



Existing Conditions

Community Map Atlas



November 2020

Prepared for

The City of
SAN DIEGO

Prepared by



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INTRODUCTION

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- 1.2 College Community Plan Purpose, Vision and Process
- 1.3 Regional Location and Planning Area
- 1.4 Demographic Overview
- 1.5 Existing Plans and Regulatory Framework
- 1.6 Introduction Summary



1.1 Overview

This Existing Conditions Community Atlas provides baseline information on existing conditions, opportunities, and challenges in the College Area Community Plan Update. The Atlas focuses on geographic resources, trends, and critical issues that will frame choices for the long-term physical development of the College Area. The Atlas includes information relating to demographics, land uses, economic settings, community form, mobility, the natural environment and open spaces, and environmental and community health. The Community Atlas will be used as a basis for:

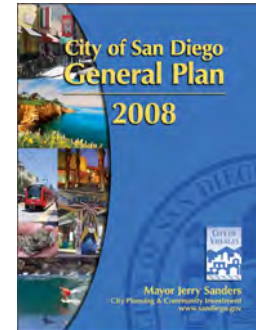
- Facilitating community input on planning issues, priorities, and visions for the future;
- Evaluating policy issues and options, and preparing alternative land use and transportation concepts;
- Identifying potential community opportunities and constraints; and
- Formulating policies and implementation actions for the updated community plan.



1.2 College Community Plan Purpose, Vision and Process

GENERAL PLAN CONTEXT

The San Diego General Plan, last comprehensively updated in 2008, sets out a long-range vision and policy framework to guide future development, provide public services, maintain the qualities that uniquely define San Diego, and contains a set of overall guiding principles. The update to the General Plan shifts the focus from how to develop vacant land to how to design infill development and reinvest in existing communities. A key component guiding these efforts is the City of Villages strategy, which proposes growth be directed into pedestrian-friendly mixed use activity centers linked to an improved regional transit system. Regional and local investments that promote transit and bicycle use support this strategy. By increasing transportation choices, a reduction in overall vehicle miles traveled can be achieved, a key contributor to broader sustainable development initiatives. As part of this strategy, the General Plan identifies 52 community planning areas, including the College Area, for which community plans provide more specific policies tailored to the characteristics of the community.



Better mobility options are also needed for those who cannot drive, do not own a motor vehicle, or prefer to reduce their dependence on the automobile. Benefits to individual as well as public health can be achieved with any reduction in air pollutants as well as a shift in favor of walking. These villages and activity centers will be identified in the Community Plan, with mixed use commercial districts and higher density neighborhoods along transit lines being candidate village locations within the community. Within these village areas, the policies of the Plan can be used to focus the implementation of needed investments in infrastructure, transit, and other mobility improvements. As part of the planning process, the College Area Community Plan will tie into the general themes and guiding components of the City's General Plan and build upon these strategies.

A key component of the General Plan is a City of Villages strategy which proposes growth be directed into pedestrian-friendly mixed use activity centers linked to an improved regional transit system. The College Area Community Plan Update will tie into the general themes and guiding components of the City's General Plan and build upon its strategies.



College Area Community Plan Vision

College Area envisions a college town with vibrant mixed use corridors and villages, that are connected to neighborhoods and the University, and that enhance the community.

COMMUNITY PLAN PURPOSE

Community plans work together with the General Plan to provide location-based policies to further the City of Villages strategy. Community plans are written to refine the General Plan's citywide policies, designate land uses and housing densities, achieve the community's vision, and provide additional site-specific recommendations as needed. Community plans also play a key role in helping the City to meet its Climate Action Plan (CAP) targets by planning for an urban form conducive to alternative modes of transportation.

What a Community Plan does:

- Provides a community-level policy and zoning framework for growth and development, for use by City officials, property owners, developers, and community members.
- Identifies strategies that support the community vision, and establishes goals and policies to address land use, the mobility network, urban design guidelines & community character, and the necessary public facilities to support the community.
- Provides a forum for public participation in the planning process.

COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE PROCESS

The City of San Diego has begun a collaborative effort to update the College Area Community Plan, which was last updated in 1989. Community plans provide goals and policies for housing, mobility, open space & parks, public facilities, conservation & sustainability, urban design and historic preservation. The updated community plan will help to revitalize key activity centers, provide housing options and recreational opportunities, and strengthen connections between SDSU and the community. During the update process, Planning Department staff will work with the College Area community and the public to identify and consider important questions, issues, and opportunities including:

- How will College Area grow over the next 20-30 years?
- What services, infrastructure or facilities are needed to meet this growth?
- How can the community best plan for new housing opportunities, including housing for San Diego State University students?
- How can College Area nurture the economic relationship with San Diego State University and strengthen the community’s connection to the university?
- How can the community support neighborhood businesses, including those along the community’s celebrated El Cajon Boulevard business corridor?

- How can the community build upon College Area’s robust transit network, including the trolley and the El Cajon Boulevard Bus Rapid Transit, to support additional housing near transit?
- Where can College Area create public and recreation spaces that provide opportunities to get outside, connect and play?

The public is encouraged to participate as an update to the College Area Community Plan is successful when it reflects the goals and values of the community.

PROJECT TIMELINE

2020	2021	2022	2022	2023
1	2	3	4	5
Plan College Launch	Concept Development	Draft Plan	CEQA Environmental Review	Plan Approval
PLANNING DOCUMENT				
COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE				
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT				
PUBLIC HEARINGS				
OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC INPUT				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website & email sign up for updates • Online Engagement • Community Planning Group (CPG) Subcommittee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Open House • Planning Commission Workshop • Online Engagement • CPG Subcommittee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Open House • Online Engagement • CPG Subcommittee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EIR Public Comment Period • CPG Subcommittee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPG Vote • Planning Commission • Council Committee • City Council

1.3 Regional Location and Planning Area

The College Area community is located along the southern border of Mission Valley, approximately eight miles northeast of Downtown. The College Area is primarily made up of single family residential neighborhoods, but includes major institutional uses such as the San Diego State University campus (SDSU) and Alvarado Hospital Medical Center, as well as the commercially-oriented El Cajon Boulevard - a major east-west thoroughfare. The community shares boundaries with the communities of Navajo, Mission Valley, Kensington-Talmadge, and Eastern Area, as shown in **Figure I-1**.

As indicated in **Figure I-2**, the plan area encompasses approximately 1,970 acres and is generally bounded by Interstate 8 (Kumeyaay Highway) to the north; the City of La Mesa to the east; El Cajon Boulevard to the southeast; and Collwood Boulevard, Montezuma Road, and Fairmount Avenue to the west.



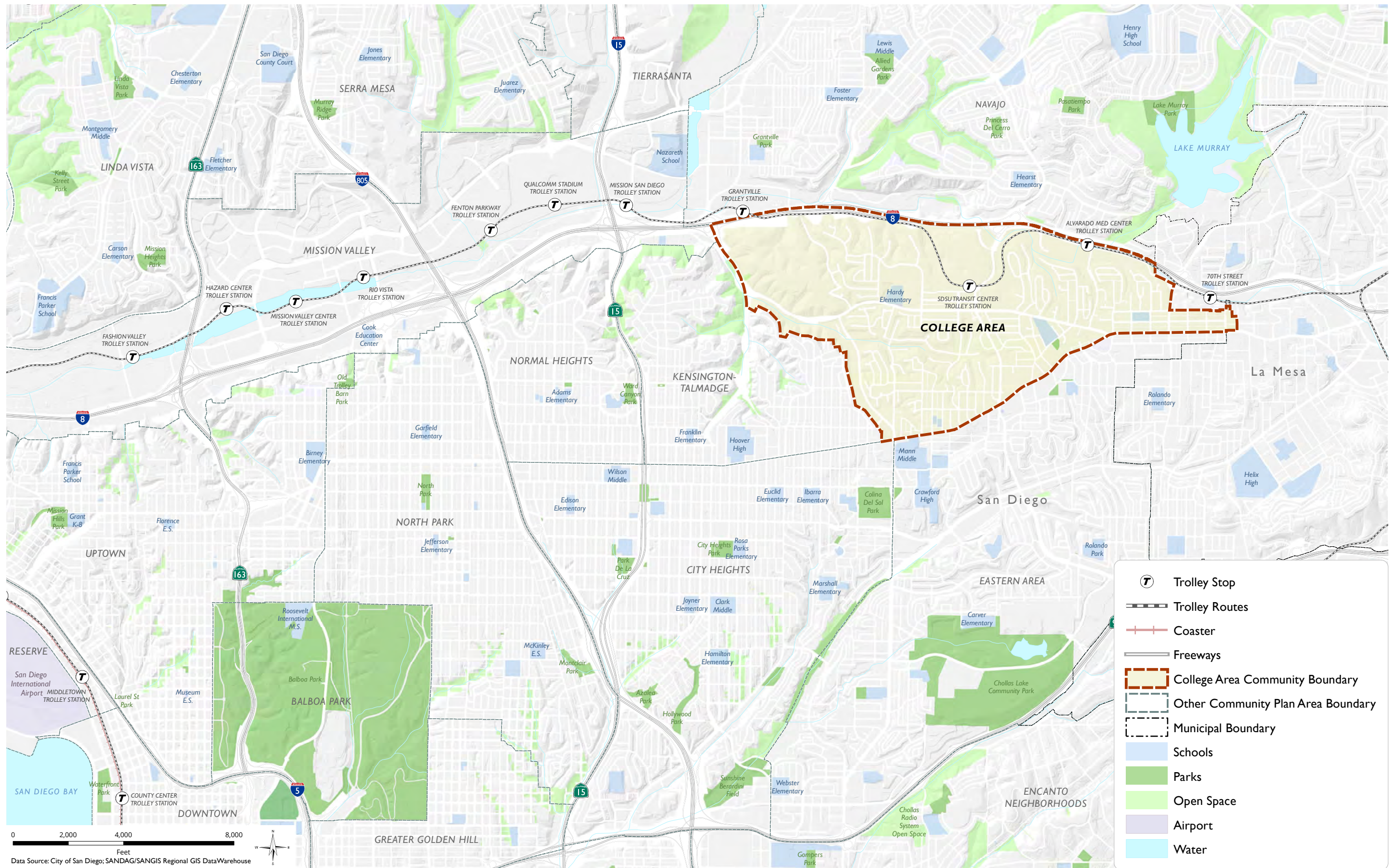
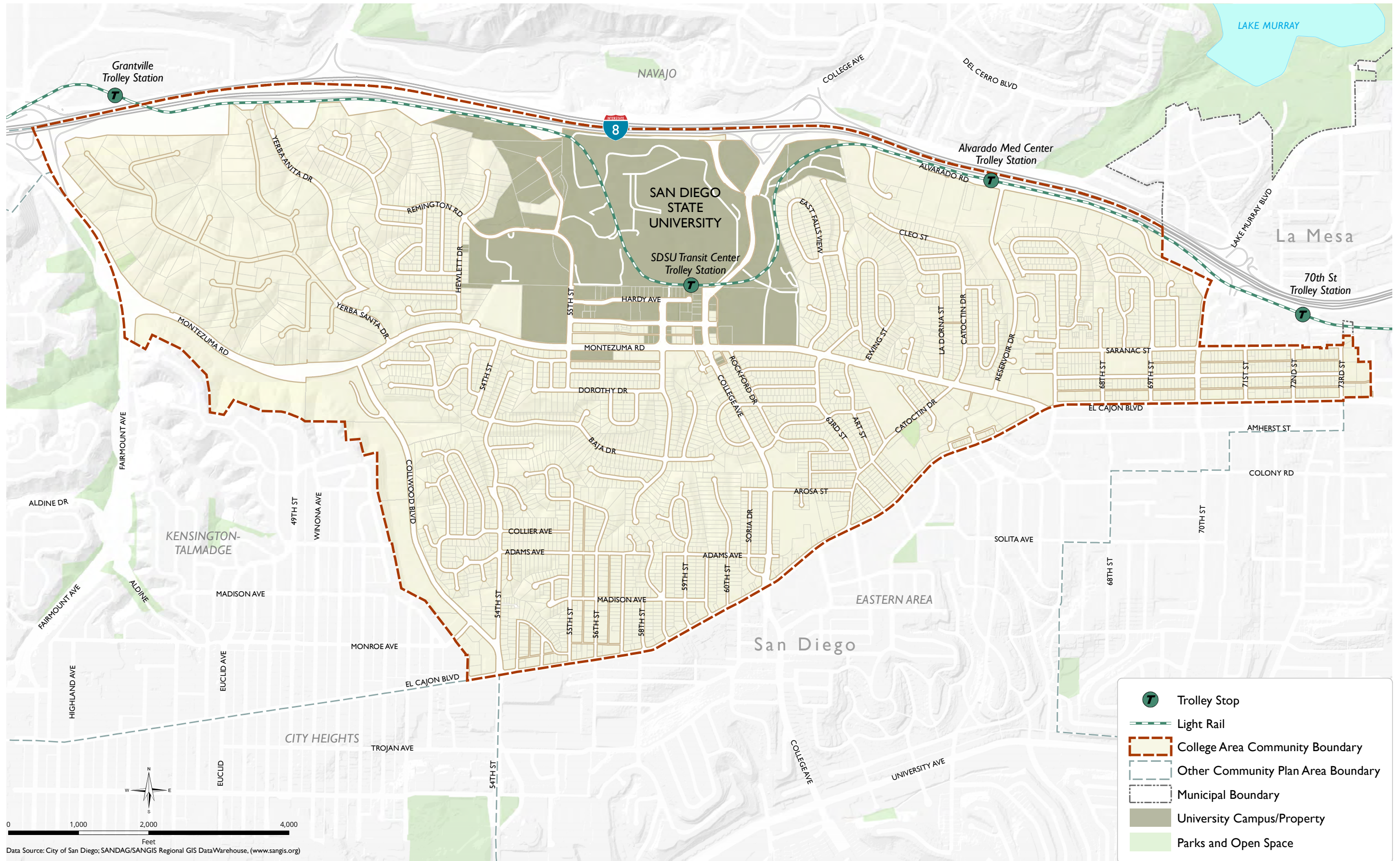


Figure 1-2 Planning Area



1.4 Demographic Overview

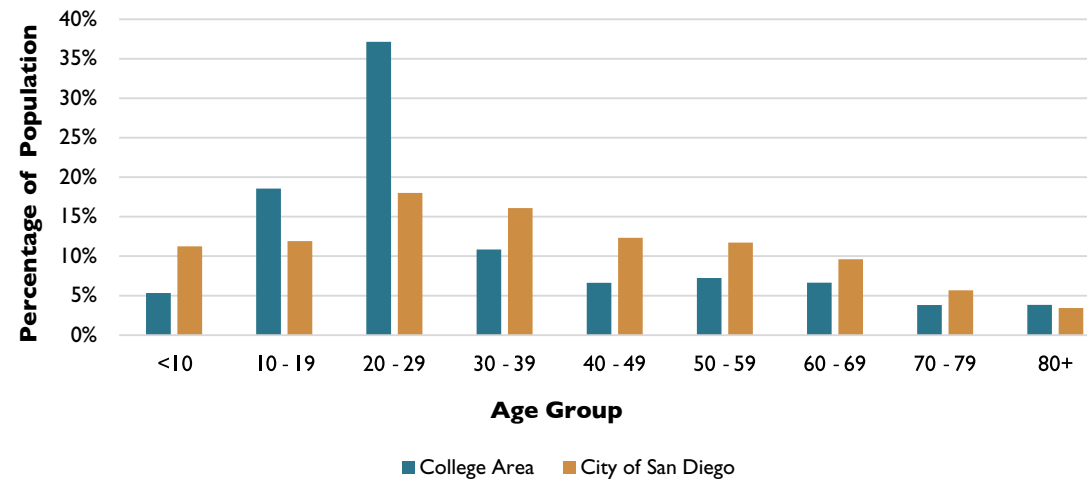
According to the latest estimates from the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), the total population of the College Area was nearly 22,700 in 2019, approximately 1.6% of the city’s population. Demographic characteristics of this population are largely influenced by the student population attending SDSU which reports a total enrollment of about 34,000 students. **Chart I-1** shows age groups within the College Area; when compared to the overall city, residents in College Area are considerably younger. Individuals between the ages of 20 to 29 represent the largest share of the age groups, comprising approximately 37% of the total College Area population; nearly 61% of the population is under 30 years of age. In comparison, 18% of the population in the overall city is between the ages of 20 to 29, with 41 % of the population under 30 years of age. The median age in the College Area is 24.6 years – more than a decade less that the median citywide age of 35.2 years.

Per the U.S. Census, “Family” is defined as a group of two people or more (one of whom is the householder) related by birth, marriage, or adoption and residing together. **Chart I-2** shows the family population within College Area and citywide. Of the total household population in the College Area, 44% are considered to be family households while 56% are non-family households. In comparison, the City has a 74% family households makeup - about 30% greater than the College Area. This indicates that there are significantly less family households that comprise the College Area population, most likely due to the SDSU student population. The average household size in the College Area is 2.58 persons per household, similar to the citywide average household size of 2.68 persons.

The median household income for residents in the College Area is around \$54,500 which is 33% less than the citywide median household income of \$80,200. **Chart I-3** shows the household income distribution comparing the College Area to the overall city. 17% of the College Area collects less than \$15,000 in annual income, almost double the City-wide rate of 9% within this income category. The student population at SDSU likely contributes to the community’s lower median household income and to the significant portion of the College Area with an annual income below \$15,000.

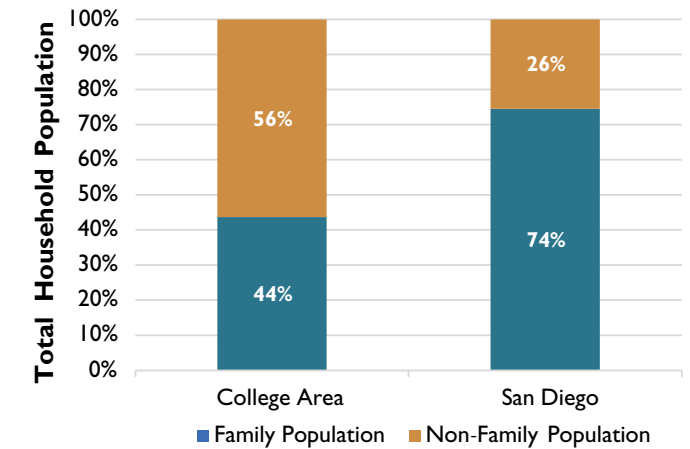
As shown in **Chart I-4**, the College Area community is predominantly non-Hispanic White (50%). Hispanic of any race is the second largest ethnic group (23%). The third largest ethnic group is non-Hispanic Asian (13%). The fourth largest ethnic group is non-Hispanic Black (8%). Residents who are two or more ethnicities, or identify as another ethnicity not previously listed, represent 6% of the College Area community. As per the American Community Survey from 2018, the College Community has the following breakdown of languages spoken: 80% speak only English, 8% speak Spanish, 4% speak a Indo-European Language, 6% speak an Asian-Pacific Island Language, and 2% speak another language.

Chart I-1: Age Groups, College Area and San Diego



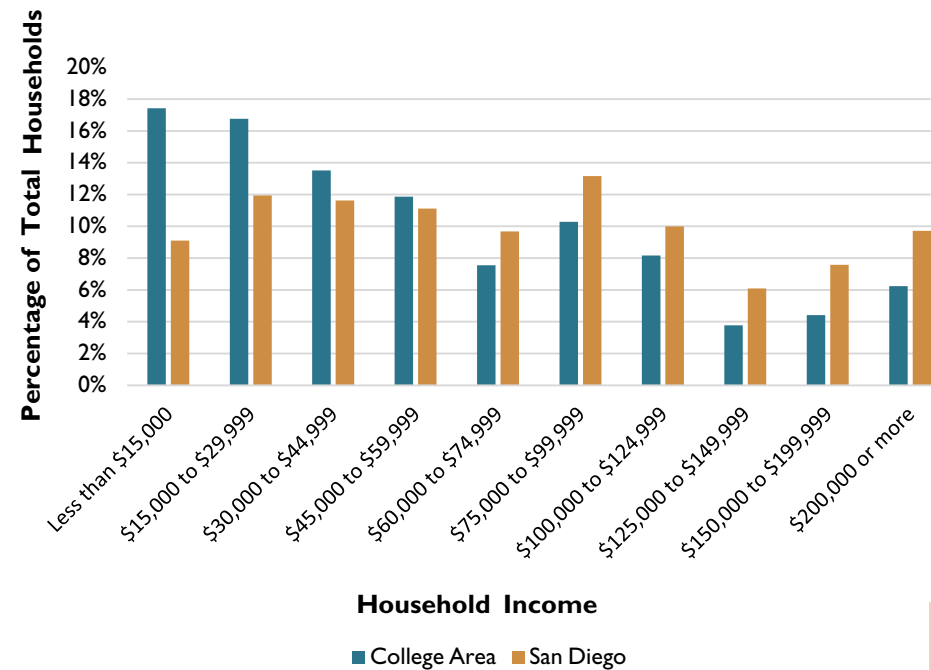
Source: City of San Diego; SANDAG 2018 Estimates; Dyett and Bhatia 2020

Chart I-2: Family Population, College Area and San Diego



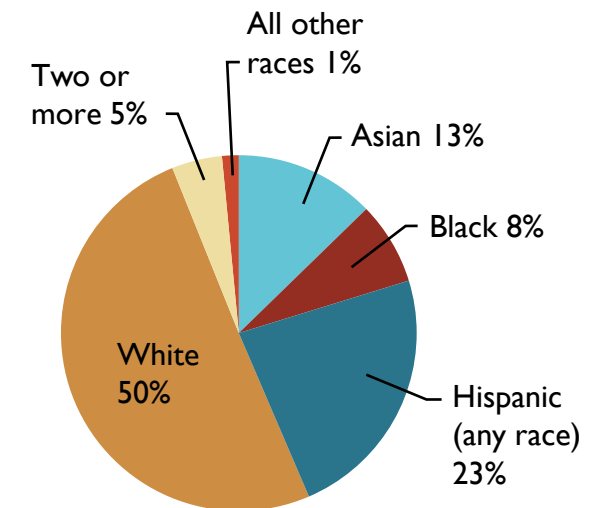
Source: City of San Diego; ACS 2019 Current Estimates; Dyett and Bhatia 2020

Chart I-3: Household Income, College Area and San Diego



Source: SANDAG 2018 Estimates; Dyett and Bhatia 2020

Chart I-4: Ethnic Breakdown of College Area



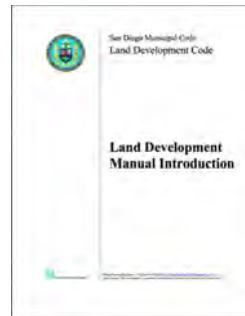
Source: SANDAG 2018 Estimates; Dyett and Bhatia 2020

Nearly 61% of the College Area population is under 30 years of age, largely influenced by the student population attending SDSU.

1.5 Existing Plans and Regulatory Framework

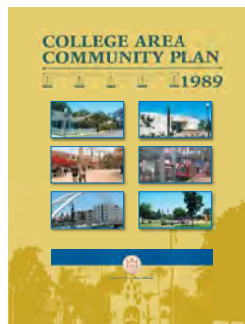
LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE

The City of San Diego Land Development Code (LDC) is part of the municipal code and contains regulations and controls pertaining to land use, density and intensity, building massing, architectural design, landscaping, storm water management, street frontages, lighting, and other development characteristics. The LDC implements the policies and recommendations of the Community Plan and all development within the community must comply with regulations set forth in the LDC. Zoning is also within the municipal code and is a key tool used to implement community plan land uses.



EXISTING COLLEGE AREA COMMUNITY PLAN (1989)

The current College Area Community Plan was originally adopted in 1989 and has been amended three times since then. The Plan identifies several key issues, goals, and objectives for the College Area Community. These include providing for growth that ensures preservation of single family neighborhoods; improving the transportation system; providing a range of retail and commercial services that support the community; developing a cohesive open space system and adequate recreational and social opportunities; and ensuring a high level of public services. The plan is organized into eight elements including housing, San Diego State University, transportation, commercial, open space, parks and recreation, public facilities, and urban design and an implementation section.



MASTER PROJECT PLAN (1993) AND CORE SUB-AREA DESIGN MANUAL (1997)

The Master Project Plan (MPP) is a redevelopment plan adopted in 1993 that was required as part of the 1989 College Area Community Plan. The MPP presents approved land uses, development densities and general design principles applicable throughout the Redevelopment Project Area,

as well as specific requirements for five sub-areas. The MPP includes five redevelopment sub-areas, the largest of which is the 58.6 acre Core Sub-Area on the southern side of the SDSU campus. The Core Sub-Area extends from Plaza Drive on the north to sites fronting the south side of Montezuma Road; and from 55th Street on the west, to the alley east of College Avenue. The Core Sub-Area Design Manual, adopted in 1997, gives more precise form to the prescriptions of the MPP through detailed development controls and architectural and landscape guidelines which are designed to ensure coordinated development of the area and appropriate functional and aesthetic relationships between various projects.

SDSU CAMPUS MASTER PLAN (2007)

The 2007 Campus Master Plan is the blueprint that guides the physical growth and development of the SDSU campus. The Campus Master Plan includes the development of classrooms, student and faculty/staff housing, and student support facilities throughout the SDSU campus and immediately adjacent to it to meet a projected enrollment increase of 10,000 full-time equivalent students. The six project components include:



- Adobe Falls Faculty/Staff Housing, which includes development of faculty and staff housing on a site approximately 33 acres in size located north of Highway 8 (note, this component is not within the plan area);
- The Alvarado Campus, which includes an expansion of the current Campus Master Plan northeastern boundary and the multi-phase development (near-term and long-term) of approximately 612,000 GSF of academic/research/medical space, and a 552,000 GSF vehicle parking structure;
- The Alvarado Hotel, which includes development of an approximately 60,000 GSF six-story building with approximately 120 hotel rooms and studio suites;
- Campus Conference Center, which includes development of a new 70,000 GSF 3-story building to be used for meeting/conference space, office space, food services, and retail services;
- Student Housing, which includes demolition of two existing student housing structures and the construction of five new housing structures, ultimately resulting in a net increase of 2,976 new student housing beds on campus; and

- The Student Union/Aztec Center Expansion and Renovation, which consists of a 101,000 GSF expansion and renovation of the existing Aztec Center to include social space, recreation facilities, student organization offices, food services, and retail services. This expansion is expected to be completed in 2021.

SDSU prepared a 2018 Draft Additional Analysis that included mitigation measures to implement recommended road improvements and a transportation demand management program.

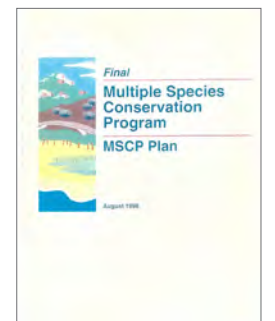
SAN DIEGO PARKS MASTER PLAN (2020 - NOT ADOPTED)

The San Diego Parks Master Plan, most recently updated in 2020, provides a citywide framework for park and recreation goals, policies, and needs. The plan sets a new standard for park space, updating the City's previous target of 2.8 acres per 1,000 residents to a system that evaluates the amenities or features a park provides for the community. The new system, called the Recreational Value-Based Park standard, sets a new recreational value of 12 points per 1,000 people and represents a range of recreation experiences comparable to the opportunities available to residents in communities that previously achieved the acreage-based standard.



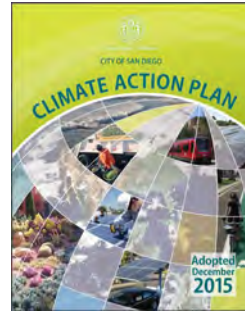
MULTIPLE SPECIES CONSERVATION PROGRAM (1997)

The Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) is a comprehensive, long-term habitat conservation planning program to preserve native habitat for multiple species. This is accomplished by identifying areas planned to be conserved in perpetuity, referred to as the Multi-Habitat Planning Area (MHPA), to achieve a workable balance between new development and species conservation. A portion of the open space lands in the western part of the community are within the MHPA. Open space lands within the MHPA are addressed in the Conservation and Recreation elements of the Community Plan and are implemented by the City's MSCP Subarea Plan.



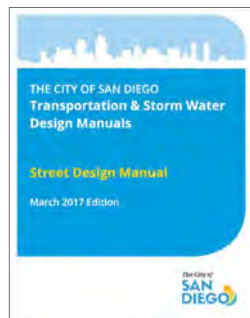
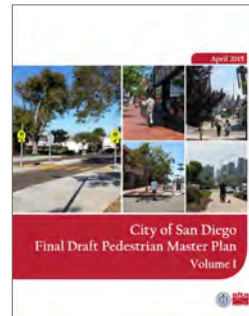
CLIMATE ACTION PLAN (2015)

The 2015 City of San Diego Climate Action Plan calls for eliminating half of all greenhouse gas emissions in the city and aims for all electricity to be from renewable sources by 2035. The Climate Action Plan provides a road map to achieve greenhouse gas reductions, conforms to California laws and regulations, implements the General Plan, provides California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) tiering for greenhouse gas emissions from new development, and establishes strategies to accomplish other sustainability goals.



OTHER CITYWIDE DOCUMENTS

Other citywide documents that inform the College Area Community Plan include the City of San Diego's Pedestrian Master Plan, Bicycle Master Plan, Street Design Manual, and Urban Forestry Management Plan.



1.6 Introduction Summary

This section summarizes key information related to the College Area Community Plan Update project presented in this chapter.

- The College Area encompasses about **three square miles** anchored by major institutions such as SDSU and the Alvarado Hospital Medical Center.
- Nearly **61%** of the College Area population is **under 30** years of age, largely influenced by the student population attending SDSU.
- About **44%** of the total College Area household population is considered “family households”—**30%** less than the citywide family households makeup of **74%** and most likely due to the SDSU student population.
- The median household income for College Area residents is **\$54,500**, **33%** less than the citywide median household income, and a significant portion of the population makes under **\$15,000**, likely influenced by the SDSU student population.
- In order from larger to smaller ethnic categories by population, residents of the College Area are 1) non-Hispanic White, 2) Hispanic of any race, 3) non-Hispanic Asian, and 4) non-Hispanic Black.
- The existing College Area Community Plan was adopted in **1989** and requires updating so that the College Area Community and the public have the opportunity to decide how the College Area should grow over the **next 30 years**. The current San Diego General Plan was updated in 2008 and updating the College Area Community Plan will expand upon the General Plan to make localized goals and policies.
- A key component of the General Plan is a **City of Villages** strategy, which proposes growth be directed into pedestrian-friendly mixed use activity centers that are linked to an improved regional transit system. The College Area Community Plan Update will tie into the general themes and guiding components of the City's General Plan and build upon the strategies within.



02

LAND USE

- 2.1 Existing Land Use
- 2.2 Density and Intensity
- 2.3 Adopted Land Use
- 2.4 Zoning
- 2.5 Land Use and Mobility
- 2.6 Land Use Summary



2.1 Existing Land Use

The College Area community encompasses approximately 1,969 gross acres and 1,548 net acres. **Figure 2-1** displays the distribution of existing land use as of 2019 and **Table 2-1** and **Chart 2-1** show the pattern of existing land use in acres and percentage of land area.

RESIDENTIAL

Nearly three-fourths of the College Area is residential (69%), with single family residential (63%) comprising the largest share of residence land area. Multi family residential and dormitories/group quarters represent 6% (99 acres) of the College Area and are typically located in close proximity to SDSU and along transit corridors, with many of the structures serving as student housing. There are approximately 8,549 housing units (1,071 acres) within the College Area, with 4,079 units as multi family residential or attached single family and 3,412 units as single family detached residential. Despite multi family residential representing 6% of the land use, it contains 60% of the total housing units for the College Area.

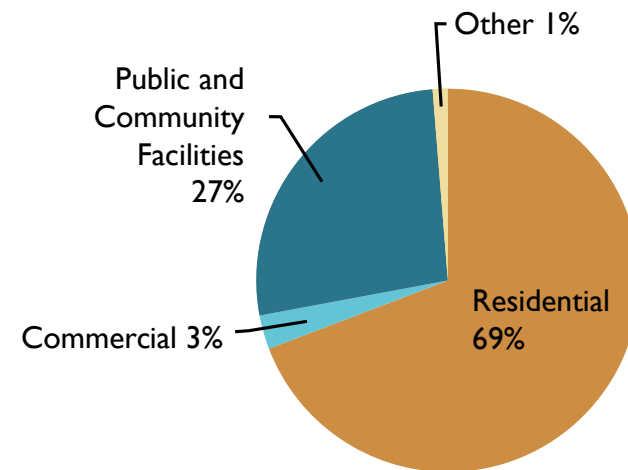
PUBLIC AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Institutional uses comprise about 27% of the College Area, including the Alvarado Hospital Medical Complex, religious institutions, Platt College, and schools. The San Diego State University (SDSU) Campus accounts for more than half of the land utilized for institutional uses. The SDSU campus is 262 acres, or about 14% of the total College Area. Parks and open spaces account for about 5% of the College Area. While park facilities are located within single family residential neighborhoods, most of the College Area's open space is among the canyons in the western portion of the community.

