

6.0 ALTERNATIVES

As required by Section 15126.6(a) of the State CEQA Guidelines, this SEIR examines a reasonable range of alternatives to the proposed Project that could feasibly achieve most of the basic Project objectives, but would avoid or substantially lessen the Project's significant impacts.

In identifying suitable alternatives, potential alternatives must be reviewed to determine whether they:

- *Can avoid or substantially reduce significant environmental effects;*
- *Can attain most of the basic project objectives;*
- *Are potentially feasible; and*
- *Are reasonable and realistic.*

CEQA provides the following additional guidance for discussing project alternatives:

- *An EIR need not consider every conceivable alternative to a project. Rather, it must consider a reasonable range of potentially feasible alternatives.*
- *An EIR is not required to consider alternatives that are infeasible. The term "feasible" means capable of being accomplished in a successful manner within a reasonable period of time, taking into account economic, environmental, social, technological and legal factors.*
- *The EIR must focus on alternatives to the project or its location that are capable of avoiding or substantially lessening any significant effects of the project.*
- *The alternatives discussed should be ones that offer substantial environmental advantages over the proposed project.*
- *The EIR should briefly describe the rationale for selecting the alternatives to be discussed, as well as any alternatives that the lead agency considered but rejected.*
- *The EIR shall include sufficient information about each alternative to allow meaningful evaluation, analysis and comparison with the proposed project.*
- *The alternatives analysis discussed must be reasonable, and selected to foster informed decision-making and public participation. An EIR need not consider an alternative where the effect cannot reasonably be ascertained or where the implementation is remote or speculative, because unrealistic alternatives do not contribute to a useful analysis.*

Consistent with the above parameters, included in this analysis are the CEQA-required "No Project" alternatives, which include a No Project/No Development and a No Project/Buildout of Existing Land Use/Zoning alternative, and two additional alternatives. The alternatives were selected for analysis because they may be able to reduce one or more of the significant adverse impacts associated with the proposed Project. The alternatives are listed and summarized below, and subsequently discussed in greater detail within the impact analysis for each alternative:

- *Alternative 1: No Project /No Development*
- *Alternative 2: No Project /Buildout of Existing Land Use and Zoning*
- *Alternative 3: Reduced Site Development Footprint*
- *Alternative 4: Reduced Project Buildout*



In conducting the alternatives analysis, as discussed previously, consideration must be given as to how, and to what extent, an alternative can meet the project's basic objectives. The objectives for the Project, as listed in Section 2.0, *Project Description*, are as follows:

1. *Provide a mixture of residential unit types appropriate to the projected housing needs as identified in the San Benito County General Plan Housing Element;*
2. *Provide space for retail and professional services, including a resort hotel site designed to provide convenient services to residents and guests and to complement and support the existing golf course;*
3. *Provide a local use vehicle, pedestrian, and bicycle roadway network that accommodates both traditional and alternative modes of transportation to minimize auto use for shopping, services, and leisure activities;*
4. *Provide flexibility in land use regulations to allow for site constraints, variations in housing styles, and changing market conditions;*
5. *Promote a long-term project that provides for the creation of new jobs, recreational opportunities, and expanded housing opportunities;*
6. *Create a project that has a fiscally-neutral impact on the County's financial and services resources;*
7. *Integrate the natural and built environments to minimize the disruption of natural features, and to the extent practicable, blend with the landforms, trees, and water courses of the site;*
8. *Establish residential neighborhoods that are inviting for residents and buffered from noise and other nuisance factors associated with agricultural practices, in accordance with County requirements; and*
9. *Maintain San Benito County's natural, rural and agricultural character by establishing an approximately 1,243 permanent wildlife habitat preserve and over 190 acres of on- and off-site agricultural preservation.*

SIGNIFICANT AND UNAVOIDABLE IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

While the specific mitigation measures summarized in the Executive Summary would reduce many significant impacts to a less than significant level, the SEIR identified the following areas where, after the implementation of feasible mitigation measures, consideration of the Project's various design features, and compliance with applicable laws and regulations, the Project would result in impacts which cannot be fully mitigated:

Aesthetics

Implementation of the Project's mitigation measures as outlined in Section 4.1, *Aesthetics*, would reduce aesthetic impacts to the extent feasible. However, due to the size and nature of the proposed Project and the current context of undeveloped conditions on-site and within the Project surroundings, it would have a significant impact on the aesthetic character of the site vicinity by changing the area's character from rural to a more urbanized developed setting. This is a Class I, *significant and unavoidable*, impact to the aesthetic character of the area.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Implementation of the Project's mitigation measure for a GHG reduction plan, as outlined in Section 4.7, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*, would reduce impacts on climate change to the extent



feasible. However, the specific mix of GHG reduction measures has not been confirmed and also the offset program proposed and described in Mitigation Measure GHG-1 has not been presented or approved by the County Board of Supervisors. In addition, the timing of the projects funded by the carbon offsets – and therefore the timing of the reduction in emissions – cannot be confirmed at the time of publication of this SEIR. Therefore, this impact would remain Class I, *significant and unavoidable*.

Noise

Construction of the proposed Project has the potential to adversely impact newly developed receptors (the nearest of which could be adjacent to construction activities) within the Project Site. As described in Impact NOI-1 in Section 4.11, *Noise*, Mitigation Measures NOI-1(a) through NOI-1(h) would be required. These measures would reduce construction-related noise levels during the day, and would prohibit construction activities during the more noise-sensitive nighttime hours to the extent feasible. However, because of the phasing of the Project and the potential for construction activities to occur adjacent or in the close vicinity of sensitive receptors, construction-related noise impacts would not be reduced to a less than significant level. While sound barriers could potentially reduce noise by up to 10 dBA, if construction occurred adjacent to sensitive receptors, this would not be sufficient to reduce the noise below the specific thresholds (e.g. 65 dBA for residences and 70 dBA for hotels). Therefore, the Project's construction-related noise impacts as they relate to on-site sensitive receptors would be considered significant and unavoidable.

Construction-related activities associated with the proposed Project would intermittently generate groundborne vibration on and adjacent to the Project Site if construction occurs adjacent to those sites (within approximately 50 feet). As discussed in Impact NOI-2 in Section 4.11, *Noise*, due to the phasing associated with development of the Project, this may affect existing receptors near the Project Site as well as proposed receptors on-site. Mitigation Measure NOI-2 limits vibration-generating construction equipment. However, if grading were to be required adjacent to an occupied use, this mitigation may not be feasible or may not reduce vibration below the applicable threshold. Impacts would therefore remain significant and unavoidable.

Occupants of off-site residences would be exposed to noise levels that could exceed applicable criteria as a result of Project-generated traffic on SR 156, Union Road, and San Juan Oaks Drive. Mitigation Measure NOI-3 in Section 4.11, *Noise*, would partially reduce impacts. However, mitigation may not be feasible due to physical or other constraints, and would require the cooperation of the existing residents, which cannot be assured. Therefore, impacts related to traffic-generated noise under Existing plus Project conditions would remain significant and unavoidable.

Existing off-site residences along SR 156 and Union Road would be exposed to noise levels that could exceed applicable criteria as a result of cumulative and Project-generated traffic from SR 156, Union Road, and San Juan Oaks Drive. As described in Impact NOI-5 in Section 4.11, *Noise*, Mitigation Measure NOI-3 would partially reduce impacts. However, mitigation may not be feasible due to physical or other constraints, and would require the cooperation of the existing residents, which cannot be assured. Therefore, impacts related to traffic-generated noise under Cumulative plus Project conditions would remain significant and unavoidable.



Transportation and Circulation

The proposed Project would increase traffic levels at study intersections under Existing plus Project conditions and exceed established measures of effectiveness at four of the eleven study area intersections. Mitigation is required for three of the four intersections, and would reduce impacts to two intersections to a less than significant level. However, as described in Impact TRF-1 in Section 4.13, *Transportation and Circulation*, impacts at Union Road-Mitchell Road and SR 156 (Intersection #5) would remain significant and unavoidable in the Existing plus Project condition.

The proposed Project would also increase traffic levels at study intersections under Background plus Project conditions and would exceed established measures of effectiveness at four of the eleven study area intersections. Mitigation is required for three of the four intersections, and would reduce impacts to two intersections to a less than significant level. However, impacts at Union Road-Mitchell Road and SR 156 (Intersection #5) would remain significant and unavoidable in the Background plus Project condition.

Implementation of the Project would increase traffic levels at study intersections under Cumulative plus Project conditions and would exceed established measures of effectiveness at three of the eleven study area intersections. Impacts to one of the intersections would be reduced to a less than significant level with payment of TIMF fees, and impacts at a second would be mitigated to a less than significant level. However, impacts at Bixby Road and SR 156-San Juan Road (Intersection #4) one intersection would remain significant and unavoidable in the Cumulative plus Project condition.

6.1 NO PROJECT/NO DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVE

6.1.1 Alternative Description

The No Project/No Development alternative assumes that the proposed Project is not implemented, and that the Project Site remains in its current mostly undeveloped state (at the time the Notice of Preparation [NOP] was filed on December 2, 2013). The No Project/No Development alternative would include continued use of the existing San Juan Oaks Golf Club, which includes an 18-hole golf course, clubhouse, driving range and support structures on approximately 262 acres (collectively, "Existing Golf Club"). The remaining approximately 1,502 acres of the Project Site are currently used for agricultural activities, primarily cattle grazing with some row crops. This alternative assumes that these existing uses at the Project Site would continue.

6.1.2 Impacts

With the implementation of the No Project/No Development alternative, the Project Site would be maintained for crop production, grazing lands, and golf course uses. Since the proposed development would not occur on the Project Site, impacts related to construction and long-term site disturbances, such as those relating to aesthetics, agricultural resources, biological resources, cultural resources, and geology and soils would not occur. Also, since no additional



residents, employees or visitors would be brought onto the Project Site as a result of the proposed development, population-based impacts including air quality, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, noise, public services, transportation, and some utilities would not occur under this alternative. Because no development would occur, no additional property or occupants would be subject to geologic or other hazards (e.g., dam inundation).

The current availability of water would not be changed and the discharge of additional stormwater associated with urban-related runoff would not occur in the absence of development. However, the existing runoff from crop irrigation and other agricultural uses would continue at their current levels. The continued production of irrigated crops on the Project Site, although limited, would involve the continued use of agricultural chemicals (e.g., fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides, etc.) and associated impacts related to hazardous materials, water quality, and land use conflicts with the adjacent existing golf course.

Overall, while some environmental impacts would occur as a result of the continued use of the site for agriculture (including those related to hazardous materials, water demand and water quality), impacts resulting from the No Project/No Development alternative would generally be less than for the proposed Project. In summary, this alternative would avoid each of the impacts identified in this SEIR, which are listed in the Impact Summary Table. However, none of the Project objectives would be achieved.

