



City of Escondido's Communications Plan

The Communications Plan serves as the blueprint for all of the City of Escondido's communications functions. Its purposes are two-fold: (1) to communicate an accurate, clearly stated, and consistent identity of the City of Escondido, and (2) to establish procedures and action steps to communicate timely and relevant information to the City's various audiences in all communications.

Communications Plan's Goal

To provide direction and guidance to effectively communicate the City's core messaging in a unified, consistent and effective format.

City Structure

With over 151,000 residents, Escondido is the fourth largest among the 18 incorporated cities in San Diego County. The City operates under a Council-Manager governance system. A Mayor and Treasurer are elected by the City at large, and four City Councilmembers are elected by council districts to set policy. The City Council appoints two managers: a City Manager, who serves as the City's chief executive and a City Attorney who serves as the chief legal officer.

The City provides services through 13 departments:

- City Attorney
- City Clerk
- City Manager
- Communications and Community Services
- Community Development
- Engineering
- Finance
- Fire
- Human Resources
- Information Systems
- Police
- Public Works
- Utilities

Audiences Addressed by the Communications Plan

- Current and future City residents
- Visitors/tourists
- Residential, commercial, and industrial property owners
- Existing and prospective businesses owners, and their employees and customers
- Community, philanthropic, business, and service organizations
- School districts, charter and private schools, area colleges, and universities
- Churches and other faith-based organizations
- City staff, City Council, volunteers, and appointed members of advisory bodies, boards and commissions
- News media outlets
- Regional cooperative initiatives and organizations (e.g. Innovate 78, San Diego North Economic Development Council, SANDAG)
- County, state, and federal offices

City Assets

Escondido's year-round temperate climate; immediate access to major freeway and rail corridors; a diverse inventory of for-sale and rental housing; high quality health care featuring Palomar Medical Center; active citizen engagement; a wide range of cultural, arts, and recreational amenities including a regional arts center and one of the largest nature preserves in the county; rich educational resources that include traditional and charter K-12 schools, a community college campus and private university; a robust business community; compelling tourism amenities including a wide variety of local wineries and breweries; a comprehensive strategic plan for addressing homelessness and transiency utilizing our partner network of service providers; the City's ongoing commitment to maintain Escondido as safe, clean and efficiently managed; and a core value to honor community-wide diversity make the City an attractive community.

Inputs

Input for the Communications Plan is drawn from:

- Appropriate findings of a Communications Audit
- City Councilmember comments and requests
- Social Media Strategic Plan
- Resident Satisfaction Survey
- Ongoing experiences and events.

Core Messages

Core messages are overarching statements that can be used in their entirety, in part, or paraphrased to adapt to specific communications formats and outputs. The identity for Escondido begins with the consistent use of core messages that highlight the City's assets.

Messaging Goals: Position the City of Escondido as a desirable city to live, work, play, and visit. Identify the City of Escondido as safe, clean, and efficiently run. Its deep agricultural roots are reflected in the community's strong work ethic, family values, and welcoming nature. The City has historically served as the commercial center serving North San Diego County and continues to grow and prosper. It is a diverse City, moving forward, and remembering its rich history.

Core Message Themes:

Theme 1 - Escondido has a thriving economy with assets that make it the go-to destination for residents, visitors, the workforce, and businesses.

Being centrally located and the fourth-largest city in San Diego County, Escondido is the economic hub of North San Diego County and attracts, retains, and promotes:

- A diverse mix of small, medium, and large businesses encouraging shoppers to Support Local, Shop Local thereby retaining sales tax revenue in the City;
- A robust supply of safe, affordable, and available for-sale and rental housing of various sizes to accommodate families, couples, and singles of all cultures and ages; and
- Affordable and inclusive recreational and family-friendly activities to engage and support a thriving community.
- The City works closely with existing and prospective business owners; community members; non-profit, faith-based, and educational organizations to make Escondido a safe, clean and efficient place to do business free of graffiti, homelessness, and blight.
- Visitors are drawn to Escondido to experience world-class recreation and open spaces, breweries, wineries, and a wide variety of hotels, shopping, dining, museums, arts, and cultural opportunities.
- The Economic Development team supports local businesses and commerce by providing a streamlined permitting process and assisting businesses of all sizes with their workforce needs including attraction, expansion, and retention resources.
 - Diverse, quality businesses are essential to Escondido. Local businesses bring a wide range of jobs for Escondido residents, generate tax revenue to fund essential services and quality of life amenities, and contribute to the health of our local and regional economy.
 - Escondido's economic development priorities are to encourage the growth and expansion of local businesses and support the growth of the City's commercial and tourism amenities and housing stock.

