

6 PROJECT ALTERNATIVES

6.1 CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT REQUIREMENTS

The State CEQA Guidelines require analysis of a range of reasonable alternatives to the project, or to the location of the project, which would feasibly attain most of the project's basic objectives and avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project (Section 15126.6[a]). The range of potentially feasible alternatives required in an EIR is governed by a "rule of reason" that requires the EIR to set forth only those alternatives necessary to permit a reasoned choice. The potential feasibility of an alternative may be determined based on a variety of factors, including economic viability, availability of infrastructure, and other plans or regulatory limitations. Specifically, Section 15126.6(f) (1) of the State CEQA Guidelines 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). The State CEQA Guidelines further require that the alternatives be compared to the project's environmental impacts and that the "no project" alternative is considered (Section 15126.6[d] [e]).

An EIR need not evaluate the environmental effects of alternatives in the same level of detail as the project, but must include enough information to allow meaningful evaluation, analysis, and comparison with the project. The requirement that an EIR evaluate alternatives to the project or alternatives that address the location of the project is a broad one; the primary intent of the alternatives analysis is to disclose other ways that the objectives of the project could be attained while reducing the magnitude of, or avoiding, the environmental impacts of the project. Alternatives that are included and evaluated in the EIR must be feasible alternatives. However, the Public Resources Code (PCR) and the CEQA Guidelines direct that the EIR need "set forth only those alternatives necessary to permit a reasoned choice." The ultimate determination as to whether an alternative is feasible or infeasible is made by the lead agency's decision-making body (see PRC Section 21081[a] [3].)

6.2 CONSIDERATIONS FOR SELECTION OF ALTERNATIVES

6.2.1 Attainment of Project Objectives

As described above, one factor that must be considered in selection of alternatives is the ability of a specific alternative to attain most of the basic objectives of the project (CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6[a]). Chapter 2, "Project Description," articulates the following project objectives:

- ▲ amend the Sphere of Influence (SOI) boundary beyond the existing Elk Grove city limits to accommodate orderly and sustainable growth compatible with the Sacramento LAFCo, City of Elk Grove, and Sacramento County growth goals and policies, including promoting a sustainable jobs to housing ratio;

- ▲ implement the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 consistent with public service conditions present or reasonably foreseeable in the proposed Bilby Ridge SOIA area;
- ▲ establish a logical boundary within which future annexation requests by the City of Elk Grove may be considered; and
- ▲ establish an expanded SOI for the City of Elk Grove that will facilitate the protection of important environmental, cultural, and agricultural resources.

6.2.2 Environmental Impacts of the Project Impacts

Sections 3.1 through 3.15 of this Draft EIR address the environmental impacts of implementation of the Bilby Ridge SOIA. Potentially feasible alternatives were developed with consideration of avoiding or lessening the significant adverse impacts of the project, as identified in this draft EIR. In summary, the significant impacts of the project are:

Aesthetics: The project could result in the following impacts:

- ▲ While approval of the SOIA alone would not result in physical visual changes to the site, future development of the SOIA area could convert the open space character of project site to suburban uses, which would further expand suburban development conditions south of the existing City of Elk Grove. This may substantially alter public views. Mitigation has been identified to minimize this impact, but would not reduce it to a less-than-significant level. Therefore, the impact would be **significant and unavoidable**. (Impact 3.1-1)
- ▲ The SOIA would not result in any changes in existing land uses and, as such, would not result in new sources of substantial light or glare. If the site is annexed and developed in the future, development could result in the introduction of buildings and facilities that may create lighting and glare on adjoining areas. Mitigation has been identified to minimize this impact, but would not reduce it to a less-than-significant level. Therefore, the impact would be **significant and unavoidable**. (Impact 3.1-2)

Agricultural Resources: The project could result in the following impacts:

- ▲ While the SOIA would not result in direct physical changes to the site, future development facilitated by subsequent annexation within the Bilby Ridge site could result in the direct conversion of up to 362 acres of Farmland of Statewide Importance, 70 of which are also considered prime agricultural land by LAFCo, to nonagricultural urban uses. Mitigation has been identified to minimize this impact, but would not reduce it to a less-than-significant level. Therefore, the impact would be **significant and unavoidable**. (Impact 3.2-1)
- ▲ Future development within the Bilby Ridge site could result in conflicts with existing Williamson Act contracts that protect farmland in the SOIA and require filing of non-renewals or cancellations of the contracts. Mitigation has been identified to minimize this impact, but would not reduce it to a less-than-significant level. Therefore, the impact would be **significant and unavoidable**. (Impact 3.2-2)
- ▲ The project would establish an expanded sphere of influence for the City of Elk Grove that would likely facilitate the subsequent annexation and development of the project site. New urban land uses in the project area may impair or result in conflicts with adjacent agricultural activities. Mitigation has been identified to minimize this impact, but would not reduce it to a less-than-significant level. Therefore, the impact would be **significant and unavoidable**. (Impact 3.2-3)

Air Quality: The project could result in the following impacts:

- ▲ Construction-related activities associated with future development within the SOIA area upon annexation would result in emissions of ROG, NO_x, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} from site preparation (e.g., excavation, clearing), off-road equipment, material and equipment delivery trips, and worker commute trips, and other miscellaneous activities (e.g., building construction, asphalt paving, application of architectural coatings). Construction activities would result in mass emissions of NO_x and PM₁₀ that exceed SMAQMD's thresholds of 85 pounds per day (lb/day) and 80 lb/day, respectively. Mitigation has been identified to minimize this impact, but would not reduce it to a less-than-significant level. Therefore, the impact would be **significant and unavoidable**. (Impact 3.3-1)
- ▲ While approval of the SOIA would not result in any physical changes to the environment, development in the SOIA area upon future annexation could result in long-term operational emissions of ROG, NO_x, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} that exceed SMAQMD-recommended mass emission thresholds and, therefore, could conflict with the air quality planning efforts and contribute substantially to the nonattainment status of the SVAB with respect to the CAAQS and NAAQS for ozone, the CAAQS for PM₁₀ and the NAAQS for PM_{2.5}. Mitigation has been identified to minimize this impact, but would not reduce it to a less-than-significant level. Therefore, the impact would be **significant and unavoidable**. (Impact 3.3-2)
- ▲ New operational TAC sources associated with commercial development may expose existing or new receptors to TAC emissions. Mitigation has been identified that would reduce this impact to a **less-than-significant level**. (Impact 3.3-4)
- ▲ While approval of the SOIA would not result in any physical changes to the environment, future development of the SOIA area upon annexation could introduce new odor sources into the area (e.g., temporary diesel exhaust emissions during construction and delivery trucks associated with commercial land uses). Thus, receptors located near the commercial land uses may be exposed to odorous emissions depending upon the specific land uses developed. Mitigation has been identified that would reduce this impact to a **less-than-significant level**. (Impact 3.3-5)

