

5 ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT

The following discussion is intended to inform the public and decision makers of feasible alternatives to the proposed project that would avoid or substantially lessen any significant effects of the project. Section 15126.6 of the CEQA Guidelines states that:

An EIR shall describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project, or 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.

A “No Project” Alternative is required as part of the “reasonable range of alternatives” that could feasibly attain most or all of the project’s objectives. Each alternative is analyzed against the significance thresholds considered in Chapter 4, Environmental Evaluation. This chapter assesses whether the impacts of the alternatives would be greater than, less than, or similar to those of the proposed General Plan and Energy and Conservation Action Strategy (ECAS).

The alternatives to the proposed project are:

- ◆ **No Project Alternative.** Under this alternative, the proposed General Plan and ECAS would not be adopted, and future development in Vacaville would continue to be subject to existing policies, regulations, and land use designations as per the existing General Plan. This alternative would not achieve the greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction target of the proposed ECAS because it would continue existing, planned growth patterns without incorporating the GHG reduction measures in the proposed ECAS. As described in Chapter 3, Project Description, the horizon-year development projections are based on the “probable planning period development,” which represents the anticipated demand for new development in Vacaville, based primarily on past development trends. Because the existing inventory of vacant lands in the city has the capacity to accommodate a significant amount of development, the No Project Alternative can accommodate the probable planning period development. Therefore, it is projected that this alternative would result in the same amount of new development by 2035 (9,680 new housing units) as the proposed project, the only difference being the location of future development. Based on this amount of future development potential, the No Project Alternative would include the same level of growth as the proposed project, but with an altered land use map and distribution of growth that matches the existing General Plan. Said another way, although the existing General Plan and the proposed General Plan are based on somewhat different land use maps, these differences are not substantial enough that significantly more growth would be expected to occur under one than the other by 2035.

◆ **Focused Growth Alternative.** Under the Focused Growth Alternative, the policies in the proposed General Plan and ECAS would be adopted, but the land use map in the proposed General Plan would not be adopted. Under this alternative, a revised land use map would be adopted. Development in growth and focus areas would occur under the Focused Growth Alternative as follows:

- Development in the growth areas would be focused in the central portion of the East of Leisure Town Road Growth Area and in the southwest corner of the Northeast Growth Area. The northeast corner of the Northeast Growth Area would maintain the land use designations specified by the existing General Plan.
- In the focus areas, which are vacant or underdeveloped parcels within the city, the existing character would be maintained as much as possible. Land use designations would be changed from what is in the existing General Plan only in order to be consistent with the existing land use.

It is estimated that this alternative would result in less residential development by the horizon year than would occur under the proposed General Plan, with approximately 9,240 new housing units expected under the Focused Growth Alternative by 2035. The amount of non-residential development projected by 2035 is slightly lower than that of the proposed General Plan. It is assumed that all residential development would occur during the horizon year, and therefore the full buildout anticipated under the Focused Growth Alternative would include significantly less residential development than would occur under the full buildout of the proposed General Plan. Non-residential development under full buildout would also be lower under this alternative than under the proposed General Plan. This alternative would achieve the GHG reduction target of the proposed ECAS.

◆ **Town Grid Alternative.** Under the Town Grid Alternative, the policies in the proposed General Plan and ECAS would be adopted, but the land use map of the proposed General Plan would not be adopted. Development in growth and focus areas would occur under the Town Grid Alternative as follows:

- The highest density development in the growth areas would be focused around a central town square in the East of Leisure Town Road Growth Area. Both residential and non-residential uses would be focused around the Meridian Road interchange in the Northeast Growth Area.
- In the focus areas, this alternative would establish or revitalize neighborhood centers throughout Vacaville. Many of the focus areas would be designated for mixed-use development, which would eventually serve as neighborhood-serving retail uses on the ground floor with residential on a second and possibly third floor. These mixed-use centers would enhance the character of Vacaville's existing neighborhoods by allowing vacant or underutilized areas to be redeveloped in support of neighborhood revitalization, and pro-

vide a central neighborhood focal point for the community living in Vacaville’s neighborhoods.

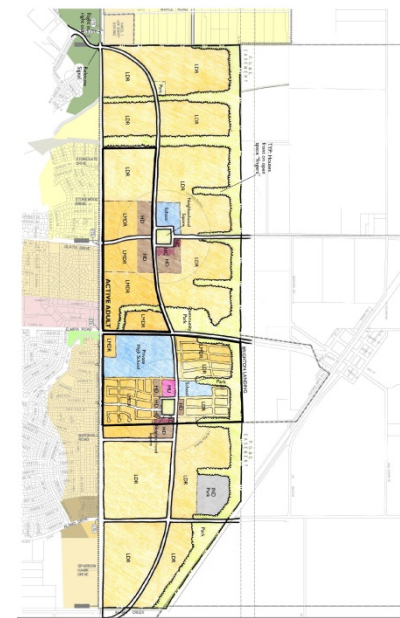
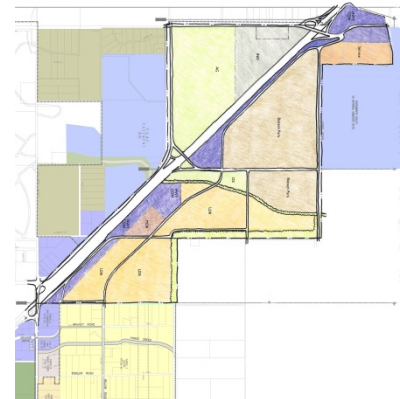
It is projected that this alternative would result in the same amount of new residential development by 2035 (e.g. 9,680 new housing units) as the proposed project, and approximately the same amount of non-residential development by 2035. Under full buildout, the Town Grid Alternative would involve more residential development but less non-residential development than the proposed General Plan. This alternative would not achieve the GHG reduction target of the proposed ECAS.

A comparison of potential impacts of each alternative is provided in Table 5-1, below.

A. Alternatives Considered But Rejected

The alternatives evaluated in this EIR were developed during the land use alternatives phase of the General Plan Update, which involved extensive public meetings with the Steering Committee and City Council. This section describes other alternatives that were considered by the City but are not evaluated in this EIR.

During the land use alternatives phase of the General Plan Update, the City considered another potential land use alternative for the growth areas, called the Village Alternative. In the East of Leisure Town Road Growth Area, the Village Alternative would be organized around two small “town square” focal points and green spaces that would be linked together through a system of pedestrian and bicycle paths and neighborhood streets. The town squares would be surrounded primarily by residential development, as well as mixed-use development that would include a small amount of retail and/or office uses. In addition, a small industrial area would be located along Elmira Road in the western portion of the growth area. In the Northeast Growth Area, biotechnology uses would be located immediately south of Interstate 80 and highway commercial uses would be located near the freeway interchanges. A large portion of the growth area between Webber Road and the Locke Paddon community would be designated for residential uses. The area north of Interstate 80 would be designated for agricultural uses.



The Village Alternative, Rejected from Further Consideration

TABLE 5-1 COMPARISON OF IMPACTS FROM PROJECT ALTERNATIVES

| Topic | No Project Alternative | Focused Growth Alternative | Town Grid Alternative |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Aesthetics | = | < | = |
| Agriculture and Forestry Resources | < | < | = |
| Air Quality | > | < | < |
| Biological Resources | < | < | = |
| Cultural Resources | > | < | = |
| Geology, Soils, and Mineral Resources | = | = | = |
| Greenhouse Gas Emissions | >> | = | = |
| Hazards and Hazardous Materials | = | = | = |
| Hydrology and Water Quality | > | = | = |
| Land Use and Planning | > | = | = |
| Noise | = | < | < |
| Population and Housing | = | < | = |
| Public Services and Recreation | = | < | = |
| Transportation/Traffic | > | << | < |
| Utilities and Service Systems | < | < | = |

<< Substantially reduced impact in comparison to the proposed project
< Slightly reduced impact in comparison to the proposed project
= Similar impact in comparison to the proposed project
> Slightly greater impact in comparison to the proposed project
>> Substantially greater impact in comparison to the proposed project

The City considered this alternative, but ultimately rejected it because it did not provide a significantly different land use approach from the other alternatives that were considered. In addition, the Steering Committee and City Council were not supportive of the “town square” approach of the Village Alternative because of the possibility that it might detract from the Downtown.

B. No Project Alternative

This section analyses the No Project Alternative against the proposed General Plan and ECAS. Figure 5-1 shows the land uses for the No Project Alternative.

