

SECTION 5: ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT

5.1 - Introduction

Section 15126.6 of the State CEQA Guidelines, as amended, mandates that an EIR include a comparative evaluation of the proposed project with the alternatives to the project, including a No Project Alternative. This section focuses on alternatives, as identified in Section 15126(d)(2) of the State CEQA Guidelines, to the Wasco Center Walmart that are capable of avoiding or substantially lessening any significant adverse impacts associated with the proposed project—even if these alternatives would to some degree impede attainment of project objectives or be more costly. There are four environmental issues associated with the proposed Walmart that will require implementation of mitigation measures to reduce to less than significant. As described in Section 4.9, there are mitigation measures proposed to reduce potential traffic impacts to less than significant. However, conservatively, these potential traffic impacts are considered significant and unavoidable because the City of Wasco does not have jurisdiction over the proposed traffic improvements along SR-46.

The alternatives may result in new impacts that would not result from the proposed project. CEQA requires that this analysis discuss whether the alternatives and related mitigation measures would be preferable to the proposed project. Case law suggests that discussion of alternatives need not be exhaustive, and that alternatives be subject to reasonable construction. CEQA Guidelines Section 15126(d)(3) states that impacts of the alternatives may be discussed “in less detail than the significant effects of the project as proposed.”

As stated in Section 3, Project Description, of this ~~Draft~~ [Final](#) SEIR, the project objectives are to:

- Provide the City of Wasco and surrounding region with a retail element that would provide significant benefits in terms of employment opportunities, sales tax revenues, and affordable shopping opportunities.
- Promote economic growth and development that is consistent with the City of Wasco General Plan.
- Provide a combined retail and grocery use that will stimulate development of the approved Wasco Center by motivating retailers to lease the approved, but not yet constructed, structures within the Wasco Center.
- Maximize the amount of sales and property tax revenues collected by the City of Wasco and Kern County to support local and regional agencies and programs.
- Provide the City of Wasco’s largest proposed commercial retail district with a nationally recognized anchor to attract consumers and other businesses.

- Reduce vehicle travel by providing residents with a local and inclusive shopping option in the City of Wasco.
- Provide a 24-hour retail use to serve the residents of the City of Wasco and travelers along SR-46.
- Provide a retail use on a site that would require modification of an approved, but not yet constructed, development.

This section identifies alternative sites that were considered but eliminated from further consideration by the City of Wasco, and provides an analysis of two alternatives selected for consideration for the proposed project. The evaluation of the alternative sites focuses on the capability of avoiding or substantially lessening any significant adverse impacts associated with the proposed project. Therefore, the evaluation addresses only the four environmental issues of the proposed project that will require implementation of mitigation measures to reduce impacts to less than significant.

The analysis of the two alternatives selected for consideration for the proposed project is intended to provide a relative comparison between the proposed project and each of the two alternatives for all of the environmental issues addressed in Section 3 of this ~~Draft~~ [Final](#) SEIR. For each alternative evaluated, a conclusion is provided for each impact as to whether the alternative results in a lesser, greater, or the same impact as the proposed project. Additionally, a conclusion is provided summarizing each of the two alternative's relationship to the Project objectives.

5.2 - Alternative Sites Considered But Eliminated

Two Alternative Sites for the proposed Walmart were reviewed. As identified above, the purpose of this evaluation is to focus on alternatives that are capable of avoiding or substantially lessening any significant adverse impacts associated with the proposed project. The proposed project has no foreseeable significant unavoidable adverse impacts. As discussed in Section 4 of this ~~Draft~~ [Final](#) SEIR, there are four environmental issues, however, that will require implementation of mitigation measures to be reduced to less than significant level. These issues include construction and operation air emissions, biological resources related to the San Joaquin kit fox and burrowing owl, construction noise, and operational traffic. Based on a review of the City's General Plan Land Use Map and aerial photographs, there are only two locations (not including the currently approved Wasco Center project) that are currently designated for Community Retail Commercial that can accommodate the proposed Walmart on a site that encompasses at least 17 acres. Both sites are located along the north side of Highway 46. One of the sites is located approximately 2.0 miles west of the project site at the northeast corner of Highway 46 and Scofield Avenue (Site A) and the second site is located approximately 0.3 of a mile west of the project site at the northwest corner of Highway 46 and Magnolia Avenue (Site B). A description of the two alternative sites are discussed below as well as a brief evaluation to determine if the placement of the proposed Walmart at either of these two alternative sites would reduce the project's potentially significant impacts requiring mitigation

associated with air emissions, biological resources related to the San Joaquin kit fox and burrowing owl, construction noise, and traffic. The purpose of these focused discussions is to determine if these alternatives have the ability to avoid or substantially lessen a potentially significant environmental impact associated with the proposed project. It is assumed that the proposed project and its components would be constructed the same as proposed on the project site.