Theme 2 - Escondido is safe, clean and efficiently run.

- Escondido is a full-service city with a locally-controlled police force, fire department, and utilities (water and wastewater) enabling us to be self-sufficient to the largest extent possible. Our management and recovery of water resources is cutting edge in our region.
- Escondido is a safe city in which to conduct business, to explore, and to call home. Public safety, both real and perceived, is a high priority.
- Residents can engage with the City using the Report It App to communicate issues in real-time and track their status/completion.

- Homelessness is a national, state, and local issue that impacts the health and safety of communities. The City's Strategy for Addressing Homelessness and Transiency lays out the framework for how the City is addressing this issue.
- Several City departments utilize the latest technology to digitize government transactions and vital interactions, track projects electronically, and share information with the public. These efforts streamline processes, offer services outside of traditional business hours, and lower costs.
 - Escondido offers a variety of online services where residents, business owners, developers, contractors, and others interact with the City to pay utility bills, apply for and renew business licenses, apply for building permits, register for recreation programs, and much more.

Theme 3 - Escondido celebrates its history and agricultural roots, strong work ethic, family values, and welcoming nature.

- Escondido is unique in that it is one of the oldest cities in San Diego County. Incorporated in 1888, Escondido grew and flourished as an agricultural hub for growing grapes, citrus, and avocados.
- The City continues to invest resources to bring affordable water to our agricultural community that produces a wide variety of fruits and vegetables.
- Farmers Market - The City partners with the Downtown Arts Partnership to host a weekly farmers market in the downtown area.
 - Other nearby non-City collaborated markets:
 - Sikes Adobe Farmers Market
 - Lawrence Welk Farmers Market
- Community Events
 - Over 1500 events occur per year in Escondido bringing community members together.
 - Featuring Cruisin' Grand, visual and performing arts, winery and brewery events, live music and theatre, holiday festivities, family-friendly fun, sports tournaments, competitive races and fun runs, and over 30 major annual events.
- Arts and Culture groups
 - Escondido is full of passionate artists who come together to collaborate and enhance the arts and culture landscape of the community.
 - Queen Califia's Magical Circle is the only American sculpture garden and the last major international project created by Niki de Saint Phalle.
 - California Center for the Arts, Escondido is the cultural center of North County bringing people together to discover, create, and celebrate both the visual and performing arts.
 - MAGEC (Music and Arts: Growing Escondido's Culture) - Escondido's thriving museums and arts community collaborate within this informal group with the purpose of growing and developing the businesses of its participants by promoting Escondido's vibrant arts, heritage and educational culture.

Theme 4 - Escondido is fiscally responsible but faces a structural budget gap where projected revenues will not keep pace with rising costs of providing services.

- The costs of providing services to residents continue to increase and are not keeping pace with the amount of revenue that the City brings in through sales and property taxes. As a result, the 20 year budget gap totals \$220 million which annually ranges up to \$14 million.
- City staff have aggressively implemented cost savings measures for years to address this structural budget gap including: pension reforms; increasing employee contributions to benefits; reducing workforce to below pre-recession levels through increases in efficiency, attrition, and consolidation; updating fees; contracting for services; technology efficiencies; the creation of a CityWide Community Facilities District; deferred maintenance; and seeking grant funds to pay for projects that could not otherwise be funded by the General Fund.
- City revenue is heavily dependent upon sales tax but only receives 1% of the revenue from items purchased in the City. The rest goes to the State. Only 1/10 of 1% of property taxes go to the City. The balance goes to schools, the County, and other taxing agencies.
- Public Safety staffing and per capita costs are the lowest in the region while service levels and response times remain amongst the highest.
- Deep cuts to services and staffing across all departments are required to address this structural budget gap unless an additional source of ongoing revenue or a reliable, long-term increase to our existing sales tax revenue source is established.