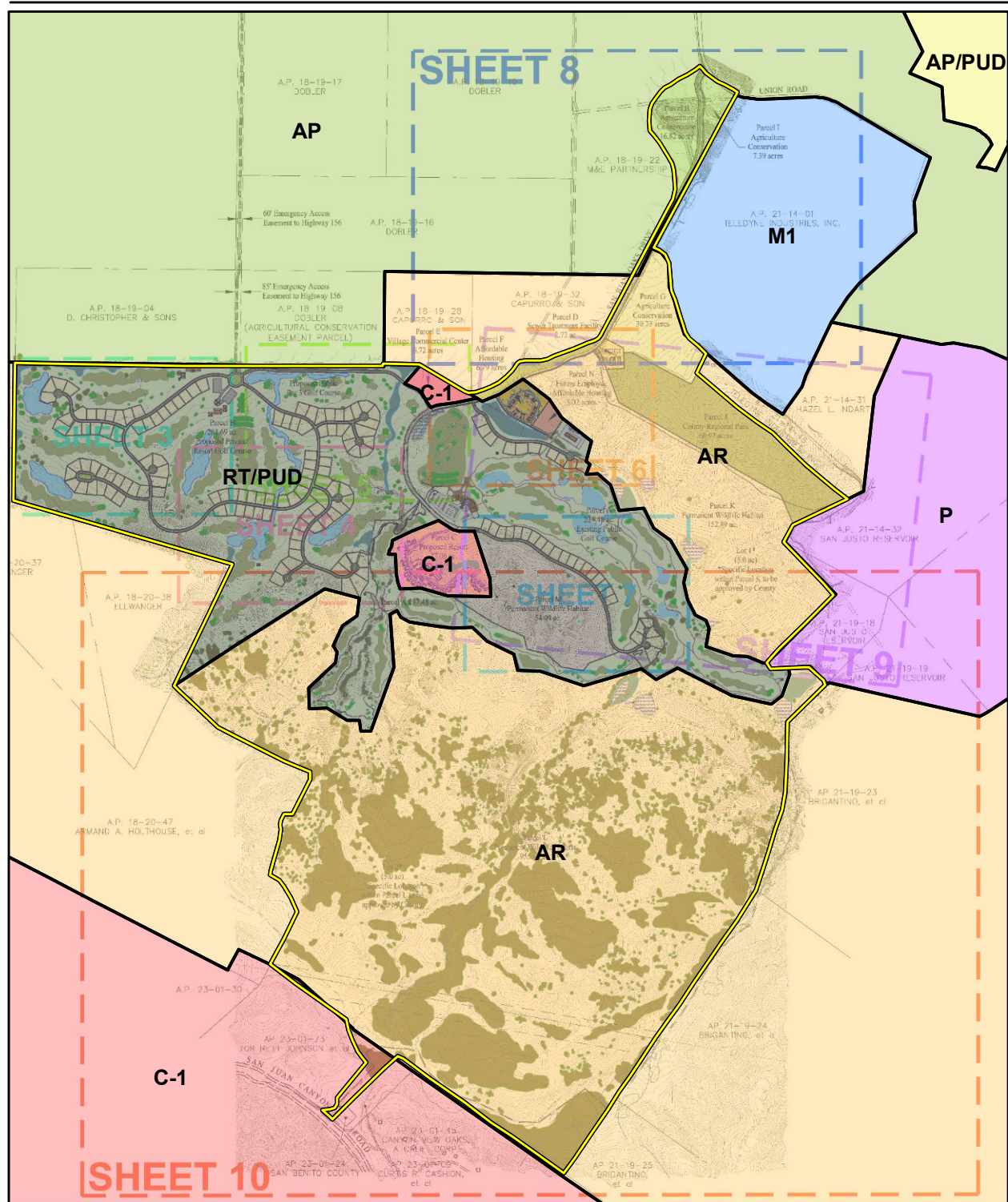
6.2 NO PROJECT/BUILDOUT UNDER EXISTING LAND USE AND ZONING DESIGNATIONS ALTERNATIVE

6.2.1 Alternative Description

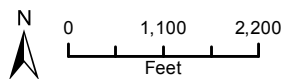
The No Project/Buildout Under Existing Land Use and Zoning Designations Alternative assumes that the proposed Project is not implemented, and that the Project Site is developed in accordance with its existing general plan and zoning designations pursuant to the approvals obtained in 2003. Current general plan and zoning designations for the site include Rural Transitional (RT)/Planned Unit Development (PUD) Overlay and Commercial Thoroughfare (C-1), Agriculture Productive (AP), and Agriculture Rangeland (AR). The amount of development anticipated under this alternative would be consistent with the previously-approved San Juan Oaks Golf Club Project, for which a previous Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was prepared (San Juan Oaks Golf Club EIR, State Clearinghouse No. 2002101031). For purposes of this alternative, it is assumed that the Project Site would be developed in accordance with the above-referenced 2003 approvals, including: a residential and commercial subdivision consisting of a total of 186 residential units, a 200-room resort hotel, a new 18-hole private/resort golf course, a new 9-hole public golf course, new commercial uses, regional park uses, and permanent wildlife habitat/open space. Figure 6-1 illustrates the configuration of this alternative; the breakdown of each land use component is included in Table 6-1.



Del Webb at San Juan Oaks Specific Plan Subsequent EIR
Section 6.0 Alternatives



Basemap by Whitson Engineers, 2015.
 Zoning/Land Use from County of San Benito, 2013.



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| Project Site Boundary | (C-1) Commercial Thoroughfare |
| General Plan and Zoning Designations | (M1) Light Industrial |
| (AP) Agriculture Productive | (P) Park |
| (AP) Agriculture Productive / (PUD) Planned Unit Development | (R) Rural |
| (AR) Agriculture Rangeland | (RT) Rural Transitional / (PUD) Planned Unit Development |

No Project/Buildout Under Existing
 Land Use and Zoning Designations Alternative

Figure 6-1

Table 6-1. Land Use Distribution

Proposed Land Use	Land Use Size (Approx. Acres)	Percent of Gross Area
<i>Buildable Areas</i>		
Single-Family Homes (154 Home-sites)	92	4.6
Ranch Estates (Two Buildable Areas)	10	0.5
Affordable Multi-Family Housing (30 Units)	7	0.3
Future Employee Affordable Housing	3	0.2
Resort (200 Rooms)	27	1.4
Village Commercial Center	7	0.3
Sewer Treatment Plant	3	0.1
Road Right-of-Way	44	2.2
SUBTOTAL	193	9.7
<i>Non-Buildable Areas</i>		
Golf Courses (One 18-Hole Private and One 9-Hole Public)	522	26.2
Permanent Wildlife Habitat	1,163	58.3
Agricultural Conservation	55	2.8
San Benito County Regional Park	61	3.1
SUBTOTAL	1,801	90.3
TOTAL	1,994	100

6.2.2 Impact Analysis

a. **Aesthetics.** Similar to the proposed Project, this alternative would be only slightly visible in background views from State Route (SR) 156. Due to the distance from the SR 156 viewshed and the building profiles in the proposed Project, background views would not be significantly impacted. However, this alternative would have less than significant impacts on public scenic views of agricultural land, rangeland, and hillsides visible from SR 156 and Union Road. Because this alternative would reduce the footprint of development on the Project Site from approximately 323 acres to 193 acres, impacts to scenic views from these roadways would be incrementally reduced when compared to the proposed Project. Impacts to scenic resources would be potentially significant but mitigable and this alternative would be required to implement mitigation measures AES-1(a) through AES-1-(c), AES-2-(a), AES-2(b), AES-2(a), and AES-2(b) as described in the previously certified San Juan Oaks Golf Club General Plan Amendment/Zone Change/Vesting Tentative Subdivision Map EIR.

This alternative also would alter the aesthetic character of the site vicinity through grading activities that would alter the topography and vegetation of the Project Site. Impacts to the site's rural aesthetic character would be significant but mitigable and this alternative would be required to implement mitigation measures AES-1(a), AES-2(a), and AES-2(b) as described in the previously certified San Juan Oaks Golf Club General Plan Amendment/Zone Change/Vesting Tentative Subdivision Map EIR.

At present, there is minimal nighttime lighting on the Project Site. However, similar to the Project, implementation of this alternative would require additional lighting that could be visible from Highway 156 to the south and from Union Road to the west. Streetlights, entry lights, and interior lights have the potential to adversely affect nearby public viewpoints and degrade the nighttime view of the foothill area. The addition of residential and commercial structures, supporting infrastructure, and street lighting in this area would contribute to the alteration of the rural character of the Project Site. However, because this alternative would reduce the total number of residential dwellings on-site from 1,084 to 186 dwellings, reduce the



on-site commercial square footage from approximately 65,000 sq. ft. to 9,400 sq. ft., and reduce the roadway acreage from approximately 85.4 acres to 44.2 acres, impacts from light and glare would be reduced when compared to those that would occur under the proposed Project. Impacts from light and glare would remain less than significant with implementation of mitigation measures AES-1(a) and AES-1(c) as described in the previously certified 2003 *San Juan Oaks Golf Club General Plan Amendment/Zone Change/Vesting Tentative Subdivision Map EIR* (2003 EIR).

This alternative would reduce the significant and unavoidable aesthetic impacts associated with the proposed Project to a less than significant level.

b. Agricultural Resources. This alternative would reduce the amount of conversion of NRCS-designated prime farmland when compared to the proposed Project from approximately 218 acres to approximately 190 acres, assuming all soils to be irrigated.¹ Therefore, this alternative would reduce the loss of NRCS-designated prime farmland by approximately 13 percent. This alternative would retain the areas of the Project Site containing Important Farmland (as designed under the FMMP) (refer to Figure 4.2-1 in Section 4.2, *Agricultural Resources*) in agricultural production; although the Project would preserve some of this area, as described in Section 4.2, *Agricultural Resources*, approximately 12 acres would be converted to non-agricultural use (approximately seven located outside of the agricultural preserve, three acres within the community park, and two acres for the potential future public safety station). This alternative would not convert these 12 acres of Important Farmland to non-agricultural use. However, the previously certified 2003 EIR found that the loss of approximately 190 acres of NRCS-designated prime farmland was a significant impact. As the proposed off-site 153-acre agricultural preserve would not be established to offset the loss of prime farmland, impacts would be significant and unavoidable.

Active row crop agriculture and grazing lands are located immediately adjacent to this Project Site to the west and north. Therefore, similar to the proposed Project, this alternative's residential, recreational, resort, and commercial uses may result in potential conflicts between the existing on- and off-site agricultural operations and new non-agricultural uses. These potential conflicts include: 1) generation of excessive dust that could temporarily affect agricultural productivity; 2) increased regulations and the need to purchase additional liability insurance to protect the farmer from the urban uses ; 3) further limitation on hours of operation and limitation on the intensity of agricultural uses on the portions of their property closest to the urban uses proposed under this alternative; and 4) the risk of encouraging the conversion of other nearby lands in agricultural use generally and/or covered by Williamson Act contracts to proceed with the conversion to non-agricultural uses and/or the non-renewal process/cancellation process. Therefore, impacts would be significant although mitigable similar to the Project, but would be incrementally less than the Project's impacts. This alternative would be required to implement Mitigation Measure AG-3(a) (Disclosure of Potential Nuisance), as described in the previously certified San Juan Oaks Golf Club General Plan Amendment/Zone Change/Vesting Tentative Subdivision Map EIR, which would reduce impacts related to agricultural land use conflicts to a less than significant level.

¹ These areas are not irrigated, and therefore do not currently qualify as prime farmland under the NRCS rating. However, as a reasonable worst case considering the potential for future irrigation, prime acreages are used in this analysis.



c. Air Quality. This alternative would result in the emission of air pollutants that would not exceed recommended significance thresholds. Specifically, development under this alternative it is projected to generate approximately 68.41 lbs/day of ROG, 89.56 lbs/day of NO_x, and 39.18 lbs/day of PM₁₀ as a result of operational emissions associated with vehicular traffic and electrical and natural gas usage. Because this alternative would reduce operational air emissions of ROG from 251 lbs/day (under the proposed Project) to 68.41 lbs/day, it would not result in exceedance of the MBUAPCD threshold for operational ROG emissions (137 lbs/day) (an exceedance experienced by the proposed Project). Therefore, impacts would be reduced compared to the proposed Project, and would be less than significant.

Temporary construction emissions of PM₁₀ associated with this alternative would be increased from 23.5 lbs/day (under the proposed Project) to over 135 lbs/day (under this alternative) due primarily to the lack of project phasing. Higher intensity construction periods result in greater concentrations of air pollutants per day. Therefore, construction-related impacts would be greater than those with the Project, although these impacts could be mitigated, similar to the Project. This alternative would be required to implement Mitigation Measures AQ-3(a) through AQ-3(c), as described in the 2003 EIR, to control dust emissions and combustion emissions during construction. With this mitigation, impacts would be less than significant, similar to the proposed Project.

