
ALTERNATIVES

INTRODUCTION

The California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines (CEQA Guidelines, 1970, as amended, Section 15126.6) requires an EIR to include a discussion of a reasonable range of alternatives to the proposed Project. The primary purpose of the evaluation of alternatives is to consider feasible alternatives that may avoid or substantially reduce significant environmental impacts that may be associated with implementation of the project as proposed while attaining most of the project's basic objectives. The CEQA Guidelines also require that the EIR explain why specific project alternatives that were considered at one time in developing the project proposal were rejected in favor of the proposed project. The selection of alternatives is to be guided by the provision of reasonable choices and the promotion of informed decision making and informed public participation. An EIR need not evaluate alternatives that would have effects that cannot be determined, or for which implementation would be remote and speculative.

CEQA Guidelines also require that the EIR specifically address a “no project” alternative within this discussion and that an “environmentally superior” alternative be identified (Section 15126.6 [e]). (In short, the “No Project” alternative assumes that further development would occur under existing rules.) Where the “no project” alternative is also identified as the “environmentally superior” alternative, another alternative which would represent the “environmentally superior” in the absence of the “no project” alternative should then be identified.

The Downtown Community Plan is described in Chapter 3 of this DEIR (**Project Description**). The environmental consequences associated with this Project are addressed in Chapter 4 of this DEIR. In addition to the Downtown Community Plan, this chapter of the DEIR includes a discussion of the following alternatives:

- No Project Alternative, which considers development that would be permitted consistent with the current City of Fremont General Plan and the existing City zoning ordinance; and
- Reduced Development Alternative, which assumes that development within the Downtown area during the twenty-five-year planning period would take place at

densities lower than anticipated under the Downtown Community Plan (at an area-wide average FAR of 0.8, rather than at an area-wide average FAR of 1.5).

It should be noted that while the DEIR is intended to provide a program-level evaluation of the environmental impacts which could be anticipated with development under the Downtown Community Plan or the alternatives, it does not focus on the full spectrum of social, economic and regional sustainability aspects and/or benefits that may be associated with development in the Downtown area, as this would be beyond the scope of a CEQA environmental review document.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT NOT FURTHER EVALUATED

In some instances, an alternative project site may be one of the alternatives evaluated in an EIR. However, in the case of the Downtown Community Plan, the Project is “location-specific”: the Downtown Community Plan is intended to guide future development within the Downtown area. For this reason, an alternative that would consider a different development site was not evaluated further.

There are other possible development patterns that could be imagined for the Downtown area that could represent alternatives to the Downtown Community Plan during the twenty-five-year planning period. One might involve modifications of the existing land use regulations to permit more intensive residential development in areas which currently support non-residential uses in the Downtown area as a means of providing opportunities for urban infill development. Another might involve modifications of the existing land use regulations to permit substantially more retail uses within the Downtown area, as a means of enhancing the City’s ability to generate sales tax revenue. Although there are an infinite number of variants on these concepts, these types of development were not evaluated as alternatives to the proposed Project because they were considered by the City to be less likely to promote the Goals and Objectives of the Downtown Community Plan than would implementation of the Plan itself.

NO PROJECT ALTERNATIVE

Under the No Project alternative, development in the Downtown area would be governed by the General Plan 2035 and the current zoning. Although some level of development could be expected to take place within the Downtown area over the twenty-five-year planning period in the absence of the Downtown Community Plan, the level of high-density residential development which could be expected under the current land use policies would be limited to that associated with mixed-use projects that may be developed. To date, no mixed-use projects have been developed within the Downtown area under the current land use regulations, and the number of residential units present within the area is limited to those

along Mt. Vernon Avenue¹, so it is difficult to project the level of residential development that might be present within the area at the end of the twenty-five-year planning period under this alternative. For the purposes of analysis, it is assumed that under the No Project alternative all existing uses within the Downtown area remain operational, and that the 15 acres of vacant and undeveloped land is developed during the course of the twenty-five-year planning period. If this development were to take place at an FAR of approximately 0.5, this analysis assumes that a total of approximately 500,000 gross square feet of floor space will be developed in a mix of commercial/retail and office uses, and approximately 150 new residential units will be developed as part of mixed-use projects within the area.

Land Use

Under the No Project alternative, there would be no changes in existing land use plans and policies. Development approved under this alternative would be required to be consistent with these existing plans and policies, would not be expected to create any divisions between established communities, and would not conflict with existing land uses in the area or surrounding area. Since there are no habitat conservation plans or natural community conservation plans in force within the area, development under the No Project alternative would not conflict with such plans.

