

7 ALTERNATIVES

7.1 INTRODUCTION

EIRs are required to consider alternatives to the project that are capable of reducing or avoiding significant environmental impacts. Section 15126.6(f) of the CEQA Guidelines states:

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.

Section 15126.6(a) of the Guidelines requires EIRs 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. An EIR need not consider every conceivable alternative to a project. Rather it must consider a reasonable range of potentially feasible alternatives that will foster informed decision-making and public participation. An EIR is not required to consider alternatives that are infeasible. The lead agency is responsible for selecting a range of project alternatives for examination and must publicly disclose its reasoning for selecting those alternatives. There is no ironclad rule governing the nature or scope of the alternatives to be discussed other than the rule of reason.” (See also CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6[f].) This section of the CEQA Guidelines also provides guidance regarding what the alternatives analysis should consider.

The Guidelines require that the EIR include sufficient information about each alternative to allow meaningful evaluation, analysis, and comparison with the project. If an alternative would cause one or more significant effects in addition to those that would be caused by the project, the significant effects of the alternative must be discussed, but in less detail than the significant effects of the project as proposed (CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6[d]). The Guidelines further require that the “no project” alternative be considered (CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6[e]).

In defining “feasibility” (e.g., “... feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project ...”), CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(f)(1) states, in part:

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, other plans or regulatory limitations, jurisdictional boundaries (projects with a regionally significant impact should consider the regional context), and whether the proponent can reasonably acquire, control or otherwise have access to the alternative site (or the site is already owned by the proponent). No one of these factors establishes a fixed limit on the scope of reasonable alternatives.

7.2 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

In determining what alternatives should be considered in the EIR, the objectives of the project must be considered, as attainment of most of the basic objectives forms one of the tests of whether an alternative is feasible (see discussion above). The City and the applicant have identified the following project objectives, as previously described (see Chapter 3):

- ▲ Optimize an underutilized infill location within and adjacent to the City of Davis.

- ▲ Contribute to the overall character and livability of the surrounding neighborhood and University of California at Davis (UC Davis) by facilitating the reuse of property in a manner that enhances the visibility and aesthetic appeal of the City from Richards Boulevard, UPRR, and I-80 and that enhances circulation within the City and to UC Davis.
- ▲ Develop a mixed-use project with an array of dense, efficient, urban housing types, as well as land for business opportunities.
- ▲ Provide additional housing near existing mobility infrastructure (i.e. pedestrian and bicycle facilities and transit) to reduce vehicle trips, vehicle miles travelled, and parking demand;
- ▲ Provide housing density adjacent to the downtown area of the City of Davis and UC Davis to reduce vehicle trips, vehicle miles travelled, and parking demand within the downtown area;
- ▲ Provide alternative access to UC Davis to minimize congestion along Richards Boulevard at the UPRR undercrossing and at the intersection of Richards Boulevard and 1st Street.
- ▲ Minimize impacts to on-site environmental resources, including on-site vegetation, potentially historic structures along West Olive Drive, and Putah Creek;
- ▲ Accommodate high-skilled technology-related jobs that allow a greater number of Davis residents to live and work in the community;
- ▲ Provide energy-efficient building design, low-water use indoor and outdoor design, and high-quality construction by incorporating national and/or local sustainable design practices;
- ▲ Promote flexibility in project design and implementation to respond to market demand, through phasing of construction, and offering a variety of building types; and
- ▲ Collaborate with UC Davis and others to capture startup businesses and growing mid-to-large size companies, reducing the loss of intellectual capital and revenue through out-migration.

7.3 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT DISMISSED

In addition to factors described previously, CEQA Guidelines state that an EIR should also identify any alternatives that were considered by the lead agency, but were rejected during the planning or scoping process and briefly explain the reasons underlying the lead agency's determination. This section addresses these alternatives:

Recreation-Only Alternative. This alternative would involve use of the project site as an open space area. Under this alternative, connection with West Olive Drive would be made for passenger vehicles and some surface parking would be provided. The project site would be developed with a mix of active and passive recreational uses. While this alternative would reduce air quality, noise, and traffic impacts compared to the project, it would result in the removal of agricultural land similar to the project and would not provide a mixed-use community at the Nishi site, as envisioned in local and regional planning efforts for over 15 years, and would not attain most of the project objectives. Additionally, it would not provide connectivity to UC Davis. For these reasons, the recreation-only alternative was dismissed from further analysis in this EIR.

Reduced-Intensity Alternative. This alternative would involve use of the project site as a mixed-use development, similar to the project, but at a lower intensity (approximately two thirds of the uses identified for the project – 400 residences and 200,000 sf of R&D uses). The project site is located within an area of high traffic, adjacent to a freeway. It is also constrained by the presence of the UPRR line, I-80, and the Putah Creek channel. This alternative would involve a lower level of development, while maintaining the

same mix of uses. Under this alternative, rezoning/redesignation of West Olive Drive would occur. Based on the mix of uses, this alternative would not substantially reduce or avoid any significant effects resulting from the proposed project because it would not reduce the acreage disturbed at the project site as a result of construction and operation of the project, although fewer structures would be built. This alternative would not prevent potential health risks associated with the location of residences proximate to Interstate 80 (I-80). In addition, such scale of development would not optimize an underutilized site as on-site structures could be located within the northern half of the Nishi site, and it would be economically infeasible to develop the project site with approximately two-thirds of the square footage anticipated under the project. Furthermore, this alternative would not promote the mix of uses desired for this type of development within the City, thereby not meeting an important objective of the project. For these reasons, the reduced intensity alternative was dismissed from further analysis in this EIR.

UC Davis Access Only Alternative. This alternative would involve development of the Nishi site similar to the proposed project, however vehicular access to the Nishi site would only be provided via a grade-separated crossing from Old Davis Road on the UC Davis campus. This alternative would not involve changes to West Olive Drive or the Putah Creek channel to accommodate motor vehicles, although some temporary modifications may be required for utility connections from City infrastructure to the Nishi site. Under this alternative, rezoning/redesignation of West Olive Drive might occur, but future redevelopment of the private parcels on West Olive Drive would be less likely to occur because the area would not have a vehicular connection to the Nishi site. While this alternative may potentially reduce localized transportation impacts at Richards Boulevard and Olive Drive, this alternative would not be under the control of the City of Davis because the vehicular connection and ultimately this alternative would be subject to review and approval by the UC Regents. Development of the project site would not be possible without that connection, and as a result, consideration of this as a feasible alternative to the project by the City as lead agency is not considered reasonable. For these reasons, the UC Davis access only alternative was dismissed from further analysis in this EIR.

