15 ALTERNATIVES

The primary intent of the alternatives evaluation in an EIR, as stated in Section 15126.6(a) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, is to "[…] describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project, or to the location of the project, which would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project, and evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives." Furthermore, Section 15126.6(f) states, "The range of alternatives required in an EIR is governed by a "rule of reason" that requires the EIR to set forth only those alternatives necessary to permit a reasoned choice."

The CEQA Guidelines provide the following guidance for discussing alternatives to a proposed project:

- An EIR shall describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project, or to the location of the project, which would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project, but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project, and evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives (CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6[a]).

- Because an EIR must identify ways to mitigate or avoid the significant effects that a project may have on the environment (Public Resources Code Section 21002.1), the discussion of alternatives shall focus on alternatives to the project or its location which are capable of avoiding or substantially lessening any significant effects of the project, even if these alternatives would impede to some degree the attainment of the project objectives, or would be more costly (CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6[b]).

- The range of potential alternatives to the proposed project shall include those that could feasibly accomplish most of the basic objectives of the project and could avoid or substantially lessen one or more of the significant effects. The EIR should briefly describe the rationale for selecting the alternatives to be discussed. The EIR should also identify any alternatives that were considered by the lead agency but were rejected as infeasible during the scoping process and briefly explain the reasons underlying the lead agency's determination […] Among the factors that may be used to eliminate alternatives from detailed consideration in an EIR are: (i) failure to meet most of the basic project objectives, (ii) infeasibility, or (iii) inability to avoid significant environmental impacts (CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6[c]).

- The EIR shall include sufficient information about each alternative to allow meaningful evaluation, analysis, and comparison with the proposed project. A matrix displaying the major characteristics and significant environmental effects of each alternative may be used to summarize the comparison (CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6[d]).

- The specific alternative of "no project" shall also be evaluated along with its impact. The purpose of describing and analyzing a no project alternative is to allow decisionmakers to compare the impacts of approving the proposed project with the impacts of not approving the proposed project. The no project alternative analysis is not the baseline for determining whether the proposed project's environmental impacts may be significant, unless it is identical to the existing environmental setting analysis which does establish that baseline (CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6[e][1]).

- If the environmentally superior alternative is the "no project" alternative, the EIR shall also identify an environmentally superior alternative among the other alternatives (CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6[e][2]).

In addition, Section 15126.6(d) of the CEQA Guidelines states, "If an alternative would cause one or more significant effects in addition to those that would be caused by the project as proposed, the significant effects of the alternative shall be discussed, but in less detail than the significant effects of the project as proposed."

15.1 Purpose of Alternatives

The project alternatives need to feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project, but avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project.

The following project objectives have been identified by the applicant:

1. Complete the land use planning of the western end of Olive Ranch Road in a manner consistent with the GBCP and compatible with adjacent development.

2. Create a very high-end subdivision of at least 89 residential lots consistent with, or surpassing, the quality and ambiance of Granite Bay's most prestigious neighborhoods.

3. Create an infill project composed of lots nearly one acre in size that minimizes grading activity to preserve natural resources on-site, to the extent feasible, while at the same time avoiding a sharp deviation from projected residential units in the Granite GBCP, with the resultant drop in school fees, traffic fees, and park fees that a sharp reduction in units would entail, compared to what is currently allowed under the GBCP.

Potentially significant environmental impacts of the Rancho Del Oro project include:

- ***Biological Resources.*** Implementation of the Proposed Project would potentially disturb special-status plant species, freshwater invertebrate habitat, valley elderberry longhorn beetle habitat, western burrowing owl habitat, raptors and migratory bird nesting habitat, oak woodland, and impact jurisdictional wetlands.

- ***Cultural Resources.*** Implementation of the Proposed Project would directly impact known archaeological sites and could disturb unknown archaeological resources.

- ***Visual Resources.*** The Proposed Project could create new sources of light and glare.

- ***Transportation and Circulation.*** The Proposed Project construction activities could have a significant impact on circulation in the vicinity of the project site. The Proposed Project would also add pedestrian and bicycle demands within the vicinity of the project site, creating a significant impact related to pedestrian and bicycle circulation.

- ***Air Quality.*** Short-term construction activities associated with the Proposed Project would increase temporary emissions.

- ***Noise.*** Activities associated with the construction and operation of the Proposed Project would result in elevated noise levels.

- ***Public Services and Utilities.*** The Proposed Project would generate additional demand for water supply and delivery, wastewater, schools, fire protection, and police protection.

- ***Soils, Geology, and Seismicity.*** Development of the Proposed Project could expose structures to liquefaction, expansive soils, and soil erosion.

- ***Hydrology and Water Quality.*** Development of the Proposed Project could alter the existing drainage pattern, impact surface water quality, and expose people and structures to flood hazards.

- ***Hazardous Materials and Hazards.*** Development of the Proposed Project could expose people to contaminated soils.

