

## Chapter 4. Evaluation of Plan Alternatives

### 4.1. Introduction

#### 4.1.1. State Requirements

The primary intent of the alternatives analysis in an EIR, as stated in §15126.6(a) of the State CEQA Guidelines, is to “describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project, or to the location of the project, which would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project, and evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives.”

Further, the State CEQA Guidelines state that “the discussion of alternatives shall focus on alternatives to the project or its location which are capable of avoiding or substantially lessening any significant effects of the project, even if these alternatives would impede to some degree the attainment of the project objectives, or would be more costly” (Guidelines §15126.6(b)).

An EIR must describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the proposed project that could feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project. The feasibility of an alternative may be determined based on a variety of factors, including but not limited to economic viability, availability of infrastructure, and other plans or regulatory limitations (Guidelines §15126.6(f)(1)).

For general plan EIRs, the impacts of buildout under the full entitlement, the “maximum buildout” proposed by the plan, must be analyzed. Therefore, a maximum buildout estimate for each alternative is included in addition to the “expected” buildout capacity.

#### 4.1.2. Project Objectives

The basic objectives of the General Plan Update are established by the following “Guiding Principles” in Chapter 1:

- Preserve and enhance the character of Humboldt County and the quality of life it offers.
- Provide sufficient developable land, encourage development of affordable housing for all income levels, and prevent housing scarcity under a range of population growth scenarios.
- Ensure efficient use of water and sewer services and focus development in those areas and discourage low-density residential conversion of resource lands and open space.
- Support the County’s economic development strategy and work to retain and create living-wage job opportunities.
- Protect agriculture and timberland over the long term, using measures such as increased restrictions on resource land subdivisions and patent parcel development.
- Protect natural resources, especially open space, water resources, water quality, scenic beauty, and salmonid habitat.
- Include actionable plans for infrastructure financing and construction.

- Adhere to a practical strategy that can be implemented.
- Provide a clear statement of land use values and policies to provide clarity in the County's permit processing system and simplify review of projects that are consistent with the General Plan.

#### **4.1.3 Approach to Identifying Alternatives**

The General Plan Update program began in 1998 by providing the public with choices on the desired range and scope of the General Plan Update effort (the "Critical Choices Phase"). This was followed by the "Sketch Plan Phase" (2002 – 2004), where four (4) generalized alternatives were developed and presented for public review. The public input in this phase resulted in the development of a proposed General Plan Update and three (3) generalized alternatives, which were presented to the Planning Commission in 2007. They were reviewed, discussed and refined in a series of public hearings before the Planning Commission in 2007 and 2008.

The revised version of the draft General Plan and the three (3) alternatives were published in 2008 as the Preliminary Planning Commission Draft. Public hearings on this draft and the accompanying alternatives were held by the Planning Commission for three (3) years from 2009 - 2012. The culmination of the Planning Commission's effort is the Planning Commission Approved Draft published in March, 2012; this is the "Project" for the purpose of this EIR. This chapter compares the environmental impacts of implementing the Project against the 2008 Draft and the other three (3) alternatives.

#### **4.1.4. Alternatives that Were Considered But Rejected**

Consistent with CEQA, primary consideration was given to alternatives that could reduce significant impacts, while still meeting most of the project objectives. During the Sketch Plan phase of the General Plan Update program, two alternatives were developed, but did not receive significant public support, so they were not carried forward. These original alternatives, known as "Sketch Plan 2" and "Sketch Plan 4" were comprised of maps and generalized goals and policy statements.

##### **Sketch Plan 2: Expanded Growth Patterns**

Sketch Plan 2 proposed to increase developable parcels and densities compared to the existing Framework Plan. Land use designations were applied to accommodate increased growth. Sketch Plan 2 proposed a higher number of existing parcels that could be developed for homesites. It substantially expanded water service areas beyond present boundaries, thus providing more opportunities for homesites in the outlying parts of communities. Sketch Plan 2 allowed greater flexibility for market forces to determine the form and extent of new development. This would have resulted in a more dispersed development pattern around existing communities, providing extensive opportunities for 1 – 5 acre homesites. A transition between urban and rural areas was provided through Residential Estates lands, including large lot (2 acre or greater) rural residential subdivisions, which could be converted to urban residential densities (greater than 1 dwelling unit/acre) with the extension of sewer and water service.

Sketch Plan 2 allowed existing development patterns to continue, including auto-oriented commercial development, but would revise County development standards and subdivision ordinance language to allow developers to respond to market demand for live/work, mixed-use, or neighborhoods designed with traditional town planning principles.

Resource protection policies of the existing Framework Plan would be continued under Sketch Plan 2 except that additional resource lands adjacent to urbanized areas were proposed for conversion to residential development. In addition, Sketch Plan 2 included an Urban Fringe Timber land use designation intended to serve as a buffer between residential and resource production uses.

Housing affordability was addressed in Sketch Plan 2 by increasing the number of parcels which could be subdivided outside of community plan areas. These parcels were planned for densities appropriate for on-site water and sewer services, that required less up-front investment for public water and sewer infrastructure. Sketch Plan 2 largely relied on market driven forces to address housing supply and demand, and made targeted public financing of infrastructure less of a priority.

Performance standards and guidelines were used in Sketch Plan 2 to ensure that design, scale, and buffering of affordable housing projects (especially multi-family and assisted housing) retain the character of surrounding neighborhoods. Density categories were broad enough to allow for diversity of housing types; however, there would be no regulatory requirement to provide specific housing types.

Commercial and industrial areas were designated largely based on existing use patterns, with additional areas for expansion. Big box retail was accommodated at selected sites. Community design relied largely on the market and policies contained in existing community plans to determine appropriate design.

Overlay zones were proposed in Sketch Plan 2 to ensure protection for specific environmental resources and hazards, including wetlands, steep slopes, floodplains, sensitive habitat, Alquist-Priolo zones, and landslide areas.

#### **Sketch Plan 4: Mixed Growth Patterns**

Sketch Plan 4 combined the development capacity of Sketch Plan 2 with higher urban density allowances and more resource protection policies than Sketch Plan 2. This resulted in the highest potential number of building sites among the Sketch Plan alternatives while maintaining resource lands protections. The Urban Fringe Timber designation was used in this alternative to serve as a buffer between residential and resource production uses. Sketch Plan 4 assumed housing needs were going to increase by three (3) times the historic rate of increase. These increased housing needs were met through development in currently served areas and urbanization expansion plans.

#### **Housing Element Alternatives**

The Housing Element of the General Plan was required by state law to move ahead of the other elements of the General Plan and be completed by 2009. The EIR for the Housing Element reviewed alternatives that were rejected from further analysis. One of those was a proposal promoted by some groups is to identify adequate sites to accommodate an annual growth rate of 2%, rather than the 0.5% rate projected by the state Department of Finance. This would amount to a household growth rate of close to 2,800 per year for the County, requiring 14,000 additional units by the year 2014. That would be close to 11,500 residential units more than state projections of the actual need. This alternative was rejected from further consideration in the EIR because it was so out of line with the state projections of household growth for the County.

Another alternative that was considered in the 2009 Housing Element EIR was to limit new residential development to properties in urban areas currently served by public water and sewer, and rural properties with on-site septic systems. The proposal increased the density of residentially zoned properties in the areas with existing public water and sewer to meet the projected housing needs.

This proposal would have eliminated approximately 2,100 potential units from the residential land inventory, properties presently planned and zoned for residential use within the boundaries of community service districts that provide public water and sewer services. While other parcels within the service district boundaries could make up some of the lost development potential, the allowed densities would need to be increased by an average of 70% on those parcels. This alternative was rejected because the County is unlikely to achieve the 70% higher densities necessary to retain the same development potential in the infill areas as the proposed project.

## 4.2. Description of Alternatives

### 4.2.1 Summary of Alternatives

The range of alternatives in this EIR is intended to provide a reasoned choice of options. The alternatives were selected to enhance meaningful public participation and informed decision-making. The General Plan Update process has utilized alternatives as a central element in its public participation program. There are four (4) alternatives considered in this EIR:

- Alternative A - Focused Growth Alternative,
- Alternative B - 2008 Proposed General Plan Update,
- Alternative C - Expanded Growth Alternative, and
- Alternative D - No Project (i.e. development under the existing General Plan)

The paragraphs below summarize the key features of each alternative. It is followed by a detailed analysis and comparison of the alternatives in the following section.

#### **Alternative A - The Focused Growth Alternative**

Compared to the Project, this alternative provides for a slight increase in planned urban residential densities in existing developed areas, increasing urban-serviceable development, including infill and mixed-use opportunities. It also reduces some planned residential expansion. Alternative A includes resource land protections including limitations on large lot residential development on resource lands.

The land use maps and policies of Alternative A tend to be more prescriptive and restrictive, and are in general more protective of resources and the environment. It could also be characterized as a more contemporary plan, making increased use of modern planning concepts, such as mixed-use development designations.

Alternative A devotes close to 170,000 acres to residential land uses, 10,120 acres of urban residential (RL and RM), and the remainder to suburban and rural residential (RE, RR). The expected housing unit capacity of these lands is 11,096 units, 1,440 less than the proposed project but 2,221 more units on 15,000 fewer acres than the current general plan. The mixed use and urban reserve designations (MU, VC, RCC, UR) add an additional residential expected capacity of 647 units on 2,274 acres.

Alternative A accommodates more units on less land than the Project by slightly increasing densities on urban lands (3-8 units per acre versus 1-7 units in the Project) and slightly lowering the acreage devoted to residential uses. Alternative A classifies a greater number of acres for resource production land uses, and substantially reduces the planned residential capacity on a portion of the resource production lands that are considered of critical importance, specifically the lands designated Industrial Timberland (TI) and Ranchland (AGR). For other agricultural lands, those designated Agricultural Exclusive (AE) or Agricultural Grazing (AG), the residential capacity of Alternative A is similar to the Project. Based on the analysis of environmental impacts, the EIR concludes that Alternative A would be the "environmentally superior" alternative as defined by CEQA.

Tables 4-1 and 4-2 shown later in this chapter contain a detailed comparison of residential, commercial, and industrial acreage and capacities.

### **Alternative B – The 2008 Proposed General Plan Update**

Alternative B is the 2008 Proposed General Plan Update ("2008 Draft"). This alternative was presented to the Planning Commission as a public hearing draft in November, 2008. Many of the goals, policies, standards and implementation measures and land use map designations in the 2008 Draft were selected by the Planning Commission, and have become part of the Project discussed in this EIR.

However, there are some notable exceptions. In some cases the Planning Commission approved policies which reduce impacts on the environment compared to the 2008 Draft. At other times the Planning Commission selected options that will likely have the opposite effect. For instance, in the Project, the Planning Commission chose to not recommend the Ranchland (AGR) land use designation.

Alternative B devotes 189,891 acres to residential land uses, 11,072 acres of urban residential (RL and RM), and 178,818 acres to suburban and rural residential (RE, RR). The expected housing unit capacity of these lands is 14,994 units, 1,911 more than the proposed project and 5,572 more units on 3,737 fewer acres than the current general plan. The mixed use and urban reserve designations (MU, VC, RCC, UR) add an additional residential expected capacity of 232 units on 2,241 acres.

Alternative B classifies less acreage to resources production than the Project (1,338,969 versus 1,346,644), with a residential capacity on these lands similar to Alternative D (8,636 versus 8,956). Maximum residential buildout under Alternative B is almost double that of Alternative A (93,731 versus 51,159), and about 15,000 units higher than either the Project or Alternative D.

This chapter of the EIR concludes that Alternative B would be less protective of the environment than Alternative A, but more protective than Alternative C or D. Compared to the Project, Alternative B has a mixed level of impacts on the environment, with some features that are more protective, and others that are less protective.

### **Alternative C - The Expanded Growth Alternative**

Alternative C is a high residential capacity plan. The alternative provides for an increase in planned urban residential opportunities and urban-serviceable development compared to the Project. This alternative provides for modest expansion of urban areas, and increases the amount of suburban land available for residential development. There would be more

opportunities for large lot rural residential development with this alternative, recognizing additional rural residential areas established through current use.

The policies and land use maps of Alternative C are less prescriptive and restrictive than the Project, taking a more laissez-faire market-based approach, and placing a greater reliance on case-by-case use of CEQA and discretionary decision-making. In many cases this alternative carries forward the policies of the current general plan (Alternative D), and omits more contemporary planning concepts, such as mixed-use designations and clustering policies.

Alternative C devotes 189,891 acres to residential land uses, 11,072 acres of urban residential (RL and RM), and 178,818 acres to suburban and rural residential (RE, RR). The expected housing unit capacity of these lands is 14,994 units, 1,911 more than the proposed project and 5,572 more units on 3,737 fewer acres than the current general plan. The mixed use and urban reserve designations (MU, VC, RCC, UR) add an additional residential expected capacity of 232 units on 2,241 acres.

Alternative C classifies less acreage to resources production than the Project (1,338,969 versus 1,346,644), with a residential capacity on these lands similar to Alternative D (8,636 versus 8,956). Maximum residential buildout under Alternative C is almost double that of Alternative A (93,731 versus 51,159), and about 15,000 units higher than either the Project or Alternative D.

This chapter of the EIR concludes that Alternative C would be less protective of the environment than the Project and Alternatives A and B. Compared to Alternative D, this alternative has a mixed level of impacts on the environment, with some features that are more protective, and others that are less protective of the environment.

#### **Alternative D – The No Project Alternative (i.e. development under the existing General Plan)**

This alternative considers future development patterns continuing under the existing Framework Plan. It uses policies and land use designations contained in the current 1984 Humboldt County Framework General Plan. This is the "no project" alternative required under CEQA. Alternative D will also serve as a comparison baseline for the Project and the other alternatives.

The existing Framework General Plan established community planning area boundaries and called for a program of individual community planning efforts. Within each planning area, urban development and urban expansion areas are defined based on service provider capabilities and logical expansion areas. Resource production lands (agricultural and timber) have been given protection based largely on their existing zoning, with density ranges of 20 – 160 acres per unit. Similarly, other rural lands have been given density ranges of 20 – 160 acres per unit based on remoteness, natural resources, and natural hazard considerations.

Housing availability is addressed by the community planning program and periodic updates of the Housing Element. Together these programs have provided a supply of residentially designated land, particularly multi-family designated land, which is a key component in meeting the required range of affordability.

Commercial and industrial areas are designated largely based on existing land use patterns, with logical areas for expansion. Community design has been addressed in individual community plans, applying local design review and landscaping requirements.

Acreage comparisons between the existing and proposed general plan are somewhat complicated by the naming convention used in the current plan which refers to many lands as

“Agricultural” which are primarily large lot and suburban residential lands. For purposes of comparison with the Project and the other alternatives, the existing Framework General Plan land use designations of Agricultural Lands, Agricultural Rural, and Agricultural Suburban are classified as Rural Residential and Residential Estates in the land use comparison Table 4-1 presented later in this chapter.

Based on this, Alternative D devotes 193,628 acres to primarily residential uses, 11,965 acres of urban residential (RL and RM), and 181,663 acres to suburban and rural residential (RE, RR). The expected housing unit capacity of these lands is 9,422 units, 3,661 less than the Project on 10,865 more acres. The mixed use and urban reserve designations (MU, VC, RCC, UR) add an additional residential expected capacity of 94 units on 1,168 acres. Alternative D has more land classified as resource production than the proposed plan (1,378,600 versus 1,346,644), primarily because it does not account for public land acquisitions, which have caused these lands to be reclassified from a resource production to an open space category in the Project.

### 4.3. Comparison of Effects Under Each Alternative

For each alternative the General Plan Update includes different sets of policy options and individual land use designation maps. Generally the policy option sets were developed to reflect a range of approaches for addressing environmental issues. The policy options for each of the alternatives are described in detail in the Alternatives Comparison Charts developed as a companion document to the 2008 Draft. They are available at the following website: (<http://www.co.humboldt.ca.us/gpu/documentskeyissuesplanalt.aspx>), and at the Planning Division office at 3015 H Street, Eureka California 95501, and are incorporated into this EIR by reference as if set forth fully herein. Appendix V of this EIR compares the policy options that have potential impacts to the environment. The below paragraphs describe the key differences between the Project and each of the alternatives by the environmental impact categories in Chapter 3 of this EIR.

#### 4.3.1 Land Use, Population, and Housing

The Land Use Element provides for the distribution, location and extent of uses of land for housing, business, industry, natural resources, open space, recreation, and other uses. The Element guides patterns of development for the County, providing a long-range context for decisions made regarding zoning, subdivision, and public works.

These land use policies guide growth and the development and use of land through 2030. The chapter covers population growth and land supply, urban and rural boundaries, development timing policies, and urban and rural development policies. Because of the importance of lands devoted to forest and agricultural uses, these topics are given extended policy treatment in the chapter, and are given separate treatment in this EIR (see Resource Lands discussion below).

