

PRESS RELEASE

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CITY COUNCIL TO REACH DECISION ON HUMANE SOCIETY'S \$1.6 MILLION REQUEST

Escondido, CA—May 21, 2002—At 4 p.m. tomorrow, the Escondido City Council will reach a decision on how much they will invest into the Escondido Humane Society's project to rebuild the shelter that was destroyed by fire last year. On May 1, the humane society asked the city to invest up to \$1.6 million to help with preconstruction costs necessary to make the land ready to build on.

City staff met with Phil Morgan, executive director of the Escondido Humane Society, last week to discuss how much they proposed to invest in the society's project. Morgan says, "I've been given an estimate of what the city proposes to assist us with. I'm very thankful for what they have offered- a generous lease and a proposal of financial assistance. They realize how important it is for us to reopen and they're doing their best to help us get there. Unfortunately, it looks like we'll still come up short on our preconstruction costs and will likely have to cut back on the project. The building may not look as pretty, but it will still house and care for the animals, it will still be safety equipped and it will be capable of sheltering more than 6,000 animals a year. That's what's most important. "

The city has proposed leasing a 7.5 acre plot of land to the humane society for \$1.00 per year. Since approving Phase I master plans on May 8, city staff has been looking into money sources for the society's financial request. The humane society is short more than \$1.6 million to complete preconstruction on phases I and II of their project. The most costly of the preconstruction costs is putting in utilities, developing the access road to the site, importing dirt and demolition of the old site at Kit Carson Park.

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About the Escondido Humane Society: The Escondido Humane Society was completely destroyed by fire in January 2001. 115 animals were killed, 85 survived. The humane society plans to build an 84,400 square foot state of the art facility on seven acres of city owned land on East Valley Parkway. The project is divided into two phases. The first phase, which will allow the humane society to reopen, is scheduled to break ground in June.