5.0 ALTERNATIVES

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) include a discussion of reasonable project alternatives that would "feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any significant impacts of the project and evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives"[1]. This chapter identifies potential alternatives to the Project, evaluates the potential impacts of each alternative, and compares the potential impacts of each alternative against the proposed Project's impacts, as required by CEQA. Key provisions of the *State CEQA Guidelines* on alternatives (§§15126.6[b] through [f]) are summarized below to explain the foundation and legal requirements for the alternatives analysis in the EIR:

- The EIR need not consider every conceivable alternative; rather, it must consider a reasonable range of potentially feasible alternatives to the project even if, "these alternatives would impede to some degree the attainment of the project objectives, or would be more costly." An EIR is not required to consider alternatives that are infeasible (§15126[a]).

- The discussion of alternatives shall focus on alternatives to the project or its location that are capable of avoiding or substantially lessening any significant effects of the project, even if these alternatives would impede to some degree the attainment of the project objectives or would be more costly (§15126.6[b]).

- "The range of potential alternatives shall include those that could feasibly accomplish most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project." As such, a brief discussion identifying the rationale for each alternative chosen is discussed below. The EIR should also identify any alternatives that were considered but rejected and identify the reasons for that determination. Among the factors to reject alternatives from consideration in an EIR are: failure to achieve project objectives, infeasibility, or inability to avoid significant environmental impacts (§15126.6[c]).

- An EIR must include sufficient information about each alternative to allow meaningful analysis and comparison with the Project. If an alternative would cause one or more significant effects in addition to those caused by a project, the significant effects of the alternative must be discussed, though in less detail than the significant effects of the project (§15126.6[d]).

- The specific alternative of 'no project' shall also be evaluated along with its impact (§15126.6[e][1]). The 'no project' analysis shall discuss the existing conditions at the time the Notice of Preparation is published, and at the time the environmental analysis is commenced, as well as what would reasonably be 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. If the environmentally superior alternative is the 'no project' alternative,

[1] *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.6.(a)

the EIR shall also identify an environmentally superior alternative among the other alternatives (§15126.6[e][2]).

- The range of alternatives required in an EIR is governed by the "rule of reason" requiring the identification and discussion of only those alternatives necessary to permit a "reasoned choice", in a manner that will foster meaningful public participation and informed decision making (§15126.6[f]).

  "Feasible" has been defined 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" (§15364). Among the factors that may be taken into account when addressing the feasibility of alternatives are 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 the alternative site (or the site is already owned by the proponent) (§15126.6[f][1]).

- For alternative locations, only locations that would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project need be considered for inclusion in the EIR (§15126.6[f][2][A]).

  If the lead agency concludes that no feasible alternative locations exist, it must disclose the reasons for this conclusion, and should include the reasons in the EIR. For example, in some cases there may be no feasible alternative locations for a geothermal plant or mining project which must be in close proximity to natural resources at a given location (§15126.6[f][2][B]).

- An EIR need not consider an alternative whose effect cannot be reasonably ascertained and whose implementation is remote and speculative (§15126.6[f][3]).

Pursuant to the guidelines stated above, a range of alternatives to the proposed Project is considered and evaluated in this EIR. These alternatives were developed in the course of Project planning and environmental review. The discussion in this section provides:

1. A description and analysis of impacts for each of the alternatives considered;

2. A comparative analysis of each alternative that focuses on the potentially significant environmental impacts of the proposed Project (the purpose of this analysis is to determine whether alternatives are capable of further reducing the significant environmental impacts of the Project to a less than significant level); and

3. Conclusions regarding the alternative's: (1) ability to avoid or substantially lessen the potentially significant impacts of the Project; (2) ability to attain the Project objectives (as stated below); and (3) merits compared to the merits of the proposed Project.

The City of Menifee (City), acting as the CEQA Lead Agency, is responsible for selecting a range of Project alternatives for examination and must publicly disclose its reasoning for selecting those alternatives. The range of alternatives addressed in an EIR is governed by a "rule of reason," which requires the EIR to set forth only those alternatives necessary to permit a reasoned choice. Of the

alternatives considered, the EIR needs to examine in detail only those the Lead Agency determines could feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project.

5.1.1 Summary of the Proposed Project

The Project Applicant proposes the approval of the Menifee Valley Specific Plan (MVSP), which would facilitate the development of the 590.3-acre Project site as a mixed-use, master planned community. The planned community would provide economic development and jobs to the City and improve the ratio of jobs to housing in Menifee while delivering a mix of uses that would establish a sense of place for the community.

The MVSP would establish guidelines for the future development of the planned community, which will include up to 6.070 million square feet of business park/commercial-business park/commercial uses; 1,718 single-family and multi-family residential units; an elementary school site; park and recreation areas including a public sports park, greenbelts, and the preservation of Granite Hill; and an area reserved for future public facilities. This EIR addresses the potential environmental impacts associated with the actions described below.

As the MVSP Project site is currently incorporated into the existing Menifee Valley Ranch Specific Plan No. 301 (SP 301), the Project includes the following entitlement actions:

- **General Plan Amendment (GPA) No. PLN 21-0336** proposes an amendment to the City's General Plan. The General Plan land use map would be revised to include the proposed Menifee Valley Specific Plan land use designation and remove the portion of Specific Plan No. 301 proposed to be removed under Specific Plan Amendment No. PLN 21-0221 (as described below).

- **Change of Zone (CZ) No. PLN 21-0335** proposes revisions to the zoning ordinance text of Specific Plan No. 301 to reflect the proposed Amendment. In addition, the City Zoning Map would be revised to include the proposed Menifee Valley Specific Plan (Specific Plan No. PLN 21-0217) zone and to remove the portion of Specific Plan No. 301 proposed to be removed under Specific Plan Amendment No. PLN 21-0221.

- **Specific Plan Amendment No. PLN 21-0221** proposes the fourth (4th) amendment to the Menifee Valley Ranch Specific Plan No. 301 (SP 301). The Specific Plan Amendment proposes to remove parcels located north of Matthews Road from SP 301. SP 301 is located south of State Route 74 (SR-74), north of Simpson Road, east of Menifee Road, and west of Briggs Road; however, the portion of the plan proposed for removal is located south of SR-74, north of Matthews Road, east of Menifee Road, and west of Briggs Road. The removal of this area from SP 301 will reduce the size of SP 301 from 1,548.3 to 942.0 acres. The permitted number of residential units within SP 301 would be reduced by 1,718 units.

- **Specific Plan No. PLN 21-0217** proposes a separate and distinct MVSP on 590.3 acres. Project-related improvements would occur on 17 separate parcels generally located north of BNSF Railway, south of SR-74, east of Menifee Road, and west of Briggs Road in the northeastern portion of the City.

Refer to **Section 3.3** of this EIR for a comprehensive description of the Project characteristics.

5.1.2 Project Objectives

The primary purpose of this Project is to establish a variety of complementary land uses within the MVSP area. The following Project objectives have been established to aid decision-makers in their review of the proposed Project and its associated environmental impacts:

- Implement the City of Menifee's General Plan, which envisions that the geographic area governed by the MVSP will be developed into a high-quality master planned community that demonstrates consistency with the City's General Plan policies.
- Plan for the development of a contemporary mixed-use community that internally balances housing needs and community amenities with job-producing commercial and business park uses that are economically viable in a 21st century economy.
- Locate businesses such as large warehouses and other uses that support the supply chain and which rely on transportation efficiency in a location with direct access to Menifee Road and SR-74, which are established truck routes.
- Ensure that the addition of business park and commercial business park areas to the Specific Plan are designed as places where businesses can prosper, attract economic investment to the City of Menifee, and provide goods, services, and job opportunities to the surrounding community and region.
- Concentrate residential uses in the eastern portion of the property and provide opportunities in the residential areas for supportive uses that are important to households such as an elementary school, agri-commercial uses such as a community farm, green spaces, and recreational amenities.
- Physically separate residential and business park areas through traditional and creative means such that the uses are complementary and supportive while limiting real and perceived conflicts associated with the adjacency of these uses.
- Provide for a public sports park with athletic fields, swim center, and other features that will be available for public use.
- Create gathering spaces and encourage outdoor movement in the form of parks, paseos, streetside green spaces, and outdoor employee amenity areas.
- Position a public facility/civic node in a convenient location that provides opportunity for a new fire station, a new rail corridor transit stop, or other public or quasi-public uses.
- Preserve Granite Hill in permanent open space, while allowing trails and other non-invasive activities that will protect the tangible and intangible assets of the landform.

- Provide a comprehensive circulation network with integrated mobility options by introducing traffic calming features in the residential areas, by providing pedestrian and bicycle paths and amenities throughout the community, and by providing a non-vehicular bridge connection to the Heritage Lake community to the south.

- Identify and implement infrastructure improvements to provide adequate and reliable water, reclaimed water, sewer, and storm drain service for the community.

- Create a cohesive architectural and landscape theme that ties the various components of the community together to appear as a unified, defined and recognizable place.

5.1.3 Summary of the Proposed Project's Significant Impacts

The analysis provided in **Chapter 4.0** determined that, despite the implementation of mitigation measures, significant environmental impacts would result from the construction and operation of the proposed Project. To satisfactorily provide the CEQA-mandated alternatives analysis, the alternatives considered must reduce or eliminate one or more of the Project-related significant impacts described in **Table 5.A**.

5.2 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED

In determining an appropriate range of alternatives to be evaluated in the EIR, several possible alternatives were considered by the City and rejected because they could not accomplish the basic objectives of the Project as detailed in **Section 5.1.2**, were considered infeasible, or would not reduce the significant impacts of the proposed Project. Factors that may be considered when addressing the feasibility of alternatives include failure to meet most of the stated Project objectives, infeasibility, or inability to avoid environmental effects.[2]

The Project seeks to improve the jobs-to-housing balance in northeastern Menifee, to provide the area with needed recreational amenities, and to deliver a complementary mix of land uses that incorporate regional aesthetic characteristics in a contemporary 21st century community. During the EIR process, potential alternatives for developing the site were considered, resulting in the feasible alternatives identified in **Section 5.3** and analyzed in **Section 5.4**.

5.2.1 Off-Site Alternative

Some of the factors to be considered when determining the feasibility of alternatives (including an off-site alternative) include site suitability, economic viability, availability of infrastructure, General Plan consistency, and whether the proponent can reasonably acquire, control, or otherwise have access to the alternative site. The proposed Project includes land use actions that are geographically specific to the Project site. Additionally, the Project site encompasses 590.3 contiguous acres under a single ownership. A general review of available land in the City identified the following potential off-site locations.

[2] *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.6(c).

