

5.0 ALTERNATIVES

Rationale for Alternatives Selection

CEQA requires the consideration of alternative development scenarios and the analysis of impacts associated with the alternatives. Through comparison of these alternatives to the proposed project, the advantages of each can be weighed and analyzed. Section 15126.6 of the CEQA Guidelines requires that an EIR “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.” The emphasis is added to stress that the alternatives analysis should look for ways to further mitigate the effects of the project. Thus, the selection and analysis of project alternatives presented in this section do not include any alternatives that assume intensification of development beyond that associated with the General Plan.

Additionally, the CEQA Guidelines state:

- The specific alternative of “no project” shall also be evaluated along with its impact. 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)(1)(2)]
- An EIR need not consider every conceivable alternative to a project. Rather, it must consider a reasonable range of potentially feasible alternatives that will foster informed decision making and public participation. An EIR is not required to consider alternatives which are infeasible. The range of potential alternatives to the proposed project shall include those that could feasibly accomplish most of the basic objectives of the project and could avoid or substantially lessen one or more of the significant effects. The EIR should briefly discuss the rationale for selecting the alternatives to be discussed. The EIR should also identify any alternatives that were considered by the lead agency but were rejected as infeasible during the scoping process and briefly explain the reasons underlying the lead agency’s determination. 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. (Section 15126.6[a][c])

In addition to focusing on alternatives capable of either eliminating any significant environmental effects of the project or reducing them to a less than significant level, the following analysis examines variations of the proposed project that were considered during preparation of the General Plan and that may be considered further during the public hearing process. The alternatives analyzed in the Program EIR are general in nature, as is the proposed project. The degree of specificity used in the alternatives analysis is related to the general level of information associated with implementation of the General Plan. Development over the entire planning area is addressed in the alternatives analysis, rather than specific development projects. The following project alternatives are examined:

- Alternative 1: No Project/Existing General Plan
- Alternative 2: Increased Office Professional Land Use in Urban Core
- Alternative 3: Staff Recommended Land Uses
- Alternative 4: Transfer Density

These alternatives were developed in the course of project planning and environmental review. The discussion in this section provides:

A description of alternatives considered;

- An analysis of whether each alternative meets most of the basic objectives of the proposed project as described in Chapter 2.0, Project Description, of this Program EIR; and
- A comparative analysis of the alternatives under consideration and the proposed project. The focus of this analysis is to determine if alternatives are capable of eliminating or reducing the significant environmental effects of the project to a less than significant level. Table 5.0-1 summarizes the comparison of impacts of each alternative to the proposed project.

Alternatives Considered but Rejected

The City of San Marcos, through its the General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) and General Plan public participation processes, considered a range of land use alternatives during preparation of the proposed General Plan, both for the City as a whole and within the identified Focus Areas; see Appendix D. Multiple land use configurations and options for mixed use intensity were considered. Although all the Focus Area sites were viewed as potential areas for land use designation revisions as proposed by the City, GPAC or property owners, the land use designations for 14 Focus Areas were not revised.

Land use changes for each of the Focus Areas described in Appendix D were developed and reviewed with the GPAC, and the general public. The land use changes, to varying degrees, reflected the guiding themes and preliminary policies developed by the GPAC and the wider community, as well as various land use changes recommended by City staff. The approach to creating land use alternatives for the Focus Areas was slightly different for each site. The primary concern for the Urban Core and other centrally located Focus Areas was robust support for business to generate a strong tax base for the community. Heavy consideration was given to the redevelopment process, timing, and future outcomes for existing industrial properties in the Urban Core Focus Areas.

Multiple community workshops and GPAC meetings were held between 2009 and 2011 to identify key community issues, develop and refine land use alternatives, and select a community-preferred land use plan that supports the guiding themes. Alternatives presented to the community responded to unique priorities expressed by the workshop participants as well as the constraints and opportunities present within each Focus Area. Several alternatives were determined to be infeasible at this time due to strong public opposition, and were not evaluated further.

**Table 5.0-1
Comparison of Impacts of Alternatives to the Proposed Project**

Environmental Impact	No Project Alternative	Increased Office Professional Land Use Alternative	Staff Recommended Alternative	Transferred Density Alternative
Aesthetics	Greater	Greater	Similar	Greater
Agricultural Resources	Less	Similar	Similar	Less
Air Quality	Less	Greater	Similar	Less
Biological Resources	Similar	Similar	Less	Less
Cultural Resources	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Geology/Soils/Mineral Resources	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Less	Greater	Similar	Less
Hazards/Hazardous Materials	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Hydrology/Water Quality	Greater	Similar	Similar	Similar
Land Use and Planning	Greater	Similar	Similar	Similar
Noise	Less	Greater	Similar	Similar
Paleontological Resources	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Population and Housing	Similar	Similar	Similar	Greater
Public Services and Utilities	Less	Similar	Similar	Less
Recreation	Less	Similar	Similar	Similar
Transportation and Circulation	Similar	Greater	Similar	Less
Conclusion	Environmentally Similar	Environmentally Inferior	Environmentally Superior	Environmentally Superior

As stated above, the City considered numerous land use alternatives as a part of the General Plan update process. The alternatives presented in this section were specifically created for the purposes of this draft Program EIR analysis. Alternatives previously considered featured greater levels of residential, commercial, and retail development than the Draft General Plan (the proposed Project). This is not helpful for comparison in a draft Program EIR because the purpose of an alternatives analysis is to reduce potentially significant environmental impacts compared to the impacts of the proposed Project.

Alternative Project Location Alternative

The CEQA Guidelines recommend considering an alternative location to reduce potential impacts of a proposed project. However, the policies and programs of the General Plan are specific to the geographic

context of San Marcos. Buildout pursuant to the General Plan at another location does not make sense for a plan that applies only to properties within the City's planning area. Thus, this Program EIR does not examine the Alternate Project Location alternative.

5.1 ALTERNATIVE 1: NO PROJECT/EXISTING GENERAL PLAN ALTERNATIVE

This alternative is analyzed within this Program EIR as it is required under CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e). According to Section 15126.6(e)(2) of the CEQA Guidelines, the "no project" analysis shall discuss, "...what is 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." When the project is the revision of an existing land use policy, CEQA Guidelines §15126.6(e)(3)(A) states that "the No Project Alternative will be the continuation of the existing plan...into the future." So, for the purposes of this Program EIR, the No Project Alternative represents development under the currently adopted General Plan as further described below. This alternative, however, does not represent a "no build" scenario in which no future development or redevelopment would occur.

Description of the Alternative

The No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative assumes that the proposed General Plan would not be adopted and implemented. Instead, the planning area would be developed according to the existing 1983 General Plan land use map and existing development patterns. The 1983 General Plan projected dwelling units and population are less than current existing conditions and are therefore not a useful comparison for the No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative. Instead, SANDAG 2050 Regional Growth Forecast projections were used for the number of projected dwelling units as well as the projected population. The 2050 forecast used our City's existing Land Use Element as basis for future population/build out.

San Marcos has approved two substantial specific plans that would increase the development under the existing General Plan that were not accounted for in SANDAG projections. Table 5.0-2 delineates the dwelling unit and population additions that would supplement the SANDAG projections based on the existing General Plan.

Table 5.0-3 identifies the development capacity and projected population for the No Project/ Existing General Plan compared to the proposed General Plan.

