SECTION 5: ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT

5.1 - Introduction

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6, this Environmental Impact Report (EIR) contains a comparative impact assessment of alternatives to the proposed project. The primary purpose of this section is to provide decision makers and the general public with a reasonable number of feasible project alternatives that could attain most of the basic project objectives, while avoiding or reducing any of the project's significant adverse environmental effects. Important considerations for these alternatives analyses are noted below (as stated in CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6).

- An EIR need not consider every conceivable alternative to a project;
- An EIR should identify alternatives that were considered by the lead agency, but rejected as infeasible during the scoping process;
- Reasons for rejecting an alternative include:
  - Failure to meet most of the basic project objectives;
  - Infeasibility; or
  - Inability to avoid significant environmental effects.

5.1.1 - Significant Unavoidable Impacts

The proposed project would result in the following significant unavoidable impact:

- **Regional Facilities:** The proposed project would contribute new trips to the segment of southbound State Route 99 between State Route 32 and E. 20th Street that would operate at unacceptable levels under Cumulative Plus Project conditions. Feasible mitigation measures are proposed to lessen the severity of impacts; however, the residual significance of this impact would be significant and unavoidable.

5.1.2 - Alternatives to the Proposed Project

The three alternatives to the proposed project analyzed in this section are as follows:

- **No Project Alternative:** The existing Walmart store would remain unchanged and no new development would occur on the project site.
- **Walmart Expansion Only Alternative:** The existing Walmart store would be expanded by up to 66,500 square feet as proposed, but the fuel station and Parcel 2 and 3 retail/restaurant uses would be eliminated.
- **Reduced Density Alternative:** A 25 percent reduction in development potential would be applied to each project use. The Walmart store would be expanded by 49,875 square feet; the fuel station would consist of six pumps and a 1,125-square-foot convenience market; Parcel 2 would total 19,725 square feet; and Parcel 3 would total 19,275 square feet. The Reduced Density Alternative would develop a total of 90,000 square feet of new commercial uses on-site.

These alternatives to the proposed project are analyzed on the following pages. These analyses compare the proposed project and each individual project alternative. In several cases, the description of the impact may be the same under each alternative when compared with the CEQA Thresholds of Significance (i.e., both the project and the alternative would result in a less than significant impact). The actual degree of impact may be slightly different between the proposed project and each alternative, and this relative difference is the basis for a conclusion of greater or lesser impacts.

5.2 - Project Objectives

As stated in Section 2, Project Description, the objectives of the proposed project are to:

1. Positively contribute to the local economy through new capital investment, creation of new employment opportunities, expansion of the tax base, and increased retail offerings.
2. Reinforce Chico's status as a regional retail node by increasing commercial retail and service offerings within an established regional and highway-oriented commercial area.
3. Expand an existing regional-serving retail use close to SR-99 in order to better serve the retail demands of the Market Area, while also minimizing the need for infrastructure improvements.
4. Promote economic growth in accordance with the goals and policies set forth in the City of Chico General Plan.
5. Facilitate the development of undeveloped and underutilized land on an infill site zoned for commercial use in the Chico city limits.
6. Develop complementary fuel station, retail, and restaurant uses that are compatible with surrounding land uses and which provide consumers with additional convenient and competitive options.
7. Design a site plan to minimize overall access and circulation conflicts, such as facilitation of the circulation between the store, service station and future development on the adjacent parcel.
8. Enhance bicycle and pedestrian circulation by relocating the existing Class I bicycle/pedestrian path around the perimeter of the site in order to minimize conflicts with motor vehicles.
9. Improve the overall visual appearance of the area by removing two outdated and unsightly billboards and developing new commercial uses that employ high-quality contemporary architecture and landscaping.

5.3 - Alternative 1—No Project Alternative

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e) requires that an EIR evaluate a "No Project Alternative," which is intended to allow decision-makers to compare the impacts of approving the proposed project with the impacts of not approving the proposed project. In cases where the project constitutes a land development project, the No Project Alternative is the "circumstance under which the project does not proceed." For many projects, the No Project Alternative represents a "No Development" or an

"Existing Conditions" scenario, in which the project site remains in its existing condition and no new development occurs for the foreseeable future. However, CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e)(3)(B) establishes that "If disapproval of the project under consideration would result in predictable actions by others such as the proposal of some other project, this 'no project' consequence should be discussed."

In this case, the project site supports an existing Walmart store that has been in operation since 1994. The store retails general merchandise and a limited amount of food and beverage items, and operates between 6 a.m. and 12 a.m. (midnight), 7 days a week. Therefore, the No Project Alternative would be the scenario in which the Walmart store would remain unchanged and no new development would occur on-site.

5.3.1 - Impact Analysis

The existing Walmart store would remain unchanged and no new development would occur. The Walmart store would continue to retail general merchandise and a limited amount of food and beverage items, and operate between 6 a.m. and 12 a.m. (midnight), 7 days a week. No changes to these characteristics would occur. Accordingly, this alternative would avoid all of the proposed project's significant impacts (including significant unavoidable impacts), as well as the need to implement any mitigation measures.

