# 4 Alternatives

CEQA mandates consideration and analysis of alternatives to the proposed project. The CEQA Guidelines state that the range of alternatives "shall include those that could feasibly accomplish most of the basic purposes of the project and could avoid or substantially lessen one or more of the significant impacts" (§15126 (d)(2)). The alternatives may result in new impacts that do not result from the proposed project.

Case law suggests that the discussion of alternatives need not be exhaustive and that selection should be limited to "reasonable" alternatives. The impacts of the alternatives may be discussed "in less detail than the significant effects of the proposed project" (CEQA Guidelines §15126(d)(3)). Also, the Guidelines permit analysis of alternatives at a less detailed level for general plans and other program EIRs, compared to project EIRs. The Guidelines do not specify what would be an adequate level of detail. Quantified information on the alternatives is presented where available; however, in some cases only qualitative analysis or partial quantification can be provided because of data or analytical limitations.

The draft Castro Valley Plan includes proposed policies and actions that were formulated to ensure that the development that is anticipated to occur to 2025 will not have any significant impacts on the environment. Because the Plan as drafted does not have any potentially significant impacts, the DEIR does not require and does not propose any additional mitigation measures. For this reason, it might be legally defensible to consider only one alternative to the proposed Plan—the No Project Alternative. As the following section explains, the DEIR has, nevertheless, included analysis of a second alternative, which is a variation of the draft Plan that is of interest to the community.

CEQA also requires identification of an "environmentally superior" alternative. In this case, the proposed General Plan meets this requirement. The basis for this determination is that the proposed Plan will:

- Generate less traffic;
- Provide greater protection of biological resources due to the proposed biological resources overlay zone and reduced density in creek corridors;
- Reduce development on steep slopes and in fire hazard areas;
- Promote increased use of transit due to the concentration of housing and infill commercial development in the Downtown; and
- Provide greater protection for cultural resources.

## 4.1 DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVES

The No Project Alternative to the proposed Plan is continued implementation of the 1985 Castro Valley General Plan and other countywide General Plan elements that comprise a general plan as mandated by the State Government Code. (Section 65302 et. seq.) This is consistent with the (CEQA Guidelines §15126(e)(3)(A)) which state that when the project is the revision of an existing plan, the No Project Alternative is continuation of the existing plan.

Since the proposed project, the new General Plan, is environmentally superior, it is not necessary to include and analyze a third alternative. Nevertheless, because there has been considerable discussion of a reduction in the number of travel lanes on Castro Valley Boulevard during Redevelopment Strategic Plan and General Plan meetings and community workshops, this chapter of the DEIR includes the Castro Valley Boulevard Reduced Lane Proposal as a second alternative to the proposed Plan. This alternative would reduce the number of travel lanes on Castro Valley Boulevard to constrain through traffic and enhance the Downtown's character as a pedestrian-oriented shopping area.

The proposed project is fully described in Chapter 2 of this EIR with the General Plan Diagram shown in Figure 2.3-1 and Land Use Classification Tables 2.3-1 through 2.3-3. The following sections describe key features of the two alternatives that this DEIR has analyzed and also review several alternatives that were considered during the planning process and rejected.

## ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

During the course of preparing a new plan for Castro Valley, several alternatives were considered and rejected because they were infeasible, failed to meet most of the objectives for preparing a new plan, and either failed to substantially reduce potential impacts or would have impacts that were more significant than those associated with the proposed plan. This section briefly describes each of these alternatives and explains why they were not given further consideration.

### Lower Density Zoning in Biologically Sensitive Areas

This alternative would have significantly increased minimum lot sizes in the Planning Area's biologically sensitive areas, specifically the riparian corridors, to further reduce their development potential. The minimum lot sizes in this alternative would have increased to one to five acres. This change would have drastically reduced the value of parcels in the creek corridors and could have resulted in challenges that might have created significant delays in completing and adopting the new General Plan. Moreover, it would have had minimal or no impact on existing smaller vacant lots, which would have become nonconforming but could have still been developed. The proposed plan will increase the minimum lot sizes in these sensitive areas from the prevailing 5,000 square foot standard to 20,000 or 40,000 square feet depending upon site conditions. This will provide extensive additional land area on individual lots that can remain undeveloped and thus support wildlife habitat. Moreover, the Plan's objectives regarding protection of sensitive habitat areas will be achieved by amending the Zoning Ordinance to require special review of proposed development in these areas.

### Rezoning Neighborhood Commercial Sites for Residential Development

This alternative would have changed the General Plan land use classification of vacant or underused neighborhood commercial sites to exclusively residential use as some property owners have requested. This alternative would provide additional sites for meeting the County Housing Element's housing needs. It would also help to ensure that these sites are developed for uses that are compatible with surrounding residential development. After analyzing the economic viability of retaining these sites for exclusively commercial uses, it was determined that mixed-use development is a feasible alternative from an economic standpoint. By amending the Zoning Ordinance to include restrictions on the types of uses that are permitted on the ground floor, the proposed policies will allow vacant and underused commercial sites to

be redeveloped with housing above neighborhood-serving commercial and community services uses, such as childcare, that will provide both economic benefits to public agencies and a variety of services to meet the needs of nearby residents. The majority of the community comments about this issue strongly favored retaining neighborhood commercial uses because they provide retail and services to residents.

### Larger Lot Sizes in Hillside Areas

This alternative would have increased the minimum lot size to 10,000 square feet or larger in hillside areas that have steep slopes, are in high fire hazard areas, and/or include biological resources. This would have reduced the total amount of development even further, and thus reduced total amount of traffic, as well as avoiding hazards and biological impacts. The current zoning is for 5000 sq. ft. lots; however, the County's current practice is to approve subdivisions only if lots are consistent with surrounding lot sizes. The County Fire Department has confirmed that, with the exception of the Madison Common area, it can provide adequate emergency response. With appropriate construction techniques and erosion control, the impact of construction on steeper slopes can be mitigated. In addition, while protection of biological resources is of major concern, not all potential resource areas are of equal value or sensitivity. Instead of sharply increasing lot sizes, the draft Plan proposes a Hillside Residential classification with a sliding scale of 5,000 to 10,000 square foot lots, based on lot slope. The proposed zoning would include provisions that include more stringent provisions where necessary to control surface runoff.

### Higher Density Development in the CBD

An alternative would have promoted and allowed higher intensity commercial development in downtown, which would result in more development overall, could have generated a greater proportion of trips by transit, and would have further improved the Planning Area's jobs/housing balance. This alternative was not pursued for several reasons including market studies show insufficient demand to support a higher level of CBD development. Second, because parcels are small and the development economics do not work for structured parking, achieving higher intensity development would be difficult. Also, the community wanted to retain the Castro Valley's small-town character and small locally-owned businesses. It was determined there was ample development potential to accommodate the amount of new commercial space projected, without increasing height or density. Further intensification would have also degraded already congested intersections to Level of Service F , which does not meet County goals or standards.

