

Chapter 4 – Evaluation of Plan Alternatives

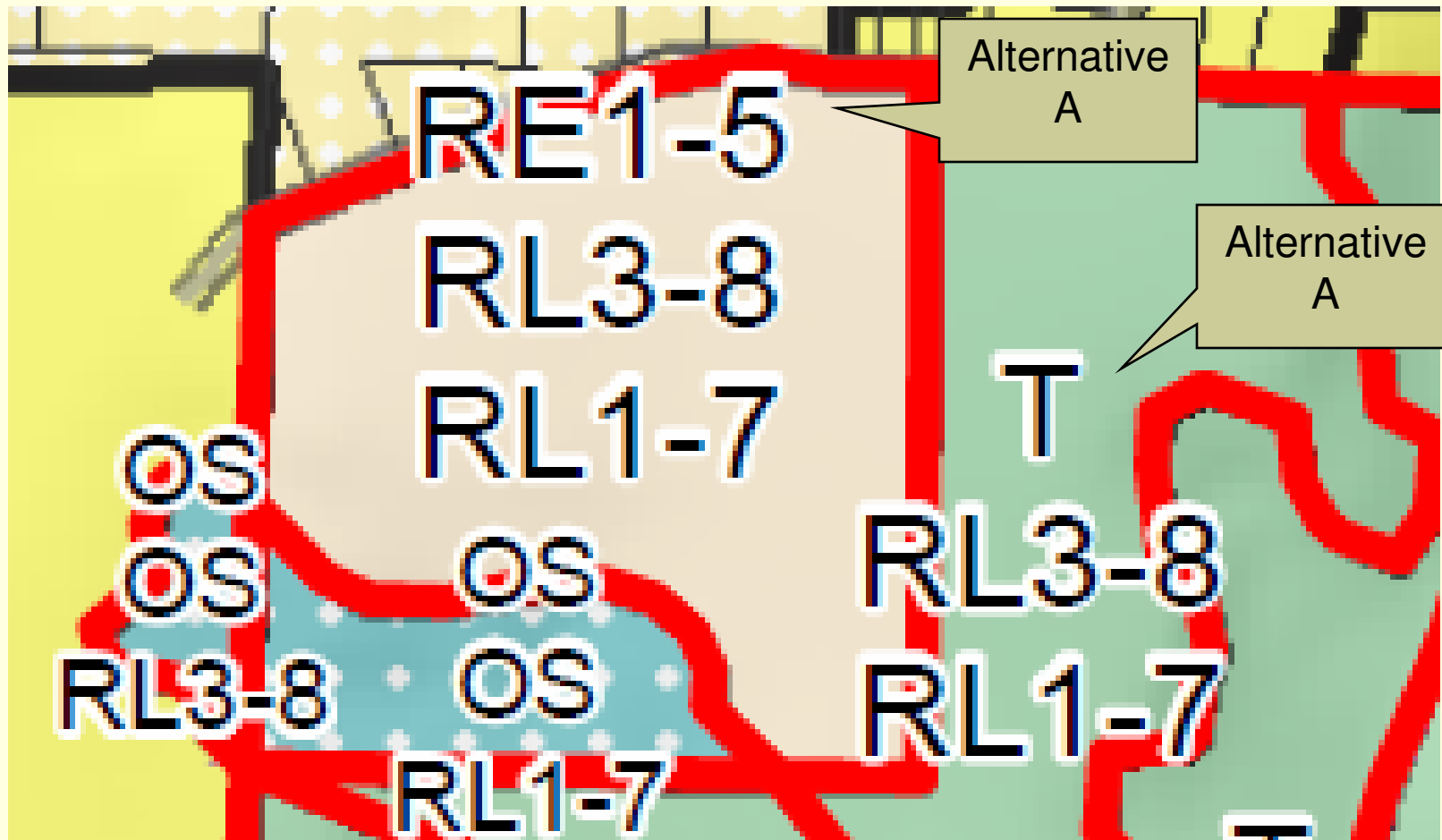
- Describes the state requirements
- Identifies alternatives that were rejected early on
- Summarizes, then compares the alternatives
 - Alternative A - Focused Growth Alternative,
 - Alternative B - 2008 Proposed General Plan Update,
 - Alternative C - Expanded Growth Alternative, and
 - Alternative D - No Project (i.e. development under the existing General Plan)
 - Alternative PC – the Planning Commission - Approved Project

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- Alternative A - Focused Growth Alternative

