

SECTION 5: ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT

5.1 - Introduction

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6, this Environmental Impact Report (EIR) contains a comparative impact assessment of alternatives to the North Camino Ramon Specific Plan. The primary purpose of this section is to provide decision-makers and the general public with a reasonable number of feasible project alternatives that could attain most of the basic project objectives, while avoiding or reducing any of the project’s significant adverse environmental effects. Important considerations for these alternatives analyses are noted below (as stated in CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6).

- An EIR need not consider every conceivable alternative to a project;
- An EIR should identify alternatives that were considered by the lead agency, but rejected as infeasible during the scoping process;
- Reasons for rejecting an alternative include:
 - Failure to meet most of the basic project objectives;
 - Infeasibility; or
 - Inability to avoid significant environmental effects.

5.1.1 - Significant Unavoidable Impacts

The proposed project would not result in any significant unavoidable impacts.

5.1.2 - Alternatives to the Proposed Project

The three alternatives to the proposed project analyzed in this section are as follows:

- **No Project Alternative:** The North Camino Ramon Specific Plan would not be implemented. The entire Specific Plan area would be designated “Mixed Use,” pursuant to the General Plan 2030 land use diagram; however, there would be no Specific Plan to guide the transition of this area.
- **Office/Retail Intensification Alternative:** An alternative Specific Plan emphasizing office and retail use intensification would be implemented in the Specific Plan area and would create a commercial district with a wide range of retail and support commercial uses, supported by nearby office campus and residential neighborhoods.
- **Suburban Village Alternative:** A Specific Plan that emphasizes residential use intensification would be implemented and would seek to create a fully integrated horizontal and vertical mixed-use suburban village with a vibrant commercial core, lifestyle residential neighborhoods, and abundant open park space amenities.

The three alternatives to the proposed project are analyzed below. These analyses compare the proposed project with each project alternative. In several cases, the description of the impact may be the same under each alternative when compared with the CEQA Thresholds of Significance (i.e., both the project and the alternative would result in a less than significant impact). The actual degree of impact may be slightly different between the proposed project and each alternative, and this relative difference is the basis for a conclusion of greater or lesser impacts.

5.2 - Project Objectives

As stated in Section 2, Project Description, the objectives of the proposed project are to:

- Enhance quality of life for residents and employees.
- Promote economic growth through new capital investment, the creation of new jobs, the development of new housing opportunities, and expansion of the tax base.
- Facilitate the redevelopment of the Specific Plan area from an automobile-dominated, low-density commercial area to a transit- and pedestrian-oriented neighborhood that will be a community focal point with a mix of uses.
- Complement the San Ramon City Center project and support the large office population within the Bishop Ranch Business Park.
- Expand the City’s retail offerings by identifying sites for retail opportunities , as well as neighborhood-serving commercial uses.
- Enhance all modes of circulation within the plan area and connectivity to surrounding land uses.
- Facilitate the use of alternative modes of transportation through an enhanced circulation system, site planning and design techniques.
- Emphasize the use of the Iron Horse Trail and connectivity between the Plan Area and other parts of the City.
- Provide workforce housing close to employment centers.
- Minimize adverse impacts to sensitive uses through the use of site planning and design techniques.

5.3 - Alternative 1 – No Project Alternative

Under the No Project Alternative, the North Camino Ramon Specific Plan would not be implemented. The entire Specific Plan area is designated “Mixed Use,” pursuant to the General Plan 2030 land use diagram. Therefore, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e)(3), the “No Project

Alternative” consists of the Specific Plan area building out in accordance with General Plan 2030, as this represents the most likely “circumstance under which the project does not proceed.”

Table 5-1 summarizes the No Project Alternative. As shown in Table 5-1, the No Project Alternative would result in 4.9 million square feet of commercial space and 1,224 dwelling units. By comparison, the proposed project would have 5.07 million square feet of commercial space and 1,500 residential dwelling units, a difference of 168,000 less commercial square footage and 376 fewer dwellings.

Table 5-1: No Project Alternative Summary

Scenario	Maximum Buildout Potential (Square Feet)		
	Commercial	Residential (dwelling units)	Total
No Project Alternative (General Plan 2030)	4,902,000	1,236,400 (1,224 dwelling units)	6,138,400
Proposed Project	5,070,000	1,650,000 (1,500 dwelling units)	6,720,000
Difference	(168,000)	(413,600) (376 dwelling units)	(581,600)
Source: City of San Ramon, 2012.			

5.3.1 - Impact Analysis

Aesthetics, Light, and Glare

Under the No Project Alternative, the Specific Plan area would maintain existing development and land use activities for the foreseeable future. The proposed project’s impacts on State Scenic Highways and visual character were found to be less than significant and did not require mitigation; therefore, the No Project Alternative would also have less than significant impacts on these areas. With 168,000 fewer square feet of commercial space and 376 fewer residential dwelling units, the No Project Alternative would result in fewer new sources of light and glare than the proposed project. Mitigation similar to the proposed project would be required to reduce this impact to a level of less than significant. Therefore, the No Project Alternative would have fewer impacts on aesthetics, light, and glare than the proposed project.

Air Quality/Greenhouse Gas Emissions

This alternative would result in a reduction of 168,000 square feet of commercial square footage and 376 fewer residential dwelling units relative to the proposed project. Under the proposed project, all construction and long-term operational air quality and greenhouse gas impacts would be less than significant with mitigation. From a construction standpoint, the No Project Alternative would result in fewer emissions associated with both demolition and construction of commercial and residential buildings. From any operational standpoint, the project is also expected to have reduced air quality

impacts compared with the proposed project, even though under the No Project Alternative, several design features that are part of the proposed project that would reduce traffic would not be constructed. Notably, the No Project Alternative, which does not include residential development, would have reduced potential air quality impacts associated with exposure of sensitive receptors to air pollutants generated by commercial land uses and vehicle traffic on Interstate 680 (I-680) beyond the project site. In summary, the No Project Alternative would have less impact on air quality and greenhouse gases than the proposed project.

