

4 PROJECT ALTERNATIVES

The following discussion addresses the relative advantages and disadvantages of alternatives to the proposed project. The proposed project includes a subdivision of 46 lots, including one for the existing single family home and out buildings.

The proposed project conforms to the Butte County General Plan.

4.1 ALTERNATIVE 1: PROJECT AS DESCRIBED IN THE 2011 INITIAL STUDY

The original design specified in the draft Initial Study (Appendix B) had 140 lots for senior citizen housing on 51 acres. Four of the original lots would be separated on a different parcel to the west also with access to Durham-Dayton Highway. Water supply was included in a proposed Community Services District for all public onsite services including sewage treatment, parks, and open space areas. An open space lot was indicated on the west side of the project, with the leach field and a replacement leach field area located on the southwest corner of the project site. Open space buffers between the project and neighboring properties were less than currently proposed. A RV parking area was located at the southern edge. A small neighborhood retail/commercial area was included. A raised berm was proposed to surround the project site to protect homes against 100 year floods. This berm would also serve as a walking/bicycle path.

Advantages: This alternative would provide more housing for displaced senior Paradise residents. The retail center would provide more goods and services for Durham residents. The domestic water supply under the CSD would be less costly than the proposed connection to the Durham Irrigation District system.

Disadvantages: There was strong local opposition to this project. Buffers between the proposed homes and adjacent orchards were less than specified by the current project. The surface storm water detention basins would require additional maintenance, not necessary with an underground infiltration system.

4.2 ALTERNATIVE 2: DEVELOPMENT WITH 5-ACRE PARCELS

County staff requested an alternative with a lower density. A more practical one, in place of two-acre minimums, would be parcels with five acres to allow development of family or commercial vegetable or flower gardens or small livestock production for family food or 4-H activities.

Adjoining land owners within the project area could continue almond production by jointly hiring shakers and sweepers. The multiple owners could afford to treat the soil to reduce or eliminate Armillaria. Parcels would be served by individual wells, rather than an interconnection with Durham Irrigation District.

Advantages: Five acre parcels provide room for production of vegetables or other specialty crops that can be used by the families as a food source or sold in a Farmers Market. It also provides adequate space for poultry or other small farm animal production for food or activities such as 4-H. These are

appropriate uses for a community that prefers to remain rural. The need for public services such as schools and public safety should be lower than the proposed project. Traffic and associated air quality impacts would be reduced.

Disadvantages: The reduction in housing units continues a serious problem in the county regarding permanent homes for displaced residents. It is also an inefficient use of land designated for higher (1 acre) densities, and does not comply with General Plan goals. The loss of a new well connection for the Durham Irrigation District continues a problem with water supply for existing homes.

4.3 ALTERNATIVE 3: NO PROJECT

Under the No Project alternative, the site would retain its current zoning of Very Low Density Residential (VLDR) but would remain as an almond orchard.

Advantages: There would be no impacts related to development and occupation of the site. Specific impacts avoided are increases in motor vehicle trips, related air quality impacts, increases in impervious surfaces, demands for public services and loss of agricultural land.

Disadvantages: Water consumption and greenhouse gas production would remain higher. The orchard is declining because of *Armillaria mellea* and may soon become economically unproductive. The project provides an important segment of the local housing market for senior citizens that would otherwise not be available. The Durham Irrigation District would lose an opportunity to upgrade their system and improve current water supply deficiencies.

Although the No Project Alternative has the fewest adverse impacts, the current project was proposed because it implements the Land Use policies of the 2030 General Plan. It will also improve the water system of the Durham Irrigation District.