

5 ALTERNATIVES

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The CCR Section 15126.6(a), State CEQA Guidelines requires EIRs 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. An EIR need not consider every conceivable alternative to a project. Rather, it must consider a range of potentially feasible alternatives that will avoid or substantially lessen the significant adverse impacts of a project, and foster informed decision making and public participation. An EIR is not required to consider alternatives that are infeasible. The lead agency is responsible for selecting a range of project alternatives for examination and must publicly disclose its reasoning for selecting those alternatives. There is no ironclad rule governing the nature or scope of the alternatives to be discussed other than the rule of reason.” This section of the State CEQA Guidelines also provides guidance regarding what the alternatives analysis should consider. Subsection (b) further states the purpose of the alternatives analysis is as follows:

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

The State CEQA Guidelines require that the EIR include sufficient information about each alternative to allow meaningful evaluation, analysis, and comparison with the proposed project. 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 must be discussed, but in less detail than the significant effects of the project as proposed (CCR Section 15126.6[d]).

The State CEQA Guidelines further require that the “no project” alternative be considered (CCR Section 15126.6[e]). The purpose of describing and analyzing a no project alternative is to allow decision makers to compare the impacts of approving a proposed project with the impacts of not approving the proposed project. If the no project alternative is the environmentally superior alternative, CEQA requires that the EIR “shall also identify an environmentally superior alternative among the other alternatives.” (CCR Section 15126[e][2]).

In defining “feasibility” (e.g., “feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project”), CCR Section 15126.6(f) (1) states, in part:

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

In determining what alternatives should be considered in the EIR, it is important to consider the objectives of the project, the project’s significant effects, and unique project considerations. These factors are crucial to the development of alternatives that meet the criteria specified in Section 15126.6(a). Although, as noted above, EIRs must contain a discussion of “potentially feasible” alternatives, the ultimate determination as to whether an alternative is feasible or infeasible is made by the lead agency’s decision-making body, here the Board. (See PRC Sections 21081.5, 21081[a][3].)

5.2 CONSIDERATIONS FOR SELECTION OF ALTERNATIVES

5.2.1 Attainment of Project Objectives

In determining what alternatives should be considered in the EIR, the objectives of the project must be considered, as attainment of most of the basic objectives forms one of the tests of whether an alternative is feasible (see discussion above). Cal Poly identified the following project objectives, as previously described (see Chapter 2, "Project Description"):

- ▶ Support and advance the University's educational mission by guiding the physical development of the campus to accommodate gradual student enrollment growth up to a future enrollment of 22,500 FTES by year 2035 while preserving and enhancing the quality of campus life.
- ▶ Enhance academic quality and student success through Cal Poly's "Learn by Doing" teaching methodology through the provision of physical facilities that allow students to take a hands on approach and conduct project-based learning.
- ▶ Expand campus programs, services, facilities, and housing to support and enhance the diversity of students, faculty, and staff.
- ▶ Site campus facilities and housing to strengthen the campus's compact Academic Core and promote cross-disciplinary synergies between complementary academic, student/faculty support, and housing programs.
- ▶ House all first- and second-year students plus 30 percent of upper-division students in residential communities on campus.
- ▶ Provide housing opportunities on campus primarily for university faculty and staff to promote recruitment and retention and enhance faculty and staff engagement with the campus. In addition, provide housing opportunities and complementary services that may be offered to nontraditional students such as graduate students, veterans, students with families; potentially alumni housing or a retirement community; and for members of the San Luis Obispo community.
- ▶ Provide and enhance campus facilities to create a more vibrant evening and weekend environment.
- ▶ Attain a modal shift from vehicles to more pedestrian, bicycle, and transit use.
- ▶ Advance campus-wide environmental sustainability and make progress toward goals of carbon neutrality and climate resilience.
- ▶ Consider the interface between Cal Poly and the surrounding communities with respect to shared economic health, housing, multimodal transportation, open space and agricultural resources, diversity, and public services.
- ▶ Preserve the core of the Main Campus for instructional and student service uses and move support functions/facilities to the perimeter.

5.2.2 Summary of 2035 Master Plan Impacts

The Executive Summary chapter of this EIR presents a detailed summary of the potential environmental impacts of implementation of the 2035 Master Plan. Overall, the 2035 Master Plan would result in significant and unavoidable impacts with respect to aesthetics; agricultural resources; air quality; archaeological, historical, and tribal cultural resources; and noise.

5.3 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT NOT EVALUATED FURTHER

As described above, State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(c) provides that the range of potential alternatives for the 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. Alternatives that fail to meet the fundamental project purpose need not be addressed in detail in an EIR. (*In re Bay-Delta Programmatic Environmental Impact Report Coordinated Proceedings* (2008) 43 Cal.4th 1143, 1165-1167.)

In determining what alternatives should be considered in the EIR, it is important to acknowledge the objectives of the project, the project's significant effects, and unique project considerations. These factors are crucial to the development of alternatives that meet the criteria specified in Section 15126.6(a). Although, as noted above, EIRs must contain a discussion of "potentially feasible" alternatives, the ultimate determination as to whether an alternative is feasible or infeasible is made by lead agency decision-maker(s). (See Pub. Resources Code, § 21081(a)(3).) At the time of action on the project, the decision-maker(s) may consider evidence beyond that found in this EIR in addressing such determinations. The decision-maker(s), for example, may conclude that a particular alternative is infeasible (i.e., undesirable) from a policy standpoint, and may reject an alternative on that basis provided that the decision-maker(s) adopts a finding, supported by substantial evidence, to that effect, and provided that such a finding reflects a reasonable balancing of the relevant economic, environmental, social, and other considerations supported by substantial evidence. (*City of Del Mar v. City of San Diego* (1982) 133 Cal.App.3d 401, 417; *California Native Plant Society v. City of Santa Cruz* (2009) 177 Cal.App.4th 957, 998.)

The EIR should also identify any alternatives that were considered by the lead agency but were rejected during the planning or scoping process and briefly explain the reasons underlying the lead agency's determination. The following alternatives were considered by Cal Poly but are not evaluated further in this Draft EIR.

5.3.1 Academic Core and East Campus Infill

Based on public input received during the NOP public review period and subsequent coordination with local agencies, Cal Poly evaluated several alternatives that involved an increase in student housing beyond what is currently proposed. Under this alternative, Cal Poly would focus additional campus development beyond what is contemplated in the 2035 Master Plan within the Academic Core and East Campus subareas (east of California Boulevard, west of Perimeter Street and south of Highland Road). This alternative would involve infill and redevelopment, with dense student housing projects providing up to approximately 7,000 additional beds. This alternative would result in a reduction in potential academic and administrative space compared to the 2035 Master Plan, as well as loss of the existing recreation, plaza, and field space within the Academic Core subarea. Due to the densification of uses within these two subareas of the main campus, there would also be a potential for loss of connection between some academic programs and research/field space. Although this alternative would result in additional housing opportunities within the central campus, it would represent a greater level of development and disturbance within a smaller and already developed area, thereby resulting in potentially greater impacts to air quality (construction-related); noise (construction-related); historic, archaeological and cultural resources; and even, aesthetic impacts depending on the placement of structures in the southern portion of the main campus. Finally, while it would achieve some of the objectives stated in Section 5.2, it would not achieve several others to the degree to which the 2035 Master Plan would, including enhancing academic quality through the provision of physical facilities that allow students to take a hands on approach and conduct project-based learning, and the preservation and enhancement of the quality of campus life. In addition, it would not, as noted above, maintain and promote cross-disciplinary synergies between complementary academic, student/faculty support, and housing programs as well as the 2035 Master Plan. It would also not be consistent with the objective to preserve the core of the Main Campus for instructional and student service uses and move support functions/facilities to the perimeter. Thus, because this alternative would not meet most of the basic project objectives and would not reduce or eliminate an environmental impact, relative to the 2035 Master Plan, this alternative is not feasible and is not considered in further detail.

5.3.2 Additional On-Campus Housing (i.e., 4-Year Housing Guarantee)

Under this alternative, Cal Poly would provide greater on-campus housing opportunities for students, up to a 4-year housing guarantee. In other words, Cal Poly would extend the opportunity for all students (graduates and undergraduates) to live on campus. Using target enrollment numbers (25,000) and assuming up to 80 percent of students would pursue guaranteed housing, Cal Poly would need to provide approximately 20,000 beds on campus. That would represent an increase of approximately 12,238 student beds from existing conditions and a 5,042-bed increase above the on-campus beds anticipated under the 2035 Master Plan. If all housing was to occur within the planning horizon, implementation of this alternative would require the construction of approximately 1.66 million square feet of additional student housing. This alternative would involve a greater level of development within Cal Poly property and additional land use changes (likely conversion of agricultural facility space to student housing). As a result, this alternative would result in greater impacts than those under the 2035 Master Plan. Further, this alternative would resemble Alternative 4 (see below) in terms of total development and is not considered materially different such that it would contribute to a “reasonable range” of alternatives. For this reason, this alternative is not considered necessary to meet CEQA requirements for an alternative to be considered. As a result, this alternative is not considered in further detail.

5.3.3 Limited Student Enrollment Alternative

Under this alternative, Cal Poly would limit student enrollment on campus resulting in a reduced need for development. Depending on the limit of enrollment and development, this could result in reduced impacts in various issue areas. This alternative was dismissed from further consideration it would not allow Cal Poly to meet its state/constitutional educational obligations and would not meet the most basic of project objectives.

