

19 STUDY AREA 19: DURHAM PENTZ/HIGHWAY 99

Study Area 19, Durham Pentz/Highway 99, consists of 389 acres located adjacent to and south of Study Area 15, at the intersection of Durham-Pentz Road and Highway 99. The 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, approximately 220 acres along Highway 99 would be designated for retail purposes, while the remainder of the study area would be designated Medium Density Residential, allowing approximately 900 new homes.

A. *Economics*

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

1. **Market Viability**

a. Alternatives 1 and 2

As this Study Area would not have any new residential or commercial development under Alternatives 1 or 2, market viability is not a concern.

b. Alternative 3

The residential component of this alternative would likely face some market resistance due to its isolation from other population centers. Although the planned retail component would provide shopping amenities for residents of the study area, the study area would not be likely to support the full range of public facilities that would help create a complete community. Given the isolation from other existing communities that have these amenities, this may be a marketing drawback.

The planned retail component for this alternative is equivalent to almost three regional malls, or about 18 to 20 big-box stores. Such a large concentration of retail development would likely require a trade area with a

population of at least 600,000 people. Since Butte County is unlikely to reach this level of population within the General Plan time horizon, the absorption potential of the retail component in this alternative is questionable. The planned residential component of this alternative would only support a small amount of basic convenience retail, such as perhaps a service station/convenience store and fast food eatery, with some potential for additional support from drive-by traffic.

Since the market viability of both the residential and retail components of Alternative 3 is questionable, it receives a D.

2. Fiscal Impacts

a. Alternatives 1 and 2

Alternatives 1 and 2 do not propose any new residential or commercial development, so they would have neutral fiscal impacts and receive a C.

b. Alternative 3

This study area lies in a TRA where Butte County receives an above-average 20.5 percent of the property tax revenues. With a focus on single-family homes and retail development, Alternative 3 has strong revenue-generating potential, but, as discussed above, full buildout of these revenue-generating uses is questionable. Moreover, the study area lies outside the eight-minute travel time range of the nearest full-time staffed fire station (Butte County Station #45); thus, there is potential for significant service cost increases.

With a potential 2.8 million square feet of retail development potential, this alternative would likely create fiscal benefits for the county if fully built out, but these benefits would be diminished under a more realistic absorption scenario. Alternative 3 receives a C for fiscal impacts.

3. Jobs/Housing Balance

a. Alternatives 1 and 2

Since Alternatives 1 and 2 do not plan any new residential or commercial development, neither would have an effect on jobs/housing balance.

b. Alternative 3

The estimated jobs/housing ratio under Alternative 3 is six jobs for every one employed resident. The potential increase in jobs is large enough that it could lead to an excess of jobs relative to housing in the Durham area, although the likelihood of developing enough commercial space during the General Plan time horizon to shift the Durham area from jobs shortfall to jobs surplus is low. Instead, Alternative 3 would be expected to make a contribution to improving the County's overall jobs deficit, and therefore 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 19. 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 19. The closest fire station is the Butte County/CALFIRE Fire Station 25, a volunteer-staffed station located less than 3 miles away.

Study Area 19 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

There would be no new development under Alternatives 1 and 2, so fire and emergency services are not an issue.

b. Alternative 3

Alternative 3 calls for approximately 900 new homes at suburban densities. This alternative also 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. All development under Alternative 3 would not have adequate fire and emergency service levels due to high travel times and 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 19 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 19 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 19; however, the Butte County Sheriff station in the City of Chico is located approximately 7 miles away from Study Area 19.

a. Alternatives 1 and 2

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

b. Alternative 3

Alternative 3 would allow approximately 900 new homes, as well as significant retail development, generating the need for more than five new officers in this area with quick response times. Therefore, this alternative receives a C.

3. Capacity of School Districts

Study Area 19 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.

a. Alternatives 1 and 2

Under Alternatives 1 and 2, Study Area 19 would not generate any new students, so schools are not an issue.

b. Alternative 3

Under Alternative 3, Study Area 19 could generate approximately 440 new students, which would exceed its current capacity by about 410 students. The total amount of development foreseen under Alternative 3 in all of the study areas within the DUSD could generate approximately 1,690 new students, about 1,660 students beyond current capacity.

Because this study area could generate more students than could be accommodated by the existing capacity, but would not generate enough students to support the construction of new schools, this alternative receives a D.

C. Water

1. Water Supply

Study Area 19 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.

The northern portion of Study Area 19 is located within the Esquon Inventory Sub-Unit. As discussed in more detail under the Durham study area, the primary land use in the Esquon Sub-Unit is agriculture.

The southern portion of Study Area 19 is located in the Cherokee Inventory Sub-Unit. The main water source in the Cherokee Sub-Unit is groundwater, although there is also some surface water use. The primary land use is agriculture, including rice, almonds and pasture. There are no water service providers operating within or near Study Area 19.

a. Alternatives 1 and 2

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

b. Alternative 3

Alternative 3 calls for approximately 900 new homes and 220 acres of retail development. Because there is no identified water supply for this development, this alternative receives a D.

2. Groundwater Recharge Potential

Study Area 19 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 under Alternatives 1 and 2. Therefore, these alternatives receive an A.

b. Alternative 3

Alternative 3 allows significant residential and retail 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 19. The current wastewater treatment method is individual septic systems.

a. Alternatives 1 and 2

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

b. Alternative 3

Alternative 3 calls for approximately 900 new homes at a medium density, as well as about 220 acres of retail development. This development can effectively be served by sewers 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 it is all part of one development proposal. Therefore, this alternative receives a B.

