

CITY COUNCIL

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Reso No. _____ File No. _____

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Agenda Item No.: _____

Date: March 24, 2010

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: Barbara J. Redlitz, Director of Community Development

SUBJECT: General Plan Update Status and Draft Introduction (Case No. PHG 09-0020)

RECOMMENDATION:

It is requested that Council review and comment on Draft General Plan Introduction that includes the Vision, Goals, Objectives and Quality of Life Statements, and authorize staff to continue updating the General Plan text as directed.

FISCAL ANALYSIS:

A total of \$948,400.00 remains available for the General Plan Update for Fiscal Years 2009-2010. Expenses to date have been for the one staff position that includes the salary of the staff Project Manager and minor, incidental expenses. Completing the General Plan Update will rely on the continuation of funding for staff support and anticipated consultant contracts to prepare technical studies and the Environmental Impact Report.

It is expected that the General Plan EIR could cost between \$300,000 and \$500,000 to complete. Mandatory costs will include the EIR, and related technical studies for air quality, traffic, biology, archaeology/cultural resources, noise, and Housing Element analyses (to the extent in-house housing staff are not available to assist in the update). Every attempt will be made to utilize past studies to the extent possible.

GENERAL PLAN ANALYSIS:

The pending General Plan update is anticipated for the 2012 General election. The Plan will meet current legal requirements and includes the City's Vision for 2050, as well as addressing the City Council's Action Plan requirements. The Housing Element (a component of the General Plan) has a separate, specific, update schedule that has been extended to December 2012 so it can be coordinated with other Regional Planning efforts, and will be coordinated with the remainder of the General Plan Update to ensure they are consistent.

BACKGROUND AND PREVIOUS ACTION:

The City Council has directed staff to proceed with edits necessary to update the text, address legal requirements, and reflect the General Plan Issues Committee's recommendations on key principles. Staff is in the process of evaluating identified "Smart Growth" areas, potential employment lands and developing three alternative land use maps for Council review in April.

All Information, reports, and presentations have been available to the public and posted on the General Plan website (www.escondido.org/gp-update) where opportunities for citizens to submit comments are also provided. Additionally, all reports, updates, and agendas continue to be transmitted to an email list of approximately 150 people.

DISCUSSION:

The General Plan Introduction contains the community vision, goals, objectives, and Quality of Life Standards that will guide Escondido during the next 15-20 years and beyond. From the introduction, policies pertaining to each General Plan topic will be updated and amended as necessary to guide future decision-making efforts. Staff gathered input from a wide variety of sources including residents attending community workshops, student observations, anonymous survey responses, and comments received during the series of General Plan Issues Committee meetings as the basis for editing and updating the text.

Many themes of the of the current General Plan's vision, goals, objectives, and Quality of Life Standards remain relevant as evidenced from comments and recommendations received during the public outreach conducted so far. The nature of proposed text amendments include:

1. ***Incorporating "Smart Growth" Principles.*** The text incorporates text supporting compact and sustainable design, consolidating resources, revitalizing existing neighborhoods, diversifying economic and employment opportunities (a new Economic Element is proposed), and promoting efficiency in public services to minimize the effects of sprawl;
2. ***Focusing Future Growth in Downtown and the Surrounding Urban Core.*** The adopted General Plan focuses growth in several Specific Planning Areas and Master Planned Communities that have built-out over the past 15 years. The text amendments support growth where it can benefit from existing and planned urban services.
3. ***Promoting Public Transit and Increased Transportation Choices.*** The text amendments identify the development of the Sprinter Rail Line and its proposed extension to Westfields Shoppingtown, efforts to incorporate high speed rail, the proposed intensification of land uses along major corridors, and prospects for expanded bus and shuttle routes as opportunities for enhancing multi-modal linkages.
4. ***Enhancing Recreation and Cultural Amenities to Foster Healthy Lifestyles.*** The proposed expansion of Grape Day Park, inclusion of pedestrian-oriented urban recreational amenities, plans to expand the Main Library, Palomar Hospital, and improvements to enhance accessibility of the Escondido Channel Trail are identified in the text to enhance Escondido's quality of life.
5. ***Simplifying Growth Management.*** The amended text calls for maintaining the existing General Plan Boundary for planning purposes and providing for the orderly expansion of Escondido's corporate boundaries while establishing clear limits for service area boundaries. The draft Growth Management Element will replace the "neighborhood tier areas" with policies calling for a more functional application addressing infrastructure and service deficiencies.