Aesthetics

Development under the No Project alternative could be expected to be similar in character to that which has already taken place in the area. Such development would not be expected to alter the existing visual character of the area, adversely affect any scenic resources or views along scenic routes, or generate substantial amounts of new light or glare.

Population, Employment and Housing

Under the assumptions used in evaluating the No Project alternative, a relatively small number of new residential units (150) could be anticipated within the Downtown area over the twenty-five-year planning period, and the number of people that would be living in these new residences (approximately 450) would not represent a substantial increase in Fremont's current population (approximately 213,000). Existing residential units along Mt. Vernon Avenue would remain in place under this alternative, and there would be no need to relocate current residents or to provide replacement housing.

¹ Note that at the time of the NOP there were 15 acres of vacant land including the 4-acre Urban Housing site on Walnut Avenue. The Urban Housing project initiated construction of a 301-unit residential project in September 2011.

Transportation, Circulation and Parking

In the absence of development associated with the implementation of the Downtown Community Plan, the results in **Table 4-13**, above, indicate that there would be significant 2035 traffic impacts at the following intersections based on the City of Fremont criteria:

- Mission Boulevard and Mowry Avenue (AM and PM peak hour, from LOS F to LOS F with >4 seconds delta delay)
- Paseo Padre Parkway and Mowry Avenue (AM and PM peak hour, from LOS F to LOS F with >4 seconds delta delay)
- Paseo Padre Parkway and Stevenson Boulevard (AM peak hour, from LOS F to LOS F with >4 seconds delta delay)
- Mowry Avenue and Fremont Boulevard (AM and PM peak hour, from LOS F to LOS F with >4 seconds delta delay)
- Mowry Avenue and Argonaut Way (PM peak hour, from LOS F to LOS F with >4 seconds delta delay)
- Blacow Road and Mowry Avenue (AM and PM peak hour, from LOS E/F to LOS F with >4 seconds delta delay)

Under this alternative, development under the current General Plan Implementation of this alternative would not have significant 2035 impacts on the following intersections that would be significantly affected under the Maximum Buildout scenario:

- Mowry Avenue and Hasting Street
- Fremont Boulevard and Capitol Avenue

Development under the current General Plan would not be expected to affect current air traffic patterns in any way, and would not be expected to result in any potentially significant hazards associated with the design of any transportation system improvements that might take place in the Downtown area under this alternative. All development which could take place under this alternative would be subject to review by the City of Fremont (including the Fremont Fire Department and the Fremont Police Department) prior to approval to ensure that individual development projects do not impede emergency access, and compliance with current parking requirements would ensure that adequate parking capacity is provided for any new development to meet City standards. This alternative would not provide the roadway, pedestrian and bicycle network improvements which would be made as part of the Downtown Community Plan, but continued development in the Downtown area under the current General Plan would not result in any significant conflicts with policies intended to promote the use of alternative modes of transportation.

Air Quality

In the absence of the Downtown Community Plan, air quality impacts associated with future development in Downtown area would those described in the Fremont General Plan Update DRAFT EIR (pages 4-124 through 4-144). These include conflict with CAP Assumptions for growth (identified as a significant and unavoidable impact associated with implementation of the General Plan 2035), possible exposure of sensitive receptors to unhealthy levels of TACs, and construction period dust, emissions and odors.

Noise and Vibration

Under this alternative, development within the Downtown area would still be anticipated, but not to the extent enabled by the Downtown Community Plan. As a result, it is likely that a reduced level of development could result in a proportional reduction in the projected increase in traffic-related noise in the Downtown area, although with maximum development possible under the existing General Plan, the cumulative increase in existing traffic-related noise levels could be considered significant and unavoidable. Without a residential component for the Downtown area under the current General Plan, potential noise impacts related to incompatible land uses and exposure to sensitive residents within the area would likely be less than anticipated with mixed-use and high-density residential development proposed under the Downtown Community Plan. With less development anticipated under this alternative relative to level of development anticipated under the Downtown Community Plan, there would be less construction activity, although on-going construction projects within the area could result in significant and unavoidable (although temporary) noise and vibration impacts. There would be no significant noise or vibration impacts related to rail transportation or aviation under this alternative.