The chapter describes the kinds, intensity, and location of planned uses, primarily through the General Plan Land Use Designation Map and the supporting descriptions of the land use classifications found in Section 4.8 of the Project.

#### Land Use Maps

The Land Use Maps for the Project are included in Appendix F of the General Plan Update. The Land Use Maps for the Plan Alternatives are at the following website

<http://www.co.humboldt.ca.us/gpu/documentsMaps.aspx>; both sets of maps are available at the Planning Division office (3015 H Street, Eureka, California, 95501).

The difference in the land use maps between the alternatives and the Project would largely be apparent in the maps themselves, as all three alternatives would use the same suite of land use designations. Alternative D would continue to utilize the land use designations from the previous general plan and community plans.

Alternative A and Alternative B encourage more development in urban areas within the boundaries of community service districts providing public sewer and/or water, with some provisions for logical extensions of those boundaries. As shown on the land use maps, more of the new development will occur in those areas compared to Alternatives C and D, and the Project.

The land use capacity estimates for housing units and commercial and industrial acreages are presented below in Table 4-1. Both the expected and maximum buildout figures are shown; the expected buildout reflects the buildout through the year 2030 based on historic development patterns, and the maximum buildout reflects what would happen if all the available land was developed to the maximum extent possible during that same timeframe. Population projections may be derived from the table by multiplying the number of housing units by 2.38, the average number of persons per household in the county in 2010.

### **Land Use and Development Estimates**

Existing land use conditions represent on-the-ground uses in 2008 as reported in County assessor's data. This EIR uses the existing land use conditions data as a baseline from which to determine environmental impacts of the proposed General Plan Update and its alternatives.

To project the density and intensity of development under Alternatives A, B, C, and D, two assumptions are made: (1) with the expected buildout figures, future development will occur at the same densities and intensities at which current land uses have developed; and (2) with the maximum buildout figures, all developable property will be developed by 2030.

#### **Expected vs. Maximum Buildout Estimates**

To estimate the expected buildout of population, dwelling units, and commercial space with the General Plan Update alternatives, the County used the midpoint of the permitted density/intensity range for each land use category multiplied by the estimated net developable acreage for that category, the acreage remaining after subtracting mapped physical constraints, such as flood areas, fault hazard areas, steep slopes and wetlands.

The use of the midpoint was based on an analysis of past developed patterns. Ultimate development in unincorporated Humboldt County tends to occur at the midpoint of the permitted General Plan density/intensity ranges. Values for residential units and commercial/industrial building square footage were generated for both the Project and the alternatives, and are used to describe the density and intensity of development in the environmental impact analysis described in Chapter 3 and in this Chapter.

Maximum Buildout estimates are also presented for each alternative and represent the highest theoretical amount of development that would be possible under each alternative. These estimates use the highest density and intensity allowed by the plan to predict buildout. The Maximum Buildout estimates generate substantially more dwelling units, commercial square footage, and population growth than the expected buildout of each alternative. Although it is extremely unlikely that maximum buildout could occur, such a scenario must be analyzed to demonstrate the highest possible level of environmental impact that could theoretically result from the Project and the alternatives.

**Table 4-1. Expected and Maximum Buildout Estimates By Alternative.**

Land Use Designation	Alternative A			Alternative B			Alternative C		
	Acres	Units		Acres	Units		Acres	Units	
		Expected	Max Buildout		Expected	Max Buildout		Expected	Max Buildout
<b>Residential</b>									
RM	617	2,568	13,859	679	2,589	15,390	743	2,639	16,374
RL	9,505	6,411	33,559	9,692	7,182	36,171	10,293	8,030	40,872
RE	10,281	441	1,672	12,342	527	2,302	14,276	784	5,630
RR	153,474	1,676	3,835	154,984	1,711	4,309	159,414	1,911	5,424
<b>Commercial</b>									
CG	363	0	213	369	0	223	436	0	258
CS	366	0	200	462	0	282	533	0	380
CR	1,437	0	711	1,521	0	942	1,563	0	1,111
<b>Mixed Use &amp; Urban Reserve</b>									
MU	405	19	625	323	11	452	8	0	4
VC	311	0	51	313	0	52	167	0	8
RCC	1,516	0	342	1,585	0	338	1,853	0	364
UR	111	1	1	362	4	4	265	2	2
<b>Industrial</b>									
IG or MG	1,686	0	0	1,768	0	0	2,078	0	0
IR	154	0	0	186	0	0	302	0	0
MC	553	0	0	934	0	0	960	0	0
MB	41	0	0	41	0	0	41	0	0
<b>Resource Production</b>									
T	888,277	2,501	6,472	883,234	4,603	19,430	881,967	4,562	19,378
AE	64,013	266	1,802	60,905	247	1,679	63,144	266	1,805
AG or AGR	402,475	2,193	5,036	406,707	2,269	6,997	397,469	2,490	17,452
<b>Open Space</b>									
CF	2,955	0	0	2,888	0	0	2,888	0	0
CFR	588	0	0	588	0	0	588	0	0
NR	9,195	0	0	9,157	0	0	9,157	0	0
OS	585	0	0	660	0	0	965	0	0
PF	2,870	0	0	2,870	0	0	2,864	0	0
P	567,481	0	0	566,858	0	0	567,168	0	0
PR	11,133	0	0	10,794	0	0	11,080	0	0
Other	127,432	0	0	127,603	0	0	127,603	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,257,824</b>	<b>16,076</b>	<b>68,378</b>	<b>2,257,824</b>	<b>19,143</b>	<b>88,571</b>	<b>2,257,824</b>	<b>20,684</b>	<b>109,062</b>

**Table 4-1 Expected and Maximum Buildout Estimates By Alternative** (continued)

Land Use Designation	Framework General Plan			Proposed General Plan Update		
	Acres	Units		Acres	Units	
		Expected	Max Buildout		Expected	Max Buildout
<b>Residential</b>						
RM	713	2,864	15,284	654	3,052	15,018
RL	10,084	6,351	32,012	9,878	7,081	37,219
RE	17,513	666	4,344	12,207	495	2,771
RR	156,289	1,916	6,960	153,845	1,716	4,806
<b>Commercial</b>						
CG	600	0	248	360	0	206
CS	547	0	344	516	0	343
CR	2,965	8	21	1,598	0	1,035
<b>Mixed Use &amp; Urban Reserve</b>						
MU	0	0	0	263	10	456
VC	235	8	123	267	13	81
RCC	1,396	15	41	1,788	68	741
UR	49	1	0	362	4	4
<b>Industrial</b>						
IG or MG	2,096	0	0	1,773	0	0
IR	240	0	0	199	0	0
MC	977	0	0	934	0	0
MB	29	0	0	41	0	0
<b>Resource Production</b>						
T	899,717	5,283	19,876	899,222	5,475	20,301
AE	59,465	218	1,925	74,991	334	2,191
AG	409,722	2,526	18,041	377,315	2,354	17,306
<b>Open Space</b>						
CF	1,411	0	0	3,462	0	0
CFR	428	0	0	0	0	0
NR	9,801	0	0	9,214	0	0
OS	52	0	0	646	0	0
PF	2,594	0	0	2,878	0	0
P	544,572	0	0	566,986	0	0
PR	8,871	0	0	10,785	0	0
Other	127,458	0	0	127,663	13	81
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,257,824</b>	<b>19,856</b>	<b>99,219</b>	<b>2,257,847</b>	<b>20,615</b>	<b>102,559</b>

### Growth Planning and Urban Land Use

The complete set of Growth Planning and Urban Land Use policy differences between the plan alternatives are presented in the Plan Alternative Comparison Chart for Urban Land Uses; the subset of policies that have environmental impacts are presented in Appendix V of this EIR. In summary, Alternative A has policy language that imposes more restrictions on new development, which will likely reduce environmental impacts in comparison to the Project and other alternatives. For example, Alternative A would not allow new development served by individual sewage disposal systems within areas served by public sewer:

**GP-P6.** (Alternative A) **Use of On-Site Sewage Systems for new development within Urban Development Areas.** The utilization of on-site sewage disposal systems for new development within the Urban Development Area shall not be acceptable.

The policy language for Alternative A is more restrictive than the Alternative B policy language, which is as follows:

**GP-P6.** (Alternative B) **Use of On-Site Sewage Systems for Subdivisions within Urban Development Areas.** The utilization of on-site sewage disposal systems shall not be acceptable for new subdivisions in the Urban Development Area, unless public sewer services are not available to serve the proposed subdivision and the local sewer service provider provides a written statement that the area is not planned for service in the service provider's Municipal Service Review and other written long-term plans.

In this instance, the Alternative A policy language would be expected to reduce water quality impacts from new development in urban areas by not allowing on-site individual sewage disposal systems because effluent contaminated with coliform bacteria is more likely to be carried into nearby creeks and rivers from on-site individual sewage disposal systems than from public sewer systems.

The policy language for the Project falls in between the two (2) alternatives described above, and is expected to have fewer water quality impacts from individual on-site sewage disposal systems than Alternative B, but more impacts than Alternative A:

**GP-P6.** (The Project) **Use of On-Site Sewage Systems within Urban Development Areas.** The utilization of on-site sewage disposal systems shall not be acceptable for new development including subdivisions in the Urban Development Area, unless the Planning Commission makes specific factual findings that: 1) the extension of services are physically infeasible; or 2) the area is not planned for service in the service provider's Municipal Service Review and other written long-term plans; or 3) the services are not reasonably available in a timely manner.

The policy for both Alternative C and D are the least protective of water quality:

**GP-P6.** (Alternative C and D version - 2633.4). Utilization of public water services should be encouraged in the urban development area.

Alternative A also contains policies better protecting historic structures (Policy UL-P9 Historic Structures), and better ensuring compatibility of new development with existing neighborhoods (UL-P12 Design Review and UL-P20 Landscaping) than the other alternatives and the Project. Further analysis comparing the impacts of the alternatives and the Project on water quality, historic resources, and neighborhood capacity is provided later in this chapter. The following charts help explain some of the other Growth Planning and Urban Land Use differences between the Plan Alternatives.

<b>Section 4.2 Growth Planning</b>				
<b>Key Topics and Issues</b>	<b>Alternative B</b>	<b>Existing Framework Plan (Alternative D)</b>	<b>Alternative A</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>
<p><b>Land Supply, Public Services and Infrastructure and Development Timing</b>                      The Plan must provide for a sufficient supply of developable land with adequate services to accommodate expected growth.</p> <p>Should growth be focused in and around existing infrastructure and services or should growth be more widely distributed without regard to the current location of services and infrastructure?</p> <p>How should increases in the supply of land to accommodate growth be timed with the expansion of public services and infrastructure?</p>	<p>Urban Development Boundaries, Urban Expansion Boundaries and Community Plans Areas are used to provide an adequate supply of land in proximity to services and infrastructure. Expansion of development areas is approved by the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors as land within development areas is consumed. (GP-P1 through GP-P9, GP-S4, GP-S8, and GP-IM1). Policies require use of public sewer and water (for new development) inside Urban Development Areas and prohibit sewer connections outside (GP-P2, P5, P8, P9). New subdivisions can be served with on-site septic if there are no plans to extend sewer service (GP-P6)</p>	<p>Roughly equivalent to B. Planning areas, such as Urban Development Area and Urban Expansion Area, originate in the Framework Plan, however, they have not been well defined in all communities. Utilization of public water is encourage but not required in Urban Development Areas (GP-P7).</p>	<p>Requires urban development to occur within Urban Development Areas (GP-P3). Relies on increasing urban densities and increasing land supply through expansion of Urban Development Areas as land within development areas is consumed (GP-9). Requires sewer and water service to all new development and subdivisions within Urban Development Areas (GP-6).</p>	<p>Alternative C does not use Urban Development or Expansion Areas to focus or time growth. Community Plan plan and zone designations for individual parcels create the supply of developable land. Plan and zone designations and individual property owner's interest in selling, subdividing and building would primarily dictate patterns of development.</p>
<p><b>Community Planning</b>                      Community Plans allow more direct citizen involvement and focused consideration of local land use issues.</p>	<p>Maintains community planning areas as a means of precise land planning, mapping and setting of growth boundaries and timing mechanisms (GP-P1--P7, GP-S1-S2, and GP-IM1). Changes in the proposed plan</p>	<p>Roughly equivalent to B. Proposed community planning areas are almost identical to those in existing Framework Plan. In practice,</p>	<p>Equivalent to B.</p>	<p>Equivalent to B.</p>

Section 4.2 Growth Planning				
Key Topics and Issues	Alternative B	Existing Framework Plan (Alternative D)	Alternative A	Alternative C
Should the Plan continue to support and facilitate the preparation and amendment of individual Community Plans?	have been designed to allow increased focus and brevity in community planning processes. Community Plan-specific policies are included as Appendix C.	individual community plans have become more comprehensive, time consuming and costly. This has been due, in part, to the lack of frequent updates of the Framework Plan,		

Section 4.3 Urban Lands				
Key Topics and Issues	Alternative B	Existing Framework Plan (Alternative D)	Alternative A	Alternative C
<p><b>Revitalization of Communities</b> Based on community input, the revitalization of developed communities for business expansion, residential growth, and renewed public investment in infrastructure and services should be one of the highest priorities of the Plan.</p> <p>Which incentives and regulations would encourage investment in developed communities?</p>	<p>Urban Development Area designations are used to identify preferred areas for business expansion, housing opportunities and investments in infrastructure (UL-P1).</p> <p>Includes streamlined approvals in core residential (UL-P2) and business areas (UL-P3), mixed-use zoning (UL-P6), and other policies to enhance core areas (UL-P4, -P7).</p>	<p>Development policies in the Framework Plan use plan and zone designations on individual properties and Community Plan Area designations to guide development. Framework policies do not directly address incentives and regulatory reform to promote the revitalization of communities.</p>	<p>Alternative A provides less incentives for streamlined regulatory approvals in Urban Development Areas to allow more comprehensive project by project review. Includes policy that would require a mix of uses in Mixed-Use zones to achieve a better balance between jobs and housing.</p>	<p>Alternative C includes similar streamlined approvals in core residential and business area.</p>

Section 4.3 Urban Lands				
Key Topics and Issues	Alternative B	Existing Framework Plan (Alternative D)	Alternative A	Alternative C
<p><b>Community Identity</b> Residents want new development to compliment the character of their communities.</p> <p>What is the appropriate mix of policies to maintain and enhance community character?</p> <p>Should the Plan provide for and/or encourage the use of mixed use areas?</p> <p>Should the Plan increase the level of design review for development, for example, streetscape appearance in business districts?</p>	<p>Promotes aesthetically appealing UDA's that preserve and enhance existing community character and provides for town centers to serve as community focal points (UL-G2, -G3, -G4; UL-P5, -P7, -P8, -P9, -P11, -P12).</p> <p>Includes provisions for mixed-use (MU) designation (UL-P6, -P7).</p> <p>Promotes preferred design concepts and design review through UL-P7, P10 -12, P15 -16, P20, UL-S6 and UL-IM8-9.</p>	<p>The Framework Plan does not address preserving existing community identity.</p> <p>Does not include a Mixed Use planned land use designation.</p> <p>Some treatment in Community Plans and design review areas.</p>	<p>The nature of community identity policies in Alternative A are similar to the proposed Plan.</p> <p>Applies the Mixed Use designation (through land use maps) more extensively than Alt B.</p> <p>Would extend design review to more commercial areas within Urban Development Areas through mapped overlay zones. Applies design review to Town Centers designation and major subdivisions within Urban Development Areas.</p>	<p>Would not require development design considerations related to community identify or aesthetics.</p> <p>Applies the MU designation less extensively than Alt B.</p> <p>Would not require design review for development.</p>

Section 4.3 Urban Lands				
Key Topics and Issues	Alternative B	Existing Framework Plan (Alternative D)	Alternative A	Alternative C
The Board requested that the Plan address big box development and adult entertainment. What are the appropriate policies for these uses?	Includes policies, standards, and recommended implementation for big box and adult entertainment uses (UL-P13, -P14, -S4, -S5, -IM13, -IM14).	Not specifically addressed.	Same as Alt. B (differences would be within ordinance.)	Would not establish additional regulations for Big Box uses.

A complete listing of the policy differences between the Plan Alternatives and the Project is contained in Appendix V of this EIR.

## Rural Land Use

All the policy differences between the plan alternatives are presented in the Plan Alternative Comparison Chart for Rural Land Uses; the subset of policies that have environmental impacts are presented in Appendix V of this EIR. In general, Alternative A, in comparison to Alternative B, has more restrictive policy language for policies RL-P2 - Water Withdrawal and RL-S4 Subdivision Standards, and includes the implementation measure RL-IMx - Decrease Inventory of Rural Residential Lands.

