



CITY OF ESCONDIDO
PLANNING DIVISION
201 NORTH BROADWAY
ESCONDIDO, CA 92025-2798
(760) 839-4671

NEGATIVE DECLARATION

Maple Street Pedestrian Corridor Master Plan and Maple Street Plaza

Case No.: ER 2005-45

ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST SUPPLEMENTAL COMMENTS

INTRODUCTION

This Negative Declaration (ND) assesses the environmental effects of two associated projects. The Maple Street Pedestrian Corridor Master Plan will be evaluated at the programmatic level, as implementation of different parts of the master plan would require project specific environmental review. The Proposed Maple Street Pedestrian Plaza is the first part of the corridor master plan to be implemented and will be evaluated at the project specific level.

The proposed Maple Street Pedestrian Corridor Master Plan would provide a framework for the future development of pedestrian amenities and sidewalk enhancements along Maple Street, within the existing public right-of-way, from the public parking lot #2 at Maple Street and 2nd Avenue, north on Maple Street, through the proposed plaza area, along the west side of City Hall and extending through Grape Day Park and the public parking lot to Woodward Avenue. The corridor would include design elements such as paving enhancements, addition of interpretive panels on Escondido history, signage, lighting, public art and street furniture.

The proposed Maple Street Pedestrian Plaza is a Smart Growth Incentive Program (SGIP) (a Sandag grant program) project that involves the reconstruction of the portion of Maple Street between W. Grand Avenue and W. Valley Parkway as a pedestrian plaza while maintaining a one-lane, one-way street with vehicular access from Grand Avenue north to Valley Parkway. Street and plaza improvements would occur within the existing right-of-way and on-street parking (up to 23 spaces) would be eliminated. The southwesterly access driveway to public parking lot #1 would be relocated and an area for a future public restroom would potentially eliminate 3-5 parking spaces. The existing driveway from Maple Street to the property at the southwest corner of Maple Street and W. Valley Parkway will be removed.

An Initial Study Environmental Checklist was prepared for this project and is included as a separate attachment to the Supplemental Comments within this report. The information contained in the Initial Study Environmental Checklist and the Supplemental Comments will be used by the City of Escondido to determine potential impacts associated with the proposed development.

The detailed Supplemental Comments included in this document identifies and evaluates physical impacts to the environment associated with developing or implementing the proposed project based on preliminary review of a variety of environmental factors identified in the attached Environmental Checklist. Based on information and documentation incorporated in the analysis, it has been concluded that this Initial Study warrants issuing a Negative Declaration (ND), which is a determination that no negative environmental impacts that rise to a level of significance will occur upon developing or implementing the project. As provided by CEQA, the City of Escondido will act as a responsible agency because of its role in reviewing and potentially approving or issuing permits for the project.

As mandated by CEQA Guidelines Section 15105, affected public agencies and the interested public may submit comments on the Negative Declaration (ND) in writing before the end of the 30 -day public review period starting on March 2, 2010 and ending on March 31, 2010. Written comments on this environmental document shall be submitted to the following address by 5:30 p.m. on **March 31, 2010**. Following the close of the public comment review period, the City of Escondido will consider this Negative Declaration (ND) and all received comments in determining the approval of this project.

City of Escondido
Planning Division
201 North Broadway
Escondido, CA 92025-2798

Contact: Rozanne Cherry, Principal Planner
Telephone: (760) 839-4536
Fax: (760) 839-4313
E-mail: rcherry@escondido.org

A hard copy of this document and any associated plans and/or documentation are available for review during normal operation hours for the duration of the public review period at the City of Escondido Planning Division

DETAILED PROJECT DESCRIPTION / LOCATION

Location: Corridor Master Plan - Maple Street from the alley south of 2nd Avenue to Woodward Avenue
Plaza - Maple Street from Grand Avenue to W. Valley Parkway

Existing Zoning: SP (Specific Plan); the Corridor Master Plan passes through the Historic Downtown District and the Park View District; the Plaza is located in the Historic Downtown District and Retail Core Area.

Existing General Plan: SP (Specific Plan Area #9)

Lighting: Additional pedestrian lights and decorative up lighting of trees along the corridor and in Grape Day Park are proposed.

Signs: Kiosk and directional signs are proposed along the corridor and within the plaza area. Overhead gateway signs are proposed at each end of the Maple Street Plaza.

Project Landscaping: New street trees, accent trees and landscaping are proposed in the plaza.

Removal of existing vegetation: The existing street trees in the plaza area would be removed.

Building Heights, Colors, Materials: The future restroom structure would conform to development standards of the Historic Downtown District.

Parking: Approximately 23 on-street parking spaces would be eliminated with the plaza project, and potentially up to 5 parking spaces would be eliminated with the relocation of the driveway and construction of a

future public restroom in Parking Lot #1.

Open Space Areas, trails, recreation facilities: The corridor master plan would provide a north/south link to the downtown pedestrian pathways and linkages as shown in the City's Trail Master Plan and Figure III-1 of the Interim Downtown Specific Plan, by intersecting with the main pathway on Grand Avenue. The corridor master plan proposes public enhancements within the existing public right-of-way, including benches, historic information, decorative lighting, directional signs, and additional walkways in Grape Day Park. The plaza project would provide more pedestrian space and amenities adjacent to the traffic lane, including public seating under shade structures, a water feature, and game tables, and would convert to an open space area for public events and festivals when the street is closed to vehicles.

PAST PUBLIC MEETINGS:

As the project developed over several years, publicly noticed workshops were held to discuss the proposed project and solicit community input. Workshops were held on May 10, 2007, October 23, 2008 and February 17, 2009. City Council received public comments and provided direction to staff at a workshop on July 11, 2007. Staff provided a project summary and update to the Community and Older Adult Services Commission on June 25, 2009, and to the Design Review Board on August 27, 2009.

ANTICIPATED PUBLIC MEETINGS/HEARINGS:

-Planning Commission:

A separate public hearing notice will be advertised confirming the Planning Commission time and date, anticipated to be in April 2010.

-City Council:

A separate public hearing notice will be advertised confirming the City Council time and date, anticipated to be in April 2010.

PROJECT ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The project area is located in the urbanized, historic downtown core of Escondido, within the existing 80-foot wide public right-of-way of Maple Street, which is developed as a two-way public street with curb, gutters, sidewalks, street lights, street trees and on-street parking. Adjacent property is developed with commercial buildings and a public parking lot. The proposed corridor would continue through the existing civic center and Grape Day Park, where City Hall, the California Center for the Arts Escondido, and the History Center are located. The park includes open turf areas, a playground, landscaping, lighting, signs, and several historic structures. The current zoning is Downtown Specific Plan, within the Historic Downtown District and the Park View District. The General Plan designation is SP (Specific Plan Area #9) in the Tier 1 Central Neighborhood.

The zoning and land uses adjacent to the proposed development area are as follows:

North: Urbanized commercial development in the Park View District and in the CG (General Commercial) zone north of Washington Avenue.

