THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Planning Commission

DATE ISSUED: October 29, 2026 REPORT NO. PC-26-039

HEARING DATE: November 5, 2026

SUBJECT: Otay Mesa-Nestor Community Plan Update Workshop

SUMMARY

This workshop gives the Planning Commission an early opportunity to provide input on the Otay Mesa-Nestor Community Plan Update. This aligns with the Planning Commission's past preferences for participating in workshops during the community plan update process to share their ideas and priorities. No action is required on the part of the Planning Commission at this time. This workshop provides an opportunity for discussion and feedback from the Planning Commission on the *Otay Mesa-Nestor Atlas: Existing Conditions Report (Atlas)* and to help guide the Otay Mesa-Nestor Community Plan Update process. Staff appreciates and welcomes Commission feedback during the workshop.

BACKGROUND

The City updates community plans to address changing conditions and community needs and implement the General Plan and Climate Action Plan. Through these updates, the City works with the community to develop a guide for future development by identifying opportunities for homes and jobs near transit and services, and planning for infrastructure, parks and public facilities. Since 2014, the City has comprehensively updated 16 community plans. The City launched the Otay Mesa Community Plan Update in October 2026, after receiving grant funding from SANDAG.

The Otay Mesa-Nestor planning area covers approximately 4,500 acres (about 7 square miles) in the southern region of the City of San Diego. It is bounded by the City of Chula Vista to the north; the City of Imperial Beach to the west; the City of San Diego Otay Mesa community to the east; and the Tijuana River Valley and the City of San Diego San Ysidro community to the south, as shown on Attachment 1. Encompassing the neighborhoods of Nestor, Egger Highlands, Palm City, and Otay Mesa, Otay Mesa-Nestor had approximately 57,400 people and 17,800 homes in 2025, while businesses provided about 6,300 jobs in 2023.

History of the Community Plan

The community was officially annexed into the City of San Diego in 1957; at the time, it contained approximately 1,000 homes. Responding to an acceleration of residential growth along with concerns about deficiencies in public facilities and services during the late 1960s, the City rezoned portions of the community in the early 1970s. During this time, the City began working with the Otay Mesa – Nestor Community Planning Group to work on the first Community Plan.

In 1979, the City adopted the Otay Mesa – Nestor Community Plan, which focused on:

- Adding housing supply
- Guiding commercial development and supporting job growth with appropriately located industrial sites
- Expanding educational and cultural opportunities
- Developing a transportation system
- Enhancing the physical environment

In 1997, the Community Plan was updated, expanding the community plan area by 740 acres to include the Salt Ponds operated by South Bay Salt Works. The 1997 Community Plan directed future growth toward opportunity areas within distinct neighborhood centers, aiming to reinforce the unique characteristics of each neighborhood and, in turn, strengthen the community's overall identity. It also highlighted areas with strong revitalization potential, along with stable neighborhoods that continue to enhance the community's cultural diversity, economic vitality, and overall quality of life. The 1997 Community Plan update also designated areas near the transit stations in the Palm City and Iris Avenue Mercado neighborhoods for mixed-use, transit-oriented development encouraging transit ridership and creating walkable neighborhoods connecting homes, businesses, services, and transit access to capitalize on their proximity to transit access to San Diego Trolley.

Housing & Demographics

While the City of San Diego experienced a 15.2 percent increase in total population between 2000 and 2025, Otay Mesa-Nestor's total population has declined by 6.5 percent during the same period, as shown in Table 1. This translates to an estimated 4,000 fewer people living in Otay Mesa-Nestor.

Table 1. City of San Diego and Otay Mesa-Nestor Community: Population Change 2000 to 2025

	2000	2025	% Change
City of San Diego	1,223,400	1,409,400	15.2%
Otay Mesa-Nestor	61,400	57,400	-6.5%

Source: U.S. Census, 2000; SANDAG, 2025 Estimates

However, the number of homes had modest growth over these 25 years. In 2000, Otay Mesa-Nestor grew from 16,600 homes in 2000 to 17,800 homes in 2025. The community added approximately 1,200 homes, which is a 7.2 percent increase, as shown in Table 2. Otay Mesa - Nestor has a higher average household size of 3.4 persons per household compared to the citywide average of 2.52 in 2025.

Table 2. City of San Diego and Otay Mesa-Nestor Community: Total Housing Change 2000 to 2025

	2000	2025	% Change
City of San Diego	469,700	569,800	21.3%
Otay Mesa-Nestor	16,600	17,800	7.2%

Source: U.S. Census, 2000; SANDAG, 2025 Estimates

Affordable Housing

According to San Diego Housing Commission data from October 2025, Otay Mesa – Nestor contains 1,692 deed-restricted affordable homes, which represents about 9.5 percent of the community's total homes, compared to 5 percent citywide. These figures do not capture naturally occurring affordable housing, that also exists within the community.

Land Use & Zoning

Residential land use designations account for 47 percent of the land within Otay Mesa-Nestor, broken down into 33 percent for single-family use and 14 percent for multi-family use, as shown in Attachment 2. Open space encompasses 37 percent of the community plan area, followed by public facilities at 7 percent, parks at 3 percent, commercial use at 3 percent, industrial use at 2 percent, and mixed-use at 1 percent. The community plan land use designations are implemented through zoning, as shown in Attachment 3

Recent Planning Efforts

The following recent community plan amendments and rezoning approvals reflect ongoing plans to introduce new housing opportunities across sites in Otay Mesa-Nestor:

- *Bella Mar (408 Hollister Street):* On August 4, 2023, City Council approved a Community Plan Amendment to redesignate 14.62 acres from Open Space to Medium Density Residential (15-30 du/net acre) and rezone from AR-1-2 to RM-2-5 to allow 380 new homes.
- *920 Saturn Boulevard:* On July 16, 2024, City Council approved a Community Plan Amendment to redesignate 0.8 acres from Low Density to High Density Residential (45-73 du/ac) and rezone from RS-1-7 to RM-3-9 to allow up to 58 new homes.
- *Palm Hollister Apartments (555 Hollister Street*): On September 13, 2024, City Council approved a Community Plan Amendment to redesignate a 5.92-acre site from Residential Low Density, Mixed Use, and Open Space to Residential Medium-High Density and rezone from RM-1-1, RS-1-7, and AR-1-2 to RM-2-6 to allow up to 198 new homes. This development project is currently under construction.

Transit

Existing

The majority of Otay Mesa-Nestor is within a Transit Priority Area. Local bus and Bus Rapid routes provide connections from the community to the Palm Avenue Transit Center and the Iris Avenue Transit Center, which provide regional connections to job and educational centers, as shown in Attachments 4 and 5.

