

VIII. ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT

PROJECT ALTERNATIVES, OBJECTIVES, AND IMPACTS

This chapter summarizes the analysis of project alternatives from the 1999 Tier 1 FEIR for the subject project. As a Supplemental EIR (SEIR), this document presents minor additions or changes that would be necessary in the previous EIR to make that EIR apply in the changed situation (CEQA Guidelines section 15163 (a)). The supplement to the (previous) EIR need contain only the information necessary for the project as revised (Guidelines Section 15163 (b)). As explained in Chapter 1.0, Introduction, this SEIR evaluates changes in the environment resulting from both the construction and operation of the Willow Road Extension/US 101 Interchange project based on a more detailed project design from that addressed in the 1999 FEIR. As part of the FEIR certification process, the County of San Luis Obispo Board of Supervisors selected Alignment 2 as the preferred project alignment, which has been evaluated herein along with other project design refinements. The environmental effects of Alignment 4 (two alternative locations), several interchange designs and two frontage road alternative locations are included in the summarized alternatives analysis incorporated by reference from the previous Tier 1 EIR. Based on the earlier evaluation of alternatives, and the decision as part of the Tier 1 process, the County is no longer considering alternatives to the selected project including Alignment 4 or the other interchange and frontage roads in lieu of an interchange.

The summarized analysis of project alternatives from the Tier 1 FEIR is presented below.

Project Alternatives

The purpose of evaluating alternatives to the proposed project is to determine whether any different project designs or locations that would feasibly attain most of the basic project objectives can avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant environmental impacts. Through this analysis, an environmentally superior alternative is identified. An EIR does not have to consider every conceivable alternative, but a reasonable range of potentially feasible alternatives. An EIR does not need to consider alternatives that are infeasible. The Alternatives to the proposed project evaluated herein were developed as a range of reasonable alternatives pursuant to the CEQA Guidelines, Section 15126.6. The Environmentally Superior Alternative is identified in Section VIII.G.

The alternatives evaluated in this chapter include:

- VIII.A. "No Project/No Build" Alternative
- VIII.B. Alternative Project Sites
 1. Alignment 4
 2. Relocate Alignment 4 – 300 feet to the North
 3. Relocate Alignment 4 – 1200 feet to the North
- VIII.C. Interchange Design Alternatives
 1. Modified Diamond/Partial Cloverleaf
 2. Modified "Tight" Diamond

3. Modified "Tight-Spread" Diamond
- VIII.D. No Interchange Alternatives
1. Frontage Road between Willow Road and Sandydale Drive (CEQA Baseline Alternative)
 2. Frontage Road between Sandydale Drive and Los Berros Road

Project Objectives

The objectives for the proposed project are provided in Chapter III, Project Description, and reiterated below:

- Provide a new direct connection between State Route 1 (SR 1) and US 101 (primary goal);
- Relieve traffic congestion in order to improve traffic flow and levels of service (LOS) at the US 101 interchanges at Tefft Street and Los Berros Road;
- Provide circulation improvements to support planned land uses as identified in the South County Area Plan;
- Reduce future traffic levels on Los Berros Road, West Tefft Street, and Pomeroy Road;
- Reduce travel length and time in the Nipomo area;
- Reduce the need for major modification of the US 101/Tefft Street and Los Berros-Thompson Road interchanges;
- Improve traffic safety by diverting future traffic from nonstandard County roadways to a full standard roadway;
- Provide enhanced emergency access to the residents and businesses of the Nipomo area through the provision of an alternative east-west access and a connection to US 101;
- Provide a new recreational trail from Thompson Avenue to SR-1, improving access to the coastal zone.

Each of the project alternatives evaluated herein are also assessed as to whether or not they meet the majority of the project objectives.

Summary of Proposed Project Impacts

The proposed project involves a two-lane extension of Willow Road from approximately 1,000 feet west of Pomeroy Road to Thompson Road (Figure III-3). A two-lane bridge is proposed to be constructed at the crossing of Willow Road over Nipomo Creek, east of US 101.

An interchange is proposed where the extension of Willow Road would cross US 101. The interchange will be constructed as an undercrossing and includes the construction of two two-lane concrete bridges to carry northbound and southbound US 101 traffic over Willow Road.

A proposed frontage road between Willow Road and Sandydale Drive is proposed to be located approximately 50 feet west of the US 101 right-of-way and a park and ride facility is proposed in the

southwest quadrant of the proposed future interchange at US 101/Willow Road. In addition, two infiltration basins will be constructed and Cherokee Place will be graded and paved for a distance of 1,000 feet to connect with the proposed frontage road.

Potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed project as discussed in Chapter V are summarized below.

Project Objectives. The proposed project meets all of the project objectives.

Land Use and Planning. Construction of the proposed project will not have a significant impact related to land use and planning. The proposed project is consistent with long-range land use and circulation planning for the project area as included in the Land Use and Circulation Elements of the San Luis Obispo County General Plan. Long-term access to residential land uses in the area will be improved through the addition of a paved, all-weather roadway. However, the project would have the potential indirect effect of inducing growth along the Willow Road alignment by providing improved circulation and access to currently undeveloped properties.

Traffic and Circulation. Construction of the project provides some congestion relief at some study area intersections, but increases traffic volume on Willow Road itself. LOS is forecast to improve to acceptable levels at the Los Berros Road/US 101 southbound intersection and the Tefft Street/US 101 northbound intersection during PM peak hours. The proposed project will also improve LOS at the Los Berros Road/US 101 northbound intersection during peak AM hours, although operations will still be an unacceptable LOS at this location. By providing some congestion relief at the Los Berros Road and Tefft Street interchanges, the proposed project also reduces the potential for accidents at these locations. The proposed project significantly reduces the average vehicle delay resulting in improved intersection and ramp operations.

The proposed project would cause LOS to decline slightly at the intersections of Willow Road with both Pomeroy Road and Hetrick Avenue; however, the LOS would be within acceptable levels. In addition, the proposed project should improve emergency access to the Nipomo Mesa region by providing direct freeway access to the middle of this area.

Noise. Short-term noise generated by construction worker commutes and equipment transport would be less than significant. However, construction equipment noise, generated by road and interchange building, would reach 91 dBA L_{max} at residents of nearby homes. Proposed mitigation measures will reduce the duration and severity of the noise; however, because construction-related noise would be short-term/temporary, impacts are considered less than significant.

Potential long-term noise impacts associated with the proposed project originate from traffic noise created by vehicles that will use the proposed system of roadways in the project area. In 10 receptor locations, increased traffic will cause noise levels to exceed the County's exterior noise standard. It is only feasible to mitigate these effects with sound barriers at 3 receptor sites. Therefore, 7 receptor locations will experience significant, unavoidable, and adverse noise impacts.

Air Quality. Use of heavy equipment and earth moving operations during project construction can generate fugitive dust and emissions that may have substantial temporary impacts on local air quality. However, when the APCD emissions thresholds are properly followed and the Best Available Control

Technology for construction equipment (CBACT) is utilized, construction equipment emissions would not exceed the daily thresholds for any of the criteria pollutants: NO_x, ROC, CO, SO_x and PM₁₀. By adhering to Caltrans Standard Specifications for construction (Sections 10 and 18 for dust control and Section 39–306 for asphalt concrete plant) air quality impacts from construction emissions will be less than significant. Therefore, short-term air quality impacts associated with project construction will be less than significant after implementation of standard procedures.

Although no naturally occurring asbestos is indicated on County maps for the project vicinity, the County contains ultramafic and serpentine rock. In the event of the discovery of ultramafic or asbestos containing materials during construction, impacts will be less than significant if standard requirements in the Asbestos Airborne Toxic Control Measures for Construction Grading, Quarrying and Surface Mining Operations are followed.

Over the long-term, however, no additional local or regional air pollutant emissions associated with the proposed project would occur. Because traffic flow/congestion is being improved while no additional vehicle trips are being attracted to the general area, the proposed project is expected to improve air pollution emissions over the long-term. The proposed project is considered to be consistent with the Clean Air Plan for San Luis Obispo County.

Public Services. The proposed project will represent added police patrol responsibilities, create opportunities for people to congregate, and provide a new roadway that would lead to unlit open space. Roadways provide the opportunity for sparks and other combustibles (e.g. cigarettes) from cars which can ignite fires on the side of roadways leading to potential impacts to fire protection and emergency services. Construction also has the potential to disturb underground natural gas and/or electrical service mains, water or sewer mains, and telephone or cable television lines. Each of these potential impacts will be reduced to less than significant through implementation of mitigation measures. Project construction could potentially generate material from site clearance and grading (excess cut soil) for deposition at County Landfills. However, nearly 100% of the construction debris removed from the site is planned to be recycled and converted to a class II road sub-base, and the excess cut soil is proposed to be stockpiled for use on other County construction projects. Therefore, the proposed project would not cause any significant solid waste generation for area landfills.

The proposed project will lead to improved vehicular access to the Nipomo area which will assist law enforcement efforts, and benefit fire protection and emergency services. In addition, the proposed project will result in a reduction of traffic congestion, thereby reducing accident potential. Therefore, in the long-term, the proposed project is beneficial to the provision of public services.

Biological Resources. Construction of the proposed project has the potential to both directly and indirectly impact sensitive wildlife species and nesting birds. Removing or altering sensitive wildlife habitat could kill or injure small mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and other animals of lesser mobility. Vegetation removal will indirectly impact these sensitive wildlife species and nesting birds by removing potential foraging, breeding, denning, and nesting habitat.

Construction could potentially impact several sensitive plant species including Pismo clarkia, sand mesa manzanita, Mile's milkvetch, sand almond, California spineflower, and oak trees. Construction will also impact sensitive habitat such as maritime chaparral, oak woodland, and riparian vegetation

associated with Nipomo Creek. Additional potential impacts include importation of invasive species to native habitats via contaminated construction equipment or imported materials.

Nipomo Creek and the riparian vegetation are potentially subject to Corps of Engineers (Corps) jurisdiction. Therefore, the proposed project has the potential to impact jurisdictional waters. In addition, wildlife may depend upon the Nipomo Creek riparian/wetland habitats as a movement corridor. Although the design of the proposed Willow Road bridge over Nipomo Creek will not directly create impacts to wildlife movement in this corridor, construction noise and operation of the proposed roadways may indirectly impact wildlife movement.

Each of the above impacts can be reduced to less than significant levels with the implementation of mitigation measures. However, project impacts to oak woodland and oak trees are considered significant adverse impacts until the replacement trees and restored/enhanced habitat as prescribed in mitigation measures included in Section V.F is considered viable.

