

CHAPTER 5. ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Section 15126.6(a) requires an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to “describe a reasonable range of alternatives to a project, or to the location of a project, which could feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project, and evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives.” This chapter discusses a range of alternatives to the proposed Dana Reserve Specific Plan (DRSP; project), including modified locations, alternative designs, and a No Project Alternative. The State CEQA Guidelines provide direction for the discussion of alternatives to the proposed project, including the following guidance for the discussion of alternatives to the proposed project:

- “An EIR shall describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project, or to the location of the project, which would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project, and evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives.” (Section 15126.6(a))
- “Because an EIR must identify ways to mitigate or avoid the significant effects that a project may have on the environment (Public Resources Code Section 21002.1), the discussion of alternatives shall focus on alternatives to the project or its location which are capable of avoiding or substantially lessening any significant effects of the project, even if these alternatives would impede to some degree the attainment of the project objectives, or would be more costly.” (Section 15126.6(b))
- “The EIR shall include sufficient information about each alternative to allow meaningful evaluation, analysis, and comparison with the proposed project. A matrix displaying the major characteristics and significant environmental effects of each alternative may be used to summarize the comparison.” (Section 15126.6(d))
- “The specific alternative of “no project” shall also be evaluated along with its impact. The purpose of describing and analyzing a no project alternative is to allow decisionmakers to compare the impacts of approving the proposed project with the impacts of not approving the proposed project.” (Section 15126.6(e))
- “If the environmentally superior alternative is the ‘no project’ alternative, the EIR shall also identify an environmentally superior alternative among the other alternatives.” (Section 15126.6(e)(2))
- “The alternatives shall be limited to ones that would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project. Of those alternatives, the EIR need examine in detail only the ones that the lead agency determines could feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project.” (Section 15126.6(f))
- “Only [alternative] locations that would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project need be considered for inclusion in the EIR.” (Section 15126.6(f)(2)(A))

Given the CEQA mandates listed above, this section: (1) describes the range of reasonable alternatives to the project, including the No Project Alternative; (2) examines and evaluates resource issue areas where significant adverse environmental effects have been identified and compares the impacts of the alternatives to those of the proposed project; and (3) identifies the Environmentally Superior Alternative.

5.2 ALTERNATIVES SELECTION

In accordance with the CEQA Guidelines, appropriate alternatives for EIR analysis are those that meet most of the basic project objectives and avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant environmental effects of the proposed project. Consequently, this section reviews the objectives that were identified for the proposed project and any significant unavoidable environmental effects.

5.2.1 Project Objectives

As described in Chapter 2, *Project Description*, the primary project objectives identified for the DRSP include:

1. To provide a mix of land uses that offers a range of amenities accessible to residents and community members.
2. To respect Old Town Nipomo, by providing a small, neighborhood-oriented village commercial area designed to complement, rather than compete with, Old Town Nipomo.
3. To provide a public neighborhood park and pocket parks and open space areas within each residential neighborhood, linking the neighborhoods together through a network of trails and open spaces.
4. To incorporate the rural history of the community through architectural design.
5. To provide a diversity of housing types and opportunities for home ownership and rental, including affordable homes consistent with the goals and policies of the Housing Element of the *County of San Luis Obispo General Plan*, the County of San Luis Obispo (County) Inclusionary Housing Ordinance, and regional housing needs.
6. To create new employment and job training opportunities for the community and the broader south San Luis Obispo County area.
7. To enhance circulation within the Specific Plan Area and existing community by continuing the existing public roadway network through the DRSP property to connect to Willow Road, providing a new Park and Ride lot to encourage carpooling, and creating new public transportation points of connection to facilitate public transit use and reduce single-occupant automobile use.
8. To integrate a network of walking, bicycling, and equestrian facilities to connect on-site residential neighborhoods and the broader community.
9. To maintain the large, centrally located oak woodland area as a site feature and to minimize impacts to special-status plants and animals on-site.
10. To meet the County Building Code requirements for energy efficiencies and water savings.
11. To reduce uncertainty in planning for and secure the orderly development of the Specific Plan Area.
12. To provide effective and efficient development of public facilities, infrastructure, and services appropriate for the Specific Plan Area.
13. To meet the requirements of the Nipomo Community Services District (NCSD) District Code to ensure that the necessary DRSP water and wastewater infrastructure is constructed to serve the project without adverse impacts on the NCSD's ability to serve existing and future users.

5.2.2 Significant Impacts Resulting from the Proposed Project

Alternatives to be considered under CEQA are those that would avoid or substantially lessen one or more of the significant environmental effects identified during evaluation of the proposed project. Many of the adverse environmental impacts described in Chapter 4, *Environmental Impacts Analysis*, were judged to be less than significant or less than significant with the incorporation of identified mitigation. The following impacts were found to be significant and unavoidable even with the implementation of mitigation measures:

5.2.2.1 Air Quality

- **AQ Impact 1: The project would conflict with an applicable air quality plan, resulting in a significant impact.** Implementation of the proposed project would further divide the jobs-to-housing balance within the project area and would be inconsistent with regional vehicle miles traveled (VMT)-reduction efforts. No mitigation measures have been identified that would reduce these impacts to below applicable thresholds. Due to the increase in regional VMT and inconsistency with the jobs-to-housing balance, impacts would be *significant and unavoidable* (Class I).
- **AQ Impact 3: The project would result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of criteria pollutants in exceedance of established San Luis Air Pollution Control District (SLOAPCD) daily emissions thresholds, resulting in a significant impact.** During operation, maximum daily operational air pollutant emissions would exceed SLOAPCD's operational significance thresholds. Annual emissions of reactive organic gases (ROG) and nitrogen oxides (NOx) would also exceed SLOAPCD's recommended operational significance thresholds. Mitigation Measure AQ/mm-3.3 has been included to require implementation of SLOAPCD recommended mitigation measures as well as additional measures to reduce long-term operational air quality pollutant emissions. With implementation of Mitigation Measure AQ/mm-3.3, operational annual emissions would be reduced to below SLOAPCD's significance threshold; however, daily operational emissions would continue to exceed SLOAPCD's significance threshold. Therefore, impacts related to the generation of criteria pollutants in exceedance of established daily emissions thresholds would be *significant and unavoidable* (Class I).
- **AQ Impact 9: The project would conflict with an applicable air quality plan and would result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of criteria pollutants in exceedance of established SLOAPCD daily emissions thresholds, resulting in a significant cumulative impact.** Reasonably foreseeable future projects within the vicinity of the DRSP area have the potential to further exceed established VMT-reduction and jobs-to-housing balance requirements that would conflict with applicable air quality plans and further exceed operational SLOAPCD criteria air pollutant thresholds. Reasonably foreseeable future projects would be subject to separate environmental review to determine potential impacts to air quality; however due to project-specific significant impacts, cumulative impacts would be *significant and unavoidable* (Class I).

5.2.2.2 Biological Resources

- **BIO Impact 1: The project could directly or indirectly impact special-status plant and wildlife species, resulting in a significant impact.** Project activities, including tree removal, grading, demolition, utility installation, paving, etc., could result in impacts to special-status species and their habitat. Mitigation Measure BIO/mm-1.1 through BIO/mm-1.6 have been

included to reduce impacts to special-status species; however, feasible mitigation may not be possible for all species; therefore, impacts would be *significant and unavoidable* (Class I).

- **BIO Impact 4: The project could directly and indirectly impact California Rare Plant Rank (CRPR) 4 and Watch List plant species, including California spineflower, sand buck brush, and sand almond, resulting in a significant impact.** Mitigation has been included to reduce potential impacts; however, there is a lack of information about the cultural requirements to successfully propagate California spineflower at a large scale and Sand almond propagation is very difficult. Therefore, impacts would be *significant and unavoidable* (Class I).
- **BIO Impact 14: The project will directly impact Burton Mesa chaparral, resulting in a significant impact.** The project would result in the loss of 35 acres of Burton Mesa chaparral habitat on-site. Based on limited and infeasible on-site conservation methods, the project would be predominantly limited to off-site conservation of Burton Mesa chaparral to offset significant impacts. However, due to the limited range of this vegetation type and the limited availability of off-site mitigation parcels, implementation of this mitigation may not be feasible. Therefore, potential impacts would be *significant and unavoidable* (Class I).
- **BIO Impact 15: The project will directly impact coast live oak woodland, resulting in a significant impact.** The project would result in the loss of approximately 75 acres of coast live oak woodland habitat on-site. In order to maintain the diversity of oak woodlands in the County, per *County of San Luis Obispo General Plan Conservation Open Space Element* (COSE) Policy BR 3.3.1, mitigation for coast live oak woodlands should occur adjacent to the conservation/restoration of Burton Mesa chaparral on sites with sandy soil conditions suitable to support the special-status plant species that occur in the project area. This would effectively maintain and/or recreate the habitat matrix that supports the unique assemblage of species that would be lost as a result of the proposed project. However, implementation of this mitigation may not be feasible. Therefore, potential impacts would be *significant and unavoidable* (Class I).
- **BIO Impact 18: The project will result in direct and indirect impacts to coast live oak woodland, coast live oak forest, and individual oak trees, resulting in a significant impact.** Mitigation has been included to reduce potential impacts to Coast live oak woodland; however, the project would still result in a significant net loss of oak trees and oak woodland within the county and mitigation may not be able to maintain the integrity of the Burton Mesa chaparral community being lost. Based on these considerations, the proposed impacts to oaks and oak woodlands are still considered *significant and unavoidable* (Class I).
- **BIO Impact 20: The project would have cumulatively considerable impacts related to biological resources, resulting in a significant cumulative impact.** Other reasonably foreseeable future projects may contribute to the loss of oak woodland or other sensitive biological resources. Reasonably foreseeable future projects would be subject to separate environmental review to determine potential impacts to biological resources; however due to project-specific significant impacts, cumulative impacts would be *significant and unavoidable* (Class I).

5.2.2.3 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

- **GHG Impact 3: The project would conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases, resulting in a significant impact.** The project would generate VMT above existing per capita thresholds, which would conflict with the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG) *2019 Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy* (RTP/SCS) intended to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions through VMT-reduction strategies. Mitigation has been

included to reduce VMT and associated emissions; however, VMT would still exceed established thresholds. Therefore, this impact would remain *significant and unavoidable* (Class I).

- **GHG Impact 5: The project would result in a cumulatively considerable impact to greenhouse gas emissions, resulting in a significant cumulative impact.** Individual future projects would be subject to separate environmental review to determine potential impacts related to GHG emissions. However, due to project-specific significant impacts, cumulative impacts would be *significant and unavoidable* (Class I).

5.2.2.4 Land Use and Planning

- **LUP Impact 3: The project would adversely affect the local jobs-to-housing ratio within the project area and would be inconsistent with Land Use Planning Policy L-3 of the *San Luis Obispo County Clean Air Plan (CAP)*, resulting in a significant impact.** The project would result in the creation of 1,441 dwelling units and approximately 272 new jobs, which would increase the gap between jobs and housing in the community of Nipomo in conflict with Land Use Planning Policy L-3 of the San Luis Obispo County CAP. This jobs-to-housing imbalance could result in a number of environmental impacts, including increased VMT, energy consumption, GHG emissions, and related indirect impacts. Based on an evaluation of the project objectives, no feasible mitigation has been identified that would reduce this significant impact. Therefore, potential impacts associated with increasing the jobs/housing gap would be *significant and unavoidable* (Class I).
- **LUP Impact 5: The project would result in the net loss of CRPR 4 and Watch List plant species, native oak woodland, and sensitive habitats; therefore, the project would be potentially inconsistent with goals and policies of the County of San Luis Obispo General Plan Conservation Open Space Element pertaining to preservation of biological resources and Policy 3.8 of the Parks and Recreation Element, resulting in a significant impact.** The project would be potentially inconsistent with County COSE Goal BR 1, Policy 1.2, BR Policy 1.4, BR Policy 1.9, Policy BR 2.6, Goal BR 3, Policy BR 3.1, Policy BR 3.2, Policy BR 3.3, and several Implementation Strategies set forth in the County COSE. Mitigation measures have been identified in Section 4.4, *Biological Resources*, to reduce, minimize, and compensate for the project's impacts to sensitive biological resources. However, not all impacts to biological resources would be able to be mitigated to a less-than-significant level and would still have the potential to be inconsistent and/or conflict with policies identified in the County COSE and Recreation Element. The project's inconsistency with these goals, policies, and implementation strategies identified in the County COSE and Recreation Element would be *significant and unavoidable* (Class I).
- **LUP Impact 10: The project would result in cumulative impacts associated with inconsistency with goals and policies identified within the County of San Luis Obispo General Plan Conservation and Open Space Element, Framework for Planning (Inland), LUO, and South County Area Plan regarding preservation and no net loss of sensitive biological resources and preservation of rural visual character, resulting in a significant impact.** The physical effects resulting from these conflicts are cumulative in nature. Other projects would contribute to the countywide jobs-to-housing imbalance in the community of Nipomo and habitat, changes in the rural visual character, and species loss throughout the county. No feasible mitigation measures have been identified to address this potentially significant impact. Therefore, the project's cumulative impacts associated with conflicts with land use plans and policies would be *significant and unavoidable* (Class I).

5.2.2.5 Population and Housing

- **PH Impact 1: The project would induce substantial unplanned population growth in the Nipomo area, resulting in a significant impact.** Buildout of the DRSP would result in substantial population growth within the Inland South County Planning Area that is not specifically projected or planned for in local or regional County planning documents and would result in the exceedance of projected population growth for the unincorporated community of Nipomo. Based on an evaluation of the project objectives, no feasible mitigation has been identified that would reduce this significant impact. Therefore, potential impacts associated with substantial unplanned population growth would be *significant and unavoidable* (Class I).
- **PH Impact 5: The project would result in a cumulatively considerable impact related to substantial and unplanned population growth, resulting in a significant cumulative impact.** Potential impacts associated with substantial unplanned population growth are cumulative by nature, in that they are evaluated within the greater context of the region rather than impacts on the DRSP area or local community of Nipomo. Therefore, the project's cumulative impacts associated with substantial unplanned population growth would be *significant and unavoidable* (Class I).

5.2.2.6 Transportation

- **TR Impact 3: Buildout of the Specific Plan Area would exceed the County VMT thresholds and therefore would not be consistent with State CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3(b). VMT per employee would be incrementally reduced compared to existing conditions; however, the project-related increase in residential VMT per capita and overall VMT would exceed the County VMT thresholds, resulting in a significant impact.** Mitigation has been included to reduce VMT; however, VMT generated by the project would still exceed established thresholds. Therefore, this impact would remain *significant and unavoidable* (Class I).
- **TR Impact 9: The project would result in a cumulatively considerable impact to transportation and traffic, resulting in a significant cumulative impact.** Individual future projects would be subject to separate environmental review to determine potential impacts related to transportation. However, due to project-specific significant impacts, cumulative impacts would be *significant and unavoidable* (Class I).

5.2.2.7 Growth Inducing Impacts

- **GI Impact 1: The project would result in substantial growth inducement associated with the proposed project's population as well as the potential to induce additional spatial, economic, or population growth in a geographic area.** No feasible mitigation has been identified; therefore, this impact would remain *significant and unavoidable* (Class I).

This alternatives analysis specifically focuses on alternatives that would avoid or substantially lessen the significant and unavoidable impacts identified above.

5.2.3 Alternatives Development and Analysis Process

In defining the feasibility of alternatives, the State CEQA Guidelines state: "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.” If an alternative was found to be infeasible, as defined above, then it was dropped from further consideration in this analysis.

In addition, State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6 states that alternatives should “. . . attain most of the basic objectives of the project . . .” As further explained by the California Supreme Court:

“[A]n EIR should not exclude an alternative from detailed consideration merely because it ‘would impede to some degree the attainment of the project objectives.’ But an EIR need not study in detail an alternative that is infeasible or that the lead agency has reasonably determined cannot achieve the project’s underlying fundamental purpose . . .

Although a lead agency may not give a project’s purpose an artificially narrow definition, a lead agency may structure its EIR alternative analysis around a reasonable definition of underlying purpose and need not study alternatives that cannot achieve that basic goal.” (In re Bay-Delta Programmatic Environmental Impact Report Coordinated Proceedings, 43 Cal.4th 1143, 1165-1166 [2008]).

The alternatives selected for further analysis have been evaluated against the proposed DRSP project to provide a comparison of environmental effects and to identify the environmentally superior alternative. Note that the significance of impacts associated with the proposed project, and the determination of impacts presented in this section for comparative purposes, are based on the respective identified changes in conditions relative to the environmental baseline (as described in Chapter 4, *Environmental Impacts Analysis*).

The County has the discretion to approve (or disapprove) whatever alternative or combination of alternatives it deems most appropriate, provided that the environmental impacts of the proposed project can be mitigated, or to the extent that they cannot, provided that the County adopts a Statement of Overriding Considerations, per Section 15093 of the State CEQA Guidelines.

The alternatives analysis includes a preliminary alternatives screening process and alternative project evaluation process, as described below.

5.2.4 Preliminary Alternatives Screening Process

The alternatives analysis begins with a screening and evaluation of a list of preliminary alternatives to determine which alternatives will be selected for further analysis in the EIR. In order to maximize the range of alternatives considered and provide flexibility during project approval, the EIR evaluated a total of eight variations of the proposed project aimed at reducing the significant and unavoidable impacts to air quality, biological resources, GHG emissions, land use and planning, population and housing, and transportation associated with the proposed DRSP project.

Each of the identified alternatives was preliminarily assessed to determine which of the alternatives met the requirements of a viable alternative under CEQA by considering whether the alternative: (1) would be feasible; (2) would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project; and (3) could feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project. Those alternatives that met these three criteria were carried forward for more detailed review in the EIR.

5.2.5 Alternative Project Evaluation Process

The environmental impacts of the alternatives carried forward for review in the EIR, including the No Project Alternative, were then compared against the impacts of the proposed project for each environmental issue area discussed in Chapter 4, *Environmental Impacts Analysis*, of this EIR. A

significance determination was made about each alternative for each issue area, and a basis for that determination has been provided. The determination of comparative impacts utilizes the following criteria:

- **No Impact:** The significance criteria do not apply, or no impact would result.
- **Similar:** Impacts would be identical or would be of the same general extent and severity as the impacts associated with the proposed project; therefore, the significance determination would be the same.
- **Increased:** New potentially significant impacts or a substantial increase in the severity of the impacts associated with the proposed project would occur; therefore, the significance determination would be greater.
- **Decreased:** Potentially significant impacts would be avoided or a substantial reduction in the severity of the impacts associated with the proposed project would occur; therefore, the significance determination would be reduced.

As a result of this evaluation and comparison of potentially significant environmental impacts, an Environmentally Superior Alternative has been identified.

5.3 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT DISCARDED

State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(c) requires that an EIR disclose potential alternatives that were considered and eliminated along with a brief explanation of the reason for elimination. Factors used to eliminate alternatives from detailed consideration include: (1) failure to meet most of the basic project objectives, (2) infeasibility, and/or (3) inability to avoid significant environmental impacts.

The following four alternatives were considered but eliminated from further analysis.

5.3.1 Burton Mesa Chaparral Avoidance Alternative

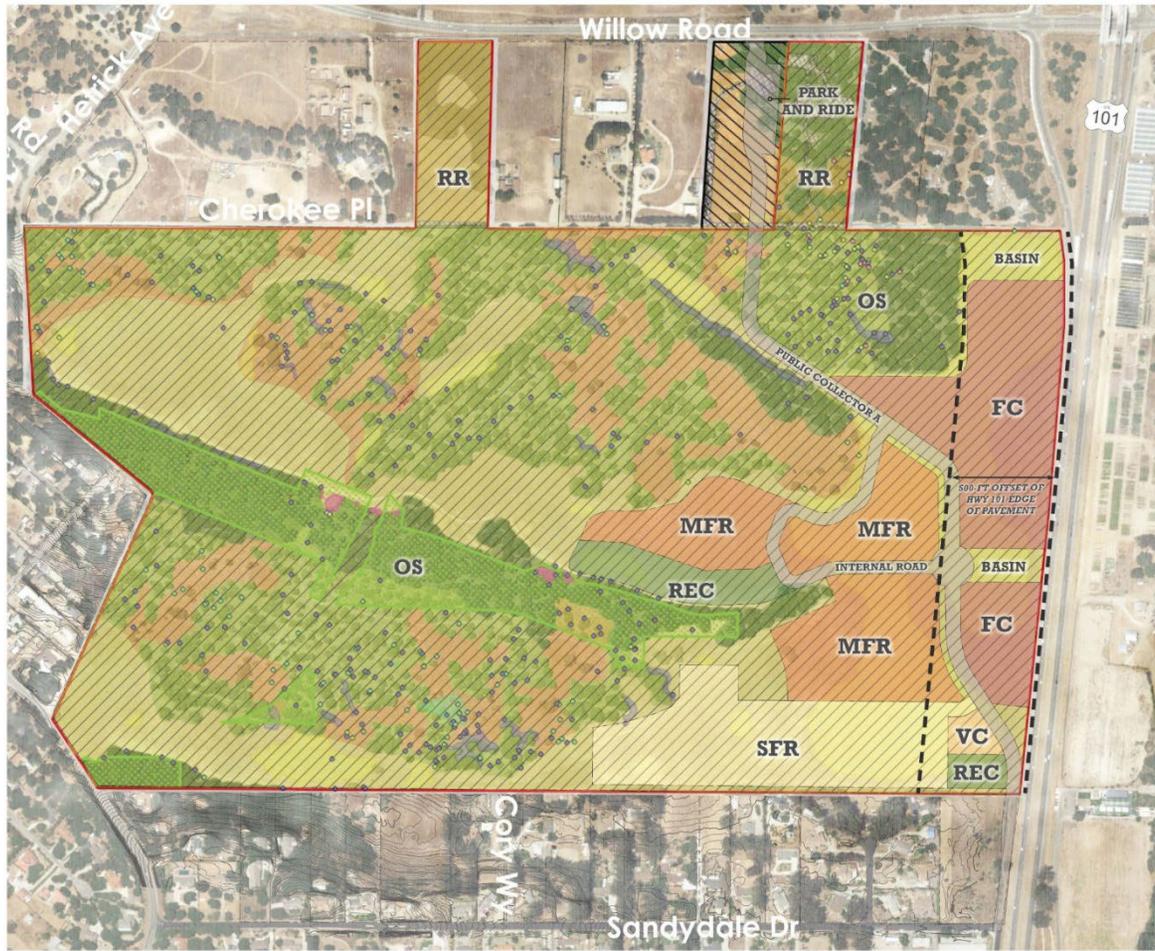
Under this potential alternative, proposed development would be limited to the eastern portion of the project site by reducing the density of proposed single-family residential dwellings, multi-family residential dwellings, and proposed commercial development. In addition, Collector B and pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian facilities would not be constructed on the western portion of the Specific Plan Area. This alternative would include the dedication of 61.7 acres of land for single- and multi-family residential development, 20.7 acres of land for commercial development, 4.9 acres of land for recreational uses, and 205.6 acres of land for open space across the remaining portion of the 288-acre project site. In order to meet housing production goals while minimizing the footprint of development to avoid oak woodland, Burton Mesa chaparral, and other native habitats, this alternative would facilitate the future development of 815 residential units, including 704 four-story multi-family units and 111 two-story single-family units. This alternative would also have the potential to facilitate the development of accessory dwelling units (ADUs). Therefore, the Burton Mesa chaparral avoidance alternative would facilitate buildout within the eastern portion of the project site, resulting in a higher density of commercial and residential development along U.S. Route (US) 101. In addition, Collector A would be constructed through the eastern portion of the Specific Plan Area and an adjacent northern parcel (Assessor's Parcel Number [APN] 091-301-029) to connect to Willow Road. APN 091-301-029 is immediately adjacent to and west of the proposed parcel connecting Collector A to Willow Road within the proposed project area (APN 091-301-030) and contains fewer oaks and less oak woodland habitat. A second collector road would not be constructed (Figure 5-1).

