10 STUDY AREA 10: SKYWAY/NEAL ROAD

Study Area 10, Skyway/Neal Road, consists of approximately 1,965 acres located west of the Town of Paradise. There is currently some low density residential development near the town limits, but the majority of the study area is open, much of it on steep terrain.

- Alternative 1 follows the existing General Plan, designating the majority of this study area for Agriculture and Resource Conservation. This alternative also includes about 360 acres of Rural Residential adjacent to the town limits, allowing approximately 20 new homes.
- Under Alternative 2, there would be approximately 1,030 acres of Rural Residential, allowing about 100 new homes. The remainder of the study area would be designated for Agriculture.
- Alternative 3 designates about 30 acres for residential development at a variety of densities adjacent to a golf course, allowing approximately 200 new homes. This alternative also includes about 100 acres of industrial uses, while the remainder would be resource conservation.

There are a number of environmental constraints within Study Area 10, including high and very high fire severity in the northern part of the study area, moderate and severe erosion potential in the western part and the southern "arm" of the study area, and blue oak woodlands in the southern arm. The Skyway is an area of scenic importance. The County currently designates this corridor as a scenic highway through zoning. Almost all of the study area is within the deer herd winter range. Therefore, shifting development out of the severe fire areas would mean that development would be located in blue oak woodlands with severe erosion potential. Moreover, the northern and western edges of the study area are closest to existing urbanization in the Town of Paradise. Although the amount of development foreseen under Alternative 3 may be able to be accommodated, it would be difficult to accommodate the extensive acreage of residential development called for under Alternative 2 without encountering some constrained areas.

A. Economics

1. Market Viability

a. Alternative 1

Because this alternative would allow only minimal new residential development, market viability is not an issue.

b. Alternative 2

With only 100 new residential homes planned through buildout in a location adjacent to the Town of Paradise, market viability should be sound for this Alternative 2. Alternative 2 receives an A.

c. Alternative 3

Similar to Alternative 2, the residential component of Alternative 3 should enjoy sound market viability. For the industrial component of Alternative 3, absorption potential is more questionable. 1.7 million square feet of industrial space represents potential for approximately 2,100 new jobs. This represents approximately 20 percent of the projected growth in employment within all unincorporated areas during the General Plan time horizon. Due to access and visibility issues, this location is likely less competitive than other industrial locations along Highways 99 or 70 and therefore, it is unlikely to capture 1.7 million square feet of industrial development within the General Plan time horizon. It may be possible that 100,000 to 200,000 square feet of industrial space could be market viable, but not the large amount foreseen under Alternative 3. Overall, Alternative 3 receives a C.

2. Fiscal Impacts

a. Alternative 1

Since Alternative 1 would not allow significant new residential or commercial development, fiscal impacts would be neutral, and Alternative 1 receives a C.

b. Alternative 2

Within the TRAs that encompasses this study area, Butte County receives between 17.2 and 18.8 percent of the property tax revenues. Furthermore, as

Alternative 1 focuses on single-family homes, revenue potential for this alternative should be solid. From a service provision standpoint, the county would tend to benefit from adjacency to existing development where services are provided. Therefore, Alternative 2 receives a B.

c. Alternative 3

The residential component of Alternative 3 is similar to Alternative 2, with the addition of approximately 1.7 million square feet of new industrial space located along Neal Road, distant from adequate fire and emergency medical response from the Town of Paradise Station 1. The presence of this additional development makes the need for good fire and emergency medical response more important, and increases the risk that the county would need to fund a new fire station if the study area is not adequately served through automatic aid from the Town of Paradise. Although full buildout of the industrial development in Alternative 3 is unlikely, some industrial development could be viable and would require services. Overall, Alternative 3 receives a D.

3. Jobs/Housing Balance

a. Alternative 1

Since this alternative does not plan any significant residential or commercial development in this study area, it would have no effect on jobs/housing balance.

b. Alternative 2

Alternative 2 would add employed residents to the study area, but no new jobs. This means that new development would create a deficit of new jobs relative to the number of new residents, contributing to a deterioration of jobs/housing balance in the Paradise area. Therefore, Alternative 2 receives a C.

c. Alternative 3

The estimated jobs/housing ratio for new development in this study area is nine jobs for every one employed resident, meaning that this alternative

would generate many times more jobs than new employed residents. New development under this alternative would be dependent upon workers from other nearby areas to fill available new jobs; however, as noted in the market viability section, full buildout is highly unlikely. Ultimately, Alternative 3 may add some jobs to the Paradise area, but would also add some housing, and so would not significantly improve the jobs/housing balance. Alternative 3 receives a B.

