

7. Alternatives to the Proposed Project

7.1 INTRODUCTION

7.1.1 Purpose and Scope

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that an environmental impact report (EIR) include a discussion of reasonable project alternatives that would “feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project, but would avoid or substantially lessen any significant effects of the project, and evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives” (CEQA Guidelines § 15126.6[a]). As required by CEQA, this chapter identifies and evaluates potential alternatives to the proposed project.

Section 15126.6 of the CEQA Guidelines explains the foundation and legal requirements for the alternatives analysis in an EIR. Key provisions are:

- “[T]he 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.” (15126.6[b])
- “The specific alternative of ‘no project’ shall also be evaluated along with its impact.” (15126.6[e][1])
- “The no project analysis shall discuss the existing conditions at the time the notice of preparation is published, or if no notice of preparation is published, at the time environmental analysis is commenced, as well as what would be reasonably expected to occur in the foreseeable future if the project were not approved, based on current plans and consistent with available infrastructure and community services. If the environmentally superior alternative is the ‘no project’ alternative, the EIR shall also identify an environmentally superior alternative among the other alternatives.” (15126.6[e][2])
- “The range of alternatives required in an EIR is governed by a ‘rule of reason’ that requires the EIR to set forth only those alternatives necessary to permit a reasoned choice. The alternatives shall be limited to ones that would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project.” (15126.6[f])
- “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..., and whether the proponent can reasonably acquire, control or otherwise have access to the alternative site (or the site is already owned by the proponent)” (15126.6[f][1]).
- “Only locations that would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project need be considered for inclusion in the EIR.” (15126.6[f][2][A])

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- “An EIR need not consider an alternative whose effect cannot be reasonably ascertained and whose implementation is remote and speculative.” (15126.6[f][3])

For each development alternative, this analysis:

- Describes the alternative.
- Analyzes the impact of the alternative as compared to the proposed project.
- Identifies the impacts of the project that would be avoided or lessened by the alternative.
- Assesses whether the alternative would meet most of the basic project objectives.
- Evaluates the comparative merits of the alternative and the project.

According to Section 15126.6(d) of the CEQA Guidelines, “[i]f an alternative would cause...significant effects in addition those that would be caused by the project as proposed, the significant effects of the alternative shall be discussed, but in less detail than the significant effects of the project as proposed.”

7.1.2 Project Objectives

Objectives for the Laguna Niguel City Center Mixed Use Project (proposed project) will aid decision makers in their review of the project and associated environmental impacts:

1. Create a dynamic mix of commercial uses, including retail, restaurant, creative office, health/wellness, and civic uses, which will be unique and distinct from other commercial projects in the City and will be complemented by highly amenitized residential apartment buildings, culminating in a vibrant city center in the heart of Laguna Niguel.
2. Create a financially feasible project that promotes the City’s economic well-being with (i) a commercial core that generates local tax revenue and provides new jobs; and (ii) a residential component that creates housing options for existing and new residents to support local businesses, including dining, shopping, office, and entertainment venues.
3. Replace the existing Laguna Niguel library with a larger, innovative, and architecturally significant library with modern programming and technologies to better serve the residents of Laguna Niguel for decades to come. The new library will be an integral part of the project and designed to facilitate connections to and integration with surrounding retail, office, and residential uses.
4. Incorporate a pedestrian-oriented town green and gathering place for the community, connected by an integrated walkable network of passive and active pedestrian-oriented paseos and open spaces weaving through the retail and commercial core.
5. Provide for investment in and redevelopment of underutilized property in the Town Center Opportunity Area by replacing the vacant South County Justice Center and undeveloped county land with a project that will generate new sources of property and sales tax revenue for the City and County.
6. Create a visually impactful, architecturally distinct design and retailing experience that will attract differentiated retail, restaurant, and commercial tenants to the City of Laguna Niguel and provide unique live, work, and play opportunities for residents of Laguna Niguel and surrounding communities.

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7. Improve and enhance the City's profile and amenities for residents by providing a unique mixed-use environment not seen elsewhere in South Orange County that will attract differentiated retail and commercial tenants and a unique, high-quality, pedestrian-oriented commercial center including a state-of-the-art library that the community can enjoy.

7.1.3 Significant Impacts of the Project

The primary consideration in defining project alternatives is their potential to reduce or eliminate significant impacts compared to the proposed project. The CEQA requirement for consideration of alternatives is well settled—an EIR must describe a reasonable range of alternatives to the proposed project that would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project and would also avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant impacts of the project, and it must evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives. CEQA requires a reasonable range of alternatives to foster informed decision-making and public participation. As summarized in Chapter 6, *Significant Unavoidable Adverse Impacts*, upon implementation of recommended mitigation measures, the project would result in the following significant and unavoidable impacts:

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

- **Impact 5.7-1** Operation of the proposed project would generate a cumulatively considerable net increase in GHG emissions that would exceed the South Coast AQMD Working Group bright-line threshold.

7.2 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED DURING THE SCOPING/PROJECT PLANNING PROCESS

“Among the factors that may be used to eliminate alternatives from detailed consideration in an EIR are: (i) failure to meet most of the basic project objectives, (ii) infeasibility, or (iii) inability to avoid significant environmental impacts” (CEQA Guidelines § 15126.6[c]).

7.2.1 No Residential Development Alternative

Comments received during the public scoping meeting expressed concern about developing additional multifamily residential units in Laguna Niguel, particularly given the recent residential development approved in the Gateway Specific Plan area near Interstate 5. Under this alternative, the project site would be developed as proposed minus the 275 residential units.

The project site would be developed under a lease arrangement with the County of Orange, which owns the property. The project applicant has indicated that the residential component of the project is required for economic feasibility. The multifamily residential component provides critical economic support for the commercial project that enables development of higher quality commercial spaces and extensive community benefits, including a large open space and new library. A No Residential Development Alternative (with the exception of the Existing General Plan alternative), was not considered because it was determined to be economically infeasible by the County (owner of the property) and the County has indicated it would not pursue a commercial project without a significant residential component.

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7.2.2 Alternative Development Areas

CEQA requires that the discussion of alternatives focus on alternatives to the project or its location that can avoid or substantially lessen any significant effects of the project. The key question and first step in the analysis is whether any of the significant effects of the project would be avoided or substantially lessened by putting the project in another location. Only locations that would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project need be considered for inclusion in the EIR (Guidelines Sec. 15126[5][B][1]). In general, any development of the size and type proposed by the project would have substantially the same impacts on air quality, greenhouse gas emission, hydrology/water quality, land use/planning, noise, population/housing, public services, recreation, transportation/traffic, and utilities/service systems. Without a site-specific analysis, impacts on aesthetics, biological resources, cultural resources, geology/soils, hazards and hazardous materials, and mineral resources cannot be evaluated.

An alternative development area would be required to have adequate acreage for all components—residential and nonresidential uses—of the Laguna Niguel City Center project. Tables B-4 and B-5 and Figure B-1 of the City of Laguna Niguel Housing Element 2021-2029 detail and illustrate an inventory of vacant and underutilized sites suitable for residential development in the City. The underutilized sites are within the Gateway Specific Plan area and are already planned for residential development. All other available vacant sites are either too small to accommodate the development footprint of the proposed project or are designated “Residential Detached” in the Land Use Element of the Laguna Niguel General Plan and would not allow development of the nonresidential component of the proposed project. Also, these vacant parcels are adjacent to existing single-family residential subdivisions and would not be an optimal location for a mixed-use “downtown” development. Relocating the proposed project within the City would not avoid or substantially lessen the significant and unavoidable GHG impact of the proposed project. Thus, only the proposed project site in the City’s town center would accommodate the proposed project.