The General Plan Introduction also includes proposed amendments to the Quality of Life Standards that have been briefed by the City Council. Substantive amendments have been incorporated into the Traffic & Transportation, Parks, Open Space, Air Quality, and Water Standards (the Library QL standard is pending) whereby the proposed text alters how the standard will be delivered or addressed. The proposed text changes for Fire, Police, Schools, Wastewater, and Economic Prosperity are minor in nature and intend to further clarify and/or define how the current standard will be delivered or addressed.

Subsequent Steps in the Process

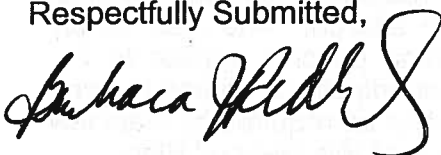
A comprehensive review of potential land use amendment areas is underway involving Smart Growth areas, a full range of employment land use areas, and "minor clean-up" amendments to correct inconsistencies with current land use patterns. It is expected that certain study areas would be deleted from further analysis based on preliminary conclusions. The direction has been to only incorporate viable study areas in the Update that warrant further analysis in order to minimize the EIR scope of work and costs associated with preparing subsequent technical studies. This information, and staff's recommendations on suggested map and text amendments, will be presented to the City Council on April 28, 2010.

Extensive public outreach would occur to solicit input on the draft text and map amendments between May and August 2010. During that time the General Plan Issues Committee would be solicited to provide input. Staff would also conduct workshops to obtain feedback from the community on the potential study areas. This information would be brought back to the City Council in August where selections would be made on the preferred and/or range of land use alternatives that would be fully evaluated in the General Plan EIR.

A detailed Action Plan containing the following anticipated milestones necessary to keep the General Plan Update on track for the November 2012 election was presented to the City Council in February, 2010:

- Identify and prepare text amendments, develop alternative Land Use scenarios, and commence public review by the end of April 2010.
- Complete Workshops on the Draft General Plan document by July 2010
- City Council selection of preferred and/or range of General Plan alternatives by August 2010
- Execute final Consultant Contracts by September 2010
- Complete the Screencheck EIR by March 2011
- Commence the 45 Day Public Review Process of the Draft EIR by June 2011
- Complete the Final EIR by September 2011
- Complete Planning Commission Meetings by January 2012
- Complete City Council Hearings by March 2012
- Transmit all information to the County Clerk as necessary to place the General Plan on the November 2012 General Election by August 2012

Respectfully Submitted,



Barbara J. Redlitz, AICP
Director of Community Development



Jay Petrek, AICP
Principal Planner

GENERAL PLAN DRAFT INTRODUCTION

I. INTRODUCTION

A. WHAT THE COMMUNITY ENVISIONS FOR ESCONDIDO

Escondido, as envisioned by the community, is the vibrant and dynamic cultural, economic, and recreational hub of inland North San Diego County. The shared vision calls for an outstanding quality of life with exemplary public services and a safe environment that support a wide-range of housing types; quality educational facilities; desirable workplaces offering diverse employment opportunities; convenient transportation options, and unique cultural/recreational amenities. A lively, active downtown with unique and exciting land uses and a revitalized surrounding urban core are the focus for appropriate higher-intensity infill developments that maximize opportunities for alternative transportation, and strengthen pedestrian linkages. Planning for quality, managed growth ensures the adequate provision of infrastructure, preserves perimeter view sheds, respects and enhances the character of established single family neighborhoods, and assures the long-term sustainability of Escondido's future

B. PURPOSE OF THE GENERAL PLAN

The General Plan is a statement of long-range public policy to guide the use of private and public lands within a community's boundaries. The General Plan reflects the aspirations and values of its residents and is adopted by the elected representatives. The policies within the Plan are intended to become the basis for decisions by elected and appointed officials. By these means, the values reflected in the General Plan shape the community and the quality of life sought by its residents.

The Plan is both general and comprehensive in that it provides broad guidelines for development in the City while addressing a wide range of issues that will affect the City's desirability as a place to live and work. The General Plan represents both an evaluation and vision of the future that typically extends 20 – 40 years into the future. The goals and policies are aimed at guiding growth and development in that direction.

It is an internally consistent document in that the goals, objectives, policies, principles, and standards present a comprehensive, unified program for development. California planning law requires consistency between the General Plan and its implementation programs—zoning and subdivision ordinances, growth management policies, capital improvements programming, specific plans, environmental review procedures, building and housing codes, and redevelopment plans. Thus, there is a strong connection between a community's policies and its regulatory system, with the General Plan serving as the City's "constitution."

The General Plan should not be viewed as a final statement of the City's vision. With time, its population will change, its goals may be redefined, and the physical environment in which its residents live and work will be altered. The Plan simply represents a depiction at this particular point of planning policies applied to the future. As a result, the General Plan must be revised periodically to respond to and reflect changing conditions subject to full public participation as required by state law and to the criteria identified in the "Implementation" section of this General Plan.

