

## 5 STUDY AREA 5: MAGALIA/PARADISE PINES

The Magalia/Paradise Pines study area consists of approximately 6,700 acres located north of the Town of Paradise. Portions of this study area are currently developed with medium and low density residential uses, as well as retail along the Skyway. Eastern portions of this study area are also used for public purposes related to the Paradise and Magalia Reservoirs. Much of this study area remains as forested resource conservation.

- ◆ Alternative 1 follows the existing General Plan, designating a mix of Very Low, Medium, and Medium-High Density Residential, about 170 acres of Retail, as well as agricultural and public uses. This alternative would allow approximately 1,400 new homes.
- ◆ Alternative 2 designates the majority of the study area for Agriculture and Resource Conservation, but maintains the Medium Density Residential and Public designations from the existing General Plan. Because the majority of the area designated for Medium Density Residential is already developed, this alternative would not allow a significant amount of new homes.
- ◆ Under Alternative 3, the majority of the study area would be designated as Rural Residential, allowing approximately 400 new homes. This alternative also maintains the Medium Density Residential and Public designations from the existing General Plan.

### A. *Economics*

#### 1. **Market Viability**

##### a. **Alternative 1**

This alternative calls for a substantial number of new residential homes, spread over a variety of density ranges that would likely appeal to a broad swath of potential home seekers. Magalia/Paradise Pines is an established location for residential development, so the planned housing has good potential for absorption.

However, with 2.2 million square feet of new commercial potential, this alternative would accommodate the equivalent of approximately 15 “big-box” stores (e.g. Target or Costco), or two enclosed regional malls. Retail shopping facilities of this scale would typically require a market area population of 600,000+ residents within an approximately 15-minute drive. Given that this is almost three times the entire current population of Butte County, absorption potential for the retail component of this alternative is extremely low. However, the amount of new homes that would be allowed under Alternative 1 may support a limited amount of new small convenience stores or fast-food restaurants to serve new residents. Since there is significant doubt that the amount of retail development in Alternative 1 would fully build out during the General Plan horizon, Alternative 1 receives a C.

b. Alternative 2

Since this alternative calls for Agriculture and Resource Conservation uses, absorption potential is not a concern.

c. Alternative 3

With 400 new rural residential homes envisioned for this study area, this alternative would likely enjoy reasonable market support, as the greater Paradise area already has a well-established market for this type of residential development. Alternative 3 receives an A.

## 2. Fiscal Impacts

a. Alternative 1

The Magalia/Paradise Pines study area lies in TRAs where the county receives between 16.7 and 20.3 percent of the property taxes, meaning that the study area has reasonably good property tax revenue potential. This observation holds true under Alternative 2, and 3, also.

With a predominantly single-family focus in the residential category, and a very large (2.2 million square feet) potential for new retail development, this alternative has positive fiscal potential for the county.

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From a service provision standpoint, this study area is located near an existing concentration of development in the unincorporated area that is served by Sheriff's patrols and by Butte County Fire Station #33, which is staffed full-time; however, it should be noted that the geographic boundaries of this study area extend beyond the eight-minute emergency response travel times for Station #33. Conversations with Butte County Fire Department personnel indicate that the Fire Department is already starting to experience demands for a more urban level of emergency response in this study area, due to an increasing concentration of population and non-residential land uses. Developing additional residential and retail uses may further increase pressure to provide a higher level of service in this study area, which might, for example, necessitate the construction and staffing of an additional fire station, at significant cost to the county. Overall, Alternative 1 receives a B for its fiscal impacts.

b. Alternative 2

Since this alternative proposes only Agriculture and Resource Conservation uses for the Magalia/Paradise Pines study area, it implies little to no fiscal impact for the County, unless recreational uses involved County maintenance responsibilities. Since fiscal impacts would be neutral, Alternative 2 receives a C.

c. Alternative 3

With a reasonable property tax share and a focus on rural residential development, which is likely to have relatively high values, the 400 homes planned under this alternative would likely have fiscal benefits for the county. However, as discussed under Alternative 1, if the continued development of the Paradise Pines/Magalia study area triggers a need for a second full-time staffed fire station, this could have adverse fiscal impacts. Because this alternative would scatter few homes over the study area and no new commercial development, this alternative would have less revenue-generating potential than Alternative 1, but since Alternative 3 is more likely to achieve full market absorption during the General Plan horizon, it receives a B.

