

4.6.4 Fire Services

SUMMARY

The proposed project would be served by the Elk Grove Community Services District (EGCSD) Fire Department. Current response times to the project site exceed the Fire Department standard. The project is predicted to increase calls for service to the site somewhere between one and four calls per day. The project applicant is expected to pay Fire Protection Development fees to the EGCSD similar with fees paid in other areas. The fee program is intended to finance costs of fire station construction and equipment acquisition needed to meet service demands generated by development within the EGCSD. The project would also meet all Uniform Fire Code requirements.

INTRODUCTION

This section evaluates the impacts of the proposed project on the provision of fire services. Correspondence received from the Elk Grove Community Services District Fire Department provided much of the background information found within this section.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Existing Fire Protection Services

Fire protection service is provided to the project area by the Elk Grove Community Services District Fire Department. The Elk Grove Community Services service area is depicted in **Figure 4.6.4-1, Elk Grove Community Service Fire District**. The service area is supported by five fire stations; an additional station is proposed. Fire Station No. 71 located at 8760 Elk Grove Boulevard would provide primary fire protection service to the project site. Additional fire protection services are provided by Fire Station 73, 74 and 72 as needed. The locations of these stations are illustrated in **Figure 4.6.4-2, Fire Station Locations**.

A description of the operational characteristics of each station is provided below.

- Elk Grove Community Services Fire Station 71 is located at 8760 Elk Grove Boulevard and is approximately 3.08 miles northwest of the project site. This station maintains a minimum of five personnel, 24 hours a day. The primary equipment at this station includes a rescue pumper, grass unit, reserve structure pumper and a paramedic ambulance.

- Elk Grove Community Services Fire Station 73 is located at 9607 Bond Road, approximately 4.37 miles northeast of the project site. This station provides fire, emergency medical and ambulance transport services. This station also maintains a minimum of five personnel, 24 hours per day. Primary equipment at this station includes a water-tender pumper, grass unit, and a paramedic ambulance.
- Elk Grove Community Services Fire Station 74 is located at 6501 Laguna Park Drive, approximately 5.67 miles northwest of the project site. This station provides fire, rescue, emergency medical, and ambulance transport services. Minimum staffing at this station includes six personnel, 24 hours per day. Primary equipment at this station includes a 105-foot aerial ladder truck, urban interface combination grass/structure pumper, and a paramedic ambulance.
- Elk Grove Community Services Fire Station 72 is located at 4011 Hood Franklin Road, #B, approximately 6.32 miles northwest of the project site. This station provides fire, swift water rescue, and emergency medical services. Minimum staff at this station includes three personnel, 24 hours per day. Primary equipment at this station includes water tender-pumper, grass unit, swift water rescue boat, and a reserve paramedic ambulance.
- Elk Grove Community Services Fire Station 75 is located at 2300 Maritime Drive, approximately 8.3 miles northwest of the project site. This station provides fire and emergency medical services. Minimum staff at this station includes three personnel, 24 hours a day. Primary equipment located at this station includes structure pumper, grass unit, heavy foam unit, and a breathing apparatus air compressor refill unit.
- Elk Grove Community Services Fire Station 78 is proposed to be constructed in close proximity to the Lent Ranch Marketplace project. This station is not currently planned for construction until several years or more after the scheduled opening of the mall use on the project site.

Response times for all of the existing fire stations to the project site are all eight minutes or more. This response time exceeds the Department response time standard of five minutes or less, eighty percent of the time in urban areas.

