

SECTION 6.0 ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT

6.1 INTRODUCTION

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15126.6(a) and (b) provide guidance on the scope of alternatives to a proposed project that must be evaluated. The CEQA Guidelines state:

- (a) 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. 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, which 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.
- (b) 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.

In selecting alternatives to the Sunset Ridge Park Project, the City of Newport Beach (City), as the Lead Agency, will consider alternatives that could feasibly obtain most of the basic objectives of the Project. However, no one factor establishes a fixed limit on the scope of alternatives considered, and the Lead Agency can consider alternatives that would impede, to some degree, the attainment of Project objectives or that would be more costly.

6.2 SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

The Sunset Ridge Park Project site (Project site) encompasses approximately 18.9 acres. Approximately 13.7 acres are located within the incorporated boundary of the City of Newport Beach (City), and approximately 5.2 acres are in unincorporated Orange County within the City's adopted Sphere of Influence, as approved by the Local Agency Formation Commission of Orange County. The entire site is within the boundary of the Coastal Zone as established by the California Coastal Act.

The City proposes to develop the site with active and passive recreational uses and an access road to the park through the Newport Banning Ranch property. The proposed park would include one baseball field and two soccer fields, a playground and picnic area, a memorial garden and shade structure, pedestrian paths, a one-story, 1,300-square-foot (sf) building with restroom facilities, maintenance equipment storage and sports equipment storage, and parking. The parking lot would provide 75 parking spaces and include a designated drop-off area. In addition, up to 22 parallel parking spaces would be provided along the park access road. The proposed park would include pedestrian access via two entries from the sidewalk along Superior Boulevard and one entry from the sidewalk along West Coast Highway. Vehicle

ingress and egress would be provided via an access road to the park extending from West Coast Highway through the Newport Banning Ranch property. No nighttime lighting other than for public safety would be provided. The park would be open from 6:00 AM until 11:00 PM every day. The park access road would be gated near the entrance at West Coast Highway. Vehicles can only enter the site between 8:00 AM and dusk. In addition to these on-site improvements, there would be off-site improvements on West Coast Highway, including widening and signalization.

As a part of the Project, the City proposes to widen a portion of the northern side of West Coast Highway from Superior Avenue to a point west of the proposed park access road consistent with the standards of the *City of Newport Beach General Plan's* Circulation Element and the Orange County Transportation Authority's Master Plan of Arterial Highways (MPAH). The City is proposing a signal on West Coast Highway at the proposed access road. Because West Coast Highway is a State highway, California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) approvals would be required.

Construction of the proposed Project is planned to occur in a single construction phase lasting between 16 and 18 months. Approximately 130,000 cubic yards (cy) of cut and 96,000 cy of fill may be required during grading activities, with a net export of approximately 34,000 cy. The City has proposed that all of the exported soil to go to the adjacent Newport Banning Ranch property. Existing oil field roads on the Newport Banning Ranch property would provide truck access to transport the export material from the park site to Newport Banning Ranch.

The Project does not require a General Plan amendment or zone change. The *City of Newport Beach General Plan's* land use designation for the 13.7 acres of the Project site within the City is Parks and Recreation (PR), and the land use designation for the 5.2 acres within the City's Sphere of Influence is Open Space/Residential Village (OS/RV).

The zoning designation for the portion of the Project site (13.7 acres) in the City is Open Space-Active (OS-A); there is not a City zoning designation for the unincorporated portion of the Project site. The County zoning designation for the portion of the Project site in the City's Sphere of Influence (5.2 acres) is Local Business with an Oil Production Overlay (C1[O]); this area does not have a City zoning designation.

With respect to the proposed export soil sites and haul road on the Newport Banning Ranch property, these areas traverse areas both within the City and within the City's Sphere of Influence. Zoning designations for these areas are identified below.

- **City of Newport Beach:** The area located within the jurisdictional boundaries of the City of Newport Beach is zoned "Planned Community District 25" (PC-25).
- **County of Orange:** R-4(O), Suburban Multi-family residential uses. The letter "O" identifies that oil drilling and production of oil, gas, and other hydrocarbon substances is permitted.
- **County of Orange:** C1(O), Local Business with an Oil Production Overlay.

6.2.1 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The City of Newport Beach has identified the following objectives for the proposed Sunset Ridge Park Project:

- To implement the goals and policies of the *City of Newport Beach General Plan*, including developing Sunset Ridge Park with active and passive park uses;
- To develop a community park consistent with the City's General Plan standards, including facilities for picnicking, active sports, and other facilities that serve a larger population;
- To develop an active and passive park to serve the West Newport Beach community;
- To develop a community park that is easily accessible via arterial roads to the public and is centrally located in the West Newport Beach area;
- To provide additional parkland in the West Newport Beach area, which currently experiences a parkland deficit; and
- To develop the Project site in conformance with the Deed Restriction, which stipulates that the property purchased from Caltrans be used as a park.

6.3 ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT

In accordance with the CEQA Guidelines, the discussion in this section focuses on a reasonable range of alternatives. This section addresses an alternative that was considered and rejected and the reasons for the rejection, and alternatives that were carried forward. For those alternatives that were carried forward, the analysis compares the alternatives' varying environmental effects and their merits and/or disadvantages in relation to the proposed Sunset Ridge Park Project and to each other, and compares their feasibility and ability to achieve Project objectives. The analysis also identifies the CEQA-required environmentally superior alternative.

6.4 ALTERNATIVE CONSIDERED BUT NOT CARRIED FORWARD

The following alternative has not been carried forward in this EIR because it does not substantially avoid or minimize impacts that were not accommodated in other alternatives and that are evaluated in this EIR. The following provides a discussion of the alternative and reasons for not selecting it for further evaluation.

6.4.1 SUPERIOR AVENUE ACCESS ROAD ALTERNATIVE

The Superior Avenue Access Road Alternative assumes that active and passive park uses are developed on the Sunset Ridge Park site. Vehicular access into the Project site would be provided from Superior Avenue between the existing Newport Crest Condominium development to the north and West Coast Highway to the south and across from the existing parking lot entrance on the east side of Superior Avenue. Therefore, no park development or access into the park from West Coast Highway would be provided through the adjacent Newport Banning Ranch property to the west. As such, the overall size of the Project site inclusive of road improvements would be 13.7 acres because the Newport Banning Ranch property would not be a part of this alternative.

The reduction in acreage from 18.9 acres to 13.7 acres would require a reduction in usable active and passive park uses because all vehicular access to the park would need to be located on the City's property. The *City of Newport Beach General Plan's* Recreation Element identifies a citywide park deficiency. Exclusive of beach recreation acreage, there is a citywide deficiency of 67.7 acres, 53.4 acres of which is in Service Area 1, West Newport. With the inclusion of beach acreage, there is not a citywide deficit. However, even with the inclusion of beach recreation acreage, a 19.4-acre deficiency occurs in West Newport; the Sunset Ridge Park site is located in West Newport. This alternative would reduce the amount of active park facilities that would be provided by the proposed Project in order to accommodate the access road on the site.

While the reduction in acreage would reduce the significant but mitigatable biological impacts that would occur with the Proposed Project, it is anticipated that this alternative would require similar or greater grading quantities in order to accommodate all of park uses as well as an access road.

Under this alternative scenario, vehicular right-turn ingress and right-turn egress would be provided from southbound Superior Avenue; no access from northbound Superior Avenue could be provided. Adjacent to the site in the southbound direction, Superior Avenue is curved and declines in elevation at an approximate eight percent grade. From the northeastern portion of the site near the Newport Crest Condominium development to the intersection of Superior Avenue at West Coast Highway, the elevation drops from approximately 80 feet above mean sea level (msl) to approximately 10 feet above msl. A signal could not be provided along the park site on Superior Avenue to slow vehicular traffic to allow for safe access into the site. Further, a park access entrance and road in this location would traverse the Scenic Easement which precludes permanent structures within the easement. For these reasons, this alternative is not considered feasible.

