

SECTION 4.0 ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT

4.1 INTRODUCTION

CEQA requires that an EIR consider a reasonable range of alternatives to a Proposed Project that can attain most of the basic project goals, but has the potential to reduce or eliminate significant adverse impacts of the Proposed Project and may be feasibly accomplished in a successful manner, considering the economic, environmental, social, and technological factors involved. An EIR must evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives (CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(a), (d) and (e)). If certain alternatives are found to be infeasible, the analysis must explain the reasons and facts supporting that conclusion.

Section 15126.6(d) also requires that, if an alternative would cause one or more significant effects in addition to those caused by the Proposed Project, the significant effects of the alternative shall be discussed, but in less detail than the significant effects of the project as proposed. One of the alternatives analyzed must be the “No Project” alternative (CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e)). The EIR must also identify alternatives that were considered by the lead agency but were rejected as infeasible during the scoping process and should briefly explain the reasons underlying the lead agency’s determination (CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(c)).

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e)(2) requires that the EIR identify the environmentally superior alternative. If that alternative is the No Project Alternative, the EIR shall also identify an environmentally superior alternative among the other alternatives. The environmentally superior alternative is discussed in Section 4.5.

For convenience, the Proposed Project’s goals are repeated below.

1. Complete of a trail loop through a “Clasp” at the northern portion of the Emerald Necklace.
2. Connect the Whittier Narrows Recreation Area to the Emerald Necklace.
3. Provide access to the Emerald Necklace for surrounding communities.
4. Provide access points, missing multi-use/equestrian trail elements, and other park elements.

4.2 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED

A Feasibility Study was completed to systematically evaluate the existing elements of the Emerald Necklace and to identify a large number of feasible projects that support the vision of the Emerald Necklace. The Proposed Project is composed of 15 individual projects that best met the project objectives out of the 44 projects that were evaluated in the Feasibility Study.

The Feasibility Study prioritized the 44 projects based on how well a project would meet the Proposed Project’s goals (listed in Section 4.1). It should be noted that each project goal is linked to a geographical region of the Emerald Necklace. For example, Goal 1 is the completion of a trail loop through a “Clasp” at the northern portion of the Emerald Necklace. Rather than prioritizing all 44 projects based on this goal, only projects that would be located in the Quarry Clasp area were evaluated on how critical a project would be to reach the goal. Furthermore, the order of the Proposed Project’s goals also describes their priority. For example, completing the trail loop by a clasp was considered the highest priority.

Potential alternatives would be composed of a combination of the 44 projects that were evaluated; however, the 15 projects that were selected and compose the Proposed Project best met the criteria of the project goals. The remaining 29 projects would have similar project characteristics and impacts and would not substantially reduce or eliminate significant adverse impacts. Any other potential combination of projects would not meet the project goals when compared to the Proposed Project (in particular Goal 1); therefore, no other alternatives, other than the No Project Alternative, are being carried forward for analysis. Future phases may be composed of the projects that remain from the original 44.

4.3 ALTERNATIVES CARRIED FORWARD FOR ANALYSIS

4.3.1 No Project Alternative

4.3.1.1 Description

CEQA requires that the No Project Alternative be analyzed in an EIR. In accordance with Section 15126.6(e)(3)(B), the No Project Alternative consist of an analysis of the circumstance under which the project does not proceed.

With the No Project Alternative no trails or access infrastructure would be constructed and no park development would occur. No trail connections would occur at the northern portion of the Emerald Necklace and a non-continuous loop around the San Gabriel River Trail and the Rio Hondo Bike Path would continue to exist. Proposed connectivity improvements within the Whittier Narrows area would not occur and existing park resources would continue to be disconnected and inaccessible to all user groups. Communities surrounding the Emerald Necklace, especially communities on the east side of the San Gabriel River and on the western side of the Rio Hondo, would continue to face access issues due to the lack of safe and formal river crossings and connections to existing trails. The No Project Alternative would not meet any of the goals of the Emerald Necklace Implementation Plan – Phase I.

4.3.1.2 Impacts

Aesthetics

With the No Project Alternative, aesthetic impacts associated with the Proposed Project would not occur. Beneficial impacts that would result from landscaping improvements along trails would also not occur.

Air Quality

The No Project Alternative would not result in the construction or operation of a park, multi-use trails, bridges, or access ramps in the project area. Therefore, air quality impacts would not occur under this Alternative. Air quality emissions associated with existing recreational activities would continue. Any beneficial impacts that would result from people bicycling to work using the proposed trails and connections to existing trails would also not occur.

