

CHAPTER 13.0

Alternatives to the Proposed Project

13.1 Overview

General CEQA Requirements

The purpose of the alternatives analysis in an EIR is to describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project, or to the location of the project, that could feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project, but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project, and to evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15126.6[a]). Additionally, Section 15126.6(b) of the CEQA Guidelines requires consideration of alternatives that could reduce to a less-than-significant level or eliminate any significant adverse environmental effects of the Proposed Project, including alternatives that may be more costly or could otherwise impede to some degree the attainment of the project's objectives.

It is important to understand, however, that the mere inclusion of an alternative in an EIR does not constitute definitive evidence that the alternative is in fact "feasible." The ultimate decision regarding the feasibility of alternatives lies with the ultimate decision-maker for a project, which in this case is the City of Tulare City Council. Such determinations are to be made in statutorily mandated findings addressing potentially feasible means of reducing the severity of significant environmental effects. One finding that is permissible, if supported by substantial evidence, is that "specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations . . . make infeasible the . . . alternatives identified" in the EIR (Pub. Resources Code, § 21081, subd. [a]; see also CEQA Guidelines, § 15901, subd. [a]). CEQA Guidelines section 15364 defines "feasible" to mean "capable of being accomplished in a successful manner within a reasonable period of time, taking into account economic, environmental, legal, social, and technological factors." In deciding whether an alternative is feasible or infeasible, a decision-making body may consider the stated project objectives in an EIR, and may balance any relevant economic, environmental, social, and technological factors. (See *City of Del Mar v. City of San Diego* (1982) 133 Cal.App.3d 410, 417; *Sequoyah Hills Homeowners Assn. v. City of Oakland* (1993) 23 Cal.App.4th 704, 715.)

13.2 Factors Considered In Selection of Alternatives

The CEQA Guidelines recommend that an EIR should briefly describe the rationale for selecting the alternatives to be discussed, identify any alternatives that were considered by the lead agency but were rejected as infeasible, and briefly explain the reasons underlying the lead agency's determination [CEQA Guidelines, Section 15126.6(c)]. This section describes the process used in selection of the alternatives. The alternatives addressed in this EIR were selected in consideration of one or more of the following factors:

- The extent to which the alternative would accomplish most of the basic goals and objectives of the project;
- The extent to which the alternative would avoid or lessen any of the identified significant environmental effects of the project;
- The potential feasibility of the alternative, taking into account site suitability, economic viability, availability of infrastructure, and consistency with various applicable plans and regulatory limitations;
- The appropriateness of the alternative in contributing to a “reasonable range” of alternatives necessary to permit a reasoned choice; and
- The requirement of the CEQA Guidelines to consider a “no project” alternative and, where the “no project” alternative is the environmentally superior alternative, to identify an “environmentally superior” alternative in addition to the no-project alternative [CEQA guidelines, Section 15126.6(e)].

The significant environmental impacts that the City, in identifying alternatives, seeks to eliminate or reduce are:

- Transportation and circulation impacts resulting from substantial increases in vehicular traffic.
- Air quality and global climate change impacts resulting from increased development and vehicular traffic.
- Noise and nuisance effects on adjacent sensitive receptor locations.
- Conversion of agricultural land.
- Flooding impacts associated with failure of a levee or dam.
- Historical resource impacts.
- Biological resources impacts resulting from a loss of habitat.
- Viewshed impacts resulting from increased development.

Alternatives Selection Process

Throughout the General Plan process, the City solicited public input to identify issues, opportunities, and responses for the development of the General Plan. During the process, over 100 people participated in four community workshops, six CAC workshops and two joint City Council and Planning Commission workshops. The workshops allowed the public to voice their concerns and provide suggestions for improving and enhancing the community.

13.3 Alternatives Selected for Further Consideration

The following section provides a general description of the five alternatives considered in this analysis, with Table 13-1 providing a summary of each alternative's ability to meet the project objectives. Using the community workshop input identified above, these five alternatives were developed and have been determined to represent a reasonable range of alternatives which (with the exception of "No Project") have the potential to feasibly attain most of the basic project objectives.

The following alternatives are currently being proposed for evaluation in the EIR for the proposed project (Preferred Land Use Alternative):

- Alternative 1— Concentric/Infill Growth Pattern
- Alternative 2— Northeast Expansion Growth Pattern
- Alternative 3— Northwest Expansion Growth Pattern
- Alternative 4— Southeastern Expansion Pattern
- Alternative 5— No Project Alternative (Build-out of existing 1993 General Plan)

Alternative 1— Concentric/Infill Growth Pattern

This alternative focuses on the revitalization of the existing City with commercial, employment, and multifamily growth directed in the downtown. Additional commercial development is positioned to the north at Oakdale and Highway 99, and along Foster to the south. New employment centers would be focused northwest of the airport. New residential growth would include higher densities, located around the existing urbanized City. A band of "urban reserve" land is included around the new growth area that could be developed in the event that new growth exceeds the projected population through 2030. This alternative would establish a permanent open space greenbelt along Mooney Boulevard between the Cities of Tulare and Visalia.

Alternative 2— Northeast Expansion Growth Pattern

This alternative directs most new commercial growth to the north, along State Route 99, and in the south along Foster. New employment growth would be concentrated around the airport, where residential uses are not allowed. Most new residential growth would incorporate low density uses and "neighborhood centers" of higher residential densities, focused northeast of the existing urbanized area along the Mooney Boulevard corridor. Rural residential uses would be included to buffer urban and agricultural uses. "Urban reserve" lands are included to the north and east of the new growth area that could be developed in the event that growth exceeds projections through 2030. This alternative would encourage development that would eventually abut the City of Visalia.

Alternative 3— Northwest Expansion Growth Pattern

This alternative directs most new commercial growth to the north, along State Route 99 and Oakdale, and in the south along Foster. New employment growth would be concentrated around Mefford Airport. Most new residential growth would be at moderate densities, focused northwest of the existing urbanized City, and would incorporate higher density “neighborhood centers.” Rural residential uses would be included to buffer urban and agricultural uses. “Urban reserve” land is included to the north and west that could be developed in the event that growth exceeds the projected growth through 2030. Finally, this alternative would establish a permanent open space greenbelt along Mooney Boulevard between Tulare and the City of Visalia.

Alternative 4— Southeastern Expansion Pattern

This alternative directs most new commercial growth to the southeast and east of the existing City Limits. New employment growth would be concentrated around Mefford Airport. A majority of new residential growth would be accommodated by low density uses that are focused southeast of the existing urbanized area around the proposed COS extension site, and would include higher density “neighborhood centers.” Rural residential uses would be included to buffer urban and agricultural uses. “Urban reserve” lands are included to the north and west of the new growth area that could be developed in the event that growth exceeds projections through 2030. This concept also preserves the agricultural and open space lands along Mooney Blvd in the north. This alternative would encourage development that would eventually separate Tulare from the City of Visalia.

