

## 5. Environmental Analysis

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### 5.12 PUBLIC SERVICES

This section addresses public services including: fire protection and emergency services, police protection, school services, and library services. Park services are addressed in Section 5.13, *Recreation*. Public and private utilities and service systems, including water, wastewater, and solid waste services and systems are addressed in Section 5.15, *Utilities and Service Systems*.

The Initial Study, included as Appendix A, substantiates that all impacts associated with public services would be potentially significant and all impacts are discussed in the following analysis.

#### 5.12.1 Fire Protection and Emergency Services

##### 5.12.1.1 *Environmental Setting*

###### Provision of Services

Fire protection and emergency services in the Town of Yucca Valley are provided by the San Bernardino County Fire Department (SBCFD), Division 5. SBCFD provides fire suppression, inspection, fire safety, rescue and emergency response (emergency medical and paramedic ambulance transportation). SBCFD also monitors fire hazards in the Town and has ongoing programs for public education and the investigation and mitigation of hazardous situations. Fire-fighting resources in Yucca Valley include the fire stations listed in Table 5.12-1 and shown in Figure 5.12-1, *Public Facilities*. Stations 36, 41, and 42 provide year-round service, whereas Station 38 is only manned when necessary, typically during months where there is a high fire risk.

SBCFD Division 5 administration, operations, and community safety functions are located at 6942 Airway Avenue, Suite A, in Yucca Valley.



## 5. Environmental Analysis

### PUBLIC SERVICES

**Table 5.12-1**  
**Fire Stations Serving the Town of Yucca Valley**

<b>Station</b>	<b>Service Area</b>	<b>Equipment and Personnel</b>
<b>Station 36</b> 6715 Park Blvd Joshua Tree, CA 92252	Services Joshua Tree and surrounding areas; routinely assists the National Park Service, Twentynine Palms Fire, and the Marine Corps Fire Services	<b>Equipment:</b> 1 paramedic engine, 1 aerial ladder truck, and 1 hazardous materials response unit  <b>Personnel:</b> Daily staffing including 1 captain, 1 engineer, and 1 firefighter paramedic
<b>Station 38</b> 5380 Mountain View Lane Pioneertown, CA 92268	Services Pioneertown and surrounding areas	<b>Equipment:</b> 1 utility (SUV) vehicle with radios and basic life support medical gear  <b>Personnel:</b> Paid call staffing
<b>Station 41</b> 57201 Twentynine Palms Highway Yucca Valley, CA 92284	Services the valley and southern portion of the Town, and responds to incidents as needed in Joshua Tree, Twentynine Palms, and Morongo Valley; assists CALFIRE with fire response in Joshua Tree National Park	<b>Equipment:</b> 1 paramedic engine, 1 brush engine, 2 paramedic ambulances, and 1 swift water rescue unit  <b>Personnel:</b> Daily staffing including 1 captain, 1 engineer, 2 firefighter paramedic, and two limited term firefighter/ ambulance drivers  The Type I engine and ambulances are regularly staffed. The brush engine and swift water unit are cross-staffed with the regular duty crew when necessary. Between the hours of 8AM and 8PM, the station is staffed with 6 people. At night, between 8PM and 8AM, the station is staffed with 4 people, with one of the ambulances taken out of service.
<b>Station 42</b> 58612 Aberdeen Road Yucca Valley, CA 92284	Services the Yucca Mesa area north of town and responds to incidents in Landers, Johnson Valley, Pioneertown, and Joshua Tree; assists CALFIRE on all State Responsibility Areas west of Highway 247	<b>Equipment:</b> 1 paramedic engine, 1 paramedic ambulance, 1 water tender, 1 light duty urban search and rescue unit, and 1 utility vehicle  <b>Personnel:</b> Daily staffing including 1 captain, 1 engineer, 1 firefighter paramedic, and 1 limited term firefighter/ambulance driver  The water tender and rescue unit are cross-staffed as needed by the regular crew. Also houses 1 Type I reserve engine and 2 reserve ambulances.

Source: Benfield 2013; Earth Consultants International 2012.

### Response Activity

Response activity statistics for Stations 41 and 42 for the years 2009 to 2012 are summarized further in Table 5.12-2. The data shows that the number of calls received by the local fire department has increased from one year to the next, at an average rate of just fewer than 4 percent per year, roughly consistent with the population growth during the same time period. Only about 2.5 percent of incident calls received by Fire Stations 41 and 42 between 2009 and 2012 were for fires.

# 5. Environmental Analysis

**Table 5.12-2  
Response Statistics for Yucca Valley Fire Stations for Fiscal Years 2009 to 2012**

Year	Fires	Medical Calls	Other*	Total Calls
<b>Station 41</b>				
2009–2010	74	2,664	657	3,395
2010–2011	56	2,662	737	3,455
2011–2012	69	2,828	764	3,661
<b>Station 42</b>				
2009–2010	22	711	215	948
2010–2011	31	704	231	966
2011–2012	36	736	252	1,024

Source: Earth Consultants International 2012.

Note: These statistics are for two stations only and limited to calls within the Town of Yucca Valley.

\* Other calls include downed power lines, false alarms, smoke investigations, carbon dioxide and smoke alarm investigations, etc.

## Response Times

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA Standard 1710, 2010) recommends the following objectives for fire departments:

- An alarm answering time of not more than 15 seconds for at least 95 percent of the alarms received, and not more than 40 seconds for at least 99 percent of the alarms received;
- When the alarm is received at a public safety answering point (PSAP) and transferred to a secondary answering point (or communication center), the agency responsible for the PSAP should have an alarm transfer time of not more than 30 seconds for at least 95 percent of all alarms processed;
- The responding fire department should have an alarm processing time (the time interval from when the alarm is acknowledged at the communication center until response information begins to be transmitted via voice or electronic means to emergency response facilities and emergency response units) of not more than 60 seconds for at least 90 percent of the alarms, and not more than 90 seconds for at least 99 percent of the alarms;
- Turnout time for fire and special operations of 80 seconds, and turnout time for Emergency Medical Service (EMS) response of 60 seconds;
- Travel time of 240 seconds (4 minutes) or less for the arrival of the first arriving engine company at a fire suppression incident and 480 seconds (6 minutes) or less travel time for the deployment of an initial full alarm assignment at a fire suppression incident;
- Travel time of 240 seconds (4 minutes) or less for the arrival of a unit with first responder with automatic external defibrillator (AED) or higher level capability at an emergency medical incident;
- Travel time of 480 seconds (6 minutes) or less for the arrival of an advanced life support unit at an emergency medical incident, where this service is provided by the fire department, provided that a first responder with AED or basic life support unit arrived in 240 seconds (4 minutes) or less travel time.