5.4 ALTERNATIVES SELECTED FOR DETAILED ANALYSIS

The following alternatives evaluated in this Draft EIR:

- ▶ **Alternative 1: No Project Alternative.** This alternative would involve the continued implementation of the 2001 Master Plan. Planned growth as expressed in the 2001 Master Plan would continue up to its planned capacity, primarily associated with new academic/administrative space.
- ▶ **Alternative 2: Reduced Administrative/Academic Development Program.** Under this alternative, Cal Poly would implement a master plan with an overall reduction in planned campus development of administrative/academic space. Approximately 500,000 gross square feet (gsf) of new academic/administrative space would be provided, compared to approximately 1,290,000 gsf of new academic/administrative space under the 2035 Master Plan, resulting in less ground disturbance and other development-related impacts. Further, approximately 455,000 gsf of renovations would occur within existing structures under this alternative, for a total development/renovation potential of 955,000 gsf. Proposed growth in on-campus student housing (approximately 7,200 student beds) and growth in enrollment would be the same as the 2035 Master Plan.
- ▶ **Alternative 3: Net Student Growth Only.** Under Alternative 3, Cal Poly would implement a long-range campus plan that reduces the level of student housing development relative to the proposed increase of approximately 7,200 student beds. This alternative would provide up to 3,188 student beds, which would correspond to the projected increase in student new enrollment at Cal Poly. The 1,750,000 gsf of new academic/administrative space proposed under the 2035 Master Plan would remain the same under this alternative. Under this alternative, the faculty/staff and workforce housing project located at Slack Street and Grand Avenue and the University-Based Retirement Community would not be constructed.
- ▶ **Alternative 4: No Development along City Interface.** This alternative would include development of the campus similar to that under the 2035 Master Plan, however no development would be proposed along (i.e., within 500 feet/0.1 mile) the campus’s southern boundary with the city of San Luis Obispo. Those projects associated with the 2035 Master Plan that would be located within these areas would be relocated within the North and West Campus

subareas. Under this alternative, the faculty/staff and workforce housing project at Slack Street and Grand Avenue and the University-Based Retirement Community would not be constructed in their current locations but would be more centrally located within the Master Plan Area. Spanos Stadium expansion and the expansion of the Orfaea Family and ASI Children's Center would still occur under this alternative, as they both would involve an expansion of an existing facility that could not be relocated to an alternative site within the interior campus.

Further details on these alternatives, and an evaluation of environmental effects relative to the project, are provided below.

5.4.1 Alternative 1: No Project-No Development Alternative

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e)(1) requires that the "no project" alternative be described and analyzed "to allow decision makers to compare the impacts of approving the project with the impacts of not approving the project." The no project analysis is required to discuss "the existing conditions at the time the notice of preparation is published...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" (Section 15126.6[e][2]). "If the project is...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 its existing state against environmental effects which would occur if the project is 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 will 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" (Section 15126[e][3][B]).

The 2001 Master Plan is the existing long-range plan for the campus. For this reason, continued implementation of the current plan would continue if Cal Poly does not adopt and begin implementation of the 2035 Master Plan or other long-term plan for campus. Based on current historical trends, annual student enrollment has steadily increased; thus, this alternative assumes that same trend over time, resulting in gradual student population growth. Under the 2001 Master Plan, additional campus growth would be primarily associated with increases in academic and administrative space, likely limited to just the Academic Core subarea and would likely not exceed an additional 500,000 gsf of academic/administrative space. Under this alternative, Cal Poly would provide additional needed academic and administrative space to meet the needs of the current student population, which exceeds the 2001 Master Plan projections.

AESTHETICS

Under Alternative 1, changes in existing visual conditions would be much more limited than those under the 2035 Master Plan, and impacts would be less than significant because the development would not encroach upon vistas or create visually incompatible views. New development, such as the Farm Shop and the University-Based Retirement Community Project, proposed within the West Campus subarea, which could affect some scenic views and long-distance views of vistas under the 2035 Master Plan, would not occur. Further, under the 2035 Master Plan, development within the West Campus subarea could potentially damage scenic resources along a state scenic highway (State Route 1), resulting in significant and unavoidable impacts. In addition, the faculty, staff workforce housing project located at Slack Street and Grand Avenue in the East Campus would not occur under this Alternative, which would avoid the substantial degradation of existing visual character. Because development under Alternative 1 would occur only within the Academic Core subarea, impacts within state scenic highways and degradation of existing visual character would not occur. Therefore, aesthetic impacts associated with Alternative 1 would be less than those under the 2035 Master Plan, and significant and unavoidable impacts would be avoided. (*Less impact; significant and unavoidable aesthetics impact avoided*)

AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

Under Alternative 1, there would be no conversion of agricultural lands to non-agricultural use, as future campus development would be located within the Academic Core subarea, where no Important Farmland exists. As a result, impacts associated with the 2035 Master Plan, including conversion of up to 10 acres of Important Farmland associated with the development of the Facilities Operations Complex and interim parking lot, would not occur. *(Less impact; significant and unavoidable agriculture impact avoided)*

AIR QUALITY

Alternative 1 would result in less development than would occur under the 2035 Master Plan and thus would generate comparatively reduced construction-related air emissions. Many of the 2035 Master Plan's larger projects, particularly the residential projects serving students, faculty, staff, workforce housing and the local retirement community, would not be constructed under this alternative. This alternative would provide for up to 500,000 gsf of new academic space and thus would generate construction-related air emissions, which could exceed APCD construction emission thresholds. Nonetheless, construction emissions would decrease under this alternative due to the reduction in on-campus development and would likely not exceed project specific thresholds. Regarding operation-related emissions, because no on-campus housing would be constructed under this alternative, and the same growth in enrollment would occur, it is assumed that students, faculty, and staff would travel greater distances from off-campus housing to the Cal Poly campus. Therefore, due to increased vehicle trips, operational air quality emissions would increase under Alternative 1. In addition, this alternative would be considered less consistent with applicable air quality planning efforts related to the provision of residences closer to their destinations in order to reduce emissions. Regarding odor impacts, the Water Reclamation Facility (WRF) would still likely be required due to the increase in academic/administrative space, so significant and unavoidable odor impacts would not be avoided. Because of the limited amount of new development and campus growth anticipated under this alternative, construction-related air quality impacts would be reduced compared to those under the 2035 Master Plan and would likely be less than significant, while operation-related air quality emissions may increase due to longer travel distances for students, faculty, and staff to off-campus housing. *(Greater impact to (less consistency with) local air quality plan consistency; Less construction-related impact; greater operation-related impact; significant and unavoidable impacts remain)*

ARCHAEOLOGICAL, HISTORICAL, AND TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

Earth-moving activities have the potential to disturb archaeological, tribal cultural, and/or historic resources, or result in accidental discovery of human remains. Ground-disturbing activities (e.g., grading, excavation) from project construction could result in discovery of archaeological resources; however, feasible mitigation measures and regulatory requirements/procedures would reduce these impacts to a less-than-significant level. Under the 2035 Master Plan, inadvertent discoveries of tribal cultural resources, or human remains would be required to comply with regulatory requirements to ensure impacts are less than significant. Similar requirements would be required for this alternative, keeping impacts to less than significant. However, on-campus development within or near potentially historic structures under both this alternative and the 2035 Master Plan could result in potentially significant and unavoidable impacts, if development would result in damage to or destruction of a building or structure that is a designated historic resource, eligible for listing as a historic resource, or a potential historic resource that has not yet been evaluated, result in the change in its historical significance. Because this alternative reduces the overall development footprint there would be less earth-moving activities and reduced potential for impacts on cultural resources; nonetheless, the potential for damage to a historic resource still exists. *(Less impact; significant and unavoidable impacts remain)*

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Under Alternative 1, the campus would remain largely similar to existing conditions, except where limited development would occur within the Academic Core subarea. Various portions of campus consist of habitat for special-status plants and wildlife, sensitive natural communities and riparian habitat, wetlands and other waters of the United States and waters of the state, and suitable wildlife movement corridors and nursery sites for some species. These areas exist throughout the Master Plan Area and could also intersect with the Academic Core subarea, where development is proposed under Alternative 1. Development under the 2035 Master Plan could result in impacts resulting from degradation of these existing biological resources. However, due to the reduced development footprint, there would be less earth-moving activities under Alternative 1. For this reason, compared to the 2035 Master Plan, there would be a lesser degree of potential impacts on biological resources under Alternative 1. *(Less impact)*

ENERGY

Because this alternative would result in much less development than would occur under the 2035 Master Plan, it would require less fuel for construction activities and less building-related energy during operation. Because Alternative 1 would not incorporate additional housing on-site, students could reside farther from campus resulting in more and longer trips to and from campus, consuming more fossil fuel. However, due to decreased building-related energy as a result of less development, construction and operational energy consumption would be less than that of the 2035 Master Plan. *(Less impact)*

GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Earth-moving activities associated with construction have the potential to affect geology, soils, and mineral resources. The types of impacts that could occur from development on campus include potential landslides, erosion or loss of topsoil, and impacts from unstable or expansive soils. Existing regulations and permitting requirements, such as California Building Code (CBC) and the CSU Seismic Requirements, would reduce potential impacts to less-than-significant levels and would also be required for this alternative. Less land disturbance under this alternative would slightly reduce impacts. *(Less impact)*