While the Burton Mesa chaparral avoidance alternative would substantially avoid and reduce impacts to biological resources; reduce air pollutant and GHG emissions, VMT, and unplanned population growth; and improve project consistency with applicable plans and policies, this alternative would not reduce significant impacts related to aesthetic resources. This alternative would result in the development of high-density residential dwellings up to 48 feet in height within the viewshed of US 101 and surrounding neighborhoods. The higher-density development would result in building sizes that are not currently found in the community of Nipomo (e.g., four-story, multi-family buildings). All single-family units would be located adjacent to the existing rural residential neighborhoods along Sandysdale Drive and would be two stories to accommodate a substantially reduced project footprint. As a result, significant impacts related to aesthetics would continue to result in an adverse change to the existing visual character of the project area.

Under this alternative, the project would not provide a diversity of housing types, including affordable homes, and would not connect on-site residential neighborhoods to the community through development of pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian trails via Collector B and an on-site trail system in the majority of the Specific Plan Area. Therefore, the Burton Mesa chaparral avoidance alternative would not meet most of the basic project objectives. This alternative may also be infeasible from a cost perspective. Based on the substantially reduced project footprint, increased density, and more compact design, the Burton Mesa chaparral avoidance alternative would accommodate an increased number of multi-family units and a decrease in single-family units compared to the proposed project. Single-family units would be reduced from 831 to 111 and multi-family units would be increased from 458 units to 704 units. Not only does this not meet the basic project objective of providing a range of housing types, including affordable housing, workforce housing, and affordable by design housing, based on market studies conducted by the project applicant, the Nipomo area does not have adequate demand for the number of multi-family units. Further, the reduced number of units and utility connections makes expansion of NCSA infrastructure to serve the site more expensive per unit, increasing the challenges of providing affordable housing within the Specific Plan Area. Since this alternative does not meet the basic project objectives, is likely infeasible, and has the potential to generate new potentially significant impacts, this alternative was eliminated, consistent with State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(c).

5.3.2 Residential Rural Development

This alternative would result in a future buildout scenario that is consistent with the existing Residential Rural (RR) land use designation for the project site, similar to surrounding residential areas. Under this alternative, the 22.3 acres of land within the eastern portion of the project site would be dedicated to village and flex commercial development, 49.8 acres of land would be dedicated to open space, and 11 acres of land would be dedicated to public parks, which is consistent with the proposed project. However, the 173 acres of land dedicated to single- and multi-family residential development would remain within the Residential Rural (RR) land use category. Based on the Subdivision Design Standards for the Residential Rural Category (LUO Section 22.22.060), the minimum parcel size for the project site would be 5 acres. Assuming a minimum parcel size of 5 acres, this alternative would facilitate the construction of approximately 34 single-family residential units, in addition to a proportionate number of ADUs. This alternative would also include the construction of two collector roads and pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian trails; however, the feasibility of these improvements is uncertain based on the limited nature of proposed residential development and the high cost to construct.



DANA RESERVE

EIR SITE PLAN ALTERNATIVE

GROSS LAND USE TOTALS

COLOR	LAND USE	ACRES	%
[Green]	RESIDENTIAL MULTI-FAMILY (MFR)	207	72%
[Light Green]	RESIDENTIAL SINGLE-FAMILY (SFR)	15.8	5.5%
[Light Blue]	RECREATION (REC)	4.8	1.7%
[Light Yellow]	PRIMARY ROADS	10.3	3.6%
[Light Orange]	RURAL RESIDENTIAL (RR) - EXISTING	10	3.5%
RESIDENTIAL SUBTOTAL:		247.9	85.5%
[Light Green]	OPEN COMMERCIAL (OC)	19.8	6.9%
[Light Orange]	VILLAGE COMMERCIAL (VC)	1.9	0.7%
COMMERCIAL SUBTOTAL:		21.7	7.2%
[Light Yellow]	OPEN SPACE (OS)	205.6	71.3%
TOTAL:		288	100%

GROSS TOTAL ACREAGE OF SITE = 288 ACRES
 *ALL STATISTICS ARE APPROXIMATE

DEVELOPMENT TOTALS ON GROSS SITE

RESIDENTIAL PROJECT TYPE	LAND USE	LAND USE ACRES	% OF GROSS SITE	UNIT COUNT
MULTI-FAMILY (34 UNITS)	MFR	20.7	7.2%	704
SINGLE-FAMILY (48-47)	SFR	15.8	5.5%	11
TOTAL		36.7	12.7%	815

	LAND USE	UNIT COUNT	COUNTY PERIPLAND MULTIFAMILY	REQUIRED PERIPLAND (ACRES)
MULTI-FAMILY	MFR	704	0.0024	1.76
SINGLE-FAMILY	SFR	11	0.0014	0.8
TOTAL		-	-	2.56



Source: RRM Design Group, March 2022

Figure 5-1. Burton Mesa chaparral avoidance alternative.

While this alternative would result in residential development in a manner that would be more consistent with the scale of adjacent residential land uses and would reduce air pollutant emissions, GHG emissions, VMT, and unplanned population growth, this alternative would not meet the basic project objectives related to providing a diversity of housing types, including affordable homes. Although reduced, this alternative would continue to result in the loss of oak woodland, Burton Mesa chaparral, and other natural habitats. In addition, due to the limited population growth, this alternative may preclude annexation into the NCS D service area due to the costs of expansion of NCS D facilities, which would be inconsistent with the basic project objectives related to the provision of NCS D and other infrastructure improvements. As a result, the project could be required to utilize on-site wells and install on-site septic systems to meet the project's water and sewer demands. Since no analysis of necessary off-site improvements to serve this level of development and their associated costs has been prepared, it is currently not known whether annexation would continue to be feasible under this alternative. If the project did not utilize the NCS D's water supply, which is comprised of ground, surface, and imported water, and would only utilize groundwater from on-site wells, the potential to deplete the groundwater supply within the Santa Maria River Groundwater Basin would be increased. In addition, due to the installation of on-site septic systems throughout the project site, there would be greater potential for groundwater contamination.

Based on the above considerations, the rural residential development alternative would have the potential to increase potential impacts related to utilities and service systems, would not reduce all of the project's significant impacts, and would not meet the basic project objectives. The feasibility of constructing infrastructure improvements to facilitate this level of development (collector roads, water and wastewater infrastructure) is also uncertain. Therefore, this alternative was eliminated from further discussion in accordance with State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(c).

5.3.3 Exclusively Commercial/Retail Development

Under this alternative, the 288-acre project site would not be developed with residential uses and would instead be developed with flex commercial and village commercial uses over 238.2 acres of the project site. This alternative would include 49.8 acres of land for open space, construction of Collectors A and B, and development of pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian trails; however, this alternative would not facilitate construction of residential dwellings or recreational facilities. While the exclusively retail development alternative would reduce air pollutant emissions, GHG emissions, VMT, and population growth, this alternative would not meet the basic project objectives and would be inconsistent with the County's General Plan. This alternative would not meet project objectives and County objectives (as defined in the County's Memorandum of Understanding with the applicant) related to providing a diversity of housing types, including affordable homes, and providing public parks. This alternative would still result in the loss of oak woodland, Burton Mesa chaparral, and other natural habitats, and would alter the existing visual character of the project site. As such, this alternative would not reduce significant impacts related to biological resources.

The feasibility of this alternative is also questionable, as the market is not likely to support this extent of commercial/retail development, development at this level would be inconsistent with growth patterns throughout the Nipomo community, and this development pattern could conflict with the project objective to respect Old Town Nipomo by providing a small, neighborhood-oriented village commercial area. Since the exclusively retail development alternative would not meet the basic project objectives and would not reduce all of the project's significant impacts, this alternative was eliminated from further consideration, consistent with State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(c).

5.3.4 Alternative Location

Under this alternative, the project would not be developed on the proposed 288-acre Specific Plan Area and would be developed at another location within the county. An alternative location would need to be large enough to accommodate 173 acres of residential land uses, including 831 residential single-family units, 458 residential multi-family units, and up to 152 ADUs; 22.3 acres of commercial land uses; 49.8 acres of open space; 21.9 acres of roadways; and 11 acres of public recreational facilities. There is potential that alternative locations would include similar physical and environmental constraints as the proposed project site (i.e., presence of oak woodland habitat), as well as other constraints not presented at the proposed project site (i.e., wetlands, surface water features). Unless an alternative location is selected within the community of Nipomo, the alternative location alternative would not meet the basic project objectives, including a project design intended to incorporate the rural history of the community, create job and employment opportunities in the South County area, enhance circulation throughout Nipomo by providing roadway connections to Willow Road, and ensure NCS D requirements are met to provide water and wastewater infrastructure to serve the community without adversely impacting NCS D's ability to serve existing and future customers. Development at another location in the unincorporated county would result in similar impacts related to air pollutant emissions, GHG emissions, VMT, and population growth. Further, the applicant does not own alternative sites that could accommodate the proposed development, making this alternative likely infeasible even if alternative locations did exist in the Nipomo area that could accommodate the proposed development. Based on the above considerations, the alternative location alternative would not be feasible, would not reduce the project's significant impacts, and would not meet the basic project objectives. Therefore, this alternative was eliminated from further discussion in accordance with State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(c).

5.4 ALTERNATIVES IMPACTS ANALYSIS

Criteria used to develop preliminary project alternatives included: (1) whether the alternative would avoid or substantially lessen significant impacts to air quality, biological resources, GHG emissions, land use and planning, population and housing, and transportation; (2) whether the alternative would generally meet the project objectives and underlying fundamental purpose; and (3) whether implementation of the alternative would be feasible.

Specific preliminary project alternatives are described in further detail below.

5.4.1 No Project Alternative

This alternative would maintain existing conditions at the project site (Figure 5-2). No development under the DRSP would occur, and no Vesting Tentative Tract Map (VTTM), Development Agreement, Annexation into the NCS D service area, or General Plan Amendment would occur.

5.4.1.1 Analysis of the No Project Alternative

Under the No Project Alternative, implementation of the DRSP would not occur and future buildout of the project site, including off-site improvement areas, would not occur. This alternative assumes no development would occur on the site to provide a clear comparison of the project to existing (undeveloped) baseline conditions; development as envisioned in the current General Plan for La Cañada Ranch is evaluated in Alternative 2, below. As no physical changes to the environment would occur, potentially significant and other identified impacts would be reduced in comparison to the proposed project. However, this alternative would not meet any of the project objectives.



Figure 5-2. No project alternative.

5.4.1.1.1 AESTHETICS

Under the No Project Alternative, the DRSP would not be implemented, and future buildout of the project site and off-site improvements would not occur. Therefore, no change to the existing visual character of the project site and surroundings would occur, and mitigation would not be necessary to reduce the significance of potential impacts related to aesthetic resources. Impacts would be *reduced* in comparison to the proposed project.

5.4.1.1.2 AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

Under the No Project Alternative, the DRSP would not be implemented, and future buildout of the project site and off-site improvements would not occur. Similar to the proposed project, this alternative would not result in conversion of prime agricultural soils to non-agricultural uses and would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural land or a Williamson Act contract. Indirect impacts to existing agricultural production activities would not occur, as no construction activities would occur that could generate short-term dust. Therefore, implementation of mitigation to reduce short-term dust impacts would not be required. Impacts would be *reduced* in comparison to the proposed project.

5.4.1.1.3 AIR QUALITY

The No Project Alternative would not facilitate buildout of the DRSP area and would not result in short- or long-term criteria air pollutants as a result of construction or operation of the project. As such, this alternative would not conflict with an applicable air quality plan, generate short- or long-term criteria pollutant emissions in exceedance of SLOAPCD significance thresholds, expose sensitive receptors to substantial concentrations of pollutant emissions, or result in adverse odors or other emissions. Mitigation would not be necessary to reduce the significance of potential impacts related to air quality. Therefore, impacts would be *reduced* in comparison to the proposed project.

5.4.1.1.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Under the No Project Alternative, the DRSP would not be implemented, and future buildout of the project site and off-site improvements would not occur. Therefore, no physical changes related to the DRSP would occur at the project site and the potential to adversely affect sensitive biological resources within the project area due to future buildout would be eliminated. In addition, no change to the oak woodland habitat at the project site would occur. Mitigation would not be required to reduce the significance of potential impacts related to biological resources. Although direct impacts through development of the site would not occur, under the No Project Alternative, the DRSP area would continue to be managed to support grazing of the site under a ranching lease, which could result in adverse impacts to native habitat on-site through continued vegetation removal and site modification for grazing and ranching activities. The site modification resulting from continuation of grazing activities under a ranching lease would be comparable to existing baseline conditions at the Specific Plan Area, which has been part of an active grazing and management plan, including removal of Burton Mesa chaparral, for at least the last 80 years. The regularly removed Burton Mesa chaparral has historically repopulated to some extent at the site and would continue to do so; however, the No Project Alternative would avoid direct permanent removal of on-site biological resources. Therefore, impacts would be *reduced* in comparison to the proposed project.

5.4.1.1.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES

Under the No Project Alternative, ground disturbance at the project site and off-site improvement areas would not occur and there would be no potential to disturb known or unknown cultural resources, including human remains, within the project area. As such, mitigation would not be required to reduce the significance of potential impacts related to cultural resources. Therefore, impacts would be *reduced* in comparison to the proposed project.

5.4.1.1.6 ENERGY

Under the No Project Alternative, future construction of new residential and commercial buildings would not occur, which would preclude the need for an increase in short- and long-term energy consumption at the project site. Mitigation would not be required to reduce the potential for wasteful, unnecessary, or inefficient energy use or to ensure consistency with applicable plans, policies, and ordinances related to energy efficiency. Therefore, impacts related to energy would be *reduced* in comparison to the proposed project.

5.4.1.1.7 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

The No Project Alternative would not introduce new habitable buildings and structures to the project site that would be susceptible to risk involving seismic-related or other ground-failure events. This alternative would not require any ground-disturbing activities that could increase erosion and loss of topsoil at the project site or result in disturbance to paleontological resources if present at the project site. Compliance with the California Building Code (CBC) and County LUO and implementation of mitigation identified for the proposed project would not be required to reduce the significance of potential impacts related to geology and soils. Therefore, impacts would be *reduced* in comparison to the proposed project.

5.4.1.1.8 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

The No Project Alternative would not facilitate buildout of the DRSP area and would not result in short- or long-term GHG emissions as a result of construction or operation of the project. As such, this alternative would not generate a GHG emissions in a manner that would result in adverse environmental impacts or conflict with applicable GHG-reduction plans, policies, or ordinances. Mitigation would not be necessary to reduce the significance of potential impacts related to GHG emissions. Therefore, impacts would be *reduced* in comparison to the proposed project.

5.4.1.1.9 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Under the No Project Alternative, no physical changes to the project site or off-site areas would occur. As such, the use of construction-related hazardous materials during project construction would not occur and compliance with existing policies to reduce the risk related to use of hazardous materials would not be required. Ground disturbance would not occur, which would eliminate the potential to release naturally occurring asbestos (NOA) or other soil contaminants and mitigation would not be required to reduce the significance of these potential impacts. The proposed project includes the construction of a collector road from Hetrick Avenue and a collector road from North Frontage Road to connect to Willow Road in order to improve existing traffic congestion conditions and improve emergency response and evacuation efforts within the project area. Under the No Project Alternative, the construction of these collector roads would not occur, and traffic, emergency response, and evacuation conditions would remain the same as existing conditions. Under this alternative, impacts related to hazards and hazardous materials would be overall *reduced* from impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.1.1.10 HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Under the No Project Alternative, future buildout of the project site and off-site improvements would not occur. As a result, no physical changes to the existing drainage conditions at the site would occur and compliance with existing state and County water quality protection regulations would not be required to reduce the significance of potential impacts related to hydrology and water quality. Therefore, impacts would be *reduced* in comparison to the proposed project.

5.4.1.1.11 LAND AND USE PLANNING

Similar to the proposed project, the No Project Alternative would not result in new features that could physically divide an established community. Under this alternative, implementation of the DRSP and future buildout of the site would not occur, and the project would not facilitate adoption of a specific plan and expansion of the site as identified in the County's General Plan. However, since no physical changes to the project site would occur, the No Project Alternative would not be inconsistent with any plans, policies, or ordinances related to protection of the environmental resources. Overall, impacts related to land use and planning would be *reduced* in comparison to the proposed project. On the other hand, the land use planning benefits of the project (creating a range of housing opportunities, walkable neighborhoods with interconnected pedestrian and bicycle paths, improved regional circulation and transportation infrastructure, public parks, and open space areas, etc.) would not be realized under this alternative.

5.4.1.1.12 MINERAL RESOURCES

Under the No Project Alternative, future buildout of the project site and off-site improvements would not occur. As evaluated for the proposed project, there are no identified mineral resources of significance within the project site or surrounding area. Therefore, similar to the proposed project, this alternative would not result in the loss of availability of any known mineral resources or conflict with the County's General Plan. Impacts would be *similar* to impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.1.1.13 NOISE

The No Project Alternative would not facilitate the development of new residential, recreational, or commercial land uses within the project site that could contribute to the existing ambient noise environment of the project area. Mitigation would not be required to ensure consistency with the County's interior and exterior noise standards. Since no change to the ambient noise environment would occur, impacts would be *reduced* in comparison to the proposed project.

5.4.1.1.14 POPULATION AND HOUSING

The No Project Alternative would not facilitate any population growth as this alternative would not result in the development of new residential land uses or generate new employment opportunities. However, this alternative would not help the county reach its housing development allocation goals per the County Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) required by state or facilitate the development of affordable homes. Since this alternative would not result in substantial or unplanned population growth, impacts would be *reduced* in comparison to impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.1.1.15 PUBLIC SERVICES

Under the No Project Alternative, an increase in demand on existing public facilities and services would not occur as this alternative would not facilitate any population growth. As such, this alternative would not be required to implement mitigation to offset demand on existing fire protection services, including through a dedication of land for development of a new fire station within the Specific Plan Area, and current emergency response times would remain inadequate. In addition, this alternative would not result in payment of Public Facilities Fees to support the County's provision of public services. Since emergency response times would remain inadequate under the No Project Alternative, and because the proposed project would provide a substantial community-wide benefit through its contribution towards the development of a needed new fire station within the Specific Plan Area, impacts would be *increased* as compared to impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.1.1.16 RECREATION

Under the No Project Alternative, an increase in demand on existing public recreational facilities would not occur as this alternative would not facilitate any population growth. This alternative would not be subject to the payment of Public Facilities Fees. Under this alternative, no additional public recreational facilities would be constructed within the South County region. However, since there would be no increase in demand on existing public recreational facilities, impacts would be *reduced* as compared to impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.1.1.17 TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC

Under the No Project Alternative, the DRSP would not be implemented, and future buildout of the project and off-site improvements would not occur. Since buildout would not occur, an increase in VMT would also not occur, which would be consistent with applicable VMT thresholds. This alternative would not facilitate the construction of any new roadways that could increase roadway hazards or would be subject to County roadway design standards. The proposed project includes the construction of a collector road from Hetrick Avenue and a collector road from North Frontage Road to connect to Willow Road in order to improve existing traffic congestion conditions and improve emergency response and evacuation efforts within the project area. Under the No Project Alternative, the construction of these collector roads would not occur, and traffic, emergency response, and evacuation conditions would remain the same as existing conditions. Since no physical changes to the project site or surrounding area would occur, impacts related to transportation and traffic would be *reduced* in comparison to the proposed project.

5.4.1.1.18 TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

Under the No Project Alternative, ground disturbance at the project site and off-site improvement areas would not occur and there would be no potential to disturb known or unknown tribal cultural resources, including unidentified human remains, within the project area. As such, mitigation would not be required to reduce the significance of potential impacts related to tribal cultural resources. Therefore, impacts would be *reduced* in comparison to the proposed project.

5.4.1.1.19 UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Under the No Project Alternative, buildout of the DRSP area and associated growth would not occur, which would preclude the need for the construction of new and expanded utility infrastructure to serve the project. Mitigation to reduce impacts associated with construction and installment of utility infrastructure would not be necessary. In addition, there would be no increase in demand on water and wastewater services from the NCSD or solid waste services from South County Sanitary and Cold Canyon Sanitary Landfill (Cold Canyon Landfill). Mitigation would not be required to ensure adequate water availability for the proposed project. In addition, no off-site NCSD improvements would be required and there would be no change to the capacity of existing NCSD water and wastewater services. Therefore, impacts would be *reduced* in comparison to impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.1.1.20 WILDFIRE

The No Project Alternative would not introduce new habitable buildings and structures to the project site that would be susceptible to risk involving development within a high fire hazard severity zone (FHSZ). Since no development would occur, compliance with CBC, California Fire Code (CFC), Public Resources Code (PRC), and California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) requirements would not be required to reduce the significance of potential impacts related to wildfire. Therefore, impacts would be *reduced* in comparison to the proposed project.