South: Commercial and residential development in the Southern Gateway District of the Downtown Specific Plan.

East: Urbanized commercial development and a public parking lot in the Historic Downtown District and Park View District of the Downtown Specific Plan.

West: Urbanized commercial development in the Historic Downtown District and Centre City Urban District of the Downtown Specific Plan.

I. LAND USE AND PLANNING

Significance Criteria and Impact Analysis

The effects of a project on existing or planned land uses are considered significant if the proposed project would:

- a. *Physically divide an established community;*
- b. *Conflict with any applicable land-use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to, the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect;.*

The City of Escondido General Plan designates the proposed project sites as public right of way and Grape Day Park, a public park. Maple Street and Grape Day Park are located within the Downtown Specific Plan area. The one-block length of the proposed plaza is in the Historic Downtown District and Retail Core Area. The proposed corridor would traverse the Historic Downtown District, the Retail Core Area and the Park View District. The plaza site is surrounded by urban commercial development, a public parking lot and is adjacent to the Escondido City Hall. The corridor would follow the public sidewalks adjacent to commercial development and through a public park and parking lot. From a land use perspective no adverse impacts from the project are anticipated because the work would be done completely within the public right-of-way. The proposed project would not disrupt or divide the physical arrangement of the area because it would follow existing public streets. Maple Street is not identified on the City's Circulation Element. Development of the project and proposed improvements would not significantly alter or impact the existing circulation pattern throughout the surrounding neighborhood, nor preclude the development of surrounding parcels because access to the public alley would be maintained and former southbound traffic on Maple Street would be accommodated one-block to the west on Escondido Blvd. When the plaza is closed to vehicular traffic for a public event, traffic would be routed to Escondido Blvd. or Broadway (one-block to the east). See additional discussion in Section III – Transportation/Traffic. The project's construction also would not create any new land use barriers, or otherwise divide or disrupt the physical arrangement of the surrounding community because it would be temporary and circulation would be provided on adjacent streets. Upon completion of the plaza project, the configuration of the areas' existing street network and sidewalks would not be affected by the project because it would remain a public street with one lane of traffic going south to north. The project would provide a new north/south link to the downtown pedestrian pathways and linkages as shown in the City's Trail Master Plan and Figure III-1 of the Interim Downtown Specific Plan, by intersecting with Grand Avenue, which is the main pathway. Adequate public facilities are available and water and sewer service can be provided to the project with nominal extension of nearby existing facilities.

- c. *Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan;*

The proposed project would not conflict with applicable environmental plans since the subject site does not contain any sensitive species/habitat, or any area designated for preservation (as indicated on the latest MHCP maps) or any other conservation planning area. The removal of any mature street trees would be replaced in conformance with the City's Landscape Ordinance with specimen sized trees at a minimum 1:1 ratio.

- d. *Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista;*
- e. *Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway;*
- f. *Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings;*

The corridor master plan area is generally flat and follows the existing sidewalk of Maple Street and continues through Grape Day Park. The sidewalk is generally 14-feet wide and bulbs out at intersection corners. Street trees and street lights line the street. The park includes concrete pathways, turf areas, mature trees, planting areas, pedestrian lighting, directional signs, and several historic structures. Elements of the master plan would include enhancing the sidewalk with decorative pavers and historic interpretive information, up lighting street and park trees, adding more paths in the park, and adding directional signs. While the proposed improvements would not change the buildings that abut the length of the corridor, the new paving enhancements, street furniture and lighting effects would change the visual environment for pedestrians, providing more diverse visual elements and focal points. With the implementation of the master plan, the corridor along Maple Street would become more visually unified, have a stronger identity, and provide a more continuous connection between 2nd Avenue, the historic retail core, the civic center, the performing arts center and Grape Day Park. Therefore, the proposed corridor enhancements would not adversely affect the visual and community character of Maple Street or the surrounding area.

The plaza project area is generally flat. There are no significant visual resources or any significantly prominent topographical features as identified in the City's General Plan or Area Plans. The property is not located on a ridgeline identified in the Community Open Space/Conservation Element of the General Plan. A Visual & Community Character Impact Analysis, dated 9-22-09 and on file in the Planning Division, was prepared for the plaza project by Helix Environmental Planning, Inc. Development of the proposed use would not significantly alter the developed character of the site nor adversely impact any scenic views through and across the property. Existing vegetation and street trees would be replaced by new landscaping. The project would not damage any significant scenic resources within a designated State scenic highway or create an aesthetically offensive site open to the public since the site is not located along a State scenic highway and the property would continue being public right-of-way with a one-way street and wider pedestrian spaces. The report concluded that the proposed roadway modifications and streetscape enhancements would not adversely affect the visual and community character of Maple Street or the surrounding area.

Cumulative Impacts: Existing and planned developments have altered and would continue to alter the existing landforms and visual setting throughout the general project area. However, given the existing, approved and proposed development pattern in the project area, as well as what is anticipated in the General Plan buildout, the change in the visual setting would not represent a significant individual or cumulatively significant impact.

- g. *Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.*

Development of the subject site would create some additional sources of light and glare in the area. The primary source of light would be from street and accent lights, building, and security lighting. All proposed lighting near adjacent properties would be designed to minimize the overflow of light onto off-site areas. Compliance with the City's Outdoor Lighting Ordinance would ensure that impacts related to light and glare, resulting from development of the site, are less than significant.

II. AGRICULTURE RESOURCES

Significance Criteria and Impact Analysis

In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, the City has referred to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Department of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. The effects of a project on agricultural resources are considered significant if the proposed project would:

- a. Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use;*
- b. Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract; or,*
- c. Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use?*

The project site is within a developed commercial area. The site is not listed as Prime Agricultural Lands as identified in the General Plan Final EIR, which was prepared for the City's most recent General Plan revisions in 2000. The site does not appear to have been used for agricultural purposes, and it is not involved in a Williamson Act Contract or other agricultural land contract. Therefore, the proposed development would not result in significant individual or cumulative impacts to agricultural resources.

III. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC

According to the City of Escondido Environmental Quality Regulation (Article 47, Sec. 33-924), impacts are considered significant if the project:

- 1. Causes the level of service (LOS) of a circulation element street to fall below a mid-range of LOS "D" and /or adds more than 200 ADT to a circulation element street with a LOS below the mid-range "D" yet above LOS "F". According to the Escondido General Plan, the minimum acceptable LOS is "C";*
- 2. Exceeds, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads and highways;*
- 3. Results in a change of air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or in a location that results in substantial safety risks or increased hazards due to a design feature; or,*
- 4. Results in inadequate emergency access or parking capacity, or conflicts with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks).*
- 5. General Plan Circulation Policy D2.3 states that: "...Due to the physical design characteristics, 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. However, level of service "C" should be pursued in the ultimate implementation of the circulation system."*

Project Impacts – The Pedestrian Corridor Master Plan would have not impact on traffic or circulation as the

plan proposes enhancements to the existing sidewalks and pedestrian paths within the existing Maple Street right-of way and Grape Day Park. No physical improvements are proposed with the master plan. Subsequent implementation of portions of the master planned corridor would include appropriate environmental review for the individual project. Therefore, no impacts to traffic or circulation would occur with the approval of the Maple Street Pedestrian Corridor Master Plan.

