

5.0 ALTERNATIVES

INTRODUCTION

EIRs are required to examine alternatives to a proposed project in order to explore a reasonable range of alternatives that meet most of the basic objectives of the proposed project, while reducing the severity of significant project environmental impacts. CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(b) notes that “the discussion of alternatives shall focus on alternatives to the project or its location which are capable of avoiding or substantially lessening any significant effects of the project, even if these alternatives would impede to some degree the attainment of the project objectives, or would be more costly.” If there is an “environmentally superior” alternative to the proposed project, it must be identified. Analysis of the “No Project” alternative, assuming the reasonable future use of the project parcel if the application were not approved, is also required. If the environmentally superior alternative is the No Project Alternative, the EIR must identify an additional “environmentally superior” choice among the other project alternatives.

The analysis of project alternatives in this EIR focuses on a reasonable range of alternatives consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(a). Accordingly, Section 15126.6(a) states:

An EIR shall describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project, or to the location of the project, which would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project, and evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives. An EIR need not consider every conceivable alternative to a project. Rather it must consider a reasonable range of potentially feasible alternatives that will foster informed decisionmaking and public participation. The lead agency is responsible for selecting a range of project alternatives for examination and must publicly disclose its reasoning for selecting those alternatives. There is no ironclad rule governing the nature or scope of the alternatives to be discussed other than the rule of reason.

The alternatives evaluated below address this reasonable range of alternatives that strive to minimize significant environmental impacts associated with the proposed project. Three alternatives to the proposed project have been identified and assessed in this EIR. In addition to the No Project Alternative, two other alternatives, including a Reconfigured and Reduced Project Alternative and an Off-site Location Alternative, are evaluated to minimize potentially significant environmental effects associated with the proposed project, while achieving most of the project objectives.

Alternative 1: No Project

As directed under CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6, the No Project Alternative assumes the reasonable future development of the project site assuming the proposed application were not approved, given currently available public services infrastructure. The project site is currently designated and zoned for urban uses and would be expected to be developed with about 1,700 net residences, as approved as part of Target Area 7 in the City’s Sphere of Influence EIR.

1 **Alternative 2: Reconfigured and Reduced Project**

2 The Reconfigured and Reduced Project Alternative would be designed to minimize significant,
3 adverse impacts on air quality, biological resources, noise, recreation, and traffic associated with
4 the proposed project. The primary aspect of the Reconfigured and Reduced Project Alternative
5 would be to increase the acreage of open space onsite from 100 acres to 150 acres to reduce
6 significant impacts on federally-listed, threatened California tiger salamander and California red-
7 legged frog and other sensitive amphibian species potentially present in the area by disturbance
8 of their habitat. The increased onsite conservation open space area would allow for more
9 expansive amphibian travel corridors and sensitive species habitat along Drainage B and C.

10 The reduced development area would result in a decrease of maximum residential buildout to
11 1,080 units from 1,405 units, or roughly a 23 percent reduction in buildout. This would reduce
12 significant air quality emissions by a commensurate amount.

13 Another significant project impact is related to the lack of available onsite recreational park acreage
14 provided onsite. In order to minimize this impact, the 5.2-gross acre neighborhood commercial
15 parcel accommodating a net 65,340 s.f. development, would also be reduced by roughly 23 percent.
16 This would provide for a 4.0-acre neighborhood commercial parcel and a 50,311 s.f. developed area.
17 An additional 1.2 acres of open space would be available for expanded recreational opportunities
18 within the joint use school/public facilities area located in Planning Area 6.

19 The additional onsite conservation open spaces have been prioritized into three areas: Area 1
20 includes essential dispersal habitat that provides a wildlife travel corridor between Drainage C and
21 currently inhabited habitat south of the project site along Dutard Road; Area 2 includes a non-row
22 crop agricultural area that provides potential burrowing habitat for the California tiger salamander;
23 and Area 3 that provides habitat connectivity and an essential onsite amphibian migratory corridor
24 between Drainages B and C (Figure 5-1). Because these open areas (Areas 1-3) have been disturbed
25 from past and ongoing agricultural operations, under this alternative these areas would also be
26 restored to provide high quality upland habitat that would enhance wildlife movement corridors to
27 areas east, south, and west of the property. Additionally, to preserve the use of onsite drainages
28 (Drainages B and C) as migratory corridors for amphibian species and enhance the inter-
29 connectiveness of these aquatic habitats, the proposed road crossing on fill embankments for stream
30 crossings within the COS areas would be replaced with bridges or culverts acceptable to the
31 California Department of Fish and Game and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Furthermore,
32 directional borings would be used to install utilities (i.e., including water, wastewater, gas,
33 electricity, telephone, and cable) under stream corridors within the COS areas.

34 Under the Reconfigured and Reduced Alternative, the lowest residential land use densities would
35 be relocated to within the existing Santa Maria Public Airport 60 dBA CNEL noise contour (see
36 Figure 4.8-2) extending over the central portion of the site along the eastern site boundary, to reduce
37 the number of exterior living unit areas exposed to aircraft sound levels over 60 dBA CNEL.
38 Specifically, portions of Planning Area 4 designated for low-density residential (LDR) development,
39 Single-Family 6,000 s.f. minimum lot size, would be relocated from their proposed location next to
40 Olivewood Road and Spock Street to both sides of Kirk Avenue where this roadway terminates
41 adjacent to the eastern project boundary. Portions of Planning Area 7, proposed for low-medium
42 density residential (LMDR) development (Single-Family, 5,000 s.f. minimum lot size), would be
43 relocated adjacent to Spock Street and Olivewood Road, outside of the 60 dBA CNEL contour.

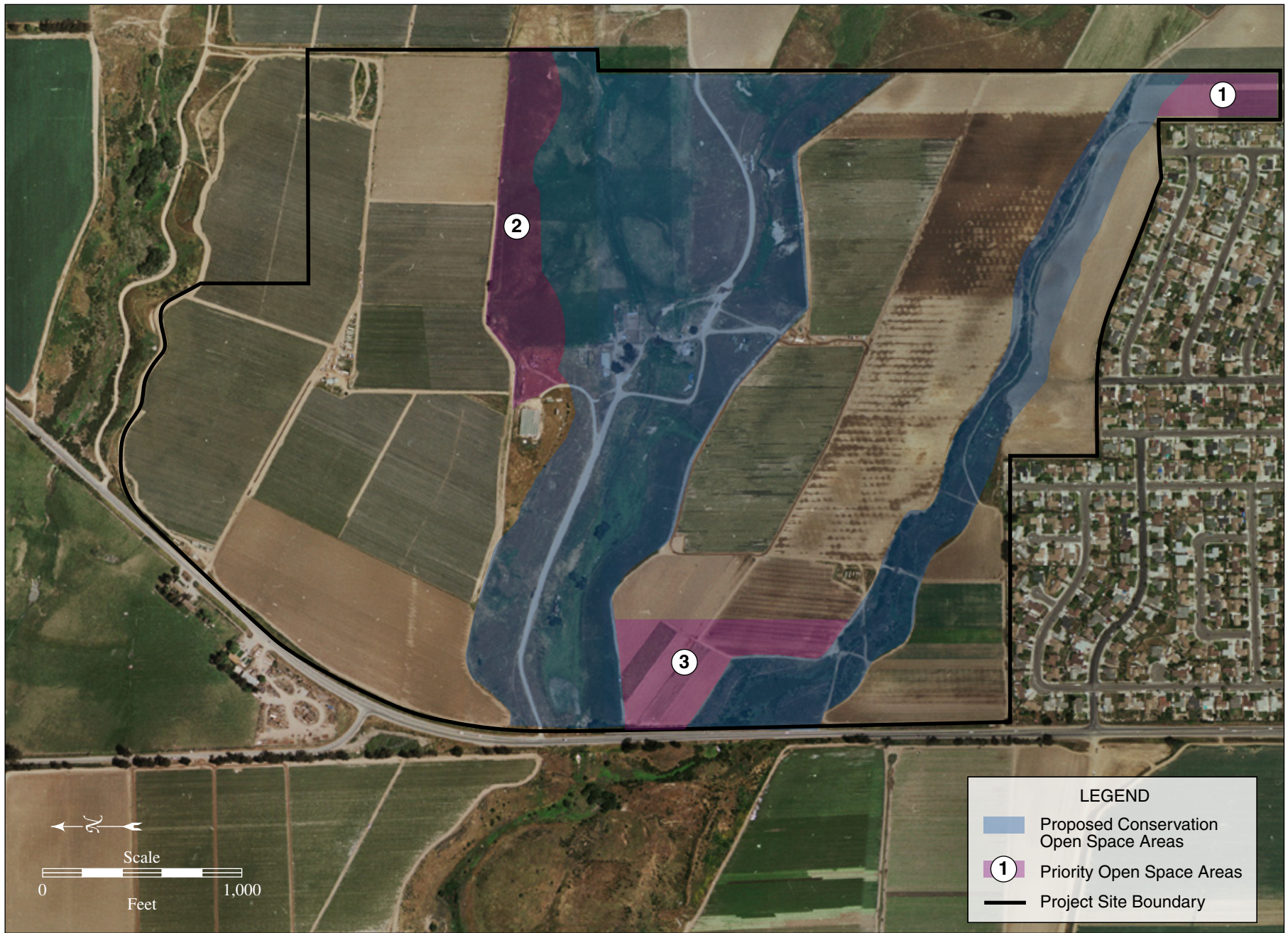


Figure 5-1. Alternative 2: Priority Open Space Areas

1 Alternative 2 would also include relocation of the proposed neighborhood commercial area (i.e.,
2 Planning Area 9) such that it is accessible equally by on-site residents and outside traffic. This
3 would minimize the number of vehicular trips that would be necessary to use Mahoney Road
4 on the north side of the project site and Black Road on the south to access the commercial
5 center, reducing the number of left hand turns to get in and out of the stores. The community
6 commercial convenience center would be relocated to either the Mahoney Road/Olivewood
7 Road intersection, or Kirk Road/Black Road intersection, such that Mahoney Ranch South
8 Project occupants could access stores from internal roads as well as external roads, minimizing
9 left turns on external roadways.

