

5 ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT

The Siena Hill project, as proposed by the applicant, has been described and analyzed in the previous chapter with an emphasis on potentially significant impacts and recommended mitigation measures to avoid those impacts. The State CEQA guidelines require the description and comparative analysis of a range of alternatives to the proposed project that could feasibly attain the objectives of the project. As stated in the project description in Chapter 3 of this EIR, the project proponent has the following objectives for the project:

- ◆ Develop an underutilized site into a residential community that will enhance existing adjacent residential neighborhoods.
- ◆ Provide no less than 32 attached single-family homes on this infill site, to help maximize meeting the demand for housing in Oakland and implement elements of Oakland's General Plan, including the Housing Element.
- ◆ Provide for a financially-viable project in terms of residential density, building massing, parking and other amenities.
- ◆ Maximize the efficient use of the project site, given the constraints of the site, by clustering homes.
- ◆ Utilize architecture and landscaping that conforms to and is sensitive to the unique configuration of the site by following the existing slope of the site and respecting existing views from the site.
- ◆ Provide needed parking to accommodate the housing in a manner that is visually concealed from Keller Avenue and the neighborhoods adjacent to the proposed project site.
- ◆ Respect the character of the existing surrounding residential areas.
- ◆ Preserve views from residences upslope of the proposed project site.
- ◆ Phase project construction to allow for reasonable absorption rates.
- ◆ Provide construction jobs for local workers.

The following discussion is intended to inform the public and decision makers of the feasible alternatives that consider mitigation measures recommended in this EIR. Three alternatives are discussed below.

CEQA guidelines require consideration of a “No Project Alternative” in every EIR. In most project EIRs, the No Project Alternative is assumed to be one in which no development would take place on the project site. Such an alternative is considered as the No Project Alternative in this EIR.

CEQA guidelines also require that the environmentally superior alternative be designated. If the alternative with the least environmental impact is the No Project Alternative, then the EIR must also designate the next most environmentally superior alternative.

Two project alternatives were considered but rejected from further consideration since they would not avoid or substantially lessen the potential impacts of the proposed project. The project analyzed in this EIR represents a reduction from the applicant’s original proposal to construct 44 housing units on the project site, in a slightly different configuration. However, prior to the start of the environmental review process, the applicant made a voluntary reduction in the number of units from 44 to 32. This reduction of units resulted in a reduction of visual impacts of the amount and height of retaining walls that would be needed; the amount of grading that would have to be done; and a safer alignment of Siena Drive. Therefore, in effect, the proposed project represents an alternative that has been substantially mitigated from the original proposal.

In addition, an alternative of 32 detached single-family residential units was considered but rejected from further study due to the steep and irregularly shaped site. This alternative would result in greater environmental impacts than the proposed project due to the massive amount of grading required, the increased width and height of retaining walls required and the increased visual impact of housing dispersed over a greater area of the site. Accordingly, be-

cause this alternative would have greater environmental impacts, it was not further studied.

The three alternatives analyzed in this chapter are as follows:

1. No Project Alternative

Construction of 32 units of single-family housing would not occur. This site would remain undeveloped.

2. 16-Unit Detached Alternative

The project would be developed with 16 detached single-family residential units. Each unit would be twice the size of the units in the proposed project, and would share the same footprint as two of the proposed project units with a single lot line. The 16-Unit Alternative would utilize the same site plan with respect to retaining walls, landscaping and the configuration of Siena Drive.

3. Mitigated Project Alternative

The Mitigated Project Alternative has the same components as the proposed project, but incorporates alternative site design or other mitigations in order to mitigate most environmental impacts that were associated with the construction of the project as proposed.

Each alternative is analyzed against the impact factors considered for the proposed project, according to whether it would have a mitigating or adverse effect. Table 16 summarizes the results of the analysis.

B. No Project Alternative

1. Principal Characteristics

Construction of 32 units of single-family housing would not occur. This site would remain undeveloped and unimproved, with ruderal vegetation.

