

Rancho Bernardo Atlas

DRAFT: Existing Conditions Report

City Planning | **OCTOBER** 2026

The City of SAN DIEGO

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

1.1 Overview 5
1.2 Regional Location and Planning Boundaries 5
1.3 Community Plan Purpose and Process 5
1.4 Overview of Rancho Bernardo 8
1.5 Progress and Trends 9
1.6 Existing Plans and Regulatory Framework 16
1.7 Concurrent Planning Initiatives 18
1.8 Introduction Summary 19

2. History and Place

2.1 Brief History 21
2.2 Landform and Natural Features 24
2.3 Development Patterns 26
2.4 Placemaking 31
2.5 History and Place Summary 32

3. Sustainability, Equity, Resilence and Conservation

3.1 Sustainability, Equity, Resilience, and Conservation 34
3.2 General Plan (Blueprint SD) 35
3.3 Transit Priority Areas 35
3.4 Community Health 35
3.5 Equity 41
3.6 Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing 42
3.7 Biological Resources 43
3.8 Hydrology, Flooding and Wildfire 47
3.9 Extreme Heat 49
3.10 Urban Tree Canopy 53
3.11 Air Quality and Pollution Burdens 55
3.12 Sustainability, Equity, Resilience, and Conservation Summary 58

4. Land Use and Development

4.1 Existing Land Use 60
4.2 Rancho Bernardo Community Plan 63
4.3 Zoning 63
4.4 Existing Density and Intensity 68
4.5 Commercial, Business and Employment 70
4.6 Balance of Homes, Jobs and Commutes 73
4.7 Land Use Summary 76

5. Mobility

5.1 Overview 78
5.2 Street and Freeway 78
5.3 Pedestrian Walkability 78
5.4 Bicycle 81
5.5 Transit 81
5.6 Safety Data 84
5.7 Household Transportation Characteristics 87
5.8 Mobility Summary 89

6. Parks, Public Facilities and Open Space

6.1 Overview 91
6.2 Parks and Recreation 91
6.3 Public Services, Facilities and Safety 99
6.4 Parks and Public Facilities Summary 102

List of Figures and Tables

Figure 1-1: Regional Location 6
Figure 1-2: Community Plan Update Process 7
Figure 1-3: Population and Housing Growth 9
Figure 1-4: Population Change by Age between 2000 and 2025 9
Figure 1-5: Age Groups in 2025 11
Figure 1-6: Median Household Income in 2025 11
Figure 1-7: Household Income by Category in 2025 12
Figure 1-8: Race/Ethnicity in 2025 12
Figure 1-9: Language Spoken in 2025 13
Figure 1-10: Percent of Homes Occupied by Renters and Owner in 2025 13
Figure 1-11: Percent of Housing Type in 2025 14
Figure 1-12: Faith-Based Institutions 15
Figure 2-1: Topography and Natural Features 25
Figure 2-2: Block Pattern 27
Figure 2-3: Residential Building Age 28
Figure 2-4: Important Places and Neighborhood Centers 29
Figure 2-5: Building Types 30
Figure 3-1: City of San Diego Greenhouse Gas Emissions (2024) 34
Figure 3-2: Village Climate Goal Propensity 36
Figure 3-3: Transit Priority Areas 37
Figure 3-4: Access to Parks and Recreation Centers 38
Figure 3-5: Access to Schools and Community Facilities 39
Figure 3-6: Access to Grocery Stores 40
Figure 3-7: Environmental Justice Communities 42
Figure 3-8: California Tax Credit Allocation Committee Resource Areas 44
Figure 3-9: Vegetation and Multi-Habitat Planning Area 45
Figure 3-10: Habitat and Potential Areasof Occurrence of Special Status Species 48
Figure 3-11: Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone and Brush Management Zone 50
Figure 3-12: Heat Exposure 51
Figure 3-13: Heat Risk 52
Figure 3-14: Urban Tree Canopy 54
Figure 3-15: CalEnviroScreen and Pollution Burden 57
Figure 4-1: Existing Land Use by Acreage 60
Figure 4-2: Existing Land Use 61
Figure 4-3: Adopted Community Plan Land Uses Summary 62
Figure 4-4: Adopted Community Plan Land Uses 63
Figure 4-5: Zoning 66
Figure 4-6: Existing Residential Density 68
Figure 4-7: Existing Residential Density 69
Figure 4-9: Non-Residential Floor Area Ratio Map 71
Figure 4-10: Prime Industrial Land 72
Figure 4-11: Location of Jobs 74
Figure 4-12: Commuter Inflow/Outflow 75
Figure 5-1: Street Classifications 79
Figure 5-2: Sidewalks 80
Figure 5-3: Bicycle Network 83
Figure 5-4: Existing and Planned Transit Network 85
Figure 5-5: Pedestrian and Bicycle Collisions Resulting in Severe Injuries or Fatalities 86
Figure 5-6: Household Transportation Spending 88
Figure 6-1: Existing Public Parks, Open Space and Recreation Centers 94
Figure 6-2: Existing Parks and Recreation Facilities 97
Figure 6-3: Poway Unified School District Enrollment 100
Figure 6-4: Public Services and Facilities 101

Table 1-1: Population Change between 2000 and 2025 9
Table 1-2: Population Change by age between 2000 and 2025 10
Table 1-3: Household Income between 2000 and 2025 10
Table 1-4: Home Value and Mean Household Income between 2000 to 2025 11
Table 3-1: Average Daily Vehicle Miles Traveled (2022) 34
Table 3-2: CalEnviroScreen and Pollution Burden 56
Table 4-1: Existing Land Use by Acreage 60
Table 4-2: Adopted Community Plan Land Uses by Acreage 64
Table 4-3: Summary of Existing Zoning Designations 67
Table 4-4: Residential Land and Homes by Density Range 68
Table 4-5: Non-Residential Floor Area Ratio Summary 70
Table 4-6: Employment Profile (2023) 73
Table 4-7: Worker Commute Origins (2023) 73
Table 5-1: Local and Rapid Bus Routes 81
Table 5-2: Bicycle Classifications 82
Table 5-3: Planned Transit 84
Table 5-4: How People Get to Work between 2020 to 2025 87
Table 5-5: Travel Time to Work between 2020 to 2025 87
Table 5-6: Vehicle Ownership between 2020 to 2025 87
Table 6-1: Recreation Center Facilities 92
Table 6-2: Existing Parks and Recreation Facilities Points Value Summary 93
Table 6-3: Existing Parks and Recreation Facilities Points Value 95
Table 6-4: Private Parks and Recreational Facilities 98



01 Introduction



1.1 Overview

The Rancho Bernardo Existing Conditions Atlas (Atlas) provides a snapshot of existing conditions in the Rancho Bernardo planning area. This Atlas highlights the area's strengths, challenges and opportunities to help guide future planning and growth. The Atlas focuses on resource information that can be shown on a map and includes trends and critical concerns that will frame choices for the long-term physical development of the community. Maps, photos, charts and tables focus on history and place, sustainability, equity, resilience and conservation land use and development, mobility, and parks, and public facilities. 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 facilities, parks and recreation; and
- Development of policies and implementation actions for the updated Community Plan..

1.2 Regional Location and Planning Boundaries

Regional Location

The Rancho Bernardo planning area is approximately 6,500 acres in area. The Rancho Bernardo community is located within the northern region of the City of San Diego. The northern area of Rancho Bernardo is bounded by Hodges Reservoir and the San Pasqual Valley; bounded on the west by the unincorporated San Diego County community of 4S Ranch; on the east by the City of Poway; and the southern portion is bounded by the Black Mountain Ranch, Rancho Peñasquitos, and Carmel Mountain Ranch communities as shown in Figure 1-1.

1.3 Community Plan Purpose and Process

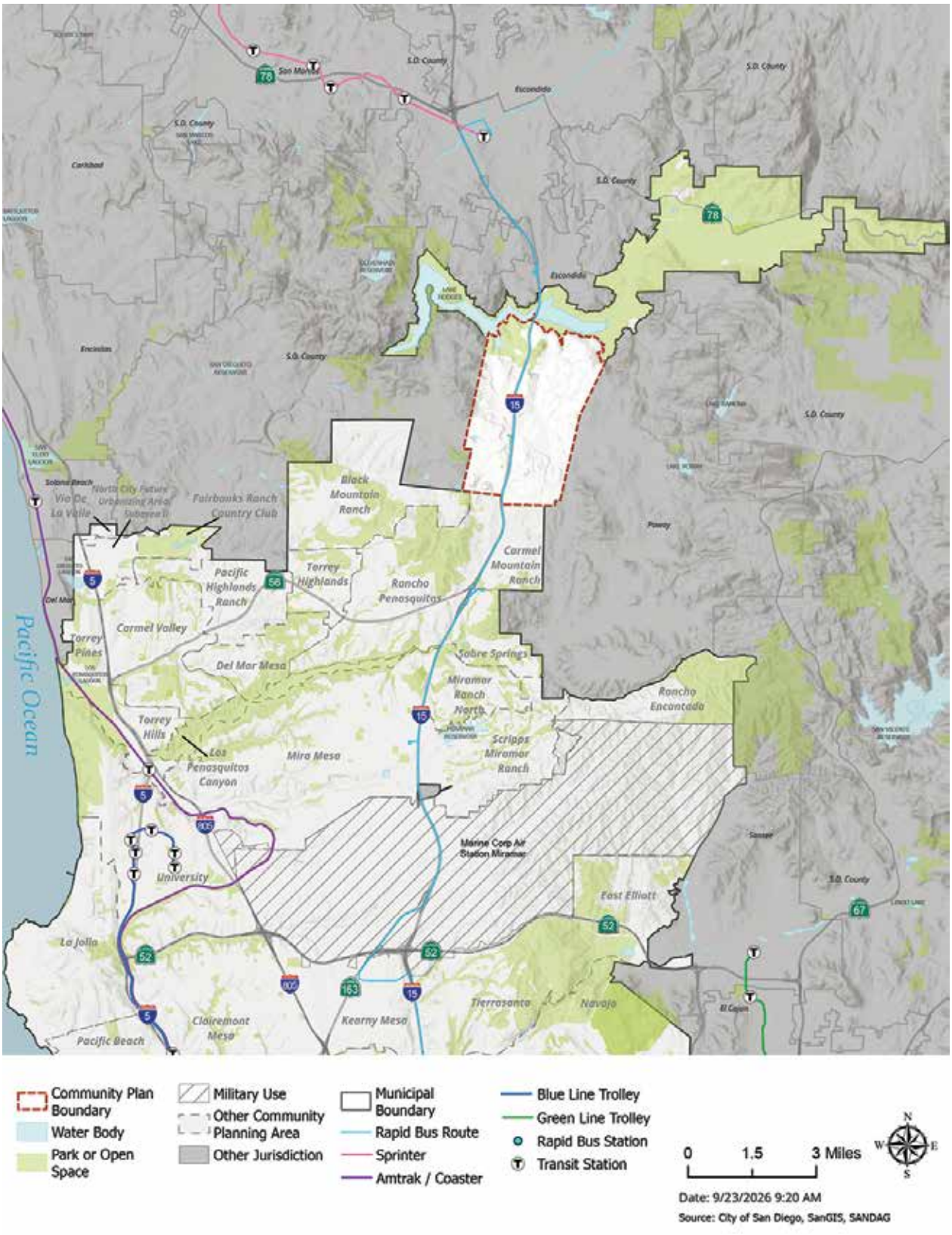
General Plan Context

The City's General Plan provides a policy framework for how the city grows and develops over the next 20 to 30 years. It establishes a broad vision and development framework anchored by the "City of Villages" land use strategy, which promotes pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use centers connected by an improved regional transit system.

The City of Villages strategy guides growth towards Climate Smart Village Areas that will help meet climate, housing and equity goals. Climate Smart Village Areas are areas near jobs, shopping and transit where people are able to more easily walk, bike, take transit and drive shorter distances. Focusing development in these village areas provide San Diegan's alternatives to longer distance driving for their daily trips, which can create vibrant, connected communities, and can also reduce overall greenhouse gas emissions.

The General Plan identifies 52 Community Planning Areas citywide, including Rancho Bernardo, where community plans guide localized policies and development. Community plans are part of the General Plan and provide policies and recommendations tailored to each community. They build on the General Plan's citywide policies, designate land uses and housing densities, and provide additional community-specific recommendations as needed. The City has been updating its community plans to help identify where new housing, commercial spaces, and infrastructure will go in neighborhoods consistent with the City of Villages strategy.

Figure 1-1: Rancho Bernardo Regional Location



PURPOSE

The current Rancho Bernardo Community Plan provides a detailed framework to guide development in Rancho Bernardo. Last adopted nearly 50 years ago in 1978, the Community Plan has been amended five times in the intervening years. The purpose of the update to the Rancho Bernardo Community Plan is to:

- Analyze current land uses, development patterns, and environmental conditions;
- Evaluate changes in demographics that may affect future land use and community needs;
- Understand future needs for housing, public facilities and services, jobs, and businesses;
- Work with community members to identify key priorities, concerns, and a vision and goals for the community plan update;
- Review existing Community Plan policies to determine whether they support community goals and current regulations; and
- Align the plan with the General Plan, state requirements, and other relevant plans.

PROCESS

The Rancho Bernardo Community Plan Update process will be prepared in the following four steps that will help guide how City Staff share and collect information, also shown in Figure 1-2:

- Step 1 - Community Ideas
- Step 2 - Community Validation
- Step 3 – Draft Community Plan
- Step 4 - Adoption and Hearing Process

Figure 1-2: Rancho Bernardo Community Plan Update Process

Continued and Ongoing Engagement

1 Fall 2026 – Winter 2027	2 Winter 2027 – Summer 2027	3 Summer 2027 - Winter 2028	4 Winter 2028 – Summer 2028
Community Ideas	**Community Validation**	**Draft Community Plan**	**Adoption & Hearing Process**
Collect input from people that live and work in Rancho Bernardo about how to improve the community.	Collect input on early options and ideas based on community ideas, technical analyses and citywide goals.	Opportunity for community to review and provide meaningful input on complete draft.	Finalize Community Plan for adaption by City Council.

1.4 Overview of Rancho Bernardo

History of Community Plan

Rancho Bernardo's documented history of settlement and land use dates to the mid nineteenth century. From the late eighteenth century through much of the nineteenth century, cattle ranching was the region's primary economic activity during the Spanish and Mexican periods. By the mid-to-late nineteenth century, agriculture had emerged as a significant land use, supported by the area's fertile soils. Through the mid-twentieth century, the area remained largely agricultural or undeveloped until plans for a fully planned community were initiated in 1961.

The City Council adopted the master plan for the Rancho Bernardo Community Planning Area when it was annexed into the City of San Diego in 1962 and subsequently revised it in 1966 and 1971 in response to coordinated studies by public agencies and the community developer. These early updates mainly adjusted land uses through agreements between the developer and the City. The 1971 Rancho Bernardo Community Plan anticipated the extension of Interstate 15 (I-15), historically associated with U.S. 395 and referred to as the Escondido Freeway in the plan, through Rancho Bernardo. The plan included provisions for new on- and off-ramps and improvements to the freeway network serving the community.



The 1962 Rancho Bernardo Master Plan.

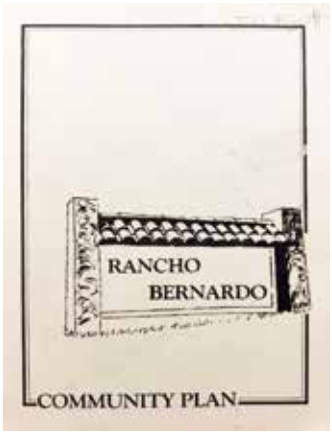
In 1978, the City Council adopted the Rancho Bernardo Community Plan, replacing the earlier development plan with the City's community planning framework. This transition reflected the area's rapid growth and increasing diversity in land uses, population, and lifestyles. The 1978 plan established a long-term structure for the development of homes, businesses, parks, and public facilities throughout the community.

