

### **INTRODUCTION**

*The purpose of this section is to describe the City's existing fire protection services and the potential impacts of the RiverPark Specific Plan. Sources used in the preparation of this section include: the City of Oxnard 2020 General Plan (November 1990), the City of Oxnard General Plan Final EIR (June 1990), and personal communication with City of Oxnard Fire Department officials.*

### **ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING**

#### **Staffing and Facilities**

Fire protection services are provided in the City by the Oxnard Fire Department. The Fire Department also responds to chemical spills, injuries, and vehicle accidents, and is responsible for managing the City's records pertaining to hazardous materials Risk Management and Prevention programs. The Fire Department has established a computer database system using CAD and RMS to assign fire department resources and record information on business occupancies.

The City maintains a total of six fire stations. The location of these stations relative to the project area is depicted in **Figure 4.10.2-1**. Each fire station contains a fire engine and over 200 pieces of equipment including breathing apparatus, emergency medical supplies, tools, and fire-proof clothing. The Fire Department also keeps and maintains reserve equipment. Each of these six stations is staffed by a minimum of three fire fighters at all times. Station 1 is currently staffed with seven fire fighters and an battalion chief and Station 6 is currently staffed with six fire fighters.

An existing County of Ventura fire station is located within the Specific Plan Area in the County El Rio Maintenance Yard. This station is used by the County Fire Department as a "cover station" providing additional assistance to other County units responding to calls from Thousand Oaks to Ojai. Although the County Fire Department would not be directly responsible for fire calls generated with the City, the City of Oxnard Fire Department has a mutual aid agreement with Ventura County.

## **Standards and Response Times**

The City of Oxnard Fire Department's goal in response to a call for emergency service is to have a fire unit on the scene within four and one-half minutes of receipt of the call at the station. Based on a average travel speed of 30 miles per hour, a distance of approximately 1.2 miles can be covered within four and one-half minutes. A quick response time is critical for the prevention of property damage and loss of life.

As illustrated in **Figure 4.10.2-1**, the City is divided into six overlapping Response Districts for each station. Each station has a primary service area in which they respond to calls, as well as a secondary and tertiary service area. This system assures that resources are available as needed to respond to different types of incidents throughout the City. Several fire stations may respond to calls dependent upon the type and severity of the incident. The Fire Department has a defined protocol for responding to a call based upon the type (i.e., medical, structure fire, etc.) and severity of an incident. Based on this protocol, the Fire Department's dispatch center sends equipment and personnel from the City's fire stations as needed.

The City of Oxnard Fire Department has mutual aid agreements with Ventura County, the City of Ventura, and the Ventura County Federal Fire Department, which operates fire stations at the Port Hueneme Naval Construction Battalion Base and the Point Mugu Naval Air Station.

Presently, the closest fire station to the Specific Plan Area is Station 4, located on Vineyard Avenue just west of Oxnard Boulevard. The existing development within and adjacent to the Specific Plan Area in the current City Limits is within the primary service area of Station 4. This includes the two existing office buildings in RiverPark Area 'A', existing development along El Rio Drive and the portion of the El Rio West Neighborhood located north of Stroube Street. Response time from Station 4 to these existing developed areas in the City is approximately four and one-half minutes.

## **Existing Fire Flows**

It is the City of Oxnard's policy not to permit new construction unless there is adequate water supply and pressure to serve the project. Recent expansions of the City's water distribution system include additional water pressure separation vaults to ensure that enough water can be delivered at adequate pressure and fire flow levels as new customers are added to the system. These expanded facilities are capable of delivering approximately 106 cubic feet per second (roughly 68 million gallons per day), and meet fire flow levels required by the State of California.

**Figure 4.10.2-1**  
**Response Areas of Fire Stations**

## Plans and Policies for Fire Fighting

The City has also adopted strict fire prevention regulations on new buildings to decrease the damage and danger incurred by a fire before the emergency crews can respond. The following routine measures are required for all new development projects:

1. Implement the City of Oxnard Fire Department fire prevention recommendations through project design. Include the Oxnard Fire Department in the plan check process for new tenant improvements so the department can recommend and inspect specific tenant improvements prior to the opening of business. This increases the level of fire prevention and allows for the fire department to better plan for calls that may be generated.
2. All roof materials provided on the project site shall be of non-combustible material.
3. All new structures are required to contain automatic fire sprinkler systems. The fire safety devices provided within the project buildings shall be designed by a California Life Safety Specialist who is approved by the City of Oxnard.
4. All fire protection and alarm systems shall be maintained in accordance with Fire Department guidelines by licensed, certified, or otherwise qualified personnel. Maintenance records shall be kept on-site.
5. Exterior building glass shall be protected by using the newly available coatings designed to eliminate glass shards in the event of seismic activity, heat, or Fire Department operations.
6. The project shall comply with all State of California fire requirements.
7. Addresses for each tenant shall be clearly identified on the front and rear of all buildings.