Biological Resources: The project could result in the following impacts:

- ▲ Potential land uses and development projects that may be approved and implemented in the future in the proposed SOIA area could result in disturbance or loss of several special-status plant species. Mitigation has been identified that would reduce this impact to a **less-than-significant level**. (Impact 3.4-1)
- ▲ Potential land uses and development projects that may be approved and implemented in the future under the proposed SOIA area could adversely affect several special-status wildlife species, including reptiles, nesting birds, invertebrates, and mammals. Future development construction activities such as ground disturbance and vegetation removal, as well as overall conversion of habitat to urban uses, could result in the disturbance or loss of individuals and reduced breeding productivity of these species. Mitigation has been identified to minimize this impact, but would not reduce it to a less-than-significant level. Therefore, the impact would be **significant and unavoidable**. (Impact 3.4-2)
- ▲ Wetlands, including vernal pools, and other waters of the United States and waters of the state may be present in the SOIA. Future land use changes and development related to the proposed establishment of the SOIA and future annexation could result in conversion of wetland habitat to urban uses. Mitigation has been identified that would reduce this impact to a **less-than-significant level**. (Impact 3.4-3)

Cultural and Paleontological Resources: The project could result in the following impacts:

- ▲ There are several historic-age buildings on the projects site that have not been evaluated for NRHP- or CRHR-eligibility. If the SOIA is approved and subsequent annexation of all or a portion of the site to the City of Elk Grove occurs, development of the SOIA area could result in damage to or destruction to these

buildings. Mitigation has been identified that would reduce this impact to a **less-than-significant level**. (Impact 3.5-1)

- ▲ Ground-disturbing activities from development upon annexation to the City of Elk Grove could result in discovery or damage of as yet undiscovered archaeological resources as defined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5. Mitigation has been identified that would reduce this impact to a **less-than-significant level**. (Impact 3.5-2)
- ▲ Any future development within the SOIA area could potentially affect undiscovered paleontological resources. Mitigation has been identified that would reduce this impact to a **less-than-significant level**. (Impact 3.5-4)

Energy: The project could result in the following impacts:

- ▲ Future development of the SOIA area would increase electricity and natural gas consumption at the site relative to existing conditions. Mitigation has been identified that would reduce this impact to a **less-than-significant level**. (Impact 3.6-1)
- ▲ Electrical and natural gas infrastructure would need to be extended by PG&E and SMUD to meet the energy needs of future development within the SOIA area upon annexation. If determined to be necessary, off-site improvements to electrical and natural gas facilities would be the responsibility of the utility and would be analyzed by the utility provider under separate environmental review. Physical environmental impacts from construction or operation of off-site improvements could remain significant after implementation of mitigation (i.e., significant and unavoidable) or no feasible mitigation may be available to fully reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level. No additional mitigation is available to address this impact. Therefore, the impact would be **significant and unavoidable**. (Impact 3.6-2)

Greenhouse Gas Emissions: The project could result in the following impacts:

- ▲ Future development of the SOIA area upon annexation is estimated to generate 5,116 MTCO₂e from construction activities and 71,113 MTCO₂e operation-related emissions at assumed buildout of the conceptual land use plan. Total emissions attributed to the conceptual land use plan would be 71,318 MTCO₂e/year with combined amortized construction emissions. This level of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions has the potential to result in a considerable contribution to cumulative emissions related to global climate change and conflict with State GHG reduction targets established for 2030 and 2050. Mitigation has been identified that could mitigate this impact. However, Sacramento LAFCo cannot guarantee the success of these mitigation measures for offsetting project emissions. Confirmation of compliance with the mitigation measures would require monitoring of the GHG reduction actions as development occurs. LAFCo would not be able to verify or enforce these measures after annexation. The City of Elk Grove is also in the process of updating its CAP and may alter the mitigation approach for the development of this project (after annexation) to match the updated CAP GHG reduction measures. Because of this uncertainty in achieving no net increase in GHG emission, the project's contribution to this significant cumulative impact would be **cumulatively considerable** and **significant and unavoidable**. (Impact 3.7-1)

Hydrology and Water Quality: The project could result in the following impacts:

- ▲ Future development of the SOIA area from future annexation could result in water quality degradation from construction activities, as well as from operational sources of water pollutants. Mitigation has been identified that would reduce this impact to a **less-than-significant level**. (Impact 3.8-1)
- ▲ Future development of the SOIA area upon annexation could lead to alteration of the drainage pattern of the site. This could result in increased stormwater runoff and an increase in susceptibility to downstream flooding and sediment issues. Mitigation has been identified that would reduce this impact to a **less-than-significant level**. (Impact 3.8-3)

- ▲ A portion of the SOIA area is mapped as 200-year floodplain that could expose future SOIA area residents to flooding. Mitigation has been identified that would reduce this impact to a **less-than-significant level**. (Impact 3.8-4)

Land Use: The project could result in the following impacts:

- ▲ Establishment of the SOIA and the future annexation and development of the area could result in the loss of open space resources, as defined by Sacramento LAFCo, to urban uses. Mitigation has been identified to minimize this impact, but would not reduce it to a less-than-significant level. Therefore, the impact would be **significant and unavoidable**. (Impact 3.9-4)