SANDAG housing and population projections based on the existing General Plan, adjusted for approved specific plan and land use changes, would result in approximately 4,765 fewer dwelling units and approximately 8,855 fewer people than the expected capacity of the proposed General Plan. It should be noted that the No Project Alternative assumes dwelling units and population based on 3.21 persons per household while proposed General Plan is based on 3.06 persons per household.

**Table 5.0-2
SANDAG Growth Projections Approved Land Use Calculation**

Projection Factors	Dwelling Units	Population
SANDAG 2050 Regional Growth ¹ Forecast (2030 projections March 2011 update - city limits only)	33,095	101,298
University District SPA (not assumed in SANDAG Growth Forecast)	3,400	10,404
Focus Area 4 - Richmar SPA (unapproved units only)	291	890
Sphere of Influence (SOI) (Assumed 10% growth from existing conditions)	292	6,593
Adjusted expected capacity of the existing GP²	37,078	119,185

¹ SANDAG 2050 Regional Growth Forecast, March 2011 San Marcos FastFacts.

² SANDAG 2050 Regional Growth Forecast projections (revised March 2011) adjusted for approved specific plans consistent with the existing General Plan and growth in the sphere of influence areas.

**Table 5.0-3
Expected Capacity and Population
Existing No Project/Existing General Plan vs. Proposed General Plan**

Impact	Dwelling Units	Population
No Project/ Existing General Plan	37,078 ¹	119,185 ¹
Proposed General Plan	41,843 ²	128,040 ²
Difference	-4,765 (11.4%)	-8,855 (6.9%)

¹ Table 5.0-2 based on supplemented SANDAG 2050 Regional Growth Forecast, March 2011 San Marcos FastFacts

² Expected capacity of proposed General Plan

Comparison of Environmental Impacts to the Proposed Project

Aesthetics

The implementation of the No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative would result in a decreased level of residential and non-residential development relative to the proposed General Plan. General intensification of the planning area would still occur, however expected development capacity would be approximately 11 percent lower for residential units and substantially lower for non-residential capacity. Due to infill, redevelopment and intensification of existing land uses some reduction in visibility of scenic vistas and resources would still be expected. Guiding themes identified for the Project include preservation and enhancement of the existing community character and sense of place. The General Plan Land Use and Community Design Element contains numerous policies to encourage high-quality urban design in new development and redevelopment areas, visually enhance and beautify existing streetscapes, neighborhoods, gateways, and corridors. However, the No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative would not include proposed General Plan policies to reduce lighting levels/light pollution, maintain and enhance neighborhood character, improve the general visual and structural quality of the planning area, or

improve community elements like signage and streetscapes. In the absence of these policies and programs, impacts to aesthetics would be greater under the No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative than with implementation of the proposed General Plan. Altered views, changed visual character and new sources of light and glare would be new significant impacts under this alternative. (Greater impact)

Agricultural Resources

Implementation of the No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative would result in minimal impacts to agricultural resources given that land use of current agricultural land and agricultural-adjacent land would remain the same. Development capacity would be marginally less in agricultural areas, however existing conversion pressures would remain. Impacts on farmland/conversion would be reduced, however not to a less than significant level. Other agricultural resource impacts would be similar to the proposed General Plan. The No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative would reduce agricultural resource impacts, but not to a less than significant level. (Less impact)

Air Quality

Implementation of the No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative would result in a lower development capacity for residential units and a coinciding lower population than the proposed General Plan. As a result of the decreased potential development, both construction and operational criteria air pollutant and precursor emissions would be less than the proposed General Plan. This alternative would reduce construction and operational pollutant impacts, but not to a less-than-significant level. Impacts associated with carbon monoxide, toxic air contaminants, and odors exposure of sensitive receptors to pollutants would be similar to the proposed General Plan. (Less impact)

Biological Resources

Development under both the No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative and proposed General Plan would be subject to the same State and Federal environmental review requirements and regulation for the protection of sensitive and endangered species and habitats. Critical habitat protections related to MHCP and MSCP would be the same. The No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative expected development capacity would be reduced. However development would still be anticipated in the Business/Industrial District, an area of clustered critical habitat. Furthermore, the proposed Project makes key land use changes in the College Area, Twin Oaks Valley and Questhaven/La Costa Meadows neighborhoods that would reduce development capacity within critical habitats. Overall, biological resources impacts would be similar. (Similar impact)

Cultural Resources

Implementation of the No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative would result in a similar impact to cultural resources. Conservation, protection and restoration of historic sites has been occurring under the current General Plan. The proposed General Plan codifies the historical resources approach the City of San Marcos has been implementing. The No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative would continue the existing approach resulting in similar impacts. (Similar impact)

Geology and Soils

Implementation of the No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative would expose less people and fewer structures to the potential seismically related geologic events. Development under both the No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative and proposed General Plan would be subject to the same state and federal and City standards for construction, drainage, geology, soils and minerals. Because this alternative would impose similar geology, soils, and mineral resources requirements on future development as the proposed project, impacts related geology, soils, and mineral resources would be similar. Overall, impacts to geology, soils, and mineral resources under the No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative would be similar to the General Plan. (Similar impact)

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Implementation of the No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative would result in a lower development capacity for residential units and a coinciding lower population than the proposed General Plan. As a result of the decreased amount of development, GHG emissions would be less than the proposed General Plan. This alternative would reduce GHG emissions, but not to a less-than-significant level. Similar to the proposed General Plan, this alternative would not conflict with applicable plans, policies, or regulations for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions. Overall, impacts related to greenhouse gas emission under the No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative would be less than those under the proposed General Plan. (Less impact)

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Implementation of the No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative and the proposed General Plan would result in both residential and non-residential development that could potentially produce, use, and store hazardous materials. Development and operation of business under both the No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative and proposed General Plan would be subject to the same federal, state and regional regulations that are currently in place. Overall, impacts to hazards and hazardous materials would be similar under the No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative and the proposed General Plan. (Similar impact)

Hydrology and Water Quality

Under the No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative, the City would continue to function under the direction of the existing General Plan. Although the existing General Plan currently discusses issues related to water and hydrology, the existing General Plan contains only general discussions and does not contain policies that specifically target the assessment of water quality in watersheds, conservation and reuse efforts, and programs to improve water quality and supply. Development and intensification of the planning area are expected under the No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative and the proposed General Plan. Although the No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative expected development capacity is lower, without the policies and programs of the proposed General Plan pollutant conditions and levels of use could continue. Therefore, the impacts under the No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative would be greater than the proposed General Plan. (Greater impact)

Land Use and Planning

Buildout under the No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative would result in approximately 4,765 fewer dwelling units and approximately 8,855 fewer people. Non-residential square footage would be expected to increase under the No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative as vacant and underutilized land is developed/redeveloped; however, expected non-residential square footage capacity would be less than the proposed General Plan. Development under either this alternative or the proposed General Plan would not physically divide communities or conflict with habitat plans as the City has not adopted the MHCP subarea plan. However, the No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative would not adopt the goals, policies and new land uses of the proposed General Plan that supplement the smart growth goals of the SANDAG RTP. Implementation of the No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative would result in greater impacts to land use and planning when compared to the proposed General Plan. (Greater impact)

Noise

Buildout under the No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative would result in reduced expected development capacity compared to the proposed General Plan. Density and intensity of the entire planning area would be expected to increase over time, however at lower levels than the proposed project. Both plans contain policies related to noise compatibility between land uses and noise reduction strategies. Because general development levels, and thus traffic generation, would be lower under the No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative, impacts associated with noise would be less than the proposed General Plan. (Less impact)

