



# STAFF REPORT

DATE: 6/25/2024

PL24-0007 | Consistency Amendments to the Land Use Element and East Valley Area Plan

**PROJECT NUMBER / NAME:** PL24-0007 | Consistency Amendments to the Land Use Element and East Valley Area Plan

**REQUEST:** A request to amend the City of Escondido's General Plan Land Use and Community Form chapter and the East Valley Parkway Area Plan for conformance with the East Valley Specific Plan.

**PROPERTY SIZE AND LOCATION:** CityWide

**APPLICANT:** City of Escondido

**GENERAL PLAN / ZONING:** General Commercial (CG), Office (O), Commercial Professional (CP), Planned Development (PD)/Specific Plan (S-P).

**PRIMARY REPRESENTATIVE:** Pricila Roldan, Associate Planner

**DISCRETIONARY ACTIONS REQUESTED:** General Plan Amendment

**PREVIOUS ACTIONS:**

1. In 2004, City Council Adopted the East Valley Parkway Area Plan through Resolution No. 2004-136 which sought to revitalize and boost business around the East Valley area in Escondido.
2. In 2012, the City Council adopted the General Plan update identifying the East Valley area as an ideal location for anticipated growth and mixed-use development. The General Plan Land Use and Community Form chapter identifies 15 Specific Planning Areas and 16 Target Areas.
3. In 2023, the City of Escondido adopted Ordinance No. 2023-10 which approved the East Valley Specific Plan and rezoned approximately 191 acres adjacent to and east of downtown Escondido.

**CEQA RECOMMENDATION:** This effort is not considered a "project" under CEQA, as defined in section 15378(b)(5) of the State CEQA Guidelines.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Recommend City Council Approval

**REQUESTED ACTION:** Adopt Resolution No. 2023-03

**CITY COUNCIL HEARING REQUIRED:** ☒ YES ☐ NO

**REPORT APPROVALS:** ☐ Dare DeLano, Senior Deputy City Attorney

☒ Veronica Morones, City Planner



# CITY of ESCONDIDO

## STAFF REPORT

### BACKGROUND

The proposed amendments impact the Escondido General Plan's the Land Use and Community Form chapter ("Land Use chapter") and the East Valley Parkway Area Plan (EVPAP). The amendments requested under this General Plan Amendment are a result of the East Valley Specific Plan's adoption on July 19, 2023. The information below provides context on how general plans, area plans, and specific plans differ from one another.

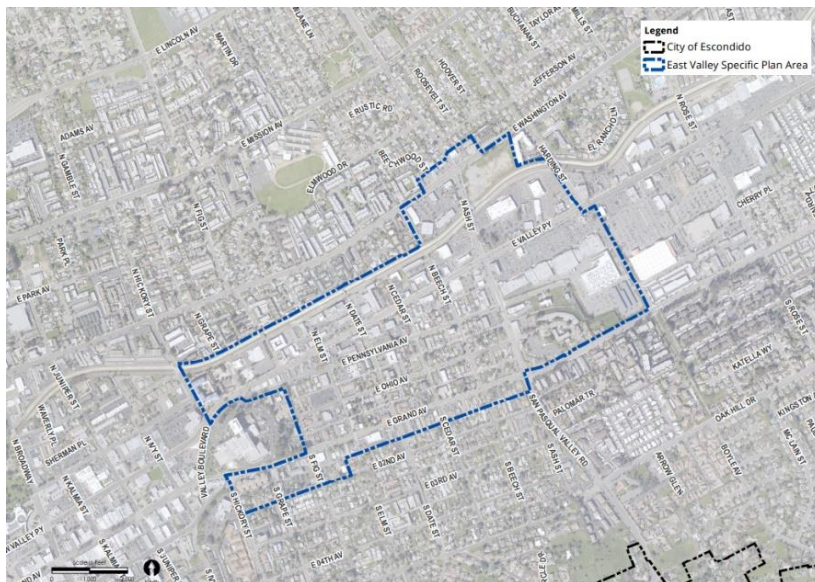
**General Plan:** The general plan is a local government's blueprint for meeting the long-term vision for the future. A general plan expresses a community's development goals and sets forth public policy relative to the distribution of future land uses, both public and private. The Escondido General Plan is comprised of 10 chapters that focus and address various topics including housing, transportation, safety and more.

**Area Plan:** An area plan is an extension of the general plan. An area plan provides more specific development policies and measures that seek to meet additional objectives within a particular region or community in a city.

**Specific Plan:** A specific plan is designed to systematically implement the general plan (California Government Code §65450). Specific Plans are prepared, adopted, and amended in the same manner as general plans and therefore must have certain analyses and components. Similar to area plans, specific plans provide development policies and measures for a specific region or zone (i.e., geographic area); however, specific plans maintain greater legal weight in comparison to area plans due to the scrutiny specific plans must meet for adoption.

