

General Plan for the City of Laguna Niguel
Chapter 10 - Community Service Standards

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COMMUNITY SERVICE STANDARDS

I. INTRODUCTION

The Community Service Standards Element focuses on the provision of essential facilities and services. The purpose of this element is to identify level of service standards to be sought for certain community services in accommodating the City's remaining growth potential as identified in the Land Use Element. The services and facilities identified in this Element represent a combination of all community services mentioned in the Growth Management Components of other Elements of the General Plan, specifically the Land Use, Open Space/Parks/Conservation, and Public Facilities Elements. Traffic level of service standards are included in the Growth Management Element (Chapter 9) of the General Plan.

In order to achieve a desirable quality of life in Laguna Niguel, community service standards have been established. These standards will help to ensure orderly growth and development and facilitate the provision of services by the City and other service providers.

II. CONSISTENCY WITH STATE LAW

The Community Service Standards Element is an optional element of the General Plan. This element carries the same force and effect as a mandatory element and must be internally consistent with other elements of the General Plan.

III. COMMUNITY SERVICE STANDARDS

A. Fire Protection

Discussion

The currently adopted LOS Standard is established by the Orange County Fire Department (OCFD) and consists of a 5 minute response time for 80% of the City, with a maximum response time of 7 minutes. That performance is currently being exceeded with the provision of a 5 minute response time for 88% of the City. This compares very favorably with other jurisdictions. This is particularly impressive, given the hilly terrain, and indirect access routes typical of Laguna Niguel.

It is important to note that response time patterns will vary from year to year because of differences in emergency locations, status of new development and changes in station locations as temporary facilities phase out.

New development is expected to be capable of being served within the adopted response time.

Level of Service Standard: 5 minute response time for 80% of the City.
(Growth Management Component - Public Facilities Element)

Source: Orange County Fire Department

Implementing Action:

1. Monitor and report annually on performance levels achieved, along with recommendations for improvements, if any.
2. Conduct fire awareness and prevention programs in the City through the OCFD Community Education Program.
3. Provide high priority to response times for employment centers containing unusually flammable materials and potential wild land fire prone areas where fires could spread quickly.
4. Explore and consider special procedures for handling fires in environmentally sensitive areas.
5. Continue to require fuel modification zones as part of development approvals in areas subject to wildfires.

Actions if the Standard is Not Met:

1. Review impediments with the OCFD to determine the most cost effective remedies.
2. If it is determined that a proposed project cannot be served within the LOS response time, mitigation measures to correct the deficiency must accompany approval, or approval will be withheld until deficiency is corrected. Consideration shall be limited to only the development in question to the extent that it contributes significantly to the deficiency.

B. Paramedic Emergency Services**Discussion:**

Paramedic services are also provided by the OCFD under contract. The current Level of Service Standard is a 10 minute response for 80 % of the developed area. The 10 minute response time is currently available for 92 % of the City. It is important to be aware that initial emergency medical treatment is provided by the firefighters as they arrive on the scene. Paramedics take over when they arrive. In this way, critical time is not lost in such emergencies as heart attacks or smoke inhalation; treatment begins at once.

Response time patterns will vary from year to year because of differences in emergency locations, status of new development and changes in station locations as temporary Fire Department facilities phase out.

New development is expected to be capable of being served within the adopted response time or provide mitigation measures acceptable to the City.

Level of Service Standard: 10 minute response time for 80% of the City.
(Growth Management Component - Public Facilities Element)

Source: Orange County Fire Department

Implementing Action:

1. Monitor and report annually on performance levels achieved, along with recommendations for improvements, if any.

Actions if the Standards is Not Met:

1. Review impediments with the OCFD to determine the most cost effective remedies including, but not limited to, additional facilities.

2. If it is determined that a proposed project cannot be served within the LOS response time, mitigation measures to correct the deficiency must accompany approval, or approval will be withheld until the deficiency is corrected. Consideration shall be limited to only the development in question to the extent that it contributes significantly to the deficiency.