5.4.2 Alternative 1: Applicant-Preferred Alternative

5.4.2.1 Specific Plan Area

Alternative 1, which is the applicant’s preferred alternative, would result in a change to the proposed conceptual master plan by reconfiguring the conceptual master plan to relocate a multi-family neighborhood (Neighborhood [NBD] 10) from the northeastern portion of the project site to the central portion of the site adjacent to the eastern side of the proposed public neighborhood park. As a result, the proposed public park would be reduced to 6 acres in size. This alternative includes the dedication of 173 acres of land for residential development, 22.3 acres of land for commercial development, 7 acres of land for recreational facilities, 53.8 acres of land for open space, and 21.9 acres of land for development of primary roads. This alternative would also relocate the future construction of Collector A through APN 091-301-029 to connect North Frontage Road to Willow Road; consistent with the proposed project, Collector B would connect Hetrick Avenue to Willow Road through APN 091-301-031. Similar to the proposed project, Alternative 1 would also include a Park and Ride lot; pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian trails throughout the site; pocket parks within proposed neighborhoods; an equestrian trailhead; and other site improvements, including internal roadways, drainage basins, and transit stops (Figure 5-3). An overview of the proposed land uses for this alternative is shown in Table 5-1.

Table 5-1. Overview of Alternative 1

Land Use Zones	Acres ¹	Potential Units ¹	Potential Floor Area (square feet)
Residential Single-Family	149.5	831	
Residential Multi-Family	23.5	458	
Rural Residential (Existing)	10.0	N/A ²	
Recreation/Public Park	7.0 ³		
Village and Flex Commercial ⁴	22.3		110,000–203,000
Open Space, Trails, Basins	53.8		
Roads	21.9		
Total	288	1,289	110,000–203,000

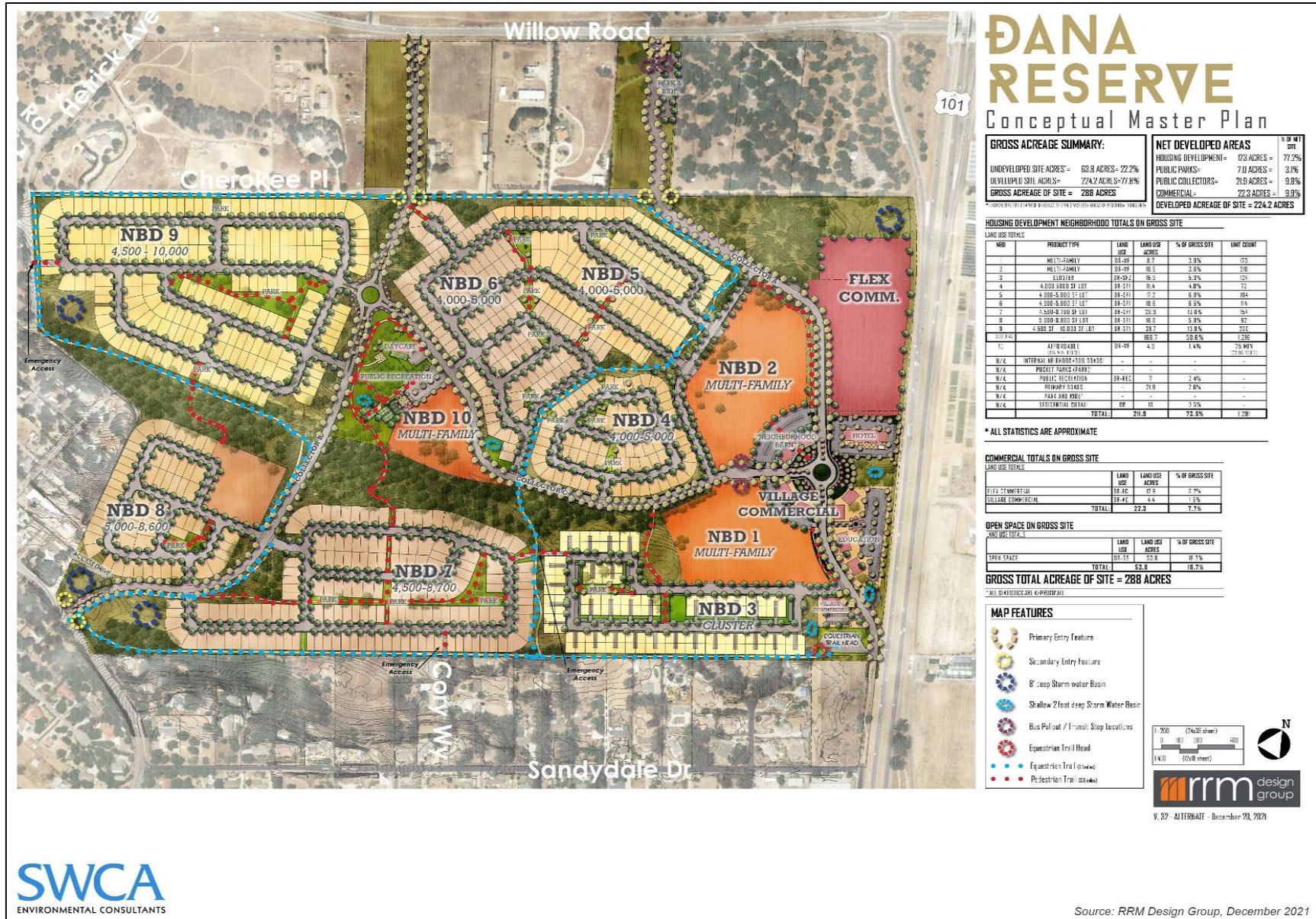
¹ All acreage and potential units can be adjusted up to 10% to address site-specific constraints and more suitable site design, subject to County review.

² The Specific Plan Area includes two parcels between Cherokee Place and Willow Road (APNs 091-301-030 and 091-301-031) that are currently designated Residential Rural (RR). The DRSP does not propose to change the land use designation of these parcels or develop additional residential, commercial, or recreational uses within these parcels. They are included in the Specific Plan to provide a transit center and roadway connections for Collectors A and B from Cherokee Place to Willow Road. These roadway and roadway-related improvements are the only development proposed on these parcels; therefore, the identification of additional potential units is not applicable for these parcels.

³ This acreage does not meet the minimum standard and would need to receive partial credit under LUO Section 21.09.020 for the pocket parks that are to be maintained by the future Homeowner’s Associations (HOAs).

⁴ Proposed Commercial uses include a 60,000-sf hotel and a 30,000-sf educational/training facility.

This alternative would allow for the proposed future buildout scenario of 1,443 residential dwelling units, including 833 single-family units, 458 multi-family units, and 152 ADUs and up to 203,000 square feet of village and flex commercial development. This alternative would relocate the Collector A connection to Willow Road to APN 091-301-029 but would not otherwise result in any changes to site access, primary roadways, or other roadway improvements included in the proposed project. This alternative would continue to provide pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian trails to connect the community to surrounding areas. In addition, the alternative also includes 7 acres of land designated for the future construction of public recreational facilities and includes construction of pocket parks within proposed neighborhoods. This alternative would continue to require the construction of new and expanded utility infrastructure. See Chapter 2, *Project Description*, for a full description of the improvements.



5.4.2.2 Off-Site Improvements

This alternative would include the construction of off-site transportation and NCSW water and wastewater improvements consistent with those of the proposed project. See Chapter 2, *Project Description*, for a full description of the improvements.

5.4.2.3 Analysis of Alternative 1

Under Alternative 1, buildout of the project site would be consistent with the scale and proposed land use types included under the proposed project. As a result, impacts under this alternative would be generally consistent with impacts associated with the proposed project. However, this alternative would change the alignment of Collector A and would move a proposed neighborhood from the northeastern portion of the site, which would substantially reduce the number of impacted oak trees. Alternative 1 would meet all of the project objectives.

5.4.2.3.1 AESTHETICS

Specific Plan Area

Under Alternative 1, future buildout of the project site would include construction of new residential, commercial, and recreational development at the same scale as the proposed project. Proposed village and flex commercial development would be constructed within the eastern portion of the project site, nearest to US 101, and residential units would be constructed throughout the site. As a result of relocating a multi-family neighborhood from the northeastern portion of the site, oak trees would be retained in this area and provide additional screening of the project from vehicles along US 101 traveling south. Due to the scale of proposed buildout of the site, this alternative would be required to implement mitigation to screen the project from surrounding areas, which is consistent with the proposed project. Development under this alternative would be subject to the Land Use and Development Standards, Design Guidelines, and other controlling documents intended to maintain the rural character of the project site and surrounding community included in the DRSP. This alternative would also be subject to requirements of LUO Section 22.10.060 for exterior lighting and policies and objectives included in the DRSP intended to reduce light and glare. Alternative 1 would result in future buildout of the project site and would be consistent with the scale, design, and use type of the proposed project. Therefore, while visual impacts may be slightly reduced due to relocation of NBD 10 and retention of additional oak woodlands, impacts would be *similar* to impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.2.3.2 AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 1 would result in buildout of the proposed 288-acre Dana Reserve in a manner that is generally consistent with the scale of the proposed project. Alternative 1 would not result in conversion of prime agricultural soils to non-agricultural uses and would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural land or a Williamson Act contract, which is consistent with the proposed project. Alternative 1 would require the same level of construction activities as the proposed project and would have the potential to result in an increase in short-term dust that could disturb agricultural activities within the

proposed project area. Similar to the proposed project, this alternative would be required to implement mitigation to reduce the amount of dust generated by project construction to reduce indirect impacts to existing agricultural production activities. Since the project site does not support prime agricultural soils, is not zoned for agricultural uses, and is not under a Williamson Act contract and Alternative 1 would not facilitate indirect conversion of existing agricultural land, impacts would be *similar* to impacts associated with the proposed project

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.2.3.3 AIR QUALITY

Specific Plan Area

Under Alternative 1, proposed construction activities would result in a short-term increase in air pollutant emissions generated by construction equipment and vehicle use and ground-disturbing activities. As identified for the proposed project, this alternative would be required to implement mitigation to reduce construction-related air pollutant emissions. This alternative would include buildout of the proposed Dana Reserve site, which is located in an area with the potential for NOA to occur. This alternative would be required to implement mitigation to reduce the potential for exposure of NOA to nearby sensitive receptors. In addition, the project site is located along US 101, which could expose proposed residential land uses to diesel particulate matter (DPM) if located within 500 feet of the freeway. This alternative would also be required to implement mitigation to avoid the construction of residential homes within 500 feet of US 101 in order to reduce long-term exposure of DPM to on-site sensitive receptors.

The type and scale of land uses included under Alternative 1 would be consistent with the proposed project; therefore, this alternative would be expected to generate operational air pollutant emissions that are similar to the proposed project. Under this alternative, proposed buildout density would be consistent with the proposed project and would generate the same level of population growth and VMT. Therefore, this alternative would also be required to implement mitigation to reduce VMT and operational emissions as necessary. Since the level of buildout and associated growth would be consistent with the proposed project, this alternative would be expected to generate operational emissions above SLOAPCD daily emissions thresholds. This alternative would also be inconsistent with the elements of the SLOAPCD CAP because implementation of the proposed project would further divide the jobs-to-housing balance within the project area and would increase regional VMT in excess of applicable per capita thresholds, which would be inconsistent with regional VMT-reduction efforts. Alternative 1 would be required to implement mitigation to reduce these impacts; however, based on the scale of buildout and associated growth, impacts to air quality would continue to be significant. Therefore, this alternative would still be expected to result in operational emissions in exceedance of SLOAPCD significance thresholds and would also be inconsistent with the SLOAPCD CAP, and impacts related to air quality would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.2.3.4 **BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 1 would result in buildout of the proposed 288-acre Dana Reserve in a manner that is consistent with the scale of the proposed project. As such, Alternative 1 would have the same potential to disturb special-status plant and wildlife species and be required to implement mitigation to reduce the significance of these potential impacts. Under Alternative 1, a multi-family neighborhood (NBD 10) would be relocated from the northeastern portion of the project site to the central portion of the site, adjacent to the proposed public park. This relocation would retain approximately 4 acres of additional oak woodland habitat in the northeastern portion of the site, ultimately reducing the number of impacted oak trees. In addition, the alignment of Collector A would be relocated from APN 091-301-030 to APN 091-301-029, which would further reduce the number of oak trees to be removed or otherwise impacted as a result of construction of Collector A. However, since this alternative would continue to facilitate large-scale development of residential, commercial, and recreational development at the project site, oak woodland habitat on-site would continue to be removed and would be subject to compensatory mitigation identified for the proposed project. Therefore, while reduced, impacts related to biological resources would continue to be significant and unavoidable and would therefore be considered *similar* to impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.2.3.5 **CULTURAL RESOURCES**

Specific Plan Area

Under Alternative 1, future buildout would occur on the proposed 288-acre project site at the same scale as the proposed project. The project site does not contain any historical buildings or structures that would be eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR); however, there are known cultural archaeological resources within the project site. Additionally, due to the extent of proposed ground-disturbing activities, there is potential for inadvertent discovery of unknown cultural resources and unidentified human remains. This alternative would be required to implement mitigation measures identified for the proposed project, which have been included for avoidance of known cultural resource sites and to reduce impacts related to inadvertent discovery of unknown resources, including human remains. Since Alternative 1 would have the same potential to disturb known and unknown cultural resources sites and would be subject to the implementation of identified mitigation, impacts related to cultural resources would be *similar* to impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.2.3.6 ENERGY

Specific Plan Area

Under Alternative 1, future buildout would occur on the proposed 288-acre project site and would be similar in land use type and scale as the proposed project. Under this alternative, construction-related and operational energy consumption would be consistent with the proposed project and would be required to implement mitigation to reduce to avoid unnecessary, wasteful, or inefficient energy use. Since Alternative 1 would result in development that is consistent with the scale and type of development of the proposed project, this alternative would also result in the same level of energy consumption. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.2.3.7 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 1 would include the construction of habitable buildings in structures on the proposed Dana Reserve site and would have the same potential for seismic-related hazards, including fault rupture, ground shaking, liquefaction, and landslide and the potential for other ground-failure events as the proposed project. This alternative would be required to implement mitigation and adhere to CBC and other applicable engineering standards to reduce potential impacts related to seismic-related and other ground-failure events. Under Alternative 1, ground disturbance and tree removal for project construction would be generally consistent with the proposed project and would have similar potential to increase erosion and loss of topsoil during construction. This alternative would be required to comply with Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) and County LUO requirements related to short- and long-term erosion control at the project site. In addition, this alternative would have the same potential to disturb paleontological resources if present within the proposed area of disturbance and would be required to implement mitigation to reduce potential disturbance to paleontological resources during project construction. Alternative 4 would not constitute a change in the potential risk associated with seismic or other ground-failure events or the potential for the project to increase erosion and loss of topsoil at the project site; therefore, impacts would be *similar* to those identified for the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.2.3.8 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Specific Plan Area

Under Alternative 1, the proposed scale of development, types of land uses, and associated growth would be consistent with the proposed project. During construction of the proposed project, use of equipment and vehicles would generate short-term GHG emissions and this alternative would be required to implement mitigation to reduce GHG emissions during construction. Long-term GHG emissions would

be generated by vehicle trips generated by the project and operational energy use. Since the number of residential units would be consistent with the proposed project, this alternative would be expected to generate the same level of VMT and require the same amount of energy consumption as the proposed project. Similar to the proposed project, this alternative would be required to implement mitigation to reduce VMT and operational energy use and associated GHG emissions. This alternative would facilitate population growth and generate VMT in a manner that is consistent with the proposed project and would be expected to continue to exceed applicable per capita VMT thresholds. As a result, Alternative 1 would continue to be inconsistent with goals and policies of the 2019 RTP/SCS related to GHG-reduction strategies. Therefore, impacts related to GHG emissions would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.2.3.9 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 1 would facilitate future buildout of the 288-acre Dana Reserve. The project site is located along the western side of US 101 and is located approximately 0.2 mile west of Nipomo High School. Similar to the proposed project, construction activities for buildout of Alternative 1 would require the use of construction-related hazardous materials (e.g., fuels, gasoline, solvents, oils, paints, etc.) and would be required to comply with state and local regulations to reduce associated hazards. This alternative would not include different land uses or features that could facilitate the use of hazardous materials that could result in significant upset if released. As previously evaluated, the project site would be located in an area with potential for NOA to occur and would be required to implement mitigation to reduce the potential for release. Although located along the US 101, the project site is located more than 30 feet from the edge of the highway, which would reduce the potential for aerially deposited lead (ADL) to occur. Alternative 1 would be consistent with the design and location of proposed access routes evaluated for the proposed project and would also construct Collectors A and B to connect to Willow Road. Construction of these access routes and collector roads is intended to improve traffic circulation within the area and ensure the project would not interfere with emergency response and evacuation efforts. Alternative 1 would not constitute a change to the potential risk associated with hazardous materials or natural hazards evaluated for the proposed project; therefore, impacts would be *similar* to those identified for the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.2.3.10 HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Specific Plan Area

The Dana Reserve site does not support any surface water features. Under Alternative 1, proposed future buildout would occur on the proposed project site and would be similar in nature and scale as the proposed project. This alternative would require the use of construction equipment and vehicles that could result in accidental fuel or other hazardous materials spills that could runoff from the site. Although this

alternative would retain approximately 4 acres of additional open space area within the Specific Plan Area, the proposed amount of soil disturbance for project construction and amount of new impervious surface area at the site would be consistent with the proposed project. This alternative would be required to comply with applicable RWQCB and County water quality protection and stormwater management requirements to reduce impacts related to hydrology and water quality. This alternative would result in a large amount of soil disturbance, require the use of construction equipment and vehicles during construction, and result in a large amount of new impervious surface areas at the project site, which is consistent with the proposed project. Further, this alternative would be subject to applicable state and local water quality protection requirements, which is also consistent with the proposed project. Therefore, this alternative would result in *similar* impacts to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.2.3.11 LAND USE AND PLANNING

Specific Plan Area

Buildout of Alternative 1 would not result in new features or other components that could physically divide an established community, which is consistent with the proposed project. This alternative would continue to present potential inconsistencies with applicable policies adopted to avoid impacts to the jobs-to-housing balance and associated VMT, biological resources, and parks and recreational facilities. Therefore, impacts related to land use and planning would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.2.3.12 MINERAL RESOURCES

Specific Plan Area

Buildout of Alternative 1 would occur on the proposed project site, which does not contain any known significant mineral resources on the project site or in the project site vicinity. Further, proposed buildout would not result in the loss of availability of any known mineral resources or conflict with the County's General Plan. Since Alternative 1 would occur within the proposed project site and would not conflict with the County's General Plan, impacts related to mineral resources would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.2.3.13 NOISE

Specific Plan Area

Under Alternative 1, the location, proposed scale of buildout, and the proposed land uses of the project would be consistent with the proposed project. Alternative 1 would require construction activity that is consistent with the proposed project and would be required to implement mitigation identified to reduce construction-related noise. Similar to the proposed project, Alternative 1 would not include long-term components that could substantially increase groundborne noise levels or vibration at the project site. Under Alternative 1, proposed land uses would be consistent with the proposed project and required to implement mitigation to ensure future buildout of the proposed mix of land uses would be consistent with the County's exterior and interior noise standards at proposed noise-sensitive land uses. Alternative 1 would relocate residential land uses from the northeastern portion of the project site to the central portion of the site, adjacent to the proposed public park. Relocation of this neighborhood could result in exterior noise levels above County standards at residential units nearest to the park. This alternative would be required to implement mitigation included for the proposed project, to ensure future buildout of proposed land uses would be consistent with the County's noise standards. Therefore, noise associated with this alternative would be generally consistent with the proposed project, and impacts would be *similar* to those associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.2.3.14 POPULATION AND HOUSING

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 1 includes proposed residential and commercial development consistent with the scale of the proposed project. Therefore, population growth would be the same as the proposed project, including approximately 4,554 residents and 272 employees. Similar to the proposed project, this level of population growth would be inconsistent with the growth included in the County's General Plan and would result in substantial unplanned population growth in the unincorporated community of Nipomo. This growth would adversely affect the local jobs-to-housing ratio within the Inland South County Planning Area. However, the project would also result in the construction of additional housing units that would help the county reach its housing development allocation goals per the County's RHNA required by state law. Alternative 1 would not result in the demolition or removal of existing homes and would not require additional home to be constructed elsewhere. Since Alternative 1 would generate the same level of unplanned population growth, impacts would be *similar* to the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.2.3.15 PUBLIC SERVICES

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 1 includes proposed residential and commercial development consistent with the scale of the proposed project. Therefore, population growth would be the same as the proposed project, including approximately 4,554 residents and 272 employees, and would result in the same increase in demand on public services and facilities. Alternative 1 would be subject to mitigation that requires the applicant to set aside land for the construction of a future fire station to offset the demand on existing fire protection services. This alternative would also be subject to the payment of Public Facilities Fees as a standard condition of approval to offset the increase in demand on other public services and facilities. Alternative 1 would result in an increased demand on public services and facilities in a manner that is consistent with the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.2.3.16 RECREATION

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 1 includes proposed residential and commercial development consistent with the scale of the proposed project. Therefore, population growth would be the same as the proposed project and would result in approximately 4,554 residents and 272 employees. As such, this alternative would result in the same increase in demand on public recreational facilities. Alternative 1 would contribute less recreational land than the proposed project by approximately 4 acres. As evaluated in Section 4.16, *Recreation*, there would still be adequate regional and community recreational facilities to provide for the existing and future population. Due to the reduction of recreational public park land to be provided under Alternative 1, this alternative would not meet the County's minimum standard for required parkland and would be subject to the payment of Quimby Fees (with partial credit achieved in accordance with LUO Section 21.09.020 for the pocket parks that are to be maintained by the future Homeowner's Associations [HOAs]). Per LUO Section 21.09.020, the project could receive between 4.25 and 6 acres of parkland credit, which would exceed the County's requirements for parkland with new development. This alternative would be subject to the payment of Public Facilities Fees as a standard condition of approval to offset the increase in demand on public recreational facilities. Alternative 1 would result in an increased demand on public recreational facilities in a manner that is consistent with the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.2.3.17 TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC

Specific Plan Area

Under Alternative 1, proposed future buildout would be similar in nature and scale as the proposed project and would result in growth in a manner that is consistent with the proposed project. Alternative 1 would include the construction of Collectors A and B to connect Frontage Road and Hetrick Avenue to Willow Road, respectively. Under Alternative 1, Collector A would be constructed through APN 091-301-029 rather than APN 091-301-030; however, this roadway alignment would not affect proposed site access, increase roadway hazards, or result in other transportation-related impacts in a manner that would be inconsistent with the proposed project. Construction of these road extensions is intended to improve existing and traffic circulation within the vicinity of the project and ensure buildout of the project would not impede emergency response, evacuation, and public ingress and egress. Alternative 1 would also include pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian trails; transit stops; and a Park and Ride lot to encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation and carpooling, which would be consistent with applicable local plans, policies, and ordinances related to the transportation system. Alternative 1 would be subject to the County's roadway design standards and CAL FIRE requirements for emergency access. Because buildout of Alternative 1 would be consistent with the proposed project, this alternative would generate an increase in VMT above existing thresholds and would be required to implement mitigation to reduce VMT as feasible. However, similar to the proposed project, based on the proposed level of growth, VMT would still exceed existing thresholds. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to those identified for the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.2.3.18 TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

Specific Plan Area

Under Alternative 1, proposed future buildout would occur on the proposed 288-acre project site and would be similar in nature and scale as the proposed project. In accordance with Assembly Bill (AB) 52, consultation with appropriate tribes was conducted for the proposed project. As previously identified, there are known cultural archaeological resources within the project site and there is potential for inadvertent discovery of unknown cultural resources and unidentified human remains. This alternative would be required to implement mitigation for avoidance of known cultural resource sites and to reduce potential impacts related to inadvertent discovery of unknown resources, including human remains. This alternative would also be required to implement additional mitigation measures specific to the protection of tribal cultural resources. Alternative 1 would have the same potential to disturb known and unknown cultural and tribal cultural resources sites and be required to implement mitigation to avoid and/or minimize these impacts. Therefore, impacts related to tribal cultural resources would be *similar* to impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.2.3.19 UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Specific Plan Area

Under Alternative 1, proposed future buildout would be similar in nature and scale as the proposed project and would result in growth in a manner that is consistent with the proposed project. As such, Alternative 1 would result in a similar increase in demand on water and wastewater services from the NCSD and a similar increase in demand on South County Sanitary and Cold Canyon Landfill. This alternative would be required to implement mitigation included to ensure there is adequate water availability to support future development. This alternative would also be subject to state and local solid waste reduction requirements to reduce the amount of solid waste within Cold Canyon Landfill. Alternative 1 would require construction of new and expanded utility infrastructure within the same development footprint of the proposed project and be required to implement identified mitigation to reduce potential adverse impacts on the environment. Additionally, since growth under Alternative 1 would be consistent with the proposed project, this alternative would also be required to install off-site NCSD water and wastewater improvements to serve the project and surrounding area. Since Alternative 1 would result in similar growth and increase in demand on utility services, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.2.3.20 WILDFIRE

Specific Plan Area

Under Alternative 1, future buildout would include the development of habitable buildings and structures within a high FHSZ, which is consistent with the proposed project. As such, the potential for wildfire occurrence would be consistent with that of the proposed project. Alternative 1 would include site access in a manner that is consistent with the proposed project and would also construct Collectors A and B to provide connection to Willow Road. These improvements are intended to improve existing circulation conditions within the vicinity of the project and ensure buildout of the proposed project would not interfere with emergency response, evacuation, and public ingress and egress. Under Alternative 1, proposed habitable buildings and structures would be required to comply with applicable CFC, CBC, PRC, and CAL FIRE requirements to reduce risk associated with development within a high FHSZ. Alternative 1 would be required to implement mitigation included to facilitate emergency preparedness and reduce risk of wildfire ignition at the project site. Alternative 1 would result in development within a high FHSZ and would not constitute a change to the potential risk associated with development within a high FHSZ evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.3 Alternative 2: La Cañada Ranch Specific Plan

5.4.3.1 Specific Plan Area

The *County of San Luis Obispo General Plan* identifies the project site as the Cañada Ranch Specific Plan Area, which is subject to preparation and adoption of a specific plan prior to modification of the Nipomo Urban Reserve Line (URL) to include the site to accommodate development proposals and address pertinent issues. The property is designated as an expansion area under the *South County Area Plan* (Sections 4.5 and 4.8) and County LUO Section 22.98.072).

Per the South County Area Plan, a specific plan should be prepared showing commercial retail, service commercial, and light industrial uses on the large La Cañada Ranch property. The specific plan should consider the feasible extent of the job-generating uses as a first priority and residential uses should be considered only in support of employment development. As identified in the South County Area Plan, the objectives of La Cañada Ranch include the following:

1. Service commercial and light industrial uses designed as business or office parks that have integrated site planning, architecture, and landscaping;
2. Commercial retail uses to serve travelers at an interchange of US 101 and an extension of Willow Road, if the location is determined to occur on this property, as a gateway to the community and employees and users of the area; and
3. Residential uses that are affordable to employees of the area, to be developed concurrently or in later phases upon the success of the non-residential uses.

Per the County LUO, a specific plan shall be prepared for the Cañada Ranch property and shall comply with the following provisions:

- a. **Types of Uses.** The concept of a Specific Plan is for uses in the following priority for acreage, scale and intensity:
 - (1) Open space uses within the oak woodlands;
 - (2) Industrial park(s) that will generate "basic" employment for the Nipomo and south county area;
 - (3) Commercial service parks that do not conflict with downtown and community shopping commercial uses within Nipomo;
 - (4) Retail uses to serve the daily shopping needs of employees and residents of the site in compliance with purpose and character statements for neighborhood shopping areas in Framework for Planning - Inland Area;
 - (5) Commercial retail uses that are in compliance with purpose and character statements in Framework for Planning - Inland Area for highway-oriented retail; and
 - (6) Residential areas to contain a mix of housing unit types, a portion of which should be affordable to average employee incomes on the site, timing to be concurrent with or following establishment and operation of nonresidential uses, the timing to be determined by a market feasibility study.
- b. **Oak habitat preservation.** Designation of the existing oak forest habitat for open space preservation, where limited recreational and open space uses may be allowed.

- c. **Pedestrian-oriented site planning.** Location of workplaces, shopping, services, civic buildings and residences in close proximity to each other to facilitate walking and alternative transportation to the private vehicle.
- d. **Architecture and landscaping.** Guidelines for architecture and landscaping that respond to the rural character of the area.
- e. **Resource, facility and services needs.** Extent of necessary public, or private where applicable, needs including, but not limited to, safety, health, waste management and water supply.

Alternative 2 includes reconfiguration of the project site in order to provide a mix of commercial, light industrial, and residential land uses on the 288-acre project site. This alternative would result in an increase in the amount of land designated for commercial development and open space area and reduce the amount of land designated for residential and recreational development. Under Alternative 2, the conceptual site plan would include 60.8 acres of land for commercial and light industrial uses, 22.3 acres of land for residential development, and 173 acres of land for open space. This alternative would also include construction of Collectors A and B, a network of pedestrian and bicycle trails, transit stops, a Park and Ride lot, and other improvements consistent with the proposed project, except that the Collector A connection to Willow Road would be relocated through APN 091-301-029, similar to Alternative 1.

Similar to the proposed project, this alternative would include a specific plan that could modify the minimum parcel size to allow for a mix of parcel sizes and housing types. Under the DRSP, the proposed building density for the Residential Single-Family-1 (DR-SF1) designation is four to seven dwelling units per acre, the building density for the Residential Single-Family-2 (DR-SF-2) designation is 7.5 to 8.5 dwelling units per acre, and the building density for Residential Multi-Family (DR-MF) designation is 18 to 24 dwelling units per acre. Since the General Plan objectives for the Cañada Ranch include residential uses that are affordable to employees of the area, it would be expected that residential development under this alternative would be constructed in accordance with the Residential Single-Family-2 (DR-SF-2) designation, which includes 7.5 to 8.5 dwelling units per acre, and/or Residential Multi-Family (DR-MF) designation, which includes 18 to 24 dwelling units per acre. Therefore, based on the 22.3 acres of land designated for residential land uses, this alternative could facilitate the construction of up to approximately 190 DR-SF-2 units or 535 DR-MF dwelling units, or some combination of the two, and a proportionate number of ADUs.

This alternative would not result in a change to site access, primary roadways, or other roadway improvements included in the proposed project. This alternative would continue to provide pedestrian and bicycle trails to connect the community to surrounding areas. This alternative would continue to require the construction of new and expanded transportation and utility infrastructure. See Chapter 2, *Project Description*, for a full description of the improvements.

5.4.3.1 Off-Site Improvements

This alternative would include the construction of off-site transportation and NCSW water and wastewater improvements. See Chapter 2, *Project Description*, for a full description of the improvements.

5.4.3.2 Analysis of Alternative 2

Under Alternative 2, buildout of the project site would result in an increase in light industrial and commercial development and a decrease in residential development. This alternative would also substantially increase the amount of land designated for open space and eliminate recreational land uses. As a result, impacts related to air quality, GHG emissions, population and housing, and transportation would be reduced. However, this alternative would result in similar impacts related to biological

resources and would increase impacts related to recreation. Although this alternative would facilitate the future development of residential land uses, due to the substantial reduction in the number of proposed units, the number of affordable units and affordability of market rate units would be significantly decreased in order to provide funding for site development and other improvements. As a result, Alternative 2 would not meet some of the basic project objectives, including providing a mix of residential development, including affordable homes, and providing public recreational facilities at the project site.

5.4.3.2.1 AESTHETICS

Specific Plan Area

Under Alternative 2, the project site would be reconfigured to facilitate construction of light industrial and commercial development over 60.8 gross acres of the site, residential development over 22.3 gross acres of the site, and 173 acres of open space. This alternative would result in the construction of new commercial and light industrial land uses near rural residential dwellings, which would contribute to a change in the existing visual character of the project area. However, this alternative would result in substantially more open space land, including oak woodland habitat and other native habitat that could provide natural screening of the site, which would reduce project impacts related to alteration of the visual character of the project area. Similar to the proposed project, this alternative would be required to implement mitigation to screen the project from surrounding areas and reduce impacts related to a change in the visual character of the site. Development under this alternative would be subject to the Land Use and Development Standards, Design Guidelines, and other controlling documents intended to maintain the rural character of the project site and surrounding community included in the DRSP. Alternative 2 would also be subject to requirements of County LUO Section 22.10.060 for exterior lighting and policies and objectives included in the DRSP intended to reduce potential impacts related to light and glare. Since this alternative would retain more open space land and mature oak trees and result in lower-density development, this alternative would result in reduced visual impacts compared to the proposed project. However, implementation of vegetative screening and adherence to existing and proposed regulations governing visual quality would still be required to reduce impacts related to alteration of existing visual character of the project area and impact would be significant but mitigable, *similar to* the impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.3.2.2 AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 2 would result in buildout of the 288-acre Dana Reserve at a similar scale as the proposed project but would result in an increase in commercial and light industrial land uses and a reduction of residential land uses. Alternative 2 would not result in conversion of prime agricultural soils to non-agricultural uses and would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural land or a Williamson Act contract, which is consistent with the proposed project. Construction activities for buildout of Alternative 2 would have the potential to result in an increase in short-term dust that could disturb agricultural activities within the proposed project area, which is consistent with the proposed project. This alternative would be required to implement mitigation to reduce short-term impacts related to dust generated by project construction to reduce indirect impacts to existing agricultural production activities. Since the

project site does not support prime agricultural soils, is not zoned for agricultural uses, and is not under a Williamson Act contract and Alternative 2 would not facilitate indirect conversion of existing agricultural land, impacts would be *similar* to impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.3.2.3 AIR QUALITY

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 2 would require construction activity and would be expected to result in a short-term increase in air pollutant emissions generated by construction equipment and vehicle use and ground-disturbing activities. This alternative would be required to implement mitigation to reduce construction-related air pollutant emissions. Alternative 2 would result in buildout of the proposed 288-acre project site, which is located in an area with the potential for NOA to occur. This alternative would be required to implement mitigation to reduce the potential to expose nearby sensitive receptors to NOA. In addition, the project site is also located along US 101, which could result in long-term exposure of DPM to sensitive receptors within the DRSP area. However, since this alternative includes a greater density of commercial and light industrial uses, residential homes have a greater potential to be located more than 500 feet from the freeway, reducing potential impacts associated with DPM exposure. Since the specific buildout scenario for this alternative is currently not known, this alternative would still be required to implement mitigation to ensure construction of residential homes would not occur within 500 feet of US 101.

As evaluated in Section 4.2, *Air Quality*, the proposed project would exceed daily operational emissions thresholds established by the SLOAPCD primarily as a result of mobile source emissions (i.e., vehicle use). Due to the reduced density of proposed residential development, Alternative 2 would facilitate substantially less population growth than the proposed project, which would also result in a reduction of VMT as compared to the proposed project. Further, this alternative has the potential to reduce existing VMT within the region by reducing the distance needed to reach these services elsewhere, which would further reduce operational mobile source emissions. However, this alternative would have the potential to introduce new stationary sources of pollutant emissions as a result of an increase in light industrial and commercial land uses that were not evaluated for the proposed project. This alternative would continue to be required to incorporate mitigation to reduce operational criteria pollutant emissions to ensure operational emissions would not exceed SLOAPCD significance thresholds. As a result, operational emissions under this alternative would be expected to fall below SLOAPCD significance thresholds.

Under Alternative 2, buildout would result in fewer residential units and an increase in commercial and light industrial uses that would facilitate employment opportunities in the region. Therefore, this alternative would have a beneficial effect in balancing the jobs-to-housing ratio within the community. Additionally, as evaluated above, this alternative would reduce VMT as compared to the proposed project, and with incorporation of VMT-reduction measures, would be consistent with VMT-reduction goals included in the SLOAPCD CAP. As such, Alternative 2 would be consistent with the SLOAPCD CAP. Therefore, impacts related to air quality would be *decreased* from the impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.3.2.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 2 would reduce the area of proposed residential and commercial and light industrial land uses and would substantially increase the amount of open space on-site. Proposed buildout of this alternative would have similar potential to disturb special-status plant and wildlife species and would be required to implement mitigation to reduce the significance of these potential impacts. Under Alternative 2, approximately 137 acres of land would be retained for open space, reducing the number of impacted oak trees and the amount of other impacted native habitat (i.e., Burton Mesa chaparral) at the project site. However, since this alternative would continue to facilitate development of residential and commercial land uses at the project site, oak woodland and Burton Mesa chaparral habitat on-site could continue to be removed and would be subject to compensatory mitigation requirements identified for the proposed project. Based on the significantly reduced development footprint, if properly situated, Alternative 2 could largely avoid direct removal and impacts to oak woodland and Burton Mesa chaparral. In the event these habitat areas could not be entirely avoided, the number of acres impacted would be greatly reduced and the amount of required mitigation through on- or off-site preservation or restoration would similarly be substantially reduced, significantly increasing the feasibility of mitigating the impact. Therefore, impacts related to biological resources would be *decreased* from the impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.3.2.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 2 would continue to facilitate future buildout of the proposed 288-acre Dana Reserve. As evaluated for the proposed project, the project site does not contain any historical buildings or structures that would be eligible for listing in the CRHR; however, there are known cultural archaeological resources within the project site. Due to the increase in land designated for open space, this alternative would require less ground disturbance, which reduces some potential for inadvertent discovery of unknown cultural resources. Nevertheless, this alternative would be required to implement mitigation for avoidance/mitigation of known cultural resource sites as well as mitigation for inadvertent discovery of unknown cultural resources, including human remains. Alternative 2 would have the same potential to disturb known and unknown cultural resources sites and would be required to implement mitigation to avoid and/or minimize these impacts. Therefore, impacts related to cultural resources would be *similar* to impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.3.2.6 ENERGY

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 2 would result in the future buildout of up to 60.8 gross acres of light industrial and commercial development and up to approximately 190 DR-SF-2 units or 535 DR-MF dwelling units, or some combination of the two, and a proportionate number of ADUs on the project site. Construction of Alternative 2 would be required to implement mitigation to reduce energy consumption during construction to avoid unnecessary, wasteful, or inefficient energy use. During operation, Alternative 2 would result in energy consumption in the form of electricity, gasoline, and natural gas. This energy consumption would overall be reduced as a result of the reduction in development on-site, though commercial development (and associated energy demand) would be increased, in comparison to the proposed project. This alternative would be required to implement mitigation intended to reduce operational energy consumption to avoid long-term unnecessary, wasteful, or inefficient energy use. Implementation of identified mitigation measures would ensure this alternative would be consistent with applicable energy reduction goals, plans, and policies. Alternative 2 would result in construction-related and operational use in a manner that is generally consistent with the proposed project. Therefore, the project would result in impacts *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.3.2.7 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 2 would continue to facilitate buildout of new habitable buildings and structures on the 288-acre project site. Therefore, the potential for seismic-related hazards, including fault rupture, ground shaking, liquefaction, and landslide, and the potential for other ground-failure events would be similar to the proposed project. This alternative would be required to implement mitigation and adhere to CBC and other applicable engineering standards to reduce potential impacts related to seismic-related and other ground-failure events. This alternative would result in less soil disturbance and loss of topsoil due to the substantial increase of land dedicated to open space. However, this alternative would still result in a large amount of soil disturbance and would be required to comply with RWQCB and County LUO requirements related to short- and long-term erosion control at the project site. Although more land would be retained as open space, this alternative would also have the potential to disturb paleontological resources if present within the proposed area of disturbance and would be required to implement mitigation to reduce potential impacts. Alternative 2 would result in the construction of new habitable buildings and structures on the 288-acre site and would be subject to mitigation and state and local regulations identified for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.3.2.8 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 2 would facilitate the construction of light industrial and commercial development over 60.8 gross acres of the site and residential development over 22.3 gross acres of the site. During construction of the proposed project, use of equipment and vehicles would generate short-term GHG emissions. Though developed uses would be reduced, construction for buildout of Alternative 2 would be reduced but not incomparable to the proposed project in terms of GHG emissions and would be required to implement mitigation to reduce short-term GHG emissions. Long-term GHG emissions would be generated by operational vehicle trips and energy use.

Due to the reduced density of proposed residential development, Alternative 2 would facilitate substantially less population growth than the proposed project, which would also result in a reduction of VMT as compared to the project. Under Alternative 2, buildout would result in retail commercial, service commercial, and light industrial uses in close proximity to existing residential land uses, which has the potential to reduce existing VMT within the region by reducing the distance needed to reach these services elsewhere. Proposed residential units at the site would ideally provide housing for employees at the new commercial and light industrial uses generated by the buildout of this alternative, further reducing the potential for the project to generate VMT above established thresholds. Therefore, the provision of additional jobs within the community would be anticipated to contribute to a reduction in existing regional VMT by generating new employment opportunities in a housing-rich community, which would reduce VMT generated by commuters. Based on the scale of proposed development, this alternative would be required to incorporate mitigation to further reduce operational VMT to ensure VMT generated by this alternative would fall below established thresholds. This alternative would also be required to implement mitigation to ensure proposed commercial and light industrial buildings and residential buildings are constructed in accordance with green and energy efficient building design standards. Based on the implementation of mitigation to reduce operational VMT and energy use, this alternative would be consistent with applicable goals, plans, and policies related to GHG-reduction strategies. Therefore, impacts related to GHG emissions would be *decreased* compared to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.3.2.9 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 2 would continue to facilitate buildout of the 288-acre Dana Reserve, which is located along US 101 and approximately 0.2 mile west of Nipomo High School. Similar to the proposed project, Alternative 2 does not include the use of hazardous materials that could result in significant upset if released. This alternative would continue to require the transport, use, and disposal of construction-related

hazardous materials (e.g., fuels, gasoline, solvents, oils, paints, etc.) and would be required to comply with state and local regulations to reduce hazards related to the transport, use, and disposal of these materials. This alternative would increase the amount of light industrial and commercial land uses on the project site, which may require the long-term use of common hazardous materials (e.g., paints, oils, solvents, cleaner, gasoline, etc.) and would also be required to comply with state and local regulations to reduce hazards related to the transport, use, and disposal of these materials. As evaluated under the proposed project, the project site would be located in an area with potential for NOA to occur and would be required to implement mitigation to reduce the potential for release. The project site would be located more than 30 feet from US 101, which would reduce the potential for ADL to occur. Alternative 2 includes the construction of site access, roadway improvements, and collector roads that would be consistent with the proposed project. Construction of Collectors A and B is intended to improve traffic circulation within the area and would ensure buildout of the site would not interfere with emergency response and evacuation efforts. Alternative 2 would not constitute a change to the potential risk associated with hazardous materials or natural hazards evaluated for the proposed project; therefore, impacts would be *similar* to those identified for the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.3.2.10 HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 2 includes buildout of the proposed 288-acre Dana Reserve, which does not support any surface water features. Buildout of this alternative would result in 60.8 gross acres of commercial development and the construction of up to approximately 190 DR-SF-2 units or 535 DR-MF dwelling units, or some combination of the two, and a proportionate number of ADUs, 173.8 acres of land for open space, 21.9 acres of new roadways, and other site improvements. As evaluated for the proposed project, this alternative would require the use of construction equipment and vehicles that could result in accidental fuel or other hazardous materials spills that could runoff from the site. Due the increase in land designated for open space, this alternative would reduce the amount of soil disturbance during construction; however, construction would still require a large amount of soil disturbance that could increase erosion and siltation at the project site. Under this alternative, the level of buildout would be reduced in comparison to the proposed project but would result in the same general risks to hydrology and water quality and result in new impervious surface areas that would require on-site treatment in a manner that is generally consistent with the proposed project. As required for the proposed project, Alternative 2 would be subject to applicable RWQCB and County water quality protection and stormwater management requirements to reduce impacts related to hydrology and water quality. This alternative would result in a large amount of soil disturbance, would require the use of construction equipment and vehicles during construction, and would result in a large amount of new impervious surface areas at the project site, which is consistent with the proposed project. Further, this alternative would be subject to applicable state and local water quality protection requirements, which is also consistent with the proposed project. Therefore, this alternative would result in *similar* impacts to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.3.2.11 LAND AND USE PLANNING

Specific Plan Area

Future Buildout of Alternative 2 would not result in new features or other components that could physically divide an established community, consistent with the proposed project. Alternative 2 would be consistent with policies intended to protect the jobs-to-housing balance, reduce VMT, and preserve sensitive biological resources. Alternative 2 would also not propose a public park that would conflict with policies related to County acceptance and maintenance of park facilities. Development under Alternative 2 would also be consistent with the existing County LUO and General Plan (South County Area Plan - Inland) standards for development of the La Cañada Ranch property, as opposed to the DRSP, which provides an alternative vision for the subject property. Therefore, impacts related to consistency with applicable plans and policies would be *decreased* compared to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.3.2.12 MINERAL RESOURCES

Specific Plan Area

Buildout of Alternative 2 would occur on the proposed project site, which does not contain any known significant mineral resources on the project site or in the project site vicinity. Further, proposed buildout would not result in the loss of availability of any known mineral resources or conflict with the General Plan. Since Alternative 2 would occur within the proposed project site and would not conflict with the General Plan, impacts related to mineral resources would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.3.2.13 NOISE

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 2 would result in an increase in commercial and light industrial development and would reduce the amount of residential and recreational development at the project site. As evaluated for the proposed project, this alternative would require construction activity, which would increase short-term ambient noise within the project area and would be required to implement mitigation to reduce short-term

construction-related noise. In addition, Alternative 2 would not include long-term components that could substantially increase groundborne noise levels or vibration at the project site. The increase in proposed commercial and light industrial land uses would have the potential to permanently increase ambient noise levels within the project area. Consistent with the proposed project, this alternative would be required to implement mitigation to ensure noise from commercial and light industrial land uses would be consistent with the County's exterior and interior noise standards at proposed on- and off-site noise-sensitive land uses. Based on implementation of mitigation to reduce operational noise as necessary, this alternative would be generally consistent with the level of noise that would be generated by the proposed project. Therefore, impacts related to noise would be *similar* to those associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.3.2.14 POPULATION AND HOUSING

Specific Plan Area

Similar to the proposed project, this alternative would not result in the demolition or removal of existing homes and would not require additional replacement homes to be constructed elsewhere. Alternative 2 would substantially reduce the number of proposed residential units and would increase the amount of commercial and light industrial land uses at the project site. Alternative 2 would facilitate the construction of up to approximately 190 DR-SF-2 units or 535 DR-MF dwelling units, or some combination of the two, and a proportionate number of ADUs. Based on an average household size of 3.16 for the community of Nipomo, this alternative would generate approximately 600-1,690 new residents, which would be slightly increased through ADU development. Under this alternative, the amount of land designated for commercial and light industrial uses would be increased, which would facilitate an increase in employment opportunities. Based on the SCAG *Employment Density Study Summary Report*, other retail/services would generate one employee per 585 square feet of development. Since this alternative is conceptual in nature, the square footage of future light industrial and commercial uses is not currently known. Although the number of new employees is currently not known, the population growth generated by this alternative would be less than the proposed project because there would be substantially fewer new residents and new employment opportunities could be filled by the local workforce since in an effort to balance the jobs-to-housing ratio in the community.