Since adoption of the 1978 Community Plan, the City has approved several amendments to respond to changing community needs and development proposals. A major amendment was adopted in 1988 to update the plan and ensure it continued to serve as an effective guide for public and private development decisions as Rancho Bernardo matured as a residential and employment center. Subsequent amendments in 1989, 1997, 1999, and 2016 primarily involved site-specific land use changes to facilitate individual development projects while maintaining the overall vision and character of the community.

Many of the land use recommendations contained in the 1978 Community Plan and its subsequent amendments have been implemented, and the community has generally developed in accordance with the community plan's vision. The 1978 Community Plan emphasized balancing residential neighborhoods with employment uses, preserving open space resources and community identity, and coordinating future growth with the provision of transportation infrastructure, parks, and public facilities.



The 1971 Rancho Bernardo Community Plan.



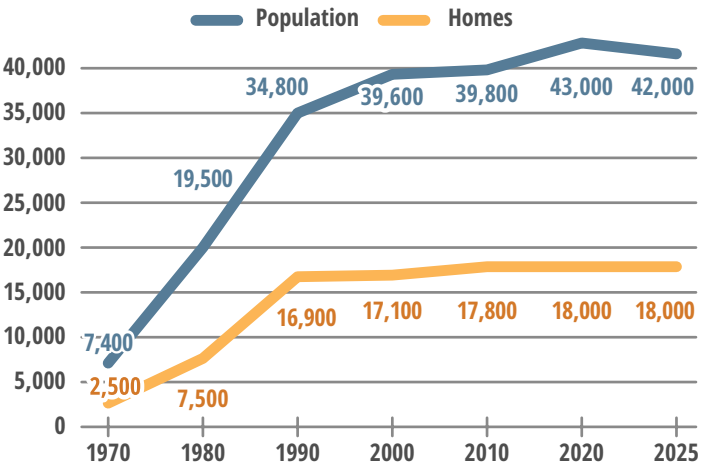
The 1978 Rancho Bernardo Community Plan.

1.5 Progress and Trends

Rapid Growth and Stabilization

The Rancho Bernardo community continued to see rapid growth until the late 1990s, adding 32,200 residents and 14,600 homes between 1970 and 2000. Since 2000, the population has remained relatively stable, peaking at 43,000 people and 18,000 homes in 2020. From 2020 to 2025, although the number of homes has remained largely unchanged, as shown in Figure 1-3, the community's population has declined slightly by 2.3 percent, a loss of 1,000 residents.

Figure 1-3: Rancho Bernardo Population and Housing Growth – 1970 to 2025



Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey Estimates (1970-2025); SANDAG.

Note: Census figures are approximate and rounded to the nearest hundredth.

In comparison, as shown in Table 1-1, the population of Rancho Bernardo has increased slightly by 6.1 percent, while the City of San Diego saw a 15.2 percent increase in population since 2000. Compared to 2000, in 2025, there are around 2,400 more people estimated to be living in Rancho Bernardo.

Table 1-1: Population Change for the Rancho Bernardo Community and Citywide: 2000 to 2025

	2000	2025	% Change
City of San Diego	1,223,400	1,409,400	+15.2%
Rancho Bernardo	39,600	42,000	+6.1%

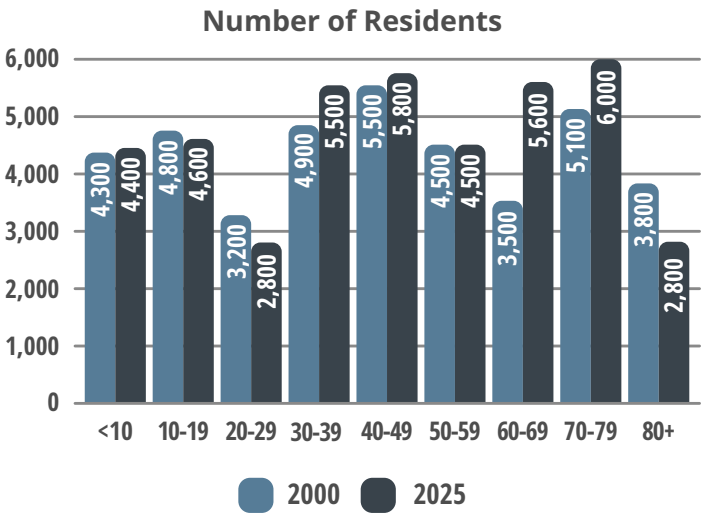
Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey Estimates; SANDAG

Note: Census figures are approximate and rounded to the nearest hundredth

Population Change by Age

Figure 1-4 and Table 1-2 illustrate the population change within Rancho Bernardo between 2000 to 2025 by age group. They show that there are fewer people under the age of 30 living in Rancho Bernardo today, while there has been a significant increase in residents between the ages of 60 and 79. Residents that are aged 80+ saw the biggest decrease in share of the population, falling by over 26 percent; residents between 60 and 69 saw the biggest increase in share of the population since the year 2000, increasing by 60%.

Figure 1-4: Population Change by Age for the Rancho Bernardo Community between 2000 and 2025



Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey Estimates; SANDAG

Note: Census figures are approximate and rounded to the nearest hundredth

Table 1-2: Population Change by Age for the Rancho Bernardo Community between 2000 and 2025

Age Group *(Pop Change by Age)*	2000	2025	% Change
Less than 10	4,300	4,400	2%
10 to 19	4,800	4,600	-4%
20 to 29	3,200	2,800	-13%
30 to 39	4,900	5,500	12%
40 to 49	5,500	5,800	5%
50 to 59	4,500	4,500	N/A
60 to 69	3,500	5,600	60%
70 to 79	5,100	6,000	18%
80 or More	3,800	2,800	-26%
TOTAL	39,600	42,00	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey Estimates; SANDAG

Note: Census figures are approximate and rounded to the nearest hundredth

Defined Terms:

Household refers to all the people living together in a single housing unit.

Median household income refers to the average annual income earned by people living together in a home.

Household Income

The number of households making more than $100,000 has increased substantially since 2000, as shown in Table 1-3. Households making $150,000 or more saw the most significant percentage increase (80 percent). Households making less than $30,000 dropped by 113 percent. The share of households with income between $300,000 and $59,999 saw a 114 percent decline, followed by a 83 percent decline for households between $60,000 and $74,999. Households between $75,000 and $99,999 saw a moderate 16 percent decrease, while household earning between $100,000 and $149,999 saw a moderate household income increase of 18 percent.

Table 1-3: Population Household Income for the Rancho Bernardo Community: 2000 to 2025

Household Income	2000	2025	% Change
Less than $30,000	3,200	1,500	-113%
$30,000 to $59,999	4,700	2,200	-114%
$60,000 to $74,999	2,200	1,200	-83%
$75,000 to $99,999	2,700	1,600	-69%
$100,000 to $149,999	2,700	3,300	18%
$150,000 or More	1,500	7,400	80%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey Estimates; SANDAG

Note: Census figures are approximate and rounded to the nearest hundredth

Cost of Homes

The growth in average home value has outpaced the mean household income in Rancho Bernardo. Between 2000 and 2025, average home value increased by 333 percent compared to a 189 percent increase in mean household income. This gap is similar to the City of San Diego as a whole, where mean household income increased by 168 percent and home values increased by 326 percent. Home values in Rancho Bernardo have risen substantially faster than local household incomes, increasing the gap between housing costs and residents' earning power.

Broken down further, from 2000 to 2025, the average single-family home value increased by 339 percent, while average multi-family homes (apartments and condominiums) values rose by 276 percent in Rancho Bernardo. Citywide, single-family home values rose 330 percent and multi-family home values rose 292 percent. The value of both single-family homes and multi-family homes in Rancho Bernardo grew faster than average household income and faster than they did citywide, as shown on Table 1-4.

Table 1-4: Home Value and Median Household Income for the Rancho Bernardo Community: between 2000 to 2025

Rancho Bernardo	2000	2025	% Change
Household Income	$63,300	$134,700	+189%
All Homes Values (Single and Condo/Co-op)	$308,600	$1,336,000	+333%
Single-Family Home Value	$354,400	$1,554,300	+339%
Multi-Family Home Value	$191,000	$718,300	+276%
City of San Diego	**2000**	**2025**	**% Change**
Household Income	$45,800	$112,700	+168%
All Homes Values (Single and Condo/Co-op)	$235,300	$1,001,300	+326%
Single-Family Home Value	$266,700	$1,147,200	+330%
Multi-Family Home Value	$168,900	$662,800	+292%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey Estimates; SANDAG; Zillow

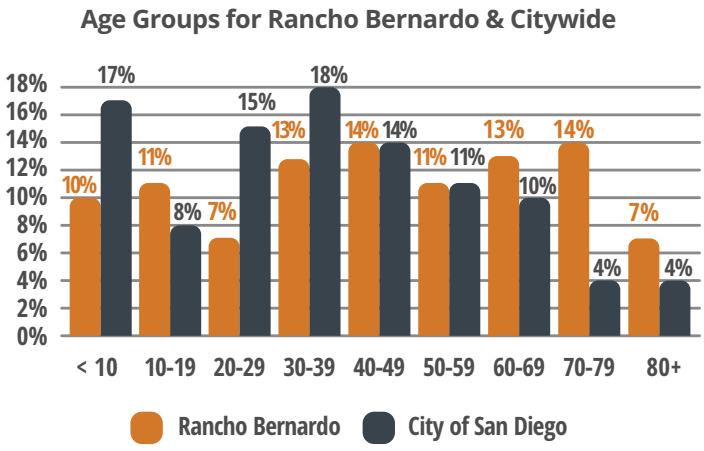
Note: Census figures are approximate and rounded to the nearest hundredth

Current Demographics

Age

In 2025, Rancho Bernardo had a higher percentage of older adults compared to the rest of the city, especially residents aged 60 and above, as shown in Figure 1-5. It also has fewer younger adults, particularly those under the age of 40.

Figure 1-5: Age Groups for the Rancho Bernardo Community and Citywide in 2025



Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey Estimates; SANDAG

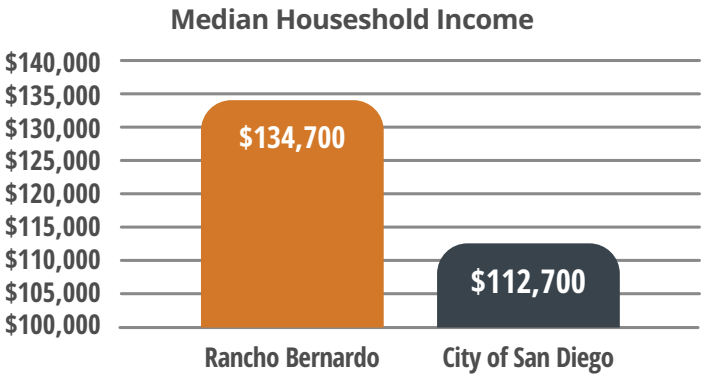
Household Size

In 2025, an average household in Rancho Bernardo had 2.42 people living in a home compared to 2.52 people living in a home citywide based on SANDAG housing and population estimates.

Income

In 2025, the median household income in Rancho Bernardo was $134,700, which is higher compared to the rest of the city, as shown in Figure 1-6.

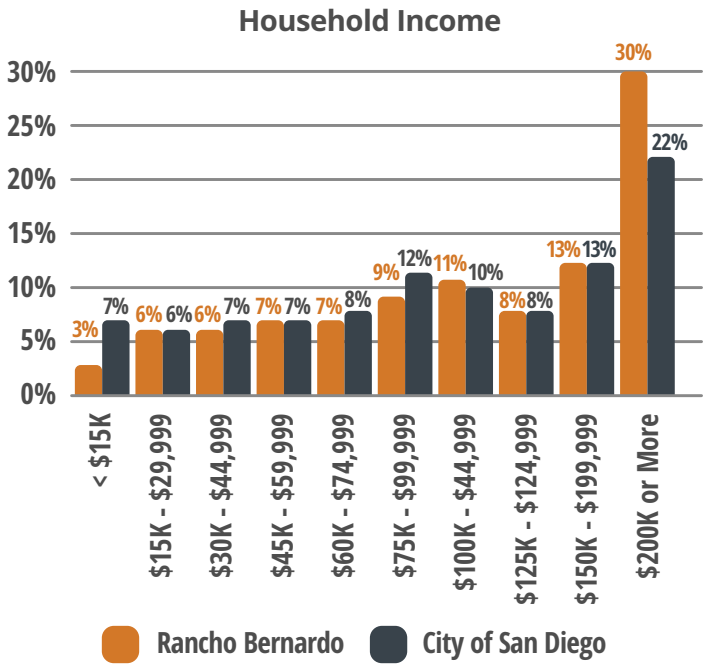
Figure 1-6: Median Household Income for the Rancho Bernardo Community and Citywide in 2025



Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey Estimates; SANDAG

Note: Census figures are approximate and rounded to the nearest hundredth

Figure 1-7: Household Income by Category for the Rancho Bernardo Community and Citywide in 2025



Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey Estimates; SANDAG

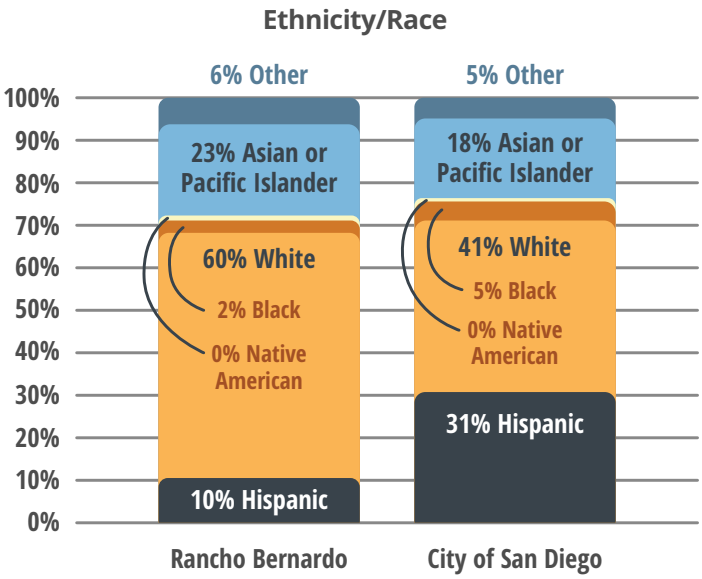
Note: Census figures are approximate and rounded to the nearest hundredth

The largest income group in Rancho Bernardo is comprised of households earning $200,000 or more, with the second-largest group comprising households earning between $150,00 and $199,999, as shown in Figure 1-7. Citywide, there is a higher percentage of households earning less than $99,999 compared to Rancho Bernardo.

Race/Ethnicity

Rancho Bernardo's population is predominantly White compared to the rest of the city, with 60 percent of residents identifying as White, as shown in Figure 1-8. Asian and Pacific Islander residents make up 23 percent of the community, 10 percent identify as Hispanic, and 2 percent of residents identify as Black.

Figure 1-8: Race/Ethnicity for the Rancho Bernardo Community and Citywide in 2025



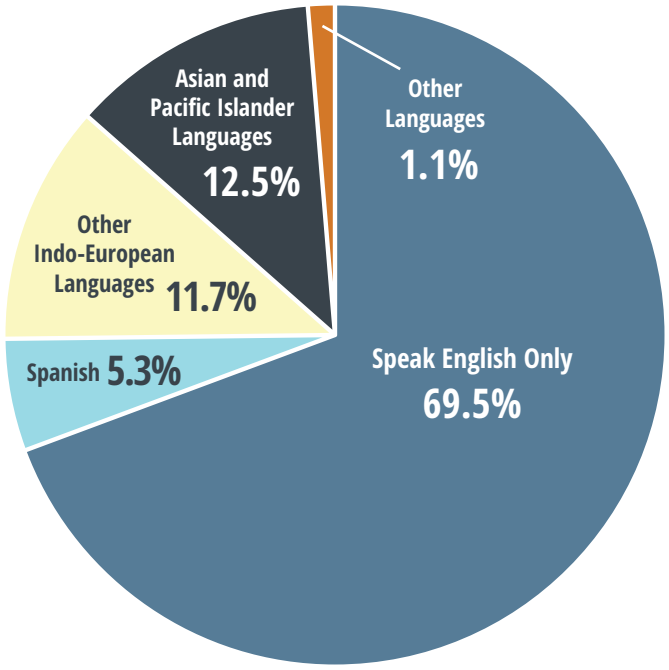
Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey Estimates; SANDAG

Note: Census figures are approximate and rounded to the nearest hundredth

Language Spoken

Several different languages are spoken in Rancho Bernardo, with English being the most common language spoken at home, as shown in Figure 1-9. About 70 percent of residents speak only English at home, while nearly one-third speak another language, most commonly Asian and Pacific Island languages (13 percent) and other Indo-European languages (12 percent).

