Mid-City Atlas

EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT - MAY 2025

PLAN MID-CITY

Communities Plan Update

The City *of*
SAN DIEGO

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Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

1 Introduction

PLAN MID-CITY
Communities Plan Update

1.1. Overview

The Mid-City Atlas provides a snapshot of existing conditions, challenges and opportunities in the Mid-City planning area, which includes communities of City Heights, Eastern Area, Kensington-Talmadge, and Normal Heights. This Atlas focuses on mappable resources, trends and critical concerns that will frame choices for the long-term physical development of Mid-City communities. The Atlas includes maps, photos, charts and tables about history and place, sustainability, equity and climate resilience, land use and development, mobility, and parks, public facilities and open space. The Atlas will help inform and facilitate:

- Community input on planning issues, priorities and vision for the future;
- Development of alternatives and concepts related to land use, mobility, urban design, public facility, parks and recreation; and
- Formulation of policies and implementation actions for the updated Community Plan.

1.2. Regional Location and Planning Boundaries

REGIONAL LOCATION

The Mid-City planning area is approximately 8,052 acres in area. The Mid-City communities are centrally located in the San Diego region, northeast of downtown, south of Mission Valley, and west of the City of La Mesa, as shown in Figure 1-1. There are four community plan areas within Mid-City: City Heights, Eastern Area, Kensington-Talmadge and Normal Heights. The northern area of Mid-City is bounded by the Interstate 8 (I-8) and the community of College Area; on the west by the Interstate 805 (I-805), State Route 15 (SR-15) and communities of North Park and Greater Golden Hills; on the east by City of La Mesa; and the southern portion is bounded by State Route 94 (SR-94) and communities of Southeastern San Diego and Encanto Neighborhoods (also referred to as Chollas Valley).

PLANNING AREA AND NEIGHBORHOODS

There are 24 neighborhoods (Figure 1-2) within four community plan areas in Mid-City. Neighborhood boundaries are generally defined by major streets, freeways, natural features and the planning area boundary. Table 1-1 shows a list of neighborhoods for each of the four community plan areas.

Examples of neighborhood gateway signs

Table 1-1 Neighborhoods by Community Plan Area

Normal Heights	Kensington-Talmadge
• Adams North • Normal Heights	• Kensington • Talmadge
City Heights	**Eastern Area**
• Corridor • Cherokee Point • Teralta West • Teralta East • Castle • Fairmount Village • Fox Canyon • Colina Del Sol • Chollas Creek • Islenair • Swan Canyon • Azalea/Hollywood Park • Fairmount Park • Ridgeview	• El Cerrito • Rolando • Redwood Village • Rolando Park • Oak Park • Webster

Figure 1-1 Mid-City Regional Location

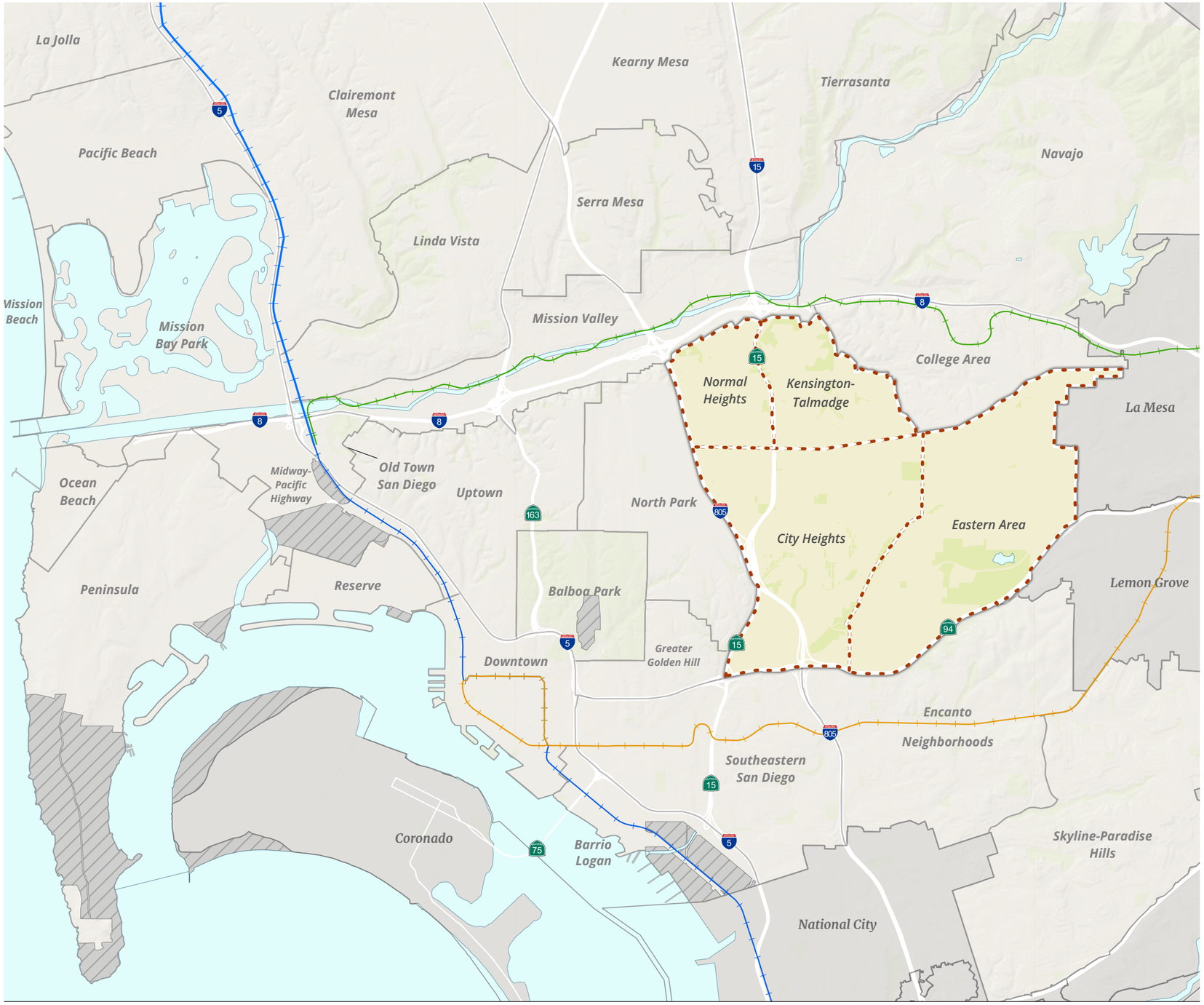
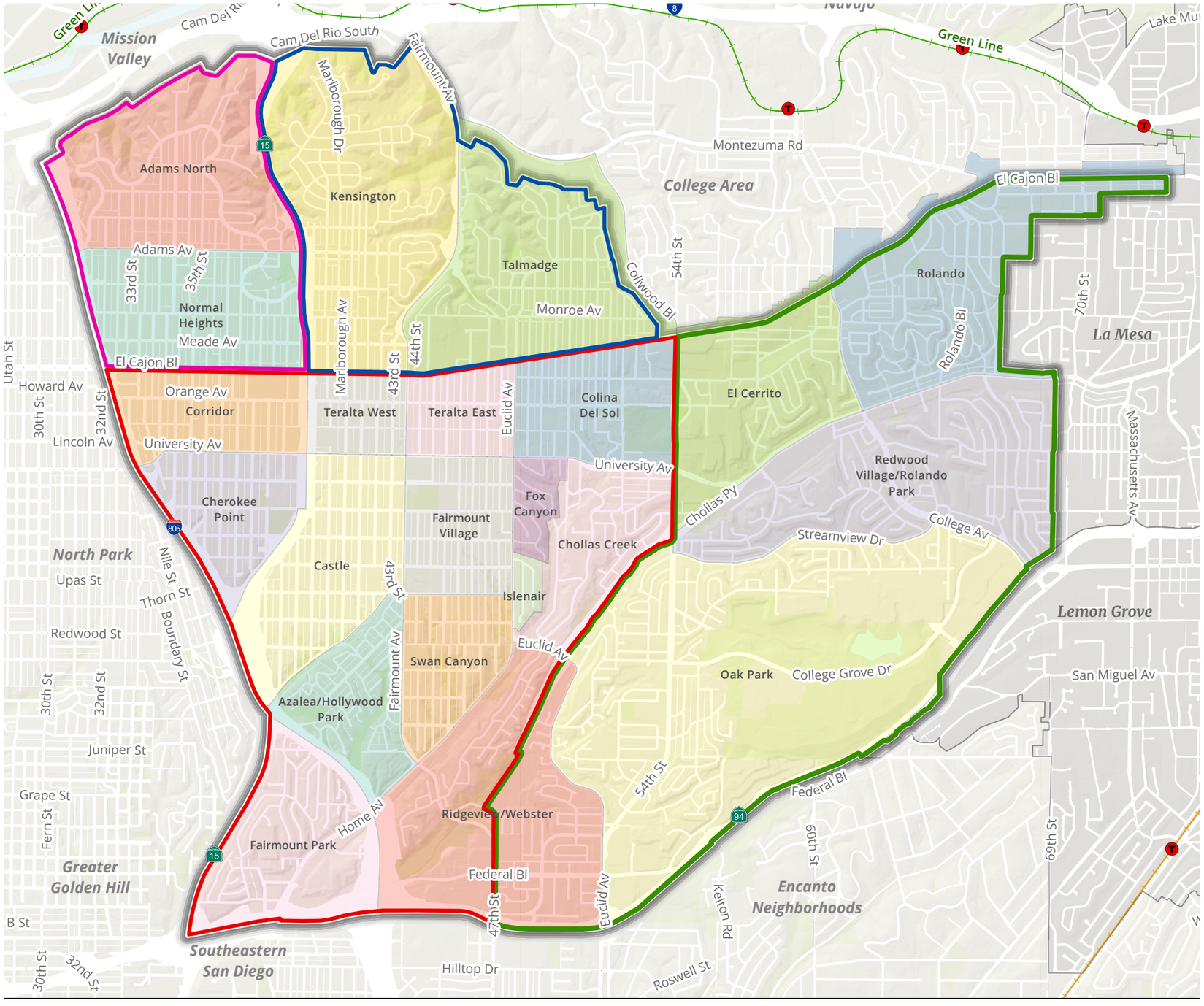


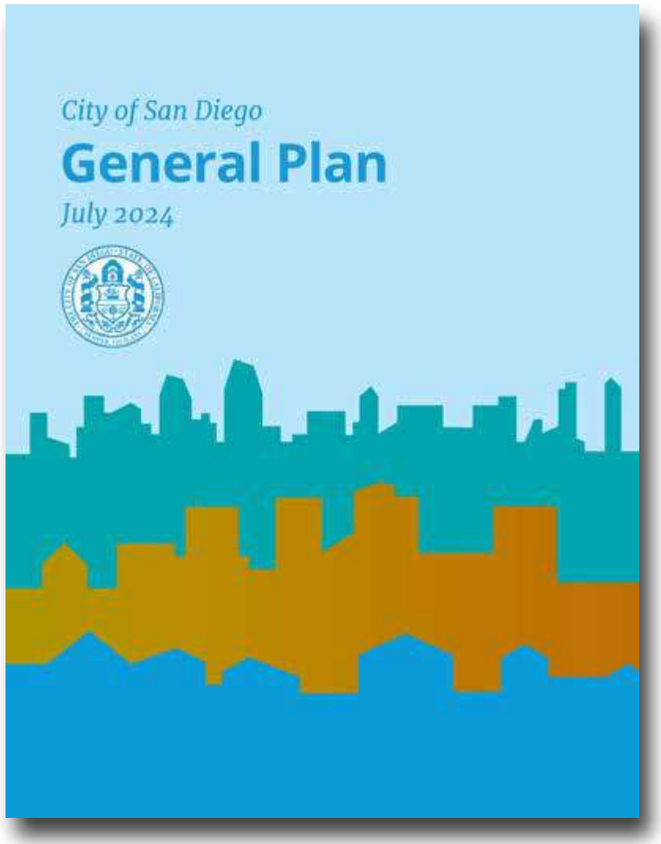
Figure 1-2 Planning Area and Neighborhoods



1.3. Community Plan Purpose and Process

GENERAL PLAN CONTEXT

Adopted in 2024, the City of San Diego General Plan (Blueprint San Diego) outlines the city's growth strategy over the next 20 to 30 years. It establishes a broad vision and development framework, anchored by the "City of Villages" strategy, which promotes pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use centers connected by an improved regional transit system. Blueprint identifies 52 Community Planning Areas citywide, including four Mid-City communities, where community plans guide localized policies and development.



PURPOSE

The current Mid-City Communities Plan provides a detailed framework to guide development in Mid-City. Last adopted in 1998, the community plan has undergone more than three amendments in the intervening years. The amendments from 2003, 2008, and 2015 are highlighted in the current version of the plan. The Community Plan update seeks to bring the Community Plan up-to-date by:

- Analyzing current land use, development and environmental characteristics;
- Evaluating changes in demographics that may affect land use needs;
- Understanding demand for housing, public facility and commercial development;
- Working with community members to determine key issues of concern, desires and preferences to establish a vision and goals for the plan update;
- Evaluating the "fit" of current Communities Plan policies to achieve community goals and regulatory requirements; and
- Ensuring that policies and recommendations remain in harmony with the General Plan, Climate Action Plan, and state mandates.

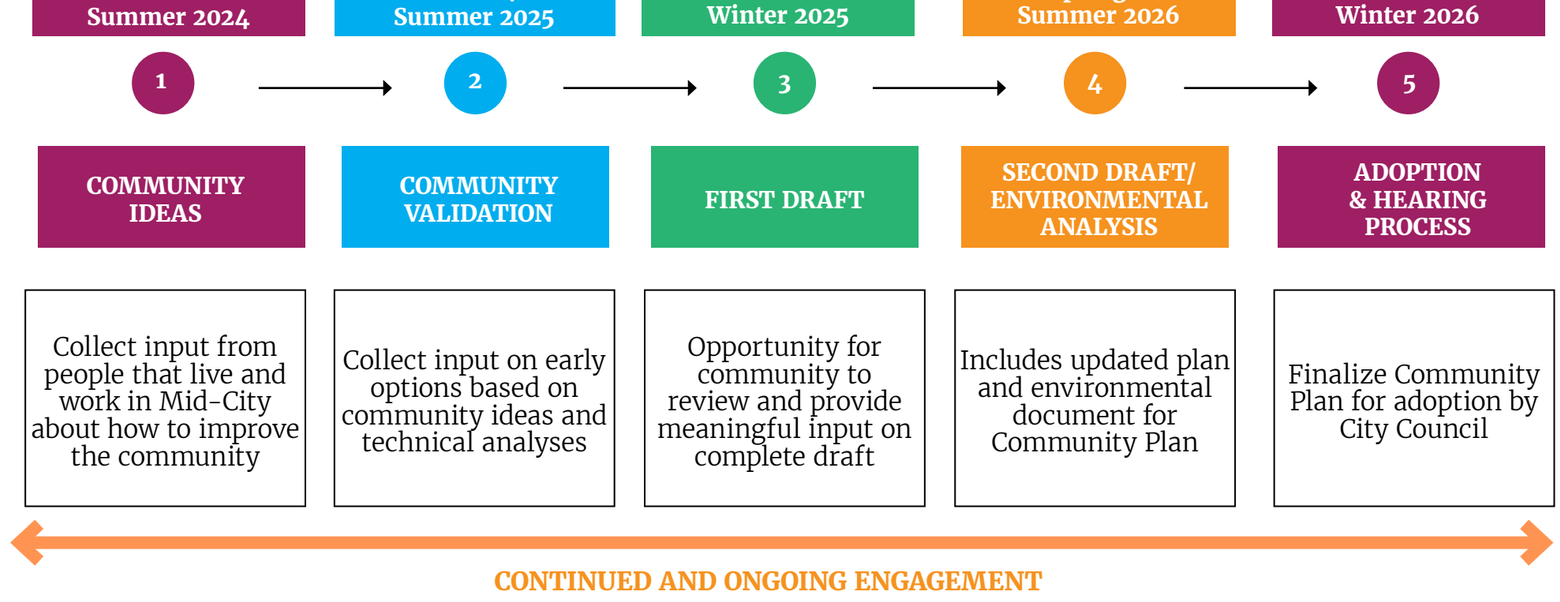
PROCESS

The Community Plan update process will unfold in five phases:

- Phase 1 - Community Ideas
- Phase 2 - Community Validation
- Phase 3 - First Draft
- Phase 4 - Second Draft and Environmental Analysis
- Phase 5 - Adoption and Hearing Process

The Community Plan update process is further shown in Figure 1-3.

Figure 1-3 Community Plan Updates At A Glance



1.4. Overview of Mid-City

HISTORY OF COMMUNITY PLAN

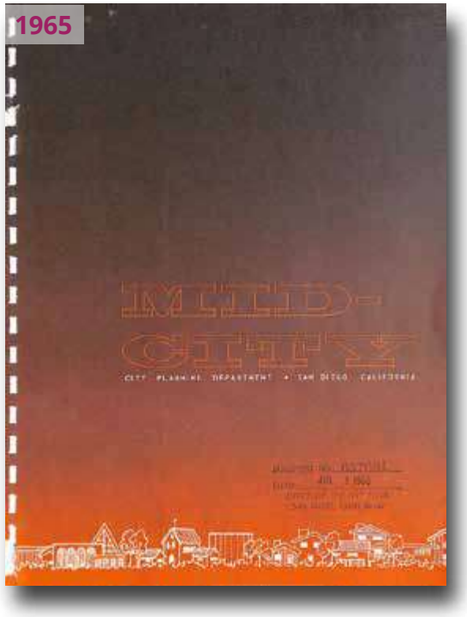
Mid-City includes one of the oldest and most diverse communities in the City of San Diego. Much of the westerly portion of the community was originally developed in the 1910-1930 era, before the Second World War, while development east of 54th Street generally occurred in the post-World War II period. El Cajon Boulevard was once the main east-west highway for the region (Highway 80), with a concentration of economic activity, until Interstate 8 (I-8) was built in the late 1950s.

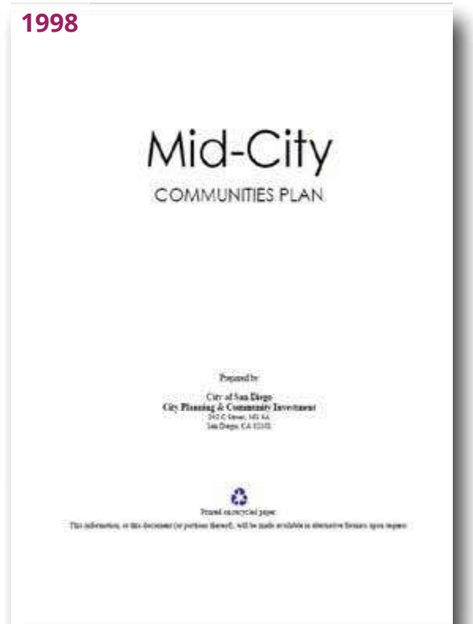
One of the first community plans developed in the city of San Diego was the 1965 Mid-City Development Plan, which encouraged more growth in Mid-City and proposed commercial clustering and dense housing near parks.

In 1981, the City of San Diego Planning Department initiated a comprehensive update of the community plan in collaboration with the community planning groups, which City Council adopted in December 1984. The 1984 plan envisioned a significant parkland expansion leading to the first-of-its-kind four-acre park over State Route 15.

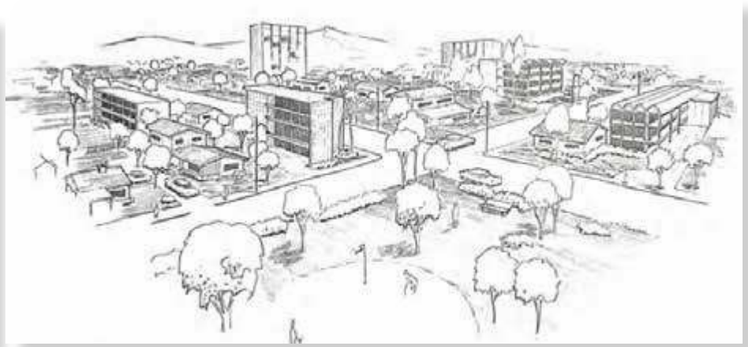
In 1998, a new update to the Mid-City Communities Plan was adopted by City Council. The 1998 community plan significantly reduced residential densities along Adams Avenue, El Cajon Boulevard, and University Avenue due to the need for adequate community facilities and the overcrowding of schools. The plan proposed future growth in urban villages, encouraging community investments and celebrating cultural diversity through placemaking.

History of Mid-City Community Plans

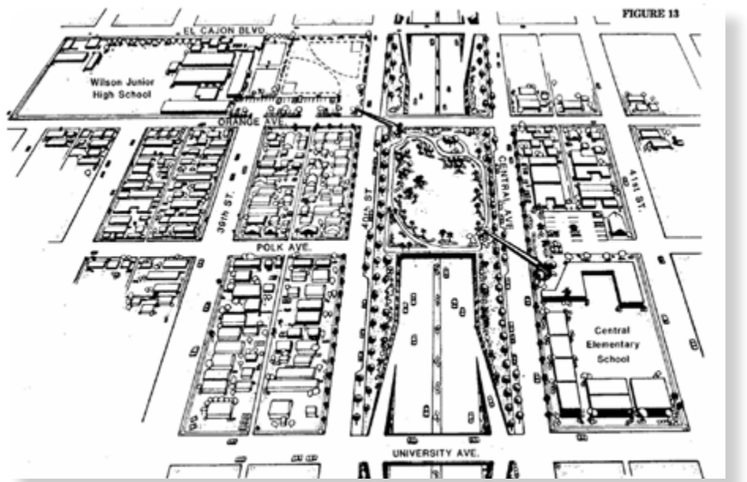




Rendering of commercial clustering (1965)



Rendering of dense housing near a park (1965)



Rendering of capping SR-15 to create a park (1984)

1.5. Progress and Trends

RAPID GROWTH

The Mid-City saw rapid growth between 1980 to 2000, adding 47,895 residents while only building 6,262 homes during the 20 year period (Figure 1-4). Large infusion of immigrant communities to Mid-City occurred during this time. Consequently, the rapid population growth outpaced home building and the delivery of community facilities including schools, libraries, parks, and infrastructure.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT VIA DOWNZONING

The Mid-City Communities Plan (1998) significantly reduced the opportunity for new homes due to inadequate community facilities. The previous plans and rezoning actions reduced the Mid-City's zoned capacity by over 40,000 homes along major commercial corridors and neighborhoods. The implementation of the current plan also created additional development requirements via the Central Urbanized Planned District.

POPULATION PEAK AND DECLINE

After the downzoning action from the 1998 community plan, the population in Mid-City peaked in 2000 at 146,394 people (Figure 1-4). Since 2000, the population of Mid-City has declined by 8.8%, while the City of San Diego saw a 14.4% increase in population (Table 1-2). Compared to 2000, in 2023, there are 12,835 fewer people estimated to be living in Mid-City.

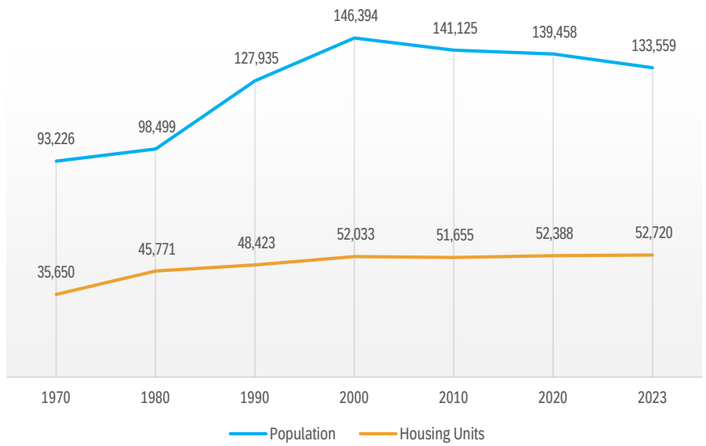
POPULATION CHANGE BY AGE

Figure 1-5 illustrates the Mid-City Population Change between 2000 to 2023 by age group. There are fewer young people (under 40) living in Mid-City today, while there has been a significant percentage increase of older people (50 to 79). The most considerable percent decrease in age cohort were children under 10, with a 37% decline, while those aged 60 to 69 saw a 110% increase compared to year 2000. The impact of fewer children and youth help explain the 37% decline in student enrollment at San Diego Unified School District from 2000 to 2024 (Figure 6-3).

POPULATION CHANGE BY RACE/ETHNICITIES

Figure 1-6 illustrates the population change in Mid-City between 2000 and 2023 by race/ethnicity. The most significant percentage decreases occurred in the American Indian, Black, and All Other cohorts, with declines of 54%, 31%, and 17%, respectively.

Figure 1-4 Mid-City Population and Housing Growth



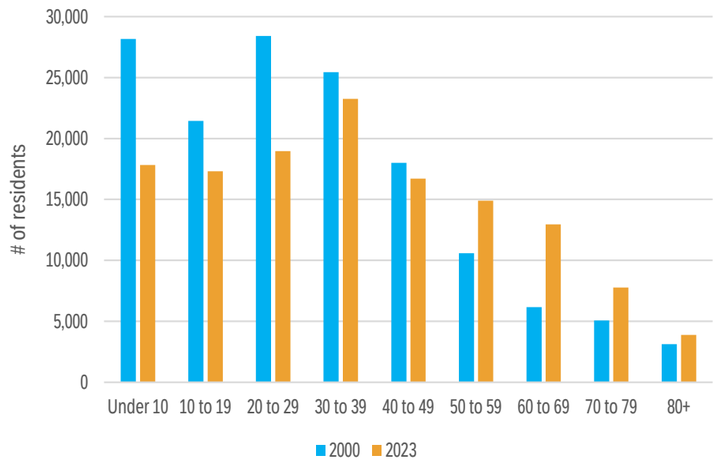
Source: Mid-City Community Plan (1984); Mid-City Communities Plan (1998); SANDAG (2000, 2010, 2020, 2023) Data Extracted on 02/2025

Table 1-2 City of San Diego and Mid-City Population Change: 2000 to 2023

	2000	2023	% Change
City of San Diego	1,209,101	1,383,623	14.4%
Mid-City	146,394	133,559	-8.8%

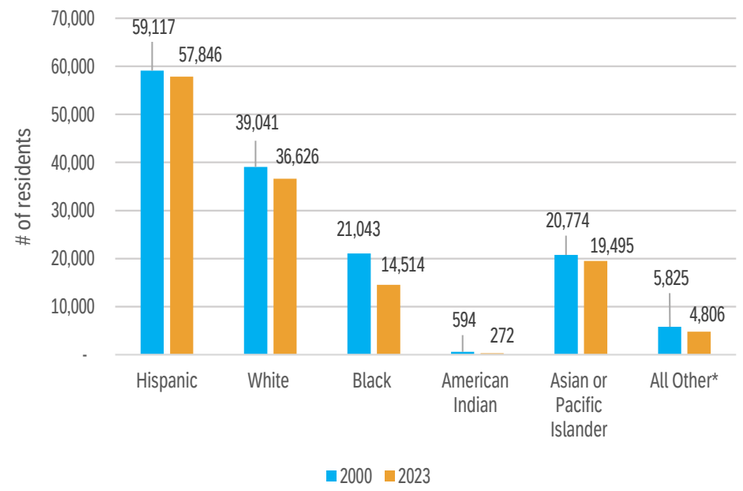
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, SANDAG & City of San Diego; Data Extracted on 02/2025

Figure 1-5 Mid-City Population Change by Age



Source: SANDAG (2000, 2023) Data Extracted on 02/2025

Figure 1-6 Mid-City Population Change by Race/Ethnicities



Source: SANDAG (2000, 2023); City of San Diego; Data Extracted on 02/2025

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Since 2000, the number of households making more than $100,000 have increased substantially. Table 1-3 shows the changes in the number of households by income level between 2000 and 2023. Households making $150,000 or more saw the most significant percentage increase (401%), followed by those making $100,000 to $149,999 (337%) and households making $75,000 to $99,999 (164%). The share of households with income of less than $30,000 saw a 58% decline, followed by a 28% decline of those making $30,000 to $59,999.

COST OF HOMES

Despite the overall increase in Mid-City household income, the average home value has grown by 2.5 times more than the average household income in Mid-City. Between 2000 and 2023, average home value increased by 339% compared to a 134% increase in average household income. Breaking down the data by home type—single-family homes versus condos/co-ops—the trend remains clear, with average home values growing much faster than average household incomes over the past two decades. From 2000 to 2023, the average single-family home value increased by 319%, while average condo/co-op values rose by 473%. The most significant disparity is in the condo/co-op market, where average values have increased 3.5 times faster than the average household income in Mid-City (Table 1-4).

Meanwhile, homebuilding did not keep pace with job and population growth in San Diego, with a regional housing shortage estimated to be between 90,000 to 100,000 homes.[1] There are approximately 33,000 homes in downtown San Diego. The regional housing shortage equates to 3 downtown worth of homes. Recent research suggests restrictive land use and zoning (lowering allowed densities) are associated with increased median rents and reduction in units affordable to middle-income renters.[2]

OVER $2 BILLION IN COMMUNITY INVESTMENTS

Since 1998, Mid-City has seen over $2 billion in community investments, which is highlighted below:

- **City Heights Initiatives** - the Price Philanthropies Foundation has directly invested or leveraged over $212 million to support community revitalization such as City Heights Urban Village.
- **School Facilities** - San Diego Unified School District has invested over $614 million to modernize school facilities.
- **Capital Improvement Program** (CIP) - over $1 billion in streets, water, sewer, stormwater, parks and other public facility projects have been recently completed, ongoing and/or scheduled to begin in Mid-City. For more detailed information on CIP projects in Mid-City, please visit Appendix G.
- **Street, Bike and Transit Infrastructure** - the SR-15 Mid-City Centerline Rapid Transit project was completed in 2016 ($65 million), San Diego's first freeway-level transit stations along State Route 15 (SR-15) at University Avenue and El Cajon Boulevard. Several Bikeway Investments ($200 million) have been implemented to improve the street, drainage and bike facilities in Mid-City, which is further explored in Chapter 5.

The combination of place-based investment, support for community-based organizations, and community advocacy appears to be making an impact to bring in community investment into the Mid-City planning area. A detailed breakdown of these projects is available in Appendices.

STATE-OF-THE-ART COMMUNITY FACILITIES

In addition, Mid-City has also witnessed the opening of two state-of-the-art community facilities since 1998 through philanthropic efforts:

- **Salvation Army Ray and Joan Kroc Community Center -** the 132,000 square-foot facility located on 12 acres along University Avenue in Eastern Area officially opened in 2002. The state of the art facility comes with a fully-equipped theatre, aquatic center, ice arena, fitness center & group exercise, and recreation field.
- **Copley-Price Family YMCA** - the biggest YMCA facility in San Diego County officially open its door in 2015. The 53,000 square-foot facility on El Cajon Boulevard and Fairmount Avenue comes with two pools, a teen center, child care, a basketball gymnasium, and a wellness center complete with exercise studio.

Since 1998, Mid-City has changed significantly. Although the City of San Diego is facing a major infrastructure funding deficit, and more investment to maintain and improve infrastructure is still needed in Mid-City, it is encouraging to see all the recent and ongoing community investments to improve and enhance the Mid-City planning area.

Table 1-3 Mid-City Population Household Income: 2000 to 2023

Household Income	2000	2023	% Change
< $30,000	25,609	10,870	-58%
$30,000 to $59,999	15,711	11,235	-28%
$60,000 to $74,999	3,255	5,043	55%
$75,000 to $99,999	2,677	7,067	164%
$100,000 to $149,999	1,810	7,909	337%
$150,000 or more	1,140	5,708	401%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, SANDAG & City of San Diego; Data Extracted on 02/2025

Table 1-4 Mid-City Mean Home Value and Mean Household Income: 2000 to 2023

Mean	2000	2023	% Change
Household Income	$40,879	$95,731	134%
All Home Value (SF, Condo/Co-op)	$178,614	$784,372	339%
Single-Family Home Value	$205,875	$861,727	319%
Condo/Co-op Home Value	$80,872	$463,108	473%

Source: Household Income – 2000 Census & 2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates; Home Value – Zillow Home Value Index 2000 & 2023 for ZIP Code 92105, 92115 & 92116; Data Extracted on 03/2025

1 https://www.axios.com/local/san-diego/2024/01/09/san-diego-housing-shortage-chart

2 Stacy, C., Davis, C., Freemark, Y. S., Lo, L., MacDonald, G., Zheng, V., & Pendall, R. (2023). Land-use reforms and housing costs: Does allowing for increased density lead to greater affordability? Urban Studies, 60(14), 2919-2940. https://doi.org/10.1177/00420980231159500

CURRENT DEMOGRAPHIC

Compared to the city of San Diego, Mid-City has a higher percentage of people 19 and under and lower percentage of people 60 and over (Figure 1-7). Average household size is larger in City Heights and Eastern Area compared to city of San Diego (Figure 1-8).

The median household income in Mid-City ranges from $56,113 in City Heights to $104,927 in Kensington-Talmadge, which is slightly higher compared to city of San Diego (Figure 1-9).

As shown in Figure 1-10, the largest income group in Mid-City communities comprises households earning $75,000 to $99,999, with the second-largest group comprising households earning between $15,000 and $29,000. Compared to the city of San Diego, City Heights has a higher percentage of households with annual income less than $55,999 dollars, while Kensington-Talmadge has a higher percentage of household with annual income of more than $125,000.

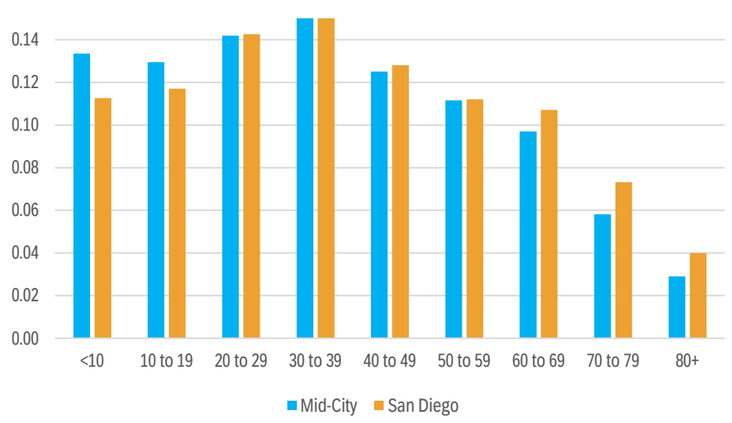
As shown in Figure 1-11, Mid-City is a diverse community. Hispanic represents 31 to 49 percent of the population across the four communities in Mid-City, while Non-Hispanic white makes up 20 to 44 percent of the population. Asian & Pacific Islander constitute 6 to 17 percent of the population and Black constitute 6 to 14 percent, while two or more races constitute 3 to 4 percent.

As shown in Figure 1-12, 65 percent of occupants in Mid-City are renters compared to 52 percent for the City of San Diego. Overall, 35 percent of homes are owner-occupied in Mid-City, compared to 48 percent citywide.

The majority of homes in Eastern Area (60 percent) and Kensington-Talmadge (60 percent) are single-family homes while homes in City Heights (56 percent) and Normal Heights (54 percent) are majority multifamily homes (Figure 1-13). Overall, 3 percent of homes in Eastern Area are mobile homes.

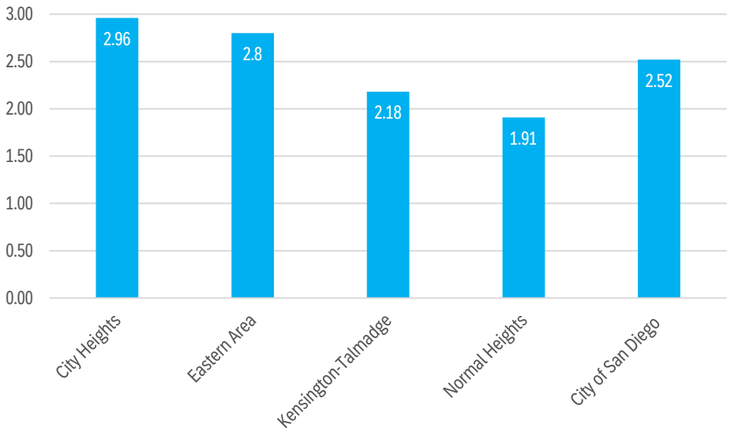
Many languages are spoken in the Mid-City (Figure 1-14). Over 30 percent of City Heights residents over the age of 5 have a limited English language ability, followed by 19 percent in Eastern Area, 12 percent in Kensington-Talmadge, and 10 percent in Normal Heights.

Figure 1-7 Age Groups, Mid-City and San Diego



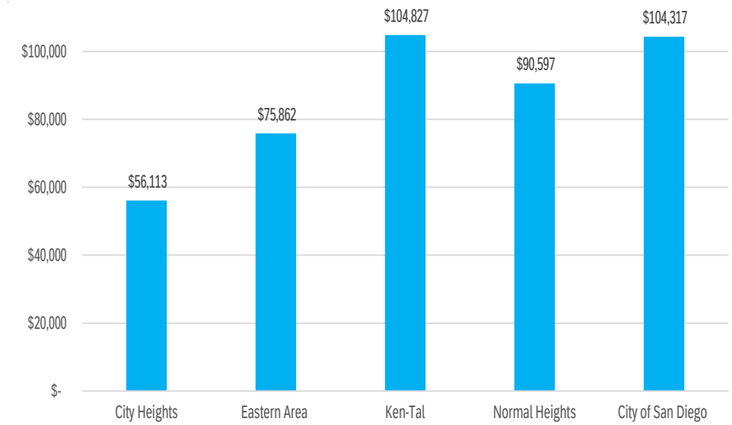
Source: SANDAG, 2023 Estimates (Data Extracted on 02/2025).

Figure 1-8 Household Size, Mid-City Communities and San Diego



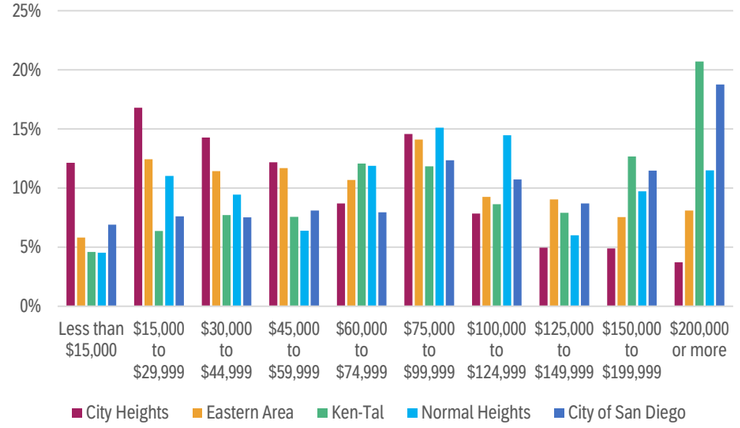
Source: SANDAG, 2023 Estimates (Data Extracted on 02/2025).

Figure 1-9 Median Household Income, Mid-City Communities and San Diego



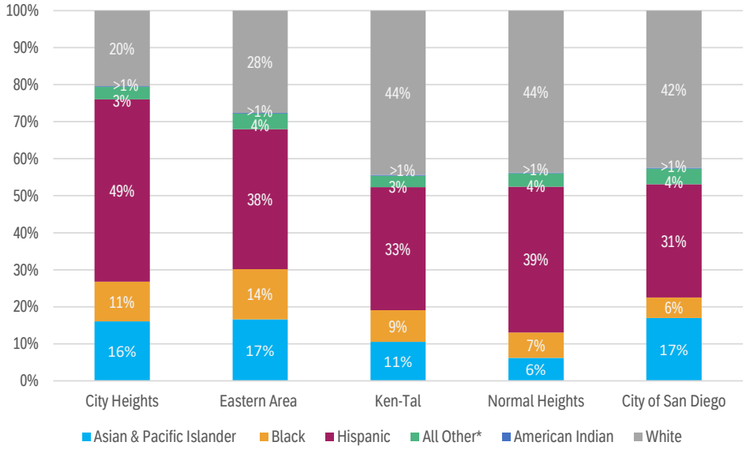
Source: SANDAG, 2023 Estimates (Data Extracted on 02/2025).

Figure 1-10 Household Income by Category, Mid-City Communities and San Diego



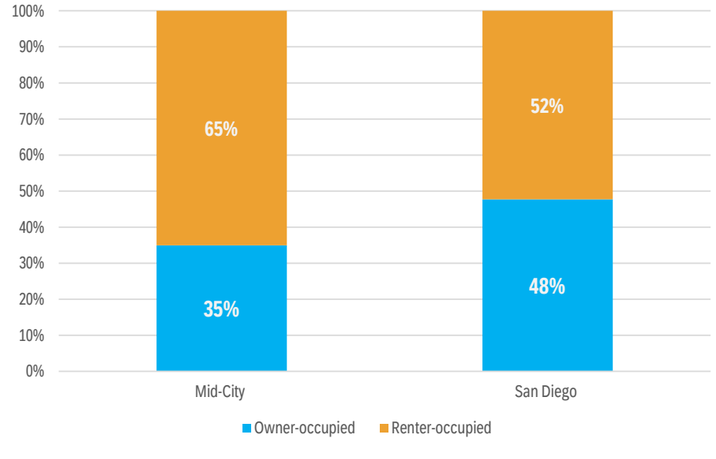
Source: SANDAG, 2023 Estimates (Data Extracted on 02/2025).

Figure 1-11 Race/Ethnicity, Mid-City Communities and San Diego



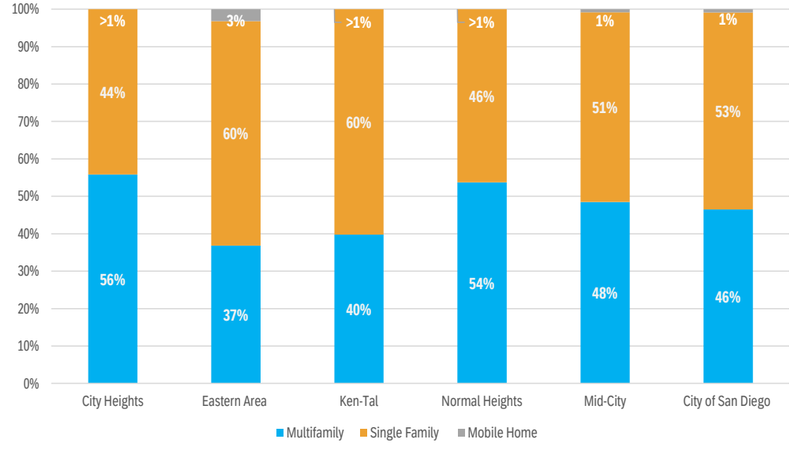
Source: SANDAG, 2023 Estimates (Data Extracted on 02/2025).

Figure 1-12 Household Occupancy Status (%), Mid-City and San Diego



Source: ACS 2019-2023 (Data Extracted on 03/2025).

Figure 1-13 Housing Type (%), Mid-City Communities and San Diego



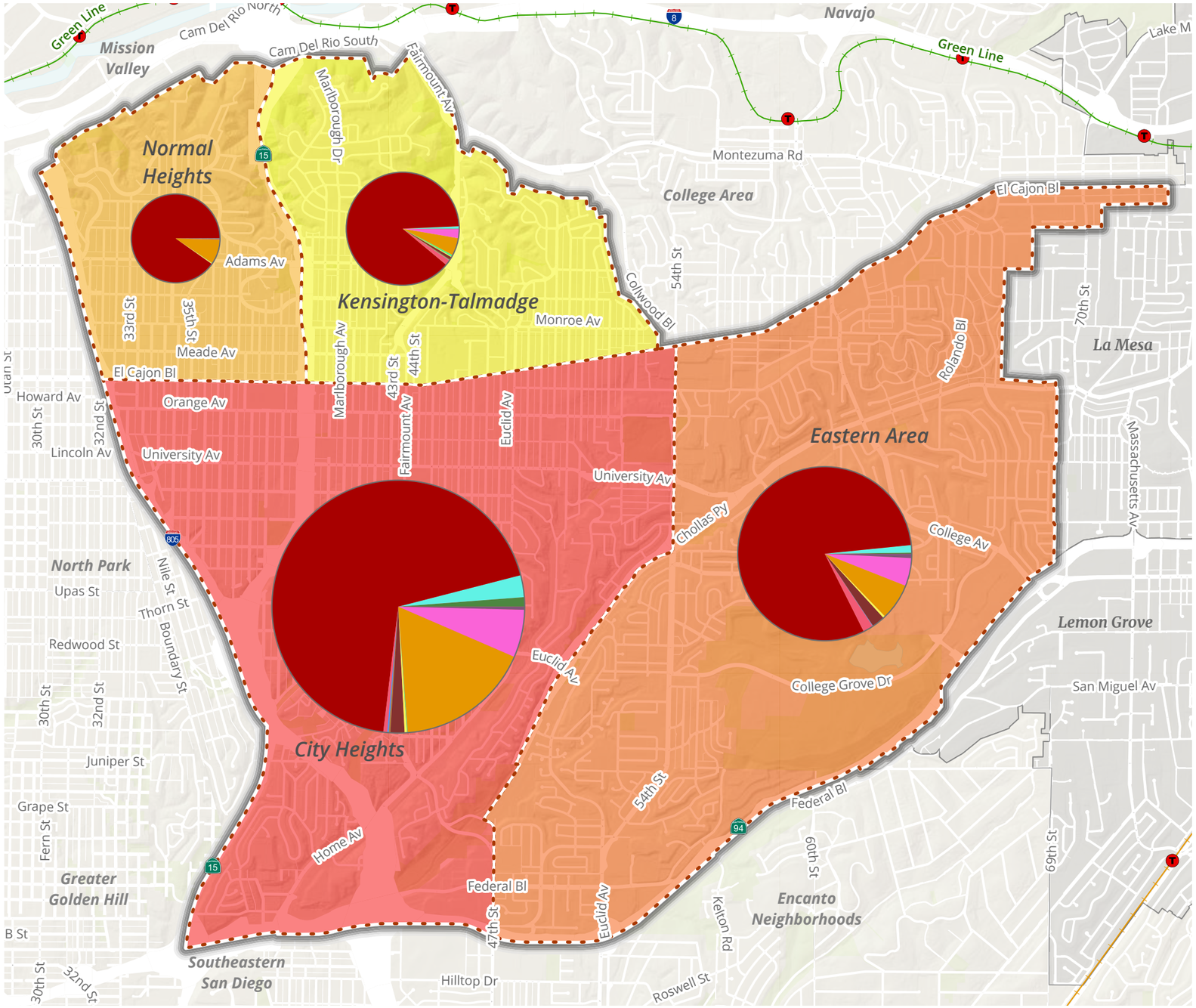
Source: SANDAG, 2023 Estimates (Data Extracted on 02/2025).