Because of this policy language, Alternative A would have fewer impacts on water quality than the other alternatives by ensuring new discretionary development does not impact streams through water withdrawal and subdivisions, and by reducing the number of new residential units dependent on in-stream water sources for domestic water supply.

Alternative C, on the other hand, includes implementation measures RL-IMx - Increase Inventory of Rural Residential Lands, and RL-IMxx - Rural Residential Development Incentives. These policies would likely have greater impacts on water quality than the alternatives because it would increase the number of new residential units dependent on in-stream water sources for domestic water supply. Alternative D would continue the existing Framework Plan policies on rural lands which do not address some key rural land use issues identified for the General Plan Update, such as water withdrawal, subdivision standards, clustering rural residential development and road constraints in rural areas.

Alternative A has 6.2% less commercial land than Alternative D and Alternative C has 11.8% more commercial land than Alternative D. Alternative A, B and C all have less industrial lands than Alternative D, reflecting the long-standing decline in the industrial timber sector. However, Alternative C has more industrial lands than Alternative B, while Alternative A has less industrial lands than Alternative B.

The acreage of rural residential land use is significantly greater for Alternative C, but decreased in Alternatives A and B, with Alternative A having the least amount of land with this designation. Residential medium density is increased for Alternatives A, B, and C over Alternative D, with Alternative C having 34.3% more, Alternative B having 21.1% more and Alternative A having 8.8% more. Alternatives A, B, and C all have a net decrease in timberlands compared to Alternative D, but these decreases are partially offset by transfers from agricultural land use to timber land use. Alternative C has the greatest decrease in timber land use (12,282 acres) followed by Alternative B (7,490 acres), with Alternative A having the least decrease (4,736 acres). The decreases in agricultural and timber land uses not related to transfers to public uses are to allow for greater residential development under each of the alternatives.

The following chart helps explain the Rural Land policy differences between the Plan Alternatives.

<b>Section 4.4 Rural Lands</b>				
<b>Key Topics and Issues</b>	<b>Alternative B</b>	<b>Existing Framework Plan (Alternative D)</b>	<b>Alternative A</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>
<p><b>Adequate supply of lands planned Rural Residential</b>                      An adequate supply of land for rural living is critical to support rural lifestyles and culture, provide opportunities for growth for successive generations and people moving into the County, and to support the County's economy and rural town centers.</p> <p>Is the current inventory of vacant rural residential lands adequate for future rural development?</p> <p>Should the County re-zone lower quality agricultural and timber production lands to increase the inventory of lands planned for rural residential uses?</p>	<p>Establishes an implementation program to review the inventory of rural residential lots during the Housing Element update (every five years) to make sure the inventory is adequate for future growth (RL-IM1).</p> <p>Would inventory and map substandard rural roads to determine areas where development is constrained by substandard roads. Would establish overlay zones to reflect identified constraints (RL-IM2).</p>	<p>The Framework Plan does not contain a requirement for review of rural residential lots as a part of the Housing Element update.</p> <p>Standards for subdivision of rural lands are similar to those found in Alt. B (2554.9).</p>	<p>Inventory and road mapping policies equivalent to Alt. B. A plan and zoning program would decrease the availability of rural residential lands for homestead development (RL-IMx).</p>	<p>Rural residential lots would be mapped and inventoried as in Alt. B (RL-IM1). A plan and zoning program would increase the availability of rural residential lands for homestead development (RL-IMx). Incentives for residential development of rural residential lands would be developed (RL-IMxx). A Capital Improvement Program would be initiated to expand and improve the rural road system.</p>

<b>Section 4.4 Rural Lands</b>				
<b>Key Topics and Issues</b>	<b>Alternative B</b>	<b>Existing Framework Plan (Alternative D)</b>	<b>Alternative A</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>
<p><b>Compatibility of rural residential uses and commercial resource production.</b> Conflicts can occur between lands planned for commercial resource extractive uses and rural residential uses that can impact the profitability and viability of agriculture and timber production.</p> <p>Which policies are effective in maintaining profitable agricultural and timber production adjacent to lands planned primarily for rural homesteads?</p>	<p>Development on rural residential lands must be planned to be compatible with agriculture and timber production (RL-S1).</p> <p>Clustered development would be promoted to protect resource lands (RL-P7) and all rural subdivisions would need to be evaluated for compatibility with continued resource productivity (RL-S1), requiring a Right to Harvest or Farm agreement.</p> <p>Requires commercial development to be located in developed areas such as rural community centers unless the development is rural in nature, e.g., retreat or camp, or meets rural cottage industry standards (RL-P3).</p>	<p>The Framework Plan does not contain policies that advocate clustering houses.</p> <p>Encourages commercial development to be located in developed areas (RL-P3 -2554.6)</p>	<p>The same policies as Alt. B.</p>	<p>Alt. C does not require that development on rural residential lands be planned to be compatible with agriculture and timber production (RL-S1).</p> <p>Does not restrict the location of commercial development.</p>

<b>Section 4.4 Rural Lands</b>				
<b>Key Topics and Issues</b>	<b>Alternative B</b>	<b>Existing Framework Plan (Alternative D)</b>	<b>Alternative A</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>
<p><b>Carrying capacity of rural lands, wild land fire risks and public service costs.</b>                      Water withdrawal, habitat fragmentation, sediment discharge to waterways, introduction of ignition sources and deficiencies in road maintenance can accompany rural residential development. Traditional regulatory approaches to protect public health and safety and minimize environmental impacts are often viewed as inappropriate infringement on rural property owner's rights and property values.</p> <p>Is there a need for local land use regulation and permitting systems in rural residential areas?</p> <p>What practices or programs would increase the sustainability of rural development given anticipated increased in rural populations?</p>	<p>Policies and standards guide the division of rural residential lands so that future development will not be subject to adverse impacts from geologic instability, flooding or fire and would require adequate access, water, and sewage disposal for future development (RL-P4, RL-P5 and RL-S4). The Plan would allow for clustered rural development that provides a density bonus when significant permanent land dedications are secured (RL-P7). Future subdivisions and zone changes in rural residential areas must evaluate the cumulative impacts of water withdrawals and on-site septic systems (RL-P2). Changes in zoning density and subdivision approvals require road improvements to minimum County standards at time of subdivision or incrementally as future development occurs. (RL-P5).</p>	<p>Cumulative impacts of water withdrawals and sewage disposal evaluated for zone changes only. (RL-P2 – 2553.7) Changes in zoning should reflect road constraints (RL-P5 – 2554.8). Requirements for subdivisions to meet minimum county road standards contained in FRMK 2554.9 and the subdivision ordinance.</p>	<p>Cumulative impacts of water withdrawals and on-site septic systems evaluated for subdivisions, zone changes and discretionary development (RL-P2). Same as Alt. B for road improvements.</p>	<p>Rural commercial uses would be expanded to areas outside of Rural Community Centers and Community Planning Areas (RL-P3), and subdivision requirements would be less restrictive, similar to the existing Framework Plan (2554.9).</p> <p>Same as Alt. D for analysis of cumulative impacts of water withdrawals and sewage disposal. Same as Alt. D for evaluation of rural road constraints.</p>

A complete listing of the policy differences between the Plan Alternatives and the Project is contained in Appendix V of this EIR.

### 4.3.2 Agricultural and Timberland Resources

As discussed above, Alternative A retains more land in agricultural and timberland uses and allows less housing to be built on such lands than the Project and Alternative B. Therefore, based on the land use map designations, Alternative A is more protective of resource production land use than the Project and Alternative B, and would result in less irreversible conversion of such lands to other uses.

Conversely Alternative C retains less land in agricultural and timberland uses and allows more housing to be built on such lands than the Project and Alternative A and B, and therefore is less protective of resource production land use than the Project and Alternative A and B, and would result in more irreversible conversion of such lands to other uses. Alternative D designates more land for agricultural and timberland use than the Project and the other alternatives, but this is primarily due to transfers of timberlands to public open space uses, which are not accounted for in Alternative D. These transfers have already occurred, so there are no practical benefits to the conservation of agriculture and timberland on the land use maps for Alternative D compared to the other alternatives. With new development in the future, Alternative D allows more housing to be built on such lands than the Project and Alternative A and B, and therefore is less protective of resource production land use than the Project and Alternative A and B.

Alternative A has stronger policies for preservation of agricultural and timber lands than the other alternatives, including the Project. For example, Agricultural Standard S1 contains the following language preventing subdivision of agricultural lands:

**AG-S1. (Alternative A) Subdivision of Ranchlands (AGR) and Agricultural Exclusive (AE) Lands.** No further subdivision of lands planned AGR and AE unless the subdivision is necessary for the protection of cultural resources or to mitigate impacts of public acquisition.

This policy is more protective than the policy in other alternatives and the Project:

**AG-S1. (Project) Subdivision of Planned Agricultural Exclusive (AE) Lands.** Within areas designated AE, no agricultural land division will be approved whereby any parcel thusly created will be less than 60 acres.

**AG-S1. (Alternative B and C) Subdivision of Planned Agricultural Exclusive (AE) Lands.** Within areas designated AE, no agricultural land division will be approved whereby any parcel thusly created will be less than 60 acres. However, divisions of these agricultural lands to a minimum size of 20 acres may be approved if the Planning Commission finds that the division is necessary for a specific agricultural purpose (e.g., to provide for a separate starter farm for a family member), and the division will not adversely affect the area's agricultural economy or environmental resources. The rezoning and parcel map may be approved only upon satisfaction of all of the following conditions:

- A. Conveyance of a permanent agricultural easement to the County of Humboldt or other public entity or private non-profit corporation, having as its chief goal the preservation of agricultural or open space lands.
- B. Conveyance of development rights beyond those necessary for agricultural purposes.
- C. Recorded acknowledgment that, although the new parcel is of a size below that considered a viable economic agricultural unit, its creation was approved for a specific agricultural purpose, and no further division or other conversion from agricultural use, except to other open space or habitat restoration use, will be allowed in the future even if agricultural use of such separate parcel does not provide adequate economic return.

**AG-S1. (Alternative D) 2722.3 Minimum Parcel Size:** Sixty (60) acres minimum parcel size, except that divisions to 20 acres may be permitted where the parcel is subject to an agricultural preserve contract or agreement. The total number of building sites shall not exceed a density of one dwelling unit per 20 acres. A use permit or special permit shall be required where a density of more than one

dwelling unit per parcel is sought, except that 40 acres or larger agriculture parcels zoned Agriculture Exclusive (AE) will be allowed two single family farm dwellings as a principal use. Total homesite coverage shall not exceed two acres for both dwellings and accessory structures. (Res. 89-106, 6-27-89).

By limiting the subdivision of agricultural lands, Alternative A keeps agricultural lands in larger parcel sizes, which facilitates their use for agricultural purposes. Alternative A also includes a Ranchland designation (AGR), which has a density range of one (1) unit per 160 – 600 acres, which would also tend to keep agricultural areas mapped with this designation intact with larger parcel sizes than the other alternatives.

Alternative A includes additional policies for preventing agricultural land conversion, loss of agricultural productivity and conflicts from un-permitted development (AG-P15. Compliance with Regulations), protection of agricultural soils (AG-P16. Protect Productive Agricultural Soils), and recognition of substandard parcels (AG-P17. Substandard Legal Parcels).

Policy options for Plan Alternative C impose the least restrictions on development, and are the least protective of agricultural and timberland. For example, Alternative C contains a policy supporting the conversion of agricultural lands to non-agricultural use where continued agricultural production is deemed not to be economically feasible is included (AG-P6). Alternative C also contains allowances for second residences on agricultural lands regardless of density standards (AG-P18).

Alternative D, the existing 1984 Framework Plan, is somewhat more protective of agricultural and timberlands than Alternative C, but less protective than Alternatives A and B, and the Project.

The Project has mixed impacts on the protection of agricultural and timberlands compared to Alternative B. While it contains some stronger protections in its policies and standards than Alternative B, including Standard S-1 shown above, it deletes the Ranchland designation from the land use maps, increasing the likelihood these properties will be subdivided, so it is less protective than Alternative B in that way.

The following chart helps explain the key differences between the Plan Alternatives in their treatment of agricultural and timberlands.

**Section 4.5 Agricultural Resources**

Key Topics and Issues	Alternative B	Existing Framework Plan (Alternative D)	Alternative A	Alternative C
<p><b>Stable Land Base</b> The long-term sustainability of Humboldt’s agricultural economy hinges on the continued profitability of agricultural operations and the availability of farm land. Conversion of agriculture lands to other uses, such as rural residential and natural resources preservation, can negatively impact the agricultural industry as a whole.</p> <p>What blend of policies will provide the most protection for agricultural lands with the least impact on property values.</p>	<p>Subdivision of agricultural land requires specific findings and residential subdivision of Agricultural Exclusive (AE) lands would not be allowed (AG-P5). Conversion of prime agricultural lands must include offsetting protections so there is no net loss (AG-P6). The Right-to-Farm Notice would continue to be used to protect producers from nuisance complaints from neighbors (AG-P8).</p>	<p>Does not contain policies that allow clustering of houses. Protects resource lands by advocating infill and establishing logical boundaries between urban and resource production areas using plan and zone designations. Includes an annual reporting requirement for the conversion of agricultural lands to other uses (2523.2 and 5-2520.1).</p>	<p>Includes a planned rural development program (AG-P1). Contains development timing polices to control conversion of agricultural land for urban expansion and prohibits conversion for other purposes (AG-P5). Includes explicit permitting compliance program (AG-Px). Explicit protection of prime soils (AG-Pxx). Generally, no further subdivisions on lands planned AE and AGR would be allowed (AG-P5, AG-S1).</p>	<p>Allows conversion of agricultural lands if found consistent with public interests (AG-G2) Does not include planned rural development and clustering program. Provides conversions of resource lands to residential outside of Community Planning Areas when agricultural production is not economically feasible (AG-P6). Second residential units would be allowed conditionally regardless of density standards. Allows subdivision of agricultural lands for non-production purposes (AG-S3).</p>
<p><b>Economic Viability of Ag Lands and Land Use Programs</b> While agriculture is one of the most enduring industries in Humboldt county, operators are facing increasing challenges to maintain economically viable</p>	<p>Includes a planned rural development program that provides a density bonus when residential development is clustered and located on the least productive areas in exchange for permanent protection on the remainder. Can</p>	<p>Supports the Williamson Act Program (AG-P3 - 5-2520.3). Supports Predator Control program (AG-P9 - 2523.5) and vegetation management (AG-P11 - 2523.6) Promotes economic parcel sizes (AG-P13 - 2523.4 and</p>	<p>Similar to B. Explicitly adds research of a Transfer of Development Rights program and a carbon sequestration program into the County agricultural land conservation program (AG-IM2).</p>	<p>Fewer restrictions on agricultural conversion and subdivision can increase agricultural property values and sales (AG-G2, AG-P6, AG-S3). Support for Williamson Act Program AG-P3) and supplemental farm</p>

Key Topics and Issues	Alternative B	Existing Framework Plan (Alternative D)	Alternative A	Alternative C
<p>operations. The long-term sustainability of the agricultural land base and industry depends on continued commercial profitability.</p> <p>What measures can the County take to increase the long-term profitability of agricultural land management and production?</p>	<p>allow fractional sale of ranchland while maintaining overall productivity (AG-P1). Supports voluntary sale of residential development rights (AG-P2). Continues support for Williamson Act program (AG-P3). Supports supplemental farm income from activities compatible with agriculture (AG-P4). Supports continued agricultural production of lands under easement or purchased by a public agency (AG-P7). Includes a policy to seek advice from the farm community on planning projects near agricultural lands (Ag-P12). Includes program to brand and market local agricultural products (AG-IM7).</p>	<p>2523.9). Supported adoption of the "Right to Farm" ordinance. Supports public services for the agricultural industry (2523.11).</p>		<p>income AG-P4.</p>

