

5.12 PUBLIC SERVICES

5.12.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

This section describes potential impacts of the Cadiz Project related to public services. Information for this section was obtained from the applicable public service providers serving this part of San Bernardino County and the Cadiz Valley Agricultural Development Final EIR (1993).

Police and Law Enforcement Services

The San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department (SBCSD) provides police protection to the Cadiz Project area. The Cadiz Project area is under the jurisdiction of the SBCSD's Morongo Basin Station at 6527 White Feather Road, approximately 78 miles west of the project site. This station has 82 Sheriff's personnel assigned, including 60 sworn personnel and 22 civilian employees. There are 17 patrol officers, two detectives and three sergeants assigned to the unincorporated county area. There are a minimum of two patrol officers per shift assigned to the 5,000 square miles of the unincorporated area in the Morongo Basin jurisdiction. The Cadiz Project area is patrolled on a random basis depending on the need for service. The estimated response time of a Sheriff's unit to the Cadiz Project area for non-emergency calls is approximately two hours and approximately one hour for emergency calls. Calls for police and law enforcement services in the Cadiz area average approximately ten calls annually.

The Cadiz Valley area is also patrolled by Rangers from the Needles Resource Area office of the BLM. Eight staff rangers regularly patrol a total of 8,600 square miles in the Needles Resource Area. As a result, patrols of the Cadiz Project area generally occur every few weeks. These rangers can typically respond to an emergency situation in 1.5 hours. These rangers have the same powers as the San Bernardino County Deputy Sheriff and are the federal law enforcement authorities in the Cadiz Valley area. Their primary responsibility is resource protection-oriented law enforcement.

The Cadiz Valley area is served by the Barstow office of the California Highway Patrol (CHP). The CHP does not regularly patrol the Cadiz Project area. However, they provide assistance on an on-call basis for accidents, emergencies, etc. The normal response time is approximately one and 1.5 hours. However, the CHP has been known to respond to emergencies in the Cadiz Project area in about one-half hour.

There is a Sheriff's Department Citizen on Patrol volunteer group in Cadiz. This unit consists of unarmed volunteers who patrol the Cadiz area in marked Citizen Patrol cars and report suspicious activities. This group does not take any law enforcement action. There is no set schedule for this volunteer unit. The volunteers patrol when they have free time.

The Cadiz Inc. agricultural operation employs one to two security personnel on a seasonal basis, depending on the number of workers in their seasonal housing facility.

Fire Protection Services

Fire protection services for the Cadiz Project area are provided by the San Bernardino County Fire Department (SBCFD), headquartered at 157 West Fifth Street in San Bernardino. The nearest fire station to the Cadiz Project area is at Harvard, approximately 85 miles away. This station has a mutual aid agreement with the Wonder Valley fire station, which is approximately 40 miles from the Cadiz Project. The Harvard station has approximately 12 on-call firefighters and two fire managers.

SECTION 5

This station is equipped with one structure engine, a 750-gallon engine, a 500-gallon engine and a reserve 500-gallon engine.

The average response time to the project site is approximately one to 1.5 hours.

Schools

The Cadiz Project area is under the jurisdiction of the Needles Unified School District (NUSD) which provides elementary and secondary education. The nearest school to the Cadiz Project is the Essex Elementary School at 110715 Highway 66, located approximately 25 miles to the northeast. This school serves grades kindergarten through eight. Essex Elementary School has a capacity of approximately forty students. Currently, there are 13 students attending Essex Elementary School.

Needles High School, which serves grades 9 through 12, is east of the Cadiz Project. This high school has approximately 500 regular students. Bus transportation is available to Needles High School from Amboy, approximately 72 miles east of Needles.

Libraries

The San Bernardino County Public Library (SBCPL) provides library service to 18 cities and unincorporated areas in San Bernardino County. The closest branches of the SBCPL system are in Twentynine Palms, approximately 50 miles southwest of the Cadiz Project, and Needles, approximately 60 miles east of the Cadiz Project. The Twentynine Palms Library occupies 5,000 square feet and has 37,000 volumes. This library is open 52 hours a week.

