



Serving the Environment in San Diego and Imperial Counties



SAN DIEGO COASTKEEPER



January 22, 2021

Mayor Paul McNamara and City Council Members
City of Escondido
201 N. Broadway
Escondido, CA 92025

Via Email

RE: Request to DENY Palomar Heights proposal and recommend that the City Council convey a recommendation to the Palomar Hospital Board to re-issue a Request for Proposals for the Old Palomar Hospital site.

Dear Mayor and Council members:

The undersigned organizations share a commitment to building a vibrant, inclusive economy that delivers economic and environmental justice, lifts up communities, creates healthier communities, addresses the climate crisis, and ensures resource conservation.

Several of us sent a letter on November 18, 2019 (see Attachment) urging the city of Escondido to step forward as a model for how local government can realize economic and environmental sustainability through land-use decisions. Since that time, it has become increasingly clear Integral's proposal for the Old Palomar Hospital site falls far short of this vision.

We strongly support transit-oriented development projects that create affordable housing, high-quality construction jobs and apprenticeship training opportunities in the community and the old hospital site is probably the best location in the entire city for a signature, quality, high-density project offering a range of housing options. **Unfortunately, this is not what Integral is bringing to the community and we urge you to reject their proposal.** Moreover:

1. Any development at this site should be high-density closer to the planned zoning with no fewer than 900-1,000 DU minimum density.
2. We understand the developer is seeking waiver or exemption from participating in the Community Facilities District (CFD) fees or other offsets. Any development impact fee reduction constitutes a public subsidy that requires the payment of prevailing wages to construction workers under California Labor Code Section 1720(b)(4).
3. Any development in this location must include on site affordable housing, no less than 30%.
4. Any development here should integrate walkable/bikeable and transit use and Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) reduction measures into its project scope, traffic mitigation and urban design, to be consistent with Escondido's new Climate Action Plan and Senate Bill 743.

We urge you to deny Integral's project, conduct a true objective appraisal, and re-issue the Request for Proposals with clear climate, labor standards and affordable housing criteria and align with the points outlined above.

We join others in wanting housing and progress on this site and believe the best and the most expedient way to achieve sale of the property and secure a quality project is to issue a Request for Proposals/Qualifications (RFP/Q) for this site, in order to solicit the best value through a competitive process. We ask the City Council to recommend that the RFP/Q include a requirement for a Community Benefits Agreement to address labor, climate, environmental, and affordable housing in a future project and convene a stakeholder group including representatives of the signers of this letter to develop the conditions needed for a project that truly meets the needs of the city.

Sincerely,

Tom Lemmon, Business Manager, San Diego County Building & Construction Trades Council
Jeremy Abrams, Business Manager, IBEW Local 569
Brigitte Browning, President, UNITE HERE Local 30
Ron Forster, Escondido Neighbors United
Pamela Heatherington, Board of Directors, Environmental Center of San Diego
George Courser, Chair, Conservation Committee, Sierra Club San Diego Chapter
Jim Miller, Vice President, AFT Local 1931
Noah Harris, Transportation Policy Advocate, Climate Action Campaign
Marco Gonzalez, Executive Director, Coastal Environmental Rights Foundation
Jim Peugh, Conservation Committee Chair, San Diego Audubon Society
Matt O'Malley, Executive Director, San Diego Coastkeeper
Tara Hammond, Founder & CEO, Hammond Climate Solutions
Bee Mittermiller, Chair Transportation Team, SanDiego350
Andy Hanshaw, Executive Director, San Diego County Bicycle Coalition
Mike McCoy, President, Southwest Wetlands Interpretive Association
Kyle Heiskala, Interim Executive Director, BikeSD

Attachment: November 18, 2019 Letter RE: Request for transit-oriented land use development decisions in Escondido