Planned

SANDAG's 2025 Regional Plan proposes investments to bolster regional connectivity. Planned improvements include increased service frequencies during peak and off-peak periods and extended service hours. The Regional Plan also identifies service additions, including the new Purple Line Trolley connecting San Ysidro to Mission Valley, Express Route 121 serving Cross Border Xpress and Iris Avenue Transit Center, four new Rapid Bus routes (630 to Kearny Mesa, 638 to Otay Mesa, 640 to Santa Fe Depot via I-5, and 688 to UTC Transit Center via I-805), and potential on-demand micro-transit options along community boundaries shared with Imperial Beach and San Ysidro.

Public Facilities

Otay Mesa-Nestor is served by key community facilities, including libraries, schools, and emergency services, as shown in Attachment 6.

Libraries

Within the Otay Mesa-Nestor community, the 15,000-square-foot Otay Mesa–Nestor Branch Library serves as a community anchor. It opened in 1986 and expanded in 2006. It features community and meeting rooms, a computer lab, and outdoor space to support growing community needs. The community also has access to the nearby 15,000-square-foot San Ysidro Branch Library, which opened in 2019. It features study and meeting spaces, a computer lab, and a multi-purpose community room. To help guide future facility needs, the City's 2023 Library Master Plan Master Plan recommends renovating the existing Otay Mesa–Nestor Branch Library to address lifecycle maintenance and modernize operations, alongside constructing a new, minimum 25,000-square-foot third library in the South Bay area of the city.

Schools and Childcare

The Otay Mesa-Nestor community has the following 15 public schools, operated by three school districts:

- Chula Vista Elementary School District operates four elementary schools and one charter school.
- South Bay Union School District operates six elementary schools.
- Sweetwater Union High School District operates three middle schools and a high school.

There are also two private schools in Otay Mesa-Nestor: Ocean View Christian Academy High School and St. Charles Elementary School.

In Otay Mesa-Nestor, childcare is provided through smaller home-based providers, preschools, and schools. The number and location of childcare facilities may change over time as providers open, close, or modify their services.

Emergency Services

Proximity to emergency services ensures good response times during emergencies. Due to its vegetation and slope, northern and southern portions of the community are within the very high fire hazard severity zone. Otay Mesa-Nestor is served by the City of San Diego Fire-Rescue Department stations 6 and 30. Police services are provided by the Southern Division of the San Diego Police Department. The Southern Division Police Station and a community relations storefront are within the community.

Parks

Otay Mesa-Nestor has five neighborhood parks, two community parks, three recreation centers, and the Otay Valley Regional Park, as shown in Attachment 7.

Open Space

Otay Mesa-Nestor includes 1,629 acres of designated open space, of which 1,486 acres (91 percent) are publicly owned. Undisturbed open space is concentrated mostly within the Multiple Habitat Planning Area along the northern edge of the community plan area within the Otay Valley Regional Park, as shown in Attachment 8.

DISCUSSION

What are the Community Plan Update's Key Objectives?

The following are the key objectives for the Otay Mesa-Nestor Community Plan Update that will be addressed, as well as others that arise through the update process:

- Expand opportunities for new homes and jobs near transit
- Improve walking, biking, and transit connections between homes, jobs, and key destinations
- Increase climate resiliency, enhance biodiversity, and preserve open space areas
- Enhance access to the Otay Valley Regional Park and the Tijuana River Valley Regional Park
- Address public facilities, parks and recreation, and infrastructure needs.

How would the Community Plan Update be consistent with the General Plan?

The Community Plan Update would identify potential focus areas for new homes, businesses and public facilities informed by community engagement and technical analysis. Guided by the General Plan's City of Villages Strategy, the community plan update would identify opportunities for land use changes along transit corridors and commercial nodes by using the Village Climate Goal Propensity Map, as shown on Attachment 9. The General Plan identifies areas within Otay Mesa-Nestor as having medium to high propensity for adding density to meet climate goals primarily around the two trolley stops and Palm Avenue west of the trolley Sation. To address future recreational needs, the community plan update process would identify opportunities for new and improved parks, recreation facilities and public spaces.

What will the Community Plan Update process involve?

The Community Plan Update will be prepared through a phased process to guide how Otay Mesa-Nestor evolves, with opportunities for community members and the Planning Commission to provide input throughout, as shown on Attachment 10. The Community Plan Update process includes the following stages:

- Phase 1: Existing conditions and community vision: The Atlas and initial engagement will help identify community needs, priorities and aspirations to guide the update.
- Phase 2: Concepts and alternatives: Building on this input, staff will prepare an Ideas Report to include a range of ideas for land use, housing, mobility, parks, public spaces and other community improvements for discussion and feedback.
- Phase 3: Draft Community Plan and supporting analysis: Feedback on the concepts and alternatives, together with technical studies, will inform a draft Community Plan and proposed zoning changes and regulation changes.
- Phase 4: Public hearings and adoption: Following public review and refinement, the proposed Community Plan and associated documents will be presented for consideration and further feedback throughout the public hearing process.

What is the status of the Community Plan Update?

Phase One formally launched in October 2026 with a suite of public engagement resources, including the project website, an interactive web map, an informational fact sheet, the initial online community survey, and the publication of the existing conditions atlas. The first phase focuses on existing conditions and establishing a shared community vision. This phase provides an opportunity for community members and the Planning Commission to identify issues, opportunities and priorities that will help shape future land use, mobility, parks, and public facility concepts. During this phase, the City Planning Department is seeking input on the Draft Otay Mesa-Nestor Atlas: Existing Conditions Report and gathering feedback on community strengths, areas for improvement, and the long-term vision and goals.

What is the role of the Otay Mesa-Nestor Community Planning Group?

The Otay Mesa-Nestor Community Planning Group plays a foundational advisory role in the update process, and the City Planning Department presented to the full planning group on September 9, 2026, to provide an overview of the Community Plan Update process, timeline, and engagement strategy. City staff presented the Otay Mesa-Nestor Atlas: Existing Conditions Report to the community planning group's Vision Subcommittee on October 27, 2027. The Community Planning Group formed the subcommittee to be involved throughout the entire community plan update process, responsible for reviewing public engagement materials, research, and technical studies; providing initial community ideas; and evaluating draft proposals to help shape the community plan.

What does the Draft Otay Mesa-Nestor Atlas: Existing Conditions Report address?

The October 2026 Draft Otay Mesa-Nestor Atlas: Existing Conditions Report (Attachment 11) provides a snapshot of existing conditions, challenges and opportunities using maps, photos, charts and tables about the history and place, sustainability, equity, resilience and conservation, land use and development, mobility, and parks and public facilities. The Atlas is intended to inform and facilitate community visioning, inform the design of land use and mobility concepts and alternatives, and guide policy formulation for the updated community plan. The City Planning Department welcomes feedback which will be used to refine the report and inform the draft Community Plan.

