

Environmental Determinations:

1. Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (Public Resources Code section 21000 et. seq.) ("CEQA"), and its implementing regulations (14 C.C.R. § 15000 et seq.) ("CEQA Guidelines"), the City of Escondido ("City") is the Lead Agency for the Project, as the public agency with the principal responsibility for approving the Project.
2. The Project qualifies for an exemption from further environmental review pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15332 (In-Fill Development Projects) because the Project is consistent with applicable provisions of the Escondido General Plan and South Centre City Specific Plan; is on a site within city limits that is of no more than five acres and is substantially surrounded by urban uses; is on a site that has no habitat value for special status species; can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services; and would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality. The Project also does not trigger any exceptions to the categorical exemption as listed in CEQA Guidelines section 15300.2. Technical studies were requested by the Planning Division to substantiate the categorical exemption as applied to the Project.
3. The City Council has independently considered the full administrative record before it, which includes but is not limited to the January 25, 2022, Planning Commission staff report; the March 2, 2022, City Council staff report; testimony by staff and the public; and other materials and evidence submitted or provided to it. The administrative record demonstrates that each of the above requirements have been satisfied. No substantial evidence has been submitted that would support a finding that any of the above-described exemption requirements has not been satisfied. The Project will not have a significant effect on the environment, and all of the requirements of CEQA have been met.

No Net Loss:

1. The purpose of Government Code section 65863 ("No Net Loss Law"), is to ensure development opportunities remain available throughout the planning period to accommodate a jurisdiction's regional housing need allocation ("RHNA"), especially for lower- and moderate- income households. Jurisdictions also cannot approve new housing at significantly lower densities or at different income categories than was projected in the Housing Element without making specific findings and identifying other sites that could accommodate these units and affordability levels "lost" as a result of the approval.
2. The Project complies with the Housing Element portion of the General Plan and California State No Net Loss Zoning Law, in that:
 - a. The City's Fifth RHNA Cycle consists of 4,175 total units, including 733 moderate-income units and 1,873 lower-income units. The Housing Element Residential Site Inventory identified a total capacity for 4,561 units to accommodate extremely/very low, low, moderate, and above moderate-income affordability levels.

- b. Since 2012, the City has produced 1,866 total housing units during the course of the Fifth RHNA Cycle. As of January 1, 2021, the total remaining RHNA obligation is 2,309 total units, including 655 moderate-income units and 1,634 lower-income units.
- c. Government Code section 65583(a)(3) requires local governments to prepare an inventory of land suitable for residential development, including vacant sites and sites having the potential for redevelopment, and an analysis of the relationship of zoning and public facilities and services to these sites. The City performed this analysis in March, 2021, and identified suitable sites that can be developed for housing. Overall, vacant and underutilized properties in the South Centre City Specific Plan area are projected to accommodate 1,038 new moderate-income and lower-income units. The Project would result in no net loss because it will be developed at the maximum density permitted for the property as identified in the South Centre City Specific Plan, and total housing yield capacity exceeds the remaining RHNA obligations in the lower-income category.
- d. The inventory of suitable land within the Downtown Specific Plan and South Centre City Specific Plan may be used to identify sites that can be developed for housing within the Fifth RHNA Cycle planning period. With the entitlement of the Project, there are available sites in the Housing Element Residential Site Inventory adequate to meet the City's RHNA for very low and low-income categories.

Plot Plan Findings

1. The Project is consistent with the objectives of the General Plan, complies with applicable zoning regulations, South Centre City Specific Plan provisions, Specific Planning Area provisions, and Improvement Standards adopted by the City.
2. The Project site is zoned SP and is within the Southern Entry District of the South Centre City Specific Plan. One goal of the Southern Entry District is to encourage the orderly development and to ensure the presence of new development is part of the neighborhood balance. The proposed architecture, site design, and landscaping, are suitable for the purposes of the Project, and the site will enhance the character of the surrounding area. The architecture, including the scale and quality of the design, relationship of the site to other buildings, building materials, colors, screening of exterior appurtenances, exterior lighting and signage, and similar elements, establishes a clear design concept and is compatible with nearby properties. In addition, the Project's design utilizes a variation of structural and non-structural elements to reduce the facility's overall scale and ensure that the development respects the architectural character established in adjacent residential and commercial development, and adds value with significant reinvestment on the subject property. Overall, the Project enhances the site's character and complements surrounding development.
3. As proposed, the Project utilizes a functional layout that adequately achieves the City's required parking, pedestrian access, landscaping, and lighting development provisions. The proposed site is adequate in size and shape to accommodate the yards, walls, fences, parking, landscaping, and other development features, prescribed by Code or as is otherwise required in order to integrate said use with the uses in the surrounding area.

4. The proposed site is adequately served by highways or streets of sufficient width and improved as necessary to carry the kind and quantity of traffic such use would generate; or by other forms of transit adequate to carry the kind and quantity of individuals such use would generate.

5. The proposed use at the location requested will not adversely affect the peace, health, safety, morals or welfare of persons residing or working in the surrounding area; and will not have a substantial adverse effect on abutting property or the allowed use of the abutting property because it will not generate excessive noise, traffic, vibration, or other disturbance. Furthermore, the Project is subject to conditions of approval that will ensure consistency with all standard requirements.