Cultural and Paleontological Resources. The proposed project has the potential to significantly impact a number of cultural resources including CA-SLO-1319H, CA-SLO-1620, CA-SLO-1767, CA-SLO-2133, CA-SLO-2271, and a home built in 1952. Some or all of these resources could be damaged or destroyed by construction of the proposed project. While Pleistocene fossils were found within 2 miles of the current project, no known paleontological resources are known to be within the project limits. However, the proposed project is located on Pleistocene sediments that have a high potential for containing remains of vertebrate fossils at depths below six feet. In addition, this project also has the potential to impact cultural and paleontological resources that have not been discovered during the course of previous archaeological and paleontological surveys. Each of these potential impacts can be reduced to less than significant levels through the implementation of mitigation measures.

Agricultural Resources. The proposed project has the potential to impact agricultural operations including irrigated farming, nurseries and greenhouse operations. In addition, the proposed Willow Road alignment impacts approximately 3 acres of potentially prime agricultural soils in the area between Nipomo Creek and Thompson Avenue. However, with the implementation of mitigation measures, each of these impacts will be reduced to less than significant levels.

The proposed project is located within or adjacent to several existing Williamson Act Agricultural Preserves. Between US 101 and Thompson Road the proposed project passes through two agricultural preserves (parcel numbers 091-251-017 and 091-301-019). Impacts to these preserves cannot be mitigated. Therefore, the proposed project would have a significant, unavoidable, adverse impact on these agricultural preserves.

Aesthetics. Construction of the proposed project will result in short-term visual impacts. However, impacts to views of the area during project construction are considered to be less than significant due to the short-term nature of construction activities and the relatively small area of disruption which will be constructed in phased sections.

The proposed project has the potential to significantly impact existing views through the provision of the Willow Road extension, the frontage road, the US 101 interchange, the removal of oak woodland habitat and a large number of individual oak trees, and lastly, the removal of riparian vegetation along

Nipomo Creek. In addition, lighting of intersections adjacent to the US 101 interchange are considered to be potentially significant. Each of these potential visual impacts can be reduced to less than significant through mitigation.

Geology and Soils. Within the project area, the Wilmar Avenue fault represents a potential threat of surface rupture. When seismic activity from this fault or others in the surrounding region occurs, potentially significant impacts could include cracking of the roadway and structural sections, slumping of slopes, liquefaction, and lateral spreading. Each of these potential impacts can be reduced to less than significant through the implementation of mitigation. Offset along faults could produce uplift and/or tilting of the proposed roadway which could crack pavement and structural sections, creating a minor threat to public safety. In addition, seismic ground shaking can cause sediments to settle several inches. These effects are easily repaired and are not considered significant. Other potentially significant impacts regarding geology and soils include expansive soils (such as the Cropley Clay series that occur in the project area), landslides (created by cut and fill slopes during construction), and erosion (caused by disturbance of dunes during construction). Mitigation can reduce each of these potential impacts to less than significant.

Drainage, Erosion, and Sedimentation. The proposed project will not expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving flooding. It will not significantly alter existing drainages or drainage patterns. Design features, such as the infiltration basins, accommodate the additional runoff generated by the project. In addition, there are no potentially significant impacts anticipated from a seiche, tsunami, or mudflow since the conditions necessary to produce these events are not present in the project area.

Ground disturbance and cut and fill slopes created by construction of the proposed project could increase erosion and sedimentation potential. With the implementation of mitigation measures, however, the proposed project will have no potentially significant impacts resulting from erosion and sedimentation.

Water Quality. Construction of the proposed project has the potential to introduce pollutants into Nipomo Creek causing a significant impact to water quality. In the long-term, an increase in impervious area through the provision of new roads will increase the volume and character of storm runoff which has the potential to significantly impact water quality. Mitigation measures including adherence to County and Caltrans requirements and Treatment Best Management Practices can reduce these potential impacts to less than significant levels.

Hazardous Materials. During construction, there may be significant impacts related to hazardous materials. Construction activities could disturb soils containing contaminants such as lead. Ingestion or inhalation of airborne dust from contaminated soil may pose a potential threat to human health. Construction of the proposed project could potentially impacts two underground Unocal pipelines. Disturbance may cause hydrocarbon contamination of the subsurface soils which would be a significant impact. Each of these potential impacts can be reduced to less than significant levels with the implementation of mitigation measures. The Air Quality Section addresses potential impacts from asbestos containing materials that could potentially be encountered during construction.

In the long-term, the proposed roadway and interchange would not emit hazardous emissions or involve hazardous materials handling. Use of the roadways and interchange would not create any potential impacts related to hazardous materials.

Socio-Economics. The proposed Willow Road extension, frontage road and US 101 interchange will not directly generate any additional population or housing. However, the proposed project could indirectly lead to an increase in Nipomo's population and housing resulting in a significant *indirect* impact upon the existing population and housing inventory of the project area as well as add to the overall growth of the project area. The indirect or growth-inducing impacts of the proposed project facilities upon the population and housing inventory of the Nipomo area are considered to be potentially significant unavoidable adverse impacts.

The proposed Willow Road extension, US 101 interchange, and frontage road will not directly generate any new commercial uses or employment. However, the proposed project could indirectly cause growth in new commercial uses and employment if areas adjacent to the eastern frontage road are developed commercially. The indirect generation of additional commercial land uses along the proposed eastern frontage road is, however, not considered to represent a potentially significant impact upon the existing economic profile of the Nipomo area. The proposed project will potentially benefit existing businesses through reduced traffic congestion and improved access.

Summary of Significant Unavoidable Project Impacts

As was discussed in the previous section, the majority of the potential project impacts can be reduced to less than significant levels through mitigation. The few significant impacts that cannot be feasibly mitigated are given below.

- Long-term traffic noise at 7 receptor locations
- Direct impacts to oak woodland habitat and oak trees
- Long-term project specific impacts to two agricultural preserves (parcels 091-251-017 and 091-301-019) and indirect cumulative impacts to agriculture
- Indirect or growth-inducing impacts upon the population and housing supply in Nipomo

VIII.A. "NO PROJECT/NO BUILD" ALTERNATIVE

CEQA section 15126.6(e) (1) requires that the EIR include evaluation of a No Project alternative along with its environmental impacts. Section 15126.6(e) (2) states that the "*no project analysis shall discuss the existing conditions at the time the Notice of Preparation is published, and at the time the environmental analysis is commenced, as well as what would reasonably be expected to occur in the foreseeable future if the project were not approved, based on current plans and consistent with available infrastructure and community services.*"

Under the "No Project/No Build" Alternative, no construction would occur and the existing roadway in the project area would remain in its present condition. The following impacts would be associated with this alternative.

VIII.A. Project Objectives. The “No Project/No Build” Alternative does not meet any of the project objectives. Without the project, there would be no direct connection between SR 1 and US 101, and traffic congestion would not be relieved at the US 101 interchanges at Tefft Street and Los Berros Road. There would be no improvements to circulation, traffic safety, or emergency access and no reduction to future traffic levels on Los Berros Road, West Tefft Street, and Pomeroy Road. The need for major modification of the US 101/Tefft Street and Los Berros-Thompson Road interchanges would remain as well as the need for improved recreational access to the coastal zone.

VIII.A. Land Use and Planning. The “No Project/No Build” Alternative is inconsistent with long-range land use and circulation planning for the project area as included in the Land Use and Circulation Elements of the San Luis Obispo County General Plan since these plans call for the Willow Road extension and US 101 interchange. In addition, without the project, long-term access to residential land uses in the area would not be improved. Therefore, Alternative VIII.A would have greater land use and planning impacts than the proposed project.

VIII.A. Traffic and Circulation. Without the project being constructed, increases in traffic would lead to unacceptable deteriorations in LOS and delay at several ramp junctures and intersections by 2030. During both the AM and PM peak hours, unacceptable LOS would be experienced at the northbound US 101 ramp/Los Berros Road intersection, the southbound US 101 ramp/Tefft Street intersection, and the northbound US 101/Los Berros offramp. During the peak PM hours, unacceptable LOS would also be experienced at the northbound US 101/Tefft Street offramp, the southbound US 101/ Los Berros intersection, and the northbound US 101/Tefft Street intersection. Forecast 2030 traffic will potentially congest both the northbound and southbound US 101/Tefft Street ramp intersections such that vehicles would back up on to the mainline US 101. Overall, Alternative VIII.A would cause greater traffic and circulation impacts than the proposed project.

VIII.A. Noise. Because there would be no construction involved with Alternative VIII.A potentially high noise levels from construction activities would not occur. In addition, long-term traffic noise will not increase at the 10 receptor locations and the significant, unavoidable impact at 7 of these receptors sites will be avoided. Therefore, the “No Project/No Build” Alternative would avoid the significant, unavoidable and adverse impacts associated with long term traffic noise caused by the proposed project.

VIII.A. Air Quality. Short-term air quality impacts associated with project construction will be avoided by Alternative VIII.A since there will be no construction. Over the long-term, however, the “No Project/No Build” Alternative would lead to a worsening in air quality. Traffic flow would not be improved and traffic congestion would increase in several areas. Typically, high CO concentrations are associated with roadways or intersections operating at unacceptable levels of service or with extremely high traffic volumes. Because motor vehicles produce more exhaust per mile at slower speeds, the increased traffic would lead to greater impacts on air quality than the proposed project.

The proposed project would have the potential to expose construction workers to asbestos containing materials through grading and earthwork, as the County is known to have Naturally Occurring Asbestos (NOA). The “No Project/No Build” Alternative would not have construction activities and therefore would have no potential impact from exposure to NOA.

VIII.A. Public Services. Public service impacts such as added police patrol responsibilities, potential from combustibles from cars to ignite fires, and potential disturbance to underground utilities would be avoided by this alternative. However, the “No Project/No Build” Alternative would not improve vehicular access to the Nipomo area and therefore, it would not assist law enforcement efforts, benefit fire protection, or emergency services. Since Alternative VIII.A would not reduce traffic congestion, it would not reduce accident potential. Therefore, this alternative has greater impacts to public services than the proposed project.

VIII.A. Biological Resources. The “No Project/No Build” Alternative would not change the existing biological setting and therefore, it does not have the potential to cause impacts to biological resources. The proposed project has potential to significantly impact sensitive wildlife, sensitive vegetation, sensitive habitat, jurisdictional waters, a wildlife corridor, and nesting birds. This alternative would avoid each of these impacts on biological resources.