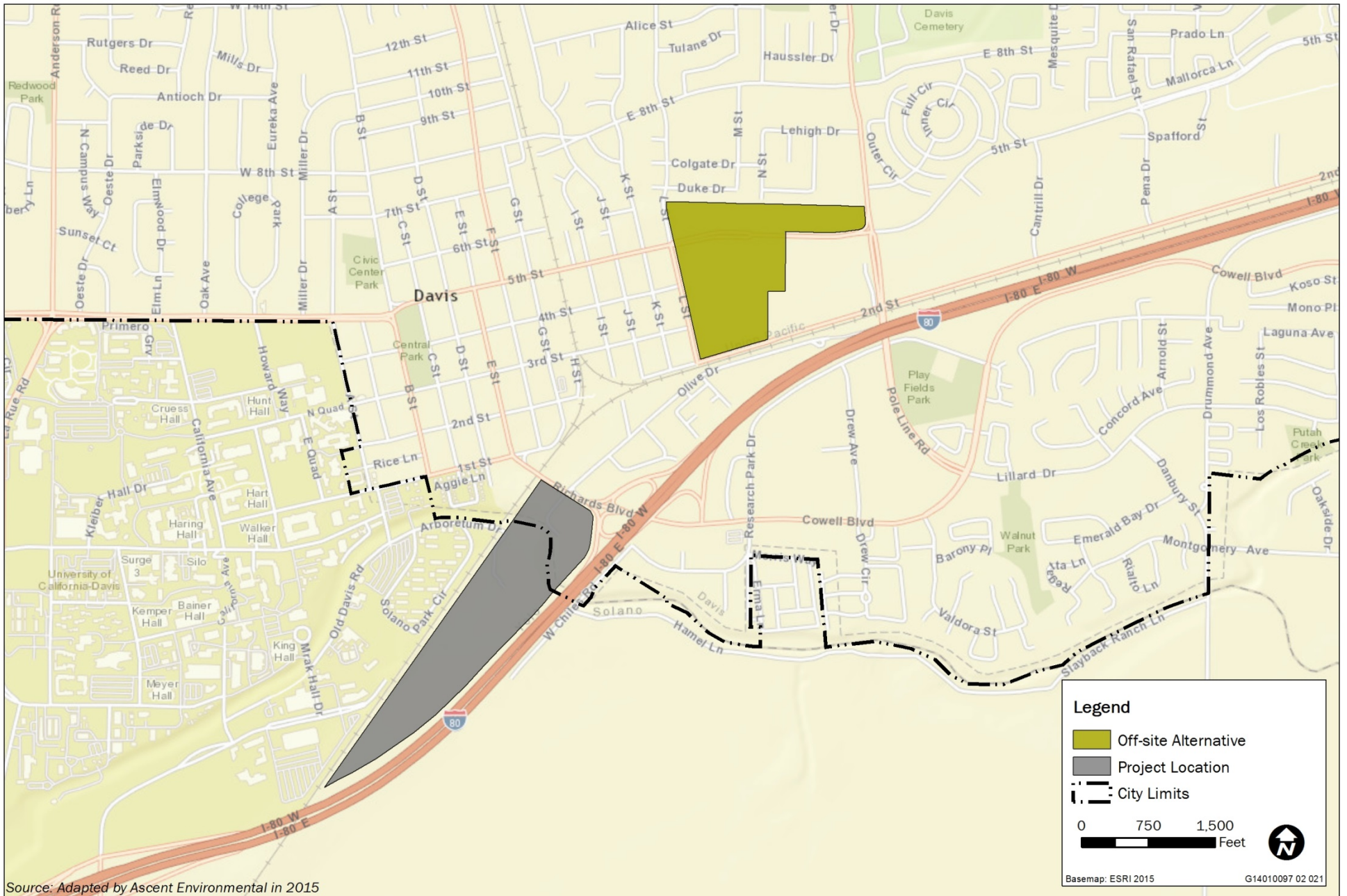
7.4 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED IN DETAIL

The following alternatives are under consideration for this project:

- ▲ **Alternative 1: No Project.** Under this alternative, the project site would not be developed/redeveloped and existing uses, including dry-farm agricultural operations, would continue.
- ▲ **Alternative 2: Research and Development (R&D) Only Alternative.** Under this alternative, the Nishi site would be developed with only R&D uses. Redesignation and Rezoning of West Olive Drive would occur under this alternative.
- ▲ **Alternative 3: Alternative Land Use Mix.** This alternative would be similar to the project with the exception of the northernmost R&D facility, which would be replaced with an extended stay hotel (up to 125 rooms) under this alternative.
- ▲ **Alternative 4: Off-Site Alternative.** Under this alternative, the 5th Street Corridor site (between Pole Line Road and L Street) would be developed with a mix of uses similar to that of the project. Refer to Figure 7-1 for the off-site alternative project location.

7.4.1 Summary of Project Impacts

The summary table provided in Chapter 2, “Executive Summary” presents a detailed summary of the potential environmental impacts of implementation of the Nishi Gateway Project at the project site. Please refer to this table for a summary of the potential significant and unavoidable impacts associated with development of the project.



Source: Adapted by Ascent Environmental in 2015

Figure 7-1

Off-site Alternative Project Location



7.4.2 Evaluation of Alternatives

ALTERNATIVE 1: NO PROJECT

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e)(1) requires that the ‘no project’ alternative be described and analyzed “to allow decision makers to compare the impacts of approving the project with the impacts of not approving the project.” The no project analysis is required to discuss “the existing conditions at the time the notice of preparation is published...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” (Section 15126.6[e][2]). “If the project is...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 its existing state against environmental effects which would occur if the project is 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 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” (Section 15126[e][3][B].)

Because the site is currently zoned and general planned for agriculture under Yolo County’s jurisdiction, the No Project Alternative assumes the project site would not be developed and current dry farm operations would continue. Additionally, rezoning/redesignation of West Olive Drive would not occur.

Aesthetics and Visual Resources

No change in existing visual conditions would occur on the project site because no site improvements or other development would be implemented under Alternative 1. The site would appear the same as the existing condition. By comparison, the project would develop the Nishi site with residential units, research and development buildings, on-site stormwater detention, open space, and surface/structure parking; West Olive Drive would be rezoned, which could result in redevelopment. Impacts associated with visual character and quality, and light and glare would be less than significant, as described in Section 4.1. Under Alternative 1 there would be no impacts, because the project site would not be altered. Therefore, overall aesthetic impacts associated with Alternative 1 would be slightly less than the project. (*Less Impact*)

Agriculture and Forest Resources

Under Alternative 1, there would be no changes to the existing uses within the project site. As a result, impacts associated with the project, including conversion of farmland, associated with the Nishi site would not occur. Because there would be no physical changes to the project site that could affect agricultural resources under Alternative 1, it would result in lesser impacts than the project. Because there are no agricultural resources located within West Olive Drive, impacts would be similar between the project and Alternative 1. (*Less Impact; significant unavoidable impact to agriculture avoided*)

Air Quality

Alternative 1 would not include any new development, and thus, would not generate new construction or operations-related air emissions. By comparison, development of the project would generate construction-related and operational emissions associated with vehicle trips and activities within the project site. Furthermore, due the project site’s proximity to freeway and railroad facility, the No Project alternative would avoid the project’s significant and unavoidable impacts on residents associated with toxic air contaminants (TACs) and ultrafine particulates (UFPs) under Alternative 1. Because there would be no physical changes to the project site that could affect air quality under Alternative 1, there would be no air quality impacts. (*Less Impact; significant unavoidable impacts to air quality avoided*)