Figure 1-9: Language Spoken in the Rancho Bernardo Community in 2024



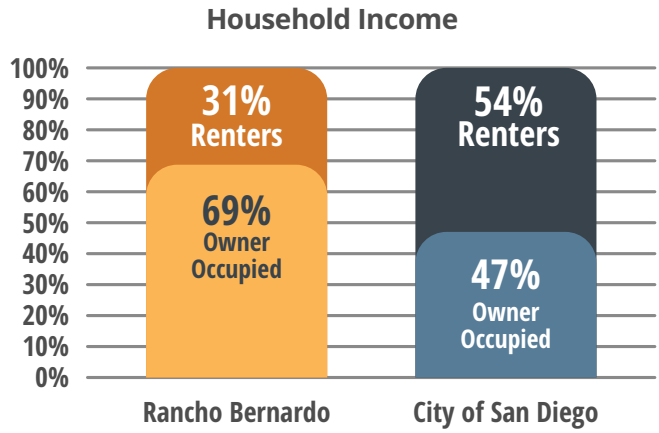
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2024 Estimates

Note: American Community Survey estimates for languages spoken were not yet available at the time of publication; therefore, the most recent available ACS estimates were used.

Household Occupancy Status

In 2024, more than two thirds of the homes in Rancho Bernardo (69 percent) are owner occupied compared to 47 percent citywide, as shown in Figure 1-10. Overall, 31 percent of homes are renter-occupied in Rancho Bernardo, compared to 54 percent citywide.

Figure 1-10: Percent of Homes Occupied by Renters and Owners for the Rancho Bernardo Community and Citywide in 2024



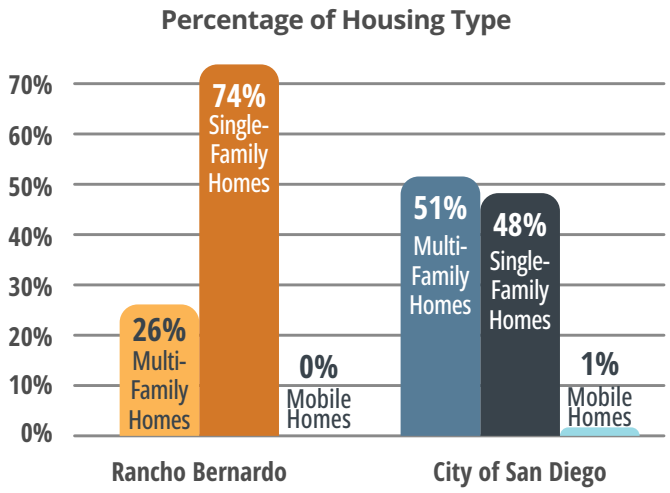
Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2024

Note: American Community Survey estimates for household occupancy were not yet available at the time of publication; therefore, the most recent available ACS estimates were used.

Housing Type

As of 2025, most homes (nearly three quarters) in Rancho Bernardo are single family homes, compared to less than half (48 percent) citywide, as shown on Figure 1-11. More than one quarter of the homes are multi-family, compared to just over half citywide. There are no mobile homes in the community.

Figure 1-11: Percent of Housing Type for the Rancho Bernardo Community and Citywide in 2025



Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey Estimates; SANDAG

Faith-Based Institutions

Faith-based spaces are a large piece of Rancho Bernardo's social and cultural fabric, serving as places of worship and hubs for social support, education and community services. Figure 1-12 shows the Faith-Based Institutions in Rancho Bernardo.







Figure 1-12: Faith-Based Institutions



1.6 Existing Plans and Regulatory Framework

The Rancho Bernardo Community Plan Update process is guided by a range of existing regulatory documents, citywide plans, and regional planning efforts that establish policies, regulations, and priorities for future growth and development. These documents provide a broader framework for addressing land use, environmental protection, mobility, climate resilience, public facilities, housing, economic development, and community culture. The Community Plan Update will incorporate applicable goals and recommendations from these plans to ensure consistency with City policies, support implementation of adopted strategies, and respond to the unique opportunities and challenges within the Rancho Bernardo community.

Equestrian Trail and Facilities

The 1975 Equestrian Trails and Facilities Plan identifies Rancho Bernardo as an important part of the City's proposed regional equestrian trail network. The plan proposed the Bernardo Trail, a 13-mile connector linking the Lake Hodges Trail with the San Vicente Trail, with portions extending through open-space areas in and around Rancho Bernardo. It also proposed the Black Mountain Trail, which would pass through the Rancho Bernardo open-space system and connect to the Lake Hodges Trail and a proposed equestrian center. The Possum Canyon Trail was specifically recommended to connect the Lake Hodges Trail with the Rancho Bernardo Saddle Club (Saddle Club Estates) and Bernardo Trails subdivision, which had been designed with integrated trail easements for residents who kept horses on their properties. Together, these recommendations demonstrate that the plan envisioned Rancho Bernardo as a key equestrian-oriented community, using its open-space corridors and existing horse facilities to connect local riders to a larger citywide and regional trail system.

San Dieguito River Regional Plan

The San Dieguito River Park Concept Plan provides a regional framework for preserving the San Dieguito River Valley as a continuous system of open space, natural and cultural resources, and compatible recreational opportunities. Rancho Bernardo is connected to this regional system through the Lake Hodges area along the community's northern edge. This includes the area identified in the River Park Concept Plan as Bernardo Bay, which provides habitat, scenic views, and access to the Coast to Crest Trail and other recreational facilities. The Concept Plan provides important regional context for the Community Plan Update, particularly for coordinating open-space preservation, resource protection, trail connections, and public access within Rancho Bernardo and across community and jurisdictional boundaries.

General Plan

The General Plan provides an equitable and sustainable policy framework for how the City will develop, based on the City of Villages strategy within Climate Smart Village Areas, supported by convenient and affordable opportunities to walk, bike, ride transit or drive shorter distances to conduct daily activities, including work, school, shopping and play. The General Plan also promotes fair housing, elimination of disparities and improved access to jobs and housing. Community Plans are part of the General Plan. Together, they will provide the framework for the future of Rancho Bernardo.

Climate Action Plan

The current Climate Action Plan, last updated in 2022, establishes a citywide goal of net zero by 2035. The Climate Action Plan provides strategies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions through local action. The Community Plan Update will help facilitate the implementation of the Climate Action Plan goals identifying opportunities for higher-density, mixed-use development, jobs and stores in areas that will allow people opportunities to drive less, including City of San Diego General Plan Climate Smart Village Areas near transit, jobs, and community amenities and services. The City will be working to update the Climate Action Plan over the next two years.



The City's current Climate Action Plan: Our Climate Our Future.



Land Development Code

The Land Development Code is part of the San Diego Municipal Code and contains development regulations pertaining to land use, density and intensity, building massing, architectural design, landscaping, storm water management, street frontages, lighting, and other development regulations. The Land Development Code implements the policies of the General Plan and Community Plans. All development within the community must comply with regulations in the Land Development Code.

Multiple Species Conservation Program

The Multiple Species Conservation Program Subarea Plan was created to protect local natural habitats, wildlife, and open space. Under this plan, critical habitats are designated as Multi-Habitat Planning Areas. Any development within or adjacent to a Multi-Habitat Planning Area in Rancho Bernardo must comply with Multiple Species Conservation Program requirements to safeguard these protected natural spaces.

Library Master Plan

The Library Master Plan is a long-range guide for future City investment in library spaces and facilities. It acts as a guide for San Diego's libraries to evolve into flexible, technology-rich community hubs that provide equitable access to resources across all neighborhoods, including the Rancho Bernardo Branch Library.

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, 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. The City will be working to update Climate Resilient SD over the next two years.

Parks Master Plan

The Parks Master Plan establishes a long-term vision for a vibrant, citywide park system that connects and engages all San Diegans. The plan 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. It uses a Recreational Value Based Park Standard as a scoring tool that helps to measure and evaluate parks and other recreational facilities as part of the community plan update process.

Mobility Master Plan

The Mobility Master Plan provides a framework for a balanced, equitable, and sustainable transportation network for all San Diegans. It helps to prioritize mobility projects and programs that deliver environmental benefits. By focusing investments in areas with the greatest needs, the plan helps to meet pedestrian and bicycle safety goals and aligns with 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 easier, faster, and affordable.

Pavement Management Plan

The Pavement Management Plan was developed by the City of San Diego's Transportation Department to summarize the current citywide street condition and to identify strategic investment needs that will ensure the network is efficiently maintained. It is the first plan of its kind for the city, as the Department aims to proactively identify funding needs and provide reliable transportation network for its residents. In addition, this 5-year plan is intended to inform the public and stakeholders on the streets selected and the necessary funding to implement improvements. The plan also uses a fairness scoring system to ensure road funding is distributed equally, prioritizing neighborhoods that have been historically overlooked.

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. It also 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.

1.7 Concurrent Planning Initiatives

Community Plan Updates

The City Planning Department periodically updates community plans to reflect changing community needs and establish a current long-range vision for future growth and investment. Updated community plans 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. Each community plan includes policies on land use, mobility, urban design, public facilities and services, natural resources, historic and cultural resources and economic development. Community plan updates, in coordination with the General Plan and its Land Use Element, achieve both citywide and community-level goals. In addition to the Rancho Bernardo Community Plan, the City is also in the process of updating the Mid-City Communities Plan and the Otay Mesa-Nestor Community Plan.

Climate Action Plan Update

The City Planning Department is in the process of a Climate Action Plan Update to maintain alignment with State targets and goals for reducing emissions through actions that also deliver core community benefits, including increased climate resilience, and equitable outcomes for all San Diegans.

Climate Resilient SD Plan Update

The City of San Diego is in the process of updating Climate Resilient SD to ensure a more equitable, sustainable and healthy future where communities are prepared for and resilient to the impacts of climate change. Adaptation is a core component of a comprehensive response to climate change. The update will build on the City's existing climate resilience work and establish prioritized strategies to prepare San Diego's communities, infrastructure, natural systems, and economy to climate hazards including wildfire, flooding, heat and sea level rise.

Preservation and Progress

Preservation and Progress 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.

Bicycle Master Plan

The Bicycle Master Plan Update refreshes San Diego's 2013 plan to expand and improve the citywide cycling network. It updates bicycle facility recommendations and prioritizes projects to support the Climate Action Plan goals with a strong focus on equity.

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.

Interstate 15 Comprehensive Multimodal Corridor Plan

SANDAG and Caltrans are preparing the I-15 Comprehensive Multimodal Corridor Plan as a joint effort to help identify potential improvements to enhance the way people travel through the I-15 corridor. The Plan would provide a long-term strategy that proposes ways to ease congestion, improve safety, and expand travel options for people who drive, take the bus or train, bike, or walk. Comprehensive Multimodal Corridor Plans serve as blueprints for future projects and support grant applications for regional, state, and federal funding sources. SANDAG and Caltrans.

1.8 Introduction Summary

This section summarizes the key information for the Rancho Bernardo planning area presented in this chapter.

- Rancho Bernardo is approximately **6,500 acres** in area and is located within the northern region of the City, bounded to the north by Hodges Reservoir and the San Pasqual Valley; bounded on the west by the unincorporated San Diego County community of 4S Ranch; on the east by the City of Poway; and the southern portion is bounded by the Black Mountain Ranch, Rancho Peñasquitos, and Carmel Mountain Ranch communities.
- Rancho Bernardo experienced the **most growth between 1970 and 1990**. Since 1990, the community has been largely built out, with relatively modest growth in both population and housing.
- The community's population **peaked in 2020 at approximately 43,000 residents** and has since slightly declined.
- **Compared to 2000, Rancho Bernardo has an older population**, with fewer residents under the age of 40 and a growing share of residents aged 50 and older, while the number of children under the age of 20 has remained relatively stable.
- Compared to the City of San Diego, Rancho Bernardo has a **higher percentage of people 60 and over and lower percentage of people 20 to 49**.
- Compared to the City of San Diego, Rancho Bernardo has a larger share of White and Asian/Pacific Islander residents and smaller shares of Hispanic and Black residents.
- The share of **households making more than $100,000 has increased substantially** since 2000.
- **Although household incomes and home values have both increased significantly** since 2000, the increase in home values has far outpaced the increase in household incomes.
- **Households earning $200,000 or more** represent the largest income group in Rancho Bernardo.
- Approximately **70 percent** of Rancho Bernardo residents **speak only English at home**, while nearly **one-third** speak another language, most commonly **Asian and Pacific Island languages**.
- Most homes in Rancho Bernardo are **single-family homes**, and most are **owner-occupied**.



02 History & Place


City Grows In Middle Of Ranch

North County Sees Passing Of Era With Mixed Emotions

San Diego Union Article, March 4, 1962

2.1 Brief History

Overview

Although modern development of Rancho Bernardo began in the 1960s, the area had been used for ranching and agriculture as far back as the early 1800s. The Mexican government granted the land to Don Jose Snook for a large stock-raising operation in the mid-19th century. A small settlement known as the Town of Bernardo, or simply Bernardo, developed around this activity but disappeared by the early 1920s, influenced by Escondido's growth and the construction of the Lake Hodges Dam and Reservoir in 1919.

Rancho Bernardo remained primarily undeveloped or agricultural until 1961, when developers-initiated plans for a fully planned community. After the City of San Diego approved annexation in 1962, they began grading land, building roads, and establishing the first neighborhoods of Bernardo Greens, Bernardo Hills, and Seven Oaks. By 1963, the first residents had moved in, and both the Rancho Bernardo Inn and the community's first shopping center had opened. Today's community reflects the ongoing growth and expansion of that original 1961 vision.

Cultural Context and Early Settlement

The Rancho Bernardo community planning area lies within the ancestral homeland of the Kumeyaay people. Prior to European contact, the inland valleys, mesas, and watersheds around Rancho Bernardo were part of a network of seasonal villages, travel routes, food-gathering grounds, and ceremonial landscapes.

During the Spanish (1769–1821) and Mexican (1821–1846) periods, lands encompassing present-day Rancho Bernardo were incorporated into the Mission San Diego de Alcalá system and later into regional ranchos. Nearby land grants included the La Cañada de San Bernardo grant, which introduced ranching and agricultural uses. These ranchos supported cattle and horse grazing, with the regional economy centered on the production of hides and tallow, supplemented by sheep raising, grain cultivation, and viticulture.

Following the Mexican-American War and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, the rancho system gradually dissolved as land ownership shifted under American governance. The Land Act of 1851 required landowners to verify their titles, often resulting in the subdivision and sale of former rancho lands. The Homestead Act of 1862 further encouraged settlement by allowing individuals to claim and improve undeveloped federal land. During the late 1800s, a small settlement called Bernardo developed near present day Lake Hodges. The community included homes, a school, a blacksmith shop, hotel, stage stop, and post office, serving travelers and local ranchers along the route between San Diego and inland communities. For several decades Bernardo prospered as an agricultural and transportation center.

The town's fortunes gradually declined during the early twentieth century. Improved transportation routes favored nearby Escondido, while the construction of Lake Hodges Dam and Reservoir in 1919 altered local travel patterns and submerged portions of the original community. By the early 1920s, the town of Bernardo had largely disappeared.