5.3.2 - Conclusion

The No Project Alternative would avoid the proposed project's significant and unavoidable impacts and would have less impact on all environmental topical areas. However, it would not advance any of the project objectives, including (1) positively contributing to the local economy and (2) reinforcing Chico's status as a regional retail node. The No Project Alternative would not meet the following project objectives: (3) expanding an existing regional-serving retail use; (4) promoting economic growth in accordance with the goals and policies set forth in the City of Chico General Plan; (5) facilitating the development of undeveloped and underutilized land on an infill site; (6) developing complementary fuel station, retail, and restaurant uses; (7) designing a site plan to minimize overall access and circulation conflicts; (8) enhancing bicycle and pedestrian circulation; and (9) improving the overall visual appearance of the area by removing two outdated and unsightly billboards.

5.4 - Alternative 2—Walmart Expansion Only Alternative

The Walmart Expansion Only Alternative consists of the expansion of the Walmart store as contemplated by the proposed project and the elimination of all other new commercial uses, as well as improvements to Wittmeier Drive.

The Walmart store would be expanded by 66,500 square feet to 197,802 square feet. The expanded Walmart store would operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and would retail groceries and general merchandise. The store would have the same visual appearance and occupy the same footprint as contemplated by the proposed project.

The internal circulation and parking layout would be modified to accommodate the store expansion. To offset the loss of parking by the store expansion, new parking would be constructed on

approximately 3 acres where the fuel station would be constructed under the proposed project. (The Class I bicycle/pedestrian trail would be re-routed around the perimeter of the new parking area, but the balance of the facility would maintain its current alignment.) Additionally, the Baney Lane driveways would be modified to prevent left-out turning movements. No vehicular connections would be provided to Wittmeier Drive, and the cul-de-sac would maintain its current lane configuration and traffic control devices (e.g., side street stop control at Forest Avenue).

Aside from the 3 acres occupied by the new parking area, the undeveloped portion of the project site would remain in its existing condition for the foreseeable future. This includes the depressional seasonal wetland in the southwest corner of the project site and the wooden freeway billboards, which would not be removed. (This alternative assumes that no changes to the billboards would occur, as there would be no impetus to terminate the existing outdoor advertising agreement.)

This alternative would require the same discretionary approvals as the proposed project, including Tentative Parcel Map, Use Permits, Planned Development Permit, and Site Design and Architectural Review.

Table 5-1 summarizes the Walmart Expansion Only Alternative. The purpose of this alternative is to evaluate a land use concept that includes the largest component of the proposed project, while also eliminating the smaller components in order to reduce site disturbance and the amount of new development.

Table 5-1: Walmart Expansion Only Alternative Summary

Scenario	Use	Characteristics
Walmart Expansion Only Alternative	Walmart	131,302 square feet (existing) 66,500 square feet (new) 197,802 square feet (total)
	Subtotal	197,802 square feet (total) *66,500 square feet (net new)*
Proposed Project	Walmart	131,302 square feet (existing) 66,500 square feet (new) 197,802 square feet (total)
	Fuel Station	Eight pumps 1,500 square feet
	Parcel 2 (Retail or restaurant)	26,300 square feet
	Parcel 3 (Retail or restaurant)	25,700 square feet
Proposed Project (*cont.*)	*Subtotal*	251,302 square feet (total) *Eight pumps (net new)* *120,000 square feet (net new)*
Difference	**Subtotal**	**(Eight pumps)** **(53,500 square feet)**
Source: FCS, 2016.		

5.4.1 - Impact Analysis

Aesthetics, Light, and Glare

The Walmart Expansion Only Alternative consists of expanding the existing Walmart store by 66,500 square feet and eliminating the fuel station, outparcels, and improvements to Wittmeier Drive. The expanded Walmart store would employ identical architecture and design elements and occupy the same footprint as proposed by the project. Additionally, similar exterior light fixtures would be installed, and mitigation identical to the proposed project would be implemented. The elimination of the fuel station, outparcels, and improvements to Wittmeier Drive would avoid any changes to visual character and light and glare within this portion of the project site; however, the two wooden freeway billboards would remain in place. Overall, the avoidance of change to the existing conditions would outweigh the aesthetic benefits of removing the two billboards. Therefore, the Walmart Expansion Only Alternative would have less impact on aesthetics, light, and glare than the proposed project.

Air Quality/Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The Walmart Expansion Only Alternative consists of expanding the existing Walmart store by 66,500 square feet and eliminating the fuel station, outparcels, and improvements to Wittmeier Drive. The buildout potential of this alternative would be 53,500 square feet less than the proposed project and, therefore, would result in fewer construction emissions. Although construction emissions impacts can be mitigated to a level of less than significant, the reduction in emissions would be considered more beneficial. The Walmart Expansion Only Alternative would generate 2,776 fewer weekday daily trips and 2,970 fewer Saturday daily trips than the proposed project and, therefore, would reduce operational emissions of criteria pollutants, toxic air contaminants, and greenhouse gas emissions. The substantial reduction in daily trip generation would lessen the severity of the proposed project's air quality and greenhouse gas emissions impacts. Therefore, the Walmart Expansion Only Alternative would have less impact on air quality/greenhouse gas emissions than the proposed project.

