
4.8 - Public Services

4.8.1 - Introduction

This section provides an evaluation of public services, including fire and police protection. The analysis for the proposed Walmart concludes that there are no mitigation measures required because similar to the approved 158,000 square foot “Large Box Retail” use, the 170,000 square foot proposed Walmart will result in less than significant impacts to police and fire protection services. The following is a list and location of information reviewed in preparation of this section:

- City of Wasco General Plan. June 2010. City of Wasco. This document is not contained in the ~~Draft~~ Final SEIR appendices but is instead available for review at the City of Wasco Community Development Department at 764 E Street, Wasco, California, 93280. Pursuant to CEQA Guideline Section 15150, the City of Wasco General Plan is hereby incorporated by reference.
- Correspondences with Kern County Fire Department. September 2010. This information is located in ~~Draft~~ Final SEIR Appendix J.
- Correspondences with Kern County Sheriff’s Department. September-October 2010. This information is located in ~~Draft~~ Final SEIR Appendix J.
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report. December 2010. City of Wasco. This document is available for review at:
http://www.ci.wasco.ca.us/Public_Documents/WascoCA_Finance/Budget/CAFR%20-%2009-10.pdf

4.8.2 - Environmental Setting

The project site comprises approximately 17 acres of the previously approved 112-acre Wasco Center. The 17-acre site is located on the west side of Central Avenue, has relatively flat terrain, and currently contains walnut orchards. The area surrounding the project site contains fallow agriculture land to the north, and walnut orchards to the west, south, and east. In addition, a commercial center is located southeast of the project site at the intersection of Central Avenue and SR-46.

The approved and not yet constructed Wasco Center contains 98.6 acres of commercial retail that includes 273,000 square feet (sq ft) of large box retail, 105,000 sq ft of shopping center, 75,000 sq ft of movie theater, 67,500 sq ft of restaurants, 206,000 sq ft of community retail, 11,900 sq ft of recreation, and a 100-room hotel. The Wasco Center includes 14 acres approved for 123 units of high-density residential, including 64 units directly across from the project site on the east side of Central Avenue.

Fire Services

The Kern County Fire Department (KCFD) provides fire suppression and emergency medical services to the City of Wasco and the project site. In addition, the KCFD provides hazardous materials mitigation, fire prevention, rescue, air operations, training and public education, arson investigation, and apparatus maintenance. The KCFD employs approximately 725 total uniformed and non-uniformed personnel who protect approximately 500,000 residents and 8,141 square miles of unincorporated Kern County. These personnel work at 41 fire stations throughout the County.

The City of Wasco is served by KCFD Station 31, located at 2424 7th Street, approximately one-half mile from the project site. Station 31 was built in 1984 and has a response area of 155 square miles. To meet the City's policy of a six minute or less response time, the station is centrally located in the City of Wasco. The City of Wasco established the standard of 1 fire company for every 10,000 residents when evaluating fire protection services. The station is staffed with 9 firefighting personnel working in 3-man shifts (i.e., 3 fire companies). As of 2010, the City's population is 25,541, and therefore, the 3 fire companies at Station 31 meet the City's standard of 1 fire company for every 10,000 residents. Standard equipment at the station includes a Type 1 Fire Engine, a Type 4 Patrol, and a Type 1 OES Water Tender. Aside from Station 31, the nearest KCFD facility to the project site is Station 32 in the City of Shafter, approximately 8 miles from the site.

Police Services

The Kern County Sheriff's Department provides police protection services to the City of Wasco and the project site. In addition to providing police services to the unincorporated portions of Kern County, the Sheriff's Department has the responsibility for the jail system, providing bailiff and prisoner transportation services, search and rescue, coroner services, and civil process. The Department employees approximately 1,239 sworn officers and civilian personnel.

The City of Wasco is served by the Wasco Substation, located at 748 F Street, approximately 1.5 miles from the project site. The City of Wasco established the standard of 1 officer per 1,000 residents when evaluating police protection services. The substation is staffed by 25 officers (2 sergeants, 18 deputies, 4 senior deputies, and the area commander), 6 clerks, and an aide who handles civil process. As of 2010, the City's population is 25,541, and therefore, the 25 officers at the Wasco Substation meet the City of Wasco's standard of 1 officer per 1,000 residents. Aside from the Wasco Substation, the nearest police protection services facility is in the City of Shafter, approximately 8 miles from the site.

4.8.3 - Regulatory Setting

Based on a review of the City of Wasco General Plan, there are objectives and policies within the following elements that address public services related issues. Objectives and policies relevant to public services are presented below.

City of Wasco General Plan

Safety Element (Fire Protection)

- Policy 1 The standard of one fire company for every 10,000 residents shall be used to evaluate fire protection services.
- Policy 2 The City’s fire service response goal shall be six minutes from “tone-out” to arrival on scene.
- Policy 6 The City will coordinate with Kern County in the provision of fire protection services to ensure the maximum level of protection for all residences, commercial establishments, and industries within the planning area.

