

CITY COUNCIL

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Reso No. _____ File No. _____

Ord No. _____

Agenda Item No.: 8

Date: August 17, 2011

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: Barbara Redlitz, Director of Community Development
Joyce Masterson, Assistant to the City Manager

SUBJECT: Preliminary City Council Action Plan – Image and Appearance

RECOMMENDATION:

It is requested that Council provide direction to staff on the proposed content of the Image and Appearance element of the 2011-2012 City Council Action Plan.

FISCAL ANALYSIS:

None

PREVIOUS ACTION:

The City Council held a workshop for the development of the 2011-2012 Council Action Plan on February 2, 2011. On April 6, 2011, Council approved the format and schedule for the development of the 2011-2012 City Council Action Plan. On May 11, 2011, Council reviewed the proposed content for the Financial Stability element. On June 15, 2011 Council reviewed the proposed content for the Economic Development element.

BACKGROUND:

The City Council Action Plan represents the City Council's collective vision for Escondido's future and the key strategies that will be used to achieve that vision. It is developed biennially following a workshop where key policy goals are identified and discussed.

On April 6, 2011, Council approved the format as well as a recommendation that a review of a draft of each priority area be scheduled individually to provide the City Council with adequate time to discuss each section and to provide feedback to ensure the action plan truly reflects the Council's desires.

A draft Image and Appearance element is attached to this document as Attachment 1. Staff will incorporate any revisions into a final draft to be presented on September 14, 2011.

Preliminary Council Action Plan
August 17, 2011
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Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Barbara Redlitz".

Barbara Redlitz
Director of Community Development

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Joyce Masterson".

Joyce Masterson
Assistant to the City Manager

City Council Action Plan 2011-2012

Attachment 1

Image and Appearance

Goal	Current Reality	Strategy	Evaluation Measures	Outcome
Pro-active code enforcement (residential and commercial properties); implement existing ordinances; public education on violations	1. The Appearance and Compliance Team (ACT) was highly successful in proactively improving the City's appearance, but was disbanded due to the recession's impact on staffing and budget. A modified version of the ACT can be reinstated, although monthly sweeps cannot yet be accommodated. Code enforcement currently is complaint-based, with priority given to health/safety violations. Priorities are as follows: • Health & Safety violations • Garage conversions • Non-permitted room additions • Substandard dwellings • Graffiti removal • Inoperable street lights • Abandoned vehicles • Abandoned and foreclosed properties • Weed and junk abatement • Shopping carts • Potholes • Illegal signs • Business license violations	1a. Reinstate a modified version of the interdepartmental ACT to identify and monitor problem properties and attractive nuisances; anticipate "ripple effect"; and adjust resources accordingly. 1b. Identify specific geographic areas of the city for methodical, proactive enforcement; give advance public education or notification, then target for concentrated enforcement, focusing on appearance violations. 1c. Establish reporting mechanisms to determine baselines and progress made by geographic or specific areas. 1d. Develop additional public education information on reporting problems or finding solutions (i.e. website, handouts, etc.)	Quarterly reports from various departments and/or operations	

Goal	Current Reality	Strategy	Evaluation Measures	Outcome
	2. Code enforcement part time staffing: • Allows for weekend and flexible coverage. • Officers lack experience; not yet fully trained. • No night-time enforcement Over the years, city employees in all departments have been encouraged to report code violations, potholes, burned out street lights, etc. Unless continually reminded, personal responsibility for this lessens over time.	2a. Train volunteers in all organized neighborhoods to report code violations; examine potential to use volunteers in other low and moderate income areas in the City. 2b. Release periodic reminders encouraging all field personnel, inspectors, police volunteer patrols, and general City employees to report potential code violations. 2c. Work with the DBA, Chamber of Commerce, realtors, and other business and non-profit groups to encourage voluntary compliance.	Quarterly reports from various departments. Track volunteer numbers and hours.	
	3. City Appearance Committee reviews public and private projects involving city-owned property or facilities, and along gateways and medians for appropriate level of design and issues related to maintenance, public safety, liability, etc. 4. Multiple inspections are often required to achieve compliance.	3. Appoint a representative from the City Appearance Committee to sit on the interdepartmental team and coordinate or resolve issues that may arise. 4. Establish a re-inspection fee to encourage timely compliance.	Biannual report from City Appearance Committee. Adopt fee for non-responsive cases. Number of cases requiring multiple inspections.	

