

23 STUDY AREA 23: EASTERN OROVILLE/OROVILLE HILLS

Study Area 23, Eastern Oroville/Oroville Hills, consists of approximately 10,030 acres located east of the City of Oroville. This study area is included within the City of Oroville's Preferred Land Use Alternative for their General Plan Update. This study area also includes the Oroville Urban Reserve, about 2,000 acres that are bounded by Lower Wyandotte Road, Foothill Boulevard and Wyman Ravine. The Oroville Urban Reserve was established in 1984; this designation allows residential development on parcels at least 10 acres in size and plans for the extension of sewers, water and circulation to address downstream flooding. Portions of this large study area are developed with residential and retail uses, while significant areas remain as open agricultural land.

- ◆ Alternative 1 follows the Preferred Land Use Alternative for the City of Oroville, including a mix of residential densities, allowing approximately 18,400 new homes, as well as about 515 acres of Retail, 10 acres of Public, and 820 acres of Resource Conservation.
- ◆ Alternative 2 would reduce the residential densities from Alternative 1, allowing approximately 2,600 new homes. The Retail, Public and Resource Conservation designations from Alternative 1 would remain.
- ◆ Alternative 3 would also reduce the residential densities from Alternative 1, but to a lesser degree than under Alternative 2. This alternative would also designate about 35 acres of the retail area from Alternative 1 for residential purposes. The Public and Resource Conservation designations would remain. This alternative would allow approximately 5,900 new homes and designates about 480 acres for retail purposes.
- ◆ None of the alternatives follow the existing General Plan and Zoning Ordinance, which designate the majority of this study area for residential purposes, including rural, very low and medium densities.

A. Economics

1. Market Viability

a. Alternative 1

Alternative 1 envisions almost 19,000 new residential homes in Study Area 23. This represents almost double the number of new housing units projected for all unincorporated areas by 2030, making market viability highly questionable.

Market viability for Alternative 1's 6.7 million square feet of planned retail development is low, particularly given the location of this study area along a secondary highway on the edge of the urbanized part of Butte County, which is not conducive to regional retail activity. If full residential buildout was achieved, the population might support between 750,000 and 1.0 million square feet of neighborhood and community shopping facilities; however, much of the resident expenditures for regional retail goods (i.e. cars, furniture, electronics) would likely be captured elsewhere in the county or the cities.

Since both the residential and retail components of Alternative 1 have questionable market viability, Alternative 1 receives a D.

b. Alternative 2

The development of 2,600 new homes is likely viable during the General Plan time horizon. As discussed above under Alternative 1, due to the lack of adequate market area population to support such a large amount of retail space, and also due to the location, which is not conducive to regional retail activity, the market viability of the 6.7 million square feet of retail foreseen under Alternative 2 is low. The potential retail market support is lower than under Alternative 1, due to the much smaller residential component under Alternative 2. The residential component of Alternative 2 would likely only support a small amount of new, local-serving retail, such as a convenience store or small grocery store. Because Alternative 2's retail component has questionable market viability, it receives a C.

c. Alternative 3

Alternative 3's residential component of 5,900 new homes is likely market viable.

As discussed under Alternatives 1 and 2 above, the market viability of the extremely large amount of retail development under Alternative 3 is very questionable, given the inadequate trade area population and the location. The potential retail market support is lower than under Alternative 1, due to the much smaller residential component under Alternative 2. However, the 5,900 new homes under Alternative 3 may support a new neighborhood shopping center including a full grocery store, pharmacy, family restaurants and a beauty salon or dry cleaner. Because Alternative 2's retail component has questionable market viability, it receives a C.

2. Fiscal Impacts

This study area stretches over a large number of different TRAs in which Butte County's share of property tax revenues ranges from a low of 11.5 percent to a high of 17.5 percent. The county receives more than 17 percent of the property tax revenues in only three of the 17 TRAs in the study area. The county is therefore at a disadvantage in terms of revenue-generating potential in the study area.

Each alternative calls for a varying number of new homes, ,but also a very large quantity of retail development. Although the retail space would generate a tremendous amount of sales tax revenues if successfully built out, the market viability for any significant amount of retail is questionable. Since fiscal benefits, if any, are likely to be low, all alternatives receive a C.

