

CHAPTER 5.0 ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT

5.1 Rationale for Alternative Selection

Six alternatives are evaluated – a No Development Alternative, the CEQA-mandated No Project Alternative, a Reduced Grading Alternative, a Reduced Footprint/Maximum Density Alternative, a Reduced Project Alternative, and a Reduced Visibility Alternative.

The No Development Alternative would preclude any development and leave the site in its existing condition. This alternative was selected to compare the environmental effects of the Project against leaving the property in its existing state.

The No Project Alternative considers development of the site in accordance with the approved Panorama Ridge Specific Plan, which would allow for the development of 355 dwelling units. CEQA §15126.6(e) requires that the SEIR include an alternative describing what would reasonably be expected to occur on the property if the Project were not approved, based on current plans and consistent with available infrastructure and community services.

The Reduced Grading Alternative would allow for the development of 39 residential lots (10,000 s.f. minimum lot size) on the property. This Alternative was selected in response to a Notice of Preparation comment from the Spring Valley Community Planning Group to preserve steep slopes and provide larger residential lot sizes.

The Reduced Footprint/Maximum Density Alternative would reduce the development footprint in an effort to reduce impacts to biological resources and steep slopes, while allowing for the development of 332 small-lot cluster homes, with units ranging in size from 1,655 s.f to 1,840 s.f. This Alternative was selected to evaluate the effects of implementing the County's pending General Plan land use designation for the site.

The Reduced Project Alternative would reduce the number of residential lots from 211 to 150, with development occurring within the same limits of grading as proposed by the Project. Under this alternative, minimum lot sizes would increase from 5,000 s.f. to 6,500 s.f. This alternative was selected in order to evaluate the effects of a reduction in the number of dwelling units proposed for the site.

The Reduced Visibility Alternative considers a reconfiguration of residential lots within the project site in order to reduce impacts to visual quality. Specifically, the Reduced Visibility Alternative would eliminate dwelling units that would be prominently visible from the South Barcelona viewshed, which is significantly impacted by the proposed Project.

With the exception of the No Development Alternative, each alternative is designed to meet the Project objective of providing residential housing on the project site. Table 5-1, *Comparison Of Project Alternative Impacts To Significant Proposed Project Impacts*, shows a comparison of environmental impacts among the alternatives. The alternatives evaluated in this section represent a reasonable range of alternatives as required by CEQA §15126.6(a) and are in accordance with the "rule of reason" identified in CEQA §15126.6(f).

No alternative locations for the Project are evaluated in this document because no alternate sites were considered reasonable under the provisions of CEQA. The currently selected location is the only option for the proposed Project. Amendment of the previously approved Panorama Ridge SPA as proposed by the Project can only occur on the project site. Regardless, alternative locations within the Spring Valley community were reviewed, and it was determined that no feasible location exists for a large scale development project such as the one proposed. The hillside southeast of the proposed project site is undeveloped and could sustain the size of the proposed Project; however, this area is dedicated open space precluding any potential for development. Due to the built-out nature of the community, there are no other feasible alternative locations within the Spring Valley community. The neighboring community of Casa de Oro has hilltop development on Mount Helix. This area also is built-out with no undeveloped areas available to sustain the proposed Project. The proposed Project is consistent with the selected location's General Plan and Zoning designation, and infrastructure is readily available due to surrounding development. In consideration of these circumstances, it has been concluded that there are no feasible alternative sites for the proposed Project.

5.2 Analysis of the No Development Alternative

5.2.1 No Development Alternative Description and Setting

The No Development Alternative allows the decision-makers to compare the impacts of approving the proposed Project against the impacts that would occur if the site were to remain undeveloped for the foreseeable future. The No Development Alternative would involve leaving the site in its existing condition, as depicted on Figure 5-1, *No Development Alternative*. The project site is undeveloped except for an existing water reservoir, electric transmission lines, and unimproved access roads. The access roads provide maintenance vehicle access for the transmission lines and the OWD reservoir. The project site is mostly covered with native vegetation, much of which is low-lying scrub.

5.2.2 Comparison of the Effects of the No Development Alternative to the Proposed Project

Aesthetics and Visual Quality

The No Development Alternative would not involve the development of the project site and would therefore not create an impact related to aesthetics and visual quality. The No Development Alternative would avoid the Project's significant visual quality impacts. However, absent purchase of the site by a conservation organization with funding for ongoing maintenance of the open space, continued unauthorized use of the site could create increased visual blight from trash and destruction of the natural appearance from extensive off-road vehicle trails. The quality of the native vegetation as a visual resource could degrade with the continued introduction of non-native vegetation, including "weed" species, surrounding the site and the natural effects of isolation on the native plant populations. The level of these changes on the visual quality would be a less significant impact.

Air Quality

The No Development Alternative would result in the generation of no air pollutants and eliminate the proposed Project's contribution to the degradation of regional air quality. Construction related air quality impacts also would not occur.

Biological Resources

Short-term impacts to biological resources would continue under the No Development Alternative; however, they would be limited to human-set fires, vegetation removed by off-road or other unauthorized activities, and habitat disruption during maintenance and replacement of on-site transmission lines and the OWD water tank. In the long-term, the property would remain as an island of habitat connected to other open spaces through pockets of open space in the adjacent Pointe San Diego development. Some wildlife populations on-site may be unsustainable in the long-term, due to the combined threats of reduced genetic diversity, inbreeding, repeated disturbance by fire, unauthorized human activities, and feral dogs and cats. Reptiles and small mammals, which may have limited mobility, would have limited influx of genetic material and may experience increased mortality and decreasing reproductive success. In addition, the increasing level of disturbance to the on-site habitats over time will enable exotic species to invade and establish over increasingly greater areas. Many of these exotics may either directly outcompete the natives or eliminate available areas for native habitat expansion. Under this alternative, no mitigation can be required to offset the long-term degradation of the quality of the on-site biological resources.

Hydrology and Water Quality

Under the No Development Alternative, the existing hydrologic conditions of the site would be maintained. Areas devoid of vegetation due to human disturbance (i.e., trails) would continue to be subject to erosion. However, the drainage conditions on the site would be maintained, and the site would not substantially contribute to water quality impacts downstream. Flood hazards to downstream properties would not change under this alternative. Therefore, implementation of the No Development Alternative would result in less than significant impacts to hydrology and water quality, and these impacts would be reduced as compared to the proposed Project.

Noise

Because no development would occur on the site, no on-site construction noise would occur, and no vehicular traffic noise would be generated. Noise impacts would not occur under the No Development Alternative, as noted on Page 39 of the Noise Study (Appendix F). Thus, hourly noise levels would range between 36 to 63 dBA with normal daytime levels averaging roughly 45 dBA onsite. Future increases in noise due to off-site urbanization surrounding the site would result in an approximate two to three decibel increase in community noise levels under the cumulative project scenario.