Communications Tools

Existing communications tools include but are not necessarily limited to the following:

- City websites
 - Primary City website
 - Fire, Police, Library, Community Services, and Visit Escondido websites
 - All of the City's websites will be cohesive in their appearance, unified under the goal of sharing the City's core messages, and provide timely and accurate information.
- Social media
 - The City uses Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Nextdoor, and YouTube.
 - Depending on the information being shared, the Communications team can indicate which platform is most effective for your message.
 - The City's Social Media Policy can be referenced in [Administrative Directive #46](#).
- Traditional Communications
 - E-mail
 - Letters
 - Print/direct mail
 - Verbal communications
 - Surveys
 - Onsite signage and banners
 - Vehicle and employee uniform signage (e.g. Public Works employees)
- Cox Channel 19 and AT&T U-verse Channel 99
 - The City broadcasting channels that stream City Council Meetings, board and commission meetings, City messages, and emergency notifications.
- Public meetings
- Community and City-sponsored events
- Digital and printed collateral materials
 - Newsletters

- Flyers
 - Street banners
 - Centre digital billboard
 - CCAE digital billboard
- City Manager's Weekly Activity Report
 - A comprehensive report on City activities, major project updates, and public safety data. Distributed to City Council, City leadership, employees, and the media. The report is also available on the homepage of the City's website.
- Media Outreach
 - News releases
 - Emergency alerts
 - Interviews
 - The City's Media Relations Policy can be referenced in [Administrative Directive #14](#).
- Elected Official Activity
 - Speeches
 - Emails
 - News conferences
 - In-District or Town Hall meetings
- Communication Liaisons

This group of mid-level management staff from across City departments is instrumental in facilitating internal communication and serves as a sounding board for feedback and workshopping of Communications-related ideas and projects.

Communications on Behalf of Elected Officials and During Election Season. Staff must always be cautious about providing various services to individual elected officials. All requested services from an elected official need to be cleared by the City Manager before execution. Procedures for departmental communications with City Council can be found in [Administrative Directive #6](#).

During election season, staff must be extra cautious about providing services to elected officials to avoid any appearance that taxpayer resources benefit incumbents over challengers. For example, any work for individual Councilmembers associated with the following will not be allowed:

- Social Media (content consulting, proofing, etc.)
- Graphics (creation, implementation, and/or duplicating)
- Speaking engagements (drafting talking points or logistics)
- PR/News Media

Objectives and Action Steps

Objective 1: Implement and enforce brand standards

All messages and other forms of print or digital communications intended for the City's audiences will be consistent in format, accurate, and timely.

Action Steps:

- All print and digital communications materials for which the use of an official City emblem is appropriate shall only use the official City seal or the "City of Choice" logo and slogan.
 - Exception: Existing City Seal can continue to be used on City vehicles and other applications where it is in current use.
 - Exception: Police and Fire may forgo the use of the City Seal and "City of Choice" logo in lieu of their badge or patch and slogans.
 - Departments can add their personalized department slogan to the "City of Choice" logo but must use this logo in its entirety.
- All City graphics materials shall be consistent with the Graphics Applications Standards protocol and City of Escondido Style Guide attached as Addendum A.
- All informational and promotional print and digital communications materials intended for external audiences shall be cleared by the Communications Officer before being distributed.

Objective 2: Enhance internal communications

To provide optimum customer service to the City's constituents, there needs to be timely, accurate, and proactive communications taking place within and among City departments.

Action Steps:

- Identify a detailed City organizational chart or manual that identifies the respective duties and responsibilities of each department for use by all departments.
- Identify format and protocol for departments to communicate relevant information to other departments to coordinate actions and avoid duplicative efforts.
- Utilize the Department Heads, Communications Liaisons, and Administrative Coordinators groups for information sharing and idea generation.

Objective 3: Promote the City's assets, unique Escondido events, key initiatives, and projects

Consistent use of this plan's core messages and other positive points when appropriate to include in communications materials and outputs will help build the consistent identity this plan seeks to achieve. Keeping these topics at the forefront of all communications guides the message delivered to our audiences. Delivering confident and accurate statements about our current events and projects will boost public awareness and civic engagement. A connected and informed community is a vibrant community.

Action Steps:

- Regularly review and update departmental website content with current, accurate, and topical information.
- When changes in leadership occur, the Core Messages of this plan will be reviewed and updated as necessary.

Objective 4: Staff Education

Having a trained workforce means employees are learning new skills that can improve productivity, shorten time spent on processes, reduce mistakes, build confidence, and create a better working environment.

Action Steps:

- The Communications department will work with other departmental staff as appropriate to create standardized procedures and trainings for the following:

- Photo archiving
- P-Temp organization and saving protocols
- Document versioning
- Mass communication protocols
- Newsletters
- Conducting effective marketing and outreach campaigns
- Workflow documentation
- Writing in plain language
- Selecting the appropriate tone, voice, and style for the intended audience
- Web design standards
- Website Content Administrator training
- These procedures will be shared with the Communication Liaison team for implementation.

Objective 5: Translation Protocols

In order to provide consistent and timely information to the community, it has been determined that when translation is appropriate, the best practice is to translate approved documents in Spanish only. Since the City's websites and social media platforms utilize embedded third-party translation services, no additional translation should be provided. It is best to rely on these services to ensure accuracy and offer a variety of languages and dialects.