## 5. Environmental Analysis

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### PUBLIC SERVICES

According to the SBCFD, the average response time for Station 41 is currently 6 minutes, 3 seconds. The average response time for Station 42 is currently 9 minutes, 4 seconds (Benfield 2013). These statistics reflect calls generated only within the town limits. The response time begins when a station receives an alert and ends when the fire unit arrives on scene. This time includes receiving the call, donning personal safety gear as required, and driving to the incident. Safety rules and seat belt laws prohibit personnel from donning safety gear while en route to an incident. Station 42 services an extremely large area. As a result, response times can actually take 20 minutes or more because of the distance from the fire station to the incident (Earth Consultants International 2012). In addition to the large response area serviced by the Fire Department, response times in the Town of Yucca Valley can be impacted by a number of conditions. The most significant of these include congestion on Highway 62 during the late afternoons and early evenings, and the numerous unpaved (dirt) roads that limit driving speeds. Weather can also impact response times. Some of the Town's roads are prone to flooding during storms. For example, Yucca Mesa Road and Old Woman Springs Road are the main arteries providing connection between the areas serviced by Station 42 (in northern Yucca Valley) and Station 41 (southern Yucca Valley). However, the intersection of Yucca Mesa Road and Barron Drive is typically closed due to flooding during storms, forcing all traffic between the two areas onto Old Woman Springs Road. Deep snow at higher elevations during the winter can also hinder or slow down emergency response.

Staffing and equipment levels are currently below optimum given the number of calls generated within the Town. The recent economic/fiscal crisis has affected SBCFD drastically and has resulted in reductions in staffing and equipment (Benfield 2013).

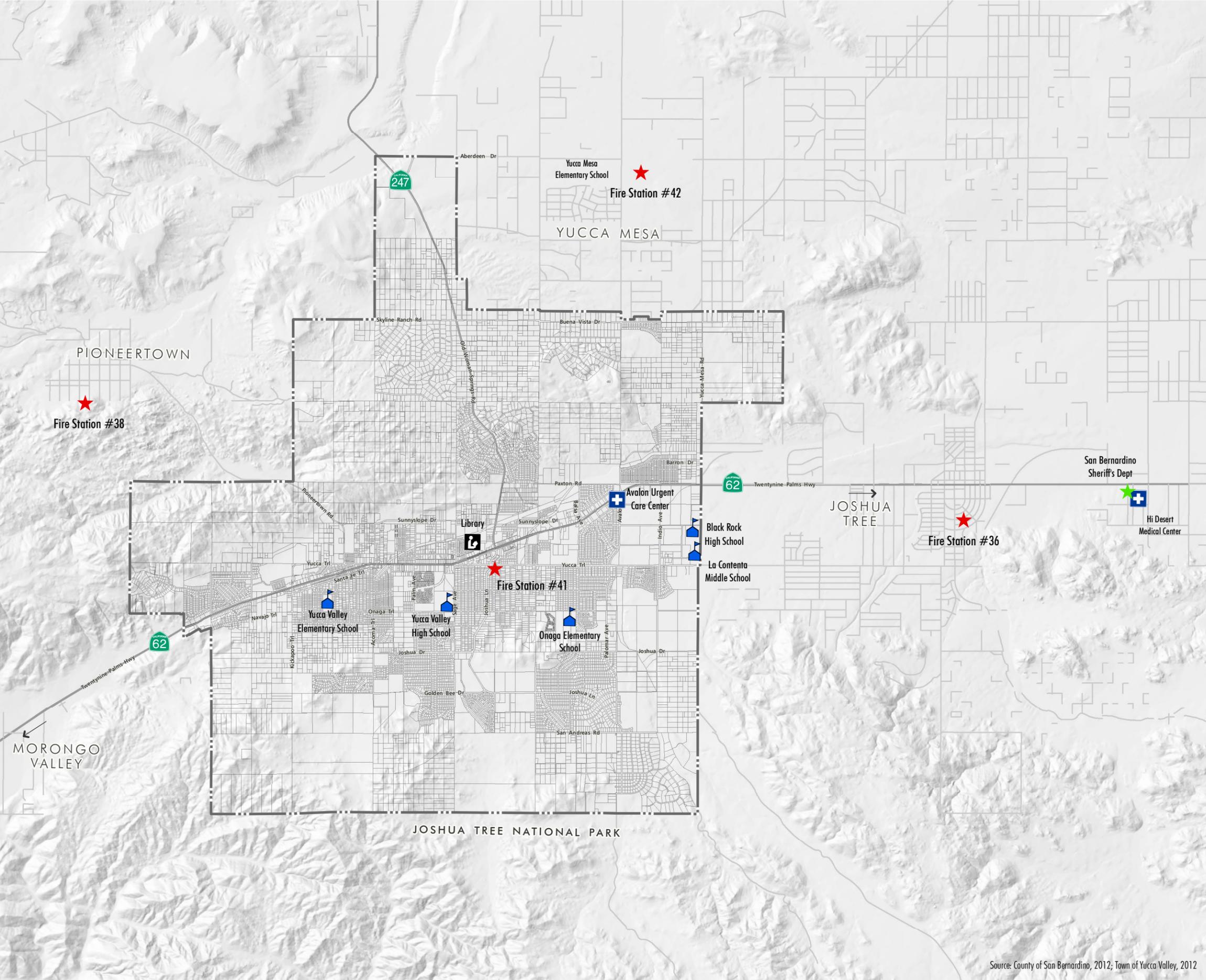
### **Automatic and Mutual Aid Agreements**

Although Stations 41 and 42 are tasked with the responsibility of fire prevention and fire suppression in Yucca Valley, in reality, fire-fighting agencies team up and work together during emergencies. These teaming arrangements are handled through automatic and mutual aid agreements, which obligate fire departments to help each other under predefined circumstances. Automatic aid agreements require the nearest fire company to respond to a fire regardless of the jurisdiction. Mutual aid agreements obligate fire department resources to respond outside of their district upon request for assistance.

