



# Survey Report

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## San Ysidro

San Diego, CA

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City of San Diego

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# San Ysidro Survey Report

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## Executive Summary

This survey report summarizes the work completed on the San Ysidro Historic Context Statement and the San Ysidro Reconnaissance Level Survey, which occurred from September 2009 to September 2010.

Completed by the City of San Diego and Page & Turnbull, the San Ysidro Historic Context Statement (HCS) identifies development patterns and significant properties in the San Ysidro community, and provides a guide towards the evaluation of potential historic resources within the San Ysidro Community Planning Area. The San Ysidro HCS is organized into five major periods, which are defined by major events, trends, and periods of development. To guide the evaluation of potential historic resources, these five periods include an architectural description, character-defining features, significance statement, and integrity considerations for associated property types. The San Ysidro HCS concludes with a summary of the potentially significant properties within the community plan area, as well as recommendations for future work.

In April 2010, Page & Turnbull completed a reconnaissance-level survey of the San Ysidro Community Plan Area, which documented approximately 444 properties – all of which were constructed prior to 1970. This survey included digital photography and field notes. All survey results were entered into a Microsoft Access database, and a California Historic Resource Status Code was assigned to each property.

Based upon the historic context statement and the reconnaissance-level survey, Page & Turnbull and the City of San Diego identified twelve properties as potentially significant individual properties, and sixty-two properties as contributors to a potential historic district. However, Page & Turnbull recommends that additional work should occur to determine if this potential historic district is viable and meets national, state, and local standards for eligibility. In addition, work also needs to occur to determine if a viable cultural landscape exists around San Ysidro Community Park.

## I. Project Overview

### Purpose & Deliverables

In June 2009, the City of San Diego received a grant through the Certified Local Government (CLG) program to prepare a reconnaissance level survey for the community of San Ysidro. The City prepared the Historic Context Statement, and contracted with Page & Turnbull for field work, digital photography, a reconnaissance survey, survey report, and revisions to the Historic Context Statement. The product of this reconnaissance survey was a database, which outlines the major salient features of the surveyed properties. The survey was undertaken in support of the San Ysidro Community Plan Update scheduled to be completed by the City Planning & Community Investment Department in 2012. The survey will be used as background information for the Historic Preservation Element of the community plan, and will be used by the City, the public, consultants, and other interested parties to identify significant historic resources within San Ysidro.

Deliverables completed as part of this project include:

- San Ysidro Historic Context Statement – Outlining the history and physical development of San Ysidro and the criteria for evaluating potential historic resources;
- Digital Photography - Of all properties in San Ysidro constructed prior to 1970;
- Reconnaissance-Level Historic Resource Survey - Of all properties constructed prior to 1970 (All survey information input into Microsoft Access database); and
- Survey Report – To document the survey process and findings.

