

## 7.0 ALTERNATIVES

As required by Section 15126(f) of the *State CEQA Guidelines*, this EIR examines a range of reasonable alternatives to the proposed Specific Plan that could feasibly achieve similar objectives. The discussion focuses on alternatives that may be able to reduce many of the adverse impacts associated with the proposed Specific Plan. Included in this analysis are the CEQA-required “no project” alternative, a “no project” alternative that would allow buildout under existing land use designations and zoning, an alternative that would allow only commercial development under the Specific Plan, and an alternative with an alternate parking and land use plan. These are summarized below and in Table 7-1, and subsequently discussed in greater detail within the impact analysis for each alternative:

- *Alternative 1: No Project (No development)*
- *Alternative 2: No Project (Development under existing land use designations and zoning)*
- *Alternative 3: Commercial Development Only.*
- *Alternative 4: Alternate Parking and Land Use Plan.*

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

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

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

Based on discussions with City staff, an alternative project site is not evaluated in this EIR because of the unique characteristics of the proposed Town Center area relative to the project’s goals, which are specific to the project area.

### 7.1 ALTERNATIVE 1: No Project (No Development)

**a. Description.** This alternative assumes that the proposed Specific Plan is not adopted and no additional development would occur within the project area. In addition, in the absence of the proposed specific plan or future development, there would be no modifications to existing infrastructure, including the implementation of pedestrian-oriented roadway improvements, streetscape modifications, and public amenities. This alternative would preclude all future development, thus the project site would virtually remain as is.



## **b. Impact Analysis**

Aesthetics. Since no new development would occur, existing buildings would remain, and the general character of the project area would not be substantially altered from its current condition. Because no new development would take place, the potential for a building to block scenic views would be eliminated, as would potential light and glare impacts. Conversely, with the implementation of the proposed Specific Plan, new development would occur in accordance with the Plan's design guidelines, the intent of which would create a more defined and attractive Town Center area with a more intensive development pattern. Therefore, overall impacts to aesthetics would be both greater and lesser under the No Project Alternative when compared to the proposed Specific Plan.

Air Quality. Since no additional vehicle trips would be generated by this alternative and no new construction would take place, no additional air quality impacts would occur. The proposed project would increase the number of vehicle trips in the area because of increased development, contributing to increased air quality emissions. Therefore, air quality impacts would be less under the No Project Alternative when compared to the proposed Specific Plan.

Biological Resources. No development would occur; therefore, there would be no impacts to biological resources. As such, impacts to biological resources would be less under this alternative than compared to the proposed project.

Cultural Resources. Because development would not occur under this alternative and would therefore not result in grading or earthmoving, archeological artifacts or human remains would not be unearthed. Thus, impacts would be less under this alternative as compared to the proposed Specific Plan.

Geology and Soils. No development would occur; therefore, there would be no exposure of residents to geologic hazards on the site, including seismic ground shaking, fault rupture, landslides, shrink-swell potential, erosion, and liquefaction. This alternative would result in fewer impacts than the proposed Specific Plan.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials. No development would occur under this alternative as compared to the proposed project, so fewer residents would be exposed to hazardous materials that could otherwise be transported through the downtown area. In addition, with less intensive housing development, fewer future residents could be exposed to hazards associated with existing land uses in the area. As such, impacts would be less under this alternative.

Hydrology and Water Quality. No development would occur under this alternative as compared to the proposed project, so there would be less potential for stormwater runoff and erosion. Therefore, impacts would be less under this alternative.

Land Use. Since no new development would occur under this alternative, land use patterns would remain generally unchanged. Potential land use conflicts involving air quality, noise, or traffic from mixed-use development (residential and commercial mixed) under the



Specific Plan would not occur. Thus, impacts would be less under this alternative as compared to the proposed Specific Plan.

Noise. No new development would occur under this alternative, so no additional residents would be exposed to noise from construction, parking, or increased traffic on the roadways that traverse the project site. Therefore, noise-related impacts would be less under this alternative.

Public Services. No development would occur under this alternative as compared to the proposed project, so fewer residents would require fire and police protection and educational services. As such, impacts would be less under this alternative.

Recreation. No development would occur under this alternative as compared to the proposed project, so there would be less demand for additional park facilities. Thus, impacts would be less under this alternative as compared to the proposed Specific Plan.

Transportation and Circulation. Under this alternative, land uses in the Specific Plan area would remain as they currently are, and no additional development would occur. Because there would be no new development, no additional traffic would be created by this alternative. In addition, there would also be no new demand for parking. Therefore, the No Project Alternative would result in fewer traffic impacts compared to the proposed Specific Plan.

