

City Council Priority Work Plan



FY 2025/26 – 2026/27



Executive Summary

The City of Escondido's City Council Priority Work Plan for FY 2025/26 – 2026/27 provides a roadmap for implementing six interconnected strategic priorities established by the Escondido City Council in March 2025 (presented in alphabetical order). This document is not an exhaustive representation of all the regular, ongoing, annual work that is conducted by staff in each department to provide essential services to our residents, business owners, and community stakeholders. Instead, these are key initiatives that support the City Council's strategic priorities and were evaluated for inclusion on this list by the City's leadership team based on the following criteria:

- Contingency required before another phase or project can begin
- Funding deadline
- Legal or statutory requirement
- Previous commitments made to the community

While this document serves to guide the work of our City team throughout FY2025/26 and FY2026/27, the timeline for each specific project is defined and monitored by the Project Owner. The initiation of these projects does not necessarily align with July 1 of each fiscal year. Some projects will only begin once a key position is filled while others require execution of a service contract. Project status updates will be regularly reported out to the City Council and the community to maintain transparency regarding strategic investments and initiatives.

This is a living document. It is expected that other potential priorities could be elevated for consideration during the course of this Work Plan. New potential projects or initiatives will be vetted as outlined in this document. A decision will then be made as to whether they are added to the current or a future Work Plan.

The adoption of the FY 2025/26 Operating Budget represents a new methodology around how frequently staff present before the City Council to provide status updates and request funding. The adopted budget represents the starting point and, in many cases, provides the initial funding necessary to launch an effort. Moving forward, budget requests will be an ongoing process of demonstrating success and requesting additional investments to continue to drive measurable outcomes and advance strategic priorities.

Strategic Priority

Be Business Friendly

Strategic Objectives

- **Business Attraction and Retention:**
Create competitive environment that attracts new businesses while supporting existing business growth and expansion
- **Business Community Engagement:**
Maintain regular communication and collaboration with business community to ensure responsive policy development
- **Economic Development:**
Support strategic development projects that enhance tax base, create jobs, and improve community amenities
- **Regulatory Efficiency:**
Streamline permitting, licensing, and approval processes to reduce administrative burden and accelerate business development

FY 2025/26

- **Business license portal:**
Online services and phone support
- **Commercial Building Vacancy Program Development:**
Create ordinance and program framework to address vacant properties
- **Development Services Streamlining:**
Initiate application process improvements and efficiency enhancements
- **North County Mall/Sears Box Revitalization:**
Begin strategic redevelopment planning and stakeholder engagement
- **Real Estate Negotiations:**
Begin strategic property acquisition and development discussions
- **Round One Lease Deal Completion:**
Finalize priority commercial development agreement
- **Short Term Rental Program:**
Initiate program balancing regulation while supporting tourism

FY 2026/27

- **Fee Structure Optimization:**
Refine business-related fees based on implementation experience and competitiveness analysis
- **Property Business Improvement District (PBID):**
Create a Downtown District to decrease vacancy, improve safety, and activate Downtown Escondido

Strategic Priority

Build Trust and Accountability

Strategic Objectives

- **Communication Standards:**
Establish consistent, professional, and responsive communication standards across all City departments and community touchpoints
- **Community Engagement:**
Create meaningful opportunities for resident participation in City governance and decision-making processes
- **Performance Accountability:**
Implement measurement and reporting systems that demonstrate progress toward strategic objectives and community benefit achievement
- **Transparency Excellence:**
Establish reporting and communication systems that provide clear, accessible information about City operations and Measure I utilization

FY 2025/26

- **Brand Reinforcement:**
Toolkit of downloadable City logos, font families, and other approved City branding for consistency and to build trust with the community
- **Citizens' Oversight Committee:**
Facilitate committee review of FY2026 Measure I spending plan
- **Communication Standards Implementation:**
Deploy consistent communication protocols across all departments
- **Community Satisfaction Assessment:**
Conduct baseline assessment to establish improvement metrics
- **Implementation of Online Community Outreach Tool:**
Digital platform with options for community engagement at various levels to centralize community feedback
- **Measure I Audit Report Publication:**
Regular reporting out of Measure I spending

FY 2026/27

- **Communication Effectiveness Assessment:**
Evaluate communication system performance and community response
- **Measure I Accountability Transparency Review:**
Assess transparency system effectiveness and accessibility
- **24-Month Strategic Progress Evaluation:**
Complete assessment of all strategic priority achievements

Strategic Priority

Drive Community and Land Development

Strategic Objectives

- **Community Asset Enhancement:**
Develop and improve public facilities, amenities, and services that enhance quality of life
- **Infrastructure Development:**
Ensure adequate infrastructure capacity to support sustainable community growth and development
- **Permitting Excellence:**
Streamline development review processes while maintaining quality standards and community protection
- **Strategic Land Use Planning:**
Align development policies with community vision through comprehensive planning updates and zoning optimization

