



SECTION 5.11

Schools/Education



5.11 SCHOOLS/EDUCATION

The project site is within the Sulphur Springs School District and the William S. Hart Union High School District. This section of the EIR evaluates impacts of the proposed project on schools in these two districts that currently provide public elementary, junior high, and high school education in the project area.

5.11.1 REGULATORY SETTING

ASSEMBLY BILL 2926

The State of California has traditionally been responsible for the funding of local public schools. To assist in providing facilities to serve students generated by new development projects, the State passed Assembly Bill 2926 (AB 2926) in 1986. This bill allowed school districts to collect impact fees from developers of new residential and commercial/industrial building space. Development impact fees were also referenced in the 1987 Leroy Greene Lease-Purchase Act, which required school districts to contribute a matching share of project costs for construction, modernization, or reconstruction.

SENATE BILL 50

Senate Bill 50 (SB 50) and Proposition 1A (both of which passed in 1998) provided a comprehensive school facilities financing and reform program by, among other methods, authorizing a \$9.2 billion school facilities bond issue, school construction cost containment provisions, and an eight-year suspension of the Mira, Hart, and Murrieta court cases. Specifically, the bond funds are to provide \$2.9 billion for new construction and \$2.1 billion for reconstruction/modernization needs. The provisions of SB 50 prohibit local agencies from denying either legislative or adjudicative land use approvals on the basis that school facilities are inadequate and reinstate the school facility fee cap for legislative actions (e.g., general plan amendments, specific plan adoption, zoning plan amendments) as was allowed under the Mira, Hart, and Murrieta court cases. According to Government Code Section 65996, the development fees authorized by SB 50 are deemed to be "full and complete school facilities mitigation." These provisions were in effect until 2006 and remain in place as long as subsequent state bonds are approved and available.

SB 50 establishes three levels of Developer Fees that may be imposed upon new development by the governing board of a school district depending upon certain conditions within a district. These three levels are described below:

- Level 1: Level 1 fees are the base statutory fees. These amounts are the maximum that can be legally imposed upon new development projects by a school district unless the district qualifies for a higher level of funding. Currently, Level 1 fees assessed by the Sulphur Springs District are \$1.485 per square foot¹ and Hart District are \$1.32 per square foot for new residential development.

¹ Email correspondence with Carol Greenwood, Administrative Secretary, Business Services, Sulphur Springs School District, on September 27, 2010.



Level 2: Level 2 fees allow the school district to impose developer fees above the statutory levels, up to 50 percent of certain costs under designated circumstances. The state would match the 50 percent funding if funds are available. Under Level 2, the governing board of a school district may require a developer to finance up to 50 percent of new school construction costs. However, in order to qualify for Level 2 funding the district must satisfy at least one of the following four requirements until January 1, 2000, or satisfy at least two of the four requirements after January 1, 2000:

1) Impose a Multi Track Year Round Education (MTYRE) with:

- At least 30 percent of K-6 enrollment in the high school attendance area on MTYRE for unified and elementary school districts; or
- At least 30 percent of high school district enrollment on MTYRE; or
- At least 40 percent of K-12 enrollment on MTYRE within boundaries of the high school attendance area for which the district is applying for funding.

2) Place a local bond measure on the ballot in the last four years which received at least 50 percent plus 1 of the votes.

3) District has issued debt or incurred obligations for capital outlay equal to a specified (under Government Code 65995.5(b)(3)(C)) percentage of its local bonding capacity.

4) At least 20 percent of teaching stations within the district are portable classrooms.

Currently, Level 2 fees assessed by the Sulphur Springs District are \$3.37 per habitable square foot of new residential development². Currently, Level 2 fees assessed by the Hart District are \$2.57 per square foot for new residential development.

Level 3: Level 3 fees apply if the state runs out of bond funds after 2006, allowing the school district to impose 100 percent of the cost of the school facility or mitigation minus any local dedicated school moneys. Level 3 fees currently assessed by the Sulphur Springs District are \$6.75 per square foot³ and Hart District are \$5.16 per square foot for new residential development.

To accommodate students from new development projects, school districts may alternatively finance new schools through special school construction funding resolutions (e.g., the School Facilities Funding Mitigation Agreement) and/or agreements between developers, the affected school districts and, occasionally, other local governmental agencies. These special resolutions

² Email correspondence with Carol Greenwood, Administrative Secretary, Business Services, Sulphur Springs School District, on September 27, 2010.

³ Ibid.



and agreements often allow school districts to realize school mitigation funds in excess of the developer fees allowed under SB 50.

CITY OF SANTA CLARITA

GENERAL PLAN

Applicable goals, objectives, and policies from the *General Plan Land Use Element* are listed below.

Environmental Justice

Goal LU 8: Equitable and convenient access to social, cultural, educational, civic, medical and recreational facilities and opportunities for all residents.