Hydrology and Water Quality

Although less development would be anticipated within the Downtown area under the existing General Plan than under the Downtown Community Plan, potential construction-related effects on water quality could be similar. These could be reduced to a level considered less than significant through implementation of **Mitigation HYD-1**, above. Following development, similar types of long-term water quality effects (e.g., contaminated stormwater run-off) could be associated with this alternative and with development under the Downtown Community Plan. These could be reduced to a level considered less than significant through implementation of **Mitigation HYD-2**, above. Future development in the Downtown area under this alternative could adversely affect groundwater, although these potential impacts could be reduced to a level considered less than significant through implementation of **Mitigation HYD-3**, above. Development under this alternative would not be expected to have any significant effect on groundwater recharge, or result in any significant changes in existing drainage patterns. Development under this alternative could result in an increase in stormwater runoff, but this potential impact could be reduced to a

level considered less than significant through implementation of **Mitigation HYD-4**, above. Additional development under this alternative could result in an increased risk of flooding, but implementation of **Mitigation HYD-6**, above, would ensure that there would be no net increase in stormwater run-off going to City streets in the area, reducing this potential impact to a level considered less than significant.

Geology, Soils and Seismicity

Development under the No Project alternative would entail the same potential geotechnical-related impacts as that associated with implementation of the Downtown Community Plan (e.g., potential exposure of structures to strong seismic ground shaking, potential exposure of structures to seismic-related ground failure, potential construction-related soil erosion, and potential development on unstable geologic units). Each of these potential impacts could be reduced to a level of less than significant through effective implementation of the mitigation measures identified in **Section H: Geology, Soils and Seismicity**, above.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Development under this alternative would likely result in an increase in the number of businesses storing, using, transporting, and/or disposing of hazardous material within the Downtown area. However, the General Plan 2035 identifies goals, policies and actions designed to reduce the impact of businesses routinely using, storing, and transporting hazardous material. General Plan implementing actions, including SF 6.1.1, SF 6.2.1, SF 6.4.1, SF 6.5.1, SF 6.5.2, and SF 6.5.3, described above, in combination with California Department of Transportation, California Department of Toxic Substance Control, and California State Water Resource Control Board regulations, would reduce the impact of the routine use, transport, or disposal of hazardous material to a level considered less than significant.

No reasonably foreseeable hazardous material release would likely happen as a result of implementation of this alternative. However, development under this alternative would result in an increase in the number of people exposed to any potential release of hazardous materials. Some sites within the Downtown area have a history of hazardous material use, and residual amounts may be present. Construction activities could expose any potential hazardous materials and release them to the environment. The General Plan 2035 identifies objectives and policies designed to reduce the hazard to the population due to a hazardous material release. General Plan implementing actions, including SF 6.1.1, SF 6.2.1, SF 6.4.1, SF 6.5.1, SF 6.5.2, SF 6.5.3, SF 6.6.1, SF 6.7.1, and SF 6.7.2, in combination with **Mitigation HAZ-1**, above, would reduce the impact of a reasonably foreseeable hazardous material release to a level considered less than significant.

Development under this alternative could include new development in the vicinity of existing and/or planned schools. However, state regulations on siting of hazardous materials facilities and schools limit the facilities' proximity to schools. Additionally, new construction within

the Downtown area would be implemented under the General Plan 2035. Construction in accordance with the General Plan 2035, which includes Policy SF 6.2 would reduce the impact to a level considered less than significant.

There are no sites within the Downtown area that are currently listed on a government database compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 (Cortese List). Therefore, this is a less than significant impact under this alternative.

There are no airports within two miles of the Downtown area, therefore, no impact under this alternative.

There are no private airstrips in the vicinity of the Downtown area, therefore, no impact under this alternative.

Development under this alternative would not interfere with an adopted emergency response or emergency evacuation plan. This is considered a less than significant impact under this alternative.

The Downtown area is located on nearly flat land within the urbanized core of the City of Fremont. Wildland fires are not anticipated to impact the area. This is considered a less than significant impact under this alternative.

Cultural and Paleontological Resources

Under the No Project alternative, any new development would be generally expected to entail the same type of potential effects on cultural and paleontological resources as those associated with development under the Downtown Community Plan (e.g., possible uncovering of previously unknown cultural resources or human remains during construction activity), although these impacts could be reduced to a level of less than significant through implementation of the identified mitigation measures. Since existing land uses within the Downtown area would be assumed to remain in operation indefinitely under this alternative, there would be no potential loss of historic resources resulting from demolition of structures and there would be a less than significant impact to possible historic structures..

Public Services

Fire Protection and Emergency Response Services

Development under the No Project alternative would be expected to result in an increased demand for fire protection and emergency response services. However, this increased demand would be less than that anticipated under the Downtown Community Plan, and could be accommodated without the need for construction new fire stations or expanding existing fire stations.