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Less development would result in reduced fuel and energy consumption during construction, and would result in a commensurate decrease in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions compared to the construction of the 2035 Master Plan. Because Alternative 1 would not incorporate housing on-site, students, faculty and staff could be located farther from campus resulting in more and longer trips to and from campus. Therefore, due to increased vehicle trips, operational mobile-source GHG emissions would increase under Alternative 1. Because of the limited amount of new development and campus growth anticipated under this alternative, construction-related GHG impacts would be reduced compared to those under the 2035 Master Plan and would likely be less than significant, while operation-related mobile-source GHG emissions may increase due to longer travel distances for students, faculty, and staff to off-campus housing. *(Less construction-related impact; more operation-related impact)*

HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

As with the 2035 Master Plan, earth-moving activities associated with construction under Alternative 1 have the potential to affect hydrology and water quality on campus. The types of impacts that could occur include: reduced groundwater recharge, alterations to existing drainage systems, and effects on the 100-year floodplain. Mitigation measures are recommended to reduce these impacts to less-than-significant levels. Existing regulations and permitting requirements, such as National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit conditions, a storm water pollution prevention plan (SWPPP), the 2013 General Permit, a Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) Permit, and Wastewater Discharge Requirements (WDRs), would also be required to ensure impacts to water

quality are less-than-significant. In addition, development of additional academic/administrative space would be required to comply with existing regulations and implement similar mitigation measures that would reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level. Overall, however, because this alternative would include much less development, the degree of this impact (even though less than significant under the 2035 Master Plan) would be reduced when compared to the 2035 Master Plan. (*Less impact*)

NOISE

Alternative 1 would result in substantially less development than under the 2035 Master Plan, and thus, would generate less construction and operational noise. Short-term construction activities would still occur, associated with development in the Academic Core subarea, but to a lesser degree as compared to the project. Additional student population growth could occur under this alternative, and additional staff and faculty could be employed by Cal Poly because additional academic and administrative buildings would be constructed. Therefore, regarding operation-related emissions, because no on-campus housing would be constructed under this alternative, it is assumed that students, faculty, and staff would travel greater distances from off-campus housing to the Cal Poly campus. Therefore, due to increased vehicle trips, operational traffic noise could be increased compared to the 2035 Master Plan. Nonetheless, as discussed in Section 3.10, substantial increases in long-term traffic noise levels would be less than significant. Long-term stationary noise would be similar in nature, but fewer new sources would result from this alternative compared to the 2035 Master Plan due to less development.

As discussed in Section 3.10, even with mitigation incorporated, the 2035 Master Plan would result in significant and unavoidable impacts from long-term increases in stationary noise. More specifically, these impacts are attributed to the expansion of Spanos Stadium; construction of a new parking structure located along Via Carta, south of Village Drive and within the North Campus subarea; and construction of a second structure near the Union Pacific Railroad right-of-way, immediately north of Brizzolara Creek, within the West Campus subarea. Noise impacts are also attributed to the use of mechanical building equipment (e.g., HVAC systems) proximate to noise-sensitive receptors. Because development under Alternative 1 would not result in the expansion of Spanos Stadium, this significant and unavoidable impact would be avoided. Further, development of parking structures in the North and West Campus subareas would not occur under Alternative 1. Thus, significant and unavoidable stationary noise impacts related to sporting and special events and parking structures would be avoided. However, because under Alternative 1, the placement of HVAC systems in the vicinity of noise-sensitive receptors could still occur, this significant and unavoidable stationary noise impact would remain. Thus, depending on the location of development, this alternative could still expose sensitive receptors to increased noise levels during construction activities and noise impacts would be reduced but still occur. Long-term operational noise sources would still have the potential to occur but because this alternative has less development, operational noise would be less. (*Less construction-related impact; less operation-related stationary noise impact but still significant and unavoidable*)

POPULATION AND HOUSING

As discussed in Section 3.11.3, the 2035 Master Plan would not result in unplanned growth in the population of the campus and impacts would be less than significant. Under Alternative 1, there would be no new residential units provided on campus. This alternative would not increase the percentage of students living on campus compared to students living off campus. In comparison, the 2035 Master Plan would add approximately 7,200 additional student beds in excess of the anticipated growth in student enrollment allowing for students who might otherwise seek residences off campus to stay on campus. Under this alternative, on-campus employment could incrementally increase due to the maximum of 500,000 sf of academic/administrative space that could be developed beyond existing conditions. While new employees under the 2001 Master Plan would not require additional housing beyond current projections, it may increase the number of employees living off campus relative to the 2035 Master Plan. By not providing housing, this alternative would not improve the ratio of students living on campus compared to students living off campus. Therefore, because Alternative 1 would increase the need for off-campus housing as a result of increased enrollment and

associated faculty and staff employment and would not increase the ratio of students living on campus, it would result in potentially greater and significant impacts than would occur under the 2035 Master Plan. (*Greater impact*)

PUBLIC SERVICES AND RECREATION

Alternative 1 would result in an incremental increase in demand for public services as a result of increased campus enrollment and employment, although not to the degree of the 2035 Master Plan due to the substantially lower level of anticipated development. Under the 2035 Master Plan, impacts to police services would be less than significant. Because the population increase associated with the project would primarily be university-aged students enrolled at the campus, the population would obtain educational and library services through the University and would not substantially affect the public school and library systems; thus, impacts to schools and libraries would be less than significant. Regarding recreation facilities, because the 2035 Master Plan would include maintenance, improvement, and construction of additional parks and recreation facilities that would exceed local and state guidelines on population/parkland ratios, this impact would be less than significant. Lastly, as discussed in Section 3.12, under the 2035 Master Plan, there is no need to construct additional fire and emergency service facilities to serve campus growth. The City provides fire and emergency services to campus through its Operational Plan and Agreement for Automatic Aid with the County/CAL FIRE. In addition, Cal Poly received enhanced fire protection services from the City through the Agreement for Enhanced Emergency Services between CSU and the City. This agreement is currently effective through June 30, 2023, and Cal Poly is committed to pursuing an extension of the Agreement for Enhanced Emergency Services through 2035 to ensure the level of fire and emergency service responses from the San Luis Obispo Fire Department (SLOFD) are maintained for the life of the 2035 Master Plan. Alternative 1 would also result in less-than-significant public service impacts similar to those under the 2035 Master Plan. However, because this alternative would have less overall development, there would be fewer students, staff, and faculty residing on campus and impacts to public services may be slightly reduced. (*Slightly less impact*)

TRANSPORTATION

This alternative would result in less overall development and no new student housing compared to the 2035 Master Plan. As a result, Alternative 1 would generate less traffic during construction. During operations, because no on-campus housing would be constructed under this alternative, it is assumed that students, faculty, and staff would travel greater distances from off-campus housing to the Cal Poly campus. Therefore, Alternative 1 would result in increased vehicle trips on local roadways. The 2035 Master Plan includes specific objectives to reduce on-campus parking demand relative to existing conditions through University policies and provide on-campus multi-modal amenities. Because actions to implement these objectives would not occur under Alternative 1, this alternative would result in an increase in vehicle miles traveled (VMT), compared to the 2035 Master Plan. (*Greater impact*)

UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Under Alternative 1, there would be less additional demand on utilities and fewer requirements to alter or expand infrastructure compared to the 2035 Master Plan because on-campus population levels would be lower. New development would likely occur within the Academic Core subarea and be limited to new academic/administrative facilities, as well as renovation of older structures. While this could result in an overall reduction in demand for utilities and service systems, construction of the WRF and improvements to existing fixtures and infrastructure would still be necessary to ensure that adequate water supplies are available. There would be adequate treatment capacity at the City's WRRF to accommodate wastewater treatment needs, but conservation measures and other improvements would need to be made to campus infrastructure (such as replacement of aging pipelines to reduce inflow and infiltration (I/I) and to ensure that peak wet weather wastewater flows do not exceed 2018/2019 levels prior to plan implementation. As under the 2035 Master Plan, this impact would be less than significant with mitigation; however, impacts would be comparatively reduced under this alternative. (*Less impact*)

ACHIEVEMENT OF PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Alternative 1 would not provide the guidance for the physical development of the campus and its facilities to accommodate gradual student enrollment growth while preserving and enhancing the quality of campus life, which is the primary objective of the 2035 Master Plan. Further, new student housing would not be provided on campus, which would not achieve several of the objectives, including housing all first- and second-year students plus 30 percent of upper division students in residential communities on campus; providing housing opportunities on campus for University faculty and staff and non-traditional students; or providing and enhancing campus facilities to create a more vibrant evening and weekend environment. Lastly, because this alternative would provide less academic/administrative space compared to the 2035 Master Plan, it would limit the ability for Cal Poly to enhance academic quality and student success through Cal Poly's "Learn by Doing" teaching methodology, or strengthen the campus's compact, cross-disciplinary Academic Core subarea. Thus, Alternative 1 would not meet most of the basic project objectives.

5.4.2 Alternative 2: Reduced Administrative/Academic Development Program Alternative

Under this alternative, Cal Poly would implement a master plan with approximately 500,000 sf of new administrative and academic space, as compared to approximately 1,290,000 gsf under the 2035 Master Plan. This reduced level of development would result in less ground disturbance and other development-related impacts. Further, approximately 455,000 gsf of renovations would occur within existing structures under this alternative, for a total development/renovation potential of 955,000 gsf. Growth in on-campus student housing (approximately 7,200 student beds) and growth in enrollment would be the same as under the 2035 Master Plan.