Biological Resources

Under Alternative 1, the project site would remain the same as under the existing conditions. While the project site contains habitat for special-status plant and animal species, and riparian habitat, no changes associated with the project would occur; and, thus, there would be no impacts to biological resources under Alternative 1. By contrast, the project would have significant effects, which could be mitigated, on: special status plants, Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle, Special Status Bat Species, Nesting Birds and Raptors, including Swainson's Hawk and Burrowing Owl (see Section 4.4, "Biological Resources"). Although the project includes mitigation that would reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level, complete avoidance under Alternative 1 would result in reduced impacts. *(Less Impact)*

Cultural Resources

Earth-moving activities within the project site have the potential to disturb archaeological resources or result in accidental discovery of human remains. Under the project, there would be ground-disturbing activities (e.g., grading, excavation) could result in discovery of archaeological resources or human remains; however, feasible mitigation measures would reduce these impacts to a less-than-significant level. Because there would be no changes to the use or existing conditions of the project site under Alternative 1, there would be no potential impacts on cultural resources. *(Less Impact)*

Geology, Soils, and Mineral Resources

Earth-moving activities associated with construction, have the potential to affect geology, soils, and mineral resources. The types of impacts that could occur from development of the Nishi site and redevelopment of West Olive Drive, include: geotechnical issues associated with expansive soils or soils with the potential to liquefy during seismic events, increased erosion due to ground disturbance and soil compaction, and exposure of buildings and people to seismic hazards. Existing regulations and permitting requirements, such as California Building Code (CBC) requirements, National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit conditions, and best management practices (BMPs), would minimize potential impacts to a less-than-significant level. Because there would be no changes to the use or existing conditions of the project site under Alternative 1, there would be no potential impacts on geology, soils, and mineral resources. *(Less Impact)*

Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Climate Change, and Energy

No construction would occur under Alternative 1, and no new vehicle trips would be generated on a daily basis. Further, no increase in electricity or natural gas consumption would occur. Therefore, there would be no increase in GHG emissions; thus this alternative would meet the identified threshold of significance. However, GHG emissions are unique in that they are tied to overall population and economic activity; thus, GHG emissions that are avoided at the site would likely emerge elsewhere as the same population seeks housing and employment. To that end, it is important to view the project in terms of GHG efficiency relative to what may occur without the project construction. The project has a relatively small carbon footprint for a project of its size, with very low building energy use, particularly with respect to fossil fuels (the project would largely rely on solar and other non-fossil fuels and with a high degree of VMT-reduction measures. Nonetheless, in and of itself, emissions at the project site would be less under this alternative. *(Less Impact)*

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Construction activities associated with the Nishi site and redevelopment of West Olive Drive would entail the transport, use, and storage of hazardous materials; and release of hazardous materials from a site of known or potential contamination. In addition, disruption of area roadways during construction may hinder traffic flow and affect emergency response. However, feasible mitigation measures are available to reduce these impacts to a less-than-significant level. In contrast, under Alternative 1, there would be no construction activities or changes in land use, and thus, no potential for these types of impacts. Because there would be no changes to the use or existing conditions of the project site under Alternative 1, there would be no potential impacts on hazards and hazardous materials. *(Less Impact)*

Hydrology and Water Quality

Earth-moving activities associated with construction, have the potential to affect hydrology and water quality within the project site. The types of impacts that could occur from development of the Nishi site and redevelopment of West Olive Drive, include: adverse effects on the water quality in Putah Creek, reduced groundwater recharge, alterations to existing drainage systems, and effects on the 100-year floodplain. Existing regulations and permitting requirement, such as NPDES permit conditions, a storm water pollution prevention plan (SWPPP), and a Stormwater Quality Control Plan (SWQCP) would reduce potentially significant impacts to a less-than-significant level. In contrast, under Alternative 1, there would be no construction activities or changes in land use, and thus, no potential for these types of impacts. Because there would be no changes to the use or existing conditions of the project site under Alternative 1, there would be no potential impacts on hazards and hazardous materials. *(Less Impact)*

Land Use and Planning

Under Alternative 1, there would be no changes associated with land use and planning. The project includes amendments to the General Plan and Zoning Code for West Olive Drive, and the Nishi site would be annexed from Yolo County to the City of Davis and require redesignation/rezoning. Approval of the proposed amendments would ensure policy and planning consistency. In addition, redevelopment of West Olive Drive and development of the Nishi site would bring the project site into compatibility with surrounding residential and commercial development, and would be consistent with guiding principles of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (MTP/SCS). While Alternative 1 would not require annexation or redesignation/rezoning, it would remain inconsistent with the surrounding development and would not help to meet the guiding principles of the MTP/SCS. Thus, Alternative 1 would result in greater land use and planning impacts compared to the project. *(Greater Impact)*

Noise and Vibration

Earth-moving activities within the project site (e.g., grading, excavation) would result in noise and vibration impacts. Feasible mitigation measures are available to reduce these impacts to a less-than-significant level, as described in Section 4.11, "Noise." In contrast, there would be no construction-generated noise or vibration under Alternative 1, because there would be no construction-related activities. Furthermore, the existing uses on the Nishi site and West Olive Drive would remain the same as under the existing condition; and, there would be no new noise impacts. *(Less Impact)*

Population and Housing

Under Alternative 1, there would be no new residential units, accommodation of increased populations, or new job opportunities. As a result, there would be no potential to induce population growth. In comparison, the project would allow for job creation and accommodation of future populations, which are anticipated to occur in the foreseeable future. Alternative 1 would not change the existing conditions. *(Less Impact)*

Public Services and Recreation

Alternative 1 would not result in an increase in demand for public service or recreation facilities. By comparison, the project would increase demands for public services; however, these impacts were determined to be less than significant because the project site is currently located within the service area of, and served by, local public service providers when necessary. Nonetheless, Alternative 1 would result in less public service impacts compared to the project. *(Less Impact)*

Transportation and Circulation

Under Alternative 1, there would be no changes to the project site; thus there would be no impacts on intersections, freeways, or local neighborhood traffic. This differs substantially from the project, which would result in degraded roadway conditions during construction and operation. Mitigation measures are available to reduce these impacts; however, there may be significant and unavoidable effects associated with the Richards Boulevard interchange area. Because there would be no changes to the use or existing conditions of the project site under Alternative 1, there would be no potential impacts on traffic and circulation. *(Less Impact; avoids significant unavoidable impacts to local intersections)*

Utilities

Under Alternative 1, there would be no changes to the existing demand on utilities or requirements to alter or expand infrastructure. In contrast, while water supply and wastewater treatment capacity are sufficient to meet the project demands, infrastructure improvements would be needed. Similarly, improvements to electricity and natural gas connections would be needed to serve the project. Because there would be no changes to the use or existing conditions of the project site under Alternative 1, there would be no potential impacts on utilities. (*Less Impact*)

Achievement of Project Objectives

Under Alternative 1, no development or redevelopment would occur on the project site. This alternative would not meet any of the project objectives identified above in Section 7.2, "Project Objectives," because the project site would not be treated as infill and would remain underutilized. Without development in the project site, objectives related to the character, City-wide housing demands, job creation, transportation connectivity, and general project design would not be met.

