

4.15 PUBLIC SERVICES

4.15.1 INTRODUCTION

This section describes the existing conditions and regulatory setting for public services and evaluates impacts on public services that could occur as a result of the implementation of the proposed project. Public services addressed in this section include fire protection services, law enforcement services, and schools. Impacts on emergency response or access (i.e., disruption of emergency services due to access restrictions) are addressed in Section 4.17, Traffic and Transportation. Impacts on parks and recreational facilities are addressed in Section 4.16, Recreation. Impacts on solid waste disposal facilities are addressed in Section 4.18, Utilities and Service Systems, and energy is addressed in Section 4.12, Mineral and Energy Resources.

4.15.2 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

4.15.2.1 Fire Protection

All Jurisdictions

All jurisdictions within the project boundaries contract with the Riverside County Fire Department for the provision of fire protection services. The County Fire Department is administered under contract with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE). The Fire Department headquarters for each jurisdiction are as follows:

- City of Desert Hot Springs: 65950 Pierson Boulevard, Desert Hot Springs
- City of Palm Desert: 73510 Fred Waring Drive, Palm Desert
- City of Rancho Mirage: 69825 Highway 111, Rancho Mirage
- City of La Quinta: 79495 Calle Tampico, La Quinta
- City of Indio: 46990 Jackson Street, Indio
- Community of Thermal: 56925 Tyler Street, Thermal

4.15.2.2 Police Protection

Riverside County Sheriff's Department

The Riverside County Sheriff's Department provides law enforcement services to several cities within the project area, including Palm Desert, Rancho Mirage, and the unincorporated community of Thermal. The Department is responsible for enforcement of local, state, and federal public safety, traffic enforcement, and maintaining public order. The Sheriff Station headquarters for each jurisdiction are as follows:

- City of Palm Desert: 73705 Gerald Ford Drive, Palm Desert
- City of Rancho Mirage: 73705 Gerald Ford Drive, Palm Desert
- Thermal: 86625 Airport Boulevard, Thermal

City of Desert Hot Springs

Police protection and law enforcement services are provided by the Desert Hot Springs Police Department, which includes high visibility preventive patrol, enforcement of local, state and federal laws

and ordinances, traffic enforcement, traffic collision investigation, and non-criminal requests for service. The Desert Hot Springs Police Department is located at 65950 Pierson Boulevard.

City of La Quinta

The City of La Quinta operates a local Police Department with assistance from the Riverside County Sheriff's Department. Divisions within the Police Department include patrol, investigation, special enforcement team, and the business district team. The La Quinta Civic Center Community Policing Office is located on 78495 Calle Tampico. The Riverside County Sheriff's Department La Quinta station is located at 86625 Airport Boulevard in Thermal.

City of Indio

Police protection and law enforcement services are provided by the Indio Police Department, which is responsible for enforcement of local, state, and federal public safety, traffic enforcement, and maintaining public order. There are currently three divisions within the department, including Field Services, Investigative Services and Support Services. Programs employed to address issues and provide services include: police canine (K-9) teams, police motorcycles, code enforcement, animal control, police reserves, cadets, citizens on patrol, neighborhood watch, and a chaplain program. The Indio Police Department is located at 46800 Jackson Street.

4.15.2.3 Schools

School districts that serve the project area include Desert Sands Unified School District (DSUSD) and the Coachella Valley Unified School District (CVUSD). DSUSD consists of 19 elementary schools, one charter elementary school, six middle schools, one charter middle school, four comprehensive high schools, two continuation high schools, one alternative education school, and preschool. CVUSD consists of 14 elementary schools, three middle schools, four high schools, and one adult education school.

4.15.3 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

4.15.3.1 Federal and State

There are no federal or state regulations governing public services that apply to the proposed project.

4.15.3.2 Local

The local jurisdictions and contracted police and fire service providers are responsible for establishing performance objectives and average emergency response times to ensure adequate police and fire services are provided to their service areas. There are no local regulations governing schools that apply to the proposed project.

4.15.4 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

4.15.4.1 Significance Criteria

Based on Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, a project would have a significant effect on public services if it were to:

- a. Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of, or the need for, new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any public services such as fire protection, police protection, or schools.

4.15.4.2 Approach to Analysis

This impact analysis focuses on the potential for project construction or operations to directly affect public services. The analysis considers whether construction or operation of the project would affect the ability of fire, police, and school service providers to maintain acceptable service or other performance objectives, resulting in the need for new or expanded facilities.

Due to the nature of the proposed project, there would be no impacts related to the above criterion for the reasons described below.

- a. The proposed project would not substantially increase the demand for police, fire, and school services in the project area. It is expected that construction workers would be local to the Coachella Valley and surrounding counties, and there would be no substantial increase in local populations that would affect established service ratios for fire protection, police protection, or schools.

Potential incidents requiring fire or law protection services could occur during project construction. The construction workers will be required to attend safety sessions which will address construction hazards such as fires. Additionally the contractor will be employing proper safety procedures and storage of hazardous materials which will reduce potential incidents for fire. Construction-related activities are temporary and will end once development of the project is complete. However, the potential temporary increase in incidents would not be expected to exceed the capacity and service times of local fire and law enforcement agencies..

The proposed project would not result in a permanent increase in the local population. Operation and post-construction maintenance activities would be similar to existing CVWD maintenance activities and would not result in substantial increases in the demand for public services, including fire protection, police protection, or schools. Therefore, no operational impacts related to public services would occur.

4.15.4.3 Construction and Operational Impacts and Mitigation Measures

As described above, implementation of the proposed project would not result in impacts related to public services. Therefore, no mitigation measures related to this resource topic are required.

4.15.5 SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION

No mitigation program is required.

4.15.6 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

The geographic scope for the analysis of potential cumulative public services impacts includes the jurisdictional boundaries (including cities and service districts) and the immediate vicinity in which each of the project facility sites is located. The cumulative impact analysis was performed using the summary of projections approach. Because the project would not result in project-specific impacts related to public services, implementation of the project would not contribute to cumulative impacts.

4.15.7 REFERENCES

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. 2015. *About CAL FIRE*. Retrieved from <http://calfire.ca.gov/index>.

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