Noise and Vibration: The project could result in the following impacts:

- ▲ Short-term construction-generated noise levels associated with the future development of the SOIA area upon annexation could expose nearby noise-sensitive receptors to noise levels that exceed applicable local standards. In addition, if construction activity were to occur during more noise-sensitive nighttime hours it could result in annoyance and sleep disruption at occupants of nearby residential land uses and substantial periodic increases in ambient noise levels. Mitigation has been identified to minimize this impact, but would not reduce it to a less-than-significant level. Therefore, the impact would be **significant and unavoidable**. (Impact 3.10-1)
- ▲ The SOIA area could result in the future development of commercial land uses in proximity to existing noise-sensitive land uses. Noise sources generally associated with commercial/retail land uses include vehicular and human activity in parking lots, and loading dock and delivery activities. Existing off-site receptors could experience commercial-related noise levels that exceed the City and County's daytime and nighttime noise levels standards. Mitigation has been identified that would reduce this impact to a **less-than-significant level**. (Impact 3.10-3)
- ▲ Future annexation of the SOIA area would enable the development of a mix of various land uses, including residential, commercial, office, park, and school uses. Traffic and stationary noise sources in the vicinity of the project could expose newly developed noise-sensitive uses in the SOIA area to noise levels generated by generated by traffic on adjacent roadways and by stationary sources that exceed applicable noise standards established by the City of Elk Grove. Mitigation has been identified that would reduce this impact to a **less-than-significant level**. (Impact 3.10-4)

Population and Housing: The project could result in the following impacts:

- ▲ The SOIA would indirectly induce substantial population growth through fostering future annexation of the SOIA area and development. Mitigation has been identified to minimize this impact, but would not reduce it to a less-than-significant level. Therefore, the impact would be **significant and unavoidable**. (Impact 3.11-1)

Public Services and Recreation: The project could result in the following impacts:

- ▲ Future development within the Bilby Ridge SOIA area could result in an increase in demand for fire protection and emergency services, which could require construction of new facilities that would result in environmental impacts. Mitigation has been identified to minimize this impact, but would not reduce it to a less-than-significant level. Therefore, the impact would be **significant and unavoidable**. (Impact 3.12-1)
- ▲ Future development within the Bilby Ridge SOIA area could result in an increase in demand for law enforcement services, which would require construction of new facilities that would result in environmental impacts. Mitigation has been identified to minimize this impact, but would not reduce it to a less-than-significant level. Therefore, the impact would be **significant and unavoidable**. (Impact 3.12-2)

Transportation and Circulation: The project could result in the following impacts:

- ▲ Approval of the SOIA and future development of the SOIA area upon annexation could result in increases in local vehicle miles traveled, unacceptable operations and add traffic to study roadway segments that are projected to operate unacceptably. Mitigation has been identified to minimize this impact, but would not reduce it to a less-than-significant level. Therefore, the impact would be **significant and unavoidable**. (Impact 3.13-1)
- ▲ Approval of the SOIA and future development of the SOIA area upon annexation would add traffic to segments of SR 99 and I-5 that are projected to operate unacceptably. Mitigation has been identified to minimize this impact, but would not reduce it to a less-than-significant level. Therefore, the impact would be **significant and unavoidable**. (Impact 3.13-2)
- ▲ Approval of the SOIA and future development of the SOIA area upon annexation would increase demand for public transit service. Mitigation has been identified that would reduce this impact to a **less-than-significant level**. (Impact 3.13-3)
- ▲ Approval of the SOIA and future development of the SOIA area upon annexation would increase demand for bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Mitigation has been identified that would reduce this impact to a **less-than-significant level**. (Impact 3.13-4)

Utilities: The project could result in the following impacts:

- ▲ Revising the City of Elk Grove's SOI would inform future planning efforts so that the anticipated demand from development could be accommodated in the area. If determined to be necessary, off-site improvements to water or wastewater treatment or conveyance facilities would be the responsibility of the utility and would be analyzed by the utility provider under separate environmental review. Physical environmental impacts from construction or operation of off-site improvements could remain significant after implementation of mitigation (i.e., significant and unavoidable) or no feasible mitigation may be available to fully reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level. Therefore, the impact would be **significant and unavoidable**. (Impact 3.14-1)

Hazards and Hazardous Materials: The project could result in the following impacts:

- ▲ Future development of the SOIA area upon annexation could expose construction workers to hazardous materials present on-site during construction activities and hazardous materials on-site could create an environmental or health hazard for later residents or occupants, if left in place. Mitigation has been identified that would reduce this impact to a **less-than-significant level**. (Impact 3.15-2)

6.3 ALTERNATIVES DISMISSED FROM DETAILED EVALUATION

6.3.1 Buffer Alternative/ Changes in Land Use of the Sphere of Influence Amendment Alternatives

Comments received on the notice of preparation suggested that the EIR consider a land use design that would provide for buffering and/or development density transitions along the SOIA area's southern boundary with the Sacramento County Urban Services Boundary.

The Bilby Ridge SOIA would allow the City of Elk Grove and other service providers to plan for future urbanization of the approximately 480-acre site as an area planned for potential urban growth. However, approval of the SOIA would not authorize changes in land use or governance by the City unless the project site is annexed to the City. Annexation of the project site to the City is not an action under consideration for

this project. Sacramento LAFCo does not have land use authority to establish the land use pattern for the SOIA and can only consider boundary adjustments to the SOI. An alternative that reduces land use densities as they transition to neighboring agricultural properties is not within the purview of LAFCo's authority under this discretionary action. Thus, this alternative is considered infeasible. However, alternate land use scenarios may be considered upon annexation of all or a portion of the site by the City.

