

Chapter V.
PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES

POLICE AND FIRE PROTECTION ELEMENT

PURPOSE

The Police and Fire Protection Element is intended to address the provision of adequate police and fire protection services by a local government. It identifies the agencies that provide police and fire protection services, and describes the levels of service those agencies currently provide. It establishes focused policies and programs that have been developed to ensure the long-term and adequate public safety for the entire community. This Element is reflective of the Town's commitment to provide continuous quality and responsive police and fire protection services.

BACKGROUND

The Police and Fire Protection Element is directly related to a number of General Plan elements, including Land Use, Traffic and Circulation, Emergency Preparedness, and Water Resources. Factors that affect the provision of fire and police services include distribution and intensity of land uses, accessibility and emergency response coordination. These services also depend on the availability of water to suppress fires, health service to treat the injured, and the provision of "defensible space" in urban development.

As communities grow, the provision of police and fire protection services are important to continued safety. The Town of Apple Valley contracts with the County of San Bernardino Sheriff's Department for law enforcement services. The Apple Valley Fire Protection District provides fire protection and maintains cooperative/mutual aid agreements with other communities and agencies for additional emergency response support. Ambulance and paramedic services are provided by American Medical Response (AMR).

There are several state regulatory codes directed at the importance of addressing the protection of the community from natural and man-made hazards, including Government Code Section 65302(g) and Public Resources Code 4125(a). Government Code Section 65302(g) requires that a Safety Element or its equivalent be included in the General Plan to address measures necessary to protect the community from risks related to fire and other hazards and threats. Public Resource Code 4125(a) sets forth a requirement that the State Board of Forestry classify all lands within the State so as to determine hazards and address financial responsibility for fire prevention and suppression. Lands that are unclassified fall under the jurisdiction of the Town or if applicable, appropriate federal agency, such as the Bureau of Land Management or the U.S. Forest Service.

Police Protection

The Town of Apple Valley contracts with the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department for police services. Sheriff's Department staff assigned to the Apple Valley Police Department offers police protection services within the corporate limits of the Town of Apple Valley, which

encompasses approximately 72 square miles. The County Sheriff's Department serves unincorporated areas in the vicinity of Apple Valley, including the Town's Sphere of Influence.

The Apple Valley Police Department is located at 14931 Dale Evans Parkway in Apple Valley. There is also an un-staffed sub-station, used for report writing and other administrative tasks, which is located at 21989 Outer State Highway 18. The Department desires a ratio of 1 police officer for every 1,500 residents. The current (2008) level of law enforcement staffing in the Town is approximately 1.02 sworn officers for every 1,500 residents.

Police Personnel

At present (2008), the Apple Valley Police Department has a total of 48 sworn positions and 13 unsworn positions for a total of 61 personnel. The 48 sworn positions include 1 Captain, 1 Lieutenant, 7 Sergeants, 5 Detective/Corporals, and 34 Patrol Deputies; while the unsworn positions include 5 Sheriff's service specialists, 1 secretary, and 7 station clerks. The Apple Valley Police Department is organized into three main departments: Administration, Traffic Division, and Detective Bureau.

The Apple Valley Police Department patrol unit is currently organized into three shifts per day, with each shift lasting 10 hours. The day shift operates from 7 am to 5 pm, the night shift operates from 3 pm to 1 am, and the graveyard shift is on duty from 10 pm until 8 am. Patrol teams are deployed with 4 to 5 officers during the day shift, 5 to 6 officers during the night shift, and approximately 3 officers are on duty for the graveyard shift. In addition, there is a traffic officer on duty from 5 pm to 3 am each day of the week.

The Apple Valley Police Department fleet inventory consists of 22 patrol cars, 9 unmarked units, and 4 bicycles. In addition, they operate a mobile trailer, equipped with radar, radios, and other equipment, that is used daily for enforcing speed limits. In early 2008 the Department anticipates receiving a new trailer that will be similarly outfitted with all new equipment; this trailer will be utilized at checkpoints.

Demand for Police Services

In 2007, the Apple Valley Police Department received approximately 72,658 calls for service. The Police Department officers respond to high priority calls within 3 to 7 minutes, depending on the time of the day and traffic flow. As the Town's population continues to increase, law enforcement response time, calls for police services, and traffic levels are expected to increase.