VIII.A. Cultural Resources. Because the “No Project /No Build” Alternative does not involve any construction, potential impacts to CA-SLO-1319H, CA-SLO-1620, CA-SLO-1767, CA-SLO-2133, CA-SLO-2271, a home built in 1952, and unknown archaeological sites are avoided. Therefore, Alternative VIII.A would have less potential to cause impacts to cultural resources than the proposed project.

VIII.A. Agricultural Resources. Agricultural resources will not be impacted by the “No Project/No Build” Alternative because no construction or changes to the existing setting are anticipated. Because the proposed project has the potential to impact agricultural operations, prime agricultural soils, and agricultural preserves, Alternative VIII.A would have less impact on agricultural resources than the proposed project. This alternative would avoid significant, unavoidable and adverse impacts to two agricultural preserves that would be caused by the proposed project.

VIII.A. Aesthetics. Because the “No Project/No Build” Alternative would not change the existing setting, it does not have the potential to cause aesthetic impacts. Because the proposed project has potential to significantly impact existing views and add significant amounts of new lighting, this alternative would have less aesthetic impacts.

VIII.A. Geology and Soils. With Alternative VIII.A, there is no potential for problems related to seismic activity, expansive soils, landslides, or erosion. Because these factors may cause impacts with regard to the proposed project, this alternative would avoid potential geology and soils impacts.

VIII.A. Drainage, Erosion, and Sedimentation. Neither the “No Project/No Build” Alternative nor the proposed project would expose people or structures to a significant risk from flooding, a seiche, tsunami, or mudflow. In addition, neither will significantly alter existing drainages or drainage patterns. Construction of the proposed project could increase erosion and sedimentation potential, but these impacts would be avoided by Alternative VIII.A. Therefore Alternative VIII.A would have fewer drainage erosion, and sedimentation impacts when compared to the proposed project.

VIII.A. Water Quality. Because this alternative does not entail any construction or lead to an increase in impervious area, it would not alter existing water quality conditions. Since the proposed project has the potential to impact water quality, Alternative VIII.A would have less impacts than the proposed project.

VIII.A. Hazardous Materials. Alternative VIII.A avoids potential hazardous materials impacts that could occur with the proposed project. Since there would not be any construction with this alternative, there is no potential to disturb contaminated soil, Naturally Occurring Asbestos (see Air Quality discussion), or impact underground oil pipelines. Therefore, the “No Project/No Build” Alternative would have less potential for impacts from hazardous materials than the proposed project.

VIII.A. Socio-Economics. The “No Project/No Build” Alternative would not directly or indirectly generate any additional population or housing nor would it generate new commercial uses or employment. Therefore, the potentially significant unavoidable impacts of the proposed project upon the population and housing inventory of the Nipomo area would be avoided. Therefore, Alternative VIII.A would result in less of an impact to socio-economics than the proposed project. However, the potential benefit to existing businesses through reduced traffic congestion would not occur.

VIII.B. ALTERNATIVE PROJECT SITES

According to the South County Area Plan, Circulation Element, the “Highway 101/Tefft Street interchange cannot adequately serve the expanding population, [and] poses serious limitations on movement of emergency vehicles” (Circulation Element p.5-4). Construction of an interchange with an extension of Willow Road (Circulation Element p.5-9, 5-10) is discussed in the Circulation Element as a way to relieve circulation problems at Tefft Street. In addition, improvement to arterials including the extension of Willow Road “easterly from Pomeroy Road to intersect Highway 101 at a proposed interchange, then east to Thompson Road with rural arterial standards, including a Class II bike lane” (Circulation Element p.5-10) is discussed to carry traffic between population centers and to serve large volumes of traffic within an urban area. Lastly, the Circulation Element proposes improvements of the North Frontage Road “from Sandydale to the proposed interchange at the Willow Road extension” (Circulation Element p.5-13) to enable traffic to move between minor roads or streets and arterial roads or streets.

Because the proposed project is intended to satisfy the requirements of the South County Area Plan Circulation Element, there are limited alternative project sites. However, a few feasible alternative locations for the Willow Road/US 101 interchange and Willow Road extension were identified in the 1999 FEIR prepared by Douglas Wood & Associates. Although these alternative alignments and design configuration were not selected as the preferred project by the County Board of Supervisors in 1999, the discussion of these alternatives and their comparative effects on the environment are incorporated by reference below from the 1999 FEIR.

VIII.B.1 Alignment 4. Alternative VIII.B.1 is Alignment 4 as described in the 1999 FEIR. Both the proposed project and Alignment 4 involve the extension of Willow Road immediately west of the intersection of Pomeroy and Willow roads to Hetrick Avenue. Alignment 4 diverges from the proposed project at Hetrick Road. Where the proposed project heads northeast from this intersection, Alignment 4 continues in an easterly direction and then turns southeast so that it parallels the proposed project approximately 2,700 feet to the south (Figure VIII-1).

The impacts associated with this alternative are summarized from the findings of the 1999 FEIR and are discussed below.

VIII.B.1 Project Objectives. This alternative meets all of the project objectives.

VIII.B.1 Land Use and Planning. Like the proposed project, Alternative VIII.B.1 would not have a significant impact related to land use and planning. The proposed project is consistent with long-range land use and circulation planning and long-term access to residential land uses in the area would be improved. However, this alternative alignment creates a significant impact on the C&M nursery that is avoided by the proposed project. Therefore, this alternative has a greater impact on existing land uses than the proposed project.

VIII.B.1 Traffic and Circulation. This alternative would have essentially the same traffic and circulation impacts and benefits as the proposed project. LOS should improve at the southbound Los Berros Road/US 101 intersection and the northbound Tefft Street/US 101 intersection during PM peak hours. LOS should also improve at the northbound Los Berros Road/US 101 intersection during peak AM hours. By providing some congestion relief at the Los Berros Road and Tefft Street interchanges, Alternative VIII.B.1 also reduces the potential for accidents at these locations.

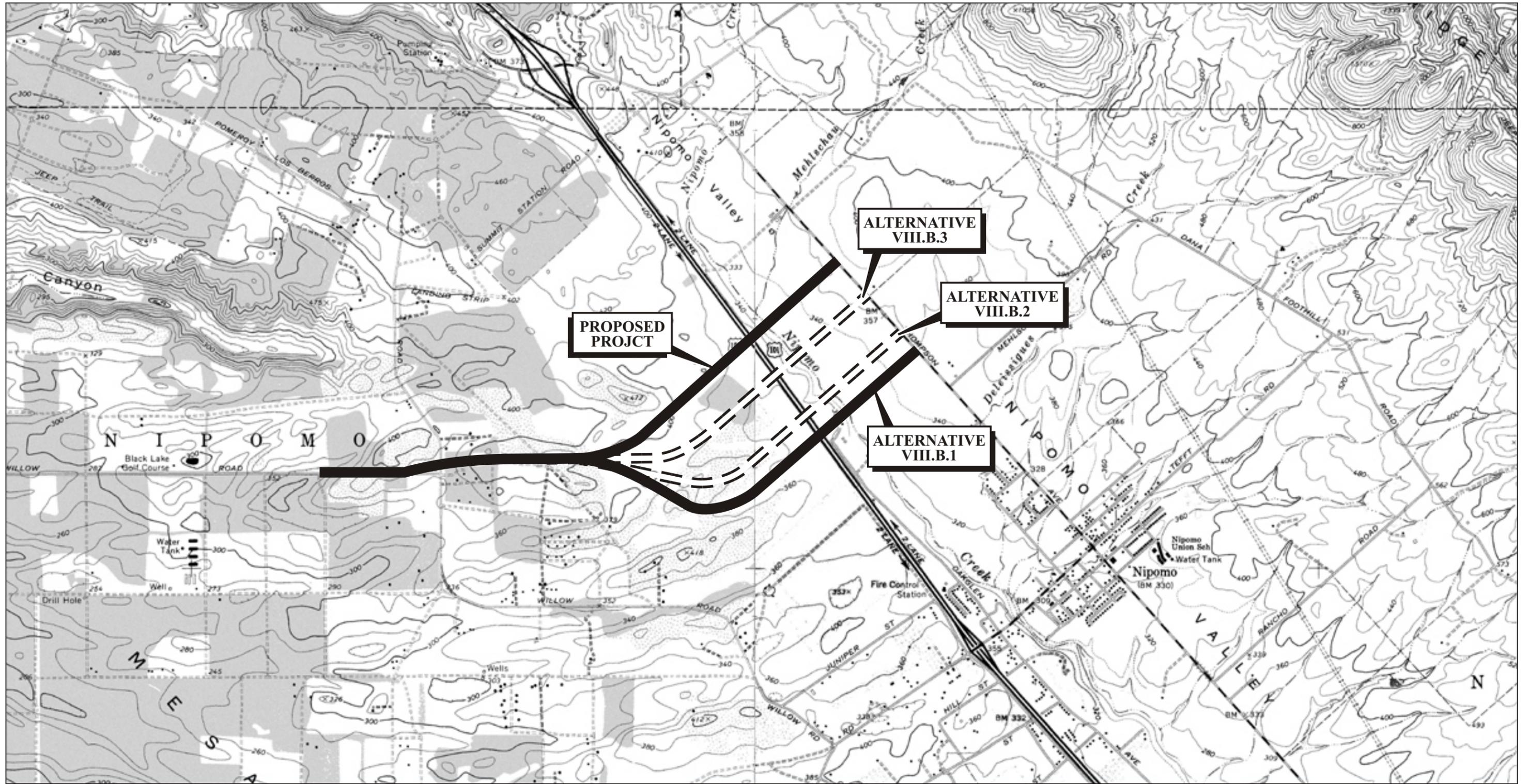
Like the proposed project, this alternative may cause LOS to decline slightly at the intersections of Willow Road with both Pomeroy Road and Hetrick Avenue. In addition, Alternative VIII.B.1 should improve emergency access to the Nipomo Mesa region by providing direct freeway access to the middle of this area.

VIII.B.1 Noise. Like the proposed project, construction related noise from Alternative VIII.B.1 could generate significant noise levels affecting residents of nearby homes. However, fewer homes are located within 50 feet of Alignment 4 when compared to the proposed project. Therefore, impacts from constructed related noise would be less than the proposed project. In either case, short-term construction noise is considered less than significant.

Because there are fewer sensitive receptors within 50 feet of Alignment 4, this alternative would also have less long-term noise impacts than the proposed project. Nevertheless, like the proposed project, it is likely that increased traffic would cause noise levels to exceed the County's exterior noise standard, leading to significant, unavoidable, and adverse noise impacts that would require mitigation.