3. Jobs/Housing Balance

a. Alternative 1

The estimated jobs/housing ratio for new development under Alternative 1 is less than 1 job for every one employed resident, meaning that Alternative 1

would exacerbate the existing shortfall of jobs relative to housing in the Oroville area. Alternative 1 receives a C.

b. Alternatives 2 and 3

The estimated jobs/housing ratio for new development under Alternative 2 is five jobs for every one employed resident, and the estimated jobs housing ratio for new development in Alternative 3 is two jobs per employed resident. Both of these alternatives would tend to contribute to an improvement in the jobs/housing balance in the Oroville area. Although this benefit would be diminished under more realistic retail absorption scenarios, Alternatives 2 and 3 receive 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 23. 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 two Butte County/CALFIRE fire stations within the boundaries of Study Area 23. Fire Station 64 is a career- and volunteer-staffed station and Fire Station 66 is a volunteer-staffed station.

Study Area 23 has adequate service levels for rural and very low density residential development, as it is located within an eight-minute travel area for a first-due unit. In addition, portions along Highway 162 and adjacent to the City of Oroville have adequate service levels for suburban residential, retail and industrial uses, as they are located within four minutes of a first-due unit and within eight minutes of three or more fire stations.

Alternatives 1 and 3 call for approximately 18,400 and 5,900 new homes at rural, very low and suburban densities, as well as significant retail uses. Alternative 2 calls for significant retail development, covering approximately 520 acres, as well as residential development. Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 have enough development that they could support a new fire station in the study area. Therefore, these alternatives receive a B.

2. Sheriff Services

Study Area 23 is served by the Southern Division of the Butte County Sheriff's Office (BCSO). The BCSO is currently understaffed and has limited capacity for expansion of its services. The Southern Division typically has about three to four deputies on duty in the Oroville area. Because Study Area 23 is located near the Oroville area, response times to this location are relatively quick.

There is no police station located within the boundaries of Study Area 23; however, the Butte County Sherriff station in the City of Oroville is located less than 2 miles away from the northwestern limit of Study Area 23 and approximately 8 miles from the southeastern boundary.

Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 call for significant growth, including 18,400, 2,600 and 5,900 new homes, respectively, generating the need for more than five new officers in an area with quick response times. Therefore, these alternatives receive a C.

3. Capacity of School Districts

Study Area 23 is served by the Oroville City Elementary School District (OCESD) (K-8) and the Oroville Union High School District (OUHSD) (9-12).

The OCESD's enrollment has been steadily declining since 1997. Its current enrollment is approximately 2,840 students, while it has the capacity for 3,360 students, meaning the District has the capacity for approximately 520 more students. Prior to the declines in enrollment, the OCESD had plans to build

new schools, and still owns property for those new school sites. However, due to the decline in enrollment, there are no current plans for expansion.

The OUHSD has also been experiencing declining enrollment. As discussed in more detail in the Concow and Thermalito study areas, the District currently has capacity for approximately 440 additional students, with a project underway that would expand capacity by another 100 students.

a. Alternative 1

Under Alternative 1, Study Area 23 could generate approximately 6,070 new students within the OCESD, which would exceed its current capacity by 5,550 students. The new students generated from this study area by this alternative could support about 16 to 17 new K-8 schools. This would significantly increase the size of the OCESD and require additional administration and other services.

The total amount of development foreseen under Alternative 1 in all of the study areas within the OCESD could generate approximately 7,590 new students, more than double the current enrollment and about 7,070 students beyond current capacity.

Under Alternative 1, Study Area 23 could generate approximately 2,970 new students within the OUHSD, which would exceed planned capacity by about 2,430 students. The new students generated from this study area by this alternative could support about two to three high schools. This would significantly increase the size of the OUHSD and require additional administration and other services.

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.

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Because the number of new students generated by this study area could support the construction of new schools, this alternative receives a C.

b. Alternative 2

Under Alternative 2, Study Area 23 could generate approximately 860 new students within the OCESD, which would exceed its current capacity by about 340 students. The new students generated from this study area by this alternative could support one new K-8 school.

The total amount of development foreseen under Alternative 2 in all of the study areas within the OCESD could generate approximately 1,490 new students, about 970 students beyond current capacity.

Under Alternative 2, Study Area 23 could generate approximately 420 new students within the OUHSD, which could be accommodated by the existing capacity. However, the total amount of development foreseen under Alternative 2 in all of the study areas within the OUHSD could generate approximately 2,040 new students, more than double the current enrollment and about 1,600 students beyond current capacity.

Because the number of new students generated by this study area could support the construction of a new K-8 school, and the high school students could be accommodated by the existing capacity, this alternative receives C.

c. Alternative 3

Under Alternative 3, Study Area 23 could generate approximately 1,950 new students within the OCESD, which would exceed its current capacity by about 1,430 students. The new students generated from this study area by this alternative could support about four new K-8 schools. This would significantly increase the size of the OCESD and require additional administration and other services.

