

## PLANNING COMMISSION

Agenda Item No.: G.3  
Date: Sept. 13, 2011

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Planning Staff

SUBJECT: PHG 11-0023 - A Modification to the Master Development Plan for ARCO La Terraza (90-47-PD) to modify and increase the size of the existing ARCO monument signs.

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the proposed modification to the Master Development Plan.

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

A Modification to the Master Development Plan for ARCO La Terraza (90-47-PD) to modify and increase the size of the existing ARCO monument signs to accommodate brand and price signage for the Propel alternative fuel site recently approved to collocate on the ARCO gas station property. The proposed signs would be 44 square feet in size and approximately six-feet high.

### LOCATION:

The 0.85-acre ARCO La Terraza site is located on the southeastern corner of the intersection of West Valley Parkway and La Terraza Boulevard, addressed as 100 La Terraza Boulevard.

### ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

The proposal is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in accordance with CEQA Section 15301 (Existing Facilities). A Notice of Exemption was issued on September 1, 2011.

### BACKGROUND:

The ARCO gas station was one of the first completed properties in the La Terraza commercial planned development when it was constructed in 1991. The site includes an approximately 3,000 SF AM/PM convenience store, and a 2,850 SF freestanding canopy over six fuel dispensers.

On April 12, 2011, the Planning Commission approved a modification to the ARCO Precise Development Plan to allow Propel Fuels to collocate an alternative fueling station on the ARCO site. Propel will build, own and operate a single pump dispenser offering biodiesel and E85 Flex Fuel (85% ethanol 15% gasoline). The Propel business is completely separate from the ARCO business and ARCO employees will not assist with Propel fuel purchases. All Propel transactions will take place at the pump through the use of debit or credit cards. Construction of the fueling station has not started as building plans are currently being reviewed for permit issuance.

In anticipation of opening the new Propel fueling station on the ARCO site, the applicant is proposing to modify the sign program for the gas station to increase the size of two existing monument signs. The new monument signs would be designed to include brand identification and price signage for the Propel fuels as well as the current ARCO brands and pricing.

DISCUSSION:

***Project Design and Design Review Board***

Propel Fuels is in the process of building a California network of 75 alternative fuel sites. The majority of sites will be located at existing gas stations to provide easy accessibility and enhanced fuel options in locations where consumers currently fuel their vehicles.

The ARCO gas station in La Terraza is on a highly visible corner lot adjacent to West Valley Parkway, which is designated as a Prime Arterial street. The site design includes an AM/PM convenience store located on the corner with the ARCO gas dispensers and canopy located behind the store. Driveway access is provided on both Valley Parkway and La Terraza Boulevard. Double-sided, internally illuminated monument signs are located near each driveway. The existing monument signs identify the ARCO brand and pricing and are approximately 30 SF in size.

The approved Master Plan for the ARCO site (90-47-PD) established a maximum size of 32 SF each for the two monument signs allowed on the site. A height limit of four feet was also established. The applicant is proposing to increase the size of the signs to accommodate the Propel pricing information. The proposal would install two new monument signs in the same location where the two existing signs are located. Each sign would include separate illuminated cabinets for the two fuel suppliers and would be a total of 44 SF with a height of 5'-8," including the sign base. The sign base would be a 12-foot-wide textured aluminum cabinet that would be painted to match the building.

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The request to increase the size and height on the monument signs was submitted in response to staff direction to maintain a maximum of one monument sign on each street frontage instead installing separate signs for the Propel pricing. Staff feels collocating the pricing information on slightly larger signs is better than having two separate monument signs on each street frontage.

Although sign standards for the ARCO site are regulated by the standards adopted as part of the Master Plan, the Sign Ordinance generally regulates the size of freestanding signs on commercial properties. Freestanding signs (includes monument signs) less than six feet in height are encouraged, and in some cases, are permitted to bypass the design review process. Based on the size of the ARCO property, the Sign Ordinance would allow freestanding signs up to 80 SF in size with a maximum height of 15 feet. The proposed modification would be well within those limitations.