Alternative 5— No Project Alternative (Build-out of existing 1993 General Plan)

This alternative would continue, for the most part, the existing pattern of land use. This will serve as the “No Project” alternative required for inclusion in the environmental impact report (EIR) that will be prepared for the General Plan.

**TABLE 13-1
SUMMARY OF THE ALTERNATIVES ABILITY TO MEET THE PROJECT OBJECTIVES**

Alternative 1. Concentric/Infill Growth Pattern	Alternative 2. Northeast Expansion Growth Pattern	Alternative 3. Northwest Expansion Growth Pattern	Alternative 4. Southeastern Expansion Pattern	Alternative 5. No Project Alternative	Project Objective
YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	Growth should be contiguous, taking advantage of infill opportunities, should protect the City’s agricultural areas, and should transition smoothly from intense to less intense uses.
YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	Future development should create a mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented downtown area that encourages full day use and defines key entry points to enhance downtown gateways.

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Alternative 1. Concentric/Infill Growth Pattern	Alternative 2. Northeast Expansion Growth Pattern	Alternative 3. Northwest Expansion Growth Pattern	Alternative 4. Southeastern Expansion Pattern	Alternative 5. No Project Alternative	Project Objective
YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	The City should provide a variety of transportation choices, expand its current trails system, and focus on higher density housing near transit stops.
YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	An integrated mixture of housing choices, including "upper end" housing options, is encouraged to support a balanced community; rural residential areas should have visual designation along the City edge to provide a transition; the City center should accommodate a pedestrian-oriented downtown with higher density.
YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	Clustered commercial land use should be promoted with a variety of horizontal and vertical mixed-use. "Big box" retail development should occur only in regional commercial centers such as the regional retail along the Hwy 99 corridor.
NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	A Regional Park will be located near the airport, and an open space buffer along Elk Bayou. Village areas will reserve at least 20% of land for open space with parks located within walking distance to neighborhood centers.
YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	Community "Villages" will support a variety of housing choices and opportunities, create a connected system of neighborhoods designed to avoid land use conflicts, preserve farmland through compact development, and provide residents with centered community facilities including neighborhood parks and various open space areas.

A description of the environmental impacts associated with each alternative is also provided below. As provided in Section 15126.6(d) of the CEQA Guidelines, the significant effects of each alternative are identified in less detail than those of the Proposed Project. A matrix comparing the significance of the identified impacts for each alternative to the impacts identified for the Proposed Project is presented in Table 13-2.

**TABLE 13-2
SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVES
(COMPARISON OF IMPACTS WITH PROPOSED PROJECT LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE)**

Key: LTS = Less than Significant Impact
 NI = No Impact
 SU = Significant and Unavoidable Impact
 SU - = Lesser impact than the Proposed Project
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Impact	Proposed Project	Alt 1. Concentric/ Infill Growth Pattern	Alt 2. Northeast Expansion Growth Pattern	Alt 3. Northwest Expansion Growth Pattern	Alt 4. Southeastern Expansion Pattern	Alt 5. No Project
Land Use						
LU-1: The Proposed Project could divide the physical arrangement of an established community.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
LU-2: Development proposed by the Draft General Plan could conflict with an adopted applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.	SU	SU+	SU	SU	SU	SU-
LU-3: The Proposed Project could conflict with an applicable Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) or Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP).	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
Agricultural Resources						
AG-1: The Proposed Project would result in the substantial conversion of important farmland to non-agricultural uses.	SU	SU-	SU	SU-	SU-	SU-
AG-2: The Proposed Project could conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or conflict with existing Williamson Act contracts.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS

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AG-3: The Proposed Project could involve other changes in the existing environment that, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Important Farmland, to non-agricultural uses.	SU	SU-	SU	SU-	SU-	SU-
Aesthetics						
AES-1: The Proposed Project could substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.	SU	SU-	SU	SU-	SU-	SU-
AES-2: The Proposed Project could have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista or substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway.	SU	SU-	SU	SU-	SU-	SU-
AES-3: The Proposed Project would create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.	SU	SU-	SU	SU-	SU-	SU-

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Public Services and Utilities						
PSU-1: The Proposed Project would require or result in the construction of new water treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects.	SU	SU	SU	SU	SU	SU
PSU-2: The Proposed Project would require new or expanded water supply entitlements.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
PSU-3: The Proposed Project would have the potential, in the long-term, to deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
PSU-4: The Proposed Project would not result in the exceedance of wastewater treatment requirements of the CVRWQCB.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS

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PSU-5: The Proposed Project would require or result in the construction of new wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which would cause significant environmental effects.	SU	SU	SU	SU	SU	SU
PSU-6: The Proposed Project would require additional capacity to serve the Project's projected demand in addition to existing commitments.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
PSU-7: The Proposed Project would require or result in the construction of new stormwater drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
PSU-8: The Proposed Project could produce substantial amounts of solid waste that would exceed the permitted capacity of a landfill serving the City.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
PSU-9: The Proposed Project complies with all federal, State, and Local Statutes and Regulations related to solid waste.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS

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PSU-10: The Proposed Project would result in a substantial adverse physical impact to the continued provision of fire protection services in the City.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
PSU-11: The Proposed Project would result in a substantial adverse physical impact to the continued provision of law enforcement services in the City.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
PSU-12: The Proposed Project would include fire protection/law enforcement facilities or require the construction/expansion of facilities which would have an adverse physical effect on the environment.	SU	SU	SU	SU	SU	SU
PSU-13: The Proposed Project would not result in a substantial adverse physical impact to the continued provision of school services in the City.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
PSU-14: The Proposed Project would result in a substantial adverse physical impact to the continued provision of library services in the City.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS

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PSU-15: The Proposed Project would include community facilities or require the construction/expansion of facilities which would have an adverse physical effect on the environment.	SU	SU	SU	SU	SU	SU
PSU-16: The Proposed Project would not result in the wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy by residential, commercial, industrial, or public uses.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
PSU-17: The Proposed Project may require the construction or expansion of additional energy infrastructure facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects.	SU	SU	SU	SU	SU	SU
Transportation and Circulation						
TC-1: The Proposed Project would result in a substantial increase in vehicular traffic on roadways in the Project Area.	SU	SU+	SU	SU	SU	SU-
TC-2: The Proposed Project would result in a substantial increase in vehicular traffic on State highways.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS

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TC-3:	The Proposed Project would generate a demand for transit services and may result in unmet transit needs.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
TC-4:	The Proposed Project would increase the demand for recreational and transportation related bicycle facilities.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
Air Quality and Global Climate Change							
AQ-1:	The Proposed Project would result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of criteria pollutants. Future growth in accordance with the Proposed Project would exceed the SJVAPCD thresholds for PM-10.	SU	SU	SU	SU	SU	SU-
AQ-2:	The Proposed Project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of an applicable air quality plan.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
AQ-3:	The Proposed Project would expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations.	SU	SU	SU	SU	SU	SU-
AQ-4:	The Proposed Project would not create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
AQ-5:	The project could conflict with implementation of state goals for	SU	SU	SU	SU	SU	SU-

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reducing greenhouse gas emissions and thereby have a negative effect on Global Climate Change.						
Noise						
N-1: The Proposed Project would result in the exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies; or would result in a substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project; or would result in a substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project.	SU	SU+	SU	SU	SU	SU-
N-2: The Proposed Project will result in the exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels.	SU	SU+	SU	SU	SU	SU-

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N-3: The Proposed Project will be located within an airport land use plan area or within the vicinity of a private airstrip and could expose people residing or working within the project area to excessive noise levels.	SU	SU	SU	SU	SU	SU
Flooding and Water Quality						
HWQ-1: The Proposed Project could place housing or other structures within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary, Flood Insurance Rate Map, or other flood hazard delineation map or place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which could impede or redirect flood flows.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
HWQ-2: The Proposed Project could expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam.	SU	SU	SU	SU	SU	SU
HWQ-3: The Proposed Project would/would not violate water quality standards or waste discharge requirements, or otherwise degrade water quality.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS

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HWQ-4: The Proposed Project could substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner, which would result in on- or off-site flooding.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
HWQ-5: The Proposed Project could create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS

Biological Resources						
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BIO-1: The Proposed Project could have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any fish or wildlife species including those officially designated species identified as an endangered, threatened, candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the	SU	SU-	SU	SU-	SU-	SU-
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California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.						
BIO-2: The Proposed Project could have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.	SU	SU-	SU	SU-	SU-	SU-
BIO-3: The Proposed Project could have a substantial adverse effect on "federally protected" wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means.	SU	SU-	SU	SU-	SU-	SU-
BIO-4: The Proposed Project could interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites.	SU	SU-	SU	SU-	SU-	SU-

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BIO-5: The Proposed Project would not conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance.	LTS	LTS	LTS	SU-	SU-	SU-
BIO-6: The Proposed Project could conflict with the provisions of an adopted habitat conservation plan, natural community conservation plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan.	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI
Mineral Resources and Geology						
GEO-1: The Proposed Project could result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of a value to the region and the residents of the State or result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
GEO-2: The Proposed Project could result in land use incompatibilities with adjacent mineral extraction operations.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS

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GEO-3: The Proposed Project would not result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
GEO-4: The Proposed Project would not expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving: 1) rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map, issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault; 2) strong seismic groundshaking; 3) seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
GEO-5: The Proposed Project would not be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on-or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
GEO-6: The Proposed Project could be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS

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(1994), but would not create substantial risks to life or property.						
Cultural Resources						
CR-1: The Proposed Project could cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in Section 15064.5.	SU	SU	SU	SU	SU	SU
CR-2: The Proposed Project could cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a unique archaeological resource as defined in Section 15064.5 and/or disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries.	SU (for archaeological resources) LS (for human remains)	SU (for archaeological resources) LS (for human remains)	SU (for archaeological resources) LS (for human remains)	SU (for archaeological resources) LS (for human remains)	SU (for archaeological resources) LS (for human remains)	SU (for archaeological resources) LS (for human remains)
Health and Safety						
HS-1: The Proposed Project could result in development located within an airport land use plan or within two miles of a public or private airstrip but would not result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
HS-2: The Proposed Project could create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport,	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS

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 SU + = Greater impact than the Proposed Project

Impact	Proposed Project	Alt 1. Concentric/ Infill Growth Pattern	Alt 2. Northeast Expansion Growth Pattern	Alt 3. Northwest Expansion Growth Pattern	Alt 4. Southeastern Expansion Pattern	Alt 5. No Project
use, or disposal of hazardous materials or create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonable foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials to the environment.						
HS-3: The Proposed Project would not emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
HS-4: Development under the Proposed Project could be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to government code section 65962.5 and, as a result, could create a significant hazard to the public or the environment.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
HS-5: The Proposed Project could expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS

**TABLE 13-2
SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVES
(COMPARISON OF IMPACTS WITH PROPOSED PROJECT LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE)**

Key: LTS = Less than Significant Impact
 NI = No Impact
 SU = Significant and Unavoidable Impact
 SU - = Lesser impact than the Proposed Project
 SU + = Greater impact than the Proposed Project

Impact	Proposed Project	Alt 1. Concentric/ Infill Growth Pattern	Alt 2. Northeast Expansion Growth Pattern	Alt 3. Northwest Expansion Growth Pattern	Alt 4. Southeastern Expansion Pattern	Alt 5. No Project
HS-6: The Proposed Project could impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS

Alternative 1: Concentric/Infill Growth Pattern

This alternative focuses on the revitalization of the existing City with commercial, employment, and multifamily growth directed in the downtown. Additional commercial development is positioned to the north at Oakdale and Highway 99, and along Foster to the south. New employment centers would be focused northwest of the airport. New residential growth would include higher densities, located around the existing urbanized City. Under Alternative 1, land uses within the existing City limits would intensify and be characterized as infill development. The intensification of land uses would result in a decreased need to convert existing open space space/agricultural lands. However, such an approach may result in an increased need to provide additional levels of public services (e.g., law enforcement, fire, etc.) or infrastructure and may also increase other localized urbanization impacts (e.g., noise impacts, localized air quality impacts, localized traffic impacts, and historic resources impacts).

Ability to Meet Project Objectives

A summary of this Alternative’s ability to meet each of the project objectives is provided in Table 13-1. Under this Alternative, most of the project objectives would be met.

Growth would be contiguous, taking advantage of infill opportunities; future development would create a mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented downtown area; a variety of transportation choices would be provided; and an integrated mixture of housing choices, including “upper end” housing options, would be encouraged to support a balanced community. However, this Alternative does not include a Regional Park near the airport and does not specify if Village areas will reserve at least 20% of land for open space with parks located within walking distance to neighborhood centers.

Environmental Impacts of the Alternative

The environmental impacts of this Alternative are summarized in Table 13-2 and described in greater detail below.

Land Use

Alternative 1 would result in similar types of development with a similar build-out population to that anticipated under the Proposed Project. However, implementation of this alternative would intensify development within the City and would convert less open space areas within the proposed Planning Area to developed uses. Moreover, by definition, this alternative would include increased policy direction for the City to ensure a more compact development pattern than with the Proposed Project. Consequently, neither the Proposed Project nor Alternative 1 would divide existing communities and they would both be subject to the same policy direction with regards to ensuring land use compatibility with surrounding uses. However, because land uses are intensified within certain areas of the Planning Area, the potential for some nuisance impacts associated with traffic, noise, odors, and air quality emissions, may be intensified and affect land use compatibility, in particular along major transit routes/multi-modal corridors. Consequently, the potential for land use compatibility impacts is considered to be slightly greater than those associated with the Proposed Project.