COMMERCIAL AND OTHER

Around 3% of the land use is commercial. The commercial uses include retail, regional, wholesale, and visitor commercial. Commercial uses are found in a fine-grained pattern primarily along El Cajon Boulevard. To a lesser degree, commercial uses are also found along College Avenue, along Montezuma Road, and adjacent to the University. Office uses, which make up a 0.1% of the College Area, can also be found interspersed among commercial uses on El Cajon Boulevard.

Chart 2-1: Existing Land Use



Within the College Area, 69% of the land area is residential, 27% Public and Community Facilities, 3% Commercial, and 1% all other uses.

CORE AREA LAND USE

The College Community Redevelopment Project, part of the Master Project Plan adopted in 1993 and was ceased by the State when local Redevelopment Agencies (RDAs) were dissolved in 2012, was initiated by the SDSU Foundation and the City of San Diego to improve conditions surrounding the SDSU campus. This core area, shown in **Figure 2-2**, is focused along the southern edge of the campus near the SDSU Transit Center. Current uses include high-density housing along Montezuma Road, mixed use commercial/ and residential along College Avenue, designated sorority and fraternity housing, and very-high-density residential along Hardy Avenue.

Table 2-1: Existing Land Use

Existing Land Use Categories	Acres	Percentage
Residential	1,071	69%
Single Family Residential	972	63%
Multi Family Residential	99	6%
Commercial	45	3%
Retail Commercial	37	2%
Visitor Commercial	6	0.4%
Office Commercial	2	0.1%
Public and Community Facilities	412	27%
Institutional	105	7%
Educational	224	14%
Parks, Open Space, and Recreation	83	5%
Other	22	1%
Communication and Utilities	.1	.01%
Parking	5	0.3%
Vacant	17	1%
Transportation and Right of Way (ROW)	421	-
TOTAL Net Area (excluding Transportation and ROW)	1,548	100%
TOTAL Gross Area (including Transportation and ROW)	1,969	

*Numbers may not add due to rounding. Percentages with less than 1% are shown as 0%.

Source: City of San Diego; Dyett and Bhatia 2020

Figure 2-1 Existing Land Use

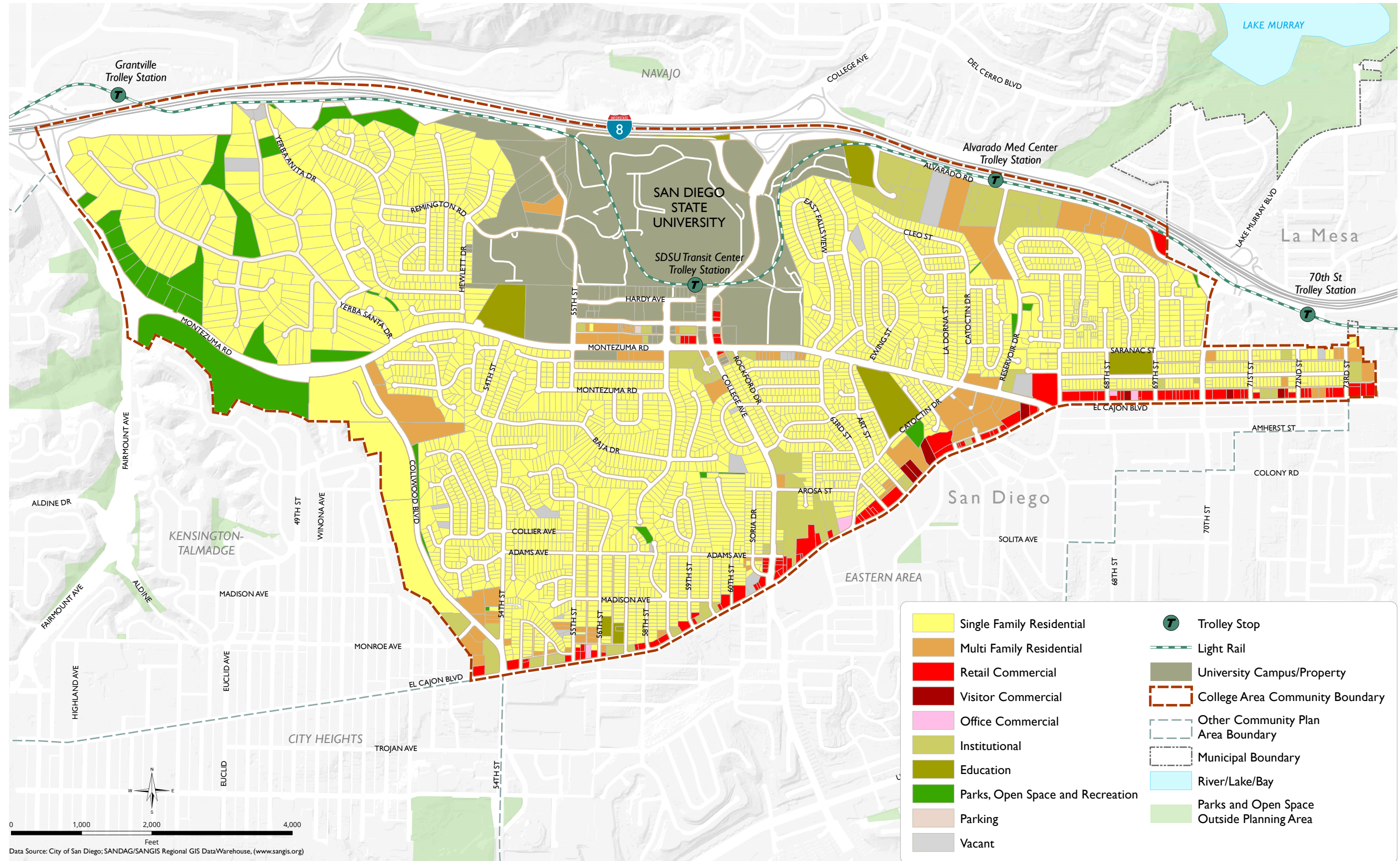
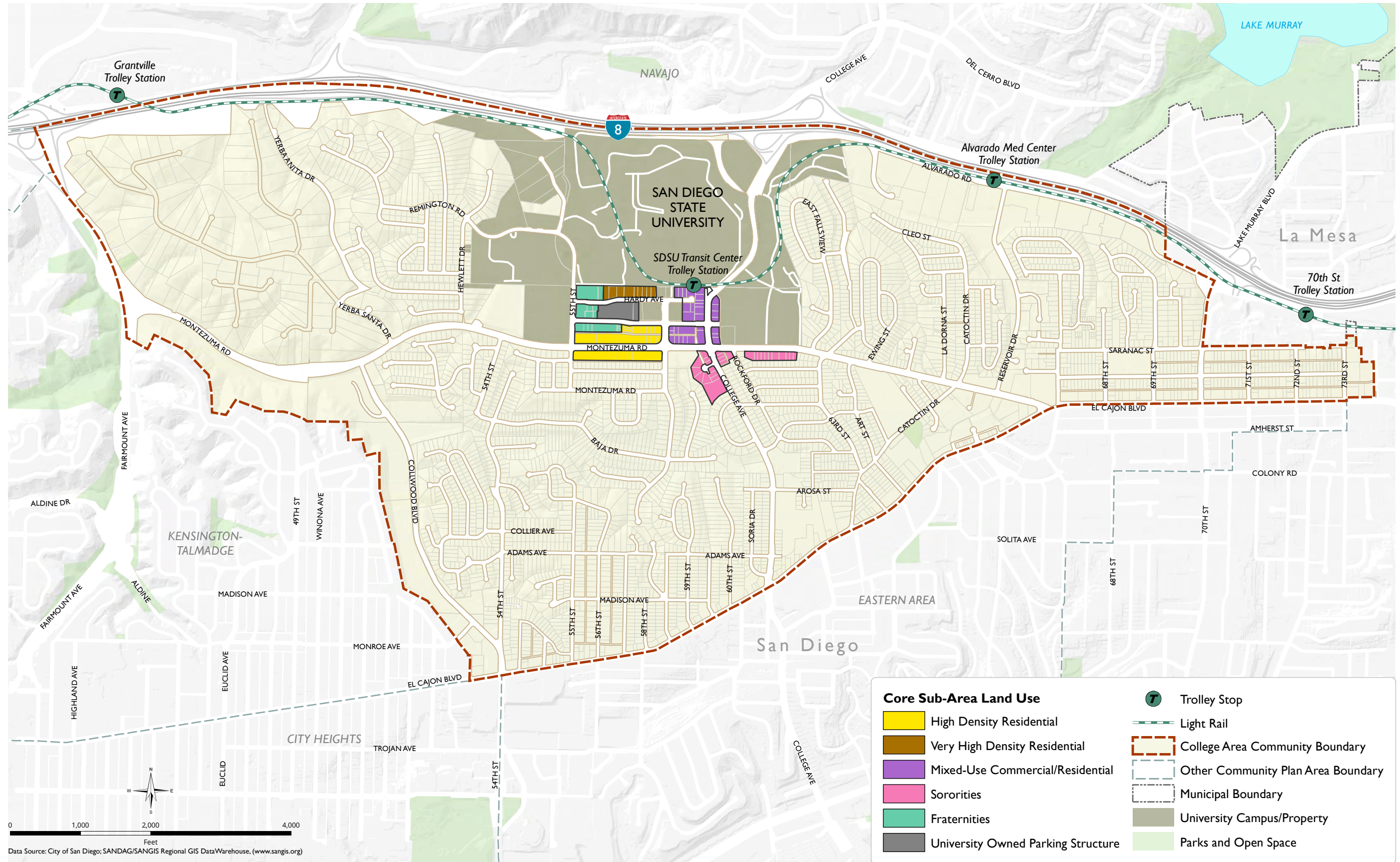


Figure 2-2 Core Area Land Uses



2.2 Density and Intensity

EXISTING RESIDENTIAL DENSITY

Residential density is expressed as the number of housing units per acre (units/acre). The density distribution of existing residential development is shown in **Figure 2-3** and summarized in **Chart 2-2**. The majority acreage within College Area (53%) has a density up to 5 units/acre which reflects the large portion of detached single family homes as are the predominant housing type in the community. A total of 1,240 units are up to 5 units/acre. Thirty four percent of the total residential area has a density of 6-9 units per acre. This consists of 2,435 units.

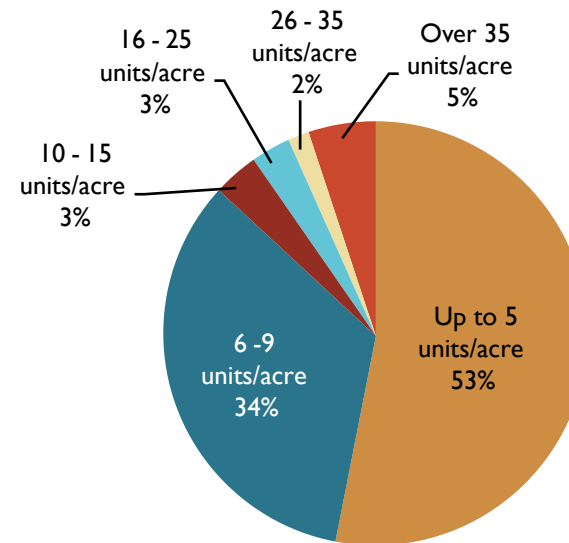
The average residential density for College Area is, at 7.8, below the average San Diego citywide residential density of 10.1 units/acre.¹

Figure 2-4 shows dormitories and other group quarters facility, most of which are located within the Core Area surrounding the edges of the SDSU campus. There are several high occupancy multifamily complexes—most of which cater to SDSU students—located on the periphery of the campus, Montezuma Road, and along El Cajon Boulevard as illustrated in **Figure 2-5**. There is a concentration of high occupancy residences at the intersection of Montezuma Road and El Cajon Boulevard. While many of the high occupancy buildings are apartment complexes on large lots, high occupancy buildings on smaller lots can also be found interspersed

¹ SANDAG SR-13 Forecast; Data Surfer

throughout the College Area. **Figure 2-6** illustrates the approved residential and mixed use projects. A total of 162 units have been approved within the College Area.

Chart 2-2: Breakdown of Existing Residential Densities



Within the College Area, 53% of residential land has a density of up to 5 units/acre, with an overall average density of 7.8 units/acre which reflects the predominance of single family homes in the community. The citywide average residential density is 10.1 units/acre.

What are Group Quarters?

The US Census Bureau defines group quarters as places where people live or stay in a group living arrangement. These places are owned or managed by an entity or organization providing housing and/or services for the residents. These services may include custodial or medical care as well as other types of assistance, and residency is commonly restricted to those receiving these services. College dormitories, religious group living quarters, and hospice/nursing facilities are examples of group quarters.



The Core Area consists of mixed use buildings and high density housing. (photo credit: Google Streetview)



Example of some of the single family homes in the College Area.



Figure 2-3 Residential Density

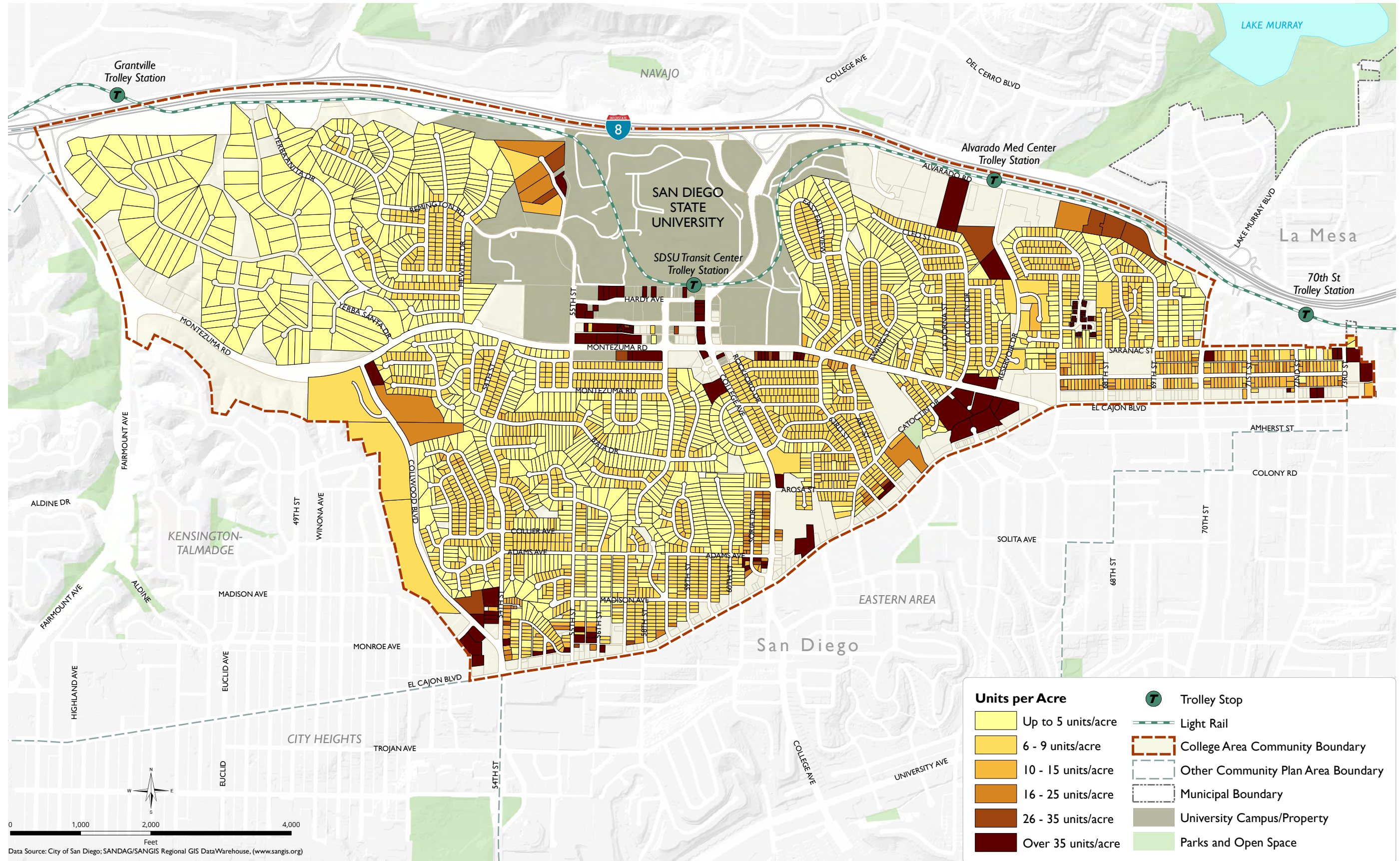


Figure 2-4 Dormitories

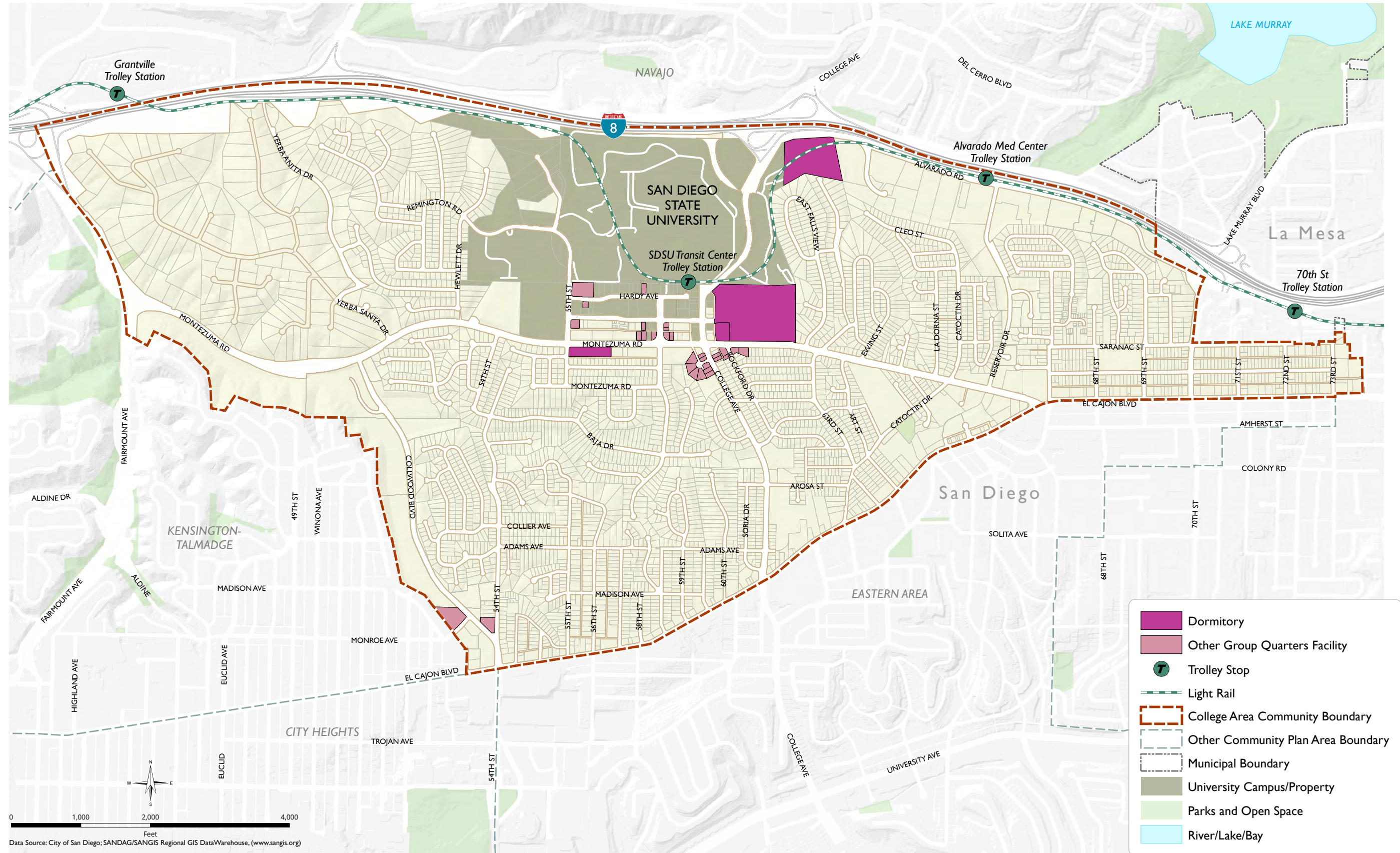


Figure 2-5 Single Family Homes with 5 Bedrooms

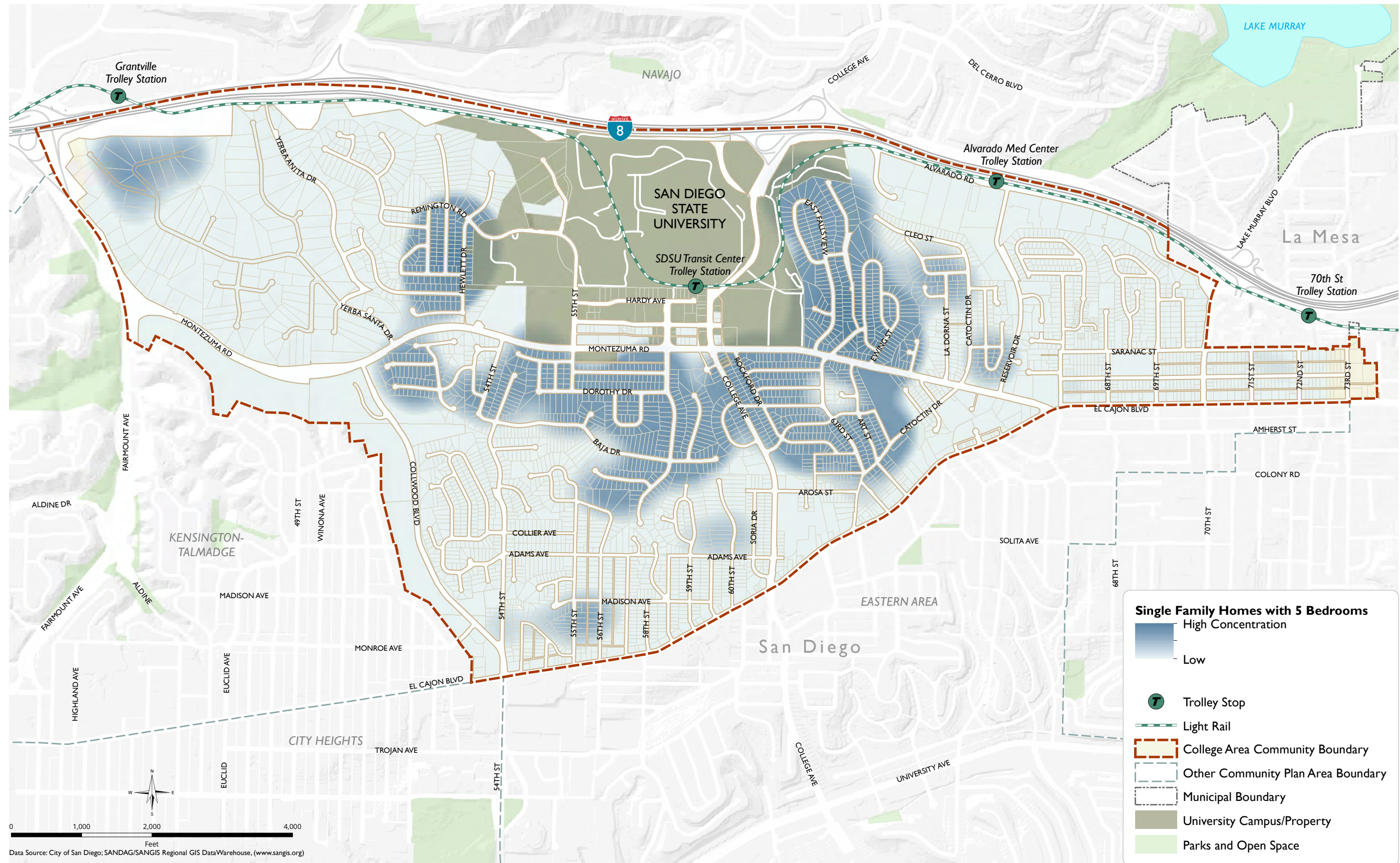
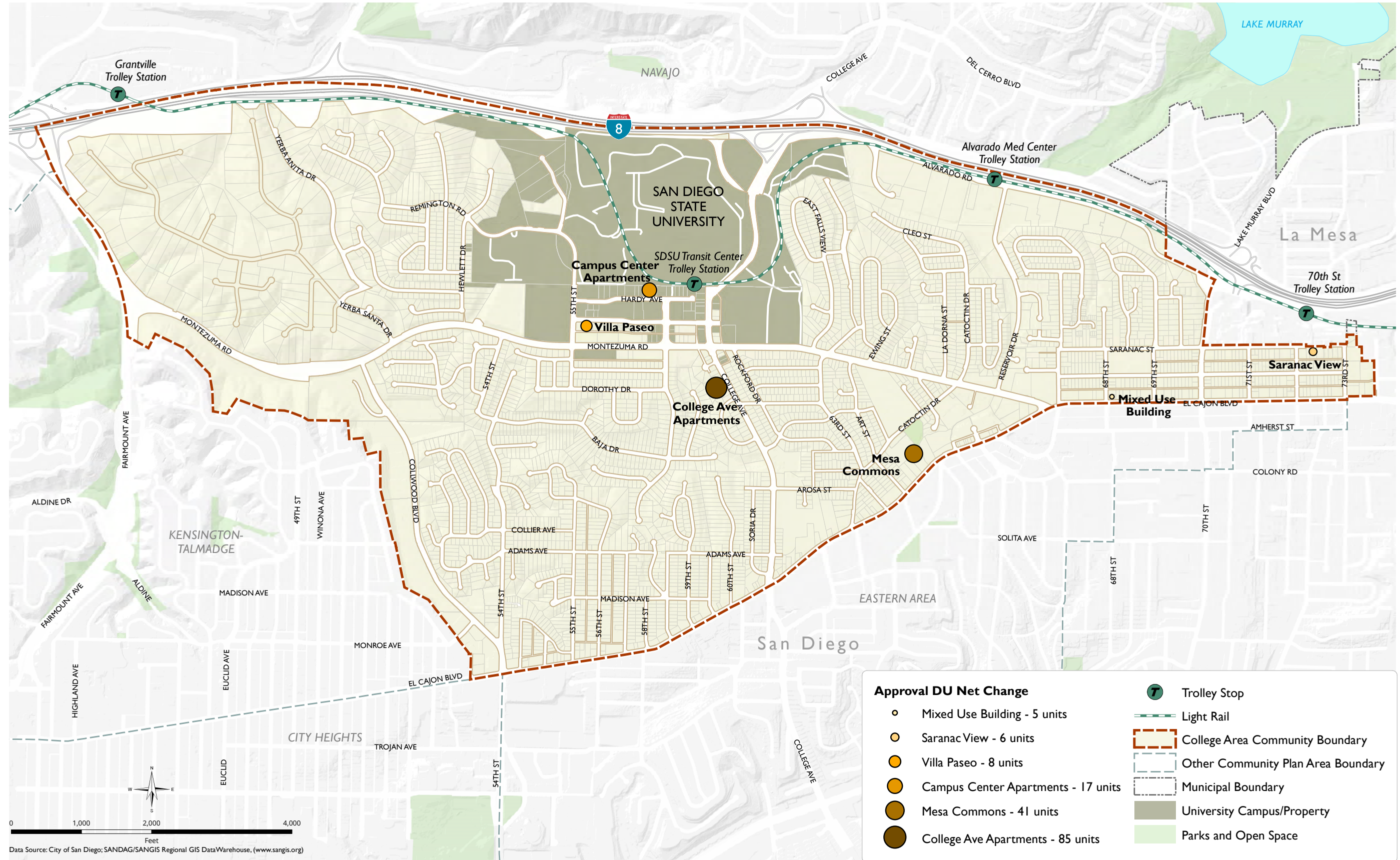


Figure 2-6 Approved Multi Family Residential Construction



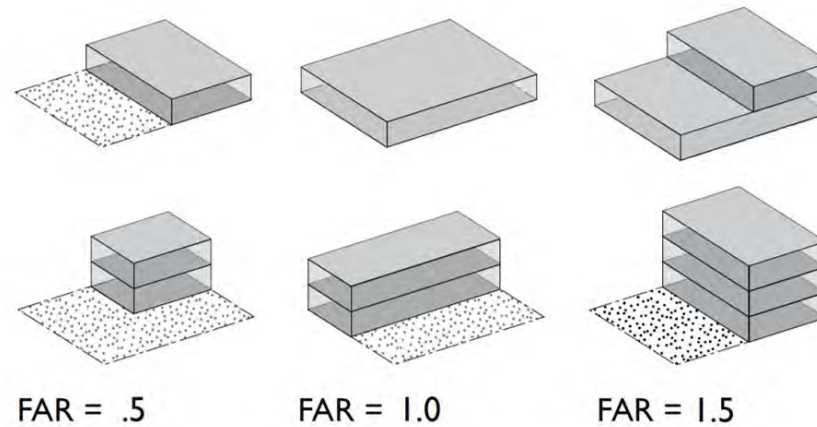
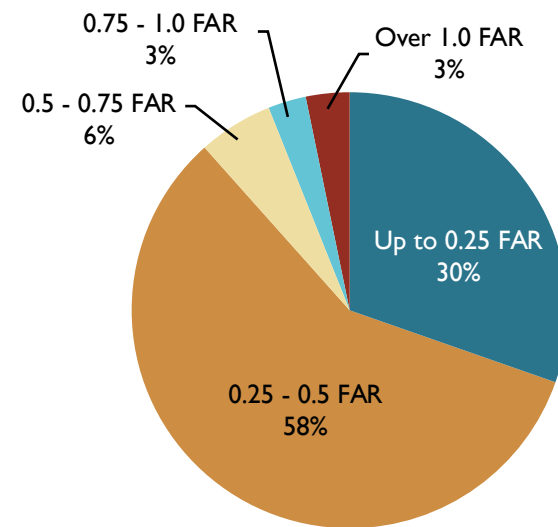
EXISTING NON-RESIDENTIAL INTENSITY

Development intensity is expressed as Floor Area Ratio (FAR), which refers to the ratio between a building's total floor area and the total area of the site. The intensity of non-residential development (office, commercial, institutional, and industrial) in the College Area is shown in **Figure 2-7** and a breakdown of FAR percentages is shown in **Chart 2-3**. Overall, non-residential buildings have an average 0.6 FAR.

The breakout of FAR values shows that, for non-residential land, 30% is below 0.25 FAR, 58% is between 0.25 to 0.5 FAR, 6% is between 0.5 to 0.75 FAR, 3% is between 0.75 to 1.0 FAR, and 4% is 1.0 FAR or more. When summarized, most of the non-residential land (88%) has an FAR below 0.5. Development with the highest FARs are located within the Core Area and at Iconic Alvarado, the mixed use building near the Alvarado Medical Center Trolley Station. Even though 88% of the non-residential land has an FAR below 0.5, the average FAR is higher due to the properties that are above 1.0 FAR (including some of the older commercial buildings at 7200 El Cajon Boulevard) which increases the overall average.

Within the College Area, 88% of non-residential land has a floor area ratio (FAR) below 0.5, with an overall average 0.6 FAR.