Table 5.A: Significant Environmental Effects That Cannot Be Avoided

Environmental Issue	Details of Impact
Air Quality	
4.3.7.1 Air Quality Management Plan Consistency Would the Project conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	Because the proposed Project would result in significant and unavoidable long-term operational pollutant emissions pursuant to Indicator 1, the proposed Project would have the potential to conflict or obstruct implementation of the adopted Air Quality Management Plan.
4.3.7.2 Increase in Criteria Pollutants (Regional Construction and Operation) Would the proposed Project result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is in non-attainment under an applicable federal or State ambient air quality standard?	Operation of the proposed Project would result in emissions of VOCs, NOx, CO, PM10, and PM2.5 exceeding established SCAQMD thresholds. Operation of the proposed Project would result in a significant and unavoidable impact related to a cumulatively considerable net increase of criteria pollutant for which the Project region is in nonattainment under an applicable federal or State ambient air quality standard.
4.3.8 Cumulative Air Quality Emissions	Since the combination, number, and size of projects that could be under construction at any one time are unknown, the proposed Project would result in significant cumulative construction emissions from criteria pollutants. Additionally, operational impacts from criteria pollutant emissions would exceed SCAQMD thresholds, which could hinder the attainment of the Basin's air quality standards and result in significant cumulative operational emissions. Cumulative growth within the City could result in potential TAC health risks exceeding 10 in one million and could cumulatively contribute to elevated health risks in the Basin. Therefore, air quality emissions associated with future development that may occur under the proposed Project could result in cumulatively considerable impacts.
Greenhouse Gas Emissions	
4.8.7.1 Increase in Greenhouse Gas Emissions (Regional Construction and Operation) Would the Project generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	The proposed Project would result in emissions of 68,683.8 MT CO_2e per year, which would exceed the scaled SCAQMD threshold of 2,109.0 MT CO_2e per year. Additionally, the proposed

Table 5.A: Significant Environmental Effects That Cannot Be Avoided

Environmental Issue	Details of Impact
	Project would result in per service population emission of 6.0 MT CO_2e per year per service population, which exceeds the SCAQMD's scaled screening threshold of 3.4 MT CO_2e per year per service population. Even with implementation of the proposed mitigation measures, greenhouse gas emission reduction measures cannot ensure compliance with future efficiency targets.
4.8.8 Cumulative Greenhouse Gas Emissions Impacts	Because Project-related CO_2e emissions would exceed the scaled SCAQMD thresholds, the proposed Project would have a significant contribution to cumulatively considerable greenhouse gas emission impacts.
Land Use and Planning	
4.11.7.2 Conflict with Applicable Land Use Plans, Policies, or Regulations Would the Project cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	Forecasted operational deficiencies cannot be fully improved or mitigated to the General Plan's desired LOS at study area intersections because of right-of-way constraints. As such, the proposed Project would not be able to improve the LOS at study area intersections to meet the City's General Plan standards (Policy C 1.2). As a result, the proposed Project would conflict with General Plan Policy C 1.2.
4.11.8 Cumulative Land Use and Planning Impacts	Other cumulative projects may or may not add cumulative adverse LOS intersection impacts to the impacted study intersections depending on the scope and nature of those projects. Therefore, cumulative land use impacts related to consistency with Circulation Element Policy C.1.2, in combination with the proposed Project, would be cumulatively significant.
Transportation	
4.17.6.1 Conflicts with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system Would the Project conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?	The proposed Project would not be able to improve the LOS at several intersections to meet the City's General Plan aspirational standards. Therefore, despite implementation of MM LU-1, the proposed Project would conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the roadway facilities (Circulation Element C 1.2).

Table 5.A: Significant Environmental Effects That Cannot Be Avoided

Environmental Issue	Details of Impact
4.17.6.2 State CEQA Guidelines *Section 15064.3, Subdivision(b)* VMT Would the Project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?	The Project's VMT per service population is 20.3 percent higher and 11.6 percent higher than the threshold in the base year and build out scenarios, respectively. Based on the City guidelines, the Project would result in a significant VMT impact for Project-generated VMT. Implementation of the feasible TDM measures identified to help reduce VMT impacts cannot guarantee that the industrial and service component's VMT per employee and retail component's total VMT would be reduced to a less than significant level.
4.17.7 Cumulative Transportation Impacts	Other cumulative projects may or may not add cumulative adverse LOS intersection impacts to the impacted study intersections depending on the scope and nature of those projects. Therefore, cumulative transportation impacts related to a plan addressing the City's roadway system would be cumulatively significant. Even with implementation of the feasible reduction measures, the Project's VMT cannot be reduced to levels that would be less than significant. Therefore, the Project's contribution to cumulative transportation impacts from increases in VMT would be considered cumulatively significant.

Source: Compiled by LSA (2023).

- **Legaldo Specific Plan:** An approximately 330-acre Specific Plan planned for the development of 1,061 residential units and 225,000 square feet of commercial uses. Surrounding land uses consist primarily of a variety of residential uses.

- **Menifee North Specific Plan:** Consisting of discontinuous parcels north of SR-74 and east of Briggs Road. Undeveloped properties within this Specific Plan approximate half of the Project's 590.3 acres.

- **Cantalena Specific Plan/EDC-Southern Gateway Property:** Located north of Scott Road and east of Interstate 215, the approximately 400-acre area is comprised of the Cantalena Specific Plan (planned for the development of 935 dwelling units), with the balance designated by the City as Economic Development Corridor-Southern Gateway (EDC-SG), an area envisioned for the

development of business park style of uses consisting of light industrial and office uses, with commercial use opportunities.

None of these properties are currently owned or otherwise controlled by the Project Applicant. Furthermore, the location, configuration, and size of these alternative sites are not sufficient to accommodate the proposed Project uses. Even a reduced level of development on these sites would require amendment of existing Specific Plan documents to fully accommodate the proposed Project uses. Due to the general absence of a site within the City large enough to accommodate the Project, an off-site alternative is not considered feasible and is not considered for further analysis.

5.2.2 No Build Alternative

Under the No Build Alternative, the Project site would remain in its current condition. No new building, improvements, or ground disturbance would occur. The proposed discretionary actions (e.g., General Plan Amendments, Change of Zone) would not be required. As the existing SP 301 has anticipated the development of the site with a mixture of residential, commercial, and business park uses since 2002, it is not reasonable to assume that the Project site would remain vacant.

This alternative would not realize the City's long-standing goal for the development of a high-quality master planned community. This alternative would not attract economic investment, increase employment opportunities, or expand housing options in the City, and would neither satisfy stated Project objectives or be consistent with City goals; therefore, the No Build Alternative was not considered viable and is not considered for further analysis.

5.2.3 Industrial Alternative

Prior to the creation of the MVSP, development of the Project site was considered entirely as an industrial park with no residential, commercial, recreation, or public facility uses. This alternative anticipated the development of up to 9,337,500 square feet (sf) of industrial uses, trailer parking areas, and water quality/detention basins. The design contemplated a maximum building size of approximately 3 million sf, which could have allowed for multi-story structures. Smaller incubator warehouse buildings totaling up to 244,500 sf also were anticipated, in the northeastern portion of the Project site adjacent to SR-74. The Industrial Alternative would maximize the job creation and economic development potential of the site. As originally conceived, this alternative included:

- An Amendment to the City of Menifee General Plan Circulation Element to accommodate a curve in Malaga Drive;
- Removal of a segment of McLaughlin Road through the site as an east-west connection to accommodate internal circulation for the industrial uses;
- Inclusion of truck and trailer parking and building loading dock doors facing Heritage High School; and
- Preservation of Granite Hill as open space.

During the planning process the Industrial Alternative design details were modified to:

- Omit the planned curve in Malaga Drive to match the straight north-south alignment shown in the City's General Plan.
- Reduce the square footage of the industrial buildings to 8,023,00 sf and commensurately reduce the amount of passenger vehicle and truck trailer parking.
- Modify the conceptual building configurations so that no truck trailer parking or building dock doors faced Heritage High School.
- Reduce the anticipated maximum single building size from 3.0 million to 1.5 million sf, eliminating the potential for multi-story industrial buildings.
- Slightly reduce the size of the smaller incubator warehouse buildings adjacent to SR-74 to a maximum of 232,000 sf.

As this design progressed, the Project Applicant and the City dismissed the Industrial Alternative to diversify the goals of the Project and provide a mix of land uses. An all-industrial alternative would not meet several of the Project's objectives, would meet other Project objectives to a lesser extent, and when compared to the Project, would result in greater air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, noise, and transportation impacts; therefore, this alternative is not carried forward for further analysis.

5.2.4 Business Park/Reduced Residential Alternative

This alternative considered a balance of land uses providing a strong economic development base and included the elimination of heavy industrial uses in favor of business park and light industrial uses and the removal of these uses from the southeastern portion of the site. Residential uses were introduced into this portion of the site. In summary, this alternative considered:

- Smaller business park incubator buildings adjacent to SR-74, in what was named a "flex zone."
- The buildout potential of the business park-industrial area was substantially reduced by 3.5 million sf of building space from that considered in the Industrial Alternative with these uses being smaller and confined primarily in the western and northern portions of the site.
- A 4.0-acre public facility site was introduced in the southwestern corner of the site for a future fire station or other public facility.
- In the southeastern portion of the site, the residential community was expanded and refined to include a mixture of single-family residential uses, one planning area of multi-family residential uses, a school site, and recreation uses, while still preserving Granite Hill as open space.
- This alternative included 830 single-family residential dwelling units, 140 multi-family residential dwelling units, a 12.0-acre school site, community center, trails, linear parks, pocket parks, and a 29-acre combined natural area (Granite Hill) and a new Menifee Aquatic Center and Sports Park at the southeastern portion of the property.

- The curve in Malaga Road was re-introduced, requiring an Amendment to the City of Menifee General Plan to accommodate the curve and also to remove the segment of McLaughlin Road through the site as an east-west connection to accommodate internal circulation for the business park area.

- Under this iteration, no commercial or commercial business park uses were proposed.

Because SP 301 currently entitled the site for 1,718 dwelling units, this alternative envisioning 970 dwelling units does not comply with the requirements of Senate Bill 330 (SB 330, the Housing Crisis Act of 2019). While this alternative would meet to a lesser extent most of the Project's objectives, it would not comply with provisions of SB 330; therefore, this alternative is not carried forward for further analysis.

5.2.5 No McLaughlin Road Alternative

Under this alternative, McLaughlin Road would not provide full through access through the Project site. The purpose of this alternative was to segregate access and traffic resulting from the proposed Business Park/Industrial uses from residential uses. All other aspects of the Project would remain unchanged. As the extension of McLaughlin Road through the Project site is included in the City's General Plan Circulation Element, and because this project envisions development of similar uses at similar densities, it is reasonable to conclude the significant impacts resulting from this alternative would be similar to those associated with the proposed Project. In the absence of any reduction in significant impacts, this alternative has been rejected and not is not carried forward for further analysis.