Alternative A - Focused Growth Alternative

- Provides for a slight increase in planned urban residential densities in existing developed areas with an RL 3-8 Plan designation
- Reduces some planned residential expansion outside infill areas
- Limits large lot residential development on resource lands, specifically the lands designated Industrial Timberland (TI) and Ranchland (AGR)
- Includes Mixed-use development designations

Alternative Land Use Maps – Appendix V



South Eureka map

Alternative A - Focused Growth Alternative

- 16,420 residential units at expected buildout
(20% fewer than the Project)
- 6,943 acres of commercial and industrial land
(14% less than the Project)

Alternative Comparison Charts – Appendix V

Plan Alternative					Chapter 4: Land Use Section 2: Growth Planning	
A	B	C	D	Project	Goals, Policies, Standards and Implementation Measures	
Policies						
A	B			P	GP-P2. Urban Development Areas. Establish and maintain Urban Development Areas within Community Plan Areas to reflect areas that are served with existing or planned to be served with public wastewater systems.	

Alternative A - Focused Growth Alternative

- 269 Policies, Standards & Implementation Measures are shared by Alternative A & the Project (57% of the Project total)

Alternative A - Focused Growth Alternative

- Policies generally impose more restrictions on new development, which will likely reduce environmental impacts in comparison to the Project and other alternatives.
- Policies do not include some incentives encouraging new development.

Alternative A - Focused Growth Alternative

Alternative A

- **GP-P6. 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 Project

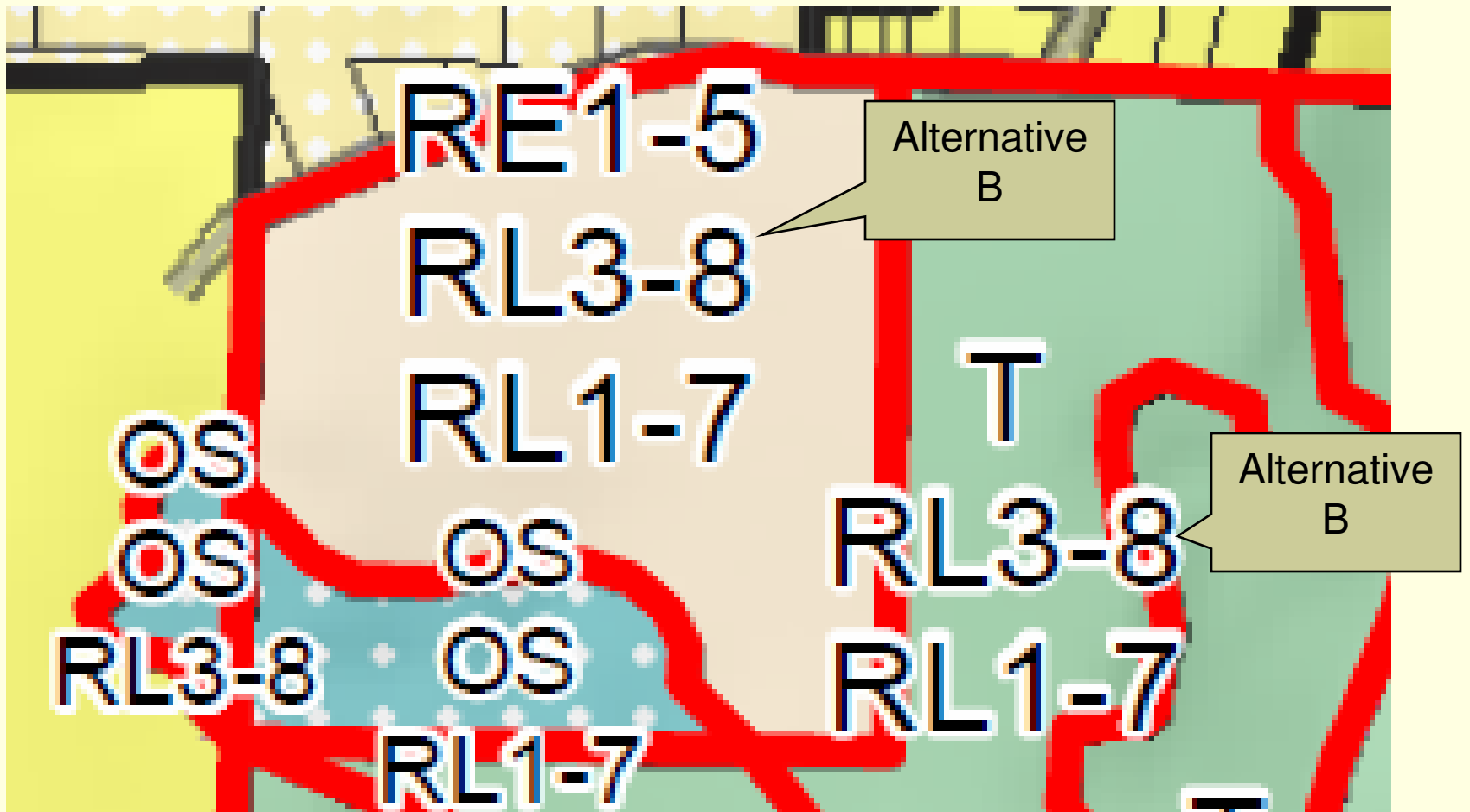
- **GP-P6. Use of On-Site Sewage Systems within Urban Development Areas.** The utilization of on-site sewage disposal systems shall not be acceptable for new development including subdivisions in the Urban Development Area, unless the Planning Commission makes specific factual findings that: 1) the extension 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.

