

6.0 Comparison of Proposed Project and Alternatives

This chapter summarizes the environmental advantages and disadvantages associated with the Proposed Project and the alternatives. Based upon this discussion, the environmentally superior alternative is selected as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The State CEQA Guidelines, Section 15126 (d) (2), state that if the environmentally superior alternative is the No Project Alternative, then the next most environmentally preferred alternative must also be identified.

CEQA does not provide specific direction regarding the methodology of comparing alternatives and the Proposed Project. Each Project must be evaluated for the issues and impacts that are most important; this will vary depending on the project type and the environmental setting. Issue areas with significant long-term impacts are generally given more weight in comparing alternatives. Impacts that are short-term (e.g., construction-related impacts) or those that are mitigable to less than significant levels are generally considered to be less important.

This comparison is designed to satisfy the requirements of State CEQA Guidelines, Section 15126.6(d), Evaluation of Alternatives, which state that:

The EIR shall include sufficient information about each alternative to allow meaningful evaluation, analysis, and comparison with the Proposed Project. A matrix displaying the major characteristics and significant environmental effects of each alternative may be used to summarize the comparison. If an alternative would cause one or more significant effects in addition to those that would be caused by the project as proposed, the significant effects of the alternative shall be discussed, but in less detail than the significant effects of the project as proposed.

In accordance with State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(d), this Environmental Impact Report (EIR) provides sufficient information about each alternative to allow meaningful evaluation, analysis, and comparison with the Proposed Project and the other alternatives. Assumptions made regarding the alternatives' descriptions could differ from actual proposals and the analyses are not presented with project-level detail. Different alternative Project configurations and a project-level environmental analysis could result in different conclusions from those presented herein.

The following methodology was used to compare alternatives and the Proposed Project in this EIR:

- **Step 1: Identification of Alternatives.** Alternatives screening process (described in Section 5.0) identified a range of alternatives to the Proposed Project. That screening analysis selected alternatives for further consideration. The No Project Alternative is also evaluated in the EIR as required by CEQA.
- **Step 2: Determination of Environmental Impacts.** The environmental impacts of the selected alternatives are identified in Section 6.1.
- **Step 3: Comparison of Proposed Project with Alternatives.** Section 6.1 also analyzes the impacts that could occur with the alternatives selected for further review. This section discusses how these impacts would vary for each alternative relative to the Proposed Project.

- **Step 4: Selection of the Environmentally Superior Alternative.** Section 6.2, Environmentally Superior Alternative, provides a detailed comparison of the environmental effects of the Proposed Project and the selected alternatives.

6.1 Environmental Analysis of Selected Alternatives

Section 5.0, Alternatives, considered the following six alternatives:

- No Project;
- Reduced Refinery Throughput Increase;
- Increased Rail Transport;
- Santa Maria Refinery Truck Unloading;
- Summit Pump Station Truck Unloading; and
- Orcutt Pump Station Truck Unloading.

Based on the screening analysis in Section 5.0, Alternatives, one alternative (in addition to the No Project Alternative), the Summit Pump Station Truck Unloading Site, was selected for further evaluation in this EIR.

The alternative transportation routes considered in Section 5.0, Alternatives, are

- Northbound Route Alternative;
- Eastbound Route Alternative; and
- Southbound Route Alternative.

Based on the screening analysis in Section 5.0, the Southbound Route Alternative was selected for further evaluation.

The remainder of this section analyzes the environmental impacts of the alternatives selected for further evaluation.

6.1.1 No Project Alternative

Under the No Project Alternative, no increase in throughput would take place at the Santa Maria Refinery. The Applicant's Proposed Project is to increase the permitted volume of processed crude oil at the Santa Maria Refinery.

Therefore, impacts associated with the Project's throughput increase would not occur and the area would remain in its current condition.

6.1.2 Summit Pump Station Truck Unloading Alternative

The following sections discuss impacts to each issue area associated with the Summit Pump Station Truck Unloading Alternative.

