

16 STUDY AREA 16: OROVILLE CHICO HIGHWAY/HIGHWAY 99

Study Area 16, Oroville Chico Highway/SR-99, consists of approximately 290 acres located south of the City of Chico along Highway 99. This study area is currently undeveloped, and is characterized by open grazing land.

- ◆ Alternatives 1 and 2 follow the existing General Plan, designating the entire study area for Agriculture.
- ◆ Under Alternative 3, about half the study area would be designated for industrial uses, while the remainder would be designated as Resource Conservation.

Study Area 16 falls entirely within a Vernal Pool Core Recovery Area, and is also recognized as Grazing Land by the California Farmland Mapping and Mitigation Project. In addition, the western half of the study area is subject to subsidence. While development under Alternative 3 would probably be able to avoid areas of subsidence, it would not be possible to avoid a Vernal Pool Core Recovery Area or Grazing Land.

A. *Economics*

Alternatives 1 and 2 are identical and so would have the same economic effects.

1. **Market Viability**

a. Alternatives 1 and 2

Alternatives 1 and 2 do not anticipate significant new residential or commercial development; market viability is not a concern.

b. Alternative 3

This alternative proposes a medium sized industrial park. While the location along Highway 99 is attractive due to accessibility and visibility, and it may be possible to develop a successful marketing strategy for a business park focused on uses that prefer some separation from urban areas and sensitive neighboring uses, the stand-alone location of Study Area 16 may discourage

certain uses that would desire to be located closer to the labor force and to other supporting businesses and services. Overall, Alternative 3 receives a C.

2. Fiscal Impacts

a. Alternatives 1 and 2

With no significant new residential or commercial development planned under Alternatives 1 and 2, fiscal impacts would be neutral, and Alternatives 1 and 2 receive a C.

b. Alternative 3

This study area is located in TRAs where Butte County receives between 17.5 and 20.5 of the property tax revenues, a relatively high rate. Since Alternative 2 focuses on industrial development, typically a relatively low property tax generator, Alternative 3 does not have particularly strong revenue generating potential. However, because the study area lies well within the eight-minute travel time range of the full-time staffed Butte County Fire Station #45 in Durham, and because it is easily accessible via Highway 99, service provision should be relatively efficient. On balance, to the extent that Alternative 3 might generate either negative or positive fiscal impacts, they are not likely to be significant in either case, and Alternative 3 receives a C.

3. Jobs/Housing Balance

a. Alternatives 1 and 2

Because these alternatives propose no significant new residential or commercial development, neither would it affect jobs/housing balance in this study area.

b. Alternative 3

With the potential to generate over 3,100 new industrial employees, but no new residential development, this alternative would likely outstrip available employed workers in the Durham area and/or lead to a deterioration of the current balance between jobs and employed residents in the Chico area. Therefore, 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 Study Area 16. 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 16. The closest fire station is the Butte County/CALFIRE Fire Station 45, a career- and volunteer-staffed station located less than 3 miles away.

Study Area 16 has adequate service levels for rural and very low density residential development, as it is within eight minutes of a first-due unit. None of the study area has adequate service levels for suburban residential, retail or industrial development.

a. Alternatives 1 and 2

Alternatives 1 and 2 do not call for any new development in this study area, so fire and emergency services are not an issue.

b. Alternative 3

Alternative 3 calls for industrial development, which typically requires high fire and emergency service levels because it includes assets of high economic value. Development under this alternative would not have adequate fire and emergency services due to high travel times and/or a low concentration of fire stations in the immediate area. Moreover, the level of development under this alternative would not support a new fire station, so there would be little opportunity to improve fire protection. Therefore, this alternative receives a D.

2. Sheriff Services

Study Area 16 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. Because Study Area 16 is accessible to the Chico area via Highway 99, response times to this location are relatively quick.

There is no police station located within the boundaries of Study Area 16. The Butte County Sheriff station in the City of Chico is located less than five miles away from Study Area 16.

a. Alternatives 1 and 2

There would be no new development in this study area under Alternatives 1 and 2, so sheriff services are not an issue.

b. Alternative 3

Alternative 3 calls for significant industrial development, which would likely generate 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 16 is served by the Durham Unified School District (DUSD). This District has been experiencing declining enrollment, but is operating near capacity. As described in more detail under the Paradise Urban Reserve study area and Study Area 15, DUSD currently has capacity for approximately 30 additional students and does not have any specific expansion plans.