Police Protection

Development under the No Project alternative would be expected to result in an increased demand for police protection. However, this increased demand would be less than that anticipated under the Downtown Community Plan, and could be accommodated without the need for construction of a new police station or expanding the existing police station.

Schools

Development under the No Project alternative would be expected to result in some increase in attendance at local public schools, depending on the extent to which residences may be built as part of future mixed-use development projects within the Downtown area. However, any increased enrollment associated with this alternative would be less than that anticipated under the Downtown Community Plan. As indicated in **Section K: Public Services**, above, all developers would continue to be required to make such payments to the Fremont Unified School District prior to the City's issuance of any certificate of occupancy, in effect reducing all development-related impacts to local schools to a level of less than significant.

Parks

No new parks or recreational facilities would be developed within the Downtown area under the current General Plan. With future residential development in the area limited to that which is within mixed-use projects, it is unlikely that the increase in the number of new residents within the Downtown area under this alternative would place a significant additional demand on existing park and recreational facilities within Fremont. With no new parks proposed under this alternative, there would be no environmental impacts associated with future park construction activities in the Downtown area.

Other Public Facilities

Development under the No Project alternative would be expected to result in an increased demand for library services, child care and other public services, depending on the extent to which residences may be built as part of future mixed-use development projects within the Downtown area. However, this increased demand would be less than that anticipated under the Downtown Community Plan, and could be accommodated without the need for construction new public facilities for these service providers.

Infrastructure and Utilities

Water Supply

Because the level of development would be considerably less under the No Project alternative than would be expected with implementation of the Downtown Community Plan, the anticipated demand on the local water supply under this alternative would also be less than projected with implementation of the proposed Plan. In the absence of street

realignments within the area, no improvements to the existing water distribution system would be made, although as redevelopment occurs, some water mains which cross private parcels may need to be reconfigured to accommodate development.

Storm Drainage

In the absence of street realignments within the area, no improvements to the existing storm drainage system would be anticipated under this alternative.

Sanitary Sewers

In the absence of street realignments within the area, no improvements to the existing storm drainage system would be anticipated under this alternative.

Solid Waste

Additional development within the Downtown area under the General Plan 2035 would increase the demand for solid waste collection and disposal. However, programs are in place to increase waste diversion rates by expanding recycling programs, including mandatory single-family and multi-family residential recycling, drop-off disposal sites for items such as motor oil, electronic waste, batteries and household hazardous waste, and a commercial food waste recycling program. The City has implemented a Construction and Demolition Debris Ordinance that requires minimum levels of recycling of construction and demolition debris, further increasing the City's diversion rate, and is part of the State-sponsored Recycled Market Development Zone Program which encourages recycling based business to locate in Fremont. Taken together, these measures would be expected to reduce the increased demand for solid waste collection and disposal associated with increased development under this alternative to a level considered less than significant.

Gas, Electricity and Telecommunications Service

In the absence of street realignments within the Downtown area under this alternative, no new gas, electricity or telecommunications service facilities would be anticipated under this alternative.

Global Climate Change

In the absence of the Downtown Community Plan, the Downtown area would be expected to be developed under the General Plan 2035. As indicated in the Fremont General Plan Update DRAFT EIR (pages 4-354 through 4-3-57), development under the General Plan 2035 would have fewer total emissions but would in fact have a higher service population ratio inconsistent with the General Plan. Although this impact would be considered potentially significant if the service population emission ratio exceeds projected ratios through 2020, it is not possible to accurately project future greenhouse gas emissions thresholds (and future

methods which may be developed for reducing greenhouse gas emissions). Potential cumulative greenhouse gas emission effects associated with development under the General Plan 2035 without the TOD benefits of the Downtown Community Plan would be additional cumulatively considerable effects and result in significant and unavoidable impacts.

Planning Policy Analysis

As indicated above, under the No Project alternative all development taking place within the Downtown area during the twenty-five-year planning period would be required to comply with existing land use plans and regulations, so such development would be consistent with current land use regulations.