AESTHETICS

Changes to the visual environment would be similar under this alternative to the 2035 Master Plan, but the degree of change would be somewhat reduced as less academic/administrative space would be constructed. Because the majority of academic and administrative space would include redevelopment of existing structures, less change in the visual environment would occur. However, this alternative would continue to provide for the proposed Farm Shop and University-Based Retirement Community, both located in the West Campus subarea, which would cause potentially significant visual impacts to scenic vistas (both projects), and interrupt views along a state scenic highway (University-Based Retirement Community). In addition, the faculty, staff workforce housing project located at Slack Street and Grand Avenue in the East Campus would still occur, which could result in substantial degradation of existing visual character. Therefore, impacts to scenic vistas would remain significant and unavoidable with Alternative 2. Lastly, as with the project, Alternative 2 would introduce substantial light sources from facilities such as residential units, dining halls, pedestrian and bike pathways, and recreation areas and could include building materials such as surfaces such as glass and metal and may result in additional sources of glare. Similar mitigation as that outlined in Section 3.1.3 would also be required for Alternative 2, to reduce light and glare impacts to less-than-significant levels. The overall aesthetic condition of the campus would be similar to that of the 2035 Master Plan and impacts would remain significant and unavoidable. (*Similar impact*)

AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

Under Alternative 2, the conversion of some agricultural lands to non-agricultural use would be necessary to accommodate anticipated development. As proposed in the 2035 Master Plan, the Facilities Operations Complex would be moved to a site within the West Campus subarea, which would result in the conversion of Prime Farmland to non-agricultural uses. In addition, the site would be initially used as a temporary surface parking lot to accommodate parking displaced by student housing projects located in the North Campus, thereby converting it to a non-agricultural use prior to construction of the Facilities Operations Complex. As a result, impacts related to the conversion of Important Farmland would remain significant and unavoidable. (*Similar impact*)

AIR QUALITY

Because Alternative 2 would include less development than would occur under the 2035 Master Plan, construction would result in reduced air pollutant emissions during construction. During operations, Alternative 2 would provide the same number of on-campus housing opportunities for students as the project. Because new academic and administrative buildings would be limited to 500,00 sf, and redevelopment would remain at 455,000 sf, this alternative would result in overall less new development in the Master Plan Area. As with the proposed 2035 Master Plan, this alternative would be consistent with the 2001 Clean Air Plan, but construction and operational activities that emit criteria air pollutants would still be required on campus. Large-scale construction projects or a number of campus projects could occur simultaneously which could result in daily and quarterly emissions that exceed applicable thresholds; however any such exceedance would likely be for shorter periods of time due to the reduced amount of new development under this alternative. Thus, construction-related air quality impacts would be slightly reduced compared to those under the 2035 Master Plan. Mitigation would still be required, and significant and unavoidable impacts from construction could still occur. Operational impacts under Alternative 2 would be similar in nature to those described for the 2035 Master Plan, but slightly reduced in magnitude. During operations, because Alternative 2 would provide the same amount of housing for the same level of enrollment growth, vehicle trips would be similar. As with the project, it is possible that development under this Alternative 2 could exceed APCD operational thresholds. Mitigation of operational emissions would still be required in accordance with current standards and regulations, but it is possible thresholds would still be exceeded. For this reason, operation-related air quality emissions would likely remain significant and unavoidable under this alternative. As construction and operation of the WRF would be required under this alternative, odor impacts would be similar to the project under this alternative. *(Similar impact)*

ARCHAEOLOGICAL, HISTORICAL, AND TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

Earth-moving activities within the Master Plan Area have the potential to disturb archaeological, tribal cultural, and/or historic resources or result in accidental discovery of human remains. Under the 2035 Master Plan, ground-disturbing activities (e.g., grading, excavation) could result in discovery of archaeological resources; however, feasible mitigation measures and regulatory requirements/procedures would reduce these impacts to a less-than-significant level. Under the 2035 Master Plan, inadvertent discoveries of tribal cultural resources, or human remains would be required to comply with regulatory requirements to ensure impacts are less than significant. Additionally, on-campus development within or near potentially historic structures under both this alternative and the 2035 Master Plan could result in potentially significant and unavoidable impacts, if development would result in damage to or destruction of a building or structure that is a designated historic resource, eligible for listing as a historic resource, or a potential historic resource that has not yet been evaluated, could result in a change in its historical significance. While the reduced development footprint and earth-moving/construction activities under Alternative 2 could result in reduced impacts on cultural resources, mitigation would still be required to reduce impacts to archaeological resources. Regarding historic resources, mitigation would still be required to ensure, where feasible, that future projects under Alternative 2 would not result in damage to or destruction of a building or structure that is a designated historic resource or eligible for listing as a historic resource or a potential historic resource that has not yet been evaluated. However, under this alternative, the University would rely on redevelopment of existing buildings to accommodate approximately half of the growth in academic and support facilities, which could result in the loss of historic buildings similar to the project. Under this alternative, however, the University would have reduced capacity to consider alternatives to the demolition or replacement of historic structures, thereby potentially increasing impacts to historic resources. Therefore, impacts would still be significant and unavoidable. *(Similar impact)*

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Under Alternative 2, the Master Plan Area would be developed in a manner similar to, but with less overall development than as proposed in the 2035 Master Plan. Alternative 2 would result in an overall reduction in the area of land disturbance due to the emphasis on redevelopment of existing academic and administrative buildings but would still provide a variety of on-campus housing, including within the North Campus. Because habitat for special-

status plant and animal species, as well as riparian habitat, wetlands, and wildlife movement corridors and nursery sites are present in the Master Plan Area, physical changes associated with implementation of this alternative could result in significant impacts, and implementation of mitigation measures described in Section 3.5 would still be required in order to reduce this potential impact to a less-than-significant level. However, because of the reduced development footprint under Alternative 2, there would be reduced impacts to biological resources under Alternative 2 compared to the 2035 Master Plan. *(Less impact)*

ENERGY

Under this alternative, slightly reduced development would occur, which would result in reduced construction activities and less fuel use during construction. Alternative 2 also includes redevelopment of existing academic and administrative buildings, which would result in replacement of older, less energy-efficient structures and facilities with those that are more energy efficient. Because building development for this alternative would be less than that of the 2035 Master Plan, it would likely require less energy. *(Less impact)*

GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Earth-moving activities associated with construction have the potential to affect geology and soils. The types of impacts that could occur from development within the Master Plan Area include potential landslides, erosion or loss of topsoil, and impacts from unstable or expansive soils. Impacts to paleontological resources could also occur if these resources are discovered during ground-disturbing activities. Existing regulations and permitting requirements, such as the CBC and CSU Seismic Requirements, would reduce potential impacts to less-than-significant levels and would be required for this alternative as they are for the project. Because the development footprint of this alternative would be reduced compared to the project, impacts associated with Alternative 2 would also be slightly reduced. *(Less impact)*

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Because the level of development would be reduced under this alternative as compared to the 2035 Master Plan, construction- and operational-related GHG emissions would also be reduced. However, GHG emissions associated with operation of Alternative 2 would still occur from vehicle trips to and from the Master Plan Area; area-source emissions from the operation of landscape maintenance equipment; energy-source emissions from the consumption of electricity and natural gas; water-related energy consumption associated with water use; conveyance and treatment of wastewater; and waste-generated emissions from the transport and disposal of solid waste. Mitigation Measure 3.8-1, outlined in Section 3.8.3, would likely still be required but the volume of GHG emissions to be mitigated may be less. Therefore, due to less development on campus compared to the 2035 Master Plan, impacts would be slightly reduced under this alternative. *(Less impact)*

HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Earth-moving activities associated with construction under Alternative 2 would affect hydrology and water quality similarly to the 2035 Master Plan. The types of impacts include reduced groundwater recharge, alterations to existing drainage systems, and effects on the 100-year floodplain. Mitigation measures are recommended to reduce these impacts to less-than-significant levels. Existing regulations and permitting requirements, such as NPDES permit conditions, a SWPPP, the 2013 General Permit, a Small MS4 Permit, and a WDR, would also be required to reduce water quality impacts to less-than-significant levels. Because Alternative 2 would rely on redevelopment of a large portion of the proposed academic and administrative buildings within the campus to provide approximately half of the new academic and support facilities and new project footprints are significantly reduced, alterations to existing drainage systems and coverage of groundwater recharge areas may be slightly reduced compared to the 2035 Master Plan, because these areas are already developed with existing facilities and infrastructure. Although a lesser level of development would occur under this alternative than under the 2035 Master Plan, the degree to which these

measures would need to be implemented would likely be similar. Impacts under this alternative would be similar to those under the 2035 Master Plan and less than significant with mitigation. *(Similar impact)*

NOISE

Alternative 2 would result in less overall development than under the 2035 Master Plan, and thus, would generate less construction and operation-related noise, potentially over a shorter period of time. Short-term construction activities associated with on-campus housing and academic/administrative space would still occur, but to a slightly lesser degree. Regarding long-term increases in traffic noise, the on-campus population under this alternative would remain the same as the 2035 Master Plan, which would result in similar daily vehicle traffic and associated noise on project-affected roadways to the project. Regarding long-term stationary sources, even with mitigation incorporated, the 2035 Master Plan would result in significant and unavoidable noise impacts attributable to the expansion of Spanos Stadium; construction of a new parking structure located along Via Carta, south of Village Drive and within the North Campus subarea; construction of a parking structure near the Union Pacific Railroad right-of-way, immediately north of Brizzolara Creek, within the West Campus subarea. Noise impacts also would be attributed to the use of mechanical building equipment (e.g., new HVAC systems) and new parking structures proximate to noise-sensitive receptors. Alternative 2 would not result in the expansion of Spanos Stadium. Thus, the significant impact associated with the Spanos Stadium expansion would be avoided as part of Alternative 2. However, because the placement of HVAC systems and construction of parking structures in the vicinity of noise-sensitive receptors could still occur under this alternative, the significant and unavoidable stationary noise impacts could still remain, depending on the location of development under this alternative. Therefore, although significant and unavoidable impacts attributed to stadium expansion would be avoided, Alternative 2 could still result in substantial increases in noise and impacts that would be significant and unavoidable. *(Less construction-related impact; less operation-related stationary noise Impact but still significant and unavoidable)*