Additionally, the approximately 25-acre project site is owned by the County of Orange and Laguna Niguel Town Center Partners LLC has an option to lease the project site and to develop the proposed project. Thus, it would be economically difficult for the project applicant to purchase or lease another suitable site in Laguna Niguel that can accommodate the proposed development. Given the preceding factors, an alternative development location was rejected from further analysis.

7.2.3 County Reuse

An alternative that results in the County reuse of the project site was considered for analysis. County reuse could include, but is not limited to, an expanded maintenance yard, County administrative offices, wellness facilities, supportive housing, and emergency shelters. In 2018, County of Orange staff was directed to develop operational plans for emergency shelters (limiting capacity to 100 individuals). The project site was identified and reviewed for emergency homeless housing and ultimately rejected as a potential site for this use by the County due to substantial public opposition. This alternative was rejected from further review because this project alternative does not meet any of the project objectives.

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7.3 ALTERNATIVES SELECTED FOR FURTHER ANALYSIS

Based on CEQA requirements, two “no project” alternatives were defined for further analysis: No Development, and Development Under the Existing General Plan. Two other development alternatives were defined for their potential to reduce or eliminate significant impacts of the proposed project, and to potentially attain most of the basic objectives of the project. These four alternatives were determined to represent a reasonable range of alternatives for analysis:

- No Project/No Development Alternative
- No Project: Development Under Existing General Plan Land Use Designation Alternative
- Residential Only Development Alternative
- Reduced Commercial Development Alternative

Table 7-1, *Project Alternatives: Buildout Statistical Summary*, provides a summary of general socioeconomic buildout projections for the project alternatives compared to the proposed project. The estimates represent projected buildout for each of the alternatives and show dwelling units, population and employment projections, and the jobs-to-housing ratio for each of the alternatives.

Table 7-1 Project Alternatives: Buildout Statistical Summary

	Proposed Project	No Project/No Development Alternative	No Project – Development Under Existing General Plan Land Use Designation Alternative	Residential Development Only Alternative	Reduced Commercial Development Alternative
Residential Units	275	0	0	400	275
Population	704	0	0	1,024	704
Nonresidential SF	174,851 ¹	23,500 ²	348,480	0	23,750
Commercial	77,110		130,680		23,750
Office	81,451		217,800		
Library	16,290				
Employment	412	19	983 ³	0	62
Jobs-to-Housing Ratio	2.6	0	NA	NA	0.22

Source: PlaceWorks 2021.

¹ The total nonresidential SF, including the 16,290 SF library is included in this table. Projected jobs are based on the additional net square footage (the total shown minus the existing 14,400 SF library)

² Existing nonresidential SF only accounts for the 9,100 SF County maintenance yard and the 14,400 SF Laguna Niguel Library (does not include the 33,300 SF vacant courthouse).

³ This employment number assumes commercial would be split between fast-casual restaurant and retail.

- **No Project/No Development Alternative.** The No Project/No Development Alternative would keep the project site as is, and no development would occur. Therefore, buildout of this alternative would preserve existing uses on-site, including the 9,100-square-foot County maintenance yard and 14,400 square-foot Laguna Niguel Library. The vacant, 33,300-square-foot courthouse is not included because it is not in operation. The County maintenance yard currently employs 7 workers, and the library employs approximately 11 employees.

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- **No Project: Development Under Existing General Plan Land Use Designation Alternative.** Under this alternative, the site would be developed based on the current Laguna Niguel General Plan land use designation of “Community Commercial,” “Professional Office,” and “Public/Institutional” and on the property’s current zoning of “Community Commercial” (CC) (see Figure 4-1, *Existing General Plan Land Use Designations*). The potential range and combinations of development and land uses allowable are extensive, including: regional commercial centers and shopping complexes; professional offices, corporate headquarters, research and development, and administrative offices; or a range of public, quasi-public, and special purpose private facilities aimed at providing governmental or social services to the community. This alternative assumes development in accordance with the anticipated land use mix in the current General Plan (Community Profile Area 14). The development of the site would include a maximum of 130,680 square feet of commercial/retail space and a maximum of 217,800 square feet of office space. As with the proposed project, it is assumed that a new library within the commercial portion of the development would replace the existing library. It is unlikely this alternative would include a publicly accessible town green because of space limitations given the amount of commercial development.
- **Residential Development Only Alternative.** Under this alternative, nonresidential development would be eliminated, and the number of residences would increase to 400 units. The existing library and fire station would remain. This alternative would not include a parking structure. Resident and guest parking would be provided by surface parking and spread throughout the project site. The maximum number of 400 units was determined by the approximate threshold with the potential to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions impact of the proposed project to less than significant. In addition, 400 units is a reasonable estimate of the number of units that could be developed on the site without also constructing structured parking. This alternative would introduce approximately 1,024 residents. This alternative would likely not include a publicly accessible town green because the residences would be distributed throughout the site.
- **Reduced Commercial Development Alternative.** This alternative would retain 275 residential units but reduce the square footage of nonresidential uses as needed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to less than significant. Office uses would be eliminated, and commercial (retail and restaurant uses) would be reduced to 23,750 square feet—a reduction of almost 137,000 square feet of commercial in comparison to the proposed project (see Table 7-1). This alternative would introduce approximately 704 residents and 62 employees. The limited commercial for this alternative would not support the expensive, podium style construction for apartments. With the exception of the Crown Valley commercial frontage, the entire site would be developed with garden style, wood frame walk up apartments with surface parking. This alternative would likely not include a publicly accessible town green because of financial feasibility.

An EIR must identify an “environmentally superior” alternative, and where the No Project Alternative is identified as environmentally superior, the EIR is required to identify as environmentally superior another of the alternatives evaluated. Each alternative’s environmental impacts are compared to the proposed project and determined to be environmentally superior (reduced impact), neutral (similar impact), or inferior (greater impact). Impacts found to be potentially significant prior to mitigation and impacts found to be significant and unavoidable even after implementation of mitigation measures are used in making the final determination of whether an alternative is environmentally superior or inferior to the proposed project. Section 7.4 identifies the environmentally superior alternative.

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7.3.1 Environmental Impact Comparison

Table 7-2, *Environmental Impact Comparison: Project Alternatives*, assesses the relative impact for each project alternative in comparison to the proposed project. All the environmental categories evaluated for the proposed project in this Draft EIR are compared. The table shows whether the impact is “less than” (LT), “greater than” (GT), or “similar to” (S) the respective environmental impact for the proposed project. The table also provides a notation if an alternative is expected to eliminate a significant impact of the proposed project (reduce its severity to less than significant).

