

**4.0 TOPICAL ISSUES AND
IMPACT SUMMARIES**

4.0 TOPICAL ISSUES AND IMPACT SUMMARIES CHAPTER

4.1 Growth-Inducing Impacts

CEQA mandates that an EIR assess potential growth-inducing impacts of a project. The *CEQA Guidelines* describe the required assessment in the following way:

Discuss the ways in which the proposed project could foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment. Included in this are projects which would remove obstacles to growth (a major expansion of a waste water treatment plant might, for example, allow for more construction in service areas). Increases in the population may tax existing community service facilities, requiring construction of new facilities that could cause significant environmental effects. Also discuss the characteristic of some projects which may encourage and facilitate other activities that could significantly affect the environment, either individually or cumulatively. It must not be assumed that growth in any area is necessarily beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15126.2(d)).

Growth-inducing impacts typically arise when a project would provide new infrastructure or public services that can be used to serve other future projects. The analysis should be balanced with the general rule that EIRs should evaluate foreseeable, but not speculative, impacts. Note that the assessment of growth-inducing impacts is not the same assessment that is required for cumulative impacts (which are assessed in each section of Chapter 3 of this EIR). Growth-inducing impacts refer to impacts that might arise from the project if it were approved while cumulative impacts are the impacts resulting from the project plus other projects that have been specifically approved or proposed.

The one element of the proposed Garden's Gate project that might directly induce additional development in the area is the proposed project street system. The new access to Oak Knoll Road and street stubs to undeveloped property to the south could facilitate development of that southern property. However, this area to the south could develop without this new access to Oak Knoll Road, because it also has easy access to South State Street.

The project could act as a precedent for new growth in the area between Gobalet Lane and Highway 253. However, this area has long been slated for potential Suburban Residential development, and is currently designated for similar development (plus some mixed use along South State Street) in the Draft 2007 UVAP. Properties between the site and Highway 253 could develop whether or not the Garden's Gate site is developed.

The project could induce the future development of the Remainder Parcel at the west end of the property. Two residences could be constructed on this 13.13-acre property. Two additional units would not have a substantial impact on any resources with the exception of possible impacts to plants and animals. Those impacts would need to be assessed at the time a proposal to subdivide the property was submitted. It is

speculative at this stage to determine where building envelopes would be proposed and what the site-specific impacts would be.

There is a vacant 5.5-acre parcel between the project site and South State Street. This site was recently rezoned by the County to R-3, which allows multi-family development at a maximum density of 29 units per acre. The parcel is currently for sale. This parcel has access directly to South State Street. The proposed extension of Plant Road through this parcel and the roundabout at the Plant Road/South State Street intersection would provide access improvements that might otherwise need to be developed as part of development of the R-3 zoned parcel. However, the project does not specifically induce development of this site. In addition, the County has already approved development of this site by including it in the list of projects to be rezoned to R-3 to meet the General Plan Housing Element requirements related to zoning sufficient land to be developed for affordable housing. Future development of this parcel requires only the issuance of building permits – no additional CEQA review or other County permits are needed.

The proposed project would not have significant growth-inducing impacts. The project is consistent with growth allowed by the existing General Plan and the proposed Draft 2007 UVAP.

4.2 Project Alternatives

CEQA requires that the EIR assess alternatives to the project if the project would have significant environmental impacts, even if these impacts can be mitigated to a level that is less than significant. As noted in Chapter 3.0 of this EIR, the project would have a number of significant impacts. This EIR therefore assesses alternatives to the project.

The CEQA Guidelines offer a number of requirements and recommendations regarding the alternatives analysis. The more pertinent issues are summarized as follows:

- A range of reasonable alternatives must be assessed. The range must be sufficient to permit a reasonable choice of alternatives so far as environmental aspects are concerned. The EIR need not assess multiple variations of alternatives. The range of alternatives to be assessed is governed by the rule of reason.
- Alternatives must be ones that could feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the proposed project and could avoid or substantially lessen one or more of the significant effects of the project. While alternatives can impede the attainment of the objectives, they should not substantially impede those objectives. Alternatives that fundamentally change the nature of the project do not meet the basic objectives of the project.
- The alternatives must be feasible. Feasibility takes into account factors such as site suitability, economic viability, availability of infrastructure, consistency with the Mendocino County Plan, other plans and regulatory limitations, jurisdictional boundaries, and ability to acquire, control, or gain access to alternative sites.
- The analysis of the alternative must determine whether the alternative reduces the significant impacts identified for the project. If the alternative would generate additional significant impacts, those must be identified and discussed.
- One of the alternatives to be assessed must be the “no project” alternative. (See discussion below under that heading.)
- The EIR must assess the identified alternatives and determine which among the alternatives (including the project as proposed) is the environmentally superior alternative. If the no project alternative is identified as the environmentally superior alternative, then another of the alternatives must be identified as the environmentally superior alternative among the remaining alternatives.

Using these guidelines as well as the County's CEQA guidelines for identifying potential project alternatives, this EIR has identified the following alternatives:

- A. Alternative 1 – No Project
- B. Alternative 2 – No Project Alternative - Current Entitlement
- C. Alternative 3 – Reduced Density Consistent with Zoning
- D. Alternative 4 – Reduced Density
- E. Alternative 5 – Mitigated Project
- F. Alternative 6 – Off-Site Alternative

In the final subsection, these alternatives are compared to the project as proposed (complete with EIR-recommended mitigation measures) and to one another to identify the environmentally superior alternative.

A. ALTERNATIVE 1 – NO PROJECT

1. Description

The No Project Alternative describes the environmental effects of not approving the proposed project. This alternative would include no new development and maintain the status quo on the site, though it would not foreclose possible future development of the site. The site would continue to be used mainly to grow commercial wine grapes.

2. Environmental Impacts

Geology and Soils

No grading or construction would occur so there would be no destabilizing slopes or landslides, and no damage of improvements due to soil or geologic conditions. There would continue to be tilling of the vineyard, which would create some soil erosion, but there would be no increase in the amount of erosion. The alternative would avoid impacts associated with landsliding, seismic activity, grading, and additional soil erosion.

Hydrology and Water Quality

The alternative would avoid impacts associated with on-site and off-site flooding as there would be no increase in peak flows. The alternative would avoid impacts to water quality from additional soil erosion, non-point pollution from runoff on streets and parking areas (i.e. grease, oil, etc.), and the use of landscaping chemicals and residues from normal residential use. There could remain some runoff from agricultural chemicals used on the vineyard, but there would be no increase over baseline conditions.

