

7 STUDY AREA 7: CONCOW

The Concow study area consists of approximately 2,470 acres located near the Concow Reservoir in northeastern Butte County. The community of Concow falls within this study area, which is developed with low density residential uses, as well as limited retail and public uses. The majority of the study area remains open, and is typically forested with steep terrain.

- ◆ Alternative 1 follows the existing General Plan, designating portions as Rural Residential and Medium Density Residential, allowing approximately 500 new homes. This alternative also includes about 5 acres of Retail and a large area of Resource Conservation.
- ◆ Alternative 2 calls for almost the entire area to be designated Resource Conservation, but maintains the 5 acres of Retail from the existing General Plan.
- ◆ Alternative 3 maintains the Medium Density Residential and Retail designations from Alternative 1, allowing approximately 200 new homes. The remainder of the study area is designated as Resource Conservation.

A. *Economics*

1. **Market Viability**

a. **Alternative 1**

The increase in housing units under Alternative 1 would be approximately double the existing number of housing units in the study area, leading to an extended absorption period due to isolation and lack of visibility in the market area. However, the amount of housing in Alternative 1 may be viable over the General Plan horizon.

The amount of new retail space proposed for the study area is generally in scale with the anticipated size of the community; however, actual demand for commercial space at buildout is likely to be less than what is planned since residents of the study area would likely take care of many of their retail and services needs in Paradise, where a greater selection is available. The overall market viability of Alternative 1 receives a C.

b. Alternative 2

Under this alternative, the Concow study area would provide less market support than Alternative 1 for the 4 acres of new retail development, as there would be no significant increase in population. Thus, market viability for anything more than a small portion of the planned new retail development is questionable, and Alternative 2 receives a C.

c. Alternative 3

As discussed under Alternatives 1 and 2, above, there is likely to be inadequate market support for all of the planned new retail development under Alternative 3, the 200 new homes would likely be absorbed over the General Plan horizon. Overall, Alternative 3 receives a C.

2. Fiscal Impacts

a. Alternative 1

The Concow study area lies in a TRA where Butte County receives approximately 17.4 percent of the property taxes. Alternative 1 focuses on single-family homes, which tend to have relatively high values compared to other types of residential units. From a service cost standpoint, this is not likely to be a very efficient location for significant new development, as access is very limited. While this study area lies outside the eight-minute response area for the full-time staffed fire stations operated by the City of Paradise and Butte County, it does appear the southern and eastern edges of the study area might be served by Butte County Fire Station #36 in Jarbo Gap within that station's eight-minute travel time area. However, development under Alternative 1 is probably insufficient to trigger the need for an additional fire station. Overall, fiscal impacts for the county would likely be either slightly positive or neutral, and Alternative 1 receives a C.

b. Alternative 2

With no significant new residential development and only a small amount of new retail development planned, fiscal impacts would be fairly minor, but

positive. However, since the retail development is unlikely to be viable, fiscal impacts would essentially be neutral, and Alternative 2 receives a C.

c. Alternative 3

With the same concerns about service provision efficiency/costs as under Alternative 1, but a smaller amount of new development, Alternative 3 may have slightly greater potential for adverse fiscal impacts than Alternative 1. Alternative 3 also receives a C.

3. Jobs/Housing Balance

a. Alternative 1

The estimated jobs/housing balance for this study area is 0 jobs for every one employed resident, meaning that at buildout, this alternative would tend to adversely affect jobs/housing balance in the Paradise area, which already has a deficit of jobs relative to employed residents. Therefore, Alternative 1 receives a D.

b. Alternative 2

It is unlikely that the new retail jobs foreseen in Alternative 2 would actually be developed. However, with no new housing potential, this alternative would not exacerbate the existing surplus of housing over jobs in the Paradise area. Overall, Alternative 2 receives a C.

c. Alternative 3

Like Alternative 1, Alternative 3 would add houses in the Paradise area, which already has more employed residents than jobs. Therefore, Alternative 3 receives a D.

B. Public Services

1. Fire and Emergency Services

The Butte County Fire Department and CAL FIRE provide fire protection and emergency services to the Concow study area. In general, there is not

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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 would impact the level of fire protection and emergency services.

There is one fire station located within the boundaries of the Concow study area, Fire Station 38, a volunteer-staffed fire station located in the south central portion of the study area.

