

IV. ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT

A. INTRODUCTION

The CEQA Guidelines, at §15126.6(A), stipulate the following with respect to consideration and evaluation of project alternatives:

“An EIR shall describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project, or to the location of the project, which would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project, and evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives.”

The following alternatives are evaluated in this section:

1. No Project Alternative;
2. Reduced Project Size alternative;
3. In-Line Retail Alternative.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED FROM FURTHER CONSIDERATION

In addition to the alternatives listed above, the following alternatives were initially considered but rejected from further consideration for the reasons discussed below.

Residential Land Use Alternative

An alternative land use such as residential development was initially considered but rejected for several reasons. First, the 3.7-acre expansion site is surrounded on three sides by the existing commercial retail uses of the Williamson Ranch Plaza and is separated from nearby residential neighborhoods to the north by the East Antioch Creek flood control channel. Second, the current General Plan designation of “Neighborhood/Community Commercial” allows only commercial uses, so residential land use would not be consistent with that designation. Finally, the expansion site is currently entitled for commercial development under its P-D Zoning District, and the development plans and standards specifically approved for this project do not provide for residential development. For these reasons, evaluating a residential land use alternative was rejected from further consideration.

Alternative Project Location

The evaluation of an alternative location was initially considered but ultimately rejected from consideration for several reasons. First, consideration of an alternative location implies that the entire Walmart store would be vacated and a larger store constructed elsewhere. However, the existing store is centrally located in an established retail center on a major commercial thoroughfare, with convenient freeway access, and with existing and planned residential neighborhoods in the immediately surrounding area to support it. The only other commercial site in the vicinity which is centrally located in trade area

and is of sufficient size (i.e., at least 20 acres) to support the expanded Walmart is the Orchard at Slatten Ranch. However, this site is set back behind other shopping center uses on Lone Tree Way, the nearest commercial thoroughfare, and thus lacks the visibility and ready accessibility of the existing Walmart site. The second reason is that expanding the existing store on land which is already owned by Walmart is less cost prohibitive than constructing an entirely new store on land which would have to be acquired. An alternative site would also require cost outlays for the installation of infrastructure and other improvements, whereas the existing site already has the major infrastructure and improvements in place. Third, the development of a new store would likely require more time to accomplish than the expansion of the existing store. Finally, the relocation of the Walmart store to a different location would result in the vacancy of the existing store, including the necessity for retenancing. For these reasons, evaluating an alternative project site was rejected from further consideration.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The following is a restatement of the project objectives as contained in Section I. C. of this EIR.

The objectives of the proposed project, as stated by the applicant, are as follows:

- Design a project consistent with the City of Antioch General Plan and Zoning Ordinance.
- Expand the existing outdated and undersized Walmart store in conformance with the existing Master Use Permit for Williamson Ranch Plaza.
- Minimize travel lengths and utilize existing infrastructure to the maximum extent possible by expanding an existing Walmart store.
- Develop a state of the art retail center that will accommodate the retail and grocery demands of the Antioch community. The project will also complete the Williamson Ranch Plaza as originally approved.
- Develop an architectural design that softens the scale and mass of the building with features designed to blend with the existing shopping center. Maintain existing landscaping and provide new landscaping to soften the design and create a pleasant, attractive appearance that complements the surrounding area.
- Develop a site plan to minimize potential automobile and pedestrian conflicts.
- Design a site plan to minimize overall access and circulation conflicts by facilitating the circulation between the Walmart store and the existing uses on the site.
- Design a site plan to minimize noise and nighttime lighting to the surrounding neighborhood.
- Provide sufficient off-street parking to minimize impacts to the surrounding residential neighborhood, and ensure that adequate on-site parking is provided for store customers, and employees.

- Provide an expanded store that will provide significant economic benefits to the City and community in terms of its diversity of employment opportunities (through the addition of approximately 85 new jobs).

The project alternatives are described and evaluated below. This is followed by the identification of the environmentally superior alternative, as required under CEQA.

B. NO PROJECT ALTERNATIVE

The CEQA Guidelines require, in Section 15126.6(e)(1), that the “specific alternative of ‘no project’ shall...be evaluated along with its impact.” Therefore, this chapter includes a description and evaluation of the environmental impacts associated with the No Project Alternative, relative to those resulting from the proposed project, including a discussion of the ability of the No Project Alternative to meet the project objectives. The CEQA Guidelines state: “[t]he ‘no project’ analysis shall discuss existing conditions...as well as what would be reasonably expected to occur in the foreseeable future if the project were not approved...” (Section 15126.6(e)(2)). This section could be interpreted to require the discussion of two ‘no project’ alternatives: the ‘no build’ alternative and the ‘reasonably foreseeable development’ alternative, in cases where these are not the same scenario. In this case, the reasonably foreseeable development scenario could consist of retail development other than the expansion of the Walmart store. It is possible that such development could consist of a series of in-line shops that would not include a grocery or food outlet. This “reasonably foreseeable” no project alternative is reflected in the “In-Line Retail Alternative” which is presented and analyzed subsequently in this section.