Traffic

Traffic associated with the proposed Project would be eliminated as part of the No Development Alternative; therefore, the Project's contribution to significant cumulative impacts would not occur. There would be no participation by the Highlands Ranch property owner in the construction of the ultimate Circulation Element improvements that would alleviate existing and future unacceptable levels of service on existing street segments and intersections in the community.

Effects Found not to be Significant under the Proposed Project

Implementation of the proposed Project was found to result in less than significant impacts requiring no mitigation under the issue areas of hazards and hazardous materials, land use and planning, public services, recreation, and utilities and service systems. As compared to the proposed Project, the No Development Alternative would not result in impacts to these issue areas.

5.2.3 Rationale for Preference of Proposed Project over the No Development Alternative

Implementation of this Alternative does not meet the Project objectives to develop the project site with residences as envisioned in the Spring Valley Community Plan. In addition, this Alternative would not establish restrictions over unauthorized activities in the natural open space. In the long-term, biological diversity could be reduced due to the relatively isolated nature of the site. Also, no entity has been identified with the willingness and financial ability to purchase the project site at market value for permanent open space. Finally, this alternative would fail to achieve the objectives of the proposed Project, as identified in EIR Section 1.2.

5.3 Analysis of the No Project Alternative

5.3.1 No Project Alternative Description and Setting

This is the CEQA-mandated No Project Alternative, which allows the decision-makers to compare the impacts of approving the proposed Project against the impacts of not approving the Project. Under this scenario, development as permitted by the approved Panorama Ridge SPA would be constructed on the property. The No Project Alternative would involve the development of 355 residential homes, as well as parks and private streets, resulting in a total impact area of 93.9 acres (as compared to 75.9 acres that would be impacted by the proposed Project). Lot sizes proposed by the No Project Alternative would range from 5,000 square feet to 16,000 square feet in size. Access would be provided from the north via Ivy Street, and from the south via La Presa Avenue and San Bernardino Avenue, with no connection provided to the east via Pointe Parkway.

Implementation of the Panorama Ridge SPA would result in a larger area of ground disturbance as compared to the proposed Project. Although the grading volume referenced in the Panorama Ridge SPA text is 300,000 c.y., it is assumed that this was an error because the Project civil engineer evaluated the Panorama Ridge land use plan and determined that grading volumes necessary to develop the Panorama Ridge SPA would be over 1.1 million c.y. Therefore, the volume of grading likely needed to implement this Alternative would be slightly more than the proposed Project's estimated 1,066,689 c.y.

5.3.2 Comparison of the Effects of the No Project Alternative to the Proposed Project

Aesthetics and Visual Quality

Development of the No Project Alternative would alter the appearance of the project site from an undeveloped parcel to that of a developed suburban community. Grading would occur over a majority of the site and disturb the top and side slopes of Dictionary Hill. Grading quantities and areas of disturbance would be greater than proposed by the Project. The amount of open space would be less than the proposed Project. As viewed from the Spring Valley viewshed, a greater amount of development would be visible. Also, as viewed from Jamacha Boulevard and Highway 125, scenic corridors, development under this Alternative would be more visible than development proposed by the Project. Impacts to the topographic character of the Dictionary Hill landform would be considered significant and would occur to a greater degree than would occur under the proposed Project. Implementation of the No Project Alternative would therefore result in significant and unmitigable impacts to visual quality, and these impacts would be increased relative to the proposed Project.

Air Quality

SANDAG growth projections consider the build-out of County-approved Specific Plans, Community Plans, and the General Plan. Because this Alternative would implement the approved Panorama Ridge SPA, it would be consistent with the SANDAG projections for growth within this area, and would, by default, not be in conflict with the *Consistency Criterion* of the RAQS or the SIP for criteria pollutants. Because a greater amount of site disturbance and grading would occur under the No Project Alternative as compared to the Project, increased short-term air quality impacts would result due to rough grading, underground utility construction, and paving. Significant air quality impacts could be expected from diesel exhaust because NO_x emission levels could rise above SDAPCD thresholds. With the disturbance of no more than 250,000 cubic yards of material per phase, PM₁₀ impacts would be the same per day as would occur under the proposed Project and would be significant without surface wetting.

In the long-term, 3,550 ADT would be generated under this Alternative as compared to 2,110 ADT under the proposed Project. Operational trip emission levels would be greater, but would not exceed significance levels. Similar to the proposed Project, operational impacts from wood burning fireplaces in residential homes is less than significant under this Alternative because the MUP prohibits their installation in initial home construction and it is unlikely that many homes would be retrofitted to install them in the future.

Biological Resources

Because implementation of the Panorama Ridge SPA would result in a greater disturbance area as compared to the proposed Project, increased impacts to all on-site biological resources would occur, except for impacts to the southern willow scrub and wetland area in the northeastern portion of the Project site which would be avoided both by the proposed Project and this Alternative. This Alternative would significantly increase impacts to the coastal sage scrub vegetation community, variegated dudleya, barrel cactus, and San Diego goldenstar plant species, and the coastal California gnatcatcher bird species. In addition, this Alternative would impact at least half or more of the entire population of Munz's sage on-site. As a result, this Alternative would not be in compliance with the County's Biological Mitigation Ordinance (BMO). Non-compliance with the BMO would result in non-compliance with the MSCP, resulting in a significant impact for which no mitigation is available. This Alternative also would result in greater indirect impacts to coastal California gnatcatchers, rufous-crowned sparrows, and other birds through habitat reduction and fragmentation, edge effects, and domestic animal interference. Due to increased edge effect, increased indirect impacts due to invasive species, lighting, drainage, etc., also would occur.

Hydrology and Water Quality

Because more development would occur under the No Project Alternative when compared with the proposed Project, impacts associated with drainage, stormwater runoff, and flooding would be increased. However, the installation of detention basins and compliance with a stormwater management plan would reduce the No Project Alternative's impacts to hydrology and water quality to a level below significance.

Noise

As noted on Page 40 of the Noise Study (Appendix F), with implementation of the No Project Alternative, community noise conditions would be greater than those identified for the proposed Project. The anticipated impacts are expected to be approximately 68 percent higher than those identified under the proposed Project. This would equate to approximately a 2.0 dBA community noise level increase as compared to the proposed Project due to future traffic noise impacts. Onsite noise generation would be similar to that of the proposed Project. Ground vibration impacts under this Alternative also would be similar to that of the proposed Project, and would not be expected to generate significant impacts. Construction noise impacts would be greater than those of the proposed Project due to the increased extent of grading and development and the closer distance to sensitive receptors under this Alternative, although such increased impacts could be mitigated by measures similar to those recommended for the Project.