POPULATION AND HOUSING

Under Alternative 2, the same number of beds would be developed as the 2035 Master Plan. Therefore, the number of students living on campus would be the same for Alternative 2 as under the 2035 Master Plan. Although Alternative 2 would result in approximately 790,000 fewer square feet of new academic and administrative development on campus, the level of employment that would occur would be similar to the 2035 Master Plan as the level of faculty/staff would be scaled to student enrollment. As discussed in Section 3.11.3, the Master Plan would not result in unplanned growth in campus population, and impacts would be less than significant. Because Alternative 2 proposes the same amount of housing on campus as the 2035 Master Plan, impacts to population and housing would be the same under Alternative 2 as the 2035 Master Plan and therefore remain less than significant. *(Same or similar impact)*

PUBLIC SERVICES AND RECREATION

Because Alternative 2 proposes the same number of beds and would result in the same level of enrollment on campus as the 2035 Master Plan, it would accommodate the same number of students on campus and similar demand for services. Thus, Alternative 2 would result in impacts similar to those under the 2035 Master Plan. *(Same or similar impact)*

TRANSPORTATION

As with the 2035 Master Plan, development of new student housing and academic/administrative space under Alternative 2 would increase the level of on-campus activity and reduce new vehicle commute trips. As noted above under the population and housing discussion for this alternative, the development of less academic/administrative space would not result in less on-site population, as new faculty/staff would be added to address increased enrollment. As a result, this alternative would result in the same per capita VMT compared to the 2035 Master Plan, and impacts would likely remain less than significant with mitigation. Consistency with policies related to alternative transportation (transit, bicycle, and pedestrian) would be similar under this alternative to the 2035 Master Plan. *(Same or similar impact)*

UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Because Alternative 2 would result in less academic and administrative space on campus, demand for utilities and service systems may be somewhat reduced when compared to the 2035 Master Plan. Similar to the project, development and operation of proposed buildings and increased campus population levels associated with Alternative 2 would increase water consumption needs and wastewater generation. Campus potable water supplies would continue to be derived from the Whale Rock reservoir and on campus groundwater wells, though potable water demand would be expected to decrease with the reduced academic and administrative space on campus. Nonetheless, the WRF must be still constructed to ensure that water demand and wastewater treatment needs are met (or the campus otherwise demonstrates that adequate water supplies and wastewater treatment capacity is available to serve the new development on campus.) With respect to wastewater treatment and conveyance capacity, in addition to the WRF, improvements to on-campus facilities including the wastewater conveyance system to reduce inflow and infiltration, as well as water fixture efficiency measures, would need to be implemented to reduce wastewater flows and ensure that peak wet weather flow conditions do not exceed 2018/2019 conditions under this alternative. As under the 2035 Master Plan, impacts would be less than significant with mitigation; however, impacts would be comparatively reduced due to a lesser intensity of development under Alternative 2. (*Less impact*)

ACHIEVEMENT OF PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Under Alternative 2, new student housing would be provided on-campus to accommodate the same level of student growth, accomplishing the objectives related to housing all first- and second-year students plus 30 percent of upper division students in residential communities on campus, and providing on-campus housing opportunities for University faculty and staff and non-traditional students. Because this alternative would provide less academic/administrative space, it would limit the ability for Cal Poly to enhance academic quality and student success through Cal Poly's "Learn by Doing" teaching methodology and the ability for Cal Poly to strengthen the campus's compact, cross-disciplinary Academic Core subarea. By providing less academic and administrative uses, Alternative 2 may not be able to expand campus programs, services, and facilities to support and enhance the diversity of students, faculty, and staff to the degree achieved by the 2035 Master Plan. Further, this alternative would not allow for the enhancement of campus facilities, nor would it strengthen the campus's compact, cross-disciplinary Academic Core. While this alternative would meet the on-campus housing objectives of the 2035 Master Plan, it would fail to further implement Cal Poly's educational mission and its objectives related to the expansion of educational and administrative programs to continue to advance Cal Poly as an institution of higher education.

5.4.3 Alternative 3: Net Student Growth Only Alternative

Under Alternative 3, Cal Poly would implement a long-range campus plan that reduces the level of student housing development relative to the proposed increase of approximately 7,200 student beds. This alternative would provide up to 3,188 student beds, which would correspond to the projected increase in student new enrollment at Cal Poly. The 1,750,000 gsf of new academic/administrative space proposed under the 2035 Master Plan would remain the same under this alternative. Under this alternative, the faculty/staff and workforce housing project located at Slack Street and Grand Avenue and the University-Based Retirement Community would not be constructed.

AESTHETICS

Changes to visual conditions would be similar to those under the 2035 Master Plan, but the degree of change would be somewhat reduced. Alternative 3 would result in less development as fewer student beds would be provided. As discussed in Section 3.1.3, because the proposed Farm Shop would be highly visible and the preservation of scenic views may not be feasible through project design, impacts to scenic vistas would be significant and unavoidable, although significant impacts associated with the University-Based Retirement Community and Slack and Grand would not occur as they would with the project. Similarly, development of the Farm Shop within the West Campus subarea along a state scenic highway could damage scenic resources, resulting in a significant and unavoidable impact. These

impacts could still occur under Alternative 3, although they would be reduced under this alternative. Lastly, as with the project, Alternative 3 would introduce substantial light sources from facilities such as residential units, dining halls, pedestrian and bike pathways, and recreation areas and could include building materials such as surfaces such as glass and metal and may result in additional sources of glare. Similar mitigation as outlined in Section 3.1.3 of the EIR would also be required for Alternative 3, to reduce light and glare impacts to less-than-significant levels. The overall changes in aesthetic condition of the campus would be less than that of the 2035 Master Plan, but impacts would remain significant and unavoidable. *(Less impact)*

AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

Under Alternative 3, conversion of 10 acres of agricultural lands to non-agricultural use would be necessary to accommodate anticipated development, specifically the Facilities Operations Complex. Because this alternative would convert Important Farmland in a manner and scale similar to the project, impacts would be similar to the 2035 Master Plan and remain significant and unavoidable. *(Similar impact)*

AIR QUALITY

Alternative 3 would result in less residential development compared to the 2035 Master Plan, and thus, would generate lower levels of air pollutant emissions during construction and operation. As this alternative would provide on-campus housing to accommodate only new student growth, it would be consistent with applicable air quality plans, but would not achieve the same level of plan consistency by providing additional housing on-campus to serve the existing student population. With respect to construction air quality impacts, because development of academic/administration space and student housing would still be substantial, it is possible that large construction projects (or multiple projects are being constructed at the same time) could exceed APCD's construction emission thresholds for criteria pollutants and still result in significant impacts. From an operational perspective, the emissions associated with building operations would be reduced due to the reduction in student housing compared to the 2035 Master Plan. However, less on-campus housing would result in more students needing to live off-campus, increasing commute trips, VMTs and associated vehicle exhaust emissions. In addition, large individual projects under this alternative could potentially exceed APCD's operational emission criteria which would result in a significant operational air quality impact. Therefore, operational emissions could be greater than those of the 2035 Master Plan. Mitigation identified for the 2035 Master Plan in Section 3.3 of this EIR would still be required, but air quality impacts would remain significant. As construction and operation of the WRF would be required under this alternative, odor impacts would be similar to the project under this alternative. *(Similar impact during construction; greater impact during operation)*

ARCHAEOLOGICAL, HISTORICAL, AND TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

Earth-moving activities within campus have the potential to disturb archaeological, tribal cultural, and/or historic resources or result in accidental discovery of human remains. The project would result in ground-disturbing activities (e.g., grading, excavation) that could result in discovery of archaeological resources; however, feasible mitigation measures and regulatory requirements/procedures would reduce these impacts to a less-than-significant level. The 2035 Master Plan could also result in inadvertent discoveries of tribal cultural resources, or human remains, but would be required to comply with regulatory requirements to ensure impacts are less than significant. These measures would also be required for this alternative. Additionally, on-campus development within or near potentially historic structures under both this alternative and the 2035 Master Plan could result in potentially significant and unavoidable impacts, if development were to damage a building or structure that is a designated historic resource, eligible for listing as a historic resource, or a potential historic resource that has not yet been evaluated, and result in a change in its historical significance. While the reduced development footprint and earth-moving/construction activities under Alternative 3 could result in reduced impacts on cultural resources, they would still be significant and unavoidable due to the potential unavoidable loss of historic structures. *(Similar impact)*

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Under Alternative 3, campus would be developed in a manner similar to, but with less overall development than, the 2035 Master Plan, as reduced student beds would be provided. Because habitat for special-status plant and animal species, riparian habitat, wetlands, and wildlife movement corridors and nursery sites are present in the Master Plan Area, physical changes associated with implementation of this alternative could result in significant impacts and the mitigation measures described in Section 3.5 would still be required. Because of the reduced development footprint under Alternative 3, there would be reduced impacts to biological resources under Alternative 3 compared to the 2035 Master Plan. *(Less impact)*