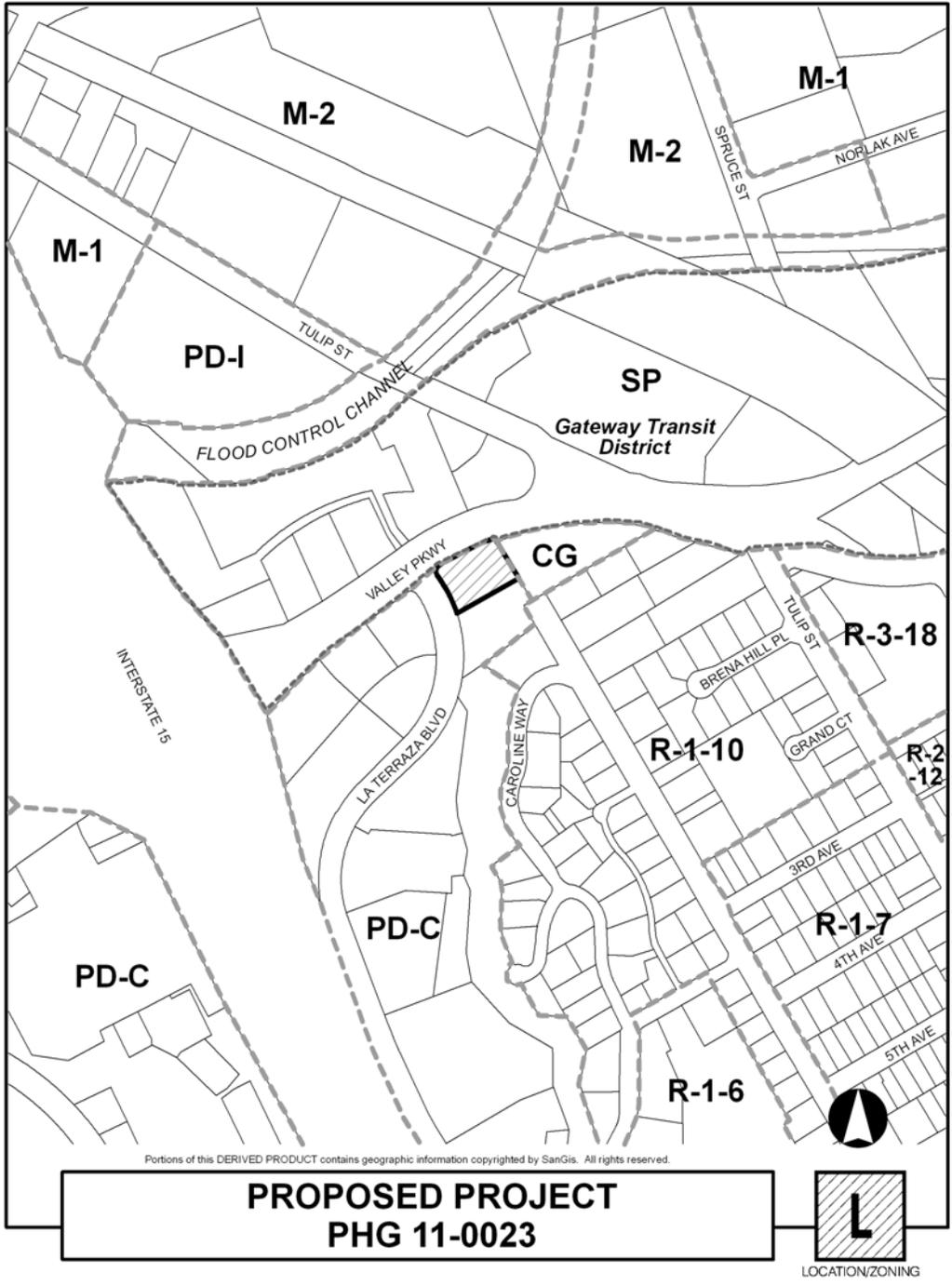
On June 23, 2011, the Design Review Board considered the applicant's proposal for the new monument signs. After clarifying the Propel price signs would use green LED, the Board voted unanimously to recommend approval of the new signs as designed.