Under Alternatives 1, 2 and 3, Study Area 16 would not add any new students to the DUSD, so schools are not an issue.

C. Water

1. Water Supply

Study Area 16 is located within the Sacramento Valley Inventory Unit. As discussed in more detail under Study Area 14, 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.

Study Area 16 is located within the Pentz Inventory Sub-Unit. As discussed in more detail under Study Area 14, the primary source of water in Pentz is groundwater. Although there are no water service providers currently operating within Study Area 16, the District boundary of the Durham Mutual Water Company is located close to the western edge of this study area. The Durham Mutual Water Company supplies surface water to agricultural users from Butte Creek. It may be possible to serve urban development in this study area in the future by connecting to the Durham Mutual Water Company network.

a. Alternatives 1 and 2

There would be no new development in this study area under Alternatives 1 or 2, so water supply is not an issue.

b. Alternative 3

Alternative 3 calls for significant retail and industrial development. Because this development would be located adjacent to a water supplier, Alternative 3 receives a B.

2. Groundwater Recharge Potential

Study Area 16 is located within the Valley Inventory Unit. It may serve as a moderate or high potential recharge area.

a. Alternatives 1 and 2

There would be no new development in this study area under Alternatives 1 or 2. Therefore, these alternatives receive an A.

b. Alternative 3

Alternative 3 allows significant retail and industrial development in a region that may serve as a moderate or high potential recharge area. Therefore, this alternative receives a D.

D. Wastewater

There is currently no publicly managed sewer service in Study Area 16. The current wastewater treatment method is individual septic systems.

a. Alternatives 1 and 2

There would be no new development in this study area under Alternatives 1 and 2, so wastewater would not be an issue.

b. Alternative 3

Alternative 3 calls for significant industrial and retail development. This development can effectively be served by sewers due to the amount of development. Furthermore, it appears likely that this development would create the ability to form a new sewer system because it is all part of one development proposal. Therefore, this alternative receives a B.

E. Circulation

The Oroville Chico Highway/Highway 99 study area is served by one major regional roadway, Highway 99.

1. Proximity to Freeways and Major Roadways

Highway 99 runs adjacent to the study area on the northeast side (and is accessible from Neal Road, which forms the study area's southern boundary). The Oroville Chico Highway forms the southwestern boundary to the study area. Improvements are planned at the Highway 99/Neal Road intersection including realignment of Neal Road and construction of an interchange. The existing local roadway network in the study area is limited. This study area receives an A for access proximity to major roadways. Since Alternatives 1 and 2 do not include any new development, proximity to roadways is not an issue.

2. Bicycle Circulation

Adjacent to Study Area 16 a bicycle facility is planned along Oroville Chico Highway. Due to the study area's high level of access to planned bicycle facilities and location more than 1 mile from existing urban areas, the study area receives a C. Since Alternatives 1 and 2 do not include any new development, bicycle circulation is not an issue.

3. Transit Service

Transit service is currently provided along Highway 99 in the study area. This receives an A. Since Alternatives 1 and 2 do not include any new development, transit service is not an issue.

F. Airport Compatibility Zone Conflicts

Study Area 16 is not located within an Airport Compatibility Zone. Therefore, airport compatibility issues would not limit development under Alternatives 1, 2 or 3.

G. Potential Loss of Agricultural Land

The entire Oroville Chico Highway/ Highway 99 study area is identified as Grazing Land, except for two acres on the northwest boundary. The 287 acres of Grazing Land is located throughout the study area.

a. Alternatives 1 and 2

Under Alternatives 1 and 2, the entire study area is designated for Agriculture. Therefore, Alternatives 1 and 2 receive an A.

b. Alternative 3

Alternative 3 would convert approximately 150 acres of Grazing Land to industrial uses. Therefore, Alternative 3 receives a D.

H. Biological Resources

This small study area is located on the valley floor at elevations of 180 to 225 feet, and is within the Butte Regional Conservation Plan (HCP/NCCP) area. The predominant land cover type is gently sloping grassland with vernal swale complex, which occupies almost the entire area; the remainder consists of grassland without vernal pools.

