

**CITY OF ESCONDIDO
HOUSING AND COMMUNITY INVESTMENT STUDY
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN**

June 10, 2020

A. Purpose of a Public Participation Plan:

The City of Escondido (“City”) is undertaking this public involvement process to help engage residents, businesses, and other community members in the development of three different housing studies and plans. To achieve success for the three studies and plans, the City needs to have a well thought-out planning process. Since the studies are related to each other, consolidating the work program in terms of project management will help ensure that activities and tasks are grouped to be more efficient. This in turn will also lead to more effective public outreach and community engagement activities.

The Public Participation Plan (“PPP”) for the housing studies and plans establishes goals for the outreach effort, as well as specific scheduling, engagement, and coordination elements. The purpose of the PPP is to weave various outreach activities together into a coordinated process. This PPP will also serve as a source document to show how and when information will be presented to the public, including different community groups, and the City Council in their consideration of policy making priorities and/or implementation decisions.

B. Studies/Plans Overview:

The City was awarded grant funding to develop three different housing studies and plans: a Housing Element update (“HEU”), a Sector Feasibility Study, and an East Valley Specific Plan (“EVSP”).

HEU: The Housing Element of the General Plan identifies housing needs and establishes clear goals and objectives to inform future housing decisions, including how best to accommodate population growth. This HEU will allow the City to assess current conditions, plan for the future, and advance a progressive set of programs and initiatives to develop, conserve, and maintain housing opportunities, health in housing, and fair housing choices for current and future residents. The HEU reflects the vital role housing plays in ensuring the shared prosperity of our region.

Sector Feasibility Study: The one tool that more and more communities around the country are using to better understand housing market performance is to conduct a residential sector housing market study. The Sector Feasibility Study explores all the direct and indirect costs to new construction to better understand market conditions and patterns of housing and community

development policy and investment strategy. This may help offer a general framework for defining realistic goals that respond to the challenges faced by different markets and would provide guidance on the differing scales of interventions, role of public subsidy, and timeframes required for affordable housing projects (i.e. calling attention to programs that can be used to influence housing market outcomes in one or more ways).

EVSP: A specific plan is a comprehensive planning and zoning document for a defined geographic area of the city. The planning area of the East Valley Target Area, as it currently exists, is a function of past decisions and policies. A lot has changed since the area developed, including the adoption of the 2012 General Plan. Creating a specific plan for this area of the city would help establish a link between implementing policies of the General Plan and the future, individual development proposals within the defined area. It is envisioned that the target area will accommodate additional housing opportunities, so the EVSP should be closely coordinated with the HEU and Sector Feasibility Study.

C. Defining the “Housing and Community Investment Study:”

These three housing studies and plans will be linked together, through a common work program theme, called the “Housing and Community Investment Study.” The Housing and Community Investment Study, as a theme, is the “face” or “brand” of the studies/plans and is something that people will recognize. It is simple enough to be memorable and also helps distinguish it from other City activities and projects. The study directly explores the link between safe, decent, and attainable housing and community investment opportunities.

Public participation is a critical component of the Housing and Community Investment Study planning process, because ultimately, its success will depend on community support. Therefore, this PPP seeks to develop a way to provide clear and ongoing information, encourage meaningful dialog, gather feedback and build consensus among local stakeholders. This will be achieved through a variety of methods, which are outlined in the plan, all with the goal of being as inclusive as possible.

D. Outreach Goals:

Public participation will help ensure that the Housing and Community Investment Study is developed to identify community-supported solutions. Since housing is a basic need of all people, regardless of income level, household type, etc., there is a need to engage a broad spectrum of stakeholders. Therefore, public participation will need to be achieved in a variety of ways. The outreach and coordination goals for the Housing and Community Investment Study are as follows:

1. Develop well-targeted messages to raise awareness about the Housing and Community Investment Study.

2. Succinctly communicate the purpose, benefits, and reason for the Housing and Community Investment Study, and the relationship that the three housing studies/plans (HEU, Sector Feasibility Study, and EVSP) have with each other.
3. Create opportunities for broad community input and engage a diverse group of people that represents a cross-section of perspectives, with particular emphasis on typically under-served or underrepresented populations of the city, including Spanish speakers, youth/students, seniors, and disadvantaged community members. The plan isn't just about making what we have better, it is also about attracting new residents, businesses, and visitors to the city. For this purpose, stakeholders and organizations should be unified in their visions to keep Plan implementation consistently positive and to help build public private partnerships.
4. Engage local groups to ensure that a wide audience is reached (including but not limited to resident groups, HOAs, business membership groups, non-profits, schools, churches, etc.).
5. Offer a variety of platforms, mediums, and times of day to participate.

On March 4, 2020, the Governor declared a State of Emergency in California due to the threat of Coronavirus Disease 2019 ("COVID-19"). Due to subsequent directives from federal, state, and local health officials, residents, businesses, and other community members have been advised to avoid public gatherings and stay at home to prevent the spread of this disease. As a result, it is highly likely that the City will be no longer able to conduct outreach in-person as originally intended. The City must utilize this PPP to be flexible – and consider the use of remote tools and technologies that more effectively meet people where they are in their homes or in other remote locations. As meetings and activities shift to more virtual spaces, remote or online formats, the City must facilitate new ways to maximize access and give people multiple opportunities and varied means/channels to contribute. In doing so, the project team must ensure people know how to get access, know where to get more information, and that everyone has a path to engage – at their own pace. Implementation of this PPP will help provide guidance to effectively engage residents, businesses, and other community members in the development of three different housing studies and plans.

E. Information Sharing and Engagement Strategies:

The purpose of the PPP is to weave various outreach activities together into a coordinated process. To provide information about the Housing and Community Investment Study, gather meaningful feedback and build consensus among local stakeholders, initial outreach will focus on re-establishing stakeholder networks and ask these stakeholders to re-engage in the planning process. This network building will involve multiple forms of outreach, which are outlined below.

SECTION 1: Information Sharing

Communications for the Housing and Community Investment Study will be simple and will outline how and when public input will be used to inform various components of the project. Outreach materials will limit the use of planning jargon and technical terms. Outreach materials will be graphic-rich and limit the use of text, where appropriate. Outreach materials will be produced in English and Spanish, and Spanish

language facilitators will be available at outreach events. The following sections describe specific elements communications and information sharing.

1a. Press and Media Notifications

Objective and Overview. The purpose of the press and media notifications is to reach out to local media outlets in order to get media coverage and boost project exposure to reach wide audiences, which will lead to increased public participation. Press releases will be circulated to announce public workshops and hearings, and the City will work with local media outlets and encourage them to follow the planning process and include features in local publications.

Timing: Notifications and communications will be created at key points in the study process.

1b. Fact Sheet

Objective and Overview: In the beginning it will be important to document the overall purpose and goals of the Housing and Community Investment Study work program. The message needs to identify a “call of action” to engage broad audiences that may be unfamiliar with conventional planning projects. The purpose of developing the fact sheets is to provide a concise but thorough overview of the project, and what it means. At a minimum, the fact sheet will contain information on the Housing and Community Investment Study timeline, stakeholder involvement and public comment opportunities, and contact details. The fact sheet will also include the Community Workshop schedule and location information, making them useful for pre-workshop publicity. The fact sheet will include an electronic format suitable for website posting, e-mail distribution, and printing. Spanish versions of the fact sheets will be prepared once the English version has been finalized.

Timing: The fact sheets will be produced in summer 2020, in advance of the first round of outreach.

1c. City Website

Objective and Overview: The purpose of the Housing and Community Investment Study webpage, hosted at the link below, is to establish a one-stop source for all project information and for collecting public input. The website will be used to post fact sheets, working documents, maps and illustrations, past agenda reports and council actions, and for the public to sign-up to receive newsletters.

Link: <https://www.escondido.org/HGIS.aspx>

Timing: The webpage has already launched, with updates as needed throughout the planning process. The project webpage will be advertised broadly through social media and other communication platforms.

