

5 ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Section 15126.6(a) of the State CEQA Guidelines requires EIRs to describe “... a range of reasonable alternatives to 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.”

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 lead agency is responsible for selecting a range of project alternatives for examination and must publicly disclose its reasoning for selecting those alternatives. There is no ironclad rule governing the nature or scope of the alternatives to be discussed other than the rule of reason. Section 15126.6(b) describes the purpose of the alternatives analysis as follows:

Because an EIR must identify ways to mitigate or avoid the significant effects that a project may have on the environment (Public Resources Code Section 21002.1), the discussion of alternatives shall focus on alternatives to the project or its location which are capable of avoiding or substantially lessening any significant effects of the project, even if these alternatives would impede to some degree the attainment of the project objectives, or would be more costly.

The State CEQA Guidelines suggest that alternatives should be compared to the proposed project’s environmental impacts, and that the “no project” alternative be considered (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6[e]). In defining “feasibility” (e.g., “... feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project ...”). State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(f)(1) states, in part:

Among the factors that may be taken into account when addressing the feasibility of alternatives are site suitability, economic viability, availability of infrastructure, general plan consistency, other plans or regulatory limitations, jurisdictional boundaries (projects with a regionally significant impact should consider the regional context), and whether the proponent can reasonably acquire, control or otherwise have access to the alternative site (or the site is already owned by the proponent). No one of these factors establishes a fixed limit on the scope of reasonable alternatives.

In determining what alternatives should be considered in the EIR, it is important to acknowledge the objectives of the project, the project’s significant effects, and unique project considerations. These factors are crucial to the development of alternatives that meet the criteria specified in Section 15126.6(a) of the State CEQA Guidelines.

For the purposes of this EIR, the “project,” as described in the various CEQA guidance summarized above, is adoption and implementation of the Draft General Plan. Please see Section 3.3 in Chapter 3, “Project Description,” for the project objectives.

5.2 ALTERNATIVES EVALUATED

Project alternatives are intended to reduce or eliminate the potentially significant adverse environmental effects of the Draft General Plan, while attempting to meet most of the project objectives, as stated in Chapter 3, “Project Description.”

An EIR is required to contain a discussion of a reasonable range of alternatives to the project, or to the location of the project, that could feasibly attain the basic objectives of the project (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6[a]). The comparative merits of the alternatives should also be presented. In addition to the guidance described in Section 5.1 above, CEQA provides the following guidelines for considering alternatives to the project:

- ▶ If an alternative would cause one or more significant environmental effects in addition to those that would be caused by the project, the significant effects of the alternatives shall be discussed, but in less detail than the significant effects of the project. (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6[d])
- ▶ The “no project” alternative shall be evaluated. If the environmentally superior alternative is the no project alternative, the EIR shall also identify an environmentally superior alternative among the other alternatives. (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6[e])
- ▶ The range of alternatives required by an EIR is governed by the “rule of reason” that requires the EIR to set forth only those alternatives necessary to permit a reasoned choice. The key issue is whether the selection and discussion of alternatives fosters informed decision-making and informed public participation. An EIR need not consider an alternative whose effect cannot be ascertained and whose implementation is remote and speculative. (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6[f])

5.2.1 GENERAL PLAN ALTERNATIVES

The City considered a range of land use alternatives for the Draft General Plan. The previous public discussion of Draft General Plan alternatives is distinct from the alternatives analysis presented in this EIR, although there may be overlap with certain concepts presented earlier. Because the purpose of the EIR alternatives is primarily to identify means to reduce or avoid significant environmental effects of the project, the alternatives considered during the public discussion leading to the Draft General Plan are not considered.

5.2.2 GENERAL PLAN EIR ALTERNATIVES

For this EIR, the City chose to examine the impacts of three alternatives to the Draft General Plan:

- ▶ Alternative 1 – No Project / Existing General Plan
- ▶ Alternative 2 – Reduced Mixed-Use Intensity
- ▶ Alternative 3 – Reduced Intensity Throughout the Planning Area

Each is described briefly below.

ALTERNATIVE 1. NO PROJECT / EXISTING GENERAL PLAN

Under the No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative (Alternative 1), the Draft General Plan would not be adopted, and future development in the planning area would proceed according to the existing (1992) General Plan land use diagram (Exhibit 5-1) and policies. The development capacity estimated within the 1992 General Plan would provide for a population of 307,026 in a smaller geographic area than is proposed in the Draft General Plan. Acreages by land use designation, number of residential units, and square footage of non-residential uses anticipated in the 1992 General Plan are presented in Table 5-1.

Alternative 1 would result in 26,573 more residential units than the Draft General Plan. There would be 2.56 million less nonresidential square feet under Alternative 1 than envisioned in the Draft General Plan. Alternative 1 also addresses a smaller planning area than the Draft General Plan. The overall acreage designated for developed uses (i.e., the acreage occupied by residential, commercial, industrial, office, and public land uses) would be 3,742 acres less than with implementation of the Draft General Plan.

