

L. PUBLIC SERVICES

This section describes existing public services in the vicinity of the project site, discusses policies relevant to these services, evaluates potential impacts resulting from implementation of the proposed project, and identifies mitigation measures to reduce the significance of potential impacts, as appropriate. The analysis examines fire and police services, public schools, libraries, and parks.

1. Setting

This section discusses existing conditions for fire and police services, public schools, libraries, and parks in the City of Benicia. Conditions described include staffing, equipment, service levels, and standards that apply to each service.

a. Fire Services. Fire protection and emergency medical services would be provided to the project site by the City of Benicia Fire Department (Fire Department). Primary fire and medical response to the project site would be from two stations. Station Eleven is located approximately 3 miles southwest of the project site, at 150 Military West Street. Station Twelve, located at 601 Hastings Drive, is approximately 2.5 miles west of the project site.

The Fire Department maintains a staff of approximately 35 fire fighters and typically maintains a crew of eight on duty. There are approximately 20 volunteer positions. Equipment housed at Station Eleven includes one engine and rescue squad, a reserve engine, ladder truck, two brush fire trucks, water tender, and staff vehicles. Station Twelve houses one engine, two brush fire trucks, two utility vehicles, a reserve engine, and one reserve rescue unit.¹

The project site is located in an area with an approximate 7- to 8-minute response time for fire and emergency services from either of the two fire stations.² The Fire Department maintains a response time goal for fire fighting of 4 to 5 minutes, and 3 to 4 minutes for emergency medical services.

The Fire Department requires 20-foot wide roads for emergency vehicle access to the site. The Fire Department establishes access road standards including load bearing capacity and turnaround requirements on a project-specific basis and would review the development for adequate capacity and requirements.

b. Police Services. The City of Benicia Police Department (Police Department) would provide law enforcement and emergency related services to the project site. The Police Department, located at 200 East L Street, maintains a staff of 53, including 37 sworn officers, 15 full time and one part time civilian employees, and 30 to 35 volunteers. The Police Department anticipates maintaining these staff levels over the next few years.³

¹ Hanley, Ken, 2006. Fire Chief, City of Benicia Fire Department. Written communication with LSA Associates, Inc. April 20.

² Ibid.

³ Daley, Michael, 2006. Services Division Commander, City of Benicia Police Department. Written communication with LSA Associates, Inc. March 14.

The Police Department's level of service goal is 1.5 police officers per 1,000 residents. As of 2005, the Police Department had approximately 1.38 officers per 1,000 residents.⁴ Under existing conditions, the estimated emergency response time to the project area ranges from 2 to 10 minutes, depending on the initial location of the first responding officer.⁵ Non-emergency response would average 10 to 20 minutes.⁶ Under the existing staffing levels and beat structure, these are considered acceptable response times based on established Department criteria.

In addition, the Police Department's existing firing range is located off of Lake Herman Road, to the west of the project site.

c. Public Schools. The City of Benicia is served by the Benicia Unified School District (BUSD), which operates four elementary schools, one middle school, one high school and one continuation high school. Total BUSD enrollment for the 2005-2006 school year was 5,123 students, with projected enrollment declining to 5,081 and 5,002 for the 2006-2007, and 2007-2008 school years, respectively.⁷ The District has a maximum student:teacher ratio of 20:1 for grades K through 3, 30:1 for grades 4 and 5, and 31:1 for grades 6 through 12.⁸

New development is required to provide necessary funding and/or capital facilities for the school system, as determined by applicable State-mandated development impact fees. The proposed development would be subject to a developer mitigation fee of \$0.36 per square foot for commercial development; no development fee is required for industrial development.⁹

d. Libraries. The Benicia Public Library is located at 150 East L Street. The Library has a shelf capacity of 98,000 books. For the 2003-2004 fiscal year (the most recent year for which data is available), the Library had an annual circulation of 330,168 items.¹⁰ In addition to providing reading and research materials to the community, the Library operates an art gallery and runs Literacy and English as a Second Language (ESL) programs.

