6.0 ALTERNATIVES

INTRODUCTION

This section of the environmental impact report (EIR) provides a comparative analysis of the impacts of alternatives to the proposed project pursuant to Section 15126.6 of the *California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines*, as amended. It identifies potentially feasible ways to avoid or substantially lessen the potentially significant effects of implementing the proposed Area Plan. According to the *State CEQA Guidelines*,[1] an EIR needs to examine a reasonable range of alternatives to a project, or its location, which would feasibly meet most of the basic objectives of the project while avoiding or substantially lessening significant impacts. When addressing feasibility, the *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.6 states that "[a]mong the factors that may be taken into account when addressing the feasibility of alternatives are site suitability, economic viability, availability of infrastructure, general plan consistency, other plans or regulatory limitations, jurisdictional boundaries (projects with a regionally significant impact should consider the regional context), and whether the applicant can reasonably acquire, control or otherwise have access to the alternative site (or the site is already owned by the proponent)." Pursuant to the *State CEQA Guidelines*, several factors need to be considered in determining the range of alternatives to be analyzed in an EIR and the level of analytical detail that should be provided for each alternative. These factors include (1) the nature of the significant impacts of the proposed project; (2) the ability of alternatives to avoid or substantially lessen the significant impacts associated with the project; (3) the ability of the alternatives to meet the objectives of the project; and (4) the feasibility of the alternatives. Each alternative selected for evaluation in this EIR is described below and followed by a comparative analysis.

RANGE OF REASONABLE ALTERNATIVES

According to the *State CEQA Guidelines*,[2] the discussion of alternatives should focus on alternatives to a project or its location that can feasibly avoid or substantially lessen one or more of the significant effects of the project. The alternatives discussion should provide decision makers with an understanding of the comparative merits of the alternatives in relation to the proposed project.

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1 California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3, *California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines*, Section 15126.6.

2 California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3, *California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines*, Section 15126.6(f)(1).

Section 3.0, Environmental Impact Analysis, of this EIR concludes that implementation of the proposed Area Plan would result in significant and unavoidable environmental impacts with respect to the following:

- **Biological Resources** – loss of open space from the impact of development
- **Utilities and Infrastructure, Solid Waste** – inadequate landfill space for solid waste
- **Noise** – short-term construction noise impacts are unavoidably significant for the duration of the construction activities and short-term noise and vibration impacts from the pile driving would be unavoidably significant for the duration of the pile driving

In response to these significant impacts, the County developed and considered several alternatives to the project. These alternatives include:

- **Alternative 1** – No Project/Existing SCV (Santa Clarita Valley) Area Plan
- **Alternative 2** – Preservation Corridor Alternative
- **Alternative 3** – Transit Corridor/Increased Employment Opportunity Alternative

Project Objectives

The alternatives to the proposed project ultimately selected for analysis in this EIR were developed to avoid or substantially lessen one or more of the significant environmental impacts associated with the proposed project, while still meeting many of the project's objectives. The following are objectives for the proposed project:

Management of Growth

1. Growth in the Santa Clarita Valley shall account for the visions and objectives for each community and must be consistent with principles, as subsequently defined in this document, for the protection of the Valley's significant environmental resources. It must also be based on the availability of or ability to provide adequate infrastructure, schools, and public services, and must be carefully planned to benefit the community's economy, lifestyles, and needs.

2. Growth shall occur within and on the periphery of previously developed areas, rather than as "leapfrog" development or in areas of critical environmental habitat or natural hazards, and taking into consideration accessibility to infrastructure and public services.

3. Development shall be prioritized in areas for infill and redevelopment sites within currently developed areas consistent with community character objectives and those for which the County and City have approved entitlements. Commitments for new development outside of these areas shall be made in accordance with the other principles defined in this document.

4. Higher density development, including multi-family housing and mixed use projects that integrate housing with commercial uses, shall be targeted in areas adjacent to existing and planned transit corridors, stations, and key activity centers, such as the Valencia Town Center and portions of Newhall and Soledad Canyon Road.

Environmental Resources

5. The natural buffer area surrounding the entire Valley, which includes the Angeles National Forest, Santa Susana, San Gabriel, Sierra Pelona, and Del Sur mountains, shall be preserved as a regional recreational, ecological, and aesthetic resource.

6. The Santa Clara River corridor and its major tributaries shall be preserved as open space to accommodate storm water flows and protect critical plant and animal species (riparian vegetation, fish, etc.).

    a. Uses and improvements within the corridor shall be limited to those that benefit the community's use of the river in its natural state.

    b. Development on properties adjacent to, but outside of the defined primary river corridor, shall be:

        - located and designed to protect the river's water quality, plants, and animal habitats, controlling the type and density of uses, drainage runoff (water treatment), and other relevant elements; and

        - designed to maximize the full range of river amenities, including views and recreational access, while minimizing adverse impacts to the River.

7. The Santa Clarita Valley's prominent ridgelines shall be preserved and hillside development shall be limited to protect their valuable aesthetic and visual qualities intrinsic to the Valley landscape.

8. Development shall be located and designed to minimize the impact on the Valley topography, emphasizing the use of grading techniques for development pads that mimic the natural topography in lieu of repetitive flat pads to the extent feasible and consistent with a community's open space objectives.

9. Development shall be located and designed to protect oak, sycamore, and other significant indigenous woodlands.

10. Biological resources in the designated Significant Ecological Areas (SEAs) shall be protected through the siting and design of development to account for and be highly compatible with their resources. Specific development standards shall be identified to control the types of land use, density, building location and size, roadways and other infrastructure, landscape, drainage, and other elements to assure the protection of the critical and important plant and animal habitats of each SEA. In general, the principle shall be to minimize the intrusion and impacts of development in these areas with sufficient setbacks, or buffers, to adequately protect the resources.

11. New development shall be designed to improve energy efficiency, reducing energy and natural resource consumption by such techniques as the use of solar generators, recycling of treated wastewater, capture of storm runoff on site, and use of recycled materials in building construction, native and drought-tolerant landscape, and energy and water efficient appliances and systems.

Land Uses

12. The Santa Clarita Valley shall contain a diversity of land uses that support the needs of current and future residents including housing, schools, libraries, parks, retail, business and industry, civic institutions, medical and social services, cultural, entertainment, open spaces, and comparable uses.

13. The type and density of land uses in the Santa Clarita Valley shall be varied to reflect the special characteristics, life styles, and opportunities that differentiate its communities. A choice of urban, suburban, and rural environments will be provided.

14. Valley communities shall contain a mix of uses that support the basic needs of residents – places to live, shop, recreate, meet/socialize, and enjoy the environmental setting – that are appropriate and consistent with their community character. Regionally oriented uses that serve residents of the entire Valley or export goods and services may be concentrated in key business centers rather than uniformly dispersed throughout the Valley communities.

15. Development in the Valley shall be guided by a common set of land use designations and standards for comparable uses in comparable locations. These standards, however, may be varied to reflect the unique intentions for the quality and character of the distinct communities that comprise the Valley.

Residential Neighborhoods

16. The Valley shall contain a mix of housing types that meet the diverse needs of residents, and offer choices for the Valley's population and lifestyles (ages, education, income, etc.) that are appropriate and consistent with their community character. This shall include a combination of single- and multi-family, owner occupied and rental units within *each* community, and mixed-use (i.e., integrated housing with commercial or office uses) development in key activity centers.

17. The Valley is committed to providing affordable work force housing to meet the needs of individuals employed in the Santa Clarita Valley.

18. Multi-family housing developments shall contain adequate recreational and open space amenities on site and be designed to ensure a high quality living environment. Their architectural treatment and building massing shall complement the characteristics of surrounding single-family residential neighborhoods.

19. Neighborhood scale development shall be encouraged by promoting mixed density of housing units consistent with community character objectives and limiting the number and acreage of multi-family units that can be developed in any single location.

20. Housing developments located in the more urbanized communities of the Valley shall be designed to create a sense of neighborhood by:

    a. promoting walkability and containing places that serve as centers of activity and identity (schools, multi-purpose facilities, parks, convenience services, neighborhood commercial centers, etc.);

    b. containing a mix of housing types, densities, and parcel sizes, avoiding large areas and an over-concentration of homogeneous density units;

    c. minimizing the dependence on, prominence, and area dedicated to the automobile;

    d. featuring architectural design treatments along all frontages of new housing to promote continuity of architectural scale and rhythm and avoid "blank walls and

    e. including pedestrian linkages, landscaped parkways and green corridors, and separated trails (pedestrian, bicycle or equestrian) where appropriate and feasible

Vital Economy

21. Commercial and retail uses will be expanded and new centers developed to meet the needs of the Valley's residents, as supportable by the market, minimize the need to travel outside of the Valley, complement (and do not adversely compete with) existing uses, and contribute to a balanced Valley economy.

22. New "clean" industries and businesses that provide job opportunities for local residents and enhance the economy shall be encouraged within and adjacent to existing and planned business centers/parks, and adjacent to transportation corridors.

23. Older commercial areas and corridors that are economically and/or physically obsolete or deteriorated, such as portions of Castaic, Val Verde, Newhall, Lyons Avenue, Sierra Highway, San Fernando Road, and Soledad Canyon Road, shall be redeveloped for commercial, mixed use, residential or other appropriate uses that complement and serve adjoining land uses and can be adequately supported by the market. Where appropriate, redeveloped uses and buildings shall reflect the area's important architectural and cultural history.

Mobility

24. A unified and well-maintained network of highways, streets, truck routes, bikeways, and pedestrian paths will provide access among Valley communities and to regional centers outside of the Valley.

25. Santa Clarita Valley's streets and highways shall be developed and maintained according to common standards for right-of-way, paving and other improvements, landscape, signage, lighting, and curb cuts for "like" street categories. These standards shall take into consideration of objectives for the character of the Valley's communities consistent with public health and safety.

26. A continuous bikeway network shall provide circulation within each community, connect the various Santa Clarita Valley communities, and provide access to surrounding open spaces.

27. An integrated transit system shall serve the Valley (rail, bus, shuttle, other) offering convenient alternatives to the automobile, minimizing congestion and providing access to regional transportation systems, such as Metrolink.

Infrastructure

28. The location and timing of development shall be coordinated with the provision of adequate water, wastewater treatment, storm drainage, telecommunications, energy, roads, and other infrastructure.

29. Public infrastructure shall be improved, maintained, and expanded as needed to meet the needs of projected population and employment growth and contribute to the Valley's quality of life.

30. Common standards for providing utility infrastructure (flood control channels, energy transmission, telecommunications, and so on) shall be developed and applied throughout the Valley, in consideration of the character of each community.

Schools and Public Services

31. The County and City shall work in partnership with the Santa Clarita Valley school districts and the State of California to ensure the development of adequate facilities and programs to serve the needs and achieve a high level of academic excellence for local students.

32. While the County and City do not have direct authority over the development of public schools, they shall continue to coordinate with the school districts on issues of mutual interest such as transportation services, shared facilities, and long range planning for Valley schools.

33. Public services (police, fire, health care, youth, seniors, homeless, and other) shall be expanded to support community needs and population growth.

Recreation

34. The County and City shall recognize that trails are an important recreational asset that, when integrated with transportation systems, contribute to mobility throughout the Santa Clarita Valley.