6.4 EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVES

The following alternatives to the proposed project are evaluated in detail, as described below:

- ▲ **Alternative 1: No Project** – This alternative would consist not approving the Bilby Ridge SOIA and the SOIA area would remain under the jurisdiction of Sacramento County with no changes to current agricultural land use designation and zoning.
- ▲ **Alternative 2: Reduced Sphere of Influence** – This alternative would reduce the SOIA area from 480 acres to 240 acres as shown in Exhibit 6-1.
- ▲ **Alternative 3: Off-Site Alternative** – This alternative would involve the establishment of the SOIA area adjacent to the proposed Elk Grove Multi Sport Complex that is proposed for annexation south of Grant Line Road (see Exhibit 6-2).

6.4.1 Alternative 1: No Project Alternative

Under the No Project Alternative, the proposed SOIA would not be established and the SOIA area would remain under Sacramento County's jurisdiction. The County General Plan land use designation would remain as Agricultural Cropland. The No Project Alternative would not meet any of the project objectives. However, consistent with State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e), the No Project Alternative is nevertheless evaluated in this Draft EIR.

EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

Aesthetics

The No Project Alternative provides for the continued use of the project area for agricultural uses and would retain the existing visual character and lighting conditions of the area. While project impacts to the visual character and lighting/glare conditions of the area are significant and unavoidable under project and cumulative conditions, this impact would be avoided under the No Project Alternative. Therefore, the visual and lighting impacts of the No Project Alternative would be less.

Agricultural Resources

The No Project Alternative would allow for the continued use of the project area for agricultural uses. While the project would result in the significant and unavoidable impacts under project and cumulative conditions for the loss of Important Farmland as well as prime agricultural land defined by LAFCo to nonagricultural uses, this alternative would not result in the conversion of any agricultural lands. The No Project Alternative would also avoid the significant and unavoidable land use compatibility impacts with adjacent agricultural operations identified for the project. Overall, the agricultural resource impacts of the No Project Alternative would be less.

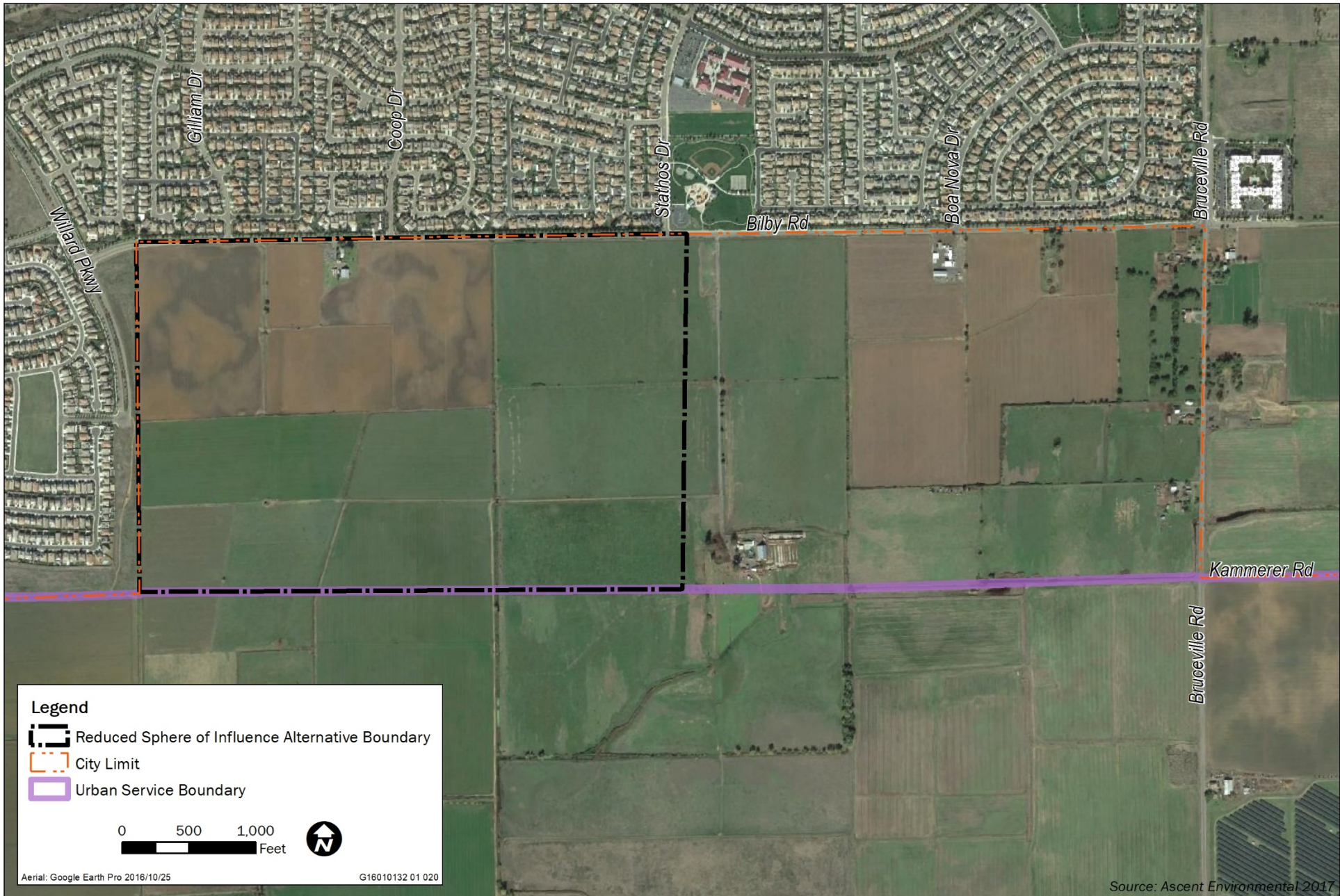
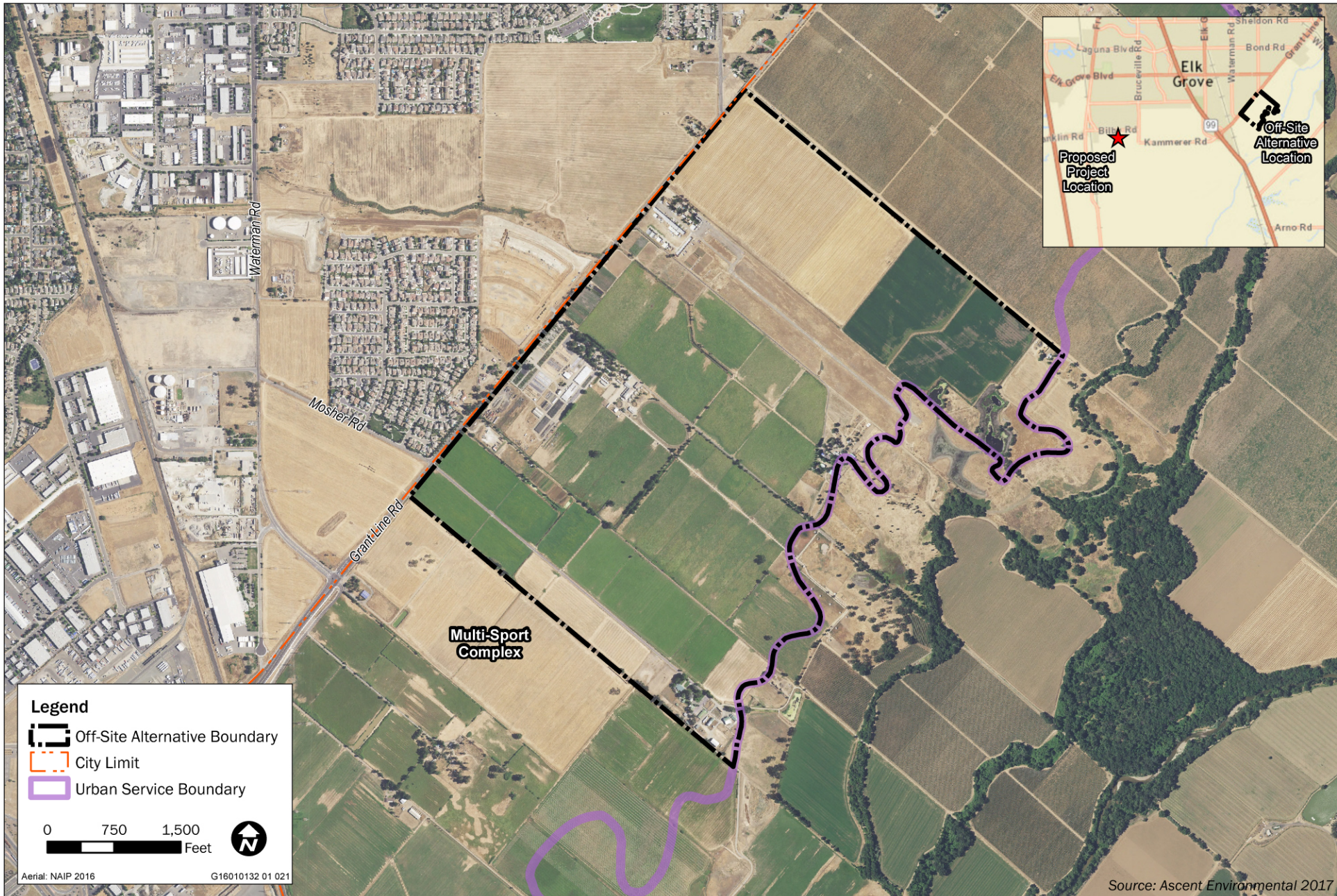