Goal	Current Reality	Strategy	Evaluation Measures	Outcome
	5. Due to the nature of major, regional businesses regulated by agencies other than the City, clean-up and/or beautification of various properties is not self-monitored.	5. Develop protocol for working with Palomar/SDG&E/Palomar-Pomerado, etc. to resolve unsightly property maintenance issues. This may require Council member or City Manager initiation and/or advocacy.	Develop and maintain contact list. Track response times.	
	6. Maintenance of city property should set the standard in the community. Unfortunately it has been reduced due to diminished resources.	6a. Analyze City workforce to effectively maintain City property. 6b. Develop an "Adopt-a-Lot" program for maintenance of public properties. Explore a corporate sponsorship program or other form of recognition as an incentive. 6c. Co-sponsor community and corporate volunteerism, such as work days, coordinated through the City's Volunteer Coordinator.	Mid-year report on maintenance needs, concurrent with mid-year budget review. Establish policies and procedures for an "Adopt-a-Lot" program.	
	7. In CDBG-eligible areas: • Staff actively educates and trains residents and 15 neighborhood groups regarding violations • NEAT staff and PD District Area Commanders attend neighborhood meetings and Neighborhood Leadership forums • NEAT staff prepare items of interest in the Neighborhood News	7a. Use CDBG funds to: • Expand Project NEAT program to all CDBG-eligible neighborhoods • Add Code Enforcement officer(s) for CDBG-eligible commercial properties • Conduct field survey of commercial property and identify high violations rates • Focus efforts in areas of high pedestrian use	Number of cases with voluntary compliance; Number of cases referred to Code Enforcement; Number of cases referred to the City Attorney.	

Goal	Current Reality	Strategy	Evaluation Measures	Outcome
	- NEAT staff participate in neighborhood tours with group leadership members - Project NEAT assesses 2,600 residential properties for property maintenance and appearance issues. - Funding for additional Code Enforcement personnel through CDBG has been authorized for FY 2011-12.	7b. Develop an expanded marketing plan for Project NEAT. Identify and maintain key private citizen groups (realtors, service clubs, churches) to educate them regarding the importance of property maintenance issues	Track and report new outlets used to market Project NEAT, and determine if new projects are generated by the use of these outlets.	
	8. Enforcement successes are not well publicized to the City Council, other departments or the public, resulting in a skewed and potentially negative perception of City Image.	8. Develop standardized reports to track enforcement complaints, caseload, responsiveness, and trends using upgraded TRAKIT and Azteca software approved in the FY 2011-12 CIP budget.	Quarterly reports regarding enforcement caseload and results. Post results on website.	
	9. Proliferation of new types of temporary signs such as "feather" signs create unsightly appearance, but provide a cost – effective way for businesses to attract customers. An increased number of businesses are painting murals on large blank walls without design review approval.	9. Evaluate sign ordinance to address feather/temporary signs and murals.	Adopt code amendment.	
	10. Special volunteer projects on City properties provide public improvements that may not otherwise be funded, but lack of a standardized policy result in proposals that do not make efficient use of staff resources.	10. Develop policy to address offers of special projects on City property, i.e., Eagle Scout projects, including procedures and identification of types of desirable projects and locations.	Adopt policy.	

Goal	Current Reality	Strategy	Evaluation Measures	Outcome
	11. Weed Abatement enforcement response is handled by Code Enforcement under property maintenance provisions of the Municipal Code, and by the Fire Department under the Fire Code. 12. FY 2011-12 CIP Budget authorized \$177,000 for CRW upgrades. Code Enforcement officers document their cases when they return to the office. Additional CRW software is available to increase staff accuracy and efficiency by allowing immediate field entry (Mobile TRAK) and monitor customer response (CRM). Cost for the additional software and annual maintenance is \$40,500 plus additional laptop purchase and internet fees of \$20,000. Customer complaints are submitted through a variety of sources, often resulting in overlapping responses that are difficult to track and create inefficiencies. Additional TRAKIT software (Citizens Response Management or CRM) is also available to manage and monitor customer complaints. Cost for software and annual maintenance is \$22,500.	Coordinate weed abatement enforcement efforts by Code Enforcement and Fire Department to ensure communication and provide consistent direction to property owner. 12. Purchase additional TRAKIT software (Mobile TRAK and CRM).	Response time. Response time.	

Goal	Current Reality	Strategy	Evaluation Measures	Outcome
Urban Renewal, Overlays and Standards	1. Vacant and foreclosed properties are poorly maintained. Enforcement efforts are hampered by difficulty determining ownership or responsible party.	1. Explore strategies employed by other jurisdictions to address maintenance of vacant and foreclosed properties, and assess necessary resources for implementation as additional funding becomes available.	Summary Report.	
	2. The Economic Development element of the Council Action Plan requested funding for a consultant to update the Zoning Code. Some code provisions lack enforceability due to conflicting language, inconsistencies or lack of clarity between guidelines and standards. Current City policy requires preliminary step of City Council initiation prior to processing.	2a. Expand scope of Zoning Code update to evaluate land use and development related code sections and guidelines to delete outdated provisions and amend codes as necessary to better support current enforcement goals and policies. 2b. Eliminate City Council initiation of code amendments and authorize Planning staff to process as deemed necessary, in consultation with City Attorney.	Adoption of code amendments. Adoption of code amendments.	