

CHAPTER 5 ALTERNATIVES

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, environmental impact reports (EIRs) are required to “describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project, or to the location of the project, which would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project, and evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives” (14 CCR 15126.6(a)). This alternatives analysis is prepared in support of CEQA’s goals to foster informed decision making and public participation (14 CCR 15126.6(a)). An EIR is not required to evaluate the environmental impacts of alternatives at the same level of detail as the proposed project, but it must include enough information to allow meaningful evaluation, analysis, and comparison with the proposed project.

The alternatives analysis is required even if the alternatives “would impede to some degree the attainment of the project objectives, or would be more costly” (14 CCR 15126.6(b)). An EIR must evaluate “only those alternatives necessary to permit a reasoned choice” (14 CCR 15126.6(f)) and does not need to consider “every conceivable alternative” to a project (14 CCR 15126.6(a)). The alternatives evaluated should be “potentially feasible” (14 CCR 15126.6(a)), but inclusion of an alternative in an EIR does not constitute definitive evidence that the alternative is in fact “feasible.” The final decision regarding the feasibility of alternatives lies with the decision makers for a given project who must make the necessary findings addressing the feasibility of alternatives for avoiding or substantially reducing a project’s significant environmental effects (California Public Resources Code, Section 21081; see also 14 CCR 15091).

This chapter identifies the alternatives that were included for analysis, evaluates the environmental impacts associated with them, and compares the impacts with those of Mitchell Farm Subdivision (proposed project). This chapter also identifies those alternatives considered by the City of Citrus Heights (City) but not carried forward for detailed analysis, and it describes the basis for the City’s decision to omit those alternatives from the detailed analysis.

In conformity with CEQA, the purpose of this analysis is to focus on alternatives that are potentially feasible, and that would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project. The analysis in Chapter 4, Environmental Analysis, specifically Sections 4.1 through 4.12, finds that all of the project’s significant or potentially significant impacts would be reduced to less-than-significant levels with implementation of the mitigation measures included in this EIR; the project would not result in any significant and unavoidable impacts in either existing or cumulative conditions.

5.2 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The primary objectives of the proposed project are set forth in Chapter 3, Project Description. The project applicant has set forth the following objectives for the proposed project:

- Provide an economically viable master-planned community on a suitable site with proximity and access to established community amenities and civic infrastructure.
- Provide for a range of housing densities and product choices affordable to a broad spectrum of income levels.
- Establish a pedestrian-friendly community and access to a system of trails that link neighborhoods together.
- Establish a circulation system that meets local transportation needs and accommodates a variety of transportation modes, including off-street trail systems.
- Provide adequate infrastructure improvements without adversely affecting existing levels of service.
- Phase development and infrastructure to respond to market demand while requiring infrastructure and public facilities necessary to serve the project's needs.
- Provide a comprehensively planned project that is sensitive to environmental issues, including wetlands preservation, flood protection, and tree preservation, and protects the highest-quality natural features and resources of the site.

5.3 ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

This section evaluates three alternatives to the proposed project: No Project, Existing Designations, and Reduced Footprint. The No Project Alternative is a required element of an EIR pursuant to Section 15126.6(e) of the CEQA Guidelines that examines the environmental effects that would occur if the project were not to proceed. The other alternatives are discussed as part of the “range of reasonable alternatives” required by CEQA.

The project alternatives were chosen with consideration of balancing each alternative's ability to best meet the project objectives stated above and to avoid or substantially lessen the significant effects of the proposed project. The selected alternatives constitute a reasonable range of project alternatives due to their consideration of different variations in the use and size of project components. As noted previously, the intent of this alternatives analysis is to identify a means of avoiding or substantially lessening any of the significant environmental effects associated with construction and operation of the proposed project.

The environmental effects of each alternative relative to the environmental effects of the proposed project are evaluated below. These conclusions are also listed in the alternatives summary matrix provided at the end of this discussion.

Project Alternatives

The alternatives addressed in this section are listed below, followed by a more detailed discussion of each.

Alternative 1: No Project/No Build. This alternative assumes no development would occur and the site would remain unchanged from its current condition.

Alternative 2: Existing Designations. This alternative assumes that the project site would be developed under the existing General Plan and zoning designations. The site would include approximately 93 apartments on the 6.26 acres designated for high-density residential development, 15.77 acres of commercial land uses, and continued operation of the existing golf course under the commercial/recreation zoning designations applied to 34.78 acres of the site.

Alternative 3: Reduced Footprint. This alternative assumes that the project design would be modified to allow for greater retention of existing trees and the valley oak woodland vegetation community within the site and to reduce the extent of new impervious surfaces that would be created on site.

Alternatives Considered But Rejected

The following alternatives were initially considered but rejected from further consideration. The CEQA Guidelines (14 CCR 15000 et seq.) provide that reasons to eliminate potential alternatives from detailed consideration in an EIR can include (1) failure to meet most of the basic project objectives, (2) infeasibility, and (3) inability to avoid significant environmental impacts. Factors that may be considered to determine whether an alternative is feasible include site suitability, economic viability, and general plan consistency. The following alternatives were preliminarily considered but rejected from further evaluation for the reasons described below.

Off-Site Alternative. A search for a vacant project site of a similar size, adjacent to major roadways, and with available public services was conducted within the City based on review of aerial images. Given that the City is 98% built out, no other similar parcel or parcels that could accommodate the proposed project (or a similar design) was identified. Therefore, no off-site alternative was identified for analysis in this EIR.