5.3 DEVELOPMENT OF PROJECT ALTERNATIVES

The following alternatives have been identified and evaluated to provide City of Menifee decision-makers with a reasonable range of alternatives that would eliminate or reduce the impacts of the Project. Factors considered in selecting the alternatives include site suitability, availability of infrastructure, other plans or regulatory limitations, and economic viability. An EIR need not consider an alternative whose impact cannot be reasonably ascertained and whose implementation is remote or speculative. The alternatives considered in this EIR (**Table 5.B**) include those that (1) could accomplish most of the basic objectives of the Project, (2) are reasonably feasible given the nature of the Project and surrounding land uses, and (3) could avoid or reduce one or more of the significant impacts of the Project.

5.4 ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

The following sections evaluate and compare the impacts of the alternatives to the proposed Project by each environmental topic presented in **Chapter 4.0** of this EIR. **Section 5.5** summarizes the impacts of each alternative and determines if or to what degree each one would achieve the objectives of the Project. **Section 5.6** identifies the environmentally superior alternative.

Table 5.B: Description of Analyzed Alternatives

Project Alternative	Alternative Description
Alternative 1: No Project Alternative	The "No Project" Alternative is the circumstance under which the Project does not proceed. Under Alternative 1, the site would be developed with the land uses prescribed by SP 301, including 1,718 residential dwellings of varying densities and a variety of open space dedicated to park, greenbelt, and recreation (golf course), storm water detention, and conservation uses.
Alternative 2: Residential/ Commercial-Office Alternative	The Residential/Commercial-Office Alternative would eliminate the business park uses and increase the square footage of commercial uses from 560,000 sf to 1.5 million sf developed along SR-74. Of the commercial and office uses, 1.25 million sf would be allotted for commercial uses, with 250,000 sf reserved for office uses. Based on a target floor to area ratio (FAR) of 0.30 for commercial uses and 0.50 for office uses, approximately 107.1 acres would be devoted to these uses. It is anticipated this area would allow the development of neighborhood, local, and regional serving retail and service uses, office-related uses (e.g., legal, financial, insurance, engineering and similar professions), and/or hotel uses currently permitted in the City's Commercial Retail (CR) and Commercial Office (CO) zones. A similar amount of land would be devoted to open space, perimeter roads, public facilities, and a potential school site. This alternative retains the number of residential units and variety of housing product offered with the proposed Project (390 multiple-family units and 1,328 single-family units).
Alternative 3: Reduced Business Park Alternative	The Reduced Business Park Alternative would reduce business park and commercial-business park uses by 25 percent (approximately 1,377,500 sf), resulting in development of approximately 4,132,500 sf of business park and commercial-business park uses. The reduction of anticipated square footage devoted to various business park uses has been reduced proportionally. The commercial, open space, roadway, and public facility/school components of the proposed Project would remain unchanged. This alternative includes development of the same number of residential units (1,718); therefore, with the additional residential area, the overall residential density would be approximately 6.9 units per acre.

Source: Compiled by LSA (2023).

Table 5.C provides a comparison between the proposed Project and the alternatives related to vehicle trips (peak hour trips and average daily trips), which affects air quality emissions, greenhouse gas emissions, and transportation impacts, as discussed below.

5.4.1 Alternative 1: No Project, Existing SP 301

Under this alternative, the Project site would be developed as currently entitled under the existing Menifee Valley Ranch Specific Plan (SP 301). Per the current SP 301 (Amendment No. 3), the 590.3-acre Project site would be developed with 1,718 residential units of varying densities and 213.1 acres of open space and recreational uses, including three parks, greenbelts, a recreation area (golf course), storm water detention, and conservation uses. This alternative substantially increases the amount of open space and recreational uses provided within the Project site when compared to the proposed Project (44.5 acres).

Table 5.C: Comparison of Peak Hour and Daily Trips

Alternative	Uses	Peak Hour		Average Daily
		AM	PM	
Proposed Project	5.510 msf Business Park 560 ksf Retail 1,328 SFR DU 390 MFR DU 120 ksf Public Facility 759 ksf Student School Site Community Recreation Facilities	4,144	5,301	62,342
Alternative 1: No Project/Existing Land Use Plan	1,328 SFR DU 292 MFR DU 123 Triplex Units 151-Acre Recreation Area (Golf Course)	1,109	1,483	15,674
Change in ADT Between Project and Alternative 1		**-3,035**	**-3818**	**-46,668**
Percent Change Between Project and Alternative 1		**-73**	**-72**	**-75**
Alternative 2: Commercial/Office	1.25 msf Commercial/Retail 250 ksf Office 1,328 SFR DU 390 MFR DU 120 ksf Public Facility 750 ksf Student School Site Community Recreation Facilities	3,182	5,535	58,755
Change in ADT Between Project and Alternative 2		**-962**	**+234**	**-3,587**
Percent Change Between Project and Alternative 2		**-23**	**+4**	**-6**
Alternative 3: Reduced Business Park	4.1325 msf Business Park 560 ksf Retail 1,328 SFR DU 390 MFR DU 120 ksf Public Facility 750 ksf Student School Site Community Recreation Facilities	4,233	5,552	56,249
Change in ADT Between Project and Alternative 3		**+89**	**+251**	**-6,093**
Percent Change Between Project and Alternative 3		**+2**	**+5**	**-10**

Source: Compiled by LSA (2023).
SFR = single-family residential
MFR = multi-family residential
DU = dwelling units
msf = million square feet
ksf = thousand square feet
ADT = average daily traffic

Under this alternative, neither the proposed 560,000 square feet of commercial uses along SR-74 nor the 5.51 million square feet of business park/commercial business park uses would be developed. In the absence of these uses, the retail, commerce, and employment opportunities generated by the Project would not be realized. Additionally, this alternative does not provide an area for the Project's Public Facility planning area (5.3 acres).

Development of the Project site in accordance with the existing entitlements would include grading for building pads, slopes, roadways, and other improvements. This alternative would result in a similar suite of roadway and other related infrastructure improvements to the proposed Project.

Under this alternative, the Project site would remain within the limits of the existing SP 301, and the discretionary actions associated with the Project (e.g., the proposed General Plan and Specific Plan Amendments, new Specific Plan, and associated zone changes) would not be required.

It is expected that some degree of the off-site infrastructure and landscape improvements would be required for this alternative, and they would have similar impacts as the proposed Project. Because the type of commercial and business park uses are not yet defined, it is unknown whether the off-site roadway improvements would still be required in order to reduce impacts associated with conflicts with aspirational General Plan land use and transportation policies. Sensitivity analyses would have to be conducted at each submittal of Tentative Tract Map or subdivision plans to determine any required off-site roadway improvements.

Alternative 1 is located on the same site as the proposed Project. The modification of existing topography and removal of existing vegetation on site would still be required to accommodate any future development. Therefore, Alternative 1 would have similar impacts under Agricultural and Forestry Resources, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Geology and Soils, Mineral Resources, Tribal Cultural Resources, and Wildfire as the proposed Project.

The potential impacts for the remaining environmental topics associated with Alternative 1 are described below.

5.4.1.1 Aesthetics

Under Alternative 1, the entire site would still be developed; however, development of the residential uses would be consistent with the current development guidelines established in SP 301. Under the existing SP 301, single- and multiple family housing of varying densities, open space, and recreational amenities would be developed on site. Views of the site from SR-74, Menifee Road, and Briggs Road would consist of one- and two-story residential development and ancillary features (lighting, perimeter walls, landscaping, etc.). While views of the Project site would still be altered, the scale, mass, and height of the residential uses would be less than that associated with the proposed commercial and industrial buildings; therefore, views to and through the site would be less impactful. Furthermore, this alternative does not require the expansive parking, loading, storage, and lighting associated with the proposed commercial and industrial uses. Therefore, the relative change in the visual character of the site under this alternative would be less impactful than the proposed Project.

Impacts to aesthetics would be less than significant with implementation of either Alternative 1 or the proposed Project. However, the intensity of the impact to aesthetics is reduced under Alternative 1.

5.4.1.2 Air Quality

As development of the entire site is envisioned under this alterative, it is anticipated the extent, duration, and equipment used during earth disturbance and construction under this alternative would generally be similar to the proposed Project, and with the implementation of similar mitigation, maximum daily construction emissions would be less than the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) thresholds.

Long-term air pollutant emission impacts that would result from the proposed Project are those associated with mobile sources (e.g., vehicle trips), energy sources (e.g., natural gas), and area sources (e.g., architectural coatings and the use of landscape maintenance equipment). As shown in **Table 5.C**, average daily vehicle trips (mobile sources) would be reduced by approximately 75 percent when compared to the proposed Project and therefore would result in a proportional decrease in the volume of air pollutants generated during long-term occupation of the site. Since Alternative 1 would entitle the same number of residential units (1,718 units) as the proposed Project, but would eliminate 6,190,000 square feet of commercial, business park, and public facility uses, it is reasonable to conclude that Alternative 1 would also reduce the energy source and area source emissions when compared to the proposed Project. However, overall emissions may still exceed SCAQMD daily thresholds. Therefore, while air quality impacts may be less impactful than the proposed Project, impacts may still be significant and unavoidable.

Since overall emissions under Alternative 1 may result in significant and unavoidable long-term operational impacts, Alternative 1 may also be inconsistent with Indicator 1. Therefore, like the proposed Project, Alternative 1 would have the potential to conflict or obstruct implementation of applicable air quality plans. As such, impacts related to conflicting or obstructing implementation of an applicable air quality plan would be similar to the proposed Project.

Various commercial and industrial processes associated with the business park and commercial uses (e.g., industrial, manufacturing, warehouse/storage, fulfillment center, and e-commerce) allowed under the proposed Project would be expected to release Toxic Air Contaminants (TACs). Additionally, these uses could generate a substantial amount of diesel particulate matter emissions from off-road equipment use and truck idling. Diesel particulate matter (DPM) accounts for approximately 84 percent of the excess cancer risk in the Basin. New land uses that use diesel trucks, including trucks with transport refrigeration units, could generate an increase in DPM that would contribute to cancer and noncancer health risk in the Basin. Furthermore, trucks would travel on regional transportation routes throughout the Basin, contributing to near-roadway DPM concentrations. The proposed Project would be required to implement mitigation measures (Mitigation Measure AIR-3, requiring Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value [MERV] filters in heating, ventilation, and air conditioning [HVAC] systems) to ensure that residential receptors are not exposed to substantial pollutant concentrations. Under Alternative 1, commercial and industrial uses would be eliminated from the Project site and residential receptors would not be exposed to substantial pollutant concentrations generated by business park and commercial uses. Therefore, exposure to substantial pollutant concentrations under this alternative would be less impactful than the proposed Project.