Objective LU 8.1: Work with service providers to plan for adequate community facilities and services to meet the needs of present and future residents.

Policy LU 8.1.1: Coordinate plans for new residential development with affected school districts to ensure adequate mitigation of impacts on school facilities; provision of facilities and programs to promote academic excellence for Santa Clarita Valley students; coordination on joint use of facilities and transportation; and long-range planning.

5.11.2 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The Sulphur Springs District provides elementary school service (grades K through 6), while the William S. Hart Union High School District provides junior high education (grades 7 and 8) and high school education (grades 9 through 12) for the project area.

SULPHUR SPRINGS SCHOOL DISTRICT⁴

There are a total of 9 elementary schools within the Sulphur Springs District, providing a total enrollment of 5,636 students as of September 2010. The Sulphur Springs District has no plans to construct a new elementary school within its jurisdiction within the next few years. According to the Sulphur Springs District, all of the schools within their district are either at or above capacity and will have no room to accommodate new development projects. The Sulphur Springs Elementary School would serve the project site and is approximately 0.5 to 0.75 miles away.

WILLIAM S. HART UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

There are a total of six junior high schools and six high schools within the William S. Hart Union High School District (WSHUHS). Sierra Vista Junior High School and Canyon High School would serve the proposed project. As illustrated in Table 5.11-1, Hart District

⁴ Email correspondence with Carol Greenwood, Administrative Secretary, Business Services, Sulphur Springs School District, on September 27, 2010.



Enrollment/Capacity, total student enrollment within WSHUHSD is 23,269 students and total student current design capacity is 23,044 seats. Therefore, WSHUHSD is operating at 101 percent of its design capacity, and is currently operating at over-capacity conditions by 225 students. Schools currently operating at over-capacity levels include:

- Arroyo Seco Middle School (currently operating at 60 students over capacity)
- La Mesa Middle School (currently operating at 80 students over capacity)
- Canyon High School (currently operating at 14 students over capacity)
- Golden Valley High School (currently operating at 164 students over capacity)
- Valencia High School (currently operating at 513 students over capacity)
- West Ranch High School (currently operating at 339 students over capacity)

To accommodate existing and future students, WSHUHSD plans to open Castaic High School, which is scheduled to open Fall of 2013 or Fall of 2014. The design capacity of Castaic High School would be similar to other WSHUHSD high schools.⁵

**Table 5.11-1
Hart District Enrollment/Capacity**

School	Current Design Capacity	Current Enrollment
Junior High Schools		
Arroyo Seco	1,240	1,300
La Mesa	1,220	1,300
Placerita	1,210	1,116
Rancho Pico	1,125	982
Rio Norte	1,300	1,192
Sierra Vista	1,280	1,248
Subtotal	7,375	7,138
High Schools		
Canyon	2,600	2,614
Golden Valley	2,385	2,549
Saugus	2,750	2,560
Valencia	2,949	3,462
West Ranch	2,385	2,724
W.S. Hart SR.	2,600	2,222
Subtotal	15,669	16,131
TOTAL	23,044	23,269
Source: <i>Vista Canyon Draft Environmental Impact Report</i> , Impact Sciences, Inc., October 2010.		

5.11.3 SIGNIFICANCE THRESHOLD CRITERIA

The *City of Santa Clarita Local CEQA Guidelines* (Resolution 05-38) adopted on April 26, 2005 and the Initial Study Environmental Checklist form in *CEQA Guidelines* Appendix G serve as the thresholds for determining the significance of impacts relating to schools/education services. As

⁵ Vista Canyon Draft Environmental Impact Report, Impact Sciences, Inc., October 2010.



such, a project would be considered to have a significant environmental impact if it would result in the following:

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

Based on these standards, the effects of the proposed project have been categorized as either a “less than significant impact” or a “potentially significant impact.” Mitigation measures are recommended for potentially significant impacts. If a potentially significant impact cannot be reduced to a less than significant level through the application of mitigation, it is categorized as a significant unavoidable impact.

5.11.4 PROJECT IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

SULPHUR SPRINGS DISTRICT

- ***DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT COULD INCREASE STUDENT ENROLLMENT WITHIN THE SULPHUR SPRINGS DISTRICT.***

Level of Significance Before Analysis and Mitigation: Potentially Significant Impact.

Impact Analysis: The project proposes the development of 99 residential units. Based upon a generation factor of 0.368 students per single-family residential unit, the proposed project would generate approximately 36 elementary age students.⁶ As previously discussed, the Sulphur Springs District schools are all at or above capacity. In addition, the Sulphur Springs District has stated they have no room to accommodate students from the proposed development and full mitigation would be required.⁷

Pursuant to SB 50, payment of fees to the Sulphur Springs District is considered full mitigation for project impacts, including impacts related to the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, or other performance objectives for schools. The Sulphur Springs District has indicated that the project applicant shall pay 1.5 times the Level 2 fees (\$3.37) or \$5.06 per square foot. Therefore, the project applicant would be required to pay the statutory fees (refer to Mitigation Measure SE-1), so that space can be constructed at the nearest sites to accommodate the impact of proposed project-generated students, reducing impacts to a less than significant level.