The No Project Alternative consists of continuing the existing Walmart operation, without modification to the building or parking area, and retaining the westerly 3.7 acres of the site as vacant undeveloped land. The potential impacts of this alternative are discussed below, relative to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

Aesthetics: Under the No Project Alternative, there would be no visual change to the site. The proposed project would change the character of the planned expansion site from vacant and undeveloped to a part of an expanded Walmart store, although the City’s design review process would ensure that any aesthetic impacts of the project would be less than significant. While the visual impacts of the project would not be significant, the No Project Alternative would avoid visual changes to the site altogether. The aesthetic impacts associated with the No Project Alternative would therefore be less than the aesthetic impacts associated with the proposed project.

Air Quality: The proposed project would result in an incremental increase in air emissions due to increased traffic generation, as well as an incremental increase in diesel particulate emissions from added truck deliveries. Although the resulting air quality and health risk impacts would be less than significant, the No Project Alternative would result in no increase in vehicular emissions or diesel particulate emissions. The proposed project would also result in dust and exhaust emissions during the construction phase, albeit temporary, as well as potential restaurant odors, although both of these impacts would be mitigated to less-than-significant levels. While the air quality impacts of the project would be less than significant, the No Project Alternative would avoid increased air emissions altogether. The air quality impacts associated with the No Project Alternative would therefore be less than the air quality impacts associated with the proposed project.

Biological Resources: The proposed project would not result in significant impacts to biological resources, although it would result in a slight reduction of foraging habitat for certain wildlife species. While the proposed project would result in less-than-significant impacts to biological resources, the No Project Alternative would leave the expansion site unchanged biologically. The biological impacts associated with the No Project Alternative would therefore be less than the biological impacts associated with the proposed project.

Cultural Resources: There are no known historic or archaeological resources present on the site, and any potential impacts to paleontological resources would be less than significant. As such, there would be no significant impacts to cultural resources associated with the proposed project. Although the potential always exists that previously unknown cultural resources could be encountered during project development, any such impacts would be mitigated through implementation of mitigation measures identified in this EIR. Under the No Project Alternative, the potential impacts to cultural resources would be avoided. The cultural resources impacts associated with the No Project Alternative would therefore be less than the cultural resources impacts associated with the proposed project.

Geology and Soils: The potential impacts of the proposed project associated with exposure to potential geologic and soils hazards would be mitigated to less-than-significant levels. Under the No Project Alternative, potential geologic and soils impacts would be avoided. The geologic and soils impacts associated with the No Project Alternative would therefore be less than the geologic and soils impacts associated with the proposed project.

Land Use and Planning: There would be no change in land use under the No Project Alternative, whereas the proposed project would change the land use of the planned expansion site from vacant and undeveloped to part of an expanded Walmart store. Although the proposed project would not result in significant land use impacts, the No Project Alternative would result in no land use change. The land use impacts associated with the No Project Alternative would therefore be less than the land use impacts associated with the proposed project.

The No Project Alternative would avoid increased competitive effects upon existing businesses within the trade area. Without the addition of a Walmart grocery component to the market, there would be no economic impact on existing supermarkets in the trade area. Under the proposed project, the Walmart expansion would result in some reduction in sales at competing businesses, but this is not expected to result in closure of any existing businesses and thus would not result in urban decay. Thus the potential urban decay impacts associated with the No Project Alternative would be less than the potential urban decay impacts associated with the proposed project. In summary, the land use impacts associated with the No Project Alternative would be less than the land use impacts associated with the proposed project.

Hazardous Materials: The planned expansion site includes no known soil or groundwater contamination. Once completed, the expansion area would involve the use of little or no hazardous substances, or if so, they would be handled in accordance with applicable regulations to avoid impacts. While the proposed project would not result in significant hazardous materials impacts, the No Project Alternative would not involve any change in current hazardous materials conditions at the site. The hazardous materials impacts associated with the No Project Alternative would therefore be less than the hazardous impacts associated with the proposed project.