Agricultural Resources

Development proposed under Alternative 1 would result in a reduced impact to agricultural resources compared to the Proposed Project. This is because a fewer number of acres of land designated as Prime, Unique or Farmland of Statewide Importance would be converted to urban uses under this alternative compared to the amount of important farmland that would be converted to urban uses under the Proposed Project. However, similar to the Proposed Project, Alternative 1 would also result in a significant and unavoidable impact, since there would be some conversion of important farmland to urbanized uses under this alternative.

Aesthetics

Alternative 1 would result in similar types of development with a similar build-out population to that anticipated under the Proposed Project. However, implementation of this alternative would intensify development within the City and would convert less open space areas within the Planning Area to developed uses (see Table 13-2). Consequently, build-out of this alternative may result in slightly reduced impacts to aesthetic resources because growth would likely be intensified within a smaller development area and more open space would remain undeveloped.

Public Services and Utilities

Alternative 1 would result in intensified development within the City. This development would require an increase in services within those areas. However, the overall need for services would remain the same, as the expected population growth would be the same as for the Proposed Project. Therefore, impacts are expected to be similar to the Proposed Project.

Transportation and Circulation

Development anticipated under this alternative would be similar to that anticipated under the Proposed Project. However, Alternative 1 would cause slightly higher levels of delay and congestion than the Proposed Project. This is because Alternative 1 would tend to cluster development and its associated traffic within a smaller area, whereas the Proposed Project would place development in areas where transportation improvements are generally easier to implement. Overall, implementation of Alternative 1 could result in greater localized traffic impacts than those associated with the Proposed Project.

Air Quality and Global Climate Change

Under Alternative 1, the City would intensify development which would result in a slightly higher population within a development footprint similar to that anticipated under the Proposed Project. Additionally, although this alternative has the potential to reduce the overall number of vehicle miles traveled by local residents, it has the potential to result in an increase in overall travel delay and the number of hours motorists would spend on the road and increase localized air quality impacts. Consequently, due to intensified land uses development proposed under Alternative 1 could result in a greater impact than the proposed project.

Noise

Although Alternative 1 includes a slightly reduced development footprint, development anticipated under this alternative would be similar to that anticipated under the Proposed Project. Similar to the Proposed Project, significant noise level increases associated with increased traffic would occur adjacent to existing noise sensitive land uses during the planning horizon. However, because land uses are intensified within certain areas of the Planning Area, noise impacts may actually be greater in some areas. Overall, implementation of Alternative 1 would still result in a significant and unavoidable impact because growth could still contribute additional sources of noise and vibration that would exceed local standards. Localized noise impacts are expected to be somewhat greater than for the Proposed Project.

Flooding and Water Quality

Under Alternative 1, development would convert less open space land to urban uses (within the proposed Planning Area) than the Proposed Project. As with the Proposed Project, the creation of impervious surfaces associated with urbanization would increase the amount of runoff, which could affect water quality. However, because land conversion would be less than the Proposed Project, fewer impervious surfaces would be developed. Overall, hydrologic and water quality impacts under Alternative 1 are considered to be similar to those of the Proposed Project.

Alternative 1 also proposes development in areas that are within the 100-year floodplain in a similar manner to the Proposed Project. Similarly, levees are regulated at the State level with maintenance activities delegated to local reclamation districts. The City has no jurisdiction and is limited in terms of alternatives to mitigate for the identified flood risks. Consequently, flood risk impacts are also considered to be similar to the Proposed Project.

Biological Resources

Development proposed under Alternative 1 would result in similar impacts to biological resources (compared to the Proposed Project) through the conversion of open space lands to developed uses. However, under this alternative, a fewer number of acres of habitat land would be converted to urban uses compared to the same types of land uses that would be converted under the Proposed Project.

Mineral Resources and Geology

Alternative 1 proposes development that is similar in nature to that anticipated under the Proposed Project. Current State and federal regulations require specific engineering and design criteria to minimize impacts related to geologic, soils, and seismic hazards, which would apply to local geologic/soil conditions under each of the alternatives and the Proposed Project. Policies and implementation measures included as part of the Proposed Project incorporate all applicable regulations to minimize these impacts. For this reason, geologic impacts under Alternative 1 are considered similar to those of the Proposed Project. Alternative 1 would result in slightly less development than the Proposed Project on currently undeveloped lands. This alternative would result in similar impacts to mineral resources.

Cultural Resources

Development proposed under this alternative would result in similar impacts to cultural resources as compared to the Proposed Project. Similar to the Proposed Project, urbanization associated with future growth could damage or destroy a variety of cultural resources during various construction-related activities. The intensification of land uses within the existing City limits may result in greater impacts historic resources due to infill development. However, the reduction in construction and excavation activities on currently undeveloped land may result in reduced impacts to archaeological resources. Overall cultural resources impacts would be similar to those for the Proposed Project.

Health and Safety

Alternative 1 proposes development that is similar in nature to that anticipated under the Proposed Project. Hazardous materials generation, storage and clean-up are heavily regulated by federal, State and local regulations that would apply to both Alternative 1 and the Proposed Project. For this reason, hazardous materials impacts under Alternative 1 are considered to be similar to those of the Proposed Project.

Alternative 2: Northeast Expansion Growth Pattern

This alternative directs most new commercial growth to the north, along State Route 99, and in the south along Foster. New employment growth would be concentrated around the airport, where residential uses are not allowed. Most new residential growth would incorporate low density uses and “neighborhood centers” of higher residential densities, focused northeast of the existing urbanized area along the Mooney Boulevard corridor. Though it would focus development in

different areas than the Proposed Project, this alternative would result in similar impacts as those of the Proposed Project as overall amounts of growth and development would be similar.

Ability to Meet Project Objectives

A summary of this Alternative's ability to meet each of the project objectives is provided in Table 13-1. Under this Alternative, some of the project objectives would be met and others would not. A variety of transportation choices would be provided; and an integrated mixture of housing choices, including "upper end" housing options, would be encouraged to support a balanced community. However, this Alternative does not include a Regional Park near the airport and does not specify if Village areas will reserve at least 20% of land for open space with parks located within walking distance to neighborhood centers. Additionally, the Alternative would not promote contiguous growth or infill and future development would not create a mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented downtown area because the alternative focuses growth in the northeast versus in the downtown area.

Environmental Impacts of the Alternative

The environmental impacts of this Alternative are summarized in Table 13-2 and described in greater detail below.

