

# 6

# ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

## 6.1 INTRODUCTION

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The primary intent of the Alternatives Analysis in an Environmental Impact Report (EIR), as stated in Section 15126.6(a) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, is to “[...] 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.” Furthermore, Section 15126.6(f) states, “The range of alternatives required in an EIR is governed by a “rule of reason” that requires the EIR to set forth only those alternatives necessary to permit a reasoned choice.”

The CEQA Guidelines provide the following guidance for discussing alternatives to a proposed project:

- An EIR shall describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project, or to the location of the project, which would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project, but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project, and evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives (CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6[a]).
- Because an EIR must identify ways to mitigate or avoid the significant effects that a project may have on the environment (Public Resources Code Section 21002.1), the discussion of alternatives shall focus on alternatives to the project or its location which are capable of avoiding or substantially lessening any significant effects of the project, even if these alternatives would impede to some degree the attainment of the project objectives, or would be more costly (CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6[b]).
- 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 describe 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 (CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6[c]).

- The EIR shall include sufficient information about each alternative to allow meaningful evaluation, analysis, and comparison with the proposed project. A matrix displaying the major characteristics and significant environmental effects of each alternative may be used to summarize the comparison (CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6[d]).
- The specific alternative of “no project” shall also be evaluated along with its impact. The purpose of describing and analyzing a no project alternative is to allow decisionmakers to compare the impacts of approving the proposed project with the impacts of not approving the proposed project. The no project alternative analysis is not the baseline for determining whether the proposed project’s environmental impacts may be significant, unless it is identical to the existing environmental setting analysis which does establish that baseline (CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6[e][1]).
- If the environmentally superior alternative is the “no project” alternative, the EIR shall also identify an environmentally superior alternative among the other alternatives (CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6[e][2]).

In addition, Section 15126.6(d) of the CEQA Guidelines states, “If an alternative would cause one or more significant effects in addition to those that would be caused by the project as proposed, the significant effects of the alternative shall be discussed, but in less detail than the significant effects of the project as proposed.”

## **6.2 PURPOSE OF ALTERNATIVES**

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The project alternatives need to feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the Eastview Specific Plan and Annexation Project (proposed project), while avoiding or substantially lessening any of the significant effects of the project.

The following project objectives have been identified for the project:

- Promote the harmonious existence of a range of residential (low density, medium density, and high density) land uses and diversity in population, housing types and income levels, implemented in a systematic and controlled manner;
- Locate a master-planned community with recreational and education amenities in balance with future job centers along SR 99;
- Through quality design, encourage healthy lifestyles by incorporation of recreational opportunities throughout the project site;
- Provide an inter-connecting network of distinctive common area elements such as parks, open space, trails, landscaping, street furniture, signage, and lighting that will provide visual and physical continuity to the Plan Area;
- Prepare a master plan for infrastructure for the introduction and/or extension of urban services to the project site;
- Build a well-planned community with features that are attractive to homebuyers, such as safe and quiet neighborhoods, convenient school sites, multiple recreation opportunities,

and mobility choices that enhance Plan Area connectivity as well as connectivity to the Galt community at-large;

- Arrange the community around a walkable Open Space Corridor with amenities that can serve as vibrant gathering spaces for public and private interaction, and provide recreation and minor services;
- Dedicate rights-of-way to implement the General Plan Circulation Element;
- Implement feasible “smart growth” and “green building” practices, including:
  - Design compact and efficient development to maximize efficiency in land as a resource as well as minimize energy consumption, minimize air quality impacts, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions;
  - Locate higher density housing central to the plan adjacent to principal recreational land uses to promote walking and cycling and minimize auto use for short daily trips;
  - Incorporate passive energy-efficient features, such as cool roofs, and/or photovoltaic energy production by meeting or exceeding Title 24 requirements, in the design and orientation of “solar ready” buildings, and utilize deciduous street trees to provide protection and shade;
  - Incorporate “green” storm water infrastructure and low-impact design strategies such as water quality basins and swales to pre-treat urban runoff and allow ground recharge and absorption by plant material;
  - Promote “smart grid” technology to integrate communications or gather information on the behaviors and needs of residents so that services can be provided in an efficient and more sustainable manner (smart meters, tiered pricing to reduce peaking, service distribution based on demands, etc.); and
  - Encourage community bus service that would allow local and regional connections to Galt, Lodi, Stockton, and Sacramento.

Potentially significant environmental impacts of the proposed project, which would be reduced to less-than-significant levels with implementation of the mitigation measures set forth in each of the associated chapters of this EIR, include the following:

- ***Aesthetics.*** Potentially significant impacts have been identified for the creation of new sources of substantial light or glare at both the project-level and cumulative-level.
- ***Biological Resources.*** Potentially significant impacts have been identified for impacts related to special-status plant and wildlife species, nesting birds under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, riparian habitat, federally protected wetlands, and local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance, as well as the cumulative loss of biological resources.
- ***Cultural Resources.*** Potentially significant impacts have been identified for loss of prehistoric and/or historic cultural resources, unique archeological or paleontological resource, or human remains, as well as the cumulative loss of cultural resources.

- ***Geology and Soils.*** Potentially significant impacts have been identified for the risk associated with substantial erosion or loss of topsoil and the risks to people and structures associated with unstable or expansive soils and use of on-site soils as engineered fill.
- ***Hydrology and Water Quality/Storm Water Quality.*** Potentially significant impacts have been identified for the substantial alteration of the existing drainage pattern of the site or area as well as violation of any quarter quality standard or waste discharge requirement during construction.
- ***Hazards and Hazardous Materials.*** Potentially significant impacts have been identified for on-site wells, septic tanks, and reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment, or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school.
- ***Noise.*** Potentially significant impacts have been identified for construction related and transportation noise.
- ***Public Services and Utilities/Recreation.*** Potentially significant impacts have been identified related to water treatment, wastewater conveyance and treatment capacity, and parks.
- ***Transportation and Circulation.*** Potentially significant impacts have been identified related to short-term impacts related to construction activities and Year 2021 and Year 2026 study intersections.

The proposed project's impacts that have been determined to remain significant and unavoidable, even after implementation of the feasible mitigation measures set forth in this EIR, include the following:

- ***Aesthetics.*** Significant and unavoidable impacts have been identified for the degradation of the existing visual character or quality of the project site and/or the site's surroundings, as well as for long-term changes in the visual character associated with cumulative development.
- ***Agricultural Resources.*** Significant and unavoidable impacts have been identified for the conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural use, or impacts related to changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses, as well as the cumulative loss of agricultural land. In addition, a significant and unavoidable impact was identified for the cumulative loss of agricultural land.
- ***Air Quality and Climate Change.*** Significant and unavoidable impacts have been identified for a violation of an air quality standard or substantial contribution to an existing or projected air quality violation during construction, and a conflict with or

obstruction of implementation of applicable air quality plans. In addition, a significant and unavoidable impact was identified for a conflict with or obstruction of implementation of applicable air quality plans, as well as a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant.