Hydrology and Water Quality: There would be no increase in stormwater runoff or erosion under the No Project Alternative, and potential for increased nonpoint pollution of surface water from urban pollutants would not occur. While these impacts would be mitigated under the proposed project, they would be

avoided under the No Project Alternative. The hydrology and water quality impacts associated with the No Project Alternative would therefore be less than the hydrology and water quality impacts associated with the proposed project.

Noise: Although the proposed project would result in increased traffic noise, the resulting noise levels would not represent a significant increase over existing noise levels on the nearby roadways. Noise generated by on-site project activities would be mitigated so that no significant noise impacts would occur at the nearest residential land uses. The proposed project would result in short-term construction noise, although this short-term noise would be mitigated to less-than-significant levels. Although the noise generated by the expansion project would be mitigated to less-than-significant levels, the No Project Alternative would result in no increase in ambient noise levels. The noise impacts associated with the No Project Alternative would therefore be less than the noise impacts associated with the proposed project.

Public Services: The increased demand for fire protection, police service, and solid waste collection and disposal service would not be significant for the proposed project, but would be avoided under the No Project Alternative. The public services impacts associated with the No Project Alternative would therefore be less than the public services impacts associated with the proposed project.

Traffic and Circulation: The No Project Alternative would result in no change in the traffic volumes generated at the site. The proposed project would result in an incremental increase in traffic generation; however, the resulting volumes would not result in significant level of service or operational impacts to the roadway system in the near term, and the far-term impacts would be mitigated to less-than-significant levels. Although the traffic impacts associated with the expansion project would be less than significant, the No Project Alternative would generate no additional traffic. The traffic impacts associated with the No Project Alternative would therefore be less than the traffic impacts associated with the proposed project.

Utilities and Service Systems: The expansion project would generate incremental demands for domestic water supply as well as wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal services. These increased demands would be readily accommodated by the respective service providers without exceeding existing or planned service capacities, and thus would not result in significant impacts. Although the expansion project would not result in significant impacts to utilities and service systems, the No Project Alternative would result in no additional service demands for water supply and wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal. The utilities and service systems impacts associated with the No Project Alternative would therefore be less than the utilities and service impacts associated with the proposed project.

Energy: Since no activity would occur on the expansion site under the No Project Alternative, the only energy consumption would be negligible amounts involved in maintenance activities such as weed control. The energy consumption associated with the proposed project would be substantially greater, as discussed in Section II. M. *Energy*, although the impacts to energy resources would not be considered significant. Although the project would result in consumption of energy resources, albeit without significant impacts, the No Project alternative would result virtually no energy consumption. The energy impacts associated with the No Project Alternative would therefore be less than the energy impacts associated with the proposed project.

Global Climate Change: Since there would be no vehicle trips associated with the No Project Alternative, and since there would be negligible energy consumption associated site maintenance under the No Project Alternative, the greenhouse gas emissions would likewise be virtually nil. The greenhouse gas emissions associated with the proposed project would be substantially greater, as discussed in Section II. N. *Global Climate Change*, although the impacts would not be considered significant. The global climate change

impacts associated with the No Project Alternative would therefore be less than the global climate change impacts associated with the proposed project.

In summary, the No Project Alternative would result in little or no effect for all of the impact categories. While the corresponding impacts associated with the expansion project would be avoided or reduced to less-than-significant levels for all environmental categories, the effects associated with the No Project Alternative would be comparatively lower in most cases. Therefore, the No Project Alternative would be the environmentally superior alternative to the proposed project because it would result in somewhat lesser effects, even though of the effects of the proposed project would be less than significant or could be reduced to less-than-significant levels through mitigation measures to be implemented in conjunction with the project. However, the No Project Alternative would not fulfill any of the applicant's stated project objectives, particularly the basic project objective of expanding the existing outdated and undersized Walmart store to accommodate a new grocery sales area in conformance with existing project approvals and entitlements, as well as applicable General Plan and zoning provisions (see Section I. C. *Project Objectives*).