How will awarded grant funds be used to support the Community Plan Update?

The City was awarded a Smart Growth Incentive Program grant from SANDAG to fund the Otay Mesa-Nestor Community Plan Update to identify opportunities for homes near transit, improving mobility connections to transit, and enhancing parks, trails and public spaces. The City has also applied for the Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant to help further expand community engagement and multimodal transportation analysis, with award notification expected in Spring 2027.

CONCLUSION

This first workshop for the Otay Mesa-Nestor Community Plan Update provides an opportunity for the Planning Commission to provide staff with early feedback. Staff will continue to conduct public engagement with the Community Planning Group and community members to help inform the community plan update. Staff welcome and value ongoing feedback from the public and the Commission. All community plan update information and documents are available on the Otay Mesa-Nestor Community Plan Update website: www.sandiego.gov/planotaymesanestor.

Respectfully submitted,

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City Planning Department

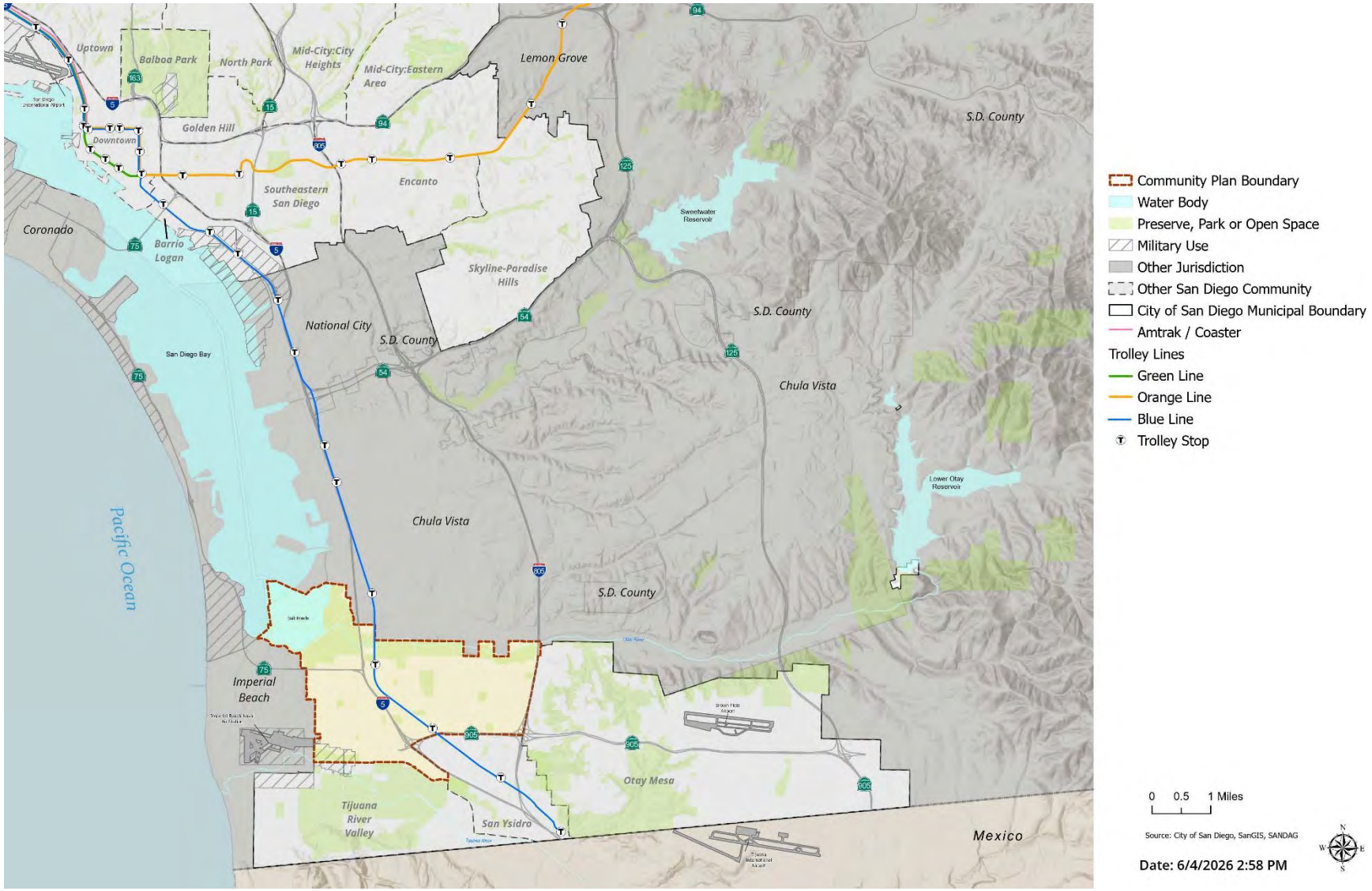
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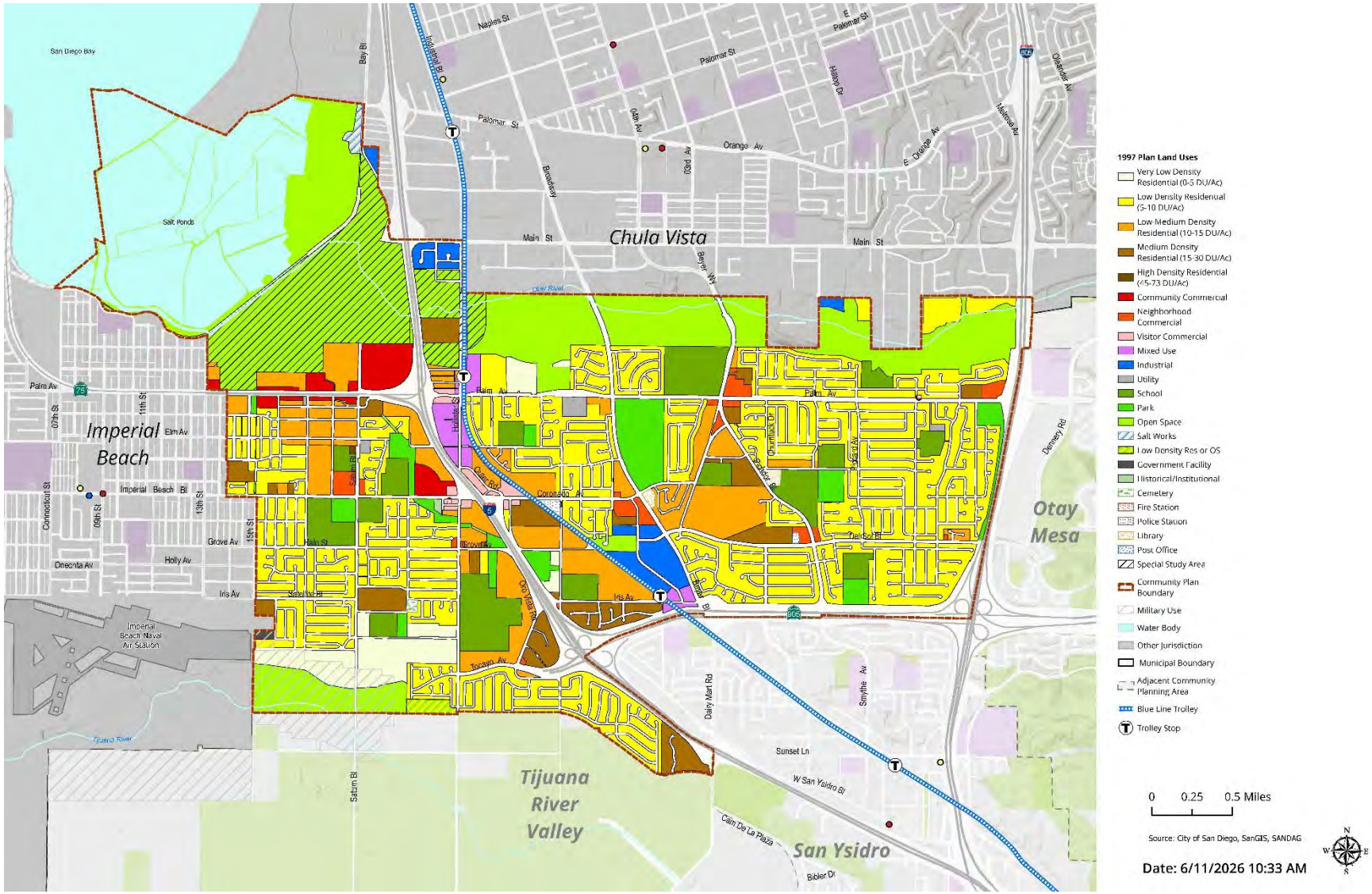
Attachments:

1. Otay Mesa-Nestor Regional Location Map
2. Planned Land Use Map
3. Zoning Map
4. Transit Map
5. Transit Priority Area Map
6. Public Services and Facilities Map
7. Existing Parks, Open Space, and Recreation Centers Map
8. Vegetation and Multiple Habitat Planning Area Map
9. Village Climate Goal Propensity Map
10. Community Plan Update Phases
11. Draft Otay Mesa-Nestor Atlas: Existing Conditions Report link

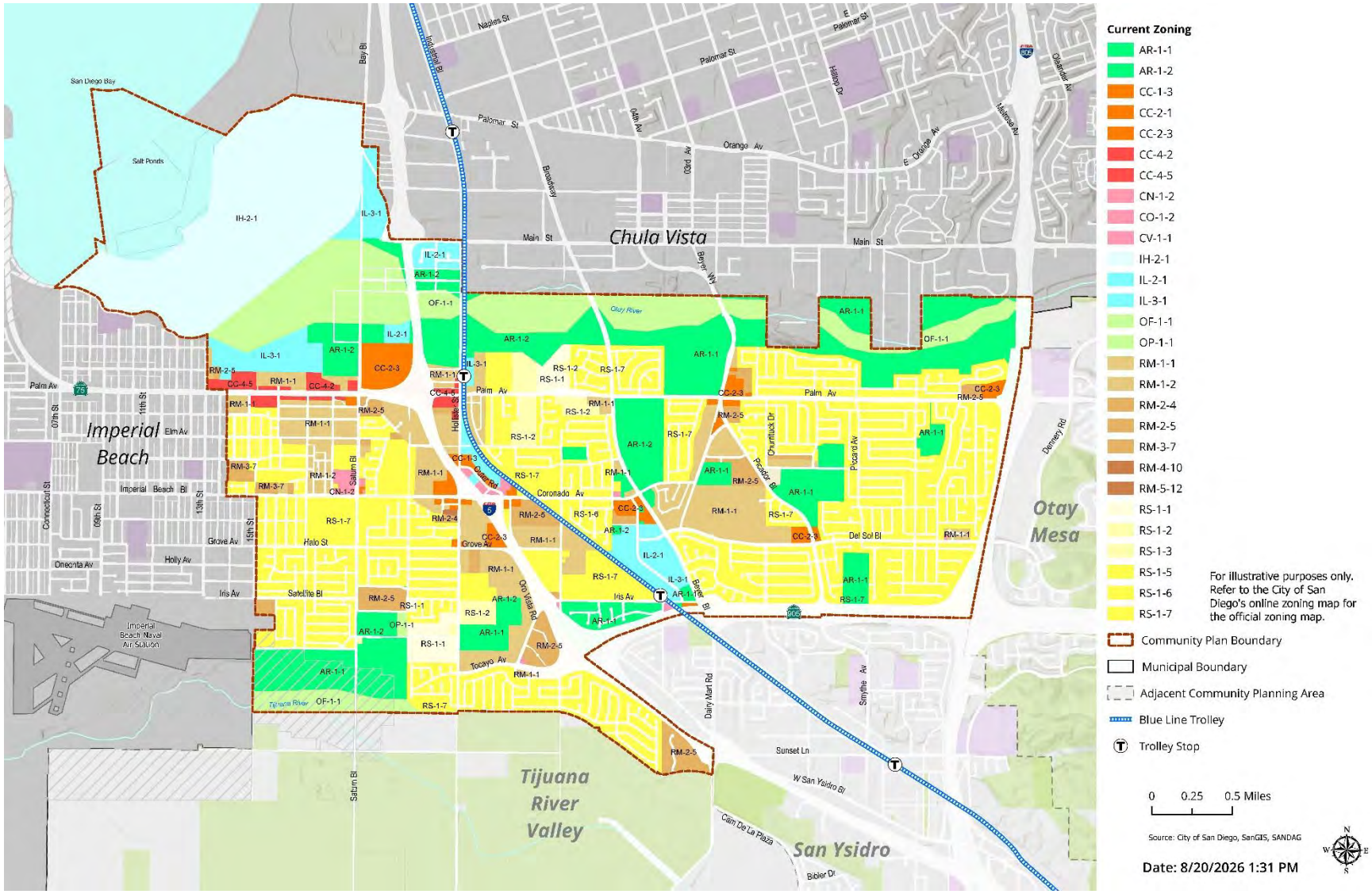
Attachment 1: Otay Mesa-Nestor Regional Location Map