Library staff consists of full-time and part-time employees along with teen and adult pages, and on-call employees. There are also over 50 volunteers who regularly serve at the Library. The Library receives funding from the City, federal and State grants, and from non-profit organizations such as Friends of the Library. The Library receives approximately 30 percent of its funding from Measure B, which was passed in 1998. Measure B provides a 1/8 cent sales tax supplementing Solano County library budgets for new and expanded services.

⁴ Association of Bay Area Governments, 2005. *Projections 2005, Forecasts for the San Francisco Bay Area to the Year 2030*. Based on 37 sworn officers per a 2005 population estimated at 26,900 persons.

⁵ Daley, Michael, 2006. *op. cit.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Kimberly Dennis, Superintendent, Benicia Unified School District, 2006. Written communication with LSA Associates, Inc. February 17.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Benicia, City of, 2006. Building Inspection Division: Commercial and Industrial Development Fees. October.

¹⁰ Benicia, City of, 2006. City of Benicia Public Library. <http://www.ci.benicia.ca.us/library.html>. October.

e. Public Parks. Benicia has almost 700 acres of existing parks; the largest portion of this acreage is within Lake Herman Regional Park, which includes the open space area surrounding the lake. The City has a joint use agreement with BUSD that provides for the sharing of school recreational facilities.

There are three types of parks in Benicia. Regional parks serve one or more communities and accommodate a variety of activities designed to enhance the use and experience of the natural environment. Uses may include trails, nature centers, picnic areas, and camping. Community parks serve several neighborhoods and accommodate a wide variety of activities. Neighborhood parks serve a residential population within close proximity to the park and accommodate such activities as playgrounds, picnicking, and lawn games. See Table IV.L-1 for City park standards.

The California Department of Parks and Recreation operates two parks in Solano County, both in Benicia. The State Capitol Historic Park was the third site of the State Capitol (1853–1854). The Benicia State Recreation Area is located in western Benicia along the Benicia/Vallejo border. This area is predominantly marshland, but it provides hiking, jogging, biking trails, fishing, and picnic areas.

Table IV.L-1: City Park Standards

Park Type	Acres/ 1,000 People	Service Area	Size (Acres)
Regional Park	10.0	One hour of travel	250-1,000
Community Park	2.5	Within 3 miles of all residences	30-100

Source: City Benicia, 1999. *Benicia General Plan*. June 15

f. Public Works Maintenance and Operations. The Benicia Public Works Department is responsible for the maintenance and operation of field utilities (water and sanitary sewer infrastructure), storm water drains, and streets; the Public Works Department also manages the contracts for street light maintenance, signal maintenance, and street sweeping. The maintenance and operation division operates primarily out of the City Corporation Yard, which is located at 2400 East 2nd Street, north of Downtown Benicia. There are currently 23 employees that provide maintenance services at the Corporation Yard. Employees work in the following sections: field utilities and street maintenance administration (two employees); street maintenance section (seven employees); field utilities section (11 employees); and fleet maintenance section (three employees). The maintenance and operations division also maintains a 300-piece vehicle and equipment fleet in a full-service vehicle repair shop at the Corporation Yard. According to the Public Works Department, the maintenance and operations division and Corporation Yard are currently operating at capacity (i.e., current staff cannot assume additional workloads, and there is not additional space at the Corporation Yard to store new equipment/staff that would be required for expanded operations).¹¹

2. City of Benicia General Plan

Applicable public services and facilities-related General Plan goals and policies are presented below.

¹¹ Schiada, Dan, 2006. Director of Public Works Department. Memorandum to Adam Weinstein, LSA Associates, Inc. December 21.

Land Use and Growth Management

- *Growth Management Goal 2.4:* Ensure that development pays its own way.
 - *Growth Management Policy 2.4.1:* Ensure any new development to be fiscally and financially sound and pay its own way with respect to City and School District capital improvements.

