



**Keep the Skyway
Scenic Open Space
And
Agriculture**

**BUTTE
COUNTY
MAY 30 2008
DEVELOPMENT
SERVICES**



May 14, 2008

RE: Alternatives Report—Study Area 10 Skyway/Neal Road

Dear Supervisor Dolan:

On July 30, 1950, almost sixty years ago, the main road from Chico to Paradise, known as the Skyway, was dedicated and open for use. The project engineers selected the route for its proximity to the existing railroad bed that previously established connectivity between the valley floor and the foothills.

The outstanding variety of natural vistas and ecosystems that flank the Skyway rival many of this country's most breathtaking picturesque landscapes. When traveling the Skyway, one's awareness of the visual environment is heightened and a sense of community pride in our natural resources, agricultural base, and open space is awakened. During the next couple of years, we may lose this precious resource to development if we do not put in place the necessary restrictions that will limit the sprawl and leap-frog development that Alternative 3 of Study Area 10 supports.

The enclosed document provides a closer review of the consulting firm DC&E's evaluation process of Study Area 10. Please take the time to carefully review this paper as it reveals some serious flaws in the research and analysis of the existing conditions and conclusions drawn by DC&E.

Hopefully, after your review you will see that the best growth pattern for Study Area 10 conclusively excludes Alternative 3; the building of approximately 150 dwellings at the Tuscan Ridge Golf Course which supports the worst kind of antiquated planning and unsustainable development.

Sincerely,

April Grossberger

I believe that 8 of the 34 study areas directly impact Durham and the surrounding prime agricultural lands. A recent study by American Farmland Trust found that in Dunn Wis., the city government was spending \$1.06 in services for every tax dollar they collected.

groundwater is stored in the Tuscan, Laguna, Riverbank and Modesto Formations. Groundwater in these formations primarily exists within the spaces between sand and gravel deposits which generally allow greater recharge and access to groundwater than aquifers relying on the fractures and joints of rocks. The Tuscan and Laguna Formations provide water for deep irrigation and municipal wells, while the Riverbank and Modesto Formations provide water for shallower domestic wells...

[This is true of sediments and sedimentary rock; however, it does not mean that recharge processes can be simplified.] [Unit C of the Tuscan Formation has a resistant, low permeability layer that forms many of the Buttes in this area. This Unit outcrops in much of the study areas impacting Durham, and is most likely the cause of high runoff and surface/channel flooding in the Durham area east of Oro-Chico Highway.] . [It is important to note that Durham, like Chico, has a growing groundwater depression. This spring, seven of the eight monitoring wells in the Durham SIU were below the low level set for the county groundwater monitoring program. This is the second year that groundwater levels are low, putting the Durham-Dayton SIU into stage two alert. Please note that the Durham-Dayton SIU covers a very large geologic and demographically diverse area.]

Study Area 9 is located within the Durham/Dayton Inventory Sub-Unit. The primary source of water is groundwater, although some water suppliers in this Sub-Unit have water rights on Butte Creek. This water is used for both urban and agricultural needs. Although there are no water service providers currently operating within Study Area 9, the California Water Service Company (Chico District) serves adjacent urbanized areas in Chico. This provider relies on over 60 wells that pump groundwater for urban needs in and around the City of Chico. It may be possible to serve urban development in this study area by connecting to the California Water Service Company network. However, the existing demand in the greater Chico area has created a cone of groundwater depression around the municipal water supply wells.

[This is in error and a similar comment has been indicated as such in the Alternatives Evaluation Report Errata dated May 2, 2008 (DCE?). The report fails to mention this error in the context of this study area. To be clear, Butte Creek is not used as a municipal water supply.]

[All of the study area reports fail to look at the effect of creating impervious surfaces and how that in turn affects runoff and flooding for communities downstream and downslope.]

[Cal Water indicates that the average water use per household in the Chico area is 300gal/day, plus an additional 1300gals for outdoor use – landscapes. California Water Code Section 13550-13556 states that using potable domestic water for non-potable uses, including cemeteries, golf courses, parks, industrial and residential irrigation is an unreasonable use of potable water if recycled water is available (Local Government Commission). If infrastructure has to be developed for all of these new study areas outside of incorporated areas, it is time to consider the development of recycled water systems.]

The eastern portion of Study Area 10 is located within the Foothill Inventory Unit. As in the Valley, the primary source of groundwater is the Tuscan Formation; however, aquifer yields are much lower than those in the Valley.

[This may be due to the fact that this area overlies Unit C of the Tuscan Formation as noted above. It is important to note that the Tuscan Formation is very complex and we do not fully understand recharge or discharge processes of this formation as a whole. Therefore, it is hard to estimate available water supplies and what impacts land use changes will have on these processes.]

Study Area 14 is located within the Pentz Inventory Sub-Unit. The primary source of water is groundwater. There is little farming in this area and the population is low, leading to low water demands.

[It is important to note that regardless of the low demands in this area for groundwater, the monitoring well in the Pentz SIU indicates a decline below the low groundwater level set for this area. And, like Chico, Durham also has a growing groundwater depression.]

Study Area 9 is located within the Valley Inventory Unit. It may serve as a moderate or high potential recharge area.

[None of these area studies discuss storm water runoff or discharge. How will that be handled? Will retention ponds be employed or will storm water be routed to creeks unfiltered?]

There is currently no publicly managed sewer service in Study Area 9. The current wastewater treatment method is individual septic systems.

[Reuse of wastewater and conservation should be part of the language found here and in the GP.]

Submitted May 30, 2008: Butte Planning Commission Meeting
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