The largest remaining portion of Rancho San Bernardo, approximately 5,800 acres, passed through several owners during the early twentieth century, including developer Ed Fletcher and businessman William Henshaw, before being acquired by the San Diego County Water Company. During the late 1920s, the company leased the ranch to George Daley, a member of one of San Diego County's pioneering ranching families. Daley raised cattle and grain on the property for many years before purchasing the ranch outright in 1943. Following George Daley's death in 1957, ownership passed to his nephews, Donald and Lawrence Daley. As late as the early 1960s, Rancho San Bernardo remained largely undeveloped.

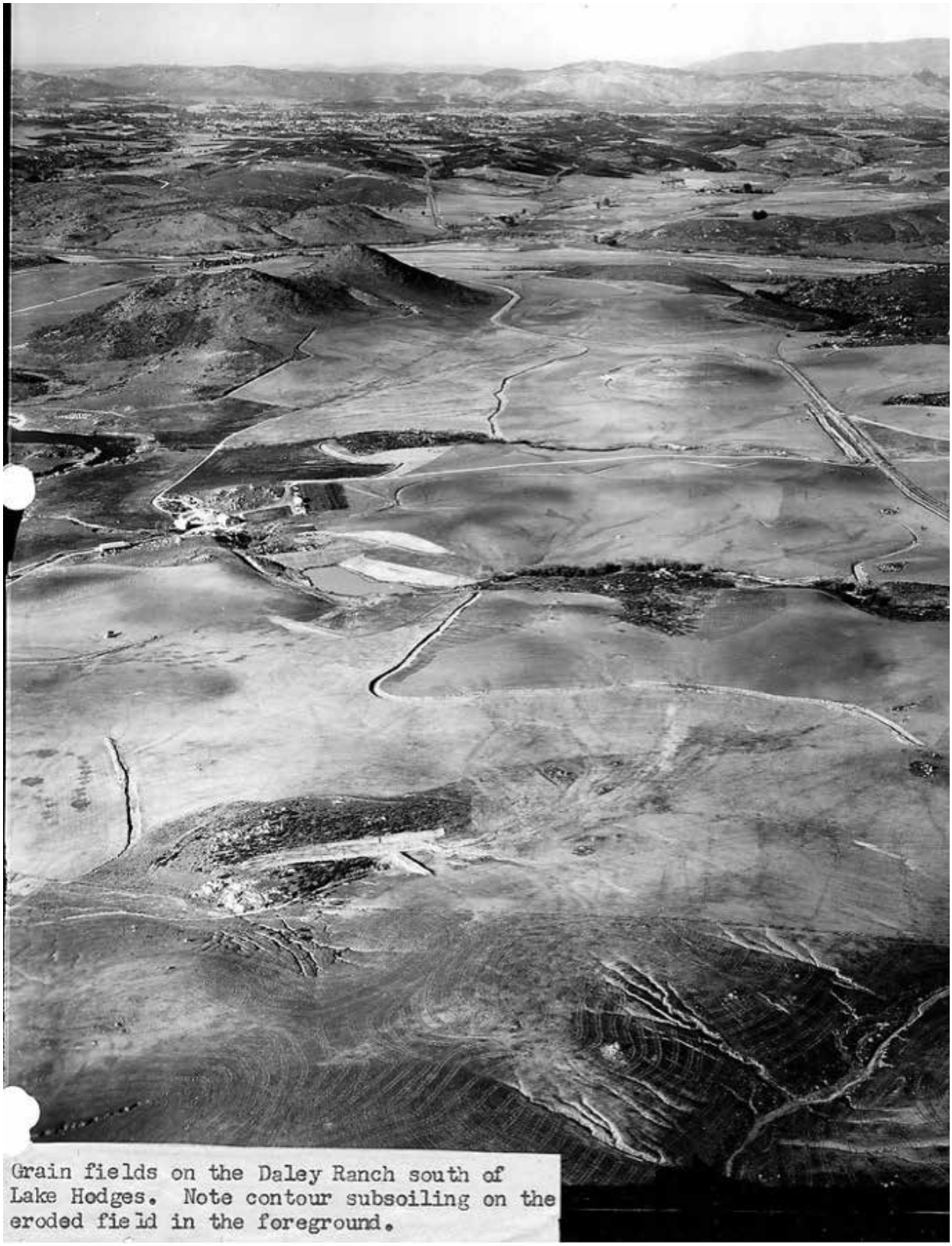


San Diego Union Advertisement for Seven Oaks, Bernardo Greens and Bernardo Hills Communities, January 1963


Daley Ranch Is Sold; Entire City Planned

Developers Envision 33,000 Population

San Diego Union Article, November 15, 1961



View of Daley Ranch in 1948, Courtesy of Rancho Bernardo Historical Society



1963 View North at Pomerado and Rancho Bernardo Road. The Rancho Bernardo Presbyterian Church is under construction in the background. Courtesy of Rancho Bernardo Historical Society.

Postwar Growth

Following World War II, Rancho Bernardo underwent one of the most significant suburban community transformations in the San Diego region. In 1961, developers Harry Summers and W. R. "Fritz" Hawn formed a joint venture with the Daley family to create one of Southern California's first large-scale suburban master-planned communities. Their vision was for a "self-contained city" that combined residential neighborhoods with schools, parks, employment centers, shopping, recreation, and open space. The proposal reflected a growing postwar planning philosophy that emphasized balanced suburban development rather than isolated housing subdivisions.

This plan, developed by renowned architectural firm of Charles Luckman and Associates, was submitted in 1961, approved in 1962, and construction began shortly thereafter. The City of San Diego formally annexed Rancho Bernardo in 1962 . The community's development reflected broader postwar trends of suburbanization, automobile-oriented growth, and expanding homeownership. The original master plan envisioned a self-contained city by 1975, with homes, recreational facilities, a hotel, an industrial center, city water reservoir, schools and churches, high-rise apartments, commercial areas, and an adjoining airport. The plan called for total development investment of around $300 million by 1973, a total of 11,650 residential units and a population of more than 35,000. By the end of 1963, investments in Rancho Bernardo topped $10 million and an estimated 600 families had moved into the community.

The community was advertised in the local newspapers, and the developers displayed an array of at least 15 model homes, three each in the first three planned communities. A concentrated sales campaign began in 1963 with homes ranging in prices between $15,500 in Bernardo Hills to $26,500 in Bernardo Greens around the golf course fairways. Seven Oaks was promoted as the first of Rancho Bernardo's proposed retirement communities. The developers planned the area with underground utilities and drainage to lessen "visual clutter".

Rancho Bernardo: 1960s to Today

As the community grew, the master plan was revised in 1966 and 1971 to respond to changing development patterns and agreements between the City and the community's developers. Implementation of the master plan followed a phased approach, with development progressing neighborhood-by-neighborhood. By February of 1964, the new community had grown to 1,300 residents, by June of 1964 that number was 2,000. A 10-million-gallon reservoir was constructed in 1964 in the undeveloped western area of the planning area (today north of Camino Del Norte and Southeast of Bernardo Center Drive). The area surrounding the reservoir remained undeveloped until the 1980s.

By 1978, the plan had evolved from a development master plan into the Rancho Bernardo Community Plan, reflecting the community's increasing population, expanding range of land uses, and growing diversity of housing. The Community Plan established a comprehensive framework for land use, circulation, parks, open space, employment, and community facilities while reinforcing Rancho Bernardo's identity as a community with a variety of homes that integrates employment, shopping, recreation, and open space.

As a result of the phased development pattern and master planned aspects, Rancho Bernardo contains a high concentration of separate Homeowners' Associations and Common-Interest Developments. Rather than being governed by a single association, the community is composed of numerous independently managed neighborhoods, each with its own governing documents, assessment structure, architectural standards, and maintenance responsibilities. In addition to neighborhood Homeowners' Associations, several recreation associations provide access to community centers, swimming pools, tennis facilities, and other shared amenities accessible to dues-paying members. The prevalence of Homeowners' Associations and Common-Interest Developments plays a significant role in maintaining neighborhood appearance and managing private infrastructure and recreational facilities, while presenting unique planning challenges and opportunities resulting from the lack of publicly-available facilities.

Overall, Rancho Bernardo developed as a predominantly small and medium scale residential community organized around distinct neighborhoods, employment centers, commercial services, and recreational amenities. Office, commercial and industrial development was concentrated around the Bernardo Town Center, Bernardo Center Drive, and Interstate 15 to create a community focal point and supporting a mix of shopping, office, employment, and community-serving uses. Residential expansion continued through the construction of new villages, including a mix of single-family neighborhoods, townhomes, condominiums, and age-restricted communities. Commercial centers, schools, parks, religious institutions, and recreational facilities were developed alongside housing, reinforcing the community's self-contained, master-planned character.

The extension of regional transportation infrastructure, including improvements to Interstate 15 and Rancho Bernardo Road, strengthened connections to major employment centers throughout San Diego County and supported continued residential and commercial growth. Employment opportunities within Rancho Bernardo also expanded during the late 20th century with the development of business parks and office campuses that attracted technology, telecommunications, healthcare, and research-oriented industries.

Throughout its evolution, the community has maintained emphasis on preserving natural open space, respecting the area's hillsides and canyons, and creating a high-quality living environment that takes advantage of its natural setting. More recent development has generally occurred through infill projects, redevelopment of existing commercial properties, and incremental improvements to community facilities rather than large-scale greenfield development. Today, Rancho Bernardo is characterized by mature landscaping, established neighborhoods, and a balance of residential, commercial, employment, and recreational land uses that reflects its long history as one of San Diego's earliest master-planned communities.

Designated Historic Resources

Only one resource in the Rancho Bernardo Community Planning Area is designated on a historical register. Historical Resources Board Site #81, the Piedras Pintados resource was designated in 1973. This cultural site showcases historic pictographs from approximately 1780.

Similarly, abundant evidence for Late Prehistoric occupation within the Rancho Bernardo Community Planning area has been documented. The area may be associated with the ethnohistoric village of San Bernardo. However, due to the rough grading associated with the development process, there is generally considered to be a low potential for intact archaeological resources within the planning area.

More information about the prehistoric and historic resource potential will be report in the Historic Context Statement and Survey technical documents.

2.2 Landform and Natural Resources

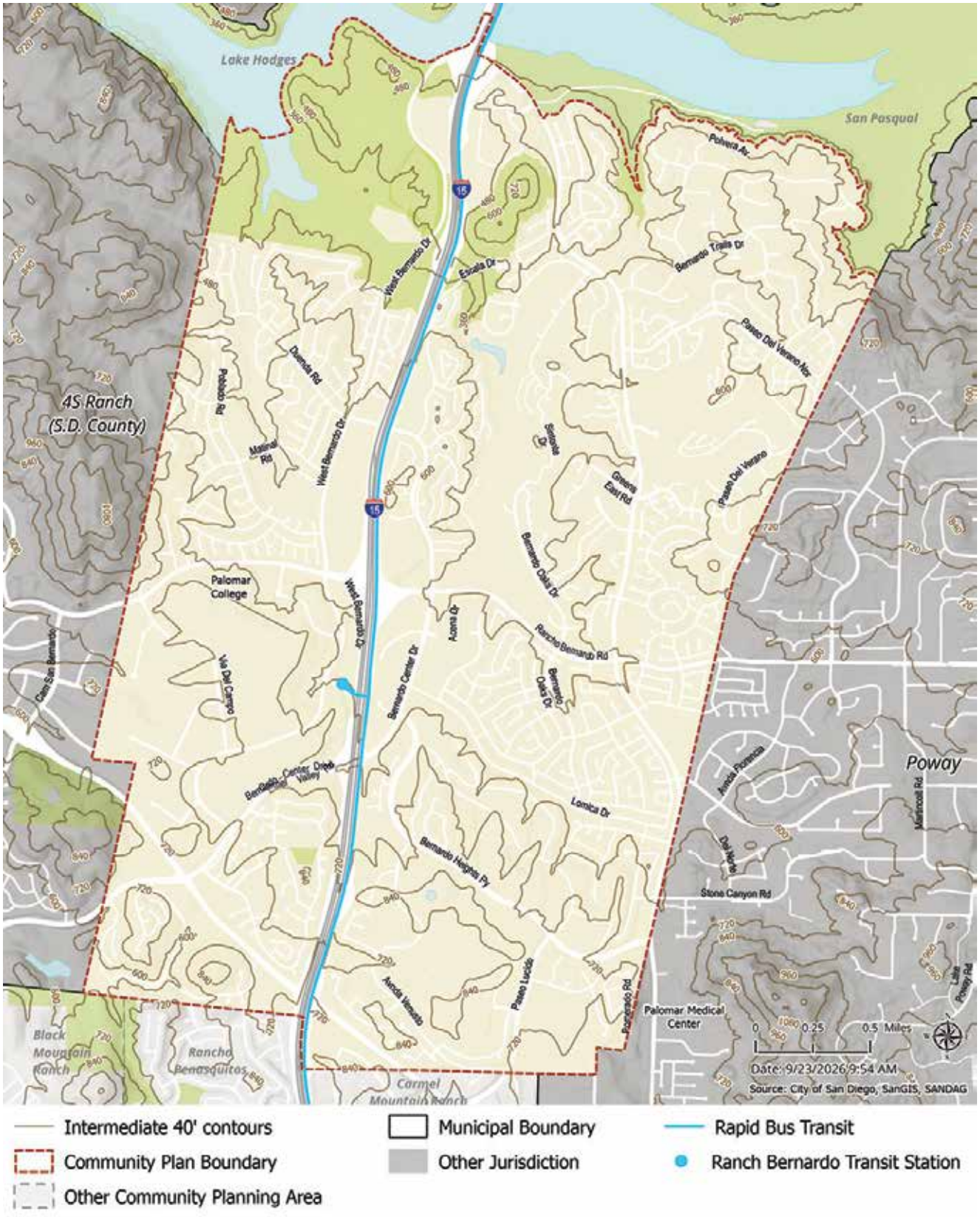
The Rancho Bernardo community is located within the inland valleys and foothills of northern San Diego and is characterized by rolling hills, ridges, knolls, canyons, and broad valleys. The community is shaped by prominent natural features, including Lake Hodges to the northwest and the San Pasqual Valley to the north and east, which frame the community and provide extensive open space, habitat, and scenic resources. Steep hillsides and canyon systems separate Rancho Bernardo from adjacent communities, while gentler terrain has accommodated much of the area's residential, commercial, and employment development.

Important natural features include (Figure 2-1):

- San Pasqual Valley
- Lake Hodges
- Battle Mountain
- Rolling hills, ridgelines, and knolls
- Canyon systems and steep hillsides

These natural features contribute to Rancho Bernardo's scenic character, environmental resources, and extensive open space network while influencing patterns of development and circulation. The community's topography has historically guided the location of neighborhoods and transportation corridors, and its interconnected system of canyons, valleys, and open spaces continues to provide habitat, recreational opportunities, and visual relief within the urban environment. More information on the natural features are provided in the Sustainability, Equity, and Climate Resilience chapter.

Figure 2-1: Topography and Natural Features



2.3 Development Patterns

Block Pattern

The block pattern within Rancho Bernardo is relatively consistent throughout the community, as shown in Figure 2-2. Its residential neighborhoods are characterized by curvilinear streets and cul-de-sacs, typical of post-war suburban development. Some master-planned communities that were built with private streets, such as Bernardo Village in the south end of the community, have shorter block lengths in order to reduce long-term costs associated with maintaining private street infrastructure.

Interstate 15 serves as the community's major north-south transportation corridor, dividing the area in half. Rancho Bernardo Road runs east–west through the center of the community. The employment center west of I-15 is characterized by a superblock bounded by Rancho Bernardo Drive to the north and Camino del Norte to the south. Natural open space areas throughout the community shape the block pattern by limiting development and connectivity in portions of the community. As a result, block size and street connectivity vary throughout Rancho Bernardo, contributing to distinct neighborhood development patterns.

Subdivisions and Important Places

Rancho Bernardo began developing in the 1960s most prominently along Rancho Bernardo Road, with single family and low-density multi-family homes built east of Interstate 15 as far south as Lomica Drive and north along Bernardo Oaks Drive adjacent to Pomerado Road, as shown in Figure 2-3. Residential development expanded substantially during the 1970s, particularly in the central portion of the community north of Rancho Bernardo Road on both sides of I-15. Development continued outward during the 1980s, including much of the southern and northeastern portions of the community. Additional pockets developed during the 1990s, particularly in the northwestern and southwestern portions of Rancho Bernardo, with smaller areas of development occurring from the 2000s to today. Some neighboring properties show significantly different years built, which may reflect major renovations, reconstruction, or limitations in building record data rather than the original development period. Accordingly, Figure 2-3 shows broad patterns of residential development over time and should not be interpreted as a parcel-level record of building age.