### 3. Jobs/Housing Balance

#### a. Alternative 1

The estimated jobs/housing balance for this study area is three jobs for every one employed resident, meaning that at full buildout, the study area would allow substantially more jobs than new employed residents. Since Paradise currently has more employed residents than jobs, Alternative 1 would improve the jobs/housing ratio in the Paradise area. However, because the large amount of job-generating retail in Alternative 1 is unlikely to build out during the General Plan horizon, these potential new jobs may not be realized. Therefore, Alternative 1 receives a C.

#### b. Alternative 2

With essentially no new housing and no new commercial uses planned under this alternative, this alternative would not affect the jobs/housing balance.

#### c. Alternative 3

In this alternative, with only new rural residential uses planned and no significant new employment generating uses, the new residents would contribute to an existing deficit of employment opportunities relative to new employed residents. Alternative 3 receives a C.

## *B. Public Services*

### 1. Fire and Emergency Services

The Butte County Fire Department and CAL FIRE provide fire protection and emergency services to the Magalia/Paradise Pines study area. In general, there is not adequate staffing to handle more than two serious fire events or several less-serious emergencies at once in Butte County. Any new development in the county will impact the level of fire protection and emergency services.

There are three fire stations located within the boundaries of the study area: Fire Stations 17, 31 and 33. Fire Station 17 is located in the north central

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portion of the study area, Fire Station 31 is volunteer-staffed and located on the north western boundary, and Fire Station 33 is career-staffed and located in the south central portion of the study area.

All of the study area has adequate service levels for rural residential development; there is also a significant area that has adequate service levels for very low density residential development. A small southeastern portion of the study area has adequate service levels for suburban residential, industrial and retail development.

Specifically, all of study area is located within a ten- to 14-minute travel area for a first-due unit. The majority of the study area is also located within an eight-minute travel area for a first-due unit. Although a large area is also located within a four-minute travel area for a first-due unit, only a small southeastern portion of the study area is located within an eight-minute response time for three or more fire stations.

Fire safety and evacuation concerns on the Upper Ridge and Paradise area present a significant challenge due to the lack of alternative circulation routes. Fire safety and evacuation concerns are even more pronounced for the Paradise Pines and Magalia communities due to a single point of ingress and egress over the Magalia Reservoir dam. A Capitol Improvement Program administered by the Butte County Department of Public Works includes a long-range plan to make road improvements along the Skyway, and to additionally improve the Skyway northward to connect with Highway 32 to provide alternative access. This plan is in the early stages and funding has not been fully acquired.

a. Alternative 1

Alternative 1 calls for approximately 1,400 new homes at a suburban density, as well as some areas of very low residential densities. In addition, this alternative calls for retail development, which typically requires high fire and emergency service levels because it includes assets of high economic value and generates customers that depend on those services.

Only the small area of suburban residential and retail development in the southeast corner of the study area would have adequate levels of fire and emergency services. The remaining suburban residential and retail development would not have adequate levels of fire and emergency services due to high travel times and/or a low concentration of fire stations in the immediate area. The majority of the very low density residential development would have adequate fire and emergency service levels. The level of development under this alternative would not support a new fire station, so there would be little opportunity to improve fire protection. Because Alternative 1 allows more than a minimal amount of new development and portions would not have adequate service levels, this alternative receives a C.

b. Alternative 2

There would be no new development in this study area under Alternative 2, so fire and emergency services are not an issue.

c. Alternative 3

Alternative 3 calls for approximately 400 new homes at a rural density. All of this development would have adequate fire and emergency service levels. Although Alternative 3 allows more than a minimal amount of new development, it would have adequate levels of fire and emergency services. Therefore, Alternative 3 receives a B.