REDUCED DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVE

Under the Reduced Development alternative, it is assumed that development within the Downtown area would occur at an intensity considerably lower than anticipated under the Downtown Community Plan. For the purposes of assessing the environmental impacts associated with this alternative, it is assumed that development in the area over the twenty-five-year planning period would take place at an FAR of approximately 0.8, rather than at the FAR assumed for future development under the Downtown Community Plan. This would result in development of approximately 2,953,200 gross square feet (gsf) of new space over the planning period, compared to 5,318,500 gsf of new space projected for the same period under the Downtown Community Plan, with estimated development by land use category shown below:

<u>Land Use</u>	<u>Reduced Development Alternative</u>	<u>Midtown Community Plan</u>
Commercial/Retail	355,200 gsf	443,100 gsf
City Offices	250,000 gsf	278,000 gsf
Office	705,500 - 1,943,500 gsf	1,988,800 gsf
Residential	404,500 - 1,642,500 gsf	3,205,800 gsf

Under this alternative, it is assumed that existing, thriving commercial enterprises within the area would remain in operation, and that the total number of mixed-use development projects completed within the planning period would be limited to two (in addition to some residential-only development). Development of a new city hall and performing arts center in the central portion of the area would also be an element of this alternative.

Land Use

This alternative is similar to the Downtown Community Plan in that it would enable development of relatively high density housing units in an area where new residential development is currently limited to that associated with mixed-use projects, which would represent a shift from current land use policies in the Downtown area. The intention of both the proposed Plan and this alternative is to redevelop the Downtown area as a vibrant, pedestrian-oriented mixed-use destination. However, with the lower development intensities associated with this alternative (relative to those assumed for the Downtown Community Plan), development under this alternative would be less likely to result in a lively mixed-use, transit-oriented downtown. Development under the Reduced Development alternative would not be expected to create any divisions between established communities, and would not conflict with existing land uses in the area or surrounding area. Since there are no habitat conservation plans or natural community conservation plans in force within the area, development under the No Project alternative would not conflict with such plans.

Aesthetics

Structures developed under the Reduced Project alternative could be expected to be generally similar in character to those anticipated under the Downtown Community Plan, except that they would probably be less tall and not as massive as those which could be built under the proposed Plan. Such development would not be expected to substantively degrade the existing visual character of the area, to adversely affect any scenic resources or existing views along scenic routes, or to generate substantial amounts of new light or glare.

Population, Employment and Housing

Under the assumptions used in evaluating the Reduced Project alternative, the total number of new residential units within the Downtown area could be expected to be approximately half that anticipated under the Downtown Community Plan (between 400 and 1,650 new units, depending on the ultimate pattern of development and the mix between office and residential uses). The number of people that would be living in these new residences (ranging from approximately 1,200 to 5,000) would not represent a substantial increase in Fremont's current population (approximately 213,000).

Transportation, Circulation and Parking

The results in **Table 4-13**, above, indicate that development under this alternative (Minimum Buildout assumptions) will result in significant intersection impacts at the following location:

- Mission Boulevard and Mowry Avenue (AM peak hour, from LOS E to LOS F with >4 seconds delta delay)

Implementation of this alternative would not have significant impacts on the following intersections that would be significantly affected under the Maximum Buildout scenario:

- Fremont Boulevard and Capitol Avenue
- Fremont Boulevard and Walnut Avenue

Based on the CMP analysis, the following roadway segments are expected to experience significant impacts associated with implementation of this alternative (Minimum Buildout scenario):

- Southbound Mowry Avenue from Fremont Boulevard to I-880 (2035 AM)
- Eastbound Paseo Padre Parkway from Thornton Avenue to Stevenson Boulevard (2035 AM)
- Westbound Fremont Boulevard from Thornton Avenue to I-880 (2035 PM)
- Northbound Mowry Avenue from I-880 to Fremont Boulevard (2035 PM)

Implementation of this alternative would not have significant impacts on the following CMP roadway segments that would be significantly affected under the Maximum Buildout scenario:

- Eastbound I-880 from Mowry Avenue to Stevenson Boulevard
- Eastbound Fremont Boulevard from I-880 to Thornton Avenue
- Northbound Mowry Avenue from Fremont Boulevard to Peralta Boulevard

Implementation of this alternative would not be expected to affect current air traffic patterns in any way. Under this alternative, implementation of General Plan 2035 Policy 3-3.6 would minimize road hazards associated with overgrown vegetation, structures blocking sight lines, and other visual obstructions, and requires that new development is reviewed to ensure that ingress and egress locations, driveways, crosswalks, and other circulation features, are sited to minimize accident hazards, reducing potential design hazards. All development proposed under this alternative would be subject to review by the City of Fremont (including the Fremont Fire Department and the Fremont Police Department) prior to approval to ensure that individual development projects do not impede emergency access. This alternative incorporates development controls intended to manage on-street parking to ensure the efficient use of curbside space, to provide adequate customer parking for local businesses, and to encourage shared parking. Effective implementation of these standards would reduce potential impacts associated with increased demand for adequate parking capacity. Implementation of this alternative would promote the use of alternative modes of

transportation, and would not conflict with any existing policies which support the use of alternative transportation.