6.5 ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT

In accordance with the CEQA Guidelines, the discussion in this section focuses on a reasonable range of alternatives. The analysis for each Project alternative includes the following:

- A description of the alternative;
- An analysis of environmental impacts and a comparison to the proposed Project; and
- An assessment of the alternative's ability to meet Project objectives.

Pursuant to the CEQA Guidelines, 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.

Alternatives that are considered in this EIR are described below.

6.5.1 ALTERNATIVE A: NO PROJECT/NO DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVE

Section 15126.6(e)(2) of the CEQA Guidelines specifies that the "No Project analysis shall discuss the existing conditions at the time the Notice of Preparation (NOP) 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)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines indicates that when the project is not a land use or regulatory plan, the No Project Alternative "is the circumstance under which the project does not proceed... 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".

Description of the Alternative

Alternative A assumes existing conditions on the Project site are retained. The City's 13.7-acre property would remain vacant. The 5.2-acre portion of the Project site located on the Newport Banning Ranch property would continue to be part of the oil field. No oil operations currently occur in this area.

Comparative Analysis of Environmental Impacts

Land Use and Related Planning Programs

Under this alternative, the park would not be constructed. As previously noted, the City has identified a citywide park deficiency of 53.4 acres in Service Area 1, West Newport. With the inclusion of beach acreage, there is a 19.4-acre deficiency that would occur in West Newport. The General Plan identifies three planned parks in West Newport, Newport Center, and Newport Coast (completed) that would help alleviate the citywide deficiency. As identified in the General Plan, the fastest-growing recreational demand in Newport Beach is the need for additional sports fields. The Recreation Element states "There is a future park site identified in this service area, Sunset Ridge Park which is designated as an active park to include ball fields, picnic areas, a playground, parking, and restrooms".

In 2001, Senate Bill (SB) 124 directed Caltrans to transfer control of the site to the City. In 2006, the City authorized the purchase of 15.05 acres. The 15.05 acres includes the proposed 13.7 acres proposed for Sunset Ridge Park and property northeast of the intersection of West Coast Highway and Superior Avenue. As a term of the sale from the State to the City, the site proposed for the Sunset Ridge Park must be used as a park.

Using the same thresholds of significance applied to the proposed Project, neither the Project nor Alternative A would have any significant land use impacts. However, Alternative A would not meet the objectives of the City to provide a public park in this location.

Aesthetics

Under the Alternative A scenario, the aesthetic character of the site would not change because no development would occur on the site. No topographical modifications would occur either to the City's property or to the Newport Banning Ranch property with respect to implementation of a park on the City's property. No significant aesthetic impacts were identified for the proposed Project, and no significant aesthetic impacts would occur under this alternative.

Transportation and Circulation

Alternative A would not change the existing traffic conditions because no development would occur on the site, and no short-term (construction) or long-term (operational) traffic trips would be generated. Currently, traffic study area intersections are operating at an acceptable level of service (i.e., Level of Service [LOS] D or better).

Based on the significance criteria set forth by the City, the proposed Project would not significantly impact this intersection. All other traffic study intersections are forecasted to operate at acceptable levels of service in the AM and PM peak hours. Because the park site would not be developed, no traffic would be generated and no impacts would occur.

Air Quality and Climate Change

No new air quality emissions would occur as a part of Alternative A. This alternative would preclude significant and unavoidable local short-term emissions associated with the proposed Project's construction-related mass grading activities. Section 4.4, Air Quality and Climate Change, notes that all other potential Project impacts related to air quality and potential impacts related to global climate change would be reduced to less than significant levels.

Noise

Because no new development would be implemented on the Project site as a part of Alternative A, no new noise would be generated by on-site uses or vehicles. Section 4.5, Noise, identifies that the proposed Project would not result in significant noise impacts associated with on-site park activities or vehicles. However, the proposed Project's construction equipment and grading activities would result in significant and unavoidable short-term construction-related noise impacts. This significant and unavoidable short-term impact would cease upon completion of the Project. Alternative A would preclude this short-term significant and unavoidable impact.

Cultural and Paleontological Resources

This alternative would not involve any development or site disturbance. However, no significant impacts associated with the proposed Project would occur.

Geology and Soils

This alternative would not involve any construction equipment or grading activities on the Project site, including the proposed access road, haul road, or export soils sites. Therefore, potentially significant geological and soils impacts identified for the proposed Project (prior to mitigation) would not occur under this alternative. Geological impacts associated with the proposed Project would be less than significant with implementation of the Mitigation Program.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

The Project site is currently vacant and undeveloped; that portion of the site within the Newport Banning Ranch is an oil field. This alternative would not develop the site as a park and would not involve any construction or grading activities. That portion of the site within Newport Banning Ranch would continue to be a part of the 401-acre oil field site. Upon future cessation of oil operations at Newport Banning Ranch, the property would be remediated in compliance with State and local requirements. There are no active or proposed oil operations on the portion of the Newport Banning Ranch property proposed for use by the City for the park access road, haul road, or export soils sites. Any required soil remediation would not occur under this alternative scenario.

Biological Resources

Alternative A would not involve any grading or earth-moving activities; therefore, the potential to impact sensitive biological resources is eliminated. In addition, because the site would remain in its current condition, no potential direct or indirect impacts to biological resources would occur.

The proposed Project would impact approximately 25.34 acres of native and non-native vegetation types and other areas. Of this, 0.41 acre of coastal sage scrub and 0.06 acre of riparian vegetation would be removed through construction activities. Impacts on sage scrub and riparian vegetation types are significant due to the ongoing loss of this vegetation type in Southern California and the potential for these habitats to support special status species. The proposed Project would impact habitat for the federally Threatened coastal California gnatcatcher (CAGN); CAGN was observed during the 2009 focused surveys. The impact on this species is considered significant. Additionally, a total of 0.44 acre of streambed under the jurisdiction of the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) would be significantly impacted by the proposed Project. All biological impacts that would occur as a part of the proposed Project can be mitigated to less than significant levels. However, potentially significant impacts related to biological resources identified for the proposed Project would not occur under Alternative A.

Hydrology and Water Quality

As discussed in Section 4.10, Hydrology and Water Quality, with implementation of the identified Mitigation Program, potentially significant hydrology and water quality impacts from the proposed Project would be reduced to a level considered less than significant. The No Project/No Development Alternative would not result in any on-site grading and would not involve the development of the site with active and passive park uses. There would be no increase in impervious surface or runoff, nor would the concentration of pollutants in storm water runoff be increased. Existing drainage conveyances on site would continue to transport untreated surface and seepage flows into the reinforced concrete box (RCB) culvert at West Coast Highway. Water quality treatment benefits to these flows and their receiving waters provided by the proposed Project would not occur.

Public Services and Utilities

Because no development would occur under the Alternative A scenario, this alternative would not result in new demands on public services and utilities or on service systems. The proposed Project would not cause significant impacts on public services or utilities.

Conclusion

Alternative A would avoid potential impacts resulting from the proposed Project. All impacts associated with the proposed Project would be fully mitigated with the exception of short-term, construction-related air quality and construction-related noise impacts. Despite this finding, this alternative would not meet the any of the Project objectives listed above in Section 6.2.1. Specifically, retention of the site with its existing use would not provide the community with an active and passive park in West Newport Beach and would not serve to achieve the City's goal to reduce the overall parkland deficit in West Newport Beach and the City as a whole.

6.5.2 ALTERNATIVE B: ALTERNATIVE SITE

Section 15126.6(f)(2)(A) of the CEQA Guidelines indicates that in determining an alternative location, “The key question and first step in analysis is whether any of the significant effects of the project would be avoided or substantially lessened by putting the project in another location. Only locations that would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project need be considered for inclusion in the EIR”. Section 15126.6(f)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines further states that “an EIR need not consider an alternative whose effect cannot be reasonably ascertained and whose implementation is remote and speculative”.