Biological Resources

The Walmart Expansion Only Alternative consists of expanding the existing Walmart store by 66,500 square feet and eliminating the fuel station, outparcels, and improvements to Wittmeier Drive. Ground-disturbing activities would be limited to the approximately 20 acres of the site occupied by the Walmart store and the existing and new parking areas; the approximately 7 acres of the site that are undeveloped would remain unchanged. Because previously undisturbed areas would be impacted under this alternative, mitigation identical to the proposed project for special-status species would be implemented. However, there would be a net decrease in ground disturbance under this alternative, including a complete avoidance of impacts to the depressional seasonal wetland in the southwest corner of the project site. Therefore, the Walmart Expansion Only Alternative would have less impact on biological resources than the proposed project.

Cultural Resources

The Walmart Expansion Only Alternative consists of expanding the existing Walmart store by 66,500 square feet and eliminating the fuel station, outparcels, and improvements to Wittmeier Drive. Ground-disturbing activities would be limited to the approximately 20 acres of the site occupied by the Walmart store and the existing and new parking areas; the approximately 7 acres of the site that are undeveloped would remain unchanged. Because previously undisturbed areas would be impacted under this alternative, mitigation identical to the proposed project for previously undiscovered cultural resources would be implemented. However, there would be a net decrease in ground disturbance under this alternative, which reduces the potential for previously undiscovered cultural resources to be encountered. Therefore, the Walmart Expansion Only Alternative would have less impact on cultural resources than the proposed project.

Geology, Soils, and Seismicity

The Walmart Expansion Only Alternative consists of expanding the existing Walmart store by 66,500 square feet and eliminating the fuel station, outparcels, and improvements to Wittmeier Drive. Ground-disturbing activities would be limited to the approximately 20 acres of the site occupied by the Walmart store and the existing and new parking areas; the approximately 7 acres of the site that are undeveloped would remain unchanged. Similar requirements would be imposed to ensure that the Walmart expansion is constructed in accordance with the latest adopted seismic safety standards and that erosion control measures are implemented. However, there would be a net decrease in ground disturbance under this alternative, which reduces the potential for erosion to occur. Therefore, the Walmart Expansion Only Alternative would have less impact on geology, soils, and seismicity than the proposed project.

Hazards and Hazardous Material

The Walmart Expansion Only Alternative consists of expanding the existing Walmart store by 66,500 square feet and eliminating the fuel station, outparcels, and improvements to Wittmeier Drive. As with the proposed project, no hazardous conditions exist on-site and the project's end users would not expose surrounding receptors to hazardous materials; therefore, impacts would be less than significant. However, elimination of the fuel station use would preclude the possibility of the accidental release of gasoline and diesel. Therefore, the Walmart Expansion Only Alternative would have fewer impacts related to hazards and hazardous materials than the proposed project.

Hydrology and Water Quality

The Walmart Expansion Only Alternative consists of expanding the existing Walmart store by 66,500 square feet and eliminating the fuel station, outparcels, and improvements to Wittmeier Drive. Ground-disturbing activities would be limited to the approximately 20 acres of the site occupied by the Walmart store and the existing and new parking areas; the approximately 7 acres of the site that are undeveloped would remain unchanged. Similar mitigation would be implemented to ensure that the Walmart expansion employs water pollution prevention measures and manages stormwater runoff in a manner that prevents downstream flooding. However, there would be a net decrease in ground disturbance and new impervious surfaces under this alternative, which reduces the potential

for erosion to occur. Therefore, the Walmart Expansion Only Alternative would have less impact on hydrology and water quality than the proposed project.

Land Use

The Walmart Expansion Only Alternative consists of expanding the existing Walmart store by 66,500 square feet and eliminating the fuel station, outparcels, and improvements to Wittmeier Drive. This alternative would require the same entitlements as the proposed project, and, therefore, would yield similar conclusions in terms of land use. Additionally, the uses developed under this alternative would have physical characteristics and end uses similar to the proposed project and, therefore, would yield a similar compatibility finding with the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance. Therefore, the Walmart Expansion Only Alternative would have land use impacts similar to the proposed project.

Noise

The Walmart Expansion Only Alternative consists of expanding the existing Walmart store by 66,500 square feet and eliminating the fuel station, outparcels, and improvements to Wittmeier Drive. The buildout potential of this alternative would be less than the proposed project and, therefore, construction noise impacts would be less severe than the proposed project, although these impacts can be mitigated to a level of less than significant. The Walmart Expansion Only Alternative would generate 2,776 fewer weekday daily trips and 2,970 fewer Saturday daily trips than the proposed project. Although the proposed project was found to have less than significant impacts with regard to roadway noise, the substantial reduction in daily trip generation would be considered more beneficial from a noise perspective. Therefore, the Walmart Expansion Only Alternative would have less impact on noise than the proposed project.

