

5. Alternatives to the Revised Project

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This section discusses alternatives to the Revised Project. CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6 requires that an EIR include the description and a comparative analysis of alternatives to a proposed project, including both a No Project Alternative and a reasonable range of alternatives that could feasibly attain the project's objectives and avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project. CEQA Guidelines Section 15163(b) states that a Supplemental EIR "need contain only the information necessary to make the previous EIR adequate for the project as revised."

Because this is a Supplemental EIR and substantial analysis of Project alternatives is contained in the original Certified EIR, which continues to be valid, this section focuses on alternatives to the components of the Revised Project that have the potential to generate impacts that were not evaluated in the Certified EIR.

These components include:

- Proposed roundabout on Deer Hill Road.
- Proposed community park.
- Proposed dog park on the north side of Deer Hill Road.

This section evaluates alternatives to these components and focuses on the topic areas for which the Initial Study prepared for the Revised Project determined that the Revised Project would have potentially significant impacts (see Appendix A). This analysis does not consider alternatives that would address significant impacts that were found in the Certified EIR because such alternatives were already evaluated in that EIR. For a full alternatives analysis of the Terraces of Lafayette Project that was the subject of the Certified EIR, please see Chapter 5, Alternatives to the Proposed Project, of the Certified EIR. The Certified EIR included the following three alternatives:

- No Project Alternative
- Mitigated Project Alternative
- Office Development Alternative

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5.2 MITIGATED REVISED PROJECT ALTERNATIVE

5.2.1 PRINCIPAL CHARACTERISTICS

Under the Mitigated Revised Project Alternative, the proposed 44 homes and multi-use on-site trail would be developed as proposed by the Revised Project. Instead of the proposed on-site community park and off-site dog park, the recreational portion of the Project site would be developed with an on-site dog park and passive recreational uses, including open space and picnic areas. This alternative would include the same creek crossings proposed by the Revised Project. The Mitigated Revised Project Alternative would include the same driveways and parking areas proposed by the Revised Project, with the exception of the off-site driveway and parking for the dog park site, which would be left in its existing condition. With the exception of walkways, fencing, and landscaping improvements, the recreational portion of the Project site would remain in its current condition, and provide passive open space uses. Under the Mitigated Revised Project Alternative most of the existing trees (including the large oak tree) would be preserved. As a result of retaining a substantial portion of the site in its current state, the amount of grading would be considerably lower than the Revised Project.

Instead of a roundabout on Deer Hill Road, the access road into the housing area would be controlled by a stop sign at the Revised Project driveway. This driveway and Deer Hill Road would be designed to incorporate the following mitigation measures in the Certified EIR:

- Certified EIR Mitigation Measure TRAF-4: The Project applicant shall either:
 - Widen Deer Hill Road as needed to add a striped westbound left turn lane and appropriate taper lengths approaching the west Project driveway, and maintain appropriate widths for bike lanes, traffic lanes, and proposed sidewalks, as well as legal left-turn access at the adjacent driveway on the north side of the roadway; or
 - Post signs prohibiting left turns from westbound Deer Hill Road into the west driveway. At the mouth of the driveway on the south side of Deer Hill Road, a raised island designed to physically obstruct left turns into the driveway shall be constructed, if emergency access can be maintained to the satisfaction of the Contra Costa County Fire Prevention District (CCCFFPD) and the eastbound bike lane is not obstructed. Raised centerline or median features to obstruct the westbound left turn are not recommended on Deer Hill Road at this location because of prevailing speeds, as well as potential obstruction of left turns out of the Project driveway and access at the adjacent driveway on the north side of the roadway.
- Certified EIR Mitigation Measure TRAF-6: The Project site plans shall be revised such that corner radii and medians at on-site driveway intersections provide a minimum inside turning radius of 25 feet and a minimum outside turning radius of 45 feet, per CCCFFPD requirements.

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- Certified EIR Mitigation Measure TRAF-8: The Project site plan shall be revised at the [...] Project driveways such that adequate truck turning radii are provided, by widening the portion of the entry roadway near each intersection, modifying the median configuration, and/or increasing the corner radius.
- Certified EIR Mitigation Measure TRAF-10: The Project applicant shall either:
 - Widen Deer Hill Road at the west Project Driveway as needed to add a striped westbound median refuge lane to receive left turns from the driveway, and provide appropriate taper lengths west of the refuge land, and maintain appropriate widths for bike lanes, traffic lanes, and proposed sidewalks; or
 - [Implement measures to provide adequate sight-distance] and install a side road symbol (California MUTCD No. W2-2) warning sign facing westbound Deer Hill Road traffic in advance of the relocated driveway.
- Certified EIR Mitigation Measure TRAF-17: Implement [measures to provide adequate sight-distance]. In addition, the Project applicant shall install stop signs for traffic exiting Project driveways, and special design treatments such as paving, to be specified by the City Engineer to alert drivers exiting the Project site that they are crossing pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

5.2.2 IMPACT DISCUSSION

5.2.2.1 AESTHETICS

As discussed in Section 4.1, Aesthetics and Visual Resources, the Revised Project would result in one significant-but-mitigable impact associated new sources of glare. Under the Mitigated Revised Project Alternative, the dog park would be relocated to the Project site and the amount of grading would be reduced compared to the Revised Project. The impacts under the Mitigated Revised Project Alternative could improve slightly with the reduction of grading, because more of the Project site would remain in its existing vegetated state. Under both the Revised Project and the Mitigated Revised Project Alternative, proposed development would be substantially screened from off-site locations as a result of proposed plantings and building design and siting. Therefore, the overall impact would be *similar* to the Revised Project.

5.2.2.2 AIR QUALITY

As discussed in Section 4.2, Air Quality, of this Draft Supplemental EIR, the Revised Project would result in three significant impacts associated with fugitive dust, construction impacts to sensitive receptors and community risk hazards. Also, the Revised Project would not conflict with the Bay Area 2010 Climate Action Plan. Under the Mitigated Revised Project Alternative, construction and operation emissions would

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occur at a lower level than those of the Revised Project due to the reduced amount of site grading, on-site improvements, and road improvements, as well as reduced traffic associated with less intense recreational uses on the Project site. The Mitigated Revised Project Alternative would have an on-site dog park and passive open space uses, instead of the ball field proposed by the Revised Project. Also, the Mitigated Revised Project Alternative would install stop signs instead of the roundabout proposed for the Revised Project, which would slightly reduce the amount of construction for roadway improvements. After implementation of the same mitigation measures applied to the Revised Project, the Mitigated Revised Project Alternative would be a *similar* to the Revised Project.

5.2.2.3 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

As discussed in Section 4.3, Biological Resources, the Revised Project would result in significant impacts associated with loss of native trees and sensitive natural communities, possible loss of bird nests in active use, adverse effects in the creek corridor, impacts to wildlife movement, and potential conflicts with relevant plans and ordinances, although potential adverse impacts could be adequately mitigated to a level of less than significant. Under the Mitigated Revised Project Alternative, potential impacts to biological and wetland resources would be similar to the Revised Project. However, the anticipated loss of native grasslands and native trees would be reduced to some degree under this alternative with the elimination of the proposed soccer field where the largest stand of native grasslands is located, and other grading in the vicinity of existing trees. It is uncertain to what degree the landslide that underlays the stand of native grassland would have to be stabilized as part of the nearby residential development proposed under this alternative, but some additional avoidance of native grasslands is likely. Mitigation measures recommended to address significant adverse impacts under the Revised Project would still apply to this alternative. Overall, the Mitigated Revised Project Alternative would be a *slight improvement* in comparison to the Revised Project.

5.2.2.4 CULTURAL RESOURCES

The Revised Project would result in three significant impacts associated with undiscovered buried cultural resources that would be mitigated to less-than-significant levels. Neither the Revised Project nor the Mitigated Revised Project Alternative would result in a significant impact to historical resources. The significant-but-mitigable Revised Project impacts would occur with any significant ground disturbance to the Revised Project site, and would not be avoided by the Mitigated Revised Project Alternative. Although the Mitigated Revised Project would not include an off-site dog park and would therefore disturb less area than the Revised Project, impacts would be mitigatable to less-than-significant levels under this alternative. As discussed in Section 4.4, Cultural Resources, of this Draft Supplemental EIR, the buildings on both the Project site and dog park site are not considered historically significant. Therefore, the Mitigated Revised Project Alternative would be considered *similar* to the Revised Project.

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5.2.2.5 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

As discussed in Section 4.5, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, of this Draft Supplemental EIR, the Revised Project would not result in any significant impacts associated with greenhouse gases. Under the Mitigated Revised Project Alternative, the number of housing units would be the same as under the Revised Project, but traffic would be reduced due to the on-site dog park and construction of passive open space uses on the Project site, which would result in fewer emissions associated with construction and operational vehicle trips. Additionally, the Mitigated Revised Project Alternative would still be in conformance with the California Air Resources Board's Scoping Plan and the Association of Bay Area Governments/Metropolitan Transportation Commission's Plan Bay Area. Overall, the Mitigated Revised Project Alternative would be considered a *slight improvement* in comparison to the Revised Project.

5.2.2.6 HAZARDS

The Revised Project would result in one significant-but-mitigable impact associated with potential release of hazardous materials during demolition. The Revised Project would result in a less-than-significant impact associated with adequate emergency access or adequate emergency evacuation from the Revised Project site. As under the Revised Project, under the Mitigated Revised Project Alternative the implementation of traffic mitigation measures would be sufficient to reduce potential impacts to emergency vehicle access. Therefore, the overall impact for the Mitigated Revised Project Alternatives on the emergency access and evacuation would be considered *similar* to the Revised Project.

5.2.2.7 LAND USE AND PLANNING

As discussed in Section 4.7, Land Use and Planning, of this Draft Supplemental EIR, the Revised Project would result in one significant-but-mitigable impact associated with loss of privacy to the single-family home adjacent to the off-site dog park and the Revised Project's compliance with the City's hillside development requirements. Under the Mitigated Revised Project Alternative, the Project site would be developed with an on-site dog park and passive open space uses. Therefore, the dog park site would remain in its existing use and the Revised Project's mitigable impact would be avoided. Therefore, the Mitigated Revised Project Alternative would be considered a *slight improvement* in comparison to the Revised Project.

5.2.2.8 NOISE

The Revised Project would result in two significant-but-mitigable impacts associated with construction noise and interior noise levels. The Revised Project would also result in a significant and unavoidable impact associated with exterior noise levels at outdoor recreation areas. The Mitigated Revised Project Alternative would relocate the proposed off-site dog park to the Project site and decrease the intensity of proposed on-site recreational uses. The Mitigated Revised Project Alternative would reduce the amount of construction

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needed for the dog park and off-site roadway improvements. This alternative would therefore reduce the amount of construction needed, thereby reducing noise levels related to construction activities. The recreational activities would be more passive compared to the soccer field and other recreational activities proposed for the Revised Project; therefore, the dog park may generate less non-transportation noise from recreational activities to the proposed homes. It should be noted that the relocation of the dog park to the Project site may expose dog park users to higher ambient noise levels from Highway 24 and Pleasant Hill Road compared to the off-site location under the Revised Project. Under the Mitigated Revised Project Alternative, the same number and location of homes would be developed as under the Revised Project. Therefore, the significant-but-mitigable impact associated with indoor noise levels would be the same under this alternative. Overall, the impact for the Mitigated Revised Project Alternatives on the noise would be considered a *slight improvement* in comparison to the Revised Project, as it would result in less construction noise and less stationary noise to the proposed homes.

5.2.2.9 TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC

As discussed in Section 4.9, Transportation and Traffic, of this Draft Supplemental EIR, the Revised Project would result in six significant-but-mitigable traffic impacts, four significant-but-mitigable impacts to bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and one significant-but-mitigable parking impact. The Revised Project would also result in a significant and unavoidable cumulative impact associated with the AM peak hour Delay Index on southbound Pleasant Hill Road.

Under the Mitigated Revised Project Alternative, approximately one third of the AM peak hour vehicle trips and half of the PM peak hour trips associated with the Revised Project would be removed with elimination of the community park and play field. The delay index at the Deer Hill Road/Pleasant Hill Road/Stanley Boulevard intersection would be slightly reduced for this alternative due to the reduction in vehicle trips. The significant and unavoidable impact on the peak-hour peak direction Delay Index under Cumulative Year 2030 conditions for Pleasant Hill Road would therefore be reduced under the Mitigated Revised Project Alternative.

The significant-but-mitigable impact on emergency vehicle access would be eliminated under this alternative because the site plan would incorporate adequate provisions for turnaround Fire District apparatus on dead-end emergency access roadways on site.

The elimination of the soccer field and proposed on-site dog park and passive open space uses would lower the parking demand; therefore, the potential parking lot spillover on weekends under the Revised Project and the mitigation measure requiring a repeal of the weekend parking prohibition on Pleasant Hill Road to accommodate that spillover would be avoided.

The one-way stop control for the proposed driveway and associated design features for Deer Hill Road would not provide adequate speed reduction to accommodate bicyclist safety crossing Deer Hill Road from the west end of the proposed multi-use trail, and would result in a significant impact. However, this impact

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would be mitigated to a less-than-significant level with the same mitigation measures applied to the Revised Project.

As other impacts would remain the same as the Revised Project, overall the Mitigated Revised Project Alternative would be a *slight improvement* in comparison to the Revised Project.

As part of the Mitigated Revised Project Alternative, alternative options for the Revised Project's roundabout at Deer Hill Road/Homes driveway were considered. As described above, the Mitigated Revised Project Alternative includes a one-way stop sign for vehicles exiting the Project site. Other options considered include all-way stop signs and a traffic signal:

- All-way stop signs. Under the Mitigated Revised Project Alternative, the off-site dog park would be relocated to the Project site. Therefore, the sidewalk connecting to the off-site dog park site would be eliminated as no pedestrian traffic is expected to cross Deer Hill Road at this location. The speed at the intersection under the Revised Project (i.e. with the roundabout) would be reduced compared to the existing conditions and would be similarly reduced under the Mitigated Revised Project Alternative as well, but provisions of safe bicyclist access would be required in order to make the impact less than significant. All-way stop signs at the intersection would create safe conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists, but this option would result in a level of service (LOS) of LOS F and queues would be longer than under existing conditions and the Revised Project.

All-way stop control at the Deer Hill Road/Homes driveway intersection could provide safe conditions for bicyclists crossing Deer Hill Road from the west end of the proposed multi-use trail on the site to the westbound bike lane on Deer Hill Road with the Mitigated Project Alternative. However, the crossing location would need to be incorporated into the stop-controlled intersection by relocating the end of the multi-use trail to intersect Deer Hill Road more easterly at the west corner of the driveway intersection. Installation of stop sign ahead warning signs would provide adequate notice to reduce speed to drivers approaching on Deer Hill Road.

The subject driveway intersection would not come close to meeting all-way stop sign warrants with either the Mitigated Project Alternative or the Revised Project. Where all-way stop signs are installed at such locations with relatively low conflicting side street volumes like these driveways and high main street volumes like Deer Hill Road, drivers tend to become increasingly disobedient to the stop signs. This creates an enforcement burden on the City, but, more importantly, this option would create a safety hazard with the potential for drivers to run the stop signs, which would then create secondary impacts on pedestrian and bicyclist safety as well.

- Traffic signal. Installation of traffic signals would result in operations of LOS A during the AM and PM peak hours and would provide safe pedestrian and bicyclist conditions. However, the crossing location would need to be incorporated into the signalized intersection by relocating the end of the multi-use trail to intersect Deer Hill Road more easterly at the west corner of the driveway intersection. In addition, the intersection traffic volumes would not meet the warrants for traffic signal installation. Installation of new traffic signals is typically limited to locations that meet the warrants because new

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signals tend to increase the number of rear-end accidents. This would be of particular concern for westbound Deer Hill Road traffic because of the steep downward approach to the Revised Project driveway intersection. Also, a traffic signal at the intersection would need additional dynamic warning signs to alert drivers in advance of the traffic signal. In addition, traffic signals would tend to encourage higher speeds, and might be considered inconsistent with the semi-rural design the City pursues, compared to roundabout or stop sign control. The Revised Project with new traffic signals would still operate at a very good LOS, with delays and queues somewhat longer than with the Mitigated Revised Project Alternative.

5.3 ENVIRONMENTALLY SUPERIOR ALTERNATIVE

In addition to the discussion and comparison of impacts of the Revised Project and the Mitigated Revised Project Alternative, Section 15126.6 of the State CEQA Guidelines requires that an “environmentally superior” alternative be selected and the reasons for such a selection be disclosed. In general, the environmentally superior alternative is the alternative that would be expected to generate the least amount of significant impacts. Identification of the environmentally superior alternative is an informational procedure and the alternative selected may not be the alternative that best meets Project objectives. The No Project Alternative analyzed in the Certified EIR would have the fewest environmental impacts as compared to the other alternatives, and would therefore be considered the environmentally superior alternative. However, in accordance with State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e)(2), if the Environmentally Superior Alternative is the “no project” alternative, the EIR shall also identify an environmentally superior alternative among the other alternatives. In this case, the Mitigated Revised Project Alternative would be considered the environmentally superior alternative.