Fire Master Plan

The EGCSO has adopted a Master Plan that includes service level goals. The plan examines future growth in the service area and identifies the facilities, manpower, and equipment needed to meet these

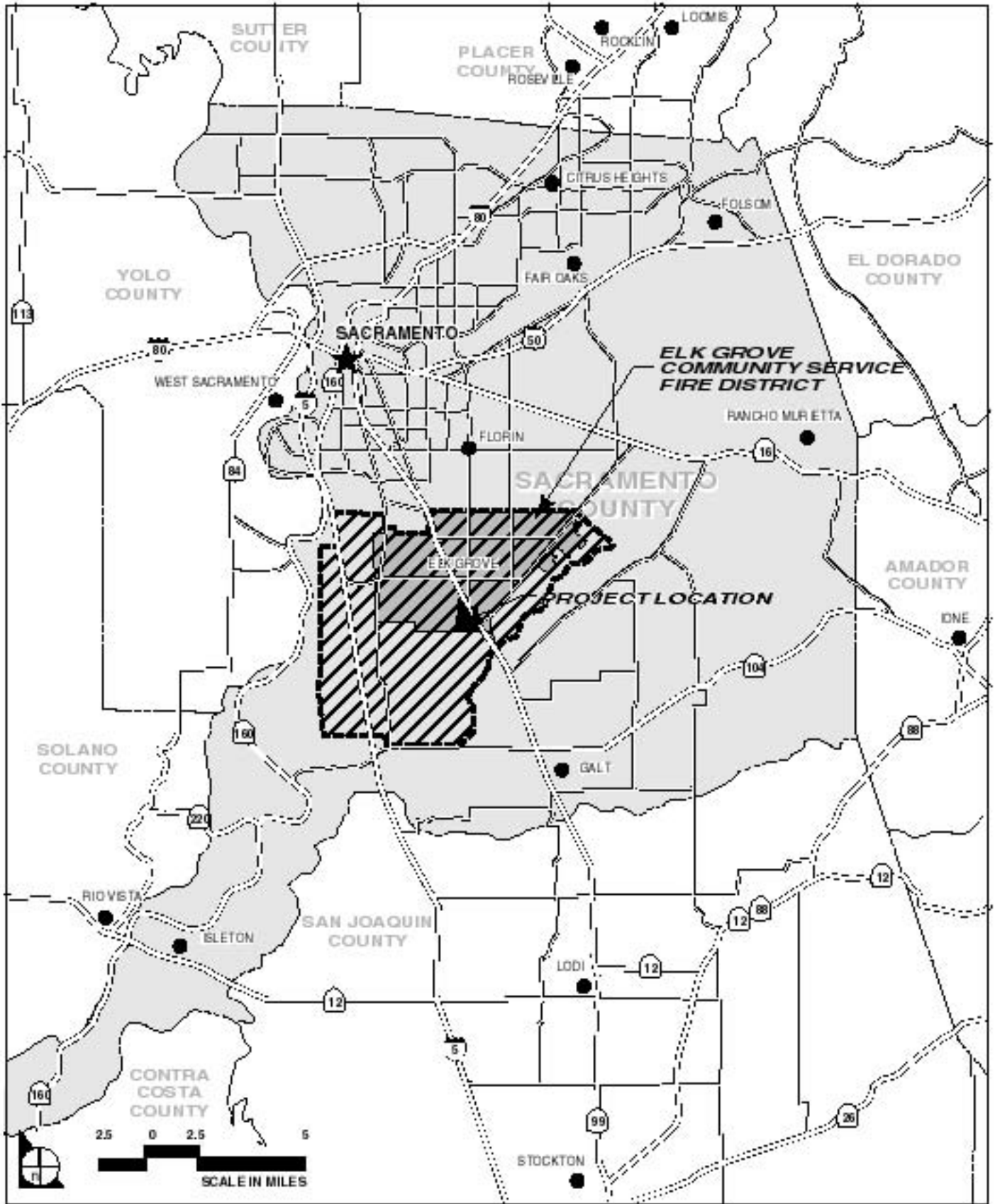


FIGURE 4.6.4-1

Elk Grove Community Service Fire District

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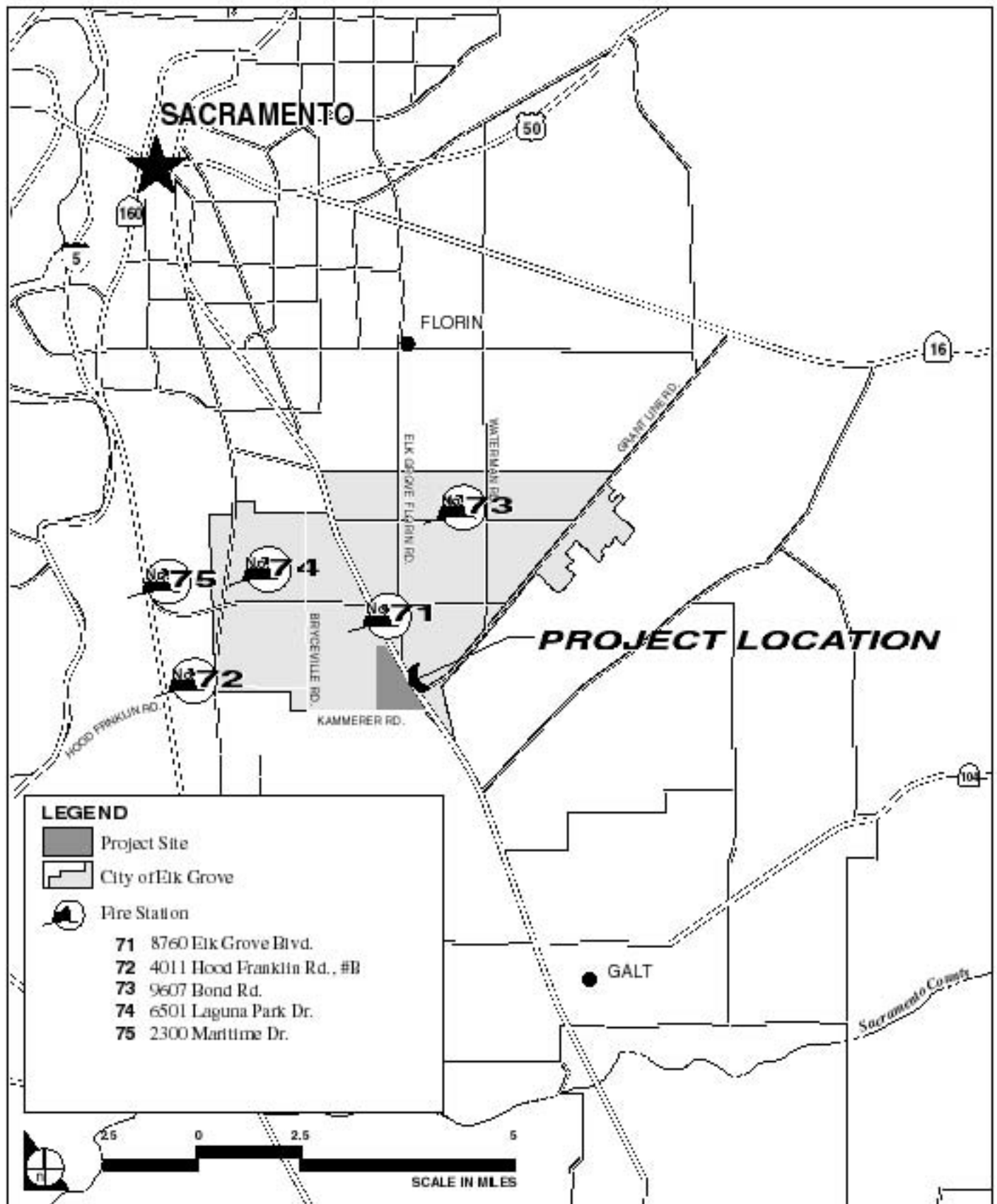


FIGURE 4.6.4-2

Fire Station Locations

goals. A future fire station (#78) is planned within one-half mile of the project site. The EGCSD relies upon a Fire Protection Development Fee program in order to fund needed facilities. The fee to be paid by the Lent Ranch Marketplace is anticipated to equal that established in the Elk Grove/West Vineyard Public Facilities Financing Plan revised in June of 1999. However, EGCSD is currently reevaluating its fee program.