The Needles Library is staffed by a full-time librarian, a library assistant and page help, and is open 48 hours a week. It occupies 5,568 square feet and has 30,000 volumes.

A bookmobile, which serves the Cadiz area, is headquartered at the Needles Library. This bookmobile visits the Cadiz area on a weekly basis and is staffed by two persons.

Medical Facilities

The nearest medical facilities to the Cadiz Project site are in Needles, approximately 60 miles to the east. The San Bernardino County Health Department's office in Needles operates a health clinic, providing tuberculosis screening, flu vaccines, family planning and child care services.

Medical aid and ambulance services to the Cadiz Project area are provided from Twentynine Palms or Needles, when needed. The Sheriff's Department helicopter, the CHP air ambulance or Mercy Air Service can provide assistance in the case of emergencies for transporting patients to the nearest medical facilities. Response time varies from fifteen minutes to one hour depending on mode.

5.12.2 CEQA THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

For purposes of CEQA, a project will normally have a significant adverse environmental impact on public services including fire protection, police and law enforcement, emergency medical services, schools, parks, libraries, or other public facilities, if it will result in:

- Substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically-altered governmental facilities.

- The need for new or physically-altered governmental facilities which would cause significant environmental impacts in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives.

For a further discussion of CEQA thresholds of significance, see Section 5.20.

5.12.3 METHODOLOGY

The potential impacts of the Cadiz Project on public facilities were evaluated based on written correspondence with local public service agencies, information in the Cadiz Valley Agricultural Development Final EIR (1993) and various 1999 San Bernardino County public service studies. The correspondence with the public services and utilities written is provided in the Public Participation Report on file at Metropolitan.

5.12.4 IMPACTS

The Cadiz Project is located in an undeveloped area with minimal provision of existing public services. Although the project will bring in large amount of construction equipment and workers over the short term, only a few workers will be added during project operations. During construction, contractors will be responsible for construction site security and worker safety per state and federal safety regulations. Therefore, the Cadiz Project will have little or no impact on public services. Potential impacts on public services for any of the Cadiz Project alternatives will be short term and will occur only during construction of the Cadiz Project. The need to close Cadiz-Rice Road and/or limit access to vehicular traffic will result in similar impacts for each type of emergency response service and Cadiz Project alternative. However, under mitigation measures PS-1 and PS-2, provided later in this section, closures and/or delays will be coordinated with emergency service providers. Overall, there will be no significant short or long term increase in the demand for any public services directly resulting from the Cadiz Project.

Impacts of the Eastern and Eastern/ Canal Alternatives

Police and Law Enforcement Services

Potential impacts to police and law enforcement from proposed actions are typically expressed as an increased demand for these services and potential disruption of service due to restricted vehicular access during construction.

Construction of the Eastern or Eastern/Canal Alternative would not require additional police and law enforcement services in the Cadiz Project area. During construction, the potential short term impacts on police services would be related to the ability of the SBCSD to respond to emergency situations in the Cadiz Project area. Open trenches and/or temporary storage of construction materials and equipment on the Cadiz Project area could impede or prevent access for law enforcement vehicles through the site. However, these potential construction impacts would be considered temporary and, therefore, would not be anticipated to be significant.

Construction and traffic detour signs would be placed accordingly throughout the Cadiz Project area to reduce adverse impacts related to police/law enforcement services access to and through this area during construction.

Safety related issues could be a potential impact during non-construction hours. However, construction may occur up to 24 hours/day and 7 days/week. Mitigation measure PS-3, provided

SECTION 5

later in this Section, requires that construction personnel post necessary warnings and construct barriers to prevent access to open trenches and other active construction areas. Construction crews would be responsible for properly securing active construction areas at the end of each workday.

