
V. ALTERNATIVES

C. ABOVE GROUND PARKING

1. DESCRIPTION OF THE ALTERNATIVE

The Above Ground Parking Alternative is based on a project design intended to reduce the excavation required for the semi-subterranean parking and thus reduce the air quality emissions associated with grading. Under this Alternative, an above ground parking structure would be developed in lieu of the Phase 2 two-level semi-subterranean parking structure that would be located below the Phase 2 Institute Building. Thus, the excavation activities needed for the project would be reduced. The above ground structure would include two parking levels containing approximately 113 parking spaces that would be located above the surface parking area developed within the southern portion of the site as part of Phase 1. The new above ground parking structure would be approximately 20 feet in height and would be comprised of an approximately 20,000 square foot footprint. Other than the varied parking arrangement, this Alternative would provide a project that would be identical to the proposed project with regard to the facilities provided, adding 79,000 square feet of new area in Phase 1 and 50,000 square feet of new area in Phase 2, for a total project area of approximately 271,880 square feet. The expanded building areas would be developed in the same locations proposed by the project. However, the Phase 2 Institute Building would be located above a single level of parking that would generally be at-grade in lieu of the two levels of parking described above. In addition, access under this Alternative would also be similar to that of the proposed project. A comparative summary of the environmental impacts of the proposed project and Alternative C is presented in Table 33 on page 270 and is described in greater detail below.

2. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

(1) Aesthetics

The Above Ground Parking Alternative would include the same additions to the existing site structures and development of the new Institute Building as the proposed project. In addition, the Above Ground Parking Alternative would add a new parking structure that would be located along the southern edge of the project site. As discussed above, the new parking structure would be approximately 20 feet in height with a footprint of approximately 20,000 square feet. With the exception of development of the above ground parking structure, the site design and landscaping program would be similar to that of the proposed project.

The new above grade parking structure would add greater building volume to the site, thus increasing the impact on visual character. The variation in site appearance would detract

from the visual character of the site by placing an above grade parking facility within an area that would generally remain an open parking area under Phase 2 of the project. The parking facility would be more apparent to viewers, and would be less integrated into the site design. Therefore, the impacts of the Above Ground Parking Alternative on aesthetic character would be greater than those of the proposed project, but like the proposed project would be less than significant due to the location of the project site within the northeastern-most corner of Griffith Park next to two regional freeways and the already developed nature of the project site.

The new above ground parking facility would generally lie outside of the major view corridors in the project vicinity, although it would be a more notable component of the view setting. Views of visual resources such as the mountains to the south and north would not be significantly impacted. However, impacts of views from the golf courses would increase when compared with the project. Overall, view impacts would be greater when compared with the proposed project, however such impacts would remain less than significant.

Lighting in an above ground parking structure would increase the amount of lighting on-site when compared with the project. However, the additional lighting would not substantially alter the night-time aesthetic character of the site from that of the proposed project. Similar to the proposed project, such lighting impacts would be less than significant.

The above ground parking structure would be a new source of shading on the project site. However, this additional shading would fall mainly within the project site and would not adversely affect off-site sensitive uses. Therefore, shading impacts of the Above Ground Parking Alternative and the proposed project would be similar, and less than significant.

(2) Air Quality

As discussed above, the Above Ground Parking Alternative was designed to reduce the amount of grading required during construction, thus reducing the project's significant impact on NO_x emissions. Notwithstanding, excavation for foundation footings and preparation of the building would still be necessary for the new parking facility. However, the reduction in grading would be expected to be sufficient to reduce the project's significant construction impact on NO_x emissions, which exceeds the significance threshold only by a small amount. Further, the reduced excavation would also incrementally reduce the project's construction emissions on other emissions, including regional VOC, PM₁₀, PM_{2.5}, CO, and SO_x, emissions and localized NO_x, PM₁₀, PM_{2.5} and CO emission which are adverse, but less than significant under the project. Therefore, construction impacts of the Above Ground Parking Alternative would be less than those of the proposed project and would be less than significant.