Fire Codes and Guidelines

The availability of sufficient on-site water pressure is a basic requirement of the Fire Department. Fire Department requirements are determined for each project at the design stage, based on the Uniform Fire Code.

In addition to meeting the necessary fire flow, the proposed project would be required to be fully sprinklered and meet other various fire protection requirements that would be identified during the plan check review process.

PROJECT IMPACTS

Thresholds of Significance

Appendix G of the CEQA *Guidelines* (Environmental Checklist Form) states that a project could have a significant impact if it would result in:

- substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, or;
- 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 public services.

Requirements for adequate fire protection identified by the Fire Department would need to be satisfied to reduce impacts to below a level of significance. These requirements include but are not limited to: fire flows, emergency access, and additional staff and/or equipment.

Analysis

Construction

On-Site Impacts

Impact 4.6.4-1 Emergency crews responding to a call for service at the construction site may not arrive within the minimum response time of five minutes considered acceptable by the EGCSO. This is considered a potentially significant impact.

Some or all of the structures within the project would be wood framed. In association with 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 such fires could occur if the electrical, plumbing, and mechanical systems within buildings are not properly installed during framing operations. The closest existing station is Station #71 located approximately 3 miles from the site, which would result in an average response time of approximately 8 minutes or more. This exceeds the existing standard of five minutes.

Off-Site Impacts

Impact 4.6.4-2 The project may have a significant impact on the ability of the Fire Department to conduct plan review and site inspection services.

With respect to site plan review and inspection, the Fire Department indicates that the proposed project could create a significant impact on the ability to provide timely plan check service and site inspection in their NOP response dated September 27, 2000. Existing staffing levels would not support the extensive plan review and site inspection needed for the proposed project. Funding above the existing plan review fee structure may be necessary to support the service required for this project according to the Department's NOP response letter.

Operational

On-Site Impacts

Impact 4.6.4-3 Project operation may significantly impact Fire Department Response times during the period between project opening and construction of planned Station #78.

On-site uses associated with the proposed project consist of residential, commercial, and office/entertainment. None of these uses are considered unique or especially hazardous (i.e., uses that use or generate hazardous and or toxic materials in large quantities). Consequently, the project does not present unique fire fighting hazards. Intensification of land uses on the property combined with the increase in human activity on the project site, when compared to present conditions, would result in an increase in fire hazards and other associated needs for fire protection services, including paramedic services.

Using the Department's emergency response census, the Department believes that the likely direct response call volume for the mall only (not including indirect calls to surrounding areas that may develop around the mall) to be approximately two calls per day or approximately 730 emergency responses per year.

Based upon the development experience observed at the Sunrise Mall during the 1970s, the Fire Department also believes it is reasonable to expect that the indirect response call volume into the developed areas that would fill in around the mall would be approximately equal to that created directly by the mall (being a function of persons travelling to and/or from the mall and a function of those living, working, and/or doing business in the vicinity of the mall). From this data the Fire Department concludes that it is likely that the overall direct and indirect response call volume impact of the proposed project would, at build out, be approximately four calls per day or approximately 1,460 calls per year. The Department considers the increase in calls to be a significant impact.

An independent review of existing shopping center projects in several other cities was conducted by Impact Sciences to verify this estimate. This survey examined data obtained from four comparable malls located throughout northern and central California. The malls surveyed included the Stanford Shopping Mall (1.35 million square feet), Valley Plaza Center (1.1 million square feet), Hilltop Mall (1.7 million square feet) and Sun Valley Mall (1.44 million square feet). On average, the four malls generated a total of 3.4 calls for service per week, which equates to 0.48 calls per day. Assuming that indirect call volume is equal to 0.48, as was assumed by the Fire Department, this analysis indicates that approximately one additional call for service per day would result at project buildout.