C. ESCONDIDO'S REGIONAL PARTICIPATION

Over the last few years, the role of regional planning efforts has expanded by virtue of mandates to address climate change, habitat preservation, coordinating land use and transportation, and allocating grants to jurisdictions. As part of the greater San Diego Region, Escondido does not operate in a vacuum. Decisions made in the community affect the region, and activities that occur outside the city have varying impacts on Escondido. Achieving wide-ranging goals and attaining a broader regional vision requires cooperation and coordination with other jurisdictions. Escondido, along with the region's other cities and county government forms the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) serving as the forum for regional decision-making. SANDAG builds consensus, makes strategic plans, obtains and allocates resources, plans, engineers, and builds public transportation, and provides information on a broad range of topics pertinent to the region's quality of life.

D. COMMUNITY CONTEXT AND VISION

Escondido has transformed from a rural agricultural town into a vibrant urbanizing community with a 2008 population of approximately 143,400. The growing process has brought master planned neighborhoods and more infill development, thoroughfares and freeways; major shopping centers; a downtown revitalization effort, a beautiful city hall, a joint police and fire headquarters; a regional medical center; employment centers; main library; community centers; several neighborhood and community parks, a transit center with rail service; and a regional cultural and performing arts center.

Throughout Southern California, substantial growth has also resulted in challenges concerning public facilities and services, air quality, traffic, water and sewer availability, economic development, environmental protection and open space. Therefore, the General Plan includes Quality of Life Standards and a Growth Management Element to assist in sustaining these standards. With the land use designations, environmental policies, and growth management policies, it is anticipated that the population within Escondido's General Plan Area (including City limits and surrounding unincorporated areas) will be approximately __,000 - __,000 in the year 2050. The implementation of the General Plan will not only result in land use ordinances directing development, but will also set forth policies to manage growth and coordinate programs that complement each other rather than compete with each other.

The General Plan is a comprehensive document with policies not only directed at land use and private development, but also public facilities and services. Furthermore, it addresses community goals and issues regarding human needs such as child and elder care, community health and housing, as well as our cultural enhancement.

With implementation of the goals and policies of the General Plan, the following is envisioned for Escondido:

1. Downtown

A City's identity is reflected in its downtown area. Downtown Escondido is envisioned as a dynamic, attractive, economically vital city center providing social, cultural, economic, and residential focus while respecting its historic character. The environment incorporates a variety of land uses that are pedestrian oriented, making downtown a destination for unique shops and exciting activities attracting local and non-local visitors to experience an atmosphere that is entertaining and vibrant with activity occurring throughout the day, evening and weekend hours.

Escondido's most prominent public facilities are located Downtown providing convenient access for the community. Grape Day Park is revitalized and extended north of Woodward Avenue to provide park frontage on Washington Avenue. City Hall, the performing arts and conference center, an expanded central library, the multi-modal transit center, museums, theaters, Palomar Hospital's remodeled eastern campus, and an expanded employment base of commercial, office, and financial establishments combine to establish a downtown that is a source of pride for Escondido residents.

Escondido's downtown area is anticipated to add several thousand more residences during the buildout of the General Plan. A variety of housing types are focused in close proximity to Grape Day Park in developments incorporating "smart growth" principles of compact design, transit-oriented land uses with pedestrian and bicycle-friendly streetscapes. High quality design standards and innovative architectural integrate well with street improvements that incorporate decorative paving, shade trees, street furniture, public art, and plazas. Shaded urban trails radiate out from downtown, and a walkway along Escondido Creek, provide convenient pedestrian linkages to the Urbanized Core and surrounding neighborhoods.

2. Urbanized Core

The Urbanized Core area essentially surrounds the Downtown Specific Planning Area within the "valley floor" of Escondido. It includes a variety of land uses including well-maintained new and established single- and multi-family neighborhoods, as well as industrial and commercial developments offering a wide variety of employment opportunities. Additional population growth is focused along transit corridors such as Escondido Boulevard, East Valley Parkway and areas north of Downtown and incorporates "smart growth" principles. Historic and established single-family neighborhoods in existing residential areas are revitalized with appropriate infrastructure and pedestrian-friendly connections. The area is served by a network of parks, trails, community services and facilities conveniently accessed by efficient local transportation corridors that accommodates public transit linked to I-15 and Highway 78.