The Maple Street Plaza project implements the portion of the corridor plan on Maple Street between Grand Avenue and W. Valley Parkway. This project would reconfigure this section of Maple Street from a two-lane two-way street with on-street parking to a level pedestrian plaza with one, one-way (northbound) vehicle lane 16' wide with no on-street parking within the existing 80-foot wide right-of-way. The travel lane would be routed around a half round-about at the northwest corner of the alley that crosses Maple Street. The sidewalks would be flush with the street, and both the street and sidewalk would be paved with paver bricks in a decorative pattern with additional 12-inch-wide accent pavers engraved with historical information. The sidewalks would be separated from the travel lane with truncated dome warning strips in a contrasting color and removable bollards. A raised planter to hold a large accent tree would be placed in the center of the proposed half round-about. A compass rose paving pattern flush with the sidewalk / street would encircle the planter. Street furniture, a water feature, 2 shade trellises, trees, lighting, signs and removable bollards would all be located outside of the vehicle travel lane. An entry gateway arch with the name of the plaza would span the travel lane at each end of the plaza. The Maple Street travel lane and the alley would be open for general public vehicular use, except during a public event held in the plaza. At that time, the travel lane would be closed to vehicles with removable bollards and the entire right-of-way area would be used for pedestrians. The existing driveway off of Maple Street to the adjacent business at the northwest corner of Maple Street and Grand Avenue would be maintained. However, the driveway into the public parking lot #1 from Maple Street would be closed and shifted to access from W. Valley Parkway. With the new driveway entrance and the future restroom building, potentially 5 parking spaces would be lost in the public parking lot. Reconfiguration of Maple Street to a plaza would eliminate the existing 23 on-street parking spaces. The existing driveway from Maple Street to the property at the southwest corner of Maple Street and W. Valley Parkway will be removed.

Maple Street is not on the General Plan Circulation Element and is currently a low-volume, two-lane street between Grand Avenue and W. Valley Parkway. The project area is adjacent to and takes access from Grand Avenue, which is a four-lane, two-way, divided roadway designated as a four-lane Collector in the General Plan Circulation Element. The proposed one-way travel lane through the plaza area would end at W. Valley Parkway, a three-lane, one-way collector road extending in a westbound direction as part of the couplet with Second Avenue between Tulip Street and Hickory Street.

The Traffic Impact Analysis Report prepared for the Escondido Marriott Hotel and Mixed-Use Condominium Project by RBF Consulting (Case ER 2005-13, available in the Planning Division) included analysis of traffic impacts with Maple Street remaining as it exists and with the southerly half of Maple Street permanently closed to vehicle traffic between Grand Avenue and the alley to the north. Further, these scenarios were studied for those occasions when the Farmer's Market and Crusin' Grand events are held and the temporary street closures associated with these two frequent community events are in place. Since the proposed mixed use condominiums are no longer part of the hotel project and the final Maple Street plaza design allows one lane of northbound traffic (rather than completely eliminating through traffic), the current plaza project would have less traffic impacts than those analyzed in the hotel traffic analysis.

The conversion of Maple Street from Grand Avenue to W. Valley Parkway from a two-way street to a north-

bound, one-way street will divert the existing south-bound trips to other downtown area streets. The alternate routes for the redistributed traffic will most notably be W. Valley Parkway (Maple St. to Escondido Blvd.), Escondido Boulevard (W. Valley Pkwy. to Second Ave.), Grand Avenue (Escondido Blvd. to Maple St.) and Second Avenue (Escondido Blvd. to Maple St.). Based on the traffic analysis prepared for the hotel/mixed-use project, these roadway segments and intersections have sufficient excess capacity to accommodate the redistributed traffic. The traffic analysis reached this conclusion for the complete closure of a portion of Maple Street with consideration of the road closures for special events like the Farmers Market and Cruisin' Grand. The one-way street, as currently proposed for the Maple Street Plaza will have less impact than the complete closure studied.

The analysis for the hotel/mixed use project concluded that with the installation of traffic signals at W. Second Avenue/Maple Street and Maple Street/W. Valley Parkway and a four-way stop at Orange Avenue/W. Grand Avenue, traffic impacts would be below the thresholds of significance in both Maple Street scenarios (remaining a 2-way street and being closed to through traffic.) The four-way stop at Orange Avenue/W. Grand Avenue has subsequently been installed. However, since the plaza project will not generate additional traffic and the Maple Street volumes are so low compared to the main lanes of W. Valley Parkway and Second Avenue, the Engineering Department staff further studied intersection operations at W. Valley Parkway/Maple Street (Engineering Department memorandum dated January 26, 2010). Staff reviewed the traffic analysis prepared for the hotel/mixed-use project, the cycling of the existing traffic signal at Valley Parkway and Broadway, and the potential interruption of volume on the main lanes of W. Valley Parkway in comparison to the potential delays for the low volume of vehicles on Maple Street. The Engineering Department staff concluded that the overall or average Level of Service (LOS) for the intersection was very good to excellent, and that installing a new signal at the Valley/Maple intersection would likely increase the minor street delays, not reduce them, and the high volumes on the main lanes of W. Valley Parkway would be interrupted more frequently.

The Second Ave./Maple St. intersection is geographically separated from and to the south of the proposed pedestrian plaza project between Valley Parkway and Grand Avenue. Since the plaza design will allow the continuation of the north-bound through traffic on Maple Street from Second Avenue to W. Valley Parkway, there will not be a significant project impact to the intersection. Therefore, a traffic signal at Second Avenue/ Maple Street is not required.

The Engineering Department concluded that the proposed project, which does not include the construction of a traffic signal at W. Valley Parkway/Maple Street, would not result in a significant direct impact to the existing levels of service on the adjacent streets since a stable flow of traffic is maintained along the street segments. The Engineering Department also indicated the proposed project is not anticipated to have any significant individual or cumulative impacts to the circulation system or degrade the levels of service on any of the adjacent roadways or intersections since the project would not generate any traffic and adjacent streets have sufficient capacity to handle the few south-bound trips that would be diverted from Maple Street by the proposed one-way north-bound lane.

Design Features/Hazards/Emergency Access – The proposed development would not result in inadequate emergency access, as determined by the Fire Department. Emergency and non emergency response times of the Escondido Fire Department would remain the same with the proposed development. The proposed 20-foot wide fire access lane (the 16-foot wide vehicle lane and 2-foot wide border area on each side,) the radius of the half round-about, the height of the gateway arches, and the location of the removable bollards were reviewed by

the Fire Department and determined to be appropriate for their access needs, both to the alley and the plaza area.

Cumulative Impacts – The above traffic data indicated the project would not result in any significant direct or cumulative impact to the Levels-of-Service of the adjacent road segments and intersections.

