
CHAPTER 4
ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROJECT

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4.1 Introduction

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that EIR's review a range of alternatives which might reduce or avoid the significant impacts of a proposed project. This Chapter reviews the range of alternatives which were considered in developing this EIR. Some alternatives were rejected from analysis because they did not reduce environmental effects, were infeasible, or did not meet any of the project goals. This Chapter also reviews the reasons for rejection of alternatives. In addition, this Chapter describes the alternatives which were selected for analysis in this EIR.

4.2 Purpose of Alternatives

Alternatives are considered in an EIR to assist the public and decision-makers in considering the environmental consequences of a proposed project. The purpose of the alternatives analysis is to consider reasonable feasible options to reduce or avoid the significant impacts of a proposed project. The range of alternatives considered in an EIR is governed by the rule of reason. CEQA Guidelines, Section 15126(d) states: "Alternatives to the Proposed Action. Describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project, or to the location of the project, which could feasibly attain the basic objectives of the project and evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives." Further, section 15126(d)(3) states: "The discussion of alternatives shall focus on alternatives capable of eliminating any significant adverse environmental impacts or reducing them to a level of insignificance, even if these alternatives would impede to some degree the attainment of the project objectives, or would be more costly."

4.3 Alternatives Considered But Rejected From Further Analysis

Key to the selection and review of alternatives, are the objectives and requirements of the project. The CEQA Guidelines Section 15126 (d) (2) states that "the range of potential alternatives to the project shall include those that could feasibly accomplish most of the basic purposes of the project and could avoid or substantially lessen one or more of the significant effects. The EIR should briefly describe the rationale for selecting the alternatives to be discussed. The EIR should also identify any alternatives that were considered by the lead agency but were rejected as

infeasible during the scoping process and briefly explain the reasons underlying the lead agency's determination." Thus, in reviewing alternatives the following requirements and objectives were considered:

1. The project and alternatives must meet the basic objectives and requirements of State Senate Bill 1460 which is the enabling legislation for the project.
2. The project and alternatives should be reasonably effective in furthering the goals of the Implementation Plan which are:
 - a. Create a mixed use, mixed income neighborhood;
 - b. Orient development to transit stations;
 - c. Preserve historic structures and character;
 - d. Enhance neighborhood livability through sufficient open space;
 - e. Develop R Street streetscape at a pedestrian scale;
 - f. Provide public infrastructure necessary for development;
 - g. Create R Street as a neighborhood destination;
 - h. Encourage participation of property and business owners in the revitalization efforts.

Based on the above criteria, the following types of alternatives were considered but were rejected for further analysis for the reasons listed below:

4.3.1 Alternative Locations

Alternative locations for the project activities were considered but rejected. As noted above, alternatives must be capable of reasonably attaining the objectives of the project and reduce environmental impacts. In this case, the objectives of the project are in part set by State Senate Bill 1460 which defines the project area. Senate Bill 1460 specifically defines the area of R Street to be the area subject to revitalization measures. Therefore, alternative locations are not considered insofar as undertaking the proposed implementation actions in an alternative location would not comply with the basic statutory objectives of the R Street Redevelopment Area.

4.3.2 Alternative Land Uses

Alternative land use designations in the R Street Corridor were also considered. State Senate Bill 1460, states that the R Street Implementation Plan must consider the purposes and objectives of the State of California Capitol Area Plan (CAP) and be prepared in consultation with the City of Sacramento. The land uses in the CAP are consistent with the adopted City of Sacramento 1996 R Street Corridor Master Plan. Thus, the proposed RSAIP does not change any land uses in the area, but rather sets forth projects which would support these land uses. If alternative land uses were to be proposed as an EIR alternative, such an alternative may not be consistent with the adopted R Street Corridor Master Plan and the State Capitol Area Plan and therefore, would not meet the requirements of Senate Bill 1460. For these reasons, alternatives to the project which included changes in land use were not considered since such alternatives would not support the objectives of the project.

4.3.3 Alternative Improvement Priorities

Finally, alternative project priorities were considered as a possible EIR alternative. For example instead of repairing water lines and improving streets, an alternative might be to focus redevelopment funding on under-grounding of overhead utilities. While this presents an alternative use of funds, it does not result in any measurable reduction of potential environmental impacts. For example, one might consider under-grounding of utilities on R Street rather than the water line improvements. Either project would require trenching and disruption of the roadbed in R Street which would in turn, result in the same or similar impacts to cultural resources, hazardous materials risk, construction period noise and air quality effects. Changing priorities would not change the range of probable impacts on the R Street corridor.

Thus, after due consideration of possible EIR alternatives, it was determined that there were no reasonably feasible development alternatives which met the project objectives and reduced significant environmental impacts.

4.4 Alternatives Considered For Analysis in the EIR

Two alternatives are assessed in this EIR, the No Project Alternative and the Proposed Project.

AA: No Project Alternative.

This alternative assumes that the proposed project is not implemented. The conditions of the No Project Alternative are set at the time of the issuance of the Notice of Preparation. This alternative is required by CEQA. Under this alternative, none of the proposed infrastructure or housing improvements would be implemented. Private development would occur in accordance with the adopted Central City Community Plan (R Street Corridor Master Plan portion) and would occur without public assistance.

PP: Proposed Project.

This alternative assumes that the proposed project is fully implemented including all infrastructure, housing, open space and other components described in Chapter 3, Project Description.