<b>Section 4.6 Forest Resources</b>				
<b>Key Topics and Issues</b>	<b>Alternative B</b>	<b>Existing Framework Plan (Alternative D)</b>	<b>Alternative A</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>
<p><b>State and Federal Regulatory Issues</b>                      High regulatory costs for timber harvesting can have the unintended consequence of promoting the conversion of Timberlands to potentially more environmentally harmful residential uses. Increased regulatory efficiency for timber harvesting may yield lower process and compliance costs with little or no loss in environmental performance.</p> <p>Should the County advocate for improved state and federal regulatory efficiency as a means to support continued timber harvesting as the primary land use in Timberlands (T)?</p>	<p>Defers timber harvest reviews to CAL FIRE unless significant land use conflicts require input from the County (FR-P2). Provides policy guidance to the Board of Supervisors for state and federal regulatory issues to support fewer more effective and lower-cost timber regulation to maintain forestlands in timber production (FR-P3). Provides specific support for broader use of NTMP's for multiple land owners to help reduce permitting costs (FR-P4). Requires periodic review of County policy and the Forest Practices Act to promote compatibility (FR-IM8 and IM9). Supports CAL FIRE's plans to increase regulatory efficiency and productivity of timberlands (FR-P1).</p>	<p>Provides policy guidance to "encourage the long-term management of timberlands" (2514.1).</p> <p>Supports the use of forest improvement programs (2514.4) and more local control for rezoning of lands in TPZ (5-2510.5).</p>	<p>Same as Alternative B.</p>	<p>Same as Alt. B except policy FR-P2. Alternative C defers all Timber Harvest Plan reviews to CAL FIRE.</p>
<p><b>Stable Land Base</b>                      Lands planned with a Timberland (T) designation are arguably the County's greatest long-term economic asset for creation of employment and wealth.</p>	<p>Establishes timber production as the primary use of Timberlands (T) and regulates the impacts of residential use (FR-P8, FR-P9). Supports removal of lands from TPZ designation on substandard</p>	<p>Regulates residential use through rural development standards (Section 2550) and does not contain a policy for sub-standard TPZ</p>	<p>Establishes an Industrial Timber (IT) designation for large contiguous timberland holdings and increases restrictions on</p>	<p>Generally avoids restrictions on residential use in Timberlands (T) and would not require analysis or mitigation of impacts. Allows</p>

<b>Section 4.6 Forest Resources</b>				
<b>Key Topics and Issues</b>	<b>Alternative B</b>	<b>Existing Framework Plan (Alternative D)</b>	<b>Alternative A</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>
<p>Acquisition of Timberlands by public agencies has had the largest impact to this land base; increasing conservation values but decreasing timber production. Looking forward, continued declines in timber profitably and demand for rural homesteads has the potential to further decrease economic productivity.</p> <p>What can the County do to maintain the commercial viability of Timberlands so they continue to attract the investment necessary for logging and sustained timber production?</p> <p>Should the County be involved in managing the impacts of residential use of Timberland?</p>	<p>lots when residential use is the primary use and timber production is secondary (FR-P10). Includes a Planned Rural Development program that provides a density bonus when residential development is clustered and located on the least productive areas in exchange for permanent protection on the remainder (FR-P13). Supports tax incentive programs, such as TPZ and voluntary purchase of Conservation Easements (FR-P6 and P15). Supports funding for Forest Improvement Programs (FR-P5) and development of programs to promote the use of bio-mass for energy or carbon storage (FR-P7, FR-IM2). Allows subdivisions to minimum parcel size to improve site productivity (FR-S4). Repeals existing Merger Ordinance (FR-IM4). Does not provide for second units as an allowable use.</p>	<p>parcels. Does not include a Planned Rural Development program or policies that advocate clustering houses. Advocates for the protection of forestlands by utilizing TPZ zoning according to statutory requirements (2514.1) and utilizing forest improvement programs as a mechanism to protect forestlands (2514.4). Allows second units for caretakers (2721.6). Allows subdivisions to minimum parcel size to improve site productivity with an approved Joint Timber Management Plan (Sec 5-2510.4)</p>	<p>residential development and subdivisions (FR-P8, FR-P9, FR-S4). No residential subdivisions would be allowed for lands planned IT (FR-S6). Supports voluntary conservation easement programs and possible acquisition and management of community forests by the County (FR-P15, IM-3). Does not repeal Merger Ordinance (FR-IM4). Alternative A would extend support to homesteads in Timberlands (T) only when they are managed under a Non-Industrial Timber Management Plan (FR-P5). Provides an Implementation measure to remove substandard parcels from TPZ (FR-IMxx)</p>	<p>lot-line adjustments to facilitate residential development (FP-11). Allows Timberland subdivisions that do not improve site productivity (FR-S4). Provides for increased housing in Timberlands through second residences and by reducing the standards for compatibility with timber production (FR-Sx). Alternative C does not include a policy to support innovative development of forest programs such as bio-mass for energy or revenue for carbon credits (FR-P7).</p>
<b>Conflicts of Land Use in the Forest-Residential Interface</b>	Recommends the establishment of a Forestland-	Does not include land use policies to	Also recommends the establishment of	Also recommends the establishment of

<b>Section 4.6 Forest Resources</b>				
<b>Key Topics and Issues</b>	<b>Alternative B</b>	<b>Existing Framework Plan (Alternative D)</b>	<b>Alternative A</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>
<p><b>Areas (“FRI zone”)</b> The area where houses and undeveloped forestlands meet can be a focal point for conflict between residential and resource land uses.</p> <p>Should the County implement development standards to address potential use conflicts?</p>	<p>Residential Interface (FRI) overlay zone to help resolve use conflicts between residential uses and timber production (FR-P17). The FRI zone would be mapped around Rural Community Centers and Community Planning Areas (FR-IM7).</p>	<p>resolve conflicts between residential and timber production uses.</p>	<p>a Forestland-Residential Interface (FRI) overlay zone to help resolve use conflicts between residential uses and timber production (FR-P17). The FRI zone would be mapped around all residentially zoned areas next to resource lands (FR-IM7).</p>	<p>a Forestland-Residential Interface (FRI) overlay zone to help resolve use conflicts between residential uses and timber production (FR-P17). The FRI zone would be mapped around Community Planning Areas only (FR-IM7).</p>
<p><b>Infrastructure and Public Services</b> Continued timber production requires reliable road access and wild land fire suppression. Residential uses additionally require police, structural fire and emergency medical services.</p> <p>What level of road maintenance and public services should the County provide to support continued timber production and residential uses of Timberlands?</p>	<p>Advocates for a public road system to support the transportation of logs and forest products in the rural areas (FR-P19, FR-IM11). Also provides a policy to avoid locating public improvements and utilities on lands zoned TPZ where the project will adversely affect timber production (FR-P14).</p>	<p>Generally the same as Alternative B (2514.5 and 2514.2).</p>	<p>Same as Alternative B.</p>	<p>Broadens road maintenance to support residential uses (FR-IM11). Supports extension of 911 initiated police, structural fire and emergency services to Timberlands (T) containing residential uses (FR-IMx).</p>

A complete listing of the policy differences between the Plan Alternatives and the Project is contained in Appendix V of this EIR.

### 4.3.3 Air Quality

The County is in non-attainment status for only one air pollutant monitored by the State – PM<sub>10</sub> which is comprised of fine particulate matter, such as dust and smoke. There are numerous sources of PM<sub>10</sub> emissions the most significant ones are related to vehicles; unpaved road dust contributes 47% of the total. Development allowed under all the Plan alternatives is projected to lead to increases in the number of vehicle trips and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) by Humboldt County residents, which in turn will result in increased PM<sub>10</sub> emissions, primarily due to the fine dust raised by interaction of tires and the road surface, rather than increased tailpipe emissions. A cleaner vehicle fleet in the future will largely offset increases in tailpipe emissions. The emphasis on development in more outlying areas with Alternative C will likely increase PM<sub>10</sub> emissions from vehicle miles traveled on unpaved roads more than with Alternatives A and B. Also, Alternatives A and B are expected to result in fewer motor vehicle trips and corresponding lower PM<sub>10</sub> emissions as a more compact form of development is more easily served by alternative modes of transportation, such as public transit.

#### Alternative A

The compact form of development encouraged by land use maps under Alternative A would likely result in fewer vehicle trips and shorter trips than the Project and each of the other Plan Alternatives. All of the policies standards and implementation measures that would be more protective of air quality in Alternative A are included in the Project. The key policies are listed below:

- AQ-P1. Reduce Length and Frequency of Vehicle Trips.** Reduce the length and frequency of vehicle trips through land use and transportation policies by encouraging mixed-use development, compact development patterns in areas served by public transit, and alternative modes of travel.
- AQ-P6. Buffering Land Uses.** During environmental review of discretionary commercial and industrial projects, consider the use of buffers between new sources of emissions and adjacent land uses to minimize exposure to air pollution.
- AQ-S1. Construction and Grading Dust Control.** Ground disturbing construction and grading shall employ fugitive dust control strategies to prevent visible emissions from exceeding NCAQMD opacity regulations and prevent public nuisance. Projects requiring discretionary review that result in ground disturbance exceeding one acre at any one time shall prepare a fugitive dust control plan.
- AQ-Sx. Evaluate Greenhouse Gas Emission Impacts.** During environmental review of large scale residential, commercial and industrial projects, include an assessment of the project's GHG emissions, and require feasible mitigation consistent with best practices documented by the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association in their 2008 white paper "CEQA & Climate Change" or successor documents.

Section 10.4 of the Open Space Element (Mineral Resources) of the General Plan Update includes the following new implementation measure, which addresses air quality and other impacts associated with surface mining in areas with naturally occurring asbestos:

- MR-IM5. Coordination with the Air Quality Management District.** The County shall coordinate with the North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District during discretionary review of proposed mining operations in ultramafic rock areas with naturally occurring asbestos to develop asbestos control plans for the duration of quarrying activities.

**Alternative B**

The development pattern shown on the land use maps for Alternative B is more dispersed than Alternative A, so it is expected to increase both the number and length of motor vehicle trips compared to Alternative A. The resulting increase in air emissions from paved and unpaved road dust would likely adversely impact air quality more than Alternative A.

The policies, standards and implementation measures for Alternative B are somewhat less protective than those for Alternative A and the Project, and would result in more air quality impacts.

**Alternative C**

The expanded development pattern shown on the land use maps for Alternative C is expected to increase both the number and length of motor vehicle trips compared to Alternatives A, B and the Project. The resulting increase in air emissions from paved and unpaved road dust would likely significantly adversely impact air quality more than the other alternatives.

Alternative C does not contain the policies and implementation measures cited above which are protective of air quality, so there would be greater air quality impacts resulting from the policies in Alternative C as well.

**Alternative D**

The land use maps for Alternative D, the existing 1984 Framework Plan, show a less dispersed development pattern than Alternative C, resulting in fewer air quality impacts from both the number and length of motor vehicle trips. However, the development pattern under Alternative D is more dispersed than under Alternative A, B and the Project, so it would have comparatively greater impacts on air quality from both the number and length of motor vehicle trips.

Alternative D does not contain the policies and implementation measures cited above which are protective of air quality, so there would be greater air quality impacts resulting from the policies in Alternative D as well. The following chart helps explain the key differences between the alternatives in their approach toward reducing air quality impacts.

<b>Chapter 15 Air Quality Element</b>				
<b>Key Topics and Issues</b>	<b>Alternative B</b>	<b>Existing Framework Plan (Alternative D)</b>	<b>Alternative A</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>
<p><b>Overall Air Quality</b> The county meets all federal standards for air quality and all state standards except for one pollutant—airborne particles that are 10 microns in diameter and smaller (PM<sub>10</sub>), which are from a variety of sources. Should the County actively seek to reduce PM<sub>10</sub> emissions? What policies, standards and implementation measures are most effective at reducing PM<sub>10</sub> emissions? More attention is being paid to air quality impacts from mining rock containing asbestos. Should the County adopt requirements to minimize air quality impacts from mining rock containing asbestos?</p>	<p>The proposed Plan seeks to reduce PM<sub>10</sub> emissions throughout the County by reducing the length and frequency of automobile trips (AQ-P1), coordinating with the North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District (NCUAQMD) in the review of projects that may have significant PM<sub>10</sub> emissions impacts (AQ-P4, P5, P-7, S1, S2, IM1, IM2), and supporting incentives to minimize PM<sub>10</sub> emissions from woodstoves and fireplaces (AQ-P3), and requiring a fugitive dust control plan for projects that involve grading of two (2) acres or more (AQ-S1).</p>	<p>The Framework General Plan had a policy to evaluate new commercial and industrial sources of emissions using analytical methods and significance criteria approved by the District. There was also reference to a possible future limit on wood burning fireplaces.</p>	<p>Alternative A requires fugitive dust control plans for projects with one (1) acre of disturbance.</p> <p>Alternative A includes an implementation measure to apply a Mineral Resources zone overlay to existing rock quarries mining and transporting rock containing asbestos. The standards will protect residential uses near the mining operations and along the haul routes from air quality impacts</p>	<p>Alternative C would control PM<sub>10</sub> emissions through the referral of projects requiring environmental review to the NCUAQMD for recommendations. Fugitive dust control measures would be consistent with those required by the NCUAQMD.</p>

Chapter 15 Air Quality Element				
Key Topics and Issues	Alternative B	Existing Framework Plan (Alternative D)	Alternative A	Alternative C
<p><b>Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emission Reductions.</b> The state is requiring reductions in GHG emissions from local government actions. These actions include reducing energy use, waste, water use, transportation emissions, and improving energy efficiency in new development through siting and design considerations.</p> <p>Should the County take a leadership role to develop and implement a multi-jurisdictional Climate Action Plan to achieve reductions in greenhouse gas emissions?</p> <p>What GHG reduction measures should be included in the Climate Action Plan?</p> <p>Should the County implement measures to sequester carbon on forest and agricultural lands?</p>	<p>The proposed Plan would put the County in a leadership role in reducing GHG emissions. A centerpiece of the new Element is adoption of a Climate Action Plan (AQ-P9). Policy AQ-P10 proposes the County will reduce its 2020 GHG emissions from governmental operations to less than 2003 levels. Other proposed policies will increase solar-electric capacity of new development (AQ-P12), increase energy efficiency of new buildings (AQ-P13), and better accommodating electric vehicles (AQ-P14).</p> <p>The Element recognizes that increasing carbon storage on timber and agricultural lands may be the County's most effective means to combat global warming. Policy AQ-P11 would have the County provide incentives for increased carbon sequestration on forest lands and encourage the use of forest biomass for sustainable energy generation.</p>	<p>The existing plan does not contain any policies, standards or programs addressing climate change or GHG emissions. There are policies in the Housing Element encouraging energy efficient siting and construction techniques.</p>	<p>Alternative A takes the policies, standards and implementation measures of Alternative B a step further in reducing GHG emissions by evaluating the impacts of new large scale residential, commercial and industrial projects, and requiring feasible mitigation. Alternative A would also establish a voluntary Transfer of Development Rights program to reduce GHG emissions from new rural development by relocating it into areas with public water and sewer.</p>	

A complete listing of the policy differences between the Plan Alternatives and the Project is contained in Appendix V of this EIR.

### 4.3.4 Biological Resources

Development allowed under all the Plan alternatives is likely to have significant effects on biological resources because of scale and scope, which includes accommodating 20 years of countywide growth. On a comparative basis, Alternative A is expected to have substantially less impacts to biological resources for a variety of reasons. Alternative A proposes less development, and substantially less development on large areas of the county's resource production lands. Alternative A retains larger parcel sizes and reduces fragmentation of land holdings, which in turn is expected to reduce habitat fragmentation and modification. Alternative A's policies are more protective of riparian habitats and wetlands, and implementation of Alternative A is less likely to interfere with wildlife movement or to impede wildlife corridors or to disturb nursery sites.

Conversely, Alternative C is expected to have substantially more impacts than Alternatives A, B, or D. It proposes more development, and substantially more development on large areas of the county, and offers fewer policy protections to offset the impacts of the additional development potential. Alternative D, continuing the current plan, would be expected to have slightly higher impacts to biological resources than implementing the Project, substantially higher impacts than Alternative A, and slightly lower impacts than Alternative C, based on the relative amount of development allowed and the relative strength of its resource protection policies. Alternative B would be expected to have slightly higher impacts to biological resources than implementing the Project, substantially higher impacts than Alternative A, and substantially lower impacts than Alternative C, based on the relative amount of development allowed and the relative strength of its resource protection policies.

#### Alternative A

Alternative A includes additional prescriptions and restrictions in defined resource areas. In wetland and wetland buffer areas, a prescribed list of uses is included. As well, streamside management areas and stream channels are more limited in allowed uses, particularly with respect to the removal of vegetation. For example, the following policies, standards and implementation measures have wording specific for Alternative A which is more protective than that of Alternatives B or C:

**BP-P8. Oak Woodlands.** Oak woodlands shall be protected through the review and conditioning of discretionary projects to minimize avoidable impacts to functional capacity and aesthetics.

**BR-P9. Invasive Plant Species.** The County shall recommend measures to minimize the introduction of noxious and exotic invasive plant species in landscaping, grading and major vegetation clearing activities.

**BR-S1. Development Excluded from Sensitive Habitat Policies.** Proposed development occurring within areas containing sensitive habitats shall be subject to the conditions and requirements of this chapter except for these exclusions (which do not preempt other County regulations or those of other agencies):

- A. Timber management and harvest activities under a timber harvesting plan or non-industrial timber management plan, or activities exempt from local regulation as per California Public Resources Code 4516.5(f). These standards shall not be used to reduce buffers specified under the State Forest Practice Act.
- B. Any area proposed for development, which upon examination of the biological resource maps and field inspection is not actually within or does not contain the indicated habitat.