TABLE 16 COMPARISON OF PROJECT ALTERNATIVES

Topic	Project Impacts	No Project Alternative	16-Unit Alternative	Mitigated Project Alternative
Aesthetics	LTS	+	0	0
Air Quality	SM	+	0	+
Biological Resources	SM	+	0	+
Cultural Resources	SM	+	0	+
Geology, Seismicity and Soils	SM	+	0	++
Hydrology	SM	+	0	++
Land Use	LTS	-	0	0
Noise	SM	++	0	+
Traffic and Transportation	SM	+	+	+
Utilities and Service Systems	SM	+	0	+
Project Objectives		--	--	0

LTS Less Than Significant
SM Significant but Mitigable

++ Substantial improvement compared to the proposed project
+ Some improvement compared to the proposed project
0 Same impact as proposed project
- Some deterioration compared to the proposed project
-- Substantial deterioration compared to the proposed project

2. Impact Analysis

The No Project Alternative would have the following impacts relative to the proposed project:

a. Aesthetics

The site does not currently have a high aesthetic value as a vacant hillside covered with grass, scattered weedy shrubs, and some live oak saplings along the top of the site. However, the aesthetic and light and glare impacts the proposed project could have would not occur with the No Project Alternative. Overall, the No Project Alternative is considered to have less of a visual impact than the proposed project.

b. Air Quality

The No Project Alternative would have no air quality impacts. Therefore the No Project Alternative is considered a slight improvement compared to the air quality impacts of the construction of the proposed project.

c. Biological Resources

Potentially significant impacts to special-status plant species that could occur under the proposed project would not occur under the No Project Alternative. Although these impacts could be mitigated to a less-than-significant level in the proposed project, they would be avoided entirely if the site were not developed. Therefore the No Project Alternative is considered environmentally superior with regard to biological resources impacts.

d. Cultural Resources

Neither the proposed project nor the No Project Alternative would be expected to cause impacts to cultural resources. Therefore the No Project Alternative is not environmentally superior with regard to cultural resources.

e. Geology, Soils and Seismicity

Potentially significant impacts regarding slope stability, regional seismic activity and erosion would result from development of the proposed project. These impacts could be mitigated to a less-than-significant level in the pro-

posed project, but would be avoided entirely if the site were not developed under the No Project Alternative. Therefore the No Project Alternative is considered environmentally superior with regard to geologic and seismic impacts.

f. Hydrology and Water Quality

Potentially significant impacts from construction-related erosion, inadequate storm water system capacity and storm water pollution would result from development of the proposed project. These impacts could be mitigated to a less-than-significant level, but would be avoided entirely if the site were not developed under the No Project Alternative. Therefore the No Project Alternative is considered environmentally superior with regard to hydrologic and water quality impacts.

g. Land Use

The proposed project would not have any land use impacts. Moreover, under the No Project Alternative, the project site would not be developed with housing, for which it is designated in both the General Plan and Municipal Code. Therefore, the proposed project would be superior to the No Project Alternative with respect to land use.

h. Noise

No potentially significant construction-related or indoor noise level impacts would occur with the No Project Alternative. Therefore the No Project Alternative is considered environmentally superior with regard to noise impacts.

i. Traffic and Transportation

If no development were to occur on the site, traffic conditions would be expected to remain relatively constant with volumes steadily increasing as a result of other approved development in the area. Since the No Project Alternative would not cause even a slight increase traffic volumes, this alternative is considered environmentally superior to development of the site.

j. Utilities and Service Systems

There would be no increase in wastewater or storm water from the proposed project site. Therefore, the No Project Alternative is considered superior to the proposed project.

3. Ability to Meet Project Objectives

The No Project Alternative would not meet any of the objectives set forward for the project since no housing would be constructed on the project site.

C. 16-Unit Detached Alternative

1. Principal Characteristics

The site would be developed with 16 detached single-family residences on 16 parcels. Each home and its parcel would be the size of two of the homes in the proposed project sharing a zero lot line. Therefore, although there would be only half as many units, each unit would be twice as big as those proposed. The buildings would have the same “Italian hill town” architectural style, and would step up the slope. The site configuration and building footprints would be the same as the configuration and footprints of the proposed project.

