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## **3.11 PUBLIC AND GOVERNMENTAL SERVICES**

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### INTRODUCTION

This section of the EIR addresses existing public services and facilities within unincorporated San Benito County and evaluates the potential environmental impacts associated with any physical expansion or alteration to public service facilities caused by implementation of the proposed project. Services examined for potential impacts include law enforcement, fire protection, schools, parks and recreation, and solid waste. This analysis is primarily based on information contained in the *County of San Benito General Plan* and personal and written communication with the San Benito County Sheriff's Department, San Benito County Fire Department, Hollister School District, San Benito High School District, Integrated Waste Management, and San Benito County Planning and Building Department.

#### 3.11.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

##### LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICES

The San Benito County Sheriff's Department operates from its headquarters at 451 Fourth Street in Hollister, approximately two miles west of the project site. The Sheriff's Department employs 27 full time deputies as well as five sergeants, one lieutenant, one sheriff, and one undersheriff. The Department has 13 patrol vehicles, nine investigation vehicles, two search and rescue vehicles and six unmarked administrative vehicles.

The Sheriff's Department has adopted a target staffing ratio of one officer per 800 residents (1.25 officers per 1,000 population). Although the actual ratio is well below this goal (0.57 per 1,000 population), the Sheriff's Department has been able to provide adequate protection for the County, typically responding to calls within ten minutes (Curtis Hill, Sheriff-Coroner). The response time to the project site from the Sheriff's Department is approximately 6-10 minutes for an emergency, 10-15 minutes if a crime has just occurred but there is no imminent threat, and 15-20 minutes for a non-emergency incident. The Sheriff's Department also maintains mutual aid agreements with other local law enforcement agencies, including the City of Hollister Police Department, in order to maintain adequate response levels should the need arise.

##### FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES

The County Fire Department is responsible for providing structural fire protection and emergency response within all areas of the County outside of city limits. The County Fire Department contracts with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) to manage and provide these services. CDF operates from the Fairview Road CDF station within the project site, immediately adjacent to the plan area, north of Sunnyslope Road. The station is staffed by two full-time fire fighters and supplemented by 25 on-call volunteer fighters (Fire Department 2008 Annual Report). Fire Department apparatus includes four fire engines and one water tender. According to the Annual Report, the Fire Department responded to a total of 1,019 incidents in 2008, of which 120 were fire-related, with the remainder being non-fire emergencies and other incidents. The most significant response subcategories of the non-fire related incidents include medical aid (476), vehicle accidents (135), mutual aid agreement responses (111), and false alarms (125). Ambulance service in the County, when required for medical aid calls, is provided by American Medical Response.

Due to the proximity of the CDF station to remaining portions of the project site, the Fire Department response time to the project would be approximately three to five minutes (Mike Marlow, then Battalion Chief, October 29, 2008). Similar to the Sheriff's Department, the County

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Fire Department maintains mutual aid agreements with other fire protection agencies, including the City of Hollister Fire Department. The existing agreement with the City does not currently include the project site; however, it is anticipated the agreement would be extended to include this area prior to commencement of construction (Marlow).

Recognized standards are to employ one firefighter per every 1,500 population, in accordance with National Fire Protection Association Standard (NFPA) 1710, or 0.67 firefighters per 1,000 persons. The population of the County Fire Department service area is approximately 18,371 persons (California Department of Housing and Finance, 2008); therefore, the actual staff to population ratio is far below this goal, at approximately one firefighter per 9,186 persons. In spite of this discrepancy, the County has been able to respond within five minutes to approximately 90 percent of calls within a five-mile radius of the fire station. This response time is within the County's service goal of six minutes for fire and medical response (Marlow).

Per NFPA 1710 Standards of Cover, a fire in a single family residence requires four firefighters on scene within four minutes and an additional 11 fire personnel on scene within eight minutes of the time of the report, for total personnel coverage of 15. This number increases for commercial occupancies. With only two persons staffing one fire engine, supported by volunteer paid-call firefighters, this objective is rarely met (Marlow). Volunteer "paid-call" firefighters typically respond from home in their personal vehicles, are not required to be available at any specific time and may be not be available for other reasons, such as being out of the area.