35. A continuous and unified hiking and equestrian trail network for a variety of users and developed according to common standards shall connect and unify Santa Clarita Valley communities and be interconnected with the regional and statewide system (e.g., Pacific Crest Trail).

36. New parklands will be developed throughout the Santa Clarita Valley, with priority on locations that are not now adequately served. These shall encompass a diversity of park types and functions, including passive and active areas, in consideration of the recreational needs of the residents to be served.

    a. Common park standards shall be developed and applied throughout the Valley, consistent with community character objectives.

b. A range of parkland types, sizes and uses shall be provided to accommodate recreational and leisure activities.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS OF ALTERNATIVES

Described throughout the following alternative analysis are references to the City's General Plan. This is due to those resource areas (land use, air quality, global climate change, traffic and circulation, and noise) that would potentially impact the One Valley One Vision (OVOV) Planning Area, not just the County's Planning Area.

Alternative 1 – No Project/Existing SCV Area Plan

Section 15126.6(e)(1) of the *State CEQA Guidelines* requires evaluation of the No Project Alternative. As described in the *State CEQA Guidelines,* the purpose of describing and analyzing the No Project Alternative is to allow decision makers to compare the impacts of approving the proposed project with the impacts of not approving the proposed project. Therefore, as required by the *State CEQA Guidelines,* the analysis must examine the impacts that might reasonably be expected to occur in the foreseeable future if the proposed project was not approved. When the project is the revision of an existing land use plan, *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.6(e)(3)(A) states that "the No Project Alternative will be the continuation of the existing plan…into the future." Under the No Project Alternative, the proposed SCV Area Plan would not be adopted or implemented, and buildout within the County's Planning Area would continue to occur under the existing SCV Area Plan (adopted in 1984) and adopted Specific Plans. The Housing Element would continue to be updated per California Government Code 65583 and is a legally required element for a general plan. This alternative does not represent a "no build" scenario in which no future development would occur. The number of dwelling units at buildout of the existing Area Plan would be 93,400 in 2010 and the residential population would be 270,000 at buildout.[3]

This No Project analysis discusses the existing conditions at the time the NOP was prepared as well as what would be reasonably expected to occur in the foreseeable future if the proposed Area Plan Update (proposed project) was not approved. The existing Area Plan was adopted in 1984 and comprehensively updated in 1990. Some of the policies do not reflect current changes in the population, economy, or the environment.

Land Use

Buildout conditions under Alternative 1 would follow the policies of the existing Area Plan. The existing Area Plan would continue to implement land use policy that designates land anywhere from 0.5 dwelling

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3 County of Los Angeles, Department of Regional Planning, *Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan*, 1990.

units per acre (du/ac) to 40 du/ac. The proposed project would designate land anywhere from 1.0 du per 20 ac to 30 du/ac. As described in **Table 6.0-1, Existing Area Plan and Proposed Area Plan Land Use Designations**, there would be changes in land use designations and in the acreage of those land uses.

Table 6.0-1
Existing Area Plan and Proposed Area Plan Land Use Designations

Land Use Categories	Existing Area Plan Land Use Categories	Existing County Land Use Acres	Proposed Area Plan Land Use Categories	Proposed County Land Use Acres[1]	Change in Acres (existing to proposed)
Rural Land	Sum of acreages in N1, N2, and HM designations	76,839	Sum of acreages in RL1, RL2, RL5, RL10, and RL20 designations	66,615	-10,224
Urban Residential	Sum of acreages in U1, U2, U3, and U4 designations	6,271	Sum of acreages in H2, H5, H18, and H30 designations	15,688	9,417
Commercial	Sum of acreages in C and RR designations	1,053	Sum of acreages in CN and CM designations.	1,436	383
Industrial	Acreage in M designation	1,411	Sum of acreages in IL and IO designations	2,925	1,514
Public and Community Service	Sum of acres in P and AP designations	3,693	Acreage in P designation	3,924	231
Transportation Corridor	Acreage in TC designations	3,185	Acreage in TC designation	3,331	146
Other Land Uses	Acreage in W designations	5,029	N/A	0	-5,029
Open Space	Sum of acreages in all OS designations	165,192	Sum of acreages in all OS designations	169,290	4,098
Specific Plan	Acreage in SP designations	14,283	Acreage in SP designation.	14,340	57

Source: County of Los Angeles Department of Regional Planning, March 2009.

[1] *The County acres includes the unincorporated County land and the City SOI within the OVOV Planning Area. Approximately 18,901.48 acres of land comprise the City's SOI area.*

As shown in **Table 6.0-1**, the existing Area Plan would provide 10,224 more acres of Rural Land (RL) uses. Implementation of the proposed Area Plan would provide 9,417 additional acres of urban residential, an increase of 383 acres of commercial land uses, an increase of 1,514 acres of industrial uses,

and increase of 231 acres of public and community service, an additional 146 acres of land designated for transportation corridor land uses, an additional 4,098 acres of open space, and 57 acres of additional specific plan land uses. Alternative 1 would have less than significant impacts when compared to the proposed project on dividing an established community and any habitat conservation plans. The existing Area Plan policies and the proposed Area Plan policies are consistent with Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) policies. However, the proposed Area Plan Update policies provide guidance for more sustainable and "green" planning within the County's Planning Area. Overall, impacts on land use would be greater with the proposed Area Plan.

Transportation and Circulation

Transportation and circulation is defined in terms of roadway capacities, Level of Service (LOS), total number of average daily trips (ADT), and the miles traveled. As defined in the proposed project the LOS ranges from A (least amount of congestion) and F (most traffic). Buildout of the existing Area Plan and General Plan would have a total of 3,207,093 ADTs. With buildout of the proposed Area Plan Update and City's proposed General Plan 3,288,386 ADTs would be generated, which would represent an approximate 2.5 percent increase (the proposed Area Plan has a greater amount of ADTs due to the increase in the total square feet of commercial land uses).

The existing Area Plan would have an average LOS A at buildout. This would be the same LOS at buildout for the proposed Area Plan and the City's proposed General Plan. Overall, the ICU (intersection capacity utilization) values at each intersection under either buildout scenario would be comparable. The average ICU value during the AM peak hour would be 0.90 and the average ICU value during the PM peak hour would decrease slightly from 1.09 to 1.08 with the proposed plans as compared to the existing plans.

The ADT would be approximately 2.5 percent lower under Alternative 1 than with buildout of the proposed Area Plan and proposed General Plan. The total vehicle miles traveled (VMT) is approximately 15 percent higher for Alternative 1 than with the proposed plans. Additionally, the average trip length is higher by approximately 1.9 miles for an increase of 14 percent under Alternative 1 when compared to buildout of the proposed Area Plan.

Operating conditions along CMP (congestion management process) roadways would improve with buildout of the proposed Area Plan versus the existing Area Plan. Since the proposed Area Plan would incrementally improve rather than worsen traffic conditions, impacts on CMP roadways would be less than significant. The proposed Area Plan policies address the deficiencies in the existing alternative

transportation system, and provide direction for the expansion and improvement of alternative transportation throughout the Santa Clarita Valley. Impacts on transportation and circulation would be greater under Alternative 1.

Air Quality

The estimated daily construction emissions (which would consist of volatile organic compounds [VOC], oxides of nitrogen [NO_x], carbon monoxide [CO], sulfur oxides [SO_x], particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter [PM_{10}], and particulate matter less than 2.5 microns in diameter [$PM_{2.5}$]) before mitigation would exceed South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) thresholds for both the existing Area Plan and General Plan and the proposed Area Plan and General Plan.

With respect to SCAQMD's threshold to determine cumulative air quality impacts, the projected rate of population growth from **Section 3.19, Population and Housing**, was compared to the rate of ADT growth using information from the project traffic study (**Appendix 3.2**). Population growth under Alternative 1 is projected to increase from approximately 75,000 to 200,000 in the County's Planning Area. The OVOV Planning Area is projected to increase from approximately 177,000 to 443,000. The existing (2004) number of ADTs is expected to increase from 1,487,994 in the OVOV Planning Area to 3,207,093 in the OVOV Planning Area under buildout of the existing Area Plan and General Plan (an ADT growth rate of 1.16 [1.2 for the proposed project]). Since the potential rate of ADT growth (1.16) is less than the rate of population growth (1.5), buildout of the existing Area Plan and General Plan would not result in a significant cumulative air quality impact.

Alternative 1 would potentially produce operational emissions consisting of VOC, NO_x, CO, SO_x, PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$ for both summertime and wintertime (in pounds per day). The net increase in emissions, when compared to existing summertime operational emission conditions, would increase 103 percent for ROG and NO_x, 105 percent for CO and SO_x, and 106 percent for PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$. The net increase for wintertime emissions under buildout of the existing Area Plan would be 104 percent for NO_x and SO_x, 106 percent for ROG, CO, and PM_{10}, and 107 percent for $PM_{2.5}$.

The proposed project would potentially increase both summertime and wintertime operational emissions. This increase is based on the existing condition for operational emissions. The summertime increases at buildout for the proposed project would have a net increase of 104 percent for ROG and CO, a 102 percent increase in NO_x and $PM_{2.5}$, a 105 percent increase in SO_x, and a 99 percent increase in PM_{10}. The wintertime emissions in pounds per day for the buildout of the proposed project would potentially

have a net increase of 103 percent for ROG, NO_x, and PM_{10}, a 106 percent increase in CO, a 104 percent increase in $PM_{2.5}$, and a 100 percent increase in SO_x. Air quality impacts from buildout of the existing Area Plan and General Plan would be similar to those resulting from buildout of the proposed Area Plan and General Plan.

Global Climate Change

Buildout under the existing Area Plan would potentially increase greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The GHG emissions potentially produced would amount to approximately 8,010,100 metric tons equivalent carbon dioxide (CO_2E)/year. This represents an approximate increase of 4,055,900 metric tons CO_2E/year over existing conditions.

The net increase in GHG emissions after buildout under the proposed Area Plan and General Plan would be approximately 7,917,800 metric tons CO_2E/year. This represents a decrease of approximately 92,000 metric tons CO_2E/year compared to buildout of the existing Area Plan and General Plan.

Based on the above quantitative analysis and the fact that the Santa Clarita Valley is in nonattainment, neither Alternative 1 nor the proposed Area Plan and General Plan would impede or conflict with the state's goal of meeting AB 32 through the implementation of the proposed policies designed specifically to meet the requirements of AB 32. Buildout under either Alternative 1 or the proposed Area Plan and General Plan would be consistent with project design features and mitigation measures recommended by the California Air Resources Board (CARB), Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR), the California Climate Action Team, and the Office of the Attorney General; they would achieve reductions in GHG emissions from business as usual conditions so as to not impede the state's ability to meet AB 32. The generation of GHG emissions would be lower, however, under the proposed Area Plan and General Plan than that of Alternative 1.

Agricultural Resources

Buildout conditions under Alternative 1 would differ from those under the proposed Area Plan, as seen in **Table 6.0-1**. Agricultural land would be designated as rural land and open space land use designations under both Alternative 1 and the proposed Area Plan. Since Alternative 1 and the proposed Area Plan would designate farmland with similar densities, impacts on agricultural resources under Alternative 1 would be comparable to those associated with the proposed Area Plan.