This alternative would be consistent with the growth envisioned in the General Plan for the Inland South County Planning Area. This buildout scenario would also aid the County in balancing the jobs-to-housing ratio within the region. However, since residential development would be more limited, Alternative 2 would be slightly less effective at helping the County reach its housing development allocation goals per the County RHNA required by state law. In addition, due to the reduced number of proposed residential units, this alternative may be infeasible due to its inability to meet the La Cañada Ranch requirements that housing be affordable based on the average wages of the new jobs being provided. Because this alternative would generate less population growth than the proposed project and would be consistent with the General Plan, impacts related to population and housing would be *decreased* compared to the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.3.2.15 PUBLIC SERVICES

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 2 would result in less population growth than the proposed project; however, based on the scale of buildout of proposed land uses, this alternative would still increase demand on public services and facilities. Alternative 2 would be subject to mitigation that requires the applicant to set aside land for the construction of a future fire station to offset the demand on existing fire protection services. This alternative would also be subject to the payment of Public Facilities Fees as a standard condition of approval to offset the increase in demand on other public services and facilities. Alternative 2 would increase demand on public services and facilities, and be required to mitigate them proportionately, in a manner that is generally consistent with the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.3.2.16 RECREATION

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 2 would result in substantially less residential development, which would reduce the increase in demand on existing public recreational facilities as compared to the project. However, the addition of a range of 600 to 1,690 new residents, which would be slightly increased through ADU development, and new employees would still result in an increase in demand on existing public recreational facilities. This alternative includes construction of pedestrian and bicycle trails but does not include the construction of new public recreational facilities. As such, this alternative would be inconsistent with County LUO Chapter 21.09 related to parkland requirements for new development. This alternative would be subject to the payment of Public Facilities Fees as a standard condition of approval to offset the increase in demand on public recreational facilities, which is consistent with the proposed project. However, since this alternative would increase demand on public recreational facilities and would not include the construction of or dedication of land for recreational facilities, this alternative would result in *increased* impacts in comparison to the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.3.2.17 TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 2 would result in an increase in commercial and light industrial development and would reduce the amount of residential and recreational development at the project site. This alternative would include the construction of Collectors A and B to connect North Frontage Road and Pomeroy Road to Willow Road, respectively. Construction of these collectors is intended to improve existing traffic conditions within the vicinity of the project and would ensure buildout of the project does not impede emergency response, evacuation, and public circulation. Alternative 2 would also include pedestrian and bicycle trails, transit stops, and a Park and Ride lot to encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation and carpooling, which would be consistent with applicable local plans, policies, and ordinances related to the transportation system. Alternative 2 would include the same site access and roadway design as the proposed project and would not increase potential roadway hazards. This alternative would be subject to County roadway design standards and CAL FIRE emergency access requirements.

Due to the reduced density of proposed residential development, Alternative 2 would facilitate less population growth than the proposed project, which would result in a reduction of VMT. Under this alternative, buildout would result in retail commercial, service commercial, and light industrial uses in close proximity to existing residential land uses, which has the potential to reduce existing VMT within the region by reducing the distance needed to reach these services elsewhere. In addition, the provision of additional jobs within the community could contribute to a reduction in existing regional VMT by generating new employment opportunities in a housing-rich community, reducing VMT generated by commuters and helping to balance the jobs-to-housing ratio within the region. Therefore, this alternative is anticipated to generate less VMT than the proposed project. Since this alternative would generate less VMT than the proposed project, with implementation of mitigation to reduce operational VMT (if needed), this alternative would be expected to fall below established per capita thresholds. Therefore, impacts related to transportation and traffic would be *decreased* compared to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.3.2.18 TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

Specific Plan Area

Under Alternative 2, proposed future buildout would occur on the proposed 288-acre Dana Reserve. In accordance with AB 52, consultation with appropriate tribes was conducted for the proposed project. As previously identified, there are known cultural archaeological resources within the project site. Although more open space land would be retained at the site, there is still potential for disturbance to known sites and inadvertent discovery of cultural resources and human remains if present within the proposed area of disturbance. This alternative would be required to implement mitigation for avoidance of known cultural resource sites and mitigation for inadvertent discovery of unknown cultural resources, including human remains. This alternative would also be required to implement additional mitigation measures identified for protection of tribal cultural resources. Since buildout is likely to occur in most of the same locations as the proposed project, Alternative 2 would have a similar potential to disturb known and unknown cultural and tribal cultural resources and would be required to implement mitigation to avoid and/or minimize

these impacts. Therefore, impacts related to tribal cultural resources would be *similar* to impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.3.2.19 UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 2 would result in an increase in commercial and light industrial development and would reduce the amount of residential development at the project site. This alternative would still include annexation into the NCSD as envisioned in the General Plan. Although this alternative would reduce the number of residential dwellings and associated residential population growth, due to the increase in commercial and light industrial uses, the scale of proposed development would still result in an increase in demand on water and wastewater services from the NCSD and solid waste services from South County Sanitary and Cold Canyon Landfill. This alternative would be required to implement mitigation included to ensure there is adequate water availability to support future development and would also be subject to state and local solid waste reduction requirements to reduce the amount of construction-related and operational solid waste within Cold Canyon Landfill. Alternative 2 would require the construction of new and expanded utility infrastructure to serve proposed land uses and would be required to implement mitigation to reduce potential adverse impacts on the environment. Additionally, based on the scale of proposed light industrial and commercial land uses as well as construction of up to approximately 190 DR-SF-2 units or 535 DR-MF dwelling units, or some combination of the two, and a proportionate number of ADUs, Alternative 2 would also be required to install off-site NCSD water and wastewater improvements to serve the project and surrounding area. Alternative 2 would result in substantial growth at the project site and would increase the demand on the NCSD, South County Sanitary, and Cold Canyon Landfill, which is similar to the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.3.2.20 WILDFIRE

Specific Plan Area

Under Alternative 2, future buildout would occur on the 288-acre project site and would still include the development of new habitable buildings and structures within a high FHSZ. As such, the potential for wildfire occurrence would be similar to that of the proposed project. Alternative 2 would include site access in a manner that is consistent with the proposed project and would also construct Collectors A and B to improve existing traffic circulation within the vicinity of the project. Proposed site access and construction of the collectors would ensure the project does not interfere with emergency response, evacuation, and public ingress and egress. Under Alternative 2, proposed habitable buildings and structures would be required to comply with applicable CFC, CBC, PRC, and CAL FIRE requirements to reduce risk associated with development within a high FHSZ. This alternative would also be required to

implement mitigation included to facilitate emergency preparedness and reduce risk of wildfire ignition at the project site, which is consistent with the proposed project. Alternative 2 would not constitute a change to the potential risk associated with wildfire evaluated for the proposed project; therefore, impacts would be *similar* to those identified for the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.4 Alternative 3: Residential Rural Cluster Subdivision

5.4.4.1 Specific Plan Area

Alternative 3 would result in a future buildout scenario that is consistent with a cluster subdivision of the Residential Rural (RR) land use designation for the project site. Under this alternative, 195.3 acres of land would be dedicated to residential development, 49.8 acres of land would be dedicated to open space, and 11 acres of land would be dedicated to public parks. No commercial land uses would be developed. Alternative 3 would include the construction of two collector roads through the project site, consistent with the proposed project, except that the Collector A connection to Willow Road would be relocated through APN 091-301-029, similar to Alternative 1. Site access would continue to be provided in accordance with applicable County standards.

According to the cluster division standards identified in County LUO Section 22.22.140.B, “The number of buildable lots allowed in a cluster division shall be determined through the use of the parcel size tests . . . applicable to the land use categories in which the site is located . . . The actual size of the clustered lots shall then be determined by Subsection D.”

Based on the Subdivision Design Standards for the Residential Rural (RR) Category (County LUO Section 22.22.060), the minimum parcel size for the project site would be 5 acres. Assuming a minimum parcel size of 5 acres over 195.3 acres of land, Alternative 3 would facilitate a subdivision of approximately 39 Residential Rural (RR) parcels. According to County LUO Section 22.22.140.D, the minimum lot size for the Residential Rural (RR) land use category is 20,000 square feet (approximately 0.5 acre) when community water and sewer services are provided. However, a minimum lot size less than 2.5 acres is only allowable when community water is provided, and a minimum lot size less than 1 acre is only allowable when the leaching capacity of site soils for septic tank use is from 0 to 5 minutes per inch, or where community sewer is provided.

This alternative may preclude annexation into the NCSD due to infrastructure costs. If annexation into the NCSD does not occur, this alternative would rely on domestic water and sewer infrastructure and the minimum lot size would be 2.5 acres. If annexation into the NCSD is feasible, this alternative would be provided community water and sewer services and would have a minimum parcel size of approximately 0.5 acre. Since the feasibility of annexation is currently not known, this alternative has the potential to facilitate a two- to 10-lot cluster subdivision on each 5-acre Residential Rural (RR) parcel, resulting in the construction of 78 to 390 single-family residential units, in addition to a proportionate number of ADUs.

This alternative would continue to provide pedestrian and bicycle trails to connect the community to surrounding areas and require the construction of new and expanded transportation and utility infrastructure. See Chapter 2, *Project Description*, for a full description of the improvements. The cost of implementing the needed infrastructure improvements would be very high to serve a relatively low number of units and uses. While the number and extent of needed improvements may be reduced due to

this alternative's reduced demand for services, this alternative may not be feasible. Assuming it is feasible to construct, it would not provide a mix of housing types and affordability levels at the same level as the proposed project.

5.4.4.2 Off-Site Improvements

This alternative would include the construction of off-site transportation and NCSW water and wastewater improvements. See Chapter 2, *Project Description*, for a full description of the improvements. However, the feasibility of expansion of NCSW water and wastewater infrastructure to serve so few units is uncertain.

5.4.4.3 Analysis of Alternative 3

Under Alternative 3, no commercial development would occur, and the density of residential development would be limited, resulting in a smaller scale of buildout as compared to the proposed project. Based on the reduction of proposed residential units, this alternative would reduce population growth in comparison to the proposed project. As a result, impacts related to aesthetics, air quality, GHG emissions, population and housing, and transportation would be reduced. However, this alternative could continue to potentially impact sensitive biological resources. In addition, this alternative may preclude annexation into the NCSW due to infrastructure costs; therefore, this alternative would potentially increase impacts related to utilities and service systems. Due to the substantial reduction in the number of proposed residential units, the number of affordable units would be significantly decreased in order to provide funding for site development and other improvements. As a result, Alternative 3 would not meet the basic project objective of providing affordable workforce market rate homes. In addition, this alternative would be inconsistent with the commercial and light industrial land uses planned for the site as identified in the County's General Plan.

5.4.4.3.1 AESTHETICS

Specific Plan Area

As compared to the proposed project, under Alternative 3, buildout of the site would result in a substantial reduction in the number of residential dwellings developed on-site, which would retain a larger amount of existing oak woodland habitat to better preserve the natural rural character of the site. In addition, due to the reduced density of residential dwellings, proposed development would be more consistent with surrounding rural residential dwellings. Further, Alternative 3 would not include the construction of commercial land uses along the eastern portion of the project site, nearest to US 101, the most visible portion of the site. As a result, this alternative would reduce project impacts related to the alteration of the visual character of the project area. Similar to the proposed project, this alternative would introduce new development to a previously undeveloped area and would be required to implement mitigation to screen the project from surrounding areas. As evaluated for the proposed project, development under this alternative would be subject to the Land Use and Development Standards, Design Guidelines, and other controlling documents intended to maintain the rural character of the project site and surrounding community included in the DRSP. Alternative 3 would also be subject to requirements of County LUO Section 22.10.060 for exterior lighting and policies and objectives included in the DRSP intended to reduce light and glare. Since this alternative would retain more mature oak trees, result in lower-density development, and be more consistent with the scale of surrounding residential development, implementation of vegetative screening and adherence to existing and proposed regulations governing visual quality would reduce impacts related to alteration of existing visual character of the project area. Therefore, although this alternative would reduce impacts related to aesthetics, potential impacts would remain significant but mitigable, *similar to* impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.4.3.2 AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 3 would continue to facilitate buildout of the proposed 288-acre Dana Reserve. As evaluated for the proposed project, Alternative 3 would not result in conversion of prime agricultural soils to non-agricultural uses and would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural land or a Williamson Act contract, consistent with the proposed project. Based on the reduced density of development, Alternative 3 would require less construction activity; however, there would still be potential to result in an increase in short-term dust that could disturb agricultural activities within the proposed project area. Alternative 3 would be required to implement mitigation to reduce short-term impacts related to dust to reduce indirect impacts to existing agricultural production activities. Since the project site does not support prime agricultural soils, is not zoned for agricultural uses, and is not under a Williamson Act contract, Alternative 3 would not facilitate indirect conversion of existing agricultural land, and impacts would be *similar* to those associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.4.3.3 AIR QUALITY

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 3 would require less construction activity; however, there is still potential for construction to result in a short-term increase in air pollutant emissions generated by construction equipment and vehicle use and ground-disturbing activities. This alternative would be required to implement mitigation to reduce construction-related air pollutant emissions. Alternative 3 would result in buildout of the proposed 288-acre project site, which is located in an area with the potential for NOA to occur. This alternative would be required to implement mitigation to reduce the exposure of NOA to nearby sensitive receptors.

The project site is located along US 101, which could result in long-term exposure of DPM to sensitive receptors within the DRSP area. The proposed project includes mitigation to avoid construction of residential homes within 500 feet of US 101 in order to reduce long-term exposure of DPM to on-site sensitive receptors. However, Alternative 3 does not include the construction of commercial development and would instead include land designated for residential uses along the eastern portion of the site, nearest to US 101. The ability to cluster development may successfully allow this alternative to avoid impacts related to DPM; however, implementation of the identified mitigation would reduce the availability of land for residential development outside of sensitive biological resource areas. There appears to be adequate land to develop the maximum 10-lot cluster subdivision to accommodate up to 390 single-family residential units outside of sensitive biological areas and the 500-foot buffer. Therefore, impacts related to DPM would be similar to those of the proposed project.

Due to the reduced density of proposed residential development, Alternative 3 would facilitate substantially less population growth than the proposed project, which would also result in a reduction of VMT. However, this alternative would still facilitate population growth that would generate VMT within the region and would be subject to mitigation to further reduce VMT as necessary. Due to the reduction of VMT and energy use for proposed residential units, Alternative 3 would be expected to generate lower levels of operational pollutant emissions compared to the proposed project. Although reduced, this alternative would continue to provide a substantial amount of housing and would, therefore, continue to adversely affect the jobs-to-housing ratio within the community, although to a lesser degree than the proposed project, and would potentially be inconsistent with the SLOAPCD CAP. Although Alternative 3 would reduce emissions and be more in line with the SLOAPCD CAP, this alternative would continue to result in significant impacts related to air quality associated with increases in VMT and inconsistencies with the SLOAPCD CAP; therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.4.3.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 3 would result in 195.3 acres of land dedicated to cluster residential rural development, 49.8 acres of land dedicated to open space, and 11 acres of land dedicated to public parks. No commercial development would occur. Because buildout would occur at the same project site as the proposed project, the potential to disturb special-status plant and wildlife species would be consistent with the proposed project. However, the ability to cluster residential uses would allow the site to be developed in a way that avoids and minimizes impacts to sensitive biological resources. This alternative would be required to implement mitigation to reduce the significance of any remaining potential impacts, similar to the proposed project, and due to the significantly reduced development footprint, requirements for on- and/or off-site mitigation would be substantially reduced and more feasible to implement. Buildout of the site would be reduced due to the lower density of clustered residential development, which would ultimately reduce the amount of impacted oak woodland and Burton Mesa chaparral habitat at the project site. However, since removal of oak woodland and Burton Mesa chaparral habitat would continue to be required for buildout of the site, this alternative would still be required to implement compensatory mitigation to minimize impacts related to sensitive habitats. Potential impacts to oak woodland habitat and Burton Mesa chaparral would be substantially reduced, the feasibility of on- and off-site mitigation would be significantly improved; therefore, impacts would be *decreased* compared to impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.4.3.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES

Specific Plan Area

Under Alternative 3, future buildout would continue to occur on the proposed 288-acre Dana Reserve. The project site does not contain any historical buildings or structures that would be eligible for listing in the CRHR; however, there are known cultural archaeological resources within the project site and there is potential for inadvertent discovery of unknown resources. Based on the location of these known sites and the assumption that this alternative would avoid sensitive biological resource areas, it is likely that the clustered residential development would be located in proximity to sensitive cultural resource areas. This alternative would be required to implement mitigation for avoidance of known cultural resource sites. Due to the decrease in proposed residential development, this alternative would require less ground disturbance, which reduces some potential for inadvertent discovery of unknown cultural resources. However, this alternative would still require ground disturbance at the project site and be required to implement mitigation for inadvertent discovery of unknown cultural resources, including human remains. Although clustered development could be sited to successfully avoid direct impacts to known sites, indirect impacts would still be possible due to the proximity of proposed uses to these sites, and Alternative 3 would have similar potential to disturb unknown cultural resources. Alternative 3 would be required to implement mitigation to avoid and/or minimize these impacts to a less-than-significant level. Therefore, impacts related to cultural resources would be *similar* to impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.4.3.6 ENERGY

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 3 would result in the future buildout of up to 390 single-family residential dwelling units (plus associated ADUs) on the project site. No commercial development would occur. Alternative 3 would require less construction activity, which would reduce energy consumption during the construction phase of the project. However, this alternative would still be required to implement mitigation to reduce energy consumption during construction to avoid unnecessary, wasteful, or inefficient energy use. Since commercial development would not occur and the number of residential homes would be substantially reduced, Alternative 3 would require less electricity and natural gas and would generate less VMT, which would reduce overall energy consumption during operation. However, this alternative would still be required to implement mitigation intended to reduce operational energy use to avoid unnecessary, wasteful, or inefficient energy use. Implementation of identified mitigation measures would ensure the proposed project would be consistent with applicable energy reduction goals, plans, and policies. Alternative 3 would result in less overall energy consumption during project construction and operation; however, mitigation would still be required to reduce unnecessary energy use and ensure consistency with applicable energy reduction requirements. Therefore, the project would result in impacts *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.4.3.7 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 3 would continue to facilitate buildout of new habitable buildings and structures on the 288-acre project site. As such, the potential for seismic-related hazards, including fault rupture, ground shaking, liquefaction, and landslide, and the potential for other ground-failure events would be consistent with the proposed project. This alternative would be required to implement mitigation and adhere to CBC and other applicable engineering standards to reduce potential impacts related to seismic-related and other ground-failure events. This alternative would result in less ground disturbance and tree removal, which would reduce some potential for substantial erosion and loss of topsoil to occur during construction. However, this alternative would still be required to comply with RWQCB and County LUO requirements related to short- and long-term erosion control at the project site. Although the development footprint would be reduced, this alternative would still have the potential to disturb paleontological resources if present within the proposed area of disturbance and would be required to implement mitigation to reduce potential disturbance to paleontological resources during project construction. Therefore, Alternative 3 would result in impacts *similar* to impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.4.3.8 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 3 would result in the future construction of up to 390 residential rural dwellings through clustered subdivision development. No commercial development would occur under this alternative. During construction of the proposed project, use of equipment and vehicles would generate short-term GHG emissions. Construction for buildout of Alternative 3 would be smaller in scale than the proposed project based on the construction of substantially fewer residential dwellings. However, Alternative 3 would be required to implement mitigation to reduce GHG emissions during construction. Long-term GHG emissions would be generated by vehicle trips and energy use generated by the project. Since the number of residential units would be substantially reduced, this alternative would be expected to require less overall energy consumption and to generate less VMT than the proposed project. Since this alternative would not result in commercial development on-site, VMT-reduction strategies related to the provision of mixed land uses would no longer be feasible. This alternative would include pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian trails to encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation, which would be consistent with applicable local plans, policies, and ordinances related to the transportation system, but would not provide new transit stops, Park and Ride lot, or other VMT-reducing amenities. As such, although reduced as a result of lower-density residential development, VMT generated by the project would continue to have the potential to exceed regional thresholds. This alternative would be required to implement mitigation to further reduce VMT and operational energy use and to ensure consistency with applicable goals, plans, and policies related to GHG-reduction strategies. Since Alternative 3 would result

in less population growth and associated operational VMT in comparison to the proposed project, with implementation of mitigation to further reduce operational VMT, this alternative would be expected to be consistent with applicable goals, plans, and policies related to GHG-reduction strategies. Therefore, impacts related to GHG emissions would be *decreased* compared to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.4.3.9 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 3 would continue to facilitate buildout of the 288-acre Dana Reserve, which is located along US 101 and approximately 0.2 mile west of Nipomo High School. Similar to the proposed project, Alternative 3 does not include land uses or features that would facilitate the long-term use of hazardous materials that could result in significant upset if released. This alternative would require the transport, use, and disposal of construction-related hazardous materials (e.g., fuels, gasoline, solvents, oils, paints, etc.) and would be required to comply with state and local regulations to reduce hazard related to the transport, use, and disposal of these materials. The project site would be located in an area with potential for NOA to occur and would be required to implement mitigation to reduce the potential for release. The project site would be located more than 30 feet from US 101, which would reduce the potential for ADL to occur. Similar to the proposed project, Alternative 3 includes the construction of site access, roadway improvements, and collector roads in accordance with CAL FIRE and County requirements to ensure adequate emergency access and public ingress and egress. The project site would continue to provide site access and internal roads. Alternative 3 would not change the potential risk associated with hazardous materials or natural hazards; therefore, impacts would be *similar* to those identified for the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.4.3.10 HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Specific Plan Area