- **Transportation and Circulation.** Significant and unavoidable impacts have been identified related to Year 2021, and Year 2026 study freeway facilities, as well as cumulative study freeway facilities.

### 6.3 SELECTION OF ALTERNATIVES

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The requirement that an EIR evaluate alternatives to the proposed project or alternatives to the location of the proposed project is a broad one; the primary intent of the alternatives analysis is to disclose other ways that the objectives of the project could be attained while reducing the magnitude of, or avoiding, any significant and unavoidable impacts of the proposed project. Alternatives that are included and evaluated in the EIR must be feasible alternatives. However, the CEQA Guidelines require the EIR to “set forth only those alternatives necessary to permit a reasoned choice.” The CEQA Guidelines provide a definition for “a range of reasonable alternatives” and thus limit the number and type of alternatives that may need to be evaluated in a given EIR. According to the *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.6(f):

The alternatives shall be limited to ones that would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project. Of those alternatives, the EIR need examine in detail only the ones that the lead agency determined could feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project.

First and foremost, alternatives in an EIR must be feasible. In the context of CEQA Guidelines Section 21061.1, “feasible” is defined as:

...capable of being accomplished in a successful manner within a reasonable period of time, taking into account economic, environmental, legal, social and technological factors.

Finally, an EIR is not required to analyze alternatives when the effects of the alternative “cannot be reasonably ascertained and whose implementation is remote and speculative.”

#### **Alternatives Considered But Dismissed From Further Analysis**

Consistent with CEQA, primary consideration was given to alternatives that could reduce significant impacts, while still meeting most of the basic project objectives. Any alternative that would have impacts identical to or more severe than the proposed project, and/or that would not meet any or most of the project objectives were dismissed from further consideration. The alternatives considered but dismissed from further analysis in this EIR are discussed below.

### No Project (Adopted 2030 Galt General Plan Land Uses) Alternative

Consistent with the adopted 2030 Galt General Plan land use designations, the No Project (Adopted 2030 Galt General Plan Land Uses) Alternative would include buildout pursuant to the approved 2030 General Plan land use designations and would involve development of 673 low density residential units, 336 medium density residential units, 366 medium-high density residential units, 467 high density residential units, 162,000 square feet of general commercial development, 55.7 acres of open space, 11.4 acres of parks, and 72.9 acres of public/quasi-public uses on the project site. Buildout of the site per the No Project (Adopted 2030 Galt General Plan Land Uses) Alternative would result in 157 more residential units than the proposed project and 37,000 more square feet of commercial uses.

The No Project (Adopted 2030 Galt General Plan Land Uses) Alternative would be similar to the proposed project and achieve the majority of the proposed project's objectives; however, in comparison to the proposed project, the No Project (Adopted 2030 Galt General Plan Land Uses) Alternative would develop 157 more residential units than the proposed project and 37,000 more square feet of commercial uses. Therefore, development of the No Project (Adopted 2030 Galt General Plan Land Uses) Alternative would introduce a larger population than the proposed project resulting in more vehicle trips which would create greater impacts to traffic, air, noise, and greater demand on public services and utilities/recreation. The No Project (Adopted 2030 Galt General Plan Land Uses) Alternative would develop the same amount of acreage as the proposed project; therefore, impacts to biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality/storm water quality, and land use and planning would be the same.

As a result, the No Project (Adopted 2030 Galt General Plan Land Uses) Alternative would not substantially lessen at least one of the significant environmental effects and was dismissed from further consideration.

### Off-Site Alternative

Section 15126.6(f)(2)(B) of the CEQA Guidelines states, "If the lead agency concludes that no feasible alternative locations exist, it must disclose the reasons for this conclusion, and should include the reason in the EIR." A feasible location for the proposed project that would result in substantially reduced impacts does not exist.

The CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(b) requires that only locations that would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project need be considered for inclusion in the EIR. The Off-Site Alternative would involve the construction of the proposed project on an alternative location. The Off-Site Alternative would locate the proposed project on other lands located within the vicinity of the proposed project site. The City of Galt lacks a potential site within the city limits that could accommodate the proposed development. However, lands within the City of Galt's Sphere of Influence (SOI) boundary could support the development of the proposed development. The area south of the proposed project across from the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) could serve as a potential Off-Site Alternative to the proposed project (see Figure 6-1). The area south of the proposed project is within the Phase II General Plan buildout

area for the City of Galt, similar to the project site. It should be noted that the Off-Site Alternative site is not owned or controlled by the project applicant, except for the 17.4-acre Future Growth Area, which is included in the Off-Site Alternative site. In addition, the Off-Site Alternative site's property owners have not indicated a desire to undertake an annexation or master planning process for the site area. Therefore, an Off-Site Alternative would not meet the feasibility criterion for selection of alternatives.

The CEQA Guidelines state that, by definition, an alternative should avoid or substantially lessen one or more of the environmental effects of the project. The Off-Site Alternative location within the City of Galt's SOI would generally contain characteristics similar to the proposed project site. Development of the project on another similar site would result in an equal area being graded and, therefore, similar physical environmental impacts would occur related to land disturbance activities. In addition, the development of the same number of residential units would result in traffic, air quality, and noise impacts that would likely be very similar to the proposed project. Furthermore, development of the same number of residential units on another similar site in the area would likely result in similar impacts associated with loss of farmland and agricultural resources.

The Off-Site Alternative would not impact Deadman Gulch like the proposed project and the Off-Site Alternative site does not contain streams or other aquatic features; however, the Off-Site Alternative would have similar biological impacts to special-status plant and wildlife species, nesting birds under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and to the movement of native, resident, or migratory wildlife species. Because the Off-Site Alternative site does not contain aquatic features, impacts to such features would not occur; therefore, impacts to biological resources would be slightly fewer as compared to the project. Overall, development of the project at an alternative location within the City of Galt's SOI would be expected to result in similar, or slightly less impacts, when compared to the proposed project. As a result, an environmentally feasible off-site location that would meet the requirements of CEQA, as well as meet the basic objectives of the project, does not exist; the land is not owned or controlled by the applicant and owners have not indicated a desire for annexation. As a result, the Off-Site Alternative has been dismissed from further consideration and is not feasible.