Table 5-1 Alternative 1 - No Project/Existing General Plan Development Capacity Assumptions			
Land Use Category	Developed Acres ¹	Residential Units	Non-Residential Square Feet (1,000s)
Single Family Residential	27,243	73,483	--
Multifamily Residential	1,664	23,500	--
Commercial	1,859	--	25,730
Office	107	--	2,700
Industrial	1,531	--	25,880
Public	9,707	--	2,800
Total	42,111	96,983	57,110
Compared to Draft General Plan	-3,742	+26,573	-2,560
Source: City of Hemet 1991 (General Plan EIR, Table C-2)			

ALTERNATIVE 2. REDUCED MIXED-USE INTENSITY

This alternative is intended to reduce significant water supply, GHG emissions, air quality, transportation and traffic, and agricultural resource impacts of the Draft General Plan. Compared to the Draft General Plan, this alternative would reduce the intensity of development in currently undeveloped portions of the planning area, including West Hemet. This alternative would also include construction of additional approach lanes at the intersections of Sanderson Avenue with Florida and Devonshire Avenues beyond the configuration proposed by the Draft General Plan. An additional approach lane in each of the four approach directions would be added at each intersection.

In this alternative, proposed Mixed-Use Areas 1, 2, 3 and 5 in the Land Use Element would be reduced to 60% of proposed development capacity (including both dwelling units and non-residential square feet). Mixed-Use Area 4 (the Page Ranch area) would be removed, and would instead be designated for Agricultural use to conserve Important Farmland in this area. Table 5-2 provides estimated dwelling units, non-residential square feet, and population that would occur with implementation of Alternative 2.

Alternative 2 would result in 1,877 fewer residential units and 4,458 fewer people than the Draft General Plan. There would also be 5.28 million less nonresidential square feet under Alternative 2 than envisioned in the Draft General Plan.

ALTERNATIVE 3. REDUCED INTENSITY THROUGHOUT THE PLANNING AREA

This alternative is intended to reduce significant water supply, GHG emissions, and air quality impacts of the Draft General Plan. Compared to the Draft General Plan, this alternative would reduce the intensity of development in currently undeveloped portions of the planning area, including West Hemet.

In this alternative, all land use designations providing for residential units or non-residential uses would provide for 15% less density or intensity compared to the Draft General Plan. Table 5-3 provides estimated dwelling units, non-residential square feet, and population that would occur with implementation of Alternative 3.

**Table 5-2
Alternative 2 – Reduced Mixed-Use Intensity Development Capacity Assumptions**

General Plan Land Use Designation		Acres	Dwelling Units	Non-Residential Square Feet (1,000s)	Population
		Total	Total	Total	Total
Residential		26,891	66,441	0	158,422
Rural Residential	RR	1,853	1,901	0	4,515
Rural Residential	RR-2.5	809	626	0	1,486
Rural Residential	RR-5ac	1,388	278	0	659
Hillside Residential	HR	8,264	1,819	0	4,320
Hillside Residential	HR-10	2,165	216	0	514
Low Density Residential	LDR	10,202	36,408	0	86,323
Low Medium Density Residential	LMDR	1,239	6,622	0	15,701
Medium Density Residential	MDR	567	7,845	0	18,636
High Density Residential	HDR	263	5,775	0	14,166
Very High Density Residential	VHDR	141	4,952	0	12,102
Commercial/Office		1,480	0	16,589	0
Neighborhood Commercial	NC	155	0	1,689	0
Community Commercial	CC	1,108	0	12,068	0
Regional Commercial	RC	65	0	851	0
Office Professional/Medical	OP	152	0	1,981	0
Mixed Use		1,366	1,946	6,688	4,622
MU-1	Mixed Use 1	561	404	2,040	959
MU-2	Mixed Use 2	241	347	1,962	823
MU-3	Mixed Use 3	121	195	900	464
MU-4	Mixed Use 4	149	0	0	0
MU-5	Mixed Use 5	108	103	588	246
MU-D	Mixed Use Downtown	187	897	1,198	2,130
Industrial		1,945	0	25,484	0
Airport	ARPT	297	0	1,942	0
Business Park	BP	1,188	0	15,527	0
Industrial	I	460	0	8,014	0
Public Facilities and Open Space		14,881	146	5,631	348
Quasi-Public/Cultural	QP/C	1,643	0	0	0
Public Facilities	PF	252	0	4,868	0
Parks/Recreation	P	1,252	0	597	0

Table 5-2
Alternative 2 – Reduced Mixed-Use Intensity Development Capacity Assumptions

General Plan Land Use Designation		Acres	Dwelling Units	Non-Residential Square Feet (1,000s)	Population
		Total	Total	Total	Total
Open Space	OS	8,407	0	0	0
Agricultural	A	2,927	146	0	348
School	SCH	400	0	166	0
Right-of-Way/Lake		15,791	0	0	0
Diamond Valley Lake	DVL	5,167	0	0	0
Right-of-Way	ROW	10,624	0	0	0
Post-2030 Estimated Totals		62,354	68,533	54,391	163,392
Compared to Draft General Plan		--	-1,877	-5,278	-4,458

Table 5-3
Alternative 3 – Reduced Intensity Throughout the Planning Area Development Capacity Assumptions