6.1.2.1 Air Quality

This alternative would require construction of new offloading facilities at the Summit Pump Station. However, it would reduce air emissions from trucks transporting crude oil from northern oil fields (such as Arroyo Grande and San Ardo). The Summit Pump Station is farther north than the Santa Maria Pump Station and, therefore, the distance from these northern fields to the Summit Pump Station is less than the distance to the Santa Maria Pump Station. However, this alternative would increase trucking distances for trucks coming from the south. The average crude volume-weighted distance associated with this alternative would be 56 miles, compared to 66 volume-weighted miles for current operations and the Proposed Project, which is a savings of approximately 10 miles per truck trip. This correlates to a savings of approximately 16 pounds per day of NO_x emissions for all the truck trips. **Impact AQ.1** would remain significant, and although NO_x emissions associated with this alternative would be less than the Proposed Project emissions, the truck emissions would still be a significant impact (Class I). Mitigation measures AQ-1.1 and AQ-1.2 would still apply.

Odor issues related to the Santa Maria Facility (SMF) would be the same as **impact AQ.2** and mitigation measure AQ-2 would still apply. However, the installation of a crude oil tank could increase odor issues at the Summit Pump Station.

Impact #	Impact Description	Residual Impact
AQ.a1	Alternative operations at the Summit Pump Station could increase odor events.	Class II

Installing and operating offloading facilities, including a crude oil tank at the Summit Pump Station, could increase the frequency of odor events for residences in the vicinity. Crude oil tanks can leak vapors from the seals each time the floating roof lowers with changing crude oil levels. Leaked vapors from crude oil tanks would be a significant impact that could be mitigated by installing vapor recovery units and appropriate seals, and proper maintenance on the tank.

Mitigation Measures

AQ-a1 The Applicant shall install vapor recovery units and emission control seals on the crude oil tank and ensure proper maintenance on the crude oil tank. The Odor Control Plan, created pursuant to mitigation measure AQ.2-1, shall include these measures.

Residual Impacts

Implementing the recommended mitigation measure would help minimize odor events from the Summit Pump Station. Impacts would be less than significant with mitigation.

Impact AQ.3 related to greenhouse gases would be similar to the Proposed Project, although with the shorter truck travel distances, it would be marginally less severe.

Impact AQ.4 related to toxic risk would be the same as for the SMF and mitigation measure AQ-4 would still apply. The transportation of crude oil along Dale Avenue to the Summit Pump Station would increase the emissions of diesel particulates along Dale Avenue and would impact residences in the area. Modeling associated with truck traffic along area routes indicates that the truck traffic would not be high enough to exceed the Air Pollution Control District thresholds for health risk.

6.1.2.2 Public Safety and Hazardous Materials

This alternative would include the construction and operation of a new truck unloading facility to include a truck loading rack and a 10,000-barrel crude oil storage tank. Impacts associated with a crude oil spill and subsequent fire could impact the area around the Summit Pump Station. Residences and public roadways are within 250 feet of the Summit Pump Station. Thermal impacts from a crude oil fire would not reach residences; however, a crude oil fire could cause wildfire impacts to the area since the Summit Pump Station is in a heavily vegetative area. A wildfire could cause impacts to nearby residences.

Impact PSHM.1 related to accidental releases of hazardous materials from the SMF would be the same as the Proposed Project. However, impacts associated with a crude oil fire could be significant due to the heavily vegetative area.

Impact #	Impact Description	Residual Impact
PSHM.a1	Alternative operations at the Summit Pump Station could increase the risk of fire in the area.	Class II

Installing a crude oil tank at the Summit Pump Station could increase the risk of crude oil fires at the Summit Pump Station. Although the frequency of crude oil fire is low, and thermal radiation would not impact residences, a fire could impact nearby vegetation causing subsequent impacts to residences. This could be a significant impact.