VIII.B.1 Air Quality. Like the proposed project, construction of Alternative VIII.B.1 will generate fugitive dust and combustion emissions that may have substantial temporary impacts on local air quality. However, adhering to APCD emissions thresholds, Best Available Control Technology for construction equipment (CBACT), and Caltrans Standard Specifications for construction would reduce potential short-term air quality impacts to less than significant. Like the proposed project, this alignment could cause potential impacts from disturbance of ultramafic/serpentine rock which contains asbestos materials. It is unknown whether either Alignment 4 or the proposed project alignment would have this material; mitigation would be required for both.

Over the long-term, no additional local or regional air pollutant emissions associated with Alternative VIII.B.1 or the proposed project would occur. In addition, both this alternative and the proposed project would benefit air quality in the long term through the reduction of traffic congestion. Therefore, this alternative would have essentially the same air quality effects as the proposed project.



LSA

FIGURE VIII-1



VIII.B.1 Public Services. Like the proposed project, this alternative could impact underground utilities, create additional police patrol responsibilities, fire protection and emergency service opportunities, generate excess cut soil and construction debris, and disturb underground utilities. In addition, Alternative VIII.B.1 is similar to the proposed project in that it would lead to improved vehicular access, thereby assisting law enforcement efforts, fire protection and emergency services. Overall, this alternative has similar impacts and benefits to public services as the proposed project.

VIII.B.1 Biological Resources. Like the proposed project, construction of Alternative VIII.B.1 would have the potential to significantly impact sensitive wildlife, sensitive vegetation, sensitive habitat, jurisdictional waters, a wildlife corridor, and nesting birds. Construction of this alternative would impact a larger area of jurisdictional wetlands and a larger area of maritime chaparral. Impacts to these resources could be reduced to less than significant levels with implementation of the mitigation measures described for the proposed project. However, fewer oaks and a much smaller area of oak woodland habitat would be directly impacted since Alignment 4 runs through an area that has been used for farming (Canada property). Since this alternative reduces the area where significant, unavoidable and adverse impacts will occur, this alternative would cause less of a biological impact than the proposed project.

VIII.B.1 Cultural Resources. Alignment 4 would avoid impacts to CA-SLO-1319H, CA-SLO-1620, CA-SLO-1767, CA-SLO-2133, and CA-SLO-2271. However, Alignment 4 would impact two other archaeological sites, CA-SLO-2131 and CA-SLO-2132, as well as any unknown sites. Because fewer sites have the potential to be impacted by Alignment 4, this alternative would have less impact on cultural resources than the proposed project.

VIII.B.1 Agricultural Resources. Similar to the proposed project, Alternative VIII.B.1 would have the potential to impact agricultural operations, and prime agricultural soils in the area between Nipomo Creek and Thompson Avenue. However, the mitigation measures prescribed for the proposed project would also be applicable to this alternative and, each of these impacts could be reduced to less than significant levels.

Alternative VIII.B.1 would avoid impacts to the two agricultural preserves (parcel numbers 091-251-017 and 091-301-019) located within the proposed project area. However, this alternative would disrupt a different agricultural preserve located between US 101 and Thompson Road (parcel number 091-301-062). Therefore, the Alignment 4 alternative would also have significant, unavoidable, and adverse impacts on agricultural preserves. In addition, this alternative intersects the C&M Nursery, thereby impacting agricultural operations at this location. Therefore, when compared to the proposed project, Alternative VIII.B.1 has greater impacts on agricultural resources.

VIII.B.1 Aesthetics. Like the proposed project, this alternative introduces intersection lighting, an interchange and surface streets to the existing setting. It also removes riparian vegetation along Nipomo Creek and leads to the removal of oak woodland habitat. However, fewer oaks along US 101 would be removed since Alignment 4 runs through an area that has been used for farming (Canada property) and has fewer oak trees. Therefore, this alternative may cause less of an aesthetic impact than the proposed project.

VIII.B.1 Geology and Soils. The geologic setting of this alternative is very similar to the proposed project. Therefore, potential impacts including seismic activity, expansive soils, landslides, and erosion would be the same as the proposed project.

VIII.B.1 Drainage, Erosion, and Sedimentation. Neither the proposed project nor Alternative VIII.B.1 would expose people or structures to a significant risk from flooding, a seiche, tsunami, or mudflow. In addition, neither would significantly alter existing drainages or drainage patterns. Construction of this alternative or the proposed project could increase erosion and sedimentation potential. Overall, this alternative has similar drainage, erosion, and sedimentation impacts as the proposed project.

VIII.B.1. Water Quality. Alignment 4 would require roughly the same amount of construction as the proposed project. In addition, the same amount of impervious area would be added as described for the proposed project. Therefore, this alternative has similar potential as the proposed project to introduce pollutants into Nipomo Creek and alter the volume and character of storm runoff. Alternative VIII.B.1 and the proposed project would cause the same or similar impacts to water quality as the proposed project.

VIII.B.1 Hazardous Materials. Potential impacts related to hazardous materials from Alternative VIII.B.1 are essentially identical to impacts associated with the proposed project. This alternative and the proposed project require roughly the same amount of construction and therefore have the same potential to disturb contaminated soil and the two Unocal pipelines. In the long-term, neither Alternative VIII.B.1 nor the proposed project would have potential to cause impacts related to hazardous materials.

VIII.B.1 Socio-Economics. Like the proposed project, this alternative could indirectly lead to an increase in Nipomo's population and housing and it could indirectly cause growth in new commercial uses and employment. The indirect or growth-inducing impacts of Alternative VIII.B.1 or the proposed project are considered to be potentially significant unavoidable adverse impacts. In addition, Alternative VIII.B.1 is similar to the proposed project since it would potentially benefit existing businesses through reduced traffic congestion and improved access.

VIII.B.2 Relocate Alignment 4 – 300 feet to the North

This alternative alignment is very similar to the Alignment 4 alternative, except that the Willow Road extension between Hetrick Avenue and Thompson Avenue and the US 101 interchange would be shifted 300 feet to the north. Where Alignment 4 is approximately 2,700 feet south of the proposed project alignment, Alternative VIII.B.2 would be 2,400 feet to the south (Figure VIII-1). This alternative was discussed in the 1999 FEIR and potential impacts are very similar to the Alignment 4 alternative (Alternative VIII.B.1). Therefore, impacts will not be discussed by topic, but are briefly summarized.

Alternative VIII.B.2 is similar to the proposed project and Alternative VIII.B.1 in that it meets all of the project objectives. In addition, impacts to traffic and circulation, noise, air quality, public services, geology and soils, drainage, erosion, and sedimentation, water quality, hazardous materials, and socio-economics are the same or similar to the proposed project.

This alternative is similar to Alternative VIII.B.1 in that it creates a significant impact on the C&M nursery that is avoided by the proposed project. Therefore, this alternative has a greater impact on existing land uses and agricultural resources than the proposed project. It is also similar to Alternative VIII.B.1 since fewer oaks along US 101 would be removed than the proposed project since both Alternatives VIII.B.1 and VIII.B.2 traverse through an area that has been used for farming (Canada property). Therefore, this alternative may cause less aesthetic and biological impacts than the proposed project.

In terms of cultural resources, Alternative VIII.B.2 avoids potential impacts of either the proposed project or Alternative VIII.B.1 because it does not impact any known archaeological sites. Therefore, Alternative VIII.B.2 has less impact on cultural resources than the proposed project.

VIII.B.3 Relocate Alignment 4 – 1200 feet to the North

Alternative III.B.3 is very similar to the Alignment 4 alternative, except that the Willow Road extension between Hetrick Avenue and Thompson Avenue and the US 101 interchange would be shifted 1,200 feet to the north. Where Alignment 4 is approximately 2,700 feet south of the proposed project alignment, Alternative VIII.B.3 would be 1,500 feet to the south (Figure VIII-1).

Like Alternative VIII.2, this alternative was discussed in the 1999 FEIR and potential impacts are very similar to the Alignment 4 alternative (Alternative VIII.B.1). Therefore, impacts will not be discussed by topic, but are briefly summarized.

Alternative VIII.B.3 is similar to the proposed project in that it meets all of the project objectives. In addition, impacts to traffic and circulation, noise, air quality, public services, aesthetics, geology and soils, drainage, erosion, and sedimentation, water quality, hazardous materials, and socio-economics are the same or similar to the proposed project.

This alternative is similar to Alternatives VIII.B.1 and VIII.B.2 in that it creates a significant impact on the C&M nursery that is avoided by the proposed project. Therefore, this alternative has a greater impact on existing land uses and agricultural resources than the proposed project. It is also similar since fewer oaks along US 101 would be removed than the proposed project since this alternative traverses through an area that has been used for farming (Canada property). Therefore, this alternative may cause less aesthetic and biological impacts than the proposed project.

In terms of cultural resources, Alternative VIII.B.3 avoids potential impacts of either the proposed project or Alternative VIII.B.1 because it does not impact any known archaeological sites. Therefore, Alternative VIII.B.3 has less impact on cultural resources than the proposed project.

VIII.C. INTERCHANGE DESIGN ALTERNATIVES

Three alternative interchange configurations were identified and discussed in detail in the 1999 FEIR prepared for this project. The description and impact analysis for each of these alternatives are summarized from the original FEIR below.

VIII.C.1 Modified Diamond/Partial Cloverleaf

The design for this alternative includes a diamond interchange configuration on the west side of the freeway and a partial cloverleaf configuration in the southeast quadrant (Figure VIII-2). The project area for this alternative would resemble the proposed project in all areas except that the partial cloverleaf would require a much larger take of the C&M Nursery property and no right-of-way would be acquired in the northeast quadrant of the interchange.

Alternative VIII.C.1 meets all of the project objectives and has similar impacts as the proposed project in terms of noise, air quality, public services, aesthetics, geology and soils, drainage, erosion, and sedimentation, hazardous materials, and socio-economics.

While this alternative creates many of the same traffic and circulation improvements as the proposed project, the modified diamond/partial cloverleaf design is difficult for drivers to use and may cause safety and operational difficulties. Therefore, Alternative V.C.1 has greater impacts to traffic and circulation than the proposed project. The partial cloverleaf also creates a significant impact on the C&M nursery that is avoided by the proposed project. Therefore, this alternative also has a greater impact on agricultural resources and existing land uses than the proposed project.

With regard to cultural and biological resources, Alternative VIII.C.1 avoids potential impacts since the northeast quadrant of the interchange is not directly impacted. Since this alternative avoids impacts to site CA-SLO-1620, it would have less impact on cultural resources than the proposed project. This quadrant also contains relatively undisturbed oak woodland with a thick understory of native shrubs. Because this area will be preserved, potential impacts to biological resources are reduced when compared to the proposed project.