- C. Forest management activities that are needed to improve timber productivity regulated by CAL FIRE, which are otherwise consistent with this chapter.

**BR-S5. Streamside Management Areas Defined.** Streamside Management Areas (SMA) are identified and modified as follows:

- A. Areas specifically mapped as SMA and Wetland (WR) Combining Zones, subject to verification and adjustment pursuant to site-specific biological reporting and review procedures.
- B. For areas not specifically mapped as SMA and Wetland (WR) Combining Zones and outside of Urban Development and Expansion Areas, the outer boundaries of the SMA shall be defined as:
  - 1) Consistent with the Forest Practice Rule stream buffer widths.
  - 2) 150 feet, measured as the horizontal distance from the stream transition line on either side of perennial streams.
  - 3) 50 feet, measured as the horizontal distance from the stream transition line on either side of intermittent streams.
- C. For areas not specifically mapped as SMA and Wetland (WR) Combining Zones and inside of Urban Development and Expansion Areas, the outer boundaries of the SMA shall be defined as:
  - 1) 75 feet, measured as the horizontal distance from the stream transition line on either side of perennial streams.
  - 2) 25 feet, measured as the horizontal distance from the, stream transition line on either side of intermittent streams.
- D. The width of Streamside Management Areas shall be expanded as necessary to include significant areas of riparian vegetation adjacent to the buffer area, slides, and areas with visible evidence of slope instability, not to exceed 200 feet measured as a horizontal distance. Where Forest Practice Rules designate wider stream buffer areas, the width of the SMA shall be expanded to be consistent with those regulations when they are applicable.
- E. The Streamside Management Area may be reduced or eliminated where the County determines, based on specific factual findings, that the USGS mapping of the stream as perennial or intermittent is not accurate, and there are no in-channel wetland characteristics or off-channel riparian vegetation.

**BR-S7. Development within Streamside Management Areas.** Development within Streamside Management Areas may be approved where consistent with Policy BR-P6 - Development within Streamside Management Areas, and shall be limited to the following uses:

- A. Development permitted within stream channels per BR-S6 - Development within Stream Channels.
- B. Timber management and harvest activities under a timber harvesting plan or non-industrial timber management plan, or activities exempt from local regulation as per California Public Resources Code 4516.5(e).
- C. Road, bridge, and trail replacement or construction, when it can be demonstrated that it would not degrade fish and wildlife resources or water quality, and that vegetative clearing is kept to a minimum.
- D. Removal of vegetation for disease control or public safety purposes.

**BR-S12 Discretionary Review within Oak Woodlands.** Discretionary projects proposed for oak woodlands (defined as lands on which the majority of the trees are of the genus *Quercus*) shall be analyzed for ways to reduce ecological and aesthetic impacts. The placement of proposed roads and structures shall avoid oak trees and their drip lines, if feasible and site layout and design shall minimize impacts.

**BR-IM3. Staff Training and Expertise.** Building and Planning Division staff shall receive periodic training related to the field identification of biological resources and mitigation of impacts. The County shall also have on staff or retain a qualified biologist to conduct site visits, work with resource agencies, review applicant prepared biological reports and formulate and monitor project conditions and mitigation measures.

**BR-IMx. Natural Communities Conservation Plan and Habitat Conservation Plan.** For biological conservation and the protection of threatened and endangered species, the County shall work with Department of Fish and Game, NOAA Fisheries and the US Fish and Wildlife Service to develop and adopt a County-wide Natural Communities Conservation Plan and Habitat Conservation Plan (California Fish and Game Code 2800-2835 and section 10(a)(1)(B) of the Endangered Species Act)

**BR-IMxx. Humboldt Bay and Eel River Delta Wetlands Bank.** The County shall facilitate and assist in the development of a wetlands banking system for the Humboldt Bay and Eel River Delta area.

**BR-IMxxx. Oak Woodlands Conservation Program.** The County shall develop an Oak Woodland Management Plan and attain eligibility for Oak Woodland Preservation Program funding (Fish and Game Code, Section 1360, Division 2, Chapter 4) to conserve and protect high-value oak woodlands.

## Alternative B

Alternative B would be expected to have substantially higher impacts than Alternative A, and substantially lower impacts than Alternative C, based on the relative amount of development allowed and the relative strength of its resource protection policies. For example with standard BR-S8. Required Mitigation Measures Alternative B deletes one of the mitigation measures for development within Streamside Management Areas included in Alternative A and the Project: Maximum feasible retention of overstory canopy in riparian corridors.

## Alternative C

Alternative C omits some specific prescriptions for allowed uses. While CEQA review and biological report requirements implemented through the Streamside Management Area Ordinance may result in protections similar to those of Alternative B and the Project, they may provide more flexibility and require more interpretation. For example, the following policies, standards and implementation measures have wording specific for Alternative C which is less prescriptive than that of Alternatives A or B:

**BR-P4. Development within Stream Channels.** Development within stream channels shall be required to obtain a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement from the Department of Fish and Game.

**BR-P6. Development within Streamside Management Areas.** Development within Streamside Management Areas shall be permitted after consultation with the Department of Fish and Game and application of feasible mitigation measures.

**BR-S7. Development within Streamside Management Areas.** Development within streamside management areas shall be conditionally permitted subject to mitigations recommended by the Department of Fish and Game.

**BR-S9. Erosion Control.** Erosion control measures shall follow best management practices to reduce off-site sediment transport to the maximum extent feasible.

**BR-S10. Development Standards for Wetlands and Other Wet Areas.** Development for wetlands and other wet areas; including natural ponds, springs, vernal pools, marshes, wet meadows (exhibiting standing water all year long or riparian vegetation), and wetlands as defined in the California Fish and Game Code Section 2785(g), shall be consistent with the standards for streamside management areas.

**BR-S11. Wetlands Defined.** The County shall follow the identification and classification policies of the Corp of Engineers (Wetlands Delineation Manual). Wetlands must have evidence of a minimum of one positive wetland indicator from each wetland parameter (hydrophytes, hydric soil, and periods of inundation).

#### **Alternative D**

Alternative D, continuing the current plan, would be expected to have slightly higher impacts to biological resources than implementing the Project, substantially higher impacts than Alternative A, and slightly lower impacts than Alternative C, based on the relative amount of development allowed and the relative strength of its resource protection policies. The following chart helps explain the key differences between the alternatives in their approach toward reducing biological resource impacts.

<b>Section 10.3 Biological Resources</b>				
<b>Key Topics and Issues</b>	<b>Alternative B</b>	<b>Existing Framework Plan (Alternative D)</b>	<b>Alternative A</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>
<p><b>Protection of Aquatic Habitat to Recover Salmon and Steelhead.</b> With improvements in forest practices, locally regulated land use activities; such as, road construction, site grading and vegetation clearing, will play a greater role in the recovery of salmon and steelhead species. Protection of riparian corridors is central to the protection of aquatic habitat.</p> <p>Should the County increase the size of buffers around rivers, stream and wetlands?</p> <p><b>Key Policies:</b> G1, P8, P9, (S1, S5, S7, S8 &amp; S12; IM3)</p>	<p>This element regulates development within stream channels and Streamside Management Areas (SMA's) to reduce impacts to aquatic habitat. (BR-P4 and 6, BR-S5-9). Defines applicable drainage courses (BR-P5). Excludes man-made drainage systems (BR-S5 (F)).</p> <p>Note: Additional aquatic habitat protection policies are contained in Chapter 11 Water Resources Element.</p>	<p>Roughly equivalent to B. Does not include specific SMA and Wetland map definitions. Does not include exemption for man-made drainage systems.</p>	<p>Expands SMA's for perennial streams to 150 ft and 75 ft (BR-S5). Disallows fire wood-cutting and clearing for pasturage within SMA's (BR-S7). Retains fallen snags and overstory canopy in SMA's (BR-S8).</p>	<p>No restrictions on the type of development within SMA's but all development would be subject to conditions and mitigations recommended by the Department of Fish and Game.</p>
<p><b>Achieving Consistency and Coordinating with State and Federal Biological Resource Laws and Responsible Agencies.</b> Land use is regulated locally but the majority of biological protections are codified in state and federal laws. Close coordination with state and federal agencies is essential for efficient processes and conservation of biological resources and protection of threatened and endangered species.</p>	<p>Incorporates state and federal goals, definitions and recovery strategies for threatened and endangered species and sensitive, critical and essential habitat (BR-G1-2, BR-P1-3). Requires state and federal agency review for development proposed within Sensitive Habitat areas (BR-P11, BR-S2). Codifies use of Department of Fish and Game wetland</p>	<p>Roughly equivalent to B. Relies on agency consultation within CEQA and NEPA reviews to consider and mitigate impacts to threatened and endangered species.</p>	<p>Eliminates exclusion for agricultural operations from Sensitive Habitat policies (BR-S1). Includes preparation of a County-wide Natural Communities Conservation Plan and Habitat Conservation Plan (BR-G2, BR-IMx). Includes staff biologist (BR-IM3).</p>	<p>Makes use of CEQA process to consider biological resource impacts directly related to County land use decisions (BR-P2). Relies on independent actions of state and federal agencies for other habitat and species protection efforts (BR-P4 and 6, BR-S7). Uses Corp of</p>

Section 10.3 Biological Resources				
Key Topics and Issues	Alternative B	Existing Framework Plan (Alternative D)	Alternative A	Alternative C
<p>How should County land use policies and regulations be synchronized with state and federal laws and regulatory oversight?</p> <p><b>Key Policies:</b> P11 (S2) and IMx, IMx2, IMx3 and IMx4</p>	<p>definitions (BR-S11).</p>			<p>Engineers wetland definitions (BR-S11).</p>

A complete listing of the policy differences between the Plan Alternatives and the Project is contained in Appendix V of this EIR.

### 4.3.5 Cultural and Historical Resources

Development allowed under all the Plan alternatives may have significant effects on cultural/historical resources because of scale and scope. On a comparative basis, Alternative A is expected to have substantially less impacts to biological resources for a variety of reasons. Alternative A proposes less development, and substantially less development on large areas of the county's resource production lands. Alternative A retains larger parcel sizes and reduces fragmentation of land holdings, which in turn is expected to reduce disturbance and modification of surface and subsurface cultural resources and historic structures. Alternative A's policies are more protective of cultural/historical resources, and implementation of Alternative A is less likely to disturb or modify such resources

Conversely, Alternative C is expected to have substantially more impacts than Alternatives A, B, or D. It proposes more development, and substantially more development on large areas of the county, and offers fewer policy protections to offset the impacts of the additional development potential. Development on larger lots with longer access roads may increase the amount of grading and excavation, and result in a greater chance archaeological, paleontological or unique geologic resources would be disturbed under Alternative C.

Alternative D, continuing the current plan, would be expected to have slightly higher impacts than implementing the proposed project, substantially higher impacts than Alternative A, and slightly lower impacts than Alternative C, based on the relative amount of development allowed and the relative strength of its cultural resource protection policies. Alternative B would be expected to have slightly higher impacts to cultural and historic resources than implementing the Project, substantially higher impacts than Alternative A, and substantially lower impacts than Alternative C, based on the relative amount of development allowed and the relative strength of its resource protection policies.

#### Alternative A

Alternative A includes policies, standards and implementation to provide the maximum level of protection for cultural and historic resources. The compact development form of Alternative A will also serve to protect cultural and historic resources by minimizing the grading required for new construction and result in a lesser chance archaeological, paleontological or unique geologic resources would be disturbed under Alternative A. The following policies are some examples of how Alternative B approaches protection of cultural and historic resources.

**CU-P5. Mitigation.** Mitigation measures shall be required where new development would adversely impact cultural resources.

**CU-S5. Assessment of Impacts.** A cultural resources report prepared by a professional who meets the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's professional qualification guidelines (36 Code of Federal Regulations Part 61 as amended) shall be required during environmental assessment to determine the presence, extent, and condition of cultural resources and the likely impact upon such resources. For structures of historical significance, alternations and/or additions shall follow the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation.

**CU-Sx. Cultural Resources Report Contents.** A Cultural Resources Report should, at the minimum, contain:

(1) Evidence of a full background literature search through the depository at the Humboldt County Historical Society. Whether the resource is on any federal, State or local list of designated historic resources. Whether the resource is identified in any information in the historical archives;

- (2) A brief description of the project parcel(s) and the expectations of the consultant at the onset of the inventory report;
- (3) A clear description of the methods and results of the field inventory including rationale for surface coverage and a brief discussion of any historic resources encountered. This treatment should be patterned after the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION* [As Amended and Annotated] - [http://www.cr.nps.gov/local-law/arch\\_stnds\\_0.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/local-law/arch_stnds_0.htm) ;
- (4) A generally accurate map (7.5' USGS topographic, parcel map or engineers map) in a scale sufficient to show the intensity and coverage of the field inventory as well as the location of any resources encountered;
- (5) A description and evaluation of any structures and a determination of whether or not they qualify as historical resources. This evaluation should answer the following questions with respect to possible historic significance:
  - a) Is it associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history, or the cultural heritage of California, or the United States;
  - b) Is it associated with the lives of persons important to local, California, or national history;
  - c) Does it embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represent the work of a master or possess high artistic values;
  - d) Has it yielded, or does it have the potential to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California, or the nation.
- (6)
  - a) Given the answers to 5. a. through d., Does the resource qualify as an historic resource? If the answer to 6a is no, and any of the answers to 5a through 5d is yes, explain why, in your assessment, the resource does not qualify as historic.
  - b) Does the resource have integrity for the period of significance? The period of significance is the date or span of time within which significant events transpired, or significant individuals made their important contributions. Integrity is the authenticity of a historical resource's physical identity as evidenced by the survival of characteristics or historic fabric that existed during the resource's period of significance.
  - c) Identify whether or not the resource retains enough of its historic character of appearance to be recognizable as an historical resource and able to convey the reasons for significance. If it is determined that a resource has lost its historic character or appearance, does it still have the potential to yield significant scientific or historical information or specific data?
  - d) Is the historic resource located within a historic district or a concentration of historic buildings, structures, objects, or sites with precise boundaries that share a common historical, cultural or architectural background? If so, and if it is determined that the resource lacks individual significance as an historic resource, could the resource be considered a contributor to the significance of the historic district or concentration of historic structures?
- (7) If the resource is historic, provide recommended means to avoid or lessen development related impacts to any historical resources encountered on the

**CU-Sxx. Cultural Resource Commission Recommendations & Mitigation.** The conclusions, findings and recommendations of the Cultural Resources Report will be evaluated during the environmental review process, and will be referred to the Cultural Resource Commission. The Cultural Resource Commission will make recommendations on historic resources to the Planning Commission. Applicants should be encouraged to avoid impacts to historical resources where feasible. When this is not feasible, mitigation measures shall be incorporated into the project to lessen the impact of the project on these resources. Mitigation shall be in accordance with Appendix K of the State CEQA Guidelines.

**CU-S6. Historic Resource Commission Recommendations & Mitigation.** The conclusions, findings and recommendations of the historic assessment study will be evaluated during the

environmental review process, and will be referred to the Historic Resource Commission. The Historic Resource Commission will make recommendations on historic resources to the Planning Commission. Applicants should be encouraged to avoid impacts to historical resources where feasible. When this is not feasible, mitigation measures shall be incorporated into the project to lessen the impact of the project on these resources. Mitigation shall be in accordance with Appendix K of the State CEQA Guidelines.

**CU-IM7 Certified Local Government Program.** Pursue County certification under the Certified Local Government Program through the State Office of Historic Preservation (SHPO).

Requirements of the program include:

- Enforce appropriate legislation for the designation and protection of historic properties.
- Establish and maintain a qualified historic preservation commission.
- Maintain a system for identifying historic properties.
- Provide for public participation and perform other agreed functions delegated by SHPO.

**CU-Sxxx. CEQA Review.** Historical resources as provided in Section 15064.5 of the State CEQA Guidelines shall include: 1) a resource listed in, or determined to be eligible for listing in, the California Register of Historical Resources; 2) a resource listed in a local register of historical resources; or 3) any object, building structure, site, area or place which the County Planning Division determines to be historically or culturally significant.

### Alternative B

Alternative B provides protection of cultural and historic resources by referencing existing state and federal laws and guidelines. It also updates references. Alternative B requires identification of cultural resources and mitigation of impacts, and calls for review and updating of existing implementing ordinances and guidelines to ensure appropriate protection. The cultural and historic resource protections of Alternative B policies are less effective than those of Alternative A. The Project incorporates Alternative A and Alternative B policies, so it will be somewhat more protective of cultural and historic resources than Alternative B.