Avoiding Biological Resource Impacts. The project site plans and biological resource inventories were reviewed to consider the feasibility of a project alternative that would avoid all

impacts to sensitive biological resources on site, and reduce impacts to trees to no more than the amount of tree loss that can be mitigated through on-site replacement planting. The project proposes to remove a total of 15,331 diameter inches of trees and plant 2,029 new trees on-site. With a reduced project footprint, fewer trees would be removed. Reducing the tree loss on site to be commensurate with the amount of tree planting that can be accommodated on site would require that approximately impacts be limited to approximately 3,000 diameter inches. This would allow development to occur on approximately 8.5 acres of the oak woodland habitat on site, compared to the proposed 19.48-acre development footprint within the oak woodland. The overall development footprint is 32 acres. An alternative that reduced oak woodland impacts to 8.5 acres would require an approximately 26.6% reduction in the size of the project.

This avoidance alternative would include a minimum 50-foot setback from all wetlands and waters of the United States to ensure that no direct or indirect adverse effects to these resources occur. The wetlands and waters of the United States mapped within the project site are shown in Figure 4.3-2 in Section 4.3, Biological Resources. The features that would be impacted by the project include the South Branch of Arcade Creek, Wetland 1, located on the eastern portion of the site, Wetland 4, located just north of Arcadia Drive in the western portion of the site, and Drainage 4, which extends northerly from the knuckle in Arcadia Drive.

Wetland 1 is located along a portion of the project site that is constrained by other sensitive resources – it is within 50 feet of the northern project site boundary, and within 50 feet of the 100-year floodplain for the South Branch of Arcade Creek. Additionally, the area south of the wetland supports oak woodland habitat. Avoiding impacts to this wetland while still extending Street A to the center of the project site would result in development within the floodplain, likely including a segment of public street, and would result in loss of oak woodland habitat. Under this scenario, avoiding impacts to Wetland 1 would result in other impacts to biological and hydrologic resources, thus this would not be a feasible way to reduce the project's significant environmental effects. Another scenario in which impacts to Wetland 1 could be avoided would be to terminate Street A at proposed Street G, limiting the development in Village 1 to 13 lots instead of the 26 lots proposed. The area of Village 1 west of Street G currently supports a mixture of oak woodland and previously developed/disturbed areas.

Wetland 4 and Drainage 4 are located within the proposed Village 5 neighborhood. Avoiding impacts to these features would require revising the site plan to modify Street B - such as by shifting it to the east which would reduce the number of units in proposed Village 4, reduce Village 5 by approximately 30 to 40 lots to maintain a 50-foot setback from the protected wetland features, and reconfigure Village 5 to provide for vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian access. As both of these features cross oak woodland habitat, avoiding impacts to each could occur as part of the tree removal avoidance described above.

Avoiding impacts to the South Branch of Arcade Creek would require constructing the Street B crossing of this creek as a span that does not require placement of any footings within the ordinance high water mark of the creek, or not constructing this roadway. If the road crossing of the creek is not constructed, access to the northern portion of the site would need to come from Sunrise Boulevard and the access drive along the northern property boundary.

This alternative would eliminate between 26% and 30% of the proposed residential lots – reducing the project from 260 dwelling units to between 180 and 191 units. This alternative was considered to be incapable of meeting most of the basic project objectives because it would substantially constrain achievement of the goals for establishing a pedestrian-friendly community with access to a system of trails that link neighborhoods together. Village 1 would consist of a 13-unit pod that is isolated from other portion of the site, and Villages 4 and 5 would be substantially revised to accommodate wetland preservation, creating inefficient traffic circulation patterns internal to the site and requiring more project site access points onto Arcadia Drive. Because this proposed alternative would also likely result in more significant impacts in other resource areas (i.e., failure to comply with General Plan policies for avoiding sprawl), this alternative was considered but ultimately rejected from further consideration.

5.3.1 Alternative 1: No Project/No Build

Under the No Project/No Build Alternative, the project site would remain in its current condition. No building demolition, grading or new construction would occur. The site would remain vacant, and the existing non-native grassland, riparian habitat, and woodlands would not be removed.

Land Use

The proposed project would alter the land use of the project site and require amending the General Plan and zoning designations for the site. The proposed residential land use would be compatible with the surrounding residential and commercial uses. Implementation of mitigation measures specified in Section 4.1 would ensure these changes would result in less-than-significant impacts related to consistency with policies and regulations.

The No Project/No Build Alternative would result in no changes to land uses in the project vicinity and no impacts to land use. Although land use impacts would be less than significant under the proposed project, there would be no land use impacts under the No Project/No Build Alternative. The No Project/No Build Alternative would have somewhat reduced land use impacts compared to the proposed project.

Population and Housing

The proposed project would not result in any significant impacts associated with the provision of housing nor would the project induce substantial growth elsewhere in the City. Buildout of the City is expected to generate approximately 3,577 new residential dwelling units by 2035, requiring development of approximately 149 acres of vacant, and a population increase of approximately 15,880 people (18%) from 2010 to 2035 (City of Citrus Heights 2011a). The proposed project is consistent with the City's land uses and housing needs specified in the General Plan. Further, by developing medium-density single-family residences on lots ranging from 2,000 to 9,000 square feet, the project would adhere to General Plan policies that encourage development of a range of housing types (City of Citrus Heights 2011b).

Under the No Project/No Build Alternative, the site would continue to be used for commercial recreation. No new housing would be constructed, and the City's projected growth would need to occur in other locations within the City. Under this alternative, there would be no impacts to population and housing relative to the existing conditions.

Biological Resources

The proposed project would result in potentially significant impacts to biological resources associated with the loss of riparian habitat and oak woodlands, possible disturbance to nesting birds, loss of trees, and indirect impact to wetlands. With implementation of mitigation measures specified in Section 4.3, these impacts would be reduced to less-than-significant levels.