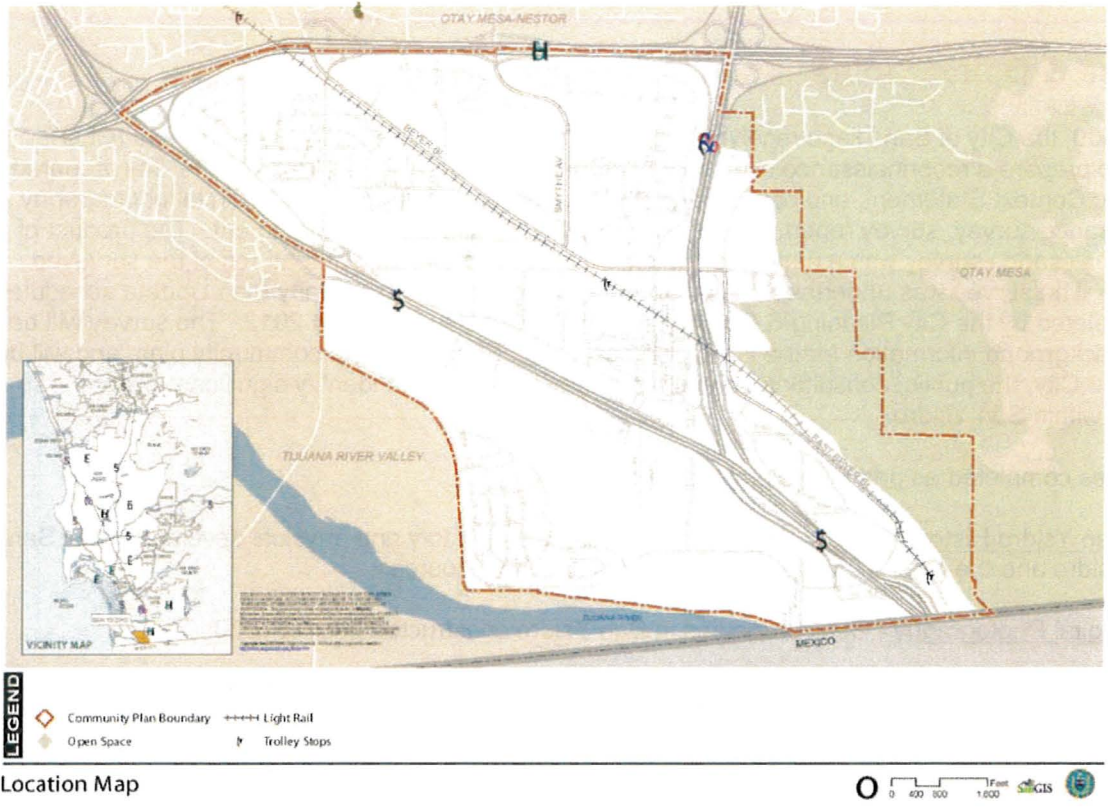
### Definition of Geographical Area

This context statement addresses the community of San Ysidro, located in the City of San Diego. San Ysidro is located adjacent to the U.S./Mexico border and includes approximately 1,863 acres. San Ysidro is bounded by I-905 to the north, the Tijuana River Valley to the west, the Otay Mesa community to the east, and the international border with Mexico to the south (Figure 1).



SAN YSIDRO

July 2010



**Figure 1. San Ysidro outlined in Red with City Boundaries**  
(Source: City of San Diego, July 2010)

## II. Methodology/Research Design

This section outlines the methodology and research design for the reconnaissance-level survey, and the San Ysidro Historic Context Statement. (See Attachment A)

### Historic Context Research Design and Methodology

The Historic Context Statement identifies development patterns and significant properties in the San Ysidro neighborhood. Investigations for the historic context statement included archival research and field work to define property types. Archival research included an examination of various documents at local repositories regarding the history of San Ysidro. Primary sources reviewed include street maps, subdivision maps, newspaper articles, and historic photographs. Secondary sources include books, journals, periodicals, historic resource reports, previous survey reports, and internet sources. In addition, oral interviews were conducted with select members of the San Ysidro and San Diego community, based upon recommendations offered by the City of San Diego Planning Department.

The document is organized as follows:

- **Section I. Introduction** provides an introduction to the document, its purpose, and geographic area.
- **Section II. Existing Surveys, Studies & Reports** summarizes previous historic resource survey work in the San Ysidro survey area.
- **Section III. Guidelines for Evaluation** provides a definition of each of the major property types found in the survey area (residential, commercial, civic/institutional and industrial), and guidelines to evaluate the significance and integrity of these properties.
- **Section IV. Historic Context** includes a narrative of the area's developmental history. This history is broken into five periods which are defined by events, themes, and development trends. Property types associated with each of the five periods are identified and analyzed. Analysis includes an architectural description, a list of character-defining features, an evaluation of historic significance, and a summary of integrity considerations.
- **Section V. Conclusion & Recommendations** provides a summary of the findings and recommendations for future work.

The historic context statement is organized chronologically, with sections that correspond to major periods in San Ysidro's history. These sections include:

- Rancho Period and Early Border History (1822 to 1908)
- An Agricultural Community (1909 to 1964)
- Development of a Border Town (1916 to 1956)
- Annexation to City of San Diego (1957 to Present)

Included with each context are:

- Associated Property Types (residential, commercial, institutional, etc);
- Architectural Description;
- Character-Defining Features;
- Significance; and
- Integrity Considerations.

Criteria for the evaluation of potential historic resources are outlined for the National Register of Historic Places, California Register of Historical Resources, and San Diego Historical Register.