Youth in Mid-City

Family enjoying the Lunar New Year Festival

Multifamily housing bordering Talmadge

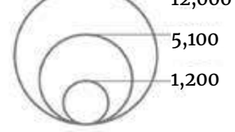
Figure 1-14 Language Spoken



Language Categories

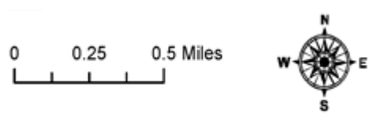
- Arabic
- Asian and Pacific Island languages
- English
- Chinese (#incl Mandarin, Cantonese)
- French, Haitian or Cajun
- German or other West Germanic languages
- Korean
- Other and unspecified languages
- Other Indo European languages
- Russian, Polish or other Slavic languages
- Spanish
- Vietnamese
- Tagalog (incl# Filipino)

Total Population 5 years and over



Percent of population 5+ who have limited English ability

- Kensington-Talmadge: 11.9%
- Normal Heights: 9.9%
- Eastern Area: 19.2%
- City Heights: 30.9%



City of San Diego, SANGIS, SANDAG

FAITH-BASED INSTITUTIONS

Faith-based spaces are integral to Mid-City's social and cultural fabric, serving as places of worship and hubs for social support, education and community services. The area is home to a diverse range of religious institutions, including churches, mosques, temples and other spiritual centers.

These spaces are distributed across all four communities, with the highest concentration in City Heights. Many faith-based institutions offer services, events and outreach in multiple languages. They also play a key social role, hosting food drives, operating food pantries and childcare programs and providing resources such as identification vouchers.

Nhu Lai Thien Tu

Masjid Al-Ansar

Our Lady of Kazan

Kensington Community Church

Iglesia Remanente

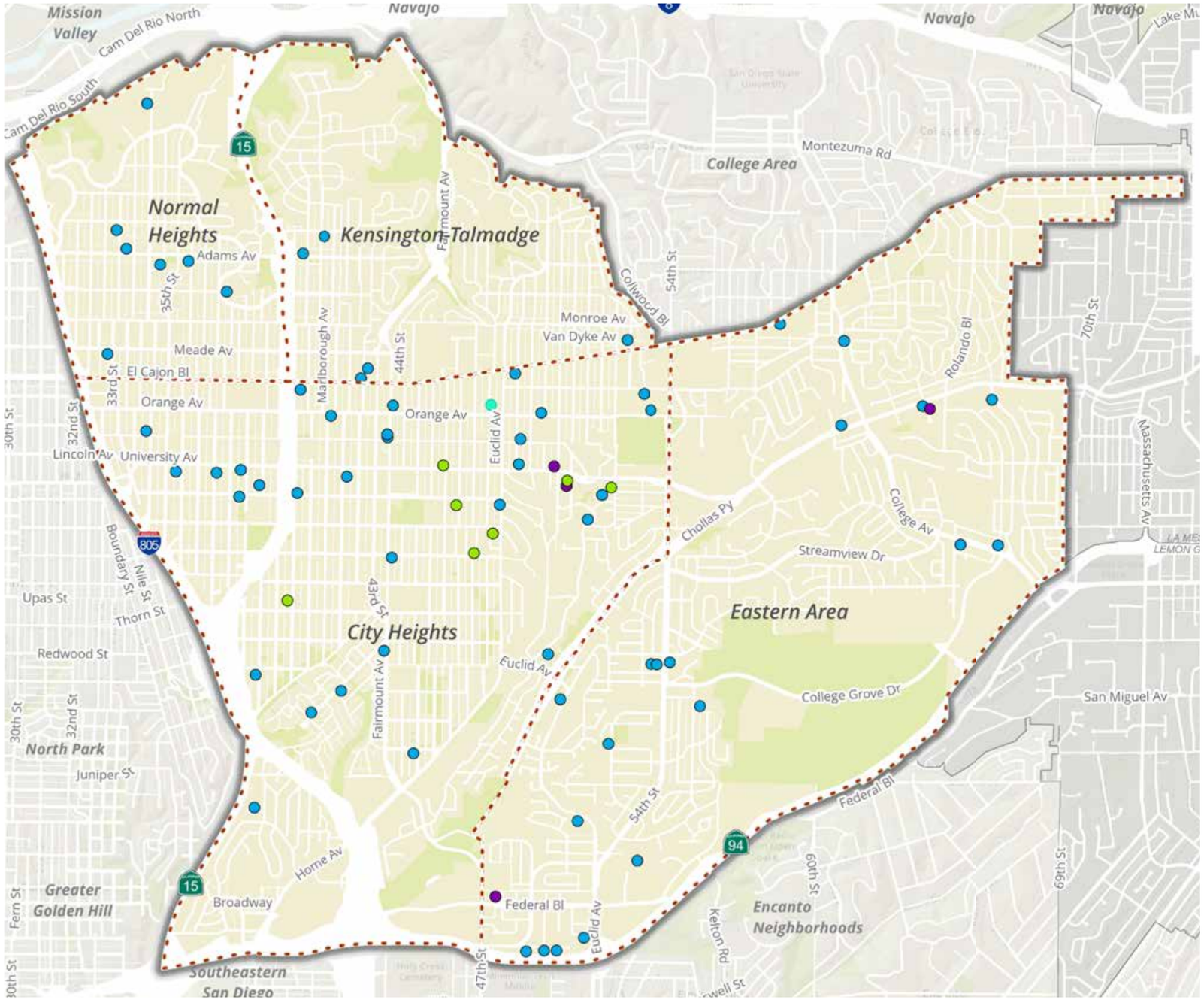
Holy Spirit Catholic Church

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart

Carmelite Monastery

Wat Sovannkiri

Figure 1-15 Faith-based Spaces



Faith-Based Spaces

- Church
- Mosque
- Temple

1.6. Existing Plans and Regulatory Framework

GENERAL PLAN (BLUEPRINT SD)

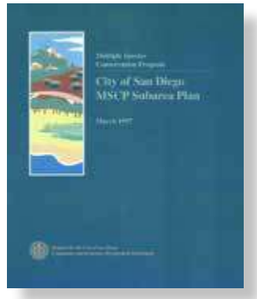
Adopted in 2024, the City of San Diego General Plan (Blueprint San Diego) outlines the city's growth strategy over the next 20 to 30 years. It establishes a broad vision and development framework, anchored by the "City of Villages" strategy, which promotes pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use centers connected by an improved regional transit system.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ELEMENT

The Environmental Justice Element (EJE) is a new element added to the General Plan with the purpose of setting goals, policies and implementation measures focused on advancing environmental justice in our city.

The purpose of the EJE is to identify and reduce unique or compounded health risks in our city with a focus on disadvantaged communities. Priorities outlined in the EJE will be reflected in community plans, City Council policies, infrastructure priorities and facility improvement programs, as well as annual City budgets that work together with the General Plan to advance improvements in neighborhoods throughout San Diego.

MULTIPLE SPECIES CONSERVATION PROGRAM



The Multiple Species Conservation Program Subarea Plan (MSCP) was developed to preserve a network of habitat and open space and enhance the region's quality of life. The MSCP covers core biological resource areas identified as the City's Multi-Habitat Planning Areas (MHPA).
The MHPA is the area within the City from which the permanent MSCP preserve is assembled and managed for its biological resources. For areas within Mid-City designated and protected as part of the citywide MHPA or adjacent to the MHPA, MSCP compliance is required.

LIBRARY MASTER PLAN

The Library Master Plan (LMP), adopted in 2023, is a long-range guide for future City investment in library spaces and facilities. It is intended to build on and supersede the City's previous Library Building Plan, which has driven new and expanded library facilities for more than 20 years. The Community Plan Update will incorporate the recommendation from the LMP.

CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

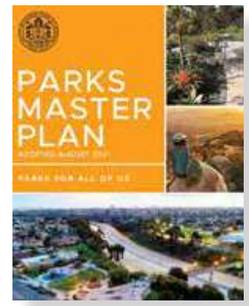
The San Diego Climate Action Plan, most recently updated in 2022, establishes a city-wide goal of net zero by 2035.

The Climate Action Plan (CAP) provides strategies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions through local action. The Community Plan Update will help facilitate the implementation of the CAP.

CLIMATE RESILIENT SD

Climate Resilient SD serves as the City's comprehensive plan to prepare for and respond to climate change hazards that threaten our communities, including wildfires, drought, extreme heat, and flooding. Long range plans such as Community Plans support and integrate climate adaptation, resilience, and hazard mitigation, and ensure minimal disruption to all critical City services in the face of climate change hazards.

PARKS MASTER PLAN



The Parks Master Plan (PMP) identifies policies, actions, and partnerships for planning parks, recreation facilities, and programs that reflect the vision of a world-class Citywide network of recreational experiences to engage, inspire, and connect all San Diegans. A park standard, Recreational-Value Based Park Standard, is also established in the PMP and it evaluates and assigns scores to regional assets during community plan updates.

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, including application of the Community Plan Implementation Overlay Zone. All development within the community must comply with regulations set forth in the LDC.

MOBILITY MASTER PLAN

The Mobility Master Plan is a comprehensive transportation planning effort to create a balanced, equitable, and sustainable mobility system for the City of San Diego. It combines community, mode, and objective-specific planning into one comprehensive document to prioritize mobility projects and to identify programs that have the largest benefit in our communities and on the environment. Additionally, the Mobility Master Plan ensures that Citywide mobility initiatives support investments in areas with the greatest needs, promotes Vision Zero, and advances the goals of the Climate Action Plan and the General Plan.

The Mobility Master Plan focuses on projects, programs and actions that help make walking, rolling, bicycling, and using transit more convenient, efficient, and affordable.

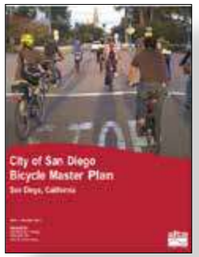
CREATIVE CITY

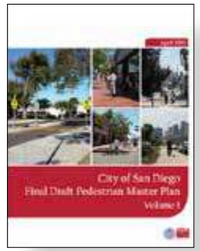
Creative City is a comprehensive cultural plan to advance arts, culture, and creativity for all San Diegans. This plan articulates a collective vision and outlines specific goals, strategies, and actionable steps to sustain and enhance San Diego's creative sector. It is aligned with the City's strategic priorities, emphasizing the vital role of the creative sector in shaping our city. Additionally, it establishes a strong policy framework to foster the growth and development of arts and culture in our neighborhoods and the broader transborder region, ultimately positioning San Diego as a global creative hub.

OTHER CITYWIDE AND COMMUNITY DOCUMENTS

Other documents that inform the Mid-City CPU include San Diego County Food Vision 2030, Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan, City of San Diego's Pedestrian Master Plan, Bicycle Master Plan, Street Design Manual and Urban Forestry Management Plan.

The list of existing Mid-City related studies and plans is available in Appendices.





PURPLE LINE CONCEPTUAL PLANNING STUDY - SANDAG

SANDAG commissioned a study to assess the feasibility of the Purple Line, a key regional transit line that will provide needed transit service and connectivity between the southern and central portions of the region called the Purple Line Conceptual Planning Study (Study), its purpose is to provide a high level assessment of the overall engineering feasibility, construction, operations and maintenance, cost estimates, as well as anticipated opportunities and challenges associated with project implementation. The goal for the Purple Line is to offer more transit options to the tens of thousands of San Diego and South Bay residents and relieve congestion along the I-805 and parallel corridors.[1]

1 https://www.sandag.org/projects-and-programs/transit/transit-projects/purple-line

1.7. Concurrent Planning Initiatives

CHOLLAS CREEK WATERSHED MASTER PLAN

The Chollas Creek Watershed is a vital natural resource encompassing a network of water channels, parks and surrounding open space. The watershed stretches across the neighborhoods of City Heights, Eastern Area, Encanto, Southeastern San Diego, Barrio Logan, Greater Golden Hill, North Park and Normal Heights. The watershed plays a crucial role in maintaining the region's ecological balance and providing essential habitat for numerous plant and animal species as well as providing opportunities for community-serving recreation.

The Chollas Creek Master Plan will be a long-term planning document developed by the City of San Diego in partnership with various stakeholders and community members to guide the sustainable future of Chollas Creek Watershed as a regional park. The goals of the Master Plan are to protect and enhance the Chollas Creek Watershed's ecology; improve the watershed's sustainability and resilience to the impacts of climate change; increase recreational opportunities; improve walking/rolling and biking within the watershed and adjacent to neighborhoods; and foster a sense of ownership and connection to the Creek among community members. By working hand in hand with the diverse communities and stakeholders within the watershed, the Chollas Creek Master Plan will address the needs and aspirations of the community members while creating a sustainable and resilient watershed.

COLLEGE AREA CPU

The City of San Diego is updating the College Area Community Plan, last updated and adopted in 1989. The update will consider current conditions, Citywide goals within the Climate Action Plan, the General Plan, the City's Strategic Plan, and community-specific goals to shape what the community looks like into the future.

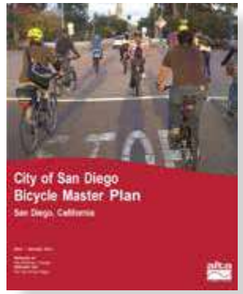
PLAN
COLLEGE AREA

HERITAGE PRESERVATION PROGRAM

The Preservation and Progress initiative is a comprehensive update to the City's Heritage Preservation Program that will streamline processes for new homes and other uses while protecting places of historic, architectural and cultural importance and encouraging their adaptive reuse.

The primary purpose of the City's Heritage Preservation Program is to identify and protect the places that matter to our collective history, while allowing those places to evolve to continue to meet our needs as a growing city. In doing so, the program allows us to navigate change, not stop it, so places can evolve while keeping what makes them most meaningful.

BICYCLE MASTER PLAN



The Bicycle Master Plan Update (BMPU) is a citywide effort that will result in an overarching update to the 2013 Bicycle Master Plan. The BMPU will refresh the City's bicycle facility recommendations and prioritization of active transportation projects to meet the City's Strategic Plan and Climate Action Plan goals with increased emphasis on equity and serving areas with the greatest needs.

TRAILS MASTER PLAN

The Citywide Trails Master Plan was identified in the Parks Master Plan as a critical implementation item. This plan will guide the equitable and environmentally responsible development, enhancement and construction of existing and new trails throughout the City. The Master Plan will also guide its close interaction and synergy with open space planning and conservation, in compliance with the City's Multiple Species Conservation Program. In addition to trails within the City's open space, the Trails Master Plan will also include urban pathways and other community connections.

1.8. Introduction Summary

This section summarizes the key information for the Mid-City planning area presented in this chapter.

- The Mid-City planning area includes four communities: **City Heights, Eastern Area, Kensington-Talmadge, and Normal Heights.**
- Mid-City is approximately **8,052 acres** in area and is centrally located in the San Diego metro area, **northeast of downtown**.
- The Community Plan Update will **incorporate community input** in the recommended changes to the Community Plan, which acts as a detailed framework that guides development in Mid-City.
- Mid-City includes some of the **oldest communities in the City of San Diego**.
- After the downzoning action from the 1998 community plan, the **population peaked in 2000**, and growth stabilized from 2000 to 2020.
- Compared to 2000, there are **fewer young people** (under 40) and **fewer Black, White and American Indian** people living in Mid-City today.
- The share of **households making more than $100,000 has increased substantially**, compared to 2000, in Mid-City today.
- The increase in **household income has not kept pace with the increase in home value** in Mid-City.
- Since 1998, Mid-City has seen **over $2 billion in community investments** and the opening of two state-of-the-art community facilities.
- Compared to the city of San Diego, Mid-City has a **higher percentage of people 19 and under and lower percentage of people 60 and over.**
- The **largest income group** in Mid-City communities comprises **households earning $75,000 to $99,999.**
- Mid-City is a **diverse community** with people speaking many languages**.**
- The majority of homes in **Eastern Area and Kensington-Talmadge** are **single-family homes** while homes in **City Heights and Normal Heights** are **majority multifamily homes.**

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2 History & Place

2.1. Introduction

OVERVIEW

The planning area contains some of the oldest communities in the City of San Diego. Neighborhood development began on the west side of the planning area in the 1910's and moved east, where most of the development east of 54th Street generally occurred in the post-World War II period. The neighborhood layout, block patterns, and building typologies reflect this history, creating an area diverse in setting and context. This chapter outlines this history and it's influence on the physical form of the community.

TOPOGRAPHY AND SETTING

Mid-City is bound on the north by steep hillsides that rim Mission Valley and Grantville, as well as the College Area. The western and west-central portion of the planning area is located on a central mesa, punctuated by a network of canyons. Bound by the I-805 freeway to the west, and SR 94 freeway to the south, these freeways form a combination of natural and man-made edges to the community, limiting connectivity. To the east, the Eastern Area community is characterized by varied topography as well as the Chollas Park and the Chollas Reservoir as part of the Chollas Creek Watershed.

Important natural features shown on Figure 2-1 include:

- Mission Valley
- Chollas Creek Canyon, Chollas Creek, and Chollas Resevoir
- Talmadge Canyon
- Fairmount Canyon
- Devils Sandbox Canyon
- Manzanita Canyon
- Swan Canyon
- 47th Street Canyon

The land form and canyon system contributes significantly to the sense of place and forms a backdrop of open space, with a number of accessible hiking trails and canyons such as the City Heights Canyons Loop Trail, Manzanita Canyon Open Space Trail, North Chollas Loop Trail, Chollas Lake Loop Trail, Azalea Park Canyon Trail, and Shamrock Canyon. However, many of the canyons are not accessible, or are located on private property.

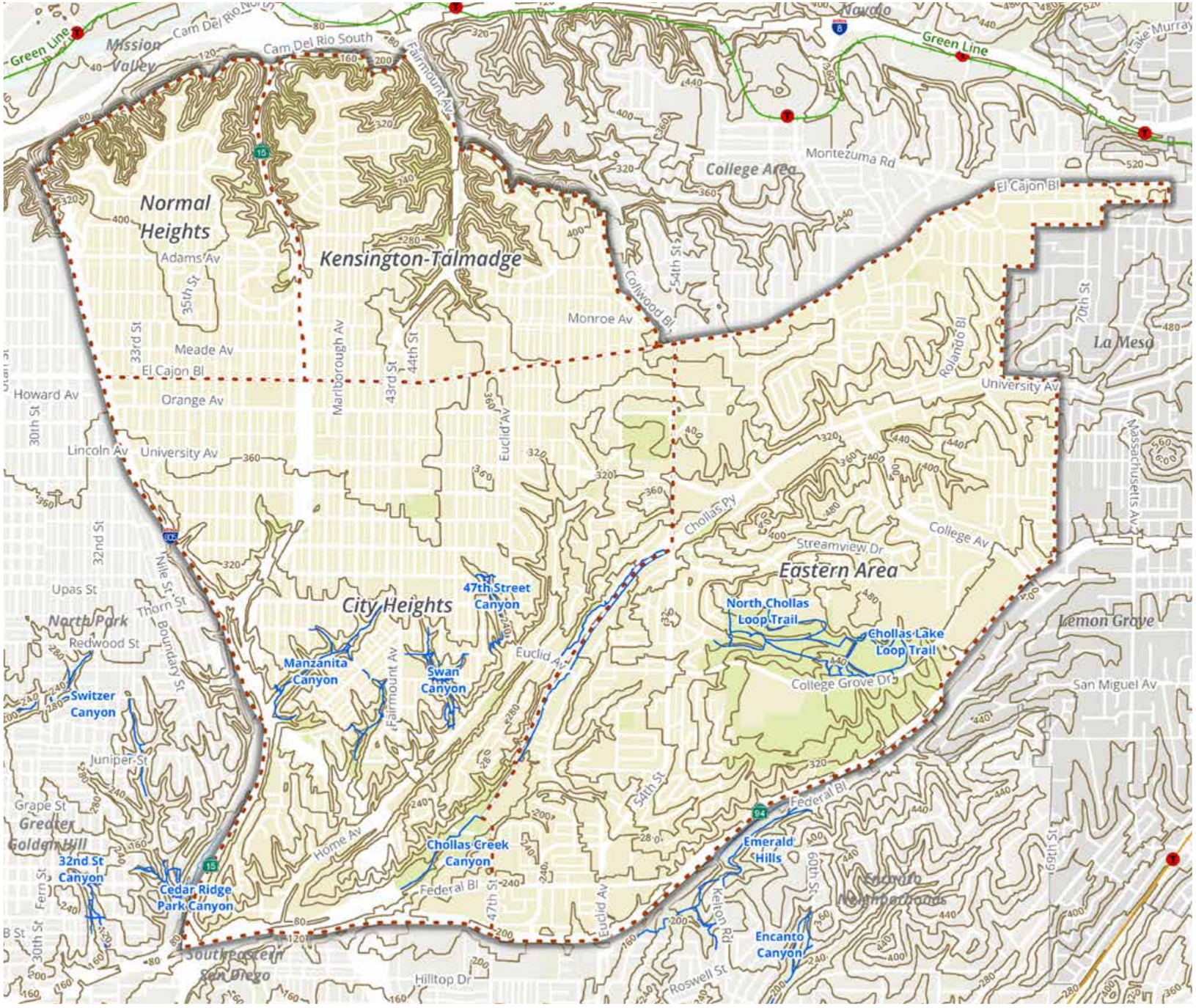
North rim, view north to Mission Valley from Mid-City planning area

View to Devils Sandbox Canyon, Normal Heights

View to Fox Canyon, City Heights

View to Chollas Lake Park from College Grove Drive, Oak Park

Figure 2-1 Topography and Natural Features



2.2. Brief History

OVERVIEW

Mid-City includes some of the oldest communities in the City of San Diego. Much of the western portion of the community saw rapid growth in the 1910-1930 era, before the Second World War, while development east of 54th Street generally occurred in the post-World War II period. Figure 2-2 illustrates the development era of Mid-City subdivisions.

Overall, residential development is a mix of single-family and multi-family homes, with pockets of varying multi-family densities ranging from duplex development to early century apartment courts, garden apartments and higher-density residential and mixed-use development.

Commercial and business development have historically been concentrated along the three major east-west corridors: El Cajon Boulevard, Adams Avenue and University Avenue.

The evolution of Mid-City is organized into six significant periods to illustrate the major changes in transportation, land use and development patterns:

- Kumeyaay, Spanish and Mexican
- East San Diego
- Streetcar Suburbs
- Post-War Boom and Suburbanization
- Freeways and Urban Decline
- Revitalization

KUMEYAAY, SPANISH AND MEXICAN

For thousands of years, San Diego has been a part of the ancestral homeland of the Kumeyaay people. The Kumeyaay lived in both permanent villages and seasonal encampments. The Chollas Creek, which flows through Mid-City, was well known to Kumeyaay, who used it for settlement and as a major trail through the region. A prehistoric village has been identified at the mouth of Chollas Creek, which had access to fresh water and marine resources needed to sustain a large population over time.

The founding of Mission San Diego de Alcalá in 1769 and the Spanish occupation via the mission system brought about profound changes in the lives of the Kumeyaay. In 1821, Mexico became independent from Spain, and San Diego became part of the Mexican Republic, which established the rancho system of extensive land grants to individuals.

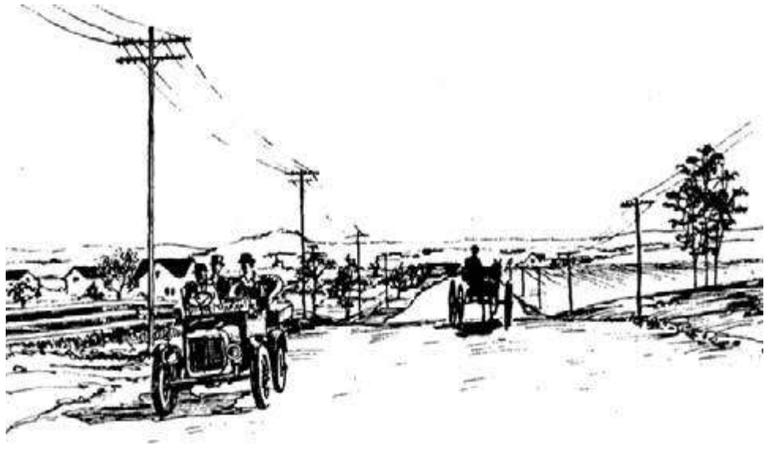
San Diego became part of the United States in 1848 following the U.S. victory in the Mexican-American War, and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. San Diego was incorporated two years later, in 1850.

EAST SAN DIEGO

The origin of City Heights began in the 1880s when entrepreneurs named Abraham Klauber and Samuel Steiner bought 240 acres of land and named it City Heights because of its 360-degree expansive views. Residents living in the City Heights area voted to become an incorporated City of East San Diego on November 2, 1912.

During the period of incorporation, the population in the area boomed from 400 in 1910 to 4,000 in 1912. The growth was spurred by the anticipation and excitement of the 1915 Panama-Pacific Exhibition. On December 31, 1923, the City of East San Diego was annexed into the City of San Diego and re-adopted the name "City Heights."[1]

This area continued the traditional grid format development pattern seen in adjacent areas of the city to the south and west. During the development of streetcar lines in the early 1900's, a trolley connected City Heights to downtown San Diego via University Avenue.



El Cajon and 43rd, 1910

Daily life at plaza at Presidio de San Diego, 1790

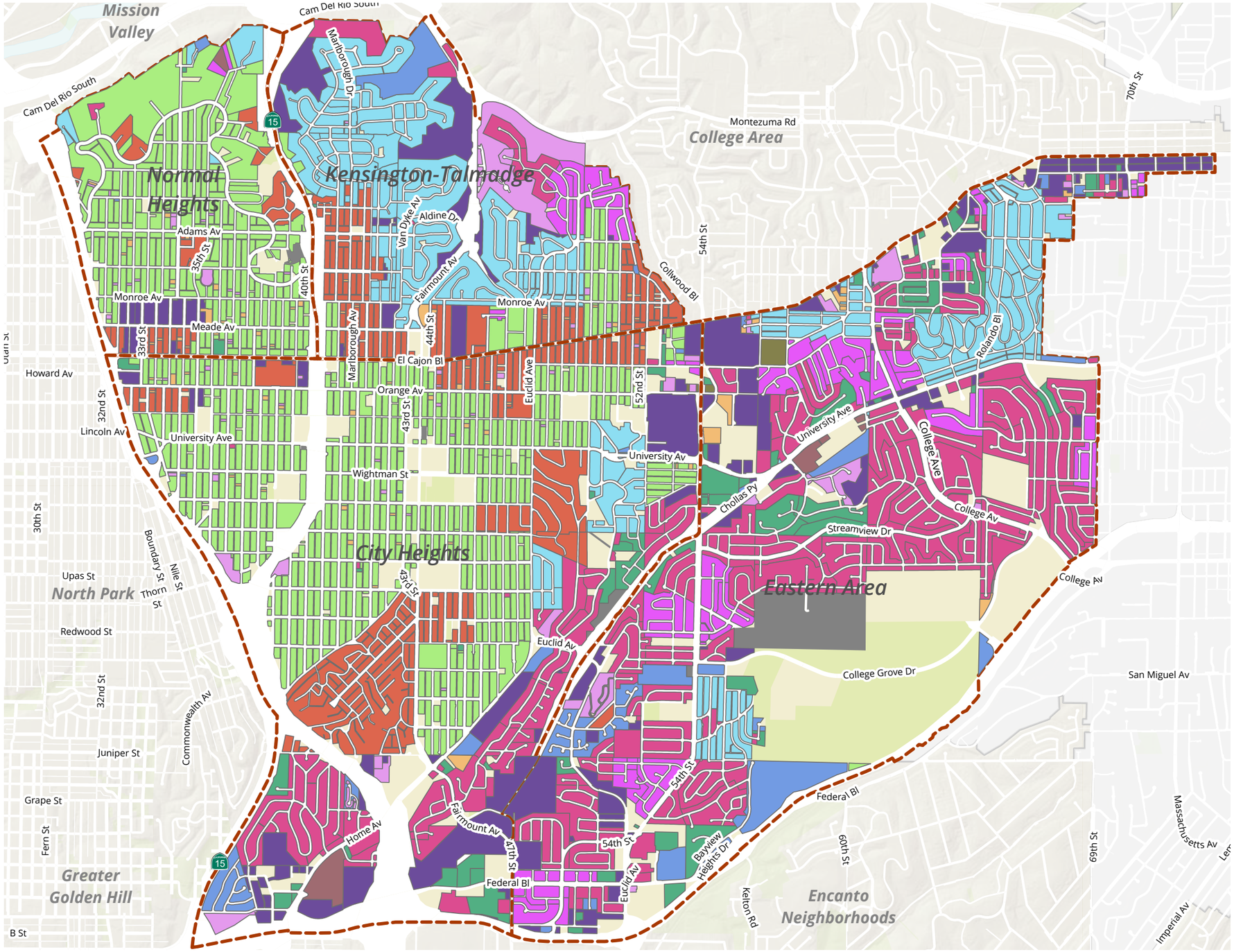
Image: Sketch by Gene Locklear & San Diego History Center

Fairmount and University, 1917

Images: 1984 Mid-City Community Plan

1 City Heights Town Council website, cityheightstowncouncil.org/city-heights-history.html.

Figure 2-2 Historic Subdivision



Subdivisions

Development Era

- 1872–1899
- 1900–1909
- 1910–1919
- 1920–1929
- 1930–1939
- 1940–1949
- 1950–1959
- 1960–1969
- 1970–1979
- 1980–1989
- 1990–1999
- 2000–2010
- UNKNOWN

Community Planning Boundary

City of San Diego

Municipal Boundaries

STREETCAR SUBURBS

The Normal Heights and Kensington communities are some of San Diego's earliest examples of "streetcar suburbs" that developed in the 1920s. An electric trolley route along Adams Avenue was added as part of the San Diego Electric Railway system in 1907 and expanded to extend from downtown San Diego to Kensington by the end of the decade.

The addition of the streetcar along Adams Avenue spurred development in the two neighborhoods, which included a series of winding roads and cul-de-sacs adjacent to the northern steep slopes and the valley rim; and an urban grid infill in between, continuing the development pattern of the City Heights community to the south. Homes in Normal Heights consist primarily of single-family bungalows and bungalow courts, whereas Kensington developed many Tudor-style homes. Normal Heights was annexed to the city of San Diego in 1925 and Kensington soon after in 1936.[2]

POST-WAR BOOM AND SUBURBANIZATION

After World War II, American cities began rapidly developing auto-oriented suburbs in response to the national housing shortage and the rising popularity of the automobile. El Cajon Boulevard was once the main east-west highway for the region (Highway 80) until I-8 was built in the late 1950s. Adams Avenue is located north of El Cajon Boulevard and University Avenue is located south of El Cajon Boulevard. Both Adams Avenue and University Avenue were areas with early neighborhood commercial activity. These three corridors function as main streets with commercial development ranging from more historic community centers to post-war commercial "strip" development.[3]

The subdivision of Islenair is an early example of an auto-oriented suburb in City Heights (Figure 2-3) reflecting architectural trends from Spanish Eclectic to Minimal Traditional and Ranch styles, visually illustrating and encapsulating the booms, busts, and trends in working-class suburban development in San Diego from 1926 through 1952. It was designated a historic district by the City of San Diego Historical Resources Board (HRB) in 2007. Many neighborhoods in the Eastern Area were planned and developed in this auto-oriented suburban style following 1945, as shown in Figure 2-2.

The historic streetcar map illustrates streetcar connections to Mid-City along Adams Avenue and University Avenue.

Image credit: https://www.aaaarch.com.

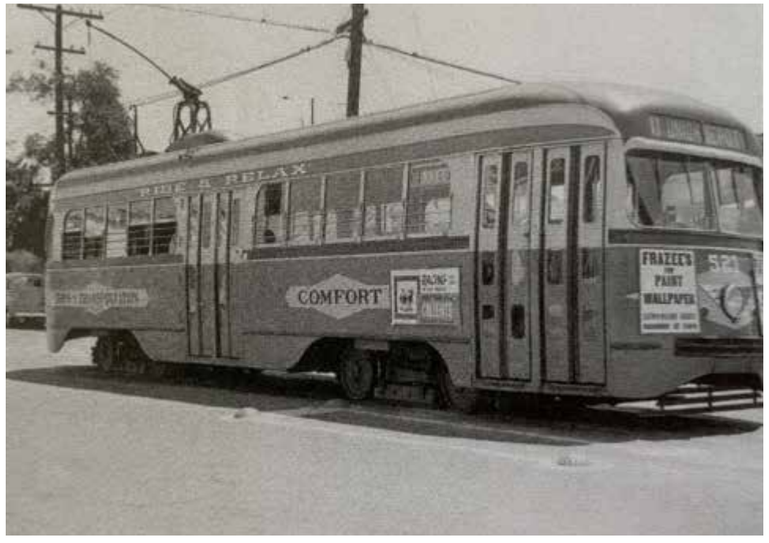


Photo of No. 11 streetcar on Adams Avenue in 1948.

Image credit: Images of America San Diego's Kensington, 2017.

El Cajon Boulevard in 1942 when it was known as Highway 80.

Source: El Cajon Boulevard Business Improvement Association, theboulevard.org

The original Jack in the Box location on El Cajon Boulevard, 1951

Source: John Fry Productions, Johnfry.com

2 The Journal of San Diego History, "San Diego's Normal Heights: The Growth of a Suburban Neighborhood, 1886-1926" by Suzanne Ledeboer.
3 Portions adapted from 1998 Mid-City Community Plan.

FREEWAYS AND URBAN DECLINE

Mid-City was particularly affected by the construction of freeways, most notably I-805 and I-15. Prior to the 1980's, the urban form of City Heights and Normal Heights was continuous between 40th and Central Avenue. Nine blocks of land were cleared in the 1980's by Caltrans to build the I-15 segment. This type of neighborhood clearance to build freeways was common, particularly in community of color and immigrant neighborhoods, and created gaping holes between once vibrant, connected urban communities.

During much of the 1930s through 1950s, the older retail areas of City Heights, Normal Heights and Kensington-Talmadge still acted as important commercial centers, particularly University Avenue, El Cajon Boulevard and Adams Avenue. With the development of the freeway system and the construction of suburban shopping centers just outside the planning area, such as Fashion Valley and Mission Valley, these commercial areas began to lose business, further fraying the urban fabric of these areas.

Aerial view of City Heights in 1945 before the construction of Interstate 15, at the intersection of University Avenue and Fairmount Avenue looking northwest. Image credit: San Diego History Center Howard Rozelle Aerial Collection.

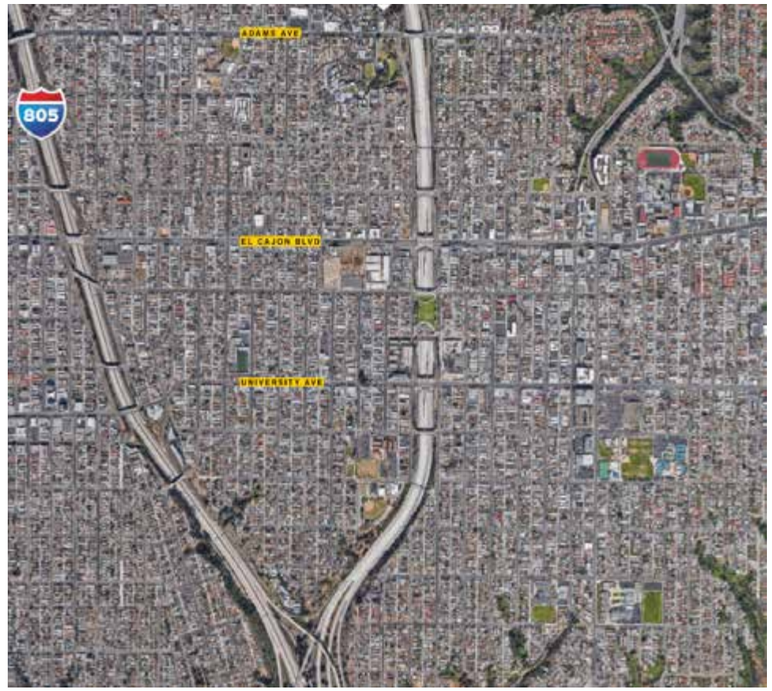
Little Saigon street mural by Victor Ving in the Little Saigon Cultural and Commercial District in City Heights and Talmadge.

REVITALIZATION

To combat the trend of urban disinvestment and community fraying that occurred during the period between the post-war era and the 1980's, a series of comprehensive community initiatives were undertaken by locals to promote the physical and social revitalization of urban areas most impacted by suburbanization and urban decline. These comprehensive community, or place-based initiatives, constructed apartment buildings, financed small businesses, organized residents, offered tax breaks, paved streets, rehabilitated arts centers, financed charter schools, provided workforce training and more to reinvest in the urban areas of the Mid-City communities.[1]

One such example of these comprehensive community initiatives is the creation of the Little Saigon Cultural and Commercial District, formally recognized by the city in 2013. The district runs along a six-block stretch of El Cajon Boulevard, as shown in Figure 2-3, and is meant to highlight, celebrate and draw visitors to the Vietnamese enclave in this area of City Heights. A series of art installations was installed throughout the district as part of the Little Saigon Project, an initiative to feature public artwork that highlight the area's culture.

City Council passed a resolution on June 4th, 2013 designating the six blocks of El Cajon Boulevard from Euclid Avenue to Highland Avenue as the Little Saigon Cultural and Commercial District.[2] The district is outlined in Figure 2-3.

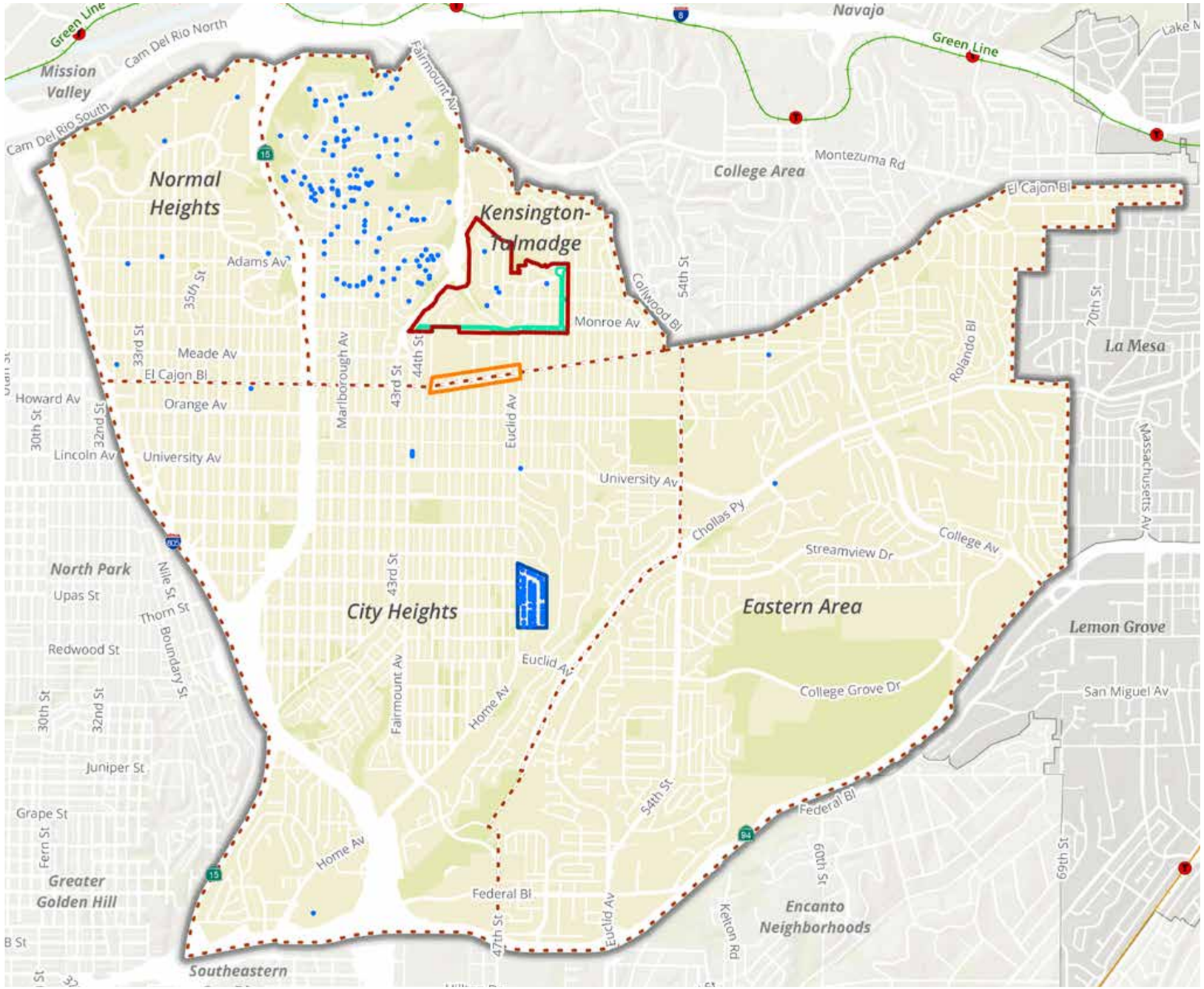


Aerial image of Mid-City before SR-15 and after SR-15

Images: Andrew Bowen KPBS - Before Google Maps, Caltrans After Google Maps

1 San Diego's City Heights Initiative Research Report by Brett Theodos, 2022
2 https://docs.sandiego.gov/council_reso_ordinance/rao2013/R-308237.pdf

Figure 2-3 Historic Sites and Districts



- Community Plan Boundary
- Open Space
- HRB Designated Sites

Historic Districts
- Islenair
- Talmadge Gates
- Talmadge Park Estates (National Register)

Cultural District
- Little Saigon

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

N W E S

City of San Diego, SANGIS, SANDAG

2.3. Development Patterns

Development patterns in Mid-City range from an older traditional urban grid fabric to post-war suburban development patterns. The following sections describe the development patterns, block patterns, and building typologies in more detail.

BLOCK PATTERN AND FIGURE GROUND MAPS

As shown in Figure 2-4, the block pattern within Mid-City varies from a rectangular grid pattern in the pre-war neighborhoods, located generally in the north and west of Mid-City, to a curvilinear suburban development pattern in the post-war neighborhoods, located in the east and south of Mid-City. Superblocks appear within both block patterns and are shown as clusters of large buildings with no internal streets in Figure 2-5. Residential block pattern typologies are described in more detail in sections that follow.

Large changes in topography are present throughout Mid-City. The topography and associated canyon network affect neighborhood design and connectivity and in some areas impacts intersection density and connectivity due to topographical limitations. The canyon network is reflected in the block pattern, shown in Figure 2-4 as large continuous black areas of the map with few connecting streets (shown in white).

BUILDING TYPES

Figure 2-6 shows a representation of the variety of residential, mixed-use, and non-residential building styles that exist within Mid-City. Each building types is characterized briefly below. It should be noted that the planning area reflects a rich and diverse range of building types, scales, and styles, of which numerous variations are present throughout.

Residential: Mid-City includes a range of residential building types that vary in density, style and building age. Single-family housing appears throughout both the urban grid and suburban neighborhoods and varies in size, style and age. Medium density housing, including cottage courts and low-rise apartment buildings, and multi-plexes, appear throughout the urban grid. Higher-density housing appears primarily along larger collector streets or commercial corridors and typically was built within the past 50 years.

Mixed-Use: Mixed-use development typically includes ground floor, street-facing commercial uses with multi-family residential uses above or behind. This type of development appears throughout Mid-City, although in much less frequency, and has been built primarily within the last 50 years.

Non-Residential Uses: The non-residential uses differ the most between the urban grid and suburban communities. In the urban grid, small and medium-sized, street-facing commercial structures are the most prevalent along commercial corridors. In more suburban or auto-oriented development patterns, commercial and other non-residential uses are located in strip malls or large commercial centers off of arterial streets, both of which include large parking lots between the street and the building.

RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD AND BLOCK TYPE COMPARISON

A range of neighborhood and block typologies appear in Mid-City. These residential typologies are summarized graphically in Figure 2-7 and are described briefly below.

Urban Grid Typology: Defined by a repeating rectangular block approximately 630 feet by 300 feet and oriented in the north-south direction, the urban grid appears in the older communities within the planning area, including Normal Heights, Kensington, Talmadge, and City Heights. In many areas, alleys provide access to the rear of the residential parcels, and service commercial parcels where they appear.

Urban Grid at Canyon/Ridge Typology: Where the urban grid meets a canyon, a collector street often follows the ridge line of the canyon, providing the irregular shape of the urban block. Local streets and alleys connect to adjacent urban blocks to provide connectivity to the urban grid. This typology appears in parts of the Normal Heights and Kensington-Talmadge communities, adjacent to the Mission Valley rim.