Traffic

In the long-term, 3,550 ADT would be generated under this Alternative as compared to 2,110 ADT under the proposed Project. Traffic would enter and exit the site from local roadways north and south of the site instead of through a connection to Pointe Parkway from the southeast and a connection to Montemar Drive from the northwest. Due to the greater development intensity that would occur under this Alternative (355 residential homes), traffic impacts would be increased. Also, traffic would be forced to use existing local roadways constructed at steep grades which could result in the potential to increase traffic conflicts and safety concerns. In addition, the increase in ADT generated under this Alternative would result in significant and unmitigable direct impacts to Jamacha Boulevard south of Campo Road (where it would exceed the significance threshold of 400 ADT). Moreover, in order to facilitate full vehicular access from Ivy Street, improvements to both Ivy Street and Montemar Drive would be required which are not feasible due to the required right-of-way widths, sight-distances, and grades. Finally, this Alternative would result in significant unmitigable impacts at the SR-94 Westbound Ramp/Sweetwater Springs Road due to the cost-prohibitive nature of bridge over-crossing, widening, and ramp improvements. As with the proposed Project, cumulative impacts also would occur, but would be reduced to a level below significance with the payment of TIF fees.

Effects Found Not to Be Significant Under the Proposed Project

Implementation of the proposed Project was found to result in less than significant impacts requiring no mitigation under the issue areas of hazards and hazardous materials, land use and planning, public services, recreation, and utilities and service systems. As compared to the proposed Project, development under the No Project Alternative would incrementally increase impacts to these issue areas due to the greater development intensity of 355 homes over a larger disturbance area and would result in a significant Land Use and Planning impact due to non-compliance with the MSCP and BMO.

5.3.3 Rationale for Preference of Proposed Project over the “No Project” Alternative

The Proposed Project is preferred over the No Project Alternative because it would reduce the development intensity and disturbance footprint on the project site. The proposed Project would result in a lesser degree of environmental impact associated with every issue area evaluated in this SEIR and would be in compliance with the County’s MSCP and BMO.

5.4 Analysis of the Reduced Grading Alternative

5.4.1 Reduced Grading Alternative Description and Setting

The Reduced Grading Alternative would eliminate 172 lots (81.5%) from the proposed Project. This Alternative contemplates development of the site with 39 lots (10,000 s.f. minimum lot size), with access provided at Pointe Parkway and an emergency-access only connection to Ivy Street, as shown on *Figure 5-3, Reduced Grading Alternative*. Grading to implement the Reduced Grading Alternative would require approximately 240,000 cubic yards of cut and fill. This Alternative is identified as the Environmentally Superior Alternative.

5.4.2 Comparison of the Effects of the Reduced Grading Alternative to the Proposed Project

Aesthetics and Visual Quality

Development of the Reduced Grading Alternative would alter the appearance of the project site from an undeveloped parcel to that of a hilltop neighborhood. Grading would occur along the top of Dictionary Hill and Little Dictionary Hill to allow for 39 gently sloping pads for home sites. Grading quantities would be decreased by approximately 830,000 cubic yards, and areas of impact would be reduced from 75.9 acres to 47.6 acres, as compared to the proposed Project. The number, height, and extent of manufactured slopes would be substantially reduced as compared to the proposed Project, and only one large manufactured slope associated with Pointe Parkway near the Project entrance would be visible from off-site locations. Retaining walls would not be needed. The amount of open space would be greater than the proposed Project. As viewed from surrounding viewsheds, a lesser amount of development would be visible. The development of the slightly larger lots (i.e., 10,000 s.f. or larger) would be consistent with lot sizes and zoning in the surrounding neighborhoods. The surrounding neighborhoods have minimum lot sizes of 3,000 square feet to the southeast (Pointe Development), 6,000 and 10,000 square feet to the south, 0.5 and 1 acre to the west, and 10,000 and 15,000 square feet, and 0.5 and 1 acre to the north. In addition, due to the somewhat isolated nature of the hilltop development, this alternative would be most prominently visible from the neighborhoods to the north. Development would still be visible from Jamacha Boulevard and Highway 125, scenic corridors, and aesthetic impacts would be regarded as significant due to visibility of development. Impacts to the topographic character of the Dictionary Hill landform would be considered significant, but would occur to a much lesser degree than would occur under the proposed Project. Implementation of this Alternative would not eliminate the cumulatively significant and unmitigable impact due to the visibility of grading when viewed from the Spring Valley viewshed, and mitigation is not available to reduce these impacts to a level below significance. Impacts to aesthetics and visual quality would be much reduced but not avoided as compared to the proposed Project.

Air Quality

The Reduced Grading Alternative would include fewer residential units and therefore would result in less traffic (390 ADT). This would result in the generation of fewer vehicle emission air pollutants with a corresponding reduction in the degradation of regional air quality. Construction related air quality impacts also would be much reduced due to a reduction in construction activity from fewer dwelling units being developed and a substantial reduction in areas proposed for ground disturbance.

Similar to the proposed Project, operational impacts from wood burning fireplaces in residential homes is less than significant under this Alternative because the MUP prohibits their installation in initial home construction and it is unlikely that many homes would be retrofitted to install them in the future.

Biological Resources

Biological impacts associated with the Reduced Grading Alternative would be reduced when compared to the proposed Project because less land area would be graded and developed. The BMO requires that avoidance of sensitive plants must be considered in project design, and that impacts to Narrow Endemic and County Group A and B plant species must be avoided to the maximum extent practicable. Where complete avoidance is not feasible, encroachment may be authorized but should not exceed 20% of the population on-site. Under the Reduced Grading Alternative, impacts to Munz's sage would be 1.08-acre (5.2%), impacts to San Diego barrel cactus would be 128 individuals (13.5%), impacts to San Diego goldenstar would be 1.0 acre (18.8%), and impacts to variegated dudleya would be 0.02-acre (5.0%). In addition, this Alternative would reduce impacts to the black tailed jackrabbit, coast barrel cactus, and the coastal California gnatcatcher. Because impacts to each Narrow Endemic plant community would not exceed 20%, this Alternative would be in compliance with the BMO and the MSCP, and impacts would be reduced as compared to the proposed Project.

Hydrology and Water Quality

Because the Reduced Grading Alternative proposes a reduction of 172 lots from the proposed Project, impacts associated with stormwater runoff, drainage, and flooding would likewise be diminished but not eliminated. Impacts to hydrology and water quality would still require mitigation involving the installation of a detention basin and compliance with a storm water management plan in order to reduce impacts to a level below significance.