Paleontological Resources

Implementation of the No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative and the proposed General Plan would both continue the existing City of San Marcos review processes and conservation/management policies protect prominent land forms, reduce run off, and limit human interaction with unmanaged open space. Furthermore, no direct construction activities are related to the No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative or the proposed General Plan, thus implementation of these plans would not directly or indirectly destroy unique geologic features. Impacts on paleontological resources would be less than significant under the No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative, similar to the proposed General Plan. (Similar impact)

Population and Housing

Implementation of the No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative would result in lower expected population and a lower capacity for housing units and non-residential square footage. See Table 5.0-2. This EIR evaluated inducing substantial population growth as a social or economic effect rather than an environmental one; impacts from the No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative would be evaluated in a similar manner. Replacement of housing would still occur under the No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative, occurring at a similar or slightly slower rate than the proposed General Plan. Impacts on displacement of housing or people resulting from the No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative would be similar to the proposed General Plan. (Similar)

Public Services and Utilities

Per Table 5.0-2, buildout under the No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative would result in a lower population, housing and non-residential square footage stock. This lower-buildout would result in less of an impact to public services and utilities within the planning area. Therefore, the impacts under the No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative would be less than the proposed General Plan. (Less impact)

Recreation

Under the No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative, the City would continue to implement existing plans for park and trail expansion. Due to the lower level of population predicted under the No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative, the demands on existing recreational facilities would be less and the park ratio would be higher than expected under the proposed General Plan. As a result, the same amount of parkland would service a smaller projected population. Therefore, the impacts under the No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative would be less than the General Plan. (Less impact)

Transportation and Traffic

Implementation of the No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative would continue the current General Plan for San Marcos and assumes continuation of current policies of surrounding North County cities. Analysis of the No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative assumes Year 2030 conditions in the North County Area assuming land use and transportation infrastructure consistent with the North County travel demand forecasting model maintained by SANDAG. Table 5.0-4 identifies roadway segment ADT and LOS for the No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative as compared to the proposed project. These projections generally reflect the current General Plans for the City of San Marcos and the surrounding North County cities.

Implementation of the No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative would not implement the mobility and circulation system improvements, Figure 3.16-10, or the flexible LOS standards of the proposed General Plan. However, the No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative would result in lower long-term volumes for the roadway segments studied. Overall, transportation and traffic impacts from the No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative would be similar to the proposed General Plan based on tradeoffs between mobility improvements and volumes. (Similar impact)

Alternative 1 Conclusion

Expected development under the Alternative 1: No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative would result in approximately 4,765 fewer dwelling units, approximately 8,855 fewer people, and substantially fewer square feet of non-residential development than expected development capacity under the proposed General Plan. The No Project/ Existing General Plan Alternative would result in similar environmental impacts to the proposed General Plan in the areas of biological resources; cultural resources; geology/soils/mineral resources; hazards/hazardous materials; paleontological resources; population and housing; and transportation and traffic.

Table 5.0-4
Project Roadway ADT and LOS Analysis
Project vs. No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative

Roadway	Segment	Proposed General Plan Conditions				No Project/Existing General Plan Conditions				Change
		Lanes	Acceptable Capacity	ADT	LOS	Lanes	Acceptable Capacity	ADT	LOS	
Santa Fe Avenue	West of Smilax Road ¹	4	35,000	27,310	C	4	35,000	29,110	C	=
	West of Rancho Santa Fe Road	4	35,000	13,990	A	4	35,000	13,990	A	=
Rancho Santa Fe Road	between Mission Road and Capalina Road	6	55,000	12,550	A	6	55,000	12,550	A	=
	between Grand Avenue and Linda Vista Drive	4	35,000	36,890	E	4	35,000	30,900	D	↓
	between Grandon Avenue and Security Place	4	35,000	37,960	E	4	35,000	28,970	C	↓
	South of San Marcos Boulevard	4	35,000	40,840	F	4	35,000	37,340	D	↓
	between Melrose Drive and San Elijo Road	6	55,000	26,650	C	6	55,000	26,650	C	=
San Elijo Road	East of Rancho Santa Fe Road	4	35,000	26,980	C	4	35,000	16,190	B	↓
Las Posas Road	North of Borden Road ¹	4	35,000	9,000	A	4	35,000	8,410	A	=
	North of Descanso Avenue	6	55,000	41,110	C	6	55,000	39,510	C	=
	North of Linda Vista Drive	4	35,000	9,050	A	4	35,000	16,250	B	↑
Twin Valley Oaks Road	North of Windy Way ²	4	35,000	36,350	E	4	35,000	33,050	D	↓
	North of Richmar Avenue	6	55,000	33,990	B	6	55,000	31,390	B	=
	between San Marcos Boulevard and SR-78 WB Ramp	6	55,000	37,620	C	6	55,000	42,620	C	=
	North of Barham Drive	8	64,200	41,810	C	8	64,200	41,010	C	=
	South of South Village Drive	4	35,000	25,520	C	4	35,000	21,520	C	=
Woodland Parkway	South of El Norte Parkway	4	35,000	14,200	A	4	35,000	12,100	A	=
	North of Mission Road	4	35,000	17,730	B	4	35,000	18,430	B	=
Borden Road	East of Vineyard Road ¹	4	35,000	11,340	A	4	35,000	10,240	A	=
Mission Road	East of Las Posas Road	4	35,000	17,410	B	4	35,000	17,410	B	=
	West of Aberdeen Avenue	4	35,000	19,180	B	4	35,000	19,180	B	=
	between Knoll Road and Fitzpatrick Road	4	35,000	17,630	B	4	35,000	17,230	B	=
	East of Mulberry Drive	6	55,000	29,070	B	6	55,000	23,770	A	↓

**Table 5.0-4
Project Roadway ADT and LOS Analysis
Project vs. No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative**

Roadway	Segment	Proposed General Plan Conditions				No Project/Existing General Plan Conditions				Change
		Lanes	Acceptable Capacity	ADT	LOS	Lanes	Acceptable Capacity	ADT	LOS	
San Marcos Boulevard	West of Rancho Santa Fe Road	6	55,000	30,970	B	6	55,000	32,770	B	=
	East of Rancho Santa Fe Road	6	55,000	47,940	C	6	55,000	53,740	D	↑
	between Bent Avenue and Grand Avenue	6	42,500	39,530	E	4	55,000	40,220	C	↓
Discovery Street	West of Twin Valley Oaks Road ¹	6	55,000	31,310	B	6	55,000	29,410	B	=
Barham Drive	West of La Moree Road	6	55,000	26,510	B	6	55,000	31,610	B	
	East of Twin Valley Oaks Road ¹	6	55,000	27,740	B	6	55,000	27,540	B	=

Note: Yellow highlights indicate significant impacts; green highlights indicate improved roadway ADT and LOS under the proposed project.

¹ Roadway segment would be analyzed in future scenario as a two lane roadway within a right of way consistent with the County of San Diego's General Plan.

² The Level of Service of the roadway segment is analyzed using the criteria of Major Arterial (4 lanes).

This alternative would result in greater environmental impacts to aesthetics, hydrology and water quality, and land use and planning.

Less environmental impacts can be expected to occur under this alternative for agricultural resources, air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, noise, public services and utilities, and recreation.