ENERGY

Under this alternative, slightly reduced development would occur, as compared to the 2035 Master Plan, which would result in reduced construction activities and less fuel use during construction. However, less on-campus housing could result in more students needing to live off-campus, increasing commute trips and the amount of associated transportation energy (i.e., fuel) used. Therefore, operational energy would be greater than that of the 2035 Master Plan. This alternative would require slightly increased energy demand during operations due to additional vehicle trips and decreased energy demand during construction, compared to the 2035 Master Plan. *(Less impact during construction; greater impact during operation)*

GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Earth-moving activities associated with construction have the potential to affect geology and soils. The types of impacts that could occur from development on campus include potential landslides, erosion or loss of topsoil, and impacts from unstable or expansive soils. Impacts to paleontological resources could also occur if these resources are discovered during ground-disturbing activities. Existing regulations and permitting requirements, such as the CBC and CSU Seismic Requirements, would reduce potential impacts to a less-than-significant levels and would be required for this alternative as they are for the project. Because the development footprint of this alternative would be reduced compared to the project, impacts associated with Alternative 3 would also be slightly reduced. *(Less impact)*

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Because the level of development would be reduced under this alternative as compared to the 2035 Master Plan, construction-related GHG emissions would also be reduced. Nevertheless, GHG emissions associated with operation of Alternative 3 would still occur from vehicle trips, area sources, energy-source emissions from consumption of electricity and natural gas, energy consumption associated with water use and the conveyance, treatment of wastewater, and from transport and disposal of solid waste. However, because this alternative would not reduce the number of students living off campus to the degree of the 2035 Master Plan, emissions associated with student vehicle commute trips would be greater under Alternative 3. Although GHG emissions during construction and from less building energy-related GHGs would be reduced, impacts to GHG emissions during operations would be greater than would occur under the 2035 Master Plan, due to increased vehicle trips. Note that mitigation measures for the project would also reduce impacts to less than significant for this alternative. *(Less impact during construction; greater impact during operation)*

HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Earth-moving activities associated with construction under Alternative 3 would affect hydrology and water quality similarly to the 2035 Master Plan. The types of impacts include reduced groundwater recharge, alterations to existing drainage systems, and effects on the 100-year floodplain. Mitigation measures are recommended to reduce these impacts to less-than-significant levels. Existing regulations and permitting requirements, such as NPDES permit conditions, a SWPPP, the 2013 General Permit, a Small MS4 Permit, and Cal Poly's WDR, would also be required to

reduce water quality impacts to less-than-significant levels. Because Alternative 3 would include less development in the Master Plan Area, alterations to existing drainage systems and coverage of groundwater recharge areas may be slightly reduced compared to the 2035 Master Plan. Nonetheless, development under Alternative 3 would be required to comply with existing regulations and implement similar mitigation measures as the 2035 Master Plan to reduce impacts to less-than-significant levels. Although a lesser level of development would occur under this alternative than would occur under the 2035 Master Plan, the degree to which these measures would need to be implemented would likely be similar. Impacts under this alternative would be similar to those under the 2035 Master Plan and less than significant with mitigation. *(Similar impact)*

NOISE

Like the project, earth-moving activities (e.g., grading, excavation) under this alternative would result in noise and vibration impacts. Construction and operation of new buildings and facilities may include new stationary noise sources and equipment (e.g., mechanical equipment, emergency generators), and increased noise levels associated with sporting and special events. Compared to the 2035 Master Plan, there would be slightly less construction-generated noise and vibration under Alternative 3 owing to less overall development. Nevertheless, Alternative 3 would result in the same types of noise-generating activities and sources, such as the expansion of Spanos Stadium and construction of new parking structures in the North Campus and West Campus subareas. Noise-generating sources also could include mechanical building equipment, primarily HVAC systems, which could increase ambient noise levels depending on their proximity to noise-sensitive receptors. These project components, proposed under both the 2035 Master Plan and Alternative 3, would result in significant and unavoidable impacts to long-term increases in noise levels. Additionally, providing less on-campus student housing could result in additional vehicle trips associated with students commuting to and from campus, but this is unlikely to result in new or substantially more severe impacts. Thus, impacts to noise and vibration would be similar to those under the 2035 Master Plan. *(Similar impact)*

POPULATION AND HOUSING

Alternative 3 would provide up to 3,188 new student beds on-campus, which would accommodate only the projected increase in student enrollment between 2018 and 2035; housing would not be available to reduce the numbers of students currently living off campus. Alternative 3 would result in similar numbers of new employees, but because the faculty, staff and workforce housing project located at Slack Street and Grand Avenue and the University-Based Retirement Community would not be constructed, a greater demand for off-campus housing would result. As discussed in Section 3.11.3, the Master Plan would not result in unplanned growth in campus population, and impacts would be less than significant. Nonetheless, impacts would be greater under this alternative because less on-campus housing would be available for students, faculty, and staff, thereby reducing the available housing stock in the surrounding area. *(Greater impact)*

PUBLIC SERVICES AND RECREATION

Alternative 3 would result in an increase in demand for public services that would be similar to, if slightly reduced, the 2035 Master Plan. As discussed in Section 3.12, impacts to fire, police, school, libraries, and recreation were determined to be less than significant without mitigation under the 2035 Master Plan. As this alternative would result in less on-campus housing, impacts to police services may be slightly less than would occur under the 2035 Master Plan. Less on-campus housing would not necessarily change the level of student enrollment, and therefore, impacts on other services and recreation would be similar to those of the 2035 Master Plan. *(Similar impact)*

TRANSPORTATION

As with the 2035 Master Plan, development of new student housing and academic/administrative space under Alternative 3 would increase the level of on-campus activity and reduce new vehicle commute trips and associated VMT. However, because Alternative 3 would include only the amount of housing necessary to accommodate the projected increase in student enrollment, more students would live off campus, generating more commute trips and higher VMT as compared to the 2035 Master Plan. In addition, the University-Based Retirement Community and the faculty, staff and workforce housing project at Slack Street and Grand Avenue would not be developed under this alternative, which could result in faculty/staff and retirement community residents living farther from campus and activity centers, thus resulting in even greater VMT. Therefore, VMT-related impacts are anticipated to increase and could become significant and unavoidable. Consistency with policies related to alternative transportation (transit, bicycle, and pedestrian) would be similar to the 2035 Master Plan. Nonetheless, due to the potential for higher VMT, this alternative would result in greater transportation impacts than the 2035 Master Plan. (*Greater impact*)

UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Similar to the project, development and operation of proposed buildings and increased campus population levels associated with Alternative 3 would increase potable water demand and wastewater generation. Reduced on-campus student housing under Alternative 3 would also serve to reduce campus-generated water demand and wastewater flows compared to the 2035 Master Plan. However, it is expected that these demands and increased flows would still occur, but be generated by residential uses in the city or county as students, faculty and staff find alternative housing primarily within the surrounding area.

As under the 2035 Master Plan, the WRF would be constructed in a manner consistent with Mitigation Measure 3.14-3 to ensure that water demands are met through campus buildout. With this Alternative, however, the WRF would not be needed to accommodate waste water treatment demands as Cal Poly would have adequate capacity rights as the City's WRRF. As noted in Section 3.14, "Utilities and Service Systems," the campus would be prevented from occupying new campus facilities until adequate water supplies are established through the construction of the WRF or other sources. With respect to wastewater treatment and conveyance capacity, improvements to on-campus facilities, including to wastewater conveyance systems to reduce inflow and infiltration as well as water fixture efficiency measures (such as replacing toilets, urinals, faucets, and showerheads with low-flow alternatives), would need to be implemented in addition to operation of the WRF to reduce wastewater flows and ensure that peak wet weather flow conditions do not exceed 2015 conditions under this alternative. As under the 2035 Master Plan, this impact would be less than significant with mitigation and, due to the reduced level of development, would be less than those of the 2035 Master Plan. (*Less impact*)

ACHIEVEMENT OF PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Under Alternative 3, new student housing would be provided on-campus, but would only satisfy the projected increase in student enrollment; it would not make any progress toward the goal of housing more Cal Poly students on campus and making off-campus housing stock available to permanent residents. As a lesser development alternative, Alternative 3 could still enhance academic quality and student success through Cal Poly's "Learn by Doing" teaching methodology; increase the diversity of students, faculty, and staff; and strengthen the campus's compact, cross-disciplinary academic curriculum. However, because less student housing would be provided, this alternative may not achieve the objectives of housing all first- and second-year students plus 30 percent of upper division students in residential communities on campus, providing housing opportunities on campus primarily for University faculty and staff to promote faculty and staff recruitment and retention, or enhancing campus facilities to create a more vibrant evening and weekend environment. By not providing housing for more of the projected student population, this alternative could result in students residing farther from campus, increasing vehicle commute trips. Thus, this alternative may not achieve the objectives of advancing campus-side environmental sustainability and make progress toward goals of carbon neutrality and climate resilience or attaining a modal shift from vehicles to more pedestrian, bicycle, and transit use.

