

Chapter 10

Alternatives to the Proposed Project



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10.1 Overview

General CEQA Requirements

The purpose of the alternatives analysis in an EIR is to describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the Proposed Project, or to the location of the Proposed Project, that could feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project, but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project, and to evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15126.6[a]). Additionally, Section 15126.6(b) of the CEQA Guidelines requires consideration of alternatives that could reduce to a less-than-significant level or eliminate any significant adverse environmental effects of the Proposed Project, including alternatives that may be more costly or could otherwise impede to some degree the attainment of the project's objectives.

It is important to understand, however, that the mere inclusion of an alternative in an EIR does not constitute definitive evidence that the alternative is in fact "feasible." The ultimate decision regarding the feasibility of alternatives lies with the ultimate decision-maker for a project, which in this case is the City of Lincoln City Council. Such determinations are to be made in statutorily mandated findings addressing potentially feasible means of reducing the severity of significant environmental effects. One finding that is permissible, if supported by substantial evidence, is that "*specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations . . . make infeasible the . . . alternatives identified*" in the EIR (Pub. Resources Code, § 21081, subd. [a]; see also CEQA Guidelines, § 15901, subd. [a]). CEQA Guidelines section 15364 defines "feasible" to mean "capable of being accomplished in a successful manner within a reasonable period of time, taking into account economic, environmental, legal, social, and technological factors." In deciding whether an alternative is feasible or infeasible, a decision-making body may consider the stated project objectives in an EIR, and may balance any relevant economic, environmental, social, and technological factors. (See *City of Del Mar v. City of San Diego* (1982) 133 Cal.App.3d 410, 417; *Sequoyah Hills Homeowners Assn. v. City of Oakland* (1993) 23 Cal.App.4th 704, 715.)

10.2 Factors Considered In Selection of Alternatives

The CEQA Guidelines recommend that an EIR should briefly describe the rationale for selecting the alternatives to be discussed, identify any alternatives that were considered by the lead agency but were rejected as infeasible, and briefly explain the reasons underlying the lead agency's determination [CEQA Guidelines, Section 15126.6(c)]. This section describes the process used in selection of the alternatives. The alternatives addressed in this EIR were selected in consideration of one or more of the following factors:

- The extent to which the alternative would accomplish most of the basic goals and objectives of the project;
- The extent to which the alternative would avoid or lessen any of the identified significant environmental effects of the project;
- The potential feasibility of the alternative, taking into account site suitability, economic viability, availability of infrastructure, General Plan consistency, and consistency with other applicable plans and regulatory limitations;
- The appropriateness of the alternative in contributing to a “reasonable range” of alternatives necessary to permit a reasoned choice; and
- The requirement of the CEQA Guidelines to consider a “no project” alternative and to identify an “environmentally superior” alternative in addition to the no-project alternative [CEQA guidelines, Section 15126.6(e)].

The significant environmental impacts that the City, in identifying alternatives, seeks to eliminate or reduce are:

- Transportation and circulation impacts resulting from substantial increases in vehicular traffic for roadways outside of the City's jurisdiction.
- Air quality impacts resulting from increased development and vehicular traffic.
- Noise and nuisance effects on adjacent sensitive receptor locations.
- Loss of agricultural land.
- Biological resources impacts resulting from a loss of habitat.

Alternatives Selection Process

In January 2002, the City Council appointed a General Plan Update (GPU) Steering Committee (a council member, planning commissioner, parks & recreation commissioner, economic development committee member, a school board member and two citizens) to direct the preparation of the Draft General Plan. The Proposed Project and the alternatives addressed in this chapter of the EIR are based on several ideas and concepts developed with the GPU Steering Committee at a number of working sessions conducted during the end of 2003 and the beginning of 2004. This process included reviewing the General Plan Background Report (existing

conditions), identifying various land use constraints (i.e., flood zone areas, etc.) associated with the planning area, and reviewing a list of all pending and proposed land development applications for the planning area. The City's proposed amendment to the Sphere of Influence was also considered. From this stakeholder input, as well as input from City staff and the General Plan consulting team, three conceptual land use alternatives were initially developed. A summary of the three conceptual alternatives is provided below in **Table 10-1**.