- Always translate:
 - Statutorily required documents (i.e. water shut-off notifications), emergency notifications distributed in print, materials for community engagement, Census and voter information, and community feedback surveys.
- Do not translate:
 - Social media, news releases, applications for employment and volunteering, and City meeting documents (agendas, minutes).
- Exceptions made at the discretion of the City Manager and/or the City Attorney.
- A roster of City staff who have been tested and certified to translate written, verbal, or both is maintained by the Human Resources department and available on the intranet [here](#). When translation services are required, it is the Department's responsibility to consult this list and locate a translator. Documents must be vetted by two or more certified bilingual staff members before being submitted to Graphics or Duplication so be sure to provide adequate lead time for translation and review.
 - For verbal translation needs, request the assistance of a certified bilingual staff member. In the event that a bilingual staff member is unavailable or for translation of languages other than Spanish, utilize the [AT&T Translation Services](#).
- The City's translation policy and procedure are also codified in [Administrative Directive #35](#)

The Communications Plan will be updated as needed.

ADDENDUM A – GRAPHICS APPLICATIONS STANDARDS AND STYLE GUIDE

The following are the guidelines for approved use of the City of Escondido's Logo and City Seal.

All approved logos can be found on the Intranet under "[Forms and Templates](#)". Use of the City Seal and City of Choice Logo are also detailed in [Administrative Directive #21](#).

Logo:



Never stretch or distort the City Logo.

- The City of Choice logo can be used for correspondence, memos, clothing and other PR materials.
- Never change the color of the logo (blue or black are the only approved colors) without permission from the City Manager's Office.
- Do not change spacing, alignment, or relative locations of the design elements.
- Do not add a drop shadow, place objects behind the logo, tint or rotate the logo.
- Do not position the logo on an angle.
- The logo should never appear in a white box on a colored background, see GIS for the proper file if needed.
- The logo can be inverted to show as white on a blue or black background if the use requires.
- You may add a department slogan to the bottom of this logo but all components of the logo must remain intact.

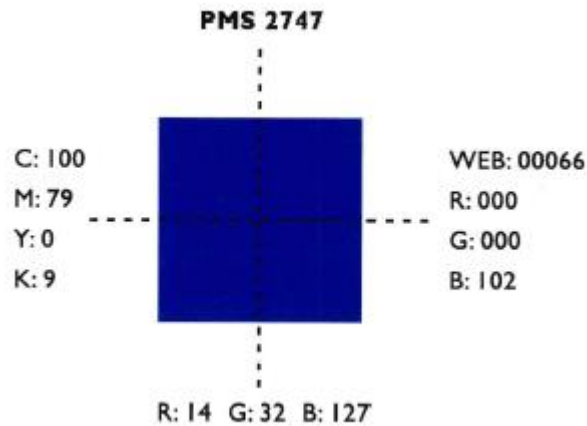
Seal:



Never stretch or distort the City Seal.

- The City Seal should only be used on official documents and City vehicles.
- The seal may be also printed in black and white.
- The seal should not be printed in other colors besides those shown above.
- The seal is always round, not oval.

City of Choice Blue:



Fonts:

Calibri	Arial
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz	abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ	ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
123456789	123456789

City of Escondido Best Practices:

The City of Escondido uses AP Style formatting. The following are common occurrences and best practices. For more information about AP Style, click [here](#).

Date Format

January 1, 2020

NOT January, 1st, 2020

1/1/2020

NOT 1-1-2020

Time Format

11 a.m., 1 p.m., 3:30 p.m., 9 – 11 a.m., 9 to 10:30 a.m.; 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Both “-” and “to” are acceptable.

NOT 8am or 8:00 a.m.

NOT AM or A.M.

Use figures except for noon and midnight

Title Format

Capitalize the job title when it comes immediately before the name, in a formal context or in direct address. It is not generally capitalized if it comes after the person's name, or if there is a "the" before it. However, the City of Escondido allows that titles can be capitalized after the name.

Examples:

City Manager Jeffrey Epp

Jeffrey Epp, city manager

Jeffrey Epp, City Manager

General Best Practices

Capitalize the letter C when referencing the City of Escondido.

Example: The City is home to Kit Carson Park.

Councilmember

Should be all one word and capitalized when it comes before a name (same as Title Format recommendation)

Example: Councilmember Jane Doe joined the City Council in 2019.

CityWide

Should be all one word with a capital C and capital W

Example: John will send a CityWide email with the details next week.