The Fire Department is in the process of developing a Strategic Plan, scheduled for completion in December 2001. The Fire Department Strategic Plan will address the number and locations of existing and future fire stations, staff resources, and equipment needed to maintain adequate response times as the City grows consistent with the City's 2020 General Plan.

## 2020 General Plan Policies

The Safety Element of the *2020 General Plan*, adopted in 1990, contains information goals, objectives and policies related to fire protection services in the Public Facilities and Safety Elements. The primary finding in the Public Facilities Element is that additional public safety facilities and equipment will be necessary to meet the needs of additional growth in the City. Goals and objectives call for providing adequate facilities and services. A policy in the Public Facilities Element states that new stations should be established as needed to provide adequate service and additional equipment and staff resources should be added as needed. Three general locations for new fire stations

are identified in the Public Facilities Element. One of these locations is on Vineyard Avenue in the general vicinity of Walnut Avenue, near the RiverPark Specific Plan Area. The Safety Element contains goals, objectives and policies that are consistent with those related to fire protection services in the Public Facilities Element.

## **PROJECT IMPACTS**

### **Thresholds of Significance**

The City of Oxnard considers a project to have a significant impact on fire protection services if:

- adequate response times to handle calls for services cannot be maintained;
- special fire protection problems are associated with the proposed project or general area; and/or,
- there would be substantial interference with an evacuation plan.

### **Construction Impacts**

A large amount of wood framing would occur on the Specific Plan site during its build-out. In association with the framing operations, electrical, plumbing, communications, and ventilation systems would be installed in each structure. Although rare, fires do occur at construction sites, and it is expected that the electrical, plumbing, and mechanical systems for the development would be properly installed during framing operations (they would be subject to City codes and inspection by City personnel prior to drywalling). In addition, construction sites would also be subject to City requirements relative to water availability and accessibility for fire fighting equipment. Therefore, adherence to City codes and requirements during construction would reduce the potential for fire hazards at the Specific Plan Area during construction to below the threshold of significance.

In addition, construction pursuant to the Specific Plan would increase traffic both on and adjacent to the Specific Plan Area during working hours because commuting construction workers, trucks, and other large construction vehicles would be added to normal traffic periodically during the build-out of the Specific Plan. Slow-moving, construction-related traffic on local adjacent roadways may temporarily reduce optimal traffic flows on local roadways and could conceivably delay emergency vehicles traveling through the area. This potential is considered small given the periodic and short term nature of any construction related traffic and no significant impacts are expected with the use of flagmen and other standard construction practices.

## Operational Impacts

The proposed RiverPark Specific Plan would allow development of up to 2,761 dwelling units, along with commercial buildings and new school facilities. This development would require emergency fire protection and medical services.

The City of Oxnard Fire Department will be responsible for fire protection and emergency medical service to the project area. It is anticipated that demands for fire protection service will increase above current levels upon build-out of the Specific Plan, as a total of up to 7,220 persons would be added to the Specific Plan area at build-out. Calls for service are expected to be those typical of residential, commercial, and schools. Typical calls would include structure fires, garbage bin fires, car fires, electrical fires, emergency medical responses, etc.

The City of Oxnard Fire Department has prepared a *Fire Protection Planning Guide* to provide a compilation of general development requirements which involve fire prevention and protection measures. All development within the City must comply with the requirements in this guide, which addresses construction activities and fire protection measures for new development. All development is also subject to a detailed review by Fire Department staff to ensure compliance with the requirements. Measures in the *Fire Protection Planning Guide* address development guidelines for various projects within the City and are meant as a guide for the design of projects. Specific measures for individual development projects would be identified during the review of development plans on an ongoing basis by the Fire Department.

## Facilities

As proposed, the RiverPark Specific Plan includes a site for a new fire station. Planning District L, the Public Facilities District, includes 3.7 acres for a new fire station and a administrative or maintenance facilities for the Rio School District. The proposed location at Vineyard Avenue and Simon Way is consistent with the location for a new station identified in the Public Facilities Element of the 2020 General Plan to serve the portion of the City north of the Ventura Freeway.