### Alternative C

Alternative C is expected to have substantially more impacts than Alternatives A, B, or D, or the Project. It proposes more development, and substantially more development on large areas of the county. Development on larger lots with longer access roads may increase the amount of grading and excavation, and result in a greater chance archaeological, paleontological or unique geologic resources would be disturbed under Alternative C. The policy protections it offers to offset the impacts of the additional development potential are somewhat less protective than Alternative B and the Project, and somewhat more protective than Alternative D.

For example, like Alternative B, Alternative C includes standard CU-S1. Cultural Resources, which defines cultural resources to include any object, building, structure, site, area, or place that is culturally, historically, or archeologically significant, or is significant in the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural annals of Humboldt County.

But Alternative C offers less protections than Alternative B by omitting CU-S4. Conditioning, Designing, or Mitigating Projects to Avoid Loss, which describes requirements for conditioning, designing, or mitigating projects to avoid loss of cultural resources in general, but archeological or paleontological resources in particular.

**Alternative D**

Alternative D, continuing the current plan, would be expected to have slightly higher impacts to cultural resources than implementing the Project, substantially higher impacts than Alternative A, and slightly lower impacts than Alternative C, based on the relative amount of development allowed. The following chart helps explain the key differences between the alternatives in their approach toward reducing cultural and historic resource impacts.

Section 10.6 Cultural Resources				
Key Topics and Issues	Alternative B	Existing Framework Plan (Alternative D)	Alternative A	Alternative C
<p><b>Cultural Resource Protection</b> The County’s rich history helps define the unique character and identity of the county.</p> <p>What level of protection should be afforded to the cultural resources within the county?</p> <p><b>Key Policies:</b></p>	<p>Provides protection as outlined in existing state and federal laws and guidelines, and includes updated references. Requires identification of cultural resources and mitigation of impacts (P1, 2, 5 S4,5) Calls for review and updating of existing implementing ordinances and guidelines to ensure appropriate protection (IM-1,2).</p>	<p>Provides protection for significant cultural resources; includes dated references to state and federal laws, guidelines and interest groups.</p>	<p>Provides additional protection through CEQA review (Sxxx) and cultural resources report (Sx) requirements for projects that might impact historic resources. Also establishes a County Cultural Resource Commission (Sxx).</p>	<p>Alternative C would update basic requirements for cultural resource protection, but would not otherwise expand cultural resource protection beyond the requirements of state and federal law.</p>
<p><b>Historic Structures</b> Historic buildings are a particularly visible and important component of community character.</p> <p>What level of effort is appropriate to ensure conservation of these resources?</p> <p><b>Key Policies:</b></p>	<p>Encourages active support of local, state and federal historical registrations programs (IM3), promotes the use of the State Historic Building Code (IM4), and calls for establishing a system for identifying historic properties(IM5).</p>	<p>Encourages active support of local, state and federal historical registrations programs, promotes the use of the State Historic Building Code.</p>	<p>In addition to policy of Alt B, calls for efforts to develop a Certified Local Government Program through the State Office of Historic Preservation (IMx).</p>	<p>Alternative C would not promote the use of the Historic Building Code or encourage identification or registration of historic properties.</p>

A complete listing of the policy differences between the Plan Alternatives and the Project is contained in Appendix V of this EIR.

### 4.3.6 Geology and Soils

#### Alternative A

Alternative A includes all of the Geology and Soils policies, standards and implementation measures of Alternative B plus the following additional policies:

**S-PX1. Site Suitability.** New development may be approved only if it can be demonstrated that the proposed development will neither create nor significantly contribute to geologic instability or geologic hazards.

With this policy, the impacts of Alternative A with respect to Geology and Soils would be significantly less than the impacts of Alternative B. The Project contains this same policy, so it would have impacts similar to Alternative B.

#### Alternative C

Alternative C includes all of the Geology and Soils policies, standards and implementation measures of Alternative B. The impacts of Alternative C with respect to Geology and Soils would be the same as the impacts of Alternative B, and greater than the impacts of Alternative A and the Project.

#### Alternative D

Alternative D policies are somewhat vague and ineffective. For example, 3291.1 states the County should "Regulate land use to ensure that development in potentially hazardous areas will not preclude preserving and promoting public safety. Potentially hazardous areas include, but are not limited to, steep slopes, unstable soils areas, on active earthquake fault lines, in wildland fire hazard areas, in airport flight path zones, and in flood plains and tsunami runup areas." The proposed policy language for the other Plan Alternatives is more precise and effective, so Alternative D is expected to have greater impacts from geologic and soils hazards than each of the alternatives. A complete listing of the policy differences between the Plan Alternatives and the Project is contained in Appendix V of this EIR.

### 4.3.7 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

To review the topics covered under this section, the significance criteria for hazards and hazardous materials include the following. The proposed General Plan Update would result in a significant impact on hazards and hazardous materials if it would:

- a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials.
- b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment.
- c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school.
- d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment.
- e) Result in a safety hazard for people residing or working within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport. .

- f) Result in a safety hazard for people residing or working within the vicinity of a private airstrip.
- g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.
- h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands.

For items "a" through "g", there would be no appreciable difference in impacts among alternatives, since these criteria are treated in a similar manner under each alternative and exposure rates would not be expected to be significantly different. For item "h" – exposure to wildland fires, Alternatives B, C and D and the Project would all result in significantly higher exposure to this hazard than Alternative A because of higher planned densities in rural areas with higher wildland fire risk ratings, and fewer policies ensuring fire protection and response capacity (see Public Services section for policies). Compared to the Project and the other alternatives, Alternative A would expose significantly fewer people to hazards in areas planned Ranchland (AGR) or Industrial Timberland (TI). A complete listing of the policy differences between the Plan Alternatives and the Project in terms of geologic and soils hazards is contained in Appendix V of this EIR.

### 4.3.8 Hydrology and Water Quality

The Water Resources Element comprehensively deals with water management and conservation issues, and incorporates various policies and implementation measures that would serve to prevent potential impacts to water resources. Measures to address potential degradation of water quality are covered under the following measures in the General Plan Update: Policies WR-P5, P7, P8, P15, and P24, and WR-P30 through P40. Measures to address potential depletion of groundwater or interference of groundwater recharge are covered under policies, standards and implementation measures WR-P2, WR-P12 through WP-P14, WR-S4, and WR-IM12. However, since the County has not comprehensively studied surface water or groundwater supplies, some development may indirectly impact the amount of surface water and groundwater in areas with limited water supply.

Measures to address potential alteration the existing drainage pattern of development sites or areas, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site are addressed in policies WR-P1 through WR-P20. Additional policies address water exportation concerns (WR-P24 and WR-P27) and conservation and reuse (WP-P23). None of the proposed policies, standards or implementation measures would result in changes in the course or direction of water movement. The Water Resource Element and Safety Element policies (S-S10 through S18) and standards (S-S5 through S-S8) would serve to further flood hazard delineation, thus supporting other plan elements designed to avoid placing housing in the 100-year flood hazard area. The policies, standards and implementation measures would serve to avoid exposing people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam, or from inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow.

#### Alternative A

Alternative A includes additional policies and implementation measures in water resource categories that would more comprehensively address water resource issues than any of the other alternatives and the Project, but would add significant financial costs to the County for water resource management programs. Following are some examples of policies included in Alternative A which protect water resources.

- WR-Px5. Important Groundwater Recharge Areas.** Protect important groundwater recharge areas by limiting the construction of impervious surfaces and requiring that new development maintain pre-development infiltration rates.
- WR-S4. Protection of Groundwater Recharge Areas.** Ministerial and discretionary development in Critical Water Supply or Watershed Areas where maintenance of groundwater recharge is determined to be necessary to maintain sustainable groundwater demands or surface water flows shall maintain or increase the site's pre-development absorption to recharge groundwater or be conditioned to reduce effects to water supplies to below levels of significance.
- WR-S8. Erosion and Sediment Discharge.** Ministerial and discretionary projects shall conform to grading ordinance standards for erosion and sediment control.

Alternative A would be the most protective alternative for protecting water quality and avoiding hazards from flood hazards. It includes extensive new measures for addressing water resources.

### **Alternative B**

Alternative B would be expected to have slightly higher impacts than Alternative A, and substantially lower impacts than Alternative C, based on the relative amount of development allowed and the relative strength of its resource protection policies. For example Alternative B omits an implementation measure in Alternative A: WR-IMx3 Identification of Critical Groundwater Recharge Areas, which would have the County map important groundwater recharge areas.

### **Alternative C**

By increasing the development potential in the areas served by on-site water supply, Alternative C may indirectly encourage development in more rural areas on larger lots not served by public sewer and/or water, so Alternative C may require more surface water and groundwater for landscaping and gardening than the Project and each of the other alternatives. This may cause more impacts than the Project and each of the other alternatives on surface water and groundwater in areas with limited water supply.

At a policy level, Alternative C omits any new prescriptions and implementation measures. While CEQA review and application requirements may result in protections similar to those of Alternative B, they may require more interpretation and be less effective than Alternative B policies.

### **Alternative D**

*Alternative D would be expected to have substantially higher impacts than Alternative A and B, and the Project, and substantially lower impacts than Alternative C, based on the relative amount of development allowed and the relative strength of its resource protection policies.* The following chart helps explain the key differences between the alternatives in their approach toward reducing hydrology and water quality impacts.

Chapter 11 Water Resources Element				
Key Topics and Issues	Alternative B	Existing Framework Plan (Alternative D)	Alternative A	Alternative C
<p><b>Water Resources and Land Use.</b> Planned land uses could trigger new water supply and quality impacts or exacerbate existing problems. How can the General Plan Update be used as an effective tool to ensure that new development occurs without damaging water resources on an individual and cumulative basis?</p> <p><b>Key Policies:</b>                      WR-P4 (WR-S1, WR-S2, WR-IM1, WR-IM2), WR-P5 (WR-S1, WR-S3, WR-IM1, WR-IM2), WR-Px2 (WR-IMx2)</p>	<p>Includes policies for sustainable management of water resources (WR-P1), protection of existing surface and groundwater uses (WR-P2), identification of critical municipal water supply areas (WR-P3) and critical watershed areas (WR-P4), assessment of impacts of subdivision on water resources (WR-P6 and P7) as well as measures addressing erosion, sediment discharge (WR-P8), pathogens, and nutrient discharge (WR-P14 and WR-P15).</p>	<p>While the existing plan does not have a water resources element, it contains water resources and land use policies calling for land use decisions to be consistent with water resource values, timing development with water supply and capacity, and considering existing uses during project review.</p>	<p>Same as Alternative B except that additional protections are provided for groundwater recharge areas and data and new requirements for well permit applications to reduce groundwater contamination.</p>	<p>Alternative C would be the same as the Framework Plan and not adopt new water resources related policies, standards, or implementation measures.</p>
<p><b>Watershed Planning.</b> Watershed planning includes an evaluation of land use activities, water supply and quality, and sources of pollution within a watershed and a plan to reduce pollution and accommodate land uses. What should be the approach in the General Plan Update for controlling sedimentation, preventing further increases in water temperature and preserving flow rates within watersheds</p>	<p>Proposes using watersheds as the geographic planning framework for water resource planning and coordination with other regional, state, and federal planning, implementation, and funding efforts (WR-P17 through WR-P20).</p>	<p>Contains encouraging continued participation in water resource planning efforts and encouraging water investigation by state and federal agencies,</p>	<p>Same as Alternative B.</p>	<p>Same as Existing Framework Plan</p>

Chapter 11 Water Resources Element				
Key Topics and Issues	Alternative B	Existing Framework Plan (Alternative D)	Alternative A	Alternative C
<p>in Humboldt County where these water parameters have been identified as watershed management issues?</p> <p><b>Key Policies:</b> WR-P17 (WR-IM8, WR-IM11)</p>				
<p><b>Public Water Supply.</b> Domestic water is supplied by a variety of public agencies and private utilities. Humboldt County is not a water provider.</p> <p>What should be the County's role in managing public water supplies for new development?</p> <p><b>Key Policies:</b> WR-P22</p>	<p>Includes measures for sufficient water supply for public systems, designation and regulation of water resources in Critical Water Supply areas, and a water conservation and re-use strategy (WR-P21 through WR-P23).</p>	<p>Includes policies regarding water conservation and development timing</p>	<p>Same as Alternative B</p>	<p>Same as Existing Framework Plan</p>
<p><b>Water Exports.</b> Water is diverted from the Klamath, Trinity, and Eel Rivers. Restoring river flows is important to the County's environment and economy.</p> <p>How should the County manage water rights with respect to water exports?</p> <p><b>Key Policies:</b> WR-P27</p>	<p>Includes measures addressing restoration of flow rates, compliance with water code export laws, and consideration of county water needs in reviewing future water exports (WR-P24 through WR-P 29).</p>	<p>Alternative B water export policy similar to existing plan.</p>	<p>Alternative A would additionally specify that there be no new exports of water to locations outside Humboldt County unless the County has issued a Conditional Use Permit for such exportations (WR-P29). Also requires a re-balancing of considerations for dam relicensing (WR-P28).</p>	<p>Same as Existing Framework Plan</p>

Chapter 11 Water Resources Element				
Key Topics and Issues	Alternative B	Existing Framework Plan (Alternative D)	Alternative A	Alternative C
<p><b>Stormwater.</b> Stormwater management plays an important role in water quality and supply. How should the General Plan Update address stormwater management and plan for drainage facility infrastructure?</p> <p><b>Key Policies:</b> WR-P38 (WR-IM26)</p>	<p>Includes policies and standards addressing drainage facilities, erosion and sediment control measures, storm drainage design, reduction of toxic runoff, and fish passage design (WR-P30 through WR-P40).</p>	<p>Contains polices relating to utilizing natural drainage courses, peak stormwater flows, and providing support for restoration projects</p>	<p>Alternative A, besides including all of the measures of Alternative B, also includes a requirement for use of Low-Impact Development standards in watersheds showing impairment from stormwater discharge.</p>	<p>Same as Existing Framework Plan</p>

A complete listing of the policy differences between the Plan Alternatives and the Project is contained in Appendix V of this EIR.

### 4.3.9 Mineral Resources

#### Alternative A

Because of the strategy of focused development in infill areas and a strategy of planning for only the fair share of about 6,000 additional dwelling units. This alternative would be most conservative of mineral resources. Fewer mineral resources would be required for development of new residential, commercial, and industrial buildings and roads. By prohibiting terrace mining of agricultural lands, Alternative A may restrict mining activities compared to each of the other alternatives except the Project. However, other policies protect mining activities, such as policies addressing right to mine (MR-P2), identification of mineral deposits (MR-P3), future development planning (MR-P8), and location of haul routes (MR-P9). Alternative A also adds an implementation measure to establish a mineral resource combining zone (MR-IM4).

#### Alternative B

This alternative would have slightly more impacts on mineral resources than Alternative because more mineral resources would be required for development of new residential, commercial, and industrial buildings and roads compared to Alternative A. On the other hand, Alternative B does not prohibit terrace mining on agricultural lands, so it would not limit mineral resource production as much. It contains all the other policies in Alternative A supporting mining operations, so it would have less impacts than Alternative C or D. It would have similar impacts to mineral resources as the Project; they both share all nearly all the same policies, standards and implementation measures.

#### Alternative C

This alternative would be less protective of mineral resources than Alternative A and B and the Project. It would continue many of the policies, standards and implementation measures of the current Framework Plan. One notable exception is Alternative C would provide notice and mapping of mining activity as a means to avoid conflict with other land uses (MR-P9, MR-7). This alternative would rely on individual, case-by-case permit reviews, including CEQA review, to address environmental and conservation concerns related to mineral resources. This alternative could result in up to 18,000 additional dwelling units, and thus would require proportionally up to three times the mineral resources of Alternative A and would have fewer policies addressing management of impacts and conservation of the mineral resources. This alternative would likely have significant impacts on adjacent land uses as a consequence of greatly increased extraction volumes and number of sites.

#### Alternative D

This alternative would have similar impacts on mineral resources as Alternative C. The following chart provides more detail on how each of the alternatives treat mineral resources.