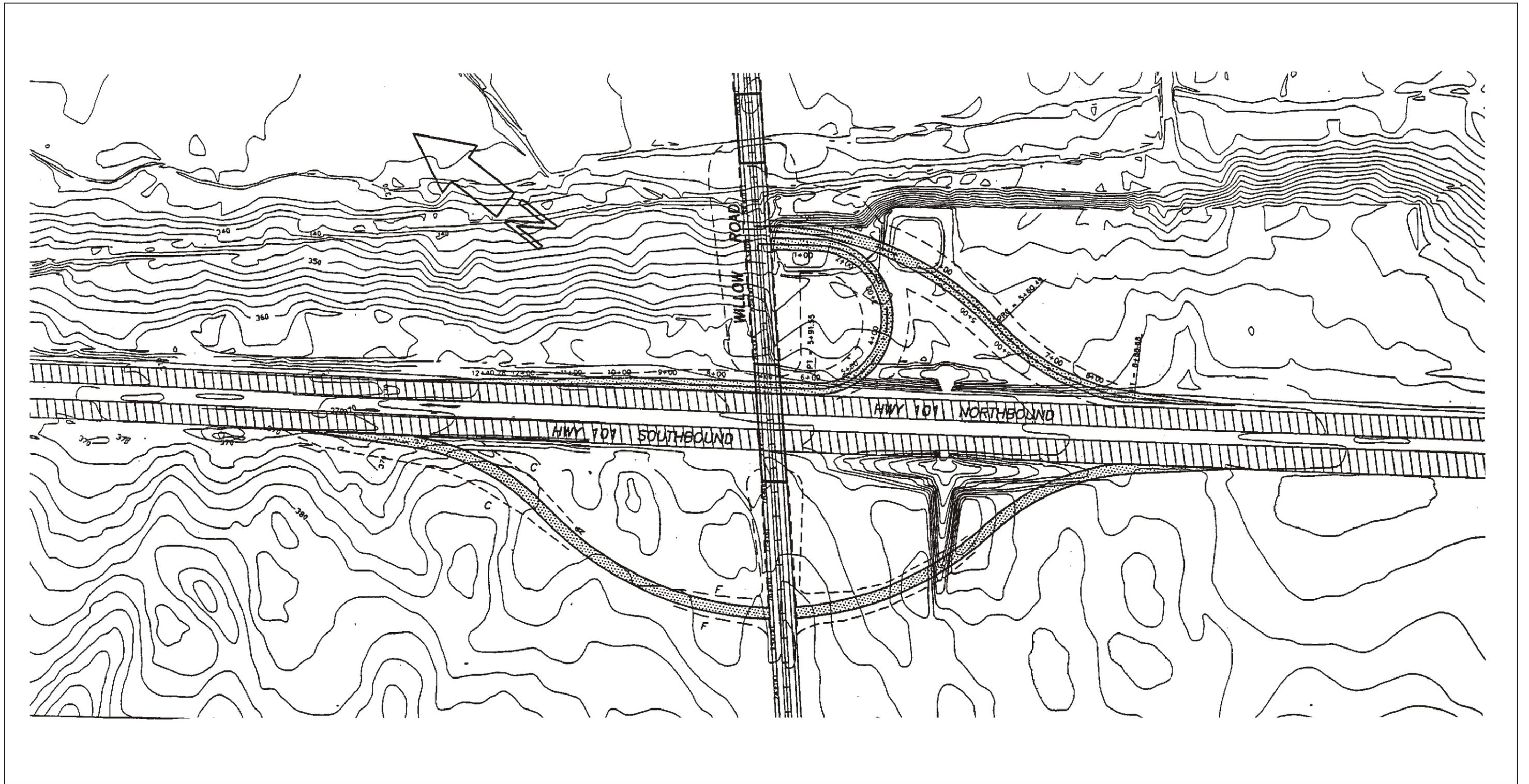
VIII.C.2 Modified “Tight” Diamond

The “Tight” Diamond interchange involves moving the southbound US 101 on and off ramps closer to the freeway than currently proposed by the project (Figure VIII-3). However, the northbound off ramp would be slightly farther from US 101 than the proposed project. This alternative would reduce the distance between off-ramps to approximately 300 feet.

Because Caltrans recommends at least 525 feet between off-ramps, the “tight” diamond may not be approved by Caltrans, or would require a design modification approval.

While the project limits would be reduced on the west side of US 101, few potential significant impacts described for the proposed project would be avoided by this alternative. Alternative VIII.C.2 meets all of the project objectives and has similar impacts to noise, air quality, public services, cultural resources, aesthetics, geology and soils, drainage, erosion, and sedimentation, water quality, hazardous materials, and socio-economics.

Since the northbound off ramp is farther from US 101 than the proposed project, this alternative would encroach upon the C&M Nursery. Therefore, this alternative would have greater impacts to existing land use and agricultural resources than the proposed project.



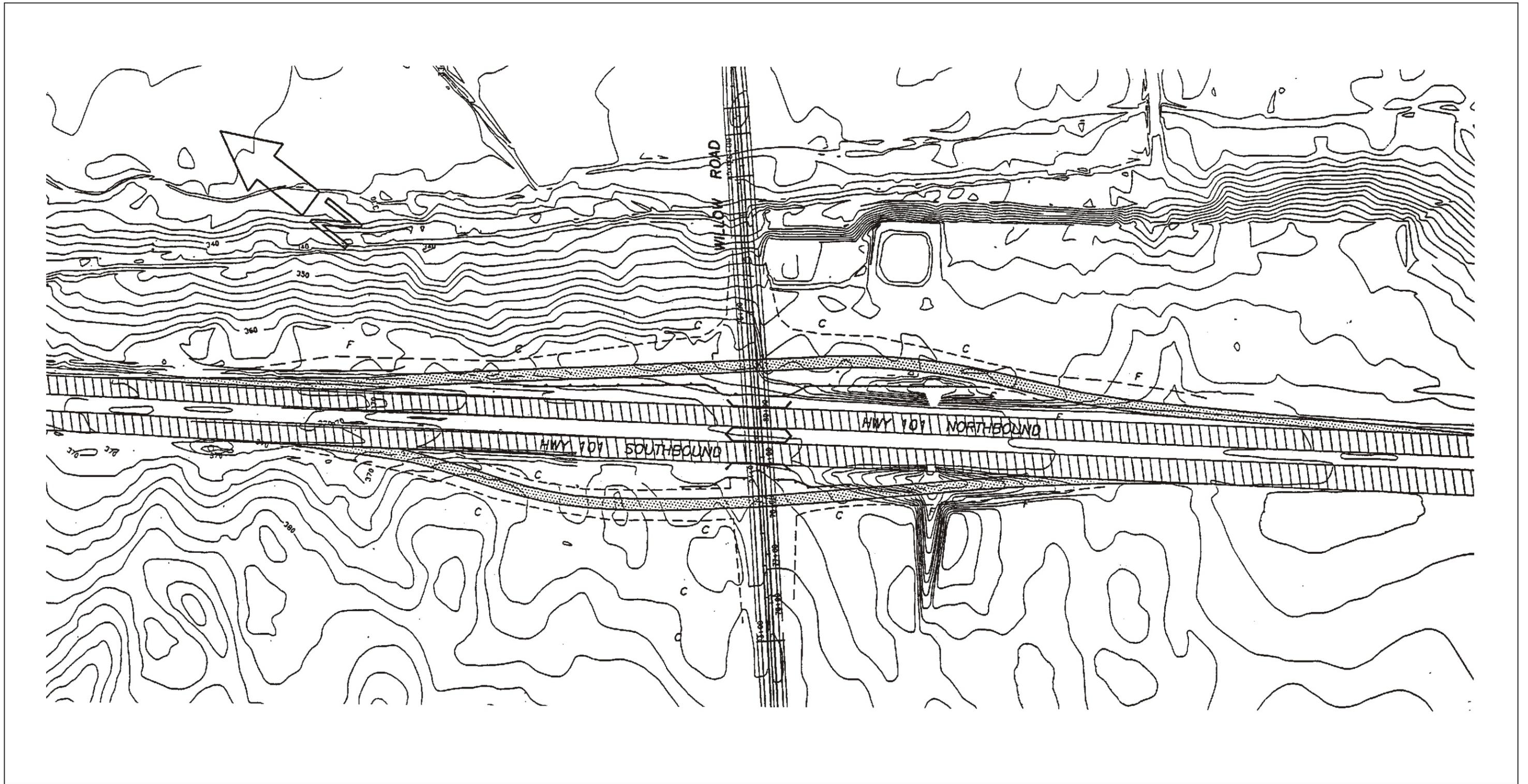
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FIGURE VIII-2



SOURCE: DOUGLAS WOOD & ASSOCIATES, INC.

Willow Road Extension/U.S. 101 Interchange Project
 Alternative VIII.C.1, Modified Diamond/Partial Cloverleaf Interchange



LSA

FIGURE VIII-3



In terms of biological resources, a relatively undisturbed oak woodland with a thick understory of native shrubs in the northeast quadrant of the interchange will be preserved. Therefore, potential impacts to biological resources are reduced when compared to the proposed project.

The “tight” diamond design creates safety and operational difficulties for drivers. Therefore, Alternative V.C.1 would have greater traffic hazard impacts than the proposed project.

VIII.C.3 Modified “Tight-Spread” Diamond

The “Tight-Spread” Diamond interchange involves moving the northbound US 101 on and off ramps closer to the freeway, and moving the southbound US 101 on and off ramps further from the freeway than currently proposed by the project (Figure VIII-4). This alternative allows for the Caltrans recommended 525 feet between off-ramps.

The project limits would be reduced on the east side of the US 101 interchange, but no potential impacts described for the proposed project would be avoided by this alternative. Alternative VIII.C.3 meets all of the project objectives and has similar impacts to traffic and circulation, noise, air quality, public services, cultural resources, biological resources, aesthetics, geology and soils, drainage, erosion, and sedimentation, water quality, hazardous materials, and socio-economics.

Like Alternative VIII.C.2, the northbound off ramp for this alternative is farther from US 101 than the proposed project. Therefore, this alternative would encroach upon the C&M Nursery and would have greater impacts to existing land use and agricultural resources than the proposed project.