10 **Alternative 3: Off-site Location Alternative**

11 This alternative would relocate the proposed project to a 261-acre site located on the northwest
12 corner of "A" Street and West Betteravia Road. Due to the reduced parcel size, the Off-site
13 Location Alternative buildout scenario would accommodate clustered low-density residential
14 buildout of up to 1,405 units on approximately 219 acres, a 75,000 s.f. (gross) neighborhood
15 commercial center on 7 acres, an elementary school facility on approximately 11 acres, and
16 recreational open space areas on 24 acres.

17 **5.1 ALTERNATIVE 1: NO PROJECT**

18 CEQA Guidelines 15126.6(e)(1) and (e)(2) provide guidance on how the No Project Alternative is
19 to be assessed. This alternative's analysis should not evaluate the existing environmental
20 conditions exclusively, as if the project were not to be built; it should evaluate "what would be
21 reasonably expected to occur in the foreseeable future if the project were not approved, based on
22 current plans and consistent with available infrastructure and community services." The
23 Mahoney Ranch South Project site is located along the western Santa Maria urban area boundary
24 and designated and zoned for urban uses, and would be expected to be developed with about
25 1,700 net residences, as approved for Target Area 7 in the City's Sphere of Influence EIR.

26 **Aesthetics**

27 Development of approximately 1,700 residential units would increase aesthetic impacts relative
28 to the proposed project, including view obstruction of the area's important visual resources (i.e.,
29 expansive agricultural fields, eucalyptus windrows, and the Sierra Madre Mountains and Casmalia
30 Hills), and intensified light and glare. Therefore, the No Project Alternative would not be
31 environmentally preferable to the proposed project.

32 **Air Quality**

33 The No Project Alternative would produce greater short-term air quality impacts than the
34 proposed project due to the increased intensity of construction including construction
35 equipment and dust emissions. This alternative also would result in up to approximately 295
36 more homes to be built, which would add to the amount of produced during the construction
37 phase of the project. Significant long-term operational air emissions would also be over 20
38 percent higher than the proposed project. Therefore, the No Project Alternative would not be
39 environmentally preferable to the proposed project.

1 **Biological Resources**

2 The No Project Alternative would result in 20 percent more residential units and, as a result,
3 decreased open space. Increased residential density would increase direct and indirect impacts on
4 the California red-legged frog and the California Tiger Salamander including: greater loss or
5 reduction in quality of aquatic habitat resulting from increased potential for residential
6 chemicals and pollutants entering drainages; greater potential for mortalities and injuries to
7 individuals resulting from increased traffic in the project area; a reduction of habitat value due
8 to the increased lighting in the project area; an increased potential for disturbances to
9 individuals resulting from increased human presence and pets within the conservation areas;
10 and an increased potential for disturbances to individuals resulting from increased exposure to
11 other native wildlife species (i.e., raccoon and opossum) that are attracted to and supported by
12 urban development. Therefore, the No Project Alternative would not be environmentally
13 preferable to the proposed project.

14 **Cultural Resources**

15 The No Project Alternative would require more grading in order to accommodate the intensified
16 development that it entails. Any possible, though unlikely impacts on archaeological resources
17 encountered during grading would remain *significant but feasibly mitigated*. However, as
18 development on previously undisturbed portions of the project site would be increased compared
19 to the proposed project, the No Project Alternative would not be environmentally preferable to
20 the proposed project.

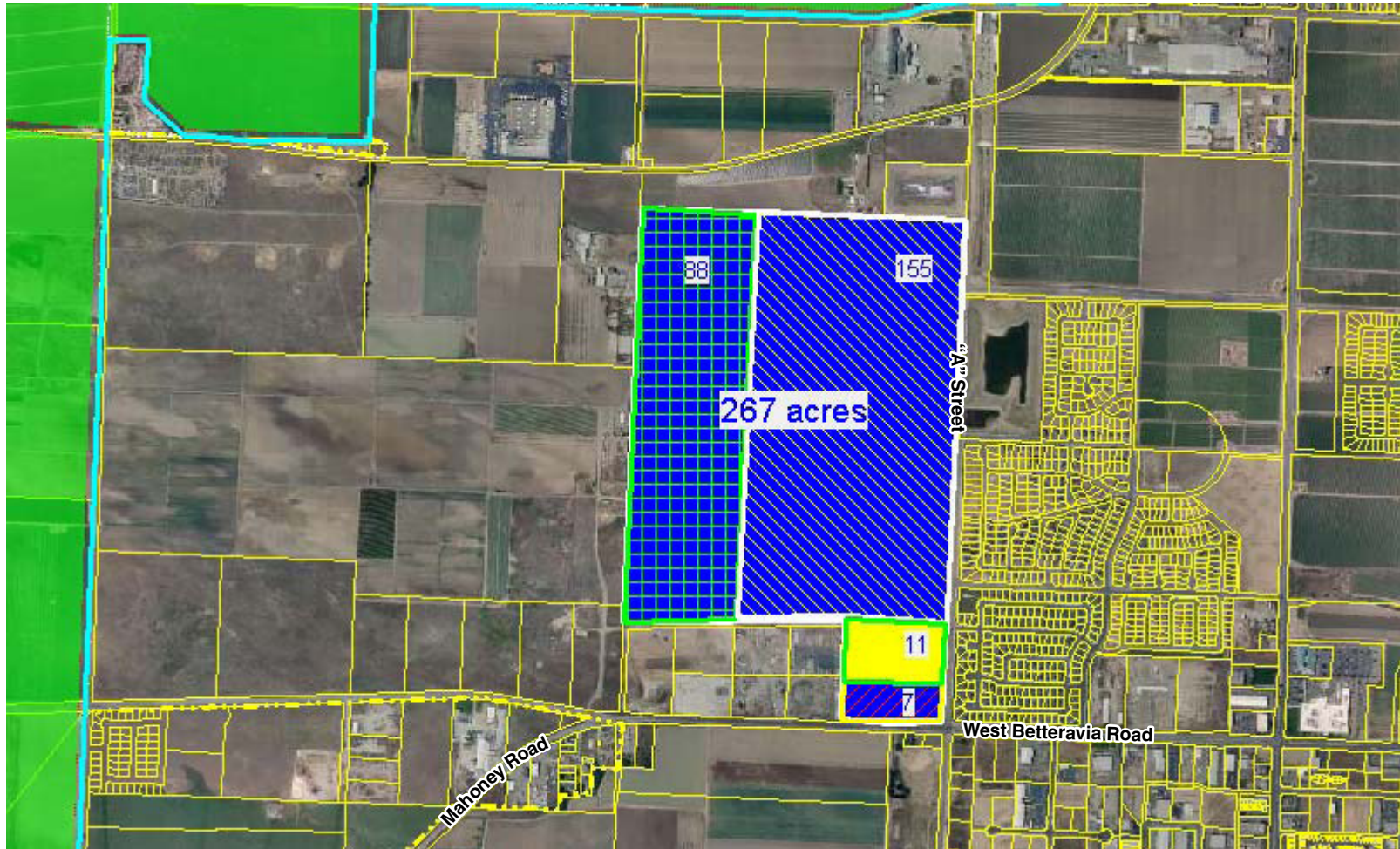
21 **Hazards and Hazardous Materials**

22 Under the No Project Alternative, approximately 20 percent more residents would be exposed to
23 potential unintended pesticide drift from adjacent agricultural operations. In addition, the
24 increased population would magnify the potential for exposing sensitive receptors to hazards
25 associated with the accidental releases of hazardous substances. Overall, impacts related to
26 hazards and hazardous materials would be greater than those estimated for the proposed
27 project. Therefore, the No Project Alternative would not be environmentally preferable to the
28 proposed project.

29 **Hydrology and Water Quality**

30 The No Project Alternative with approximately 20 percent more residential units would result
31 in an increased development footprint, increasing the amount of grading and topographic
32 modification. Therefore, surface water quality impacts associated with grading-induced
33 sedimentation and runoff of non-point pollution sources would be increased compared to the
34 proposed project; the impacts would remain *significant but feasibly mitigated*. Increased grading
35 would also potentially increase the surface runoff in a manner that would result in flooding on-
36 or off-site. In addition, increased grading and development would introduce sediments and
37 pollutants of concern in post-construction storm water runoff to the Santa Maria River. Impacts
38 would be *significant but feasibly mitigated*. Therefore, the No Project Alternative would not be
39 environmentally preferable to the proposed project.

40



CONCEPTUAL ALTERNATIVE SITE LAND PLAN

- 155 acres residential (7.1 units/acre = 1,100 dwelling units)
- 88 acres open space (conservation, agricultural, recreational)
- 11 acres elementary school site
- 7 acres neighborhood commercial (75,000 sf at .25 FAR)

Figure 5-2. Off-site Location Alternative

1 Land Use

2 The No Project Alternative would occupy an increased development footprint and provide a
3 reduced amount of designated open space as compared to the proposed project. Increased
4 populations would be potentially consistent with Airport Land Use Plan guidelines for
5 development with the Santa Maria Airport Influence Area Safety Area 3, but more individuals
6 would be subject to airport flight noise. The conversion of the area's agricultural land to urban
7 development would be inconsistent with the agricultural protection policies in the City's General
8 Plan; impacts would be *significant but feasibly mitigated*. Therefore, the No Project Alternative
9 would not be environmentally preferable to the proposed project.