Chart 2-3: Breakdown of Existing Non-Residential Intensities (Floor Area Ratio FAR)

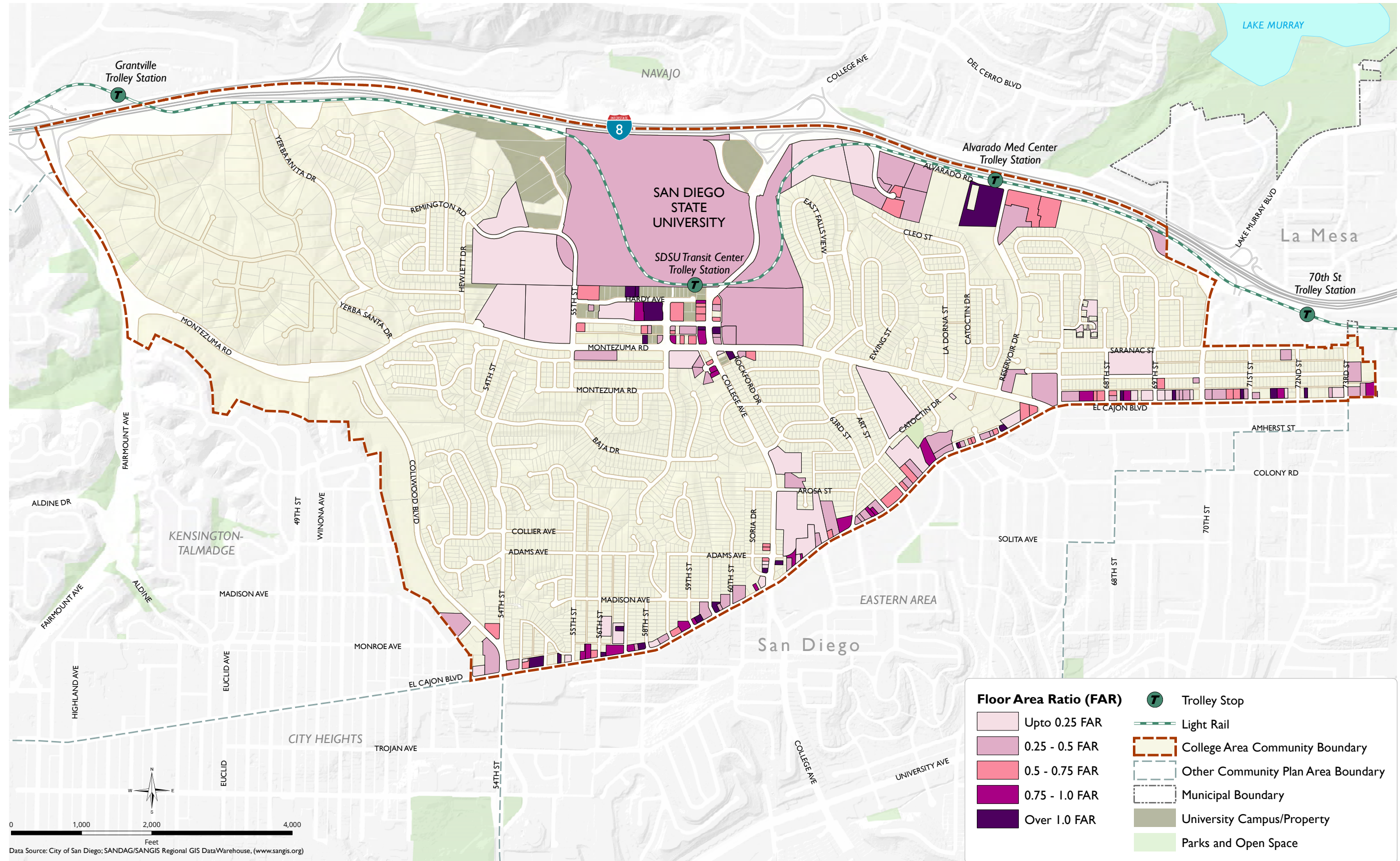


FAR is calculated by comparing the ratio of a building's total floor area to the area of the site it is on.



The average floor area ratio for non-residential buildings within the College Area is 0.6.

Figure 2-7 Non-Residential FAR



0 1,000 2,000 4,000
Feet
Data Source: City of San Diego; SANDAG/SANGIS Regional GIS Data Warehouse, (www.sangis.org)

2.3 Adopted Land Use

The College Area Community Plan land use diagram, shown in **Figure 2-8**, shows the Plan’s adopted land use designations. As shown in the figure and listed in **Table 2-2**, a significant portion of the College Area (44%) is designated as Low Density Residential, with all residential uses representing 62% of the total acreage. General Commercial with residential (3%) is largely found along El Cajon Boulevard, with Low-to-Medium Residential bordering the commercial corridor. Medium to Medium-High Residential land uses are found around the periphery of the SDSU campus, near Alvarado Road, and along Montezuma Road. These, along with Very-High Residential uses, are largely student housing. Mixed Use Commercial is found on campus, and Office Commercial is located near the hospital. The SDSU campus represents about 14% of the total land use and open-space represents about 14%. A breakdown of land use designations in the current College Area Community Plan is shown in **Chart 2-4**.

The largest percentage of land by land use designation in the adopted College Area Community Plan is Low Density Residential (43%), followed by the SDSU campus (13%) and Open Space (13%).

Chart 2-4: Community Plan Adopted Land Use Summary

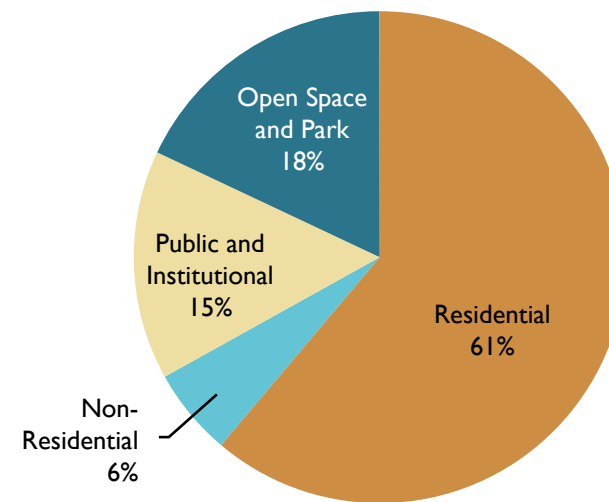


Table 2-2: Adopted Community Plan Land Use Designations

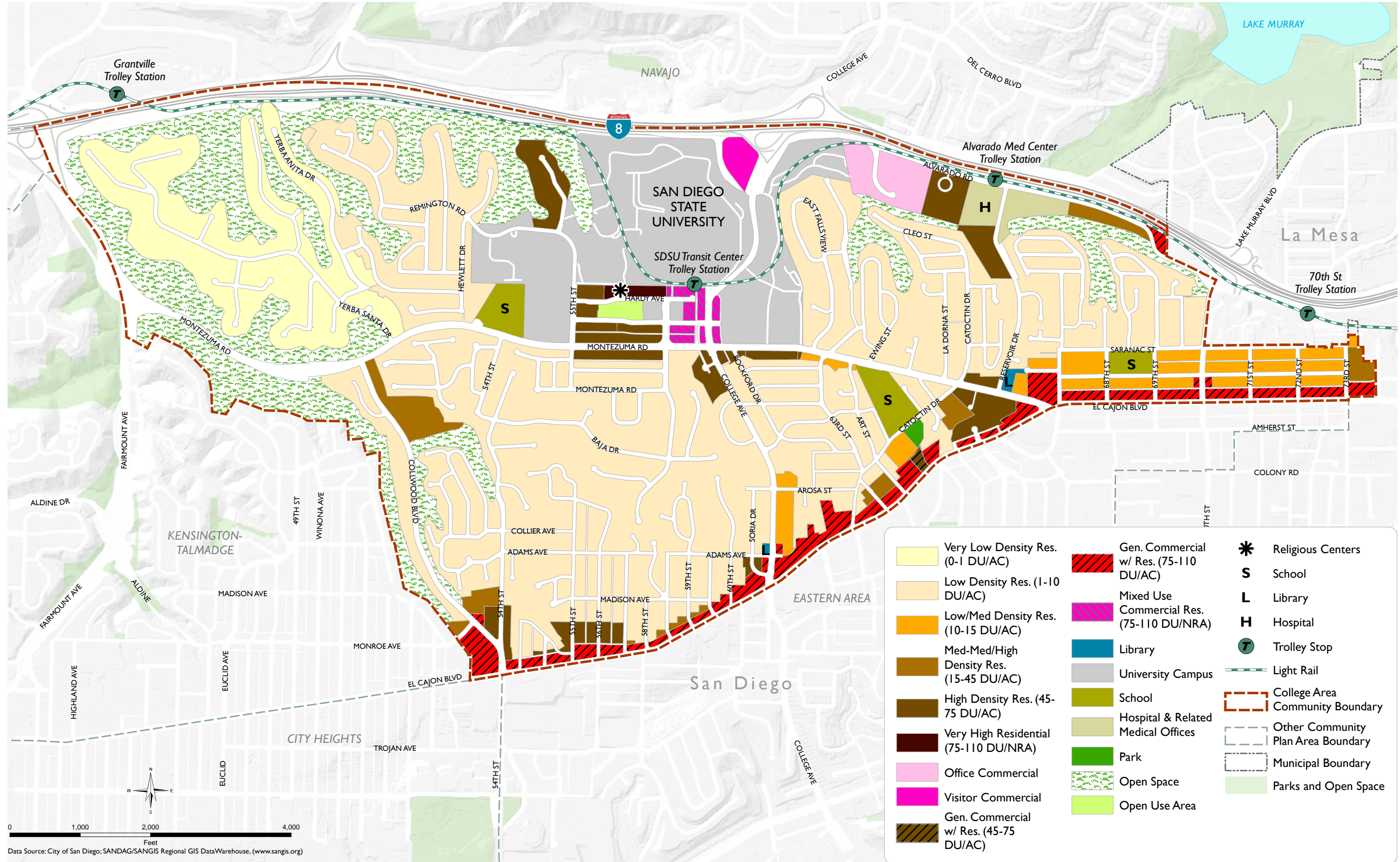
Land Use Designation	Permitted Density Range (housing units per acre)	Sum of Acreage in the College Area	Percentage of Total Acreage
Residential		958	61.2%
Very Low Density Residential	0-1	130	8.3%
Low Density Residential	5-10	677	43.2%
Low/Med Density Residential	10-15	48	3.1%
Med-Med High Density Residential	15-45	31	2.0%
High Density Residential	45-75	69	4.4%
Very High Density Residential	75-110	3	0.2%
Non-Residential		88	5.6%
Office Commercial	-	18	1.1%
Visitor Commercial	-	6	0.4%
General Commercial w/ Residential	45-75	1	0.1%
General Commercial w/ Residential	75-110	55	3.5%
Mixed Use Commercial Residential	75-110	8	0.5%
Public/Institutional		240	15.3%
Library	-	2	0.1%
University Campus	-	200	12.8%
School	-	24	1.5%
Hospital and Related Medical Offices	-	14	0.9%
Parks/Open Space		250	15.3%
Park	-	2	0.1%
Open Space	-	245	12.8%
Open Use Area	-	3	0.2%
Transportation / ROW		402.9	
Total Net	-	1566	100%
Total Gross		1,969	

*Numbers may not add due to rounding. Percentages with less than 1% are shown as 0%.

Source: City of San Diego; Dyett and Bhatia 2020

Adopted Community Plan Land Use Data right of way (ROW) and net acres vary from the existing land use data due to portions of the Adopted Community Plan land use designations encompassing portion of right of way.

Figure 2-8 Community Plan Adopted Land Use Designations



2.4 Zoning

Zoning is the policy mechanism for the San Diego Municipal Code that implements the policies put forth in the General Plan and the Community Plan; via zoning, the Municipal Code contains detailed development regulations that control the form development can take and the land uses that are permitted. Both citywide zoning districts and Central Urbanized Planned District (CUPD) zones regulate the College Area. The current zoning designations are shown in **Figure 2-7** and listed in **Table 2-3**. At approximately 78% of the total acreage, a significant majority of land within the College Area is zoned for Residential Single Unit (RS); Residential Multiple Unit (RM) comprises about 11% and commercial uses comprises about seven.

CENTRAL URBANIZING PLAN DISTRICT ORDINANCE

As **Figure 2-7** shows, most of the College Area is governed by Citywide zoning, and areas along El Cajon Boulevard are subject to the Central Urbanizing Plan District (CUPD) Zones. CUPD zones assist in implementing the goals and objectives of the College Area Community Plan and the Mid-City Communities Plan, and relevant zoning is indicated as CUPD-CT and CUPD-CU. As zoning must be consistent with existing Community Plans, the zoning applicable to the College Area will be revised, as necessary, as part of the update of the College Area Community Plan. This will include using Citywide zoning.

COMMUNITY PLAN IMPLEMENTATION OVERLAY ZONE (CPIOZ)

The Municipal Code (section 132.1402) includes the Community Plan Implementation Overlay Zone (CPIOZ), which provides supplemental development regulations that are tailored to specific sites within community plan areas of the City. The CPIOZ establishes supplemental development regulations that are tailored to specific sites within community plan area. In the College Area, the CPIOZ-A designation is applied to only to a property to the east of Friends of the College-Rolando Library as shown in **Figure 2-7**.

Within the College Area, 78% of the land is zoned for Residential Single Unit, 11% Residential Multiple Unit, and 8% Commercial.

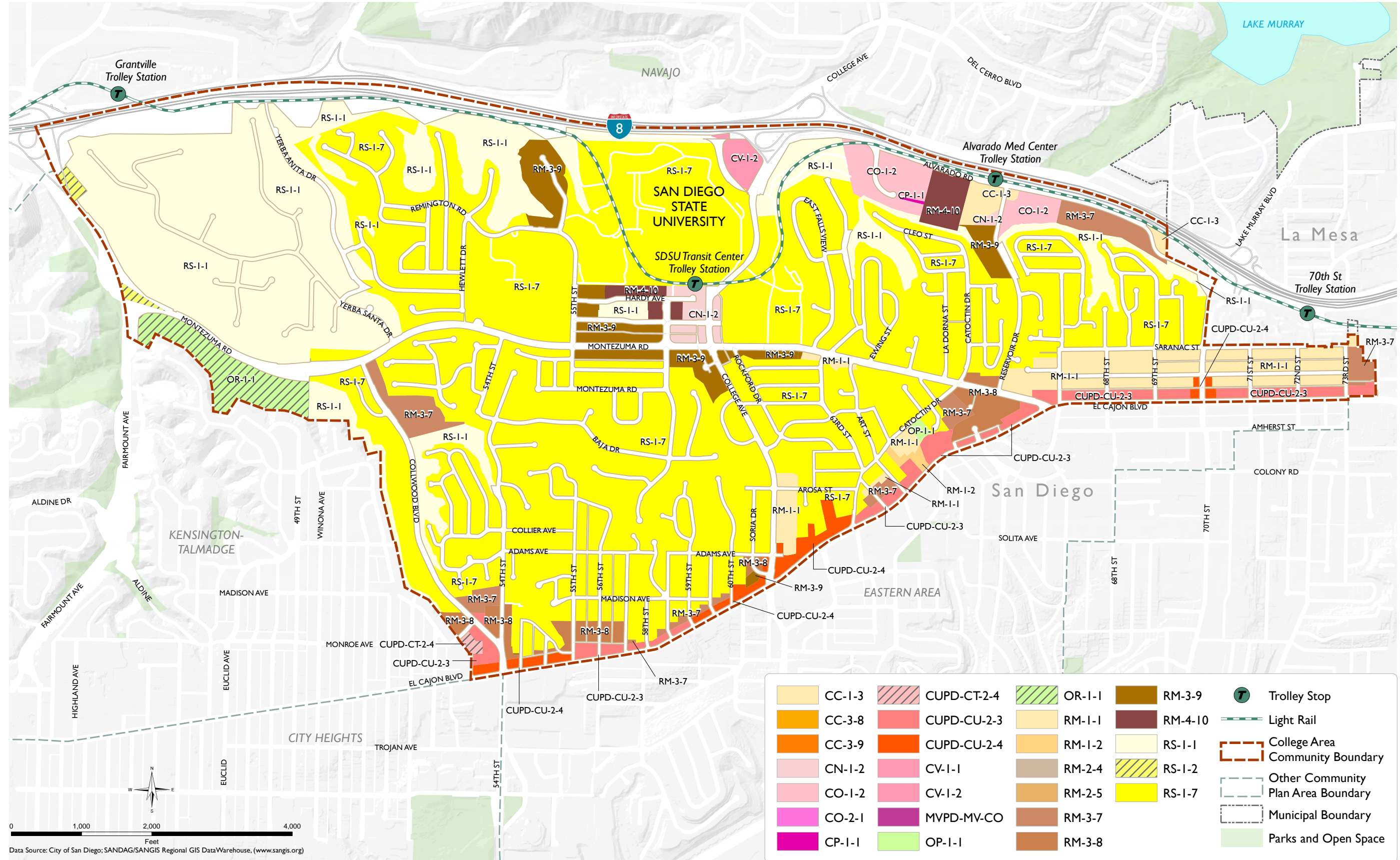
Table 2-3: Current Zoning Designations

Zoning Designation	Zoning Name	Description/Purpose	Sum of Acreage in the College Area	Percentage of Total Acreage
Commercial Base Zones			163	8.3%
CC-1-3	Commercial Community	Mix of residential and commercial development with an auto orientation (1 housing unit/1,500 sf. of lot area)	14	0.7%
CN-1-2	Commercial-Neighborhood	Mix of residential and commercial development with an auto orientation (1 housing unit/1,500 sf. of lot area)	15	0.7%
CO-1-2	Commercial-Office	Mix of office and residential uses that serve as an employment center (1 housing unit/1,500 sf. of lot area)	35	1.8%
CUPD-CT-2-4	Central Urbanized Planned District- Commercial Transition	Provides a transition between the CU-2-4 zone and abutting residential use areas.	2	0.1%
CUPD-CU-2-3	Central Urbanized Planned District- Central Urbanized	Accommodate development with pedestrian orientation and medium-high density residential use	48	2.5%
CUPD-CT-2-4	Central Urbanized Planned District- Central Urbanized	Accommodate development with pedestrian orientation and high-density residential use	25	1.3%
CV-1-2	Commercial-Visitor	Mix of visitor-serving uses and residential uses with a pedestrian orientation (1 housing unit/1,500 sf. of lot area)	24	1.2%
Residential			1,765	89.9%
RM-1-1	Residential Multiple Unit	Lower density multiple dwelling units with some characteristics of single dwelling units (1 housing unit/3,000 sf. of lot area)	77	3.95
RM-1-2	Residential Multiple Unit	Lower density multiple dwelling units with some characteristics of single dwelling units (1 housing unit/2,500 sf. of lot area)	2	0.1%
RM-3-7	Residential Multiple Unit	Medium density with limited commercial uses (1 housing unit/1,000 sf. of lot area)	4430	2.3%
RM-3-8	Residential Multiple Unit	Medium density with limited commercial uses (1 housing unit/800 sf. of lot area)	58	1.5%
RM-3-9	Residential Multiple Unit	Medium density with limited commercial uses (1 housing unit/600 sf. of lot area)	19	2.9%
RM-4-10	Residential Multiple Unit	Urbanized, high density with limited commercial uses (1 housing unit/400 sf. of lot area)	456	0.9%
RS-1-1	Residential Single Unit	Urbanized Community min. 40,000 sf. lot	4	23.2%
RS-1-2	Residential Single Unit	Urbanized Community min. 20,000 sf. lot	1075	0.2%
RS-1-7	Residential Single Unit	Urbanized Community min. 5,000 sf. lot		54.7%
Open Space				1.8%
OP-1-1	Open Space, Park	Allows developed, active parks	1	0.1%
OR-1-1	Open Space	Allows open space with limited private residential development	35	1.8%

Source: San Diego Municipal Code, Chapter 13 Zones; City of San Diego GIS; Dyett and Bhatia 2020

Zoning Data right of way (ROW) and net acres vary from the existing land use data due to portions of the zoning designations encompassing portion of right of way.

Figure 2-9 Current Zoning



2.5 Land Use and Mobility

The relationship between land use and mobility can better connect our communities to essential services, commercial retail, housing and job opportunities, increased public transit accessibility, and creation of walkable communities. This section outlines a few key components of land use and mobility as they relate to the College Area.

CITY OF VILLAGES STRATEGY

San Diego’s “City of Villages” strategy focuses growth in mixed use villages and corridors served by high frequency transit as addressed by the General Plan.

TRANSIT PRIORITY AREAS

Transit Priority Areas (TPAs) or areas within a half-mile of major public transit stops. Multifamily Residential projects in TPAs are not required to provide parking, an incentive which can reduce development costs and increase housing production. Affordable housing projects within TPAs are eligible for density bonuses beyond standard state bonuses for affordable housing.



El Cajon is an important transportation corridor.

EXISTING TRANSIT

As shown in **Figure 2-8**, the College Area is served by three Light Rail Transit (LRT) trolley stations: at SDSU, the Alvarado Medical Center and 70th Street in La Mesa. The community is also served by two Rapid Bus routes with peak headways of 15-minutes or less that operate on El Cajon Boulevard and College Avenue. Route 215 runs from SDSU to Downtown San Diego, and BRT 115 runs from SDSU to the El Cajon Transit Center. As a result, nearly the entire community is designated as a TPA.

Nearly the entire College Area community is within a Transit Priority Area, locations that the “City of Villages” strategy focuses growth within. Additionally, El Cajon Boulevard, the SDSU campus area, and areas surrounding the Alvarado Trolley Station have been identified as SANDAG Smart Growth Areas.



Linking land use and transportation is a key component of Transit Priority Areas.

SANDAG SMART GROWTH AREAS

In addition to its TPA designation, portions of the College Area also designated as SANDAG Smart Growth Areas. These areas are envisioned to have better coordination between transportation and land use planning in order to make the most use out of both and to create more housing, jobs, and transit accessible places (see sidebar for smart growth definition). Smart growth areas also receive higher priority for transportation improvements. **Figure 2-8** shows the boundaries of the four main areas that are designated for smart growth: College Avenue and Montezuma Road (SD-CO-1), which is identified as a Community Center; the SDSU campus and transit station (SD-CO-2), which is designated as a Special Use Center; Alvarado Medical Center and light rail station (SD-CO-3), which is designated as a Town Center; and El Cajon Boulevard (SD-CO-4), which is identified as a Mixed use Transit Corridor.²

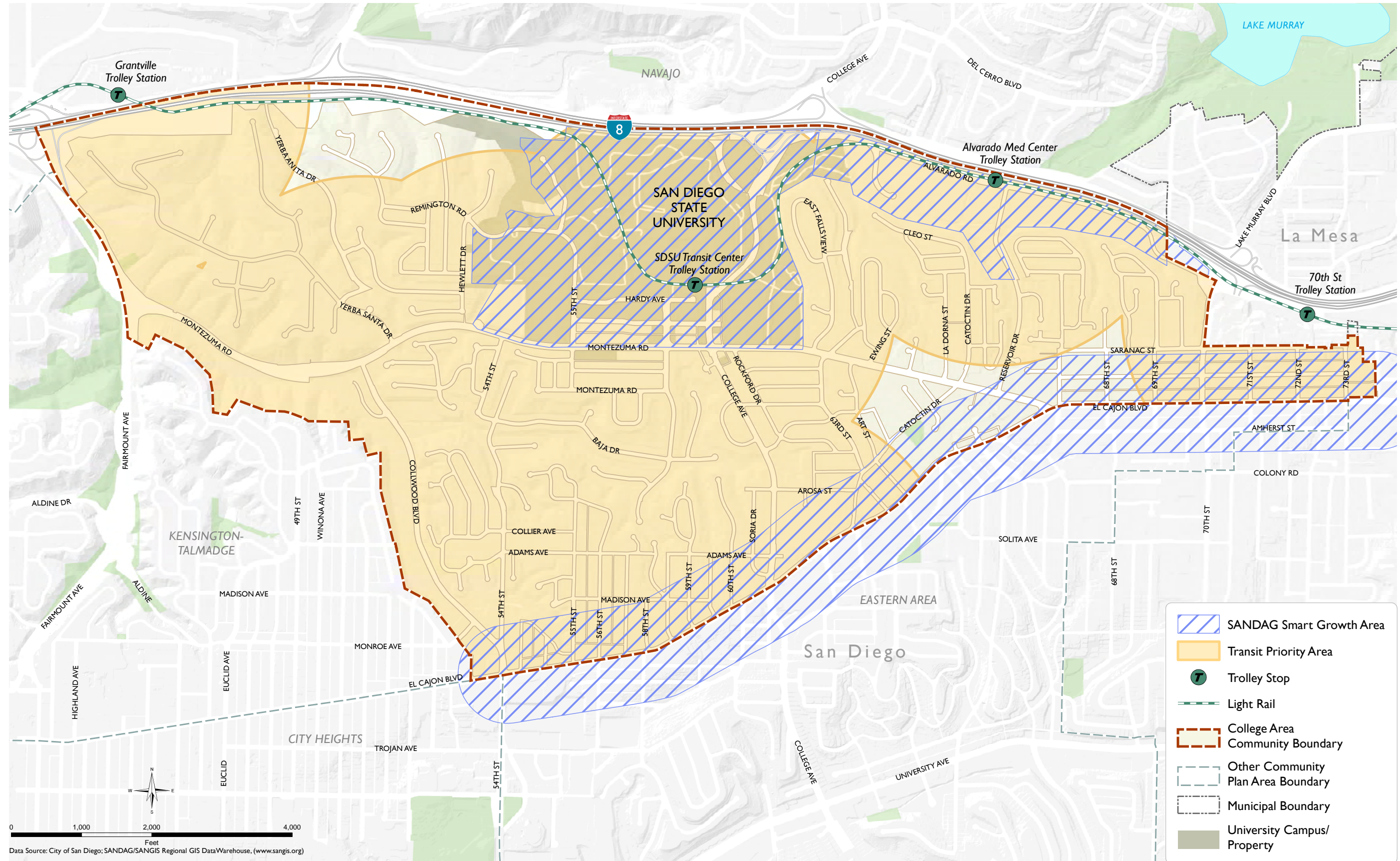
² SANDAG, *Quick Reference: Smart Growth Areas by Place Type*. May 2016. Accessed 10/2020. https://www.sandag.org/uploads/projectid/projectid_296_14006.pdf

What is Smart Growth?

SANDAG defines Smart growth as a compact, efficient, and environmentally-sensitive urban development pattern. It focuses future growth and infill development close to jobs, services, and public facilities to maximize the use of existing infrastructure and preserve open space and natural resources.

Smart growth is characterized by more compact, higher density development in urbanized areas throughout the region. These areas are walkable, bike-friendly, near public transit, and promote good community design, resulting in housing and transportation choices for those who live and work in these areas.

Figure 2-10 Transit Priority Areas and SANDAG Smart Growth Areas



2.6 Land Use Summary

This section summarizes key information related to land use for the College Area presented in this chapter.

- Within the College Area, **69%** of the land area is residential, **27%** is used for Public and Community Facilities, **3%** is commercial, and **1%** is all other uses.
- Within the College Area, **53%** of residential land has a density of up to **5** units/acre, with an overall average density of **7.8** units/acre which reflects the predominance of single family homes in the community. The citywide average residential density is **10.1** units/acre.
- **51%** of the homes within the College Area are Multifamily Residential and **49%** of the homes in the community are Single family Residential.
- Within the College Area, **88%** of non-residential land has a floor area ratio (FAR) below 0.5, with an overall average **0.6** FAR. Even though **88%** of the non-residential land has an FAR below 0.5, the average FAR is higher due to the properties that are above 1.0 FAR (like some of the older commercial buildings at 7200 El Cajon Boulevard) which increases the overall average
- The largest percentage of land by land use designation in the adopted College Area Community Plan is Low Density Residential (**43%**), followed by the SDSU campus (**13%**) and Open Space (**13%**).
- Within the College Area, **78%** of the land is zoned for Residential Single Unit, **11%** for Residential Multiple Unit, and **8%** is zoned for Commercial.
- Nearly the entire College Area community is within a **Transit Priority Area**, locations that the “City of Villages” strategy focuses growth within. Additionally, El Cajon Boulevard, the SDSU campus area, and areas surrounding the Alvarado Trolley Station have been identified as SANDAG **Smart Growth Areas**.



03

ECONOMIC SETTING

- 3.1 Economic Context
- 3.2 Projected Growth
- 3.3 Residential Housing Conditions
- 3.4 Commercial and Employment Conditions
- 3.5 Economic Setting Summary



3.1 Economic Context

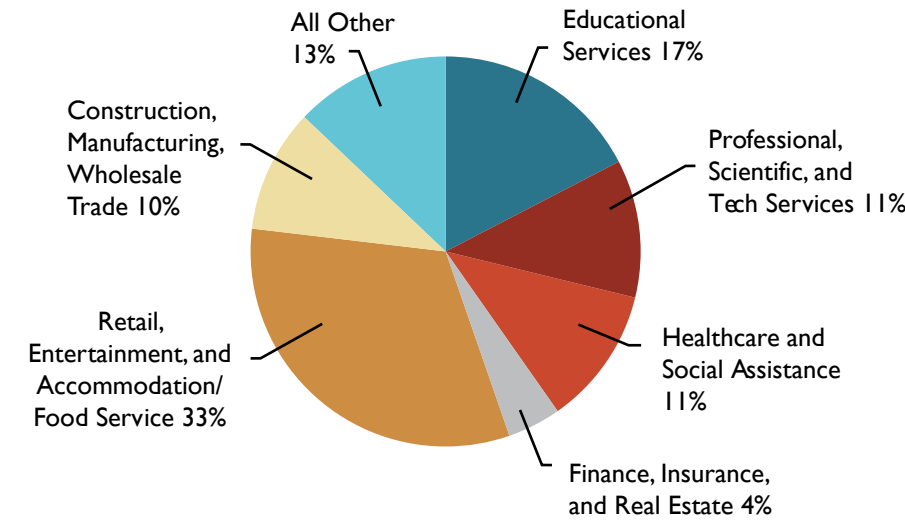
While there are numerous demographic indicators that contribute to the understanding of an area’s economic context, information regarding income, educational attainment, and employment are frequently used for a high-level snapshot, shown in Table 3-1.

Of the College Area’s labor force of approximately 12,000 people, the employed civilian population is around 11,500 people as shown in Table 3-1. The unemployment rate for the College Area (5.4%) is only slightly higher than the city’s rate of 5.3%. Residents of the College Area tend to have slightly higher levels of educational attainment than the overall city, with about 58% of residents in the College Area possessing a bachelor’s degree or higher in comparison to the city’s rate of 53%.

The College Area has a median household income of just over \$54,500, which is significantly less compared to the City’s median household income of approximately \$80,200¹; this is most likely due to the large SDSU student population.

The College Area includes approximately 680 businesses, employing about 6,080 people². As shown in Chart 3-1, about one-third of the jobs within the College Area are within the “retail, entertainment, and accommodation/food service” industry. The second highest jobs by industry is “educational services” at about 17% of the total jobs. The third highest jobs by industry are “healthcare and social assistance” and “professional, scientific, and tech services,” both of which account for about 11% of the total jobs in the College Area.

Chart 3-1: Jobs by Industry in College Area



Source: City of San Diego; ACS 2019; Dyett and Bhatia, 2020

Residents of the College Area tend to have slightly higher levels of educational attainment than the overall city, however, the College Area’s median household income of around \$54,500 is significantly less compared to the city’s median of approximately \$80,200, most likely due to the large SDSU student population and the predominance of “retail, entertainment, and accommodation/food service” industry jobs that typically offer lower wages.