Air Quality

Under this alternative, air quality impacts associated with development would be similar to those identified in **Chapter 4, E. Air Quality**, above. With less development in the Downtown than would be anticipated under the Downtown Community Plan, there could be an incremental reduction in some of the adverse air quality effects associated this alternative, although the location and character of specific development projects could entail the same level of impacts identified for development under the Downtown Community Plan.

Noise and Vibration

Under this alternative, development within the Downtown area would not be a great as under the Downtown Community Plan. As a result, it is likely that a reduced level of development could result in a proportional reduction in the projected increase in traffic-related noise in the Downtown area, although with maximum development possible under this alternative, the cumulative increase in existing traffic-related noise levels could be considered significant and unavoidable. Potential noise impacts related to incompatible land uses and exposure to sensitive residents within the area would likely be similar to that anticipated with development proposed under the Downtown Community Plan. With less development anticipated under this alternative relative to level of development anticipated under the Downtown Community Plan, there would be less construction activity, although on-going construction projects within the area could result in significant and unavoidable (although temporary) noise and vibration impacts. There would be no significant noise or vibration impacts related to rail transportation or aviation under this alternative.

Hydrology and Water Quality

Although less development would be anticipated within the Downtown area under this alternative than under the Downtown Community Plan, potential construction-related effects on water quality could be similar. These could be reduced to a level considered less than significant through implementation of **Mitigation HYD-1**, above. Following development, similar types of long-term water quality effects (e.g., contaminated stormwater run-off) could be associated with this alternative and with development under the Downtown Community Plan. These could be reduced to a level considered less than significant through implementation of **Mitigation HYD-2**, above. Future development in the Downtown area under this alternative could adversely affect groundwater, although these potential impacts could be reduced to a level considered less than significant through implementation of **Mitigation HYD-3**, above. Development under this alternative would not be expected to have any significant effect on groundwater recharge, or result in any significant changes in existing drainage patterns. Development under this alternative could result in an increase in stormwater runoff, but this potential impact could be reduced to a level considered less than

significant through implementation of **Mitigation HYD-4**, above. Although the City of Fremont has not identified any significant existing storm drain capacity issues in the Downtown area, and does not propose any improvements to the existing storm drain system in the Downtown area, if the potential for increased runoff exists under this alternative, then the potential for existing stormwater drainage systems to be exceeded also exists. Implementation of **Mitigation HYD-4**, above, would reduce the potential of development under this alternative exceeding the existing capacity of the storm drain system to a level considered less than significant. Additional development under this alternative could result in an increased risk of flooding, but implementation of **Mitigation HYD-6**, above, would ensure that there would be no net increase in stormwater run-off going to City streets in the area, reducing this potential impact to a level considered less than significant.

Geology, Soils and Seismicity

Development under the No Project alternative would entail the same potential geotechnical-related impacts as that associated with implementation of the Downtown Community Plan (e.g., potential exposure of structures to strong seismic ground shaking, potential exposure of structures to seismic-related ground failure, potential construction-related soil erosion, and potential development on unstable geologic units). Each of these potential impacts could be reduced to a level considered less than significant through effective implementation of the mitigation measures identified in **Section H: Geology, Soils and Seismicity**, above.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Development under this alternative would likely result in an increase in the number of businesses storing, using, transporting, and/or disposing of hazardous material within the Downtown area. However, the General Plan 2035 identifies goals, policies and actions designed to reduce the impact of businesses routinely using, storing, and transporting hazardous material. General Plan implementing actions, including SF 6.1.1, SF 6.2.1, SF 6.4.1, SF 6.5.1, SF 6.5.2, and SF 6.5.3, described above, in combination with California Department of Transportation, California Department of Toxic Substance Control, and California State Water Resource Control Board regulations, would reduce the impact of the routine use, transport, or disposal of hazardous material to a level of less than significant.

No reasonably foreseeable hazardous material release would likely happen as a result of implementation of this alternative. However, development under this alternative would result in an increase in the number of people exposed to any potential release of hazardous materials. Some sites within the Downtown area have a history of hazardous material use, and residual amounts may be present. Construction activities could expose any potential hazardous materials and release them to the environment. The General Plan 2035 identifies objectives and policies designed to reduce the hazard to the population due to a hazardous material release. General Plan implementing actions, including SF 6.1.1, SF 6.2.1, SF 6.4.1, SF 6.5.1, SF 6.5.2, SF 6.5.3, SF 6.6.1, SF 6.7.1, and SF 6.7.2, in combination with

Mitigation HAZ-1, above, would reduce the impact of a reasonably foreseeable hazardous material release to a level of less than significant.