Exhibit 6-1


Alternative 2: Reduced Sphere of Influence





Legend

-  Off-Site Alternative Boundary
-  City Limit
-  Urban Service Boundary

0 750 1,500 Feet 

Aerial: NAIP 2016 G16010132 01 021

Source: Ascent Environmental 2017

Exhibit 6-2

Alternative 3: Off-Site Alternative



Air Quality

The No Project Alternative would generate lower air pollutant emissions (particulate matter and ozone precursors) as a result of continued agricultural activities. This alternative would avoid project air quality impacts related to TAC and potential odor generation. The significant construction, operational, and cumulative air quality impacts identified for the project would not occur. Therefore, the air quality impacts of the No Project Alternative would be less than those that would occur with the project.

Biological Resources

Under the No Project Alternative, activity within the project would be limited to the continued operation of agricultural uses. This would retain the grasslands, agricultural habitat, and trees in the SOIA area that support special-status plant and wildlife species known to occur in the region. While mitigation is available to reduce some project biological resource impacts to a less-than-significant level, these impacts would be substantially reduced or avoided under the No Project Alternative. Therefore, the biological resource impacts of the No Project Alternative would be less.

Cultural and Paleontological Resources

Under the No Project Alternative, impacts to archaeological, historical, paleontological, and tribal cultural resources would be less under the No Project Alternative because of the minimal ground disturbance from new agricultural activities as compared to the project. Overall, impacts would be less.

Energy

The No Project Alternative would have a substantial reduction in operational and transportation energy demand as compared to the project and would not require the extension of off-site energy infrastructure that would result in significant and unavoidable impacts for the project. The No Project Alternative would have substantially less energy demands, and no off-site energy infrastructure impacts as compared to the project.

Greenhouse Gases Emissions

The No Project Alternative would generate lower GHG emissions from continued agricultural operations in the SOIA area. The significant and cumulative GHG emission impacts that would contribute to climate change identified for the project would not occur, and no mitigation would be required for this alternative. Overall, the GHG emission impacts of the No Project Alternative would be less than those that would occur with the project.

Hydrology and Water Quality

The No Project Alternative would avoid an increase in impervious surface area as compared to future development potential under the project, which would increase surface water infiltration and reduce sedimentation and other pollutants in stormwater runoff. This alternative would still be exposed to existing 200-year flood hazards like the project that can be mitigated. Overall, the hydrology and water quality impacts of the No Project Alternative would be less.