Aesthetics

Alternative 1 would maintain the County Planning Area's rural character and ensure visual consistency and continuity with the existing natural and built environment. As described in the existing Area Plan policies, light and glare generation would be limited by establishing techniques for light screening and shielding, restricting the use of unnecessary light during non-business nighttime hours, restricting the use of decorative lighting, and protecting open space. Implementation of Alternative 1 would continue to follow codes and ordinances pertaining to light and glare, landscaping, and aesthetic ridgelines and canyons. There are no state scenic highways in the County's Planning Area.

Under the proposed Area Plan, more land would be used for urban residential, commercial, and industrial uses. However, there would be an additional 4,098 acres of open space than with the existing Area Plan. If unregulated, new development under buildout of the proposed Area Plan has the potential to degrade the quality of existing scenic vistas and scenic resources. The proposed Area Plan would provide for the permanent preservation or restoration of important natural and built scenic resources and conservation of scenic vistas. Alternative 1 would have greater aesthetic impacts at buildout.

Biological Resources

Under Alternative 1, 10,224 acres of land would remain as rural that would otherwise be developed under the proposed Area Plan. The proposed Area Plan would include an additional 4,098 acres of open space as compared to Alternative 1 but would result in more land dedicated to urban residential, commercial, and industrial uses. As seen in **Figure 3.1-1, Existing County Area Plan Land Use Policy Map**, six Significant Ecological Areas (SEAs) are located throughout the County's Planning Area. These areas are located within San Francisquito Canyon, the Santa Susana Mountains, along the Santa Clara River and its tributaries, Kentucky Springs, Lyon Canyon, and the Valley Oak Savannah. The proposed Area Plan has designated larger and additional areas, such as the Cruzan Mesa Vernal Pools, Piru Creek, all of the Santa Clara River, and larger portions of the Santa Susana Mountains, for SEAs land use designation (**Figure 3.7-2, Current and Proposed Significant Ecological Areas**). Impacts on biological resources under Alternative 1 would therefore be greater than those under the proposed Area Plan.

Cultural Resources

Buildout conditions under Alternative 1 would not increase or decrease the potential to harm a historical, archaeological, or paleontological resource relative to the proposed Area Plan. Therefore, impacts on cultural resources under Alternative 1 would be comparable to those associated with the proposed project.

Geology, Soils, Seismicity

Buildout under Alternative 1 would be subject to the same geologic conditions and hazards as the proposed project. As described above in **Table 6.0-1**, existing land use designations and allowable densities differ between the existing and proposed Area Plan. Land uses within the proximity of an Alquist-Priolo earthquake fault zone would remain similar in density under the existing Area Plan and the proposed Area Plan. Therefore, potential geologic impacts under Alternative 1 would be comparable to those associated with the proposed project.

Mineral Resources

The identification of significant mineral resources that are available for extraction has been identified on **Figure 3.10-1**. The extraction and processing of mineral resources would be approved on a project by project basis under either the existing or proposed Area Plan. The existing Area Plan policy would guide the management and protection of important mineral resources by a long range approach toward mineral resource utilization. The proposed Area Plan contains policies that state to identify, preserve from encroachment, and conserve and maintain the significant MRZ-2 lands. Potential impacts on mineral resources would be comparable.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Alternative 1 would not substantially increase or decrease the transport, use, or disposal of hazardous substances relative to the proposed Area Plan. As required by state law, both the County and City have adopted the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) for managing response to multi-agency and multi-jurisdictional emergencies, and to facilitate communications and coordination among all levels of government and affected agencies. The County has adopted an Operational Area Emergency Response Plan, which describes the planned responses to emergencies associated with natural and man-made disasters and technological incidents. As the emergency response plans are developed and adopted independently of the Area Plan and General Plan process, impacts on emergency preparedness and response would be comparable for Alternative 1 and the proposed project. Alternative 1 would support programs related to wildland fire; fire hazard impacts would be comparable to the proposed project.

Hydrology and Water Quality

As the County's Planning Area reaches buildout, the amount of pervious surface area would decrease with increased development and additional impervious surface area would increase due to more paved surfaces such as parking lots, streets, and sidewalks. As described in **Section 3.12, Hydrology and Water**

Quality, existing and proposed development is subject to state and federal guidelines which regulate surface water quality and discharge, either through point sources or non-point sources.

The re-designation of land uses would have the greatest potential to affect water quality and hydrology. The greatest change in land use designations between the existing and proposed Area Plans would occur in the western portion of the County's Planning Area. The existing land uses would change from Hillside Management designations (maximum of 1 du/2 acres [ac]) to Rural Land uses (max 1 du/ac), Residential Land uses (max 5 du/ac), and Office and Professional (coverage of area shall not exceed 90 percent) under the proposed Area Plan. Under Alternative 1, the amount of unpaved surface area would be potentially greater promoting more water infiltration and reduced impacts on surface water quality. Buildout under Alternative 1 would potentially have fewer impacts on hydrology and water quality.

Water Service

Since the buildout population under Alternative 1 was considered under the cumulative analysis within **Section 3.13, Water Service**, of the proposed Area Plan; it was found that there would be a surplus of 21,337 acre feet (af) during multiple dry years for the Santa Clarita Valley in 2030. Therefore, impacts on water service would be comparable to those associated with the proposed Area Plan.

Community Services

Youth and Senior Services

As the population of the County's Planning Area reaches buildout under the existing Area Plan, the number of senior citizens would be expected to increase. The County would need to work with childcare facilities and providers to ensure adequate services. Park resources would need to meet the future demands of youth programs and youth sports. Impacts on youth and senior services under the existing Area Plan would be greater due to the higher demand of services from the larger buildout population projection than under the proposed Area Plan.

Cultural Amenities

As the build out of the County's Planning Area increases, the demand on different cultural amenities will also increase. This increase would require more meeting space to accommodate the increase in population. Impacts on cultural amenities would be greater under Alternative 1 than those of the proposed Area Plan due to the higher projected population and thus the greater demand for cultural amenities.

Homelessness and Emergency Shelters

Services such as the provision of emergency shelters and housing for the disadvantaged population are established under the County of Los Angeles Housing Element. Alternative 1 follows the policies and programs for homeless and emergency shelters identified in the Housing Element for the unincorporated areas of the County. The proposed Area Plan would also follow the County of Los Angeles Housing Element and land use designations that allow uses for emergency shelters and housing. Therefore, impacts on homelessness and emergency shelters would be comparable under Alternative 1 and the proposed project.

Public Services

Libraries

To adequately service the buildout population of 270,000 under Alternative 1 there would need to be 742,500 library items and 135,000 square feet (sf) of library capacity. The five libraries have 595,314 available library items and 48,605 square feet of library space within the OVOV Planning Area. Under the existing Area Plan an additional 147,186 library items would be needed at buildout as compared to a surplus of 45,314 items under the proposed Area Plan, which would need 550,000 library items and 100,000 sf of library space. With the implementation of the planned expansion of library space (60,000 sf) and the existing amount of library space (48,605 sf), under Alternative 1 an additional 26,395 sf of library space would be needed to meet current library guidelines as compared to a surplus of 8,605 sf for the proposed Area Plan. Impacts on library services under Alternative 1 would be greater than the proposed project.

Health Services

Since the buildout population of 270,000 under the existing Area Plan would be greater than the buildout population of 200,000 under the proposed Area Plan, the County's health and social services needs at buildout under Alternative 1 would be greater. As of 2007, 10.2 percent of the population consisted of the age group 65 or older. If trends stay the same then, at buildout, 41,580 people, or 15.4 percent, of the projected 270,000 residents would be age 65 or older. The proposed Area Plan would total 30,800 people age 65 and over. Every age group of the projected population would require adequate health care within the County's Planning Area, not just newborns and the elderly. Therefore, impacts on health services would be greater under Alternative 1 than those of the proposed Area Plan.

Education

The County's Planning Area currently has six school districts and, as of 2008, educates 14,299 students from kindergarten to grade 12. The school districts design capacity is 15,702 students. No school districts are over capacity; however there are five schools over capacity. Implementation of Alternative 1, as well as the proposed Area Plan, would potentially increase the number of new students within the County's Planning Area. The number of projected students is determined using a student generation rate, which is based on the number and type of dwelling units (i.e., single-family detached). As this is a programmatic EIR, the number and types of dwelling units are not provided and therefore, the number of new schools needed at buildout of the County's Planning Area would be conducted on a project-by-project basis. Impacts from implementation of the existing Area Plan would be comparable to that of the proposed Area Plan.

Fire Protection

Since the buildout population under the existing Area Plan would be greater than that of the buildout population under the proposed Area Plan, the County's fire protection needs at Area Plan buildout would be greater. As population increases the number of emergency calls and the emergency response times would potentially increase. Therefore, impacts on fire protection would be greater with buildout of the existing Area Plan.

Police Protection

As described in **Section 3.15, Public Services**, the Sherriff's Department uses a standard guideline of providing at least 1 sworn officer per 1,000 residents. The current number of sworn officers, within the County's Planning Area, is 171, which provides one officer per 439 residents. With buildout under Alternative 1, the number of officers required to maintain a standard of one officer per 1,000 residents would need to be 270 for the projected population of 270,000 residents, or an additional 99 sworn officers. The proposed Area Plan buildout population would be 200,000 residents and would therefore require 200 sworn officers, or an additional 29 sworn officers to maintain standards. Alternative 1 would require an additional 70 sworn officers than the proposed Area Plan. Therefore, Alternative 1 would have greater impacts on police protection.

Parks and Recreation

Buildout conditions under Alternative 1 would require more parkland to meet the needs of the citizens of the County's Planning Area, per the Quimby Act. Under this alternative, the estimated number of residents in the County's Planning Area would be 270,000. Therefore, 810 acres of parks would be needed to satisfy the Quimby Act requirement of 3 acres per 1,000 residents. The proposed project would require 685.7 acres of parkland. With the amount of planned parks and existing parks, the amount of parkland (1,685.7 acres) available for residents at buildout of either the existing or proposed Area Plan would be 8.43 acres per 1,000 residents. Therefore, impacts on parks and recreation under Alternative 1 would be greater than the proposed Area Plan.

Utilities and Infrastructure

Wastewater

The County's wastewater generation and treatment needs at Area Plan buildout would need to be evaluated on a project-by-project basis for their potential impact on the capacity and effectiveness of the wastewater treatment system to treat the potential additional sources of wastewater. Due to the potential for greater demand under Alternative 1 on existing and planned wastewater treatment facilities; impacts on wastewater would be greater than those associated with the proposed Area Plan.

Solid Waste

Since the buildout population under Alternative 1 would be greater than the buildout population under the proposed Area Plan, the solid waste generation and disposal needs at buildout under Alternative 1 would potentially be greater. Solid waste generation for the County's Planning Area is analyzed using the adjacent City's Planning Area solid waste generation numbers (**Section 3.17, Utilities and Infrastructure**). The amount of waste disposed (2007) by the City's Planning Area was 163,000 tons; the County's Planning Area waste disposed was 48,512 tons.