C. REDUCED PROJECT SIZE ALTERNATIVE

This alternative assumes a 17,000 square-foot store expansion, for a total store size of approximately 158,000 square feet. This is about a 50 percent reduction in the expansion square footage compared to the proposed project, which proposes a 33,575 square-foot expansion, for a total store size of 175,073 square feet. The site area for the reduced expansion project under this alternative would be about 1.9 acres, a reduction of 1.8 acres from the proposed project. It is assumed that the reduction in project size would occur entirely in the western portion of the expansion site, such that the western site boundary would be shifted eastward approximately 220 feet. This would leave a vacant area of 1.8 acres between the Walmart and OSH sites. Additionally, the continuous 8-foot masonry wall to be constructed along the north site boundary would terminate at the west end of the reduced project site, thereby leaving a gap of about 220 feet between the Walmart soundwall and the OSH soundwall to the west. The potential impacts of this alternative are discussed below, relative to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

Aesthetics: Apart from a reduced building footprint and smaller parking area, it is assumed that all other design elements proposed for the expansion project would be present in the Reduced Project Size Alternative. As such, it is expected that the City's design review process would ensure that any aesthetic impacts of the Reduced Project Size Alternative would be less than significant. This alternative would include about 1.8 acres of undeveloped land at the west end of the Walmart site. For the four residences located opposite this undeveloped area, some portion of their southward views from their second floor bedroom windows would be maintained, although the viewing area would be narrowed. Although these views are very limited in area and are of generally low quality, being dominated by commercial and suburban residential development, the resulting visual impact would be somewhat less than for the proposed project. The aesthetic impacts associated with the Reduced Project Size Alternative would therefore be less than the aesthetic impacts associated with the proposed project.

Air Quality: The proposed project would result in incremental air emissions due to increased traffic generation. Although the resulting air quality impacts would be less than significant, the Reduced Size Project Alternative would result in somewhat lower vehicular emissions. The proposed project would also result in dust and exhaust emissions during the construction phase, albeit temporary, although this impact would be mitigated to less-than-significant levels. While the short-term air quality impacts of the proposed project would not be significant, the Reduced Size Project Alternative would result in generally lower dust emission. Assuming the Reduced Size Project Alternative would include a fast-food restaurant, the potential

for odor emissions would be same as under the proposed project, although any odors would be mitigated as required under either alternative. The air quality impacts associated with the Reduced Project Size Alternative would therefore be less than the air quality impacts associated with the proposed project.

Biological Resources: The proposed project would not result in significant impacts to biological resources, although it would result in a slight reduction of foraging habitat for certain wildlife species. While there is a small potential for burrowing owls to occupy the site prior to development, any impacts would be avoided through pre-approved mitigation measures. While the impacts of the proposed project upon biological resources would be less than significant, the Reduced Size Project Alternative would result in somewhat lower levels of impact given the smaller area of vacant land that would be converted to urban use. The biological impacts associated with the Reduced Project Size Alternative would therefore be less than the biological impacts associated with the proposed project.

Cultural Resources: There are no known historic or archaeological resources present on the site, and any potential impacts to paleontological resources would be less than significant. As such, there would be no significant impacts to cultural resources associated with the proposed project. Although the potential always exists that previously unknown cultural resources could be encountered during project development, any such impacts would be mitigated through implementation of the mitigation measures identified in this EIR. Under the Reduced Size Project Alternative, the potential impacts to cultural resources would be somewhat lower due to the smaller land area being developed. The cultural resources impacts associated with the Reduced Project Size Alternative would therefore be less than the cultural resources impacts associated with the proposed project.

Geology and Soils: The exposure to potential geologic and soils impacts would be similar for both the Reduced Project Size Alternative and the proposed project, and would be mitigated to less-than-significant levels under either scenario. The geology and soils impacts associated with the Reduced Project Size Alternative would therefore be similar to the geology and soils impacts associated with the proposed project.

Hazardous Materials: The planned expansion site includes no known soil or groundwater contamination. Once completed, the expansion area would involve the use of little or no hazardous substances, or if so, they would be handled in accordance with applicable regulations to avoid impacts. The operations under the Reduced Project Size Alternative would essentially be the same as under the proposed project, albeit slightly smaller in scale. However, given the regulatory safeguards and practices to prevent releases of hazardous materials, there would be no substantial overall difference in hazardous materials impacts between the Reduced Project Size Alternative and the proposed project. The hazardous materials impacts associated with the Reduced Project Size Alternative would therefore be similar to the hazardous materials impacts associated with the proposed project.

Hydrology and Water Quality: The Reduced Project Size Alternative would result in a smaller increase in stormwater runoff relative to the proposed project, and the erosion impacts and potential for nonpoint pollution of surface water from urban pollutants would also be reduced. While these impacts would be mitigated under both scenarios, the impact would be somewhat lower under the Reduced Project Size Alternative given the smaller land area involved. The hydrology and water quality impacts associated with the Reduced Project Size Alternative would therefore be less than the hydrology and water quality impacts associated with the proposed project.