C. **Police/Sheriff**

Discussion:

This service is contracted with the Orange County Sheriff's Department. The level of service is considered satisfactory by the City, but cost concerns have caused the Laguna Niguel to join with others in south Orange County to explore a separate district (South County rather than countywide) for provision of police services.

Some jurisdictions establish police LOS Standards in terms of facility or personnel ratios to the population; others according to response times for various types of calls; and still others by personnel work load measures. The Sheriff's Department uses the latter methodology. The current measure is that: 1) at least 35% of an officer's time must be spent on directed patrol duty; 2) 60 to 70% is to be spent on responding to calls and associated administrative duties; and 3) new officers are added when 70% of the total workload is exceeded. This measurement does not signify to the community a clear indication of what is actually being provided in the way of service.

The purpose of the LOS Standard regarding police services is two-fold: 1) to maintain or improve the current services being provided the City; and 2) to convert the administrative standard now in use to performance standard which can be more readily understood by Laguna Niguel citizens.

The LOS standard for police services is predicated on a slightly less demanding response time than fire response because of the single station location and an increased percentage of call responses within the time because of the patrol car activity.

Level of Service Standards: 4-6 minute response time for 85% of the Priority 1 calls. (Growth Management Component - Public Facilities Element)

Implementing Action:

1. Monitor and report annually on performance levels achieved, along with recommendations for improvements, if any.

Actions if the Standard is Not Met:

1. Review impediments with the Sheriff's Department to determine the most cost effective remedies.
2. If it is determined that a proposed project cannot be served within the LOS response time, mitigation measures to correct the deficiency must accompany approval, or approval will be withheld until the deficiency is corrected. Consideration shall be limited to only the development in question to the extent that it contributes significantly to the deficiency.

D. Flood Control/Drainage (Local)**Discussion:**

Local flood control channels and conduits connect developed areas with the four regional channels serving Laguna Niguel. There are no known deficiencies in local facilities. Others will be needed as remaining undeveloped areas build out and will be identified as development plans are processed.

Level of Service Standard:

All new development shall be provided with 100-year flood protection and new streets shall comply with City Engineering standards. (Growth Management Component - Public Facilities Element)

Implementing Action:

1. Review development proposals for adequacy of local drainage facilities.
2. Design flood control facilities to provide open space recreation and habitat value wherever feasible.
3. Distinguish between residential (landscaped channels) and commercial/industrial areas (hardened channels) in facility design.

Action if the Standard is Not Met:

1. Require project redesign to conform to standards.

E. Solid Waste**Discussion:**

The City uses a private contractor for waste collection purposes. Disposal is at the County operated Prima Deshecha Landfill site in San Juan Capistrano, a facility currently operating at daily intake levels approximately 25% below its design limits. The City has adopted its required Source Reduction and Recycling Element (SRRE) pursuant to state law.

Planned growth according to the General Plan is not projected to exceed landfill capacities. This assumes the current 20 year life expectancy of the site, based on a 2% increase in population and 20% diversion of solid waste from the landfill because of source reduction and recycling. Implementation of local SRREs will result in 50% diversion and therefore, the life expectancy of the landfill may be extended. Along with all jurisdictions in Orange County, cooperative long term solid waste disposal solutions beyond a 20 year time horizon will need to be developed through participation in the County's Integrated Waste Management Plan and subsequent studies.

Level of Service Standard: Implementation of source reduction, recycling, composting and other conservation methods as required by State Law. (Growth Management Component - Public Facilities Element).

Source: Laguna Niguel General Plan

Implementing Actions:

1. Complete implementation of the SRRE according to schedule.
2. Coordinate with the County Integrated Waste Management Department (IWMD) to insure continued landfill capacity, achieve recycling targets and initiate plans for long term capacity development.
3. Pursue with the IWMD the potential and benefits associated with a materials reduction facility (MRF) to serve Laguna Niguel.

Actions if the Standard is Not Met:

1. Review and revise the SRRE as necessary.
2. Establish conditions of approval on development projects if a determination is made that waste reduction targets are not being met and project mitigation measures are required to avoid excessive solid waste generation.

