

5.8 PUBLIC SERVICES

5.8.1 BACKGROUND

This section focuses on the potential need for and impacts to fire protection, police services, health care facilities, and solid waste disposal. A brief discussion is also provided on other services (i.e., electric, and gas) that may also be needed and affected by oil and gas development. To a large degree, availability of public services affects the quality of life within a community and lack of adequate services can jeopardize public health, safety and welfare.

5.8.2 REGIONAL SETTING

Fire Protection

There are fifteen Santa Barbara County Fire Department (SBCFD) stations serving the county's unincorporated areas. The stations serving the Study Area are listed in Table 5.8-1. The SBCFD is a member of Firescope, which is a local, regional, and statewide mutual aid program. In the rural areas SBCFD receives assistance from the United States Forest Service (USFS) and the California Department of Forestry (CDF).

According to the County Fire Department, seven percent of the county is within a six minute response time, seven percent is within a six to eight minute response time, and 86 percent of the county (primarily the rural area) is beyond an eight minute response time. Emergency response times in some rural areas of the County (e.g., within Station 24, Los Alamos overall area) can be up to forty minutes (County of Santa Barbara, 1992). All of the response times for the sites addressed in the Siting Analysis (section 6.0) within this document are below 15 minutes (Johnson, 2000).

Fire equipment access is generally a greater problem within the rural areas. In several rural areas, dead-end roads and cul-de-sacs complicate access for fire trucks, and creeks can also present barriers. In some areas, neither wells, tanks, nor reservoirs meet fire department standards.

Urban response for fire protection is provided by the city municipalities of Santa Maria, Guadalupe, and Lompoc. Vandenberg Air Force Base has its own fire department and also has a cooperative agreement with the Lompoc City Fire Department and the Santa Barbara County Fire Department.

Police Services

The Santa Barbara County Sheriff Department provides law enforcement service within the county's unincorporated areas. Table 5.8-2 identifies the County Sheriff Stations serving the Study Area. Traffic control and additional emergency service is provided by the California Highway Patrol (CHP). The two agencies have reciprocal agreements to provide mutual assistance and backup on an as-needed basis. Additional backup assistance in the Study Area may be provided by Santa Maria, Lompoc, and Guadalupe city police departments (County of Santa Barbara, 1998). Vandenberg has its own police department and also has a cooperative agreement with the California Highway Patrol for traffic enforcement.

Table 5.8-1 Rural Area Fire Service/Resources

Agricultural Region	Station No.	Station Equipment	Station Location/Area Served
Santa Maria	Station 21	1 Engine, 2 Reserve Engines, Com-van, Crash Unit	City of Santa Maria (south)
	Station 22	1 Engine, 1 Reserve Engine	Orcutt; Casmalia
	Station 23	1 Engine, 1 Water Tender	Sisquoc
Gaviota	Station 18	1 Engine, 1 Brush Truck, 1 Water Tender, 1 Air & Lighting Unit	Gaviota
San Antonio	Station 24 ^a	1 Engine, 2 Reserve Engines, 2 Dozers	Los Alamos
Lompoc Valley	Station 51 ^a	1 Engine, 1 Reserve Engine, 1 Brush Truck, 1 Paramedic Ambulance, 1 Reserve Ambulance	Lompoc/Vandenberg Village
Santa Ynez	Station 31	1 First Line Engine, 1 Reserve Engine, Haz-Mat Vehicle	Buellton
	Station 32	1 Engine, 1 Reserve Engine, 1 Water Tender	Santa Ynez

^a Station capable of providing paramedic and advanced life saving (ALS) services. Source: King, SBCFD, 1997.

Table 5.8-2 County Sheriff Stations Serving the Rural Areas

Station Location	No. of Deputies	Area Served
Santa Maria	28	Santa Maria west to Vandenberg, north to the County line, east to Los Padres National Forest and south to Mail road on Highway 246 including Los Alamos.
Lompoc	16	Lompoc west to Surf, north to the Harris Grade Pass, east to Mail Road, and South to the ocean including Hollister Ranch.
Solvang	15	Solvang West to Mail Road, north to Los Padres National Forest, east to Vista Point on Highway 154 including Paradise road, and South to Los Padres National Forest.

Source: B. Turner, County Sheriff's Department, 2000.

In order to provide adequate law enforcement services, the Sheriff Department's preferred officer to population ratio is one officer per 1,200 residents. The county has 118 deputies serving the unincorporated areas. As of 1994, the estimated population of the unincorporated areas was approximately 164,000 (Santa Barbara County Association of Governments, 1994) resulting in an officer to population ratio of approximately 1 to 1,400. Although this county-wide service ratio may be low for unincorporated urban areas, it is considered adequate for the rural areas due to the low crime rate (County of Santa Barbara, 1998).