Land Use and Planning: As is the case with the proposed project, the Reduced Project Size Alternative would be consistent with the City's General Plan and Zoning Ordinance, and would be permitted under existing entitlements. The Reduced Project Size Alternative would result in a smaller development footprint.

As such, operational activities on the Walmart site may be less noticeable visually to the existing four residents located opposite the western end of the Walmart site, which would remain vacant under this alternative, although project operations would be screened by the continuous 8-foot soundwall with the proposed expansion. Additionally, there would be a 220-foot gap in the north boundary soundwall under this alternative, which could expose the nearest residents to the north to higher overall noise levels from the commercial operations at Williamson Ranch Plaza than would occur under proposed project conditions. Overall, therefore, the Reduced Project Size Alternative would not result in appreciably different land use compatibility impacts than the proposed project, although the impact would not be significant in either case.

The Reduced Project Size Alternative may result in somewhat reduced competitive effects upon existing businesses within the trade area. Assuming that a 50 percent reduction in grocery floor area would translate into a 50 percent reduction in sales, this would reduce the anticipated impact on existing supermarkets in the trade area. Since the lost business resulting from the proposed expansion is not expected to result in closure of existing businesses, the lower level of economic impact associated with this alternative would not alter that conclusion, and similarly would not result in any building vacancy which could result in physical deterioration and ultimately urban decay. Thus there would be no significant difference in land use impact between the Reduced Project Size Alternative and the proposed project. In summary, the land use impacts associated with the Reduced Project Size Alternative would therefore be similar to the land use impacts associated with the proposed project.

Noise: Although the proposed project would result in increased traffic noise, the resulting noise levels would not represent a significant increase over existing noise levels on the nearby roadways. Noise generated by on-site project activities would be mitigated so that no significant impacts would occur at the nearest residential land uses. However, the 220-foot gap that would remain in the northern soundwall under this alternative would result in some exposure of the adjacent residences to operational noise from the Williamson Ranch Plaza, although this would be unlikely to result in significant noise impacts. The proposed project would result in short-term construction noise, although construction noise would be mitigated to less-than-significant levels. The Reduced Project Size Alternative would generate less traffic, and would have a lower level of operational activity, and would involve less construction. Therefore, although the proposed project would not result in significant noise impacts, the Reduced Project Size Alternative would result in somewhat lower levels of noise than the proposed project. The noise impacts associated with the Reduced Project Size Alternative would therefore be less than the noise impacts associated with the proposed project.

Public Services: The increased demand for fire protection, police service, and solid waste collection and disposal service would not be significant for the proposed project, but would be relatively lower under the Reduced Project Size Alternative. Although the difference would not be significant, the overall level of impact would be slightly lower under the Reduced Project Size Alternative compared to the proposed project. The public services impacts associated with the Reduced Project Size Alternative would therefore be less than the public services impacts associated with the proposed project.

Traffic and Circulation: The proposed expansion project would result in no traffic operations impacts in the near term, and the far-term impacts can readily be mitigated. The Reduced Project Size Alternative would result in lower levels of overall traffic generation and thus would likely not result in traffic impacts in the near term or the far term. Therefore, while the far-term impacts associated with the proposed project would be mitigated to less-than-significant levels, traffic impacts under the Reduced Project Size Alternative would likely be avoided. The traffic impacts associated with the Reduced Project Size Alternative would therefore be less than the traffic impacts associated with the proposed project.

Utilities and Service Systems: The incremental demand for domestic water under the Reduced Project Size Alternative would be approximately 50 percent of the water demand for the proposed expansion project. However, since project water demand can be readily accommodated by the existing water supplies and infrastructure, there would be no water supply impacts associated with the project. Thus there would not be a significant difference in impact between the proposed project and the Reduced Project Size Alternative in terms of water supply. Similarly, the incremental wastewater flows generated under the Reduced Project Size Alternative would be approximately 50 percent of the wastewater generated by the proposed expansion project. However, since wastewater generated by the project can be readily accommodated by the existing municipal wastewater collection and treatment system, there would be no wastewater impacts associated with the project. Thus there would not be a significant difference in impact between the proposed project and the Reduced Project Size Alternative in terms of wastewater collection and treatment. In summary, although the impacts on utilities and service systems would not be significant under either the proposed project or the Reduced Project Size Alternative, the overall level of demand for services would be somewhat lower under the Reduced Project Size Alternative compared to the proposed project. The utilities and public services impacts associated with the Reduced Project Size Alternative would therefore be less than the utilities and public services impacts associated with the proposed project.