F. Community Purpose Facilities

Discussion:

Community Purpose Facilities include land uses which serve various community needs including child care, religious services, child and adult counseling, teen and senior centers, and city civic center. These community purpose facilities are a valued component of Laguna Niguel and enhance the quality of life. For these reasons such facilities are encouraged within Laguna Niguel.

Community Purpose Facilities are established primarily by private, usually non-profit, organizations. Therefore, the City has little control over the amount and timing of development of such facilities, although the City can influence the development of community purpose facilities through the land use approval process.

The Land Use Element identifies a specific land use category for the establishment of community purpose facilities, the Public/Institutional land use category. Traditionally, community purpose facilities had to compete for land which was assigned another land use such as commercial or residential. This often raised the land prices beyond the reach of many non-profit organizations. In addition to the Public/ Institutional land use category, community purpose facilities may locate in other appropriate locations within the City.

Unlike other community services which have specific quantitative levels of service, community purpose facilities cannot be assessed numerically, rather the provision of such facilities can be encouraged through community goals and policies.

Level of Service Standard: No numeric level of service standards apply.

Goal: Encourage the development of Community Purpose Facilities in appropriate locations within the City.

G. Park Facilities

Discussion:

Laguna Niguel includes 231.9 acres of useable parkland. The current standard of 3 acres per 1,000 persons suggests that the City should provide 138.8 acres, based on the current population of 46,251. The actual acreage provided (231.9) equates to 5.0 acres of parkland per 1,000 persons. Thus, the City could impose a parkland dedication requirement of 5 acres per 1,000 persons, but elects to retain the 3 acre per 1,000 population standard.

A key aspect of parkland dedication is the degree to which it is actually usable for recreation purposes. While landscaped slopes and other features may add to the attractiveness of the site, the parkland dedication requirement's purpose is to satisfy recreation needs. Section V.D. of the Open Space/Parks/Conservation Element specifies the criteria for local parkland sites including size, shape, slope, location, etc.

Level of Service Standard: 3 acres of local parkland per 1,000 population. (Growth Management Component - Open Space/Parks/Recreation Element)

Source: Laguna Niguel General Plan

Implementing Actions:

1. Continue to implement the local park ordinance which requires a standard of 3 acres per 1,000 population, ensuring that all land so dedicated is useable for recreation purposes.

Actions if the Standard is Not Met:

1. Comply with requirements in the form of an in lieu fee.
2. Scale the project back to a level at which the required standard can be satisfied.

H. Open Space

Discussion:

There are several types of open space areas in the City of Laguna Niguel including Regional Open Space, Local Open Space (open space corridors, greenbelts, hillsides, and landscaping), and Landscaped Corridors along scenic highways. Open Space comprises over one-third of the acreage within the City. Therefore, it is important to manage and maintain existing open space areas.

Level of Service: Ensure that existing designated Open Space areas are conserved, managed and maintained and encourage future appropriate additions to the Open Space system.

I. Library

Discussion

One library operated by the County is located within the City and two nearby libraries are in adjacent cities (Mission Viejo and Dana Point). The Level of Service Standard of .2 square feet of library space per capita is used through-out

the County system, which serves 21 cities and several unincorporated communities within Orange County. Ideally, libraries would be dispersed geographically to be relatively convenient to all portions of the City. The Dana-Niguel Branch serves the southerly portion of Laguna Niguel well; and the Crown Valley Branch serves the central portion of the City well. The Mission Viejo Branch, though less convenient, could provide service to the most northerly residents in the City. The Crown Valley Branch library currently receives a great deal of use and the demand for services has prompted a request to the County Board of Supervisors to approve funding for an additional 5,000 sq.ft. of space at that branch.

Service levels will need to be coordinated through the County Library system. The aggregate of all three sites, considering the portion of service they provide to Laguna Niguel residents, must be considered and assessed to determine total Level of Service. This will entail coordination with the two adjacent Cities, particularly Dana Point.

Level of Service Standard: 0.2 square feet of library space per capita. (Growth Management Component - Public Facilities Element).

Source: Orange County Library system

Implementing Action:

1. Coordinate library needs with the Orange County Library system and the Cities of Dana Point and Mission Viejo.
2. Seek ways to improve library access to residents in the northerly portions Laguna Niguel.