The No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative would not implement the proposed General Plan. As such, the No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative would not achieve most of the objectives of the community established guiding themes and proposed General Plan. The City is focusing efforts on attracting a variety of businesses and industries, higher educational institutions, and health care facilities. A full range of quality new development and redevelopment would be part of this effort including retail centers, mixed-use districts, corporate/technology parks, and restaurants, which would not be supported by the No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative. The No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative would not provide updated management tools or Implementation Programs that address the air quality, GHG and watershed/water quality management for regional reductions and benefit. The No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative would not provide updated planning tools or Implementation Programs that address planning area and regional setting, which is the general purpose of the proposed General Plan. Based on this balance of factors and the severity of the impacts, overall the No

Project/Existing General Plan alternative would be environmentally similar to the proposed General Plan, and would fail to meet the objectives of the project.

5.2 ALTERNATIVE 2: INCREASED URBAN CORE OFFICE PROFESSIONAL LAND USE ALTERNATIVE

Description of the Alternative

This second alternative, Increased Urban Core Office Professional Land Use Alternative is analyzed within this Program EIR as it would substantially lessen one or more of the significant effects of, and attain most of the basic project objectives of the proposed General Plan consistent with criteria in CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6[a][c].

The Increased Urban Core Office Professional Land Use Alternative would implement the goals, policies and Implementation Programs of the proposed General Plan with some modifications. The Increased Urban Core Office Professional Land Use Alternative land use plan would:

- increase Office Professional land use by 20 acres resulting in an increase non-residential expected development capacity square footage (location of this land use change is undefined but would be expected to occur within the urban core of the planning area)
- reduce Industrial land use by 20 acres to compensate for increase in Office Professional land use (location of this land use change is undefined but would be expected to occur within the urban core of the planning area)
- increase total non-residential expected capacity square footage compared to the proposed General Plan
- maintain expected capacity for residential development equal to the proposed General Plan.

The land use approach would maintain the majority of the goals and policies of the proposed General Plan, while shifting future development from land designated for Industrial use to Office Professional use. Conversion of 20 acres of land from Industrial to Office Professional land use would result in three primary outcomes. First, a higher utilization of land by Office Professional uses, 0.3 FAR for Industrial compared to 1.0 FAR for Office Professional, would result in an increase in non-residential expected capacity square footage. Second, the number of jobs available in the planning area would increase as Office Professional land uses generate more jobs per square foot of development yielding a higher employment base for the planning area. The accepted standard multiplier for Southern California assuming a generation rate of 0.001 jobs per square foot of industrial space, and a rate of 0.004 jobs per square foot on office space. Third, increasing Office Professional expected capacity would generate a larger potential job base for San Marcos and increase the jobs-to-housing ratio of the planning area. Table 5.0-5 identifies the expected development capacity and difference between job generation for the Increased Urban Core Office Professional Land Use Alternative compared to the proposed General Plan.

**Table 5.0-5
Planned Development and Jobs Capacity (20 Industrial acres converted
to Office Professional) Increased Urban Core Office Professional
Land Use Alternative vs. Proposed General Plan**

Alternative	Dwelling Units (DU)	Non-residential S.F.	Planned Jobs Capacity	Jobs to Housing Ratio
Increased Urban Core Office Professional Land Use Alternative	41,843	33,526,973*	69,057	1.65 jobs/1 DU
Proposed General Plan	41,843	32,917,134	65,834	1.57 jobs/1 DU
Difference	0	609,840	3,223	

*Total non-residential square footage of this alternative represents a decreased industrial capacity of 261,360 square feet and an increased office capacity of 871,200 square feet for a net increase of 609,840 square feet over the proposed General Plan.

The Increased Urban Core Office Professional Land Use Alternative would implement the majority of goals and policies of the proposed General Plan while increasing Office Professional expected capacity to generate a larger potential job base for San Marcos and increase the jobs to housing ratio. This change in land uses would result in an increased non-residential expected capacity of 609,840 square feet and a potential increase of 3,223 jobs compared to the proposed General Plan. Residential dwelling unit capacity would remain the same as the proposed General Plan, increasing the jobs/housing ratio from 1.57 jobs per dwelling unit to 1.65 jobs per dwelling unit.

Comparison of Environmental Impacts to the Proposed Project

Aesthetics

Implementation of the Urban Core Office Professional Land Use Alternative would result in an increased expected non-residential development capacity of 609,840 square feet; this represents an approximate 1.8% increase. While the percentage increase may be small, the visual impacts of this change would result in increased aesthetic impacts compared to the proposed General Plan. Building height, material and lighting of office buildings would be much different than the industrial buildings potentially replaced. This development shift of the Urban Core Office Professional Land Use Alternative could potentially block more vistas of the surrounding hills, generate more light and increase glare from office development. Therefore, implementation of the Urban Core Office Professional Land Use Alternative would result in greater aesthetic impacts when compared to the proposed General Plan. (Greater impact)

Agricultural Resources

Implementation of the Urban Core Office Professional Land Use Alternative would be consistent with all land use designations of the proposed General Plan, except for the 20 acres converted from Industrial to Office Professional. Expected development capacity and conversion pressures in areas of agricultural resources would be similar. This alternative would result in similar impacts to agricultural resources. (Similar impact)

Air Quality

The Increased Urban Core Office Professional Land Use would result in the development of additional commercial square footage compared to the proposed General Plan. The additional land for Office Professional uses would have a higher utilization of land than the Industrial acreage, which would result in an increase in non-residential expected capacity square footage. This increased development would result in increased construction and operational criteria air pollutant and precursor emissions compared to the proposed General Plan. Impacts associated with carbon monoxide, toxic air contaminants, and odors exposure of sensitive receptors to pollutants would be greater than the proposed General Plan. (Greater impact)

Biological Resources

Implementation of the Increased Urban Core Office Professional Land Use Alternative would result in similar development throughout the planning area as compared to the proposed General Plan. The Increased Urban Core Office Professional Land Use Alternative would only change land uses within the core of the planning area. Areas identified as Critical Habitat within the Urban Core Focus Areas would be treated the same manner for the Increased Urban Core Office Professional Land Use Alternative and the proposed General Plan. Implementation of the Increased Urban Core Office Professional Land Use Alternative would have similar impacts on biological resources as the proposed General Plan. (Similar impact)

Cultural Resources

Implementation of the Increased Urban Core Office Professional Land Use Alternative would result in a similar impact to cultural resources. Conservation, protection and restoration of historic sites have been occurring under the current General Plan. The Increased Urban Core Office Professional Land Use Alternative would implement the same approach to preservation and conservation of historic and cultural resources as the proposed General Plan. Impacts of this alternative and the proposed Project would be similar. (Similar impact)

Geology and Soils

Implementation of the Increased Urban Core Office Professional Land Use Alternative would result in a similar impact to geology and soils as all policies, programs and City regulations would be the same as the proposed General Plan. Overall, impacts to geology, soils, and mineral resources would be similar under the Increased Urban Core Office Professional Land Use Alternative and the proposed General Plan. (Similar impact)

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The Increased Urban Core Office Professional Land Use Alternative would result in the development of additional commercial square footage compared to the proposed General Plan. Similar to the proposed General Plan, this alternative would not conflict with applicable plans, policies, or regulations for the

purpose of reducing GHG emissions; this impact would be less than significant. The additional land for Office Professional uses would have a higher utilization of land than the Industrial acreage, which would result in an increase in non-residential expected capacity square footage under the Increased Urban Core Office Professional Land Use Alternative. This increased development would result in increased GHG emissions compared to the proposed General Plan. (Greater impact)