No construction would occur under the No Project/No Build Alternative. This alternative would result in no changes to biological resources. No nesting birds would be disturbed, all existing trees would remain in place, and no impacts to wetlands or oak woodlands would occur.

While all of the proposed project's impacts to biological resources identified in this EIR would be reduced to less-than-significant levels with implementation of mitigation measures, no development would occur under the No Project/No Build Alternative and there would be no loss of or disturbance to habitat and oak trees. Therefore, the No Project/No Build Alternative would have reduced biological resources impacts compared to the proposed project.

Visual Resources

The proposed project would result in less-than-significant impacts to visual resources. The project would result in changes to the visual conditions at the site by developing a primarily vacant site with residential uses. This would require removing portions of a mature oak woodland habitat and non-native grasslands (golf course). The impact would remain less than significant because the site is not a key focus point in views of the site from publically accessible vantage points and because

after development, the site would be compatible with the surrounding land uses. Under the No Project/No Build Alternative, no demolition or construction would occur; the No Project/No Build Alternative would result in no changes to existing visual conditions and visual character of the site. The grasslands, riparian habitat, and oak woodlands would not be changed or altered. Thus, the No Project/No Build Alternative would avoid all impacts to visual resources and would have reduced aesthetic impacts compared to the proposed project.

Transportation and Circulation

The proposed project would increase traffic in the project vicinity as a result of the new trips generated by the proposed project. Implementation of mitigation measures would be necessary to ensure that impacts to traffic and circulation in the vicinity are reduced to less-than-significant levels. Since the No Project/No Build Alternative would not introduce any development to the project site, this alternative would result in no changes to transportation and circulation conditions in the project vicinity compared to existing conditions. The No Project/No Build Alternative would have no impacts on transportation and circulation. Therefore, the No Project/No Build Alternative would have reduced transportation and circulation impacts compared to the proposed project.

Noise

The proposed project would result in less-than-significant impacts associated with noise generated during project construction and operation but would require construction of sound barriers along the northern side of Arcadia Drive, adjacent to the proposed roundabout, and along the project site frontage on Fair Oaks Boulevard to ensure that noise levels on site remain below the maximum acceptable levels. The No Project/No Build Alternative would avoid all noise generation from construction and increases in traffic associated with the proposed project. Therefore, the No Project/No Build Alternative would have reduced noise impacts compared to the proposed project.

Air Quality

The proposed project would result in less-than-significant air quality impacts during project construction and operation. Under the No Project/No Build Alternative, no construction would occur, and the No Project/No Build Alternative would neither increase nor decrease emissions of air pollutants. Thus, the No Project/No Build Alternative would result in no impacts to air quality.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The proposed project would generate less than significant amounts of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions during project construction and operation. The proposed design includes several sustainability features as identified in Chapter 3, Project Description. Mitigation Measure 4.8a is

included in the EIR to ensure that the sustainability features that would contribute to ensuring the project is consistent with General Plan policies intended to minimize GHG emissions and consistent with the City's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan. Implementation of this mitigation measure would ensure that the project's GHG emissions would remain at less-than-significant levels. Under the No Project/No Build Alternative, no construction would occur, and the No Project/No Build Alternative would neither increase nor decrease emissions of GHGs. Thus, the No Project/No Build Alternative would result in no impacts associated with GHG emissions.

Hydrology and Water Quality

The proposed project would contribute to an increase in stormwater and a potential degradation of water quality during project construction and operation. Mitigation would reduce the impact to less than significant. The proposed project would result in less-than-significant impacts to groundwater supply, increase in stormwater flows that could exceed capacity of stormwater infrastructure, or increase in sediment and erosion on local waterways during construction.

There would be no impacts to hydrology or water quality related to an increase in stormwater, loss of groundwater, or inadequate stormwater infrastructure under the No Project/No Build Alternative because there would be no increase in impervious surfaces under this alternative and no development. Therefore, impacts would be reduced compared to the proposed project.

Public Services and Utilities

The proposed project would have less-than-significant impacts related to existing public services including water supply, police, fire, solid waste disposal, emergency access, parks, libraries, schools, or dry utilities. The proposed project would have a less-than-significant impact related to wastewater collection and treatment after implementation of mitigation. The proposed project would increase demand for these services and utilities but the demand would be within the levels anticipated by the applicable service providers and impacts would remain less than significant.

The No Project/No Build Alternative would not develop new housing that would generate an increase in population requiring public services and utilities to accommodate the increase in demand. Therefore, the No Project/No Build Alternative would have reduced public services and utilities impacts compared to the proposed project.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

The proposed project would not result in any significant impacts related to the use, transport, or handling of hazards and hazardous materials during project construction and operation. With mitigation, any potentially significant impacts would be reduced to less than significant. The No Project/No Build Alternative would result in no changes to hazardous conditions. No building

materials would be disturbed through demolition and no new hazardous materials (such as fuel for construction equipment and cleaning products) would be used at the project site.

Impacts related to hazards and hazardous materials would be less than significant under the proposed project with mitigation, but because there would be no site disturbance or building demolition under the No Project/No Build Alternative, impacts would be less severe or reduced in severity compared to the proposed project.

Tribal Cultural Resources

With the completion of the proposed project, the potential for disturbance to unknown subsurface tribal cultural resources is considered low; however, mitigation is included that would reduce potential impacts to a less-than-significant level. The No Project/No Build Alternative would result in no potential to disturb subsurface tribal cultural resources and would avoid these potential impacts.

Impacts to tribal cultural resources would be less than significant with implementation of mitigation measures under the proposed project. No impacts to tribal cultural resources would occur under the No Project/No Build Alternative. Therefore, the No Project/No Build Alternative would have reduced tribal cultural resource impacts compared to the proposed project.