2. Impact Analysis

The 16-Unit Detached Alternative would have the following impacts relative to the proposed project:

a. Aesthetics

The 16-Unit Detached Alternative would have very similar visual impacts as the proposed project since the buildings would be the same size, the site would have the same configuration, and the lighting would be substantially similar. Therefore, the 16-Unit Detached Alternative would be considered the same as the proposed project with respect to aesthetic impacts.

b. Air Quality

The 16-Unit Detached Alternative would require the same amount of grading and construction as the proposed project, and thus would be expected to create the same level of construction-related air quality impacts.

c. Biology

The 16-Unit Detached Alternative would be expected to have similar impacts to biological resources, since both this alternative and the proposed project would disturb most if not all of the existing vegetation on the site. However, neither the proposed project nor the 16-Unit Detached Alternative would have significant biological impacts.

d. Cultural Resources

Since the proposed project site is not thought to contain any cultural resources, neither the proposed project nor the 16-Unit Detached Alternative would have any impacts on cultural resources. Therefore this alternative is neither better nor worse than the project as proposed.

e. Geology, Soils and Seismicity

The 16-Unit Detached Alternative would require the same amount of grading, retaining walls and soil engineering as the proposed project. The 16-Unit Detached Alternative would be expected to have the same impacts regarding slope stability, regional seismic activity and erosion since it would have the same site configuration as the proposed project. Therefore, the 16-Unit Detached Alternative would be the same as the proposed project.

f. Hydrology and Water Quality

The 16-Unit Detached Alternative would be expected to have almost identical impacts to site hydrology and water quality from construction-related erosion and storm water pollution since it would have a very similar development footprint as the proposed project and would include the same amount of impervious surfaces. Therefore, the 16-Unit Detached Alternative would be considered the same as the proposed project.

g. Land Use

The 16-Unit Detached Alternative would meet the requirements of the “Best Fit” R-30 zoning, which state that a maximum of 33 units would be allowed on the site. In addition, the 16-Unit Detached Alternative would be consistent with the General Plan designation of Detached Unit Residential. Since neither the proposed project nor the 16-Unit Detached Alternative would create any land use impacts, they are considered to be substantially similar.

h. Noise

Although the construction of the 16-Unit Detached Alternative would involve half the number of units of the proposed project, each unit would be twice as big as those included in the proposed project. Therefore, the 16-Unit Detached Alternative would require the same amount and duration of construction, resulting in substantially similar construction noise impacts, which could be mitigated to a less-than-significant level. The 16-Unit Detached Alternative would be expected to have similar indoor noise level impacts, and similar, less-than-significant operational noise impacts. Overall, the 16-Unit Detached Alternative would have the same noise impacts as the proposed project.

i. Traffic and Transportation

The 16-Unit Detached Alternative would represent a 50 percent decrease in the number of units below the proposed project. A corresponding 50 percent decrease in the number of trips generated would result in a total of 153 rather than 306 trips per day. While both the 16-Unit Detached Alternative and the proposed project would reduce the level of service at the intersection of Keller Avenue and Mountain Boulevard to LOS F, the 16-Unit Detached Alternative would add fewer total vehicles to local intersections. Therefore, the 16-Unit Detached Alternative would be considered slightly better than the proposed project.

j. Utilities and Service Systems

The 16-Unit Detached Alternative would slightly decrease demands on the wastewater and storm water facilities in the project area below the demands

of the proposed project. Therefore, the 16-Unit Detached Alternative would have slightly less impact than the project as proposed.

3. Ability to Meet Project Objectives

The 16-Unit Detached Alternative would meet the objectives of providing infill housing on the project site; visually concealing project parking, and utilizing architecture and landscaping that conform to the unique configuration of the site. However, it would not meet the objective of providing “no less than 32 single-family homes” on the project site. Therefore, the 16-Unit Detached Alternative would not meet all project objectives as well as the proposed project would.

D. Mitigated Project Alternative

1. Principal Characteristics

In this alternative, the project would be built on the proposed site with the site planning and design mitigation measures recommended in Chapter 4. Specifically, this alternative would include the following mitigation measures during construction:

- ◆ The project would comply with Phase II NPDES General Construction Activities Stormwater Permit Requirements.
- ◆ Grading plans would include drainage, erosion, and sediment control plans and incorporate BMPs to minimize the amount of pollutants entering the storm drain system, to the maximum extent possible.
- ◆ The project would follow BAAQMD guidelines for construction Best Management Practices.
- ◆ In case undiscovered archaeological resources or human remains were uncovered during construction, all work on the site would stop, and the applicant would consult a qualified archaeological consultant and/or the County Coroner, as appropriate.