5.2.1 - Alternative Site A - Northeast Corner of SR-46 and Scofield Avenue

Alternative Site A encompasses 18.5 acres of fallow agricultural land. West of the site is the two-lane Scofield Avenue and south of the site is the two-lane SR-46. East of the site is currently fallow agricultural land that is designated for Neighborhood Commercial. North of the site are existing and occupied residential units as well as fallow agricultural land that is designated Low Density Residential.

Air Quality - Implementation of the proposed Walmart on Alternative Site A would result in slightly greater construction air emissions and the same operational air emissions as the proposed project. Construction activities would be slightly greater because Alternative Site A is 1.5 acres greater in size compared to the proposed project. Operational emissions would be the same because both this alternative and the proposed project would include the same size Walmart. Due to the location of the nearest residence to Alternative Site A (immediately adjacent to the northern boundary) compared to the nearest residence to the project site (approximately 700 feet south of the project site), the nearest residence to Alternative Site A could be exposed to greater dust emissions compared to the nearest existing residence to the project site. Overall, this alternative site would not avoid or substantially lessen the potentially significant adverse air quality impacts associated with the proposed project.

Biological Resources - This alternative site currently contains fallow agricultural land and is in the vicinity of historical records for the burrowing owl. Because the site is fallow, the entire alternative site has suitable habitat for burrowing owls. Comparatively, only the outer edges of the project site provide suitable habitat due to the presence of a walnut orchard. Therefore, the alternative site would not avoid or substantially lessen the potentially significant adverse impacts to the burrowing owl that are associated with the proposed project. Similar to the proposed project, the alternative site is located in the vicinity of historical occurrences of San Joaquin kit fox. Because the San Joaquin kit fox is known to occur in the area, the alternative site and the project site have a similar potential to affect this species during construction activities. Therefore, the alternative site would not avoid or substantially lessen the potentially significant adverse impacts to the San Joaquin kit fox.

Construction Noise - Due to the location of future residential development, the proposed construction activities on the project site may result in significant construction noise impacts if the residential areas north (approximately 60 feet) and east (approximately 110 feet) of the site are constructed and occupied prior to the proposed Walmart. Under Alternative Site A, existing and future residences are located immediately north of the site. The existing residences could experience significant construction noise impacts. The implementation of Alternative Site A would not avoid or

substantially lessen the potential significant adverse noise impacts on residential uses. These potential noise impacts could be greater than those that may potentially occur from construction activities on the project site.

Transportation/Traffic - Implementation of the proposed Walmart on Alternative Site A would result in shifting traffic volumes along State Highway 46 near Central Avenue to State Highway 46 near Scofield Avenue (approximately 2 miles west of the project site). The shifting of traffic volumes may result in an overall greater impact on intersections because the cumulative development of the approved Wasco Center will already result in impacts to intersections along Highway 46. The operation of a Walmart on the project site would result in a few additional impacts to the same intersections as those that would be affected with the operation of the approved Wasco Center. The development of the proposed project at Alternative Site A could effect intersections between Wasco Center (i.e., Magnolia Avenue and Scofield Avenue) due to increases in traffic to Alternative Site A. The implementation of the project at Alternative Site A would not avoid or substantially lessen the proposed project's potentially significant adverse traffic impacts on intersections along State Highway 46.

Conclusion - Based on the brief evaluation provided above, each of the potentially significant impacts requiring mitigation associated with the proposed Walmart on the project site would not be avoided or substantially lessened with the development of the project on Alternative Site A. Greater noise and traffic impacts may occur with the development of Alternative Site A. Since Alternative Site A would not avoid or substantially lessen any potentially significant impacts of the proposed project, this Alternative is eliminated from further consideration.

5.2.2 - Alternative Site B - Northwest Corner of SR-46 and Magnolia Avenue

Alternative Site B encompasses 21 acres of agricultural land that has an orchard and a farm residence that encompasses approximately one acre immediately adjacent to SR-46 and Magnolia Avenue. West of this alternative site is a retention basin and agricultural land that is designated for Medium Density Residential. North of the site is additional agricultural land that is also designated for Medium Density Residential as well as a retention basin and a farm residence. East of the site is the two-lane Magnolia Avenue and further east is the approved Wasco Center. South of the site is the two-lane SR-46 and designated for Medium Density Residential and Community Retail Commercial.