Public Services and Utilities

The Walmart Expansion Only Alternative consists of expanding the existing Walmart store by 66,500 square feet and eliminating the fuel station, outparcels, and improvements to Wittmeier Drive. The reduction of 53,500 square feet of commercial development potential would have a corresponding reduction in demand for fire protection, police protection, water, and energy, and less generation of wastewater and solid waste. Although the proposed project was found to have a less than significant impact on public services and utilities, this alternative would be considered more beneficial. Therefore, the Walmart Expansion Only Alternative would have less impact on public services and utilities than the proposed project.

Transportation

The Walmart Expansion Only Alternative consists of expanding the Walmart store by 66,500 square feet and eliminating the fuel station, outparcels, and improvements to Wittmeier Drive. Table 5-2 summarizes the trip generation of the Walmart Expansion Only Alternative. As shown in the table, the Walmart Expansion Only Alternative would result in a net reduction of 2,776 weekday daily trips, 123 AM peak-hour trips, 202 PM peak-hour trips, 2,970 Saturday daily trips, and 228 Saturday peak-hour trips. The substantial reduction in peak-hour trips would avoid or lessen the severity of significant impacts on the southbound State Route 99 segment between State Route 32 and E. 20th Street;

however, impacted facilities would still experience unacceptable operations and require mitigation measures. For the reasons described in Section 3.11, Transportation, this alternative would yield similar significant and unavoidable conclusions, although the severity of impacts would be reduced. Additionally, this alternative would avoid any changes to Wittmeier Drive and, therefore, obviate the need for any mitigation to address potential conflicts with traffic associated with the Wittmeier Auto Center. Overall, the Walmart Expansion Only Alternative would have less impact on transportation than the proposed project.

Table 5-2: Walmart Expansion Only Alternative Trip Generation Comparison

Scenario	Trip Generation				
	Weekday Daily	AM Peak Hour	PM Peak Hour	Saturday Daily	Saturday Peak Hour
Walmart Expansion Only Alternative (Net New)	2,186	71	182	2,529	249
Proposed Project (Net New)	4,962	194	384	5,499	477
Difference	**(2,776)**	**(123)**	**(202)**	**(2,970)**	**(228)**
Source: Fehr & Peers, 2016.					

Urban Decay

The Walmart Expansion Only Alternative consists of expanding the existing Walmart store by 66,500 square feet and eliminating the fuel station, outparcels, and improvements to Wittmeier Drive. The expanded Walmart store was estimated to generate $32.2 million in net new sales on an annual basis. All impacts associated with urban decay were found to be less than significant and did not require mitigation. As such, the Walmart Expansion Only Alternative would yield the same conclusions in terms of impacts on competing food stores and general merchandise retailers. However, the elimination of the fuel station and outparcel uses would forego $29.6 million in new sales associated with these uses and avoid any impacts to existing outlets in these categories. Overall, the Walmart Expansion Only Alternative would yield similar less than significant conclusions in the context of Walmart, and would avoid any impacts in the context of the fuel station and outparcel uses. Therefore, the Walmart Expansion Only Alternative would have less impact on urban decay than the proposed project.

5.4.2 - Conclusion

The Walmart Expansion Only Alternative would lessen the severity of, but would not avoid, the significant and unavoidable transportation impacts associated with the proposed project. Additionally, the Walmart Expansion Only Alternative would lessen the severity of many of the potentially significant impacts that can be reduced to a level of less than significant with mitigation (air quality/greenhouse gas emissions, biological resources, cultural resources, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, noise, public services and utilities).

The Walmart Expansion Only Alternative would advance all of the project objectives, although several would be advanced to a lesser degree than the proposed project, primarily because of the

53,500-square-foot reduction in development potential and the $29.6 million reduction in new sales. This includes objectives related to (1) positively contributing to the local economy through new capital investment, creation of new employment opportunities, expansion of the tax base, and increased retail offerings; (2) increasing commercial retail and service offerings within an established regional and highway-oriented commercial area; (3) expanding an existing regional-serving retail use close to SR-99 in order to better serve the retail demands of the Market Area; and (4) facilitating the development of undeveloped and underutilized land on an infill site. Additionally, the Walmart Expansion Only Alternative would not advance the objectives associated with (1) developing complementary fuel station, retail, and restaurant uses that are compatible with surrounding land uses and that provide consumers with additional convenient and competitive options; or (2) improving the overall visual appearance of the area by removing two outdated and unsightly billboards.

5.5 - Alternative 3—Reduced Density Alternative

The Reduced Density Alternative consists of a 25 percent reduction to each project use that would result in a net reduction of two fuel station pumps and 30,000 square feet relative to the proposed project. In total, this alternative would develop six fuel station pumps and 90,000 square feet of new commercial uses on the project site.

The Walmart store expansion would occur in the same location, although it would add 49,875 square feet to the store instead of 66,500 square feet. The expanded store would total 181,177 square feet. All other operational characteristics would be identical to the proposed project.

The fuel station would have a canopy over six pumps (12 vehicle fueling positions) and a 1,125-square-foot convenience market. All other operational characteristics would be identical to the proposed project.

The development potential on Parcels 2 and 3 would be reduced to 19,275 square feet and 19,725 square feet, respectively. As with the proposed project, end users would be retail or restaurant.