Commercial and industrial development began primarily south of Rancho Bernardo Road and along Bernardo Center Drive in the 1960s, as shown in Figure 2-3. Non-residential development continued over subsequent decades, particularly within the commercial and employment areas near I-15 and Bernardo Center Drive. Over time, some non-residential buildings have also been updated, repurposed, or replaced to accommodate changing business and commercial needs. As with the residential data, recorded building age may therefore reflect substantial alterations or replacement rather than the original development of a site. Figure 2-3 shows broad geographic patterns of non-residential building age rather than provide a definitive parcel-level development history.

Important places and neighborhood centers are distributed throughout Rancho Bernardo, as shown in Figure 2-4, including shopping centers, community facilities, recreational destinations, schools, and other landmarks. The greatest concentration is located near the center of the community along Rancho Bernardo Road and Bernardo Center Drive, while smaller neighborhood centers and important places serve residential areas throughout the community.



Figure 2-2: Block Pattern

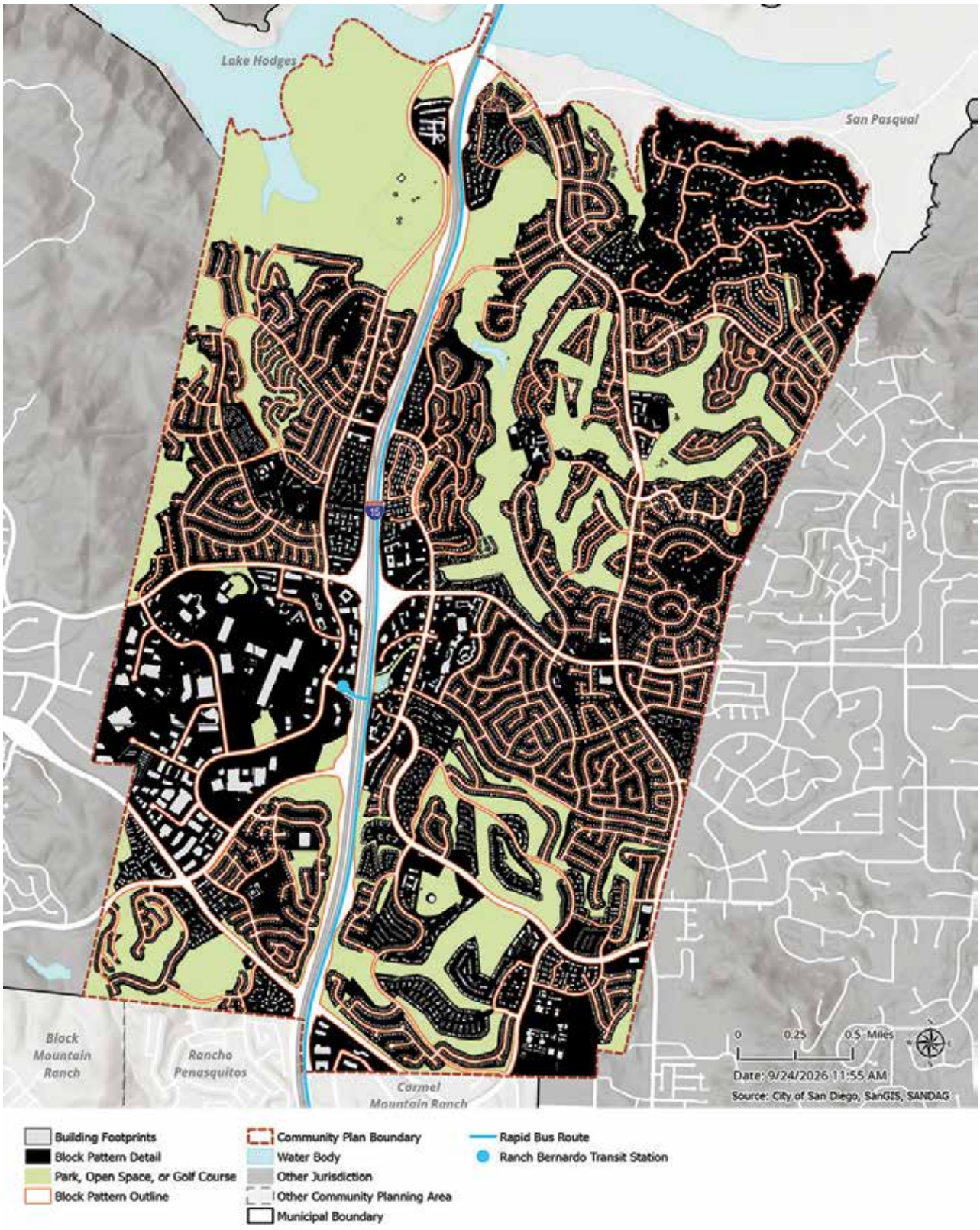


Figure 2-3: Building Age

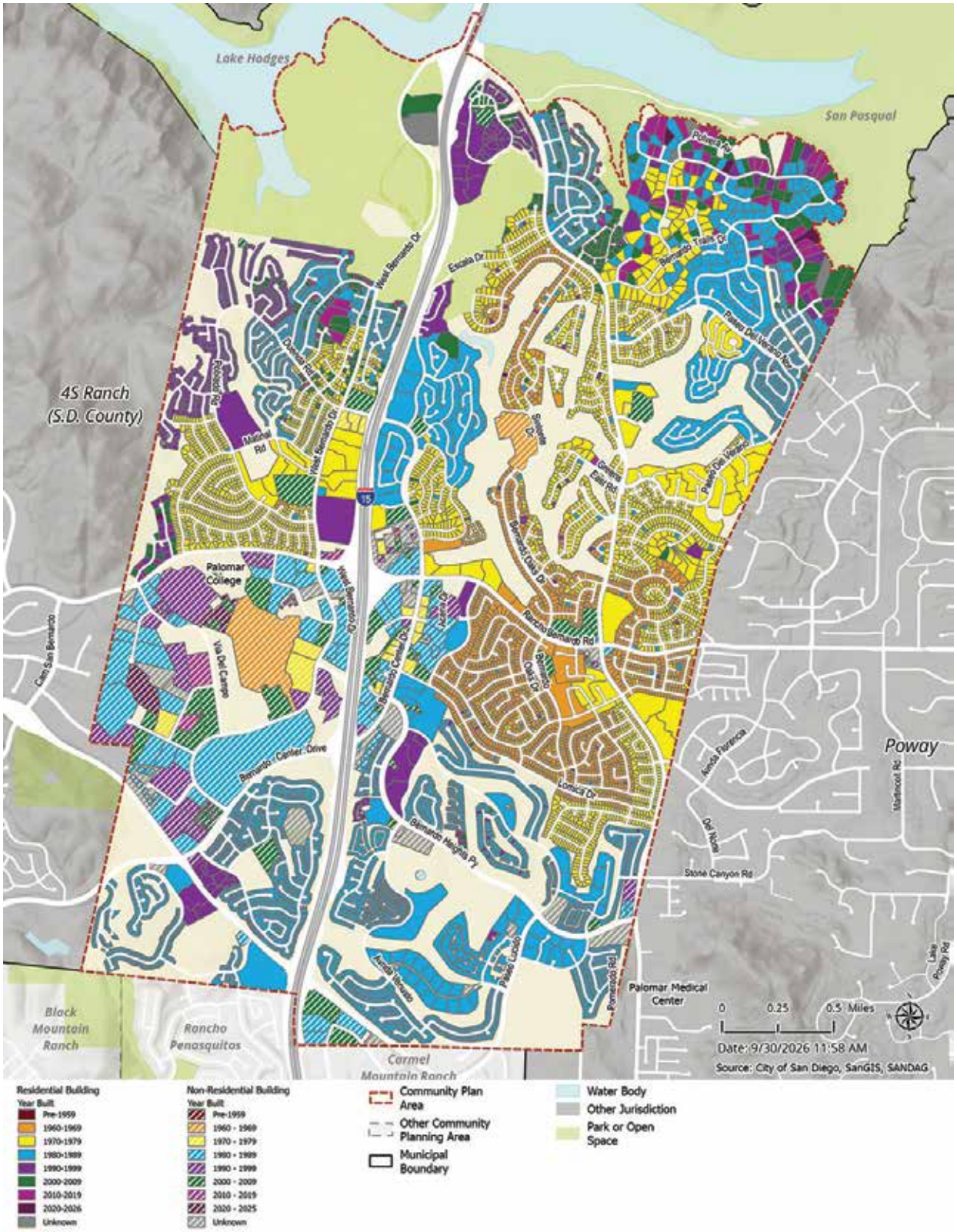
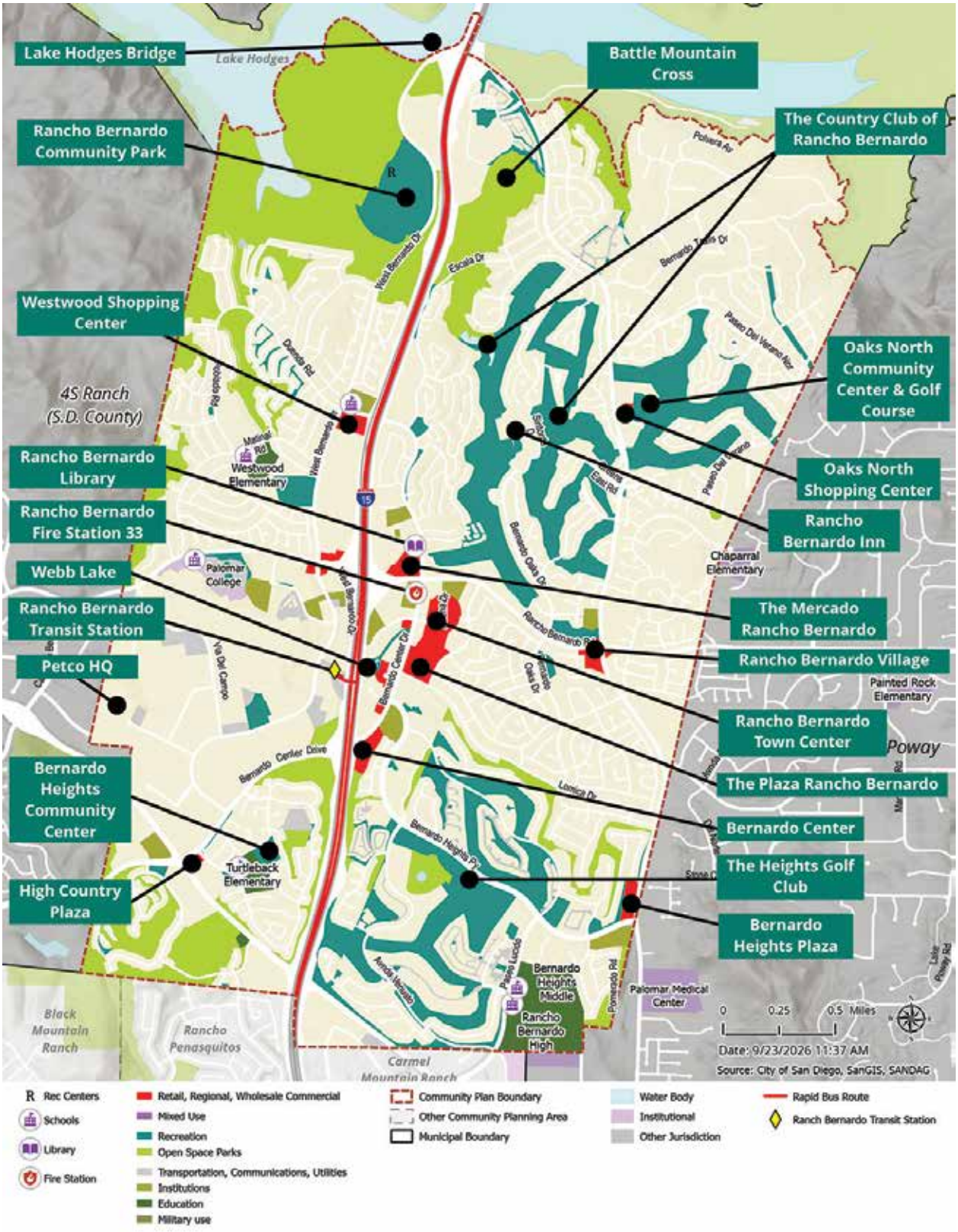


Figure 2-4: Important Places and Neighborhood Centers



Building Types

A variety of residential and non-residential building styles exist within Rancho Bernardo, as shown in Figure 2-5. The community includes a mix of low-scale residential neighborhoods, attached townhomes, multifamily developments, shopping centers, low-rise industrial and business parks, public institutions, and important community landmarks. Across these different uses, building types vary in height, scale, density, building footprint, site organization, parking and access patterns, and relationship to the street and surrounding development. Within individual uses, however, development patterns and building forms are generally similar. Together, the examples illustrate the variety of development patterns and built forms that contribute to the existing built environment and identity of Rancho Bernardo.

Figure 2-5: Building Types (continued on following page)

Low Scale Residential

Low-scale residential development is the predominant building type in Rancho Bernardo. These neighborhoods are generally characterized by one- and two-story detached homes on individual lots, with front yards, driveways, and relatively low building coverage. Homes are typically oriented towards residential streets and vary in architectural style, lot size, setbacks, and degree of landscaping. Together, these characteristics create a predominantly low-density, neighborhood-oriented residential environment.


Horado Road


Avenida Suavidad


Bernardo Trails Drive

Shopping Centers

Existing shopping centers are typically low-rise, auto-oriented commercial developments organized around shared surface parking lots and internal drive aisles. Buildings are generally set back from the street and oriented towards parking areas, with storefronts and entrances facing internal circulation areas. These centers primarily provide retail, dining, and neighborhood-serving commercial uses and are an important component of the community's commercial corridors.


Pomerado Village Shopping Center


The Plaza at Rancho Bernardo


Bernardo Heights Plaza


Oaks North Plaza

Multifamily Homes

Multi-family development in Rancho Bernardo includes a range of building configurations, from garden-style apartment buildings to stacked flats and units with tuck-under parking. These developments generally have a greater building and residential density than surrounding detached-home neighborhoods and may include shared courtyards, landscaped areas, surface parking, or internal pedestrian circulation. Building heights for most multifamily developments relatively low. Denser apartment developments exceeding three-stories are located near the Rancho Bernardo Transit Center.


West Bernardo Drive


Bernardo Pines Condos, Caminito Pinero


SkyLine


Royal Birkdale Road

Townhomes

Townhomes are residential units that share walls with adjacent units and typically have individual exterior entrances. They are commonly arranged in rows or small clusters and may include private yards, patios, balconies, or garages, with shared or individual parking. Townhomes are generally one to three stories in height and provide multiple homes within a relatively compact building form.


Caminito Siega


Florinado Road


Corte Aarauco

Figure 2-5: Building Types (Continued from previous page)

Low-Rise Industrial and Business Parks

Low-rise industrial and business parks are characterized by larger, utilitarian buildings that accommodate employment, warehouse, logistics, manufacturing, and commercial uses. Buildings are generally one to a few stories in height and occupy larger parcels with surface parking, loading areas, service access, and space for vehicle circulation. Compared with residential and neighborhood commercial areas, these properties typically have larger building footprints and a more functional, vehicle-oriented site layout.



Amazon Warehouse on Via Del Campo



Petco Headquarters

Public Institutions *(Schools, Fire Stations, Library)*

Public institutions, including schools, fire stations, and libraries, form an important part of the community's civic infrastructure and are generally located on larger sites that serve surrounding neighborhoods. These facilities vary considerably in scale and building configuration but typically include larger building footprints, dedicated parking, outdoor gathering or recreation areas, and prominent entrances. Schools often include extensive outdoor play and athletic areas, while libraries and fire stations tend to have more compact sites and direct connections to surrounding streets.