Temporary Construction Traffic – Temporary construction-related traffic impacts would occur during the removal of existing paving materials, delivery of new paving materials and potential import material for fine grading of the plaza project (Engineering Department memorandum dated December 30, 2009). Minimal grading is anticipated to prepare the site and equipment used for grading and excavation generally would remain on site and would not contribute to a substantial increase in traffic. Approximately 141 total truck trips (assuming standard 15 cubic yard capacity trucks) would be anticipated over the course of the project construction. This equates to about 10 trips per day, with a peak day estimate of 20 ADT. Additional traffic would be associated with construction employee trips to and from the site, equipment delivery and removal, and other related activities. With this low volume of trips, potential impacts from hauling and construction operations would be avoided by the implementation of safety/traffic control measures that minimize potential conflicts. All measures would be implemented prior to the onset of construction activities. Therefore, potential traffic impacts from construction traffic are not significant.

Parking – Up to 23 on-street parking spaces located along both sides of Maple Street between Grand Avenue and W. Valley Parkway would be removed with the construction of the plaza. When the new access drive to the public parking lot and the future restroom structure are built, up to an additional 5 parking spaces would be lost in the adjacent public parking lot.

Concerns regarding the short-term loss of parking remain an issue with surrounding merchants. Notwithstanding the ongoing availability of parking within walking distance, merchants fear the loss of convenient parking will affect customer patronage. A Downtown Parking Study dated 2/24/06 was prepared by Walker and Associates for the Hotel / Mixed-Use project. This study showed the average utilization of public parking on each of the blocks where the hotel and mixed-use structures (located on Public Parking Lot #1, adjacent to the proposed plaza site) were proposed peaking at 69% and generally staying at or below 50%. In late September, 2005 and again in early February, 2006, City staff surveyed the 906 parking spaces located in the surface lots south of Woodward Avenue and adjacent to the CCAE and City Hall. The survey found that less than half of these parking spaces were occupied at the peak hour of 11:00 AM on a typical weekday. Most of these 906 spaces are located within approximately 1,100 feet of the Civic Center. None are further than 1,400 feet, which at typical walking speed translates into no more than a 7 minute walk. Walker's research on walking distances between where one parks and one's final destination has shown that, particularly in a pleasant walking environment, walking distances of as much as 1,400 feet are acceptable for employees and other long term parkers. This is not the case for retail or restaurant customers and others who park for a short stay or who may be unfamiliar with the area. The Woodward surface lots therefore provide an opportunity for employees and other long-term parkers so that more central spaces can be reserved for those unfamiliar with the area or restaurant users. The downtown merchants could consider having their employees park in the Woodward lot in the short-term as City Hall employees are asked to do. In addition, each of the three commercial uses (a bank, and two retail/commercial buildings) adjacent to the proposed plaza has its own on-site parking area. Access to these private parking areas will be maintained; except that the driveway from Maple Street into the parking lot for the retail/commercial building at the southwest corner of Maple Street / W. Valley Parkway will be closed. The other existing access points to this property from W. Valley Parkway and the alley will be maintained.

The city has completed parking improvements in the vicinity of the Maple Street Plaza project. The public parking spaces on the north side of W. Valley Parkway adjacent to City Hall have been restriped to provide seven accessible disabled parking stalls. These additional accessible parking spaces are in close proximity to the proposed pedestrian plaza, as well as to city hall, grape day park and the arts center. Also, the city council recently approved resolution No. 2009-121R, modifying the management policies for the public parking lots located throughout the downtown area, including Public Parking Lot #1, which is adjacent to the proposed plaza, and Public Parking Lot #2 at the south end of the Maple Street Pedestrian Corridor. The management changes will be effective April 1, 2010 and will include the establishment of a day parking permit; designation of "customer only" parking spaces in Lot #1 (the lot closest to the downtown core area); an increase of almost 40% in the number of parking permits available for purchase; and the removal of a restriction that will allow holders of parking permits to park in any of the public lots.

As the city is continuing to explore ways to increase the number of available public parking spaces in the downtown area, the short-term loss of spaces is not considered significant since the commercial uses adjacent to the plaza site have their own on-site parking; the existing public parking lots through-out the downtown area are under-utilized; over 900 public parking spaces are available within acceptable walking distances for long-term parkers; and the hotel project will provide sufficient on-site parking to accommodate its own parking demand.

Airport-Impacts - The project is not located within the vicinity of a public or private airstrip and would not result in a change in air traffic patterns, increase in traffic levels, or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks.

Adopted Plans/Policies – The project would not conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation. There are no bus stops along Maple Street. Nearby, existing bus stops are located on W. Grand Avenue and W. Valley Parkway at Maple Street. The proposed project would not impact any proposed bus routes or stops, or require the development of new or relocated bus stops.

IV. AIR QUALITY

Significance Criteria and Impact Analysis

Where applicable, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Impacts would be significant if the project:

- a. *Conflicts with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan;*
- b. *Violates any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation;*
- c. *Results in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors;*
- d. *Exposes sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations; or,*
- e. *Creates objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people.*

City of Escondido Significance Criteria:

Project related impacts exceeding any of the following South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) daily emissions criteria can be considered significant:

- Carbon Monoxide (CO) 550 lbs

- *Reactive Organic Gases (ROG)* 55 lbs
- *Oxides of Nitrogen (NOx)* 55 lbs
- *Fine Particulate Matter (PM)* 150 lbs

The project area is within the San Diego Air Basin (SDAB). Air quality at a particular location is a function of the kinds and amounts of pollutants being emitted into the air locally, and throughout the basin, and the dispersal rates of pollutants within the region. The major factors affecting pollutant dispersion are wind, speed and direction, the vertical dispersion of pollutants (which is affected by inversions) and the local topography. The air basin currently is designated a state and federal non-attainment area for ozone and particulate matter. However, in the SDAB, part of the ozone contamination is derived from the South Coast Air Basin (located in the Los Angeles area). This occurs during periods of westerly winds (Santa Ana condition) when air pollutants are windborne over the ocean, drift to the south and then, when the westerly winds cease, are blown easterly into the SDAB. Local agencies can control neither the source nor transportation of pollutants from outside the basin. The Air Pollution Control District (APCD) policy therefore, has been to control local sources effectively enough to reduce locally produced contamination to clean air standards.

For long-term emissions, the direct impacts of a project can be measured by the project's consistency with regional plans to improve and maintain air quality. Local air-quality impacts are directly related to the number of vehicle trips and operation levels on adjacent streets and intersections. According to CEQA Guidelines, a project normally is considered to have a significant air quality impact if it violates any ambient air quality standard, contributes substantially to an existing or projected air-quality violation, or exposes sensitive receptors to substantial pollution concentrations.