#### Air Quality Attenuation Alternative

The Air Quality Attenuation Alternative would aim to reduce the land uses proposed by the project in an attempt to meet the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District (SMAQMD) operational screening levels. The SMAQMD operational screening level for single family residential housing is 316 units; therefore, the Air Quality Attenuation Alternative would include development of a maximum of 315 units on the proposed project site in order to be below the screening level. Buildout of the site per the Air Quality Attenuation Alternative would result in 1,430 fewer residential units than the proposed project and the elimination of commercial and public/quasi-public uses. A reduction of that magnitude on the project site would not be a comparable alternative to the proposed project as annexation of the entire site for the development of only 315 units would not be feasible.

**Figure 6-1  
Off-Site Alternative**



In addition, the Air Quality Attenuation Alternative would not achieve any of the proposed project's objectives. Although the Air Quality Attenuation Alternative would provide some housing, the proposed project objective related to the provision of housing aims to provide a range of affordable housing opportunities available to a wide range of income levels with a broad range of housing types. Because the Air Quality Attenuation Alternative would only supply single-family housing, the only housing-related project objective would not be met.

As a result, the Air Quality Attenuation Alternative would not be considered a feasible alternative which would meet the majority of the objectives and was dismissed from further consideration.

### **Alternatives Considered in this EIR**

The following alternatives are considered and evaluated in this section:

- No Project (No Build) Alternative;
- No Project (No Annexation, County Buildout) Alternative;
- Liberty Ranch and "Future Growth Area" Alternative; and
- Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative.

CEQA requires the evaluation of the comparative impacts of the "No Project" alternative (CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6[e]). Analysis of the no project alternative "... shall discuss [...] existing conditions [...] as well as what would be reasonably expected to occur in the foreseeable future if the project were not approved, based on current plans and consistent with available infrastructure and community services." (*Id.*, subd. [e][2]) "If the project is other than a land use or regulatory plan, for example a development project on identifiable property, the 'no project' alternative is the circumstance under which the project does not proceed. Here the discussion would compare the environmental effects of the property remaining in the property's existing state versus environmental effects that would occur if the project were approved. If disapproval of the project under consideration would result in predictable actions by others, such as the proposal of some other project, this 'no project' consequence should be discussed. In certain instances, the no project alternative means 'no build,' wherein the existing environmental setting is maintained. However, where failure to proceed with the project would not result in preservation of existing environmental conditions, the analysis should identify the practical result of the project's non-approval and not create and analyze a set of artificial assumptions that would be required to preserve the existing physical environment." (*Id.*, subd. [e][3][B]).

Per the requirements of the CEQA Guidelines, the City has decided to evaluate a No Project (No Build) Alternative, a No Project (No Annexation, County Buildout) Alternative, a Liberty Ranch and "Future Growth Area" Alternative, and a Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative. Under the No Project (No Build) Alternative, the project site would remain under current conditions. Under the No Project (No Annexation, County Buildout) Alternative, the site would not be annexed to the City of Galt, changes to the existing land uses on the project site would not occur, and the site would remain within Sacramento County.

The Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative would include the approximate 338-acre Liberty Ranch Site, the 17.4-acre “Future Growth Area,” as well as four non-participating parcels, identified by the Sacramento County Assessor as Assessor’s Parcel Numbers (APNs) 148-0090-056, -057, -058, and -024 (see Figure 6-2).

The non-participating properties would be included in order to not create an unincorporated island and to include the existing Liberty Ranch High School and Estrellita Continuation High School; however, the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative would not include the non-participating properties located in the northwestern portion of the proposed project site (approximately 94 acres).

The City has also chosen to evaluate a Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative. The Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative would involve development of the proposed project with the same number of residential units (1,745), but with an increased density. The increase in residential density would reduce the residential acreage for the site, which would be transferred and preserved as open space under the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative. The Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative would be developed on the entire project site, but would preserve approximately 122 acres as open space.

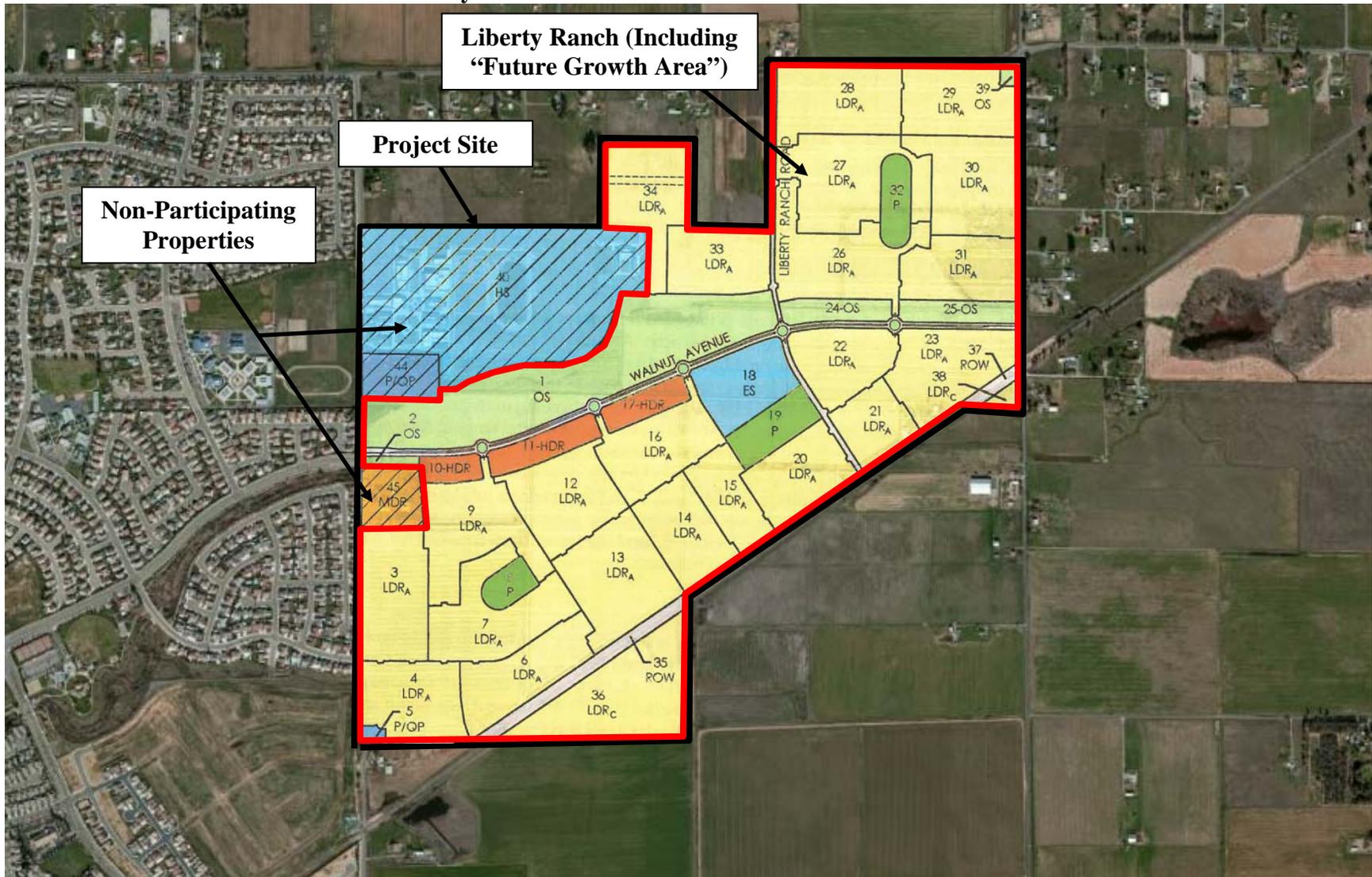
Each of the project alternatives are described in further detail below with analyses of each alternative’s impacts with regards to each environmental resources area. A comparison of the environmental impacts resulting from the considered alternatives and the proposed project is provided in Table 6-1.

