

## **3.6 Public Services**

This section discusses the existing public service providers, provides an overview of the relevant regulatory framework, and analyzes the potential impacts to public services that would result from implementation of the proposed project. Existing public services information was obtained from the websites of the Lakeside Fire Protection District (LFPD), San Diego County Sheriff Department (SDCSD), Sharp Grossmont Hospital, and various school districts and websites, as well as from the County of San Diego General Plan and Lakeside Community Plan. In addition, this analysis is based on the Fire Protection Plan (FPP), which is included in Appendix P of this EIR.

### **3.6.1 Existing Conditions**

This section summarizes the existing public services at the project site and in the surrounding area.

#### **Police Protection**

The SDCSD provides generalized patrol and investigative services for the unincorporated areas of San Diego County, including the project area. SDCSD is also contracted by certain cities within the County to provide law enforcement services, and serves as their police department (SDCSD, 2015a). The California Highway Patrol has the primary jurisdiction for traffic services in the County's unincorporated areas.

The SDCSD is comprised of approximately 4,000 employees including both sworn officers and professional support staff. Units within the department include railroad enforcement, detention services, and court services (SDCSD 2013). The project area is within the jurisdiction and patrol area of responsibility of the Lakeside Substation, which is located approximately 1.3 miles southwest of the project site at 12365 Parkside Street in Lakeside (Stubkjaer 2015). The station services the unincorporated areas of Lakeside and El Cajon (SDCSD 2015b).

SDCSD designates calls on the basis of four priority levels. A priority one call requires a "life-saving response" (e.g., officer needs assistance), and a priority two call requires an "expeditious response" (e.g., felonies in progress). Priority three calls require officers to "respond to calls ASAP" (e.g., non-injury accidents), and priority four calls require a "respond to call when clear to do so (e.g., abandoned vehicle)" (Raftery 2014). Response times to calls depend on various factors including the location of the incident, location accessibility, and the deputy's current location. Specific to the Lakeside Substation, higher priority calls would have the fastest response times possible, with times sometimes as low as 2 to 5 minutes (Stubkjaer 2015).

## Fire Protection

Most of the unincorporated County is located within “Very High” or “Extreme” fire threat areas. The majority of the project area is located in a Very High fire threat area as identified by the County General Plan’s Safety Element (San Diego County 2011) (See Section 2.6, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, for more information regarding potential fire risks within the project area).

The project site is located entirely within the LFPD, which provides fire protection to over 60,000 residents living in the community of Lakeside and several other communities. The LFPD service area primarily consists of suburban residential land uses and has a significant wildland/urban interface (LFPD 2015a), which is defined as the area where houses meet or intermingle with undeveloped wildland vegetation (Radeloff et al. 2005).

The Operations Division of the LFPD is comprised of three platoons of firefighters alternating 24-hour duty shifts to provide 24-hour year-round service. LFPD firefighters respond to over 8,000 incidents annually including fires, medical emergencies, traffic collisions, and rescues. LFPD personnel operate out of four fire stations that staff four paramedic engine companies, one rescue company, one brush engine, and two advanced life support paramedic ambulances (LFPD 2015b). LFPD Fire Station 3, located approximately 4.5 miles away from the project site at 14008 Highway 8 in El Cajon, would provide fire protection services for the proposed project, as designated by the County’s Deputy Fire Marshal. The average emergency travel time from this substation to the project site is approximately 8.5 minutes (Firewise 2016).

San Diego County has established mutual aid zones to allow fire agencies to access resources from adjacent fire agencies to successfully cope with certain emergencies. There are four mutual aid zones in the County including the North Zone, Metro Zone, Central Zone, and East Zone. The LFPD is one of ten fire departments located in the Central Zone (LFPD 2018).

## Hospitals

The closest full-service hospital to the project area is Sharp Grossmont Hospital, which is located approximately 8.6 miles southwest of the project site at 5555 Grossmont Center Drive. Services at the hospital include orthopedic, labor, cancer, heart, and stroke care (Sharp 2015a). The Sharp Grossmont Hospital includes 540 licensed beds and 484 maintained beds (Sharp 2015b).

## Schools

There are several schools located in the project area; however, this discussion focuses on the closest schools to the project site. El Capitan High School for grades 9–12 is located approximately 0.5 mile southwest of the project site (approximately 1.1 miles west of the closest area of disturbance) and is part of the Grossmont Union High School District (GUHSD). The GUHSD includes nine

comprehensive high schools, two charter schools, and one continuation high school (GUHSD 2015). Tierra Del Sol Middle School for grades 6–8 is located approximately 1.1 miles southwest of the project site (approximately 1.1 miles southwest of the closest area of disturbance) and is part of the Lakeside Union School District (LUSD). The LUSD includes six elementary schools and two middle schools (LUSD 2016). Blossom Valley Elementary School for grades K–5 is located approximately 1.5 miles southeast of the project site (approximately 1.7 miles southeast of the closest area of disturbance) and is part of the Cajon Valley Union School District (CVUSD). The CVUSD includes 19 elementary schools, six middle schools, one preschool, and one community day school (CVUSD 2016). In addition to public schools, there are private schools in the project area. Foothills Christian Elementary School is located approximately 0.60-mile south of the project site and is part of the Foothills Christian Schools District which includes a middle school and high school (Foothills 2014). Also, ABC Wonder Years preschool and kindergarten is located approximately 0.6 mile west of the project site (approximately 1.2 miles west of the closest area of disturbance).