The document follows:

- *Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Preservation Planning;*
- *National Register Bulletin No. 15 - How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation;*
- *National Register Bulletin No. 16B - How to Complete the National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form;* and

- National Register Bulletin 24 Guidelines for Local Surveys: A Basis for Preservation Planning.<sup>1</sup>

## Reconnaissance Level Survey Methodology

From April 5 to April 7, 2010, Page & Turnbull architectural historians Richard Sucre and Christina Dikas undertook a reconnaissance-level survey of all properties within the San Ysidro Community Plan Area that were constructed prior to 1970. Included as reference is a map of the survey area highlighting the dates of construction and properties surveyed (See Map 1). This survey primarily consisted of digital photography and field notes. All survey information was compiled into a database. Both surveyors meet the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards in Architectural History.

### Database

A total of 444 properties were photographed and recorded in the San Ysidro Historic Resource Survey Database, which was provided by the City of San Diego. As part of the data entry work, Page & Turnbull entered information into the following fields:

- Full Address
- Architectural Style
- Year Built
- Description
- Bldg2Desc
- Alterations (if apparent based on visual survey)
- Plan
- Roof Form
- Eaves
- Roof Material
- Roof Pitch
- Foundation
- Chimney Materials
- Window Types
- Window Detailing
- Window Material
- Exterior Cladding
- Porch
- Garage
- Integrity
- Image Name 1
- Image Name 2 (if more than one image assigned to property)
- Image Name 3 (if more than two images assigned to property)

The City of San Diego provided information on the Year Built, Address and APN, if known.

In general, building description information was limited to the aforementioned fields. Page & Turnbull used the "Description" field to denote an estimate for a property's date of construction (if not provided by the City), while the "Bldg2Desc" field was used to denote when more than one property was located on a parcel, or if additional property information (ie. more than one window type) was deemed necessary to record.

For properties where no date of construction was provided, Page & Turnbull provided a date of construction based upon a visual estimate. For these properties, Page & Turnbull provided the mid-year range in the "Year Built" field. For example, if a property was identified in the "Description" field as "Circa

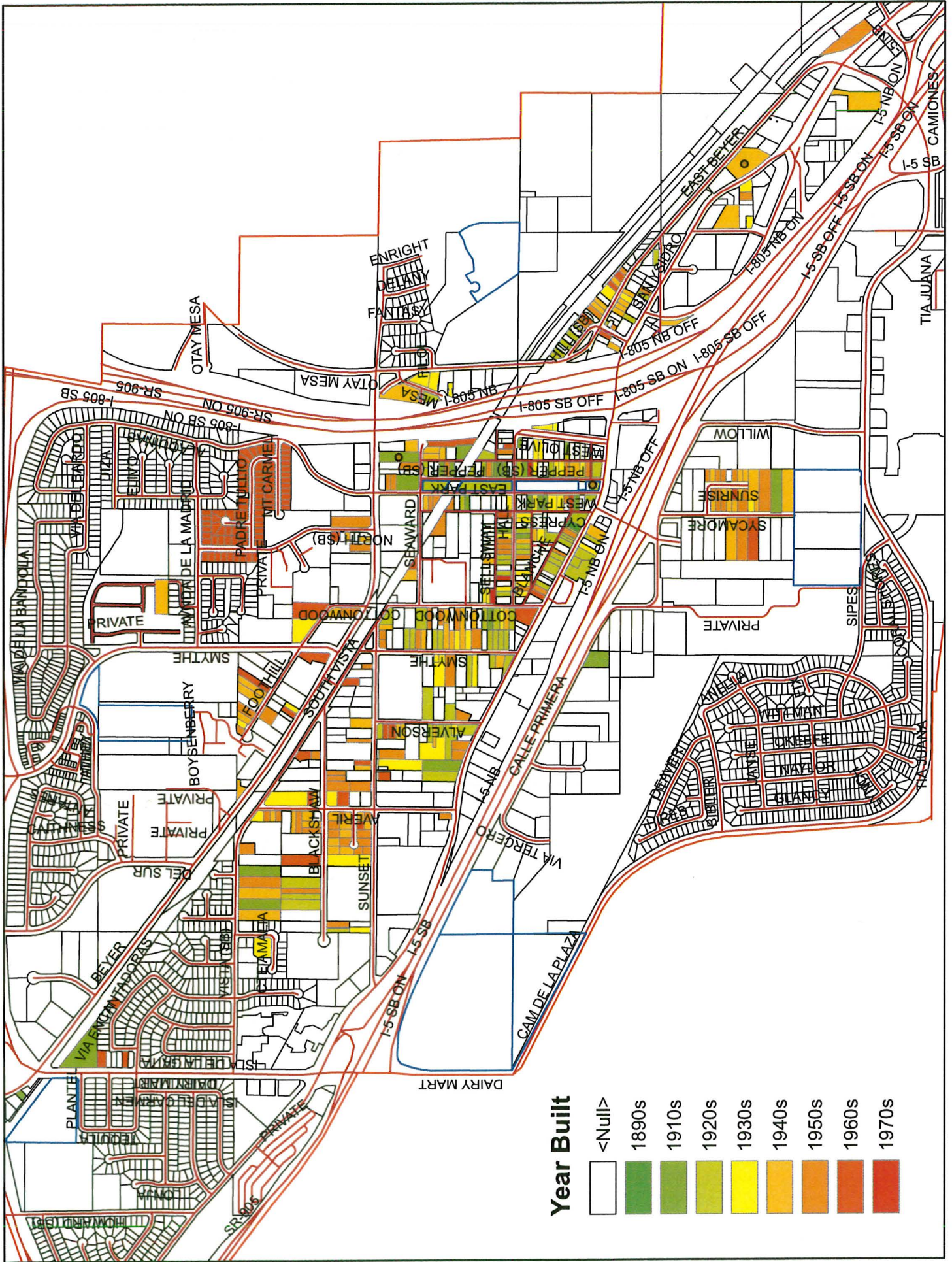
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<sup>1</sup> The Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Preservation Planning can be found at <http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/pad/PlngStds/index.htm#std1>. The National Register Bulletins can be found at <http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/publications/bulletins.htm>.