Implementation of mitigations measures required in this Draft EIR would reduce the above impacts to a less-than-significant level. However, even after implementation of feasible mitigation measures, the following impacts would remain significant and unavoidable:

- ***Biological Resources.*** Implementation of the Proposed Project would result in a cumulative loss of biological resources in Placer County and effects on ongoing urbanization in the region. The impact would be significant and unavoidable.

15.2 Alternatives Considered But Dismissed From Further Consideration

The following section describes the alternatives considered but dismissed from further analysis in this EIR. One alternative, the Off-Site Alternative, was considered but dismissed. The major characteristics of the Off-Site Alternative are summarized below.

Off-Site Alternative

Section 15126.6(f)(2)(B) of the CEQA Guidelines states, "If the lead agency concludes that no feasible alternative locations exist, it must disclose the reasons for this conclusion, and should include the reason in the EIR." A feasible location for the Proposed Project that would result in substantially reduced impacts does not exist.

The CEQA Guidelines (Section 15126.6[b]) requires that only locations that would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project need be considered for inclusion in the EIR. The Off-Site Alternative would involve the construction of the proposed project on an alternative location. The Off-Site Alternative would have the same type and intensity of uses as the proposed project. However, the Applicant does not own an alternative location in which to construct the proposed project. Furthermore, parcels of substantial size like the project site are limited in Placer County. It should also be noted that, by definition, CEQA states that an alternative should avoid or substantially lessen one or more of the environmental effects of the project. Alternative locations within the County would generally contain similar characteristics as the project site, and would likely result in similar or greater impacts than the proposed project. Therefore, development of the project on an alternative location would be expected to result in at least the same level of impacts as the proposed project. As a result, an environmentally feasible off-site location that would meet the requirements of CEQA, as well as meet the basic objectives of the proposed project, does not exist.

15.3 Alternatives Considered in This EIR

The following section evaluates the alternatives considered for the Proposed Project, which include:

- No Project – No Build Alternative;
- Base Zoning Alternative; and
- Planned Development Alternative.

CEQA requires the evaluation of the comparative impacts of the "No Project" alternative (CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6[e]). Analysis of the No Project Alternative "[…] shall discuss […] existing conditions […] as well as what would be reasonably expected to occur in the foreseeable future if the project were not approved, based on current plans and consistent with available infrastructure and community services." (*Id.*, subd. [e][2]) "If the project is other than a land use or regulatory plan, for example a development project on identifiable property, the 'no project' alternative is the circumstance under which the project does not proceed. Here the discussion would compare the environmental effects of the property remaining in the property's existing

state versus environmental effects that would occur if the project were approved. If disapproval of the project under consideration would result in predictable actions by others, such as the proposal of some other project, this 'no project' consequence should be discussed. In certain instances, the no project alternative means 'no build,' wherein the existing environmental setting is maintained. However, where failure to proceed with the project would not result in preservation of existing environmental conditions, the analysis should identify the practical result of the project's non-approval and not create and analyze a set of artificial assumptions that would be required to preserve the existing physical environment." (*Id.*, subd. [e][3][B])

Given the existing entitlements, the County has decided to evaluate both of the potential "no project" scenarios. Under the No Project – No Build Alternative, the project site would remain vacant, undeveloped land. However, because the project site is entitled to develop with urban uses based on the existing land use designations, denial of the project would likely result in the proposal of another project. Therefore, under the Base Zoning Alternative, the full development of the project site pursuant to the existing land use designations is evaluated.

In addition, the County has decided to evaluate a Planned Development Alternative, which would include the development of 62 residential units, 26 residential units fewer than the proposed project. The major characteristics of each of the alternatives are summarized below.

No Project – No Build Alternative

The No Project – No Build Alternative is defined in this section as the continuation of the existing condition of the project site, which is an undeveloped oak woodland and annual grasses. The No Project – No Build Alternative would allow the project site to continue in the site's existing state. The No Project – No Build Alternative would not meet any of the project objectives. Under the No Project – No Build Alternative, construction and operational vehicle trips would be eliminated, along with associated emissions and noise related to vehicles trips. As construction would not occur, impacts to biological and cultural resources would not occur. In addition, the project site would not be graded, the existing drainage pattern would remain, and structures would not be exposed to flood areas. Lastly, an increase for the demand for water, wastewater, and other public services would not occur. However, it should be noted that the project site is identified for development in the Placer County General Plan (PCGP) and the Granite Bay Community Plan (GBCP).