Revitalization efforts similar to the Downtown are applied in the Urbanized Core, especially along major thoroughfares where there is high visibility. Non-residential areas along Escondido Boulevard, Centre City Parkway and East Valley Parkway provide convenient shopping, recreational, educational and employment opportunities. New retail uses are established only after careful consideration of the economic and fiscal impacts upon existing retail. Escondido's industrial areas are desirable places to work, convenient to transit and seek to attract "green" industries that balance the local economy and promote economic and environmental sustainability. Older established industrial employment areas are revitalized providing opportunities for transitioning to high-tech design and manufacturing firms. New industrial development in and around the Escondido Research Technology Center reflect quality design standards employee-intensive uses.

3. Perimeter Areas

Surrounding the urbanized core area are many established neighborhoods with vacant or underdeveloped properties still available for growth. These developing areas include lower density land use designations that may be more topographically constrained and further distanced from more intensive land uses found in the urban core. Implementation of the General Plan guides developments in the Perimeter Areas to ensure that compatibility with existing

neighborhoods is achieved, adequate public services are provided, and sensitivity to the environment is maintained. Adequate schools, infrastructure, services and open space are provided in a timely and pedestrian-friendly manner, including street trees, walkable streets, trail linkages, appropriate signage, and convenient connections to transit.

To retain Escondido's visual backdrop of mountains and hillsides, and preserve its natural terrain, General Plan policies call for strong measures to protect ridgelines, steep slopes and environmentally sensitive habitats. Rural land use designations are applied in outlying areas to reduce the potential of conflict with these policies. The remainder of the perimeter areas remains in estate and rural neighborhoods, or large areas of open space, such as Daley Ranch, San Dieguito River Valley, and the area around Lake Wohlford, where hiking and multi-use trails connect Escondido's urbanized areas to recreational activities in the perimeter. The coordinated efforts of City government, private development, existing residents, and other agencies providing facilities and services result in strategic planning to ensure acceptable quality of life standards for new and existing development.

4. Transportation and Mobility

Additional population growth focused in Escondido's central core will incorporate "smart growth" principles to enhance the viability for public transit with good headways; and multi-modal transportation opportunities with convenient commuting patterns. The introduction of High Speed Rail Service, coupled with the North County Transit District Sprinter, bus and shuttle lines reduces automobile trips in the community. Enhanced bicycle routes, pedestrian walkways, and a network of urban trails, including the Escondido Creek Path and Escondido-Oceanside trail provide additional commuting and recreational opportunities that also foster better health.

A variety of measures are implemented through the development process, capital improvement program and regional programs to facilitate the efficient movement of traffic along the community's network of streets and thoroughfares. Consolidating access driveways installing raised medians, and coordinating traffic signals effectively reduce potential conflicts with motorized vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians. Park-and-ride facilities are coordinated with Caltrans, as well as transit stations with North County Transit District. Bus turnouts and shelters are conveniently sited. Sidewalks, pedestrian crossings and street lighting are enhanced for pedestrian safety.

5. Open Space

In addition to hillside and ridgeline protection policies, the City emphasizes the preservation of open space in local and regional programs that balance fire safety needs. A system of urban and rural trails provides residents with convenient connections to City parks and large open space areas. Particular attention will be given to trail connections and visual protection for the San Dieguito River Regional Open Space Park, Daley Ranch, and Lake Wohlford areas, and providing connections to other regional trail systems from the Urbanized Core.

City parks continue to be developed with an emphasis on neighborhood parks that are pedestrian oriented and promote a healthy lifestyle. Grape Day Park is expanded to provide a connection to Washington Avenue. Urban-style recreational improvements such as par courses, tree-lined shaded walkways and plazas, are incorporated in the urbanized core that offers residents and visitors a wide variety of recreational amenities. The City's regional parks are maintained as recreational centers sensitive to existing water features and natural resources. Community parks and centers provide the more intensive recreational facilities.

6. Community Identity and Sustainability

With the implementation of this General Plan, Escondido's appeal as a desirable place to live revolves around the community's quality of life including safe and livable neighborhoods, a variety of housing, competitive job opportunities, a healthy environment, unique recreation and entertainment venues, excellent educational and community facilities, and a transportation system that provides easy access to work, school, shopping, and other activities.

The downtown highlights this regional identity. Preservation and rehabilitation of the urbanized core provides a wide range of housing opportunities in a livable manner. The City's ability to accommodate that growth and sustain its quality of life enhances the community's desirability. Development is balanced with the need to preserve and conserve natural resources in order to ensure that current and future generations are able to enjoy the benefits of Escondido.

Increased attention to adequate community facilities and services through the Growth Management Element maintains and improves Escondido's quality of life. Preservation and revitalization of existing neighborhoods further enhances the community identity. Planning is coordinated on a continuous basis between City departments, the school districts, service districts, the County, and regional entities to ensure realization of the Goals and Objectives of the General Plan.