1. Principal Characteristics

Under this alternative, the proposed General Plan and ECAS would not be adopted. Future development in Vacaville would continue to be subject to existing policies, regulations, and land use designations as per the existing General Plan. This alternative would not achieve the GHG reduction target of the proposed ECAS.

As explained on pages 5-1 and 5-2, it is estimated that this alternative would likely result in the same horizon-year development levels (9,680 new housing units) as the proposed project. The No Project Alternative would include the same level of growth within the General Plan horizon as the proposed project, but with an altered land use map.

As throughout Chapter 4, Environmental Evaluation, of this EIR, the alternatives analysis in this chapter is based on estimated horizon development in 2035. However, also as in Chapter 4, full buildout is described for the purposes of full disclosure. The full buildout anticipated under the No Project Alternative would include significantly more development than the 2035 horizon-year development, but would include less development than would occur under the full buildout of the proposed project. The alternatives analysis in this section is based on estimated horizon-year development in 2035.

2. Impact Discussion

The No Project Alternative would have the following impacts relative to the proposed General Plan and ECAS.

a. Aesthetics

As demonstrated below, the No Project Alternative would result in similar impacts as the proposed project.

Under the No Project Alternative, new development would occur under the existing General Plan in Vacaville and, following annexation, in the Sphere of Influence (SOI) and Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). The proposed project would not have an adverse effect on a scenic vista, substantially damage scenic resources, or create new sources of light or glare. The proposed project would substantially alter the visual character in undeveloped portions of Vacaville, which would be a significant and unavoidable impact. As with the proposed project, the No Project Alternative would allow new development in areas that are currently largely undeveloped or in

agricultural use. These areas offer open, expansive views of the hillsides in and surrounding the city. These areas also offer scenic views of agricultural landscapes and countryside. Under the No Project Alternative, proposed land uses would be less intensive than under the proposed project in some of these areas, such as the East of Leisure Town Growth Area. In addition, the No Project Alternative would not include the proposed ECAS measures that promote alternative energy facilities, green building techniques, and reflective surfaces to reduce heat gain, all of which could affect visual resources and community character. Nevertheless, development allowed by the No Project Alternative would alter the existing rural and agricultural appearance of undeveloped areas. Therefore, the No Project Alternative would also result in a significant and unavoidable impact as under the proposed project and the alternative would be considered to have impacts that are *similar* to the proposed project.

b. Agriculture and Forestry Resources

As demonstrated below, the No Project Alternative would result in slightly reduced impacts in comparison to the proposed project.

The proposed project would convert farmlands of concern under CEQA and Williamson Act lands to non-agricultural uses, and contribute to cumulative impacts to agricultural resources; these impacts would be significant and unavoidable. Like the proposed General Plan, the No Project Alternative would allow new development in areas that are currently in agricultural use, but the amount of agricultural land designated for development in the two growth areas would be substantially less. In addition, the No Project Alternative would not include proposed ECAS measures that promote alternative energy facility development that could occur on and potentially negatively affect agricultural land. The No Project Alternative would also not include the new policies and actions in the proposed General Plan that support agriculture, including policies to support the preservation of land under Williamson Act contracts within the Vacaville Planning Area; to encourage the continued agricultural use of land within the Permanent Agriculture Overlay Area and Planning Area; to work cooperatively with non-profit organizations, such as land trusts, to preserve agricultural land in the Permanent Agriculture Overlay Area; to adopt an in-lieu fee to mitigate for the loss of agricultural lands; and to adopt a right-to-farm ordinance. Neither the proposed project nor the No Project Alternative would result in impacts to forest lands.

Overall, the No Project Alternative would result in a *slightly reduced impact* in comparison to the proposed project.

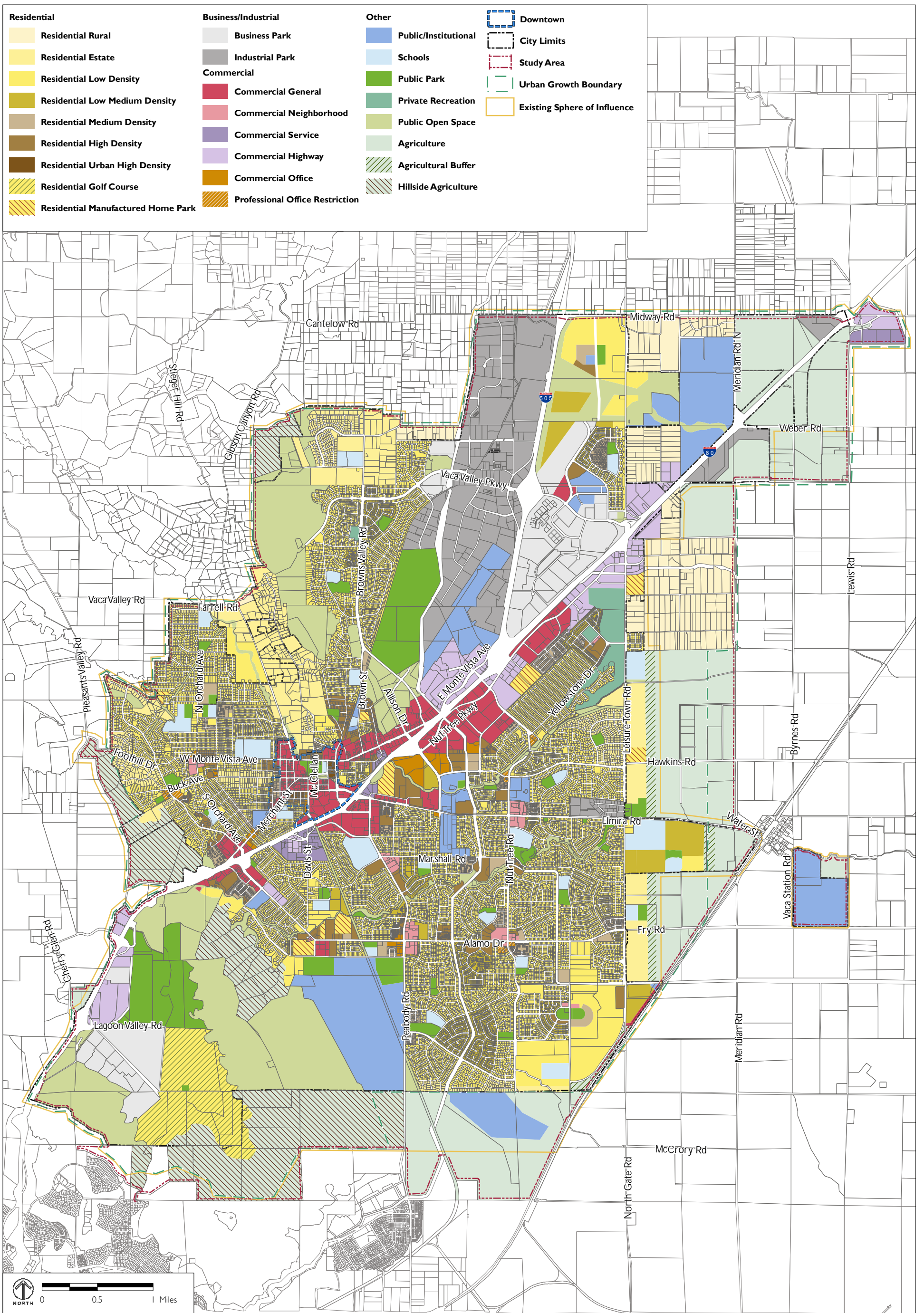


FIGURE 5-1
 NO PROJECT ALTERNATIVE

c. Air Quality

As demonstrated below, the No Project Alternative would result in slightly greater impacts in comparison to the proposed project. The horizon-year development levels anticipated for the No Project Alternative are the same as for the proposed project. The proposed project would result in a significant and unavoidable impact due to PM₁₀ emissions associated with vehicle miles traveled (VMT). This impact would occur at the project and cumulative levels. Because the No Project Alternative would involve the same horizon-year development and therefore the same amount of additional traffic, the significant and unavoidable project and cumulative impacts would still occur. However, the No Project Alternative would not include proposed ECAS measures to promote non-vehicular transport and reduce VMT. Therefore, overall this alternative would have *slightly greater impacts* than the proposed project.

d. Biological Resources

As demonstrated below, the No Project Alternative would result in a slightly reduced impact in comparison to the proposed project.