### **East Valley Specific Plan (EVSP)**

On July 19, 2023, the Escondido City Council adopted Ordinance No. 2023-10 and 2023-85, approving the East Valley Specific Plan and associated Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR). The EVSP is located in central Escondido,



immediately adjacent to and east of downtown. Generally, the EVSP is bounded by South Hickory and North Fig streets to the west and Harding Street to the east. The Escondido Creek flood control channel and East Washington Avenue bounds the area to the north and Grand Avenue and East 2nd Street bounds the area to the south (Figure 1). The EVSP seeks to spur economic activity and increase housing through a combination of design guidelines, policies, and overlays. Adoption of the EVSP was a necessary component to plan for the City's [Sixth Planning Cycle \(2021-2029\) Regional Housing Needs Allocation](#) and achieve State certification of the Escondido General Plan's Housing Element.

**Figure 1 – East Valley Specific Plan (EVSP)**



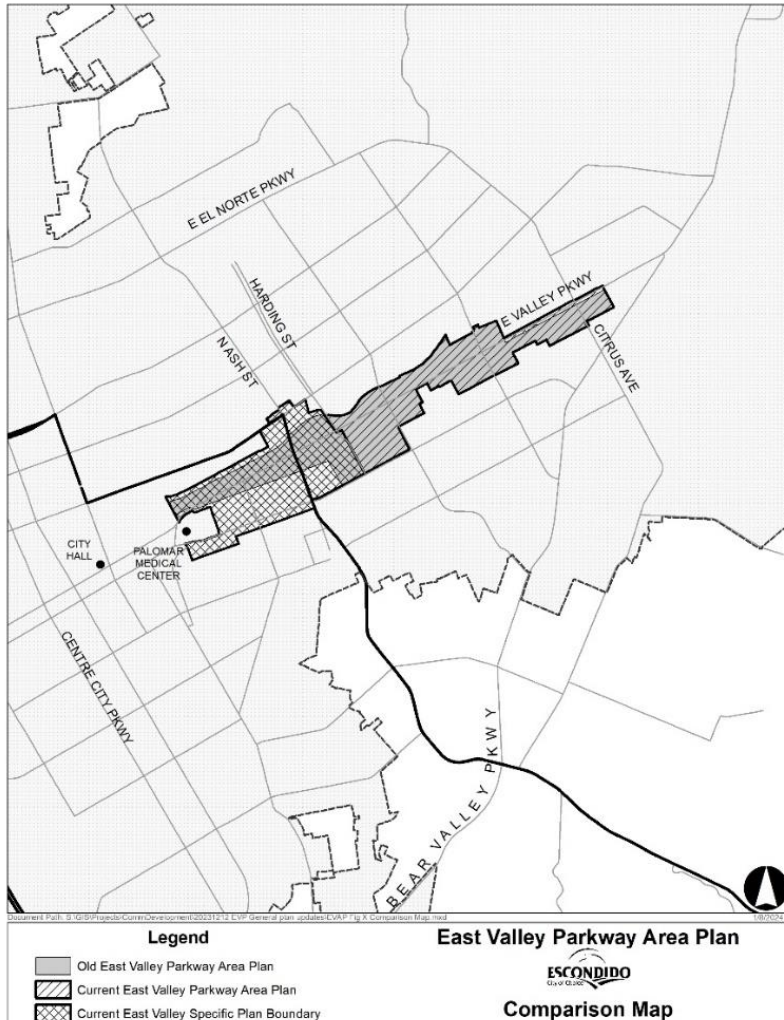
# CITY of ESCONDIDO

## STAFF REPORT

### East Valley Parkway Area Plan (EVPAP)

In 2004, the City Council approved the East Valley Parkway Area Plan (EVPAP) (refer to Figure 2) which refined the general plan's policies in an effort to further commercial objectives and attract office and professional uses; rehabilitate commercial centers; and strengthen business establishments within the East Valley area. Adoption of the EVPAP created a two-mile commercial district that extended along East Valley Parkway from Hickory Avenue at the west end to Citrus Avenue on the east. The East Valley Parkway Area Plan is also bounded by the Escondido Creek flood control channel to the north and Pennsylvania Avenue and Grand Avenue to the south.

Approval of EVSP bifurcated the existing East Valley Parkway Area Plan, and rezoned approximately 191 acres of General Commercial land (CG) to Specific Planning area (S-P). Changes in land uses, policies, and direction triggers mandatory consistency adjustments in the East Valley Parkway Area Plan and General Plan's Land Use chapter. Approval of the EVSP also created new boundaries between the East Valley Parkway Area Plan and EVSP (Figure 2). While the EVSP rezoned the entirety of the western portion of the East Valley Parkway Area Plan, the EVSP is also comprised of neighborhoods outside the East Valley Parkway Area Plan boundary.



