

3.11 PUBLIC SERVICES

3.11.1 INTRODUCTION

This section describes the existing public services that serve the project site and its vicinity and potential impacts to these services from implementation of the proposed project. The public services addressed in this section include fire protection, law enforcement, schools, and parks and recreational facilities. Regulations and policies affecting the public services in the City are also described. Information in this section is based on correspondence with service providers and City staff.

3.11.2 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

3.11.2.1 Fire Services

The Rodeo-Hercules Fire District (RHFD) serves the Sycamore Crossing and Hill Town sites. It is an autonomous fire district within Contra Costa County serving the City of Hercules and the unincorporated Town of Rodeo. The RHFD is a full-service fire department that employs a total of 21 full-time personnel and up to 20 reserve personnel and covers an area approximately 25 square miles. The RHFD serves a population of approximately 33,000 and responds to over 2,200 calls per year. The current average response time for emergencies is 6.4 minutes. The response time goal for the district is 5 minutes, 90 percent of the time (Biagi 2008). Responsibilities of the RHFD include

- responding to and providing fire/rescue services for all areas located within the City's boundaries;
- providing all Emergency Medical Services (EMS), including Advanced Life Support (ALS) and Basic Life Support (BLS), to all areas located within the City's boundaries;
- hazardous Material response and mitigation in all areas located with the City's boundaries;
- urban Search and Technical rescues in all areas located within the City's boundaries;
- planning and preparing for all contingencies in the event of disaster;
- maintaining automatic aid and mutual aid with local cities, counties, and the state;
- all Fire Prevention inspection programs and public education; or
- all fire investigation.

The RHFD operates two fire stations: Rodeo Fire Station 75 (located at 326 Third Street, Rodeo) and Hercules Fire Station 76 (located at 1680 Refugio Valley Road, Hercules). The RHFD list of fire service equipment includes one 75-foot ladder quint, two type-one engines, two type-three engines, one medium

rescue unit, one utility truck, and four staff vehicles. The Pinole Fire Department provides backup services to the RHFD through a mutual aid agreement.

3.11.2.2 Police Services

The Hercules Police Department (HPD) serves the proposed Sycamore Crossing and Hill Town sites. The HPD is a full-service police department that provides general police protection, law enforcement, traffic enforcement, and all associated duties to the City of Hercules. The HPD currently employs 29.5 personnel including 29 sworn officers, 2 part-time parking enforcement officers, 1 police assistant, 1 full-time office assistant, 1 part-time office assistant, and 1 administrative secretary. The HPD is authorized to have 32 sworn officers for a population of approximately 25,000 and is recruiting to fill 3 vacancies. The ratio of sworn personnel to population is 1.2 per 1,000 residents. Currently, the HPD has 10 patrol cars, 3 motorcycles, a special response team van, and 6 unmarked vehicles. The average response time to emergency and non-emergency calls in Hercules is 5 to 7 minutes, and is consistent with the department's goals. The Hercules Police Department is located at 111 Civic Drive, Hercules.

The Pinole Police Department provides protection services to the City of Pinole and surrounding communities as well as backup services to the City of Hercules through a mutual aid agreement. The Pinole Police Department is located at 880 Tennent Avenue, Pinole.

3.11.2.3 Schools

The proposed Sycamore Crossing and Hill Town sites are within the West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD). WCCUSD covers 65 square miles and is one of seven unified school districts in Contra Costa County. WCCUSD serves 235,000 residents in the Cities of El Cerrito, Hercules, Pinole, Richmond, and San Pablo, and the unincorporated areas of Bay View–Montalvin Manor, East Richmond Heights, El Sobrante, Kensington, North Richmond, and Tara Hills. WCCUSD provides public education for kindergarten through 12th grade. The WCCUSD employs 1,763 employees, including 1,630 teachers, 128 pupil services staff (including counselors, librarians, psychologists, nurses, and speech/language/hearing specialists), and 135 administrators (including principals, vice and assistant principals, and district-level administrators). The WCCUSD administers 18 preschools, 38 elementary schools, 1 K–8 school, 7 middle schools, 6 comprehensive high schools, 10 alternative schools, 60 adult education sites, and 9 operation sites serving over 31,500 students. Four WCCUSD schools are located within the proximity of the Sycamore Crossing and Hill Town sites: Hanna Ranch Elementary School, Lupine Hills Elementary School, Ohlone Elementary School, and the Hercules Middle-High School.