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Table 7-2 Environmental Impact Comparison

Impact	No Project/No Development	No Project: Development Under Existing General Plan Land Use Designation Alternative	Residential Development Only Alternative	Reduced Commercial Development Alternative
Aesthetics	No development would occur under this alternative; thus, the visual character of the site would remain as is. The existing site encompasses the South County Justice Center building (closed in 2008), the County maintenance yard, the Laguna Niguel Library, and their associated surface parking lots. The structures are along the perimeter of the project site near the adjacent roadways; the large middle and western portions of the site are vacant and undeveloped (approximately 72 percent of the property). Sources of light on-site include building (exterior and interior), security, and parking-area lighting for the County maintenance yard and library. Demolition of the existing site improvement and development of the proposed project would substantially change the visual character of the project site. Development as proposed would also introduce new sources of lighting and glare from stationary and operational sources. As detailed in Section 5.1, <i>Aesthetics</i> , and shown in the conceptual renderings, the proposed project would introduce high quality designed buildings and landscaping. However, since aesthetic impacts are largely subjective, it has been determined that the impact of aesthetics under this alternative would be reduced because there would be no change from existing conditions.	Under this alternative, the development would build out the project site up to the maximum allowable area under the current general plan designation. The maximum allowable height under the existing general plan designation is 35 feet to 45 feet. The building heights under this alternative would be lower than the proposed project residential buildings of 50 feet. This alternative may result in fewer buildings but due to a substantial greater non-residential square footage in comparison to the proposed project, the site massing would likely be comparable. No scenic vistas or resources would be obstructed. This alternative would introduce lighting to the project site due to building security lighting, surface parking lights, and car headlights. Overall, aesthetic impacts as a result of this alternative would be similar than the proposed project's aesthetic impacts.	The project site would be developed with more residential units across the project site, and the nonresidential development would be eliminated. The residential units would be increased from 275 to 400 and would include surface parking. This alternative would likely result in less building area, and consequently the need for less outdoor lighting. The nighttime lighting would consist of residential security and parking lighting. No scenic vistas or resources would be obstructed. Overall, aesthetic impacts would be reduced under this alternative.	The project site would be developed with residential buildings and commercial development consisting of daily needs retail along the Crown Valley Parkway. As with the proposed project, this alternative would include 275 residential units, however, the nonresidential development would be reduced by approximately 136,800 square feet. In comparison to the proposed project, all of the residential product would be garden style, walk-up apartments with surface parking. A town-green, an aesthetic resource for the proposed project, would not be provided under this alternative. Since development would be distributed throughout the project site, outdoor lighting would also be spread throughout the project site. In comparison to the more intensive commercial use, lighting may be slightly reduced for this alternative. No scenic vistas or resources would be obstructed. Overall, aesthetic impacts would be different, but similar under this alternative.
	LT	S	LT	S
Air Quality	Since no new development would occur under this alternative, it would not generate any construction emissions or result in an increase in operational emissions. Therefore, less-than-significant operational emissions impacts of the project would be eliminated under this alternative. Sensitive receptors would not be exposed to substantial pollutant concentrations in exceedance of South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) thresholds. Overall, air quality impacts would be reduced under this alternative.	Construction of the commercial and office buildings, parking, and associated site improvements would require a similar construction schedule with similar grading activities. Due to the substantial increase in non-residential square footage in comparison to the proposed project, the overall footprint would likely be similar to the proposed project. Overall grading and construction air quality impacts would be similar. Operational emissions of the commercial and office buildings would be greater compared to the proposed project because this alternative would generate more traffic, resulting in greater overall emissions.	This alternative would increase the residential units by 125 units to a total of 400 units and eliminate the nonresidential development on the project site. The residential units would be distributed throughout the entire site, resulting in a building footprint similar to the proposed project. Construction equipment, however, would likely be reduced in comparison to the proposed project. And although VMT/capita may be increased (since there would be no trip capture related to mixed-use opportunities), the total number of vehicle miles traveled and related air emissions would be reduced. As with the proposed project, impacts would be less than significant. However, because this alternative would reduce the overall scale and intensity of the project overall, air quality impacts would be reduced under this alternative.	This alternative would reduce nonresidential development on the project site by 136,811 square feet compared to the proposed project, resulting in substantially fewer employees, commercial patrons and vehicle trips. This alternative would decrease the nonresidential development footprint, decrease pollutants produced during construction, and decrease the amount of energy used in businesses. This alternative would reduce VMT and related traffic air quality emissions. Overall air quality impacts would be reduced under this alternative.
	LT	GT	LT	LT

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Impact	No Project/No Development	No Project: Development Under Existing General Plan Land Use Designation Alternative	Residential Development Only Alternative	Reduced Commercial Development Alternative
Biological Resources	<p>One sensitive wildlife species was observed at the project site during the August 2019 field survey, the Cooper's hawk (<i>Accipiter cooperii</i>), a CDFW Watch List species when nesting. Additionally, there is foraging and nesting potential on-site for other avian species, including sensitive species such as the white-tailed kite (<i>Elanus leucurus</i>), which is California Fully Protected. The eucalyptus trees and other ornamental trees provide habitat for nesting, and the open space areas provide habitat for foraging. Construction of the project could disturb raptor or songbird nests on the project site, and such an impact would be considered potentially significant.</p> <p>Under the No Project Alternative, the project site would remain partially undeveloped, and existing biological resources on the project site would remain undisturbed since no construction would occur.</p> <p>Therefore, the No Project/No Development Alternative would not have a substantial adverse effect on biological resources, and the No Project Alternative would result in less impacts related to biological resources compared to the project.</p>	<p>Development of the proposed project or the Existing General Plan Alternative could disturb raptor or songbird nests on the project site, and such an impact would be considered potentially significant. Upon implementation of mitigation, impacts would be similar to the proposed project and less than significant.</p>	<p>Development of the proposed project or the Residential Development Only Alternative could disturb raptor or songbird nests on the project site, and such an impact would be considered potentially significant. Upon implementation of mitigation, impacts would be similar to the proposed project and less than significant.</p>	<p>Development of the proposed project or the Reduced Commercial Development Alternative could disturb raptor or songbird nests on the project site, and such an impact would be considered potentially significant. Upon implementation of mitigation, impacts would be similar to the proposed project and less than significant.</p>
	LT	S	S	S
Cultural Resources	<p>Since no development would occur on-site, no grading or excavation activities would occur. There would be no potential to impact previously unknown cultural resources, including historical, archaeological, and paleontological resources. Cultural resource impacts, therefore, would be less than for the proposed project.</p>	<p>Development under the Existing General Plan Alternative would require the construction of the commercial and office buildings, parking, and associated site improvements across the project site. Therefore, potential impacts to cultural resources during excavation and grading activities, including to previously undiscovered archaeological resources, would be similar to the proposed project and less than significant with mitigation.</p>	<p>Given that this alternative would result in disturbing most of the project site, the potential to discover previously undiscovered cultural resources (i.e., archaeological resources) during excavation and grading activities would be similar to the proposed project. As with the proposed project, implementation of the required mitigation would ensure impacts are less than significant.</p>	<p>Since the residential uses under this alternative would be distributed across the entire project site (exclusive of the minimal commercial use), land disturbance would be similar to the proposed project. The potential to discover previously undiscovered cultural resources (i.e., archaeological resources) during excavation and grading activities would be similar to the proposed project. As with the proposed project, implementation of the required mitigation would ensure impacts are less than significant.</p>
	LT	S	S	S
Energy	<p>Since no new development would occur under this alternative, it would not generate any construction energy consumption. Furthermore, operational energy consumption from the County maintenance yard and library are less than consumption associated with the proposed project. Nevertheless, energy impacts for both this alternative and the proposed project would be less than significant.</p>	<p>Construction and operation of the Existing General Plan Alternative would still require construction of buildings, parking, and associated infrastructure improvements that would require energy consumption during construction and operation. However, this alternative would require less energy for construction and operation compared to the proposed project due to the reduced overall size and would not use energy in a wasteful or inefficient manner. Potential impacts related to energy use would be similar and less than significant.</p>	<p>Construction of the residential development only alternative would still require construction of buildings, parking, and associated infrastructure improvements across the project site that would require energy during construction and operation. However, this alternative would require less energy for construction and operation compared to the proposed project due to the reduced size and would not use energy in a wasteful or inefficient manner. Potential impacts related to energy use would remain less than significant.</p>	<p>Construction of reduced commercial alternative would still require construction of buildings, parking, and associated infrastructure improvements that would require energy during construction and operation. However, this alternative would result in less energy consumption for construction and operation compared to the proposed project due to the reduced project size and would not use energy in a wasteful or inefficient manner. Potential impacts related to energy use would remain less than significant.</p>
	LT	LT	LT	LT
Geology and Soils	<p>No new construction activities, including demolition and grading, would occur under the No Project Alternative. This alternative would not involve any grading or excavation that could cause unstable subsurface geologic conditions or erosion impacts. The No Project alternative would not introduce new residents or employees to the project site that could be exposed to seismic ground shaking or other geologic hazards. Overall, therefore, geologic and soils impacts would be reduced relative to the proposed project.</p> <p>Furthermore, under this alternative there is no potential to encounter paleontological resources during grading activities. Since no earthmoving activities would occur, there would be no potential to damage paleontological resources, and impacts would be reduced compared to the proposed project.</p>	<p>Under the Existing General Plan Alternative, impacts related to site-specific geologic hazards, including seismic ground shaking, soil erosion, landslides, liquefaction, soil stability, and paleontological resources would be similar to those under the proposed project because such impacts are a function of the project site's underlying geologic conditions rather than the type or amount of land use proposed. This alternative would comply with the same regulatory requirements as the project to ensure that the soils underlying the project site can adequately support the proposed development. As with the proposed project, the General Plan Alternative would be designed to conform to the current seismic design provisions of the California Building Code and would require final design-level geotechnical report subject to City review and approval. Impacts related to</p>	<p>Under this alternative, impacts related to site-specific geologic hazards, including seismic ground shaking, soil erosion, landslides, liquefaction, soil stability, and paleontological resources would be similar to those under the proposed project because such impacts are a function of the project site's underlying geologic conditions. This alternative would comply with the same regulatory requirements as the project to ensure that the soils underlying the project site can adequately support the proposed development. As with the proposed project, the Residential Development Only Alternative would be designed to conform to the current seismic design provisions of the California Building Code and would require final design-level geotechnical report subject to City review</p>	<p>Under the Reduced Commercial Alternative, impacts related to site-specific geologic hazards, including seismic ground shaking, soil erosion, landslides, liquefaction, soil stability, and paleontological resources would be similar to those under the proposed project because such impacts are a function of the project site's underlying geologic conditions. This alternative would comply with the same regulatory requirements as the project to ensure that the soils underlying the project site can adequately support the proposed development. As with the proposed project, the Reduced Commercial Alternative would be designed to conform to the current seismic design provisions of the California Building Code and would require final design-level geotechnical report</p>