Biological Resources

The alternative would not require disturbance of any habitat on the site. The alternative would therefore avoid impacts to oaks and Cleland Mountain Creek. The alternative would avoid impacts to biological resources.

Cultural Resources

As no development would occur, there would be no disturbance of possible cultural resources on the site. The alternative would avoid impacts to cultural resources.

Traffic and Circulation

The alternative would not alter the number of trips on South State Street or other streets in the area. There would be no new traffic connection to Oak Knoll Road, or new traffic on that street or streets that connect to it. There would be no additional risk to bicyclists or pedestrians using Oak Knoll Road. The alternative would avoid traffic impacts.

Air Quality

The alternative would not require site grading, so there would be no dust generation. There could be some dust generated by continuing agricultural tilling of the site, but the amount produced would not exceed baseline conditions. There would be no construction equipment operating on the site nor generation of any additional motor vehicle trips. Therefore, the alternative would not generate pollutant emissions into the air. The alternative would avoid new air quality impacts. The alternative would avoid any new impacts on energy supplies as there would be no need to use energy to construct or operate the project. The alternative would not generate any new greenhouse gas emissions, and, therefore, would not contribute to global climate change.

Noise

The alternative would avoid noise impacts as there would be no noise generated by project construction, residential use of the site, or new motor vehicle traffic.

Aesthetics

The alternative would avoid visual impacts because it would retain the site in its current natural state. No site grading, building construction, or driveway construction would occur.

Public Services and Infrastructure

The alternative would avoid impacts to public service and infrastructure providers. Because no one would reside on the site, there would be no need for public water, wastewater treatment and disposal, school capacity, or police, fire, or emergency medical response. There would be no increased demand for recreational facilities. No solid waste would be generated. Workers or residents would not be exposed to possible toxic wastes on the site.

Land Use

The alternative would avoid any land use conflicts with adjacent neighbors. The site would remain privately owned farmland. The site would be consistent with the Mendocino County General Plan.

3. Conclusions

The No Project Alternative is the environmentally superior alternative because it would eliminate all the potentially significant impacts resulting from construction and future use of the project. There would remain the baseline conditions of soil erosion, dust pollution, machine noise, and water quality impacts from agricultural operations. This alternative, however, would not meet any of the project objectives because the site would retain its current use.

B. ALTERNATIVE 2 – NO PROJECT – CURRENT ENTITLEMENT

1. Description

The No Project – Current Entitlement Alternative assumes that the project site would be developed with uses that are consistent with existing land use designations and zoning densities and lot sizes, without the proposed density bonus. The Mendocino County General Plan and the Zoning Ordinance designate the site Suburban Residential, which allows a maximum of six (6) residential units per acre of development space (with a minimum lot size of 6,000 square feet). Without the requested density bonus, the site could support a maximum of 171 residential units, or an approximately 13% reduction from the number of units included in the proposed project.

These units would all be single-family units (one- to two-story) on individual lots. To obtain this level of density while maintaining the required 6,000 square foot lot size would require elimination of the on-site parks. The development would be laid out like a typical subdivision with the land being used for access or homesites.

2. Environmental Impacts

Geology and Soils

The alternative would require basically the same amount of grading and ground disturbance as the proposed project. The same hazards related to groundshaking, unstable slopes, and unstable soils would apply to this alternative. The same mitigation measures described in Section 3.1 would be required, and they would reduce the impacts to a less than significant level. The project would result in the same grading and potential for erosion control. The same erosion control measures would apply and would reduce that impact to a less than significant level.

Hydrology and Water Quality

The reduction in units would not likely result in a substantial reduction in the amount of impervious surface on the site. In fact, the elimination of the two parks could increase peak runoff. The underground detention facilities planned for the park would need to be located in some other location. It is possible that many smaller detention facilities would be required on individual parcels. Locating appropriate sites for detention facilities would be difficult using a standard subdivision design.

The alternative would be expected to have approximately the same impacts as the proposed project on downstream water quality. The same mitigations recommended for the project in Section 3.2 would apply, and they would reduce all impacts to a less than significant level.

Biological Resources

The project would have the same less than significant impacts on special status species and general biological resources. Impacts to Cleland Mountain Creek, on-site oaks, and wildlife travel would be similar to the project as proposed, and they would all be reduced

to a less than significant level with implementation of the mitigation measures recommended in Section 3.3.

Cultural Resources

The project is not predicted to damage cultural resources. The mitigation measures recommended in Section 3.4 that mitigate any impact in the case of unknown resources being uncovered during site grading would also apply to this alternative, and would reduce the impact to a less than significant level.

Traffic and Circulation

The alternative would generate slightly more traffic than the proposed project (because single-family residences generate more traffic than townhouses). The alternative would generate 1,636 daily two-way trips as compared to 1,612 trips for the project as proposed. This is basically the same number of trips, and the alternative would have the same traffic impacts as described for the proposed project. The alternative would have the same less-than-significant impacts on roadway and intersection capacity. There would be the same potentially significant impact regarding pedestrian safety and the cumulative bicycle safety impact, and the same mitigation measures recommended for the project would be required. These mitigations would reduce the impacts to a less than significant level. There would continue to be the secondary impacts of constructing pedestrian and bicycle improvements along Oak Knoll Road.

Air Quality

The alternative would generate the same amount of pollutants as the proposed project. The alternative would have the same less than significant impact for emissions from project-generated vehicles. The potentially significant particulate emissions impact from project construction would be the same as for the project. The recommended mitigation measure would reduce this impact to a less than significant level.

The alternative would take approximately the same amount of energy to construct. Future energy use would also be about the same (since single-family residences use more energy than townhouses). The alternative would have about the same impacts from greenhouse gas emissions. The same mitigation measures recommended for the proposed project would apply to this alternative. The cumulative impact on Global Climate Change (GCC) would remain a significant and unavoidable impact.

Noise

The alternative would have approximately the same noise impacts as the proposed project. New traffic-generated noise would be less than significant for residents living along South State Street. The cumulative traffic noise impact on residents living along Oak Knoll Road, the northernmost block of Oak Court Road, and the southern end of South Dora Street would be significant for this alternative. Residents living near the east end of the site would be exposed to traffic noise, and the same mitigation recommended for the proposed project would apply to this alternative. Construction noise would be potentially significant for this alternative, and the same mitigation measures

recommended for the project would apply. All noise impacts but the cumulative impact to streets northwest of the site. would be reduced to a less than significant level.