### Lower Density on Small Infill Lots

There are many properties in areas north and south of downtown where medium and higher density development has been allowed either in the zoning, the General Plan, or through Planned Development zoning. Some community members object to these higher density housing types. We considered limiting the areas where medium and density infill development is permitted. This would have reduced overall traffic levels due to the density decrease. However this would conflict with housing element goals, which are mandated by the State.

## REDUCED TRAVEL LANES ON CASTRO VALLEY BOULEVARD - ALTERNATIVE

The draft Plan incorporates the proposal in the Castro Valley Redevelopment Strategic Plan to retain two travel lanes in each direction but narrow the travel lanes to a width of 10 feet in order provide 5-foot bike lanes in each direction, an 8-foot parallel parking lane, and 12-foot sidewalks. The Reduced Travel Lane Alternative, which was proposed and evaluated during preparation of the Redevelopment Strategic Plan, would eliminate two travel lanes on Castro Valley Boulevard. Except for changes in the number of lanes on the Boulevard and associated changes in lane geometrics and intersections, this alternative is otherwise identical to the draft Plan.

### Key Features

The Reduced Travel Lane Alternative would reduce Castro Valley Boulevard to one through travel lane in each direction between Wilbeam Avenue and Anita Street with diagonal parking and a two-way left turn lane between Wilbeam and San Miguel avenues. There would be associated reductions of two existing northbound turn lanes to one left turn lane. The street section would include a single travel lane in each direction, a two-way left-turn lane, bicycle lanes in each direction, and on-street parking on both sides of the street. [1] (See Figure 4.1-1 and 4.1-2)

[1] DKS Associates, Castro Valley Redevelopment Traffic Analysis, Technical Memorandum, p. 10.

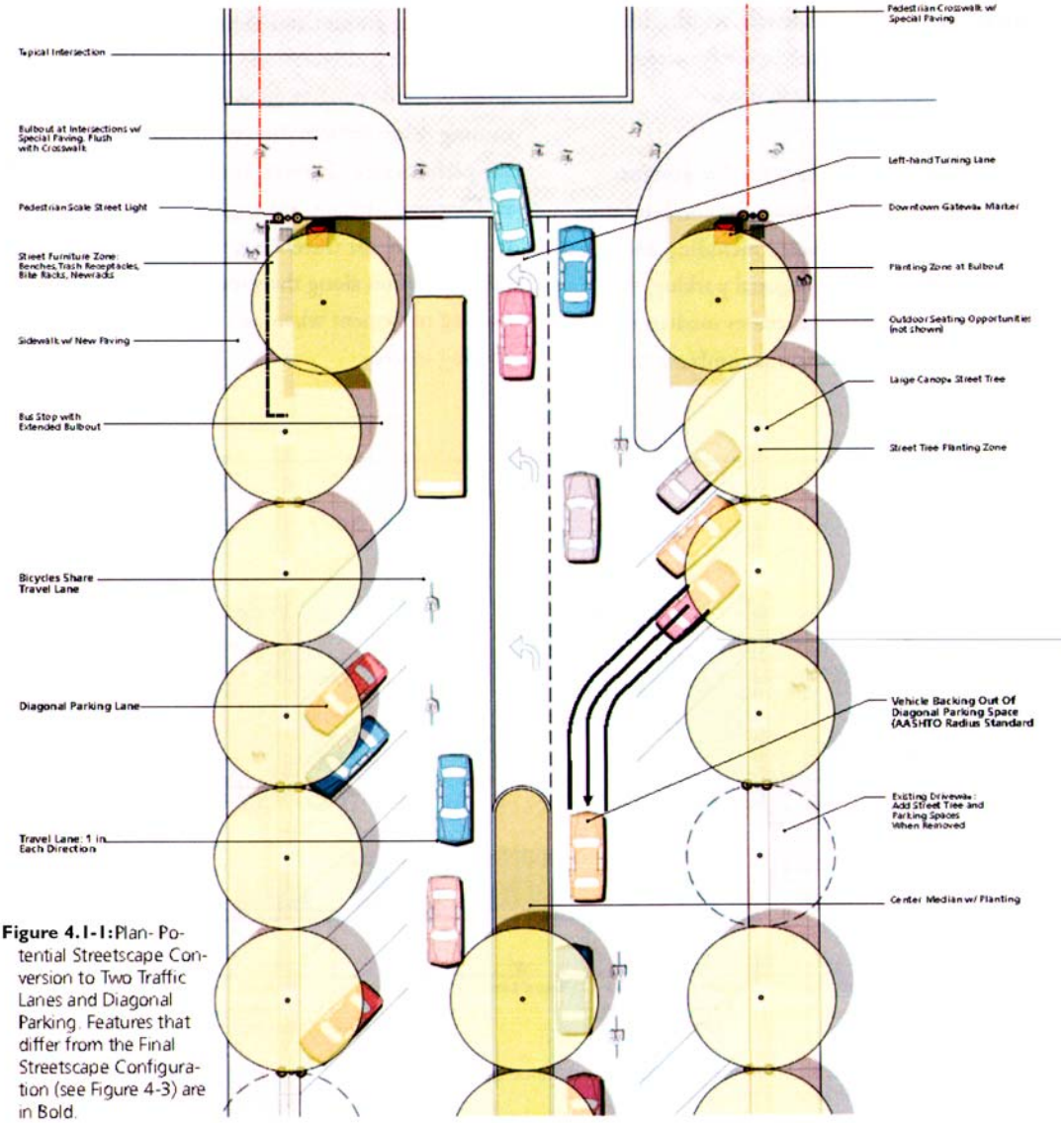


**Figure 4.1-1:** Plan- Potential Streetscape Conversion to Two Traffic Lanes and Diagonal Parking. Features that differ from the Final Streetscape Configuration (see Figure 4-3) are in Bold.