The County's Planning Area buildout population under Alternative 1 would be 270,000 residents. Using the same per capita waste generation in the impact analysis, the projected amount of waste disposal at buildout under the existing Area Plan would be 174,434 tons per year. Waste generated under the proposed Area Plan would be in the amount of 129,210 tons per year. Due to the nearby landfills approaching full capacity for waste disposal and the projected amount of landfill capacity needed for the County's Planning Area for buildout of either the existing or proposed Area Plans, there would be a shortfall of capacity by 2021. The proposed project has determined that this impact is significant and

unavoidable. Since Alternative 1 would potentially increase the population of the County's Planning Area at buildout more than with the existing Area Plan, impacts on solid waste would be greater than with the proposed Area Plan.

Electricity, Natural Gas and Telecommunications

The County's electricity, natural gas, and telecommunications needs at Area Plan buildout would be greater than those of the proposed project due to the potentially greater buildout population. Consequently, impacts on electricity, natural gas, and telecommunications would potentially be greater than those from the proposed project.

Noise

As described in **Section 3.2, Transportation and Circulation**, buildout of the existing Area Plan would potentially increase the number of trip ends. The existing (2004) number of trip ends was found to be 1,487,994 vehicle trips for the OVOV Planning Area. With buildout under Alternative 1, the amount of trip ends would total 3,207,093 for the OVOV Planning Area. The proposed OVOV buildout would generate 3,288,386 trip ends, an overall increase of 3 percent (increase for proposed Area Plan is due to an increase in total commercial square feet). Therefore, Alternative 1 impacts on noise would be less than those of the proposed Area Plan.

Population and Housing

Buildout under Alternative 1 would have a greater population increase and a smaller number of housing units as compared to the proposed project. The proposed project would account for 41 percent of the growth within the unincorporated North Los Angeles subregion. Alternative 1 would account for 65 percent of the growth within the unincorporated North Los Angeles subregion. The remaining 35 percent of growth within the unincorporated North Los Angeles subregion between years 2005 and 2035 would primarily occur within the Antelope Valley. Therefore, population growth in the unincorporated Santa Clarita Valley due to Area Plan buildout is consistent with overall growth anticipated by SCAG for the unincorporated North Los Angeles County subregion.

Implementation of Alternative 1 would not result in the displacement of substantial numbers of housing or people since several proposed policies promote growth and development within underutilized and vacant areas of the County's Planning Area. Implementation of Alternative 1 would have comparable impacts on population and housing as those of the proposed project.

Conclusion

As discussed above, under Alternative 1, the existing Area Plan would continue to be implemented and used for the guidance of growth throughout the County's Planning Area. Therefore, implementation of Alternative 1 would not achieve the following project objectives to the same degree as the proposed project.

4. Higher density development, including multi-family housing and mixed use projects that integrate housing with commercial uses, shall be targeted in areas adjacent to existing and planned transit corridors, stations, and key activity centers, such as the Valencia Town Center and portions of Newhall and Soledad Canyon Road.

8. Development shall be located and designed to minimize the impact on the Valley topography, emphasizing the use of grading techniques for development pads that mimic the natural topography in lieu of repetitive flat pads to the extent feasible and consistent with a community's open space objectives.

11. New development shall be designed to improve energy efficiency, reducing energy and natural resource consumption by such techniques as the use of solar generators, recycling of treated wastewater, capture of storm runoff on-site, and use of recycled materials in building construction, native and drought-tolerant landscape, and energy and water efficient appliances and systems.

20. Housing developments located in the more urbanized communities of the Valley shall be designed to create a sense of neighborhood by

    a. promoting walkability and containing places that serve as centers of activity and identity (schools, multi-purpose facilities, parks, convenience services, neighborhood commercial centers, etc.);

    b. containing a mix of housing types, densities, and parcel sizes, avoiding large areas and an over-concentration of homogeneous density units;

    c. minimizing the dependence on, prominence, and area dedicated to the automobile;

    d. featuring architectural design treatments along all frontages of new housing to promote continuity of architectural scale and rhythm and avoid "blank" walls; and

    e. including pedestrian linkages, landscaped parkways and green corridors, and separated trails (pedestrian, bicycle or equestrian) where appropriate and feasible.

23. Older commercial areas and corridors that are economically and/or physically obsolete or deteriorated, such as portions of Castaic, Val Verde, Newhall, Lyons Avenue, Sierra Highway, Main Street, Newhall Avenue, and Soledad Canyon Road, shall be redeveloped for commercial, mixed use, residential or other appropriate uses that complement and serve adjoining land uses and can be adequately supported by the market. Where appropriate, redeveloped uses and buildings shall reflect the area's important architectural and cultural history.

27. An integrated transit system shall serve the Valley (rail, bus, shuttle, other) offering convenient alternatives to the automobile, minimizing congestion and providing access to regional transportation systems, such as Metrolink.

The following objectives would partially meet the vision of the proposed project as relating to this alternative:

18. Multi-family housing developments shall contain adequate recreational and open space amenities on site and be designed to ensure a high quality living environment. Their architectural treatment and building massing shall complement the characteristics of surrounding single-family residential neighborhoods.

The impacts associated with continued use of the existing Area Plan would potentially result in comparable impacts as the proposed project and impacts could be potentially greater. Those impacts that were found to be similar to the proposed project are: agricultural resources, biological resources, cultural resources, soils, geology, and seismicity; mineral resources, hazards and hazardous materials, homelessness and emergency shelters, education, law enforcement, noise, and population and housing. With the implementation of Alternative 1, the following impacts were found to be greater than those of the proposed project: traffic, air quality, global climate change, water service, seniors and youth, cultural amenities, libraries, health services, fire protection, parks and recreation, and electricity, natural gas, and telecommunications. Impacts on biological resources, solid waste, and noise sources would remain significant and unavoidable.

Alternative 2 – Preservation Corridor Alternative

This alternative would support the South Coast Missing Linkages wildlife corridor and the proposed SEAs by proposing a density reduction. The South Coast Wildlands is an organization that proposed a wildlife corridor between two separated parts of the Angeles National Forest. The existing acreage located within the proposed Preservation Corridor is defined as RL 2, 5,225 acres, with a total of 2,613 dwelling units and RL 5, 742 acres, with at total of 148 dwelling units. The RL2 designation allows for the maintenance and expansion of rural communities in the County's Planning Area that are distinguished by large lot sizes (generally 2 acres or greater), agricultural and equestrian uses, and an absence of urban services. Allowed uses in this category include single-family homes at a density not to exceed 1 du/2 acres, limited agriculture, equestrian uses, and public and institutional facilities serving the local area. The RL5 designation identifies lands in the County's Planning Area that include environmental features that are not appropriate for intense development requiring urban services. Lands in this category are largely undeveloped and consist of rolling hillside areas with limited or no access. Allowed uses in

this category include single-family homes at a density not to exceed 1 du/5 acres, agriculture, equestrian uses, and public and institutional facilities serving the local area.

The proposed density changes under Alternative 2 would designate the RL2 and RL5 land use designations within the Preservation Corridor to RL10. The RL10 designation includes single-family homes at a density not to exceed 1 du/10 acres, agriculture, equestrian uses, and public and institutional facilities serving the local area. This land use designation change would reduce the number of dwelling units to 597 on 5,967.5 acres within the boundary of the Preservation Corridor. Additionally, this alternative would create more open space for wildlife movement (see **Figure 6.0-1, Preservation Corridor Alternative**). Policies would be developed to create minimal obstructions on these properties to allow wildlife movement. This alternative would also support the SEAs proposed within this region.

Land Use

Buildout conditions under Alternative 2 would be similar to those under the proposed project, except the proposed land uses would reduce density located within the proposed Preservation Corridor, which includes the South Coast Missing Linkage (SCML). As seen in **Figure 6.0-1** the specific area of Alternative 2 would be located within the eastern portion of the County's Planning Area. The proposed project would be consistent with SCAG policies and other applicable area plans (i.e., the Air Quality Management Plan). Alternative 2 would redesignate land uses within the Preservation Corridor boundary from Rural Land 2 (RL 2 1 du/2 ac) and Rural Land 5 (RL 5 1 du/5 ac), to Rural Land 10 (RL 10 is 1 du/10 ac). The change in land uses would provide a buffer/transition between Open Space (OS), RL 10, and Rural Land 20 (RL 20) for potential wildlife movement. The number of dwelling units within the Preservation Corridor would potentially decrease from 2,761 du under the proposed Area Plan to 597 du on 5,967.50 acres under Alternative 2. Under Alternative 2, impacts on land use would be less than that of the proposed Area Plan.

Transportation and Circulation

Under this alternative traffic and circulation impacts would be less than those of the proposed project although there would be a potential reduction in the number of ADTs within the Preservation Corridor. As seen in **Figure 6.0-1**, the alternative would designate land uses that would reduce the density within the SCML from 2,761 dwelling units to 597 dwelling units. **Table 6.0-2, Preservation Corridor Alternative Trip Generation Summary,** describes the difference in ADTs between the proposed Area Plan and Alternative 2.

Table 6.0-2
Preservation Corridor Alternative Trip Generation Summary

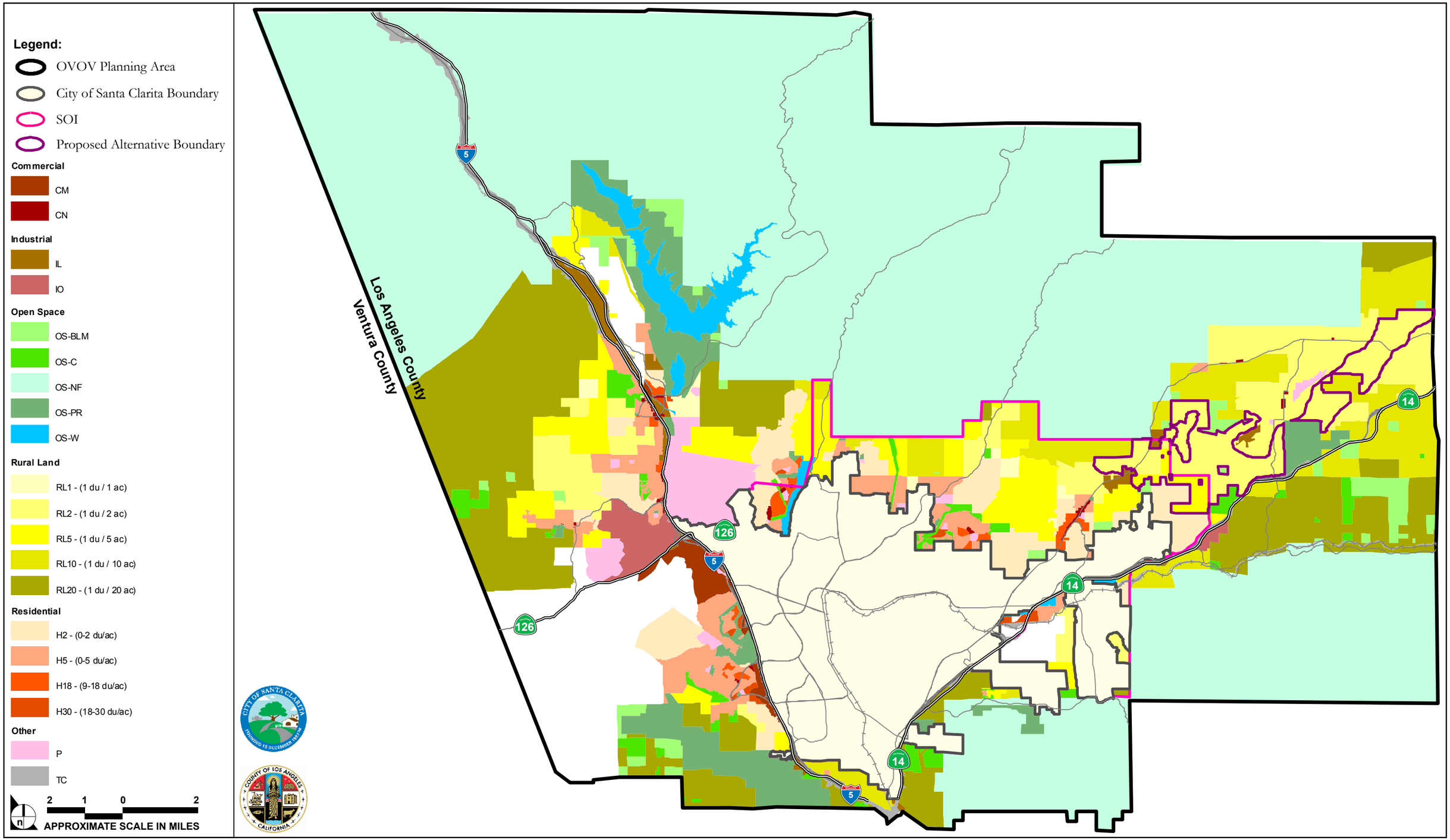
	Land Use	Units	ADT
Proposed Area Plan	RL 2	2,613	25,866
	RL 5	148	1,469
Subtotal		2,761	27,335
Buildout			3,288,386
Preservation Corridor Alternative	RL 10	597	5,908
Subtotal		597	5,908
Buildout			3,266,959
Difference		**2,164**	**(21,427)**