#### SCHOOLS

The project would be served by two school districts; the Hollister School District (HSD) for students in grades K through 8 and the San Benito High School District (SBHSD) for students in grades 9 through 12. The Hollister School District operates six elementary schools for grades K-5 and two middle schools for grades 6-8. The San Benito High School District operates a single school, San Benito High School. The project would be served by Gabilan Hills Elementary School, located at 901 Santa Ana Road; Marguerite Maze Middle School, located at 900 Meridian Street; and San Benito High School located at 1220 Monterey Street (Sharon Kurtz, Hollister School District). **Table 3.11-1** identifies existing enrollment as well as the capacity for schools in both districts serving the project site. As indicated in the table, San Benito High School is currently utilized at slightly over its design capacity.

**TABLE 3.11-1**  
**SAN BENITO COUNTY SCHOOL ENROLLMENT AND CAPACITY, SCHOOL YEAR 2007-2008**

School	Existing Enrollment	Capacity	% Of Capacity
<b>Hollister School District</b>			
Gabilan Hills Elementary (K-5)	628	710	88%
Marguerite Maze Middle School (6-8)	890	1,100	81%
<b>San Benito High School District</b>			
San Benito High School (9-12)	2,940	2,835	104%

Source: California Department of Education (2008); San Benito County of Education (2008); Hollister School District (2008).

### SOLID WASTE

Solid waste generated in San Benito County is collected by Norcal Waste Systems and hauled to the John Smith Road Landfill, a County-owned facility located approximately two miles east of the project site on John Smith Road. The projected remaining capacity of the landfill, as of July 2008, is approximately 2,093,309 cubic yards, or 17.5 years based on the average daily refuse acceptance rate of 250 tons (Mandy Rose, Integrated Waste Management). San Benito County also owns a 125-acre site adjacent to the landfill, which is currently being studied as a potential new landfill site. Development of this site for future landfill operations would be funded by a portion of disposal fees currently collected by the landfill.

### PARKS AND RECREATION

The County of San Benito provides park and recreation facilities and services to County residents. The principal County park in the project vicinity is the 35-acre Veterans Memorial Park, located one mile west of the project site at Hillcrest Road and Memorial Drive. This park includes a tot-lot, lighted softball fields, tennis courts and picnic areas. There are no neighborhood parks or school playgrounds in the immediate vicinity of the project site.

Other public recreation areas of regional importance include Pinnacles National Monument located 35 miles south of the project site; Fremont Peak State Park located eight miles to the southwest; and Hollister Hills State Vehicular Recreation Area, located six miles southwest of the project site. In the Tres Pinos area, seven miles to the southeast of the project site, the State of California 33<sup>rd</sup> Agricultural District operates Bolado Park, which includes the County fairgrounds and a nine-hole golf course. Adjacent to Bolado Park is the County Historical Park.

### 3.11.2 REGULATORY SETTING

#### SCHOOL FACILITIES ACT OF 1998

The School Facilities Act of 1998, also known as SB50, provides state funding for new school construction projects that can satisfy criteria for such funding, including eligibility due to growth, Division of State Architect plan approval and California Department of Education site approval. However, the Act also limits the maximum amount of impact fees which can be charged by school districts as mitigation for school impacts resulting from new residential, commercial and industrial development. The Act also prohibits local agencies from denying a development application on the basis of the applicant's refusal to provide school facilities mitigation that exceeds the fee amount and prohibits local agencies from refusing to approve any legislative or adjudicative act on the basis that school facilities are inadequate.

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#### COUNTY GENERAL PLAN AND ORDINANCES

Construction and maintenance of public services and facilities in unincorporated San Benito County are regulated by the General Plan and County ordinances. The following policies from the *San Benito County General Plan* address the provision of public services and facilities:

#### **Land Use Element**

##### **Policy 37 School Facilities**

The individual and cumulative effects of development proposals that generate population growth shall be evaluated and all available means shall be used to assist full mitigation of school facility impacts.

#### **Safety Element**

##### **Policy 5 State of Readiness**

It will be the County's policy to maintain local police, fire and health forces in a state of readiness to insure adequate protection for the citizens of San Benito County.

#### **Open Space and Conservation Element**

##### **Policy 46 County and City Bike Plans**

It will be the County's policy to require new development to provide easements for trails/bikeways identified in the City of Hollister Parks and Recreation Master Plan and to be consistent with the San Benito County Bike Plan.

##### **Policy 48 Park Funding**

Provide the optimum level of cost-effectiveness and public use level at each park, recognizing that each facility has a different mission and a unique set of operating conditions associated with the natural or other available resources.

##### **Policy 55 Provide for Recreation and Open Space**

It shall be the County's policy to acquire, develop, operate, and maintain a comprehensive system of open space land uses and recreational facilities to provide for the low-intensity trails, picnicking, informal sports, park benches, and active recreational needs (sports fields for youth and adult league play) of the County population.