Base Zoning Alternative

Section 15126.6(e)(1)(B) of the CEQA Guidelines states, "[…] where failure to proceed with the project will not result in preservation of existing environmental conditions, the analysis should identify the practical result of the project's non-approval and not create and analyze a set of artificial assumptions that would be required to preserve the existing physical environment." As seen in Table 6-1, the Base Zoning Alternative would include development of the project site under the existing RS-AG-B-100 PD 0.83 (Residential Single-family, Combining Agricultural, Combining Minimum Building Site of 100,000 square feet, Combining Planned Development 0.83 dwelling units per acre) zoning designation. The Base Zoning Alternative would include 40 residential single-family lots, two open space lots, and a common area parcel, approximately 2.0

acres, containing a sewer pump station and bio swale stormwater treatment basin. The two open space parcels would provide 6.27 acres of year round drainage and wetland setback location in the southeastern portion of the property, and 9.9 acres of floodplain and open space south of Miners Ravine (See Figure 15-1).

The Base Zoning Alternative would require the same off-site sewer infrastructure and water quality treatment as the Proposed Project. In addition, the Base Zoning Alternative would include the development of the project site with residential uses. Buildout of the Base Zoning Alternative would include the development of 40 single family residential units, which would be less than the proposed project. Therefore, this Alternative would not satisfy Project Objectives 2 and 3.

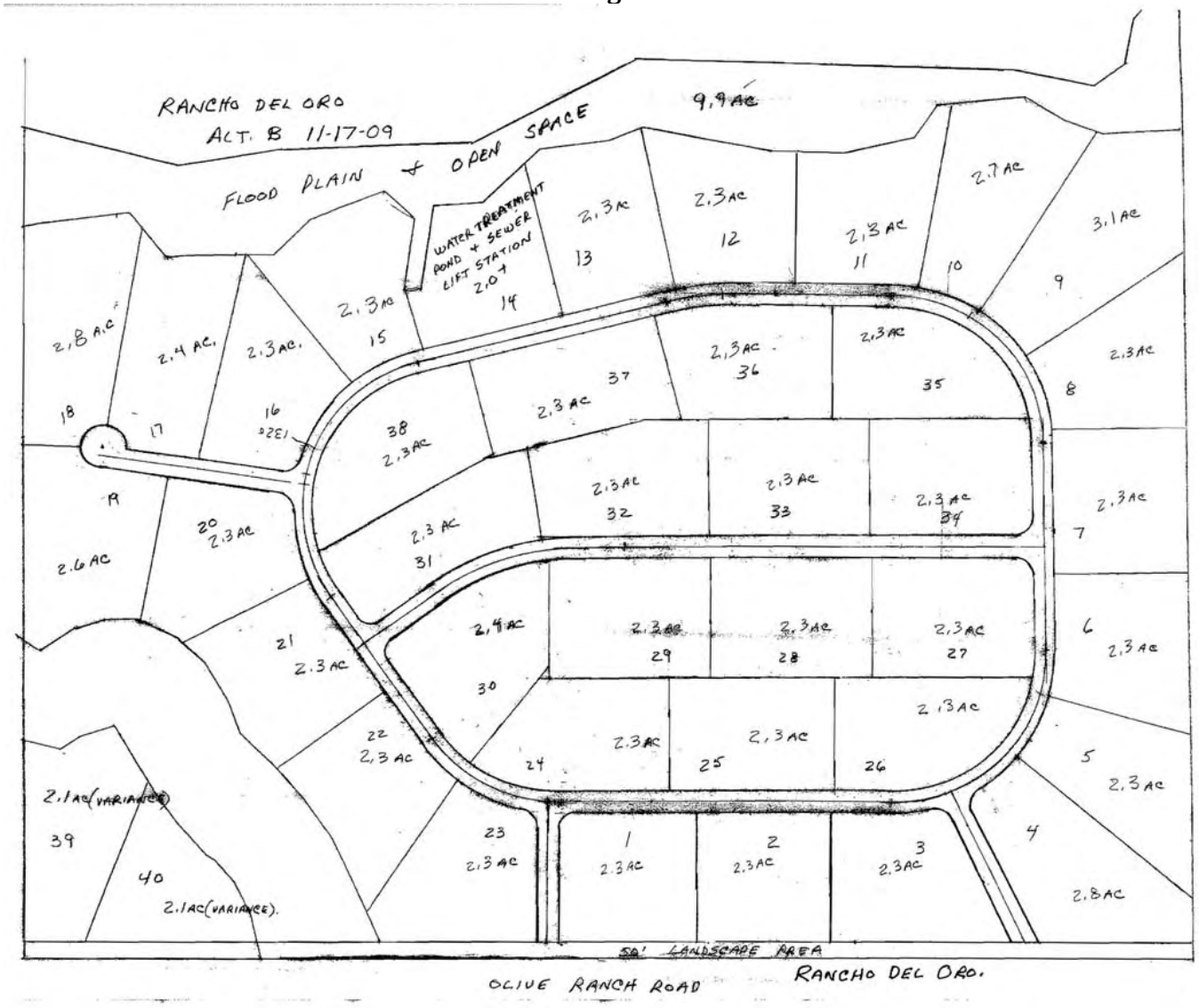
Land Use

The Base Zoning Alternative would not require an amendment to the Placer County Zoning Designations. Construction of 40 residential units on 100,000 minimum square foot parcels would be consistent with the existing PCGP and GBCP designations. The Base Zoning Alternative would be consistent with the GBCP Land Use Element Policies. The 100,000 square foot lots would be consistent with GBCP Land Use Policies 3, 4, 11, and 19 which require development in areas that lend themselves to planned unit development and require adequate public services and facilities to be available. The Base Zoning Alternative lots would be similar to the residential uses to the east and would remain consistent with the residential uses to the south and west. Therefore, implementation of the Base Zoning Alternative would result in fewer impacts to land use would be fewer, as compared to the Proposed Project.