Community Services

- *Public and Quasi-Public Goal 2.28:* Improve and maintain public facilities and services.
 - *Public and Quasi-Public Policy 2.28.1:* Require that new development not reduce the levels of service in existing neighborhoods below City Standards.
- *Parks and Recreation Goal 2.30:* Maintain and improve existing parks and recreation programs.

Cultural Resources

- *Cultural Goal 3.4:* Support the library and the services it provides to the community.
 - *Cultural Policy 3.4.2:* New development will be required to underwrite additional library materials.

3. Impacts and Mitigation Measures

This section discusses potential impacts to public service systems that could result from implementation of the proposed project. The section begins with the criteria of significance, which establish the thresholds used to determine whether an impact is significant. The latter part of this section presents the impacts associated with the proposed project and identifies mitigation measures, as appropriate. Less-than-significant impacts to public services are discussed first, followed by significant impacts.

a. Significance Criteria. The Public Services criteria are based on the *CEQA Guidelines*. The proposed project would have a significant impact on public services if it would:

- Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of or need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable staffing levels, service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for any of the following public services:
 - Fire protection;
 - Police protection;
 - Schools; or
 - Libraries.
- Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreation facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated.
- Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment.

While important to the quality of life in the project area, impacts to schools from increased development do not necessarily result in physical environmental impacts. In *Goleta Union School District v. Regents of the University of California* (2d Dist. 1995) (37 Cal. App. 4th 1025, 1032, 1995), the Court of Appeal found that: "Classroom overcrowding, per se, does not constitute a significant effect

on the environment.” In addition, the Benicia General Plan does not contain any specific performance-related policies regarding the provision of school services.

b. Less-than-Significant Public Services Impacts. Implementation of the proposed project would result in the following less-than-significant impacts to public services.

(1) Public Schools. The proposed project would not provide housing and thus would not directly increase the demand on the City’s public schools by increasing the residential population. As discussed in Section IV.B, Population, Employment, and Housing, the City’s General Plan anticipates the development of the project site with industrial and commercial uses, and the proposed project would not induce substantial population growth. Therefore, the project is not expected to substantially affect the demand for school services. The project could have an indirect impact on BUSD enrollment if some portion of future employees were to relocate to Benicia and enroll students in BUSD schools. However, the project’s potential impact on BUSD enrollment would be too speculative to quantify. Senate Bill 50 (SB50), which revised the existing limitation on developer fees for school facilities, was enacted as urgency legislation which became effective on November 4, 1998 as a result of the California voters approving a bond measure (Proposition 1A). SB50 established a 1998 base amount of allowable developer fees (Level One fee) for residential construction (subject to adjustment) and prohibits school districts, cities, and counties from imposing school impact mitigation fees or other requirements in excess or in addition to those provided in the statute.

Consistent with SB 50, the project sponsor would be required to pay the mandated development fee to BUSD for the commercial component of the project. The project sponsor would pay a school impact/mitigation fee of \$0.36 per square foot of commercial development. Assuming that there is approximately 857,000 square feet of commercial development, the project sponsor would pay an estimated total of \$308,520 in school impact/mitigation fees. However, the final fee would be determined based upon the final square footage of commercial component of the project.

(2) Libraries. As discussed above, under Public Schools, and in Section IV.B, Population, Employment, and Housing, the proposed project would not directly increase the City’s residential population. Although the project could have an indirect effect on library use if some portion of future employees relocates to Benicia, the City’s General Plan anticipates the development of the project site, and any increase in demand for library services would not be substantial.