Under the proposed project, potential impacts to special-status plant and animal species, riparian habitat, wetlands, and biological resource plans and policies would be less than significant as a result of proposed General Plan policies and consistency with the Solano Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). Although the Solano HCP is not an adopted conservation plan, the City of Vacaville, as a plan participant, has prepared the proposed General Plan to ensure that it will be consistent once the HCP is adopted. Under cumulative conditions, the proposed project could substantially impact an important wildlife corridor, resulting in a significant and unavoidable impact. However, the proposed General Plan includes important new policies and actions in the Conservation and Open Space Element requiring biological assessments prior to development, encouraging use of native plants, adding tree protection measures for native trees and woodland habit, and increasing protection of special-status species. These policies and actions increase protection of biological resources in Vacaville.

The No Project Alternative would include the same General Plan land use designations in that wildlife corridor area, and therefore result in the same significant and unavoidable impact as the proposed project. However, the No Project Alternative would have less impact to other resources, such as foraging habitat, creeks areas, or nesting trees within the two growth areas, which would retain their existing agricultural designation. In addition, the No Project Alternative would not include the proposed ECAS measures to promote alternative energy development, which could include large wind turbines that kill birds. Although under this alternative the policies of the proposed General Plan would also not be adopted, it is assumed that under the No Project Alternative the City would still be required to implement the Solano HCP. However, although the existing General Plan contains policies related to the protection of biological

resources, these policies have been substantially expanded and strengthened in the proposed General Plan as described above. Overall, the No Project Alternative would result in *slightly reduced impacts* in comparison to the proposed project.

e. Cultural Resources

As demonstrated below, the No Project Alternative would result in slightly greater impacts in comparison to the proposed project.

Less development would occur in the growth areas under the No Project Alternative than under the proposed project, which could reduce the extent of potential cultural resource impacts on disturbed but undeveloped land. However, under the No Project Alternative, the policies in the proposed General Plan would not be adopted.

Under the proposed project, consistency with the policies of the proposed General Plan as new development occurs would ensure that impacts to cultural resources would be less than significant. The No Project Alternative would not include the proposed ECAS measures to promote green building design and energy efficiency. These measures support preservation and reuse of existing structures, which would reduce demolition activities and reduce impacts on historic resources. The existing General Plan contains policies related to the protection of cultural resources, but these policies have been expanded and strengthened in the proposed General Plan by preserving and protecting identified cultural resources and evaluating unanticipated finds made during construction. Therefore, the No Project Alternative would result in *slightly greater impacts* in comparison to the proposed project.

f. Geology and Soils

As demonstrated below, the No Project Alternative would result in similar impacts as the proposed project. Under both the No Project Alternative and the proposed project, consistency with the policies of the proposed General Plan and compliance with the California Building Code (CBC) as new development occurs would ensure that impacts associated with geologic and seismic hazards would be less than significant. Although the No Project Alternative would not include the adoption of the policies in the proposed General Plan, the existing General Plan includes similar policies related to seismic and geologic hazards as those proposed in the General Plan. Therefore, overall the No Project Alternative would be *similar* to the proposed project.

g. Greenhouse Gas Emissions

As demonstrated below, the No Project Alternative would result in substantially greater impacts in comparison to the proposed project. The proposed project would result in a significant and unavoidable GHG impact because the General Plan and ECAS would not ensure that the City will be on track to reach the goal of Executive Order S-03-05 to reduce GHG emissions by 80

percent below 1990 levels by 2050. As described in Chapter 4.7, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, transportation emissions from VMT are the largest contributor to Vacaville's emissions. Under horizon-year conditions, the same level of development would occur as under the proposed project, and therefore VMT levels and GHG emissions would be similar.

However, the No Project Alternative would not include proposed ECAS measures to reduce GHG emissions, which would make the No Project Alternative inconsistent with the 2020 GHG emission reduction target established by AB 32 and Executive Order S-03-05, creating a new significant impact. Therefore, this alternative would result in a *substantially greater impact* in comparison to the proposed project.

h. Hazards and Hazardous Materials

As demonstrated below, the No Project Alternative would result in similar impacts as the proposed project.

Under the proposed project, consistency with the policies of the proposed General Plan and compliance with the existing regulations and procedures as new development occurs would ensure that impacts associated with hazards and hazardous materials would be less than significant. The existing General Plan contains policies related to hazards, but these policies have been expanded and strengthened in the proposed General Plan by, for example, requiring industrial uses that rely on the use of hazardous materials to have a storage and emergency response program in place, directing the City to maintain designated hazardous materials carrier routes, and requiring separation between hazardous materials areas and sensitive uses. Although the No Project Alternative would not include these strengthened policies, development would be required to comply with existing regulations and procedures related to hazardous and hazardous materials. Therefore, overall the No Project Alternative would be *similar* to the proposed project.

i. Hydrology and Water Quality

As demonstrated below, the No Project Alternative would result in slightly greater impacts in comparison to the proposed project.

Less development would occur in the growth areas under this alternative than under the proposed project, which would reduce impervious surfaces and thereby lessen water quality and groundwater impacts and reduce the exposure of people to flooding and failure of a dam or levee.

The proposed project would not result in significant impacts associated with water quality, groundwater, drainage, or flooding. The proposed project would result in significant project-

level and cumulative impacts associated with failure of a dam or levee. Under the No Project Alternative, the same impact related to dam or levee failure would occur.

As under the proposed project, new development under the existing General Plan would need to comply with the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permit, which requires the preparation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) for projects that disturb 1 acre or more of land, and construction on smaller sites that are part of a larger project. Existing regulations and procedures, such as the Vacaville Grading Ordinance and FEMA's flood zone mapping, would still apply.

Under the No Project Alternative, policies of the existing General Plan would remain in place. The existing General Plan includes policies related to water conservation, flooding, and storm drainage. However, under the proposed General Plan policies related to these topics would be expanded and strengthened. In addition, the No Project Alternative would lack the proposed ECAS measures that promote water conservation and increase infiltration. Therefore, overall the No Project Alternative would result in *slightly greater impacts* in comparison to the proposed project.

j. Land Use and Planning

As demonstrated below, the No Project Alternative would result in slightly greater impacts from land use conflicts in comparison to the proposed project.

As discussed in Section B.2.d, Biological Resources, it is assumed that under the No Project Alternative the City would still be required to comply with the Solano HCP. However, the No Project Alternative would lack the proposed ECAS measures that promote neighborhood connectivity. In addition, the No Project Alternative would lack the proposed General Plan policies and ECAS measures that support the regional Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS), which could result in a significant impact. Therefore, overall the No Project Alternative would result in a *slightly greater impact* in comparison to the proposed project.

k. Noise

As demonstrated below, the No Project Alternative would result in similar noise impacts as the proposed project.

Under the No Project Alternative, new development would occur under the existing General Plan, which calls for less intensive development east of Leisure Town Road, but calls for similar levels of development along Vaca Valley Parkway and Ulatis Drive, which are all areas where the proposed project would result in significant noise impacts due to increased traffic levels. In addition, the No Project Alternative would not include the proposed ECAS measures that promote

alternative energy facilities, such as wind turbines, which would become stationary sources of noise. However, the No Project Alternative would also not include the proposed new policies to address vibration from the railroad; to reduce noise from stationary noise sources by requiring conditions of approval; and to control construction noise.

Overall, the No Project Alternative would result in *similar* impacts in comparison to the proposed project.

l. Population and Housing

The No Project Alternative would result in similar impacts to population and housing as the proposed project. The proposed General Plan would induce substantial population growth in the EIR Study Area under horizon-year conditions, which would result in project-level and cumulative significant and unavoidable impacts. Since the No Project Alternative would include the same amount of horizon-year development as the proposed project, impacts associated with population growth would be *similar* to the proposed project.

m. Public Services and Recreation

The No Project Alternative would result in similar impacts to public services and recreation as the proposed project. The No Project Alternative would include the same amount of horizon-year development as the proposed General Plan. Therefore, the No Project Alternative would generate a similar demand for police, fire protection, school, library, and park and recreation services and facilities and public service impacts would be *similar* to the proposed project.

n. Transportation and Traffic

As demonstrated below, the No Project Alternative would result in slightly greater impacts in comparison to the proposed project.

The horizon-year development levels anticipated for the No Project Alternative are the same as for the proposed project. As shown in Table 4.14-10 in Chapter 4.14, Transportation and Traffic, the proposed project would cause roadway intersections and freeway segments to degrade below acceptable level of service (LOS) standards, creating 17 significant and unavoidable impacts. The No Project Alternative would not cause two of the significant and unavoidable impacts (Impacts TRAF-5 and TRAF-6) of the proposed project, but new impacts could occur under the No Project Alternative at different intersections due to different development patterns from the proposed project. Therefore, the impacts with respect to LOS standards are considered similar under horizon-year conditions.