3.11.2.4 Parks

The City of Hercules Recreation and Community Services Department maintains seven parks: Refugio Valley Park, Ohlone Park, Woodfield Park, Foxboro Park, Railroad Park, Frog Pad Park, and Hanna Ranch Park. The City of Hercules Recreation and Community Services Department currently employs 13 full-time staff members and about 80 part-time employees. The department provides a wide variety of recreational, educational, and social activities for all citizens. The department also provides child care services.

3.11.3 REGULATORY CONSIDERATIONS

3.11.3.1 Hercules General Plan

The Safety Element and Open Space/Conservation Element of the *Hercules General Plan* include objectives, policies, and programs related to public services, including fire protection services and park and recreation services. Objectives, policies, and programs applicable to the project are listed below.

Safety Element

Objective 1: Consider potential seismic, geologic, flood and fire hazards and introduce adequate safety measures in development plans and proposals.

Program 1A.4: An Emergency Operations Plan has been prepared and should be maintained to provide responsibilities and procedures in the event of a major disaster or emergency in the City. This plan is compatible with the State of California and the Office of Emergency Services. The Emergency Operations Plan designates emergency evacuation routes.

Objective 3: Ensure that adequate fire protection is provided throughout the city and that all new structures conform to current fire safety standards.

Policy 3A: The City should continually evaluate the alternatives for providing adequate fire service to meet the changing needs of the City in the most efficient manner.

Program 3A.1: The City shall assist the Rodeo-Hercules Fire Protection District in processing the collection of fire impact fees from all new development within the City.

Program 3A.2: The City shall work with the Rodeo-Hercules Fire Protection District to determine specific needs for fire protection when a particular development proposal is reviewed and ensure that these needs are met. Fire Stations shall be located in the City so that five minutes emergency response time may be achieved by first response unit for 90 percent of all emergency calls. Fire Stations shall be sized to accommodate a minimum of two engines/trucks and three-person 24-hour crews.

Open Space/Conservation Element

Objective 1: Provide adequate recreation, park, and open space resources as the community expands.

Policy 1A: Expand the community’s park, trail, and open space system to meet the demands of future growth. The comprehensive park, trail, and open space system shall provide linkages between developed and developing areas.

Policy 1C: The City shall ensure that new development funds its share of costs associated with the provision of park facilities by attaching project-specific mitigation as conditions of approval.

Standards: The standards for the provision of parks and open space in Hercules are:

- A minimum of 1.75 acres of neighborhood parks shall be provided for each 1,000 residents.
- A minimum of 3.25 acres of community park space shall be provided for each 1,000 residents.

3.11.4 THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

The impact of the proposed project on public services would be considered significant if it would exceed the following standards of significance, in accordance with Appendix G of the 2008 California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Statutes and Guidelines:

- 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 following public services:

- Fire protection
- Police protection
- Schools
- Parks

3.11.5 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Impact Pub-1: The proposed project would be adequately served by existing City fire and emergency service facilities and would not require the construction of new facilities. (*Less than Significant*)

The Hill Town and Sycamore Crossing sites are served by the RHFD. Future commercial and residential development on the now mostly vacant sites would affect the provision of fire protection services. The proposed project would facilitate new construction in blighted areas of the City already served by the RHFD. Any new construction is required to be built to and adhere to current Fire Code Development Standards as prescribed by state law. The inclusion of the Sycamore Crossing and Hill Town sites within a redevelopment area would facilitate the replacement of mostly vacant and vegetated parcels with development that would comply with current Fire Code Development Standards, potentially reducing fire threats within Hercules. Furthermore, as part of standard development practices, the proposed project plans would be reviewed by the RHFD, and the project applicant would be required to incorporate the RHFD's recommendations into the final project design. While development of the project area could create a need for additional staff, the RHFD has indicated that it is unlikely that the proposed project would result in a need for additional facilities. In addition, all future developments are required to pay fire development impact fees pursuant to Section 10-18.503 of the *Hercules Municipal Code* prior to the issuance of building permits. Therefore, any resulting increase in the need for additional fire department services would be offset by the required payment of the development fees. Also, placing the project sites within a redevelopment area would facilitate the collection of property taxes and benefit assessment fees, which could fund RHFD operations. Therefore, the proposed project would not significantly affect the provision of fire services or require the construction of new facilities.

Mitigation Measure: None required.