VIII.D. NO INTERCHANGE ALTERNATIVES

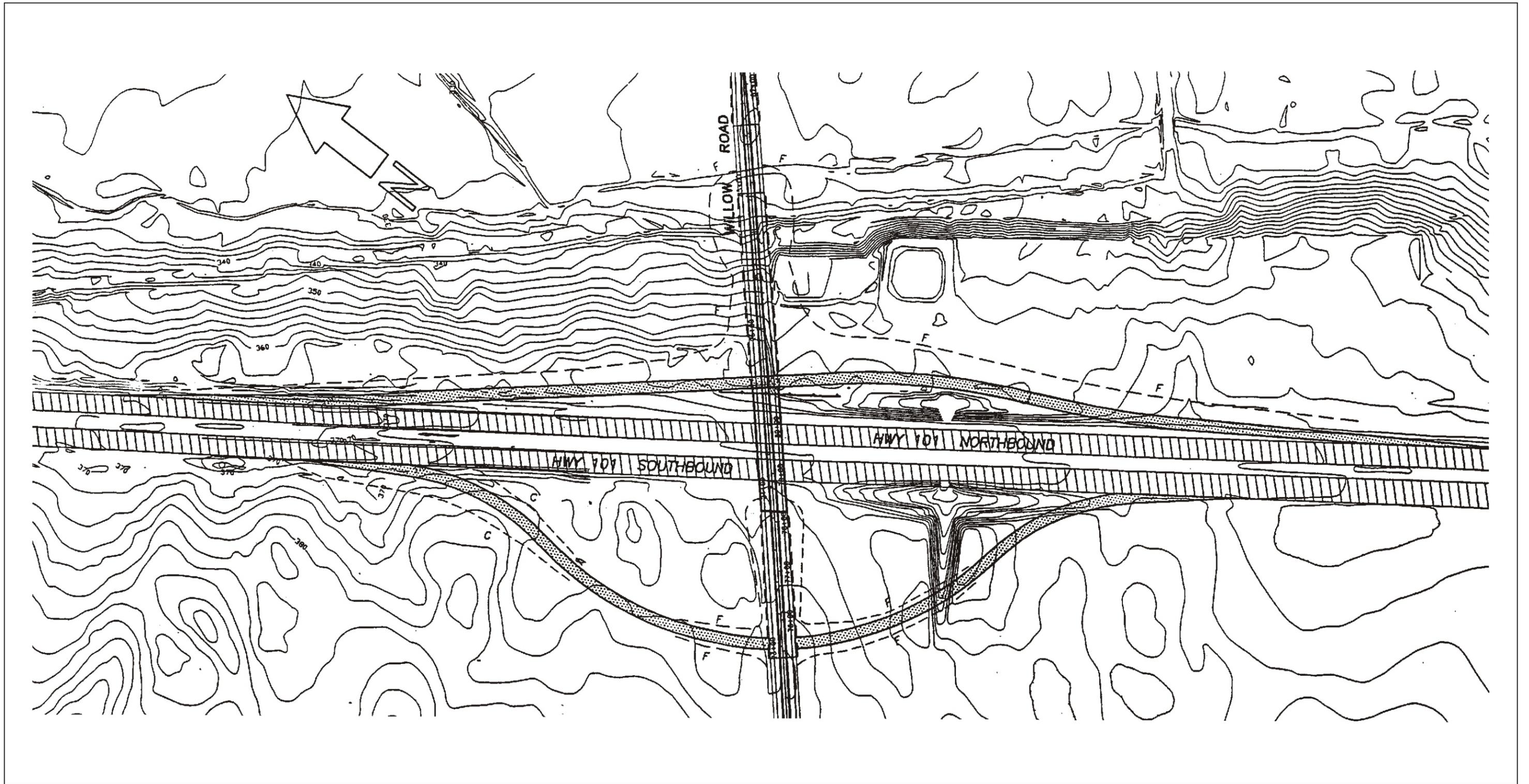
Because many objectives of the Willow Road Extension project involve relieving traffic congestion at adjacent interchanges and roadways, the Traffic Analysis (Appendix B) assessed several different design alternatives. Two of these alternatives involve eliminating the interchange at Willow Road and US 101 and redirecting traffic along frontage roads. Each of these alternatives is discussed below.

VIII.D.1 Frontage Road between Willow Road and Sandydale Drive

In the Traffic Analysis, this alternative is referred to as the CEQA Baseline Alternative. Like the proposed project, Alternative VIII.D.1 involves a two-lane extension of Willow Road. The Willow Road extension would follow the same alignment as the proposed project from approximately 1,000 feet west of Pomeroy Road to 50 feet west of the US 101 right-of-way. At this terminus, Willow Road would connect to a frontage road that would connect between Willow Road and Sandydale Drive. This frontage road is identical to the frontage road described for the proposed project. Alternative VIII.D.1 does not entail any modifications to US 101 and it does not construct any roadway segments east of US 101 (Figure VIII-5).

The following impacts would be associated with this alternative.

VIII.D.1. Project Objectives. Because this alternative does not provide an interchange or direct access on to US 101, it fails to meet the objective of providing a new direct connection between SR 1 and US 101 and it fails to provide circulation improvements identified in the South County Area Plan.



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FIGURE VIII-4



In addition, it fails to relieve traffic congestion LOS at the US 101 interchanges at Tefft Street and Los Berros Road and the need for major modification of the US 101/Tefft Street and Los Berros-Thompson Road interchanges would remain. Lastly, enhanced emergency access through the provision of an alternative connection to US 101 and a new recreational trail from Thompson Avenue to SR-1 would not be provided.

VIII.D.1. Land Use and Planning. Alternative VIII.D.1 is inconsistent with long-range land use and circulation planning for the project area as included in the Land Use and Circulation Elements of the San Luis Obispo County General Plan because it lacks a new interchange at Willow Road/US 101. However, with no new roadway segment east of US 101, impacts to the C&M Nursery would be avoided. Indirect growth inducing effects would be approximately the same as those of the proposed project. Therefore, this alternative has less land use and planning impacts than the proposed project.

VIII.D.1. Traffic and Circulation. As was discussed in the project objectives, this alternative does not relieve traffic congestion LOS at the US 101 interchanges at Tefft Street and Los Berros Road. In

fact, as there would be no new interchange at Willow Road/US 101 under this alternative, there would be more congestion at the Tefft Street/ US 101 intersections than there would be with the proposed project. In addition, improved emergency access would not be provided since direct freeway access is not part of this alternative. Therefore, Alternative VIII.D.1 has greater traffic and circulation impacts than the proposed project.

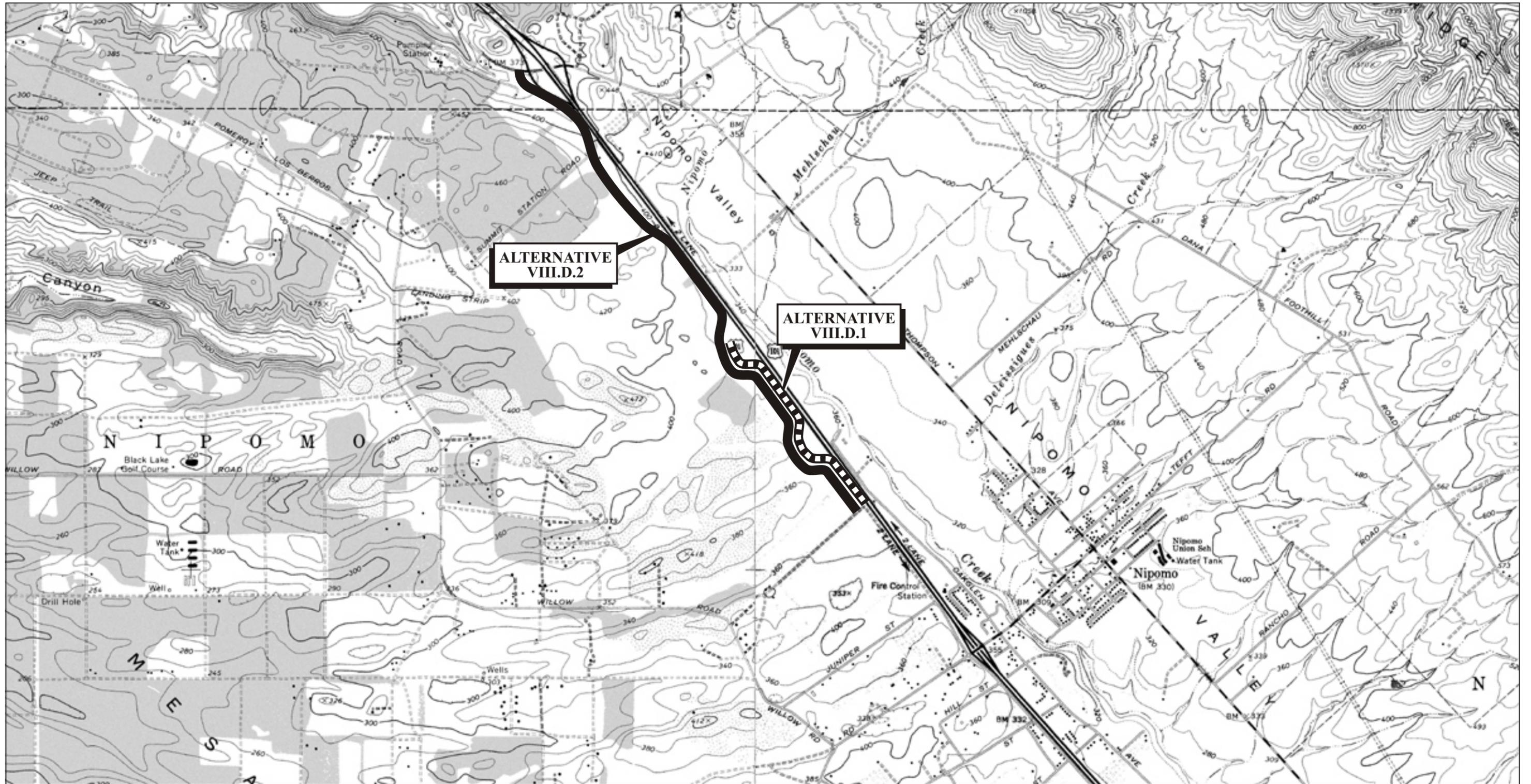
VIII.D.1. Noise. Because there is no interchange or connection to Thompson Avenue associated with this alternative, construction noise would be less than the proposed project. However, like the proposed project, construction related noise generated by road building could still cause significant noise levels, to residents of nearby homes. Potential long-term noise impacts would also be similar to the proposed project. Noise would originate from traffic using the proposed system of roadways in the project area. It is likely that the same 7 receptor locations discussed in the project impacts would experience significant, unavoidable, and adverse noise impacts since the road alignment west of US 101 is the same as the proposed project.

VIII.D.1. Air Quality. Like the proposed project, construction may generate fugitive dust and combustion emissions that may have substantial temporary impacts on local air quality. Naturally Occurring Asbestos could be encountered with this alternative as well as with the proposed project. Because there is no interchange or connection to Thompson Avenue, there would be less construction and therefore less construction emissions than the proposed project.

