

IV. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

I. PUBLIC SERVICES

2. Police Services

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Police protection and law enforcement services are provided by the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), which operates 18 stations (also called areas) Citywide within four Bureaus (Central, South, West, and Valley). Statistical data is compiled by Reporting Districts (RDs), which are smaller units within the stations. The project site is located in the Valley Bureau area of the LAPD operating district. The Valley Bureau (VB) oversees operations in the following areas: Devonshire, Foothill, North Hollywood, Van Nuys, and West Valley, as well as Valley Traffic Division. Valley Bureau has a population of roughly 1.27 million people and encompasses 221.8 square miles. The project site is located within Reporting District 1723, which is roughly bounded by the Simi Valley-San Fernando Freeway (SR-118) to the north, Browns Creek Channel to the west, Devonshire Street to the south, and Winnetka Avenue to the east

The Devonshire Community Police Station, located at 10250 Etiwanda Avenue in Northridge, approximately 5.3 miles east of the project site, serves the neighborhoods of Chatsworth, Granada Hills, North Hills and Northridge, as well as parts of Canoga Park and Winnetka. The Devonshire Station boundary encompasses 53.9 square miles and has an estimated population in excess of 240,000. The Devonshire Division currently has approximately 339 sworn officers and 26 civilian support staff.¹ The location of the Devonshire Station relative to the project site is shown in **Figure IV.I-1, Fire and Police Stations**.

Year 2003 crime statistics for RD 1723, the Devonshire Community Police Station, and the City of Los Angeles are outlined in **Table V.I.2-1**. Larceny (theft) and burglary are the predominant crimes in the Devonshire Community Police Station area. As shown in **Table V.I.2-1**, the Devonshire area accounted for 6.9 percent of the crimes reported in the City of Los Angeles as a whole. Crimes per 1,000 persons are slightly greater within the Devonshire area (52) than the City of Los Angeles (49).¹ The average response time to emergency calls for service in the Devonshire Area during 2002 was an average 11.0 minutes. The Citywide average during 2003 was 10.2 minutes.

¹ NOP response from the Los Angeles Police Department, Fred Booker, Lieutenant, Officer in Charge, Community Relations Section, Office of the Chief of Police, February 24, 2004.

¹ IBID.

TABLE V.I.2-1 YEAR 2003 CRIMES BY REPORTING DISTRICT OF OCCURRENCE			
Type of Crime	Number of Crimes		
	RD 1723	Devonshire Area	Citywide
Homicide	0	24	655
Aggravated Assault	20	1,681	32,491
Forcible Rape and Attempts	2	52	1,400
Robbery and Attempts	7	671	17,257
Burglary and Attempts	76	4,282	54,455
Larceny and Attempts	25	3,790	50,425
Vehicle Theft	28	2,784	34,123
Bunco	7	1	133
TOTAL	165	13,285	190,939

SOURCE: Los Angeles Police Department, 2003 Selected Crimes and Attempts by Reporting District from the Police Arrest and Crime Management Information System 2 Report.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

THRESHOLD OF SIGNIFICANCE

According to the City of Los Angeles' CEQA Thresholds Guide, the determination of significance associated with impacts to police protection shall be made on a case-by-case basis, considering the following factors:

- 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 build-out compared to the expected level of service available, taking into consideration scheduled improvements to LAPD services 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.

Additionally, the following shall be considered when determining significance:

- The increase or decrease in LAPD response time due to traffic congestion during either construction or operation of the project.

Construction Impacts

A high demand for police protection services during construction is not anticipated. The construction site would be secured (with fences and gates) to prevent trespassing and vandalism, and to avoid accidents involving the public. Temporary closures of traffic lanes on adjacent streets is not anticipated during construction, as much of the site is vacant, allowing for staging of construction equipment and because construction would occur in phases over different parts of the property. The extension of Rinaldi Street adjacent to the site would be completed to a 104-foot right-of-way by the time of project construction. In the event that construction activities do require lane closures, emergency access would remain unimpeded through the use of flagmen, and other controls, as may be required by conditions of the issuance of a building permit by the Department of Building and Safety. Therefore, access for police units responding to emergencies would not be impeded. In addition, proposed project construction is not expected to result in any population increase from construction workforce relocating to the area that would result in increased demand for services beyond existing levels. No significant impacts to police protection services are therefore expected during project construction.

Operation and Occupancy

Development of the proposed project would introduce an educational use with the addition of a 550-student secondary school and approximately 100 associated faculty and staff. In addition, the project would result in an increase of floor area within the project site of approximately 120,542 square feet. Police service needs are generally related to the size of the population and geographic area served, the number and type of calls for service, and other community characteristics. Projects that affect these factors may increase the demand for service from the LAPD.