5.4.1.3 Energy

Similar to the proposed Project, this alternative will consume both electricity (e.g., lighting, cooling, heating) and natural gas (e.g., heating buildings, generating electricity, and powering appliances). Since Alternative 1 would entitle the same number of residential units (1,718 units) as the proposed Project, but would eliminate 6,190,000 square feet of commercial, business park, and public facility uses, it is reasonable to conclude that Alternative 1 would also reduce the energy and natural gas consumption when compared to the proposed Project. Similar to the proposed Project, Alternative 1 will be required to implement design features that are in compliance with CALGreen Standards.

Impacts to energy would be less than significant with implementation of either this alternative or the proposed Project. However, it is reasonable to conclude that the amount of energy required under this alternative would be less than that required for the proposed Project. Therefore, Alternative 1 would be less impactful than the proposed Project.

5.4.1.4 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

It is anticipated the extent, duration, and equipment used during earth disturbance and construction under this alternative would generally be similar to proposed Project and would result in the same level of amortized construction-related greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Long-term GHG emissions are typically generated from mobile sources (e.g., vehicle trips), area sources (e.g., maintenance activities and landscaping), indirect emissions from sources associated with energy consumption, waste sources (land filling and waste disposal), and water sources (water supply and conveyance, treatment, and distribution). As shown in **Table 5.C**, average daily vehicle trips would be reduced by approximately 75 percent when compared to the proposed Project. The 75 percent reduction in vehicle trips would result in a corresponding decrease in GHG emissions. However, the absence of employment and/or service generating uses under Alternative 1 would likely result in a higher vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per service population (more vehicle miles traveled than the proposed Project), thereby increasing the GHG emissions when compared to the proposed Project. According to the SCAQMD, a project would have less than significant GHG emissions if it would result in operational-related GHG emissions of less than 2,109.0 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MT CO_2e) per year or 3.4 MT CO_2e per year per service population. Given the reduction in vehicular trips but increase in VMT, the level of GHG emissions resulting from Alternative 1 would still likely exceed the established SCAQMD threshold due to the large number of residential units (1,718) entitled for development on the Project site. Therefore, like the proposed Project, Alternative 1 would result in a significant and unavoidable GHG impact.

5.4.1.5 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

The government records database search, completed as part of the Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA), determined that the Project site is not included on any queried database compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5, nor were any that could create a significant hazard to the public or the environment. The Phase I ESA determined that there are no "recognized environmental conditions" for the Project site or active/historic cleanup sites located within the vicinity of the Project site. Furthermore, Phase II ESA testing confirmed the absence of residual organo-chlorine pesticides (OCPs), Title 22 metals, total petroleum hydrocarbons (TPH), or volatile organic compounds (VOCs) exceeding screening levels for residential applications.

Existing State, federal, and county regulations govern the use, storage, transport, and disposal of hazardous materials and hazardous wastes. Under this alternative, the business park and commercial uses would not be developed; therefore, the use of hazardous materials would be limited to fuels, solvents, lubricants, architectural coatings and similar substances during construction, and household cleaners, paints, fuels, and similar materials during occupation of residential uses. Accidental spills and leaks are unplanned occurrences. It is impossible to predict the occurrences of such events and the likelihood of such events occurring, though in the absence of large business park or commercial uses and considerable range of potential activities at such uses, it is reasonable to expect that the likelihood of a large-scale accidental release of hazardous materials

is less likely to occur in a residential community that would be developed on site under this alternative.

The Project site is located near Heritage High School; therefore, similar to the proposed Project, Alternative 1 would be required to implement mitigation measures (e.g., California Air Resources Board [CARB] diesel engine requirements) to ensure that schools are protected from hazardous emissions during construction. The proposed Project includes commercial and industrial uses associated with the business park land use designation, which would result in operational emissions hazards to sensitive receptors (e.g., schools). The proposed Project would be required to implement mitigation measures to reduce operational emissions hazards to less than significant levels. In the absence of commercial and industrial uses, Alternative 1 would result in less impacts associated with operational emissions hazards to schools.

The Project site is located approximately 10.33 miles southeast of the nearest airport, March Air Reserve Base (MARB). The Project site is located within Zone E of MARB's Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP) and is occasionally subject to the flight paths of aircraft using MARB. Given the location of the Project site, Alternative 1 would be required to comply with the same conditions of approval prescribed by the Riverside County Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) as the proposed Project.

According to CalFire, the Project site is located within a Local Responsibility Area (LRA), which is the City of Menifee, and is not located in a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ). It is anticipated that development of the Project site under Alternative 1 or as proposed would expose occupants/residents of the Project site to a similar level of risk related to airport and wildfire hazards.

5.4.1.6 Hydrology and Water Quality

Alternative 1 and the proposed Project would require similar changes in the site's drainage and would implement similar best management practices to reduce the degradation of surface and groundwater quality. As such, Alternative 1 and the proposed Project would have similar impacts related to hydrology and water quality.

5.4.1.7 Land Use and Planning

This alternative envisions development under the existing General Plan and Zoning designations; therefore, the land use actions (General Plan Amendment, Change of Zone, Specific Plan Amendment) included with the Project would not be required. Various local and regional plans are in part based on existing General Plan and Zoning designations and the development assumptions derived from these designations. As this alternative retains the existing on-site designations, it is reasonable to expect development under this alternative would retain the existing consistency with local and regional land use and planning programs.

Compared to the proposed Project, Alternative 1 would decrease the amount of daily traffic trips generated by on-site uses by 75 percent. The decrease in traffic associated with this alternative would likely improve functions at local intersections and along roadway segments in the Project area, including SR-74, Briggs Road, and Menifee Road, which would better ensure the alternative's

consistency with aspirational General Plan policies relevant to traffic operations. Therefore, this alternative would likely eliminate the proposed Project's significant and unavoidable impact.

5.4.1.8 Noise and Vibration

Alternative 1 would require a similar level of earth movement and construction as the proposed Project and would include the same limits of disturbance, including off-site improvement areas. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that construction noise and vibration impacts at adjacent receptors for this alternative would be similar to those experienced under the proposed Project.

The project-specific noise impact assessment determined that construction traffic would increase noise levels by up to 2.3 A-weighted decibels (dBA) on adjacent roadways. This level of increase is not perceptible to the human ear in an outdoor environment. Noise from construction activities at residential property lines to the east and south would reach 68.9 dBA maximum instantaneous noise level (L_{max}) and 65.7 dBA L_{max}, respectively. The nearest sensitive receptor to off-site improvement areas would be exposed to construction noise levels of 93.2 dBA L_{max}. Similar to the proposed Project, Alternative 1 would be required to adhere to the City's noise regulations, which would ensure that short-term noise impacts remain less than significant.

Loaded trucks used for off-site improvements would generate vibration levels that may result in community annoyance and building damage to the nearest residential buildings along Menifee Road (north of SR-74). Similar to the proposed Project, Alternative 1 would be required to implement similar mitigation measures (e.g., restricting loaded trucks near residential structures) to reduce short-term vibration impacts to less than significant levels.

While traffic noise impacts resulting from operation of the Project would generate a perceptible change in ambient noise (up to 4 dBA increase with Project conditions), traffic noise levels at the noise-sensitive residential areas and Heritage High School would not exceed the City's established 65 dBA Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) noise standard. This alternative would generate an average of 46,668 (75 percent) fewer daily vehicle trips compared to the proposed Project. It is reasonable to conclude that this reduction in traffic on local roadways would have a corresponding effect on the levels of traffic noise in the Project area; therefore, similar to the proposed Project, this alternative would result in a less than significant traffic noise impact.

5.4.1.9 Population and Housing

The Project site would be developed with the mix of residential and open space uses envisioned in the approved SP 301. While the type and density of residential units under this alternative differs from that proposed under the proposed Project, no change in the number of units or associated residential population would occur. This alternative would eliminate the job-generating uses of the proposed Project, which would eliminate 6,225 employees working on the Project site. Therefore, Alternative 1 may reduce the level of impact on the City's population when compared to the proposed Project. However, both the proposed Project and Alternative 1 would have a less than significant impact on population and housing.

5.4.1.10 Public Services

Similar to the proposed Project, Alternative 1 would increase the demand for public services in the area through development of residential uses on the Project site. However, like the proposed Project, Alternative 1 would be required to pay development impact fees to fund public services, including police, fire protection, schools, parks, and City facilities (e.g., libraries). Impacts to public services would be less than significant under the proposed Project and Alternative 1. Additionally, since Alternative 1 would not develop job-generating uses and retail services on the Project site, less people would occupy the Project site on a daily basis. Therefore, Alternative 1 would likely be less impactful on police and fire protection services as the proposed Project.

5.4.1.11 Recreation

Similar to the proposed Project, Alternative 1 would increase the demand for recreation (parkland) in the area through the development of up to 1,718 residential units on the Project site. However, like the proposed Project, Alternative 1 would provide adequate parkland and open space on the Project site in accordance with the City Municipal Code. Therefore, like the proposed Project, Alternative 1 would result in less than significant impacts to recreation. However, Alternative 1 would include the development of 3 public parks, greenbelts, and a golf course, totaling approximately 194.5 acres of recreational open space. The proposed Project would develop significantly less recreational open space when compared to Alternative 1 (29.8 acres). Therefore, Alternative 1 would likely result in less impacts to recreation than the proposed Project.

5.4.1.12 Transportation and Traffic

Since the design for perimeter roads, interior roads, and site access would be reviewed and approved by the City Engineer at the time subdivision maps are brought for approval, it is reasonable to conclude that development under this alternative would be consistent with General Plan policies for facility planning. Development under this alternative would implement the bicycle and pedestrian features (e.g., bike paths, greenbelts, pedestrian trails) envisioned under the existing SP 301, providing access through the site and connectivity to adjacent residential areas; therefore, similar to the proposed Project, this alternative would remain consistent with City General Plan policies related to accommodations for alternative modes of transportation.

Though Level of Service (LOS) impacts themselves are no longer considered in CEQA evaluations, the City's General Plan has a goal to require development projects to maintain LOS D or better at local intersections. Even with implementation of the intersection improvements detailed in **Section 4.17.6.1** of this EIR, because of right-of-way constraints, existing or forecasted operational deficiencies cannot be fully improved to the City's desired LOS at several intersections. Compared to the proposed Project, Alternative 1 would decrease the amount of daily traffic trips generated by on-site uses by 75 percent. The decrease in traffic associated with this alternative would likely improve functions at local intersections and along roadway segments in the Project area, including SR-74, Briggs Road, and Menifee Road, which would better ensure the alternative's consistency with applicable General Plan policies relevant to traffic operations.