Similar to the proposed Project, this alternative would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations from construction dust, TACs, or naturally-occurring asbestos, and therefore impacts in this regard would be less than significant.

As described in Section 2.0, *Project Description*, the proposed Project may include an optional on-site WWTP, which would result in potential odor impacts. This alternative would include a (non-optional) on-site package sewer plant, which would generate similar odor impacts. Impacts from objectionable odors would be potentially significant but mitigable. This alternative would be required to implement Mitigation Measure AQ-4(a), as described in the 2003 EIR, to develop an odor abatement plan. With implementation of this measure, this alternative would result in less than significant odor-related impacts, similar to the proposed Project.

d. Biological Resources. This alternative would result in impacts to oak trees and associated oak woodland habitat, wetland habitats, permanent impacts to approximately 143 acres of available grassland and oak woodland habitat for the San Joaquin kit fox (SJKF), direct and indirect impacts to CRLF (Federally threatened) and CTS (proposed Federally threatened) due to loss of aquatic and upland habitats, and wildlife movement in general. The Project may also result in direct take of individual SJKF during grading activities. When compared to the proposed Project, this alternative would slightly increase impacts to annual grassland by approximately 19 acres, from 124 acres under the proposed Project to 143 acres under this alternative. This alternative would slightly reduce the loss of upland habitat for CRLF and CTS, and this alternative would result in similar impacts to wildlife movement in general. Similar to the proposed Project, impacts would be considered significant but mitigable. This alternative would be required to implement Mitigation Measures B-1(a), B-2(a), B-3(a) through B-2(j), B-4(a) through B-4(e), and B-5(a) through B-5(f), as described in the 2003 EIR. These mitigation



measures would reduce biological impacts associated with this alternative to a less than significant level, similar to the proposed Project.

e. Cultural Resources. This alternative's development footprint would be located in an area of high archaeological sensitivity due to proximity to several drainage features and known archaeological sites, similar to the proposed Project. Similar to the proposed Project, this alternative would potentially impact cultural resource sites CA-SBN-199 and -200, which are located within or immediately adjacent to the proposed development footprint. With disturbance of soil during construction, impacts would remain significant but mitigable, similar to the proposed Project. This alternative would be required to implement Mitigation Measures CR-1(a) and CR-1(b), as described in the 2003 EIR, to reduce impacts on cultural resources to a less than significant level.

f. Geology and Soils. As with the proposed Project, seismically induced ground shaking could destroy or damage structures and infrastructure and this alternative also could be subject to structural damage from liquefiable or expansive soils during earthquakes, high groundwater and liquefaction, and landslides in the area of the resort hotel and the wastewater treatment facility. Similar to the proposed Project, impacts are considered significant but mitigable. This alternative would be required to implement Mitigation Measures G-1(a), G-2(a) through G-2(b), G-3(a) through G-3(b), G-4(a), G-5(a), G-6(a), and G-7(a), as described in the 2003 EIR. With implementation of these measures, impacts related to geology and soils would be reduced to a less than significant level, similar to the proposed Project.

g. Greenhouse Gas Emissions. This alternative would substantially reduce residential buildout when compared to the proposed Project, from 1,084 to 186 dwelling units, and substantially reduce the on-site commercial square footage from approximately 65,000 square feet to approximately 9,400 square feet. The reduced buildout would generate fewer vehicle trips overall and lower emissions associated with travel. Overall GHG emissions would be substantially lower under this alternative because of the reduced intensity of development and the reduced development footprint. Impacts would be less than significant without mitigation, compared to significant and unavoidable for the proposed Project.

As with the proposed Project, this alternative would be required to comply with State regulations to achieve overall GHG reductions goals in AB 32 and other applicable plans and policies related to GHG emissions. This alternative would not conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions, and impacts would be less than significant in this regard under both this alternative and the proposed Project.

h. Hazards/Hazardous Materials. This alternative would involve development of single-family residences, neighborhood commercial uses, and a resort hotel on portions of the Project Site that have been historically utilized for agricultural activities. Therefore, similar to the proposed Project, impacts from exposure to residual chemicals from historic agricultural production would remain significant but mitigable.

Similar to the proposed Project, this alternative's development footprint does not contain a listed hazardous materials site, and future residents and occupants would not be exposed to significant hazards from surrounding listed sites. Therefore, impacts from listed hazardous



materials sites would be less than significant under both this alternative and the proposed Project.

Similar to the proposed Project, by complying with applicable laws and regulations intended to minimize potential hazards from wildfires, this alternative would not result in safety hazards from wildfires. Impacts would be less than significant under both this alternative and the proposed Project.

i. Hydrology and Water Quality. This alternative involves a substantial reduction in residential buildout, from 1,084 to 186 dwelling units, and a substantial reduction in the on-site commercial square footage from approximately 65,000 sq. ft. to 9,400 sq. ft. As a result, the overall impervious building area would be reduced from approximately 323 acres to approximately 193 acres. This reduction in impervious surfaces would reduce the quantity of soil subject to erosion and would also reduce the area covered by impervious surfaces, resulting in a potential decrease in surface runoff and accelerated erosion. However, similar to the proposed Project, this alternative proposes to convey drainage through new on-site storm drains to on-site detention basins and all runoff from the site would be captured and detained in these basins. Therefore, the quantities of pollutants potentially entering stream courses with runoff from parking lots, golf course areas, and landscaping would be similar when compared to the proposed Project. Impacts would remain significant but mitigable. Similar to the proposed Project, this alternative is located within an area subject to inundation should San Justo Reservoir dam failure occur. This alternative would be required to implement Mitigation Measures H-1(a) through H-1(d), H-2(a) through H-2(d), H-3(a), H-3(b), and H-4(a), as described in the 2003 EIR. With implementation of these measures, impacts on hydrology and water quality under this alternative would be reduced to a less than significant level, similar to the proposed Project.

j. Land Use. Similar to the proposed Project, this alternative would not conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the Project adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental impact, and impacts associated with land use consistency would remain less than significant.

k. Noise. This alternative would require the operation of heavy equipment during construction of the required improvements, which would result in temporary increases in noise in the immediate vicinity of the construction sites. The existing sensitive receptor nearest the Project Site could be exposed to noise levels up to 80 dBA. However, except for this one sensitive receptor (which is located within approximately 1,600 feet of construction sites), there are no other off-site noise sensitive uses located close enough to be significantly impacted by the temporary construction noise associated with this alternative. Based on the County noise level standard of 65 dBA Leq exterior for residential receptors, the existing off-site residence nearest the Project Site would experience unacceptable noise levels during Project construction. Although this alternative would result in less impervious building area, construction of the golf course would require a substantial amount of earth moving. In addition, although this alternative would require a shorter overall construction buildout period (reduced to six years from an estimated 10 years for the proposed Project), construction would still take place over a period of longer than 12 months. Therefore, construction-related noise impacts would be significant and unavoidable for this alternative, similar to the proposed Project. This alternative



would be required to implement Mitigation Measures N-1(a) and N-(b), as described in the 2003 EIR. However, similar to the proposed Project, it is anticipated that construction-related noise impacts would remain significant and unavoidable.

Similar to the proposed Project, construction-related activities associated with this alternative would intermittently generate groundborne vibration on and adjacent to the Project Site. While impacts to off-site receptors would be less than significant, construction activities could occur adjacent to on-site receptors and produce vibration levels that exceed thresholds of significance. Due to this alternative's reduced level of buildout, less building construction and therefore less vibration would occur. However, anticipated vibration levels and the proximity of sensitive receptors would be similar under this alternative as for the proposed Project. Therefore, impacts would be significant and unavoidable, similar to the proposed Project.

As compared to existing conditions, this alternative would generate an increase in the average number of daily vehicle trips along the segments of SR 156 and Union Road near the Project Site, which has the potential to increase operational noise levels. Vehicle noise generated by this alternative along SR 156 would increase by up to 0.3 dBA. Increases in vehicle noise levels along Union Road nearest to sensitive receptors would also increase by up to 0.3 dBA. However, this is substantially less than the traffic-generated noise levels anticipated as part of the proposed Project, which would be up to 4.7 dBA (under Existing plus Project conditions; refer to Section 4.11, *Noise*). Similar to the proposed Project, Mitigation Measure N-2(a) for this alternative (as outlined in the 2003 EIR) would require the installation of berms between impacted residences and the adjacent roadway. Although the 2003 EIR found this to be a significant but mitigable impact, as outlined in Section 4.11, *Noise*, such a mitigation measure would require the cooperation of the existing residents and/or private property owners, which cannot be assured. Thus, the mitigation is potentially infeasible and the impact would remain significant and unavoidable, similar to the proposed Project.

1. Public Services. This alternative would result in land uses that would require police and fire protection services from the San Benito County Sheriff's and the San Benito County Fire Department. Similar to the proposed Project, due to the Project Site's location in a sparsely populated area, the alternative would increase response times. However, upon payment of public facility fees as a condition of approval, this alternative would not substantially affect the personnel, equipment or organization of the Sheriff's Department or Fire Department, such that new or expanded facilities would need to be constructed. Therefore, under both the proposed Project and this alternative, impacts in this regard would be considered less than significant. However, similar to the proposed Project, development would occur in a fire hazard area and therefore impacts would be significant but mitigable. This alternative would be required to implement Mitigation Measures PS-2(a) through PS-2(c), as described in the 2003 EIR, which would reduce impacts related to fire protection services to a less than significant level.

Similar to the proposed Project, impacts with respect to the provision of parkland would be less than significant under this alternative. This alternative would include the dedication of approximately 61 acres of on-site parkland, which would exceed the County's existing General Plan standards related to parkland dedication requirements and would exceed the proposed Project's public parkland dedication area of approximately 17 acres by approximately 7 acres. In addition, this alternative would result in a reduction in future population from 1,934 residents



to 647 residents which would reduce further potential future impacts on County park facilities. Impacts on park and recreational facilities would be less than significant under both this alternative and the proposed Project.

This alternative would generate approximately 130 students, with 93 students anticipated in grades K-8 and 37 students in grades 9-12. Despite the additional residential buildout, the proposed Project would generate approximately 35 students, with 26 students in grades K-8 and 9 students in grades 9-12. The relatively small number of students anticipated as a result of the proposed Project is due to the age- restricted senior housing proposed for 1,017 of the on-site residential units. Because this alternative would generate a greater number of students, it would have a slightly higher impact on school facilities than the proposed Project. However, impacts would be less than significant in this regard under both this alternative and the proposed Project.

This alternative's anticipated service population of 647 persons would represent approximately 2.5 percent of the anticipated population growth within the County, which represents a reduction of approximately 4.5 percent when compared to the proposed Project. Under both this alternative and the proposed Project, payment of public facilities fees as a condition of approval would help fund library facilities, which would reduce demands on library resources and programs caused by an increase in service population. Accordingly, similar to the proposed Project, impacts to library facilities would be less than significant.

m. Transportation and Circulation. This alternative would generate approximately 4,289 vehicle trips per day, with 265 trips generated during the AM peak hour and 370 trips generated during the PM peak hour. The proposed Project would generate 7,906 total trips, with 373 trips in the AM peak hour and 563 trips generated in the PM peak hour, which would add traffic to nearby intersections and freeway segments. Due to this alternative's reduced intensity overall, this alternative would reduce total trips by approximately 45 percent and reduce AM and PM peak hour trips by approximately 29 percent and 34 percent, respectively. This alternative's impacts to the Union Road-Mitchell Road and SR 156 intersection would be significant but mitigable with the payment of fair share fees towards the planned SR 156 widening project and the restriping of this intersection. When compared to the proposed Project, this alternative's traffic impacts would be significantly reduced and would eliminate the significant and unavoidable impacts at Union Road-Mitchell Road and SR 156 (Intersection #5) under all studies scenarios.

n. Utilities and Service Systems. This alternative involves a reduction in residential buildout, from 1,084 to 186 dwelling units, and a reduction in the on-site commercial square footage from approximately 65,000 sq. ft. to approximately 9,400 sq. ft. However, the golf course would be expanded by an additional 9 holes and approximately 260 acres under this alternative. The overall water demand associated with this alternative would be approximately 1,432 acre-feet per year (AFY), compared with approximately 442 acre-feet per year demanded by the proposed Project. Therefore, this alternative would increase overall water demand by approximately 224 percent compared to the proposed Project. Impacts related to water supply would therefore be substantially reduced when compared to the proposed Project. As with the proposed Project, projected groundwater supply is available to service this alternative, and



impacts related to groundwater supplies and net aquifer volumes would be less than significant.