Turtleback Elementary School



Westwood Elementary School



Bernardo Heights Middle School



Rancho Bernardo High School



Fire-Rescue Station 33



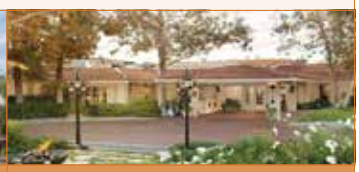
Rancho Bernardo Branch Library

Important Landmarks

Important landmarks are buildings and sites that have a distinct visual, cultural, historic, or community presence within Rancho Bernardo. These places differ from surrounding development in their architectural character, scale, use, or visibility and can serve as recognizable reference points within the community. The examples shown represent some of the locations that contribute to the identity and sense of place of Rancho Berardo.



Bernardo Winery



Rancho Bernardo Inn and Resort

2.4 Placemaking

Rancho Bernardo was developed as one of San Diego's earliest master-planned suburban communities, with neighborhoods organized around parks, schools, employment centers, shopping areas, and an extensive open space system. Mature landscaping, landscaped parkways, and community amenities contribute to a distinct identity as the northern gateway between the City of San Diego and Riverside communities centered on quality of life, outdoor recreation, and access to nature. The community's setting near Lake Hodges, the San Pasqual Valley, and surrounding open space preserves further reinforces its unique character by providing scenic views, recreational opportunities, and strong connections to the natural environment.

As the community continues to evolve, opportunities exist to enhance placemaking through high quality design, new public spaces and community gathering areas, improved streetscapes with stronger pedestrian and bicycle connections, and community-focused public art. Thoughtful reinvestment and new development can reinforce Rancho Bernardo's identity while creating more vibrant, accessible, and connected neighborhoods.

2.5 History & Place Summary

This section summarizes the key information related to history and place for the Rancho Bernardo planning area presented in this chapter.

- Rancho Bernardo is approximately 6,500 acres and was annexed into the City of San Diego in 1962.
- The community's development was shaped by **Kumeyaay settlement, ranching, agriculture, freeway development, and master-planned suburban growth.**
- **Lake Hodges, the San Pasqual Valley, other surrounding open spaces, and rolling hills and ridgelines** are defining natural features have shaped the community's development pattern, environmental character, and recreational opportunities.
- As a cohesively planned community, opportunities for future placemaking include **high-quality design, new public spaces, multimodal connections, public art**, and **thoughtfully integrated new development** will enhance the community identity and quality of life.



03 Sustainability, Equity, Resilience, & Conservation

3.1 Sustainability, Equity, Resilience, and Conservation

Overview

Sustainability, equity, resilience, and conservation are closely interconnected with the environmental, social, and physical conditions that shape daily life in Rancho Bernardo. Access to parks, schools, transit, healthy food, and other community amenities influence health and quality of life, while environmental conditions such as air pollution, extreme heat, flooding, and wildfire can create disproportionate risks for vulnerable populations. At the same time, the community's open spaces and other natural resources provide important ecological, recreational, and climate resilience benefits.

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 vary significantly across the communities within the 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.

Today, 502 acres (approximately 8 percent) within Rancho Bernardo are identified as an Environmental Justice Community (Figure 3-7), which describes areas that include socially vulnerable populations and are most impacted and negatively affected by environmental burdens and associated health risks. Socially vulnerable populations are those that lack choice and opportunity due to social or economic conditions and therefore face disproportionate and unequal ability to prepare for and respond to climate change and environmental hazards such as particulate air pollution, extreme heat and flooding. A climate resilient community is prepared for extreme events, less exposed to environmental hazards, and better equipped to recover following hazard events. This is especially important for vulnerable populations who can experience greater impacts and face larger barriers to recovery.

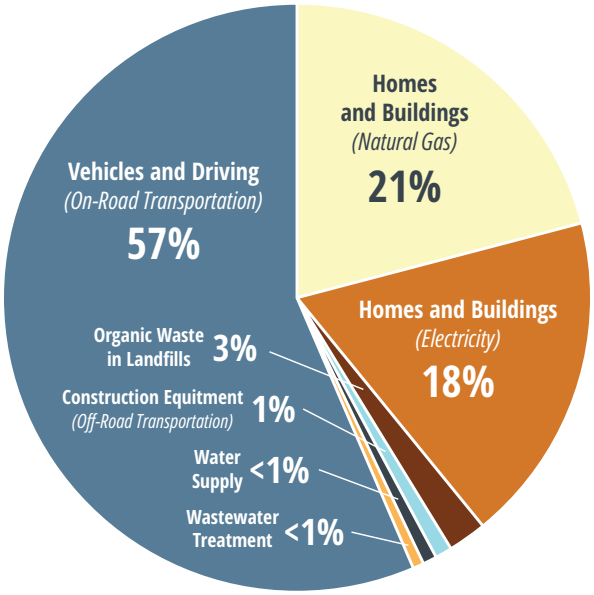
Policy Frameworks

The General Plan, Climate Action Plan and Climate Resilient SD provide the policy framework 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.

Baseline

"On-Road Transportation" accounted for 57 percent of the City's GHG emissions in 2024, as shown in Figure 3-1. People who lived and worked in Rancho Bernardo drove more miles for their daily trips compared to the San Diego regional average in 2022, as shown in Table 3-1.

Figure 3-1: City of San Diego Greenhouse Gas Emissions (2024)



Data Source: City of San Diego 2025 Climate Action Plan Report

Table 3-1: Average Daily Miles Traveled (2022)

Category	Rancho Bernardo	San Diego Region
Vehicle Miles Traveled per Resident (miles)	21.1	16.8
Vehicle Miles Traveled per Employee (miles)	14.5	11.9

Data Source: SANDAG 2025 Regional Plan SB743 VMT Maps

3.2 General Plan *(Climate Smart Village Areas)*

In July 2024, the City Council adopted an updated General Plan, including the Village Climate Goal Propensity Map, as shown in Figure 3-2. Climate Smart Village Areas identify where opportunities for new homes can most effectively implement the General Plan's City of Villages strategy. Climate Smart Village Areas focus growth where residents are more likely to use transit, walk, bike, and drive less, helping reduce greenhouse gas emissions while supporting functional and balanced communities.

3.3 Transit Priority Areas

Locating homes, jobs, services, and amenities near transit can result in social, economic and environmental benefits, which are discussed in the City's General Plan and Climate Action Plan.

Figure 3-3 shows Transit Priority Areas, which are areas within a half-mile radius of an existing or planned major public transit stop. Focusing growth in these areas and Climate Smart Village Areas allows more people to bike, walk, roll or take transit to work, home, shopping and other places of enjoyment within their community, or if they drive, to spend less of their time driving.

3.4 Community Health

Access to a Healthy Lifestyle

Many factors contribute to a community's ability to live a healthy life. One key factor is whether community members can safely and conveniently access parks and recreational facilities. Close-to-home opportunities to exercise and experience nature contribute to individuals' health and feelings of well-being.[1]

Regular physical activity has many physical health benefits, including a reduced risk of coronary heart disease, hypertension, strokes, some cancers, and premature mortality[2]. Regular physical activity also has many attendant emotional health benefits; it reduces depression, anxiety, stress, as well as improves mood and the ability to perform tasks.[3]

Although there is only one community park in Rancho Bernardo, most of the recreational opportunities in the community are provided by private membership access parks that were built as part of each master-planned development, as shown in Figure 3-4. As a result, many residential areas in Rancho Bernardo are within walking distance of an existing park.

Access to Amenities and Schools

Walkable access to healthy foods is important to the community's health. The presence of a supermarket in a neighborhood is linked to higher fruit and vegetable consumption, as well as a reduced incidence of obesity.[4] A healthy community also provides convenient access to schools. Proximity to schools makes it easier for children to walk or bike to school, which, in turn, is associated with higher overall physical activity throughout the day.

There are ten educational facilities, one library, seven fitness and recreation centers and two senior centers in the Rancho Bernardo community and many residents are within walking distance to these facilities, as shown in Figure 3-5. There are five grocery stores in Rancho Bernardo, and walkability to grocery stores is more limited in most of the community; access is primarily along Rancho Bernardo Road east of I-15, as shown in Figure 3-6. It should be noted it is not possible to show all services and facilities that provide a benefit to the community and its members. A large portion of the northern part of the community is outside of a walking distance to amenities and schools.

---

[1] *L. Frank et al., "Linking Objectively Measured Physical Activity with Objectively Measured Urban Form: Findings from SMARTRAQ", Vol. 28, Issue 2, American Journal of Preventative Medicine, at 117-125 (February 2005).*

[2] *U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Physical Activity and Health: A Report of the Surgeon General (Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, 1996), 4–8, http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/sgr/pdf/sgrfull.pdf.*