Health Care Facilities

Within the project study area are two hospitals, located in Santa Maria and Lompoc areas. Marian Medical Center / Valley Community Hospital are in Santa Maria. Currently this hospital does not maintain a center for severely burned victims. Burn victims are currently airlifted from the local hospital to Sherman Oaks Hospital in Northridge.

Solid Waste

Currently, five landfills are operated within Santa Barbara County. The City of Santa Maria and the City of Lompoc each operate a landfill for their respective communities. Vandenberg Air Force Base operates a landfill for use by their base and the Lompoc Federal Penitentiary. The remaining two landfills (Tajiguas and Foxen Canyon) are operated by Santa Barbara County. Estimates of current life expectancy for the four municipal landfills range from four to approximately 53 years. (County of Santa Barbara, 1998).

Industrial facilities can require the use of Class I (hazardous waste) disposal facilities. There are no such facilities currently operating in Santa Barbara County. The closest facilities are located in Kern and Kings Counties (County of Santa Barbara, 1991). These facilities are referred to as the Buttonwillow Facility and the Kettleman Hills Facility, respectively.

Other Services

Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) provides electrical service in the County's northern rural areas. PG&E's service area extends west of Lake Cachuma to Vandenberg Air Force Base, north to the county line, and east to the Cuyama area. The future energy needs associated with a new or expanded oil and gas facility may require the development of additional electric facilities, such as transmission lines (60 kV and above) or substations (MMS, 1999). Requirements for additional electrical facilities, such as line extensions, electrical protection equipment, and voltage regulation equipment, would need to be assessed as part of a specific project development application.

The Gas Company provides natural gas to the Study Area. Although several high pressure gas lines exist in the rural areas (i.e., along Highway 246, Highway 1 between Gaviota and Guadalupe, and Highway 101 between Goleta and Gaviota) (County of Santa Barbara, 1998), and several rural communities have gas service (e.g., Los Olivos, Garey, Sisquoc, Casmalia and Guadalupe), gas service may not be currently available to many rural parcels (County of Santa Barbara, 1998). Extension of existing gas lines to service a new or expanded facility would need to be assessed as part of a specific project development application.

5.8.3 CONSTRAINTS

County policies require that certain findings are made that adequate public or private services and resources are available before a project can be approved. Since approval of any new or expanded oil and gas project would be contingent upon a finding of consistency with the Comprehensive Plan, many of the identified

impacts resulting from development of such a project would be partially mitigated through the requirement to comply with existing policies and regulations.

With respect to fire hazards and fire safety, the SBCFD has specific requirements for development in high fire hazard areas. These requirements can include fire retardant building materials, interior sprinkler systems, and firebreaks and vegetation clearing around structures. Typical fire safety related requirements for an oil and gas facility might include, but not be limited to: adequate water for fire suppression, adequate fire hydrant spacing, all-weather roads with adequate widths for fire access, separation between facility components, secondary access, vegetation management program, and high fire hazard area building design.

5.8.4 POLICIES

The following are policies adapted by the County of Santa Barbara to address public service issues.

Public Resources Code Section 30250:

(a) New residential, commercial, or industrial development, except as otherwise provided in this division, shall be located within, contiguous with, or in close proximity to, existing developed areas able to accommodate it or, where such areas are not able to accommodate it, in other areas with adequate public services and where it will not have significant adverse effects, either individually or cumulatively, on coastal resources. In addition, land divisions, other than leases, for agricultural uses, outside existing developed areas shall be permitted only where 50 percent of the usable parcels in the area have been developed and the created parcels would be no smaller than the average size of surrounding parcels.

Public Resources Code Section 30254:

New or expanded public works facilities shall be designed and limited to accommodate needs generated by development or uses permitted consistent with the provisions of this division; provided, however, that it is the intent of the Legislature that State Highway Route 1 in rural areas of the coastal zone remain a scenic two-lane road. Special districts shall not be formed or expanded except where assessment for, and provision of, the service would not induce new development inconsistent with this division. Where existing or planned public works facilities can accommodate only a limited amount of new development, services to coastal-dependent land use, essential public services and basic industries vital to the economic health of the region, state, or nation, public recreation, commercial recreation, and visitor-serving land uses shall not be precluded by other development.

Land Use Element, Land Use Development Policy 4:

Prior to issuance of a use permit, the County shall make the finding, based on information provided by environmental documents, staff analysis, and the applicant, that adequate public or private services and resources (i.e., water, sewer, roads, etc.) are available to serve the proposed development. The applicant shall assume full responsibility for costs incurred in service extensions

or improvements that are required as a result of the proposed project. Lack of available public or private services or resources shall be grounds for denial of the project or reduction in the density otherwise indicated in the land use plan.