10 Noise

11 The No Project Alternative would locate a denser number of residential structures adjacent to
12 Mahoney Road and Black Road and these structures would potentially be exposed to exterior
13 noise levels exceeding 60 dBA CNEL, and interior living areas subject to noise levels exceeding 45
14 dB(A) CNEL; impacts would be *significant but feasibly mitigated*. Commercial development would
15 be increased relative to the proposed project; therefore long-term stationary noise would
16 substantially increase ambient noise levels affecting proposed residential units. Increased
17 amounts of traffic and exterior activities would increase ambient noise levels affecting sensitive
18 receptors. Both of these impacts would be *significant but feasibly mitigated*. Overall, the No Project
19 Alternative would not be environmentally preferable to the proposed project.

20 Population and Housing

21 The City of Santa Maria was included in the Santa Barbara County Association of Government
22 Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA). This set a target for the total number of new
23 residential units that should be built in the City of Santa Maria by 2030. The No Project
24 Alternative, would result in more housing units built than with the proposed project. It would
25 contribute approximately 20 percent more units to contribute to the City's progress toward
26 meeting the RHNA target goal. Therefore, the No Project Alternative would be environmentally
27 superior to the proposed project.

28 Public Facilities

29 The No Project Alternative would require the extension of City of Santa Maria police and fire
30 services, and would include a new school site. Approximately 20 percent more residents under
31 the No Project Alternative would increase impacts on fire protection, police protection, schools,
32 and library services compared to the proposed project. Therefore, the No Project Alternative
33 would not be environmentally preferable to the proposed project.

34 Recreation and Parks

35 Approximately 20 percent more residents under the No Project Alternative would increase the
36 demand on recreational facilities in the vicinity. Therefore, the No Project Alternative would
37 not be environmentally preferable to the proposed project.

1 **Transportation and Circulation**

2 The No Project Alternative would increase residential density. Therefore, project-specific impacts at
3 the Betteravia Road/Mahoney Road and Betteravia Road/Broadway intersections, and cumulative
4 impacts at the Betteravia Road/Mahoney Road intersection, would be greater than those of the
5 proposed project. Therefore, the No Project Alternative would not be environmentally preferable to
6 the proposed project.

7 **Utilities and Service Systems**

8 The No Project Alternative would increase residential development by approximately 20
9 percent. Therefore, impacts on all utilities and service systems would be intensified along with
10 wastewater treatment flows, water, and solid waste demand. Therefore, the No Project
11 Alternative would not be environmentally preferable to the proposed project.

12 **Geologic Resources**

13 Increasing residential density would increase the potential for geologic hazards impacts. Grading
14 for the development would increase potential erosion and slope failure and building on potentially
15 expansive soils. Impacts resulting from geologic hazards would remain *significant but feasibly*
16 *mitigated*. Therefore, the No Project Alternative would not be environmentally preferable to the
17 proposed project.

18 *Alternative Summary:* The No Project Alternative (i.e., reasonably probable development of
19 about 1,700 net residences, as approved for Target Area 7 in the City’s Sphere of Influence EIR)
20 would be less environmentally preferable to the proposed project due to the increased intensity
21 of development and resulting related ground disturbances and long term.

22 **5.2 ALTERNATIVE 2: RECONFIGURED AND REDUCED PROJECT**

23 The Reconfigured and Reduced Project Alternative would be designed to minimize significant,
24 adverse impacts on biological resources, land use, noise, recreation, and transportation/circulation
25 associated with the proposed project. These would include:

- 26 • Increasing the amount of onsite permanent conservation open space to preserve and
27 restore habitat for California red-legged frog and California tiger salamander from 100
28 acres to 150 acres;
- 29 • Preserve migratory corridors and enhance habitat connectivity along existing drainages
30 by replacing proposed road crossings on fill embankments for stream crossings within
31 the COS areas with bridges or culverts acceptable to the California Department of Fish
32 and Game and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service;
- 33 • Use directional borings to install utilities under stream corridors within the COS areas
34 including water, wastewater, gas, electricity, telephone and cable, as necessary;
- 35 • Locate the lowest residential land use densities within the existing 60 dBA CNEL contours
36 associated with Santa Maria Public Airport overflights (see Figure 4.8-2) extending over the
37 central portion of the site along the eastern boundaries. Specifically, portions of Planning
38 Area 4 with Single Family Residential, 6,000 s.f. minimum parcel size, would be relocated

1 from their proposed location next to Olivewood Road and Spock Street, to both sides of Kirk
2 Avenue where this roadway terminates next to the eastern project boundary. Portions of
3 proposed Planning Area 7, Residential Small Lots, 5,000 s.f. minimum parcel size, would be
4 relocated adjacent to Spock Street and Olivewood Road, outside of the 60 dBA CNEL
5 contour. Under the Reconfigured and Reduced Alternative residential buildout would be a
6 maximum 1,080 units;

- 7 • Reduce the neighborhood commercial area from 5.2 acres to 4.0 acres, and developed
8 area from 65,340 to 50,311 s.f., increasing the amount of neighborhood recreation area
9 and reducing air quality emissions; and
- 10 • Relocate the proposed neighborhood commercial area (i.e., Planning Area 9) such that it
11 is accessible equally by on-site residents and outside traffic. The community commercial
12 convenience center would be relocated to either the Mahoney Road/Olivewood Road
13 intersection, or Kirk Road/Black Road intersection.

14 **Aesthetics**

15 Preservation and restoration of additional onsite conservation area (i.e., Priority Open Space Area 3)
16 (see Figure 5-1) would reduce the aesthetic impact of neighborhood commercial development in
17 Planning Area 9 that would encroach within the public view corridor from Black Road. This would
18 minimize the obstruction of important onsite visual features from sensitive public vantage points,
19 including the open agricultural lands and the Sierra Madre Mountains. Preservation of Priority
20 Open Space Areas 1 and 2 would occur within the interior portion of the site and would not be
21 visible from surrounding public view corridors. However, reconfiguring site buildout to
22 accommodate a reduced development footprint would result in a *significant and unavoidable* impact
23 associated with obstruction of important visual resources (i.e., expansive agricultural fields,
24 eucalyptus windrows, and the Sierra Madre Mountains and Casmalia Hills). Similar to the
25 proposed project, residential and neighborhood commercial buildout would be potentially
26 compatible in appearance (i.e., design, bulk, and scale) with surrounding residential development
27 based on proposed Mahoney Ranch South Specific Plan Design Guidelines. Under the
28 Reconfigured and Reduced Project Alternative, buildout would potentially introduce new glare
29 sources in an existing agricultural area, but would be addressed by mitigation addressing the
30 screening of lighting fixtures. Although development under this alternative would reconfigure the
31 size and location of commercial and residential building envelopes, impacts on visual resources
32 would be generally equivalent to the proposed project.

33 **Air Quality**

34 The Reconfigured and Reduced Project Alternative would reduce the residential and neighborhood
35 commercial buildout by approximately 23 percent, and the area developed by over 50 acres. As a
36 result, the amount of construction equipment and dust emissions that would be generated would be
37 decreased. Also, operational vehicular trips and associated air quality emissions would be reduced
38 by approximately 23 percent. Mitigated ROG vehicular emissions would be reduced from 135
39 lbs./day to approximately 104 lbs./day, NO_x emissions would be reduced from 180 lbs./day to
40 139 lbs./day, and PM₁₀ would be reduced from 214 lbs./day to 165 lbs./day. The ROG and NO_x
41 emissions would still substantially exceed the APCD threshold of 25 lbs./day for vehicular
42 emissions, and the PM₁₀ emissions would exceed the APCD threshold of 80 lbs./day for combined

1 vehicular and stationary sources. Though air quality impacts would remain *significant and*
2 *unavoidable*, they would be reduced and environmentally superior to the proposed project.

3 **Biological Resources**

4 The Reconfigured and Reduced Project Alternative would result in reduced impacts on
5 biological resources relative to the proposed project. Although this alternative would decrease
6 the size of the building envelope size and would increase the amount of available open space,
7 any development on this project site would increase the potential for several substantial effects
8 on populations of sensitive species or these species' habitats. Implementation of the mitigation
9 and avoidance measures described in the Draft HCP and Mitigation Measures BIO-1.2a and -
10 1.2b would reduce potential impacts on individual California tiger salamander and California
11 red-legged frog and these species' habitats. However, any level of development at this site
12 would result in a substantial adverse effect on populations of California red-legged frog and
13 California tiger salamander. This alternative would result in impacts to sensitive amphibian
14 species that would include: a loss or reduction in quality of aquatic habitat resulting from
15 increased potential for residential chemicals and pollutants entering drainages; an increased
16 potential for mortalities and injuries to individual California tiger salamander and California
17 red-legged frog resulting from increased traffic in the project area; a reduction of habitat value
18 due to the increased lighting in the project area; an increased potential for disturbances to
19 individual California tiger salamander and California red-legged frog resulting from increased
20 human presence and pets within the conservation areas; and an increased potential for
21 disturbances to individual California tiger salamander and California red-legged frog resulting
22 from increased exposure to other native wildlife species (i.e., raccoon and opossum) that are
23 attracted to and supported by urban development. Impacts would be considered *significant and*
24 *unavoidable impacts*, but reduced relative to the proposed project.