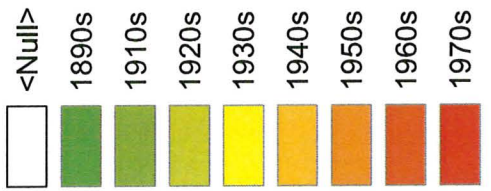


1940s (Based Upon Visual Estimate),” then “1945” was input into the “Year Built” field, since this database field would not accept narrative text.

Of the properties provided in the database by the City of San Diego, twelve properties were found to be demolished, not found in the field, or replaced by new construction.



**Year Built**





### III. Historic Context

Included with this survey report is an abbreviated history of San Ysidro.

For the full version of the San Ysidro Historic Context Statement, including the criteria for evaluating potential historic resources, please refer to *San Ysidro Historic Context Statement (published September 20, 2010)*, completed by the City of San Diego and Page & Turnbull.

#### *Abbreviated History*

San Ysidro has had a long and varied history of development. The Ranch Period and Early Border History (1822 – 1908) was the earliest period of Anglo settlement in the San Ysidro area, and included the brief existence of the first of American town (Tia Juana City) on the north side of the Tijuana River, as well as establishment of the first ranches. Of these ranches, the Belcher homestead, a much-altered farmhouse extant on San Ysidro Boulevard, is the oldest surviving building in San Ysidro. In 1908, William E. Smythe, an agricultural reformer, selected the site of the Belcher Ranch as the location for a new agrarian community. Smythe purchased 550 acres of the ranch, and called his community “Little Landers Colony No. 1.” Little Landers was modeled after Smythe’s principles of cooperative farming and agricultural utopian ideals, popular throughout the country in the early 20th century in response to the industrial revolution and cramped conditions of urban living. Smythe’s concept included owning a residential town lot and at least an acre of agricultural land. The Little Landers Colony No. 1 Period (1909 – 1916) represents the earliest development of the present-day town of San Ysidro, including construction of the original neighborhood of Craftsman homes, many of which are still extant. The city park and a few early commercial buildings were also established during this period. The earliest infrastructure and transportation systems were established at this time, laying the basis for further property development in the town.