Project-Related Impacts – Long-term emissions are related to the amount of vehicular traffic generated by the project. As the project is a master plan for a pedestrian corridor and the modification of an existing public street to intermittent use as a pedestrian plaza, no additional traffic trips would be generated. With the proposed one-way (south to north) traffic pattern through the plaza area, some existing trips currently using Maple Street north to south, will be re-routed to the adjacent two-way north/south streets; Broadway and Escondido Blvd. The Engineering Department indicated that the re-routing of trips generated from the project would not significantly impact the existing Levels of Service on the adjacent streets or intersections. Therefore, the anticipated daily emissions would not exceed local or South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) daily emissions criteria. Since the project would not deteriorate the level of service on adjacent streets and intersections, and is not anticipated to exceed SCAQMD thresholds of significance, the project would not result in a significant impact to local or regional air quality. While the proposed project may have an incremental impact to basin-wide air-quality, the individual impacts attributed to the project are immeasurably small on a regional scale and would not cause ambient air-quality standards to be exceeded on a regional scale. Therefore, the project will not have a significant impact on air quality and no mitigation measures are required.

Construction-Related Emissions

Construction-related activities are temporary, short-term sources of air emissions. Sources of construction-related air emission include:

- Fugitive dust from grading activities;
- Construction equipment exhaust;
- Construction-related trips by worker, delivery trucks and material-hauling trucks; and
- Construction-related power consumption.

The Maple Street Pedestrian Corridor is only a Master Plan for future implementation and would not have

construction-related emissions. The construction of the proposed Maple Street Pedestrian Plaza would include demolition of the existing curb, gutter, sidewalk, street pavement and street trees, and the reconstruction of the right-of-way as a level plaza with a one-way traffic lane. Demolition would entail approximately 950 cubic yards of material to be exported, and the import of base material and paver blocks would be similar, approximately 950 cubic yards. About 163 cubic yards of import material would be needed to create a level plaza/street. Construction equipment primarily would be utilized in an incremental fashion over the course of construction. Due to the relatively small amount of grading anticipated and small size of the project area, no significant earthwork or diesel truck impacts are anticipated. Approximately 141 truck trips would be anticipated over the course of the construction activities. The average two-way ADT from truck traffic associated with the construction of the project is about 10 trips per day. Due to this very low volume, maximum daily emissions of NO_x during construction periods are not projected to exceed City thresholds or APCD standards based on similar studies performed for similar size grading operations.

Construction activities also are a source of fugitive dust emissions that may be a substantial, but temporary impact on local air quality. Dust from grading and other site preparation would generate particulate matter emission. With appropriate use of grading and operation procedures (in conformance with APCD Best Management Practice for dust control), the project would not generate significant particulate matter or dust. The City of Escondido Grading Ordinance and erosion control requirements include provisions for dust control to reduce impacts to air quality during grading and construction activities. At a minimum, these ordinances and provisions require projects to perform regular watering and timely revegetation of disturbed areas to minimize the dust and airborne nuisance impacts to off-site receptors.

Emissions from construction equipment, worker and delivery and material-hauling trucks, and construction-related power consumption would be temporary and would result in an extremely small contribution to the SDAB and therefore would not result in a significant impact. Operations emissions come from area sources, including gasoline-powered landscaping and maintenance equipment, and from vehicle operations associated with the project. The proposed project would not significantly increase traffic volumes on local streets and intersections, as indicated in the Transportation / Traffic Section III above, and the proposed project would not result in a substantial increase in the number of vehicles operating in cold start mode or substantially increase the number of vehicles on local roadways. Therefore, the project would not cause an unacceptable concentration of CO at any project-affected intersection.

Since the project would not adversely impact area roadways and intersections the development of the project would not violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation and would have a less than significant impact on local and regional air quality. Individual impacts attributed to the proposed project are small on a regional scale and will not cause ambient air-quality standards to be exceeded, nor contribute to any adverse cumulative impacts.

Consistency with the RAQS - Consistency with the Regional Air-Quality Standards (RAQS) assumptions is determined by analyzing the project with the assumptions in the RAQS. Forecasts used in the RAQS are developed by the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG). The SANDAG forecasts are based on local general plans and other related documents that are used to develop population projections and traffic projections. The current City plans identifies the project site as public right-of-way, which it will remain, thus, the proposed project would not exceed the assumptions used to develop the RAQS and would not obstruct or conflict with the SDAPCD's RAQS.

Odors - During construction, diesel equipment operating at the site may generate some nuisance odors. However, due to the temporary nature of construction, odors associated with project construction would not be considered significant.

Global Climate Change - Global climate change alleged to be caused by greenhouse gases (GHG) is currently one of the important and widely debated scientific, economic, and political issues in the United States. Global climate change is a change in the average weather of the earth, which can be measured by wind patterns, storms, precipitation, and temperature. With the adoption of AB 32, the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, the State of California has determined that global warming proposes a serious threat to the State's economy, public health and environment. As such, actions which may contribute to global warming are beginning to be addressed in CEQA documents. The adopted legislation defines the greenhouse gasses to be considered and regulated as follows: carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, and sulfur hexafluoride.

An individual project of this scale and nature would not generate enough greenhouse gas emissions to significantly influence global climate change. Greenhouse gas emissions occur in a worldwide system and the project does participate in this potential impact through its incremental contribution, which is combined with the cumulative increase of all other sources of greenhouse gases. There currently are no published thresholds for measuring the significance of a project's cumulative contribution to global climate change. The State of California currently is working to define the greenhouse gas inventory which existed in 1990 to provide a statewide benchmark against which to measure progress. Once that inventory is determined, AB 32 measures future acceptable emissions against that standard over a period of several years. Although the incremental contribution to GHG is not considered significant due to the relatively small size and potential impact from the project, newer projects throughout the City of Escondido continue to implement certain California Air Resources Board Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction Strategies.

V. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Significance Criteria and Impact Analysis

The effects of a project on biological resources are considered to be significant if the proposed project would:

- a. *Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service;*
- b. *Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service;*
- c. *Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means;*
- d. *Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species, or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites;*
- e. *Conflict with any local policies/ ordinance that protect biological resources (e.g. tree preservation policy or ordinance); or,*

- f. *Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan.*

According to the proposed Master Plan, the pedestrian corridor will be located in the Maple Street public right-of-way from 2nd Avenue north to the north side of West Valley Parkway, where the corridor will continue through the Civic Center, Grape Day Park and a public parking lot to Woodward Avenue. As a master plan, no improvements are proposed at this time. Future implementation of the master plan, in whole or in part, will require separate environmental review. The corridor does not contain any sensitive or protected plants, habitat or animal species. Removal of any mature trees would be required to be replaced on a 1:1 basis with specimen-sized trees in accordance with the City's Grading and Landscape Ordinance. Approval of the pedestrian corridor master plan will not result in significant biological impacts.

The Maple Street Plaza will be located in the Maple Street public right-of-way between Grand Avenue and West Valley Parkway. All native plant cover was removed from this area many years ago when the street was constructed. The site does not contain any sensitive or protected plants, habitat or animal species. Mature trees along the block consist of street trees, which will be removed and replaced with new box-sized street trees and additional accent trees, consistent with the City's Grading and Landscape Ordinance. The development of the proposed project would not conflict with the provisions of an adopted or proposed Habitat Conservation Plan. A review of the City's draft MHCP planning efforts indicates that the project site, a public street, is not considered biologically significant or strategically located to warrant being included in a regional or local natural open space preserve.