As shown in **Figure IV.I-1**, the Devonshire Community Police Station is located approximately 5.3 miles east of the project site and as described earlier, the most recent response times within the Devonshire area average 11.0 minutes, slightly greater than the 2003 Citywide average of 10.2 minutes. As addressed in detail in Section V.J, Transportation and Circulation, after mitigation, the project would not significantly impact congested intersections operating at a level of service of E or F, and therefore would not be expected to impact response times to the area or the site. In fact, mitigation measures would result in improved conditions at most of the study intersections, compared to conditions that would occur without the proposed project.

The project would incorporate a number of security measures into school facilities and school planning. These measures may include private security staff that would patrol the campus on a full-time basis and provide traffic control during school pick-up and drop-off periods, motorized key-pad access gates at vehicular entries, security screens at the garage facade openings along Rinaldi Street, perimeter security fences and pedestrian gates along property lines not secured by building masses and security lighting of all parking areas, building entries, and pedestrian walkways to provide for pedestrian orientation and to clearly identify a secure route between parking areas and points of entry into buildings. These elements would provide a secured barrier around the entire project boundary. Although the project would not generate residents, an increase in demand for services could result from school use and school traffic in the area surrounding the project site. Specifically, development of a private secondary school could result in increased service calls to the site for thefts, vandalism and traffic incidents.

In their response to the NOP for this Draft EIR, the LAPD stated that a project of this size would have a significant impact on police services in the Devonshire area due to existing capacity restraints to the understaffed Devonshire Community Police Station.² Subsequent consultation with the LAPD determined that that these impacts could be mitigated through LAPD site plan approval and further coordination efforts.³ Thus, mitigation measures are required to ensure that sufficient consultation with the LAPD is undertaken to the Department's satisfaction as part of the project design and site planning process.

The employment of private security for the school would reduce the manner and frequency of emergency calls to the LAPD and adequately serve the proposed improvements, including the increase in floor area. However, the project is considered to have a potentially significant impact on the demand for community police services and requires mitigation to reduce impacts to a less than significant level.

MITIGATION MEASURES

V.1.2-1 The applicant shall provide project plans to the LAPD Crime Prevention Unit, to determine any additional crime prevention and security features appropriate to the design of the project. Any additional design features identified by the LAPD Crime Prevention Unit shall be incorporated into the project's final design and to the satisfaction of LAPD, prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy for the project.

V.1.2-2 Upon completion of the project, the applicant shall provide the Devonshire Division Commanding Officer with project plans showing access routes and any information that might facilitate police response to the site.

V.1.2-3 The project shall incorporate design guidelines relative to security, semi-public and private spaces, which may include, but not be limited to, access control to buildings, secured parking facilities, walls/fences with key systems, well illuminated public and semi-public space designed with a minimum of dead space to eliminate areas of concealment, location of toilet facilities or building entrances in high-foot traffic areas and provision of security guard patrol throughout the project site if needed. The applicant is referred to Design Out Crime Guidelines: Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) published by the Los Angeles Police Department's Crime Prevention Section (located at Parker Center, 150 North Los Angeles Street, Room 818, Los Angeles, (213) 485-3134. The CPTED operates on three key concepts:⁴

- Natural surveillance: The placement of physical features, activities, and people in a way that maximizes visibility.
- Natural access control: Restricting or encouraging people to come into a space through the placement of entrances, exits, fencing, landscaping, and lighting.
- Territorial reinforcement: The use of physical attributes to define ownership and separate public and private space.

² IBID.

³ Telephone conversation with Officer Tanya Hanamaikai, Crime Prevention Unit, Community Relations Section, March 16, 2004.

⁴ Source: Los Angeles Police Department, Crime Prevention Tips – Design Out Crime – City of Los Angeles, website, http://www.lapdonline.org/bldg_safer_comms/design_out_crime.htm.

Project security measures shall be approved by the Police Department prior to the issuance of building permits.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Although significant unmitigated impacts would not occur with the proposed project, development of all related projects would increase the demand for law enforcement services within the Devonshire Division service area. Given current understaffed conditions in the Devonshire Division, the addition of 30 related projects, including development of the Porter Ranch Specific Plan (Related Project No. 2) and several other substantial projects, additional officers could be needed to ensure adequate response times and adequate staffing in the Devonshire Division area. Although the proposed project, in and of itself, would not result in a significant impact to police services, it would contribute to an adverse cumulative condition in the Devonshire Division service area. As with the proposed project, each related project will be subject to LAPD review to determine specific on-site needs and to incorporate security measures and other recommendations as needed to reduce the impact of increased demand. Currently, there are no plans or provisions to provide additional staff or facilities to the Devonshire Division.⁵ Consequently, given population growth and new development in the project area, development of the proposed and related projects would further burden current understaffed conditions and result in a significant cumulative impact to police services.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION

Impacts to police protection from the proposed project would be less than significant after implementation of mitigation measures, and the inclusion of a private security staff as currently proposed by the project. However, given that there are no plans or provisions to provide additional staff or facilities to the Devonshire Division, a significant cumulative impact could result from development of significant projects within the Devonshire Division service area.

⁵ Officer Tanya Hanamaikai, Crime Prevention Unit, Community Relations Section, March 16, 2004.