5.4.4 Alternative 4: No Development along City Interface Alternative

This alternative would include development of the campus similar to the 2035 Master Plan, however no new development, including surface parking lots, would be proposed along (i.e., within 500 feet/0.1 mile) the campus's boundary with the city of San Luis Obispo. For example, expansion of Spanos Stadium would occur under this alternative as it is an existing facility that cannot be relocated to the interior of campus, but the development of the Farm Shop, the University-Based Retirement Community, Facilities Operations Complex (and interim parking lot) within the West Campus, and the faculty, staff and workforce housing site at Slack Street and Grand Avenue in the East Campus would not occur. Spanos Stadium expansion and the expansion of the Orfalea Family and ASI Children's Center would still occur under this alternative, as they both would involve an expansion of an existing facility that could not be relocated to an alternative site within the interior campus. Those projects associated with the 2035 Master Plan that would be located within the City interface areas, including, would be relocated to other areas within campus, most likely within the North and West Campus subareas which have the most open space and available land.

AESTHETICS

Alternative 4 would result in the same amount of development within campus, but development would be located away from the city interface. Changes in existing visual conditions would occur within campus similar to the 2035 Master Plan, just in different locations. As discussed in Section 3.1.3, under the 2035 Master Plan, the proposed Farm Shop and the University-Based Retirement Community would be highly visible and the preservation of scenic views and views from a state-designated scenic highway (for the University-Based Retirement Community) could not feasibly be mitigated through project design, impacts to scenic vistas would be significant and unavoidable. In addition, the faculty, staff workforce housing project located at Slack Street and Grand Avenue in the East Campus could result substantial degradation of existing visual character that could not be mitigated and would have a significant and unavoidable impact. Because these components are located within 500 feet of the city interface, they would be relocated under Alternative 4, thereby avoiding these significant and unavoidable aesthetic impacts. Lastly, similar to impacts under the 2035 Master Plan, Alternative 4 would introduce substantial light sources from facilities such as residential units, dining halls, pedestrian and bike pathways, and recreation areas and could include building materials such as surfaces such as glass and metal and may result in additional sources of glare. Mitigation Measures 3.1-3a, 3.1-3b, and 3.1-3c, outlined in Section 3.1.3 would likely be required for Alternative 4 to reduce impacts to light and glare to less than significant levels. However, the overall aesthetic impacts of development under Alternative 4 would be reduced compared to that of the 2035 Master Plan, and significant and unavoidable impacts would be reduced under Alternative 4. (*Less impact; significant and unavoidable aesthetics impact avoided*)

AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

Under Alternative 4, the Facilities Operations Complex (and interim parking lot) would be relocated which would avoid the conversion of 10 acres of prime farmland and the resulting significant and unavoidable agricultural impact. However, the 2035 Master Plan projects along the City interface would need to be relocated elsewhere within the Master Plan Area, which would likely be sited in the open space and undeveloped areas of the North and West campus. This would lead to a likely increase in the conversion of agricultural lands to non-agricultural. As a result, relocation of proposed development under this alternative could result in the placement of additional development within agricultural resource areas. For projects where this may occur, mitigation similar to that outlined in Section 3.2 would be required. However, due to the similar overall degree of land disturbance under this alternative, the acreage required and resulting impact to farmland would likely be slightly increased compared to those under the 2035 Master Plan. Under Alternative 4, impacts would remain significant and unavoidable. (*Slightly greater impact*)

AIR QUALITY

Although some development would be relocated, Alternative 4 would include the same type and amount of development on campus as the 2035 Master Plan. As a result, and similar to the 2035 Master Plan, this alternative would be consistent with applicable air quality plans by locating more students and faculty/staff on campus, proximate to their likely destinations, which would reduce mobile source emissions associated with commute and other emission reducing measures. Due to the similar level of projected development, Alternative 4 would emit the same overall air emissions during construction and operation. During operations, Alternative 4 would provide the same number of on-campus housing opportunities for students as the 2035 Master Plan and the same amount of other land uses, such as academic and administrative uses. For this reason, the corresponding amount of operational criteria air pollutants from sources such as trips to and from the campus would be the same or similar as the 2035 Master Plan. Regarding odor impacts, the WRF would still be constructed under this alternative, so significant and unavoidable odor impacts would still occur. Air quality impacts under Alternative 4 would be similar to those described for the 2035 Master Plan. Significant and unavoidable impacts would still occur. (*Similar impact*)

ARCHAEOLOGICAL, HISTORICAL, AND TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

Although some development would be relocated, Alternative 4 would include the same amount of development and ground disturbance on campus as the 2035 Master Plan. Earth-moving activities within campus under both the 2035 Master Plan and Alternative 4 would have the potential to disturb archaeological, tribal cultural, and/or historic resources or result in accidental discovery of human remains. Under the 2035 Master Plan, ground-disturbing activities (e.g., grading, excavation) could result in discovery of archaeological resources; however, feasible mitigation measures and regulatory requirements/procedures would reduce these impacts to a less-than-significant level. Under the 2035 Master Plan, inadvertent discoveries of tribal cultural resources, or human remains would be required to comply with regulatory requirements to ensure impacts are less than significant. Additionally, on-campus development within or near potentially historic structures under both this alternative and the 2035 Master Plan could result in potentially significant and unavoidable impacts, if development would result in damage to or destruction of a building or structure that is a designated historic resource, eligible for listing as a historic resource, or a potential historic resource that has not yet been evaluated, could result in the change in its historical significance. Because development would be similar to the 2035 Master Plan, the same degree of potential impacts on cultural resources would occur and impacts to historic resources would still be significant and unavoidable. (*Similar impact*)

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Alternative 4 would involve the same amount of development and ground disturbance on campus as the 2035 Master Plan, but in different locations. The presence of habitat for special-status plant and animal species, as well as riparian habitat, wetlands, and wildlife movement corridors and nursery sites within certain areas of campus, physical changes associated with implementation of this alternative could result in significant impacts and the mitigation measures described in Section 3.5 would still be required. However, relocating development away from the city of San Luis Obispo could result in Cal Poly locating the development North and West campus or open space and undeveloped areas within the Master Plan Area, including near the hillside. This would result in the disturbance of additional biological resources. Biological resources in these areas include Smith, Shephard, and Drumm Reservoirs and their drainages, which are subject to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers jurisdiction and provide aquatic habitat suitable for California red-legged frog and other aquatic species. Aquatic habitat suitable for these species also is found in portions of Brizzolara Creek. Due to the similar development footprint between the 2035 Master Plan and Alternative 4, and the potential to disturb more sensitive areas beyond the main campus, impacts associated with Alternative 4 would likely be greater in comparison to impacts under the 2035 Master Plan. (*Greater impact*)

ENERGY

Under this alternative, the same amount of development would occur, which would result in the same amount of construction activities and thus the same energy impacts during construction. Because development proposed under Alternative 4 and the 2035 Master Plan would be similar, during operations, the number of trips to and from the campus, as well as natural gas and electricity consumption, would be similar. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant under this alternative and similar to the 2035 Master Plan. *(Similar impact)*

GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Earth-moving activities associated with construction have the potential to affect geology, soils, and mineral resources. The types of impacts that could occur from development on campus include potential landslide issues, erosion or loss of topsoil, and impacts from unstable or expansive soils. Relocating development away from the city of San Luis Obispo under this alternative would likely result in Cal Poly locating additional development northeast of the main campus near the hillsides, which would require additional grading and development in areas more prone to landslides. Further, potential impacts to paleontological resources could occur if these resources are discovered during ground-disturbing activities under the 2035 Master Plan. Nonetheless, regardless of the relocation of development, existing regulations and permitting requirements, such as CBC requirements, and the CSU Seismic Requirements, would minimize potential impacts to a less-than-significant level and would still be required for this alternative. Alternative 4 includes the same level of development on campus, and therefore, the general areas where development would occur would be subject to similar geologic impacts. Impacts would be of similar type and magnitude and remain less than significant with mitigation. *(Similar impact)*

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Due to a similar level of on-campus development under this alternative, there would be similar construction- and operation-related GHG emissions compared to the 2035 Master Plan. Thus, Mitigation Measure 3.8-1, outlined in Section 3.8.3, would still be required. Therefore, impacts would be similar under this alternative compared to the 2035 Master Plan and would remain less than significant with mitigation. *(Similar impact)*

HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Earth-moving activities associated with construction under the 2035 Master Plan and Alternative 4 have the potential to affect hydrology and water quality within campus. The types of impacts that could occur from development under the 2035 Master Plan include reduced groundwater recharge, alterations to existing drainage systems, and effects on the 100-year floodplain. Mitigation measures were incorporated into the EIR to reduce these impacts to less-than-significant levels. Existing regulations and permitting requirements, such as NPDES permit conditions, a SWPPP, the 2013 General Permit, a Small MS4 Permit, and Cal Poly's WDR, would also be required to ensure impacts to water quality are less-than-significant. Although Alternative 4 would include the same amount of development within campus as the 2035 Master Plan, it would likely involve a greater degree of conversion of permeable surfaces to impermeable surfaces, as it is more likely that undeveloped land would be developed under this alternative. Therefore, while impacts under this alternative would remain less than significant with mitigation, they would be greater than the 2035 Master Plan. *(Greater impact)*

NOISE

Because Alternative 4 and the 2035 Master Plan would result in the same level of development within campus, earth-moving activities (e.g., grading, excavation) and noise and vibration impacts would be similar. Receptors subject to those impacts, however, would be different. Because no new development would occur within 500 feet of the city's boundary, impacts to offsite receptors in the city of San Luis Obispo would be reduced and potential impacts to onsite receptors would remain. As noted above, the expansion of Spanos Stadium would still occur under this

alternative and impacts and mitigation related to additional noise from stadium-related activities would be the same. As overall development would be the same as the project, the temporary and permanent increases in noise would be the same. *(Similar impact)*