The majority of the Concow study area has adequate service levels for rural residential development, as it is located within a ten- to 14-minute travel area for a first-due unit. None of the study area has adequate service levels for very low density residential, suburban residential, retail or industrial development.

a. Alternative 1

Alternative 1 calls for approximately 500 new homes at both rural and suburban 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.

The suburban residential and retail development under Alternative 1 would not have adequate fire and emergency service levels due to the high travel times to this study area. However, the rural residential development would have adequate service levels. Because this alternative allows more than a minimal amount of new development, portions of which would not have adequate service levels, this alternative receives a C.

b. Alternative 2

Alternative 2 calls for limited retail development, which typically requires high fire and emergency service levels. This minimal development would not have adequate levels of fire and emergency services due to high travel times and a low concentration of fire stations in the immediate area. Therefore, this alternative receives a C.

c. Alternative 3

Alternative 3 calls for approximately 200 new homes at a suburban density, as well as limited retail development, which typically requires high fire and emergency service levels. All development under Alternative 3 would not have adequate fire and emergency service levels due to high travel times and a low station concentration in the immediate area. Therefore, this alternative receives a D.

2. Sheriff Services

The Concow 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 two deputies on duty in the Chico area and one to two deputies on duty in the Magalia area. Because of the distance and access issues between the Concow study area and the Chico/Magalia areas, response times to this location can be slow.

There is no police station located within the boundaries of the Concow study area. The Butte County Sheriff station in Chico, the closest police station, is located within 16 miles of the southwest boundary of the study area and within 19 miles of the northeast boundary.

Alternative 1 allows approximately 500 new homes, generating the need for about one new officer. Alternative 2 allows limited retail development and Alternative 3 allows approximately 200 new homes; these alternatives would not generate the need for a new officer. Because Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 allow development that would generate the need for less than six new officers in an area with slow response times, they receive a C.

3. Capacity of School Districts

The Concow study area is served by the Golden Feather Union Elementary School District (GFUESD) (K-8) and the Oroville Union High School District (OUHSD) (9-12).

The GFUESD has been experiencing declining enrollment in recent years. The District's current enrollment is approximately 150 students, while it has the capacity for 350 students, meaning the District has the capacity for approximately 200 more students. There are no existing plans for expanding the capacity of this District.

The OUHSD has also been experiencing declining enrollment. The District's current enrollment is approximately 2,950 students, while it has the capacity for 3,390 students, meaning the District has the capacity for approximately 440 more students. There are numerous improvement projects underway, including one that would expand the capacity of the Oroville High School by about 100 students. In addition, some of the existing campuses could accommodate additional classrooms to expand capacity, and there are discussions about potential new high school sites throughout the District, although there are no specific plans underway.

a. Alternative 1

Under Alternative 1, approximately 170 new K-8 students could be generated within the GFUESD, all from the Concow study area. There is adequate capacity for these students.

Under Alternative 1, the Concow study area could generate approximately 80 new high school students, which could be accommodated by the existing capacity. The total amount of development foreseen under Alternative 1 in all of the study areas within the OUHSD could generate approximately 7,250 new students, more than double the current enrollment and about 6,810 students beyond current capacity.

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

b. Alternative 2

Under Alternative 2, the Concow study area would not generate any new students, so schools are not an issue.

c. Alternative 3

Under Alternative 3, approximately 70 new K-8 students could be generated within the GFUESD, all from the Concow study area. There is adequate capacity for these students.

Under Alternative 3, the Concow study area could generate approximately 30 new students within the OUHSD, which could be accommodated by the existing capacity. However, the total amount of development foreseen under Alternative 3 in all of the study areas within the OUHSD could generate approximately 3,220 new students, about 2,780 students beyond current capacity.

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

C. Water

1. Water Supply

The Concow study area is located within the Mountain Inventory Unit. The steep terrain in the mountains limits groundwater accessibility and the fractured aquifers limit localized recharge potential, contributing to very low groundwater supplies. In the past, there has been limited development in the mountain area, so the water demand is low. However, there is significant uncertainty about what level of long-term supply is sustainable in this region. Development that relies on groundwater could potentially have significant impacts on neighboring groundwater users. There are no water service providers operating within or near the Concow study area.

a. Alternative 1

Alternative 1 calls for approximately 500 new homes, as well as about 5 acres of retail development. There is no identified water supply for this development. Therefore, Alternative 1 receives a D.

b. Alternatives 2 and 3

Alternative 3 calls for approximately 200 new homes. Alternatives 2 and 3 also allow about 5 acres of retail development. Because these alternatives allow minor development that does not have an identified water supply, they receive a C.