### **No Project (No Build) Alternative**

The No Project (No Build) Alternative is defined in this section as the continuation of the existing conditions of the project site, which is currently vacant and undeveloped. The No Project (No Build) Alternative would not meet any of the project objectives because the site would not be developed with mixed residential neighborhood uses, including low density, medium density, and high density residential, parks, open space, schools, and minor commercial and public facilities.

Because the site would not introduce any new structures or buildings on the site under the No Project (No Build) Alternative, modifications to the existing visual character or quality of the site or surroundings, creation of any new sources of light or glare, or changes to scenic resources would not occur. Thus, aesthetic impacts under the No Project (No Build) Alternative would not occur.

**Figure 6-2**  
**Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative**



Because development of the site would not occur, land disturbance and any associated physical environmental impacts would not occur. As such, construction activities would not be involved and all associated short-term, construction-related air pollutant emissions would not occur. As development would not occur on the site, emissions associated with operations, such as mobile and stationary sources (e.g., heating mechanisms, landscaping equipment, and consumer products) would not occur. Similarly, sources of greenhouse gas (GHG) would not occur on-site under the No Project (No Build) Alternative, and sources of objectionable odors in the area do not exist. Therefore, air quality impacts would not occur with implementation of the No Project (No Build) Alternative.

In addition, because land disturbance would not occur under the No Project (No Build) Alternative, impacts to any potential biological resources on-site or in the project vicinity would not occur. For the same reason, a potential to affect any cultural resources on-site or in the project vicinity would not occur. Thus, impacts related to biological and cultural resources would not occur.

Because changes to the existing land uses on the project site would not occur, and the site would remain undeveloped, the No Project (No Build) Alternative would have no impacts on land use and planning. The existing ambient noise levels would not be modified with implementation of the No Project (No Build) Alternative, thus, resulting in no noise impacts. As an increase in population would not occur as a result of the No Project (No Build) Alternative, the current demand on public services or utilities in the area would not be modified, and associated impacts would not occur. In addition, the No Project (No Build) Alternative would not alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or surrounding area, create or contribute an increase in runoff water, provide additional sources of polluted runoff, result in the degradation of water quality, or affect groundwater supply or quality. Thus, impacts related to hydrology and water quality of the site and surrounding area would not occur under the No Project (No Build) Alternative.

Transportation and circulation in the project vicinity would not be modified under the No Project (No Build) Alternative; thus, all associated impacts such as short-term increases in traffic related to construction activities, increased vehicle traffic at nearby intersections, on area roadways, and freeway facilities, and effects on alternative modes of transportation would not occur.

Therefore, implementation of the No Project (No Build) Alternative would result in fewer overall impacts compared to that of the proposed project; however, it would not meet the project objectives. For a summary of the impacts resulting from the No Project (No Build) Alternative in comparison with the proposed project and the other project alternatives, see Table 6-1.

### **No Project (No Annexation, County Buildout) Alternative**

The project site is currently located within Sacramento County and has a Sacramento County General Plan land use designation of Agricultural-Residential (AG-RES) and General Agriculture 20 Acres (GA 20). Consistent with the adopted Sacramento County land use designations, the No Project (No Annexation, County Buildout) Alternative could involve development of up to approximately 90 single-family residential units on the project site. The Sacramento County General Plan land use designation of AG-RES (approximately 70 acres) could result in a

development density between 1 to 10 acres per dwelling unit; however, the properties designated AG-RES are currently developed consistent with their designation. The remaining 434 acres of the project site has the Sacramento County General Plan land use designation of GA 20. The Sacramento County General Plan land use designation of GA 20 results in a development density of 1 dwelling unit per 20 acres, which could result in up to approximately only 20 additional single-family residential units due to the existing Liberty High School located on the project site. Buildout of the project site per the No Project (No Annexation, County Buildout) Alternative would result in 1,715 fewer residential units than the proposed project.

Detailed discussions of impacts to each environmental resource area as a result of buildout of the site per the No Project (No Annexation, County Buildout) Alternative in comparison to that of the proposed project are presented below.

### Aesthetics

Because the No Project (No Annexation, County Buildout) Alternative would not introduce a significant amount of new structures or buildings on the site, modifications to the existing visual character or quality of the site or surroundings, creation of any new sources of light or glare, or changes to scenic resources would not occur. Thus, aesthetic impacts under the No Project (No Annexation, County Buildout) Alternative would not occur.

### Agricultural Resources

The No Project (No Annexation, County Buildout) Alternative would not introduce a significant amount of new structures or buildings on the site. As such, the potential for the conversion of farmland, Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural use, as well as the cumulative loss of agricultural land under the No Project (No Annexation, County Buildout) Alternative would not occur.

### Air Quality and Climate Change

Because large scale development of the site would not occur under the No Project (No Annexation, County Buildout) Alternative, land disturbance and any associated physical environmental impacts would not occur. As such, large scale construction activities would not be involved and all associated short-term, construction-related air pollutant emissions would not occur. As large scale development would not occur on the site, emissions associated with operations, such as mobile and stationary sources (e.g., heating mechanisms, landscaping equipment, and consumer products) would not occur. Similarly, sources of greenhouse gas (GHG) would not occur on-site under the No Project (No Annexation, County Buildout) Alternative, and sources of objectionable odors in the area do not exist. Therefore, air quality impacts would not increase with implementation of the No Project (No Annexation, County Buildout) Alternative.