Table 3-1: Income, Educational Attainment, and Employment

	College Area	Percentage of Total	City of San Diego	Percentage of Total
Income				
2019 Median Household Income	\$54,519	-	\$80,168	-
2019 Average Household Income	\$81,087	-	\$111,381	-
2019 Per Capita Income	\$28,138	-	\$41,645	-
Educational Attainment				
Less than 9th Grade	319	3%	55,328	6%
9-12th Grade/No Diploma	444	4%	50,209	5%
High School Diploma	1,171	11%	130,964	14%
GED/Alternative Credential	251	2%	16,689	2%
Some College/No Degree	2,302	21%	186,335	20%
Bachelor's Degree	3,369	31%	262,239	27%
Associate's Degree	1,013	9%	69,188	7%
Graduate/Professional Degree	1,925	18%	183,633	19%
Employment				
Unemployed Population Age 16+	657	-	39,995	-
Employed Civilian Population Age 16+	11,526	-	712,271	-
Unemployment Rate	5.4%	-	5.3%	-

Source: City of San Diego; ACS, 2019; LEHD, 2019; Dyett and Bhatia, 2020

¹ City of San Diego; ACS 2019

² City of San Diego; ACS, 2019; LEHD, 2019

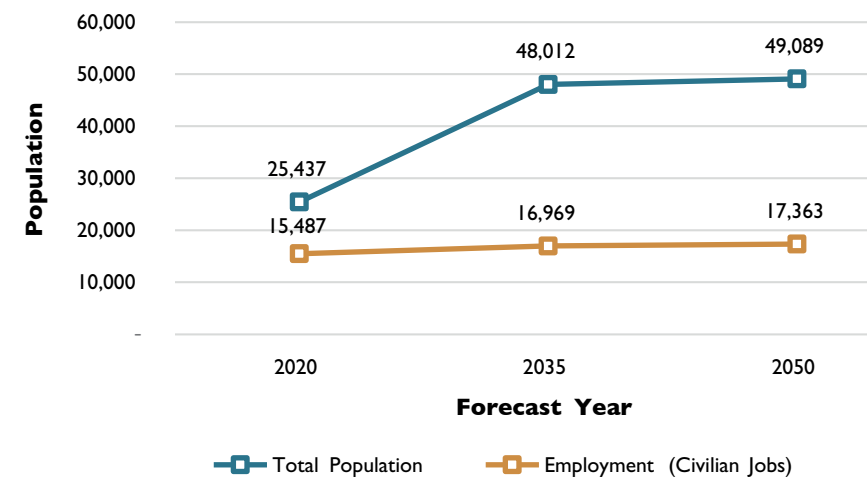
3.2 Projected Growth

According to the most current forecast by the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), the population of the College Area is expected to nearly double by 2050, with an increase in population from about 25,400 people in 2020 to about 49,100 people by 2050³. Chart 3-2 shows the College Area population and employment forecast for 2020, 2035, and 2050. Most of the population increase is expected over a 15-year period between 2020 and 2035. While there is a significant population increase, employment (civilian jobs) is not expected to have as dramatic of an increase, with less than 2,000 additional employed persons by 2050. The projected growth calculation by SANDAG is based on the adopted community plan for the College Area.

³ SANDAG SR-13 Forecast; Data Surfer

The population of the College Area is expected to nearly double by 2050, with an increase in population from about 25,400 people in 2020 to about 49,100 people by 2050.

Chart 3-2: College Area Population and Employment Forecast



Source: SANDAG Series 13 Regional Growth Forecast; Dyett and Bhatia, 2020



The San Diego State University is a major employer within the College Area.



The Alvarado Hospital Medical Center and surrounding health-related offices are another major employer (photo credit: Google Streetview).



A third of the jobs within the College Area are within retail, entertainment, and accommodation or food service, like this coffee shop on College Avenue (photo credit: Google Streetview).

3.3 Residential Housing Conditions

There are approximately 8,600 housing units in the College Area with a vacancy rate of 4.8%, which is below the city's vacancy rate of 5.5%.⁴ At 61%, the majority of the total housing units in the College Area are renter-occupied, higher than the city's renter-occupied percentage of 52%. **Chart 3-3** shows the distribution of households with cost burden, or households that pay over 20% of their income for rent. Nearly 55% of these cost burdened households spend half or more of their household income on rent, which is significantly more than the citywide cost burdened household percentage of 35%. This indicates that within the College Area, there is a much higher percentage of renters that are housing burdened, with a total of about 82% of these households spending 30% or more of their income on rent; citywide, the housing burdened percentage is about 69%.

⁴ City of San Diego; ACS 2019

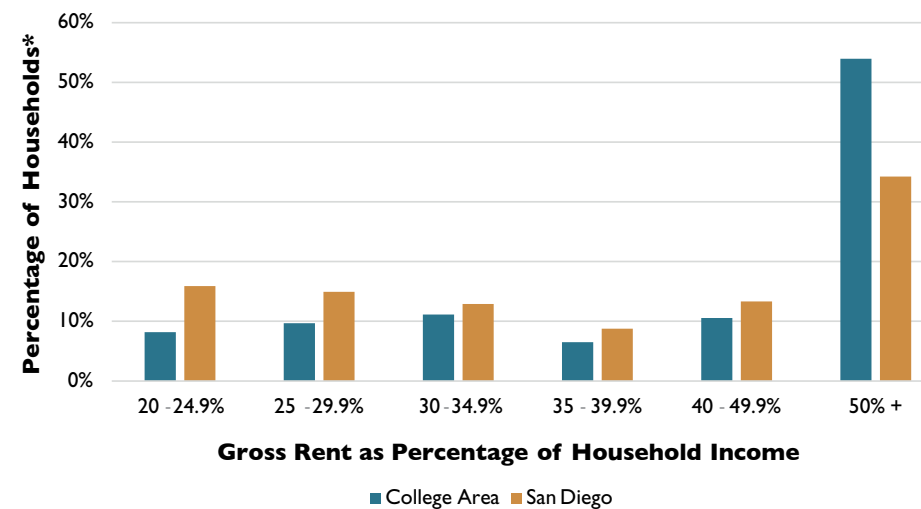
Average housing rents and values for the College Area and the overall city are shown in **Chart 3-4**. The median contract rent in the College Area is slightly lower at \$1,370 in comparison to the city's median contract rent of \$1,511. Median and average home values in the College Area are also lower in comparison to the overall City. With regard to the affordability of owner-occupied units on the market, the Housing Affordability Index compares local median housing prices with local household incomes to determine overall affordability. The College Area's Housing Affordability Index rating is 50 in comparison to the City's rating of 64 (lower index values represent less housing affordability). This indicates that about half of the households in the College Area can afford a median priced home in the area.

The majority of the total housing units in the College Area are renter-occupied. Within the College Area, there is a much higher percentage of renters that are housing burdened, with a total of about 82% of these households spending 30% or more of their income on rent; citywide, the housing burdened percentage is about 69%.



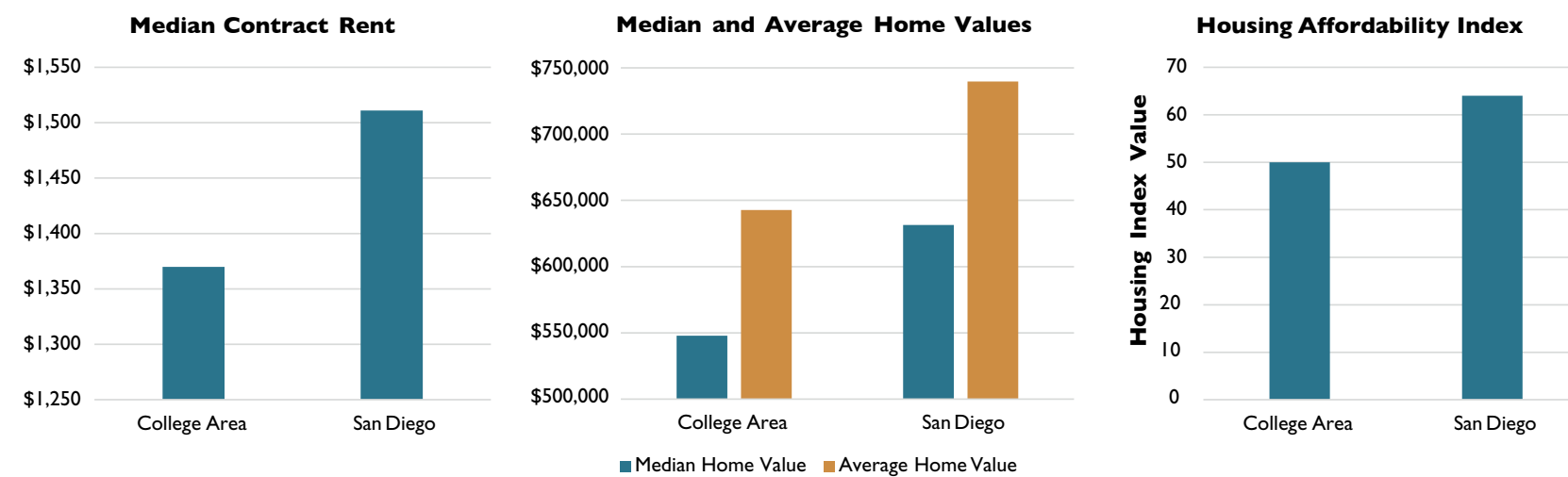
At 61%, the majority of the total housing units are renter-occupied, like this apartment complex.

Chart 3-3: Tenure and Housing Burden



*Universe: Percentage of households that pay over 20% of household income on rent
Source: City of San Diego; ACS, 2019; Dyett and Bhatia, 2020

Chart 3-4: Average Housing Rents and Value



Source: City of San Diego; ACS, 2019; Dyett and Bhatia, 2020

3.4 Commercial and Employment Conditions

Around 3% of the land use in the College Area is for commercial uses, including retail, regional, wholesale, and visitor commercial. Commercial uses are found in a fine-grained pattern primarily along El Cajon Boulevard and to a lesser degree, along College Avenue and adjacent to SDSU. Commercial business sites and their types are shown in Figure 3-1.

A few of the College Area’s major employment centers include the SDSU campus, which employs almost 1,600 instructional and non-instructional staff,⁵ and Alvarado Hospital Medical Center, which employs approximately 800 physicians, technicians, nurses, and support staff.⁶ A variety of retail stores, restaurants, and offices are located along El Cajon Boulevard, which contribute to the “retail, entertainment, and accommodation/food service” industry employment figures, representing about one-third of the total jobs within the College Area.

⁵ DataUSA. San Diego State University Statistics. 2017. Accessed at <https://datausa.io/profile/university/san-diego-state-university#:~:text=In%202017%2C%20San%20Diego%20State,38.9%25%20of%20all%20salaries%20paid>.

⁶ Alvarado Hospital. About Us. 2020. Accessed at <https://www.alvaradohospital.com/About-Us.aspx>

Commercial uses are primarily along El Cajon Boulevard and, to a lesser degree, College Avenue and adjacent to SDSU. A variety of retail stores, restaurants, and offices are located along El Cajon Boulevard which contribute to the “retail, entertainment, and accommodation/food service” industry, representing about one-third of the total jobs within the College Area.



Chart 3-5: Number of Businesses by Type

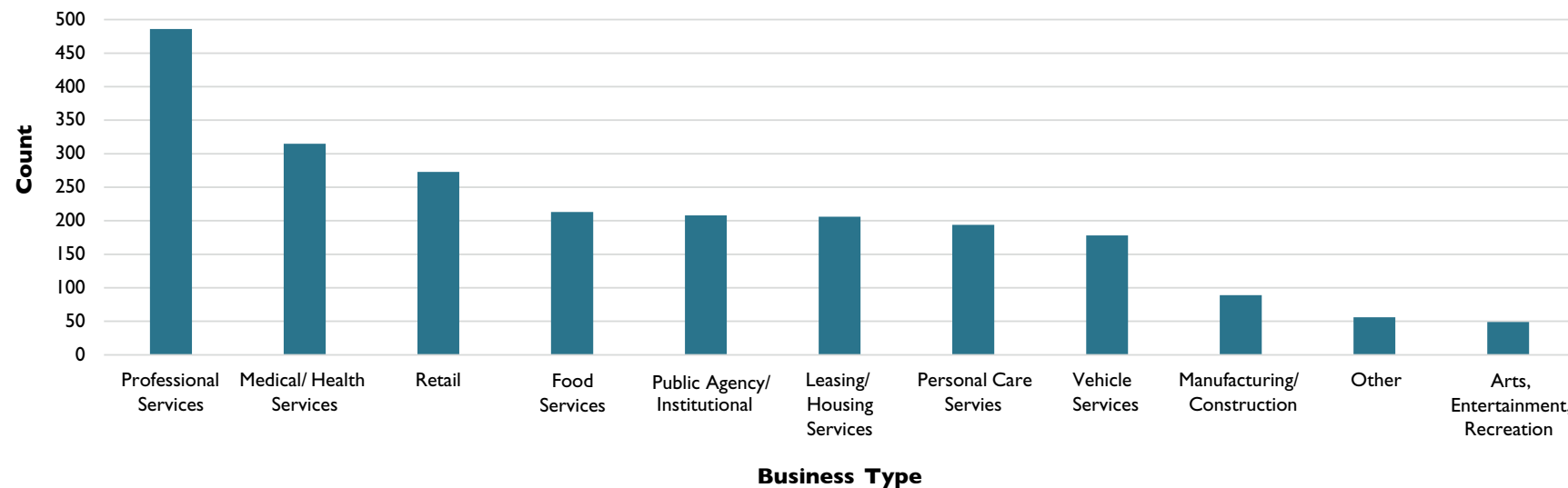


Figure 3-1 Business Sites

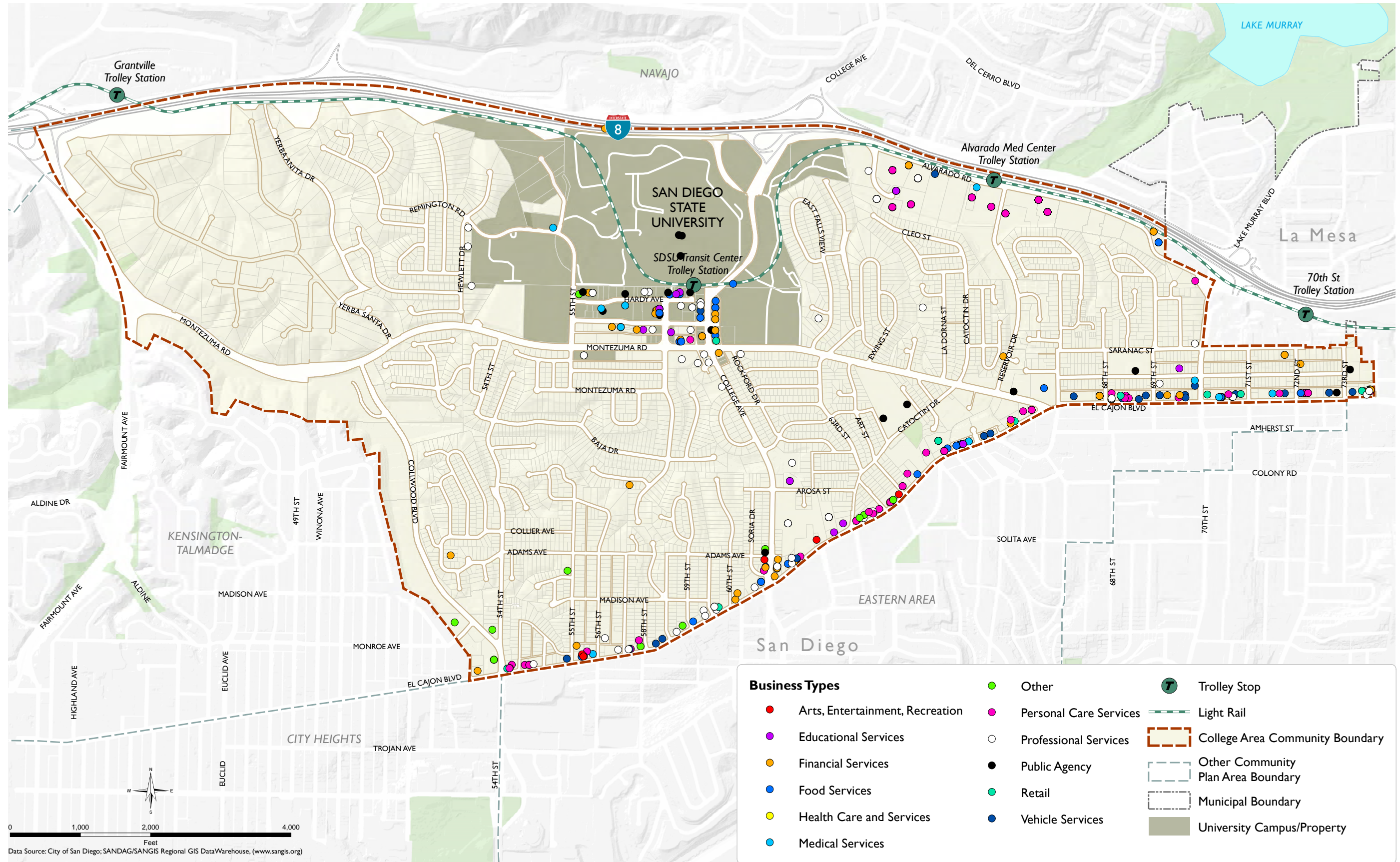
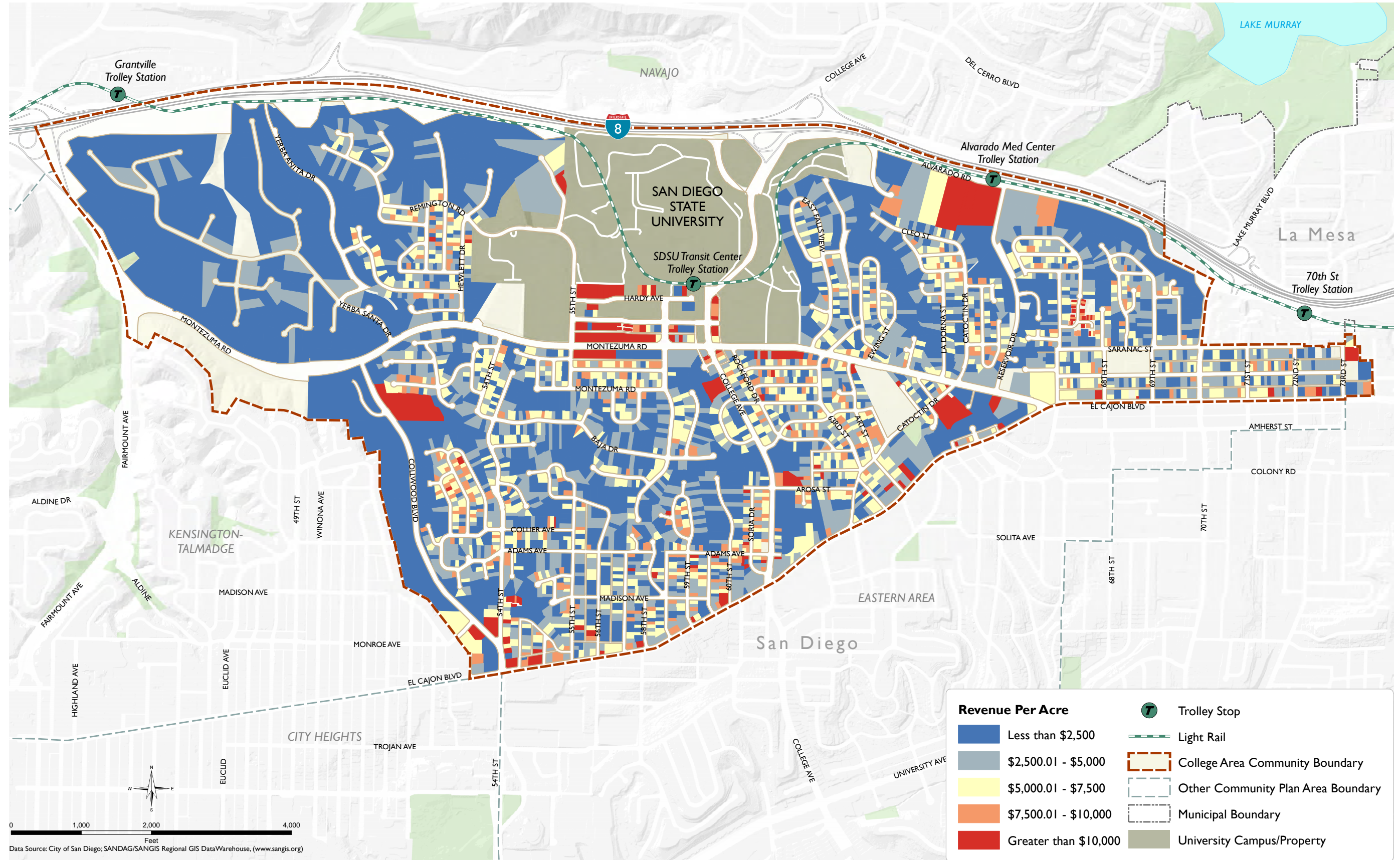


Figure 3-2 Revenue Per Acre



3.5 Economic Setting Summary

This section summarizes key information related to economic setting for the College Area presented in this chapter.

- Residents of the College Area tend to have slightly higher levels of educational attainment than the overall city, however, the College Area's median household income of around **\$54,500** is **33%** less than the City's median of approximately **\$80,200**, most likely due to the large SDSU student population and the predominance of "retail, entertainment, and accommodation/food service" industry jobs that typically offer lower wages.
- The population of the College Area is expected to nearly **double** by 2050, with an increase in population from about **25,400** people in 2020 to about **49,100** people by 2050.
- **61%** of the total housing units in the College Area are renter-occupied. Within the College Area, there is a much higher percentage of renters that are housing burdened, with a total of about **82%** of these households spending **30% or more** of their income on rent; citywide, the housing burdened percentage is about **69%**.
- Commercial uses are primarily along **El Cajon Boulevard** and, to a lesser degree, **College Avenue** and adjacent to **SDSU**. A variety of retail stores, restaurants, and offices are located along El Cajon Boulevard which contribute to the "retail, entertainment, and accommodation/food service" industry, representing about **one-third** of the total jobs within the College Area.

04

COMMUNITY FORM

- 4.1 Landform and Natural Features
- 4.2 History of Urban Form
- 4.3 Development Patterns
- 4.4 Residential Buildings
- 4.5 Commercial Buildings
- 4.6 Active Public Realm
- 4.7 Community Form Summary



4.1 Landform and Natural Features

The sense of place within the College Area is largely characterized by the landform and natural features of the community. As shown in **Figure 4-1**, the College Area community sits upon a mesa with a network of bluffs and canyons, which significantly contributes to the overall urban form. In particular, the northern and western edges of the plan area have significant topography changes which slopes down to the roadways below. Single family houses typically sit on top of the mesas with vegetation in the steep canyons. While much of the steep canyons are open space, most of it is private property and inaccessible to the public. The result of the canyons and mesas on the urban form is single-entry roadways that commonly dead end in cul-de-sacs which are commonly found in the residential areas.

The College Area community sits upon a network of steep hills, bluffs, and canyons which is a major contribution to the overall urban form.



Steep slopes, bluffs, and canyons gives a unique form to the College Area community.

4.2 History of Urban Form

The College Area community is predominantly developed with single family houses in subdivision patterns that are reflective of the hills and canyons within the community. Mature and well-maintained landscaping in residential neighborhoods, as well as wild native vegetation on hillsides and canyons, are defining characteristics of the community. Mesa views of the mountains to the east, and down into small finger canyons, are also defining features of the community.

The College Area community was largely un-built until the early 1930s. The area started to develop—first with the State Teachers College, later to become San Diego State University (SDSU)—in 1931 and then with suburban-style development between the 1940s–60s. The State Teachers College initially occupied a site of 125 acres, with an enrollment of just 150 students. The location of the College in the area, combined with the natural eastward expansion of the City along El Cajon Boulevard, resulted in steady growth of the community over the next three decades. The postwar desire for suburban living and the completion of Interstate 8 in the late 1950s further contributed to the growth of the community and SDSU.

These suburban areas have largely remained unchanged since this time period, while the need for student housing resulted in high-density apartments and dorms adjacent to the campus. This difference in housing approach has essentially created two communities: the University campus and the



Aerial image of the San Diego State Teacher's College (now SDSU campus) in 1931. Photo credit: San Diego State University Library, University Archives, Photograph Collection

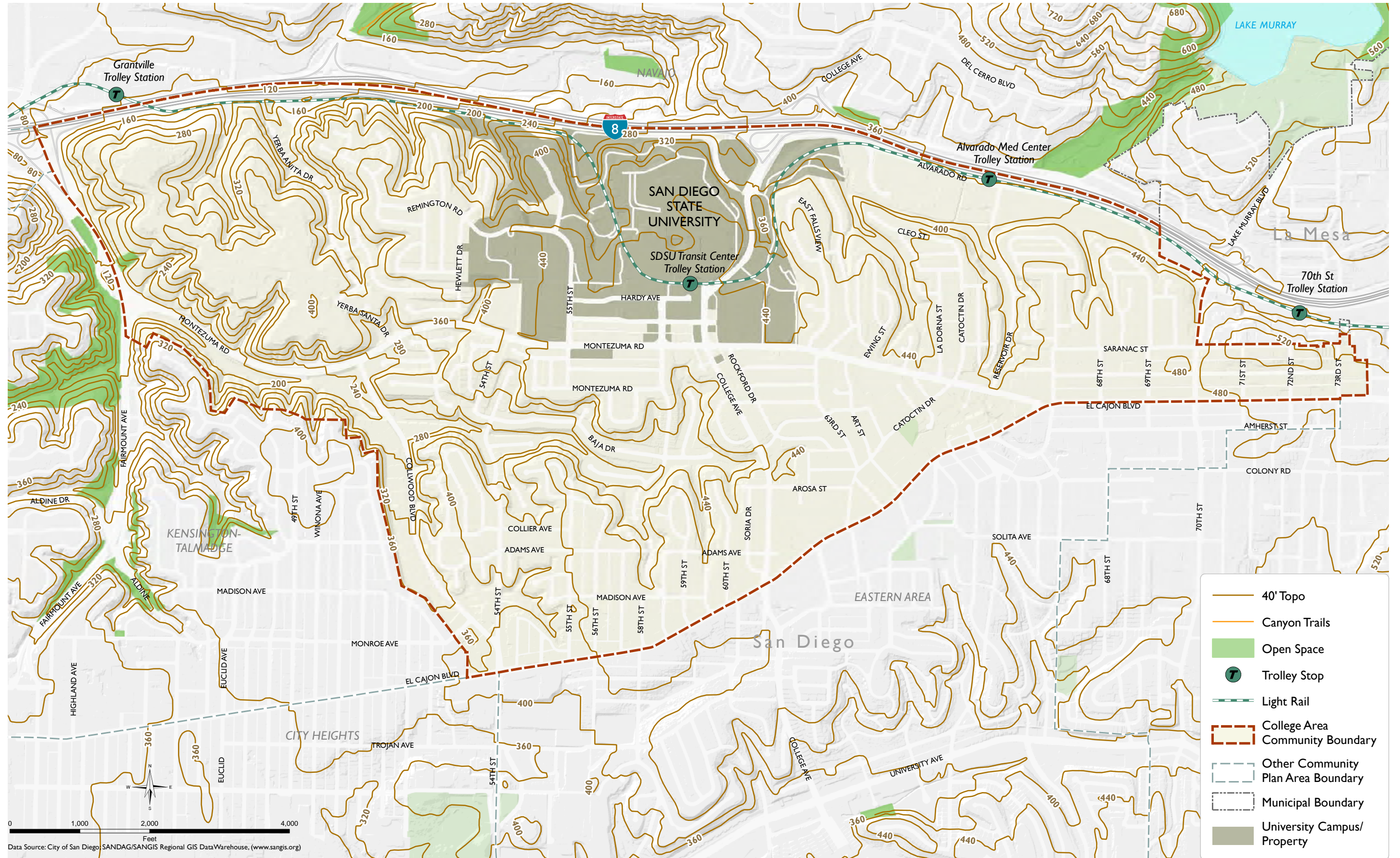
single family residential neighborhoods that surround it. Historically, commercial activity within the plan area is focused primarily along El Cajon Boulevard, which was retrofitted for the automobile, and still contains stretches with street-facing retail space, such as the intersection of El Cajon and Collwood boulevards.

The College Area community was largely un-built until the early 1930s. Higher density housing is clustered around SDSU and single family residential neighborhoods surround the campus. Commercial activity is located on auto-oriented shopping centers, mostly around El Cajon Boulevard.



View of the campus expansion in 1948, with additional development underway in the background. Photo credit: San Diego State University Library, University Archives, Photograph Collection

Figure 4-1 Topography and Natural Features



4.3 Development Patterns

Due to the topography changes of the bluffs and canyons, much of the College Area community consists of curvilinear streets that dead-end into cul-de-sacs or loops that stem from a few key corridors. These key corridors, which include Montezuma Road, El Cajon Boulevard, 70th Street, and College Avenue, act as the major community spines. There are a few places where a grid-like pattern appears, including along Madison Avenue, Rockford Drive, and the eastern portion of El Cajon Boulevard. The grid pattern generally spans around 600 feet by 300 feet in size, although varied in block size and orientation. Most of the plan area consists of single family lots that typically range between 5,000 to 15,000 square feet. Multifamily and commercial buildings typically have larger lot sizes and building footprints than single family households and are mostly located along the three key corridors. Multifamily and commercial lot sizes range significantly, from 4,000 square feet on the low end to 150,000 square feet on the high end, depending on land use and location. SDSU has a major presence within the plan area, and its pedestrian-oriented campus is made up of extensive blocks and expansive building footprints.

Figure 4-2 (page 40) shows building footprints and block patterns in the community, and **Figure 4-3** (page 41) takes a detailed look at six unique development patterns in the College Area. Following is a description of each development pattern:

Much of the College Area community consists of curvilinear streets that stem from the key corridors of Montezuma Road, El Cajon Boulevard, and College Avenue and dead-end in cul-de-sacs or loops. The three key corridors—Montezuma Road, El Cajon Boulevard, and College Avenue—act as the major community spines.

1. The University Blocks development pattern largely consists of the SDSU campus and its immediate environs, and is generalized by large building footprints and a centralized campus without many through streets for cars.
2. The Alvarado Hospital Medical Center development pattern is around the Alvarado Trolley Station and consists of large institutional buildings. Steep hills disconnect this area from the neighboring single family homes along the southern edges.
3. The El Cajon Boulevard development pattern shows the larger commercial building footprints that front El Cajon Boulevard with smaller, single family homes directly behind. The commercial buildings generally front along the street with parking lots either behind or adjacent to the main structure.
4. The Residential Curvilinear Streets development pattern shows how development reflects the topography changes of the bluffs and canyons. The buildings in this area are largely detached single family homes with small building footprints.
5. The Residential Canyons development pattern follows the same topographic conditions as Residential Curvilinear Streets except that the building footprints and lot sizes are larger, and the canyons take up more space.
6. The Residential Grid development pattern looks at the eastern portion of El Cajon Boulevard, which follows a grid-like pattern of streets. Here, some of the blocks contain alleys that bisect the blocks in an east to west direction. Larger commercial and multifamily building footprints with ample surface parking are located along El Cajon Boulevard, while the rest of this area consists of smaller single family homes. The large building and smaller structures along Saranac Street, between 68th Street and 69th Street, is a charter school which takes up entirety of the block.



Development Pattern #1: View of the walkable SDSU campus.



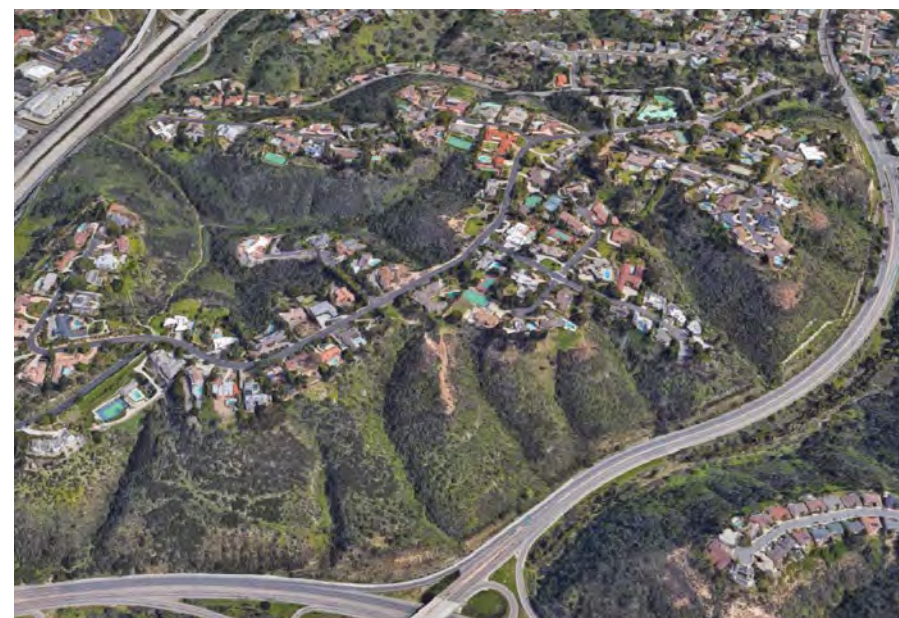
Development Pattern #2: View looking down Alvarado Road towards the trolley station and hospital (photo credit: Google Streetview).



Development Pattern #3: View looking down El Cajon Boulevard, one of the main retail corridors, which has large block and building sizes.



Development Pattern #4: The bluffs and canyons give these residential areas a unique development pattern (photo credit: Google Streetview).