Energy Consumption

Both construction and operation of the proposed project would result in less-than-significant impacts associated with energy consumption. The No Project/No Build Alternative would result in no changes in energy consumption on the project site. No new energy consumption associated with construction, vehicle trips, or occupancy of on-site residences would occur.

Impacts related to energy consumption would be less than significant under the proposed project, but because there would be no construction or new on-site sources under the No Project/No Build Alternative, impacts would be less severe than under the proposed project.

Relationship to Project Objectives

The No Project/No Build Alternative would not meet any of the project objectives since the site would remain in its current condition and would not support any dwelling units. This would be inconsistent with the General Plan, which designates approximately 6.26 acres of the site for high density residential land uses and anticipated development of 93 apartment units on that portion of the site. The site would also not support the proposed multi-use trail or public recreation area.

5.3.2 Alternative 2: Existing Designations

Under this alternative, development would occur under the existing General Plan and Zoning designations for the project site. Land uses for the project site are determined by the City of Citrus Heights General Plan and the City of Citrus Heights Zoning Ordinance. As shown on Figures 4.1-1 and 4.1-2 in Section 4.1, Land Use, Land use designations for the project site under the City's General Plan are Open Space (34.78 acres), High Density Residential (6.26 acres), and General Commercial (15.77 acres) (City of Citrus Heights 2011). Zoning designations on the site are Commercial Recreation (CR) on 34.78 acres, Limited Commercial (LC) on 0.96 acres, Shopping Center (SC) on 14.81 acres, and High Density Residential (RD30) on 6.26 acres (City of Citrus Heights 2017) (see Table 4.1-1).

The zoning ordinance requires that high density residential development range between 21 and 30 units per acre. Accounting for space needed for parking, circulation, and landscaping, the General Plan assumes that the portion of the site zoned for high-density residential uses would accommodate 93 dwelling units. Under the Citrus Heights Zoning Code, the CR zoning districts allows for: indoor and/or outdoor recreation facility, a fitness center, a conference/convention center, a golf course, storage facilities, a park, a sport and entertainment facility, a theater, retail uses, bar, a restaurant/coffee shop, a smoking shop, lodging, or utility facilities. The LC zoning allows for: indoor recreational facility, fitness center, recycling center, personal storage facility, an adult entertainment facility, indoor commercial recreation, library, museum, a park, school facility, art/dance studio, bar, brewery, restaurant/coffee shop, specialty foods, banking center, lodging, animal kennel, day care, animal hospital, utility facilities, and automobile services.

The open space corridor included in the proposed project encompasses the 100-year floodplain surrounding the South Branch of Arcade Creek. This alternative would be required to comply with all city, state, and federal codes and restrictions, including avoiding development within the 100-year floodplain. Retaining this open space corridor would bifurcate the parcels on which the CR zoning occurs, isolating the portion of the CR zoning where Village 2 would be located under the proposed project. This could limit options for redevelopment of a commercial recreation use on the site. This portion of the site could be used for an accessory feature, such as outdoor tennis and basketball courts that may be an accessory to a fitness center use.

The area of disturbance within the project site would essentially be the same as the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be very similar.

Land Use

The proposed project would alter the planned land uses of the project site. Implementation of mitigation measures would ensure these changes would result in less-than-significant impacts

related to land use. The No Project/Existing Designations Alternative would develop the project site under the existing General Plan and Zoning designations. This alternative would result in a mixed-use project that would have fewer residential units than the proposed project and would add commercial and retail space. The high density residential would be placed in the northern portion of the site while the commercial development would be located in the southern portion, along Arcadia Drive, and the commercial recreation would be located in the middle of the site.

The commercial recreation component would extend into the area where Villages 1 and 2 are proposed. These areas are adjacent to the existing multi-family residences to the east. Although the site is currently used for commercial recreation, redevelopment with a new commercial recreation use, such as a fitness center, could increase the intensity of use in these portions of the site. Thus, there would be a greater potential for land use incompatibility and conflicts, but these could be avoided through appropriate site design. The development would be expected to be generally consistent and compatible with adjacent land uses. Impacts would remain less than significant. Both the proposed project and the No Project/Existing Designations Alternative would result in redevelopment of the site, introducing new land uses adjacent to existing residences. The central portion of the site would remain open space and riparian habitat. Land use impacts from the No Project/Existing Designations would be similar to the proposed project and would remain less than significant.

Population and Housing

The proposed project would not result in any significant impacts associated with the provision of housing nor would the project induce substantial growth elsewhere in the City. The No Project/Existing Designations Alternative would develop a mixed use project that would include fewer residential units. Under the alternative, 93 dwelling units are assumed to be constructed, which could support a population of 237 people, representing a 0.3% increase in the City's population. In comparison with the development under the proposed project, the No Project/Existing Designations Alternative would introduce 426 fewer residents to the project site. The multi-family units constructed under this alternative would likely be affordable at lower income levels than the single-family units proposed, but would be more likely to be rental rather than ownership units. Thus, the proposed project and this alternative would have different effects related to provision of affordable housing and meeting the City's identified housing goals, but the impacts would remain less than significant for either. Like the proposed project, the No Project/Existing Designations Alternative would neither demolish dwellings nor result in the displacement of people. Impacts to population and housing under the Reduced No Project/Existing Designations Alternative would be similar to the proposed project.