Air Quality - Implementation of the proposed Walmart on Alternative Site B would result in slightly greater construction air emissions and the same operational air emissions as the proposed project. Construction activities would be slightly greater because Alternative Site B is 4 acres greater in size compared to the proposed project. Operational emissions would be the same because both this alternative and the proposed project would include the same size Walmart. Due to the location of the nearest residence to Alternative Site B (approximately 190 feet north of the Alternative Site) compared to the nearest residence to the project site (approximately 700 feet south of the project site), the nearest residence to Alternative Site B could be exposed to greater dust emissions compared to the

nearest existing residence to the project site. Overall, this alternative site would not avoid or substantially lessen the potentially significant adverse air quality impacts associated with the proposed project.

Biological Resources - This alternative site currently contains an orchard and is in the vicinity of historical records for the burrowing owl. Similar to the project site, Alternative Site B includes suitable habitat for burrowing owls on the outer edges of the orchard. Therefore, the alternative site would not avoid or substantially lessen the potentially significant adverse impacts to the burrowing owl that are associated with the proposed project. Similar to the proposed project, the alternative site is located in the vicinity of historical occurrences of San Joaquin kit fox. Because the San Joaquin kit fox is known to occur in the area, the alternative site and the project site have a similar potential to affect this species during construction activities. Therefore, the alternative site would not avoid or substantially lessen the potentially significant adverse impacts to the San Joaquin kit fox.

Construction Noise - Due to the location of future residential development, the proposed construction activities on the project site may result in significant construction noise impacts if the residential areas north (approximately 60 feet) and east (approximately 110 feet) of the site are constructed and occupied prior to the proposed Walmart. Under Alternative Site B, existing and future residences are located north of the site. The existing residence that is located 190 feet north of the site could experience significant construction noise impacts. The implementation of Alternative Site B would not avoid or substantially lessen the potential significant adverse noise impacts on residential uses. These potential noise impacts could be greater than those that may potentially occur from construction activities on the project site.

Transportation/Traffic - Implementation of the proposed Walmart on Alternative Site B would result in shifting traffic volumes along State Highway 46 near Central Avenue to State Highway 46 near Magnolia Avenue (approximately 0.3 mile west of the project site). The shifting of traffic volumes may result in an overall greater impact on intersections because the cumulative development of the approved Wasco Center will already result in impacts to intersections along Highway 46. The operation of a Walmart on the project site would result in a few additional impacts to the same intersections as those that would be affected with the operation of the approved Wasco Center. The development of the proposed project at Alternative Site B could increase the traffic effect on intersections along State Route 46 because the Large Box Retail within the approved Wasco Center and the Walmart would be constructed; thus resulting in more traffic volumes compared to the modification of the Wasco Center by constructing a Walmart in place of the approved Large Box Retail use. The implementation of the project at Alternative Site B would not avoid or substantially lessen the proposed project's potentially significant traffic impacts on intersections along State Highway 46.

Conclusion - Based on the brief evaluation provided above, each of the potentially significant impacts requiring mitigation associated with the proposed Walmart on the project site would not be avoided or

substantially lessened with the development of the project on Alternative Site B. Greater noise and traffic impacts may occur with the development of Alternative Site B. Since Alternative Site B would not avoid or substantially lessen any potentially significant impacts of the proposed project, this Alternative is eliminated from further consideration.

5.3 - Alternatives Considered and Evaluated

5.3.1 - No Project/No Development Alternative

Under the No Project/No Development Alternative, the entire project site would remain unchanged and no new development would occur. In general, the portion of the Wasco Center where the Walmart is proposed would remain unchanged and remain as agricultural land.

Impact Analysis

Aesthetics (Light and Glare)

The No Project Alternative would result in no light or glare being generated from the project site. As identified in Section 4.1 of this ~~Draft~~ [Final](#) SEIR, the project would result in the generation of light and glare, but based on the project features of light shielding, buffering, and building materials, potential light and glare impacts would be less than significant. Since the No Project Alternative will result in no light or glare generating sources from the proposed project area, this alternative is considered to have less light and glare impacts than the proposed project.

