

26 STUDY AREA 26: LAS PLUMAS/SOUTHSIDE/OPHIR ROAD

Study Area 26, Las Plumas/Southside/Ophir Road, consists of approximately 2,060 acres located southeast of the City of Oroville. Much of this study area is already developed with residential, industrial, retail and public uses. However, there are also significant areas that are currently open, and there has been some development interest in these areas.

- ◆ Alternative 1 follows the existing General Plan, designating the majority of the study area for residential uses at a variety of densities, allowing approximately 7,200 new homes. The existing General Plan also designates a large portion of the study area, approximately 730 acres, for industrial uses, as well as about 90 acres of Retail and 170 acres of Public.
- ◆ Alternative 2 would decrease the amount of land devoted to residential and industrial uses and add about 795 acres of Resource Conservation, allowing about 1,800 new homes and about 560 acres of Industrial. This alternative also slightly increases the retail area to about 100 acres, and maintains the public area from the existing General Plan.
- ◆ Alternative 3 designates the majority of the study area for Low Density Residential, which would allow about 3,600 new homes. This alternative also maintains the Public designation from the existing General Plan.

A. *Economics*

1. **Market Viability**

a. **Alternative 1**

Market viability under Alternative 1 is questionable due to the large amounts of development anticipated. The 7,200 new residential units planned in this Alternative 1 would represent approximately 70 percent of the projected new housing units in the unincorporated area through 2030, which is unlikely. Additionally, the retail component of Alternative 1 envisions a retail area comparable in size to a regional mall. This would require a market area population of about 300,000+ people, which is not likely to be achieved during the General Plan time horizon. Instead, it is likely that the new homes allowed under Alternative 1 allows demand for a new neighborhood

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shopping center, with the amount of new retail development equivalent to a full-size grocery store, drug store, a few small restaurants, and some personal services like cleaners and salons.

Finally, the industrial component of this alternative involves 12.7 million square feet of industrial uses, accommodating up to 15,300 employees. This represents 43 percent of the projected industrial growth for all of Butte County (including the incorporated cities) through 2030. Considering the disproportionately large share of overall industrial demand that this study area would need to capture, market viability for the industrial component is probably weak. Even under the most optimistic scenario, it is unlikely that more than 1 to 2 million square feet of industrial development would be feasible. Since market viability for all components of Alternative 1 is questionable, Alternative 1 receives a D.

b. Alternative 2

The 1,800-unit residential component of Alternative 2 seems more likely to be absorbed, compared to Alternative 1.

Alternative 2 has slightly more retail development than Alternative 1, as well as a very substantial amount of industrial development, so market viability for industrial and retail components is weak. However, it may be viable to add a few small grocery stores or convenience stores to serve the new residents. Therefore, Alternative 2 also receives a D.

c. Alternative 3

Under Alternative 3, this study area would develop 3,600 residential units. The market viability of this alternative is potentially moderate over the General Plan time horizon. In addition, these new homes would probably generate demand for a few small grocery stores or convenience stores to serve the new residents. Alternative 3 receives a B.

2. Fiscal Impacts

a. Alternative

This study area spans 22 TRAs in which the county's share of property taxes ranges from 12.2 percent to 17.2 percent. In all but one of the TRAs, the county's share is less than 17 percent. In 17 of the 22, the county's share is below 15 percent, a very low proportion. This means that the county is at a fiscal disadvantage when planning new development in this area.

In this location, property values are likely to be relatively low, due to existing market conditions; thus, the property tax-revenue generating potential is likely to be lower in Study Area 26 as compared to others areas. It appears that the study area lies within the eight-minute travel time range of the full-time staffed Butte County Fire Station #72, meaning that service costs should only be incremental.

The retail component of Alternative 1 would likely generate fiscal benefits, if successfully built out, but this is not expected to be feasible. Therefore, the potential fiscal benefits under Alternatives 1 and 2 are unlikely to be realized within the General Plan horizon, and both alternatives receive a C.

b. Alternative 3

This alternative involves only residential development, has lower property values, and is in an area where the county receives lower shares of property tax revenues. Alternative 3 offers none of the revenue boost associated with retail development in Alternatives 1 and 2. Alternative 3 entails a significant risk of negative fiscal impacts, and so receives a D.