2. Groundwater Recharge Potential

The Concow study area is located within the Mountain Inventory Unit. It is unlikely to serve as a potential recharge area due to steep slope and/or low permeability.

a. Alternative 1

Alternative 1 calls for approximately 500 new homes and some retail development in a region that is unlikely to serve as a potential recharge area, and therefore receives a B.

b. Alternatives 2 and 3

Alternatives 2 and 3 call for minor residential and retail development in a region that is unlikely to serve as a potential recharge area, and therefore receive an A.

D. Wastewater

There is currently no publicly managed sewer service in the Concow study area. The current wastewater treatment method is individual septic systems.

a. Alternative 1

Alternative 1 calls for approximately 500 new homes at rural residential and medium densities, as well as some limited retail development. The rural residential 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. The medium density development cannot effectively be served by septic because of the high density, nor can it effectively be served with a sewer system because there would be too few homes at this density to support the costs of a new sewer system. Therefore, this alternative receives a D.

b. Alternative 2

Alternative 2 calls for only limited retail development. Because this low level of development could be effectively served by septic, this alternative receives a B.

c. Alternative 3

Alternative 3 calls for approximately 200 new homes at a medium density, as well as limited retail development. This development cannot effectively be served by septic because of the high density, nor can it effectively be served with a sewer system because there would be too few homes to support the costs of a new sewer system. Therefore, this alternative receives a D.

E. Circulation

Concow is not served by any major regional roadways.

1. Proximity to Freeways and Major Roadways

No major regional roadways travel through or adjacent to the Concow study area. This study area receives a D for access proximity to major roadways.

2. Bicycle Circulation

No existing or planned bicycle facilities are located within or adjacent to the Concow study area. Due to the study area's lack of access to bicycle facilities and location more than 1 mile from an urban area, the study area receives a D.

3. Transit Service

Transit service is currently not provided to the study area. This receives a D.

F. Airport Compatibility Zone Conflicts

The Concow 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

A small portion of the Concow study area, approximately 320 acres, is identified as Grazing Land. Grazing Land is located centrally within the study area.

a. Alternative 1

Under Alternative 1, 885 acres in the Concow study area would be designated for non-agricultural uses, which would convert 210 acres of Grazing Land to non-agricultural uses. Therefore, Alternative 1 receives a D.

b. Alternatives 2 and 3

Alternative 2 would convert a minimal amount of Grazing Land, approximately 5 acres, to non-agricultural uses. Alternative 3 designates approximately 75 acres for non-agricultural uses, which would convert 55 acres of Grazing Land to non-agricultural uses. Therefore, Alternatives 2 and 3 receive a C.

H. Biological Resources

The Concow study area is located around the Concow Reservoir in northeastern Butte County. This study area is located in the upper foothills and is outside the Butte Regional Conservation Plan (HCP/NCCP) area. The predominant land cover type is conifer forest, with small patches of mixed chaparral and grassland intermixed. Hardwood forest occurs in the northwestern portion of the study area. Concow and Cirby Creeks run north – south through the study area into Concow Reservoir is at the southwestern edge of the study area.

Two occurrences of Butte County morning glory have been recorded. There is potential habitat for Butte County fritillary and Mosquin’s clarkia.

There are no occurrences of special-status animals in the study area. There is potential habitat for several special-status species in the creeks including bald eagle, foothill yellow-legged frog, California red-legged frog, and western pond turtle.

There is no Critical Habitat or other protected lands in the study area.

Sensitive habitats include riparian associated with creeks, lakes, and reservoirs.