The Reduced Density Alternative would have the same internal circulation facilities and driveway connections as the proposed project. The Baney Lane driveways would be modified to prohibit left-out movements, and the Wittmeier Drive cul-de-sac would have two driveway connections. As contemplated by the proposed project, a signal would be installed at the intersection of Forest Avenue/Wittmeier Drive, and the Class I bicycle/pedestrian trail would be re-routed around the perimeter of the project site.

This alternative would require the same discretionary approvals as the project, including Tentative Parcel Map, Use Permits, Planned Development Permit, and Site Design and Architectural Review.

Table 5-3 summarizes the Walmart Expansion Only Alternative. The purpose of this alternative is to evaluate a land use concept which reduces the overall development intensity, while still facilitating the development of similar commercial uses on the project site.

Table 5-3: Reduced Density Alternative Summary

Scenario	Use	Characteristics
Reduced Density Alternative	Walmart	131,302 square feet (existing) 49,875 square feet (new) 181,177 square feet (total)
	Fuel Station	Six pumps 1,125 square feet
	Parcel 2 (Retail or restaurant)	19,725 square feet
	Parcel 3 (Retail or restaurant)	19,275 square feet
	Subtotal	221,302 square feet (total) *Six pumps (net new)* *90,000 square feet (net new)*
Proposed Project	Walmart	131,302 square feet (existing) 66,500 square feet (new) 197,802 square feet (total)
	Fuel Station	Eight pumps 1,500 square feet
	Parcel 2 (Retail or restaurant)	26,300 square feet
	Parcel 3 (Retail or restaurant)	25,700 square feet
	Subtotal	251,302 square feet (total) *Eight pumps (net new)* *120,000 square feet (net new)*
Difference	**Subtotal**	**(Two pumps)** **(30,000 square feet)**
Source: FirstCarbon Solutions, 2016.		

5.5.1 - Impact Analysis

Aesthetics, Light, and Glare

The Reduced Density Alternative consists of developing 90,000 square feet of new commercial uses on the project site, which represents a reduction of 30,000 square feet relative to the proposed project. Buildings would employ similar architecture and design elements, be located in generally the same locations, and be used for land use activities similar to those of the proposed project. Additionally, similar exterior light fixtures and illumination signage would be installed. The 30,000-square-foot reduction in buildings would be offset with additional landscaping and pedestrian facilities, which would be more beneficial from a visual perspective. Therefore, the Reduced Density Alternative would have less impact on aesthetics, light, and glare than the proposed project.

Air Quality/Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The Reduced Density Alternative consists of developing 90,000 square feet of new commercial uses on the project site, which represents a reduction of 30,000 square feet relative to the proposed

project. The buildout potential of this alternative would be less than the proposed project and, therefore, would result in fewer construction emissions. Although construction emissions impacts can be mitigated to a level of less than significant, the reduction in emissions would be considered more beneficial. The Reduced Density Alternative would generate 875 fewer weekday daily trips and 993 fewer Saturday daily trips than the proposed project and, therefore, would reduce operational emissions of criteria pollutants, toxic air contaminants, and greenhouse gas emissions. The substantial reduction in daily trip generation would lessen the severity of the proposed project's air quality and greenhouse gas emissions impacts. Therefore, the Reduced Density Alternative would have less impact on air quality/greenhouse gas emissions than the proposed project.

Biological Resources

The Reduced Density Alternative consists of developing 90,000 square feet of new commercial uses on the project site, which represents a reduction of 30,000 square feet relative to the proposed project. Similar ground-disturbing activities would occur and, therefore, mitigation identical to the proposed project for special-status species would be implemented. Therefore, the Reduced Density Alternative would have biological resources impacts similar to the proposed project.

Cultural Resources

The Reduced Density Alternative consists of developing 90,000 square feet of new commercial uses on the project site, which represents a reduction of 30,000 square feet relative to the proposed project. Similar ground-disturbing activities would occur and therefore, mitigation identical to the proposed project for historic resources, archaeological resources, paleontological resources, and burial sites would be implemented. Therefore, the Reduced Density Alternative would have cultural resources impacts similar to the proposed project.

Geology, Soils, and Seismicity

The Reduced Density Alternative consists of developing 90,000 square feet of new commercial uses on the project site, which represents a reduction of 30,000 square feet relative to the proposed project. As with the proposed project, all structures would be constructed in accordance with the latest adopted seismic safety standards, and erosion control measures would be implemented. Therefore, the Reduced Density Alternative would have geology, soils, and seismicity impacts similar to the proposed project.

Hazards and Hazardous Material

The Reduced Density Alternative consists of developing 90,000 square feet of new commercial uses on the project site, which represents a reduction of 30,000 square feet relative to the proposed project. As with the proposed project, no hazardous conditions exist on-site and the project's end users would not expose surrounding receptors to hazardous materials; therefore, impacts would be less than significant. However, the reduction in the number of fuel pumps (and related fuel storage capacity) would incrementally reduce the risk of accidental release of gasoline and diesel, which is more beneficial. Therefore, the Reduced Density Alternative would have fewer impacts related to hazards and hazardous materials than the proposed project.