<b>Section 10.4 Mineral Resources</b>				
<b>Key Topics and Issues</b>	<b>Alternative B</b>	<b>Existing Framework Plan (Alternative D)</b>	<b>Alternative A</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>
<p><b>In-Stream Gravel Mining.</b> River deposits are the main source of sand and gravel.</p> <p>How should in-stream gravel mining be conducted to avoid impacts; especially to aquatic habitat, endangered species and river bed elevations.</p> <p><b>Key Policies:</b> MR-P4, MR-P5 (MR- IM1)</p>	<p>Adds a goal addressing in-stream sand and gravel extraction (MR-G2), adds policies addressing sustainable extraction levels (MR-P4, MR- P5) and supports scientifically based extraction through the CHERT program (MR-IM1).</p>	<p>Contains a policy limiting in-stream extraction to annual bedload levels (2533.9) otherwise largely silent on in-stream mining.</p>	<p>Same as Alternative B.</p>	<p>Would not impose County limits on in-stream gravel mining.</p>
<p><b>Land Use Compatibility.</b> Mineral extraction can conflict with residential use.</p> <p>Given the increased construction of housing near mineral extraction sites, should there be additional measures added to the plan to address land use compatibility?</p> <p><b>Key Policies:</b> MR-P2</p>	<p>Adds policies addressing right to mine (MR-P2), identification of mineral deposits (MR-P3), future development planning (MR-P8), and location of haul routes (MR-P9). Adds an implementation measure to establish a mineral resource combining zone (MR-IM4).</p>	<p>Contains a general policy to plan future development to avoid interference with mineral deposits (2533.2 now MR-P8).</p>	<p>Same as Alternative B.</p>	<p>Would provide notice and mapping of mining activity as a means to avoid conflict (MR-P9, MR-7).</p>

<b>Section 10.4 Mineral Resources</b>				
<b>Key Topics and Issues</b>	<b>Alternative B</b>	<b>Existing Framework Plan (Alternative D)</b>	<b>Alternative A</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>
<p><b>Terrace Mining for Sand and Gravel Deposits.</b> Off-channel terrace mining of historical gravel deposits can avoid in-stream mining effects but can result in agricultural and other impacts. Should the County establish policies on commercial terrace mining, given increased regulatory pressure on in-stream mining?</p> <p><b>Key Policies:</b> MR-P12</p>	<p>Would require full restoration of agricultural productivity on disturbed agricultural lands (MR-P12).</p>	<p>Silent on terrace mining in particular but would seem to support agricultural land conversion through reclamation for alternative land uses (2533.3).</p>	<p>Prohibits terrace mining on agricultural lands planned AG and AE (MR-P12).</p>	<p>Would allow conversion of agricultural lands to wetlands or open water. (MR-P12).</p>

A complete listing of the policy differences between the Plan Alternatives and the Project is contained in Appendix V of this EIR.

### 4.3.10 Noise

#### Alternative A

Alternative A contains the maximum level of protection from noise impacts of all the alternatives and the Project. Below are several examples of how Alternative A seeks to reduce noise impacts.

#### Industrial Performance Standards

The County Coastal Zoning Code includes Industrial Performance Standards that limit noise as well as lights, dust, vibrations and traffic. These standards could be added to the Inland Zoning Code as well. Performance standards for cottage industry and home occupation use already exist in both the inland and coastal zoning code.

**N-IM5 Adoption of Performance Standards.** Adopt Industrial Performance Standards Countywide.

#### Noise Ordinance

While Humboldt is a largely rural county, a Noise Ordinance allowing for the establishment of noise standards based on local standards that are tied to land use designations and zoning districts can protect public health and welfare in more heavily-populated unincorporated areas. Sample noise ordinance language is attached.

Such a Noise Ordinance would codify noise limits for residential, commercial, office, and industrial zones, similar to what is found in Figure 20-2. The main difference would be that it would be applied at the building permit level, ensuring all (new) uses would comply with the standards, not just discretionary uses where environmental review is required, or where mapped noise contours triggered the application of the Noise Impact combining zone.

Considerable concern was expressed early in the General Plan Update process and during the development of the McKinleyville Community Plan regarding nuisance type noises such as gunfire, loud music, cars and power equipment. The sample noise ordinance discussed above includes provisions to address these issues.

**N-IM6 Noise Ordinance.** Adopt a noise ordinance based on current zoning districts, tailored to community noise standards that address construction noise and other non- transportation noise sources.

#### Exterior Noise Reduction Standards

The existing general plan identifies acceptable noise levels, but it does not specify how to achieve acceptable noise levels in exterior areas. Adopting the following implementation measure would clarify which portions of a lot are most important for acceptable noise levels, provide design standards for sound walls, and set standards for noise reduction techniques using landscaping:

**N-IM7 Exterior Noise Reduction Standards.** Adopt standards specifying appropriate measures to reduce exterior noise levels in noise impact areas. Standards shall consider the portion of a lot where noise level reduction measures would apply, acceptable sound wall designs, and standards for achieving noise level reductions through effective site planning techniques.

Alternative A would provide for population growth that could increase noise levels. The increase in most areas is not expected to significantly affect acceptable noise levels. Localized noise impacts which might be significant are mitigated by the recommended policies, standards, and implementation measures. The Project includes noise protection standards similar to Alternative A.

### Alternative B

Plan Alternative B differs slightly from Alternative A and the Project because it has a higher threshold for determining excessive noise levels (five (5) decibels higher). It also does not include noise level limits on quarries nor industrial uses which are a part of Alternative A. Accordingly, Alternative B is expected to have slightly higher noise impacts than Alternative A and the Project. The Project incorporates some of the Alternative B and Alternative A policies, so it is going to offer somewhat greater protection than Alternative B.

### Alternative C

Plan Alternative C differs from Alternative B and Alternative A because it does not include adoption of a Noise Combining Zone nor does it consider adoption of a noise ordinance. It also does not include Policy N-P4 (Hwy 101 Surface Maintenance), nor Policy N-P5 (U.S 101 Speed Limits/ Noise Barriers).

Also, Plan Alternative C includes the following policy which would reduce the effectiveness of noise insulation requirements:

**N- Sx. Modification or Waiver of Noise Insulation Requirements.** Where full mitigation in accordance with the policies and standards of this Noise Element is not feasible, the Planning Commission may modify or waive such policies or standards to enable reasonable use of the property, provided that noise levels are mitigated to the maximum extent feasible.

Alternative C would also provide for much greater population growth in comparison to Alternatives A or B and this would result in a proportionally greater increase in noise levels. However, the increased population growth under Alternative C would be more diffuse and spread out over a greater area. The increase in most areas is not expected to significantly affect acceptable noise levels. Localized noise impacts which might be significant are mitigated by the recommended policies, standards, and implementation measures.

### Alternative D

This is the "no project" alternative and would result in continuation of the policies, standards, and implementation measures of the current Framework Plan. Development would proceed at historic and projected rates and impacts would be similar to that seen under the existing plan, with potential significant impacts addressed through the CEQA process. The Land Use/Noise Compatibility Matrix provides more protection from noise impacts than the policies contained in Alternative C, but it is less effective at mitigating noise impacts than the policies in Alternative A, B and the Project.

The following chart provides more detail on how each of the alternatives treat noise impacts. A complete listing of the policy differences between the Plan Alternatives and the Project is contained in Appendix V of this EIR.

Chapter 13 Noise Element				
Key Topics and Issues	Alternative B	Existing Framework Plan (Alternative D)	Alternative A	Alternative C
<p><b>Inventory of Noise Sources and Constructive Notice.</b> General Plan guidelines require an inventory so noise sources can be considered during planning processes.</p> <p>Should significant noise sources and surrounding properties also be identified by zoning overlay?</p>	<p>Noise characteristics and sources are generally described. The most significant sources are specifically listed in tables within the Element. The Element includes the use of noise impact combining zones to identify areas where noise mitigation and recorded notice and acknowledgement is required (N-S2, N-IM1).</p>	<p>Includes an inventory of sources but does not include the use of noise impact combining zones.</p>	<p>Adds quarries and industrial operations to the inventory.</p>	<p>Does not use zone overlay or recorded notices for inventoried sources and surrounding properties beyond those already in place (McKCP).</p>
<p><b>Noise Compatibility.</b> This is an issue for general plan and zone mapping and project application review to avoid noise conflicts.</p> <p>Are the maximum noise levels appropriate?</p> <p>Should the County regulate short-term noise levels?</p>	<p>Acceptable short-term noise levels are defined by zone for day and night time (N-S9). Acceptable exterior and interior average noise levels for residential areas are specified (N-S6,7,8). The Element includes approaches to avoid conflicts through zoning overlays, project review and compliance measures (NP-1,2 and NS-2, 3,4,5)</p>	<p>Noise limits were not described by zone type and did not include limits on short-term noise. Less attention given to steps that should be taken to avoid conflicts.</p>	<p>Has lower maximum sound level limits.</p>	<p>Increased maximum limits and does not regulate short-term noise levels.</p>
<p><b>Nuisance Abatement.</b> Abatement issues include resolving noise complaints and reducing noise along Highway 101 and 299.</p> <p>Should nuisance be judged on sound levels alone or should allowances be made for mitigating factors?</p>	<p>The Element approaches noise complaints with precise allowable noise levels and a compliance program (N-IM3). Highway noise reduction is included as an implementation measure (NM-IM4).</p>	<p>A general reference is made on the need for code enforcement and interagency attention to noise reduction.</p>	<p>Judges nuisance on sound levels alone with no allowance for mitigating circumstances.</p>	<p>Allows nuisance complaints to be resolved through civil channels with minimum county enforcement. Does not pursue noise reductions on Highway 101 and 299.</p>

### 4.3.11 Utilities and Services

#### Alternative A

Alternative A include alternative wording for several polices. Standards and implementation measures which provide a stronger linkage for assessing and addressing public service needs for new development.

**IS-P4. Requirements for Discretionary Development.** Adequate public infrastructure and services (as specified in Standard IS-S1) shall be used to determine infrastructure and services requirements for new development. Projects which do not currently have adequate public infrastructure and services, and cannot provide adequate public infrastructure and services concurrently with the new development, shall be scheduled for hearing before the appropriate hearing body with a staff recommendation for denial, on the grounds that the project is inconsistent with the goals, policies, and standards of Community Infrastructure and Services Element of the General Plan.

**IS-P18. Expanded Fire Protection Services.** Require the expansion of existing special district boundaries, or the formation of a County Service Area with agreements to fund contract fire services, to ensure the provision of fire protection services to existing and proposed development outside of fire district boundaries.

**IS-S1. Adequate Public Infrastructure and Services Ordinance.** Adequate public infrastructure and services standards shall be used to determine the level of infrastructure and services necessary for new development. Standards shall be specified by ordinance for County provided services, including roads, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, drainage, law enforcement, on-site wastewater disposal and recreation. Standards for non-County services, including public transportation, water, public wastewater, emergency services and fire, shall be referenced and based on applicable service provider criteria. County standards shall be consistent with Plan policies and, to the extent practical, generally accepted levels of service. Standards for non-County services should be consistent with levels of service adopted by local service providers and, to the extent practical, generally accepted levels of service.

**IS-S4. Subdivisions Outside of Fire District Boundaries.** Residential development shall be conditioned to annex to or form a fire-related district or county service area and provide funding to ensure that the district has adequate capacity to provide services.

#### Alternative B

Alternative B contains slightly less effective measures for reducing impacts to utilities and services than Alternative A. For example, in policy IS-P18 Expanded Fire Protection Services, Alternative B would “encourage” the expansion of existing special district boundaries, or the formation of a County Service Area to provide fire protection services to areas outside of fire district boundaries, whereas Alternative A would require the expansion of existing special district boundaries. The Project most closely resembles Alternative B.

#### Alternatives C and D

Alternatives C and D lack the following measures for addressing public service needs for new development:

IS-P3. Public infrastructure and Services Standards.

- IS-P5. Fiscal Impact Assessment.
- IS-P11. Consolidation and Cost Sharing.
- IS-P12. State and Federal Advocacy.
- IS-P13. District Boundaries.
- IS-P16. Drainage and Flood Control.
- IS-P20. On-Site Sewage Disposal Requirements.
- IS-P21. Parks and Recreation Service in Urban Development Areas.
- IS-P22. Park Dedications Held in Perpetuity.
- IS-P25. Street Lighting.
- IS-S1. Adequate Public Infrastructure and Services Ordinance.
- IS-S4. Subdivisions Outside of Fire District Boundaries.
- IS-IM13. Drainage and Flood Control Plan.
- IS-IM14. Storm Drainage Impact Fees.
- IS-IM16. Sheriff's Office Funding Sources.
- IS-IM17. Fire Protection Special Assessments.
- IS-IM18. Fire Impact Fees.
- IS-IM20. Fire Protection Levels of Service.
- IS-IM21. Standards of Fire Protection Response.
- IS-IM22. County Service Area-Fire Protection.
- IS-IM23. Fire Protection Municipal Service Review.
- IS-IM25. Organization of Water and Wastewater Providers.
- IS-IM26. Sizing of Water and Wastewater Systems.
- IS-IM29. Parks and Recreation.
- IS-IM31. Expand Lighting Services.

Without these policies, standards and measures, Alternatives C and D may not keep pace with the need for public services and facilities in all areas and for all services that would result from new development under the Plan. Accordingly, these alternatives would both have significant adverse impacts on utilities and services. The following chart provides more detail on how each of the alternatives reduce impacts to utilities and services.

<b>Chapter 5 Community Infrastructure and Service</b>				
<b>Key Topics, Issues and Policies</b>	<b>Alternative B</b>	<b>Existing Framework Plan (Alternative D)</b>	<b>Alternative A</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>
<p><b>Adequate Infrastructure and Services.</b> Adequate public infrastructure and services throughout the County provide a foundation for growth and are essential for community health, safety, and quality of life.</p> <p>Should the County base land use planning decisions on minimum levels of service for infrastructure and services and condition project approval according to such requirements?</p> <p><b>Key Policies:</b> P4, P6, P18 and P22 with S1, S4 and S5 (IM2-IM8)</p>	<p>Requires that adequate service levels be available for the type of development proposed (IS-P4). This is accomplished through the establishment of level of service standards (IS-S1); and programs that involve exactions and ongoing service funding (IS-P5, P6, and IS-IM3 through IM8); development impact fees (IS-IM4); and coordinated infrastructure and service capacity and capital improvement planning (IS-P1, P7, P10, IS-S1-S2, IS-IM1, IM20-IM27).</p>	<p>Does not contain clear policies requiring infrastructure and services or establish comprehensive minimum service standards.</p>	<p>Requires projects to be served with adequate levels of service concurrently with project implementation (IS-P4 and Standard IS-S1).</p>	<p>Does not establish infrastructure and service standards. Standards would be applied on a project-by-project basis.</p>
<p><b>Funding for Services and Construction and Maintenance of Infrastructure.</b> Funding for existing services and infrastructure is inadequate and new programs may be required to bring existing services up to standard, or maintain them at current levels as well as to support new development.</p>	<p>Following the completion of appropriate studies, the proposed Plan establishes development impact fees for facilities such as roads and drainage systems and the framework for the formation of special tax and assessment districts to fund new infrastructure and its ongoing maintenance (IS-P5, IS-IM3 through IM18).</p>	<p>Does not identify the need for infrastructure and service funding or contain policies to ensure such funding is put in place as development occurs.</p>	<p>Requires that new development be subject to funding mitigations when significant fiscal impacts are identified (IS-P5).</p>	<p>Allows discretionary project approval with a recorded notice of infrastructure or service deficiency. (IS-P4)</p>

<b>Chapter 5 Community Infrastructure and Service</b>				
<b>Key Topics, Issues and Policies</b>	<b>Alternative B</b>	<b>Existing Framework Plan (Alternative D)</b>	<b>Alternative A</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>
<p>Should the County establish development impact fees to fund new infrastructure demanded by development and establish tax or assessment funding programs to support service levels?</p> <p><b>Key Policies:</b> P5 (IM-3)</p>				
<p><b>Coordination with Service Providers.</b> Effective land use planning requires close coordination with municipal service providers.</p> <p>What are the County's coordination obligations for delivery and funding of services that the County does not directly provide?</p>	<p>Coordination with other service providers is among the highest priorities of this element (IS-G3 and IS-P1). This element supports and encourages the preparation of capital improvement programs (IS-P19), provides for regular consultation with service providers (IS-P8, IS-IM24 and IS-IM27) and requires the restriction of new development based on capacity limitations that are identified by service providers (IS-S2).</p>	<p>There are few policies regarding Intergovernmental coordination, which are found within specific sections of the plan, such as trail system coordination with Caltrans, coordination with economic development organizations, and coordination with state and federal agencies regarding solid waste</p>	<p>Contains the same Intergovernmental coordination policies as the proposed Plan</p>	<p>Contains many of the same Inter-governmental coordination policies as the proposed Plan, but limits the service provider coordination to project review and service capacity.</p>

A complete listing of the policy differences between the Plan Alternatives and the Project is contained in Appendix V of this EIR.

### 4.3.12 Recreation

#### Alternative A and Alternative B

Alternative A has no unique goals, policies, implementation measures or standards related to recreation. All such measures are also included in Alternative B, and so the impacts and mitigation of Alternative A would be the same as that of Alternative B.

Both of these alternatives and the Project include policies and implementation measures to reduce impacts of new development on park and recreation facilities. Several of these policies are listed below:

**IS-P21. Parks and Recreation Service in Urban Development Areas.** Encourage and support special districts to provide neighborhood parks and recreation services within Urban Development Areas.