### Biological Resources

The No Project (No Annexation, County Buildout) Alternative would not include large scale development of the site and, therefore, large scale land disturbance would not occur under the No Project (No Annexation, County Buildout) Alternative. As a result, impacts to any potential biological resources on-site or in the project vicinity would not occur.

### Cultural Resources

The No Project (No Annexation, County Buildout) Alternative would not include large scale development of the site and, therefore, large scale land disturbance would not occur under the No Project (No Annexation, County Buildout) Alternative. As a result, impacts to any potential cultural resources on-site or in the project vicinity would not occur.

### Geology and Soils

The No Project (No Annexation, County Buildout) Alternative would not include large scale development of the site and, therefore, large scale land disturbance would not occur under the No Project (No Annexation, County Buildout) Alternative. As a result, the potential for the No Project (No Annexation, County Buildout) Alternative to result in the risk associated with substantial erosion or loss of topsoil and the risks to people and structures associated with unstable or expansive soils and use of on-site soils as engineered fill would not occur.

### Hazards and Hazardous Materials

The No Project (No Annexation, County Buildout) Alternative would not include large scale development of the site and, therefore, large scale land disturbance would not occur under the No Project (No Annexation, County Buildout) Alternative. As a result, the potential for the No Project (No Annexation, County Buildout) Alternative to result in significant impacts regarding on-site wells, septic tanks, and reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment or emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school would not occur.

### Hydrology and Water Quality/Storm Water Quality

The No Project (No Annexation, County Buildout) Alternative would not alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or surrounding area, create or contribute an increase in runoff water, provide additional sources of polluted runoff, result in the degradation of water quality, or affect groundwater supply or quality. Thus, impacts related to hydrology and water quality of the site and surrounding area would not occur under the No Project (No Annexation, County Buildout) Alternative.

### Land Use and Planning

Under the No Project (No Annexation, County Buildout) Alternative, the site would not be annexed to the City of Galt, changes to the existing land uses on the project site would not occur, and the site would remain within Sacramento County. Planning-related impacts could result if the project site is not annexed to the City of Galt because the site is designated for urban uses by the 2030 Galt General Plan. Without annexation and redesignation of the site, the No Project (No Annexation, County Buildout) Alternative would not be consistent with the 2030 Galt General Plan, which identifies the site for development.

### Noise

The existing ambient noise levels would not be modified with implementation of the No Project (No Annexation, County Buildout) Alternative, thus, resulting in no noise impacts.

### Public Services and Utilities/Recreation

As a substantial increase in population would not occur as a result of the No Project (No Annexation, County Buildout) Alternative, the current demand on public services, utilities, or recreation facilities in the area would not be modified, and associated impacts would not occur.

### Transportation and Circulation

Existing transportation and circulation in the project vicinity would not be substantially modified under the No Project (No Annexation, County Buildout) Alternative; thus, all associated impacts such as short-term increases in traffic related to construction activities, increased vehicle traffic at nearby intersections, on area roadways, and freeway facilities, and effects on alternative modes of transportation would not occur.

Therefore, implementation of the No Project (No Annexation, County Buildout) Alternative would result in fewer overall impacts compared to that of the proposed project; however, the No Project (No Annexation, County Buildout) Alternative would not meet any of the project objectives because the site would remain rural agricultural land within the County and would not promote the harmonious existence of a range of land uses and diversity in population or provide an inter-connecting network of distinctive common elements such as parks and open space, landscaping, street furniture, signage, lighting, and trails that would provide visual and physical continuity to unify the project area.

For a summary of the impacts resulting from the No Project (No Annexation, County Buildout) Alternative in comparison with the proposed project and the other project alternatives, see Table 6-1.

### **Liberty Ranch And “Future Growth Area” Alternative**

The Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative would involve the same land uses as the proposed project, but with only the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” portions of the

proposed project, eliminating the non-participating parcels located in the northwestern portion of the proposed project site (see Figure 6-2). With the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative, the non-participating parcels (approximately 94 acres) included in the proposed project would not be annexed into the City of Galt and would remain within Sacramento County. Accordingly, the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative would result in approximately 82 fewer acres of low density residential and 125,000 fewer square feet of commercial uses compared to the proposed project. Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative would not result in additional development of the non-participating properties. As mentioned above, the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative would include the existing Liberty Ranch High School, Estrellita Continuation High School, and four non-participating properties in order to not create an unincorporated island.

The Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative would achieve all of the project objectives; however, would not annex non-participating properties located in the northwestern portion of the proposed project site, which currently have City land use designations, and are planned for future annexation.

Detailed discussions of impacts to each environmental resource area as a result of buildout of the site per the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative in comparison to that of the proposed project are presented below.

#### Aesthetics

The Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative would involve development of the project site similar to the types of land uses as the proposed project. As such, the same potential to degrade the existing visual character or quality of the project site and/or the site’s surroundings, create new sources of light or glare, and contribution to cumulative aesthetic impacts would occur as the proposed project. Therefore, the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative’s impacts related to aesthetics would be similar to those of the proposed project, including the significant and unavoidable impact.

#### Agricultural Resources

The Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative would involve development of the project site with the similar types of land uses as the proposed project. As such, the same potential for the conversion of farmland, Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural use, as well as the cumulative loss of agricultural land would occur as the proposed project. Therefore, the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative’s impacts related to agricultural resources would be similar to those of the proposed project, including the significant and unavoidable impact.

#### Air Quality and Climate Change

Buildout of the site per the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative would result in fewer residential units and eliminate the proposed commercial square footage when compared to the proposed project. In addition, the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative

would involve a smaller overall area of disturbance than the proposed project; therefore, construction-related emissions would likely be slightly less than what is expected for the proposed project.

The Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative would involve buildout of the same types of land uses as the proposed project with the exception of the non-participating properties in the northwestern portion of the project site, resulting in fewer residential units and eliminating the proposed commercial square footage; therefore, the operational criteria air pollutant and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions would be fewer than those estimated for the proposed project. As a result, the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative would result in fewer impacts as the proposed project associated with a violation of air quality standards, a contribution to an existing or projected air quality violation during operations, a conflict with obstruction of implementation of applicable air quality plans, and generation of GHG emissions that may have a significant impact on the environment and/or conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing emissions of GHGs. However, similar mitigation would still be required to ensure impacts would be reduced.