Biological Resources

Under the No Project Alternative, 168,000 fewer square feet of commercial building space and 376 fewer dwellings would be constructed within the Specific Plan area compared with the proposed project. Nonetheless, this alternative would have the potential to impact nesting birds and would require mitigation similar to the proposed project. The implementation of mitigation would reduce impacts to a level of less than significant. Therefore, this alternative would have less impact on biological resources than the proposed project.

Cultural Resources

Under the No Project Alternative, 168,000 fewer square feet of commercial building space and 376 fewer dwelling units would be constructed within the Specific Plan area compared with the proposed project. Even so, this alternative would have the potential to impact previously undiscovered buried cultural resources, albeit to a lesser degree than the proposed project, and would require mitigation similar to the proposed project. The implementation of mitigation would reduce impacts to a level of less than significant. Therefore, this alternative would have less impact on cultural resources than the proposed project.

Geology, Soils, and Seismicity

Under the No Project Alternative, 168,000 fewer square feet of commercial building space and 376 fewer dwelling units would be constructed within the Specific Plan area. Nonetheless, development would have the potential to expose people or structures to seismic hazards, unstable soils, or expansive soils and create erosion during construction, but to a lesser degree than the proposed project. Therefore, this alternative would require mitigation similar to the proposed project, the implementation of which would reduce impacts to a level of less than significant. This alternative would have less impact related to geology, soils, and seismicity than the proposed project.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Under the No Project Alternative, 168,000 fewer square feet of commercial building space and 376 fewer dwelling units would be constructed within the Specific Plan area. Similar to the proposed project, employees and patrons would have the potential to be exposed to existing contamination. However, since no residential development is included, exposure would be less. The implementation

of mitigation would reduce impacts to a level of less than significant. Therefore, this alternative would have less impact on hazards and hazardous materials compared with the proposed project.

Hydrology and Water Quality

Under the No Project Alternative, 168,000 fewer square feet of commercial building space and 376 fewer dwelling units would be constructed within the Specific Plan area. New development would have the potential to create water quality problems in downstream waterways. As such, this alternative would require mitigation similar to the proposed project, the implementation of which would reduce impacts to level of less than significant. Therefore, this alternative would have less impact on hydrology and water quality than the proposed project.

Land Use

Similar to the proposed project, the No Project Alternative would maintain the existing Mixed Use General Plan and Zoning Ordinance designations of the Specific Plan area. Buildout of the Specific Plan area under General Plan 2030 would be required to comply with applicable General Plan and Zoning Ordinance policies. Therefore, this alternative would have impacts on land use similar to the proposed project.

Noise

This alternative provides for the construction of 4.9 million square feet of commercial space and 1,224 dwelling units. This is a net decrease of 168,000 square feet of commercial space and 376 dwelling units relative to the proposed project. Construction activities would be required to implement mitigation similar to the proposed project that would ensure short-term noise impacts are less than significant. Unlike the proposed project, the No Project Alternative does not include any residential uses; therefore, it would not be necessary to implement the vibration and interior noise control mitigation measures identified for the proposed project. In addition, because the No Project Alternative would generate fewer daily trips, it would have a smaller contribution to noise levels on local roadways. Therefore, the No Project Alternative would have less impact on noise than the proposed project.

Population and Housing

This alternative would result in a net decrease of 168,000 square feet of commercial space relative to the proposed project, and 376 dwelling units would be developed. Under this alternative, 4.9 million square feet of commercial space and 1,224 dwelling units would be developed. The population and employment growth contemplated by General Plan 2030 within the Specific Plan area have already been accounted for in local and regional forecasts because it would be consistent with the General Plan. Therefore, similar to the proposed project, population and employment growth that would occur under this alternative would not exceed forecasted population growth assumptions. As such, this alternative would have impacts on population and housing similar to the proposed project.

Public Services and Recreation

This alternative provides for 4.9 million square feet of commercial space and 1,224 dwelling units. This would represent a net decrease of 168,000 square feet relative to the proposed project and 376 dwelling units relative to the proposed project. Because this alternative would reduce the total number of dwelling units and create fewer employment opportunities, it would result in correspondingly lower impacts on public services and recreation through fewer calls for service, student generation, and public facility usage. The 4.9million square feet of commercial space would be required to implement fire protection mitigation similar to the proposed project. However, because this alternative would not include space for a police contact and public outreach station, or provide additional park facilities, it would not result in the beneficial impacts of the provision of such facilities. Therefore, the No Project Alternative would have greater impacts on public services and recreation than the proposed project.

Transportation

The No Project Alternative would result in a net decrease of 168,000 square feet of commercial space and 376 dwelling units relative to the proposed project. The No Project Alternative would generate fewer daily trips relative to the proposed project, including fewer trips during the morning and afternoon peak hours. While peak-hour trips would be reduced under the No Project Alternative, intersection operation impacts would still occur, and mitigation would be required to reduce impacts to a level of less than significant. The No Project Alternative would not implement the secondary street grid and would not increase circulation in the Specific Plan area. Furthermore, this alternative would not relocate the Transit Center or construct the Iron Horse Trail pedestrian overcrossings, which would not result in the beneficial impacts of the provision of such facilities. Therefore, the No Project Alternative would have greater impact on transportation than the proposed project.

Utility Systems

The No Project Alternative would result in the development of 4.9 million square feet of commercial space and 1,224 dwelling units within the Specific Plan area, resulting in 168,000 million fewer square feet of commercial space and 376 fewer dwelling units than the proposed project. The reduced development intensity of this alternative would have correspondingly less demand for potable water relative to the proposed project. Similar to the proposed project, this alternative would be required to comply with the Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance and use recycled water for irrigation to the extent practicable. The proposed project's wastewater and storm drainage impacts were determined to be less than significant; therefore, the No Project Alternative would have less than significant impacts on these utility systems. The No Project alternative would result in less demolition and construction waste; however, the development of 4.9 million square feet of commercial space would be considered significant enough to require demolition and construction debris recycling. In addition, this alternative would also generate substantial amounts of operational solid waste and require mitigation similar to the proposed project to reduce potential impacts to a level of less than significant. The No Project Alternative would have a substantially lower demand for energy, but would not be guided by Specific

Plan policies to implement energy conservation and alternative energy strategies and, therefore, would require mitigation to reduce potential impacts to a level of less than significant. The No Project Alternative would have less impact on utility systems compared with the proposed project.

5.3.2 - Conclusion

The No Project Alternative would have less impact than the proposed project in most impact categories. It would have impacts similar to the proposed project on land use and population and housing, and it would have greater impacts than the proposed project on public services and recreation and transportation.

The No Project Alternative would meet the project objectives relating to the promotion of economic growth, the creation of new jobs, and supporting the Bishop Ranch office population, but to a lesser extent than the proposed project. The No Project Alternative would not meet the objectives of developing capital investment, new housing opportunities, a transit- and pedestrian-oriented neighborhood, alternative modes of transportation, emphasized use of the Iron Horse Trail, or the provision of workforce housing close to employment centers.

5.4 - Alternative 2 – Office/Retail Intensification Alternative

The Office/Retail Intensification Alternative consists of implementing a version of the Specific Plan that emphasizes office and retail use intensification. The Specific Plan contemplated by this alternative would seek to create a vibrant commercial district with a wide range of retail and support commercial uses, supported by nearby office campus and residential neighborhoods.

Commercial uses would consist of the following:

- Pedestrian-oriented retail with larger, mid-sized floor plate stores along an extended Crow Canyon Place between Crow Canyon Road and Norris Canyon Road
- One- and two-story commercial structures oriented to a new grid of streets to provide increase retail-oriented frontages, vehicular circulation options, and to encourage a pedestrian retail environment
- Larger floor plate uses (such as supermarkets and drug stores) in the central block oriented to Camino Ramon
- Vertical, mixed-use structures with residential units over ground-floor commercial along the Camino Ramon and Norris Canyon Road frontages
- A modern office campus east of Camino Ramon
- Consolidation of Bishop Ranch 6 office structures into a node adjacent to Bishop Ranch 8 to free up land for support of commercial and residential uses
- Other infill development and parcel intensification as market forces allow

Residential uses would consist of:

- Residential neighborhoods with a variety of densities to support project area and City Center commercial uses, and provide housing close to work for the large number of office employees in the area. Large residential neighborhood south of Norris Canyon Road to provide easy pedestrian access to Bishop Ranch employment centers, City Center, and the central block commercial core.
- Residential units over ground-floor commercial uses along Camino Ramon and Norris Canyon Road frontages.
- Residential development adjacent to the Iron Horse Trail.

This alternative would feature the following transportation-related improvements:

- Relocation of the existing Transit Center on Executive Parkway to the project area's central block
- New roadway link between Crow Canyon Place and Annabel Lane
- New local traffic retail/commercial street connecting Crow Canyon Road and Norris Canyon Road
- Network of streets to create and pedestrian-friendly commercial environment in the central block, and in the new residential neighborhoods.
- Extension of Alcosta Boulevard to Fostoria Way
- Strong pedestrian and bicycle linkage between the Iron Horse Trail and the Project Area's central block.
- Pedestrian arcades in the central block's commercial core, linking primary streets to mid-block parking resources

Table 5-2 summarizes the Office/Retail Intensification Alternative Summary. As shown in Table 5-2, the Office/Retail Intensification Alternative would result in 5.195 million square feet of commercial space and 1,877 residential dwelling units. By comparison, the proposed project would have 5.07 million square feet of commercial space and 1,500 residential dwelling units, a difference of 125,300 fewer square feet of commercial space and the addition of 377 dwelling units.

The Office/Retail Intensification Alternative reflects a version of the North Camino Ramon Specific Plan that was initially considered by the City of San Ramon, but was not selected as the preferred alternative.

Table 5-2: Office/Retail Intensification Alternative Summary

Scenario	Maximum Buildout Potential		
	Commercial (square feet)	Residential (dwelling units)	Total (square feet)
Office/Retail Intensification Alternative	5,195,300	1,877	7,260,000
Proposed Project	5,070,000	1,500	6,720,000
Difference	125,300	377	540,000
Source: City of San Ramon, 2012.			

5.4.1 - Impact Analysis

Aesthetics, Light, and Glare

The Office/Retail Intensification Alternative would result in 125,300 more commercial square footage and 377 more residential dwelling units than would be permitted under the proposed project. The proposed project’s impacts on State Scenic Highways and visual character were found to be less than significant and did not require mitigation. The Office/Retail Intensification Alternative would also have less than significant impacts on these areas, since the additional commercial and residential dwellings would not be more visible from offsite than those in the proposed project, due to the two-story limit on building height. The Office/Retail Intensification Alternative would result in more new sources of light and glare than the proposed project, and mitigation similar to the proposed project would be required to reduce this impact to a level of less than significant. Therefore, the No Project Alternative would have greater aesthetics, light, and glare impacts than the proposed project.

Air Quality/Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The Office/Retail Intensification Alternative would result in the addition of 135,300 square feet of commercial space and 377 more residential dwelling units than the proposed project. Under the proposed project, all construction and long-term operational air quality and greenhouse gas impacts would be less than significant with mitigation. From a construction standpoint, the Office/Retail Intensification Alternative would result in more emissions associated with both commercial and residential construction. From any operational standpoint, the Office/Retail Intensification Alternative is also expected to have increased air quality impacts compared with the proposed project. In particular, the increased residential development would potentially increase sensitive receptor exposure to air quality impacts associated with air pollutants generated by commercial land uses and vehicle traffic on I-680 beyond the project site. Although the Office/Retail Intensification Alternative would result in overall greater generation of greenhouse gases, the increased density may result in a higher reduction from the business-as-usual emissions scenario than the proposed project. In summary, this alternative would have greater impacts than the proposed project.

Biological Resources

Under the Office/Retail Intensification Alternative, 125,300 more commercial square footage and 377 more residential dwelling units would be constructed than would be permitted under the proposed project. This alternative would have the potential to impact nesting birds to a greater degree than the proposed project, and would require mitigation similar to the proposed project. However, as with the proposed project, the implementation of mitigation would reduce potential impacts to a level of less than significant. Therefore, this alternative would have greater impacts on biological resources than the proposed project.

Cultural Resources

Under the Office/Retail Intensification Alternative, 125,300 more commercial square footage and 377 more residential dwelling units would be constructed than under the proposed project. As such, this alternative would have the potential to impact previously undiscovered buried cultural resources to a greater degree than the proposed project, and would require mitigation similar to the proposed project. However, the implementation of mitigation would reduce impacts to a level of less than significant. Therefore, this alternative would have greater impacts on cultural resources than the proposed project.

Geology, Soils, and Seismicity

Under the Office/Retail Intensification Alternative, 125,300 more square footage of commercial space and 377 more residential dwelling units would be constructed than under the proposed project. This alternative would have the potential to expose a greater number of people and structures to seismic hazards, unstable soils, or expansive soils and create erosion during construction than the proposed project. This alternative would require mitigation similar to the proposed project, the implementation of which would reduce impacts to a level of less than significant. Therefore, this alternative would have greater geology, soils, and seismicity impacts than the proposed project.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Under the Office/Retail Intensification Alternative, 125,300 more square footage of commercial space and 377 more residential dwelling units would be constructed than under the proposed project. Similar to the proposed project, persons employed or living on the site would have the potential to be exposed to existing contamination, but to a greater extent due to increased building occupancy. The implementation of mitigation would reduce impacts to a level of less than significant. Therefore, this alternative would have a greater impact related to hazards and hazardous materials than the proposed project.

Hydrology and Water Quality

Under the Office/Retail Intensification Alternative, more impervious surface area would be constructed within the Specific Plan area than under the proposed project, which, similar to the proposed project, would have the potential to create water quality problems in downstream

waterways. As such, this alternative would require mitigation similar to the proposed project, the implementation of which would reduce impacts to level of less than significant. Therefore, this alternative would have greater impacts on hydrology and water quality than the proposed project.

Land Use

Similar to the proposed project, the Office/Retail Intensification Alternative would maintain the existing Mixed Use General Plan and Zoning Ordinance designations of the project site. The construction of the commercial space would be required to comply with applicable General Plan and Zoning Ordinance policies, as would be required for the proposed project. Therefore, this alternative would have impacts on land use similar to the proposed project.

Noise

The Office/Retail Intensification Alternative would increase the amount of commercial square footage by 125,300 square feet and increase by 377 the number of dwellings compared with the proposed project. Like the proposed project, noise impacts would occur during construction activities but to a greater extent, given the additional development included under this alternative. Construction activities would be required to implement mitigation similar to the proposed project that would ensure short-term noise impacts are less than significant. The Office/Retail Intensification Alternative includes a greater number of residential dwellings than the proposed project. It will be necessary to implement similar vibration and interior noise control mitigation measures to those identified for the proposed project. In addition, because the Office/Retail Intensification Alternative would generate an increased number of daily trips compared with the proposed project, it would have a greater contribution to ambient noise levels on local roadways, although the proposed project's contribution was not determined to be significant. The Office/Retail Intensification Alternative would have greater noise impacts than the proposed project.

Population and Housing

This alternative would result in an increase of 125,300 commercial square feet and 377 additional dwellings relative to the proposed project. As with the proposed project, direct population growth would occur under the Office/Retail Intensification Alternative. The direct population growth and employment growth created by this alternative have already been accounted for in local and regional forecasts because it would be consistent with the General Plan. Therefore, similar to the proposed project, population and employment growth that would occur under this alternative would not exceed forecasted population growth assumptions. Therefore, the impact is similar to that of the proposed project.

Public Services and Recreation

The Office/Retail Intensification Alternative would result in a net increase of 125,300 square feet of commercial space and 377 additional dwellings relative to the proposed project. Because this alternative would contain more residential uses and generate greater employment opportunities than

the proposed project, it would result in correspondingly greater impacts on public services and recreation through increased calls for service, student generation, and public facility usage. This alternative would be required to implement fire protection mitigation similar to the proposed project. In conclusion, the Office/Retail Intensification Alternative would have greater impacts on public services and recreation than the proposed project.

Transportation

The Office/Retail Intensification Alternative would result in a net increase of 125,300 square feet of commercial space and 377 dwelling units relative to the proposed project. The Office/Retail Intensification Alternative would generate more daily trips relative to the proposed project, including more trips during the morning peak hour and more trips during the afternoon peak hour. Peak-hour trips would be increased under the Office/Retail Intensification Alternative, intersection operation impacts would still occur, and mitigation would be required to reduce impacts to a level of less than significant. The Office/Retail Intensification Alternative would implement the secondary street grid, which would increase circulation in the Specific Plan area. Furthermore, this alternative would relocate the Transit Center and construct the Iron Horse Trail pedestrian overcrossings, which would result in the beneficial impacts of the provision of such facilities. Therefore, the Office/Retail Intensification Alternative would have less impact on transportation than the proposed project.

Utility Systems

The Office/Retail Intensification Alternative would result in the development of 125,300 more square footage of commercial space and 377 more dwellings than the proposed project. The increased development intensity of this alternative would have correspondingly greater demand for potable water and wastewater disposal and treatment relative to the proposed project. Similar to the proposed project, this alternative would be required to comply with the Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance and use recycled water for irrigation to the extent practicable. The proposed project's wastewater and storm drainage impacts were determined to be less than significant. Therefore, the Office/Retail Intensification Alternative would have less than significant impacts on these utility systems. This alternative would result in greater demolition and construction waste; however, development would be considered significant enough to require demolition and construction debris recycling. In addition, this alternative would generate substantial amounts of operational solid waste and require mitigation similar to the proposed project to reduce potential impacts to a level of less than significant. The Office/Retail Intensification Alternative would have a greater demand for energy, but would be guided by Specific Plan policies to implement energy conservation and alternative energy strategies that would reduce potential impacts to a level of less than significant. Therefore, this alternative would have impacts on utility systems greater than the proposed project.

5.4.2 - Conclusion

The Office/Retail Intensification Alternative would have impacts similar to the proposed project relative to land use and population and would have less impact on transportation than the proposed project. In all other impact categories, it would have greater environmental impacts.

The Office/Retail Intensification Alternative would meet all of the project objectives relating to the promotion of economic growth, the creation of new jobs, and supporting the Bishop Ranch office population. It would also meet the objectives of developing capital investment, new housing opportunities, a transit- and pedestrian-oriented neighborhood, alternative modes of transportation, emphasized use of the Iron Horse Trail, or the provision of workforce housing close to employment centers.

5.5 - Alternative 3 – Suburban Village Alternative

The Suburban Village Alternative consists of implementing a version of the Specific Plan that emphasizes residential use intensification. The Specific Plan contemplated by this alternative would seek to create a fully integrated horizontal and vertical mixed-use suburban village with a vibrant commercial core, lifestyle residential neighborhoods, and abundant open park space amenities.

Commercial uses would consist of the following:

- Ground floor commercial uses with residential uses above, along a linear park linking Crow Canyon Road and Norris Canyon Road
- Auto-oriented retail with larger, mid-sized floor plate stores such as Best Buy, REI, etc. along an extended Crow Canyon Place between Crow Canyon Road and Norris Canyon Road
- Larger floor plate uses (e.g., supermarkets, drug stores, etc.) in the central block oriented to Camino Ramon
- A modern office campus east of Camino Ramon
- Consolidation of Bishop Ranch 6 office structures into a node adjacent to Bishop Ranch 8 to free up land that would support commercial and residential uses
- Other infill development and parcel intensification as market forces allow

Residential uses would consist of:

- Two stories of residential units above ground floor retail along a linear park linking Crow Canyon Road and Norris Canyon Road
- Lifestyle neighborhoods with abundant open space and resident amenities

- Residential neighborhoods in the central block to encourage nighttime activity (such as open retail shops, restaurants, events in the parks)

This alternative would feature the following transportation-related improvements:

- Relocation of the existing Transit Center on Executive Parkway to the Project Area’s central block
- New roadway link between Crow Canyon Place and Annabel Lane
- Network of streets to create and pedestrian-friendly commercial environment in the central block, and in the new residential neighborhoods
- Extension of Alcosta Boulevard to Fostoria Way
- Strong pedestrian and bicycle linkage between the Iron Horse Trail and the Project Area’s central block
- Pedestrian arcades in the central block’s commercial core, linking primary streets to mid-block parking resources

Table 5-3 summarizes the Suburban Village Alternative Summary. As shown in Table 5-3, the Suburban Village Alternative would result in 5.567 million square feet of commercial space and 3,285 residential dwelling units. By comparison, the proposed project would have 5.07 million square feet of commercial space and 1,500 residential dwelling units, a difference of 496,500 more square feet of commercial space and 1,785 more dwelling units.

The Suburban Village Alternative reflects a version of the North Camino Ramon Specific Plan that was initially considered by the City of San Ramon, but was not selected as the preferred alternative.

Table 5-3: Suburban Village Alternative Summary

Scenario	Maximum Buildout Potential		
	Commercial (square feet)	Residential (dwelling units)	Total (square feet)
Suburban Village Alternative	5,566,500	3,285	9,180,000
Proposed Project	5,070,000	1,500	6,720,000
Difference	496,500	1,785	2,460,000
Source: City of San Ramon, 2012.			

5.5.1 - Impact Analysis

Aesthetics, Light, and Glare

The Suburban Village Alternative would result in 496,500 more commercial square footage and 1,785 more residential dwelling units than the proposed project. The proposed project's impacts on State Scenic Highways and visual character were found to be less than significant and did not require mitigation. This alternative would also have less than significant impacts on these areas, since the relatively small increase in commercial square footage and additional residential dwellings would not be more visible from offsite than those in the proposed project due to height limitations. This alternative would result in more new sources of light and glare than the proposed project, and mitigation similar to the proposed project would be required to reduce this impact to a level of less than significant. Therefore, the Suburban Village Alternative would have greater aesthetics, light, and glare impacts than the proposed project.

Air Quality/Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The Suburban Village Alternative would result in the addition of 496,500 square feet of commercial space and 1,785 more residential dwelling units than the proposed project. Under the proposed project, all construction and long-term operational air quality and greenhouse gas impacts would be less than significant with mitigation. From a construction standpoint, the Suburban Village Alternative would result in more emissions associated with both commercial and residential construction. From any operational standpoint, the Suburban Village Alternative is also expected to have increased air quality impacts compared with the proposed project. In particular, the significantly increased residential development component would potentially increase exposure of sensitive receptors to air quality impacts associated with air pollutants generated by commercial land uses and vehicle traffic on I-680 beyond the project site. Although the Suburban Village Alternative would result in overall greater generation of greenhouse gases, the increased density may result in a higher reduction from the business-as-usual emissions scenario than the proposed project. In summary, the Suburban Village Alternative would have greater impacts than the proposed project.

Biological Resources

Under the Suburban Village Alternative, 496,500 more commercial square footage and 1,785 more residential dwelling units would be constructed than under the proposed project. Similar to the proposed project, this alternative would have the potential to impact nesting birds, but to a greater degree than the proposed project. Mitigation similar to that required for the proposed project would be required. As with the proposed project, the implementation of mitigation would reduce potential impacts to a level of less than significant. Consequently, this alternative would have greater impacts on biological resources than the proposed project.

Cultural Resources

Under this alternative, 496,500 more commercial square footage and 1,785 more residential dwelling units would be constructed than under the proposed project. This alternative would have the potential

to impact previously undiscovered buried cultural resources to a greater degree than the proposed project, and it would require mitigation similar to the proposed project. The implementation of mitigation would reduce impacts to a level of less than significant. Therefore, this alternative would have greater impacts on cultural resources than the proposed project.

Geology, Soils, and Seismicity

Under this alternative, 496,500 more commercial square footage and 1,785 more residential dwelling units would be constructed than under the proposed project. This alternative would have the potential to expose people or structures to seismic hazards, unstable soils, or expansive soils and create erosion during construction, but to a greater extent than the proposed project due to the increased residential and commercial occupancy. This alternative would require mitigation similar to the proposed project, the implementation of which would reduce impacts to a level of less than significant. Therefore, this alternative would have greater geology, soils, and seismicity impacts than the proposed project.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Under the Suburban Village Alternative, 496,500 more square feet of commercial space and 1,785 more residential dwelling units would be constructed than under the proposed project. Similar to the proposed project, persons employed or living on the site would have the potential to be exposed to existing contamination, but to a greater extent due to increased occupancy. The implementation of mitigation would reduce impacts to a level of less than significant. Therefore, this alternative would have greater impacts related to hazards and hazardous materials than the proposed project.

Hydrology and Water Quality

Under this alternative, more impervious surface area would be created in conjunction with an increased amount of commercial uses and increased number of residential dwellings compared with the proposed plan. Similar to the proposed project, this alternative would have the potential to create water quality problems in downstream waterways. As such, this alternative would require mitigation similar to the proposed project, the implementation of which would reduce impacts to level of less than significant. Therefore, this alternative would have greater impacts on hydrology and water quality than the proposed project.

Land Use

Similar to the proposed project, this alternative would maintain the existing Mixed Use General Plan and Zoning Ordinance designations of the project site. The construction of the commercial space would be required to comply with applicable General Plan and Zoning Ordinance policies, as would be required for the proposed project. Therefore, this alternative would have impacts on land use similar to the proposed project.

Noise

Under the Suburban Village Alternative 496,500 more commercial square footage and 1,785 more residential dwelling units would be constructed than under the proposed project. Similar to the

proposed project, noise impacts would occur during construction activities but to a greater extent, given the increased development included under this alternative. Construction activities would be required to implement mitigation similar to the proposed project that would ensure short-term noise impacts are less than significant. This alternative includes significantly more residential dwellings than the proposed project. As such, it will be necessary to implement vibration and interior noise control mitigation measures identified for the proposed project. This alternative would generate an increased number of daily trips compared with the proposed project. Accordingly, it would have a greater contribution to noise levels on local roadways, although the proposed project's contribution was determined not to be significant. Therefore, this alternative would have noise impacts greater than the proposed project.

Population and Housing

This alternative would increase the commercial square footage of the project by 496,500 square feet and increase residential development by 1,785 dwellings as compared to the proposed project. As with the proposed project, direct population growth would occur under this alternative. The direct population growth and employment growth created by this alternative have already been accounted for in local and regional forecasts, and this alternative would be consistent with the General Plan. Therefore, similar to the proposed project, population and employment growth that would occur under this alternative would not exceed forecasted population growth assumptions. The population and housing impacts would be similar to those of the proposed project.

Public Services and Recreation

The Suburban Village Alternative would result in 496,500 more commercial square footage and 1,785 more residential dwelling units than would be constructed under the proposed project. Because this alternative would contain significantly more residential uses and increased employment opportunities relative to the proposed project, it would result in greater impacts on public services and recreation through increased calls for service, student generation, and public facility usage. This alternative would be required to implement fire protection mitigation similar to the proposed project. In conclusion, this alternative would have greater impacts on public services and recreation than the proposed project.

Transportation

The Suburban Village Alternative would result in a net increase of 496,500 square feet of commercial space and 1,785 dwelling units relative to the proposed project. The Suburban Village Alternative would generate more daily trips relative to the proposed project, including more trips during the morning and afternoon peak hours. Peak-hour trips would be increased under the Suburban Village Alternative, intersection operation impacts would still occur, and mitigation would be required to reduce impacts to a level of less than significant. The Suburban Village Alternative would implement the secondary street grid and, therefore, would increase circulation in the Specific Plan area. Furthermore, this alternative would relocate the Transit Center and construct the Iron Horse Trail

pedestrian overcrossings, which would result in the beneficial impacts of the provision of such facilities. However, the large addition of dwelling units would cause the Suburban Village Alternative to have greater impacts on transportation than the proposed project.

Utility Systems

The Suburban Village Alternative would result in 496,500 more commercial square footage and 1,785 more residential dwelling units than would be constructed under the proposed project. The increased residential development under this alternative would have correspondingly greater demand for potable water and wastewater disposal and treatment relative to the proposed project, and there would be increased demand for these utilities associated with commercial development. Similar to the proposed project, this alternative would be required to comply with the Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance and use recycled water for irrigation to the extent practicable. The proposed project's wastewater and storm drainage impacts were determined to be less than significant. Therefore, this alternative would have less than significant impacts on these utility systems. This alternative would result in increased demolition and construction waste that would be considered significant enough to require demolition and construction debris recycling. In addition, this alternative would generate substantial amounts of operational solid waste and require mitigation similar to the proposed project to reduce potential impacts to a level of less than significant. This alternative would have an increased demand for energy, and would be guided by Specific Plan policies to implement energy conservation and alternative energy strategies that would reduce potential impacts to a level of less than significant. Therefore, this alternative would have impacts on utility systems greater than the proposed project.

5.5.2 - Conclusion

The Suburban Village Alternative would have impacts similar to the proposed project relative to land use and population. In all other impact categories, it would have greater environmental impacts.

The Suburban Village Alternative would meet all of the project objectives relating to the promotion of economic growth, the creation of new jobs, and supporting the Bishop Ranch office population. It would also meet the objectives of developing capital investment, new housing opportunities, a transit- and pedestrian-oriented neighborhood, alternative modes of transportation, emphasized use of the Iron Horse Trail, or the provision of workforce housing close to employment centers.

5.6 - Environmentally Superior Alternative

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126(e)(2) requires an EIR to identify an “environmentally superior” alternative. The qualitative environmental effects of each alternative in relation to the proposed project described earlier in the section are summarized in Table 5-4.

Table 5-4: Comparison of Alternatives

Environmental Topic Area	No Project Alternative	Office/Retail Intensification Alternative	Suburban Village Alternative
Aesthetics, Light, and Glare	Less Impact	Greater Impact	Greater Impact
Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Less Impact	Greater Impact	Greater Impact
Biological Resources	Less Impact	Greater Impact	Greater Impact
Cultural Resources	Less Impact	Greater Impact	Greater Impact
Geology, Soils, and Seismicity	Less Impact	Greater Impact	Greater Impact
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	Less Impact	Greater Impact	Greater Impact
Hydrology and Water Quality	Less Impact	Greater Impact	Greater Impact
Land Use	Similar Impact	Similar Impact	Similar Impact
Noise	Less Impact	Greater Impact	Greater Impact
Population and Housing	Similar Impact	Similar Impact	Similar Impact
Public Services and Recreation	Greater Impact	Greater Impact	Greater Impact
Transportation	Greater Impact	Less Impact	Greater Impact
Utility Systems	Less Impact	Greater Impact	Greater Impact
Source: Michael Brandman Associates, 2012.			

As shown in Table 5-4, the No Project Alternative is the environmentally superior alternative, as the project area would consist of existing land uses and land use activities allowed under the Mixed Use land use classification for the foreseeable future.

In accordance with CEQA requirements, if the No Project Alternative is the environmentally superior alternative, the EIR must also identify an environmentally superior alternative from among the other alternatives. In this instance, the Office/Retail Intensification Alternative is the environmentally superior alternative: it would less impact on transportation relative to the proposed project, while the Suburban Village Alternative would have greater impact on this topical area relative to the proposed project.

5.7 - Alternatives Rejected From Further Consideration

The following alternative was initially considered, but rejected from further consideration for the reasons described below.

5.7.1 - Alternative Location

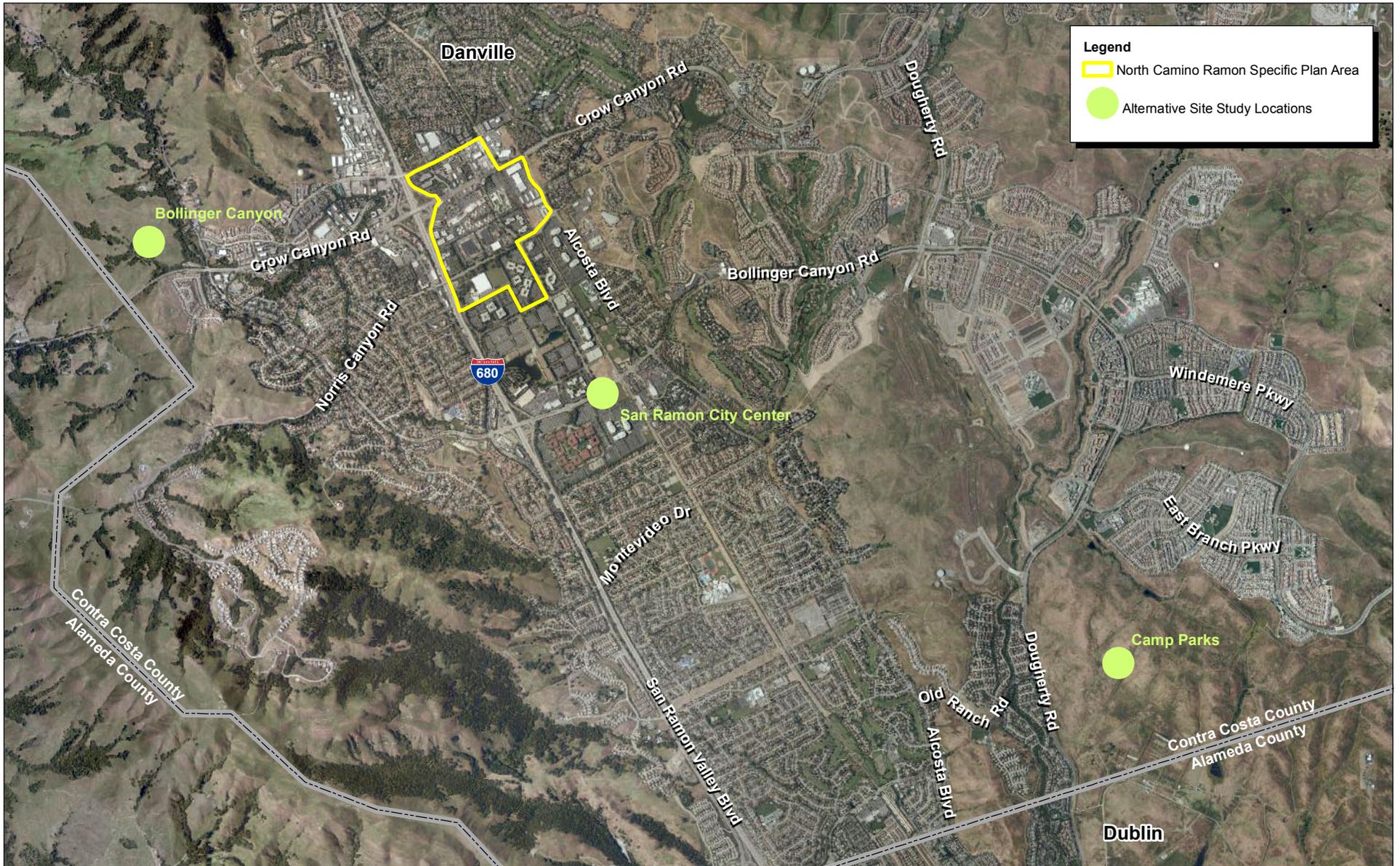
The following discussion will first describe the CEQA requirements for evaluation of alternative project locations and then evaluate potential alternative locations.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(f)(2) sets forth considerations to be used in evaluating an alternative location. The section states that the “key question” is whether any of the significant effects of the project would be avoided or substantially lessened by relocating the project. The CEQA Guidelines identify the following factors that may be taken into account when addressing the feasibility of an alternative location:

- 1.) Site suitability
- 2.) Economic viability
- 3.) Availability of infrastructure
- 4.) General Plan consistency
- 5.) Other plans or regulatory limitations
- 6.) Jurisdictional boundaries
- 7.) Whether the project applicant can reasonably acquire, control, or otherwise have access to the alternative site

The CEQA Guidelines establishes that only locations that would accomplish this objective should be considered as alternative locations for the proposed project.

Table 5-5 summarizes the feasibility of three alternative study locations. Exhibit 5-1 depicts the locations of the three alternative study sites. As shown in the table, none of the three study sites are considered feasible for a variety of reasons; therefore, developing the proposed project at an alternative location has been rejected from further consideration.



Source: State of CA NAIP, 2010.



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Exhibit 5-1 Alternative Site Study Locations

Table 5-5: Alternative Study Location Feasibility Analysis

Location	Description	Feasibility Analysis
San Ramon City Center	Approximately 44 acres located on all four quadrants of the intersection of Bollinger Canyon Road/Camino Ramon in the City of San Ramon. This site contains undeveloped land, surface parking areas associated with the Bishop Ranch 1 office complex, and the entire Bishop Ranch 2 office complex. Most of this site is designated “Mixed Use” by the City of San Ramon General Plan; a small portion is designated “Office.” This site is adjacent to the Iron Horse Trail and is within 0.25 mile of the I-680/Bollinger Canyon Road interchange.	Not Feasible: This site is currently entitled for the San Ramon City Center Project, a 2.1-million-square-foot, mixed-use project. The City Center Project is a public-private venture between the City of San Ramon and Sunset Development. Although construction has not begun on the project, the entitlements are still in effect and, therefore, this location is considered committed to another higher-and-better use. Additionally, the acreage of this site (44 acres) is less than one-fifth of the acreage of the Specific Plan area (255 acres) and, thus, is too small to accommodate the level of development contemplated by the proposed project. Finally, a key objective of the proposed Specific Plan is to complement the San Ramon City Center Project. Developing the proposed project at the City Center site would be contrary to this objective. These factors preclude the possibility of developing the project at this location.
Bollinger Canyon	Approximately 64 acres located west of Bollinger Canyon Road and north of Crow Canyon Road in the City of San Ramon. This site contains grazing land and rural residences. This site is designated “Hillside Residential,” “Open Space,” and “Parks” by the City of San Ramon General Plan.	Not Feasible: This site is currently entitled for residential development (200 dwelling units), open space, and parks by the Northwest Specific Plan. Although construction has not begun on the project, the entitlements are still in effect and, therefore, this location is considered committed to another higher-and-better use. Additionally, the acreage of this site (64 acres) is one-quarter of the acreage of the Specific Plan area (255 acres) and, thus, is too small to accommodate the level of development contemplated by the proposed project. Lastly, this site is not well suited for the high-density mixed uses contemplated by the project, as it is located at the urban fringe of San Ramon and is more than 1 mile from I-680. It also lacks adjacency to major employment centers (e.g., Bishop Ranch Business Park), which is a key objective of the Specific Plan. These factors preclude the possibility of developing the project at this location.

Table 5-5 (cont.): Alternative Study Location Feasibility Analysis

Location	Description	Feasibility Analysis
Camp Parks	Approximately 910 acres located adjacent to the Dougherty Valley in unincorporated Contra Costa County, adjacent to the San Ramon city limits. (Camp Parks totals more than 2,000 acres; however, only the 910 acres located in Contra Costa County are being considered as a potential alternative site). This site is designated “Public/Semi-Public” by the Contra Costa County General Plan. This site is also designated “Open Space” by the City of San Ramon General Plan, a non-binding designation. This site is within the City of San Ramon’s Urban Growth Boundary and Sphere of Influence.	Not Feasible: The United States Department of Defense controls Camp Parks and has not indicated that the portion of the base within Contra Costa County is a candidate for closure or conversion to civilian use. As such, the City of San Ramon does not have the ability to acquire, control, or otherwise access this site. Additionally, this site is not well suited for the high-density mixed uses contemplated by the project, as it is located more than 2 miles from I-680 and I-580. It also lacks adjacency to any employment centers (e.g., Bishop Ranch Business Park), which is a key objective of the Specific Plan. These factors preclude the possibility of developing the project at this location.
Source: Michael Brandman Associates, 2012.		