Air Quality

No new short-term construction or long-term operational air quality emissions would occur as a result of the No Project Alternative, yet existing periodic agricultural-related emissions would still occur. As identified in Section 4.2, Air Quality, of this ~~Draft~~ [Final](#) SEIR, construction and operational emissions associated with the project are potentially significant, but will be mitigated to a level of less than significant. Since this alternative would not result in development that would create increased air emissions, the No Project Alternative is considered to have less air quality impacts than the proposed project.

Biological Resources

Under the No Project Alternative, the project site would remain unchanged from its current condition as agricultural land. Although much of this habitat is disturbed, these areas provide suitable habitat for a variety of common plant and wildlife species, some of which are sensitive species.

Development of the proposed project would eliminate suitable foraging habitat for mammal and raptor species, in addition to reducing or eliminating some plant and wildlife populations that occur on the site. However, the project site has been heavily disturbed and continues to be impacted by agriculture. Yet, since the No Project Alternative would not disturb the agricultural land, this alternative is considered to have less biological resources impacts than to the proposed project.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

No new short-term construction or long-term operational greenhouse gas emissions would occur as a result of the No Project Alternative, yet existing periodic agricultural-related emissions would still occur. As identified in Section 4.4, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, of this ~~Draft~~ [Final](#) SEIR, the project would have less than significant greenhouse gas emissions impacts. However, since this alternative would not result in development that would increase greenhouse gas emissions, the No Project Alternative is considered to have less greenhouse gas impacts than the proposed project.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

The project site consists of agricultural land that has been utilized for agricultural purposes. A site reconnaissance and an environmental database review revealed that the project site is not located on a Hazardous Site and Substance List. The project site includes residual concentrations of chemical due to the historic onsite agricultural operations. These chemicals which include DDT, DDD, and DDE are organochlorine compounds. A health risk evaluation was performed and concluded that the cancer risk is below the California Environmental Protection Agency's target risk, and therefore, do not present an environmental concern. The continued use of pesticides on the project site for agricultural operations could pose future potential hazards. The proposed project is anticipated to introduce hazardous materials into the project area in the short-term during construction and in the long-term through the installation of the project's lube and tire center, and garden center. However, with mitigation and adherence to state and local regulations for the use of hazardous materials, these impacts will be less than significant. Since this alternative would continue the use of pesticides on the project site and the proposed project would introduce new sources of hazardous materials to the project site, the No Project Alternative and the proposed project are expected to result in similar hazards and hazardous materials impacts.

Hydrology and Water Quality

The project site is currently used for agricultural production, with the surface of the project site being permeable. Implementation of the proposed project would result in project becoming impermeable, not including landscaping. As identified in Section 4.6, Hydrology and Water Quality, of this ~~Draft~~ [Final](#) SEIR, the project would result in less than significant impacts to hydrology and water quality. In addition, the project includes an onsite retention basin to control onsite surface water flows and contain those flows onsite. The retention basin would allow storm water to percolate toward the groundwater table. The No Project Alternative would retain the existing use of the site and permeable surfaces throughout. Although the project site includes permeable surfaces, surface water flows during storm events may exit the project site and possibly result in erosion and degrade surface water quality. Therefore, this Alternative could result in greater hydrology and water quality impacts than the proposed project.

Noise

The No Project Alternative would result in no short-term construction or long-term operational phase noise impacts. As identified in Section 4.7, Noise of this ~~Draft~~ [Final](#) SEIR, the proposed project

would increase noise levels during short-term construction activities and long-term operation of the proposed project, however, the increase would be less than significant. The No Project Alternative would result in no net increase of noise levels at the project site. Thus, the No Project Alternative is considered to have less noise impacts than the proposed project.

Public Services

The project site consists of agricultural land and is currently provided fire protection and emergency medical response services by Kern County's Fire Department. The Kern County Sheriff's Department currently provides police services to the project site. As identified in Section 4.8, Public Services, of this ~~Draft~~ Final SEIR, the proposed project will have less than significant impacts to police and fire services. However, the proposed project is intended to operate 24 hours a day, therefore the need for fire and police services will be greater than the current use. The No Project Alternative would result in the project site remaining agricultural land, thus, not needing the amount of fire and police protection that may be required to serve the proposed project. Therefore, the No Project Alternative is considered to have less public services impacts than the proposed project.

Transportation/Traffic

The project site is currently used for agricultural. The proposed project would place a Walmart within the Wasco Center generating substantially more traffic than the current agricultural use. As identified in Section 4.9, Transportation and Traffic, of this ~~Draft~~ Final SEIR, the proposed project will contribute to significant traffic impacts. These impacts can be reduced to less than significant with the incorporation of the recommended mitigation measures. However, since the No Project Alternative would not result in any additional traffic generation, this Alternative is considered to have less transportation and traffic impacts than the proposed project.