The total amount of development foreseen under Alternative 3 in all of the study areas within the OCESD could generate approximately 3,140 new students, about 2,620 students beyond current capacity.

Under Alternative 3, Study Area 23 could generate approximately 950 new students within the OUHSD, which would exceed its planned capacity by about 410 students. The total amount of development foreseen under Alternative 3 in all of the study areas within the OUHSD could add approximately 3,220 new students, about 2,780 students beyond current capacity.

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

C. Water

1. Water Supply

Study Area 23 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.

Study Area 23 is located within the Wyandotte Inventory Sub-Unit. The primary water source in the Wyandotte Sub-Unit is surface water, which serves both urban and agricultural users.

Study Area 23 is served by the South Feather Water and Power Agency, which provides water for agricultural, residential and commercial purposes using surface water from four major reservoirs, including Sly Creek, Lost

Creek, Ponderosa and Miner's Ranch. Although the South Feather Water and Power Agency does not use groundwater, there are some pockets of land within the District that have independent private wells.

Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 call for residential and retail development. Since this development would be served by the South Feather Water and Power Agency, an existing water service provider, all alternatives receive an A.

2. Groundwater Recharge Potential

Study Area 23 is located within the Foothill Inventory Unit. It may serve as a moderate or high potential recharge area. Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 call for significant development in this study area, and therefore receive a D.

D. Wastewater

The western one-third of Study Area 23 is served by the Lake Oroville Area Public Utility District (LOAPUD), which provides wastewater collection services to unincorporated areas east and south of the City of Oroville. LOAPUD is also part of a Joint Powers Agreement with the Sewerage Commission - Oroville Region (SC-OR), which handles wastewater treatment and disposal. The remainder of Study Area 23 is not served by sewer, and currently relies on individual septic systems.

LOAPUD's collection system currently has no significant capacity issues and is generally in good condition. However, significant developments may be required to upgrade the existing collection system downstream if additional capacity is required.

Recently, SC-OR has indicated that their connection fee structure does not adequately cover the costs of providing sewer service to the new development.

Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 call for approximately 18,400, 2,600 and 5,900 new homes, respectively, at a range of densities, as well as retail uses. Approximately 35 percent of the development under Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 would be connected to the wastewater collection and treatment service provided by LOAPUD and SC-OR. The remaining development is too extensive and too dense to be served by individual septic systems. Overall, the amount of development under Alternatives 1, 2 or 3 could create the ability to expand the sewer system.

Although development under Alternatives 1, 2 or 3 could create the ability to expand the sewer system, SC-OR's connection fees do not adequately cover the costs of providing service to new development. Therefore, Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 receive a C.

E. Circulation

Study Area 23 is served by three major regional roadways: Highway 162, Lower Wyandotte Road, and Oroville-Bangor Highway.

1. Proximity to Freeways and Major Roadways

Three major regional roadways travel through or adjacent to Study Area 23. Highway 162 and Oroville-Bangor Highway run through the study area and Lower Wyandotte Road forms a portion of the southern boundary to the study area. Highway 162 provides connections to Highway 70. This study area receives an A for access proximity to major roadways.

2. Bicycle Circulation

Within Study Area 23, planned bicycle facilities are located along Lower Wyandotte Road, Foothill Boulevard, Oakvale Avenue, Highway 162, and Oroville-Bangor Highway. The location of the study area adjacent to the City of Oroville allows for bicycle access to jobs, schools, and services in Oroville. Due to the study area's high level of access to planned bicycle

facilities and location adjacent to the Oroville urban area, the study area receives a B.

3. Transit Service

Transit service is currently provided along Lower Wyandotte Road and Highway 162 in the study area. This receives an A.

F. Airport Compatibility Zone Conflicts

Study Area 23 is not located within an Airport Compatibility Zone. Therefore, airport compatibility issues would not affect development under Alternatives 1, 2 or 3.

G. Potential Loss of Agricultural Land

There are no agricultural acres, Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Grazing Land, within Study Area 23. Therefore, Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 receive an A.

H. Biological Resources

Study Area 23 is located in the lower foothills and is within the Butte Regional Conservation Plan (HCP/NCCP) area. The area is large and supports a diversity of land cover types. The predominant land cover type is mixed oak woodland, with areas of wooded ranchettes, blue oak woodland, and smaller patches of grassland and orchards. Several small urban areas occur within the oak woodlands. Several extensive patches of valley oak riparian woodland occur along valley floors throughout the study area.