Implementation of this alternative would include development in the vicinity of existing and/or planned schools. However, state regulations on siting of hazardous materials facilities and schools limit the facilities' proximity to schools. Additionally, new construction within the Downtown area would be implemented under the General Plan 2035. Construction in accordance with the General Plan 2035, which includes Policy SF 6.2 would reduce the impact to a level of less than significant.

There are no sites within the Downtown area that are currently listed on a government database compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 (Cortese List). Therefore, this is a less than significant impact under this alternative.

There are no airports within two miles of the Downtown area, therefore, no impact under this alternative.

There are no private airstrips in the vicinity of the Downtown area, therefore, no impact under this alternative.

Development under this alternative would not interfere with an adopted emergency response or emergency evacuation plan. Implementation of this alternative would improve emergency access by extending Capitol Avenue across the entire Downtown area. This is considered a less than significant impact under this alternative.

The Downtown area is located on nearly flat land within the urbanized core of the City of Fremont. Wildland fires are not anticipated to impact the area. This is considered a less than significant impact under this alternative.

Cultural and Paleontological Resources

Under the Reduced Project alternative, any new development would be generally expected to entail the same type of potential effects on cultural and paleontological resources as those associated with development under the Downtown Community Plan (e.g., possible uncovering of previously unknown cultural resources or human remains during construction activity), although these impacts could be reduced to a level of less than significant through implementation of the identified mitigation measures. As with development under the Downtown Community Plan, were specific projects to result in the demolition of any existing historic structures, this would represent a significant and unavoidable environmental impact.

Public Services

Development under the Reduced Development alternative would be expected to result in an increased demand for fire protection and emergency response services. However, this

increased demand would be less than that anticipated under the Downtown Community Plan, and could be accommodated without the need for construction new fire stations or expanding existing fire stations.

Police Protection

Development under the Reduced Development alternative would be expected to result in an increased demand for police protection. However, this increased demand would be less than that anticipated under the Downtown Community Plan, and could be accommodated without the need for construction of a new police station or expanding the existing police station.

Schools

Development under the Reduced Development alternative would be expected to result in some increase in attendance at local public schools, depending on the extent to which new residences may be built within the Downtown area. However, any increased enrollment associated with this alternative would be less than that anticipated under the Downtown Community Plan. As indicated in **Section K: Public Services**, above, all developers would continue to be required to make such payments to the Fremont Unified School District prior to the City's issuance of any certificate of occupancy, in effect reducing all development-related impacts to local schools to a level of less than significant.

Parks

Implementation of this alternative would result in the development of two community parks, both situated on city-owned property and adjacent to the proposed New Middle Road that services pedestrians and bicyclists to the Fremont BART station, which would enhance recreational opportunities for local residents. The development of these two community parks could be expected to entail construction-related impacts similar to those associated with other development projects (e.g., temporary air quality and noise effects during the actual construction activity at the two sites), but with implementation of the applicable mitigation measures identified in the corresponding sections of the DSEIR, above, these temporary impacts could be reduced to a level considered less than significant.

Other Public Facilities

Development under the Reduced Development alternative would be expected to result in an increased demand for library services, child care and other public services, depending on the extent to which new residences may be built within the Downtown area. However, this increased demand would be less than that anticipated under the Downtown Community Plan, and could be accommodated without the need for construction new public facilities for these service providers.

Infrastructure and Utilities

Water Supply

Under this alternative, new 8-inch water mains would be installed in new streets to provide water service and fire protection along the new public rights-of-way and properties served by them. Fire hydrants would be nominally spaced at 300 feet along the new streets. No improvements to the existing water distribution system would be made, although as redevelopment occurs, some water mains which cross private parcels may need to be reconfigured to accommodate development. Development under this alternative would be expected to require approximately half the water that would be needed to meet the demand associated with development under the Downtown Community Plan.

Storm Drainage

New storm drains ranging in size from 12 inches to 24 inches would be installed in new streets to provide drainage to the new rights-of-way and the adjacent properties. No improvements to the existing storm drainage system would be anticipated, although new storm drain inlets and laterals may be necessary at locations where existing drainage patterns are disrupted by street modifications, including the addition of bulb-outs at the intersections and mid-block pedestrian crosswalks.