Biological Resources

Biological impacts associated with construction and operations of the Proposed Project would not occur. Without the bridges and formalized trails, unsafe crossings of the rivers that may affect plants and wildlife would continue.

Cultural and Paleontological Resources

The No Project Alternative would not result in impacts to cultural or paleontological resources.

Geology and Soils

With the No Project Alternative, no trails or access infrastructure would be constructed and no park development would occur. Impacts to geology and soils associated with ground disturbing activities would not occur.

Greenhouse Gas

Greenhouse gas emissions would not occur because the construction and operation components of the Proposed Project would not happen. Any beneficial impacts that would result from people bicycling to work using the proposed trails and connections to existing trails would also not occur.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Hazards and hazardous materials impacts would not occur because no construction or maintenance activities associated with the Proposed Project would take place.

Hydrology and Water Quality

Project-level impacts to hydrology and water quality would be avoided. Areas along the Emerald Necklace with existing drainage issues that result in water quality degradation would not be improved and would continue to persist.

Land Use and Planning

With the No Project Alternative, existing land uses in the project area would remain. The local jurisdictions would continue to review future proposed projects as part of their land use and zoning process.

Noise

With the No Project Alternative, no construction would take place and no new operational noise sources would be introduced. Therefore, there would be no noise impacts from the No Project Alternative.

Public Services

With the No Project Alternative, increase recreational use of the Emerald Necklace recreation facilities would not occur; therefore, no increase in the need for expanded public services would

occur. Public services, such as fire and police protection, would be required at a level similar to the present day service ratio.

Recreation

With the No Project Alternative no trails or access infrastructure would be constructed and no park development would occur. No trail connections would occur at the northern portion of the Emerald Necklace and a non-continuous loop around the San Gabriel River Trail and the Rio Hondo Bike Path would continue to exist. The recreational and alternative transportation (e.g., bicycle and trails) goals and policies of the affected jurisdictions would not be met.

Transportation/Traffic

With the No Project Alternative, recreational facilities to improve access and recreational opportunities along the Emerald Necklace would not be built. Communities surrounding the Emerald Necklace, especially communities on the east side of the San Gabriel River and on the western side of the Rio Hondo, would continue to face access issues due to the lack of safe and formal river crossings and connections to existing trails.

Utilities and Services Systems

With the No Project Alternative, increases in the demand for utilities would not occur.

4.4 COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES

Table 4-1 provides a comparison of anticipated impacts of the No Project Alternative with the Proposed Project. Table 4-2 provides a comparison of project goals between the Proposed Project and the No Project Alternative.

**EMERALD NECKLACE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN – PHASE I
DRAFT PROGRAM ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT**

Table 4-1. Comparison of Alternative 1 with Proposed Project

CATEGORY	ALTERNATIVE 1 (NO PROJECT)
Aesthetics	+
Air Quality	– (construction) + (operation)
Biological Resources	–
Cultural and Paleontological Resources	–
Geology and Soils	–
Greenhouse Gas	– (construction) + (operation)
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	–
Hydrology and Water Quality	–
Land Use and Planning	+
Noise	–
Public Services	–
Recreation	+
Transportation/Traffic	–
Utilities and Service Systems	–

Notes:

+ = Impacts would be greater than the Proposed Project

○ = Impacts would be the same as the Proposed Project

– = Impacts would be less than the Proposed Project

Table 4-2. Comparison of Project Objectives by Alternative

PROJECT OBJECTIVE	PROPOSED PROJECT	NO PROJECT
1) Complete of a trail loop through a “Clasp” at the northern portion of the Emerald Necklace	Y	N
2) Connect the Whittier Narrows Recreation Area to the Emerald Necklace	Y	N
3) Provide access to the Emerald Necklace for surrounding communities	Y	N
4) Provide access points, missing multi-use/equestrian trail elements, and other park elements	Y	N

Notes: Y = meets objective; N = does not meet objective

4.5 ENVIRONMENTALLY SUPERIOR ALTERNATIVE

CEQA Guidelines require that an EIR identify the environmentally superior alternative. The No Project Alternative would be the environmentally superior alternative because it would avoid all impacts associated with the Proposed Project. However, the No Project Alternative would not meet any of the project goals. According to the CEQA Guidelines, if the environmentally superior alternative is the No Project Alternative, then the EIR shall identify an environmentally superior alternative among the other alternatives. The Proposed Project has been identified as the environmentally superior alternative because no other combination of projects would meet the project goals when compared to the Proposed Project or would substantially reduce or eliminate significant adverse impacts. In addition, the Proposed Project would result in beneficial impacts to recreation, aesthetics, and the transportation network, and meet all of the project goals.

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