The Town of Yucca Valley is one of 24 cities and towns that are part of the San Bernardino County Operational Area. The operational area is part of the Standardized Emergency Management System, which promotes effective disaster management, response, and cooperation across jurisdictional boundaries. As a result of being part of an operational area group, all of the jurisdictions have mutual aid agreements that allow them to obtain additional emergency resources as needed from nonaffected members in the group. Given their geographic locations, the fire stations in Joshua Tree and Landers (County Stations 36 and 19, respectively) are the first responders to mutual aid requests from the Town of Yucca Valley. Furthermore, each of these cities is signatory to a joint powers agreement that provides for the joint use and operation of machinery, equipment, vehicles, and personnel in the event of a fire, disturbance, or other local emergency that cannot be met solely by the requesting city or jurisdiction. The automatic aid agreements provide for automatic dispatch of surrounding agencies when needed to replace units that are already responding to other calls (multiple alarms), in areas where two or more agencies border each other, or when the call type requires more units than the local area can provide. Mutual aid calls for units over and above what a first alarm assignments provide, generally on large incidents (like a fire in a large shopping center or apartment complex). In both automatic aid and mutual aid agreements, fire units are provided free of charge for the first 12 hours. After 12 hours, the agency with jurisdiction reimburses the assisting agencies for their costs.

# 5.12 - PUBLIC SERVICES

Figure 5.12-1  
PUBLIC FACILITIES



-  Library
-  Medical Center
-  School
-  San Bernardino Sheriff's Dept
-  Fire Station
-  Town Limits

Source: County of San Bernardino, 2012; Town of Yucca Valley, 2012

# 5. Environmental Analysis

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## PUBLIC SERVICES

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## 5. Environmental Analysis

### PUBLIC SERVICES

SBCFD has automatic aid and mutual aid agreements with surrounding agencies, including Morongo Valley Fire, California Department of Forestry and Fire Prevention (CALFIRE), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and National Park Service. SBCFD is currently in the process of establishing agreements with Twentynine Palms Fire Department and Twentynine Palms Marine Base Combat Center Fire Department (Benfield 2013). Numerous other agencies are available to assist the San Bernardino County Fire Department if needed. These include the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Office and California Highway Patrol, who, depending on the location of the incident, would provide support during evacuations and discourage people from traveling to the incident area to observe fire department operations, since this can hinder fire suppression and emergency response efforts. In addition to the agencies mentioned above, several other state and federal agencies have roles in fire hazard mitigation, response, and recovery, depending on the type of incident and its location. These agencies include the Office of Emergency Services, Office of Aviation Services, National Weather Service, the Department of the Interior, and in extreme cases, the Department of Defense. In forest and open areas, agencies that provide fire suppression services include the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, National Association of State Foresters, Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Department of Agriculture. Private companies and individuals may also be asked to provide assistance in some cases.

#### 5.12.1.2 *Thresholds of Significance*

According to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, a project would normally have a significant effect on the environment if the project would:

- FP-1 Result in a substantial adverse physical impact associated with the provisions 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 services.

#### 5.12.1.3 *Environmental Impacts*

The following impact analysis addresses thresholds of significance for which the Initial Study disclosed potentially significant impacts. The applicable thresholds are identified in brackets after the impact statement.

**IMPACT 5.14-1: *BUILDOUT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE GENERAL PLAN UPDATE WOULD INTRODUCE NEW STRUCTURES, RESIDENTS, AND WORKERS INTO THE SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT'S SERVICE BOUNDARIES, INCREASING THE DEMAND FOR FIRE PROTECTION FACILITIES AND PERSONNEL. [THRESHOLD FP-1]***

**Impact Analysis:** Buildout of General Plan Update would result in an increased number of persons and businesses within the Town, thereby resulting in an increase in demand for fire services. Firefighter staffing needs are determined by the SBCFD by the number of calls and requests for fire services within the service area. However, SBCFD has indicated that staffing and equipment levels are currently below optimum for the number of calls generated within the Town. The SBCFD has also stated that additional fire stations with paramedic services in the southern and western areas of Yucca Valley are desired (Benfield 2013).

Under the General Plan Update, staffing levels for fire protection and emergency services in Yucca Valley would continue to be established by the SBCFD. Public safety in Yucca Valley, including fire protection and emergency services provided by the SBCFD, is paid for with county revenue generated by property taxes. Although there is no direct fiscal mechanism that ensures that funding for fire and emergency services would grow exactly proportional to an increased need for services resulting from population growth in the Town, property taxes would be expected to grow roughly proportion to any increase in residential units and/or businesses in Yucca Valley.

Furthermore, polices and implementation programs in the proposed General Plan Update encourage periodic review of public safety services provided in Yucca Valley and require that fire and emergency services reflect the growing



# 5. Environmental Analysis

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## PUBLIC SERVICES

needs of residents. In particular, Policy S7-7 of the Safety Element requires that the Town coordinate with the SBCFD to ensure that adequate equipment, personnel, and services are provided as needed. Future increased need for fire services is also addressed in Implementation Action S 37, which requires that the Town analyze the possibility of establishing a Public Safety Assessment District to offset the costs of providing police and fire services to new development.

As the Town's population increases, additional fire stations may be required. Various localized environmental impacts related to construction of new fire stations would occur; however, since specific site locations have not been selected, it would be speculative to analyze these impacts as part of this first-tier Program EIR, other than to note that such impacts would likely fall within the envelope of construction impacts analyzed elsewhere in the EIR. Future environmental review would occur once specific locations have been determined. If an initial study is prepared and the Town determines the impacts to be significant, the project would be required to comply with project-specific mitigation measures, which for facilities as small as a fire station are likely to be successful in mitigating to less than significant.