[3] *Ibid., 8.*

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

Figure 3-2: Village Climate Goal Propensity

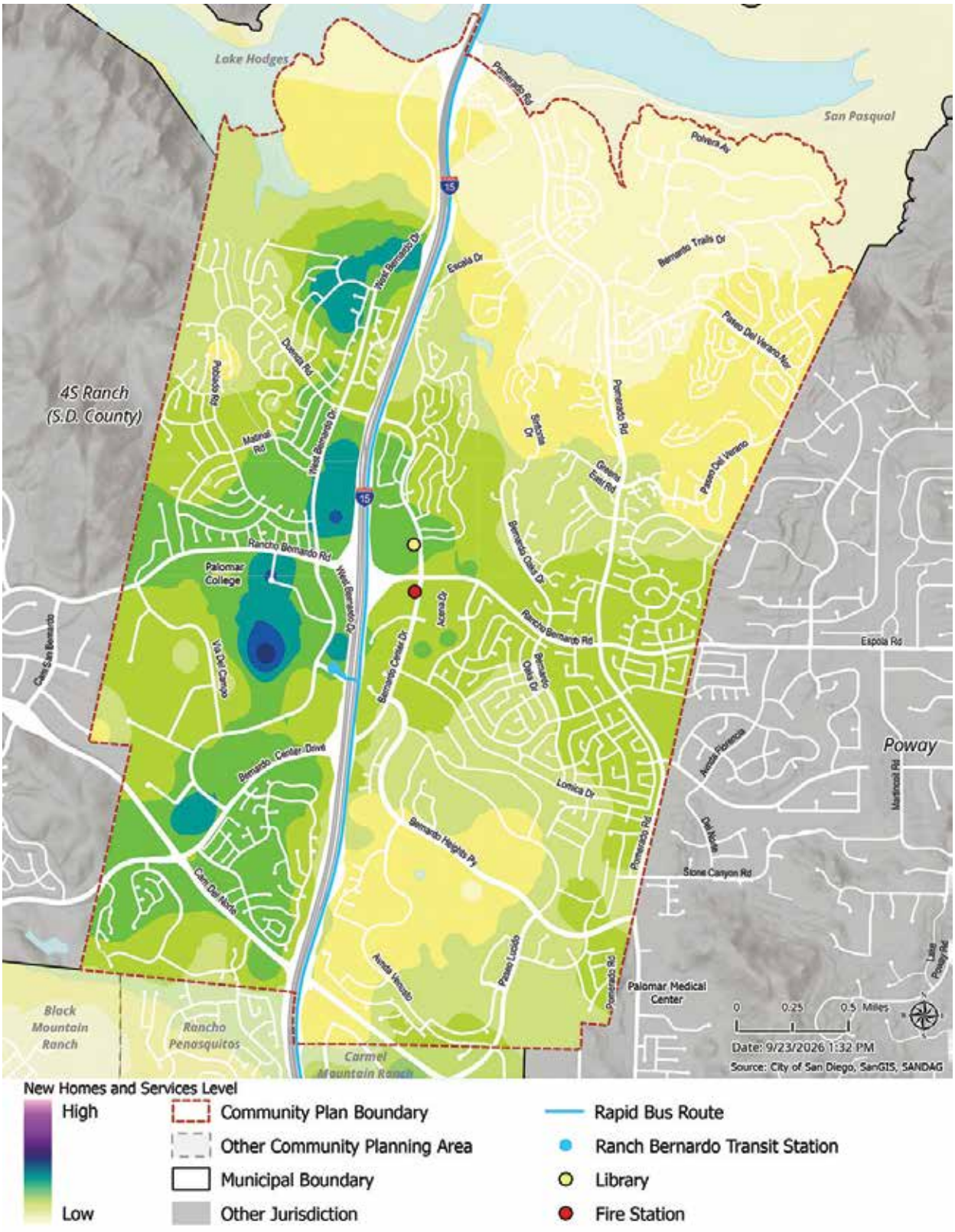


Figure 3-3: Transit Priority Areas

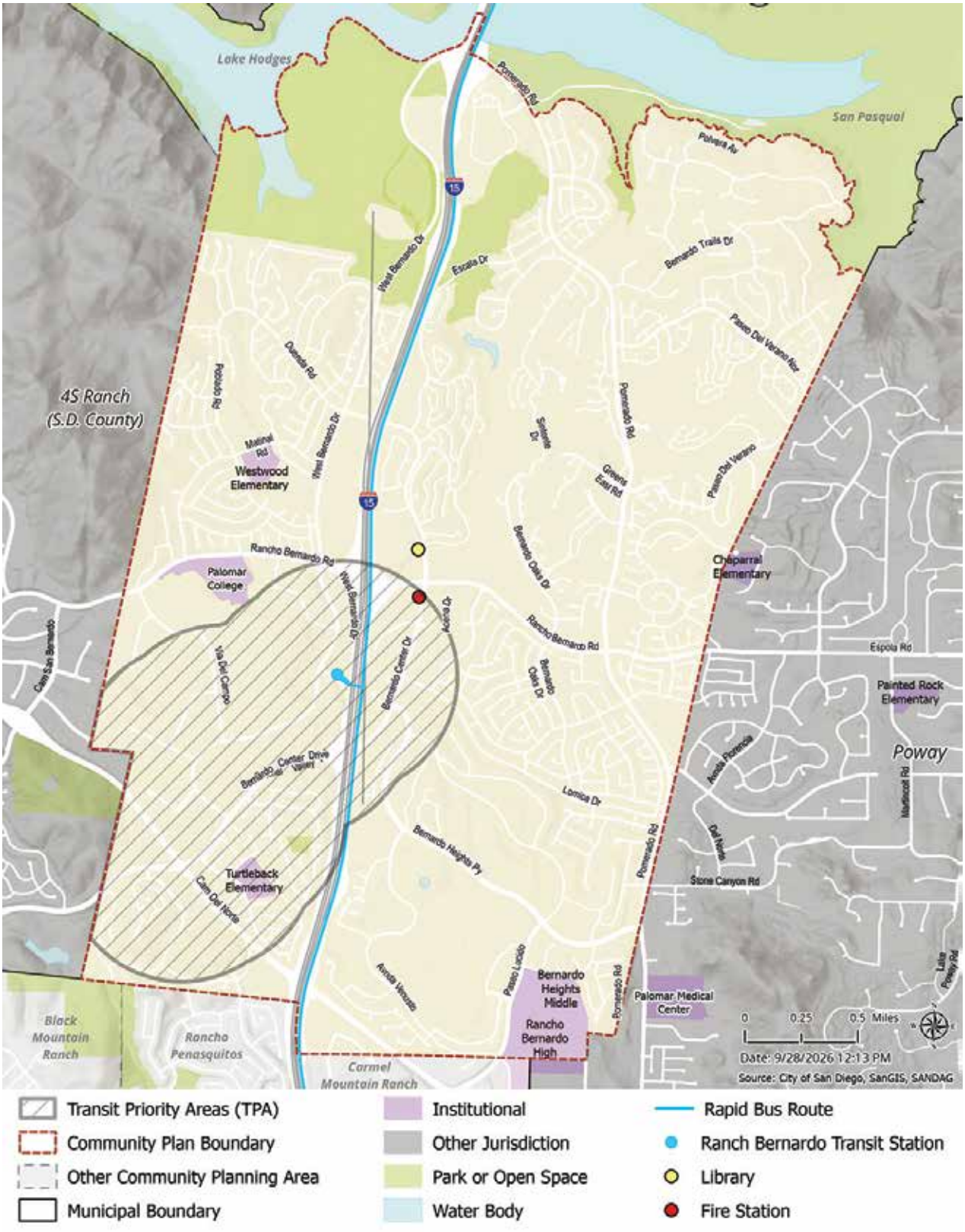


Figure 3-4: Access to Parks and Recreation Centers

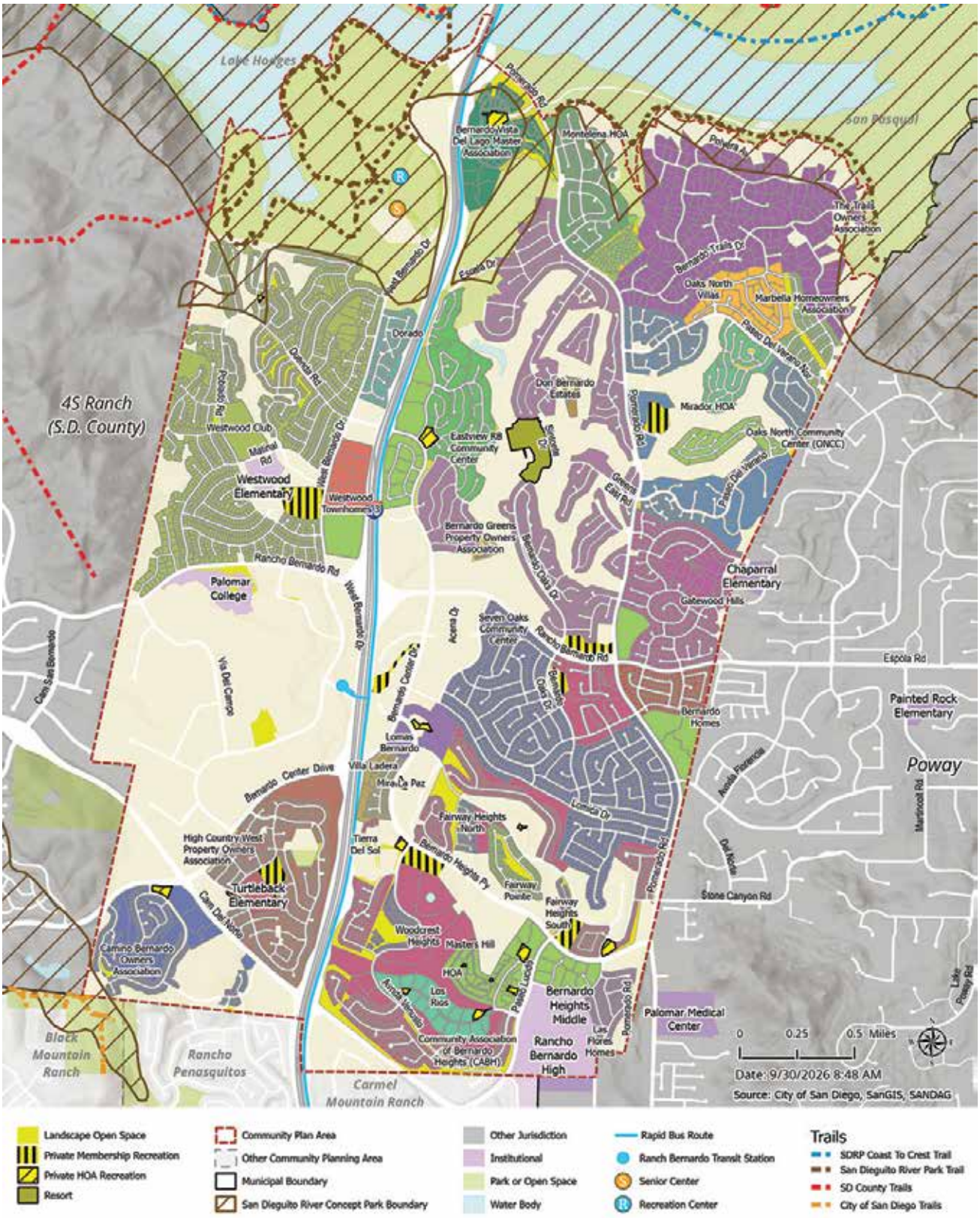


Figure 3-5: Access to Schools and Community Facilities

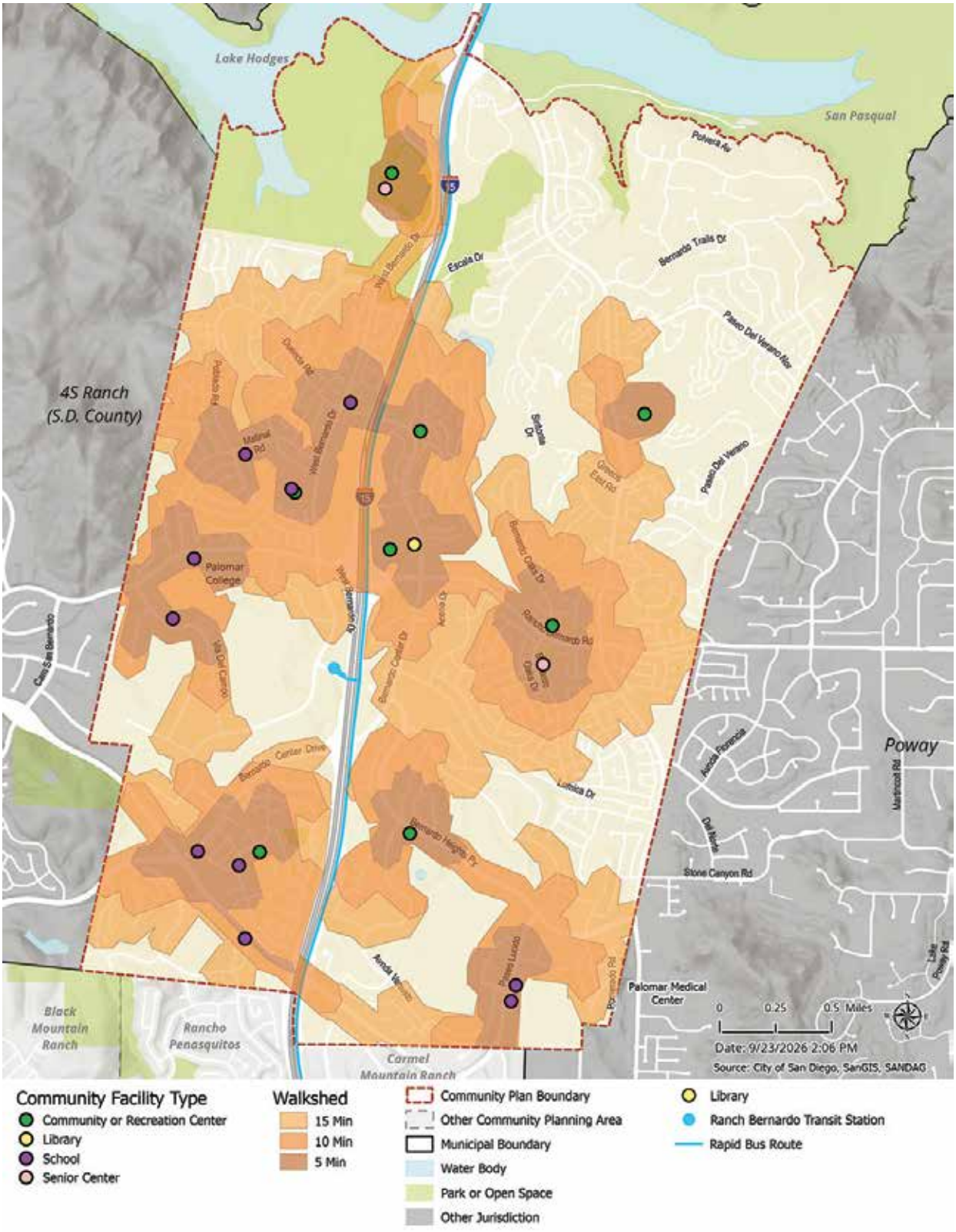
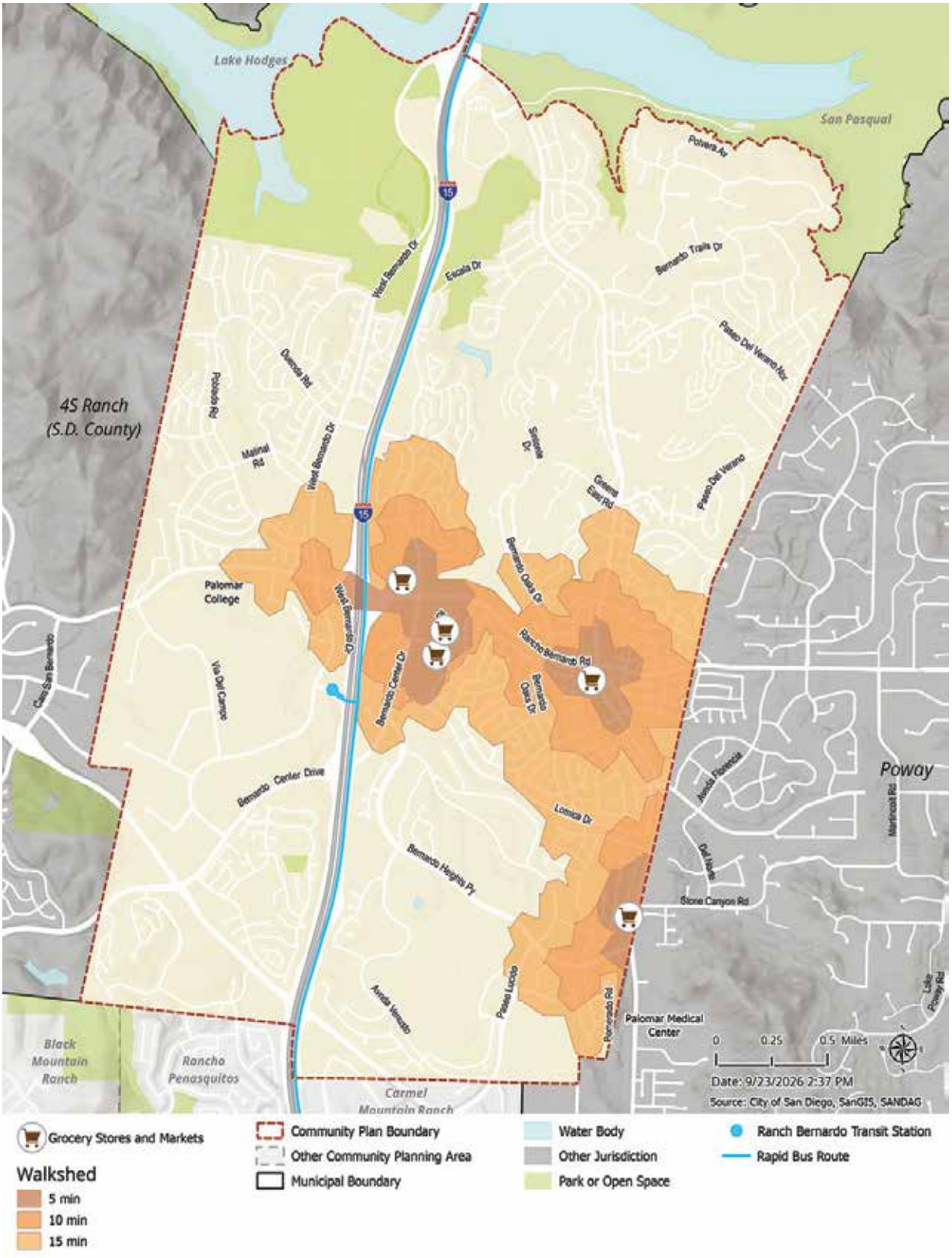


Figure 3-6: Access to Grocery Stores







3.5 Equity

Environmental Justice Communities

Environmental Justice focuses on reducing pollution exposure, improving air quality, and promoting public facilities, food access, safe and healthy homes, and physical activity, so that people of all races, cultures, and incomes are equally and equitably valued, protected, and served.

Approximately 502 acres, or almost 8 percent, of the Rancho Bernardo Community Planning Area is identified as an Environmental Justice Community by the General Plan's Environmental Justice Element, as shown in Figure 3-7. The designation considers environmental, climate, health, food access, and socioeconomic factors and is not based solely on household income. The portion of Rancho Bernardo that is categorized as Environmental Justice is generally east of I-15, south of Rancho Bernardo Road, west of Pomerado Road, and north of Lomica Drive.

This area of Rancho Bernardo faces a combination of environmental and socioeconomic stressors. Households in the area experience higher energy costs relative to income, while limited tree canopy coverage reduces natural cooling and shade. Residents also face a higher housing cost burden and a comparatively greater prevalence of diabetes, indicating overlapping economic and health vulnerabilities. Interstate 15 travels through this part of the community, and both this area and southern Rancho Bernardo are exposed to moderate levels of particulate-matter pollution, compounding environmental challenges that disproportionately affect residents.

Together, these demographic and environmental factors contribute to the environmental justice concerns within Rancho Bernardo.

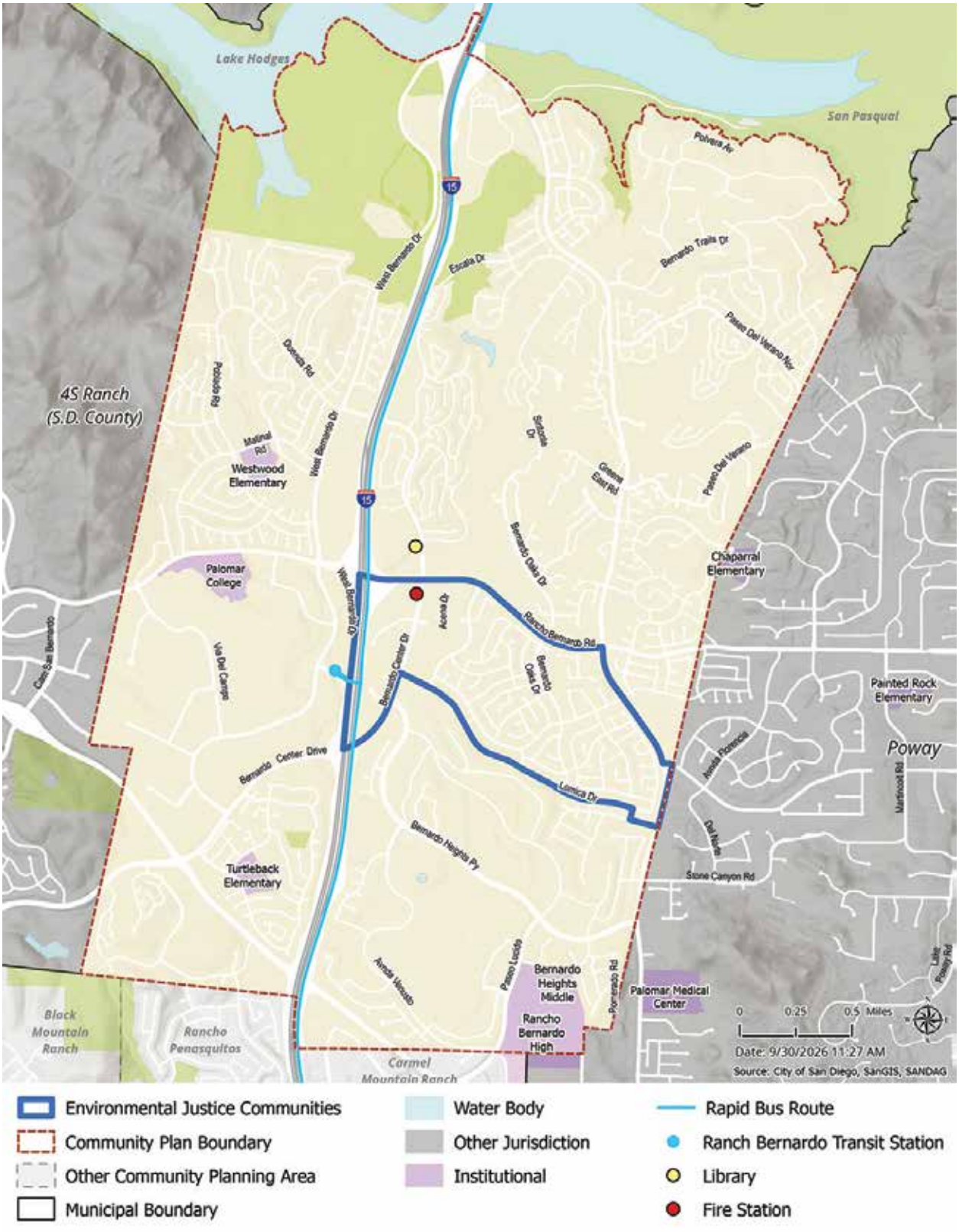
3.6 Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing

The California Tax Credit Allocation Committee and Department of Housing and Community Development identify 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 to be associated with positive economic, educational, and health outcomes for low-income families, particularly long-term outcomes for children, which helps to inform efforts to affirmatively further fair housing. The economic and educational indicators are described below:

Economic Indicators:

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

Figure 3-7: Environmental Justice Communities



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.