25 Bridging the two drainages, as opposed to using culverts, would reduce impacts to wetlands
26 and drainages on the site to *significant but feasibly mitigated*, and would reduce significant
27 impacts on the sensitive species travel corridors for amphibians moving east to west. However,
28 any substantial amount of development on the project site would result in an interruption of
29 travel through the site from north to south. Therefore impacts to sensitive species' migration
30 corridors would remain *significant and unavoidable*, but reduced relative to the proposed project.

31 The Reconfigured and Reduced Project Alternative would also result in reduced impacts on other
32 biological resources compared to the proposed project, including those on non-sensitive wildlife
33 species and native habitats and vegetation. Impacts to non-state or federally listed biological
34 resources would be *significant but feasibly mitigated*, or *not significant*.

35 **Cultural Resources**

36 This alternative would result in buildout of 1,080 residential units and a reduced commercial lot
37 of 5.2 acres to 4.0 acres to accommodate 50 acres of additional onsite conservation open space
38 areas. Although grading required for site preparation would be reduced, any possible, though
39 unlikely impacts on archaeological resources encountered during grading would remain
40 *significant but feasibly mitigated* with incorporation of mitigation measure CR-1.1, CR-1.2, and CR-2.
41 However, as development on previously undisturbed portions of the project site would be

1 reduced, the Reconfigured and Reduced Project Alternative would be environmentally superior to
2 the proposed project relative to cultural resources.

3 **Hazards and Hazardous Materials**

4 The Reconfigured and Reduced Project Alternative would have less effect with respect to hazards
5 and hazardous materials project impacts. Preservation of additional onsite conservation areas
6 would minimize the project's potential to create a public health hazard by exposing residents to
7 unintended pesticide drift from adjacent agricultural operations; Priority Areas 1 and 2 would
8 minimize exposure to pesticides/herbicides that are used on the row crops adjacent to the eastern
9 site boundary; and Priority Area 3 would reduce public exposure from agricultural operations to
10 the west across Black Road.

11 A decrease in residential and commercial development and an increase in open space would result
12 in less potential for exposing sensitive receptors to hazards associated with the accidental releases of
13 hazardous substances. Overall, impacts related to hazards and hazardous materials would be less
14 than those estimated for the proposed project; this alternative would be environmentally superior to
15 the proposed project. Impacts would remain *significant but feasibly mitigated*.

16 **Hydrology and Water Quality**

17 The Reconfigured and Reduced Project Alternative would occupy a reduced development
18 footprint, minimizing the amount of grading and topographic modification. Therefore, surface
19 water quality impacts associated with grading-induced sedimentation and runoff of non-point
20 pollution sources would be slightly reduced compared to the proposed project; however, impacts
21 would remain *significant but feasibly mitigated*. Similar to the proposed project, development and
22 grading would substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site and potentially increase
23 the surface runoff in a manner that would result in flooding on- or off-site. In addition, grading and
24 development would introduce sediments and pollutants of concern in post-construction storm
25 water runoff to the Santa Maria River. Impacts would be *significant but feasibly mitigated*. However,
26 a decrease in residential and commercial development and an increase in open space would result
27 in less surface runoff relative to the proposed project, thus reducing the potential for flooding and
28 runoff of sediments and pollutants of concern. Therefore, this alternative would be
29 environmentally superior relative to the proposed project.

30 The estimated Reconfigured and Reduced Project Alternative water demand based on net
31 consumptive use factors would be decreased by approximately 23 percent, from 505 AFY to 389
32 AFY. The net decrease in consumptive use relative to existing agricultural use would be increased
33 from approximately 103 AFY to 219 AFY. Therefore, the proposed Reconfigured and Reduced
34 Project Alternative would result in *beneficial impacts* on water supplies, and would be substantially
35 superior relative to the proposed project.

36 **Land Use**

37 The Reconfigured and Reduced Project Alternative project would occupy a reduced development
38 footprint to accommodate an additional 50 acres of onsite conservation open space areas and an
39 additional 1.2 acres of recreational space instead of neighborhood commercial. However, 168
40 acres of the 319 acre site would be converted to urban uses. Similar to the proposed project,

1 residential and commercial buildout would be incompatible with the existing agricultural
2 character of the project site; impacts would be *significant and unavoidable*. Relocating lower density
3 land uses (i.e., Planning Area 4) within the 60 dBA CNEL contour associated with the Santa Maria
4 Public Airport operations would minimize impacts associated with ALUP Safety Area 3 land use
5 density restrictions, a *significant but feasibly mitigated* impact. Similar to the project, the conversion
6 of the 168 acres of agricultural land to urban development would be inconsistent with the
7 agricultural protection policies in the City's General Plan; impacts would be *significant but feasibly*
8 *mitigated*. Therefore, impacts on land use under the Reconfigured and Reduced Project
9 Alternative would be similar but superior to the proposed project.

10 **Noise**

11 The Reconfigured and Reduced Project Alternative would occupy a reduced footprint to
12 accommodate 50 acres of additional onsite conservation open space area. However, proposed
13 residential structures located adjacent to Mahoney Road and Black Road would potentially be
14 exposed to exterior noise levels exceeding 60 dBA CNEL, and interior living areas subject to noise
15 levels exceeding 45 dB(A) CNEL; impacts would be *significant but feasibly mitigated*. Relocating
16 Planning Areas 4 with lower density development within the existing 60 dBA CNEL contours
17 associated with Santa Maria Public Airport overflights along the eastern site boundaries would
18 reduce excessive noise nuisances to future site residents, a *significant but feasibly mitigated* impact.
19 Commercial development would be reduced relative to the proposed project, but the
20 Reconfigured and Reduced Project Alternative long-term stationary noise would still
21 substantially increase ambient noise levels affecting proposed residential units. Traffic and
22 exterior activities would increase ambient noise levels affecting sensitive receptors. Both of these
23 impacts would be *significant but feasibly mitigated*. Overall, however, impacts on noise under the
24 Reconfigured and Reduced Project Alternative would be superior to the proposed project.

25 **Population and Housing**

26 The Reconfigured and Reduced Project Alternative would result in a reduced number of
27 residential units compared to the proposed project, therefore, contributing 325 less units to the
28 Regional Housing Needs Assessment goal. Although the Reconfigured and Reduced Project
29 Alternative would contribute a reduced number of housing units compared to the proposed
30 project and would result in reduced growth inducing impacts, this alternative would be
31 environmentally equivalent to the proposed project.

32 **Public Facilities**

33 Similar to the proposed project, the Reconfigured and Reduced Project Alternative would require
34 the extension of City of Santa Maria police and fire services, and would include a new school site.
35 However, as buildout under this alternative would be up to 1,080 residential units (i.e., a
36 reduction of 325 units compared to the proposed project), the corresponding increase in
37 population would also be reduced. Therefore, impacts on public facilities in the City of Santa
38 Maria would be slightly reduced under the Reconfigured and Reduced Project Alternative
39 because a reduced number of people would need fire, police, schools, and library services
40 compared to the proposed project. These impacts would remain *significant but feasibly mitigated*.
41 The Reconfigured Alternative would be environmentally superior to the proposed project.

1 Recreation and Parks

2 Maximum residential buildout and associated population would be reduced under the
3 Reconfigured and Reduced Project Alternative compared to the proposed project. Therefore, the
4 demand on recreational facilities in the vicinity would be reduced. Reducing the neighborhood
5 commercial area from 5.2 acres to 4.0 acres would increase opportunities for onsite recreational
6 facilities and use, decreasing the project's residual effect on this resource. Therefore, impacts on
7 recreation associated with the Reconfigured and Reduced Project Alternative would be superior
8 to the proposed project.

9 Transportation and Circulation

10 The Reconfigured and Reduced Project Alternative would reduce residential and neighborhood
11 commercial buildout by approximately 23 percent. Therefore, alternative ADT would be reduced
12 from 17,412 to 13,400, and PHT from 1,831 to 1,410. Project-specific impacts at the Betteravia
13 Road/Mahoney Road and Betteravia Road/Broadway intersections, and cumulative impacts at
14 the Betteravia Road/Mahoney Road intersection, would remain *significant but feasibly mitigated*,
15 but would be reduced compared to the project site. Though other traffic improvements along
16 roadways and intersections would still be required to reduce impacts to *significant but feasibly*
17 *mitigated*, they would be superior to those resulting from the proposed project.

18 Utilities and Service Systems

19 The Reconfigured and Reduced Project Alternative would reduce residential and neighborhood
20 commercial buildout by approximately 23 percent. Therefore, impacts on all utilities and
21 service systems would be decreased by a commensurate amount. Wastewater treatment flows,
22 water, solid waste demand all would be reduced. Impacts on solid waste would be reduced
23 from 5,309 tons to 4,088 tons, but would remain a *significant and unavoidable impact*, exceeding
24 the 196 tons/year threshold. Substantial extension of public utilities and service systems to the
25 project site would still be required. Overall, the Reconfigured and Reduced Alternative would
26 be environmentally superior to the proposed project relative to utility and service systems.

27 Geologic Resources

28 Reducing residential and neighborhood commercial buildout by approximately 23 percent, and
29 increasing the amount of open space by over 50 acres, would minimize the effect of potential
30 geologic hazards on the built environment. Grading would be reduced, such that potential
31 erosion and slope failure of steep escarpments and gullies would be reduced. Less developed
32 overall area would also reduce the potential impacts resulting from building on potentially
33 expansive soils. Impacts resulting from geologic hazards would remain *significant but feasibly*
34 *mitigated*, but would be reduced relative to the proposed project.