Description of the Alternative

To meet the objectives of the proposed Project (i.e., to provide additional parkland in the West Newport Beach area, which currently experiences a parkland deficit), an alternative site would need to be located in the West Newport Beach area of the City. As identified in the *City of Newport Beach General Plan’s* Recreation Element, not only is there a deficit in combined park and beach recreation acreage, there is an overall shortage in active playfields throughout Newport Beach. Many of the service areas within the City may have a park surplus but are still experiencing a deficit in active playfields. As identified by the Recreation Element, it is difficult to provide playfields because of the large amount of land required for sports fields, the lack of suitable vacant land, and the high cost of such land within the City.

The City has identified a site, as depicted in Exhibit 6-1, Alternative Site, at the 401-acre Newport Banning Ranch property located west and northwest of the Sunset Ridge Park site that could accommodate the development of a park.

Newport Banning Ranch is located in West Newport Beach within the City’s Sphere of Influence. The property is generally bound on the north by the County of Orange Talbert Nature Preserve/Regional Park in the City of Costa Mesa and residential development in the City of Newport Beach; on the south by West Coast Highway and residential development in the City of Newport Beach; on the east by residential, light industrial, and office development in the Cities of Costa Mesa and Newport Beach; and on the west by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) wetlands restoration area and the Santa Ana River. There is no public access to the Newport Banning Ranch property.

Newport Banning Ranch is designated on the City’s General Plan as Open Space/Residential Village (OS[RV]). The OS(RV) land use designation allows for both a Primary Use (open space) and an Alternative Use (residential village) of the property as described below:

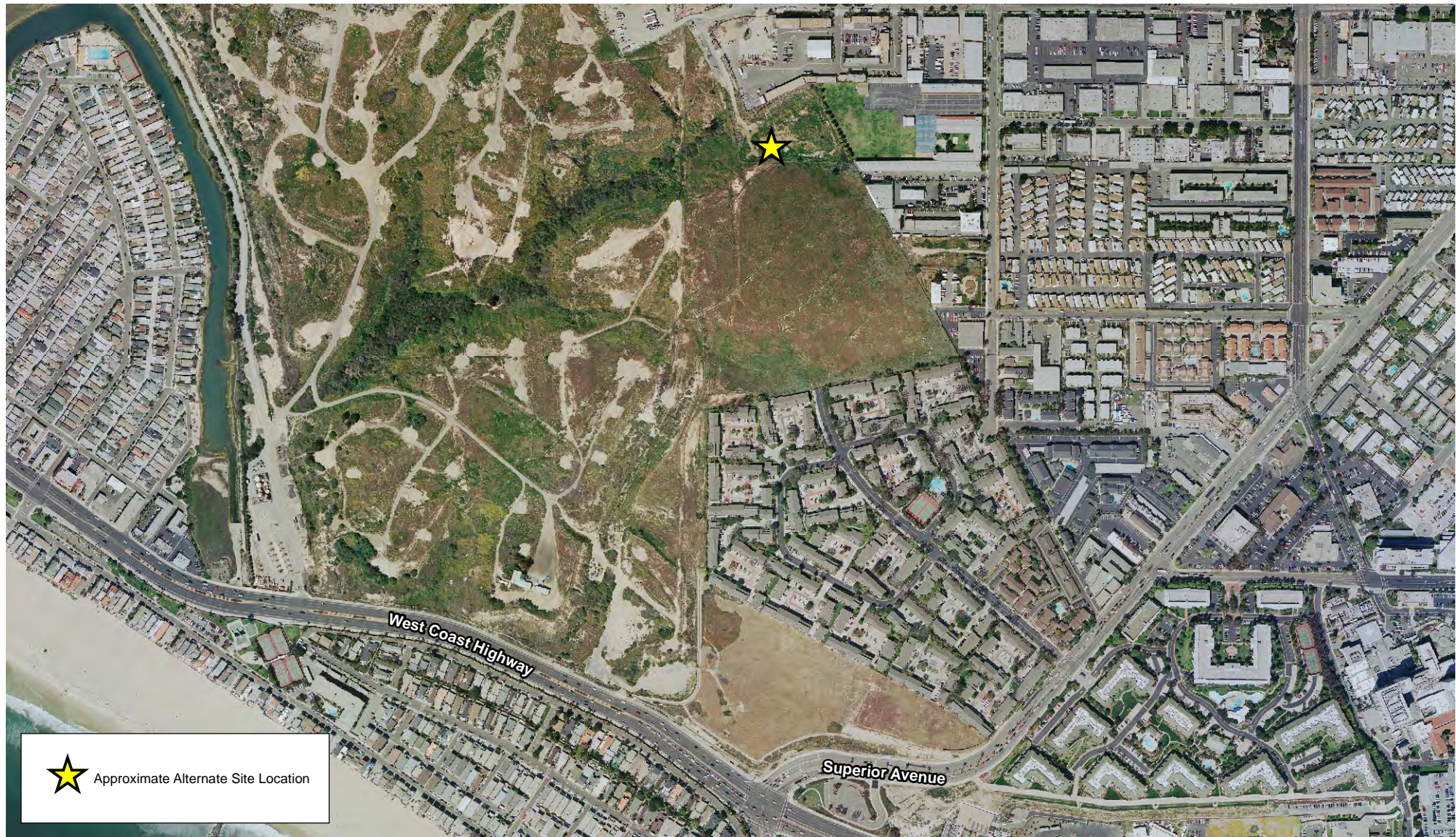
Primary Use:


“Open Space, including significant active community parklands that serve adjoining residential neighborhoods if the site is acquired through public funding”.

Alternative Use:

“If not acquired for open space within a time period and pursuant to terms agreed to by the City and property owner, the site may be developed as a residential village containing a mix of housing types, limited supporting retail, visitor accommodations, school, and active community parklands, with a majority of the property preserved as open space. The property owner may pursue entitlement and permits for a residential village during the time allowed for acquisition as open space”.

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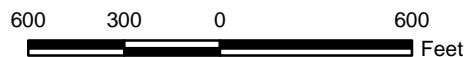
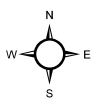


 Approximate Alternate Site Location

Alternative Site

Sunset Ridge Park EIR

Exhibit 6-1



The *City of Newport Beach General Plan's* Land Use Element prioritizes the retention of Newport Banning Ranch for open space. As described in the General Plan, the open space acquisition option would include consolidation of oil operations; restoration of wetlands; the provision of nature education facilities, interpretative facilities, and an active park containing playfields and other facilities to serve residents of adjoining neighborhoods; and the construction of the north-south Primary Road extending from West Coast Highway to a connection with an east/west arterial roadway. With respect to the park, Land Use Policy 6.5.2 of the City's General Plan states:

“Accommodate a community park of 20 to 30 acres that contains active playfields that may be lighted and is of sufficient acreage to serve adjoining neighborhoods and residents of Banning Ranch, if developed”.

The General Plan identifies that if the Newport Banning Ranch property is not acquired for open space, the property could be developed as a residential village (RV) containing a mix of housing types, limited supporting retail, visitor accommodations, a school, and active community parklands with a majority of the property preserved as open space. The General Plan identifies the maximum intensity of development allowed on the property to include 1,375 residential units, 75,000 square feet (sf) of retail commercial uses oriented to serve the needs of local and nearby residents, and 75 hotel rooms in a small boutique hotel or other type of overnight visitor accommodation. Under the RV designation, roads would be constructed through the property consistent with the *City of Newport Beach General Plan's* Circulation Element Master Plan of Streets and Highways.

Within the Newport Banning Ranch property, Alternative B assumes that approximately 13.7 acres would be developed as an active and passive public park. The park would be constructed north of 16th Street and contiguous to the City's Utilities Yard. Located within the current boundaries of Newport Banning Ranch, the park site would be generally bound by 16th Street and a Newport-Mesa Unified School District-owned vacant parcel north of 16th Street to the north; oil fields within Newport Banning Ranch to the south and west; and the City Utilities Yard, Carden Hall, a private school for kindergarten through 8th grade, office uses, and light industrial uses to the east. The Newport Knolls Condominium development is located south of 15th Street.