Noise

As noted on Page 43 of the Noise Study (Appendix F), implementation of the Reduced Grading Alternative would produce an approximate 82 percent reduction in overall community noise levels in the long-term scenario. Traffic associated with this Alternative would result in a noise level decrease of approximately 2.4 dBA under the cumulative condition. Onsite noise generation would be reduced as compared to the proposed Project. In addition, ground vibration impacts under this Alternative would be reduced due to a reduction in areas proposed for grading and would not be expected to result in significant impacts. Construction noise impacts due to grading would be substantially less than the proposed Project, and would occur over a shorter duration of time.

Traffic

In the long-term, 390 ADT would be generated under this Alternative as compared to 2,110 ADT under the proposed Project. Traffic would enter and exit the site through a connection to Pointe Parkway. Due to the lesser development intensity that would occur under this Alternative, traffic impacts would decrease. However, because Jamacha Boulevard is currently operating at LOS F, and because the Alternative proposes more than 100 ADT, a direct and cumulatively significant impact would occur which would require mitigation. Cumulative impacts would be mitigated through payment of the TIF. Direct impacts would be mitigated by improvements planned by County Project #CG-4476/Log89-19-105E, to which this Alternative would contribute a fair share payment. The

Reduced Grading Alternative would result in lesser impacts as compared to the proposed Project, and its impacts would be mitigated to a less than significant level.

Effects Found not to be Significant under the Proposed Project

Implementation of the proposed Project was found to result in less than significant impacts requiring no mitigation under the issue areas of hazards and hazardous materials, land use and planning, public services, recreation, and utilities and service systems. As compared to the proposed Project, development under the Reduced Grading Alternative would result in a lesser degree of impact associated with these issues.

5.4.3 Rationale for Preference of Proposed Project over the Reduced Grading Alternative

Due to the reduced number of dwelling units (39) under the Reduced Grading Alternative, environmental impacts would be proportionately less. Although the Reduced Grading Alternative would achieve all of the objectives of the proposed Project, the proposed Project would be more effective at achieving the Project objective of providing housing opportunities on the site to meet the housing shortage projected for San Diego County.

5.5 Analysis of the Reduced Footprint/Maximum Density Alternative

5.5.1 Reduced Footprint/Maximum Density Description and Setting

The County General Plan is in the process of being updated. The pending future update is commonly referred to as “General Plan 2020.” The Reduced Footprint/Maximum Density Alternative would increase development intensity on the site to achieve, to the extent possible, the land use designation of 2 du/ac applied to the site by the pending General Plan Update. (The Alternative would reduce the on-site limits of grading impacts from 75.93 acres to 64.9 acres, including the limited building zone (LBZ)). This Alternative considers developing the site with 332 two-story small-lot cluster homes ranging in size from 1,647 to 1,840 square feet. Approximately 825,000 cubic yards of cut and fill would be required to implement this Alternative, which amounts to approximately 23% less grading volume in comparison to the approximately 1,066,689 cubic yards required for the proposed Project. An additional 1.0-acre of off-site grading would occur which would require letters of permission from affected off-site property owners. The Alternative would divide the development into two development envelopes to reduce grading and biology impacts in the center of the site. Both portions of the development would be accessed via the proposed connection with Pointe Parkway to the east, while an emergency-only access would be provided at Ivy Street. Total dwelling units would be increased from 211 to 332, resulting in a gross density of 1.9 du/ac. The residential units would be developed in a small-lot single-family cluster pattern as shown on Figure 5-4, *Reduced Footprint/Maximum Density Alternative*.

5.5.2 Comparison of the Effects of the Reduced Footprint/Maximum Density Alternative to the Proposed Project

Aesthetics and Visual Quality

The Reduced Footprint/Maximum Density Alternative and the proposed Project would be similar with regard to aesthetics and visual quality impacts. Similar types of land uses are proposed under both scenarios, although residential development would occur at a higher density under the Reduced

Footprint/Maximum Density Alternative. The Alternative would reduce grading at the top of Dictionary Hill, but this reduction would not substantially reduce impacts relative to aesthetics and visual quality which would occur under the proposed Project, because development would still be visible from off-site locations in the Spring Valley viewshed. As with the proposed Project, retaining walls also would be required in order to reduce the amount and area of required grading. Although the Alternative would result in additional areas of open space at the perimeter (111.68 acres undisturbed, versus 100.65 acres with the proposed Project), the additional amount of open space would not be substantial in relation to appearance from off-site viewsheds. Development would still be visible from surrounding communities, would still affect the topographic landform of Dictionary Hill, and would still be visible from scenic corridors. Mitigation measures similar to those recommended for the Project would be required to reduce the visual impact of this Alternative. As with the proposed Project, impacts to the Spring Valley viewshed would be significant and unmitigable.

Air Quality

The Reduced Footprint/Maximum Density Alternative would include more residential units and therefore would result in more traffic (2,656 ADT). This would result in the generation of a greater concentration of pollutants emitted by vehicles with a corresponding degradation of regional air quality. Construction related air quality impacts would be decreased due to the reduction in earthwork quantities required to implement this Alternative (825,000 cubic yards, versus 1,068,689 cubic yards). Accordingly, impacts associated with grading operations would be slightly reduced, while long-term operational impacts would be increased, as compared to the proposed Project. Impacts associated with NO_x and PM₁₀ would occur, and require the same mitigation measures as recommended for the Project. Similar to the proposed Project, operational impacts from wood burning fireplaces in residential homes is less than significant under this Alternative because the MUP prohibits their installation in initial home construction and it is unlikely that many homes would be retrofitted to install them in the future.

Biological Resources

Biological impacts would be reduced with the Reduced Footprint/Maximum Density Alternative by removing development from the central portion of the site, which impacts sensitive plant species under the proposed Project. The Reduced Footprint/Maximum Density Alternative would result in increased impacts to the non-native grassland vegetation community, but would reduce impacts to Munz's sage, variegated dudleya, coast barrel cactus, and San Diego goldenstar plant species, as compared to the proposed Project. In addition, the Reduced Footprint/Maximum Density Alternative would avoid one pair of coastal California gnatcatchers that would be impacted by the proposed Project. Under either this Alternative or the proposed Project, biological impacts would be reduced to less than significant through on-site preservation of habitat and through acquisition of off-site habitat in a pre-approved mitigation bank. This Alternative would comply with the County's BMO and MSCP. The BMO requires that avoidance of sensitive plants must be considered in project design, and that impacts to Narrow Endemic and County Group A and B plant species must be avoided to the maximum extent practicable. Where complete avoidance is not feasible, encroachment may be authorized but should not exceed 20% of the population onsite. Due to a reduction in impacts to several on-site sensitive biological resources, implementation of the Reduced Project/Maximum Density Alternative would reduce the extent of impacts to biological resources, as compared to the proposed Project.