While the proposed project would result in improved air quality in the long-term, Alternative VIII.D.1 would worsen air quality. Traffic flow would not be improved and the traffic congestion would increase in several areas. Typically, high CO concentrations are associated with roadways or intersections operating at unacceptable levels of service or with extremely high traffic volumes.

Because motor vehicles produce more exhaust per mile at slower speeds, the increased traffic would lead to greater impacts on air quality than the proposed project.

VIII.D.1. Public Services. This alternative is similar to the proposed project since both have the potential to impact buried utilities. However, as was discussed in the project objectives for this



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FIGURE VIII-5



alternative, enhanced emergency access through the provision of an alternative connection to US 101 would not be provided. In addition, increased access for police and fire protection would not be provided. Therefore, Alternative VIII.D.1 has greater impacts to public services than the proposed project.

VIII.D.1. Biological Resources. Like the proposed project, construction of Alternative VIII.D.1 has the potential to impact sensitive wildlife species and nesting birds. In addition, this alternative is similar to the proposed project since construction could potentially impact several sensitive plant species and sensitive habitat. However, since this alternative does not involve construction of an interchange or new road segment east of US 101, relatively undisturbed oak woodland with a thick understory of native shrubs east of US 101 and north of the C&M Nursery will be unaffected. In addition, riparian vegetation associated with Nipomo Creek would be unaffected, thereby avoiding impacts to sensitive habitat, jurisdictional waters, and a wildlife corridor. Overall, Alternative VIII.D.1 would have fewer impacts to biological resources than the proposed project.

VIII.D.1. Cultural Resources. Because no construction would occur east of US 101, no impacts would be made to sites CA-SLO-1620, CA-SLO-1319H, or CA-SLO-1767. Therefore, this alternative avoids some of the impacts to cultural resources that would be caused by the proposed project.

VIII.D.1. Agricultural Resources. Like the proposed project, this alternative has the potential to impact agricultural operations such as irrigated farming. However, Alternative VIII.D.1 avoids potential impacts to nurseries, greenhouses, prime agricultural soils and Williamson Act Agricultural Preserves because there will be no construction of a new interchange at US 101 or road segment east to Thompson Avenue. Therefore, this alternative would result in fewer impacts to agricultural resources than the proposed project.

VIII.D.1. Aesthetics. Alternative VIII.D.1 avoids potential aesthetic impacts such as altering views through the provision of the US 101 interchange (raised US 101 mainline over Willow Road would not occur), and addition of lighting at intersections adjacent to the US 101 interchange. Therefore, potential aesthetic impacts are reduced by this alternative when compared to the proposed project.

VIII.D.1. Geology and Soils. Like the proposed project, seismic activity, expansive soils, landslides, and erosion all have the potential to create significant impacts to this alternative. However, the project limits would be smaller than the proposed project since there would be no interchange or at grade road connection to Thompson Avenue. Therefore, impacts to geology and soils are slightly less than those of the proposed project.

VIII.D.1. Drainage, Erosion, and Sedimentation. Neither the proposed project nor Alternative VIII.D.1 would expose people or structures to a significant risk from flooding, a seiche, tsunami, or mudflow. In addition, neither would significantly alter existing drainages or drainage patterns. Construction of either the proposed project or Alternative VIII.D.1 could increase erosion and sedimentation potential, however, the reduced project limits and avoidance of Nipomo Creek would reduce this potential for Alternative VIII.D.1. Overall, Alternative VIII.D.1 has less potential for impacts to drainage, erosion, and sedimentation because this alternative affects less area than the proposed project.

VIII.D.1. Water Quality. Because Alternative VIII.D.1 does not include any construction east of US 101, this alternative does not have the potential to introduce pollutants into Nipomo Creek. Also, the reduced project limits would create less impervious area than the proposed project, thereby reducing the potential to alter storm runoff volume and character. When compared to the proposed project, this alternative would impact water quality to a lesser degree compared with the proposed project.

VIII.D.1. Hazardous Materials. Alternative VIII.D.1 has less potential to impact hazardous materials than the proposed project for two reasons. First, this alternative requires less construction than the proposed project and therefore has less potential to disturb contaminated soil or ultramafic/serpentine rock. Second, with no construction east of US 101, there is no potential to impact the two Unocal pipelines and introduce hydrocarbon into subsurface soils. In the long-term, neither this alternative nor the proposed project has potential to cause hazardous material impacts.

VIII.D.1. Socio-Economics. Like the proposed project, this alternative could indirectly lead to an increase in Nipomo's population and housing and it could indirectly cause growth in new commercial uses and employment. The indirect or growth-inducing impacts of Alternative VIII.D.1 or the proposed project are considered to be potentially significant unavoidable adverse impacts. However, this alternative would have greater socio-economic impacts than the proposed project because it would not benefit existing businesses through reduced traffic congestion and improved access.

VIII.D.2. Frontage Road between Sandydale Drive and Los Berros Road

This alternative resembles Alternative VIII.D.1, but the frontage road would extend continuously from Sandydale Drive north to Los Berros Road. Like Alternative VIII.B.1, Willow Road would be extended from Pomeroy Road to 50 feet west of the US 101 right-of-way. Traffic that reaches the eastern end of Willow Road could access the freeway either by moving north along the frontage road and using the Los Berros interchange or by heading south along the frontage road and taking the Tefft Street interchange. Alternative VIII.D.2 does not entail any modifications to US 101 and it does not construct any roadway segments east of US 101(Figure VIII-5).

The following impacts would result from this alternative.

VIII.D.2. Project Objectives. Like Alternative VIII.D.1, this alternative does not provide an interchange or direct access on to US 101. Therefore, it fails to meet the primary objective of providing a new direct connection between SR 1 and US 101 and it fails to provide circulation improvements identified in the South County Area Plan. In addition, it fails to relieve traffic congestion LOS at the US 101 interchanges at Tefft Street and Los Berros Road and the need for major modification of the US 101/Tefft Street and Los Berros-Thompson Road interchanges would remain. Lastly, enhanced emergency access through the provision of an alternative connection to US 101 and a new recreational trail from Thompson Avenue to SR-1 would not be provided.

VIII.D.2. Land Use and Planning. Due to the lack of an interchange, this alternative is inconsistent with long-range land use and circulation planning for the project area as included in the Land Use and Circulation Elements of the San Luis Obispo County General Plan. In addition, with no interchange and no road segment constructed east of US 101, impacts to the C&M Nursery would be avoided. Therefore, this alternative has less land use and planning impacts than the proposed project.

VIII.D.2. Traffic and Circulation. Like Alternative VIII.D.1, this alternative has greater traffic and circulation impacts than the proposed project. This alternative does not relieve traffic congestion LOS at the US 101 interchanges at Tefft Street and Los Berros Road. In addition, improved emergency access would not be provided.

VIII.D.2. Noise. With no interchange or connection to Thompson Avenue, construction noise associated with this alternative would be less than the proposed project. However, like the proposed project, construction related noise generated by road building could still cause significant noise levels at nearby homes. In fact, additional homes are located on the west side of US 101, between Willow Road and Los Berros Road. Therefore, more sensitive receptors would be affected by construction of this alternative.

In addition, potential long-term noise impacts would originate from traffic noise using the proposed system of roadways. It is likely that in addition to the 7 receptor locations discussed in the project impacts, additional sensitive receptors would experience significant, unavoidable and adverse noise impacts. Overall, Alternative VIII.D.2 has greater noise impacts than the proposed project.

VIII.D.2. Air Quality. Air quality impacts for this alternative are similar to the impacts discussed for Alternative VIII.D.1. Construction impacts would be similar to the proposed project. Although there is no interchange or connection to Thompson, there is additional construction west of US 101 between Willow Road and Los Berros Road. Similar to the proposed project, exposure to asbestos containing material in ultramafic/serpentine rock could occur during project grading. Alternative VIII.D.2 would cause greater air quality impacts in the long-term than the proposed project because traffic flow is not being improved. The increase in traffic congestion would lead to greater impacts on air quality than the proposed project.

VIII.D.2. Public Services. Alternative VIII.D.2 has greater impacts to public services than the proposed project since enhanced emergency access, through the provision of an alternative connection to US 101, would not be provided. In addition, increased access for police and fire protection would not be provided. Lastly, there is an increased potential for underground utilities to be impacted during construction of the frontage road north to Los Berros Road.

VIII.D.2. Biological Resources. Like the proposed project and Alternative VIII.D.1, construction of Alternative VIII.D.2 has the potential to impact sensitive wildlife species, nesting birds, sensitive plant species and sensitive habitat. However, since this alternative does not involve construction east of US 101, riparian vegetation associated with Nipomo Creek would be preserved, thereby avoiding impacts to sensitive habitat, jurisdictional waters, and a wildlife corridor.

With no interchange at US 101, this alternative also preserves a relatively undisturbed oak woodland with a thick understory of native shrubs east of US 101, but it would impact additional oak woodland and oak trees west of US 101 between Willow Road and Los Berros Road. Since Alternative VIII.D.2 exacerbates the significant, unavoidable adverse impacts created by the proposed project, this alternative would have greater overall impacts to biological resources.

VIII.D.2. Cultural Resources. Because no construction would occur east of US 101, no impacts would be made to sites CA-SLO-1620, CA-SLO-1319H, or CA-SLO-1767. Therefore, this

alternative avoids some of the impacts to cultural resources that would be caused by the proposed project. One additional site, CA-SLO-2272, would be impacted by this alternative. However, this site has been found to be ineligible for listing on the California Register and impacts would therefore not be considered significant. Overall, Alternative VIII.D.2 has fewer cultural resource impacts than the proposed project.

VIII.D.2. Agricultural Resources. Potential impacts of this alternative are similar to those described for Alternative VIII.D.1 because both alternatives avoid construction east of US 101. This alternative has the potential to impact agricultural operations such as irrigated farming, but it avoids potential impacts to nurseries, greenhouses, prime agricultural soils and Williamson Act Agricultural Preserves. Therefore, this alternative would result in fewer impacts to agricultural resources than the proposed project.

VIII.D.2. Aesthetics. Alternative VIII.D.2 avoids potential aesthetic impacts such as altering views through the provision of the US 101 interchange, removal of riparian vegetation along Nipomo Creek, and addition of lighting at intersections adjacent to the US 101 interchange. However, impacts, such as those caused by the removal of oak trees along US 101 would be exacerbated as additional habitat would be lost between Willow Road and Los Berros Road. Since the loss of oaks can be mitigated eventually when new habitat is ecologically functional, aesthetic impacts overall are reduced by this alternative when compared to the proposed project.

