



Sean McGlynn, City Manager
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February 5, 2024

Supervisor Lawson-Remer:

I am writing to request removal of 620 E. Valley Parkway from inclusion in the scope of the Board of Supervisors agenda item, "Making County Land Available for Emergency Homeless Shelter Solutions." While it is important to provide support to those in need, this location is not suitable for a temporary homeless shelter and will have negative consequences for our community.

First and foremost, the proposed location is in close proximity to residential areas, schools, and businesses. Placing a temporary homeless shelter in such a location may pose safety concerns for residents and could potentially lead to an increase in crime and blight. Additionally, by utilizing the 620 E. Valley Parkway as an emergency shelter Escondido's downtown core would be bookended with homeless shelters and services. Only one mile away from the proposed location Interfaith Community Services operates homeless sheltering and other supportive services. The immediate area surrounding 550 W. Washington Ave already represents the single largest calls for police services for the City of Escondido, and so adding this location would only compound the already challenging situation.

Next, the City of Escondido adopted a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) on June 7, 2023, that prioritizes land use for housing that promotes an increase in population growth rates and an increase in available local jobs to improve the City's economy. This document was filed with the federal Economic Development Administration (EDA), outlining specific tactics to encourage population growth and job growth within Escondido. Learn more about the report here: <https://escondido.org/ceds>.

Escondido experiences lower educational attainment rates and lower average annual wages than surrounding cities in San Diego County (see CEDS report.) Therefore, land within the City boundaries is prioritized by the City Council for permanent housing and job opportunities to allow for economic recovery and resiliency.

The geographic area of the downtown-specific plan within the City of Escondido is listed as an area of focus in the CEDS and includes the development of market-rate housing units at the location of the former Palomar Hospital site, a location directly across from the proposed County location for emergency housing shelter consideration.

The City is working to increase housing and businesses in a walkable neighborhood of the downtown-specific plan; current homelessness activity in the downtown-specific plan area is a detractor from residential and business growth and has contributed to a -347.7% 12-month retail building net absorption rate and an overall 6% vacancy rate in

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retail (meaning businesses are actively vacating the area at a rapidly growing rate). The average retail vacancy rate in the County of San Diego is 3.83%.

The Escondido City Council recently adopted an East Valley Specific Plan that allows for higher-density housing zoning. The proposed County site for the emergency shelter is zoned commercial and located in the East Valley Specific Plan, immediately adjacent to the Downtown Specific Plan area. Pursuing this property as an emergency homeless shelter would further exacerbate blight within a low-income census tract in need of revitalization and development consistent with the East Valley Specific Plan. Use of this site for anything other than permanent, dense housing or job creation detracts from the City's strategic priorities of creating permanent housing and job growth.

Additionally, the proposed shelter lacks proper infrastructure and resources to support the anticipated influx of individuals seeking assistance. Without a comprehensive plan in place, the proposed shelter threatens to become overwhelmed, leading to unsanitary conditions, increased strain on emergency services, and a decline in the overall quality of life for residents, businesses, and the homeless population.

Furthermore, the City was not adequately consulted about this recommendation. It is crucial to consider the opinions and concerns of our community members, who will be directly affected by the presence of the shelter.

I strongly urge you to remove 620 E. Valley Parkway from consideration for the emergency homeless shelter, and instead prioritize and expedite the RFP for housing. It is essential to work collaboratively with residents, businesses, and other stakeholders to find a considered and practical solution.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I trust that you will carefully consider these concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a series of fluid, connected strokes that form the name 'Sean McGlynn'.

Sean McGlynn
City Manager

cc: Supervisor Jim Desmond