The demand for Priority 1 police services, which include assaults and burglaries, was 2,431 service calls in 2007. In the same period, the Department received 5,235 Priority 2 calls such as petty thefts and vandalism. In 2007 the Police Department made 1,978 arrests, and issued 7,105 citations.

Crime Prevention and Public Safety

The Apple Valley Police Department implements a variety of crime prevention and public safety programs. The department currently deploys personnel in the following public safety programs, including several community-based policing programs; patrol, detectives, traffic enforcement, crime free multi housing, and monthly safety checkpoints.

Patrol deputies are the primary responders for all police related service calls within the Town of Apple Valley. It is the responsibility of the Detective Bureau to perform follow-ups and investigation of reports, arrests, and tips initiated by the uniformed officer. In addition, detectives conduct crime scene analysis. Traffic law enforcement, traffic collision investigations, and follow-ups on traffic related crimes are handled by motor officers within the Traffic Enforcement Division.

The Town participates in the California Police Activities League (Cal-Pal), by offering a number of programs to the Town's youth, including those aimed at resolving conflict situations associated with gangs and school age children within the community as well as within schools. The SHOCK (self discipline, honor, obedience, consistency and knowledge) program places law enforcement officers in the educational environment to conduct programs focused on prevention and intervention. There are two sworn officers assigned to this program. They provide and teach program curricula such as DARE and GREAT, which are drug and gang awareness programs, to elementary and middle school children.

For teenagers and adults who are interested in law enforcement the Department offers the Explorer Program. Candidates must be between 14 and 20 years of age and must pass an oral interview and a background investigation.

The Apple Valley Police Department has a citizen's volunteer program called Citizens on Patrol that provides additional patrol capabilities to the community, and helps in clerical duties throughout the department. There are approximately 40 volunteers that offer daily assistance to the Department. Volunteers must be at least 21 years old, are required to complete training classes, and must comply with the Town's and Police Department's guidelines and policies.

Apple Valley Police Department Strategic Plan

The Apple Valley Police Department has drafted a 2008 strategic plan to address the current and future law enforcement needs of the community. A description of strategies and objectives as well as methods for implementation are set forth in the strategic plan. Development of the Police Department Strategic Plan involved the review and input of department employees, the Town Manager, and Town policy makers, and its drafting is currently underway.

Fire Protection

The Apple Valley Fire Protection District provides fire protection services to the Town of Apple Valley and the vicinity. It is an independent District whose western boundary is the Mojave River, and extends east as far as the dry lakes toward Lucerne Valley. It serves the Town and unincorporated areas of San Bernardino County, with a total service area of over 206 square miles. District staff includes paid, professional personnel and support staff.

The Fire Protection District maintains a mutual aid agreement with Victorville, San Bernardino County Fire Department, and the Bureau of Land Management. This agreement allows for fire departments within the region to actively support one another regardless of geographic or

jurisdictional boundaries. A joint dispatch center serving the mutual aid agencies is located in Victorville.

Fire Department Staffing

There are currently a total of 20 paid-call, five (5) part-time, and 54 career (paid, full-time) staff in the Fire Protection District, of which 50 are assigned to seven stations within the Apple Valley District (see below). This level of staffing is currently adequate to meet the District's desired ratio of approximately 1 full-time fire personnel per 1,500 persons.

Fire Stations and Equipment

There are seven fire stations in the District. Four are staffed 24-hours per day, seven days per week, for emergency response. One station is staffed by department staff on a 24-hour basis approximately four-days per week, and staffed by private ambulance company personnel only the remainder of the time. One is staffed as needed by on-call firefighters. One station is staffed with private ambulance company personnel only.

The District's desired response time is 6 minutes. Within the core area, defined as the Town corporate limits, the average response time is 6 minutes 25 seconds.