Suburban Typology: Developed primarily in the post-World War II era, suburban development consists of a network of curvilinear residential streets served by an arterial street. Distances between residential neighborhoods and commercial services are large and sidewalks are not always provided, creating a more auto-oriented circulation system. This typology adapts easily to large changes in topography and appears primarily in the Eastern Area community and parts of the City Heights community.

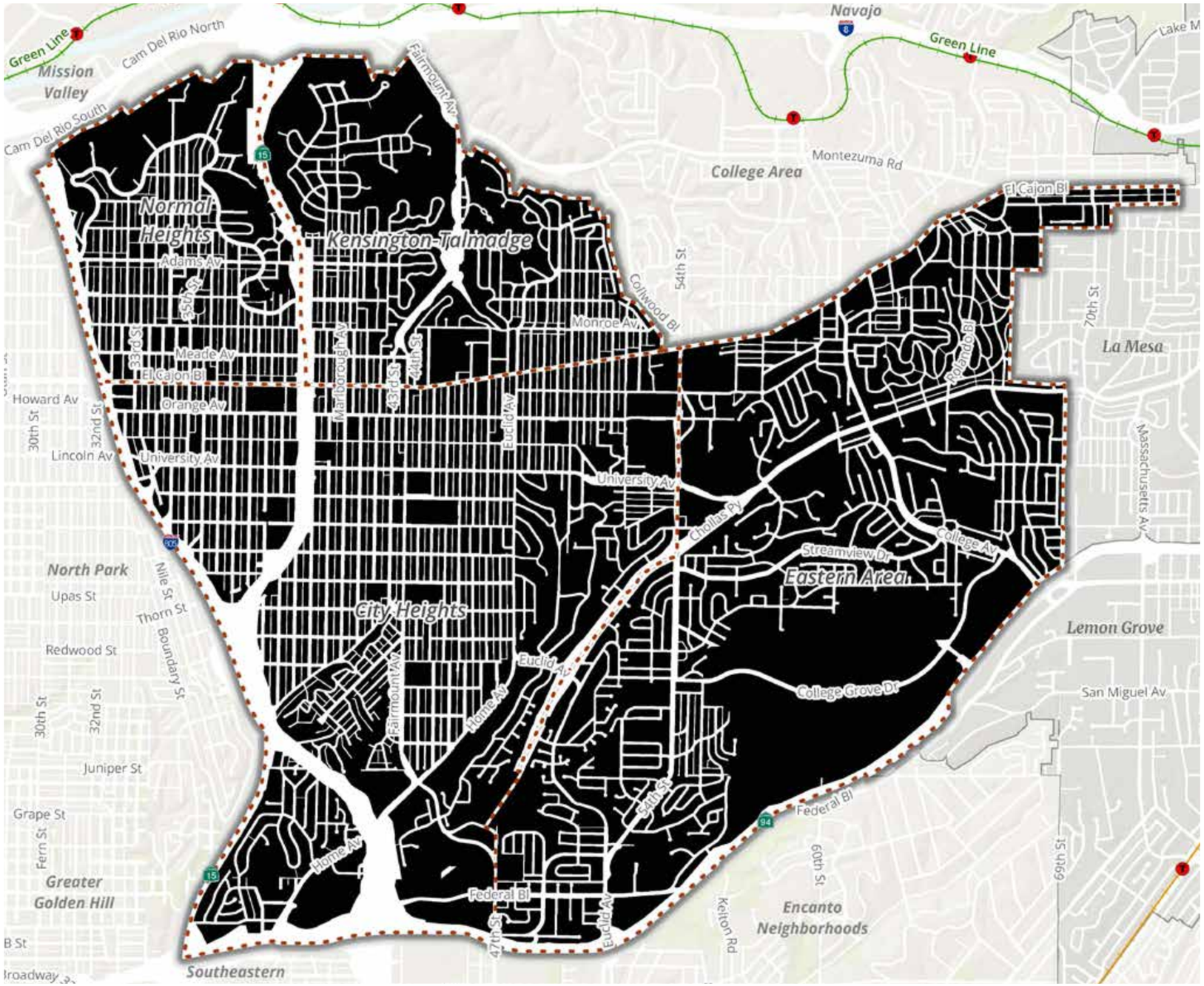
Superblock Type 1: Superblocks may appear within the urban grid or suburban typologies and consist of larger blocks divided into large parcels that contain a mix of uses, including residential. Superblocks have limited internal connectivity to the perimeter streets and generally each parcel organizes its internal circulation system separately. This typology appears primarily in parts of the Eastern Area and City Heights communities.

Superblock Type 2: Residential infill occurs primarily in large or consolidated parcels along commercial corridors. Infill projects consist primarily of street-facing, high-density, multi-family wrap housing and may provide an internal circulation system to improve connectivity within the parcel. This type of infill housing can be seen scattered throughout the Mid-City Plan Area.

SCALE COMPARISON

Figure 2-8 shows Mid-City compared to other adjacent localities including Downtown San Diego, Chula Vista and Mira Mesa. Mid-City is approximately five miles in the east-west direction at its widest point and approximately four miles in the north-south direction at its longest point. The size of the planning area encompasses the size of the comparison cities/communities as well as their surrounding areas.

Figure 2-4 Block Pattern



- Block
- Community Plan Area Boundary
- Open Space

Trolley Stops

- Green Line
- Orange Line

Light Rail Routes

- Green Line
- Orange Line

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

N W E S

City of San Diego, SANGIS, SANDAG

Figure 2-5 Building Figure Ground Map

- Building
- Community Plan Area Boundary
- Open Space

Trolley Stops

- Green Line
- Orange Line

Light Rail Routes

- Green Line
- Orange Line

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

N W E S

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Figure 2-6 Building Typologies

Kensington: Pre-war residential

Normal Heights: Pre-war residential

City Heights: Canyon-adjacent residential

City Heights: Cottage homes

Normal Heights: Cottage Court

City Heights: Apartments

City Heights: Residential infill along El Cajon Boulevard

Adams Avenue in Kensington: Urban mixed-use residential Infill w/ integrated parking, and rear alley

Normal Heights: Urban commercial corridor, with rear alley

(West) El Cajon Blvd: Suburban-style commercial corridor with ethnic grocery anchor

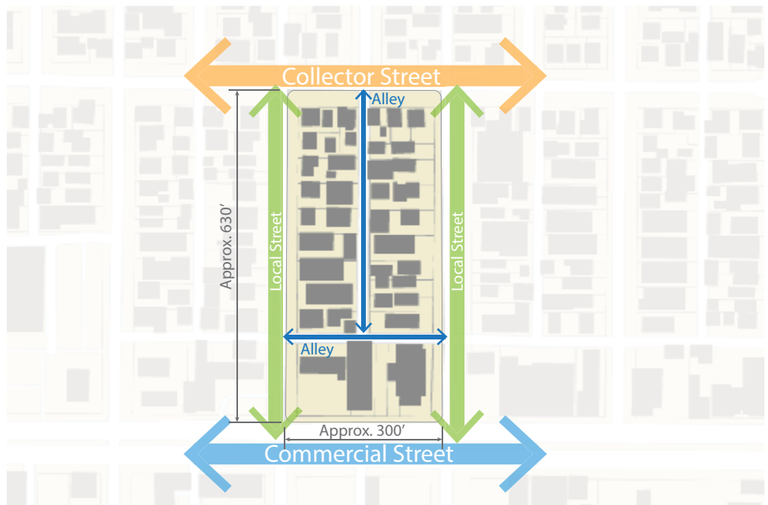
(Central) El Cajon Blvd: Asia Business Center commercial area in Little Saigon

College Avenue: Suburban-style commercial corridor with big box retail anchors

Figure 2-7 Residential Neighborhood and Block Type Comparison

Urban Grid Typology

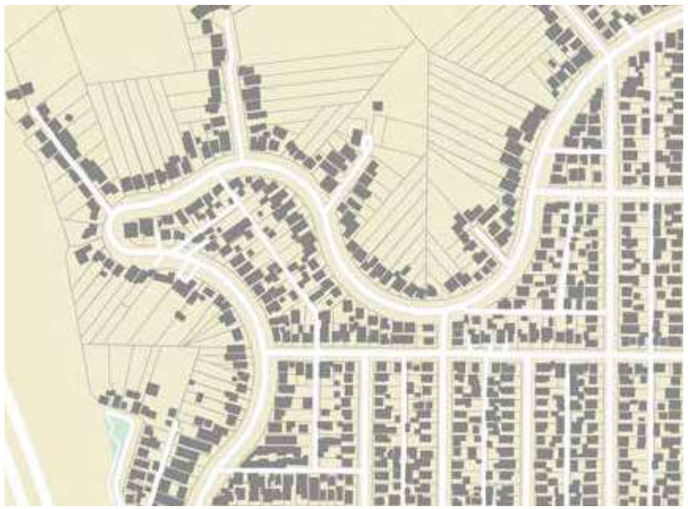
Older neighborhoods of the Mid-City, such as portions of Normal Heights, Kensington, Talmadge, and City Heights are organized with an urban grid typology, and many include alleys. Blocks are generally oriented north-south with residential facing east or west towards local streets.



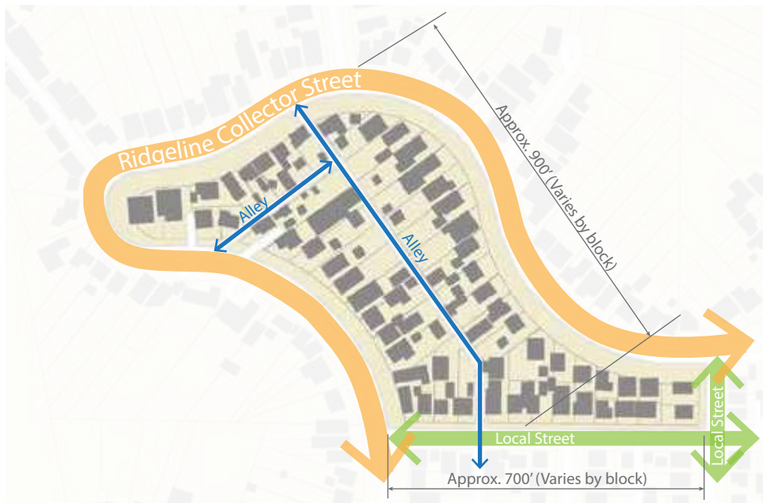
An enlarged view of a typical urban block within the urban grid. Blocks are either generally residential, or contain commercial uses at their north or south end, fronting a commercial street. An alley serves as a transition between the commercial street and the residential neighborhood.

An example of a residential local street within the urban grid in the Normal Heights community.

Urban Grid at Canyon/ Ridge Typology



Where the urban grid meets canyons, the street network follows the ridgelines, and alleys continue through the middle of the block where possible.



An enlarged view of a block within the urban grid at canyon typology. Local streets and alleys connect to adjacent urban blocks. A collector street follows the canyon ridgeline.

An example of a ridgeline street with residential housing and canyon views beyond in the Normal Heights community.

Figure 2-7 (Continued)

Suburban Typology

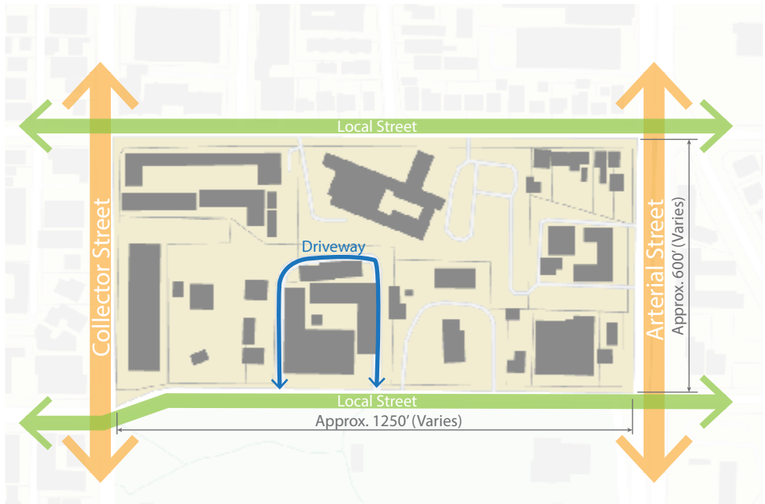
Suburban development is characterized by curvilinear residential streets, often ending in cul-de-sacs, served by an arterial street. Residential streets continue along ridgelines where necessary.

Distances to individual lots from the Arterial Street are often larger and connectivity to adjacent neighborhoods is limited, creating an auto-oriented circulation system.

An example of a more suburban residential street along a ridgeline in the City Heights community. A sidewalk has been provided on only one side of the street. Single-family residential units face the street, with apartments below accessed from a lower-level street.

Superblock Type 1

Superblocks range in scale throughout the Mid-City Plan Area, and may be divided into large parcels including a variety of uses such as housing, shown in orange above. They typically are located along arterial or collector streets.



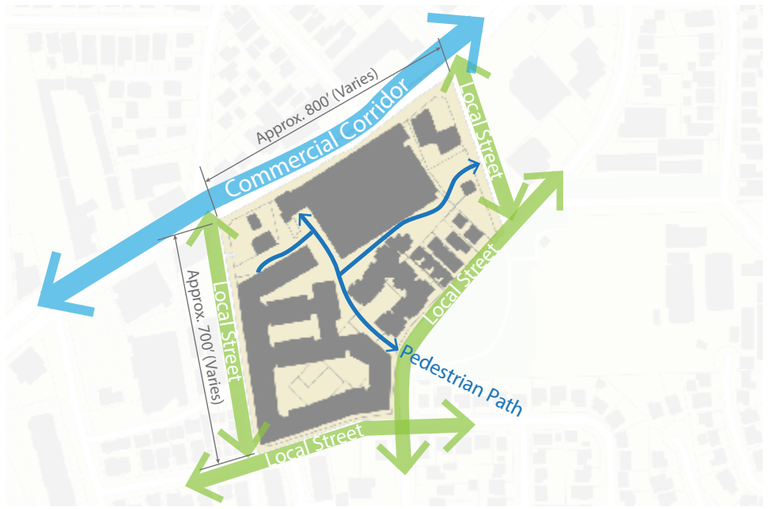
Superblocks have limited internal connectivity to surrounding streets and blocks. Each parcel organizes internal and/or private circulation separately from the others, creating an auto-oriented circulation system.

An example of a multi-family housing development within a superblock in the Colina Park neighborhood of City Heights.

Figure 2-7 (Continued)

Superblock Type 2

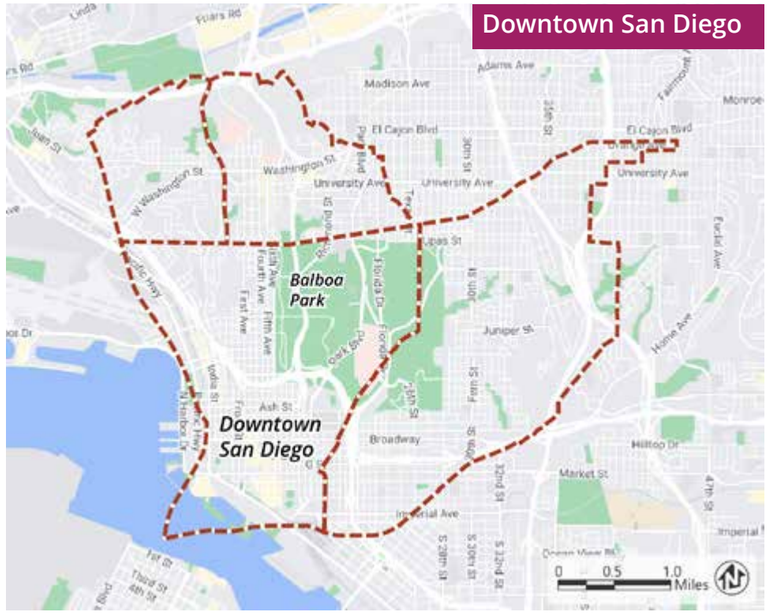
In recent years, some parcels along commercial corridors have been infilled with large high-density, multi-family "wrap" housing projects such as those shown in orange above.



These infill housing projects may be organized to wrap or line larger parking garages, with units facing the streets, in addition to an inner pedestrian path, courtyard, or paseo.

An example of a larger mixed-use infill project on El Cajon Boulevard in the Eastern Area community.

Figure 2-8 Scale Comparison



"Mid-City is approximately five miles in the east-west direction at its widest point and approximately four miles in the north-south direction at its longest point.

2.4. Building Age

RESIDENTIAL

Mid-City includes an extremely broad range of residential types, ranging from craftsman-style bungalows, tract home development, apartment and cottage courts, tiny cottage homes, six- and eight-plex apartment buildings, multi-story senior housing, and newer mixed-use residential development and infill. Much of Mid-City is residential, with clusters of multi-family located along and around the commercial corridors.

The northern portions of the Mid-City planning area, including much of Kensington, Talmadge, and portions of Normal Heights include distinctive neighborhoods and early planned communities dating to the 1920s or earlier. As shown in Figure 2-9 and Figure 2-10, Kensington-Talmadge has the largest portion of buildings that were constructed prior to 1964, with approximately 44 percent of the residential buildings constructed prior to 1945, and an additional 25 percent built between 1945 and 1964. Nearly 60 percent of the residential buildings in Mid-City, were constructed prior to 1964. Additionally, most residential buildings that exist today in Normal Heights, Kensington-Talmadge, and Eastern Area were built prior to 1984, and only 4 percent of construction occurred after 2005. It is important, however, to note that when a property goes through significant reconstruction or rehab, then the recorded construction date is updated, which means that the map figures and associated statistics may not represent a true picture of age, or construction activity.

Due to the size of Mid-City, detailed maps illustrating residential building age have been provided in Figures 2-11 through 2-16, for the Normal Heights, Kensington-Talmadge, City Heights, and Eastern Area communities.

NON-RESIDENTIAL

Commercial development in Mid-City ranges from early main street-type retail corridors, such as those along Adams Avenue in Normal Heights and Kensington and University Avenue in City Heights, to neighborhood centers, strip centers, and regional shopping centers located along El Cajon Boulevard, College Avenue, 54th Street, and Euclid Avenue. There are a diverse range of ethnic grocery stores, restaurants, and shops, serving a rich mix of residents, including Little Saigon along El Cajon Boulevard (expand this discussion). As shown in Figure 2-10 and Figure 2-16, 47% of today's non-residential buildings were constructed between 1965-1984, with only 4% of construction occurring after 2005.

In general, Normal Heights has a higher percentage of non-residential buildings that were built pre-1945, as well as in the period of 1945 to 1964, with approximately 38% of non-residential buildings dating to before 1964.

In addition to the Mid-City planning area's diverse mix of commercial uses, there are broad range of elementary, high schools, and charter schools, churches and religious institutions of different denominations, community-serving uses, and health centers.

HISTORIC PROPERTIES

There are over 130 designated historic properties[1] in Mid-City, including buildings in the following styles:

- Craftsman (Arts and Crafts)
- Colonial Revival
- Spanish Colonial Revival
- Mission Revival
- French Eclectic
- Spanish Eclectic
- Tudor
- Minimal Traditional
- California Ranch
- Modern Ranch
- Streamline Moderne

A significant number of designated properties are located in the Talmadge Gates Historical District, and the Islenair Historic District. Additionally, there are historic structures and districts which are eligible for historic designation, including the Carteri Center Historic District in Normal Heights, the Kensington & Talmadge Historic District, and the Egyptian Revival Euclid Tower, Garage, and Silverado Ballroom in City Heights, and the Chollas Heights Navy housing project in the Eastern Area.[2]

Figure 2-9 Residential Building Age

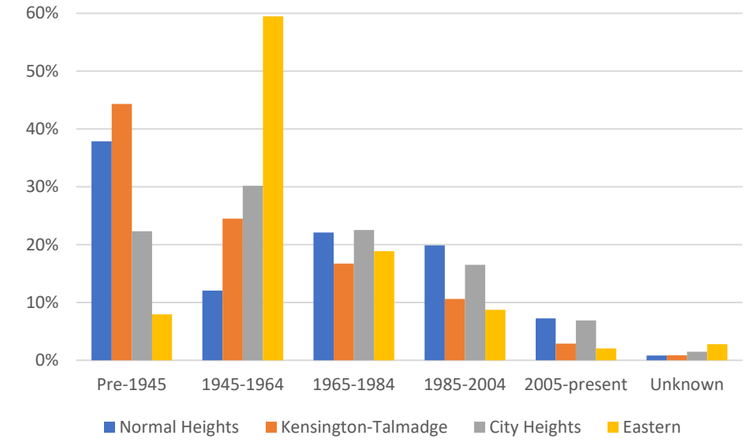
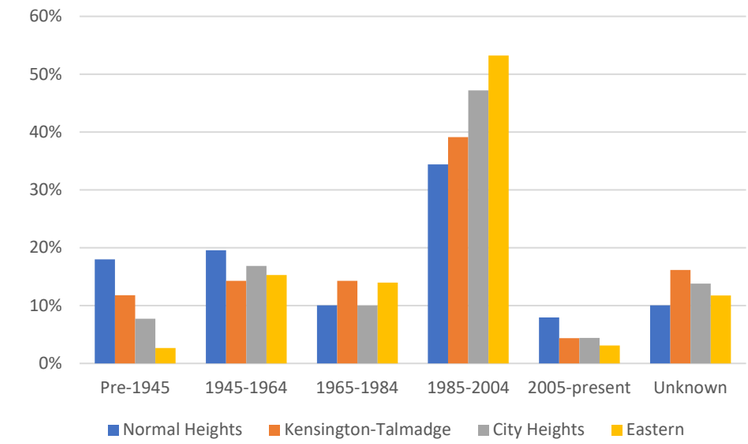
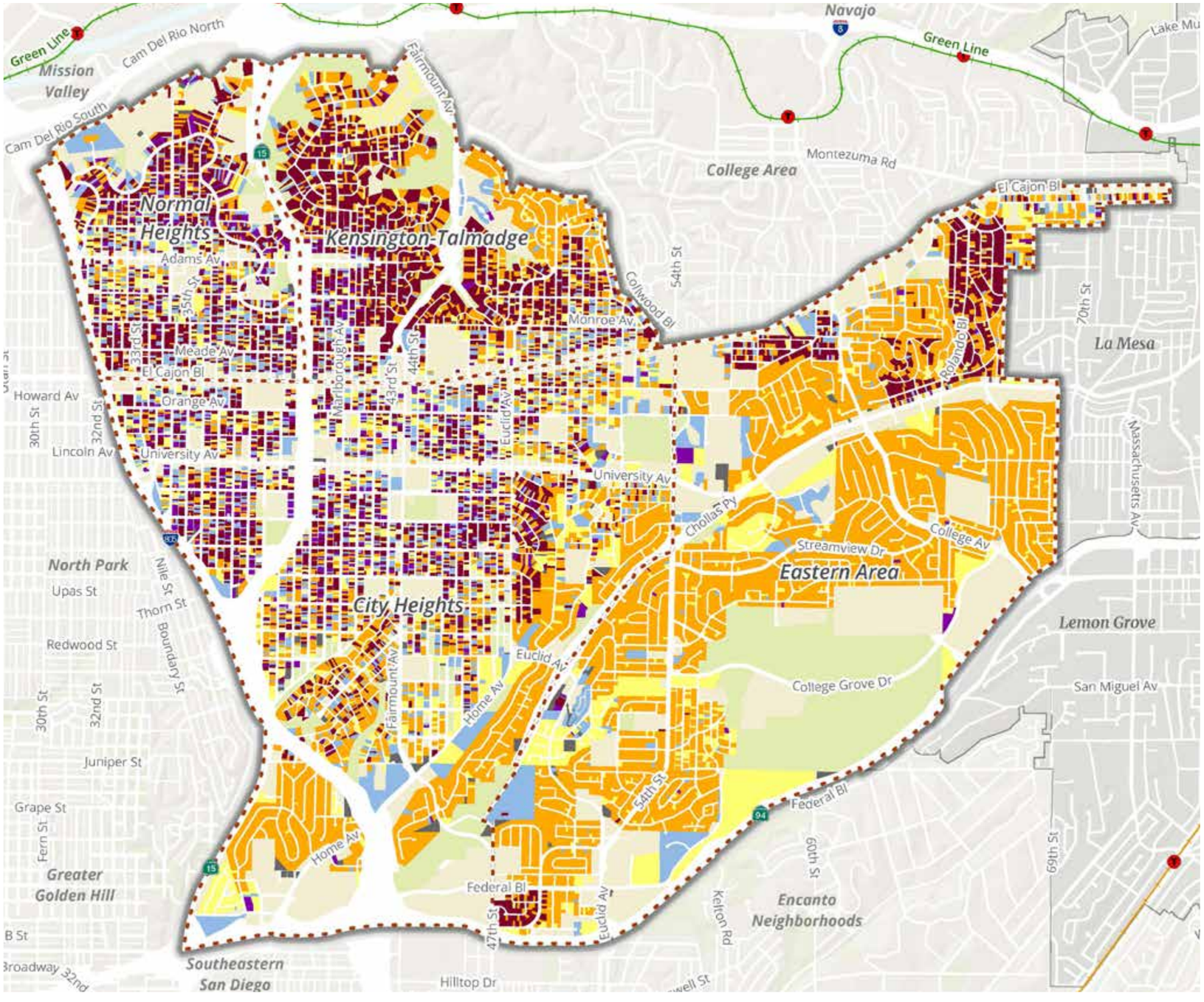


Figure 2-10 Non-Residential Building Age



1 California Historical Resources Inventory Database
2 1998 Mid-City Community Plan and Heartofkensington.org

Figure 2-11 Residential Building Age



Year Built

- Pre-1945
- 1945-1964
- 1965-1984
- 1985-2004
- 2005-Present
- Vacant/Undeveloped Parcel

- Community Plan Area Boundary
- Open Space

Trolley Stops

- Green Line
- Orange Line

Light Rail Routes

- Green Line
- Orange Line

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

N W E S

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Figure 2-12 Residential Building Age - Normal Heights in Detail

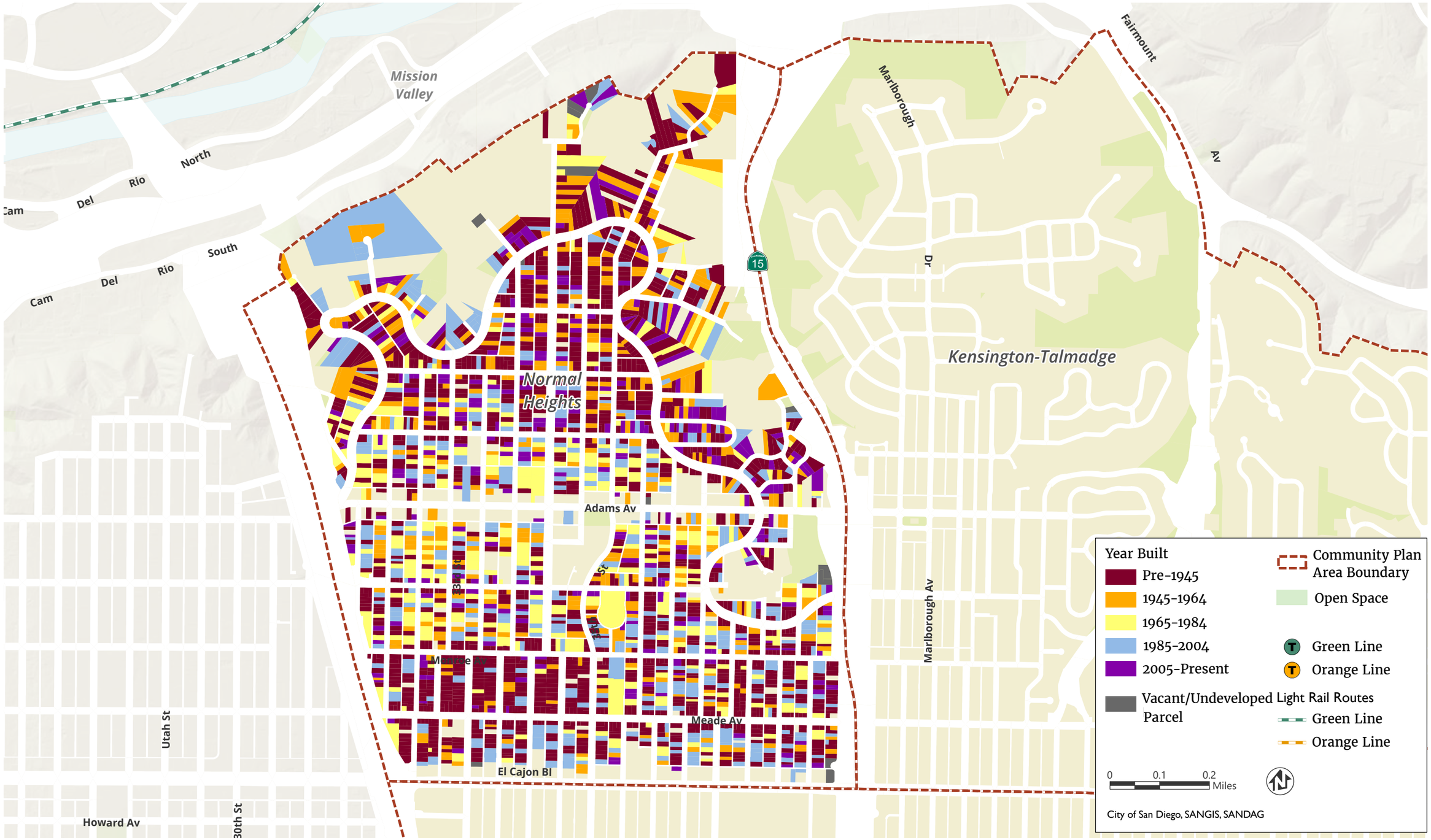


Figure 2-13 Residential Building Age - Kensington-Talmadge in Detail

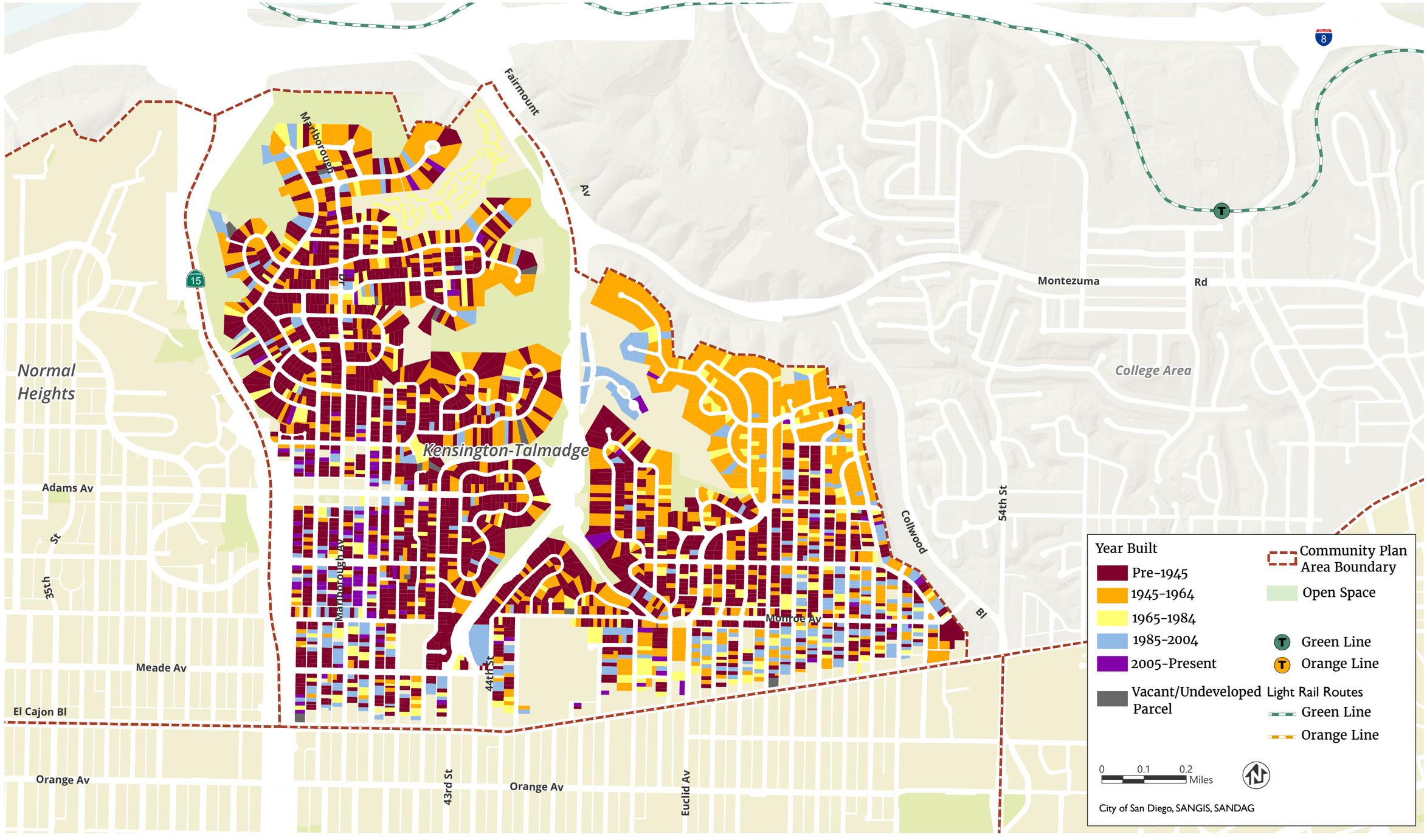


Figure 2-14 Residential Building Age - City Heights in Detail

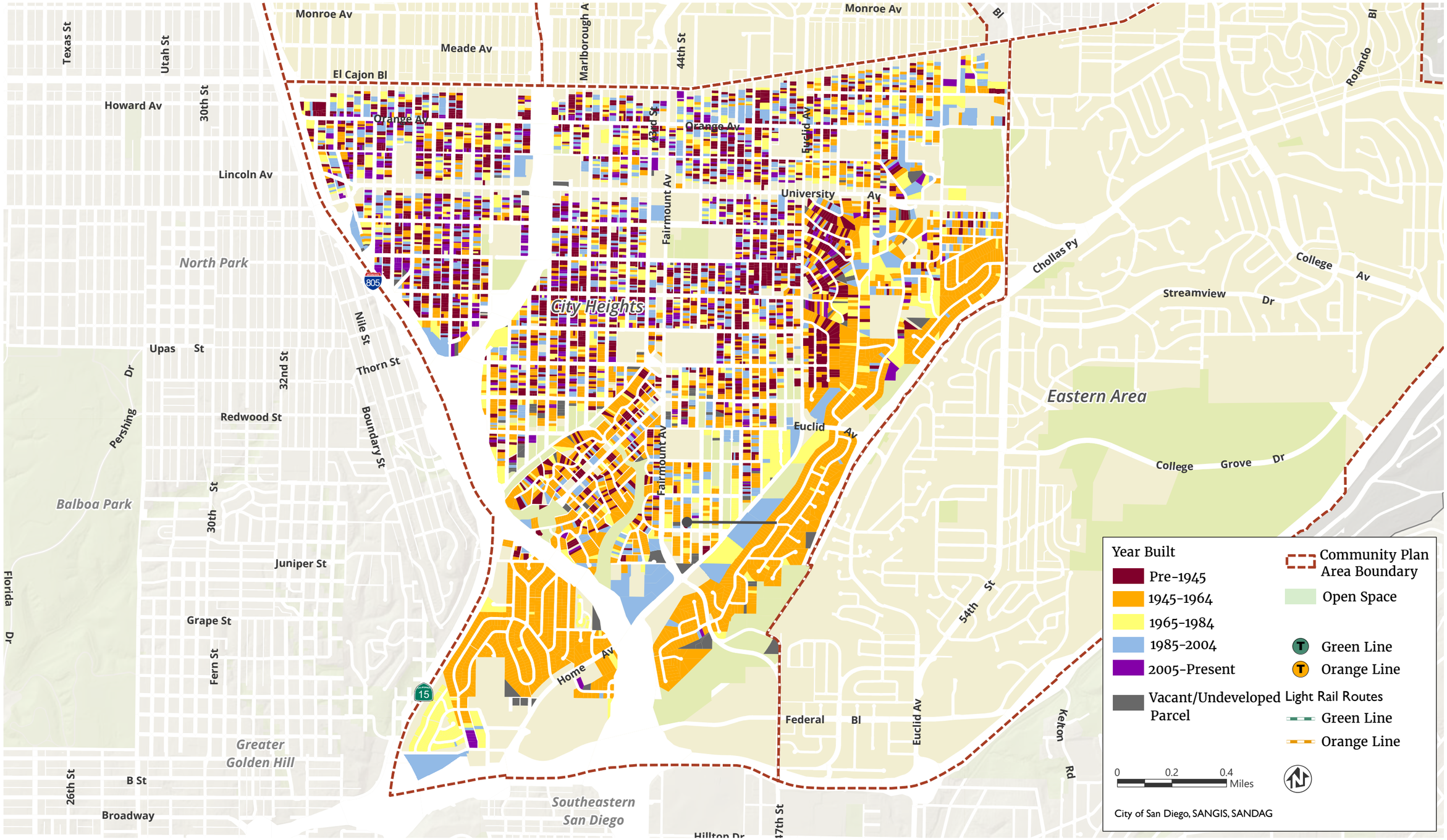


Figure 2-15 Residential Building Age - Eastern Area in Detail

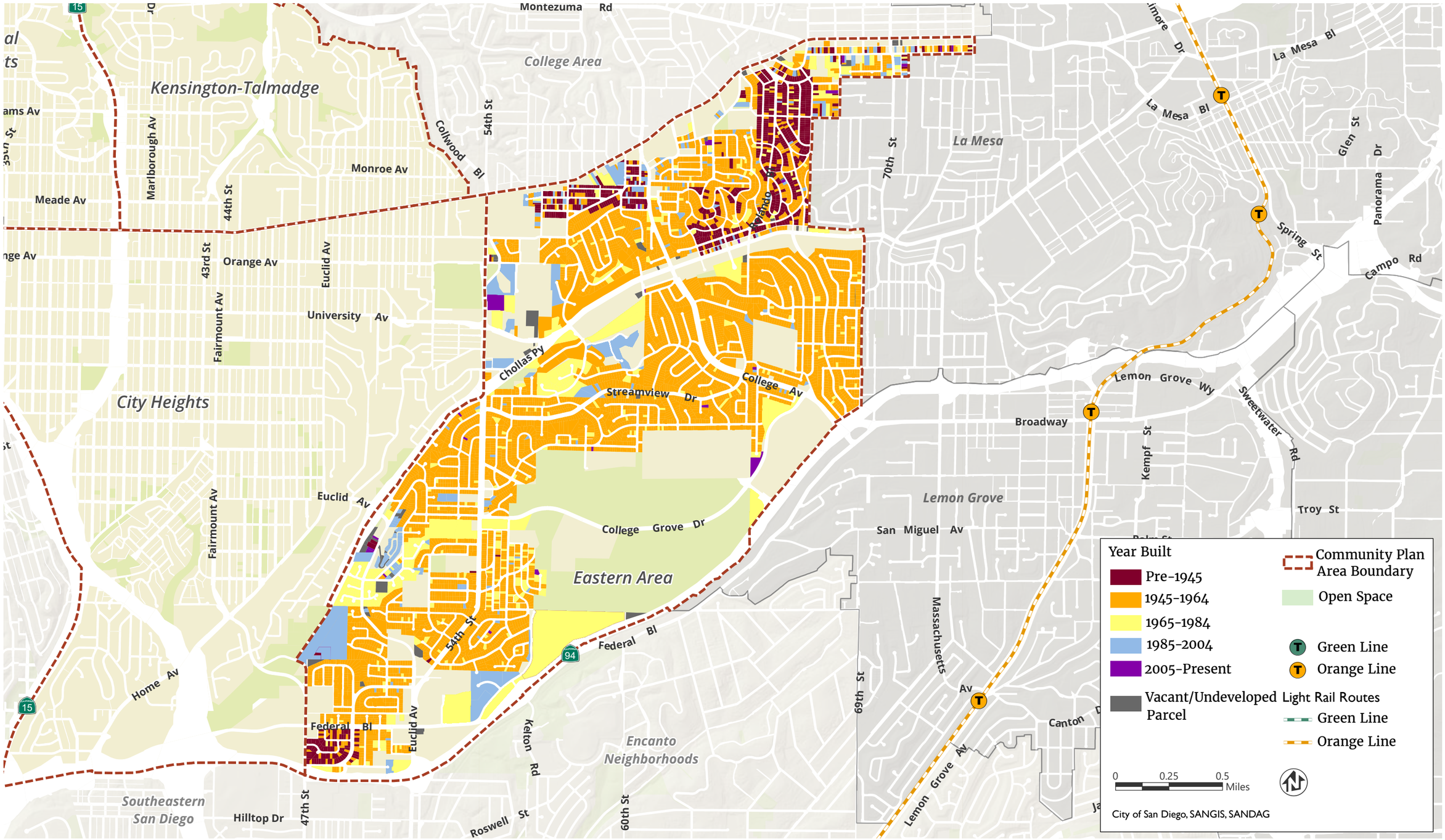
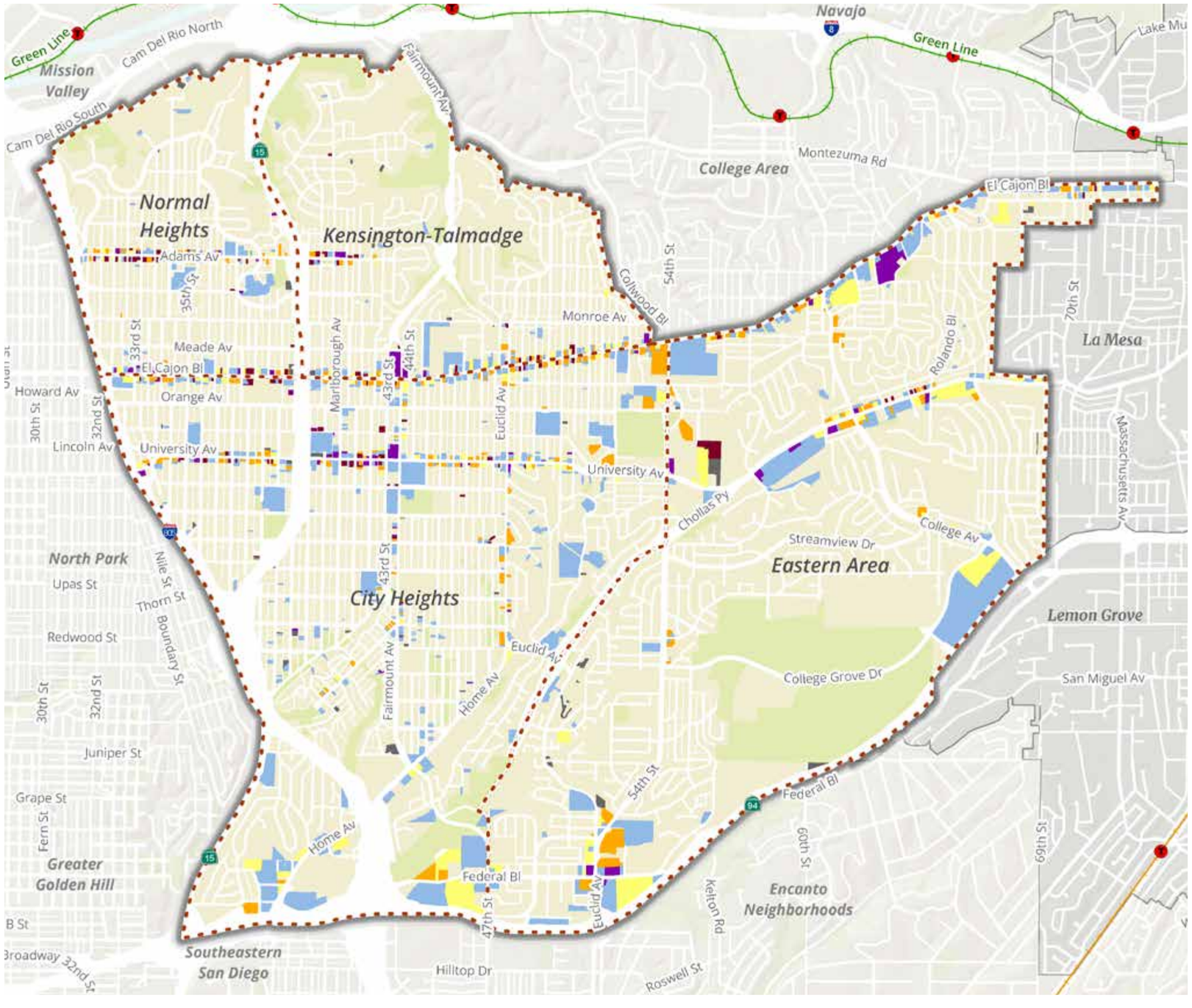


Figure 2-16 Non-Residential Building Age



Year Built

- Pre-1945
- 1945-1964
- 1965-1984
- 1985-2004
- 2005-Present
- Vacant/Undeveloped Parcel

- Community Plan Area Boundary
- Open Space
- Green Line
- Orange Line

Light Rail Routes

- Green Line
- Orange Line

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

N W E S

City of San Diego, SANGIS, SANDAG

2.5. Placemaking

Mid-City is rich with public art, including historic murals, recent murals developed through community art programs, street art, and painted electrical boxes, contributing to a culturally significant sense of place in the community.

Many of the murals and public art pieces have been led and/or sponsored through the work of community-led programs, such as those led by the Normal Heights Urban Arts Committee, founded in 2016 by Normal Heights residents, and the Normal Heights Community Development Corporation; and other programs such as Moving the Lives of Kids Community Mural Project (MLK Mural); the ArtReach San Diego Mural Program; the San Diego Cultural Arts Alliance; and the Little Saigon Project.