Sanitary Sewers

New 8-inch sanitary sewer mains would be installed in new streets to provide sanitary sewer service to the properties fronting the new public rights-of-way, and it is likely that the 6-inch sanitary sewer main in Fremont Boulevard will need to be replaced to support development under this alternative.

Solid Waste

Additional development within the Downtown area under this alternative would increase the demand for solid waste collection and disposal. However, programs are in place to increase waste diversion rates by expanding recycling programs, including mandatory single-family and multi-family residential recycling, drop-off disposal sites for items such as motor oil, electronic waste, batteries and household hazardous waste, and a commercial food waste recycling program. The City has implemented a Construction and Demolition Debris Ordinance that requires minimum levels of recycling of construction and demolition debris, further increasing the City's diversion rate, and is part of the State-sponsored Recycled Market Development Zone Program which encourages recycling based business to locate in Fremont. Taken together, these measures would be expected to reduce the increased demand for solid waste collection and disposal associated with increased development under this alternative to a level considered less than significant.

Gas, Electricity and Telecommunications Service

New facilities including transformers, switch gear and junction boxes, would be installed in new streets to provide service along all of the new public rights-of-way. Where new streets are installed, communications facilities will be extended along those streets so that service will be available for new public rights-of-way.

Global Climate Change

Under this alternative, there would be a reduction in overall greenhouse gas emissions relative to those anticipated with development under the Downtown Community Plan. However, since development under the Downtown Community Plan has been determined to be less than significant in terms of greenhouse gas emissions under the current BAAQMD threshold, reduced development under this alternative would also be considered to have a less than significant effect in terms of overall greenhouse gas emissions as it would have a TOD-based development pattern that promotes a community-wide reduction in service population ratio of emissions.

Planning Policy Analysis

As indicated above, both the Reduced Project alternative or the Downtown Community Plan would represent a shift from current land use policies in the Downtown area, since either would enable development of relatively high density housing units in an area where new residential development is currently limited to that associated with mixed-use projects. Development of purely residential projects within the City Center would be inconsistent with General Plan 2035 policies for this area. However, both the Reduced Project alternative and the Downtown Community Plan would support the goals and objectives of the current Fremont General Plan 2035 policies which support high intensity, pedestrian-friendly, transit-oriented development in a portion of the City Center relatively close to the Fremont BART station.

EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVES

In evaluating alternatives, different people may assign different weights to the relative importance of specific environmental impacts. For example, some might “give more weight” to potential visual impacts than to traffic impacts, while others may feel that traffic-related impacts should carry more weight in the analysis than air quality impacts. In comparing the Project and the alternatives for this analysis, no specific type of environmental impact was given more weight than any other type of environmental impact.

Under the No Project alternative, development in the Downtown area would be guided by the General Plan 2035, and the additional development anticipated in the area during the planning period would be less than anticipated under either the Downtown Community Plan or the Reduced Development alternative. With less development, environmental effects

associated with this alternative would be expected to be somewhat less than those associated with development under the Downtown Community Plan or the Reduced Development alternative, although the same types of impacts would be anticipated. Specifically, the No Project alternative has less Transportation and Cultural Resources impacts, but additional potentially significant impacts to community-wide GHG emissions. All other impacts would only be incrementally greater than existing conditions and well below conditions described in the General Plan 2035.

Under the Reduced Development alternative, the level of development in the Downtown area would be expected to be greater than would be anticipated under the No Project alternative, but less than anticipated under the Downtown Community Plan. The Reduced Development alternative would specifically have less significant impacts to Transportation and incrementally less impacts in all other categories compared to the maximum build project.

ENVIRONMENTALLY SUPERIOR ALTERNATIVE

Although development under either the No Project alternative, the Reduced Development alternative, or the Downtown Community Plan would result in adverse environmental effects, the No Project alternative would result in the lowest level of future development within the Downtown area, and the magnitude of environmental effects associated with this alternative would be less than that associated with either the Reduced Development alternative or the Downtown Community Plan (although the types of impacts would be the same). For this reason, the No Project alternative is considered the “environmentally superior” alternative, although it would not be fully consistent with the vision and goals of the Downtown Community Plan.

CEQA Guidelines require that where the No Project alternative is also identified as the “environmentally superior” alternative, another alternative which would represent the “environmentally superior” alternative in the absence of the No Project alternative should then be identified. In this case, given the reduced level of development relative to the Downtown Community Plan (and the incremental reduction in the magnitude of development-related impacts) associated with the Reduced Development alternative, this alternative has been identified as the “environmentally superior” alternative in the absence of the No Project alternative.

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