### **3.6.1.1 Regulatory Framework**

#### Federal

There are no applicable federal regulations.

#### State

##### *California Fire Code*

The 2016 California Fire Code, California Code of Regulations Title 24 Part 9, was published in July 2016, and became effective in January 2017. The California Fire Code contains provisions for the application, enforcement, and administration of general safety provisions and building and equipment design features (California Building Standards Commission 2016). The California Fire Code contains regulations consistent with nationally recognized and accepted practices for safeguarding life and property from the hazards of fire and explosion; dangerous conditions arising from the storage, handling, and use of hazardous materials and devices; and hazardous conditions in the use or occupancy of buildings or premises. The Code also contains provisions to assist emergency response personnel.

#### Local

##### *County of San Diego 2017 Consolidated Fire Code*

The Consolidated Fire Code contains the County amendments to the 2016 California Fire Code and the ordinances of each of the 14 unincorporated fire protection districts in the County of San Diego, including but not limited to Alpine,

Ramona, Lakeside, and Vista (San Diego County 2017). Due to the County's climatic, geological, and topographical conditions, the County has adopted modifications and changes to the California Fire Code. The County Fire Code is adopted for the protection of the public health and safety, and applies to all new construction and to any alterations, repairs, or reconstruction.

*County of San Diego General Plan Safety Element*

The following goals and policies would be applicable to the proposed project:

Goal S-3: Minimized Fire Hazards. Minimize injury, loss of life, and damage to property resulting from structural or wildland fire hazards.

Policies

S-3.1: Minimize Flammable Vegetation. Site and design development to minimize the likelihood of a wildfire spreading to structures by minimizing pockets or peninsulas, or islands of flammable vegetation within a development.

S-3.6: Fire Protection Measures. Ensure that development located within fire threat areas implement measures that reduce the risk of structural and human loss due to wildfire.

Goal S-4: Managed Fuel Loads. Managed fuel loads, including ornamental and combustible vegetation.

Policies

S-4.1: Fuel Management Programs. Support programs and plans, such as Strategic Fire Plans, consistent with state law that require fuel management/modification within established defensible space boundaries and when strategic fuel modification is necessary outside of defensible space, balance fuel management needs to protect structures with the preservation of native vegetation and sensitive habitats.

S-4.2: Coordination to Minimize Fuel Management Impacts. Consider comments from CAL FIRE, U.S. Forest Service, local fire districts, and wildlife agencies for recommendations regarding mitigation for impacts to habitat and species into fuel management projects.

**3.6.2 Analysis of Project Effects and Determination as to Significance**

For the purpose of this EIR, the identified significance thresholds are based on the criteria provided in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. Implementation of the proposed project would result in a significant public services-related impact if it would:

1. Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, 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 of the public services of :
  - a. Fire protection;
  - b. Police protection;
  - c. Schools;
  - d. Parks; and
  - e. Other public facilities.

Issue 1d above is addressed within Section 3.7, Recreation, and is therefore not analyzed below.

### **3.6.2.1 Issue 1a: Fire Protection**

#### Analysis

The project site is located in a high fire hazard zone, and the introduction of new facilities associated with mining operations has the potential to be subject to existing high fire risks and exacerbate existing fire risks in the project area. Mining operations propose to remove all vegetation onsite by phase and concurrently reclaim and revegetate the site. The FPP for the project indicates that there is no radiant heat threat to proposed facilities near the project boundary from a wildland fire burning in the planned work area, with the exception of embers and firebrands that may land on combustible materials during a high wind event.

The proposed project would include the establishment of Fuel Modification Zones (FMZs) pursuant to County Fire Code requirements that would thin vegetation within various buffer widths in order to minimize wildfire hazards to the proposed mining facilities. FMZs would be clearly and permanently marked and maintained annually. All fire protection systems, equipment, and fire access roads would be maintained on the project site in accordance with County Fire Code.

In order to reduce potential wildfire-related injuries or deaths during evacuation of the project area, project Design Consideration **DC-HZ-1** would require a Site Safety and Evacuation Plan to be prepared and submitted to the LFPD and the County for review and approval prior to commencement of the proposed project. This would include designation of a Fire Safety Coordinator and specific regulations pertaining to the storage and use of hazardous and combustible materials by workers onsite (Firewise 2016). See Section 2.6, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, for full Design Consideration measure.