Land Use

Alternative 2 would result in similar types of development with a similar build-out population to that anticipated under the Proposed Project. Although different areas of undeveloped land would be converted to developed uses, the overall amount of converted land is expected to be similar. Consequently, build-out of this alternative would result in similar land use impacts as those associated with the Proposed Project.

Agricultural Resources

Development proposed under Alternative 2 would result in similar agricultural resources impacts compared to the Proposed Project. Although different areas of undeveloped land would be converted to developed uses, the overall amount of converted land is expected to be similar. Consequently, build-out of this alternative would result in similar agricultural impacts as those associated with the Proposed Project.

Aesthetics

Alternative 2 would result in similar types of development with a similar build-out population to that anticipated under the Proposed Project. However, implementation of this alternative would direct development to different areas within the Planning Area and would likely reduce views in some areas while leaving other areas with open views. However, the overall change in views is expected to be similar to that of the Proposed Project as total development is expected to be the same. Consequently, build-out of this alternative would result in similar aesthetics impacts as those associated with the Proposed Project.

Public Services and Utilities

Development anticipated under this alternative would be similar to that anticipated under the Proposed Project. Although development might occur in different areas, the total increase in need for services is expected to be similar. Overall, implementation of Alternative 2 is expected to have similar public services impacts as those associated with the Proposed Project.

Transportation and Circulation

Development anticipated under this alternative would be similar to that anticipated under the Proposed Project. Although development might occur in different areas, the total increase in traffic is expected to be similar. Overall, implementation of Alternative 2 is expected to have similar transportation and circulation impacts as those associated with the Proposed Project.

Air Quality and Global Climate Change

Under this alternative impacts to Air Quality and Global Climate Change are expected to be similar to those associated with the Proposed Project. Implementation of this alternative would still result in a significant and unavoidable impact because growth would still contribute to air pollutant emissions that could exceed the daily SJVAPCD thresholds for NOx and ROG and contribute to global climate change impacts.

Noise

Development anticipated under this alternative would be similar to that anticipated under the Proposed Project. Similar to the Proposed Project, significant noise level increases associated with increased traffic would occur adjacent to existing noise sensitive land uses during the planning horizon. Overall, implementation of Alternative 2 would still result in a significant and unavoidable impact because growth could still contribute additional sources of noise and vibration that would exceed local standards.

Flooding and Water Quality

As with the Proposed Project, the creation of impervious surfaces associated with urbanization would increase the amount of runoff, which could affect water quality. Overall, hydrologic and water quality impacts under Alternative 2 are considered to be similar to those of the Proposed Project.

Alternative 2 also proposes development in areas that are within the 100-year floodplain in a similar manner to the Proposed Project. Similarly, levees are regulated at the State level with maintenance activities delegated to local reclamation districts. The City has no jurisdiction and is limited in terms of alternatives to mitigate for the identified flood risks. Consequently, flood risk impacts are also considered to be similar to the Proposed Project.

Biological Resources

Development proposed under Alternative 2 would result in similar impacts to biological resources (compared to the Proposed Project) through the conversion of open space lands to developed uses as a similar amount of land would be converted.

Mineral Resources and Geology

This alternative proposes development that is similar in nature to that anticipated under the Proposed Project. Current State and federal regulations require specific engineering and design criteria to minimize impacts related to geologic, soils, and seismic hazards, which would apply to local geologic/soil conditions under each of the alternatives and the Proposed Project. Policies and implementation measures included as part of the Proposed Project incorporate all applicable regulations to minimize these impacts. For this reason, geologic impacts under Alternative 2 are considered similar to those of the Proposed Project. This alternative would result in similar impacts to mineral resources.

Cultural Resources

Development proposed under this alternative would result in similar impacts to cultural resources as compared to the Proposed Project. Similar to the Proposed Project, urbanization associated with future growth could damage or destroy a variety of cultural resources during various construction-related activities. Overall cultural resources impacts would be similar to those for the Proposed Project.

Health and Safety

Alternative 2 proposes development that is similar in nature to that anticipated under the Proposed Project. Hazardous materials generation, storage and clean-up are heavily regulated by federal, State and local regulations that would apply to both Alternative 2 and the Proposed Project. For this reason, hazardous materials impacts under Alternative 2 are considered to be similar to those of the Proposed Project.

Alternative 3: Northwest Expansion Growth Pattern

This alternative directs most new commercial growth to the north, along State Route 99 and Oakdale, and in the south along Foster. New employment growth would be concentrated around Mefford Airport. Most new residential growth would be at moderate densities, focused northwest of the existing urbanized City, and would incorporate higher density “neighborhood centers.” Rural residential uses would be included to buffer urban and agricultural uses. “Urban reserve” land is included to the north and west that could be developed in the event that growth exceeds the projected growth through 2030. Finally, this alternative would establish a permanent open space greenbelt along Mooney Boulevard between Tulare and the City of Visalia. Though it would focus development in different areas than the Proposed Project, this alternative would result in similar impacts as those of the Proposed Project for many resource areas as overall amounts of growth and development would be similar. However, the establishment of a

permanent greenbelt would help reduce impacts to agricultural resources, aesthetics, and biological resources.

Ability to Meet Project Objectives

A summary of this Alternative's ability to meet each of the project objectives is provided in Table 13-1. Under this Alternative, some of the project objectives would be met and others would not. A variety of transportation choices would be provided; and an integrated mixture of housing choices, including "upper end" housing options, would be encouraged to support a balanced community. However, this Alternative does not include a Regional Park near the airport and does not specify if Village areas will reserve at least 20% of land for open space with parks located within walking distance to neighborhood centers. Additionally, the Alternative would not promote contiguous growth or infill and future development would not create a mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented downtown area because the alternative focuses growth in the northeast versus in the downtown area.

Environmental Impacts of the Alternative

The environmental impacts of this Alternative are summarized in Table 13-2 and described in greater detail below.

Land Use

Alternative 3 would result in similar types of development with a similar build-out population to that anticipated under the Proposed Project. Although different areas of undeveloped land would be converted to developed uses, the overall amount of converted land is expected to be similar. Consequently, build-out of this alternative would result in similar land use impacts as those associated with the Proposed Project.

Agricultural Resources

Development proposed under Alternative 3 would result in similar agricultural resources impacts compared to the Proposed Project. Although different areas of undeveloped land would be converted to developed uses, the overall amount of converted land is expected to be similar. However, this alternative includes the establishment of a permanent greenbelt which would prevent agricultural conversion in that area. Consequently, build-out of this alternative would result in somewhat reduced agricultural impacts as those associated with the Proposed Project.

Aesthetics

Alternative 3 would result in similar types of development with a similar build-out population to that anticipated under the Proposed Project. However, implementation of this alternative would direct development to different areas within the Planning Area and would likely reduce views in some areas while leaving other areas with open views. Additionally, the establishment of a permanent greenbelt would serve to preserve views in that area. Consequently, build-out of this

alternative would result in similar but somewhat reduced aesthetics impacts as those associated with the Proposed Project.