No plant or animal species recognized as threatened or endangered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or California Department of Fish and Game are located or anticipated to be present within the proposed development area, and no mitigation measures are required. The property is not listed as an open space corridor or animal migration corridor on any City open space planning maps. No Resource Agency permits would be required for the proposed development since the project would not remove any protected or endangered habitats.

VI. CULTURAL RESOURCES

Significance Criteria and Impact Analysis

The effects of a project on cultural resources are considered to be significant if the proposed project would:

- a. *Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5;*
- b. *Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5;*
- c. *Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature; or,*
- d. *Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries.*

The corridor master plan proposes improvements within the public right-of-way along Maple Street and through Grape Day Park and adjacent parking lot. The street and parking lot are currently developed with paved traffic lanes and parking, as well as, curb, gutter, sidewalks and landscaping. Grape Day Park is listed as a Landmark Historic Resource and includes several historic structures moved into the park along the eastern portion of the flood control channel. The corridor master plan identifies potential new walkways, lighting and signs through the park that would not impact the historic structures or recreational opportunities. Further project specific environmental review would be completed prior to the construction of any of the master plan components.

Therefore, the corridor master plan would not result in a significant impact to cultural resources.

The plaza site's current condition is paved and improved as public sidewalk and street and there are no cultural or historically sensitive resources located within this public right-of-way. The project site has been significantly disturbed by previous development. No significant archaeological or paleontological impact has been identified for the project site and no prehistoric resources have been previously recorded on the project site. The City of Escondido General Plan EIR (1990a) does not include the project site in areas identified as having potential paleontological resources. The site does not appear to contain any indicators of significant cultural resources or geologic features. The site also does not contain any resources listed on the City's Historic Sites. Therefore, the project would not result in a significant impact to these resources.

VII. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Significance Criteria and Impact Analysis

The effects of a project on geology and soils are considered to be significant if the proposed project would:

- a. *Expose people or structures to potentially substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:*
 - i. *Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault; (Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42).*
 - ii. *Strong seismic ground shaking;*
 - iii. *Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction; or,*
 - iv. *Landslides.*

Although Escondido is located within a Seismic Zone 4, the project site is not located within proximity to active faults as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map. The closest known active faults are the Rose Canyon Fault and the Elsinore Fault. The Rose Canyon Fault is located about 15 miles southwest of the project site. The Julian segment of the Elsinore Fault is approximately 17 miles northeast of the project site. Accordingly, fault surface rupture is not likely at this project. In the event of a major earthquake on these faults or other faults within the Southern California region, the site could be subjected to moderate to severe ground shaking. However, the site is not considered to possess a significantly greater seismic risk than that of the surrounding area in general.

- b. *Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil;*
- c. *Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse; or,*
- d. *Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property.*

The topography of the site is generally flat. The existing road and improvements in Grape Day Park drain to approved drainage facilities. Proposed grading would be limited to the reconstruction of Maple Street between Grand Avenue and W. Valley Parkway to create a flat continuous pedestrian plaza. The Pedestrian Corridor

master Plan does not propose any grading along Maple Street or in Grape Day Park. Future implementation of portions of the master plan will be subject to additional environmental review.

Based on the depth of potential disturbance of 1-3 feet to reconstruct Maple Street as a pedestrian plaza, impacts to groundwater are not anticipated. If any potential groundwater or drainage issues are encountered they are effectively addressed through appropriate grading and drainage techniques/improvements. Due to the existing character of the project site as an improved road and sidewalk, blasting will not be required. The proposed development would not result in any substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil because all areas will be paved or landscaped. Appropriate compaction of the site would be required to support vehicles and the proposed improvements. Appropriate on-site drainage facilities would be constructed in conformance with the city's grading and storm water provisions. Other potential geologic hazards such as tsunamis, seiches, liquefaction or collapse should be considered to be negligible or nonexistent. Grading and development of the site would be constructed in conformance with any recommendations of a final soils and engineering report, and therefore a significant geology and soils impact would not occur.

e. Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater.

The project site would be served by an existing wastewater/sewer pipeline system within the City of Escondido. No septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal system would be utilized as part of the project.

VIII. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Significance Criteria and Impact Analysis

The effects of a project on hazards and hazardous materials are considered to be significant if the proposed project would:

- a. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials;*
- b. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment;*
- c. Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school; or,*
- d. Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment*

The project would be required to comply with all applicable Fire, Building, and Health and Safety Codes, which would eliminate any potential risk of upset. The site is not located within a 100-year floodplain. Due to the nature of the project and the lack of hazardous materials associated with a pedestrian corridor and plaza, the project would not result in the creation of any health hazards nor would it involve a risk of an explosion or the release of hazardous substances. The plaza site would be located within the existing public right-of-way of Maple Street. A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment was completed in March 2009 by EnviroApplications, Inc. The report is available in the Planning Division file, Case No. ER 2005-45. The assessment included historical research on property adjacent to the subject public right-of-way. A former gas station and vehicle repair shop, present on the

northeast corner of W. Grand Avenue and N. Maple Street from 1940 to 1970, was identified as a potential environmental impact concern. The County of San Diego, Department of Environmental Health (DEH) opened unauthorized release (UAR) Cases H26578-001 (1990) and -002 (1993). A free product removal and ongoing groundwater monitoring and sampling program has been conducted since then by environmental consultants working for the City of Escondido. Residual concentrations of dissolved petroleum hydrocarbons remain in the groundwater underlying this portion of the project area at an average approximate depth of 10-feet below the street pavement level. Soil in this area from approximately 8-feet to 11-feet below the street pavement level is likely impacted with fuel hydrocarbons and may require special handling if excavation to that depth becomes necessary for the proposed Maple Street Pedestrian Plaza project. More shallow fuel hydrocarbon impacted soil may exist in the former underground storage tank (UST) locations beneath the sidewalk, between MW-1 and the parking lot planter. Closure of the UAR Cases is pending preparation of a Corrective Action Plan on behalf of the City of Escondido followed by concurrence by the DEH. If closure is granted by the DEH prior to the start of construction work in the project area, the wells can be abandoned. In the event the subject site unauthorized release case is not closed, it will be necessary to preserve the wells during the construction work in the project area.

No evidence of any other potential adverse environmental conditions, including recognized environmental conditions (RECs) per ASTM International Standard E1527-05, was found to exist in association with the project area. No other known environmental release sites, located either hydro-geologically up or cross-groundwater gradient of the project area, that qualify as a potential adverse environmental contaminant impact source to the project area were identified in the Environmental Data Resources Inc. Report that was obtained and reviewed during the preparation of the ESA. Therefore, no significant impacts from hazards or hazardous materials would occur.