35 **Alternative Summary:** The Reconfigured and Reduced Project Alternative would be
36 environmentally superior to the proposed project in terms of reducing the extent of *significant*
37 *and unavoidable* impacts on air quality, biological resources, recreation, and solid waste.
38 Reduced impacts on *significant but feasibly mitigated* impacts on land use, noise, and public
39 services would also occur. This alternative would reduce all potentially significant impacts

1 associated with the proposed project, while achieving over 75 percent of the project's basic
2 objectives of 1,405 residential units.

3 **5.3 ALTERNATIVE 3: OFF-SITE LOCATION ALTERNATIVE**

4 This alternative would relocate the proposed project to a 261-acre site located on the northwest
5 corner of "A" Street and West Betteravia Road (see Figure 5-2). The site is dominated by
6 agricultural row crops on approximately 243 acres that extend west as far as "E" Street, while two
7 smaller parcels of 11 and 7 acres are industrially zoned and currently used for scrap metal storage.
8 The Off-site Location Alternative buildout scenario would accommodate clustered residential
9 development over 219 acres, with 24 acres of designated recreational open space areas for
10 recreational purposes (based on the requirement for 4.7 acres/recreational area per 1,000 residents,
11 and a population of 5,100). Residential development would be clustered to provide an average 6.4
12 dwelling units per acre (1,405 maximum units). A neighborhood commercial center would be
13 constructed on the 7.0-acre parcel adjacent to Betteravia Road, representing an estimated 75,000
14 s.f. buildout (assuming a floor to area ratio of 0.25:1). An elementary school would be
15 constructed on the adjacent 11-acre parcel to the north of the commercial parcel, and south of
16 the residential buildout area.

17 **Size:** 261 acres

18 **Access:** via Blosser Road, Stowell Road, and Betteravia Road

19 **Public Infrastructure:** within City of Santa Maria water and wastewater service areas

20 **Existing Land Use Designation:** Agricultural and Industrial

21 **Existing Onsite Land Uses:** agricultural row crops and scrap metal storage

22 **Surrounding Land Uses:**

23 **North:** agricultural lands

24 **East:** residential units

25 **South:** agricultural lands

26 **West:** agricultural lands

27 The 261-acre project site is moderately level with a slope of 2-9 percent. The site does not contain
28 any prime agricultural soils; onsite soils primarily consist of Betteravia loamy sand. Runoff
29 associated with these soils is very slow and the erosion potential is none to slight (USDA 1972). The
30 site is not bisected by any drainages.

31 **Aesthetics**

32 Aesthetic impacts associated with project development at the off-site location would be similar to
33 those described for the proposed project, primarily because the majority of the site consists of open
34 agricultural lands; existing industrial uses associated with scrap metal storage operations occur on
35 the southern portion of the site. Although intervening industrial ancillary structures along the
36 southern site boundary would partially obstruct public views, this alternative would obstruct
37 important scenic views of foreground agricultural land from surrounding roadways, including "A"
38 Street. Alternative site development of residential and commercial structures up to 40-feet high
39 would completely obstruct expansive view of agricultural vistas from "E" Street looking east;
40 distant views of the Sierra Madre Mountains and Casmalia Hills beyond the site would be partially

1 obstructed by industrial development and storage yards with security fencing. Similar to the
2 proposed project, impacts on view obstruction would be *significant and unavoidable* in spite of
3 implementing mitigation by design measures AES-1.1 and -1.2.

4 Similar to the proposed project, new structures, lighting, landscaping, and daytime and nighttime
5 activities would be introduced onto a site that is currently devoid of such uses, with the exception of
6 a few miscellaneous ancillary structures. However, as the site is surrounded by existing sources of
7 light and glare from residential development to the east and a major public thoroughfare, lighting
8 and glare impacts would be reduced to *significant but feasibly mitigated* with implementation of
9 measure AES-3. Similar to the proposed project, this alternative location site is surrounded by
10 existing development to the east; therefore, project buildout would alter sensitive agricultural vistas,
11 and visual character and compatibility impacts under this alternative would be *significant but feasibly*
12 *mitigated* with implementation of measures AES-2.1, -2.4a, -2.4b, and -2.4c. Therefore, the Off-site
13 Location Alternative would be environmentally equivalent to the proposed project relative to
14 aesthetics and visual resources.

15 **Air Quality**

16 As the total site buildout would be comparable to the proposed project, the Off-site Location
17 Alternative would produce essentially the same air quality impacts. Therefore, emissions from this
18 alternative would produce *significant and unavoidable* air quality impacts, as project construction and
19 operation activities would exceed the APCD daily thresholds of: (1) 80 pounds of PM₁₀ for
20 combined vehicular and stationary sources; and (2) 25 pounds of ROG and NO_x for vehicular
21 sources. However, as buildout would occur on approximately 18 additional acres (i.e., 237 acres)
22 compared to the proposed project, the amount of construction equipment and dust emissions that
23 would be generated would be increased. Overall, impacts on air quality under the Off-site Location
24 Alternative would be similar but slightly greater relative to the proposed project.

25 **Biological Resources**

26 The Off-site Location Alternative would result in similar impacts to biological resources, including
27 non-state or federally listed wildlife species, native habitats, native grasslands, as those described
28 for the proposed project. There are no known drainages on the Off-site Location Alternative site,
29 therefore this alternative would reduce potential impacts to wetlands and drainages. However, the
30 alternative site is located immediately east of potential California tiger salamander habitat (SAMA-
31 17 on the Santa Barbara County Draft California Tiger Salamander Habitat Map, 2001). In addition,
32 aerial photographs of the Off-site Location Alternative site indicate the presence of a potential stock
33 pond located adjacent to the eastern site boundary. Therefore, similar to the proposed project,
34 development of the Off-site Location Alternative would have potentially *significant and unavoidable*
35 *impacts* on individual California tiger salamanders and this species' migration corridors. Therefore
36 impacts on individual California tiger salamanders and tiger salamander's migration corridors
37 would be *significant and unavoidable*. Therefore, the Off-site Location Alternative would be
38 environmentally preferable to the proposed project relative to biological resources.

39 **Cultural Resources**

40 Development at the Off-site Location Alternative site would result in a slightly increased
41 development footprint compared to the proposed project. Although grading required for site

1 preparation would occur on an additional 18 acres of undisturbed portions of the site (i.e., 237
2 acres), any impacts on archaeological resources encountered during grading would remain
3 *significant but feasibly mitigated* with incorporation of mitigation measure CR-1.1, CR-1.2, and CR-2.
4 However, as development on previously undisturbed portions of the project site would be reduced,
5 the Reconfigured and Reduced Project Alternative would be environmentally superior to the
6 proposed project relative to Cultural Resources. Overall, impacts on cultural resources under the
7 Off-site Location Alternative would be similar but slightly greater relative to the proposed project.

8 **Hazards and Hazardous Materials**

9 Similar to the proposed project, development at the Off-site Location Alternative site would be
10 situated directly adjacent to agricultural activities. Therefore, the potential for public health and
11 safety impacts associated with unintended pesticide spray drift from adjacent agricultural
12 operations would be *significant but feasibly mitigated*. As commercial development would be
13 increased by 10,000 s.f. under this alternative, the potential for exposing sensitive receptors to
14 hazards associated with the accidental releases of hazardous substances would be increased. The
15 project site is located within the former Santa Maria Valley Oil Field as identified on Division of Oil
16 and Gas Maps (see Appendix A, letter from Regional Water Quality Control Board), so the number
17 of former oil wells requiring proper abandonment prior to the introduction of residential and school
18 uses would be greater. Overall, the Off-site Location Alternative would not be environmentally
19 preferable to the proposed project relative to hazards and hazardous materials.

20 **Hydrology and Water Quality**

21 The Off-site Location Alternative development scenario would increase the amount of new
22 impervious surfaces, thereby increasing degradation of water quality entering Santa Maria River
23 relative to the proposed project. Buildout of this alternative site would increase ground
24 disturbances (i.e., grading and topographic modification) and equipment, increasing grading-
25 induced sedimentation and runoff of non-point pollution sources. Although the amount of
26 commercial and residential development would be increased relative to the proposed project,
27 pollutants of concern introduced in post-construction storm water runoff to the Santa Maria River
28 would still be *significant but feasibly mitigated*. Therefore, hydrology/water quality impacts
29 associated with this alternative would be slightly increased compared to the proposed project.

30 **Land Use**

31 Development at the Off-site Location Alternative site would occupy an increased development
32 footprint; 237 acres of 261 acre site would be converted to urban uses. Similar to the proposed
33 project, residential, commercial, and institutional development would be incompatible with the
34 existing agricultural character of the project site. However, proposed development would be
35 generally consistent with the industrial character of the southern portion of the alternative site. As
36 development of the Off-site Location Alternative site would not occur with proximity to the Santa
37 Maria Public Airport, impacts associated with ALUP Safety Area 3 land use density restrictions
38 would be *not significant*. Similar to the project, the conversion of the 237 acres of agricultural land to
39 urban development would be inconsistent with the agricultural protection policies in the City's
40 General Plan; impacts would be *significant but feasibly mitigated*. Overall, impacts on land use under
41 the Off-site Location Alternative would be environmentally superior to the proposed project.