Community involvement in these planning and implementation processes continues to grow, due to the nature of the many programs necessitated by the General Plan. A strong sense of pride and participation exists as a result of fulfilling the community vision outlined in this plan.

E. COMMUNITY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Escondido City Council has fully supported the need to solicit widespread community input on the goals that should direct the community's future. A Council-appointed General Plan Issues Committee was charged to recommend policy direction pertaining to updating the General Plan. A series of workshops and outreach efforts involving community groups and students were held to discuss citywide and neighborhood issues, community assets, liabilities, and land-use options. Information and recommendations from these meetings were instrumental in refining the General Plan's community goals and objectives, policies, standards, and guidelines for future growth and certainty in the General Plan's implementation.

GOAL 1: Plan for Quality and Managed Growth

Objectives:

- a. Maintain the existing General Plan Boundary for planning purposes and provide for the orderly expansion of Escondido's corporate boundaries consistent with the ultimate Sphere of Influence Boundary.
- b. Approve Master Plans that establish clear boundaries identifying the ultimate limits of service areas.
- c. Accommodate the bulk of Escondido's future growth by guiding it to more central areas that will benefit from existing or planned infrastructure, transit, and support services.
- d. Support energy efficient, green construction "smart growth" design principles.
- e. Maintain established Quality of Life Standards.
- f. Coordinate the pace and rate of development with the ability to provide necessary infrastructure and services.
- g. Ensure clear intensity and capacity assumptions for each land use category to facilitate accurate forecasting.
- h. Maintain policies encouraging compatible infill development that will improve and enhance existing neighborhoods.
- j. Improve coordination with the county and surrounding cities regarding planning for areas beyond the city limits to address regional issues and to protect the goals and objectives of the General Plan.
- k. Notify and coordinate with property owners and resident groups when conducting land use studies affecting residents. Notification and coordination will include surrounding property owners, as well as any resident groups, homeowner's associations, or planning advisory groups that make their presence known to the City. Neighborhood meetings may be utilized to notify interested parties to gather information and solicit input for recommendation to various decision-makers.

GOAL 2: Improve Circulation And Safety For Vehicles And Pedestrians

Objectives:

- a. Establish feasible levels of service for intersections and street segments which will be addressed by Capital Improvement Programs and facilities plans.
- b. Enhance carrying capacity of existing streets and intersections in the urbanized core through Transportation System Management, support for public transportation and carpooling, and coordination of improvements through the overall capital improvement program and facilities plans.
- c. Develop a circulation model plan and maintain a traffic signal coordination system that will determine the impacts of development and identify mitigation measures to ensure consistency with facilities plans.

- d. Improve bicycle and pedestrian safety through the installation or improvement of sidewalks, a trail system in coordination with the Open-Space Element, and intersection controls.
- e. Support programs that improve student safety.
- f. Participate in regional transportation efforts including but not limited to park-and-ride facilities, Transportation System Management efforts, and public transit.
- g. Identify segments and intersections where improving streets to their ultimate configuration may be inappropriate due to community character impacts despite increased traffic congestion.

GOAL 3: Preserve and Enhance Existing Neighborhoods

Objectives:

- a. Preserve existing neighborhood densities and encourage infill development that respects or improves community character.
- b. Ensure that clustering policies result in developments that are compatible with surrounding areas.
- c. Maintain objective guidelines for controlling density increases in existing residential neighborhoods.
- d. Limit the conversion of predominantly residential neighborhoods to nonresidential uses, and require effective buffers and mitigation measures through Conditional Use Permits when appropriate nonresidential uses are proposed.
- e. Maintain land-use designations that maintain or improve the character of existing neighborhoods.
- f. Adopt and implement area plans to preserve and/or improve existing neighborhoods.
- g. Continue property maintenance programs through public information and code enforcement.

GOAL 4: Provide a Range Of Housing Opportunities for All Income Groups

Objectives:

- a. Maintain a current housing needs assessment through the Housing Element.
- b. Maintain land-use designations which will allow for housing opportunities for all income levels.
- c. Support strategies for low- and moderate-income housing opportunities, including neighborhood area plans, senior housing, and specialized housing needs.
- d. Continue support for housing rehabilitation.

- e. Promote well-planned, well-designed, and well-managed affordable housing projects.
- f. Support the continued operation of mobile home parks and develop strategies for mobile home resident ownership.

GOAL 5: Encourage More High Quality Diversified Employee-Intensive Industrial, Retail, Technology, Manufacturing and Service-Oriented Businesses that Create and Maintain a Strong Economic Base and Provide an Environment for the Full Employment of a Diverse Set of Skills.