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Implementation of the Increased Urban Core Office Professional Land Use Alternative and the proposed General Plan would result in similar residential and non-residential development that could potentially produce, use, and store hazardous materials. The Increased Urban Core Office Professional Land Use Alternative would increase office users and reduce industrial users, potentially reducing the volume of hazardous materials user/generators; reduction would be very limited. All policies, programs and City regulations would be the same under the Increased Urban Core Office Professional Land Use Alternative as the proposed General Plan. Overall, impacts to hazards and hazardous materials would be similar under the Increased Urban Core Office Professional Land Use Alternative and the proposed General Plan. (Similar impact)

Hydrology and Water Quality

Implementation of the Increased Urban Core Office Professional Land Use Alternative would result in similar hydrology and water quality impacts as the proposed General Plan. All policies and programs related to water quality, watershed protection and use reduction/recycling efforts would be implemented under the Increased Urban Core Office Professional Land Use Alternative and the proposed General Plan. Therefore, the impacts under the Increased Urban Core Office Professional Land Use Alternative would be similar to the proposed General Plan. (Similar impact)

Land Use and Planning

The Increased Urban Core Office Professional Land Use Alternative would increase office development and the number of available jobs in the planning area. This would improve the jobs housing balance within San Marcos, providing greater job opportunities closer to home for residents of the planning area and the North County area. Otherwise, all policies and programs established to protect communities and community character, and facilitate consistency with applicable land use or habitat conservation plan would remain in place. Impacts related to land use and planning under the Increased Urban Core Office Professional Land Use Alternative would be similar to the proposed General Plan. (Similar impact)

Noise

Implementation of the Increased Urban Core Office Professional Land Use Alternative would result in similar levels of development across the planning area as the proposed General Plan. The exception would be an increase in the development footprint within the urban core, generating increased trips within the planning area. This would result in an increase to noise generation from car trips. Overall, noise

related impacts under the Increased Urban Core Office Professional Land Use Alternative would be a greater impact than under the proposed General Plan. (Greater impact)

Paleontological Resources

Implementation of the Increased Urban Core Office Professional Land Use Alternative and the proposed General Plan would both continue the existing City of San Marcos review processes and conservation/management policies protect prominent land forms, reduce run off, and limit human interaction with unmanaged open space. Implementation of both plans would not directly or indirectly destroy unique geologic features. Impacts on paleontological resources under the Increased Urban Core Office Professional Land Use Alternative would be similar to the proposed General Plan. (Similar impact)

Population and Housing

The Increased Urban Core Office Professional Land Use Alternative would implement the same land use plan and policies as related to housing. Revising the non-residential land use designation of 20 acres from Industrial to Office Professional would not impact the displacement of homes or people compared to the proposed General Plan. Thus, impacts related to population and housing under the Increased Urban Core Office Professional Land Use Alternative would be similar to the proposed General Plan. (Similar impact)

Public Services and Utilities

Implementation of the Increased Urban Core Office Professional Land Use Alternative would result in the same expected population as the proposed General Plan. This alternative would also implement the same policies and programs related to public services, infrastructure and utilities. Therefore, impacts related to public services and utilities under the Increased Urban Core Office Professional Land Use Alternative would be similar to the proposed General Plan. (Similar impact)

Recreation

Implementation of the Increased Urban Core Office Professional Land Use Alternative would result in the same expected population as the proposed General Plan. This alternative would also implement the same policies and programs related to expansion of parkland, recreational facilities and trails. Therefore, impacts related to recreation under the Increased Urban Core Office Professional Land Use Alternative would be similar to the proposed General Plan. (Similar impact)

Transportation and Traffic

Implementation of the Increased Urban Core Office Professional Land Use Alternative would result in increased Office Professional development within the urban core of the planning area. From a traffic standpoint, office uses are more land use and trip intensive than industrial uses. Therefore, the increase in Office Professional land use development under this alternative would increase the total number of trips within the planning area. While provision of additional jobs associated with office uses may result in internalizing trips within the planning area, the details of regional impacts on employment-related trips

associate with this alternative are not available at this time. Thus, it is assumed that this alternative would have greater transportation and traffic impacts than the proposed General Plan. (Greater impact)

Alternative 2 Conclusion

Expected development capacity under the Alternative 2: Increased Urban Core Office Professional Land Use Alternative would result in approximately 609,840 more square feet for non-residential development, and a potential for 3,223 more jobs, than expected development capacity under the proposed General Plan. Expected dwelling units and population would be the same. All goals, policies and programs of the proposed General Plan would be implemented under the Increased Urban Core Office Professional Land Use Alternative. The only changes would be the conversion of 20 acres within the urban core from Industrial to Office Professional land use.

Increasing the non-residential capacity the Increased Urban Core Office Professional Land Use Alternative would increase the jobs/housing balance, providing a greater number of job opportunities within the planning area.

The Increased Urban Core Office Professional Land Use Alternative would result in similar environmental impacts to the proposed General Plan in the issue areas of agricultural, biological, cultural and paleontological resources; geology, soils and mineral resources; hazardous materials; hydrology and water quality; land use and planning; population and housing; public services and utilities, and recreation.

This alternative would result in greater environmental impacts to aesthetics, air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, noise, and transportation and traffic. The Increased Urban Core Office Professional Land Use Alternative would not reduce impacts to any environmental issues.

The Increased Urban Core Office Professional Land Use Alternative would achieve most of the goals and policies of the proposed General Plan, allow for increased non-residential development capacity and increase potential job opportunities within the planning area. The non-residential capacity of the Increased Urban Core Office Professional Land Use Alternative would implement policies of the proposed General Plan that focus on promoting commercial uses for a solid economic base (Policy LU-1.2). However, this alternative would lessen the effectiveness of retaining a variety of industrial uses (Policy LU-1.5), and diversification of land uses (Policy LU-1.3).

Based on the discussion above, the Increased Urban Core Office Professional Land Use Alternative would be environmentally inferior to the proposed General Plan.

5.3 ALTERNATIVE 3: CITY STAFF RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE

Description of the Alternative

This Alternative 3: Staff Recommended Alternative is analyzed within this Program EIR as it would substantially lessen one or more of the significant effects of, and attain most of the basic project

objectives of the proposed General Plan consistent with criteria in CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6[a][c].

The Staff Recommended Alternative would implement the goals and policies the proposed General Plan; however, the General Plan Land Use Plan would be revised to include changes in land use designations on specific properties recommended by City of San Marcos staff. Of the 33 Focus Areas identified for land use changes in the proposed General Plan, the Staff Recommended Alternative would propose different land use designations in eight of the Focus Areas. The Staff Recommended Alternative land use changes are summarized in Table 5.0-6.

**Table 5.0-6
Staff Recommended Alternative
Land Use Changes by Focus Area**

Focus Area	Acres	Staff Recommended	Proposed Project	Impact
1 (Mission Road Study Area)	5.93	MU4	MU3	Increase non-residential square footage
6	9.48	LI	I	Increase non-residential square footage
8 (Barham)	62.12 ac	BP/ LI/OP/ C/MU3	LI/OP/ C/MU3	Increase non-residential square footage
11 (Bieri)	69.41	SPA/C/OP/ BP/MU4	SPA(LI)/C/ MHDR/OS	Land Use only, SOI
21	0.55	I	C	Same as existing General Plan
22	122.38	SPA (LDR up to 18 units)	SPA (LDR up to 25 units)	-7 dwelling units
30	10.03	LMDR (8-12 DU/AC)	MDR (15-20 du/ac)	-80 dwelling units
34	15.28	SPA Movie Studio	SPA (BP)	Same as existing General Plan

The Staff Recommended Alternative would reduce the number of areas experiencing land use change under the General Plan update and would conserve the existing land use designation of 15.83 acres within the planning area. Expected development capacity under the Staff Recommended Alternative would be similar to the proposed General Plan; planned development and population capacity of the Staff Recommended Alternative as compared to the proposed General Plan is summarized in Table 5.0-7.