The City adopted its Vehicle Miles Traveled Guidelines (VMT guidelines) in June 2020, which were updated in January 2022. The updated guidelines include multiple screening criteria for land use projects. The screening criteria recognize that projects that provide a variety of community serving purposes (schools, senior/affordable housing, local parks, K-12 schools, day care centers, local serving retail, etc.), sites within Transit Priority Areas (TPAs), sites within identified low-VMT areas, and projects with less than 110 daily trips would be exempt from a project-level VMT analysis. However, given the Project is a specific plan, none of these screening criteria are applicable to the Project and a project-specific VMT analysis was conducted. Per the VMT guidelines, the City has established VMT per service population as the VMT evaluation metric for land use projects.[3]

Alternative 1 would result in the development of the site pursuant to the existing SP 301, generating only 25 percent of the traffic of the proposed Project. In the absence of the employment opportunities and commercial retail services provided by the proposed Project, residents on the Project site under Alternative 1 would drive farther distances for employment and/or services. Therefore, Alternative 1 is expected to result in a higher average VMT per service population than the proposed Project. As such, while both the proposed Project and Alternative 1 would have a significant and unavoidable impact on VMT, Alternative 1 would likely be more impactful when compared to the proposed Project.

5.4.1.13 Utilities

Adequate amounts of sewer capacity and water supply are available to serve the proposed Project. Since Alternative 1 would include the same number of residential units as the proposed Project, but would eliminate the commercial, business park, commercial business park, and public facility uses, it is likely that the demand for utilities (sewer, water supply) would be significantly reduced when compared to the proposed Project. While both the proposed Project and Alternative 1 would have a less than significant impact on utility and service systems, Alternative 1 would be less impactful when compared to the proposed Project.

5.4.1.14 Alternative 1: Conclusion

This alternative envisions a project that would not require a General Plan Amendment, Change of Zone, or Specific Plan Amendment, and would develop a previously approved project which allows for the development of 1,718 residential units, parks, and open space. SP 301 does not provide for commercial, business park, or public facility uses. Development of the alternative would occur pursuant to the design, siting, and landscaping standards identified in the approved SP 301. While Alternative 1 would be less impactful than the proposed Project in almost all of the environmental impact areas, and would likely eliminate the significant and unavoidable land use and planning and transportation and traffic impact, the elimination of the business park and commercial uses would likely increase the average VMT per service population and would not achieve the primary Project objectives of balancing housing needs and community amenities with job-producing uses, attracting economic investment to the City of Menifee, or providing goods, services, and job opportunities to the surrounding community and region.

[3] The service population includes total residential population, employment, and the consumers (patrons/customers) of a project's land uses.

5.4.2 Alternative 2: Residential/Commercial-Office Alternative

The Residential/Commercial-Office Alternative envisions the development of 1.250 million square feet of commercial and office uses along SR-74. Based on a target floor to area ratio (FAR) of 0.30, approximately 96.7 acres would be devoted to these uses. It is anticipated this area would allow the development of neighborhood, local, and regional serving retail, service, office-related (e.g., legal, financial, insurance, engineering and similar professions) uses, and/or hotel uses currently permitted in the City's Commercial Retail (CR) and Commercial Office (CO) zones. This alternative includes a similar amount of open space (44.5 acres) as the proposed Project to accommodate greenbelts, active recreation, and conservation uses as well as a similar amount of land (32.4 acres) for the improvement of perimeter and primary interior roadways. Approximately 15.5 acres would be reserved for a potential future school site. The balance of land, approximately 402.3 acres, would be dedicated for development of 1,718 dwelling units with an average density of 4.3 dwellings per acre.

Because the existing SP 301 did not envision this scale of non-residential development on the Project site, this alternative would include a General Plan Amendment, Specific Plan Amendment (to remove the 590.3 acres from SP 301), rezoning, and adoption of a new Specific Plan to establish the land use designations, building intensities, development standards (zoning), and design guidelines to ensure the efficient and orderly development of this alternative.

Under this alternative, the 5.51 million square feet of business park/commercial business park uses would not be developed. In the absence of these uses, the economic and employment opportunities generated by the Project may be reduced. Additionally, this alternative does not provide an area for the Project's 5.3-acre Public Facility planning area.

Under this alternative, entitlements would include grading for building pads, slopes, roadways, and other improvements. This alternative would result in a similar suite of roadway and other related infrastructure improvements to the proposed Project.

It is expected that some off-site infrastructure and landscape improvements would be required for this alternative and would have similar impacts as the proposed Project. In addition, it is expected that the off-site roadway improvements would still be required in order to reduce impacts associated with conflicts with aspirational General Plan land use and transportation policies. However, sensitivity analyses would have to be conducted at each submittal of Tentative Tract Map or subdivision plans to determine any required off-site roadway improvements.

Alternative 2 is located on the same site as the proposed Project and would disturb the same amount of land as the proposed Project. For these reasons, Alternative 2 would have the same impacts under Agricultural and Forestry Resources, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Geology and Soils, Mineral Resources, Tribal Cultural Resources, and Wildfire as the proposed Project.

The potential impacts for the remaining environmental topics associated with Alternative 2 are described below.

5.4.2.1 Aesthetics

Alternative 2 would eliminate the business park/commercial business park uses and increase the square footage devoted to commercial uses on the site. The building height limits for business park uses (60 feet) are similar to the building height limits for commercial uses (50 feet); therefore, impacts to scenic vistas and views of scenic resources would be similar as the proposed Project. Alternative 2 would require a new Specific Plan to establish development standards and design guidelines for uses on the Project site, which like the proposed Project, would ensure that Alternative 2 results in a high-quality development that is compatible with the visual character of the community and consistent with the City's General Plan policies governing visual quality. Therefore, Alternative 2 would have a similar visual impact to off-site viewers as the proposed Project.

5.4.2.2 Air Quality

Similar to the proposed Project, the entire site would be developed under Alternative 2; therefore, the extent, duration, and equipment used during construction activities under this alternative would be similar to the proposed Project. With implementation of similar mitigation, maximum daily construction emissions would be less than the SCAQMD thresholds.

Long-term air pollutant emission impacts that would result from the proposed Project are those associated with mobile sources (e.g., vehicle trips), energy sources (e.g., natural gas), and area sources (e.g., architectural coatings and the use of landscape maintenance equipment). Alternative 2 would eliminate the 5.51 million sf of business park/commercial business park uses and 120,000 sf of public facility uses, and would increase commercial uses on the site by 940,000 sf. As such, the total building area on the Project site would be reduced, which could result in lower area emissions (e.g., architectural coatings) and energy sources. As shown in **Table 5.C**, average daily vehicle trips (mobile sources) would be reduced by approximately 6 percent when compared to the proposed Project. However, as shown in **Table 5.D**, the increase in commercial uses under Alternative 2 would result in a higher VMT than the proposed Project.

Table 5.D: Comparison of VMT

	VMT Per Service Population			
Scenario Year	**Proposed Project**	**City's Threshold**	**Difference**	**% Difference**
2018	40.4	33.6	6.81	**20.3**
2045	37.5	33.6	3.88	**11.6**
Scenario Year	**Alternative 2**	**City's Threshold**	**Difference**	**% Difference**
2018	51.3	33.6	17.74	**52.8**
2045	51.5	33.6	17.90	**53.3**

Source: Compiled by LSA (2023).

While average daily vehicle trips would be slightly reduced under Alternative 2, VMT would be increased; therefore, Alternative 2 could result in higher mobile source emissions than the proposed Project. Given that energy sources and area sources would likely be reduced, and mobile sources would likely be increased under Alternative 2, it is reasonable to conclude that even with implementation of similar mitigation measures as the proposed Project, Alternative 2 would exceed

SCAQMD daily thresholds. Therefore, air quality impacts under both Alternative 2 and the proposed Project would be significant and unavoidable.

Since overall emissions under Alternative 2 may result in significant and unavoidable long-term operational impacts, Alternative 2 may also be inconsistent with Indicator 1. Therefore, like the proposed Project, Alternative 2 would have the potential to conflict or obstruct implementation of applicable air quality plans. As such, impacts related to conflicting or obstructing implementation of an applicable air quality plan would be similar to the proposed Project.

Various commercial and industrial processes associated with the business park and commercial uses allowed under the proposed Project would be expected to release TACs. Additionally, these uses could generate a substantial amount of diesel particulate matter emissions from off-road equipment use and truck idling. DPM accounts for approximately 84 percent of the excess cancer risk in the Basin. New land uses that use diesel trucks, including trucks with transport refrigeration units, could generate an increase in DPM that would contribute to cancer and noncancer health risk in the Basin. Furthermore, trucks would travel on regional transportation routes throughout the Basin, contributing to near-roadway DPM concentrations. Since Alternative 2 would eliminate the business park/commercial business park uses, the number of truck trips generating DPM would be reduced. However, since the commercial uses under Alternative 2 would also include truck trips generating DPM and VMT under Alternative 2 would increase, it is likely that Alternative 2 would be required to implement similar mitigation measures (e.g., MERV filters in HVAC systems) to protect on-site residents from being exposed to substantial pollutant concentrations. Therefore, impacts related to the exposure to substantial pollutant concentrations would be similar to the proposed Project.

5.4.2.3 Energy

Similar to the proposed Project, Alternative 2 would consume both electricity and natural gas. Since Alternative 2 would reduce the building area developed on the Project site by eliminating the business park/commercial business park uses and public facility uses, it is reasonable to conclude that electricity and natural gas consumed under Alternative 2 would also be reduced. Additionally, similar to the proposed Project, Alternative 2 would be required to implement design features that are in compliance with CALGreen Standards.

Impacts to energy would be less than significant with implementation of Alternative 2 and the proposed Project. However, since the amount of energy required under this alternative would be less than that required for the proposed Project, Alternative 2 would be less impactful than the proposed Project.

5.4.2.4 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

It is anticipated the extent, duration, and equipment used during earth disturbance and construction under Alternative 2 would generally be similar to proposed Project and would result in the same level of amortized construction-related GHG emissions.

GHG emissions are typically generated from mobile sources (e.g., vehicle trips), area sources (e.g., maintenance activities and landscaping), indirect emissions from sources associated with energy consumption, waste sources (land filling and waste disposal), and water sources (water supply and

conveyance, treatment, and distribution). As discussed under Air Quality impacts above, Alternative 2 would eliminate the business park/commercial business park uses, which may reduce DPM emissions. However, as shown in **Table 5.D**, Alternative 2 would result in more VMT than the proposed Project, which may offset the reduction in DPM emissions. Therefore, it is likely that impacts related to mobile emissions would be similar to the proposed Project. While Alternative 2 would develop less building area as the proposed Project by eliminating the business park, commercial business park, and public facility uses, Alternative 2 would increase commercial uses by 940,000 sf, which may result in similar emissions from area, energy, waste, and water sources depending on the operating needs of the commercial uses.

Given the above, it is likely that even with implementation of mitigation measures, overall GHG emissions would likely exceed the established SCAQMD threshold due to the size, scale, and type of uses developed on the Project site under Alternative 2. Therefore, similar to the proposed Project, greenhouse gas impacts would be significant and unavoidable.