The proposed project would not result in significant impacts related to air traffic, roadway hazards, or alternative transportation. Although the No Project Alternative would have similar im-

pacts related to air traffic and roadway hazards, it would not include the proposed General Plan and ECAS policies and measures that support alternative transportation.

Overall, because the No Project Alternative would have similar impacts related to roadway intersections and segments, but exclude the alternative transportation policies and measures found in the proposed project, this alternative would result in a *slightly greater impact* in comparison to the proposed project.

o. Utilities and Service Systems

As demonstrated below, the No Project Alternative would result in slightly reduced impacts in comparison to the proposed project.

The No Project Alternative would include the same amount of horizon-year development as the proposed project. Therefore, the No Project Alternative would generate a similar demand for water supply, wastewater, stormwater, solid waste, and energy supplies, services, and facilities. However, since the No Project Alternative would not extend new development as far east into the growth areas as would the proposed General Plan, it would require less extensive construction of new utilities and service systems to serve new development. Although these impacts of the General Plan can be reduced to a less-than-significant level, the No Project Alternative would have *slightly reduced* impacts on utilities and services systems.

C. Focused Growth Alternative

This section analyses the Focused Growth Alternative against the proposed General Plan and ECAS. Figures 5-2 and 5-3 show the land uses in growth areas and the focus areas under the Focused Growth Alternative.

1. Principal Characteristics

Under the Focused Growth Alternative, the policies in the proposed General Plan and ECAS would be adopted, but the land use map of the proposed General Plan would not be adopted. Under this alternative, development in the growth areas would be focused in the central portion of the East of Leisure Town Road Growth Area and in the southwest corner of the Northeast Growth Area. The northeast corner of the Northeast Growth Area would maintain the land use designations specified by the existing General Plan. In the focus areas, this alternative would maintain the existing character as much as possible. Land use designations would be changed from what is in the existing General Plan only in order to be consistent with the existing land

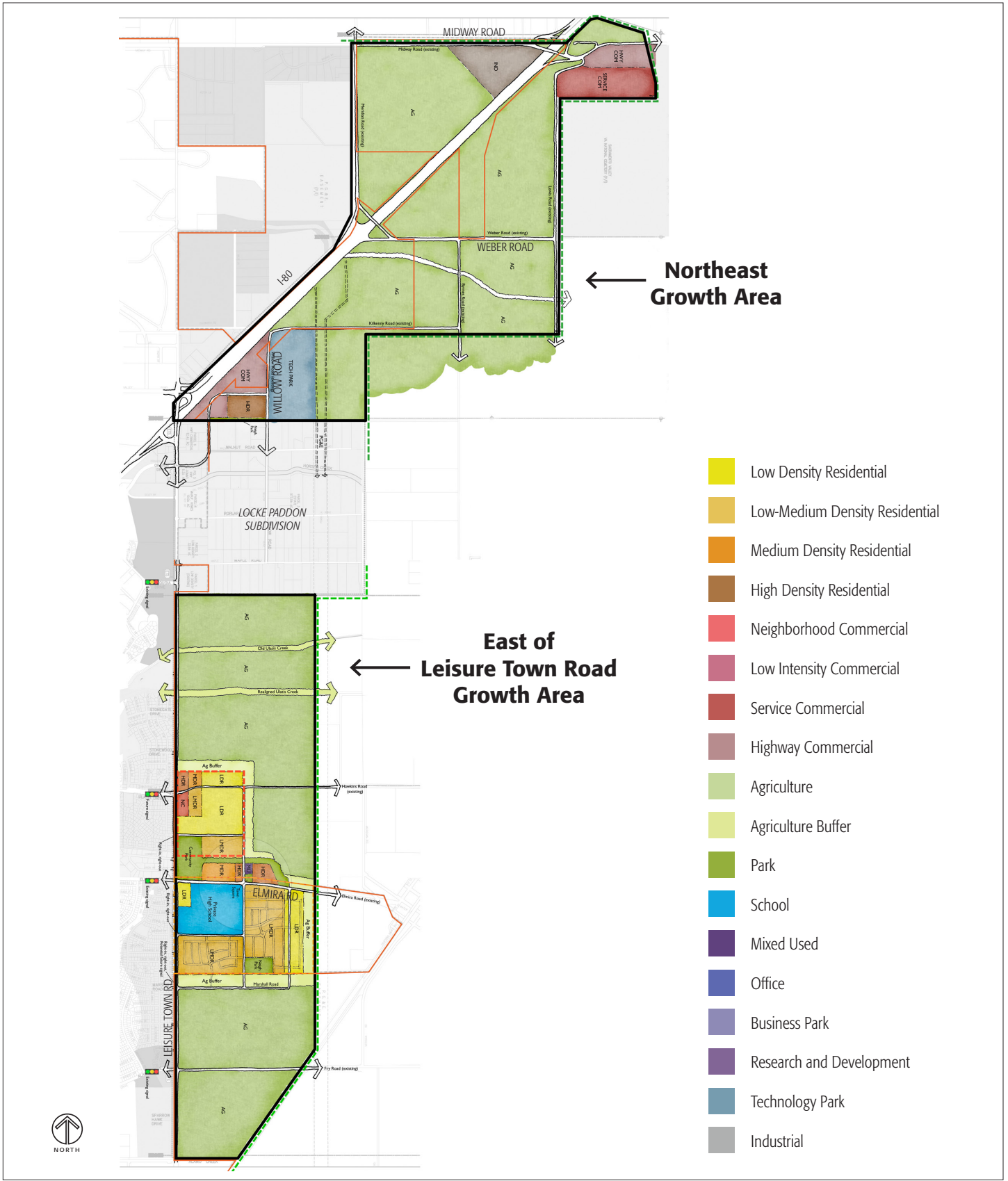


FIGURE 5-2

FOCUSED GROWTH ALTERNATIVE -
 EAST OF LEISURE TOWN ROAD AND NORTHEAST GROWTH AREAS

use. This alternative maintains the existing General Plan land use designations for vacant properties in the focus areas. In addition, this alternative maintains significant areas outside the current city limits for agricultural use.

Outside of the growth areas and focus areas, land uses under this alternative would be the same as the land uses planned in the proposed General Plan. This alternative proposes the least amount of growth among the three alternatives because of the focused geographical extent of new development under this alternative. It is estimated that this alternative would result in 9,240 new housing units, with 1,660 of these units being proposed in the new growth areas, which is lower than the amount of housing units expected under the proposed General Plan. The amount of non-residential development projected by 2035 is slightly lower than that of the proposed General Plan. Because it is assumed that all residential development would occur during the horizon of the General Plan, the full buildout anticipated under the Focused Growth Alternative would include significantly less residential development than would occur under the full buildout of the proposed project. Non-residential development under full buildout would also be lower under this alternative than under the proposed General Plan. This alternative would achieve the GHG reduction target of the proposed ECAS. The alternatives analysis in this section is based on estimated horizon-year development in 2035.

2. Impact Discussion

The Focused Growth Alternative would have the following impacts relative to the proposed General Plan and ECAS.

a. Aesthetics

As demonstrated below, the Focused Growth Alternative would result in a slightly reduced impact to aesthetics in comparison to the proposed project.

Under the Focused Growth Alternative, portions of the East of Leisure Town Road Growth Area and Northeast Growth Area would remain in agricultural use rather than being converted to non-agricultural land uses, as would occur under the proposed General Plan. Focus areas would remain in their existing land use. The proposed project would not have an adverse effect on a scenic vista, substantially damage scenic resources, or create new sources of light or glare. The proposed project would substantially alter the visual character in undeveloped portions of Vacaville, which would be a significant and unavoidable impact. Like the proposed project, the Focused Growth Alternative would allow new development in some areas that are currently largely undeveloped or in agricultural use. These areas offer open, expansive views of the hillsides in and surrounding the city. However, in comparison to the proposed project, the Focused Growth Alternative would allow for the conversion of fewer of these properties. Because