In addition to public artwork, there are numerous other community-led placemaking efforts including the planting of shade trees along El Cajon Boulevard, holiday bridge lights over I-805 and SR 15, and decorative streetlighting in Little Saigon. These efforts foster vibrant, meaningful places that enhance quality of life, beautification, and social interaction.

Examples of placemaking activations throughout the Mid-City planning area.

2.6. Important Places and Neighborhood Centers

Numerous cultural, religious, historical and municipal facilities act as neighborhood centers, gathering and connecting community members throughout the Mid-City planning area. Figure 2-17 shows the location of some of the key neighborhood centers within the planning area and an example in each of the four Mid-City communities has been described briefly below.

Normal Heights Gateway Sign

This classic neon "Normal Heights" sign spans Adams Avenue, the main commercial retail street in the Normal Heights community. The sign forms the backdrop for many annual community events held on the street, including the Adams Avenue Street Fair, Taste of Adams Avenue, and Holiday on Adams Avenue.

Talmadge Gates

The Talmadge Gates are a series of historic metal sidewalk gates unique to the Kensington-Talmadge community. Designed and constructed in 1927, the gates were restored in 2002 and form the basis of the Talmadge Gates Historic District which runs along Monroe Avenue from 44th street to 49th street and along 49th street from Monroe to Adams Avenue (also shown in Figure 2-2).

Teralta Park

Teralta Park is a four-acre park constructed in 2001 on top of State Route 15 between Orange Avenue and Polk Avenue in the City Heights community. Neighborhood residents, led by community organizers, lobbied Caltrans to build open space on top of the freeway in order to mitigate the effect of community separation that resulted from the construction of SR-15 in the 1980's.

The Salvation Army Kroc Center

The Kroc Center acts as a church, community center, and fitness center in the Eastern Area community. Its services include performances, counseling, children's classes, food distribution and a full-service fitness facility that includes swimming pools, an ice arena, and a recreation field.

Normal Heights Gateway Sign

Little Saigon

Talmadge Gates

The Tower Bar

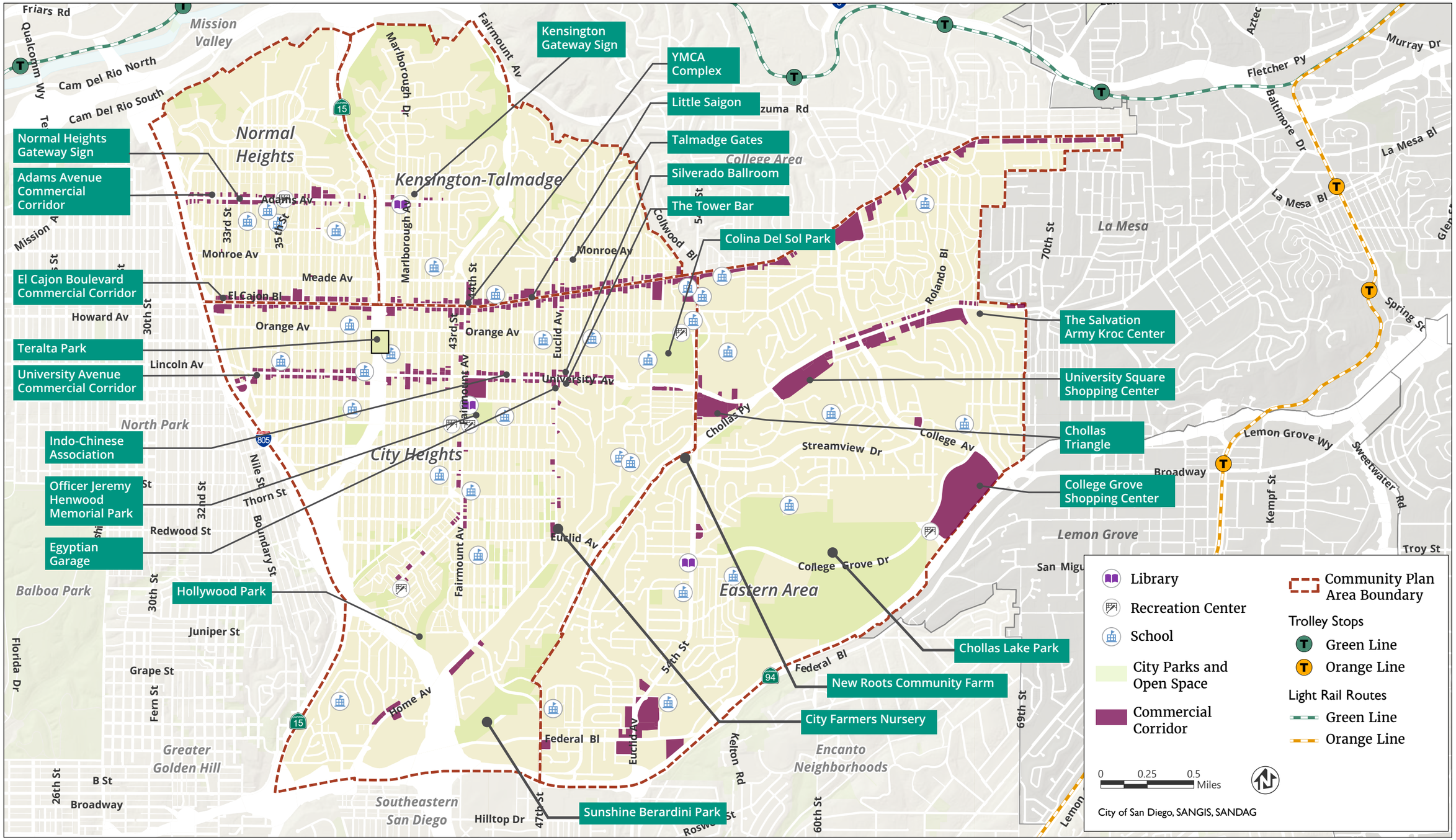
Kensington Park and Library

Teralta Park

The Salvation Army Kroc Center

Chollas Lake Park

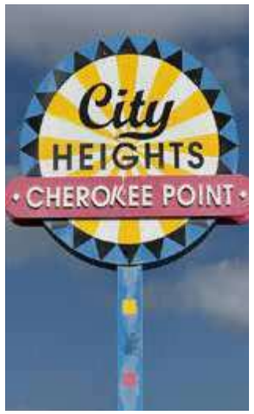
Figure 2-17 Important Places and Neighborhood Centers



2.7. History & Place Summary

This section summarizes the key information related to history and place for the Mid-City planning area presented in this chapter.

- Mid-City is approximately **13 square miles**, an area larger than Downtown San Diego and other adjacent localities.
- The **canyon system** contributes significantly to the sense of place and forms a backdrop of open space to the Mid-City planning area.
- The history of the urban fabric follows similar patterns to other urban neighborhoods with periods of **urban growth, urban decline, and revitalization**.
- The block development patterns mirror the historical development of the city, with older neighborhoods displaying an **urban grid typology** and newer neighborhoods, a **suburban typology**.
- Mid-City contains a rich and **diverse range of building typologies, scales, and styles.**
- Approximately half of the residential buildings in Mid-City were constructed prior to 1964. **Very little construction has occurred after 2005.**
- There are a diverse range of ethnic grocery stores, restaurants, and shops, serving a **rich mix of residents.**
- Mid-City is **rich with public art.**
- There are **many important places** and neighborhood centers throughout the planning area where the communities come together.



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3 Sustainability, Equity & Climate Resilience

PLAN MID-CITY
Communities Plan Update

3.1. Sustainability, Equity and Climate Resilience

OVERVIEW

This section describes major thematic areas related to sustainability, equity and climate resilience at the community level. Sustainability is defined as "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" through making better use of resources, such as water, energy, waste, and infrastructure; designing compact and complete neighborhoods; reducing exposure to toxic chemicals and pollutions; improving air, water and food quality; and enhancing people's access to affordable homes, jobs and public spaces.

However, the impact of climate change, such as exposure to extreme heat, intense rainstorms, flooding and wildfires, is already being felt in people's daily lives. The effect of these impacts varies significantly across our city, especially due to the deferred infrastructure maintenance and investment, with some communities experiencing the effects more strongly, with fewer resources to prepare and respond.

The historic inequities driven by past government policies still linger in Mid-City neighborhoods. Today, over half of Mid-City is classified as Environmental Justice Communities, which describes areas that are most impacted and negatively affected by environmental burdens and associated health risks.[1]

Socially vulnerable populations face disproportionate and unequal risk to climate change and environmental hazards such as particulate air pollution, extreme heat and flooding.

A resilient community is less vulnerable to extreme events and minimizes exposure to environmental hazards. By working together to make our neighborhoods clean, safe and healthy, we can plan for resilient communities.

POLICY FRAMEWORKS

The City of San Diego General Plan, Climate Action Plan and Climate Resilient SD provide the policy frameworks for how the city will grow and develop into a City of Villages while reducing citywide emissions and preparing and responding to climate change hazards. In addition, the San Diego Regional Plan identifies opportunities for a faster, fairer and cleaner transportation system to help reduce the region's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.[2]

BASELINE

In 2019, On-Road Transportation was responsible for 55% of city's GHG emissions (Figure 3-1). The Mid-City household, on average, used 18% less energy and 10% less water while producing 17% fewer GHG emissions compared to the average household in City of San Diego (Table 3-1).

In terms of vehicle miles traveled (average driving distance), the resident of Mid-City drove 22% fewer miles for their daily trips, while employees drove 27% fewer miles to reach their destinations compared to the San Diego regional average (Table 3-2).

Due to its central transit-rich location with a mix of housing types, average Mid-City household pay 30% less in auto and utility costs compared to the regional average.

Table 3-1 Average Household Consumption & Emission

Category	Mid-City	City of San Diego
Energy Use (BTUs)	38,960,000	47,506,000
Water Use (Gallons)	71,732	79,312
GHG Emissions* (MTCO2e)	35	42

*Source: Urban Footprint Analysis (Energy/Water) & *CoolClimate Network (GHG Emissions)*

Table 3-2 Average Daily VMT, Auto & Utility Cost

Category	Mid-City	San Diego Region
VMT per Resident (miles)	14.7	18.9
VMT per Employee (miles)	13.8	18.9
Annual Auto & Utility Costs	$17,141	$24,346

Source: SANDAG SB743 VMT Maps & Urban Footprint Analysis (Auto/Utility Costs)

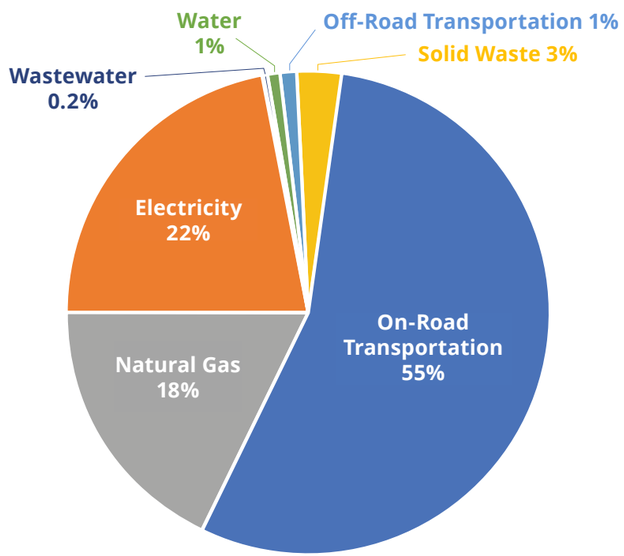
3.2. Priority Growth Areas

San Diego Regional Plan and the City's General Plan, Climate Action Plan and Land Development Code prioritize future growth in location-efficient places due to the economic, social and environmental benefits. Figure 3-2 highlights these areas:

- Sustainable Development Area - allows for utilization of local housing incentive programs if the development is accessible to a major public transit stop up to a 1-mile walk.
- Smart Growth Area - these areas are identified through Regional Comprehensive Plan development process to help prioritize regional transportation investments and eligibility for local smart growth incentive funds.
- Transit Priority Area - allows for state-mandated housing incentive programs to be used within a half-mile radius ("as the crow flies") of an existing or planned major public transit stop.

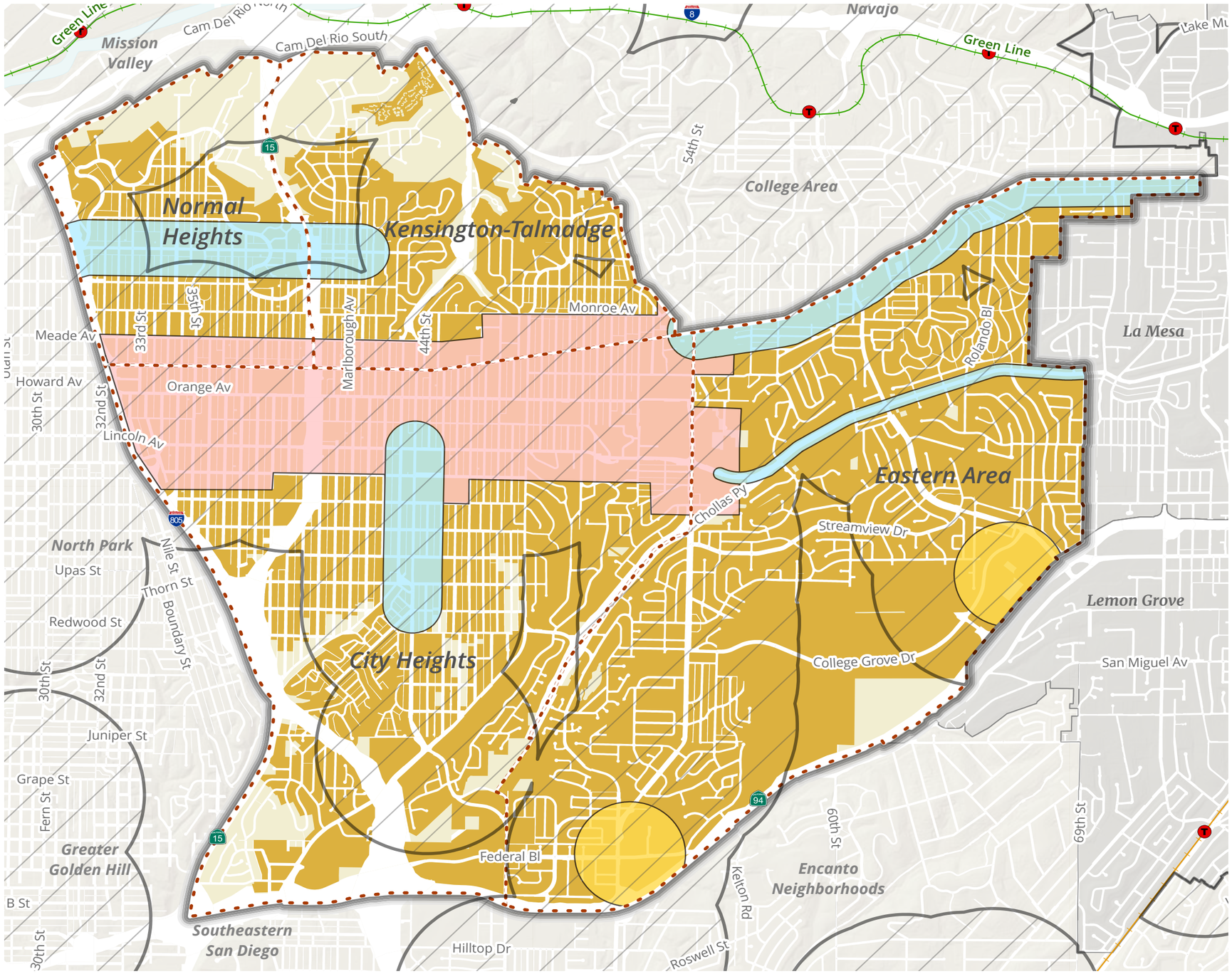
These location-efficient areas align with the City's General Plan and Climate Action Plan goals to expand housing and jobs near transit so more people can bike, walk, roll or take transit to work, home, shopping and other places of enjoyment within their community.

Figure 3-1 City of San Diego GHG Emissions (2019)



1 https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/2024-07/general-plan_11_environmental-justice_july-2024_0.pdf
2 https://www.sandag.org/-/media/SANDAG/Documents/PDF/regional-plan/2021-regional-plan/final-2021-regional-plan/final-2021-regional-plan-flipbook.pdf

Figure 3-2 Sustainable Development, Smart Growth and Transit Priority Areas



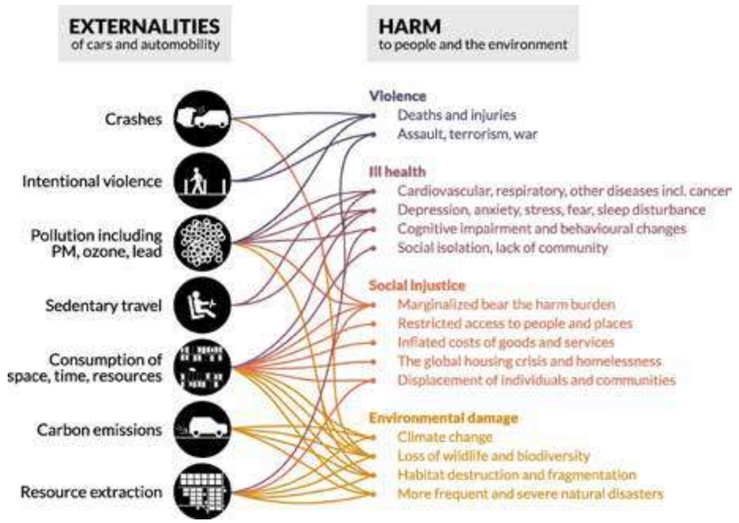
3.3. Mobility and Land Use

OVERVIEW

On-road transportation is the single largest source of GHG emissions in San Diego region and more than two-thirds of smog-forming emissions in San Diego County are generated from mobile sources.[1,2] Air pollutants emitted from cars, diesel-powered trucks, buses and other heavy-duty equipment include oxides of nitrogen (NOx) as well as diesel particulate matter (PM).

There are additional consequences of automobility. The infographic illustrates externalities of cars and automobility and how they harm people and the environment. Since their invention, cars and automobility have killed 60-80 million people and injured at least 2 billion. Currently, 1 in 34 deaths are caused by automobility and it has exacerbated social inequities and damaged ecosystems.[3]

Encouraging compact and complete neighborhoods via strategic land use planning is critical to reducing citywide vehicle emissions that result from vehicular travel. When people live near where they work and play, with safe, convenient, and enjoyable options for reaching their destination as pedestrians or by biking, or using transit, there is less overall travel by car in the city while reducing our reliance on costly personal vehicles.



WALK, BIKE AND TRANSIT SCORES

Walk Score measures the walkability of a neighborhood, Transit Score measures access to public transit, and Bike Score measures whether a location is good for biking.[4] Walk Score analyzes hundreds of walking routes to nearby amenities. Points are awarded based on the distance to amenities, pedestrian friendliness and road metrics such as block length and intersection density. Figures 3-3 through 3-5 illustrates the Walk Score, Transit Score and Bike Score of the Mid-City planning area.

Table 3-3 compares the different categories of Walk, Transit and Bike Scores between Mid-City and City of San Diego. Around 58% of Mid-City is considered Very Walkable or Somewhat Walkable compared to 17% in City of San Diego. For Transit Score, 32% of Mid-City has Good Transit compared to 10 percent for City of San Diego. Finally, 35% of Mid-City is considered to be Very Bikeable or Bikeable compared to 22% in City of San Diego. These metrics support and validate the designations of priority growth areas identified in Figure 3-2. Overall, neighborhoods in Mid-City have higher Walk, Bike and Transit Scores compared to City of San Diego.

Table 3-3 Walk, Transit and Bike Scores

Walk Score	Mid-City	City of San Diego
Very Walkable	27%	6%
Somewhat Walkable	31%	11%
Car-Dependent	42%	83%

Transit Score	Mid-City	City of San Diego
Good Transit	32%	10%
Some Transit	68%	40%
Minimal Transit	0%	50%

Bike Score	Mid-City	City of San Diego
Very Bikeable	1%	3%
Bikeable	34%	19%
Somewhat Bikeable	65%	78%

Source: County of San Diego 2018

This infographic by WalkBoston illustrates the health benefits of walking 30 minutes a day. Regular physical activities, such as walking, lowers the risk of cancer, heart disease, diabetes, stroke, arthritis and osteoporosis, help keep weight in check and boosts your mood.

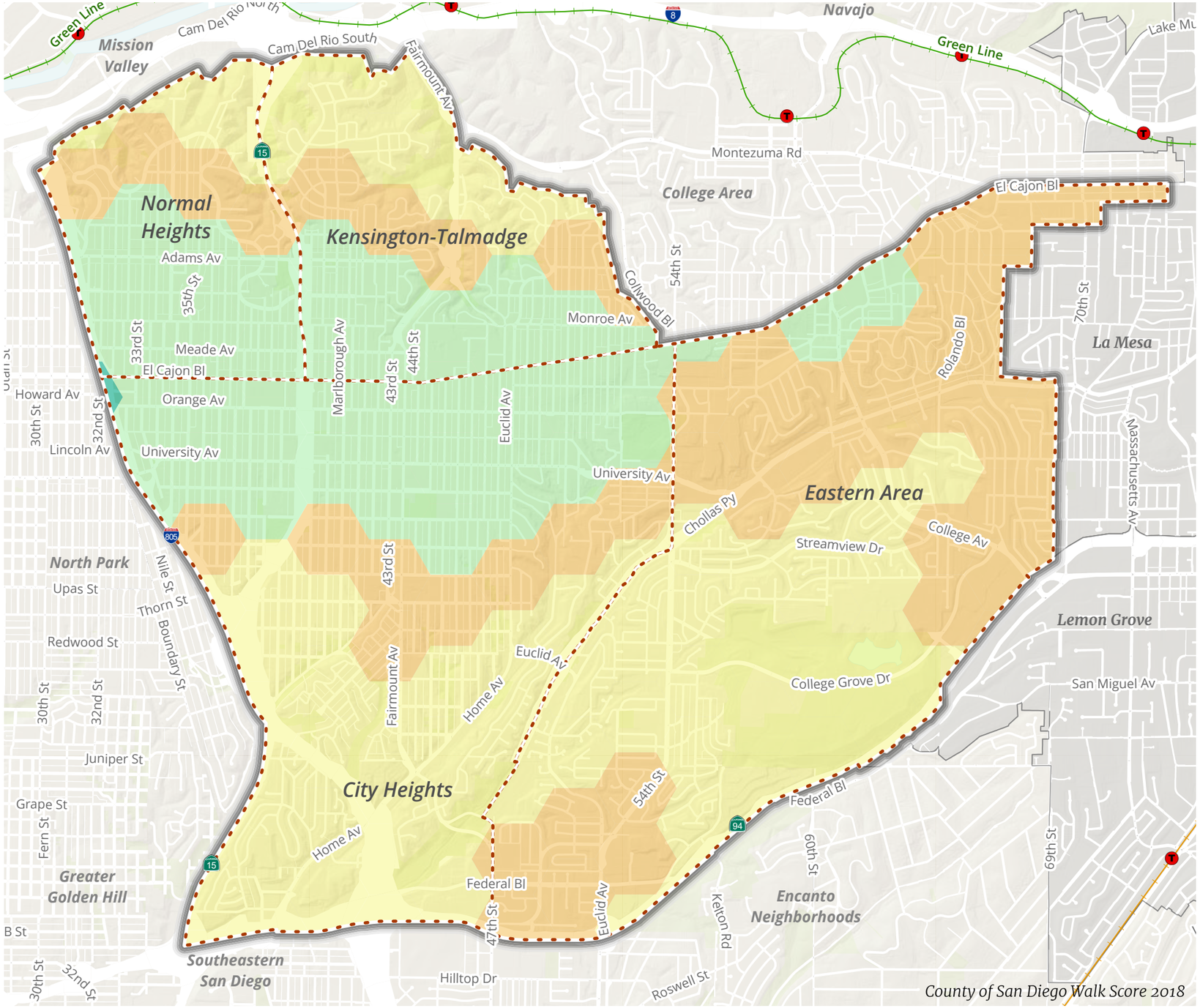
1 https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/dam/sdc/sustainability/docs/final2024cap/Final2024CAP.pdf

2 https://www.sdapcd.org/content/sdapcd/compliance/compliance-requirements/mobile-source-program.html#:~:text=Over%2070%25%20of%20the%20total,and%20other%20heavy%20duty%20equipment.

3 Patrick Miner, Barbara M. Smith, Anant Jani, Geraldine McNeill, Alfred Gathorne-Hardy,Car harm: A global review of automobility's harm to people and the environment, Journal of Transport Geography,Volume 115,2024,103817,ISSN 0966-6923,https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jtrangeo.2024.103817.

4 https://www.walkscore.com/methodology.shtml

Figure 3-3 Mid-City Walk Score



County of San Diego Walk Score 2018

Walk Score

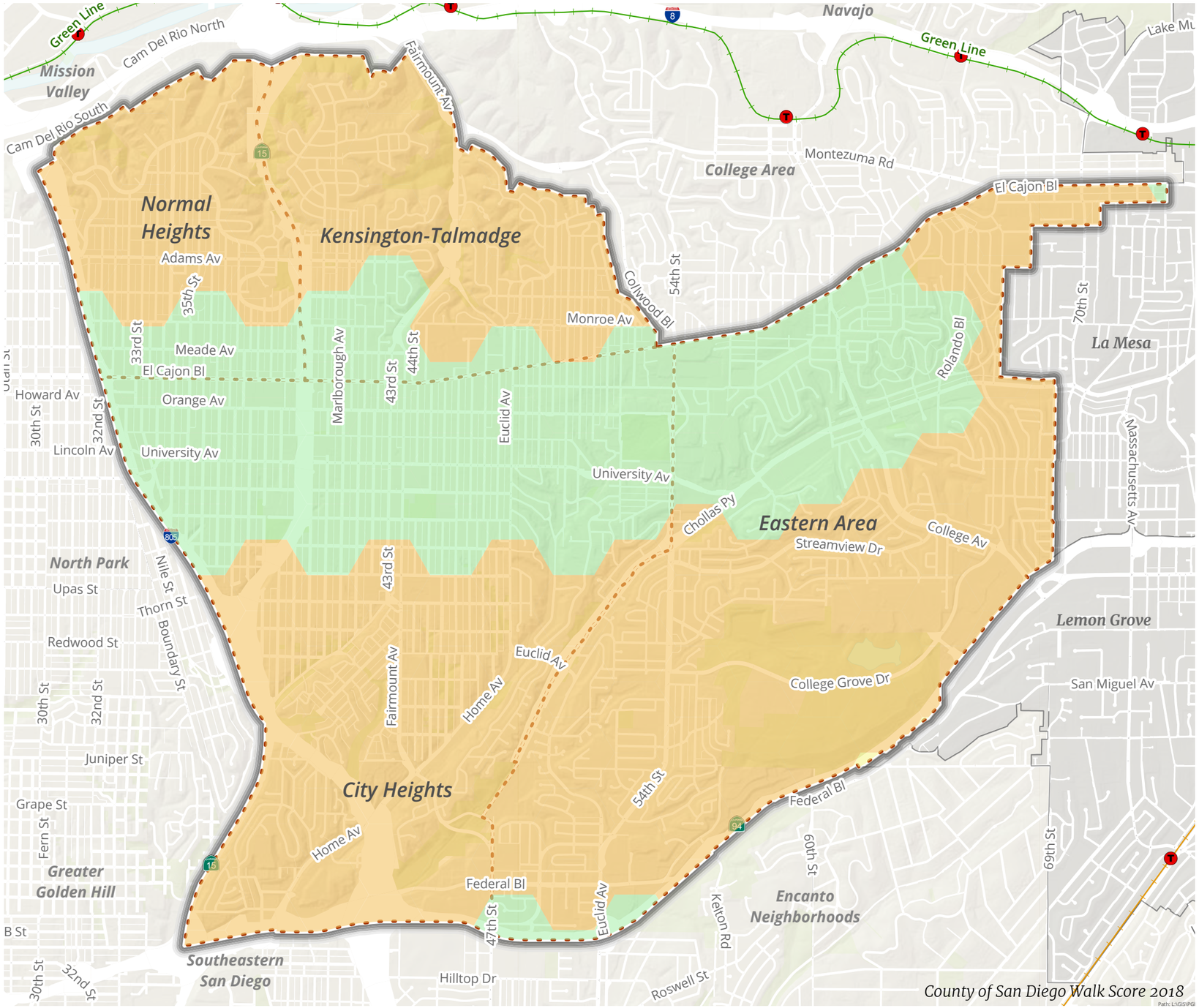
- Walker's Paradise | Daily errands do not require a car
- Very Walkable | Most errands can be accomplished on foot
- Somewhat Walkable | Some errands can be accomplished on foot
- Car-Dependent | Most errands require a car

Communities	Score
Normal Heights	
Very Walkable	57%
Somewhat Walkable	29%
Car Dependent	14%
Kensington-Talmadge	
Very Walkable	38%
Somewhat Walkable	24%
Car Dependent	38%
City Heights	
Very Walkable	33%
Somewhat Walkable	22%
Car Dependent	45%
Eastern Area	
Very Walkable	3%
Somewhat Walkable	45%
Car Dependent	52%

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

City of San Diego, SANGIS, SANDAG

Figure 3-4 Mid-City Transit Score



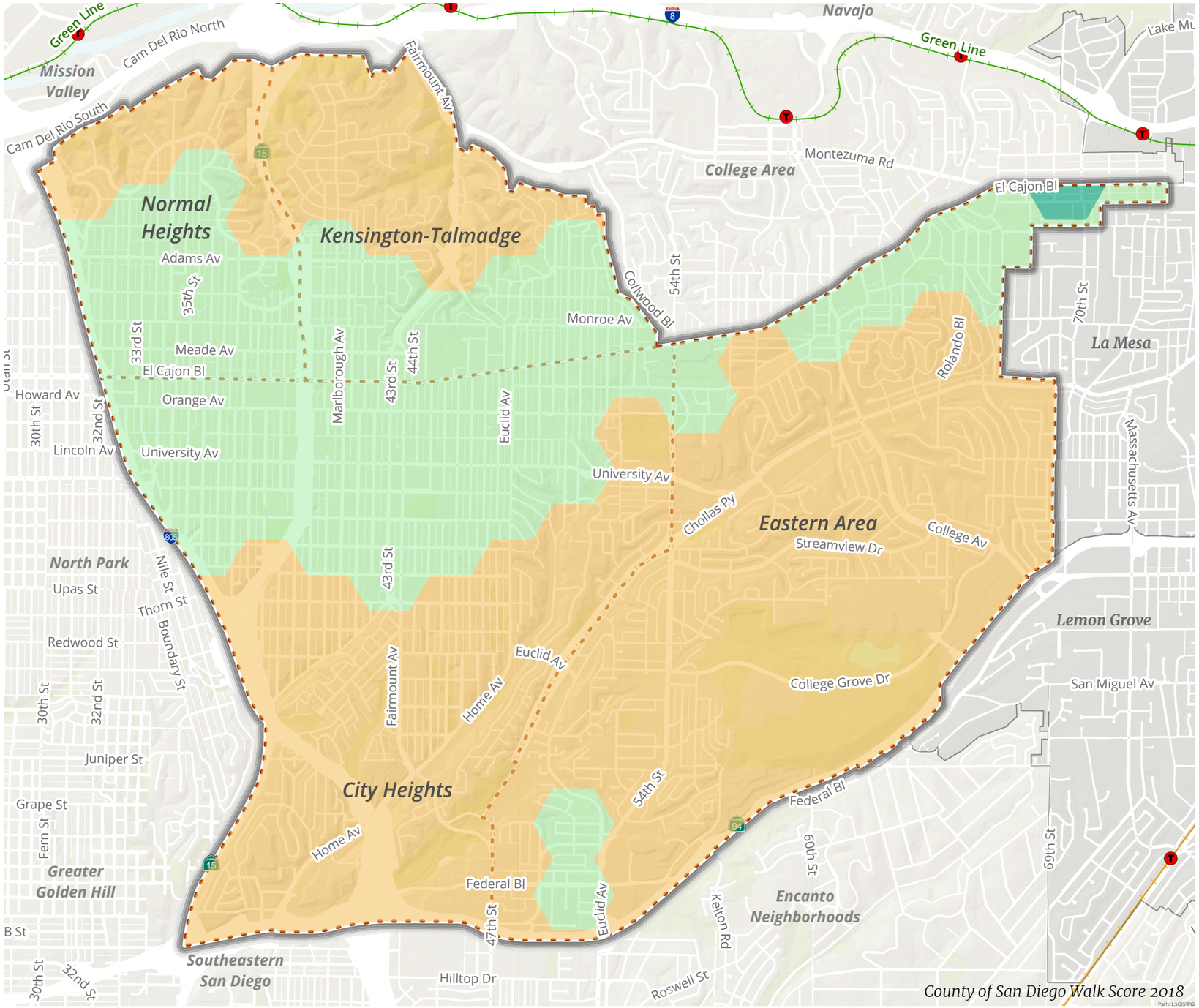
Transit Score

Good Transit | Many nearby public transportation options

Some Transit | A few nearby public transportation options

Communities	Score
Normal Heights	
Good Transit	21%
Some Transit	79%
Kensington-Talmadge	
Good Transit	19%
Some Transit	81%
City Heights	
Good Transit	43%
Some Transit	57%
Eastern Area	
Good Transit	25%
Some Transit	75%

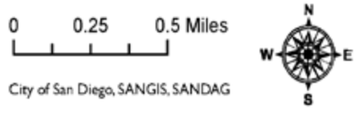
Figure 3-5 Mid-City Bike Score



Bike Score

- Very Bikeable | Biking is convenient for most trips
- Bikeable | Some bike infrastructure
- Somewhat Bikeable | Minimal bike infrastructure

Communities	Score
Normal Heights	
Bikeable	64%
Somewhat Bikeable	36%
Kensington-Talmadge	
Bikeable	48%
Somewhat Bikeable	52%
City Heights	
Bikeable	41%
Somewhat Bikeable	59%
Eastern Area	
Very Bikeable	2%
Bikeable	12%
Somewhat Bikeable	86%



BLUEPRINT SAN DIEGO

In July 2024, the City Council adopted an amendment to the City's General Plan known as Blueprint San Diego including the Village Climate Goal Propensity Map (Figure 3-6) to identify areas with the greatest transit competitiveness and where opportunities for new homes can most effectively implement the General Plan's City of Villages Strategy. The Village Climate Goal Propensity Map serves as a guide for community plan update efforts, including the Mid-City Communities Plan Update, to align with Climate Action Plan mode share goals. This map indicates that the Mid-City should include increased opportunities for new homes and jobs within the community given the existing and planned transit which will help reduce vehicle miles traveled and support sustainable growth.

Urban Village Centers

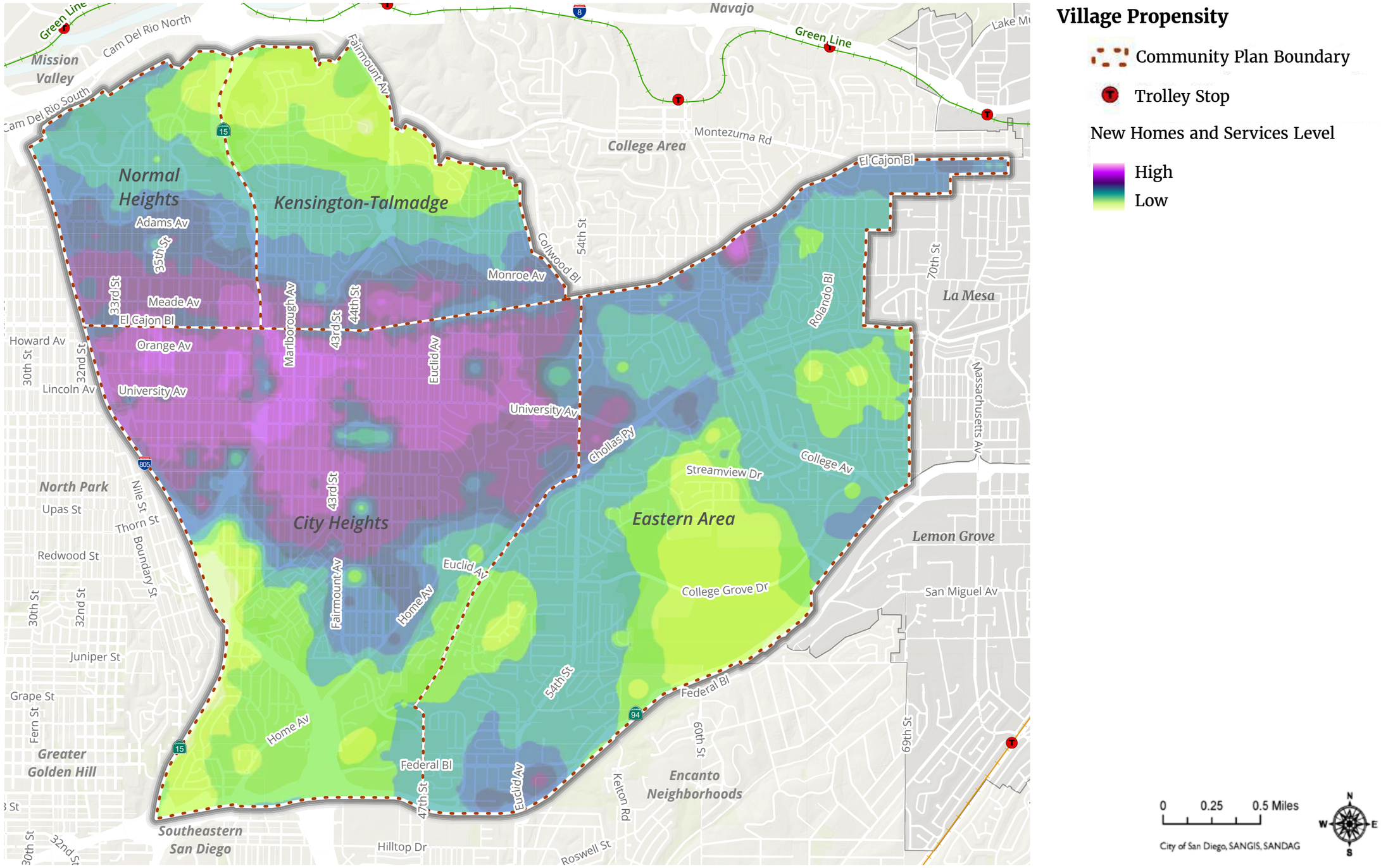
Subregional Employment Areas

Downtown

Community and Neighborhood Village Centers

Transit Corridors

Figure 3-6 Mid-City Village Climate Goal Propensity Map



Village Propensity

- Community Plan Boundary
- Trolley Stop

New Homes and Services Level

- High
- Low

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

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3.4. Equity

HISTORICAL INEQUITY

The Great Depression brought home construction in San Diego to a near stand-still in the early 1930s, with high unemployment and defaults on existing mortgages. In 1933, the Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC) was established by the Roosevelt administration to buy mortgages at risk of foreclosure and refinance them into new government mortgages, which would allow people to keep their homes.

However, the HOLC would not buy and offer mortgages in areas they deemed economically hazardous. To identify these areas, maps were made of major cities with each neighborhood ranked as either "A", "B", "C" or "D". Neighborhoods ranked "D", shown in red on the maps, were ineligible for federal mortgages, an action known as "redlining." Redlined neighborhoods were often the oldest neighborhoods in the City occupied by lower income residents and people of color.

Figure 3-7 shows the historic redlining boundaries and grades within the Mid-City planning area. A brief description of each of the grades is provided below:

- **Grade A, "Best":** Described by HOLC as areas where mortgage lenders with available funds were willing to make their maximum loans, up to 75-80% of appraisal.
- **Grade B, "Still Desirable":** Described by HOLC as areas where mortgage lenders tended to hold commitments 10-15% under the maximum loan limit, so approximated 65% of appraisal.
- **Grade C, "Definitely Declining"**: Described by HOLC as areas where mortgage lenders were more conservative and held commitments under the lending ratios for Grade A and Grade B areas.
- **Grade D, "Hazardous":** Described by HOLC as areas where it was recommended that mortgage lenders refuse to make loans or only on a conservative basis.

In 1934, Congress passed the National Housing Act and established the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) to administer a program that offered federal mortgage insurance for private mortgage lenders in an effort to spur private lending. The FHA used the same redlining principles to deny mortgage insurance. Soon private banks, lending institutions, and the Veterans Administration (VA) would follow suit.

When the FHA expanded into construction loans for homebuilders, discrimination became even more explicit as the FHA prohibited builders from selling homes to African Americans.

OTHER CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

Concentrations of individuals on the basis of race, ethnicity, income, familial status, and to a lesser degree disability can be seen within the Mid-City planning area. Lower income individuals and people of color are disproportionately concentrated in certain neighborhoods within Mid-City.

These patterns of concentration are the result of several intersecting factors that include:

- redlining of many of the City's older neighborhoods occupied by lower income residents and people of color, preventing them from securing mortgages, purchasing or improving property, and building generational wealth;
- the use of restrictive covenants in real estate deeds between 1910 and 1948 in many areas of the City that prohibited sale of the property to individuals not of the Caucasian race and established minimum valuations that excluded lower income property owners and residents;
- "White flight" from older suburban areas developed around the turn of the 20th century in the communities to the east and southeast of downtown;
- the implementation of exclusionary zoning that protected single-family homes from all other development, including multi-family development; thereby reinforcing existing racial and economic segregation;
- construction of freeways through older communities that disproportionately impacted lower income individuals and people of color, demolishing buildings, displacing residents and business, and cutting communities off from one another; and
- growth management initiatives that limit the City's ability to increase housing in certain areas of the City without a vote of the people.

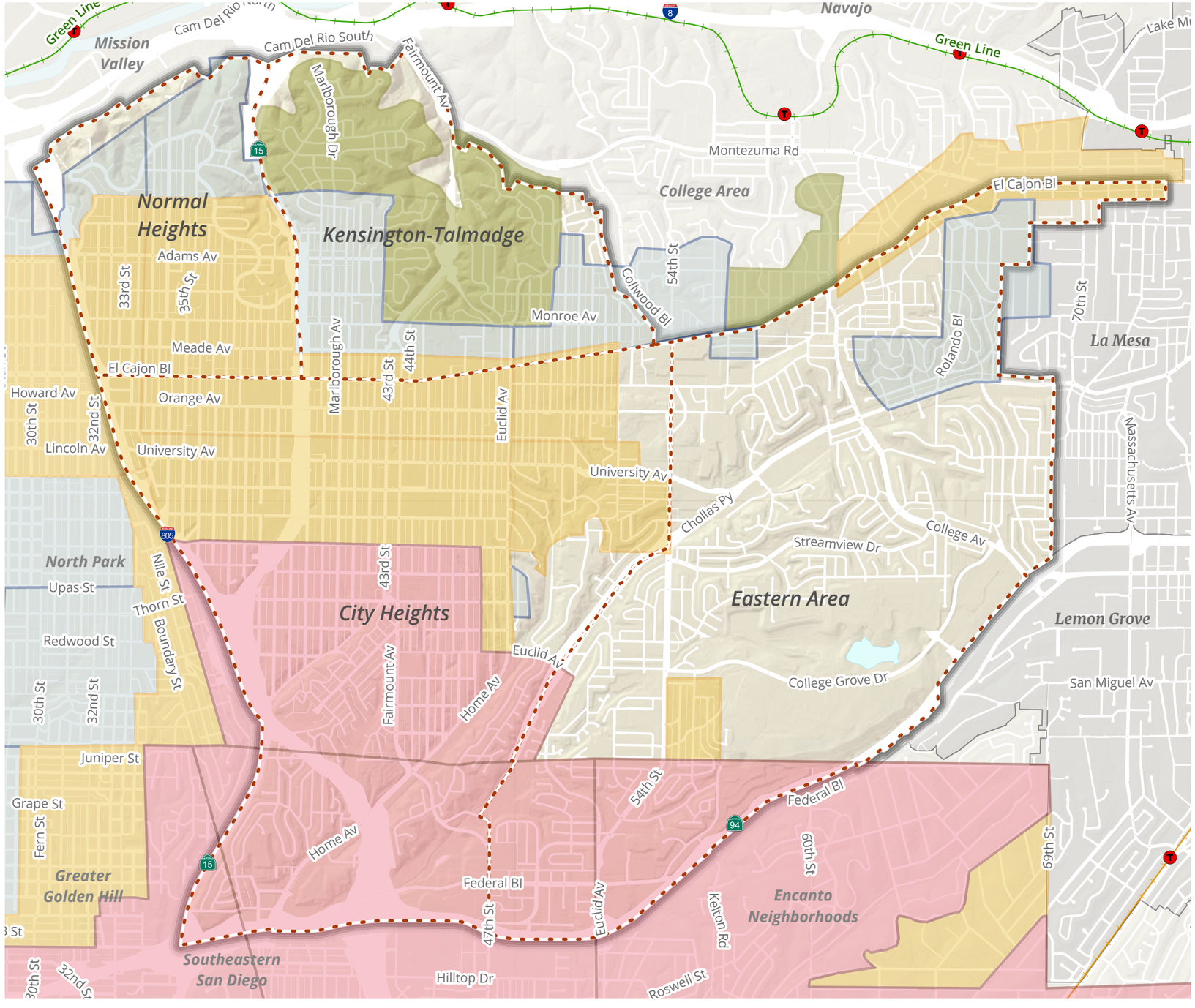
While many of the above factors have since been deemed unconstitutional and/or immoral and are no longer in practice, the effects of these past actions still remains.[1] More than half of Mid-City is classified as Environmental Justice Communities today, which describes areas that are most impacted and negatively affected by environmental burdens and associated health risks.[2]

Environmental Justice Communities in and near Mid-City

Oak Park mural of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

1 https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/he_appa_assessmentfairhousing_final.pdf
2 https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/2024-07/general-plan_11_environmental-justice_july-2024_0.pdf

Figure 3-7 Federal Home Owner's Loan Corporation (HOLC) Graded Area Map 1935



Community Plan Boundary

Trolley Stop

Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC) Redlining Areas

- Grade A
- Grade B
- Grade C
- Grade D

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

N W E S

City of San Diego, SANGIS, SANDAG, "Mapping Inequality: Redlining in New Deal America" https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/#loc=5/39.1/-94.58

3.5. Opportunities & Neighborhood Change

OPPORTUNITY MAP

Opportunity Map developed annually by the California Tax Credit Allocation Committee (CTCAC) and Housing and Community Development identifies the neighborhoods that score better across eight economic and educational indicators relative to other neighborhoods in the region. These indicators were selected because they have been shown by research to be associated with positive economic, educational, and health outcomes for low-income families - particularly long-term outcomes for children:

Economic Indicators

- Above 200% of Poverty - Percentage of population with income above 200% of federal poverty line
- Adult Education - Percentage of adults with a bachelor's degree or above
- Employment - Percentage of adults age 20-64 who are employed in the civilian labor force or in the armed forces
- Median Home Value - Value of owner-occupied units

Education Indicators

- Math proficiency - Percentage of 4th graders who meet or exceed math proficiency standards
- Reading proficiency - Percentage of 4th graders who meet or exceed literacy standards
- High school graduation rate - Percentage high school cohort that graduated on time
- Student poverty rate - Percentage of students not receiving free or reduced-price lunch

The Opportunity Map also reflects local environmental conditions by using a subset of data from the CalEnviroScreen 4.0 tool to identify the geographies that have the highest potential - defined here as ranking in the highest 5% of regional environmental burden - to expose vulnerable populations to nearby health and safety threats.