Safety Element (Public Safety Standard)

- Objective B The standard of one officer per 1,000 residents shall be use to evaluate police protection services.

4.8.4 - Thresholds of Significance

According to the CEQA Guidelines’ Appendix G Environmental Checklist, to determine whether public services impacts are significant environmental effects, the following questions are analyzed and evaluated. Would the project:

Result in 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 for any of the public services:

- a) Fire protection?
- b) Police protection?
- c) Schools? (Refer to Section 7, Effects Found Not To Be Significant.)
- d) Parks? (Refer to Section 7, Effects Found Not To Be Significant.)
- e) Other public facilities? (Refer to Section 7, Effects Found Not To Be Significant.)

For the purpose of the proposed project, the following threshold has been added to evaluate the project’s consistency with applicable objectives and policies related to public services.

- Conflict with any applicable local objectives or policies?

4.8.5 - Impact Analysis and Mitigation Measures

Fire Protection

Impact PS-1: **The project would not result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered fire protection facilities, need for new or physically altered fire protection facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for fire protection.**

Project Specific Impact Analysis

Implementation of the proposed Walmart will include construction activities and operation on a 24-hour basis. The proposed Walmart includes two accesses from State Route (SR) 46 to the project site. First, Central Avenue will be extended north from SR-46 and three access driveways onto the project site from Central Avenue will be provided. Second, an access off SR-46 west of Central Avenue will be provided, and three additional accesses on the project site from the access off SR-46 will be provided.

Fire protection services during construction and operational activities associated with the proposed Walmart (i.e., 24 hours per day) will be required. The demand on KCFD Station 31 and its personnel would not substantially increase. According to Jim Killam of the KCFD, implementation of the proposed project would not require new or physically altered fire protection facilities (J. Killam, pers. comm. September 17, 2010).

Although the proposed Walmart is anticipated to draw increased consumer traffic to the area, the proposed Walmart does not include new residences and will not induce substantial in-migration of employees because the vast majority, if not all, of employment opportunities associated with the Walmart store would be filled by the local community. According to the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report prepared by the City of Wasco in December 2010, the unemployment rate as of 2009 was 18.2 percent. The City-established service ratio of 1 fire company for every 10,000 residents would not be altered because the proposed Walmart does not include residents. Moreover, with Station 31 being approximately one-half mile from the project site, the City established response time goal of six minutes from “tone-out” to arrival on scene can be met.

According to Jim Killam of the KCFD, the nearest fire station to the project site, Station 31, can adequately serve both the City of Wasco and the proposed Walmart upon buildout (J. Killam, pers. comm. September 17, 2010). Therefore, less than significant impacts associated with fire protection services would occur from development of the proposed Walmart.

Cumulative Impact Analysis

Development resulting from implementation of the proposed Walmart and cumulative projects will include the introduction of new structures within the City. The majority of the new structures would be located within the Wasco Center. These additional structures may result in an increased risk of fire hazards as the area transitions from agricultural to urban. Cumulative development is anticipated to result in an increase need for fire protection services.

Cumulative development will add approximately 482 new residents to the current population of 25,541 due to the 124 new residences approved as part of the Wasco Center. This increase in residents will not affect the City's establish service ratio of 1 fire company for every 10,000 residents because the Station 31 currently includes 3 fire companies to serve the City. Moreover, the City established response time goal of six minutes from "tone-out" to arrival on scene would not change as a result of the proposed Walmart and cumulative projects because the proposed Walmart and cumulative projects are located approximately 1.5 miles from Station 31.

According to Jim Killam of the KCFD, the nearest fire station, Station 31, can adequately serve the City of Wasco, the proposed Walmart (i.e., operation on a 24-hour a day basis), and the cumulative projects when completed and would not require new or physically altered fire protection facilities (J. Killam, pers. comm. September 17, 2010). Therefore, the proposed Walmart's cumulative impacts on fire protection services would not be cumulatively considerable, and therefore, less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

Project Specific

No mitigation measures are required.

Cumulative

No mitigation measures are required.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Project Specific

Less than significant impact.

Cumulative

Less than significant impact.

Police Protection

Impact PS-2:	The proposed Walmart would not result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered police protection facilities, need for new or physically altered police protection facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for police protection.
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Project Specific Impact Analysis

The proposed Walmart will operate on a 24-hour basis and is anticipated to result in a small increase in criminal activity such as vandalism, burglary, theft, and other minor crimes associated with commercial areas. Minor increases in police protection services may occur, Sergeant James Craig of the KCSD stated that the implementation of the proposed Walmart would not result in adverse physical impacts related to police protection facilities (J. Craig, e-mail, October 14, 2010).

Although the proposed Walmart is anticipated to draw increased consumer traffic to the area, the Walmart does not include new residences and will not induce substantial in-migration of employees because the vast majority, if not all, of employment opportunities associated with the Walmart store would be filled by the local community. According to the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report prepared by the City of Wasco in December 2010, the unemployment rate as of 2009 was 18.2 percent. Therefore, the City established service ratio of 1 officer per 1,000 residents would not be altered due to the proposed Walmart. Moreover, with the Wasco Substation being approximately 1.5 miles from the project site, the Sheriff Department's average response time of approximately two minutes for emergency situations could be met.