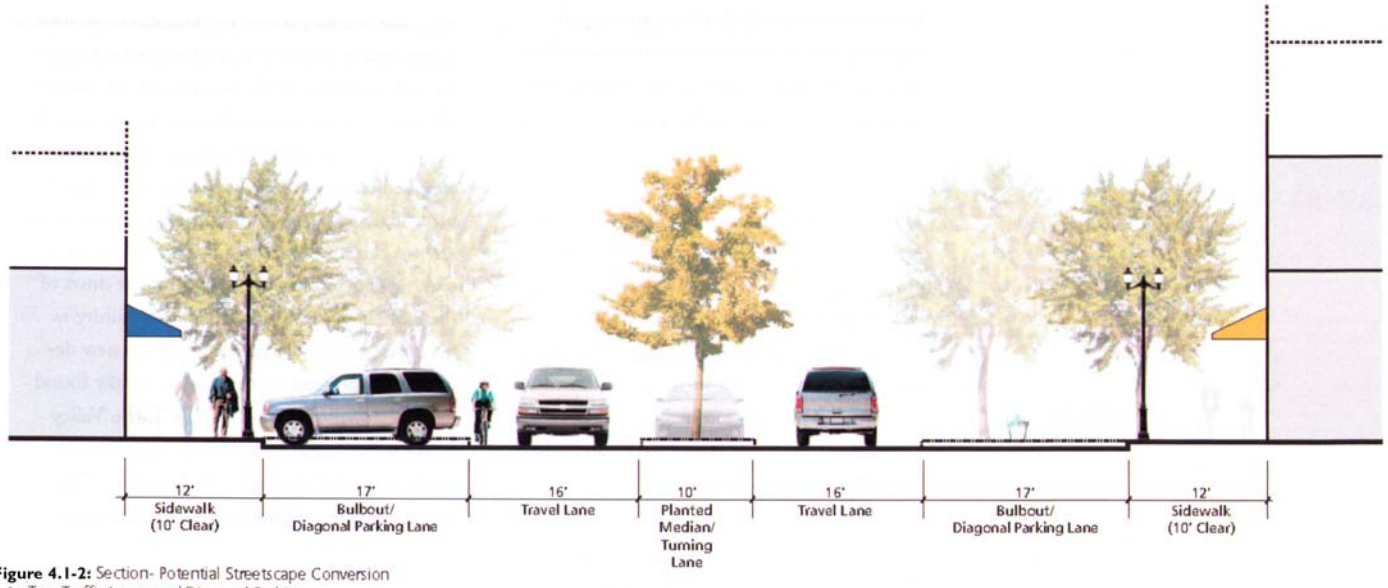


**Figure 4.1-2:** Section- Potential Streetscape Conversion to Two Traffic Lanes and Diagonal Parking

## NO PROJECT ALTERNATIVE

If the Alameda County Board of Supervisors does not adopt the proposed General Plan, the existing 1985 Castro Valley Plan, the 1993 Castro Valley Central Business District Specific Plan, the Madison-Common Specific Plan, and several countywide specific plans would continue to guide development in the Planning Area.

The existing 1985 Castro Valley Plan is the third comprehensive amendment to the community plan that the County Board of Supervisors first adopted in 1961 as the 'Master Plan for Castro Valley.' The 1985 Plan covered a larger area than the proposed new General Plan, extending farther north and south of the current planning area to encompass the San Leandro and Palomares Creek watersheds, which are now outside the Urban Growth Boundary that was established by voters in 2000. The 1985 Plan lists 28 goals for the planning area, covering topics from urban design/community character to public services and from transportation to health and safety, including the following:

- To provide for community identity;
- To provide unique and attractive focal point for the community;
- To maintain the predominantly low-density residential character of the community;
- To provide an adequate level of library and informational services;
- To provide for employment opportunities;
- To protect natural scenic features.

The Plan includes objectives, principles, and implementation provisions in five major areas:

- General Development;
- Housing and Residential Land Use;
- Commercial Land Use;
- Public Utilities, Facilities and Services; and
- Policies for Adjoining Urban Areas.

Figures 3.1-2 through 3.1-5 show the 1985 General Plan land use maps and the existing zoning map.

Development in the Central Business District is guided by the Central Business District Specific Plan (CBDSP), which the Board of Supervisors first adopted in 1983 to implement a mandate in the 1978 Castro Valley Plan. The CBDSP was substantially revised in 1993 and most recently amended in 2005 to conform to the 2003 Alameda County Housing Element. The Specific Plan divides the CBD into 11 sub areas within which four Land Use Groups—intensive retail commercial; low intensity, predominantly motor vehicle-oriented retail and service commercial, wholesale commercial; offices; and high density residential—are either permitted or prohibited.

The CBDSP is intended to implement the Castro Valley General Plan policies for the Downtown area marked on Figure 3.1-2; its policies and guidelines serve as zoning regulations

and design review guidelines for this area. Where the CBDSP is silent, provisions of the Alameda County Zoning Ordinance apply. The goal of the Specific Plan is to increase the competitiveness of the CBD and expand the range of good and services located there in order to create a lively, pedestrian-oriented town center.

The CBDSP was amended in June 2005 to conform to the County's 2003 Housing Element update. The changes included:

- adding a new high density residential category (Land Use Group E) allowing 40 to 60 units per acre that applies to the area around the BART station and generally west of Redwood Road (portions of Subareas 8, 9, and 10); and
- A zoning change to 17 regular parcels and one condo parcel on the north side of Jameson Way, east of Woodbine Court and west of Redwood Road, to allow one housing unit per 1,500 square feet of lot area (or 29 units per acre).

The Castro Valley CBD is part of the Castro Valley sub-area of the Eden Redevelopment District. The Eden Redevelopment Plan (2000) includes proposals for revitalization of the Planning Area's commercial core along Castro Valley Boulevard including upgrading the area's physical appearance, improving public infrastructure to induce private investment, and improving and/or constructing public facilities such as libraries and parks. State law and the Redevelopment Plan itself require the Plan to conform to the County's General Plan. The Agency may, however, adopt specific plans or programs to augment the requirements of the General Plan and County zoning.[2] The County's Community Development Agency has prepared such a plan for the Castro Valley Boulevard commercial area. The Castro Valley Redevelopment Strategic Plan identifies sites for catalyst projects, proposes a detailed streetscape design, and describes a retail attraction strategy for the Castro Valley Redevelopment Area.

Other existing County plans and policies incorporated in the No-Project Alternative include the countywide Specific Plan for Areas of Environmental Significance (1977) and the existing Specific Plan for the Upper Madison Avenue/Common Road Area (1975).

The Specific Plan for Areas of Environmental Significance established a Site Development Review process for designated areas of environmental significance including riparian areas—where a watercourse forms the environmental focal point—and along the scenic route corridors identified in the County's Scenic Routes Element. This plan includes some guidelines but does not regulate permitted land uses.

The Specific Plan for the Upper Madison Avenue/Common Road Area includes policies and regulations for the steep-walled Y-shaped valley extending north from Seaview Avenue between Trenton Drive and Center Street. The Plan established a minimum one-acre lot size in both the lower and upper canyon areas and regulations governing street access, drainage, water, sewer, and geology required for new development.

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[2] Eden Area Redevelopment Plan, Section 210

The County is currently updating the plan to strengthen its provisions to protect the character of the area. The substantive changes proposed include requiring site development review for development on parcels having access from Madison Avenue and/or Common Road, revised building height regulations, more stringent setback requirements, and design guidelines that aim to reduce peak stormwater runoff. The No-Project Alternative assumes continued enforcement of the Plan, as it existed in March 2006, when the County issued the Notice of Preparation for this EIR.