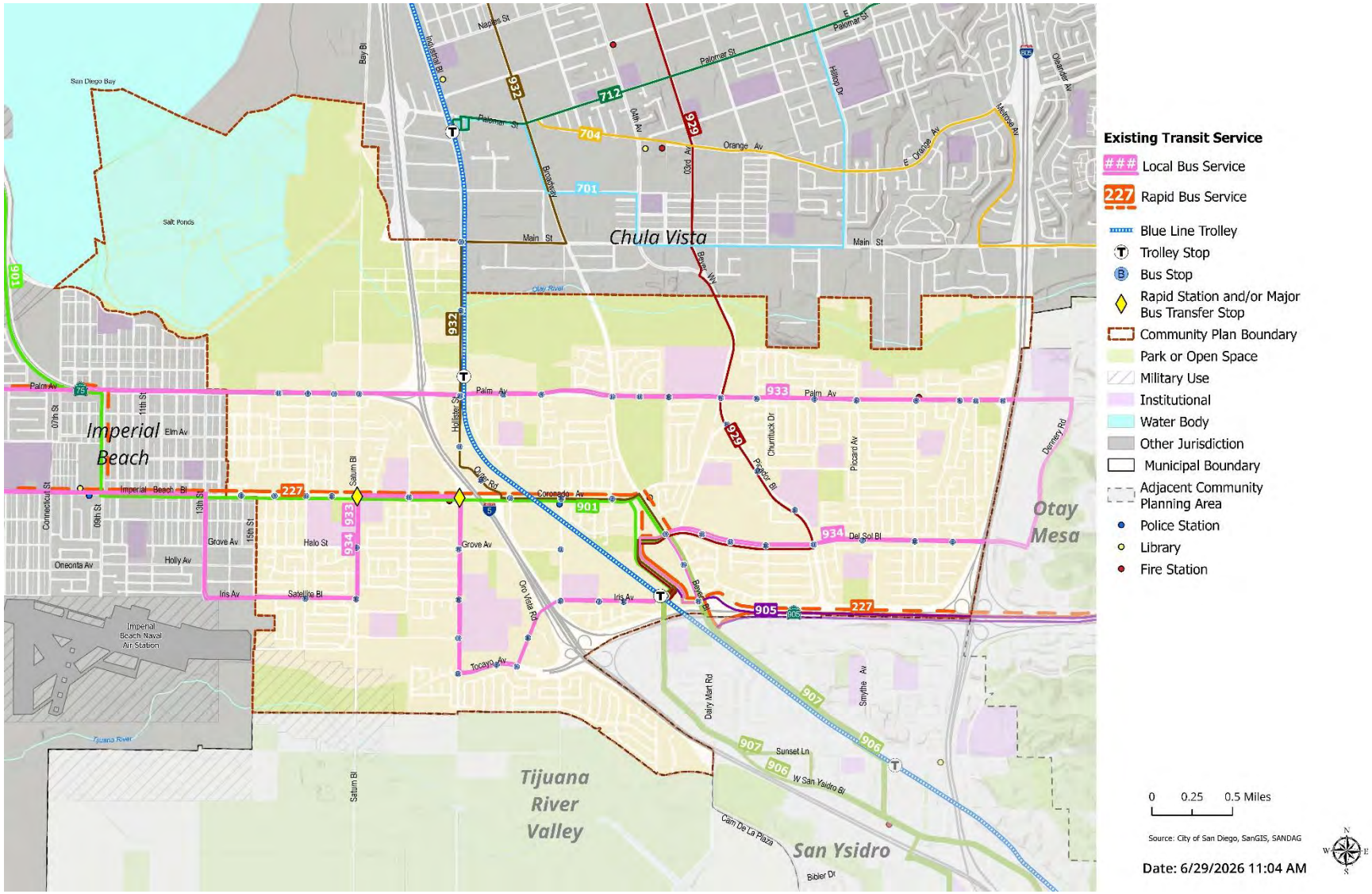
Attachment 2: Planned Land Use Map



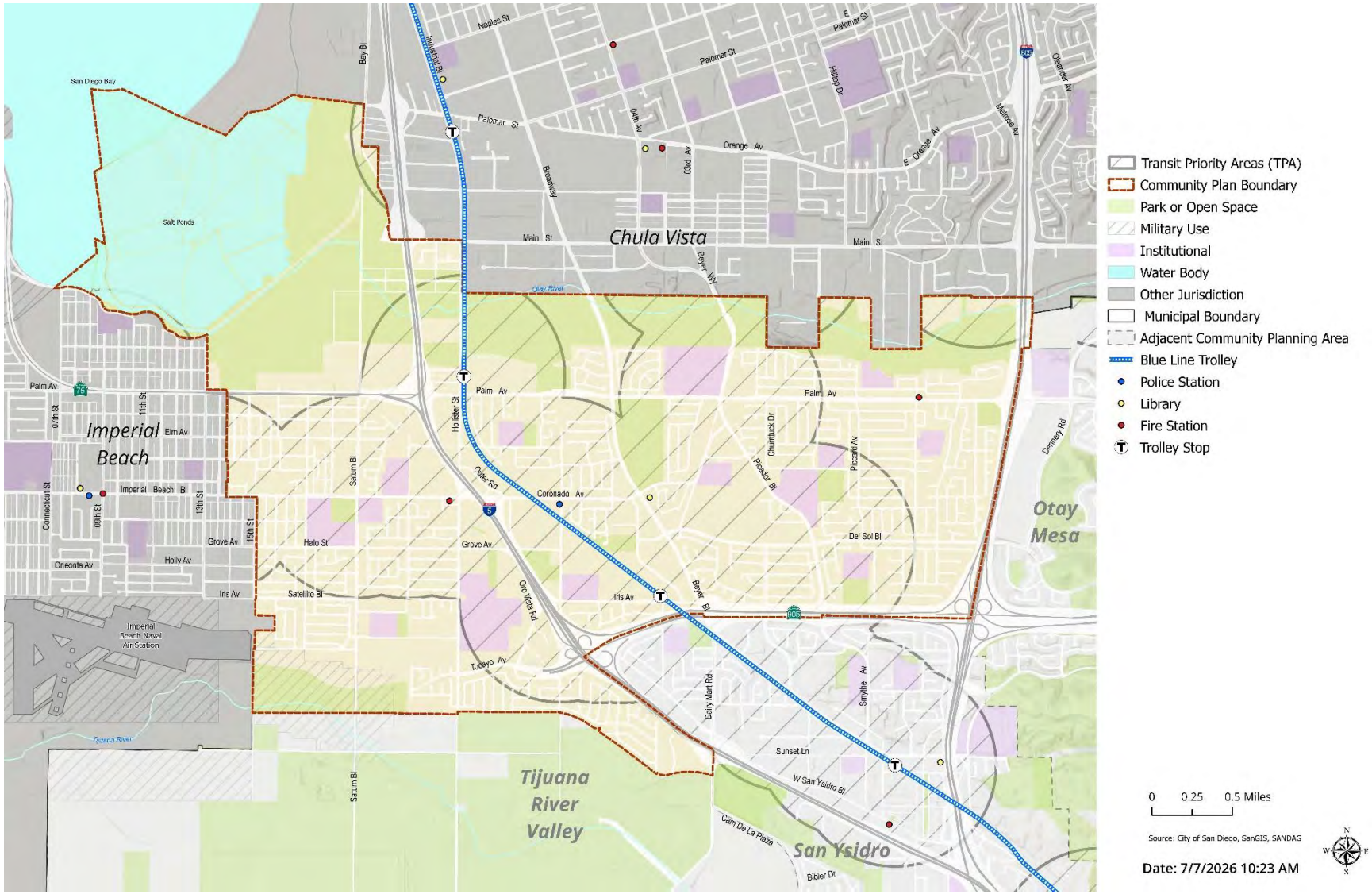