The County would maintain appropriate firefighter staffing to ensure compliance with the National Fire Protection Association standards for response time and coverage, as discussed above. In addition, future projects would be reviewed by the Town of Yucca Valley and SBCFD on an individual basis and would be required to comply with requirements in effect at the time building permits are issued. Policies and programs in the proposed General Plan Update are designed to ensure collaboration between Town departments, SBCFD, and other involved agencies to achieve the Town's development goals in phases, working within the budget and infrastructure constraints of the Town. Following this process, sufficient revenue would be available for necessary service improvements to provide for adequate fire facilities, equipment, and personnel upon buildout of the General Plan Update. Impacts on fire services would be less than significant.

### **5.12.1.4 Relevant General Plan Policies and Implementation Actions**

#### **Land Use Element**

##### **Land Use Element Policies**

- |         |  |
|---------|--|
| LU 1-1  | Encourage infill development to maximize the efficiency of existing and planned public services, facilities, and infrastructure.   |
| LU 1-3  | Require new projects to pay their fair share cost of, or make necessary improvements to, public facilities, infrastructure and services that are impacted by the new demands generated by new development. |
| LU 1-26 | Seek opportunities to collaborate with other public/quasi-public organizations in an effort to build new facilities to meet demand or develop joint use facilities.  |

##### **Land Use Element Implementation Actions**

- |       |   |
|-------|---|
| LU 12 | Annually revisit public facility priorities through the Capital Improvements Program and annual budget process. |
|-------|---|

# 5. Environmental Analysis

## Safety Element

### **Safety Element Policies**

- S 7-1 Provide an appropriate level of police and fire protection to preserve and protect the health, welfare, and property of residents and businesses in the Town of Yucca Valley.
- S 7-2 Require the San Bernardino County Sheriff and Fire Departments to evaluate new development plans and comment on their ability to provide services.
- S 7-4 Update and maintain the Emergency Operations Plan and Hazard Mitigation Plan keeping them current with county, state, and federal requirements, include measures pertaining to man-made and natural hazards such as flood, access, earthquakes, landslides, hazardous materials, evacuation, severe weather and fire.
- S 7-5 Establish emergency evacuation routes and adequate signage.
- S 7-6 Promote public and quasi-public education programs to enhance public safety.
- S 7-7 Coordinate with the San Bernardino County Fire and Sheriff's Departments and other appropriate agencies for the provision of adequate equipment and personnel, as well as expanded levels of service when needed.

### **Safety Element Implementation Actions**

- S 30 Review and update the Emergency Operations Plan with local key staff members including medical, fire, police, etc. to ensure that the Town is adequately prepared for most likely and demanding emergency disasters.
- S 36 Communicate with the San Bernardino County Sheriff and Fire Departments to ensure an adequate level of service.
- S 37 Analyze the possibility of establishing a Public Safety Assessment District to offset the costs of providing police and fire services to new development.



### **5.12.1.5 Existing Regulations**

#### **State and Federal Regulations**

- National Fire Protection Association Code 1710, Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments

### **5.12.1.6 Level of Significance Before Mitigation**

Upon implementation of regulatory requirements, the following impact would be less than significant: 5.14-1.

### **5.12.1.7 Mitigation Measures**

No significant impacts were identified and no mitigation measures are necessary.

## 5. Environmental Analysis

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### PUBLIC SERVICES

#### **5.12.1.8 Level of Significance After Mitigation**

No significant adverse impacts were identified and no significant unavoidable impacts relating to fire protection and emergency services remain.

#### **5.12.2 Police Protection**

##### **5.12.2.1 Environmental Setting**

The San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department (SBCSD), through a contract with the Town, provides police protection in Yucca Valley. SBCSD's Morongo Basin substation at 63665 Twentynine Palms Highway serves as the area's regional headquarters for provision of police services. A satellite law enforcement facility is in the Yucca Valley Community Center.

SBCSD's performance standard for responding to emergency calls within its service area is under five minutes. The department's standard for nonemergency calls is 10 to 15 minutes. Current response times in Yucca Valley are 4.36 minutes for emergency calls and 13.33 minutes for nonemergency calls. Although the SBCSD's police protection resources are currently adequate to serve the Town under existing conditions, response times are increasing (Toms 2013). SBCSD does not have an adopted officers-per-capita performance standard. However, the industry standard is one officer per thousand residents. SBCSD current provides 0.6 officers per person in Yucca Valley.

##### **5.12.2.2 Thresholds of Significance**

According to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, a project would normally have a significant effect on the environment if the project would:

- PP-1 Result in a substantial adverse physical impact associated with the provisions 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 services.

##### **5.12.2.3 Environmental Impacts**

**IMPACT 5.14-2: BUILDOUT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE GENERAL PLAN UPDATE WOULD INTRODUCE NEW STRUCTURES, RESIDENTS, AND WORKERS INTO THE SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT SERVICE BOUNDARIES, INCREASING THE DEMAND FOR POLICE PROTECTION FACILITIES AND PERSONNEL. [THRESHOLD PP-1]**

**Impact Analysis:** Buildout of the General Plan Update would result in an increase in demand for police protection services within the Town. New facilities, equipment, and personnel would be necessary to maintain adequate levels of service. At buildout, the Town is anticipated to result in a total of approximately 17,771 new residential units, 17,403,385 additional square feet of nonresidential space, 43,283 new residents, and 27,387 additional employees compared to existing conditions (see Table 3-2 in Chapter 3, *Project Description*, for complete buildout projections). In particular, the generation of population growth under the General Plan Update would substantially increase the demand for police protection services.

Yucca Valley's population upon buildout of the General Plan Update is projected to be approximately 64,565 people, based on the land use types and densities of the proposed land use plan (see Table 3-2 in Chapter 3, *Project Description*). In order for SBCSD to maintain its current ratio of 0.6 sworn officers per 1,000 residents, a population of 64,565 would require 39 sworn officers. This is more than double the number of officers currently provided by SBCSD in Yucca Valley. As a result, additional police equipment, facilities, and personnel would be required to provide

# 5. Environmental Analysis

adequate response times, acceptable public service ratios, and other performance objectives for law enforcement services.