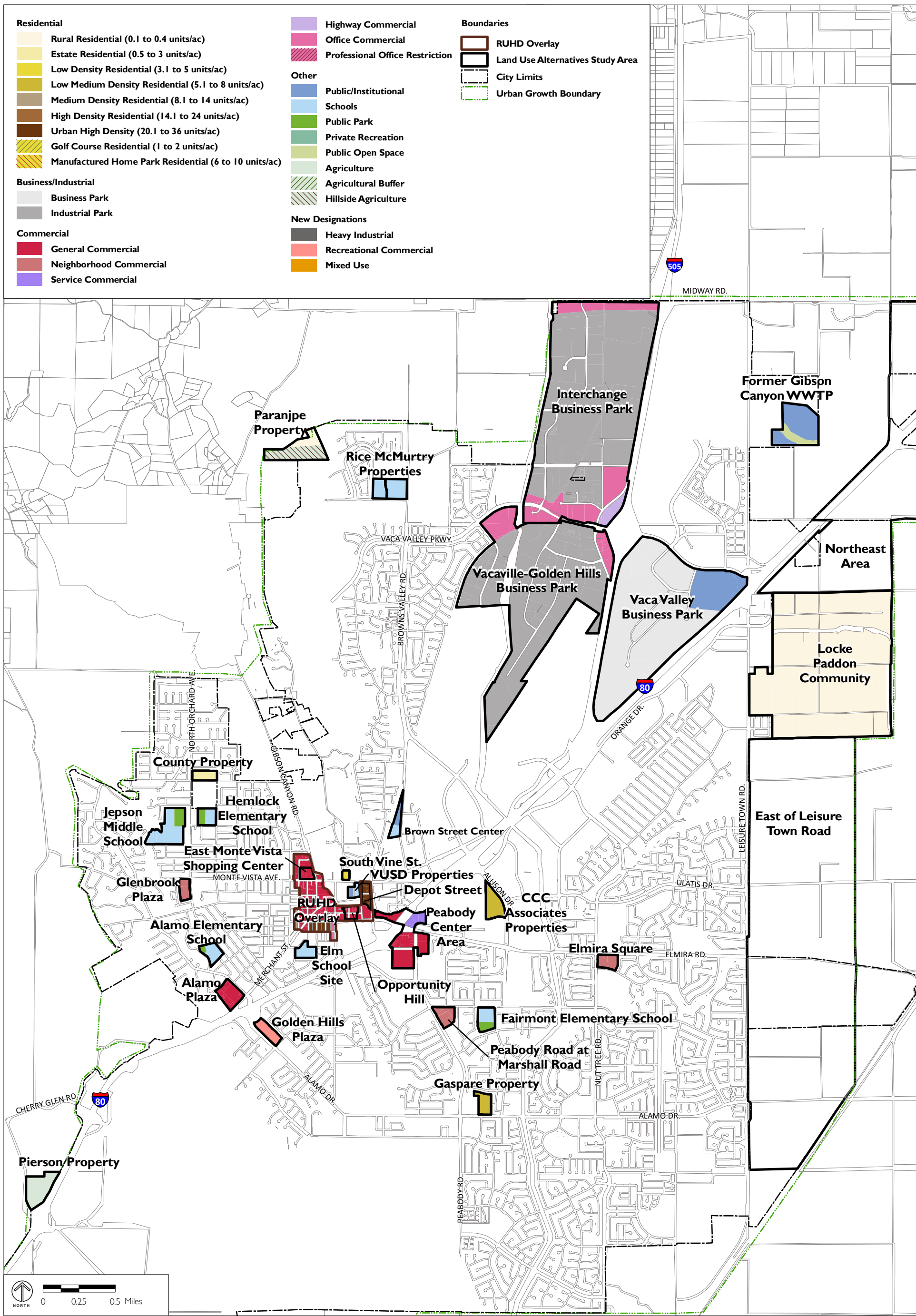


FIGURE 5-3

FOCUSED GROWTH ALTERNATIVE - FOCUS AREAS

the Focused Growth Alternative would reduce the extent of the significant and unavoidable impact of the proposed project, the alternative would result in a *slightly reduced impact* in comparison to the proposed project.

b. Agriculture and Forestry Resources

As demonstrated below, the Focused Growth Alternative would result in a slightly reduced impact to agriculture and forestry resources in comparison to the proposed project.

Under the Focused Growth Alternative, new development would be focused in comparison to the proposed General Plan. Portions of the East of Leisure Town Road Growth Area and Northeast Growth Area would remain in agricultural use rather than being converted to non-agricultural land uses, as would occur under the proposed project. The proposed project would not result in impacts to forest lands. However, the proposed project would convert farmlands of concern under CEQA and Williamson Act lands to non-agricultural uses, and contribute to cumulative impacts to agricultural resources; these impacts would be significant and unavoidable. Although less development would occur under the Focused Growth Alternative than the proposed project, some farmlands of concern under CEQA and lands under active Williamson Act contracts would be converted to non-agricultural uses. Overall, because the Focused Growth Alternative would reduce the extent of the significant and unavoidable impact of the proposed project, the alternative would result in a *slightly reduced impact* in comparison to the proposed project.

c. Air Quality

As demonstrated below, the Focused Growth Alternative would result in a slightly reduced air quality impact in comparison to the proposed project.

The proposed project would result in a significant and unavoidable impact due to PM₁₀ emissions associated with VMT. This impact would occur at the project and cumulative levels. Under horizon-year conditions, the Focused Growth Alternative would generate less development than the proposed General Plan, and therefore the significant and unavoidable project and cumulative impacts would be slightly reduced. Because less development would occur under the Focused Growth Alternative than under the proposed project, total VMT would be reduced under this alternative, which would reduce air quality impacts. Overall, this alternative would result in a *slightly reduced impact* in comparison to the proposed project.

d. Biological Resources

As demonstrated below, the Focused Growth Alternative would result in a slightly reduced impact to biological resources in comparison to the proposed project.

Under horizon-year conditions, less development would occur under the Focused Growth Alternative than under the proposed General Plan, which could reduce the extent of potential biological resource impacts. Under the proposed General Plan, potential impacts to special-status plant and animal species, riparian habitat, wetlands, and biological resource plans and policies would be less than significant as a result of proposed General Plan policies and consistency with the Solano HCP. Under cumulative conditions, the proposed project could substantially impact an important wildlife corridor, resulting in a significant and unavoidable impact. The Focused Growth Alternative would include the same General Plan land use designations in that wildlife corridor area and therefore result in the same significant and unavoidable impact. Because the Focused Growth Alternative would result in a less extensive area of impact to biological resources, this alternative would result in a *slightly reduced impact* in comparison to the proposed project.

e. Cultural Resources

As demonstrated below, the Focused Growth Alternative would result in a slightly reduced impact to cultural resources in comparison to the proposed project.

Less development would occur under the Focused Growth Alternative than under the proposed General Plan, which could reduce the extent of potential cultural resource impacts. Under the proposed General Plan, consistency with the policies of the proposed General Plan as new development occurs would ensure that impacts to cultural resources would be less than significant. The Focused Growth Alternative would include the same policies as the proposed project to protect cultural resources.

It is generally assumed that a larger developed acreage and higher number of units would require a concomitant increase in the scale of ground preparation, demolition, subsurface construction, and landscape alteration. Based on this assumption, the Focused Growth Alternative would have a lower potential to result in impacts to archaeological sites, built environment resources, paleontological resources, and human remains than the proposed project due to the reduced amount of development. Therefore, the Focused Growth Alternative would result in a *slightly reduced impact* in comparison to the proposed project.

f. Geology and Soils

As demonstrated below, the Focused Growth Alternative would result in similar geology and soils impacts as the proposed project.

Under horizon-year conditions, less development would occur under the Focused Growth Alternative than under the proposed General Plan, which could reduce the exposure of people and structures to geologic and seismic hazards. Under the proposed project, consistency with the

policies of the proposed General Plan and compliance with the California Building Code (CBC) as new development occurs would ensure that impacts associated with geologic and seismic hazards would be less than significant. Under the Focused Growth Alternative, the same set of policies in the proposed General Plan would be adopted and the CBC would still apply to new development. Therefore, overall the Focused Growth Alternative would be *similar* to the proposed project.

g. Greenhouse Gas Emissions

As demonstrated below, the Focused Growth Alternative would result in similar GHG emissions impacts as the proposed project.

Under horizon-year conditions, less development would occur under the Focused Growth Alternative than under the proposed General Plan. The proposed project would result in a significant and unavoidable impact because the General Plan and ECAS would not ensure that the City will be on track to reach the goal of Executive Order S-03-05 to reduce GHG emissions by 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. As described in Chapter 4.7, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, VMT is the largest contributor to Vacaville's emissions. Because the Focused Growth Alternative would involve less development than the proposed project, VMT and GHG emissions would be slightly reduced. However, this reduction in VMT would likely not be substantial enough to reduce GHG emissions consistent with the 2050 goal of Executive Order S-03-05. Therefore, overall this alternative would be *similar* to the proposed project.

h. Hazards and Hazardous Materials

As demonstrated below, the Focused Growth Alternative would result in similar hazards and hazardous materials impacts as the proposed project.

