

6.0 ANALYSIS OF ALTERNATIVES

The discussion and analysis of alternatives in Environmental Impact Assessments should consider other practicable strategies that will promote the elimination of negative environmental impacts identified. This section is a requirement of the National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA), and is critical in consideration of the ideal development with minimal environmental disturbance.

This draft report has identified the major environmental impacts noted by scientific experts. The RIU project team and the consulting scientists worked together, utilising findings of these impacts to analyse possible options for the final development.

The following alternatives have been identified and have been discussed with RIU as means of reducing environmental effects. They are discussed in further detail below:

- The “No-Action” Alternative
- The proposed Development as described in the EIA
- Original rooms area, with parking lot moved
- Demarcation of fish sanctuary and negotiation of border

6.1 The “No-Action” Alternative

The “no action” alternative is required to ensure the consideration of the original environment without any development. This is necessary for the decision-makers in considering all possibilities.

The development will have a minimal effect on the physical environment. The only major effect identified was drainage and storm surge issues and mitigation measures and solutions have been identified to address these issues.

The no-action alternative **should** minimize the effects on flora and fauna identified, this is not, however, a guarantee. If the land is not secured, damage to the special floral and faunal species and habitats may still occur from independent sources.

The property also fringes on a proposed fish sanctuary. Similar to the discussion above, it is not guaranteed that if the hotel is not built, the beach area will remain in its present state.

There is a possibility of working with the hotel management in a positive way with the development, as a possible useful on-site management solution for the management and monitoring of the sanctuary.

In terms of the social environment, the “no-action” alternative would eliminate the job opportunities and the local economic inflow as estimated in the discussions above.

Negril

6.2 The proposed Development as described in the EIA

The impacts and mitigation measures for this alternative are discussed in detail throughout this report. The positive impacts have been identified in social and economic opportunities for the local vicinity of Negril, as well as a positive impact on the national economy.

This alternative will have minimal impact on the physical environment and has considered the necessary measures to almost eliminate the identified issues of drainage and storm water runoff.

As proposed, however, the consultant has identified some ecological issues with respect to the proposed parking area. The proposed parking lot is in a particularly dense, eco-rich wooded area. The scientists therefore propose that even slightly moving the site of the parking lot may preserve a large eco-habitat.

The beachfront of the present development has also raised some issues with an area that has been earmarked by the environmental interests in Negril for a Fish Sanctuary/nursery. It is proposed that a compromise from both the landowner and the environmental users in the community may best resolve this issue. This will require interactive dialogue and fair debate by both parties to achieve an amicable agreement.

6.3 Original rooms area, with parking lot moved

This alternative considers minimising the ecological impact of the parking lot by relocating it to the present site of the batching plant. This will significantly reduce the disturbance of the ecosystems and habitats as identified and discussed in the impacts for the present proposed development. In addition, based on the high species density in the original proposed site, and the requirements of the environmental agency, this alternative may reduce some of the costs on the Tree Preservation Plan and ecosystem conservation generally.

6.4 Demarcation of fish sanctuary

In addition to relocating the proposed parking lot, it may be prudent in anticipation of the designation of the proposed fish sanctuary in the Negril Environmental Protection Plan to move the fish sanctuary boundary by approximately 75 – 100m north. The border should then be extended westwards so that the area of the sanctuary remains the same. This long-term planning may not only minimize costs at a later date, but will also minimize delays due to process and negotiation and indeed enhance the hotel's community image.

The use of the designated fish sanctuary area is not prohibited, but may have to be limited by the hotel in creative and innovative ways, maybe even in association with the environmental groups.

6.5 Overview of Alternative Analysis

Based on the above, the most environmentally sound alternative is the development of the guest area as proposed, the relocation of the proposed parking area to the present batching plant site and the demarcation of the fish sanctuary areas for lower carrying capacity and possibly special environmental projects.

The findings of the alternative analysis were discussed with RIU hotels and they have agreed to the preservation of the flora and fauna of the originally proposed parking lot site and will therefore relocate the parking lot to the existing batching plant site.