##### **Policy 56 Ratio of Parks to Population**

Recreational facilities for existing and new development in the unincorporated areas of the County shall be provided to meet the needs of the population based on a ratio of five acres of park land per 1,000 persons.

### 3.11.3 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

#### STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

The following thresholds for measuring a project's environmental impacts are based on the CEQA Guidelines. Public service impacts may be considered significant if implementation of the project will result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of 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
- Other public facilities, such as solid waste treatment facilities

#### METHODOLOGY

The analysis of potential public services impacts is based upon the project applicant's plans, information supplied by County of San Benito service providers, and other relevant documentation.

#### Law Enforcement Services

**Impact 3.11-1** The proposed project will increase service demands for police patrol and incident response. This increase in demand, however, will not trigger the need for new or expanded police facilities to serve the project. A **less than significant impact** is anticipated.

Buildout of the Santana Ranch project is anticipated to increase the Sheriff's Department service area population by 3,549, or 19% percent, based on 1,092 proposed new residences with an average of 3.25 persons per household (San Benito County General Plan). This population increase will result in additional demand for police services by 4.4 officer positions, applying optimal ratios, within the unincorporated County. The Sheriff's Department has indicated, however, that no new or altered facilities will be required to serve the project in order to maintain acceptable response times or service capacity (Hill). The project developer will be required to pay the applicable law enforcement impact fee for both commercial and residential uses. According to the Department, any additional staff and equipment required to serve the project can be accommodated by existing facilities. Therefore, as no new facilities will need to be constructed, the project will not result in any physical environmental impacts associated with the construction of any new facilities. A **less than significant impact** is therefore anticipated.

#### Fire Protection Services

**Impact 3.11-2** The proposed project will increase the demand for fire protection services, potentially resulting in the demand for new or expanded facilities to serve the project. A **less than significant impact** is anticipated.

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The development of the project will increase demand for fire-fighting and emergency response services as a result of the increase in population for the unincorporated area of the County. Even assuming optimal ratios (which are not currently achieved in the County), the project would increase staffing demands by 2.4 firefighter positions. Despite this increase, the Fire Department's current response time of five minutes or less within the five mile radius of the Fairview Road CDF station would not be significantly impacted and no new facilities or staffing would be required to maintain an adequate response time as a result of the project (Marlow). The project developer will be required to pay the applicable fire service impact fee for new residential and commercial buildings. The project, however, will not directly result in the need for new facilities. As no new facilities will need to be constructed, the project will not result in any physical environmental impacts associated with the construction of any new facilities. A **less than significant impact** is therefore anticipated.

#### Schools

**Impact 3.11-3** The project is proposed to include a building site for an elementary school planned to accommodate approximately 700 students, the operation of which will generate air pollutants, additional traffic on area roadways, and potential safety hazards associated with proximity to an existing underground gas line. These are considered **potentially significant** impacts.

The project proposes to include a site for an elementary school that could accommodate up to 700 elementary school students. While plans for the school have not been developed, certain environmental impacts associated with the future development of the school can be evaluated at this time based on information that is currently available, including the number of anticipated students and the location of the potential school. These impacts have been addressed within other sections of this EIR, and include generation of air pollutants and traffic as a result of school operation, as well as potential safety issues. Impacts for each of these areas are briefly discussed below, including references to discussion in other EIR sections as appropriate.

**Air Quality** The operation of the school will result in an increase in vehicle trips on area roadways for the purpose of dropping off and picking up students, as well as trips by the school faculty and other employees. These additional trips will result in emissions of air pollutants by passenger vehicles and school busses. Indirect emissions through the consumption of energy will also result through the operation of the school. These emissions have been included in the impact and mitigation analysis for the overall project within **Section 3.3, Air Quality**, of this EIR (applicable mitigation measures include **MM 3.3-1** and **3.3-2**.) While the overall project has been determined to exceed applicable air quality thresholds established by the Monterey Unified Air Pollution Control District, the contribution of operation air pollutants to the project by the school would not exceed applicable thresholds of significance established by the MBUAPCD (Urbemis output, 12/15/09).

**Traffic** The number of additional vehicle trips resulting from operation of the school has been included within the overall project trip generation estimates, and are anticipated to be less than ten percent of overall project-generated traffic. The impact of these additional trips on the existing street system, including required mitigation (all mitigation measures are applicable), has been included in **Section 3.13, Traffic and Transportation**, of this EIR.