5.4.2.5 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

The government records database search, completed as part of the Phase I ESA, determined that the Project site is not included on any queried database compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5, nor were any that could create a significant hazard to the public or the environment. The Phase I ESA determined that there are no "recognized environmental conditions" for the Project site or active/historic cleanup sites located within the vicinity of the Project site. Furthermore, Phase II ESA testing confirmed the absence of residual OCPs, Title 22 metals, TPH, or VOCs exceeding screening levels for residential applications.

Existing State, federal, and county regulations govern the use, storage, transport, and disposal of hazardous materials and hazardous wastes. Under this alternative, the business park, commercial business park, and public facility uses would not be developed; therefore, hazardous materials associated with these uses would be absent from the Project site. However, hazardous materials associated with construction (e.g., fuels, solvents, lubricants, architectural coatings) and operation of the residential and commercial uses (e.g., household cleaners, paints, fuels) under Alternative 2 would be similar to the proposed Project. Accidental spills and leaks are unplanned occurrences; therefore, it is impossible to predict the occurrences of such events and the likelihood of such events occurring. However, in the absence of large business park uses and considerable range of potential activities at such uses, it is reasonable to expect that the likelihood of a large-scale accidental release of hazardous materials is less likely to occur when compared to the proposed Project.

The Project site is located near Heritage High School; therefore, similar to the proposed Project, Alternative 2 would be required to implement mitigation measures (e.g., CARB diesel engine requirements) to ensure that schools are protected from hazardous emissions during construction. Similar to the proposed Project, Alternative 2 includes commercial uses, which would result in operational emissions hazards to sensitive receptors (e.g., schools). Therefore, like the proposed Project, Alternative 2 would be required to implement mitigation measures to reduce operational emissions hazards to less than significant levels. However, since Alternative 2 would remove the

industrial uses associated with the business park land use designation, Alternative 2 would likely result in less impacts associated with operational emissions hazards to schools.

The Project site is located approximately 10.33 miles southeast of the nearest airport, MARB. The Project site is located within Zone E of MARB's ALUCP and is occasionally subject to the flight paths of aircraft using MARB. Given the location of the Project site, Alternative 2 would be required to comply with the same conditions of approval prescribed by the Riverside County ALUC as the proposed Project.

According to CalFire, the Project site is located within an LRA, which is the City of Menifee, and is not located in a VHFHSZ. It is anticipated that development of the Project site under Alternative 2 would expose employees/residents of the Project site to a similar level of risk related to aviation and wildfire as the proposed Project.

Overall, similar to the proposed Project, Alternative 2 would result in less than significant impacts to hazards. However, impacts related to an accidental release of hazardous materials may be less impactful than the proposed Project due to the elimination of 5.51 million sf of business park uses.

5.4.2.6 Hydrology and Water Quality

Alternative 2 and the proposed Project would require similar changes in the site's drainage and would implement similar best management practices to reduce the degradation of surface and groundwater quality. As such, Alternative 2 and the proposed Project would have similar impacts related to hydrology and water quality.

5.4.2.7 Land Use and Planning

This alternative envisions development of the Project site without the business park, commercial business park, and public facility uses of the proposed Project. Additionally, this alternative would increase the commercial uses on the Project site by 940,000 sf and decrease the average density of the residential units on the site when compared to the proposed Project. Alternative 2 would require the same General Plan Amendment, Change of Zone, and Specific Plan Amendment approval as the proposed Project. Similar to the proposed Project, Alternative 2 would comply with the majority of local and regional plans with implementation of similar mitigation measures, including Connect SoCal, Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP), and the March Air Reserve Base/Inland Port Airport ALUCP.

Compared to the proposed Project, Alternative 2 would decrease the amount of average daily traffic trips generated by on-site uses by 6 percent. Therefore, Alternative 2 would have a similar or slightly less of an impact on local intersections/roadway segments in the Project area but would likely still conflict with General Plan policies relevant to aspirational traffic operations. Therefore, similar to the proposed Project, this alternative would result in a significant and unavoidable impact after implementation of similar mitigation measures (e.g., roadway improvements).

5.4.2.8 Noise and Vibration

Alternative 2 would require a similar level of earth movement and construction as the proposed Project and would include the same limits of disturbance, including off-site improvement areas. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that construction noise and vibration impacts at adjacent receptors for this alternative would be similar to those experienced under the proposed Project.

The project-specific noise impact assessment determined that construction traffic would increase noise levels by up to 2.3 dBA on adjacent roadways. This level of increase is not perceptible to the human ear in an outdoor environment. Noise from construction activities at residential property lines to the east and south would reach 68.9 dBA L_{max} and 65.7 dBA L_{max}, respectively. The nearest sensitive receptor to off-site improvement areas would be exposed to construction noise levels of 93.2 dBA L_{max}. Similar to the proposed Project, Alternative 2 would be required to adhere to the City's noise regulations, which would ensure that short-term noise impacts remain less than significant.

Loaded trucks used for off-site improvements would generate vibration levels that may result in community annoyance and building damage to the nearest residential buildings along Menifee Road (north of SR-74). Similar to the proposed Project, Alternative 2 would be required to implement similar mitigation measures (e.g., restricting loaded trucks near residential structures) to reduce short-term vibration impacts to less than significant levels.

While traffic noise impacts resulting from operation of the proposed Project would generate a perceptible change in ambient noise (up to 4 dBA increase with Project conditions), traffic noise levels at the noise-sensitive residential areas and Heritage High School would not exceed the City's established 65 dBA CNEL noise standard. This alternative would generate an average of 3,587 (6 percent) fewer daily vehicle trips compared to the proposed Project. It is reasonable this reduction in traffic on local roadways would have a corresponding effect on the levels of traffic noise in the Project area. Therefore, similar to the proposed Project, this alternative would result in a less than significant traffic noise impact.

5.4.2.9 Population and Housing

Alternative 2 would develop the same number of residential units (390 multi-family units and 1,328 single-family units) as the proposed Project and therefore would have the potential to result in the same population increase as the proposed Project (5,220 persons). In accordance with SB 330, Alternative 2 and the proposed Project would allow for the development of the same number of residential units (1,718) as what is currently entitled for the Project site pursuant to SP 301. Therefore, population growth resulting from the development of 1,718 residential units is already accounted for in the City's General Plan. As such, similar to the proposed Project, Alternative 2 would not induce unplanned population growth in the City.

Similar to the proposed Project, Alternative 2 would develop job-generating uses (commercial) on the Project site, which would have the potential to increase the City's population through employment opportunities. However, like the proposed Project, the labor demand generated by Alternative 2 would likely be met by people who live in the City or near the City. Therefore, like the proposed Project, job-generating uses on the Project site would not induce substantial unplanned

population growth in the City. Even though Alternative 2 may reduce the number of employees working on the Project site by eliminating business park, commercial business park, and public facility uses, the level of impact on the City's population would likely be the same.

5.4.2.10 Public Services

Similar to the proposed Project, Alternative 2 would increase the demand for public services in the area through the generation of employees and residents on the Project site. However, like the proposed Project, Alternative 2 would be required to pay development impact fees to fund public services, including police, fire protection, schools, parks, and City facilities (e.g., libraries). Alternative 2 would eliminate the business park and commercial business park uses (5.51 million sf) and increase the commercial uses by 940,000 sf on the Project site. Therefore, less people may occupy the Project site on a daily basis, which could result in less impacts to police and fire protection services. However, Alternative 2 would also eliminate the public facility use on the Project site, which could be used to develop a fire station. In the absence of a fire station on the Project site, Alternative 2 could result in more impacts to fire protection services when compared to the proposed Project. Nevertheless, impacts to public services would be less than significant under both the proposed Project and Alternative 2.

5.4.2.11 Recreation

Similar to the proposed Project, Alternative 2 would increase the demand for recreation (parkland) in the area through the development of up to 1,718 residential units on the Project site. However, Alternative 2 would provide a similar amount of recreational open space on the Project site as the proposed Project, which exceeds the required parkland pursuant to the City's Municipal Code. Therefore, like the proposed Project, Alternative 2 would result in a less than significant impact to recreation.

5.4.2.12 Transportation and Traffic

As shown on **Table 5.C**, this alternative would decrease average daily trips generated from on-site uses by 3,587 trips (6 percent) when compared to the proposed Project. Similar to the proposed Project, it is likely that the 6 percent reduction of average daily trips generated by Alternative 2 would still require improvements to local roads or intersections and even after implementation of improvements would result in a deficient LOS at several intersections. Similar to the proposed Project, Alternative 2 would exceed the City's VMT per service population threshold (refer to **Table 5.D**), and mitigation measures would not be available to reduce VMT impacts to less than significant levels. As such, similar to the proposed Project, VMT impacts would be significant and unavoidable. Additionally, Alternative 2 would result in a much higher VMT than the proposed Project (refer to **Table 5.D**) and therefore would result in a more significant impact to the City's VMT than the proposed Project.

5.4.2.13 Utilities

Adequate amounts of sewer capacity and water supply are available to serve the proposed Project. Alternative 2 would eliminate the business park, commercial business park, and public facility uses (total of 5.63 million sf) and would increase commercial uses by 940,000 sf (total of 1.5 million sf). Although Alternative 2 would increase the commercial uses on the Project site when compared to

the proposed Project and commercial uses may demand more water or sewer capacity than business park uses depending on the type of commercial use (e.g., hotels), it is unlikely that Alternative 2 would demand more sewer capacity or water supply than the proposed Project due to the absence of 5.63 million sf of uses proposed under Alternative 2. Therefore, the proposed Project and Alternative 2 would both result in a less than significant impact on utility and service systems.

5.4.2.14 Alternative 2: Conclusion

This alternative would eliminate the business park, commercial business park, and public facility uses, increase the commercial uses on the Project site by 940,000 sf, and include the same number of residential units (1,718 units) as the proposed Project. This alternative would meet most of the Project objectives; however, by eliminating business park and commercial business park uses, this alternative would meet the Project objectives of attracting economic investment to the City and providing goods, services, and job opportunities to the surrounding community and region to a lesser extent than the proposed Project. Additionally, this alternative would not meet the Project objective of providing a public facility/civic node (e.g., fire station, transit stop) on the Project site.

Similar to the proposed Project, this alternative would result in less than significant impacts in most of the environmental impact areas and could be less impactful in Energy and Hazards and Hazardous Materials. However, like the proposed Project, Alternative 2 would likely result in significant and unavoidable impacts to Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Land Use and Planning, and Transportation and Traffic. Although both the proposed Project and Alternative 2 would exceed the City's VMT threshold, Alternative 2 would significantly increase VMT when compared to the proposed Project. Therefore, Alternative 2 would not reduce or eliminate significant and unavoidable impacts associated with the proposed Project.

5.4.3 Alternative 3: Reduced Business Park Alternative

This alternative would reduce business park uses by 25 percent (approximately 1,377,500 million sf), resulting in development of approximately 4,132,500 million sf of business park and commercial-business park uses. Based on a FAR of 0.50, this reduction would reduce the area devoted to these uses by approximately 63.3 acres. The commercial, open space, roadway, and public facility/school components of the proposed Project would remain unchanged.