Source: Austin-Foust Associates, Inc., OVOV Alternative Trip Generation Summary, May 2009.

The proposed Area Plan and General Plan would generate a total of 3,288,386 ADTs at buildout. Under the proposed Area Plan the alternative area would generate 27,335 ADTs. Alternative 2 would generate 5,908 ADTs, approximately 21,427 less ADTs when compared to the proposed Area Plan and General Plan. Buildout under Alternative 2 would have approximately 0.7 percent less ADTs than the proposed Area Plan and General Plan. The projected amount of vehicle miles traveled is based on the average trip length (11.47 miles) and the average number of trips. The total vehicle miles traveled for Alternative 2 would be approximately 37,472,020 miles which would be 245,768 less miles traveled than the proposed Area Plan and General Plan (37,717,788 miles traveled). This would reduce the amount of vehicle miles traveled for this area of the County's Planning Area. Impacts on traffic and circulation would be greater under the proposed project compared with Alternative 2.

Air Quality

Since buildout under Alternative 2 would reduce density within the Preservation Corridor, there would be the potential for less vehicle emissions and operational emissions as compared to the buildout under the proposed project. As described above there would be 21,427 less ADTs which would translate into 37,472,020 vehicle miles traveled (11.47 miles; average trip length) or approximately 245,768 less total vehicle miles traveled (approximately 0.7 percent less than the proposed Area Plan and General Plan). Therefore, impacts on air quality would be less for the Preservation Corridor Alternative.



SOURCE: City of Santa Clarita, County of Los Angeles, Valleywide General Plan - May 2009

FIGURE **6.0-1**

Preservation Corridor Alternative

112-023•05/09

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Global Climate Change

Since buildout under Alternative 2 would reduce density within the Preservation Corridor there would be potential for fewer vehicle emissions and operational emissions. Impacts on global climate change would be less than the proposed project.

Agricultural Resources

Buildout conditions under Alternative 2 would be similar to those under the proposed Area Plan, except for the reduction in density within the Preservation Corridor (**Figure 6.0-1**). As seen in **Figure 3.5-1** Farmland Designations within the OVOV Planning Area, the only type of agricultural land near the Preservation Corridor boundary is prime farmland. This farmland is not located within the Preservation Corridor's boundary and impacts on agricultural resources would be similar to the proposed Area Plan.

Aesthetics

Buildout conditions under Alternative 2 would be similar to those under the proposed Area Plan, with the exception of land uses within the boundary of the Preservation Corridor. Since the change in rural land uses would decrease density and increase open space, impacts on aesthetics, views, and nighttime illumination under Alternative 2 would be less than those associated with the proposed Area Plan.

Biological Resources

Existing biological resources within the Preservation Corridor include coastal and desert scrub, chaparral, coast live oak woodland, coast live oak riparian forest, juniper woodland, southern sycamore-alder woodland, southern cottonwood-willow riparian woodland and forest, southern willow scrub, freshwater marsh, alluvial fan sage scrub, and native and annual grassland. These represent most of the major vegetation types found within the County's Planning Area, and provide habitat for the vast majority of animal and plant species that are expected to occur within the Santa Clarita Valley, excepting narrowly endemic taxa that would be dependent on rare landscape features such as vernal pools (e.g., fairy shrimp, Orcutt's grass, etc.).

Much of the proposed linkage is within the County-proposed Santa Clara River SEA, and includes portions of the Santa Clara River and Soledad Canyon, as well as several major northern tributaries—Mint, Tick, Tapie, Spring, Agua Dulce, Long, and Bobcat Canyons. Undeveloped portions of this area constitute the sole remaining linkage network connecting the San Gabriel and Liebre Mountains. Riparian corridors within these drainages provide linkage opportunities between populations of threatened and

endangered native fish and amphibian species, including Santa Ana sucker, unarmored threespine stickleback, arroyo chub, and arroyo toad. These habitats and associated upland surroundings also provide movement, forage and breeding opportunities for western spadefoot and all of the other special status reptile, bird, and mammal species to be found within the Santa Clarita Valley.

As described in the description of Alternative 2 approximately 5,967.50 acres of RL 2 and RL 5 land uses would be re-designated for RL 10, thus reducing density within this area (see **Figure 6.0-1**). Alternative 2 would allow the opportunity for a wildlife movement corridor between the two units of the National Forest in northeastern and southeastern portions of the County's Planning Area. This opportunity would potentially reduce impacts on wildlife movement to less than those of the proposed project. Therefore, impacts on wildlife movement through the County's Planning Area would be less than that of the proposed Area Plan. Impacts on biological resources would be less than those of the proposed Area Plan.

Cultural Resources

Buildout conditions under Alternative 2 would be similar to those under the proposed Area Plan, except for the Preservation Corridor. Alternative 2 would reduce the potential to damage a historical, archaeological, or paleontological resource relative to the proposed project because of the reduced amount of construction. Impacts on cultural resources would potentially be less than those associated with the proposed project. However, cultural resource surveys would be conducted on a project by project basis and projects would be subject to CEQA review.

Geology, Soils, Seismicity

Buildout under Alternative 2 would be similar to those under the proposed project, except for the reduction in density in the northeast portion of the County's Planning Area. As seen in **Figure 3.9-3**, **Faults Within or Adjacent to the OVOV Planning Area**, the Alternative 2 Preservation Corridor boundary is located near known earthquake faults and would be subject to the same geologic conditions and hazards as the proposed project. However, Alternative 2 would not allow as much development, consequently reducing grading or excavation within the Preservation Corridor. As the alternative would reduce density within the Preservation Corridor, the potential to injury of people from earthquake hazards would be less than that of the proposed project. As Alternative 2 would allow less development, soils, geology, and seismic impacts would potentially be less than those associated with the proposed project.

Mineral Resources

As seen in **Figure 6.0-1**, Alternative 2 would designate the Preservation Corridor as less dense rural land. As Alternative 2 would potentially have less density than that of the proposed Area Plan, impacts on mineral resources would be less than the proposed Area Plan.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Alternative 2 would not substantially increase or decrease the transport, use, or disposal of hazardous substances relative to the proposed Area Plan. As emergency response plans are developed and adopted independently of the Area Plan and General Plan process, impacts on emergency preparedness and response would be comparable for Alternative 2 and the proposed project. Alternative 2 would support programs related to wildland fire and fire hazard impacts would be comparable to the proposed project.

Hydrology and Water Quality

As the County's Planning Area reaches buildout, the amount of unpaved surface area would decrease with increased development and additional impervious surface area would increase due to the construction of more paved surfaces such as parking lots, streets, and sidewalks. As described in **Section 3.12, Hydrology and Water Quality**, existing and proposed development is subject to state and federal guidelines which regulate surface water quality and discharge, either through point sources or non-point sources. As the land uses in the Preservation Corridor would decrease in density under Alternative 2, the amount of potential hardscaped areas would decrease. The decrease in hardscaped areas, or increase in open space areas, would potentially have fewer impacts on hydrology. Therefore, Alternative 2 impacts on hydrology and water quality would be less than the proposed Area Plan.

Water Service

Buildout under Alternative 2 would have the potential for less development within the northeast portion of the County's Planning Area. This alternative would therefore have a potential for less demand on the area's water supply. As described in the cumulative impacts subsection of **Section 3.13, Water Services**, there would be enough water during multiple dry years (supply would be 156,027 acre feet per year [afy] with demand at 137,900 afy). Therefore, impacts related to water service would be less than those associated with the proposed project.

Community Services

Seniors and Youth

As the population of the County's Planning Area reaches buildout, the number of senior citizens would be expected to increase for both Alternative 2 and the proposed Area Plan. Alternative 2 would have a smaller population at buildout and potentially a smaller amount of seniors. The County would need to work with childcare facilities and providers to provide adequate services as the County's Planning Area reaches buildout. Park resources would need to meet the future demands of youth programs and youth sports. Impacts on youth and senior services under Alternative 2 would be potentially less than those of the proposed Area Plan due to the potentially smaller demand of services from the smaller population projection at buildout under Alternative 2.

Cultural Amenities

Alternative 2 cultural amenities would be similar to the proposed project. As there would be a decrease in the land use density of Alternative 2, there would potentially be a decrease in the buildout population. As the proposed buildout population would be smaller than the proposed project, impacts on cultural amenities would be less than the proposed project.

Homelessness and Emergency Shelters

Services such as the provision of emergency shelters and housing for the disadvantaged population would be established under both the proposed Area Plan and Alternative 2. However, Alternative 2 population at buildout would be smaller than buildout population under the proposed Area Plan. Therefore, impacts on community services would be less than the proposed project.

Public Services

Libraries

The buildout of Alternative 2 would reduce the projected amount of dwelling units of the proposed project by 2,164 dwelling units. This would be a reduction of approximately 7,055 residents within the County's Planning Area.[4] With less population there would be less demand on library items and library space. As projected the proposed project would already have a surplus of library items and library space

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4 3.26 persons per household was used to calculate the approximate number of residents. This was determined by the dividing the 2008 population of the County's Planning Area and the 2008 number of dwelling units.

at buildout. Since Alternative 2's buildout population would be smaller than the proposed project buildout population, impacts on libraries and library service would be less than those associated with the proposed project.

Health Services

Under Alternative 2 the buildout population (192,945 residents) would potentially be less than the proposed Area Plan buildout population (200,000 residents) due to the reduced land use density within the Preservation Corridor. As the buildout population would potentially be less than that of the proposed Area Plan, Alternative 2 would therefore, have less impacts on health services at buildout of the County's Planning Area.

