

Alternatives

Alternatives to the proposed project must be considered. There could be options considered that may have slightly more cost, but less environmental impact. This may lead to an alternative being the most appropriate selection when the project's environmental mitigation measures are considered.

Examples of alternatives include, but are not limited by the following:

1. Site location.
2. Project design.
3. Project size.
4. Renovate existing building vs new construction.
5. No action.

Site locations are often predetermined before the Agency becomes involved with the project. There must be some reason the site was selected like the location or it was already owned by the Owner. This should be documented. Different sites may still be under consideration. The best site for the proposed project with the least environmental impact should be explained. Cost is secondary to an environmental impact if reasonable.

For example, the Owner owns a site proposed for the project site which includes habitat for an endangered species. Another site is nearby, is available for sale, and will function just the same as the first site. The second site may be a better environmental choice if the cost is reasonable. If the second site was not available or the cost was extravagant, the first site may be the only option, but will come with mitigation measures to protect the endangered species.

Reasonable different project designs and sizes should be considered. The project may come to the Agency with a pre-set design due to the specific requirements of the Owner. Reasonable alternatives should have or can be explored to evaluate the least environmental impact. It may be a situation where the Agency has to document the process the design professionals went thru to come up with the design. Other projects may be influenced by the environmental report from the beginning.

For example, the Owners current site contains a small wetland. The Owner wants a single story building, but that would require filling in portions of the wetland. The alternative could be a two story building which avoids this impact.

A no action alternative must always be addressed. It may seem pointless because the Owner believes they have reasons for the project. By going through the process, the environmental report helps document the potential impact. It is not acceptable to state that there are no possible options except for the one proposed. Design options are unlimited, different sites are usually available throughout in the State, and to do nothing is always possible.

The environmental report should not have any preconceived outcomes. The report is not to justify a project, but rather present facts that support the process of design, identify environmental issues, and lower any harmful impacts.