Reclaimed areas would be designed to mimic the existing ecosystem and plant species distribution prior to project-related disturbance. Therefore, the need for fire protection would not be increased when compared to existing conditions.

In the event that fire protection services are needed at the project site, LFPD Fire Station No. 3 would respond in an estimated 8.5 minutes as indicated by the County Fire Marshal (Firewise 2016). Further, should LFPD be unable to respond to a fire hazard at the project site or in the project area, other fire agencies within the same mutual aid zone (Central Zone) would be tasked with responding. Implementation of the fire minimization measures and FMZs in perpetuity in accordance with the project specific FPP listed in **DC-HZ-2**, which includes water supply, fire access roadways, setbacks, and fuel modification zones (see Section 2.6, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, for full Design Consideration measure), would demonstrate compliance with LFPD and County fire protection requirements and ensure that the proposed project would not increase the risk of fire hazards in the project area. Therefore, with implementation of DC-HZ-1 and DC-HZ-2, the proposed project would result in **less than significant impacts** related to fire protection.

### **3.6.2.2 Issue 1b: Police Protection**

#### Analysis

The proposed project would require an estimated eight full time employees. All construction workers and employees would be sourced from the local population; thus, the proposed project would not contribute to a substantial increase in population growth requiring more police protection.

The proposed project would introduce private mining facilities into a presently undeveloped area that could attract trespassers. The proposed trails system could increase the amount of foot or equestrian traffic in the area as compared to existing conditions, and could result in similar trespassing issues that the project site currently experiences occurring during the proposed mining operations, project site restoration, and revegetation efforts. However, security measures to prevent trespassing during the proposed mining operations would include a three-strand barbed wire fence around the entire project site and installation of a locked gate at the ingress/egress access areas on El Monte Road. Also, signage would be placed along the fence at appropriate intervals to warn the public of hazards and restricted access. The SDCSD currently patrols the project area to discourage trespassing and vagrancy, and would continue to do so, as needed, for the duration of the proposed project, as well as in perpetuity after reclaimed/revegetated lands have been established. The Station Lieutenant at the Lakeside Substation has indicated that high priority calls originating from the project site could be responded to as quickly as 2 to 5 minutes (Stubkjaer 2015). Therefore, the Substation would be able to adequately respond to calls generated from the proposed project. Also, the facilities associated with the proposed project would be equipped with appropriate security measures to help

reduce the potential need for police protection. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

### **3.6.2.3 Issues 1c and 1e: Schools and Other Public Facilities**

#### Analysis

The project site is located within the vicinity of multiple schools and is approximately 8.6 miles away from the nearest hospital. Personnel associated with the proposed project would be locally sourced and would not contribute to a local increase in population substantial enough to generate an increased demand on school or hospital services. Implementation of the proposed project would not obstruct road access to any schools or hospital facilities, or result in an increased demand on schools and hospitals. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

### **3.6.3 Cumulative Impact Analysis**

#### Issue 1a: Fire Protection

Cumulative projects, in conjunction with the proposed project, would add demand on fire services. However, each cumulative project would be required to assure adequate fire service. The proposed project would comply with all LFPD Guidelines as detailed in the FPP prepared for the proposed project, and existing fire personnel would be able to accommodate any fire risks associated with the proposed project (Appendix P). Therefore, the project's cumulative contribution associated with fire protection is **less than significant**.

#### Issue 1b: Police Protection

Cumulative projects, in conjunction with the proposed project, would add demand for police protection. This increase in demand could have the potential to result in the need to construct or expand existing police facilities, which would have the potential to create an adverse impact on the environment. For the proposed project, SDCSD has confirmed that response times would not change as a result of the proposed project. Therefore, the project's cumulative contribution associated with police protection is **less than significant**.

#### Issues 1c and 1e: Schools and Other Public Facilities

Cumulative projects that include residential development in the cumulative project area may potentially increase the population. As a result, schools and hospitals may be affected by the increased population. However, the proposed project is not expected to result in an increased demand on schools and hospitals. Therefore, the project's cumulative contribution associated with public facilities is **less than significant**.

### 3.6.4 Significance of Impacts Prior to Mitigation

As discussed above, no significant impacts related to public services would result from the proposed project. Thus, no mitigation is required.

### 3.6.5 Conclusion

The sand mining activities associated with the proposed project would not require the need for new or physically altered governmental facilities. Implementation of the proposed project would have a less than significant impact on service ratios, response times, and other performance objectives for fire protection, police protection, schools, and hospitals. Additionally, the measures required by DC-HZ-1 and DC-HZ-2 would reduce the risk of fire hazards in the project area. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would result in **less than significant** impacts related to public services.