Mitigation Measures

PSHM-a1 The Applicant shall install fire detection and fire fighting capabilities, including fire foam systems, at the Summit Pump Station, and shall implement vegetative fuel modifications to reduce the potential for a crude fire to impact nearby residences.

Residual Impacts

Implementing the recommended mitigation measure would help to ensure that a crude oil fire at the Summit Pump Station would not impact nearby residences. Impacts would be less than significant with mitigation.

Impact PSHM.2 related to transportation of product along local and area roadways would be the same as the Proposed Project and would be less than significant.

6.1.2.3 Noise and Vibration

Noise impacts of this alternative would be the same as **impact N.1** related to noise impacts from the Proposed Project.

Under this alternative, crude oil from oilfields north of the SMF would be unloaded by truck at the Summit Pump Station rather than at the SMF. Impacts would be more severe than those associated with the Proposed Project. **Impact N.2**, related to transportation noise, would be more severe since truck trips and subsequent unloading would generate vehicle-related noise at the Summit Pump Station. Residential receptors are within 250 feet of the Summit Pump Station and the unloading noise would create impacts at these receptors. However, unloading noise is not expected to be substantial and the impact would be less than significant.

Although the area is rural, it is close to U.S. Highway 101, which currently creates a relatively high background noise level. The San Luis Obispo County Noise Element indicates that some of the residences in this area are within the 60- to 65-dBA Ldn contour for U.S. Highway 101. This alternative would introduce an estimated five trucks per hour, which would produce an approximately 57-dBA hourly average noise level during the daytime 50 feet from Dale Avenue. Considering the 60-dBA background noise from U.S. Highway 101, noise levels at the residences closest to Dale Avenue would increase less than 2 dBA, which would be less than a significant impact.

However, the noise associated with trucks moving along Dale Avenue to access the Summit Pump Station would have a greater impact on residences than current operations or the Proposed Project at the Santa Maria Pump Station since there are no residences along the route. Noise impacts would therefore be more severe, but still less than significant.

6.1.2.4 Public Services and Utilities

This alternative would include the construction and operation of a new truck unloading facility to include a truck loading rack and a 10,000-barrel crude oil storage tank.

Impact PS.1 related to increased water use during throughput increase operations would be the same as the Proposed Project. Therefore, impacts related to an increased demand for water would remain less than significant.

Impact PS.2 related to increased wastewater during throughput increase operations would be the same as the Proposed Project and would remain less than significant.

Impact PS.3 related to increased solid waste generation during throughput increase operations would remain unchanged from the Proposed Project and would remain less than significant.

Impact PS.4 related to increased electricity consumption during throughput increase operations would remain unchanged from the Proposed Project since operations would require the same energy levels. Therefore, impacts from increased electricity demand would remain less than significant.

Impact PS.5 related to increased fossil fuel consumption and production during throughput increase operations would remain unchanged from the Proposed Project since operations would require the same energy levels. Therefore, impacts from increased fossil fuel use would remain less than significant.

Impact PS.6 related to fire protection and emergency response would remain unchanged from the Proposed Project at the SMF. However, installing crude storage facilities at the Summit Pump Station would increase the risk of wildfire at the heavily vegetated site and would increase fire response issues in the area surrounding the Summit Pump Station. However, these impacts could be mitigated and the storage of crude oil would not exceed the capabilities of area fire response agencies. Therefore, impacts related to fire water supplies, fire protection and emergency response would remain less than significant.

6.1.2.5 Land Use and Policy Consistency Analysis

Under this alternative, trucks would unload crude oil from oilfields north of the SMF at the Summit Pump Station rather than at the SMF. Impacts would be greater than those associated with the Proposed Project since truck trips and subsequent unloading would increase activities at the Summit Pump Station compared to the Proposed Project.

Impact LU.1 related to increased noise levels in the area due to operational increases would remain unchanged from the Proposed Project and would remain less than significant with mitigation.