**Figure 2 –EVSP and EVPAP Boundary Comparison**

### General Plan Land Use and Community Form chapter

The City of Escondido's General Plan was comprehensively updated in 2012. As a result, the Land Use and Community Form chapter ("Land Use chapter") identified Opportunity Areas. These Opportunity Areas encourage land use changes and incorporate smart growth principles that promote compact, walkable development patterns. Opportunity Areas consist of three Specific Planning Areas (SPAs) and many Target Areas. The General Plan assigns an official land use designation to Specific Planning Areas, whereas Target Areas are specific geographic areas and provide "guiding principles" for future development. The Land Use chapter identifies 15 SPAs and 16 Target Areas.



# CITY of ESCONDIDO

## STAFF REPORT

In 2012, the East Valley Parkway Target Area ("Target Area") was identified as a General Plan Opportunity Area. As part of the 2021 Housing Element update, the City identified the western portion of the Target Area for creation of a new specific plan area to meet the City's Regional Housing Needs Allocation for the 2021-2029 planning period. The adoption of the new specific planning area (i.e., EVSP) created inconsistencies between the Land Use chapter and the EVSP.

### SUMMARY OF REQUEST

Tables 1 and 2 below identify the proposed amendments needed in the General Plan's Land Use chapter and East Valley Parkway Area Plan to create consistency with the newly adopted EVSP. Amendments to the East Valley Parkway Area Plan and the General Plan Land Use chapter would create consistency between City documents.

#### East Valley Parkway Area Plan Amendments

The EVSP bifurcated the boundaries of the East Valley Parkway Area Plan, creating new boundaries for both the EVSP and the East Valley Parkway Area Plan. The East Valley Parkway Area Plan now extends from Harding Street on the west end, to just beyond Citrus Avenue on the east end, whereas previously it extended farther west to Hickory Street. The Area Plan is still bound by the Escondido Creek flood control channel to the north and Pennsylvania Avenue and East Grand Avenue to the south.

The EVSP land uses, boundaries, and references supersede those in the East Valley Parkway Area Plan. To create consistency between the EVSP and the East Valley Parkway Area Plan, staff identified the following changes:

1. Addition of a cover page highlighting the changes to the Area Plan as a result of the EVSP adoption;
2. Changes to existing boundaries in the East Valley Parkway Area Plan text and figures to delineate the revised East Valley Parkway Area Plan boundary;
3. Removal of any language that references or sets standards in areas that are now governed by EVSP;
4. Update the East Valley Parkway Area Plan's zoning labels and business data to reflect changes stemming from EVSP adoption.

A strikethrough and underlined version of the Area Plan with all proposed changes is included as part of this report ("Attachment 1"). Table 1 provides a summary of the proposed text revisions to the East Valley Parkway Area Plan:

**TABLE 1: TEXT REVISIONS TO THE EAST VALLEY PARKWAY AREA PLAN**

PAGE #	TOPIC	MODIFICATION
II	Informational	Add ordinance reference for GPA.
1	Boundary Reference Change	Change "Hickory Avenue" to "Harding Street"
2	History	Add reference to the adopted EVSP and update nomenclature for the Westfield Shoppingtown, known today as the North County Mall
4-5, 36, 38-39,	Grammar	Correction to grammatical issues.





# CITY of ESCONDIDO

## STAFF REPORT

7-8	Zoning/Boundary Reference Change	Add a sentence identifying the changes in zoning before and after this resolution. Remove reference to the Escondido Shopping Center Subarea
9	Boundary Reference Change	Remove "Ash Street"
10-11	Existing Land Use: Data update	Update business data to reflect the number of businesses in EVAP (decrease from 400 to 329). Update the percentage of businesses in the EVAP relative to the City
11, 13, 31, 33-34, 44-45	Boundary Reference Change	Remove "Fig Street" and "Ash Street" and replace with and include "Harding Street"
14- 22	Zoning	Remove "Planned Development Zones" (PD-R) and "Hospital Professional" (HP)
23-24	Zoning/Boundary Change	Remove the Escondido Village Shopping Subarea
25	Zoning/Boundary Change	Remove parking standards specific to the Escondido Village Shopping Subarea
31-32	Boundary Reference Change	Remove "Ash Street" and replace with "Rose Street"
43	Boundary Reference Change	Removed reference to the land mark element on Ash Street

### General Plan Amendments

Adoption of the EVSP created discrepancies within the Land Use chapter with regard to the Specific Planning Areas (SPA) and Target Areas. In an effort to bring those portions of the Land Use chapter into alignment with the newly adopted EVSP, the following changes to the Land Use chapter are proposed:

1. Update to the City's Land Use map to depict the EVSP area;
2. Creation of a new EVSP SPA figure and section in accordance with the SPA section of the Land Use chapter;
3. Addition of an EVSP reference to the existing Opportunity Areas section of the Land Use chapter, "Target Area H: East Valley Parkway Area."