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		<p>geology and soils would be less than significant and similar to those of the project.</p> <p>The General Plan Alternative would not construct subterranean parking levels compared to the proposed project, but still would entail substantial remedial grading. Therefore, the potential for this alternative to uncover subsurface paleontological resources would be less when compared to that of the project. However, because this alternative would require excavation, mitigation measures would also be required. Like the proposed project, impacts would be less than significant with mitigation.</p>	<p>and approval. Impacts related to geology and soils would be less than significant and similar to those of the project.</p> <p>This alternative would not construct subterranean parking levels compared to the proposed project, but still would be anticipated to require substantial remedial grading. Therefore, the potential for this alternative to uncover subsurface paleontological resources would be slightly less when compared to that of the project. However, because this alternative would require excavation, mitigation measures would also be required. Like the proposed project, impacts would be less than significant with mitigation.</p>	<p>subject to City review and approval. Impacts related to geology and soils would be less than significant and similar to those of the project.</p> <p>This alternative would require less overall grading and excavation; therefore, the potential for this alternative to uncover subsurface paleontological resources would be slightly less than that of the proposed project. Like the proposed project, impacts would be less than significant with mitigation.</p>
	LT	LT	LT	LT
Greenhouse Gas Emissions	The proposed project is estimated to generate approximately 11,651 metric tons of CO ₂ -equivalent (MTCO ₂ e) emissions per year. This alternative would substantially reduce GHG emissions compared to the proposed project, because no construction would occur, and this alternative would not result in an increase in operational emissions. The significant and unavoidable GHG impact of the project would be eliminated under this alternative.	Construction of the Existing General Plan Alternative would eliminate the residential units but would result in substantially greater commercial/office area than the proposed project. As a result, it would generate more vehicle trips and vehicle miles traveled. As with the proposed project, this alternative would exceed 3,000 MTCO ₂ e per year and would result in significant operational GHG emissions impacts. Short-term GHG emissions from the construction phase of this alternative would be expected to be similar to the proposed project. Overall GHG emissions impacts would be similarly reduced under this alternative; however, significant greenhouse gas emissions impacts would remain significant and unavoidable.	The Residential Development Only Alternative would increase residential units but would generate substantially fewer vehicle trips and VMT by eliminating the nonresidential component. Operation of the proposed project's nonresidential component generates a substantial amount of vehicle trips and VMT. Eliminating the nonresidential component would also reduce energy use (indirectly from purchased electricity use and directly through fuel consumed for building heating), area sources (e.g., equipment used on-site, consumer products, coatings), water/wastewater generation, and waste disposal. Short-term GHG emissions from the construction phase of the project would likely be similar to the proposed project since essentially the entire site would be graded. GHG emissions impacts would be reduced under this alternative and would eliminate significant greenhouse gas emissions impacts.	The Reduced Commercial Alternative would result in an approximate 85 percent reduction in the commercial area compared to the proposed project and would also eliminate office space. This alternative would, therefore, generate fewer daily vehicle trips and VMT. The reduction in nonresidential building area would reduce GHG emissions from operational traffic to a level below 3,000 MTCO ₂ e per year. By reducing the commercial development by 136,811 square feet, this alternative would also reduce energy use (indirectly from purchased electricity use and directly through fuel consumed for building heating), area sources (e.g., equipment used onsite, consumer products, coatings), water/wastewater generation, and waste disposal. Overall, GHG impacts would be reduced under this alternative and would eliminate significant greenhouse gas emissions impacts.
	LT (eliminates a significant and unavoidable impact)	S (the operational GHG impact would remain significant)	LT (eliminates a significant and unavoidable impact)	LT (eliminates a significant and unavoidable impact)
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	No demolition or grading would occur under the No Project alternative. Potential hazards from the accidental release of hazardous materials due to exposure to impacted soils and hazardous building materials would not occur, but hazardous materials also would not be removed and properly disposed. Therefore, impacts from hazards and hazardous materials would be reduced under this alternative, and the mitigation measures required for the proposed project would be eliminated.	<p>Development under the Existing General Plan Alternative would require demolition and grading. Potential hazards would occur from the accidental release of hazardous materials due to potential exposure to impacted soils and hazardous building materials. Therefore, impacts from hazards and hazardous materials would be less than significant with mitigation similar to the proposed project. As with the proposed project, the transport, use, and storage of hazardous materials would be mitigated by comprehensive regulations.</p> <p>The overall hazards impacts associated with this alternative would be less than significant with mitigation, and therefore, similar to the proposed project.</p>	<p>Development under the Residential Development Only Alternative would require demolition and grading. Potential hazards would occur from the accidental release of hazardous materials due to potential exposure to impacted soils and hazardous building materials. Therefore, impacts from hazards and hazardous materials would be less than significant with mitigation, similar to the proposed project. As with the proposed project, the transport, use, and storage of hazardous materials would be mitigated by comprehensive regulations.</p> <p>The overall hazards impacts associated with this alternative would be less than significant with mitigation, and therefore, similar to the proposed project.</p>	<p>Development under the Reduced Commercial Development Alternative would require demolition and grading. Potential hazards would occur from the accidental release of hazardous materials due to potential exposure to impacted soils and hazardous building materials. Therefore, impacts from hazards and hazardous materials would be less than significant with mitigation, similar to the proposed project. As with the proposed project, the transport, use, and storage of hazardous materials would be mitigated by comprehensive regulations.</p> <p>The overall hazards impacts associated with this alternative would be less than significant with mitigation, and therefore, similar to the proposed project.</p>
	LT	S	S	S
Hydrology and Water Quality	Under the No Project/No Development Alternative, no grading, excavation, or development of new structures would occur. Therefore, no changes to the hydrology of the project site or the potential for polluted runoff or siltation would occur. No construction-related impacts to hydrology and water quality would occur under the No Project/No Development Alternative.	Similar to the proposed project, construction and operation of this alternative could generate pollutants that impact water quality. However, similar to the proposed project, a Construction General Permit, stormwater pollution prevention plan (SWPPP), and water quality management plan (WQMP) would be required. Implementation of BMPs in the SWPPP would ensure water quality impacts are minimized to less than significant levels. Construction and operations of this alternative	Similar to the proposed project, construction and operation of this alternative could generate pollutants that impact water quality. However, similar to the proposed project, a Construction General Permit, SWPPP, and WQMP would be required. Implementation of BMPs in the SWPPP would ensure water quality impacts are minimized to less than significant levels. This alternative could result in more open space and greater pervious surface areas. Construction and operation of this alternative	Similar to the proposed project, construction and operation of this alternative could generate pollutants that impact water quality. However, similar to the proposed project, a Construction General Permit, SWPPP, and WQMP would be required. Implementation of BMPs in the SWPPP would ensure water quality impacts are minimized to less than significant levels. This alternative could result in more open space and greater pervious surface areas than the proposed project. Construction and