Based on the above, the project is predicted to increase calls for service to the site somewhere between one and four calls per day. The project applicant is required to pay Fire Protection Development fees to the EGCSD. The fee program is intended to finance costs of fire station construction and equipment acquisition needed to meet service demands generated by development within the EGCSD. The Lent Ranch Draft Public Facilities Financing Plan (August 2000), estimates that the project would generate

\$960,000 in direct fire facility fees. In addition, the project would generate revenue in the form of sales tax to the City General Fund that can be used to fund operational costs if so desired by the City Council. Given that the project would be required to meet all uniform fire code requirements, would pay development fees to cover the project's share of the cost to provide facilities, equipment, and service to the site, and would generate revenue to fund ongoing service, no significant impacts to ongoing fire protection and emergency services are expected at project buildout.

Station # 78 has yet to be designed or funded, and it is not expected to open for several years after the proposed project is constructed. Until the time that Station #78 is constructed and staffed, existing fire stations in the area must cover the project. The closest existing station is Station #71 located approximately 3 miles from the site, which would result in an average response time of approximately 8 minutes or more. The response time would be influenced by traffic conditions and the location of the emergency (calls within the mall would require a greater response time than one located in the parking lot). The estimated response time is below the Department's standard of five minutes or less, and is considered to be a short-term significant impact that would cease upon completion and operation of Station #78. Several methods are available to reduce this interim impact to below a level considered significant, including advanced funding of a new station, construction of a temporary station, and/or installation of devices to improve traffic flow.

PROJECT MITIGATION MEASURES

Mitigation Measures Already Incorporated into the Project

MM4.6.4-1 Uses constructed on the project site shall meet the minimum necessary fire flow and other standard fire protection and life safety requirements identified in the Uniform Fire Code. Construction sites shall ensure adequate on-site water supply and all-weather access for fire-fighting equipment and emergency vehicles before framing can occur. The applicant shall also pay the Fire Protection Development Fee in effect at the time of building permit issuance.

Timing/Implementation: **Prior to construction activities.**

Enforcement/Monitoring **EGCSD and City of Elk Grove Public Works Department.**

Mitigation Measures Recommended by the EIR

MM4.6.4-2 Prior to issuance of building permits, the applicant and the EGCS D shall reach an agreement on funding to provide adequate staff to conduct site plan review and construction inspection services for the project. The agreement shall specify funding levels and timing of payment.

Timing/Implementation: **Prior to issuance of building permits.**

Enforcement/Monitoring **EGCS D and City of Elk Grove Public Works Department.**

MM4.6.4-3(a) The Draft Public Facilities Financing Plan for the project shall provide either complete early funding for a permanent fire station (by means of developer financing of the station with a provision for credit against the Fire Protection Development Fee) or developer financing of a temporary fire station. Sufficient funds will also be required to purchase an engine and grass unit. The Plan shall contain a provision that allows reimbursement for payment of those funds beyond the proposed project's "Fair Share."

Timing/Implementation: **Prior to approval of the Draft Public Facilities Financing Plan.**

Enforcement/Monitoring **EGCS D and City of Elk Grove Public Works.**

MM4.6.4-3(b) All signalized intersections installed by the project developer shall be equipped with traffic pre-emption devices at the time of installation.

Timing/Implementation: **Prior to improvement plan approval.**

Enforcement/Monitoring **EGCS D and City of Elk Grove Public Works Department.**

CONSISTENCY WITH GENERAL PLAN POLICIES

The following are policies from the City of Elk Grove General Plan that apply to fire protection. These policies are general in nature and are subject to interpretation. The City Council has the authority to decide whether the project is consistent with applicable policies.

