

7.0 ALTERNATIVES

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), an environmental impact report (EIR) is required to compare impacts of a proposed project to alternatives which could feasibly achieve the objectives of the proposed project (CEQA Article 9, Section 15126[d]). The discussion of alternatives should focus on optional land use strategies which would be capable of reducing some or all of the significant adverse impacts associated with the proposed project to a level of nonsignificance. The "no project" alternative must also be evaluated.

The range of alternatives to be addressed in an EIR by CEQA is governed by the "rule of reason" and requires the document to address only those alternatives necessary to permit a reasoned choice. The key issue in determining the range of alternatives evaluated is whether or not the selection and discussion of alternatives fosters informed decisionmaking and public participation. Several alternatives have been discussed at the General Plan Advisory Committee Level as described below:

7.1 Alternatives Evaluated in the Formulation of the General Plan

During the formulation of the City of American Canyon General Plan a number of alternative land use plans were considered. In addition to the fundamental alternatives described and evaluated in this EIR, a number of options explored variations of the specific locations, types, and densities of use within the "urban core," approximately bounded by the City's southern limits, Flosden Road on the east, Green Island Road in the north, and the extended Flosden Road on the east. The following summarizes the significant alternatives that were considered and criteria for the selection of the land uses recommended in the Plan.

Town Center Alternatives

The Plan proposes the development of a "Town Center" that will serve as the functional and symbolic "downtown" of the City of American Canyon. Policies provide for the inclusion of government, retail, office, public services, pedestrian paths in an integrated center focused around a common public plaza and open space. Two alternative sites were considered for its location: the northwest corner of the intersection of American Canyon Road and Flosden Road and as re-use of the Basalt Plant east of Highway 29 and south of Eucalyptus Drive.

At either location, the type, density, and amount of development were relatively the same. Similarly, low density residential uses would be planned for either of the sites not developed for the Town Center. Consequently, the cumulative amount of development within the City would be unchanged and each site will be impacted by "urban" development. Changes in the natural physical features of each site would be approximately the same, as described in this EIR, for either of the options. Environmental impacts will differ only in the distribution of traffic on the City's highway network. Such re-distribution would not affect the basic network of

highway improvements or the classification system proposed by the General Plan to mitigate traffic impacts. Improvements at intersections (e.g., turning lanes and signalization), however, would vary by location.

The basalt plant site was selected as the candidate site of the Town Center to reflect opportunities to incorporate and re-use some of the site's existing structures and to take advantage of the site's elevation which provides views of the Napa River valley, and wetlands to the west. Furthermore, it was felt that creative re-use of this site would create a mixed commercial core that is designed by members of the community.

Alternative Uses for Highway 29

Three alternative land use concepts were considered for the Highway 29 corridor: (a) continued development of commercial uses, (b) re-use for multi-family residential, and (c) re-use for mixed-use development projects integrating housing with commercial uses. In each option, the corridor is committed to urban development. Each option will not significantly impact on-site natural environmental resources as the corridor is largely developed and there will be no removal of habitat. In addition, each represents an improvement of existing land use and visual conditions, as current development is fragmented and visually unattractive (e.g., outdoor storage of debris and materials, excessive signage, and absence of landscape).

Development of the corridor exclusively for commercial uses would result in the highest traffic volumes and significantly impact transportation and noise conditions. In addition, increases in the City's cumulative capacity for commercial uses would result in the greater dispersal of development for which there is market demand, weakening the ability to establish well-defined and economically viable nodes.

Development of the corridor exclusively for multi-family residential uses would result in the lowest traffic volumes. To minimize conflicts with the traffic on Highway 29, site access should be directed to parallel streets where feasible. However, in some locations, impacts would occur as this is not feasible. Other significant impacts include those attributable to the noise from traffic along the corridor.

Development of the corridor for mixed-use would result in levels of traffic between those of the other two options. As this alternative was selected for inclusion in the Plan, its impacts are fully described in this EIR.

Preservation of Napa River Corridor for Open Space

Two options were considered for the Napa River corridor: (a) preservation as open space and (b) introduction of water-oriented recreational and wetland educational/informational facilities. The former will result in no impacts on environmental resources. The latter would generate impacts depending on the specific location, type, and character of development. Plan Policy 1.21.4 directs that "...the appropriate scale of development (would be determined) on a case-by-case basis to account for the specific environmental characteristics of the site and nature of the proposed project...In areas abutting the Napa River, the determination of density should be made in collaboration with the Department of Fish and Game and other appropriate management agencies." In addition, development would be subject to policies for wetland protection (8.1.2 and 8.3.1). With mitigation, there would be a loss of open space that would not occur if the area were preserved.

The Plan incorporates the second option, allowing for the introduction of water-oriented and wetlands-related facilities.