Education

Since the buildout population under Alternative 2 would be less at buildout than the buildout population under the proposed project, the County's education needs at Area Plan buildout would be less. Therefore, impacts on education would be less than those associated with the proposed project.

Fire Protection

The County's fire protection needs at Alternative 2 buildout would be less than the proposed project due to the potentially lower population at buildout. Therefore, impacts on fire protection would potentially be less with buildout of Alternative 2.

Police Protection

As described in **Section 3.15, Public Services**, the Sheriff's Department uses a standard guideline of providing at least 1 sworn officer per 1,000 residents. The current number of sworn officers, within the County's Planning Area, is 171, which provides one officer per 439 residents. With buildout under Alternative 2, the number of officers required to maintain a standard of one officer per 1,000 residents would need to be 193 for the projected population of 192,945 residents, or an additional 22 sworn officers. The proposed Area Plan buildout population would be 200,000 residents and would therefore require 200 sworn officers, or an additional 29 sworn officers to maintain standards. The proposed Area Plan would require an additional 7 sworn officers than Alternative 2. Therefore, Alternative 2 would have less impacts on police protection than those associated with the proposed Area Plan.

Parks and Recreation

Buildout conditions under the Alternative 2 would require more parkland to meet the needs of the citizens of the County's Planning Area, per the Quimby Act. Under this alternative the estimated number of residents in the County's Planning Area would be 192,945. Therefore, 578.8 acres of parks would be needed to satisfy the Qumiby Act requirement of 3 acres per 1,000 residents. The proposed project would require 685.7 acres of parkland. With the amount of planned parks and existing parks the amount of parkland (1,685.7 acres) available for the residents would be 8.43 acres per 1,000 residents at buildout of either Alternative 2 or the proposed Area Plan. Therefore, impacts on recreation under Alternative 2 would be less than those associated with the proposed project.

Utilities and Infrastructure

Wastewater

The County's wastewater generation and treatment needs at Area Plan buildout would need to be evaluated on a project-by-project basis for their potential impact on the capacity and effectiveness of the wastewater treatment system to treat the potential additional sources of wastewater. Due to the potential for less demand under Alternative 2 on the wastewater treatment facility; impacts on wastewater would be less than those associated with the proposed project.

Solid Waste

Since the buildout population under Alternative 2 would be less than the buildout population under the proposed project, the County's solid waste generation and disposal needs at Area Plan buildout would potentially be less. As described above, the projected buildout generated waste under the proposed Area Plan would be 129,210 tons per year (3.54 pounds per capita per day). Alternative 2 estimates that buildout population of the County's Planning Area would be 192,945 residents. Using the same per capita waste generation for this alternative, the projected amount of waste disposal would be 124,652 tons per year. Due to the nearby landfills approaching full capacity for waste disposal and the projected amount of landfill capacity for the County's Planning Area, there would be a shortfall of capacity by 2021. Since Alternative 2 would generate less solid waste than that of the proposed project, impacts on solid waste would be less than those associated with the proposed project.

Electricity, Natural Gas and Telecommunications

Since the buildout population (192,945) under Alternative 2 would be less than that of the proposed Area Plan (200,000), the County's electricity, natural gas and telecommunications needs at Alternative 2 buildout would be less. Therefore, impacts on electricity, natural gas, and telecommunications would be less under Alternative 2 than those associated with the proposed project.

Noise

Under this alternative the noise impacts would reflect the construction impacts associated with the proposed project. Over the buildout of the County's Planning Area the only area that would have the potential for fewer impacts from noise and noise generating sources would be the northeast portion of the County's Planning Area. As seen in **Figure 6.0-1**, this area would have reduced density to potentially provide the opportunity for preservation of a wildlife corridor. The reduction in density would have the potential for a reduction in the amount of noise generating sources. As with a reduction in density there would potentially be a reduction in the amount trips and vehicle miles traveled. As Alternative 2 would potentially have approximately 7,055 less residents, there would be a reduction in the noise from vehicles along major transportation routes (a reduction of 21,427 ADTs under Alternative 2). Therefore, noise impacts would be less than that of the proposed project.

Population and Housing

Under Alternative 2, the total number of new housing units developed within the County's Planning Area at Area Plan buildout would be reduced to 2,164 dwelling units. The proposed project would allow 2,761 dwelling units with implementation of RL 2 and RL 5 land uses within the alternative boundary. The estimated buildout population for Alternative 2 would be 7,055 less residents than the proposed project. Alternative 2 would not interfere with the County's ability to meet its Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA). The County is required by state law to provide an inventory of land suitable for residential development, including vacant sites and sites having the potential for redevelopment. This inventory is used to identify sites that can be feasibly developed for housing within the current planning period in order to meet the County's RHNA. As described in **Section 3.1, Land Use**, the definition of rural land identifies lands in the County's Planning Area that includes environmental features that are not appropriate for intense development requiring urban services. Lands in this category are largely undeveloped and consist of rolling hillside areas, slopes, and mountain lands with limited or no access. Under the proposed Area Plan, RL 2 land is designated for the maintenance and expansion of rural communities in the County's Planning Area that are distinguished by large lot sizes (generally 2 acres or

greater), agricultural and equestrian uses, and an absence of urban services. Alternative 2 would designate areas within the Preservation Corridor boundary as RL 10, see **Figure 6.0-1**. The proposed project would total approximately 5,225.37 acres of Rural Land 2 land uses and 742.13 acres of Rural Land 5 land uses. Alternative 2 would designate approximately 5,967.50 acres as Rural Land 10, thus reducing the density and the number of residents at buildout. Impacts on housing and population under this alternative would be less than that of the proposed project.

Conclusion

As discussed above an area plan similar to the proposed Area Plan would be implemented, except the RL 2 and RL 5 land use designations would be changed to reflect the RL 10 land use designations for rural land development located within the Preservation Corridor's boundary as compared against the proposed project. However, implementation of Alternative 2 would not achieve the following project objectives to the same degree as the proposed project.

14. Valley communities shall contain a mix of uses that support the basic needs of residents – places to live, shop, recreate, meet/socialize, and enjoy the environmental setting – that are appropriate and consistent with their community character. Regionally oriented uses that serve residents of the entire Valley or export goods and services may be concentrated in key business centers rather than uniformly dispersed throughout the Valley communities.

Potential environmental impacts would be reduced under Alternative 2 as compared to the proposed project. Those impacts would include: land use, traffic and circulation, air quality, global climate change, aesthetics, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, mineral resources, hydrology and water quality, water service, community and public services, parks and recreation, noise, and population and housing. The remaining resource areas would be comparable to the proposed project and include impacts on agricultural resources, hazards and hazardous materials, scenic highways, federally protected wetlands, local biologically protective policies and ordinances pertaining to SEAs, biological conflicts with local, regional, or state conservation plans, private airstrip safety hazards, and school enrollment capacities. Impacts that would remain significant and unavoidable would include: utilities and infrastructure – solid waste and noise generated sources.

Alternative 3 – Transit Corridor/Increased Employment Opportunity Alternative

This alternative would create a mixed use transit corridor around the proposed Lang Station. High density residential located next to a major transportation/transit corridor would support policies in Los Angeles County's Housing Element and the vision created in the OVOV planning process. The types of development recommended for this area would be designed at an urban density and have a mix of

commercial uses. The proposed land use designations for the Transit Corridor boundaries are Urban Residential 2 (H2), 107 acres with 215 dwelling units, and RL 10, 701 acres with 70 dwelling units. Alternative 3 would propose to change these land use designations within the Transit Corridor to Urban Residential 30 (H30) and Office and Professional (IO).

The H30 land use designation would allow an estimated 16,251 dwelling units on 5,412 acres with 267 acres designated as IO within the Transit Corridor. Adjacent to and just north of the proposed high density Transit Corridor would be a proposed business/office park, see **Figure 6.0-2, Transit Corridor/Increased Employment Opportunity Alternative**. This would create an employment center near the transportation/transit corridor and give other residents an opportunity to work and live in the Santa Clarita Valley.

Land Use

Alternative 3 would designate the areas around Lang Station as Urban Residential (H30) and IO land uses. The H30 land use designation would have medium to high density multi-family housing, such as apartment and condominium complexes configured in buildings of two to three stories in height with provision for common and private open space and recreational amenities. These complexes would be constructed in areas easily accessible to transportation, employment, retail, and other urban services. The IO land use designation is intended to permit a variety of office, research and development, light assembly and fabrication, warehousing and distribution, and supportive commercial uses within an environment characterized by master-planned developments. High quality maintenance is expected to provide enhanced landscaping and outdoor amenities to create a campus-like setting, with no outdoor storage visible to the general public. This designation is appropriate in locations with good access and visibility from freeways and major arterials.

The proposed Area Plan has designated the area around Lang Station, just south of the land use designation IO, as RL 10. The proposed Area Plan would also designate the area just east of the RL 10 land uses as RL 1, RL 10, Transportation Corridor (TC), and Light Industrial (LI). Alternative 3 would increase the density, as compared to the proposed Area Plan, around Lang Station. The alternative would be consistent with the City's land uses to the north (UR3 which allows 11 du/a and CC) and would potentially conflict to the west (UR1 which allows 2 du/a). These land uses would potentially conflict with an AQMP or congestion management plan (CMP), but would be consistent with SCAG's policies and the goals of the proposed Area Plan to create livable workspace environments and walkable communities. Alternative 3 would have fewer impacts on land use as that of the proposed Area Plan.