**Hazards / Hazardous Materials** The proposed school site is within proximity of an existing high pressure natural gas line traversing the overall project site. The potential safety impacts of this gas line have been identified and addressed within **Section 3.7, Hazards and Hazardous Materials**, of this EIR. The analysis within this section has concluded that potential safety impacts to the school associated with the gas line will be **less than significant, with mitigation incorporated** (applicable mitigation measures: **MM 3.7-2a, b and c.**)

Because the plans for the proposed school have not yet been prepared, it is not possible to analyze the potential environmental impacts of the school more specifically at this time. It is anticipated, however, that the future school project will be required to undergo separate CEQA environmental analysis at the time a specific school project is proposed for construction. Potential impacts based on information available at this time, however, have been determined to be **less than significant with mitigation incorporated**, as discussed within the EIR sections cited above, and based on operational air pollutant data for the school.

**Impact 3.11-4** The proposed project will result in the development of new residences, which will result in additional demand on school facilities. This additional demand is anticipated to result in the need for future school facilities. **Less than significant impacts** are anticipated.

As discussed above, the project would be served by two school districts; the Hollister School District (HSD) for students in grades K through 8 and the San Benito High School District (SBHSD) for students in grades 9 through 12.

#### Hollister School District

Based on the composite yield rate of 0.376 K-5 students per single-family dwelling unit and 0.187 for 6-8 students, buildout of the project is anticipated to generate 411 new K-5 students as well as 205 new 6-8 students, for a total of 616 new K-8 students (Sharon Kurtz, Hollister School District, 10/13/08). The yield rate of 0.190 for high school students (grades 9-12) per dwelling unit results in an estimate of 208 new high school students as a result of the project (Stanley Rose, San Benito High School District).

As discussed above, in order to help accommodate this projected increase in school-age children, a new K-8 elementary school site able to accommodate a school with capacity to serve approximately 700 students is proposed to be provided within the project. The size and design for the potential school and facilities have not yet been identified, and the school would ultimately be constructed and operated by the Hollister School District. Development of the school will also be dependent upon execution of a purchase agreement between the school district and the project developer, as the site has been reserved for the school, but has not yet been dedicated to the school district.

In the event that the school is not constructed, students living in the Santana Ranch project will attend existing public schools in the area. At the present time, the combined K-8 school capacity in the district is 292 below maximum capacity. Based on the project K-8 student generation estimate of 616, existing K-8 capacity would be exceeded by 324 students as a result of the project. It is therefore anticipated that additional elementary school facilities would be required to adequately serve these students as the demand increases over the five to ten year development period of the project, should the planned school within the project not be constructed.



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#### San Benito High School District

The San Benito High School District estimates future enrollment on a ratio of 0.190 students per dwelling unit. Based on this ratio, the project would generate 208 new high school students (Stanley Rose). San Benito High School is currently overcapacity by 105 students, and the project would exacerbate this overcapacity. It is therefore anticipated that additional high school facilities would be required to adequately serve the additional students associated with the development of the project over time.

Residential development of the proposed project would be subject to school impact fees as calculated by the school districts, per statute, and due prior to issuance of occupancy permits. The school districts currently collect impact fees of \$2.97 per square foot of new residential construction, and \$0.47 per square foot of new commercial construction, as provided by State law. Of this amount, approximately two-thirds are allocated to elementary schools and one-third is allocated to the high school (Ron Wheelahan, Hollister School District).

School impact fees paid by the project would ultimately be programmed by the school districts, in combination with fees collected from other projects, to improve or expand school facilities. Specific improvements as a result of the project, however, have not been identified; therefore, environmental analysis of specific potential impacts associated with the development of any future facilities is not feasible at this time, however it is anticipated that a range of environmental impacts would be identified and addressed, including those typically associated with the construction and operation of school facilities. Examples of these impacts include traffic generation, noise, air quality. It is also anticipated that any school facilities proposed in the future will be required to undergo separate environmental analysis within their physical environmental contexts, during which specific impacts could be identified and mitigated based on project plans. Project impacts associated with the construction and operation of school facilities are therefore considered to be **less than significant**.

#### **Solid Waste**

**Impact 3.11-5** The project will increase the generation of solid waste at the project site, thereby reducing the estimated long-term disposal capacity at the local landfill site, and potentially triggering the need to expand the facility, the construction and operation of which could result in environmental impacts. **Less than significant impacts** are anticipated.