A strikethrough and underlined version of the Land Use chapter's proposed changes is included as part of this report ("Attachment 2"). Table 2 provides a summary of the proposed text revisions to the Land Use chapter:



# CITY of ESCONDIDO

## STAFF REPORT

**TABLE 2: TEXT REVISIONS TO THE LAND USE AND COMMUNITY FORM CHAPTER**

PAGE #	TOPIC	MODIFICATION
II-65-66	Specific Plan	New Specific Planning Area section for the EVSP
II-81	East Valley Parkway Target Area	EVSP reference added to the adopted plans section

### PROJECT ANALYSIS

1. Pursuant to state law, the General Plan, East Valley Parkway Area Plan, and the East Valley Specific Plan must be consistent and compatible with one another. Staff reviewed adopted documents and drafted the necessary changes to ensure no conflicts between documents exist as a result of the EVSP's adoption, as shown under Attachments 1 and 2 of this report. General Plan Conformance:

A specific plan must meet statutory requirements under California Government Code section 65451, including consistency with a jurisdiction's general plan (Gov. Code section 65454). Adoption of the EVSP resulted in minor text and figure inconsistencies within the General Plan and the East Valley Parkway Area Plan. Such inconsistencies would be rectified as part of this amendment, resulting in consistency across City policy documents. The proposed request would conform with Policy 17.4 of the Land Use and Community Form chapter of the General Plan, which outlines when amendments are required. The EVSP's adoption triggers the need to update the General Plan's Land Use Map and text within both the General Plan and EVPAP.

2. Zoning or Specific Plan Conformance:

During the 2023 annual zoning code clean up, staff corrected Article 79 (East Valley Parkway Overlay Zone) for consistency with the EVSP's adoption. This change provided conformance of the City's Zoning Code to the General Plan and new EVSP. The proposed General Plan Amendment is the last clean up step in ensuring consistency across policy documents related to the EVSP.

3. Climate Action Plan Consistency:

The Climate Action Plan (CAP) provides a comprehensive approach to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in communities. The proposed project entails document consistency cleanup between the EVSP, the Land Use chapter, and East Valley Parkway Area Plan. The EVSP is designed to encourage a safe and efficient transportation network through infrastructure improvements that provide alternatives to single occupancy vehicle use and increased density. Eliminating discrepancies between EVSP and the land use chapter, as well as the East Valley Parkway area plan facilitates development projects within the EVSP boundaries, therefore supporting the Climate Action Plan's goals.



# CITY of ESCONDIDO

## STAFF REPORT

### FISCAL ANALYSIS

This project has no direct fiscal impact to the City budget.

Changes to the East Valley Parkway Area Plan and General Plan will clarify and ensure consistency among City policy documents.

### ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

Changes to the East Valley Parkway Area Plan and General Plan are not considered a "Project" under CEQA, as defined in section 15378(b)(5) of the State CEQA Guidelines.

### PUBLIC INPUT

This effort seeks to only make the necessary adjustments to already adopted plans, without increasing the scope or significantly altering documents. The project was noticed in accordance with State and local requirements, including those identified within Article 61, Division 6.

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

On July 19, 2023, the Escondido City Council adopted Ordinance No. 2023-10 and 2023-85 adopting the EVSP and associated Program Environmental Impact Report. The EVSP is located in central Escondido, immediately adjacent to, and east of, downtown. Approval of the EVSP bifurcated the existing East Valley Parkway Area Plan and rezoned approximately 191 acres of General Commercial land to Specific Planning Area. Changes in land uses, policies, and direction requires mandatory consistency adjustments in the East Valley Parkway Area Plan and General Plan pursuant to State law. Staff requests Planning Commission's recommendation to Council to remove conflicts between the EVSP, East Valley Parkway Area Plan, and General Plan.

Staff recommends the Planning Commission adopt Resolution No. 2024-03, recommending approval of the proposed General Plan Amendment to the Land Use and Community Form chapter and East Valley Parkway Area Plan.

### ATTACHMENTS

1. Draft changes to the East Valley Parkway Area Plan in strikethrough and underline (full document)
2. Draft changes to the Land Use and Community Form chapter in strikethrough and underline (excerpted)
3. Draft Planning Commission Resolution No. 2024-03, including Exhibits A, B, and C