The history of San Ysidro is intimately connected to the history of the U.S./Mexican border. As the utopian community of Little Landers waned, the community evolved with a new focus on border activity, entertainment, tourism, and civic development. The Border Town Period (1916 – 1956) addressed the needs of a growing population of both residents and tourists from California and Mexico. Americans were attracted into the area because of recreational gambling and horse racing just over the border in Tijuana, Mexico, while both Americans and Mexicans were attracted to agricultural employment opportunities in and around San Ysidro. Consequently, the era saw the further construction of single-family residences in the original platted neighborhood, as well as multi-family housing like the first small apartment buildings and bungalow courts. Commercial development also expanded greatly along San Ysidro Boulevard, and many of these commercial properties remain extant. Institutional facilities, such as the Customs House, public library, and churches were established to service the tourists and/or residents. The town was now a full-fledged city that supported the various economic, social, religious, and recreational needs of the residents and visitors.

The Annexation Period (1957 – present) represents the transition period from a small, relatively sleepy border town to a bustling community, which is today characterized by a heavy Mexican influence and primarily Mexican residents. The community voted for annexation to the City of San Diego in 1957 in order to obtain a better water system. Further expansion of the transportation infrastructure between San Diego and the border in the 1970s, namely Interstate 5 and Interstate 805, has encouraged the growth in the amount of travel between Mexico and California, but also cut through San Ysidro’s older neighborhoods. Subdivisions and commercial areas were over-developed due to limited city planning controls in San Ysidro in the 1970s and 1980s, but were curbed in the 1990s. These developments are indicators of various cultural, economic, and political changes in the last fifty or so years that have promoted both commerce and residency on the U.S. side of the border.

## IV. Survey Results (Summary)

This section provides a summary of the results of the reconnaissance-level survey completed in April 2010. For all properties, a California Historic Resource Status Code (CHRSC) was assigned by Page & Turnbull and reviewed by the City of San Diego. (See Attachment B)

Properties noted as significant to a potential historic district were assigned a CHRSC of "7R," while properties noted as significant as an individual resource were assigned a CHRSC of either "3CB," "3CS," or "3S." All other properties were noted with a CHRSC of "6Z." Based upon the current methodology used by the State of California Office of Historic Preservation, these status codes are defined as follows:

- 3CB – Appears eligible for CR both individually and as a contributor to a CR eligible district through a survey evaluation.
- 3CS – Appears eligible for CR as an individual property through survey evaluation
- 3S – Appears eligible for NR as an individual property through survey evaluation
- 6Z – Found ineligible for NR, CR or Local designation through survey evaluation
- 7R – Identified in Reconnaissance Level Survey: Not evaluated

### Potential Historic Resources

The following tables identify properties found to be potentially significant through the April 2010 Reconnaissance Survey. The tables highlight those properties, which may contribute to a potential historic district, or which may be potentially significant as an individual property.

Included with these tables are the address range (Number From and Number To), street name (Street), construction date (Built Date), contribution to a potential historic district (District), and potential individual historic resource (Individual).

**Table 1. Potentially Significant Individual Properties**

Number From	Number To	Street	Built Date	District	Individual	Status Code
3283		Beyer	ca. 1910s		x	3CS
320		Bolton Hall	ca. 1940s		x	3CS
1663		Dairy Mart	1910		x	3S
114		Hall, W	ca. 1920s	x	x	3CB
159		Hall, W	1923	x	x	3CB
260		Mesa	ca. 1900s		x	3CS
240		Pepper	ca. 1910s		x	3CS
701		San Ysidro, E	ca. 1950s		x	3CS
751*		San Ysidro, E	ca. 1930		x	3S
133		San Ysidro, W	ca. 1895-1901		x	3CS
407		San Ysidro, W	1928		x	3CS
3616		Sunset	1934		x	3CS

\* - Denotes a property previously evaluated as a historic resource.