This alternative would result in a decreased expected capacity for dwelling units and population with an increase in non-residential square feet. Overall, the Staff Recommended Alternative would result in similar environmental impacts as the proposed General Plan with a slight shift in expected capacity between residential and non-residential development.

**Table 5.0-7
Development and Population Capacity
Transferred Density Alternative vs. Proposed General Plan**

Impact	Dwelling Units	Population	Non-Residential S.F.
Staff Recommended Alternative	41,756	127,773	Increased
Proposed General Plan	41,843	128,040	32,917,134
Difference	-87	-267	Increased, square footage undefined.

Comparison of Environmental Impacts to the Proposed Project

Aesthetics

Implementation of the Staff Recommended Alternative would result in a shift of expected development capacity with slightly more Business Park, Mixed Use 4 and Light Industrial development. This would be a shift, rather than an increase or decrease in quality, of aesthetic development. The goals and policies of the proposed General Plan regarding the quality of construction, FAR and general community improvements would remain. Therefore, implementation of the Staff Recommended Alternative would result in similar impacts associated with population and housing when compared to the proposed General Plan. (Similar impact)

Agricultural Resources

Implementation of the Staff Recommended Alternative would result in similar development within the planning area as the proposed General Plan. Treatment and land use designations of agricultural or agricultural-adjacent land would be the same as the proposed General Plan. Therefore, implementation of the Staff Recommended Alternative would result in similar impacts associated with agricultural resources when compared to the proposed General Plan. (Similar impact)

Air Quality

The Staff Recommended Alternative would implement a very similar land use plan and all the goals, policies and programs of the proposed General Plan. Alteration in expected development capacity for residential and non-residential would be negligible. Vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and associated air pollutant emissions would be similar; it is also assumed that this alternative would have construction and operational pollutant impacts similar to the proposed General Plan. Impacts associated with carbon monoxide, toxic air contaminants, and odors exposure of sensitive receptors to pollutants under the Staff Recommended Alternative would be similar to the proposed General Plan. (Similar impact)

Biological Resources

Implementation of the Staff Recommended Alternative would result in similar development within the planning area as the proposed General Plan. Differences in land use designations between the Staff Recommended Alternative and the proposed General Plan occur primarily in previously disturbed areas where redevelopment is already permitted. However, expected development capacity in critical habitat areas would be reduced by seven units under the Staff Recommended Alternative. This land use revision would reduce permitted density of Focus Area 22 from “up to 25” units” within a MHCP designated critical habitat area. Reduced development potential in a critical habitat area would result in a lesser impact than under the proposed General Plan. (Less impact)

Cultural Resources

Implementation of the Staff Recommended Alternative would result in a similar impact to cultural resources as the proposed General Plan. All polices, programs and regulations of such resources would be identical under Staff Recommended Alternative and the proposed project. Impacts of this alternative and the proposed General Plan would be similar. (Similar impact)

Geology and Soils

Implementation of the Staff Recommended Alternative would result in a similar impact to geology and soils as all policies, programs and City regulations would be the same as the proposed General Plan. Overall, impacts to geology, soils, and mineral resources would be similar under the Staff Recommended Alternative and the proposed General Plan. (Similar impact)

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The Staff Recommended Alternative would implement a very similar land use plan and all the goals, policies and programs of the proposed General Plan. Alteration in expected development capacity for residential and non-residential would be negligible. Vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and associated GHG emissions would be similar to the proposed General Plan. This alternative would also not conflict with applicable plans, policies, or regulations for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions. This impact under the Staff Recommended Alternative would be similar to the proposed General Plan. (Similar impact)

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Implementation of the Staff Recommended Alternative and the proposed General Plan would result in similar residential and non-residential development that could potentially produce, use, and store hazardous materials; modifications in land use designations of the Staff Recommended Alternative would slightly alter the type of non-residential development and negligibly reduce population, however not to a level that would result in more or less impacts from hazards and hazardous materials. All policies, programs and City regulations would be the same under the Staff Recommended Alternative as the proposed General Plan. Overall, impacts to hazards and hazardous materials would be similar under the Staff Recommended Alternative and the proposed General Plan. (Similar impact)

Hydrology and Water Quality

Implementation of the Staff Recommended Alternative would result in similar hydrology and water quality impacts as the proposed General Plan. All policies and programs related to water quality, watershed protection and use reduction/recycling efforts would be implemented under the Staff Recommended Alternative and the proposed General Plan. Therefore, the impacts under the Staff Recommended Alternative would be similar to the proposed General Plan. (Similar impact)

Land Use and Planning

Implementation of the Staff Recommended Alternative would not propose any additional roadways or alter the policies and programs of the proposed General Plan that protect communities and community character, or facilitate consistency with applicable land use or habitat conservation plan. Impacts related to land use and planning under the Staff Recommended Alternative would be similar to the proposed General Plan. (Similar impact)

Noise

The Staff Recommended Alternative would implement a very similar land use plan and all the goals, policies and programs of the proposed General Plan. Alteration in expected development capacity for residential and non-residential would be negligible and result in a similar number of noise-generating car trips. Thus, implementation of the Staff Recommended Alternative would result in similar noise impacts when compared to the proposed General Plan. (Similar impact)

Paleontological Resources

Implementation of the Staff Recommended Alternative and the proposed General Plan would both continue the existing City of San Marcos review processes and conservation/management policies protect prominent land forms, reduce run off, and limit human interaction with unmanaged open space. Implementation of both plans would not directly or indirectly destroy unique geologic features. Impacts on paleontological resources would be less than significant under the Staff Recommended Alternative, similar to the proposed General Plan. (Similar impact)

Population and Housing

The Staff Recommended Alternative would implement the same policies as related to housing. Alteration in expected development capacity for residential, 87 less units than the proposed project, would be negligible. Thus, impacts related to population and housing under the Staff Recommended Alternative would be similar to the proposed General Plan. (Similar impact)

Public Services and Utilities

Implementation of the Staff Recommended Alternative would result in a very similar expected population as the proposed General Plan. This alternative would also implement the same policies and programs

related to public services, infrastructure and utilities. Therefore, impacts related to public services and utilities under the Staff Recommended Alternative would be similar to the proposed General Plan. (Similar impact)

Recreation

Implementation of the Staff Recommended Alternative would result in the nearly same expected population as the proposed General Plan. This alternative would also implement the same policies and programs related to expansion of parkland, recreational facilities and trails. Therefore, impacts related to recreation under the Staff Recommended Alternative would be similar to the proposed General Plan. (Similar impact)

Transportation and Traffic

Implementation of the Staff Recommended Alternative would result in the nearly same expected population and distribution of expected development capacity as the proposed General Plan. This alternative would also implement the same transportation policies and programs, and proposed circulation improvements as the proposed General Plan. Therefore, impacts related to transportation and traffic under the Staff Recommended Alternative would be similar to the proposed General Plan. (Similar impact)

Alternative 3 Conclusion

Expected development capacity under the Staff Recommended Alternative would result in approximately 87 less dwelling units and 267 less people living in the planning area compared to the proposed General Plan; non-residential expected development capacity would be the same. All goals, policies and programs of the proposed General Plan would be implemented under the Staff Recommended Alternative. The only changes would be minor land use changes to seven Focus Areas under the Staff Recommended Alternative.