⁶ Email correspondence with Carol Greenwood, Administrative Secretary, Business Services, Sulphur Springs School District, on September 27, 2010.

⁷ Ibid.



Mitigation Measures:

SE-1 The project applicant shall pay \$5.06 per square foot to the Sulphur Springs District.

Level of Significance After Analysis and Mitigation: Less Than Significant Impact.

WILLIAM S. HART UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

- **DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT WOULD INCREASE STUDENT ENROLLMENT WITHIN THE WILLIAM S. HART UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT.**

Level of Significance Before Analysis and Mitigation: Potentially Significant Impact.

Impact Analysis: The WSHUSD provides student generation rates based upon the type of residential development. As illustrated in Table 5.11-2, William S. Hart Union High School District Student Generation Rates, the proposed project would result in a total of 13 junior high school students and 24 high school students.

**Table 5.11-2
William S. Hart Union High School District Student Generation Rates**

School	Student Generation Factor		Project Total ¹
	Single-Family Detached	Multi-Family	
Junior High School	0.1270	0.0429	13
High School	0.2386	0.0875	24

Source: *Vista Canyon Draft Environmental Impact Report*, Impact Sciences, Inc., October 2010
¹ The proposed project involves the development of 99 single-family detached residential units.

As illustrated in Table 5.11-1, WSHUSD is currently operating at over-capacity conditions by 225 students. To accommodate existing and future students, WSHUSD plans to open Castaic High School, which is scheduled to open Fall of 2013 or Fall of 2014. WSHUSD has stated that they would not displace currently assigned neighborhoods to accommodate new students. Therefore, the proposed project would result in less than significant impacts in this regard.

Pursuant to SB 50, payment of fees to the WSHUSD is considered full mitigation for project impacts, including impacts related to the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, or other performance objectives for schools. Therefore, the project applicant would be required to pay the statutory fees as stipulated in the School Facilities Funding and Mitigation Agreement (refer to Mitigation Measure SE-2), so that space can be constructed at the nearest sites to accommodate the impact of proposed project-generated students, reducing impacts to a less than significant level.



Mitigation Measures:

- SE-2 The project applicant shall pay the required mitigation fees to the William S. Hart Union High School District as stipulated in the School Facilities Funding and Mitigation Agreement.

Level of Significance After Analysis and Mitigation: Less Than Significant Impact.

5.11.5 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

- **DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROPOSED PROJECT AND OTHER RELATED CUMULATIVE PROJECTS COULD INCREASE THE DEMAND FOR SCHOOL FACILITIES WITHIN THE SULPHUR SPRINGS AND WILLIAM S. HART UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICTS.**

Level of Significance Before Analysis and Mitigation: Potentially Significant Impact.

Impact Analysis: A significant cumulative impact could occur if a project does not contribute its fair share to mitigate adverse effects on school facilities. Cumulative impacts on schools can be mitigated through the school facilities funding agreements between the districts and proposed project applicant, or through other mechanisms, such as SB 50, the School Facilities Funding and Mitigation Agreement, and/or future facilities funding agreements between the districts and the developers of new projects. Assuming such mechanisms are implemented for each new development included in the related projects, cumulative impacts on schools caused by other future development would be mitigated to less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: Refer to Mitigation Measures SE-1 and SE-2. No additional mitigation measures are required.

Level of Significance After Analysis and Mitigation: Less Than Significant Impact.

5.11.6 SIGNIFICANT UNAVOIDABLE IMPACTS

All potentially significant impacts related to schools/education services can be reduced to a level less than significant with implementation of applicable *General Plan* goals and policies and mitigation measures. As such, implementation of the proposed project would not result in any significant unavoidable schools/education services impacts.

5.11.7 SOURCES CITED

Santa Clarita General Plan, adopted June 14, 2011.

Draft Program Environmental Impact Report for the City of Santa Clarita's Proposed One Valley One Vision General Plan, Impact Sciences, Inc., September 2010.



Final Program Environmental Impact Report for the City of Santa Clarita's Proposed One Valley One Vision General Plan, Impact Sciences, Inc., dated May 2011, certified June 14, 2011.

Email correspondence with Carol Greenwood, Administrative Secretary, Business Services, Sulphur Springs School District, on September 27, 2010.

Sulphur Springs School District Website, <http://www.sssd.k12.ca.us/>, accessed October 2010.

William S. Hart Union High School District Website, <http://www.hart.k12.ca.us/>, accessed October 2010.

Vista Canyon Draft Environmental Impact Report, Impact Sciences, Inc., October 2010.