Hydrology and Water Quality

Because the Reduced Footprint/Maximum Density Alternative would result in an increase in density, impacts associated with stormwater runoff, drainage, and flooding would increase when compared to impacts associated with the proposed Project. With the construction of condominium units on the site, additional impervious surfaces would be created to provide for pedestrian walkways and vehicular circulation. Unlike single-family residential development, landscaped areas (such as backyards) would be reduced. Because the amount of impervious surfaces would increase under this alternative, additional on-site detention would be required to reduce peak runoff volumes. Because the proposed Project would result in significant impacts to hydrology and water quality, mitigation involving the installation of additional detention basins (as compared to the proposed Project) and compliance with a storm water management plan would reduce these impacts to a level below significance.

Noise

As noted on Pages 41 and 42 of the Noise Study (Appendix F), implementation of the Reduced Footprint/Maximum Density Alternative would result in increased long-term operational noise volumes by approximately 26 percent due to the increased number of daily vehicle trips. Community noise level conditions would be greater than those identified for the proposed Project, resulting in an approximate 0.8 dBA community noise level increase as compared to the proposed Project. On-site noise generation would be similar to that of the proposed Project. Ground vibration under this Alternative would be similar to that of the proposed Project and would not be expected to generate significant impacts. Construction noise impacts due to grading would be less than the proposed Project, although the length of time over which construction would occur would be similar. Mitigation measures similar to those recommended for the proposed Project would be required to reduce impacts to below a level of significance.

Traffic

The Reduced Footprint/Maximum Density Alternative creates two development envelopes on-site with a total ADT of approximately 2,656 compared to 2,110 ADT under the proposed Project. An increase in vehicular traffic would occur on Pointe Parkway, as well as other roadways including but not limited to Jamacha Blvd. and Sweetwater Springs. A direct impact would occur on Jamacha Boulevard south of Campo Road where it would meet the significance threshold of 400 ADT. The condominium trip generation rate during peak hours does not, however, trigger unmitigable impacts at SR-94/Sweetwater Springs interchange. Although the level of impacts would increase, no new cumulative impacts are identified. All of the direct and cumulative traffic impacts associated with the alternative would be considered less than significant with mitigation incorporated (i.e., payment of TIF fees). Although significant unmitigable impacts to traffic would not occur under this Alternative, impacts would be increased as compared to the proposed Project.

Effects Found not to be Significant under the Proposed Project

Implementation of the proposed Project was found to result in less than significant impacts requiring no mitigation under the issue areas of hazards and hazardous materials, land use and planning, public services, recreation, and utilities and service systems. As compared to the proposed Project, development under this Alternative would incrementally increase impacts to these issues due to the proposed increase in the number of residential units, but not above a level of significance.

5.5.3 Rationale for Preference of Proposed Project over the Reduced Footprint/Maximum Density Alternative

The proposed Project is preferred over the Reduced Footprint/Maximum Density Alternative because this Alternative would only slightly reduce environmental impacts of the Project associated with biology and landform alteration and would not eliminate any of the Project's significant impacts. Additionally, the Reduced Footprint/Maximum Density Alternative would increase impacts to air quality, traffic, noise, and hydrology and water quality due to the increased development intensity on the site.

5.6 Analysis of the Reduced Project Alternative

5.6.1 Reduced Project Alternative Description and Setting

The Reduced Project Alternative considers a decrease in the number of residential units from the proposed Project's 211 units to a total of 150 units (a reduction of 61 units). This Alternative considers the development of 150 single-family residences on slightly larger lots (minimum lot size of 6,500 s.f. as opposed to 5,000 s.f. with the proposed Project). See Figure 5-5, *Reduced Project Alternative*. As shown, the limits of grading considered by this Alternative are identical to that of the proposed Project.

5.6.2 Comparison of the Effects of the Reduced Project Alternative to the Proposed Project

Aesthetics and Visual Quality

The Reduced Project Alternative and the proposed Project would be similar in regard to aesthetics and visual quality impacts. Land uses and grading amounts would be similar under both scenarios although fewer residential units would be constructed under the Reduced Project Alternative. As with the proposed Project, several retaining walls also would be required in order to reduce the amount and area of required grading. As with the proposed Project, development would be visible from surrounding communities, would affect the topographic landform of Dictionary Hill, and would be visible from scenic corridors. Moreover, the Reduced Project Alternative would result in significant and unmitigable visual quality impacts to portions of the Spring Valley viewshed, as would occur under the proposed Project. Although fewer residential units would be constructed under this Alternative, it is reasonable to conclude that, due to the larger lot sizes proposed by this Alternative, residential units would be larger in size. As a result, visual effects would be very similar to those of the proposed Project.

Air Quality

Under the Reduced Project Alternative, impacts to air quality associated with grading and infrastructure construction would be identical to that of the proposed Project. Emissions associated with home construction would be reduced due to 29% fewer dwelling units. As with the proposed Project, mitigation would be required during construction activities to preclude significant impacts. Due to the reduction in the number of units (i.e., 150 units in lieu of 211), air quality impacts associated with traffic would be reduced by approximately 29%. Mitigation to reduce air quality grading and construction related impacts would be required, as is required under the proposed Project.

Biological Resources

The Reduced Project Alternative would impact the same areas as would be impacted by the proposed Project. Accordingly, impacts to biological resources would be identical to those of the proposed Project. As with the proposed Project, impacts to biological resources would be fully mitigated through on-site preservation of habitat, acquisition of off-site habitat in a pre-approved mitigation bank, and other measures specified in Section 3.2 of this SEIR.

Hydrology and Water Quality

Impacts to hydrology and water quality during construction of the Reduced Project Alternative would be similar to the proposed Project. As with the proposed Project, a storm water management plan would be required to preclude significant impacts to water quality. Additionally, a detention basin would be required on-site to ensure that flood and erosion hazards are not increased as a result of development. With compliance to a Project-specific hydrology study and storm water management plan, impacts would be less than significant and similar to those impacts that would occur under the proposed Project.

Noise

As noted on Page 43 of the revised Noise Study (Appendix F), implementation of the Reduced Project Alternative would result in an approximate 29 percent reduction in overall community noise levels due to a reduction in traffic volumes, resulting in a reduction of approximately 0.9 dBA in the cumulative scenario. Onsite noise generation would be similar to that of the proposed Project and mitigation would be required as specified for the proposed Project in this SEIR. Ground vibration impact potential under this Alternative would be similar to that of the proposed Project, and would occur over a shorter duration of time (due to the proposed reduction in the number of dwelling units).