General Plan Land Use Designation		Acres	Dwelling Units	Non-Residential Square Feet (1,000s)	Population
		Total	Total	Total	Total
Residential		26,891	56,475	0	134,659
Rural Residential	RR	1,853	1,616	0	3,838
Rural Residential	RR-2.5	809	532	0	1,263
Rural Residential	RR-5ac	1,388	236	0	560
Hillside Residential	HR	8,264	1,546	0	3,672
Hillside Residential	HR-10	2,165	184	0	437
Low Density Residential	LDR	10,202	30,947	0	73,375
Low Medium Density Residential	LMDR	1,239	5,628	0	13,346
Medium Density Residential	MDR	567	6,668	0	15,841
High Density Residential	HDR	263	4,909	0	12,041
Very High Density Residential	VHDR	141	4,209	0	10,287
Commercial/Office		1,480	0	14,100	0
Neighborhood Commercial	NC	155	0	1,436	0
Community Commercial	CC	1,108	0	10,258	0
Regional Commercial	RC	65	0	723	0
Office Professional/Medical	OP	152	0	1,684	0
Mixed Use		1,366	3,250	10,171	7,718
MU-1	Mixed Use 1	561	572	2,890	1,358
MU-2	Mixed Use 2	241	491	2,780	1,167

Table 5-3 Alternative 3 – Reduced Intensity Throughout the Planning Area Development Capacity Assumptions					
General Plan Land Use Designation		Acres	Dwelling Units	Non-Residential Square Feet (1,000s)	Population
		Total	Total	Total	Total
MU-3	Mixed Use 3	121	277	1,275	657
MU-4	Mixed Use 4	149	492	697	1,170
MU-5	Mixed Use 5	108	147	833	348
MU-D	Mixed Use Downtown	187	1,271	1,697	3,018
Industrial		1,945	0	21,661	0
Airport	ARPT	297	0	1,651	0
Business Park	BP	1,188	0	13,198	0
Industrial	I	460	0	6,812	0
Public Facilities and Open Space		14,881	124	4,786	295
Quasi-Public/Cultural	QP/C	1,643	0	0	0
Public Facilities	PF	252	0	4,138	0
Parks/Recreation	P	1,252	0	507	0
Open Space	OS	8,407	0	0	0
Agricultural	A	2,927	124	0	295
School	SCH	400	0	141	0
Right-of-Way/Lake		15,791	0	0	0
Diamond Valley Lake	DVL	5,167	0	0	0
Right-of-Way	ROW	10,624	0	0	0
Post-2030 Estimated Totals		62,354	59,849	50,719	142,672
Compared to Draft General Plan		--	-10,561	-8,950	-25,178

Alternative 3 would result in 10,561 fewer residential units and 25,178 fewer people than the Draft General Plan. There would also be 8.95 million less nonresidential square feet under Alternative 3 than envisioned in the Draft General Plan.

5.3 COMPARISON OF THE ALTERNATIVES

In the following discussion, the impacts of the proposed project for each environmental topic area considered in this EIR are summarized. This summary is followed by a description of how impacts for each alternative would differ from the proposed project, including whether any significant impacts would be reduced or avoided, and whether any new significant impacts would result. Table 5-4 summarizes the impact comparison.

5.3.1 AESTHETICS

Impacts of the Draft General Plan related to adverse effects on scenic vistas, degradation of existing visual character, and creation of new sources of light or glare that would adversely affect nighttime views are less than significant. No

designated scenic highways are located in the planning area, so there is no impact to scenic highways. The Draft General Plan would result in new urban development that would substantially alter views, the visual character, and add new sources of light and glare within the planning area. However, Draft General Plan policies and programs applicable to new development would reduce these impacts to a less-than-significant level.

ALTERNATIVE 1

Alternative 1 would marginally reduce the planning area footprint proposed for urban development compared to the Draft General Plan. However, Alternative 1 would not include Draft General Plan policies and programs to reduce light pollution(CD-5.8) and protect hillsides and viewsheds (OS-P-1, OS-P-11, OS-P-12, and OS-P-14). In the absence of these policies and programs, impacts to aesthetics would be greater under Alternative 1 than with implementation of the Draft General Plan. Altered views, changed visual character, and new sources of light and glare would be new potentially significant impacts under this alternative. **[Greater.]**

ALTERNATIVE 2

Alternative 2 would marginally reduce the development footprint of the Draft General Plan, and include the same policies and programs as the proposed project. Because Mixed-Use Area 4 would be retained in agricultural use, the development footprint would be slightly smaller, and impacts to aesthetics would be reduced under Alternative 2 compared to the Draft General Plan. No significant impact would be avoided. **[Lesser.]**

ALTERNATIVE 3

Alternative 3 would have substantially the same development footprint and include the same policies and programs as the Draft General Plan. Therefore, aesthetics impacts would be similar under Alternative 3 to the Draft General Plan. **[Similar.]**

5.3.2 AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

Impacts of the Draft General Plan related to loss of farmland, conflicts with existing agricultural zoning or Williamson Act contracts, or conversion of agricultural land would be significant. Implementation of the Draft General Plan would substantially convert farmland to nonagricultural uses. Although Draft General Plan policies and programs are designed to conserve agricultural lands by supporting conservation easements to protect agricultural uses, farmland could potentially convert to non-agricultural uses. Thus, with implementation of the Draft General Plan, impacts on agricultural resources would be significant and unavoidable.