Under the General Plan Update, staffing levels for police services in Yucca Valley would continue to be established by the SBCSD based on its contract with the Town. Public safety in Yucca Valley, including contract police protection services provided by the SBCSD, is paid for with funding from the Town’s General Fund. Although the Town collects development impact fees per Chapter 3.40 of its Municipal Code, these fees are used to fund capital facilities and infrastructure projects and are not used to fund daily operation of public services. There is no direct fiscal mechanism that ensures that funding for police services would grow exactly proportional to an increased need for police services resulting from population growth in the Town. However, revenue sources that contribute to funding the Town’s General Fund, including property and sales taxes, would be expected to grow in rough proportion to any increase in residential units and/or businesses in Yucca Valley.

Furthermore, polices and implementation programs in the proposed General Plan Update encourage periodic review of public safety services provided in Yucca Valley and require that police protection services reflect the growing needs of residents. In particular, Policy S7-7 of the Safety Element requires that the Town coordinate with the SBCSD to ensure that adequate equipment, personnel, and services are provided as needed. Future increased need for police services is also addressed in Implementation Action S 37, which requires that the Town analyze the possibility of establishing a Public Safety Assessment District to offset the costs of providing police and fire services to new development.

The SBCSD is currently able to meet the Town’s police protection needs, but buildout of the General Plan Update would result in an impact on the SBCSD and their ability to deliver police services in a timely manner. Buildout of the General Plan Update would require the hiring of new staff and could potentially require the building of new facilities. Environmental impacts would result from the construction of new facilities. The physical impacts cannot be analyzed in this EIR because the locations and sizes of these facilities are unknown. Future projects would be reviewed by the Town of Yucca Valley on an individual basis and would be required to comply with regulations in effect at the time building permits are issued (i.e., payment of impact fees), or if an initial study is prepared and the Town determines the impacts to be significant, the project would be required to comply with project-specific mitigation measures. The need for additional structures and personnel would be financed through the Town’s General Fund, and the impacts of General Plan Update on police services would be less than significant.



## 5.12.2.4 Relevant General Plan Policies and Implementation Actions

### Land Use Element

#### Land Use Element Policies

- LU 1-1 Encourage infill development to maximize the efficiency of existing and planned public services, facilities, and infrastructure.
- LU 1-3 Require new projects to pay their fair share cost of, or make necessary improvements to, public facilities, infrastructure and services that are impacted by the new demands generated by new development.
- LU 1-26 Seek opportunities to collaborate with other public/quasi-public organizations in an effort to build new facilities to meet demand or develop joint use facilities.

# 5. Environmental Analysis

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## PUBLIC SERVICES

### **Land Use Element Implementation Actions**

- LU 12            Annually revisit public facility priorities through the Capital Improvements Program and annual budget process.

### **Safety Element**

#### **Safety Element Policies**

- S 7-1            Provide an appropriate level of police and fire protection to preserve and protect the health, welfare, and property of residents and businesses in the Town of Yucca Valley.
- S 7-2            Require the San Bernardino County Sheriff and Fire Departments to evaluate new development plans and comment on their ability to provide services.
- S 7-3            Encourage the evaluation of projects using Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) design practices as a means of providing increased security in residential, commercial, and industrial development.
- S 7-4            Update and maintain the Emergency Operations Plan and Hazard Mitigation Plan keeping them current with county, state, and federal requirements, include measures pertaining to man-made and natural hazards such as flood, access, earthquakes, landslides, hazardous materials, evacuation, severe weather and fire.
- S 7-5            Establish emergency evacuation routes and adequate signage.
- S 7-6            Promote public and quasi-public education programs to enhance public safety.
- S 7-7            Coordinate with the San Bernardino County Fire and Sheriff's Departments and other appropriate agencies for the provision of adequate equipment and personnel, as well as expanded levels of service when needed.

#### **Safety Element Implementation Actions**

- S 30            Review and update the Emergency Operations Plan with local key staff members including medical, fire, police, etc. to ensure that the Town is adequately prepared for most likely and demanding emergency disasters.
- S 36            Communicate with the San Bernardino County Sheriff and Fire Departments to ensure an adequate level of service.
- S 37            Analyze the possibility of establishing a Public Safety Assessment District to offset the costs of providing police and fire services to new development.

#### **5.12.2.5 Existing Regulations**

No existing regulations apply.

#### **5.12.2.6 Level of Significance Before Mitigation**

Upon implementation of regulatory requirements, the following impact would be less than significant: 5.14-2.

# 5. Environmental Analysis

## 5.12.2.7 Mitigation Measures

No significant impacts were identified and no mitigation measures are necessary.

## 5.12.2.8 Level of Significance After Mitigation

No significant adverse impacts were identified and no significant unavoidable impacts relating to police protection services remain.

## 5.12.3 School Services

### 5.12.3.1 Environmental Setting

There are six public schools within Yucca Valley and numerous private schools.

#### Public Education Facilities

Morongo Unified School District (MUSD) currently serves over 9,700 students in grades K–12 from Yucca Valley, as well as Morongo Valley, Joshua Tree, and Twentynine Palms. MUSD currently operates 11 elementary schools, 2 middle schools, 2 high schools, 2 continuation high schools, 2 state preschool programs, and a special education preschool program. Yucca Valley’s public schools include 2 elementary schools, 1 middle school, 1 high school, and 1 continuation school:

- Yucca Valley Elementary School
- Onaga Elementary School
- La Contenta Middle School
- Yucca Valley High School
- Black Rock High School (formerly Sky Continuation High School)