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Table 7-2 Environmental Impact Comparison

Impact	No Project/No Development	No Project: Development Under Existing General Plan Land Use Designation Alternative	Residential Development Only Alternative	Reduced Commercial Development Alternative
	<p>No Project/No Development</p> <p>Under existing conditions, the majority of the project site drains via sheet flow, which is collected and then discharged into the City's storm drain system. Development as proposed would be subject to comprehensive regulatory water quality measures (best management practices) and hydromodification requirements to ensure that drainage patterns reflect predevelopment patterns to the maximum extent. Runoff would be more controlled and water quality protected. Hydrology impacts under the No Project/No Development Alternative and for the proposed project would be less than significant. Compliance with comprehensive regulatory requirements for development ensures that impacts of the proposed project would be reduced in comparison to existing conditions. Thus, impacts would be greater if the site remained as is under the No Project/No Development Alternative.</p>	<p>No Project: Development Under Existing General Plan Land Use Designation Alternative</p> <p>could substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff. Implementation of source control, site design, and treatment control BMPs in the project's WQMP and final hydrology report would also reduce stormwater runoff volumes and overall impacts to water quality. Adherence to existing regulations, implementation of required BMPs, and design specifications in the final hydrology report would ensure impacts to hydrology and water quality are less than significant. Overall, impacts would be similar under both scenarios.</p>	<p>Residential Development Only Alternative</p> <p>could substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff compared to existing conditions. Implementation of source control, site design, and treatment control BMPs in the project's WQMP and final hydrology report would also reduce stormwater runoff volumes and overall impacts to water quality. Adherence to existing regulations, implementation of required BMPs, and design specifications in the final hydrology report would ensure impacts to hydrology and water quality are less than significant. Overall, impacts related to hydrology and water quality would be similar to the proposed project.</p>	<p>Reduced Commercial Development Alternative</p> <p>operation of this alternative could substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff. Implementation of source control, site design, and treatment control BMPs in the project's WQMP and final hydrology report would also reduce stormwater runoff volumes and overall impacts to water quality. Adherence to existing regulations, implementation of required BMPs, and design specifications in the final hydrology report would ensure impacts to hydrology and water quality are less than significant. Overall, impacts related to hydrology and water quality would be similar to the proposed project.</p>
	GT	S	S	S
Land Use and Planning	<p>GT</p> <p>Under this alternative, no new development would occur. The existing uses on-site are compatible with the existing land uses in the vicinity of the project site. Compared to the proposed project and would not require either a general plan amendment (GPA) or zone change (ZC). The site, however, would remain mostly undeveloped with vacant buildings, and be underutilized. This alternative would not achieve the General Plan's vision for the project site. As with the proposed project, this alternative would not physically divide an established community. Impacts would be greater in comparison to the proposed project.</p>	<p>S</p> <p>This project alternative would be consistent with the Laguna Niguel General Plan and Laguna Niguel Zoning Code; therefore, this alternative would not require a GPA or ZC. In comparison, the proposed project would require a GPA to expand the existing land use designations to allow multifamily residential development (275 units). Therefore, land use and planning impacts of this alternative would be reduced and, as with the proposed project, would be less than significant.</p>	<p>S</p> <p>Compared to the proposed project, this alternative would also require a GPA and ZC to allow the residential multifamily units. As with the proposed project, this alternative would not physically divide an established community. In comparison to the proposed project, this alternative would not be as effective in achieving the General Plan's objective for this site to include commercial/office space and would not achieve many of the General Plan's policies. Impacts would be greater than the proposed project.</p>	<p>S</p> <p>This alternative would require a GPA and ZC to allow the residential multifamily units. The remaining proposed nonresidential development would already be allowed under the existing "Community Commercial," "Professional Office," and "Public/Institutional" land use designations and CC zoning. The substantially reduced commercial area, however, would not meet the General Plan's vision for larger scale non-residential development and would not be consistent with several General Plan policies relative to developing a well-balanced community. Therefore, land use and planning impacts of this alternative would be greater than the proposed project and less than significant.</p>
	GT	LT	GT	GT
Noise	<p>GT</p> <p>Under this alternative, no grading, excavation or construction would occur; therefore, no construction-related noise or vibration would be generated on-site or off-site. The No Project/No Development would not develop new uses on the project site, and no changes to existing site operation would occur. There would be no new vehicle trips generated under this alternative. No impacts associated with construction noise or with on- or off-site operational noise would occur under this alternative, and impacts would be less than significant with mitigation noise impact to operational noise and vibration.</p>	<p>LT</p> <p>Development under this alternative would require construction and associated site improvements. As with the proposed project, it is anticipated that construction noise impacts would be less than significant. Grading quantities would be similar to the proposed project, and overall building massing and related construction would be similar. Therefore, construction noise associated with this alternative would be similar to the proposed project and less than significant.</p> <p>Operational noise impacts would be reduced compared to the proposed project. Operations of the uses under the existing general plan and zoning designations would not include special events held on the project site and would not include multipurpose plazas. Thus, operational noise impacts would be reduced and, as with the proposed project, less than significant.</p>	<p>GT</p> <p>Development under this alternative would require construction across the project site and associated site improvements. As with the proposed project, construction noise impact would be less than significant.</p> <p>Operational noise impacts would be reduced compared to the proposed project. This alternative would not include multipurpose community plazas that support special events that may generate louder noises. Thus, operational noise impacts of this alternative would be reduced and, as with the proposed project, be less than significant.</p>	<p>GT</p> <p>Development under this alternative would require construction across the project site and associated site improvements. Construction noise impact would be less than significant.</p> <p>Operational noise impacts would be reduced compared to the proposed project because it would substantially reduce nonresidential development, resulting in fewer visitors and events and less traffic noise. Thus, operational noise impacts of this alternative would be reduced and, as with the proposed project, less than significant.</p>
	LT	LT	LT	LT
Population and Housing	<p>LT</p> <p>Under this alternative, no new housing units and commercial uses would be developed, and no additional residents or employees would be introduced to the City. This alternative would not induce population growth and would not displace existing housing. In comparison, the proposed project would introduce 275 new residential units and an estimated population of 704 new residents. These projections, along with other related projects under development in the City, are within the SCAG projections for the City. However, population and housing impacts would be reduced under this alternative and would be less than significant, as they are for the project.</p>	<p>LT</p> <p>This alternative would not introduce any dwelling units or associated residents. Thus, there would be no increase in population or housing on-site. This alternative would introduce approximately 983 jobs.</p> <p>In comparison, the proposed project would provide approximately 412 jobs and 275 residential units. This alternative would not introduce any new residents and would generate more employment opportunities than the proposed project. This alternative would beneficially affect the City's jobs-housing balance. Impacts to population and housing would be less than for the proposed project under this alternative.</p>	<p>LT</p> <p>This alternative would develop 400 residential units and would generate approximately 1,024 residents. Eliminating the project's nonresidential development would substantially reduce employment opportunities. The city is considered "housing rich," and this alternative would not beneficially affect the city's jobs-housing balance. Impacts to population and housing would be greater than the proposed project under this alternative, but would remain less than significant.</p>	<p>LT</p> <p>Similar to the proposed project, this alternative would develop up to 275 residential units but would reduce the nonresidential development by 136,811 square feet. Impacts to population and housing would be similar.</p> <p>Decreasing nonresidential development by 136,811 square feet would reduce employment opportunities from 412 employees to 62 employees. This alternative would not improve the City's "housing-rich" status. Overall, impacts would be greater than the proposed project but would remain less than significant.</p>