Water Supply and Wastewater. No additional development would occur under this alternative, therefore water would not be needed and no wastewater would be generated. Thus, impacts would be less under this alternative as compared to the proposed Specific Plan.

## 7.2 ALTERNATIVE 2: No Project (General Plan Development)

**a. Description.** This alternative assumes that the proposed Specific Plan is not adopted and that development continues in accordance with the existing General Plan designations, the Skypark Specific Plan, and zoning, which would result in overall less intense development. The existing General Plan Land Use, Specific Plan, and Zoning designations within the Specific Plan area are the same, and include the following:

- C-S, Commercial Service, 45% maximum building coverage, 35-foot height limit
- C-SC, Commercial Shopping Center, 35% maximum building coverage, 35-foot height limit
- P, Public/Quasi Public, 30% maximum building coverage, 35-foot height limit
- R-VH, Very High-Density Residential, 2,100 sf/unit maximum lot density (7-20 units/acre)

Table 2-2 of Section 2.0 *Project Description* summarizes existing General Plan land use designations and existing development within the Specific Plan area. This development would remain; however, undeveloped parcels would be built-out.

The vast majority of land within the project area is designated as Commercial Service; refer to Figure 2-3. Development under this alternative would result in primarily retail uses, except for



very high-density residential in the northeastern portion of the project site. In the absence of the proposed specific plan, there would be no modifications to existing infrastructure, including the implementation of pedestrian-oriented roadway improvements, streetscape modifications, infrastructure, and public amenities.

#### **b. Impact Analysis**

Aesthetics. Since no new development would occur besides what is expected under the General Plan, existing buildings would likely remain in their current condition and the general character of the area would not be substantially changed. This alternative would not have the beneficial effect that a cohesive urban design scheme under the Specific Plan would realize. However, buildings would not exceed 35 feet in height, and would not potentially impact scenic views or other public viewsheds. Therefore, overall impacts to aesthetics would be both greater and lesser under the No Project Alternative – General Plan Buildout when compared to the proposed Specific Plan.

Air Quality. This alternative would involve reduced overall development compared to the proposed Specific Plan and less residential development. However, the proposed project involves mixed-use development, which places residential and commercial uses together, thereby encouraging bicycle and pedestrian use, which reduces automobile use and air quality emissions. Therefore, impacts would be both greater and lesser as compared to the proposed Specific Plan.

Biological Resources. This alternative would result in removal of both non-native and native vegetation due to grading and earthmoving from development, as would the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be similar as compared to the proposed project.

Cultural Resources. Because development would occur under this alternative and therefore could result in grading or earthmoving, archeological artifacts or human remains could be unearthed. Thus, impacts under this alternative would be similar as under the proposed Specific Plan.

Geology and Soils. This alternative would involve construction of fewer buildings, such that it would expose fewer residents and structures to potential geologic hazards on the site, including seismic ground shaking, fault rupture, landslides, shrink-swell potential, erosion, and liquefaction. This alternative would result in fewer impacts than the proposed Specific Plan.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials. The Phase I ESA prepared for the project site has identified several items that would require additional evaluation prior to construction. Evaluation of these items would be required for either development pursuant to existing land use designations and zoning, or per the proposed Specific Plan. Exposure to residential contamination in onsite soils would be less than the proposed Specific Plan because there would be construction of fewer residential units. However, this alternative would not include the anticipated relocation of the two existing propane facilities to an industrial area of the City, such that there would still be potential risks associated with future development occurring adjacent to the two facilities. Therefore, impacts from hazards and hazardous materials would be both lesser and greater under this alternative than the proposed project.



Hydrology and Water Quality. Lot coverage under this alternative would be less than under the proposed Specific Plan, such that the area of potential disturbance would be smaller. There would be fewer impervious surfaces with this alternative than under the proposed project, such that there would be less stormwater runoff. However, this alternative would not include the improvements to the storm drainage system of the site, as well as various elements to minimize stormwater runoff. Therefore, impacts would be lesser and greater under this alternative to the proposed project.

Land Use. This alternative would allow development to occur, but less intensively than anticipated under the proposed Specific Plan. Therefore, there would be fewer vehicle trips generated, and resulting less air emissions and noise, such that there would be fewer land use conflicts. Also, this alternative would not result in land use conflicts that could result from mixed-use developed as proposed under the Specific Plan. Conversely, this alternative would lack the cohesive and centralized “downtown” that the City and public desire. Thus, impacts would be both lesser and greater under this alternative as compared to the Specific Plan.

