
IV. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

J. PUBLIC SERVICES

2. POLICE PROTECTION

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) is the local law enforcement agency responsible for providing police protection services to the project site and immediate project vicinity. The project site is located within the LAPD's Foothill Area, which is served by the Foothill Community Police Station located at 12760 Osborne Street. The LAPD's Foothill Area has approximately 285 sworn officers and 26 civilian support staff deployed over three watches.¹ The Foothill Area covers approximately 62.12 square miles and extends across the northern portion of the San Fernando Valley from the Golden State Freeway (Interstate 5) to the west to the City of Glendale to the east (see Figure IV.J-2). More specifically, the project site is within Reporting District (RD) 1694. The boundaries of RD 1694 are Sunland Boulevard to the north, Interstate 210 to the west and south, and Tujunga Canyon Boulevard to the east. Generally, there is one basic car unit (two officers per car) assigned to each RD.²

Table IV.J-1 provides 2002 crime statistics for RD 1694, the Foothill Area and citywide. In 2002, the crime rate for the City of Los Angeles was 49 crimes per 1,000 persons. The Foothill Area reported 35 crimes per 1,000 persons.³ Predominant crimes in the project area for 2002 were aggravated assaults, vehicle theft and theft and burglary from vehicle, and burglary from homes.

The crime rate, which represents the number of crimes reported, affects the "needs" projection for staff and equipment for the LAPD. To some extent, it is logical to anticipate that the crime rate in a given area will increase as the level of activity or population, along with the opportunities for crime, intensifies. However, because a number of other factors also contribute to the resultant crime rate, such as police presence, crime prevention measures, economic conditions, and ongoing legislative/funding issues, the potential for increased crime rates is not necessarily directly proportional to increases in land use activity.

¹ Written correspondence from Fred Booker, Lieutenant, Los Angeles Police Department February 26, 2003.

² Telephone correspondence with Tanya Hanamaikai, Officer, Los Angeles Police Department, April 3, 2003.

³ Written correspondence from Fred Booker, Lieutenant, Los Angeles Police Department February 26, 2003.

Figure IV.J-2 Foothill Community Police Station Boundaries

Table IV.J-1
Crimes by Reporting District of Occurrence, LAPD 2002
Canyon Hills Project

Type of Crime	RD 1694 ^a	Foothill Area ^a	Citywide
Burglary from Business	6	246	5,407
Burglary from Home	12	864	15,155
Burglary Other	2	336	4,758
Street Robbery	1	384	11,259
Other Robbery	2	267	5,998
Murder	0	32	655
Rape	2	99	1,400
Aggravated Assault	16	1,920	32,491
Burglary from Vehicle	13	1,018	29,135
Theft from Vehicle	15	851	13,467
Grand Theft	1	518	12,408
Theft from Person	0	28	1,006
Purse Snatch	0	11	348
Other Theft	9	993	22,890
Bicycle Theft	0	29	306
Vehicle Theft	16	2,063	34,123
Bunco	1	9	133
Total	98	9,668	190,939
<i>a All statistical information is based on 2002 LAPD Selected Crimes and Attempts by Reporting District from the Police Arrest and Crime Management Information System 2 Report.</i>			
<i>Source: City of Los Angeles Police Department, Police Arrest and Crime Management Information System 2 Report, 2002.</i>			

The LAPD's operational statistics are generally reported and analyzed in terms of response times and crime rates within the specific RDs. Response time is the amount of time from when a call requesting assistance is made until the time that a police unit responds to the scene. Calls for police assistance are prioritized based on the nature of the call. Unlike fire protection services, police units are most often in a mobile state; hence, actual distance between a headquarters facility and the project site is of little relevance. Instead, the number of police officers out on the street is more directly related to the realized response time. The LAPD has a preferred response time of 7.0 minutes to emergency calls. Response times are not broken down by RD.⁴ The average response time to an emergency call for

⁴ Telephone correspondence from Tanya Hanamaikai, Officer, Los Angeles Police Department, April 3, 2003.

service in the Foothill Area during 2002 was 11.4 minutes. The citywide average for that year was 10.2 minutes.⁵

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Threshold of Significance

In accordance with Appendix G to the CEQA Guidelines, impacts on police protection services would be significant if the project would result in a substantial adverse physical impact associated with the provision or need of a new or expanded police station or other facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives of the LAPD.