ALTERNATIVE 1

Alternative 1 would marginally reduce the planning area footprint proposed for urban development compared to the Draft General Plan, reducing farmland loss/conversion impacts, but not to a less-than-significant level. Other agricultural resource impacts would be similar to the Draft General Plan. This alternative would reduce agricultural resource impacts, but not to a less-than-significant level. **[Lesser.]**

ALTERNATIVE 2

Alternative 2 would marginally reduce the development footprint of the Draft General Plan, and would designate an area of Important Farmland for agricultural use. This Alternative would reduce farmland loss/conversion impacts, but not to a less-than-significant level. Other agricultural resource impacts would be similar to the Draft General Plan. This alternative would reduce agricultural resource impacts, but not to a less-than-significant level. **[Lesser.]**

ALTERNATIVE 3

Alternative 3 would have substantially the same development footprint and include the same policies and programs as the Draft General Plan. Therefore, agricultural resource impacts would be similar under Alternative 3 to the Draft General Plan. *[Similar.]*

5.3.3 AIR QUALITY

The Draft General Plan provides for construction and operation of new land uses, resulting in short-term and long-term air pollutant emissions in excess of SCAQMD thresholds for criteria air pollutants and precursors for which the region is in non-attainment, thereby conflicting with SCAQMD air quality management plans. Implementation of the Draft General Plan would potentially expose sensitive receptors to criteria air pollutants, toxic air contaminants, and carbon monoxide. These impacts would be significant and unavoidable.

Potential for exposure to odors would be a less-than-significant impact of the Draft General Plan.

ALTERNATIVE 1

Alternative 1 would provide for 26,573 more residential units, but 2.56 million fewer non-residential square feet than the Draft General Plan. With about 20% more residences and about 4% less non-residential square feet, overall generation of criteria air pollutants would be greater under Alternative 1. Air pollutant and precursor emissions would be further increased by the comparative imbalance of housing and employment; as more future residents would have to drive longer distances to seek work outside the City, increasing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and associated air pollutant emissions. Impacts related to exposure of sensitive receptors to pollutants would be similar, as sensitive receptors could be located near pollutant sources under both the Draft General Plan and Alternative 1. This alternative would worsen a significant and unavoidable impact. *[Greater.]*

ALTERNATIVE 2

Alternative 2 would provide for 441 fewer residential units and 5.26 million fewer non-residential square feet than the Draft General Plan. With this reduction in overall intensity, the generation of air pollutants would be less under Alternative 2. Impacts related to exposure of sensitive receptors to pollutants would be similar, as sensitive receptors could be located near pollutant sources under both the Draft General Plan and Alternative 2. This alternative would reduce a significant and unavoidable air quality impact, but not to a less-than-significant level. *[Lesser.]*

ALTERNATIVE 3

Alternative 3 would provide for 9,098 fewer residential units and 8.933 fewer non-residential square feet than the Draft General Plan. With this reduction in overall intensity, the generation of air pollutants would be less under Alternative 3. Impacts related to exposure of sensitive receptors to pollutants would be similar, as sensitive receptors could be located near pollutant sources under both the Draft General Plan and Alternative 3. This alternative would reduce a significant and unavoidable air quality impact, but not to a less-than-significant level. *[Lesser.]*

5.3.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Impacts of the Draft General Plan related to biological resources and conflicts with local policies, ordinances, and conservation plans to protect special-status plant and animal species and their habitats would be less than significant. Implementation of the Draft General Plan could potentially result in significant loss or degradation of existing populations or suitable habitat of special-status plant and wildlife species, impacts to riparian habitat or sensitive natural communities, impacts to federally-protected wetlands, impacts to movement of wildlife, conflicts

with local policies and ordinances, or conflicts with the West Riverside County Multi-species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) or Stephens' Kangaroo Rat Habitat Conservation Plan (SKR HCP). However, compliance with the California Endangered Species Act (CESA), CEQA, MSHCP, and SKR HCP (as applicable), and implementation of Draft General Plan policies and programs would mitigate for potential direct and indirect impacts on special-status plant species, avoid potential loss within the planning area and reduce these impacts to less than significant.

ALTERNATIVE 1

Although the 1992 General Plan lacks specific policies and programs requiring compliance with the MSHCP and the SKR HCP, compliance with applicable state and federal regulations, including the MSHCP, SKR HCP, and CESA, would still be required. Although the 1992 General Plan has a slightly smaller footprint of development compared to the proposed project, all of the biologically sensitive areas identified in MSHCP cells would still be affected. Therefore, biological resources impacts would be similar. *[Similar.]*

ALTERNATIVE 2

Alternative 2 would include Draft General Plan policies and programs requiring compliance with the MSHCP and the SKR HCP. Compliance with Draft General Plan policies and programs and state and federal regulations, including the MSHCP, SKR HCP, and CESA, would still be required. Although the development footprint would be slightly smaller under Alternative 2 compared to the proposed project, all of the biologically sensitive areas identified in MSHCP cells would still be affected. Therefore, impacts to biological resources would be similar. *[Similar.]*

ALTERNATIVE 3

Alternative 3 would include Draft General Plan policies and programs requiring compliance with the MSHCP and the SKR HCP. Compliance with Draft General Plan policies and programs and state and federal regulations, including the MSHCP, SKR HCP, and CESA, would result in similar impacts to biological resources because of the similar development footprint. *[Similar.]*

5.3.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES

Draft General Plan programs would ensure that potential historic features are assessed for their significance and direct the City to consider relocation, architecturally-compatible rehabilitation, or adaptive reuse prior to approving development applications proposing demolition of potentially historic structures. Although future land uses consistent with the Draft General Plan could affect buried archaeological resources or human remains, policies and programs would require inventorying and evaluation of any resources discovered. Cultural resources impacts would be less than significant.