As discussed above, the projected remaining capacity of the John Smith Road Landfill, as of July 4, 2008, is approximately 2,093,309 cubic yards, or 17.5 years of capacity based on the average daily refuse acceptance rate of 250 tons. Regulations contained in Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations require the maintenance of a minimum of 15 years of permitted disposal capacity for county or regional landfills. As noted above, the projected remaining landfill service life was 17.5 years in July, 2008. The amount of refuse produced by the project, however, could reduce this service life, potentially triggering the need for expanded landfill capacity within a shorter timeframe. As discussed above, however, a site adjacent to the existing landfill has been identified as a part of the landfill's future planning process for study as a potential future landfill site, and it is anticipated that this site will be utilized to fulfill the existing landfill's obligation to maintain a 15-year minimum disposal capacity for the County as a whole. It is also anticipated that separate environmental review under CEQA will be required for the landfill expansion at the time it is proposed. Finally, the contribution of the project to the overall solid waste stream accepted by the John Smith Landfill is relatively small when compared to that produced within the County as a whole; therefore, the project impacts associated with overall landfill capacity and solid waste disposal are considered to be **less than significant**.

### Parks and Recreation

**Impact 3.11-6** The proposed project will create new residences, which may result in additional demand for parks and recreational facilities, the construction and operation of which could result in environmental impacts. This is considered a **less than significant impact**.

The San Benito County General Plan requires that recreational facilities be provided at a ratio of five acres of park land per 1,000 residents. Based on the projected population of 3,549 residents for the project, approximately 17.8 acres of park land would be required. A total of 18.2 acres of park land is proposed within the project, which exceeds the required ratio. Construction and operation of these proposed parks have the potential to result in short and long term impacts to the residents of the project. Short term impacts include noise and air quality impacts to future residents of the project, associated with the use of construction equipment. Long-term, operational impacts could include noise (i.e. use of sound amplification systems, landscape maintenance equipment, etc.) and light and glare from outdoor flood lighting. These impacts have been fully discussed in **Section 3.12, Parks and Recreation**, and mitigation measures have been identified reducing these impacts to **less than significant levels** (see **Mitigation Measure 3.3-1 (Air Quality), 3.10-1 (Noise), and 3.10-2c (Noise)**). Therefore, impacts associated with construction and operation of new park and recreational facilities are considered to be **less than significant** with mitigation incorporated.

### CUMULATIVE IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

#### Public Services

**Impact 3.11-7** The proposed project, in combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable, probable future projects within San Benito County, may result in the need for new, expanded, or altered public service facilities, the construction and operation of which could result in environmental impacts. These impacts are anticipated to be **less than significant**.

The proposed project, in combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable, probable future development in the County, will generate additional demand on existing public services and facilities, including fire and police protection, schools, park and recreational facilities and refuse disposal. Current and reasonably foreseeable, probable future projects include those listed within the Cumulative Impacts Summary section of the EIR. Examples of these projects include:

- **Gavilan College San Benito Campus** This project involves the construction of a 3,500 full-time equivalent (FTE) student college facility, as well as approximately 285 residential units and 35,000 square feet of retail space, on a 137-acre site at the northeast corner of Fairview Road and Airline Highway.
- **Award Homes Subdivision** 595 single family homes and 100 apartment units are proposed for this project on the west side of Fairview Road, south of St. Benedict's Church and east of Calistoga Drive within the City of Hollister.

The cumulative projects lists also includes a number of smaller residential projects within the City of Hollister, as well as a number of industrial and warehousing projects in the vicinity of the Hollister Municipal Airport.

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These projects are required to pay established impact fees or service fees for the purpose of providing new and/or expanded facilities (fire, police, schools, and landfill). These fees are programmed for the development of new, expanded or altered facilities by the providers of these public services, at their individual discretion, in response to increased demand for services resulting from these new and planned projects. While the proposed Santana Ranch project, in combination with other anticipated future development in the County, may ultimately result in the need for new or expanded facilities, specific improvements as a direct result of these projects have not been identified at this time. It is anticipated, however, that a range of environmental issues typically associated with facility expansion projects will be identified within the physical environmental context of these potential future projects, such as traffic, biological resources, and aesthetics. Further, specific public facility improvements will be identified as part of the capital facilities planning process undertaken by the individual agencies, and these improvements will be subject to environmental review at the time they are proposed.

Park facilities are required to be provided directly by individual projects in order to serve the park and recreational needs of the future residents of the projects. The physical environmental impacts of these facilities are typically local in nature, and are anticipated to be addressed at the project level, at the time individual projects are proposed. For the reasons discussed above, cumulative environmental impacts as a result of the construction of new, expanded or altered public facilities are anticipated to be **less than significant**.

**REFERENCES/DOCUMENTATION**

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