A neighborhood's opportunity score is determined by how many economic and education indicators fall above the median (50th percentile) tract or block group value within each region.

Using this method, the final scores are divided into four primary categories:

- 9 or 8 = "Highest Resource
- 7 or 6 = "High Resources"
- 5 or 4 = "Moderate Resource"
- 3 or lower = "Low Resource"

Based on these criteria, Figure 3-8 highlights majority of neighborhoods in Mid-City are categorized as Low Resource, followed by Moderate Resource in portion of Normal Heights and Kensington-Talmadge.

High-Poverty & Racially Segregated Areas

The map also illustrates five census tracts in City Heights that meet the definition for High-Poverty & Segregated areas. High-poverty is defined as tracts with at least 30% of the population falling under the federal poverty line. Racial segregation is defined as tracts with a racial/ethnic Location Quotient of higher than 1.25 for Black, Hispanic, Asian, or all people of color in comparison to the county.

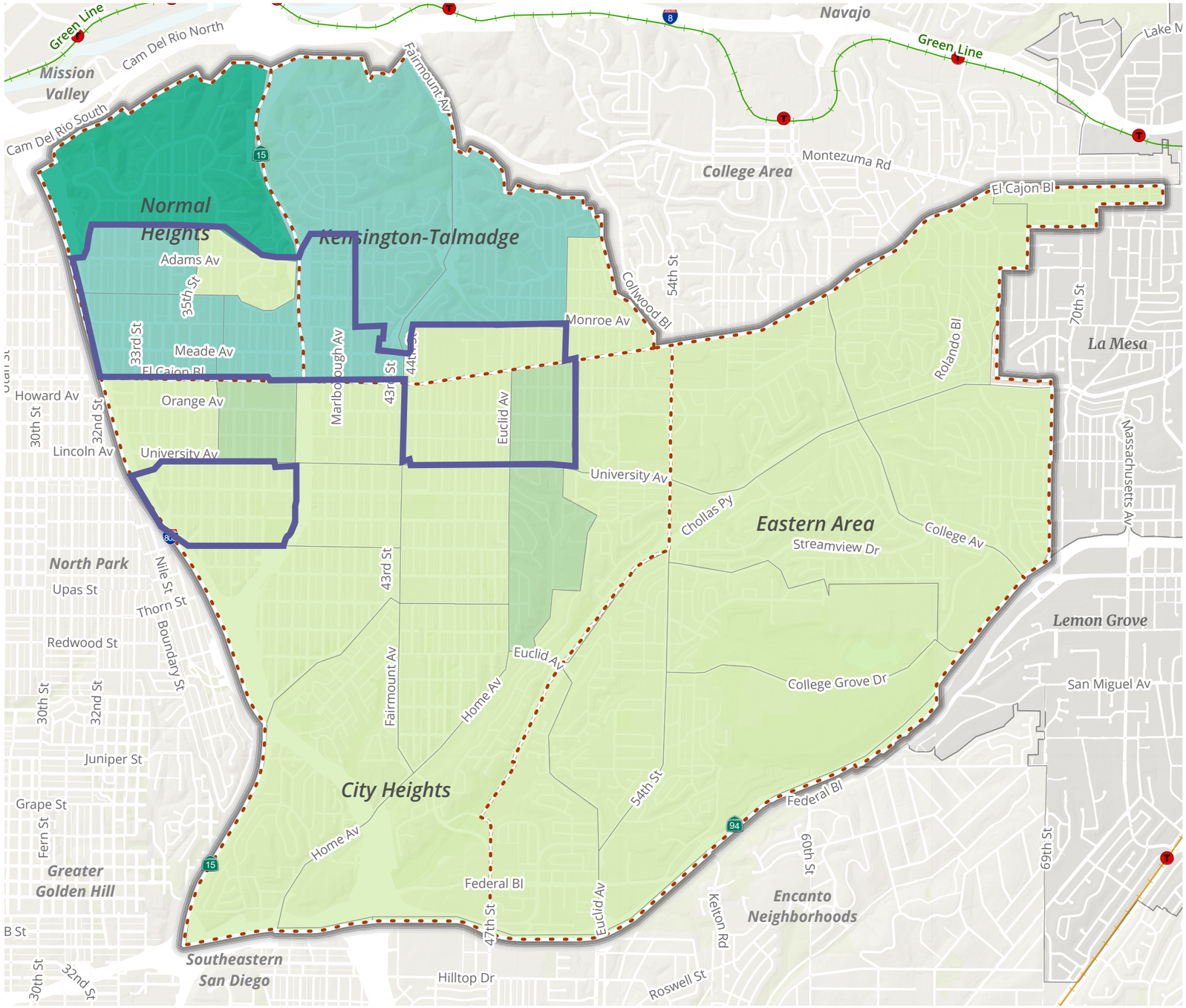
NEIGHBORHOOD CHANGE

Neighborhood Change[1] area (Figure 3-8) identifies census tracts that have experienced both substantial racial/ethnic demographic change (growth in non-Hispanic white share of the population) and economic demographic change (growth in the share of high-income households), as well as markers of disproportionate housing need (rising median rents). The approach is intended to identify places that have already undergone substantial racial and economic change over a period of time. Based on this methodology, eight Mid-City census tracts in Normal Heights, Kensington-Talmadge and City Heights show substantial changes in neighborhood demographics, growth in high-income households and rising median rents.

Mural in Little Saigon – a census tract experiencing neighborhood change

1 https://belonging.berkeley.edu/2024-hcd-affh-mapping-tool

Figure 3-8 California Tax Credit Allocation Committee (CTCAC) Opportunity Map (2025)



- Community Plan Boundary

TCAC/HCD Opportunity Areas

- High Resource
- Moderate Resource
- Low Resource/High Segregation and Poverty
- Low Resource
- Neighborhood Change

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

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3.6. Hydrology, Flooding, and Wildfire

HYDROLOGY

City Heights and Eastern Area are entirely within San Diego Bay Watershed Management Area (WMA) and subwatershed of Pueblo San Diego and Chollas Creek Watershed.[1] The Chollas Creek Watershed is a vital natural resource encompassing a network of water channels, parks and surrounding open space. The watershed stretches across the neighborhoods of City Heights, Eastern Area, Encanto, Southeastern San Diego, Barrio Logan, Greater Golden Hill, North Park and Normal Heights. The watershed plays a crucial role in maintaining the region's ecological balance and providing essential habitat for numerous plant and animal species as well as providing opportunities for community-serving recreation.

Significant portions of Normal Heights and Kensington-Talmadge are within the San Diego River WMA, while other areas of Mid-City are part of the San Diego Bay WSA. The San Diego Bay WSA is the largest WSA located entirely within the boundaries of San Diego County and is estimated to be home to approximately one-third of the population of San Diego County.

FLOODING

The 100-year floodway, 100-year flood plain, and 500-year flood plain for Mid-City Plan Area are delineated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate maps and illustrated in Figure 3-6. The majority of Mid-City sits on a mesa top, providing views of the surrounding communities as well as elevation protection for flooding. The canyon areas of Mid-City provide open space access and visual relief from the built environment. The canyons areas also provide value by providing a thoroughfare for water during high precipitation events; flood zones are primarily limited to the canyon areas.

2016 San Diego Winter Storms

In January of 2016, an El Niño year, San Diego experienced a series of heavy rain storms. There was flooding and road closures Countywide, including along Aldine Drive and Fairmount Avenue in Mid-City during one storm on January 5th. One driver was rescued after driving into stormwater. It rained 2.02 inches in a 24-hour period.

January 2024 - Chollas Creek Flood

According to the National Weather Service, January 22nd, 2024, was the fourth wettest day in San Diego's recorded history which received 2.73 inches of rain. The heavy rainfall overwhelmed the stormwater channels, and several locations in Mid-City experienced catastrophic damages. Many residents of Village Green apartments in Rolando Park, a low-income housing complex in the Eastern Area, were significantly impacted by the flood, temporarily displaced, and lost belongings.

WILDFIRE

Portions of the community are identified as being within a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone by CAL FIRE due to potential hazard from wildland fires. Residents of these areas, especially adjacent to canyons, should take additional measures to be prepared for threat of wildland fire. The San Diego Fire-Rescue Department provides information that should be used when safeguarding homes and responding during a fire emergency.

1985 - Normal Heights Fire

A fire fueled by heavy brush and strong winds raced up a series of Mission Valley canyons on June 30, 1985. The Normal Heights Fire burned 300 acres, destroyed 76 houses and damaged 57 others. Damage was set at $9 million. 1,000 to 1,500 people were evacuated. It was, at the time, the worst brush fire in San Diego history.

Heavy brush in the canyons and around the houses on the canyon rim propelled the fire. A force of some 400 firefighters and 98 rigs fought the fire. Firefighters from virtually every city and rural fire district in the county rushed to San Diego to help, including teams of federal firefighters from North Island and Miramar Naval Air Stations. The San Diego Fire Department called in 40 off-duty firefighters. Reinforcements came from Ventura, Imperial, Riverside and Orange Counties. By evening, two air tankers arrived from Ventura County.

The Normal Heights fire pushed the City of San Diego to establish several initiatives including a weed and brush abatement program, an educational campaign for canyon rim residents and a plan to improve water pressure in the Mid-City area.

Recent Brush Fires

Between 2019 and 2024, the Kensington and Talmadge neighborhoods experienced several fires. In October 2019, a brush fire near Fairmount Avenue and Aldrine Drive prompted evacuations and power outages for nearby residents. In September 2024, a brush fire began in Alder Canyon on a 103-degree day. In October 2024, a fire consumed 39 acres south of Montezuma Road, leaving one home damaged. In each of these instances, San Diego Fire acted quickly with support from dozens of engine crews and helicopter drops and no injuries were reported.

Chollas Creek after a downpour

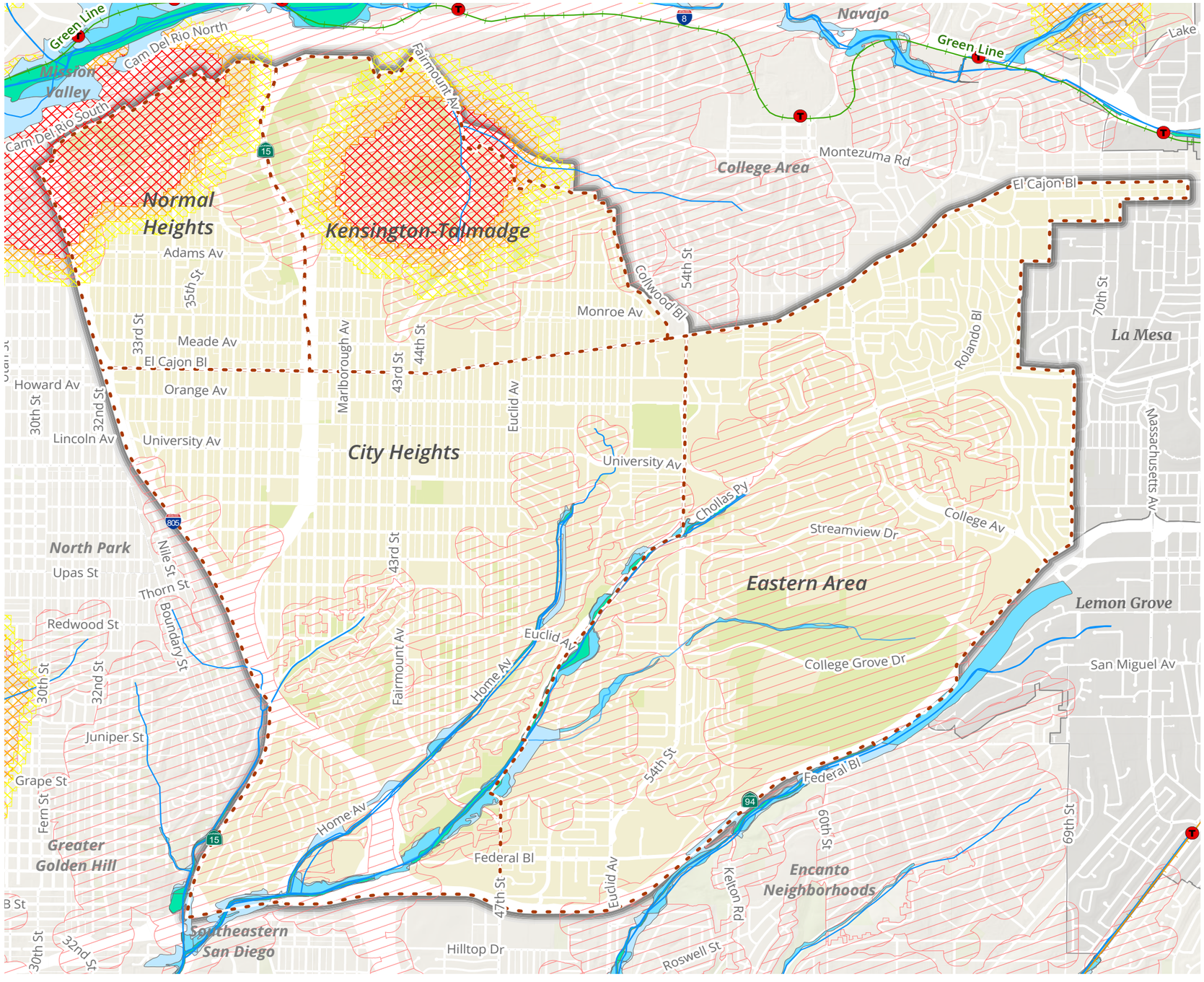
Flooded underpass on Aldine Drive

A house and a car burn North Mountain View Drive in Normal Heights about 1:30 p.m. on June 30, 1985 (Bruce Huff/ The San Diego Union-Tribune file photo)

2024 Brush fire in Kensington-Talmadge

1 https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/dpw/watersheds/Watersheds.html

Figure 3-9 Hydrology, Flooding and Wildfire



Flood and Fire Zones

- 100 Year Floodway
- 100 Year Flood Plain
- 500 Year Flood Plain
- Rivers/Streams

Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (CAL FIRE)

- Very High
- High
- Moderate

Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (Prior City Areas)

- Very High

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

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CAL FIRE. Fire Hazard Severity Zones Map. (2025). https://osfm.fire.ca.gov/what-we-do/community-wildfire-preparedness-and-mitigation/fire-hazard-severity-zones.

3.7. Urban Heat Island

OVERVIEW

Areas with limited tree cover and high concentrations of structures like buildings and roads tend to absorb and radiate heat more than natural landscapes, resulting in elevated temperatures—a phenomenon known as the urban heat island effect. Rising temperatures from climate change further exacerbates the urban heat island effect.

Heat Vulnerability measures how susceptible a community is to the impacts of extreme heat, considering both environmental exposure and social factors like age, income, and pre-existing health conditions. factors in social and health indicators. Identifying vulnerable areas and the driving factors helps to address the impacts of urban heat island.

HEAT EXPOSURE

Using satellite imagery from Landsat 8 Surface Reflectance Tier 1 image collection, the NASA DEVELOP team based out of Tempe, Arizona measured heat exposure in the summers of 2015 to 2020 for the City of San Diego and measured the average temperature for each census tract.[1] Figure 3-10 highlights the 14 census tracts with Very High heat exposure in Mid-City. The combination of high impervious surfaces, low tree canopy, and distance from the cooling effects of the coast on the mesa top increases the heat exposures in Mid-City communities.[2]

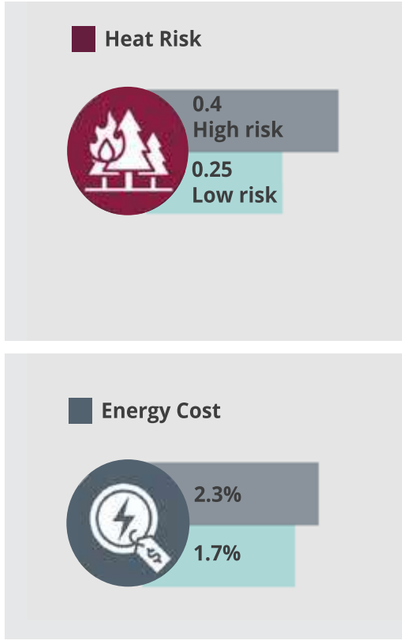
HEAT RISK

Heat risk, as illustrated in Figure 3-11, is a measure of heat exposure and heat vulnerability combined. Values for census tracts are normalized to a range of 0 to 1 with higher scores indicating higher heat risk. The average score for Mid-City communities is considered high risk at 0.4, while the average across the City is generally low risk at 0.25. This indicates that neighborhoods in Mid-City face greater risk to extreme heat events, such as heat waves, than other areas of the city.

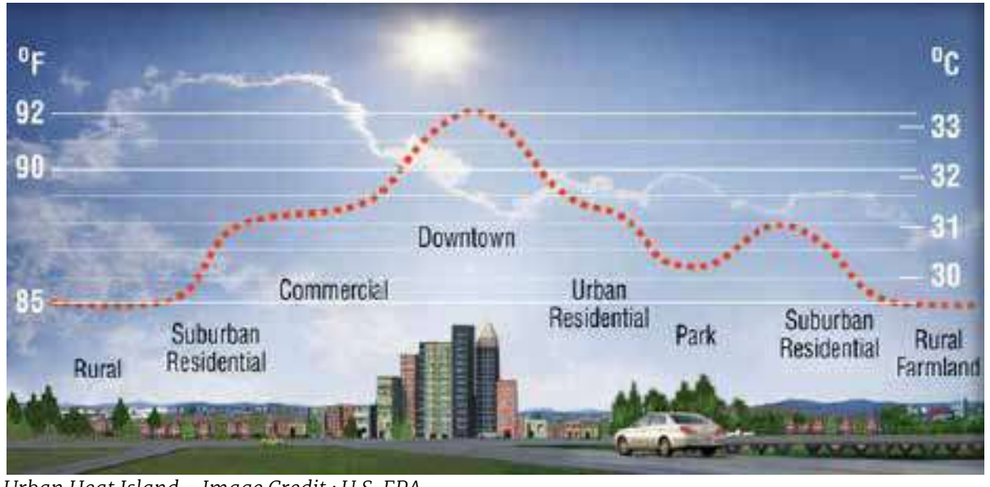
Moreover, older, more developed neighborhoods may face challenges in maintaining comfortable indoor temperatures due to outdated building infrastructure lacking energy-efficient features such as proper insulation, modern appliances, and efficient heating and cooling systems.

ENERGY COST BURDEN

The energy cost burden, which denotes the proportion of household income spent on energy expenses like electricity and natural gas, disproportionately affects certain households, particularly those with lower incomes. While community members may use cost-effective methods like fans or adding extra layers of clothing to reduce energy consumption, these strategies may not be sufficient during extreme weather events. Establishing a local dataset detailing building ages and areas suffering from high heat risk can provide insights into disparities prevalent in older and less affluent areas to inform future community resilience strategies.



Environmental Justice Communities (gray bar), on average, face higher Heat Risk and Energy Cost Burden compared to the rest of the City (teal bar).



Urban Heat Island – Image Credit : U.S. EPA

1 https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/d79916f065424f1a91c3663cb486a126
2 https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/2024-08/climate-resilient-sd_3-22-24.pdf

Figure 3-10 Urban Heat Vulnerability Index - Heat Exposure

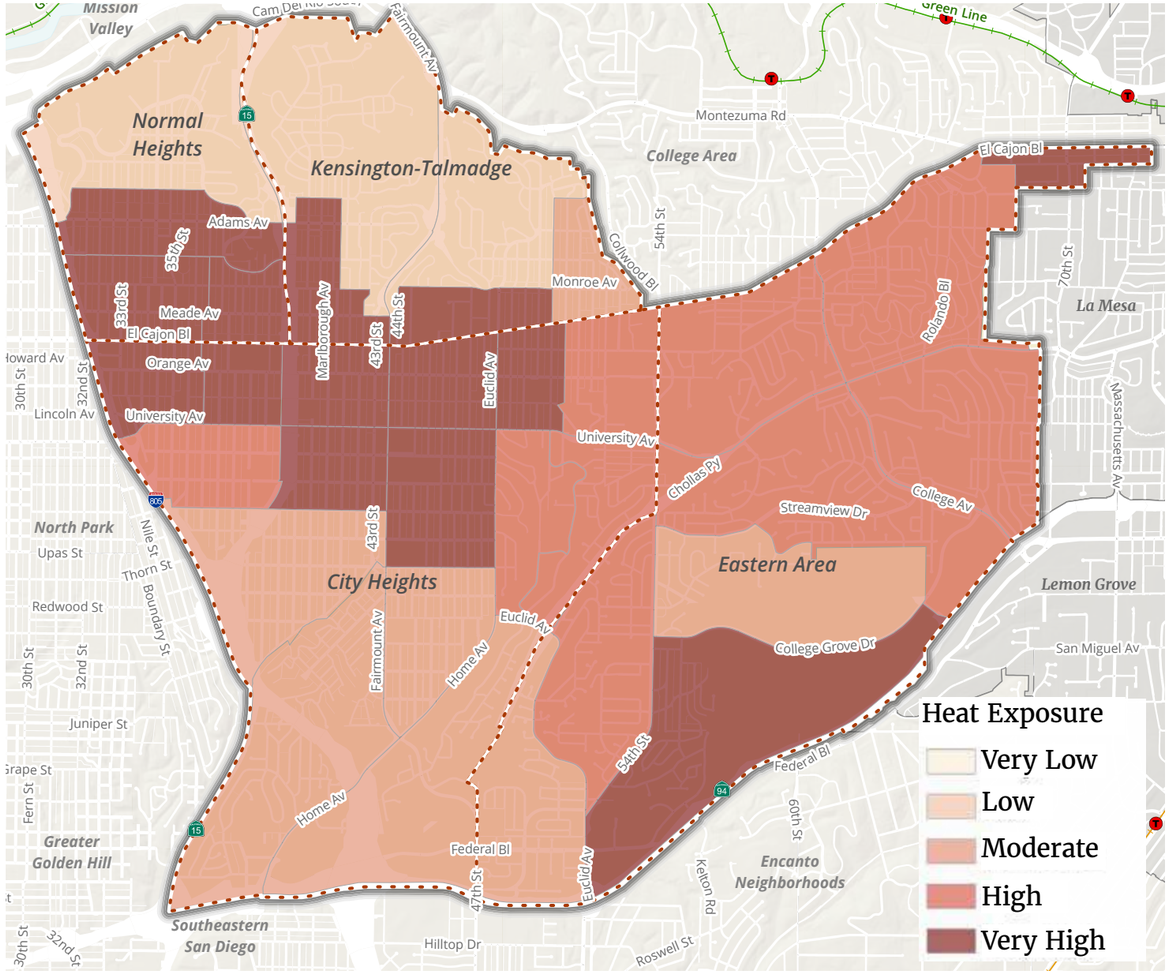
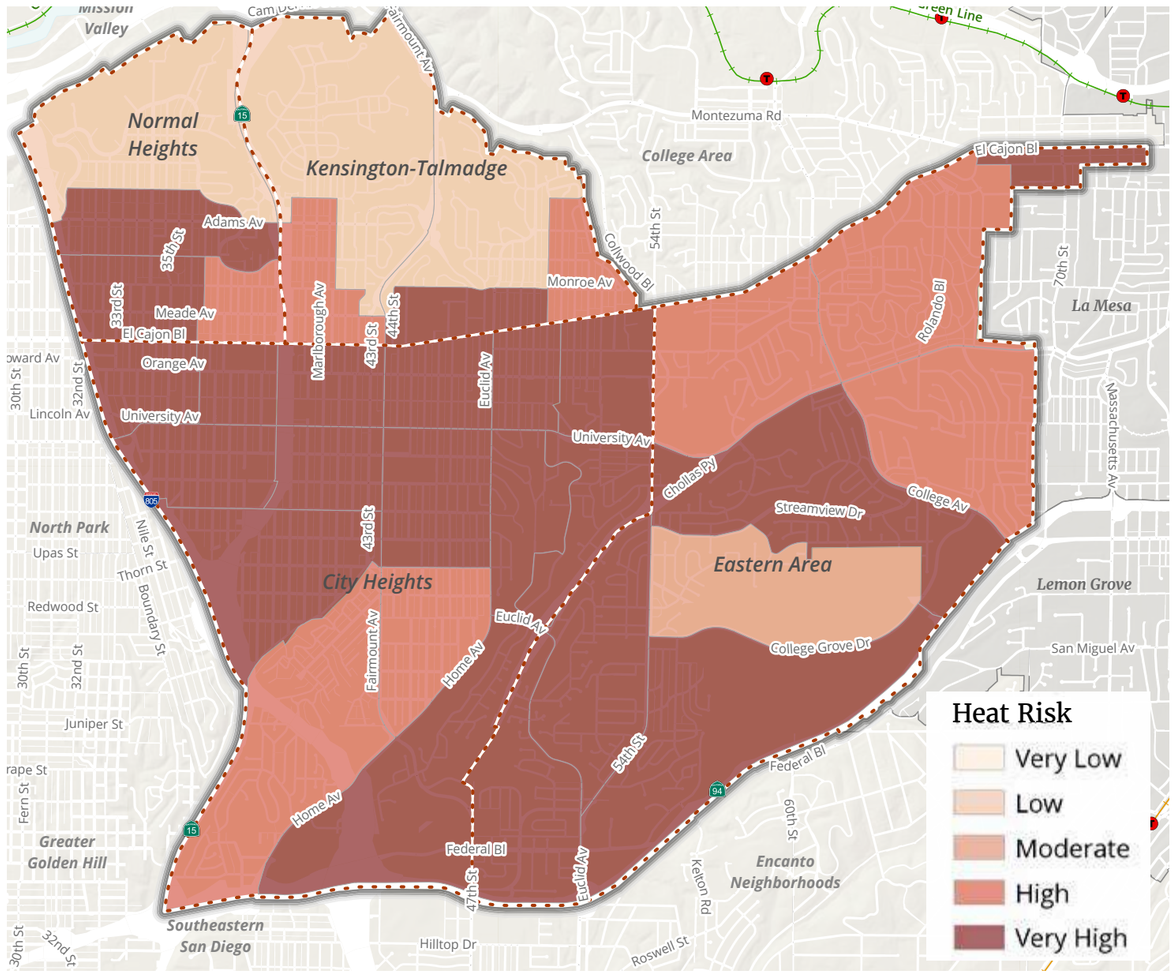


Figure 3-11 Urban Heat Vulnerability Index - Heat Risk



3.8. Urban Tree Canopy

The urban tree canopy provides enormous benefits, including:

- Enhancing placemaking and community character
- Increasing real estate value
- Providing shade and cooling, while supporting energy conservation
- Providing habitat
- Providing health benefits, including reducing pollutants and improving air quality
- Supporting soil and carbon sequestration

The City's General Plan establishes the importance of urban forestry. The Conservation Element establishes goals and policies for the protection and expansion of a sustainable urban forest, including retaining and protecting significant and mature trees, planting large canopy shade trees to maximize environmental benefits, requiring the planting of trees with new development, and developing street tree master plans. In 2017, the City Council approved the Urban Forest Management Plan, a document to coordinate the work of multiple City departments, and the City is currently in the process of finalizing an Action Plan. The City's 2022 Climate Action Plan establishes a specific goal to increase urban tree canopy cover with targets of 28% by 2030 and 35% by 2035, with actions that target increasing tree planting in Communities of Concern, including identifying areas for tree planting, expanding the tree canopy throughout parks, the transportation network, and freeways, and reducing fees and code hurdles.

TREE CANOPY COVERAGE

Figure 3-12 shows the tree coverage in Mid-City. The mapping is based on City land cover data derived from high resolution aerial imagery and LiDAR. Analysis of this data found that approximately 15% of the Mid-City planning area is covered by tree canopy, which is significantly lower than the City's goal of 28% by 2030. It should be noted that palm tree data can be difficult to reflect on a tree canopy map, and does not provide much of a canopy, however the figure is generally representative of an order-of-magnitude analysis for an area of this size.

Many of the residential streets, especially in the older neighborhoods of Kensington, Talmadge, and Normal Heights, include extensive mature tree canopies. Many portions of Mid-City include natural vegetated valleys, with low brush, but limited tree canopy. Of note, there are freeway corridors in the Mid-City which contribute to the low coverage ratio, particularly in City Heights and Eastern Area. Additionally, many of the major corridors such as El Cajon Boulevard, College Avenue, and University Avenue, as well as many neighborhood streets and parking areas, lack a cohesive tree canopy network. The tree canopy varies considerably across the Mid-City, with Kensington-Talmadge having significantly more tree canopy than other parts of the Mid-City, at approximately over 21% coverage. Normal Heights has approximately 16.3% tree coverage, though it should be noted that Adams North has denser tree coverage, while the southern portion of the neighborhood is more akin to City Heights. City Heights and Eastern Area both have considerably lower tree canopy coverages at approximately 13.6 and 13.9% respectively. This is less than half of the City's 28% goal, and reflective of larger parts of the Mid-City planning area with freeway right-of-way and major corridors.

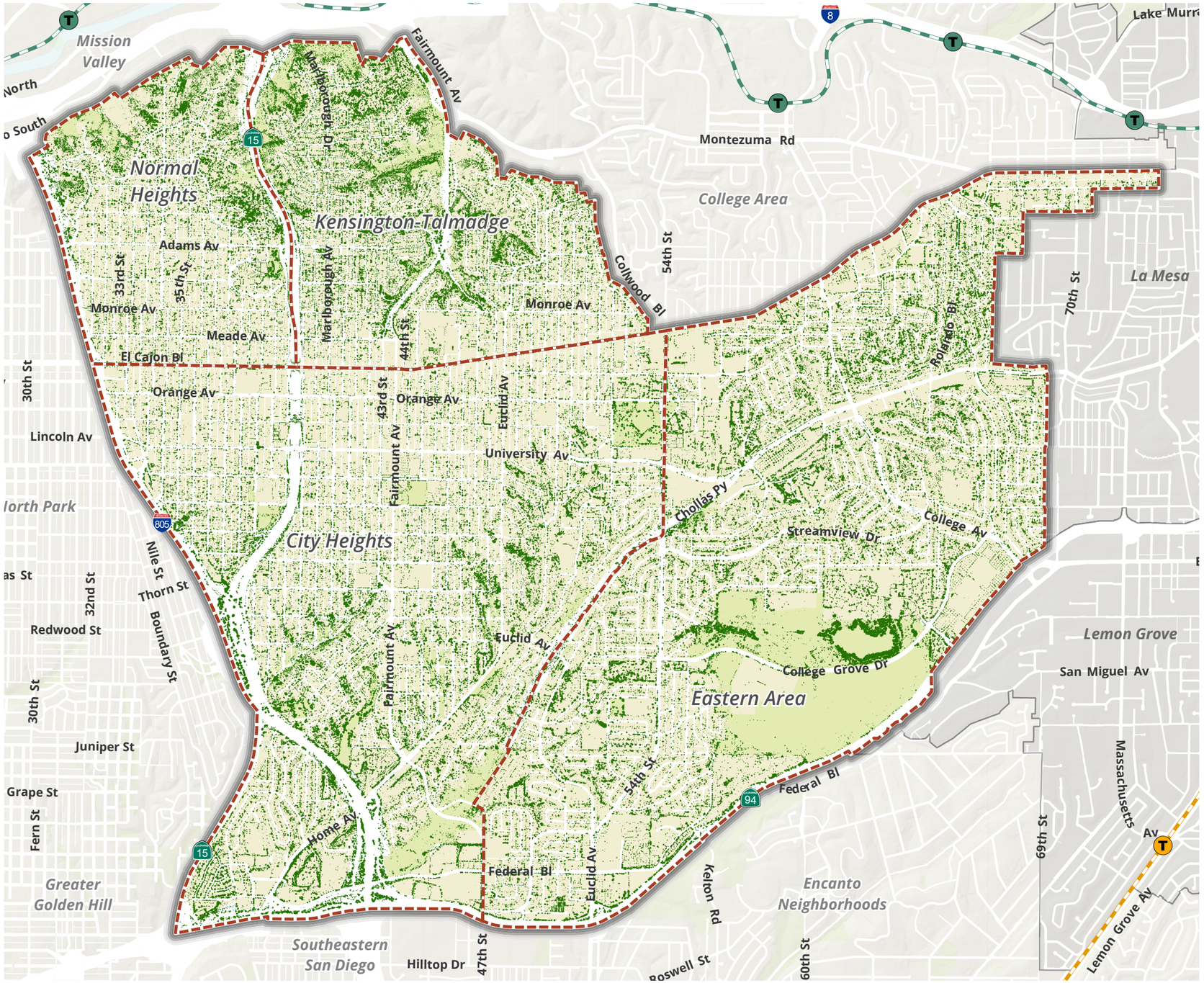
Western segment of El Cajon Boulevard, limited street trees in poor health.

Tree canopy on Aragon Drive, adjacent to the Kroc Center.

Healthy tree canopy at Cherokee Point Park in City Heights.

Street trees along Adams Avenue in Normal Heights.

Figure 3-12 Tree Canopy Coverage



Tree Canopy

Community Plan Area Boundary

Open Space

Trolley Stops

Green Line

Orange Line

Light Rail Routes

Green Line

Orange Line

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

N W E S

City of San Diego, SANGIS, SANDAG

3.9. Sustainability, Equity & Climate Resilience Summary

This section summarizes the key information related to sustainability, equity and climate resilience for the Mid-City planning area presented in this chapter.

- Due to a centrally located transit-rich environment and diverse housing types, **Mid-City residents consume fewer resources, engage in less driving, and incur lower expenses** for both autos and utilities than the regional average.
- The majority of the planning area is within the **Transit Priority and Sustainable Development Areas** and features several designated smart growth areas.
- Compared to the rest of the City, Mid-City has **better pedestrian, bicycle, and transit scores. 58% of Mid-City is considered Very Walkable or Somewhat Walkable,** compared to 17% in the City of San Diego.
- Redlining **systematically marginalized lower-income residents and people of color** in the Mid-City planning area, compounding with other past discriminatory practices and policies to reinforce racial and economic segregation that still lingers today.
- The majority of neighborhoods are categorized as **Low Resource** compared to the region, with some areas in Normal Heights and Kensington-Talmadge classified as Moderate and High Resource. Additionally, City Heights has three census tracts that are **classified as high-poverty and racially segregated areas.**
- Meanwhile, eight census tracts are experiencing significant Neighborhood Change in Mid-City, particularly in Normal Heights, Kensington-Talmadge, and City Heights, which have **experienced significant demographic and economic shifts,** including an increase in high-income households and rising median rents.
- **Canyons and canyon-adjacent lands** in Mid-City are identified as areas of **highest risk for flooding and wildfire.**
- In contrast to the City's generally low heat risk average, **Mid-City is rated at a high heat risk** with larger population of individuals with health conditions like heart disease and diabetes. This risk is further compounded by high impervious surfaces, low tree canopy, and distance from the cooling effects of the coast on the mesa top. Heat risk is a combination of heat exposure and heat vulnerability, which are both significant factors.
- The planning area struggles with **significantly lower tree canopy coverage** in the planning area than the city's goal. Additionally, tree canopy varies across neighborhoods such as Kensington-Talmadge, boasting over 21% coverage, while City Heights and Eastern Area have notably lower percentages at just over 13%.

4 Land Use & Development

PLAN MID-CITY
Communities Plan Update

4.1. Existing Land Use

OVERVIEW

There are over 8,000 acres in Mid-City. Table 4-1 shows the breakdown of existing land uses, and Figure 4-1 shows the summary of existing land uses in a pie chart, excluding rights-of-way and utilities. Figure 4-2 shows the overall pattern of existing land uses in Mid-City communities.

CURRENT LAND USE PATTERN

As shown in Table 4-1 and Figure 4-1, residential use is the most prominent existing land use in Mid-City, occupying 3,895 acres (48.2%) of the four Community Planning Areas, closely followed by Public Facilities and Utilities with 2,662 acres (33.0%). The Parks and Recreation land use is the 3rd largest area occupying 1,011 acres (12.5%) while Commercial land uses account for 347 acres (4.3%) of the Planning Area. Around 58 acres of land is undeveloped in Mid-City.

Figure 4-1 Existing Land Use Summary

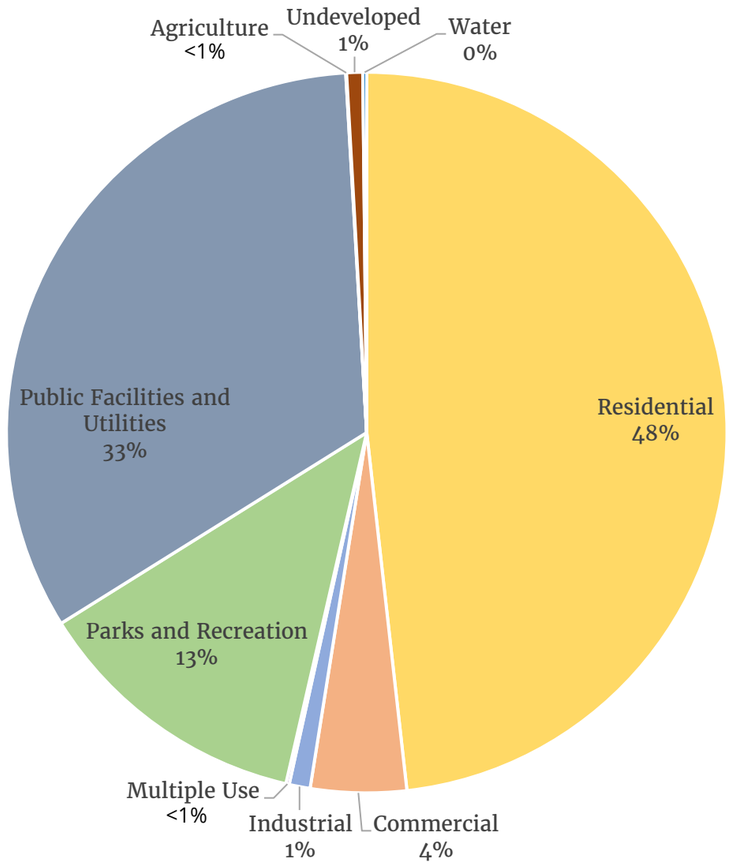
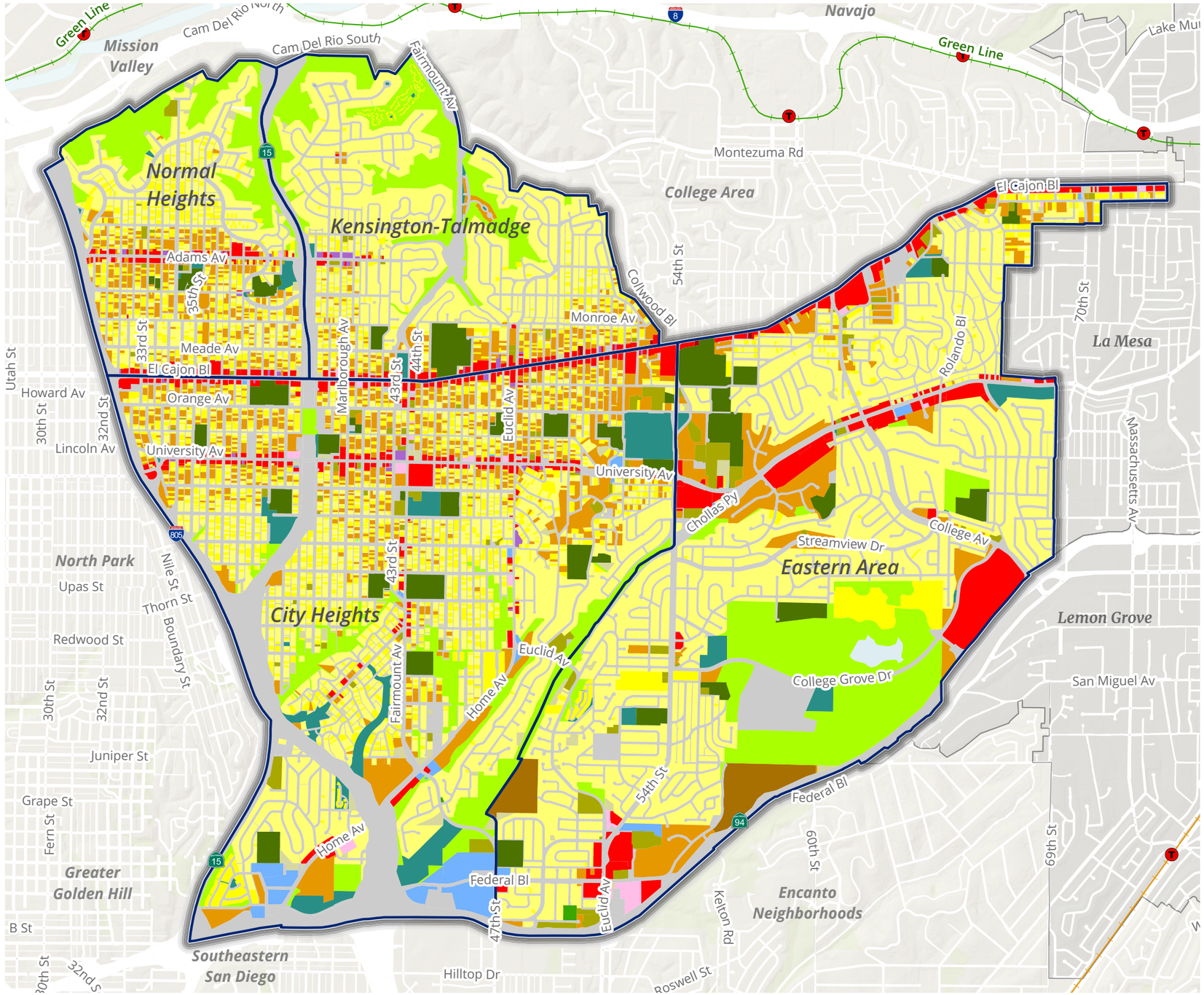


Table 4-1 Existing Land Use by Acreage

Existing Land Use Categories	Acres	Percentage
Residential	**3,895**	**48%**
Spaced Rural Residential	1	<1%
Single Family Detached	2,553	32%
Single Family Attached	596	7%
Multiple Family	678	8%
Mobile Home Park	67	<1%
Commercial	**347**	**4%**
Retail, Regional, Wholesale Commercial	323	4%
Visitor Commercial	1	<1%
Office Commercial	22	<1%
Industrial	**76**	**<1%**
Light Industrial	76	<1%
Multiple Use	**12**	**<1%**
Mixed Use	12	<1%
Parks and Recreation	**1,011**	**13%**
Recreation	167	2%
Open Space Parks	844	10%
Public Facilities and Utilities	**2,662**	**33%**
Transportation, Communication, Utilities	2,279	28%
Institutions	114	1%
Education	269	3%
Water	**14**	**<1%**
River, Lake, Bay	14	<1%
Other	**61**	**<1%**
Agriculture	3	<1%
Undeveloped	58	<1%
Total	**8,078**	**100%**

Source: SANDAG , City of San Diego 2022

Figure 4-2 Existing Land Use



- Community Plan Boundary
- Trolley Stop

Existing Land Use 2022 (SANDAG)

RESIDENTIAL
- Spaced Rural Residential
- Single Family Detached
- Single Family Attached
- Multiple Family
- Mobile Home Park

COMMERCIAL
- Retail, Regional, Wholesale Commercial
- Visitor Commercial
- Office Commercial

INDUSTRIAL
- Light Industry

MULTIPLE USE
- Mixed Use

PARKS AND RECREATION
- Recreation
- Open Space Parks

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND UTILITIES
- Transportation, Communications, Utilities
- Institutions
- Education

AGRILCULTURE
- Agrilculture

UNDEVELOPED
- Undeveloped

WATER
- River, Lake, Bay

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

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4.2 Adopted Plan in Mid-City

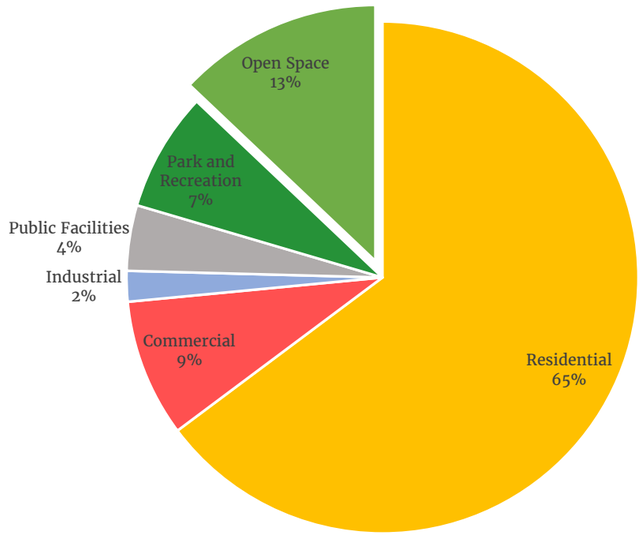
EXISTING MID-CITY COMMUNITIES PLAN (1998)

The current Mid-City Communities Plan was originally adopted in 1998 and has been amended on three occasions since. The community plan identifies several key issues, goals, and implementation actions for the Mid-City communities. These include improving the transportation system; relating development intensity to the capacity of the transportation system; encouraging mixed-use development on large sites to offer environments for living, working, shopping, and related activities; guiding urban form and physical development that protects and is responsive to the physical environment of Mid City and encouraging the development of neighborhood facilities and services that fulfill the daily needs of local residents.

LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

The Communities Plan land use diagram, shown on Figure 4-4, shows the Plan's land use designations. As shown in the figure, a significant portion of the Community Planning Areas are designated as Residential (65.0%), Commercial (9%), and Open Space (13.0%). Figure 4-3 illustrates the breakdown of land use designations in the current Mid-City Communities Plan. The specific land use designations are briefly described in Table 4-2.

Figure 4-3 Communities Plan Adopted Land Use



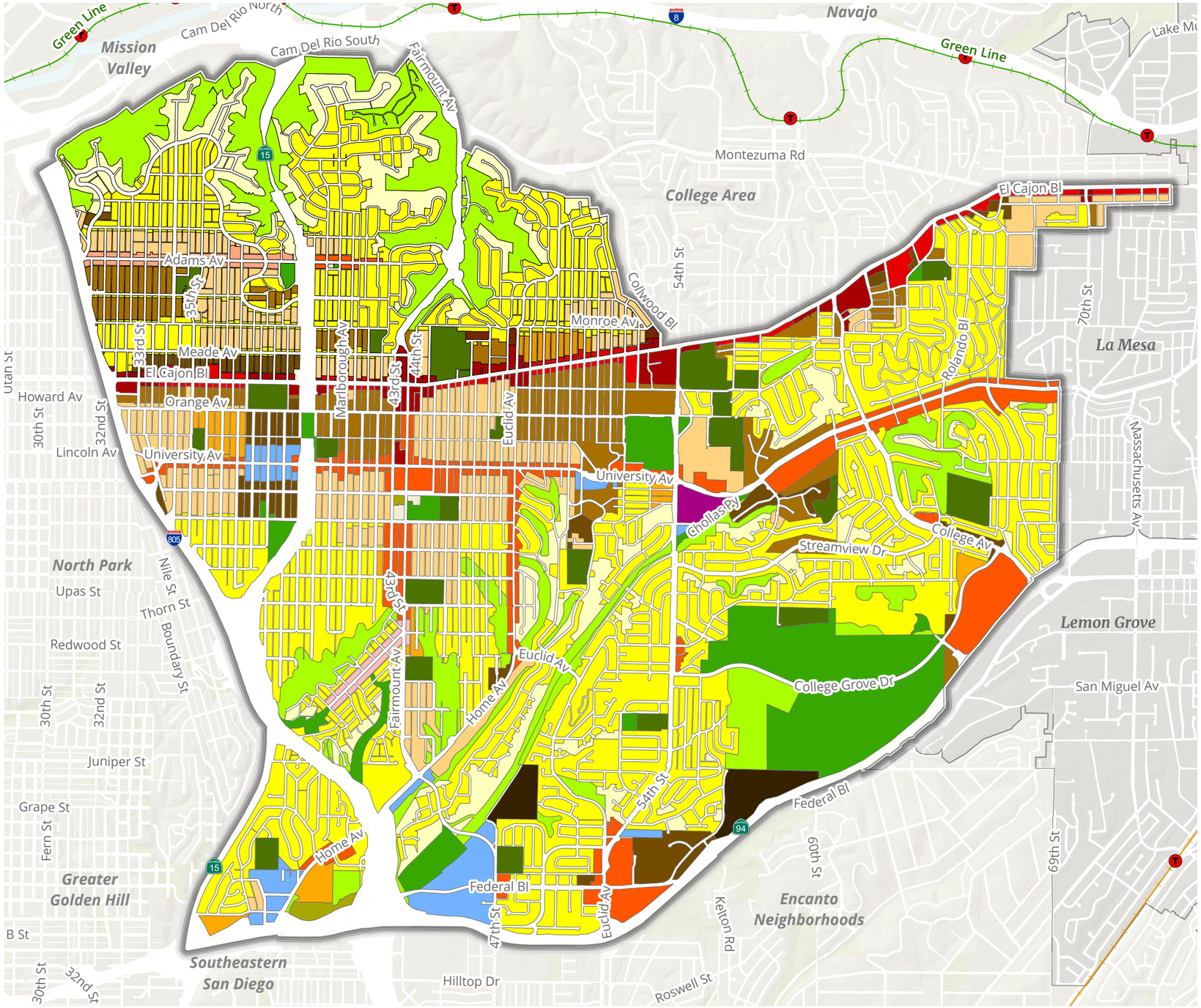
Residential

Park and Recreation

Commercial

Industrial

Figure 4-4 Adopted Mid-City Communities Plan Land Use



Communities Plan Land Use

- Residential (1-5 du/ac)
- Residential (6-10 du/ac)
- Residential (11-15 du/ac)
- Residential (16-20 du/ac)
- Residential (21-25 du/ac)
- Residential (26-30 du/ac)
- Commercial/ Mixed Use (9 du/ac)
- Commercial/ Mixed Use (19 du/ac)
- Commercial/ Mixed Use (29 du/ac)
- Commercial/ Mixed Use (35 du/ac)
- Commercial/ Mixed Use (73 du/ac)
- Neighborhood Village (15-29 du/ac)
- Industrial
- School
- Institutional
- Park
- Open Space
- Library
- Fire Station
- Police Station

Table 4-2 Adopted Mid-City Communities Plan Designated Land Uses

Land Use Designation	Description	Acres	Percentage
Residential		**3,787**	**65%**
Residential (1-5 du/ac)	Residential at density below 5 dwelling units per acre.	471	8%
Residential (6-10 du/ac)	Residential at density between 6-10 dwelling units per net acre.	2,200	38%
Residential (11-25 du/ac)	Residential at density between 11-25 dwelling units per net acre.	531	9%
Residential (16-20 du/ac)	Residential at density between 16-20 dwelling units per net acre.	133	2%
Residential (21-25 du/ac)	Residential at density between 21-25 dwelling units per net acre.	289	5%
Residential (26-30 du/ac)	Residential at density between 26-30 dwelling units per net acre.	163	3%
Commercial		**508**	**9%**
Commercial/Mixed Use (9 du/ac)	Commercial and mixed use development with max density of 9 dwelling units per acre.	15	<1%
Commercial/Mixed Use (19 du/ac)	Commercial and mixed use development with max density of 19 dwelling units per acre.	22	<1%
Commercial/Mixed Use (29 du/ac)	Commercial and mixed use development with max density of 29 dwelling units per acre.	303	5%
Commercial/Mixed Use (35 du/ac)	Commercial and mixed use development with max density of 35 dwelling units per acre.	67	1%
Commercial/Mixed Use (73 du/ac)	Commercial and mixed use development with max density of 73 dwelling units per acre.	83	1%
Neighborhood Village (15-29 du/ac)	Provides housing in a mixed-use setting and serves the commercial needs of the community-at-large.	18	<1%
Industrial	**Intended for industrial uses and office parks**	**113**	**2%**
Public Facilities		**242**	**4%**
School	Intended for multi-level public and private education facilities	240	4%
Institutional	Intended for uses that are identified as public or semi-public facilities.	< 1	<1%
Library	Serves the informational & educational interest.	< 1	<1%
Police Station	Central Police Facility in City Heights.	2	<1%
Park	**Provides for areas designated for passive and/or recreational uses.**	**439**	**8%**
Open Space	**Provide for preservation of land that has distinctive scenic, natural, or cultural features.**	**756**	**13%**
Total		**5,845**	**100%**

4.3. Zoning

Zoning implements the policies and land use designations put forth in the General Plan and the Community Plan through detailed development regulations. Zoning also regulates the form, design, density and intensity, and permitted uses.

While citywide zones enforce land use plans across different areas, some neighborhoods have their own specific zoning and development rules called Planned District Ordinances (PDOs). Many of PDOs will be replaced by citywide zoning as community plans are updated, though some unique communities may still have PDOs, such as Downtown and Old Town.

As shown in Figure 4-5, residential, commercial and central urbanized planned district zones dominate the current zoning in Mid-City. Table 4-3 describes the existing zoning designations.

A street zoned for commercial uses along Adams Avenue.

Table 4-3 Existing Zoning Designations

Zone	Description	DU/AC[1]	Max FAR[2]	Max Height
Agricultural				
AR-1-1	Agricultural Residential, require min. 10 acre lots	0.1	--	30
Commercial				
CC-1-3	Commercial Community, mix of residential and commercial development with an auto orientation	29	0.75	45
CC-2-3	Commercial Community, community-serving uses with limited residential development with an auto orientation	29	0.75	45
CC-2-5	Commercial Community, community-serving uses with limited residential development with a pedestrian orientation	29	2	100
CC-3-5	Commercial Community, mix of residential and commercial development with a pedestrian orientation	29	2	100
CC-3-9	Commercial Community, mix of residential and commercial development with a pedestrian orientation	109	2	--
CC-4-3	Commercial Community, heavy commercial and residential development	29	0.75	45
CC-5-3	Commercial Community, mix of heavy commercial and limited industrial and residential development with an auto orientation	29	0.75	45
CC-5-4	Commercial Community, mix of heavy commercial and limited industrial and residential development with a pedestrian orientation	29	1	30
CN-1-2	Commercial Neighborhood, development with an auto orientation	29	1	30
CN-1-3	Commercial Neighborhood, development with a pedestrian orientation	29	1	30
CN-1-5	Commercial Neighborhood, development with a pedestrian orientation	73	1	65
CR-1-1	Commercial Regional, mix of residential and regional serving commercial development with an auto orientation	29	1	60
Industrial				
IL-2-1	Industrial Light, mix of light industrial, office, and limited commercial	--	--	--
IL-3-1	Industrial Light, mix of light industrial, office, and commercial	--	--	--
Open Space				
OC-1-1	Open Space Conservation, protect natural and cultural resources and environmentally sensitive lands	--	--	--
OP-1-1	Open Space Parks, developed active parks	--	--	--
OP-2-1	Open Space Parks, parks for passive uses with active uses	--	--	--

Table 4-3 (Continued)

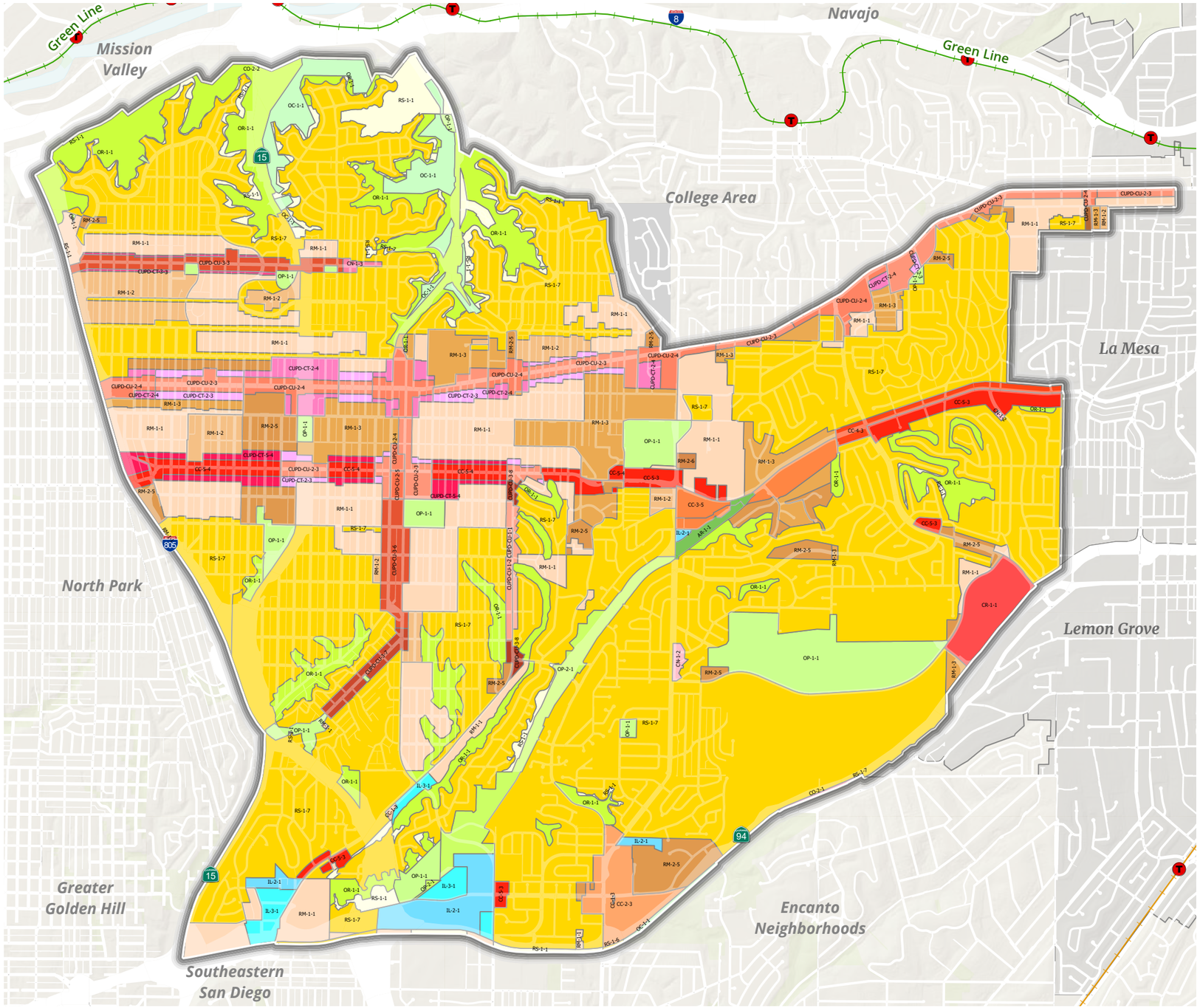
Zone	Description	DU/AC[1]	Max FAR[2]	Max Height
OR-1-1	Open Space Residential, open space with limited private residential development and to implement the MHPA	0.1	--	--
Residential				
RM-1-1	Residential Multiple Unit, lower density multiple dwellings with single dwelling character	15	1.25	30
RM-1-2	Residential Multiple Unit, lower density multiple dwellings with single dwelling character	17	1.25	30
RM-1-3	Residential Multiple Unit, lower density multiple dwellings with single dwelling character	22	1.25	30
RM-2-5	Residential Multiple Unit, medium density multiple dwellings	29	1.35	30
RM-2-6	Residential Multiple Unit, medium density multiple dwellings	35	1.5	30
RM-3-7	Residential Multiple Unit, medium density multiple dwellings	44	1.8	40
RM-3-8	Residential Multiple Unit, medium density multiple dwellings	54	2.25	50
RM-3-9	Residential Multiple Unit, medium density multiple dwellings	73	2.7	60
RS-1-1	Residential Single Unit, Urbanized Community min. 40,000 sf. lot	1	0.45	30
RS-1-2	Residential Single Unit, Urbanized Community min. 20,000 sf. lot	2	0.45	30
RS-1-6	Residential Single Unit, Urbanized Community min. 6,000 sf. lot	7	0.59	30
RS-1-7	Residential Single Unit, Urbanized Community min. 5,000 sf. lot	9	0.6	30
Central Urbanized Planned District				
CUPD-CT-2-3	Commercial-Transitional, transition between the CU-2-3 zone and abutting residential use areas	44	1	50
CUPD-CT-2-4	Commercial-Transitional, transition between the CU-2-4 zone and abutting residential use areas	73	2	--
CUPD-CT-3-3	Commercial-Transitional, transition between the CU-3-3 zone and abutting residential use areas	44	1	50
CUPD-CT-5-4	Commercial-Transitional, transition between the CC-5-4 zone and abutting residential use areas	29	1	30
CUPD-CU-1-1	Central Urbanized Commercial Zones, mix of low density residential and low-intensity commercial development	9	0.6	24
CUPD-CU-1-2	Central Urbanized Commercial Zones, mix of low-medium density residential and low-intensity commercial development	15	0.6	24
CUPD-CU-2-3	Central Urbanized Commercial Zones, mix of heavy commercial, limited industrial, and medium-high density residential development with a pedestrian orientation	44	1	50
CUPD-CU-2-4	Central Urbanized Commercial Zones, mix of heavy commercial, limited industrial uses, and high density residential development with a pedestrian orientation	73	2	--
CUPD-CU-2-5	Central Urbanized Commercial Zones, mix of heavy commercial, limited industrial, and medium-high density residential development with a high intensity, pedestrian orientation	44	2	90
CUPD-CU-3-3	Central Urbanized Commercial Zones, mix of pedestrian-oriented, community-serving, limited industrial, and medium-high density residential development with a pedestrian orientation	44	1	50
CUPD-CU-3-6	Central Urbanized Commercial Zones, mix of pedestrian-oriented, community-serving, limited industrial, and medium density residential development with strip commercial characteristics	29	0.75	30
CUPD-CU-3-7	Central Urbanized Commercial Zones, mix of pedestrian-oriented, community-serving, limited industrial, and low density residential development with strip commercial characteristics	9	0.5	30
CUPD-CU-3-8	Central Urbanized Commercial Zones, mix of pedestrian-oriented, community-serving, limited industrial, and low-medium density residential development with strip commercial characteristics	15	0.5	30

Footnotes

[1] Dwelling Units per Acre

[2] Floor Area Ratio

Figure 4-5 Current Zoning



Current Zoning

- AR-1-1
- CC-1-3
- CC-2-3
- CC-3-5
- CC-3-9
- CC-4-3
- CC-5-3
- CC-5-4
- CN-1-2
- CN-1-3
- CN-1-5
- CO-2-1
- CO-2-2
- CR-1-1
- CUPD-CT-2-3
- CUPD-CT-2-4
- CUPD-CT-3-3
- CUPD-CT-5-4
- CUPD-CU-1-1
- CUPD-CU-1-2
- CUPD-CU-2-3
- CUPD-CU-2-4
- CUPD-CU-2-5
- CUPD-CU-3-3
- CUPD-CU-3-6
- CUPD-CU-3-7
- CUPD-CU-3-8
- IL-2-1
- IL-3-1
- OC-1-1
- OP-1-1
- OP-2-1
- OR-1-1
- RM-1-1
- RM-1-2
- RM-1-3
- RM-2-5
- RM-2-6
- RM-3-7
- RM-3-8
- RM-3-9
- RS-1-1
- RS-1-2
- RS-1-6
- RS-1-7
- Road ROW

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

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4.4 Existing Density and Intensity

The existing density of residential development in Mid-City is shown in Figure 4-6 and Figure 4-7. For residential uses, density is expressed as the number of homes per acre. As reflected in this analysis, residential density is calculated as a "gross" residential density, which also accounts for streets and other public areas.

A variety of housing options exists in the community, from single-unit homes to multiplex apartment and condominium complexes, stacked flats, townhomes, accessory dwelling units, and mid-rise homes built over and around parking deck.

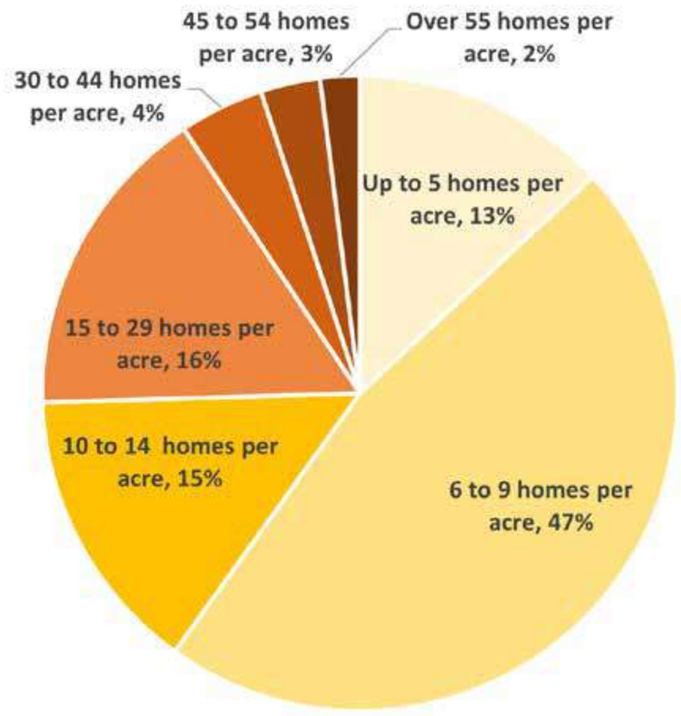
Figure 4-6 shows the distribution and breakdown of existing residential density within Mid-City. 47% of the existing residential parcels have densities that range between 6 to 9 homes per acre, 15% of parcels that have a density of 10 to 14 homes per acre, 16% of parcels have a density of 15 to 29 homes per acre, while 13% of parcels have densities of 5 homes per acre.

Around 7% of residential parcels have densities that range between 30 to 54 homes per acre while 2% of parcels have densities of over 55 homes per acre. Most of these residential parcels are clustered around Adams Avenue, El Cajon Boulevard and University Avenue, demonstrating the relatively compact building patterns that predominate along major commercial and transportation corridors.

Overall, the average existing residential density in the planning area is approximately 13 homes per acre. Example of home(s) at various densities:

- Up to 5 homes per acre = a home in 10,000 square foot lot
- 6 to 9 homes per acre = a home in 5,000 square foot lot
- 10 to 14 homes per acre = a home in 4,000 square foot lot
- 15 to 29 homes per acre = an apartment with 6 homes in 10,000 square foot lot
- 30 to 44 homes per acre = an apartment with 20 homes in 20,000 square foot lot
- 45 to 54 homes per acre = a condominium with 30 homes in 30,000 square foot lot
- Over 55 homes pear acre = an apartment with 50 homes in 36,000 square foot lot

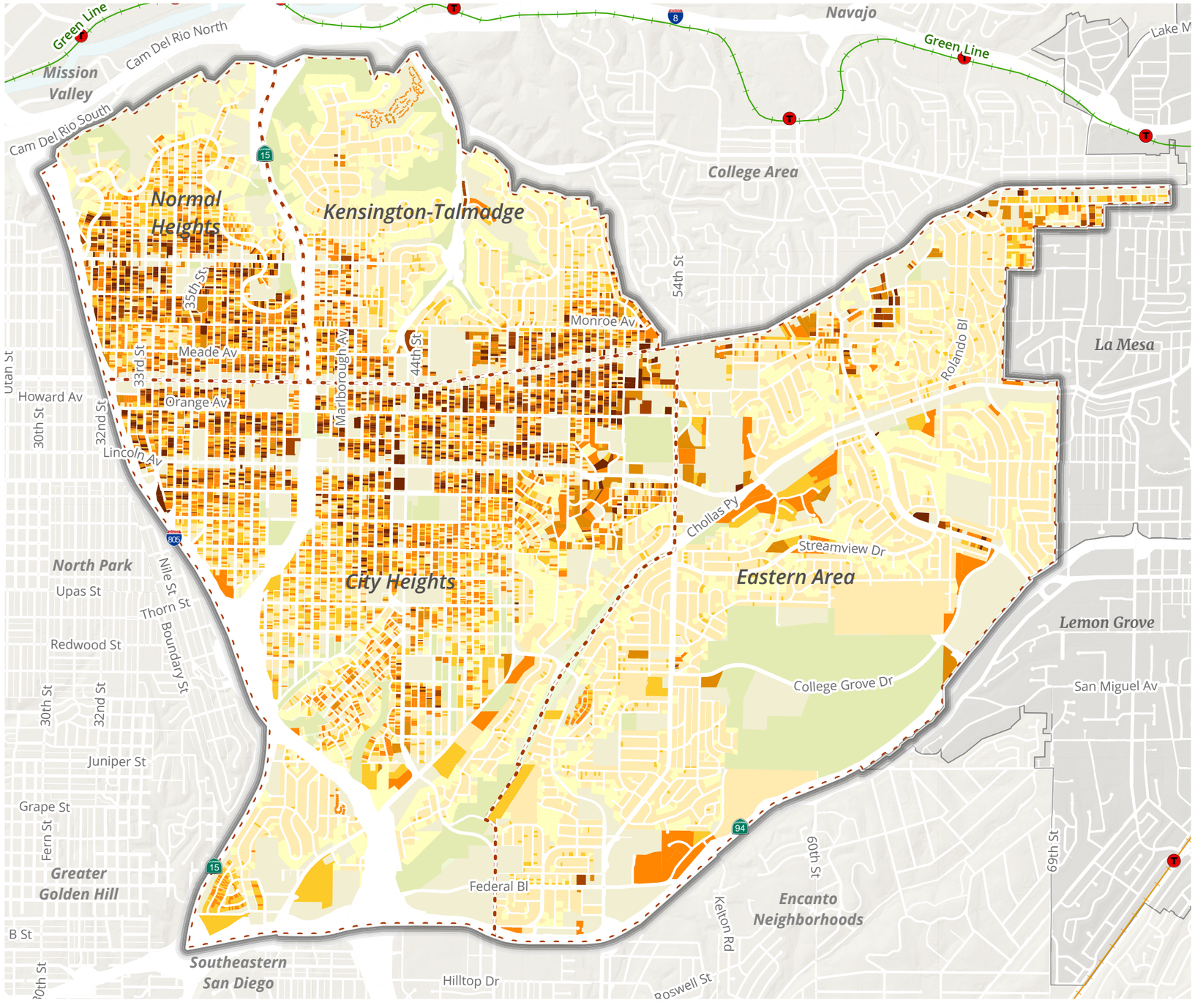
Figure 4-6 Existing Residential Density Summary



Medium density housing project near El Cajon Boulevard

High density housing in City Heights

Figure 4-7 Existing Residential Density



Residential Density

- Up to 5 units per acre
- 6-9 units per acre
- 10-14 units per acre
- 15-29 units per acre
- 30-44 units per acre
- 45-54 units per acre
- Over 55 units per acre
- Community Plan Boundary
- Park and Open Space

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

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4.5. 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 Mid-City is shown in Figure 4-10 and a breakdown of FAR percentages is shown in Figure 4-9. Overall, non-residential buildings have an average 0.24 FAR. The breakout of FAR values shows that, for non-residential land, 28% is below 0.25 FAR, 35% is between 0.25 to 0.5 FAR, 19% is between 0.5 to 0.75 FAR, 9% is between 0.75 to 1.0 FAR, 8% is 1.0 to 2.0 FAR, and 1% is above 2.0 FAR.

When summarized, a majority of the non-residential land (64%) has an FAR below 0.5. Development with the highest FARs are located within the City Heights Urban Village.

Figure 4-8 FAR Illustration

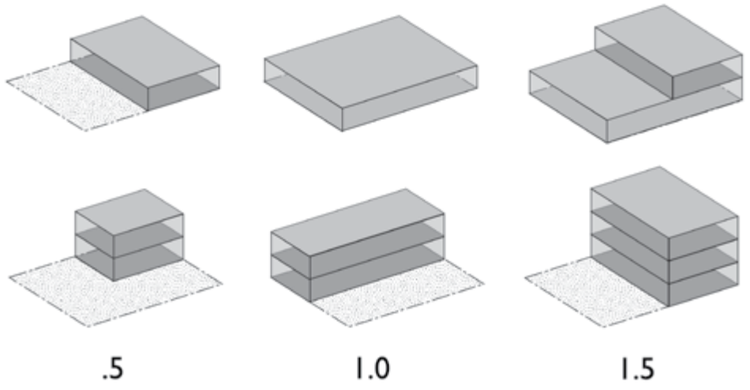
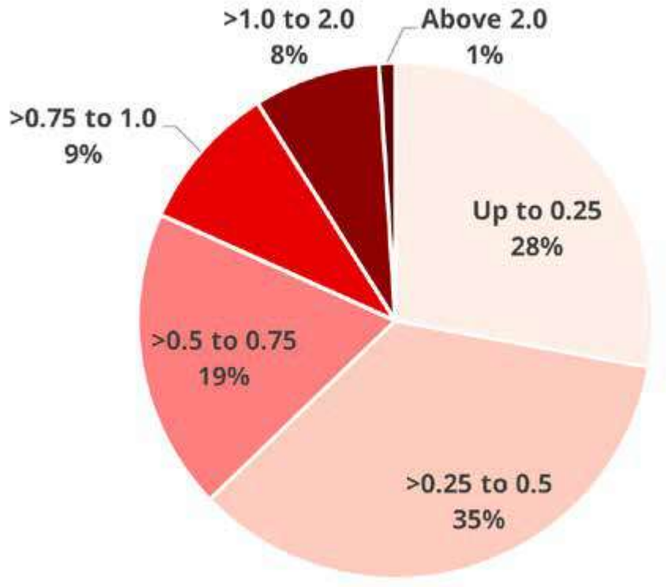


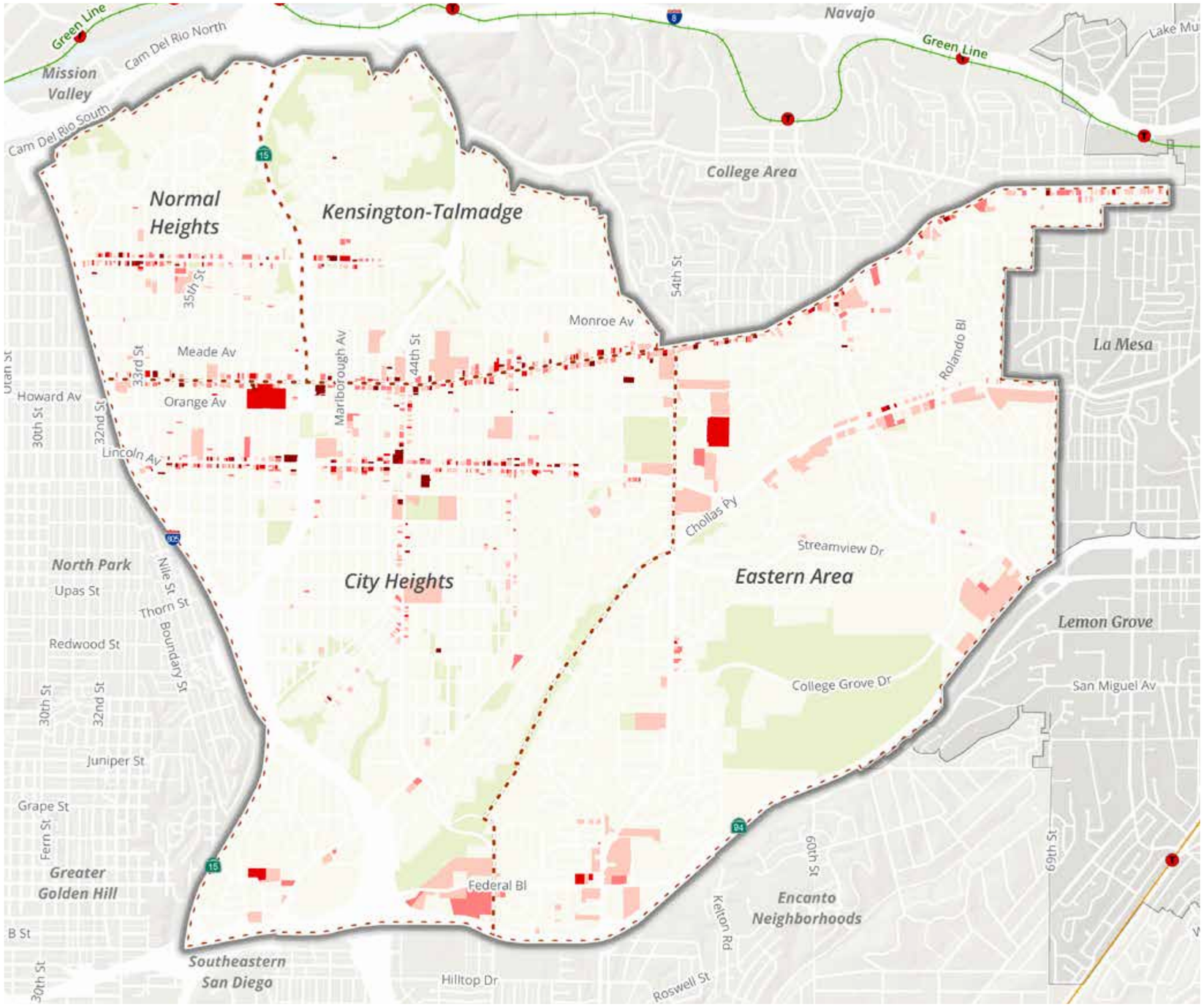
Figure 4-9 Non Residential Floor Area Ratio



The Weingart/City Heights Library in the City Heights Urban Village

Crest Beverage Building in Eastern Area

Figure 4-10 Non-Residential Floor Area Ratio



Floor Area Ratio (FAR)

- Up to 0.25 FAR
- > 0.25 to 0.50 FAR
- > 0.50 to 0.75 FAR
- > 0.75 to 1.0 FAR
- > Above 1.0 FAR
- Parks and Open Space
- Community Plan Boundary

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

N W E S

City of San Diego, SANGIS, SANDAG

4.6. Business and Employment

In 2022, there were over 21,000 jobs and 2,700 businesses in Mid-City. Table 4-4 provides an employment profile with total job count. 41% of jobs within Mid-City are in education and health care, followed by retail (16%), accommodation and food services (12%), and professional, scientific, information and technical services (10%). Many of these jobs are found along commercial corridors of Adams Avenue, El Cajon Boulevard, Fairmount Avenue and University Avenue while large percentage of industrial jobs are concentrated along Federal Boulevard as shown in Figure 4-12. Largest employment centers are located in City Heights Urban Village, College Grove Shopping Center, and Ridgeview/Webster and Oak Park neighborhoods.

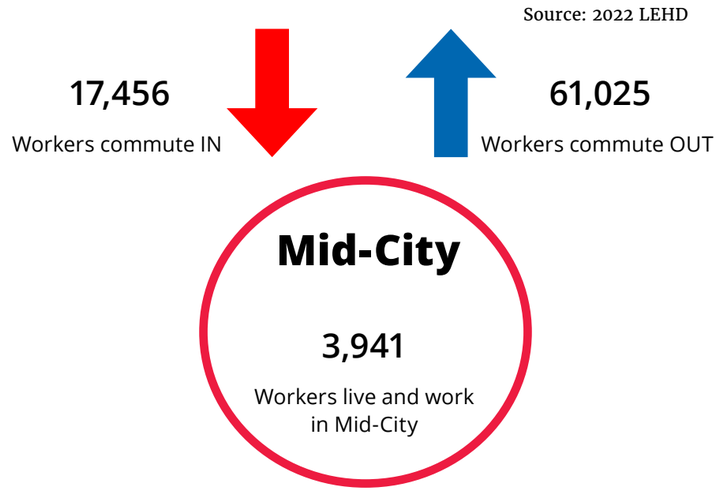
When looking at commuter inflow/outflow shown in Figure 4-11, 81.6% of the total jobs are held by workers who commute into Mid-City while 61,025 workers commute out of Mid-City. Only 3,941 jobs are held by workers who both live and work within Mid-City.

Table 4-4 Employment Profile (2022)

NAICS Industry Sector	Count	Share
Construction	652	3%
Education and Health Care	8,846	41%
Finance and Real Estate	649	3%
Manufacturing, Transportation and Warehousing	885	4%
Retail and Wholesale Trade	3,402	16%
Accommodation and Food Services	2,459	12%
Professional, Scientific, Information and Technical Services	2,071	10%
Administration & Support, Waste Management and Remediation	417	2%
All Other	2,016	9%

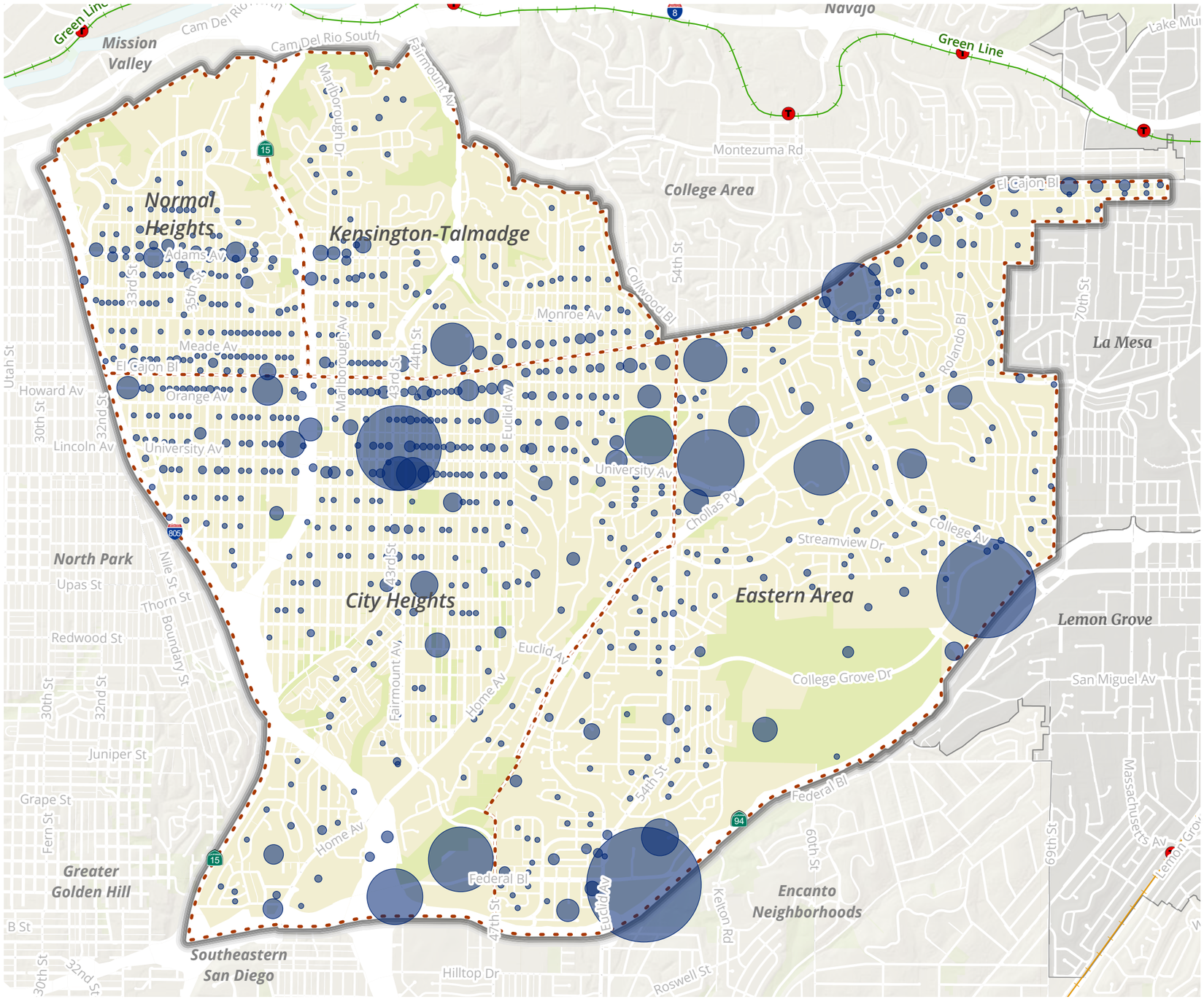
Source: Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) 2022

Figure 4-11 Commute Inflow/Outflow Analysis



One of the largest employers in the Mid-City planning area is the College Grove Shopping Center in Eastern Area

Figure 4-12 Total Number of Jobs



Community Plan Boundary

Trolley Stop

Open Space

Total Number of Jobs (Census LEHD 2019)

1

10

50

100

1,000

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

N W E S

City of San Diego, SANGIS, SANDAG

4.7. Business Improvement Districts and Maintenance Assessment Districts

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS

Around 4.3% of the land use in the Mid-City is for commercial uses, including retail, regional, wholesale, and visitor commercial. Commercial uses are found in a fine-grained pattern primarily along Adams Avenue, El Cajon Boulevard and University Avenue. There are six Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) within Mid-City: Adams Avenue, City Heights, College Area, Diamond, El Cajon Central and El Cajon Gateway. Figure 4-13 shows the location of these BIDs within the Mid-City planning area.

San Diego's BIDs are City-designated geographic-based areas where the business owners are assessed annually to fund activities and improvements to promote their individual business districts. The City of San Diego supports a BID as a tool for strengthening small business communities, creating new jobs, attracting new businesses and revitalizing older commercial neighborhoods across the City. To implement a BID program, the City partners with the merchants association that represents that area's assessed business owners.

A BID provides business area merchants with the resources to develop marketing campaigns, increase awareness and enhance public improvement projects in partnership with the City. An organized business community can work more effectively to create positive change and increase support for businesses in the area. In San Diego, BID associations work closely with elected officials and City staff to voice collective concerns, monitor business regulations and obtain funding and support for their business development projects. BID program is administered by the City's Economic Development Department.

MAINTENANCE ASSESSMENT DISTRICTS

San Diego's Maintenance Assessment Districts (MADs) are legal mechanisms by which property owners within specified boundaries vote to establish an assessment on their property tax bill to improve their community. Property owners determine what "special benefits," or services, can include litter and graffiti abatement, trash collection and bulky item removal, as well as a variety of maintenance and economic development services.

There are ten MADs located wtithin the Mid-City planning area. For most MADs, the Economic Development Department contracts with a nonprofit community-based organization for its management. Figure 4-14 shows the location of MADs within Mid-City.