Short-Term Construction Impacts

Construction sites can be sources of fascination for both children and adults. While most people are satisfied to observe construction activities from afar, there are those who are attracted to enter the construction area – some just out of curiosity, some to play games, and some to pick up the odd scrap of wood. However, construction sites can be hazardous for the unwary. Similarly, theft and vandalism also plague construction sites. When these issues are not properly dealt with, construction sites can become attractive nuisances and a problem for local law enforcement – in responding to calls, conducting investigations, and filing reports police resources can be distracted from more pressing matters that require their attention. Consequently, most developers typically take precautions to prevent trespassing through construction sites. Most commonly, temporary fencing is installed around the construction site to keep out the curious. Deployment of roving security guards is also an effective strategy in preventing problems from developing. When such common sense precautions are taken, there is less need for local law enforcement at the construction site and impacts on police protection services can be assumed to be less than significant. Because the proposed project is in an early stage of planning, specific strategies for preventing construction site problems have not yet been developed. Therefore, mitigation measures are recommended later in this section to ensure that no significant problems arise during the construction period.

Due to the topography in the project area, site access is limited to La Tuna Canyon Road and Interstate 210. Most construction-related traffic (i.e., commuting construction workers and truck deliveries) is anticipated to be predominantly freeway-oriented (see Section IV.I (Transportation/Traffic)). Consequently, construction-related traffic is not expected to cause significant congestion at the local study intersections (see Section IV.I (Transportation/Traffic) for further discussion). Although minor

⁵ *Written correspondence from Fred Booker, Lieutenant, Los Angeles Police Department February 26, 2003.*

traffic delays may occur during construction, particularly during the construction of utilities and street improvements, impacts to police response times would be both minimal and temporary and, therefore, would not be significant (see also the discussion of construction-related impacts to emergency vehicles in Section IV.J.1 (Fire Protection)).

Long-Term Operational Impacts

Implementation of proposed project would result in an increased number of residents and visitors within the project site and the surrounding area. The residential population is projected to increase by 831 persons.⁶ As previously discussed, there is not a directly proportional relationship between increases in land use activity and increases in demand for police protection services. However, an increase in the number of requests for assistance calls for the police services from new homes would be expected. Most of the calls would likely involve responses to domestic disputes, thefts, vehicle burglaries, damage to vehicles, traffic-related incidents, and crimes against persons. Such calls are typical of problems experienced in existing residential neighborhoods in the project area and do not represent unique law enforcement issues specific to the proposed project. As previously discussed, the existing crime rate in the Foothill Area is well below the citywide average (35 crimes per 1,000 persons in the Foothill Area compared to 49 crimes per 1,000 persons citywide in 2002). Furthermore, the relatively small size of the proposed project (i.e., 280 homes) is not expected to increase crime rates in the Foothill Area to the extent that a new or expanded police station or other facilities would be required.

It is also important to note that existing police facilities in the Foothill Area and elsewhere have previously accommodated more police officers than the number of police officers currently employed by the LAPD. In 1998 there were 9,671 sworn officers in the LAPD.⁷ By March of 2003, the number of officers had declined to 9,141 while no police facilities were closed.⁸ Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the LAPD facilities in the Foothill Area have sufficient capacity to accommodate any additional police officers necessary to provide police protection services for the proposed project. In addition, a new Community Police Station is being constructed in Mission Hills that is intended to reduce the demands on the police stations in the LAPD Operations-Valley Bureau, which includes the Foothill Area in which the project site is located.⁹ Construction of this new police station is anticipated to be completed in December 2004. Although the location of this new police station is a considerable distance from the project site, police officers are most often in a mobile state and distance to the project site is of little relevance. It is expected that any additional police officers that may be needed could also

⁶ *Sunland-Tujunga-Lake View Terrace-Shadow Hills-East La Tuna Canyon Community Plan, Plan Population and Dwelling Unit Capacity, Persons Per Dwelling Unit (2010), Low Residential Land Use Category = 2.97 persons per unit x 280 units = 831 persons.*

⁷ *Los Angeles Police Department, Annual Report 2000, page 27.*

⁸ *Hanamaikai, Tanya, Officer, Los Angeles Police Department, Community Affairs Group, May 7, 2003.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

be accommodated at this new police station. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in a substantial adverse impact associated with the provision or need of new or expanded police stations and impacts on police protection services would be less than significant.

Notwithstanding that the proposed project should not create the need for new or expanded police facilities, the operation of the proposed project could increase the LAPD's response times and result in a lower service ratio in the Foothill Area. The LAPD's resources are already strained by a chronic shortage of uniformed officers, a situation that may not improve in the foreseeable future. For this reason, the LAPD has suggested that the proposed project could have a significant environmental impact on police protection services in the Foothill Area without crime prevention design features.¹⁰ However, the LAPD did not indicate that any new police facilities would be required or were otherwise anticipated in connection with the proposed project. Rather, the LAPD's concern related to safety stems from the current understaffing of the LAPD. Safety concerns are social issues rather than physical environmental impacts. Section 15131 of the CEQA Guidelines provides that social effects of a project shall not be treated as significant effects on the environment. Therefore, safety concerns are not addressed in this environmental analysis.