Aesthetics

The alternative would reduce the overall number of units and eliminate three-story buildings. However, from vantage points outside the project site, these differences would not substantially reduce visual changes. The views of the park from a section of South State Street would be replaced with views of residences. Similarly, views of the site from upper elevations to the northwest would not include the open parks on the site. However, these changes in impact are not substantial. There could be some decrease in visual impacts for residents of some of the seven residences along the north side of Gobalet Lane, but, again, the overall change in views would remain approximately the same. The alternative would have approximately the same visual impacts as the proposed project. The mitigation measures recommended in Section 3.8 would apply to this alternative, and they would reduce the impacts to a less than significant level.

Public Services and Infrastructure

The alternative would reduce the demand for water and wastewater treatment and disposal by approximately 13% and would reduce the demand for most public services by that same amount. The same mitigations would be required for those impacts where the impact was identified as being potentially significant, and all project impacts on public services would be reduced to a less than significant level. The alternative's increment of the cumulative impact to public services would also be reduced to a less than significant level. By eliminating the parks, the project would increase the impact on parks. The applicant would be required to pay a park in-lieu fee to adequately mitigate this impact

Land Use

The project would convert the same amount of Farmland to a non-agricultural use as the proposed project. This would remain a significant and unavoidable impact for this alternative. The alternative would be consistent with the County General Plan.

3. Conclusions

Alternative 2 (Current Entitlement) would result essentially in the same type of potentially significant impacts as identified for the project. The 13% reduction in the number of units would correlate to a reduction in some impacts, but the decrease in impact would not be substantial. For other impacts, such as traffic, air quality, noise, and most public services, the amount of impact would be approximately the same as the proposed project. The drainage impacts could be increased by this alternative, and the alternative would increase the demand for parks at off-site locations. The decrease in units would not reduce any impacts to a level where the mitigation measures recommended for the proposed project would not be required. The mitigations would reduce all impacts, except for the conversion of Prime and Unique Farmland, the cumulative traffic noise impact, and the contribution to Global Climate Change, to a less than significant level for this alternative. The alternative reduces the amount of parkland and open space. This alternative meets three or four of the eight project objectives; it does not meet the

objectives of: providing a variety of building types and lot sizes; providing smaller lots to allow more open space; increasing density to allow for construction of at least 36 affordable housing units; and probably not garden setting landscaping and extensive landscaping of parks and green courts.

This alternative is environmentally superior to the proposed project, though the environmental advantages are small. The alternative is not superior to Alternative 1 (No Project), 3 (Reduced Density Consistent with Zoning), 4 (Reduced Density), or 5 (Mitigated Project).

C. ALTERNATIVE 3 – REDUCED DENSITY CONSISTENT WITH ZONING

1. Description

The objective of including this alternative is to measure the impacts of the project as proposed against an alternative that contains fewer units, maintains open space on the site, and maintains higher density housing, thereby potentially disrupting less of the site and requiring fewer services and infrastructure. The total number of units would be 171, as is allowed by the zoning.

For this alternative, 23 townhouse units would be eliminated, and Lots 20, 21, and 197 would be eliminated consistent with Mitigation Measure 3.2-D.2. This would result in an alternative that includes about 50 two-unit structures and 121 garden court and/or cottage lots for a total of 171 units. Otherwise, the alternative would include the other elements of the project as proposed.

Geology and Soils

The alternative would require basically the same amount of grading and ground disturbance as the proposed project. The same hazards related to groundshaking, unstable slopes, and unstable soils would apply to this alternative. The same mitigation measures described in Section 3.1 would be required, and they would reduce the impacts to a less than significant level. The project would result in the same grading and potential for erosion control. The same erosion control measures would apply and would reduce that impact to a less than significant level.

Hydrology and Water Quality

The reduction in units would not likely result in a substantial reduction if the amount of impervious surface on the site. In any case, the reduction would be so small that it would not appreciably affect the project impacts on runoff, groundwater recharge, or water quality. Similarly, the susceptibility to flooding and water quality impacts from future use of the site would be approximately the same as described for the proposed project. The same mitigations recommended for the project in Section 3.2 would apply, and they would reduce all impacts to a less than significant level.

Biological Resources

The project would have the same less than significant impacts on special status species and general biological resources. Impacts to Cleland Mountain Creek, on-site oaks, and

wildlife travel would be similar to the project as proposed, and they would all be reduced to a less than significant level with implementation of the mitigation measures recommended in Section 3.3.

Cultural Resources

The project is not predicted to damage cultural resources. The mitigation measures recommended in Section 3.4 that mitigate any impact in the case of unknown resources being uncovered during site grading would also apply to this alternative, and would reduce the impact to a less than significant level.

Traffic and Circulation

The alternative would reduce project-generated traffic by approximately 9% to 1,453 daily two-way trips (the reduction in units is in the number of townhouses, and these units generate fewer trips than single-family units, so there is not a 13% reduction in daily trips). The alternative would have the same less than significant impacts on roadway and intersection capacity. There would be the same potentially significant impact regarding pedestrian safety and the cumulative bicycle safety impact, and the same mitigation measures recommended for the project would be required. These mitigations would reduce the impacts to a less than significant level. There would continue to be the secondary impacts of constructing pedestrian and bicycle improvements along Oak Knoll Road.

Air Quality

The alternative would reduce project-generated traffic emissions by approximately 9%. The alternative would have the same less than significant impact for emissions from project-generated vehicles. The potentially significant particulate emissions impact from project construction would be the same as for the project. The recommended mitigation measure would reduce this impact to a less than significant level.

The alternative would take approximately the same amount of energy to construct. Future energy use would also be about the same (since single-family residences use more energy than townhouses). The alternative would have about the same impacts from greenhouse gas emissions. The same mitigation measures recommended for the proposed project would apply to this alternative. The cumulative impact on Global Climate Change (GCC) would remain a significant and unavoidable impact.

Noise

The alternative would have approximately the same noise impacts as the proposed project. New traffic-generated noise would be less than significant for residents living along South State Street. The cumulative traffic noise impact on residents living along Oak Knoll Road, the northernmost block of Oak Court Road, and the southern end of South Dora Street would be significant for this alternative. Residents living near the east end of the site would be exposed to traffic noise, and the same mitigation recommended for the proposed project would apply to this alternative. Construction noise would be potentially significant for this alternative, and the same mitigation measures

recommended for the project would apply. All noise impacts except to residents along streets to the northwest of the site would be reduced to a less than significant level.

Aesthetics

The alternative would reduce the overall number of units. However, from vantage points outside the project site, these differences would not be substantial, and the overall change in views would remain approximately the same. The alternative would have approximately the same visual impacts as the proposed project. The mitigation measures recommended in Section 3.8 would apply to this alternative, and they would reduce the impacts to a less than significant level.

