



STAFF REPORT

DATE: June 27, 2023

PHG20-0028 – East Valley Specific Plan

PROJECT NUMBER / NAME: PHG20-0028 / EAST VALLEY SPECIFIC PLAN

REQUEST: A request to create a new Specific Plan that would provide a forward-looking vision for the future of the East Valley area in central Escondido (“Project”). The East Valley Specific Plan (“EVSP”) is intended to provide guidance for private development and public investment in the EVSP Area, consistent with the adopted Escondido General Plan. The EVSP Area would be rezoned from existing commercial and office uses to mixed-use and high-density residential uses to encourage new housing opportunities, improve economic vibrancy, and allow for flexibility in use and implementation as the EVSP Area changes over time.

PROPERTY SIZE AND LOCATION: The East Valley Specific Plan area is comprised of approximately 191 acres generally bound by Escondido Creek to the north; Harding Street to the east, Grand Avenue and East 2nd Street to the south; and North Hickory, South Hickory, and North Fig Streets to the west

APPLICANT: City of Escondido

GENERAL PLAN / ZONING: General Commercial, Office / General Commercial, Commercial Professional, Hospital Professional

PRIMARY REPRESENTATIVE: Adam Finestone, AICP
City Planner

DISCRETIONARY ACTIONS REQUESTED: Specific Plan

PREVIOUS ACTIONS: In 2012, the City Council adopted the Escondido General Plan update which identified the East Valley Specific Plan area as a Target Area anticipated for mixed-use development.

CEQA RECOMMENDATION: Certify a Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Report prepared for the Project.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Continuance to date-certain

REQUESTED ACTION: Continue Public Hearing to July 6, 2023.

CITY COUNCIL HEARING REQUIRED: YES NO

REPORT APPROVALS: Andrew Firestine, Director of Development Services

Adam Finestone, City Planner



CITY of ESCONDIDO

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SUMMARY OF REQUEST

At its June 13, 2023, meeting, the Planning Commission held a public hearing and received a presentation on the draft East Valley Specific Plan (“EVSP”). The staff report from that meeting, included as Attachment 1 to this report, provides a thorough summary of the draft EVSP. At that meeting, input was provided by the commission on issues related to open space, landscaping, setbacks, parking, and requirements for ground-floor residential construction. At the conclusion of the June 13, 2023, meeting, the Planning Commission called a special meeting for 6 p.m. on June 20, 2023, to discuss additional aspects of the draft EVSP. A copy of the staff report from the June 20, 2023, meeting, and a memorandum distributed at that meeting, are included as Attachments 2 and 3, respectively, to this report. Issues discussed at that meeting are identified in the memorandum (Attachment 3).

Staff is currently working with its consultants to make revisions to the EVSP to address the issues discussed at the June 13 and June 20, 2023 Planning Commission meeting. At the June 27, 2023, Planning Commission hearing, Planning Division staff will provide a summary of the EVSP, including a list of topics areas that are being revised. The final draft EVSP will be published online as soon as it is available.

PUBLIC INPUT

Staff mailed public hearing notices to all property owners, residents, and business owners within the EVSP area on June 12, 2023. As of the publication of this report, staff has received seven phone calls and four written comments in response to said notice. The written comments have been included as Attachment 4 to this report. Most of the phone calls were seeking general clarification on what is being proposed, with specific interest in changes to land use allowances. Five of the seven callers expressed support for the changes. The other two callers, as well as the three of the four written comments, expressed opposition to the changes. (Note that one of the callers is also the author of one of the three emails.) The final written comment came from a public agency and addresses coordination of efforts between the City and the agency.

Public outreach and engagement efforts during the preparation of the EVSP are discussed in the June 13, 2023, Planning Commission staff report (Attachment 1).

CONCLUSION AND REQUESTED ACTION

The June 27, 2023, Planning Commission public hearing provides an opportunity for the public to hear a presentation on the EVSP. It also gives staff the opportunity to provide an update on the status of changes being made to the EVSP in response to comments and input received from the Planning Commission over the last few weeks. At the conclusion of the public hearing, staff requests that the Planning Commission continue the item to a special Planning Commission meeting on July 6, 2023, at 7 p.m.

ATTACHMENTS

1. June 13, 2023, Planning Commission staff report
2. June 20, 2023, Planning Commission staff report
3. June 20, 2023, Planning Commission memorandum
4. Public Comments