Biological Resources

The proposed project would result in potentially significant impacts to biological resources associated with the loss of trees and oak woodland, possible disturbance to nesting birds and roosting bats, disturbance of riparian habitat, and both direct and indirect impacts to wetlands. With implementation of mitigation measures, these impacts would be reduced to less-than-significant levels. The No Project/Existing Designations Alternative would develop high-density residential, commercial recreational, and retail and commercial uses. The alternative may include a similar open space-based commercial recreational facility, similar to what currently exists on site. However, under the CR zoning designation, built structures would be permitted as well – such as for indoor and/or outdoor recreation facility, a fitness center, a conference/convention center, or an entertainment facility. Should any of the aforementioned be built, the alternative would likely result in impacts to biological resources that are similar to those of the proposed project and would require the same mitigation measures identified in Section 4.3 of this EIR to ensure that impacts are reduced to less-than-significant levels. This would include impacts associated with the loss of trees and oak woodland, possible disturbance to nesting birds and roosting bats, disturbance of riparian habitat, and both direct and indirect impacts to wetlands.

Visual Resources

The proposed project would result in less-than-significant impacts to visual resources. The project would result in changes to the visual conditions at the site by developing a primarily vacant site with residences uses, as well as removing portions of a mature oak woodland habitat. The impact would remain less than significant because the site is not a key focus point in views of the site from publically accessible vantage points and because after development, the site would be compatible with the surrounding land uses.

The No Project/Existing Designations Alternative would result in the alteration of the visual condition of the project site by developing high-density residential, commercial recreational, and retail and commercial uses. The alternative would result in similar changes as the proposed project in all viewpoints and the overall change in character and visual quality of the project site under the No Project/Existing Designations Alternative would be considered less than significant.

Transportation and Circulation

The proposed project would increase traffic in the project vicinity as a result of the new trips generated by the proposed project. Implementation of mitigation measures would be necessary to ensure that impacts to traffic and circulation in the vicinity are reduced to less-than-significant levels.

The No Project/Existing Designations Alternative would introduce a similar level of development to the project site, with development of a total of 93 residential units compared to

the proposed 260 units, and the addition of commercial and retail space. Commercial and retail uses typically generate more trips per day than residential land uses do; however, with the substantial reduction in residential space, the No Project/Existing Designations Alternative would result in a decreased number of trips per day originating from the project site. This alternative would result in decreased traffic volumes compared to the proposed project, and therefore would decrease congestion at intersections and on roadway segments in the study area. The impacts associated with the No Project/Existing Designations Alternative would remain less than significant.

Noise

The proposed project would result in less-than-significant impacts after mitigation associated with noise generated during project construction and operation. The proposed project requires the creation of a soundwall along a portion of Village 5, adjacent to the roundabout proposed at the project site entrance, and along the project site's frontage on Fair Oaks Boulevard. The No Project/Existing Designations Alternative would develop high-density residential, commercial recreational, and retail and commercial uses. This alternative would develop commercial and retail uses along Arcadia Drive and Fair Oaks Boulevard instead of residential uses and would therefore eliminate the need for soundwalls in these locations. Therefore, the No Project/Existing Designations Alternative could have slightly reduced noise impacts compared to the proposed project.

Air Quality

The proposed project would result in less than significant air quality impacts during project construction and operation. Under the No Project/Existing Designations Alternative, the level of construction activity on the site would be similar to the proposed project and would be expected to result in similar impacts as the proposed project, while long-term operations would generate substantially more vehicle trips, which would increase the air pollution emissions associated with the project. Thus, impacts to air quality would be slightly greater under this alternative, but would likely remain less than significant after mitigation.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The proposed project would generate less than significant amounts of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions during project construction and operation. The proposed design includes several sustainability features as identified in Chapter 3, Project Description. Mitigation Measure 4.8a is included in the EIR to ensure that the sustainability features that would contribute to ensuring the project is consistent with General Plan policies intended to minimize GHG emissions and consistent with the City's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan. Implementation of this mitigation measure would ensure that the project's GHG emissions would remain at less-than-significant levels.

Under the Existing Designations Alternative, similar amounts of grading and construction would occur, and the No Project/Existing Designations Alternative would result in a similar amount of new GHG emissions compared to the proposed project. Although the number of daily vehicle traffic trips may increase as a result of the change a portion of the project from residential to commercial uses, the typical trip length for commercial trips is less than that for residential trips, so the overall vehicle miles traveled would remain similar. Through implementation of mitigation measures, the impacts associated with GHG emissions would be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Hydrology and Water Quality

The proposed project would result in less-than-significant impacts related to hydrology and water quality. The proposed project would not result in any significant impacts to groundwater supply, increase in stormwater flows that could exceed capacity of stormwater infrastructure, or increase in sediment and erosion on local waterways during construction.

The No Project/Existing Designations Alternative would develop a mixed-use project similar in size and disturbance area to the proposed project. However, the alternative would add commercial and office development and reduce the amount of residential development. This could result in a greater amount of impervious surface on site associated with parking for the commercial and office land uses. Best Management Practices and other mitigation measures to address such impacts would be similar to those for the proposed project – for example, the alternative would likely also use vegetated swales and erosion protection at drainage outfalls to control stormwater runoff. Therefore this alternative would have similar impacts to hydrology and water quality related to an increase in stormwater, loss of groundwater, or inadequate stormwater infrastructure because while there may be a greater increase in impervious surfaces under this alternative, the same performance standards for stormwater management would be applied to either the proposed project or this alternative. Therefore, impacts to hydrology and water quality would be similar to the proposed project. The impacts to hydrology and water quality under the No Project/Existing Designations Alternative would be less than significant.

Public Services and Utilities

The proposed project would have less-than-significant impacts related to existing public services including police, fire, solid waste disposal, emergency access, parks, libraries, schools, and dry utilities. The proposed project would have a less-than-significant impact on wastewater after mitigation. The proposed project would increase demand for these services and utilities but the demand would be consistent with the levels anticipated by the applicable service providers and impacts would remain less than significant.