Development of the site would not involve the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials. The project does not involve the use or storage of hazardous materials that would result in a reasonably foreseeable upset or accident conditions. The project would not emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within ¼ mile of an existing or proposed school. Water for the site would be provided by the City of Escondido from existing mains located within the adjacent streets/easements. No groundwater wells would be used to supply water for the site. Accordingly, the project will not create a significant risk of upset or hazard to human health and safety.

- e. *For a project located within an airport land-use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, impacts would occur if the project results in safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area; or,*
- f. *For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, the project results in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area; or,*
- g. *Impair implementation of, or physically interfere with, an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan; or,*
- h. *Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands.*

The project is not located within an airport land-use plan, an airport land-use plan that is to be adopted, or within 2 miles of a public airport. The project is not located within the vicinity of a private airstrip and would not result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area. The project is outside of the Helicopter Overlay zone established for the heliport at Palomar Hospital.

Based on interviews and comments from the Police and Fire Departments the project does not include activities or structures that would impair implementation of, or physically interfere with, an emergency response plan. The proposed development is not expected to result in the need for additional emergency and fire facilities. The project would be required to comply with all applicable Fire, Building, and Health and Safety Code, which would eliminate any potential risk of upset.

The City Fire Department has indicated their ability to adequately circulate through the proposed plaza. The project would not expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wild fires since the site is in an urban setting and would be paved and irrigated. The project is not located within an identified Fire Hazard Area as indicated on Figure 5.7.2 of the 2000 General Plan Update EIR.

IX. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Significance Criteria and Impact Analysis

The effects of a project on hydrology and water quality are considered to be significant if the proposed project would:

- a. Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements, including but not limited to increasing pollutant discharges to receiving waters (Consider temperature, dissolved oxygen, turbidity and other typical storm water pollutants);*
- b. Have potentially significant adverse impacts on ground water quality, including but not limited to, substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted);*
- c. Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river in a manner which would result in substantial/increased erosion or siltation on- or off-site;*
- d. Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site and/or significant adverse environmental impacts;*
- e. Cause significant alteration of receiving water quality during or following construction;*
- f. Cause an increase of impervious surfaces and associated runoff;*
- g. Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned storm water drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff;*
- h. Cause potentially significant adverse impact on ground water quality;*
- i. Cause or contribute to an exceedance of applicable surface or ground water receiving water quality objectives or degradation of beneficial uses;*
- j. Is the project tributary to an already impaired water body, as listed on the Clean Water Act Section 303(d) list? If so, can it result in an increase in any pollutant for which the water body is already impaired;*
- n. Otherwise substantially degrade water quality;*
- k. Create or exacerbate already existing environmentally sensitive areas;*
- l. Create potentially significant environmental impact on surface water quality, to either marine, fresh, or wetland waters; or,*
- m. Impact aquatic, wetland or riparian habitat.*

The site topography is generally flat. Runoff from the existing road improvements in the area of the project currently drains into a public storm drain inlet located in the public street. The amount of run-off from the site would not be expected to incrementally increase upon development of the plaza as the site is currently a public road covered mostly by impervious surfaces. The project would be required to comply with National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) standards. Consequently, the Engineering Department has determined that runoff from the project would not be considered significant and the project would not materially degrade the existing drainage facilities. The City would provide sewer and water service from mains located within the adjacent street or easements, so no significant impact is expected to occur to the groundwater table.

Typical urban pollutants associated with this type of public right-of-way project include oil, grease, solvents, antifreeze, cleaners, various fluids and fuels, trash/debris, fertilizers, and organic matter, which require proper use, storage, and disposal. The project would not withdraw groundwater or interfere with groundwater recharge and groundwater table level. Grading operations associated with the project development are not expected to impact groundwater or be a factor during removal and any recompaction onsite. Water service to the site would be provided by the City of Escondido. Standard BMPs would be implemented during construction to adequately control erosion and siltation impacts to a less than significant level. The development of the site would not cause any diversion to or from the existing watershed. Proper use of erosion and sediment control measures as well as BMPs (which are standard requirements as part of the grading permit) would reduce potential water quality impacts to less than significant. The project does not include activities that would discharge pollutants into groundwater aquifers.

- o. Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map;*
- p. Place project within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows;*
- q. Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam; or,*
- r. Inundate the site by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow.*

The project site is located outside the 100-year flood zone according to SanGIS. Therefore, no structures would impede or redirect flood flows. The project does not propose to construct a levee or dam and would not otherwise expose people or structures to a significant risk of flooding. The project does not include activities that would increase the risk of inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow. Consequently, no significant impacts from potential flooding are expected.

X. MINERAL RESOURCES

Significance Criteria and Impact Analysis

The effects of a project on mineral resources are considered to be significant if the proposed project would:

- a. Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state; or,*
- b. Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land-use plan.*

No known locally important mineral resource recovery site is located on the project site or within the vicinity of the project site. The project would not change the existing availability of mineral resources that would be of value to the region and residents of the state.

XI. NOISE

Significance Criteria and Impact Analysis

The effects of a project on noise are considered to be significant if the proposed project would result in:

- a. Exposure of persons to, or generation of, noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies;*
- b. Exposure of persons to, or generation of, excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels;*
- c. A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project; or,*
- d. A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project.*

Noise generally is defined as loud, unpleasant, unexpected, or undesired sound that is typically associated with human activity and that interferes with or disrupts normal activities. The human environment is characterized by a certain consistent noise level which varies by location and is termed ambient noise. The City's General Plan Noise Element contains policies which outline acceptable noise levels associated with each type of land use. A 60 dBA CNEL exposure is considered normally acceptable for commercial land uses. The City requires that noise levels be presented in terms of Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL). CNEL is a weighted sound level during a 24-hour period, after the addition of 5 decibels (dB) to average sound levels at evening hours (7 PM to 10 PM) and 10dB to the average night hours (10 PM to 7AM), is applied to account for noise sensitivity during evening and nighttime hours.

The project site is located within Maple Street which has a projected 1990 noise contour of 60 dB or greater, as do the adjacent streets, West Valley Parkway and Grand Avenue. The site is surrounded by commercial buildings and parking lots in commercial zones. No residential units are in the area and none are currently proposed. There are no noise-sensitive zones or uses such as hospitals, schools, churches or courthouses within 100 yards of the proposed plaza area. Proposed outdoor uses include seating under shade structures, game (board-type games) tables and a one-way vehicle traffic lane from south to north. As the area currently includes two-way traffic and parking, the project proposal for one lane of traffic would not increase noise, but potentially reduce it. When the street is closed for a public event in the plaza, music and noise will be generated by the gathered people and activities taking place in the plaza. However, as there are no residential units or other noise-sensitive uses in the project vicinity, the short-term temporary increase in noise from a public event would not be considered a significant impact. In addition, the reasonable and temporary sounds emanating from the public event would be exempt from the noise ordinance pursuant to EMC Section 17-242, since there is no adjacent residential development. Therefore exterior noise measures would not be required for the proposed project.