Biological Resources

The Base Zoning Alternative includes the development of 40 residential units on the project site. The 40 residential lots would be a minimum of 2.3 acres, and would cover a similar amount of land as the 89 lots for the Proposed Project. Similar to the proposed project, the Base Zoning Alternative would include two open space parcels along Miners Ravine and the southwestern potion of the site. In addition, similar to the proposed project, the Base Zoning Alternative would require removal of trees and habitat that would impact special-status species and jurisdictional wetlands. However, significant oak tree losses on individual residential lots could be greater than the Proposed Project. Therefore, the Base Zoning Alternative would result in greater impacts related to biological resources, as compared to the Proposed Project. However, it should be noted that similar to the Proposed Project, development of the Base Zoning Alternative would result in a *significant and unavoidable* cumulative impact to biological resources.

Figure 15-1
Base Zoning Alternative



Cultural Resources

The Base Zoning Alternative includes the development of 40 residential units on the project site. Similar to the proposed project, construction of the residential units would potentially impact sensitive cultural resources on-site. Similar to the Proposed Project, development of the Base Zoning Alternative would require grading and filling the project site. Grading and construction could directly impact known (RDO#1, RDO#2a, and RDO#2b), or disturb previous unknown archaeological sites. Development of the Base Zoning Alternative would develop approximately the same acreage as the Proposed Project and would indirectly impact portions archaeological sites eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources and located within the open space. Therefore, the Base Zoning Alternative would result in similar impacts related to cultural resources, as compared to the Proposed Project.

Visual Resources

The Base Zoning Alternative includes the development of 40 residential units on the project site. The Base Zoning Alternative and the Proposed Project would both include a meandering walkway along Olive Ranch Road, with a six-foot solid wall, existing oak trees, and landscaping. However, the project site is identified for development in the PCGP and the GBCP. Similar to the proposed project, with implementation of mitigation measures, impacts of the Base Zoning Alternative related to the introduction of new sources of light and glare and to the existing visual character or quality of the site and surroundings would be *less-than-significant*. Therefore, the impacts of the Base Zoning Alternative would be similar to the impacts of the proposed project.

Transportation and Circulation

The Base Zoning Alternative would result in a reduction in total external traffic trips. Fewer traffic trips would result in a less intense impact to surrounding intersections and roadway segments. Development of the Base Zoning Alternative would generate approximately 420 weekday daily trips, which would be less than half of the 924 weekday daily trips associated with the Proposed Project. In comparison to the Proposed Project, the Base Zoning Alternative would still result in impacts to pedestrian and bicycle circulation, as well as traffic impacts related to construction of the project. Similar to the Proposed Project, the Base Zoning Alternative would cumulatively impact the intersections of Douglas Boulevard / Cavitt-Stallman Road and Douglas Boulevard / Barton Road. Therefore, although the Base Zoning Alternative would result in similar intersection impacts, the Base Zoning Alternative would generate fewer vehicle trips, resulting in fewer traffic related impacts than the Proposed Project.

Air Quality

Similar to the Proposed Project, the Base Zoning Alternative would require grading and construction of a majority of the project site, which would generate fugitive dust. Development of the Base Zoning Alternative would generate a similar number of construction-related vehicle trips and fewer operation-related vehicle trips. The reduction of vehicle trips would result in fewer air pollutants, including NO_X, CO, and ROG being emitted by project-related traffic. The Base Zoning Alternative's ROG and NO_X emissions are not anticipated to exceed the Placer

County Air Pollution Control District thresholds. In addition, by not altering the zoning designations for the site, the emissions generated by the Proposed Project would be in substantial conformance with the amounts projected for the site in existing air quality attainment plans. The Base Zoning Alternative would result in the development of fewer units and would generate less greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions than the Proposed Project. Similar to the Proposed Project, the Base Zoning Alternative is considered to have a less-than-significant incremental contribution to the cumulative production of GHG emissions that would result in the cumulative impact of global climate change. Overall, because the Base Zoning Alternative would generate fewer vehicle trips, fewer air quality impacts would result as compared to the Proposed Project. It should be noted that with implementation of the required mitigation measures, the impacts of the Proposed Project and the Base Zoning Alternative related to air quality would be *less-than-significant*.