Hydrology and Water Quality

The Reduced Density Alternative consists of developing 90,000 square feet of new commercial uses on the project site, which represents a reduction of 30,000 square feet relative to the proposed project. Similar development activities would occur and mitigation identical to the proposed project for water quality, drainage, and flood hazards would be implemented. Therefore, the Reduced Density Alternative would have hydrology and water quality impacts similar to the proposed project.

Land Use

The Reduced Density Alternative consists of developing 90,000 square feet of new commercial uses on the project site, which represents a reduction of 30,000 square feet relative to the proposed project. This alternative would require the same entitlements as the proposed project, and, therefore, would yield similar conclusions in terms of land use. Therefore, the Reduced Density Alternative would have land use impacts similar to the proposed project.

Noise

The Reduced Density Alternative consists of developing 90,000 square feet of new commercial uses on the project site, which represents a reduction of 30,000 square feet relative to the proposed project. The buildout potential of this alternative would be less than the proposed project and, therefore, construction noise impacts would be less severe than the proposed project, although these impacts can be mitigated to a level of less than significant. The Reduced Density Alternative would generate 875 fewer weekday daily trips and 993 fewer Saturday daily trips than the proposed project. Although the proposed project was found to have less than significant impacts with regard to roadway noise, the substantial reduction in daily trip generation would be considered more beneficial from a noise perspective. Therefore, the Reduced Density Alternative would have less impact on noise than the proposed project.

Public Services and Utilities

The Reduced Density Alternative consists of developing 90,000 square feet of new commercial uses on the project site, which represents a reduction of 30,000 square feet relative to the proposed project. The reduction of 30,000 square feet of commercial development potential would have a corresponding reduction in demand for fire protection, police protection, water, and energy, and less generation of wastewater and solid waste. Although the proposed project was found to have a less than significant impact on public services and utilities, this alternative would be considered more beneficial. Therefore, the Reduced Density Alternative would have less impact on public services and utilities than the proposed project.

Transportation

The Reduced Density Alternative consists of developing 90,000 square feet of new commercial uses on the project site, which represents a reduction of 30,000 square feet relative to the proposed project. Table 5-4 summarizes the trip generation of the Reduced Density Alternative. As shown in the table, the Reduced Density Alternative would result in a net reduction of 875 weekday daily trips, 27 AM peak-hour trips, 37 PM peak-hour trips, 993 Saturday daily trips, and 41 Saturday peak-hour trips. The substantial reduction in peak-hour trips would avoid or lessen the severity of significant impacts on the

southbound State Route 99 segment between State Route 32 and E. 20th Street; however, impacted facilities would still experience unacceptable operations and require mitigation measures. For the reasons described in Section 3.11, Transportation, this alternative would yield similar significant and unavoidable conclusions, although the severity of impacts would be reduced. Additionally, this alternative would improve Wittmeier Drive as proposed by the project and, therefore, implement similar mitigation to address potential conflicts with traffic associated with the Wittmeier Auto Center. Overall, the Reduced Density Alternative would have less impact on transportation than the proposed project.

Table 5-4: Reduced Density Alternative Trip Generation Comparison

Scenario	Trip Generation				
	Weekday Daily	AM Peak Hour	PM Peak Hour	Saturday Daily	Saturday Peak Hour
Reduced Density Alternative (Net New)	4,087	167	347	4,506	436
Proposed Project (Net New)	4,962	194	384	5,499	477
Difference	**(875)**	**(27)**	**(37)**	**(993)**	**(41)**
Source: Fehr & Peers, 2016.					

Urban Decay

The Reduced Density Alternative consists of developing 90,000 square feet of new commercial uses on the project site. The expanded Walmart store was estimated to generate $32.2 million in net new sales, the fuel station was estimated to generate $5.5 million in new sales, and the outparcels were estimated to generate $24.2 million in new sales, for a total of $61.8 million. Applying a 25 percent reduction to this figure yields $46.4 million in annual sales for the Reduced Density Alternative—a reduction of $15.4 million. All impacts associated with urban decay were found to be less than significant and did not require mitigation. As such, this alternative would yield less severe conclusions in terms of impacts on competing outlets, as there would be a 25 percent reduction in new sales. Therefore, the Reduced Density Alternative would have less impact on urban decay than the proposed project.

5.5.2 - Conclusion

The Reduced Density Alternative would lessen the severity of, but would not avoid, the significant and unavoidable impacts associated with transportation as the proposed project. Additionally, the Reduced Density Alternative would lessen the severity of significant impacts that can be reduced to a level of less than significant with mitigation (e.g., air quality/greenhouse gas emissions, biological resources, cultural resources, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, noise, and public services and utilities).

The Reduced Density Alternative would advance all of the project objectives, although several would be advanced to a lesser degree than the proposed project primarily because of the 30,000-square-foot reduction in development potential and the $15.4 million reduction in new sales. This includes

objectives related to (1) positively contributing to the local economy through new capital investment, creation of new employment opportunities, expansion of the tax base, and increased retail offerings; (2) increasing commercial retail and service offerings within an established regional and highway-oriented commercial area; and (3) expanding an existing regional-serving retail use close to State Route 99 in order to better serve the retail demands of the Market Area.