VIII.D.2. Geology and Soils. Like the proposed project, seismic activity, expansive soils, landslides, and erosion all have the potential to create significant impacts to this alternative. Although there is no interchange or connection to Thompson Avenue associated with this alternative, the overall project areas would be similar in size to the proposed project because of the connection to Los Berros Road. Therefore, impacts to geology and soils are similar to those described for the proposed project.

VIII.D.2. Drainage, Erosion, and Sedimentation. Like the proposed project, Alternative VIII.D.2 would not expose people or structures to a significant risk from flooding, a seiche, tsunami, or mudflow. Neither the proposed project nor Alternative VIII.D.2 would significantly alter existing drainages or drainage patterns. However, since there would be no construction east of US 101 with this alternative, the potential to impact Nipomo Creek is avoided. Construction of either the proposed project or Alternative VIII.D.2 could increase erosion and sedimentation potential. Overall, Alternative VIII.D.2 has slightly less potential to impact drainage, erosion, and sedimentation than the proposed project.

VIII.D.2. Water Quality. Because there would be no construction east of US 101, the potential to introduce pollutants into Nipomo Creek is avoided. The frontage road between Willow Road and Los Berros Road would introduce roughly the same amount of impervious area as the proposed road between Willow Road and Thompson Avenue. Therefore, the potential for this alternative to alter storm runoff volume and character is similar to the potential of the proposed project. Overall, Alternative VIII.D.1 has less potential to impact water quality than the proposed project.

VIII.D.2. Hazardous Materials. Alternative VIII.D.2 and the proposed project would entail roughly the same amount of construction. Therefore, they have similar potential to disturb contaminated soil and/or Naturally Occurring Asbestos. However, since this alternative does not require a new interchange or construction of Willow Road east of US 101, the potential to impact the two Unocal

pipelines is avoided. In the long-term, neither this alternative nor the proposed project has potential to cause hazardous material impacts. Overall, this alternative has fewer hazardous materials impacts than the proposed project.

VIII.D.2. Socio-Economics. Socio-economic impacts from this alternative are similar to those described for Alternative VIII.D.1. This alternative could indirectly lead to an increase in Nipomo's population and housing and it could indirectly cause growth in new commercial uses and employment. Like the proposed project, these indirect or growth-inducing impacts are considered to be potentially significant, unavoidable and adverse. In addition to these indirect or growth-inducing impacts, benefits to existing businesses through reduced traffic congestion and improved access provided by the project would be eliminated with this alternative. Therefore, Alternative VIII.D.2 has greater socio-economic impacts than the proposed project.

VIII.E. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT WITHDRAWN FROM FURTHER CONSIDERATION

The Traffic Analysis (Appendix B) includes one alternative that has been withdrawn from consideration. In this alternative, the Willow Road extension and US 101 interchange would not be constructed, but the existing Tefft Street/US 101 interchange would be improved. Both the southbound and northbound ramps to US 101 at Tefft Street would be widened so that they could obtain turn lanes. This alternative eases congestion at the Tefft Street interchange by adding to the capacity of that interchange to handle traffic. However, traffic congestion problems at this intersection would be greatly exacerbated during construction since the interchange would become closed to motorists for long periods of time. In addition, this alternative fails to meet the project objective of providing a new direct connection between SR 1 and US 101 and it fails to provide circulation improvements identified in the South County Area Plan. Lastly, this alternative would require a significant amount of property acquisition.

VIII.F. SUMMARY COMPARISON OF ALL ALTERNATIVES

Table VIII-1 provides a summary comparison of the environmental effects of the alternatives considered compared to the proposed project.

VIII.G. ENVIRONMENTALLY SUPERIOR ALTERNATIVE

Per the CEQA Guidelines, Section 15126.6, the purpose of evaluating alternatives to the proposed project is to determine whether any different project designs or locations, could feasibly attain most of the basic project objectives. In the case of this project, the basic objective includes providing a new direct connection between SR 1 and US 101.

The "No Project/No Build" Alternative (VIII.A) would have less impacts (or no impacts) compared with the proposed project on noise, biological resources, cultural resources, agricultural resources, aesthetics, geology and soils, drainage, erosion and sedimentation, water quality, hazardous materials, and socio-economics. However, the "No Project/No Build" Alternative would have greater impacts on land use and planning, traffic and circulation, air quality and public services (emergency access).

In addition, the “No Project/No Build” Alternative would not meet any of the project objectives. Therefore, the “No Project/No Build” Alternative would not be the Environmentally Superior Alternative.

The two “No Interchange” alternatives (Alternative VIII.D.1: Frontage Road between Willow Road and Sandydale Drive and Alternative VIII.D.2: Frontage Road between Sandydale Drive and Los Berros Road) would not meet most of the project objectives. Alternative VIII.D.2 would have greater impacts than the proposed project on traffic and circulation, noise, air quality, public resources, biological resources and socio-economics. Alternative VIII.D.1 would have greater impacts than the proposed project to traffic and circulation, air quality, public services and socioeconomics. Therefore, these two No Interchange alternatives would not reduce the proposed project impacts in these issue areas, respectively.

In addition to the proposed project, there are six alternatives (three Alternative Project Sites and three Interchange Design Alternatives) that meet all or most of the project objectives. Although some of these alternatives reduce the amount of oak woodland and number of oak trees being impacted, none of the alternatives reduce the significant unavoidable biological impacts to less than significant levels. In addition, none of these alternatives eliminate significant unavoidable impacts from construction and long-term traffic noise, agricultural resources, or socio-economics. The three Alternative Project Sites and the three Interchange Design Alternatives exacerbate the significant, unavoidable, adverse impacts to agricultural resources because each encroaches upon the C&M Nursery.

When all alternatives are considered, there are no potential alternatives that meet most of the project objectives and avoid or substantially minimize all of the significant impacts identified for the proposed project. Therefore, the proposed project is considered to be the Environmentally Superior Alternative.

VIII-1. Summary Comparison of All Alternatives

Environmental Topic	Proposed Project	VIII.A. "No Project/No Build" Alternative	VIII.B. Alternative Project Sites		
			1. Alignment 4	2. Relocate Alignment 4 - 300 feet North	3. Relocate Alignment 4 - 1200 feet North
Project Objectives	Meets All Objectives	Meets No Objectives	Meets All Objectives	Meets All Objectives	Meets All Objectives
Land Use and Planning	Potentially Significant	Greater Impacts	Greater Impacts	Greater Impacts	Greater Impacts
Traffic and Circulation	No Impacts	Greater Impacts	Same or Similar Impacts	Same or Similar Impacts	Same or Similar Impacts
Noise	Significant Unavoidable	Less Impacts	Less Impacts	Same or Similar Impacts	Same or Similar Impacts
Air Quality	Potentially Significant	Greater Impacts	Same or Similar Impacts	Same or Similar Impacts	Same or Similar Impacts
Public Services	Potentially Significant	Greater Impacts	Same or Similar Impacts	Same or Similar Impacts	Same or Similar Impacts
Biological Resources	Significant Unavoidable	Less Impacts	Less Impacts	Less Impacts	Less Impacts
Cultural Resources	Potentially Significant	Less Impacts	Less Impacts	Less Impacts	Less Impacts
Agricultural Resources	Significant Unavoidable	Less Impacts	Greater Impacts	Greater Impacts	Greater Impacts
Aesthetics	Potentially Significant	Less Impacts	Less Impacts	Less Impacts	Less Impacts
Geology and Soils	Potentially Significant	Less Impacts	Same or Similar Impacts	Same or Similar Impacts	Same or Similar Impacts
Drainage, Erosion and Sedimentation	Potentially Significant	Less Impacts	Same or Similar Impacts	Same or Similar Impacts	Same or Similar Impacts
Water Quality	Potentially Significant	Less Impacts	Same or Similar Impacts	Same or Similar Impacts	Same or Similar Impacts
Hazardous Materials	Potentially Significant	Less Impacts	Same or Similar Impacts	Same or Similar Impacts	Same or Similar Impacts
Socio-Economics	Unavoidable	Less Impacts	Same or Similar Impacts	Same or Similar Impacts	Same or Similar Impacts

VIII-1. Summary Comparison of All Alternatives

Environmental Topic	VIII.C. Interchange Design Alternatives			VIII.D. No Interchange Alternatives	
	1. Modified Diamond/Partial Cloverleaf	2. Modified "Tight" Diamond	3. Modified "Tight-Spread" Diamond	1. Frontage Road b/w Willow Rd. and Sandydale Dr.	2. Frontage Road b/w Sandydale Dr. and Los Berros Rd.
Project Objectives	Meets All Objectives	Meets All Objectives	Meets All Objectives	Meets Some Objectives	Meets Some Objectives
Land Use and Planning	Greater Impacts	Greater Impacts	Greater Impacts	Less Impacts	Less Impacts
Traffic and Circulation	Greater Impacts	Greater Impacts	Same or Similar Impacts	Greater Impacts	Greater Impacts
Noise	Same or Similar Impacts	Same or Similar Impacts	Same or Similar Impacts	Same or Similar Impacts	Greater Impacts
Air Quality	Same or Similar Impacts	Same or Similar Impacts	Same or Similar Impacts	Greater Impacts	Greater Impacts
Public Services	Same or Similar Impacts	Same or Similar Impacts	Same or Similar Impacts	Greater Impacts	Greater Impacts
Biological Resources	Less Impacts	Less Impacts	Same or Similar Impacts	Less Impacts	Greater Impacts
Cultural Resources	Less Impacts	Same or Similar Impacts	Same or Similar Impacts	Less Impacts	Less Impacts
Agricultural Resources	Greater Impacts	Greater Impacts	Greater Impacts	Less Impacts	Less Impacts
Aesthetics	Same or Similar Impacts	Same or Similar Impacts	Same or Similar Impacts	Less Impacts	Less Impacts
Geology and Soils	Same or Similar Impacts	Same or Similar Impacts	Same or Similar Impacts	Less Impacts	Same or Similar Impacts
Drainage, Erosion and Sedimentation	Same or Similar Impacts	Same or Similar Impacts	Same or Similar Impacts	Less Impacts	Same or Similar Impacts
Water Quality	Same or Similar Impacts	Same or Similar Impacts	Same or Similar Impacts	Less Impacts	Less Impacts
Hazardous Materials	Same or Similar Impacts	Same or Similar Impacts	Same or Similar Impacts	Less Impacts	Less Impacts
Socio-Economics	Same or Similar Impacts	Same or Similar Impacts	Same or Similar Impacts	Greater Impacts	Greater Impacts