1 Noise

2 Development at the Off-site Location Alternative would occupy an increased footprint to
3 accommodate buildout on 237 acres. Proposed residential structures would be set back
4 approximately 100 feet from Betteravia Road; proposed institutional development would be
5 attenuated from vehicular noise along Betteravia Road by proposed commercial structures.
6 Relocating development to accommodate this alternative site would reduce sensitive receptor
7 exposure to exterior noise levels exceeding 60 dBA CNEL, and interior noise levels exceeding 45
8 dBA CNEL; impacts would be *significant but feasibly mitigated*. Additionally, development at the
9 Off-site Location Alternative site would occur approximately 3 miles northwest of the Santa Maria
10 Public Airport, completely outside the 60 dBA CNEL contour, reducing impacts associated with
11 noise nuisances associated with airport operations; therefore, impacts would be reduced to *not*
12 *significant*. Overall, the Off-site Location Alternative would be environmentally superior to the
13 proposed project relative to noise.

14 Population and Housing

15 The Off-site Location Alternative would result in the same number of residential units as the
16 proposed project, therefore contributing equally to the Regional Housing Needs Assessment goal.
17 Given this alternative site's lack of access to public infrastructure, including domestic water and
18 wastewater treatment hookups, extension of new public infrastructure including sewer, drinking
19 water, and utilities would potentially induce substantial population growth in the surrounding
20 project area. Because the Off-site Location Alternative would contribute the same number of
21 housing units as the proposed project, this alternative would be environmentally equivalent to the
22 proposed project.

23 Public Facilities

24 Public facilities response times to fire and police emergencies would be faster than for the proposed
25 project because the Off-site Location Alternative is located closer to the nearest fire station and is
26 within a geographically smaller policing area. Impacts to fire and police services would be
27 *significant but feasibly mitigated* with payment of City development fees. Similar to the proposed
28 project, the Off-site Location Alternative would generate students attending Battles Elementary
29 School, Fesler Junior High School, and Santa Maria High School. The alternative site also would
30 provide for an 11-acre elementary school site. The *significant but feasibly mitigated* impact on schools
31 would be greater than the proposed project due to the decreased school site acreage. Impacts on
32 libraries would be the same as the proposed project because the alternative would introduce the
33 same number of new residents that would need library services. Impacts to libraries would be
34 *significant but feasibly mitigated* with payment of City development fees. Overall, impacts related to
35 public facilities would be slightly greater than those estimated for the proposed project, due to the
36 decreased acreage available for an elementary school.

37 Recreation and Parks

38 This alternative would contribute the same number of new residents that would use the Santa
39 Maria Parks system as the proposed project. However, the Off-site Location Alternative would
40 include 24 acres of designated recreational open space areas for recreational purposes. Therefore,

1 impacts would be *not significant* and the alternative would be environmentally superior to the
2 proposed project.

3 **Transportation and Circulation**

4 The Off-site Location Alternative would relocate the proposed project to a 261-acre site located on
5 the northwest corner of the Betteravia Road/"A" Street intersection. Land uses would be the same
6 as under the proposed project. Therefore, the trip generation would be the same as the proposed
7 project. Impacts to Mahoney Road and to Black Road would be *not significant*, and widening of
8 these two roadways and improvements to the associated intersections would not be required. In
9 the event site access was provided from "E" Street north of Betteravia Road, the Betteravia
10 Road/Mahoney Road intersection would need to be improved. Similar to the proposed project, the
11 Off-site Location Alternative would result in *significant but feasibly mitigated* impacts. Overall, the
12 Off-site Location Alternative would be slightly environmentally superior to the proposed project
13 relative to transportation and circulation.

14 **Utilities and Service Systems**

15 The Off-site Location Alternative site is within the City of Santa Maria service areas. Similar to the
16 project, extension of domestic water and wastewater services would be required to support onsite
17 development. As buildout of this alternative would increase commercial development by 10,000
18 s.f., this alternative's solid waste generation would be increased to 5,318 tons (3.63 people per unit x
19 1,405 units x 0.95 tons/year = 4,845 tons) + (75,000 s.f. commercial x 0.0009 ton/s.f. = 67.5 tons) +
20 (900 students x 0.45 tons/student/year = 405 tons). With mitigation, the demand would be reduced
21 to 2,659 tons/year; residual impacts on solid waste generation would remain *significant and*
22 *unavoidable*. Overall, the Off-site Location Alternative would be environmentally equivalent to the
23 proposed project relative to utility and service systems.

24 **Geologic Resources**

25 The Off-site Location Alternative would potentially generate development on greater expanses
26 relative to the project site. Grading on 237 acres would be increased relative to the proposed project,
27 such that the potential for development on expansive soils would be increased. However, the
28 alternative site does not contain any drainages with the potential for slope failure on steep
29 escarpments and gullies. Impacts resulting from geologic hazards would remain *significant but*
30 *feasibly mitigated* and would be similar relative to the proposed project.

31 **Alternative Summary:** The Off-site Location Alternative would be environmentally comparable to
32 the proposed project in terms of most *significant and unavoidable* impacts. Impacts on air quality,
33 biological resources, and solid waste would remain basically the same, though impacts on
34 recreation would be reduced to *significant but feasibly mitigated* by providing 24 acres for a
35 neighborhood park facility. Most *significant but feasibly mitigated impacts* would be the same, though
36 impacts on land use and noise would be reduced as no residential development would occur under
37 the Santa Maria Public Airport flight path. Widening of Black and Mahoney Roads would not be
38 required under this alternative as well. Overall, the Off-site Location Alternative would be
39 environmentally superior to the proposed project.

5.4 ENVIRONMENTALLY SUPERIOR ALTERNATIVE

Table 5-1 illustrates the associated environmental impacts of the proposed project relative to the three alternatives discussed above. The categories of impacts defined in Section 1.4 are represented by one of the following for purposes of comparing the impacts of the proposed project to the three project alternatives:

- I. Significant environmental impacts which may require mitigation measures, but those measures cannot reduce impacts to a level below significance, as described in Section 21081(a)(3) of the California Environmental Quality Act. These impacts are characterized as “*significant and unavoidable*” in the EIR text.
- II. Significant environmental impacts that can be fully mitigated to a level below significance, as described in Section 21081(a)(1) of the California Environmental Quality Act. These impacts are characterized as “*significant but feasibly mitigated*” in the EIR text.
- III. Potential effects that were found not to be significant. Therefore, in accordance with Section 15128 of the CEQA Guidelines, no mitigation measures are required. These impacts are characterized as “*not significant*” in the EIR text.

Adverse impacts reduced relative to the project are indicated by (-); increased adverse impacts relative to the proposed project are indicated by (+).

The *No Project Alternative*, by virtue of the absence of any development, would be environmentally superior to all other alternatives. As required by CEQA Guidelines Section 15126, another alternative that is most capable of reducing significant project impacts must then be identified.

The *Reconfigured and Reduced Project Alternative* would decrease Mahoney Ranch South Project buildout by approximately 23 percent, and increase open space by over 50 acres, thereby reducing the extent of *significant and unavoidable* impacts on air quality and biological resources. Reduced impacts on *significant but feasibly mitigated* impacts on land use, noise, public services, and transportation/circulation would also occur. This alternative would reduce all potentially significant impacts associated with the proposed project, while achieving over 75 percent of the project’s basic objectives of 1,405 residential units.

The *Off-site Location Alternative* would provide approximately 20 percent more units as the proposed project, but would increase the severity of all potentially significant impacts associated with the proposed project. It would, however, be capable of achieving all of the project’s basic objectives, though the diversity of housing types would be changed.

The *Reconfigured and Reduced Project Alternative* would be capable of reducing the greatest number of *significant and unavoidable* and *significant but feasibly mitigated* impacts relative to the proposed project and the *Off-site Location Alternative*. Therefore, it is considered the environmentally superior alternative.

Table 5-1. Impact Comparison of Alternatives to the Proposed Project

Type of Impact	MAGNITUDE OF IMPACT IN COMPARISON TO PROPOSED PROJECT ¹			
	Proposed Project	Alternative 1 No Project Alternative	Alternative 2 Reconfigured and Reduced Project Alternative	Alternative 3 Off-site Location Alternative
Aesthetic/Visual Resources				
AES-1: Obstruct views of important visual resources.	I	I (-)	I (-)	I (=)
AES-2.1: Short-term adverse aesthetic impacts during construction.	III	III (-)	III (-)	III (=)
AES-2.2: Project buildout of commercial, institutional, and relatively low to high-density residential development would not degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.	III	III (=)	III (=)	III (=)
AES-2.3: Residential buildout would be potentially compatible in appearance with surrounding residential development.	III	III (=)	III (=)	III (=)
AES-2.4: Massing of proposed residential and commercial structures would potentially result in incompatible mass and bulk with surrounding development.	II	II (+)	II (=)	II (=)
AES-3: Project development would introduce new glare sources in an existing agricultural area that would degrade existing visual conditions.	II	II (+)	II (-)	II (=)
Air Quality				
AQ-1: Project construction PM10 emissions.	III	III(+)	III (-)	III (+)
AQ-2: Project operational PM10 emissions for combined vehicular and stationary sources.	I	I (+)	I (-)	I (+)
AQ-3: Project operational ROG and NOx emissions from vehicular sources.	I	I (+)	I (-)	I (=)
1. Key: + More adverse impacts than proposed project = Similar to proposed project - Fewer adverse impacts than proposed project				

Table 5-1. Impact Comparison of Alternatives to the Proposed Project (continued)