Public Services and Infrastructure

The alternative would reduce the demand for water and wastewater treatment and disposal by 13% and would reduce the demand for public services by that same amount. The same mitigations would be required for those impacts where the impact was identified as being potentially significant, and all project impacts on public services would be reduced to a less than significant level. The alternative's increment of the cumulative impact to public services would also be reduced to a less than significant level.

Land Use

The project would convert the same amount of Farmland to a non-agricultural use as the proposed project. This would remain a significant and unavoidable impact for this alternative. The alternative would be consistent with the County General Plan.

3. Conclusions

Alternative 3 (Reduced Density Consistent with Zoning) would result essentially in the same type of potentially significant impacts as identified for the project. The 13% reduction in the number of units would correlate to a reduction in some impacts, but the decrease in impact would not be substantial. The decrease in units would not reduce any impacts to a level where the mitigation measures recommended for the proposed project would not be required. The mitigations would reduce all impacts, except for the conversion of Prime and Unique Farmland, the cumulative traffic noise impact, and the contribution to Global Climate Change, to a less than significant level for this alternative. This alternative meets seven of the eight project objectives; it does not meet the objective of increasing density to allow for construction of at least 36 affordable housing units.

This alternative is superior to the project as proposed and Alternative 2 (No Project Alternative – Current Entitlement), but the difference in impact is small. It is not superior to Alternatives 4 (Reduced Density) or 5 (Mitigated Project).

D. ALTERNATIVE 4 – REDUCED DENSITY

1. Description

The objective of including this alternative is to measure the impacts of the project as proposed against an alternative that substantially reduces the number of units. For this alternative, the number of units would be reduced by approximately 50%, resulting in 50 single family units, and 50 multi-family units. The proposed parks would be included in this alternative as would other proposed elements of the project.

Geology and Soils

The alternative would require approximately the same amount of grading and ground disturbance as the proposed project. The same hazards related to groundshaking, unstable slopes, and unstable soils would apply to this alternative. The same mitigation measures described in Section 3.1 would be required, and they would reduce the impacts to a less than significant level. The project would result in the same grading and potential for erosion control. The same erosion control measures would apply and would reduce that impact to a less than significant level.

Hydrology and Water Quality

The reduction in units would result in a reduction if the amount of impervious surface on the site. However, there would remain the need for detention facilities to ensure there was no off-site flooding. There would be less runoff from impermeable surfaces that would affect water quality, but the same mitigations recommended for the proposed project would apply to this alternative. The susceptibility to flooding from future use of the site would be approximately the same as described for the proposed project. The same mitigations recommended for the project in Section 3.2 would apply, and they would reduce all impacts to a less than significant level.

Biological Resources

The project would have the same less than significant impacts on special status species and general biological resources. Impacts to Cleland Mountain Creek, on-site oaks, and wildlife travel would be similar to the project as proposed, and they would all be reduced to a less than significant level with implementation of the mitigation measures recommended in Section 3.3. Because there would be far fewer new residences, it would be simpler to protect the area near Cleland Mountain Creek from development.

Cultural Resources

The project is not predicted to damage cultural resources. The mitigation measures recommended in Section 3.4 that mitigate any impact in the case of unknown resources being uncovered during site grading would also apply to this alternative, and would reduce the impact to a less than significant level.

Traffic and Circulation

The alternative would reduce project-generated traffic by approximately 53% to 772 daily two-way trips. The alternative would have the same less than significant impacts on roadway and intersection capacity. There would be the same potentially significant impact regarding pedestrian safety and the cumulative bicycle safety impact, and the same mitigation measures recommended for the project would be required. These mitigations would reduce the impacts to a less than significant level. There would continue to be the secondary impacts of constructing pedestrian and bicycle improvements along Oak Knoll Road.

Air Quality

The alternative would reduce project-generated traffic emissions by approximately 53%. The alternative would have the same less than significant impact for emissions from project-generated vehicles. The potentially significant particulate emissions impact from project construction would be the same as for the project. The recommended mitigation measure would reduce this impact to a less than significant level.

The alternative would require less energy to construct. Future energy use would be reduced approximately 53%. The reduced energy use would reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and thereby reduce impacts to global climate change. The same mitigation measures recommended for the proposed project would apply to this alternative. The cumulative impact on Global Climate Change (GCC), though considerably smaller, would remain a significant and unavoidable impact.

Noise

The alternative would reduce noise impacts. New traffic-generated noise would continue to be less than significant for residents living along South State Street. This alternative would reduce the cumulative noise impact to residences Oak Knoll Road to South Dora Street to a 4 dBA increase. This would reduce this cumulative impact to a less than significant level (i.e., less than the significance criterion of a 5 dBA increase). However, residents living along these streets will be aware of the increase in traffic noise. Residents living near the east end of the site could be exposed to traffic noise (depending on site layout for the alternative), and the same mitigation recommended for the proposed project would apply to this alternative. Construction noise would be less but remain potentially significant for this alternative, and the same mitigation measures recommended for the project would apply. All noise impacts would be reduced to a less than significant level.

Aesthetics

The alternative would reduce the overall number of units. However, from vantage points outside the project site, these differences would not be substantial, and the overall change in views would remain approximately the same – open space would be developed with homes, roads, and other improvements. The reduction in density and the height of buildings could allow for additional buffering of views from homes on the north side of Gobalet Lane. Views from higher elevations to the northwest would be of a less dense development, but the change would not be significant. Similarly, views from

South State Street and from the south would not change significantly with this alternative. The mitigation measures recommended in Section 3.8 would apply to this alternative, and they would reduce the impacts to a less than significant level.

Public Services and Infrastructure

The alternative would reduce the demand for water and wastewater treatment and disposal by about 53% and would reduce the demand for public services by that same amount. The same mitigations would be required for those impacts where the impact was identified as being potentially significant, and all project impacts on public services would be reduced to a less than significant level. The alternative's increment of the cumulative impact to public services would also be reduced to a less than significant level.

Land Use

The project would convert the same amount of Farmland to a non-agricultural use as the proposed project. This would remain a significant and unavoidable impact for this alternative. The alternative would be consistent with the County General Plan.