ALTERNATIVE 1

Section 6 of the Resource Management Element in the 1992 General Plan requires inventorying and evaluation of any resources discovered and maintenance of the integrity of historic structures and resources in the planning area. However, the 1992 General Plan lacks demolition delay and historic ordinance protections, and leaves multi-family zoning in the Downtown Core; Alternative 1 would therefore have greater potential for impacts to historic resources compared to the proposed project. Cultural resource impacts would be greater under Alternative 1. *[Greater.]*

ALTERNATIVE 2

Alternative 2 would have a slightly smaller development footprint than the Draft General Plan, reducing the number of areas where cultural and archaeological resources or human remains would potentially be discovered. This alternative would include Draft General Plan policies and programs that would require inventorying and evaluation of any resources discovered, and that would maintain the integrity of historic structures and resources in the planning area. Cultural resource impacts would be slightly less under Alternative 2. **[Lesser.]**

ALTERNATIVE 3

Alternative 3 would provide for reduced intensity of development on the same footprint as the Draft General Plan, so the potential for discovery of cultural and archaeological resources or human remains would be similar to the proposed project. This alternative would include Draft General Plan policies and programs that would require inventorying and evaluation of any resources discovered, and that would maintain the integrity of historic structures and resources in the planning area. Cultural resource impacts would be similar under Alternative 3. **[Similar.]**

5.3.6 GEOLOGY, SOILS, AND MINERAL AND PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Implementation of the Draft General Plan, including future land uses consistent with the Land Use Diagram, would provide for construction of new uses in areas potentially subject to fault rupture, seismic ground shaking, soil liquefaction and ground failure, and earthquake induced landslides. New land uses would also potentially be exposed to erosion hazards, expansive and collapsible soils, or soils not suitable for septic systems. However, implementation Draft General Plan policies and programs requires enforcement of regulations, programs, and building code requirements. Draft General Plan policies and programs would also require protection and conservation of mineral resources and include investigation and evaluation of paleontological resources discovered during construction. All geology, soils, mineral, and paleontological resources impacts of the Draft General Plan would be less than significant.

ALTERNATIVE 1

Alternative 1 would marginally reduce the planning area footprint proposed for urban development, thereby reducing the number of areas subject to potential geological hazards, potential conflict with mineral resources, or discovery of paleontological resources. Section 1 of the Public Safety Element and Sections 7 and 10 of the Resource Management Element of the 1992 General Plan require enforcement of regulations, programs, and building code requirements to reduce geology, soils, and mineral resources impacts. However, the 1992 General Plan does not include policies, programs, or strategies to address paleontological resource impacts. Impacts to geology, soils, and mineral resources would be similar to the Draft General Plan. However, impacts to paleontological resources would be greater, and would represent a new potentially significant impact. **[Greater.]**

ALTERNATIVE 2

Alternative 2 would have a slightly smaller development footprint than the Draft General Plan, reducing the number of areas subject to geologic and soils hazards or conflict with mineral resources, and reducing the number of areas where paleontological resources would potentially be discovered. This alternative would include Draft General Plan policies and programs that would require enforcement of regulations, programs, and building code requirements, and inventorying and evaluation of any resources discovered. Because of the smaller footprint, geology, soils, and mineral and paleontological resources impacts would be slightly less under Alternative 2. **[Lesser.]**

ALTERNATIVE 3

Alternative 3 would provide for reduced intensity of development over the same footprint as the Draft General Plan. This alternative would include Draft General Plan policies and programs that would require enforcement of regulations, programs, and building code requirements, and inventorying and evaluation of any resources discovered. Because of the similar footprint, geology, soils, and mineral and paleontological resources impacts would be similar under Alternative 3. *[Similar.]*

5.3.7 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Implementation of the Draft General Plan would provide for land use changes and population and employment growth in the planning area, and would result in significant and unavoidable GHG emissions impacts during both construction and operation. Impacts related to climate change effects (“adaptation impacts”) in the planning area would be significant and unavoidable with implementation of the Draft General Plan.

ALTERNATIVE 1

Alternative 1 would provide for 26,573 more residential units, but 2.56 million fewer square non-residential square feet than the Draft General Plan. With about 20% more residences and about 4% less non-residential square feet, overall generation of GHGs would be greater under Alternative 1. GHG emissions would be further increased by the comparative imbalance of housing and employment; as more future residents would have to drive longer distances to seek work outside the City, increasing VMT and associated GHG emissions. Impacts related to climate change effects would be similar. This alternative would worsen a significant and unavoidable impact. *[Greater.]*

ALTERNATIVE 2

Alternative 2 would provide for 441 fewer residential units and 5.26 million fewer non-residential square feet than the Draft General Plan. With this reduction in overall intensity, the generation of GHGs would be less under Alternative 2. Impacts related to climate change effects would be similar. This alternative would reduce a significant and unavoidable GHG emission impact, but not to a less-than-significant level. *[Lesser.]*

ALTERNATIVE 3

Alternative 3 would provide for 9,098 fewer residential units and 8,933 fewer non-residential square feet than the Draft General Plan. With this reduction in overall intensity, the generation of GHGs would be less under Alternative 3. Impacts related to climate change effects would be similar. This alternative would reduce a significant and unavoidable GHG emission impact of the proposed project, but not to a less-than-significant level. *[Lesser.]*

5.3.8 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Implementation of the Draft General Plan would result in increased routine use, transport, and disposal of hazardous materials, including the potential for hazardous materials handling near schools and development on Cortese-listed site. Construction of new residential, commercial, and industrial land uses with implementation of the Draft General Plan would increase the number of people in proximity to the Hemet-Ryan Airport. Implementation of the Land Use Diagram would also increase the number of people and structures in wildfire hazard zones. However, compliance with existing hazardous materials regulations and Draft General Plan policies and programs would result in less-than-significant hazards and hazardous materials impacts.