### Key Features

Under this alternative, the proposed General Plan would not be adopted and development in the Planning Area would be guided by the existing 1985 Castro Valley Plan, the 1993 Castro Valley Central Business District Specific Plan (as amended to implement the adopted Housing Element), the 1975 Madison-Common Specific Plan, and other adopted plans that were in effect as of March, 2006, at the time the County issued the Notice of Preparation. Implementing this alternative would result in more housing development in existing residential areas, especially in the northern part of the Planning Area, and less residential development in and around the Central Business District. The 25-acre EBMUD property at Sydney Way and Carleton could be developed under its existing single-family residential zoning designation.

New homes and second units would continue to be developed primarily through subdivision of existing single family lots in lower-density residential areas. Restrictions on development to protect riparian corridors and other sensitive biological features and reflect physical constraints, such as steep hillsides, will be imposed on a case-by-case basis through site development review and Planned Development provisions. Neighborhood commercial areas on Lake Chabot and Seven Hills roads, on Seven Hills Road, and at Heyer Avenue and Center Street would remain designated for commercial use. General commercial uses, including personal storage, would continue to be allowed next to residential development and within and adjacent to retail uses around the intersection of Redwood Road and Grove Way.

## 4.2 COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES

This section presents the impacts of each of the two alternatives in each major environmental issue area and compares them to the impacts of the proposed project.

### LAND USE

The most significant difference in land use impacts between the project and the No Project Alternative is that the draft General Plan proposes a number of new land use classifications and regulations that would reduce development potential in lower-density residential areas in the northern part of the Planning Area and increase residential development in areas that are closer to Castro Valley Boulevard. The revised land use classifications would require substantive changes in zoning that would particularly affect the use of vacant and underused parcels. The draft Plan also proposes that more detailed specific or precise plans be prepared as a condition of allowing development in several parts of the Planning Area that have special conditions that warrant more detailed plans to ensure that build-out conforms to the Plan's policies.

Compared with the No Project Alternative, build-out under both the draft Plan or the Reduced Travel Lane Alternative would, in particular, result in changes to the type and intensity in the following areas:

- Additional residential development in townhouses, small-lot subdivisions, and small apartment buildings in the mixed residential area north of the Central Business District bounded by Lake Chabot to the west, Redwood Road to the east, and Somerset Avenue to the north;
- Additional residential development along Grove Way east of Redwood Road intersection and on Center Street south of I-580;
- Permanent open space and reduced residential development on the EBMUD property at Sydney Way, Stanton, and Carleton;
- Reduced or clustered development on two-acre or larger lots along Crow Canyon and Jensen roads;
- Mixed use development on neighborhood commercial sites at Lake Chabot and Seven Hills roads, Redwood Road and James Street, and Heyer Avenue and Center Street;
- Reduced residential development in areas with slopes over 30 percent, riparian corridors, and lands in designated high fire hazard areas.

Most of these land use changes would result from the adoption of zoning regulations to conform to proposed changes in land use under either the draft Plan or the Reduced Travel Lane Alternative. Table 4.2-1 describes the proposed new land use classifications:

**Table 4.2-1: New Land Use Classifications w. Draft Plan and Reduced Travel Lane Alternative**

| *Land Use Category* | *Map Designation* | *Description* | *Maximum Density* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Rural Residential | R1-RR | Rural residential in areas that have development constraints due to access limitations, steep slopes, and/or natural resources. | 1-2 Units Per Nat Acre |
| Hillside Residential | RI-H | Hillside residential zone in areas where there are steep slopes, and/or a high fire hazard due to proximity to regional open space with sliding scale of lot sizes based on slope. | 4-8 Units Per Net Acre |
| Residential-Small Lot | RS-5 | Residential zone allowing small-lot subdivision for townhouses and small single-family detached units. | 8-12 Units Per Net Acre |
| Residential Mixed Density | RMX | Mixed housing types including single family, duplexes, townhomes, and two-story multi-family in areas close to Downtown. | 8-29 Units Per Net Acre |
| Residential Mixed Use | CBD-RMU | Apartments and condominiums with required ground floor retail along Castro Valley Boulevard west of Forest Avenue | 30-60 Units Per Net Acre |

**Table 4.2-1: New Land Use Classifications w. Draft Plan and Reduced Travel Lane Alternative**

| *Land Use Category* | *Map Designation* | *Description* | *Maximum Density* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Rural Residential | R1-RR | Rural residential in areas that have development constraints due to access limitations, steep slopes, and/or natural resources. | 1-2 Units Per Nat Acre |
| Hillside Residential | RI-H | Hillside residential zone in areas where there are steep slopes, and/or a high fire hazard due to proximity to regional open space with sliding scale of lot sizes based on slope. | 4-8 Units Per Net Acre |
| Residential-Small Lot | RS-5 | Residential zone allowing small-lot subdivision for townhouses and small single-family detached units. | 8-12 Units Per Net Acre |
| Public Facilities | PF | Lands proposed for or occupied by public uses including schools, community centers, fire stations, reservoirs. | Not applicable |
| Open Space-Parks | OS-P | Public parks and recreation facilities. | Not applicable |
| Open Space-Natural | OS-N | Natural resource areas, passive recreation areas in public parklands and open space in planned developments designated for permanent conservation. | Not applicable |
| Habitat Conservation Overlay | C | Overlay zone in areas with sensitive biological resources, including creeks, where special review is required for new development and reduced densities or clustering may be required for habitat protection. | Not applicable |
| Downtown Commercial | CBD Sub-Area 10 | Auto-reliant commercial goods and services to meet community needs. | 2.0 FAR |
| Downtown Civic and Community Center | CBD Sub-Area 10 | Banks, title insurance, headquarters offices, government offices, social service agencies, library, childcare facilities, community assembly, library. | 2.0 FAR |
| Downtown High Density Residential Mixed Use | CBD Sub-Area 10 | Multi-family residential and senior housing with required ground floor childcare, offices, or retail required along Castro Valley Boulevard west of Forest Avenue. | 40-60 Units Per Net Acre and 1.0 FAR |

*Source: Kahn/Mortimer/Associates and Dyett & Bhatia (2005); Castro Valley Central Business District Specific Pan (1993)*

Build-out under the No Project Alternative would result in a slightly higher number of residential units and higher population than under the proposed General Plan. Build-out projections were calculated by projecting changes to the Congestion Management Agency's 2005 projections of households, household population, employed residents, and total employment by Transportation Analysis Zone (TAZ). The CMA projections are based on the Association of Bay Area Government (ABAG)'s *Projections 2002*. The ABAG projections were, in turn, based on the 1985 Castro Valley Plan, which do not reflect changes in the Planning Area boundary or zoning changes the County approved in 2005 to implement the 2003

Countywide Housing Element. Projected growth under the proposed Plan was calculated by undertaking a parcel by parcel analysis of changes under the new land use classifications and recent development trends to determine the residential and commercial development potential of each TAZ.

