

CHAPTER 4

Alternatives

4.1 Introduction and Overview

CEQA requires that an EIR evaluate a reasonable range of alternatives to a proposed project that could feasibly attain most of the basic project objectives, and would avoid or substantially lessen any of the proposed project's significant effects. This chapter summarizes the alternatives screening process conducted to identify feasible alternatives that meet project objectives.

The range of alternatives required in an EIR is governed by a "rule of reason" that requires an EIR to set forth only those alternative necessary to permit a reasoned choice. An EIR need not consider every conceivable alternative to a project. Rather, the alternatives must be limited to ones that meet the project objectives, are feasible, and would avoid or substantially lessen at least on of the significant environmental effects of the project. "Feasible" means capable of being accomplished in a successful manner within a reasonable period of time, taking into account economic, environmental, legal, social and technological factors.

The EIR must briefly describe the rationale for selection and rejection of alternatives and the information the lead agency relied on when making the selection. It also should identify any alternatives considered, but rejected as infeasible by the lead agency during the scoping process and briefly explain the reasons for the exclusion. Alternatives may be eliminated from detailed consideration in the EIR if they fail to meet most of the project objectives, are infeasible, or do not avoid any significant environmental effects.

As described in Chapters 1 and 2 the project was substantially reduced in scope after circulation of the NOP. The project is now substantially smaller than some of the alternatives originally contemplated. In addition the project is now not anticipated to have any unmitigated adverse impacts, and therefore the need for project alternatives (whose primary purpose is to reduce impacts) is no longer present.

4.2 Project Objectives

The objectives of the New Leaf development are as follows:

- Develop a residential project consistent with zoning and compatible with development in the area;
- Dedicate a portion of the site for open space in order to preserve a portion of the hillside; and

- To realize a return on investment in the site.

This EIR does not identify potentially significant impacts. Nonetheless, this chapter, in addition to the required No Project Alternative, identifies one alternative that attains the project objectives, is feasible, and could further avoid or lessen environmental impacts. That alternative is the Rehabilitation Only Alternative; no new house would be constructed. This chapter concludes by identifying the environmentally superior alternative.

4.3 Alternatives to the Proposed Project

No Project Alternative

An EIR is required to evaluate and analyze the impacts of a No Project Alternative. The purpose of evaluating the No Project Alternative is to allow decision-makers to compare the impacts of approving the project with the impacts of not approving the project. However, the No Project Alternative is not necessarily the baseline for determining whether the projects project's impacts are significant, unless it is identical to the existing environmental setting analysis that establishes the baseline (*CEQA Guidelines*, Section 15126.6(e)(1)), which in this case it is.

The No Project analysis must discuss the existing conditions and what would be reasonably expected to occur in the foreseeable future if the project were not approved based on current plans and consistencies with available infrastructure and community services. (*CEQA Guidelines*, Section 15126.6(e)(2)).

The discussion of the No Project Alternative normally proceeds along one of two lines. When the project is the revision of an existing land use or regulatory plan, policy, or ongoing operation, the No Project Alternative will be the continuation of the plan, policy or operation into the future. If the project is an individual development project on an identifiable location, such as the proposed project, the No Project Alternative compares the environmental effects of the property remaining in its existing state. However, if other future uses of the land are predictable, such uses also should be discussed as possible no project conditions and the project should be compared to those uses (*CEQA Guidelines*, Section 15127(e)(3)). In this case, the proposed project is an individual development project that does not include the revision of an existing land use or regulatory plan. Therefore, the No Project Alternative will evaluate what could happen at the proposed project site if development of the proposed project did not proceed.

Under the No Project Alternative, the construction of one new home and completion of the 5 partially completed homes would not occur. The site would remain as it is with 5 partially constructed homes on Woodstock Road. These homes could persist in their current condition and would continue to deteriorate. It is likely that the City would require that these homes be demolished as they represent a fire hazard.

In comparison to the proposed project, implementation of the No Project Alternative would eliminate some of the adverse environmental impacts associated with the proposed project. However demolition impacts (noise and air quality) would occur. The 5 existing homes are similar in size and design to the homes in the surrounding area; they are visible from Mulholland

Drive, a locally designated scenic corridor. The existing homes are monolithic and exceed the height requirements of the Mulholland Specific Plan (reaching 59 feet compared to the 40 feet allowed by the Specific Plan). The No Project Alternative would likely result in the removal of these homes.

The No Project Alternative would eliminate air quality impacts related to construction of the one house at the site, but impacts associated with demolition of the five homes would likely occur at some point in the near future.

The No Project Alternative would not attain any of the project objectives and goals. Further, existing conditions (geologically unstable hillside that has resulted in landslides on to off-site properties) would persist under the No Project Alternative. Improvements associated with the proposed project to stabilize area soils, and reduce drainage problems would not occur and the existing homes would continue to deteriorate (until the City requires demolition) creating a visual and potential safety concern for the surrounding area.

The Rehabilitation Only Alternative

Under this alternative, the only construction that would occur would be the completion of the five existing homes. These homes would be finished to include attachment of sewer lines, improvements to Woodstock that would serve as access and other improvements necessary to make the homes inhabitable.

Land Use/Aesthetics – This alternative would have a beneficial effect on Land Use/Aesthetics. By completing the existing homes, the project site would retain much of the visual character of the site without adding another new home to the site, the site would have even more of an “open” character than the project. As with the project, the homes would be landscaped to reduce some of the visual intrusions associated with the homes currently. This alternative would also improve the general area, which is currently in general disrepair.

Traffic – Traffic would be decreased under this alternative, as it consists of adding only five homes to the areas rather than the 6 homes under the proposed project. This alternative also would not require trucks for ground moving activities associated with the construction of the one house as under the proposed project.

Air Quality- The rehabilitation of the five existing homes would result in fewer truck trips as the one home would not be constructed and the associated soil export would not be needed.

Noise impacts would be reduced and as with the project would be below a level of significance.

Public Services– The rehabilitation alternative would result in similar impacts to the project. Under this alternative, new inhabitants would be allowed on the project site, resulting in the need for fire and police service. The project site is located in a very high fire hazard zone, this alternative would still allow structures and put people at risk of injury due to wildfire. Impacts would be incrementally less than the project.

Geology and Soils- Under this alternative, as with the project, the hillside below the five existing homes would be landscaped but not stabilized. Some risk of landslides and erosion would remain.

4.4 Environmentally Superior Alternative

An EIR must identify the environmentally superior alternative. The No Project Alternative would be environmentally superior to the proposed project based on the minimization or avoidance of physical environmental impacts. However, the No Project Alternative does not achieve any of the project objectives. In addition, CEQA Guidelines (Section 15126.6(c)) require that if the environmentally superior alternative is the No Project Alternative, the EIR shall identify an environmentally superior alternative among other alternatives.

The Rehabilitation Only Alternative would be the Environmentally Superior Alternative as it would reduce incrementally construction-related impacts.