Development Pattern #5: Aerial view of the residential canyons which are larger lots and more spread out than focus area #4 (photo credit: Google Maps).



Development Pattern #6: View of the residential street which follows a grid pattern. (photo credit: Google Streetview).

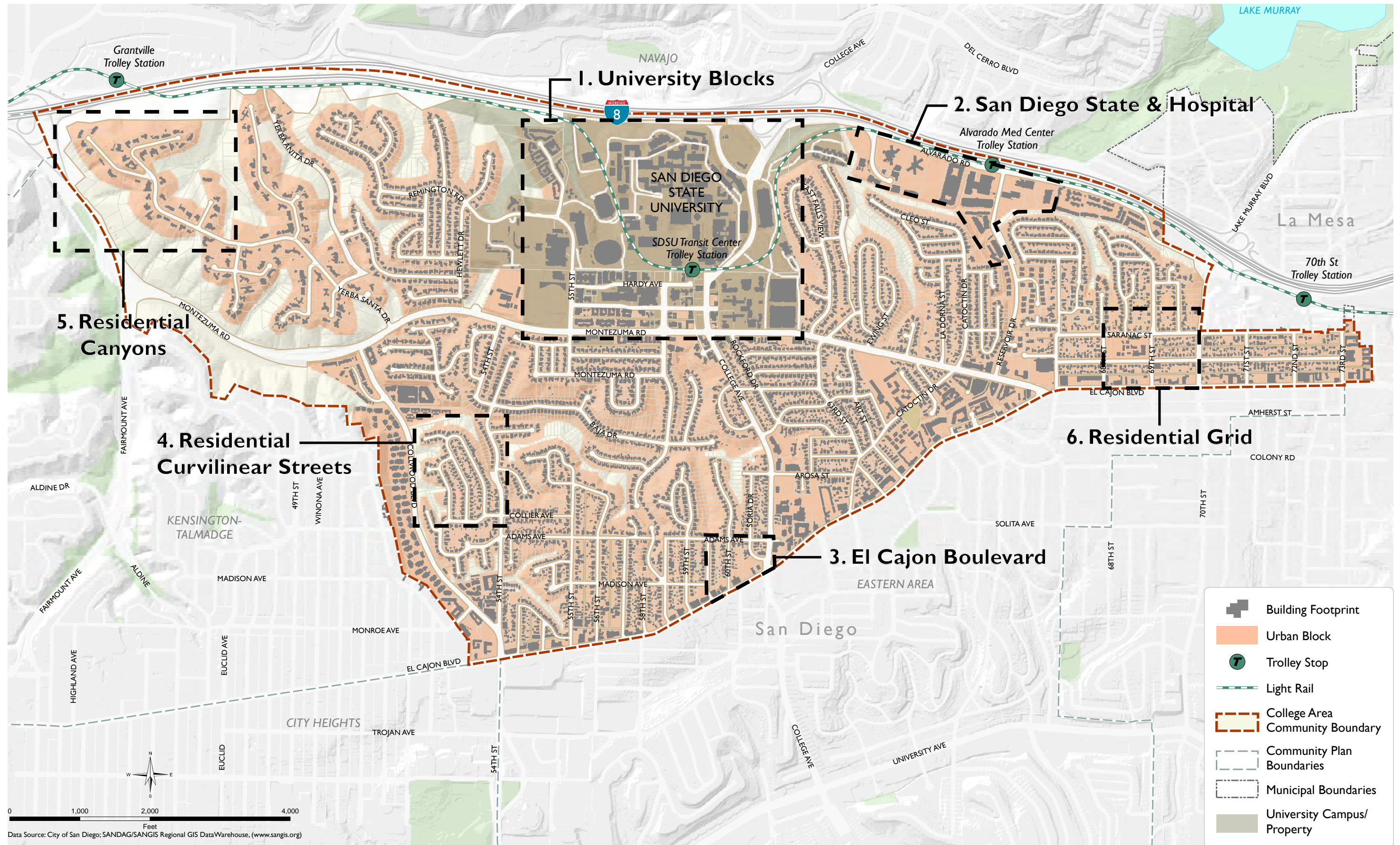
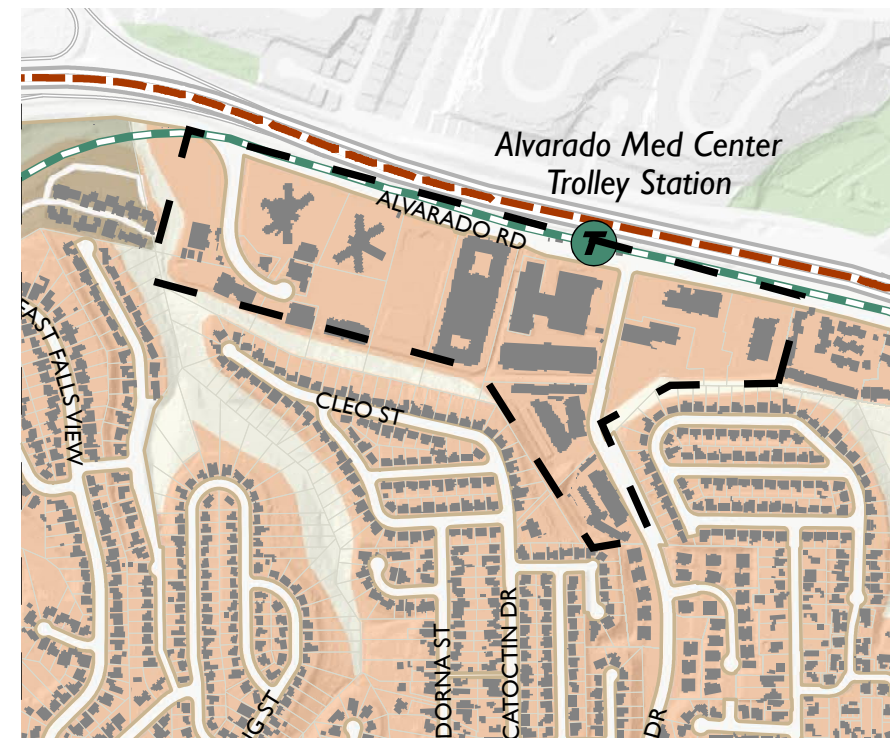


Figure 4-3 Block Pattern Focus Areas

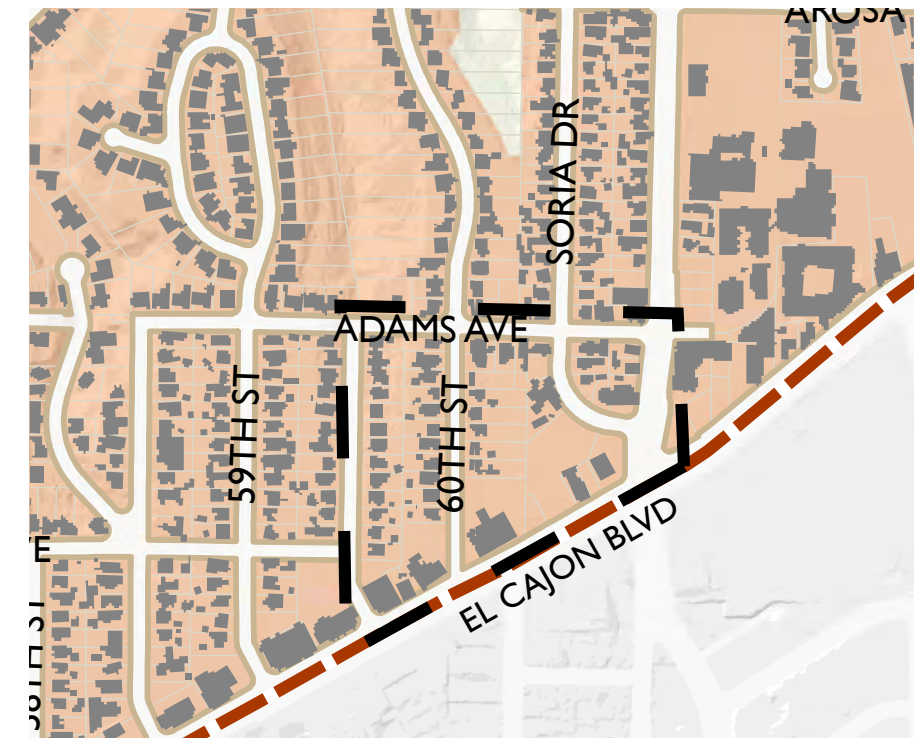
1. University Blocks



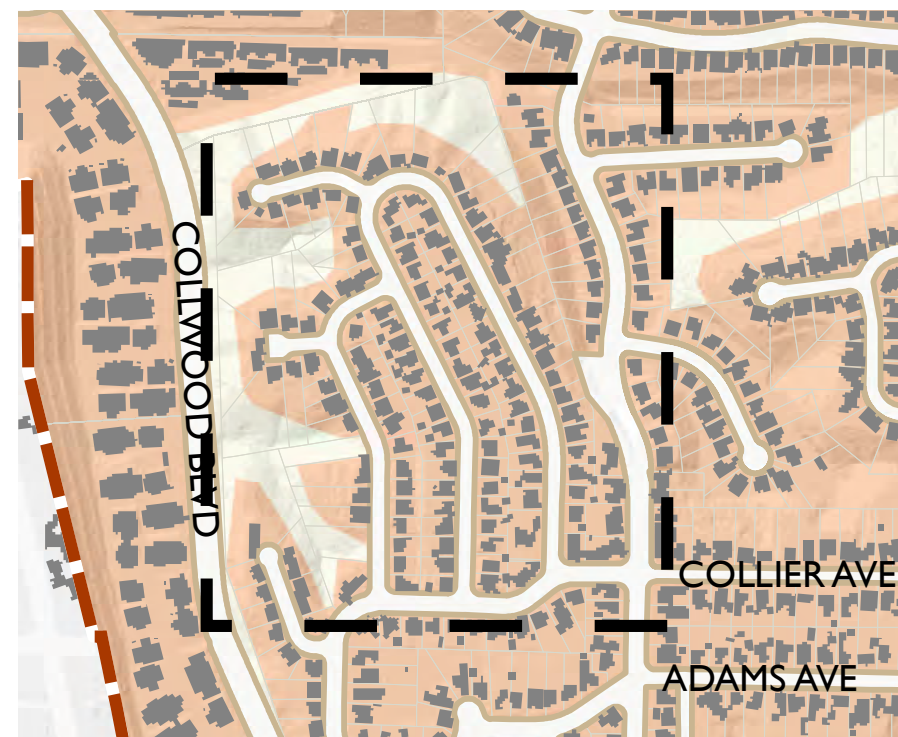
2. San Diego State & Hospital



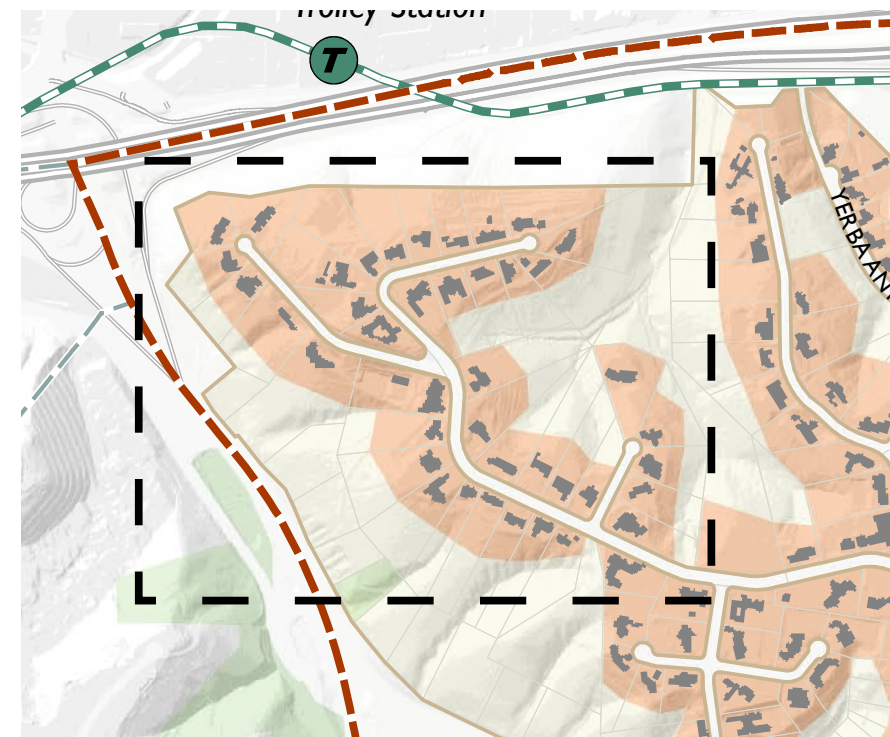
3. El Cajon Boulevard



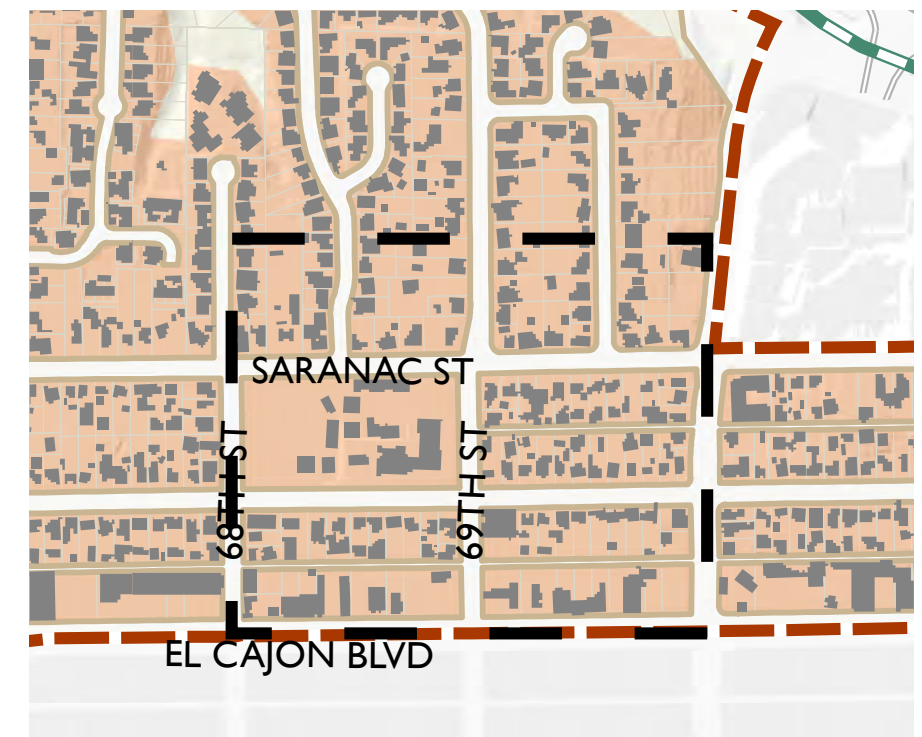
4. Residential Curvilinear Streets



5. Residential Canyons



5. Residential Grid



4.4 Residential Buildings

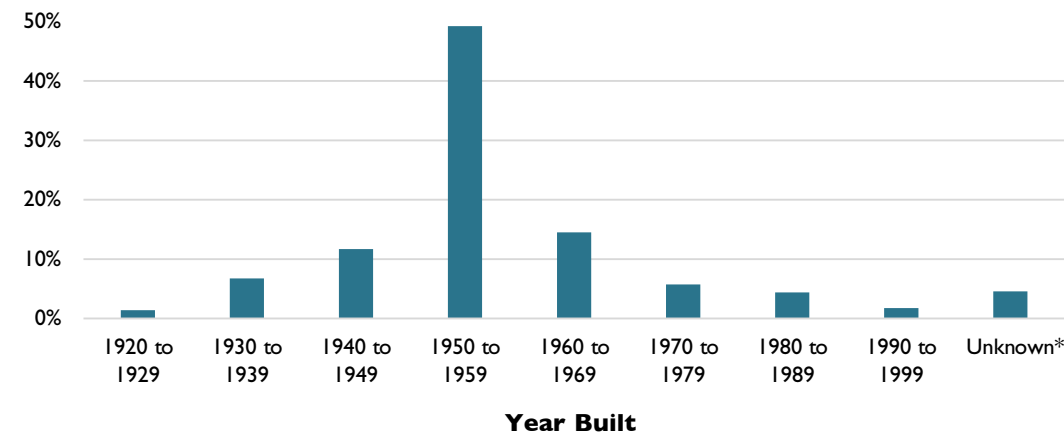
Residential buildings in the College Area community area are diverse in their design and layout. While most of the plan area consists of single family homes, there are pockets of multifamily and shared housing spread throughout. Single family houses range in styles, typically reflecting the time period in which the neighborhood developed: most are ranch-style or bungalows with a front-access garage facing the street. As shown in **Figure 4-4** and listed in **Chart 4-2**, at nearly 50%, the majority of the single family units have been built between 1950 and 1959, with an additional 14% being built between 1960 and 1969. There is a residential pocket of older houses prior to 1950 along El Cajon near the southern-edge of the College Area. It is important to note that when a property goes through significant reconstruction or rehab, then the construction date is updated which is why there are individual properties that have newer year built dates in these neighborhoods.

The majority of multifamily dwelling units are concentrated around the University, with some newer projects built along commercial corridors to help meet the demand for additional housing. There are several types of multifamily buildings in the community, including townhomes or attached single family homes, stacked flats, garden apartments, and podium buildings. Multifamily buildings range in height from two to five stories; student dorms reach up to nine stories tall. Apartment complexes typically provide common open space and amenities, such as a pool, gym, and/or community lounge.

Another housing phenomenon that is taking place is the presence of 'mini dorms' within single family residential areas, which are close to the university campus and rented out to SDSU students. Mini dorms are single family houses or additions that have been converted into multiple individual rooms that are rented out separately. The result of mini dorms include overcrowding in single family homes, lack of on-site parking resulting in excessive use of street parking, and increase in noise.

The majority of the College Area consists of single family units with pockets of multifamily and shared housing spread throughout. Nearly 50% of the existing residential buildings were built between 1950 and 1959.

Chart 4-2: Residential Building Age



Source: City of San Diego; SANDAG/SANGIS Regional GIS DataWarehouse (www.sangis.org)

*Data contains a two digit year and it is not clear for structures built post-2000 and those built early 1900s.



Architectural styles of single family homes vary throughout College Area.

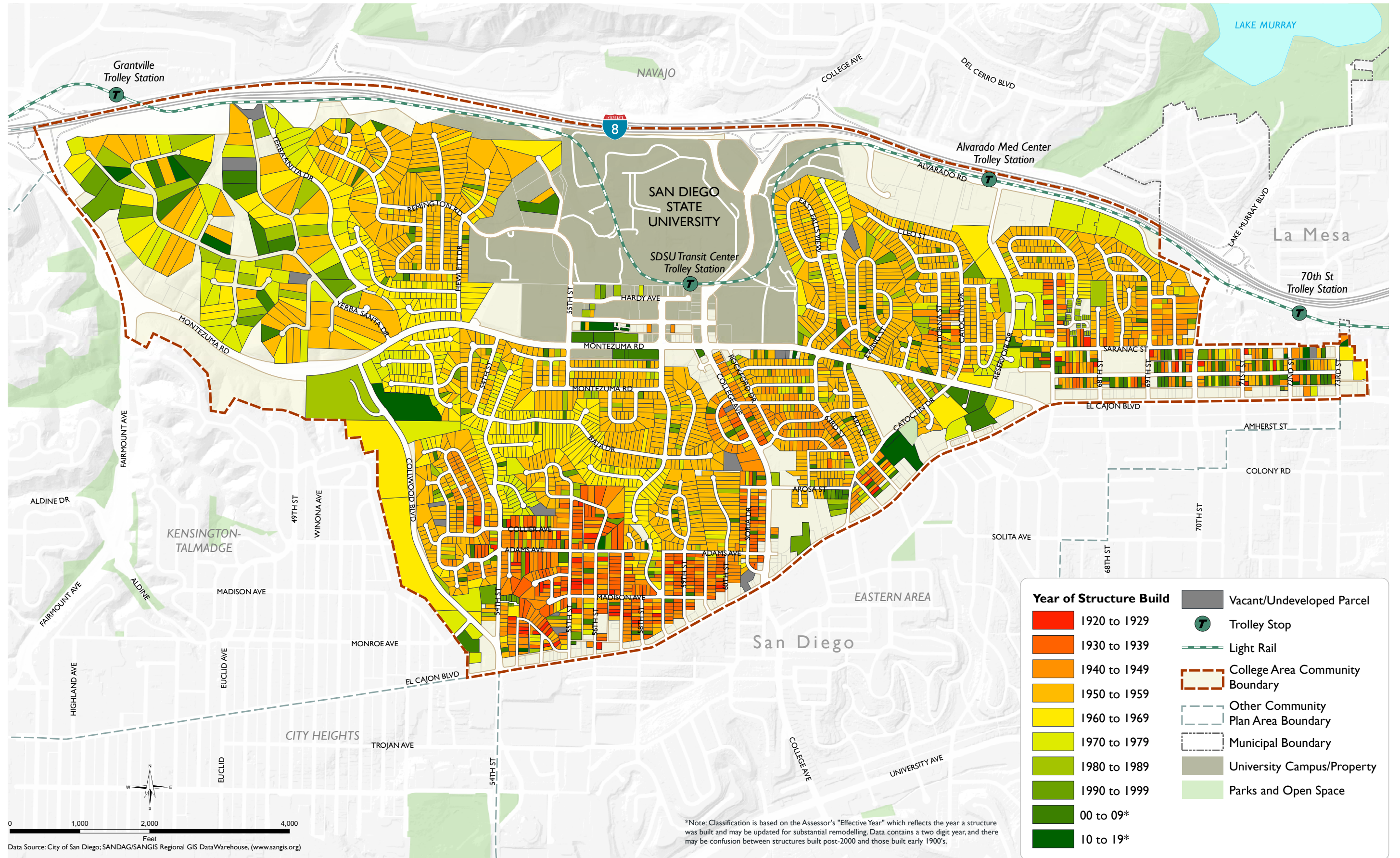


Single family bungalows with street-front garages are common.



Multifamily homes give residents a variety of housing choices, including these garden apartments.

Figure 4-4 Residential Building Age



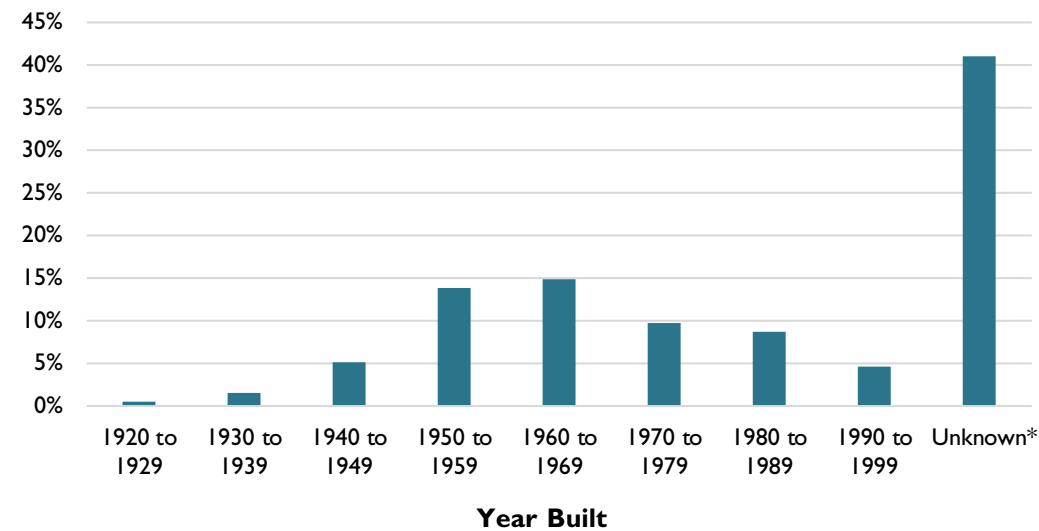
4.5 Non-Residential Buildings

Non-residential buildings are primarily located along El Cajon Boulevard and near the University, while the Alvarado Hospital Medical Center and other medical offices surround the Alvarado trolley station. As shown in **Figure 4-5** and summarized in **Chart 4-3**, the ages of non-residential buildings vary and were built relatively evenly over time, starting in the 1950s. It is important to note that when a property goes through significant reconstruction or rehab, then the construction date is updated which is why individual properties may have newer year built dates. Like residential buildings, commercial buildings within the plan area are made up of many styles and layouts, depending on construction date. There are three main types of commercial buildings located within the College Area community: strip commercial centers, small-scale standalones, and mixed use buildings. The majority (54%) of non-residential buildings within the planning area have been built prior to the 1990s when strip retail was prevalent.

Strip commercial centers are characterized by string of smaller businesses set back behind surface parking lots that front the street. The shopping center at Aragon Drive, and Ralphs supermarket at the corner of Montezuma Road and El Cajon Boulevard, are examples of strip commercial centers. Small-scale standalone buildings include a variety of restaurants, autobody shops, motels, and a myriad of other commercial uses. These buildings are characterized by having a storefront directly along the street with its own parking lot either behind or adjacent to the commercial building. The stretch of El Cajon Boulevard between 67th Street and 73rd Street is an example of small-scale standalone commercial buildings. The third commercial type—mixed use—is characterized by retail on the ground floor and residential units above. Mixed use buildings within the community include the South Campus Plaza North and South Towers located on the SDSU campus, the “Iconic at Alvarado” apartment complex located near the Alvarado Trolley Station, and the Mesa Commons development along El Cajon Boulevard, adjacent to Montezuma Park.

There are three main types of commercial buildings located within the College Area community: strip commercial centers, small-scale standalone, and mixed use buildings. The majority of the commercial buildings (54%) within the planning area have been built prior to the 1990s when strip retail was prevalent.

Chart 4-3: Non-Residential Building Age



Source: City of San Diego; SANDAG/SANGIS Regional GIS DataWarehouse (www.sangis.org)

*Data contains a two digit year and it is not clear for structures built post-2000 and those built early 1900s.



Small-scale standalone on El Cajon Boulevard.

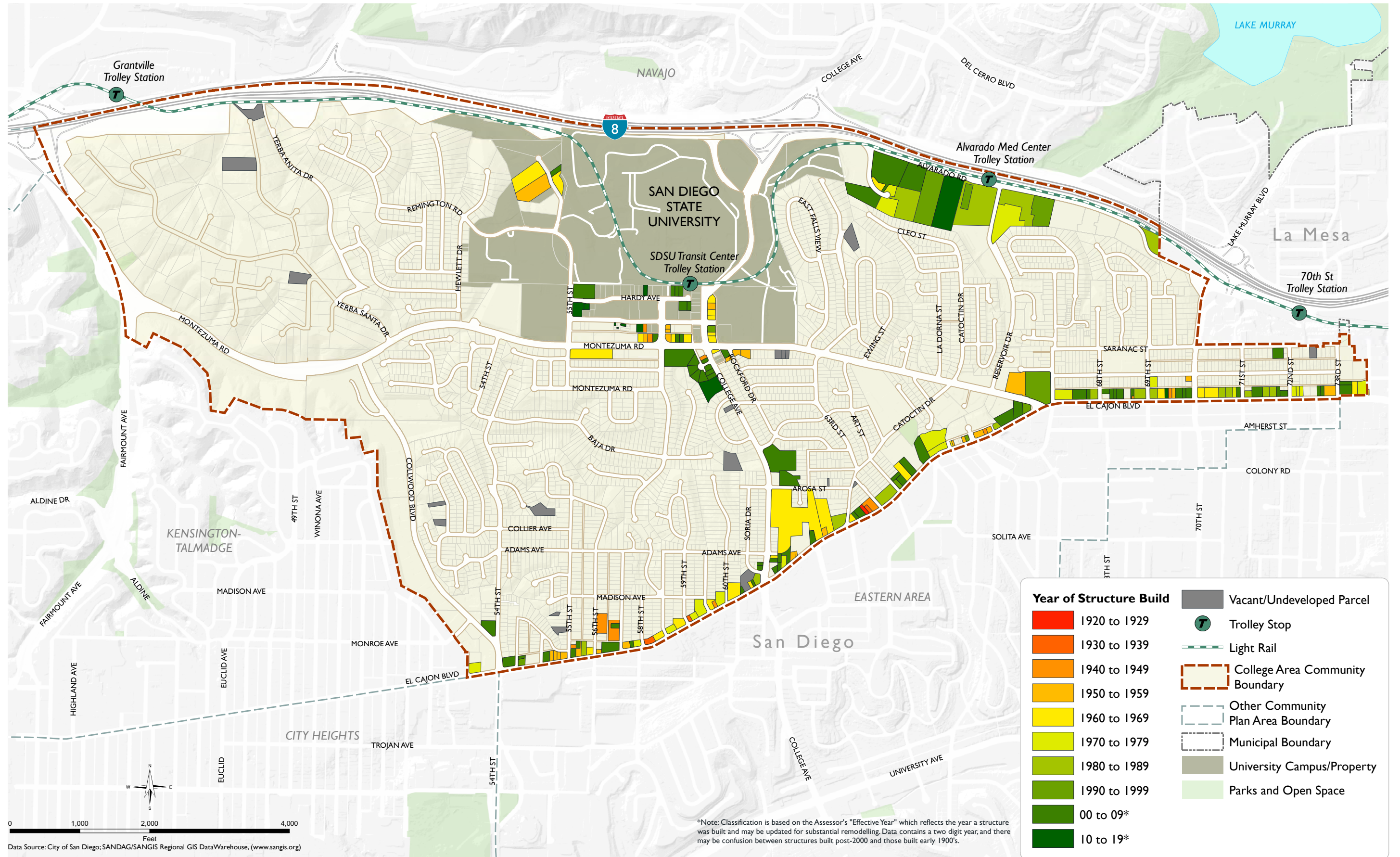


Strip commercial center on the corner of Montezuma Road.



Mixed use on the SDSU campus.

Figure 4-5 Non-Residential Building Age



4.6 Active Public Realm

The public realm encompasses all publicly visible and accessible areas within the planning area. This includes the space between buildings and streets, connections to transit, parks, and public spaces—all of which contribute to the community’s identity as a vibrant and welcoming place. Cities that have buildings with active ground floor uses in a walkable environment usually encourage foot traffic and provide a destination where people can take transit or park once and walk around to multiple stores and services. and/or use other transit modes to get around. This leads to an active and lively public realm in which people enjoy being outdoors and exploring their community, building connections with their neighbors and supporting local businesses. In short, this leads to more active, healthy, and socially-cohesive communities with greater commerce.

An active frontage, where the front façade of buildings orient and open towards the street, provides visual engagement between those on the street and those on the ground floors of buildings. Active ground floor uses include storefronts, residential and office spaces and amenities (e.g. gyms, conference rooms, community spaces, etc.), business types, and other uses that impact the streetscape. Businesses that have individual entrances fronting the sidewalk in which people are coming and going often, or that have storefront windows with merchandise available to look at from the sidewalk, or that feature a street-side outdoor dining area, are common commercial examples that contribute to an active ground floor. Commercial areas with parking lots in between the sidewalk and store entrances typically do not support an active ground floor and frequent curb cuts, street-front parking lots, narrow sidewalks without shade producing street trees, poor connectivity, and lack of pedestrian amenities contribute to an environment that is not conducive to walking. Overall, active street frontage within the College Area community could be improved, with the exception of the active frontages near SDSU. While much of the commercial areas along El Cajon Boulevard are designed to prioritize the automobile, there are stretches of commercial buildings that do face the street, such as the coffee shop and barber at El Cajon Boulevard and Aragon Drive, although this form is not consistent along the corridor.

Residential units can also have an active street frontage. Single family homes can be designed with porches, windows, and front doors that face the street instead of blank garage doors or tall opaque fences. The quality of active residential frontages within the plan area depends on the age built and architectural style, which typically reflects the time period when the structure was built. Many homes that were built in the 1950s and 60s typically had an “inward” focus, which meant few windows and a prominent

garage that takes up most of the façade facing the street, such as many of the homes along Baja Drive. Older houses, such as those along El Cerrito Drive, have entryways and windows facing the street and setback garages, all of which contribute to quality active residential frontage. For non-mixed use multifamily uses, buildings with active street frontage typically have ground floor units that open up towards the street with individual entrances, windows, stoops, greenery, and / or patios closer to the street. In general, most of the multifamily projects within the plan area have an “inward” focus with entrances facing surface parking lots or are limited in a few designated entrances, resulting in blank walls or poor lighting and landscaping facing the street.