FY 2025/26

- **Battery Energy Storage Solution (BESS):**
Complete draft ordinance for City Council approval
- **General Plan Update Initiation:**
Begin comprehensive planning process to align policies with community vision
- **Parks Capital Projects:**
Finalize design and construction of the following community amenities:
 - ◆ Grove Park Splash Pad
 - ◆ John Masson Bike Park
 - ◆ Mountain View Park Pickleball Courts
 - ◆ Westside Park Skate Spot
- **Special Event Permit Streamlining & Community Event Management:**
Regularizing the process for annual events and exploring the initiation of City-sponsored community events

FY 2026/27

- **Utilities Design Standards Update:**
Initiate standards review and modernization process
- **Water/Wastewater Hydraulic Model Implementation:**
Begin system modeling for development planning support

Strategic Priority

Financial Stewardship

Strategic Objectives

- **Infrastructure Modernization:**
Bringing infrastructure into the 21st century to serve the community into the future
- **Revenue Enhancement:**
Optimize fee structures and explore new revenue opportunities while maintaining competitive positioning

FY 2025/26

- **Aging Access Switches Replacement:**
Complete critical infrastructure upgrade preventing major operational disruptions
- **Budget Software Implementation:**
Begin deployment of enhanced financial transparency and reporting systems
- **Citywide Energy Roadmap Program:**
Modernization of City facilities and infrastructure to realize energy savings with a guaranteed ROI over the lifecycle of the identified in-scope projects
- **California Center for the Arts, Escondido (CCAЕ) Management Solution Assessment:**
Evaluate long-term management approaches for California Center for the Arts
- **Cybersecurity Training Implementation:**
Deploy comprehensive security awareness program across all departments
- **Fleet Replacement and Reserve Study:**
Develop a sustainable plan for future vehicle replacement funding
- **Library Management Planning:**
Develop long-term operational strategy for library services
- **Measure I Accounting Framework:**
Establish tracking and reporting system for Measure I revenue utilization
- **Niche Records Management System:**
Complete implementation and go-live for Public Safety Records Management System
- **Origami Software Deployment:**
Software solution that integrates with Workday for risk, safety, and insurance

governance and compliance

- **Printing Services Optimization:**
Implement cost-effective printing solutions
- **Public Works Deferred Maintenance:**
Develop a schedule for addressing deferred facility maintenance of the following:
 - ◆ CCAЕ Conference Center Kitchen Plumbing
 - ◆ CCAЕ Theater & Concert Hall Stage Motor Lifts
 - ◆ Citywide Elevator Repairs
 - ◆ Citywide HVAC Duct Cleaning
 - ◆ Flooring Upgrades & Cleaning
 - ◆ Historic Property Facility Assessment
 - ◆ Kitchen Ventilation Hood Cleaning
 - ◆ Patio/Deck Repairs
 - ◆ PW Yard Fleet Services Awning Repair
 - ◆ Rain Gutter Repair
 - ◆ Roll Up Doors & Gates
 - ◆ Roof Repairs
- **Workday Sustainment:**
Bi-annual release management and system optimization

FY 2026/27

- **Fleet Electrification Planning:**
Develop transition strategy for 2027 mandated compliance
- **Opioid Settlement Fund Planning:**
Develop strategic spending plan aligned with community health priorities
- **Recognized Obligation Payment Schedule (ROPS)/Successor Agency Resolution:**
Initiate resolution process with School Districts
- **Utility Billing Software Replacement RFP and Selection:**
Begin the process for evaluating a replacement Utility Billing Software system
- **Utilities Connection Fee Study:**
Initiate comprehensive analysis of current fee structures

Strategic Priority

Prioritize Public Safety

Strategic Objectives

- **Addressing Homelessness:**
Implement comprehensive, collaborative approach to address homelessness impacts while providing appropriate services and support
- **Community Safety Enhancement:**
Improve emergency response capabilities, infrastructure safety, and crime prevention through strategic investments
- **Emergency Preparedness:**
Strengthen community resilience through improved emergency planning, response capabilities, and infrastructure

FY 2025/26

- **Addressing Homelessness:**
Coordinated multi-department approach to address homelessness impacts
- **Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) System Replacement:**
Critical software upgrade to assist Dispatchers in receiving and coordinating resources for 9-1-1 emergency calls
- **Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Technology Improvements:**
Upgrade existing technology to ensure efficiency and reliability in times of emergencies
- **Escondido Creek Trail (ECT) Enhancement and Renovation Project:**
Finalize construction of safety and recreational improvements and grand opening.
- **Fire Standards Implementation:**
Begin implementation of Standards of Cover Study recommendations
- **HARRF Digester Cleaning:**
Complete critical wastewater infrastructure maintenance