Presently, service to this area is provided from Station 4, located on Vineyard Avenue just west of Oxnard Boulevard. As discussed above, The City of Oxnard Fire Department's goal in response to a call for emergency service is to have a fire unit on the scene within four and one-half minutes of receipt of the call at the station. With an average assumed travel speed of 30 miles per hour, a distance of approximately 1.2 miles can be covered within four and one-half minutes. Based on this standard, the

southern portion of the Specific Plan Area, generally south of the planned extension of Ventura Road can be adequately served by Station 4, along with uses located on Vineyard Avenue. The distance from Station 4 to the north end of the proposed residential uses along Oxnard Boulevard would be slightly over 2 miles. The proposed location for a new station on Vineyard Avenue at Simon Way would allow for a four and one-half minute response to emergency calls in the northern and central portions of the Specific Plan Area. The Fire Department has indicated that design and construction of the new fire station would take approximately two years. Development of the fire station would need to occur early in the development of the Specific Plan Area to ensure adequate response times can be maintained as development occurs. No significant impact related to response times will result.

The Oxnard Fire Department and Ventura County Fire Department are currently discussing establishing a joint City/County Fire station at the proposed location. This station would serve to replace the existing County Fire station located in the County El Rio Maintenance Yard on El Rio Drive. Approximately a 1.5-acre site is necessary to establish a new 10,000 square foot fire station and approximately 2.0 acres would be needed to establish a new larger joint City/County Fire Station. As proposed Planning District L could accommodate either type of station. Should the City and County determine that a joint station can not meet the needs of both Fire Departments, a plan for the relocation of a new county fire station would be agreed to by the County and the project applicant prior to the sale of the El Rio Maintenance Yard to the project applicant by the County. No significant impact to County fire protection services will, therefore, result.

### ***Resource Needs***

The Oxnard Fire Department has reviewed the proposed RiverPark Specific Plan and the proposed location for the new City Fire Station. The Fire Department has determined that a new station at this location would need to be manned by three firefighters for each of three planned shifts. Specifically, a captain, engineer and firefighter would be required. An additional fire engine would also need to be purchased for this station. An additional fire inspector and a vehicle for this position would also be needed to provide for review of development plans, construction and buildings.

The primary source of funding for Fire Department facilities and related resources comes from the City's General Fund, and funding is allocated to the Department through the City's budget process. Based upon the fiscal impact study prepared for the Specific Plan, revenues accrued to the City's General Fund from sales taxes, property taxes and other revenues generated by the project would be sufficient to pay

for the development of a new fire station and the annual recurring cost of manning this facility.<sup>1</sup> No significant impact on

### ***Emergency Plans and Evacuation Routes***

With regard to emergency plans and evacuation routes, the proposed Specific Plan would be required to comply with all standards and policies contained in City's Safety Element of the 2020 General Plan and appropriate sections of the City's Zoning Code. These standards are enforced during the review of tract maps at the subdivision stage of the development process. Furthermore, development pursuant to the Specific Plan would not adversely hinder the performance of evacuation routes in the area because any significant impacts to the local circulation network would be mitigated to maintain an acceptable level of service. Please refer to **Section 4.7, Transportation & Circulation**, for a discussion of traffic impacts and mitigation. Thus, no significant impacts to emergency plans or evacuation routes are expected.

### ***Unusual Number or Unique Calls for Service***

None of the uses allowed within the Specific Plan Area are considered to be unusual in nature or to have the potential to generate an unusual number or type of calls for service. The proposed uses will be required comply with all applicable Fire Department codes and regulations for residential and commercial development. Typical calls would include structure fires, garbage bin fires, car fires, electrical fires, emergency medical responses, etc. All such fires and medical emergencies can be adequately addressed with the types of equipment typically found at City fire stations. The project would, therefore, not generate service calls that are "out of the ordinary." Rather, service calls from the proposed project would be similar to those from other similar residential and commercial uses within the City of Oxnard. No significant impact to fire protection services would result due to special fire protection needs.

## **CUMULATIVE IMPACTS**

Build-out of the land uses allowed by the 2020 General Plan, including the related projects known at this time, will increase demands on fire protection services. The population and housing increase associated with this growth would increase the demand for fire protection and emergency services throughout the City. The fire department has maintained a very respectable Class II fire rating by conducting a pro-active approach to fire fighting. For example, the department requires that all new

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<sup>1</sup> Urban Futures, Inc.: *RiverPark Specific Plan Proposal Fiscal Impact Analysis*. November 2000.



structures contain sprinkler systems which substantially reduce the intensity and duration of a fire, and the Fire Department is currently preparing a Strategic Plan. The maintenance of the various programs, which the department employs to achieve this rating, would ensure the continued ability of the Department to meet the cumulative demand for fire and emergency services and meet recommended national fire protection service standards. No significant cumulative impacts will result.

## **MITIGATION MEASURES**

No mitigation measures are required as no significant impacts have been identified.

## **UNAVOIDABLE SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE IMPACTS**

No unavoidable significant impacts to fire protection services are anticipated as a result of the RiverPark Project.