All of the study area is deer habitat. There is Critical Winter Range habitat in the western portion of the study area. The majority of the study area is Winter Range.

a. Alternative 1

Alternative 1 would allow approximately 500 new homes and designates approximately 5 acres for commercial purposes. It is unknown where the development would occur and there are a number of sensitive biological resources including Critical Winter deer herd habitat. Therefore, this

alternative receives a D for Special-Status Animal and Plant Species, an A for Critical Habitat and other protected lands, a D for Sensitive Habitats, and a D for Deer Herd Habitat.

b. Alternative 2

Under Alternative 2 the residential designation from the existing General Plan would change Resource Conservation. The Retail designation would remain. There would be no new residential units under this alternative, but there are biological resources present, including Critical Winter and Winter range deer habitat. Resource Conservation can have significant impacts on biological resources depending on the type and level of recreation. This would include construction and user impacts from off-road vehicle trails, horseback trails, mountain bike trails, and hiking trails placed too close to sensitive habitats, rare plant populations, and nesting sites for birds or deer habitat. Therefore, this alternative receives a C for Special-Status Animal and Plant Species, an A for Critical Habitat and other protected lands, a C for Sensitive Habitats, and a D for Deer Herd Habitat.

c. Alternative 3

Alternative 3 would allow approximately 200 new homes, which would be constructed on existing parcels with no further subdivision activity, and designates approximately 5 acres for commercial purposes. For the same reasons as Alternative 2 above, this alternative receives a D for Special-Status Animal and Plant Species, an A for Critical Habitat and other protected lands, a D for Sensitive Habitats, and a D for Deer Herd Habitat.

I. Safety and Hazards

1. Fire Hazards

The Concow study area includes moderate fire severity and very high fire severity zones.

a. Alternative 1

Under Alternative 1, approximately 990 acres of land designated for residential development are within the very high fire severity zone. Therefore, this alternative receives a D.

b. Alternative 2

Under Alternative 2, approximately 5 acres of land designated for development are within the very high fire severity zone. Therefore, this alternative receives a C.

c. Alternative 3

Under Alternative 3, approximately 75 acres of land designated for development are within the very high fire severity zone. Therefore, this alternative receives a D.

2. Flood Hazards

The Concow study area is not included in the 100-year and 500-year FEMA flood zones. Therefore, Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 receive an A.

3. Geologic Hazards

The Concow study area has areas of slight, moderate and severe erosion potential. This study area is not constrained by subsidence, faults or liquefaction. There is high landslide potential throughout the Concow study area. The majority of this study area has moderate potential for soil expansion, though there is high potential for soil expansion in the east of the study area. There are no faults within the Concow study area or within a 50-foot radius.

a. Alternative 1

Under Alternative 1, approximately 400 acres of land designated for development have severe erosion potential, 990 acres have a high landslide potential, and 1 acre has a high potential for soil expansion. Alternative 1 receives a D.

b. Alternative 2

Under Alternative 2, none of the land designated for development has erosion, subsidence, expansive soils, faults or liquefaction hazards, but 5 acres have a high potential for landslides. Alternative 2 receives a C.

c. Alternative 3

Under Alternative 3, approximately 5 acres of land designated for development have severe erosion potential and 105 acres have a high landslide potential. Alternative 3 receives a D.

J. Cultural Resources

The Concow study area lies within portions of the Paradise East and the Pulga USGS 7.5' quadrangles. Approximately 25 percent of the land in the Paradise East Quadrangle and 25 percent of the land in the Pulga Quadrangle have been surveyed for cultural resources. To date, a total of 11 cultural resources sites have been recorded in the Concow study area. This number includes nine prehistoric sites and two historic sites. One site, a historic period cemetery, has been evaluated as eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. This study area lies primarily in a foothill region, and has available water sources. The presence of previously recorded sites, including nine bedrock mortars, one multiple component historic site and one historic cemetery, indicate this study area is of medium sensitivity for cultural resources.

a. Alternative 1

This alternative allows for the most new residential units. It also includes approximately 1,585 acres of designated Resource Conservation land use (twice the area of residential development) that could be used to protect significant cultural resources. Alternative 1 receives a B.

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b. Alternative 2

There are no designated residential uses, 5 acres of non-residential uses and approximately 4,245 acres of designated Resource Conservation land use. Because it is assumed that Resource Conservation would be used to protect significant cultural resources, there would be little to no potential for impacts to cultural resources under this alternative. Alternative 2 receives an A.

c. Alternative 3

Alternative 3 substantially reduce the number of acres in residential development. Almost 97 percent of the study area would be designated Resource Conservation. Though the area of development is small, the study area is moderately sensitive and some development would be allowed. Alternative 3 receives a B.

K. Notes

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