

# VIII. Growth Management



## Introduction

The General Plan establishes Escondido's vision for the future. The Growth Management Element provides assurance that the vision is achieved without sacrificing aspects of the community valued by its residents. Quality of Life Standards are detailed in Chapter I of the General Plan that identify minimum acceptable service thresholds for critical infrastructure such as traffic and transportation, fire service, police service, water and wastewater treatment systems.

Thresholds have also been developed to address other less critical standards such as library service, parks system, open space system, air quality, public schools, and economic prosperity. Factors associated with the location, type, density, and amount, of development are tied to the city's zoning ordinance (and linked with the General Plan Land Use Element) that establishes development parameters for land uses constructed in the community.

## The Growth Management Element's Purpose

The purpose of the Growth Management Element is to establish policies for balancing the timing of infrastructure improvements with current and anticipated demands for service through the adoption of specific implementation techniques. The Growth Management Element integrates General Plan goals and objectives with adopted Quality of Life Standards to facilitate the orderly development of public and private improvements.

A goal of growth management is to phase capital facility improvements concurrent with population growth so that new development does not compound existing service shortfalls, or result in critical infrastructure deficiencies. Effective growth management also establishes parameters for periodically monitoring the impacts that growth has on the community and defines the methods by which impacts are addressed, allowing decision makers to efficiently prioritize capital improvements.



## A. Relationship to Other Elements in the General Plan

The Growth Management Element serves as a guide for the city's build out and supports the vision, conditions and factors under which development and redevelopment may occur. A major goal of the Growth Management Element is to ensure that the planning, construction, and operation of facilities and infrastructure meet Escondido's current and projected needs. While this goal is a high priority, it must be achieved while maintaining internal consistency among the other elements of the General Plan as required by state law. The Growth Management Element achieves internal consistency with the other General Plan elements through the pursuit of common major goals such as balanced development of land uses and public facilities.

Although the Growth Management Element does not replace or supersede any of the other General Plan elements; this Element addresses, amplifies and supports public facility and development phasing identified in the General Plan. Consequently there is a certain amount of overlap among the General Plan elements and the Growth Management Element is a key resource document for the phasing and implementation of facility infrastructure.

*Early construction phase of the Eureka Springs development*



## B. Quality of Life Standards

Thresholds of services established for eleven areas affecting residents' quality of life in Escondido involve traffic, police, fire, schools, libraries, parks, open space, water, sewer, air quality, and economic prosperity (refer to the General Plan Vision and Purpose for details on the Quality of Life Standards). These thresholds have helped guide the community during periods of substantial development. The Growth Management Element integrates quality of life standards and the General Plan's goals and objectives with public improvements and private development to establish a basis upon which development and growth are measured and phased. As with the General Plan goals and objectives, the quality of life standards are subject to periodic review and refinement based on community input reflecting changing priorities, technology and/or conditions that may occur over time.

*Quality of Life Thresholds include providing adequate parks and open space, such as Dixon Lake (above left) to meet current and future needs*



*Monitoring Reidy Creek storm drains (above right) to ensure proper flow and water quality is a critical component of the Master Planning effort of this and other public facilities*

## C. Public Facility Master Planning

The need for transportation improvements, park and recreation improvements, police, fire, library and other facilities (water, sewer, drainage, etc.) are related to the community's growth. Such improvements are required, or need to be maintained or expanded, as the community reaches identified thresholds. Assuming 300-400 units are constructed each year, Escondido's General Plan (city and surrounding unincorporated area) is expected to increase approximately 7,000 – 9,000 units by the planning horizon year of 2035. Master plans that determine ultimate capital facilities necessary to achieve and/or maintain the quality of life standards at build out must be prepared based on adopted growth forecasts in order to adequately plan for growth.

Master plans typically contain an analysis of existing facilities, existing and projected demand, and proposed maintenance and capital improvement projects. They also identify financing plans to accomplish identified improvements. The agencies and departments typically use growth projections provided by the city and other jurisdictions within their service boundaries to guide maintenance and capital improvement programs that may affect the rate and timing of private development.



## D. Public Facility Financing

Public facility financing plans provide the estimated cost and timing of backbone infrastructure and other public facilities needed to serve development. The financing plan also provides the strategy to match the timing of costs with the availability of probable funding sources.

Many options are available to accelerate or ensure the timely provision of infrastructure improvements. Development impact fees, assessment and maintenance districts, development agreements, and other financing programs required for completing the identified infrastructure improvements are key components of the capital improvement planning process.

## E. Public Facility Improvement Phasing

A goal of growth management is to phase capital facility improvements concurrently with population growth so that new development does not compound existing service shortfalls, or result in a critical infrastructure deficiency. Specific timelines for phasing the installation of public infrastructure, utilities, and the provision of public services and facilities are established through facility master plans as part of the city's approval process.

The phasing of infrastructure typically takes place in an incremental fashion. Public facilities (schools, parks, etc.) are expanded to accommodate private sector growth. Infrastructure phases for certain facilities may occur ahead, behind or concurrently with private development based on specific needs or the pace of private development. The sequencing of public infrastructure can change over time in response to various factors.

*Touring Escondido's Police and Fire Central Operations Facility during construction; the facility (now open) will serve the community through build-out of the General Plan and is financed through a local bond measure*

*Local flooding occurs in older neighborhoods where inadequate drainage facilities exist to properly convey storm water during heavy rains*



## **F. Public Facility Deficiencies**

The demand for additional and different types of public services and facilities will increase as the community population grows. Growth management is intended to ensure appropriate efforts are made to accommodate the increased demand and avoid deterioration in the overall quality of life. Because the size and nature of many public facilities, such as water and sewer treatment facilities, major roadways, etc. are complex and costly investments, they are often built in increments that may not match the rate of development. Consequently, all standards cannot be met at all times. Lags in service may be experienced from time to time during the build out of the General Plan. In certain situations development in areas with critical deficiencies may be delayed until adequate facilities are available.



