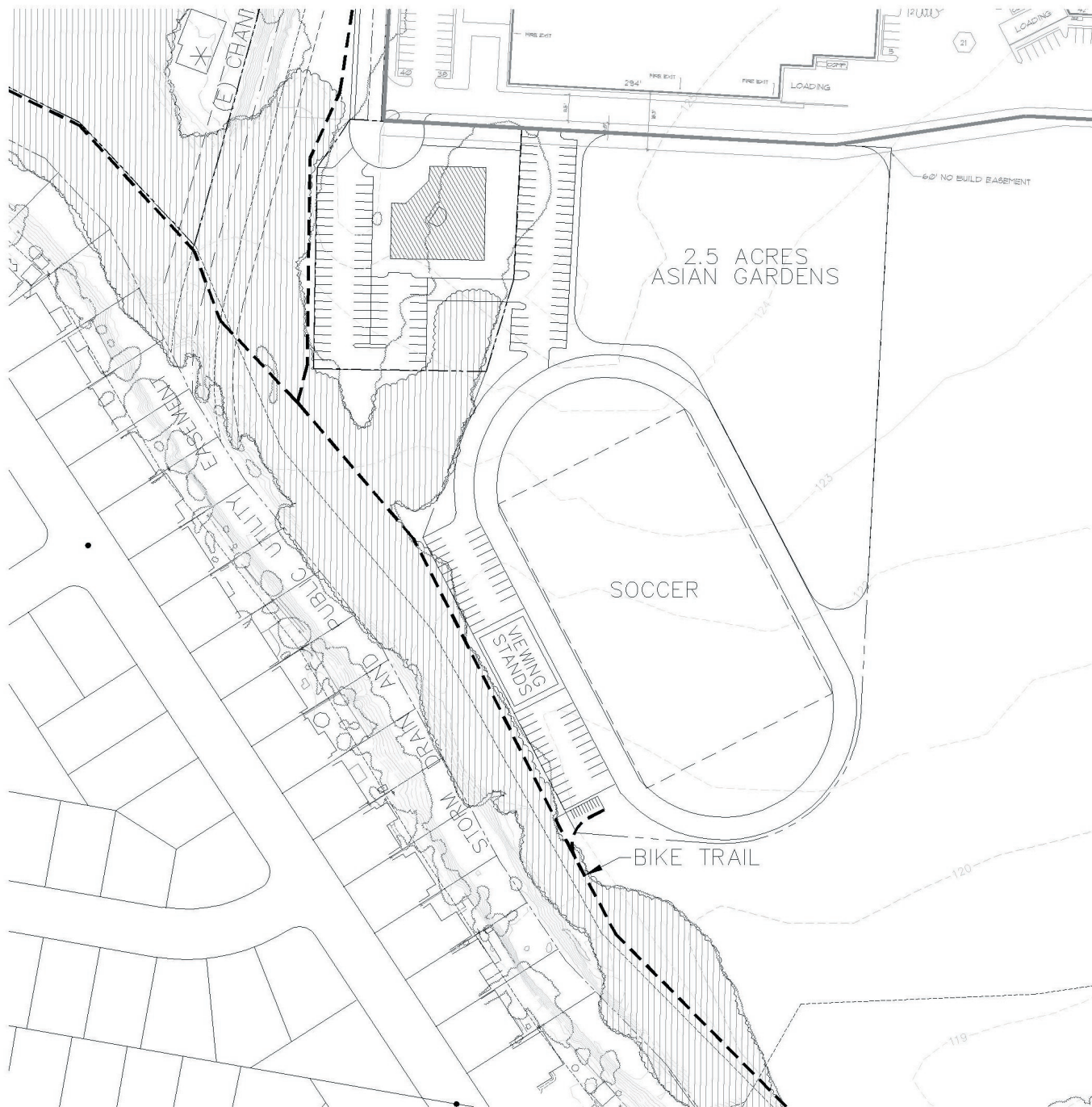
Drainage and Water Quality. This alternative would slightly increase development intensity on the site due to the development of the concourse recreational area. Because no specific site plans for this alternative are available at this time it is assumed that the alternative would implement similar flood and stormwater pollutant reduction measures as in the proposed project. Under this alternative the beneficial impacts of the project would also be realized due to the reduction in agricultural pollutant runoff. This alternative would involve the placement of a similar amount of impervious surface at the site, result in similar impacts on groundwater recharge and urban runoff from that of the proposed project. Therefore, overall impacts would be *similar* to those of the proposed project. As with the proposed project all impacts could be mitigated to less than significant levels with implementation of the measures recommended for the project.