This alternative would generate approximately 92,859 gallons of wastewater per day, which would be conveyed to an on-site wastewater treatment plant. When compared to the proposed Project's wastewater demand of approximately 0.16 million gallons of wastewater per day, this Project alternative would reduce wastewater demand by approximately 42 percent. The proposed Project would either be served by the City of Hollister's Water Reclamation Facility (which has adequate capacity to serve the proposed Project), or by an optional on-site WWTP. As this alternative would generate less wastewater due to a reduced buildout, impacts related to the need for wastewater facilities would be reduced when compared to the proposed Project. Impacts would be less than significant under both this alternative and the proposed Project.

This alternative would generate approximately 4.05 tons of solid waste per day, prior to implementation of any recycling efforts. Assuming 50 percent diversion as part of recycling efforts, this alternative would generate 2.025 tons per day. Compared to the proposed Project, this represents an approximate 47 percent reduction from the proposed Project's solid waste generation of 3.8 tons/day. Similar to the proposed Project, this alternative would not generate an amount of solid waste that exceeds the available capacity of the John Smith Road Landfill, and impacts would be less than significant.

o. Conclusion. The No Project/Buildout Under Existing Land Use and Zoning Designations Alternative would reduce impacts in many environmental topic areas, due primarily to the reduced buildout potential. This alternative would reduce impacts related to certain impacts within the areas of aesthetics, air quality (operational air emissions), biological resources (loss of upland habitat), GHG emissions, hydrology and water quality, geology and soils, land use, noise, transportation and circulation, and utilities (wastewater demand). This alternative would reduce the significant and unavoidable aesthetic impact of the proposed Project, as well as those related to GHG emissions and operational noise, to a less than significant level. However, this alternative would increase impacts on agricultural resources to a significant and unavoidable level because the proposed off-site 153-acre preserve would not be established to offset the loss of agricultural resources. Significant impacts to the SR Union Road-Mitchell Road and SR 156 intersection would be eliminated, and transportation impacts overall would be substantially reduced. A comparative summary of the environmental impacts associated with the No Project/Buildout Under Existing Land Use and Zoning Designations Alternative with the environmental impacts anticipated under the proposed Project is provided in Table 6-3.

It should also be noted that this alternative would not meet a number of the Project objectives, including: providing a mixture of residential unit types (objective 1); providing a local use vehicle, pedestrian, and bicycle roadway network that accommodates both traditional and alternative modes of transportation (objective 3); integrating the natural and built environments to minimize the disruption of natural features, and to the extent practicable, blend with the landforms, trees, and water courses of the site (objective 7); and maintaining San Benito County's natural, rural and agricultural character by establishing an approximately 1,243 permanent wildlife habitat preserve and over 190 acres of on- and off-site agricultural preservation (objective 9) since this alternative would involve reductions in both types of



reserves. Further, while this alternative would provide space for retail and professional services, including a resort hotel (objective 2) and may promote a long-term project that provides for the creation of new jobs, recreational opportunities, and expanded housing opportunities (objective 5), due to the reduced level of buildout, this alternative would not achieve the same level of retail/professional services (and related sales tax and other revenue to the County) or job- and housing-creation as the proposed Project.

6.3 REDUCED SITE DEVELOPMENT FOOTPRINT ALTERNATIVE

6.3.1 Alternative Description

The Reduced Site Development Footprint alternative would reduce the footprint of the proposed Development Areas for the purpose of reducing agricultural impacts, as well as reducing other development footprint-related impacts, as noted further below. As shown in Figure 6-2, this alternative would shrink the western and eastern ends of the Development Areas. In place of residential development at the western end of the Project Site, this alternative would leave existing agricultural land in place. To avoid potential land use conflicts between adjacent residential and agricultural uses on-site, this alternative would include a 300-foot buffer with a fence to provide physical separation of uses.

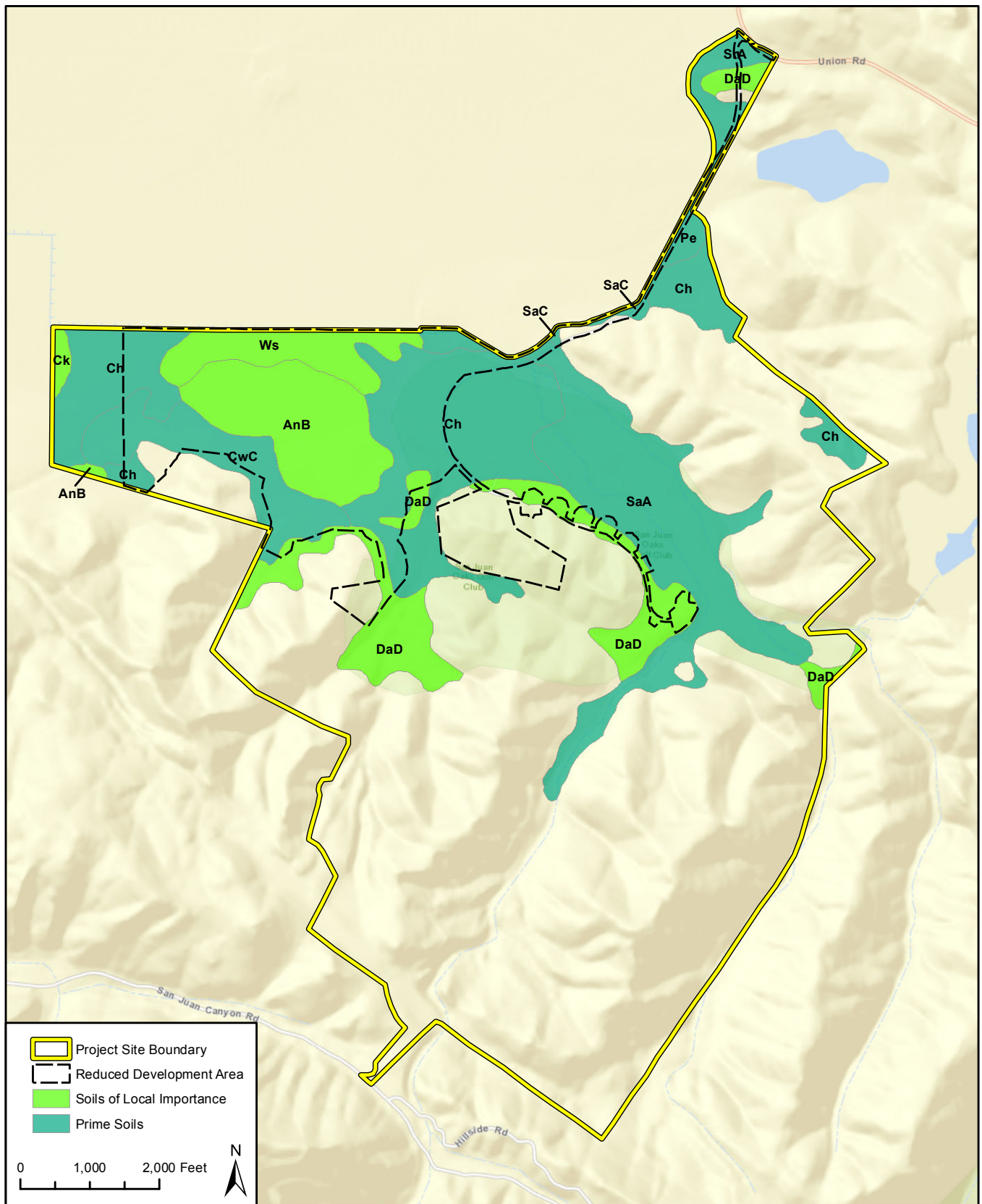
By reducing the footprint of development on the Project Site, this alternative would eliminate the following components of the proposed Project:

- *Neighborhood commercial uses with up to 65,000 square feet;*
- *30 non-age restricted single-family residences adjacent to the south of the neighborhood commercial area; and*
- *153 active-adult residences at the western edge of the Development Area.*

The total buildout under the Reduced Site Footprint alternative would include 901 residential units, 25,000 square feet of commercial space, and 200 hotel rooms. Compared to the proposed Project, this alternative would reduce the number of residential units by approximately 17 percent. This alternative would include the same open space areas as the proposed Project, including an approximately 41-acre on-site agricultural preserve in the northeast portion of the Project Site, approximately 1,243 acres of on-site permanent wildlife habitat, approximately 17 acres of public parkland, and approximately 114 acres of common area open space. In addition, this alternative includes provision for approximately 153 acres of agricultural preserve off-site, similar to the proposed Project.

Similar to the proposed Project, site access would be provided by SR 156, Union Road, and San Juan Oaks Drive, with secondary emergency vehicle access constructed within an existing 60- to 85-foot wide right-of-way that would extend approximately 5,320 feet north from the boundary of the Project Site to the south side of SR 156 (see Figure 2-8 in Section 2.0, *Project Description*). Water would be provided by a new water distribution system operated by a separate entity, and wastewater would be collected and conveyed through a new conventional gravity system of pipes to the City of Hollister's domestic wastewater treatment plant/water reclamation facility (DWWTP/WRF), located just north of San Juan Road. This alternative also would





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Soils by the NRCS.

Reduced Site Development Footprint Alternative

Figure 6-2

include an optional on-site Wastewater Treatment Plan (WWTP), similar to the optional on-site WWTP for the proposed Project.

6.3.1 Impact Analysis

a. Aesthetics. This alternative would have less than significant impacts on public scenic views of agricultural land, rangeland, and hillsides visible from SR 156 and Union Road. This is because this alternative would reduce the footprint of development on the Project Site, and design guidelines and policies within the Specific Plan to high-quality public views would continue to apply, and thus impacts to scenic views from these roadways would be incrementally reduced. Impacts to scenic resources under both this alternative and the proposed Project would be less than significant in this regard.

Although less of the Project Site would be developed, the scale of urban development on the Project Site under this alternative would still be substantial and would continue to alter the existing rural and agricultural landscape of the site. Impacts to visual character would be somewhat reduced compared to the Project, but would continue to be Class I, *significant and unavoidable*. Similar to the proposed Project, no feasible mitigation measures are available to reduce the impact to the visual character of the site.

This alternative would introduce light and glare to a slightly smaller area as compared to the proposed Project. Impacts related to light and glare would therefore be slightly reduced compared to the proposed Project, and would continue to be Class III, *less than significant* under both scenarios.

b. Agricultural Resources. As with the proposed Project, this alternative would result in conversion of approximately 12 acres of Important Farmland to non-agricultural use. However, this alternative has been designed to convert fewer acres of NRCS-classified prime farmland than would the proposed Project: by removing the proposed neighborhood commercial area, adjacent non-age restricted residences, and active-adult residences at the western edge of the Project Site from the envelope of development, this alternative would convert less NRCS-classified prime farmland than the proposed Project (approximately 153 acres compared to approximately 218 acres under the proposed Project; an approximately 30 percent reduction).² As with the proposed Project, this alternative would include an approximately 153-acre off-site agricultural preserve, which would offset the on-site loss of approximately 153 acres of NRCS-designated prime farmland at a 1:1 ratio. Furthermore, as discussed in Section 4.3, *Agricultural Resources*, the off-site agricultural preserve has soils with a higher agricultural value than existing farmland on-site. Therefore, impacts from the loss of Important Farmland would remain less than significant under this alternative, as it would be for the proposed Project.