Traffic

Because the Reduced Project Alternative proposes fewer units than the proposed Project, impacts to traffic would be reduced. Specifically, the Reduced Project Alternative would result in a total ADT of 1,500, as opposed to 2,110 ADT that would occur with implementation of the proposed Project. There would be no change in the location of impacts to traffic with implementation of this Alternative, although the number of total daily trips would be reduced by 610. As with the proposed Project, cumulative impacts to traffic would occur and would be mitigated through payment of TIF fees. Direct impacts to the Jamacha Blvd./Pointe Parkway intersection would be mitigated by improvements planned by County Project #CG-4476/Log89-19-105E, to which this Alternative would contribute a fair share payment. The Reduced Project Alternative would result in lesser impacts as compared to the proposed Project

Effects Found not to be Significant under the Proposed Project

Implementation of the proposed Project was found to result in less than significant impacts requiring no mitigation under the issue areas of hazards and hazardous materials, land use and planning, public services, recreation, and utilities and service systems. As compared to the proposed Project, development under this Alternative would incrementally reduce the level of impact to these issues due to a reduction in the number of units.

5.6.3 Rationale for Preference of Proposed Project over the Reduced Project Alternative

The proposed Project is preferred because while this Alternative would reduce Project impacts in the areas of air quality, hydrology/water quality, noise and traffic, it would not eliminate them. In addition, short-term air quality, water quality and noise impacts associated with grading, and impacts to biological resources, would be identical to those impacts which would occur under the proposed Project. Related to Project objectives, the Reduced Project Alternative would meet the objectives, but would not be as effective in achieving the Project's objective of providing housing opportunities to meet the forecasted housing demand in San Diego County.

5.7 Analysis of the Reduced Visibility Alternative

5.7.1 Reduced Visibility Alternative Description and Setting

The Reduced Visibility Alternative is intended to reduce significant and unmitigable impacts to visual quality by removing 16 lots from areas of the proposed Project that would be visible from the South Barcelona viewshed. Development under this Alternative would still be visible from the Parque de Park viewshed but would be substantially less visible from the South Barcelona viewshed. Under this Alternative, 209 dwelling units would be constructed, with maximum 5-foot high retaining walls provided between several lots. In addition, this Alternative would eliminate the west private park site and reduce the eastern park site from 1.03 acres to 0.51-acre. Figure 5-6, *Reduced Visibility Alternative*, depicts the land uses proposed under this Alternative.

5.7.2 Comparison of the Effects of the Reduced Visibility Alternative to the Proposed Project

Aesthetics and Visual Quality

The Reduced Visibility Alternative would reduce the visibility of development from off-site locations, particularly the viewsheds that would be significantly and unavoidably impacted by the proposed Project. The proposed Project would result in significant and unmitigable impacts to aesthetics and visual quality from two viewsheds, South Barcelona and Parque de Park. The Reduced Visibility Alternative would eliminate the unmitigable impact to aesthetics and visual quality from the South Barcelona viewshed by eliminating lots that would be prominently visible from South Barcelona. While this Alternative would reduce significant impacts to aesthetics and visual quality from South Barcelona, impacts to the Parque de Park viewshed would remain significant and unmitigable.

Air Quality

The Reduced Visibility Alternative would include two fewer residential units and therefore would result in essentially the same traffic volumes (a reduction of 20 ADT). This would result in essentially the same impacts on air quality due to traffic as the proposed Project. However, construction-related air quality impacts would be incrementally reduced due to a reduction in impact area (64.2 acres, as compared to 75.93 acres as proposed by the Project). Impacts associated with NO_x and PM₁₀ would occur, and require the same mitigation measures as recommended for the Project. Similar to the proposed Project, operational impacts from wood burning fireplaces in residential homes is less than significant under this Alternative because the MUP prohibits their installation in initial home construction and it is unlikely that many homes would be retrofitted to install them in the future.

Biological Resources

Because the Reduced Visibility Alternative proposes a reduction in areas proposed for grading and disturbance (11.73-acre reduction), impacts to biological resources would be reduced but not eliminated. With implementation of this Alternative, there would be a slight reduction in impacts to Munz's sage and to coastal sage scrub, although impacts to both plant communities would still be regarded as significant and would require mitigation. As with the proposed Project, biological impacts would be reduced to less than significant through on-site preservation of habitat, acquisition of off-site habitat in a pre-approved mitigation bank, and other measures as specified in Section 3.2 of this SEIR.

Hydrology and Water Quality

Impacts to hydrology and water quality would be virtually the same as the proposed Project, as the total amount impervious area would be similar. Impacts to hydrology and water quality would still require mitigation involving the installation of a detention basin and compliance with a storm water management plan in order to reduce impacts to a level below significance.

Noise

As noted on Page 41 of the Noise Study (Appendix F), implementation of the Reduced Visibility Alternative would result in a negligible reduction in noise volumes as compared to the proposed Project, due to the reduction in dwelling units from 211 to 209 and traffic volumes from 2,110 ADT to 2,090 ADT. Impacts for operation and construction would be very similar to those of the proposed Project, and mitigation would be required as presented in this SEIR to address direct and indirect noise impacts to below a level of significance.

Traffic

While the general circulation configuration of the site would remain the same under the Reduced Visibility Alternative, the deletion of two residential lots would very slightly reduce the number of vehicle trips to and from the site (i.e., a reduction of 20 daily trips and two peak hour trips). These reductions in total and peak hour ADT would be nearly immeasurable in terms of traffic impacts, and this Alternative would still impact the same roadway segments and intersections as the proposed Project. Therefore, traffic impacts would be virtually the same as the proposed project. As with the proposed Project, cumulatively significant impacts would be mitigated through fair share fee payment for roadway improvements (i.e., TIF fees). Direct impacts to the Jamacha Blvd./Pointe Parkway intersection would be mitigated by improvements planned by County Project #CG-4476/Log89-19-105E, to which this Alternative would contribute a fair share payment. The Reduced Visibility Alternative would result in lesser impacts as compared to the proposed Project.

Effects Found not to be Significant under the Proposed Project

Implementation of the proposed Project was found to result in less than significant impacts requiring no mitigation under the issue areas of hazards and hazardous materials, land use and planning, public services, recreation, and utilities and service systems. As compared to the proposed Project, development under this Alternative would nominally reduce impacts to hazards and hazardous materials, land use and planning, public services, and utilities and service systems, but would

incrementally increase impacts to recreation due to the lesser amount of private park acreage provided under this Alternative.