The following are the stations within the District, along with the number of personnel, and type of equipment at each:

- Station No. 331 at 22400 Headquarters Drive has 12 staff, and is equipped with a Type-1 engine, a Type-2 water tender, and a medium-level rescue vehicle.
- Station No. 332 at 18857 Highway 18 has 9 staff. Equipment includes a Type-1 engine and a Type-3 engine.
- Station No. 333 at 20604 Highway 18 is staffed with private ambulance company personnel.
- Station 334 at 12143 Kiowa Road has 9 staff, a Type-1 engine, and a Type-3 engine.
- Station No. 335 at 21860 Tussing Ranch Road is staffed by paid-call staff only. This means that staff members are alerted via pager to calls within the response area. The station is equipped with a Type-1 engine and a Type-3 water tender.
- Station No. 336 at 19235 Yucca Loma Road has 6 career and 10 paid-call staff, and is equipped with a rescue squad vehicle, a Type-1 engine, a Type-4 engine, an Incident Command bus, an Incident Support unit and a Type-2 truck.
- Station No. 337 at 19305 Jess Ranch Parkway was added in October 2007. Staffing has been expanded, as of April 2008, from 2 to 4 staff members. The station is equipped with a Type-4 Medic Patrol, a Hazmat Trailer, and a Reserve Squad.

The Town is considering the construction of an eighth fire station on approximately 12 acres at the northeast corner of Johnson Road and Navajo Road. The property has been donated by the Wal-Mart Corporation, which owns the Wal-Mart Distribution Center in North Apple Valley. The new station, if developed, is expected to house fire training classes, which would be relocated from Victor Valley College.

In addition to firefighting staff, the Apple Valley Fire Marshal provides project review services for all new development.

District Rating

The Insurance Service Office (ISO) provides rating and statistical information for the insurance industry in the United States. The ISO does this by evaluating a community's fire protection needs and services, and assigns each community evaluated a Public Protection Classification (PPC) rating. The PPC rating, which is developed as a cumulative point system, is based on the community's fire-suppression delivery system, including fire dispatch (operators, alarm dispatch circuits, telephone lines available), fire department (equipment available, personnel, training, distribution of companies, etc.), and water supply (adequacy, condition, number and installation of fire hydrants). Insurance rates are based upon this rating, which ranges from Class 1 (best) to Class 10 (worst). The District is currently (2008) rated "Class 4."

Other Fire Protection District Services

The District is involved in a number of community outreach and educational programs. Firefighters read to AVUSD students in schools on a weekly basis in the On Fire for Literacy program. The Risk Watch program focuses on fire/burn prevention, bike safety and water safety. The District also uses the Schools Acquiring Fire Safety Education and Readiness (SAFER) program to inform and raise fire safety awareness among school children.

Emergency Medical Services

American Medical Response (AMR), a private company, currently provides emergency medical services, including ambulance services, via a contract with the County of San Bernardino. Their services and vehicles are regional, and ambulances are dispatched as needed via the Desert Communications dispatch center in Victorville. AMR offers Advance Life Support ambulances, staffed with a paramedic and an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), Basic Life Support ambulances, staffed with two EMTs, and Critical Care Units, staffed with a paramedic, an EMT, and a Registered Nurse. AMR's contract with San Bernardino County establishes a response time of 9 minutes 59 seconds or less to all calls, with longer allowable response times to some rural areas. AMR meets or exceeds this response time an average of 92 percent of the time, based on monthly averages.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The Town's continued growth is the primary factor in determining additional demand for police and fire protection service. The exact timing and location of additional police and fire facilities necessary to provide adequate safety related services are dependent upon the type, location and intensity of future development. While these may be difficult to determine, the Town will continue to monitor growth patterns and to use that information to respond to additional demand for public safety facilities and services.

There are several issues that will continue to require focused attention, including those involving land use and circulation patterns, financing of future police and fire stations, the provision of water for sufficient fire flows, and the adequacy of emergency response times.

GOAL, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

Goal

The highest possible level of services and quality for fire and police protection to ensure the preservation and protection of the health, welfare and property for all types of development and socio-economic segments of the community.

Policy 1.A

The Town shall review all new development proposals, as well as significant remodeling projects to determine potential impacts to public safety and the provision of police and fire protection services.

Program 1.A.1

The Town shall continue to monitor development levels in the planning area to assess the need for new fire and police stations.

Responsible Agency: Planning Division, Fire Protection District, Sheriff's Department

Schedule: Immediate, Continuous

Program 1.A.2

The Town shall coordinate with the Sheriff's Department and Fire Protection District regarding the optimal location of future police and fire stations, and to ensure that levels of staffing are adequate to meet the demands of new development in the Town.

Responsible Agency: Planning Division, Sheriff's Department, Fire Protection District

Schedule: Ongoing

Program 1.A.3

The Town shall review and modify its structural fire assessment fees annually, or as necessary to ensure that there are adequate funds to cover annual operating costs.