Overall, active street frontage within the College Area community could be improved except for the active frontages near the University, which is very walkable. Portions of the commercial areas along El Cajon are designed for the automobile and are not as conducive to a walkable environment.



Street-side outdoor dining, greenery, and a storefront that opens onto the street contribute to an active ground floor at this restaurant near SDSU.

4.7 Community Form Summary

This section summarizes key information related to land use for the College Area presented in this chapter.

- The College Area community sits upon a network of steep hills, bluffs, and canyons which helps define the overall urban form.
- The College Area community was largely un-built until the early **1930s**. Higher density housing is clustered around SDSU, and single family residential neighborhoods surround the campus. Commercial activity is located on auto-oriented shopping centers, mostly around El Cajon Boulevard.
- Much of the College Area community consists of curvilinear streets that stem from the key corridors of Montezuma Road, El Cajon Boulevard, and College Avenue and dead-end in cul-de-sacs or loops. The three key corridors—**Montezuma Road, El Cajon Boulevard, and College Avenue**—act as the major community spines.
- The majority of the College Area consists of single family homes, with pockets of multifamily and shared housing spread throughout. Nearly **50%** of the existing residential buildings were built between **1950** and **1959**.
- There are three main types of commercial buildings located within the College Area community: strip commercial centers, small-scale standalones, and mixed use buildings. The majority of the commercial buildings (**54%**) within the planning area have been built prior to the **1990s** when strip retail was prevalent.
- Overall, active street frontage within the College Area community could be improved except for the active frontages near the University, which is very walkable. Portions of the commercial areas along El Cajon are designed for the automobile and are not as conducive to a walkable environment.



05

MOBILITY

- 5.1 Street and Freeway Needs
- 5.2 Transit Needs
- 5.3 Bicycle Needs
- 5.4 Pedestrian Needs
- 5.5 Transportation to Work



5.1 The Transportation System

The transportation system plays a major role in the quality of life of community residents, students, and employees. The system functions by moving people and goods from one point to their destination. Providing multiple options for people to reach their destination is key to a successful transportation system. It is important to provide safe, convenient, and comfortable travel options for people of all ages and abilities, whether they are travelling as drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists, or public transportation riders.

Complete Streets help create livable communities for everyone, including children, people with disabilities, adults, and the elderly. They are streets that are planned and designed to enable safe access for people of all ages and abilities and help to create a balanced transportation system for all modes of travel. When all modes of travel are accounted for in a transportation system, it creates a complete network with multiple options for people to travel to school, shops, work, and places to enjoy everyday activities and recreate.



This graphic from SANDAG's San Diego Forward: The Regional Plan showcases a multi-modal, flexible transportation system in which people have multiple options to travel. (photo credit: SANDAG)

5.2 Vehicular Needs

This section presents vehicular needs synthesized from the observations and analysis of the existing conditions report. The sections which follow summarize the needs of the other core transportation modes (transit, bicycling and walking) which are also part of a Complete Streets framework.

Streets and freeways comprise the framework of the transportation system and play a major role in shaping the urban form and quality of life within the community. When the street system is unsafe or congested, it impedes mobility options and has a negative impact on economic activity and community quality of life. The roadways affected by congestion during peak periods (measured by vehicular travel speeds observed at less than half of the posted speed limit) and intersections with the most traffic collisions between 2014 and 2018 are shown in **Figure 5-1**.

FREEWAYS

The College Area community is bounded to the north by Interstate 8, with access to the freeway at three interchanges (from west to east): Fairmount Avenue, College Avenue, and 70th Street. Interstate 8 has five lanes in each direction from the western extents of the community at Fairmount Avenue, and reduces to four lanes in each direction as it progresses to the east of the community at 70th Street. During the morning peak commute period, drivers experience congestion along Interstate 8 in the westbound direction; to a lesser extent, drivers experience congestion along Interstate 8 in the eastbound direction during the evening commute peak period.

TRAFFIC VOLUMES AND VEHICULAR SPEEDS

There are several major arterial corridors in the community: Fairmount Avenue / Montezuma Road, College Avenue, El Cajon Boulevard, and 70th Street. College Avenue between Interstate 8 and Montezuma Road experiences congestion during Midday and PM peak periods. This congestion is primarily caused by the heavy traffic volumes, closely spaced signalized intersections (450 feet between Canyon Crest Avenue and Interstate 8 westbound ramps), and unbalanced lane utilization attributed to the interchange configuration (i.e. both eastbound and westbound on-ramps are on the east side).

The heaviest volumes are carried by Fairmount Avenue, north of Montezuma Road (~87,000 daily trips). This section of roadway facilitates heavy demand for access to the Interstate 8 freeway from most of the College Area as well as neighboring Mid-City communities. Fairmount Avenue north of

With 87,000 daily trips, Fairmount Avenue, north of Montezuma Road, carries the heaviest traffic volume in the Plan College Area.

Montezuma Road, and Montezuma Road west of SDSU, experience slow travel speeds during the morning peak period due to the heavy demand for access to Interstate 8 and the freeway's congested conditions spilling over onto those roadways.

70th Street carries between 22,000 and 30,000 daily trips between Interstate 8 and El Cajon Boulevard, and experiences congestion consistent with peak freeway directionality during the morning and evening commute periods. El Cajon Boulevard carries 18,000 to 25,000 daily trips along the southern boundary of College Area and experiences minimal congestion at key intersections, such as College Avenue.

SAFETY

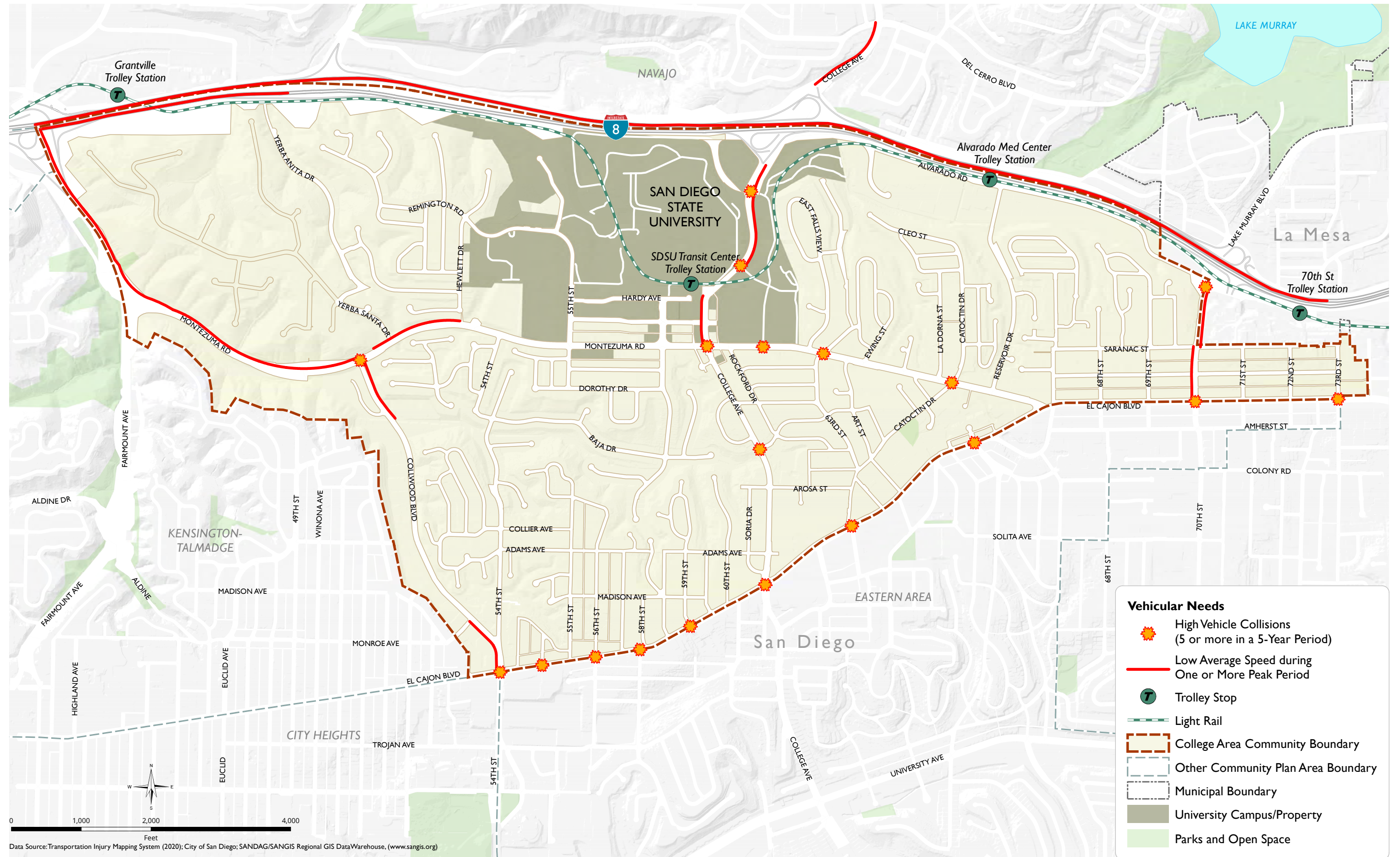
The City of San Diego is implementing a Safe Systems approach to help achieve the Vision Zero initiative. Both Vision Zero and Safe Systems look to evaluate, plan, and design a transportation system which eliminates fatalities and severe injuries despite human mistakes. This approach applies to each of the core transportation modes.

Within the College Area, there were approximately 420 vehicular-only collisions resulting in injury occurring over a five-year period between 2014 and 2018. The intersections with the most vehicular collisions were concentrated along the Montezuma Road, College Avenue and El Cajon Boulevard corridors.

The following intersection locations experienced eight or more vehicular collision resulting in injury during the 5-year study period:

- Collwood Boulevard and Montezuma Road (12)
- 54th Street and El Cajon Boulevard (11)
- 56th Street and El Cajon Boulevard (10)
- College Avenue and Montezuma Road (10)
- College Avenue and Campus Drive (10)
- Dayton Street and El Cajon Boulevard (8)
- Catoctin Drive and Montezuma Road (8)

Figure 5-1 Vehicular Needs



5.3 Transit Needs

The City of Villages growth strategy supports better utilization of the region’s transit system by directing the development of urban villages, employment centers, and other higher intensity land uses in areas that can be well served by transit. This will allow more people to live and work within walking distance of transit.

The College Area community is served by the San Diego Trolley Green Line, Rapid and local bus routes. SDSU Transit Center is the main hub in the community, and all routes except for MTS route 1 connect to the transit center. Four of the eight bus routes serving the College Area operate at headways of fifteen minutes or less during peak periods. Although there are some low density areas just beyond a quarter mile from a bus stop, most of the community’s population lives within a quarter mile of a bus stop. Destinations and places reached by the College Area-serving bus routes include Downtown, Fashion Valley, East San Diego, Southeastern San Diego / Encanto, La Mesa, National City, and Spring Valley.

MTS routes 11, 936, and 955 currently operate through the community and terminate at the SDSU Transit Center. These routes are planned to be upgraded to a Rapid service in the future, which will facilitate faster, longer distance service by potentially incorporating transit priority treatments along portions of alignments, and other measures which may reduce dwell times. Slow traffic speeds along Montezuma Road (west of SDSU) during peak periods affects transit performance and reliability within the community. In addition, Pedestrian safety is a major issue which impacts transit users. Many of the pedestrian-injury collisions within the College Area occurred near the SDSU campus, where many transit routes converge. These transit needs are illustrated in **Figure 5-2**.

ON-TIME PERFORMANCE

College Avenue and Montezuma Road, near the approaches to SDSU Transit Center, experience the busiest transit activity in the community: there are seven bus routes utilizing a portion of those roadways as part of their alignment to and from the transit center. College Avenue between Paseo Lindo and Montezuma Road is congested during the midday and evening peak periods, and Montezuma Road experiences traffic congestion and slower travel speeds westbound during the morning peak period, which can negatively impact the reliability of bus services. With no priority treatments for buses within the community, buses are frequently stuck in the same congestion as private vehicles. Implementation of transit priority measures may be desired along some portions of roadway in the vicinity of SDSU.

SAFETY

Nearly all transit users access transit stops by walking, although some users also access transit by bicycling. Frequent occurrences of pedestrian and bicycle collisions near a transit stop may indicate potential safety risk for transit users. The most pedestrian and bicycling collisions near a transit stop occurred at 54th Street and El Cajon Boulevard, where 10 collisions occurred within 500 feet of the bus stops at that intersection over the five-year study period between 2014 and 2018. Bus stops near the intersection of College Avenue and El Cajon Boulevard also experience higher pedestrian and bicycle collisions when compared to collisions throughout the entire community.

With no dedicated transit priority treatments for buses anywhere in the community, buses are frequently stuck in the same congestion as private vehicles.

The RTP calls for upgrades to several existing College Area-serving local bus routes (Routes 11, 936 and 955) to Rapid-branded service by 2035.



Nearly all transit users access transit stops by walking or bicycling.

Many pedestrian and bicycling collisions have also occurred along College Avenue and Montezuma Road near SDSU. Transit users accessing the SDSU Transit Center from other directions have options to avoid College Avenue and Montezuma Road, including by way of parallel streets Campanile Drive and Hardy Avenue (from the south and west), and the Aztec Walk (from the west and east), which includes a pedestrian and bicycle grade separated crossing over College Avenue near the transit center.

PLANNED TRANSIT IMPROVEMENTS

SANDAG’s San Diego Forward: The Regional Plan and 2019 Federal Regional Transportation Plan Update (RTP) identifies upgrades to several existing transit services in and around the College Area community.

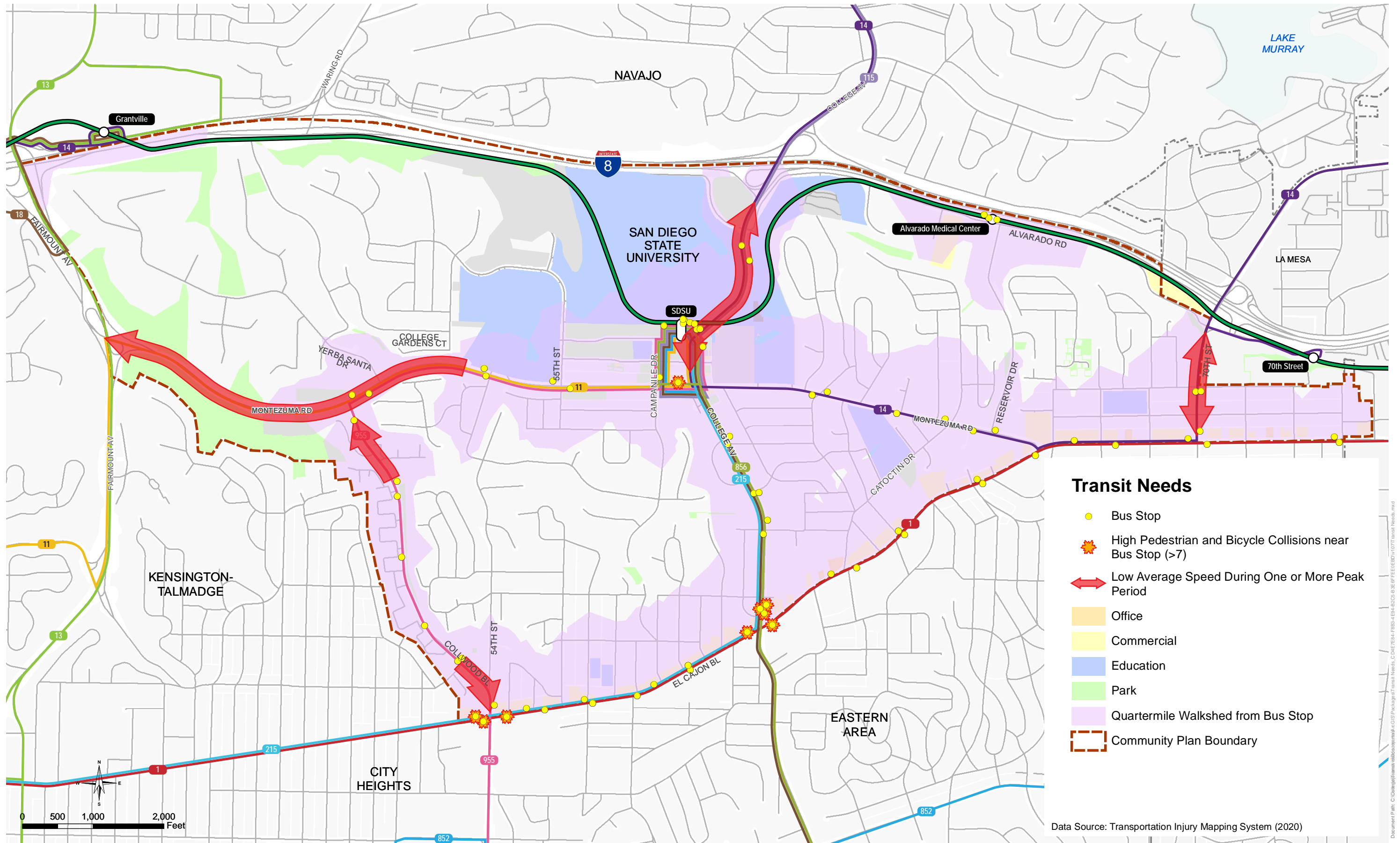
The current RTP plans for the following transit service improvements:

- Upgrade of bus routes 11, 936 and 955 to rapid transit service by the year 2035. Rapid transit service may include faster, longer distance service, improved all-day frequencies, transit priority measures and other potential measures which may reduce dwell time.
- Conversion of the existing Rapid 215 alignment to light rail service (first phase to Mid-City planned opening in 2050).
- Improved frequencies for the San Diego Trolley Green Line.

SANDAG is currently in the process of developing and identifying improvements for the 2050 Regional Transportation Plan, which will feature the agency’s 5 Big Moves transportation strategy. The strategy aims to design the region’s future transportation system around high-speed transit, multimodal corridors, mobility hubs, first and last mile mobility options, and transportation systems technology. Some of the transit improvements that had been previously identified in the 2019 RTP may not be carried forward in this latest update of the Regional Transportation Plan.



Figure 5-2 Transit Needs



5.4 Bicycle Needs

Bicycle infrastructure should provide for the safety and comfort of its users, and the bicycle network should be very well connected across a community. Safety and comfort are paramount considerations, since by nature, active travelers are more exposed than those inside a vehicle. Unsafe or uncomfortable conditions discourage the decision to make a trip by bike. Network connectivity is also paramount, since safe, comfortable infrastructure will not be useful if destinations cannot be reached.

Bicycle needs are found throughout the College Area. Needs are identified by locations with a high number of bicycle collisions, the amount of stress likely to be experienced by a bicyclist, lack of existing bicycle facilities, and high cycling demand.

EXISTING BICYCLE FACILITIES

Figure 5-3 shows existing and planned facilities (based on the City's Bike Master Plan) in the College Area. There are three general classifications of bicycle facilities within the community totaling 10.7 miles, including:

Class I – Bike Path (also termed shared-use or multi-use paths): Bike paths are paved right-of-way for exclusive use by bicyclists, pedestrians, and those using non-motorized modes of travel. They are physically separated from vehicular traffic and can be constructed in roadway right-of-way or exclusive right-of-way.

There are 10.7 miles of bicycle facilities in the Plan College Area.



The Class I Aztec Walk path is exclusive to bicyclists and micro-mobility users.

There are two Class I bike paths totaling 0.8 miles within the College Area, both paths are located within the SDSU campus: one path (Aztec Walk) runs west to east and features a bridge overpass of College Avenue; the other path runs north-south extending from Campanile Drive north of Hardy Avenue. The paths are exclusive to bicyclists and other micro-mobility users; however, they are comprised within a section of a wider campus pedestrian promenade right of way, and pedestrians have exclusive use of the rest of the promenade width. These are the only two sections of the SDSU campus's promenade system where wheeled mobility is allowed to operate.

There are two Class I bike paths within the College Area totaling 0.8 miles, both paths are adjacent to walkways within the internal circulation system of the SDSU campus.

At the periphery of the western community boundary is a paved bike path providing northbound cyclists along Fairmount Avenue a grade separated facility over Interstate 8 freeway ramps, terminating at the intersection of Camino Del Rio North and Fairmount Avenue. The bike path physically separates bicyclists from vehicular traffic, eliminating conflicts between the two user groups.

Class II – Bike Lane: Bike lanes are defined by pavement striping and signage used to allocate a portion of a roadway for exclusive or preferential bicycle travel. Bike lanes are one-way facilities on either side of a roadway.



The addition of parked cars, safe-hit posts, transit islands or other physical barriers would upgrade this Class II bike lane to a Class IV, or separated bike lane.

The following sections of bike lanes traverse the study area (with their origin or destination area noted, if it is outside the College Area). They include:

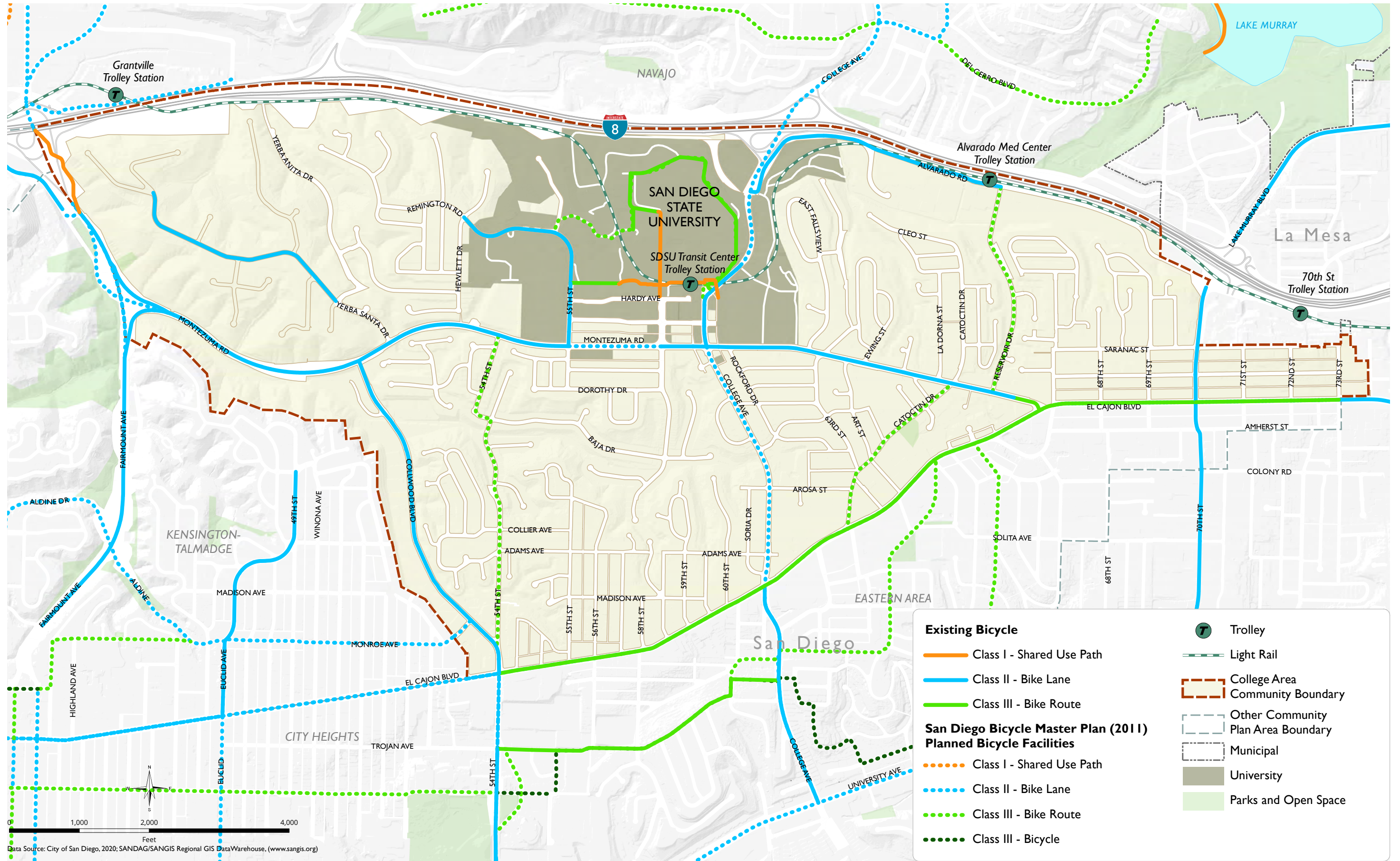
- Yerba Santa Drive from Palo Verde Trail to Mesquite Road
- Remington Rd/55th Street from Hewlett Drive to Montezuma Road
- Alvarado Road from College Avenue to Reservoir Drive
- Montezuma Road from Camino Del Rio South to 55th Street
- Montezuma Road from Campanile Drive to Reservoir Drive
- Fairmount Avenue from Montezuma Road to Burnham Place (Kensington-Talmadge)
- Collwood Way from Montezuma Road to El Cajon Boulevard
- College Avenue from Zura Way to Montezuma Road
- 70th Street from Alvarado Road to University Avenue (La Mesa)

Class III – Bike Route: Bike routes provide shared use with motor vehicle traffic within the same travel lane and are frequently marked with a shared-lane marking. Designated by signs, bike routes provide continuity to other bike facilities or designate preferred routes through corridors with high demand.



This Class III bike lane is denoted by a share-lane sign.

Figure 5-3 Existing and Planned Bicycle Facilities



There are a few sections of bike routes within the College Area, which include:

- Scripps Trail from 300ft South of Hilltop Way to Avenue of Arts
- Avenue of Arts from Scripps Trail to Aztec Circle Drive
- Aztec Circle Drive from Avenue of Arts to College Avenue
- Aztec Walk from 55th Street to Aztec Bowl
- Montezuma Road from Reservoir Drive to El Cajon Boulevard
- El Cajon Boulevard from Collwood Boulevard to 73rd Street

BICYCLE SAFETY

Within the College Area there were an estimated 50 bicycle-involved collisions resulting in injury occurring over a five-year period between 2014 and 2018. There were two intersection locations with two or more bicycling collision resulting in injury:

- 54th Street and El Cajon Boulevard (4)
- College Avenue and Montezuma Road (2)

All of the major corridors within the College Area are LTS 3 or LTS 4 in their entirety through the community, including Montezuma Road, College Avenue, Collwood Boulevard, and El Cajon Boulevard.

Between 2014 and 2018, there were 50 bicycling-involved collisions in the College Area, with the most occurring at 54th Street and El Cajon Boulevard.

BICYCLE LEVEL OF TRAFFIC STRESS

Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress (LTS) classifies the street network according to the estimated level of stress it causes cyclists. The measure takes into consideration a cyclist's physical separation from vehicular traffic, posted speed limits and number of travel lanes along a roadway, in addition to factors which may be present at intersection approaches such as right-turn only lanes and uncontrolled crossings. LTS scores range from 1 (lowest stress) to 4 (highest stress) and correspond to roadway conditions that different cycling demographics would find suitable for riding based on stress tolerance. LTS 2 or lower is considered suitable for most user groups.

All of the major corridors within the College Area are LTS 3 or LTS 4 in their entirety through the community, including Montezuma Road, College Avenue, Collwood Boulevard, and El Cajon Boulevard. The majority of the low stress roadways within the community are discontinuous residential streets. Therefore, there are currently no low-stress routes that span the community in either direction (North/South or East/West).

BICYCLE DEMAND/PRIORITY

Bicycle Priority Areas are determined using the City of San Diego's Bicycle Priority Model. The model considers demand-based factors: inter-community demand, explained by the presence or proximity and centrality to major activity centers such as smart growth areas and employment centers; and intra-community demand, based on concentrations of land uses and varieties of population. The model also accounts for bicycle detractors based on collision history, traffic volumes, posted speeds, travel lanes, and slope, which are combined with demand to determine priority.

Based on the Bicycle Priority Model, El Cajon Boulevard, Montezuma Road and College Avenue have higher bicycle demand and priority characteristics within the community.

The bicycle needs described previously are shown in **Figure 5-4**.

Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress (LTS)

Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress (LTS) classifies the street network according to the estimated level of stress it causes cyclists. This measure is calculated based on factors such as speed limits, distance between the cyclist and vehicles, and intersection design. There are four levels of traffic stress, classified below:

- **LTS 1:** Comfortable for all ages and abilities. Bicyclists are either physically separated from traffic, or interact with only occasional, slow-moving motor vehicles. Bicyclists are not in danger of having car doors opened onto them, and intersections are easy to approach and cross.
- **LTS 2:** Comfortable for most adults. Bicyclists are in a dedicated bike lane either physically separated from traffic or next to a well-defined stream with ample distance between the bike and motor lanes. Crossings are unambiguous and comfortable for most adults.
- **LTS 3:** Comfortable for confident bicyclists. Bicyclists have either an exclusive lane next to moderate speed traffic, or share the road with lower speed traffic. Crossings are longer or higher speed than LTS 2, but are still considered safe by most adult pedestrians.
- **LTS 4:** Comfortable only for experienced bicyclists. Roadways that have no defined bicycle lanes and moderate to high speed traffic, or a dedicated lane next to high speed traffic. Crossings are challenging and involve multiple lanes of traffic at higher speeds and volumes where gaps may be infrequent and motorists may not readily yield.



Figure 5-4 Bicycle Needs



5.5 Pedestrian Needs

The pedestrian environment affects an entire community, whether walking to transit, a store, school, or simply walking from a parked car to a building. Most people prefer walking in places where there are sidewalks shaded with trees, lighting, interesting buildings or scenery to look at, other people outside, quality neighborhood destinations, and a feeling of safety. Pedestrian improvements in areas with land uses that promote pedestrian activities can help to increase walking as a means of transportation and recreation. Land use and street design recommendations that benefit pedestrians also contribute to the overall quality, vitality, and sense of community of neighborhoods.

Pedestrian needs identified in the study area include locations with high pedestrian injury collisions, sidewalk connectivity issues, high existing pedestrian activity, and high pedestrian priority, as reported by the updated City of San Diego's Pedestrian Priority Model. These needs are depicted in **Figure 5-5**.



Street trees that provide shade create a pleasant and healthy pedestrian experience.

PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

Within the College Area there were approximately 60 pedestrian-involved collisions resulting in injury occurring over the five-year study period (between 2014 and 2018). There were five intersection locations with three or more vehicular collisions resulting in injury:

- College Avenue and El Cajon Boulevard (6)
- College Avenue and Montezuma Road (4)
- 55th Street and Montezuma Road (3)
- Reservoir Drive and Montezuma Road (3)
- 70th Street and El Cajon Boulevard (3)

Between 2014 and 2018, there were 59 pedestrian-involved collisions in the College Area, with the most occurring at College Avenue and El Cajon Boulevard.



Unambiguous crossings and stoplights are important for pedestrian safety, especially on streets with high traffic volumes.

SIDEWALK CONNECTIVITY

Connectivity is an important feature to consider for increasing walking activity levels across a community. A disconnected pedestrian network discourages active trip-making. Furthermore, a discontinuous network with low-quality or unsafe segments may cause a potential pedestrian traveler to choose driving instead of walking. Understanding barriers to connectivity, such as low-quality or missing sidewalk, is important for guiding long range planning recommendations.

Sidewalk gaps occur along connections to adjacent communities, such as along College Avenue between Interstate 8 and Aztec Circle Drive (near the Navajo community) and along Montezuma Road between Fairmount Avenue and 54th Street (near the Kensington-Talmadge community). In addition to the lack of sidewalks, there are topographical and freeway barriers which make these corridors impractical pedestrian inter-community connections.