Alternative B assumes the same active and passive park uses as the proposed Project with access into the alternative park site from 16th Street. Currently, 16th Street terminates at the eastern boundary of the Newport Banning Ranch property contiguous to the City Utilities Yard. The widening of 16th Street to the Newport Banning Ranch property has been assumed by the City of Newport Beach in the planning and construction of the City Utilities Yard. Adequate setbacks are available to widen the southern side of 16th Street. Alternative B does not assume the widening of 16th Street on the northern side, which would impact the vacant property owned by the Newport-Mesa Unified School District.

Alternative B assumes that the City could purchase the property from the Newport Banning Ranch property owners. The feasibility of this purchase is unknown. For the purposes of this analysis, it is also assumed that the proposed Sunset Ridge Park site on the northwestern corner of West Coast Highway and Superior Avenue would not be developed by the City as a park. The City's purchase of the property from Caltrans stipulated its use as a park. It is unknown whether the site could be used in the future for an alternative use by the City or sold by the City to another party.

Comparative Analysis of Environmental Impacts

Land Use and Related Planning Programs

The OS/RV General Plan land use designation on the Newport Banning Ranch property would permit a portion of the site to be used as a public park. Neither a General Plan Amendment or zone change would be required. As with the proposed Project site, Newport Banning Ranch is within the Coastal Zone; a Coastal Development Permit from the California Coastal Commission would be required to develop a park on either site.

As with the proposed Project, this alternative would not result in any significant land use impacts. As previously addressed in this EIR, the property owner of Newport Banning Ranch has proposed to the City to develop the 401-acre property consistent with the RV land use designation. While the Newport Banning Ranch proposal assumes a larger community park in the location of Alternative B, the park is assumed to meet the Newport Beach Ranch development parkland obligations rather than provide an alternative park site for the City. Alternative B could result in the need to provide additional on-site parklands elsewhere on the Newport Banning Ranch property.

Aesthetics

The same uses would be developed under this alternative scenario as with the proposed Project, except the Park may be open later with the addition of night field lighting. Unlike the proposed Project site, this alternative location is a relatively flat parcel that would reduce the amount of grading required to implement the park. No grading or very limited grading would be required to widen and improve 16th Street into the park site on Newport Banning Ranch. Although a site-specific park plan has not been proposed by the City as a replacement site for Sunset Ridge Park, it is anticipated that a park in this location would not have significant aesthetic impacts. The site is bound by vacant land, the City Utilities Yard, a private school, and offices; condominiums are located south of 15th Street. No public views would be obstructed. While this alternative would result in a visual change over the existing uses, it would not substantially degrade the visual character of the site or surrounding areas, nor would it impede views of or from the Newport Banning Ranch property. However, this alternative would introduce night lighting to this currently undeveloped open space area. This may result in a significant light and glare impact. Visual change impacts would be less than significant. However, the introduction of night lighting in the absence of any other development on the Newport Banning Ranch property may remain significant.

Transportation and Circulation

Alternative B assumes that access to this alternative site would be from 16th Street. This alternative would generate the same number of vehicular trips as the proposed Project. The park is estimated to generate 173 daily trips with 2 AM peak hour trips and 42 PM peak hour trips. Development of a park in this location would not result in a 0.01 or greater increase in intersection capacity utilization at intersections on or near 16th Street. No intersections would operate at a deficient level of service because of the park.

Alternative B would not require the construction of an access road through the Newport Banning Ranch property. Therefore, there would be less construction-related traffic associated with this alternative. Neither the Project nor Alternative B would have significant construction-related traffic impacts. The City would not widen the northern side of West Coast Highway as a part of this alternative.

Air Quality

Similar to the proposed Project, this alternative would not affect existing air quality violations or result in new violations, nor would it exceed assumptions in the Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP), which are based on the General Plan's Land Use Plan. Therefore, Alternative B would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan, and a less than significant impact would occur.

Alternative B assumes that less grading would be required than associated with the proposed Project. The alternative site is relatively flat and would be smaller than the proposed Project site because it would not include acreage for a park access road through Newport Banning Ranch. With a reduction in grading, the duration of construction may also be reduced. This alternative would have a reduction in short-term construction impacts than the proposed Project; it is anticipated that Alternative B would have less than significant short-term air quality impacts with mitigation. This alternative would have similar operational air quality impacts when compared to the proposed Project because both would generate the same number of vehicular trips. Long-term operational emissions of the proposed Project and this alternative would be less than South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) thresholds.

Noise

Alternative B would result in similar noise impacts as the proposed Project. This alternative would result in the significant and unavoidable short-term construction-related noise impact that would occur with the proposed Project associated with its adjacency to Carden Hall, which is considered a sensitive receptor. As with the proposed Project, this significant and unavoidable short-term impact would cease upon completion of park construction. Noise associated with the use of the park is considered less than significant.

Cultural and Paleontological Resources

There are no recorded historic or prehistoric archaeological sites on the Alternative B site. However, for both this alternative and the proposed Project, the potential to encounter unknown subsurface archaeological resources or human remains during grading activities represents a significant impact. With implementation of the standard conditions and mitigation measures identified for the proposed Project, potential impacts associated with Alternative B to archaeological resources would be reduced to a level considered less than significant. The site is underlain by Quaternary marine terrace deposits, which is a fossil-bearing unit. Potentially significant fossils could be found in this location. As with the proposed Project, Alternative B's potential impacts to paleontological resources can be mitigated to a less than significant level.

Geology and Soils

Under this alternative scenario, less grading and earth movement is anticipated than with the proposed Project. The proposed Project site and alternative site are not located within a designated Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone; however, similar to the proposed Project, under this alternative strong seismic ground shaking associated with regional earthquake activity can be expected. With the incorporation of the Mitigation Program, this impact would be less than significant. As with the proposed Project, this alternative would include development of an active and passive park, and geological and soil impacts associated with this alternative can be mitigated to a less than significant level.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

The Alternative B site is a part of the Newport Banning Ranch oil field. Although the Alternative B site contains no current oil operations, the site contains one abandoned oil well and has been subject to prior oil operations. An oil field operations area can include roads; wells; tanks; pipeline and utility corridors; and storage, staging, and work areas. These areas have typically been graded and may have surface-level gravel, crude oil, crude oil tank sediments, and debris. As such, oil remediation would be required in portions of the proposed Alternative B park site. Mitigation set forth for the proposed Project would be applicable for this alternative.

Biological Resources

The majority of the Alternative B site contains non-native grassland, ruderal, ornamental, and disturbed areas. The site also contains small areas of California sagebrush scrub and willow riparian forest. Focused surveys for special status plant and wildlife species were conducted in 2009. Only one solitary male coastal California gnatcatcher (CAGN) was observed immediately contiguous to the Alternative B site. The site also contains suitable habitat for the western burrowing owl; however, burrowing owls were not observed during focused surveys. Development of a park in this location could result in indirect impacts to the gnatcatcher; this would be considered a significant impact. Night lighting of the park would be an indirect significant impact. The site does contain potential areas that are under the jurisdiction of the USACE, Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), and/or CDFG. The Mitigation Program set forth for the proposed Project would be applicable to this alternative and it is anticipated that they would mitigate biological impacts to a less than significant level.

Hydrology and Water Quality

On-site hydrology and drainage would differ from the Sunset Ridge Park site. However, similar to the proposed Project, this alternative would develop site-design concept Best Management Practices (BMPs) to avoid or reduce the water quality impacts of the park. With respect to the Sunset Ridge Park site, existing drainage conveyances on site would continue to transport untreated surface and seepage flows into the reinforced concrete box (RCB) culvert at West Coast Highway. This alternative would use all applicable BMPs for construction, post-construction/operation, and water quality treatment to ensure compliance with (1) the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit; (2) the Construction General Permit; (3) the *Orange County Stormwater Program 2003 Drainage Area Management Plan (DAMP)*; (4) the Project's Water Quality Management Plan (WQMP); and (5) the City's water quality policies. With the incorporation of these measures, impacts to water quality would be less than significant under this alternative.

