

LAFCO 10/6/25 Commission Meeting
3-Minute Public Comment Script
(<https://protectruralescondido.com/>)

Good morning Commissioners,

My name is Tedi Jackson, I live at 1025 Birch Avenue in unincorporated Escondido, 92027. I've lived here for 27 years raising a family and building a home. I am here to present a *Citizen's Declaration of Concern* on behalf of *Protect Rural Escondido*, which has been formed to defend our semi-rural neighborhood and greater rural community from an imminent threat.

I wish to offer the first public comment to LAFCO expressing our neighborhood's **deep concern** for a high-density housing development called *Aldea Escondido*, first brought to the attention of the community this spring. The Aldea development plans for almost **200 single family** institutional style row homes with limited yards and set-backs on 10-acres of legacy agricultural lands (Idaho/Birch Ave parcel) that have been orchards and now open space for well over 75 years. As a side note, the same developer owns an adjacent 10-acre parcel under similar rural conditions, and they have since abandoned an approved Specific Plan obtained from the County of San Diego for development of **22 single-family homes** under the current County zoning standards – **A Balanced Approach that compliments** existing community character.

I have learned of a City of Escondido Staff Report dated September 11, 2024 (File Number 0850-20), six months prior to the community's knowledge of the development, which described the project with a significantly smaller annexation footprint and nine times density increase.

The Idaho/Birch Avenue parcel is situated in the middle of a community established over a century ago that respects the historical significance of rural character, agriculture legacy, and is comprised of homes zoned for equestrian and farm uses.

All the properties in this rural part of Unincorporated Escondido are on septic sewer systems that have been serving the homeowners well for decades.

At the foundation of the developer's plans is an annexation proposal of a large swath of County Unincorporated homes to the City of Escondido that would allow the developer to pursue **intense upzoning** through the City on lands completely surrounded by long-established neighborhoods that were built embracing semi-rural character with mature trees, open fencing, larger lot spacing, and homes designed to blend with the land rather than overwhelm it.

This development proposal does not improve our community's character but certainly will start a negative pattern of development.

Moreover, this area is not suitable or safe for ultra dense development for several reasons. The infrastructure here — narrow two-lane roads and highways with no sidewalks, no streetlights, aging drinking water infrastructure, zero transit options to employment centers and limited fire access — was never intended for massive growth.

The County's **General Plan**, and the **Village Residential** framework all call for growth that **Protects Community Character**. A short-sighted annexation of this degree violates the spirit and intent of this mandate resulting in an irrevocable loss of our community character and rural identity.

In Summary:

- This project threatens the century old neighborhood character, built on scale, openness, and sensitivity to the land.
- It disregards the planning policies that require compatibility, context, and preserving community identity.

- It would force urban density into an area already at significant wildfire risk—compromising safety and emergency response.

Protect Rural Escondido respectfully ask that you scrutinize this future annexation request and choose to preserve community character and rural identity in our region.

Thank you for your time today and I hope you now understand the inherent impacts of this project headed to this governing body and who will ultimately decide the fate of rural Southeast Escondido – “also known as Rincon Del Diablo”.

****You may ask why Community Character matters? Neighborhood character is more than aesthetics – it’s the way a community lives, interacts, and sustains itself. In Southeast Escondido, this means open space, small farms and vineyards, horses in pastures, and neighbors who choose a rural lifestyle. Protecting community character safeguards mental well-being, local identity, cultural continuity, and safeguards against the adversities that come with homogenized development. Once lost, rural character cannot be rebuilt; preserving it ensures future generations can inherit the same balance of land, nature and community spirit that defines our region.**

We live in a region with a documented history of wildfire risk. The community prevailing wind corridors make this zone extremely vulnerable in fire events. Dense development in such terrain multiplies exposure, limits evacuation routes, and increases rescue difficulty. Our neighborhood was adversely affected during the deadly 2007 Witch Creek fire.