3. Jobs/Housing Balance

a. Alternative 1

The estimated jobs/housing ratio for new development under Alternative 1 is 2 jobs for every one employed resident, meaning that it would contribute to an increase in the jobs/housing ratio for the Oroville area if fully built out. In a more realistic retail absorption scenario, these benefits would be reduced

since Alternative 1's new homes are more likely to be absorbed by the market than the job-generating retail and industrial development. Because Alternative 1 would be likely to significantly contribute to Oroville's existing imbalance of housing and jobs, it receives a D.

b. Alternative 2

The jobs housing ratio for new development under this alternative is estimated at seven jobs for every one employed resident, meaning that it allows many more jobs than new employed residents. Because it includes substantially less new housing, Alternative 2 would have a greater likelihood of contributing to an improvement in the jobs/housing ratio for the Oroville area. However, under a more realistic absorption scenario, these benefits would be reduced. Therefore, Alternative 2 receives a C.

c. Alternative 3

With potential for new residential development only, the jobs/housing ratio for this alternative would be zero, and the alternative would contribute to a deterioration of the jobs/housing balance in the study area. Alternative 3 receives a D.

B. Public Services

1. Fire and Emergency Services

The El Medio Fire Protection District (EMFD) provides fire and emergency services to the majority of Study Area 26. There is one EMFD fire station located in the northwest corner of Study Area 26. The EMFD has sufficient staffing and capacity for its service area, and is considering the construction of a second station in the southern part of the District.

Study Area 26 has adequate service levels for suburban residential, retail and industrial development, as EMFD's total response times are under five

minutes and the study area is within eight minutes of three or more fire stations.

a. Alternatives 1 and 2

Alternative 1 calls for approximately 7,200 new homes at a variety of densities, as well as significant industrial and retail development, covering approximately 820 acres. Alternative 2 calls for significant industrial and retail development, covering approximately 660 acres, as well as some residential development. These alternatives have enough development that they could support a new fire station in the study area. Therefore, Alternatives 1 and 2 receive a B.

b. Alternative 3

Alternative 3 calls for approximately 3,600 new homes at a suburban density. This development would have adequate fire and police service levels. Because this alternative allows more than a minimal amount of new development, all of which would have adequate fire and emergency service levels, it receives a B.

2. Sheriff Services

Study Area 26 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 26 is located within the Oroville area, response times to this location are quick.

There is no police station located within the boundaries of Study Area 26. The Butte County Sheriff Department in the City of Oroville is located within 3 miles from northern corner the study area and approximately 6 miles from the southern corner.

Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 call for significant growth, including 7,200, 1,800 and 3,600 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

Roughly half of Study Area 26 is served by the Oroville City Elementary School District (OCESD) (K-8), while the remainder of the study area is served by the Palermo Union School District (PUSD) (K-8). The Oroville Union High School District (OUHSD) (9-12) serves the entire study area.

The OCESD's enrollment has been steadily declining since 1997. As discussed in more detail under Study Area 23, the District currently has capacity for approximately 520 additional students.

The PUSD has maintained stable enrollment over the past three to four years. Its current enrollment is approximately 1,350 students, while it has the capacity for 1,450 students, meaning the District has the capacity for approximately 100 more students. The District recently completed construction on Phase I of a new school, which allows capacity for about 300 to 350 new students. This site is currently being used for other purposes, but the final steps to complete the new school would be made as soon as the student need is in place.

The OUHSD has been experiencing declining enrollment. As discussed in more detail under 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 26 could generate approximately 1,190 new students within the OCESD, which would exceed its current capacity by

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about 670 students. The new students generated from this study area by this alternative could support one to two new K-8 schools.

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 26 could generate approximately 1,190 new students within the PUSD, which would exceed its planned capacity by about 740 students. The new students generated from this study area by this alternative could support about two new K-8 schools. This would increase the size of the PUSD and require additional administration and other services.

The total amount of development foreseen under Alternative 1 in all of the study areas within the PUSD could generate approximately 4,090 new students, triple the current enrollment and about 3,990 students beyond current capacity.

Under Alternative 1, Study Area 26 could generate approximately 1,160 new students within the OUHSD, which would exceed its planned capacity by about 620 students. 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 this study area could generate more students than could be accommodated by the existing capacities, but would not generate enough students to support the construction of a new high school, this alternative receives a D.