Impact Pub-2: **The proposed project would be adequately served by existing City police facilities and would not require the construction of new facilities. (*Less than Significant*)**

The Sycamore Crossing and Hill Town sites are served by the HPD. Future commercial and residential development on the now mostly vacant sites would affect the provision of police protection services. The proposed project would increase the intensity of development and daytime and nighttime population in the project area, which could result in an increase in reported crime activity. However, among the goals of the proposed project are to create more compatible land uses and to improve the overall living conditions within the areas by the elimination of blight, which is known to contribute to increased crime rates. It is not anticipated that development of the project area would require additional police facilities. Furthermore, as part of standard development practices, development plans would be reviewed by the HPD and the project applicant would be required to incorporate recommendations from the HPD into the final project design. Finally, all future developments are required to pay police development impact fees pursuant to Section 10-18.403 of the *Hercules Municipal Code* prior to the issuance of building permits. Any resulting increase in the need for additional police services would be offset by the required payment of the City's development fees. Therefore, the proposed project would not significantly affect the provision of police services or require the construction of new facilities.

Mitigation Measure: None required.

Impact Pub-3: **The proposed project would facilitate the addition of new students to local schools; however, compliance with the requirements of state law will avoid a significant impact related to schools. (*Less than Significant*)**

The Sycamore Crossing and Hill Town sites are located in close proximity to three elementary schools, and one combined middle-high school within the WCCUSD. The proposed redevelopment project would facilitate future development in areas that would be designated for commercial and residential uses and would be required to pay school development fees, as dictated by state law, prior to the issuance of building permits. Under state law, payment of such fees constitutes full mitigation of any school impacts under CEQA. Therefore, any resulting increase in school enrollment would be offset by the required payment of the WCCUSD's development fees. As such, the proposed project would not significantly impact the WCCUSD.

Mitigation Measure: None required.

Impact Pub-4: **The proposed project would not increase the demand for the City's park and recreation facilities to the extent that new facilities would need to be constructed. (*Less than Significant*)**

There are no existing parks within the proposed Added Area. The proposed redevelopment project would facilitate future development in areas that would be designated for commercial and residential uses, thereby potentially increasing the population of Hercules. However, subsequent redevelopment activities would be required to comply with the City's *General Plan*, which states that at least 1.75 acres of neighborhood parks, 3.25 acres of community park space, and 34 acres of open space shall be provided for each 1,000 residents. The City currently provides adequate open space and neighborhood parks, but does not provide adequate community parks based on *General Plan* standards. The City currently has approximately 64 acres of community parkland for Hercules residents. Based on the current population of approximately 24,000, the City would need to provide a total of 78 acres of community parkland to meet this requirement.

The proposed Hill Town project would add approximately 1,350 new residents to the City. The development concept for the Hill Town site includes approximately 13 acres for passive open space and recreational areas. This would add to the City's recreational areas and open space and would partially offset the requirement for new park space to meet the needs of existing residents and the increased population. In addition, all new developments would be required to comply with Section 10-18.203 of the *Hercules Municipal Code*, which requires the dedication of land or payment of fees to the City to offset the impacts on parks resulting from a new development. The California Community Redevelopment Law allows redevelopment agencies to fund parks outside a redevelopment project area. This allows redevelopment funds to be used to improve existing parks within the city.

To meet the *General Plan* requirements for community parks and neighborhood parks, the City proposes the future development of approximately 26 acres of parkland. With the addition of these parks, the City would have adequate park space for the current population as well as future development within the Updated 2009 Redevelopment Plan Area. Therefore, the proposed project would not significantly increase the demand for parks and recreational facilities such that new facilities would need to be constructed.

Mitigation Measure: None required.

3.11.5.1 Cumulative Impacts

The proposed project would have a less than significant impact on the ability of the City of Hercules and other service providers to continue to provide adequate public services, including police and fire

protection, schools, and parks and recreational facilities in the project area and vicinity. Other foreseeable development within the area, although likely increasing the demand for such services, would be addressed on a site-by-site basis by the various service providers prior to completion of development to ensure that current and future citywide growth can be reasonably accommodated. Thus, the effect of this project in combination with other foreseeable projects would not be cumulatively considerable.

3.11.6 REFERENCES

Alan Biagi, Rodeo-Hercules Fire District, Battalion Chief. Personal communication with Jorge Felix, Willdan. March 6, 2008.

City of Hercules. 1997. *City of Hercules General Plan*.

City of Hercules. 2008. *Hercules Municipal Code*. June 10.