Impact LU.2 related to the increased frequency or duration of odor events due to operational activities would remain unchanged from the Proposed Project and would remain less than significant with mitigation.

6.1.2.6 Water Resources

This alternative would include the construction and operation of a new truck unloading facility to include a truck loading rack and a 10,000-barrel crude oil storage tank. Water resource impacts would also be similar to the Proposed Project since the unloading facility at the Summit Pump Station would not use any water resources.

6.1.2.7 Transportation

Under this Alternative, trucks would unload crude oil from oilfields north of the SMF at the Summit Pump Station rather than at the SMF. Truck traffic would increase at the Thompson Road and U.S. Highway 101 intersection, at the Thompson Road and Dale Avenue intersection, and along Dale Avenue. Currently, none of those intersections or roadways are impacted by traffic. However, impacts would be greater than those associated with the Proposed Project, since truck trips and subsequent unloading would generate more vehicle trips at the Summit Pump Station along residential areas compared to the Proposed Project. The current unloading location at the Santa Maria Pump Station is in an agricultural area and there are no residences nearby.

Impact T.1 related to increased traffic on local roads and the freeway, would be more severe than the Proposed Project as more vehicle trips along residential areas at the Summit Pump Station would be generated. However, impacts would be less than significant.

6.1.2.8 Other Issue Areas

Under this alternative, crude oil would be stored at the Summit Pump Station in a new crude oil tank. The installation and operation of the tank could cause aesthetic impacts to nearby residences. However, these impacts could be mitigated with vegetative plantings. The pump station currently includes some smaller tanks, as well as a building, fencing, and some other industrial structures.

Construction activities associated with installing the tank could disturb cultural artifacts. However, construction would occur within the fence line of the Summit Pump Station. Archeologists present to observe the construction excavations and grading could mitigate these impacts.

There would not be any impacts associated with the remaining issue areas.

6.1.3 Southbound Route Alternative

Under the Southbound Route Alternative, southbound U.S. Highway 101 would be accessed through Orcutt, rather than Santa Maria under the Proposed Project.

Santa Maria Refinery traffic traveling southbound to U.S. Highway 101 from the Project Site would use the following route: State Route 1 (Willow Road, which turns into Guadalupe Road then Cabrillo Highway and lastly Casmalia Road) east and then south to W. Clark Avenue; and east on W. Clark Avenue (which becomes E. Clark Avenue) to U.S. Highway 101 southbound ramp.

This alternative route avoids most residential areas and reduces traffic along Main Street through Santa Maria.

6.1.3.1 Air Quality

This alternative would reduce air emissions from trucks transporting solid petroleum coke and recovered sulfur from the SMF southbound to customers outside of San Luis Obispo County by avoiding traffic congestion along Main Street in Santa Maria. However, since the route is a similar distance, impacts to air quality would be similar.

6.1.3.2 Public Safety and Hazardous Materials

The Southbound Route Alternative would not produce any additional or different impacts to safety and risk over the Proposed Project.

6.1.3.3 Noise and Vibration

The Southbound Route Alternative would not produce any additional impacts to noise and vibration over the Proposed Project.

6.1.3.4 Public Services and Utilities

The Southbound Route Alternative would not produce any additional impacts to public services over the Proposed Project.

6.1.3.5 Land Use and Policy Consistency Analysis

The Southbound Route Alternative would not produce any additional impacts to land use and policy consistency over the Proposed Project.

6.1.3.6 Transportation

The Southbound Route Alternative would avoid the use of the intersection of Main Street/Highway 166 and Broadway Street in Santa Maria, which currently operates at a level of service of C. However, traffic from the Proposed Project would not cause an impact at this intersection. Therefore, this alternative would not produce any additional impacts to transportation compared to the Proposed Project and would create minor advantages by avoiding a partially impacted intersection. Impacts to intersections along the Proposed Project southbound route, including those within the town of Guadalupe and at Willow and Highway 1 would remain the same as the Proposed Project.