The No Project/Existing Designations Alternative would develop a mixed-use development; in comparison to the proposed project, there would be fewer residential units and additional commercial and retail space. This alternative would generate a smaller population increase than the proposed project. The alternative would still require public services and utilities but would have a lower demand for services compared to the proposed project. Therefore, the No Project/Existing Designations Alternative would have reduced public services and utilities impacts compared to the proposed project.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

The proposed project would not result in any impacts related to the use, transport, or handling of hazards and hazardous materials during project construction and operation. However, there would be potential impacts associated with exposing people to existing on-site hazardous conditions. With mitigation, this impact would be reduced to less than significant. The No Project/Existing Designations Alternative would utilize similar hazardous materials and would occur on the same project site. Therefore, the Alternative would result in similar impacts as the proposed project; the No Project/Existing Designations Alternative would result in less-than-significant impacts to hazards and hazardous materials after mitigation.

Tribal Cultural Resources

With the completion of the proposed project, the potential for disturbance to unknown subsurface tribal cultural resources is considered low; however, mitigation is included that would reduce potential impacts to a less-than-significant level. Impacts to tribal cultural resources would be less than significant with implementation of mitigation measures under the proposed project. The No Project/Existing Designations Alternative would develop an area with a similar disturbance footprint, albeit slightly reduced, as the proposed project; therefore, the Reduced Footprint/Oak Woodland Retention Alternative would result in similar impacts, albeit slightly reduced. The No Project/Existing Designations Alternative would result in less-than-significant impacts to Tribal Cultural Resources.

Energy Consumption

Both construction and operation of the proposed project would result in less-than-significant impacts associated with energy consumption. The No Project/Existing Designations would result in similar impacts to energy consumption on the project site. Energy consumption associated with project construction and operation would occur.

Impacts related to energy consumption would be less than significant under the proposed project. The No Project/Existing Designations Alternative would result in fewer residential units and more commercial and office space, which would increase the amount of vehicle trips but reduce

the amount of on-site electrical consumption. However, energy efficiency (meaning the amount of energy used per square foot of building space or per dwelling unit) under the No Project/Existing Designations Alternative would be similar to the proposed project. Further, the mitigation measures required of the proposed project would also apply to the No Project/Existing Designations Alternative. Therefore, impacts related to energy consumption associated with the No Project/Existing Designations Alternative would be similar to those of the proposed project.

Relationship to Project Objectives

The No Project/ Existing Designations Alternative would not meet several of the project objectives because limiting the residential development to 6.26 acres in the northeastern portion of the site and retaining the commercial recreation and limited commercial designations on the rest of the site would not allow for development of a master-planned community with a range of housing densities and affordability ranges and with a publically accessible recreation component. This alternative would be likely to result in a circulation system and infrastructure improvements that would meet local transportation needs and avoid adverse impacts to existing service levels, and protection of the environmental resources associated with the South Branch of Arcade Creek. This alternative would not create the type of residential community described by the project objectives or in Chapter 3, Project Description.

5.3.3 Alternative 3: Reduced Footprint/Oak Woodland Retention

The Reduced Footprint Alternative assumes a reduced development footprint and increased amounts of retained on-site oak woodlands while keeping development densities generally the same as the proposed project. This would be accomplished through a 20% reduction in the number of units proposed for the project site. Therefore, this alternative contemplates the development of 208 residential units on 25.5 acres and 30 acres of open space. This reduction would consist of the removal of 5 lots (13, 14, 21, 25 and 26) from Village 1; 14 lots (55-59, 80, 81 and 90-96) from Village 3; 6 lots (105, 106, 114, 115, 125 and 131) from Village 4 and 18 lots (176-179, 190-193, and 202-212) from Village 5. This alternative would increase the acreage of oak woodland retained on site as well as provide additional opportunities (through increased retained open space) for the on-site replacement tree planting to mitigate for the removal of oak woodland. This alternative aims to provide a contiguous area of oak woodland habitat in the center of the project site.

Land Use

The proposed project would alter the planned land uses of the project site. Implementation of mitigation measures would ensure these changes would result in less-than-significant impacts related to land use. The Reduced Footprint/Oak Woodland Retention Alternative would develop a similar residential project, but would retain greater amounts of open space and would have

fewer residential units. In comparison with the development under the proposed project, the Reduced Footprint/Oak Woodland Retention Alternative would be generally consistent and compatible with adjacent land uses. Impacts would remain less than significant and would be similar for the proposed project and the alternatives.

Population and Housing

The proposed project would not result in any significant impacts associated with the provision of housing nor would the project induce substantial growth elsewhere in the City. The Reduced Footprint/Oak Woodland Retention would develop a similar residential project, but would include fewer residential units. Under the alternative, a maximum of 208 dwelling units would be constructed, which could support a population of 530 people and represents a population increase of 0.6%. In comparison with the development under the proposed project, the Reduced Footprint/Oak Woodland Retention Alternative would introduce 133 fewer residents to the project site. As the proposed project would result in a less than significant and the Reduced Footprint/Oak Woodland Retention Alternative would result in a less impact, the Reduced Footprint/Oak Woodland Retention Alternative would result in a less-than-significant impact. Like the proposed project, the Reduced Footprint/Oak Woodland Retention Alternative would neither demolish in dwellings nor result in the displacement of people. Impacts to population and housing under the Reduced Footprint/Oak Woodland Retention Alternative would be similar, if not slightly reduced, to the proposed project.