Urban Decay

The proposed project will result in a less than significant impact to urban decay. The No Project Alternative would retain the current use of the project site as agricultural land; therefore, the potential for urban decay under this Alternative would be no impact. Accordingly, this Alternative is considered to have less urban decay impacts than the proposed project.

Conclusions

The No Project Alternative would result in fewer aesthetics (light and glare), air quality, biological resources, greenhouse gas emissions, noise, public services, transportation and traffic, and urban decay impacts than the proposed project. This alternative could result in greater hydrology and water quality impacts and the same hazards and hazardous materials impacts. Based on a review of all of the environmental issues, this Alternative is considered environmentally superior to the proposed project. This Alternative would however, not meet any of the project's objectives. It also does not serve to further the planning vision of the City, which is to develop the site with Community Retail Commercial as set forth in the City's General Plan and with the previously approved Wasco Center Specific Development Plan.

5.3.2 - Development in Accordance with the Wasco Center Specific Development Plan

Development of the project site in accordance with the Wasco Center Specific Development Plan would result in a 158,000-square foot “Large-Box Retail” structure that is 12,000 square feet smaller than the proposed Walmart. Unlike the proposed Walmart, the “Large Box Retail” use would not be open 24-hours per day. In addition, this Alternative would not include a grocery area, lube and tire center, or a garden center.

Impact Analysis

Aesthetics (Light and Glare)

The Wasco Center Specific Development Plan Alternative will result in the construction of “Large Box Retail” use on the project site, approximately 12,000 square feet less than the proposed project. Light and glare impacts associated with this Alternative would be similar compared to the proposed project. However, since the proposed project would result in a 24-hour operation, light and glare impacts would extend longer compared to this Alternative. Therefore, potential light and glare impacts associated with this Alternative would be less when compared to the proposed project.

Air Quality

The Wasco Center Specific Development Plan Alternative would result in 12,000 less square feet than the proposed project. Air quality impacts are primarily a result of vehicle emissions. Accordingly, these impacts occur during short-term construction activities and long-term operation of the proposed project. In the short-term, construction activities, such as earthmoving, excavation and grading operations, construction vehicle traffic, and wind blowing over exposed earth will generate exhaust emissions and fugitive particulate matter that will affect air quality. The Wasco Center Specific Development Plan Alternative is anticipated to result in similar short-term air quality impacts compared to the proposed project because this Alternative would result in similar earthmoving activities.

In the long-term, the Wasco Center Specific Development Plan Alternative will not be operational 24 hours a day and will result in 988 less vehicle trips per day. Considering this, the Wasco Center Alternative would generate less long-term air emissions than the proposed project.

Overall, this Alternative would result in the same short-term construction emissions and impacts, and less long-term air emissions and impacts.

Biological Resources

The proposed project and the Wasco Center Specific Development Plan Alternative would disturb the same amount of habitat. Therefore, the Wasco Center Alternative would result in the same impacts to biological resources as the proposed project.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The Wasco Center Specific Development Plan Alternative would result in 12,000 less square feet of operational space and approximately 988 less vehicle trips daily than the proposed project. The reduction in square feet and daily trips would reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Therefore, the Wasco Center Specific Development Plan Alternative would have less greenhouse gas impacts than the proposed project.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

As noted in Section 4.5, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, a detailed search was conducted to identify the presence of any underground storage tanks, above ground storage tanks, radon gas, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), asbestos containing materials (ACMS) and lead based paint. Additionally, an environmental database review was conducted that revealed no environmental hazards in the project area, and as discussed in Section 4.5, tests of project site soil samples revealed no elevated levels of chemical residues. Both the Wasco Center Specific Development Plan Alternative and the proposed project could involve the limited use, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials during construction. Both will be required to adhere to all applicable federal, state, and local regulations. Therefore, the proposed project and this Alternative could have similar construction impacts with regard to hazards and hazardous materials.

In the long-term, the proposed “Large-Box Retail” under the Wasco Center Specific Development Plan Alternative would not include a lube and tire center, and garden center while the proposed Walmart would include these uses. The operation of a lube and tire center and a garden center would include the use of household hazardous waste and materials; however, the use would not include substantial quantities. Based on the existing County of Kern regulations (i.e., Conditionally Exempt Small Quantity Generator program), the potential hazard and hazardous waste impacts from routine transport, use, and disposal associated with the proposed Walmart would be similar to the use associated with the “Large Box Retail.”