The retention of agricultural lands to the west of the Reduced Development Area shown in Figure 6-1 could potentially result in land use conflicts from proximity of agricultural and urban land uses. However, this alternative has been designed to avoid potential land use conflicts by incorporating a 300-foot buffer and fencing between these uses. As with the proposed Project,

² These areas are not irrigated, and therefore do not currently qualify as prime farmland under the NRCS rating. However, as a reasonable worst case considering the potential for future irrigation, prime acreages are used in this analysis.



the development of recreational trails within an orchard in the agricultural preserve would result in significant but mitigable land use conflicts between trail use and agricultural operations. Mitigation Measure AG-2 to install signage would reduce impacts to a less than significant level, similar to the proposed Project. Therefore, impacts from potential land use conflicts would remain less than significant.

c. Air Quality. Construction of the proposed Project would result in the temporary generation of air pollutants, which would affect local air quality. However, the extent of construction would be less than the proposed Project due to the decrease in the number of residential units and neighborhood commercial uses. Because the extent of construction would not exceed that of the proposed Project, for which short-term emissions of PM₁₀ during the construction periods would not exceed MBUAPCD thresholds, impacts from emissions during construction would be less than significant, similar to the proposed Project.

The Reduced Project Alternative would eliminate all on-site small scale retail, medical, and professional services, such as a bank, medical offices and out-patient services, a restaurant, a small market, a coffee shop, a bakery, insurance offices, financial brokerage offices, a local use vehicle sales/service center, RV and self-storage, or other similar services. Without these services, residents would be forced to drive outside of the community for these everyday services instead of utilizing local use vehicles or the pedestrian and bicycle network to access on-site services. By eliminating all neighborhood commercial uses, this alternative would not benefit from the estimated mixed-use reduction of 13 percent for total daily trips, 15 percent for AM peak hour trips, and 22 percent for PM peak hour trips that applies to the proposed Project (refer to Section 4.13, *Transportation and Circulation*). While the reduced buildout under this alternative would generate fewer new vehicle trips, this alternative would increase the overall number of daily trips as compared to the Project, and would result in additional subsequent miles traveled. Therefore, this alternative would potentially increase operational emissions from transportation sources.

Because the proposed Project would generate operational ROG emissions that would exceed the MBUAPCD's threshold of 137 pounds per day by approximately 83 percent, a substantial reduction in ROG emissions would be necessary to reduce impacts to a less than significant level. ROG emissions, especially from fireplaces and architectural coatings, would still lead to an exceedance of the MBUAPCD threshold under this alternative. Impacts would remain significant but mitigable with Mitigation Measure AQ-2(a) to install only natural gas fireplaces at residences and Mitigation Measure AQ-2(b) to use low-ROG paints and coatings, similar to the proposed Project.

Similar to the proposed Project, because this alternative would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations from construction dust, TACs, or naturally-occurring asbestos, impacts would remain less than significant under this alternative as well given its reduced scale of development.

Impacts from objectionable odors would remain significant but mitigable, because this alternative may involve development of an optional on-site wastewater treatment plant (WWTP), which has the potential to generate odor nuisance effects, similar to the proposed



Project. Mitigation Measure AQ-5 for an odor abatement plan would reduce potential odor impacts from the optional on-site WWTP to a less than significant level.

d. Biological Resources. The proposed Project would impact approximately 124 acres of suitable grassland habitat for the San Joaquin kit fox. Based on the map of habitats shown in Figure 4.4-1 in Section 4.4, *Biological Resources*, grassland is located at the western edge of the Project Site and where the proposed neighborhood commercial uses would be built. The reduced footprint of development under this alternative would preserve grassland in these areas, which could include grassland habitat that is suitable for the San Joaquin kit fox. Due to the continued loss of suitable grassland habitat in other areas, impacts to this species would remain significant; however, similar to the proposed Project, Mitigation Measures BIO-1(a) through BIO-1(b) would be required to minimize adverse effects on potential suitable habitat for the San Joaquin kit fox and would preserve, in perpetuity, an upland movement corridor for this species. Therefore, impacts to the San Joaquin kit fox would be mitigable to a less than significant level, similar to the proposed Project.

This alternative would preserve additional potential upland habitat for the California tiger salamander. As shown in Figure 1 in Appendix K, upland habitat adjacent to known populations for this species is located in the northeastern part of the Project Site, where neighborhood commercial and residential uses are proposed under the Project. While the proposed Project would result in the loss of approximately 315 acres of upland habitat, this alternative would incrementally reduce the loss of upland habitat by eliminating neighborhood commercial uses and 30 non-age restricted single-family residences from the Project. However, similar to the proposed Project, buildout of this alternative would result in loss of foraging and aestivation habitat for the California tiger salamander and California red-legged frog. Overall impacts to California tiger salamander would remain significant but mitigable.

Development within the reduced footprint under this alternative could involve removal of vegetation that contains nesting raptors and other avian species, similar to the proposed Project. Impacts to nesting birds would therefore be significant but mitigable, similar to the proposed Project.

Development of the resort hotel and portions of residential areas has the potential to result in direct impacts to special-status animal species. While eliminating the neighborhood commercial center from this alternative would preserve some grassland habitat, which could slightly reduce impacts to these species, impacts would remain significant but mitigable, similar to the proposed Project.

The construction of stream crossings, and the repair and/or replacement of in-stream culverts and weirs, also could adversely affect riparian habitat; these improvements would occur under this alternative as well as the proposed Project. Therefore, impacts in riparian habitat and wetlands would be significant but mitigable for both this alternative and the proposed Project.

This alternative would preserve the western edge of the Project Site, which includes valley oaks, according to the Arborist Report in Appendix K. However, development in the Reduced Development Area would still result in direct and indirect impacts to oak trees and oak



woodland habitat elsewhere on the Project Site, similar to the proposed Project. Thus, impacts under both this alternative and the proposed Project would remain significant but mitigable.

Finally, development of the Project Site under this alternative would introduce non-native animals associated with urban areas and invasive plants in landscaping, similar to the proposed Project. Thus, impacts on native species from the introduction of invasive animals and plants under both this alternative and the proposed Project would be significant but mitigable.

e. Cultural Resources. The Project Site is located in an area of high archaeological sensitivity due to proximity to several drainage features and known archaeological sites. With disturbance of soil during construction, impacts would be significant but mitigable for this alternative, as they would be for the proposed Project. Excavations in Holocene-aged alluvial deposits and construction of the proposed resort hotel in Pliocene aged unnamed sediments also could impact paleontological resources, similar to the proposed Project. Thus, impacts on such cultural resources under both this alternative and the proposed Project would be significant but mitigable.

f. Geology and Soils. As with the proposed Project, seismically induced ground shaking could destroy or damage structures and infrastructure. However, given mandatory compliance with applicable County of San Benito and California Building Code requirements, impacts would remain less than significant under this alternative, as they would for the proposed Project. Also, the Project Site could be subject to structural damage from liquefiable soils during earthquakes, which could impact development under this alternative as it would for the proposed Project. Thus, impacts associated with liquefaction under both this alternative and the proposed Project would be significant but mitigable.

Similar to the proposed Project, the proposed water tanks, pipelines, and access roads in the foothills of the Project Site would be at risk for damage related to soil creep and landslides, and the resort hotel could be subject to landslides. By eliminating neighborhood commercial uses, this alternative would incrementally reduce the area of the development that could be susceptible to landslides. Nevertheless, overall impacts in this regard under both this alternative and the proposed Project would be significant but mitigable.

The construction and operation of this alternative could result in soil erosion or loss of topsoil, similar to construction of the proposed Project. Development also would occur on expansive soils as it would with the proposed Project, which could result in structural hazards. Thus, these soil-related impacts under both this alternative and the proposed Project would be significant but mitigable.

g. Greenhouse Gas Emissions. The Reduced Site Development Footprint Alternative involves a reduced buildout, by eliminating all of the proposed neighborhood commercial uses and with 17 percent fewer residences. The reduced buildout, relative to the proposed Project, would generate fewer vehicle trips from outside of the development to the neighborhood commercial uses. However, elimination of all neighborhood commercial uses would increase the number of daily trips to off-site commercial centers, as compared to the proposed Project (see *Transportation and Circulation*, below), resulting in potentially higher emissions associated with off-site travel due to the greater number of subsequent miles travelled to access these off-



site services. Overall GHG emissions may therefore be slightly higher because of the elimination of the neighborhood commercial center, and would remain significant and unavoidable even with implementation of a greenhouse gas reduction plan, similar to the proposed Project.

As with the proposed Project, this alternative would be required to comply with State regulations to achieve overall GHG reductions goals in AB 32 and other applicable plans and policies related to GHG emissions. This alternative would not conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions, and impacts would remain less than significant, similar to the proposed Project.

h. Hazards/Hazardous Materials. Because this alternative would involve development of single-family residences and a resort hotel in a portion of the Project Site that was historically utilized for agricultural activities, impacts from exposure to residual chemicals from historic agricultural production would be significant but mitigable, similar to the proposed Project.

As discussed in Section 4.8, *Hazards/Hazardous Materials*, the Project Site does not contain a listed hazardous materials site, and future residents and occupants would not be exposed to significant hazards from surrounding listed sites. Therefore, impacts from listed hazardous materials sites would be less than significant, similar to the proposed Project.

By complying with applicable laws and regulations intended to minimize potential hazards from wildfires, this alternative would not result in safety hazards from wildfires. Impacts would be less than significant, similar to the proposed Project.

i. Hydrology and Water Quality. The reduced footprint of development under this alternative would incrementally reduce potential erosion from ground disturbance on the Project Site. However, impacts would remain significant but mitigable, similar to the proposed Project, with implementation of measures to reduce construction-related impacts to water quality. Similarly, the reduced footprint would decrease the area of impervious surface on the Project Site, leading to less stormwater runoff. However, as with the proposed Project, impacts under both scenarios would remain less than significant.

The elimination of proposed neighborhood commercial uses and a reduction in the total residential unit count by 17 percent under this alternative would slightly reduce the potential for water quality impacts from stormwater runoff. However, under both this alternative and the proposed Project, impacts would remain significant but mitigable with implementation of measures to improve water quality.

Because the reduced development area would still be subject to the potential inundation area associated with the San Justo Reservoir dam, as shown in Figure 4.9-1, impacts from dam failure would remain significant but mitigable, similar to the proposed Project.

j. Land Use. This alternative would involve the same land uses as the proposed Project, with the exception of eliminating the neighborhood commercial uses from the Project Site. Therefore, similar to the proposed Project, under this alternative, there would not be any conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the Project adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental impact.



Therefore, impacts associated with policy consistency would be less than significant for this alternative, similar to the proposed Project.

k. Noise. Under this alternative, construction activities could occur within 1,000 feet of occupied residences and 800 feet of the existing golf course or proposed hotel, which would generate temporary noise near sensitive receptors. Although the proposed mitigation measures would reduce construction-related noise levels during the day, and would prohibit construction activities during the more noise-sensitive nighttime hours to the extent feasible, the phasing of development on the Project Site could result in construction adjacent or in the close vicinity of sensitive receptors. Construction noise may exceed thresholds of 65 dBA for residences and 70 dBA for hotels. Therefore, impacts under this alternative would be significant and unavoidable, similar to the proposed Project. In addition, construction adjacent to on-site sensitive receptors could produce groundborne vibration levels that exceed thresholds of significance, and vibration impacts would remain significant and unavoidable.