Although the Reduced Lane Alternative could make the CBD more attractive for residential development by reducing through traffic on Castro Valley Boulevard, this analysis assumed no difference in development potential between the draft Plan (i.e. the project) and the No Project Alternative. The No Project projections are based ABAG's 2002 projections, which assumed a more robust economy and higher employment projections.

**Table 4.2-2: Buildout (2025) Comparison: Proposed Plan and Alternatives**

| | *Proposed Project* | *No Project* | *Reduced Lane* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total Housing Units | 25,290 | 25,725 | 25,290 |
| CBD | 2,900 | 2, 900 | 2,900 |
| Rest of Planning Area | 23,290 | 22,825 | 23,290 |
| Total Households | 24,785 | 25,210 | 24,785 |
| Household Population | 64,935 | 66,562 | 64,935 |
| Total Employment | 10,735 | 10,800 | 10,735 |
| CBD | 5,665 | 5,670 | 5,665 |
| Rest of Planning Area | 5,070 | 5,129 | 5,070 |

*Source: CMA 2005; Dyett & Bhatia, 2005; Dowling Associates, 2006*

1. Total housing units assumes 1.5% vacancy rate in 2005 based on 2000 Census and 2.0% at build-out in 2025

Neither alternative would result in displacement of substantial numbers of existing housing or people. Both alternatives assume that the existing mobile home parks, which accounted for about 2 percent of the Planning Area's housing units at the time of the 2000 Census, would be redeveloped.

## PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

One of the primary differences between the proposed Plan and the No Project Alternative is the establishment of new land use classifications that will provide permanent protection for parks, recreation facilities, and natural resource areas. More than 700 acres, about 12 percent of the Planning Area, is used as parkland or has been set aside as open space as a condition of planned development or subdivision approval. As a result of the voters' approval of Measure D, only about 17 acres of agricultural land remains in the Planning Area; most of the agricultural areas and natural resource areas in the canyons to the north, south, and east of the Castro Valley urban area are now outside the Urban Growth Boundary. Under the No Project alternative, much of the existing neighborhood and community parkland and other open space areas within the Planning Area would continue to be classified and zoned for residential use. The use of these areas is anticipated to be the same under either the proposed project or either of the alternatives.

The total amount of parkland and permanent open space would, however, be significantly lower under the No Project Alternative because all existing parks would continue to be classified as residential land. The undeveloped 25-acre EBMUD property, which the draft Plan proposes as a neighborhood park, would also be classified as residential land in the No Project Alternative.

Both the proposed project and the Reduced Lane Alternative propose two new open space classifications (OS-P and OS-N). The OS-P classification would apply to parks and recreation facilities. The OS-N category would include open lands that are used for passive recreation and permanent open space set aside as a condition of Planned Development or subdivision approval. The 1985 Castro Valley Plan (the No-Project Alternative) includes standards for neighborhood and community parks but did not include any specific proposals to implement principles, which state:

- Neighborhood parks should serve an area no more than one quarter mile in radius, with a population no greater than 4,000. (Principle 4.9)
- Community parks should have a service area of no more than 1.5 miles in radius with a service area population of no more than 25,000. (Principle 4.12)

Using these standards, the area bounded by Sydney Way, Lake Chabot Road, I-580, and the western boundary of the Planning Area, needs at least one neighborhood park. Under the No Project Alternative, 311 units would be added in this area, which is roughly equivalent to TAZ 163. Using the current park dedication fee schedule (Table 3.2-7), if all of the new units were single-family dwellings the County could require developers to provide about 4.5 acres of additional parkland under the No Project Alternative, compared with the draft Plan's proposal to add a neighborhood park of 10 to 25 acres to serve this area.

Table 4.2-3 compares the projected total parkland acreage in the Planning Area assuming that the park dedication requirement is the only program used to implement parkland goals under the No Project alternative and half of the new units are single-family dwellings. As shown, both the proposed project and the Reduced Lane Alternative would provide more parkland than the No Project Alternative. Because the Reduced Lane Alternative will provide additional space for outdoor seating and landscaping, it may yield slightly more passive open space than the proposed project.

**Table 4.2-3: Parkland at Build-Out, 2025: Proposed Plan and Alternatives**

| | *Proposed Project* | *No Project* | *Reduced Lane* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total Population | 64,935 | 66,561 | 64,935 |
| Total Units | 25,290 | 25,725 | 25,290 |
| Local and Community Park Acres | 377.6 | 355.8 | 377.6 |
| Acres/1,000 Residents | 5.8 | 5.3 | 5.8 |

Note: Includes local, school and community parks only. Does not include the 43 acres associated with community centers or special use facilities.

*Source: Kahn/Mortimer/Associates, 2006*

## PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Build-out under the existing General Plan (the No Project Alternative) would have a more significant impact on public facilities and services than development under either the proposed Plan or the Reduced Lane Alternative because the amount of development would be slightly higher and because of the type and location of residential development.

Under the No Project alternative, 1,328 (53.6 percent) of the housing units added by 2025 would be single-family residential units compared with 794 (38.0 percent) under the draft Plan or the Reduced Lane Alternative. Moreover, the draft Plan proposes more development on smaller lots, including a new land use classification that would allow small-lot subdivisions. Under the No Project Alternative, more new units would be provided in areas where single-family development predominates. Because the amount of water used by single-family development is higher than the usage in multi-family units and development on larger single-family lots requires more for irrigation,[3] water consumption and wastewater generation can both be expected to be higher under the No-Project Alternative.

The No-Project Alternative would also have greater impact on public schools. Assuming an average household size of 2.62 persons for the proposed project and both alternatives, the additional public school enrollment at build-out in 2025 would be 875 under the 1985 Plan (No Project) compared with 570 for the proposed Plan or the Reduced Lanes alternative as shown in Table 4.2-4. This is probably a conservative estimate because the model used to generate population and development projections is not sensitive to differences in average household size between single-family and multi-family units. In fact, because a larger proportion of the units would be single-family homes under the No Project alternative, it is reasonable to assume that there may be more children in the average household.

**Table 4.2-4: Projected Population by Age Category for Castro Valley (2025)**

| *Age Class* | *Proposed Plan* | *No-Project Alternative* | *Reduced Lane Alternative* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total 2025 Population | 64,935 | 66,561 | 64,935 |
| Ages 5 through 9 (5.9%) | 3,831 | 3,927 | 3,831 |
| Ages 10 through 14 (5.9%) | 3,831 | 3,927 | 3,831 |
| Ages 15 through 19 (6.3%) | 4,091 | 4,194 | 4,091 |
| **Total Youth Population (5-19)** | **11,753** | **12,048** | **11,753** |

*Source: 2002 ABAG Projections*

[3] Pacific Institute, *Waste Not, Want Not: The Potential for Urban Water Conservation in California,* Appendix B: Outdoor Residential Water Use and the Potential for Conservation, pp. 7-8

In addition to the impacts associated with the higher projected population and level of development, the No Project alternative does not include a number of the policies and implementation measures that the draft Plan proposes to improve or maintain the level of services available in the Planning Area. Both the proposed Plan and the Reduced Lane Alternative would, therefore, have less demand for public facilities and services and thus fewer impacts than 1985 Plan.

## TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

### Traffic Volumes

Traffic congestion within and near the Planning Area will increase with or without the proposed General Plan. Traffic impacts are projected to be worse under the existing General Plan (No Project) than the proposed General Plan because of the larger number of units and slightly higher employment projection as well as the type and location of development. Nevertheless, there is only a negligible difference between the impacts of the proposed Plan and the No Project Alternative.

As explained above, the draft Plan incorporates the proposal in the Castro Valley Redevelopment Strategic Plan to retain two travel lanes in each direction but narrow the travel lanes to a width of 10 feet in order provide 5-foot bike lanes in each direction, an 8-foot parallel parking lane, and 12-foot sidewalks. In contrast, the Reduced Travel Lane Alternative would eliminate two travel lanes on Castro Valley Boulevard.

The draft Plan and both Alternatives assume several improvements to the circulation and traffic system in and near Castro Valley Boulevard that are already planned or programmed. These include:

- Completion of the Interstate 580 Castro Valley interchange improvement, including ramp reconfigurations for a full diamond interchange at Redwood Road;
- Reconfiguration of the Center Street ramp to Grove Way and removal of the west-bound on-ramp from Castro Valley Road just west of Center Street; and
- I-238 widening and Route 238 Corridor improvements in Hayward.

These improvements, along with the combination of traffic-calming measures proposed for Castro Valley Boulevard, including reducing the width of the travel lanes to 10 feet and making intersection improvements, are expected to divert some trips off the Boulevard onto regional roadways. The draft Plan proposes several additional street improvement projects that are intended to encourage traffic that now uses Castro Valley Boulevard to use Norbridge Avenue instead. (The effect of these changes on Castro Valley Boulevard traffic is not reflected in the build-out projections for the proposed Plan, which represent a worst-case scenario.) The specific projects include:

- Reconfiguring the intersections of Norbridge-Stanton and Strobridge at Castro Valley Boulevard to improve traffic circulation as well as access to the BART station; and
- Opening Norbridge Avenue to two-way traffic.

Traffic analysis conducted for the Reduced Lanes Alternative as part of the Redevelopment Strategic Plan evaluated the effect of constructing a new signalized intersection at Strobridge and Norbridge and other changes required to facilitate two-way travel on Norbridge between Castro Valley Boulevard east of Redwood Road and Castro Valley Boulevard and Strobridge.

The number of vehicle trips generated and vehicle miles traveled are anticipated to be slightly higher under the No Project Alternative than with the proposed General Plan or the Reduced Lane Alternative. (See Table 4.2-5) This is due to the slightly higher numbers of households and jobs under the No Project alternative as shown in Table 4.2-2. The total number of daily vehicle trips and miles traveled is projected to be the same under either the draft Plan or the Reduced Lane Alternative.

**Table 4.2-5 Daily Vehicle Trips and Vehicle Miles of Travel For Build-out (2025) Conditions**

| *Scenario* | *Households* | *Employment* | *Vehicle Trips* | | *VMT*[1] | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | AM | PM | AM | PM |
| Proposed General Plan | 24,830 | 10,734 | 28,969 | 24,983 | 144,429 | 151,726 |
| No Project | 25,210 | 10,800 | 29,367 | 25,377 | 145,335 | 152,164 |

*Includes external trips that start and/or end outside of Castro Valley but use local roadways in Castro Valley.*
*Source: Dowling Associates, Inc. 2006.*

## Transit Use

Because of the minimal difference in development between the proposed project and the No Project alternative, the CMA model showed a negligible difference in transit use. However transit use may be underestimated by the model because the location of multifamily housing in downtown right near the Castro Valley BART station was not studied in depth and analyzed separately in an area-specific model. The CMA model assumed a regional average for transit use. Surveys of residents of multi-family complexes near suburban BART stations from the early 1990s showed that as many as 45 percent commuted to work by transit, much higher than the regional average of 9 percent (Cervero, 1994). More recently, Cervero used data from the 2000 Bay Area Travel Survey, which contains up to two days of daily activity information for members of 15,066 randomly selected households in the Bay Area, to analyze the relationship between residential location and commuting choices. Most of the 11,369 cases that the study included lived more than a half mile from a BART, light rail, or commuter rail station; however, of those living within a half mile of a station, 19.6 percent commuted to work by rail transit compared with 8.6 percent living farther from a station. Cervero's study also showed that those living near transit and lower-income households also had fewer cars per household. Continued increase in gasoline prices could increase the proportion of transit trips, especially by households living within walking or biking distance of BART.

### Traffic Congestion

As shown in Table 4.2-6, due in large part to additional development in eastern Alameda County, San Joaquin County, and other areas east of Castro Valley, traffic will increase along I-580. By 2025, the volume-to-capacity ratio would be at or worse than the existing levels at build-out under either the existing General Plan or the proposed Plan. However, the freeway will operate within the acceptable standard of LOS E under the proposed project and all alternatives.

**Table 4.2-6: Freeway Segment Operations**

| | | *Existing Conditions* | | | | *No Project (2025)* | | | | *Project (2025)* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | *AM* | | *PM* | | *AM* | | *PM* | | *AM* | | *PM* | |
| *Freeway Segment* | *Dir* | *LOS* | *V/C* | *LOS* | *V/C* | *LOS* | *V/C* | *LOS* | *V/C* | *LOS* | *V/C* | *LOS* | *V/C* |
| I-580 – west of Strobridge Ave | EB | D | 0.82 | D | 0.83 | D | 0.82 | D | 0.86 | D | 0.82 | D | 0.85 |
| | WB | D | 0.86 | E | 0.98 | E | 0.93 | E | 0.98 | E | 0.92 | E | 0.98 |

*Source: Dowling Associates, Inc., 2006.*

Traffic on local roadways will also increase under the proposed project and all the alternatives. As shown in Table 4.2-7, several roadways would operate at substandard levels with or without the proposed project. This is a worst-case analysis that does not, however, consider the effect of improvements to the Norbridge/Strobridge couplet and other intersection modifications. The following roadways would be most affected:

- Castro Valley Boulevard west of Lake Chabot Road would operate at LOS F with or without the proposed project in the westbound direction during the AM peak hour and in the eastbound direction during the PM peak hour. Because the proposed project would result in improved V/C ratios when compared to the No Project, the impact is considered less than significant.
- Castro Valley Boulevard east of Yeandle Street would operate at LOS F with or without the proposed project in the westbound direction during the AM peak hour. Because the proposed project would result in an improved V/C ratio when compared to the No Project, the impact is considered less than significant.
- Redwood Road north of Grove Way would operate at LOS E with or without the proposed project in the southbound direction during the PM peak hour. Because the proposed project would not result in an increase of V/C ratio by three percent or more, the impact is considered less than significant.
- Center Street north of Fernwood Court would operate at LOS F with or without the proposed project as well as under existing conditions on both directions during AM and PM peak hours. This is due to the constrained width of the bridge over the creek near this intersection. The proposed project would not cause the V/C ratio to increase by more than three percent when compared to the No Project; hence the impact is considered a less than significant impact.