Hydrology and Water Quality

The proposed project and the Wasco Center Specific Development Plan Alternative would create approximately the same amount of the impermeable surfaces throughout the project site. Considering this, hydrology and water quality impacts will remain the same and will require the same mitigation as the proposed project.

Noise

Long-term noise impacts are primarily associated with vehicle trips. Short-term noise impacts are associated with earthmoving activities and construction equipment. Since the greatest noise impacts to nearby residential uses would occur from grading, these worst-case noise levels would be the same as for the Wasco Center Specific Development Plan as those of the proposed project because both the project and this alternative include grading of the project site.

In the long-term, the Wasco Center Specific Development Plan Alternative will generate approximately 988 less vehicle trips due to the different use and size of use in relation to the proposed project, as described below under Transportation and Traffic. Although fewer trips will be generated by the “Large-Box Retail” under the Wasco Center Specific Development Plan, they are too few to cause noticeable difference in traffic related noise. Furthermore, long-term stationary noise contributors are also factors to consider under noise impacts. The proposed Walmart project will potentially have more stationary noise contributors than the “Large-Box Retail” that would be implemented under the Wasco Center Alternative. Therefore, the Wasco Center Specific Development Plan Alternative will have less long-term noise related impacts than the proposed project.

Public Services

The proposed project is intended for 24-hour a day use, and therefore, would potentially require more fire and police services than the Wasco Center Specific Development Plan Alternative that would implement a “Large-Box Retail” use at normal operating hours. Considering this, the Wasco Center Specific Development Plan Alternative would have potentially less impacts to public services than the proposed project.

Transportation/Traffic

This Alternative would include the development of a “Large Box Retail” use on the project site. This use would generate approximately 2,475 vehicle trips per day. These trips would be less than the 5,938 trips per day expected to be generated by the proposed Walmart. Both the Wasco Center Specific Development Plan Alternative and the proposed project will contribute to significant traffic impacts along SR 46. However, this Alternative would result in fewer daily trips. The Wasco Center Specific Development Plan Alternative would result in less, but not substantially less, traffic impacts than the proposed Walmart.

Urban Decay

The proposed project’s impact on urban decay was found to be less than significant. With the implementation of the Wasco Center Alternative, the project site would include a “Large-Box Retail” use, resulting in 12,000 square feet less than the proposed Wasco Walmart. Although this Alternative would have less square footage than the proposed project, the Wasco Center Specific Development Plan Alternative would result in the same urban decay impact (i.e., less than significant) as the proposed project.

Conclusions

The Wasco Center Specific Development Plan Alternative would result in less aesthetics (light and glare), air quality emissions, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, long-term noise, public services, and transportation and traffic impacts compared to the proposed project. This Alternative would have the same biological resources, hydrology and water quality, construction noise, and urban decay impacts compared to the proposed project. Based on a review of all of the

environmental issues, this Alternative is considered to be environmentally superior to the proposed project. This Alternative, however, would not meet the project objectives because it would not provide a combined retail and grocery use that will stimulate development of the approved Wasco Center by motivating retailers to lease the approved, but not yet constructed, structures within the Wasco Center. Furthermore, the Wasco Center Specific Development Plan Alternative would neither provide the City of Wasco's largest proposed commercial retail district with a nationally recognized anchor to attract consumers and other businesses nor reduce vehicle travel by providing residents with a local and inclusive shopping option in the City of Wasco.

5.3.3 - Environmentally Superior Alternative

CEQA requires that the City identify an Environmentally Superior Alternative. If the No Project Alternative is the Environmentally Superior Alternative as in this case, the City must identify an Environmentally Superior Alternative among the other alternatives considered in the EIR (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15126.6). The one remaining alternative (Development in Accordance with the Wasco Center Specific Development Plan) would not substantially lessen any of the environmental impacts of the proposed project. This Alternative would have all the same or similar impacts related to short-term construction under hazards and hazardous materials, transportation and traffic, air quality, aesthetics, noise, and greenhouse gas emissions. Furthermore, in relation to long-term operation of the proposed project, the Wasco Center Specific Development Alternative would potentially reduce impacts to aesthetics (light and glare), air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, public services, and transportation and traffic, but not substantially. This Alternative is considered to be environmentally superior.

This Alternative would, however, not meet the project objectives, including but not limited to, providing a combined retail and grocery use that will stimulate development of the approved Wasco Center, and reducing vehicle travel by providing residents with a local and inclusive shopping option.