When added to the residential area identified under the proposed Project, the 63.3 acres gained through the reduction in business park uses would increase the total residential area of the site to 250.1 acres. This alternative includes development of the same number of residential units (1,718); therefore, with the additional residential area, overall residential density would be approximately 6.9 units per acre. The actual residential density of individual planning areas would be determined by the specific residential product developed in each area.

This alternative includes a General Plan Amendment, Specific Plan Amendment (to remove the 590.3 acres from SP 301), rezoning, and adoption of a new Specific Plan to establish the land use designations, building intensities, development standards (zoning), and design guidelines to ensure the efficient and orderly development of this alternative.

Development of the Project site under this alternative would include grading for building pads, slopes, roadways, and other improvements. This alternative would result in a similar suite of roadway and other related infrastructure improvements to the proposed Project.

It is expected that some off-site infrastructure and landscape improvements would be required for this alternative and would have similar impacts as the proposed Project. In addition, it is expected that the off-site roadway improvements would still be required in order to reduce impacts associated with conflicts with aspirational General Plan land use and transportation policies. However, sensitivity analyses would have to be conducted at each submittal of Tentative Tract Map or subdivision plans to determine any required off-site roadway improvements.

Alternative 3 would be located on the same site as the proposed Project and therefore would have similar impacts to land-based CEQA resource topics as the proposed Project, including Agricultural and Forestry Resources, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Geology and Soils, Mineral Resources, Tribal Cultural Resources, and Wildfire.

The potential impacts for the remaining environmental topics associated with Alternative 3 are described below.

5.4.3.1 Aesthetics

Alternative 3 would reduce the business park/commercial business park uses by 25 percent and increase the acreage devoted to residential uses. Although there would be a 25 percent reduction of business park/commercial business park uses, Alternative 3 would develop the same uses, constructed at the same heights as the proposed Project. Therefore, impacts to scenic vistas and views of scenic resources would be similar as the proposed Project. Additionally, Alternative 3 would require a new Specific Plan to establish development standards and design guidelines for uses on the Project site to ensure that Alternative 3 results in a high-quality development that is compatible with the visual character of the community and consistent with the City's General Plan policies governing visual quality. As such, Alternative 3 would have a similar visual impact to off-site viewers as the proposed Project.

5.4.3.2 Air Quality

Since the entire Project site would be developed under Alternative 3, the extent, duration, and equipment used during earth disturbance and construction under this alternative would generally be similar to the proposed Project. With implementation of similar mitigation, maximum daily construction emissions would be less than the SCAQMD thresholds.

As shown in **Table 5.C**, average daily vehicle trips (mobile sources) would be reduced by approximately 10 percent when compared to the proposed Project. Since Alternative 3 would entitle the same uses as the proposed Project and would only reduce business park and commercial business park uses by 25 percent (1,377,500 sf), it is reasonable to conclude that Alternative 3 would also proportionally reduce the energy source and area source emissions when compared to the proposed Project.

However, overall emissions may still exceed SCAQMD daily thresholds. Therefore, while air quality impacts may be less impactful than the proposed Project, impacts may still be significant and unavoidable.

Since overall emissions under Alternative 3 may result in significant and unavoidable long-term operational impacts, Alternative 3 may also be inconsistent with Indicator 1. Therefore, like the proposed Project, Alternative 3 would have the potential to conflict or obstruct implementation of applicable air quality plans. As such, impacts related to conflicting or obstructing implementation of an applicable air quality plan would be similar to the proposed Project.

Various commercial and industrial processes associated with the business park and commercial business park uses allowed under the proposed Project and Alternative 3 would be expected to release TACs and could generate a substantial amount of diesel particulate matter emissions from off-road equipment use and truck idling. DPM accounts for approximately 84 percent of the excess cancer risk in the Basin. Similar to the proposed Project, Alternative 3 would be required to implement mitigation measures (e.g., requiring MERV filters in HVAC systems) to ensure that residential receptors are not exposed to substantial pollutant concentrations. Under Alternative 3, business park and commercial business park uses would be reduced by 25 percent. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that residential receptors would be exposed to 25 percent less of substantial pollutant concentrations than the proposed Project. Although impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated for both Alternative 3 and the proposed Project, exposure to substantial pollutant concentrations under this alternative would be less impactful than the proposed Project.

5.4.3.3 Energy

Similar to the proposed Project, Alternative 3 would consume both electricity and natural gas. Since Alternative 3 would entitle the same uses as the proposed Project and would only reduce business park and commercial business park uses by 25 percent (1,377,500 sf), it is reasonable to conclude that Alternative 3 would also proportionally reduce the energy consumption when compared to the proposed Project. Similar to the proposed Project, Alternative 3 would be required to implement design features that are in compliance with CALGreen Standards.

Impacts to energy would be less than significant with implementation of Alternative 3 and the proposed Project. However, it is reasonable to conclude that the amount of energy required under this alternative would be less than that required for the proposed Project. Therefore, Alternative 3 would be less impactful than the proposed Project.

5.4.3.4 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

It is anticipated the extent, duration, and equipment used during earth disturbance and construction under Alternative 3 would generally be similar to proposed Project and would result in the same level of amortized construction-related GHG emissions. As shown in **Table 5.C**, average daily vehicle trips would be reduced by approximately 10 percent when compared to the proposed Project, thereby resulting in a 10 percent reduction in GHG emissions. Additionally, greenhouse gas emissions from area, energy, waste, and water emissions would also be slightly reduced when compared to the proposed Project because Alternative 3 would reduce the business park and

commercial business park uses by 25 percent. Despite the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, Alternative 3 would still likely exceed the established SCAQMD threshold due to the size and scale of development on the Project site. While the volume of GHG emissions would be slightly reduced when compared to the proposed Project, a significant GHG impact would still result from development under this alternative.

5.4.3.5 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

The government records database search, completed as part of the Phase I ESA, determined that the Project site is not included on any queried database compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5, nor were any that could create a significant hazard to the public or the environment. The Phase I ESA determined that there are no "recognized environmental conditions" for the Project site or active/historic cleanup sites located within the vicinity of the Project site. Furthermore, Phase II ESA testing confirmed the absence of OCPs, Title 22 metals, TPH, or VOCs exceeding screening levels for residential applications.

Existing State, federal, and county regulations govern the use, storage, transport, and disposal of hazardous materials and hazardous wastes. Alternative 3 would develop the same uses on the Project site but would reduce the business park and commercial business park uses by 25 percent (1,377,500 sf). Therefore, the same types of hazardous materials would be used on the Project site; however, the number of hazardous materials used on the Project site would likely be reduced.

The Project site is located near Heritage High School; therefore, similar to the proposed Project, Alternative 3 would be required to implement mitigation measures (e.g., CARB diesel engine requirements) to ensure that schools are protected from hazardous emissions during construction. Similar to the proposed Project, Alternative 3 includes commercial uses and industrial uses associated with the business park land use designation, which would result in operational emissions hazards to sensitive receptors (e.g., schools). Therefore, like the proposed Project, Alternative 3 would be required to implement mitigation measures to reduce operational emissions hazards to less than significant levels. However, since Alternative 3 would reduce industrial uses by 25 percent, Alternative 3 would likely result in less impacts associated with operational emissions hazards to schools.

The Project site is located approximately 10.33 miles southeast of the nearest airport, MARB. The Project site is located within Zone E of MARB's ALUCP and is occasionally subject to the flight paths of aircraft using MARB. Given the location of the Project site, Alternative 3 would be required to comply with the same conditions of approval prescribed by the Riverside County ALUC as the proposed Project.

According to CalFire, the Project site is located within an LRA, which is the City of Menifee, and is not located in a VHFHSZ. It is anticipated that development of the Project site under Alternative 3 would expose employees/residents of the Project site to a similar level of risk related to aviation and wildfire as the proposed Project.

Overall, similar to the proposed Project, Alternative 3 would result in less than significant impacts to hazards and hazardous materials. However, impacts related to an accidental release of hazardous

materials may be less impactful than the proposed Project due to the 25 percent reduction in business park and commercial business park uses.

5.4.3.6 Hydrology and Water Quality

Alternative 3 and the proposed Project would require similar changes in the site's drainage and would implement similar best management practices to reduce the degradation of surface and groundwater quality. Therefore, Alternative 3 and the proposed Project would have similar impacts related to hydrology and water quality.

5.4.3.7 Land Use and Planning

This alternative envisions development of the Project site in a similar manner as compared to the proposed Project; however, the building area of the business park and commercial business park uses on the site would be 25 percent less than that of the proposed Project. Alternative 3 would require the same General Plan Amendment, Change of Zone, and Specific Plan Amendment approval as the proposed Project. Similar to the proposed Project, Alternative 3 would comply with the majority of local and regional plans with implementation of similar mitigation measures, including Connect SoCal, Western Riverside County MSHCP, and the March Air Reserve Base/Inland Port Airport ALUCP.

Compared to the proposed Project, Alternative 3 would decrease the amount of average daily traffic trips generated by on-site uses by 10 percent. The decrease in traffic associated with this alternative and similar mitigation measures (e.g., roadway improvements) may improve functions at local intersections and along roadway segments in the Project area, including SR-74, Briggs Road, and Menifee Road, but not to the extent that would be needed to ensure the alternative's consistency with aspirational General Plan policies relevant to traffic operations. Therefore, similar to the proposed Project, this alternative would likely result in a significant and unavoidable impact.

5.4.3.8 Noise and Vibration

Alternative 3 would require a similar level of earth movement and construction as the proposed Project and would include the same limits of disturbance, including off-site improvement areas. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that construction noise and vibration impacts at adjacent receptors for this alternative would be similar to those experienced under the proposed Project.

The project-specific noise impact assessment determined that construction traffic would increase noise levels by up to 2.3 dBA on adjacent roadways. This level of increase is not perceptible to the human ear in an outdoor environment. Noise from construction activities at residential property lines to the east and south would reach 68.9 dBA L_{max} and 65.7 dBA L_{max}, respectively. The nearest sensitive receptor to off-site improvement areas would be exposed to construction noise levels of 93.2 dBA L_{max}. Similar to the proposed Project, Alternative 3 would be required to adhere to the City's noise regulations, which would ensure that short-term noise impacts remain less than significant.

Loaded trucks used for off-site improvements would generate vibration levels that may result in community annoyance and building damage to the nearest residential buildings along Menifee Road

(north of SR-74). Similar to the proposed Project, Alternative 3 would be required to implement similar mitigation measures (e.g., restricting loaded trucks near residential structures) to reduce short-term vibration impacts to less than significant levels.

