

# Chapter 4. Alternatives Analysis

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## 4.1 INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

According to the CEQA, an EIR must describe a reasonable range of alternatives to a proposed project that could feasibly attain most of the basic project objectives, and would avoid or substantially lessen any of the proposed project's significant effects. Additionally, a No Project alternative must be analyzed. An EIR must evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives.

The range of alternatives required in an EIR is governed by a "rule of reason" that requires an EIR to set forth only those alternatives necessary to permit a reasoned choice. An EIR need not consider every conceivable alternative to a project. Rather, the alternatives must be limited to ones that meet the project objectives, are feasible, and would avoid or substantially lessen at least one of the significant environmental effects of the project. "Feasible" means capable of being accomplished in a successful manner within a reasonable period of time, taking into account economic, environmental, legal, social, and technological factors.

The EIR must briefly describe the rationale for selection and rejection of alternatives and the information the lead agency relied on when making the selection. It also should identify any alternatives considered, but rejected, as infeasible by the lead agency during the scoping process and briefly explain the reasons for the exclusion. Alternatives may be eliminated from detailed consideration in the EIR if they fail to meet most of the project objectives, are infeasible, or do not avoid any significant environmental effects.

This chapter identifies two alternatives that attain some of the project objectives, are feasible, and could avoid or lessen environmental impacts, including the No Project alternative. This chapter concludes by analyzing the environmentally superior alternative.

This EIR does not identify any unmitigated significant adverse impacts of the project, and therefore project alternatives are not strictly necessary. However, in order to comply with CEQA, this section presents a "Reduced Project Alternative" to illustrate how impacts would be affected if the project were reduced in size.

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## 4.2 ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT

### No Project Alternative

An EIR is required to evaluate and analyze the impacts of a No Project Alternative. The purpose of evaluating the No Project Alternative is to allow decision-makers to compare the impacts of approving the project with the impacts of not approving the project. However, the No Project Alternative is not the baseline for determining whether the proposed project's impacts are significant, unless it is identical to the existing environmental setting analysis that establishes the baseline (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15126.6(e)(1)).

At the time the NOP is published, the No Project analysis must discuss the existing conditions and what would be reasonably expected to occur in the foreseeable future if the project were not approved based on current plans and consistencies with available infrastructure and community services (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15126.6(e)(2)).

The discussion of the No Project Alternative normally proceeds along one of two lines. When the project is the revision of an existing land use or regulatory plan, policy, or ongoing operation, the No Project Alternative will be the continuation of the plan, policy, or operation into the future. On the other hand, if the project is an individual development project on an identifiable location, the No Project Alternative compares the environmental effects of the property remaining in its existing state. However, if other future uses of the land are predictable, such uses also should be discussed as possible no project conditions and the project should be compared to those uses (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15126.6(e)(3)). In this case, the proposed project is an individual development project and includes the revision of an existing land use or regulatory plan. Therefore, the No Project Alternative will evaluate what could happen at the proposed project site were no development to take place, and revisions were not made to the existing land use plans.

### No Project

Pursuant to the No Project Alternative, the Lexus dealership would not be constructed at the proposed project site. The site would remain as it is with three office buildings on the northernmost parcel and the Avis rental car storage facility on the southernmost.

In comparison to the proposed project, implementation of the No Project Alternative would eliminate adverse environmental impacts associated with the proposed project. On-going use of the property in its existing condition would not require a General Plan Amendment or revision of the Planned Community Development Standards (zoning regulations) for Newport Place. In addition, Platt College and the offices currently on the site would continue to operate therefore, it

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is likely the conditions at the intersection of MacArthur Boulevard and Jamboree Road would not worsen in the evening peak hours.

The No Project Alternative would allow for existing conditions to persist. Drainage improvements would not be implemented. Although drainage conditions would not be exacerbated and runoff would not increase, water quality impacts of this alternative may be greater than the proposed project as the existing automotive use at the site (Avis) is not currently required to implement BMP's similar to those included with the proposed project.

The No Project Alternative would eliminate air quality impacts related to construction of the proposed project at the site. The No Project Alternative would also eliminate impacts associated with traffic due to operation of the proposed project. However, this Alternative would not attain any of the project objectives and goals.

### **Reduced Project Alternative**

The Reduced Project Alternative is redevelopment of the site with a Lexus dealership that is reduced in size from the dealership reflected in Figure 2-5 and evaluated as "the project" in this EIR. The Reduced Project Alternative would comprise a total of 117,000 square feet of occupied space contrasted with 130,000 square feet for "the project." The smaller project size would be achieved through elimination of the second floor service department and reduction in the occupied first-floor area of the parking structure (reduction of approximately 20,000 square feet) accompanied by expansion of the showroom (addition of approximately 7,000 square feet):  
 $130,000 \text{ sq. ft.} - 20,000 \text{ sq. ft.} + 7,000 \text{ sq. ft.} = 117,000 \text{ sq. ft.}$

The current configuration calls for a 33,700 square-foot showroom and 96,300 square feet of service areas. In addition, the project calls for a four-story 1,265 space parking structure. The Reduced Project would have the same general site plan as the proposed project, only the overall occupied area would be reduced by 13,000 square feet from 130,000 to 117,000. The effect of this reduction would be to reduce the identified significant traffic impacts of the project (see below).

It is likely that reducing the size of the project would still allow the City to achieve its goals as stated in the Chapter 2 of this Draft EIR. These include creating healthy thriving businesses that increase property, sales and bed taxes, promoting economic activity and improving the quality of life of Newport Beach residents by balancing the protection of the environment and the health and safety of the community. In addition, a reduction in the size of the project would still allow the applicant to achieve its objectives of better serving the existing Lexus customer base in Newport Beach, expanding Lexus' market share in Orange County and the Newport Beach area, and constructing a facility of high architectural quality, complementary to the Newport Beach image.

