

## 3.14 Public Services

This section includes an evaluation of potential impacts for identified public services that could result from implementation of the proposed project. Public services typically include fire protection, law enforcement, schools, and other public facilities, such as parks, libraries, and post offices. Each subsection includes descriptions of existing facilities, service standards, and potential environmental impacts resulting from implementation of the proposed project, and mitigation measures where appropriate. Section 3.17, Utilities/Service Systems, of this EIR evaluates impacts related to water supply, wastewater, and other utilities. The impact assessment provides an evaluation of potential adverse effects to public services based on criteria derived from the CEQA Guidelines in conjunction with actions proposed in Chapter 2, Project Description.

The IS/NOP prepared for this EIR determined that the project would not result in impacts on schools, parks and other public facilities (libraries and post offices). Therefore, these issue areas will not be discussed further and are included in Chapter 6, Effects Found Not Significant, of this EIR. The IS/NOP is included in Appendix A of this EIR.

### 3.14.1 Existing Conditions

The project site is located approximately one mile south of the City of Heber jurisdictional limit and approximately 0.5 miles west from the City of Calexico jurisdictional limit. The project site is located within the Imperial County Fire Department (ICFD)/Office of Emergency Services (OES) and the Imperial County Sheriff Department's areas of service.

#### *Fire Protection Services*

The project site is located within the ICFD/OES service area. ICFD/OES currently has nine fire stations and six contracting agencies serving the entire 4,500 square miles of unincorporated Imperial County. The nine ICFD stations are located in the communities of Heber, Seeley, Ocotillo, Palo Verde, Niland, Winterhaven, Salton City, and the City of Imperial (ICFD 2019). Each of the county fire stations is staffed with a Captain, Firefighter, and Reserve Firefighter with the only exception being the Palo Verde station that is staffed with a Firefighter and Reserve Firefighter. Every fire station has a Type I engine as its primary apparatus. The City of Imperial and Heber stations also house a Ladder Truck along with the Type I engine. The Seeley and Heber stations also house Type III engines. The ICFD Emergency Units strive to respond immediately after receiving the initial tone for service. The actual response time would be determined by the area of response throughout the vast response area covered.

The closest fire station to the project site is the fire station located at 1078 Dogwood, Suite 101 in Heber. The Heber station is located one mile north of the project site, along Dogwood Road.

#### *Law Enforcement Services*

Imperial County's Sheriff's Department is responsible for police protection services in the unincorporated areas of Imperial County and the City of Holtville. The patrol function is divided between North County Patrol, South County Patrol, East County Operations, and City of Holtville. Deputies assigned to the Patrol Divisions are the "first responders" to a call for law enforcement service. The main patrol station is located in El Centro on Applestill Road. Sheriff substations are located in the communities of Brawley, Niland, Salton City, and Winterhaven with resident deputies located in the unincorporated community of Palo Verde. Under an existing mutual aid agreement,

additional law enforcement services would be provided if and when required by all of the cities within the county, as well as with Border Patrol and the California Highway Patrol. The California Highway Patrol provides traffic regulation enforcement, emergency accident management, and service and assistance on state roadways and other major roadways in the unincorporated portions of Imperial County.

The project site is located in the South patrol zone, and the county patrol office is located at 328 Applestill Road in El Centro. The Sheriff's office is located approximately 2.7 miles northeast of the project site.

### 3.14.2 Regulatory Setting

This section identifies and summarizes laws, policies, and regulations that are applicable to the project.

#### State

##### *Fire Codes and Guidelines*

The California Fire Code (Title 24, Part 9 of the CCR) establishes regulations to safeguard against hazards of fire, explosion, or dangerous conditions in new and existing buildings, structures, and premises. The Fire Code also establishes requirements intended to provide safety and assistance to firefighters and emergency responders during emergency operations. The provisions of the Fire Code apply to the construction, alteration, movement, enlargement, replacement, repair, equipment, use and occupancy, location, maintenance, removal, and demolition of every building or structure throughout the State of California. The Fire Code includes regulations regarding fire resistance-rated construction, fire protection systems such as alarm and sprinkler systems, fire services features such as fire apparatus access roads, means of egress, fire safety during construction and demolition, and wildland-urban interface areas.

#### Local

##### *Imperial County General Plan*

The Imperial County General Plan Seismic and Public Safety Element contains goals and objectives that relate to fire protection and law enforcement pertinent to the proposed project. An analysis of the project's consistency with the applicable goals and objectives of the Seismic and Public Safety Element is provided in Table 3.14-1.

##### *Imperial County Office of Emergency Services – Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan*

The ICFD is the local Office of Emergency services in Imperial County. Imperial County has developed the multi-jurisdictional hazard mitigation plan (MHMP) to create a safer community. The purpose of the MHMP is to significantly reduce deaths, injuries, and other disaster losses caused by natural and human-caused hazards in Imperial County. The MHMP describes past and current hazard mitigation activities and outlines goals, strategies, and actions for reducing future disaster losses. The Imperial County MHMP is the representation of the County's commitment to reduce risks from natural and other hazards and serves as a guide for decision-makers as they commit resources to reducing the effects of natural and other hazards. The jurisdictions included in the MHMP include the cities of Brawley, Calexico, Calipatria, El Centro, Holtville, Imperial, and Westmoreland, the IID and the Imperial County Office of Education. The MHMP complies with all federal, state, and local laws guiding disaster management.