Land Use

Under the No Project Alternative, the SOIA area would remain an agricultural nature that is consistent with its current Sacramento County General Plan land use designation and zoning. This alternative would not result in any conflicts with existing land uses or divide an established community. No conflicts with plans adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating a significant environmental impact would occur. The No Project Alternative would avoid the loss of open space lands identified for the project. Overall, land use impacts under this alternative would be less.

Noise and Vibration

The No Project Alternative would avoid construction noise that was identified for the project. Continued use of the SOIA area for agricultural use would also avoid operational noise impacts that could exceed

Sacramento County and City of Elk Grove noise standards. Therefore, the noise impacts of the No Project Alternative would be less.

Population and Housing

The No Project Alternative would not generate substantial new growth of residents or employment, and would not remove any housing. The project's growth potential (1,846 dwelling units; 5,540 residents; and 4,359 employees) was identified as a significant and unavoidable impact. Growth inducement impacts under this alternative would be less.

Public Services and Recreation

The No Project Alternative would not trigger the need for new or improved fire, police, or park facilities associated with the continuation of agricultural activities. While mitigation is available to reduce project impacts to public facilities, these impacts would be avoided under the No Project Alternative. Overall, the public service impacts of the No Project Alternative would be less.

Traffic, Transportation, and Circulation

The No Project Alternative would remain in agricultural operation and would avoid the project's significant and unavoidable traffic impacts to the operation of Hood-Franklin Road, Bruceville Road, Kammerer Road, Grant Line Road, and segments of Interstate 5 and State Route 99. This alternative would also avoid significant transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facility and service impacts of the project. Overall, the transportation impacts of the No Project Alternative would be less.

Utilities

Under the No Project Alternative, agricultural activities would continue to utilize groundwater wells and septic systems and would avoid the project's significant and unavoidable impacts related to the extension of off-site infrastructure. Solid waste generation would also be substantially reduced as compared to the project. The No Project Alternative would have fewer impacts than those that would occur with the project.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Under the No Project Alternative, there would not be the potential to expose new residents to sources of contamination from site development. While mitigation is available to reduce project hazards to a less-than-significant level, these impacts would be avoided under the No Project Alternative. Therefore, the hazard impacts of the No Project Alternative would be less.

6.4.2 Alternative 2: Reduced Sphere of Influence

This alternative would reduce the SOIA area from 480 acres to approximately 240 acres as shown in Exhibit 6-1. The mix of possible future land uses was based on the project's conceptual land use plan would consist of the following:

- ▲ 96.5 acres Residential (RD-4: 4 dwelling units per acre): 386 dwelling units (1,158 residents)
- ▲ 85.3 acres Residential (RD-5: 5 dwelling units per acre): 426 dwelling units (1,278 residents)
- ▲ 10 acres of park uses
- ▲ 10 acres for public elementary school site
- ▲ 19.6 acres commercial (549 jobs)
- ▲ 19.3 acres of business professional (3,474 jobs). This alternative could result in 1,034 fewer dwelling units (3,104 fewer residents) and 336 fewer jobs as to the project's conceptual land use plan.

This alternative was developed to reduce identified significant ground disturbance (e.g., biological and cultural resources, noise, air, GHG) and traffic operation impacts of the project.

EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

Aesthetics

Like the project, Alternative 2 would result in alteration of the existing visual character of approximately half of the site and introduction of new light and glare sources to the area from public views. The reduced land area for the SOIA under Alternative 2 would lessen the extent of this impact for views along Bruceville Road, Kammerer Road, and a portion of Bilby Road, because development would be in the western portion of the site. The aesthetic impacts under Alternative 2 would be significant and unavoidable under project and cumulative conditions similar to the proposed SOIA. Alternative 2's visual and lighting impacts would be less than those that would occur with the project because of the reduced extent of future development potential.

Agricultural Resources

Alternative 2 would result in the loss of Important Farmland as well as prime agricultural land defined by LAFCo from potential future development. However, this alternative would retain approximately 240 acres of Important Farmland and LAFCo designated prime agricultural land because of the reduced SOIA area. Alternative 2 would also result in the significant and unavoidable land use compatibility impacts with adjacent agricultural operations identified for the project. Overall, the agricultural resource impacts of Alternative 2 would be less than those that would occur with the project.

Air Quality

Alternative 2 would generate lower air pollutant emissions (particulate matter and ozone precursors) from future construction and operational air emission sources because of the reduced size of the SOIA and development potential. However, these air quality impacts are anticipated to remain significant and unavoidable for this alternative like the project. This alternative would also result in significant air quality impacts related to TAC and potential odor generation similar to the project. Nonetheless, the air quality impacts of Alternative 2 would be less than those that would occur with the project because of its reduced development potential.

Biological Resources

Alternative 2 would reduce the loss of grasslands, agricultural habitat, and trees in the SOIA area by approximately 240 acres as compared to the project. This acreage reduction would lessen the impacts on special-status plant and wildlife species known to occur in the region. While mitigation is available to reduce some project biological resource impacts to a less-than-significant level, with the exception of the loss of Swainson's hawk habitat, and could be applied to the project, significant biological impacts would still remain under this alternative. Nonetheless, the biological resource impacts of Alternative 2 would be less than those that would occur with the project because of its reduced development potential.

Cultural and Paleontological Resources

Alternative 2 would reduce impacts to archaeological, historical paleontological, and tribal cultural resources as a result of the smaller footprint that could be developed. Overall, impacts would be less than those that would occur with the project.

Energy

Alternative 2 would have a substantial reduction in operational and transportation energy demand as compared to the project as result of its smaller development potential (1,034 fewer dwelling units and 336 fewer jobs). Alternative 2 could still result in the need for the extension of off-site energy infrastructure that would result in significant and unavoidable impacts similar to the project. Overall, Alternative 2 would have substantially less energy demand impacts.

