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INTRODUCTION

This section of the Draft EIR discusses police protection within the project area. Sources of information used in the preparation of this section include: Coordination with the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), the City of Los Angeles internet website, and the Safety element of the City of Los Angeles *General Plan*.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Available Service

Los Angeles Police Department

Police protection within the jurisdictional boundaries of the City of Los Angeles, including the project site, is provided by the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD). The project site is located within the West Los Angeles Division of the LAPD. The West Los Angeles Division is headquartered at 1663 Butler Avenue, approximately 1.4 miles south of the project site. From this location, the Division provides police protection services for an area of approximately 64 square miles. This area is bounded by the Los Angeles City limit to the west, Mulholland Drive to the north, La Cienega Boulevard to the east, and the Santa Monica Freeway, the Los Angeles City boundary and the Pacific Coast Highway to the south. The estimated population for the Division's service area is approximately 268,000.

Currently, the West Los Angeles Division has approximately 250 sworn officers and 15 support staff assigned over three watches.¹ In 1999, the average response time for the entire West Los Angeles area was 8.5 minutes, while that of the entire City was 6.8 minutes.² The ratio of sworn officers to residents for the West Los Angeles area is approximately 1.16 officers per 1,000 population.³

Other Protective Service Providers

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department provides police protection services for unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County, and provides contract services to various cities. Although the Sheriff's

¹ Sergeant Quan, LAPD West Los Angeles Division, Telephone communication, December 2001.

² David J. Kalish, Commanding Officer, LAPD Community Affairs Group, Response to project NOP, April 19, 2000.

³ 2001 population of the West Los Angeles LAPD division is 215,000 people, Source: www.lapdonline.org.

Department does not police the area, police protection services from the Sheriff's Department is available to assist the LAPD with police protection when requested. In addition, several property owners in the project area employ private security for their premises (e.g., Westec Security and Bel Air Patrol).

Historic Crime Trends

The LAPD categorizes crime into two components, Part I and Part II crimes. Part I crimes include homicides, robbery, burglary, thefts, and crimes against persons, and Part II crimes include alcohol and drug related offenses, malicious mischief, vagrancy and disorderly conduct. In the LAPD's West Los Angeles Division area, the predominant crimes historically have been robberies, burglaries, grand theft auto, aggravated assaults, and burglary and theft from motor vehicles. Past annual crime statistics indicate that the crime rate in the West Los Angeles area is declining. In 1995, for example, the LAPD Statistical Digest indicated that there were 13,343 emergency calls in the West Los Angeles Division, while in 1997, the number of emergency calls in the area decreased to 9,664.⁴ This represented a decrease in crime rate of approximately 27.5 percent within that two-year period.

Crimes within the West Los Angeles Division are further broken down into Reporting Districts (RDs). The project site is located within Reporting District (RD) Number 804, which is bounded on the north by Mulholland Drive, on the south by Sunset Boulevard, on the east by Sepulveda Boulevard, and on the west by Mandeville Canyon Road.⁵ Overall, the crime rate in the project area is relatively lower than the City-wide average. For the second quarter of the 1998 fiscal year, eight crimes (including one residential burglary, two aggravated assaults, two burglaries from automobiles, one grand theft and one other burglary) were recorded for RD Number 804. The Los Angeles Police Department has indicated that the recorded crimes in RD Number 804 are the lowest as compared to other RDs in the West Los Angeles Division.⁶ In 1999 for example, while there were 31 crimes per 1,000 persons in the West Los Angeles area, there were 18 crimes per 1,000 persons in RD 804.

⁴ Los Angeles Police Department Internet Website (lapdonline.org), available information as of February 15, 2000.

⁵ Senior Lead Officer Dennis Hinman, LAPD West Los Angeles Division, Correspondence with Impact Sciences, Inc., August 28, 1998.

⁶ Senior Lead Officer Dennis Hinman, LAPD West Los Angeles Division, Telephone conversation, September 3, 1998.

Adequacy Assessment Criteria

Adequacy of police protection services for a given area is based on a combination of assessment factors, including officer to population ratio, type of land uses, response time, available equipment, and the overall crime rate.

The officer to population ratio is important from both a response and a prevention perspective. A greater officer to population ratio means that there are more officers available to respond to calls as needed, thereby benefiting the response time. Conversely, if the officer to population ratio is reduced, it could mean that the average response time to emergency calls would increase. A high number of officers, visibly serving and patrolling in the field, may also act as a deterrent to crime because of the greater police presence. In the West Los Angeles area, as previously stated, the current officer to population ratio is 1.16:1,000. Although LAPD does not hold an internal officer to population standard, many cities strive to maintain a minimum of 2.0:1,000.

The type of land use influences both the nature of the potential crimes and the time and frequency of criminal attempts. Residential areas typically experience larger percentage of burglaries and domestic disputes, while office/commercial areas experience a greater percentage of car-related thefts and larcenies. Examples of crimes in a commercial area include purse snatching, pick-pocketing, automated teller hold-ups, truck popping, and auto thefts.

Response time is defined as the total time from when a call requesting assistance is made until the time that a unit responds to the scene. Calls for police assistance are prioritized based on the nature of the call. For example, a crime in progress may receive a higher priority than a call that is reporting a crime already committed. Also, the potential for harm to citizens is considered when a call is received. Unlike fire protection services, police units are often in a mobile state. As a result, actual distance between a headquarters facility and the project site is of little relevance. Instead, the number of officers out on the street is more directly related to the realized response time. If the Department does not employ a sufficient number of officers, then the response time may increase.

