

5.0 ALTERNATIVES

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, Section 15126.6, provides the following framework for the formulation and analysis of alternatives in an environmental impact report (EIR):

An EIR shall describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project, or to the location of the project, which would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project, but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project, and evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives. An EIR need not consider every conceivable alternative to a Project. Rather it must consider a reasonable range of potentially feasible alternatives that will foster informed decision-making and public participation. An EIR is not required to consider alternatives which are infeasible.

The CEQA Guidelines require the analysis of a “No Project” alternative, and the identification of the “environmental superior alternative.” The guidelines state: “If the environmentally superior alternative is the ‘no project alternative’ alternative, the EIR shall also identify an environmentally superior alternative among the other alternatives.” The analysis of environmental effects of alternatives need not be as thorough or detailed as the analysis of the project itself. Rather, the CEQA Guidelines, Section 15126.6(d) state that the EIR shall include “sufficient information about each alternative to allow meaningful evaluation, analysis, and comparison with the proposed project.”

5.2 SELECTION OF ALTERNATIVES

The range of alternatives required within an EIR is governed by the “rule of reason,” under CEQA Guidelines, Section 15126.6(f), which requires an EIR to set forth only those alternatives necessary to permit a reasoned choice. An EIR need not consider every conceivable alternative to a project. An EIR need not consider an alternative with an unlikely or speculative potential for implementation or an alternative that would result in effects that cannot be reasonably ascertained.

An EIR is not required to evaluate alternatives that are not feasible. The term feasible is defined in the CEQA Guidelines, Section 15364 as “capable of being accomplished in a successful manner within a reasonable period of time, taking into account economic, environmental, legal, social, and technological factors.” CEQA Guidelines, Section 15126.6(f)(1) provides additional factors that may be taken into account when addressing the feasibility of alternatives. These factors include site suitability, economic viability, availability of infrastructure, general plan consistency, other plans or regulatory limitations, jurisdictional boundaries, and whether the proponent can reasonably acquire, control, or otherwise have access to potential alternative sites.

Reasonable alternatives are those that would attain most of the basic objectives of the Project. As described in **Section 2.0: Project Description**, the following objectives have been identified for the proposed Project:

- Maximize the development potential for the Project site based on the parameters of the Mission Street Specific Plan.
- Implement the Mission Street Specific Plan objectives for the Project site as follows:
 - a. Preserve, renovate, and reuse the historic building located at 1115 Mission Street through rehabilitation of the building for new uses.
 - b. Contribute to the development of the MSSP Core Area as a pedestrian oriented retail commercial area to include restaurants and specialty retail uses at the ground level and residential uses above.
 - c. Provide parking adequate to serve new uses and Gold Line patrons.
- Create compelling public and private open space with drought resistant landscaping, well-lit and open storefronts, and outdoor seating.
- Contribute to meeting the City's Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) goals through the construction of 36 new above moderate-income housing units.

The following alternatives were selected for evaluation:

- **Alternative 1:** No Project Alternative: This alternative considers what would be reasonably expected to occur in the foreseeable future if the Project were not approved, based on current plans and consistent with available infrastructure and community services.
- **Alternative 2:** Reduced density Alternative: This alternative considers a reduced development program as compared to the Project.

5.3 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND ELIMINATED FROM FURTHER CONSIDERATION

Section 15126.6(c) of the State CEQA Guidelines states that the EIR should identify alternatives that were considered by the lead agency but were rejected as infeasible and briefly explain the reasons underlying the lead agency's determination. Among the factors that may be used to eliminate alternatives from detailed consideration in an EIR are: (i) failure to meet most of the basic project objectives; (ii) infeasibility; or (iii) inability to avoid significant environmental impacts.

Alternative locations were rejected as infeasible. The Project Applicant has submitted a request to the City to approve development of the site that is under its control. The Project Applicant does not own or control an alternative location within the vicinity for which the Project would be possible.

Alternative uses were rejected as infeasible. The underlying purpose of the Project is to redevelop the site with residential and commercial uses. Therefore, Alternatives that consider other uses would fail to meet most of the basic project objectives.

5.4 ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(d), each alternative is evaluated in sufficient detail to determine whether the overall environmental impacts would be less, similar, or greater than the corresponding impacts of the Project. Furthermore, each alternative is evaluated to determine whether the Project objectives would be substantially attained by the alternative.¹

5.4.1 Alternative 1—No Project Alternative

Section 15126.6(e) of the CEQA Guidelines state: “the No Project/No Build Alternative means ‘no build’ wherein the existing environmental setting is maintained.” Accordingly, the No Project Alternative assumes that no new development would occur within the Project site and the existing structures and uses would remain.

Air Quality

The No Project Alternative would not alter the existing uses or include the development of any new buildings on the site. As a result, a change in air pollutant emissions would not be generated from construction or operational activities. As such, the No Project Alternative would have equivalent energy impact as that of the Project’s less than significant impact.