**Table 4.2-7: Roadway Segment Operations**

| | *Northbound/Eastbound* | | | | | | *Southbound/Westbound* | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Existing* | | *No Project* | | *Project* | | *Existing* | | *No Project* | | *Project* | |
| *Link Location* | *Vol* | *LOS* | *Vol* | *LOS* | *Vol* | *LOS* | *Vol* | *LOS* | *Vol* | *LOS* | *Vol* | *LOS* |
| | | | | | | *AM Peak Hour* | | | | | | |
| Castro Valley Blvd – west of Lake Chabot Rd | 1,055 | D | 1,170 | D | 1,148 | D | 1,209 | D | 1,720 | F | 1,701 | **F** |
| Castro Valley Blvd – east of Yeandle St | 702 | D | 587 | D | 583 | D | 1,100 | D | 1,948 | F | 1,844 | **F** |
| Redwood Rd south of Jamison Way | 701 | D | 789 | D | 756 | D | 890 | D | 990 | D | 951 | D |
| Redwood Rd – north of Grove Way | 770 | D | 1,490 | D | 1,470 | D | 914 | D | 1,711 | D | 1,895 | D |
| Center St – north of Fernwood Ct | 1,143 | F | 1,143 | F | 1,153 | **F** | 1,111 | F | 1,251 | F | 1,274 | **F** |
| Crow Canyon Rd – north of Manter Rd | 1,798 | D | 1,821 | D | 1,820 | D | 1,634 | C | 1,849 | D | 1,855 | D |
| Lake Chabot Rd – north of Congress Way | 723 | D | 836 | D | 830 | D | 701 | D | 868 | D | 858 | D |
| | | | | | | *PM Peak Hour* | | | | | | |
| Castro Valley Blvd – west of Lake Chabot Rd | 1,458 | D | 1,957 | F | 1,936 | **F** | 1,153 | D | 1,514 | D | 1,499 | D |
| Castro Valley Blvd – east of Yeandle St | 1,252 | D | 1,431 | D | 1,380 | D | 1,046 | D | 976 | D | 963 | D |
| Redwood Rd – south of Jamison Way | 1,071 | D | 1,111 | D | 1,096 | D | 821 | D | 1,016 | D | 995 | D |
| Redwood Rd – north of Grove Way | 1,050 | D | 1,746 | D | 1,603 | D | 1,146 | D | 2,229 | E | 2,222 | **E** |
| Center St – north of Fernwood Ct | 1,035 | F | 1,181 | F | 1,175 | **F** | 1,321 | F | 1,330 | F | 1,341 | **F** |
| Crow Canyon Rd – north of Manter Rd | 1,551 | C | 1,789 | D | 1,765 | D | 1,291 | B | 1,370 | B | 1,379 | B |
| Lake Chabot Rd – north of Congress Way | 719 | D | 946 | D | 931 | D | 735 | D | 958 | D | 944 | D |

*Source: Dowling Associates, Inc., 2006.*

Intersection operations are also projected to degrade under all alternatives as shown in Table 4.2-8, but would be slightly worse under the No Project alternative because of the higher levels of development and employment. As mentioned above, these projections do not quantify the effect of proposed improvements to the Strobridge/Norbridge intersection and other intersection improvements, and thus is a worst case analysis. This table reflects turning movement counts collected in May, 2006, which differ from the older data on existing conditions used to generate the projections in an analysis of the Reduced Lane alternative conducted in 2005.

**Table 4.2-8: Intersection Operations w. Proposed Project**

| | *Existing Conditions* | | | | *Year 2025 No Project* | | | | *Year 2025 With Project* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *AM Peak Hour* | | *PM Peak Hour* | | *AM Peak Hour* | | *PM Peak Hour* | | *AM Peak Hour* | | *PM Peak Hour* | |
| *Intersection* | *LOS* | *delay (sec)* | *LOS* | *delay (sec)* | *LOS* | *delay (sec)* | *LOS* | *delay (sec)* | *LOS* | *delay (sec)* | *LOS* | *delay (sec)* |
| Stanton-Norbridge Ave/Castro Valley Blvd | E | 70.7 | F | 99.5 | F | 123.5 | F | 188 | F | 118 | F | 184.2 |
| Lake Chabot Rd / Castro Valley Blvd | C | 26.3 | C | 26.6 | C | 31.4 | D | 35.4 | C | 31 | C | 34.3 |
| Redwood Rd / Castro Valley Blvd | D | 42.6 | D | 51.4 | D | 44.4 | E | 57.3 | D | 43.3 | E | 55.6 |
| Redwood Rd / Norbridge Ave | C | 21.6 | C | 21.7 | C | 21.2 | C | 29.1 | C | 22.7 | C | 29.1 |
| Center St / Grove Way | D | 48 | D | 51.7 | D | 49.3 | E | 58.7 | D | 49.3 | E | 58.7 |

*Source: Dowling Associates, Inc., 2006.*

DKS Associates prepared an analysis of the Reduced Lane Alternative for the Redevelopment Agency, which concluded that even with a full access intersection at Strobridge and Norbridge and other improvements to intersections along the Boulevard to divert 30 percent of the Boulevard traffic to Norbridge Avenue, this alternative would reduce the level of service at three Castro Valley Boulevard intersections (Lake Chabot, Stanton/Norbridge, and Strobridge) from LOS D to E during the AM peak. During the PM peak, the intersections at Redwood Road and Stanton/Norbridge would both drop to LOS E. With or without the bypass improvements, the intersections of Castro Valley Boulevard and Wilbeam, Santa Maria, San Miguel, and Anita avenues would all operate at LOS F. [4] The DKS analysis showed that even with the bypass improvements, some traffic is expected to divert onto Somerset Avenue during the PM peak. The bypass would be expected to handle from 8 to 10 percent of the vehicles diverted from the Boulevard and would, therefore, be essential to reducing the potential for traffic to shift onto neighborhood streets. These impacts were considered deleterious to the

[4] DKS Associates, *Appendix B: Castro Valley Redevelopment Traffic Analysis Technical Memorandum,* p. 145.

overall circulation system, and funding for the bypass was uncertain, and therefore the reduced lane alternative was not recommended.