Under Alternative 3, buildout would continue to occur on the 288-acre project site, which does not support any surface water features. Buildout of Alternative 3 would result in up to 390 residential rural dwellings, 49.8 acres of land dedicated to open space, 11 acres of land dedicated to public parks, and other on-site improvements. Similar to the proposed project, this alternative would require the use of construction equipment and vehicles that could result in accidental fuel or other hazardous materials spills that could runoff from the site. Due to the reduced amount of construction required for residential development, this alternative would result in less soil disturbance and tree removal, which would reduce the potential for substantial erosion and siltation to occur at the project site. Since this alternative would be limited to rural residential development, buildout of future residential dwellings would also result in less coverage of the site, reducing the amount of impervious surface areas compared to the proposed

project. Similar to the proposed project, this alternative would be required to comply with applicable RWQCB and County water quality protection and stormwater management requirements to reduce impacts related to hydrology and water quality. Although Alternative 3 would reduce the amount of ground disturbance required for project construction and would also reduce the amount of impervious surface area at the project site, the impacts evaluated for the proposed project were also determined to be less than significant. Therefore, this alternative would result in *similar* impacts to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.4.3.11 LAND AND USE PLANNING

Specific Plan Area

Future Buildout of Alternative 3 would result in a substantially smaller number of residential units, which would allow for development at a lower density than the proposed project. However, consistent with the proposed project, buildout of this alternative would not result in new features or other components that could physically divide an established community. This alternative would continue to adversely affect the jobs-to-housing balance in the community and VMT-reduction strategies but would substantially reduce impacts associated with conflicts with policies intended to protect visual resources, biological resources, and other sensitive resources. This alternative may be inconsistent with COSE Policy OS 4.6, which discourages the creation or expansion of small-lot rural designations in rural areas to maintain a well-defined urban boundary. Nevertheless, impacts related to land use and planning would be reduced to less than significant and would be *decreased* compared to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.4.3.12 MINERAL RESOURCES

Specific Plan Area

Buildout of Alternative 3 would occur on the proposed project site, which does not contain any known significant mineral resources. Additionally, there are no known significant mineral resources in the project site vicinity. Therefore, proposed buildout would not result in the loss of availability of any known mineral resources or conflict with the County's General Plan, and impacts related to mineral resources would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.4.3.13 NOISE

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 3 would result in rural residential dwellings, recreational facilities, and open space areas within the 288-acre project site. Under this alternative, it would be expected that overall long-term noise levels would be reduced based on the lower density of residential development and residents on the site. Alternative 3 would result in less construction activity; however, due to the proximity of surrounding noise-sensitive and future residential land uses, mitigation would be required to reduce short-term construction-related noise. Similar to the proposed project, Alternative 3 would not include long-term components that could substantially increase groundborne noise levels or vibration at the project site. This alternative would result in a mix of rural residential and recreational land uses at the project site and would still be required to implement mitigation to ensure future buildout of the proposed mix of land uses would be consistent with the County's exterior and interior noise standards at proposed noise-sensitive land uses. Although overall growth and associated noise would be reduced, this alternative would still be subject to mitigation to reduce noise at noise-sensitive land uses. Therefore, impacts related to noise would be *similar* to those associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.4.3.14 POPULATION AND HOUSING

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 3 would not result in the demolition or removal of existing homes and would not require additional replacement homes to be constructed elsewhere, which is consistent with the proposed project. Under Alternative 3, the residential land use category would be limited to approximately 78 to 390 rural residential units (plus associated ADU development). Based on an average household size of 3.16 for the community of Nipomo, this alternative would generate approximately 247 to 1,233 new residents (not including ADUs). Since no commercial development would occur, this alternative would not generate new employment opportunities. As such, the population growth generated by the project would be substantially less than the proposed project. Because this alternative would reduce the number of new residents within the community and be consistent with the General Plan land use designation and planned growth projections for the site, Alternative 3 would not result in unplanned population growth. However, since residential development would be limited, this alternative would not help the County reach its housing development allocation goals per the County RHNA required by state law to the same extent as the proposed project. In addition, this alternative would result in minimal, if any, affordable housing units, which is inconsistent with the basic project objectives. Alternative 3 would generate substantially less population growth than the proposed project, and impacts related to population and housing would be *decreased* compared to the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.4.3.15 PUBLIC SERVICES

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 3 would generate substantially less residential development and would not include commercial development. Therefore, population growth would be reduced in comparison to the proposed project, including approximately 247 to 1,233 residents (not including ADUs). As such, the increase in demand on public services and facilities would also be substantially reduced. This alternative would be subject to the payment of Public Facilities Fees as a standard condition of approval to offset the increase in demand on other public services and facilities. This alternative would not be expected to set aside land for the construction of a future fire station based on the substantially reduced demand on existing fire protection services compared to the proposed project. As such, Alternative 3 would continue to increase demand on existing public services and facilities; however, this increase in demand would be substantially less than the proposed project, and impacts related to public services would be *decreased* in comparison to impacts from the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.4.3.16 RECREATION

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 3 would result in substantially less residential development and associated population growth, including approximately 247 to 1,233 residents (not including ADUs). The increase in demand on public recreational facilities would also be substantially reduced. Alternative 3 includes 11 acres of land for recreational facilities, including a 10-acre public park, an equestrian trailhead, and a network of pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian trails. Under this alternative, the amount of proposed recreational facilities would exceed the County's requirement for parkland with new development. This alternative would be subject to the payment of Public Facilities Fees as a standard condition of approval to offset the increase in demand on public recreational facilities, which is consistent with the proposed project. Although this alternative would reduce demand on existing public recreational facilities, the impacts evaluated for the proposed project were also determined to be less than significant. Therefore, this alternative would result in similar impacts to the impacts associated with the proposed project. Based on the payment of Public Facilities Fees, impacts related to recreation would be *similar* to impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.4.3.17 TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 3 would generate substantially less residential development and associated population growth. This alternative would include the construction of two collector roads through the project site, consistent

with the proposed project, except that the Collector A connection to Willow Road would be relocated through APN 091-301-029, similar to Alternative 1. The project would continue to provide site access and internal roads in accordance with CAL FIRE and County requirements to ensure adequate emergency access and public ingress and egress. Alternative 3 would also include pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian trails to encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation, which would be consistent with applicable local plans, policies, and ordinances related to the transportation system.

Since the number of residential units would be limited to up to 390 residential rural dwellings, this alternative would be expected to generate less VMT than the proposed project. However, since this alternative would not result in commercial development on-site, VMT-reduction strategies related to the provision of mixed land uses would no longer be feasible. This alternative would also not provide new transit stops, Park and Ride lot, or other VMT-reducing amenities. This alternative would be required to implement mitigation to further reduce operational VMT through additional VMT-reduction strategies. Because this alternative would continue to provide housing in a housing-rich community, and would not provide any job-generating uses, impacts associated with transportation and traffic would be *similar* to those associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.4.3.18 TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

Specific Plan Area

In accordance with AB 52, consultation with appropriate tribes was conducted for the proposed project. As previously identified, there are known archaeological resources within the project site and the potential for inadvertent discovery of unknown resources. This alternative would be required to implement mitigation for avoidance of known cultural resource sites. Due to the decrease in proposed residential development, this alternative would require less ground disturbance, which reduces some potential for inadvertent discovery of unknown cultural or tribal cultural resources. However, this alternative would still result in ground disturbance at the site and would be required to implement mitigation for inadvertent discovery of unknown cultural resources, including human remains. This alternative would also be required to implement additional mitigation measures for protection of tribal cultural resources. Although Alternative 3 could avoid direct impacts to known resources during construction, it would have a similar potential to disturb known and unknown cultural and tribal cultural resources sites and would be required to implement mitigation to avoid and/or minimize these impacts. Therefore, impacts related to tribal cultural resources would be *similar* to impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.4.3.19 UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 3 would not include commercial development and would facilitate substantially less residential development and associated population growth. As such, the increase in demand on water, wastewater, and solid waste services would also be reduced in comparison to the proposed project. However, due to the limited population growth, this alternative may preclude annexation into the NCSO service area due to the costs of expansion of NCSO facilities. The project could be required to utilize on-site wells and install on-site septic systems to meet the project's water and sewer demands. Since no analysis of necessary off-site improvements to serve this level of development and their associated costs has been prepared, it's unclear whether annexation would continue to be feasible under this alternative. However, if the project did not utilize the NCSO's water supply, which is comprised of ground, surface, and imported water, and would only utilize groundwater from on-site wells, the potential to deplete the groundwater supply within the Santa Maria River Valley Groundwater Basin – Nipomo Mesa Management Area would be increased. In addition, due to the installation of on-site septic systems throughout the project site, there would be greater potential for groundwater contamination. This alternative would be required to implement mitigation to ensure there is adequate available groundwater supply to meet the project's needs, or if adequate water supplies are not available on the Nipomo Mesa, this impact would be significant and unavoidable. The project would be subject to County requirements for design and construction of septic systems to reduce potential impacts accordingly.

Should Alternative 3 preclude annexation into the NCSO, the San Luis Obispo County Integrated Waste Management Authority (IWMA) would not be responsible for solid waste collection services and the County would be required to provide these services for the project area. The San Luis Obispo County IWMA provides solid waste services in accordance with state and local solid waste reduction goals, including diversion of construction-related waste, edible food waste, and recyclables. However, this alternative would generate less solid waste per day than the proposed project based on the limited amount of residential development. In addition, the project would still be subject to applicable state and local laws related to solid waste reduction goals.

Alternative 3 would require construction of new and expanded utility infrastructure, including electrical and natural gas, and may include water storage tanks and septic systems. This alternative would be required to implement identified mitigation to reduce potential adverse impacts on the environment. Under Alternative 3, the project would have greater potential to deplete the groundwater supply, contaminate groundwater, and conflict with solid waste reduction goals; however, through implementation of mitigation and required compliance with applicable state and local requirements, the significance of potential impacts would likely be reduced. Therefore, if annexation into the NCSO service area is infeasible, impacts to utilities and service systems, particularly related to water supply, would be *increased* compared to impacts associated with the proposed project. If annexation is determined to be feasible, impacts would be generally reduced due to decreased demands, but would remain significant but mitigable, and would be *similar* to impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

If annexation is determined to be feasible, off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would result in *similar* impacts as evaluated for the proposed project. If annexation is determined to be infeasible, then the impacts of off-site improvements would *decrease* compared to the proposed project.

5.4.4.3.20 WILDFIRE

Specific Plan Area

Under Alternative 3, proposed future buildout would occur on the 288-acre project site and would include the development of new habitable buildings and structures within a high FHSZ. As such, the potential for wildfire occurrence would be consistent with that of the proposed project. The project would continue to provide site access and internal roads in accordance with CAL FIRE and County requirements to ensure adequate emergency access and public ingress and egress. Similar to the proposed project, these improvements would be adequate to support emergency response and evacuation efforts. Under Alternative 3, proposed habitable buildings and structures would be required to comply with applicable CFC, CBC, PRC, and CAL FIRE requirements to reduce risk associated with development within a high FHSZ. This alternative would be required to implement mitigation included to facilitate emergency preparedness and reduce risk of wildfire ignition at the project site. Since Alternative 3 would also result in development within a high FHSZ, impacts would be *similar* to impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.5 Alternative 4: Development on Non-Native Grassland

5.4.5.1 Specific Plan Area

Similar to the Burton Mesa chaparral avoidance alternative (see Section 5.3.1, *Burton Mesa Chaparral Avoidance Alternative*), this alternative would increase the amount of land dedicated to open space by reducing the overall area of proposed residential, commercial, and recreational development. However, this alternative would increase the density of residential development to maximize the buildout of single-family residential dwellings on the non-native grassland habitat throughout the project site.

This alternative would include the dedication of approximately 60 acres of land for single-family residential development, 20 acres of land for multi-family residential development, 20 acres of land for commercial development, 5 acres of land for recreational uses, and internal roadways and other site improvements. Under Alternative 4, the remaining portion (approximately 183 acres) of the 288-acre project site would be retained as open space land. This alternative would relocate the future construction of Collector A through APN 091-301-029 to connect North Frontage Road to Willow Road; consistent with Alternative 1. Collector B would not be constructed; residential areas in the western portion of the Specific Plan Area would be accessed via Hetrick Avenue and Pomeroy Road. Collector C would no longer be constructed as a collector road, but an internal roadway in the same general location as the existing internal ranch road north of the oak forest would connect the eastern and western portions of the site. Site access and roadways would continue to be provided in accordance with applicable County standards.

The 20 acres of commercial development would generally be located along the US 101 corridor, similar to the proposed project, while the remaining uses would be situated in areas of the Specific Plan containing California Perennial Grassland Group (Figure 5-4) to avoid and minimize impacts to sensitive habitats.

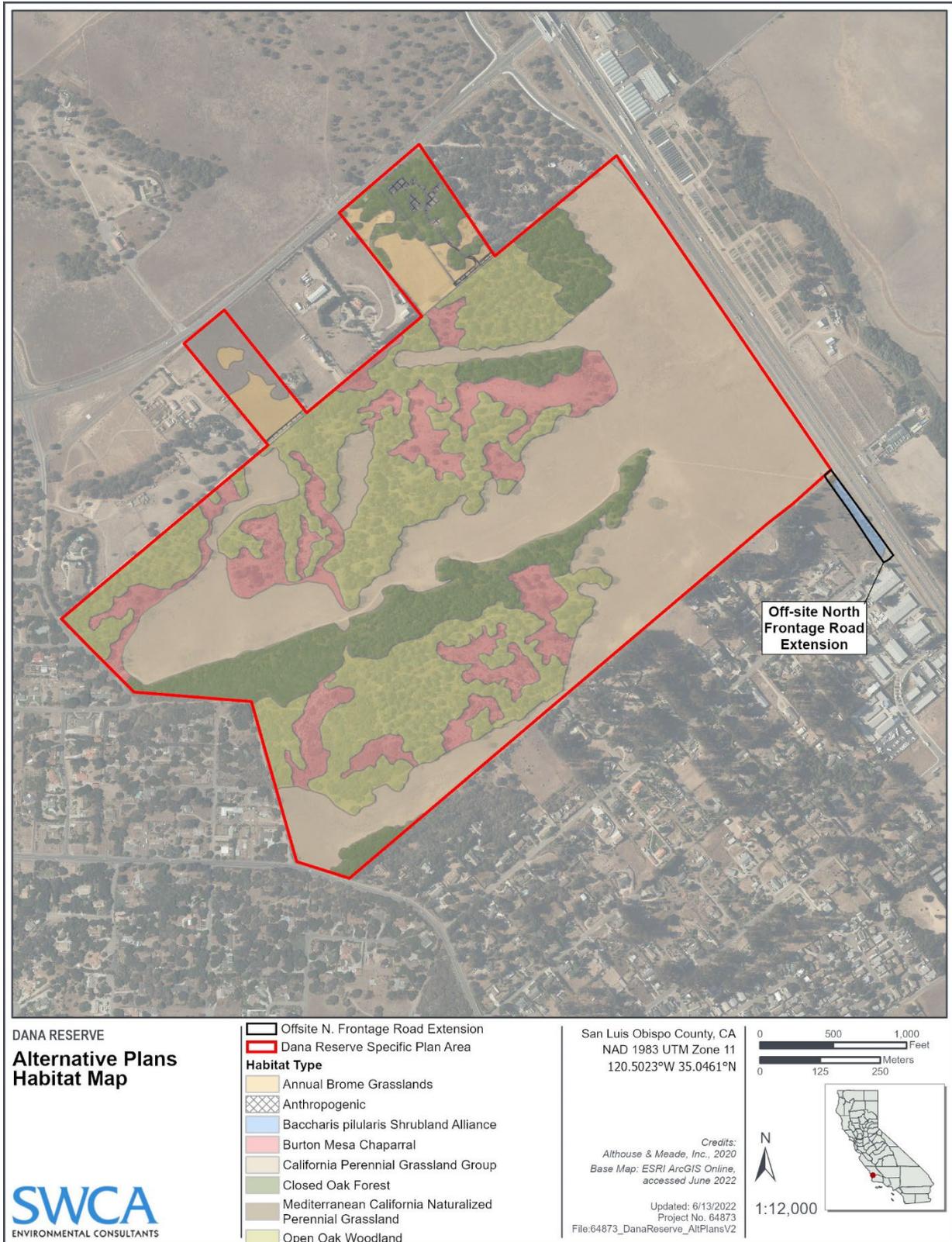


Figure 5-4. Alternative 4 California Perennial Grassland areas.

Similar to the Burton Mesa chaparral avoidance alternative (see Section 5.3.1, *Burton Mesa Chaparral Avoidance Alternative*), this alternative assumes multi-family residential dwellings would be four stories tall (48 feet) and constructed at 34 dwelling units per acre and single-family residential dwellings would be two stories tall (28 feet) and constructed at seven dwelling units per acre. Therefore, this alternative would facilitate the future development of approximately 1,100 residential units, including 680 four-story multi-family units and 420 two-story single-family units. This alternative would also have the potential to facilitate the development of ADUs.

This alternative would continue to provide pedestrian and bicycle trails to connect the community to surrounding areas. This alternative would continue to require the construction of new and expanded transportation and utility infrastructure. See Chapter 2, *Project Description*, for a full description of the improvements.

5.4.5.2 Off-Site Improvements

This alternative would include the construction of off-site transportation and NCSW water and wastewater improvements. See Chapter 2, *Project Description*, for a full description of the improvements. This alternative assumes the expansion of NCSW water and wastewater infrastructure to serve the reduced number of units is feasible.

5.4.5.3 Analysis of Alternative 4

Alternative 4 would increase the amount of land dedicated to open space by increasing density and reducing the footprint of proposed residential, commercial, and recreational development. As a result, the number of residential dwelling units would be reduced from 1,289 units to 1,100 units (approximately 189 units or 15%). In addition, the land dedicated to commercial land uses would be reduced by 2.3 acres and the land dedicated to recreational land uses would be reduced by 6 acres, ultimately increasing the amount of open space area on the site and reducing the amount of impacted oak woodland and Burton Mesa chaparral habitat. This alternative would marginally reduce population growth in comparison to the proposed project. However, buildout of this alternative would still constitute a substantial increase in growth within the community, and impacts related to air quality, GHG emissions, population and housing, and transportation would be generally consistent with the proposed project. This alternative is considered feasible; however, it may conflict with the basic project objective of providing a mix of housing types and affordable housing options.

5.4.5.3.1 AESTHETICS

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 4 would result in the construction of higher-density residential development over smaller areas of the DRSP area. Alternative 4 includes the construction of two-story single-family dwelling units and four-story multi-family units. While this alternative would retain more open space land and mature oak trees, this alternative has the potential to result in adverse impacts related to development of high-density residential dwellings up to 48 feet in height within the viewshed of US 101 and surrounding neighborhoods. The higher-density development would result in building sizes that are not currently found in the community of Nipomo (e.g., four-story multi-family buildings). Construction of 48-foot-tall multi-family units would require County approval for an exception to the height standards established in County LUO Section 22.10.090. All single-family units would be two stories to accommodate a substantially reduced project footprint. Similar to the proposed project, buildout of the project site would include construction of new village and flex commercial development within the eastern portion of the project site, nearest to US 101. As a result, this alternative would continue to be required to implement mitigation to screen the project from US 101 and surrounding areas. However, due to the increase in

proposed building height, the feasibility and effectiveness of mitigation included to require screening of the site from surrounding areas may be reduced.

As evaluated for the proposed project, development under this alternative would be subject to the Land Use and Development Standards, Design Guidelines, and other controlling documents intended to maintain the rural character of the project site and surrounding community included in the DRSP, unless otherwise provided for in a specific plan for the site. As previously identified, proposed multi-family dwelling units would exceed the maximum allowable height requirements established in County LUO Section 22.10.090. Alternative 4 would also be subject to the requirements of County LUO Section 22.10.060 for exterior lighting and policies and objectives included in the DRSP intended to reduce light and glare. Similar to the proposed project, this alternative would continue to introduce new development on a previously undeveloped site and would be subject to mitigation included for the project; however, due to the increased building height, this alternative would result in building sizes that are inconsistent with the visual character of the existing community and the feasibility of mitigation to reduce these impacts is uncertain. However, this alternative would preserve most of the natural elements within the Specific Plan Area, and views of the higher-density development internal to the site would be limited. Therefore, impacts related to aesthetics would continue to be potentially significant and would be *similar* to impacts of the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.5.3.2 AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 4 would continue to facilitate buildout of the proposed 288-acre Dana Reserve but would result in a higher density of residential homes throughout a smaller portion of non-native habitat on-site. As evaluated for the proposed project, Alternative 4 would not result in conversion of prime agricultural soils to non-agricultural uses and would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural land or a Williamson Act contract, which is consistent with the proposed project. Under Alternative 4, there would continue to be potential to result in an increase in short-term dust that could disturb agricultural activities within the proposed project area. Alternative 4 would be required to implement mitigation to reduce short-term impacts related to dust to reduce indirect impacts to existing agricultural production activities. Since the project site does not support prime agricultural soils, is not zoned for agricultural uses, and is not under a Williamson Act contract and Alternative 4 would not facilitate indirect conversion of existing agricultural land, impacts would be *similar* to impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.5.3.3 AIR QUALITY

Specific Plan Area

Under Alternative 4, construction of the project would continue to result in a short-term increase in air pollutant emissions generated by construction equipment and vehicle use and ground-disturbing activities. This alternative would be required to implement mitigation to reduce construction-related air pollutant emissions. Alternative 4 would result in buildout of the proposed 288-acre project site, which is located in an area with the potential for NOA to occur; therefore, this alternative would be required to implement mitigation to reduce the exposure of NOA to nearby sensitive receptors. In addition, the project site is also located along US 101, which could result in long-term exposure of DPM to sensitive receptors within the DRSP area. This alternative would be subject to mitigation that has been included to avoid construction of residential homes within 500 feet of US 101 in order to reduce long-term exposure of DPM to on-site sensitive receptors.