Objectives:

- a. Maintain multiple core employment use areas with quality design and development standards and appropriate support infrastructure that allow sufficient opportunities for general, light, high technology and office industrial; research and development; 'green' industries; and professional office uses.
- b. Ensure an amount of employment lands to increase jobs opportunities for local residents and avoids long commutes.
- c. Promote revitalization of Escondido's older established industrial employment areas to provide opportunities for transitioning to cleaner more employee-intensive uses.
- d. Continue to evaluate economic development strategies and policies, that effect evolving commercial, industrial, office, retail, and tourist-oriented land uses.
- e. Continue to restrict encroachment of non-related commercial or residential uses in industrial areas and consider adaptive reuse zoning for oversaturated retail zoned areas.
- f. Promote Escondido's role as the cultural, financial, medical, commercial, and transportation center of Inland North County.
- g. Continue to streamline and provide effective administration and review processes.
- h. Make business retention and expansion a primary component of Escondido's economic development strategy.
- i. When appropriate, provide incentives for the attraction and retention of businesses giving special consideration to businesses that provide well to high paying jobs, are healthy and non-polluting, and use recycled materials in their production or service provision process.
- j. Encourage partnerships, collaborative relationships, and interaction among the City, educational institutions, outside agencies and industry to achieve common goals, economic growth, and beautification objectives, and bring a jobs/housing balance.
- k. Take an active role in forums that involve activities having regional economic effects.

- I. Support the following concepts as important aspects of the industrial sector in Escondido:

- value high technology, research and development, and various industrial uses as important integral part of a sustainable economic base.
- maintain a variety of industrial lot sizes.
- support urban renewal of older industrial areas by the private sector.
- support projects that enhance City gateways.
- support quality business park development.

GOAL 6: Create a Viable Urban Downtown with Exciting Activities and Unique Land Uses that Attracts Local Residents and Tourists.

Objectives:

- a. Increase intensities in the downtown and the urban core without compromising historic character.
- b. Ensure that sufficient office and retail land and appropriate parking ratios occur in the Downtown area to meet long term demands.
- c. Promote a distinct identity for the Downtown by encouraging an exciting mix of unique activities and uses that traditionally locate in a pedestrian-oriented downtown area, including offices, restaurants, specialty retail shops and higher intensity residential.
- d. Implement the Downtown Revitalization Plan through the adoption of a Specific Plan.
- e. Promote residential development in specified areas within the Downtown Specific Plan to enhance revitalization effort.
- f. Identify compatible uses in the Downtown Specific Plan which will attract a high daytime and nighttime population to the area.

GOAL 7: Create an Aesthetically Pleasing and Culturally Diverse Community

Objectives:

- a. Create exciting places with a mix of uses that appeal to residents and visitors.
- b. Implement design guidelines and development standards to be the basis for design review of architectural, landscaping, signage, outdoor storage, site design, and other visual impacts of development projects.
- c. Maintain landscaping guidelines for all areas of the city.
- d. Preserve significant historic and cultural features through ordinances and incentive programs.
- e. Preserve natural resources such as creeks, steep slopes and ridge lines as visual amenities while maintaining fire safe communities.
- f. Expand the system of open space corridors and trails throughout the city.

- g. Bolster a stronger community identity through urban design standards, downtown revitalization, cultural activities, and visual gateways to the city.
- h. Install and maintain public art in publicly accessible areas to enhance the visual appearance of the community.
- i. Encourage rehabilitation and beautification of commercial and industrial areas.
- j. Refine design guidelines and provide staff assistance to encourage individual industries to upgrade the visual appearance of their properties.
- k. Maintain procedures for expedient review, and clear standards for approval of the location and nature of outdoor storage in a manner which maintains or improves the character of the area, and which is not unduly obtrusive.
- l. Maintain landscaping, screening, and programs which encourage property maintenance and upgrades.

GOAL 8: Preserve and Enhance Escondido's Natural and Scenic Resources

Objectives:

- a. Maintain balanced policies that preserve visually prominent vegetation, including existing street trees and mature ornamental trees in existing neighborhoods while maintaining fire safety in Wildland Urban Interface areas.
- b. Support environmental protection policies in this General Plan to protect or adequately replace sensitive habitat areas, including coordination with state and federal agencies having jurisdiction over such areas.
- c. Maintain a rural residential and open space environment around the perimeter of Escondido to serve as a buffer from urbanizing surrounding areas.
- d. Establish criteria for measuring the impacts of development on air quality and participate in efforts to attain state and federal air quality standards through appropriate mitigation measures.
- e. Maintain density and development standards designed to protect existing terrain, steep slopes, floodways, habitat areas, and ridge lines, and to minimize visual impacts.
- f. Implement communitywide resource conservation programs.