Biological Resources

The proposed project would result in potentially significant impacts to biological resources associated with the loss of trees and oak woodland, possible disturbance to nesting birds and roosting bats, disturbance of riparian habitat, and indirect impacts to wetlands. With implementation of mitigation measures, these impacts would be reduced to less-than-significant levels. Under the Reduced Footprint/Oak Woodland Retention Alternative, a greater amount of open space and oak woodland habitat would be retained on site. However, this alternative would still result in loss of open space, oak woodlands and trees, and some small areas of riparian habitat. Compliance with the City's Tree Ordinance, which requires replacement of protected trees that are removed or impacted during construction, and the requirements of Mitigation Measure 4.3f would reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level. However, the total loss of trees would be reduced under the Reduced Footprint/Oak Woodland Retention Alternative and less off-site mitigation would be necessary.

All impacts to biological resources under either the proposed project or the Reduced Footprint/Oak Woodland Retention Alternative would be reduced to less-than-significant levels with implementation of mitigation measures. The Reduced Footprint/Oak Woodland Retention

Alternative would reduce the total amount of habitat and tree loss on site; therefore, overall impacts to biological resources would be reduced compared to the proposed project.

Visual Resources

The proposed project would result in less-than-significant impacts to visual resources. The project would result in changes to the visual conditions at the site by developing a primarily vacant site with residential uses, as well as removing portions of a mature oak woodland habitat. However, due to limited viewer exposure and sensitivity at the publically accessible viewpoints from which the project site can be seen, the overall change in character and visual quality of the project site would be considered a less than significant effect of the project.

The Reduced Footprint/Oak Woodland Retention Alternative would result in similar but slightly reduced visual impacts compared to the proposed project. This alternative would retain more existing oak woodland than the proposed project, which would reduce the extent to which the project changes the visual character of the site. The overall change in character and visual quality of the project site under the Reduced Footprint/Oak Woodland Retention Alternative would be slightly reduced compared to the proposed project; the impact would remain less than significant.

Transportation and Circulation

The proposed project would increase traffic in the project vicinity as a result of the new trips generated by the proposed project. Implementation of mitigation measures would be necessary to ensure that impacts to traffic and circulation in the vicinity are reduced to less-than-significant levels. The Reduced Footprint/Oak Woodland Retention Alternative would develop a similar residential development on site. However, the Alternative would introduce a lower level of development to the project site. Although this alternative would contribute traffic to the existing transportation and circulation network in the project vicinity, the increase in traffic volumes would be reduced. Thus, the Reduced Footprint/Oak Woodland Retention Alternative would result in similar less-than-significant impacts with mitigation as the proposed project.

Noise

The proposed project would result in less-than-significant impacts after mitigation associated with noise generated during project construction and operation. The Reduced Footprint/Oak Woodland Retention Alternative would result in development of a similar project. Although there would be fewer residential units, which would decrease the overall construction activity on site, construction would still occur throughout the site over a similar construction period. This would result in similar amounts of noise generation from construction and increases in noise generated from the proposed land uses as well as from traffic associated with the

proposed project. Therefore, the Reduced Footprint/Oak Woodland Retention Alternative would have similar noise impacts as the proposed project.

Air Quality

The proposed project would result in less than significant air quality impacts during project construction and operation. Under either the Reduced Footprint/Oak Woodland Retention Alternative, development on site would be reduced compared to the proposed project, thus construction and operation emissions would be similarly reduced. Overall, the Reduced Footprint/Oak Woodland Retention Alternative would each generate fewer air pollutant emissions and would result in less-than-significant impacts to air quality.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The proposed project would generate less than significant amounts of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions during project construction and operation. The proposed design includes several sustainability features as identified in Chapter 3, Project Description. Mitigation Measure 4.8a is included in the EIR to ensure that the sustainability features that would contribute to ensuring the project is consistent with General Plan policies intended to minimize GHG emissions and consistent with the City's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan. Implementation of this mitigation measure would ensure that the project's GHG emissions would remain at less-than-significant levels.-

Under the Reduced Footprint/Oak Woodland Retention Alternative, thus the construction intensity would be slightly less than the proposed project. After the implementation of mitigation measures, the impact of the Reduced Footprint/Oak Woodland Retention Alternative would be less than significant.

Hydrology and Water Quality

The proposed project would result in less-than-significant impacts related to hydrology and water quality. The proposed project would not result in any significant impacts to groundwater supply, increase in stormwater flows that could exceed capacity of stormwater infrastructure, or increase in sediment and erosion on local waterways during construction.

The Reduced Footprint/Oak Woodland Retention Alternative would develop a similar residential project to the proposed project but would reduce the area of disturbance. This alternative would result in slightly reduced impacts to hydrology and water quality related to an increase in stormwater, risk to flooding, and the adequacy of stormwater infrastructure because there would be a slightly reduced amount of impervious surfaces under this alternative. Further, this Alternative would avoid development within the existing 100-year floodplain. Impacts related to hydrology

and water quality would be slightly less under the Reduced Footprint/Oak Woodland Retention Alternative than with the proposed project; impacts on hydrology and water quality would be less than significant under the Reduced Footprint/Oak Woodland Retention Alternative.

Public Services and Utilities

The proposed project would have less-than-significant impacts related to existing public services including police, fire, solid waste disposal, emergency access, parks, libraries, schools, and dry utilities. The proposed project would have a less-than-significant impact on wastewater after mitigation. The proposed project would increase demand for these services and utilities but the demand would be consistent with the levels anticipated by the applicable service providers and impacts would remain less than significant.

The Reduced Footprint/Oak Woodland Retention Alternative would develop a similar residential project, although there would be fewer dwelling units and more open space. This alternative would generate a smaller population increase than the proposed project. The alternative would still require public services and utilities but would have a lower demand for services compared to the proposed project. Therefore, the Reduced Footprint/Oak Woodland Retention Alternative would have reduced public services and utilities impacts compared to the proposed project.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

The proposed project would not result in any impacts related to the use, transport, or handling of hazards and hazardous materials during project construction and operation. However, there would be potential impacts associated with exposing people to existing on-site hazardous conditions. With mitigation, this impact would be reduced to less than significant. The Reduced Footprint/Oak Woodland Retention Alternative would develop a similar, albeit slightly reduced, residential project and would utilize similar hazardous materials and would occur on the same project site. Therefore, the Alternative would result in similar impacts as the proposed project; the Reduced Footprint/Oak Woodland Retention Alternative would result in less-than-significant impacts to hazards and hazardous materials after mitigation.

