

## IV. ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT

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CEQA requires that an EIR identify alternatives to a project as proposed. The CEQA Guidelines specify that the EIR identify alternatives that “would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project, but would avoid or substantially lessen many of the significant effects of the project”. The purpose of this section is to determine whether there are alternatives of design, scope or location which would substantially lessen the significant impacts, even if those alternatives “impede to some degree the attainment of the project objectives” or are more expensive.

The identified significant unavoidable impact from the proposed project is the significant increase of noise levels along Rosita Avenue, due to traffic traveling to and from the proposed project. Alternatives required by CEQA to be considered should, therefore, be capable of avoiding or lessening this impact.

Consideration of a “No Project” alternative is mandatory. In addition, logical alternatives which might reduce the significant impact identified for the proposed project would include a smaller swim center alternative or a different location.

This EIR evaluates the following project alternatives:

- ## Alternative 1 No Project
- ## Alternative 2 Reduced Scale/Smaller Project
- ## Alternative 3 Alternative Location

### A. NO PROJECT ALTERNATIVE

Under the No Project alternative, the project would remain in its current state, with two tennis courts and parking lots.

The No Project alternative would avoid the significant unavoidable noise impact anticipated to occur as a result of the proposed project. The No Project alternative would avoid the increase of traffic in the project area traveling to and from the proposed project and would, therefore, avoid the substantial noise increase along Rosita Avenue resulting from the project-generated traffic. The No Project alternative would also avoid the temporary construction-related air quality and noise impacts that are identified in this EIR and the possibility of uncovering cultural resources during construction. It should be noted, however, that the project includes mitigation measures to reduce construction-related impacts and potential impacts to cultural resources to a less than significant level.

The No Project alternative does not meet any of the project objectives, and the City of Los Altos would remain without a community swim center. Residents of Los Altos would continue to travel to other cities for swimming and other aquatic activities.

**Conclusion:** The No Project alternative avoids the impacts of the proposed project. The No Project alternative would not meet any of the project objectives.

## B. REDUCED SCALE ALTERNATIVE

The Reduced Scale alternative would reduce the size of the proposed project from two swimming pools to one. The Reduced Scale alternative could reduce the traffic traveling to and from the project site by up to half, assuming the hours of operation, variety of programs offered, and the schedule of the programs remain the same as the proposed project. This would not be likely, because the demand on one pool would be greater, triggering the need for flexible scheduling and hours of operation. As a result, one pool may only reduce traffic to and from the proposed project by 25 percent. This would, however, reduce the projected noise increase along Rosita Avenue from five dBA DNL to four dBA DNL. This one decibel change, while not perceptible to the human ear, would cause the noise impact to fall below the threshold of significance (which is five decibels). Noise from activities at a one-pool swim center would be approximately the same as from a two-pool swim center, although the single pool could be located farther north on the site, and farther from the nearest residences.

The Reduced Scale alternative would result in the same temporary construction-related air quality and noise impacts (although for a shorter time period) and the same likelihood of uncovering cultural resources as the proposed project. As stated previously, however, the project includes mitigation measures to reduce construction-related impacts and cultural resource impacts to a less than significant level.

The Reduced Scale alternative does not fully meet the project's main objective, providing the residents of the City of Los Altos with a community swim center that meets their present and future needs. One pool would not provide the amount and variety of programs necessary for the swim center to fully serve the City of Los Altos.

**Conclusion:** The Reduced Scale alternative would reduce project-generated traffic, and the associated significant unavoidable noise impact identified in this EIR to a less than significant level, from five dBA DNL to four dBA DNL. The Reduced Scale alternative would not fully meet the project's main objective, providing the residents of the City of Los Altos with a community swim center that meets their present and future needs. The Reduced Scale alternative is, however, environmentally superior to the proposed project.

## C. ALTERNATIVE LOCATION

There are several areas within the City of Los Altos that might accommodate the proposed project. The proposed site was chosen through a site selection process conducted by the City of Los Altos Parks, Art, and Recreation Commission. The minutes of the various meetings at which the City's Recreation Commission evaluated the various environmental conditions and feasibility of these alternatives are available for public review in the Community Development Department of the City of Los Altos during normal business hours. Site selection was based on the following criteria:

- ⌘ Is the site City owned or available to the City at no cost?
- ⌘ Does the site have reasonable access?
- ⌘ What impact would the project location have on surrounding neighborhoods?
- ⌘ Is there adequate parking available to serve the proposed project?
- ⌘ Would existing park facilities be jeopardized by locating the project at the site?
- ⌘ Is the site large enough to construct a facility that would meet present and future aquatic needs (i.e., two pools)?

The other locations evaluated included the following: Grant Park, Heritage Oaks Park, Hillview Community Center, Lincoln Park, Marymeade Park, McKenzie Park, Montclair Park, Redwood Gove Nature Preserve, Shoup Park, Village Park, and the Civic Center. These locations were not chosen because they did not meet the criteria as well as the proposed project site does. Because the criteria also relate to environmental conditions, these same issues indicate that these alternative sites have a greater likelihood for significant environmental impacts. The reasons why these other locations were not selected as the proposed project site are listed below.

**Grant Park** - Access to this park is circuitous and the park is surrounded by residences.

**Heritage Oaks Park** - The natural setting at this park would be adversely affected, including the creek.

**Hillview Community Center** – Construction of a swim center in the park would require removing a utilized playing field.

**Lincoln Park** – The park is too small to accommodate the proposed project.

**Marymeade Park**– The park is too small to accommodate the proposed project.

**McKenzie Park** – Construction of a swim center in the park would require the removal of existing park facilities and trees, and the park does not have adequate parking.

**Montclair Park** – The park is too small to accommodate the proposed project.

**Redwood Grove Nature Preserve** – The park has limited parking and poor access, is subject to flooding, is designated a nature preserve, and is surrounded by residences.

**Shoup Park** – The park has poor access, is surrounded by residences, is subject to flooding, has limited parking, would result in the loss of utilized parkland, and development on the site would be restricted by the adjacent creek.

**Village Park** – The park is too small to accommodate the proposed project.

**Civic Center** - Development of the proposed project at the Civic Center would require the removal of a portion of the orchard, which is designated as a historic resource.

In addition to not meeting the criteria as well as the proposed project, development of the community swim center on most of the above listed sites would require that traffic to the swim center must travel on residential streets, resulting in the same significant unavoidable noise impact as the proposed project. This is reflected in the commission minutes.

Sites with close-in residences (such as Shoup Park, Redwood Grove and Grant Park) would have similar or worse noise impacts from the pool use. Sites without sufficient area for parking would result in more parking overflow, which could adversely impact neighborhood access (McKenzie Grant, Redwood Grove, and Shoup Parks). Sites near creeks, or containing substantial natural habitat areas (such as Redwood Grove, Shoup and Heritage Oaks Parks) would experience significant impacts to vegetation and wildlife. Placing the proposed swim center at the Civic Center would result in a significant unavoidable cultural resource impact.

**Conclusion:** Development of the proposed project at alternative locations within the City would not be possible at seven locations without loss of needed park facilities, due to size constraints. Development at other identified locations that are large enough would likely result in the same significant unavoidable noise impact and/or other impacts such as noise, flooding, water quality, biological, and/or significant parking overflow. Therefore, no Alternative Location that was environmentally superior to the proposed project has been identified.