Noise

The Base Zoning Alternative would create less additional vehicular traffic in the project area, which would result in a reduction in the ambient noise level as compared to the Proposed Project. Similar to the Proposed Project, development of the Base Zoning Alternative would include grading of a majority of the project site. Grading and construction-related noise impacts would be similar to the Proposed Project. Overall, due to the reduction in vehicle trips, noise impacts would be reduced, as compared to the Proposed Project. It should be noted that with implementation of mitigation measures, the impacts of the Proposed Project and the Base Zoning Alternative related to noise would be *less-than-significant*.

Soils, Geology, and Seismicity

The Base Zoning Alternative includes the development of 40 residential units on the project site. The Base Zoning Alternative and the Proposed Project would require grading of a majority of the project site. Similar to the proposed project, construction would result in the development of residential units on potentially expansive soils and soils subject to liquefaction. Therefore, the Base Zoning Alternative would result in similar impacts to soils, geology, and seismicity, as compared to the Proposed Project. It should be noted that with implementation of mitigation measures, the impacts of the Proposed Project and the Base Zoning Alternative related to soils, geology, and seismicity would be *less-than-significant*.

Hydrology and Water Quality

The Base Zoning Alternative includes the development of 40 residential units on the project site. Similar to the proposed project, the Base Zoning Alternative would redirect swales on-site into underground pipes, alter the existing drainage pattern, and increase impervious surfaces. In addition, construction-related impacts to surface water quality would require similar Best Management Practices as the Proposed Project. The Base Zoning Alternative would utilize the same acreage as the Proposed Project and would expose people and structures to flood hazards on-site. Therefore, the Base Zoning Alternative would result in similar impacts related to hydrology and water quality, as compared to the Proposed Project. It should be noted that with

implementation of mitigation measures, the impacts of the Proposed Project and the Base Zoning Alternative to hydrology and water quality would be *less-than-significant*.

Public Services and Utilities

The Base Zoning Alternative includes the development of 40 residential units on the project site. Similar to the proposed project, construction of residential units on the project site would increase the demand for public services and require the same off-site infrastructure improvements. However, the project site was anticipated for development in the PCGP and this alternative would be consistent with the existing designations. In addition, the Base Zoning Alternative would result in fewer total dwelling units, which would reduce the intensity of demand for public services. Therefore, the Base Zoning Alternative would result in fewer impacts related to public services and utilities, as compared to the Proposed Project. It should be noted that with implementation of mitigation measures, the impacts of the Proposed Project and the Base Zoning Alternative related to public services and utilities would be *less-than-significant*.