Tribal Cultural Resources

With the completion of the proposed project, the potential for disturbance to unknown subsurface tribal cultural resources is considered low; however, mitigation is included that would reduce potential impacts to a less-than-significant level. Impacts to tribal cultural resources would be less than significant with implementation of mitigation measures under the proposed project. The Reduced Footprint/Oak Woodland Retention Alternative would develop an area with a similar disturbance footprint, albeit slightly reduced, as the proposed project; therefore, the Reduced Footprint/Oak Woodland Retention Alternative would result in similar impacts, albeit slightly

reduced. The Reduced Footprint/Oak Woodland Retention Alternative would result in less-than-significant impacts to Tribal Cultural Resources.

Energy Consumption

Both construction and operation of the proposed project would result in less-than-significant impacts associated with energy consumption. The Reduced Footprint Alternative and the Reduced Footprint Transportation Alternative would result in similar impacts to energy consumption on the project site. Energy consumption associated with project construction and operation would occur.

Impacts related to energy consumption would be less than significant under the proposed project. The Reduced Footprint/Oak Woodland Retention Alternative would result in fewer residential units, which would reduce the amount of vehicle trips and on-site electrical consumption at the project site. The intensity of construction under the Reduced Footprint/Oak Woodland Retention Alternative would also decrease relative to the proposed project. Regardless, energy efficiency would be similar to the proposed project under the alternatives. Therefore, impacts associated with the Reduced Footprint/Oak Woodland Retention Alternative would be similar to the energy consumption impacts of the proposed project.

Relationship to Project Objectives

The Reduced Footprint/Oak Woodland Retention Alternative could meet several of the project objectives because it envisions development of a master planned community with a similar range of housing densities and products as the proposed project. It would include retention of a larger amount of open space than is proposed, which could accommodate a similar multi-use trail and park site. This alternative would be likely to result in a circulation system and infrastructure improvements that would meet local transportation needs and avoid adverse impacts to existing service levels, and protection of the environmental resources associated with the South Branch of Arcade Creek. However, this alternative would reduce the overall residential density by 20% and would reduce some of the internal connectivity between the proposed villages because it would expand the open space area into the area proposed for each of the five villages, with the greatest reduction in Villages 3 and 5. The decrease in the number of dwelling units under this alternative would reduce the City's ability to achieve the amount of housing growth projected in the General Plan and to provide housing at the moderate and below-moderate income levels in support of the City's RHNA obligations, as anticipated under the Housing Element.

5.4 SUMMARY MATRIX

A matrix displaying the major characteristics and significant environmental effects of each alternative is provided in Table 5-6 to summarize the comparison with the proposed project.

**Table 5-1
Project Alternatives Impacts Summary**

Environmental Issue	Proposed Project Impacts	Alternative 1: No Project/No Build	Alternative 2: No Project/Existing Designations	Alternative 3: Reduced Footprint/Oak Woodland Retention
Land Use	LTS	▼	▼	—
Population and Housing	LTS	▼	—	—
Biological Resources	LTS	▼	—	▼
Visual Resources	LTS	▼	—	▼
Transportation and Circulation	LTS	▼	—	▼
Noise	LTS	▼	—	—
Air Quality	LTS	▼	▲	▼
Greenhouse Gases	LTS	▼	▲	▼
Hydrology and Water Quality	LTS	▼	—	▼
Public Services and Utilities	LTS	▼	—	▼
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	LTS	▼	—	—
Tribal Cultural Resources	LTS	▼	—	—
Energy Consumption	LTS	▼	▲	—

▲ Alternative is likely to result in greater impacts to issue when compared to proposed project.

— Alternative is likely to result in similar impacts to issue when compared to proposed project.

▼ Alternative is likely to result in reduced impacts to issue when compared to proposed project.

LTS = Less-than-significant impact.

5.5 ENVIRONMENTALLY SUPERIOR ALTERNATIVE

As indicated in Table 5-1, the No Project/No Build Alternative would result in the least environmental impacts and would be the environmentally superior alternative because it would avoid all impacts associated with the proposed project for all resource areas. However, Section 15126.6(e)(2) of the CEQA Guidelines states that if the environmentally superior alternative is the No Project Alternative, the EIR shall also identify an environmentally superior alternative among the other alternatives. In this case, the environmentally superior alternative is the Reduced Footprint/Oak Woodland Retention Alternative because it would slightly reduce the potential for impacts in seven of the resource areas evaluated, including biological resources, visual resources, transportation and circulation, air quality, greenhouse gases, hydrology and water quality, and public services. However, it is important to note that all of the impacts under the proposed project would be less than significant or would be reduced to a less-than-significant level with implementation of mitigation measures. Thus, selection of the Reduced Footprint/Oak Woodland Retention Alternative would not be capable of avoiding any of the project's significant impacts and would not substantially reduce any of the project's significant impacts.

5.6 REFERENCES

City of Citrus Heights. 2011a. *Citrus Heights General Plan Update and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan Final Environmental Impact Report*. Prepared by AECOM. Sacramento, California: AECOM. July 1, 2011.

City of Citrus Heights. 2011b. *City of Citrus Heights General Plan*. Adopted August 11, 2011. <http://www.citrusheights.net/202/General-Plan>.

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