Energy: The Reduced Project Size alternative would result in about half the energy consumption of the proposed expansion project. However, as discussed in Section II. M. *Energy*, the impacts of the proposed project upon energy resources would not be considered significant. Although the project would result in consumption of energy resources, albeit without significant impacts, the Reduced Project Size Alternative would result in lower levels of energy consumption. The energy impacts associated with the Reduced Project Size Alternative would therefore be less than the energy impacts associated with the proposed project.

Global Climate Change: The Reduced Project Size alternative would result in about half the greenhouse gas emissions of the proposed expansion project. Although the impacts of the proposed project upon climate change would not be considered significant, as discussed in Section II. N. *Global Climate Change*, the level of impacts associated with the Reduced Project Size alternative would be proportionately lower. The global climate change impacts associated with the Reduced Project Size Alternative would therefore be less than the global climate change impacts associated with the proposed project.

In summary, the Reduced Project Size Alternative would result in somewhat lower levels of impact under most categories relative to the proposed project. However, all of the potential impacts associated with the proposed project would be reduced to less-than-significant after mitigation. Although the Reduced Project Size Alternative would not avoid or eliminate any significant project impacts which cannot be reduced to less-than-significant levels through project mitigation measures, this alternative would be the environmentally superior alternative to the proposed project because it would result in generally lower levels of impact in most categories. The Reduced Project Alternative, with a total floor area of about 158,000 square feet, would fall short of meeting the basic project objective of expanding the existing outdated and undersized Walmart store to accommodate a new grocery sales area in conformance with existing project approvals and entitlements, as well as applicable General Plan and zoning provisions (see Section I. C. *Project Objectives*).

D. IN-LINE RETAIL ALTERNATIVE

This alternative assumes that the existing Walmart store would be left in its current state, and that the 3.7-acre vacant parcel would not be used for a Walmart expansion but rather for a series of in-line retail shops. It is further assumed that the overall floor area proposed for incremental development would remain the same as in the proposed project at 33,575 square feet. It is also assumed that none of the new retailers would be engaged in grocery sales, but would sell some form of general merchandise (e.g., shoes, clothes, books, office or art supplies, housewares, etc.). The building configuration would have all stores in a line across the vacant site from east to west, with parking in front and loading areas in the rear. The potential impacts of this alternative are discussed below, relative to the impacts associated with the proposed project.

Aesthetics: As with the proposed project, the Williamson Ranch Plaza Design Guidelines would apply to this In-Line Retail Alternative, and likewise it is expected that the City's design review process would ensure that any aesthetic impacts of this alternative would be less than significant. However, since the retail stores would be constructed across the entire width of the vacant site, any remaining views across the site from the residences to the north would be screened by these intervening buildings. Under the proposed project, a portion of some of the existing views would remain, although the visual quality and scenic value would be low. As such, the In-Line Retail Alternative would result in a somewhat greater visual impact to the affected residences, compared to the proposed project. The aesthetic impacts associated with the In-Line Retail Alternative would therefore be greater than the aesthetic impacts associated with the proposed project.

Air Quality: The proposed project would result in incremental air emissions due to increased traffic generation. Since the In-Line Retail Alternative would involve the same size of development on the same land area, the air emissions from traffic generation and construction activities associated with each alternative would be very similar. Thus there would be no significant difference in air quality impacts between the In-Line Retail Alternative and the proposed project. The air quality impacts associated with the In-Line Retail Alternative would therefore be similar to the air quality impacts associated with the proposed project.

Biological Resources: The proposed project would not result in significant impacts to biological resources, although it would result in a slight reduction of foraging habitat for certain wildlife species. While there is a small potential for burrowing owls to occupy the site prior to development, any impacts would be avoided through pre-approved mitigation measures. Since the In-Line Retail Alternative would result in development of the same land area as the proposed project, there would be no difference between these two alternatives in terms of the nature and extent of biological impacts associated with each. The biological impacts associated with the In-Line Retail Alternative would therefore be similar to the biological impacts associated with the proposed project.

Cultural Resources: There are no known historic or archaeological resources present on the site, and any potential impacts to paleontological resources would be less than significant. As such, there would be no significant impacts to cultural resources associated with the proposed project. Although the potential always exists that previously unknown cultural resources could be encountered during project development, any such impacts would be mitigated through implementation of mitigation measures identified in this EIR. Since the In-Line Retail Alternative would result in development of the same land area as the proposed project, there would be no difference between these two alternatives in terms of the nature and extent of cultural resources impacts associated with each. The cultural resources impacts associated with the In-Line Retail Alternative would therefore be similar to the cultural resources impacts associated with the proposed project.