Alternative 4 would facilitate slightly less population growth than the proposed project, which would also result in a slight reduction of VMT. However, this alternative would still facilitate population growth and employment opportunities that would generate VMT within the region and would be subject to mitigation to further reduce VMT as necessary. As evaluated for the proposed project, the level of growth associated with this alternative would still be considered substantial; therefore, incorporation of mitigation would not be anticipated to reduce VMT below applicable thresholds. As such, this alternative would still be expected to generate operational emissions above SLOAPCD significance thresholds. In addition, this alternative would continue to substantially increase the number of residential dwellings within the community, which would continue to adversely affect the jobs-to-housing ratio within Nipomo. Since this alternative would continue to exceed VMT thresholds and further divide the jobs-to-housing ratio, Alternative 4 would be similarly inconsistent with the SLOAPCD CAP. Therefore, impacts related to air quality would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.5.3.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 4 would increase the amount of land dedicated to open space by reducing the area of land designated for residential, commercial, and recreational development. Because buildout would be predominantly limited to areas of non-native grassland, the potential to disturb special-status plant and wildlife species would be substantially reduced compared to the proposed project; however, minimized impacts to special-status plant and wildlife species and natural communities, including oak woodland and Burton Mesa chaparral, would continue to occur. Therefore, this alternative would be required to implement mitigation to reduce the significance of potential impacts. Because this alternative would reconfigure proposed land uses to avoid a majority of the native habitat on-site, which would substantially reduce the number of impacted oak trees at the project site and preserve and maintain oak woodland and Burton Mesa chaparral, options for on- and off-site mitigation would be much more feasible. Since some removal of oak trees and native habitat would continue to be required for buildout of the site, this alternative would still be required to implement compensatory mitigation to minimize impacts related to sensitive habitats. Due to the substantial reduction in impacts to on-site biological resources and sensitive

habitats, impacts would be significant but mitigable and would be *decreased* compared to impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.5.3.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES

Specific Plan Area

Under Alternative 4, future buildout would continue to occur on the proposed 288-acre Dana Reserve. The project site does not contain any historical buildings or structures that would be eligible for listing in the CRHR; however, there are known archaeological resources within the project site and there is potential for inadvertent discovery of unknown resources. This alternative would be required to implement mitigation for avoidance of known cultural resource sites. Due to the decrease in the proposed area of development, this alternative would require less ground disturbance, which reduces some potential for inadvertent discovery of unknown cultural resources. However, this alternative would still require ground disturbance at the project site and be required to implement mitigation for impacts to known sites as well as inadvertent discovery of unknown cultural resources, including human remains. Alternative 4 would have similar potential to disturb known and unknown cultural resources sites and would be required to implement mitigation to avoid and/or minimize these impacts. Therefore, impacts related to cultural resources would be *similar* to impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.5.3.6 ENERGY

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 4 would result in 1,100 residential dwelling units and commercial development over 20 acres of land. This alternative would be required to implement mitigation to reduce energy consumption during construction to avoid unnecessary, wasteful, or inefficient energy use. Due the slight reduction of residential homes and associated growth, this alternative would require less electricity and natural gas and would generate less VMT during operation, which would reduce overall energy consumption during operation. However, based on proposed residential and commercial land uses, this alternative would still be required to implement mitigation intended to further reduce operational energy use to avoid unnecessary, wasteful, or inefficient energy use. Implementation of identified mitigation measures would ensure the proposed project would be consistent with applicable energy reduction goals, plans, and policies. Alternative 4 would result in less overall energy consumption during project construction and operation; however, mitigation would still be required to reduce unnecessary energy use and ensure consistency with applicable energy reduction requirements. Therefore, the project would result in impacts *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.5.3.7 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 4 would continue to facilitate buildout of new habitable buildings and structures on the 288-acre project site. As such, the potential for seismic-related hazards, including fault rupture, ground shaking, liquefaction, and landslide, and the potential for other ground-failure events would be consistent with the proposed project. This alternative would be required to implement mitigation and adhere to CBC and other applicable engineering standards to reduce potential impacts related to seismic-related and other ground-failure events. The reduced area of proposed development would result in less ground disturbance and tree removal, which would reduce the potential for substantial erosion or loss of topsoil to occur during construction. However, this alternative would still be required to comply with RWQCB and County LUO requirements related to short- and long-term erosion control at the project site. This alternative would have the same potential to disturb paleontological resources if present within the proposed area of disturbance and would be required to implement mitigation to reduce potential disturbance to paleontological resources during project construction. Therefore, Alternative 4 would result in impacts *similar* to impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.5.3.8 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 4 would result in the construction of 1,100 residential dwelling units and include commercial development over 20 acres of land. During construction of the proposed project, use of equipment and vehicles would generate short-term GHG emissions. Similar to the proposed project, Alternative 4 would be required to implement mitigation to reduce GHG emissions during construction. Long-term GHG emissions would be generated by vehicle trips and energy use generated by the project. Since the number of residential units would be reduced to 1,100 residential dwellings, this alternative would generate slightly less VMT and require slightly less energy consumption than the proposed project. However, due to the scale of new residential and commercial development, this alternative would be required to implement mitigation to reduce VMT and operational energy use to reduce associated GHG emissions. This alternative would still facilitate substantial population growth, and while slightly reduced, it would still generate VMT in a manner that is consistent with the proposed project. As such, the VMT generated by this alternative would continue to exceed applicable per capita thresholds, which would be inconsistent with applicable goals, plans, and policies related to GHG-reduction strategies. Therefore, impacts related to GHG emissions would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.5.3.9 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 4 would continue to facilitate buildout of the 288-acre Dana Reserve, which is located along US 101 and approximately 0.2 mile west of Nipomo High School. Similar to the proposed project, Alternative 4 does not include land uses or features that would facilitate the long-term use of hazardous materials that could result in significant upset if released. This alternative would require the transport, use, and disposal of construction-related hazardous materials (e.g., fuels, gasoline, solvents, oils, paints, etc.) and would be required to comply with state and local regulations to reduce hazard related to the transport, use, and disposal of these materials. The project site would be located in an area with potential for NOA to occur and would be required to implement mitigation to reduce the potential for release. The project site would be located more than 30 feet from US 101, which would reduce the potential for ADL to occur. This alternative would only provide one collector road and would not improve regional circulation as much as the proposed project; however, site access and internal roads would be developed in accordance with CAL FIRE and County requirements to ensure adequate emergency access and public ingress and egress. Alternative 4 would not change the potential risk associated with hazardous materials or natural hazards; therefore, impacts would be *similar* to those identified for the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.5.3.10 HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Specific Plan Area

Under Alternative 4, buildout would continue to occur on the 288-acre project site, which does not support any surface water features. Buildout of Alternative 4 would result in a greater acreage of land dedicated to open space. Similar to the proposed project, this alternative would require the use of construction equipment and vehicles that could result in accidental fuel or other hazardous materials spills that could runoff from the site. Due to the reduced area of development, this alternative would result in less soil disturbance and tree removal, which would reduce the potential for substantial erosion and siltation to occur at the project site. In addition, buildout of this alternative would result in less coverage of the site and would reduce the amount of impervious surface areas compared to the proposed project. This alternative would still be required to comply with applicable RWQCB and County water quality protection and stormwater management requirements to reduce impacts related to hydrology and water quality. Although this alternative would reduce the amount of ground disturbance required for project construction and would also reduce the amount of impervious surface area at the project site, the impacts evaluated for the proposed project were also determined to be less than significant. Therefore, this alternative would result in *similar* impacts to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.5.3.11 LAND AND USE PLANNING

Specific Plan Area

Future Buildout of Alternative 4 would result in 1,100 residential units, which would allow for development at a slightly reduced (15%) but comparable density as the proposed project. Consistent with the proposed project, buildout of this alternative would not result in new features or other components that could physically divide an established community. This alternative would result in similar policy conflicts related to the jobs-to-housing balance, VMT, and recreational facilities, though the jobs-to-housing imbalance and VMT impacts would be slightly reduced with the reduction in dwelling units. Although impacts related to conflicts with policies related to the protection of biological resources would be substantially reduced, impacts related to policy consistency would remain significant and unavoidable; therefore, impacts related to land use and planning would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.5.3.12 MINERAL RESOURCES

Specific Plan Area

Buildout of Alternative 4 would occur on the proposed project site, which does not contain any known significant mineral resources. Additionally, there are no known significant mineral resources in the vicinity of the project site. As such, buildout of this alternative would not result in the loss of availability of any known mineral resources or conflict with the County's General Plan. Therefore, impacts related to mineral resources would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.5.3.13 NOISE

Specific Plan Area

This alternative would facilitate the construction of residential, recreational, and commercial development on the 288-acre project site. While the proposed buildout area would be reduced, the density of proposed land uses would be comparable to the proposed project. Due to the proximity of surrounding noise-sensitive and future residential land uses, mitigation would be required to reduce short-term construction-related noise. Similar to the proposed project, Alternative 4 would not include long-term components that

could substantially increase groundborne noise levels or vibration at the project site. This alternative would result in a mix of rural residential, village and flex commercial, and recreational land uses at the project site and would still be required to implement mitigation to ensure future buildout of the proposed mix of land uses would be consistent with the County's exterior and interior noise standards at proposed noise-sensitive land uses. Similar to the proposed project, this alternative would still be subject to mitigation to reduce noise at noise-sensitive land uses. Therefore, impacts related to noise would be *similar* to those associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.5.3.14 POPULATION AND HOUSING

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 4 would not result in the demolition or removal of existing homes and would not require additional replacement homes to be constructed elsewhere, which is consistent with the proposed project. Alternative 4 would facilitate the construction of 1,100 residential units (not including ADUs). Based on an average household size of 3.16 for the community of Nipomo, this alternative would generate approximately 3,476 new residents (not including ADUs). Since proposed commercial development would be generally consistent with the proposed project, the number of new employees would still be approximately 272 employees. Although marginally reduced, the population growth generated by this alternative would be generally consistent with the proposed project. Although this alternative would reduce the number of new residents within the community, Alternative 4 would continue to facilitate substantial population growth within the community and would continue to worsen the jobs-to-housing ratio in the Inland South County Planning Area. Additionally, due to the reduction in the number of overall residential dwelling units, it is expected that the number of affordable housing units would be reduced in order to provide funding for site development and other improvements. Although population growth under Alternative 4 would be reduced, it would still facilitate substantial and unplanned growth within the project region. Therefore, impacts related to population and housing would be *similar* to the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.5.3.15 PUBLIC SERVICES

Specific Plan Area

Under Alternative 4, population growth would be marginally reduced in comparison to the proposed project, including approximately 3,476 residents (plus proportionate additional ADU development) and approximately 272 employees. Based on this population increase, this alternative would increase demand on public services and facilities in a manner that is generally consistent with the proposed project. Alternative 4 would be subject to mitigation that requires the applicant to set aside land for the construction of a future fire station to offset the demand on existing fire protection services. This alternative would also be subject to the payment of Public Facilities Fees as a standard condition of

approval to offset the increase in demand on other public services and facilities. Alternative 4 would increase demand on public services and facilities in a manner that is generally consistent with the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.5.3.16 RECREATION

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 4 would result in slightly less residential development and associated population growth, including approximately 3,476 residents (plus proportionate additional ADU development) and 272 employees. This level of growth would still result in a substantial population increase, which would increase the demand on existing public recreational facilities. Alternative 4 includes 5 acres of land for recreational facilities, which would be inconsistent with County standards. Similar to Alternative 1, this alternative would be required to meet this requirement through the payment of Quimby Fees, with partial credit in accordance with County LUO Section 21.09.020 for the pocket parks that are to be maintained by the future HOAs. Per County LUO Section 21.09.020, the project could receive between 4.25 and 6 acres of parkland credit, which would exceed the County's requirements for parkland with new development. This alternative would be subject to the payment of Public Facilities Fees as a standard condition of approval to offset the increase in demand on public recreational facilities, which is consistent with the proposed project. This alternative would result in an increase in demand on existing public recreational facilities that is consistent with the proposed project. Therefore, this alternative would result in impacts *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.5.3.17 TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC

Specific Plan Area

This alternative would facilitate the construction of residential, recreational, and commercial development on the 288-acre project site. While the proposed buildout area would be reduced, the density of proposed land uses would be increased, resulting in project-related VMT generation generally consistent with the proposed project. This alternative would include the construction of Collector A to connect North Frontage Road to Willow Road; however, Collector B would not be constructed. Instead, access to the western portions of the Specific Plan Area would be via Hetrick Avenue and Pomeroy Road. Construction of Collector A would improve existing traffic conditions within the vicinity of the project and ensure buildout of the project would not impede emergency response, evacuation, and public circulation; however, regional circulation improvements would be reduced in comparison to the proposed project due to the removal of Collector B. Localized traffic impacts along Hetrick Avenue and Pomeroy Road, which would be used to access residential development in the western portion of the Specific Plan Area, would be likely to occur, particularly if Hetrick Avenue is not extended to provide a connection to Pomeroy

Road, as currently envisioned in the South County Circulation Study. Alternative 4 would also include pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian trails; transit stops; and a Park and Ride lot to encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation and carpooling, which would be consistent with applicable local plans, policies, and ordinances related to the transportation system. Similar to the proposed project, site access and roadway design would be subject to County roadway design standards and CAL FIRE emergency access requirements.

Since the number of residential units would be reduced to 1,100 residential units, this alternative would generate slightly less VMT than the proposed project. However, due to the scale of new residential and commercial development, the growth associated with this alternative would still be substantial and would be required to implement mitigation to reduce operational VMT. This alternative would facilitate substantial population growth, and while slightly reduced, it would still generate VMT in a manner that is consistent with the proposed project. As such, it is expected that the VMT generated by this alternative would continue to exceed applicable per capita thresholds. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.5.3.18 TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

Specific Plan Area

In accordance with AB 52, consultation with appropriate tribes was conducted for the proposed project. As previously identified, there are known archaeological resources within the project site and potential for inadvertent discovery of unknown resources. This alternative would be required to implement mitigation for avoidance of known cultural resource sites. Due to the decrease in development area on the site, this alternative would require less ground disturbance, which reduces some potential for inadvertent discovery of unknown cultural or tribal cultural resources. However, this alternative would still result in ground disturbance at known sites and would be required to implement mitigation for inadvertent discovery of unknown cultural resources, including human remains. This alternative would also be required to implement additional mitigation measures for protection of tribal cultural resources. Alternative 4 would have the same potential to disturb known and unknown cultural and tribal cultural resources sites and would be required to implement mitigation to avoid and/or minimize these impacts. Therefore, impacts related to tribal cultural resources would be *similar* to impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.5.3.19 UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 4 would reduce the amount of land proposed for development by increasing the density of residential development on non-native grassland habitat throughout the site. Although, this alternative would result in slightly less residential development, the scale and level of growth associated with this

alternative would still be considered substantial. As such, Alternative 4 would result in a similar increase in demand on water and wastewater services from the NCSO and a similar increase in demand on solid waste services from South County Sanitary and Cold Canyon Landfill. This alternative would be required to implement mitigation to ensure there is adequate water availability to support future development and would also be subject to state and local solid waste reduction requirements to reduce the amount of construction-related and operational solid waste within Cold Canyon Landfill. Alternative 4 would require the construction of new and expanded utility infrastructure within the same development footprint of the proposed project and would be required to implement identified mitigation to reduce potential adverse impacts on the environment. Additionally, since growth under Alternative 4 would be generally consistent with the proposed project, this alternative would also be required to install off-site NCSO water and wastewater improvements to serve the project and surrounding area. Alternative 4 would result in substantial growth at the project site and would increase the demand on the NCSO, South County Sanitary, and Cold Canyon Landfill, which is consistent with the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.5.3.20 WILDFIRE

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 4 would continue to facilitate buildout of new habitable buildings and structures within a high FHSZ. As such, the potential for wildfire occurrence would be consistent with that of the proposed project. Alternative 4 would construct Collector A to improve existing traffic circulation within the vicinity of the project; however, circulation improvements would be reduced compared to the proposed project due to the elimination of Collector B. Proposed site access and construction of the collector would ensure buildout of the project does not interfere with emergency response, evacuation, or public ingress and egress. Under Alternative 4, proposed habitable buildings and structures would be required to comply with applicable CFC, CBC, PRC, and CAL FIRE requirements to reduce risk associated with development within a high FHSZ. This alternative would also be required to implement mitigation included to facilitate emergency preparedness and reduce risk of wildfire ignition at the project site, which is consistent with the proposed project. Since Alternative 4 would result in new development within a high FHSZ, impacts would be *similar* to impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.6 Alternative 5: Gradual Transition along the Fringe

5.4.6.1 Specific Plan Area

Alternative 5 includes the same type and configuration of land uses as Alternative 1: the Applicant-Preferred Alternative, but it would reduce the density of residential development along the property boundaries to provide a more gradual transition between surrounding rural residential development and the denser residential development within the Specific Plan Area. Under this alternative, the 22.3 acres of

land within the eastern portion of the project site would be dedicated to village and flex commercial development, 53.8 acres of land would be dedicated to open space, 21.9 acres of land would be dedicated to the construction of roadways, and 7 acres of land would be dedicated to public parks, which is consistent with the Applicant-Preferred Alternative. However, the density of NBDs 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 would be reduced by 20%. Table 5-2 shows the proposed reduction of dwelling units for neighborhoods along the fringe.

Table 5-2. Residential Development under Alternative 5

Neighborhood	Product Type	Land Use	Proposed Project (Unit Count)	Alternative 5 (Unit Count)
1	Multifamily	DR-MF	173	173
2	Multifamily	DR-MF	210	210
3	Cluster	DR-SF2	124	99
4	4,000–5,000 sf lot	DR-SF1	72	72
5	4,000–5,000 sf lot	DR-SF1	104	83
6	4,000–5,000 sf lot	DR-SF1	114	91
7	4,500–8,700 sf lot	DR-SF1	157	125
8	5,000–8,600 sf lot	DR-SF1	62	49
9	4,500–10,000 sf lot	DR-SF1	198	158
10	Affordable	DR-MF	75	75
Total	--	--	1,289	1,135

Note: sf = square feet

As shown in Table 5-2, this alternative would facilitate the development of 1,135 residential units, including 677 residential single-family units and 388 residential multi-family units. This alternative would not reduce the total number of affordable units. Based on the reduction of proposed residential units, this alternative would also proportionately reduce the anticipated number of ADUs.

This alternative would not result in a change to site access, primary roadways, or other roadway improvements included in the proposed project, except that the Collector A connection to Willow Road would be relocated through APN 091-301-029, similar to Alternative 1. This alternative would continue to provide pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian trails to connect the community to surrounding areas. In addition, the alternative also includes 7 acres of land designated for the future construction of public recreational facilities (a reduction from the 11 acres of Public Recreation proposed in the DRSP) and includes construction of pocket parks within proposed neighborhoods. This alternative would continue to require the construction of new and expanded transportation and utility infrastructure. See Section 2, *Project Description*, for a full description of the improvements.

5.4.6.2 Off-Site Improvements

This alternative would include the construction of off-site transportation and NCSW water and wastewater improvements consistent with the proposed project. See Section 2, *Project Description*, for a full description of the improvements.

5.4.6.3 Analysis of Alternative 5

Under Alternative 5, the density of residential development would be reduced along the perimeter of the project site to support a more gradual transition from surrounding rural residential land uses. Based on the

slight reduction of proposed residential units (approximately 154 units or 12%), this alternative would marginally reduce population growth in comparison to the proposed project. However, buildout of this alternative would still constitute a substantial increase in growth within the community and impacts related to air quality, biological resources, greenhouse gas emissions, land use and planning, population and housing, and transportation would be generally consistent with the proposed project. This alternative is considered feasible; however, it will likely reduce the affordability of housing within the Specific Plan Area and may conflict with the basic project objective of providing a mix of affordable housing options.

5.4.6.3.1 AESTHETICS

Specific Plan Area

Under Alternative 5, future buildout of the project site would include construction of new village and flex commercial development within the eastern portion of the project site, nearest to US 101. This alternative would result in lower density residential development along the perimeter of the project site, which would allow for a more gradual transition from surrounding rural residential development. However, buildout would still result in buildout of new land uses on the project site that would alter the existing visual character of the site in a manner that is generally consistent with the proposed project. As included for the proposed project, this alternative would be required to implement mitigation to screen the project from surrounding areas. Development under this alternative would be subject to the Land Use and Development Standards, Design Guidelines, and other controlling documents intended to maintain the rural character of the project site and surrounding community included in the DRSP. Alternative 5 would also be subject to requirements of LUO Section 22.10.060 for exterior lighting as well as policies and objectives included in the DRSP intended to reduce light and glare. Although development along the perimeter of the site would be reduced to support a gradual transition along the fringe, the project would still result in a change to the overall visual character of the site, similar to the proposed project. Therefore, impacts related to aesthetics would be lessened, but *similar* to, impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.6.3.2 AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 5 would result in buildout of the proposed 288-acre Dana Reserve but would result in a slightly reduced density of residential uses along the fringe. As evaluated under the proposed project, Alternative 5 would not result in conversion of prime agricultural soils to non-agricultural uses and would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural land or a Williamson Act contract, which is consistent with the proposed project. Alternative 5 would require slightly less construction activity for construction of residential homes; however, the scale of proposed construction activities would be generally consistent with the proposed project and there would still be potential to result in an increase in short-term dust that could disturb agricultural activities within the proposed project area. This alternative would be required to implement mitigation to reduce short-term impacts related to dust generated by project construction to reduce indirect impacts to existing agricultural production activities. Since the project site does not support prime agricultural soils, is not zoned for agricultural uses, and is not under a Williamson Act contract and Alternative 5 would not facilitate indirect conversion of existing agricultural land, impacts would be *similar* to impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.6.3.3 AIR QUALITY

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 5 would require slightly less construction activity; however, construction would result in a short-term increase in air pollutant emissions generated by construction equipment and vehicle use and ground disturbing activities. This alternative would be required to implement mitigation to reduce construction-related air pollutant emissions. Alternative 5 would result in buildout of the proposed 288-acre project site, which is located in an area with the potential for NOA to occur and would be required to implement mitigation to reduce the potential to expose nearby sensitive receptors to NOA. In addition, the project site is also located along US 101, which could result in long-term exposure of DPM to on-site sensitive receptors within 500 feet of the freeway. However, since this alternative would reduce the density of residential development along the fringe, there is greater potential for residential dwellings to be located more than 500 feet from US 101. Since the specific buildout scenario for this alternative is currently not known, this alternative would still be required to implement mitigation to ensure construction of residential homes would not occur within 500 feet of US 101.