Equipment availability and training skills are also important factors in determining the adequacy of police protection services. Equipment and training skills impact the Department's ability to handle a situation efficiently. Inadequate equipment and training may result in longer response times or inefficient service. Additional police officers only do not ensure adequate service if they are not accompanied with adequate training and equipment.

The crime rate represents the number of crimes reported in an area, over a given period of time. This affects the needs, projection for staff and equipment for the LAPD. Generally, the crime rate in a given area will increase as the level of activity or population intensifies. However, due to other factors, such as police presence, crime prevention measures, and on-going legislation/funding, potential for an increase in crime rate is not directly proportional to the increase in land use activity.

Environmental Impact Analysis

Significance Threshold Criteria

The L.A. CEQA *Thresholds Guide* indicates that the determination of a project's significance to police protection shall be made on a case by case basis, considering:

- The population increase resulting from the proposed project, based on the net increase of residential units or square footage of non-residential floor area;
- The demand for police services anticipated at the time of project buildout compared to the expected level of service available. Consider, as applicable, scheduled improvements to LAPD services, (facilities, equipment, and officers) and the project's proportional contribution to the demand; and
- Whether the project includes security and/or design features that would reduce the demand for police services.⁷

Therefore, for the purposes of this analysis, ultimate development of the proposed project would result in a significant impact upon police protection services if the project would result in any of the following situations:

- A potential for inadequate police staffing;
- A substantial decline in response times to handle calls for services; and/or
- Special police protection problems associated with the proposed project or general area.

⁷ L.A. CEQA *Thresholds Guide*, City of Los Angeles, Environmental Affairs Department, May 14, 1998, p. J.1-2.

Project Impacts

Project Construction

During construction of the proposed project, an increase in the frequency of calls for equipment theft, trespassing, vandalism, and traffic congestion would result in an increased demand on police services. This is considered to be a short-term significant impact on police services in the area and would necessitate providing on-site security measures during construction. Implementation of the recommended mitigation measure for this project would reduce this short-term impact to levels less than significant.

Project Operation

Staffing

The proposed project would result in the construction of 29 homes, thereby adding approximately 82 persons to the resident population of the project area.⁸ The increase in population and intensity of activity at the site could result in an increase in calls for police service in the area. This would require additional officers in order for the LAPD to maintain a similar level of service. As noted earlier, the current officer to population ratio for the West Los Angeles area is 1.16:1,000 population, which is lower than the desired 2.0:1,000. By adding 82 people to the population, the officer to population ratio would numerically be negligible and remain 1.16:1,000. Although there is no noticeable difference in the ratio, the 82 additional people added to the area would incrementally further reduce the officer to population ratio. The proposed project would therefore result in a potentially significant impact to LAPD staffing. Implementation of the recommended mitigation measures would reduce this impact to a less than significant level.

Response Time

As previously indicated, the average response times in the West Los Angeles District are relatively longer than that of the entire City. The reported LAPD response times do not take into account the influence of private protective and security services within the Brentwood-Pacific Palisades area. Changes in response times are difficult to quantify, as they are dependent upon various factors including

⁸ United States Census Bureau data indicate that there are 2.83 persons per household in the City of Los Angeles.

the number of calls being reported at a particular time, the degree of seriousness of the incident as compared to others, and the distance of the responding officers from the place of call.

The proposed project would impact police response times by: (1) increased vehicular and pedestrian traffic to the site; and (2) increased demand for police protection services, due to the addition of 82 new residents to the project area. In the absence of appropriate mitigation measures, the proposed project would significantly impact the LAPD's response times within the project area. However, given the size of the development and implementation of security measures such as private security, this potential impact would be reduced to a less than significant level.

Security Issues

The proposed project is a residential use and does not include any components that would cause special police protection or security problems that are "out of the ordinary". Calls for police service as a result of project implementation are anticipated to be typical of residential incidents and emergencies. Coordination with the LAPD did not indicate that any special security measures would need to be incorporated in the project.⁹ Furthermore, the majority of the existing Mountaingate residential community is gated, and there are security cameras monitored by closed circuit televisions by a private security company. The proposed project would also be gated, and would have similar security features as the existing Mountaingate Community, which would reduce the potential for crimes to occur in the project area. Therefore, impacts are considered to be less than significant.

Cumulative Impacts

The proposed project and other planned and approved developments throughout the City would cumulatively increase the need for services from the Police Department. This demand would be met by increases in law enforcement staffing and equipment, which would be funded by increased revenues from property and sales taxes and motor vehicle registration fees paid by project residents. Moreover, each project is subject to review by local law enforcement to ensure that adequate access, visibility, and security is provided. Therefore, no significant cumulative impacts are anticipated.

⁹ Senior Lead Officer Dennis Hinman, LAPD West Los Angeles Division, Telephone conversation, September 3, 1998/LAPD response to project NOP, dated April 19, 2000.

Mitigation Measures

The following mitigation measures would reduce short-term (construction) impacts to police services.

1. Construction equipment, tools, and material shall be secured by locking or placing them within sheds and/or other inaccessible areas while not in use.

The following mitigation measures would reduce long-term (operational) impacts to police services.

2. Prior to the issuance of building permits, the applicant shall coordinate project security measures and project design considerations with the Los Angeles Police Department's Crime Prevention Unit for the purpose of incorporating "defensible space" and other crime prevention features into the design of the project.
3. Upon completion of the project, the applicant shall provide the Police Department's Crime Prevention Unit with a diagram of the project. The diagram shall include access routes, addresses, and any information that might facilitate police response.

Adverse Effects

With implementation of the mitigation measures listed above, there would be no adverse effects as a result of the proposed project.