Yucca Valley Elementary School has 24 classrooms on a 15-acre campus. Onaga Elementary has 42 classrooms and a 16.5-acre campus. Each elementary school is equipped with its own library and computer lab. La Contenta Middle School provides 24 permanent classrooms, 20 portable classrooms, 2 computer labs, a library, a cafeteria, and a multipurpose room on a 29-acre campus. The Yucca Valley High School campus includes 63 permanent classrooms, 18 portable classrooms, 6 computer labs, 4 science labs, and a library, cafeteria, gym, swimming pool, and football field on 38 acres. Black Rock High School is a continuation school that provides individualized education ultimately leading to a high school diploma. The schools listed above are shown in Figure 5.12-1, *Public Facilities*. Capacity and enrollment are detailed in Table 5.12-3



## 5. Environmental Analysis

### PUBLIC SERVICES

**Table 5.12-3  
Capacity and Enrollment of Schools Serving Yucca Valley**

<b>School &amp; Location</b>	<b>Capacity, Permanent Buildings</b>	<b>Capacity, Portable Buildings</b>	<b>Total Capacity</b>	<b>Current Enrollment</b>	<b>Remaining Capacity</b>
Onaga Elementary School 58001 Onaga Trail	525	425	950	719	231
Yucca Mesa Elementary School 3380 Avalon Avenue	502	200	702	427	275
Yucca Valley Elementary School 7601 Hopi Trail	675	175	850	568	282
La Contenta Middle School 7050 La Contenta Road	725	425	1,150	765	385
Yucca Valley High School 7600 Sage Avenue	1,500	375	1,875	1,280	595
Black Rock High School 59273 Sunnyslope Drive	200	100	300	123	177
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,127</b>	<b>1,700</b>	<b>5,827</b>	<b>3,882</b>	<b>1,945</b>

Source: Smith 2013.

### Alternative Education Programs

Private, charter, and home schooling are alternatives to the traditional education system in the area. MUSD runs an independent continuing education and home schooling program that provides supervision for both parent and child to ensure progress in the California standards-based curriculum. MUSD also oversees the only charter school in Yucca Valley. Hope Academy is a K–12 independent study charter school where students correspond with teachers by e-mail or phone and meet with them once a week. There are eight private schools in Yucca Valley. Joshua Springs Christian School is the largest Christian school in the Morongo Basin. The coed school serves over 300 students. Its 42-acre campus features a preschool, elementary school, junior high, and high school.

### Bond Measure “O”

Bond Measure “O” was passed by voters in MUSD’s district boundaries in November 8, 2005. The measure approved a general obligation bond to repair and/or renovate schools in the MUSD service area in order to “improve student safety and relieve overcrowding” (MUSD 2013). Funds generated by the bond are used for:

- Repairing deteriorating/aging classrooms, restrooms, plumbing, electrical systems, and other campus facilities
- Making safety improvements for fire/health emergencies and security upgrades
- Renovating classrooms, science and computer labs, and technology centers
- Build and make improvements to school facilities

A citizens’ oversight committee regularly reviews expenditure of the bond’s proceeds.

# 5. Environmental Analysis

## 5.12.3.2 Thresholds of Significance

According to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, a project would normally have a significant effect on the environment if the project would:

- SS-1 Result in a substantial adverse physical impact associated with the provisions 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 school services.

## 5.12.3.3 Environmental Impacts

**IMPACT 5.14-3: BUILDOUT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE GENERAL PLAN UPDATE WOULD GENERATE APPROXIMATELY 15,179 ADDITIONAL STUDENTS IN THE MORONGO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT. [THRESHOLD SS-1]**

**Impact Analysis:** Buildout of the General Plan Update would allow up to 17,771 additional dwelling units in Yucca Valley. MUSD assesses its needs based on a student generation factor of 0.7 students per dwelling unit (Smith 2013) and charges developers accordingly. Table 5.12-4 calculates the approximate number of students that would be generated by dwelling units in Yucca Valley at buildout of the proposed project.

**Table 5.12-4**  
**Student Generation at Buildout of the General Plan Update**

<i>Estimated Total Units at General Plan Buildout</i>	<i>MUSD Student Generation Rate (Students/Unit)</i>	<i>Estimated Students at General Plan Buildout</i>
27,229	0.7	19,061
	Existing Student Population	3,882
	<b>Additional Students Generated by Proposed Project</b>	<b>15,179</b>

Sources: Smith 2013.



Based on the MUSD’s student generation rate above, the student population in Yucca Valley at buildout would be approximately 19,061 students. The number of additional students generated by new dwelling units allowed under the General Plan Update—approximately 15,179 students—is above the current unused classroom capacity of 1,945 students shown in Table 5.12-3. Therefore, classroom capacity would need to be expanded to accommodate students generated by buildout of the General Plan Update.

The estimated numbers of new schools that would be needed to accommodate the net increase in student generation due to General Plan buildout is shown below in Table 5.12-5. The number of new classroom seats needed, 13,234, is the net increase in student generation, 15,179, less the number of existing unused school seats, 1,945. This estimate assumes that all additional students would be housed in new schools rather than expanded existing schools. Buildout of the General Plan Update would require approximately 13 new schools.

## 5. Environmental Analysis

### PUBLIC SERVICES

**Table 5.12-5  
New Schools Needed at General Plan Buildout**

	<b>Elementary School (6 of 13 grades)</b>	<b>Middle School (3 of 13 grades)</b>	<b>High School (4 of 13 grades)</b>	<b>Total</b>
Seats	6,108	3,054	4,5044,072	13,234
Classrooms	244	122	151	517
Schools	8 Assuming 30 classrooms (750 students) capacity per school	3 Assuming 40 classrooms (1,080 students) capacity per school	2 Assuming 100 classrooms (2,700 students) capacity per school	13

Source: California Office of Public School Construction 2010.

Note: Classroom estimates based on the state loading standard of 25 students per classroom for grades K–6 and 27 students per classroom for grades 7–12.

It should be noted that, while MUSD assesses school needs based on a generation factor of 0.7 students per dwelling unit, this likely overestimates the number of students that would be generated at buildout of the General Plan Update. Based on the Town's existing number of dwelling units (9,458) and the current enrollment of 3,882 students in Yucca Valley schools, there are approximately 0.41 students per dwelling unit in the Town. When calculated by school level, there are approximately 0.18 elementary students, 0.08 middle school students, and 0.15 high school students per dwelling unit under existing conditions. A generation rate of 0.41 students per dwelling unit would result in 11,164 total students at buildout of the General Plan Update, considerably less than the 19,061 total students projected above using MUSD's student generation rate.