Transportation and Circulation

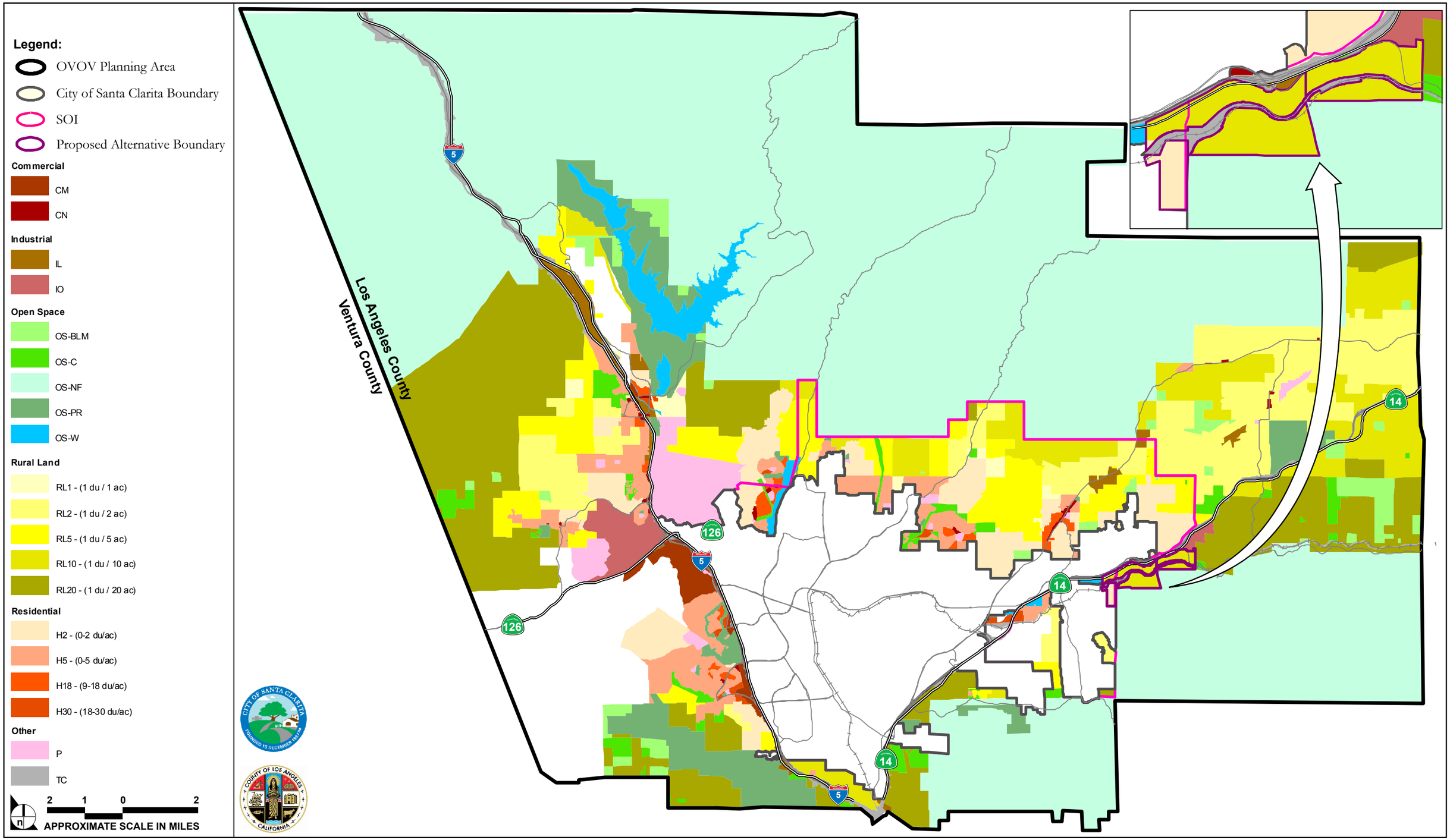
Under this alternative traffic and circulation impacts would be similar to those of the proposed project. As seen in **Figure 6.0-2**, Alternative 3 would designate land uses that would increase the density within the Transit Corridor boundary from 2,761 dwelling units to 16,251 dwelling units. **Table 6.0-3, Alternative 3 Trip Generation Summary,** describes the difference in ADTs between the proposed Area Plan and Alternative 3.

Table 6.0-3
Alternative 3 Trip Generation Summary

	Land Use	Units	ADT
Proposed Area Plan	H 2	215	2,129
	RL 10	70	693
Subtotal			2,822
Buildout			3,288,386
Alternative 3	H 30	16,251	121,070
	IO	297 acres	41,536
Subtotal			162,606
Buildout			3,448,170
Difference			**159,784**

Source: Austin-Foust Associates, Inc., OVOV Alternative Trip Generation Summary, May 2009.

The proposed Area Plan and General Plan would generate a total of 3,288,386 ADTs at buildout. Under the proposed Area Plan, the Transit Corridor area would generate 2,822 ADTs. Alternative 3 would generate 3,448,170 ADTs; approximately 159,784 more ADTs or a 4.9 percent increase in ADTs when compared to the proposed Area Plan and General Plan buildout. The total vehicle miles potentially traveled for Alternative 3 would be approximately 39,550,510 miles or 1,832,722 more miles traveled than the proposed Area Plan and General Plan. Impacts on traffic and circulation would be greater under Alternative 3 when compared to the proposed project.



SOURCE: City of Santa Clarita, County of Los Angeles, Valleywide General Plan - May 2009

FIGURE **6.0-2**

Transit Corridor / Increased Employment Opportunity Alternative

112-023•05/09

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Air Quality

There would be greater potential for more vehicle emissions and operational emissions under Alternative 3 compared to buildout under the proposed project. As described above there would be 159,784 more ADTs under Alternative 3.[5] This would result in approximately 56 percent more vehicle miles traveled than with the proposed Area Plan and General Plan. Therefore, impacts on air quality would be greater for the Transit Corridor Alternative.

Global Climate Change

Since buildout under Alternative 3 would increase density within the Transit Corridor there would be potential for more vehicle emissions and operational emissions. Impacts on global climate change would be greater than that of the proposed project.

Agricultural Resources

Buildout conditions under Alternative 3 would be similar to those under the proposed Area Plan, except for the increase in density within the Transit Corridor (**Figure 6.0-2**). As seen in **Figure 3.5-1, Farmland Designations within the OVOV Planning Area**, the only type of agricultural land located to the east and northeast of the Transit Corridor boundary is prime farmland. This farmland is not located within the Transit Corridor's boundary and impacts on agricultural resources would be similar to the proposed Area Plan.

Aesthetics

Under Alternative 3, development density would be increased on vacant parcels designated as rural residential by the proposed Area Plan. The overall acreage and distribution of developed land within the County's Planning Area would not be altered. Mixed use and strictly commercial development projects do not possess substantially different visual qualities, impacts on aesthetics, views, and nighttime illumination. Under Alternative 3, impacts on aesthetics would be greater than those associated with the proposed Area Plan.

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5 The analysis included 39,550,510 vehicle miles traveled multiplied by 11.47 miles for an average trip length; or approximately 1,832,722 more total vehicle miles traveled.

Biological Resources

Biological resources in the vicinity of Lang Station include upland areas dominated by coastal scrub, chaparral, and annual grassland vegetation, immediately adjacent to the Santa Clara River. Downstream (west) of Lang Station Road, the riverbed has been severely disturbed by sand and gravel mining activities, and noteworthy biological resources are limited to a perennialized flow channel that is constrained to the southern portion of the river flood plain. Upstream of Lang Station Road, the Santa Clara River has been largely undisturbed and maintains a natural flow. Currently, much of the floodplain east of Lang Station Road is largely bare of vegetation due to high-volume floods in 2005. Nevertheless, depending on the periodicity of flooding and the resultant maturity of vegetation within the floodplain, habitats in this section of the river and associated uplands are suitable for slender-horned spineflower, the undescribed species of everlasting reported from Newhall Ranch, white rabbit-tobacco, Mason's neststraw, Santa Ana sucker, unarmored threespine stickleback, arroyo chub, arroyo toad, western spadefoot, silvery legless lizard, coastal western whiptail, coast horned lizard, two-striped garter snake, southern California rufous-crowned sparrow, grasshopper sparrow, Bell's sage sparrow, California horned lark, loggerhead shrike, San Diego black-tailed jackrabbit, San Diego desert woodrat, southern grasshopper mouse, and American badger.

Impacts on biological resources under Alternative 3 would be greater than those associated with the proposed Area Plan.

Cultural Resources

Buildout conditions under Alternative 3 would be similar to those under the proposed Area Plan, except for the Transit Corridor. Alternative 3 would increase the potential to damage a historical, archaeological, or paleontological resources relative to the proposed project because of the increased amount of construction. Impacts on cultural resources would potentially be greater than those associated with the proposed project.

Geology, Soils, Seismicity

Buildout under Alternative 3 and the proposed project would be similar with the exception of the increased density in the eastern portion of the County's Planning Area. As seen in **Figure 3.9-3, Faults within or adjacent to the OVOV Planning Area**, the Alternative 3 Transit Corridor boundary is located near known earthquake faults and would be subject to the same geologic conditions and hazards as the proposed project. Alternative 3 would require additional grading and excavation within the Transit Corridor and would therefore potentially have more associated grading and excavation impacts. As the

alternative would increase density within the Transit Corridor, the potential of injury to people from earthquake hazards would be greater than that of the proposed project. As Alternative 3 would allow more development, soils, geology, and seismic impacts would potentially be greater than those associated with the proposed project.

Mineral Resources

Development under this alternative would have impacts greater than the proposed Area Plan.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Alternative 3 would not substantially increase or decrease the transport, use, or disposal of hazardous substances relative to the proposed Area Plan. As emergency response plans are developed and adopted independently of the Area Plan and General Plan process, impacts on emergency preparedness and response would be comparable for Alternative 3 and the proposed project. This alternative would support programs related to wildland fire and fire hazard impacts would be similar to the proposed project.

Hydrology and Water Quality

As the County's Planning Area reaches buildout, the amount of unpaved surface area would decrease due to the construction of more paved surfaces such as parking lots, streets, and sidewalks. As described in **Section 3.12, Hydrology and Water Quality**, existing and proposed development is subject to state and federal guidelines which regulate surface water quality and discharge, either through point sources or non-point sources. As seen in the existing Land Use Map, redesignation of land uses would have the greatest potential to affect water quality and hydrology. As the land uses would increase in density, the amount of impervious surfaces, and change from rural land to urban residential and commercial/industrial; impacts on hydrology and water quality within the Transit Corridor would be greater than those of the proposed Area Plan.

Water Service

Since the buildout population under Alternative 3 (243,779) would be greater than the buildout population under the proposed Area Plan (200,000), the County's water supply needs at Area Plan buildout would be greater under this alternative. Therefore, impacts related on water service would be greater than those associated with the proposed Area Plan. However, there would still be sufficient water supplies to meet this population.

Community Services

Seniors and Youth

Alternative 3 would have a larger population at buildout and a potentially larger group of seniors than the proposed project. The County would need to work with childcare facilities and providers to provide adequate services during buildout. Park resources would need to meet the future demands of youth programs and youth sports. Impacts on senior and youth services under Alternative 3 would be potentially greater than those of the proposed Area Plan due to the potentially greater demand for services resulting from a higher buildout population.

Cultural Amenities

Cultural amenities would be potentially be greater for Alternative 3 than the proposed project. Since the land use changes would increase residential and office and professional land density, which would potentially increase population within the Transit Corridor boundary, impacts on cultural amenities would be greater than the proposed project.

Homelessness and Emergency Shelters

Services such as the provision of emergency shelters and housing for the disadvantaged population would be established under both the proposed Area Plan and Alternative 3. Therefore, impacts on community services would be similar to those associated with the proposed Area Plan. Both alternatives would adhere to the County of Los Angeles Housing Element.

Public Services

Libraries

The buildout of Alternative 3 would increase the projected amount of dwelling units by 13,429 dwelling units as compared to the proposed project. This would be an increase of approximately 43,779 residents within the County's Planning Area.[6] With a larger population there would be a greater demand on library items and library space. As described above, Alternative 3 would need 670,393 library items and 121,890 square feet of library space to meet the guidelines of 2.75 library items per resident and 0.5 square feet of library space per resident. The proposed project would need 550,000 library items and 100,000

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6 3.26 persons per household was used to calculate the approximate number of residents. This was determined by the dividing the 2008 population of the County's Planning Area and the 2008 number of dwelling units.

square feet of library space at buildout. Therefore, since Alternative 3 would need more library items and library space than the proposed Area Plan, impacts on library services would be greater than the proposed Area Plan.

Health Services

Since the buildout population of Alternative 3 (243,779) would be potentially greater than the buildout population of the proposed Area Plan (200,000), the County's health and social services needs would be greater under Alternative 3. As of 2007, 10.2 percent of the population consisted of the age group 65 or older. If trends stay the same then, at buildout, 37,542 people, or 15.4 percent, of Alternative 3's projected 243,779 residents would be age 65 or older. The proposed Area Plan would total 30,800 people age 65 and over. Every age group of the projected population would require adequate health care within the County's Planning Area, not just newborns and the elderly. Therefore, impacts on health services would be greater under Alternative 3 than those of the proposed Area Plan.