Public Services and Utilities

Similar to the proposed Project, this alternative would increase the demand for public services (fire and police) and require the extension of utilities to the site. The response time to the Alternative B site would be greater than for the proposed Project. However, the City Fire Department and Police Departments can adequately serve a park on this alternative site. There are utilities that can be extended to this site to serve a park in this location without significant environmental impacts.

Conclusion

Development of a park in the Alternative B location rather than the proposed Project site could be implemented with fewer significant impacts. Unlike the proposed Project, all significant impacts identified for the Proposed Project could be mitigated to a less than significant level. However, the introduction of night lighting on this undeveloped open space area in the absence of any other development on the Newport Banning Ranch site may be significant. This alternative would achieve Project objectives to create an active and passive park in West Newport Beach. The feasibility of the City's purchase of the property from Newport Banning Ranch is speculative as the Newport Banning Ranch property owner proposes the development of the 401-acre property including a 22-acre community park on the Alternative B site. The City's General Plan specifically identifies an active community park of 20 to 30 acres to be developed in the Newport Banning Ranch area in addition to the development of Sunset Ridge Park with active and passive park uses. Together, these identified park locations would help alleviate parkland deficiencies in West Newport Beach. With potentially only one park on the Newport Banning Ranch property, the parkland deficiency in West Newport would continue to occur. While this alternative achieves the basic objective of providing parkland in West Newport, it does not result in the development of Sunset Ridge Park in conformance with the Caltrans Deed Restriction, which stipulates that the property be used as a park.

6.5.3 ALTERNATIVE C: PASSIVE PARK ALTERNATIVE

Description of the Alternative

The Passive Park Alternative assumes that only passive park uses would be developed on the Project site. Consistent with the proposed Project, a park access road would be constructed from West Coast Highway through the Newport Banning Ranch property. Improvements on West Coast Highway are assumed for Alternative C. Under this alternative scenario, no playing fields (i.e., baseball or soccer fields) would be constructed. Sunset Ridge Park would be developed with lawns, pedestrian paths, gardens, restroom facilities, and parking. No nighttime lighting except for public safety would be provided. Alternative C would require a zone change on that portion of the Project site in the City (13.7 acres) from Open Space-Active (OS-A) to Open Space-Passive (OS-P).

Comparative Analysis of Environmental Impacts

Land Use and Related Planning Programs

Under this alternative, only passive park uses would be developed on the Project site. As depicted on Exhibit 3-6, General Plan Land Use Designations, the *City of Newport Beach General Plan's* land use designation for the City-owned portion of the Project site (13.7 acres) is Parks and Recreation (PR), and the land use designation for the unincorporated County portion within the City's Sphere of Influence is OS/RV.

Unlike the proposed Project, Alternative C would require a zone change on that portion of the Project site in the City (13.7 acres) from Open Space-Active (OS-A) to Open Space-Passive (OS-P).

That portion of the Project site located within the City has a Coastal Land Use Plan designation of PR. The remainder of the Project site (where the access road, haul road, and export soils sites are proposed) is a Deferred Certification Area (DCA). As with the proposed Project, a CDP is required.

Consistent with the proposed Project, this alternative is considered compatible with residential land uses to the north of the site. As such, this alternative is generally consistent with the intent of applicable planning programs and associated goals and policies. However, Alternative C is not consistent with the General Plan Recreation Element Policy 1.9: Priority for Facility Provision, which identifies Sunset Ridge Park as an active park. The policy states:

Provide additional park and recreation facilities that meet the needs as identified by direct feedback from residents, analysis of future trends, and through observations by Recreation and Senior Services staff, as shown in Figure R2.

Parks

1. Newport Center Service Area: Develop Newport Center Park as a passive park
2. West Newport Service Area: Develop Sunset Ridge Park, an active park with playfields, picnic areas, a playground, and other facilities....

Aesthetics

Precluding active park uses would not substantially change the visual appearance of the park when compared to the proposed Project. The site would be developed with lawns, pedestrian paths, gardens, restroom facilities, and parking. This alternative would also include the new access road, haul road, and export soils sites on the Newport Banning Ranch property. Low profile lighting would be provided for public safety. This alternative would not include the baseball field with backstops and safety nets or the soccer fields. As described in Section 4.2, Aesthetics, development of these park uses would not impede views on or across the Project site. Both this alternative and the proposed Project would result in visual changes to the site when compared to existing conditions. However, these changes are not considered adverse.

Similar to the proposed Project, Alternative C would slightly alter existing southerly views along Superior Avenue, which is designated as a Coastal View Road. However, the change would be minimal, and ocean views would still be maintained. Neither this alternative nor the Project would include any structures or paving in the Caltrans scenic easement or adversely affect the on-site Public View Point. Similar to the proposed Project, this alternative would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista. Neither the proposed Project nor Alternative C would have significant aesthetic impacts.

Traffic and Circulation

The same transportation and circulation systems are assumed for the proposed Project and Alternative C. Although no active park uses would be permitted, parking would be provided on the site. Under this alternative, no sports fields would be developed. The playground, garden, and walking trails would be developed. The traffic report prepared for the proposed Project analyzed trip generation associated with active park uses. As identified in Table 6.5-1, the trip generation for Alternative C would be less than that associated with the proposed Project. However, neither the proposed Project nor this alternative would have a significant impact with mitigation.

**TABLE 6.5-1
ALTERNATIVE C TRIP GENERATION**

Land Use	ITE Code	Unit	Trip Generation Rates						
			Daily	AM Peak Hour		Total	PM Peak Hour		
				In	Out		In	Out	Total
City Park	411	ac	1.59	–	–	–	–	–	–
Soccer Complex	488	Field	71.33	0.70	0.70	1.40	14.26	6.41	20.67
Proposed Project		Quantity							
City Park		18.9 ac	30	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Soccer Complex		2 Fields	143	1	1	2	29	13	42
Total Trips			173	1	1	2	29	13	42
Alternative C		Quantity							
City Park		18.9 ac	30	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total Trips			30	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/a	N/A	N/A
Change			<143>	<1>	<1>	<2>	<29>	<13>	<42>
ac: acre –: No peak hour trip generation rates given by ITE for this land use. N/A: Not Applicable. Source: Kimley-Horn 2009.									

Alternative C would require slightly less grading than the proposed Project; grading associated with the access road would be the same. As with the proposed Project, this alternative assumes that excess dirt would be exported to the Newport Banning Ranch property. As with Project, this alternative would not have significant construction traffic impacts.

Access to the park site would be the same for the proposed Project and Alternative C. A signal at the intersection of the park access road and West Coast Highway would still be provided. Because West Coast Highway is a State highway, Caltrans approval would be required for its widening and signalization. The access road would intersect West Coast Highway approximately 980 feet west of Superior Avenue. The road would extend northward from West Coast Highway for about 850 feet, and then would follow a northwest-to-southeast alignment for about 550 feet to connect to the parking lot at the northwestern corner of the park site. Pedestrian connections to and from the public street system are proposed to be provided from West Coast Highway and from Superior Avenue. As with the proposed Project, impacts associated with circulation or access would be less than significant with the Mitigation Program described in Section 4.3, Transportation and Circulation.

Air Quality

This alternative would require slightly less grading because the central portion of the site would not have to be level to accommodate sports fields. Under the Alternative C scenario, this grading would not be required because no sports fields would be provided. The site grading necessary for the park access road and parking lot would remain the same under this alternative as the proposed Project. The *Draft Air Quality Impact Report Sunset Ridge Park Project, Newport Beach, California* identified that during the periods of mass grading when work would be concentrated within 164 feet of the Newport Crest condominiums, particulate emissions from the Project site have the potential for a short-term exceedance of the 24-hour PM10 and PM2.5 California Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS) at the nearest residences. While there would be a reduction in grading activities under this alternative, local short-term, construction-related impacts would remain significant and unavoidable.