ALTERNATIVE 2: RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ONLY ALTERNATIVE

Alternative 2 would involve development of the Nishi site with only R&D uses and a similar retail commercial component (approximately 20,000 square feet [sf]). Under Alternative 2, R&D uses would replace residential uses proposed for the project, and would result in approximately 1,200,000 sf of R&D uses present on the Nishi site. Buildout of the Nishi site under this alternative would be conducted in a manner similar to that of the project (within 5-7 years of project approval) and would depend on the outcome of a Measure J/R vote, similar to the project. Under this alternative, the redesignation and rezoning of West Olive Drive would also occur, thereby resulting in the same 55,000 sf of net new commercial square footage as a result of subsequent redevelopment within West Olive Drive.

Aesthetics and Visual Resources

Under Alternative 2, construction activities would be similar to the project; however, residential uses would be replaced with R&D uses. By comparison, the project would develop the Nishi site with residential units, research and development buildings, on-site stormwater detention, open space, and surface/structure parking. For both the project and Alternative 2, impacts associated with visual character and quality, and light and glare would be less than significant, as described in Section 4.1. Because development of the project site would be consistent with surrounding uses, Alternative 2 would result in similar aesthetics impacts as the project. (*Similar Impact*)

Agriculture and Forest Resources

Impacts associated with the project, including conversion of farmland, associated with the Nishi site would occur under both the project and Alternative 2. Because the area of impact would be similar under Alternative 2 compared to the project, impacts to agricultural resources would be similar. (*Similar Impact*)

Air Quality

Both the project and Alternative 2 would generate similar levels of construction-related emissions associated with vehicle trips and activities within the project site because there would be similar levels of construction activities required. Because there would be more R&D uses developed, there would be a greater number of employment opportunities compared to the project. This would result in approximately 9,700 daily vehicle trips (approximately 2,900 more traffic trips into and out of the site on a daily basis), which would cause more air emissions. Based on emissions shown in Table 4.3-5 in Section 4.3, "Air Quality," this alternative would result in a substantial increase in criteria pollutant emissions (a 20 percent increase in reactive organic gases, a 33 percent increase in nitrous oxides, and a 40 percent increase in particulate matter.) Further, under this alternative, the potential for students to live on the project site, proximate to campus and walk or bike to campus would not be realized. Based on the modeling results of the project, this increase in air emissions would be expected to exceed threshold requirements associated with the Yolo Air Quality Management District (YSAQMD). However, without construction of residential units, sensitive receptors

would not be exposed to TACs and UFPs within the project site under Alternative 2. (*Greater Impact; significant unavoidable impacts regarding exposure of sensitive receptors would be avoided but new significant unavoidable impact regarding regional emissions would occur*)

Biological Resources

Because the area of impact would be similar under Alternative 2 as the project, similar significant effects, which could be mitigated, would occur on: California black walnut, Valley elderberry longhorn beetle, Special status bat species, nesting birds and raptors, including Swainson's hawk and burrowing owl (see Section 4.4, Biological Resources). (*Similar Impact*)

Cultural Resources

Earth-moving activities within the project site have the potential to disturb archaeological resources or result in accidental discovery of human remains. Under the project and Alternative 2, there would be ground-disturbing activities (e.g., grading, excavation) that could result in discovery of archaeological resources or human remains; however, feasible mitigation measures would reduce these impacts to a less-than-significant level. Because the area of impact would be the same under the project as Alternative 2, impacts to cultural resources would be similar. (*Similar Impact*)

Geology, Soils, and Mineral Resources

Earth-moving activities associated with construction have the potential to affect geology, soils, and mineral resources. The types of impacts that could occur from development of the Nishi site and redevelopment of West Olive Drive, include: geotechnical issues associated with expansive soils or soils with the potential to liquefy during seismic events, increased erosion due to ground disturbance and soil compaction, and exposing buildings and people to seismic hazards. Existing regulations and permitting requirements, such as California Building Code (CBC) requirements, National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit conditions, and best management practices (BMPs), would minimize potential impacts to a less-than-significant level. Because the area of impact would be the same under the project as Alternative 2, impacts to geology, soils, and mineral resources would be similar. (*Similar Impact*)

Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Climate Change, and Energy

Compared to the project, Alternative 2 would use potentially greater levels of electricity and natural gas, due to the increase in R&D space under this alternative. For the same reasons as described in Section 4.7, Greenhouse Gases and Climate Change, GHG emissions would be above identified thresholds of significance (i.e., zero net emissions). In contrast to the project, due to substitution of non-residential for residential uses and the loss of the synergy of uses associated with the project, it is likely that more vehicle trips would be necessary under Alternative 4, because a greater number of vehicles would commute to and from the project site during peak AM and PM hours (see Transportation and Circulation discussion below). (*Greater Impact*)

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Construction activities associated with the Nishi site and redevelopment of West Olive Drive would entail the transport, use, and storage of hazardous materials; and release of hazardous materials from a site of known or potential contamination. In addition, disruption of area roadways during construction may hinder traffic flow and affect emergency response. However, feasible mitigation measures are available to reduce these impacts to a less-than-significant level. With respect to emergency evacuation and emergency response, development of the Nishi site would result in similar impacts and would likely be significant and unavoidable without a direct connection to West Olive Drive. Because the area of impact would be the same under the project as Alternative 2, impacts associated with hazards and hazardous materials would be similar. (*Similar Impact*)

Hydrology and Water Quality

Earth-moving activities associated with construction have the potential to affect hydrology and water quality within the project site. The types of impacts that could occur from development of the Nishi site and

redevelopment of West Olive Drive, include: adverse effects on the water quality in Putah Creek, reduced groundwater recharge, alterations to existing drainage systems, and effects on the 100-year floodplain. Existing regulations and permitting requirement, such as NPDES permit conditions, a SWPPP, and a Stormwater Quality Control Plan (SWQCP) would reduce potentially significant impacts to a less-than-significant level. Because the area of impact would be the same under the project as Alternative 2, impacts associated with hydrology and water quality would be similar. *(Similar Impact)*

Land Use and Planning

The project includes amendments to the General Plan and Zoning Code for West Olive Drive, and the Nishi site would be annexed from Yolo County to the City of Davis and require redesignation/rezoning; approval of the proposed amendments would ensure policy and planning consistency. Redevelopment of West Olive Drive and development of the Nishi site would bring the project site into compatibility with surrounding residential and commercial development, and would be consistent with guiding principles of the MTP/SCS. Implementation of Alternative 2 would also require redesignation and rezoning, would also result in compatibility with surrounding residential and commercial development, and would be consistent with guiding principles of the MTP/SCS. *(Similar Impact)*

Noise and Vibration

Earth-moving activities within the project site (e.g., grading, excavation) would result in noise and vibration impacts. Feasible mitigation measures are available to reduce these impacts to a less-than-significant level, as described in Section 4.11, "Noise." These impacts would be similar under the project as Alternative 2. In contrast, because Alternative 2 does not include residential units, people would not be exposed to noise from UPRR during nighttime hours. Thus, noise impacts would be less under this alternative. *(Less Impact)*