While traffic noise impacts resulting from operation of the proposed Project would generate a perceptible change in ambient noise (up to 4 dBA increase with Project conditions), traffic noise levels at the noise-sensitive residential areas and Heritage High School would not exceed the City's established 65 dBA CNEL noise standard. This alternative would generate an average of 6,093 (10 percent) fewer daily vehicle trips compared to the proposed Project. It is reasonable this reduction in traffic on local roadways would have a corresponding effect on the levels of traffic noise in the Project area. Therefore, similar to the proposed Project, this alternative would result in a less than significant traffic noise impact.

5.4.3.9 Population and Housing

The proposed Project and Alternative 3 would include the development of up to 1,718 residential units, which is the number of units currently entitled for development on the Project site. Therefore, the proposed Project and Alternative 3 would not induce unplanned population growth in the City. Like the proposed Project, the labor demand generated by Alternative 3 would likely be met by people who live in the City or near the City. Therefore, like the proposed Project, job-generating uses on the Project site would not induce substantial unplanned population growth in the City. Although Alternative 3 would reduce the business park and commercial business park uses by 25 percent, which would potentially reduce the number of employees on the Project site by 25 percent when compared to the proposed Project, the level of impact on the City's population would likely be the same.

5.4.3.10 Public Services

Similar to the proposed Project, Alternative 3 would increase the demand for public services in the area through the generation of employees and residents on the Project site. Like the proposed Project, Alternative 3 would be required to pay development impact fees to fund public services, including police, fire protection, schools, parks, and City facilities (e.g., libraries). Impacts to public services would be less than significant with implementation of the proposed Project or Alternative 3. However, because Alternative 3 would reduce the business park and commercial business park uses by 25 percent, the Project site would be occupied by less people on a daily basis than the proposed Project. Therefore, Alternative 3 may reduce the level of impact on police and fire protection services when compared to the proposed Project.

5.4.3.11 Recreation

Similar to the proposed Project, Alternative 3 would increase the demand for recreation (parkland) in the area through the development of up to 1,718 residential units on the Project site. However, Alternative 3 would provide the same amount of recreational open space on the Project site as the proposed Project, which exceeds the required parkland pursuant to the City's Municipal Code. Therefore, like the proposed Project, Alternative 3 would result in a less than significant impact to recreation.

5.4.3.12 Transportation and Traffic

Alternative 3 would generate 6,093 less average daily trips distributed on local roadways compared to those generated by the proposed Project (a 10 percent reduction compared to the proposed Project). Similar to the proposed Project, it is likely that the 10 percent reduction of average daily trips generated by Alternative 3 would still require improvements to local roads or intersections and even after implementation of improvements would result in a deficient LOS at several intersections. Similar to the proposed Project, Alternative 3 would generate an increase in VMT in the City, which would likely exceed the City's VMT per service population (33.6) threshold. Mitigation measures would not be available to reduce VMT impacts; as such, similar to the proposed Project, VMT impacts would be significant and unavoidable. However, since Alternative 3 would reduce the business park and commercial business park uses by 25 percent, the amount of impact would likely be less than the proposed Project.

5.4.3.13 Utilities

Adequate amounts of sewer capacity and water supply are available to serve the proposed Project. Alternative 3 would reduce business park/commercial business park uses by 25 percent, resulting in a proportional reduction in the demand for utilities (sewer, water supply). While both the proposed Project and Alternative 3 would have a less than significant impact on utility and service systems, Alternative 3 would be less impactful when compared to the proposed Project.

5.4.3.14 Alternative 3: Conclusion

This alternative would be similar to the proposed Project; however, the business park and commercial business park uses would be reduced by 25 percent (approximately 1,377,500 million sf) on the Project site. This alternative would meet most of the Project objectives; however, by reducing business park and commercial business park uses by 25 percent, this alternative would meet the Project objectives related to attracting economic investment and providing goods, services, and job opportunities to the City and region to a lesser extent than the proposed Project.

Similar to the proposed Project, this alternative would result in less than significant impacts in most of the environmental impact areas and could be less impactful in Energy, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Public Services, and Utilities. Similar to the proposed Project, Alternative 3 would likely exceed the SCAQMD's daily emissions thresholds and the City's VMT threshold, resulting in significant and unavoidable impacts to Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Transportation and Traffic. However, given that Alternative 3 would reduce business park and commercial business park uses by 25 percent, impacts to Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Transportation and Traffic would likely be less than the proposed Project. Additionally, when compared to the proposed Project, Alternative 3 would result in a similar significant and unavoidable impact to Land Use and Planning and Transportation and Traffic due to its inconsistency with City General Plan policies related to traffic.

Although impacts would incrementally decrease with implementation of Alternative 3, this alternative would not eliminate any of the significant and unavoidable impacts associated with the proposed Project.

5.5 COMPARISON OF PROJECT ALTERNATIVES

The following discussion compares the impacts of each alternative with the impacts of the proposed Project, as detailed in **Sections 4.1 through 4.20** of this EIR. **Table 5.E** compares the impacts of the alternatives with those of the proposed Project and identifies whether the alternative results in (1) a reduction of the impact; (2) a greater impact than the Project; or (3) the same impact as the Project. **Table 5.E** further summarizes the changes in significant impacts among the various alternatives.

Table 5.E: Comparison of Alternatives to the Proposed Project

Environmental Issue	Proposed Project	Alternative 1: Existing SP 301	Alternative 2: Residential/Commercial	Alternative 3: Reduced Business Park
Aesthetics	LTS with mitigation	←	Similar	Similar
Agriculture& Forestry Resources	LTS	Similar	Similar	Similar
Air Quality	SIG	←SIG	Similar	←SIG
Biological Resources	LTS with mitigation	Similar	←	Similar
Cultural Resources	LTS with mitigation	Similar	Similar	Similar
Energy	LTS	←	←	←
Geology and Soils	LTS	Similar	Similar	Similar
Greenhouse Gas Emissions	SIG	←SIG	Similar	←SIG
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	LTS with mitigation	←	←	←
Hydrology and Water Quality	LTS with mitigation	Similar	Similar	Similar
Land Use and Planning	SIG	←	Similar	Similar
Mineral Resources	NI	Similar	Similar	Similar
Noise	LTS with mitigation	←	Similar	Similar
Population and Housing	LTS	←	Similar	Similar
Public Services	LTS	←	Similar	←
Recreation	LTS	←	Similar	Similar
Transportation and Traffic	SIG	→SIG	→SIG	←SIG
Tribal Cultural Resources	LTS	Similar	Similar	Similar
Utilities and Service Systems	LTS	←	Similar	←
Wildfire	LTS	Similar	Similar	Similar

Source: Compiled by LSA (2023).

Impact Abbreviations

NI: No Impact
LTS: Less than Significant Impact
SIG: Significant Impact with or without Mitigation

Project Alternatives

→ Compared with the proposed Project, the significance of the impact is increased.
← Compared with the proposed Project, the significance of the impact is reduced.
←SIG Compared with the proposed Project, the volume or extent of the impact is reduced, yet still significant.
→SIG Compared with the proposed Project, the volume or extent of the impact is increased and still significant.

5.6 ENVIRONMENTALLY SUPERIOR ALTERNATIVE

When an alternatives analysis is prepared consistent with *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.6 (e[2]), an environmentally superior alternative must be identified in the EIR. As detailed in **Table 5.F**, the Environmentally Superior Alternative is the one that would result in the fewest or least significant impacts. In most cases, the Environmentally Superior Alternative is the No Build Alternative.[4]

Alternative 1 would reduce all environmental impacts, but like the proposed Project, would likely result in significant and unavoidable impacts to Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions. Additionally, Alternative 1 would likely eliminate the significant and unavoidable impact to Land Use and Planning and Transportation and Traffic when compared to the proposed Project. However, Alternative 1 does not meet most of the Project objectives.

Alternatives 2 and 3 would not eliminate any of the significant and unavoidable impacts of the proposed Project. However, the impacts generated by Alternative 3 would be less intense than those impacts generated by Alternative 2 and the proposed Project and would still meet the Project objectives. Based on this information, Alternative 3 would be considered the environmentally superior alternative for the proposed Project.

[4] Due to the site's current inclusion in SP 301, it is reasonable to conclude, should the Project as proposed **not** be approved, that development of the site in a manner currently entitled would occur. Based on this reasonable assumption, maintenance of the site in its current undeveloped (No Build) state is not likely and a No Build Alternative was rejected from further consideration.

Table 5.F: Do the Alternatives Meet Project Objectives?

Project Objectives	Proposed Project	Alternative 1: Existing SP 301	Alternative 2: Commercial/ Residential	Alternative 3: Reduced Business Park
Implement the City of Menifee's General Plan, which envisions that the geographic area governed by the MVSP will be developed into a high-quality master planned community that demonstrates consistency with the City's General Plan policies.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Plan for the development of a contemporary mixed-use community that internally balances housing needs and community amenities with job-producing commercial and business park uses that are economically viable in a 21st century economy.	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Locate businesses such as large warehouses and other uses that support the supply chain and which rely on transportation efficiency in a location with direct access to Menifee Road and SR-74, which are established truck routes.	Yes	No	No	Yes
Ensure that the addition of business park and commercial business park areas to the Specific Plan are designed as places where businesses can prosper, attract economic investment to the City of Menifee, and provide goods, services, and job opportunities to the surrounding community and region.	Yes	No	No	Yes
Concentrate residential uses along Briggs Road and provide opportunities in the residential areas for supportive uses that are important to households such as an elementary school, agri-commercial uses such as a community farm, green spaces, and recreational amenities.	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Physically separate residential and business park areas through traditional and creative means such that the uses are complementary and supportive while limiting real and perceived conflicts associated with the adjacency of these uses.	Yes	N/A	N/A	Yes
Provide for a public sports park with athletic fields, swim center, and other features that will be available for public use.	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Create gathering spaces and encourage outdoor movement in the form of parks, paseos, streetside green spaces, and outdoor employee amenity areas.	Yes	Yes (except for outdoor employee amenity areas does not apply)	Yes	Yes
Position a public facility/civic node in a convenient location that provides opportunity for a new fire station, a potential new rail corridor transit stop, or other public or quasi-public uses.	Yes	No	No	Yes
Preserve Granite Hill in permanent open space, while allowing trails and other non-invasive activities that will protect the tangible and intangible assets of the landform.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Provide a comprehensive circulation network with integrated mobility options by introducing traffic calming features in the residential areas, by providing pedestrian and bicycle paths and amenities throughout the community, and by providing a non-vehicular bridge connection to the Heritage Lake community to the south.	Yes	Yes (except for the non-vehicular bridge)	Yes	Yes
Identify and implement infrastructure improvements to provide adequate and reliable water, reclaimed water, sewer, and storm drain service for the community.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Create a cohesive architectural and landscape theme that ties the various components of the community together to appear as a unified, defined and recognizable place.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Source: Compiled by LSA (2023).

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