Other than the variation in parking facilities, the site uses under this Alternative would be similar to those of the proposed project. Therefore, regional emissions associated with VOC,

PM₁₀, PM_{2.5}, CO, SO_x, and NO_x and localized emissions associated with CO as a result of operation of the Alternative would be similar to those under the proposed project, and would be less than significant. Likewise, impacts regarding toxic air contaminants, odors and consistency with SCAQMD and SCAG policies regarding air quality would be similar for both the Above Ground Parking Alternative and the proposed project, and would be less than significant.

(3) Cultural Resources

Similar to the proposed project, grading activities under the Above Ground Parking Alternative have the low potential to result in the uncovering of archeological and paleontological resources. Compliance with regulatory requirements would ensure that potential impacts associated with uncovering of archaeological resources would be less than significant. In addition, the same mitigation measure addressing paleontological resources would also be implemented under the Above Ground Parking Alternative. However, under the Above Ground Parking Alternative, grading activities would be reduced when compared with the project. Thus, potential impacts associated with uncovering of archeological and paleontological resources would be reduced when compared with the project.

There are no historic buildings within the project site. Thus, as with the proposed project, no impacts associated with historic resources would occur under the Above Ground Parking Alternative.

(4) Hydrology/Water Quality

The location of the above ground parking structure would occur in an area that would otherwise be dedicated to hardscape area under the proposed project and therefore the runoff levels and drainage characteristics of the Above Ground Parking Alternative would be expected to be similar to those of the proposed project. Therefore, similar to the proposed project, development of the Above Ground Parking Alternative would result in a small increase in impermeable surface area that might potentially increase run-off potential. However, also like the proposed project, Best Management Practices (BMPs) would be implemented during construction and operation of the Alternative in compliance with National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit requirements. The BMPs would protect water quality through a variety of site design measures that control site contaminants from otherwise entering the regional water system. Thus, construction and operation impacts to hydrology and surface water quality under the Above Ground Parking Alternative would be similar to those of the proposed project, and in both cases such impacts would be less than significant.

(5) Land Use

The Above Ground Parking Structure Alternative includes uses that are the same as those proposed as part of the project. Thus, this Alternative would also be consistent with existing land use regulations and policies pertaining to use of the site. However, with the above grade parking structure, this Alternative may not be considered to provide a site design that would be as compatible with the park setting of Griffith Park when compared with the project, which includes a semi-subterranean parking facility that would generally not be visible from areas of the park to the west. Therefore, land use compatibility impacts would be greater under this Alternative, but would be less than significant, similar to the land use impacts of the project.

(6) Noise

The Above Ground Parking Alternative was designed to reduce the amount of grading required on the project site. Any reduction in grading would also likely reduce the noise generated by heavy equipment at off-site receptors, (i.e. the Zoo, golf courses and Zoo Magnet School) during the excavation phase of construction. However, the worst-case construction noise levels on a given day would be expected to be similar to those under the project. In addition, increased construction noise levels could result due to the above grade location of the parking structure. The project includes mitigation measures that would reduce the construction-related noise to levels that would be less than significant; and any resulting less than significant impacts due to the project's construction would occur for only very short durations. The Above Ground Parking Alternative would be required to implement similar mitigation measures. Thus, the construction-related noise impacts under the Above Ground Parking Alternative would be similar to those of the project, and like the proposed project would be less than significant with incorporation of mitigation measures.

As the site uses for the Above Ground Parking Alternative are the same as those of the proposed project, the increased noise due to additional mechanical equipment on the project site and additional traffic noise would also be similar to that generated by the project. In both cases the increased noise levels would not be perceptible. Therefore, the potential noise impacts due to operations are considered to be less than significant for the both the Above Ground Parking Structure and the proposed project.

(7) Public Services – Fire Protection

The Above Ground Parking Structure Alternative offers a varied site design plan from that of the proposed project, but otherwise offers the same site uses as the proposed project. Any variations in the configuration of buildings on the project site would be required to meet the same access, fire flow, hydrant, and building design specifications for fire protection as the proposed project. The increase in the demand for service and resulting impacts on fire protection

service during both construction and operation of the Above Ground Parking Structure would be similar to those of the proposed project. In both cases, impacts would be less than significant.