Development in Yucca Valley in accordance with the General Plan Update would require payments to the MUSD for the construction of new schools. Development impact fees charged by the MUSD are as follows:

- Residential: \$2.63/square foot
- Commercial/Industrial: \$0.42/square foot

Impact fees levied by MUSD are set within the limits of California Senate Bill 50 (SB 50). This funding program was established by the legislature to constitute "full and complete mitigation of the impacts" on the provision of adequate school facilities (Government Code § 65995[h]). SB 50 establishes two potential limits for school districts, depending on the availability of new school construction funding from the state and the particular needs of the individual school districts. MUSD qualifies for Level 1 developer fees, which are considered the base school mitigation fees, but charges less than the maximum allowed. To apply Level 1 fees, a district must justify its development fees for each land use and cannot request payment of development fees for school facility construction exceeding the amount of the statutory fees in Education Code Section 17620. If school districts conduct a school facility needs assessment and qualify for participation in the State Funding Program by the State Allocation Board, among meeting other requirements, they can be eligible for Level 2.

SB 50 also relieves jurisdictions from having the authority of denying approval of a legislative or adjudicative action under CEQA in reference to real estate development based upon the inadequacy of school facilities. Although the increased demand for school facilities would result in substantial impact, payment of impact fees in compliance with SB 50 would reduce the impacts to an acceptable level. The General Plan Update is meant to guide future development in the Town but it is not a development project. New dwelling units in the Town overall may generate 16,582 additional students, but the number of students that would be generated within the enrollment area of each school cannot be determined specifically at this point. Therefore, it would be speculative to analyze the impacts of future student generation on specific schools.

# 5. Environmental Analysis

Furthermore, implementation of policies and implementation actions included in the proposed General Plan would address the future adequacy of school services under the proposed project. Policy LU 1-3, in particular, requires new development projects to pay their fair share cost of, or make necessary improvements to, public services that face growth in demand from new dwelling units and businesses. Policy LU 1-26 states the Town’s commitment to working with other organizations and agencies to provide Yucca Valley residents with public facilities that meet local needs. Implementation Action LU11 implements this policy by ensuring that the Town and MUSD work together in their efforts to meet local demands for educational services.

## Conclusion

Population growth in Yucca Valley under the General Plan Update would result in additional students in MUSD elementary, middle, and high schools. Although schools in Yucca Valley currently provide unused excess classroom capacity, the addition of 16,582 students in Yucca Valley would require expanded school services and new or expanded school facilities. Despite this increased need, payment of SB 50 development impact fees and expenditure of Bond Measure “O” funds would provide funding for the financing of new or expanded school facilities. Therefore, impacts on school services resulting from buildout of the General Plan Update would be less than significant.

### 5.12.3.4 Relevant General Plan Policies

#### Land Use Element

##### Land Use Element Policies

###### Balanced Land Uses

- LU 1-1 Encourage infill development to maximize the efficiency of existing and planned public services, facilities, and infrastructure.
- LU 1-3 Require new projects to pay their fair share cost of, or make necessary improvements to, public facilities, infrastructure and services that are impacted by the new demands generated by new development.
- LU 1-24 Plan for the adequate and logical expansion of public facilities that are compatible with surrounding land uses, reflect community character, are educationally enriching, and meet a broad range of local needs.
- LU 1-25 Support a variety of educational opportunities and foster a culture of life-long learning through libraries, museums, schools, and other institutions.
- LU 1-26 Seek opportunities to collaborate with other public/quasi-public organizations in an effort to build new facilities to meet demand or develop joint use facilities.

##### Land Use Element Implementation Actions

###### Balanced Land Uses

- LU 11 Periodically meet with MUSD representatives to assess the educational and recreational demands on Yucca Valley facilities and to determine if there are any opportunities to provide services that are of mutual benefit to the Town and school district.



## 5. Environmental Analysis

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### PUBLIC SERVICES

#### *Existing Regulations*

- California Government Code Chapter 4: *Zoning Regulations*, Section 65995, Payment of Fees, Charges, Dedications, or Other Requirements Against a Development Project
- MUSD SB 50 School Fees

#### **5.12.3.5** *Level of Significance Before Mitigation*

Upon implementation of regulatory requirements, the following impact would be less than significant: 5.14-3.

#### **5.12.3.6** *Mitigation Measures*

No significant impacts were identified and no mitigation measures are necessary.

#### **5.12.3.7** *Level of Significance After Mitigation*

No significant adverse impacts were identified and no significant unavoidable impacts relating to school services remain.

### **5.12.4** **Library Services**

#### **5.12.4.1** *Environmental Setting*

##### **Library Services**

Library services in Yucca Valley are provided by the Yucca Valley Branch Library, which is operated by the County of San Bernardino. As of 2013, the library has over 40,000 items in its collection and occupies an 8,250-square-foot space (Hernandez 2013). Library card holders have access to the county's entire collection of over 1 million items, including books, periodicals, governmental publications, videos and DVDs, CDs, maps, audiobooks, and e-books. Members can download audiobooks and e-books and reserve traditional reading materials through the system's website. In addition to media materials, the Yucca Valley Branch Library provides residents with 10 internet terminals, cultural performances, early childhood education programs, children's storytelling events, summer reading programs, adult book groups, computer and internet training, and job search assistance. The library receives support from Friends of the Yucca Valley Library, a nonprofit organization of volunteers who raise money to sponsor special events and programs, and purchase literary materials and technical equipment. A remodel of the library is planned for the near future (Hernandez 2013).

The San Bernardino County Library uses the California State Library's standard of 0.46 square foot per capita and 3.62 items per capita for determining library needs (Hernandez 2013). Based on these standards and the California Department of Finance (DOF) 2012 population estimate of 20,916, the Town currently requires approximately 9,621 square feet of library space and 75,716 items for materials.