The proposed pedestrian corridor master plan includes potential sensory elements that would be motion activated, and provide sounds to enhance the experience of visitors at several locations, including natural water and wildlife sounds near the flood channel and sounds of grape crushing by the railroad station. As the sounds

would be low-key and only activated as someone came in close proximity, no significant noise impact would be created. A separate environmental review would be completed prior to the construction of any future component of the master pedestrian corridor plan.

Construction Noise

Noise impacts from construction are a function of the noise generated by the construction equipment, the location and sensitivity of nearby land uses, and the timing and duration of the noise-generating activities. Noise levels within and adjacent to the specific construction sites would increase during the construction period. Construction would not cause long-term impacts since it would be temporary and daily construction activities would be limited by the City's Noise Ordinance (Sections 17-234 and 17-238) to hours of less noise sensitivity. Upon completion of the project, all construction noise would cease. No pile driving or explosives blasting is anticipated as a result of the project and, thus, no significant vibrations or groundborne noise would be associated with construction of the proposed project. However, if blasting becomes necessary, the blasting would be performed in conformance with City of Escondido regulations.

- e. For a project located within an airport land-use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, significant impact would occur if the project exposed people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels; or ,*
- f. For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, if the project exposed people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels.*

No private or public airstrips are located within 2 miles of the proposed project site and the project does not include any residential or commercial units.

XII. POPULATION AND HOUSING

Significance Criteria and Impact Analysis

The effects of a project on population and housing are considered to be significant if the proposed project would:

- a. Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?*
- b. Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?*
- c. Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?*

Population within the surrounding area and city would not incrementally increase as a result of this project as no residential units are proposed or are being displaced. The intensity of this development would be in conformance with the General Plan's land-use designation of SP (Specific Plan Area 9) and the Tier 1-Central neighborhood. The project is considered a reconstruction of an existing road and a master plan for a pedestrian corridor, which would not create a demand for additional housing. The project site is located within a developed urban commercial area of the city and would not be considered growth inducing since the project site is within an existing public street and sidewalk area and adequate public facilities are available within the area to serve the project. Therefore, the proposed development of a pedestrian plaza and pedestrian corridor master plan would have no significant impact.

XIII. PUBLIC SERVICES AND XIV. RECREATION

Significance Criteria and Impact Analysis

The effects of a project on public services are considered to be significant if the proposed project would:

a. *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:*

i. *Fire protection*

The City Fire Department has indicated their ability to adequately serve the proposed project. The area currently is served by Fire Station No 1 located at 310 N. Quince Street.

ii. *Police protection*

Use of the plaza for public events would result in an incremental increase in demand for Police Services. However, the Escondido Police Department indicated their ability to adequately serve the proposed project and no significant impacts to police services are anticipated.

iii. *Schools*

The site is within the Escondido Union School District and the Escondido Union High School District. The project does not include any residential units and therefore would have no impact on the school systems.

iv. *Parks*

The project would not result in an incremental increase in demand on the City's recreational facilities. The plaza site would contain its own recreational amenities, including benches, game tables, shade structures with seating, a water feature, street trees and landscaping, all available for public enjoyment. The pedestrian corridor master plan includes potential circulation and lighting improvements to Grape Day Park. The project would not affect existing recreational opportunities available in Grape Day Park. Therefore, no significant impact to recreational resources would occur as a result of the project.

v. *Libraries*

The project would not result in a significant increase in demand on library services, or the development of additional library spaces, books or other related items since it is a non-residential public facility.

vi. *Gas/Electric*

SDG&E would provide gas and electric facilities to the project. The project would not result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered SDG&E facilities.

XV. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Significance Criteria and Impact Analysis

The effects of a project on utilities and service systems are considered to be significant if the proposed project would:

- a. exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board;*
- b. require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects;*
- c. require, or result in, the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects;*
- d. have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed;*
- e. result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves, or may serve, the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments;*
- f. be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs;*
- g. comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste;*

Solid Waste – Escondido Disposal, Inc. (EDI) currently provides solid waste removal service for the Escondido area. EDI also operates a solid waste transfer station at their Washington Avenue site where solid waste is consolidated into larger transfer trucks and taken to a class III landfill for disposal. Solid waste pick-up will be available for the project by EDI for all phases of project implementation, including from construction to special event activities.

Sewer Service – The proposed pedestrian plaza and corridor master plan would not increase demand for sewer service and would have an insignificant impact to the existing facilities. The project would not affect the established General Plan Quality-of-Life Standards for Sewer Service. Sewer service could be provided from mains within the adjoining street system.

Water Service – Water service for the project would be provided by the City of Escondido and is available from mains in the adjoining street system.

Drainage Facilities – See analysis contained within Hydrology and Water Quality Section No. IX.

MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Potential impacts to the environment as a result of this project are in the areas of Traffic and Circulation, Hazards & Hazardous Materials, and Noise. The project is not expected to have any significant impacts, either long-term or short-term, nor will it cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly. The project will not degrade the quality of the environment for plant or animal communities since the project will not cause fish and wildlife populations to drop below self-sustaining levels nor reduce the number or restrict the range of endangered plants or animals. The project will not materially degrade levels of service of the adjacent streets, intersection or utilities. Therefore, in staff's opinion, the proposed project would not have a significant individual or cumulative impact to the environment.

Materials Use in Preparation of this Analysis

1. Escondido General Plan and Environmental Impact Report 1990
2. Escondido General Plan Update and Environmental Impact Report, 2000
3. Escondido Zoning Code and Land Use Maps
4. SANDAG Summary of Trip Generation Rates
5. Escondido Historic Resources Survey
6. City of Escondido:
 - a. Public Works Department
 - b. Engineering Division
 - c. Traffic Division
 - d. Building Division
 - e. Fire Department
 - f. Police Department
 - g. Planning Division
7. FIRM maps (Flood Insurance Rate Maps)
8. Draft MHCP maps (Multiple Habitat Conservation Program)
9. USGS Map for San Diego (Escondido) area
10. County of San Diego Health Department, Hazardous Material Management Division (HMMD) Hazardous Sites List
11. Initial Site Assessment (ISA), Phase I Environmental Site Assessment, Hazardous Materials Study prepared by EnviroApplications, Inc., dated March 27, 2009
12. Visual and Community Character Impact Analysis prepared by Helix Environmental Planning, Inc., dated September 22, 2009
13. Traffic Impact Analysis Report prepared by RBF Consulting for the Escondido Marriott Hotel & Mixed-Use Condominium Project, dated June 3, 2005 and revised April 17, 2006
14. Downtown Parking Study prepared by Walker & Associates, dated 2-24-06
15. not used
16. Escondido Drainage Master Plan (1995)
17. Recommendations by the Association of Environmental Professionals (AEP) on How to Analyze Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Global Climate Change in CEQA Documents (Comment Draft, March 5, 2007).
18. Site Visits/Field Inspections
19. Project Description & Preliminary Information
20. Interim Downtown Specific Plan, adopted 3-21-07, revised 7-8-09
21. Master Plan for Trails and Open Space, prepared January 1994, updated September 1999
22. City Council Resolution No. 2009-121R, Management Policies for Public Parking Lots Downtown