Geology and Soils: The exposure to potential geologic and soils impacts would be similar for both the In-Line Retail Alternative and the proposed project, and would be mitigated to less-than-significant levels under either scenario. The geology and soils impacts associated with the In-Line Retail Alternative would therefore be similar to the geology and soils impacts associated with the proposed project.

Hazardous Materials: The planned expansion site includes no known soil or groundwater contamination. Once completed, the expansion area would involve the use of little or no hazardous substances, or if so, they would be handled in accordance with applicable regulations to avoid impacts. Although the specific nature of retail activity which would occupy the site under the In-Line Retail Alternative is unknown, it is unlikely that any users would engage in the storage and handling of hazardous materials apart from cleaning materials and perhaps some well-packaged consumer items. As such, there would be no substantial overall difference in hazardous materials impacts between the In-Line Retail Alternative and the proposed project. The hazardous materials impacts associated with the In-Line Retail Alternative would therefore be similar to the hazardous materials impacts associated with the proposed project.

Hydrology and Water Quality: The In-Line Retail Alternative would involve the same degree of impervious surface coverage and this would result in a similar increase in stormwater runoff as the proposed project. The potential for erosion and sedimentation during construction, and nonpoint pollution of surface water from urban pollutants during project operation would also be essentially the same, and would be mitigated under both scenarios. Therefore, there would be no appreciable difference in hydrology and water quality impacts between the In-Line Retail Alternative and the proposed project. The hydrology and water quality impacts associated with the In-Line Retail Alternative would therefore be similar to the hydrology and water quality impacts associated with the proposed project.

Land Use and Planning: As is the case with the proposed project, the In-Line Retail Alternative would be consistent with the City's General Plan and Zoning Ordinance, and would be permitted under existing entitlements. The retail users in the expansion area would use the north sides of their stores for loading, and storage of materials and trash, as would occur under the proposed project. Assuming that the planned noise mitigations for the proposed project would also be applied to the In-Line Retail Alternative, the potential for land use incompatibility with nearby residences to the north would be similarly minimized. Thus, in terms of land use compatibility there would not be a substantial difference between the In-Line Retail Alternative and the proposed project.

It is assumed that the In-Line Retail Alternative would not include a grocery component, and thus would not result in lost sales to competing supermarkets in the trade area. While the competitive effects of the proposed project are unlikely to result in closure of competing stores and potential urban decay, the impacts of the In-Line Retail Alternative would be somewhat lower in this regard. The addition of 33,000 square feet of general retail could have somewhat adverse effect on sales at existing retailers, although the effects would be diluted since they would be spread over a large number of retailers in several retail categories, and would not be focused on a single category such as food sales. Therefore, it is unlikely that the In-Line Retail Alternative would result in closure of competing stores and potential urban decay. As such, although the nature of the economic impacts would be different under each alternative, it is very unlikely that urban decay would ultimately result under either alternative. In summary, the land use impacts associated with the In-Line Retail Alternative would therefore be similar to the land use impacts associated with the proposed project.

Noise: Although the proposed project would result in increased traffic noise, the resulting noise levels would not represent a significant increase over existing noise levels on the nearby roadways. Noise

generated by on-site project activities would not result in significant impacts at the nearest noise-sensitive residential land uses, with the planned noise mitigations incorporated into the project. The proposed project would result in short-term construction noise, although this short-term noise would be mitigated to less-than-significant levels. The In-Line Retail Alternative would generate about the same amount of traffic, and would have a similar level of operational activity, and would involve about the same level of construction activity. Therefore, the In-Line Retail Alternative and the proposed project would result in comparable levels of noise impact, which would be mitigated to less-than-significant levels under either alternative. The noise impacts associated with the In-Line Retail Alternative would therefore be similar to the noise impacts associated with the proposed project.

Public Services: The In-Line Retail Alternative and the proposed project would result in similar increases demand for fire protection, police service, and solid waste collection and disposal service. These incremental service demands would not result in significant impacts under either alternative. The public services impacts associated with the In-Line Retail Alternative would therefore be similar to the land use impacts associated with the proposed project.

Traffic and Circulation: The proposed expansion project would result in less-than-significant traffic operations impacts in the near term, the far-term impacts would be readily mitigated. The In-Line Retail Alternative would result in very similar levels of overall traffic generation and would likely result in similar traffic impacts. As such, there would be no significant difference in traffic impact between the In-Line Retail Alternative and the proposed project. The traffic impacts associated with the In-Line Retail Alternative would therefore be similar to the traffic impacts associated with the proposed project.