(8) Traffic and Circulation

The conversion of the project's semi-subterranean parking structure to an above ground structure would not alter the traffic or access conditions that would occur under the proposed project. The same number of traffic trips would be generated, and parking access at the southern edge of the project would be identical, delivering visitors to an above ground, as opposed to a below ground, parking structure. Construction of the parking structure would not pose additional impacts on traffic, as construction staging would continue to be performed on-site, worker trips would occur during off-peak hours, and the same construction traffic and parking management plan would be implemented. Construction traffic impacts under the Above Ground Parking Alternative would be similar to those of the proposed project, and in both cases such impacts would be less than significant with mitigation measures incorporated.

As the Above Ground Parking Alternative would have the same trip generation as the proposed project, impacts on traffic associated with the Alternative would be similar to those of the project. Additional traffic would be added to the roadway network, increasing the volume to capacity/delay times at the studied intersections. However, in no cases would the increases be considered significant based on the City's significance thresholds; neither in 2010 with the completion of Phase 1 development, nor in 2014 with the completion of Phase 2 development.

The Above Ground Parking Alternative would have the same access pattern as the project. This Alternative would incorporate two driveways, one on the north end of the project site and one to the south end of the project site. Western Heritage Way would include left-turn pockets for southbound entering traffic so as not to impede the through-traffic. Similar to the project, access impacts would be less than significant. Further, like the project, the Above Ground Parking Alternative would add additional trips to the regional transportation system, but the level of these impacts would not exceed CMP threshold criteria, and thus would not be considered a project impact. In addition, like the proposed project, this Alternative would increase ridership on the public transit system, but this increase would not cause transit service to operate in excess of its capacity.

Overall, the construction and operational traffic impacts of this Alternative would be similar to those of the proposed project with regard to intersection operations, regional facilities, public transit and access. In both cases such impacts would be less than significant.

The replacement of the semi-subterranean structure with an above ground structure would not alter the number of parking spaces on site, or the basic site access layout. Therefore, as was the case with the proposed project, the Above Ground Parking Structure Alternative

would have parking that would be sufficient to meet the on-site demand; and would contain a design that avoids the creation of hazardous conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists. Therefore, impacts of the Above Ground Parking Structure and the proposed project on parking and pedestrian/bicycle safety would be similar and less than significant.

3. RELATIONSHIP OF THE ALTERNATIVE TO PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The Above Ground Parking Alternative would meet the underlying purpose of the project to engage all peoples in the inclusive stories of the American West; to expand and modernize the Griffith Park Campus; and to create an accessible, enlightening, inspiring, innovative and scholarly Campus that provides a deeper understanding of the art, history and cultures of the American West. In addition, the Mission Objectives of the project would be met. Specifically, the Above Ground Parking Alternative would provide for expanded exhibition, classroom and educational research facilities. In addition, a design that contributes to the project's intended synergy between the Autry National Center's display, interpretation, conservation and education roles would be implemented. Furthermore, under the Above Ground Parking Alternative, Mission Objectives to enhance the visitor experience, to enhance the Griffith Park Campus as a visitor destination, and to enhance the economic sustainability of the Autry National Center would be met.

The Program Objectives would also be met under the Above Ground Parking Alternative. Specifically, the Autry National Center would be able to bring together its collections, library holdings and Institute for the Study of the American West to the same facility, thus providing the full opportunity to expand its interpretive services regarding conservation of art and artifacts of the American West, including the telling of the interconnected stories of Native Americans. Further, the Above Ground Parking Alternative would allow the Autry National Center to stimulate a convergence dialogue among researchers, curators, and the public. The Above Ground Parking Alternative would also provide the space required to use the standard of care set by the American Association of Museums, to provide greater public access to larger segments of the collection, and to enhance the visitor experience with improved entertainment, retail and café facilities. Further, the Program Objectives regarding the needed upgrade to the buildings, infrastructure and parking would be met under the Above Ground Parking Alternative.

Finally, the Above Ground Parking Alternative would meet the project's Design Objectives, albeit in a less optimal manner. It would allow the Autry National Center to enhance the character of the site through the integration of the indoor and outdoor spaces with outdoor educational space and implementation of the Autry National Center's "museum-inside-out" concept to reveal a greater amount of the collection as well as the dynamic inner workings of the Campus. However, the erection of an above ground parking structure that creates more visible building mass would not meet the objective of enhancing the project's relationship with Griffith Park to the extent that the project would.