Noise. This alternative would involve less overall development than the proposed Specific Plan. In addition, because there would be no mixed-use development, it would not create any potential noise impacts related to siting residential uses on-top of commercial uses. Therefore, noise-related impacts would be less under this alternative than under the proposed Specific Plan.

Public Services. Less development would occur under this alternative as compared to the proposed project, so fewer residents would require police and fire protection and related public services. Thus, impacts to public resources would be less under this alternative.

Recreation. The development that would occur under this alternative would include residential in the northeast corner of the Specific Plan area, which generates demand for parkland. However, the level of demand for parkland generated by this alternative would be less than the proposed project. Thus, impacts would be less under this alternative as compared to the proposed Specific Plan.

Transportation and Circulation. This alternative would allow development to occur, but less intensely. Therefore, there would be fewer vehicle trips generated. Conversely, mixed-use development places residential and commercial uses together, thereby reducing the need for automobile use and encouraging bicycle and pedestrian use. However, this alternative would not take advantage of this benefit created by mixed-use development. Therefore, traffic and circulation impacts would be both lesser and greater under this alternative as compared to the proposed Specific Plan.

Water Supply and Wastewater. This alternative would allow development to occur, but less intensely. Therefore, development under this alternative would not require as much water or generate as much wastewater as under the Specific Plan. Thus, impacts would be less under this alternative as compared to the proposed Specific Plan.



### 7.3 ALTERNATIVE 3: Commercial Development Only

**a. Description.** This alternative would adopt the Specific Plan, but it would be implemented such that it would only allow for commercial development. The mixed-use element of the proposed Specific Plan and proposed residential and civic land uses would not occur. Pedestrian oriented roadways and shopping areas, infrastructure improvements and public amenities would remain as an essential element of the Specific Plan.

#### **b. Impact Analysis**

Aesthetics. Under this alternative, the entire Specific Plan area would be commercial, such that no mixed-use development would occur. Furthermore public facilities, such as parks and civic uses, which are generally aesthetically pleasing, would not be developed. Therefore, this alternative would result in greater aesthetic impacts than the proposed Specific Plan.

Air Quality. Because commercial development has a higher trip generation rate than residential or mixed-use development, this alternative would result in increased vehicle trips as compared to the proposed Specific Plan. Additionally, mixed-use development places residential and commercial uses together, thereby encouraging bicycle and pedestrian trips and reducing automobile use. This alternative would not take advantage of this benefit created by mixed-use development. Therefore, this alternative would result in greater impacts to air quality than the proposed project.

Biological Resources. This alternative would result in removal of both non-native and native vegetation due to grading and earthmoving from development, as would the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be similar as compared to the proposed project.

Cultural Resources. Because development would occur under this alternative and therefore could result in grading or earthmoving, archeological artifacts or human remains could be unearthed. Thus, impacts under this alternative would be similar as under the proposed Specific Plan.

Geology and Soils. This alternative would not involve construction of any new residents, such that it would not expose residents to potential geologic hazards on the site, including seismic ground shaking, fault rupture, landslides, shrink-swell potential, erosion, and liquefaction. This alternative would result in fewer impacts than the proposed Specific Plan.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials. The Phase I ESA prepared for the project site has identified several items that would require additional evaluation prior to construction. Evaluation of these items would be required for either development pursuant to existing land use designations and zoning, or per the proposed Specific Plan. Exposure to residents from contamination in onsite soils would be less than the proposed Specific Plan because there would be no construction of residential units. This alternative would also include the anticipated relocation of the two existing propane facilities to an industrial area of the City, such that there would not be potential risks associated with future development occurring adjacent to the two facilities. Therefore, impacts from hazards and hazardous materials would be less under this alternative than the proposed project.



Hydrology and Water Quality. Lot coverage under this alternative would be similar to that under the proposed Specific Plan, such that the area of potential disturbance would be the same. There would be the same amount of impervious surfaces with this alternative than under the proposed project, such that there would be similar stormwater runoff. This alternative would include the improvements to the storm drainage system of the site, as well as various elements to minimize stormwater runoff. Therefore, impacts would be similar under this alternative to the proposed project.

Land Use. This alternative would result in commercial development only and no residential units. Therefore, there would be greater vehicle trips generated, and resulting greater air emissions and noise, such that there would be greater land use conflicts. Conversely, this alternative would not result in land use conflicts that could result from mixed-use developed as proposed under the Specific Plan. However, this alternative would lack the cohesive and centralized “downtown” that the City and public desire. Thus, impacts would be both lesser and greater under this alternative as compared to the Specific Plan.