5.7.3 Rationale for Preference of Proposed Project over the Reduced Visibility Alternative

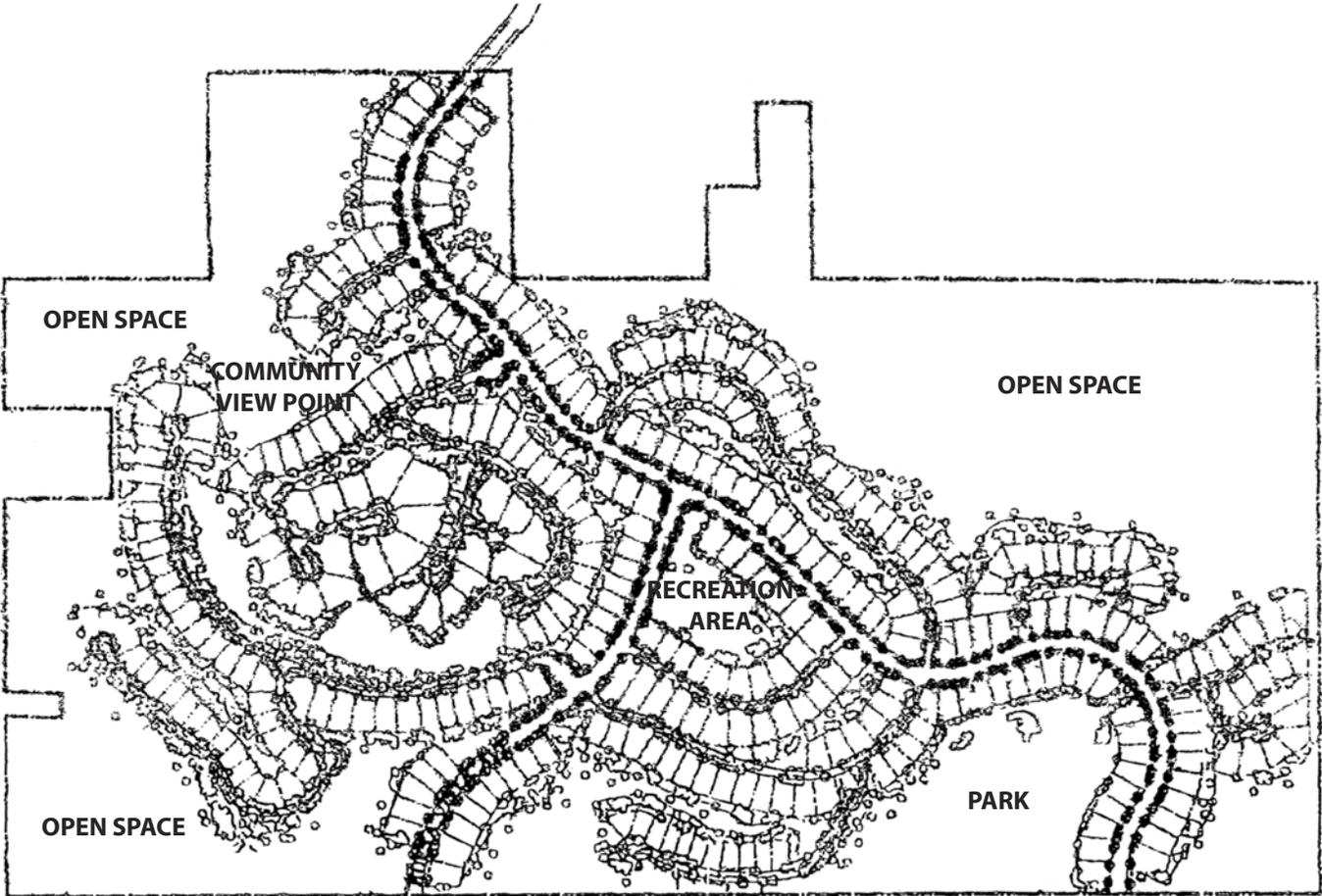
The proposed Project is preferred over the Reduced Visibility Alternative because while this Alternative reduces an unmitigable impact to aesthetics and visual quality, the impact is not avoided. Also, impacts to biological resources, traffic, air quality, noise, hydrology and water quality, would not be reduced to below levels of significance and would continue to require mitigation. Under this Alternative, on-site private parkland acreage would also be decreased when compared to the proposed Project and retaining walls would be introduced between some residential lots.

Table 5-1. COMPARISON OF PROJECT ALTERNATIVE IMPACTS TO SIGNIFICANT PROPOSED PROJECT IMPACTS

Environmental Analysis Subject	No Development Alternative	No Project Alternative	Reduced Grading Alternative¹	Reduced Footprint/ Maximum Density Alternative	Reduced Project Alternative	Reduced Visibility Alternative
Aesthetics/ Visual	Less	Greater	Less	Similar	Similar	Less
Air Quality	Less	Greater	Less	Mixed ²	Less	Mixed ³
Biological Resources	Less	Greater	Less	Less	Similar	Less
Noise	Less	Greater	Less	Greater	Less	Similar
Traffic	Less	Greater	Less	Greater	Less	Similar
Effects Not Significant	Less	Greater	Less	Greater	Less	Similar

1. The Reduced Grading Alternative is identified as the Environmentally Superior Alternative.
2. Impacts to air quality from the Reduced Footprint/Maximum Density Alternative would be slightly reduced during grading and construction, but would be increased in the long-term due to an increase in the amount of ADT.
3. Impacts would be slightly reduced during grading due to fewer acres being impacted, but would be the virtually the same for construction and long term traffic volume.