6.1.3.7 Water Resources

The Southbound Route Alternative would not produce any additional impacts to aesthetics and visual resources over the Proposed Project.

6.1.3.8 Other Issue Areas

The Southbound Route Alternative would not produce any additional impacts to other issue areas.

6.2 Comparison of Proposed Project and Alternatives

The CEQA Guidelines (Section 15126.6 [d]) require that an EIR include sufficient information about each alternative to allow meaningful evaluation, analysis, and comparison with the Proposed Project. The Guidelines (Section 15126.6 [e][2]) further state, in part, that “if the environmentally superior alternative is the ‘No Project Alternative,’ the EIR shall also identify an environmentally superior alternative among the other alternatives.”

The following discussion compares impacts associated with the Proposed Project with those associated with the No Project Alternative and the other alternatives. These impacts are identified as a result of the analysis provided in Chapter 4.0, Environmental Analysis, and Section 6.0. An alternative would be considered superior to the Proposed Project if there would be a reduction in impact classification. In cases where the impact from an alternative is in the same class as for the Proposed Project, differences in severity of the impact are analyzed.

Table 6-1 compares the Proposed Project and each of the alternatives for each impact identified in the issue areas. For impacts that are the same classification, an increase or decrease in severity is denoted with an up or down arrow, respectively.

Table 6-1 Summary of Environmental Impacts for the Proposed Project and Alternatives

NI = No Impact; NA = Not Applicable; NC = Not Classified

↑ ↓ = Increase/decrease in severity

- For the Summit Pump Station Truck Unloading and the Southbound Route alternatives, these are alternatives to the Proposed Project components and are listed with a dash if they would not affect the Proposed Project impacts.

Impact #	Impact Description	Proposed Project	Summit Pump Station Truck Unloading	Southbound Route	Explanation
Section 4.1 Air Quality					
AQ.1	Operational Emissions	I	I↓	I	The Summit Pump Station would reduce emissions as trucks would travel less distance on average.
AQ.2	Odor Events	II	II↑	II	Alternatives would be similar except that a crude oil tank could increase the frequency of odor events at Summit
AQ.3	GHG Emissions	I	I↓	I	GHG would be similar for the project and alternatives except that the Summit alternative would have less GHG as trucks would not have to travel as far..
AQ.4	Toxic Emissions	II	II↑	II	Toxic emissions would be similar except that the Summit alternative would place up to 50 trucks per day close to residences. Modeling along area routes indicates that this impact would be less than significant.
Section 4.2 Public Safety and Hazardous Materials					
PSHM.1	Accidental releases	III	III	III	Accidental releases would be the same for all scenarios.
PSHM.2	Transportation risks along roads	III	III	III↓	Transportation risks for the Southbound Route may be less due to less traffic and population.
Section 4.3 Noise and Vibration					
N.1	Noise from Pumping Stations	II	II↑	II	Noise from the Summit Station would increase noise in the area, although less than the thresholds with mitigation.
Section 4.4 Public Services					
PS.1	Increased water use	III	III	III	Increased water use would be the same for the Proposed Project and Summit Pump Station Truck Unloading Alternative.

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- For the Summit Pump Station Truck Unloading and the Southbound Route alternatives, these are alternatives to the Proposed Project components and are listed with a dash if they would not affect the Proposed Project impacts.