Type of Impact	MAGNITUDE OF IMPACT IN COMPARISON TO PROPOSED PROJECT ¹			
	Proposed Project	Alternative 1 No Project Alternative	Alternative 2 Reconfigured and Reduced Project Alternative	Alternative 3 Off-site Location Alternative
Air Quality (continued)				
AQ-4: Produce public health risks from operational emissions from commercial land uses.	III	III (=)	III (-)	III (+)
AQ-5: Air emissions from the project would be consistent with the Clean Air Action Plans.	III	III (+)	III (=)	III (=)
AQ-6: Experience objectionable odors from adjacent agricultural operations.	III	III (+)	III (-)	III (=)
Biological Resources				
BIO-1.1: Result in a substantial adverse effect on Cambria morning glory, a CNPS list 1B species.	II	II (+)	II (-)	II (-)
BIO-1.2: Result in a substantial adverse effect on populations of California red-legged frogs, a federally listed threatened species, and California tiger salamander, a federally listed threatened species either through direct removal or modification of sensitive habitat.	I	I (+)	I (-)	I (=)
BIO-2.1: Substantial adverse effect on sensitive natural plant communities including native grassland and riparian scrub habitat.	II	II (+)	II (-)	II (=)
BIO-2.2: Removal of agricultural, ruderal and non-native grassland habitat would not be substantial adverse effect on a sensitive natural community.	III	III (=)	III (=)	III (=)
1. Key: + More adverse impacts than proposed project = Similar to proposed project - Fewer adverse impacts than proposed project				

Table 5-1. Impact Comparison of Alternatives to the Proposed Project (continued)

Type of Impact	MAGNITUDE OF IMPACT IN COMPARISON TO PROPOSED PROJECT ¹			
	Proposed Project	Alternative 1 No Project Alternative	Alternative 2 Reconfigured and Reduced Project Alternative	Alternative 3 Off-site Location Alternative
Biological Resources (continued)				
BIO-3: Development would result in a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.	II	II (+)	II (-)	II (-)
BIO-4.1: Loss and potential degradation of wildlife habitat, the mortality and injury of non-sensitive wildlife species, and would interfere substantially with the movement of native non-sensitive resident or migratory wildlife species.	III	III (+)	III (=)	III (=)
BIO-4.2: Substantially interfere with the migratory movement of California red-legged frogs, a federally listed threatened species, and California tiger salamander, a federally listed threatened species.	I	I (+)	I (-)	I (=)
BIO-5: Conflict with local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources.	III	III (=)	III (=)	III (=)
Cultural Resources				
CR-1: Ground disturbances would potentially result in significant impacts if unknown, intact prehistoric resources were encountered during construction.	II	II (+)	II (-)	II (+)
CR-2: Construction would not likely increase short-term access to archaeological artifacts.	II	II (+)	II (-)	II (+)
1. Key: + More adverse impacts than proposed project = Similar to proposed project - Fewer adverse impacts than proposed project				

Table 5-1. Impact Comparison of Alternatives to the Proposed Project (continued)

Type of Impact	MAGNITUDE OF IMPACT IN COMPARISON TO PROPOSED PROJECT ¹			
	Proposed Project	Alternative 1 No Project Alternative	Alternative 2 Reconfigured and Reduced Project Alternative	Alternative 3 Off-site Location Alternative
Geological Resources				
GEO-1: Strong earthquake could cause substantial ground shaking at Project site.	II	II (+)	II (=)	II (=)
GEO-2: Steep escarpments and gullies are subject to slope failure.	II	II (+)	II (-)	II (-)
GEO-3: Soil would not become unstable as a result of liquefaction.	III	III (+)	III (=)	III (=)
GEO-4: Potentially expansive soils could create risks to life or property.	II	II (+)	II (-)	II (+)
Hazards and Hazardous Materials				
HAZ-1.1: Create a public health hazard by exposing residents and commercial patrons to unintended pesticide drift from adjacent agricultural operations.	II	II (+)	II (=)	II (=)
HAZ-1.2: Create a hazard to the environment through the routine transport and disposal of hazardous materials.	III	III (+)	III (=)	III (=)
HAZ-2: Result in the release of hazardous materials due to storage and use of these substances.	II	II (+)	II (-)	II (+)
Hydrology and Water Quality				
HYDRO/WQ-1: Alter the existing drainage pattern of the site and potentially increase the surface runoff in a manner that would result in flooding on- or off-site.	II	II (+)	II (-)	II (+)
HYDRO/WQ-2: Ground disturbances and equipment operation would cause potential storm water sediment and non-point pollutant transport off-site.	II	II (+)	II (-)	II (+)
1. Key: + More adverse impacts than proposed project = Similar to proposed project - Fewer adverse impacts than proposed project				

Table 5-1. Impact Comparison of Alternatives to the Proposed Project (continued)

Type of Impact	MAGNITUDE OF IMPACT IN COMPARISON TO PROPOSED PROJECT ¹			
	Proposed Project	Alternative 1 No Project Alternative	Alternative 2 Reconfigured and Reduced Project Alternative	Alternative 3 Off-site Location Alternative
Hydrology and Water Quality (continued)				
HYDRO/WQ-3: Introduce pollutants of concern in post-construction storm water runoff to the Santa Maria River.	II	II (+)	II (-)	II (+)
HYDRO/WQ-4: Increase TDS levels in potable water supplies.	III	III (=)	III (=)	III (=)
HYDRO/WQ-5: Groundwater infiltration and recharge changed due to an increase in the amount of impervious area.	III	III (+)	III (-)	III (+)
HYDRO/WQ-6: Reduce demand on groundwater supplies in the Santa Maria Valley Groundwater Basin.	III	III (-)	III (-)	III (=)
Land Use				
LU-1.1: Proposed project land uses would be potentially consistent with ALUP guidelines for development within the Santa Maria Public Airport Influence Area (AIA) Safety Area 3, Airport Traffic Pattern Zone.	II	II (+)	II (=)	II (=)
LU-1.2: Incompatible land use with surrounding rural agricultural lands.	II	II (=)	II (=)	II (=)
LU-1.3: Project development would comply with the Balanced Land Use Mix goals in the City's General Plan.	III	III (-)	III (=)	III (=)
1. Key: + More adverse impacts than proposed project = Similar to proposed project - Fewer adverse impacts than proposed project				

Table 5-1. Impact Comparison of Alternatives to the Proposed Project (continued)

Type of Impact	MAGNITUDE OF IMPACT IN COMPARISON TO PROPOSED PROJECT ¹			
	Proposed Project	Alternative 1 No Project Alternative	Alternative 2 Reconfigured and Reduced Project Alternative	Alternative 3 Off-site Location Alternative
Noise				
NOISE-1: Short-term increases in existing ambient noise levels within the project vicinity.	III	III (+)	III (-)	III (+)
NOISE-2: Exterior noise levels exceeding 60 dBA CNEL and interior living areas subject to noise levels exceeding 45 dBA CNEL.	II	II (+)	II (=)	II (-)
NOISE-3.1: Increase ambient noise levels affecting proposed residential units.	II	II (+)	II (-)	II (=)
NOISE-3.2: Traffic and exterior activities would increase ambient noise levels affecting sensitive receptors.	III	III (+)	III (-)	III (=)
NOISE-4: Expose people working or residing within two miles of the Santa Maria Public Airport to excessive noise.	II	II (+)	II (-)	III (-)
Population and Housing				
PH-1.1: Buildout would not induce substantial population growth in an area either directly or indirectly.	III	III (-)	III (-)	III (=)
PH-1.2: Extension of new public infrastructure including expanded road capacity, sewer, drinking water, and utilities would not induce substantial population growth in the surrounding project area.	III	III (-)	III (-)	III (=)
1. Key: + More adverse impacts than proposed project = Similar to proposed project - Fewer adverse impacts than proposed project				

Table 5-1. Impact Comparison of Alternatives to the Proposed Project (continued)

Type of Impact	MAGNITUDE OF IMPACT IN COMPARISON TO PROPOSED PROJECT ¹			
	Proposed Project	Alternative 1 No Project Alternative	Alternative 2 Reconfigured and Reduced Project Alternative	Alternative 3 Off-site Location Alternative
Public Facilities				
PF-1: Residential buildout would not require new fire station in order to maintain acceptable service ratios and emergency response.	II	II (+)	II (=)	II (=)
PF-2: Buildout would burden existing Fire Department response times or water storage for fire flow pressure requirements.	II	II (+)	II (-)	II (-)
PF-3: Increase of urban development would increase the demand for additional police officers, but would not require new police facilities.	III	III (+)	III (-)	III (=)
PF-4: Buildout of the proposed project would contribute to existing deficiencies in City Police Department staffing levels.	II	II (+)	II (=)	II (=)
PF-5: Substantial increase of students that would potentially require construction of a new educational facility	III	III (+)	III(=)	III(=)
PF-6: Development would increase the demand for and exacerbate the existing deficiency on City library facilities.	III	III (+)	III (-)	III (=)
Recreation and Parks				
REC-1: Would result in a demand for more acreage of neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities.	III	III(+)	III (-)	III (=)
REC-2: The proposed project includes recreational facilities and requires the construction of recreational facilities which would not have an adverse physical effect in the environment.	III	III(+)	III (-)	III (-)
1. Key: + More adverse impacts than proposed project = Similar to proposed project - Fewer adverse impacts than proposed project				

Table 5-1. Impact Comparison of Alternatives to the Proposed Project (continued)