In any event, the proposed project does include significant crime prevention design features. The proposed project would be a private community with security gates that will minimize public access to the Development Areas. The Development Areas are further buffered from public access by Interstate 210 and the steep hillsides and drainages that surround them. With these design features, the level of police protection required for the proposed project would be substantially reduced in comparison with a typical subdivision.

In addition to those crime prevention design features, mitigation measures are recommended below in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times and other performance objectives of the LAPD. These mitigation measures are not required under CEQA because, as discussed above, the proposed project should not create the need for new or expanded police facilities. However, they are recommended to reduce further the effects of the proposed project on police protection services.

MITIGATION MEASURES

Although the proposed project would not have a significant construction-related impact on police projection services, the following mitigation measure is recommended to reduce further the proposed

¹⁰ *Written correspondence from Fred Booker, Lieutenant, Los Angeles Police Department February 26, 2003.*

project's construction-related police protection impacts:

- J.2-1** During construction activities, the project developer shall ensure that all onsite areas of active development, material and equipment storage, and vehicle staging, that are adjacent to existing public roadways, be secured to prevent trespass.

While the proposed project would not have a significant impact on police protection services following its completion, the following mitigation measures are recommended to reduce further the proposed project's police protection impacts:

- J.2-2** The project developer shall submit a plot plan for the proposed development to the LAPD's Crime Prevention Section for review and comment. Security features subsequently recommended by the LAPD shall be implemented, to the extent feasible.
- J.2-3** Upon completion of the project, the project developer shall provide the Foothill Area Commanding Officer with a diagram of the project. The diagram shall include access routes, addresses, and any other information that might facilitate prompt and efficient police response.
- J.2-4** The project developer shall give the Foothill Area Commanding Officer access codes and/or keys to lock boxes to gated portions of the project site.
- J.2-5** The project homeowners' association(s) shall retain a single alarm and security patrol company to: patrol the site and correct false alarms expeditiously.
- J.2-6** The project homeowners' association(s) shall ensure that clearly identifiable address indicators are provided for all homes and other buildings.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Development of the 13 related projects (see Figure II-1 in Section II.C (Related Projects)), in conjunction with the proposed project, would increase the demand for police protection services. In the absence of a concurrent expansion of current levels of LAPD personnel, equipment and facilities, the increased demand for police protection services could result in a reduction in services, a lengthening of response times, and inadequate facilities. In addition, the LAPD has indicated that existing service ratios, response times and facilities are not considered adequate to support the LAPD's needs throughout the City.

However, cumulative impacts are not expected to rise to a level of significance. The largest related project (Related Project No. 9) is located in the unincorporated community of La Crescenta. As the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department provides police protection services to La Crescenta, the

development of Related Project No. 9 would not contribute to the cumulative demand of LAPD for police protection services. The LAPD would provide police protection services to the 12 other related projects, which are relatively small (as indicated in Table II-3 in Section II (Environmental Setting)). In addition, as discussed above, a new Community Police Station is being constructed in the Operations-Valley Bureau, which includes the Foothill Area.¹¹ As previously discussed, the proximity of the new police station is not relevant because police officers are most often in a mobile state. The 12 related projects that would be served by the LAPD are all within the Foothill Area; therefore, it is expected that the new police station would be able to accommodate additional police officers that could be needed as a result of implementation of the related projects. In addition, and as discussed above, the number of police officers in the LAPD has decreased from 9,671 to 9,141 since 1998 while no police stations have closed. It is, therefore, reasonable to assume that the LAPD facilities in the Foothill Area have sufficient capacity to accommodate any additional police officers necessary to provide police protection services for the proposed project and related projects.

Furthermore, the proposed project's impact on police protection services is considered to be less than significant because:

- the proposed single-family homes would have limited secured gated access from La Tuna Canyon Road;
- access to the Development Areas would be limited by the steep hillsides and drainages that surround them; and
- the proposed project is relatively small (i.e., 280 single-family homes) and would not require police protection services of a substantial magnitude that would require additional or expanded police facilities.

For all of the foregoing reasons, the cumulative demand for police protection facilities is not anticipated to result in new or expanded police facilities in the foreseeable future and there would be no cumulatively significant impact on police protection services.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION

The proposed project's impacts on police protection services would be less than significant without mitigation. The implementation of the recommended mitigation measures would further reduce the proposed project's impacts.

¹¹ Telephone correspondence with Media Relations Section, Office of the Chief of Police, Los Angeles Police Department, May 7, 2003.