1d. Newsletters

Objective and Overview: The e-newsletter will be brief informational packets/emails with links to the project website and other relevant information. The purpose of the e-newsletter is to provide up-to-date information about the project, announce milestones, and let the public know of public meetings, workshops, and other opportunities to provide input. Spanish versions of the fact sheets will be prepared once the English version has been finalized.

Timing: The e-newsletter will be distributed to at key milestones, such as the availability of a document and/or to announce upcoming public input opportunities. It is anticipated that there will 5 to 7 newsletters, depending on the status and progression of the project.

1e. Social Media

Objective and Overview: Regular updates about the projects, key milestones, and opportunities for public comment will be shared on the City's social media channels. The purpose of social media posts will be to use already-established online platforms in order to reach the widest audience and garner additional public participation. Posts will encourage community members to share the posts directly in order to encourage broad distribution of information.

Timing: Social media posts will be made at key milestones, such as the availability of a document and/or to announce upcoming public input opportunities. The update timing and purpose will be comparable to the e-newsletter timing and purpose described above.

1f. City Events Calendar

Objective and Overview: Staff will provide calendar listing of activities to make sure those that utilize this resource have an opportunity to be involved.

Timing: Community workshops and other engagement activities will be advertised in advance of the event to promote opportunities to engage.

1g. Channels 19 and 99.

Objective and Overview: Staff will provide tv announcements, advertising, or splash flyer slides on local television programming to make sure those that utilize this resource have an opportunity to be involved.

Timing: Community workshops and other engagement activities will be advertised in advance of the event to promote opportunities to engage.

1h. Commission Presentations and Community Advisory Group Meetings

Objective and Overview: To facilitate public participation at key milestones and to ensure the public has the opportunity to share their input, staff will provide standing item presentations on the Housing and Community Investment Study to each of the City's Commissions and Committees. This will ensure that all City Commissions and Committees have an opportunity to be involved. Opportunities will also be provided for the public attending these meetings to share their comments and ask questions.

To expand Study exposure and increase participation opportunities, City staff will also provide informational presentation to any stakeholder group on request (resident, business, or other community group). This will also include soliciting interest from the Community Advisory Groups. Presentations will be similar in scope to the Commission and Committee presentations, but will allow for group Q&A or active feedback and participation.

Timing: Regular status update presentations to City Commissions and Committees will be provided once every several months for the duration of the work program. More detailed presentations will be made at key milestones, with the Planning Commission, such as the availability of a document and/or to announce upcoming public input opportunities.

1i. City Council presentations

Objective and Overview: To facilitate public participation at key milestones and to ensure the public has the opportunity to share their input, staff will provide two status check-ins with the City Council on the Housing and Community Investment Study. This will ensure that the City Council can steer the process and provide direction as necessary prior to public hearings to review and consider the final HEU, Sector Feasibility Study, and EVSP.

Timing: Detailed presentations will be made at key milestones, such as the availability of a document and/or to announce upcoming public input opportunities.

1j. Video

Objective and Overview: To facilitate project awareness and education, the City will prepare video recording(s) at key milestones and to ensure the public has the opportunity to learn more about the project as an alternative to speaking one-on-one with the project team. The recordings will be offered in Spanish.

Timing: Detailed videos will be made at key milestones, such as the availability of a document and/or to announce upcoming public input opportunities.

SECTION 2: Engagement Strategies

Communications for the Housing and Community Investment Study will be simple and will outline how and when public input will be used to inform various components of the project. The following engagement strategies will be utilized to collect community input. Outreach materials will be produced in English and Spanish, and Spanish language facilitators will be available at outreach events.

As mentioned earlier in this document, residents, businesses, and other community members have been advised to avoid public gatherings and stay at home to prevent the spread of COVID-19 due to directives from federal, state, and local health officials. Although this may change during the course of developing the Housing and Community Investment Study, the PPP must take in account different pathways for engagement. For example, it is highly likely that the City will be no longer able to conduct outreach in-person during the initial stages of the work program. As meetings and activities shift to more virtual spaces, remote or online formats, the City must facilitate new ways to maximize access and give people multiple opportunities and varied means/channels to contribute. Regardless of the platform, it will be critical for the project team to continue to meet people where they are, work collaboratively with the community, and incorporate ideas, strategies, and actions into the Housing and Community Investment Study. One of the huge challenges that need to be addressed is how to reach out to neighborhoods where many residents lack access to the internet or lack digital mode access.