## 2. Sheriff Services

The Magalia/Paradise Pines study area is served by the Northern Division of the Butte County Sheriff's Office (BCSO). The BCSO is currently understaffed and has limited capacity for expansion of its services. The Northern Division typically has about one to two deputies on duty in the Magalia area. Because the study area is located within the Magalia area, response times to this location are relatively quick.

The Butte County Sheriff station in Chico, the closest police station, is located within 13 miles of the southern boundary of the study area and 17 miles of the northern boundary.

a. Alternatives 1 and 3

Alternative 1 would allow approximately 1,400 new homes, generating the need for approximately five new officers. Alternative 3 would allow approximately 400 new homes, generating the need for approximately one new officer. Because these alternatives allow development that would generate the need for between one and five new officers in an area with quick response times, they receive a B.

b. Alternative 2

There would be no new development in this study area under Alternative 2, so sheriff services are not an issue.

**3. Capacity of School Districts**

The Magalia/Paradise Pines study area is served by the Paradise Unified School District (PUSD), which has experienced dramatic declines in enrollment. The PUSD's current enrollment is approximately 4,800 students and it has the capacity for approximately 5,800 students, meaning the District has the capacity for approximately 1,000 more students. Although the PUSD does not have any immediate expansion plans, there are long-term plans to build a new high school in Magalia that would accommodate approximately 500 to 1,000 additional students. These long-term plans for the new high school were developed prior to the declining enrollment, and the PUSD purchased and still owns a site for this new school. This project could be built if enrollment begins to outstrip capacity.

a. Alternative 1

Under Alternative 1, the Magalia/Paradise Pines study area could generate approximately 690 new students. The total amount of development foreseen under Alternative 1 in all of the study areas within the PUSD could generate

approximately 880 new students, which could be accommodated by the current capacity.

Because the number of new students generated by this study area could be accommodated by the existing capacity, this alternative receives an A.

b. Alternative 2

Under Alternative 2, the Magalia/Paradise Pines study area would not generate any new students, so schools are not an issue.

c. Alternative 3

Under Alternative 3, the Magalia/Paradise Pines study area could generate approximately 200 new students. The total amount of development foreseen under Alternative 3 in all of the study areas within the PUSD could generate approximately 620 new students, which could be accommodated by the current capacity.

Because the number of new students generated by this study area could be accommodated by the existing capacity, this alternative receives an A.

*C. Water*

**1. Water Supply**

The Magalia/Paradise Pines study area is located within the Foothill Inventory Unit. As discussed in more detail under the Forest Ranch study area, the foothills primarily rely on surface water.

The Magalia/Paradise Pines study area is located within the Ridge Inventory Sub-Unit. The Ridge water supply is a mix of surface water and groundwater. During drought years, water needs have not been fully met.

The majority of the Magalia/Paradise Pines study area is served by the Del Oro Water Company. The Del Oro Water Company has four separate

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service areas; the Paradise Pines District covers most of the Magalia/Paradise Pines study area, while the Magalia District covers a small southeastern portion. The Paradise Pines District primarily services single family residential dwellings using water from five local groundwater wells. This District also receives surface water from the Stirling Bluffs District, which is another of the four Del Oro Water Company Districts. The Magalia District primarily serves residential uses, relying on water from two groundwater wells. The Magalia District also receives some surface water from the Paradise Irrigation District, which mainly serves the Town of Paradise using water from the Magalia Reservoir.

The Del Oro Water Company is pursuing an increase of its intake from Lake Oroville, upgrades to its treatment plant in Lime Saddle and a new pipeline. This project is currently under review by the California Public Utilities Commission, and construction is anticipated to begin this year pending approval. This project will affect the Magalia, Paradise Pines and Lime Saddle Districts.

a. Alternatives 1 and 3

Alternatives 1 and 3 call for residential development; Alternative 1 would also include some retail development. The majority of this development would be served by the Del Oro Water Company. The remaining development would be adjacent to this provider, and it may be possible in the future for the service to expand to provide water to these areas. Therefore, Alternatives 1 and 3 receive a B.

b. Alternative 2

There would be no new development in this study area under Alternative 2, so water supply is not an issue.