Impact #	Impact Description	Proposed Project	Summit Pump Station Truck Unloading	Southbound Route	Explanation
PS.2	Increased wastewater	III	III	III	Increased wastewater production would be the same for the Proposed Project and Summit Pump Station Truck Unloading Alternative.
PS.3	Increased solid wastes	III	III	III	Increased solid waste generation would be the same for the Proposed Project and Summit Pump Station Truck Unloading Alternative.
PS.4	Increased electricity consumption	III	III	III	Increased electricity consumption would be the same for the Proposed Project and Summit Pump Station Truck Unloading Alternative.
PS.5	Increased fossil fuel consumption and production	III	III	III	Increased fossil fuel consumption for the Summit Pump Station would be less due to the shorter trip.
PS.6	Fire protection and emergency services	III	III	III	Fire protection and emergency services would be the same for the Proposed Project and Summit Pump Station Truck Unloading Alternative.
Section 4.5 Land Use and Policy Consistency Analysis					
LU.1	Noise incompatible with adjacent land uses	II	II↑	II	Noise from the Summit Station would increase noise in the area, although less than the thresholds with mitigation.
LU.2	Odors incompatible with adjacent land uses	II	II↑	II	Odors at the Summit Pump Station would increase.
Section 4.6 Transportation and Circulation					
T.1	Operations traffic on local roads and freeway	III	III↑	III↓	Truck trips and subsequent unloading would generate more vehicle trips at the Summit Pump Station and along residential areas compared to the Proposed Project. Transportation impacts for the Southbound Route may be fewer due to less traffic and population.

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NI = No Impact; NA = Not Applicable; NC = Not Classified

↑ ↓ = Increase/decrease in severity

- For the Summit Pump Station Truck Unloading and the Southbound Route alternatives, these are alternatives to the Proposed Project components and are listed with a dash if they would not affect the Proposed Project impacts.

Impact #	Impact Description	Proposed Project	Summit Pump Station Truck Unloading	Southbound Route	Explanation
Section 4.7 Water Resources					
WR.1	Water usage increase	II	II	II	Increased water use would be the same for the Proposed Project and Summit Pump Station Truck Unloading Alternative.
WR.2	Drawdown of onsite wells	III	III	III	Increased water use would be the same for the Proposed Project and Summit Pump Station Truck Unloading Alternative.
WR.3	Water quality	III	III	III	Water quality impacts would be the same for the Proposed Project and Summit Pump Station Truck Unloading Alternative.

6.3 Environmentally Superior Alternative Analysis

The approach taken in this EIR is to provide an assessment of a number of different alternatives to the components of the Proposed Project, including:

- alternative product unloading sites; and
- alternative transportation routes.

The Environmentally Superior Alternative analysis then combines these alternative components together, along with potentially relevant components of the Proposed Project, to present an Environmentally Superior Alternative.

CEQA does not provide specific direction regarding the methodology of comparing alternatives and the Proposed Project. Each project must be evaluated for the issues and impacts that are most important; this will vary depending on the project type and the environmental setting. Issue areas that are generally given more weight in comparing alternatives are those with significant long-term impacts. Impacts that are short-term (e.g., construction-related impacts) or those that are mitigable to less than significant levels are generally considered to be less important.

This comparison is designed to satisfy the requirements of State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(d), Evaluation of Alternatives, which states that:

The EIR shall include sufficient information about each alternative to allow meaningful evaluation, analysis, and comparison with the Proposed Project. A matrix displaying the major characteristics and significant environmental effects of each alternative may be used to summarize the comparison. If an alternative would cause one or more significant effects in addition to those that would be caused by the Project as proposed, the significant effects of the alternative shall be discussed, but in less detail than the significant effects of the Project as proposed.

In accordance with State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(d), this EIR provides sufficient information about each alternative to allow meaningful evaluation, analysis, and comparison with the Proposed Project and the other alternatives. Assumptions made regarding the alternatives' descriptions could differ from actual proposals and the analyses are not presented with project-level detail. Different alternative project configurations and a project-level environmental analysis could result in different conclusions from those presented herein.

6.3.1 Proposed Project Versus Alternatives

To facilitate a clear understanding of the relative merits of the various alternatives, this discussion highlights the major differences between the significant impacts of the Proposed Project and the various alternatives. The alternatives that were described in Section 5.0 and evaluated in this section address two aspects of alternatives: alternative locations for unloading product trucked to the SMF and alternative transportation routes.