As with the proposed Project, this alternative would locate sensitive receptors near existing off-site industrial, agricultural, and golf course operations that generate noise. However, noise generated by existing uses and future land uses on-site would not exceed applicable County standards. Impacts would be less than significant, similar to the proposed Project.

Under this alternative, operational noise levels would be incrementally reduced when compared to the proposed Project. However, increases in roadway noise levels would likely still exceed the operational noise threshold and thus impacts would be a Class I impact and remain significant and unavoidable under both scenarios.

l. Public Services. The reduced development footprint alternative would generate an incrementally lower service population that requires police protection services. Similar to the proposed Project the increase in demand associated with this alternative would not trigger the need to construct new or altered police facilities. As with the proposed Project, a funding mechanism would pay for additional personnel, which would be housed at existing facilities (thus not triggering the need to construct new or expand existing facilities).

Also similar to the proposed Project, this alternative would not trigger the need to construct new or expanded fire protection facilities because it would include a funding mechanism to pay for additional personnel, which would be housed at existing facilities. In addition, similar to the proposed Project, this alternative would involve an offer of dedication to the County for an approximately two-acre site, as a potential future site for an additional fire station or other public safety facility. Impacts related to police and fire protection facilities would therefore be less than significant, similar to the proposed Project.

By reducing the number of residential units on the Project Site, this alternative would incrementally reduce the number of students generated at local K-12 schools. However, because the estimated 35 students generated by the proposed Project would not require schools to operate above capacity, this alternative also would have less than significant impacts related to educational facilities.



Similar to the proposed Project, this alternative would include approximately 17 acres of public parkland, as well as four private neighborhood parks. With the development of the proposed public parks, the proposed Project would exceed the County parkland standards by approximately 7 acres. Because this alternative would generate less demand (via a reduced residential buildout) but would develop the same amount of parkland, it too would exceed the County parkland standards. Impacts related to parks and recreation would therefore be less than significant for this alternative, similar to the proposed Project.

The service population associated with the proposed Project would not trigger the need to construct new or altered library facilities. Because this alternative would generate an incrementally smaller population on the Project Site, impacts related to library facilities would be reduced when compared to the proposed Project, and would remain less than significant.

m. Transportation and Circulation. The elimination of neighborhood commercial uses and reduction of residential buildout would result in a lower overall trip generation (trips within the Project Site and to/from the Project Site) relative to the proposed Project. Table 6-2 shows, based on the trip rates for appropriate land uses included in Appendix I, the estimated trip generation associated with this alternative.

**Table 6-2
 Trip Generation by Reduced Site Development Footprint Alternative**

Land Use	Size	Weekday Trips	AM Peak Hour	PM Peak Hour
<u>Residential Development</u>				
Single Family – Active Adult	864 du	3,164	172	217
Single Family - Detached	37 du	401	31	40
<i>Gross Residential (A)</i>		3,565	203	257
<u>Other</u>				
Resort Hotel	200 rooms	1,600	62	84
Assisted Living	100 beds	266	14	22
<i>Gross Other (B)</i>		1,866	76	106
Total Gross Trip Generation (A+B)		5,431	279	363

*Source: Trip rates included in Fehr & Peers, 2015 (Appendix I)
 ksf = thousand square feet, du = dwelling unit,*

As shown in Table 6-2, this alternative would generate an estimated 5,431 weekday trips, 279 AM peak hour trips, and 363 PM peak hour trips. Relative to the proposed Project, this level of trip generation would represent an approximate 31 percent reduction in weekday trips, a 25 percent reduction in AM peak hour trips, and a 35 percent reduction in PM peak hour trips (in comparison to the trip generation shown in Table 4.13-9 in Section 4.13, *Transportation and Circulation*). It should be noted that, because neighborhood commercial uses would not be constructed on-site, this alternative would not benefit from the estimated mixed-use reduction of 13 percent for total daily trips, 15 percent for AM peak hour trips, and 22 percent for PM peak hour trips that applies to the proposed Project (refer to Section 4.13, *Transportation and Circulation*).



Although this alternative would reduce overall trips and AM/PM peak hour trips (refer to Table 6-2), the traffic generated by this alternative caused by residents leaving the Project Site to access off-site commercial services would increase by between 13 and 22 percent, and would degrade operations from an acceptable LOS (under Existing No Project conditions) to an unacceptable LOS at the following four intersections:

- *Intersection #4: Bixby Road and SR-156 (AM and PM peak hours)*
- *Intersection #5: Union Road-Mitchell Road and SR-156 (AM and PM peak hours)*
- *Intersection #8: Union Road and San Juan Oaks Drive (AM and PM peak hours)*
- *Intersection #11: SR-25 – Airline Highway and Union Road (AM and PM peak hours)*

Therefore, under this alternative, mitigation would still be required for three of the four intersections, and would reduce impacts to two intersections to a less than significant level, similar to the proposed Project. However, impacts at Union Road-Mitchell Road and SR-156 (Intersection #5) would remain significant and unavoidable, similar to the proposed Project.

Similar to the proposed Project, this alternative would exacerbate intersection operations which are already operating unacceptably under Background No Project conditions, at the following intersections: Bixby Road and SR-156-San Juan Road (#4), during both AM and PM peak hours; Union Road and SR-156-San Juan Road (#5), during both AM and PM peak hours; Union Road and San Juan Oaks Drive (#8), during PM peak hours only; and SR-25-Airline Highway and Union Road (#11), during both AM and PM peak hours. In addition, traffic generated by this alternative would degrade operations at the Union Road and San Juan Oaks Drive (#8) intersection from acceptable LOS during AM peak hours, under Background No Project conditions, to unacceptable levels. In summary, the following four intersections are projected to operate at unacceptable service levels under Background plus Project conditions:

- *Intersection #4: Bixby Road and SR-156 (AM and PM peak hours)*
- *Intersection #5: Union Road-Mitchell Road and SR-156 (AM and PM peak hours)*
- *Intersection #8: Union Road and San Juan Oaks Drive (AM and PM peak hours)*
- *Intersection #11: SR-25 – Airline Highway and Union Road (AM and PM peak hours)*

Similar to the proposed Project, with implementation of Mitigation Measure T-1(b), the intersection of Union Road and SR-156 (intersection #8) would operate at acceptable levels (LOS A or B). Therefore, the impact to this intersection would be reduced to a less than significant level under both scenarios. However, the intersection of SR-25-Airline Highway and Union Road (intersection #11) would continue to operate at unacceptable LOS levels in the AM peak hour, even after implementation of Mitigation Measure T-1(c), as it would under the proposed Project. However, this mitigation measure would reduce delay levels to below Background No Project conditions; in other words, implementation of the identified measure would *improve* operations at this intersection. Similar to the proposed Project, because delay conditions would be improved compared to Background No Project conditions, impacts would be considered less than significant.

Similar to the proposed Project, this alternative would add traffic to nearby freeway segments under Existing plus Project and Background plus Project conditions. However, the traffic generated by this alternative would not exceed established measures of effectiveness by causing



unacceptable freeway segment levels of service. Impacts would be less than significant, similar to the proposed Project. In addition, this alternative would add traffic to nearby freeway segments in Cumulative plus Project conditions. However, similar to the proposed Project, the traffic generated by this alternative would not exceed established measures of effectiveness. Therefore, impacts to freeway segments would remain less than significant under both scenarios.

n. Utilities and Service Systems. Compared to the proposed Project, this alternative would reduce residential buildout by 17 percent and would eliminate up to 65,000 square feet of neighborhood commercial uses. The reduction in the number of active-adult residences would decrease water demand by approximately 37 acre-feet per year (AFY), assuming 0.10 af per du for indoor water and 0.14 af per du for outdoor water. The reduction in 30 non-age restricted single-family residences would decrease water demand by approximately 11 AFY (a combined 0.35 af per du for indoor and outdoor water). The elimination of proposed neighborhood commercial uses would reduce water demand by approximately 19 AFY, based on Table 4.14-2 in Section 4.14, *Utilities and Service Systems*. Therefore, overall water demand would decrease by approximately 67 AFY to 438 AFY in the year 2025 and to 375 AFY in the year 2035. Because the proposed Project would result in less than significant impacts to water supply, and because this alternative would reduce water demand compared to the proposed Project, impacts related to groundwater supplies and net aquifer volumes would be reduced when compared to the proposed Project, and would remain less than significant.

The City of Hollister's Water Reclamation Facility has adequate capacity to serve the proposed Project, and this alternative would generate less wastewater due to a reduced buildout. Therefore, impacts on wastewater facilities would be reduced when compared to the proposed Project, and would remain less than significant. Likewise, the proposed Project would not generate an amount of solid waste that exceeds the available capacity of the John Smith Road Landfill, and this alternative would generate less waste than would the proposed Project. Therefore, impacts related to solid waste would be reduced under this alternative, and would remain less than significant.

o. Conclusion. The Reduced Site Development Footprint Alternative would incrementally reduce impacts in many environmental topic areas, due primarily to the reduced buildout potential, but would increase operational emissions from traffic because it would generate additional vehicle trips caused by the elimination of all neighborhood commercial services from the 901- unit residential community, which would increase off-site vehicle trips to and from commercial uses. This alternative would incrementally reduce some impacts related to aesthetics, air quality (short-term emissions), biological resources, hydrology and water quality, geology and soils, land use, noise, public services, transportation and circulation, and utilities, although the same impacts would remain significant but mitigable under both this alternative and the proposed Project. No significant and unavoidable impacts would be reduced under this alternative (aesthetics, greenhouse gas emissions, noise, transportation and circulation). A comparative summary of the environmental impacts associated with the Reduced Site Development Alternative with the environmental impacts anticipated under the proposed Project is provided in Table 6-3



It should also be noted that this alternative would not meet a number of the Project objectives. For example, it would not provide space for retail and professional services, including a resort hotel site designed to provide convenient services to residents and guests and to complement and support the existing golf course (objective 2). In addition, because this alternative would eliminate the proposed neighborhood commercial development, it would not generate the same number of jobs as the proposed Project. Therefore, the objective of promoting a long-term project that provides for enhanced revenues for the County (via sales tax revenue, etc.), the creation of new jobs, recreational opportunities, and expanded housing opportunities (objective 5) would not be achieved in part.

6.4 REDUCED PROJECT BUILDOUT ALTERNATIVE

6.4.1 Alternative Description

The Reduced Project alternative would include the same development pattern and land uses as the proposed Project, but would reduce development buildout by approximately 25 percent. Accordingly, under this alternative, the total number of residential units would be reduced from 1,084 to 813 residential dwelling units (representing a reduction of 271 units). The resort hotel would be reduced by 50 guest rooms, from 200 to 150. The neighborhood commercial uses would be reduced from 65,000 to 48,750 square feet (including an assisted-living facility with up to 75 beds). Residential development in both the active adult and conventional (non-age-restricted) areas would occur at the same density as the proposed Project, thereby reducing the amount of residential development area from approximately 176 acres to 132 acres (or a reduction of approximately 44 acres). The development areas for the resort hotel and neighborhood commercial areas would also be reduced by about 3.5 acres and 8.6 acres, respectively. Given the reduced residential and commercial development areas, the proposed three-acre community park (including the community garden/dog parks) would not be constructed. However, this alternative would not reduce the size of the proposed amenity center, on- or off-site agricultural preserves, or the permanent wildlife habitat when compared to the proposed Project. Thus, this alternative would provide approximately 21 acres of parkland, an approximately 41-acre on-site agricultural preserve, an approximately 153-acre off-site agricultural preserve, and approximately 1,243 acres of permanent wildlife habitat. Additionally, the two-acre area to be reserved for a potential future public safety facility would remain under this alternative.