Population and Housing

The project would provide employment opportunities for future residents of the City of Davis and other local communities, which are anticipated to occur in the foreseeable future. Because Alternative 2 would substantially increase the square footage of R&D uses, it would create approximately 3,000 new employment opportunities (assumes 405 sf per employee for R&D uses; see Section 4.12, "Population and Housing" for methodology). This has the potential to increase the demand for new housing in the City, and would be considered growth-inducing to an extent greater than the project. *(Greater Impact)*

Public Services and Recreation

Alternative 2 would result in any increase in demand for public service or new recreation facilities. By comparison, the project would increase demands for public services; however, these impacts were determined to be less than significant because the project site is currently located within the service area of and served by local public service providers when necessary. Because there would be no residential units associated with Alternative 2, the demand on public services would be slightly less than the project, as services would only be requires for R&D and retail facilities during limited hours of the day. *(Less Impact)*

Transportation and Circulation

Both the project and Alternative 2 would generate similar levels of construction-related emissions associated with vehicle trips and activities within the project site because there would be similar levels of construction activities required. Because more R&D uses would operate at the project site under this alternative, Alternative 2 would result in a greater number of employment opportunities compared to the project, which would result in greater traffic trips into and out of the site on a daily basis. As noted above, this alternative would result in approximately 2,900 more daily vehicle trips to and from the project site compared to the proposed project. Trips in addition to those described for the project would result in more degraded traffic conditions. *(Greater Impact)*

Utilities

Water supply and wastewater treatment capacity are sufficient to meet the project demands; however infrastructure improvements would be needed. Similarly, improvements to electricity and natural gas

connections would be needed to serve the project. There would be a greater number of jobs associated with Alternative 2, than the project, and thus a greater number of people within the project site; however R&D uses require substantially less water and wastewater capacity than residential uses. For example, based on the water demand factors presented in the WSA conducted for the project, on-site water demand would decrease by approximately 32,500 gpd (Brown and Caldwell 2015). While further studies are required to determine if available water supply and wastewater capacity would be required to meet the demands under Alternative 2, it is reasonable to assume that potential impacts would be less than the project. (*Lesser Impact*)

Achievement of Project Objectives

Under Alternative 2, R&D uses would replace residential uses proposed for the project, and would result in approximately 1,200,000 sf of R&D uses on the Nishi site, instead of 650 residential units, 350,000 sf of R&D uses, and some accessory retail under the project. The redesignation and rezoning of West Olive Drive would also occur, thereby resulting in the same 55,000 sq. ft. of net new commercial area as a result of subsequent redevelopment within West Olive Drive. Because this alternative would not include residential uses, it would not meet any of the project objectives associated with housing and the provision of a mixed-use community. The objective related to the provision of high-skilled technology jobs, however, would be achieved to a greater extent than that of the project. Non-use related objectives would likely be met at a similar level, through planning efforts associated with design of the project, such as provision of an alternative access point to UC Davis.

ALTERNATIVE 3: ALTERNATIVE LAND USE MIX

Alternative 3 would be similar to the project, except the 70,000 sq. ft. northernmost R&D uses under the project would be replaced with a 125-room hotel (potentially extended stay). It is assumed that surface parking similar to what is shown in Figure 3-3 would be necessary to accommodate the parking requirements of the hotel. Buildout of the Nishi site under this alternative would be conducted in a manner similar to that of the project (within 5-7 years of project approval) and would depend on the outcome of a Measure J/R vote, similar to the project. Rezoning and redesignation of West Olive Drive would occur under this alternative, similar to the project.

Aesthetics and Visual Resources

Under Alternative 3, construction activities would be similar to the project, except that the northernmost R&D uses would be replaced with a 125-room hotel. Construction of a hotel, rather than an R&D facility, would not create substantially different visual impacts compared to the project because the onsite and surrounding areas consist of similar types of development (i.e., conversion to vacant land to urban uses). This would result in a less-than-significant light and glare impact because additional new light sources would blend in with surrounding development and would represent a continuation of existing mixed-use development within the area. However, in contrast to the project, a hotel would require 24-hour lighting to accommodate late-arriving guests. While the project would require some nighttime, safety-related, lighting, a hotel would require a greater amount than an R&D uses. Thus, there would be a slightly greater aesthetics impact under Alternative 3 compared to the project. (*Greater Impact*)

Agriculture and Forest Resources

Impacts associated with the project, including conversion of farmland and removal of a water source for off-site agricultural use, associated with the Nishi site would occur under both the project and Alternative 3. Because the area of impact would be similar under Alternative 3 compared to the project, impacts to agricultural resources would be similar. (*Similar Impact*)

Air Quality

Both the project and Alternative 3 would generate similar levels of construction-related emissions associated with vehicle trips and activities within the project site because there would be similar levels of construction activities required. As discussed below under Transportation and Circulation, construction of a hotel would

result in fewer vehicle trips than the proposed R&D uses. This would result in fewer air emissions compared to the project. Due to the limited amount of time that hotel patrons would be located on-site, the potential additional health risks associated with hotel patrons in close proximity is not anticipated to be substantial. *(Less Impact)*

Biological Resources

Because the area of impact would be similar under Alternative 3 as the project, similar significant effects, which could be mitigated, would occur on California black walnut, Valley elderberry longhorn beetle, Special status bat species, nesting birds and raptors, including Swainson's hawk and burrowing owl *(Similar Impact)*

Cultural Resources

Earth-moving activities within the project site have the potential to disturb archaeological resources or result in accidental discovery of human remains. Under the project and Alternative 3, there would be ground-disturbing activities (e.g., grading, excavation) that could result in discovery of archaeological resources or human remains; however, feasible mitigation measures would reduce these impacts to a less-than-significant level. Because the area of impact would be the same under the project as Alternative 3, impacts to cultural resources would be similar. *(Similar Impact)*

Geology, Soils, and Mineral Resources

Earth-moving activities associated with construction have the potential to affect geology, soils, and mineral resources. The types of impacts that could occur from development of the Nishi site and redevelopment of West Olive Drive, include: geotechnical issues associated with expansive soils or soils with the potential to liquefy during seismic events, increased erosion due to ground disturbance and soil compaction, and exposing buildings and people to seismic hazards. Existing regulations and permitting requirement, such as California Building Code (CBC) requirements, National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit conditions, and best management practices (BMPs), would minimize potential impacts to a less-than-significant level. Because the area of impact would be the same under the project as Alternative 3, impacts to geology, soils, and mineral resources would be similar. *(Similar Impact)*

Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Climate Change, and Energy

In Alternative 3, compared to the project, less electricity and natural gas would be required because hotel guests would be using these utilities during limited hours in the morning and evening – as opposed to R&D uses, which would require at least 8 hours of gas and electricity use per day. For the same reasons as described in Section 4.7, "Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Climate Change, and Energy," GHG emissions would be above identified thresholds of significance (i.e., zero net emissions). In contrast to the project, it is likely that more vehicle trips would be necessary under Alternative 3, because a greater number of vehicles would be present during peak AM and PM hours (see Transportation and Circulation discussion below). *(Greater Impact)*