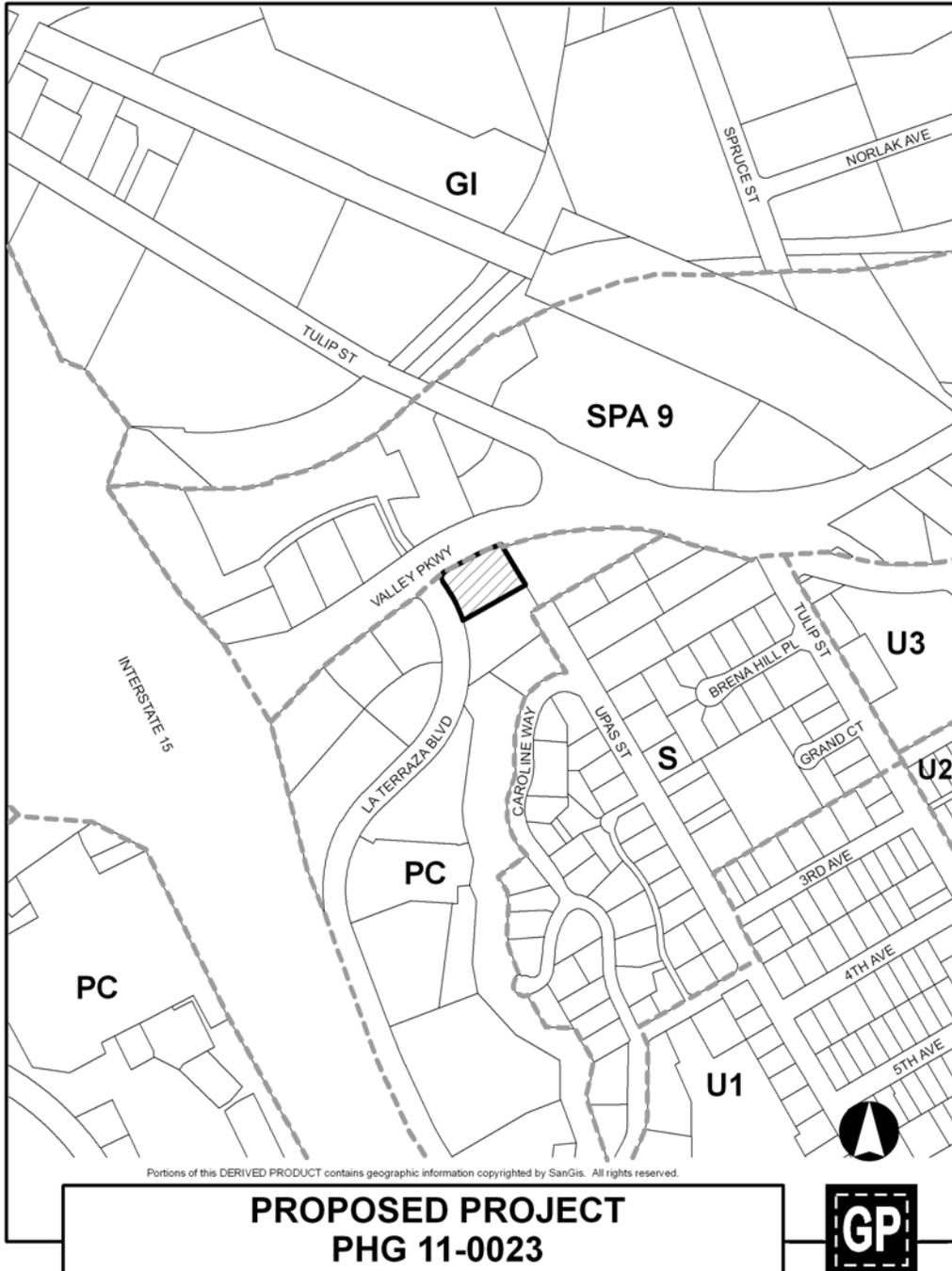
SUMMARY:

Staff feels the proposed modification to the Master Development Plan is appropriate because the proposed increase in the size of the monument signs would be well within the city's Sign Ordinance standards for commercial properties, and would allow all brand and pricing information to be colocated on a single sign for each street frontage.