Utilities and Service Systems: The incremental demand for domestic water under the In-Line Retail Alternative would be roughly the same as the water demand for the proposed project. Since project water demand can be readily accommodated by existing water supplies and infrastructure, there would not be a substantial difference in impact between the proposed project and the In-Line Retail Alternative in terms of water supply. Similarly, the incremental wastewater flows generated under the In-Line Retail Alternative would be about that same as the wastewater generated by the proposed project. Since wastewater generated by the project can be readily accommodated by existing municipal wastewater collection and treatment system, there would not be an appreciable difference in impact between the proposed project and the In-Line Retail Alternative in terms of wastewater collection and treatment. In summary, the demand for utilities and service systems would be about the same for both the proposed project and the In-Line Retail Alternative, and the impact upon these systems would be less than significant for both alternatives. The utilities and service systems impacts associated with the In-Line Retail Alternative would therefore be similar to the utilities and service systems impacts associated with the proposed project.

Energy: The energy requirements for the In-Line Retail Alternative would be roughly the same as those associated with the proposed project. Thus there would be no significant difference between the sites in terms of energy impacts, which would be less than significant in either case. The energy impacts associated with the In-Line Retail Alternative would therefore be similar to the energy impacts associated with the proposed project.

Global Climate Change: The greenhouse gas emissions for the In-Line Retail Alternative would be roughly the same those associated with the proposed project. Thus there would be no significant difference between the sites in terms global climate change impacts, which would be less than significant in either case. The global climate change impacts associated with the In-Line Retail Alternative would therefore be similar to the global climate change impacts associated with the proposed project.

In summary, the In-Line Retail Alternative would result in similar levels of impact as the proposed project under most categories. However, the In-Line Retail project would result in slightly greater visual impacts than the proposed project, although the resulting level of impact would not be significant. Additionally, the In-Line Retail Alternative would not meet the basic project objective of expanding the existing outdated and undersized Walmart store to accommodate a new grocery sales area in an enlarged floor area in conformance with existing project approvals and entitlements, as well as applicable General Plan and zoning provisions (see Section I. C. *Project Objectives*).

E. SUMMARY – ENVIRONMENTALLY SUPERIOR ALTERNATIVE

The foregoing analysis of comparative impacts between the proposed project and the project alternatives is summarized in Table 20.

TABLE 20
SUMMARY COMPARISON OF PROJECT ALTERNATIVES WITH PROPOSED PROJECT

Impact Category	Level of Impacts Compared to Proposed Project Impacts		
	No Project Alternative	Reduced Project Size Alternative	In-Line Retail Alternative
Aesthetics	Lower	Lower	Greater
Air Quality	Lower	Lower	Similar
Biological Resources	Lower	Lower	Similar
Cultural Resources	Lower	Lower	Similar
Geology & Soils	Lower	Similar	Similar
Hazardous Materials	Lower	Similar	Similar
Hydrology & Water Quality	Lower	Lower	Similar
Land Use & Planning	Lower	Similar	Similar
Noise	Lower	Lower	Similar
Public Services	Lower	Lower	Similar
Traffic & Circulation	Lower	Lower	Similar
Utilities & Service Systems	Lower	Lower	Similar
Energy	Lower	Lower	Similar
Global Climate Change	Lower	Lower	Similar

As discussed above, the No Project Alternative would be the environmentally superior alternative to the proposed project because it would result in lesser overall effects, even though none of the effects of the proposed project would be significant. The No Project Alternative would not fulfill any of the stated project objectives (see Section I. C. *Project Objectives*), as discussed above.

The CEQA Guidelines, at Section 15126.6(e)(2), provides that if the environmentally superior alternative is the No Project Alternative, the EIR shall also identify an environmentally superior alternative from among the other alternatives. The Reduced Project Size Alternative would result in somewhat lower levels of impact under most categories relative to the proposed project. However, all of the potential impacts associated with the proposed project would be reduced to less-than-significant levels after mitigation. Although the Reduced Project Size Alternative would not avoid or eliminate any significant project impacts which cannot be reduced to less-than-significant levels through project mitigation measures, this alternative would be the environmentally superior alternative to the proposed project because it would result in generally lower levels of impact in most categories. The Reduced Project Size Alternative, with a total floor area of about 158,000 square feet, would fall short of meeting the basic project objective of expanding the existing outdated and undersized Walmart store to accommodate a new grocery sales area in conformance with existing project approvals and entitlements, as well as applicable General Plan and zoning provisions (see Section *I. C. Project Objectives*).