Managed by Economic Development

- Adams Avenue MAD (1; 2; 3; 5.D)
- City Heights MAD
- College Heights MAD (1; 2)

Managed by Parks and Recreation

- El Cajon Boulevard MAD
- Talmadge MAD

Signage in the Adams Avenue Business Improvement District

Signage in the City Heights Maintenance Assessment District

Figure 4-13 Business Improvement Districts

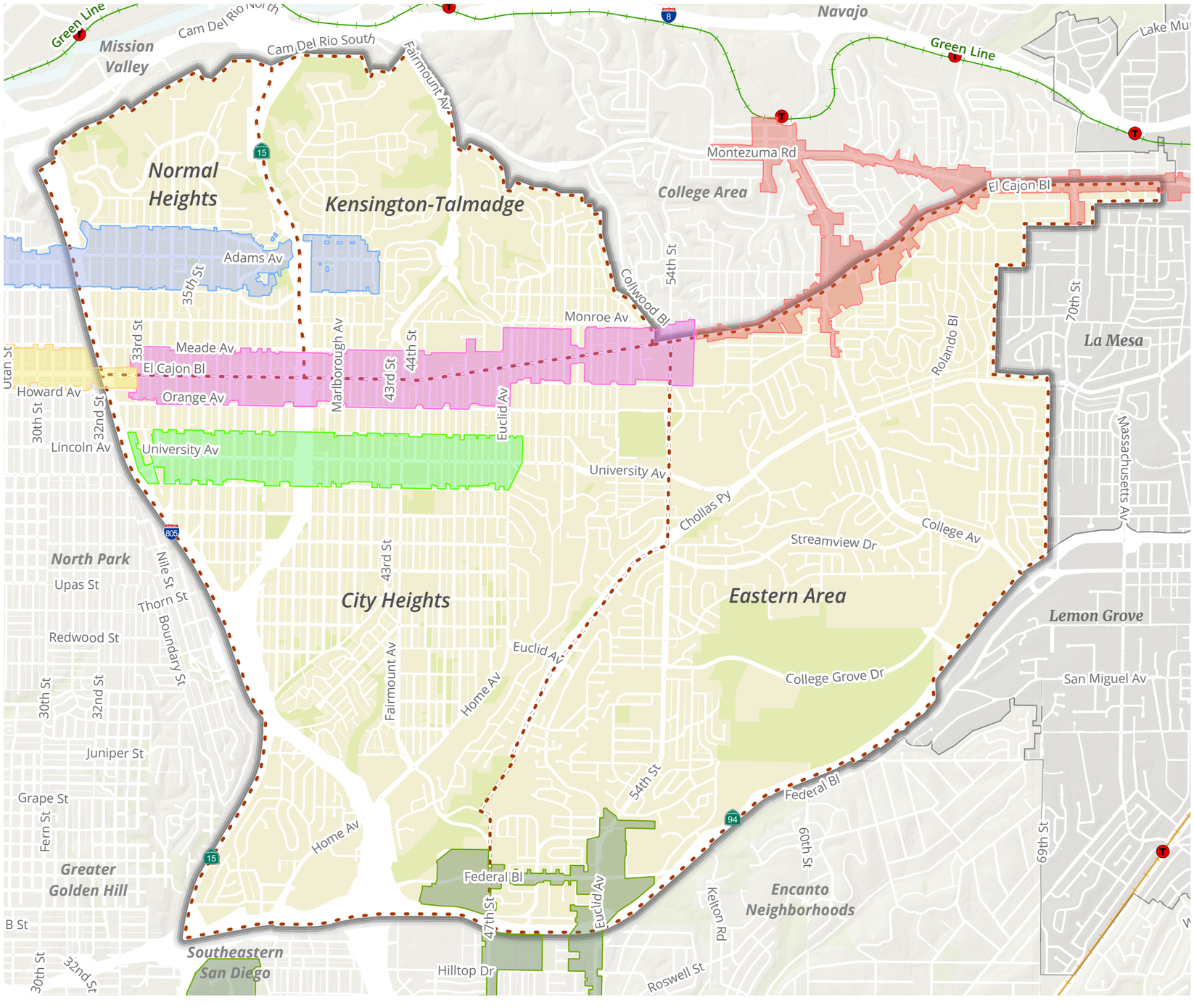
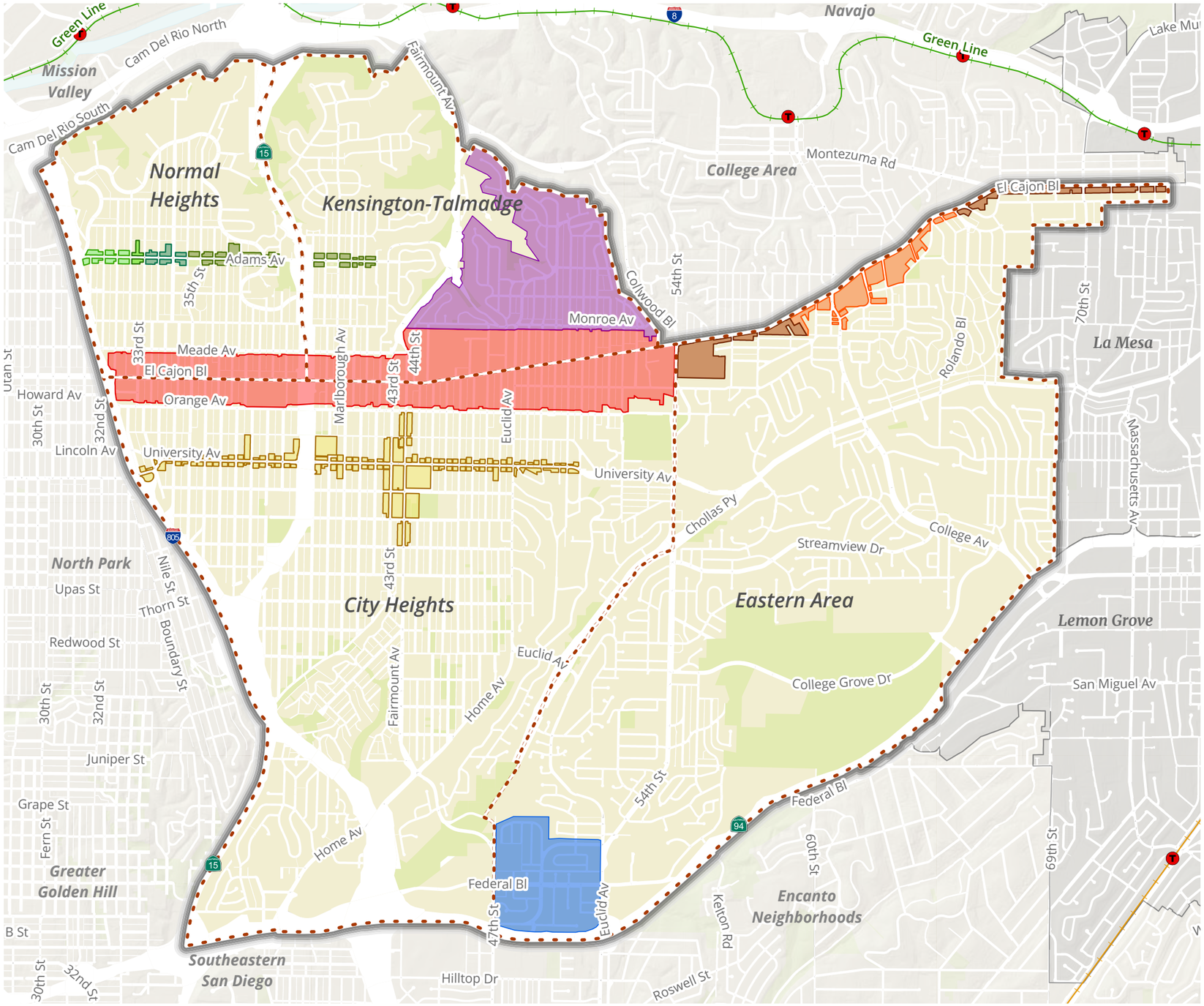


Figure 4-14 Maintenance Assessment Districts



- Community Plan Boundary
- Open Space
- Trolley Stop

Maintenance Assessment Districts in Mid-City

- Adams Avenue | 1
- Adams Avenue | 2
- Adams Avenue | 3
- Adams Avenue | 5.D
- City Heights
- College Heights | 1
- College Heights | 2
- El Cajon Boulevard
- Talmadge
- Webster/Federal Boulevard

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

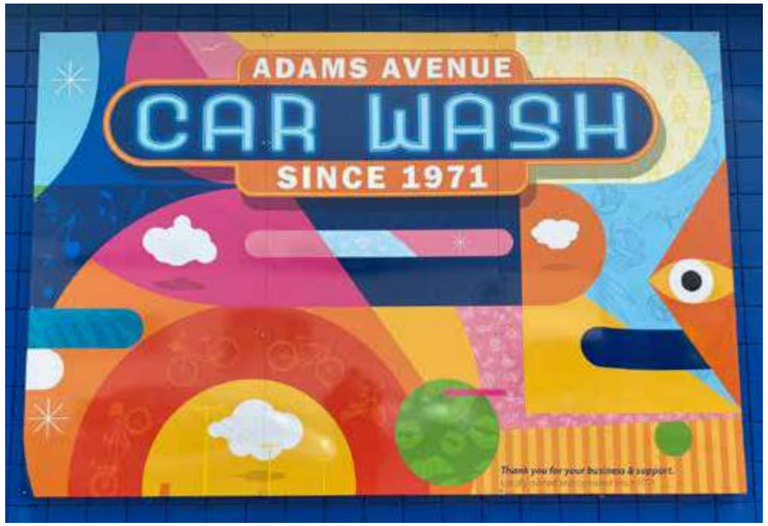
N W E S

City of San Diego, SANGIS, SANDAG

4.8. Land Use Summary

This section summarizes the key information related to land use for the Mid-City planning area presented in this chapter.

- **Residential use is the most prominent** existing land use in Mid-City, occupying 3,895 acres.
- Around **58 acres of land is undeveloped** in Mid-City.
- The current Mid-City Communities Plan was originally adopted in 1998 and has been **amended on three occasions** in 2003, 2008, and 2015**.**
- As shown in the figure, a **significant portion** of the Mid-City planning area are designated as **Residential (65.0%), Commercial (9%), and Open Space (13%).**
- **Residential, commercial and central urbanized planned district zones** dominate the current zoning in Mid-City.
- **47% of the existing residential parcels** have densities that range **between 6 to 9 homes per acre.**
- Most of the **high density housing is clustered around Adams Avenue, El Cajon Boulevard and University Avenue**, demonstrating the relatively compact building patterns that predominate along major commercial and transportation corridors.
- A majority of the **non-residential land (63%) has an FAR below 0.5.**
- 41% of jobs within Mid-City are in **education and health care.**
- **81.6% of the total jobs** in Mid-City are **held by workers who commute into** Mid-City while **61,025 workers commute out** of Mid-City.
- There are **six Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) within Mid-City**: Adams Avenue, City Heights, College Area, Diamond, El Cajon Central and El Cajon Gateway and **ten Maintenance Assessment Districts (MADs)**: Adams Avenue MAD (1; 2; 3; 5.D), City Heights MAD, College Heights MAD (1; 2), El Cajon Boulevard MAD and Talmadge MAD.



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5 Mobility

PLAN
MID-CITY
Communities Plan Update

5.1. Introduction

OVERVIEW

This section describes the existing and planned mobility system for the Mid-City communities. It describes the ability of the community to walk or roll to transit, parks, schools, and recreation centers and highlights gaps in pedestrian accessibility. It also describes the existing and planned bike network, existing and planned transit network, and existing and planned vehicular network making up the entire mobility system. Lastly, it identifies areas of concern for street safety based on pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular collisions.

5.2. Pedestrian Walkability

The pedestrian environment affects an entire community as most trips begin or end by walking and rolling, whether to transit to a store or from a parked car to a building. Most people prefer walking/rolling 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 within close proximity that promote pedestrian activities can help to increase walking/rolling 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.

Within Mid-City, walkability is partially a function of block structure and topography. Walkability is highest where block size is smaller, proximity between residential areas and destinations is shorter, sidewalk continuity is greater, sidewalks are in good condition and generally flat (or less steep). Older neighborhoods, such as City Heights, Normal Heights, and parts of Kensington-Talmadge, contain examples of this type of block structure. In areas where residents have to walk long distances to access goods and services and/or sidewalks do not exist, walkability is lower.

Figure 5-1 shows the walkability (approximately a 5, 10, and 15-minute walk) of major community facilities, including libraries, schools, colleges, recreation centers, parks and open spaces. Figure 5-2 shows the walkability to grocery stores and markets.

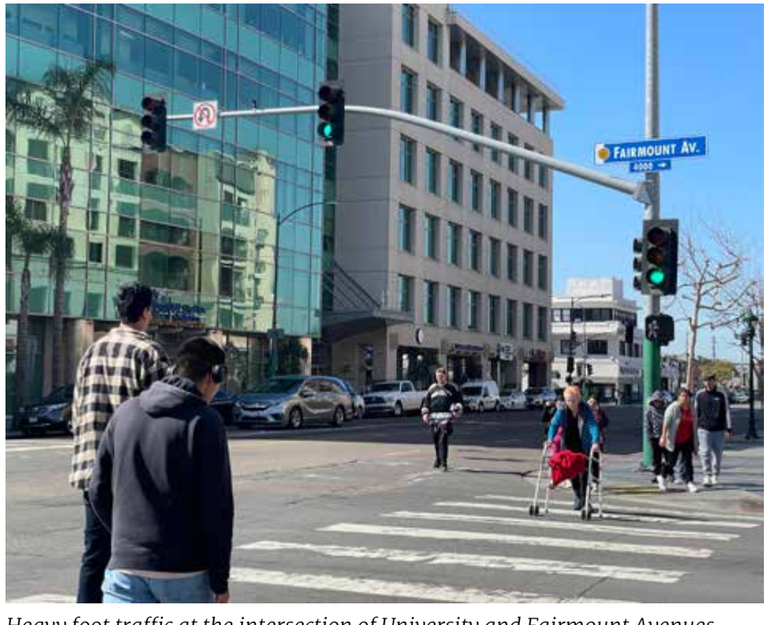
Mid-City is physically divided by I-805, SR-15, and SR-94, as well as the many canyons and steep topography, all of which disrupt the grid network and limit access, and are a major barrier to pedestrians wishing to walk between the planning area and adjacent communities.

There are limited street or pedestrian bridge crossings over these highways, thus limiting connectivity to adjacent neighborhoods. Similarly, existing canyons provide a topographical barrier to walkability between communities in the Mid-City planning area. Few streets cross these canyons, and while trails traverse some of them, they are primarily used for recreation rather than transportation.

> ***Mid-City is physically divided by I-805, SR-15, and SR-94, as well as the many canyons and steep topography, all of which disrupt the grid network and limit access and are a major barrier to pedestrians wishing to walk between the planning area and adjacent communities.***

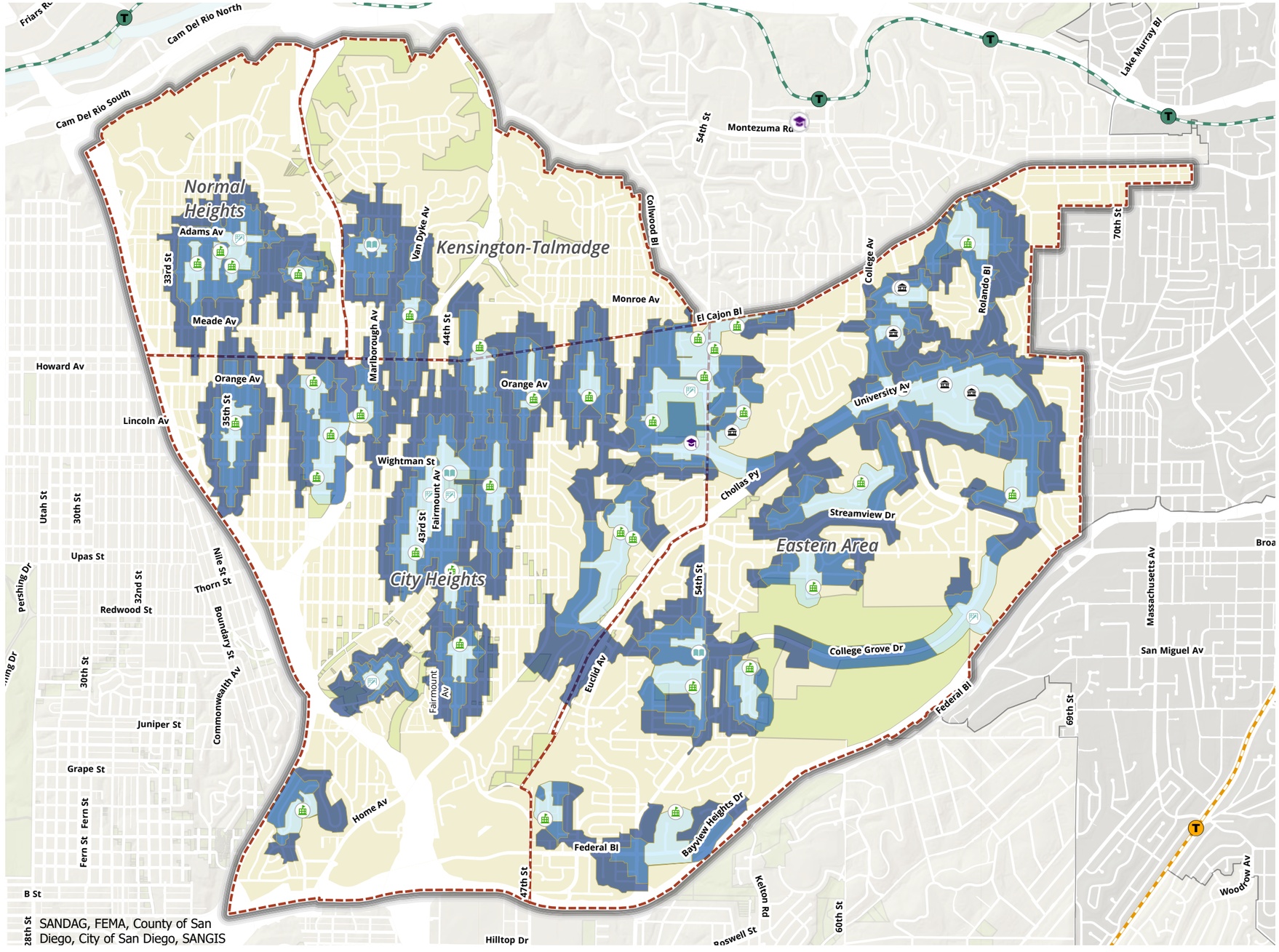
Wide, shaded sidewalks along Adams Avenue in Normal Heights

People walking together in City Heights



Heavy foot traffic at the intersection of University and Fairmount Avenues

Figure 5-1 Walkability to Community Facilities



College
Library
Recreation Center
School
Senior Center
5 Min
10 Min
15 Min

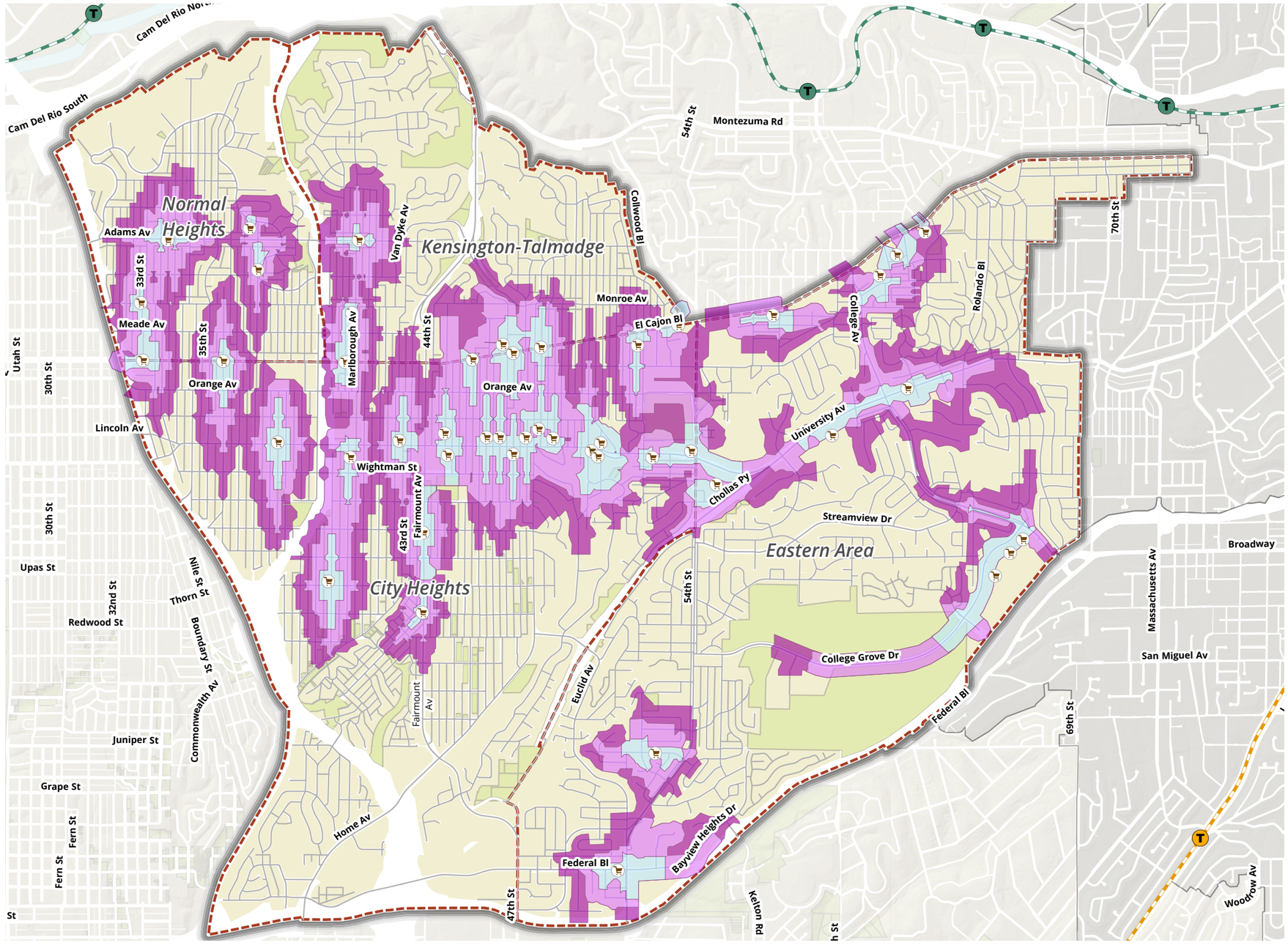
SANDAG, FEMA, County of San Diego, City of San Diego, SANGIS

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

N W E S

City of San Diego, SANGIS, SANDAG

Figure 5-2 Walkability to Grocery Stores and Markets



5.3. Existing Bikeway Network

Bicycling is a low-cost and energy-efficient mode of transportation and has been growing in popularity within the San Diego region as communities work to create a more balanced transportation system. The City of San Diego updated its Bicycle Master Plan in 2013 to address this growing popularity by identifying key infrastructure upgrades, bicycle program recommendations, and implementation and funding opportunities. The Bicycle Master Plan identified most of the area within Mid-City as a medium to high bicycle trip generator area, meaning relative to other areas of the City residents and visitors to the area are more likely to use bicycles as a means to get around. The existing bicycle network is shown in Figure 5-3. The City is beginning a new update to its Bicycle Master Plan in 2024 that will refresh the City's bicycle facility recommendations and prioritization of active transportation projects to meet the City's Strategic Plan and Climate Action Plan goals with increased emphasis on equity and serving areas with the greatest needs.

EXISTING BIKEWAY NETWORK

Bikeways are classified based on Caltrans' California Highway Design Manual with the exception of Bicycle Boulevards. A brief description of each bikeway class is provided below.

Class I - Bike Path

Bike paths, also termed shared-use or multi-use 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 the roadway right-of-way or an exclusive right-of way.

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. Bike Lanes may be enhanced with treatments that improve safety and connectivity, such as additional warning or wayfinding signage.

Class III - Bike Route

Bike routes provide shared use with motor vehicle traffic within the same travel lane. Bike Routes are designated with signs and may include "sharrows" or shared lane markings to delineate that the road is a shared-use facility.

Class IV - Separated Bikeway

Separated Bikeways are on-street bicycle facilities that include a vertical physical barrier between the bikeway and moving traffic, such as flexible bollards, a raised curb, on-street parking, or planter boxes. Separated bikeways may also be referred to as "cycle tracks," or "protected bike lanes."

Bicycle Boulevards

Bicycle boulevards are local roads or residential streets that accommodate bicyclists and motorists in the same travel lanes and are enhanced with traffic calming treatments to facilitate safe bicycle travel. Bicycle Boulevard treatments include signage, pavement markings, intersection treatments, traffic calming measures and can include traffic diversions.

As shown in Figure 5-3, the existing bike network in Mid-City is primarily a combination of Class II and Class III facilities, with some Class I and Bicycle Boulevard facilities clustered in the western portion of the planning area. The regional bikeways, which provide the majority of bicycle connectivity within the Plan Area are described in more detail below.

REGIONAL BIKEWAYS

The Mid-City planning area includes the following five regional bikeways:

Meade Ave Bikeway

The Meade Ave Bikeway is a Bicycle Boulevard that connects University Heights, North Park, Normal Heights, and Kensington and includes buffered bike lanes, neighborhood traffic circles, raised crosswalks, and other traffic calming measures designed to make the streets more pleasant for everyone. The bikeway runs along Meade Ave between Park Boulevard and Fairmount Avenue. The bikeway will provide connections to other regional bikeways.

Landis Street Bikeway

The Landis Bikeway is a Bicycle Boulevard that provides a vital connection between North Park and City Heights. The bikeway runs along Landis Street between Alabama Street and Chamoune Avenue. Features include buffered bike lanes, raised crosswalks, reverse angle parking, and traffic calming features.

Orange Ave Bikeway

The 2.1-mile Orange Bikeway runs along Orange Avenue, between 32nd Street and Estrella Avenue. The bikeway provides important connections to several regional bikeways including Howard Bikeway to the west, University Bikeway to the east, and Central Avenue Bikeway in the center. Features include buffered bike lanes, median island traffic diverters, neighborhood traffic circles, curb extensions, and other traffic calming measures.

Meade Avenue Bikeway

University Ave Bikeway

The University Bikeway provides a vital connection within Mid-City Plan Area, connecting to downtown San Diego and the City of La Mesa. The University Bikeway will run along University Avenue, between Estrella Avenue and 70th Street and provides an important connection to the Orange Ave Bikeway to the west.

Central Ave Bikeway

The Central Ave Bikeway includes two segments. The first segment includes a 1.1 mile long segment that runs between Camino Del Rio South and Adams Avenue along SR-15 and is separated from traffic. The other segment is a 1.2 mile segment of bike boulevard that begins in Kensington where the other segment ends at Adams Avenue and continues south, parallel to SR-15, along Terrace and Central avenues to Landis Street.

PLANNED BIKEWAY NETWORK

Bikeways are primarily planned and constructed by the City to implement the City of San Diego Bicycle Master Plan and by SANDAG as part of its North Park I Mid-City Bikeways Regional Bikeway Project. The list below highlights the proposed bikeways in the Mid-City.

- Central Avenue Bikeway
- Orange Avenue Bikeway
- University Bikeway
- El Cajon Boulevard Bike Lane
- Monroe Bikeway
- Federal Boulevard De-Channelization and Trail Project
- Chollas Creek Watershed Regional Park Master Plan

In addition to the proposed bikeway, the City is planning other amenities and programs to encourage cycling within the city as part of its Bicycle Master Plan. Additional amenities include high-volume bicycle parking, bike loop detectors, and bike share stations. Programs include safe routes to schools programming, police officer trainings and a bike commuter challenge.

Figure 5-3 Existing Bikeway Network

Existing Bike Routes

- Multi-use Path (Class I)
- Bike Lane (Class II)
- Bike Route (Class III)
- Bike Boulevard (Class III)
- Separated Bikeway (Class IV)
- Bus-Bike Lane

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

City of San Diego, SANGIS, SANDAG

5.4. Existing Transit Network

EXISTING TRANSIT NETWORK

Local and rapid bus service provides public transit within Mid-City, as shown in Figure 5-4. Buses offer connections to trolley stops outside the planning area and the greater San Diego region. Local bus service headway times vary by route from 15 minutes to 30 minutes between buses at peak commute times. Generally, the 800 and 900 numbered routes have longer waiting times between buses than the lower-numbered routes. Privately owned shared micro-mobility services provide transportation options outside of fixed bus route service. Recent efforts to provide quicker transit connectivity within the planning area are described below.

RAPID BUS SERVICE

Rapid bus service is a high-frequency, limited-stop bus service that connects major destinations across San Diego. The planning area is served by two rapid bus lines, Rapid 215 and Rapid 235. Rapid 215 runs at 10 minute headways at peak commute times along an approximately 9.5 mile route that connects San Diego State University with Downtown San Diego via El Cajon Boulevard. Rapid 235 runs at 15 minute headways at peak commute times along an approximately 36 mile route from Escondido Transit Center to Downtown San Diego via SR-15. The Boulevard Transit Plaza and City Heights Transit Plaza provide key connection points between bus lines, particularly between the Rapid 235 which runs below street level along dedicated freeway lanes and the other bus lines that run at street level. Due to the long route distance and dedicated freeway lanes, the Rapid 235 acts as a commuter rapid bus line for communities both within and outside of San Diego, where as the Rapid 215 provides express bus service to communities within San Diego, including the Mid-City planning area.

THE BOULEVARD BUS WAY

The Boulevard Bus Way is an approximately three-mile painted dedicated bus lane for Rapid 215, Route 1, and Route 6 along El Cajon Boulevard between Park Boulevard and Fairmont Avenue. Vehicles are prohibited from entering the dedicated bus lanes except for accessing curbside parking or loading, or to make right-hand turns. Bicycles are permitted to use the dedicated bus lane as is indicated by sharrow markings along the length of the lane. Challenges to maintaining high-frequency bus service along the bus way include a lack of enforcement and limited infrastructure. Currently, there is no automated enforcement or physical separation of the dedicated bus lane. Additionally, the bus lane spans three miles of El Cajon Boulevard, which accounts for only a portion of the bus routes that use it. Lastly, other infrastructure elements traditionally included in high-frequency bus service, such as bus bulbs, off-board fare collection, all-door boarding, signal prioritization and real-time bus tracking displays, have not been implemented.

Boulevard Transit Plaza

The Boulevard Bus Way, El Cajon Boulevard

MICRO-TRANSIT

Micro-Transit is a multi-passenger shuttle that can carry up to 15 passengers and provide rides within a defined service area. A new neighborhood shuttle will start operation in North Park and City Heights in 2024.

PLANNED TRANSIT NETWORK

SANDAG's 2021 Regional Plan identified five big moves to improve the San Diego region's transportation system all of which will have impacts to the transit network within the Mid-City planning area. The five big moves are:

Complete Corridors

Dedicating safe space on roadways for everyone, including people who walk/roll, bike, drive, ride transit and use Flexible Fleets.

Flexible Fleets

Incorporating transportation services of many forms, varying in size from bikes to scooters to shuttles, that offer first- and last-mile connections to transit and alternatives to driving alone.

Mobility Hubs

Planning vibrant centers of activity where transit and on-demand travel options, supported by safe streets, connect people with their destinations and businesses with their customers.

Next Operating System (OS)

Developing a digital platform that allows people to connect to transportation services and for dynamic management of roadways and transit services.

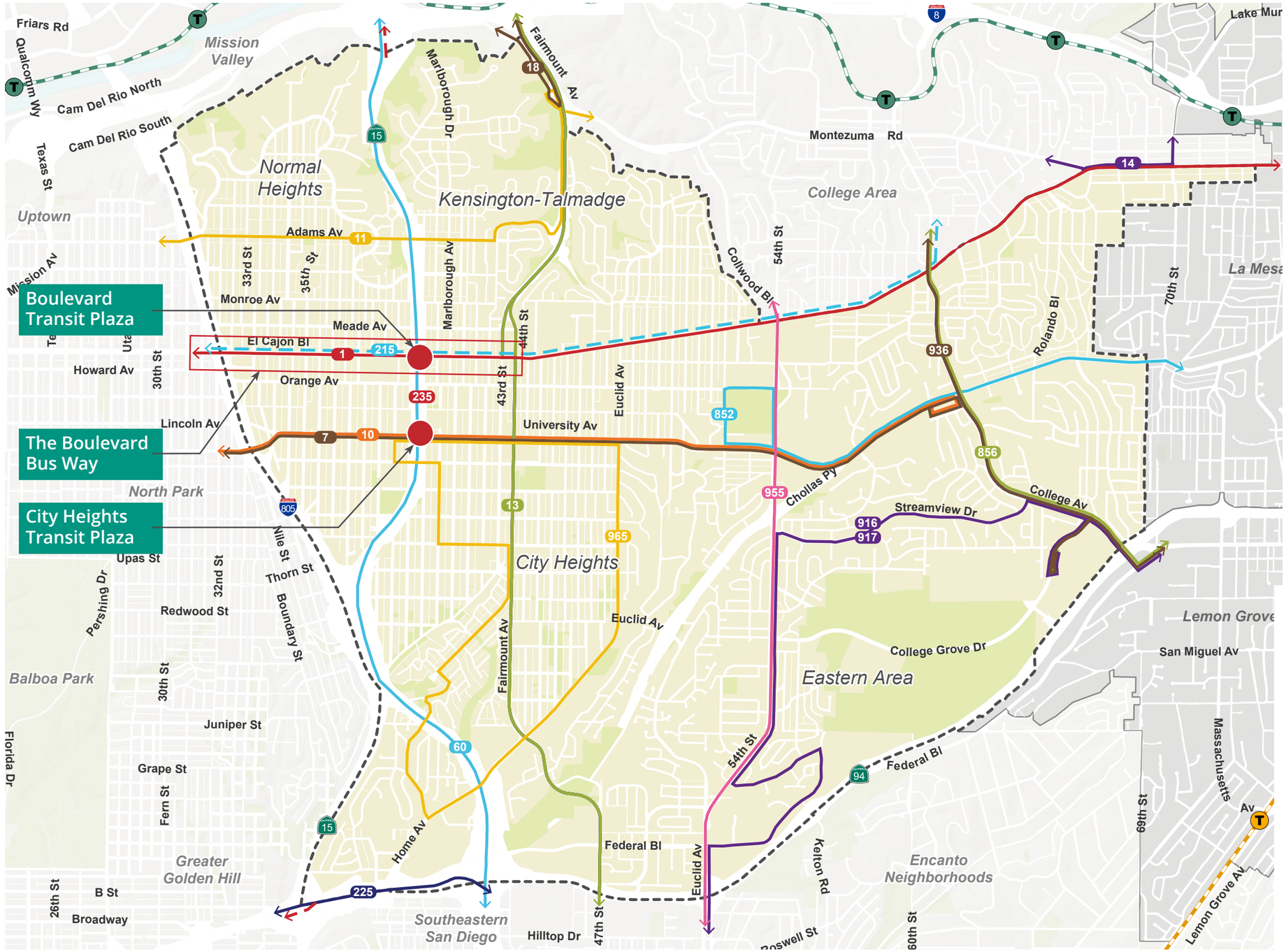
Transit Leap

Creating a network of fast, convenient, and reliable transit services that connect people from where they live to where they want to go.

The Transit Leap big move also identifies potential future commuter rail lines and Next Gen Rapid bus service lines. Commuter rail service is envisioned to use high-speed trains, operating every 5 to 10 minutes to connect major residential areas with employment centers, commercial areas, and other popular destinations. Next Gen Rapid bus service proposes a high-tech bus fleet operating in priority lanes and making use of better signal technology to run with 10 minute headways. Bus routes within the Mid-City Plan Area that have been identified for Next Gen Rapid service include:

- Route 10
- Route 215
- Route 235
- Route 295 (New Route)
- Route 625 (New Route)

Figure 5-4 Existing Transit Network



Existing Transit Service

- Local Bus Service
- Rapid Bus Service

Trolley Routes

- Green Line
- Orange Line

Trolley Stops

- Green Line
- Orange Line

Existing Transit Hubs

- Transit Plaza

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

City of San Diego, SANGIS, SANDAG

5.5. Freeway and Street Network

The freeway and street network form the basis for mobility within and into or out of the planning area, given that vehicles, bus service, bicycles, and pedestrians all use the network to get around. The street and freeway network also connects to other mobility options, such as the trolley and intercity rail outside of Mid-City. The street and freeway network plays a large role in shaping communities, often defining the boundaries, edges and connections between neighborhoods.

The rest of this section describes the freeway and street network from a vehicular perspective, while later sections describe how pedestrians, bicycles and transit are accommodated within this network. The existing street classifications within the Mid-City Communities Plan are shown in Figure 5-5.

FREEWAY NETWORK

Mid-City is bounded by Interstate 805 (I-805) and State Route 15 (SR-15) to the west, which weave together and then cross at the west edge of the planning area. Portions of SR-15 to the north of this area and I-805 to the south limit acesss and create large physical separations and barriers, particularly in City Heights and between Normal Heights and Kensington-Talmadge. State Route 94 (SR-94) defines the boundary of the planning area to the south and Interstate 8 (I-8) to the north.

There are interchanges between I-805, SR-15 and SR-94 that occur in the southwest corner of the planning area, defining a triangle shape of the neighborhood generally known as Fairmount Park. Interchanges between I-805, SR-15, and I-8 occur along the northwest corner, just outside of the planning area. I-8 can also be accessed easily from the northern and eastern areas via other routes that pass through the College Community Plan Area and the City of La Mesa.

Interstate 805

I-805 generally runs north/south through and along Mid-City and has five travel lanes in the southbound direction and four travel lanes in the northbound direction. Access points to I-805 occur along the following streets:

- Madison Ave
- El Cajon Blvd
- University Ave/Wabash Ave/Boundary St/N Park Way
- Home Ave

State Route 15

SR-15 runs north/south in Mid-City and has five vehicle travel lanes in the southbound direction, four vehicle travel lanes in the northbound direction, and two center-running, bus-only lanes providing Rapid 235 bus service in both directions. North of its junction with I-8, SR 15 becomes Interstate 15, extending north through San Diego County. Vehicular access points to SR-15 occur along the following streets:

- Adams Ave/40th St
- El Cajon Blvd
- University Ave

State Route 94

SR-94, also known as the Martin Luther King Jr. Freeway, runs generally east/west on the southern edge of the planning area and has four travel lanes in both directions. Access points to SR-94 occur along the following streets:

- Home Ave
- 47th St/A St
- Euclid Ave
- Kelton Rd
- College Grove Way
- College Ave
- A Street/49th Street

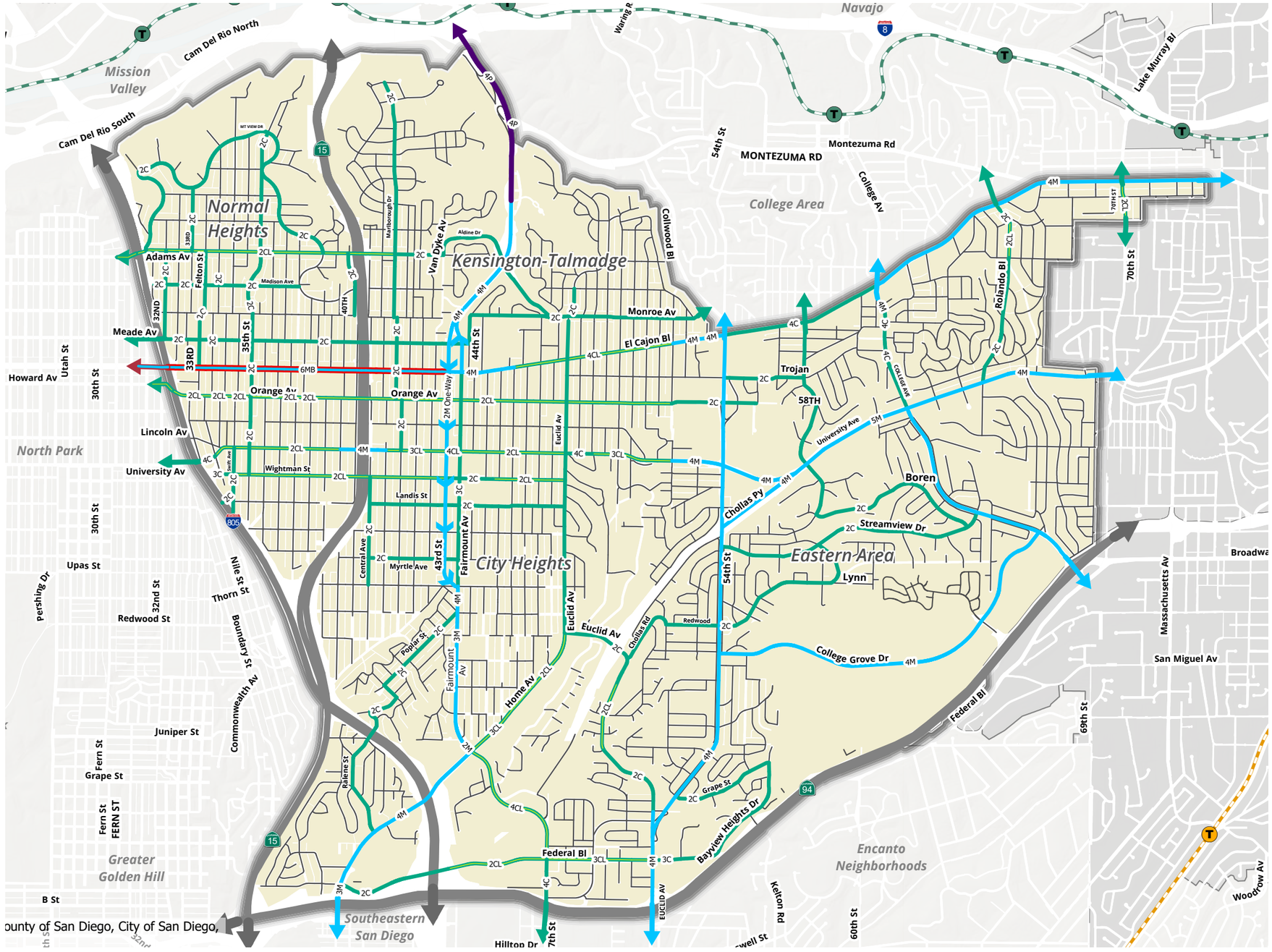
A view of SR-15 from Normal Heights

MAJOR CORRIDORS

Major corridors include segments classified as Six-Lane Major, Five-Lane Major, Four-Lane Major, Three-Lane Major, and Two-Lane Major (One-Way). These routes provide access throughout the community, connecting to the freeway network, and are some of the critical connections over the freeways and canyons that shape the planning area. Examples of major corridors include:

- El Cajon Blvd
- University Avenue
- Home Ave
- Fairmount Ave
- 54th Street and Euclid Av Freeway Access
- 47th Street / Fairmount Av
- College Ave

Figure 5-5 Existing Functional Roadway Classifications



5.6. Street Safety

In 2015, San Diego committed to Vision Zero, which is a street safety policy that promotes safe roadway design to prevent collisions resulting in severe injury or death while being forgiving towards roadway user mistakes. Based on crash data analysis summarized in the Systemic Safety Analysis Report, the City published a Vision Zero Strategic Plan 2020-2025 that outlines short and long term goals for safer streets. Among those goals are prioritizing safe infrastructure improvements at intersections, where a majority of severe injury and fatal crashes occur. Below is an overview of pedestrian and bicycle crash data for the Mid-City planning area and existing city and community initiatives to address street safety.[1]

COLLISIONS INVOLVING PEDESTRIANS OR BICYCLISTS

Within Mid-City, there were approximately 316 collisions involving a pedestrian occurring over a five-year period between 2018 and 2022. Of those collisions, 55 resulted in a fatality or severe injury as shown in Figure 5-6. A heatmap showing the concentration of pedestrian crashes resulting in injury within the planning area is shown in Figure 5-7. The intersections with the most pedestrian collisions were concentrated along El Cajon Boulevard, University Avenue, Fairmount Avenue and Euclid Ave/54th Street. Intersections with severe pedestrian injuries or fatalities are also clustered along these corridors as well as at the entrances and exits to freeways in the planning area.

The following intersection locations experienced 2 or more pedestrian collisions resulting in a serious injury or death during the 5-year study period:

- El Cajon Boulevard and Altadena Avenue (3 collisions)
- Euclid Avenue and Federal Boulevard (2 collisions)
- Orange Avenue and Central Avenue (2 collisions)

Within Mid-City, there were 142 collisions involving a bicyclist occurring over a five-year period between 2018 and 2022. Of those collisions, 9 resulted in a fatality or severe injury, as shown in Figure 5-8.

CITY AND COMMUNITY STREET SAFETY INITIATIVES

The San Diego Vision Zero Strategic Plan 2020-2025 identified several street infrastructure improvements to increase safety for all roadway users at intersections, as follows.

High-Visibility Pedestrian Crosswalks

High-visibility pedestrian crosswalks use large scale bar patterns that are more visible from a distance than leader line crosswalks to both the driver of a vehicle and a pedestrian. Use of reflective material and yield to pedestrian signage make high-visibility crosswalks more effective in low-light or night conditions.

Rectangualar Rapid-Flashing Beacon (RRFBs)

To enhance pedestrian conspicuity and increase driver awareness at uncontrolled, marked crosswalks, transportation agencies can install a pedestrian actuated RRFB to accompany a pedestrian warning sign. RRFBs consist of two, rectangular- shaped yellow indications, each with a light-emitting diode (LED)-array-based light source. RRFBs flash with an alternating high frequency when activated to enhance conspicuity of pedestrians at the crossing to drivers.

Leading Pedestrian Intervals (LPIs)

A low-cost safety improvement for signalized intersections, LPIs give pedestrians a walk signal to cross the street a few seconds ahead of parallel vehicular traffic. This allows pedestrians to enter the crosswalk safely and makes them more visible to turning vehicles.

Roundabouts

Roundabouts are intersections where vehicle and bicycle traffic travels around a central island in a counter-clockwise direction. Vehicles or bicyclists entering the roundabout must yield to other vehicles, bicyclists and pedestrians. Recessed, high-visibility pedestrian crosswalks are provided at the four entrances to the intersection. Roundabouts provide a higher level of roadway safety by reducing traffic speeds and eliminating left turns and other conflicts between cyclists, vehicles, and pedestrians.

Larger scale infrastructure improvements are typically completed under the City's Capital Improvement Program. An example of a successful capital improvement project within the planning area is the 50th St & University Ave Complete Streets and Gathering Project. This project utilized a participatory community planning process to improve pedestrian safety at the 50th Street and University Ave intersection. The City Heights Community Development Corporation worked with the Somali-American community to design a new pedestrian crossing and gathering space at the intersection that reflects the area's East African identity. The infrastructure improvement portion of the project was implemented in two phases: a pilot version utilizing paint and traffic cones, and a permanent version with wider concrete sidewalks, a concrete median and a high-visibility crosswalk.