Fire and Emergency Services

It is not anticipated that a significant increase in demand for fire protection or medical services would be needed in the short or long term. Construction of the Cadiz Project would attract between approximately 1,200 and 1,400 construction workers to the Cadiz Project area at any one time, depending on the alternative. However, some workers would be expected to commute from neighboring communities such as Barstow, Essex, Needles, Twentynine Palms and Desert Center. Service demand could increase due to the possibility of heat exhaustion and/or sunstroke due to the extreme warm temperatures in the Cadiz area during periods of extreme heat waves. In addition, accidents with equipment may occur. This demand would largely be met by temporary provision of emergency medical services to address heat-related illnesses and minor injuries in the construction areas. Open trenches and/or temporary storage of combustible construction materials and equipment could impede access for emergency vehicles through the Cadiz Project area. Therefore, there would be a minor increase in the demand for emergency medical services in the short term. The existing fire station at Wonder Valley would be adequate to meet the demand for fire and emergency services arising from project construction. Therefore, the Eastern and Eastern/Canal Alternatives would not result in significant adverse impacts related emergency services.

The SBCFD has indicated that the Cadiz Project would not generate the need for additional fire service equipment and personnel to meet short-term increases in demand. The Cadiz Project would not be anticipated to change response times or create the need for additional facilities. Therefore, the Cadiz Project would be anticipated to result in impacts that are below a level of significance.

Temporary construction roads and provision of water supplies for fire fighting would be required during construction. Construction contractors would be required under mitigation measure PS-1, provided later in this Section, to prepare and implement temporary fire control systems and plans consistent with the requirements of the SBCFD. Therefore, the overall impact during construction would be below a level of significance.

It is not anticipated that the Cadiz Project would adversely impact long term fire and emergency services to the Cadiz Project area since only a very small number of new long term employees will be present on site. In addition, water facilities do not generally experience fires.

Schools

The Cadiz Project does not include temporary or permanent residential development. Therefore, the Cadiz Project is not anticipated to result in an increase in the permanent population in the area or in the need for schools. Because the Cadiz Project would not generate the need for housing or school services, the project would not result in the need to expand existing or construct new school facilities/or affect school related services.

Construction of the Eastern and Eastern/Canal alternatives would not directly or indirectly impact schools because there are no schools on or in the immediate vicinity of the Cadiz Project area. Therefore, no construction-related impacts on school facilities and services are anticipated.

Libraries

The Cadiz Project does not include temporary or permanent residential development, and would not result in an increase in the permanent population in the area. Therefore, the construction and operation of the Eastern and Eastern/Canal Alternatives would not require an expansion of library facilities or an addition to the bookmobile serving the Cadiz area. As a result, the Cadiz Project would not result in an increase in the demand for, or a significant adverse impact on, library services.

Construction under the Eastern and Eastern/Canal alternatives would not directly or indirectly impact existing libraries, as there are no libraries on or in the vicinity of the Cadiz Project area. Therefore, no construction-related impacts on library services would occur.

Impacts of the Western Alternative Related to Public Services

The potential impacts of the Western Alternative related to police and law enforcement services, fire and emergency services, school services and library services would be the same as the potential impacts evaluated under the Eastern and Eastern/Canal Alternatives.

Impacts of the Combination Alternative Related to Public Services

The potential impacts of the Combination Alternative related to police and law enforcement services, fire and emergency services, school services and library services would be the same as the potential impacts evaluated under the Eastern and Eastern/Canal Alternatives.

Impacts of the No Project Alternative Related to Public Services

The No Project Alternative would not include any of the construction impacts on public services associated with the project alternatives.

5.12.5 MITIGATION MEASURES

- PS-1 Metropolitan, or its contractors, will submit a construction-phasing plan to the SBCFD. The plan will be consistent with SBCFD Fire Code requirements for temporary fire control and emergency response.
- PS-2 Metropolitan, or its contractors, will coordinate with the applicable public service providers to determine their needs to protect existing facilities and services during the construction of the Cadiz Project.
- PS-3 During construction, warnings and construction barriers shall be constructed and maintained to prevent access to open trenches and other active construction areas.

5.12.6 LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION

Construction of any of the Cadiz Project alternatives will result in short-term impacts on police and law enforcement services, and fire and emergency services. However, this increase in demand in the short term will not generate the need for additional staff, equipment or facilities to maintain acceptable levels of service. The Cadiz Project build alternatives will not directly result in substantial increased demand for any public services over the long-term. Implementation of mitigation measures PS-1, PS-2 and PS-3 will reduce potential impacts to below a level of significance for all the Cadiz Project alternatives.