Historical occurrences of Brandegee's clarkia and pink creamsacs have been recorded.

There is one occurrence of a northwestern pond turtle in the study area.

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

- ◆ Bald eagle
- ◆ Foothill yellow-legged frog
- ◆ Northwestern pond turtle habitat in creeks and ponds
- ◆ Peregrine falcon
- ◆ Swainson's hawk
- ◆ Tricolored blackbird
- ◆ Western burrowing owl
- ◆ Western spadefoot
- ◆ White-tailed kite
- ◆ Yellow-breasted chat

There is no Critical Habitat or other protected lands in the study area. The area is adjacent to the Oroville State Wildlife Area along the west edge of the smaller unit. The larger unit is adjacent to Department of Water Resources lands along the north boundary and adjacent to Lake Oroville State Recreation Area in the northwest.

Mixed oak and blue oak woodlands are present throughout the study area. Extensive patches of valley oak riparian woodland and cottonwood willow riparian occur along valley floors and creeks associated with Wyman Ravine and its tributaries, particularly in the study area west and northwest of Wyman Ravine. Emergent wetlands, patches of willow scrub, and small ponds are scattered throughout the study area.

There is no deer herd habitat in the study area.

Development would be expected to have negative impacts on the known occurrences of special-status species and sensitive habitats throughout the study area. Therefore, these alternatives receive a D for Special-Status Animal

and Plant Species, an A 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 23 is located in moderate and high fire severity zones. The high fire severity zone is made up of the majority of the study area. Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 all call for approximately 7,800 acres of land within the high fire severity zone to be developed. Therefore, these alternatives receive a D.

2. Flood Hazards

A small area of the western side of Study Area 23 is included in a small portion of the 100-year FEMA flood zone. Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 all include development of approximately 60 acres within the 100-year FEMA flood zone. Therefore, the alternatives receive a D.

3. Geologic Hazards

Most of Study Area 23 has moderate erosion potential, but approximately 2,320 acres have severe erosion potential. Study Area 23 has low to moderate potential for liquefaction, zero to low subsidence potential, and low to moderate, moderate and high landslide potential. The potential for expansive soils varies throughout this study area, with areas of very low, low, moderate and high soil expansion potential, and approximately 3,190 acres in the southern part of the study area have a high potential for soil expansion. A pre-quatarnary fault runs through the western part of Study Area 23. Pre-quatarnary 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 would not constrain development. The Cleveland Hills Fault traverses the eastern part of Study Area 23.

a. Alternatives 1 and 2

In Alternatives 1 and 2, approximately 2,120 acres of land designated for development has severe erosion potential, 20 acres would be subject to high landslide potential, and 2,990 acres have high potential for soil expansion. The Cleveland Hills Fault is located in areas designated for residential and commercial development. Alternatives 1 and 2 receive a D.

b. Alternative 3

In Alternative 3, approximately 20 acres of land designated for development has severe erosion potential, 20 acres would be subject to high landslide potential, and 2,990 acres have high potential for soil expansion. The Cleveland Hills Fault is located in areas designated for residential and commercial development. Alternative 3 receives a D.

J. Cultural Resources

Study Area 23 lies within the Bangor, Oroville, Oroville Dam, and Palermo USGS 7.5' quadrangles. Approximately 25 percent of the land in these Quadrangles has been surveyed for cultural resources. A total of 41 cultural resources sites have been recorded in Study Area 23: 23 historic period sites, ten prehistoric sites, and eight sites with both prehistoric and historic period components. This study area lies within in the foothill region, and abuts the Feather River on the north side. Although there is extensive historic period mining in the region as well as numerous water courses that indicate this study area is of high sensitivity for both prehistoric and historic period cultural resources.

1. Alternative 1

Because of the high sensitivity of the study area, the large amount of land devoted to residential and retail development, and the comparatively small amount of Resource Conservation that could be used to protect significant cultural resources, Alternative 1 receives a D.

2. Alternatives 2 and 3

Alternatives 2 and 3 differ from Alternative 1 in that both allow only low density, very low density, and rural residential development, resulting in a lower number of total residential units, and therefore less potential to disturb cultural resources, in the study area. Despite the high sensitivity of the study area and the large amount of acreage devoted to development, because they would result in far fewer impacts to cultural resources than would Alternative 1, Alternatives 2 and 3 receive a C.

K. Notes

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