ALTERNATIVE 1

Alternative 1 would provide for 26,573 more residential units, but 2.56 million fewer non-residential square feet than the Draft General Plan. With about 20% more residences and about 4% less non-residential square feet, fewer non-residential uses would likely use and transport a smaller amount of hazardous materials. Both Alternative 1 and the Draft General Plan propose similar land uses near Hemet-Ryan airport, require conformity with countywide emergency response programs, place people and structures in wildfire hazard zones, and propose strategies to address wildfire hazards. Because the lesser non-residential uses in Alternative 1 would result in reduced use, transport, and disposal of hazardous materials, Alternative 1 would reduce hazards and hazardous materials impacts compared to the Draft General Plan. *[Lesser.]*

ALTERNATIVE 2

Alternative 2 would provide for 441 fewer residential units and 5.26 million fewer non-residential square feet than the Draft General Plan. With this reduction in overall non-residential intensity, fewer non-residential uses would likely use and transport a smaller amount of hazardous materials. The reduced density and intensity of new development would occur primarily because of reduced development capacity in mixed-use areas, and thus would not reduce the number of residents and employees potentially exposed to airport safety or wildfire hazards. Therefore, hazards and hazardous materials impacts would generally be lesser under Alternative 2. *[Lesser.]*

ALTERNATIVE 3

Alternative 3 would provide for 9,098 fewer residential units and 8,933 fewer non-residential square feet than the Draft General Plan. With this reduction in non-residential intensity, fewer non-residential uses would likely use and transport a smaller amount of hazardous materials. Similarly, reducing density and intensity of new development throughout the planning area would reduce the number of residents and employees potentially exposed to airport safety or wildfire hazards. Therefore, hazards and hazardous materials impacts would generally be lesser under Alternative 3. *[Lesser.]*

5.3.9 HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Implementation of Draft General Plan policies and programs and compliance with existing regulations would result in less-than-significant impacts to water quality, stormwater drainage patterns, groundwater recharge, and flood hazards, including hazards related to inundation from seiche or dam failure.

ALTERNATIVE 1

Section 5 of the Resource Management Element of the existing General Plan provides strategies to reduce runoff and improve groundwater recharge within the planning area. Compliance with the existing plan and enforcement of existing regulations would result in similar water quality and flood hazard impacts, including inundation from seiche or dam failure. Although Alternative 1 would marginally reduce the planning area footprint proposed for urban development, water quality degradation, groundwater recharge, and runoff impacts would be greater because the 1992 General Plan lacks policies and programs present in the proposed project that support groundwater recharge and soft-bottomed drainage channels. Therefore, Alternative 1 would have greater impacts related to hydrology and water quality. *[Greater.]*

ALTERNATIVE 2

Alternative 2 would include Draft General Plan water quality, groundwater recharge, stormwater drainage, and on-site retention policies and programs. However, Alternative 2 would have a slightly smaller development footprint than the Draft General Plan (Mixed Use Area 4 would remain in agricultural use under Alternative 2),

thereby reducing the area where impervious surfaces would potentially be constructed. Therefore, Alternative 2 would have lesser impacts related to hydrology and water quality. **[Lesser.]**

ALTERNATIVE 3

Alternative 3 would include Draft General Plan water quality, groundwater recharge, stormwater drainage, and on-site retention policies and programs. Alternative 3 has the same development footprint as the Draft General Plan, so the area where impervious surfaces would potentially be constructed is similar. Therefore, Alternative 3 would have similar impacts related to hydrology and water quality. **[Similar.]**

5.3.10 LAND USE, POPULATION, AND HOUSING

Implementation of Draft General Plan policies and programs would result in less-than-significant impacts related to division of existing communities, displacement of people or housing, and conflicts with other plans.

ALTERNATIVE 1

Implementation of the existing General Plan would not divide existing communities, and no people or housing would be displaced; therefore, these impacts would be similar to those of the proposed project. However, the existing General Plan policies and programs are not consistent with the SCAG Compass Blueprint. Thus, land use impacts would be greater, and conflict with the SCAG Compass Blueprint plan would represent a new potentially significant impact. **[Greater.]**

ALTERNATIVE 2

Alternative 2 would have a slightly smaller development footprint than the Draft General Plan, with reduced densities and intensities and the designation of Mixed-Use Area 4 as agricultural land. This alternative would include the same policies and programs as the Draft General Plan. Therefore, impacts related to division of existing communities, displacement of people or housing, and conflicts with other plans would be similar. **[Similar.]**

ALTERNATIVE 3

Alternative 3 would have the same development footprint as the Draft General Plan, with reduced densities and intensities throughout the planning area. This alternative would include the same policies and programs as the Draft General Plan. Therefore, impacts related to division of existing communities, displacement of people or housing, and conflicts with other plans would be similar. **[Similar.]**

5.3.11 NOISE

Implementation of the Draft General Plan would result in less-than-significant impacts related to short-term construction noise, exposure of sensitive receptors to stationary and area sources of noise, and aircraft noise from Hemet-Ryan Airport. Impacts related to construction-induced vibration would be significant, but can be reduced to a less-than-significant level with mitigation. Noise levels associated with traffic on roadways in the planning area with implementation of the Draft General Plan would be significant and unavoidable.