Alternative 5: Recreational Use Amenity

Figure 7-3A



Source: Cannon Associates, March 3, 2003



Alternative 5: Recreational Use Amenity (Detail)

Figure 7-3B

Air Quality. This alternative is expected to result in slightly increased local and regional air quality impacts than the proposed project, due to the increase in trip generation associated with the recreational uses. Because construction activity required to build this alternative is expected to be similar to that of the proposed project, this alternative is expected to generate similar amounts of construction related emissions. Therefore, this alternative is considered *inferior* to the proposed project from an air quality perspective. As with the proposed project air quality impacts could be partially reduced using the mitigation measures recommended.

Noise. Because this alternative would generate more trips than the proposed project, it is expected to result in increased roadway noise level increases. In addition, the proposed recreational uses would generate noise that could be perceived as a nuisance at off-site residential receptors located west of the site. These impacts could be partially mitigated using the measures for the proposed project, though additional measures could be required. Therefore, this alternative is considered *inferior* to the proposed project from a noise perspective.

Agricultural Resources. This alternative would result in the conversion of additional agriculturally productive land at the Dalidio property, resulting in increased impacts when compared to those of the proposed project. Because this alternative would result in the loss of a greater amount of prime soils, it is considered *inferior* to the proposed project from an agricultural resources perspective.

Biological Resources. The construction of recreational uses in the western portion of the site under this alternative would increase disturbance and activity levels near sensitive biological resources areas associated with Prefumo Creek. Impacts to the eucalyptus groves, riparian habitat, and wildlife would be increased with this project. Therefore, impacts would be greater than expected under the proposed project, which would have significant biological impacts. This alternative is considered *inferior* to the proposed project from a biological perspective.

Aesthetics. This alternative would result in impacts to foreground and background views that are increased relative to the proposed project, since the recreational use under this alternative would result in more overall site disturbance than the proposed project. This alternative would result in the conversion of open space to active and passive recreational use. It is assumed that the recreational concourse would not include nighttime lighting. Therefore, lighting levels would be similar to the proposed project. Since the active and passive recreational uses would result in increased visual impacts when compared to the passive open space under the proposed project, this alternative would be *inferior* to the proposed project from an aesthetic perspective.

Public Utilities. This alternative would result in similar land use types as in the proposed project, but would add recreational amenities, including a 2.5 acre garden area **and a soccer field. Depending on the type of plants in the garden it will likely have a lesser water demand than agriculture but the soccer field will require irrigation which has a similar water demand as agriculture that will increase water demand.** In addition, the concourse area may require restroom facilities that would increase wastewater discharges. Therefore, this alternative would result in increased impacts to water and wastewater service and is considered *inferior* to the proposed project.



Cultural Resources. As with the proposed project, this alternative has the potential to disturb unknown archaeological resources during on-site grading. This alternative would result in a greater area of site disturbance and corresponding increase in the potential to disturb such resources. However, implementation of this alternative would involve the preservation of the historic viewing stand structure on-site, and incorporation of the structure into an appropriate recreational context. Therefore, this alternative is considered *both better and worse* than the proposed project from a cultural resources perspective. As with the proposed project, impacts to the unknown archaeological resources could be mitigated.