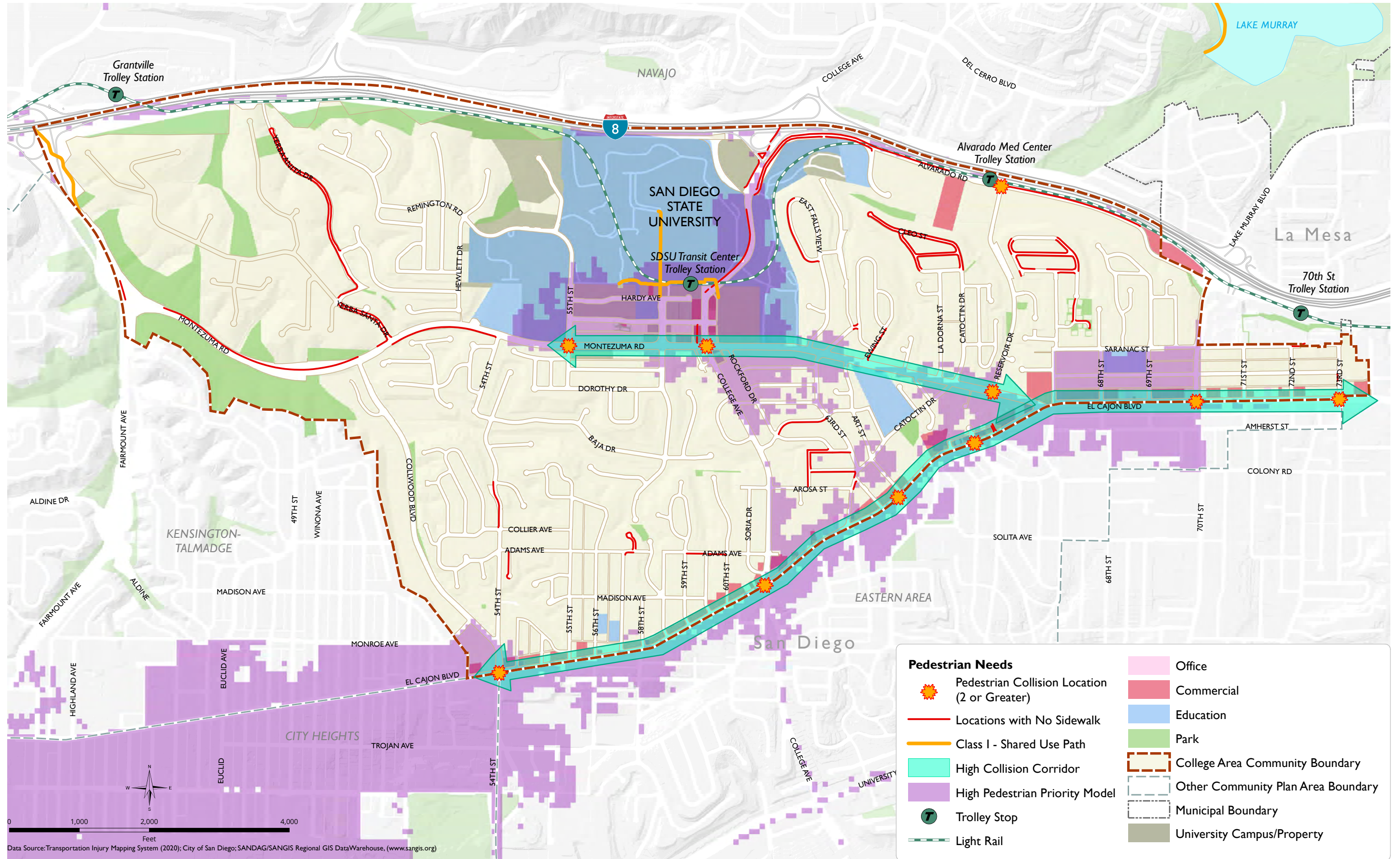
Portions of sidewalk are missing along both sides of Alvarado Road west of the Alvarado Trolley Station. A larger stretch of sidewalk is missing on the north side of Alvarado Road, where no fronting uses exist except for the trolley station. Access to the trolley station is maintained with an 850' segment of sidewalk on the north side of Alvarado Road between crossing locations at Alvarado Medical Center Driveway and Reservoir Drive.

PEDESTRIAN PRIORITY MODEL

Pedestrian Priority Areas are determined using the City of San Diego's Pedestrian Priority Model. The model considers pedestrian-attracting land uses, population and demographic concentrations, and roadway environment characteristics. The model uses these factors to determine the areas where pedestrian demand is likely to be high and improvements may be most beneficial. Portions of the College Area near the SDSU campus and along the El Cajon Boulevard corridor are among the highest pedestrian priority areas of the City. Residential parts of the community to the west of campus rank in lower pedestrian priority.

There are gaps in sidewalk connectivity at College Avenue between I-8 and Aztec Circle Drive; Alvarado Road; and Montezuma Road between Fairmount Avenue and 54th Street.

Figure 5-5 Pedestrian Needs



5.6 Transportation to Work

Based on the US Census 2018 American Community Survey five-year estimates, nearly 73% of the workers living in the College Area commute to work by vehicle, while 6.2% took public transportation, 9.3% percent walked and 1.2% bicycled. The College Area's high walking mode share, which is three-times the rate of the City's, is a product of SDSU's presence. Many residents of the community are students, who are also employed on the campus. As shown in **Figure 5-6**, annual household transportation spending in College Area varies between \$6,000 and \$12,000 by census tract but is generally lower than the \$10,495 citywide average household transportation annual spending. Lower than average transportation spending is consistent with the community's profile of having higher than citywide average pedestrian, bicycle, and transit mode shares.

The average commute length in minutes for a worker residing in College Area is about 25.7 minutes. Approximately 8.5% of College Area residents have a commute of 10 minutes or less. The average vehicles per household within College Area is 1.87, comparable to the citywide 1.80 average vehicles per household. The average household size in College Area is 1.86 persons, almost one person per household fewer than the City (2.77 persons). 8.9% of households in College Area do not own a vehicle, which is higher than the citywide percentage of households with no vehicles (6.5%).

8.9% of households in the Plan College Area do not own a vehicle, which is higher than the citywide percentage (6.5%) of households with no vehicles.

Chart 5-1: Commute Mode Share Comparison

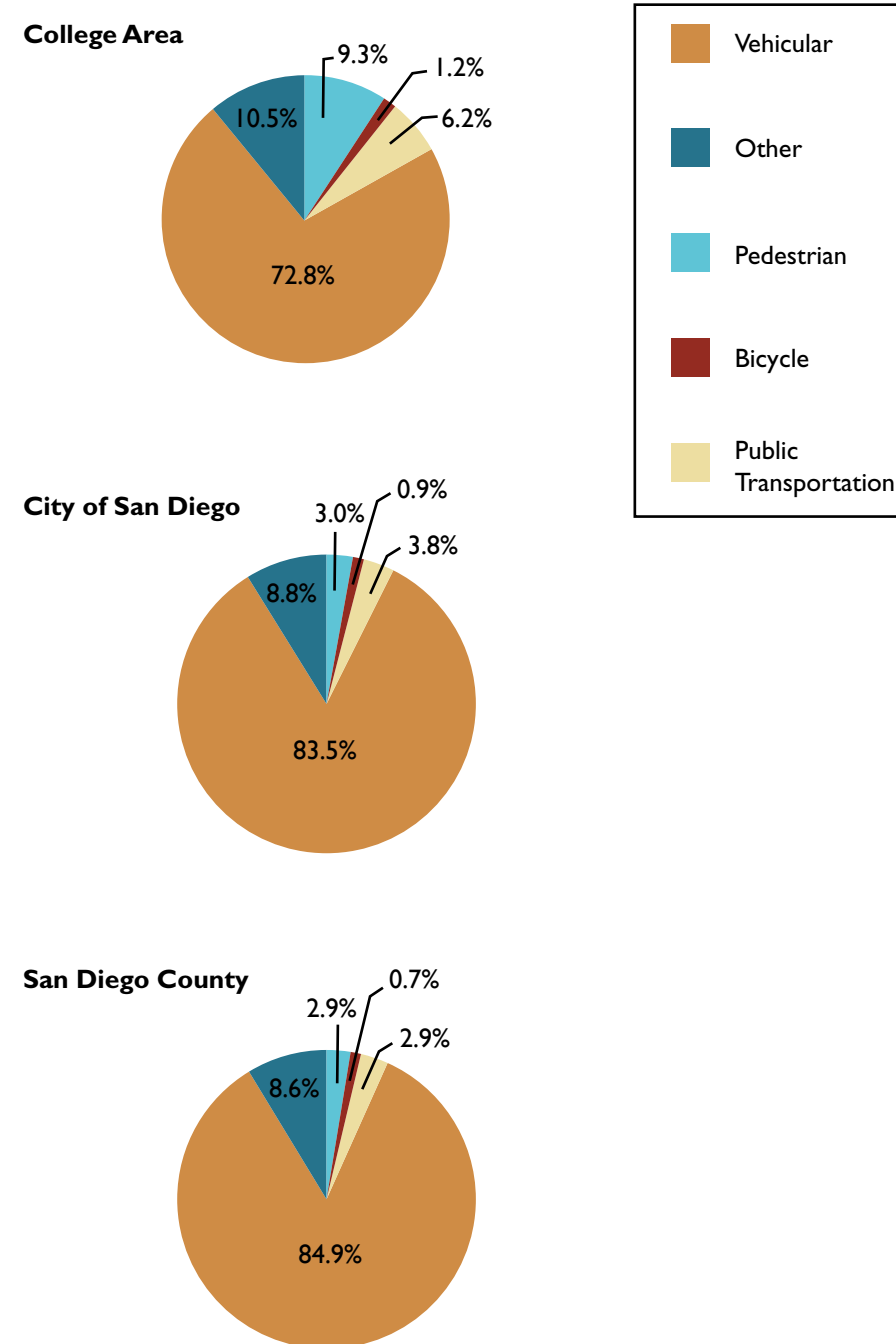


Table 5-1: Commute Mode Share Comparison

Commute Mode Share	College Area	City of San Diego	San Diego County
Pedestrian	9.3%	3.0%	2.9%
Bicycle	1.2%	0.9%	0.7%
Public Transportation	6.2%	3.8%	2.9%
Vehicular	72.8%	83.5%	84.9%

Source: US Census, 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

One in six working College Area residents either commute by walking, bicycling or transit.

5.7 Mobility Summary

The following are key findings in regards to the existing transportation network that serves the College Area presented in this chapter.

- During the AM peak period Montezuma Road westbound and Fairmount Avenue northbound toward Interstate 8 are the most congested roadways in the College Area; Fairmount Avenue north of Montezuma Road carries **87,000** daily vehicle trips.
- Vehicular traffic collisions were concentrated along Montezuma Road, El Cajon Boulevard and College Ave.
- All of the College Area's major roadways and inter-community connections, including College Avenue, Montezuma Road, Collwood Boulevard, and El Cajon Boulevard are **high stress for bicycling** (LTS 3 or 4); high stress roadways are not conducive to growing bicycling as a form of mobility among all populations.
- **One in six** College Area commuters walks, bicycles, or takes public transportation to work; the community has a pedestrian mode that is three times higher than the citywide pedestrian mode share.



06

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

+ OPEN SPACE

- 6.1 Biological Resources
- 6.2 Hydrology and Flooding
- 6.3 Storm Water Infrastructure
- 6.4 Urban Forest
- 6.5 Open Space and Recreation
- 6.6 Natural Environment and Open Space Summary



6.1 Biological Resources

The Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) is a comprehensive, long-term habitat conservation planning program to preserve native habitat for multiple species. This is accomplished by identifying areas planned to be conserved in perpetuity, referred to as the Multi-Habitat Planning Area (MHPA), to achieve a workable balance between new development and species conservation. Open space lands within the MHPA are addressed in the Conservation and Recreation elements of the Community Plan and are implemented by the City’s MSCP Subarea Plan. Within the Multi-Habitat Planning Area, development is limited to protect and ensure the viability of “covered” species, as well as to preserve a network of open space, habitat, and wildlife linkages in San Diego.

As the College Area has been extensively developed, the majority of the plan consists of developed areas shown in **Figure 6-1**. Undisturbed areas of vegetation are present, particularly along slopes and valleys between the mesas located on the northwestern and northeastern portion of the plan area. Most of the vegetation within these undisturbed areas are scrub and chaparral shrubland and is located within the MHPA and calculated in **Table 6-1**.

Undisturbed vegetation is located along slopes and valleys between mesas located on the northwestern and northeastern portion of the College Area and development is limited to support citywide efforts for preservation and protection of open space and habitat.

Table 6-1: Vegetation Types and Acreage

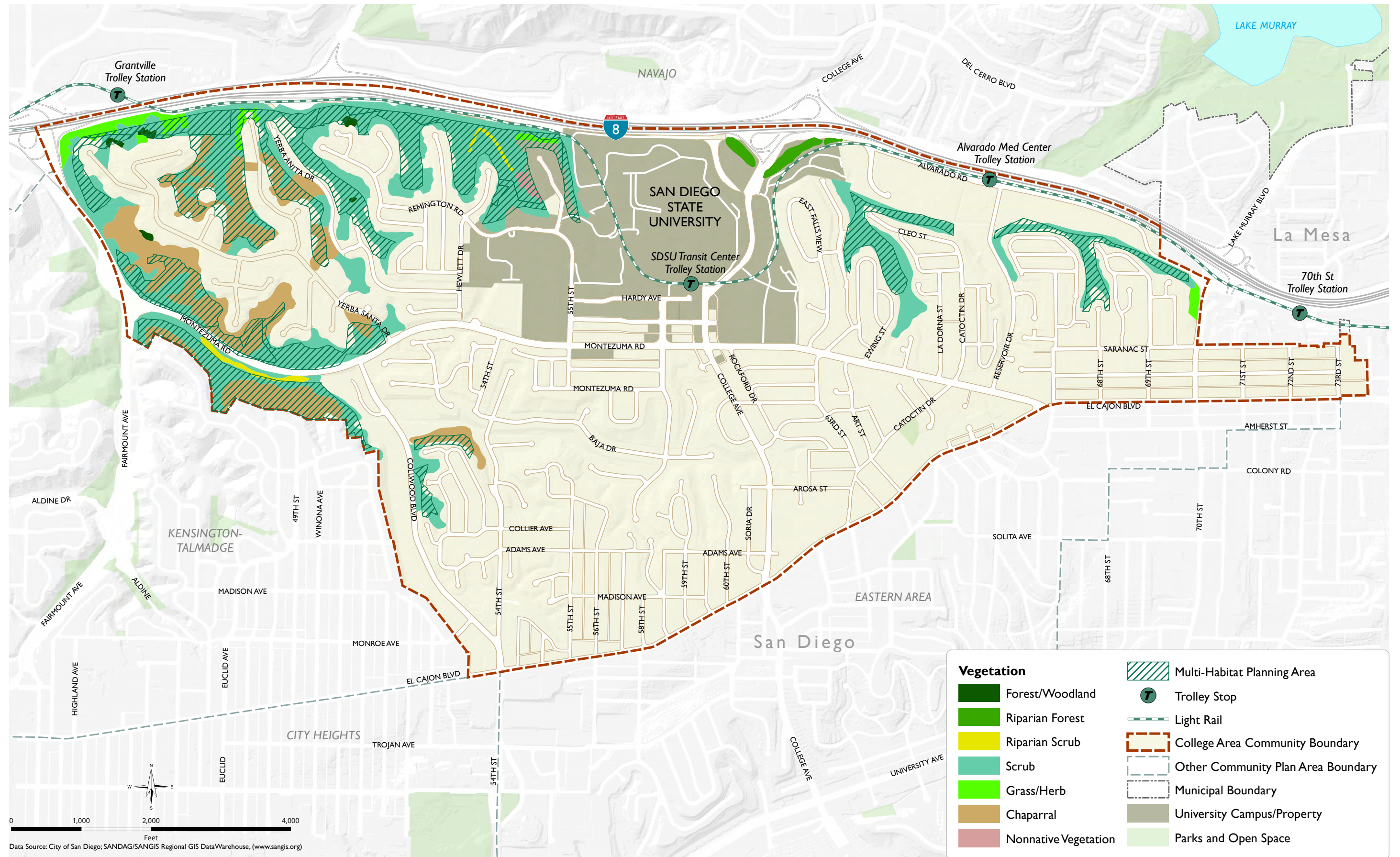
Vegetation Group	Acreage
Chaparral	84
Forest/Woodland	2
Grass/Herb	11
Nonnative Vegetation	1
Riparian Forest	5
Riparian Scrub	4
Scrub	211
TOTAL	318

Source: City of San Diego GIS



Undisturbed areas of vegetation are present particularly along slopes and valleys between mesas. (photo credit: Google Streetview)

Figure 6-1 Vegetation and Multi-Habitat Planning Area



6.2 Hydrology and Flooding

The Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) delineates flood zones: **Figure 6-2** illustrates the 100-year floodways, 100-year floodplains, and 500-year floodplains within the College Area. Alvarado Creek, a tributary from Lake Murray to the San Diego River and the Pacific Ocean, runs just outside of the northwestern plan area, but dips into the planning boundary in the northeast along Alvarado Road. This creek results in some parcels being within a 100-year or 500-year floodplain, most of which are used by the University, with small portions along the channelized creek being in a 100-year floodway zone. The rest of the plan area –the vast majority – is not within a flood zone.

Except for a small portion of the northern Community Plan Area near Alvarado Road, the rest of the College Area is not located within a flood zone.



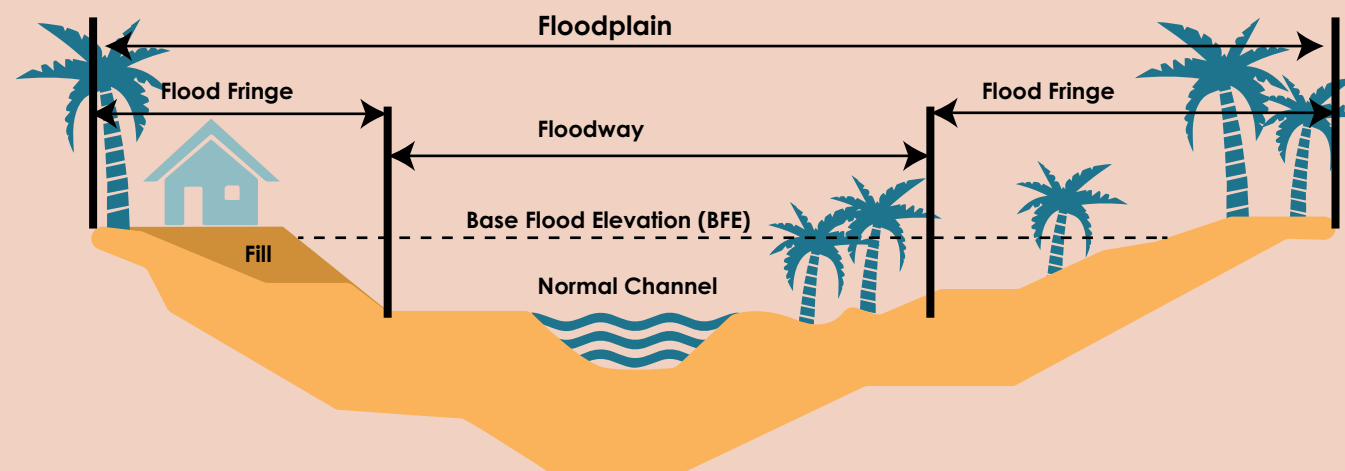
Alvarado Creek

Calculating Flood Risk

- Flood risk is calculated based on the probability of a flood in a given area. Terms like “100-year flood” can be misleading; it does not mean that the “100-year flood” will occur only once every 100 years, but that statistically speaking, the odds for this flood occurring in any given year are 1 in 100 (1% chance). The table below shows the statistical chance of a flood occurring within a given year and its corresponding term.

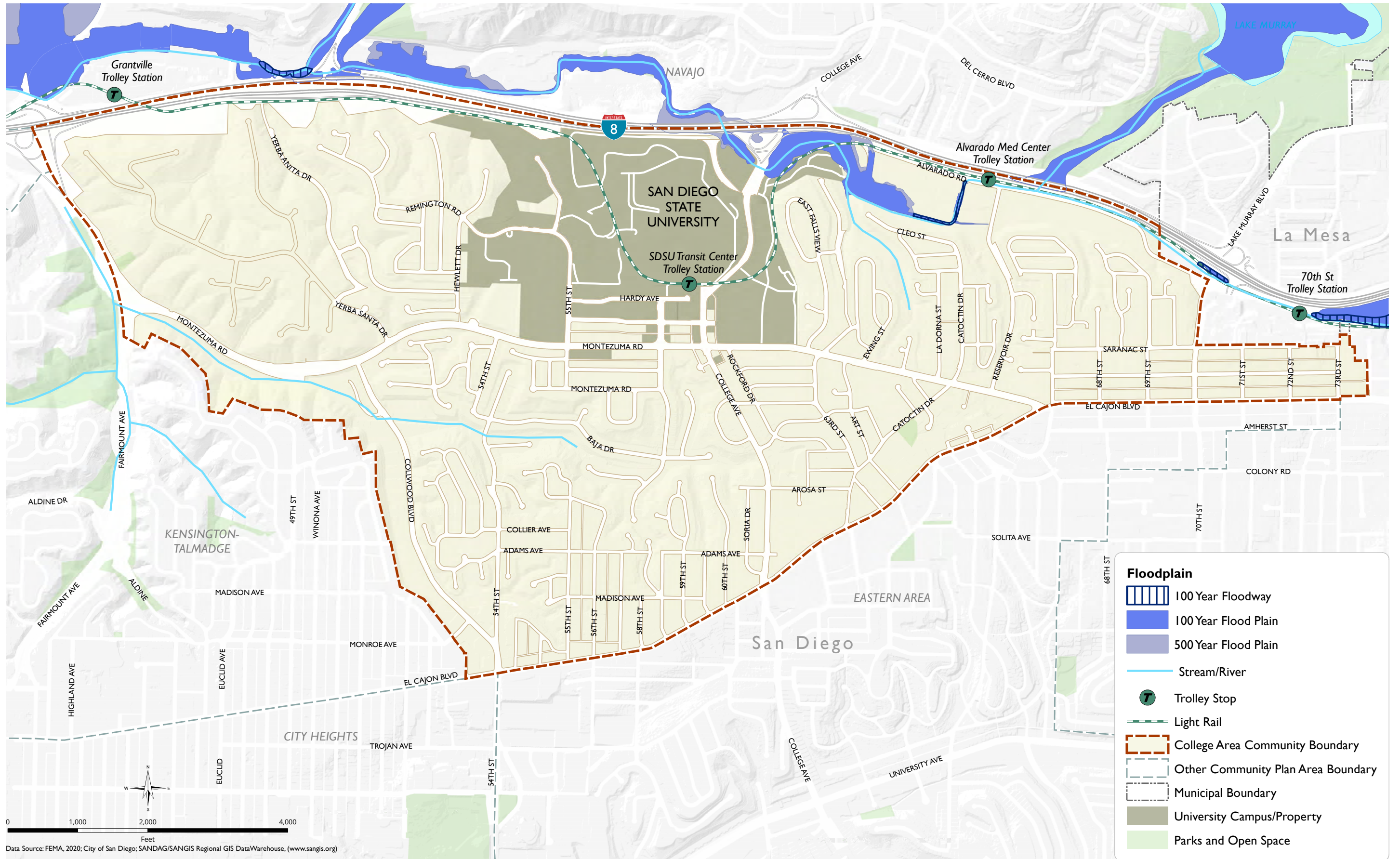
Probability of Occurrence	Term
0.01	100-year
0.002	500-year

- “Floodplain” vs. “Floodway”



Source: FEMA

Figure 6-2 Hydrology and Flooding



Data Source: FEMA, 2020; City of San Diego; SANDAG/SANGIS Regional GIS DataWarehouse. (www.sangis.org)

6.3 Storm Water Infrastructure

Figure 6-3 illustrates the storm water infrastructure system in the College Area community. Most of the storm water is collected in drain structures located on the top of the mesas and then distributed in ephemeral streams that form in the valleys. The valleys are heavily vegetated and the impact of water flow within the valleys to human structures are minimal. Some of the water runoff along the northern edge of the planning boundary is released into Alvarado Creek. While the vegetated valleys and yards of single family homes provide some pervious landscape for storm water to permeate, the plan area largely contains impervious surfaces. For areas with surface parking lots and large building footprints, such as around the University and along El Cajon Boulevard, much of the rainfall can be expected to become urban runoff and eventually make its way into local tributaries.

A tributary is a stream that feeds into a larger stream or lake.

The City of San Diego maintains drainage facilities to assist in the removal of storm water runoff in an efficient, economic, environmentally, and aesthetically acceptable manner. In order to maintain the storm water system's effectiveness, the City has developed a new Municipal Waterways Maintenance Plan (MWMP) for storm water channels in neighborhoods across San Diego, including the College Area. The MWMP identifies specific storm water channels, new channels, and detailed methods for maintaining them. There are multiple improvements proposed in the plan area, mostly around Alvarado Creek and along the vegetated valleys.



Source: San Diego Municipal Waterways Maintenance Plan

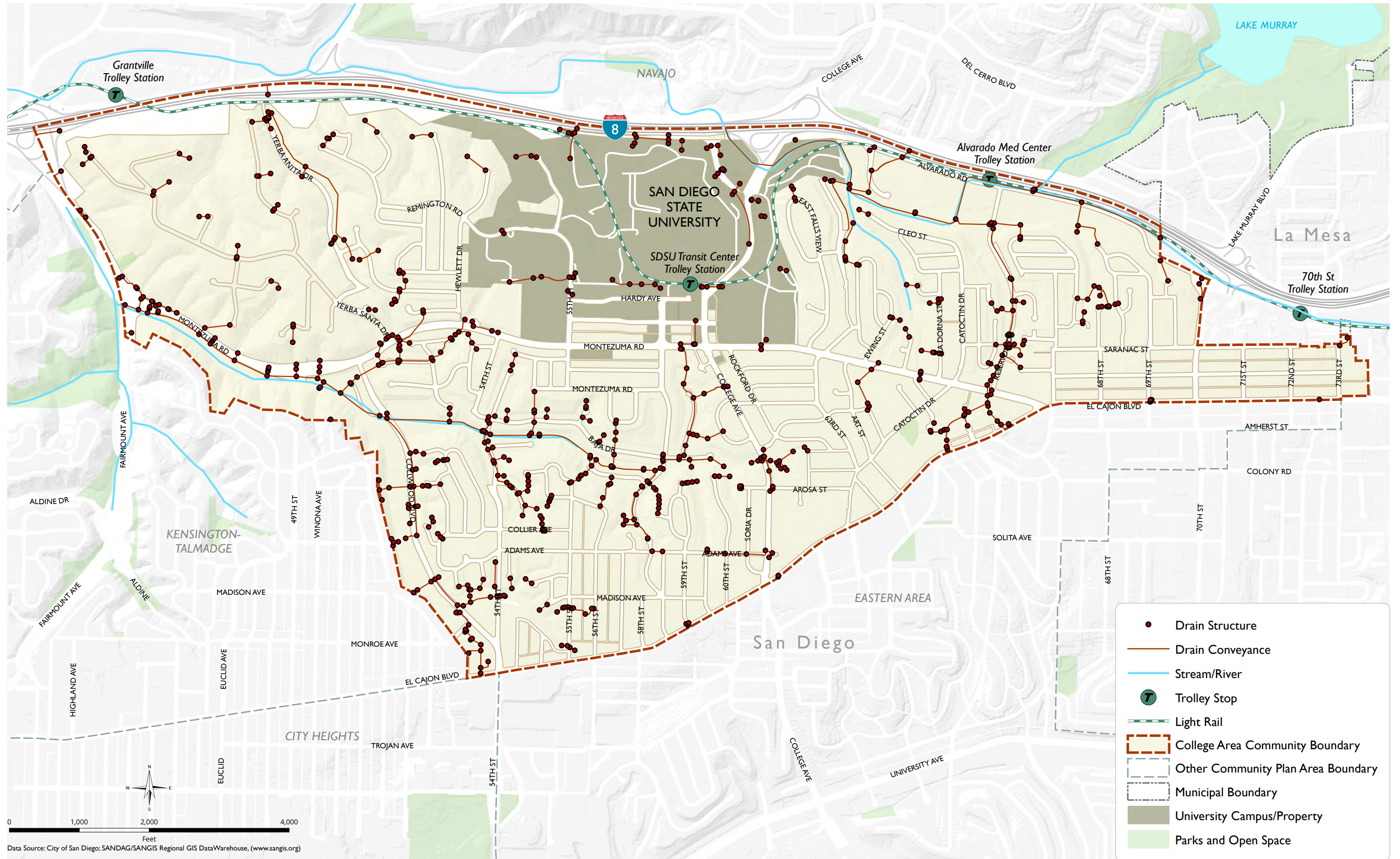
Flora are plants of a particular region or habitat. Likewise, Fauna are animals of a particular region or habitat.

Storm water pollution affects human life and local flora and fauna. Oil and grease from parking lots and roads, pesticides, cleaning solvents, and other toxic chemicals can contaminate storm water and be transported into water bodies. The City's Storm Water Pollution Prevention Program identifies actions to reduce pollutants in urban runoff and storm water. These actions include, but are not limited to, public education, employee training, water quality monitoring, source identification, code enforcement, watershed management, and Best Management Practices development/implementation within the City of San Diego's jurisdictional boundaries. The Storm Water Pollution Prevention Program represents the City on storm water and National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) storm water permit issues before the principal permittee, the County Department of Environmental Health and the Regional Water Quality Control Board. Compliance with the permit requirements are tracked and monitored by the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Program and the Regional Water Quality Control Board.



Impermeable (top photo) and pervious (bottom photo) surfaces handle stormwater differently. Pervious surfaces are preferable.

Figure 6-3 Stormwater Infrastructure



6.4 Urban Forest

Trees provide shade and beauty, support neighborhood identity, and help balance the density of development with greenery. The City's General Plan establishes the importance of urban forestry and calls for development of a sustainable urban forest. The City's Climate Action Plan establishes a specific goal to increase urban tree canopy cover with targets of 15 percent by 2020 and 35 percent by 2035. In 2017, the City Council approved the Urban Forest Management Plan, a document to coordinate the work of multiple City departments and bring together existing policies, guidelines, and actions necessary to preserve, protect, maintain, and plant trees.

Many of the benefits trees provide are correlated with the girth and structure of the tree canopy; the benefits are correlated with the size of the layers of branches, stems, and leaves that cover the ground when viewed from above. An analysis based on land cover data derived from high-resolution aerial imagery and LiDAR found that about 10% of the plan area is covered by tree canopy, which is 5% below the City's goal of 15% by 2020.

About 10% of the plan area is covered by tree canopy, which is 5% below the City's Climate Action Plan goal of 15% by 2020.

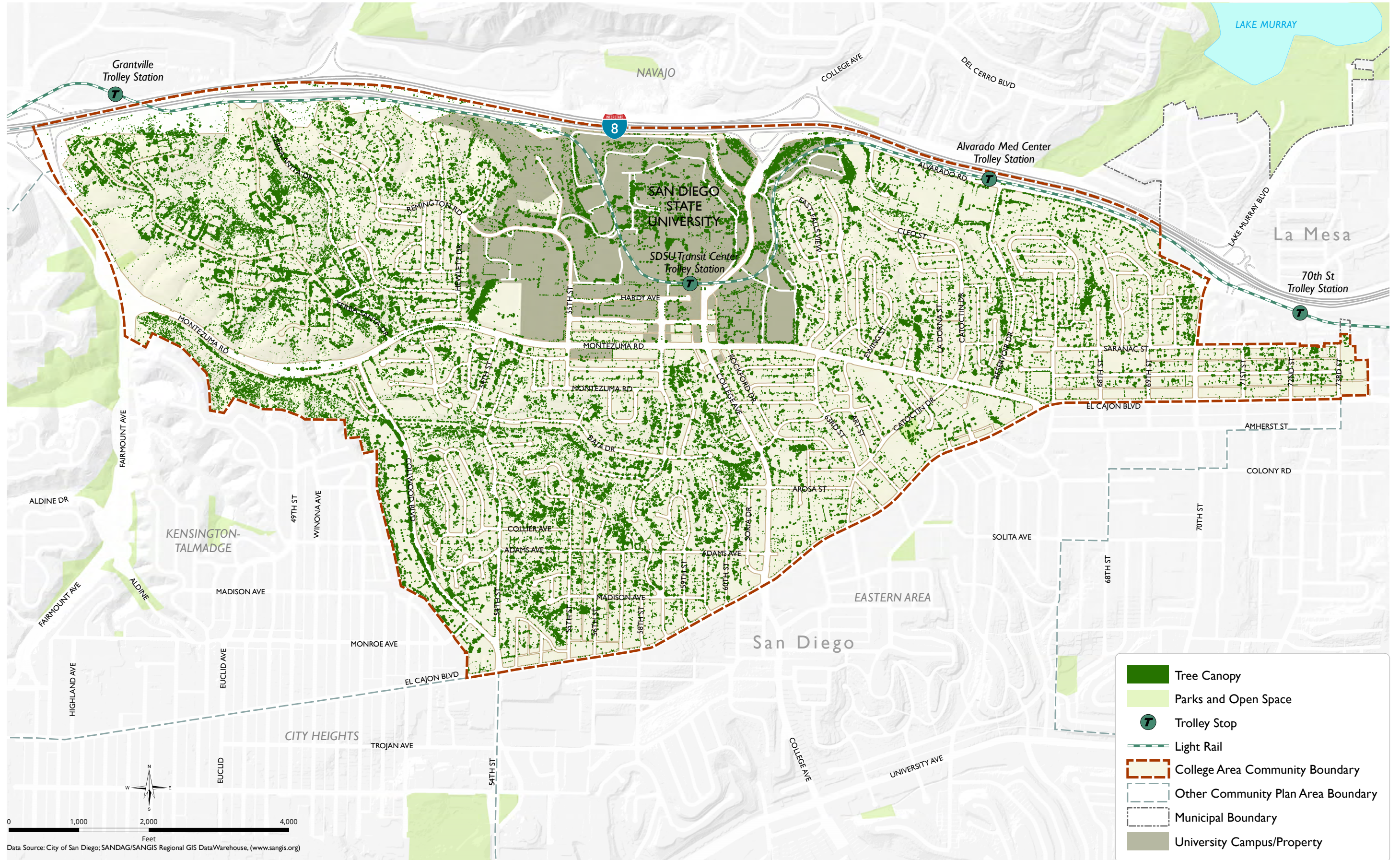
Figure 6-4 shows the tree coverage in the College Area. While there is some tree coverage within the natural vegetated valleys, much of it is low brush. Many of the single family residential streets are well lined with trees. Similar to storm water runoff, densely built areas with large surface parking lots and building footprints typically have a smaller tree canopy, such as around the University campus and along El Cajon Boulevard. The other major corridors - College Avenue and Montezuma Road - lack a cohesive tree canopy network. Many of the residential and commercial streets are lined with palm trees, which contribute to the sense of place and reflect the mild climate of the community. While palm trees do add to urban greenery, typically they do not have as wide a canopy as deciduous trees, which make them difficult to reflect on a tree canopy map. Additionally, tall palm trees, such as the Mexican Fan Palm, do not provide much shade relief to pedestrians at the street level.