In addition to the No Project Alternative, alternatives to the specific project components were addressed, including:

- Summit Pump Station Truck Unloading Alternative; and
- Southbound Route Alternative.

Each of these is compared to the respective Proposed Project component to assess the respective advantage or disadvantage over the Proposed Project and alternatives.

A comparison of the advantages and disadvantages of these alternatives compared to the Proposed Project is provided in Table 6-1. A discussion of each alternative compared to the Proposed Project follows.

6.3.1.1 Proposed Project Versus the No Project Alternative

| With the No Project Alternative, the throughput increase would not occur at the Santa Maria Refinery. Under the No Project Alternative, no new activity would take place at the Santa Maria Refinery. None of the impacts associated with the Proposed Project would occur. No new impacts would occur under the No Project Alternative.

6.3.1.2 Proposed Project Versus the Summit Pump Station Truck Unloading Alternative

The Summit Pump Station Truck Unloading Alternative has advantages over the Proposed Project because crude oil truck trips from the north would be re-routed to the Summit Pump Station from the Santa Maria Pump Station, thereby shortening the length of each trip, conserving fuel, and reducing air emissions. This alternative would reduce average crude oil transportation distances from 66 miles to 56 miles. Although the level of impact would remain the same (significant, Class I), the severity of the air quality impact would be reduced.

| This alternative creates disadvantages compared the Proposed Project associated with air quality odors and public safety due to fires. The introduction of crude oil offloading and storage at the Summit Pump Station would increase the frequency of releases that can cause odor events and complaints. Also, the crude oil storage would increase the risk of fires impacting nearby vegetation and, consequently, residences. Both of these impacts would be significant, but odor mitigation and fire prevention and design measures could mitigate them to less than significant levels.

This alternative also presents disadvantages compared to the Proposed Project associated with air quality, public safety, noise from trucks, and transportation issues for residences. Each of these issues would be less than significant, but they would be more severe than the Proposed Project.

6.3.1.3 Proposed Project Versus the Southbound Route Alternative

This is an alternative to the Proposed Project component of southbound truck traffic leaving the SMF and utilizing Main Street/Highway 166 in Santa Maria to connect to U.S. Highway 101. This alternative would access U.S. Highway 101 via Clark Avenue in Orcutt.

The Southbound Route Alternative is also advantageous compared to the Proposed Project since this alternative route avoids most residential areas and reduces traffic along Main Street through Santa Maria. It also avoids the intersection of Main Street/Highway 166 and Broadway Street in Santa Maria, which currently operates at level of service of C. Although the level of impact would remain less than significant, the severity of the impact would be less than the Proposed Project.

This alternative has a similar impact on all other issues areas compared to the Proposed Project. This alternative creates no disadvantages compared to the Proposed Project.

6.3.2 Environmentally Superior Alternative

The No Project Alternative would be the environmentally superior alternative since it would not generate any impacts. However, the No Project Alternative would not meet any of the objectives of the Proposed Project. CEQA requires that if the environmentally superior alternative is the No Project Alternative, then the next most environmentally preferred alternative must also be identified.

The Summit Pump Station Truck Unloading Alternative has the advantages of reducing air emissions, but air emissions would remain significant. The disadvantages include the impacts on nearby residences of odor, fire, toxic emissions, noise, and transportation, although none of these impacts would be significant after mitigation. These disadvantages outweigh the benefits of reduced air emissions. Therefore, this alternative has not been selected as the environmentally superior alternative.

The Southbound Route Alternative has the advantage over the Highway 166 route for southbound traffic since the alternative would avoid a partially impacted intersection within Santa Maria. The Applicant could specify their preferences for this route in contracts with trucking companies and contractors. Therefore, the Proposed Project with use of the Southbound Route Alternative is the Environmentally Preferred Alternative.

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