

# Escondido Neighbors for Solutions

December 14, 2025

Mayor White and City Council Members  
City of Escondido  
Via Email

## **RE: Requests to Improve City's Homelessness Subcommittee and Address Homelessness in Escondido, Agenda item #24, December 17, 2025 meeting**

Dear Mayor and Councilmembers,

Like many Escondido residents, members of Escondido Neighbors for Solutions (ENSOL) are deeply concerned about the well-being, health, and safety of our unhoused neighbors. Many of us have lived in this community for decades, and we are seeing a great increase in needs that require both short-term attention and long-term planning. We believe the City has an important role to play in shaping a coordinated and compassionate response.

One of the key venues for this work is the City's Homelessness Subcommittee which you will act on at the next meeting. According to the information available on the City website, the Subcommittee has met only twice this year, with the most recent meeting taking place six months ago. We also have noted an absence of regular updates during City Council meetings regarding progress or next steps, despite homelessness being identified as a major priority and receiving dedicated Measure I funding.

Despite this funding and priority, the Council has yet to publicly articulate a vision statement describing what "handling homelessness" truly looks like for Escondido. Is the goal to provide sustainable shelter and resources, or is it simply to move people out of sight? This distinction matters because the strategy dictates the outcome, and the public has a right to know how Measure I funds are and can be used and how the City plans to move forward in addressing your unhoused priority.

We are confident that improved communication and opportunities for more community involvement would strengthen this effort. Specifically, we request that the Council commit to the following in your action related to the Homelessness Subcommittee :

- Provide regular public updates through Subcommittee reports at Council meetings so residents can stay informed about current actions and future plans.
- Hold a town hall or similar public forum to share information, discuss challenges in greater depth, and invite community feedback and collaboration.
- Expand the Subcommittee membership to include a representative number of residents, business owners, and rental housing representatives who may offer valuable on-the-ground perspectives.

- Ensure that the Subcommittee develops and adopts an annual work plan which, in addition to the items above, includes a commitment to a meaningful Citizen Participation Program to ensure full and effective use of HUD HOME funds in a manner that results in real, measurable improvements in housing affordability and homelessness outcomes.

As addressing the problem with shelter beds alone is also not a complete fix, we also request the City to explore potential opportunities for additional shelter, service, or transitional space. For example, the City-owned property at Ash and Washington could be evaluated as a possible site for centralized services, a permitted encampment with basic facilities, or future low-income housing. Its proximity to transit and businesses may make it a feasible option while minimizing neighborhood conflict.

Recent experience also demonstrates what happens when the strategy is focused solely on clearance. For example, while the recent vegetation clearance and law-enforcement-led encampment removals may have mitigated fire risk in certain areas, the community cost was significant. The result was to simply displace our vulnerable neighbors onto city streets without clear alternatives available. We share the concerns voiced by residents at the last Council meeting who are now experiencing increased impacts. If this displacement and transfer of the problem is the only current strategy in Escondido, we need to immediately rethink our approach. We believe that with more coordinated planning and transparent communication, the City can take meaningful steps that support both housed and unhoused residents.

Finally, we want to emphasize that we know that homelessness is a complex, community-wide challenge that affects people from all backgrounds, many of whom are only a few setbacks, or even paychecks, away from crisis themselves. Solutions grounded in dignity, compassion, and long-term stability are not only humane; they are broadly supported by Escondido residents who want to see thoughtful progress.

ENSOL was founded in 2024 specifically to encourage constructive community involvement on this issue. At this point, we feel compelled to share with you our significant frustration and concern that the actions of the city have not yielded progress on the results our community needs and deserves, especially when some solutions are available. We believe that a better constituted and transparent Homelessness Subcommittee would help to make progress.

We plan to attend the Council meeting on December 17, 2025, when Subcommittee appointments are made, and we hope our four action items above will be included as part of that decision. For questions or further information, please contact Lisa Richards at [lrichards111@yahoo.com](mailto:lrichards111@yahoo.com).

Thank you for your consideration,

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