7. Alternatives to the Proposed Project

Table 7-2 Environmental Impact Comparison

Impact	No Project/No Development	No Project: Development Under Existing General Plan Land Use Designation Alternative	Residential Development Only Alternative	Reduced Commercial Development Alternative
	LT	LT	GT	GT
Public Services	With no new development on-site, there would be no increase in demand for public services, including police, sheriff, school, and library services. Accordingly, because the No Project/No Development Alternative would not result in a population gain that would increase demand, it would have no impact related to public services. Impacts related to public services, including sheriff, fire, school, and library, would be less under the No Project/No Development Alternative than the project.	No residences would be developed on-site under this alternative. Therefore, there would not be an increased demand for school and library services. The demand for additional police services would not be substantial. Demand for fire services would also be less under this alternative since the commercial and office buildings would not generate as much demand as the proposed project's 275 residential units and nonresidential development. Impacts on public services would be reduced and, as with the proposed project, less than significant.	Under this alternative, demand on public services, including fire, police, school, and library services, would be approximately 45 percent greater than the proposed project for the residential development component. Eliminating the nonresidential square footage would reduce demand on fire and police services compared to the proposed project. Overall, impacts would be slightly reduced and, as with the proposed project, less than significant.	Under this alternative, demand on public services, including fire, police, school, and library services, would be similar to the proposed project for the residential development component. Reducing the nonresidential square footage would reduce demand on fire and police services compared to the proposed project. Overall, impacts would be reduced and, as with the proposed project, less than significant.
Recreation	The No Project/No Development Alternative would not change the current occupancy and use of the project site; therefore, it would not increase demand for parks and recreation services and would have no impact on parks and recreation facilities. Impacts related to parks and recreational facilities would be less under this alternative than the proposed project.	No residences would be developed on-site under this alternative. Though it is possible that new employees at the project site could use the library and local parks, they would not be expected to create a substantial increase in demand for recreation services. Impacts on recreational facilities would be reduced and, as with the proposed project, less than significant.	This alternative proposes 125 more multifamily residential units than the proposed project. Thus, this alternative would introduce approximately 1,024 residents to the project area and increase demand for parks and recreational facilities. This alternative would be required to adhere to the local park code and the common open area requirements. Overall, impacts would be greater than with the proposed project but would remain less than significant.	This alternative proposes the same number of multifamily residential units as the proposed project. Thus, this alternative and the proposed project would introduce approximately 704 residents to the project area and increase demand for parks and recreational facilities. This alternative would be required to adhere to the local park code and the common open area requirements. Overall, impacts would be similar to the proposed project and would be less than significant.
Transportation	The No Project/No Build Alternative would not result in new development, and therefore would not conflict with any programs, plans, ordinances or policies addressing the circulation system, transit, roadways, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities. This alternative would not result in any increase in the intensity of on-site development and thus would not result in additional VMT over existing conditions. No new sidewalks, driveways, or roadway improvements in and around the project site would be designed, so no design hazards impacts or emergency access impacts would occur. Overall, the No Project/No Development Alternative would not result in transportation impacts. Impacts related to transportation would be less under the No Project/No Build Alternative than the proposed project.	Similar to the proposed project, this alternative would require site access improvements along Pacific Island Drive and Crown Valley Parkway at the project driveways. This development alternative would not conflict with any congestion management programs or alternative transportation plans. This alternative would generate more vehicle trips than the proposed project, and also would not have the benefit of mixed-use to reduce/eliminate some trips (e.g., residents patronizing or being employed by onsite uses). VMT per employment, therefore, would be similar or greater for this alternative in comparison to the proposed project. Impacts on transportation would potentially be greater than with the proposed project. This alternative may result in a new significant impact.	This alternative would require site access improvements along Pacific Island Drive and Crown Valley Parkway at the project driveways. This alternative would not conflict with any programs, plans, ordinances, or policies addressing the circulation system, transit, roadways, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities. Although the elimination of commercial and office uses would reduce total VMT relative to the proposed project, it may increase VMT/capita. The employment component of the project would be eliminated. New sidewalks, driveways, and roadway improvements in and around the project site would be designed according to State and local code requirements, and therefore no design hazards impacts or emergency access impacts would occur. Impacts on transportation may be greater than the proposed project, but would be anticipated to be less than significant.	This alternative would decrease nonresidential development by 136,811 square feet compared to the proposed project. This alternative would reduce vehicle trips and result in lower VMT for employment than the proposed project due to the reduced commercial development. The substantially reduced commercial use would provide local, daily use retail and result in a significant reduction in trips. New sidewalks, driveways, and roadway improvements in and around the project site would be designed according to State and local code requirements, and therefore no design hazards impacts or emergency access impacts would occur. Overall, transportation impacts would be similar or less and, as with the proposed project, less than significant.
	LT	GT (possibly result in new significant impact)	GT	S
Tribal Cultural Resources	Since no development would occur on-site, no grading or excavation activities would occur. There would be no potential to impact previously unknown tribal cultural resources, including historical, archaeological, and paleontological resources. Tribal cultural resource impacts, therefore, would be reduced in comparison to the proposed project.	Development under the existing general plan alternative would require the construction of the commercial and office buildings, parking, and associated site improvements across the project site. Therefore, potential impacts to tribal cultural resources during excavation and grading activities, including to previously undiscovered tribal cultural resources, would be similar to the proposed project and less than significant with mitigation.	Since as with the proposed project, this alternative would require grading the majority of the project site, the potential to discover previously undiscovered tribal cultural resources during excavation and grading activities would be similar. As with the proposed project, implementation of the required mitigation would ensure impacts are less than significant.	Since the residential product under this alternative would be garden style apartments distributed throughout the site, the disturbance footprint for this alternative would be similar footprint than the proposed project. The potential to discover previously undiscovered tribal cultural resources during excavation and grading activities would be similar. As with the proposed project, implementation of the required mitigation would ensure impacts are less than significant.
	LT	S	S	S