**TABLE 10-1
SUMMARY OF THE CONCEPTUAL LAND USE ALTERNATIVES**

Alternative	Description
Buildout of Existing Sphere of Influence	The primary objective of this alternative is to show future development within the existing Sphere of Influence. This alternative proposes a minor reduction in the City's Sphere of Influence on the eastern edge. For the remaining areas outside the City limits but within the existing Sphere of Influence, this alternative changes most Urban Reserve and Agriculture land use designations to a mix of residential, commercial, and industrial land uses.
Highway 65 Corridor	The primary objective of this alternative is the expansion of the Planning Area and Sphere of Influence to the west to incorporate lands within the Highway 65 Bypass corridor. This alternative includes a notable increase in the City's inventory of commercial land (primarily focused on the Highway 65 Bypass corridor) and an expansion of residential land uses to the south of the corridor.
Proposed Plans and Future City Form	The primary objective of this alternative is to establish an ultimate physical limit for the community. Building on the Highway 65 Corridor concept, this alternative adds land areas as proposed by landowners to the west and north to examine lands that are likely beyond the 20-year land use need for the community. Under this alternative, the City would look to establish an open space buffer on the western edge of the City and use the extensive flood zone to define the northern edge of the City.

As shown in the table, each alternative represents a particular addition to the existing General Plan area and with a few exceptions (such as the old wastewater treatment plant site); the land use designations within the City limits were not modified. Consequently, the focus of this update was to examine and plan for the extent of future development areas outside the existing City limits.

Having conducted the analysis of the three conceptual alternatives, the various project objectives (see Chapter 2, Project Description) were developed for the Proposed Project. Additionally, the Proposed Project was developed as a hybrid that combined several key features from all three of the conceptual alternatives (e.g., expansion of the Sphere of Influence to include the Highway 65 Bypass corridor) for a 2050 planning horizon. The GPU Steering Committee also considered various future development options including a "Village" concept for new growth areas and the amount of open space areas that would be included within each Village area.

Alternatives Eliminated From Further Consideration

The following alternative was originally considered during the planning and scoping process for the Proposed Project, but was eliminated from further consideration for the reasons expressed below.

Off-Site Alternative

The Proposed Project is projected to result in a build-out population of 132,000 residents by the year 2050. This represents an increase of approximately 101,000 new residents over the existing City's 2005 population of 31,000. Therefore any off-site alternative would need to be designed to accommodate a similar population increase of 101,000 new residents. Given the size and scope of such an alternative two options were considered for the off-site alternative.

One option would be to establish a new and separate community containing approximately 101,000 residents somewhere in the southwestern portion of Placer County. It is estimated that this would require approximately 22,000 acres of land to be assembled. This approach was determined to be infeasible to implement because of the difficulty of assembling this amount of land within this portion of Placer County and the difficulty of generating the level of financing required to establish, the basic municipal services and infrastructure for a new start up community.

The second option considered would be to allow new residents (101,000) to find housing, (approximately 34,000 dwelling units) throughout the South Placer/North Sacramento County region. This would contribute to a variety of potentially significant cumulative impacts (agricultural land conversion, traffic, etc.), although surrounding jurisdictions retain land use authority and authority over the approval of land uses that may result in significant impacts. Additionally, it is anticipated that this option would compound the projected lack of housing opportunities forecasted by SACOG, which could result in increased housing costs.

These options are similar to the various land use assumptions considered under Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 as presented in this chapter. Because of the difficulties associated with implementation of these options and the consideration that these options are inconsistent with SACOG Blueprint recommendations for Lincoln and this region, these options were not considered for further analysis.

In addition, given the nature of the Proposed Project (adoption of a Lincoln General Plan) and the fact that an off-site alternative would not meet the basic project objectives, an off-site alternative is considered infeasible pursuant to CEQA Guidelines 15126.6(c).”