B. Public Services

1. Fire and Emergency Services

The Butte County Fire Department and CAL FIRE provide fire protection and emergency services to Study Area 10. 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 no fire stations within the boundaries of Study Area 10. The closest fire station is the City of Chico Fire Station 26, which is located less than a mile away.

The majority of Study Area 10 does not have adequate fire and emergency service levels for any type of development; however, its road frontages along the Skyway and Neal Road, as well as the areas near the Town of Paradise limits, do have adequate service levels for rural and very low density residential development, as they are within 8 to 14 minutes of first-due units. None of the study area has adequate service levels for suburban residential, retail or industrial development.

a. Alternative 1 and 2

Alternatives 1 and 2 call for about 20 and 100 new homes, respectively, at a rural density. Some of this development would be located within the ten- to 14-minute travel times of a first-due unit and would therefore have adequate

fire and emergency service levels. However, some development would not have adequate service levels due to high travel times. Because portions of the development under Alternatives 1 and 2 would not have adequate service levels, they receive a C.

b. Alternative 3

Alternative 3 calls for about 200 new homes at a very low density. In addition, this alternative calls for industrial development, which typically requires high fire and emergency service levels because it includes assets of high economic value. The majority of this development would not have adequate service levels due to high travel times and a low concentration of fire stations in the immediate area. Because Alternative 3 allows more than a minimal amount of new development, the majority of which would not have adequate service levels, this alternative receives a D.

2. Sheriff Services

Study Area 10 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 Study Area 10 is located near the Magalia area via a two-lane highway (the Skyway), response times to this location are relatively quick.

There is no police station located within the boundaries of Study Area 10; however, the Butte County Sherriff station in the City of Chico is located within 5 miles away from the study area.

a. Alternatives 1 and 2

Alternatives 1 and 2 would allow approximately 20 and 100 new homes, respectively, in an area with quick response times. Because this development would not generate the need to hire a new officer, these alternatives receive an A.

b. Alternative 3

Alternative 3 would allow approximately 200 new homes, as well as significant industrial development, generating the need for one to five new officers in an area with quick response times. Therefore, this alternative receives a B.

3. Capacity of School Districts

Study Area 10 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, Study Area 10 could generate approximately ten 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, Study Area 10 could generate approximately 50 new students. The total amount of development foreseen under Alternative 2 in all of the study areas within the PUSD could generate approximately 550 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. Alternative 3

Under Alternative 3, Study Area 10 could generate approximately 100 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 western portions of Study Area 10 are located within the Sacramento Valley Inventory Unit. As discussed in more detail under Study Area 9, the Valley aquifers typically allow greater recharge and access to groundwater than the foothill and mountain aquifers, and they provide water for municipal, irrigation and domestic wells.

These western portions of Study Area 10 are also located within the Pentz Inventory Sub-Unit. The primary source of water in the Pentz Sub-Unit is groundwater. There is little farming in this area and the population is low; therefore, water demands are low.

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. These lower aquifer yields are due in part to a greater presence of a fractured aquifer type, in which groundwater is stored in the fractures and joints of volcanic rock. Fractured rock aquifers have less localized recharge potential.

This eastern portion of Study Area 10 is also 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, mostly due to a lack of surface water infrastructure.

Although there are no water service providers currently operating within Study Area 10, it is adjacent to the Paradise Irrigation District, which mainly serves the Town of Paradise using surface water from the Magalia Reservoir. It may be possible to serve urban development in this study area by connecting to the Paradise Irrigation District network.

Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 call for residential development, and Alternative 3 also calls for significant industrial development and a golf course. Because this development would be located adjacent to a municipal water supplier where future annexations could provide water, Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 receive a B.

2. Groundwater Recharge Potential

Study Area 10 is located within the Valley and Foothills Inventory Units. It may serve as a moderate or high potential recharge area.

a. Alternatives 1 and 2

Alternatives 1 and 2 call for approximately 20 and 100 new homes, respectively, in a region that may serve as a moderate or high potential recharge area. Therefore, these alternatives receive a C.

b. Alternative 3

Alternative 3 calls for approximately 200 new homes and about 100 acres of industrial development, as well as a golf course. Because this alternative allows significant development in a region that may serve as a moderate or high potential recharge area, it receives a D.