This alternative would result in a slight reduction in long-term air quality impacts compared to the proposed Project because this alternative would result in a fewer vehicular trips than the proposed Project. However, long-term operational emissions of the proposed Project and this alternative would be less than significant.

Noise

Alternative C is expected to require slightly less grading than the proposed Project because no sports fields would be provided. Grading necessary for the access road and parking lot would remain the same under this alternative as the proposed Project. It is anticipated that the duration of construction noise would be similar to the proposed Project. This alternative would result in the same significant and unavoidable short-term, construction-related noise impacts as the proposed Project. This significant and unavoidable short-term impact would cease upon completion of Project construction.

Because this alternative would generate less vehicular traffic than the proposed Project, there would be an incremental reduction in vehicular noise. However, this would be a less than significant impact for both the proposed Project and Alternative C.

Noise associated with active park activities would not occur under this alternative. Section 4.5, Noise, identifies that noise impacts from the proposed Project were determined to be less than significant with incorporation of the Mitigation Program, and it is anticipated that potential noise impacts related to this alternative would also be less than significant.

Cultural and Paleontological Resources

Under both this alternative and the proposed Project, the potential to encounter unknown subsurface cultural resources during grading activities represents a significant impact. With implementation of the Mitigation Program identified for the proposed Project, potential impacts to archaeological and paleontological resources associated with Alternative C would be reduced to a level considered less than significant.

Geology and Soils

Alternative C would require slightly less grading than the proposed Project. Grading associated with the access road would be the same. The Project site is not located within a designated Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone; however, strong seismic ground shaking associated with regional earthquake activity can be expected at this site. With the incorporation of the Mitigation Program, this impact would be less than significant. Any soil and geotechnical impacts can be fully mitigated for both the proposed Project and Alternative C.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Similar to the proposed Project, this alternative would not involve the use, handling, storage, transport, or disposal of hazardous materials that would cause potentially significant impacts. Under both park scenarios, the site would be graded. The City's portion of the site is not identified on any hazardous materials databases. The portion of the site within the Newport Banning Ranch property proposed for the park access road is an oil field. There are no currently active oil operations in or planned for this area of the property. However, two abandoned well sites are located in a portion of the park site not proposed for grading. One of the wells is near the access road's east-west leg into the park and is very near the grading limits. If grading for Alternative C would occur in this area and require cuts greater than six feet, the casing pipe

associated with the well abandonment would need to be lowered to remain below ground surface. Two additional abandoned wells are located near the area of the haul road and the export soils sites. Any alternations to oil field facilities, such as the casing pipe, would require approval from regulatory agencies.

As a part of prior well abandonment activities in this portion of the Newport Banning Ranch property, all known active pipes were removed. However, it is possible that older subsurface pipes or other equipment could be present that have not been recorded. Records and aerial photos do not show the presence of any oil sumps in this area. However, there could be small isolated areas of crude oil remnants near the surface associated with past oil operations. Should any subsurface equipment or crude oil hydrocarbons be discovered, the equipment would need to be removed, and contaminated soil would need to be remediated. Consistent with the findings for the proposed Project, potential impacts associated with Alternative C can be mitigated to a less than significant level.

Biological Resources

Biological resource impacts would be the same for both the proposed Project and Alternative C. Project implementation would impact approximately 25.34 acres of native and non-native vegetation types and other areas. Of this, 0.41 acre of coastal sage scrub and 0.06 acre of riparian vegetation would be removed through construction activities. Impacts on sage scrub and riparian vegetation types are significant due to the ongoing loss of this vegetation type in Southern California and the potential for these habitats to support special status species. The proposed Project would impact habitat for the federally Threatened coastal California gnatcatcher (CAGN); CAGN was observed during the 2009 focused surveys. The impact on this species is considered significant. Additionally, a total of 0.44 acre of streambed under the jurisdiction of the CDFG would be significantly impacted by the proposed Project. All biological impacts that would occur as a part of Alternative C can be mitigated to less than significant levels.

Hydrology and Water Quality

Both the proposed Project and Alternative C would result in potentially significant hydrology and water quality impacts that can be reduced to a level considered less than significant. As with the proposed Project, this alternative would require implementation of site-design BMPs to avoid or mitigate the water quality impacts of the Project and would use all applicable BMPs for construction, post-construction/operation, and water quality treatment to ensure compliance with the NPDES MS4 permit, Construction General Permit, the DAMP, the Project's WQMP, and the City's water quality policies. In addition, site-design BMPs would maintain the use of natural drainage areas to convey surface water runoff, and the subsurface drain system would convey seepage flows to the existing reinforced concrete box culvert in West Coast Highway consistent with existing conditions, same as with the proposed Project. With the incorporation of these measures, impacts to water quality would be less than significant under this alternative.

Public Services and Utilities

Similar to the proposed Project, this alternative would increase the demand for public services and utilities. There could be a slight reduction in the need for fire and police protection services because there would be no sports fields on the site. There are utilities within or adjacent to the Project site to serve the site whether as an active or passive park. Neither the proposed Project nor Alternative C would result in significant impacts to public services or utilities.

Conclusions

While Alternative C would have a slight reduction in grading, implementation of a passive park would still result in significant and unavoidable short-term, construction-related local air quality impacts and short-term construction-related noise impacts. These significant impacts would cease upon the completion of construction. All other impacts would be similar or the same and can be mitigated to a less than significant level.

Although Alternative C would provide a park in this location, it would not achieve all of the Project objectives, specifically, to create more active and passive parkland in West Newport Beach. The *City of Newport Beach General Plan* contains goals and policies that include developing Sunset Ridge Park with active and passive park uses, including facilities for picnicking, active sports, and other facilities that serve a larger population. This alternative would not be consistent with these General Plan goals and policies.

6.5.4 ALTERNATIVE D: GRADING/DESIGN ALTERNATIVES

Description of the Alternative

Alternative D evaluates the potential impacts associated with the option to increase the elevation of the park to minimize the volume of grading required for park and the option to lower the elevation of the park to reduce the visibility of park facilities. Both the Higher Elevation and Lower Elevation options assume the same active and passive park uses as the Proposed Project as well as the same park access road alignment. Relocation of the access road at West Coast Highway has not been proposed. Relocation further to the west on Newport Banning Ranch would result in greater impacts to biological resources; to the east would not provide for adequate distance between signalized intersections.

The Project site is irregularly shaped with varying topography, with the northeastern portion of the site at a higher elevation than the western portion. The site ranges in elevation from approximately 76 feet above mean sea level (msl) in the northeastern portion of the site, 44 feet above msl in the northwestern portion of the site, and slopes downward to approximately 10 feet above msl at the intersection of West Coast Highway at Superior Avenue. The proposed Project would modify on-site topography to accommodate the proposed active and passive park uses including on-site parking. The sports fields would be at a final elevation of approximately 40 to 45 feet above msl depending on their location on the Project site; the baseball field would be at an elevation of approximately 42 feet above msl. The parking lot would be at an elevation of approximately 44 to 49 feet above msl. The baseball field backstops and safety netting would be at approximately 67 feet above msl which would be below the height of the top of adjacent condominium balcony guardrails.

Construction of the proposed Project is planned to occur in a single construction phase lasting between 16 and 18 months. Approximately 130,000 cy of cut and 96,000 cy of fill may be required during grading activities, with a net export of approximately 34,000 cy. Of the export approximately 27,000 cy is associated with the park and approximately 7,000 cy is associated with the access road. All of the exported soil is proposed to be deposited in two proposed locations within the Newport Banning Ranch property. This export material would be used as engineered fill.

Higher Park Elevation Option

Under this option, the cut and fill would be balanced thus eliminating the need for any export. Compared to the proposed Project, this represents a reduction in exported soil of approximately 34,000 cy. The elevation at the baseball field would be approximately 46 feet above msl, an increase of approximately 4 feet compared to the proposed Project. The parking lot would be at approximately 47 to 52 feet above msl, an increase of up to 3 feet. The Baseball field backstops and safety netting would be at approximately 71 feet above msl which would be at approximately eye level for a person standing (5 feet in height) on a condominium balcony.