## 2. Groundwater Recharge Potential

The Magalia/Paradise Pines study area is located within the Foothills Inventory Unit. It may serve as a moderate or high potential recharge area.

a. Alternative 1

Alternative 1 calls for significant residential and retail development in a region that may serve as a moderate or high potential recharge area, and therefore receives a D.

b. Alternative 2

There would be no new development in this study area under Alternative 2. Therefore, this alternative receives an A.

c. Alternative 3

Alternative 3 calls for minor residential development in a region that may serve as a moderate or high potential recharge area, and therefore receives a C.

*D. Wastewater*

There is currently no publicly managed sewer service in the Magalia/Paradise Pines study area. The current wastewater treatment method is individual septic systems. Roughly half of study area is located within the Watershed Protection Zone, which regulates development in the Paradise Reservoir, Magalia Reservoir and Firhaven Creek Watersheds. This Zone, which covers the northeastern half of the study area, establishes stricter setback and erosion control standards than areas not within the Zone. Furthermore, divisions of lots within the Firhaven Creek Watershed are prohibited. A small central portion of the study area (approximately 470 acres) is located within the Firhaven Creek Watershed.

a. Alternative 1

Alternative 1 calls for approximately 1,400 new homes at very low, medium and medium high densities, as well as retail uses. Although this development could conceivably be served by septic or package plants, the existing parcelization and infill type of much of this development would make this difficult.

Any development within the Watershed Protection Zone would be subject to the Zone's stricter setback and erosion control standards. Approximately 200 of the 1,400 new homes called for under this alternative would be the result of a lot division within the Firhaven Creek Watershed, which is prohibited by the Watershed Protection Zone.

Because development under Alternative 1 could conceivably be served by septic or package plants, but with difficulty, this alternative receives a C.

b. Alternative 2

There would be no new development in this study area under Alternative 2, so wastewater is not an issue.

c. Alternative 3

Alternative 3 calls for approximately 400 new homes at a rural residential density. This development cannot effectively be served by septic because there would be too many new homes, nor can it effectively be served with a sewer system because of the low density.

Development within the Watershed Protection Zone would be subject to the stricter setback and erosion control standards. Furthermore, approximately 20 of the 400 new homes called for under this alternative would be the result of a lot division within the Firhaven Creek Watershed, which is prohibited by the Watershed Protection Zone.

Because Alternative 3 cannot effectively be served by septic or a sewer system, this alternative receives a D.

*E. Circulation*

The Magalia/Paradise Pines study area is served by two major regional roadways, Skyway and Nimshew Road.

### **1. Proximity to Freeways and Major Roadways**

Two major regional roadways, Skyway and Nimshew Road, travel through the Magalia/Paradise Pines study area. Both roadways provide only major connections to the south – Nimshew Road terminates in the study area and Skyway ceases to be a major regional roadway north of the Magalia/Paradise Pines study area. Skyway provides a connection to the Town of Paradise, City of Chico, and Highway 99. Nimshew Road provides an alternate access to destinations south of the study area. Alternatives 1 and 3 receive an A for access proximity to major roadways. Since Alternative 2 does not include any new development, proximity to major roadways is not an issue.

### **2. Bicycle Circulation**

Within the Magalia/Paradise Pines study area, a planned bicycle facility is located along Skyway and Coutolenc Road. The location of the study area adjacent to the Town of Paradise allows for bicycle access to jobs, schools, and services in Paradise. Due to the study area's high level of access to planned bicycle facilities and location adjacent to the Town of Paradise, Alternatives 1 and 3 receive B. Since Alternative 2 does not include any new development, bicycle circulation is not an issue.

### **3. Transit Service**

Transit service is currently provided along Skyway in the study area. Alternatives 1 and 3 receive an A for transit service. Since Alternative 2 does not include any new development and would not generate any demand for transit, transit service is not an issue.