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Construction activities associated with the Nishi site and redevelopment of West Olive Drive would entail the transport, use, and storage of hazardous materials; and release of hazardous materials from a site of known or potential contamination. In addition, disruption of area roadways during construction may hinder traffic flow and affect emergency response. However, feasible mitigation measures are available to reduce these impacts to a less-than-significant level. With respect to emergency evacuation and emergency response, development of the Nishi site would result in similar impacts and would likely be significant and unavoidable without a direct connection to West Olive Drive. Because the area of impact would be the same under the project as Alternative 3, impacts associated with hazards and hazardous materials would be similar. *(Similar Impact)*

Hydrology and Water Quality

Earth-moving activities associated with construction have the potential to affect hydrology and water quality within the project site. The types of impacts that could occur from development of the Nishi site and

redevelopment of West Olive Drive, include: adverse effects on the water quality in Putah Creek, reduced groundwater recharge, alterations to existing drainage systems, and effects on the 100-year floodplain. Existing regulations and permitting requirement, such as NPDES permit conditions, a SWPPP, and a Stormwater Quality Control Plan (SWQCP) would reduce potentially significant impacts to a less-than-significant level. Because the area of impact would be the same under the project as Alternative 3, impacts associated with hydrology and water quality would be similar. (*Similar Impact*)

Land Use and Planning

The project includes amendments to the General Plan and Zoning Code for West Olive Drive, and the Nishi site would be annexed from Yolo County to the City of Davis and require redesignation/rezoning. Approval of the proposed amendments would ensure policy and planning consistency. However, redevelopment of West Olive Drive and development of the Nishi site would bring the project site into compatibility with surrounding residential and commercial development, and would be consistent with guiding principles of the MTP/SCS. Implementation of Alternative 3 would also require redesignation and rezoning, and would also result in compatibility with surrounding residential and commercial development, and would be consistent with guiding principles of the MTP/SCS. (*Similar Impact*)

Noise and Vibration

Earth-moving activities within the project site (e.g., grading, excavation) would result in noise and vibration impacts. Feasible mitigation measures are available to reduce these impacts to a less-than-significant level, as described in Section 4.11, "Noise." Under Alternative 3, the extent and length of the construction period would be comparable, and thus, the types of impacts would be similar. In contrast, nighttime noise impacts associated with UPRR would be greater under Alternative 3 due to the presence of additional people on-site at night associated with the hotel. (*Greater Impact*)

Population and Housing

The project would allow for job creation and accommodation of future populations, which are anticipated to occur in the foreseeable future. While it can be assumed that there would be similar numbers of construction employees, Alternative 3 would involve construction of a 125-room hotel, rather than 70,000 sq. ft. of R&D uses. Assuming that 0.33 employees are required per room (see City of Davis Mace Ranch Innovation Center Project EIR, May 2015), there would be an estimated 41 employees associated with the hotel. This would be less than the approximately 222 employees that would be generated by a 70,000 sq. ft. R&D use (assumes 405 sf per employee for R&D uses; see Section 4.12, "Population and Housing" for methodology). While this is not a substantial difference from the project, it would place slightly less pressure on housing demand and other potentially growth-inducing influences. (*Less Impact*)

Public Services and Recreation

Alternative 3 would not result in any increase in demand for public service or recreation facilities. By comparison, the project would increase demands for public services; however, these impacts were determined to be less-than-significant because the project site is currently located within the service area of, and served by, local public service providers. Nonetheless, Alternative 3 would result in less public service impacts compared to the project because there would be fewer people who may need public services. Overall, Alternative 3 would result in less public services impacts compared to the project. (*Less Impact*)

Transportation and Circulation

Both the project and Alternative 3 would generate similar levels of construction-related vehicle trips and activities within the project site because there would be similar levels of construction activities required. When considering trip generation during operation of these facilities, the hotel would result in fewer peak hour trips than an R&D facility. More specifically, Alternative 3 would result in approximately 200 fewer daily trips and less than half of the peak hour trips (AM and PM) compared to a similarly-sized R&D facility. While the uses would not result in substantially different daily trips, AM peak and PM peak trips would be much greater under the project than Alternative 3. Alternative 3 would result in less traffic into and out of the site,

which could result in less intersection and roadway segment impact under project-specific and cumulative conditions compared to the project. (*Less Impact*)

Utilities

Under the project, water supply and wastewater treatment capacity are sufficient to meet the project demands; however infrastructure improvements would be needed. Similarly, improvements to electricity and natural gas connections would be needed to serve the project. Considering the demand factors included for the Water Supply Assessment (WSA) prepared for the project, Alternative 3 would demand less water than the project (125-room hotel at 150 gallons per day (gpd) per room and 222 employees for R&D at 90 gpd/employee). This increased water demand would correlate to a lesser wastewater treatment requirement. While further studies would be required to determine if available water supply and wastewater capacity would be required, it is reasonable to assume that potential impacts would be less than the project. (*Lesser Impact*)

Achievement of Project Objectives

Under Alternative 3, the 90,000 sq. ft. northernmost R&D uses under the project would be replaced with a 125-room hotel. The redesignation and rezoning of West Olive Drive would also occur, thereby resulting in the same 55,000 sf of net new commercial square footage as a result of subsequent redevelopment within West Olive Drive. This alternative would add an additional use type, thereby increasing the mix of uses, consistent with certain project objectives, however, it would not accommodate R&D-related jobs to the extent of the project. The remaining objective would likely be met at a similar level, through planning efforts associated with design of the project. For instance, an alternative access point to UC Davis could be created; the underutilized infill location would be developed to be more consistent with surrounding land uses; high-skilled technology-related jobs could be created; and energy-efficient building design, low-water use indoor and outdoor design, and high-quality construction could be implemented. It should also be noted that a hotel, or other short-term visitor facilities are not included in the objectives for the project.

ALTERNATIVE 4: OFF-SITE ALTERNATIVE

Alternative 4 would involve the redevelopment of the 5th Street Corridor site shown in Figure 7-1 and identified in the Davis Innovation Center Study prepared by Studio 30 (UC Davis Extension) in 2012. The 5th Street Corridor site is approximately 47 acres in size, similar to the Nishi site, and would allow for a similar mix of uses. It is currently developed with a mix of commercial, office, light industrial, and utility uses that would be removed as part of this alternative. For the purposes of this analysis, it is assumed that up to 650 residential units would be located north of 5th Street with podium and surface parking, while all R&D (up to 325,000 sf), retail (up to 20,000 sf), and open space would be located south of 5th Street. Buildout of the Alternative 4 site would be conducted in a manner similar to that of the project (within 5-7 years of project approval) and would not require a Measure J/R vote as the site of Alternative 4 is currently located within the City limits. It is assumed that rezoning and redesignation of West Olive Drive would not occur under this alternative. For the purposes of the evaluation of this alternative, it is assumed that actions/design considerations similar to those identified in the project's Sustainability Implementation Plan would be implemented under this alternative, however, the feasibility of implementing these actions has not been fully evaluated. Should implementation of the project's Sustainability Implementation Plan not occur under this alternative, impacts would likely be greater than those identified below.

