



North County Group
Sierra Club San Diego
P.O. Box 2141
Escondido, CA 92033

March 9, 2021

Mayor McNamara and City Council
City of Escondido
Via Email

RE: Request for additions and approval of the Escondido Climate Action Plan (ECAP)

Dear Mayor and City Council Members:

As the final deliberations take place on this most important action, we would like to offer the following items for your consideration.

As members of the Escondido Community Advisory Group (ECAG) we listened to the dialog at the February 10 workshop and offered compromise language which Sierra Club NCG supports. We ask the Council to request staff respond as to whether they would support inclusion of the compromise language into the final plan. These are compromises on issues that are of concern and importance to all current and future residents of Escondido. NCG believes the following edits reflect and address the concerns raised by staff to ECAG original requests.

Edits for Measure S-8.1

- *Develop a Zero Waste Plan that includes single-use plastic reduction measures in order to meet waste diversion goals.*
- *Prioritize community education to priority investment neighborhoods (PIN) and local businesses*
- *Move up the citywide diversion rate goal for 90% to 2030*

Supporting Actions Edits:

- *Explore opportunities with franchise waste hauler and other local business organizations to develop and encourage participation in commercial food scrap collection and plastics reduction programs.*
- *Explore partnership with the Escondido School Districts to work on Zero Waste Schools Initiative.*

Add to Measure C-9.2

1. **“Seek funding to develop a Green Infrastructure Plan for Urban Escondido to maximize parks, open space, natural water quality improvements, green rights-of-way, trails, riparian restoration areas, and other measures to create a plan to ensure connected and accessible green space throughout the city.”**

Add to Measure A-2.2

2. ***“Investigate adoption of an inclusionary housing and tiny home ordinances and other options as potential means to increase affordable housing near transportation corridors.”***

Supporting Action for Measure T-1.1

3. ***“Actively seek opportunities to increase conversion of electric vehicles in the municipal fleet per general plan policies.”***

Additionally, NCG requests a revised version of the measure that the Planning Commission removed related to development in fire-zones be added. Since the workshop, we have learned that our intention with this recommendation was misunderstood. We are not requesting downzone of property currently in Escondido, but rather to discourage expansion, annexation, or other leap-frog type growth into areas that are currently not in the city and that would expand the urban wildland interface. The recent report *[Built to Burn, California's Wildlands Developments are Playing with Fire](#)*, Bold Land-use Reforms Needed Now to Ensure Safer, Sustainable Future highlights the many reasons why this request is a critical tool to reduce the city's future wildfire risk.

In fact, there is proposed State legislation to prevent development in known high fire risk areas. We now know that such developments not only pose an inherent risk to those who live in them, but also increases the wildfire risk to existing residents and neighborhoods as well, as they increase fire ignitions, intensity, and destruction. It is also a huge source of GHG emissions. As such, we request the following be added

*“Avoid the siting of new land-use densities (i.e. density increases and annexations) in ‘**Very High Fire Hazard**’ areas to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, protect public safety and property, improve carbon sequestration, and reduce VMT.*

A better analogy.

At the workshop, the analogy of the loss in ‘buying’ power of a dollar was used to describe what we face with the ECAP and the climate crisis, but it misses the mark. The reality is more like this: We are all on a group canoe trip heading down a river. We’ve braved some rapids and come through, but people reading the signs of the river hear a waterfall. As the canoes gets closer the roar of the waterfall grows louder and current flows faster with increasing turbulence. Going over the waterfall is not survivable for anyone. Aware of this, some people start to row in the opposite direction trying to slow progress to the waterfall. They are trying to change course to the side of the river so that we can get out and walk forward, thereby avoiding the waterfall and certain destruction. But some aren’t paddling at all, while others are still pressing forward oblivious to what is coming.

The moral of the story here is if we can all get on the same page as to what is at stake and change our downstream plan, we can paddle towards a safe exit and find another way to our final destination. It matters that we all ‘paddle in the right direction’ because we are all in one canoe.

All of us for generations will be impacted by what we do now. Our fates are connected to the actions we take today starting with the Climate Action Plan.

As is correctly stated in the staff report, *We have reduced carbon pollution, while growing the economy.* Now, we need to do more. We are asking that Escondido adopt a strong plan that helps us move forward in a more survivable way.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important planning effort. Please contact us at conservation@sierraclubncg.org with any questions or for more information.

Sincerely,



Laura Hunter, Chair
NCG Conservation Committee

cc.
Jeff Epp
Mike Strong
Escondido Planning Commission