The draft Plan proposes two lanes in each direction and thus, the percentage of vehicles diverting onto neighborhood streets would be negligible compared with the Reduced Lane Alternative. [5]

## BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Build-out under the existing General Plan (the No Project Alternative) would have a more significant impact on biological resources than development under either the proposed Plan or the Reduced Lane Alternative because of the slightly higher amount of development and the lack of specific regulatory mechanisms to protect habitat.. More single-family detached homes would be built under the No-Project Alternative. In addition, more development could occur on sites that are close to or within riparian corridors or areas with sensitive biological resources. The 1985 Plan includes principles and policies regarding protection of riparian areas and lands containing highly significant biotic resources but did not propose any specific standards or procedures to implement these policies. Under the No Project alternative protection would be afforded on a case-by-case basis and only when projects require environmental review or site development review but there are no specific criteria to guide decisions. The project proposes establishment of a biological resources overlay zone delineating high, moderate, and low priority habitat protection areas and adoption of regulations that would allow up to a 50 percent reduction in density allowed by the underlying zone depending on the extent and value of the resources. The biological resources overlay zone is clearly mapped on a parcel by parcel basis, and thus regulations can be parcel specific, and both staff and project applicants will have in-depth information about existing biological resources at the beginning of the project review process.

## HAZARDS

The draft Plan includes policies and proposes actions that would reduce the risk from hazardous materials and would also reduce threats posed to residents and property from fire and seismic hazards. Neither the proposed project nor the two alternatives propose commercial or industrial uses that would increase the number of establishments likely to use, store, or transport hazardous materials. Moreover, the proposed Plan and both alternatives would be subject to federal, State and local regulations pertaining to safe use, storage, disposal and transportation of hazardous materials.

The Plan proposes adoption of a hazards overlay district that would include special regulations applicable to construction in areas identified as susceptible to natural hazards, development of a master plan for fire suppression water services, and additional restrictions applicable to development in areas that are susceptible to fire because of access, slope, water pressure, and proximity to wildland areas. The Plan also proposes that the County maintain and regularly update a standardized Emergency Management Plan in coordination with the Alameda County Fire Department, East Bay Regional Parks District, and public safety agencies in surrounding

[5] Ibid., pp. 148-149.

cities. The 1985 Plan includes few specific proposals for regulations or programs that would reduce the hazards posed by wildland fires, earthquakes, and other environmental conditions.

## AIR QUALITY AND NOISE

Build-out under the 1985 Plan (the No Project alternative) would generate more vehicle trips and more vehicle mileage than the proposed project. These higher traffic levels would, in turn, result in the generation of more pollutants. To the extent that automobile traffic generates noise, the No Project alternative would also have a more detrimental effect with respect to noise generation.

As a result of amendments to the CBD Specific Plan already approved by the County to implement the 2003 Housing Element, the same number of units would be developed in the CBD under both the proposed project and the 1985 Plan. The proposed project would, however, require that sensitive receptors, including residential uses, schools, day care centers, and medical facilities be located at least 300 feet and, preferably, 500 feet from I-580. In addition, the project proposes that the County establish site design criteria and standards for sites adjacent to the I-580 corridor to minimize detrimental effects from air pollution. The draft Plan also proposes policies and actions to reduce noise from certain sources and to protect noise-sensitive development that will be located close to I-580 and BART under both the proposed project and the No Project alternative.

A variety of proposals to increase transit use and other alternative forms of transportation would contribute to a regional reduction in automobile traffic and associated noise and air quality impacts. These actions would include improving pedestrian access to BART and bus stops, requiring participation in the existing Commuter Check program as a standard condition of approval for new, large-scale non-residential development, and identifying mechanisms to promote or require the establishment of BART shuttle services.

## SEISMIC, GEOLOGICAL, AND LANDSLIDE HAZARDS

The No Project alternative will have somewhat worse impacts with respect to seismic, geological, and landslide hazards because the 1985 Plan contains few specific policies and actions to regulate development in areas that are susceptible to such problems. The Plan identifies the potential risk, but for the most part relies on compliance with existing State requirements and does not propose any specific policies or actions that would mitigate the hazards posed by development in an area susceptible to such hazards. In contrast, the proposed project and the Reduced Lane alternative, based on current data including the information generated in compliance with the State Seismic Hazards Mapping Act, recognizes areas prone to landslide hazards. The draft Plan proposes measures to ensure that applicants are informed about possible risks and to establish a seismic retrofit program that would provide incentives for voluntary compliance by owners of multi-family residential properties. These and other provisions of the proposed project would mitigate hazards to existing development as well as reduce the potential for additional development in hazardous areas including areas with steep slopes.

## HYDROLOGY AND WATER RESOURCES

The 1985 Plan (No Project alternative) proposes to control flooding by constructing improvements and regular maintenance and cleaning to keep drainage channels free of debris. It includes policies to minimize degradation of water quality but no specific proposals to reduce urban runoff. Similarly, the existing Plan encourages water conservation but doesn't include any specific recommendations for achieving this objective. The proposed project includes policies that would lower the risk of downstream flooding by reducing impervious services in new development, protecting existing drainage patterns, and prohibiting or discouraging flood protection measures that inhibit flows and, ultimately, divert them to other areas. It would require that site development review include evaluation of approaches to controlling the amount and quality of urban runoff and establish design guidelines and setback requirements for development on properties adjacent to creeks and waterways. The project proposes the development of design review criteria or zoning requirements that would limit lot coverage in lower density residential areas to maximize pervious surface areas. Most new development would not be permitted in the 100-year flood plain and new requirements would be adopted to ensure that new development on the fringes of the 100-year flood plain would have to be sited and designed to be flood-resistant.

## CULTURAL RESOURCES AND VISUAL QUALITY

These issues have been examined together because the Planning Area's cultural resources are an important component of its visual quality. The current General Plan proposes protection of archaeological and historic resources but includes few specifics to accomplish this goal. Without a preservation ordinance or design guidelines as proposed in the draft Plan, review occurs on a case-by-case basis only when environmental review is required.

The proposed project includes policies and actions to protect and enhance the character-forming elements of the Planning Area's natural environment as well as buildings and structures that represent important physical connections to the community's past. The draft Plan proposes adoption of regulations to protect and preserve historic and locally important cultural resources based on the results of the current historical resources survey. These regulations would provide clear guidance and criteria to determine when demolition is permitted and would also revise the project review process to ensure that rules and policies regarding preservation of historic and cultural resources are enforced. Because the existing Plan lacks such policies and proposals, it would have a more detrimental impact on cultural resources and the Planning Area's visual quality as build-out occurs.

## 4.3 REFERENCES

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