Implementation of the Staff Recommended Alternative and the proposed General Plan would be very similar in terms of land use approach and environmental impacts. However, impacts to biological resources would be less with this alternative than the proposed General Plan. The implementation of the Staff Recommended Alternative would result in similar environmental impacts to the proposed General Plan in every other environmental impact analysis issue area.

The Staff Recommended Alternative would achieve the majority of the goals and policies of the proposed General Plan, allowing for alternative land uses within eight Focus Areas.

Based on the discussion above, the Staff Recommended Alternative would be environmentally superior to the proposed General Plan as a result of less impacts to biological resources, and would fulfill the Guiding Themes, goals and policies established by the community for the proposed General Plan.

5.4 ALTERNATIVE 4: TRANSFERRED DENSITY ALTERNATIVE

Description of the Alternative

This fourth alternative, Transferred Density Alternative, is analyzed within this Program EIR as it would substantially lessen one or more of the significant effects of, and attain most of the basic project objectives of the proposed General Plan consistent with criteria in CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6[a][c].

The Transferred Density Alternative would implement the goals, policies, and equivalent expected development capacity of the proposed General Plan; however, the land use plan would eliminate changes to the outer lying Focus Areas, and transfer the expected development capacity to the core of the planning area. Expected development capacity (number of units or square footage permitted) of housing, population and non-residential square footage would be equivalent to the Project, however, density/intensity would be increased within the urban core of the community. Expected capacity within the core would require increased density, building heights, FAR and off-street parking within the core area. Figure 5.0-1 identified the urban core area that would experience increased density under the Transferred Density Alternative. Table 5.0-8 provides the development and population capacity of the Transferred Density Alternative compared to the proposed General Plan.

**Table 5.0-8
Development and Population Capacity
Transferred Density Alternative vs. Proposed General Plan**

Impact	Dwelling Units	Population	Non-Residential S.F.
Transferred Density Alternative	41,843	128,040	32,917,134
Proposed General Plan	41,843	128,040	32,917,134
Difference	0	0	0

Comparison of Environmental Impacts to the Proposed Project

Aesthetics

Implementation of the Transferred Density Alternative would result in the same expected development capacity regarding dwelling units, population and non-residential square footages as the proposed General Plan. All policies and programs of the proposed General Plan would remain the same; however the Transferred Density Alternative would implement a land use plan that focuses increased development capacity within the urban core of the planning area. This would result in increased density, intensity and building height within the core of the community. Due to limitation on new development capacity in outlying areas, the Transferred Density Alternative would induce greater infill development than expected under the proposed General Plan. These resulting development changes would increase the height of the

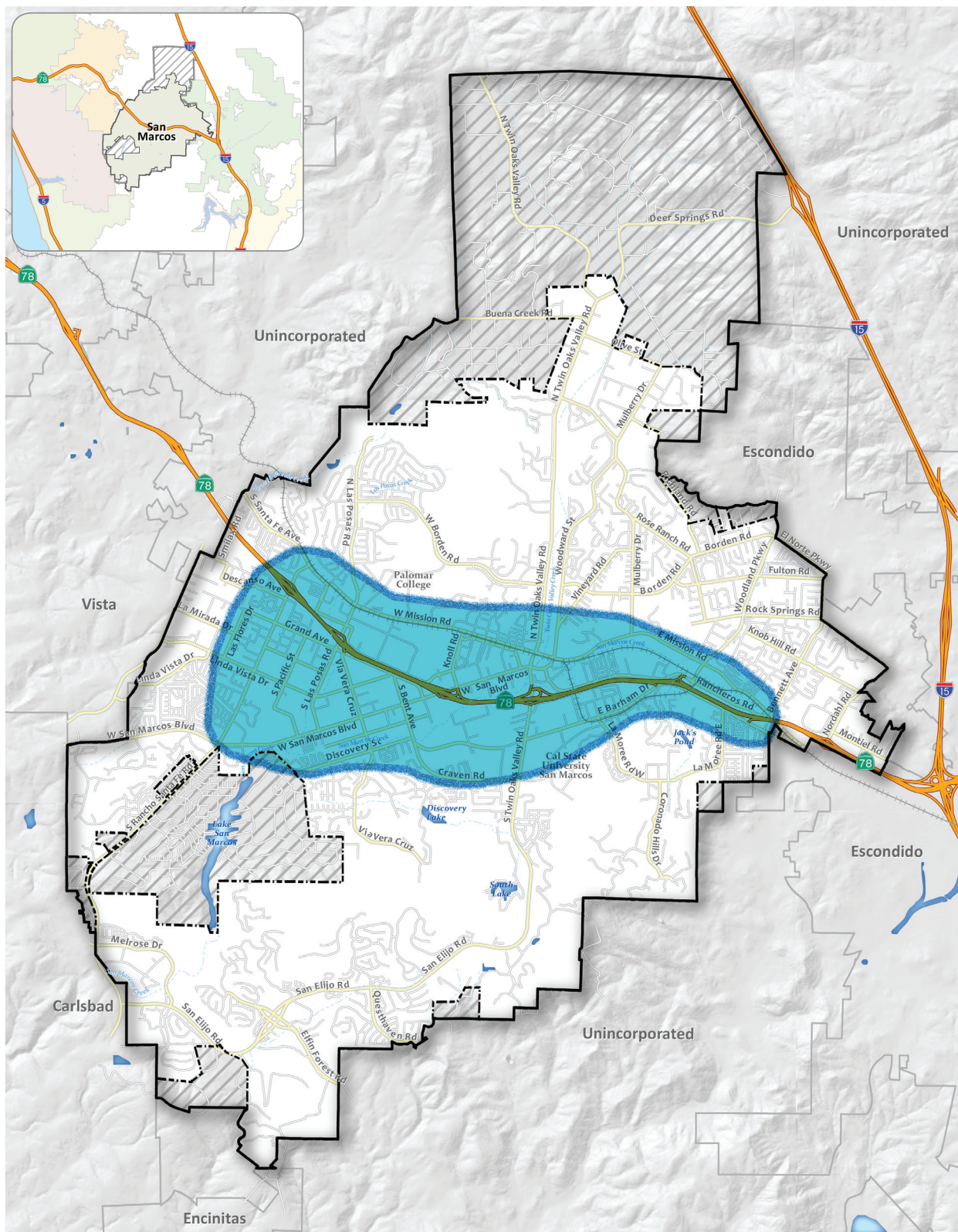


FIGURE 5.0-1

City of San Marcos

Transfer Density "Urban Core"

- San Marcos City Limits
- Sphere of Influence
- Planning Area
- Major Hydrologic Features
- Railroad
- Creeks
- Freeway
- Highway
- Major Road
- Minor Road
- Alternative 4 Urban Core Area where Transfer Density would be consolidated



San Marcos skyline, block views of surrounding hillsides from the core of the community, and increase opportunities for centralized lighting and glare issues. Therefore, implementation of the Transferred Density Alternative would result in greater aesthetic impacts when compared to the proposed General Plan. (Greater impact)

Agricultural Resources

The Transferred Density Alternative would implement the goals, policies and programs of the proposed General Plan. However, land use changes to agricultural land would be reduced, transferring the development capacity in those areas to the urban core of the planning area. See Figure 5.0-1. The land use approach of the Transferred Density Alternative would reduce land use changes to agricultural and agricultural-adjacent property, thus reducing impacts to conversion of farmland directly and indirectly. Treatment of Williamson Act properties would be similar under the Transferred Density Alternative as the proposed General Plan. Overall, implementation of the Transferred Density Alternative would result in less impacts to agricultural resources than the proposed General Plan. (Less impact).