Aesthetics and Visual Resources

Under Alternative 4, on-site uses would be of similar mass and scale to the project. Although this may result in up to 5-story residential buildings proximate to existing single-family homes north of 5th Street, it is anticipated that appropriate buffers and greenways would be incorporated into the design of the project such that significant aesthetic impacts and changes in visual character from the surrounding residences would not occur. Potential consideration of maintaining views of UC Davis campus (especially Mondavi Center and the Shrem Art Museum) would not be necessary under this alternative. Impacts would generally

be similar, because both sites are surrounded by similar types of land uses and the proposed development types are the same. *(Similar Impact)*

Agriculture and Forest Resources

The project would result in conversion of farmland and removal of a water source for off-site agricultural use. Under Alternative 4 these impacts would not occur because the 5th Street Corridor site does not contain agricultural land. *(Less Impact)*

Air Quality

Both the project and Alternative 4 would generate similar levels of construction-related emissions associated with vehicle trips and activities within the project site because there would be similar levels of construction activities required. However, Alternative 4 would result in a greater vehicles trip generation due to its increased distance from UC Davis and freeway access (i.e., more people would drive rather than use alternate forms of transportation). This increased in air emissions would not be expected to exceed threshold requirements associated with the Yolo Air Quality Management District (YAQMD). However, because residential units would not be placed within close proximity to UPRR and US 80, sensitive receptors would not be exposed to the degree of TACs and UFPs within the project site under Alternative 4. *(Less Impact; significant unavoidable impacts to air quality avoided)*

Biological Resources

The 5th Street Corridor site's vegetation is generally limited to trees along the streets, which varies considerably from the project site. As a result, Alternative 4 would not result in adverse effects on special status plants; however the 5th Street Corridor site could contain nesting birds and raptors and bats. These potential impacts could be mitigated through implementation of mitigation measures? discussed in Section 4.4, Biological Resources. Because the project site for Alternative is already developed, impacts related to disturbance of biological resources would be less than under the project site, which consists primarily of vacant land. *(Less Impact)*

Cultural Resources

Earth-moving activities generally have the potential to disturb archaeological resources or result in accidental discovery of human remains. Under the project, there would be ground-disturbing activities (e.g., grading, excavation) could result in discovery of archaeological resources or human remains; however, feasible mitigation measures would reduce these impacts to a less-than-significant level. The potential to encounter these types of cultural resources would be similar under Alternative 4 due to the need for ground-disturbing activities that would occur during construction. *(Similar Impact)*

Geology, Soils, and Mineral Resources

Earth-moving activities associated with construction have the potential to affect geology, soils, and mineral resources. The types of impacts that could occur from development of the Nishi site and redevelopment of West Olive Drive, include: geotechnical issues associated with expansive soils or soils with the potential to liquefy during seismic events, increased erosion due to ground disturbance and soil compaction, and exposing buildings and people to seismic hazards. Existing regulations and permitting requirement, such as California Building Code (CBC) requirements, National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit conditions, and best management practices (BMPs), would minimize potential impacts to a less-than-significant level. The 5th Street Corridor Site contains drainages that connect to Core Pond. While there is no connection to Putah Creek, as under the project, the types of impacts to geology, soils, and mineral resources would be similar. *(Similar Impact)*

Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Climate Change, and Energy

Compared to the project, Alternative 4 would use similar levels of electricity and natural gas, because the same type of development would be construction. For the same reasons as described in Section 4.7, Greenhouse Gases and Climate Change, GHG emissions would be above identified thresholds of significance (i.e., zero net emissions). In contrast to the project, it is likely that more vehicle trips would be necessary

under Alternative 4 due to its location further from freeway access and shopping centers. Further, there would be less synergy of uses and connectivity to UC Davis under this alternative due to the proximity of the project site to UC Davis Campus versus this location. The 5th Street Corridor site is located over a mile from campus, and students would be more inclined to drive rather than walk or take alternative forms of transportation compared to the Nishi site located adjacent to campus. Greater vehicle trips and associated VMT would likely result in greater GHG emissions. (*Greater Impact*)

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Construction activities associated with the Nishi site and redevelopment of West Olive Drive, and well as implementation of Alternative 4, would entail the transport, use, and storage of hazardous materials; and release of hazardous materials from a site of known or potential contamination (Studio 30 2012). In addition, disruption of area roadways during construction may hinder traffic flow and affect emergency response. However, feasible mitigation measures are available to reduce these impacts to a less-than-significant level, similar to the project. With respect to emergency evacuation and emergency response, the 5th Street Corridor site has multiple ingress and egress opportunities for emergency vehicles and for emergency evacuation. As a result, potential impacts with respect to emergency evacuation and response would be less under this alternative. (*Less Impact*)

Hydrology and Water Quality

Earth-moving activities associated with construction have the potential to affect hydrology and water quality within the project site as well as the 5th Street Corridor Site. The types of impacts that could occur from development of the Nishi site and redevelopment of West Olive Drive, include: adverse effects on the water quality in Putah Creek, reduced groundwater recharge, alterations to existing drainage systems, and effects on the 100-year floodplain. Similar effects could occur at the 5th Street Corridor Site related to the Core Pond, located immediately southeast of the off-site alternative. Existing regulations and permitting requirement, such as NPDES permit conditions, a SWPPP, and a Stormwater Quality Control Plan (SWQCP) would reduce potentially significant impacts to a less-than-significant level. Thus, the impacts would be the similar under the project as Alternative 4. (*Similar Impact*)

Land Use and Planning

The project includes amendments to the General Plan and Zoning Code for West Olive Drive, and the Nishi site would be annexed from Yolo County to the City of Davis and require redesignation/rezoning, approval of the proposed amendments would ensure policy and planning consistency. However, redevelopment of West Olive Drive and development of the Nishi site would bring the project site into compatibility with surrounding residential and commercial development, and would be consistent with guiding principles of the MTP/SCS. Implementation of Alternative 4 would also require redesignation and rezoning from industrial uses, and would also result in compatibility with surrounding residential and commercial development, and would be consistent with guiding principles of the MTP/SCS. However, Alternative 4 would not need to be annexed from Yolo County because it is within the City limits. (*Less Impact*)

Noise and Vibration

Earth-moving activities within the project site (e.g., grading, excavation) would result in noise and vibration impacts. Feasible mitigation measures are available to reduce these impacts to a less-than-significant level, as described in Section 4.11, Noise. Under Alternative 4, the extent and length of the construction period would be comparable, and thus, the types of impacts would be similar. Nighttime noise impacts would be less under Alternative 4 because the 5th Street Corridor site is not located in close proximity to the existing UPRR line, however, impacts are anticipated to remain significant due to the potential for waking of on-site residents as a result of horn blasts from trains. (*Less Impact*)

Population and Housing

The project would allow for job creation and accommodation of future populations, which are anticipated to occur in the foreseeable future. Under Alternative 4, the 5th Street Corridor would be developed to contain 650 residential units, 325,000 sq. ft. of R&D uses, and up to 20,000 sq. ft. of retail, which is the same as

under the project. However, implementation of Alternative 4 would require acquisition and demolition of several existing buildings, which would reduce the number of jobs available in the area. These businesses and public corporation yards would need to be relocated elsewhere, which could result in environmental impacts if adequate vacant buildings or land are not available. (*Greater Impact*)