In addition, with the elimination of the commercial square footage and fewer residential units compared to the proposed project, the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative would result in fewer associated vehicle trips and VMT. As such, traffic conditions would be expected to be improved on area roadways, which would result in a smaller potential for localized CO emissions. Thus, the potential for sensitive receptors to be exposed to localized CO concentrations per the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative could be less than that of the proposed project. Furthermore, as the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative would involve development on a smaller footprint than the proposed project, the potential for exposure of sensitive receptors to TACs associated with construction activities, freeway traffic, and naturally occurring asbestos (NOA) would be less than the proposed project.

Because the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative would involve development of the project site with the same types of land uses as the proposed project with the exception of the non-participating properties in the northwestern portion of the project site, impacts associated with objectionable odors would be the similar under the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative as the proposed project.

Overall, the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative would result in fewer air quality and climate change impacts as the proposed project; however, the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative would still result in significant and unavoidable impacts related to operational criteria air pollutant emissions.

### Biological Resources

Because the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative would involve development on a smaller footprint than the proposed project, the overall area of disturbance for development of the Alternative would likely be less than that of the proposed project. As a result, the potential for the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative to impact on-site biological resources would likely be less than the proposed project. However, similar mitigation measures

would still be required to ensure impacts would be reduced. Such as impacts to special-status plant and wildlife species, nesting birds, and impacts to Deadman Gulch. Nonetheless, overall, impacts related to biological resources would be slightly fewer under the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative, as compared to the proposed project.

### Cultural Resources

Because the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative would involve development on a smaller footprint than the proposed project, the overall area of disturbance for development of the Alternative would likely be less than that of the proposed project. As a result, the potential for the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative to disrupt or destroy previously unknown unique archaeological and paleontological resources or human remains during ground disturbing activities would likely be less than the proposed project. However, similar mitigation measures would still be required to ensure impacts would be reduced. The Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative would, similar to the proposed project, not be expected to be able to avoid impacts to on-site historical resources. Nonetheless, overall, impacts related to cultural resources would be slightly fewer under the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative than the proposed project.

### Geology and Soils

Because the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative would involve development on a smaller footprint than the proposed project, the overall area of disturbance for development of the Alternative would likely be less than that of the proposed project. As a result, the potential for the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative to result in the risk associated with substantial erosion or loss of topsoil and the risks to people and structures associated with unstable or expansive soils and use of on-site soils as engineered fill would likely be less than the proposed project. However, similar mitigation measures would still be required to ensure impacts would be reduced. Overall, impacts related to geology and soils would be slightly fewer under the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative than the proposed project.

### Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Because the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative would involve development on a smaller footprint than the proposed project, the overall area of disturbance for development of the Alternative would likely be less than that of the proposed project. As a result, the potential for the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative to result in significant impacts regarding on-site wells, septic tanks, and reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment or emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school would likely be less than the proposed project. However, similar mitigation measures would still be required to ensure impacts would be reduced. Overall, impacts related to hazards and hazardous materials would be slightly fewer under the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative than the proposed project.

### Hydrology and Water Quality/Storm Water Quality

The overall development footprint area of the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative would be less than that of the proposed project. Accordingly, the amount of impervious surfaces would be expected to be less than that of the proposed project under the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative, which would result in a lesser potential to alter the drainage pattern of the site or area, or create or contribute runoff water that would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage system. Similarly, as construction activities would likely occur over a smaller disturbance area, the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative would result in the a lesser potential to create or contribute additional sources of polluted runoff, violate water quality standards or waste discharge requirements, or otherwise degrade water quality during construction as the proposed project.

Similar to the proposed project, the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative would connect to the City of Galt water system. In addition, the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative would be required to utilize a low-impact development (LID) approach to stormwater management, which would promote infiltration of stormwater and allow for groundwater recharge.

Overall, the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative would result in slightly fewer impacts than the proposed project associated with hydrology and water quality/storm water quality.

### Land Use and Planning

Existing Galt General Plan land use designations exist on-site and the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative would consist of buildout of the site similar to the proposed project, with the exception of the non-participating properties in the northwestern portion of the project site. The Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative does not include buildout of the non-participating properties and the General Plan land use designations would remain under this alternative. Accordingly, similar impacts as the proposed project would occur under the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative related to compatibility with surrounding land uses and consistency with applicable land use plans, policies, and regulations. Although the Alternative would not include buildout of the non-participating properties, the General Plan land use designations would remain, thus maintaining consistency with land use plans and policies. Therefore, overall impacts related to land use and planning associated with the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative would be similar to the proposed project.

### Noise

Because the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative would involve development on a smaller footprint than the proposed project, the overall area of disturbance for development of the Alternative would likely be less than that of the proposed project. As a result, slightly less construction-related noise and vibration would be expected to result under the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative, as compared to the proposed project. In addition, the number or residential units and commercial square footage would be fewer under the Liberty Ranch and

“Future Growth Area” Alternative as the proposed project, therefore, fewer associated vehicle trips and VMT would occur. Overall, the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative would result in slightly fewer noise impacts than the proposed project.

#### Public Services and Utilities/Recreation

Buildout of the site per the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative would result in fewer residential units and eliminate the proposed commercial square footage when compared to the proposed project. In addition, the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative would involve a smaller overall area of disturbance than the proposed project; therefore, construction-related emissions would likely be slightly less than what is expected for the proposed project. Accordingly the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative would generate a smaller population increase as the proposed project. Consequently, the demand for public services and utilities, including water supply, treatment, and distribution services, wastewater collection and treatment services, solid waste services, police and fire protection services, school and library services, parks and recreation facilities, electricity, natural gas, and other dry utilities would be the less under the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative as the proposed project.

#### Transportation and Circulation

As the overall development footprint and area of disturbance for the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative would be less than that of the proposed project, the associated short-term construction-related traffic impacts would likely be slightly less under the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative than the proposed project. However, the same mitigation measure would still be required to reduce impacts.

In addition, the number of residential units and commercial square footage would be fewer under the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative as the proposed project, therefore, fewer associated vehicle trips and VMT. As such, traffic conditions would be expected to improve on area roadways as a result of the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative, and fewer impacts as the proposed project related to study intersections and freeway facilities would occur. Similar mitigation measures as required for the proposed project would still be required under the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative, and the significant and unavoidable impacts identified for the proposed project would still be expected to occur.

As the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative would generate a smaller population increase as the proposed project, the associated use of bicycle and pedestrian facilities, as well as the transit system, would likely be fewer to that of the proposed project. Thus, impacts to such facilities and services would be slightly fewer under the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative compared to the proposed project.