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Table 7-2 Environmental Impact Comparison

Impact	No Project/No Development	No Project: Development Under Existing General Plan Land Use Designation Alternative	Residential Development Only Alternative	Reduced Commercial Development Alternative
Utilities and Service Systems	The No Project/No Development Alternative would not construct new buildings or add population to the project site; therefore, water demand, wastewater generation, and generation of solid waste would not change compared to existing conditions on the project site. Accordingly, because no new demand would occur under the No Project/No Development Alternative, it would have no impact on utilities and service systems. Thus, impacts with regard to utilities and service systems would be less than the proposed project.	<p>This alternative would reduce water demand, wastewater generation, and solid waste generation compared to the proposed project. Using a water demand rate of 65 gallons per day (gpd) per 1,000 square feet, the office buildings (217,800 square feet) would require approximately 14,157 gpd of water. Using a water demand rate of 90 gpd per 1,000 square feet, the commercial buildings (130,680 square feet) would require approximately 11,761 gpd of water. Using a wastewater generation rate of 61.8 gpd per 1,000 square feet, the office buildings would generate approximately 13,460 gpd of wastewater. Using a wastewater generation rate of 85.5 gpd per 1,000 square feet, the commercial buildings would generate approximately 11,173 gpd of wastewater. And using a solid waste generation rate of 0.08 pounds per square foot, the office buildings would generate about 17,424 pounds per day (ppd) of solid waste. Using a solid waste generation rate of 0.03 pounds per square foot, the commercial buildings would generate about 3,920 ppd of solid waste.</p> <p>In comparison, the proposed project would require 114,804 gpd of water and would generate about 96,665 gpd of wastewater and 11,446 ppd of solid waste (see Section 5.17, <i>Utilities and Service Systems</i>). The proposed project would generate more water demand and wastewater generation, as detailed in the project's water supply assessment (see Appendix N). Thus, impacts to utilities and service systems under the Existing General Plan Alternative would be reduced, and, as with the proposed project, impacts would be less than significant.</p>	<p>Using the same water, wastewater generation, and solid waste generation rates as the proposed project, the Residential Development Only Alternative would require approximately 72,000 gpd of water, generate 68,400 gpd of wastewater, and generate 4,892 ppd of solid waste. In comparison, the proposed project would require 114,804 gpd of water and would generate about 96,665 gpd of wastewater and 11,446 ppd of solid waste (see Section 5.17, <i>Utilities and Service Systems</i>). The proposed project would generate more water demand and wastewater. Thus, impacts to utilities and service systems under this alternative would be reduced, and, as with the proposed project, impacts would be less than significant.</p>	<p>Using the same water demand, wastewater generation, and solid waste generation rates as the proposed project and as detailed in Section 5.17, <i>Utilities and Service Systems</i>, the Reduced Commercial Development Alternative would require approximately 51,600 gpd of water, generate 49,000 gpd of wastewater, and generate 4,100 ppd of solid waste. In comparison, the proposed project would require 114,804 gpd of water and would generate about 96,665 gpd of wastewater and 11,446 ppd of solid waste.</p> <p>Note that the 23,750 square feet of nonresidential use proposed under this alternative is assumed to be commercial. Reducing nonresidential development by 136,811 square feet would reduce overall water demand and wastewater and solid waste generation. Thus, impacts to utilities and service systems under the Reduced Commercial Development Alternative would be reduced. As with the proposed project, impacts would be less than significant.</p>
	LT	LT	LT	LT
Wildfire	No development of a mixed-use project would occur under this alternative. There would be no increase to wildfire hazard risk in comparison to existing conditions but there also would be no decrease due to vegetation management or replacing older, existing buildings with new buildings that meet current Fire Code requirements. Therefore, wildfire impacts would be slightly increased under this alternative.	As with the proposed project, development under the Existing General Plan alternative would include development adjacent to a Local Responsibility Area (LRA) very high fire hazard severity zone (FHSZ). Design of this alternative would be required to comply with the CBC and CFC as adopted by the City of Laguna Niguel. Development of the alternative would not exacerbate wildfire risks. Similar to the proposed project, impacts would be less than significant.	As with the proposed project, development under the High-Density Residential Development Only alternative would include multifamily residential buildings adjacent to a LRA very high FHSZ. Design of this alternative would be required to comply with the CBC and CFC as adopted by the City of Laguna Niguel. Development of the alternative would not exacerbate wildfire risks. Similar to the proposed project, impacts would be less than significant.	As with the proposed project, the Reduced Commercial Development alternative would include a mixed-use development adjacent to a LRA very high FHSZ. Design of this alternative would be required to comply with the CBC and CFC as adopted by the City of Laguna Niguel. Development of the alternative would not exacerbate wildfire risks. Similar to the proposed project, impacts would be less than significant.
	GT	S	S	S

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7.3.2 Environmental Impact Conclusion

Table 7-3 summarizes the environmental impacts of each alternative compared to the proposed project.

Table 7-3 Summary of Proposed Project and Alternatives Impacts

Topic	Proposed PLTS Project	No Project/No Development	No Project: Development Under Existing General Plan Land Use Designation.	Residential Development Only	Reduced Commercial Development
Aesthetics	LTS	-	=	-	-
Air Quality	LTS/M	-	+	-	-
Biological Resources	LTS/M	-	=	=	=
Cultural Resources	LTS/M	-	=	=	=
Energy	LTS	-	-	-	-
Geology and Soils	LTS/M	-	-	-	-
Greenhouse Gas Emissions	S/U	-*	=	-*	-*
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	LTS/M	-	=	=	=
Hydrology and Water Quality	LTS/M	+	=	=	=
Land Use and Planning	LTS	+	=	+	+
Noise	LLTS/M	-	-	-	-
Population and Housing	LTS	-	-	+	+
Public Services	LTS	-	-	-	-
Recreation	LTS	-	-	+	=
Transportation	LTS	-	+	+	=
Tribal Cultural Resources	LTS/M	-	=	=	=
Utilities and Service Systems	LTS	-	-	-	-
Wildfire	LTS	+	=	=	=

Notes: LTS = Less than Significant; LTS/M = Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated; S/U = Significant and Unavoidable

(-) The alternative would result in less of an impact than the proposed project.