Education

The County's education needs would be greater under Alternative 3 than under the proposed project because of the potentially greater buildout population with Alternative 3. As population increases towards buildout, residential dwelling units would be developed to provide a jobs to housing ratio. School districts within the OVOV Planning use a student generation rate that is based on the number and the types of residential dwelling units. Therefore, as population increases there would be a potential for greater amounts of students. Therefore, impacts on education would be greater under Alternative 3.

Fire Protection

Since the buildout population under the proposed Area Plan would be less than that of the buildout population under Alternative 3, the County's fire protection needs at Alternative 3 buildout would be greater. This increase in population would potentially slow down the median emergency response time. Therefore, impacts on fire protection would potentially be greater with buildout of Alternative 3.

Police Protection

The current number of sworn officers, within the County's Planning Area, is 171, which provides one officer per 439 residents. With buildout under Alternative 3, the number of officers required to maintain a standard of one officer per 1,000 residents would need to be 244 for the projected population of 243,779 residents, or an additional 73 sworn officers. The proposed Area Plan buildout population would be

200,000 residents and would therefore require 200 sworn officers, or an additional 29 sworn officers to maintain standards. Alternative 3 would require an additional 44 sworn officers than the proposed project. Therefore, Alternative 3 would have greater impacts on police protection than those associated with the proposed Area Plan.

Parks and Recreation

Buildout conditions under Alternative 3 would require more parkland to meet the needs of the citizens of the County's Planning Area, per the Quimby Act. Under this alternative, the estimated number of residents in the County's Planning Area would be 243,779. Therefore, 732 acres of parks would be needed to satisfy the Quimby Act requirement of 3 acres per 1,000 residents. The proposed project would require 685.7 acres of parkland. As Alternative 3 would require more parkland than the proposed project, impacts on parks and recreation under Alternative 3 would be greater than the proposed Area Plan.

Utilities and Infrastructure

Wastewater

The County's wastewater generation and treatment needs at Area Plan buildout would need to be evaluated on a project-by-project basis for their potential impact on the capacity and effectiveness of the wastewater treatment system to treat the potential additional sources of wastewater. Due to the potential for greater demand under Alternative 3 on existing and planned wastewater treatment facilities; impacts on wastewater would be greater than those associated with the proposed Area Plan.

Solid Waste

Since the buildout population under Alternative 3 would be greater than the buildout population under the proposed project, the County's solid waste generation and disposal needs at Area Plan buildout would potentially be greater. As described above, the projected buildout generated waste under the proposed Area Plan would be 129,210 tons per year (3.54 pounds per capita per day). Alternative 3 estimates that buildout population of the County's Planning Area would be 243,779 residents. Using the same per capita waste generation number for this alternative the projected amount of waste disposal would be 157,493.4 tons per year. Due to the nearby landfills approaching full capacity for waste disposal and the projected amount of landfill capacity for the County's Planning Area, there would be a shortfall of capacity by 2021. Since the amount of waste disposed would be greater than the proposed project, impacts on solid waste would be greater under Alternative 3.

Electricity, Natural Gas and Telecommunications

The County's electricity, natural gas, and telecommunications needs at Area Plan buildout would be greater than those of the proposed project due to the potentially greater buildout population. Consequently, impacts on electricity, natural gas, and telecommunications would potentially be greater when compared to those of the proposed project.

Noise

Under this alternative the noise impacts would reflect the construction impacts associated with the proposed project. Over the buildout of the County's Planning Area, the only area that would have the potential for greater impacts from noise and noise generating sources would be the Transit Corridor area of the County's Planning Area. As seen in **Figure 6.0-2**, this area would have increased density for more employment opportunities. The increase in density would have the potential for an increase in the amount of noise generating sources under this alternative. As with an increase in density there would potentially be an increase in the amount of vehicle trips and vehicle miles traveled. However, since Alternative 3 proposes urban residential land uses and office and professional land uses, the opportunity for walkable communities, the proximity of transit, and less vehicle miles traveled would have fewer potential noise impacts. As Alternative 3 would potentially have approximately 43,779 more residents, there would potentially be an increase in the noise from vehicles traveling along major transportation routes. Therefore, noise impacts would be less than the proposed project.

Population and Housing

Under Alternative 3, the total number of new housing units developed within the County's Planning Area at Area Plan buildout would be increased 13,429 dwelling units. The proposed project would designate the land uses for H2 and RL 10 for a total of 285 dwelling units. The estimated buildout population for Alternative 3 would be 243,779 residents. Alternative 3 would not interfere with the County's ability to meet its RHNA. Under the proposed Area Plan the Transit Corridor boundary is designated as H2 and RL 10. RL 10 land is designated for environmental features and would not be appropriate for intense development requiring urban services. Lands in this category are largely undeveloped and consist of rolling hillside areas, slopes, and mountain lands with limited or no access. H2 provides for neighborhoods of single-family homes and other residential uses at densities that require urban services generally on large lots. Many of these neighborhoods provide a transition between higher density, urban development, and rural communities throughout the County's Planning Area, and designation of this district is appropriate in such rural/urban interface areas.

Alternative 3 would designate areas within the Transit Corridor boundary as H30 and IO, see **Figure 6.0-2**. The proposed project would total approximately 107 acres of H2 land uses and 701 acres of RL 10 land uses. The H30 land use designation would allow an estimated 16,251 dwelling units on 5,412 acres with 267 acres designated as IO within the Transit Corridor, thus increasing the density and the number of residents at buildout. Impacts on housing and population under this alternative would be greater than that of the proposed project.

Conclusion

As discussed above, under Alternative 3, an area plan similar to the proposed Area Plan would be implemented, except development density would be concentrated around Lang Station on land uses designated for RL 10 and H2 by the proposed Area Plan. As a result, new mixed use housing units and additional office and professional buildings would be developed within the County's Planning Area at Area Plan buildout. Therefore, implementation of Alternative 3 would not achieve the following project objectives to the same degree as the proposed Area Plan.

10. Biological resources in the designated Significant Ecological Areas (SEAs) shall be protected through the siting and design of development to account for and be highly compatible with their resources. Specific development standards shall be identified to control the types of land use, density, building location and size, roadways and other infrastructure, landscape, drainage, and other elements to assure the protection of the critical and important plant and animal habitats of each SEA. In general, the principle shall be to minimize the intrusion and impacts of development in these areas with sufficient setbacks, or buffers, to adequately protect the resources.

20. Housing developments located in the more urbanized communities of the Valley shall be designed to create a sense of neighborhood by

    b. containing a mix of housing types, densities, and parcel sizes, avoiding large areas and an over-concentration of homogeneous density units;

Under Alternative 3 impacts less than that of the proposed Area Plan would include: land use, agricultural resources, biological resources, hazards, and hazardous materials. Potential impacts determined to be greater under Alternative 3 compared to the proposed Area Plan include transportation and circulation, air quality, global climate change, hydrology and water quality, water service, community services (except homelessness and emergency shelters), public services, parks and recreation, utilities and infrastructure—wastewater, population and housing, cultural resources, libraries, health services, education, fire services, aesthetics, and mineral resources. Impacts on biological resources, solid waste, and noise would remain significant and unavoidable.

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS

Table 6.0-4, Alternatives Analysis Comparison Summary, provides a comparison of the impacts associated with each project alternative relative to the proposed Area Plan. Where the project alternative would be environmentally superior (result in fewer impacts) to the proposed Area Plan, a plus (+) sign is shown; where the project alternative would result in impacts greater than those associated with the proposed Area Plan, a minus (–) sign is shown. For the instances when impacts are comparable (similar) for both the proposed Area Plan and the project alternative, an equals sign (=) is shown.

Table 6.0-4
Alternatives Analysis Comparison Summary

Environmental Issue Area	Proposed Area Plan Impact (After Mitigation)	Alt. 1 – No Project	Alt. 2 – Preservation Corridor	Alt. 3 – Transit Corridor/ Increased Employment Opportunity
Land Use	Less than Significant	-	+	=
Transportation and Circulation	Less than Significant	-	+	-
Air Quality	Less than Significant	=	+	-
Global Climate Change	Less than Significant	+	+	-
Agricultural Resources	Significant and Unavoidable	=	=	=
Aesthetics	Less than Significant	-	+	=
Biological Resources	Significant and Unavoidable	-	+	-
Cultural Resources	Less than Significant	=	+	-
Geology and Soils	Less than Significant	=	+	-
Mineral Resources	Less than Significant	=	+	-
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	Less than Significant	=	=	=
Hydrology and Water Quality	Less than Significant	+	+	-
Water Service	Less than Significant	-	+	-
Community Services – Seniors/Youth	Less than Significant	-	+	-
Community Services – Cultural Amenities	Less than Significant	-	+	-
Community Services – Homelessness/Emergency Shelters	Less than Significant	=	+	=
Public Services – Libraries	Less than Significant	-	+	-
Public Services – Health Services	Less than Significant	-	+	-
Public Services – Education	Less than Significant	=	+	-
Public Services - Fire Protection	Less than Significant	-	+	-

Environmental Issue Area	Proposed Area Plan Impact (After Mitigation)	Alt. 1 – No Project	Alt. 2 – Preservation Corridor	Alt. 3 – Transit Corridor/ Increased Employment Opportunity
Public Services – Police Protection	Less than Significant	-	+	-
Parks and Recreation	Less than Significant	-	+	-
Utilities – Wastewater	Less than Significant	-	+	-
Utilities - Solid Waste	Significant and Unavoidable	-	+	-
Utilities – Energy/Natural Gas/Telecommunications	Less than Significant	-	+	-
Noise	Significant and Unavoidable	-	+	+
Population and Housing	Less than Significant	=	+	-

ENVIRONMENTALLY SUPERIOR ALTERNATIVE

Section 15126.6(e)(2) of the *State CEQA Guidelines* indicates that an analysis of alternatives to the proposed project shall identify one alternative as the environmentally superior alternative. Furthermore, if the environmentally superior alternative is the No Project/No Development Alternative, the EIR shall also identify an environmentally superior alternative from among the other alternatives. For the OVOV project, based on the analysis included herein, the Preservation Corridor Alternative would be considered environmentally superior to the proposed project because it would avoid and/or substantially reduce the severity of significant impacts associated with implementing the proposed project. As seen in **Table 6.0-4**, potential impacts were generally found to be less than that of the proposed project.

This alternative would reduce the severity of the significant and unavoidable biological impacts to less than significant. Alternative 2 would be consistent with the proposed SEA within the eastern portion of the County's Planning Area and with the SCML. Alternative 2 would provide potential for the movement of wildlife between the two units of the National Forest.

From an environmental perspective, this alternative is superior to the proposed project as it reduces the level of impacts associated with the proposed project. However, this alternative is rejected in favor of the proposed project because it does not meet as many of the objectives as the proposed project. For example, because this alternative would result in a reduced population and a decrease in the number of housing units it would be less effective at achieving goals 14, 17and 29 to the extent of the proposed project. Infrastructure would be built, expanded and maintained to support a reduced population in a rural setting.