3. Conclusions

Alternative 4 (Reduced Density) would result essentially in the same type of potentially significant impacts as identified for the project. The 50% reduction in the number of units reduces all impacts. The major benefits are: the potential for more open space on the site; reduced runoff; reduced new traffic on South State Street and Oak Knoll Road; reduced emission of air pollutants and greenhouse gas; and reduced demand for public services and infrastructure. The decrease in units would not reduce any impacts to a level where the mitigation measures recommended for the proposed project would not be required. The mitigations would reduce all impacts, except for the conversion of Farmland, the cumulative traffic noise impact, and the contribution to Global Climate Change, to a less than significant level for this alternative. This alternative meets six of the eight project objectives; it does not meet the objective of developing 197 units of varying lot size and building type, and it does not meet the objective of increasing density to allow for construction of at least 36 affordable housing units.

The substantial reduction in the number of units under Alternative 4 (Reduced Density) decreases the amount of impact. However, it would also be a less intensive use of a site that is near the City of Ukiah and on a major arterial. Less intensive use of the site would be counter to the smart growth principles that guided the development of the Draft 2007 UVAP. While this plan has not been adopted, there was a general agreement by most participants in the public participation process and Board deliberations leading up to the selection of a draft plan (that is undergoing CEQA review) that future development should be concentrated within or adjacent to the City and that intensive land use should be favored over standard subdivision design. Intensive site use reduces resource consumption, provides more affordable housing, and reduces future demand to develop agricultural on more distant sites.

This alternative is superior to the project as proposed and to all alternatives except Alternative 1 (No Project).

E. ALTERNATIVE 5 – MITIGATED PROJECT

1. Description

The objective of including this alternative in the EIR is to compare the impacts of the proposed project against an alternative that contains several components that may reduce impacts more than EIR-recommended mitigation measures.

The Mitigated Project Alternative includes the following components:

- The connection of Plant Road to Oak Knoll Road would be an Emergency Vehicle Access (EVA). The road would be open to pedestrian and bicycle traffic but not motor vehicles (except for emergency use). The proposed sidewalk along Oak Knoll Road would not be constructed.
- Lots 20, 21, and 197 would be retained as a park/open space. Three additional units would be added to the remaining portion of the site so that the total units would remain 197 (either by adding another floor to one of the two-story multi-family buildings or converting large-lot single-family lots to smaller lots with attached townhomes).
- The applicant shall include a photovoltaic (PV) solar electricity system that will be deployed subdivision-wide for the benefit of the future residents. The system will be sized sufficiently so that it offsets 50% of the electrical use on a net-yearly basis. This equates to the applicant providing a 3.3 kilowatt photovoltaic system for each unit.
- All other mitigations, except for the required mitigations for the Oak Knoll Road connection, would be included.

2. Environmental Impacts

Geology and Soils

The alternative would require basically the same amount of grading and ground disturbance as the proposed project. The same hazards related to groundshaking, unstable slopes, and unstable soils would apply to this alternative. The same mitigation measures described in Section 3.1 would be required, and they would reduce the impacts to a less than significant level. The project would result in the same grading and potential for erosion control. The same erosion control measures would apply and would reduce that impact to a less than significant level.

Hydrology and Water Quality

The possible reduction in the amount of impervious surface would be so small that it would not appreciably affect the project impacts on runoff, groundwater recharge, or water quality. Similarly, the susceptibility to flooding impacts from future use of the site would be approximately the same as described for the proposed project. Water quality impacts would be reduced by retaining a buffer along Cleland Mountain Creek. The

alternative removes three homes potentially affected by flooding along Cleland Mountain Creek. The same mitigations recommended for the project in Section 3.2 would apply (except this alternative includes Mitigation Measure 3.2-D.2), and they would reduce all impacts to a less than significant level.

Biological Resources

By not allowing development on Lots 20, 21, and 197, the alternative would eliminate impacts to the oaks near Cleland Mountain Creek and provide a buffer to protect habitat and water quality in that creek. The alternative would have the same less than significant impacts on special status species and general biological resources. The alternative substantially reduces potential impacts to biological resources.

Cultural Resources

The project is not predicted to damage cultural resources. The mitigation measures recommended in Section 3.4 that mitigate any impact in the case of unknown resources being uncovered during site grading would also apply to this alternative, and would reduce the impact to a less than significant level.

Traffic and Circulation

Analysis of this alternative has been conducted in relation to year 2015 Base Case conditions.

1. Volumes

Figures 14 and 15 present the 2015 Base Case + Project AM and PM peak hour volumes for this alternative. As shown, the proposed project would not be expected to add any traffic to Oak Knoll Road to the west of South Dora Street, with 8 vehicles being added to South Dora Street just north of Oak Knoll Road and to Oak Knoll Road between South Dora Street and South State Street during the AM peak hour and 10 vehicles during the PM peak hour. In contrast, as described in Section 3.5, the proposed project with a project connection to Oak Knoll Road, increases on Oak Knoll Road (west of South Dora Street) and on South Dora Street just north of Oak Knoll Road would be expected to be 17 vehicles during the AM peak hour and 19 vehicles during the PM peak hour.

2. Intersection Operation

Tables 38 and 39 show that all analyzed intersections would continue to operate at acceptable levels of service for this alternative. As with the proposed project, this would be a less than significant impact.

3. Intersection Signalization Needs

No unsignalized intersection evaluated in this study would have volumes meeting or exceeding peak hour volume signal Warrant #3 criteria levels for this alternative. This would be a less than significant impact.

4. Freeway Operation

The Highway 101 freeway would continue to operate acceptably at LOS A conditions under this alternative. This would be a less than significant impact.

5. Pedestrian Impacts

This alternative would not include new sidewalks along Oak Knoll Road. This would result in all pedestrian traffic to/from the project needing to walk along the paved shoulders of South State Street between Plant Road and the planned southerly extension of sidewalk along the west side of South State Street to Oak Knoll Road (or they can walk in the street as pedestrians using Oak Knoll Road currently do). This would be a potentially significant impact. The required mitigation would be for the applicant to provide a sidewalk on the west side of South State Street between Plant Road and Oak Knoll Road; the distance is about 0.3 miles.

6. Cumulative Impacts

As there would be no new traffic using Oak Knoll Road, the safety impact to bicyclists would be eliminated. The impact would be less than significant.

7. Conclusions

The alternative would generate approximately the same traffic as the proposed project (it could be slightly less, depending on whether the three displaced residences become single-family homes or townhouses). The alternative would have the same traffic congestion impacts as described for the proposed project. The alternative would have the same less than significant impacts on roadway and intersection capacity. The alternative eliminates traffic safety impacts due to the connection to Oak Knoll Road, thereby eliminating all the secondary impacts of constructing required traffic and pedestrian improvements. The pedestrian safety impact along South State Street would be mitigated by constructing the recommended sidewalk that would connect to the sidewalk that the County will be constructing. The alternative substantially decreases traffic safety impacts and secondary impacts of improving Oak Knoll Road to minor collector street standards. Traffic impacts would be reduced to a less than significant level.