(+) The alternative would result in greater impacts than the proposed project.

(=) The alternative would result in the same/similar impacts as the proposed project.

(*) Significant and unavoidable impact is eliminated.

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7.3.3 Ability to Achieve Project Objectives

The determination of whether an alternative achieves a particular objective is not black or white. Each alternative has the potential to achieve the objectives to some extent. Table 7-4 summarizes each alternative's ability to achieve the project objectives.

Table 7-4 Ability of Each Alternative to Meet the Project Objectives

Objective	No Project/No Development	No Project: Development Under Existing General Plan Land Use Designation	Residential Development Only	Reduced Commercial Development
1. Create a dynamic mix of commercial uses, including retail, restaurant, creative office, health/wellness, and civic uses, which will be unique and distinct from other commercial projects in the City and will be complemented by highly amenitized residential apartment buildings, culminating in a vibrant city center in the heart of Laguna Niguel	No	Partially. This alternative would not include residential uses.	No	No
2. Create a financially feasible project that promotes the City's economic well-being with (i) a commercial core that generates local tax revenue and provides new jobs; and (ii) a residential component that creates housing options for existing and new residents to support local businesses, including dining, shopping, office, and entertainment venues.	No	Partially. This alternative would not include residential uses.	Partially. This alternative would not include employment uses.	Partially. This alternative would not create as large a commercial core and would generate less local tax revenue and fewer jobs.
3. Replace the existing Laguna Niguel library with a larger, innovative, and architecturally significant library with modern programming and technologies to better serve the residents of Laguna Niguel for decades to come. The new library will be an integral part of the project and designed to facilitate connections to and integration with surrounding retail, office, and residential uses.	No	Yes	No	No
4. Incorporate a pedestrian-oriented town green gathering place for the community, connected by an integrated walkable network of passive and active pedestrian-oriented paseos and open spaces weaving through the retail and commercial core.	No	No	No	No

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Table 7-4 Ability of Each Alternative to Meet the Project Objectives

Objective	No Project/No Development	No Project: Development Under Existing General Plan Land Use Designation	Residential Development Only	Reduced Commercial Development
5. Provide for investment in and redevelopment of underutilized property within the Town Center Opportunity Area by replacing the vacant South County Justice Center and undeveloped county land with a project that would generate new sources of property and sales tax revenue for the City and County.	No	Yes	Partial; no uses that would generate sales taxes are proposed under this alternative.	Yes
6. Create a visually impactful, architecturally distinct design and a retailing experience that will attract differentiated retail, restaurant, and commercial tenants to the City of Laguna Niguel and provide unique live, work, and play opportunities for residents of Laguna Niguel and surrounding communities.	No	No.	No	No
7. Improve and enhance the City's profile and amenities for residents by providing a unique mixed-use environment not seen elsewhere in South Orange County that will attract differentiated retail and commercial tenants and a unique, high-quality, pedestrian-oriented commercial center including a state-of-the-art library that the community can enjoy.	No	No	No	Partially. This alternative would not develop sufficient retail space to provide a "unique mixed-use environment with differentiated retail."

No Project/No Development. The No Project/No Development alternative would reduce impacts to all environmental issue areas except for hydrology/water quality, land use and planning, and wildfire. Hydrology/water quality, land use, and wildfire impacts would be greater than the proposed project.

This alternative would also eliminate significant and unavoidable impacts of the project related to greenhouse gas emissions (operation).

The No Project/No Development Alternative would not achieve any of the project objectives.

No Project: Development Under Existing General Plan Land Use Designation. The No Project: Development Under Existing General Plan Land Use and Zoning Designation alternative would reduce impacts to , energy, geology and soils, land use and planning, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, and utilities and service systems. Impacts to aesthetics, biological resources, cultural resources, greenhouse gas

7. Alternatives to the Proposed Project

emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, tribal cultural resources, and wildfire would be similar. Impacts to air quality, and transportation would be greater than the proposed project.

The alternative would provide a mix of office and commercial uses with new commercial tenants to the City of Laguna Niguel and redevelop the project site with a project that would generate new sources of sales tax (Objectives 1, 2, 5, 6, and 7).

This alternative would not provide a unique mixed-use environment (Objective 1) because residential uses would not be included. This alternative would not provide a pedestrian-oriented town green as the focal point of the commercial experience and gathering place for the community (Objective 4).

Residential Development Only Alternative. The Residential Development Only Alternative would reduce impacts related to aesthetics, air quality, energy, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hydrology and water quality, noise, public services, tribal cultural resources, and utilities and service systems. Impacts to biological resources, cultural resources, hazards and hazardous materials, and wildfire would be similar. Transportation, Land Use and Planning and Population impacts would be greater than the proposed project impacts.

The alternative would eliminate significant and unavoidable impacts to operational greenhouse gas emissions.

This alternative would include a residential-only development across the project site that would provide new housing options for existing and new residents, and promote the City's economic well-being by generating new sources of property tax (Objectives 2 and 5).

This alternative would not create a dynamic mix of commercial uses, including retail, restaurant, creative office, health/wellness, and civic uses, that would be unique and distinct from other commercial projects in the City (Objective 1). It would not provide unique live, work, and play opportunities for residents of Laguna Niguel and surrounding communities (Objective 6) or provide increased sales taxes (Objectives 2 and 5). Under this alternative the nonresidential component and town green would be eliminated, and therefore it would not enhance the City's profile and amenities for residents by providing a unique mixed-use environment in South Orange County that would attract differentiated retail and commercial tenants and a unique, high-quality, pedestrian-oriented commercial center (Objectives 4 and 7).

Reduced Commercial Development Alternative. The Reduced Commercial Development Alternative would reduce impacts to aesthetics, air quality, energy, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, , noise, public services, tribal cultural resources, and utilities and service systems. Impacts to biological resources, cultural resources, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, recreation, transportation, and wildfire would be similar. Land use and planning and population and housing impacts would be greater.

This alternative would eliminate significant and unavoidable impacts to operational greenhouse gas emissions.

The substantial reduction in office and commercial space under this alternative would preclude this option from effectively achieving the project's objectives. To be potentially viable, this alternative would need to locate the 23,500 SF retail use as daily-needs retail and to conveniently locate this use along Crown Valley Parkway. A dynamic, commercial retail and office use could not be created (Objective 1); the uses would not support an

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improved town green and the commercial uses would not attract people to a gathering place (Objective 4); and the limited non-residential use could not be designed as a visually impactful attraction for Laguna Niguel and surrounding residents (Objectives 6 and 7). This alternative would not be expected to be able to finance a new, state-of-the art library (Objectives 2 and 3). It would generate revenue to the City and County, but not at the levels anticipated for the proposed project (Objective 5).

7.4 ENVIRONMENTALLY SUPERIOR ALTERNATIVE

CEQA requires a lead agency to identify the “environmentally superior alternative” and, in cases where the “No Project” alternative is environmentally superior to the proposed project, the environmentally superior development alternative must be identified. One alternative has been identified as “environmentally superior” to the proposed project:

Reduced Commercial Development Alternative

The Reduced Commercial Development Alternative would reduce impacts to impacts to aesthetics, air quality, energy, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, noise, public services, and utilities and service systems in comparison to the proposed project. This alternative would also eliminate significant and unavoidable impacts to operational greenhouse gas emissions.

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