(3) Parks. The Benicia General Plan and the Parks, Trails, and Open Space Master Plan establish park standards that call for 2.5 acres of community parks per 1,000 residents and 3.5 acres of neighborhood parks per 1,000 residents. The Master Plan identifies a citywide parks deficiency of approximately 35 acres of neighborhood parks and 18 acres of community parks. The proposed project does not contain a residential component, and therefore would not lead to a direct increase in demand for neighborhood or community parks, or other recreational facilities. However, the project could result in an incremental increase in the weekday demand for City parks and recreational facilities resulting from the presence of new employees and visitors to the proposed industrial and commercial development. In addition, some percentage of future employees who do not currently reside within the City may choose to relocate to Benicia. However, at this time, the City does not maintain a park standard for commercial or industrial development based on employment levels.

As described in Chapter III, Project Description, the project would include approximately 180 acres of open space, concentrated mostly in the northern and central portions of the project site. A 54-acre “reach” of an existing creek and adjacent wetland communities would also be preserved; this reach would extend from the northern portion of the project site along Lake Herman Road to the southern boundary of the site, adjacent to East 2nd Street. These preserved areas would be revegetated with native vegetation and landscaping. No trails would be built within the open space and recreational use is not proposed.

The City’s General Plan includes goals and related policies and programs to maintain and improve existing recreation programs. Because the proposed project is anticipated by and generally consistent with the General Plan, and because buildout of the development provided for in the General Plan is not expected to result in significant impacts to recreation resources, the proposed project would result in a less-than-significant impact to parks and recreational resources.

In addition, the proposed project site is located adjacent to Lake Herman Road, which leads to the Lake Herman open space area. Access to Lake Herman along Lake Herman Road would not be affected by implementation of the proposed project. However, Lake Herman Road and Old Lake Herman Road (currently named Reservoir Road) are designated bike lanes in the Parks, Trails, and Open Space Master Plan. The project’s relationship to bicycle use on project roadways is discussed in Section IV.G, Transportation and Circulation.

c. Significant Public Services Impacts. Implementation of the proposed project could result in the following significant adverse impact related to public services. Impacts associated with the police firing range adjacent to the site are addressed in the Land Use section.

Impact PUB-1: The project would increase demand for fire protection and emergency medical services, police services, and Public Works maintenance and operation services, and Parks Department services. (S)

The proposed project would increase demand for several public services, as described below:

Police and Emergency Services. The project would result in an increased demand for fire protection and emergency medical service to accommodate Master Plan development. As noted in the setting discussion, the project site would not be located in area that can be served by the Fire Department within its response time goal. The Fire Department also anticipates that should motel or hotel facilities be developed at the project site, the greatest increase in the demand for services would be from emergency medical calls. Demand for emergency services would also be expected to increase if a movie theater complex is constructed on the site. This increase in demand would be significant.

In addition, the proposed project would locate commercial and industrial uses adjacent to open space areas comprised primarily of grassland and vegetative cover. The proximity of open grasslands to adjacent commercial and industrial uses would pose a potential fire safety hazard, as discussed in Section IV.E, Hazards and Hazardous Materials. Proposed streets in the project site have a 70-foot right-of-way for major streets and a 48-foot right-of-way for minor streets. The Fire Department requires 20-foot wide access roads for emergency vehicle access to the site. The Fire Department establishes access road standards including load bearing capacity and turnaround requirements on a project-specific basis and would review the development for the inclusion of these standards.

Police Services. As discussed in Section IV.B, Population, Employment, and Housing, although the proposed project would not result in a direct increase of the City's residential population, the proposed project could indirectly increase the residential population of the City due to the relocation of employees of future development. The City's General Plan anticipates the development of the project site with industrial and commercial uses and it is expected that the proposed project would not induce substantial population growth.

However, the proposed project would add commercial and industrial uses to an undeveloped area of Benicia, creating 24-hour activity and increasing the number of persons employed in the area and patronizing new businesses there. This increase in use would result in an increased need for law enforcement services at the project site due to crime and safety-related issues associated with new commercial and industrial development. Demand for law enforcement services would be expected to increase substantially with development of hotel or motel uses and a movie theater complex on the site. At existing staffing levels, response times to both emergency and non-emergency calls for service would rise to levels beyond existing department standards, requiring a new police beat to cover the project area. A new police beat would require the addition of four sworn police officers and a supervising agent, two additional patrol cars, new equipment for each new officer, and a new geographically-located field office.