No occurrences of special-status plants or animals are recorded in the study area. There is Butte Regional Conservation Plan (HCP/NCCP)-modeled habitat in the study area for the following 17 species:

- ◆ Ahart's dwarf rush
- ◆ Bald eagle
- ◆ Butte County meadowfoam
- ◆ Conservancy fairy shrimp
- ◆ Greene's tuctoria
- ◆ Hairy Orcutt grass
- ◆ Hoover's spurge

- ◆ Northwestern pond turtle
- ◆ Peregrine falcon
- ◆ Swainson's hawk
- ◆ Tricolored blackbird
- ◆ Valley elderberry longhorn beetle (Crouch Ravine and Mutual Ditch)
- ◆ Vernal pool fairy shrimp
- ◆ Vernal pool tadpole shrimp
- ◆ Western burrowing owl
- ◆ Western spadefoot
- ◆ White-tailed kite

Virtually the entire area is within Vernal Pool Critical Habitat (Unit 7J) for vernal pool tadpole shrimp.

Grassland with vernal swale complex occupies the majority of the study area.

There is no deer herd habitat in the study area.

1. Alternatives 1 and 2

Under Alternatives 1 and 2 the existing General Plan designation of Agriculture would remain for the entire area. These alternatives would not result in changes in habitat and could preserve existing sensitive biological resources, but it could allow grazing range improvements (e.g. fertilizing or disking grasslands) that would damage vernal pool habitat. Therefore, these alternatives receive a C for Special-Status Animal and Plant Species, a C for Critical Habitat and Other Protected Lands, a C for Sensitive Habitats, and an A for Deer Herd Habitat.

2. Alternative 3

Under Alternative 3 the General Plan would designate 250 acres for industrial purposes, with the remainder as Resource Conservation. Over half the study area would be converted from open habitat to industrial uses and it would not be possible to avoid a substantial area of sensitive vernal pool and swale

complex habitat. Therefore, this alternative receives a C for Special-Status Animal and Plant Species, a D for Critical Habitat and Other Protected Lands, a C for Sensitive Habitats, and an A for Deer Herd Habitat.

I. Safety and Hazards

1. Fire Hazards

Study Area 16 is located in a moderate fire severity zone. Fire hazards would not limit development under Alternatives 1, 2 or 3, therefore, these alternatives receive an A.

2. Flood Hazards

Small areas in the north and south of Study Area 16 are included in the 100-year FEMA flood zone.

a. Alternatives 1 and 2

Alternatives 1 and 2 do not include any new development. Therefore, Alternatives 1 and 2 receive an A.

b. Alternative 3

Alternative 3 includes 150 acres of land designated for industrial uses and 139 acres of land designated for resource conservation uses. Since only a relatively small area is within the 100-year flood zone, it is assumed that this land will be preserved as resource conservation and the 150 acres of industrial uses will avoid the flood zone. Therefore, this alternative receives a B.

3. Geologic Hazards

The Oroville Chico Highway/Highway 99 (Blakely-Western Property) study area has slight and moderate erosion potential, no areas of significant subsidence hazard, zero to low landslide potential, no earthquake faults, and low and moderate potential for liquefaction. The only significant geologic

constraint to development in this study area is approximately 6 acres in the south of the study area have very high potential for soil expansion.

a. Alternatives 1 and 2

Alternatives 1 and 2 do not include any development and receives an A.

b. Alternative 3

In Alternative 3, development could be located to avoid the 6 acres that have high potential for soil expansion. Alternative 3 receives a B.

J. Cultural Resources

Study Area 16 lies within portions of the Hamlin Canyon and the Chico USGS 7.5' quadrangles. Approximately 30 percent of the land in the Hamlin Canyon Quadrangle and 20 percent of the land in the Chico quadrangle has been surveyed for cultural resources. To date, no cultural resources sites have been recorded in Study Area 16. This study area lies within in a foothill region, and appears to have a single creek at the western periphery. Though the study area is in a foothill setting, with water available, the lack of previously recorded sites within this small area indicate that this study area is of low sensitivity for cultural resources.

1. Alternatives 1 and 2

Under both alternatives, the entire study area will remain in agriculture, devoted to grazing and open land. Grazing is not particularly destructive to most cultural resources. Based on the low sensitivity of the study area for cultural resources and the low potential for impacts from grazing, Alternatives 1 and 2 receive an A.

BUTTE COUNTY GENERAL PLAN 2030
ALTERNATIVES EVALUATION
STUDY AREA 16: OROVILLE CHICO HIGHWAY/
HIGHWAY 99

2. Alternative 3

Though a significant amount of Resource Conservation would be available to protect significant cultural resources, nearly half the study area would be developed, which could impact resources. Alternative 3 receives a B.

K. Notes