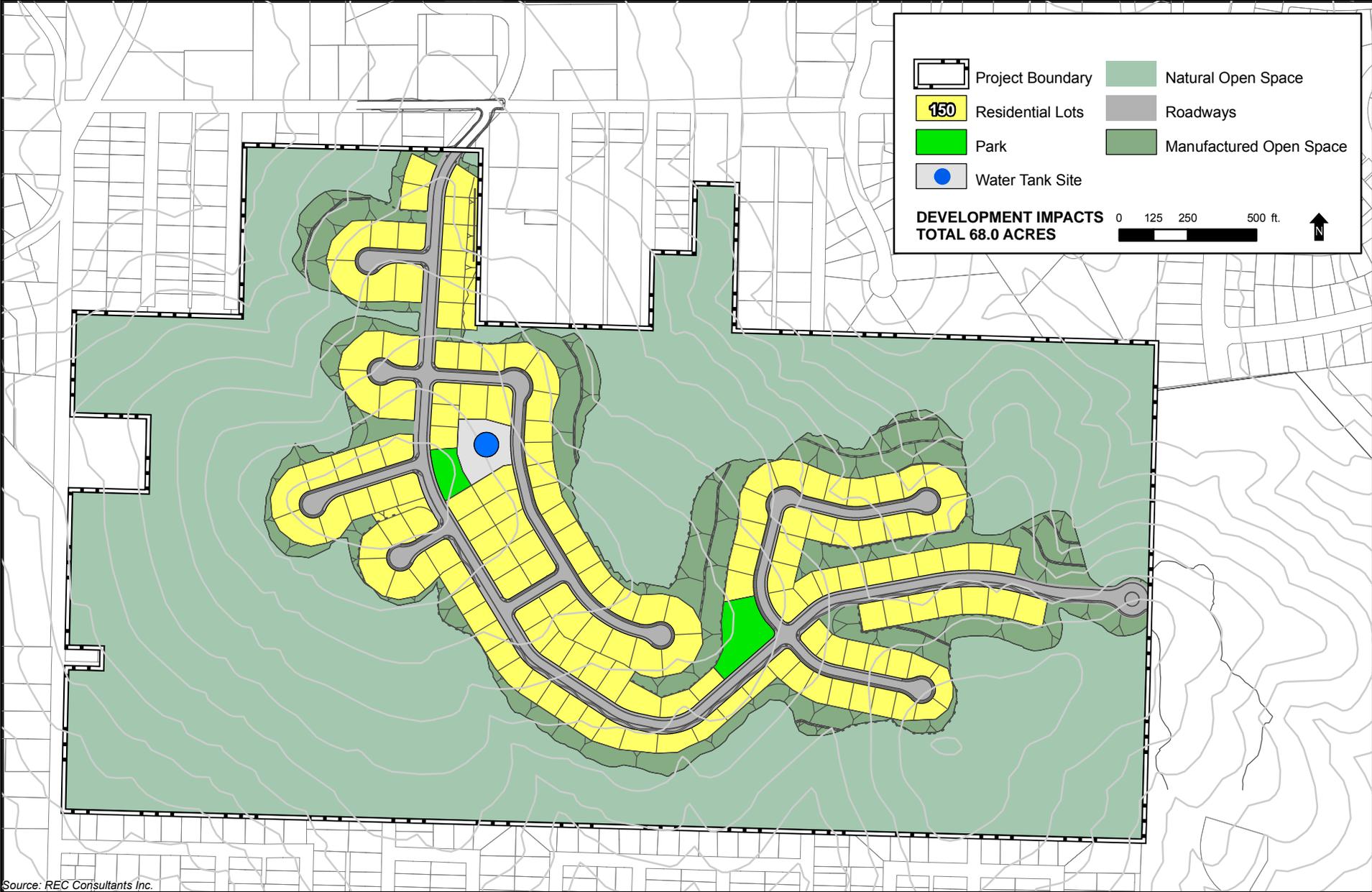




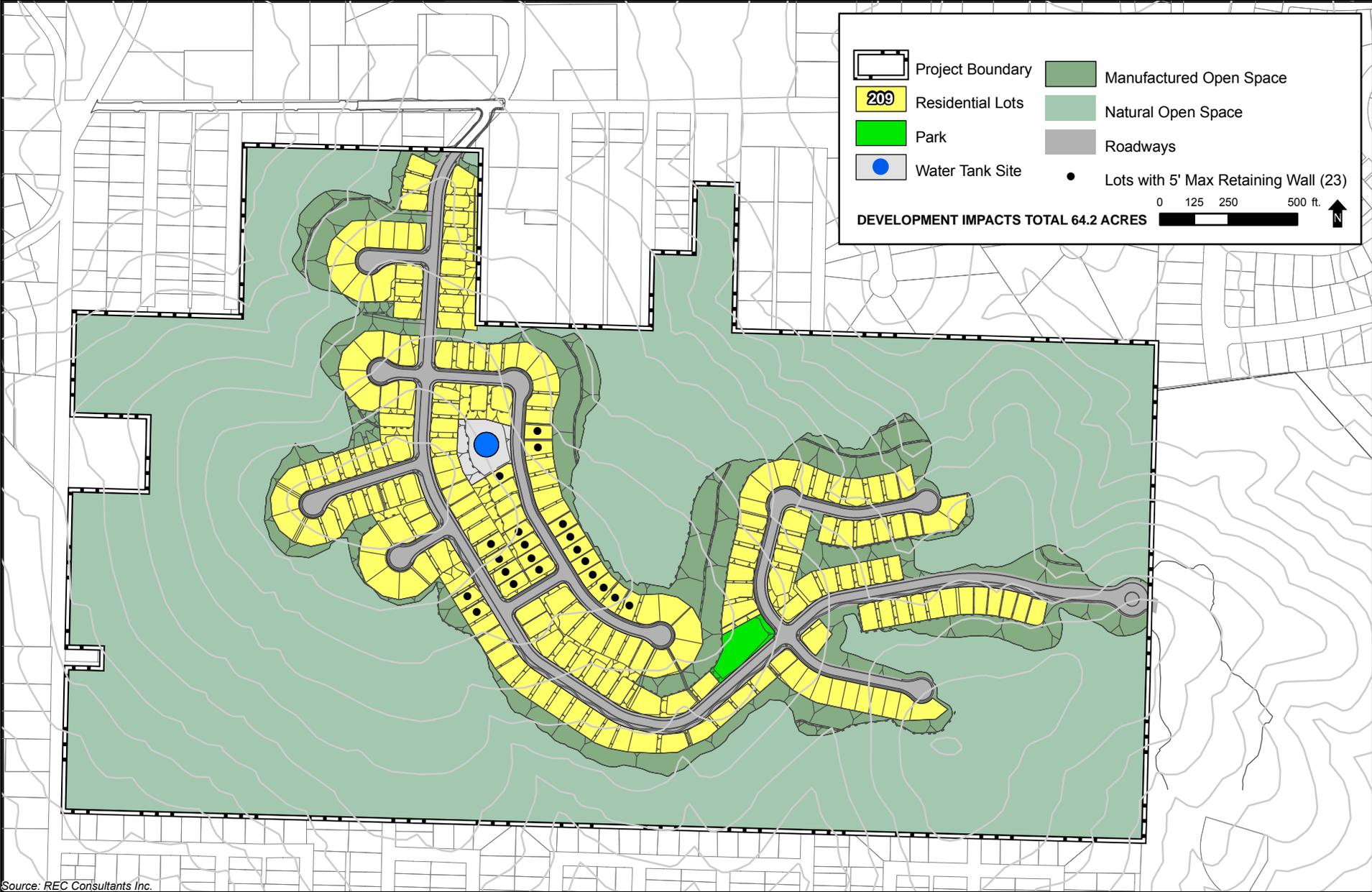
Source: County of San Diego







Source: REC Consultants Inc.



Source: REC Consultants Inc.