Cultural Resources

The No Project Alternative would not alter the existing uses or include the development of any new buildings on the site. As a result, no change would occur in the features of 1115 Mission Street. As such, the No Project Alternative would result in a lesser impact on cultural resource, though the Project would have a less than significant impact.

Energy

The No Project Alternative would not alter the existing uses or include the development of any new buildings on the site. As a result, no change in energy consumption would occur on the site. While the existing uses would consume less overall energy than the Project, the Project would be designed to meet or exceed the current building efficiency standards and therefore would have reduced per capita energy

1 State of California, CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(c)

usage. As such, the No Project Alternative would have equivalent energy impact as that of the Project's less than significant impact.

Land Use and Planning

The No Project Alternative would not alter the existing uses or include the development of any new buildings on the site. Though this would avoid the land use changes proposes, the No Project Alternative would also not be as consistent with the City's policy objectives for the Mission Street Specific Plan. As such, the No Project Alternative would have a greater, though still less than significant impact, as that of the Project's less than significant impact.

Noise

The No Project Alternative would not alter the existing uses or include the development of any new buildings on the site. As a result, no change in noise sources would be created. As such, the No Project Alternative would avoid the construction noise impact of the Project.

Relationship to Project Objectives

For the most part, the No Project Alternative would reduce environmental impacts when compared to the proposed Project, including avoiding the construction noise impact of the Project. However, a No Project Alternative would not satisfy the underlying purpose of the Project and would not achieve any of the Project objectives.

5.4.2 Alternative 2— Reduced Density Project

This alternative would result in a smaller new structure and less alteration of 1115 Mission Street. A Reduced Density Project could feature two-stories instead of three and not include the addition to the rear of 1115 Mission Street. As such, it would feature 18 units instead of 36.

Air Quality

The Reduced Density Alternative would generate less construction activity and less operational activity. As a result, less air pollutant emissions would not be generated. However, the Project would have less than significant impacts on air quality. As such, the Reduced Density Alternative would have a reduced impact but would not avoid any significant impacts associated with the Project.

Cultural Resources

The Reduced Density Alternative would result in less alteration to the features of 1115 Mission Street. However, the Project would have less than significant impacts on historic resources. As such, the Reduced

Density Alternative would have a reduced impact but would not avoid any significant impacts associated with the Project.

Energy

The Reduced Density Alternative would generate less construction activity and less operational activity. As a result, less energy would be consumed on site. However, the Project would have less than significant impacts on energy. As such, the Reduced Density Alternative would have a reduced impact but would not avoid any significant impacts associated with the Project.

Land Use and Planning

The Reduced Density Alternative would generate less construction activity and less operational activity. As a result, less energy would be consumed on site. However, the Project would have less than significant impacts on energy. As such, the Reduced Density Alternative would have a reduced impact but would not avoid any significant impacts associated with the Project. Furthermore, the Reduced Density Alternative would not be as consistent with the City's policy objectives for the Mission Street Specific Plan as would the Project.

Noise

The Reduced Density Alternative would generate less construction activity and therefore construction noise would be of shorter duration or reduced intensity. However, construction noise impacts would still be significant, due to the proximity of sensitive receptors and the general noise characteristics of construction activity. The Reduced Density Alternative would still require mitigation similar to that described for the Project. As such, the Reduced Density Alternative would have a reduced impact but would not avoid any significant impacts associated with the Project.

Relationship to Project Objectives

For the most part, the Reduced Density Alternative would result in lesser environmental impacts compared to the proposed Project, though the impacts of the Project would not be entirely avoided. A Reduced Density Alternative would satisfy the underlying purpose of the Project but would not fully achieve the Project objectives.

5.4.3 Environmentally Superior Alternative

Section 15126.6(e)(2) of the State CEQA Guidelines requires that an EIR identify an environmentally superior alternative among the alternatives evaluated. If the "no project" alternative is the environmentally superior alternative, the EIR must identify another environmentally superior alternative among the remaining alternatives.

While the No Project Alternative would avoid the impacts of the Project on the environment, it would also not achieve any of the Project's beneficial effects associated with the efficiency of the new buildings and fulfillment of the goals of the Mission Street Specific Plan. The No Project Alternative would also not meet any of the Project objectives.

A Reduced Density Alternative would both reduce the level of development and would therefore result in reduced construction noise impacts as compared to the Project, though it would still result in significant impacts and comparable mitigation measures as the Project. Though a Reduced Density Alternative could be considered environmentally superior, it would not satisfy the Project objectives as fully as the Project would and impacts would be similar after mitigation. Furthermore, an alternative reduced in scale sufficiently to avoid the potential construction noise impacts of the Project would not be economically viable.²

2 Section 15126.6(f)(1) of the CEQA Guidelines states that among the factors that may be taken into account when addressing the feasibility of alternatives is economic viability.