7.2 Feasible Alternatives

The General Plan identifies two potential land use scenarios which could occur through Plan implementation. These scenarios are 1) Theoretical General Plan Buildout, and 2) Policy General Plan Buildout. In accordance with CEQA, the Theoretical General Plan Buildout is identified as the proposed project because it represents the total amount of development which could occur if all land within the City and Sphere of Influence were to be developed to their maximum potential. This represents the worst-case scenario. Buildout of the Policy General Plan would result in reduced overall development levels and is considered a more realistic and likely alternative to the Theoretical Buildout Scenario. As such this alternative land use scenario was, like the Theoretical General Plan Buildout, analyzed at identical levels of detail. For this reason, no additional alternatives are analyzed in this section. Table Alt-1 compares impacts of the proposed project and alternative land use scenarios. Specific, detailed analysis of each land use scenario is provided for each environmental issue area in Section 3.0 of this EIR.

Under the No Project Alternative (Buildout of the Current County Plan), the proposed City of American Canyon General Plan would not be considered under any development scenario. Rather, the current County Zoning Ordinance would remain in effect and the development strategies proposed in that plan would take precedence. Table LU-2 illustrates the county's buildout potential. Consideration must be given to the County Zoning for potential dwelling units in this area, as the density under County Zoning currently stands between 1 and 16 dwelling units per acre. This would propose 5,576 dwellings (with 5.81) du/ac within the City and Sphere, producing 3,952 fewer dwellings than proposed in both the Theoretical and Policy Buildout scenarios of the proposed American Canyon General Plan. If the

County were to continue to increase density within the PD areas, making them urban residential as much of the surrounding area has converted to, the combined City and Sphere residential dwellings would cap at 10,437 units (assuming 16

TABLE AII-1

Comparison of Proposed Project and Alternatives

	No Project Alternative (No Further Growth Beyond Existing Conditions.)	Proposed Project (Theoretical General Plan Buildout)	No Project Alternative (Buildout Under the Adopted County Zoning)	Policy General Plan Buildout Alternative
PROJECT DESCRIPTION	3,210 existing dwelling units; 525,530 sq. ft. existing commercial; 1,355,286 sq. ft. existing industrial.	6,315 additional dwelling units; 1,590,500 sq. ft. commercial; 25,475,464 sq. ft. industrial.	7,224* additional dwelling units; 3,173,919 sq. ft. commercial; 18,568,757 sq. ft. industrial.	6,315 additional dwelling units; 877,500 sq. ft. commercial; 5,778,500 sq. ft. industrial.
LAND USE				
a. Will the project result in proposed uses which are incompatible with existing uses?	no	yes	yes	yes
b. Will the project result in a loss of open space?	no	yes	yes	yes
Potentially significant?	no	yes	yes	yes
SOCIO-ECONOMICS				
a. Population Increase	none	17,682	20,227	17,682
b. Housing Increase Potentially Sig?	none	6,315	7,224	6,315
Local Level	no	yes	yes	yes
Regional Level	yes	no	no	no
TRAFFIC/CIRC				
a. Consistent with acceptable roadway capacities?	no	no	no	no
b. Degradation Below LOS D?	yes	yes	yes	no
Potentially significant?	yes	yes	yes	no
WATER SUPPLY				
a. Additional water demand (mgd). ¹	1,736	6,300-8,100	6,300-8,100	6,300-8,100
Potentially Sig?	no	maybe	no	no

* The County's current urban designation allows the ability to rezone to a "PD Zone" currently 1 to 16 dwelling units/acre. The City's General Plan would be 2,363 additional units.

¹ Under current conditions the impact is not significant during drought conditions-potentially significant.

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SEWAGE				
a. Additional sewage generation (mgd).	.65	425	425	3.05
Potentially significant?	no	yes	yes	no
STORM DRAINAGE				
a. Increased post-project flows?	no	yes	no	yes
Significant incremental increase?	no	yes	no	yes
SOLID WASTE				
a. Additional tons per year.	8,259.33	12,533	12,533	12,533
Potentially significant?	yes	yes	yes	yes
NATURAL GAS				
a. Additional demand (cu ft/mo)?	16,178,118	86,380,081	67,218,008	52,973,638
Potentially Sig?	no	no	no	no
ELECTRICITY				
a. Additional demand (kW/hr/yr)	37,322,989	320,061,487	244,786,450	138,902,804
Potentially Sig?	no	no	no	no
POLICE PROTECTION				
a. Increase in demand. ²	no	yes	yes	yes
Potentially significant?	no	no	yes	no

² If funding is provided then the impact is insignificant.