Under horizon-year conditions, less development would occur under the Focused Growth Alternative than under the proposed General Plan, which could reduce the exposure of people and structures to hazards and hazardous materials. Under the proposed project, consistency with the policies of the proposed General Plan and compliance with the existing regulations and procedures as new development occurs would ensure that impacts associated with hazards and hazardous materials would be less than significant. Development under both the Focused Growth Alternative and the proposed project would be required to comply with existing regulations and procedures related to hazardous and hazardous materials, reducing potential impacts to be less than significant. Therefore, the Focused Growth Alternative would be *similar* to the proposed project.

i. Hydrology and Water Quality

As demonstrated below, the Focused Growth Alternative would result in similar impacts to hydrology and water quality as the proposed project.

Under horizon-year conditions, less development would occur under this alternative than under the proposed General Plan, which could reduce the potential for water quality and groundwater impacts and reduce the exposure of people to flooding and failure of a dam or levee. The proposed project would not result in significant impacts associated with water quality, groundwater, drainage, or flooding. The proposed project would result in significant project-level and cumulative impacts associated with failure of a dam or levee. As under the proposed project, new development under the Focused Growth Alternative would be subject to existing regulations and procedures, including the NPDES and SWPPP requirements, the Vacaville Grading Ordinance, and FEMA's flood zone mapping. Under the Focused Growth Alternative, the same impact related to dam or levee failure would occur. The Focused Growth Alternative would be subject to the same policies related to water conservation, flooding, and drainage in the proposed General Plan. Overall, the Focused Growth Alternative would be *similar* to the proposed project.

j. Land Use and Planning

As demonstrated below, the Focused Growth Alternative would result in similar land use impacts as the proposed project.

The proposed General Plan would not result in any land use impacts. Neither the proposed project nor the Focused Growth Alternative would divide an established community, conflict with a habitat conservation plan, or create a land use conflict. Therefore, the Focused Growth Alternative would be *similar* to the proposed project.

k. Noise

As demonstrated below, the Focused Growth Alternative would result in a slightly reduced noise impact in comparison to the proposed project.

Overall, the Focused Growth Alternative includes less development under horizon-year conditions than the proposed General Plan. The proposed project would result in one significant noise impact due to increased traffic levels on the following roadways:

- ◆ Vaca Valley Parkway from the Interstate 505 northbound ramps to Leisure Town Road
- ◆ Leisure Town Road from Alamo Drive to Vanden Road
- ◆ Ulatis Drive from Nut Tree Road to Leisure Town Road

The Focused Growth Alternative calls for less development in the East of Leisure Town Road Growth Area, but calls for similar levels of development along Vaca Valley Parkway and Ulatis Drive. Because the Focused Growth Alternative includes less development under horizon-year conditions than the proposed project, it can be expected that traffic noise levels would be slightly reduced, and the Focused Growth Alternative would result in a *slightly reduced impact* in comparison to the proposed project.

l. Population and Housing

As demonstrated below, the Focused Growth Alternative would result in a slightly reduced population and housing impact in comparison to the proposed project.

The Focused Growth Alternative would include less residential development under horizon-year conditions in comparison to the proposed General Plan. The proposed project would induce substantial population growth in the EIR Study Area, which would result in project-level and cumulative significant and unavoidable impacts. In order to reduce the proposed project's anticipated population growth by 2035 to an "insubstantial" level that would not exceed ABAG's current projections, the City would have to limit housing development opportunities to less than half of the level that is anticipated. Because the Focused Growth Alternative would involve less horizon-year residential development than the proposed project, impacts associated with population growth would be reduced, but a significant and unavoidable impact would still occur. Therefore, this alternative would result in a *slightly reduced impact* in comparison to the proposed project.

m. Public Services and Recreation

As demonstrated below, the Focused Growth Alternative would result in a slightly reduced impact to public services and recreation in comparison to the proposed project. The Focused Growth Alternative would include less development under horizon-year conditions in comparison to the proposed General Plan. Therefore, this alternative would generate a reduced demand for police, fire protection, school, library, and park and recreation services and facilities compared to the proposed project. Therefore, public service impacts would result in a *slightly reduced impact* in comparison to the proposed project.

n. Transportation and Traffic

As demonstrated below, the Focused Growth Alternative would result in a substantially reduced transportation and traffic impact in comparison to the proposed project.

Because the Focused Growth Alternative is anticipated to generate less development in 2035 compared to the proposed General Plan, it is anticipated to impact fewer roadway intersections and segments. The proposed project would create 17 significant and unavoidable impacts by

causing roadway intersections and segments to degrade below acceptable LOS standards. Both the proposed project and the Focused Growth Alternative would avoid significant impacts related to air traffic, roadway hazards, or alternative transportation through proposed General Plan and ECAS policies and measures. Overall, the Focused Growth Alternative would result in a *substantially reduced impact* in comparison to the proposed project for transportation and traffic impacts.

o. Utilities and Service Systems

As demonstrated below, the Focused Growth Alternative would result in a slightly reduced impact to utilities and service systems in comparison to the proposed project. The Focused Growth Alternative would include less development under horizon-year conditions in comparison to the proposed General Plan. Therefore, this alternative would generate a slightly reduced demand for water supply, wastewater, stormwater, solid waste, and energy supplies, services, and facilities. Therefore, utilities and services system impacts would result in a *slightly reduced impact* in comparison to the proposed project.

D. Town Grid Alternative

This section analyses the Town Grid Alternative against the proposed General Plan and ECAS. Figures 5-4 and 5-5 show the land uses in growth areas and the focus areas under the Town Grid Alternative.

1. Principal Characteristics

Under the Town Grid Alternative, the policies in the proposed General Plan and ECAS would be adopted, but the land use map of the proposed General Plan would not be adopted. Under this alternative, the highest density development in the growth areas would be focused around a central town square in the East of Leisure Town Road Growth Area. Both residential and non-residential uses would be focused around the Meridian Road interchange in the Northeast Growth Area. In the focus areas, this alternative would establish or revitalize neighborhood centers throughout Vacaville. Many of the focus areas would be designated for mixed-use development, which would eventually serve as neighborhood-serving retail uses on the ground floor with residential on a second and possibly third floor. These mixed-use centers would add more character to Vacaville's existing neighborhoods, and provide a central neighborhood focal point for the community living in Vacaville's neighborhoods.