- **Insurance Services Office (ISO) Review Completion:**
Complete Insurance Services Office review for community insurance rate benefits
- **Police Staffing Study:**
Finalize comprehensive analysis and resource optimization recommendations
- **Public Safety Vehicle Replacement:**
 - ◆ 37 Police vehicles
 - ◆ 2 Fire Utility Trucks
 - ◆ 3 Fire Pumper Trucks
- **Rapid DNA Testing Technology:**
Enables EPD to quickly generate DNA profiles from samples on-site without having to send them away for extensive lab processing for use in identifying suspects, solving crimes faster, and reducing forensic lab backlogs
- **Traffic Signal Replacement Program:**
Begin ongoing infrastructure safety improvement initiative
- **Wildfire Severity Zone Update:**
Complete updated risk assessment and planning

FY 2026/27

- **MS4 Compliance Street Sweeping:**
Initiate regular City street sweeping to meet environmental compliance requirements
- **Smart City Initiative:**
Evaluate public safety technology enhancement opportunities (FLOCK technology, drones, smart water meters)

Strategic Priority

Restore Organizational Capacity

Strategic Objectives

- **Service Delivery Enhancement:**
Improve customer service capabilities and administrative efficiency
- **Strategic Staffing:**
Increase staffing levels in critical areas to meet service delivery expectations and operational demands
- **Talent Management:**
Attract, develop, and retain high-quality employees through competitive compensation and professional development
- **Workplace Excellence:**
Create positive work environment that supports employee satisfaction, productivity, and long-term retention

FY 2025/26

- **Administrative Directive Updates:**
Review and update priority policies and procedures
- **Customer Service Initiative:**
Third-Thursday monthly City Hall closures to provide dedicated time for elevating customer service excellence, implementing essential technology solutions, and reducing administrative burdens.
- **Employee Satisfaction Baseline:**
Conduct comprehensive assessment to establish improvement metrics
- **Enhanced Workplace Environment:**
Space planning reconfiguration; employee engagement and satisfaction improvement programs
- **Microsoft Technology Implementation (SharePoint, Teams, and OneDrive):**
For improved collaboration
- **Retention Strategy Development:**
Create comprehensive approach to employee retention and career development

Performance Tracking

Be Business Friendly Metrics

- Business community satisfaction with City services
- Business permit processing times and customer satisfaction
- Commercial vacancy rates and property utilization
- New business formation rates and business license growth
- Tax revenue growth from business development

Build Trust and Accountability Metrics

- Community engagement
- Community satisfaction survey results
- Measure I accountability report accessibility
- Response times to community inquiries and concerns

Drive Community and Land Development Metrics

- Capital Improvement Project completion rates and budget performance
- Community satisfaction with development outcomes
- Development permit processing times and approval rates
- General Plan implementation progress and compliance

Financial Stewardship Metrics

- Energy cost savings
- Infrastructure maintenance backlog reduction

Prioritize Public Safety Metrics

- Emergency response times by service type
- Homelessness service delivery outcomes
- Public safety incident rates and case clearance statistics
- Community satisfaction with public safety services

Restore Organizational Capacity Metrics

- Customer service satisfaction
- Employee satisfaction
- Position vacancy reduction

Strategic Governance and Accountability Framework

City Manager Reporting Structure

The City Manager will provide quarterly progress reports to the City Council, including:

- Performance: Metrics for key projects from each strategic priority
- Status: Current phase, timeline adherence, and resource utilization
- Impact: Measurable outcomes affecting residents and businesses

Vetting Process for New Projects/Initiatives

Step 1:

Department Head or designee completes “Work Plan New Project Business Case Request” form which will help assess the following:

- Alignment with established strategic priorities
- Resource requirements and availability
- Impact on existing project timelines
- Fiscal impact in current and future years
- Whether the project will lead to direct or indirect revenue for the City
- What the project will deliver for the community

Step 2:

Submit form to Deputy City Manager for initial review.

Step 3:

Department Head or designee presents the request to Executive Leadership Team.

Step 4:

After initial approval from Executive Leadership Team, the Department Head organizes completion of the following:

- Feasibility analysis
- Determine funding sources and budget impacts
- Assess staff capacity and training requirements
- Stakeholder impact assessment
- Develop implementation timeline and resource allocation plan

Step 5:

Submit to City Manager for final approval and Council presentation.

Approval Criteria:

- Direct advancement of strategic priorities
- Positive cost-benefit analysis
- Available implementation capacity
- Community benefit demonstration
- Measurable outcomes identification

Conclusion

This strategic Workplan provides the City of Escondido with a framework for achieving measurable community improvements while maintaining accountability and transparency throughout the implementation process.

Document Change Control

Vs#	Date	Changes Made	Author
1	7/2/25	First Draft for DH review	Joanna Axelrod