Noise. This alternative would result in commercial development only and no residential uses. Because there would be no mixed-use development, it would not create any potential noise impacts related to siting residential uses adjacent to commercial uses. Therefore, noise-related impacts would be less under this alternative than under the proposed Specific Plan.

Public Services. This alternative would result in commercial development only and no residential. With fewer residents than under the Specific Plan, there would be less demand for police and fire protection and related public services. Thus, impacts to public resources would be less under this alternative.

Recreation. The development that would occur under this alternative would only be commercial, not residential. Thus, the project would not generate additional demand for parkland. Therefore, no shortage of parkland could result. Thus, impacts would be less under this alternative as compared to the proposed Specific Plan.

Transportation and Circulation. This alternative would result in commercial development only and no residential uses. Therefore, there would be more vehicle trips generated, since commercial uses generate more trips on a per-acre basis. Also, there would be no mixed-use development, which would otherwise reduce the demand for automobile use and encourage bicycle and pedestrian use as alternative options. This alternative would not take advantage of this benefit created by mixed-use development. Therefore, traffic and circulation impacts would be greater under this alternative as compared to the proposed Specific Plan.

Water Supply and Wastewater. This alternative would result in commercial development only and no residential. Therefore, development under this alternative would not require as much water or generate as much wastewater as under the Specific Plan. Thus, impacts would be less under this alternative as compared to the proposed Specific Plan.



## 7.4 ALTERNATIVE 4: Alternate Parking Plan

**a. Description.** This alternative would adopt the Specific Plan, but it would be implemented such that it would locate parking between the Town Center and Skypark Park instead of residential uses, refer to Figure 7-1. This alternative would also allow for two rows of parking in front of mixed-use buildings along Mount Hermon Road instead of one row of parking. Pedestrian oriented roadways and shopping areas, infrastructure improvements, and public amenities would remain as proposed under the Specific Plan.

### **b. Impact Analysis**

Aesthetics. Under this alternative, the Specific Plan area would provide additional surface parking, which is generally less aesthetically pleasing than residential units. Additionally, development along Mount Hermon Road would have two rows of parking and fewer mixed-use units, which could detract from the overall visual character of the site. Also, the surface parking lots would require lighting, which would increase overall light and glare impacts. Therefore, this alternative would result in greater aesthetic impacts than the proposed Specific Plan.

Air Quality. Under this alternative, the total residential development would be reduced to create room for additional surface parking. Thus, this alternative would generate less total population than the proposed Specific Plan, thereby reducing total trips generated and associated air quality impacts. However, mixed-use development places residential and commercial uses together, thereby encouraging bicycle and pedestrian trips and reducing automobile use. This alternative would not take advantage of this benefit created by mixed-use development to the same extent as the proposed project. Therefore, this alternative would result in both greater and lesser impacts to air quality than the proposed project.

Biological Resources. This alternative would result in removal of both non-native and native vegetation due to grading and earthmoving from development, as would the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be similar as compared to the proposed project.

Cultural Resources. Because development would occur under this alternative and therefore could result in grading or earthmoving, archeological artifacts or human remains could be unearthed. Thus, impacts under this alternative would be the same as the under the proposed Specific Plan.

Geology and Soils. This alternative would involve construction of fewer residents, such that it would expose fewer residents to potential geologic hazards on the site, including seismic ground shaking, fault rupture, landslides, shrink-swell potential, erosion, and liquefaction. As such, this alternative would result in fewer impacts than the proposed Specific Plan.





Specific Plan Alternative Parking Plan

Hazards and Hazardous Materials. The Phase I ESA prepared for the project site has identified several items that would require additional evaluation prior to construction. Evaluation of these items would be required for either development pursuant to existing land use designations and zoning, or per the proposed Specific Plan. Exposure to residential contamination in onsite soils would be less under this alternative than the proposed Specific Plan because there would be construction of fewer residential units. This alternative would also include the anticipated relocation of the two existing propane facilities to an industrial area of the City, such that there would not be potential risks associated with future development occurring adjacent to the two facilities. Therefore, impacts from hazards and hazardous materials would be less under this alternative than the proposed project.

Hydrology and Water Quality. Lot coverage under this alternative would be similar to that under the proposed Specific Plan, such that the area of potential disturbance would be the same. There would be the same amount of impervious surfaces with this alternative than under the proposed project, such that there would be similar stormwater runoff. This alternative would include the improvements to the storm drainage system of the site, as well as various elements to minimize stormwater runoff. Therefore, impacts would be similar under this alternative to the proposed project.