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- Alternative B - 2008 Proposed General Plan Update

Alternative B - 2008 Proposed General Plan Update

- Presented to the Planning Commission as the Draft General Plan in November, 2008.
- Includes higher density allowances in the urban areas, similar to Alternative A (RL 3-8).
- Retains less land in agricultural and timberland uses and allows more housing to be built on these resource lands compared to Alternative A.
- Includes the Ranchland (AGR) designation (160 – 600 acres per unit density), but does not include the Industrial Timberland (TI) designation.

Alternative Land Use Maps – Appendix V



South Eureka map

Alternative B - 2008 Proposed General Plan Update

- 20,534 residential units at expected buildout (100% of the Project)
- 7,864 acres of commercial and industrial land (97% of the Project)

Alternative B - 2008 Proposed General Plan Update

- 253 Policies, Standards & Implementation Measures are shared by Alternative B & the Project (54% of the Project total)

Alternative B - 2008 Proposed General Plan Update

- Policy language is less protective than Alternative A.

Alternative B

- **SR-P6. Term of Off-Premise Billboards.** Limit the term of new off-premise billboards with use agreements to provide for removal.

Alternative A

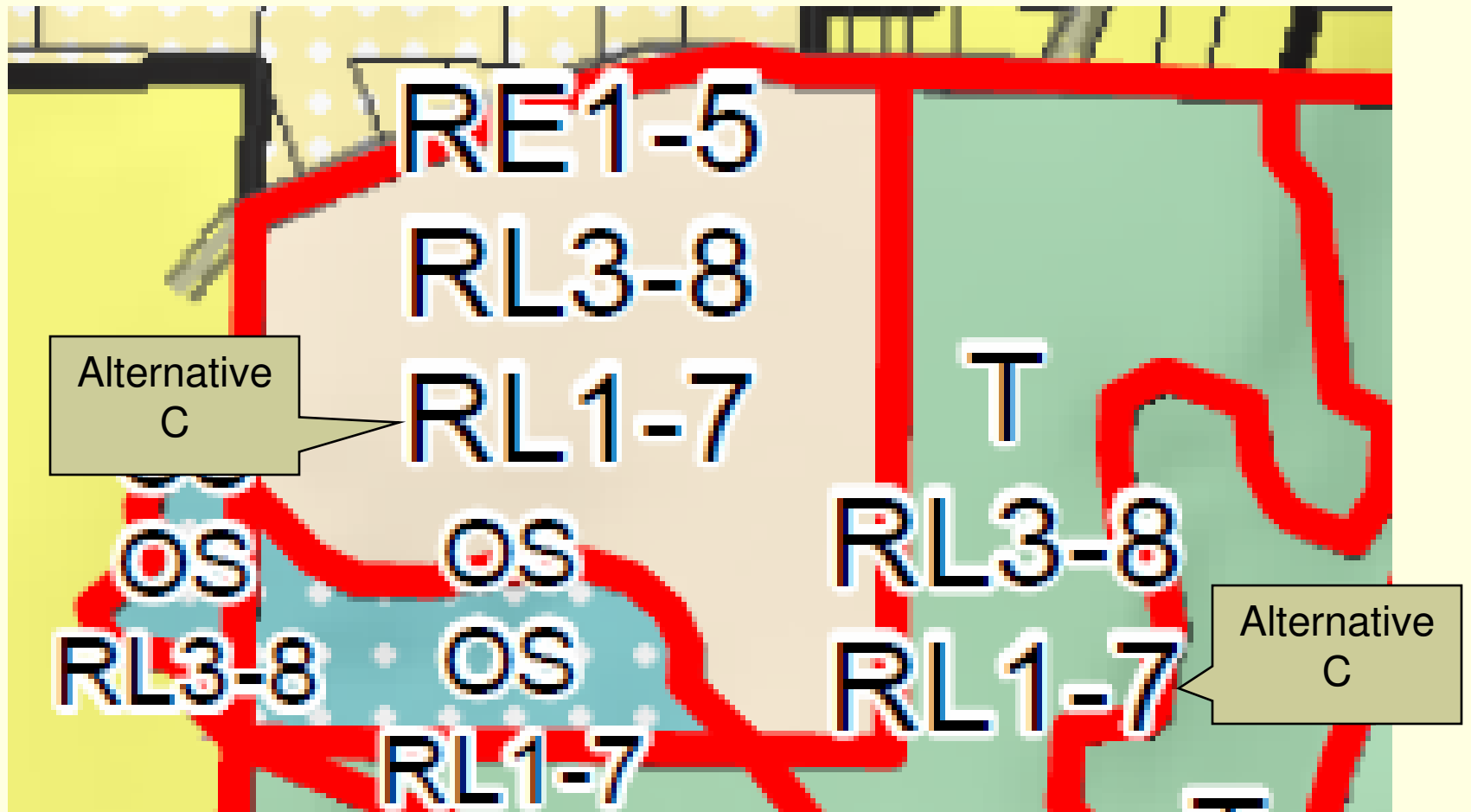
- **SR-P6. Term of Off-Premise Billboards and Prohibition.** Limit the term of new and existing off-premise billboards by ordinance to provide for removal. Prohibit the construction of new off-premise billboards along mapped Scenic Roadways.