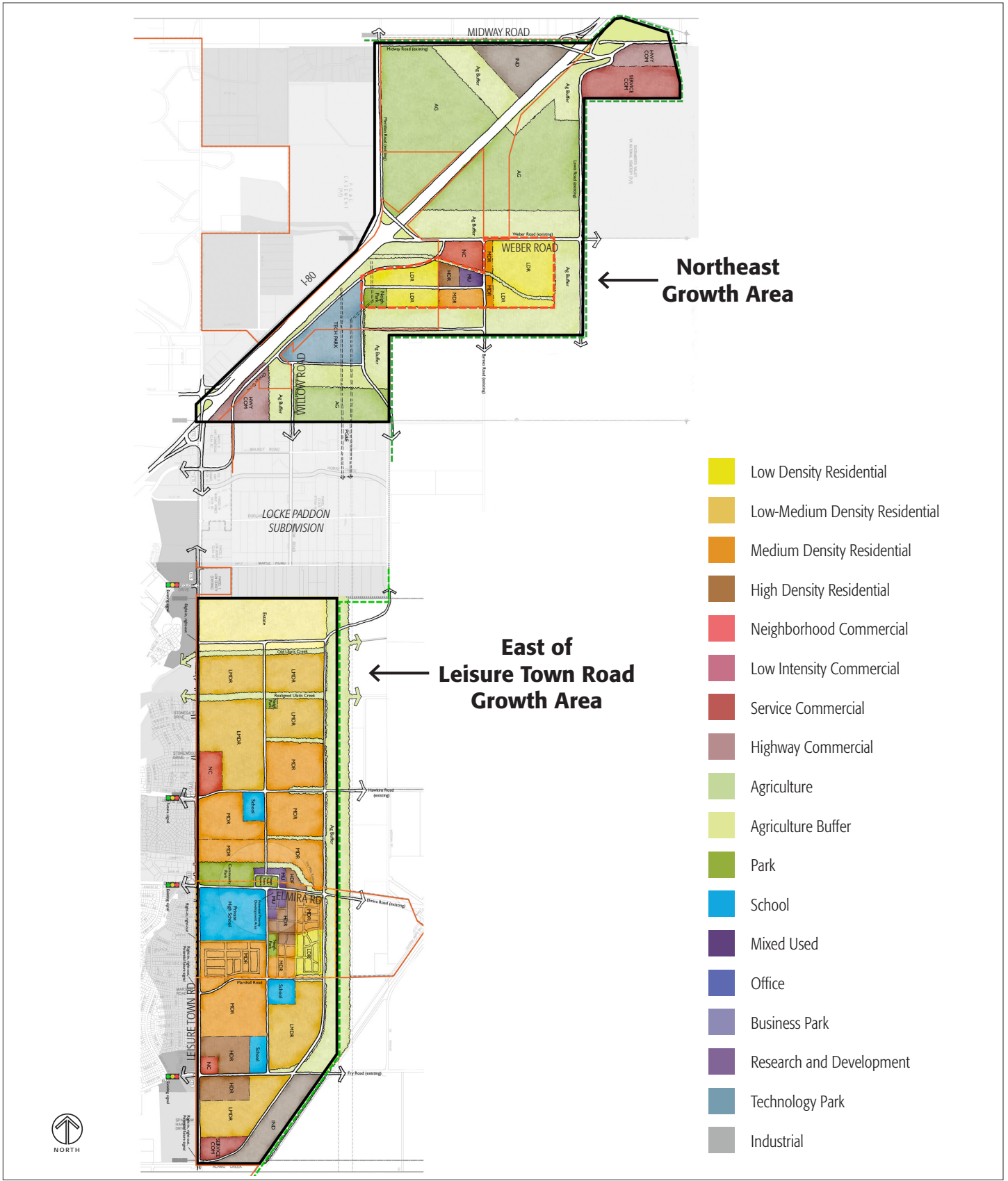


FIGURE 5-4

TOWN GRID ALTERNATIVE-
 EAST OF LEISURE TOWN ROAD AND NORTHEAST GROWTH AREAS

Outside of the growth areas and focus areas, land uses under this alternative would be the same as the land uses planned in the proposed General Plan. It is estimated that this alternative would result in the same horizon-year residential development levels (9,680 new housing units) as the proposed project, and approximately the same amount of non-residential development by 2035. The Town Grid Alternative would include the same level of horizon-year growth as the proposed project, but with an altered land use map. Under full buildout, this alternative would involve more residential development, but less non-residential development as the proposed project. This alternative would not achieve the GHG reduction target of the proposed ECAS. The alternatives analysis in this section is based on estimated horizon-year development in 2035.

2. Impact Discussion

The Town Grid Alternative would have the following impacts relative to the proposed General Plan and ECAS.

a. Aesthetics

As demonstrated below, the Town Grid Alternative would result in similar impacts to aesthetics as the proposed project.

Under the Town Grid Alternative, new development would be oriented around neighborhood centers. As under the proposed General Plan, new development would occur throughout the growth areas and in focus areas. Under horizon-year conditions, this alternative would include development of a similar extent of land as would occur under the proposed project. The proposed project would not have an adverse effect on a scenic vista, substantially damage scenic resources, or create new sources of light or glare. The proposed project would substantially alter the visual character in undeveloped portions of Vacaville, which would be a significant and unavoidable impact. Like the proposed project, the Town Grid Alternative would allow new development in some areas that are currently largely undeveloped or in agricultural use. These areas offer open, expansive views of the hillsides in and surrounding the city. These areas also offer scenic views of agricultural landscapes and countryside. Therefore, the Town Grid Alternative would result in the same significant and unavoidable impact as under the proposed project, and the alternative would be *similar* to the proposed project.

b. Agriculture and Forestry Resources

As demonstrated below, the Town Grid Alternative would result in similar impacts to agriculture and forestry resources as the proposed project.

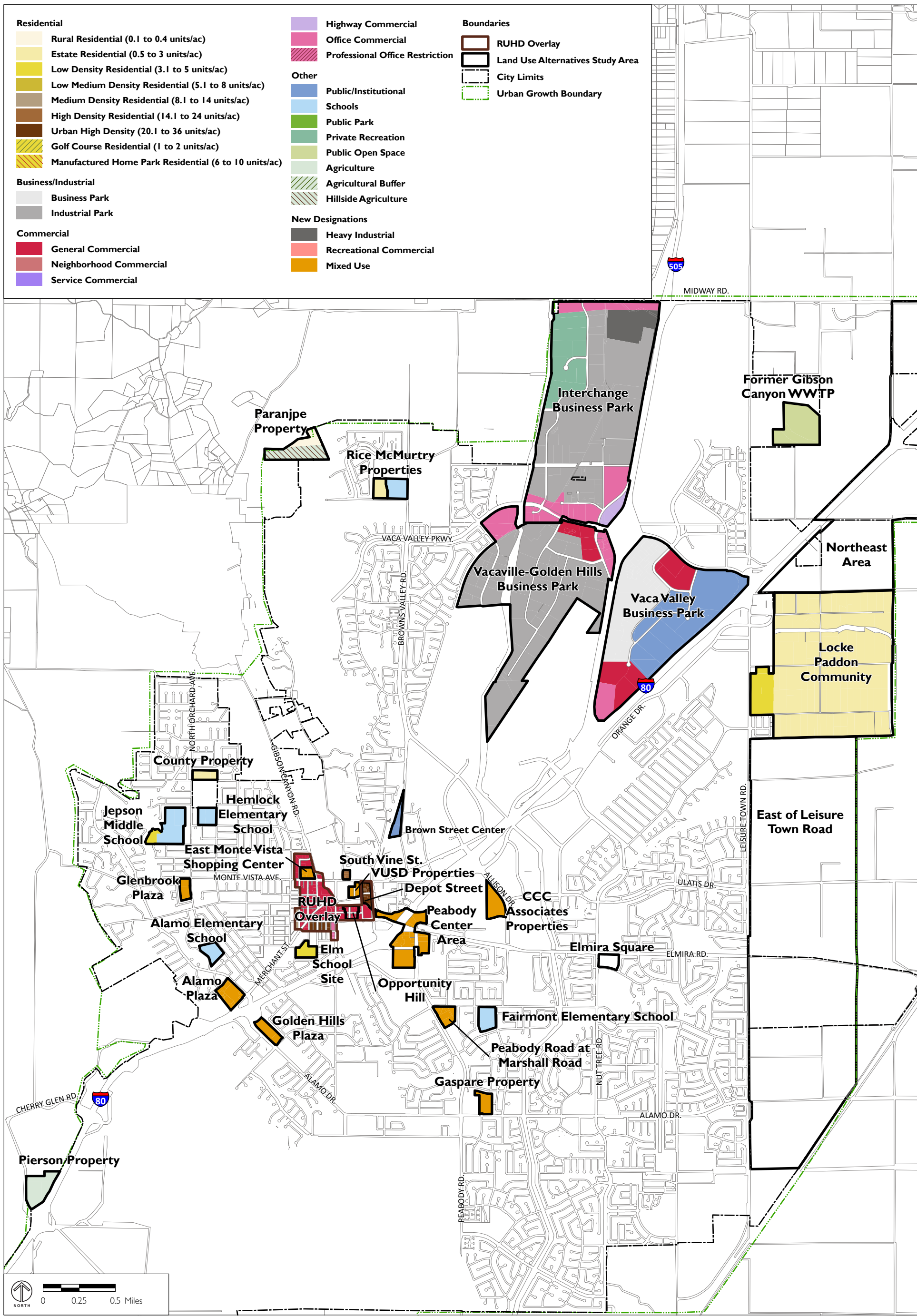


FIGURE 5-5

TOWN GRID ALTERNATIVES - FOCUS AREAS

Under horizon-year conditions, the Town Grid Alternative would include development of a similar extent of land as would occur under the proposed General Plan. The proposed project would not result in impacts to forest lands. However, the proposed project would convert farmlands of concern under CEQA and Williamson Act lands to non-agricultural uses, and contribute to cumulative impacts to agricultural resources; these impacts would be significant and unavoidable. Like the proposed project, the Town Grid Alternative would allow new development in areas that are currently in agricultural use. As under the proposed project, development under the Town Grid Alternative would result in the conversion of agricultural uses to non-agricultural uses, including farmlands of concern and lands under active Williamson Act contracts. Therefore, the Town Grid Alternative would be *similar* to the proposed project.

c. Air Quality

As demonstrated below, the Town Grid Alternative would result in a slightly reduced air quality impact in comparison to the proposed project.