Land Use. This alternative would result in additional surface parking and less residential and mixed-use development. Therefore, there would be less vehicle trips generated and resulting lower air emissions. Conversely, increased parking lot coverage and reduced residential uses would result in additional visual impacts due to the lack of a cohesive and centralized “downtown,” and would not fulfill to the same extent a fundamental objective of the project. Thus, impacts would be both lesser and greater under this alternative as compared to the Specific Plan.

Noise. This alternative moves residences further back from Mt. Hermon Rd., and replaces some of the proposed residential development with surface parking, thereby reducing total trips generated by on-site residences. However, noise-related conflicts between parking and residences remain an issue, and would potentially be exacerbated with increased parking in the northern portion of the site. Therefore, impacts would be both greater and lesser than what would be expected under the proposed project.

Public Services. Less development would likely occur under this alternative as compared to the proposed project, so fewer residents would require fire protection and educational services. Impacts would be less under this alternative.

Recreation. Less residential development would occur under this alternative as compared to the proposed project, so there would be less demand for additional park facilities. Therefore, impacts to recreation are less under this alternative as compared to the proposed Specific Plan.

Transportation and Circulation. This alternative moves residences further back from Mt. Hermon Rd., and replaces some of the proposed residential development with surface parking, thereby reducing total trips generated by on-site residences. However, mixed-use development places residential and commercial uses together, thereby reducing encouraging



bicycle and pedestrian trips and reducing automobile use. This alternative would not take advantage of this benefit created by mixed-use development to the same extent as the proposed project. Therefore, this alternative would result in greater and lesser impacts to transportation and circulation than the proposed project.

Water Supply and Wastewater. This alternative would result in less residential development. Therefore, development under this alternative would not require as much water or generate as much wastewater as under the Specific Plan. Thus, impacts would be less under this alternative as compared to the proposed Specific Plan.

## 7.5 ENVIRONMENTALLY SUPERIOR ALTERNATIVE

This section evaluates the findings for the proposed Specific Plan and the four alternatives under consideration. It then identifies the environmentally superior alternative for each issue area, as shown on Table 7-1. If the No Project Alternative is identified as the Environmentally Superior Alternative for a given issue area, the development scenario among the remaining alternatives that produces the fewest impacts is noted, in accordance with CEQA. In addition, the table shows whether each alternative’s environmental impact is greater than, lesser than, or similar to the proposed Specific Plan for each issue area.

**Table 7-1 Comparison of Alternatives**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Alternative 1 (No Project, No Development)</b>	<b>Alternative 2 (No Project, General Plan Buildout)</b>	<b>Alternative 3 (Specific Plan, Commercial Only)</b>	<b>Alternative 4 (Specific Plan, Alternative Parking)</b>
Aesthetics	+/-	+/-	-	-
Air Quality	+	+/-	-	+/-
Biological Resources	+	=	=	=
Cultural Resources	+	=	=	=
Geology and Soils	+	+	+	+
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	+	+/-	±	±
Hydrology and Water Quality	+	+/-	=	=
Land Use	+	+/-	+/-	+/-
Noise	+	+	+	+/-
Public Services	+	+	+	+
Recreation	+	+	+	+
Transportation and Circulation	+	+/-	-	+/-
Water and Wastewater	+	+	+	+
<b>Overall</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>+</b>

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

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



purpose of this EIR, the analysis assumed each issue was equally weighted. Decision makers and the community in general may choose to emphasize one issue or another, which could lead to differing conclusions regarding environmental superiority.

The No Project Alternative (Alternative 1) is considered environmentally superior overall, since no development would occur. In the case of Alternative 2, it would be superior or similar to the proposed project for several issues, and both inferior and inferior to aesthetics, air quality, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, and transportation and circulation. For the most part, this is because there would be less site disturbance and fewer residents compared to the proposed Specific Plan.

Alternatives 3 and 4 would be generally superior to the proposed project, but to a less extent than either alternatives 1 or 2. Alternative 3 is superior for Geology and Soils, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Noise, Public Services, Recreation, and Water and Wastewater. Alternative 4 is superior for Geology and Soils, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Public Services, Recreation, and Water and Wastewater. Alternative 3 would be inferior to the proposed project with respect to Aesthetics, Air Quality, and Transportation and Circulation. Alternative 4 would be inferior to the proposed project for Aesthetics.

Although not considered environmentally superior, the proposed project would best meet the objectives of: (1) creating a pedestrian-friendly City Center with an integrated mix of land use, woven together by attractive and cohesive buildings; and (2) providing for mixed uses, including residential development over all retail storages, to encourage affordable housing while reducing trips and related air emissions.