Public Services and Recreation

The project would increase demands for public services; however, these impacts were determined to be less than significant because the project site is currently located within the service area of and served by local public service providers when necessary. Because the size and scope of Alternative 4 is similar to the project, similar types of impacts would occur at a similar level. (*Similar Impact*)

Transportation and Circulation

Both the project and Alternative 4 would generate similar levels of construction-related vehicle trips and activities within the project site because similar levels of construction activities would be required. In addition, there would be a similar number of trips into and out of the project sites under operation of the developments. However, the Nishi site is in closer proximity to US 80 and other major roadways (i.e., Richards Boulevard). As a result, the 5th Street Corridor site could cause greater congestion and adverse effects on intersections, even with fair share contributions to future roadway improvements similar to the project. These potential impacts would occur in areas surrounding the 5th Street and Poleline Boulevard intersections, rather than areas around the project site. Further studies would need to be conducted to determine the extent to which these impacts would occur; however, it is assumed that Alternative 4 would cause greater roadway impacts within the City due to the increased need to use more surface streets for circulation. (*Greater Impact*)

Utilities

Under the project, water supply and wastewater treatment capacity are sufficient to meet the project demands; however infrastructure improvements would be needed. Similarly, improvements to electricity and natural gas connections would be needed to serve the project. Because Alternative 4 would result in development of the same types of land uses (residential, R&D, and retail), requiring the same service levels, these impacts would likely be similar. (*Similar Impact*)

Achievement of Project Objectives

Under Alternative 4, the same mix of uses would be developed on the 5th Street Corridor as the project. As a result, many of project objectives would be met, including: an underutilized infill location would be developed to be more consistent with surrounding land uses; high-skilled technology-related jobs could be created; and energy-efficient building design; low-water use indoor and outdoor design; and high-quality construction could be implemented. This alternative would not contribute to the overall character and livability of the surrounding neighborhood and UC Davis by facilitating the reuse of property in a manner that enhances the visibility and aesthetic appeal of the City from Richards Boulevard, UPRR, and I-80 and circulation within the City of UC Davis due to its location of over a mile from the project site and UC Davis. Furthermore it would not provide alternative access to UC Davis to minimize congestion along Richards Boulevard and the UPRR undercrossing and at the intersection of Richard Boulevard and 1st Street, as many students, staff, or faculty associated with the 5th Street Corridor would likely commute to campus.

7.5 COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES

Table 7-1 summarizes the environmental analyses provided above for the project alternatives.

Table 7-1 Comparison of the Environmental Impacts of the Alternatives in Relation to the Project

Environmental Topic	Project	Alternative 1 No Project, No Development	Alternative 2 R&D Only	Alternative 3 Alternative Land Mix	Alternative 4 Off-Site Alternative
Aesthetics	LTS	<	=	>	=
Agricultural Resources	S&U	<	=	=	<
Air Quality	LTSM	<	>	<	<
Biological Resources	LTSM	<	=	=	<
Cultural Resources	LTSM	<	=	=	=
Geology, Soils, and Mineral Resources	LTS	<	=	=	=
Greenhouse Gas Emissions	S&U	<	>	>	>
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	S&U	<	=	=	<
Hydrology and Water Quality	LTSM	<	=	=	=
Land Use and Planning	LTS	>	=	=	<
Noise and Vibration	S&U	<	<	>	<
Population and Housing	LTS	<	>	<	>
Public Service and Recreation	LTS	<	<	<	=
Transportation and Circulation	S&U	<	>	<	>
Utilities	LTSM	<	<	<	=
Overall Results		<14 >1	<3 >4 =8	<5 >3 =7	<6 >3 =6

Impact Status:
 LTS = Less Than Significant Impact = - Impacts would be similar to those of the project.
 LTSM = LTS with Mitigation < - Impacts would be less than those of the project.
 PSU = Potentially Significant and Unavoidable > - Impacts would be greater than those of the project.

Source: Data compiled by Ascent Environmental in 2015

7.6 ENVIRONMENTALLY SUPERIOR ALTERNATIVE

The State CEQA Guidelines section 15126.6 states that an EIR should identify the “environmentally superior” alternative. “If the environmentally superior alternative is the ‘no project’ alternative, the EIR shall also identify an environmentally superior alternative among the other alternatives.” As shown in Section 7.4.1, Summary of Project Impacts, there would be significant and unavoidable impacts associated with the project. These impacts are related to air quality, noise, traffic, and GHG emissions. Compared to the project, noise impacts would be less under Alternatives 2 (Research and Development Only) and 4 (Off-site Alternative); traffic impacts would be less under Alternative 3 (Alternative Land Use); and Alternatives 2, 3, and 4 would result in greater GHG emissions impacts, and less air quality impacts. With consideration of the project and the alternatives, only Alternative 1 (No Project) would result in no significant and unavoidable impacts.

When considering objectives, the project would best meet the purpose and need. In contrast, Alternative 2 would not provide additional housing to accommodate anticipated growth (both from the City and UC Davis), and Alternative 4 would not be located in close enough proximity to UC Davis to create a new entry point to campus. While Alternative 3 results in a similar number of impacts, the objectives would be better met through development of R&D uses rather than a hotel, which is not a project objective. Because there would be no project under Alternative 1, it would fail to meet the objectives of the project.

Consistent with State CEQA Guidelines (CCR Section 15126.6 [e][2]), because the environmentally superior alternative was identified as the No Project Alternative, another environmentally superior alternative shall be identified. Based on the environmental analysis contained in this Draft EIR, Alternative 2 and 4 would result in less impacts compared to the project. However, Alternatives 2 and 4 would result in various environmental effects, some of which are substantially greater than would occur with implementation of the project. In particular, both would have substantially greater traffic impacts that would contribute to additional GHG emissions compared to the project. This significant and unavoidable GHG emissions impact would be of higher magnitude than that of the project. In addition, Alternative 4 would require demolition and relocation of several businesses and would be located close enough to the existing UPRR line such that residents would be subjected to train-related noise (i.e. horn blasts). Alternative 2 would also likely result in a significant and unavoidable impact with respect to regional air emissions, based on projected trip generation. Yet, Alternatives 2 and 4 would not result in significant and unavoidable air quality impacts related to TACs and UFPs on project residents, and Alternative 4 would not result in significant and unavoidable agricultural resources impacts.

In conclusion, the environmentally superior alternative would be either the project or Alternative 4, depending on decisions about the priority of types of environmental benefits and adverse effects by the City of Davis. In essence, decision-makers must weigh the relative importance of greater traffic, GHG emissions, and population and housing impacts associated with Alternative 4, compared to the greater agricultural, air quality, and noise impacts associated with the project. Each of these alternatives would result in long-term, significant and unavoidable environmental impacts. Therefore, the environmental impact differences between these two alternatives are not substantial enough that one is clearly superior over the others.

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