ALTERNATIVE 1

Alternative 1 would provide for 26,573 more residential units, but 2.56 million fewer non-residential square feet than the Draft General Plan. With about 20% more residences and about 4% less non-residential square feet, impacts related to short term construction noise, and exposure of sensitive receptors to stationary and area source noise, and aircraft noise from Hemet-Ryan Airport would be greater. Impacts related to construction-induced

vibration would also be similar, but Alternative 1 would not include mitigation measures proposed within this EIR to reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level. Alternative 1 would result in higher traffic volumes at certain planning area intersections and segments (especially along Stetson Avenue), resulting in greater traffic noise impacts. Therefore, this alternative would generally increase noise impacts compared to the proposed project, would create a new potentially significant vibration impact, and would worsen a significant and unavoidable traffic noise impact. **[Greater.]**

ALTERNATIVE 2

Alternative 2 would provide for 441 fewer residential units and 5.26 million fewer non-residential square feet than the Draft General Plan. With this reduction in overall intensity, overall construction and operational noise and vibration impacts would be lesser under Alternative 2. This alternative would reduce noise and vibration impacts, but not to a less-than-significant level. **[Lesser.]**

ALTERNATIVE 3

Alternative 3 would provide for 9,098 fewer residential units and 8,933 fewer non-residential square feet than the Draft General Plan. With this reduction in overall intensity, overall construction and operational noise and vibration impacts would be lesser under Alternative 3. This alternative would reduce noise and vibration impacts, but not to a less-than-significant level. **[Lesser.]**

5.3.12 PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Implementation of Draft General Plan policies and programs would result in less-than-significant impacts related to provision of public safety, fire, park, and library facilities.

ALTERNATIVE 1

Similar to the Draft General Plan, the existing General Plan establishes policies and performance standards related to the provision of public safety, fire, park, and library facilities. With implementation of the existing General Plan, public facilities improvements necessary to support the planned level of development would be made. Because of the larger population in Alternative 1 compared to the proposed project, public services and facilities impacts would be greater. **[Greater.]**

ALTERNATIVE 2

Alternative 2 would have a slightly smaller development footprint than the Draft General Plan, with reduced densities and intensities and the designation of Mixed-Use Area 4 as agricultural land. This alternative would include the same policies and programs as the Draft General Plan, but smaller population growth. Therefore, impacts related to public facilities and services would be lesser. **[Lesser.]**

ALTERNATIVE 3

Alternative 3 would have the same development footprint as the Draft General Plan, with reduced densities and intensities throughout the planning area. This alternative would include the same policies and programs as the Draft General Plan, but less population growth. Therefore, impacts related to public facilities and services would be lesser. **[Lesser.]**

5.3.13 TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION

Peak hour traffic congestion at most intersections in the planning area, effects on air traffic patterns, design hazards, emergency access, non-motorized transportation and transit, and rail hazards would all be less than

significant with implementation of the Draft General Plan. However, the intersections of Sanderson Avenue with Devonshire Avenue and Florida Avenue would not meet established Level of Service (LOS) standards, resulting in significant and unavoidable impacts.

ALTERNATIVE 1

Alternative 1 would provide for 26,573 more residential units, but 2.56 million fewer non-residential square feet than the Draft General Plan. The EIR for the existing General Plan states that significant and unavoidable LOS impacts would occur along Florida Avenue at buildout of the existing General Plan, although specific intersections and segments are not identified. With implementation of strategies from Part D and Sections 7 and 8 of Part F of the existing General Plan, other transportation impacts would be similar. Therefore, traffic and transportation impacts would be greater than those of the Draft General Plan, and would worsen a significant and unavoidable traffic congestion impact. **[Greater.]**

ALTERNATIVE 2

Alternative 2 would provide for 441 fewer residential units and 5.26 million fewer non-residential square feet than the Draft General Plan, on a slightly smaller development footprint and with reduced densities and intensities. Mixed-Use Area 4 would be designated as agricultural land, and additional approach lanes at Sanderson Avenue intersections with Florida and Devonshire Avenues would be constructed. This alternative would include the same policies and programs as the Draft General Plan. The lower density and intensity of development anticipated under a similar land use plan and circulation diagram would reduce traffic and transportation impacts. In addition, with additional approach lanes at the intersections of Sanderson Avenue and Devonshire and Florida Avenues, significant impacts related to intersection LOS at these two intersections would be avoided. **[Lesser.]**

ALTERNATIVE 3

Alternative 3 would provide for 9,098 fewer residential units and 8,933 fewer non-residential square feet than the Draft General Plan, on the same development footprint with reduced densities and intensities throughout the planning area. This alternative would include the same policies and programs as the Draft General Plan. The lower density and intensity of development anticipated under a similar land use plan and circulation diagram would reduce traffic and transportation impacts, but not to a less-than-significant level. **[Lesser.]**

5.3.14 UTILITIES AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Implementation of existing regulations and Draft General Plan policies and programs would result in less-than-significant impacts related to wastewater conveyance and treatment, water facilities, stormwater drainage facilities, landfill capacity, demand for other utilities, and energy consumption. However, implementation of the Draft General Plan would have significant and unavoidable water supply impacts because of uncertainties concerning the quantities of water that will continue to be delivered from the State Water Project and the Colorado Aqueduct, and drawdown in the Hemet-San Jacinto Groundwater Basin.