Lower Park Elevation Option

Under this option, there would be approximately 64,000 cy of export. Compared to the proposed Project, this represents an increase in exported soil of approximately 30,000 cy. The elevation at the baseball field would be approximately 40 feet above msl, a decrease of approximately 2 feet compared to the proposed Project. The parking lot would be at approximately 40 to 45 feet above msl, a decrease of up to 4 feet. The Baseball field backstops and safety netting would be at approximately 65 feet above msl which would be below the top of a condominium balcony.

Comparative Analysis of Environmental Impacts

Land Use and Related Planning Programs

Higher Park Elevation Option

Similar to the proposed Project, this option would be consistent and compatible with the existing uses in the vicinity. This option allows for an increase in the park site's elevation to minimize the volume of grading compared to the proposed project. As with the proposed Project, this option is consistent with the land use designations for the site and would be consistent with applicable planning goals and policies. Both the proposed Project and this option are considered compatible with existing and proposed surrounding land uses.

Lower Park Elevation

Similar to the proposed Project, this option is also consistent and compatible with the existing uses in the vicinity. Under this option, the elevation of the park site would be lowered to reduce the visibility of park facilities and would decrease in the site's elevation and result in an increase in the volume of grading compared to the proposed Project. As with the proposed Project, this option is consistent with the land use designations for the site and would be consistent with applicable planning goals and policies. Both the proposed Project and this option are considered compatible with existing and proposed surrounding land uses.

Aesthetics

Higher Park Elevation

Section 4.2 of this EIR details the aesthetic impacts resulting from the proposed Project. As noted, impacts from the proposed Project would be less than significant with implementation of the Mitigation Program. This option would provide the same type of land use development as the proposed Project – active and passive park uses.

The baseball field and the two youth soccer fields are proposed in the central area of the park. The elevation at the baseball field would be approximately 44 feet above msl, an increase of approximately 4 feet compared to the proposed Project. The parking lot would be at approximately 47 to 52 feet above msl, an increase of up to 7 feet. The Baseball field backstops and safety netting would be 25 feet in height (at approximately 71 feet above msl) which would be at approximately eye level for a person standing (5 feet in height) on a condominium balcony. The City's General Plan and the CLUP include scenic and visual resource policies, including coastal view protection for public views that are applicable to the development on the Project site. Because of the increased elevation when compared to the proposed Project, views of the ocean from the site may be more expansive. The Higher Park Elevation option would not significantly impact or obstruct any protected views.

It is anticipated that changes in heights of some of the improvements may be required under this option associated with proposed landscaped berms adjacent to the Newport Crest Condominium development, security fencing between the park and the condominiums, as well as landscaping on the park site related to the increased park elevation. However, as with the proposed Project, no significant impacts would be anticipated with this park option.

Lower Park Elevation

With the lower elevation option, more grading with increased export would be required. The elevation at the baseball field would be approximately 40 feet above msl, a decrease of approximately 4 feet compared to the proposed Project. The parking lot would be at approximately 40 to 45 feet above msl, a decrease of up to 4 feet. The baseball field backstops and safety netting would be 25 feet in height (at approximately 63 feet above msl) which would be below the top of a condominium balcony.

By lowering the elevation of the park, line-of-sight visibility of park uses from adjacent land uses may decrease. However, the lower elevation may limit ocean views. The Project site includes a designated Public View Point (Natural Resources Element of the General Plan, Figure NR3). Although views from this Public View Point would not be obstructed under the Higher Park Elevation option, the view could be less expansive. Development of the proposed Project would alter existing views of the Project site but would not substantially degrade the visual character of the Project site or surrounding areas nor impede views of or from the Project site. This option reduces the visibility of the park uses from surrounding view points. Similar to the proposed Project, this option would not substantially degrade the visual character of the site or impede view of or from the site.

Traffic and Circulation

Higher Park Elevation Option

There would be no change in trip generation between the proposed Project and this option. Under both scenarios, traffic impacts can be mitigated to a level considered less than significant.

Under this option, there would be approximately 11,000 cy of export. Compared to the proposed Project, this represents a reduction in exported soil of approximately 23,000 cy. This option assumes that all export would go to the same locations on the Newport Banning Ranch property as for the Proposed Project. However, the reduction in export materials would have a reduction in the number of trucks required during construction. This option would require approximately 688 truckloads compared to 2,125 truckloads for the proposed Project, a reduction of 1,437

truckloads. Short-term, construction-related traffic impacts associated with this option would be similar to the proposed Project; resulting in less than significant impacts. However, to facilitate the movement of construction traffic and to minimize potential disruptions, the Mitigation Program set forth for the proposed Project would be applicable to this option.

Lower Park Elevation Option

There would be no change in trip generation between the proposed Project and this option. Under both scenarios, traffic impacts can be mitigated to a level considered less than significant.

Under this option, there would be approximately 64,000 cy of export. Compared to the proposed Project, this represents an increase in exported soil of approximately 30,000 cy. This option assumes that 34,000 cy of export would go to the same locations on the Newport Banning Ranch property (the same amount of export as for the Proposed Project). The remainder of the export would go to an off-site undetermined location. The increase in export materials would have an increase in the number of trucks required during construction. This option would require approximately 4,000 truckloads compared to 2,125 truckloads for the proposed Project, an increase of 1,875 truckloads.

Construction-related traffic would use the existing regional and local road network and would most likely access the Project site from West Coast Highway and Superior Avenue, as well as through the Newport Banning Ranch property. Temporary delays in traffic may occur due to oversized vehicles traveling at lower speeds on West Coast Highway. Such delays would be occasional, and of short duration. No vehicles would be permitted to stage on West Coast Highway. As with the proposed Project, temporary delays associated with this option would be considered less than significant. However, to facilitate the movement of construction traffic and to minimize potential disruptions, the Mitigation Program set forth for the proposed Project would be applicable to this option.

Air Quality

Higher Park Elevation

Under this option, less grading would be required but the same level of activity may occur on a daily basis but for a shorter duration. During the periods of mass grading when work would be concentrated within 164 feet of the Newport Crest condominiums, particulate emissions from the Project site could have the potential for a short-term exceedance of the 24-hour PM10 and PM2.5 ambient air quality standards at the nearest residences under this option. As with the proposed Project, this temporary, local impact would be significant and unavoidable. The impact would cease upon the completion of construction. Long-term operational emissions of the proposed Project and this option would be less than significant.

Lower Park Elevation

Under this option, increased grading would be required which could increase the amount of equipment in use at one time, increase the number of construction-related truck trips, and increase the duration of construction activities. This option would also have significant unavoidable short-term local air quality impacts. The impact would cease upon the completion of construction. Long-term operational emissions of the proposed Project and this option would be less than significant.

Noise

Higher Park Elevation

Less grading is required for the Higher Park Elevation option. However, the same level of activity may occur on a daily basis but for a shorter duration. Construction-related noise associated with this option would be considered a significant and unavoidable construction-related noise impact, similar to the proposed Project. Same as the proposed Project, this short-term significant and unavoidable impact would cease upon completion of construction. As with the proposed Project, traffic-related noise and noise from park activities would be less than significant.

Lower Park Elevation

Grading activities under this option would result in an increased volume of export material, an increase in construction vehicles, and may extend the timeframe for construction time. Both the proposed Project and this option would result in a short-term significant and unavoidable construction-related noise impact. This short-term significant and unavoidable impact would cease upon completion of the Project or this option. As with the proposed Project, traffic-related noise and noise from park activities would be less than significant.

Cultural and Paleontological Resources

The change in elevation (either higher or lower) would have the same effects on cultural and paleontological resources. Therefore, the discussion below addresses both options.