Land uses under this alternative would be oriented similarly to the proposed Project, but development would be at a smaller scale. Residential uses would therefore be concentrated in the western portion of the site, commercial uses and on-site agricultural preserve along San Juan Oaks Drive, and the resort hotel would be located near the existing San Juan Oaks Golf Course. Permanent wildlife habitat would be located in the southern and northeastern portions of the site (refer to Figures 2-4a and 2-4b in Section 2.0, *Project Description*). This alternative would result in a net reduction of approximately 59 acres of development area, which would remain as agricultural land. Development under the Reduced Project Alternative would be subject to the same Design Guidelines as the proposed Project, as outlined in the proposed Specific Plan (Appendix B).



Similar to the proposed Project, site access would be provided by SR 156, Union Road, and San Juan Oaks Drive, with secondary emergency vehicle access constructed within an existing 60 to 85 foot wide right-of-way that extends 5,320 feet north from the boundary of the site to the south side of SR 156 (see Figure 2-8 in Section 2.0, *Project Description*). Water would be provided by a new water supply system operated by a separate entity, and wastewater would be collected and conveyed through a new conventional gravity system of pipes to the City of Hollister's domestic wastewater treatment plant/water reclamation facility (DWWTP/WRF), located just north of San Juan Road. Similar to the proposed project, in the event that wastewater is not conveyed to the DWWTP/WRF, an optional on-site WWTP would be constructed. The optional on-site WWTP would be sized to accommodate the reduced buildout.

6.4.1 Impact Analysis

a. Aesthetics. This alternative would have less than significant impacts on public scenic views of agricultural land, rangeland, and hillsides visible from SR 156 and Union Road. This is because this alternative would reduce the footprint of development on the Project Site, and design guidelines and policies within the Specific Plan to high-quality public views would continue to apply. Thus, impacts to scenic views from these roadways would be incrementally reduced. Therefore, impacts to scenic resources under both this alternative and the proposed Project would be less than significant in this regard.

Although residential and commercial development associated with this alternative would be reduced by 25 percent, the scale of urban development on the Project Site under this alternative would be substantial and would continue to alter the existing rural and agricultural landscape of the site. Impacts to visual character would be somewhat reduced compared to the Project, but would continue to be Class I, *significant and unavoidable*. Similar to the proposed Project, no feasible mitigation measures are available to reduce the impact to the visual character of the site.

This alternative would introduce less light and glare as compared to the proposed Project. Impacts related to light and glare would therefore be incrementally reduced compared to the proposed Project, but would continue to be Class III, *less than significant* under both scenarios.

b. Agricultural Resources. Because this alternative would include the same on-site agricultural preserve, including 13 acre community park and two-acre area reserved for a potential future public safety site within the preserve area, it would result in the same level of FMMP-designated Important Farmland conversion as the proposed Project (approximately 12 acres). However, the conversion of NRCS-classified prime farmland (assuming irrigated soils) would be reduced from approximately 218 acres under the proposed Project to approximately 164 acres, due to the reduction in residential and commercial buildout. In addition, approximately 153 acres of productive farmland would be preserved off-site, similar to the proposed Project. As discussed in Section 4.3, *Agricultural Resources*, the off-site agricultural preserve has soils with a higher agricultural value than existing farmland on-site. With the preservation of on-site Important Farmland and productive off-site agricultural land, impacts from the loss of Important Farmland would remain less than significant, similar to the proposed Project.



As with the proposed Project, the development of recreational trails within an orchard in the agricultural preserve would result in significant but mitigable land use conflicts between trail use and agricultural operations. Mitigation Measure AG-2 to install signage would reduce impacts to a less than significant level, similar to the proposed Project.

c. Air Quality. Construction of the proposed Project would result in the temporary generation of air pollutants, which would affect local air quality. However, the extent of construction would be less than the proposed Project due to 25 percent reduction in residential and commercial buildout. Because the extent of construction would not exceed that of the proposed Project, for which short-term emissions of PM₁₀ during the construction periods would not exceed MBUAPCD thresholds, impacts from emissions during construction would be less than significant, similar to the proposed Project.

Because the proposed Project would generate operational ROG emissions that would exceed the MBUAPCD's threshold of 137 pounds per day by approximately 83 percent, a substantial reduction in ROG emissions would be necessary to reduce impacts to a less than significant level. ROG emissions, especially from fireplaces and architectural coatings, would still lead to an exceedance of the MBUAPCD threshold. Impacts would remain significant but mitigable for this alternative with measures AQ-2(a) to install only natural gas fireplaces at residences and AQ-2(b) to use low-ROG paints and coatings, similar to the proposed Project.

Similar to the proposed Project, because this alternative would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations from construction dust, TACs, or naturally-occurring asbestos, impacts would remain less than significant under this alternative as well given its reduced scale of development.

Impacts from objectionable odors would remain significant but mitigable, because this alternative may involve development of an optional on-site WWTP, which has the potential to generate odor nuisance effects, similar to the proposed Project. Because this on-site WWTP would be sized to accommodate the reduced buildout of this alternative, these impacts would be incrementally reduced. Mitigation Measure AQ-5 for an odor abatement plan would reduce potential odor impacts from the WWTP to a less than significant level, similar to the proposed Project.

d. Biological Resources. The proposed Project would impact approximately 124 acres of suitable grassland habitat for the San Joaquin kit fox. Based on the map of habitats shown in Figure 4.4-1, grassland is located at the western edge of the Project Site and where the proposed neighborhood commercial uses would be built. Because this alternative would reduce the neighborhood commercial buildout by 25 percent, these effects would be incrementally reduced. However, impacts to this species would remain significant, and mitigation measures BIO-1(a) through BIO-1(b) would still be required to minimize adverse effects on potential suitable habitat for the San Joaquin kit fox and preserve, in perpetuity, an upland movement corridor for this species. Therefore, impacts to the San Joaquin kit fox would be mitigable to a less than significant level, similar to the proposed Project.

While the proposed Project would result in the loss of approximately 315 acres of upland habitat, this alternative would incrementally reduce the loss of upland habitat by reducing



neighborhood commercial uses and non-age restricted single-family residences by 25 percent. However, similar to the proposed Project, buildout of this alternative would result in loss of foraging and aestivation habitat for the California tiger salamander and California red-legged frog. Overall impacts to the California tiger salamander would remain significant but mitigable.

Development within the reduced footprint could involve removal of vegetation that contains nesting raptors and other avian species, similar to the proposed Project. Impacts to nesting birds would remain significant but mitigable, similar to the proposed Project.

Development of the resort hotel and portions of residential areas has the potential to result in direct impacts to special-status animal species. Impacts would remain significant but mitigable, similar to the proposed Project.

The construction of stream crossings, and the repair and/or replacement of in-stream culverts and weirs, also could adversely affect riparian habitat; these improvements would occur under this alternative as well as the proposed Project. Therefore, impacts in riparian habitat and wetlands would be significant but mitigable for both this alternative and the proposed Project.

Similar to the proposed Project, this alternative would result in direct and indirect impacts to oak trees and oak woodland habitat. Thus, impacts under both this alternative and the proposed Project would be significant but mitigable.

Finally, development of the Project Site under this alternative would introduce non-native animals associated with urban areas and invasive plants in landscaping, similar to the proposed Project. Thus, impacts on native species from the introduction of invasive animals and plants under both this alternative and the proposed Project would be significant but mitigable.

e. Cultural Resources. The Project Site is located in an area of high archaeological sensitivity due to proximity to several drainage features and known archaeological sites. Although this alternative would require less ground-disturbance, due to the reduced residential and commercial buildout, disturbance of soil during construction would still result in significant but mitigable impacts, similar to the proposed Project. Excavations in Holocene-aged alluvial deposits and construction of the proposed resort hotel in Pliocene aged unnamed sediments also could impact paleontological resources, similar to the proposed Project. Thus, impacts on such cultural resources under both this alternative and the proposed Project would be significant but mitigable.

f. Geology and Soils. As with the proposed Project, seismically induced ground shaking could destroy or damage structures and infrastructure. Because this alternative would reduce development potential, fewer residents and structures would be exposed to such hazards. Similar to the proposed Project, mandatory compliance with applicable County of San Benito and California Building Code requirements would ensure that impacts remain less than significant. Also, the Project Site could be subject to structural damage from liquefiable soils during earthquakes, which could impact development under this alternative as it would for the proposed Project. Thus, impacts associated with liquefaction under both this alternative and the proposed Project would be significant but mitigable.



Similar to the proposed Project, the proposed water tanks, pipelines, and access roads in the foothills of the Project Site would be at risk for damage related to soil creep and landslides, and the resort hotel could be subject to landslides. By reducing the footprint of development by 25 percent, this alternative would incrementally reduce the area of the development that could be susceptible to landslides. Nevertheless, overall impacts in this regard under both this alternative and the proposed Project would be significant but mitigable.

The construction and operation of this alternative could result in soil erosion or loss of topsoil, similar to the proposed Project. Development also would occur on expansive soils as it would with the proposed Project, which could result in structural hazards. Because this alternative would reduce buildout compared to the proposed Project, these impacts would be incrementally reduced. However, these soil-related impacts would be significant but mitigable for this alternative, similar to the proposed Project.

g. Greenhouse Gas Emissions. This alternative involves a 25 percent reduction in residential and commercial buildout relative to the proposed Project, and would therefore generate fewer vehicle trips; less use of electricity and water; and less solid waste. It is assumed that overall GHG emissions would therefore decrease by approximately 25 percent: whereas the proposed Project would generate an estimated 15,399 MT CO₂e per year, this alternative would generate an estimated 11,550 MT CO₂e per year. This would exceed the MBUAPCD threshold of 2,000 MT CO₂e per year for land-use projects. The anticipated service population for this project would be 1,965 (25 percent less than the proposed Project). Thus, this alternative would result in approximately 5.9 MT CO₂e/service population/year, which is the same as the proposed Project. Similar to the proposed Project, this level of GHG emissions would exceed the efficiency threshold of 4.9 MT CO₂e/service population/year. Therefore, impacts related to GHG emissions would be similar to the proposed Project, and would remain significant and unavoidable.

As with the proposed Project, this alternative would be required to comply with State regulations to achieve overall GHG reductions goals in AB 32 and other applicable plans and policies related to GHG emissions. This alternative would not conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions, and impacts would remain less than significant, similar to the proposed Project.

h. Hazards/Hazardous Materials. Because this alternative would involve development of single-family residences and a resort hotel in a portion of the Project Site that was historically utilized for agricultural activities, albeit at a reduced intensity of development, impacts from exposure to residual chemicals from historic agricultural production be remain significant but mitigable, similar to the proposed Project.

As discussed in Section 4.8, *Hazards/Hazardous Materials*, the Project Site does not contain a listed hazardous materials site, and future residents and occupants would not be exposed to significant hazards from surrounding listed sites. Therefore, impacts from listed hazardous materials sites would be less than significant, similar to the proposed project.



By complying with applicable laws and regulations intended to minimize potential hazards from wildfires, this alternative would not result in safety hazards from wildfires. Impacts would be less than significant, similar to the proposed Project.

i. Hydrology and Water Quality. The 25 percent reduction in residential and commercial development under this alternative would reduce potential erosion from ground disturbance on the Project Site. However, impacts would remain significant but mitigable, similar to the proposed Project, with implementation of measures to reduce construction-related impacts to water quality. Similarly, the reduced footprint would decrease the area of impervious surface on the Project Site, leading to less stormwater runoff. However, as with the proposed Project, impacts under both scenarios would remain less than significant.

The 25 percent reduction in residential and commercial development under this alternative would incrementally reduce the potential for water quality impacts from stormwater runoff. However, under both this alternative and the proposed Project, impacts would be significant but mitigable with implementation of measures to improve water quality.