ALTERNATIVE 1

The existing General Plan includes implementation strategies to provide utility services. However, because Alternative 1 would provide for 26,573 more residential units, it would have greater impacts related to water supply due to greater future anticipated demands subject to the same uncertainties concerning the quantities of water that will continue to be delivered from the State Water Project and the Colorado Aqueduct and drawdown in the Hemet-San Jacinto Groundwater Basin. This alternative would worsen a significant and unavoidable impact. **[Greater.]**

ALTERNATIVE 2

Alternative 2 would provide for 441 fewer residential units and 5.26 million fewer non-residential square feet than the Draft General Plan, on a slightly smaller development footprint and with reduced densities and intensities. Mixed-Use Area 4 would be designated as agricultural land. This alternative would include the same policies and programs as the Draft General Plan. The reduced population and number of employees anticipated under a similar land use plan would reduce utilities and energy efficiency impacts, but not to a less-than-significant level. *[Lesser.]*

ALTERNATIVE 3

Alternative 3 would provide for 9,098 fewer residential units and 8,933 fewer non-residential square feet than the Draft General Plan, on the same development footprint with reduced densities and intensities throughout the planning area. This alternative would include the same policies and programs as the Draft General Plan. The reduced population and number of employees anticipated under a similar land use plan would reduce utilities and energy efficiency impacts, but not to a less-than-significant level. *[Lesser.]*

5.4 SUMMARY OF COMPARATIVE EFFECTS OF THE ALTERNATIVES

Table 5-4 compares the environmental impacts of the alternatives to the environmental impacts of the Draft General Plan.

5.5 ENVIRONMENTALLY SUPERIOR ALTERNATIVE

In addition to the discussion and comparison of impacts of the alternatives to the Draft General Plan, CEQA requires that an “environmentally superior” alternative among the alternatives considered be selected and that the reasons for such selection be disclosed. In general, the environmentally superior alternative represents the alternative that would generate the fewest or least severe adverse impacts.

For the purposes of this EIR, Alternative 2 is considered the environmentally superior alternative. This alternative would reduce impacts in the greatest number of topic areas compared to the Draft General Plan, and would avoid significant traffic congestion impacts on Sanderson Avenue and Devonshire and Florida Avenues.

5.6 COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES AND PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The project objectives, for the purposes of this EIR, are contained in Chapter 3, “Project Description.” Although each alternative could fulfill most project objectives, only the proposed project (the Draft General Plan) fulfills all project objectives. By implementing the existing General Plan land use plan on a marginally smaller development footprint, Alternative 1 would fail to meet Objective 1 (planning for growth through 2030 with consideration for changing demographics) and Objective 2 (accommodating new job-generating uses in walkable, mixed-use areas).

By adding approach lanes to Sanderson Avenue at Devonshire and Florida Avenues, Alternative 2 would fail to meet Objective 10 (provide a multi-modal circulation system that effectively moves people with minimal disruption to existing businesses and neighborhoods). By accommodating lower intensities in fewer future mixed-use areas, Alternative 2 would accomplish Objectives 1, 2, 5, and 6 less fully than the Draft General Plan.

Alternative 3 would accommodate lower densities and intensities throughout the planning area, reducing both new residential capacity and job-generating uses which provide economic viability for Hemet. Therefore, Alternative 3 would not effectively accomplish Objectives 1, 2, 5, and 6.

Table 5-4 Comparison of Environmental Impacts of Alternatives to the Draft General Plan			
Environmental Topic	Alternative 1. No Project/Existing General Plan	Alternative 2. Reduced Mixed-Use Intensity	Alternative 3. Reduced Intensity Throughout the Planning Area
Aesthetics	Greater	Lesser	Similar
Agricultural Resources	Lesser (SU impact would remain)	Lesser (SU impact would remain)	Similar
Air Quality	Greater	Lesser (SU impact would remain)	Lesser (SU impact would remain)
Biological Resources	Similar	Similar	Similar
Cultural Resources	Greater	Lesser	Similar
Geology, Soils, and Mineral and Paleontological Resources	Greater	Lesser	Similar
Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Greater	Lesser(SU impact would remain)	Lesser (SU impact would remain)
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	Lesser	Lesser	Lesser
Hydrology and Water Quality	Greater	Lesser	Similar
Land Use, Population, and Housing	Greater	Similar	Similar
Noise	Greater	Lesser	Lesser
Public Services and Facilities	Greater	Lesser	Lesser
Traffic and Transportation	Greater	Lesser (SU impact avoided)	Lesser (SU impact would remain)
Utilities and Energy Efficiency	Greater	Lesser	Lesser