Actions if Standard is Not Met:

1. Develop an action plan with the Orange County Library system to maintain a desired LOS standard.

J. Water Supply

Discussion:

City water is supplied by the Moulton Niguel Water District and the South Coast Water District. These districts also serve a portion of adjacent communities as well. The districts are well positioned to supply Laguna Niguel with water, however conservation programs and reclamation are necessities are in Southern California.

If the Moulton Niguel Water District obtains an additional 25 cubic feet per second (cfs) for a total of 100 cfs from which to supply the City and other district

customers, it is probable that there will be adequate water to serve development under the General Plan. Nevertheless, a careful phasing of development and water supply will be necessary in order to assure service to future water users.

Level of Service Standard: Cooperate with water districts to provide sufficient water supplies to meet projected demand and encourage conservation and the use of reclaimed water. (Growth Management Component - Public Facilities Element)

Source: Laguna Niguel General Plan

Implementing Action:

1. Incorporate water supply into a comprehensive development mitigation, phasing and monitoring program similar to, but separate from the program associated with the Growth Management Element.

Actions if the Service is Not Met:

1. If it is determined that a proposed project cannot be properly served with water (inability to obtain a will serve letter), mitigation measures to correct the deficiency must accompany approval, or approval will be withheld until the deficiency is corrected.

K. Sanitary Sewer Facilities

Discussion:

Facilities to handle waste water are supplied by the Moulton Niguel Water District and the South Coast Water District, serving approximately 95 % and 5 % of the City respectively. Two types of capacity constraints may be encountered: 1) inadequate treatment capacity and 2) inadequate line capacity.

While there is every indication that both can be readily provided to accommodate build-out of the General Plan, it will be necessary to monitor and work with the Districts to take corrective action if future deficiencies are identified.

Line capacity standards are established by the Districts according to line size to ensure that flow capacity is maintained.

Level of Service Standards:

1. Sufficient treatment capacity to serve Laguna Niguel and other system users.
2. Line capacities meeting District standards. (Growth Management Component - Public Facilities Element)

Source: Water Districts and Laguna Niguel General Plan

Implementing Action:

1. Incorporate sanitary sewer facilities for waste water transfer and treatment into a comprehensive development mitigation, phasing and monitoring program similar to, but separate from the program associated with the Growth Management Element.

Actions if the Standard is Not Met:

1. If it is determined that a proposed project cannot be properly served by sanitary sewer facilities, mitigation measures to correct the deficiency must accompany approval, or approval will be withheld until deficiency is corrected.

L. Schools

Discussion:

The City of Laguna Niguel shares an unusually large and growing school district, Capistrano Unified, with several other cities. The District continues to be impacted heavily by growth within its service boundaries. Achieving an adequate supply of schools and classrooms to keep pace with development is a constant challenge in high growth areas.

Currently authorized development fees under state legislation are inadequate to fund needed schools throughout the state. School districts and local jurisdictions resort to a variety of methods to augment development fees, some of which entail additional exactions on development projects by means of EIR mitigation requirements. Legal actions have resulted from some of these efforts.

One of the most important considerations regarding school planning for Laguna Niguel is the fact that it shares the school district with other local governments. In effect, school planning and development is a sub-regional problem similar in scale to some of the circulation issues confronting south Orange County. Accordingly, this LOS Standard is a recognition of the Capistrano School District's policy and a commitment to work with the District, other south County local governments, and the development industry in finding mutually workable approaches to the problem.

Level of Service Standard: Encourage the Capistrano Unified School District to provide the highest level of education at the lowest student to teacher ratio possible. (Growth Management Component - Public Facilities Element)

Source: Capistrano Unified School District

Implementing Actions:

1. Initiate a cooperative planning program with the Capistrano Unified School District and the cities it serves to identify and undertake measures which can most cost effectively provide necessary school facilities as development occurs.

Actions if the Standard is Not Met:

Cooperate with the Capistrano School District to establish phasing and funding mitigation conditions on residential development projects which will provide prorata support for needed school facilities.