Public Services and Utilities

Development anticipated under this alternative would be similar to that anticipated under the Proposed Project. Although development might occur in different areas, the total increase in need for services is expected to be similar. Overall, implementation of Alternative 3 is expected to have similar public services impacts as those associated with the Proposed Project.

Transportation and Circulation

Development anticipated under this alternative would be similar to that anticipated under the Proposed Project. Although development might occur in different areas, the total increase in traffic is expected to be similar. Overall, implementation of Alternative 3 is expected to have similar transportation and circulation impacts as those associated with the Proposed Project.

Air Quality and Global Climate Change

Under this alternative impacts to Air Quality and Global Climate Change are expected to be similar to those associated with the Proposed Project. Implementation of this alternative would still result in a significant and unavoidable impact because growth would still contribute to air pollutant emissions that could exceed the daily SJVAPCD thresholds for NO_x and ROG and contribute to global climate change impacts.

Noise

Development anticipated under this alternative would be similar to that anticipated under the Proposed Project. Similar to the Proposed Project, significant noise level increases associated with increased traffic would occur adjacent to existing noise sensitive land uses during the planning horizon. Overall, implementation of Alternative 3 would still result in a significant and unavoidable impact because growth could still contribute additional sources of noise and vibration that would exceed local standards.

Flooding and Water Quality

As with the Proposed Project, the creation of impervious surfaces associated with urbanization would increase the amount of runoff, which could affect water quality. Overall, hydrologic and water quality impacts under Alternative 3 are considered to be similar to those of the Proposed Project.

Alternative 3 also proposes development in areas that are within the 100-year floodplain in a similar manner to the Proposed Project. Similarly, levees are regulated at the State level with maintenance activities delegated to local reclamation districts. The City has no jurisdiction and is limited in terms of alternatives to mitigate for the identified flood risks. Consequently, flood risk impacts are also considered to be similar to the Proposed Project.

Biological Resources

Development proposed under Alternative 3 would result in similar impacts to biological resources (compared to the Proposed Project) through the conversion of open space lands to developed uses as a similar amount of land would be converted. However, the establishment of a permanent greenbelt would reduce impacts to biological resources, though they would remain significant and unavoidable.

Mineral Resources and Geology

This alternative proposes development that is similar in nature to that anticipated under the Proposed Project. Current State and federal regulations require specific engineering and design criteria to minimize impacts related to geologic, soils, and seismic hazards, which would apply to local geologic/soil conditions under each of the alternatives and the Proposed Project. Policies and implementation measures included as part of the Proposed Project incorporate all applicable regulations to minimize these impacts. For this reason, geologic impacts under Alternative 3 are considered similar to those of the Proposed Project. This alternative would result in similar impacts to mineral resources.

Cultural Resources

Development proposed under this alternative would result in similar impacts to cultural resources as compared to the Proposed Project. Similar to the Proposed Project, urbanization associated with future growth could damage or destroy a variety of cultural resources during various construction-related activities. Overall cultural resources impacts would be similar to those for the Proposed Project.

Health and Safety

Alternative 3 proposes development that is similar in nature to that anticipated under the Proposed Project. Hazardous materials generation, storage and clean-up are heavily regulated by federal, State and local regulations that would apply to both Alternative 3 and the Proposed Project. For this reason, hazardous materials impacts under Alternative 3 are considered to be similar to those of the Proposed Project.

Alternative 4: Southeastern Expansion Pattern

This alternative directs most new commercial growth to the southeast and east of the existing City Limits. New employment growth would be concentrated around Mefford Airport. A majority of new residential growth would be accommodated by low density uses that are focused southeast of the existing urbanized area around the proposed COS extension site, and would include higher density “neighborhood centers.” Rural residential uses would be included to buffer urban and agricultural uses. “Urban reserve” lands are included to the north and west of the new growth area that could be developed in the event that growth exceeds projections through 2030. This concept also preserves the agricultural and open space lands along Mooney Blvd in the north. This alternative would encourage development that would eventually separate Tulare from the City of

Visalia. Though it would focus development in different areas than the Proposed Project, this alternative would result in similar impacts as those of the Proposed Project for many resource areas as overall amounts of growth and development would be similar. However, the establishment of a permanent greenbelt would help reduce impacts to agricultural resources, aesthetics, and biological resources.

Ability to Meet Project Objectives

A summary of this Alternative's ability to meet each of the project objectives is provided in Table 13-1. Under this Alternative, some of the project objectives would be met and others would not. A variety of transportation choices would be provided; and an integrated mixture of housing choices, including "upper end" housing options, would be encouraged to support a balanced community. However, this Alternative does not include a Regional Park near the airport and does not specify if Village areas will reserve at least 20% of land for open space with parks located within walking distance to neighborhood centers. Additionally, the Alternative would not promote contiguous growth or infill and future development would not create a mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented downtown area because the alternative focuses growth in the northeast versus in the downtown area.

Environmental Impacts of the Alternative

The environmental impacts of this Alternative are summarized in Table 13-2 and described in greater detail below.

Land Use

Alternative 4 would result in similar types of development with a similar build-out population to that anticipated under the Proposed Project. Although different areas of undeveloped land would be converted to developed uses, the overall amount of converted land is expected to be similar. Consequently, build-out of this alternative would result in similar land use impacts as those associated with the Proposed Project.

Agricultural Resources

Development proposed under Alternative 4 would result in similar agricultural resources impacts compared to the Proposed Project. Although different areas of undeveloped land would be converted to developed uses, the overall amount of converted land is expected to be similar. However, this alternative includes the establishment of a permanent greenbelt which would prevent agricultural conversion in that area. Consequently, build-out of this alternative would result in somewhat reduced agricultural impacts as those associated with the Proposed Project. Additionally, Alternative 4 includes an area of contiguous agricultural land across the northern and western edges of the Planning Area starting from the northeast corner of the Planning Area and continuing to the northwest corner then down to the southwest corner. Though a portion of the land in the northern part of the Planning Area is designated as Urban Reserve and could be

converted in the future, this alternative includes the greatest amount of contiguous agricultural land and reduces the impacts associated with agricultural land and habitat fragmentation.

Aesthetics

Alternative 4 would result in similar types of development with a similar build-out population to that anticipated under the Proposed Project. However, implementation of this alternative would direct development to different areas within the Planning Area and would likely reduce views in some areas while leaving other areas with open views. Additionally, the establishment of a permanent greenbelt would serve to preserve views in that area. Consequently, build-out of this alternative would result in similar but somewhat reduced aesthetics impacts as those associated with the Proposed Project. Additionally, Alternative 4 includes an area of contiguous agricultural land across the northern and western edges of the Planning Area starting from the northeast corner of the Planning Area and continuing to the northwest corner then down to the southwest corner. Though a portion of the land in the northern part of the Planning Area is designated as Urban Reserve and could be converted in the future, this alternative includes the greatest amount of contiguous agricultural land and reduces the impacts associated with agricultural land fragmentation.