Attachment 3: Zoning Map



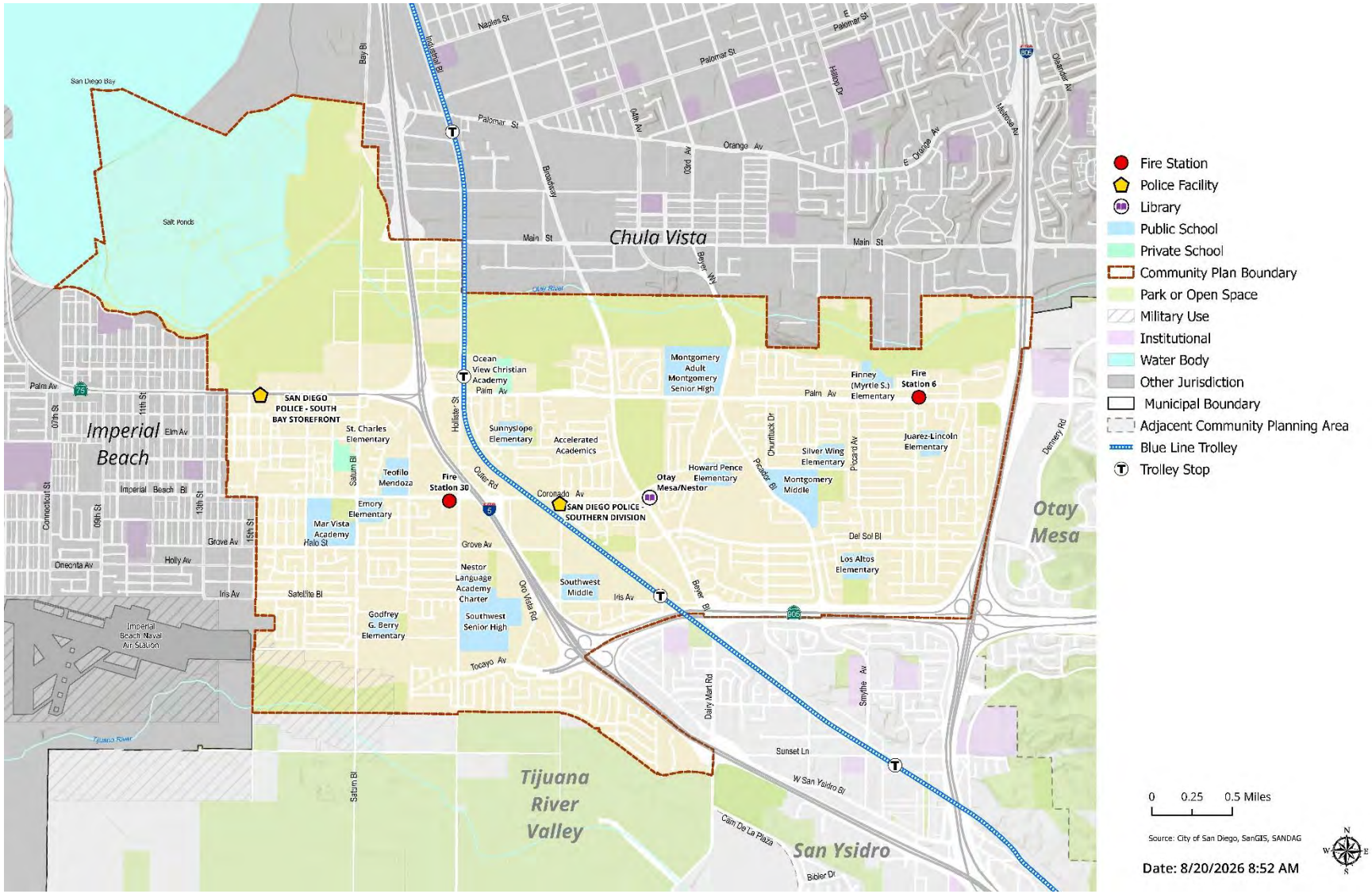
Attachment 3: Transit Map



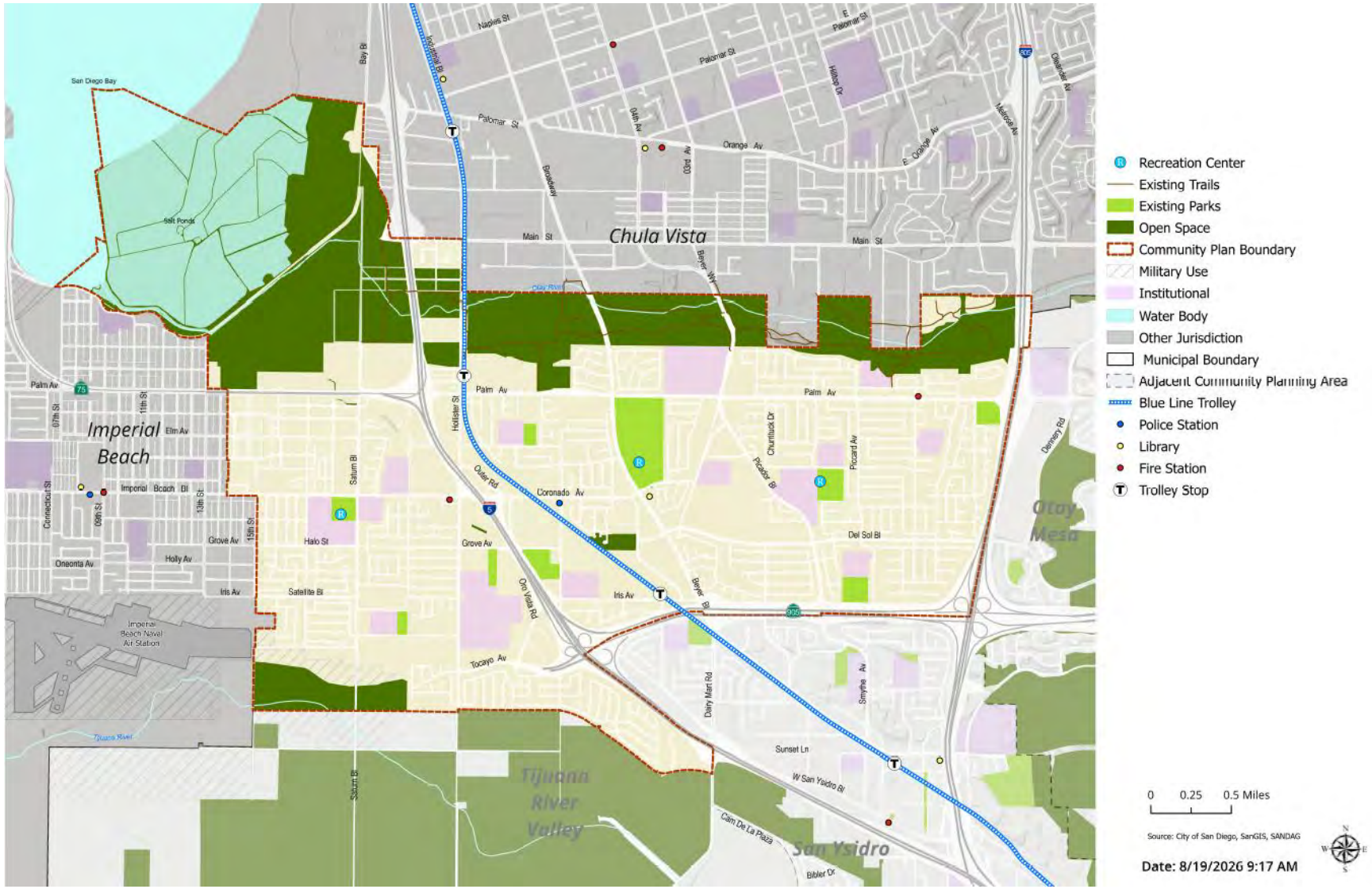