Roundabout, Meade Avenue

50th St and University Ave Complete Streets and Gathering Project
Source: City Heights Community Development, cityheightscdc.org

Bike boxes and conflict striping in City Heights

1 https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/2024-11/mid-city-cpu-draft-existing-conditions-mobility-assessment.pdf

Figure 5-6 Pedestrian Fatalities and Severe Injuries

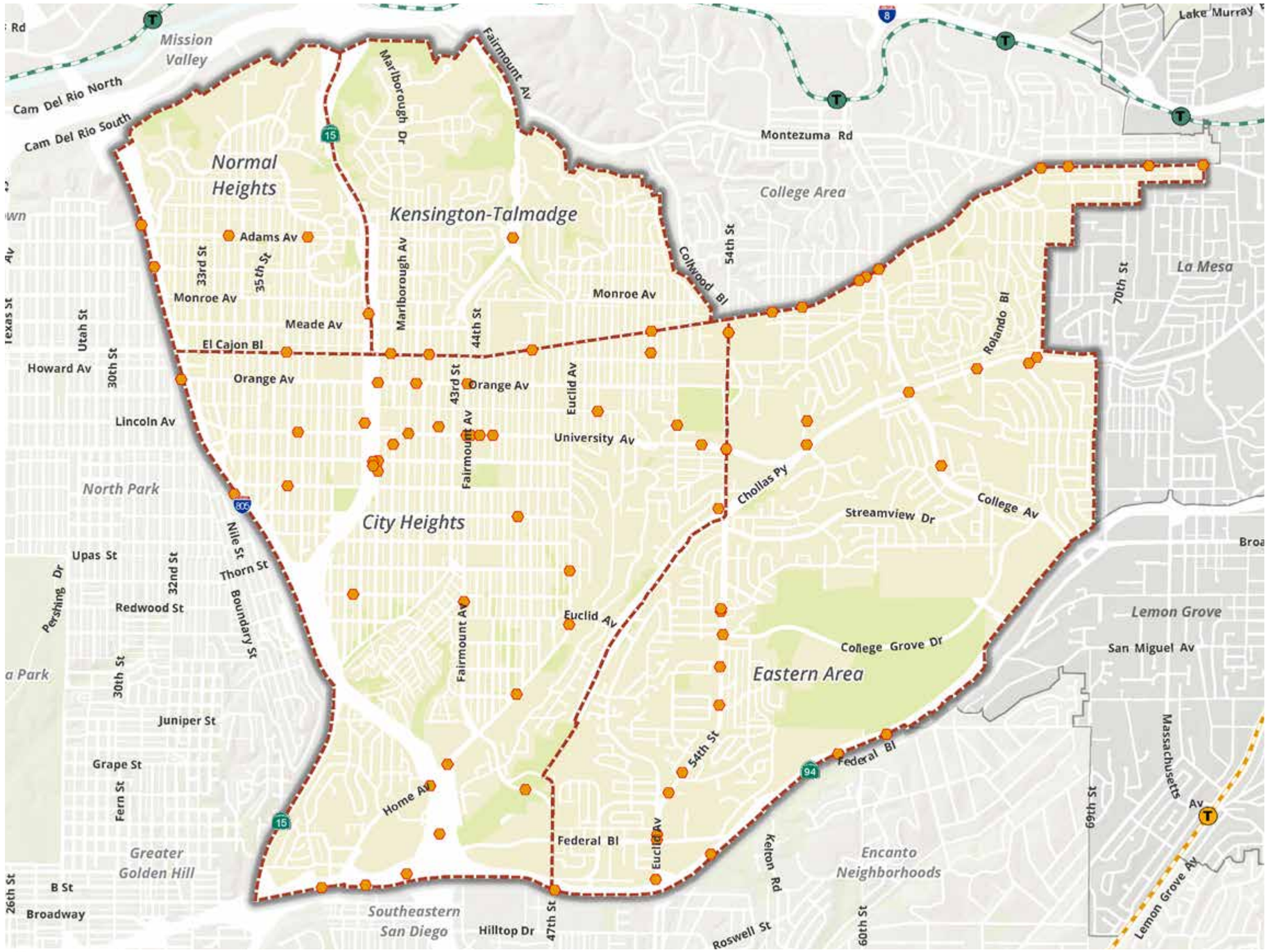


Figure 5-7 Pedestrian Collision Heatmap (All Collisions)

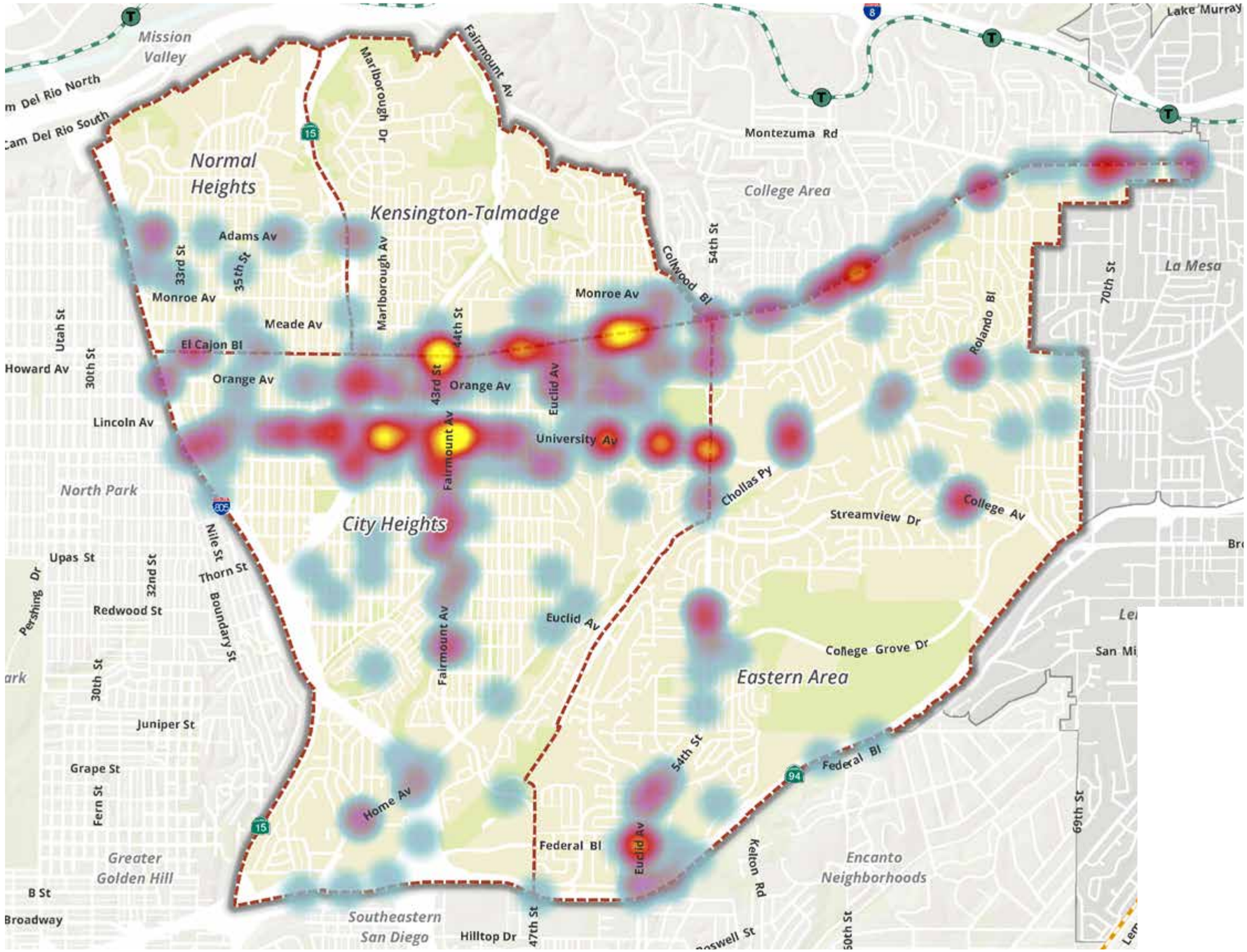
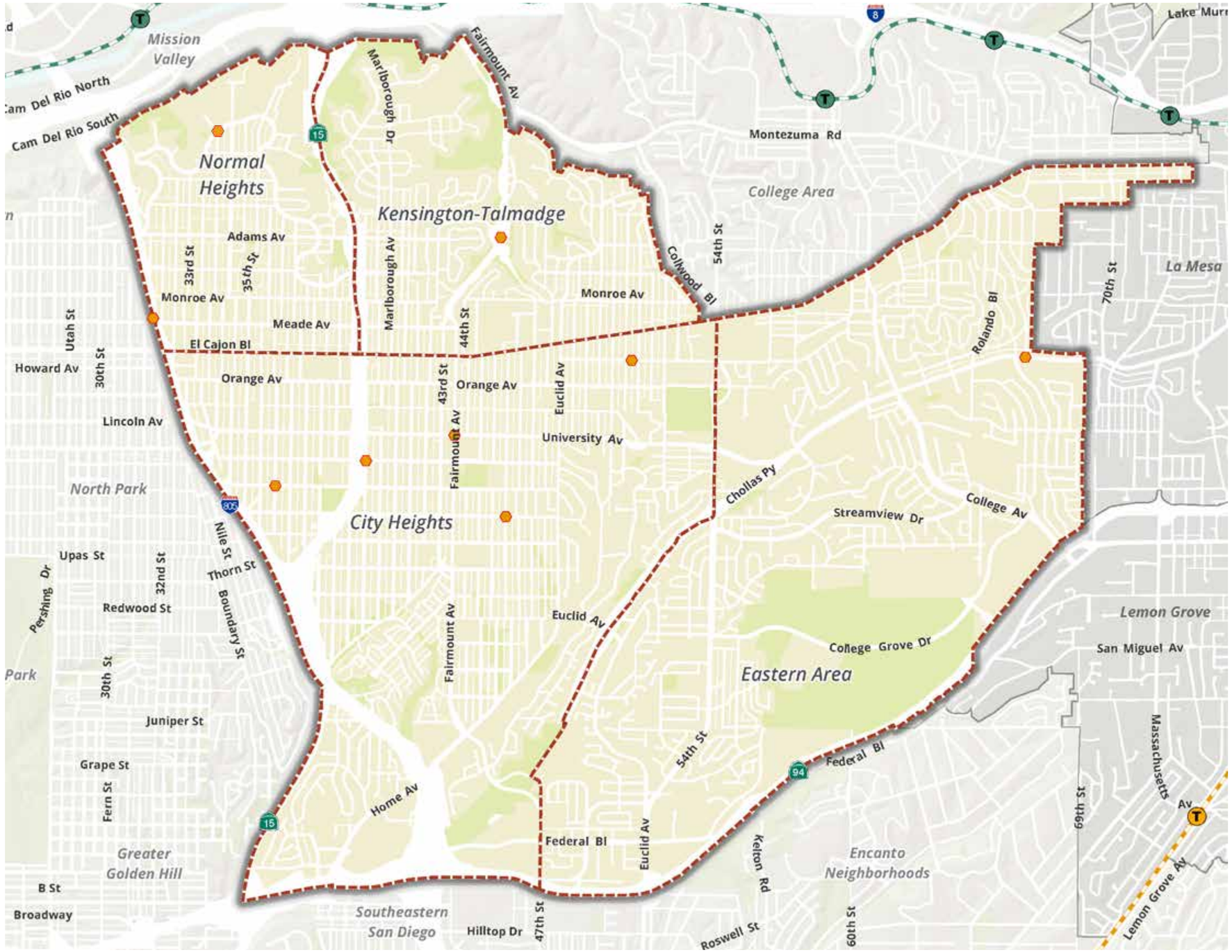


Figure 5-8 Bicycle Fatalities and Severe Injuries



5.7. Household Transportation Spending

Based on the most recent estimates from the US Census Bureau, approximately 64.9 percent of the workers living in the planning area commute to work by driving alone, while 10.7 percent carpooled, 4.8 percent take public transit, 3.3 percent walked and 0.7 percent bicycled. Over 8.8 percent of workers living in Mid-City either commute by walking, bicycling, or public transit. An average of 14.2 percent of workers in the Mid-City work from home, which is lower than the citywide average of 17.8 percent, and the countywide average of 16 percent.

The average commute length in minutes for a worker living in the Mid-City planning area is about 24.2 minutes. Approximately, 6.7 percent of people living in Mid-City have a commute of 10 minutes or less. Within the Mid-City, an average of 10 percent of households do not own a vehicle, slightly higher than the 6.4 percent of households with no vehicles citywide.

Figure 5-9 shows transportation costs as a percent of income. In the northern parts of the planning area, Normal Heights and Kensington-Talmadge households are spendings 8 to 17.7 percent of their income on transportation costs, compared to 36.3 to 45.6 percent in central City Heights. In general, lower-income households in the US bear a larger percentage of their income on transportation costs compared to higher-income households.

“Around 23 percent of workers in Mid-City either commute by walking, bicycling, transit or work from home.

Table 5-1 Means of Transportation to Work

Commute Mode Share	Mid-City	City of San Diego	San Diego County
Drove Alone	64.9%	64.3%	67.7%
Carpooled	10.7%	7.9%	8.2%
Public transportation (excluding taxicab)	4.8%	3.1%	2.1%
Walked	3.3%	4.4%	3.8%
Bicycle	0.7%	0.7%	0.5%
Taxicab, motorcycle, or other means	1.5%	1.8%	1.8%
Worked from home	14.2%	17.8%	16.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Commuting Characteristics by Sex. (ACSST5Y2023.S0801)

Table 5-2 Travel Time to Work

	Mid-City	City of San Diego	San Diego County
Travel Time to Work Less than 10 minutes (percent)	6.7%	9.5%	9.1%
Mean travel time to work (minutes)	24.2 min	23.5 min	25.7 min

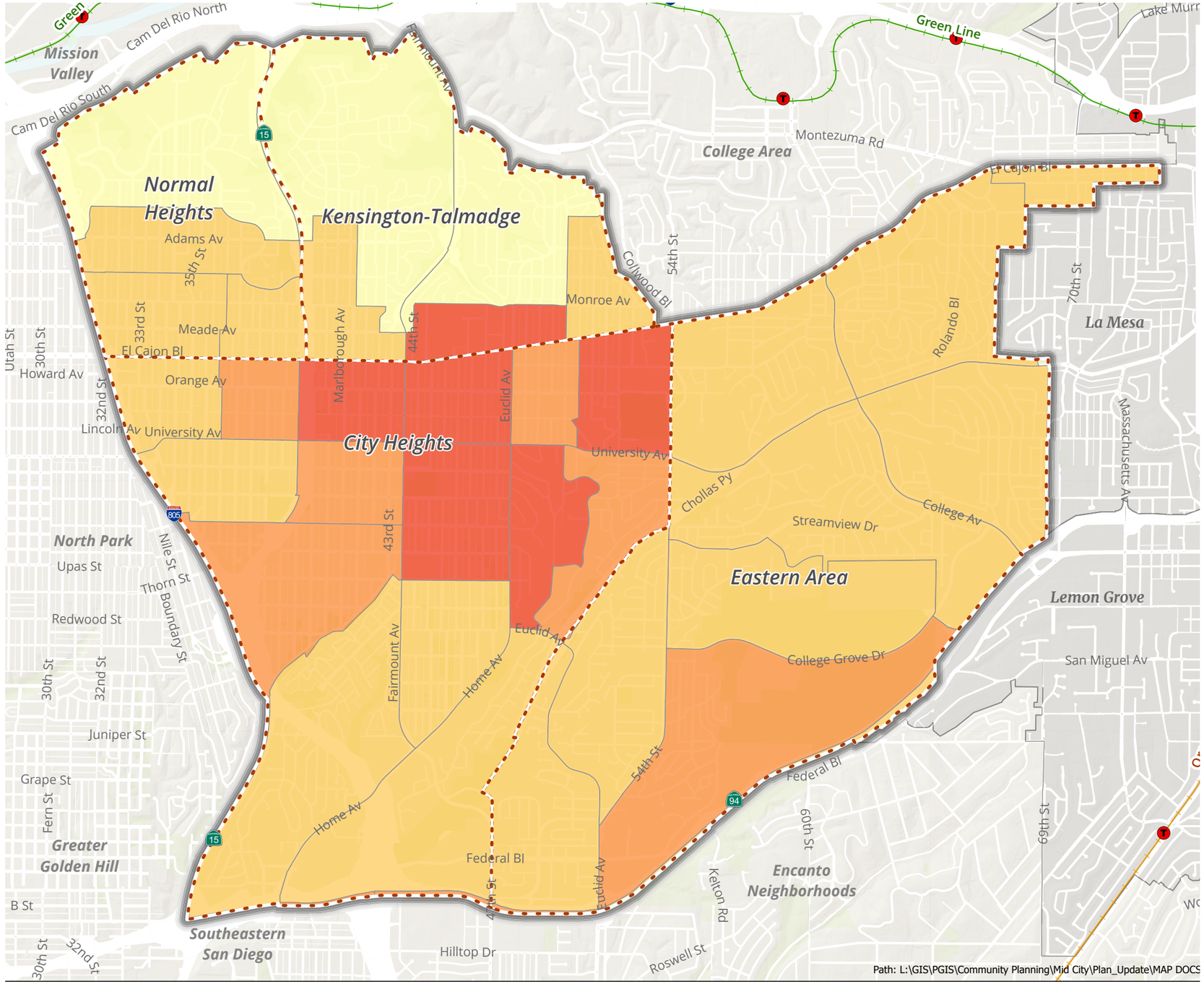
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Commuting Characteristics by Sex. (ACSST5Y2023.S0801)

Table 5-3 Vehicles Available

Vehicle(s) Available	Mid-City	City of San Diego	San Diego County
None	10.0%	6.4%	5.4%
1 vehicle	37.7%	35.1%	30.2%
2 vehicles	34.4%	38.8%	39.6%
3 or more vehicles	18.2%	19.8%	24.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Commuting Characteristics by Sex. (ACSST5Y2023.S0801)

Figure 5-9 Household Transportation Spending



Community Plan Area Boundary

Trolley Stop

Open Space

Transportation costs as a percent of income

- 8-17.7
- > 17.7 - 27
- > 27 - 36.3
- > 36.3 - 45.6
- > 45.6 - 54.9

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

City of San Diego, SANGIS, SANDAG

5.8. Mobility Summary

This section summarizes the key information related to mobility for Mid-City planning area presented in this chapter.

- The **freeway and street network** form the basis of mobility in Mid-City.
- Existing **canyons and freeways provide the biggest barrier** to pedestrian walkability in Mid-City.
- Mid-City is a **medium to high bicycle trip generator area.**
- The existing bike network in Mid-City is primarily a combination of **Class II and Class III** facilities, although a series of **Bicycle Boulevards have recently been installed and are planned** for the coming years.
- Public transit within Mid-City is provided by **local and rapid bus service.**
- Challenges to maintaining high-frequency bus service along the El Cajon Boulevard bus way include **a lack of enforcement and limited infrastructure.**
- The intersections with the **most pedestrian collisions** were concentrated along **El Cajon Boulevard, University Avenue, Fairmount Avenue and Euclid Ave/54th Street.**
- Serious pedestrian injuries or fatalities are also clustered along the corridors listed above as well as at the **entrances and exits to freeways** in Mid-City.
- Around **23 percent of Mid-City workers** either **commute by walking, bicycling, public transit, or work from home.**

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6 Parks, Public Facilities & Open Space

PLAN MID-CITY
Communities Plan Update

6.1. Introduction

OVERVIEW

This section describes the existing community facilities and open space for the Mid-City communities. Safe and convenient access to schools, fire and police stations, parks, recreational facilities, and open space is vital to a healthy community environment. For example, parks and natural spaces improve air and water quality, provide wildlife habitat, add natural buffers to urban landscapes, increase property values, spur local economies and improve general quality of life.

6.2. Parks and Recreation

PARKS, PRESERVATION, AND ACCESS

Mid-City's system of parks and recreational facilities is diverse, ranging from community and neighborhood parks to mini parks, sports fields, and aquatic centers, some of which are shared with neighboring communities (Figure 6-1). There are three use categories of parks and recreation for residents and visitors, including:

- **Population-based parks** (commonly known as Neighborhood, Community, and Mini Parks), facilities, and services are located in close proximity to residential development and are intended to serve the daily needs of the neighborhood and community. Joint use parks/facilities are intended to provide active and passive recreational opportunities for school children when school is in session and the general public when school is not in session. Each joint use site is governed by a joint use agreement between the City of San Diego and the participating agency or school. Other park typologies, such as linear parks, plazas, trailhead pocket parks, trails, or privately-owned public open spaces (POPOS), may be appropriate for satisfying some of the community's population-based park needs.
- **Resource-based parks** are located at, or centered on, notable natural or manufactured features (beaches, canyons, river parks, habitat systems, lakes, historic sites, and cultural facilities) and are intended to serve the City wide population, as well as visitors.
- **Open space lands** are generally City-owned lands located throughout the City, consisting of canyons, mesas, and other landforms. This open space is intended to preserve and protect native plants and animals, while providing public access and enjoyment by the use of hiking, biking, and equestrian trails.

PARK MASTER PLAN RECREATON VALUE-BASED PARK STANDARD

In the past, the City relied on a standard of 2.8 acres per 1,000 residents for parks. The Parks Master Plan (adopted in 2021) transitions the City from a land-based standard to a recreational value-based standard. The Recreational Value-Based Park Standard determines the value of parks in points based on features related to park size, recreational opportunities, access, amenities, activations, and overall value delivered.

As an outcome-based measure, the standard recognizes the value of parks appropriate for diverse communities, from ball fields to pocket parks to trails. Refer to the Parks Master Plan for further information on recreational value scoring. For Mid-City, points have been calculated for existing parks and then compared to the Citywide standard of 100 points per 1,000 residents (Table 6-1).

The Parks Master Plan also affirmed the need for facility-based metrics to measure how many recreation centers and aquatic complexes are available relative to a community's population. This standard defines the number of people ideally served by a recreation center or aquatic complex. The Citywide standard for recreation centers is 17,000 square feet of recreation center space per 25,000 people, and the standard for aquatic complexes is 1 complex per 50,000 people (Table 6-1).

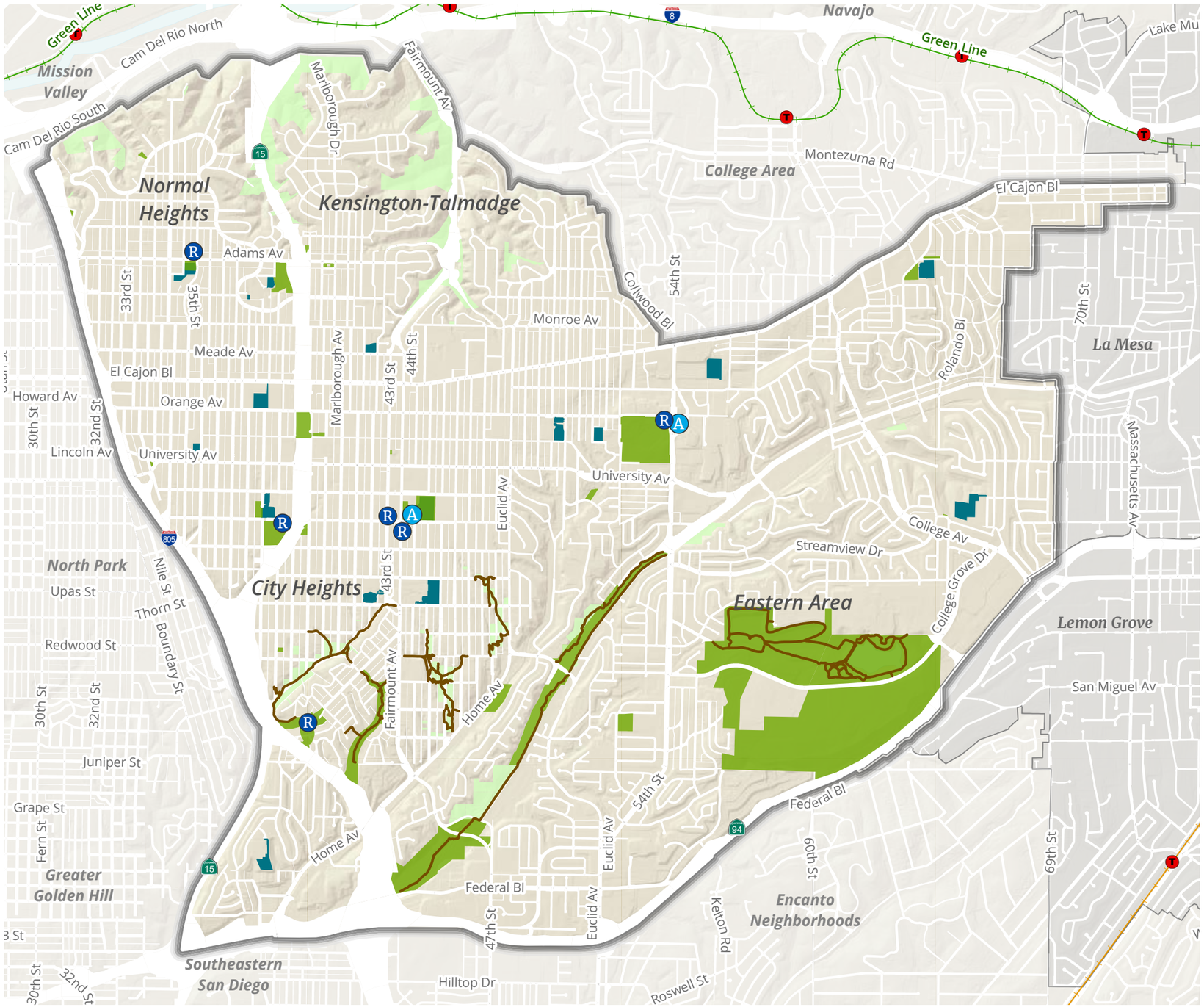
Table 6-1 Existing Park Standard

Mid-City Existing Parks and Recreation Facilities Summary	
Total Population (2023)	133,559
Recreation Value Points Goal, 100 points per thousand	13,559
Current Recreation Value Points	7,083
Recreation Center	
Recreation Center Requirement - 17,000 SF per 25,000 people	90,820
Current Recreation Center square footage	81,767
Aquatic Complex	
Aquatic Complex Requirement - 1 complex per 50,000 people	2.7
Current number of Aquatic Complex	2

Youth playing futsal at Colina Del Sol

Hollywood Canyon

Figure 6-1 Existing Parks, Recreation, and Open Space



- Trolley Stop
- Recreation Center
- Aquatic Complex
- Existing Trails
- Developed Parks
- Open Space
- Joint Use Parks

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

City of San Diego, SANGIS, SANDAG

N W E S

CHOLLAS CREEK WATERSHED PARK MASTER PLAN

In 2002, the City Council adopted the Chollas Creek Enhancement Program, laying out a visionary path for the Chollas Creek Watershed guided by the community's vision. On Aug. 3, 2021, the San Diego City Council designated the Chollas Creek Watershed as a Regional Park.

To realize the vision set by the community and to implement the policies of the recently adopted Parks Master Plan, the City Planning Department is engaging with community members to develop the Chollas Creek Watershed Regional Park Master Plan.

The Chollas Creek Watershed Park Master Plan will help unite diverse neighborhoods through a watershed-wide system of trails and parks where people can gather, play, interact and enjoy nature. The Chollas Creek Master Plan will deliver on the broader vision of more outdoor recreation opportunities and preserving natural qualities and habitats within the watershed.

Children playing at Chollas Lake Park playground

Azalea Recreation Center

Boundary of Chollas Creek Watershed Park Master Plan Area

Youth learning golf at Colina Park Golf Course

People playing tennis at Colina Del Sol

6.3. Public Services, Facilities, and Safety

OVERVIEW

Figure 6-2 identifies existing public facilities such as libraries, public and private schools, and police and fire stations. Mid-City Plan Area has three libraries, four fire stations, thirty public schools, four private schools, and the San Diego Police Department Mid-City Division and Community Relations Storefront.

FIRE AND RESCUE

The City of San Diego Fire Stations 10, 17, 18 and 26 provide fire and rescue services. In addition, there is one proposed fire station at Fairmount Avenue and 47th Street in City Heights. This project (1.28-acre site) provides for the design and construction of a new permanent fire station of approximately 14,273 square feet. The facility will accommodate an apparatus bay and a crew of ten fire personnel, onsite surface parking, dorm rooms, kitchen, watch room, ready room, station alerting system, IT data network, wet and dry utilities, electrical, mechanical and all other necessary infrastructureassociated with this project. The project is estimated to cost over $25 million.

POLICE

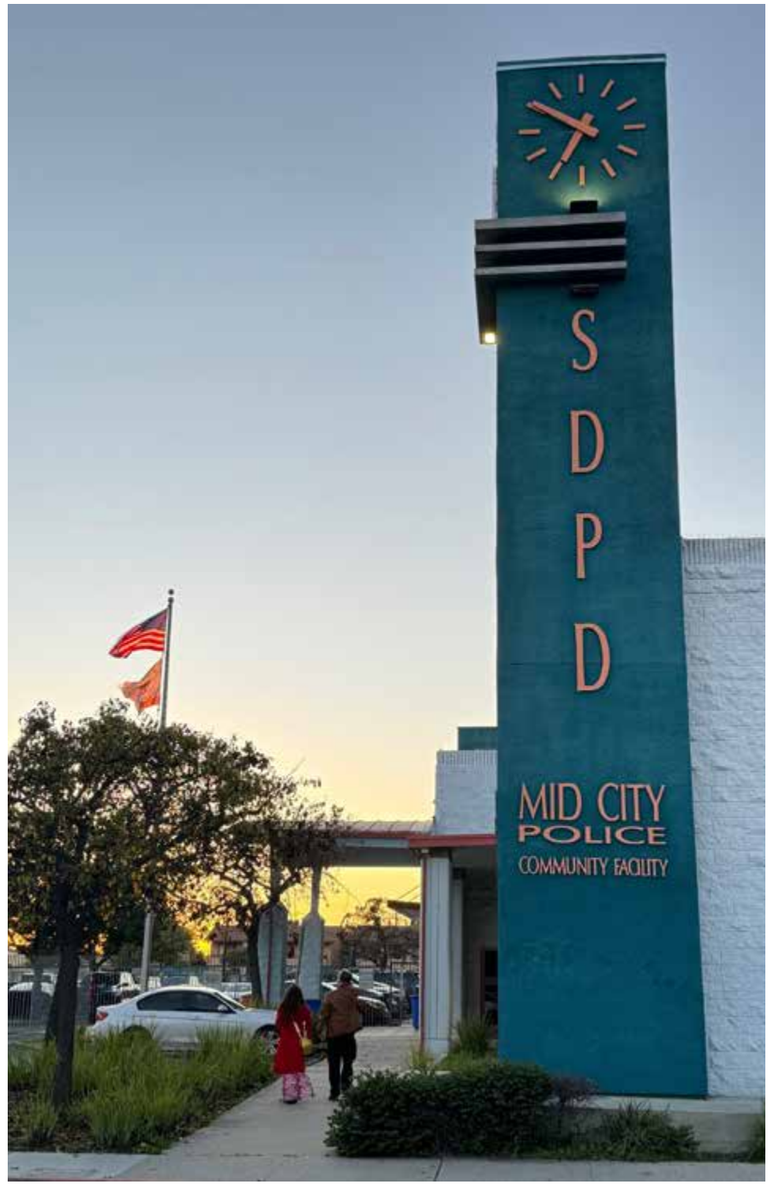
The City provides police services through geographic service areas and the police department has defined neighborhood names corresponding to each police beat. Twenty neighborhoods are served within the Mid-City Division, while the neighborhoods of Ridgeview/Webster and Oak Park are within the Southeastern Division. The names and boundaries of the police department neighborhoods are subject to change at the discretion of the police department.

LIBRARIES

There are three libraries within the Mid-City planning area. The City Heights/ Weingart Library is 17,100 square feet and envisioned as part of the City Heights Initiative, a public/private partnership between the City and Price Charities. The two-story library building and neighborhood park opened in November 1998. Dating back to the 1930s, the Kensington-Normal-Heights Library is 2,300 square feet, the smallest of all city libraries, while the 5,200 square feet Oak Park Library was dedicated in 1969.

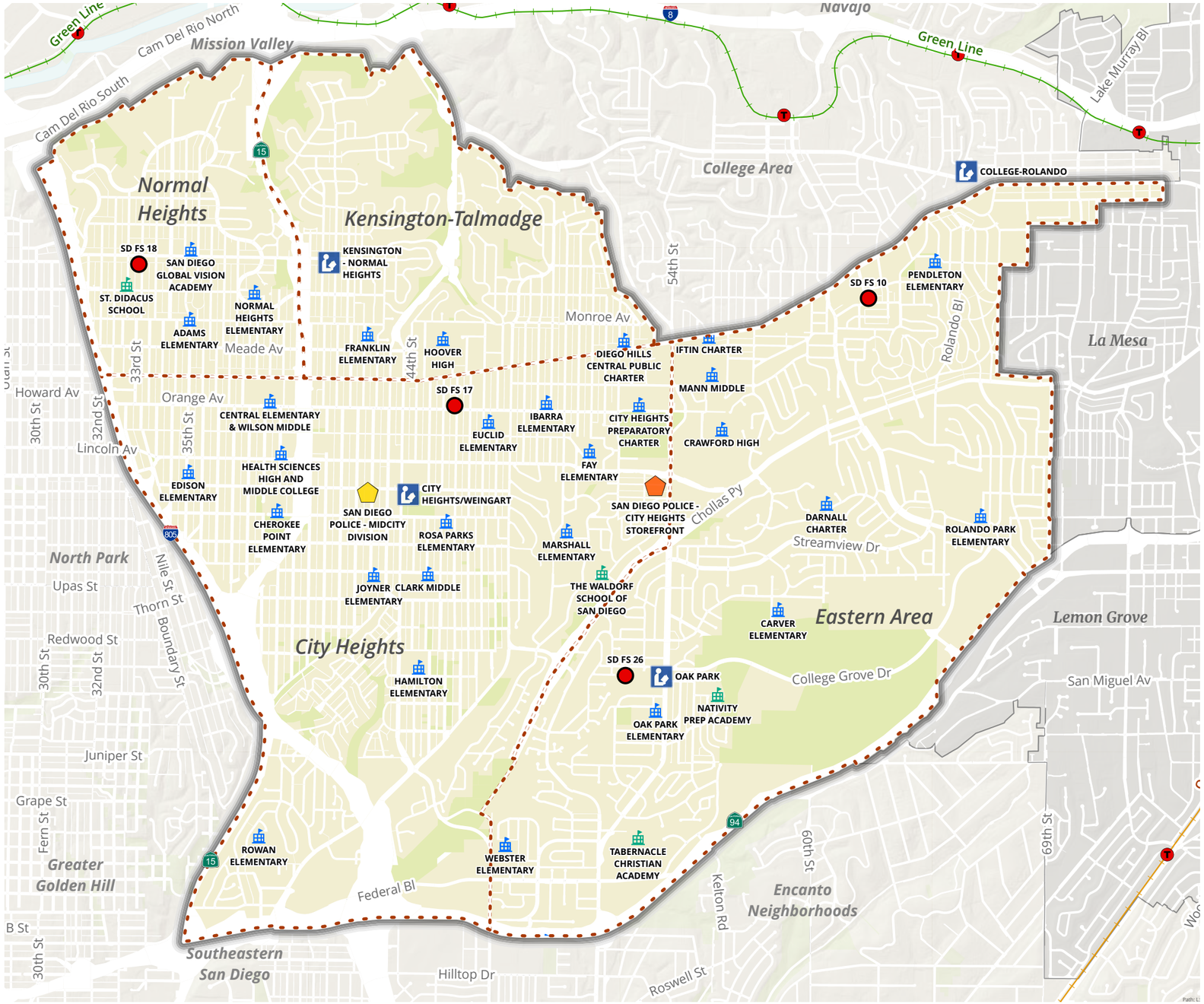
Oak Park Library

Fire and Rescue responding to a 911 call in City Heights



Mid-City Police Station

Figure 6-2 Existing Public Services & Facilities



- Community Plan Boundary
- Libraries

Schools
- Public
- Private

Police Facilities
- Police Station
- Community Relations Storefront

City of San Diego Fire Stations
- Existing

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

City of San Diego, SANGIS, SANDAG

SAN DIEGO PUBLIC LIBRARY MASTER PLAN

In 2023, a new library master plan was adopted by the San Diego City Council. The plan presents an aspirational vision for the San Diego Public Library where the library and its services are equitable, engaging and experiential, geographically accessible everywhere, and empowered with the necessary resources to thrive. The plan also provides a detailed plan to modernize branches, meet growing community needs, and become more geographically available across San Diego. Here are the major recommendations for Mid-City planning area libraries:

- City Heights/Weingart - Makeover
- Kensington-Normal Heights - Replace on existing or new site at 25,000 SF
- Oak Park - Replacement on new site at Chollas Lake Community Park (20,000 SF) in progress

SCHOOLS

Schools that serve Mid-City are dispersed throughout the communities and within walking distance of most homes. The San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD) operates nineteen elementary schools, three middle schools, two high schools and six charter schools.

The last update to the Mid-City Communities Plan (1998) significantly downzoned the plan area due to a concern over lack of community facilities and school overcrowding. Figure 6-3 provides historical student enrollment trends in Mid-City for those attending San Diego Unified School Districts' (SDUSD) Elementary, Middle and High Schools.

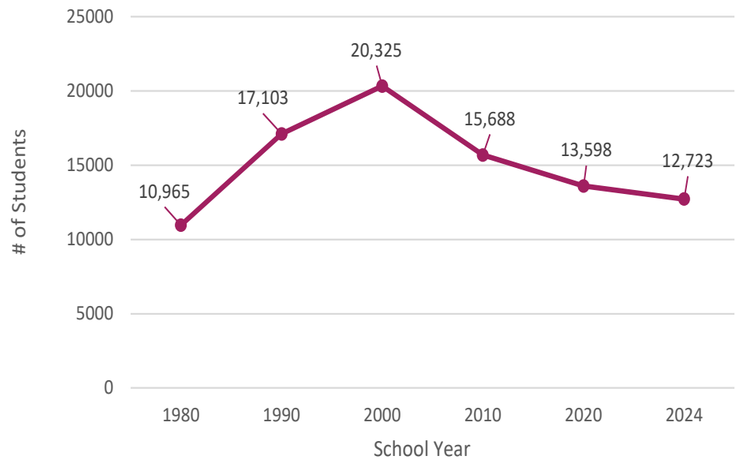
The total student enrollment has declined by 37% from its peak in the year 2000 to 2024. That's around 7,600 fewer students enrolled in the SDUSD schools today. Meanwhile, between 2005 and 2008, four new elementary schools were built in Mid-City due to the Prop MM funding:

- Cherokee Point Elementary (2005)
- Fay Elementary (2008)
- Ibarra Elementary (2005)
- Joyner Elementary (2007)

In addition, during the last 15 years, over $614 million (non-inflation adjusted) has been invested in Mid-City to modernize school facilities funded by voter-approved bond measures (Appendix E).

Crawford High School

Figure 6-3 Enrollment at Mid-City Schools (SDUSD)



Wilson Middle School

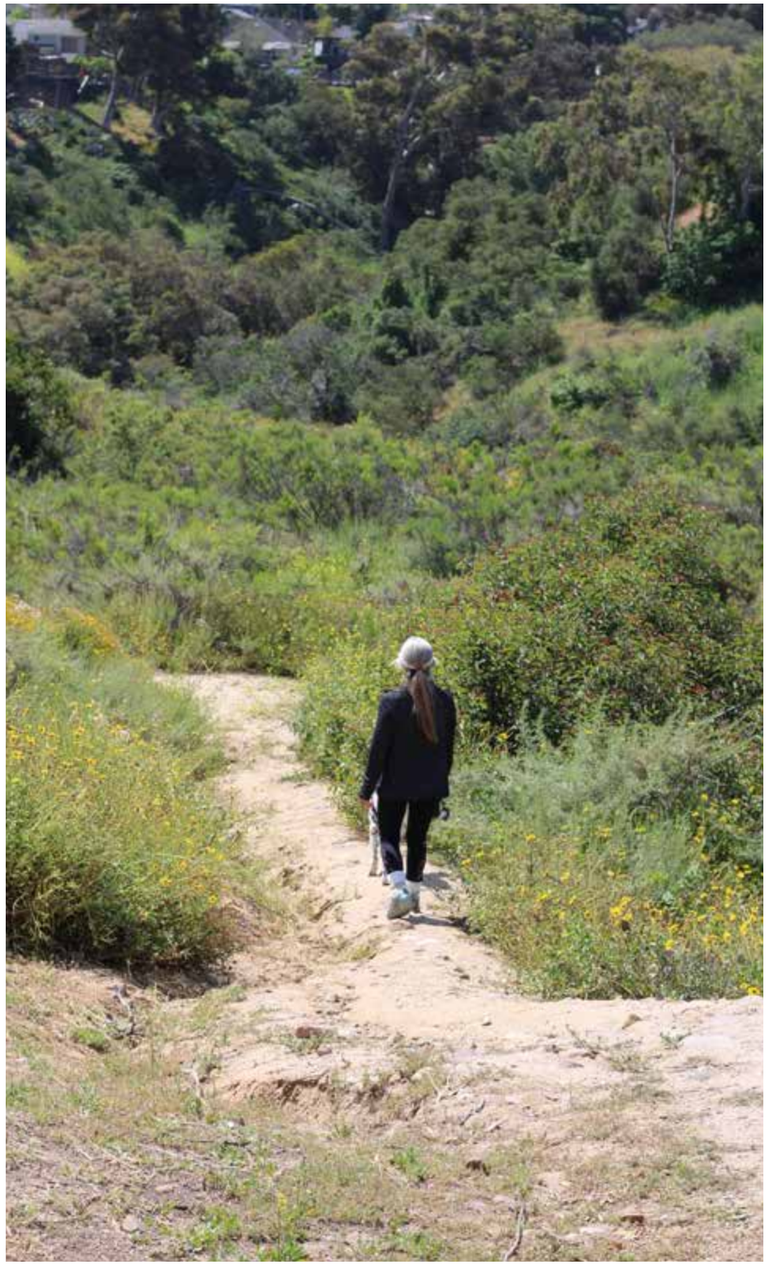
Rosa Parks ElementarySchool

6.4. Open Space

OVERVIEW

Mid-City planning area has been extensively developed. Most of the planning area consists of disturbed or developed areas (see Figure 6-4). Still, undisturbed areas of vegetation are present, particularly along the major canyons in northern Normal Heights and Kensington-Talmadge. Mid-City's undisturbed vegetation is located in San Diego's Multi-Habitat Planning Area (MHPA), the City's planned habitat preserve. Within the MHPA, development is limited to protect and ensure the viability of "covered" species and preserve a network of open space and habitat in San Diego.

Spring Bloom at Chollas Lake

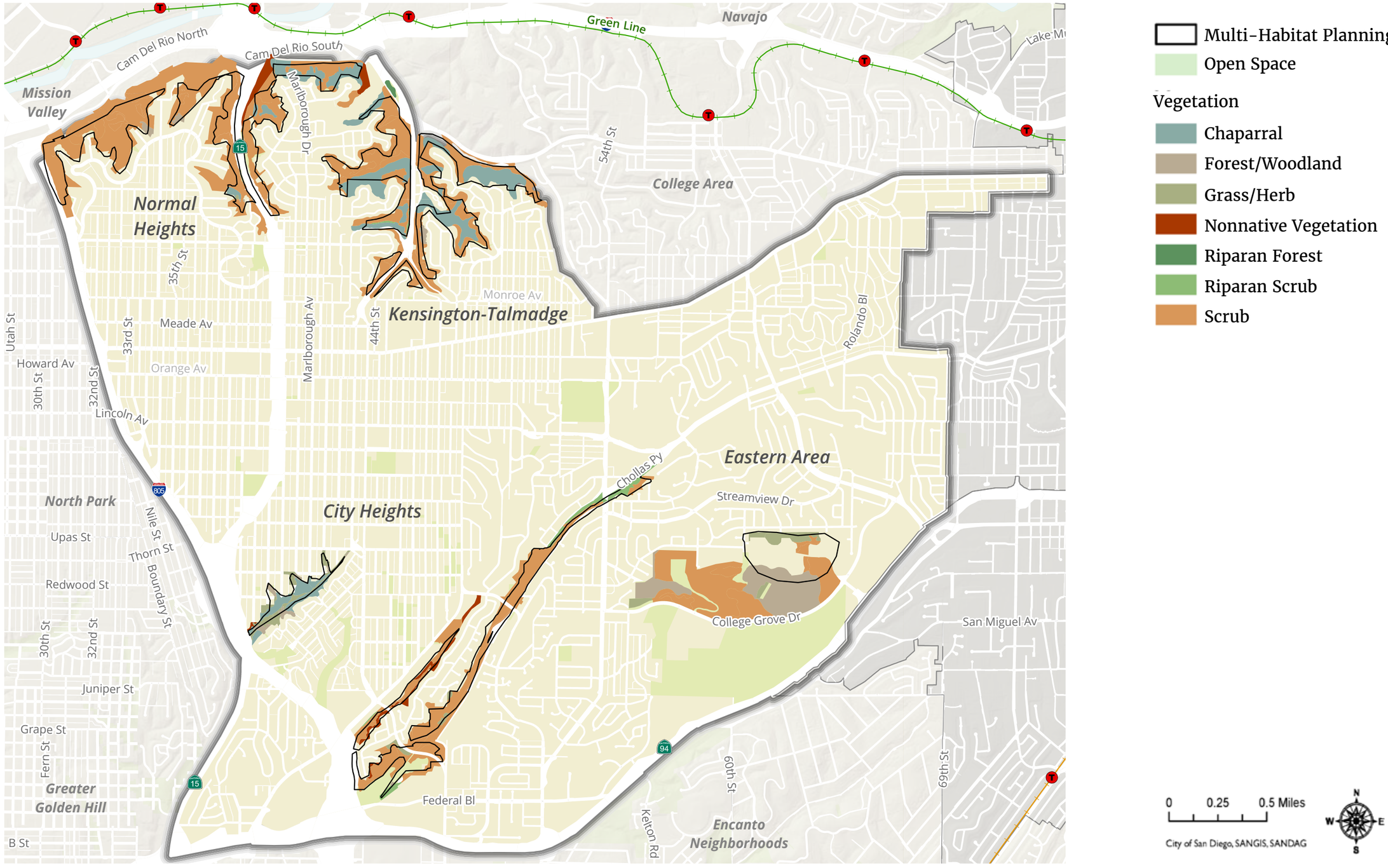


Open space areas include hiking trails in the canyons

Trail at Hollywood Canyon

Educational Sign at Swan Canyon

Figure 6-4 Multi-Habitat Planning Area and Vegetations



6.5. Parks, Public Facilities and Open Space Summary

This section summarizes the key information related to parks, public facilities and open space for the Mid-City planning area presented in this chapter.

- Mid-City's system of parks and recreational facilities is diverse, ranging from **community and neighborhood parks to mini parks, sports fields, and aquatic centers,** some of which are shared with neighboring communities.
- Using the 2023 population, Mid City has substantial **future recreational opportunities** to meet the Recreational Value-Based Park Standard.
- Through the Chollas Creek Watershed Park Master Plan, Mid-City can expect **more outdoor recreation opportunities** while the natural qualities and habitats within the watershed continue to be preserved.
- Planned public facilities currently encompass a **proposed fire station** at the intersection of Fairmount Avenue and 47th Street in City Heights, along with the new Oak Park Library.
- **Substantial school capacity remains underutilized** due to drastic student enrollment declines (37% decline from 2000-2024) and the addition of four new elementary schools built in the 2000s.
- Acquiring **funding for Mid-City schools' modernization** has been successful. Over the last 15 years, over $614 million (non-inflation adjusted) has been invested.
- Although most of the planning area has been extensively developed, the remaining undisturbed areas, mostly along the **canyons, are protected under our City's planned habitat preserve,** the Multi-Habitat Planning Area.

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The City *of*
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