GOAL 9: Support Agriculture While Planning for Possible Land Transition to Urban Uses

Objectives:

- a. Maintain large-lot residential land uses with appropriate zoning designations in agricultural areas that are compatible with preserving agricultural productivity.
- b. Buffer agriculture from more intensive urban uses with intermediate land uses which are mutually compatible.

GOAL 10: Promote Continued Community and Social Services to Foster Healthy Lifestyles and an Educated and Informed Citizenry

Objectives:

- a. Adopt basic quality of life standards to guide the development of community-wide Facility and Master Plans.
- b. Continue to support public and privately operated community services programs to serve the entire community.
- c. Provide incentives for development to provide facilities which exceed minimum standards and correct existing deficiencies.
- d. Continue strong support of recreational programs for all age groups and emphasize the development of recreational amenities in the urban core.
- e. Continue strong support of libraries and other educational institutions that promote lifelong learning and the dissemination of critical information.

GOAL 11: Provide a Safe and Healthy Environment for all Escondido Residents

Objectives:

- a. Develop energy efficient wastewater treatment facilities that recognize the value of water and maximize its reuse.
- b. Ensure that the Hale Avenue Resource Recovery Facility (HARRF) and supporting infrastructure are carefully sized to accommodate the city's long-term needs.
- c. Maintain service levels for police and fire protection that will be sustained with new development without adversely affecting service levels for existing developments.
- d. Continue coordination with county and state officials to address issues that involve toxic materials and ordinances that implement the County Hazardous Waste Management Plan or equivalent.
- e. Maintain grading drainage and erosion control standards that control surface runoff associated with new development while preserving natural resources.
- f. Continue to participate in local and regional programs to meet state and federal air and water quality standards.

GOAL 12: Provide Certainty in Implementing the General Plan

Objectives:

- a. Observe the stringent and consistent objective criteria located in the Implementation Chapter which must be satisfied before the General Plan can be amended.
- b. Maintain zoning, grading, and subdivision ordinances and the requirement of Facility Master Plans that will implement the goals and objectives of the General Plan.

- c. Maintain performance criteria within appropriate ordinances to ensure land use compatibility, environmental protection, and improvement of neighborhoods identified in the Land Use Element of the General Plan.

F. QUALITY OF LIFE STANDARDS

In conjunction with the Goals and Objectives included in the General Plan, a series of Quality of Life Standards have been developed to establish minimum thresholds of service levels for various public improvements and facilities. Consistent with the policies set forth in the Growth Management Element (see Chapter VI), the existing facilities will be evaluated and measures will be taken to ensure that adequate service levels are maintained.

The timing of development will rely upon the provision of facilities and services based upon these standards and will be used as the basis for capital improvement programs, impact fees, and other financing mechanisms established to provide facilities and services.

Quality of Life Standard 1: Traffic and Transportation

Circulation Element streets and intersections shall be planned and developed to achieve a minimum level of service "C" as defined by the Highway Capacity Manual as amended or updated or such other national standard deemed appropriate by the City. Level of service "C" represents stable traffic flow that is at the beginning range of conditions where individual users become significantly affected by the interaction of others in the traffic stream. Due to physical design characteristics, implementation of pedestrian-oriented "smart growth" design improvements, high density infill areas, environmental resource considerations, existing development, freeway interchange impacts and incomplete system improvements, level of service "C" may not be feasible in all areas at all times.

Where existing street or intersection capacities are below level of service "C," street, operational or Transportation System Management improvements shall be required or planned to improve the service level to "C" when ever feasible based upon impacts of future development. Such requirements or plans may be incremental to accommodate future development or the recycling of existing development. Feasibility of level of service "C" shall be based on impacts upon existing development or environmental constraints along street segments or intersections.

Capital improvement programs and/or facility plans for all growth management tiers shall include Transportation System Management measures designed to maintain or improve levels of service at existing or developed intersections where these locations may be impacted by further development or traffic volume growth.

The City shall support public transportation facilities through such measures as requiring right-of-way for commuter rail or park-and-ride facilities, transit stops or facilities, or for other transportation needs. The City shall establish Transportation System Management measures and shall cooperate with agencies and coordinate with regional transportation plans and transportation agencies involving the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) Vision 2020 population model to determine Quality of Life compliance.

Quality of Life Standard 2: Public Schools

The community shall have sufficient classroom space to meet state-mandated space requirements and teacher/student ratios with student attendance calculated on prescribed state and/or local school board standards. Implementation of this standard shall be the responsibility of the school districts and other appropriate agencies.