Attachment 5: Transit Priority Map



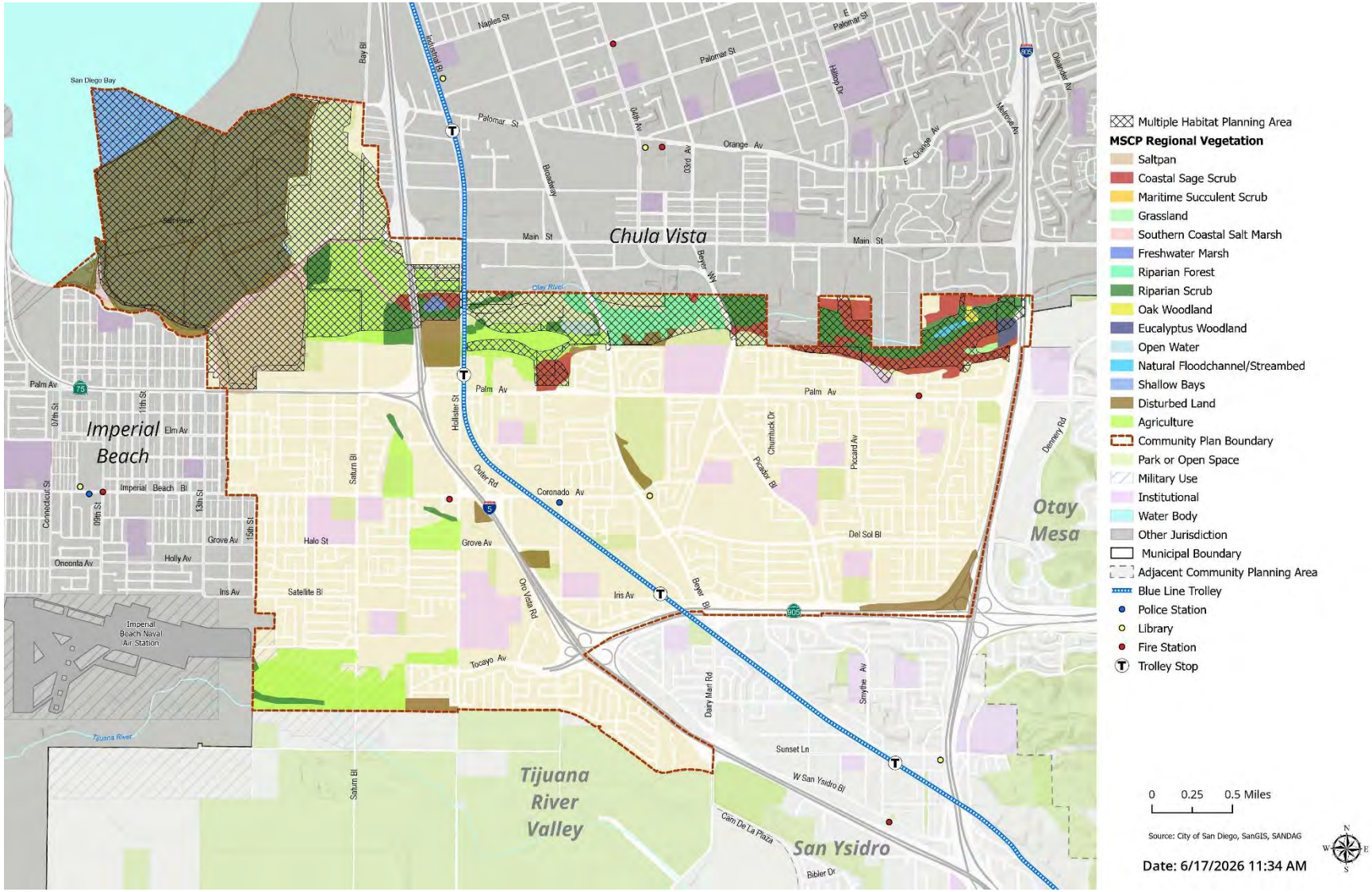
Attachment 6: Public Services and Facilities Map