**IS-P22. Park Dedications Held in Perpetuity.** Parklands shall be dedicated and held in perpetuity and protected against diversion to non-recreational purposes and conflicts with adjacent land uses.

**IS-P23. Private Recreation Facilities.** The development of private sector recreation facilities shall be encouraged but shall not be a substitute for public park requirements.

#### Alternative C and Alternative D

Neither Alternative C nor Alternative D include any policies or other measures related to recreation: Accordingly, Alternative C and D could have a significant impact on provision of adequate parks and recreation.

### 4.3.13 Transportation and Traffic

#### Alternative A

The compact form of development encouraged by land use maps under Alternative A would likely result in fewer vehicle trips and shorter trips than the Project and all the other Plan Alternatives. This will likely reduce transportation impacts. Plan Alternative A also includes policies, standards and implementation measures that encourage multimodal forms of transportation, which is also expected to result in fewer vehicle trips and shorter trips than the Project and all the other Plan Alternatives. The policies, standards and implementation measures are generally made mandatory in Alternative A which will make them more effective than the other alternatives. This is different than the other alternatives, which include more suggestive policies, standards and implementation measures. The Project incorporates some of the mandatory policies from Alternative A. Following are several examples of policies in Alternative A:

**C-P3. Consideration of Transportation Impacts in Land Use Decision Making.** Decisions to change or expand the land use of a particular area shall include an analysis of the impacts to existing and proposed transportation facilities and services so as to minimize or avoid significant operational or economic consequences and promote healthful transportation alternatives.

- C-Px. Circulation Planning for Bicycles, Pedestrians and Transit.** Circulation planning and discretionary project review shall include an assessment of quality of service for bicycle, pedestrian and public transit access.
- C-P27 Right-of-Way Design Standards.** Right-of-way design standards shall incorporate specifications for bicycles, pedestrians, public transit facilities, and buffers.

Alternative A also would implement in all the urban study areas some policies in the existing McKinleyville Community Plan that encourage multimodal transportation.

### **Alternative B**

The development pattern shown on the land use maps for Alternative B is more dispersed than Alternative A, so it is expected to increase both the number and length of motor vehicle trips compared to Alternative A, B and the Project. The resulting increase in the use of the transportation system will have more transportation impacts than Alternative A.

The policies, standards and implementation measures for Alternative B are somewhat less protective of the transportation system than those for Alternative A and the Project, and would result in more transportation impacts.

### **Alternative C**

Plan Alternative C would not implement a number of policies as shown in Appendix V. Policies in the McKinleyville Community Plan would apply only in the McKinleyville Urban Study Area and Water Study Area.

The expanded development pattern shown on the land use maps for Alternative C is expected to increase both the number and length of motor vehicle trips compared to Alternatives A, B and the Project. The resulting increase in the use of the transportation system will have significantly more transportation impacts than Alternative A, B, and the Project.

### **Alternative D**

The land use maps for Alternative D, the existing 1984 Framework Plan, show a less dispersed development pattern than Alternative C, resulting in fewer transportation impacts from both the number and length of motor vehicle trips. However, the development pattern under Alternative D is more dispersed than under Alternative A, B and the Project, so it would have comparatively greater impacts on the transportation system from both the number and length of motor vehicle trips.

Alternative D does not contain the policies and implementation measures in Alternative A, B or the Project which are protective of the transportation system, so there would be greater impacts to the transportation system resulting from the policies in Alternative D as well. The following chart helps explain the key differences between the alternatives in their approach toward reducing transportation impacts.

<b>Chapter 7 Circulation Element</b>				
<b>Key Topics, Issues and Policies</b>	<b>Alternative B</b>	<b>Existing Framework Plan (Alternative D)</b>	<b>Alternative A</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>
<p><b>Transportation System-Condition, Capacity, Safety</b>                      Safe and adequate roads, bicycle, and pedestrian routes are essential to accommodate growth. Land use planning must also complement transportation planning by locating uses in areas that can be efficiently served and by conditioning projects to mitigate impacts.</p> <p>How should the Plan ensure that appropriate transportation system improvements are in place to serve new development and that existing facilities are upgraded?</p> <p><b>Key Policies:</b>                      P3 &amp; P4, P5 (with S3 and IM2), P9, Px</p>	<p>The proposed Plan provides for transportation system-condition, capacity, and safety through the consideration of transportation matters in land use planning and vice versa (C-P1-P3), requires that new development provide its fair share of on- and off-site transportation improvements (C-P4), and establishes multi-modal right of way (C-P11 and C-P25) and level of service standards for proposed developments in order to maintain adequate capacity (C-P12, C-P25).</p>	<p>The Framework Plan considers access to public transit, bicycle parking and carpool parking in circulation planning, but does not contain specific requirements for new development.</p>	<p>Alternative A expands programs relating to multi-modal uses to address overall transportation system condition, capacity, and safety</p>	<p>Alternative C addresses transportation system-condition, capacity, and safety in a manner similar to the existing Framework General Plan.</p>

Chapter 7 Circulation Element				
Key Topics, Issues and Policies	Alternative B	Existing Framework Plan (Alternative D)	Alternative A	Alternative C
<p><b>Balanced Transportation Opportunities</b>                      Emphasis should be placed on improvements for public transit, pedestrians, bicycles, equestrian</p> <p>What policies and programs are required to balance the needs of all types of transportation?</p> <p><b>Key Policies:</b>                      P17 with IM10, P24 with S-3, P25, P27, P31, P34</p>	<p>The plan requires that multi-modal uses be increased prior to widening or constructing new roads (C-P14) and supports non-motorized planning as part of the U.S. 101 Safety Corridor improvements (C-P17). In addition, the Plan requires that bicycle and pedestrian facilities be included in the County's capital improvement program (C-P24) and includes multi-modal improvement standards in project review (C-P25-32).</p>	<p>The Framework General Plan does not include multi-modal planning considerations</p>	<p>Alternative A would specify additional criteria in multi-modal circulation planning, such as reducing drive-alone automobile use, developing a long term transit plan, and establishing additional standards to prioritize roadway capital expenditures</p>	<p>Alternative C would not establish additional policies or County requirements to balance the needs of all types of transportation</p>
<p><b>Interagency Cooperation</b>                      Many agencies plan and operate local transportation system.</p> <p>What policies and programs should be added to provide for comprehensive coordination between transportation agencies and how should projects be prioritized?</p> <p><b>Key Policies:</b>                      P35 (with IM12), P42, IM6</p>	<p>The Plan encourages interagency coordination in many Elements and especially in regards to transportation planning and funding through the regional transportation planning process (C-P6, C-P-22, C-P35), the joint preparation of a travel demand model (C-P7), as well as planning with school districts (C-P18), inter-departmental transportation planning (C-P8), and regarding roadway funding through the Community Infrastructure and Services Element.</p>	<p>The Framework Plan contains policies that support the work of other agencies regarding transportation planning but does not provide for comprehensive coordination between transportation agencies.</p>	<p>Alternative A contains the same interagency coordination policies as the proposed Plan, but adds coordination with transit providers in the development of a long range transit plan.</p>	<p>Alternative C would provide for inter-agency coordination in a manner similar to the existing Framework Plan.</p>

A complete listing of the policy differences between the Plan Alternatives and the Project is contained in Appendix V of this EIR.

### 4.3.14 Scenic Resources

#### Alternative A

Plan Alternative A is expected to have fewer visual impacts than the other alternatives outside the urban areas. Fewer housing units would be accommodated in forest and agricultural lands in Alternative A, so more open space will be maintained and less scenic intrusion would occur.

**Urban Areas:** Within urban areas, the focus of Alternative A on a more concentrated development pattern will involve streetscape and landscape visual impacts to existing neighborhood that could be greater than the other alternatives, but Alternative A omits permit streamlining policies (UL-P2 and UL-P3) contained in Alternatives B and C and includes stricter historic preservation and design review policies (UL-P9, UL-P12) that will tend to reduce such impacts. Additionally, Alternative A includes less additional land for urban and suburban residential use than Alternatives B, C, or D, impacts to aesthetic resources in and adjacent to urban areas will be less significant than the other alternatives.

**Rural Areas:** Alternative A provides more protection of the scenic quality of private forestlands and agricultural lands than the other alternatives with policies and land use designations that better protect continued resource production of these lands, and more strongly discourage conversion to residential, commercial or industrial use. Alternative A also goes further than the other alternatives to support conservation easements and Williamson Act contracts. Plan Alternative A includes the same new policy that protects scenic qualities of heritage landscapes in Plan Alternative B.

**Other Scenic Areas:** Alternative A includes stricter measures to protect scenic qualities of forested hillslope areas by extending design review of new development to Timber Production lands.

**SR-IM1. Mapping of Scenic Areas, Heritage Landscapes and Scenic Roadways.** Initiate a public process to identify, map, and designate Scenic Areas, Heritage Landscapes and Scenic Roadways, including specific ordinance standards for scenic protections and design review.

**Scenic Roadways:** Alternative A includes a wider buffer (400 feet rather than 200 feet in Alternative B), and design review requirements for new signs, which would better protect scenic qualities of the designated highway.

**SR-S1. Development in Mapped Scenic Areas.** Discretionary and ministerial development shall avoid visual disturbance of natural contours, hilltops, tree lines, forest landscapes, bluffs and rock outcroppings, to the maximum extent feasible. Roads and public utility corridors shall be narrow as possible and follow natural contours. Natural features disturbed for construction purposes shall be restored to as close to natural condition as feasible.

**Billboards:** As in Plan Alternative B, Alternative A continues the existing scenic resource protection measures that apply to billboards, disallows off premise billboards in Resource Related Industrial areas, and supports efforts of the Railroad Authority to remove or relocate billboards from their right of way between Fields Landing and Arcata.

Plan A policies provide further protections than Alternative B by restricting the size of new off-premise billboards to a maximum of 300 square feet, consistent with limits for principally permitted on-premise signs.

**SR-S6. New Off-Premise Billboards.** New off-premise billboards shall be restricted to a maximum term of 10 years and limited to areas designated as Commercial Services or Industrial General. Off-premise billboards shall not include animation or electronic messaging unless for public service purposes and be restricted to a size of 300 square feet.

**Wayfarers Signage:** Unique to Alternative A is a program to reduce the visual clutter of signage supporting and encouraging tourist travel in the County. A program is included to establish a consistent set of signs directing travelers to important destinations within the County, including scenic highways, communities, and other attractions.

**SR-IM6.Wayfarers Signage.** Establish a local scenic byways network designed to direct travelers to areas of scenic, cultural, and historic interest.

## Alternative C

Alternative C is expected to have greater visual impacts than the other alternatives outside the urban study areas. More housing units would be accommodated in forest and agricultural lands in Alternative C, so less open space will be maintained and more scenic intrusion would occur.

Alternative C on a more concentrated development pattern will involve streetscape and landscape visual impacts to existing neighborhoods within urban study areas that maybe would not occur with the other alternatives. These visual impacts are balanced by policies more protective of forest and agricultural land outside communities.

**Forest and Agricultural Lands:** Alternative C continues to provide protection of the scenic quality of private forestlands and agricultural lands with policies and land use designations that encourage continued resource production of these lands, although to a lesser degree than the other alternatives. It also discourages conversion of agriculture and forest lands to residential, commercial or industrial use, but leaves that decision more in the hands of the property owner. Alternative C also supports conservation easements and Williamson Act contracts, but again not as in the other plan alternatives. Alternative C does not include the heritage landscape protection measures of Alternative B.

**Other Scenic Areas:** Alternative C continues existing goals, policies and programs to minimize impacts on scenic resources from new development through design review, CEQA review, use permit and coastal permit requirements. Alternative C does not include the forested hillslope protection measures of Alternative B.

**Scenic Highways:** Alternative C does not include policies to seek official State designation of scenic highway status.

**Billboards:** Alternative C continues to protect scenic resources by maintaining the same limitations in the coastal zone as the existing coastal plans. It expands the inland areas where billboards may be placed to include other industrial designations as well as the heavy industrial areas they are presently allowed. It does not include provisions for limiting the term or the size of billboards, and supports existing measures to require building permits for the repair and maintenance of billboards.

Alternative C also includes a program to create incentives for signage in commercial areas that fits in with the neighborhood character.

Fewer restrictions on development of forest and agricultural land under Alternative C will likely result in more visual impacts outside urban study areas. Within urban study areas, the development pattern under Alternative C will probably be very similar to the future development pattern of the existing

general plan. Alternative C will maintain most of the same densities, and therefore will likely have similar impacts on streetscapes and community character as the No Project alternative.

#### **Alternative D**

There are several policies in the Housing Element Appendix that would continue to offer some protection of visual resources in Alternative D:

- 1.38 The County shall discourage encroachment of residential subdivisions upon agricultural and other natural resource lands. Subdivisions of resource lands shall be allowed only where the resulting uses will not adversely affect the resource use of the site.
- 1.39 The County shall encourage the preservation of natural features of terrain and vegetation in new subdivisions in residential zones by clustering development, providing common open areas, smaller, more appropriate roads, and other compatible land use innovations in the development of new residential areas.

The following chart helps explain the key differences between the alternatives in their approach toward reducing transportation impacts.

<b>Chapter 7 Circulation Element</b>				
<b>Key Topics, Issues and Policies</b>	<b>Alternative B</b>	<b>Existing Framework Plan (Alternative D)</b>	<b>Alternative A</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>
<p><b>Transportation System-Condition, Capacity, Safety</b>                      Safe and adequate roads, bicycle, and pedestrian routes are essential to accommodate growth. Land use planning must also complement transportation planning by locating uses in areas that can be efficiently served and by conditioning projects to mitigate impacts.</p> <p>How should the Plan ensure that appropriate transportation system improvements are in place to serve new development and that existing facilities are upgraded?</p> <p><b>Key Policies:</b>                      P3 &amp; P4, P5 (with S3 and IM2), P9, Px</p>	<p>The proposed Plan provides for transportation system-condition, capacity, and safety through the consideration of transportation matters in land use planning and vice versa (C-P1-P3), requires that new development provide its fair share of on- and off-site transportation improvements (C-P4), and establishes multi-modal right of way (C-P11 and C-P25) and level of service standards for proposed developments in order to maintain adequate capacity (C-P12, C-P25).</p>	<p>The Framework Plan considers access to public transit, bicycle parking and carpool parking in circulation planning, but does not contain specific requirements for new development.</p>	<p>Alternative A expands programs relating to multi-modal uses to address overall transportation system condition, capacity, and safety</p>	<p>Alternative C addresses transportation system-condition, capacity, and safety in a manner similar to the existing Framework General Plan.</p>

Chapter 7 Circulation Element				
Key Topics, Issues and Policies	Alternative B	Existing Framework Plan (Alternative D)	Alternative A	Alternative C
<p><b>Balanced Transportation Opportunities</b>                      Emphasis should be placed on improvements for public transit, pedestrians, bicycles, equestrian</p> <p>What policies and programs are required to balance the needs of all types of transportation?</p> <p><b>Key Policies:</b>                      P17 with IM10, P24 with S-3, P25, P27, P31, P34</p>	<p>The plan requires that multi-modal uses be increased prior to widening or constructing new roads (C-P14) and supports non-motorized planning as part of the U.S. 101 Safety Corridor improvements (C-P17). In addition, the Plan requires that bicycle and pedestrian facilities be included in the County's capital improvement program (C-P24) and includes multi-modal improvement standards in project review (C-P25-32).</p>	<p>The Framework General Plan does not include multi-modal planning considerations</p>	<p>Alternative A would specify additional criteria in multi-modal circulation planning, such as reducing drive-alone automobile use, developing a long term transit plan, and establishing additional standards to prioritize roadway capital expenditures</p>	<p>Alternative C would not establish additional policies or County requirements to balance the needs of all types of transportation</p>
<p><b>Interagency Cooperation</b>                      Many agencies plan and operate local transportation system.</p> <p>What policies and programs should be added to provide for comprehensive coordination between transportation agencies and how should projects be prioritized?</p> <p><b>Key Policies:</b>                      P35 (with IM12), P42, IM6</p>	<p>The Plan encourages interagency coordination in many Elements and especially in regards to transportation planning and funding through the regional transportation planning process (C-P6, C-P-22, C-P35), the joint preparation of a travel demand model (C-P7), as well as planning with school districts (C-P18), inter-departmental transportation planning (C-P8), and regarding roadway funding through the Community Infrastructure and Services Element.</p>	<p>The Framework Plan contains policies that support the work of other agencies regarding transportation planning but does not provide for comprehensive coordination between transportation agencies.</p>	<p>Alternative A contains the same interagency coordination policies as the proposed Plan, but adds coordination with transit providers in the development of a long range transit plan.</p>	<p>Alternative C would provide for inter-agency coordination in a manner similar to the existing Framework Plan.</p>

A complete listing of the policy differences between the Plan Alternatives and the Project is contained in Appendix V of this EIR