Cumulative impacts would be expected to be similar under the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative to the proposed project, as the same cumulative setting would apply to both conditions.

Overall, Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative would result in fewer impacts related to transportation and circulation as compared to the proposed project; however, the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative would still be expected to result in a significant and unavoidable impact to study freeway facilities.

### **Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative**

The Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative includes development of 1,745 dwelling units on approximately 382 acres and preservation of approximately 122 acres as open space. The same proportion of low density, medium density, and high density residential units would be developed as part of the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative as compared to the proposed project. The Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative would involve the same types of land uses as the proposed project, but with the residential units built out according to the maximum allowable density per residential land use designation. The difference in acreage associated with the decrease in residential development footprint would be designated and preserved as open space. Accordingly, the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative would result in more dwelling units per acre within the project site, concentrating development in particular locations, leaving more acreage as undeveloped open space. The open space area would be located along Deadman Gulch and would be preserved for habitat as well as passive recreational purposes.

The Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative would achieve some of the proposed project’s objectives, including those related to providing housing opportunities affordable to a wide range of income levels and with a broad range of housing types, as well as arranging the community around a walkable Open Space Corridor with amenities that can serve as vibrant gathering spaces for public and private interaction, and provide recreation and minor services.

Detailed discussions of impacts to each environmental resource area as a result of buildout of the site per the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative in comparison to that of the proposed project are presented below.

#### Aesthetics

The Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative would involve development of the project site with the same types of land uses as the proposed project. As such, the same potential to degrade the existing visual character or quality of the project site and/or the site’s surroundings, create new sources of light or glare, and contribution to cumulative aesthetic impacts would occur as the proposed project. Therefore, the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative’s impacts related to aesthetics would be similar to those of the proposed project, including the significant and unavoidable impact.

#### Agricultural Resources

The Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative would involve development of the project site with the same types of land uses as the proposed project. As such, the same potential for the conversion of farmland, Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide

Importance to non-agricultural use, as well as the cumulative loss of agricultural land would occur as the proposed project. Therefore, the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative's impacts related to agricultural resources would be similar to those of the proposed project, including the significant and unavoidable impact.

### Air Quality and Climate Change

Buildout of the site per the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative would result in the same number of residential units as the proposed project, but over a smaller residential development footprint. Because the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative would involve a smaller overall area of disturbance than the proposed project, construction-related emissions would likely be slightly less than what is expected for the proposed project.

As the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative would involve buildout of the same types of land uses as the proposed project with the same number of residential units, the operational criteria air pollutant and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions would be similar to those estimated for the proposed project. As a result, the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative would result in similar impacts as the proposed project associated with a violation of air quality standards, a contribution to an existing or projected air quality violation during operations, a conflict with obstruction of implementation of applicable air quality plans, and generation of GHG emissions that may have a significant impact on the environment and/or conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing emissions of GHGs. The significant and unavoidable impact identified for the proposed project would remain under the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative.

Because the same number of residential units would occur under the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative as the proposed project, the same number of associated vehicle trips and VMT would occur. As such, similar traffic conditions would be expected on area roadways. However, concentrating development in particular locations could cause higher amounts of traffic on the roadways and intersections nearest the concentrated development areas, which could result in a higher potential for localized CO emissions. Thus, the potential for sensitive receptors to be exposed to localized CO concentrations per the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative could be higher than that of the proposed project. However, as the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative would involve similar development on the same site as the proposed project, the potential for exposure of sensitive receptors to TACs associated with construction activities, freeway traffic, and naturally occurring asbestos (NOA) would be similar to the proposed project.

Because the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative would involve development of the project site with the same types of land uses as the proposed project on the same site, impacts associated with objectionable odors would be the same under the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative as the proposed project.

Overall, the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative would result in similar air quality and climate change impacts as the proposed project, and would still result in significant and unavoidable impacts related to operational criteria air pollutant emissions.

### Biological Resources

Because the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative would involve development of the same number of residential units, but on a smaller footprint, and more open space than the proposed project, the overall area of disturbance for development of the Alternative would likely be less than that of the proposed project. As a result, the potential for the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative to impact on-site biological resources would likely be less than the proposed project. However, similar mitigation measures would still be required to ensure impacts would be reduced. For example, impacts to special-status plant and wildlife species, nesting birds, and impacts to Deadman Gulch would still require mitigation. Nonetheless, overall, impacts related to biological resources would be slightly fewer under the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative, as compared to the proposed project.

### Cultural Resources

Because the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative would involve development of the same number of residential units, but on a smaller footprint, and more open space than the proposed project, the overall area of disturbance for development of the Alternative would likely be less than that of the proposed project. As a result, the potential for the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative to disrupt or destroy previously unknown unique archaeological and paleontological resources or human remains during ground disturbing activities would likely be less than the proposed project. However, similar mitigation measures would still be required to ensure impacts would be reduced. The Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative would, similar to the proposed project, not be expected to be able to avoid impacts to on-site historical resources. Nonetheless, overall, impacts related to cultural resources would be slightly fewer under the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative than the proposed project.

### Geology and Soils

Because the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative would involve development of the same number of residential units, but on a smaller footprint, and more open space than the proposed project, the overall area of disturbance for development of the Alternative would likely be less than that of the proposed project. As a result, the potential for the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative to result in the risk associated with substantial erosion or loss of topsoil and the risks to people and structures associated with unstable or expansive soils and use of on-site soils as engineered fill would likely be less than the proposed project. However, similar mitigation measures would still be required to ensure impacts would be reduced. Overall, impacts related to geology and soils would be slightly fewer under the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative than the proposed project.

### Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Because the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative would involve development of the same number of residential units, but on a smaller footprint, and more open space than the proposed project, the overall area of disturbance for development of the Alternative would likely be less than that of the proposed project. As a result, the potential for the Cluster Development

(Increased Density) Alternative to result in significant impacts regarding on-site wells, septic tanks, and reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment or emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school would likely be less than the proposed project. However, similar mitigation measures would still be required to ensure impacts would be reduced. Overall, impacts related to hazards and hazardous materials would be slightly fewer under the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative than the proposed project.