### ***F. Airport Compatibility Zone Conflicts***

The Magalia/Paradise Pines study area is not located within an Airport Compatibility Zone. Therefore, Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 receive an A.

### *G. Potential Loss of Agricultural Land*

There is no identified Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance or Grazing Land located in the Magalia/Paradise Pines study area. Therefore, Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 receive an A.

### *H. Biological Resources*

The Magalia/Paradise Pines study area is located in the upper foothills and is outside of the Butte Regional Conservation Plan (HCP/NCCP) area. The predominant land cover types are urban in the middle and southern portion of the study area, with conifer and hardwood forests concentrated mainly in the northern and eastern portions of the study area, and scattered patches of chaparral throughout the forests. There are two large open water bodies: Paradise Lake and Magalia Reservoir on the eastern half of the study area. Little Butte Creek flows out of the Magalia Reservoir in the southern portion of the study area.

Occurrences of seven special-status plants are recorded in the study area. Butte County morning glory (four occurrences), cut-leaved ragwort (four occurrences), Sanborn's onion and Butte County calycadenia are known from serpentine soils around Skyway and Magalia Reservoir. White-stemmed clarkia occurs in oak woodland/chaparral near Paradise Pines. Five occurrences for Butte County fritillary are recorded from ponderosa pine and mixed conifer woodland near Irish Town, Paradise Pines, near Paradise Lake and Magalia area. Two occurrences of Jepson's onion are located east of Magalia.

There are two occurrences of special-status animals: a bald eagle nest along Little Butte Creek on Lassen National Forest land between Magalia Reservoir and Paradise Lake and a silver-haired bat near Magalia Reservoir. The conifer and hardwood forests provide potential habitat for northern goshawk and bald eagle. The creeks provide potential habitat for foothill yellow-legged

frog, California red-legged frog, and northwestern pond turtle. Little Butte Creek, Paradise Lake, and Magalia Reservoir provide potential nesting habitat for bald eagle and osprey, and foraging habitat for special-status bat species.

There is Critical Habitat for Central Valley steelhead in Little Butte Creek in the southern portion of the study area. There are also three Lassen National Forest parcels in the study area.

Sensitive habitats include riparian associated with creeks, lakes, and reservoirs. Additional sensitive habitats may be associated with serpentine-derived soils. Site specific fieldwork would be required to verify the presence of additional sensitive habitats.

There is Intermediate Range deer herd habitat on the south side of the study area and Intermediate and Winter Range habitat on the north and eastern edges. The bulk of the study area does not provide deer herd habitat. The study area is almost completely surrounded by deer habitat including Critical Winter Habitat to the west.

a. Alternative 1

Widespread proposed development under Alternative 1 would be expected to negatively affect the biological resources that are present. Therefore, this alternative receives a D for Special-Status Animal and Plant Species, a C for Critical Habitat and other protected lands, a C for Sensitive Habitats, and a C for Deer Herd Habitat.

b. Alternative 2

Alternative 2 would designate the entire area for Agriculture and Resource Conservation. There would be no new residential homes under this alternative. Resource Conservation can have significant impacts on biological resources depending on the type and level of recreation. Both trail construction and final end-use for activities including hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, and off-road vehicle use could affect sensitive biological resources if placed too close to sensitive habitats (e.g. riparian,

creeks, and lakes), rare plant populations, and nesting sites for birds or deer herd habitat.

Therefore, this alternative receives a B for Special-Status Animal and Plant Species, a C for Critical Habitat and other protected lands, a C for Sensitive Habitats, and a C for Deer Herd Habitat.

c. Alternative 3

Under Alternative 3 the General Plan would designate the entire area Rural Residential. This alternative would allow approximately 400 new homes. It is unknown where the Rural Residential development would occur and there are a number of sensitive biological resources. However, with the lower housing density there should be opportunities to avoid sensitive biological resources. Therefore, this alternative receives a B for Special-Status Animal and Plant Species, a C for Critical Habitat and other protected lands, a C for Sensitive Habitats, and a C for Deer Herd Habitat.