# 5. Environmental Analysis

## 5.12.4.2 *Thresholds of Significance*

According to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, a project would normally have a significant effect on the environment if the project would:

- LS-1 Result in a substantial adverse physical impact associated with the provisions 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 library services.

## 5.12.4.3 *Environmental Impacts*

**IMPACT 5.14-4: BUILDOUT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE GENERAL PLAN UPDATE WOULD GENERATE ADDITIONAL POPULATION IN YUCCA VALLEY, INCREASING THE NEED FOR LIBRARY SERVICES IN THE TOWN. [THRESHOLD LS-1]**

**Impact Analysis:** At buildout, Yucca Valley is projected to have a population of approximately 64,565 residents. Using the San Bernardino County Library's standard service ratios, the Yucca Valley Library would need 29,700 square feet of library space and 233,725 volumes of material. Existing library space and materials, even with the planned renovation (Hernandez 2013), would not be adequate to serve the Town's approximately 43,283 additional residents, leaving a deficiency of 21,450 square feet and 193,725 volumes. However, residents of Yucca Valley, including future residents generated by land uses allowed under the proposed project, have access to all branches of the San Bernardino County Library system, including those within the neighboring communities of Joshua Tree and Twentynine Palms.

There is no direct fiscal mechanism that ensures that funding for library services would grow exactly proportional to an increased need for library services resulting from population growth in the Town. However, revenue sources that contribute to funding the county's general fund, including property and sales taxes, would be expected to grow in rough proportion to any increase in residential units and/or businesses in Yucca Valley. These tax revenues could be used to fund further expansion of the Yucca Valley Branch Library and/or additional materials and resources. Because a portion of property tax revenues collected by the county are specifically allocated for capital improvement and operating costs for the library system, future residents of the Town under the General Plan Update would be required to make a financial contribution to new or expanded library facilities.

Implementation of policies and implementation measures included in the proposed General Plan would address provision of library services under the proposed project. Policy LU 1-3 requires that new developments contribute public services or funding for services proportional to new demands generated by those developments. Policies LU 1-24 and LU 1-25 state the Town's goal to provide libraries and other public facilities that meet local needs, and Policy LU 1-26 states the Town's commitment to working with the county in efforts to provide adequate public services in the Town.

Localized environmental impacts would result from the construction of new library facilities. However, since the location and size of potential future facilities is unknown, it would be speculative to analyze the potential impacts of those facilities as part of this first-tier Program EIR, other than to note that such impacts would likely fall within the envelope of construction impacts analyzed elsewhere in this EIR. Future projects would be reviewed by the Town of Yucca Valley on an individual basis and would be required to comply with regulations in effect at the time building permits are issued. If an initial study is prepared and the Town determines the impacts to be significant, the project would be required to comply with project-specific mitigation measures.



## 5. Environmental Analysis

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### PUBLIC SERVICES

#### Conclusion

Buildout of the General Plan Update would result in an increase in demand for library services in Yucca Valley. New facilities, books, and personnel would be necessary to reach adequate levels of service. However, additional Town and county tax revenues generated from new dwelling units and businesses in Yucca Valley would contribute toward the financing of additional library space and services in the Town. Implementation of policies and implementation actions in the proposed General Plan would ensure that the Town and the San Bernardino County Library provide library services that meet local needs. Residents of the Town also have access to the entirety of the county's library system and its materials. For all of the above reasons, buildout of the General Plan Update is not anticipated to have a significant impact on library services.

#### **5.12.4.4 Relevant General Plan Policies**

##### Land Use Element

##### *Land Use Element Policies*

###### *Balanced Land Uses*

- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| LU 1-1  | Encourage infill development to maximize the efficiency of existing and planned public services, facilities, and infrastructure.  |
| LU 1-3  | Require new projects to pay their fair share cost of, or make necessary improvements to, public facilities, infrastructure and services that are impacted by the new demands generated by new development.        |
| LU 1-24 | Plan for the adequate and logical expansion of public facilities that are compatible with surrounding land uses, reflect community character, are educationally enriching, and meet a broad range of local needs. |
| LU 1-25 | Support a variety of educational opportunities and foster a culture of life-long learning through libraries, museums, schools, and other institutions.  |
| LU 1-26 | Seek opportunities to collaborate with other public/quasi-public organizations in an effort to build new facilities to meet demand or develop joint use facilities.   |

##### **Land Use Element Implementation Actions**

###### *Balanced Land Uses*

- |       |   |
|-------|---|
| LU 12 | Annually revisit public facility priorities through the Capital Improvements Program and annual budget process. |
|-------|---|

#### **5.12.4.5 Existing Regulations**

No existing regulations apply.

#### **5.12.4.6 Level of Significance Before Mitigation**

No significant impacts relating to library services have been identified. All impacts relating to library services would be less than significant without mitigation.

## 5. Environmental Analysis

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PUBLIC SERVICES

### **5.12.4.7 Mitigation Measures**

No significant impacts were identified and no mitigation measures are necessary.

### **5.12.4.8 Level of Significance After Mitigation**

No significant adverse impacts were identified and no significant unavoidable impacts relating to library services remain.

### **5.12.5 Resources**

Benfield, Dave. 2013, March 19. Response to service questionnaire, San Bernardino County Fire Department.

California Office of Public School Construction. 2010, December. Existing School Building Capacity Instructions (Form SAB 50-02). [http://www.documents.dgs.ca.gov/opsc/Forms/SAB\\_50-02.pdf](http://www.documents.dgs.ca.gov/opsc/Forms/SAB_50-02.pdf).

Hernandez, Leonard. 2013, February 26. Response to service questionnaire, San Bernardino County Library.

Morongo Unified School District (MUSD). 2013. Safety and Overcrowding/Repair Measure. <http://www.morongousd.com/bond>

Smith, Ron. 2013, March 5. Response to service questionnaire, Morongo Unified School District.

Toms, Brad. 2013, February 22. Response to service questionnaire, San Bernardino Sheriff's Department.



# 5. Environmental Analysis

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## PUBLIC SERVICES

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