The proposed project would result in a significant and unavoidable impact due to PM₁₀ emissions associated with VMT. This impact would occur at the project and cumulative levels. Although the Town Grid Alternative is anticipated to generate approximately the same amount of development in 2035 as the proposed project, the mix of uses in the growth areas would increase the likelihood that new residents in these areas could work and shop in the eastern portion of the city, rather than traveling further to other areas of the city, which could reduce VMT. Therefore, it is anticipated that this alternative would generate fewer PM₁₀ emissions. Overall, this alternative would result in a *slightly reduced impact* in comparison to the proposed project.

d. Biological Resources

As demonstrated below, the Town Grid Alternative would result in similar impacts to biological resources as the proposed project.

Under horizon-year conditions, this alternative would include development of a similar extent of land as would occur under the proposed General Plan. Under the proposed project, potential impacts to special-status plant and animal species, riparian habitat, wetlands, and biological resource plans and policies would be less than significant as a result of proposed General Plan policies and consistency with the Solano HCP. Under cumulative conditions, the proposed project could substantially impact an important wildlife corridor, resulting in a significant and unavoidable impact. The Town Grid Alternative would include the same General Plan land use designations in that wildlife corridor area, and therefore result in the same significant and unavoidable impact. Therefore, the Town Grid Alternative would be *similar* to the proposed project.

e. Cultural Resources

As demonstrated below, the Town Grid Alternative would result in similar impacts to cultural resources as the proposed project.

Under horizon-year conditions, the Town Grid Alternative would include development of a similar extent of land as would occur under the proposed General Plan. Under the proposed project, consistency with the policies of the proposed General Plan as new development occurs would ensure that impacts to cultural resources would be less than significant. Therefore, the Town Grid Alternative would also avoid significant cultural resource impacts and the alternative would be *similar* to the proposed project.

f. Geology and Soils

As demonstrated below, the Town Grid Alternative would result in similar geology and soils impacts as the proposed project.

Under the proposed project, consistency with the policies of the proposed General Plan and compliance with the CBC as new development occurs would ensure that impacts associated with geologic and seismic hazards would be less than significant. The Town Grid Alternative would be subject to the same proposed General Plan policies and the CBC, reducing impacts to a less-than-significant level. Therefore, the Town Grid Alternative would be *similar* to the proposed project.

g. Greenhouse Gas Emissions

As demonstrated below, the Town Grid Alternative would result in similar GHG emissions impacts as the proposed project.

The proposed project would result in a significant and unavoidable impact because the General Plan and ECAS would not ensure that the City will be on track to reach the goal of Executive Order S-03-05 to reduce GHG emissions by 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. As described in Chapter 4.7, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, VMT is the largest contributor to Vacaville's emissions. Although the Town Grid Alternative is anticipated to generate the same amount of development in 2035 as the proposed project, the mix of uses in the growth areas would increase the likelihood that new residents in these areas could work and shop in the eastern portion of the city, rather than traveling further to other areas of the city, which could reduce VMT and GHG emissions. However, this reduction in VMT would likely not be substantial enough to reduce GHG emissions consistent with the 2050 goal of Executive Order S-03-05. Therefore, overall this alternative would be *similar* to the proposed project.

h. Hazards and Hazardous Materials

As demonstrated below, the Town Grid Alternative would result in similar hazards and hazardous materials impacts as the proposed project.

Under horizon-year conditions, the Town Grid Alternative would include development of a similar extent of land as would occur under the proposed General Plan. Under the proposed project, consistency with the policies of the proposed General Plan and compliance with the existing regulations and procedures as new development occurs would ensure that impacts associated with hazards and hazardous materials would be less than significant. In addition, development would be required to comply with the same regulations and procedures related to hazardous and hazardous materials as the proposed project. Therefore, the Town Grid Alternative would be *similar* to the proposed project.

i. Hydrology and Water Quality

As demonstrated below, the Town Grid Alternative would result in similar impacts to hydrology and water quality as the proposed project.

The proposed project would not result in significant impacts associated with water quality, groundwater, drainage, or flooding. The proposed project would result in significant project-level and cumulative impacts associated with failure of a dam or levee. Under horizon-year conditions, the Town Grid Alternative would include development of a similar extent of land as would occur under the proposed project, which would result in a similar potential for water quality and groundwater impacts. As under the proposed project, new development under the Town Grid Alternative would be subject to existing regulations and procedures, including the NPDES and SWPPP requirements, the Vacaville Grading Ordinance, and FEMA's flood zone mapping. Under the Town Grid Alternative, the same impact related to dam or levee failure would occur. Overall, the Town Grid Alternative would be *similar* to the proposed project.

j. Land Use and Planning

As demonstrated below, the Town Grid Alternative would result in similar land use impacts as the proposed project. The proposed General Plan would not result in any land use impacts. Neither the proposed project nor the Town Grid Alternative would divide an established community, conflict with a habitat conservation plan, or create a land use conflict. Therefore, the Town Grid Alternative would be *similar* to the proposed project.

k. Noise

As demonstrated below, the Town Grid Alternative would result in a slightly reduced noise impact in comparison to the proposed project.

The proposed project would result in one significant noise impact due to increased traffic levels on the following roadways:

- ◆ Vaca Valley Parkway from the Interstate 505 northbound ramps to Leisure Town Road
- ◆ Leisure Town Road from Alamo Drive to Vanden Road
- ◆ Ulatis Drive from Nut Tree Road to Leisure Town Road

Although the Town Grid Alternative is anticipated to generate approximately the same amount of development in 2035 as the proposed project, the mix of uses in the growth areas would increase the likelihood that new residents in these areas could work and shop in the eastern portion of the city, rather than traveling further to other areas of the city, which could reduce VMT and traffic-related noise throughout the city. Overall, this alternative would result in a *slightly reduced impact* in comparison to the proposed project regarding noise impacts.

l. Population and Housing

As demonstrated below, the Town Grid Alternative would result in similar population and housing impacts as the proposed project.

The Town Grid Alternative would include approximately the same amount of horizon-year development as the proposed General Plan, but with an altered land use map. The proposed project would induce substantial population growth in the EIR Study Area, which would result in project-level and cumulative significant and unavoidable impacts. Because the Town Grid Alternative would involve the same amount of horizon-year development, the same impacts associated with population growth would occur under this alternative as would occur under the proposed project, and overall the Town Grid Alternative would be *similar* to the proposed project.

m. Public Services and Recreation

As demonstrated below, the Town Grid Alternative would result in similar impacts to public services and recreation as the proposed project. The Town Grid Alternative would include approximately the same amount of horizon-year development as the proposed General Plan, but with an altered land use map. Therefore, within the horizon of the General Plan, the Town Grid Alternative would generate a similar demand for police, fire protection, school, library, and park and recreation services and facilities, and public service impacts would be *similar* to the proposed project.

n. Transportation and Traffic

As demonstrated below, the Town Grid Alternative would result in a slightly reduced transportation and traffic impact in comparison to the proposed project.

The proposed project would create 17 significant and unavoidable impacts by causing roadway intersections and freeway segments to degrade below acceptable LOS standards. Although the Town Grid Alternative is anticipated to generate the same amount of development in 2035 as the proposed project, the mix of uses in the growth areas would increase the likelihood that new residents in these areas could work and shop in the eastern portion of the city, rather than traveling further to other areas of the city that may be more congested. Therefore, it is anticipated that this alternative would impact fewer roadway intersections and segments. Both the proposed project and the Town Grid Alternative would avoid significant impacts related to air traffic, roadway hazards, or alternative transportation through proposed General Plan and ECAS policies and measures. Overall, the Town Grid Alternative would result in a *slightly reduced impact* compared to the proposed project for transportation and traffic impacts.

o. Utilities and Service Systems

As demonstrated below, the Town Grid Alternative would result in similar impacts to utilities and service systems as the proposed project.

The Town Grid Alternative would include approximately the same amount of horizon-year development as the proposed General Plan, but with an altered land use map. Therefore, within the horizon of the General Plan, a similar demand for water supply, wastewater, stormwater, solid waste, and energy supplies, services, and facilities would be generated by the Town Grid Alternative. Therefore, impacts to utilities and services systems would be *similar* to the proposed project.

E. Environmentally Superior Alternative

CEQA requires the identification of an environmentally superior alternative in an EIR. Based on the above analysis, which is summarized in Table 5-1, the Focused Growth Alternative is the Environmentally Superior Alternative. By focusing growth into portions of the growth areas, leaving more land undeveloped and allowing less development overall, this alternative would be an improvement over the proposed project with respect to potential negative impacts associated with aesthetics, agriculture and forestry resources, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, noise, population and housing, public services and recreation, transportation and traffic, and utilities and service systems.

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