5.6 - Environmentally Superior Alternative

The qualitative environmental effects of each alternative in relation to the proposed project are summarized in Table 5-5.

Table 5-5: Summary of Alternatives

Environmental Topic Area	No Project Alternative	Walmart Expansion Only Alternative	Reduced Density Alternative
Aesthetics, Light, and Glare	No Impact	Less Impact	Less Impact
Air Quality/Greenhouse Gas Emissions	No Impact	Less Impact	Less Impact
Biological Resources	No Impact	Less Impact	Similar Impact
Cultural Resources	Less Impact	Less Impact	Similar Impact
Geology, Soils, and Seismicity	Less Impact	Less Impact	Similar Impact
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	Less Impact	Less Impact	Less Impact
Hydrology and Water Quality	Less Impact	Less Impact	Similar Impact
Land Use	Less Impact	Similar Impact	Similar Impact
Noise	Less Impact	Less Impact	Less Impact
Public Services and Utilities	Less Impact	Less Impact	Less Impact
Transportation	Less Impact	Less Impact	Less Impact
Urban Decay	Less Impact	Less Impact	Less Impact
Source: FCS, 2016.			

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126(e)(2) requires an EIR to identify an environmentally superior alternative. If the No Project Alternative is the environmentally superior alternative, the EIR must also identify an environmentally superior alternative from among the other alternatives.

As shown in Table 5-5, the No Project Alternative would have less impact on all topical areas. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15126(e)(2), an environmentally superior alternative must be identified from the two remaining alternatives. In this case, the Walmart Expansion Only Alternative would result in more findings of "Less Impact" than the Reduced Density Alternative, and would also yield the greatest reductions in daily and peak-hour trip generation. Thus, the Walmart Expansion Only Alternative is the environmentally superior alternative.

5.7 - Alternatives Rejected from Further Consideration

5.7.1 - Alternative Location

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(f)(2) sets forth considerations to be used in evaluating an alternative location. The section states that the "key question" is whether any of the significant effects of the project would be avoided or substantially lessened by relocating the project. The CEQA Guidelines identify the following factors that may be taken into account when addressing the feasibility of an alternative location:

1) Site suitability
2) Economic viability
3) Availability of infrastructure
4) General Plan consistency
5) Other plans or regulatory limitations
6) Jurisdictional boundaries
7) Whether the project applicant can reasonably acquire, control, or otherwise have access to the alternative site

The CEQA Guidelines establish that only locations that would accomplish this objective should be considered as alternative locations for the proposed project.

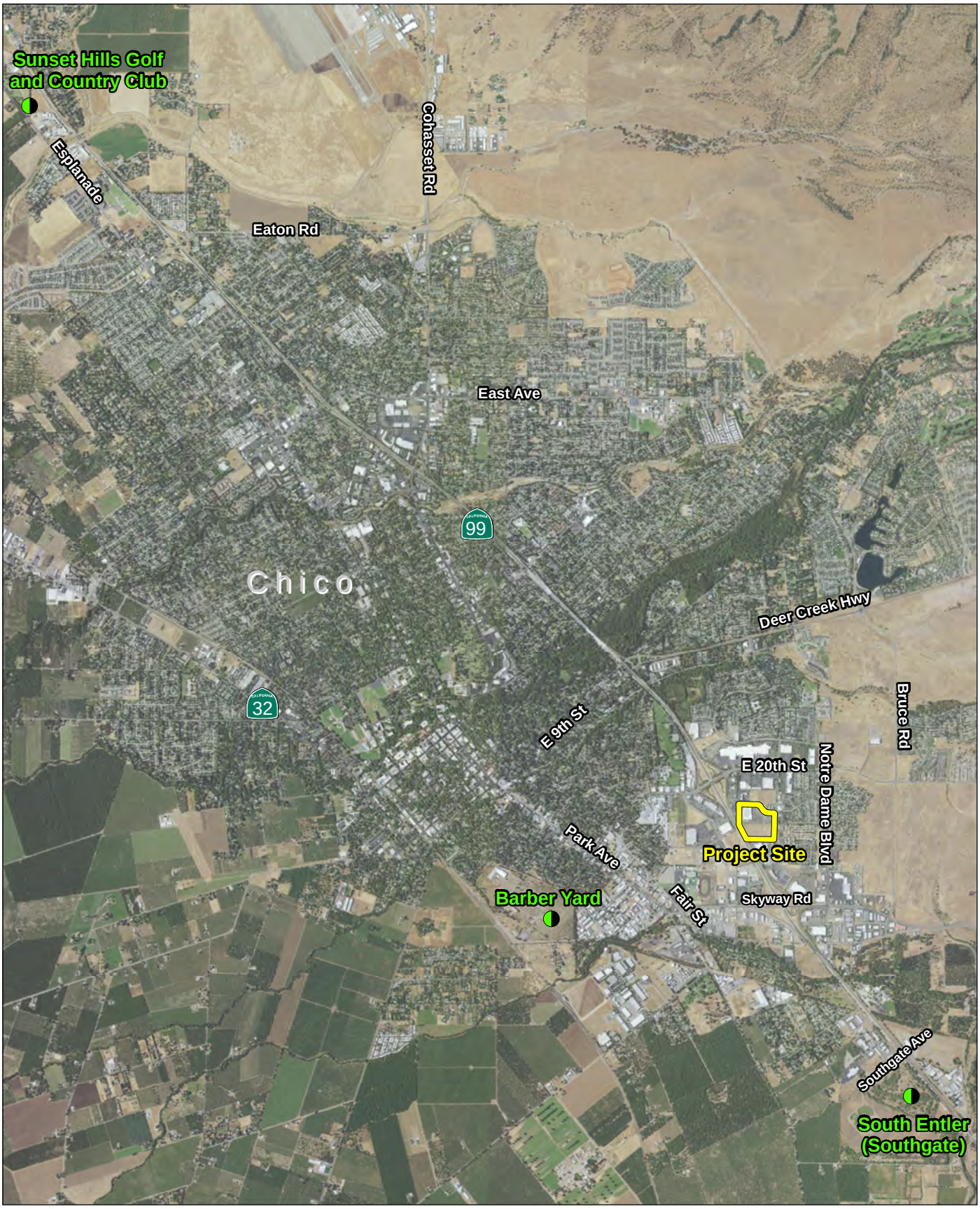
Table 5-6 evaluates the feasibility of three potential alternative locations within the City of Chico. The locations of the three sites are shown in Exhibit 5-1.