**Table 2. Properties Eligible as Contributors to a Potential Historic District**

Number From	Number To	Street	Built Date	District	Individual	Status Code
107		Alverson	1935	x		7R
111	113	Alverson	ca. 1920s	x		7R
112		Alverson	1922	x		7R
115		Alverson	1932	x		7R
117		Alverson	1925	x		7R
169		Alverson	1925	x		7R
549		Blackshaw	ca. 1920s	x		7R
559		Blackshaw	1021	x		7R
567		Blackshaw	ca. 1920s	x		7R
207		Cottonwood	1930	x		7R
211		Cottonwood	ca. 1910s	x		7R
229		Cottonwood	1940	x		7R
239		Cottonwood	1945	x		7R
253		Cottonwood	1948	x		7R
2612		East Beyer	1930	x		7R
2631		East Beyer	1948	x		7R
122		East Park	1938	x		7R
134		East Park	1925	x		7R
158		East Park	ca. 1910s	x		7R
208		East Park	1912	x		7R
212		East Park	1914	x		7R
214		East Park	1928	x		7R
218		East Park	1922	x		7R
266		East Park	1922	x		7R
114		Hall, W	ca. 1920s	x	x	3CB
122		Hall, W	1926	x		7R
123		Hall, W	ca. 1910s	x		7R
137		Hall, W	ca. 1910s	x		7R
138		Hall, W	1938	x		7R
146		Hall, W	ca. 1920s	x		7R
158		Hall, W	ca. 1930s	x		7R
159		Hall, W	1923	x	x	3CB
166		Hall, W	1935	x		7R
167		Hall, W	1931	x		7R
195	197	Hall, W	ca. 1910s	x		7R
525		Pearl	1949	x		7R
299		San Ysidro, E	ca. 1920s	x		7R
315		San Ysidro, E	ca. 1920s	x		7R
109		San Ysidro, W	ca. 1920s	x		7R
138		San Ysidro, W	ca. 1920s	x		7R
145	149	San Ysidro, W	1927	x		7R
148		San Ysidro, W	ca. 1920s	x		7R
150	152	San Ysidro, W	ca. 1920	x		7R

Number From	Number To	Street	Built Date	District	Individual	Status Code
154A	154B	San Ysidro, W	ca. 1920	x		7R
156		San Ysidro, W	ca. 1910s	x		7R
161		San Ysidro, W	1920	x		7R
2273		Smythe	1927	x		7R
2277		Smythe	ca. 1910	x		7R
2371		Smythe	1922	x		7R
2375		Smythe	ca. 1920	x		7R
2378		Smythe	1945	x		7R
2383		Smythe	ca. 1920	x		7R
3794		Sunset	1945	x		7R
392		Sycamore	ca. 1910s	x		7R
125	129	West Olive	ca. 1910s	x		7R
113	115	West Park	1914	x		7R
121		West Park	1950 (1920s?)	x		7R
143		West Park	1915	x		7R
147		West Park	ca. 1920s	x		7R
212		West Park	ca. 1940	x		7R
233		West Park	1910	x		7R
314		West Park	ca. 1910s	x		7R