According to Sergeant James Craig of the KCSD the nearest police station to the project site, the Wasco Substation, can adequately serve both the City of Wasco and the proposed Walmart (J. Craig, e-mail, October 14, 2010). Therefore, less than significant impacts associated with police protection services would occur from development of the proposed Walmart.

Cumulative Impact Analysis

Development resulting from implementation of the proposed Walmart and cumulative projects, listed in the Environmental Setting of this ~~Draft~~ Final SEIR, will include new commercial uses and residences within the City. The majority of the new commercial uses and residences would be located within the Wasco Center. These additional uses and residences are expected to increase the demand for police protection services.

Cumulative development will add approximately 482 new residents to the current population of 25,541 due to the 124 new residences approved as part of the Wasco Center. This increase in residents may affect the established service ratio of one officer for every 1,000 residents because the City would have a population of 26,023, thereby needing an additional officer at the Wasco Substation. However, the addition of an officer at the Wasco Substation would not result in adverse physical impacts related to police protection facilities (J. Craig, e-mail, October 14, 2010). In addition, since the Wasco Substation is located approximately 1.5 mile from the project site and cumulative projects, the Sheriff Department's average response time of approximately two minutes for emergency situations could be met.

According to Sergeant James Craig of the KCSD, the nearest police station to the project site, the Wasco Substation, can adequately serve the City of Wasco, the proposed Walmart (i.e., operation on a 24-hour a day basis), and the cumulative projects and would not require new or physically altered police protection facilities (J. Craig, e-mail, October 14, 2010). Therefore, the proposed Walmart's cumulative impacts on police protection services would not be cumulatively considerable, and therefore, less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

Project Specific

No mitigation measures are required.

Cumulative

No mitigation measures are required.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Project Specific

Less than significant impact.

Cumulative

Less than significant impact.

Objectives or Policies Related to Public Services

Impact PS-3	The proposed Walmart would not conflict with local objectives or policies regarding public services.
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Project Specific Impact Analysis

Table 4.8-1 provides a discussion of Walmart’s consistency with the objectives and policies contained in the City of Wasco General Plan pertaining to public services. As discussed in Table 4.8-1, the proposed Walmart would be consistent with all of the relevant public services objectives and policies set forth in the General Plan. Therefore, no impacts associated with the public services objectives and policies would occur with the implementation of the proposed Walmart.

Table 4.8-1: Consistency of the Proposed Walmart with the City of Wasco General Plan

Objectives and Policies	Project Consistency
<i>Safety Element (Emergency Planning)</i>	
Policy 1. The standard of one fire company for every 10,000 residents shall be used to evaluate fire protection services	Although the City should expect an increase in daily consumers as a result of the proposed Walmart, there would not be a significant increase in population due to development of a Walmart. As of 2010, with a population of 25,541, the KCFD is compliant with this objective by assigning 9 firefighters in 3 shifts (i.e., 3 fire companies) to protect the City. Thus, fire protection services would not need to expand as a result of the proposed Walmart. Therefore, the proposed Walmart is consistent with this policy.

**Table 4.8-1 (cont.): Consistency of the Proposed Walmart
with the City of Wasco General Plan**

Objectives and Policies	Project Consistency
Policy 2. The City's fire services response goal shall be six minutes from "tone-out" to arrival on scene.	Construction activities associated with the proposed Walmart may cause some minor traffic delays on adjacent roadways, but not to the extent that consistency with this policy would be jeopardized. Additionally, KCFD Station 31 is located approximately 0.5 mile from the project site and within a 6-minute response range. Therefore, the proposed Walmart is consistent with the policy.
Policy 6. The City will coordinate with Kern County in the provision of fire protection services to ensure the maximum level of protection for all residences, commercial establishments and industries within the planning area.	Construction and operations of the proposed Walmart would not impede with KCFD ability to ensure the maximum level of protection for the residences, commercial establishments, and industries within the protect area and throughout the City of Wasco. Therefore, the proposed Walmart is consistent with the policy.
<i>Safety Element (Public Safety Standard)</i>	
Objective B. The standard of one office per 1,000 residents shall be used to evaluate police protective services	Although the City should expect an increase in daily consumers as a result of the proposed Walmart, there would not be a significant increase in population due to development of a Walmart. As of 2010, with a population of 25,541, the KCSD is compliant with this objective by assigning 25 officers to patrol the City. Thus, police protection services would not need to expand as a result of the proposed Walmart. Therefore, the proposed Walmart is consistent with this policy.
Source: City of Wasco. June 2010. City of Wasco General Plan.	

Cumulative Impact Analysis

Based on the above consistency analysis, the proposed Walmart would not contribute to the potential cumulative impact on the local objectives and policies related to public services.

Mitigation Measures

Project-Specific

No mitigation measures are required.

Cumulative

No mitigation measures are required.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Project-Specific

No impact.

Cumulative

No impact.