D. Wastewater

There is currently no publicly managed sewer service in Study Area 10. The current wastewater treatment method is individual septic systems.

a. Alternatives 1 and 2

Alternatives 1 and 2 call for approximately 20 and 100 new homes, respectively, at a rural residential density. This development can effectively be served by septic because of the low density and low number of new homes. Therefore, Alternatives 1 and 2 receive a B.

b. Alternative 3

Alternative 3 calls for approximately 200 new homes at a mix of densities, as well as about 100 acres of industrial development. This development can effectively be served by sewer due to the density and amount of development. Furthermore, it appears likely that this development would create the ability to form a new sewer system because the study area is currently undeveloped. Therefore, this alternative receives a B.

E. Circulation

Study Area 10 is served by one major regional roadway, Skyway.

1. Proximity to Freeways and Major Roadways

One major regional roadway travels through or adjacent to Study Area 10. Skyway runs along the northern boundary of the study area. Skyway provides a connection to the Town of Paradise, City of Chico, and Highway 99. Direct access to Skyway could be limited due to design and safety concerns. This study area receives an A for access proximity to major roadways.

2. Bicycle Circulation

Within the Skyway/Neal Road area, planned bicycle facilities are located along Skyway and Neal 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, the study area receives a B.

3. Transit Service

Transit service is currently provided along Skyway in the study area. This receives an A.

F. Airport Compatibility Zone Conflicts

Study Area 10 is not located within an Airport Compatibility Zone. Therefore, Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 receive an A.

G. Potential Loss of Agricultural Land

Of the approximately 1,965 acres in Study Area 10, approximately 1,200 acres are identified as Grazing Land. These agricultural acres are located in the eastern part of the study area.

a. Alternative 1

Alternative 1 designates 360 acres for non-agricultural uses, of those acres, approximately 85 acres of Grazing Land would be converted to non-agricultural uses. Therefore, Alternative 1 receives a C.

b. Alternative 2

In Alternative 2, a small portion of land designated for Rural Residential uses would be constrained by Grazing Land, assuming the majority of the Rural Residential designation would be located on non-agricultural acres. A total of

approximately 270 acres would be converted from Grazing Land to non-agricultural uses. Therefore, Alternative 2 receives a D.

c. Alternative 3

In Alternative 3, none of the land that would be developed is constrained by Grazing Land, assuming the 260 acres designated for non-agricultural uses would be located on non-agricultural acres. Instead, the 1,200 acres of Grazing Land in the study area would be preserved under the Resource Conservation designation. Therefore, Alternative 3 receives a B.

H. Biological Resources

This study area is located in the lower foothills. The lower portions are inside the Butte Regional Conservation Plan (HCP/NCCP) area and the upper portion is outside of the Butte Regional Conservation Plan (HCP/NCCP) area. The predominant land cover types are a mosaic of blue oak woodland; mixed chaparral intermixes with the oak woodland at higher elevations. Small areas of annual grassland occur in the southern portion of the study area. Urban land use occupies much of the northwest arm. The southern arm consists of a mix of blue oak, mixed oak, chaparral, and grassland.

Occurrences of two special-status plants are recorded in the study area: Butte County checkerbloom is known from Hamlin Canyon and Butte County fritillary is known historically from Hamlin Canyon.

There are no records of special-status animals in the study area; however, coast horned lizard is known to occur within a ½-mile of the study area.

Outside the Butte Regional Conservation Plan (HCP/NCCP) area, the hardwood forests provide potential habitat for Butte County fritillary, northern goshawk, bald eagle, and several special-status bat species. The coast

horned lizard and several special-status bat species have potential to occur in chaparral and annual grassland.

There is Butte Regional Conservation Plan (HCP/NCCP)-modeled habitat in this study area for the following five species:

- Butte County checkerbloom
- Swainson's hawk
- Western burrowing owl
- Western spadefoot (northwest corner)
- White-tailed kite

The northern arm of the study area contains a Vernal Pool Core Recovery Area.

Three large vernal pools have been mapped within the HCP area north of Neal Road in the southern portion of the study area. Oak woodlands are common throughout.

Most of the study area, apart from the extreme eastern end, is within Winter Range habitat for deer herd.

1. Alternative 1

Alternative 1 allows approximately 20 new homes. The majority of the study area would be designated Agriculture (Grazing and Open Land) and Resource Conservation. Overall this alternative would preserve existing biological resources, although development would have minor impacts. Therefore, this alternative receives a B for Special-Status Animal and Plant Species, a B for Critical Habitat and other protected lands, a C for Sensitive Habitats, and a C for Deer Herd Habitat.

2. Alternative 2

Alternative 2 is similar to Alternative 1 but designates more area for Rural Residential (1,030 acres instead of 360 acres) and allows 100 new homes. Although the homes would be dispersed, a large area of oak woodland and

Winter Range deer habitat could be impacted. Therefore, this alternative receives a D for Special-Status Animal and Plant Species, a B for Critical Habitat and other protected lands, a C for Sensitive Habitats, and a C for Deer Herd Habitat.