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b. Alternative 2

Under Alternative 2, Study Area 26 could generate approximately 300 new students within the OCESD, which could be accommodated by the existing capacity. 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 26 could generate approximately 300 new students within the PUSD, which would exceed its current capacity. However, the new school that is under construction could accommodate these additional students. The total amount of development foreseen under Alternative 2 in all of the study areas within the PUSD could generate approximately 360 new students, which could also be accommodated by the new school that is under construction.

Under Alternative 2, Study Area 26 could generate approximately 290 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 be accommodated by the existing and planned capacities, this alternative receives a B.

c. Alternative 3

Under Alternative 3, Study Area 26 could generate approximately 590 new students within the OCESD, which would exceed its current capacity by about 70 students. 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 26 could generate approximately 590 new students within the PUSD, which would exceed its planned capacity by about 140 students. The total amount of development foreseen under Alternative 3 in all of the study areas within the PUSD could generate approximately 2,380 new students, about 2,280 students beyond current capacity.

Under Alternative 3, Study Area 26 could generate approximately 580 new students within the OUHSD, which would exceed its planned capacity by about 40 students. 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 this study area could generate more students than could be accommodated by the existing capacities, 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 26 is located within the Sacramento Valley Inventory Unit. As discussed in more detail under Study Area 25, 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 26 is located within the North Yuba Inventory Unit. This study area 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 allow significant residential, retail and industrial development. Because this development would be served by the South Feather Water and Power Agency, Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 receive an A.

2. Groundwater Recharge Potential

Study Area 26 is located within the Valley Inventory Unit. It may serve as a moderate or high potential recharge area. Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 allow significant residential, retail and industrial development in this study area, and therefore receive a D.

D. Wastewater

More than half of Study Area 26 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, which handles wastewater treatment and disposal. The remainder of Study Area 26 is not served by sewer, and currently relies on individual septic systems.

A focused feasibility study for planned development just south of the current service area along Ophir Road between Lincoln Boulevard and Lower Wyandotte Road was recently completed. This study concluded that this region could be served by a regional sewer pump station located in the vicinity of Lincoln Boulevard and Ophir Road. If service were extended to this study area, a greater portion of Study Area 26 would be served by LOAPUD.

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 7,200, 1,800 and 3,600 new homes, respectively, at a variety of densities. Alternatives 1 and 2 also call for retail and industrial uses. Approximately 60 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. If LOAPUD's sewer system is expanded to the Ophir Road and Lincoln Boulevard area, approximately 65 to 70 percent of this development would be served by sewer. 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 26 is served by three major regional roadways: Lower Wyandotte Road, Upper Palermo Road, and Ophir Road.

1. Proximity to Freeways and Major Roadways

Two major regional roadways travel through or adjacent to Study Area 26. Lower Wyandotte Road forms the eastern boundary to the study area, Upper Palermo Road forms a southeastern boundary, and Ophir Road runs through the study area. Ophir Road provides a connection to Highway 70. This study area receives an A for access proximity to major roadways.

2. Bicycle Circulation

Within Study Area 26, planned bicycle facilities are located along Lower Wyandotte Road and Ophir Road. 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 Ophir Road in the study area. This receives an A.

F. Airport Compatibility Zone Conflicts

Study Area 26 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

Of the approximately 2,060 acres in Study Area 26, about 55 acres are identified as Farmland of Statewide Importance and 810 acres are identified as Grazing Land. The Farmland of Statewide Importance is located in a small

pocket in the central portion of the study area. The Grazing Land is located in the southern portion of the study area.

a. Alternatives 1 and 3

Under Alternatives 1 and 3, the entire study area is designated for non-agricultural uses, which would convert the 55 acres of Farmland of Statewide Importance and 800 acres of Grazing Land to non-agricultural uses. Therefore, Alternatives 1 and 3 receive a D.

b. Alternative 2

Assuming the land designated for non-agricultural uses under Alternative 2 is directed to non-agricultural acres, Alternative 2 would convert 70 acres of Grazing Land to non-agricultural uses. Therefore, Alternative 2 receives a C.

H. Biological Resources

This study area is located on the valley floor south of Oroville; it is within the Butte Regional Conservation Plan (HCP/NCCP) area. The predominant land cover types are urban, wooded ranchettes, and grassland. Mixed and blue oak woodland occur around an area of dredge tailings in the south of the study area.