Public Services and Utilities

Development anticipated under this alternative would be similar to that anticipated under the Proposed Project. Although development might occur in different areas, the total increase in need for services is expected to be similar. Overall, implementation of Alternative 4 is expected to have similar public services impacts as those associated with the Proposed Project.

Transportation and Circulation

Development anticipated under this alternative would be similar to that anticipated under the Proposed Project. Although development might occur in different areas, the total increase in traffic is expected to be similar. Overall, implementation of Alternative 4 is expected to have similar transportation and circulation impacts as those associated with the Proposed Project.

Air Quality and Global Climate Change

Under this alternative impacts to Air Quality and Global Climate Change are expected to be similar to those associated with the Proposed Project. Implementation of this alternative would still result in a significant and unavoidable impact because growth would still contribute to air pollutant emissions that could exceed the daily SJVAPCD thresholds for NO_x and ROG and contribute to global climate change impacts.

Noise

Development anticipated under this alternative would be similar to that anticipated under the Proposed Project. Similar to the Proposed Project, significant noise level increases associated with increased traffic would occur adjacent to existing noise sensitive land uses during the planning horizon. Overall, implementation of Alternative 4 would still result in a significant and

unavoidable impact because growth could still contribute additional sources of noise and vibration that would exceed local standards.

Flooding and Water Quality

As with the Proposed Project, the creation of impervious surfaces associated with urbanization would increase the amount of runoff, which could affect water quality. Overall, hydrologic and water quality impacts under Alternative 4 are considered to be similar to those of the Proposed Project.

Alternative 4 also proposes development in areas that are within the 100-year floodplain in a similar manner to the Proposed Project. Similarly, levees are regulated at the State level with maintenance activities delegated to local reclamation districts. The City has no jurisdiction and is limited in terms of alternatives to mitigate for the identified flood risks. Consequently, flood risk impacts are also considered to be similar to the Proposed Project.

Biological Resources

Development proposed under Alternative 4 would result in similar impacts to biological resources (compared to the Proposed Project) through the conversion of open space lands to developed uses as a similar amount of land would be converted. However, the establishment of a permanent greenbelt would reduce impacts to biological resources, though they would remain significant and unavoidable. Additionally, Alternative 4 includes an area of contiguous agricultural land across the northern and western edges of the Planning Area starting from the northeast corner of the Planning Area and continuing to the northwest corner then down to the southwest corner. Though a portion of the land in the northern part of the Planning Area is designated as Urban Reserve and could be converted in the future, this alternative includes the greatest amount of contiguous agricultural land and reduces the impacts associated with agricultural land and habitat fragmentation.

Mineral Resources and Geology

This alternative proposes development that is similar in nature to that anticipated under the Proposed Project. Current State and federal regulations require specific engineering and design criteria to minimize impacts related to geologic, soils, and seismic hazards, which would apply to local geologic/soil conditions under each of the alternatives and the Proposed Project. Policies and implementation measures included as part of the Proposed Project incorporate all applicable regulations to minimize these impacts. For this reason, geologic impacts under Alternative 4 are considered similar to those of the Proposed Project. This alternative would result in similar impacts to mineral resources.

Cultural Resources

Development proposed under this alternative would result in similar impacts to cultural resources as compared to the Proposed Project. Similar to the Proposed Project, urbanization associated with future growth could damage or destroy a variety of cultural resources during various

construction-related activities. Overall cultural resources impacts would be similar to those for the Proposed Project.

Health and Safety

Alternative 4 proposes development that is similar in nature to that anticipated under the Proposed Project. Hazardous materials generation, storage and clean-up are heavily regulated by federal, State and local regulations that would apply to both Alternative 4 and the Proposed Project. For this reason, hazardous materials impacts under Alternative 4 are considered to be similar to those of the Proposed Project.

Alternative 5: No Project Alternative (Build-out of existing 1993 General Plan)

Section 15126.6(e) of the CEQA Guidelines requires that an EIR evaluate and analyze the environmental impacts of the “No-Project” Alternative. When the project is the revision of an existing land use or regulatory plan or policy, the no-project alternative will be the continuation of the existing plan or policy into the future. Therefore, Alternative 5 (No-Project or Buildout of Existing 1993 General Plan) analyzes the effects of continued implementation of the City’s existing 1993 General Plan, which would remain as the adopted long-range planning policy document for the City. Consequently, current development patterns would continue to occur in accordance with the existing General Plan and Development Code. Development outside the existing City limits would require LAFCO review and approval on a case-by-case basis. Additionally, the existing General Plan does not encourage orderly growth patterns using the “Village” design concept. Continued implementation of the No-Project Alternative would also not likely result in as large a buildout population as that provided under the Proposed Project and would not include any of the new policies and implementation measures designed to address the environmental impacts of future City development.

Ability to Meet Project Objectives

A summary of the No-Project Alternative’s ability to meet each of the project objectives is provided in Table 13-1. Under the No-Project Alternative, the City would continue with implementation of its existing 1993 General Plan, which would remain as the adopted long-range planning policy document for the City. Current development patterns would continue to occur in accordance with the existing General Plan and Zoning Code. Consequently, this alternative would fundamentally fail to meet a majority of the Project Objectives described above. Failure to update the City’s existing General Plan will not necessarily result in contiguous growth, infill, or development transitioning smoothly from intense to less intense use, as projects will be reviewed and approved on a case-by-case basis versus as part of an overall plan. Failure to update the existing General Plan will also fail to adopt the proposed “Village” communities plan and result in a continuation of the City’s existing pattern of development that fails to provide a future mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented downtown area that encourages full day use and defines key entry

points to enhance downtown gateways. Additionally, failure to adopt the proposed General Plan Update makes this alternative inconsistent with the objectives to include an integrated mixture of housing choices to support a balanced community; to promote clustered commercial land use with a variety of horizontal and vertical mixed-use and limit “Big box” retail to certain areas; and to plan for a Regional Park near the airport, and an open space buffer along Elk Bayou.

Environmental Impacts of the Alternative

The environmental impacts of this Alternative are summarized in Table 13-2 and described in greater detail below.

Land Use

Under the existing General Plan, the City would have less of an ability to direct specific development changes to ensure that new development is well-connected and compatible with surrounding uses. The proposed General Plan includes increased policy direction for the City overall, as well as specific policies for land use in both “District” and future “Village” areas. Similar to the Proposed Project, development proposed under the No-Project Alternative would need to be consistent with existing plans and policies. Existing General Plan policies would generally ensure that new development is compatible with surrounding land uses. For these reasons, the land use impacts of the No-Project Alternative are considered to be similar to those of the Proposed Project.