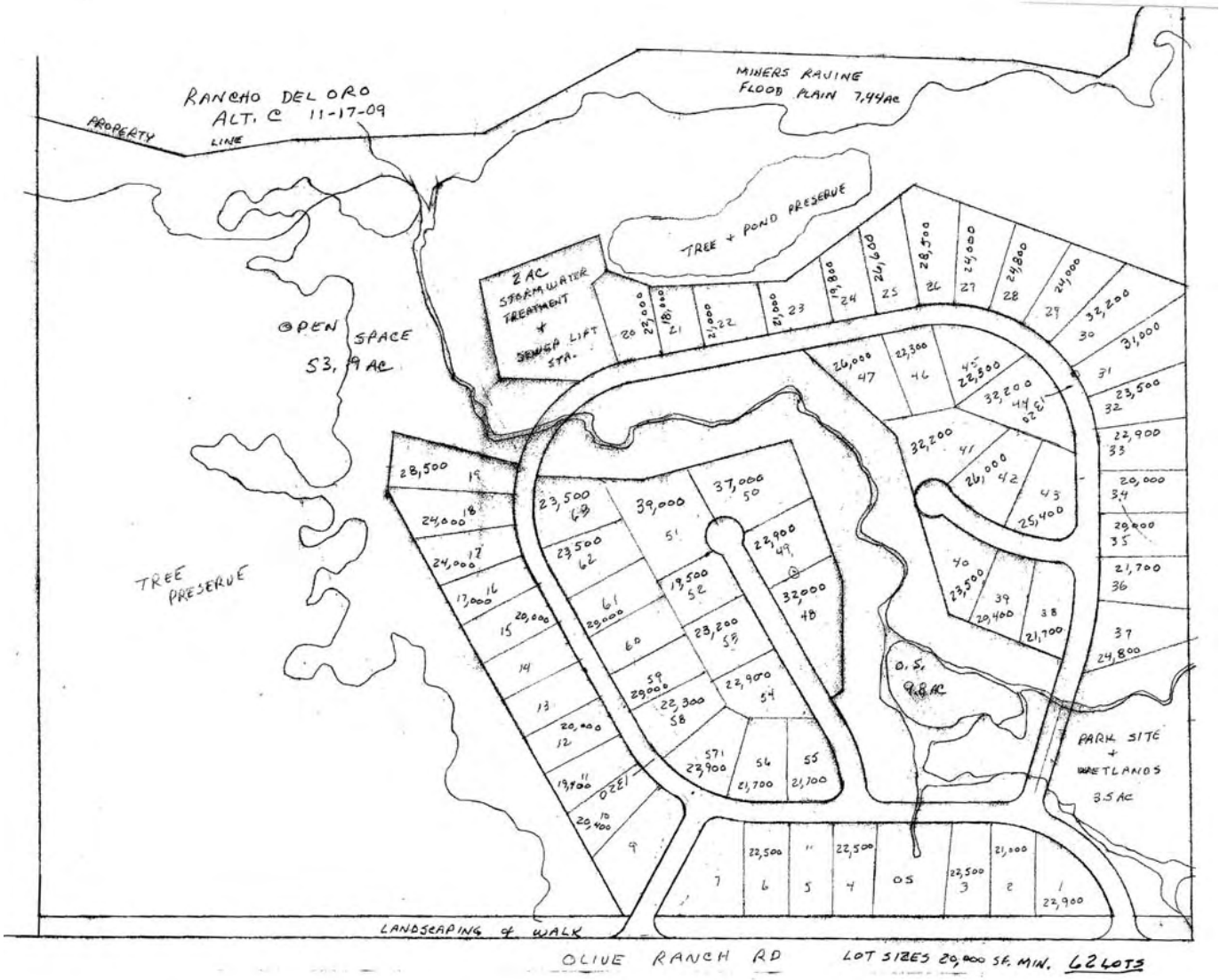
Hazards and Hazardous Materials

The Base Zoning Alternative includes the development of 40 residential units on the project site. Similar to the proposed project, development of the project site would be required to comply with the California Building Code. In addition, the project site was determined to not be located near likely sources of naturally occurring asbestos and the Department of Toxic Substances Control has issued a letter of No Further Action for the project site. Therefore, the Base Zoning Alternative would result in similar *less-than-significant* impacts related to hazards and hazardous materials, as compared to the Proposed Project.

Planned Development Alternative

The Planned Development Alternative would result in the development of the project as a Planned Residential Development (PD) consistent with Article 17.54.080 of the Placer County Code. The Planned Development Alternative would allow for the development of up to 62 residential lots, ranging in size from 17,000 square feet (0.4 acres) to 39,000 square feet (0.9 acres), with an average size of 23,800 square feet (See Figure 15-2). The internal circulation system would include a single gated access road off Olive Ranch Road across from Ramsgate Drive. The Planned Development Alternative would include a 53.9-acre open space parcel in the western portion of the site, including preservation of 38 blue oak woodland trees on the project site; a 7.4-acre open space parcel along the southern portion of Miners Ravine; and a 2.0-acre common area parcel with a sewer pump facility and bioswale stormwater treatment basin. In addition, a 3.3-acre on-site private park/wetland preserve would be included in the eastern portion of the site.

Figure 15-2
Planned Development Alternative



The Planned Development Alternative would include the development of the project site with residential uses. Buildout of the Planned Development Alternative would include the development of 62 single family residential units, which would be less than the proposed project. Therefore, this Alternative would not satisfy the project objectives.

Land Use

The Planned Development Alternative includes the development of up to 62 residential units and would develop approximately 50 percent of the site. In addition, the Planned Development Alternative would include a 53.9-acre open space parcel in the western portion of the site, including preservation of 38 blue oak woodland trees on the project site; a 7.4-acre open space parcel along the southern portion of Miners Ravine; and a 2.0-acre common area parcel with a sewer pump facility and bioswale stormwater treatment basin. A 3.3-acre on-site private park/wetland preserve would be included in the eastern portion of the site. The Planned Development Alternative would be consistent with several GBCP policies that encourage the preservation of native trees, natural land form, stream corridors, open space, and natural landscaping. Therefore, the land use impacts resulting from the Planned Development Alternative would be fewer, as compared to the Proposed Project.

Biological Resources

The Planned Development Alternative includes the development of up to 62 units. The Planned Development Alternative includes a 53.9-acre open space parcel in the western portion of the site. The Planned Development Alternative would reduce the intensity of impacts to oak woodland, as approximately 48 acres of oak woodland would be developed, as compared to 79 acres in the Proposed Project. Construction of infrastructure for the Planned Development Alternative would impact 11 significant oak trees versus the 71 that would be impacted by the Proposed Project. However, it should be noted that with the development of smaller lots in the Planned Development Alternative, a majority of significant oak trees within building setback lines would be removed. In addition, the Planned Development Alternative would include a 9.8-acre open space parcel that crosses the site in a southeast direction from Miners Ravine and an 8.3-acre wetlands preserve on the eastern edge of the site. A large portion of the project site would not be developed under the Planned Development Alternative and the impacts to jurisdictional wetland areas, special-status species habitat, and trees would be greatly reduced. Therefore, the Planned Development Alternative would result in fewer impacts related to biological resources, as compared to the Proposed Project. However, it should be noted that similar to the Proposed Project, development of the Base Zoning Alternative would result in a *significant and unavoidable* cumulative impact to biological resources.