Implementation of the Project would not impact any known historic or archaeological resources. Under both this alternative and the proposed project, the potential to encounter unknown subsurface cultural resources during grading activities is considered a significant impact. Grading activities could also impact significant paleontological resources. With implementation of the Mitigation Program identified for the proposed Project, potential impacts to archaeological and paleontological resources associated with Alternative D would be reduced to a level considered less than significant.

Geology and Soils

Higher Park Elevation

The site plan and effects on topography for this option would be similar to the proposed Project. Under this alternative, the elevation of the active area of the park would be increased to reduce the volume of grading. While this option would result in a decrease in grading material, it would not change the type or degree of impacts associated with proposed Project. The Project site is not located within a designated Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone; however, strong seismic ground shaking can be expected at this site associated with regional earthquake activity. With the incorporation of the Mitigation Program, this impact would be less than significant. As with the proposed Project, this alternative would include development of an active and passive park. Geology and soil impacts can be mitigated to a level considered less than significant.

Lower Park Elevation

The site plan and effects on topography for this option would be similar to the proposed Project. Under this alternative, the elevation of the active area of the park would be decreased to reduce

the visibility of park facilities. While this option would result in an increase in grading material, it would not change the type or degree of impacts associated with proposed Project. The Project site is not located within a designated Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone; however, strong seismic ground shaking can be expected at this site associated with regional earthquake activity. With the incorporation of the Mitigation Program, this impact would be less than significant. As with the proposed Project, this alternative would include development of an active and passive park. Geology and soil impacts can be mitigated to a level considered less than significant.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

The change in elevation (either higher or lower) would have the same effects on potential hazards on the site. Therefore, the discussion below addresses both options.

Similar to the proposed Project, this alternative would not involve the use, handling, storage, transport, or disposal of hazardous materials that would cause potentially significant impacts. Under both park scenarios, the site would be graded. The City's portion of the site is not identified on any hazardous materials databases. The portion of the site within the Newport Banning Ranch property proposed for the park access road is an oil field. There are no active oil operations in or planned for this area of the property. However, there are two abandoned well sites located in a portion of the park site not proposed for grading. One of the wells is near the access road's east-west leg into the park and is very near the grading limits. If grading for Alternative C would occur in this area and require cuts greater than six feet, the casing pipe associated with the well abandonment would need to be lowered to remain below ground surface (bgs). Two additional abandoned oil well sites are near the haul road and export soils sites. Any remediation or alterations to oil field facilities, such as the casing pipe, would require approval from Regulatory agencies.

As a part of prior well abandonment activities in this portion of the Newport Banning Ranch property, all known active pipes were removed. However, it is possible that older subsurface pipes or other equipment could be present that have not been recorded. Records and aerial photos do not show the presence of any oil sumps in this area. However, there could be small isolated areas of crude oil remnants near the surface associated with past oil operations. Should any subsurface equipment or crude oil hydrocarbons be discovered, the equipment would need to be removed and contaminated soil would need to be remediated. Any necessary remediation and oil equipment modifications would be required to be implemented in compliance with applicable regulatory requirements. Consistent with the findings for the proposed Project, potential impacts associated with Alternative D can be mitigated to a less than significant level.

Biological Resources

The change in elevation (either higher or lower) would have the same effects on biological resources. Therefore, the discussion below addresses both options.

Biological resource impacts would be the same for both the proposed Project and Alternative D. Project implementation would impact approximately 25.34 acres of native and non-native vegetation types and other areas. Of this, 0.41 acre of coastal sage scrub and 0.06 acre of riparian vegetation would be removed through construction activities. Impacts on sage scrub and riparian vegetation types are significant due to the ongoing loss of this vegetation type in Southern California and the potential for these habitats to support special status species. The proposed Project would impact habitat for the federally Threatened coastal California gnatcatcher (CAGN); CAGN was observed during the 2009 focused surveys. The impact on this

species is considered significant. Additionally, a total of 0.44 acre of streambed under the jurisdiction of the CDFG would be significantly impacted by the proposed Project. All biological impacts that would occur as a part of Alternative C can be mitigated to less than significant levels.

Hydrology and Water Quality

The change in elevation (either higher or lower) would have the same effects. Therefore, the discussion below addresses both options.

Both the proposed Project and Alternative D would result in potentially significant hydrology and water quality impacts that can be reduced to a level considered less than significant. As with the proposed Project, this alternative would require implementation of site-design BMPs to avoid or mitigate the water quality impacts of the Project and would use all applicable BMPs for construction, post-construction/operation, and water quality treatment to ensure compliance with the NPDES MS4 permit, Construction General Permit, the DAMP, the Project's WQMP, and the City's water quality policies. In addition, site-design BMPs would maintain the use of natural drainage areas to convey surface water runoff, and the subsurface drain system would convey seepage flows to the existing reinforced concrete box culvert in West Coast Highway consistent with existing conditions, same as with the proposed Project. With the incorporation of these measures, impacts to water quality would be less than significant under this alternative.

Public Services and Utilities

The change in elevation (either higher or lower) would have the same effects on public services and utilities. Therefore, the discussion below addresses both options.

Similar to the proposed Project, Alternative D would increase the demand for public services and utilities. Both the City Fire Department and City Police Department have identified that the park can be served without any significant impacts. There are utilities within or adjacent to the Project site to serve the site. Neither the proposed Project nor Alternative D would result in significant impacts to public services or utilities.

Conclusions

Increasing or decreasing the elevation of the park would generally result in similar impacts as the proposed Project. Alternative D would not substantively lessen or avoid the Project's significant effects. Neither option would eliminate the short-term significant unavoidable air quality and noise impacts associated with the proposed Project. However, the Lower Park Elevation option would extend the duration and possibly the intensity of these short-term air quality and noise impacts. These significant impacts would cease upon the completion of construction. While the amount of grading would be increased or decreased, compared to the proposed Project, Alternative D would result in similar impacts related to land use, aesthetics, cultural resources, geological resources, hydrology and water quality, biological resources, traffic, public services, and utilities and service systems. For both the proposed Project and Alternative D, these impacts are either not significant or can be fully mitigated. While this alternative would meet the Project objectives to the same extent as the proposed Project, it does not eliminate any significant unavoidable impacts associated with the proposed Project. Under the Higher Park Elevation option, short-term air quality and noise impacts may be less but would still be unavoidable; under the Lower Park Elevation option, these unavoidable impacts would be greater.

6.5.5 ENVIRONMENTALLY SUPERIOR ALTERNATIVE

CEQA requires the identification of an environmentally superior alternative. CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e)(2) states that if the No Project Alternative is the environmentally superior alternative, then the EIR shall also identify an environmentally superior alternative among the other alternatives.

Based on the alternatives evaluated, Alternative A: No Project/No Development Alternative would be considered the environmentally superior alternative. This alternative assumes that existing conditions on the Project site are retained and that no development would occur. With this alternative the site would remain vacant. This alternative would eliminate the significant impacts identified with implementation of the proposed Project, including the unavoidable significant impacts related to short-term construction related air quality and noise impacts.

When considering the other alternatives, Alternative B: Alternative Location would be environmentally superior to the proposed Project. Development of a park in the Alternative B location rather than the proposed Project site could be implemented with fewer significant impacts. All significant impacts associated with the proposed Project could be mitigated to a less than significant level. However, the introduction of night lighting would be a significant impact. This alternative would achieve Project objectives to create an active and passive park in West Newport Beach. The feasibility of the City's purchase of the property from Newport Banning Ranch is speculative as the Newport Banning Ranch property owner proposed the development of the 401-acre property and to provide a larger community park in this location as stipulated for development of the site. The City's General Plan specifically identifies an active community park of 20 to 30 acres to be developed in the Banning Ranch area in addition to the development of Sunset Ridge Park with active and passive park uses. Together these identified park locations would help alleviate parkland deficiencies in West Newport Beach. While this alternative achieves the basic objective of providing parkland in West Newport it does not result in the development of Sunset Ridge Park in conformance with the Caltrans Deed Restriction, which stipulates that the property be used as a park.