POPULATION AND HOUSING

Alternative 4 would result in the same level of development on campus as under the 2035 Master Plan, which would result in the same number of additional students, faculty, staff, and retirees living on campus. Because the level of campus population growth would be the same under this alternative and the 2035 Master Plan, impacts would remain less than significant. *(Similar impact)*

PUBLIC SERVICES AND RECREATION

Alternative 4 would result in the same level of development on campus as the 2035 Master Plan. For this reason, the increase in demand for public services would be the same as under the 2035 Master Plan. Under the 2035 Master Plan, impacts to fire, police, school, libraries, and recreation were determined to be less than significant. Public services impacts under Alternative 4 would be of similar type and magnitude as under the 2035 Master Plan. Thus, impacts to public services and recreation under Alternative 4 and the 2035 Master Plan would be less than significant. *(Similar impact)*

TRANSPORTATION

Alternative 4 proposes the same level of development on campus as the 2035 Master Plan. For this reason, the additional vehicle commute trips associated with Alternative 4 would be the same or similar to those generated under the 2035 Master Plan. Relocation of development under this alternative could result in placement of future projects farther away from transit, resulting in greater vehicle trips and thus a greater impact. Nonetheless, the degree to which this would occur is speculative. Therefore, impacts to transportation would be similar under this alternative. *(Similar impact)*

UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Similar to the project, development and operation of proposed buildings and increased campus population levels associated with Alternative 4 would increase water demand and wastewater generation. As under the 2035 Master Plan, either the WRF would be constructed to ensure that water and wastewater treatment demands are met through campus buildout or Cal Poly would reduce existing demand/flow such that adequate water supplies and wastewater treatment capacity are available to serve the new development. However, as noted in Section 3.14, "Utilities and Service Systems," the exact design, timing, and other details of the WRF have yet to be established, so mitigation is necessary to ensure that additional potable water supplies (made available as recycled water from the WRF replaces potable supplies for irrigation uses) and wastewater treatment capacity would be available in time to meet increased demand from campus development.

Several actions are proposed to reduce existing and projected wastewater flows on campus, including replacing toilets, urinals, faucets, and showerheads with low-flow alternatives. However, as discussed in Section 3.14.3, development under the 2035 Master Plan could increase campus generated peak wet weather flows in excess of existing contractual treatment and conveyance rights to the City's WRRF. Accordingly, the mitigation measures call for the implementation of on-campus facilities improvements, such as replacement of on-campus wastewater conveyance systems to reduce inflow and infiltration and water fixture efficiency measures would need to be implemented to reduce wastewater flows and ensure that peak wet weather flow conditions do not exceed 2018/2019 conditions. The mitigation measures identified in Section 3.14 would require Cal Poly to demonstrate and ensure that there are adequate water supplies and waste water treatment capacity to serve new development under the Master Plan, through the construction and operation of the WRF, expanded water supply or treatment capacity contracts

with the City and/or through conservation measures to reduce water demand and waste water flows. Because Alternative 4 would result in similar levels of wastewater generation and demand for conveyance and treatment to the project, impacts would be similar and would remain less than significant with mitigation. (*Similar impact*)

ACHIEVEMENT OF PROJECT OBJECTIVES

This alternative would result in the same amount of development as the 2035 Master Plan but it would be relocated to avoid the city boundary. For this reason, Alternative 4 would achieve most of the project objectives. For instance, Alternative 4 would still be able to enhance academic quality and student success through Cal Poly's "Learn by Doing" teaching methodology; expand campus programs to support and enhance the diversity of students, faculty, and staff; strengthen the campus's compact, cross-disciplinary Academic Core and promote cross-disciplinary synergies.

This alternative would also provide the same amount of housing as the 2035 Master Plan. Thus, this alternative would be able to house all first- and second-year students plus 30 percent of upper division students in residential communities on campus; provide housing opportunities on campus primarily for University faculty and staff to promote faculty and staff recruitment and retention, and to enhance faculty and staff connectivity with the campus; and provide housing opportunities that may be offered to non-traditional students, similar to the 2035 Master Plan. Lastly, by providing the same level of development, Alternative 4 would be able to advance campus-side environmental sustainability and make progress toward goals of carbon neutrality and climate resilience.

However, relocating the Retirement-Based Community Development and the faculty, staff and workforce housing site at Slack Street and Grand Avenue to alternative sites within the Master Plan Area would be challenging from a land use planning perspective as all community amenities important to these types of residential developments (e.g., banks, grocery stores, medical facilities) are located in the city, not on campus. Further, housing a retirement community among university-aged students would not be preferable for the residents of the new community. In addition, siting new development along the hillsides may result in permanent loss of more sensitive biological resources and conflict with future plans to develop trails and recreational facilities in these areas. Nonetheless, Alternative 4 would achieve most of the project objectives.

5.5 COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES

Table 5-1 summarizes the environmental analysis provided above for the 2035 Master Plan alternatives.

Table 5-1 Summary of Environmental Effects of the Alternatives Relative to the 2035 Master Plan Project

Environmental Topic	Project	Alternative 1: No Project – No Development Alternative	Alternative 2: Reduced Administrative/ Academic Development Program Alternative	Alternative 3: Net Student Growth Only Alternative	Alternative 4: No Development Along City Interface Alternative
Aesthetics	SU	<	=	<	<
Agriculture and Forestry Resources	SU	<	=	=	>
Air Quality	SU	< (Construction) > (Operations)	=	= (Construction) >(Operations)	=
Archaeological, Historical, and Tribal Cultural Resources	SU	<	=	=	=
Biological Resources	LTS/M	<	<	<	>
Energy	LTS	<	<	<(Construction) >(Operations)	=
Geology and Soils	LTS/M	<	<	<	=
Greenhouse Gas Emissions	LTS/M	< (Construction) > (Operations)	<	< (Construction) >(Operations)	=
Hydrology and Water Quality	LTS/M	<	=	=	>
Noise	SU	<	<	=	=
Population and Housing	SU LTS	>	=	>	=
Public Services and Recreation	LTS	<	=	=	=
Transportation	SU LTS/M	>	=	>	=
Utilities and Service Systems	SU LTS/M	<	<	<	=

Impact Status:

LTS = less-than-significant impact

LTS/M = LTS with mitigation

SU = Significant and Unavoidable

= - Impacts would be similar to those of the project.

< - Impacts would be less than those of the project.

> - Impacts would be greater than those of the project.

Source: Data compiled by Ascent Environmental in 2019

5.6 ENVIRONMENTALLY SUPERIOR ALTERNATIVE

The State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6 states that an EIR should identify the “environmentally superior” alternative. “If the environmentally superior alternative is the ‘no project’ alternative, the EIR shall also identify an environmentally superior alternative among the other alternatives.” As shown in the Executive Summary Chapter of this EIR, there would be significant and unavoidable impacts associated with the project. These impacts are related to aesthetics, agricultural resources, air quality, historic resources, and noise. Each of the evaluated action alternatives would result in lesser environmental impacts on some environmental resources and greater impacts on others compared to the 2035 Master Plan. None of the action alternatives presented would only reduce impacts associated with the 2035 Master Plan.

Alternative 1 (No Project-No Development), which would represent the least amount of development compared to existing conditions and thus, least potential physical environmental impacts, would be considered the environmentally superior alternative. Because the No Project–No Development Alternative (described above in Section 5.4.1) would avoid the significant adverse impacts resulting from the construction and operation of new facilities under the 2035 Master Plan, it is the environmentally superior alternative. However, as noted above, it would not be as consistent with applicable air quality plans and may result in increased emissions (air quality and GHG) and VMT as on-campus population increases. As required by State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations Section 15126.6 [e][2]), because the environmentally superior alternative was identified as the No Project Alternative, another environmentally superior alternative must be identified among the other alternatives considered.

When considering objectives, the project would best meet the purpose and need. In contrast, Alternative 1 would not provide additional housing to accommodate any growth in student enrollment. Alternative 2 would generally result in impacts that are less or equal to the 2035 Master Plan but would not provide additional academic facilities to meet the needs that would be generated by planned student population growth. Alternative 3 would reduce some impacts as a result of less developable footprint but because less student housing would be provided, impacts to transportation and population and housing would be greater. While Alternative 4 would generally meet the objectives of the 2035 Master Plan, it would result in greater impacts to biological resources, hydrology and utilities, and would not provide the adequate community resources and benefits to the Faculty and Staff Workforce Housing and Retirement-Based Community Development that the 2035 Master Plan would.

Alternatives 2, 3, and 4 would result in various environmental effects, some of which would be greater than with implementation of the project. some less, and some the same. However, on balance, the environmentally superior alternative would be either the 2035 Master Plan or Alternative 4, depending on decisions weighing types of environmental benefits and adverse effects by Cal Poly. The 2035 Master Plan would result in greater construction-related impacts (e.g., noise near the city) and visual impacts, and Alternative 4 would result in greater construction impacts (e.g., hydrology and utility), as well as operational impacts (e.g., biological resources). In weighing the consideration of the environmentally-superior alternative, decision-makers must weigh the relative importance of greater construction-related impacts associated with the project, compared to the greater operational impacts associated with Alternative 4. Nonetheless, each of the alternatives considered would result in long-term, significant and unavoidable environmental impacts. Therefore, the environmental impact differences between these two alternatives are not substantial enough that one is clearly superior to the other.

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