Air Quality

The Transferred Density Alternative would transfer the expected development capacity to the core of the planning area. Expected development capacity of housing, population and non-residential square footage would be equivalent to the Project; however density/intensity would be increased within the core of the community. The increased density within the core of the community would result in future residents driving shorter distances, decreasing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and associated air pollutant emissions. Impacts associated with carbon monoxide, toxic air contaminants, and odors exposure of sensitive receptors to pollutants would be similar to the proposed General Plan. (Less impact)

Biological Resources

Development under both the Transferred Density Alternative and proposed General Plan would be subject to the same state and federal environmental review requirements and regulation for the protection of sensitive and endangered species and habitats. Critical habitat protections related to MHCP and MSCP would be the same. The Transferred Density Alternative would limit increased development in outlying areas, focusing land use changes and expected development capacity in the urban core area. This land use approach would reduce development impacts on critical habitat areas in the College Area and Questhaven/La Coast Meadows neighborhoods as compared to the proposed General Plan. Overall, biological resources impacts under the Transferred Density Alternative would be less than under the proposed General Plan. (Less impact)

Cultural Resources

Implementation of the Transferred Density Alternative would implement all polices, programs and regulations of cultural resources as the proposed General Plan. Therefore, impacts of this alternative and the proposed General Plan would be similar. (Similar impact).

Geology and Soils

Implementation of the Transferred Density Alternative would result in a similar impact to geology and soils as all policies, programs and City regulations would be the same as the proposed General Plan. Overall, impacts to geology, soils, and mineral resources would be similar under the Transferred Density Alternative and the proposed General Plan. (Similar impact).

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The Transferred Density Alternative would transfer the expected development capacity to the core of the planning area. Expected development capacity of housing, population and non-residential square footage would be equivalent to the Project; however density/intensity would be increased within the core of the community. The increased density within the core of the community could result in future residents driving shorter distances, decreasing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and associated GHG emissions. This alternative would also not conflict with applicable plans, policies, or regulations for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions. This impact would be less than significant. (Less impact)

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Implementation of the Transferred Density Alternative and the proposed General Plan would result in similar residential and non-residential development that could potentially produce, use, and store hazardous materials. The Transferred Density Alternative would increase density and building height within the urban core of the planning area. However, development under the Transferred Density Alternative would continue to be regulated by federal, state and local policies and standards. Overall, impacts to hazards and hazardous materials would be similar under the Transferred Density Alternative and the proposed General Plan. (Similar impact)

Hydrology and Water Quality

Development capacity under the Transferred Density Alternative would be the same as that of the proposed General Plan. All policies and programs related to water quality, watershed protection and use reduction/recycling efforts would be implemented under the Transferred Density Alternative and the proposed General Plan. Therefore, the impacts to hydrology and water quality under the Transferred Density Alternative would be similar to the proposed General Plan. (Similar impact)

Land Use and Planning

The Transferred Density Alternative would increase density and intensity of the urban core while reducing growth levels in other areas of the planning area. This would result in less changes to the character and continuity of most existing neighborhoods and induce greater changes within the urban core. Otherwise, all policies and programs established to protect communities and community character, and facilitate consistency with applicable land use or habitat conservation plan would remain in place. Impacts related to land use and planning under the Transferred Density Alternative would be similar to the proposed General Plan. (Similar impact)

Noise

The Transferred Density Alternative would result in a lower density of development outside the urban core by consolidating greater density within the urban core of the planning area. Compared to the proposed General Plan, this alternative would increase viability of transit and alternative methods of transportation, like walking and bicycling, but cars driven within the urban core might still be greater than with the proposed General Plan. Vehicular noise within the urban core would, therefore, likely be greater than the proposed General Plan, while noise outside the urban core would be less. As a result, overall noise related impacts associated with the Transferred Density Alternative would be similar to the proposed General Plan. (Similar impact)

Paleontological Resources

Implementation of the Transferred Density Alternative and the proposed General Plan would both continue the existing City of San Marcos review processes and conservation/management policies protect prominent land forms, reduce run off, and limit human interaction with unmanaged open space. Implementation of both plans would not directly or indirectly destroy unique geologic features. Impacts on paleontological resources under the Transferred Density Alternative would be similar to the proposed General Plan. (Similar impact)

Population and Housing

The Transferred Density Alternative would implement the same policies and expected residential development capacity as the proposed General Plan. Intensification of the urban core area may induce greater redevelopment and displacement of existing housing stock compared to the proposed General Plan. Impacts would be greater than the proposed General Plan. (Greater impact)

Public Services and Utilities

Implementation of the Transferred Density Alternative would result in the same expected population as the proposed General Plan. This alternative would also implement the same policies and programs related to public services, infrastructure and utilities. However, a more compact urban core with greater density would generally have less impacts related to the provision of public services and utilities than the proposed General Plan, since the distances for service provision would be less. Therefore, impacts related to public services and utilities under the Transferred Density Alternative would be less than the proposed General Plan. (Less impact).

Recreation

Implementation of the Transferred Density Alternative would result in the same expected population as the proposed General Plan. This alternative would also implement the same policies and programs related to expansion of parkland, recreational facilities and trails. Therefore, impacts related to recreation under the Transferred Density Alternative would be similar to the proposed General Plan. (Similar impact)

Transportation and Traffic

Implementation of the Transferred Density Alternative would implement the same overall expected development capacity as the proposed General Plan. However, density and intensity of the urban core would be increased, while expected growth in other areas of the planning area would be reduced. This would increase density around established transportation corridors and transit hubs, increasing transit viability for the planning area and the region. A reduction in trips within the planning area would be expected as transit and alternative transportation usage increases. Impacts on roadway and intersection level of service within the urban core may be similar. However, increased viability of transit options for the planning area increases regional transit viability. Impacts associated with transportation and traffic under the Transferred Density Alternative would result in a reduced level of impact compared to the proposed General Plan. (Less impact)

Alternative 4 Conclusion

Expected development capacity under Transferred Density Alternative would be equivalent to that of the proposed General Plan. All goals, policies and programs of the proposed General Plan would be implemented under this alternative. The only changes would be increased density/intensity within the core of the community, allowing for less development throughout the rest of the planning area.

Implementation of the Transferred Density Alternative and the proposed General Plan would result in similar environmental impacts in the majority of issue areas including biological, cultural, paleontological, and geology/soil/mineral resources; hazards and hazardous materials; hydrology and water quality; land use and planning; noise; and recreation.

This alternative would result in greater environmental impacts to aesthetics and population and housing.

This alternative would result in less environmental impacts to agricultural resources, air quality, biological resources, public services, and transportation and traffic. Overall, implementation of the Transferred Density Alternative would be environmentally superior.

While the Transferred Density Alternative would achieve the majority of the goals and policies of the proposed General Plan, this alternative would not allow for the desired range and distribution of land uses identified through the General Plan participation process. Limitation of land use changes in areas outside of the urban core identified by this alternative would constrain property owner redevelopment and utilization of property.

Based on the discussion above, the Transferred Density Alternative would be environmental superior to the proposed General Plan, however it would not fulfill key policies or some of the guiding themes established by the community for the proposed General Plan.