*I. Safety and Hazards*

**1. Fire Hazards**

The majority of the Magalia/Paradise Pines study area, approximately 6,300 acres, is located in the very high fire severity zone. Approximately 40 acres of the study area are located in the high fire severity zone to the west. Low and moderate fire severity zones occur around water bodies in the study area.

a. Alternatives 1 and 3

Under Alternative 1, approximately 35 acres of land designated for development are within the high fire severity zone and approximately 4,900 acres of the land identified for residential development are within the very high fire severity zone. Under Alternative 3, approximately 35 acres of potential development are within the high fire severity zone and approximately 6,300 acres of potential residential development are within the very high fire severity zone. Therefore, these alternatives receive a D.

b. Alternative 2

Alternative 2 does not include any additional development within the Magalia/Paradise Pines study area, therefore, this alternative receives an A.

**2. Flood Hazards**

The Magalia/Paradise Pines study area is not within the 100-year or 500-year FEMA flood zones. Therefore, these alternatives would receive an A.

**3. Geologic Hazards**

There is moderate and severe erosion potential throughout most of the Magalia/Paradise Pines study area, with small pockets of slight erosion potential in the north and south of the study area. There are no potentially significant subsidence hazards in the Magalia/Paradise Pines study area. The majority of this study area is in a low to moderate landslide area, but approximately 5 acres in the southeast of the study area have high landslide potential and the western edge of the study area has moderate landslide potential. The majority of the Magalia/Paradise Pines study area has moderate potential for soil expansion, though soil expansion potential for occurs in the northeast and east of the study area. There are no faults within the Magalia/Paradise Pines study area or within a 50-foot radius. This study area has low potential for liquefaction.

a. Alternative 1

Under Alternative 1, approximately 1,600 acres of land designated for development have severe erosion potential and 895 acres have potential expansive soils hazards. Alternative 1 receives a D.

b. Alternative 2

Alternative 2 does not include any development and so would receive an A.

c. Alternative 3

Under Alternative 3, approximately 1 acre of land designated for development has severe erosion potential, 5 acres are subject to high landslide

potential, and 1,330 acres have potential expansive soils hazards. Alternative 3 receives a D.

*J. Cultural Resources*

The Magalia/Paradise Pines study area lies within portions of the Sterling City, Paradise West and the Paradise East USGS 7.5' quadrangles. Approximately 35 percent of the land in the Sterling City Quadrangle, 35 percent of the land in the Paradise West quadrangle, and 25 percent in the Paradise East Quadrangle has been surveyed for cultural resources. To date, a total of 66 cultural resources sites have been recorded in the study area. This number includes 11 prehistoric sites, 52 historic sites and four site containing both prehistoric and historic period artifacts. Seven sites have been evaluated as eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, including one prehistoric burial site, two prehistoric lithic scatters, two historic cemeteries, one mining feature, and one historic multi-component site. The study area lies within foothill areas that contain numerous water sources. The study area also appears to have a significant mining history, and this, coupled with the number of previously recorded sites, indicates this study area is highly sensitive for the presence of prehistoric and historic period cultural resources.

a. Alternative 1

Alternative 1 would result in the most residential homes, with medium and medium-high density residential proposed. This alternative does not include any designated Resource Conservation land use areas that could be used to protect significant cultural resources. Because of the amount of development and lack of Resource Conservation, Alternative 1 receives a D.

b. Alternative 2

Under Alternative 2, half of the study area would be designated Agriculture and the other half Resource Conservation. The agricultural land use in this study area would be grazing and timber harvesting, both of which can be only moderately disturbing to cultural resources. Therefore this alternative is

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a C because of the potential impact of timber harvesting on cultural resources.

c. Alternative 3

Under this alternative, the entire study area would be designated Rural Residential. There would be no land designated Resource Conservation. Though the development would be sparse and result in only 400 new residential homes, this study area is extremely sensitive for cultural resources. Not only are there many cultural resources, there are four NRHP listed historic properties. Therefore this alternative is a D, despite the low density of residential development.

*K. Notes*