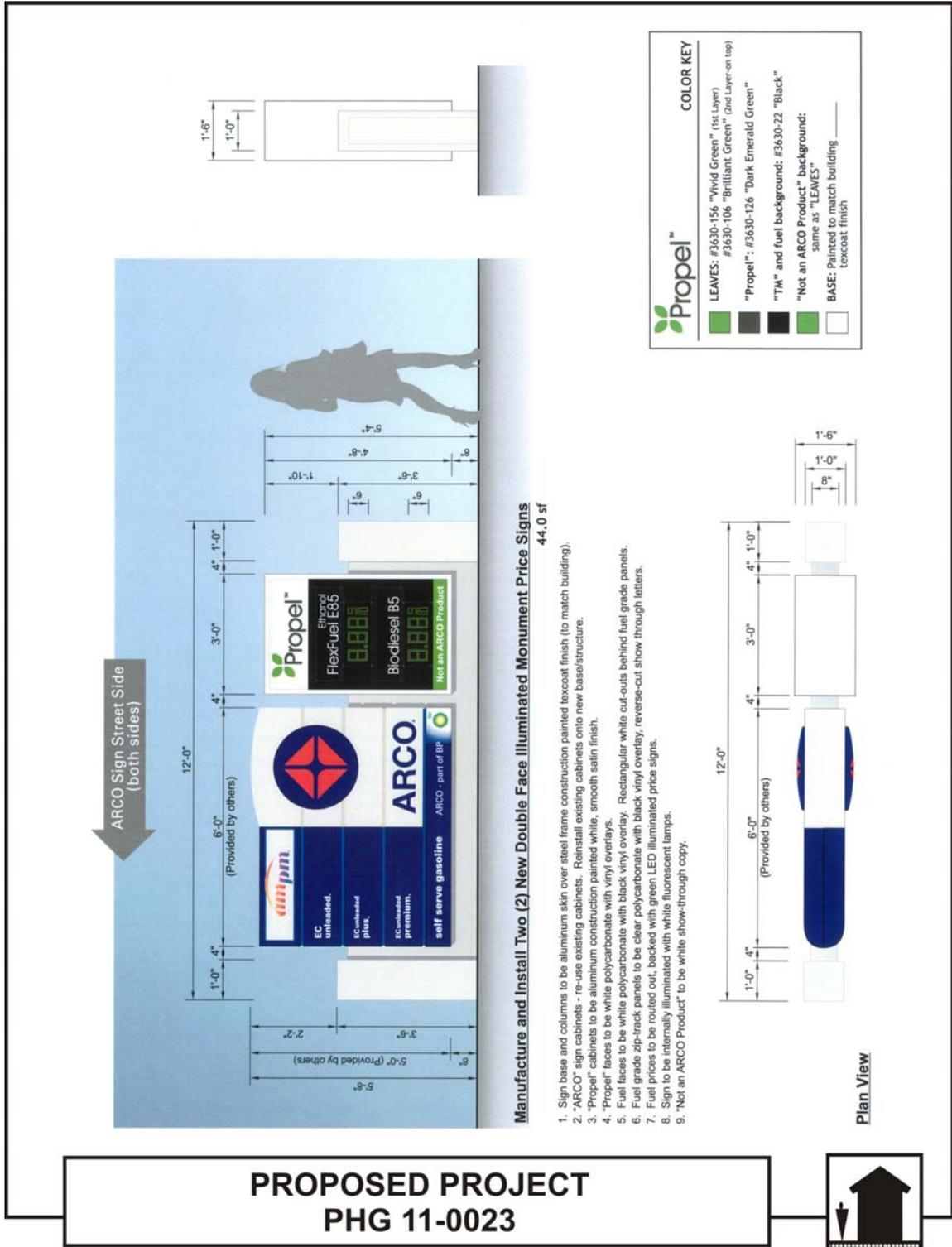
Respectfully submitted.

Bill Martin  
Principal Planner









## SUPPLEMENT TO STAFF REPORT/DETAILS OF REQUEST

### A. SUPPLEMENTAL DETAILS OF REQUEST

	<u>Existing/Approved</u>	<u>Proposed</u>
1. Property Size:	0.85 acres	
2. Building Size: AM/PM store	2,988 SF	No Change
3. Fuel Canopy Size: ARCO:	2,850 SF 22' height	No Change
Propel:	360 SF 22' height	No Change
4. Fuel Canopy Design: ARCO:	Metal fascia and supports with terra-cotta, barrel tile mansard roof	No Change
Propel:	Metal fascia and supports with terra- cotta, barrel tile mansard roof	No Change
5. Hours of Operation:	24 hrs/7 days	No Change
6. Parking:	12 spaces (based on size of convenience store)	No Change
7. Monument Signs:	Per 90-47-PD Master Plan (32 SF, 4' high)	ARCO 30 SF <u>Propel 14 SF</u> TOTAL 44 SF (each sign not including base) Max. height of six feet.

**FINDINGS OF FACT  
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EXHIBIT "A"**

1. Granting the Modification to the Master Development Plan to allow an increase in the size of the monument signs so that Propel Fuels can collocate their brand and price signage with the ARCO signs would be in conformance with the City's General Plan land-use designation of Planned Commercial, which permits a wide variety of commercial uses including office, retail, restaurants and the gas station within the master planned commercial center. The proposed project would not diminish the Quality-of-Life Standards of the General Plan as the project would not materially degrade the level of service on adjacent streets or public facilities, create excessive noise, and adequate on-site parking, circulation and public services could be provided to the site.
2. The location and size of the proposed monument signs would be well integrated with their surroundings and would not result in a substantial alteration of the present or planned land use since the property is developed with a gasoline station that already has existing monument signs that would be replaced with slightly larger signs in the same locations. The project design and colors are consistent with the overall design theme for the existing gas station and the La Terraza Design Criteria originally developed as part of the Master Plan.
3. The proposed facility would be adequately served by existing public facilities since city sewer and water service is available from existing mains in the adjacent streets or easements, and the project would not adversely impacts these facilities nor require significant upgrades to the existing infrastructure.
4. The overall design of the proposed signs would be in compliance with General Plan Policies and would not result in a negative impact to the adjacent neighborhood for the reasons stated above and detailed in the Planning Commission staff report.
5. The proposal is exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in conformance with Section 15301, "Existing Facilities" and a Notice of Exemption was prepared for the proposed project. In staff's opinion, the request does not have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment due to the project's design and conformance with the commercial zoning designation and standards established for the site.

**CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL  
PHG 11-0023  
EXHIBIT "B"**

**Planning Division Conditions**

1. All conditions of the previous Master and Precise Plan approval (90-47-PD) for the ARCO La Terraza facility shall remain in full force and effect unless specifically modified by the previously approved Precise Plan modification (PHG 11-0001) that permitted the Propel fueling station, or as modified herein with respect to monument signs.
2. The developer shall be required to pay all development fees of the City then in effect at the time and in such amounts as may prevail when building permits are issued, including any applicable City-Wide Facilities fees.
3. All construction and grading shall comply with all applicable requirements of the Escondido Zoning Code and requirements of the Planning Division, Engineering Division, Building Division, and Fire Department.
4. The legal description attached to the application has been provided by the applicant and neither the City of Escondido nor any of its employees assume responsibility for the accuracy of said legal description.
5. All requirements of the Public Art Partnership Program, Ordinance No. 86-70, shall be satisfied prior to building permit issuance. The ordinance requires that a public art fee be added at the time of the building permit issuance for the purpose of participating in the City Public Art Program.
6. All exterior lighting shall conform to the requirements of Article 35 (Outdoor Lighting) of the Escondido Zoning Code. All outdoor lighting shall be provided with appropriate shields to prevent light from adversely affecting adjacent properties.
7. As proposed, 12 striped parking spaces shall be provided in conjunction with the service station/convenience store development. Said parking spaces shall be double-striped and dimensioned per City standards. The striping shall be drawn on the plan or a note shall be included on the plan indicating the intent to double-stripe per City standards.
8. Parking for disabled persons shall be provided (including "Van Accessible" spaces) in full compliance with Section 1129B (Accessible Parking

Required) of the California Building Code, including signage. All parking stalls shall be provided with six-inch curbing or concrete wheel stops in areas where a vehicle could reduce minimum required planter, driveway or sidewalk widths.

9. Trash enclosures must be designed and built per City standards, and permanently maintained. All trash enclosures (including existing trash enclosures) shall meet current engineering requirements for storm water quality, which includes the installation of a decorative roof structure. Solid metal doors shall be incorporated into the trash enclosure. A decorative exterior finish shall be used. All trash enclosures must be screened by landscaping as specified in the Landscape Ordinance. All trash enclosures shall be of sufficient size to allow for the appropriate number of trash and recyclable receptacles as determined by the Planning Division and Escondido Disposal, Inc.
10. Colors, materials and design of the project shall be in substantial conformance with the plans/exhibits approved by the Design Review Board on June 23, 2011, and the exhibits and details in the staff report to the satisfaction of the Planning Division.
11. All new utilities shall be underground.
12. All proposed signage associated with the project must comply with the Master Development Plan sign criteria which are now modified to allow a maximum size of 44 SF and a maximum height of six feet for the two monument price signs permitted on the site. All signage requires a separate sign permit.
13. The City of Escondido hereby notifies the applicant that the County Clerk's office requires a documentary handling fee of \$50.00 in order to file a Notice of Exemption for the project (environmental determination for the project). In order to file the Notice of Exemption with the County Clerk, in conformance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Section 15062, the applicant should remit to the City of Escondido Planning Division, within two working days of the final approval of the project (the final approval being the hearing date of the Planning Commission or City Council, if applicable), a certified check payable to the "County Clerk" in the amount of \$50.00. The filing of a Notice of Exemption and the posting with the County Clerk starts a 35 day statute of limitations period on legal challenges to the agency's decision that the project is exempt from CEQA. Failure to submit the required fee within the specific time noted above will result in the Notice of Exemption not being filed with the County Clerk, and a 180 day statute of limitations will apply.

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14. All project generated noise shall comply with the City's Noise Ordinance (Ord. 90-08) to the satisfaction of the Planning Division.
15. All vegetation (including existing vegetation required as part of previous project approvals) shall be maintained in a flourishing manner, and kept free of all foreign matter, weeds and plant materials not approved as part of the landscape plan. All irrigation shall be maintained in fully operational condition.