As evaluated in Section 4.2, *Air Quality*, the proposed project would exceed daily operational emissions thresholds established by SLOAPCD primarily as a result of mobile source emissions (i.e., vehicle use). Due to the reduced density of proposed residential development, Alternative 5 would facilitate slightly less population growth than the proposed project, which would also result in a slight reduction of VMT. However, this alternative would still facilitate population growth and employment opportunities that would generate VMT within the region and would be subject to mitigation to further reduce VMT and operational emissions as necessary. As evaluated for the proposed project, the level of growth associated with this alternative would still be substantial; therefore, incorporation of mitigation would not be anticipated to reduce VMT below applicable thresholds. As such, this alternative would still be expected to generate operational emissions above SLOAPCD significance thresholds. In addition, this alternative would continue to substantially increase the number of residential dwellings within the community, which would continue to adversely affect the jobs-to-housing ratio within the community. Since this alternative would continue to exceed VMT thresholds and further divide the jobs-to-housing ratio, Alternative 5 would still be inconsistent with the SLOAPCD CAP. Therefore, impacts related to air quality would be slightly lessened, but *similar* to, the impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.6.3.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 5 would result in buildout of the proposed 288-acre Dana Reserve but would result in a slightly reduced density of residential uses along the fringe. As such, Alternative 5 would have the same potential to disturb special-status plant and wildlife species and would be required to implement

mitigation to reduce the significance of these potential impacts. Under this alternative, the density of residential units along the perimeter of the project site would be reduced, which would result in slightly less impacts to individual oak trees and oak woodland habitat that occur in those areas. However, since this alternative would continue to facilitate large-scale development of residential, commercial, and recreational development at the project site, with no enforceable mechanism for ensuring long-term preservation of biological resources along the fringe area, oak woodland habitat on-site would continue to be removed and would be subject to compensatory mitigation identified for the proposed project. Therefore, while slightly reduced, impacts related to biological resources would be generally *similar* to impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.6.3.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 5 would continue to facilitate the future buildout of the proposed 288-acre Dana Reserve. The project site does not contain any historical buildings or structures that would be eligible for listing in the CRHR; however, there are known archaeological resources within the project site and there is potential for inadvertent discovery of unknown resources. This alternative would be required to implement mitigation for avoidance of known cultural resource sites as well as mitigation for inadvertent discovery of unknown cultural resources, including human remains. Alternative 5 would have the same potential to disturb known and unknown cultural resources sites and would be required to implement mitigation to avoid and/or minimize these impacts. Therefore, impacts related to cultural resources would be *similar* to impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.6.3.6 ENERGY

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 5 would result in the future buildout of up to 203,000 square feet of village and flex commercial development, 1,135 residential units (plus additional ADU development) on the project site. Alternative 5 would require slightly less construction activity, which would result in a marginal reduction in energy consumption during the construction phase of the project. However, this alternative would still be required to implement mitigation to reduce energy consumption during construction to avoid unnecessary, wasteful, or inefficient energy use. Do the slight reduction of residential uses, this alternative would require slightly less electricity and natural gas and would generate slightly less VMT during operation, which would result in a marginal reduction in overall energy consumption during operation. However, this alternative would still facilitate a large scale of residential and commercial development and would be required to implement mitigation intended to reduce operational energy use to avoid unnecessary, wasteful, or inefficient energy use. Based on implementation of mitigation, this alternative would be consistent with applicable energy-reduction goals, plans, and policies. Alternative 5

would result in a marginal reduction of overall energy consumption during project construction and operation; however, proposed development would still result in a substantial increase in residential and commercial development at the project site and mitigation would still be required to reduce unnecessary energy use and ensure consistency with applicable energy reduction requirements. Therefore, the project would result in impacts *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.6.3.7 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Specific Plan Area

Under Alternative 5, proposed future buildout of new habitable buildings and structures would continue to occur on the 288-acre project site. Therefore, the potential for seismic-related hazards, including fault rupture, ground shaking, liquefaction, and landslide and the potential for other ground-failure events would be consistent with the proposed project. This alternative would be required to implement mitigation and adhere to CBC and other applicable engineering standards to reduce potential impacts related to seismic-related and other ground-failure events. Although this alternative would result in a reduction of residential uses along the fringe, ground disturbance and tree removal for project construction would be generally consistent with the proposed project and would have similar potential to increase erosion and loss of topsoil during construction. This alternative would be required to comply with RWQCB and County LUO requirements related to short- and long-term erosion control at the project site. In addition, this alternative would have the same potential to disturb paleontological resources if present within the proposed area of disturbance and would be required to implement mitigation to reduce potential disturbance to paleontological resources during project construction. Therefore, Alternative 5 would result in impacts *similar* to impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.6.3.8 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 5 would result in commercial development, recreational facilities, and open space areas that are consistent with the proposed project but would facilitate 20% less residential development along the perimeter of the project site. As such, this alternative would result in slightly less population growth than the proposed project; however, this growth would still be substantial. During construction of the proposed project, use of equipment and vehicles would generate short-term GHG emissions and this alternative would be required to implement mitigation to reduce short-term GHG emissions. Long-term GHG emissions would be generated by operational vehicle trips and energy use. Since the number of residential units would be reduced to 1,135 residential units, this alternative would generate slightly less VMT and require slightly less energy consumption than the proposed project. However, due to the scale of new residential and commercial development, this alternative would be required to implement mitigation to reduce VMT and operational energy use to reduce associated GHG emissions. This alternative would still

facilitate substantial population growth, and while slightly reduced, it would still generate VMT in a manner that is consistent with the proposed project. As such, the VMT generated by this alternative would continue to exceed applicable per capita thresholds, which would be inconsistent with applicable goals, plans, and policies related to GHG-reduction strategies. Therefore, impacts related to GHG emissions would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.6.3.9 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 5 would continue to facilitate buildout of the 288-acre Dana Reserve, which is located along US 101 and approximately 0.2 mile west of Nipomo High School. Similar to the proposed project, Alternative 5 does not include land uses or features that would facilitate the long-term use of hazardous materials that could result in significant upset if released. This alternative would require the transport, use, and disposal of construction-related hazardous materials (i.e., fuels, gasoline, solvents, oils, paints, etc.) and would be required to comply with State and local regulations to reduce associated hazards. The project site would be located in an area with potential for NOA to occur and would be required to implement mitigation to reduce the potential for release. The project site would be located more than 30-feet from US 101, which would reduce the potential for ADL to occur. Alternative 5 would not result in a change to the placement or design of proposed access routes and would also construct Collectors A and B to connect to Willow Road. Construction of these collectors would improve traffic circulation within the area and ensure the project would not interfere with emergency response and evacuation efforts. Alternative 5 would not constitute a change to the potential risk associated with hazardous materials or natural hazards evaluated for the proposed project; therefore, impacts would be *similar* to those identified for the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.6.3.10 HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Specific Plan Area

Under Alternative 5, buildout would continue to occur on the 288-acre project site, which does not support any surface water features. Buildout of Alternative 5 would result in up to 203,000 square feet of commercial development, approximately 1,135 residential units, 53.8 acres of land for open space, 21.9 acres of new roadways, and other site improvements. This alternative would require the use of construction equipment and vehicles that could result in accidental fuel or other hazardous materials spills that could runoff from the site, and would result in soil disturbance and tree removal in a manner that is generally consistent with the proposed project. Although the density of residential development along the perimeter of the site would be reduced by 20%, buildout of future residential dwellings would result in new impervious surface areas in a manner that is generally consistent to the proposed project. This alternative would be required to comply with applicable RWQCB and County water quality protection

and stormwater management requirements to reduce impacts related to hydrology and water quality. This alternative would result in a large amount of soil disturbance and would require the use of construction equipment and vehicles during construction. This alternative would also result in a large amount of new impervious surface areas at the project site, which is consistent with the proposed project. Further, this alternative would be subject to applicable state and local water quality protection requirements, which is also consistent with the proposed project. Therefore, this alternative would result in *similar* impacts to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.6.3.11 LAND AND USE PLANNING

Specific Plan Area

Future buildout of Alternative 5 would result in a 20% reduction of residential uses along the fringe; however, consistent with the proposed project, buildout of this alternative would not result in new features or other components that could physically divide an established community. This alternative would result in similar policy conflicts related to the jobs/housing balance, VMT, biological resources, and recreational facilities, though the jobs/housing imbalance and VMT impacts would be slightly reduced with the reduction in dwelling units. Although slightly reduced, impacts related to policy consistency would remain significant and unavoidable; therefore, impacts related to land use and planning would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.6.3.12 MINERAL RESOURCES

Specific Plan Area

Buildout of Alternative 5 would occur on the proposed project site, which does not contain any known significant mineral resources on the project site or in the project site vicinity. Further, proposed buildout would not result in the loss of availability of any known mineral resources or conflict with the County's General Plan. Since Alternative 5 would occur within the proposed project site and would not conflict with the County's General Plan, impacts related to mineral resources would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.6.3.13 NOISE

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 5 would result in commercial development, recreational facilities, and open space areas that are consistent with the proposed project but would generate 20% less residential development along the perimeter of the project site. This alternative would require construction activity, which would increase short-term ambient noise within the project area. This alternative would be required to implement mitigation to reduce short-term construction-related noise. Similar to the proposed project, Alternative 5 would not include long-term components that could substantially increase groundborne noise levels or vibration at the project site. This alternative would result in a mix of residential, village and flex commercial, and recreational land uses at the project site and would be required to implement mitigation to ensure future buildout of the proposed mix of land uses would be consistent with the County's exterior and interior noise standards at proposed noise-sensitive land uses. Noise associated with this alternative would be generally consistent with the proposed project. Therefore, impacts related to noise would be *similar* to those associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.6.3.14 POPULATION AND HOUSING

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 5 would result in commercial development, recreational facilities, and open space areas that are consistent with the proposed project but would generate less residential development along the perimeter of the project site. Under Alternative 5, the allowable density within residential land use categories would be reduced to approximately 1,135 residential units (and proportionate additional ADU development). Based on an average household size of 3.16 for the community of Nipomo, this alternative would generate approximately 3,587 new residents (plus proportionate additional ADU development). Since proposed commercial development would be consistent with the proposed project, the number of new employees would remain the same at 272 employees. As such, the population growth generated by the project would be approximately 3,858 people. This alternative would slightly reduce the number of new residents within the community; however, the proposed population increase would still exceed the number of new residents envisioned in the County's General Plan and adversely affect the jobs-to-housing ratio in the Inland South County Planning Area. Similar to the proposed project, Alternative 5 would not result in the demolition or removal of existing homes and would not require additional homes to be constructed elsewhere. Although population growth under Alternative 5 would be reduced, it would still facilitate substantial and unplanned growth within the project region. Therefore, impacts related to population and housing would be *similar* to the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.6.3.15 PUBLIC SERVICES

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 5 would result in commercial development, recreational facilities, and open space areas that are consistent with the proposed project but would generate slightly less residential development and associated population growth. Population growth would be marginally reduced in comparison to the proposed project, including approximately 3,587 residents (plus proportionate additional ADU development) and 272 employees; however, this level of growth would still be substantial. Based on this population increase, this alternative would increase demand on public services and facilities in a manner that is generally consistent with the proposed project. Alternative 5 would be subject to mitigation which requires the applicant to set aside land for the construction of a future fire station to offset the demand on existing fire protection services. This alternative would also be subject to the payment of Public Facilities Fees as a standard condition of approval to offset the increase in demand on other public services and facilities. Alternative 5 would increase demand on public services and facilities in a manner that is generally consistent with the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.6.3.16 RECREATION

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 5 would result in slightly less residential development and associated population growth, including approximately 3,587 residents (plus proportionate additional ADU development) and 272 employees. This level of growth would still result in a substantial population increase, which would increase the demand on existing public recreational facilities. Alternative 5 includes 7 acres of land for recreational facilities, including a public park; pocket parks within proposed neighborhoods to be maintained by HOAs; an equestrian trail head; and a network of pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian trails. Under this alternative, the amount of proposed recreational facilities would meet the County's requirement for parkland with new development. This alternative would be subject to the payment of Public Facilities Fees as a standard condition of approval to offset the increase in demand on public recreational facilities, which is consistent with the proposed project. This alternative would result in an increase in demand on existing public recreational facilities that is consistent with the proposed project. Therefore, this alternative would result in impacts *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.6.3.17 TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 5 would result in commercial development, recreational facilities, and open space areas that are consistent with the proposed project but would result in a 20% reduction in residential development along the perimeter of the project site. This alternative would include the construction of Collectors A and B to connect Frontage Road and Pomeroy Road to Willow Road, respectively. Construction of these collectors would improve existing traffic conditions within the vicinity of the project and ensure buildout of the project would not impede emergency response, evacuation, and public circulation. Alternative 5 would also include pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian trails as well as transit stops and a Park and Ride lot to encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation and carpooling, which would be consistent with applicable local plans, policies, and ordinances related to the transportation system. Alternative 5 includes the same site access and roadway design as the proposed project, which would be subject to County roadway design standards and CAL FIRE emergency access requirements. Since the number of residential units would be reduced to 1,135 residential units, this alternative would generate slightly less VMT than the proposed project. However, due to the scale of new residential and commercial development, the growth associated with this alternative would still be substantial and would be required to implement mitigation to reduce operational VMT. This alternative would facilitate substantial population growth, and while slightly reduced, it would still generate VMT in a manner that is consistent with the proposed project. As such, the VMT generated by this alternative would continue to exceed applicable per capita thresholds. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.6.3.18 TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

Specific Plan Area

In accordance with AB 52, consultation with appropriate tribes was conducted for the proposed project. Under this alternative, buildout would continue to occur on the Dana Reserve. As previously identified, there are known archaeological resources within the project site and potential for inadvertent discovery of unknown resources. This alternative would be required to implement mitigation for avoidance of known cultural resource sites and mitigation for inadvertent discovery of unknown cultural resources, including human remains. This alternative would also be required to implement additional mitigation measures identified for protection of tribal cultural resources. Alternative 5 would have the same potential to disturb known and unknown cultural and tribal cultural resources sites and would be required to implement mitigation to avoid and/or minimize these impacts. Therefore, impacts related to tribal cultural resources would be *similar* to impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.6.3.19 UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 5 would result in commercial development, recreational facilities, and open space areas that are consistent with the proposed project but would result in a 20% reduction in residential development along the perimeter of the project site. Although, this alternative would result in less residential development, the scale and level of growth associated with this alternative would still be substantial. As such, Alternative 5 would result in a similar increase in demand on water and wastewater services from the NCSO and a similar increase in demand on solid waste services from South County Sanitary and Cold Canyon Landfill. This alternative would be required to implement mitigation included to ensure there is adequate water availability to support future development and would also be subject to state and local solid waste reduction requirements to reduce the amount of construction-related and operational solid waste within Cold Canyon Landfill. Alternative 5 would require the construction of new and expanded utility infrastructure within the same development footprint of the proposed project and would be required to implement identified mitigation to reduce potential adverse impacts on the environment. Additionally, since growth under Alternative 5 would be generally consistent with the proposed project, this alternative would also be required to install off-site NCSO water and wastewater improvements to serve the project and surrounding area. Alternative 5 would result in substantial growth at the project site and would increase the demand on the NCSO, South County Sanitary, and Cold Canyon Landfill, which is consistent with the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.4.6.3.20 WILDFIRE

Specific Plan Area

Alternative 5 would continue to facilitate buildout of new habitable buildings and structures within a high FHSZ. As such, the potential for wildfire occurrence would be consistent with that of the proposed project. Alternative 5 would include site access in a manner that is consistent with the proposed project and would also construct Collectors A and B to improve existing traffic circulation within the vicinity of the project. Proposed site access and construction of the collectors would ensure buildout of the project does not interfere with emergency response, evacuation, or public ingress and egress. Under Alternative 5, proposed habitable buildings and structures would be required to comply with applicable CFC, CBC, PRC, and CAL FIRE requirements to reduce risk associated with development within a high FHSZ. This alternative would also be required to implement mitigation included to facilitate emergency preparedness and reduce risk of wildfire ignition at the project site, which is consistent with the proposed project. Since Alternative 5 would result in new development within a high FHSZ, impacts would be *similar* to impacts associated with the proposed project.

Off-Site Improvements

Off-site improvements would be the same as the proposed project and would not result in a change to the impacts evaluated for the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be *similar* to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

5.5 ENVIRONMENTALLY SUPERIOR ALTERNATIVE

The State CEQA Guidelines require an analysis of alternatives to identify an environmentally superior alternative among the alternatives evaluated in the EIR. The environmentally superior alternative is the alternative that would minimize adverse impacts to the environment. Based on the evaluation of alternatives above, the No Project Alternative would be the environmentally superior alternative because it would minimize the project's adverse impacts to the environment. However, State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e)(2) states that if the No Project Alternative is also the environmentally superior alternative, the EIR should then identify an environmentally superior alternative among the other alternatives. As summarized in Table 5-3, below, Alternative 2 (La Cañada Ranch Specific Plan) and Alternative 3 (Residential Rural Cluster Subdivision) would both reduce the project's significant environmental impacts related to GHG emissions, land use and planning, and population and housing. In addition, Alternative 2 (La Cañada Ranch) would further reduce impacts to air quality and transportation, but would increase potential impacts to recreation. Alternative 3 (Residential Rural Cluster Subdivision) would further reduce impacts to biological resources and public services compared to the proposed project, but would potentially increase impacts to utilities and service systems if annexation into the NCS D service area was not feasible. Alternative 3 would meet more of the project's basic objectives than Alternative 2. Therefore, Alternative 3 would be considered the environmentally superior alternative because it would reduce the project's significant impacts and more successfully meet the basic project objectives.

Alternative 3 would result in residential and commercial development, open space land to preserve oak woodland and other natural habitats, and pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian trails to connect to the community. This alternative would allow for a greater density of residential dwelling units than Alternative 2, which would be more consistent with the project's objectives. In addition, Alternative 3 would facilitate clustered subdivision development, which would be consistent with the General Plan goals and objectives for this site. Under this alternative, impacts related to biological resources, GHG emissions, land use and planning, population and housing, and public services would be reduced. However, this alternative would result in potentially increased impacts to utilities and service systems in the event annexation into the NCS D service area as determined to be infeasible. All other impacts would be similar to that of the proposed project. Overall, Alternative 3 would reduce the project's significant environmental impacts and/or result in similar impacts to other issue areas.

Although this alternative would reduce the project's significant impacts, it would not meet all of the project's objectives. Alternative 3 would meet objectives related to the protection of Old Town Nipomo, the provision of neighborhood parks linked together with trails and open space areas, incorporation of Nipomo's rural history through architectural design, provision of a diversity of housing types and opportunities, enhanced circulation, integration of a trail system, maintenance of oak forest, implementation of the County Building Code requirements for energy efficiency and water savings, reduced uncertainty in land use planning, effective provision of public services, and to meet the requirements of the NCS D and SLOLAFCO for annexation of the site into the NCS D service area. Alternative 3 would not meet the stated project objectives of providing a mix of land uses that offer a range of amenities accessible to residents and community members or to create new employment and job training opportunities for the community and broader south San Luis Obispo County area. Since residential development would be central to this alternative, this alternative would help the County reach its housing development allocation goals per the County RHNA required by state law. However, based on the clustered development and other site constraints, this alternative may not meet project goals for the provision of affordable market rate housing units. Therefore, Alternative 3 would reduce the project's significant impacts; however, it would not meet all of the project's objectives. Because it would most successfully reduce the number and extent of significant environmental impacts, and would meet more of the project's primary objectives, Alternative 3 is the Environmentally Superior Alternative.

Table 5-3. Comparison of Impacts Among Alternatives

Issue Area	No Project Alternative	Alternative 1: Applicant-Preferred Alternative	Alternative 2: La Cañada Ranch	Alternative 3: Residential Rural Cluster Subdivision	Alternative 4: Development on Non-Native Grassland	Alternative 5: Gradual Transition along the Fringe
Aesthetics	Decreased	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Agriculture	Decreased	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Air Quality	Decreased	Similar	Decreased	Similar	Similar	Similar
Biological Resources	Decreased	Similar	Decreased	Decreased	Decreased	Similar
Cultural Resources	Decreased	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Energy	Decreased	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Geology and Soils	Decreased	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Decreased	Similar	Decreased	Decreased	Similar	Similar
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	Decreased	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Hydrology and Water Quality	Decreased	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Land Use and Planning	Decreased	Similar	Decreased	Decreased	Similar	Similar
Mineral Resources	Decreased	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Noise	Decreased	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Population and Housing	Decreased	Similar	Decreased	Decreased	Similar	Similar
Public Services	Increased	Similar	Similar	Decreased	Similar	Similar
Recreation	Decreased	Similar	Increased	Similar	Similar	Similar
Transportation and Traffic	Decreased	Similar	Decreased	Similar	Similar	Similar
Tribal Cultural Resources	Decreased	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Utilities and Service Systems	Decreased	Similar	Similar	Increased/ Similar	Similar	Similar
Wildfire	Decreased	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Meets Project Objectives?	No	Yes	Partially	Partially	Partially	Yes