Cultural Resources

The Planned Development Alternative would include the development of up to 62 units. The Planned Development Alternative would include the development of approximately 50 percent of the site and would avoid sensitive cultural resources. Compared to the Proposed Project, development of the Planned Development Alternative would avoid the known archaeological sites (RDO#1, RDO#2a, and RDO#2b). However, construction could disturb previous unknown

archaeological sites and could indirectly impact portions of archaeological sites eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources. Therefore, the Planned Development Alternative would result in fewer impacts to cultural resources, as compared to the Proposed Project.

Visual Resources

The Planned Development Alternative would include the development of up to 62 units. The Planned Development Alternative would develop the project site and irreversibly change the character of the site. The Planned Development Alternative and the Proposed Project would both include a meandering walkway along Olive Ranch Road, with a six-foot solid wall, existing oak trees, and landscaping. However, the project site is identified for development in the PCGP and the GBCP. In addition, the Planned Developed Alternative would include a 53.9-acre open space parcel to the west that would remain undeveloped. Similar to the proposed project, with implementation of mitigation measures, impacts of the Base Zoning Alternative related to the introduction of new sources of light and glare and to the existing visual character or quality of the site and surroundings would be *less-than-significant.*

Transportation and Circulation

The Planned Development Alternative would result in the development of up to 62 residential lots and a reduction of total external traffic trips. Fewer traffic trips would result in a less intense impact to surrounding intersections and roadway segments. Implementation of the Planned Development Alternative would generate approximately 724 weekday daily trips, which would be less than 80 percent of the 924 weekday daily trips that would result from implementation of the Proposed Project. In comparison to the Proposed Project, the Planned Development Alternative would still result in impacts to pedestrian and bicycle circulation, as well as traffic impacts related to construction of the project. Similar to the Proposed Project, the Planned Development Alternative would cumulatively impact the intersections of Douglas Boulevard / Cavitt-Stallman Road and Douglas Boulevard / Barton Road. Therefore, although the Planned Development Alternative would result in similar intersection impacts, the alternative would generate fewer vehicle trips, resulting in fewer traffic-related impacts than the Proposed Project. It should be noted that with implementation of the required mitigation measures, impacts related to transportation and circulation for both the Proposed Project and the Planned Development Alternative would be *less-than-significant*.

Air Quality

The Planned Development Alternative would result in grading and construction of approximately 50 percent of the project site, which would reduce the amount of fugitive dust generated, as compared to the Proposed Project. The reduction of acreage planned for development in the Planned Development Alternative would generate fewer construction-related and operation-related vehicle trips. The reduction of vehicle trips would result in fewer air pollutants, including NO_X, CO, and ROG being emitted by project-related traffic. The Planned Development Alternative would not be anticipated to exceed ROG and NO_X Placer County Air Pollution Control District emission thresholds. The Planned Development Alternative would result in the development of fewer units and would generate less greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions than the

Proposed Project. Similar to the Proposed Project, the Planned Development Alternative is considered to have a less-than-significant incremental contribution to the cumulative production of GHG emissions that would result in the cumulative impact of global climate change. Overall because the Planned Development Alternative would generate fewer vehicle trips, fewer air quality impacts would result as compared to the Proposed Project. It should be noted that with implementation of the required mitigation measures, the impacts of the Proposed Project and the Planned Development Alternative related to air quality would be *less-than-significant.*

Noise

The Planned Development Alternative would develop approximately 50 percent of the site and create less additional of vehicular traffic in the project area, which would result in a reduction in the ambient noise level as compared to the Proposed Project. The intensity of grading and construction-related noise impacts would not be reduced; however, the time to finish development would be reduced as compared to the Proposed Project. Overall, noise impacts would be reduced, as compared to the Proposed Project. It should be noted that with implementation of mitigation measures, the impacts of the Proposed Project and Planned Development Alternative related to noise would be *less-than-significant*.

Soils, Geology, and Seismicity

The Planned Development Alternative includes the development of up to 62 residential units on the project site. Similar to the proposed project, construction would result in the development of residential units on potentially expansive soils and soils subject to liquefaction. However, the Planned Development Alternative would avoid the low-lying area in the middle of the site and to the north, which would require fill prior to development. Therefore, Planned Development Alternative would result in fewer impacts to soils, geology, and seismicity, as compared to the Proposed Project. It should be noted that with implementation of mitigation measures, the impacts of the Proposed Project and Planned Development Alternative related to soils, geology, and seismicity would be *less-than-significant.*