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- Alternative C - Expanded Growth Alternative

Alternative C - Expanded Growth Alternative

- Alternative C is a high residential capacity plan.
- The alternative provides for an increase in residential opportunities in both urban and rural areas

Alternative Land Use Maps – Appendix V



South Eureka map

Alternative C - Expanded Growth Alternative

- 22,990 residential units at expected buildout
(112% of the Project)
- 8,206 acres of commercial and industrial land
(101% of the Project)

Alternative C - Expanded Growth Alternative

- 88 Policies, Standards & Implementation Measures are shared by Alternative C & the Project (19% of the Project total)

Alternative C - Expanded Growth Alternative

- Policy language is less protective than Alternative A and Alternative B.

Alternative B

- **SR-P6. Term of Off-Premise Billboards.** Limit the term of new off-premise billboards with use agreements to provide for removal.

Alternative A

- **SR-P6. Term of Off-Premise Billboards and Prohibition.** Limit the term of new and existing off-premise billboards by ordinance to provide for removal. Prohibit the construction of new off-premise billboards along mapped Scenic Roadways.

Alternative C

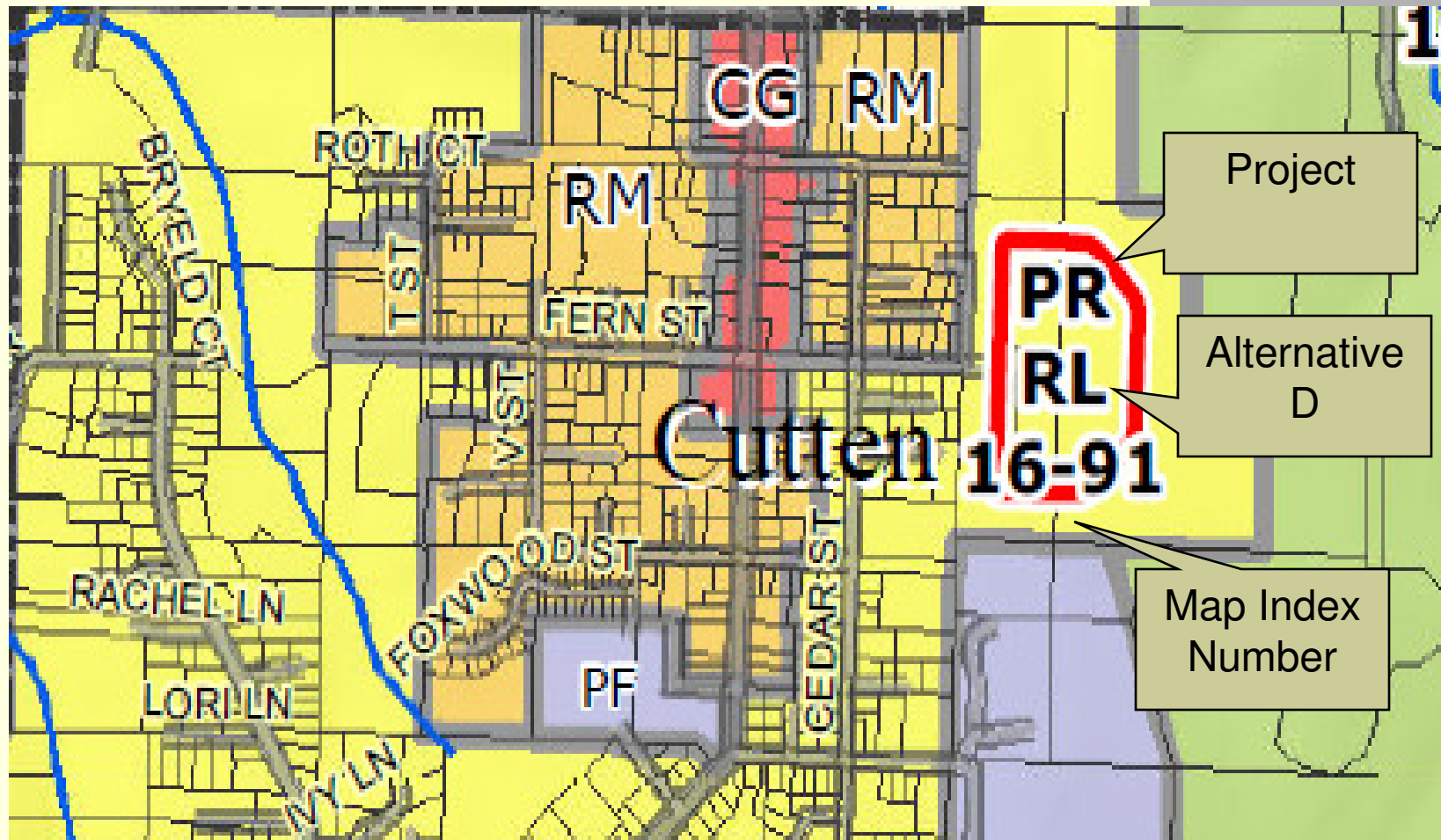
- (no policy)

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- Alternative D – No Project Alternative
(Existing Framework Plan)

Alternative D – No Project Alternative (Existing Framework Plan)

- Considers future development patterns continuing under the existing Framework Plan.
- This is the “no project” alternative required under CEQA.

Alternative Land Use Maps – Appendix V



South Eureka map

Alternative D – No Project Alternative (Existing Framework Plan)

- 19,856 residential units at expected buildout
(96% of the Project)
- 9,134 acres of commercial and industrial land
(113% of the Project)

Alternative D – No Project Alternative (Existing Framework Plan)

- 13 Policies, Standards & Implementation Measures are shared by Alternative D & the Project (3% of the Project total)