Air Quality

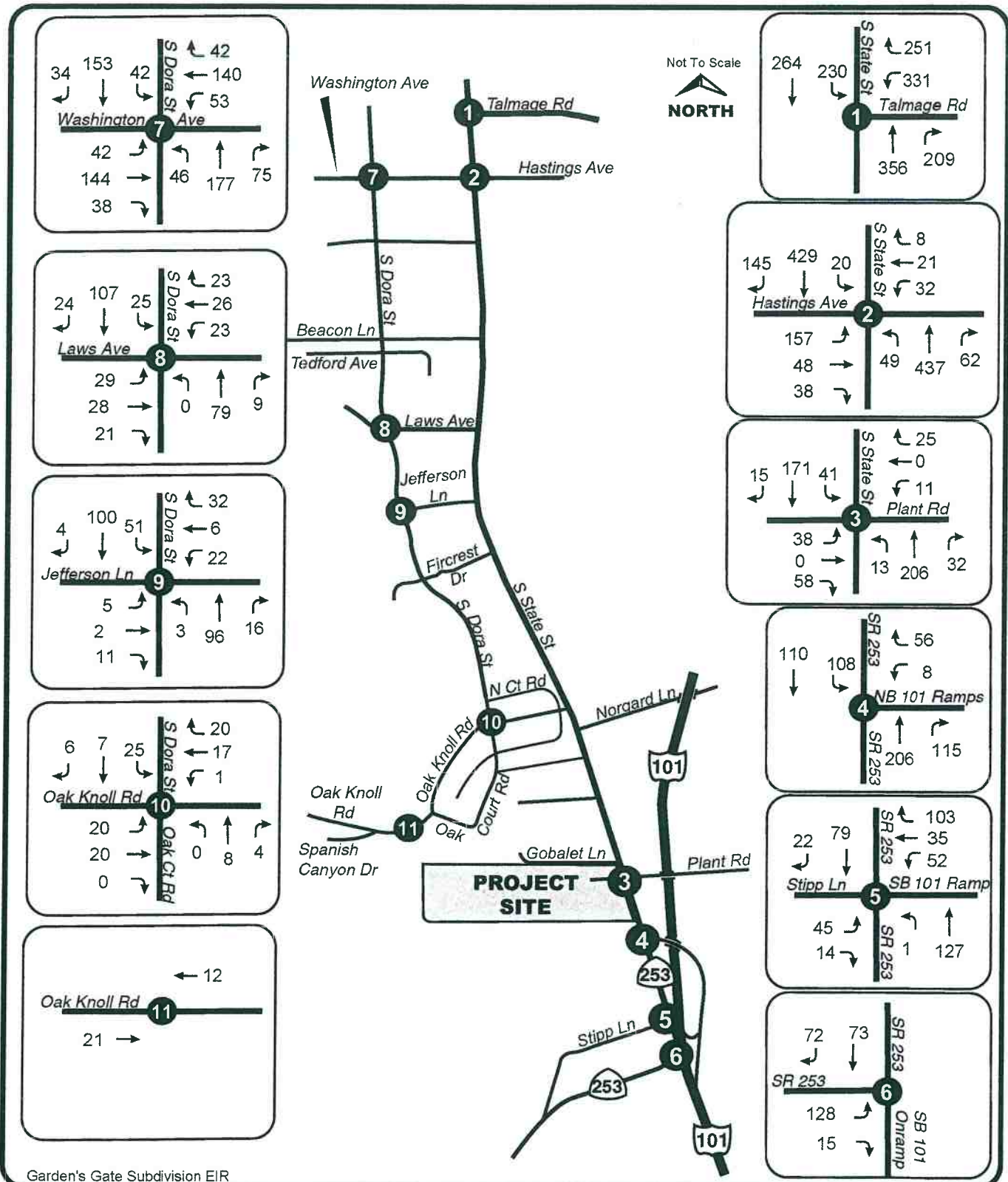
The alternative would generate the same amount of criteria pollutants as the proposed project. The alternative would have the same less than significant impact for emissions from project-generated vehicles. The potentially significant particulate emissions impact from project construction would be the same as for the project. The recommended mitigation measure would reduce this impact to a less than significant level.

The alternative would take approximately the same amount of energy to construct. By requiring that the project generate 50% of its electrical demand on-site, future energy use would be reduced by about 625 tons of CO₂e per year. However, the alternative would still generate about 1,964 tons of CO₂e per year. Therefore, the alternative would have the same two significant impacts on GCC as the proposed project.

A purveyor of solar systems was contacted to determine the feasibility of providing such a solar system. That conversation produced the following observations; note that these observations are very general in nature. Actual final design and costs would require much more extensive analysis.⁹³

- The average home is not large enough to have sufficient roof space to generate 100% of the average household's energy demand.
- Because PG&E has a rate tier, it becomes non-cost effective to produce electricity that is consumed at the lower price tiers.
- The project would have an approximately annual electricity demand of 2,000,000 kilowatt-hours.
- To produce 1,000,000 kilowatt-hours/year (50% of demand), would require solar panels capable of generating about 3.3 kilowatt.
- The cost for such a system would be about \$30,000 per residence. Current rebates (if continued after the end of 2008) would reduce the price by \$6,000-8,000, and there would be a \$2,000 residential tax credit per household. Therefore, the initial costs would be about \$20,000+ per unit. The panels are guaranteed to produce 80% of their rated power in year 25 after installation, so essentially the project would be buying a 25-year power supply at today's prices.
- The project could probably supply 65% of its annual power demand, so the 50% recommendation is a quite feasible target.
- When the solar panels are producing more than the household is using, the "meter runs backward." So, if the unit produces more than it uses, it does not pay an electric bill. The metering is done on an annual basis, so if the household generates more electricity than it uses in July, that excess amount can be applied to other months when the household uses more electricity than it generates. However, the excess electricity is cancelled at the end of each year. While there are methods of actually being reimbursed for excess electricity produced (e.g., "feed-in tariff), the tariff is low and currently rarely used. It does not provide much additional income, and currently is not worth pursuing.

⁹³ Kent Halliburton, Real Goods Solar, Inc.