Hydrology and Water Quality

The Planned Development Alternative would include the development of up to 62 residential units on approximately 50 percent of the project site. Similar to the Proposed Project, development on-site would alter the existing drainage pattern and increase impervious surfaces. However, the Planned Development Alternative would include a 9.8-acre open space floodplain area that crosses the site in a southeast direction from Miners Ravine, an 8.5-acre wetland preserve, and 53.9 acres of open space to the west. The Planned Development Alternative would expose fewer structures and people to floodplain areas. Therefore, the Planned Development Alternative would result in fewer impacts related to hydrology and water quality, as compared to the Proposed Project. It should be noted that with implementation of mitigation measures, the impacts of the Proposed Project and Planned Development Alternative related to hydrology and water quality would be *less-than-significant.*

Public Services and Utilities

Similar to the proposed project, construction of residential units on the project site would increase demand for public services and would require the same off-site infrastructure improvements. However, the project site was anticipated for development in the PCGP and this alternative would be consistent with the existing designations. In addition, the Planned Development Alternative would result in the development of fewer total dwelling units, which would reduce the intensity of demand for public services. Therefore, the Planned Development Alternative would result in fewer impacts related to public services and utilities, as compared to the Proposed Project. It should be noted that with implementation of mitigation measures the impacts of the Proposed Project and Planned Development Alternative related to public services and utilities would be *less-than-significant*.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

The Planned Development Alternative would include the development of up to 62 residential units on approximately 50 percent of the project site. Similar to the proposed project, development of the project site would be required to comply with the California Building Code. In addition, the project site was determined to be not located near likely sources of naturally occurring asbestos and the Department of Toxic Substances Control has issued a letter of No Further Action. Therefore, the Planned Development Alternative would result in similar *less-than-significant* impacts related to hazards and hazardous materials, as compared to the Proposed Project.

Table 15-1 summarizes the level of significance of the impacts for the Proposed Project and each of the project alternatives.

15.4 Environmentally Superior Alternative

An EIR is required to identify the environmentally superior alternative from among the range of reasonable alternatives that are evaluated. Section 15126(e)(2) of the CEQA Guidelines requires that an environmentally superior alternative be designated and states, "[…] if the environmentally superior alternative is the 'no project' alternative, the EIR shall also identify an environmentally superior alternative among the other alternatives."

Table 15-1
Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Project and Project Alternatives

Impact	Proposed Project	No Project – No Build Alternative	Base Zoning Alternative	Planned Development Alternative
Land Use	Potentially Significant	None	Less	Less
Biological Resources	Significant and Unavoidable	None	Equal	Equal
Cultural Resources	Potentially Significant Without Mitigation	None	Equal	Less
Visual Resources	Potentially Significant Without Mitigation	None	Equal	Equal
Transportation and Circulation	Potentially Significant Without Mitigation	None	Less	Less
Air Quality	Potentially Significant Without Mitigation	None	Less	Less
Noise	Potentially Significant Without Mitigation	None	Less	Less
Geology and Soils	Potentially Significant Without Mitigation	None	Equal	Less
Hydrology, Water Quality, and Drainage	Potentially Significant Without Mitigation	None	Equal	Less
Public Services and Utilities	Potentially Significant Without Mitigation	None	Less	Less
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	Less-Than-Significant	None	Equal	Equal

Less = fewer impacts than Proposed Project
Equal = impacts equal to Proposed Project
More = more impacts than Proposed Project

Designating a superior alternative depends in large part on what environmental effects one considers most important. This EIR does not presume to make this determination; rather, the determinations of which impacts are more important, are left to the reader and the decisionmakers. Finally, it should be noted that the environmental considerations are only one portion of the factors that must be considered by the public and the decisionmakers in deliberations regarding the Proposed Project and the alternatives. Other factors of importance include urban design, economics, social factors, and fiscal considerations. In addition, the superior alternative would, ideally, still provide opportunities to achieve most of the stated project objectives.

The Planned Development Alternative would be the environmentally superior alternative to the Proposed Project because the Planned Development Alternative would result in the generation of fewer vehicle trips to the project area, which would decrease the air quality and noise impacts via a reduction of vehicle trips. In addition, the Planned Development Alternative would develop approximately 50 percent of the site and would include 53.9 acres of open space to the west, an 8.3-acre wetland preserve, and a 9.8-acre open space area that crosses the site. The Planned Development Alternative would generate less demand for water, wastewater, parks, police, fire, and other public services. However, the alternative would still require off-site infrastructure improvements. Development of the Planned Development Alternative would avoid low-lying areas and would expose fewer people to floodplain areas.

It should be noted that the Planned Development Alternative would not meet the project objectives. With an average lot size of roughly one-half acre lots, the Planned Development Alternative would not develop in a manner compatible with adjacent development, which has lots north of Olive Ranch Road at, or close to, the 40,000-square-foot minimum lot size proposed as part of the project (Objective 1). The Planned Development Alternative would not provide for at least the number of specified lots (Objective 2), and would provide a significant deviation (a 30 percent reduction) from projected residential units in the GBCP, with a resulting significant drop in anticipated park fees, school fees, and traffic fees, among others, from what is currently projected in the GBCP (Objective 3).