3. Alternative 3

Most of the study area would be designated Resource Conservation under Alternative 3, and approximately 135 acres of Golf Course would be developed within the Vernal Pool Critical Habitat Core Recovery Area, which may also provide potential habitat for special-status species. Development would occur in the Core Recovery Area. Therefore, this alternative receives a D for Special-Status Animal and Plant Species, a D 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

A total of 1,400 acres of Study Area 10 are located in high and very high fire severity zones. The northeast of the study area is located in a very high severity zone and the southeast of the study area is located in a high fire severity zone.

a. Alternative 1

Under Alternative 1, approximately 250 acres of land designated for development are within the very high fire severity zone. Therefore, this alternative receives a D.

b. Alternative 2

Under Alternative 2, approximately half of the land designated for development is in the high fire severity zone and approximately half of the land designated for development is included in the very high fire severity zone. Although the 470 westernmost acres are in a moderate fire severity

zone, these acres are constrained by a fault, grazing land, and existing development including the county landfill. Therefore, this alternative receives a D.

c. Alternative 3

Under Alternative 3, approximately 100 acres of land designated for a combination of industrial and resource conservation uses are within a very high fire severity zone. Therefore, this alternative receives a D.

2. Flood Hazards

Study Area 10 is not included in the 100-year or 500-year FEMA flood zones. Therefore, Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 receive an A.

3. Geologic Hazards

Approximately 455 acres of land in the northern and southern "arms" of Study Area 10 have severe erosion potential. Study Area 10 has zero to low subsidence hazards, low to moderate and moderate landslide potential, and low and moderate potential for liquefaction. Approximately 5 acres of land has a high potential for expansive soils. A pre-quaternary fault traverses the study area. Pre-quaternary faults do not show any evidence of displacement in the last 1.6 million years and therefore are not considered to present a high risk of fault rupture and so would not constrain development.

a. Alternative 1

In Alternative 1, approximately 5 acres of land designated for development have severe erosion potential. No other high geologic hazard areas would constrain development in this alternative. Alternative 1 receives a C.

b. Alternative 2

In Alternative 2, approximately 176 acres of land designated for development would be located in areas of severe erosion potential. If development were to avoid areas of high erosion potential, it would be exposed to high fire hazard, a more severe constraint than erosion hazard. Due to severe erosion potential, Alternative 1 receives a C.

c. Alternative 3

In Alternative 3, over 200 acres of land designated for development would be located in areas of severe erosion potential. If development were to avoid areas of high erosion potential, it would be exposed to high fire hazard, a more severe constraint than erosion hazard. Due to severe erosion potential, Alternative 1 receives a D.

J. Cultural Resources

Study Area 10 lies within the Hamlin Canyon USGS 7.5' quadrangle. Approximately 30 percent of the land in the Hamlin Canyon quadrangle has been surveyed for cultural resources. To date, a total of 43 cultural resources sites have been recorded in Study Area 10. This number includes 33 prehistoric sites, three sites containing both prehistoric and historic period artifacts, and seven historic sites. Six sites have been evaluated as eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, including one prehistoric burial site and five prehistoric rock shelters. Of these six, two rock shelters are listed at present. This study area lies in a valley and foothill setting, the presence of water sources, coupled with the number of previously recorded sites indicate this study area is highly sensitive for the presence of prehistoric resources, particularly along terraces above floodplains.

1. Alternative 1

This alternative consists of designations for Rural Residential, Resource Conservation, and Agriculture. Agricultural land in the study area would be devoted to grazing. This land use is not particularly destructive to most types of cultural resources. Additionally, this alternative would not result in any new residential homes and the Resource Conservation designation could be used to protect significant cultural resources. Alternative 1, therefore, seems to have little potential to result in impacts to significant cultural resources and receives an A.

2. Alternative 2

More than half of the study area would be designated Rural Residential. The remainder would be designated Agriculture and would be devoted to grazing. Grazing is not particularly destructive to most types of cultural resources. There are no designated Resource Conservation land use areas that could be used to protect significant cultural resources, but it is possible that rural residential development could be sited to avoid impacts to cultural resources because of its low density. Therefore, Alternative 2 receives a C.

3. Alternative 3

This alternative would result in the smallest acreage of development and 1,700 acres of designated Resource Conservation land use that could be used to protect significant cultural resources. Because there would be some development, but development would be confined to a small area and there would be a large amount of Resource Conservation, Alternative 3 receives a C.

K. Notes