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 this study area for the following 17 species:

- ◆ Ahart's dwarf rush
- ◆ Bald eagle
- ◆ Conservancy fairy shrimp
- ◆ Greene's tuctoria
- ◆ Hairy Orcutt grass

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- ◆ Hoover's spurge
- ◆ Northwestern pond turtle (stock ponds)
- ◆ Peregrine falcon
- ◆ 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
- ◆ Yellow-breasted chat

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

A small area of grassland with vernal swale complex is located in the center of the study area, and individual vernal pools are mapped throughout the grassland habitat in the central and southern portions of the study area. Blue oak and mixed oak woodland occur along the Feather River in the south of the study area. A small area of willow scrub is located in the east of the study area.

There is no deer herd habitat in the study area.

a. Alternatives 1 and 3

Alternative 3 would designate the entire area for various densities of Residential development; Alternative 1 is similar but would designate 167 acres as Public lands. Both these alternatives would likely impact all the vernal pool and swale habitat. These areas are sensitive habitats that also provide potential habitat for several special-status species. Therefore, these alternatives receive a C 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.

b. Alternative 2

Alternative 2 proposes less development than the other alternatives and designates almost 800 acres as Resource Conservation. However, the proposed development area is substantial, and it would impact sensitive habitats and biological resources. Therefore, this alternative receives a C 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 26 includes low, moderate and high fire hazard severity zones. The high fire hazard severity zone is located in portions of the northern half of the study area.

a. Alternatives 1 and 3

Under Alternatives 1 and 3, approximately 390 acres of land designated for development are within the high fire severity zone. These alternatives receive a D.

b. Alternative 2

Under Alternative 2, development would not be limited by fire hazards. Although a portion of the site is within the high fire severity zone, it is assumed that development would be located on the portion of the site that is not constrained by fire hazards. Therefore, this alternative receives a B.

2. Flood Hazards

A portion in the southeast of Study Area 26 is in the 100-year FEMA flood zone.

a. Alternatives 1 and 3

Flood hazards could affect development of approximately 160 acres of land under Alternatives 1 and 3. Flood hazards could potentially affect development under Alternatives 1 or 3, therefore, these alternatives receive a D.

b. Alternative 2

Under Alternative 2, development would not be limited by flood hazards. Since 790 acres of the site are designated for resource conservation, it is assumed that development in the study area could be configured to ensure that the 160 acres of the site within the 100-year flood zone are not developed. Flood hazards would not affect development under Alternative 2, therefore, this alternative receives a D.

3. Geologic Hazards

The majority of Study Area 26 has slight potential for erosion, but some 220 acres of land in the west and east of the study area have severe erosion potential. This study area has zero to low subsidence potential, zero to low landslide potential, mostly moderate potential for soil expansion, and low to moderate potential for liquefaction. 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. Alternatives 1 and 3

Under Alternatives 1 and 3, approximately 220 acres of land designated for development have severe erosion hazards. Alternatives 1 and 3 receive a D.

b. Alternative 2

Under Alternative 2, since 790 acres would be resource conservation, development could be located to avoid the 220 acres of the study area with severe erosion potential. Alternative 2 receives a B.

J. Cultural Resources

Study Area 26 lies within the Palermo USGS 7.5' quadrangle. Approximately 25 percent of the land in the Palermo Quadrangle has been surveyed for cultural resources. To date, two cultural resources sites have been recorded in Study Area 26, a historic water conveyance and a prehistoric habitation site. This study area lies within in a valley and foothill region. This, coupled with the number of previously recorded sites, one a habitation site, indicates that this study area is of medium sensitivity for cultural resources.

a. Alternative 1

Due to the moderate sensitivity of the study area, the acreage and density of development and the lack of Resource Conservation that could be used to protect significant cultural resources, Alternative 1 receives a D.

b. Alternative 2

Under Alternative 2, about half of the study area would be developed, while slightly less than half would be designated Resource Conservation. Because cultural resources could be impacted by development, despite the fact that designated Resource Conservation that could be used to protect some significant cultural resources, Alternative 2 receives a C.

c. Alternative 3

Alternative 3 would devote the entire study area to very low density residential development. Because of the moderate sensitivity of the study area and the lack of Resource Conservation, Alternative 3 receives a D.

K. Notes

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