**Table 4.6.4-1
General Plan Policy Consistency - Fire Services**

General Plan Policies	Consistency with General Plan	Analysis
Policy PF-61 Require new development to install fire hydrants and associated water supply systems which meet the fire flow requirements of the appropriate fire district.	Yes	The Project will comply with the requirements of the Fire Department regarding access, water mains, fire flow, brush clearance and hydrants.
Policy PF-62 New development shall provide access arrangements pursuant to the requirements of the Uniform Fire Code.	Yes	The project would be required to comply with all Uniform Fire Code provisions with respect to access.
Policy PF-64 New development, redevelopment or traffic signal replacement shall require the installation of emergency signal activation systems in all street improvements requiring signalization when requested by a fire district.	Yes	The project, through its fair share contribution toward construction of the Grant Line Road/SR 99 Interchange upgrade and other roadway improvements, would help improve vehicular access and emergency response time to the project site and surrounding areas. The upgraded Interchange would improve Fire Department access to the area and would enhance the Department's ability to respond to emergency calls. The new Interchange traffic signals would be constructed with OPTICOM traffic pre-emption devices that would further enhance Fire Department emergency access and response time.
Policy PF-64 Require that structures of more than four stories in height provide on-site equipment and facilities to the satisfaction of the appropriate fire district, consistent with industry norms and standards.	Yes	In addition to meeting the necessary fire flow, the project would be required to be fully sprinklered, and would meet all fire protection requirements that would be identified during the plan check review process.
Policy SA-22: The County shall require that all new development meets the local fire district standards for adequate water supply and pressure, fire hydrants, and access to structures by fire fighting equipment and personnel.	Yes	The project would be required to comply with the requirements of the Elk Grove Community Services District Fire Department with respect to access, water mains, fire flow, brush clearance and hydrants. The Water District guarantees a fire flow of 3,000 gallons per minute for two hours, and fire flows may be supplemented by on-site wells.
Policy SA-25: During the Development Plan Review process, the County would require, where appropriate, the use of fire resistant landscaping and building materials for new developments that are cost effective.	Yes	Where possible, landscaping for the project would include drought tolerant, low-water use vegetation with a low fuel potential to reduce fire hazards. Also, where possible, the project would use fire resistant building materials, and would comply with all relevant City and Fire Department requirements with respect to construction.

General Plan Policies	Consistency with General Plan	Analysis
<p>Policy SA-26: The City shall require, to the maximum extent feasible, on-site fire suppression systems for all commercial and industrial development to reduce the dependence on fire department equipment and personnel.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The project would include, where possible, on-site fire suppression systems for its commercial development component. In addition, the project would fund its fair share of fire protection services and equipment through payment of fire protection development impact fees, as calculated in the Draft Financing Plan, which would further ensure that the project would be provided with adequate levels of fire protection.</p>

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

A number of recently planned and approved projects are located within the service area of the Elk Grove Community Services Fire District, including the East Franklin Specific Plan, Laguna Ridge Specific Plan, and South Pointe planning area. Improvements to the Grant Line interchange are also in planning stages to accommodate approved and planned growth in the City of Elk Grove. If the Elk Grove Community Services Fire District service area builds out consistent with the *General Plan*, a significant impact on the current level of fire protection services provided by the District would occur unless the equipment and personnel resources were to increase proportionately. The EGCSF has prepared a Fire Protection Master Plan that examines future growth in the service area and identifies the facilities, manpower, and equipment needed to ensure adequate service. The EGCSF established a Fire Protection Development Fee program in order to fund these needed facilities. Assuming each future applicant pays the Development Fee in effect at the time their project is approved, then the level of fire protection service would increase to keep pace with increased demands. Therefore, no significant cumulative fire-related impacts are expected.

CUMULATIVE MITIGATION MEASURES

It is assumed that other projects proposed within the Elk Grove Community Services Fire District would receive the same level of review as the proposed project. Implementation of measures to minimize each project's impact and the payment of the Fire Protection Fee would allow the Elk Grove Community Services Fire District to keep pace with increased demands; therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

UNAVOIDABLE SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS

With implementation of the above identified mitigation measures, impacts associated with fire protection resources would be reduced to below a level of significance. No unavoidable project specific significant impacts are anticipated.

Payment of the Fire Protection Development Fee and successful implementation of mitigation measures required for each individual project would mitigate significant cumulative impacts with respect to fire protection services to a level less than significant.