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FIRE/EMS				
a. Will the project introduce development into an existing high fire hazard area?	no	no	no	no
b. Will development occur beyond safe Fire Department response time?	no	no	no	no
Potentially significant?	no	no	no	no
SCHOOLS				
a. Total Student Increase	none	4,439	5,057	4,439
b. Expected future capacities exceeded?	yes	yes	yes	yes
Potentially significant?	yes	yes	yes	no
PARKS AND RECREATION				
a. Additional park acreage needed to serve population growth (5 acres/1000 population).	0	86.09	98.8	86.09
b. Will it create a need for additional park acreage to meet city standards?	no	yes	yes	yes
Potentially significant?	no	yes	yes	yes

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AIR QUALITY				
a. Will the project degrade local air quality?	no	yes	yes	yes
b. Short-term exceedance of PM ₁₀ threshold?	no	yes	yes	yes
c. Future Emissions (lbs./day)				
SOx	n/a	331	300	155
NOx	n/a	902	800	452
ROC	n/a	839	700	576
d. Exceedance of SOx, NOx, and ROC threshold?	n/a	yes	yes	yes
Potentially Sig?	n/a	yes	yes	yes
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES				
a. Will the project cause loss or disturbance of unique, rare or threatened plant communities or species?	no	no	no	no
b. Will the project cause a reduction in the number of any unique, rare or threatened species of animals?	no	no	no	no
Potentially Sig?	no	no	no	no
AESTHETIC RESOURCES				
a. Will the project cause obstruction of a designated scenic vista or public view?	no	yes	yes	yes
Potentially significant?	no	yes	yes	yes

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CULTURAL RESOURCES				
a. Will the project cause disruption, destruction, or alteration in areas of potential archaeological/paleontological sensitivity?	no	no	no	no
b. Will the project cause adverse physical or aesthetic impacts on a structure or property of historical/cultural significance?	no	no	no	no
Potentially significant?	no	no	no	no
GEOLOGY, SEISMIC AND SOIL HAZARDS				
a. Will the project expose populations to unstable earth conditions?	yes	yes	yes	yes
b. Will the project cause permanent changes in topography?	no	maybe	maybe	maybe
c. Will the project expose populations to seismic hazards?	yes	yes	yes	yes
Potentially significant?	yes	yes	yes	yes

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NATURAL HAZARDS (FLOODING/MARINE HAZARDS)				
a. Development in 100-year floodplain?	no	no	no	no
b. Will project expose populations to Tsunami/Tidal hazards?	no	no	no	no
Potentially significant?	no	no	no	no
NOISE				
a. Will the project create a substantial increase in ambient noise levels?	no	yes	yes	yes
b. Will exterior noise levels exceed noise exposure thresholds? ³	yes	yes	yes	yes
Potentially significant?	yes	yes	yes	yes
TOXIC/HAZARDOUS MATERIALS				
a. Exposure of people to potential health hazards?	no	no	no	no
Potentially significant?	no	no	no	no

³ Current noise levels exceed 65 dB along Highway 29.

du's/acre). This proposes 909 more dwellings than either the proposed Theoretical or Plan Buildout scenarios. Commercial buildout under the County Plan for the combined City and Sphere is 3,173,919 square feet of General Commercial (GC), Commercial Limited (CL) and Commercial Neighborhood (CN). This proposes 1,770,889 more square feet than the proposed Policy buildout and 1,057,889 more square feet than the proposed Theoretical buildout. Industrial buildout under the County Plan for the combined City and Sphere is 18,568,757 square feet of Industrial Park (IP), General Industrial (GI), and Industrial (I). This proposes 11,118,721 more square feet than the proposed Policy buildout and 8,578,243 fewer square feet than the proposed Theoretical buildout.

The final alternative considered here is the No Project-No Growth Alternative. On the surface, this alternative appears to result in fewer environmental impacts. However, three primary significant effects are created when this alternative is considered. First, the existing school situation is deficient. In order to provide American Canyon with a new school to alleviate this issue, expanded growth would be necessary to warrant a new school. Thus, no growth in the City or Sphere would exacerbate the current deficiency of school space for students.

Second, the existing situation within the City does not provide residents with adequate neighborhood grocery or drug store needs. Residents must travel outside the City to Vallejo or Napa for groceries, this increasing link traffic volumes in and out of the City. Commercial growth would actually decrease unnecessary trips outside the City for everyday needs.

Third, the visual character and economic viability along Highway 29 is not a positive situation for the City. This alternative would propose no new development, no expansion of industry, and revitalization of visually blighted areas.

7.3 Environmentally Superior Alternative

In addition to the discussion and comparison of impacts to the proposed project, CEQA requires that an "environmentally superior" alternative be selected and the reasons for such selection disclosed. In general, the environmentally superior alternative is the alternative which would be expected to generate the least number of adverse impacts.

The alternative selected as the "environmentally superior" alternative is the Policy General Plan Buildout. This alternative would allow the future buildout of the community under similar residential, commercial, and industrial designations as the Theoretical General Plan Buildout with significantly reduced densities and intensities of land uses. The Policy Buildout allows for similar residential densities and modifies the commercial and industrial intensities. As such, this alternative allows for the generation of essentially the same beneficial impacts of the

Theoretical General Plan buildout, while generating fewer and less extensive adverse environmental impacts.