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### Aesthetics

This Alternative would consist of the development of a Lexus showroom and service center that is reduced in size. The reduction in size would only slightly change the mass of structures proposed on-site as compared to the proposed project. The potential impacts on adjacent properties would be similar to those of the proposed project. Similar to the proposed project the only nighttime lighting would be low-level, low-intensity security lighting, and therefore potential impacts would not be significant. Further, the site is not located in the vicinity of any sensitive receptors; therefore, arrangement of the buildings on the site is not anticipated to reduce impacts. The overall change to the visual character and quality of the project site is anticipated to be similar under both the Reduced Project Alternative and the proposed project.

### Air Quality

The Reduced Project Alternative would involve similar types of construction activities as the proposed project, including grading of the site and construction of a Lexus dealership. As with the proposed project, both construction-related and operation air quality impacts would be less than significant with mitigation under this alternative.

### Hydrology and Water Quality

Hydrology and water quality impacts under the Reduced Project Alternative would be similar to those under the proposed project. The site is currently covered with largely impervious surfaces and a smaller project would still accommodate largely impervious surfaces. Therefore, the amount of surface runoff associated with construction and operation of the smaller project would be similar to the level of runoff associated with the proposed project. Similar to the proposed project, implementation of the Reduced Project Alternative would require meeting any and all applicable regulations for storm water runoff and water quality.

### Transportation/Traffic

The reduction of 13,000 square feet would result in 28 fewer vehicle trips in the morning peak hour and 34 fewer trips in the evening peak hour. Intersection analysis was conducted for the two intersections that were shown to be impacted by the full 130,000 square foot project (Irvine Avenue and Mesa Drive and MacArthur Boulevard and Jamboree Road). The results of the analysis are shown in Table 4-1. Review of Table 4-1 shows that with the reduction of the project by 13,000 square feet the significant project impact at the intersection of MacArthur Boulevard and Jamboree Road will be eliminated. The project would still have a significant TPO

**TABLE 4-1**  
**SUMMARY OF PEAK HOUR INTERSECTION OPERATION**  
**(REDUCED PROJECT – 117 KSF)<sup>1</sup>**

No.	Signalized Intersection	w/ out Project Conditions				w/ Project Conditions				Project Impact		
		AM Peak		PM Peak		AM Peak		PM Peak		Change in ICU		
		ICU	LOS	ICU	LOS	ICU	LOS	ICU	LOS	AM	PM	Sig?
<i>TPO Analysis (Approved Projects)</i>												
13	Jamboree Rd @ MacArthur Blvd	0.74	C	0.90	D	0.74	C	0.90	D	0.00	0.00	No
18	Irvine Ave @ Mesa Dr	0.84	D	0.98	E	0.84	D	0.99	E	0.00	0.01	Yes
<i>CEQA Analysis (Cumulative/Approved Projects)</i>												
13	Jamboree Rd @ MacArthur Blvd	0.858	D	0.992	E	0.855	D	1.000	E	-0.003	0.008	No
18	Irvine Ave @ Mesa Dr	0.843	D	0.986	E	0.845	D	0.989	E	0.002	0.003	No

<sup>1</sup> Since the project impacts associated with the reduced-intensity alternative will be less than the full project, analysis of the traffic impacts for the reduced project was conducted only at the two intersections shown to be significantly impacted by the full project.  
Source: Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc., *Traffic Study for Newport Lexus in the City of Newport Beach*, September 2004

impact (although not a CEQA impact) at the intersection of Irvine Avenue and Mesa Drive, and the project would still be required to participate in the funding of improvements at this intersection to mitigate this impact (see mitigation measure **M-3C.1**). The project's share of necessary improvements required under the Reduced Project Alternative is shown in Table 4-2.

**TABLE 4-2**  
**INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS - PROJECT RESPONSIBILITY**

Intersection	Condition	Future w/o Project	Improved w/o Project	Effective Capacity Increase	Improved w/ Project	Effective Capacity Decrease	Project Responsibility (Dec./ Inc.)
Irvine Avenue @ Mesa Drive	Approved – PM	0.983	0.932	0.051	0.936	0.004	0.078

Assumes reconfiguration of the WB approach to provide 1 left, 1 left/through, and 1 right-turn lane.

Source: Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc., *Traffic Study for Newport Lexus in the City of Newport Beach*, September 2004

### 4.3 ENVIRONMENTALLY SUPERIOR ALTERNATIVE

An EIR must identify the environmentally superior alternative. The No Project Alternative would be environmentally superior to the proposed project on the basis of the minimization or avoidance of physical environmental impacts. However, the No Project Alternative does not

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meet the project objectives. In addition, CEQA Guidelines (Section 15126.6(c)) require that, if the environmentally superior alternative is the No Project Alternative, the EIR also shall identify an environmentally superior alternative among the other alternatives.

The Reduced Project Alternative would be the environmentally superior alternative. This alternative involves the construction of a slightly smaller Lexus automobile dealership at the proposed project site; this alternative would meet all of the project objectives. Due to the only slightly smaller size of dealership under this alternative, it is assumed that impacts associated with the construction of this alternative, would be similar in nature to the proposed project (that is - less than significant). This alternative would reduce the number of significantly impacted intersections from two to one under the TPO and from one to none under the CEQA analysis. Mitigation measure **M-3C.1** would mitigate to a level of less than significance the TPO impact at Irvine Avenue and Mesa Drive. For this reason the Reduced Project Alternative is now the preferred alternative.