Coastal Plan Policy 2-2:

The long-term integrity of groundwater basins or sub-basins located wholly within the coastal zone shall be protected. To this end, the safe yield as determined by competent hydrologic evidence of such a groundwater basin or sub-basin shall not be exceeded except on a temporary basis as part of a conjunctive use or other program managed by the appropriate water district. If the safe yield of a groundwater basin or sub-basin is found to be exceeded for reasons other than a conjunctive use program, new development, including land division and other use dependent upon private wells, shall not be permitted if the net increase in water demand for the development causes basin safe yield to be exceeded, but in no case shall any existing lawful parcel be denied development of one single family residence. This policy shall not apply to appropriators or overlying property owners who wish to develop their property using water to which they are legally entitled pursuant to an adjudication of their water rights.

Coastal Plan Policy 2-5:

Water conserving devices shall be used in all new developments.

Coastal Plan Policy 2-6:

Prior to issuance of a development permit, the County shall make the finding, based on information provided by environmental documents, staff analysis, and the applicant, that adequate public or private services and resources (i.e., water, sewer, roads, etc.) are available to serve the proposed development. The applicant shall assume full responsibility for costs incurred in service extensions or improvements that are required as a result of the proposed project. Lack of available public or private services or resources shall be grounds for denial of the project or reduction in the density otherwise indicated in the land use plan. Where an affordable housing project is proposed pursuant to the Affordable Housing Overlay regulations, special needs housing or other affordable housing projects which include at least 50% of the total number of units for affordable housing or 30% of the total number of units affordable at the very low income level are to be served by entities that require can-and-will-serve letters, such projects shall be presumed to be consistent with the water and sewer service requirements of this policy if the project has, or is conditioned to obtain all necessary can-and-will-serve letters at the time of final map recordation, or if no map, prior to issuance of land use permits. *(amended by 93-GP-11)*

***1991 Gas Processing Facility Screening and Siting Criteria
Infrastructure & Emergency Services***

Siting Criteria:

1. *Prefer locations at onshore oil fields that are both relatively remote from populated areas as while having an adequate infrastructural and emergency services base.*

5.8.5 DISCUSSION

Necessary emergency services to support a new or expanded oil and gas facility include staff that is adequately trained and equipped to respond to any incident which may occur at the facility or along the pipelines. In addition, response time should be kept to a minimum (e.g. no more than five minutes, if possible). The cost of providing such services does not stop with the construction and staffing of a new fire or police facility. Equipment, staffing, and training costs are ongoing, long-term issues that require careful consideration (County of Santa Barbara, 1991). In areas where existing service levels were inadequate to support additional service needs, oil and gas projects approved in the past have included the requirement to contribute to the funding of additional fire fighting services.

The location of existing transmission and collection pipelines is a key consideration to determine the availability of electricity and natural gas utilities. The closer a facility is placed to existing lines and connection points, the less impact would be generated from the installation of additional piping to connect to the lines. Basic infrastructure required to support a future processing facility includes:

1. Access to electrical power. While much of the electrical power required by an oil and gas facility can be provided by an onsite cogeneration plant, some external source would likely be required.
2. Ability to receive natural gas for fuel and to sell residual produced gas. This would likely require access to the Southern California Gas Company's transmission pipeline that runs south from the Santa Maria Divide Station.
3. Adequate road connection to Highway 101. Road quality must be structurally and geometrically sufficient to handle construction and/or hazardous materials trucks safely. Steep grades and sharp curves are undesirable conditions, which would increase risk associated with transportation concerns. Trucks handling hazardous materials should be routed to roads that will allow the vehicles to safely enter and exit highways. Lastly, the arterial connecting road should reflect a level-of-service capable of accommodating additional vehicle traffic attributable to the facility.
4. Access to rail may be required if asphalt, gas liquids, sulfur, or other hazardous materials are shipped by train.

In general, existing public services infrastructure and emergency services are concentrated in populated areas. Both infrastructure and emergency services can be provided to almost any location, even relatively remote rural areas in the county. However, sites which are within recommended emergency response zones, and which do not require substantial utility extensions would be environmentally preferred. An ideal location for a new or expanded oil and gas facility would be one that is removed from populated areas, yet can offer the required infrastructure and emergency services to support such a facility. At minimum, the public service requirements for a new facility should address both the needs for protection of the facility and the safety of the surrounding population.

5.8.6 REFERENCES

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North County Siting Study

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