## G. Growth Management Monitoring

Monitoring growth management indicators such as critical infrastructure, population, land capacity, economic factors, natural resource consumption, and public health and safety improves the effectiveness of public policy and allows progress in achieving the General Plan goals and objectives. Use of growth management indicators assures accountability to the public and demonstrates how effectively the city is moving toward identified goals. Ongoing monitoring allows public resources to be prioritized in order to meet goals and, if the desired outcome is not achieved, to consider modifying the goals or implementing regulations.

Growth management indicators work well with the public participation process of the capital improvement planning cycle. Through the use of growth management indicators, citizens and decision makers can review growth management policies and make changes that reflect present-day realities. Periodic review of growth trends and facility capacities within and surrounding Escondido is important to effectively address development impacts, forecast anticipated service needs, and provide guidance in capital improvement programming.

## H. Exemptions

On a case-by-case basis the City Council may exempt projects involving a total of four or fewer dwelling units and/or non-residential projects determined to have a negligible impact on city services from requirements contained in this element. It shall be demonstrated that such exemptions will not substantially conflict with the intent of the growth management element, land use area plans, master plans, or other General Plan policies.

*Monitoring growth allows for the timely installation of infrastructure such as street improvements and utilities in Mission Road*

# I. Growth Management Goals and Policies

A complete list of the General Plan Goals is located in the Vision and Purpose. Specific goals and policies related to growth management provided below are intended to guide facility and infrastructure development in an orderly manner to meet present and future needs and enhance the character of Escondido.

## 1. Quality of Life Thresholds

**GOAL 1: Quality, managed, and sustainable growth that maintains and provides adequate public facilities for existing and future development.**

**GOAL 2: Predictable and fair implementation of the General Plan.**

### Quality of Life Threshold Policy 1.1

Use the General Plan quality of life thresholds (or refinements adopted by subsequent master plans, as appropriate) as the standard to assess the impact of new facility and service demands created by growth, and apply those standards, as appropriate when considering discretionary projects.

### Quality of Life Threshold Policy 1.2

Progress in meeting the General Plan quality of life thresholds shall be periodically reviewed and revised by city departments and other local government entities to ensure that they reflect appropriate service delivery and measurement techniques, and to assure their effectiveness at achieving overall community goals and objectives.

## 2. Public Facility Master Plans

### Public Facility Master Plan Policy 2.1

To anticipate the demand for services, prepare, maintain, and periodically update public facility master plans that are based on adopted growth projections through coordination of appropriate city departments and agencies.

## 3. Public Facility Financing

### Public Facility Financing Policy 3.1

Maintain and periodically update development impact fees and major infrastructure financing programs to assure that all new and infill developments contribute their proportionate share of funding for necessary municipal infrastructure and public facilities.



### **Public Facility Financing Policy 3.2**

At the discretion of the city, require larger developments to prepare a fiscal impact analysis and a public facilities financing plan that articulates infrastructure and public facilities requirements, as well as costs and funding mechanisms which document the effects upon the city's operating budget over time.

### **Public Facility Financing Policy 3.3**

Encourage the use of development agreements and other appropriate financing mechanisms to ensure the timely provision of community facilities at adequate levels to support the demands from new and existing development.

### **Public Facility Financing Policy 3.4**

Periodically assess ongoing staffing needs to adequately operate and maintain public facilities and services through the budget process in order to achieve and maintain quality of life thresholds.

## **4. Public Facility Phasing**

### **Public Facility Phasing Policy 4.1**

Require facility master plans to specify detailed infrastructure phasing increments.

### **Public Facility Phasing Policy 4.2**

Require phased and interim facilities improvements which promote community identity and character, preserve and enhance the fiscal viability of existing and planned infrastructure, and minimize the disruption to existing residents.

## **5. Public Facility Deficiencies**

### **Public Facility Deficiencies Policy 5.1**

Allow facility service deficiencies that are below acceptable thresholds on a case by case basis determined through environmental review, periodic monitoring and reporting of quality of life standards, and/or the service delivery process that relates development approvals with remaining facility capacities.

### **Public Facility Deficiencies Policy 5.2**

Monitor and periodically report the performance of development activity and its conformance with quality of life standards. Identify areas where there are critical deficiencies. Establish criteria for and implement moratoria or other strategies to address shortfalls.

### **Public Facility Deficiencies Policy 5.3**

Specify the rate and/or amount of development that may occur for areas that are deficient in meeting service thresholds.

### **Public Facility Deficiencies Policy 5.4**

Withhold discretionary approvals and subsequent building permits from projects demonstrated to be out of compliance with applicable service standards and deficiency thresholds as established in Public Facility Deficiencies Policy 5.1.

## **6. Growth Management Monitoring**

### **Growth Management Monitoring Policy 6.1**

Comprehensively monitor building permits and development entitlements in order to determine and forecast the rate of future development and service requirements to be used in updating facility master plans and guiding capital improvement planning efforts.

### **Growth Management Monitoring Policy 6.2**

Solicit comments from applicable service providers and city departments to evaluate current quality of life threshold compliance, growth impacts, facility improvements, maintenance issues, and funding opportunities.

### **Growth Management Monitoring Policy 6.3**

Review and comment on development proposals in adjacent communities to minimize potential environmental, service, and economic impacts to Escondido.