Greenhouse Gases Emissions

Alternative 2 would generate lower greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions compared to the project because of its smaller development potential (1,034 fewer dwelling units and 336 fewer jobs). Mitigation would be available

to reduce this alternative's impact similar to the project. Overall, the GHG emission impacts of Alternative 2 would be less than that would occur with the project.

Hydrology and Water Quality

Alternative 2's reduced development potential would result in less impervious surface area compared to future development potential under the project, which would reduce the volume of stormwater flows. Mitigation identified for the project would also address drainage and water quality impacts of Alternative 2. Overall, the hydrology and water quality impacts of Alternative 2 would be less than those that would occur with the project.

Land Use

This alternative would not result in any conflicts with existing land uses or divide an established community similar to the project. No conflicts with plans adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating a significant environmental impact would occur. Alternative 2 would reduce the loss of open space lands by 240 acres as compared to the project. Overall, land use impacts under this alternative would be less to those that would occur with the project.

Noise and Vibration

Alternative 2's reduced development potential would reduce the duration, extent, and area over which construction noise impacts would occur compared to the project. This alternative would result in similar operational noise impacts that could exceed Sacramento County and City of Elk Grove noise standards because similar commercial uses would be developed under this alternative. Mitigation identified for the project would also address potential noise impacts of Alternative 2 that would reduce the impact to a less than significant level. Nonetheless, the noise impacts of Alternative 2 would be less than those that would occur with the project.

Population and Housing

Alternative 2 would have a reduced growth potential as compared to the project because of its smaller development potential (1,034 fewer dwelling units and 336 fewer jobs). Growth inducement impacts under this alternative would be less than those that would occur with the project.

Public Services and Recreation

Alternative 2 would trigger the need for new or improved fire, police, and park facilities similar to the project. However, this alternative would have a reduced demand for these services because of its reduced development potential. While mitigation is available to reduce project impacts to public facilities, these impacts would not be avoided under this alternative. Overall, the public service impacts of Alternative 2 would be less than those that would occur with the project.

Traffic, Transportation, and Circulation

Alternative 2's reduced development potential would result in reductions traffic impacts to the operation of Hood-Franklin Road, Bruceville Road, Kammerer Road, Grant Line Road, and segments of Interstate 5 and State Route 99. However, this impact would remain significant and unavoidable. This alternative would result in similar significant transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facility and service impacts identified for the project as none of these facilities exist in the SOIA area. Overall, the transportation impacts of Alternative 2 would be less than those that would occur with the project.

Utilities

Alternative 2's reduced development potential would result in decreases in water supply, wastewater service, and solid waste service demands. Specifically, this alternative would reduce water supply demand by approximately 710.6 acre-feet per year, wastewater generation by approximately 0.70 million gallons per day, and solid waste generation by approximately 8,791 cubic yards per year. This alternative would result in similar significant and unavoidable off-site infrastructure impacts as the project. Impacts of Alternative 2 would be less than those that would occur with the project.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Like the project, Alternative 2 could result potential exposure of new residents to sources of contamination during site development. Mitigation is available to reduce the project's and this alternative's hazards impacts to a less-than-significant level. Therefore, the hazard impacts of Alternative 2 would be similar to those that would occur with the project.

6.4.3 Alternative 3: Off-Site Alternative

This alternative would involve the establishment of the SOIA area adjacent to the proposed Elk Grove Multi Sport Complex that is proposed for annexation south of Grant Line Road (see Exhibit 6-2). This area was chosen because it is a large land area that is within Sacramento County's Urban Services Boundary. Additionally, this site is located adjacent to the Elk Grove Multi Sport Complex project area that includes a request for annexation and expansion of the City of Elk Grove's sphere of influence between the Multi Sport Complex site and the Union Pacific railroad line to the west. Similar to the project, location of a SOIA in this area would provide a logical expansion of the City's SOI. This alternative assumes the same conceptual land use mix as the project.

EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

Aesthetics

Like the project, Alternative 3 would result in alteration of the existing visual character and introduction of new light and glare sources to the area from public views. Alternative 3 would alter public views along Grant Line Road that currently consist of agricultural lands and operations (e.g., Big Oak Nursery), residential development, and the Sunset Sky ranch Airport. Further, this alternative would push urban development closer to the natural areas of the Deer Creek corridor. The aesthetic impacts under Alternative 3 would be significant and unavoidable under project and cumulative conditions similar to the proposed SOIA. Alternative 3's visual and lighting impacts would be similar to those that would occur with the project because of the magnitude of development that would occur within an area with agricultural visual characteristics.

Agricultural Resources

Alternative 3 would also result in the loss of Important Farmland and potentially prime agricultural land defined by LAFCo. Alternative 3 would also result in the significant and unavoidable land use compatibility impacts with adjacent agricultural operations identified for the project because surrounding land uses are primarily agricultural. Nonetheless, the agricultural resource impacts of Alternative 3 would be less than those that would occur with the project.

Air Quality

Alternative 3 would result in similar air pollutant emissions (particulate matter and ozone precursors) from future construction and operational air emission sources because of similar site development potential (i.e., size and intensity of development). Thus, air quality impacts are anticipated to remain significant and unavoidable for this alternative like the project. This alternative would also result in significant air quality impacts related to TAC and potential odor generation similar to the project as it would result in a similar land use mix. Therefore, the air quality impacts of Alternative 3 would be similar to those that would occur with the project.

Biological Resources

Alternative 3 would result in the loss of grasslands, agricultural habitat, and trees similar to the project. This would result in similar impacts on special-status plant and wildlife species known to occur in the region. Mitigation is available to reduce some project biological resource impacts to a less-than-significant level, with the exception of the loss of Swainson's hawk habitat. Therefore, the biological resource impacts of Alternative 3 would be similar to those that would occur with the project because of its similar development potential.

Cultural and Paleontological Resources

Alternative 3 would result in similar impacts to historical and paleontological resources as the project because a similar area of land would be developed. However, this alternative may have a higher potential to encounter archaeological resources and tribal cultural resources given its proximity to Deer Creek because significant cultural resources are typically more prevalent in proximity to watercourses. Overall, impacts would be similar to those that would occur the project.