Alternative D – No Project Alternative (Existing Framework Plan)

Policy language for Alternative D is less protective of the environment than Alternative A and B.

Alternative A

- **GP-P6. 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.

Alternative D

- **2633.4.** Utilization of public water services should be encouraged in the urban development area.

Alternatives Analysis Conclusions

- In terms of protecting the environment, the alternatives may be ranked as follows (in descending order of protection):
 - Alternative A
 - The Project
 - Alternative B
 - Alternative C / Alternative D

Chapter 5 – Other CEQA Considerations

- Significant irreversible changes;
- Cumulative impacts;
- Growth-inducing impacts;
- Long-term versus short-term costs and benefits;
- Mandatory Findings of Significance:
 - Potential to degrade the quality of the environment...
 - Potential to threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community;
 - Potential to reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal; and
 - Potential to eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory.
- Organizations and persons consulted in preparation of the EIR, and the preparers of the EIR

Significant irreversible changes

- Commitments of nonrenewable resources associated with the construction of new housing units, non-residential structures, streets, and other infrastructure.
- An incremental increase in energy demand.
- Development and further urbanization within the plan area would result in irreversible environmental changes; once an area is developed into a built environment, the likelihood of 'reversing' development back to baseline conditions is unlikely.

Cumulative Impacts

- Assumptions:
 - The geographic scope of the cumulative impacts area is all of Humboldt County.
 - Population projections assume growth will occur in each jurisdiction in the future on a proportional basis; **5,751** residential units added countywide between 2010 and 2030.