**Table 3.14-1. Project Consistency with Applicable General Plan Seismic and Public Safety Element**

Applicable General Plan Policies	Consistency Determination	Analysis
<b>Seismic and Public Safety</b>		
Goal 1: Include public health and safety considerations in land use planning.	Consistent	The project’s CUP applications and site plans will be reviewed by the Imperial County Fire Department to ensure that the proposed facilities comply with state and local fire codes and fire safety features are met.
Objective 1.8: Reduce fire hazards by the design of new developments		
Goal 2: Minimize potential hazards to public health, safety, and welfare and prevent the loss of life and damage to health and property resulting from both natural and human-related phenomena.	Consistent	See response above for a discussion on how the project would implement all state and local fire codes to reduce the potential for fire hazards. With regards to public safety and security, the project would include perimeter security fencing. In addition, there will be a security service that monitors the property.
Objective 2.5: Minimize injury, loss of life, and damage to property by implementing all state codes where applicable.		

Source: ICPDS 1997  
 CUP = conditional use permit

*Imperial County Emergency Operations Plan*

The Imperial County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) provides guidance and procedures for the County to prepare for and respond to emergencies. The EOP designates the Sheriff’s Department as having jurisdiction in an emergency involving evacuation within the unincorporated areas of the county and within contract cities.

**3.14.3 Impacts and Mitigation Measures**

This section presents the significance criteria used for considering project impacts related to public services, the methodology employed for the evaluation, an impact evaluation, and mitigation requirements, if necessary.

**Thresholds of Significance**

Based on CEQA Guidelines Appendix G, project impacts related to public services are considered significant if the project would result in 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:

- Fire protection
- Police protection
- Schools
- Parks
- Other Public Facilities

As mentioned previously, it was determined through the preparation of an IS/NOP that the project would not result in impacts on schools, parks, or other public facilities. Therefore, those issue areas will not be discussed further and are included in Chapter 6, Effects Found Not Significant, of this EIR.

## Methodology

Evaluation of potential fire and police service impacts of the proposed project was based on consultation with the ICFD, Sheriff's Department and review of other development projects in the area.

## Impact Analysis

**Impact 3.14-1**      ***Would the project result in 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 fire protection?***

The project site is located in the unincorporated area of Imperial County. According to the Seismic and Public Safety Element of the General Plan (County of Imperial 1997), the potential for a major fire in the unincorporated areas of the County is generally low.

Points of ingress/egress would be accessed via locked gates that can be opened by any emergency responders. Although the proposed project would be designed, constructed, and operated in accordance with applicable fire protection and other environmental, health, and safety requirements, the project applicant will be required to consult and coordinate with the Fire Department to address any fire safety and service concerns so that adequate service is maintained. The project will prepare a thorough Emergency Response Plan (ERP) created with consultation from the ICFD. The project ERP will address all emergencies likely to occur at the site and requires an Emergency Coordinator who can work with County Fire Protection. The plan will contain information vital to emergency responder and engineering methods for protecting flammable isopentane tanks at the project site.

While the proposed project may result in an increase in demand for fire protection service, with installation of internal fire prevention systems and ICFD consultation, the project would not result in an increase in demand that would, in turn, result in a substantial adverse physical impact associated with the provision of new or physically altered fire protection 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. Based on these considerations, the project would not result in a need for fire facility expansion and a less than significant impact would occur.



Imperial County requires payment of impact fees for new development projects. Fire Impact Fees are imposed pursuant to Ordinance 1418 §2 (2006), which was drafted in accordance with the County's TischlerBise Impact Fee Study. The ordinance has provisions for non-residential industrial projects based on square footage. The project applicant will be required to pay the fire protection services' impact fees. These fees would be included in the Conditions of Approval for the CUPs. No new fire stations or facilities would be required to serve the project. Impacts would therefore be less than significant.

*Mitigation Measure(s)*

No mitigation measures are required.

**Impact 3.14-2** *Would the project result in 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 police protection?*

The project does not include a residential component; therefore, it would not result in a substantial addition of residents to the Sheriff Department's service area. Although the potential is low, the proposed project may attract vandals or other security risks and the increase in construction related traffic could increase demand on law enforcement services. With regards to public safety and security, the project would include perimeter security fencing. In addition, there will be a security service that monitors the property, thereby minimizing the need for police surveillance. Points of ingress/egress would be accessed via locked gates.

The proposed project may result in a temporary increase in demand for law enforcement service due to the presence of construction equipment and material being stored on-site. With installation of the proposed security features on the project site, the proposed project would not result in an increase in demand that would, in turn, result in a substantial adverse physical impact associated with the provision of new or physically altered sheriff 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. As conditions of approval of the project, the project applicant will be required to participate in the Imperial County Public Benefit Program for the life of the CUPs and shall at all times be a party to a public benefit agreement in a form acceptable to County Counsel in order to pay for all costs, benefits, and fees associated with the approved project, and the applicant will be required to reimburse the Sheriff's Department for any investigations regarding theft on the project site and related law enforcement. Approval of this public benefit agreement will be by the Board of Supervisors prior to the issuance of the first building permit. These potential impacts are less than significant.

*Mitigation Measure(s)*

No mitigation measures are required.

### 3.14.4 Decommissioning/Restoration and Residual Impacts

#### Decommissioning/Restoration

At the end of the project's useful life, all equipment and facilities will be properly abandoned and dismantled. Decommissioning and restoration of the project site would occur and would not result in

an increased need for fire and police protection services. Decommissioning of the project would occur through implementation of a required Reclamation Plan. These activities would be in the form of disassembling project components and then restoring the site to pre-project conditions, both of which would not create an increase in demand for police or fire service beyond the level required for proposed operations. Therefore, no impact is identified and no mitigation is required for this phase.

### Residual

With payment of the development impact fees for fire and police protection services, project impacts would be less than significant. No mitigation is required, and no residual significant and unmitigated impacts would result.