Maintenance and Operations Services. Construction of new streets, sewers, and other infrastructure in the project site would increase demand for street maintenance, wastewater/water distribution and collection maintenance, fleet maintenance, and storm drainage operation and maintenance. If infrastructure on the project site is not maintained by a private maintenance district or similar entity, the City would need to hire approximately five to eight employees, and associated equipment, to meet this increased demand. Space in the City's existing corporation yard would not be adequate to accommodate new employees and equipment required by the project.

Implementation of the following two-part mitigation measure would reduce the project's impacts on public services to a less-than-significant level:

Mitigation Measure PUB-1a: The project sponsor shall set aside an appropriately-sized and located parcel within the project site to accommodate new public services facilities required to serve the project. The parcel shall be large enough to include the facilities listed below:

- A new Fire Department sub-station facility, totaling a minimum of 2.5 acres, shall be located along the Industrial Way extension, near the East 2nd Street intersection. The new sub-station shall be constructed and made operational prior to the occupation of Phase 1. A total of 12 full-time firefighters would be required to staff the new sub-station. One fire engine and one brush truck would be required to equip the facility. Due to the life-hazard nature of the commercial components at the first phase of the project, fire and emergency medical services shall be provided at the sub-station prior to occupation of project facilities. Funding for this facility shall be provided by fees imposed on the proposed project. Funding for additional personnel and equipment shall be provided by the City.
- The new Fire Department sub-station shall include 200 to 400 square feet of office space for use by the Police Department, a multi-purpose room for community meetings, and training grounds. Funding for the additional officers and equipment shall be provided by

the City. The Police Department office space shall be constructed and made operational prior to occupancy of Phase 1.

The parcel shall include approximately 7 to 15 acres of land for the development of an auxiliary corporation yard. The corporation yard shall include the types of facilities currently located in the existing corporation yard, as determined to be required by the Public Works Department, and shall be funded via fees imposed on the proposed project.¹² Funding for additional personnel and equipment shall be provided by the City.

Mitigation Measure PUB-1b: Development plans for the proposed project shall be subject to the following review:

- During the development review process, the Fire Department shall be responsible for ensuring that the proposed project and subsequent individual site proposals are in conformance with locally-defined performance standards, including the Uniform Fire Code as adopted by the Benicia Fire Department, and California Building Code standards.
- The Fire Department shall review detailed site plans for site access, road widths and turning radii, road grades, surfacing, load bearing capability, sprinkler systems, stand pipes, smoke detectors, and fire alarms, and resistant landscaping in open areas adjacent to buildings within the project site.
- The City's Engineering Division and Fire Department shall review the project during the development review process to ensure that adequate water supply is available to meet the minimum fire flow requirements for fire suppression. (LTS)

¹² According to the Public Works Department, the existing corporation yard includes the following facilities, some or all of which may be required in the auxiliary corporation yard: woodworking shop; eight bay vehicle equipment shop; office space; conference room; kitchen for each department; vehicle paint booth; metalworking shop; street sign shop; training room; vehicle parts store room; water meter shop; utility parts store room; crew room for 50 employees (Parks and Public Works Departments); foul weather gear room; locker space for 50 employees; household hazardous waste and cardboard recycling area; fuel island with gasoline and diesel fuel tanks (above- and underground); outdoor covered material storage; outdoor open material storage/material bins; 30-vehicle covered parking; 50-vehicle uncovered parking; 100-space employee parking; visitor parking; dog kennel; wash down rack with vacuum area; six-bin trash container area; pesticide area; transit bus area; utility map room; and long-term engineering archives.