E. Circulation

The Durham-Pentz/ Highway 99 study area is served by two major regional roadways, Highway 99 and Durham-Pentz Road.

1. Proximity to Freeways and Major Roadways

Two major regional roadways travel through or adjacent to the Durham-Pentz/ Highway 99 study area. Highway 99 forms the southwestern study area boundary and Durham-Pentz Road is the northern study area boundary. 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 the Durham-Pentz/ Highway 99 area, a planned bicycle facility is located along Durham-Pentz Road. 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 19 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

Of the approximately 390 acres in Study Area 19, about 220 acres in the northern portion are identified as Grazing Land.

a. Alternatives 1 and 2

Under Alternatives 1 and 2, the entire 390 acres in Study Area 19 would be designated for agricultural uses, preserving all 220 acres of Grazing Land. Therefore, Alternatives 1 and 2 receive an A.

b. Alternative 3

Alternative 3 designates the entire study area for residential and retail uses, which would convert all 220 acres of Grazing Land to non-agricultural uses. Therefore, Alternative 3 receives a D.

H. Biological Resources

This small study area is located on the valley floor and is within the Butte Regional Conservation Plan (HCP/NCCP) area. The predominant land cover types are disturbed ground in the south and grassland with vernal swale complex in the north.

Occurrences of three special-status plants have been recorded in vernal pools in the study area: Greene's tuctoria, Hoover's spurge, and hairy Orcutt grass.

There are no animal occurrences in the study area.

There is Butte Regional Conservation Plan (HCP/NCCP)-modeled habitat in this study area for the following 19 species:

- ◆ Ahart's dwarf rush
- ◆ Butte County golden clover
- ◆ Butte County meadowfoam
- ◆ Greene's tuctoria
- ◆ Hairy Orcutt grass
- ◆ Hoover's spurge
- ◆ Bald eagle
- ◆ Conservancy fairy shrimp
- ◆ Northwestern pond turtle breeding habitat in pond

- ◆ Peregrine falcon
- ◆ Steelhead habitat
- ◆ Swainson's hawk
- ◆ Tricolored blackbird
- ◆ Valley elderberry longhorn beetle
- ◆ Vernal pool fairy shrimp
- ◆ Vernal pool tadpole shrimp
- ◆ Western burrowing owl
- ◆ Western spadefoot
- ◆ White-tailed kite

There is Critical Habitat for Central Valley steelhead in Little Dry Creek, which flows through the middle of the study area. In addition, virtually the entire study area is within a Vernal Pool Core Recovery Area.

Grassland with vernal swale complex occupies the northwestern half of the study area, and includes two large altered vernal pools. Cottonwood willow riparian forest occurs along Little Dry Creek, which runs through 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 for Agriculture would remain. These alternatives would not allow a significant number of new homes and would not result in changes in land use; although this could preserve existing sensitive biological resources, but it could also 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

Alternative 2 would allow approximately 900 new homes, and designates approximately 218 acres for commercial purposes. The site would be developed and could impact Critical Habitat, sensitive habitats, special-status species and potential habitats. Therefore, this alternative receives a D for Special-Status Animal and Plant Species, a D for Critical Habitat and other protected lands, a D for Sensitive Habitats, and an A for Deer Herd Habitat.

I. Safety and Hazards

1. Fire Hazards

Study Area 19 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

Study Area 19 is included in the 100-year FEMA flood zone. Approximately 150 acres of land in the center of the study area are located in the 100-year FEMA flood zone.

a. Alternatives 1 and 2

There would be no new development under Alternatives 1 and 2. Therefore these alternatives receive an A.

b. Alternative 3

Under Alternative 3, approximately 150 acres of land designated for development are included in the 100-year FEMA flood zone. Therefore, this alternative receives a D.

3. Geologic Hazards

Study Area 19 has slight and moderate erosion potential, significant subsidence potential in the center of the study area, low to moderate landslide potential, high potential for expansive soils and moderate liquefaction

potential. There are no earthquake faults within the study area or within a 50-foot distance of the study area.

a. Alternatives 1 and 2

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

b. Alternative 3

Under Alternative 3, approximately 240 acres of land designated for development have potentially significant subsidence hazards and 389 acres have very high potential for expansive soils. Alternative 3 receives a D.

J. Cultural Resources

Study Area 19 lies within the Hamlin Canyon USGS 7.5' quadrangles. Approximately 30 percent of the land in the Hamlin Canyon Quadrangle has been surveyed for cultural resources. To date, two cultural resources sites have been recorded in Study Area 19, a historic wagon road and a prehistoric bedrock mortar/hearth complex. This study area lies within in a foothill and valley region, and appears to have no water source within it. The number and type of previously recorded sites within this small area indicates that this study area is of medium sensitivity for cultural resources.

1. Alternatives 1 and 2

Alternatives 1 and 2 are identical and result in the entire study area remaining in agriculture dedicate to grazing and open land. This agricultural land use poses a minimal risk of destruction of cultural resources. Alternatives 1 and 2 result in a low potential for impacts to significant cultural resources and so receive an A.

2. Alternative 3

Alternative 3 does not provide for any designated Resource Conservation land use areas that could be used to protect significant cultural resources. Based on the density of residential development, the lack of Resource

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Conservation, and the moderate sensitivity of the study area, Alternative 3 receives a D.

K. Notes

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