Energy

Alternative 3 would have similar operational and transportation energy demands as the project because the same land use concept would be developed at this site. Alternative 3 would need to extend off-site energy infrastructure to the site and the construction of these facilities could result in significant and unavoidable impacts similar to the project. Overall, Alternative 3 would have similar energy demand impacts as the project.

Greenhouse Gases Emissions

Alternative 3 would generate similar GHG emissions as the project because the same land use concept would be developed. Mitigation would be available to reduce this alternative's impact similar to the project. Overall, the GHG emission impacts of Alternative 3 would be similar to those that would occur with the project.

Hydrology and Water Quality

Alternative 3 would have similar drainage and water quality impacts as the project because of its similar development potential. Mitigation identified for the project would also address drainage and water quality impacts of Alternative 3. This alternative could also have similar 200-year flood hazards associated with Deer Creek. Overall, the hydrology and water quality impacts of Alternative 3 would be similar those that would occur with the project.

Land Use

This alternative would not result in any conflicts with existing land uses or divide an established community similar to the project because unincorporated communities exist in the area. No conflicts with plans adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating a significant environmental impact would occur. Alternative 3 would have the same loss of open space lands as compared to the project. Overall, land use impacts under this alternative would be similar to those that would occur with the project.

Noise and Vibration

Alternative 3 would result in similar construction noise that was identified for the project because noise-sensitive receptors exist north of Grant Line Road. This alternative would result in similar operational noise impacts that could exceed Sacramento County and City of Elk Grove noise standards associated with future commercial uses. Mitigation identified for the project would also address potential noise impacts of Alternative 3. Therefore, the noise impacts of Alternative 3 would be similar to those that would occur with the project.

Population and Housing

Alternative 3 would have the same growth potential as the project because the same land use concept would be developed. Growth inducement impacts under this alternative would be similar those that would occur with the project.

Public Services and Recreation

While mitigation is available to reduce project impacts to public facilities, the extension of services and facility needs impacts would not be avoided under the project or this alternative. Overall, the public service impacts of Alternative 3 would be similar to those that would occur with the project.

Traffic, Transportation, and Circulation

Alternative 3 would relocate its traffic impacts to occur largely east of State Route 99. Road facilities that would likely support this alternative's traffic include Grant Line Road, Waterman Road, Bradshaw Road, Elk

Grove Boulevard, and segments of State Route 99. These traffic impacts would be anticipated to be significant and unavoidable. This alternative would result in similar significant transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facility and service impacts identified for the project. Overall, the transportation impacts of Alternative 3 would be similar those that would occur with the project.

Utilities

Alternative 3 would result in the same water supply, wastewater service, and solid waste service demands as the project and would require the same infrastructure upgrades and extensions to serve the development. Thus, impacts of Alternative 3 would be similar those that would occur with the project.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Alternative 3 would involve the redevelopment of the Big Oak Nursery and the Sunset Sky ranch Airport, which is anticipated to result in a higher potential for on-site contamination hazards from these existing uses as compared to the project. Alternative 3 would also be within 0.6 mile of the Suburban Propane facility that could be exposed to hazards (fire and shrapnel) from accidents at Suburban Propane. Mitigation is available to reduce project and this alternative's hazards impact to a less-than-significant level. Therefore, the hazard impacts of Alternative 3 would be greater than those that would occur with the project.

6.4.4 Comparative Evaluation of Environmental Effects

Table 6-1 summarizes the environmental analyses provided above for the project alternatives.

Environmental Topic	Project	Alternative 1: No Project Alternative	Alternative 2: Reduced Sphere of Influence	Alternative 3: Off-Site
Aesthetics	Significant and Unavoidable	Less	Less	Similar
Agricultural Resources	Significant and Unavoidable	Less	Less	Less
Air Quality	Significant and Unavoidable	Less	Less	Similar
Biological Resources	Significant and Unavoidable	Less	Less	Similar
Cultural and Paleontological Resources	Less than Significant (with mitigation)	Less	Less	Greater
Energy	Significant and Unavoidable	Less	Less	Similar
Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Significant and Unavoidable	Less	Less	Similar
Hydrology and Water Quality	Less than Significant (with mitigation)	Less	Less	Similar
Land Use	Significant and Unavoidable	Less	Similar	Similar
Noise and Vibration	Significant and Unavoidable	Less	Less	Similar
Population and Housing	Significant and Unavoidable	Less	Less	Similar

Table 6-1 Comparison of the Environmental Impacts of the Alternatives in Relation to the Proposed Project

Environmental Topic	Project	Alternative 1: No Project Alternative	Alternative 2: Reduced Sphere of Influence	Alternative 3: Off-Site
Public Services and Recreation	Significant and Unavoidable	Less	Less	Similar
Traffic, Transportation, and Circulation	Significant and Unavoidable	Less	Less	Similar
Utilities	Significant and Unavoidable	Less	Less	Similar
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	Less than Significant (with mitigation)	Less	Similar	Greater

Source: Data compiled by Ascent Environmental

6.5 ENVIRONMENTALLY SUPERIOR ALTERNATIVE

State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6 states that “If the environmentally superior alternative is the ‘no project’ alternative, the EIR shall also identify an environmentally superior alternative among the other alternatives.” Here, the No Project Alternative is the environmentally superior alternative because all the significant impacts of the project would be avoided. However, the No Project Alternative would not meet any of the project’s objectives.

Under Alternative 2, impacts to aesthetics, agricultural resources, air quality, biological resources, cultural and paleontological resources, energy, greenhouse gas emissions, hydrology and water quality, noise, public services and recreation, traffic, and utilities would be reduced, when compared to the project. Because it would result in less overall environmental impact than the project, the Reduced Sphere of Influence Alternative would be considered environmentally superior. However, the Reduced Sphere of Influence Alternative may result in irregular jurisdictional boundaries if the Kammerer Road extension is completed in the future.

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