#### Hydrology and Water Quality/Storm Water Quality

The overall development footprint area of the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative would be less than that of the proposed project. Accordingly, the amount of impervious surfaces would be expected to be less than that of the proposed project under the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative, which would result in a lesser potential to alter the drainage pattern of the site or area, or create or contribute runoff water that would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage system. Similarly, as construction activities would likely occur over a smaller disturbance area, the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative would result in the a lesser potential to create or contribute additional sources of polluted runoff, violate water quality standards or waste discharge requirements, or otherwise degrade water quality during construction as the proposed project. Although the overall development footprint of the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative would be less than that of the proposed project, the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative would still be required to make the same necessary improvements to the Deadman Gulch drainage channel that would provide for increased flood protection for not only the current conditions, but to accommodate the increase in stormwater runoff associated with the proposed project as well.

Similar to the proposed project, the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative would connect to the City of Galt water system. In addition, the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative would be required to utilize a low-impact development (LID) approach to stormwater management, which would promote infiltration of stormwater and allow for groundwater recharge.

Overall, the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative would result in slightly fewer impacts than the proposed project associated with hydrology and water quality/storm water quality.

#### Land Use and Planning

The Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative would consist of buildout of the site similar to the proposed project, with the exception of an increase in residential density. However, the increased density would remain within the allowable density range for each land use designation. Accordingly, similar impacts as the proposed project would occur under the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative related to compatibility with surrounding land uses and consistency with applicable land use plans, policies, and regulations. Therefore, overall

impacts related to land use and planning associated with the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative would be similar to the proposed project.

### Noise

Because the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative would involve development of the same number of residential units, but on a smaller footprint, and more open space than the proposed project, the overall area of disturbance for development of the Alternative would likely be less than that of the proposed project. However, depending on the location of the proposed residential units, the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative could effect nearby sensitive receptors during construction. As a result, similar construction-related noise and vibration would be expected to result under the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative, as compared to the proposed project.

Because the same number of residential units would occur under the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative as the proposed project, the same number of associated vehicle trips and VMT would occur. As such, similar traffic conditions would be expected on area roadways, which would result in similar traffic-related noise in the area, as compared to the proposed project. Thus, impacts under the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative would be similar to the proposed project associated with transportation noise and vibration at existing and new sensitive receptors, and mitigation measures would still be required to reduce impacts. As the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative would involve similar development as the proposed project, impacts related to operational noise would be expected to be similar as well.

Overall, the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative would result in similar noise impacts than the proposed project.

### Public Services and Utilities/Recreation

Buildout of the site per the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative would result in the same number and types of residential units as the proposed project. Accordingly, the same population would be generated by the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative as the proposed project. Consequently, the demand for public services and utilities, including water supply, treatment, and distribution services, wastewater collection and treatment services, solid waste services, police and fire protection services, school and library services, parks and recreation facilities, electricity, natural gas, and other dry utilities would be the same under the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative as the proposed project.

### Transportation and Circulation

As the overall development footprint and area of disturbance for the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative would be less than that of the proposed project, the associated short-term construction-related traffic impacts would likely be slightly less under the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative than the proposed project. However, the same mitigation measure would still be required to reduce impacts.

Because the same number and types of residential units would occur under the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative as the proposed project, the same number of associated vehicle trips and VMT would occur. As such, the same traffic conditions would be expected on area roadways as a result of the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative, and similar impacts as the proposed project related to study intersections and freeway facilities would occur. Similar mitigation measures as required for the proposed project would still be required under the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative, and the significant and unavoidable impacts identified for the proposed project would still be expected to occur.

As the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative would generate the same population as the proposed project, the associated use of bicycle and pedestrian facilities, as well as the transit system, would likely be similar to that of the proposed project. Thus, impacts to such facilities and services could be similar under the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative to the proposed project.

Cumulative impacts would be expected to be similar under the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative to the proposed project, as the same cumulative setting would apply to both conditions.

Overall, the Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative would result in similar impacts related to transportation and circulation as compared to the proposed project, and would still be expected to result in a significant and unavoidable impact to study freeway facilities.

#### **6.4 ENVIRONMENTALLY SUPERIOR ALTERNATIVE**

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An EIR is required to identify the environmentally superior alternative from among the range of reasonable alternatives that are evaluated. Section 15126(e)(2) of the CEQA Guidelines requires that an environmentally superior alternative be designated and states, “If the environmentally superior alternative is the ‘no project’ alternative, the EIR shall also identify an environmentally superior alternative among the other alternatives.”

A comparison of the proposed project to the three alternatives discussed in detail above is illustrated in Table 6-1, below. Although the No Project (No Build) Alternative would result in no impact in all resources areas, the No Project (No Build) Alternative would not satisfy the project objectives. Similarly, the No Project (No Annexation, County Buildout) would not satisfy the project objectives. The Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative and the Cluster Development (Increased Intensity) Alternative would satisfy the greatest number of project objectives. As shown in Table 6-1, the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative would reduce impacts compared to the proposed project in nine environmental resources areas.

Due to the number of impacts reduced compared to the proposed project and the satisfaction of project objectives, the Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative would be considered the environmentally superior alternative.

**Table 6-1  
Alternative Environmental Impacts Comparison**

<b>Resource Area</b>	<b>Proposed Project</b>	<b>No Project (No Build) Alternative</b>	<b>No Project (No Annexation, County Buildout) Alternative</b>	<b>Liberty Ranch and “Future Growth Area” Alternative</b>	<b>Cluster Development (Increased Density) Alternative</b>
Aesthetics	Significant and Unavoidable	None	None	Similar*	Similar*
Agricultural Resources	Significant and Unavoidable	None	None	Similar*	Similar*
Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Significant and Unavoidable	None	None	Fewer*	Similar*
Biological Resources	Less-Than-Significant with Mitigation	None	None	Fewer	Fewer
Cultural Resources	Less-Than-Significant with Mitigation	None	None	Fewer	Fewer
Geology and Soils	Less-Than-Significant with Mitigation	None	None	Fewer	Fewer
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	Less-Than-Significant with Mitigation	None	None	Fewer	Fewer
Hydrology and Water Quality/Storm Water Quality	Less-Than-Significant with Mitigation	None	None	Fewer	Fewer
Land Use and Planning	Less-Than-Significant	None	None	Similar	Similar
Noise	Less-Than-Significant with Mitigation	None	None	Fewer	Similar
Public Services and Utilities/Recreation	Less-Than-Significant with Mitigation	None	None	Fewer	Similar
Transportation and Circulation	Significant and Unavoidable	None	None	Fewer*	Similar*

No Impact = “None;” Less than Proposed Project = “Fewer;” Similar to Proposed Project = “Similar;” and Greater than Proposed Project = “Greater.”  
\* Significant and Unavoidable impact(s) determined for the proposed project would still be expected to occur under the Alternative.