

Comment Letter L4



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sandag.org

August 11, 2017

File Number 3300300

Ms. Kristin Blackson
City of Escondido
201 North Broadway
Escondido, CA 92025

Dear Ms. Blackson:

SUBJECT: The Villages – Escondido Country Club Draft Environmental Impact Report

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the City of Escondido's The Villages – Escondido Country Club Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) is submitting comments based on the policies included in San Diego Forward: The Regional Plan (Regional Plan). These policies will help provide people with more travel and housing choices, protect the environment, create healthy communities, and stimulate economic growth. SANDAG's comments are submitted from a regional perspective emphasizing the need for better land use and transportation coordination.

Long Range Transportation

SANDAG advises the City of Escondido to consider both existing (already defined in the Draft EIR) and planned transportation projects outlined in the Regional Plan. These projects are highlighted in Appendix A of the Regional Plan, which can be accessed at www.sdforward.com. Such projects include Rapid Route 440 from Carlsbad to the Escondido Transit Center (ETC) via Palomar Airport Road, and Route 235 from Temecula (peak only) Extension of Escondido to Downtown (formerly Route 610), in addition to SPRINTER extension and improvements. The City should also consider opportunities within the project area to enhance existing access and/or signage to local and regional transit lines, including Rapid service and SPRINTER connections.

Transportation Demand Management

In support of the transportation demand management (TDM) and parking policies identified in the City of Escondido's General Plan Mobility and Infrastructure element, please consider incorporating TDM strategies in The Villages EIR. TDM strategies are programs and services that encourage transportation alternatives and can help mitigate traffic impacts and parking demand within and around the development. Specific TDM strategies to consider include:

- MEMBER AGENCIES**
- Cities of Carlsbad, Chula Vista, Coronado, Del Mar, El Cajon, Encinitas, Escondido, Imperial Beach, La Mesa, Lemon Grove, National City, Oceanside, Poway, San Diego, San Marcos, Santee, Solana Beach, Vista, and County of San Diego
- ADVISORY MEMBERS**
- Imperial County, California Department of Transportation, Metropolitan Transit System, North County Transit District, United States Department of Defense, San Diego Unified Port District, San Diego County Water Authority, Southern California Tribal Chairmen's Association, Mexico

L4-1
L4-2
L4-3

Response to Comment Letter L4

San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG)

Katie Hentrich

August 11, 2017

L4-1

The City of Escondido (City) acknowledges the comment as an introduction to comments that follow.

L4-2

The comment describes existing and planned transportation projects to which the Project has no connection. The comment also suggests that the City should consider “enhancing existing access and/or signage to local and regional transit lines, including the RAPID service and SPRINTER connections located at the Escondido Transit Center (ETC), 4.3 miles from the site.” The City disagrees such enhancements would be required. The proposed Specific Alignment Plan (SAP) would improve transit access and provide safe routes to regional transit, providing adequate local connections to regional transit. More specifically, there is no significant impact from, or connection to, the Project that would tie any such improvement to the Project. The Project will improve three existing bus stops (identified in Responses L3-1 through L3-3) with Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant benches and shelters.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of secure and convenient bike parking and amenities, such as bicycle repair stands, at destinations throughout the development, such as the community recreational areas and Village Center. • Given the proximity to Interstate 15 (I-15), Express Lanes, promote carpooling and vanpooling to residents. The SANDAG TDM program, iCommute, offers ridematching services and a Regional Vanpool Program that provides a \$400 per month subsidy for eligible vans. Additionally, a Park & Ride facility is located nearby at I-15 and El Norte Parkway for the convenience of carpoolers and vanpoolers. • Given the proximity to the ETC, promote and consider subsidizing transit passes for residents and employees. The ETC provides riders with high-frequency local bus service, Rapid service, and SPRINTER light rail service. Transit rider parking and secure bike parking are also located at the transit center for the convenience of the commuter. • Parking management strategies, such as shared parking for the Village Center and designated parking for carpools, vanpools, electric vehicles, and other shared mobility options. • Shared neighborhood electric vehicles to reduce parking demand and vehicle congestion associated with internal trips to destinations like the Village Center and recreational facilities. • Designated transportation coordinator to manage and monitor TDM programs for employees and residents. <p>The iCommute program can assist with promoting rideshare options, as well as other regional services that encourage the use of transportation alternatives and reduce traffic congestion. Regional TDM programs include online ridematching services, multimodal trip planning, the Guaranteed Ride Home service, and support for bicycling. Information on the SANDAG TDM program can be accessed through www.iCommuteSD.com.</p> <p>Other Considerations</p> <p>SANDAG has a number of additional resources that can be used for additional information or clarification on smart growth and TDM. These can be found on our website at www.sandag.org/gr:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SANDAG Regional Parking Management Toolbox • Riding to 2050, the San Diego Regional Bike Plan • Planning and Designing for Pedestrians, Model Guidelines for the San Diego Region • Integrating Transportation Demand Management into the Planning and Development Process – A Reference for Cities <p style="text-align: center;">2</p> | <p>L4-3 Cont.</p> | <p>L4-3</p> <p>The comment suggests that the Project consider implementing transportation demand management (TDM) strategies that are intended to reduce vehicular traffic and associated vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions.</p> <p>The Project is proposing to implement a SAP for Country Club Lane from its western terminus at El Norte Parkway to the eastern terminus of Country Club Lane in the study area at Nutmeg Street. The overall SAP is intended to calm traffic speeds along Country Club Lane and enhance pedestrian and bicycle mobility throughout this part of the study area close to the development. Generally, a reduction in the number of lanes and lane widths is proposed, along with the provision of buffered bike lanes (Class II) to fulfill the City of Escondido’s Bicycle Circulation Element for this segment. Furthermore, roundabouts are proposed at two minor-street intersections (Golden Circle Drive and La Brea Street), along with a raised median, to restrict left-turns to/from Firestone Drive. The SAP also proposes enhancements to crosswalks and bus stops along the corridor. These improvements are intended to capitalize on the proposed trails system that will link the three villages together with the rest of the existing neighborhood, and to encourage multi-modal travel throughout the area.</p> |
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When available, please send any additional environmental documents related to this project to:

Intergovernmental Review
c/o SANDAG
401 B Street, Suite 800
San Diego, CA 92101

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the City of Escondido's The Villages – Escondido Country Club Draft EIR. If you have any questions, please contact me at (619) 595-5609 or via email at katie.hentrich@sandag.org.

Sincerely,



KATIE HENTRICH
Regional Planner

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L4-3 Cont.
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A small mixed-use/community center element is also proposed at Village 1. This will house the homeowner's association facilities (meeting rooms and pool/gym), as well as the local store and restaurant/bar, which will be open to the public. The combination of community-serving amenities, local-serving commercial uses, and multi-modal enhancements are proactive TDM measures because they are designed to encourage non-vehicular travel.

Proposed traditional TDM measures include enhancements to the existing bus stops to include bus stop pads that will accommodate a future bus shelter and benches (per North County Transit District standards) and the provision of bike racks at all three community parks and the dog park and at the Village Center. There will also be 10 public electric vehicle charging stations at the Village Center.

The TDM measures described in the comment are typically applied to commercial developments that are localized in nature (i.e., a single building or campus) and where potential users may be under the control of a single managing entity. For example, the assignment of a TDM coordinator and the provision of partially or wholly subsidized transit passes is not typically applied to residential developments because of the lack of centralized

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| | <p>management with respect to individual homes. Nonetheless, the proposed SAP and the numerous mixed-use and multi-modal amenities proposed would adequately address transportation demand as intended by the TDM measures described in the this comment.</p> |
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