Table 5-6: Potential Alternative Locations

Site	Description	Analysis
Barber Yard	A 112-acre vacant site located east of the Union Pacific Railroad tracks, west of Normal Avenue, and north of Estes Lane. The site previously supported the Diamond Match Factory, which has since been demolished. This site is designated "Special Planning Area 2" by both the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance. The General Plan envisions "a mix of low, medium and high residential densities, a neighborhood core or commercial mixed-use center, office and light industrial uses, and parks and open space" on the site.	**Not Feasible:** The project applicant does not own, control, or otherwise have access to this site. Moreover, a regional commercial use is not envisioned by the General Plan for this Special Planning Area and would not be compatible with the adjoining residential uses. Additionally, the project site is more than 2 miles from SR-99 and requires a circuitous routing through an established residential area. For these reasons, this site was rejected from further consideration.
South Entler (Southgate)	A 300-acre site located south and west of SR-99, north of Marybill Ranch Road. The area contains developed industrial uses, a Little League Ball Field complex, areas that contain mine tailings deposits, and areas with large numbers of cottonwood and oak trees.	**Not Feasible:** The project applicant does not own, control, or otherwise have access to this site. Although the General Plan contemplates regional commercial uses near the SR-99/Southgate Road intersection, the intersection itself would eventually need to be upgraded to the Type L-9 interchange in order to serve this type of development.

Table 5-6 (cont.): Potential Alternative Locations

Site	Description	Analysis
	The SR-99/Southgate Avenue at-grade intersection provides access to this area and is ultimately planned to be upgraded to a Type L-9 interchange. The southern portion of the site overlaps with a 100-year flood hazard area. This site is designated "Special Planning Area 3" by both the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance. The General Plan envisions "a blend of regional and community commercial, office, light industrial, and single- and multi-family residential uses" on the site.	The City of Chico does not plan to upgrade the interchange as a capital improvement project until approximately 2035. Additionally, developing the project on this site would likely yield greater biological resource impacts that are due to the presence of many trees, including native oak trees, and proximity to the Butte Creek corridor, resources that do not occur on the proposed project site. Finally, utilities and infrastructure would need to be extended to this site from more than a mile away, which creates the potential for growth inducement impacts. Overall, developing the project at this site would likely yield greater impacts associated with biological resources, growth inducement, and transportation. For these reasons, this site was rejected from further consideration.
Sunset Hills Golf and Country Club	A 19.73-acre semi-triangular site located at 13301 Garner Lane in unincorporated Butte County just north of the Chico city limits. The site contains a nine-hole golf course and driving range. This site was previously contemplated for a 210,000-square-foot Walmart store and up to 11,000 square feet of commercial uses in 2006/2007. The project application was ultimately withdrawn in 2008. This site is designated "Retail and Office" by the Butte County General Plan and zoned "General Commercial (G-C)" by the Butte County Zoning Ordinance. The site—and potentially adjoining properties—would need to be annexed into the Chico city limits.	**Not Feasible:** The project applicant does not own, control, or otherwise have access to this site, as the previous agreement to purchase the property has lapsed. This proposed store location was intended to serve growth contemplated by the North Chico Specific Plan, which envisioned substantial population growth in the northern portion of Chico. However, such growth has not materialized in the years since the project was first proposed. Additionally, the SR-99/Garner Lane at-grade intersection would need substantial upgrades to serve a commercial development at this location. At the time of this writing, no such improvements are currently programmed for this intersection. For these reasons, this site was rejected from further consideration.
Source: FCS, 2016.		



Source: ESRI Imagery, 2014

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1 0.5 0 1 Miles

Exhibit 5-1
Potential Alternative Locations