Quality of Life Standard 3: Fire Service

In urbanized areas of the City, an initial response time of seven and one-half (7½) minutes for all structure fire and emergency Advanced Life Support (ALS) calls and a maximum response time of ten (10) minutes for supporting companies shall be maintained. A minimum of seven (7) total fire stations each staffed with an ALS engine company shall be in place prior to General Plan buildout. For outlying areas beyond a five (5) minute travel time or further than three (3) miles from the nearest fire station, all new structures shall be protected by fire sprinkler systems or an equivalent system as approved by the Fire Chief. Travel time is the elapsed time from a verbal or computerized acknowledgment of the dispatch by the responding unit at the moment of departure from the station to its arrival at the scene. Response time is the elapsed time from receiving a call for service to the responding unit's arrival at the scene. In the case of single family residences "arrival at the scene" shall mean at the front door of the residence; for multi-family residences "arrival at the scene" shall mean at the street access to the involved building. The Fire Department intends to meet these times for no less than 90 percent of all emergency responses by engine companies.

Quality of Life Standard 4: Police Service

The City shall maintain personnel staffing levels based on community-generated workloads and officer availability. Resources will be adjusted to maintain an initial response time for priority 1 calls (crimes in progress or life threatening) of no more than five (5) minutes and an initial response time for priority 2 calls (serious calls requiring rapid response but not life threatening incidents) of no more than six and one-half (6 1/2) minutes. The Escondido Police standard includes the measurement of elapsed times from when the call is initially processed by the communication operator, the transfer of call information to the police officer, and the time of the field officer's arrival at the service call location. Resources will be allocated to organize patrol areas and involve community members where appropriate to achieve Community Oriented Problem Solving efforts. To the maximum economic extent feasible, the Police Department will take aggressive enforcement action against crime trends, including maintenance procedures and incorporating community involvement and education as a means to deter potential incidents.

Quality of Life Standard 5: Wastewater System

The City wastewater system shall have adequate conveyance pipelines, , pumping, , outfall and secondary treatment capacities to meet both normal and peak demands to avoid wastewater spills affecting stream courses and reservoirs, and shall provide capacity able to treat a minimum of 250 gallons per day for each residence on said system in urban areas or as established in the City's Sewer Master Plan.

Quality of Life Standard 6: Parks System

The City shall provide a minimum of 5.9 acres of developed active neighborhood and community parks per 1,000 dwelling units in addition to 5.9 acres of passive park land and/or open space for habitat preservation and additional recreational opportunities totaling 11.8 active and passive acres per 1,000 dwelling units. Urban recreational amenities such as par-courses, urban trails, tree-lined shaded walkways and plazas, etc.,

shall be focused in high intensity Downtown and Urban Core areas. Priority shall be given to acquiring land to expand Grape Day Park north of Woodward Avenue and developing neighborhood parks in urban areas with the greatest need. School playground areas may be included as park acreage, provided, however, that neighborhood park amenities and facilities are provided and open to the public as determined by the City Council. Prior to buildout, the City shall provide a minimum of two (2) community centers and other specialized recreation facilities shall be incorporated into area-wide community facility plans.

Quality of Life Standard 7: Library Service

The public library system shall maintain a stock and staffing level of(QOL text pending)

Quality of Life Standard 8: Open Space System

A system of open-space corridors, easement and acquisition programs and trails shall be established in the open-space, conservation and community facilities elements. Sensitive lands including permanent bodies of water, floodways, and slopes over 35 percent inclination shall be preserved. Significant wetlands, riparian or woodland and habitat or habitat for rare or endangered species shall be protected in coordination with state and/or federal agencies having jurisdiction over such areas.

Quality of Life Standard 9: Air Quality

The City shall establish a Climate Action Plan with feasible and appropriate local policies and measures aimed at reducing regional greenhouse gas emissions including, but not limited to, reducing the number of vehicular miles traveled, supporting public transportation, participating in the development of park-and-ride facilities, coordinating land-use approvals, accommodating facilities for alternative fuel vehicles, maintaining and updating the city's traffic signal synchronization plan, promoting local agriculture, increasing landscaping standards, promoting landscaping programs, and encouraging non-polluting alternative energy systems.

Quality of Life Standard 10: Water System

The City shall maintain provisions for an adequate water supply, pipeline capacity and storage capacity to meet normal and emergency situations and shall have the capacity to provide a minimum of 540 gallons per day per household or as established by the City's Water Master Plan. Federal and state drinking water quality standards shall be maintained. The City shall continue efforts to implement water reclamation and water conservation programs.

Quality of Life Standard 11: Economic Prosperity

The City shall implement programs and support efforts to increase Escondido's median household income and per capita wage compared to the region by actively recruiting new businesses and expanding existing businesses that increase employment densities and retain skilled workers whose wage exceeds that of workers who earn a wage comparable to the San Diego Region's median household income, and bring new dollars into the local economy.