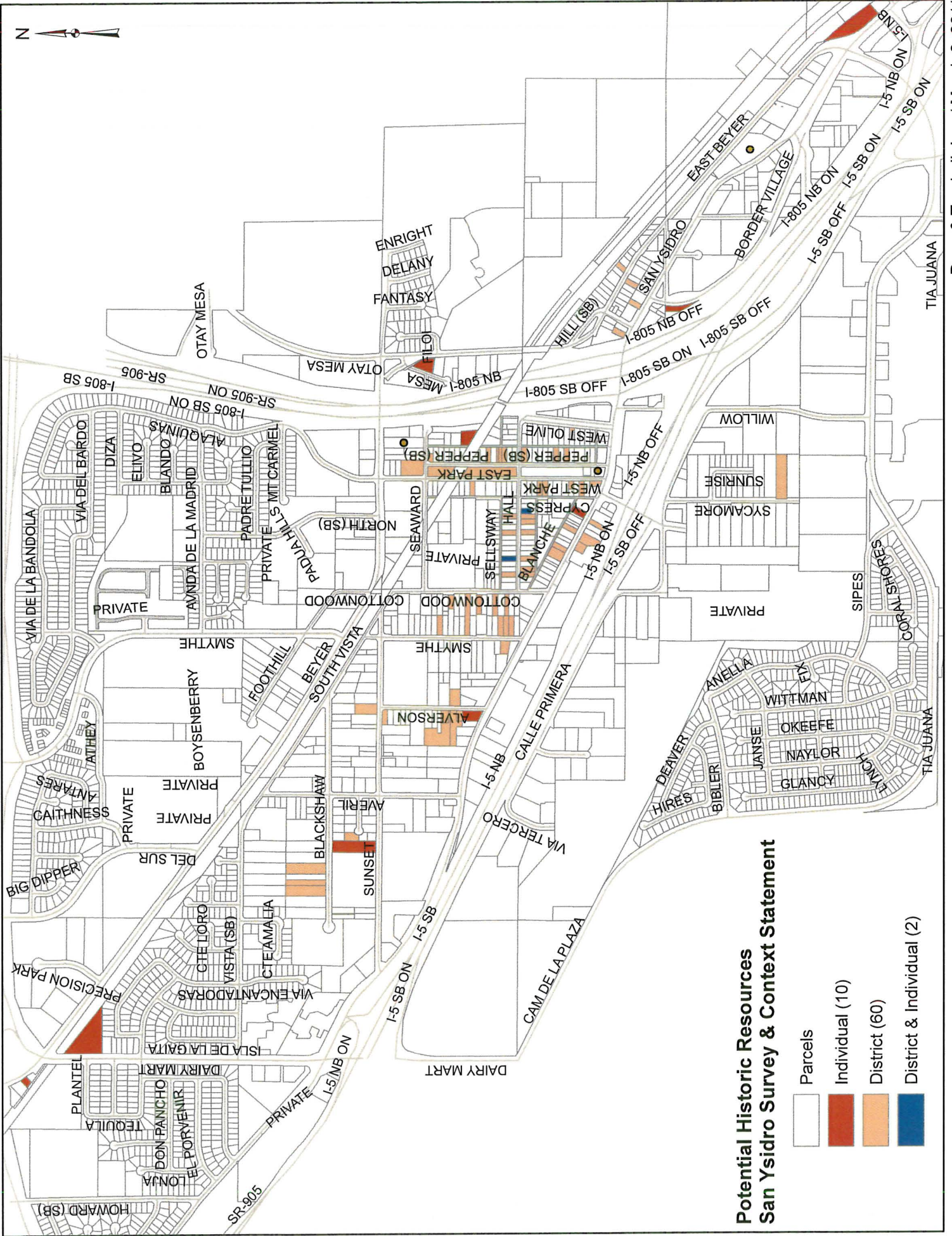
## V. Recommendations

San Ysidro has played an important role in the City of San Diego's agricultural and international tourism history. The community contains a number of potential historic resources that date primarily to the early development of the city in the 1910s and 1920s. San Ysidro has been a residential area enhancing the economy along the border, and primarily housing working class Mexican families since the mid-twentieth century. The community's connection to the rest of the city and region via railroad, interurban electric streetcars, and freeways has provided crucial access to employment and leisure activities for residents of the community, and commerce for San Ysidro's establishments. Over time the character of the area has developed to include residential subdivisions and strip malls, but the heart of old San Ysidro, including its Craftsman bungalows and city park, remains largely intact.

Future work should continue to explore the potential historic resources located within San Ysidro. Specifically, future work should focus on the following specific areas:

- San Ysidro Community Park Cultural Landscape Study: As a former agricultural and rural community, San Ysidro has had deep connections to the natural landscape, which impacted the development of the border town as an agricultural utopian community. Some evidence of this early rural development is still evident in the San Ysidro Community Park, which provided the focal point of the original Little Landers neighborhood and was one of the earliest civic improvements. Further work should explore the San Ysidro Community Park and surrounding area as a cultural landscape.
- Little Landers Historic District: A potential historic district may exist within the area of the original Little Lander settlement. This residential district would be centered on the San Ysidro Community Park and encompass the area between Pepper Street, Seward Street, Alverson Street, and San Ysidro Boulevard. Based upon initial mapping of potential resources within this area, the potential historic district may not be viable due to integrity issues (See Map 2). However, further intensive-level study is required to examine the alterations to individual properties, and to weigh the number of non-contributing parcels against the contributing parcels. A smaller district may exist encompassing as little as one or two street blocks.







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## **Other**

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