Garden's Gate Subdivision EIR

Figure 14
Year 2015 Base Case + Project
AM Peak Hour Volumes
With Oak Knoll Access Closed



Garden's Gate Subdivision EIR

Figure 15
Year 2015 Base Case + Project
PM Peak Hour Volumes
With Oak Knoll Access Closed

Table 38

**INTERSECTION LEVEL OF SERVICE
AM PEAK HOUR
WITH OAK KNOLL ROAD ACCESS CLOSED**

| INTERSECTION | EXISTING | YEAR 2015 | |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| | | BASE CASE (WITHOUT PROJECT) | BASE CASE + PROJECT ALTERNATIVE |
| S. State St./Talmage Rd. (Signal) | C-28.6 ⁽¹⁾ | C-29.5 | C-29.7 |
| S. State St./Washington Ave.- Hastings Ave. (Signal) | B-15.3 ⁽¹⁾ | B-15.3 | B-15.3 |
| S. State St./Plant Rd. (Plant Rd. Stop Sign Control) | B-10.4 ⁽²⁾ | B-10.7 | NA |
| S. State St./Plant Rd. (Roundabout) | NA | NA | A-3.9 ⁽⁷⁾ |
| U.S. 101 Southbound On- Ramp/U.S. 101 Northbound Ramps (Off-Ramp Left Turn Stop Sign Control) | B-12.1 ⁽³⁾ | B-13.1 | C-15.3 |
| U.S. 101 Southbound On-Ramp /U.S. 101 Southbound Off- Ramp-Stipp Lane (SB Off- Ramp/Stipp Lane Stop Sign Control) | B-12.0/B-11.2 ⁽⁴⁾ | B-12.3/B-11.8 | B-12.7/B-12.0 |
| U.S. 101 Southbound On-Ramp /S.R. 253 (S.R. 253 Stop Sign Control) | A-9.7 ⁽⁵⁾ | A-9.9 | A-9.9 |
| S. Dora St./Washington Ave. (All Way Stop) | B-13.8 ⁽⁶⁾ | B-14.6 | C-15.0 |
| S. Dora St./Laws Ave. (All Way Stop) | A-8.2 ⁽⁶⁾ | A-8.3 | A-8.3 |
| S. Dora St./Jefferson Lane (All Way Stop) | A-8.0 ⁽⁶⁾ | A-8.1 | A-8.1 |
| Oak Knoll Rd./Oak Court Rd. (All Way Stop) | A-7.3 ⁽⁶⁾ | A-7.3 | A-7.3 |

- (1) Signalized level of service – control delay in seconds.
- (2) Unsignalized level of service – control delay in seconds: Plant Rd. stop sign controlled approach.
- (3) Unsignalized level of service – control delay in seconds: N.B. off-ramp left turn stop sign controlled approach.
- (4) Unsignalized level of service – control delay in seconds: S.B. off-ramp stop sign controlled approach/Stipp Lane stop sign controlled approach.
- (5) Unsignalized level of service – control delay in seconds: S.R. 253 stop sign controlled approach.
- (6) All-way stop level of service – control delay in seconds.
- (7) Roundabout level of service – control delay in seconds.

Year 2000 Highway Capacity Manual Analysis Methodology.
Source: Crane Transportation Group

Table 39

**INTERSECTION LEVEL OF SERVICE
PM PEAK HOUR
WITH OAK KNOLL ROAD ACCESS CLOSED**

| INTERSECTION | EXISTING | YEAR 2015 | |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| | | BASE CASE (WITHOUT PROJECT) | BASE CASE + PROJECT ALTERNATIVE |
| S. State St./Talmage Rd. (Signal) | C-34.1 ⁽¹⁾ | D-36.6 | D-37.2 |
| S. State St./Washington Ave.- Hastings Ave. (Signal) | B-16.9 ⁽¹⁾ | B-17.4 | B-17.5 |
| S. State St./Plant Rd. (Plant Rd. Stop Sign Control) | B-12.1 ⁽²⁾ | B-12.8 | NA |
| S. State St./Plant Rd. (Roundabout) | NA | NA | A-4.4 ⁽⁷⁾ |
| U.S. 101 Southbound On- Ramp/U.S. 101 Northbound Ramps (Off-Ramp Left Turn Stop Sign Control) | B-13.4 ⁽³⁾ | B-14.8 | C-17.2 |
| U.S. 101 Southbound On-Ramp /U.S. 101 Southbound Off- Ramp-Stipp Lane (SB Off- Ramp/Stipp Lane Stop Sign Control) | B-12.2/B-11.6 ⁽⁴⁾ | B-13.8/B-12.9 | C-15.5/B-13.8 |
| U.S. 101 Southbound On-Ramp /S.R. 253 (S.R. 253 Stop Sign Control) | B-10.2 ⁽⁵⁾ | B-10.6 | B-10.6 |
| S. Dora St./Washington Ave. (All Way Stop) | B-13.2 ⁽⁶⁾ | B-13.8 | B-14.1 |
| S. Dora St./Laws Ave. (All Way Stop) | A-7.5 ⁽⁶⁾ | A-7.6 | A-7.6 |
| S. Dora St./Jefferson Lane (All Way Stop) | A-7.1 ⁽⁶⁾ | A-7.6 | A-7.6 |
| Oak Knoll Rd./Oak Court Rd. (All Way Stop) | A-7.2 ⁽⁶⁾ | A-7.3 | A-7.4 |

- (1) Signalized level of service – control delay in seconds.
- (2) Unsignalized level of service – control delay in seconds: Plant Rd. stop sign controlled approach.
- (3) Unsignalized level of service – control delay in seconds: N.B. off-ramp left turn stop sign controlled approach.
- (4) Unsignalized level of service – control delay in seconds: S.B. off-ramp stop sign controlled approach/Stipp Lane stop sign controlled approach.
- (5) Unsignalized level of service – control delay in seconds: S.R. 253 stop sign controlled approach.
- (6) All-way stop level of service – control delay in seconds.
- (7) Roundabout level of service – control delay in seconds.

Year 2000 Highway Capacity Manual Analysis Methodology.
Source: Crane Transportation Group

Noise

Except for the cumulative traffic noise impact on residents living along Oak Knoll Road to South Dora Street, the alternative would have approximately the same noise impacts as the proposed project. New traffic-generated noise would be less than significant for residents living along South State Street. The alternative would eliminate traffic noise impacts for residents living along the Oak Knoll Road to South Dora Street corridor. Residents living near the east end of the site would be exposed to traffic noise, and the same mitigation recommended for the proposed project would apply to this alternative. Construction noise would be potentially significant for this alternative, and the same mitigation measures recommended for the project would apply. All noise impacts would be reduced to a less than significant level.