Traffic and Circulation. The trip generation of this alternative would be slightly increased due to the public recreational amenities. This would result in increased effects on arterial, intersection, and freeway ramp junction operations. In addition, events at the concourse could result in the spillover of parking from the recreational portion of the site. Because this alternative would increase demand on the street and ramp systems, and could result in additional parking impacts, it is considered *inferior* to the proposed project in the area of traffic and circulation. Also, the mitigation recommended for the proposed project would lessen the impacts of this alternative.

7.6 INCORPORATION OF THE COMMERCIAL COMPONENT INTO THE SAN LUIS OBISPO PROMENADE SHOPPING CENTER

7.6.1 Description

This alternative would involve relocation of the commercial portion of the proposed project into a redeveloped San Luis Obispo Promenade shopping center. Since no site plan is available for this alternative it is assumed that the amount of commercial square footage at the San Luis Obispo Promenade shopping center would be 887,200. This includes the existing 252,000 of commercial square footage at the San Luis Obispo Promenade shopping center, plus the 635,200 square feet proposed in the project. This would be accomplished by replacing the center's parking areas with additional stores and parking structures. The placement of the proposed business park component in this alternative is assumed to remain in the proposed area. This alternative would also include the development of the Laguna Lake Park extension. The portion of the site already designated as Open Space would retain its designation, while the areas designated General Retail and Interim Open Space would be redesignated to Open Space. This entire area would be zoned C/OS or Agriculture, and would continue in agricultural production. Implementation of this alternative would require annexation of the Dalidio property into the City. This alternative would also include construction of the proposed Prado Road interchange.

7.6.2 Impact Analysis

Geology/Hazards. Impacts associated with geological hazards are related to existing soil and geotechnical conditions. Though this alternative would involve reduced earthwork than the proposed project and reduced exposure of people to the presence of geological hazards on-site, exposure to seismic hazards for the remaining on-site development would not be different, and



mitigation per standard building codes would be required. With the increase in multi-story structures, geological hazard mitigation would be more extensive. This alternative would result in similar impacts related to exposure to migration of contaminants from off-site hazardous materials releases. In summary, geology and hazards impacts would be *both better and worse* compared to the proposed project, but could be mitigated with implementation of the measures recommended for the project.

Drainage and Water Quality. A large portion of this alternative would involve development on an already paved site, reducing the amount of impervious surface proposed at the Dalidio site. This would result in lower stormwater runoff quantities at the Dalidio site than in the proposed project and would allow increased water percolation to the underlying aquifer. Also, as in the proposed project, treatment of urban runoff from these surfaces would be expected. In addition, because this alternative requires annexation of the site, the City could and would be expected to regulate the conditions of agricultural use, resulting in a reduction in agricultural pollutant runoff from the site. Therefore, the drainage and water quality impacts under this alternative would be *superior* under this alternative to the proposed project.

Air Quality. This alternative is expected to result in slightly lower local and regional air quality impacts than the proposed project, due to the replacement of aggregated trip generation of the two separate commercial developments with a consolidated retail trip circumstance. Because construction activity required to build this alternative would be substantially similar to that of the proposed project, this alternative would have similar amounts of construction-related emissions as the proposed project. Construction-related air quality impacts are subject to standardized mitigation measures that include construction monitoring, and would be considered short-term and mitigable, as in the proposed project. In summary, this alternative is considered *superior* to the proposed project from an air quality perspective.

Noise. This alternative is expected to result in slightly lessened impacts to roadway noise levels, due to the reduction in trip generation, though the impacts of the alternative are expected to remain cumulatively significant. Construction noise levels would be expected to be similar to those under the proposed project, though pile-driving equipment may be needed for multi-story structures. Because this alternative would slightly reduce roadway noise levels when compared to the proposed project, this alternative would be considered *superior* to the proposed project from a noise perspective.

Agricultural Resources. This alternative would result in the preservation of the 109 acres of agriculturally productive land at the Dalidio property and would not result in the loss of soils determined to be of statewide importance. Also, this alternative is consistent with Open Space Element policy 10.2.1.C, which recommends consideration of the transfer of commercial development potential from the project site to the San Luis Obispo Promenade shopping center. Therefore, this alternative is considered *superior* to the proposed project from an agricultural resources perspective.

Biological Resources. Under this alternative, project improvements would be concentrated on the existing disturbed Promenade mall site, resulting in substantially reduced impacts to the Prefumo Creek wildlife and habitats adjacent to the Dalidio site. However, unlike the proposed project, existing water quality impacts associated with untreated agricultural wastewater runoff

would not be reduced under this alternative. Therefore, this alternative is considered *both better and worse* than the proposed project from a biological resources perspective.

Aesthetics. This alternative would result in the intensification of the San Luis Obispo Promenade shopping center site, while preserving the open space character of the project site. The change in character of the Promenade mall site would be more urban, but not represent a significant change to heights presently established by the existing hotel and department store uses. Instead, structured parking and two-story retail space would replace surface parking. Views would not substantially be altered. Views of the farmland would remain, and vistas over the farmland to topographic features would be unaltered. Therefore, this alternative is *superior* to the proposed project from an aesthetic perspective.

Public Utilities. This alternative involves the same amount of development as in the proposed project, resulting in similar impacts to City water and wastewater facilities. Impacts to wastewater conveyance lines and the Water Reclamation Facility are expected to be similar for this alternative as in the proposed project. It should be noted that this alternative would not result in the net decrease in water use at the site as would result in the proposed project, because existing agricultural uses would remain with this alternative. Therefore, this alternative is considered *inferior* to the proposed project from a utilities perspective.

Cultural Resources. Since development with this alternative would occur in areas that have already been paved and disturbed, this alternative would reduce impacts related to disturbance of unknown archaeological resources during on-site grading, when compared to the proposed project. In addition, this alternative would not result in significant impacts to historic structures on-site, whereas the proposed project would remove these structures. Therefore, this alternative is considered *superior* to the proposed project from a cultural resources perspective.

Traffic and Circulation. Under this alternative, the square footage of each type of land use developed would be the same as for the proposed project. However, the trip generation for this alternative would be 27% less than for the proposed project. This would be the case because the end-point of the trips originally destined for the commercial portion of the proposed project would be shifted to the San Luis Obispo Promenade shopping center site. Therefore, impacts to intersections in the area are expected to be less than those occurring under the proposed project.

Also, due to the intensification of the development at the San Luis Obispo Promenade shopping center site it is expected that issues as to access and internal circulation may result as part of this alternative. However, it is assumed that any impacts in the area of access and internal circulation could be mitigated. Also, the redevelopment of the San Luis Obispo Promenade shopping center would be expected to better incorporate transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities similar to those in the proposed project. Therefore, due to the reduction in trip generation this alternative is considered *superior* to the proposed project from a traffic perspective.



7.7 REDUCED COMMERCIAL FOOTPRINT

7.7.1 Description

This alternative involves development of all the components included in the proposed project and would require annexation of the entire project site. While the business park and open space components would continue to occupy areas similar in size to the proposed project, the footprint of the commercial area would be reduced and the open space area would be increased. Because no site plan is available at this time it is assumed that the acreage of the commercial area would be decreased by 30%, approximately 14 acres. This decreased area could potentially accommodate the same square footage of commercial development as the proposed project. The 14 acres removed would be designated Open Space and zoned C/OS or Agriculture.

7.7.2 Impact Analysis

Geology. Impacts associated with geological hazards are related to existing soil and geotechnical conditions. This alternative may involve more earthwork than the proposed project and different geotechnical requirements because of the potential need for two and three-story structures to accommodate the more intense development. Nevertheless, exposure to geologic hazards would be reduced, although mitigation per standard building codes would be required. In addition, this alternative would expose fewer people to health effects associated with releases of hazardous materials from on- and off-site uses. Therefore, geology impacts would be *superior* to those of the proposed project and could be mitigated with implementation of the measures recommended for the project.

Drainage and Water Quality. This alternative would increase development intensity as compared to the proposed project and would reduce the amount of impervious surface at the site. A corresponding decrease in stormwater runoff is expected. It is also expected that this alternative would implement similar flood and parking lot pollutant run-off prevention measures as in the proposed project. The amount of agricultural pollutants would not be reduced by the same magnitude as with the proposed project, although annexation of the site would allow the City to require controls on the amount of untreated agricultural runoff leaving the site. Therefore, this alternative would result in a reduction of in urban pollutant runoff and increased surface water quality from the proposed project. Therefore, overall impacts would be *superior* to those of the proposed project. The remaining impacts could be mitigated to less than significant levels with implementation of the measures recommended for the project.

Air Quality. This alternative would result in the generation of a similar number of vehicle trips. This would result in local and regional air quality impacts similar to the proposed project. Because construction activity required to build this alternative would be similar to that of the proposed project, this alternative would have similar amounts of construction related emissions as the proposed project. Therefore, this alternative is considered *similar* to the proposed project from an air quality perspective. Additionally, as with the proposed project, emissions could be partially reduced through implementation of the proposed mitigation measures.



Noise. This alternative is expected to result in similar impacts to roadway noise levels, due to the similarity in trip generation. Construction noise levels would be expected to be similar to those under the proposed project. The continued agricultural use of the site under this alternative would result in agricultural noise emissions. Therefore, this alternative is considered *similar* to the proposed project from a noise perspective. Also, implementation of the mitigation measures recommended for the proposed project would reduce impacts from roadway noise level increases associated with this alternative to less than significant levels.

Agricultural Resources. This alternative would result in the preservation of an additional 14 acres of agriculturally productive land on-site. However, this alternative would continue to result in a significant unavoidable impact to agricultural resources. This alternative could also result in the loss of the on-site buildings for agricultural packing purposes. Nevertheless, this alternative is considered *superior* to the proposed project from an agricultural resources perspective.

Biological Resources. This alternative would result in similar impacts to the wildlife located in the eucalyptus groves of this area of the site. Similar to the proposed project, existing water quality impacts associated with untreated agricultural wastewater runoff would be reduced under this alternative. Because these impacts would occur this alternative is considered *similar* to the proposed project from a biological resources perspective. It should be noted that implementation of the mitigation measures recommended for the proposed project could reduce impacts to less than significant levels.

Aesthetics. Though this alternative would result in the preservation of an additional 14 acres of open space, this alternative would result in impacts to foreground and background views similar to the proposed project. Additional agricultural acreage would be visible, but commercial development would be of a higher profile. This alternative would also result in the introduction of new nighttime lighting at the site. Overall, this alternative is considered *similar* to the proposed project from an aesthetic perspective.

Public Utilities. This alternative involves the same amount of development as in the proposed project. This would result in a similar demand for water from the City supplies. Impacts to wastewater conveyance lines and the Water Reclamation Facility are expected to be similar for this alternative as for the proposed project. Therefore, because this project would result in similar increases in demand to City water supplies and wastewater facilities, it is considered *similar* to the proposed project from a utilities perspective.

Cultural Resources. As with the proposed project, this alternative has the potential to disturb unknown archaeological resources during on-site grading, albeit a smaller area would be graded. Implementation of this alternative also has the potential to result in significant impacts to historic structures on-site. Nevertheless, due to the reduction in site disturbance, this alternative is considered *superior* to the proposed project from a cultural resources perspective. As with the proposed project, impacts to the on-site historic structures and potential archaeological resources could be mitigated.

Traffic and Circulation. This alternative would result in the same amount of trip generation as in the proposed project and similar trip distribution. The intensification of this development on-site under this alternative could potentially result in issues of emergency and site access, internal circulation, and parking. However, it is assumed that impacts in these areas could be



mitigated to less than significant levels. Because this alternative is expected to result in similar impacts to intersection, freeway ramp, and arterial operations it is considered *similar* to the proposed project from a traffic perspective.