Many of the residential streets are well lined with trees, but major corridors and densely built areas within the plan area typically have a smaller tree canopy. Palm trees, which are commonly found throughout the plan area, do not provide much shade relief to pedestrians.



Figure 6-4 Tree Canopy Coverage



6.5 Open Space and Recreation

The College Area’s existing parks, recreation facilities, and open space areas are shown in Figure 6.5. The City has agreements for joint community use of school parks with three schools in the plan area: Hardy Elementary, the Language Academy, and Harriet Tubman Charter School. There is one neighborhood park in the community, Montezuma Neighborhood Park (1.2 acres), which is along Catoctin Drive. Montezuma Neighborhood park is located just south of the Language Academy, and just north of the Mesa Commons development that fronts El Cajon Boulevard. **Table 6-2** lists the various types of parks and open spaces in the community, and the total acreage for each type. Based on a 2019 population of approximately 22,700¹, College Area currently has a ratio of 0.4 acres of dedicated park space per 1,000 residents, which is low compared to other communities in the City.

However, as the College Area contains many private open spaces and sports fields and recreational facilities on the SDSU campus, the park ratio deficiency is less than it may seem. The SDSU campus, which is about 192 acres, has recreation facilities, open spaces, and parks many of which are available for public use.

College Area currently has a ratio of .4 park acres per 1,000 residents, which is low compared to other communities in the City.

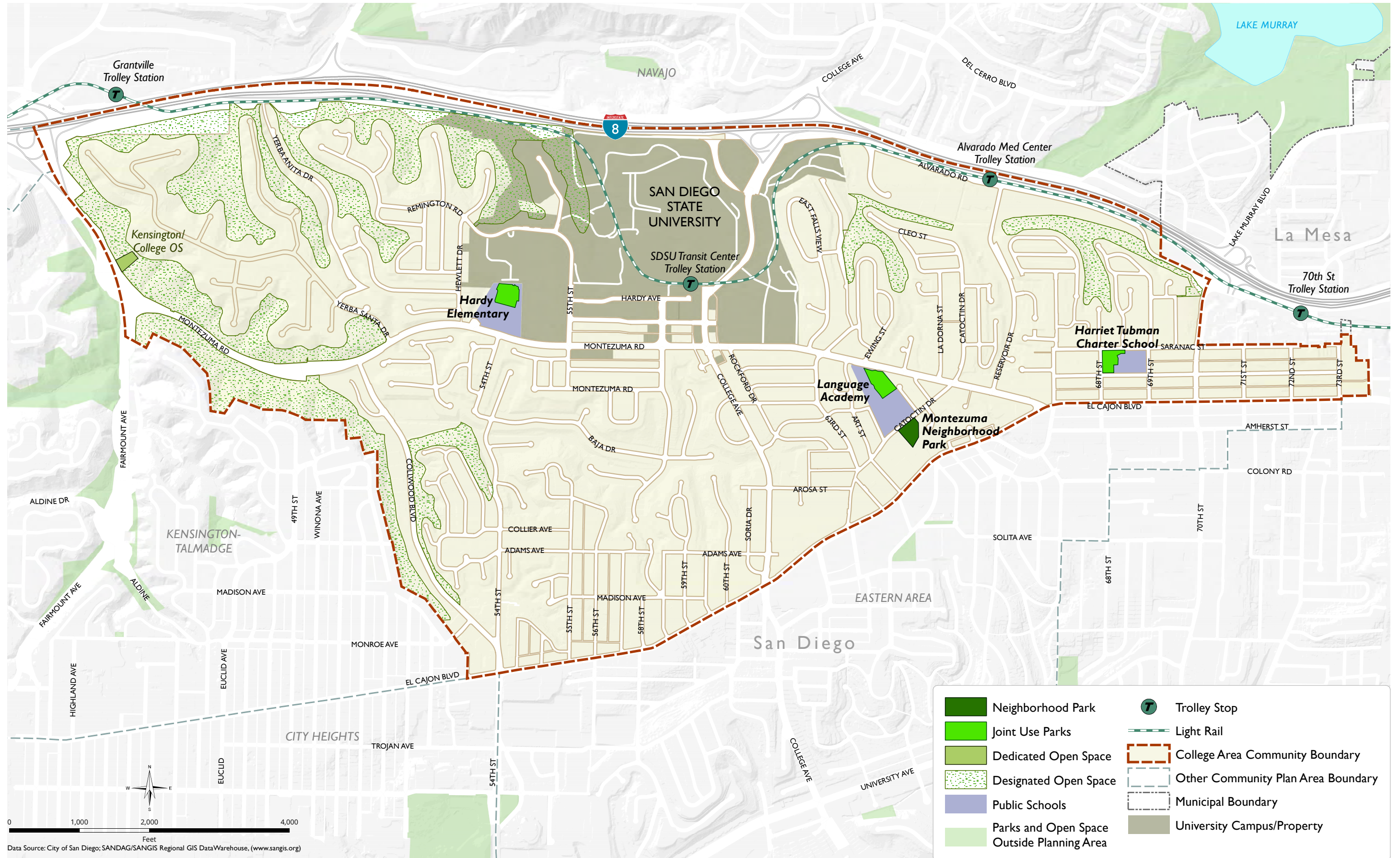
Table 6-2: Parks and Open Spaces

Parks and Open Spaces	Acres
Neighborhood Parks	1.2
Joint Use Parks	6.6
Dedicated Open Space	1.0
Total Dedicated Park Space	8.8
Designated Open Space	275.6
Total Designated Open Space	275.6



¹ SANDAG Data Surfer 2019 estimates.

Figure 6-5 Parks, Recreation and Open Space



6.6 Natural Environment and Open Space Summary

This section summarizes key information related to land use for the College Area presented in this chapter.

- Undisturbed vegetation is located along slopes and valleys, between the mesas located on the northern portion of the College Area, and development is **limited** in these **sensitive areas** in order to support citywide efforts for preservation and protection of open space and habitat.
- Except for a small portion of northern area near **Alvarado Road**, the rest of the College Area is **not located** within a flood zone.
- For areas with **surface parking lots** and large building footprints, such as around the University and along El Cajon Boulevard, much of the rainfall can be expected to become **urban runoff**.
- About **10%** of the plan area is covered by tree canopy, which is **5%** below the City's Climate Action Plan goal of **15%** by 2020.
- College Area currently has a ratio of **0.4 park acres** per 1,000 residents, which is low compared to other communities in the City.

07

ENVIRONMENTAL +

COMMUNITY HEALTH

- 7.1 Air Quality and Pollution Burden
- 7.2 Access to Parks, Recreation, and Open Space
- 7.3 Access to Transit and Mobility Options
- 7.4 Access to Public Facilities and Services
- 7.5 Access to Healthy Foods
- 7.6 Relationship to the San Diego Climate Action Plan
- 7.7 Environmental and Community Health Summary



The health of the environment and community is dependent on a multitude of factors that are interrelated, and coordinated planning efforts are needed to foster healthy and safe environments for people to live, work, and play. This section discusses some of the most common factors that contribute to the health of an environment and community, including air quality and pollution burden; access to parks, recreation, and open space; access to transit and mobility options; access to public facilities and services; and access to healthy foods.

7.1 Air Quality and Pollution Burden

Air quality is defined by the concentration of pollutants that affect human health. Concentrations of air pollutants are determined by the rate and location of pollutant emissions released by pollution sources, and the atmosphere's ability to transport and dilute such emissions. Natural factors that affect transport and dilution of air pollutants include terrain, wind, and sunlight. Therefore, in addition to the amount of air pollutant emissions released by existing air pollutant sources, ambient air quality conditions within the local air basin are also influenced by such natural factors as topography, meteorology, and climate. The San Diego Air Basin (SDAB) encompasses all of San Diego County, approximately 4,200 square miles. Harmful air contaminants are most likely to occur in areas of higher population density, heavier traffic patterns, or concentrated industrial sources - particularly in the western portion of the county.

According to the American Lung Association's 2020 "State of the Air" annual air quality report, the nation's two most widespread types of outdoor air pollutants are ozone pollution and particulate matter, also referred to as smog and soot, respectively. The report determined that the San Diego metropolitan area ranked sixth for most ozone pollution nationwide (six out of 229 metropolitan areas). Ozone is both naturally occurring through atmospheric reactions as well as pollutants released by transport and industrial activities. Ozone rankings are all based on unhealthy air days, as recorded using the Air Quality Index that was adopted with the 2015 National Ambient Air Quality Standards for Ozone. In 2018, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) officially designated all or parts of the 25 most polluted cities as "nonattainment" areas for that ozone air quality standard. That action requires these areas to take steps to clean up the sources of pollution going forward.

According to the County of San Diego's Air Pollution Control District (APCD), the county is currently in nonattainment at both the federal and State pollutant levels for Ozone (8-Hour) and is in nonattainment at the State level for Ozone (1-Hour), Particulate Matter (PM) 10, and PM 2.5. Per the American Lung Association's 2020 "State of the Air" report, the San Diego metropolitan area ranked 40 for 24-hour particle pollution out of 216 metropolitan areas and 41 for annual particle pollution out of 204 metropolitan areas. Attainment indicates that an area complies with the national and/or California Ambient Air Quality Standards. These standards are set by the EPA or the California Air Resources Board (CARB) for the maximum level of a given air pollutant which can exist in the outdoor air without unacceptable effects on human health or the public welfare. The APCD develops strategies and regulations to achieve the pollution emission reductions necessary to meet all health-based standards. Data from monitors throughout the county document the continued downward concentration trends of pollutants.

Future planning efforts can focus on active transportation, transit-oriented development, and healthy community design to reinforce improvements in local and regional air quality.

CALENVIROSCREEN AND POLLUTION BURDEN

Disadvantaged communities are communities that are disproportionately affected by a combination of economic, health, and environmental burdens. Senate Bill (SB 1000) specifies the California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool 3.0 (CalEnviroScreen) as the primary screening method for identifying disadvantaged communities. Developed by the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA), CalEnviroScreen uses environmental, health, and socioeconomic information to produce scores for every census tract in the state. The score assigned to each census tract is a product of adverse environmental effects caused by pollution, the presence of sensitive populations (i.e. those with asthma, cardiovascular disease, or low birthweight infants), and socioeconomic factors (i.e. low household income, low educational attainment, and unemployment) that can disproportionately burden a community. Tracts that score in the top quartile are defined as disadvantaged communities.

There are no census tracts within the plan area that meet the definition for a disadvantaged community—all tracts score in the 50th statewide percentile or less, as shown in **Figure 7-1**. However, some parts of the College Area are more affected by certain environmental health exposures than others, and some areas are home to communities that are more vulnerable to these negative effects. When these scores are broken down by Pollution Burden and Population Characteristics, certain tracts score comparatively higher than others. Population Characteristics represent biological traits, health status, or community characteristics that can result in increased vulnerability to pollution. Notably, Tract 28.01 has a higher Pollution Burden than other tracts due to higher exposure to particulate matter from Kumeyaay Highway (Interstate 8) traffic and proximity to hazardous waste generators. Tract 28.03 has higher rates of asthma, low birth weight, and linguistic isolation, contributing to their higher Population Characteristics percentile.

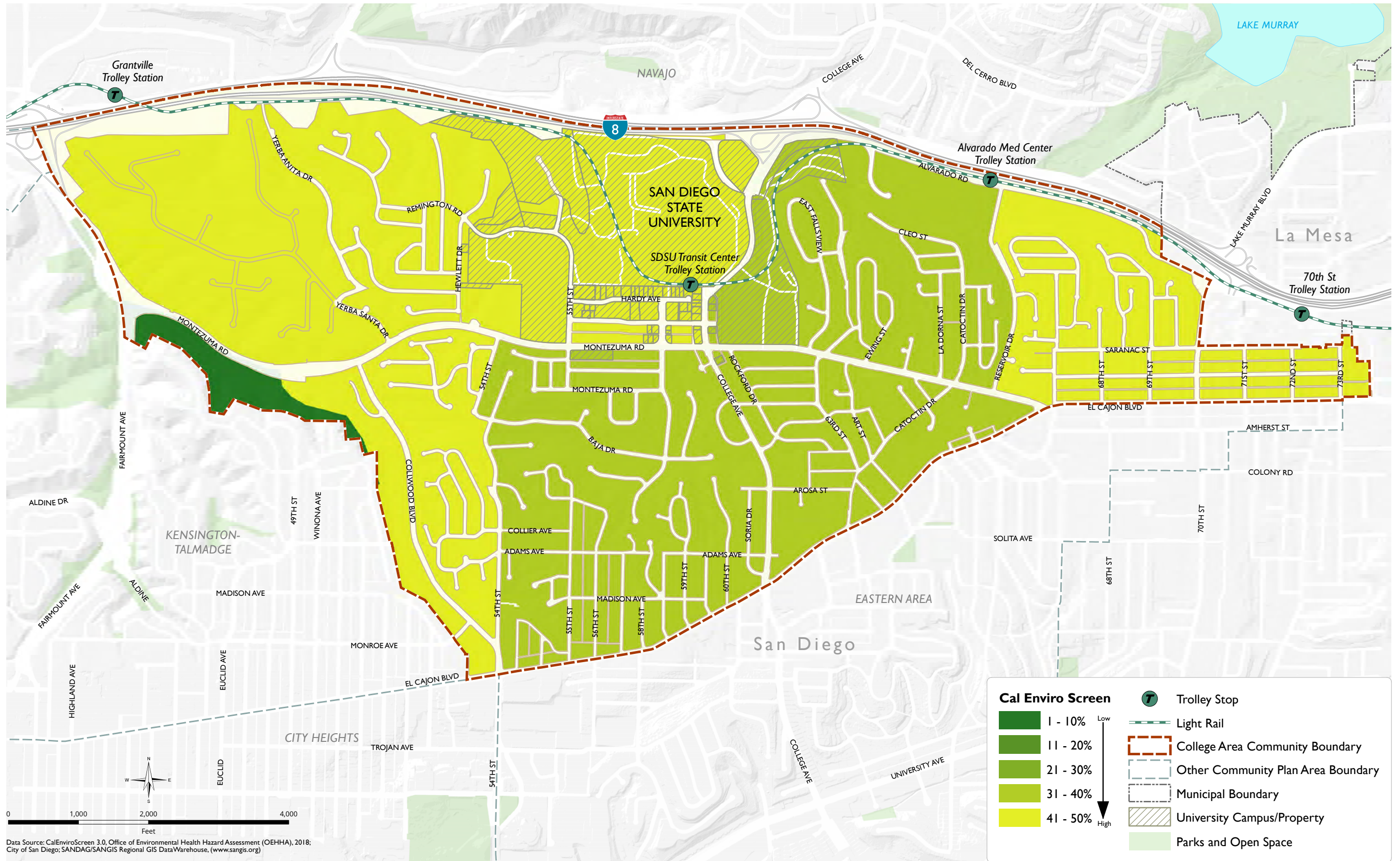
Some parts of the College Area are more affected by certain environmental health exposures than others and are more vulnerable to these negative effects, particularly census tracts that are adjacent to high-frequency traffic corridors like Interstate 8.

Table 7-1: CalEnviroScreen and Pollution Burden

Tract	Overall CalEnviroScreen Percentile Range	Pollution Burden Percentile	Pollution Characteristics Percentile
Tract 20.02	5-10%	15%	8%
Tract 28.01	45-50%	69%	33%
Tract 28.03	40-45%	21%	62%
Tract 28.04	35-40%	30%	44%
Tract 29.04	35-40%	38%	39%
Tract 29.05	40-45%	32%	46%

Source: California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool 3.0

Figure 7-1 CalEnviroScreen and Pollution Burden



7.2 Access to Parks, Recreation, and Open Space

Safe and convenient access to parks, recreational facilities, and open space is a key component of a healthy community environment. In addition to improving air and water quality, providing habitat for wildlife, and adding natural buffers to urban landscapes, parks and natural spaces increase property values, spur local economies, and improve general quality of life. Benefits to physical health are also linked to park access: people who live within 5-minute walking distance (1/4 mile) of a park are 25% more likely to meet their minimum weekly exercise recommendation¹, which reduces risk of chronic diseases and premature mortality and can improve mental and emotional health.

The western portion of the plan area includes designated and dedicated open space, and the City has joint use agreements to use facilities at Harriet Tubman Charter School, the Language Academy, and Hardy Elementary. The community's sole neighborhood park, Montezuma Neighborhood Park, is located on Catoctin Drive south of the Language Academy. As shown in **Figure 7-2**, areas lacking park access include residential areas to the west of SDSU and north of Montezuma Road, and also in residential areas west of College Avenue and south of Montezuma Road.

Montezuma Neighborhood Park is the sole neighborhood park and there are some residential areas that lack park access. Future planning efforts can focus on increasing safe and convenient access to parks, recreational facilities, and open space to support community health.



7.3 Access to Transit and Mobility Options

A robust, affordable, and reliable transit system helps to ensure better access to education and jobs, recreational and after-school activities, healthier food options, health care facilities, daily errands, and connections to people. Convenient access to public transit supports people’s mobility options and encourages getting around by means other than the car, which also reduces emissions and improves air quality. Access to affordable public transit also increases physical activity, since there is almost always walking or biking associated with taking a bus or train. Almost one-third of Americans who commute to work via public transit meet their daily requirements for physical activity (30 or more minutes a day) by walking as a part of their daily life, including to and from the transit stop.² In addition to transit, the presence and quality of walking and biking facilities contribute to either positive or negative experiences of alternative transportation that greatly influence how people choose to get around.

As shown in **Figure 7-3**, most of the College Area is within a five to ten-minute walk to transit facilities, with the exception of the neighborhood to the west of SDSU, Alvarado Estates, and a few small pockets of the community. The San Diego Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) operates trolley service with Green Line stops in and near the community, including stops at SDSU, Alvarado Medical Center, and 70th Street. MTS also operates bus service with frequent stops along the three main travel corridors in the plan area: El Cajon Boulevard, Montezuma Road, and College Avenue. The 2019 “College Area Community Plan Update Report” prepared by the College Area Community Council and Planning Group noted that while there are ample bus stops through the commercial area along El Cajon Boulevard, access to stops in single-family neighborhoods can be lacking. Further, very few bus stops were observed to have transit amenities such as sheltered stops or benches—such conditions contribute to a less positive experience of alternative transportation. The Report also identified the following with regard to overall walkability, bicycling, and auto-use in the plan area [edited for clarity]:

- The College Area is well served by sidewalks; however, a lack of pedestrian amenities, high vehicular speeds, and wide crossings (many unregulated) can lead to increased chance of pedestrian injuries and modest pedestrian usage. Additional information on pedestrian amenities can be found in Chapter 5, Mobility.
- Existing bicycle facilities in the community consist primarily of Class III Bike Routes and some Class II Bike Lanes. Lack of adequate facilities and major gaps in existing facilities make bicycling in the community feel unsafe for many users, especially less confident riders. Collisions occur primarily along transit corridors that connect the community to surrounding communities, including El Cajon Boulevard and Montezuma Road.
- Major streets cut through the community following natural topography features. East-west traffic flows primarily along El Cajon Boulevard and Montezuma Road, while north-south traffic runs primarily on College Avenue and Collwood Boulevard: College Avenue is the only north-south street that runs through the entire community. Of the major corridors within the commercial areas, College Avenue and El Cajon Boulevard feature higher levels of traffic volumes, while Montezuma Road features comparatively low traffic volumes.

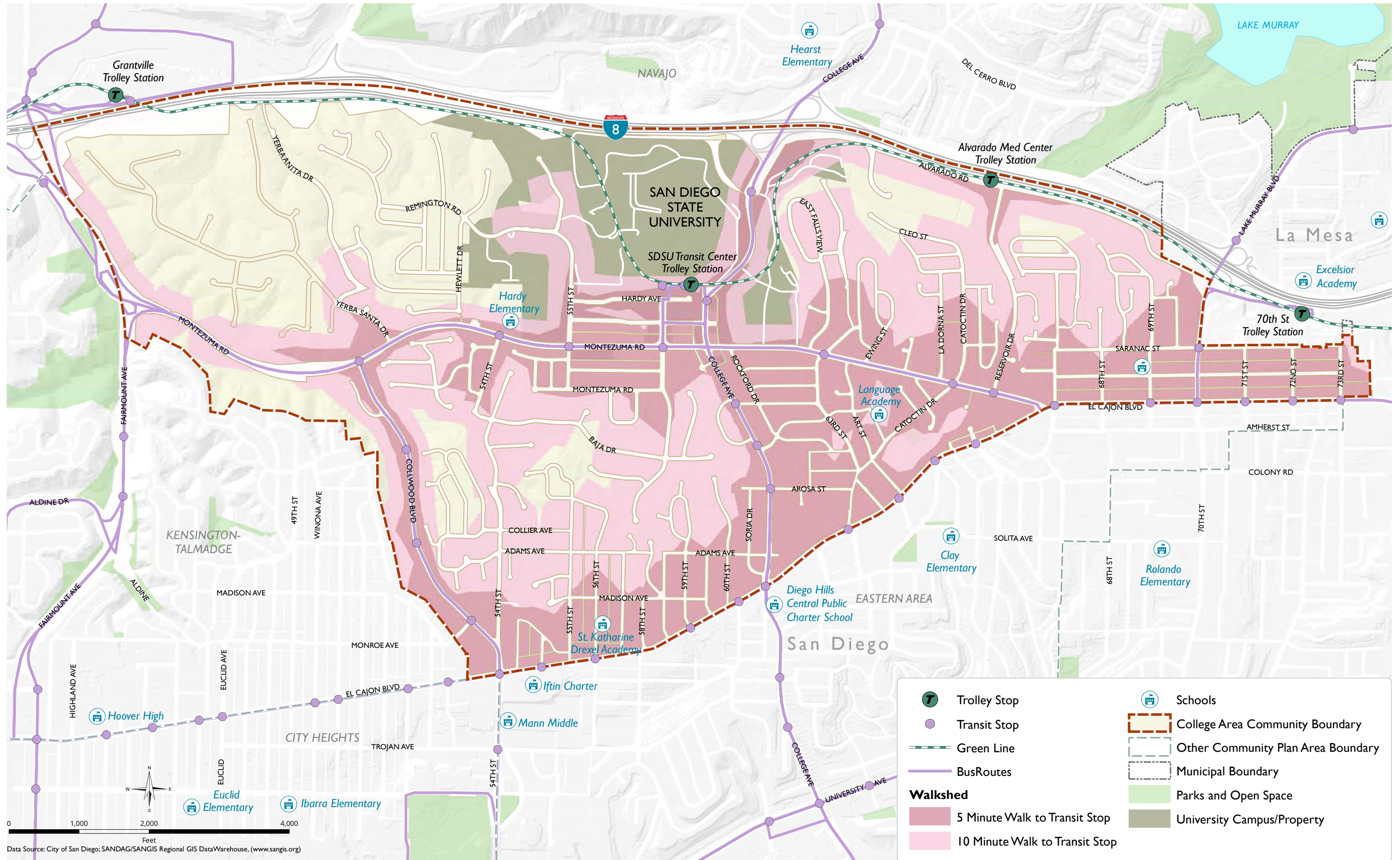
Likely strategies in future planning efforts can focus on making getting around without a car safer, more convenient, and more comfortable. Further, popular emerging technologies such as on-demand ride-hailing and ride-sharing, electric vehicle (EV) charging stations, and pay-as-you-go scooter and bike rentals should be considered as integral to the mobility ecosystem.

Most of the College Area is within a five to ten-minute walk to transit facilities, with the exception of a few small areas and the neighborhood to the west of SDSU. Future planning efforts can focus on making getting around without a car safer, more convenient and comfortable, and also more environmentally sustainable.



² L. Besser and A. Dannenberg, “Walking to Public Transit: Steps to Help Meet Physical Activity Recommendations”. Vol. 32, Issue 4, American Journal of Preventive Medicine, at 273-280 (November 2005).

Figure 7-3 Access to Transit and Mobility Options



7.4 Access to Public Facilities and Services

The College Area has adequate access to basic community facilities and services, such as health care facilities, libraries, schools, and emergency services; this access supports the health of individuals and families and improves quality of life.

A healthy community has convenient access to medical services (see **Figure 7-4**). When health care facilities are accessible via public transit, medical care is more readily accessible to those who do not drive or own cars. Alvarado Hospital and its surrounding medical cluster are adjacent to the Green Line's Alvarado Station, providing comprehensive medical and emergency services with convenient access by trolley. Student Health Services at the Calpulli Center provide no-cost or low-cost care at the college campus, accessible by trolley from the SDSU Transit Center. Alliance Health Clinic, a primary care facility specializing in services for refugee communities, and City Heights Family Health Center, a primary and specialty care provider, are located on El Cajon Boulevard and serve the southern portion of the College Area, accessible by Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and local bus routes.

A healthy community also provides convenient access to other neighborhood services, such as libraries, schools, and emergency services. Libraries promote literacy, provide Internet access, and offer a community-gathering place. They are particularly important resources for low-income residents, who may lack funds to purchase reading materials or Internet service access. In 2005, the College-Rolando branch of the San Diego Public Library system was opened at 6600 Montezuma Road (east of SDSU) to replace the former College Heights branch, which was built in 1955. The College-Rolando Library is a 15,000 square-foot state-of-the-art library three times larger than the former College Heights Library.

Convenient access to schools facilitates good health by making it easier for children to walk or bike to school, which is associated with higher overall physical activity throughout the day. Schools serving the plan area include Harriet Tubman Village Charter (serving grades K-8); the Language Academy (serving grades K-8); Hardy Elementary (serving grades K-5); and St. Katharine Drexel Academy (serving grades K-8). As shown in **Figure 5-5** in Chapter 5, Mobility, the areas surrounding these schools are well-served by adequate sidewalks.

Proximity to services that keep residents safe, including fire safety, ensures good response times during emergencies. Due to its vegetation, weather, and slope, western portions of the community are within a very high fire hazard severity zone.³ In 2019, a major brush fire occurred near the SDSU campus. The City of San Diego Fire-Rescue Department (SDFD) is the primary responder to fires in the College Area. Station 10 is located just outside the plan area to the south, in the Eastern Area Community. Another fire station location is proposed near the SDSU campus. While SDSU has its own campus police, the majority of College Area residents are served by the Eastern Division of the San Diego Police Department.



³ City of San Diego, 2019. Official Very High Fire Severity Zone Map. <https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/legacy/fire/pdf/maps/grid20.pdf>

Figure 7-4 Access to Public Facilities and Services



7.5 Access to Healthy Foods

According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), consumer choices about food spending and diet are likely to be influenced by the accessibility and affordability of food retailers—travel time to shopping, availability of healthy foods, and food prices. Some people and places, especially those with low income, may face greater barriers in accessing healthy and affordable food retailers, which may negatively affect diet and food security. The presence of a supermarket in a neighborhood is linked to higher fruit and vegetable consumption, as well as a reduced incidence of obesity.⁴ The College Area has access to grocery stores that offer fresh produce affordable for a range of incomes, including a Trader Joe’s near campus, a Ralphs and Starlight Market in College East, and a Grocery Outlet, Vons, and Smart and Final on the southern side of El Cajon Boulevard. While the College Area may have multiple access points to healthy foods, within San Diego County as a whole, food insecurity remains an issue to be conscientious of in future planning efforts. According to the San Diego Hunger Coalition’s August 2019 “Issue Brief,” based on 2017 data, the county’s food insecure population was one in seven people, or approximately 14% of the total population. Likely strategies in future planning efforts can focus on supporting efforts to maintain/enhance vibrant local food economies and ensuring healthy, affordable, and culturally appropriate food access.






While the College Area may have multiple access points to healthy foods, within San Diego County as a whole, food insecurity remains an issue to be conscientious of in future planning efforts.



⁴ Inagami, S., et al., “You Are Where You Shop: Grocery Store Locations, Weight, and Neighborhoods”, Vol. 31, Issue 1, American Journal of Preventative Medicine, at 10-17 (2006). See also K. Morland et al., “Supermarkets, Other Food Stores, and Obesity: The Atherosclerosis Risk in Communities Study”, Vol. 30, Issue 4, American Journal of Preventative Medicine, at 333-339 (2006).

7.6 Relationship to the San Diego Climate Action Plan

The City of San Diego’s Climate Action Plan (CAP), adopted in December 2015, is a roadmap towards a sustainable future that serves all citizens. Sustainability means making better use of resources such as water, energy and waste; designing neighborhoods to be more pedestrian and bicycle friendly and livable; and investing in the future by supporting clean-energy technology, innovation, and jobs. The CAP calls for eliminating half of all greenhouse gas emissions in the City and aims for all electricity used in the City to be from renewable sources by 2035. The City has identified five bold strategies to reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions to achieve these targets:

-  1. Energy & Water Efficient Buildings
-  2. Clean & Renewable Energy
-  3. Bicycling, Walking, Transit & Land Use
-  4. Zero Waste (Gas & Waste Management)
-  5. Climate Resiliency

These viable strategies will leverage the City’s existing efforts and provide clear direction for meeting the challenges of a changing climate. The College Area Community Plan can incorporate goals, actions, and policies that support the strategies outlined in the CAP to reduce GHG and remove harmful pollutants from the air and water, improving both public health and environmental health.

7.7 Environmental and Community Health Summary

This section summarizes key information related to environmental and community health for the College Area presented in this chapter.

- The San Diego metropolitan area ranks **sixth** in the nation for most **ozone pollution**.
- Future planning efforts can focus on active transportation, transit-oriented development, and healthy community design to reinforce improvements in local and regional **air quality**.
- Some parts of the College Area are more affected by certain environmental health exposures than others and are more vulnerable to these negative effects, particularly census tracts that are adjacent to high-frequency traffic corridors like **Interstate 8**.
- **Montezuma Neighborhood Park** is the sole neighborhood park, and there are some residential areas that lack park access. Future planning efforts can focus on increasing safe and convenient access to parks, recreational facilities, and open space to support community health.
- Most of the College Area is within a **five to ten-minute** walk to **transit facilities**, with the exception of a few small areas and the neighborhood to the west of SDSU. Future planning efforts can focus on making getting around without a car safer, more convenient and comfortable, and also more environmentally sustainable.
- The College Area has good access to basic **community facilities** and services, such as health care facilities, libraries, schools, and emergency services; this access supports the health of individuals and families and improves quality of life.
- While the College Area may have multiple access points to healthy foods, within San Diego County as a whole, **food insecurity** remains an issue to be conscientious of in future planning efforts.