2a. Community Workshops

Objective and Overview: Provide a welcoming environment, open to the general public, where attendees can learn about the Housing and Community Investment Study and provide feedback at key points in the technical process. Workshop formats will be designed to both educate participants about the HEU, Sector Feasibility Study, and EVSP; and its benefits and to collect input that can help guide the three studies/plans. Workshop formats are anticipated to be small group discussions, topical breakout sessions, and/or exhibits where people can post notes, comment cards, etc. Two rounds of workshops/open houses will occur as part of the overall work program; however, more may occur as needed to ensure community-supported solutions are achieved. It is anticipated that most of the workshop events will be conducted in different areas of the city to ensure that meetings are conveniently located; and there are several dates and times to provide input and speak one-on-one with the project team. Efforts will be made to offer translation services and to offer a variety of times of day to participate.

As an alternative to in-person outreach, the project team can host a series of webinars or use of Zoom or Jitsi. This would allow City staff to present project information and answer questions about the project in a live, safe virtual setting. Online tools may be used or developed to collect input.

Timing: Anticipated timing is expected to occur during the summer or fall 2020.

2b. Supplemental Pop-Up Outreach

Objective and Overview: In order to capture opinions of those that may not typically attend community meetings, Pop-Up Outreach will supplement in-person workshops. Pop-Up Outreach would piggy-back on existing community events, such as school events, community gatherings, and/or festivals. This Pop-Up Outreach may occur the same day as the in-person workshops or may occur within roughly the same 3-week period as the in-person workshops. Questions/Study content presented would be comparable to the in-person workshops. Efforts will be made to offer translation services and to offer a variety of times of day to participate.

As an alternative to in-person outreach, the project team will also host a Saturday morning open house webinar. This would allow City staff to present project information and answer questions about the project in a live, safe virtual setting, outside of typical work hours. A Spanish version of the presentation slides would be provided on the City's project webpage.

Timing: Anticipated timing of the Pop-Up Outreach is expected to occur during the summer, fall, and winter 2020, as needed to ensure community-supported solutions are achieved.

2c. Online Surveys and Community Questionnaires

Objective and Overview: The purpose of providing supplemental online surveys or community questionnaires is to provide additional ways for residents, businesses, and other community members to provide input. This forum (online community input) is intended to appeal to a broader audience that may not typically attend community workshops or meetings; or households that choose to participate out of the convenience of their own home. In addition to the traditional workshop setting, residents, businesses, and other community members will also be encouraged to use the online tool during outreach efforts, or encourage their friends to do so.

Mobile telephones and other technology have created new opportunities for reaching out to the public. The use of telephonic outreach can be used to conduct telephone surveys or opinion polls, receive and disseminate information, allow for a town hall webinar platform, and provide information in more than one language.

Timing: The surveys will be conducted during the first round of workshops to supplement data collection.

2d. Stakeholder Interviews

Objective and Overview: To supplement input received through the workshops and surveys, it will be helpful to have conversations with stakeholders to get a better understanding of opportunities and to identify barriers and roadblocks that may need to be removed. Information can be gathered through a series of focus groups and interview with more than 50 local experts in housing, community development, real estate, lending, and property management who work across a wide range of sub-markets, populations, and geographies served. Focus groups may be performed on members of nearby neighborhood groups, Community Advisory Groups, the Escondido Downtown Business Association, the Mercado Business Association, Innovate78, and applicable City volunteer groups.

Video-conferencing programs such as Skype or Zoom might provide an alternative method from in-person interviews to assess public perceptions and opinions about the project, obtain community input from hard to reach populations, and compare opinions from various segments of the public.

Timing: The interviews will be conducted after the first round of workshops.