7.8 ENVIRONMENTALLY SUPERIOR ALTERNATIVE

This section evaluates the findings for the proposed project and the seven alternatives under consideration. It then identifies the environmentally superior alternative for each issue area, as shown on Table 7-1. In accordance with State CEQA Guidelines, if the No Project Alternative is identified as the Environmentally Superior Alternative, the alternative among the remaining alternatives that is environmentally superior is also identified. In addition, the table shows whether each alternative's environmental impact is greater, lesser, or similar to the proposed project.

Table 7-1. Impact Comparison of Alternatives to Proposed Project

Issue	Project	ALT 1	ALT 2*	ALT 3	ALT 4	ALT 5	ALT 6	ALT 7
Geology	=	+	+	-	-	-	+/-	=
Drainage and WQ	=	-	+	-	+	=	+	+
Air Quality	=	+/-	+/-	-	+	-	+	=
Noise	=	+	+	-	-	-	+	=
Agriculture	=	+	+	-	=	-	+	+
Biology	=	+	+	-	=	-	+/-	=
Aesthetics	=	+	+	=	=	-	+	=
Utilities	=	+/-	+/-	-	+	-	-	=
Cultural Res.	=	+	+	-	=	+/-	+	+
Traffic	=	+	+	-	+	-	+	=
Overall	=	+6	+8	-9	+2	-8	+6	+3

- Inferior to the proposed project
- + Superior to the proposed project
- +/- Characteristics both better and worse than the proposed project
- = Similar impact to the proposed project
- * Environmentally Superior Alternative

The State CEQA Guidelines do not defined a precise methodology regarding the determination of the Environmentally Superior Alternative. For the purposes of this analysis, each alternative has been compared within each issue area to the proposed project and a determination has been made as to whether the alternative was superior, inferior, or similar to the proposed project.

Overall rankings are tabulated to determine, for the issue areas in question, which alternative has the highest incidence of being superior when each issue is equally weighted.

Among the alternatives, the Continuing Agricultural Use Alternative (Alternative 2) is considered environmentally superior overall. This alternative would result in fewer vehicle trips, reduced air emission and noise levels, and no increase in demand on City utilities. However, this alternative would result in continued groundwater demand and greater overall water use when compared to the proposed project.

In addition, this alternative would not result in the conversion of agricultural land on-site. The resulting increase in water quality of Prefumo Creek and avoidance of development within the eucalyptus groves would avoid the impacts on wildlife that would occur under the proposed project. Therefore, Alternative 2 is considered environmentally superior overall.



In addition, Alternative 1, No Project and Alternative 6, Incorporation of the Commercial Component into the San Luis Obispo Promenade Shopping center, stand out as superior to the proposed project. Alternative 1 is considered superior because no development that could result in significant environmental impacts would occur. Alternative 6 would result in reduced impacts in all categories except geology, biological resources, and utilities. The geological impacts associated with this alternative would be both better and worse than those of the proposed project. Though this alternative would involve reduced earthwork than the proposed project and reduced exposure of people to the presence of geological hazards on-site, geological hazard mitigation would be more extensive with the increase in multi-story structures. This alternative is considered both better and worse than the proposed project in the area of biological resources because it would be concentrated on the existing disturbed Promenade mall site, resulting in substantially reduced impacts to the Prefumo Creek wildlife and habitats adjacent to the Dalidio site, but would not reduce existing water quality impacts associated with untreated agricultural wastewater runoff as the project would. This alternative would be considered inferior to the proposed project with regard to utilities because it would not result in the net decrease in groundwater use at the site as would the proposed project, because existing agricultural uses would remain with this alternative.

It should be noted that Alternative 6 is potentially inconsistent with the 1973 Airport Land Use Plan (ALUP) because it would result in a high concentration of shoppers in overflight zones, where land uses are restricted. It may be infeasible from a land use policy consistency standpoint without the adoption of an ALUP amendment.

It should be noted that Alternatives 1 and 2 would not fulfill the objectives of the project, as described in Section 2.6 of this EIR. Alternative 6 would partially fulfill the objectives in that it would provide additional commercial development within the City.