Because the reduced development area would still be subject to the potential inundation area associated with the San Justo Reservoir dam, as shown in Figure 4.9-1, impacts from dam failure would remain significant but mitigable, similar to the proposed Project.

j. Land Use. This alternative would involve the same land uses as the proposed Project, at a slightly reduced buildout for urban uses. Therefore, as the proposed Project would not conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the Project adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental impact, this alternative would similarly not conflict with such policies and regulations. Therefore, impacts associated with policy consistency would be less than significant for this alternative, similar to the proposed Project.

k. Noise. Under this alternative, construction activities could occur within 1,000 feet of occupied residences and 800 feet of the existing golf course or proposed hotel, which would generate temporary noise near sensitive receptors. Although the proposed mitigation measures would reduce construction-related noise levels during the day, and would prohibit construction activities during the more noise-sensitive nighttime hours to the extent feasible, the phasing of development on the Project Site could result in construction adjacent to or in the close vicinity of sensitive receptors. Construction noise may exceed thresholds of 65 dBA for residences and 70 dBA for hotels. Therefore, impacts under this alternative would remain significant and unavoidable, similar to the proposed Project. In addition, construction adjacent to on-site sensitive receptors could produce groundborne vibration levels that exceed thresholds of significance, and vibration impacts would remain significant and unavoidable.

As with the proposed Project, this alternative would locate sensitive receptors near existing off-site industrial, agricultural, and golf course operations that generate noise. However, noise generated by existing uses and future land uses on-site would not exceed applicable County standards. Impacts would be less than significant, similar to the proposed Project.



Under this alternative, traffic-generated noise levels would be incrementally reduced when compared to the proposed Project. However, increases in roadway noise levels would likely still exceed the operational noise threshold and thus impacts would be a Class I impact and remain significant and unavoidable under both scenarios.

l. Public Services. This alternative would generate an incrementally lower service population that requires police protection services. However, similar to the proposed Project, the increase in demand associated with this alternative would not trigger the need to construct new or altered police facilities. As with the proposed Project, a funding mechanism would pay for additional personnel, which would be housed at existing facilities (thus not triggering the need to construct new or expand existing facilities).

Also similar to the proposed Project, this alternative would not trigger the need to construct new or expanded fire protection facilities because it would include a funding mechanism to pay for additional personnel, which would be housed at existing facilities. In addition, similar to the proposed Project, this alternative would involve an offer of dedication to the County for an approximately two-acre site, as a potential future site for an additional fire station or other public safety facility. Impacts related to police and fire protection facilities would therefore be less than significant, similar to the proposed Project.

This alternative would include approximately 21 acres of parkland, including four private neighborhood parks and two public community parks, which is slightly reduced as compared to the proposed Project. With the development of the proposed active and passive parks, the proposed Project would exceed the County parkland standards by approximately 7 acres. Because this alternative would generate less demand (via a reduced residential buildout) but would develop the same amount of parkland, it too would exceed the County parkland standards. Impacts related to parks and recreation would therefore be less than significant for this alternative, similar to the proposed Project.

The service population associated with the proposed Project would not trigger the need to construct new or altered library facilities. Because this alternative would generate a smaller population on the Project Site, impacts related to library facilities would be reduced when compared to the proposed Project, and would remain less than significant.

m. Transportation and Circulation. The 25 percent reduced residential and commercial buildout under this alternative would result in a lower overall trip generation (trips within the Project Site and to/from the Project Site) relative to the proposed Project. As shown in Table 4.13-9 in Section 4.13, *Transportation and Circulation*, the proposed Project would generate an estimated 7,906 net new weekday trips, including 373 AM peak hour trips and 562 PM peak hour trips. By reducing the overall residential and commercial buildout by an estimated 25 percent, this alternative would generate an estimated 5,930 net new weekday trips, including 280 AM peak hour trips and 422 PM peak hour trips. Based on this trip reduction, transportation-related impacts would be reduced by approximately 25 percent under this alternative. However, mitigation measures in Section 4.13, *Transportation and Circulation*, would still be required and impacts would be significant and unavoidable, similar to the proposed Project.



n. Utilities and Service Systems. Compared to the proposed Project, this alternative would reduce residential and commercial buildout by 25 percent. As a result, overall water demand would decrease annually by approximately 96 acre-feet to approximately 352 acre-feet (calculated by reducing the residential and non-residential water demand estimates in Table 4.14-2 in Section 4.14, *Utilities and Service Systems*, by 25 percent). Because the proposed Project would result in less than significant impacts to water supply, and because this alternative would reduce water demand compared to the proposed Project, impacts related to groundwater supplies and net aquifer volumes would be reduced when compared to the proposed Project, and would remain less than significant.

The City of Hollister’s Water Reclamation Facility has adequate capacity to serve the proposed Project, and this alternative would generate less wastewater due to a reduced buildout. Therefore, impacts on wastewater facilities would be reduced when compared to the proposed Project, and would remain less than significant. Likewise, the proposed Project would not generate an amount of solid waste that exceeds the available capacity of the John Smith Road Landfill and this alternative would generate less waste than would the proposed Project. Therefore, impacts related to solid waste would be reduced under this alternative, and would remain less than significant.

o. Conclusion. The Reduced Project Buildout Alternative would incrementally reduce impacts in many environmental topic areas, due primarily to the reduced buildout potential. This alternative would incrementally reduce some impact areas related to aesthetics, air quality (short-term emissions), biological resources, hydrology and water quality, geology and soils, land use, noise, public services, transportation and circulation, and utilities, although the resulting impacts remain significant but mitigable under both this alternative and the proposed Project. The significant and unavoidable impacts associated with the proposed Project would not be reduced under this alternative (aesthetics, GHG emissions, noise, transportation and circulation [although impacts would be reduced substantially]). A comparative summary of the environmental impacts associated with the Reduced Project Alternative with the environmental impacts anticipated under the proposed Project is provided in Table 6-3

It should also be noted that, because this alternative would include the same mix of land uses as the proposed Project (albeit a lower buildout for residential and commercial uses), it would not meet a number of the Project objectives. For example, while this alternative would provide space for retail and professional services, including a resort hotel (objective 2) and may promote a long-term project that provides for the creation of new jobs, recreational opportunities, and expanded housing opportunities (objective 5), due to the reduced level of buildout, this alternative would not achieve the same level of retail/professional services or job- and housing-creation as the proposed Project.

6.5 ENVIRONMENTALLY SUPERIOR ALTERNATIVE

CEQA requires the identification of the environmentally superior alternative among the options studied. When the “No Project” alternative is determined to be environmentally superior, CEQA also requires identification of the environmentally superior alternative among the development options.



Table 6-3 indicates whether each alternative's environmental impact is greater, lesser, or similar to the proposed Project. As shown therein, the No Project/No Development Alternative would avoid all of the proposed Project's impacts, and is therefore considered environmentally superior overall. The No Project/Buildout Under Existing General Plan and Zoning Designations Alternative would also be considered environmentally superior. As described in the analysis above, this alternative would reduce the significant and unavoidable aesthetic impact of the proposed Project to a less than significant level. However, this alternative would increase impacts on agricultural resources to a significant and unavoidable level because the proposed off-site 153-acre preserve would not be established to offset the loss of agricultural resources. Significant impacts to the SR Union Road-Mitchell Road and SR 156 intersection would be eliminated, and transportation impacts overall would be substantially reduced. It should also be noted that this alternative would not meet a number of the Project objectives, including: providing a mixture of residential unit types (objective 1); providing a local use vehicle, pedestrian, and bicycle roadway network that accommodates both traditional and alternative modes of transportation (objective 3); integrating the natural and built environments to minimize the disruption of natural features, and to the extent practicable, blend with the landforms, trees, and water courses of the site (objective 7); and maintaining San Benito County's natural, rural and agricultural character by establishing an approximately 1,243 permanent wildlife habitat preserve and over 190 acres of on- and off-site agricultural preservation (objective 9). Further, while this alternative would provide space for retail and professional services, including a resort hotel (objective 2) and may promote a long-term project that provides for the creation of new jobs, recreational opportunities, and expanded housing opportunities (objective 5), due to the reduced level of buildout, this alternative would not achieve the same level of retail/professional services or job- and housing-creation as the proposed Project.

The Reduced Project Buildout Alternative could also be considered environmentally superior for some issue areas, due primarily to the reduced buildout potential. This alternative would incrementally reduce some impact areas related to aesthetics, air quality (short-term emissions), biological resources, hydrology and water quality, geology and soils, land use, noise, public services, transportation and circulation, and utilities, although the resulting impacts remain significant but mitigable under both this alternative and the proposed Project. However, none of the Class I impacts would be reduced under this alternative (aesthetics, GHG emissions, noise, transportation and circulation). In addition, because this alternative would include the same mix of land uses as the proposed Project (albeit a lower buildout for residential and commercial uses), it would meet most of the Project objectives. However, while this alternative would provide space for retail and professional services, including a resort hotel (objective 2) and may promote a long-term project that provides for the creation of new jobs, recreational opportunities, and expanded housing opportunities (objective 5), due to the reduced level of buildout, this alternative would not achieve the same level of retail/professional services or job- and housing-creation as the proposed Project.

The Reduced Site Development Footprint Alternative could be considered environmentally superior for some issue areas, due primarily to the reduced buildout potential. This alternative would incrementally reduce impacts related to aesthetics, air quality, biological resources, greenhouse gas, hydrology and water quality, hazards and hazardous materials, geology and soils, land use, noise, public services, and utilities. However, because neighborhood commercial



uses would not be constructed on-site, this alternative would not benefit from the estimated mixed-use reduction of 13 percent for total daily trips, 15 percent for AM peak hour trips, and 22 percent for PM peak hour trips that applies to the proposed Project. In addition, none of the identified significant and unavoidable impacts (related to aesthetics, greenhouse gas emissions, noise, and transportation and circulation) would be reduced to a lower significance level under this alternative. Further, this alternative would not meet one of the project objectives: providing space for retail and professional services, including a resort hotel site designed to provide convenient services to residents and guests and to complement and support the existing golf course (objective 2). In addition, because this alternative would eliminate the proposed neighborhood commercial development, it would not generate the same number of jobs as the proposed Project. Therefore, the objective of promoting a long-term project that provides for the creation of new jobs, recreational opportunities, and expanded housing opportunities (objective 5) would not be achieved in part.

**Table 6-3
 Comparison of Project Alternatives**

Issue	Proposed Project	No Project/No Development Alternative	No Project/Existing Land Use & Zoning Alternative	Reduced Site Development Footprint Alternative	Reduced Project Buildout Alternative
Aesthetics	=	+	+	=	=
Agriculture	=	+	=	+	+
Air Quality	=	+	+	=	=
Biological Resources	=	+	=	+	+
Cultural Resources	=	+	=	=	=
Geology and Soils	=	+	=	=	=
Greenhouse Gas Emissions	=	+	=	=	=
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	=	+	=	=	=
Hydrology and Water Quality	=	+	=	+/=	+/=
Land Use and Planning	=	+	+	=	=
Noise	=	+	+	=	=
Public Services	=	+	=	=	=
Transportation and Circulation	=	+	+	=/-	=



**Table 6-3
 Comparison of Project Alternatives**

Issue	Proposed Project	No Project/No Development Alternative	No Project/Existing Land Use & Zoning Alternative	Reduced Site Development Footprint Alternative	Reduced Project Buildout Alternative
Utilities and Service Systems	=	+	=	=	=
Overall	n/a	+	+	+/=	+/=

+Superior to the proposed Project

- Inferior to the proposed Project

= Similar impact to the proposed Project

Bold typeface indicates a significant and unavoidable (Class I) impact.