Type of Impact	MAGNITUDE OF IMPACT IN COMPARISON TO PROPOSED PROJECT ¹			
	Proposed Project	Alternative 1 No Project Alternative	Alternative 2 Reconfigured and Reduced Project Alternative	Alternative 3 Off-site Location Alternative
Transportation and Circulation				
TRANS-1.1: Additional vehicle trips would affect intersection levels of service in the project vicinity during P.M. peak hours.	II	II (+)	II (-)	II (=)
TRANS-1.2: Additional vehicle trips would affect roadway levels of service in the project vicinity during P.M. peak hours.	II	II (+)	II (-)	II (=)
TRANS-2.1: Increase traffic volumes on CMP intersections in the project area.	II	II (+)	II (-)	II (=)
TRANS-2.2: Increase traffic volumes on CMP freeway segments in the project area.	III	III (+)	III (-)	III (=)
TRANS-3.1: Proposed project access points would provide acceptable operations such that no unsafe situations would result.	III	III (+)	III (=)	III (=)
TRANS-3.2: Proposed project internal roadways would provide acceptable capacity such that no unsafe situations would result.	III	III (+)	III (=)	III (=)
TRANS-3.3: Access to Planning Area 9 would not impact safety when accessing the commercial center.	III	III (+)	III (=)	III (=)
TRANS-3.4: Project intersections would not provide acceptable operation, such that unsafe conditions would result.	II	II (+)	II (=)	II (=)
1. Key: + More adverse impacts than proposed project = Similar to proposed project - Fewer adverse impacts than proposed project				

Table 5-1. Impact Comparison of Alternatives to the Proposed Project (continued)

<i>Type of Impact</i>	MAGNITUDE OF IMPACT IN COMPARISON TO PROPOSED PROJECT ¹			
	<i>Proposed Project</i>	<i>Alternative 1 No Project Alternative</i>	<i>Alternative 2 Reconfigured and Reduced Project Alternative</i>	<i>Alternative 3 Off-site Location Alternative</i>
Transportation and Circulation				
TRANS-3.5: The proposed project Loop Road/Mahoney Road intersection would be offset a sufficient distance from the existing Black Road/Mahoney Road intersection such that no unsafe conditions would result.	III	III (+)	III (=)	III (=)
TRANS-4.1: Additional vehicle trips would have a significant impact on cumulative traffic impacts on intersection levels of service within the project area.	III	III (+)	III (-)	III (=)
TRANS-4.2: Additional vehicle trips would have a significant impact on cumulative traffic impacts on roadway levels of service within the project area.	III	III (+)	III (-)	III (=)
TRANS-5.1: Additional vehicle trips would have a significant impact on General Plan buildout traffic impacts on intersection levels of service within the project vicinity.	III	III (+)	III (-)	III (=)
TRANS-5.2: Additional vehicle trips would have a significant impact on General Plan buildout traffic impacts on roadway levels of service within the project vicinity.	III	III (+)	III (-)	III (=)
Impact TRANS-5.3: Vehicular flows on Black Road and Mahoney Road under General Plan Buildout conditions would require signalization of the proposed project Loop Road/Mahoney Road intersection and the existing Black Road/Mahoney Road intersection.	II	II (+)	II (=)	II (=)
1. Key: + More adverse impacts than proposed project = Similar to proposed project - Fewer adverse impacts than proposed project				

Table 5-1. Impact Comparison of Alternatives to the Proposed Project (continued)

Type of Impact	MAGNITUDE OF IMPACT IN COMPARISON TO PROPOSED PROJECT ¹			
	Proposed Project	Alternative 1 No Project Alternative	Alternative 2 Reconfigured and Reduced Project Alternative	Alternative 3 Off-site Location Alternative
Utilities and Service Systems				
UTIL-1: Development would require extension of City sewer service to the project site, but would not require expansion of existing City wastewater treatment facilities.	II	II (=)	II (=)	II (=)
UTIL-2: The proposed project would not exceed Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) wastewater treatment requirements.	III	III (+)	III (-)	III (=)
UTIL-3: Exceed the existing wastewater treatment capacity of the City's Wastewater Treatment Plant.	III	III (+)	III (-)	III (=)
UTIL-4: Extension of infrastructure to provide adequate domestic water supplies and pressure.	II	II (-)	II (-)	II (=)
UTIL-5.1: Construction debris would increase the demand on solid waste requiring disposal in the Santa Maria Landfill.	II	II (+)	II (-)	II (=)
UTIL-5.2: Long-term increases in demands on solid waste.	II	I (+)	I (-)	I (+)
1. Key: + More adverse impacts than proposed project = Similar to proposed project - Fewer adverse impacts than proposed project				

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6.0 OTHER CEQA CONCERNS

CEQA section 15126.2(d) requires that an EIR address how the proposed project could foster economic or population growth or the construction of additional housing, directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment (see Section 4.9 Population and Housing). This includes those projects that would remove obstacles to population growth such as expansion of public infrastructure, or extension of public services capable of supporting development beyond the project boundaries.

Potential inducements to growth include: (1) the generation of short-term and long-term employment; (2) the development of new housing; (3) the improvement of the area's infrastructure; (4) the extension of services to a previously undeveloped area; or (5) stimulus to an area's economy. The substantial contribution of any one of these factors would potentially induce growth in the Santa Maria area as described in the following discussion. Under CEQA, growth is not considered "necessarily beneficial, detrimental or of little significance to the environment." If the project were capable of contributing to growth inducement, an increase in the population would potentially impact existing community service facilities, and require construction of new facilities that would potentially cause significant environmental effects. This would be considered a *significant* growth inducement impact.

6.1 ECONOMIC GROWTH

The proposed project involves residential, commercial, and public facilities development. Construction and operation of residential development would create temporary employment. Construction personnel would be required to build the proposed project, but this short-term activity would not likely generate new employment opportunities. The estimated 5,100 residents that would be accommodated on the project site would incrementally increase activity for retail establishments in the vicinity and would generate demand for such services as landscaping, gardening, and home cleaning and maintenance. The incremental population increase in the City of Santa Maria population of 6 percent would be relatively small when compared to the urban population and would be less than significant.

Construction and operation of the 65,340 s.f. neighborhood commercial center and 16.8-acre (gross) elementary school/neighborhood park would create the potential for a number of new jobs. Construction personnel would be required to build the proposed project, but this short-term activity would not likely generate new long-term local employment opportunities. Workers would be associated with project site maintenance (e.g., landscape, cleaning, etc.), and other service-oriented workers would be hired to support proposed onsite "neighborhood-serving" commercial uses (i.e., retail sales and service establishments). The proposed elementary school would also provide long-term employment opportunities for administration, instructional, and maintenance workers. The project would draw on existing services in the area (i.e., water, wastewater treatment, gas, electricity, etc.) rather than inducing new service providers to relocate to the area. Therefore, no significant physical effects are expected to result from economic growth generated by buildout of up to 1,405 residences, a 65,340 s.f. neighborhood commercial center, and a 16.8-acre (gross) elementary school/neighborhood park.

1 **6.2 UNAVOIDABLE SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE EFFECTS**

2 CEQA Section 15126 (b) requires that an EIR define those significant impacts that cannot be
3 reduced to a less than significant level. The implications and reasons why the project is being
4 proposed, notwithstanding their effect, must be described.

5 Proposed project development would result in significant, unavoidable impacts on the
6 following resources:

- 7 • **Aesthetics/Visual Resources:** Development of the proposed project would substantially
8 obstruct views of important visual resources including agricultural lands as experienced
9 from Black Road and Mahoney Road.
- 10 • **Air Quality:** Project buildout would result in ambient concentrations that exceed air
11 quality standards. Project operation would produce excessive ROG and NO_x emissions
12 from all combined project sources (i.e., vehicular traffic, space heating, water heating, and
13 landscaping).
- 14 • **Biological Resources:** Planned site development would result in a substantial adverse
15 effect on populations of California red-legged frogs, a federally listed threatened species,
16 and California tiger salamander, a federally listed threatened species either through direct
17 removal, modification of sensitive habitat, and interfering with their migratory movement.
- 18 • **Land Use:** Development of the proposed project would conflict with the existing and
19 surrounding agricultural character of the area. Conversion of the project site from
20 cultivated agricultural land to urban development would be inconsistent with the
21 agricultural protection policies in the City’s General Plan.
- 22 • **Population and Housing.** Extension of new public infrastructure including expanded
23 road capacity, sewer, drinking water, and utilities would potentially induce substantial
24 population growth in the surrounding project area.
- 25 • **Recreation:** The project would provide for a 16.8-acre (gross) joint use elementary
26 school/neighborhood park, but would result in a demand for 24 additional acres of
27 neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities.
- 28 • **Utilities (Solid Waste):** The proposed project would substantially increase the long-term
29 demand of solid waste.

30 **6.3 BENEFICIAL IMPACTS**

31 Implementation of the proposed project would have the following beneficial effects:

- 32 • The proposed project would provide both short- and long-term employment opportunities
33 within Santa Maria Valley.
- 34 • Buildout of the Mahoney Ranch South Project would provide a variety of housing
35 opportunities in Santa Maria.
- 36 • The proposed project would provide neighborhood shopping opportunities adjacent to
37 Black Road serving existing and recently developed residential and public uses in the

- 1 immediate area that would potentially reduce the trip lengths of existing adjacent
2 residences, minimizing impacts on air quality and traffic.
- 3 • The project would remove conflicts between agricultural uses and adjacent residential uses
4 to the south of the project site.
 - 5 • The project would decrease the amount of groundwater that is used from the Santa Maria
6 Valley Groundwater Basin.

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- 3 Bratz, Bobbie. Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District.
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- 9 Ortiz, Frank. Santa Maria Fire Department, Fire Chief.
- 10 Posada, Alex. City of Santa Maria Department of Recreation and Parks, Director.
- 11 Rosas, Lazaro. City of Santa Maria Utilities Department, Wastewater Treatment Plant.
- 12 Yim, William. Santa Barbara County Association of Governments.

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