Significant Cumulative Impacts - Agriculture

- The Project would allow the conversion of some agricultural and timberlands to other uses to accommodate new development.
- Cities in the County may also allow some conversion of agricultural land or timberland to other uses.
- **Conclusion:** Development within the cities together with the unincorporated areas may contribute to cumulative conversion of agricultural lands.

Significant Cumulative Impacts – Water Supply

- Residential, industrial, commercial and agricultural development allowed under the Project would place additional demands on Humboldt County's water resources.
- Effectiveness of mitigation cannot be definitively determined or tested at this time.
- Future development within cities may impact water supply and availability in a similar manner,
- **Conclusion:** This impact is considered cumulatively significant

Significant Cumulative Impacts – Transportation

- Efficacy of mitigation measures in the EIR is not assured.
- The Project and general plans of the cities encourage future population growth, which will cumulatively increase the number of vehicle miles traveled.
- Certain road segments are expected to operate at an unacceptable level of service under the Project and the general plans of the seven incorporated cities, which will conflict with a regional level of service standard.
- **Conclusion:** The Project will have a cumulatively significant impact in terms of vehicle miles traveled, unacceptable LOS, and conflict with a regional level of service standard.

Significant Cumulative Impacts – Hazards: Wildland Fires

- Cities in the County may allow some development in areas with high fire hazards, which could spread into adjacent unincorporated areas.
- Adding additional development within areas of high and very high hazard would expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires.
- **Conclusion:** This impact is considered a significant cumulative impact.

Significant Cumulative Impacts – Hazards: Seismic shaking, landslides, tsunami

- Virtually all of Humboldt County has the potential for loss of life and property due to fault rupture and strong seismic ground shaking, and there are many areas subject to liquefaction and landslide hazards, and tsunami hazards, including areas within the cities.
- Increasing population within the area can be viewed as increasing the exposure of people to geologic hazards.
- **Conclusion:** Therefore, this is a cumulatively significant impact.

Significant Cumulative Impacts – Soil Erosion or the Loss of Topsoil

- The Project will allow additional development in areas of soil instability, which will increase soil erosion and the loss of topsoil, which may degrade water quality.
- Development within cities may contribute to cumulative impacts from soil erosion or the loss of topsoil.
- **Conclusion:** This is considered a significant cumulative impact.

Significant Cumulative Impacts – Air Quality

- The North Coast air basin is currently in non-attainment for PM10.
- Cumulative development allowed under the Project and the general plans for the cities will contribute PM10 emissions, thereby violating PM10 emission standards.
- **Conclusion:** The Project will have significant cumulative air quality impacts.

Significant Cumulative Impacts – GHG emissions

- Substantial Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions indirectly related to the Project and the general plans of the cities within the county will combine with emissions across California, the U.S., and the globe to cumulatively contribute to global climate change.
- **Conclusion:** Thus there is a potential for a cumulative significant GHG emissions impact.

Significant Cumulative Impacts – Historic Resources

- The proposed project could indirectly result in the demolition of historic structures when building sites are prepared for new construction.
- New development within cities may also impact historic resources.
- **Conclusion:** The cumulative impacts of the Project on historic resources are significant.

Significant Cumulative Impacts – Scenic Resources

- The Project is expected to have significant impacts on scenic vistas and visual character.
- There are some important visual resources and community characteristics within the county's seven (7) cities. Their general plans too may allow some impacts to visual resources and community character.
- **Conclusion:** Development within the cities together with the development in the unincorporated area may contribute to significant cumulative impacts to visual resources and community character.

Significant Cumulative Impacts – Light and Glare

- Additional sources of outdoor lighting such as streetlights, housing, and commercial structures, etc., whether in the cities or in the unincorporated area would make a cumulatively considerable contribution to light pollution and nighttime sky impacts.
- **Conclusion:** This impact is considered significant on a cumulative level

Growth Inducing Impacts

The Project will have the following growth-inducing impacts.

- Foster Economic or Population Growth
- Remove Obstacles to Growth
- Precedent-Setting Actions
- Development of or Encroachment upon Open Space

Long Term Benefits Versus Short Term Gains

- The Project avoids making changes to land use designations that involve short term gains with long term costs.
 - Protection of resource lands through policies and maps

Mandatory Findings of Significance

- Potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels;
- Potential to threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community;
- Potential to reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal; and
- Potential to eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory.
- Addressed in Chapter 3 of the EIR