Responsible Agency: Planning Division, Finance Department, Fire Protection District.

Schedule: Annually

Policy 1.B

All proposed development shall be designed to provide unencumbered access for police, fire, and paramedic vehicles, to the satisfaction of the Sheriff's Department and the Fire Marshal.

Policy 1.C

The Town shall remain flexible when considering the most effective means of providing police and fire protection services to the community, and shall conduct periodic reviews to evaluate the level, quality, cost-effectiveness and innovation of those services, including those provided on a contractual basis.

Policy 1.D

To assure the most effective disaster response practicable, the Sheriff's Department and the Apple Valley Fire Protection District shall closely coordinate and cooperate emergency preparedness teams.

Policy 1.E

The Town shall utilize the process of reviewing development and building plans, and of conducting building inspections, to strictly enforce fire standards and regulations.

Program 1.E.1

The Fire District and the Fire Marshal shall review all development proposals, and project design or conditions of approval, as appropriate, shall incorporate their input.

Responsible Agency: Building and Safety Division, Planning Division, Sheriff's Department, Fire Protection District.

Schedule: Ongoing

Program 1.E.2

The Town and Fire Protection District shall coordinate with the local Water Districts to ensure availability of adequate water supplies and pressures for fire flows for all existing and proposed development.

Responsible Agency: Building and Safety Division, Planning Division, Fire Protection District, all Water Districts.

Schedule: Ongoing

Program 1.E.3

The Town shall encourage the Fire Protection District to conduct periodic inspections of commercial, industrial and institutional buildings, and multi-family developments, to ensure compliance with fire code compliance and to educate building and development managers on fire safety issues.

Responsible Agency: Building and Safety Division, Fire Protection District.

Schedule: Ongoing

Policy 1.F

The use and storage of potentially hazardous materials shall be regulated by the Town, County Department of Environmental Health, Apple Valley Fire Protection District and other appropriate agencies.

Program 1.F.1

Town public safety specialists shall thoroughly review the general location and siting of facilities which involve the use and/or storage of hazardous, highly flammable or explosive materials. Reviews shall be conducted in such a manner so as to assure the highest level of safety, and strict conformance with the Uniform Fire Code and other applicable codes and regulations.

Responsible Agency: Planning Division, Building and Safety Division, Fire Protection District, San Bernardino County Environmental Health Department

Schedule: Immediate, Ongoing

Policy 1.G

Special on-site fire protection measures may be required for well-vegetated areas where slopes are 10 percent or greater and which have potential to either lack sufficient water supplies or water pressure, and/or have access problems. These measures shall be specified during project review.

Policy 1.H

The Fire Protection District shall maintain a 6-minute response time, or as close thereto as possible.

Policy 1.I

The Fire Protection District shall maintain a level of service that ensures the provision of 1 fire personnel per 1,500 residents, or as close thereto as possible.

Policy 1.J

New and substantially remodeled development shall incorporate crime prevention design techniques, including the use of “defensible space,” high security hardware, optimal site planning and building orientation, and other design approaches to enhance security.

Program 1.J.1

The Town shall encourage Neighborhood Crime Watch and other crime prevention programs for new and remodeled multi-family developments.

Responsible Agency: Building and Safety Division, Sheriff’s Department.

Schedule: Ongoing

Policy 1.K

Acknowledging that community-based crime prevention programs are an important augmentation to the provision of professional police protection services, the Town shall continue to support and promote such programs.

Program 1.K.1

Continue to encourage and support the Cal-Pal, Citizens on Patrol volunteer program, SHOCK outreach program, and other community-based policing programs.

Responsible Agency: Sheriff’s Department

Schedule: Ongoing

Policy 1.L

The Town shall continue to encourage and support participation in the Police Department Explorer program, as an effective means of introducing youth to the benefits and importance of local law enforcement.

Policy 1.M

The Town shall continue to monitor the need for and provide, as needed, drug education and abuse intervention programs, which optimize the use of public and private councilors and treatment programs in public schools and community centers.

Policy 1.N

The Town shall encourage Neighborhood Watch Programs to promote safety and discourage crime in existing and new neighborhoods throughout the Town.

Policy 1.O

The Sheriff’s Department shall maintain a level of service that ensures the provision of 1 sworn officers per 1,500 residents, or as close thereto as possible.