Aesthetics

The alternative would have approximately the same visual impacts as were described for the proposed project. The mitigation measures recommended in Section 3.8 would apply to this alternative, and they would reduce the impacts to a less than significant level.

Public Services and Infrastructure

The alternative would have the same impacts as described for the proposed project. All project impacts on public services would be reduced to a less than significant level. The alternative's increment of the cumulative impact to public services would also be reduced to a less than significant level.

Land Use

The project would convert the same amount of Farmland to a non-agricultural use as the proposed project. This would remain a significant and unavoidable impact for this alternative. The alternative would be consistent with the County General Plan.

3. Conclusions

Alternative 5 (Mitigated Project) would have the same impacts as the proposed project except in the areas of water quality, biological resources, traffic safety, noise, and energy use (and global climate change). The alternative reduces greenhouse gas emissions by approximately an additional 250 tons of CO₂e per year. The alternative eliminates new traffic (including cumulative traffic) from accessing Oak Knoll Road and the southern end of South Dora Street. This eliminates traffic safety impacts and obviates the need for roadway improvements along Oak Knoll Road. The alternative would not generate additional noise along this roadway section, thereby eliminating the significant cumulative noise impact. Eliminating this connection is counter to the County's desire for an alternate north-south connector in this area. The County has included that connection in the Draft 2007 UVAP. However, this connection is not required to maintain adequate levels of service along roadway sections or at intersections affected by project traffic or cumulative traffic coming from south of the project site. The connector would be advantageous but not required from a traffic

congestion perspective. It would be advantageous from an emergency response and evacuation perspective.

The alternative meets all the project objectives. This alternative is environmentally superior to the proposed project and all alternatives except Alternatives 1 (No Project) and 4 (Reduced Density).

E. ALTERNATIVE 6 – OFF-SITE ALTERNATIVE

1. Background

In determining whether alternative locations for the project need to be considered in an EIR, CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(2)(A) provides:

The key question and first step to analysis is whether any of the significant effects of the project would be avoided or substantially lessened by putting the project in another location. Only locations that would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project need be considered for inclusion in the EIR.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(1) provides:

Among the factors that may be taken into account when addressing the feasibility of alternatives are site suitability, economic viability, availability of infrastructure, general plan consistency, other plans or regulatory limitations, jurisdictional boundaries (projects with a regionally significant impact should consider the regional context), and whether the proponent can reasonably acquire, control or otherwise have access to the alternative site.

Regarding the criterion of site suitability (i.e., consistency with the Garden's Gate site and project), the Mendocino County Department of Planning and Building Services has determined that the site must be large enough to accommodate approximately 197 residential units. The site must be designated by the General Plan to allow residential development (sites designated Agriculture, Industrial, or Commercial were not considered).

2. Possible Alternative Sites

Based on a valleywide buildout analysis for the existing General Plan prepared by the Mendocino County Planning Team, the only sites that would allow development on the scale proposed for the Garden's Gate project are in the area that include the project site and vacant land between the project site and Highway 253. The properties in this area are basically the same as the project site – mainly commercial vineyards with some scattered residential development. Constructing the project on these properties would have almost exactly the same impacts as developing the proposed site. There would be the same or very similar grading, erosion, drainage, water quality, biotic, cultural resource, traffic, noise, air quality, public service, and land use impacts. The visual impacts to nearby residents would differ as impacts to residents along Gobalet Lane would be diminished while impacts to residents living to the south of the site, such as along Stipp Lane, would be increased.

It is possible that development of one of the properties to the south of the project site would not include the road connection to Oak Knoll Road. However, the County would likely require that the development of a southern property include a roadway alignment to allow for the future connection through the Garden's Gate site to Oak Knoll Road if and when any development did occur on the Garden's Gate site. It would be speculative that some development of the Garden's Gate site would not occur, especially with development of properties to the south and the current interest in developing the site. If this alternative were selected by the County, it is likely that a different project would eventually be proposed for the Garden's Gate site (e.g., the alternative of development per existing entitlements). Development of an alternative site to the south might delay construction of the roadway connection to Oak Knoll Road, but would not likely eliminate its future construction, since at some point it would be expected that this connection would be made. This EIR offers Alternative 5 that would eliminate this road connection, if the County determines that the impacts of building and using this road connection are sufficiently substantial to warrant abandoning Department of Transportation plans to develop this alternate north-south connector.

Finally, it is speculative that the applicant could acquire control of one of these properties since none are currently listed for sale.

3. Conclusions

Because the applicant cannot necessarily acquire one of the properties south of the site and north of Highway 253 that is large enough to construct the proposed project, and because the development of one of these alternative sites (if it could be acquired) would have approximately the same impacts as the proposed project, this alternative would not be superior to the project as proposed.

F. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES

There are seven alternatives under consideration: the 6 alternatives discussed above and the project as proposed (with EIR mitigations included). Table 3 compares the impact significance for the project and the alternatives.

As regards the four significant and unavoidable impacts of the project (conversion of Farmland, the cumulative traffic noise impact, and the contribution to Global Climate Change) only Alternative 1 would reduce all these impacts to a less than significant level. Alternative 4 (Reduced Density) reduces the cumulative traffic noise impact to a less than significant level, while Alternative 5 (Mitigated Project) eliminates this cumulative impact. Alternative 1 (No Project) is the environmentally superior alternative.

CEQA requires that a second environmentally superior alternative be identified if the environmentally superior alternative is the no project alternative. Alternative 4 would be the environmentally superior alternative among the remaining alternatives. Alternative 4 reduces all impacts except for the conversion of Prime and Unique Farmland and the contribution to Global Climate Change to a less than significant level. This alternative meets 6 of the 8 project objectives. Of the alternatives that meet the basic project objectives, Alternative 5 (Mitigated Project) is superior.

Recognizing that these alternatives only partially meet the objectives of the applicant, the County may consider other alternatives. To facilitate those considerations, the following list ranks the alternatives. Number 1 is environmentally superior while Number 6 is the least "superior:"

1. Alternative 1 - No Project
2. Alternative 4 – Reduced Density
3. Alternative 5 – Mitigated Project
4. Alternative 2 – No Project Alternative - Current Entitlement
5. Alternative 3 - Reduced Density Consistent with Zoning
6. Project as Proposed (with EIR mitigations)
7. Alternative 6 – Off-Site Alternative

The County can approve a hybrid alternative. For example, restricting access to the Oak Knoll Road for emergency vehicle access only could be added to the project or any of the alternatives.