10.3 Alternatives Selected for Further Consideration

In consideration of the selection factors identified above, the following six alternatives have been determined to represent a reasonable range of alternatives which (with the exception of “No Project”) have the potential to feasibly attain most of the basic project objectives. These alternatives include the following:

- Alternative 1 – No-Project/Buildout of Existing City Limits
- Alternative 2 – No Project /Buildout of Existing General Plan
- Alternative 3 - Existing Sphere of Influence Buildout
- Alternative 4 – Highway 65 Bypass Corridor
- Alternative 5 – Increased Density and Reduced Area
- Alternative 6 – California Fish and Game

The following sections provide a general description of each alternative considered in this analysis, with **Table 10-2** providing a brief summary and comparison of each alternative. Following the description of each alternative, the alternatives are evaluated to determine whether they have the ability to meet the basic project objectives (see Chapter 2, Project Description) developed for the Proposed Project. These objectives include the following:

- Provide a comprehensive update to the City’s existing General Plan to deal more effectively with contemporary issues facing the City of Lincoln;
- Develop a general plan that provides for the orderly development of the City with a 2050 planning horizon and projected growth that is both economic sustainable (120,000 to 130,000) and corresponds to the SACOG Blueprint Transportation and Land Use study;
- Maintain a cohesive City development pattern that focuses new urban development in a Village pattern, while encouraging existing neighborhood revitalization;
- Encourage the preservation and maintenance of open space areas (40 percent or greater) within developing Village areas;
- Concentrate and enhance commercial uses in strategic locations, primarily at the City’s major intersections and along the Highway 65 Bypass corridor; and
- Provide for sufficient land around the City limits for new and expanding employment opportunities that focus on safe and clean technology, office, and commercial-related employment centers that ensure the economic vitality of the City and allow for the continued provision of high quality public services to City residents.

A discussion of the environmental impacts associated with each alternative is also provided below. As provided in Section 15126.6(d) of the CEQA Guidelines, the significant effects of each alternative are identified in less detail than those of the Proposed Project. A matrix comparing the significance of the identified impacts for each alternative to the impacts identified for the Proposed Project is presented in **Table 10-3**.

**TABLE 10-2
SUMMARY OF KEY COMPONENTS FOR EACH ALTERNATIVE**

Alternative	Population	Residential Units/Village Areas	Estimated Total Acreage
Proposed Project	132,000	56,106 dwelling units (Villages)	35,500 acres
Alternative 1	65,300	(No Villages)	12,220 acres
Alternative 2	66,500	24, 228 dwelling units (No Villages)	12,690 acres
Alternative 3	84,000	32,870 dwelling units (No Villages)	21,520 acres
Alternative 4	106,000	42,130 dwelling units (No Villages)	22,130 acres
Alternative 5	120,000	56,280 dwelling units (No Villages)	24,000 acres
Alternative 6	130,000	(No Villages)	24,000 acres

**TABLE 10-3
SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVES
(COMPARISON OF IMPACTS WITH PROPOSED
PROJECT LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE)**

Notes: Issue areas taken from CEQA checklist
 + = greater impact than with proposed project
 - = lesser impact than with proposed project

Impact	Proposed Project	Alt 1	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6
Aesthetics							
OSC-11 The Proposed Project would substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.	SU	SU -	SU -	SU -	SU -	SU +	SU -
OSC-12 The Proposed Project would have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista or substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway.	SU	SU -	SU -	SU -	SU -	SU +	SU -
OSC-13 The Proposed Project would create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.	SU	SU -	SU -	SU -	SU -	SU +	SU -
Agricultural Resources							
LU-4 The Proposed Project could result in a substantial conversion of important farmland to non-agricultural uses.	SU	SU -	SU -	SU -	SU -	SU -	SU -
LU-5 The Proposed Project could conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or conflict with existing Williamson Act contracts.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
LU-6 The Proposed Project could involve other changes in the existing environment, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Important Farmland, to non-agricultural uses.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS

**TABLE 10-3 (CONTINUED)
SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVES
(COMPARISON OF IMPACTS WITH PROPOSED
PROJECT LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE)**

Notes: Issue areas taken from CEQA checklist
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Impact		Proposed Project	Alt 1	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6
Air Quality								
HS-4	The Proposed Project would result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of criteria pollutants. Future growth in accordance with the Proposed Project would exceed the daily PCAPCD thresholds for NO _x , ROG, CO, and PM ₁₀ .	SU	SU -	SU -	SU -	SU -	SU -	SU -
HS-5	The Proposed Project would conflict with or obstruct implementation of an applicable air quality plan.	SU	SU -	SU -	SU -	SU -	SU -	SU -
HS-6	Build-out of the Proposed Project would generate emissions above the daily PCAPCD significance thresholds for a variety of pollutants, primarily due to emissions related to increased traffic.	SU	SU -	SU -	SU -	SU -	SU -	SU -
HS-7	The Proposed Project would expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations.	SU	SU -	SU -	SU -	SU -	SU -	SU -
HS-8	The Proposed Project would create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
Biological Resources								
OSC-3	The Proposed Project could have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.	SU	SU -	SU -	SU -	SU -	SU -	SU -
OSC-4	The Proposed Project would have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.	SU	SU -	SU -	SU -	SU -	SU -	SU -
OSC-5	The Proposed Project would have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to marsh, vernal pool, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means.	SU	SU -	SU -	SU -	SU -	SU -	SU -
OSC-6	The Proposed Project would interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites.	SU	SU -	SU -	SU -	SU -	SU -	SU -
OSC-7	The Proposed Project would not conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS

**TABLE 10-3 (CONTINUED)
SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVES
(COMPARISON OF IMPACTS WITH PROPOSED
PROJECT LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE)**

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- = lesser impact than with proposed project

Impact	Proposed Project	Alt 1	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6
OSC-8 The Proposed Project would not conflict with the provisions of an adopted habitat conservation plan, natural community conservation plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
Cultural Resources							
OSC-9 The Proposed Project would cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in Section 15064.5.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
OSC-10 The Proposed Project would cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource as defined in Section 15064.5, directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature, or disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
Geology and Soils							
HS-1 The Proposed Project would not expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving: 1) rupture of a known earthquake, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map, issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault; 2) strong seismic groundshaking; 3) seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction; or 4) landslides.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
HS-2 The Proposed Project would not be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
HS-3 The Proposed Project could be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), but would not create substantial risks to life or property.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
OSC-1 The Proposed Project could result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
Hazards and Hazardous Materials							
HS-9 The Proposed Project could create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials or create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonable foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials to the environment.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
HS-10 The Proposed Project would not emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS

**TABLE 10-3 (CONTINUED)
SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVES
(COMPARISON OF IMPACTS WITH PROPOSED
PROJECT LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE)**

Notes: Issue areas taken from CEQA checklist
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- = lesser impact than with proposed project

Impact	Proposed Project	Alt 1	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6
HS-11 Development under the Proposed Project could be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code section 65962.5 and, as a result, could create a significant hazard to the public or the environment.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
HS-12 The Proposed Project could result in development located within an airport land use plan area or/and could result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the Study Area.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
HS-13 The Proposed Project could impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.	SU	SU	SU	SU	SU	SU	SU
HS-14 The Proposed Project could expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
Hydrology and Water Quality							
PFS-3 The Proposed Project would have the potential in the long-term to deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a substantial and permanent lowering of the local groundwater table.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
PFS-8 The Proposed Project could violate water quality standards or waste discharge requirements, or otherwise degrade water quality.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
PFS-9 The Proposed Project could substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in on- or off-site flooding.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
PFS-10 The Proposed Project would create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing storm water drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
PFS-11 The Proposed Project could place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area, as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map or place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
Land Use and Planning							
LU-1 The Proposed Project could divide the physical arrangement of an established community.	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS