5.0 PROJECT ALTERNATIVES

5.1 *PURPOSE*

CEQA requires that an EIR assess a range of reasonable alternatives to a proposed project. The purpose of this assessment is to identify other types or configurations of a proposed project, or suitable alternative project sites, which would eliminate or reduce the magnitude of significant adverse impacts which would result from project implementation. The CEQA Guidelines *state that the range of alternatives discussed should be sufficient to allow decision-makers a reasoned choice between alternatives and the proposed project. The discussion should provide sufficient information to assist decision-makers in understanding the environmental merits and disadvantages of the alternatives, compared to the proposed project.*

5.2 INTRODUCTION

As stated above, the principal purpose of an alternatives analysis is to define specific strategies that would reduce the magnitude of, or eliminate, potential project-related impacts. However, CEQA *Guidelines* place some restrictions on the range of alternatives an EIR must address. First, an EIR need only examine those alternatives that meet most of the basic objectives of the project. Second, CEQA *Guidelines* stipulate that alternatives addressed in an EIR should be feasible and should not be considered remote or speculative. When addressing feasibility, CEQA *Guidelines* state that "among the factors that may be taken into account when addressing the feasibility of alternatives are site suitability, economic viability, availability of infrastructure, general plan consistency, jurisdictional boundaries, and whether the applicant can reasonably acquire, control or otherwise have access to the alternative site." Lastly, alternatives need not be presented in the same level of detail as the assessment of the proposed project.

a. Project Objectives

As discussed in **Section 3.0, Project Description** of this EIR, the project objectives established by applicant include the following:

Land Use Planning Objectives

- Develop the property with residential uses as allowed by Specific Plan No. 4 while minimizing to the maximum extent feasible the alteration of existing landforms;

- To minimize to the maximum extent feasible the intrusion of man-made structures into the Walnut Creek County Regional Park viewshed;
- To preserve to the maximum extent feasible the preservation of the scenic qualities of the area;
- To provide an enriched residential environment with aesthetic cohesiveness, harmonious massing of structures, and interfacing of open space through the utilization of superior land planning and architectural design.

Parks, Recreation, and Open Area Objectives

- To the maximum extent feasible preserve mature trees that exist on the subject property;
- Public viewsheds will be left undisturbed or planted with material compatible with the vegetation in Walnut Creek Park to minimize disruption of views.

b. Impacts of the Proposed Project

The alternatives selected for analysis in this section were developed with the aim of avoiding or lessening the significant environmental impacts of the Project as identified in this EIR while still meeting the basic objectives of the project. The analysis contained in **Section 4.0** of this Draft EIR determined that the project would not result in any unavoidable significant impacts. Several project-related impacts were identified, but mitigation was available to reduce the impact to below a level considered significant. Each is briefly summarized below:

- **Geology and Soils** – The proposed project would be subject to ground shaking in the event of an earthquake along any of major faults in the vicinity. Strong ground shaking can result in serious damage to structures, personal injuries, including loss of life, damage to property, and economic and social dislocations. The proposed project would result in the construction and occupancy of residential uses, and therefore has the inherent potential to subject persons to ground shaking-related hazards. By incorporating recommendations of the geotechnical engineering study and complying with the UBC and City of San Dimas standards, project impacts related to ground shaking would be less than significant.

- **Visual Resources** – The City of San Dimas *General Plan* considers Walnut Creek Trail a scenic resource, while Specific Plan No. 4 incorporates a scenic easement along the trail boundary. Upon project completion, a 25 foot tall manufactured slope face that forms the southern boundary of lot 6 and 7 would be clearly visible form portions of this trail. The base of this slope begins approximately 250 feet from this viewing location and will be prominently visible where presently the view is of open grass land and oak woodland. Mitigation is provided that

calls for development of a landscape program that is intended to establish a visual screen through planting of native vegetation, clearing of non-native underbrush and installation of temporary irrigation where the existing vegetation is not adequate along this viewing location.

- **Noise** – Construction noise has the potential to significantly impact both on and off-site environs. Construction activity is generally broken up into two distinct activities that typically utilize different types of construction equipment. Equipment would range from heavy machinery such as graders, scrapers, tractors, loaders and cranes during the rough grading phase, to jackhammers, pneumatic tools, saws, and hammers during tract development. Noise levels generated by heavy equipment can range from approximately 68 dB(A) to noise levels in excess of 100 dB(A) when measured at 50 feet. The off-site sensitive use that would be most susceptible to construction noise would be the residential uses directly adjacent to the west of the project site, because these homes are located at grade with the subject property and have a direct line of site to future construction activity. Any locations with an uninterrupted line of sight to the construction noise sources could periodically be exposed to temporary noise levels which could exceed adopted standards. In order to reduce the potential impacts associated with construction activities, the City of San Dimas, typically limits construction activities to between the hours of 7:00 A.M. and 8:00 P.M. daily and prohibits work on Sundays and legal holidays. In addition, mitigation was identified to further minimize noise experienced by adjacent properties during construction activity.

- **Biological Resources** – Approximately 0.4 acre of coast live oak woodland and southern coast live oak riparian woodland will be directly impacted by implementation of the project. The City of San Dimas has an ordinance that protects oak trees with a minimum trunk diameter of 8 inches at 36 inches above grade. Because these trees are under the jurisdiction of the City's tree ordinance, they require permits before they can be impacted. Any impact to these trees will be considered significant prior to implementation of mitigation conditioned as part of the permit. Additionally, some bird species, particularly raptors, could be adversely affected as a result of the loss of nesting habitat (trees and shrubs) or as a result of construction or other site-preparation activities. Such activities could result in the direct loss of active nests or the abandonment of active nests by adult birds. Depending on the number and extent of bird nests on the site that may be disturbed or removed, the loss of active bird nests would be a potentially significant impact. As such, the EIR contains mitigation that requires further surveys during the appropriate time period for active nests prior to start of construction.

- **Hydrology and Water Quality** – Grading and excavation necessary for site preparation could result in wind and water driven erosion of soils that would increase sedimentation in the creek during storm events. The applicant has the responsibility to prepare a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) for all construction projects with disturbed areas of 2 to 5 acres that identifies the Best Management Practices (BMPs) to be used on the construction site to minimize erosion. Alternatively, the applicant may conform to the State Construction Activity Storm Water Permit for projects greater than 5 acres. The applicant must ensure that a SWPPP is approved, or file a Notice of Intent to comply with the State Permit prior to issuance of a grading permit. Implementation of the BMPs contained in the plan reduce potential construction related impacts to less than significant levels.

  Common concerns related to post-development surface water quality include the potential deposition of pollutants generated by motor vehicles and the maintenance and operation of landscape areas. Urban runoff contains almost every type of water pollutant, including suspended solids, bacteria, heavy metals, oxygen-demanding substances, nutrients, and oil and grease. The project applicant will be required to prepare a Standard Urban Storm Water Mitigation Plan ("SUSMP") containing design features and BMPs appropriate and applicable to the project. The purpose of the SUSMP is to reduce post-construction pollutants in storm water discharges.

Based on the CEQA-driven directives, a total of five alternatives to the proposed project are analyzed in this section. Each is described and evaluated below.

5.3 ALTERNATIVES EVALUATION

a. "No Project-No Development"

Section 15126 of the CEQA *Guidelines* requires an analysis of a "no project" alternative. Under this alternative, the proposed Specific Plan would not be approved and the potential project-related impacts described in **Section 4.0** of this EIR would not occur. Existing vegetation and landforms would be preserved. There would be no additional demand for public services, no increase in noise levels, no disruption to visual corridors, and no water quality impacts.

1. Conclusion

This alternative is environmentally superior to the proposed project when consideration is given to impacts prior to implementation of mitigation. However, it is not consistent with the existing *General Plan* and Zoning designations for the site which allow low density single family dwellings nor would this alternative meet any of the applicant's objectives for the proposed project identified previously.

b. "No-Project – General Plan Development"

1. Description

Selection of the "no project" alternative would not necessarily preclude future development of the property. The *City of San Dimas General Plan* and Specific Plan No. 4 designate the subject property for Single Family Low uses. This category allows single family detached dwellings with a minimum lot size of 7000 sf. The maximum permitted density within this category as articulated by the Land Use Element of the General Plan is 6 du/acre. Specific Plan No. 4 contains further density restrictions that limit site development to 19 lots. In addition to being planned for urban use, the project site is located adjacent to existing water, sewer, natural gas, telephone, cable lines that are present within existing roadway rights-of-way. Further, the site is located within the existing service area of both sheriffs and fire department stations and all public services are readily available to serve future site development. Given that the property is planned for urban use and can be served by existing infrastructure, it can be assumed that the site will likely be developed at some time in the future if the currently proposed project is not approved.

One likely scenario is that the property would be developed somewhere within the midpoint range of density presently allowed by the General Plan. Under this scenario, a total of 57 residential units would be constructed on the subject property assuming the retention of 6 acres of open space buffer along Walnut Creek, and that 1.7 acres of the site are set aside for the future on-site roadway. This leaves 11.2 acres of buildable area (11.2 acres @ 4.5 du/acre=50 du). The overall street layout and lot configuration would differ from that of the proposed project, with this alternative having more of a tract appearance. For example, this alternative would have an average residential lot size of approximately 7,260 square feet compared to the average of 28,580 sf with the proposed project. Lots would be more uniform in size and building pads would be placed closer together with less open space separating individual structures. Internal circulation would be provided by a roadway that is a minimum of 36 feet wide from curb to curb rather than the 28-foot wide pavement envelope of the proposed project. No horsekeeping would occur under this alternative.

2. *Analysis*

Geology & Soils

Since this alternative would construct more building pads within the same development envelope as the proposed project, a greater amount of disturbance to the existing terrain would be needed. Slopes steeper than 20%, which are left untouched by the proposed grading plan, would be cut to accommodate the additional building pads. Consequently, it is likely that a greater number of retaining walls would be required and the number of cut slopes would be greater than that needed to construct the proposed project. However, any improvements constructed on the site would be subjected to the forces of ground movement during seismic events similar to the proposed project, and would also be subject to the same construction requirements as the proposed project.

Visual Resources

Development of any use on the property will be controlled by Specific Plan No. 4, which contains design guidelines and development standards that regulate lot size, building setbacks, building heights, permitted density ranges, define roadway design and landscaping, parking requirements, and community monumentation and signage. These standards will ensure that height, bulk, and massing of on-site structures are compatible with surrounding development regardless of the development alternative selected.

Under either the proposed project or this alternative, views from most locations would not be significantly effected by development, because landform alteration and the placement of homes would occur below the grade of Gainsborough and Valley Center Road and at-grade with adjacent residential uses. Consequently, views of cut slopes and retaining walls are largely contained to the site interior and would not be visible from surrounding vantagepoints. However, it is expected that this alternative would result in the removal of many more mature trees than the proposed project. The existing tree canopy screens views of the property from land located to the west and south. Views of the project from the Walnut Creek Trail with selection of this alternative would feature a greater number of cut slopes, fewer native trees, and less open space than under the proposed project. Thus, this alternative is considered to have a greater level of impact than the proposed project.

Noise

The amount of noise generated during construction and operation of a project can be related to the intensity of development as well as the nature and location of this development activity. With regard to construction noise, this alternative requires additional grading to cut existing slopes back so that sufficient space is available to establish all the building pads. Consequently, construction activities would occur over a longer period than that of the proposed project. However, this activity would occur at a similar distance to the nearby residences, as does the proposed project. Thus, construction noise related impacts would be greater under this alternative than those associated with the proposed project because the duration of construction noise would be greater while distance between the source and receptor would remain unchanged.

On an operational basis, this alternative would generate point source noise that is typical of a residential setting including people talking, doors slamming, dogs barking, and lawn equipment. As with the proposed project, point source noise levels generated by this alternative are not expected to exceed the City's Land Use Compatibility Guidelines or Noise Ordinance. With regard to mobile source noise, approximately 500 vehicle trips would be generated at buildout of this alternative compared to the 180 trips created by the proposed project. It takes a doubling of traffic volumes to create an audible increase in noise levels along a roadway. Since implementation of either development alternative would not double traffic volumes along Gainsborough Road (1,670 ADT) or Valley Center Avenue (2,993 ADT), neither would cause an audible noise increase and each development alternative is considered equal with regard to operational noise impacts.

Cultural Resources

Information provided from the record search and from field surveys indicates that no cultural resources are present on the project site. Therefore, site development under any alternative scenario would result in a similar level of impact to historic and prehistoric resources.

Biological Resources

This alternative would require a greater amount of land disturbance than does the proposed project and would result in the loss of all existing coast live oak woodland and southern coast live oak riparian woodland found on the property. As a greater number of units would be built, the increase in human and the associated domestic pet population would be greater, which would increase the potential for indirect impacts to the adjacent Walnut Creek open space areas. Overall, development of a greater

portion of the site would increase the impacts to biological resources on the site when compared to the proposed project.

Public Safety

Site development under either the proposed project or this alternative would place residential uses in a high fire hazard area. Any project proposed for the property would comply with all development standards set forth by the Uniform Fire Code and County of Los Angeles Fire Department regardless of site design. For example, all uses would construct an urban water system which meets fire flow requirements, and would replace fire-prone non-native grass and scrub vegetation on site with native plants that will be irrigated. Compliance with these requirements would reduce impacts to less than significant levels regardless of the nature or layout of on-site use proposed. With respect to site access, this alternative provides for a 36-foot wide paved internal collector roadway. In contrast, the proposed project provides for a 28 foot roadway with an additional 4 foot wide parkway for parking on one side and a 6 foot wide equestrian trail on the other side separated by rolled concrete curb, for a total width accessible to emergency vehicles of 38 feet. This is sufficient width to accommodate emergency vehicles without impediment, so either roadway cross section would provide adequate site access consistent with County and City code requirements. Consequently, neither the proposed project nor this alternative is considered superior with respect to fire protection service.

With regard to law enforcement service, this alternative would generate a resident population of 155 persons compared to the 59 persons expected at project buildout using the City's average person per household figure of 3.1. The higher resident population associated with this development alternative is expected to generate more calls for service than predicted for the proposed project. Thus, it is expected that this alternative would have a greater impact on the Sheriff's Department than the proposed project.

Hydrology & Water Quality

Urban runoff generated under this alternative would be conveyed and discharged off site through a developed drainage network as would the proposed project. The volume of runoff that flows off the project site in a design year storm event is greater in its undeveloped condition than it would be in a developed condition because, in the undeveloped condition, runoff contains debris (soil and materials, such as dead branches, leaves, etc.), while in the developed condition, debris is removed from the water. Like the proposed project, the amount of clear runoff from developed portions of the site in this alternative would be greater than under current conditions due to an increase in the amount of

impervious surfaces, while the amount of debris would be reduced as undeveloped areas are replaced with the more non-erosive landscaping. However, because this alternative would cover more of the site with non-erosive surfaces than the proposed project, thereby reducing debris, the amount of runoff (water plus debris) from the site would be less with this alternative than would the proposed project. Therefore, this alternative would be environmentally superior with respect to runoff volume in a design year storm. With respect to water quality, both the proposed project as well as this alternative are subject to the requirements of the NPDES permit program so neither is considered superior in this regard.

3. Conclusion

This alternative is not considered environmentally superior to the proposed project but is consistent with the existing *General Plan* designations for the site which allow low density single family dwellings at a maximum permitted density of 6 du/acre. Some of the resource related project objectives would not be achieved with selection of this alternative including preservation of mature trees, maintenance of public viewsheds, and minimization of landform alteration.

c. "No Project – Existing Specific Plan No. 4 Development"

1. Description

Selection of the "No Project" – Existing Specific Plan No. 4 Development alternative would not necessarily preclude future development of the property. The *City of San Dimas General Plan* and Specific Plan No. 4 designate the subject property for Single Family Low uses. In 1980, Specific Plan No. 4 was amended to include the project area and was designated for development of 19 lots. This Amendment to the specific plan went to the point of outlining general lot line locations for each of the 19 lots that were arranged around two cul-de-sac streets. An extension of Valley Center Avenue is a part of this alternative and the extended road would provide a separated roadway with approximately 20 feet of street in each direction. The two cul-de-sacs would have 36' street widths.

The existing specific plan provides a buildable portion of each lot and places grading limitations on each lot (SDMC Chapter 18.504.110). Exhibit H of Specific Plan No. 4 also addresses grading requirements on a lot by lot basis. The existing specific plan also provides for 10 of the 19 lots to be equestrian lots (Lots 8-17).

Under this Alternative, house height would be limited to one story, unless a conditional use permit was approved to allow additional floors. When the Specific Plan was adopted, plans were for the existing house on the property to remain.

2. *Analysis*

Geology and Soils

This alternative would require much more grading in sensitive areas than the proposed project. It is estimated that over 5,000 cubic yards of fill would be necessary to provide for the extension of Valley Center Avenue. This grading would create fill slopes along the north portion of the property. Grading for individual houses are addressed in Exhibit H of Specific Plan No. 4. On the 19 lots, no grading limits, (pad grading) are provided for 13 of the lots; three lots (6, 7 & 11) would require split-level grading; and three lots (5, 12 & 13) would allow no grading. Based on the grading required for Valley Center Avenue extension and the lack of clear grading limitations on a majority of the lots, this alternative will produce a greater impact than the proposed project.

Visual Resources

Development of any use on the property will be controlled by Specific Plan No. 4, which contains design guidelines and development standards that regulate lot size, building setbacks, building heights, permitted density ranges, define roadway design and landscaping, parking requirements, and community monumentation and signage. These standards will ensure that height, bulk, and massing of on-site structures are compatible with surrounding development regardless of the development alternative selected.

Under either the proposed project or this alternative, views from most locations would not be significantly effected by development, because landform alteration and the placement of homes would occur below the grade of Gainsborough and Valley Center Road and at-grade with adjacent residential uses. Consequently, views of cut slopes and retaining walls are largely contained to the site interior and would not be visible from surrounding vantage points. This Alternative would require a very large fill slope as a result of construction of the Valley Center Extension. This slope would be a negative aesthetic impact, but could be partially mitigated through creative grading techniques and landscaping.

Under this Alternative, house height would be limited to one story, unless a conditional use permit was approved to allow additional floors. The one story limitation, however, can not be considered to be a lesser impact item, since the possibility of additional stories exists. Also, two story structures do not necessarily create less visual impact than one story as the comparison deals with mass and bulk characteristics as well and not just a height comparison.

Fewer mature trees would be preserved with this Alternative based on required grading for streets and lot locations that do not take into account existing stands of trees. Based on additional visible grading and the removal of additional trees, this Alternative would have greater visual impact than the proposed project.

Noise

The amount of noise generated during construction and operation of a project can be related to the intensity of development as well as the nature and location of this development activity. With regard to construction noise, this alternative requires less grading than the proposed project because of the reduction in the developed footprint. Consequently, construction activities would occur over a shorter period than that of the proposed project. However, this activity would occur at a similar distance to the nearby residences, as does the proposed project. Thus, construction noise related impacts would be equal under this alternative as those associated with the proposed project because the distance between the source and receptor would remain unchanged.

On an operational basis, this alternative would generate point source noise that is typical of a residential setting including people talking, doors slamming, dogs barking, and lawn equipment. As with the proposed project, point source noise levels generated by this alternative are not expected to exceed the City's Land Use Compatibility Guidelines or Noise Ordinance. With regard to mobile source noise, the same number of vehicle trips would be created by this alternative as under the proposed project. It takes a doubling of traffic volumes to create an audible increase in noise levels along a roadway. Since implementation of either development alternative would not double traffic volumes along Gainsborough Road (1,670 ADT) or Valley Center Avenue (2,993 ADT), neither would cause an audible noise increase and each development alternative is considered equal with regard to operational noise impacts.

Cultural Resources

Information provided from the record search and from field surveys indicates that no cultural resources are present on the project site. Therefore, site development under any alternative scenario would result in a similar level of impact to historic and prehistoric resources.

Biological Resources

This alternative would require a greater amount of land disturbance than does the proposed project. It would result in the loss of much of the existing coast live oak woodland and southern coast live oak riparian woodland found on the property as well as much of the windrow along the Valley Center Avenue extension. The additional grading required for the Valley Center Avenue extension would increase the impacts to biological resources on the site when compared to the proposed project.

Public Safety

Site development under either the proposed project or this alternative would place residential uses in a high fire hazard area. Any project proposed for the property would comply with all development standards set forth by the Uniform Fire Code and County of Los Angeles Fire Department regardless of site design. For example, all uses would construct an urban water system which meets fire flow requirements, and would replace fire-prone non-native grass and scrub vegetation on site with native plants that will be irrigated. Compliance with these requirements would reduce impacts to less than significant levels regardless of the nature or layout of on-site use proposed. With respect to site access, this alternative provides for a 40-foot wide paved internal collector roadway and two, 36-foot wide cul-de-sacs. In contrast, the proposed project provides for a 28 foot roadway with an additional 4 foot wide parkway for parking on one side and a 6 foot wide equestrian trail on the other side separated by rolled concrete curb, for a total width accessible to emergency vehicles of 38 feet. This is sufficient width to accommodate emergency vehicles without impediment, so either roadway cross section would provide adequate site access consistent with County and City code requirements. Consequently, neither the proposed project nor this alternative is considered superior with respect to fire protection service.

With regard to law enforcement service, this alternative would generate a resident population that is equal to that expected at project buildout. Consequently this development alternative is expected to generate an equal number of calls for service to that predicted for the proposed project. Thus, it is expected that this alternative would have an equal impact on the Sheriff's Department.

Hydrology & Water Quality

Urban runoff generated under this alternative would be conveyed and discharged off site through a developed drainage network as would the proposed project. The volume of runoff that flows off the project site in a design year storm event is greater in its undeveloped condition than it would be in a developed condition because, in the undeveloped condition, runoff contains debris (soil and materials, such as dead branches, leaves, etc.), while in the developed condition, debris is removed from the water. Like the proposed project, the amount of clear runoff from developed portions of the site in this alternative would be greater than under current conditions due to an increase in the amount of impervious surfaces, while the amount of debris would be reduced as undeveloped areas are replaced with the more non-erosive landscaping. This alternative would cover a similar portion of the site with non-erosive surfaces to that of the proposed project. This alternative would have a similar environmental with respect to runoff volume in a design year storm. With respect to water quality, both the proposed project as well as this alternative are subject to the requirements of the NPDES permit program so neither is considered superior in this regard.

3. Conclusion

This alternative is not considered environmentally superior to the proposed project and will produce a greater level of impact. Although the same numbers of residential units result, this alternative requires or allows a significant amount of additional grading in locations that will be visible and in locations that will negatively impact the existing biological resources on the site.

d. Buffer Alternative

1. Description

The Buffer Alternative (see **Figure 5.0-1**) provides for a buffer between the Southern Coast Live Oak Riparian Forest (CLOF) found along Walnut Creek and proposed development. It also preserves the windrow and a portion of the stand of Coast Live Oak Woodland (CLOW) located in the eastern portion of the property. With this alternative, 19 residential lots are proposed, each at a minimum of 10,000 square feet in size, although smaller lots may be utilized to reduce site grading. The lots would be arranged along an internal collector street of similar dimension to that of the proposed project. A secondary form of all weather emergency access would be provided. Development of the property would take place only on the northern side of the collector street as opposed to the north and south sides under the proposed project.

2. *Analysis*

Geology & Soils

Since this alternative would construct the same number of building pads but within a smaller development envelope compared to the proposed project, less disturbance to the existing terrain would be needed. However, both would subject the same number of residents to seismic hazards. Any improvements constructed on the site would be subjected to the forces of ground movement during seismic events similar to the proposed project, and would also be subject to the same construction requirements as the proposed project. Thus, neither the proposed project nor this alternative is considered superior with regard to geology & soils.

Visual Resources

Development of any use on the property will be controlled by Specific Plan No. 4, which contains design guidelines and development standards that regulate lot size, building setbacks, building heights, permitted density ranges, define roadway design and landscaping, parking requirements, and community monumentation and signage. These standards will ensure that height, bulk, and massing of on-site structures are compatible with surrounding development regardless of the development alternative selected.

Under either the proposed project or this alternative, views from most locations would not be significantly effected by development, because landform alteration and the placement of homes would occur below the grade of Gainsborough and Valley Center Road and at-grade with adjacent residential uses. Consequently, views of cut slopes and retaining walls are largely contained to the site interior and would not be visible from surrounding vantage points. However, this alternative would preserve more mature trees than the proposed project. Although manufactured slopes similar in height and design to the proposed project would also be required with this alternative, such slopes would be less visible from Walnut Creek when compared to the proposed project due to greater retention of mature landscaping. The existing tree canopy screens views of the property from land located to the west and south. Views of the project from the Walnut Creek Trail with selection of this alternative would retain views of native trees, grassland, and open space that is more compatible with views along this scenic corridor. Thus, this alternative is considered to have a lesser level of impact compared to the proposed project.

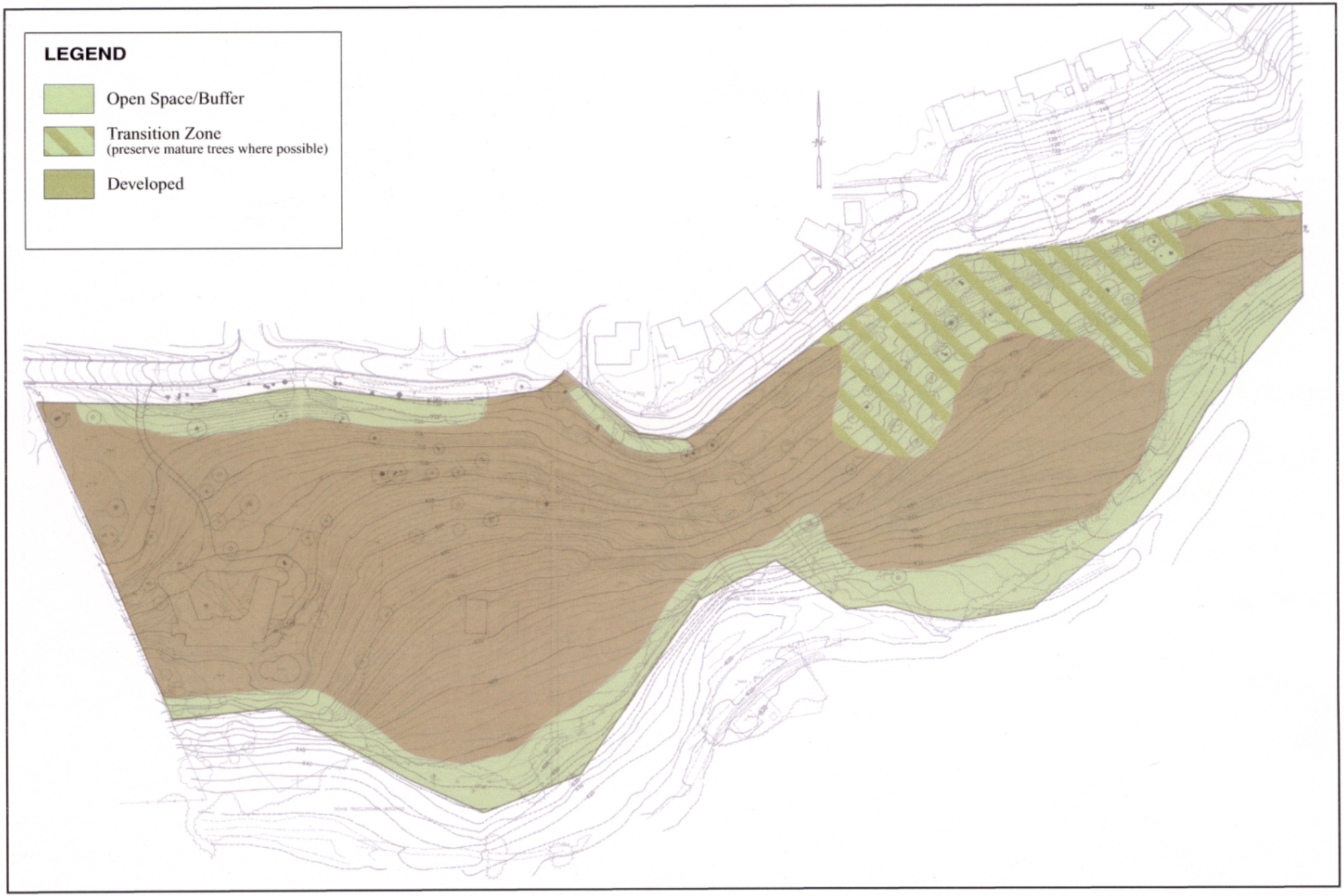

FIGURE **5.0-1**

Buffer Alternative

Noise

The amount of noise generated during construction and operation of a project can be related to the intensity of development as well as the nature and location of this development activity. With regard to construction noise, this alternative requires less grading than the proposed project because of the reduction in the developed footprint. Consequently, construction activities would occur over a shorter period than that of the proposed project. However, this activity would occur at a similar distance to the nearby residences, as does the proposed project. Thus, construction noise related impacts would be equal under this alternative as those associated with the proposed project because the distance between the source and receptor would remain unchanged.

On an operational basis, this alternative would generate point source noise that is typical of a residential setting including people talking, doors slamming, dogs barking, and lawn equipment. As with the proposed project, point source noise levels generated by this alternative are not expected to exceed the City's Land Use Compatibility Guidelines or Noise Ordinance. With regard to mobile source noise, the same number of vehicle trips would be created by this alternative as under the proposed project. It takes a doubling of traffic volumes to create an audible increase in noise levels along a roadway. Since implementation of either development alternative would not double traffic volumes along Gainsborough Road (1,670 ADT) or Valley Center Avenue (2,993 ADT), neither would cause an audible noise increase and each development alternative is considered equal with regard to operational noise impacts.

Cultural Resources

Information provided from the record search and from field surveys indicates that no cultural resources are present on the project site. Therefore, site development under any alternative scenario would result in a similar level of impact to historic and prehistoric resources.

Biological Resources

This alternative would require less land disturbance than does the proposed project and would result in the preservation of more coast live oak woodland and southern coast live oak riparian woodland found on the property. As the same number of units would be built, the increase in human and the associated domestic pet population would be equal to the proposed project. However the potential for indirect impacts to the adjacent Walnut Creek open space areas is less with this alternative, because of the

buffer area identified for that portion of the site that is nearest Walnut Creek. Overall, preservation of half the site would reduce the impacts to biological resources when compared to the proposed project.

Public Safety

Site development under either the proposed project or this alternative would place residential uses in a high fire hazard area. Any project proposed for the property would comply with all development standards set forth by the Uniform Fire Code and County of Los Angeles Fire Department regardless of site design. For example, all uses must construct an internal circulation system which provides adequate site access, construct an urban water system which meets fire flow requirements, and must replace fire-prone non-native grass and scrub vegetation on site with native plants that will be irrigated. Compliance with these requirements would reduce impacts to less than significant levels regardless of the nature or layout of on-site use proposed. Consequently, neither the proposed project nor this alternative is considered superior with respect to fire protection service.

With regard to law enforcement service, this alternative would generate a resident population which is equal to that expected at project buildout. Consequently this development alternative is expected to generate an equal number of calls for service to that predicted for the proposed project. Thus, it is expected that this alternative would have an equal impact on the Sheriff's Department.

Hydrology & Water Quality

Urban runoff generated under this alternative would be conveyed and discharged off site through a developed drainage network, as would the proposed project. The volume of runoff that flows off the project site in a design year storm event is greater in its undeveloped condition than it would be in a developed condition because, in the undeveloped condition, runoff contains debris (soil and materials, such as dead branches, leaves, etc.), while in the developed condition, debris is removed from the water. Like the proposed project, the amount of clear runoff from developed portions of the site in this alternative would be greater than under current conditions due to an increase in the amount of impervious surfaces, while the amount of debris would be reduced as undeveloped areas are replaced with the more non-erosive landscaping. However, because this alternative would cover less of the site with non-erosive surfaces than the proposed project, thereby reducing debris, the amount of runoff (water plus debris) from the site would be greater with this alternative than would the proposed project. Therefore, this alternative is not environmentally superior with respect to runoff volume in a design year storm.

With respect to water quality, both the proposed project as well as this alternative are subject to the requirements of the NPDES permit program. However, because this alternative site development is further away from Walnut Creek, it is less likely that runoff would sheet flow across developed yards and horse corrals directly into the Walnut Creek watershed. Instead this runoff would be directed to the improved drainage system where it has the opportunity for structural treatment prior to release. Consequently, this alternative is environmental superior to the proposed project with regard to water quality.

3. Conclusion

The buffer alternative reduces impacts to biological resources, water quality, and visual resources when compared to impacts associated with the proposed project prior to mitigation. All other impacts are considered equal to those of the proposed project. Moreover, this alternative design is consistent with the City of San Dimas *General Plan* and Specific Plan No. 4 and meets all of the project objectives.

e. Cluster Alternative

1. Description

As depicted on **Figure 5.0-2,** the Cluster Alternative places development on approximately 8 acres located in the western half of the project site. Under this alternative, 19 lots are proposed. Exact lot size would be determined based on grading required and available area. However, the intent would be to provide moderate sized lots (7,000 to 8,000 square feet minimum) to reduce the amount of land used for development and the amount of grading required. The lots would be arranged along an internal collector street of similar dimension to that of the proposed project. A secondary form of all weather emergency access would not be required under this alternative because of the reduction in cul-de-sac length. The balance of the property would be designated as an approximate 10-acre open space lot to be maintained by the HOA.

2. Analysis

Geology & Soils

Since this alternative would construct the same number of building pads but within a small development envelope compared to the proposed project, less disturbance to the existing terrain would be needed. However, both would subject the same number of residents to seismic hazards. Any

improvements constructed on the site would be subjected to the forces of ground movement during seismic events similar to the proposed project, and would also be subject to the same construction requirements as the proposed project. Thus, neither the proposed project nor this alternative is considered superior with regard to geology & soils.

Visual Resources

Development of any use on the property will be controlled by Specific Plan No. 4, which contains design guidelines and development standards that regulate lot size, building setbacks, building heights, permitted density ranges, define roadway design and landscaping, parking requirements, and community monumentation and signage. These standards will ensure that height, bulk, and massing of on-site structures are compatible with surrounding development regardless of the development alternative selected.

Under either the proposed project or this alternative, views from most locations would not be significantly effected by development, because landform alteration and the placement of homes would occur below the grade of Gainsborough and Valley Center Road and at-grade with adjacent residential uses. Consequently, views of cut slopes and retaining walls are largely contained to the site interior and would not be visible from surrounding vantagepoints. However, it is expected that this alternative would preserve more mature trees than the proposed project. The existing tree canopy screens views of the property from land located to the west and south. Views of the project from the Walnut Creek Trail with selection of this alternative would retain views of native trees, grassland, and open space that is more compatible with views along this scenic corridor. Thus, this alternative is considered to have a lesser level of impact compared to the proposed project.

Noise

The amount of noise generated during construction and operation of a project can be related to the intensity of development as well as the nature and location of this development activity. With regard to construction noise, this alternative requires less grading than the proposed project because of the reduction in the developed footprint. Consequently, construction activities would occur over a shorter period than that of the proposed project. However, this activity would occur at a similar distance to the nearby residences, as does the proposed project. Thus, construction noise related impacts would be equal under this alternative as those associated with the proposed project because the distance between the source and receptor would remain unchanged.

FIGURE **5.0-2**

Cluster Alternative

On an operational basis, this alternative would generate point source noise that is typical of a residential setting including people talking, doors slamming, dogs barking, and lawn equipment. As with the proposed project, point source noise levels generated by this alternative are not expected to exceed the City's Land Use Compatibility Guidelines or Noise Ordinance. With regard to mobile source noise, the same number of vehicle trips would be created by this alternative as under the proposed project. It takes a doubling of traffic volumes to create an audible increase in noise levels along a roadway. Since implementation of either development alternative would not double traffic volumes along Gainsborough Road (1,670 ADT) or Valley Center Avenue (2,993 ADT), neither would cause an audible noise increase and each development alternative is considered equal with regard to operational noise impacts.

Cultural Resources

Information provided from the record search and from field surveys indicates that no cultural resources are present on the project site. Therefore, site development under any alternative scenario would result in a similar level of impact to historic and prehistoric resources.

Biological Resources

This alternative would require less land disturbance than does the proposed project and would result in the preservation of more coast live oak woodland and southern coast live oak riparian woodland found on the property. As the same number of units would be built, the increase in human and the associated domestic pet population would be equal to the proposed project. However the potential for indirect impacts to the adjacent Walnut Creek open space areas is less with this alternative. Overall, preservation of half the site would reduce the impacts to biological resources when compared to the proposed project.

Public Safety

Site development under either the proposed project or this alternative would place residential uses in a high fire hazard area. Any project proposed for the property must comply with all development standards set forth by the Uniform Fire Code and County of Los Angeles Fire Department regardless of site design. For example, all uses must construct an internal circulation system which provides adequate site access, construct an urban water system which meets fire flow requirements, and must replace fire-prone non-native grass and scrub vegetation on site with native plants that will be irrigated. Compliance with these requirements would reduce impacts to less than significant levels regardless of

the nature or layout of on-site use proposed. Consequently, neither the proposed project nor this alternative is considered superior with respect to fire protection service.

With regard to law enforcement service, this alternative would generate a resident population which is equal to that expected at project buildout. Consequently this development alternative is expected to generate an equal number of calls for service to that predicted for the proposed project. Thus, it is expected that this alternative would have an equal impact on the Sheriff's Department.

Hydrology & Water Quality

Urban runoff generated under this alternative would be conveyed and discharged off site through a developed drainage network as would the proposed project. The volume of runoff that flows off the project site in a design year storm event is greater in its undeveloped condition than it would be in a developed condition because, in the undeveloped condition, runoff contains debris (soil and materials, such as dead branches, leaves, etc.), while in the developed condition, debris is removed from the water. Like the proposed project, the amount of clear runoff from developed portions of the site in this alternative would be greater than under current conditions due to an increase in the amount of impervious surfaces, while the amount of debris would be reduced as undeveloped areas are replaced with the more non-erosive landscaping. However, because this alternative would cover less of the site with non-erosive surfaces than the proposed project, thereby reducing debris, the amount of runoff (water plus debris) from the site would be greater with this alternative than would the proposed project. Therefore, this alternative is not environmentally superior with respect to runoff volume in a design year storm. With respect to water quality, both the proposed project as well as this alternative are subject to the requirements of the NPDES permit program so neither is considered superior in this regard.

3. Conclusion

The cluster alternative reduces impacts to biological resources and visual resources while all other impacts are considered equal to those of the proposed project. Moreover, this alternative design is consistent with the City of San Dimas *General Plan* and Specific Plan No. 4 and meets all of the project objectives.

5.4 ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

Table 5.0-1, below, provides a summary comparison of the environmental impacts of each on-site alternative against that of the proposed project. Based on the information in this section and summarized in **Table 5.0-1** below, the "no project" alternative is the environmentally preferred alternative from a purely environmental perspective. As specified in Section 12126(d) of the CEQA *Guidelines*, if the no project alternative is the environmentally superior alternative, the EIR shall also identify an environmentally superior alternative among the other alternatives. In this case, the buffer alternative would be considered the environmentally preferred alternative since it would reduce significant visual, water quality and biological impacts when compared to project impacts prior to implementation of recommended mitigation. It would also meet the applicant's objectives for the project.

Table 5.0-1
Alternatives Impact Comparison Matrix

Environmental Topic	No Project No Development	No Project General Plan Buildout	No Project Specific Plan Buildout	Buffer Alternative	Cluster Alternative
Geotechnical & Soils	L	*E*	G	E	E
Visual Resources	L	G	E	L	L
Noise	L	*Δ*	E	*E*	E
Cultural Resources	L	E	E	E	E
Biological Resources	L	G	G	L	L
Public Safety	*L*	*Δ*	E	*E*	*E*
Hydrology & Water Quality	L	*E*	E	*L*	*E*
Overall Impact	L	G	E	L*	L

KEY
(Level of Impact in Comparison to the Proposed Project):
G = *Alternative Produces Greater Level of Impact.*
E = *Alternative Produces Equal Level of Impact.*
L = *Alternative Produces Lesser Level of Impact.*
Δ = *Alternative Produces Greater Level of Impact in some respects, Lesser in others.*
* = *Environmentally Superior Alternative.*