Agricultural Resources

Implementation of the No-Project Alternative would result in less of an impact to agricultural resources compared to the Proposed Project. This is because a smaller amount of land designated as Prime, Unique or Farmland of Statewide Importance would be converted to urban uses under the No Project Alternative compared to the amount of farmland that would be converted to urban uses under the Proposed Project. However, since there would be some conversion of important farmland to urbanized uses under this alternative, there would still be a significant and unavoidable impact.

Aesthetics

Under the No-Project Alternative, the City would continue to function under the direction of the existing General Plan. Although, this alternative would result in the eventual annexation (with LAFCO approval) and urbanization of the existing SOI, buildout under the existing General Plan would result in fewer jobs, dwelling units and residents than the Proposed Project. However, the City would continue to review and approve individual development projects on a case-by-case basis, with development outside the existing SOI requiring individual LAFCO review and approval.

The proposed goals and polices provided as part of the Proposed Project are considerably more comprehensive and detailed than those in the existing General Plan. However, it is assumed that the City would continue to evaluate the environmental impacts of these projects on a case-by-case basis and would identify all applicable feasible mitigation measures for significant impacts.

As with the Proposed Project, the No Project Alternative would result in a significant and unavoidable impact because growth would occur over some currently undeveloped land. This growth would affect the existing visual character of the City and would also result in increased sources of nighttime light and glare. Because this alternative would result in less growth than the Proposed Project, the significant and unavoidable impacts would be somewhat lessened, but would remain significant and unavoidable.

Public Services and Utilities

Build-out under the existing General Plan would result in fewer jobs, dwelling units and residents than the Proposed Project. This lower level of population growth and development would result in similar although slightly lesser impacts to the public services and utilities in the City that would be required to adequately serve the levels of development projected under the No-Project Alternative.

Transportation and Circulation

Build-out of the City's existing 1993 General Plan would result in substantially fewer jobs, dwelling units and residents than the Proposed Project. Total daily vehicle trips generated under this alternative over most roadway segments would be lower under the No Project Alternative than the Proposed Project. However, the roadway network under the No Project Alternative does not include any roadway improvements that are proposed as part of the Proposed Project. Therefore, the No Project Alternative may result in similar localized level of service impacts on some roadway segments within the City as those anticipated under the Proposed Project even with overall lower roadway traffic volumes.

Air Quality and Global Climate Change

Under the No-Project Alternative, the City would continue to function under the direction of the existing General Plan. Consequently, buildout under the existing General Plan would result in fewer jobs, dwelling units, and residents than the Proposed Project. These reductions in dwelling units and other types of development would result in reduced levels of both mobile and stationary sources of air quality emissions and toxic air contaminants. However, implementation of the No Project Alternative would still result in a significant and unavoidable impact because growth would still contribute to air pollutant emissions that could exceed the daily SJVAPCD thresholds for NO_x and ROG and contribute to global climate change impacts.

Noise

Under the No-Project Alternative, the City would continue to function under the direction of the existing General Plan. Consequently, buildout under the existing General Plan would result in fewer jobs, dwelling units, and residents than the Proposed Project. These reductions in dwelling units and other types of development would result in reduced levels of both mobile and stationary noise sources. However, implementation of the No Project Alternative would still result in a significant and unavoidable impact because growth could still contribute additional sources of noise that exceed local standards.

Flooding and Water Quality

Under the No-Project Alternative, development would convert less open space land to urban uses than the Proposed Project. As with the Proposed Project, the creation of impervious surfaces associated with urbanization would increase the amount of runoff, which could affect water quality. However, because land conversion would be less than the Proposed Project, fewer impervious surfaces would be developed. For this reason, hydrologic and water quality impacts under the No-Project Alternative are considered to be similar to those of the Proposed Project.

The No-Project Alternative also proposes development in areas that are within the 100-year floodplain in a similar manner to the Proposed Project. Similarly, levees are regulated at the State level with maintenance activities delegated to local reclamation districts. The City has no jurisdiction and is limited in terms of alternatives to mitigate for the identified flood risks. Consequently, flood risk impacts are also considered to be similar to those of the Proposed Project.

Biological Resources

Implementation of the No-Project Alternative would result in less of an impact to biological resources as compared to the Proposed Project. This is because a smaller amount habitat would be converted to urban uses under the No Project Alternative compared to the amount of land that would be converted to urban uses under the Proposed Project. However, as with the Proposed Project, the No Project Alternative would result in a significant and unavoidable impact because growth would occur over some areas of currently undeveloped land and would result in the overall reduction of a plant or wildlife species habitat.

Mineral Resources and Geology

The No-Project Alternative proposes development that is similar in nature to that anticipated under the Proposed Project. Current State and federal regulations require specific engineering and design criteria to avoid impacts related to geologic, soils, and seismic hazards, which would apply to both the No-Project Alternative and the Proposed Project. For this reason, geologic impacts under the No-Project Alternative are considered to be similar to those of the Proposed Project.

The No-Project Alternative would result in less development than the Proposed Project, so there would be fewer potential land use incompatibilities and development of land containing local mineral resources. The overall impacts to mineral resources are considered to be similar to those identified for the Proposed Project.

Cultural Resources

Land that has been used for various types of agricultural or open space uses that do not require extensive excavation and/or grading activities may be more likely to contain previously undiscovered cultural resources, particularly near local waterways. Urbanized areas may also contain a variety of historic resources (i.e., buildings, bridges, etc.).

The existing General Plan does not have the full range of policies designed to address cultural resources. The proposed goals and polices provided as part of the Proposed Project are considerably more comprehensive and detailed. Similar to the Proposed Project, urbanization associated with future growth could damage or destroy a variety of cultural resources during various construction-related activities.

Health and Safety

The No-Project Alternative proposes development that is similar in nature to that anticipated under the Proposed Project. Hazardous materials generation, storage and clean-up are heavily regulated by federal, State and local regulations that would apply to both the No-Project Alternative and the Proposed Project. For this reason, hazards and hazardous materials impacts under the No-Project Alternative are considered to be similar to those of the Proposed Project.

13.4 Environmentally Superior Alternative

As previously described, Table 13-2 provides a summary of the anticipated impacts resulting from implementation of the alternatives compared to those identified for the Proposed Project. As summarized in the table, the environmentally superior alternative for this project would be Alternative 4 (Southeastern Expansion Patter). Along with Alternative 3, this alternative would reduce the severity of environmental impacts to agricultural resources, open space, aesthetics, and biological resources and would not increase the severity of any impacts. Alternative 4 was chosen over Alternative 3 because Alternative 4 appears to include conservation of more contiguous agricultural land and prevent fragmentation of this land. This reduced fragmentation would result in a reduced impact to agricultural, biological and open space resources as well as reducing aesthetics impacts in some areas. However, as shown in Table 13-2, though these impacts would be lessened, then would remain significant and unavoidable.