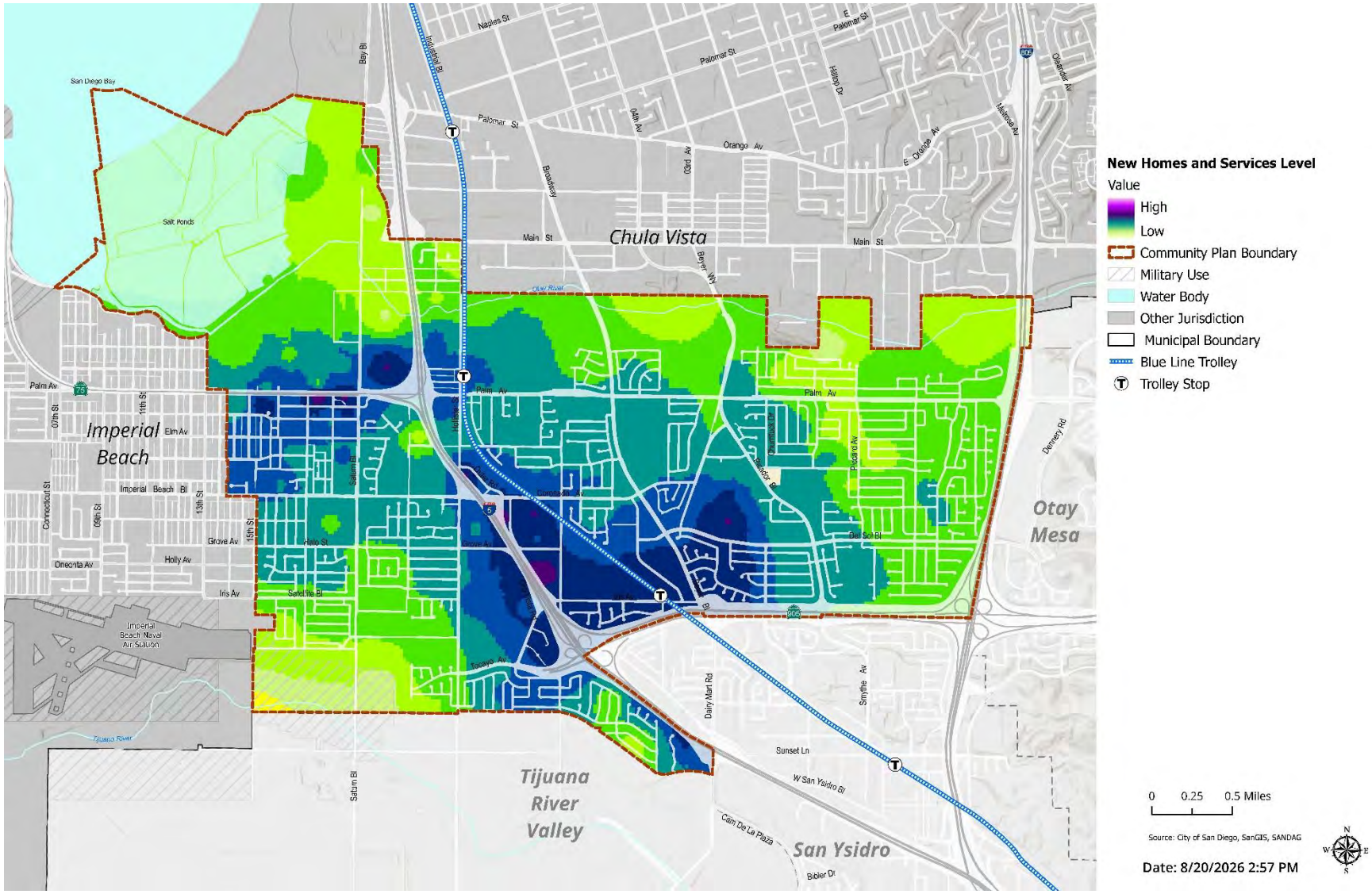
Attachment 7: Existing Parks, Open Space, and Recreation Centers Map



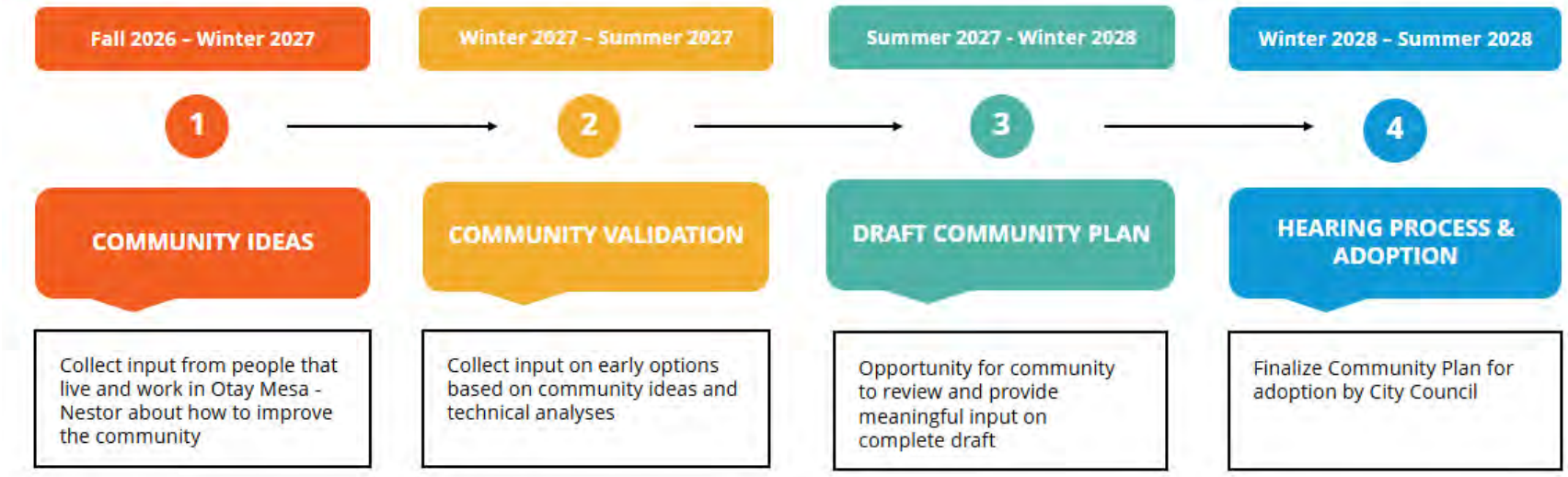
Attachment 8: Vegetation and Multiple Habitat Planning Area Map



Attachment 9: Village Climate Goal Propensity Map



Attachment 10: Community Plan Update Phases



Attachment 11: Draft Otay Mesa-Nestor Atlas: Existing Conditions Report Link

LINK

https://www.sandiego.gov/planning/otay-mesa-nestor-community-plan-update#docaccess-d8e6d4581c5305964bcaac62e83771e6