- ◆ The grading plan for the project would limit slope grades to a maximum 2-to-1 horizontal to vertical ratio with retaining walls to support this slope. In addition, detailed grading plans and construction drawings would be submitted to the City of Oakland Building Services Department for approval prior to excavation.
- ◆ The project would implement all Oakland City Council adopted construction noise mitigation measures.
- ◆ Prior to construction activity, the project applicant shall submit a construction management plan for review and approval by the City's Traffic Engineering Division.

Furthermore , the project would include the following mitigation measures after construction was completed:

- ◆ Filter mechanisms would be installed at all drop inlets receiving runoff from the project site.
- ◆ The project would include a final drainage plan approved by a City Engineer, as well as a long-term storm water pollution prevention plan (SWPPP) to protect storm water quality after the construction period. The drainage on the site would be designed and maintained to minimize ponding of surface water and/or saturation of the soils.
- ◆ Additional drop inlets would be installed along the new Siena Drive.
- ◆ The project would include payment of proportional costs of installation of a signal at the intersection of Keller Avenue and Mountain Boulevard.
- ◆ The final landscaping plan would include a program to remove French broom, emphasize the use of native tree, shrub, and groundcover species in landscape plantings, and recognize the difficult growing conditions created by cut slopes on the site.
- ◆ The structures would be designed in compliance with current building codes related to seismic safety.
- ◆ The project would incorporate an erosion control plan to minimize wind and water erosion during the construction period and would address

long-term erosion through installation of landscaping and storm drainage facilities.

- ◆ The foundations of the buildings would be drilled piers and grade beams bearing on rock.

2. Impact Analysis

The Mitigated Project Alternative would have the following impacts relative to the proposed project:

a. Aesthetics

The Mitigated Project Alternative would have the same impacts to views of and across the site, and would have the same light and glare impacts as the proposed project. Since the proposed project does not have any significant aesthetic impacts that require mitigation, the Mitigated Project Alternative would be substantially the same as the project as proposed.

b. Air Quality

With the incorporation of BAAQMD guidelines to mitigate air quality impacts from construction of the proposed project, the Mitigated Project Alternative would be an improvement over the project as proposed.

c. Biological Resources

Since the proposed project does not have any significant impacts to biological resources that would require mitigation, the Mitigated Project Alternative would be substantially the same as the project as proposed.

d. Cultural Resources

With the cultural resources mitigation listed above, the Mitigated Project Alternative would avoid the potential impacts of the proposed project to cultural resources. Therefore the Mitigated Project Alternative would be better than the project as proposed.

e. Geology, Soils and Seismicity

With the incorporation of the numerous geotechnical mitigation measures listed above, the geological impacts of the proposed project would not occur. Therefore, the Mitigated Project Alternative would be an improvement over the project as proposed.

f. Hydrology and Water Quality

With the water quality mitigation measures listed above, the Mitigated Project Alternative would be a significant improvement compared to the project as proposed.

g. Land Use

The proposed project would not create any land use impacts, and therefore the Mitigated Project Alternative would not include any land use mitigations. Therefore the Mitigated Project Alternative would be neither better nor worse than the proposed project with regard to land use.

h. Noise

The implementation of the mitigation measures included in the Mitigated Project Alternative would reduce noise impacts from construction to a less-than-significant level. Therefore the Mitigated Project Alternative would be an improvement over the project as proposed.

i. Traffic and Transportation

With the traffic mitigation measures listed above, the Mitigated Project Alternative would be an improvement over the project as proposed.

j. Utilities and Service Systems

The Mitigated Project Alternative would include both new drop inlets as well as water quality mitigation measures that would reduce impacts on the storm drain system. The Mitigated Project Alternative is therefore environmentally superior to the proposed project.

3. Ability to Meet Project Objectives

The Mitigated Project Alternative would include the same number of units in the same configuration and architectural style as the proposed project. Therefore, the Mitigated Project Alternative would meet all project objectives equally as well as the proposed project.

E. Environmentally Superior Alternative

CEQA requires the identification of the environmentally superior alternative in an EIR. Based on the foregoing analysis, which is summarized in Table 16, it can be seen that the No Project Alternative has the least environmental impact and is therefore the environmentally superior alternative.

CEQA guidelines also require that if the alternative with the least environmental impact is the No Project Alternative, the EIR must also designate the next most environmentally superior alternative. After the No Development Alternative, the Mitigated Project Alternative is the next most environmentally superior alternative.