Local environmental conditions are also considered by using a subset of data from the CalEnviroScreen tool to identify geographies that rank in the top 5 percent of regional environmental burden and therefore have the greatest potential to expose vulnerable populations to nearby health and safety threats. See Section 3.11 "Air Quality and Pollution Burden" for more discussion on CalEnviroScreen.

A neighborhood's opportunity score is determined by how many of the economic and education indicators described previously fall above 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, all neighborhoods in Rancho Bernardo are categorized as either High or Highest Resource, as shown in Figure 3-8.



3.7 Biological Resources

Overview

The Multiple Species Conservation Program Subarea Plan was prepared in coordination with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to meet the requirements under the Federal Government's Endangered Species Act and the state of California's Natural Communities Conservation Planning Act of 1992. The City of San Diego Multiple Species Conservation Plan Subarea Plan delineates areas to be conserved as the Multiple Habitat Planning Area. Within the Multiple Habitat Planning Area, development is limited to protect and ensure the viability of "covered" species and preserve a network of open space and habitat in San Diego.

Natural vegetation within Rancho Bernardo is primarily concentrated along the community's northern, western, and southern borders, where developed areas transition to canyons, hillsides, and regional open space, as shown in Figure 3-9. Coastal sage scrub is the most prominent native vegetation shown on the figure, with additional areas of chaparral, grassland, riparian vegetation, oak woodland, and wetland habitat. Much of the natural habitat along the northern and western edges of the community is within the City's Multi-Habitat Planning Area, connecting Rancho Bernardo to larger habitat areas surrounding Lake Hodges and the San Pasqual Valley.

San Pasqual Valley and Lake Hodges

San Pasqual Valley and Lake Hodges form a significant open space and habitat system along the northern edge of Rancho Bernardo. The Multiple Species Conservation Program identifies that the optimum future condition for the Lake Hodges/San Pasqual Valley area as a mosaic of native habitats and compatible farming and recreational activities that act to preserve and rejuvenate healthy natural ecosystems and processes, water quality, and the full range of native species. Lake Hodges Reservoir and the land around it is identified as cornerstone lands of the Multiple Species Conservation Program and has very high biological value.

The San Pasqual Valley lies within the San Pasqual Valley Groundwater Basin and the San Dieguito River Basin and extends eastward from Lake Hodges, encompassing agricultural lands, riparian corridors, and naturally vegetated hillsides and canyons. Lake Hodges and San Pasqual Valley are part of one of the largest continuous blocks of habitat in the City, with important conservation areas including natural areas surrounding Lake Hodges, riparian habitat, and remaining undisturbed upland vegetation. These natural areas form part of an interconnected regional open space system that and serves as a major east-west corridor for multiple species and extends beyond Rancho Bernardo.

Figure 3-8 :California Tax Credit Allocation Committee Resource Areas

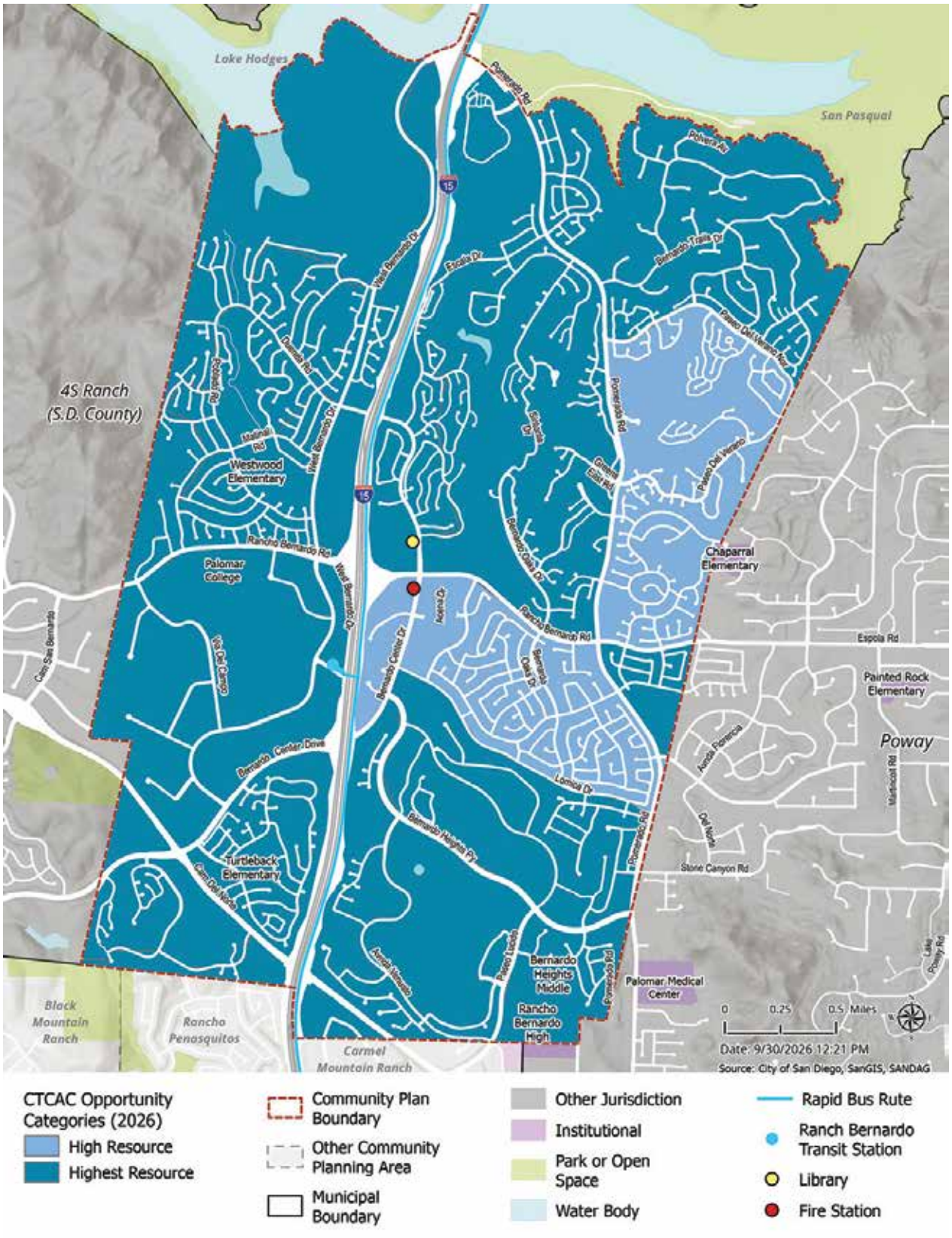
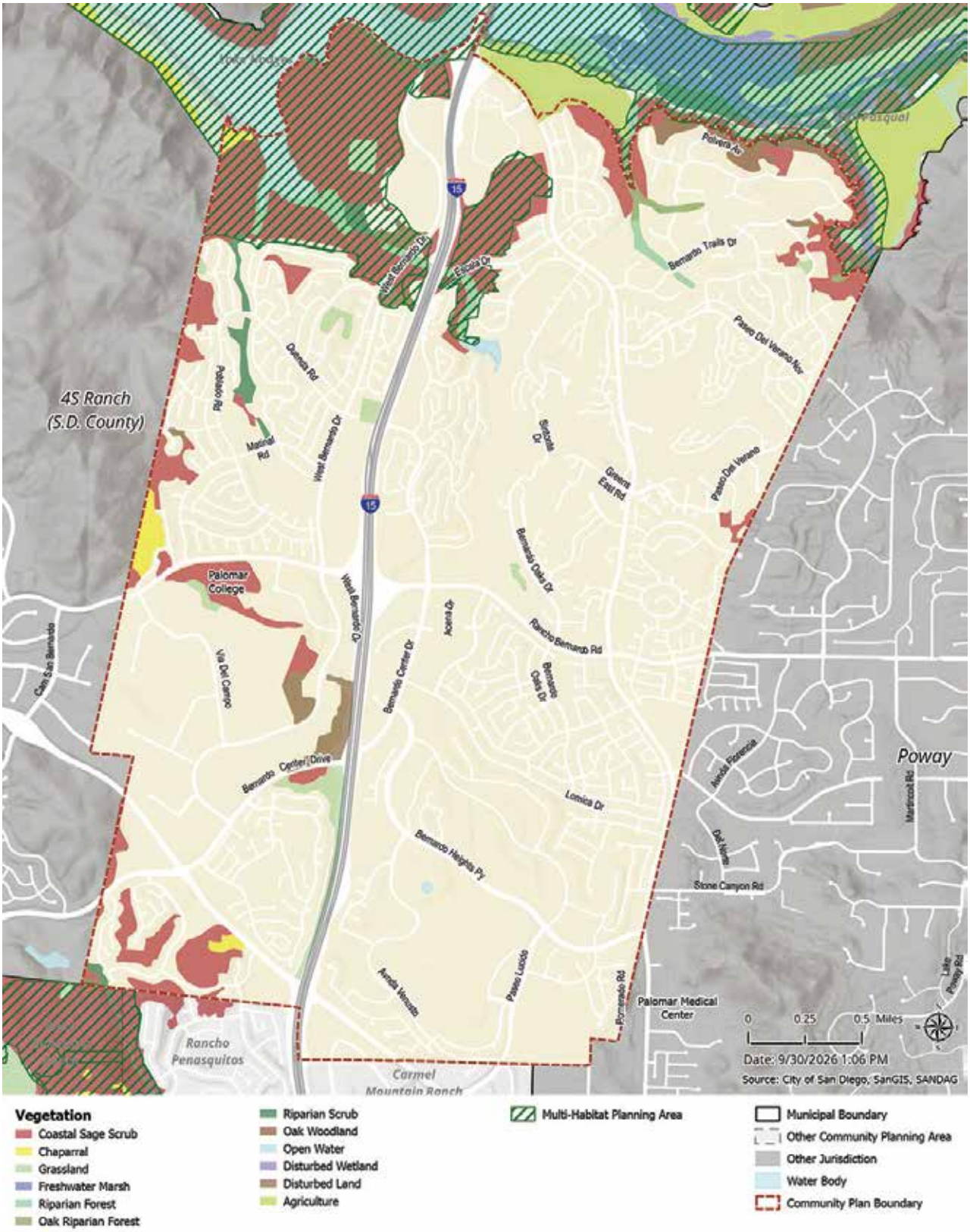


Figure 3-9: Vegetation and Multi Habitat Planning Area



San Dieguito River Park Concept Plan

The San Dieguito River Park, established in 1989, is a regional open-space greenway extending approximately 55 miles from the Pacific Ocean in Del Mar to Volcan Mountain near Julian. Administration and long-range planning for the park are carried out by the San Dieguito River Valley Regional Open Space Park Joint Powers Authority (JPA), which is authorized by its member agencies to acquire and manage land, conduct comprehensive planning, and oversee the design, improvement, operation, and maintenance of park resources. Within the Rancho Bernardo Community Planning area, the Concept Plan identifies portions of Lake Hodges and the San Pasqual Valley, designated as Landscape Unit F, as integral components of the river valley's open-space system. The Concept Plan establishes directives for resource protection, watershed management, habitat conservation, and water quality enhancement, including restoration objectives for the San Dieguito Lagoon and upstream watershed areas.

Special Status Species

The Multiple Species Conservation Program covers 85 species, including 46 plant and 39 animal species. The City's Multiple Species Conservation Program, Environmentally Sensitive Lands Regulations and Biology Guidelines work as the regulating documents for development in the Multi-Habitat Planning Area and define the protections for special status species. Special status species are those plants and animals that, because of their acknowledged rarity or vulnerability to various causes of habitat loss or population decline, are recognized in some fashion by federal, state, or other agencies as deserving special consideration. According to records maintained by the California Natural Diversity Database and the City's Multiple Species Conservation Program Subarea Plan, there are records of 51 sensitive species, including 20 Multiple Species Conservation Program covered species occurring in Rancho Bernardo.

Plants: California adolphia, decumbent goldenbush, Del Mar manzanita, Encinitas baccharis, Orcutt's brodiaea, San Diego barrel cactus, San Diego button-celery, San Diego goldenstar, San Diego mesa mint, San Diego sagewort, San Diego thorn-mint, Shaw's agave, Short-leaved dudleya, smooth tarplant, Torrey pine, Variegated dudleya, Wart-stemmed ceanothus, Willowy monardella.

Animals: Belding's Savannah Sparrow, Bell's Sparrow, Burrowing Owl, California Glossy Snake, California Gnatcatcher, California Rufous-crowned Sparrow, Canada Goose, Coast Horned Lizard, Coastal Cactus Wren, Coastal California Gnatcatcher, Cooper's Hawk, Crotch's Bumble Bee, Ferruginous Hawk, Golden Eagle, Least Bell's Vireo, Mountain Lion, Mule Deer, Northern Harrier, Orange-throated Whiptail, Riverside Fairy Shrimp, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, San Diegan Legless Lizard, San Diego Desert Woodrat, San Diego Horned Lizard, South Coast Gartersnake, Southwestern Pond Turtle, Swainson's Hawk, Tricolored Blackbird, Western Bluebird, Western Spadefoot, White-faced Ibis.

More detailed analysis of habitat and sensitive plant and animal species are conducted as part of environmental impact analysis for specific projects; avoidance and/or mitigation measures are identified to minimize potential impacts to these species in accordance with the City's Environmentally Sensitive Lands Regulations.

3.8 Hydrology, Flooding and Wildfire

Hydrology

Rancho Bernardo is located within the San Dieguito River Watershed and adjacent to the Los Peñasquitos Watershed Management Areas, with drainage systems that flow to San Dieguito Lagoon and ultimately into the Pacific Ocean and nearby Marine Protection Areas. The community is shaped by key features such as the San Dieguito River Valley, hillsides, canyons, and local drainage channels, which support flood control, habitat connectivity, and groundwater recharge.

The area also includes the nearby Lake Hodges Reservoir, a significant resource that provides water conservation, habitat for sensitive species and opportunities for recreation and restoration. An important feature of the Hodges Reservoir is the Hodges Dam, which was built in 1918 and purchased by the City in 1925.

Watershed communities could implement stormwater best management practices - including green infrastructure and nature-based solutions - to help reduce downstream flooding, improve water quality, and protect natural habitats by slowing, storing, and treating runoff at its source.

The Multiple Species Conservation Program Subarea Plan identifies specific management directives to maintain natural floodplain functions, preserve the hydrologic processes of the San Dieguito River system, and avoid artificial channelization, berming, or hard bank stabilization within the Multiple Habitat Planning Area: these management directives ensure that creeks, tributaries, and river flows remain in a natural condition that supports habitat, water quality, and long-term ecosystem integrity. A detailed Habitat Management Plan has been prepared for the Lake Hodges / San Pasqual Valley Open Space, including long-term adaptive management focusing on watershed function and reservoir impacts. Together, the San Dieguito and Los Peñasquitos watershed systems play an important role in environmental health and community planning.

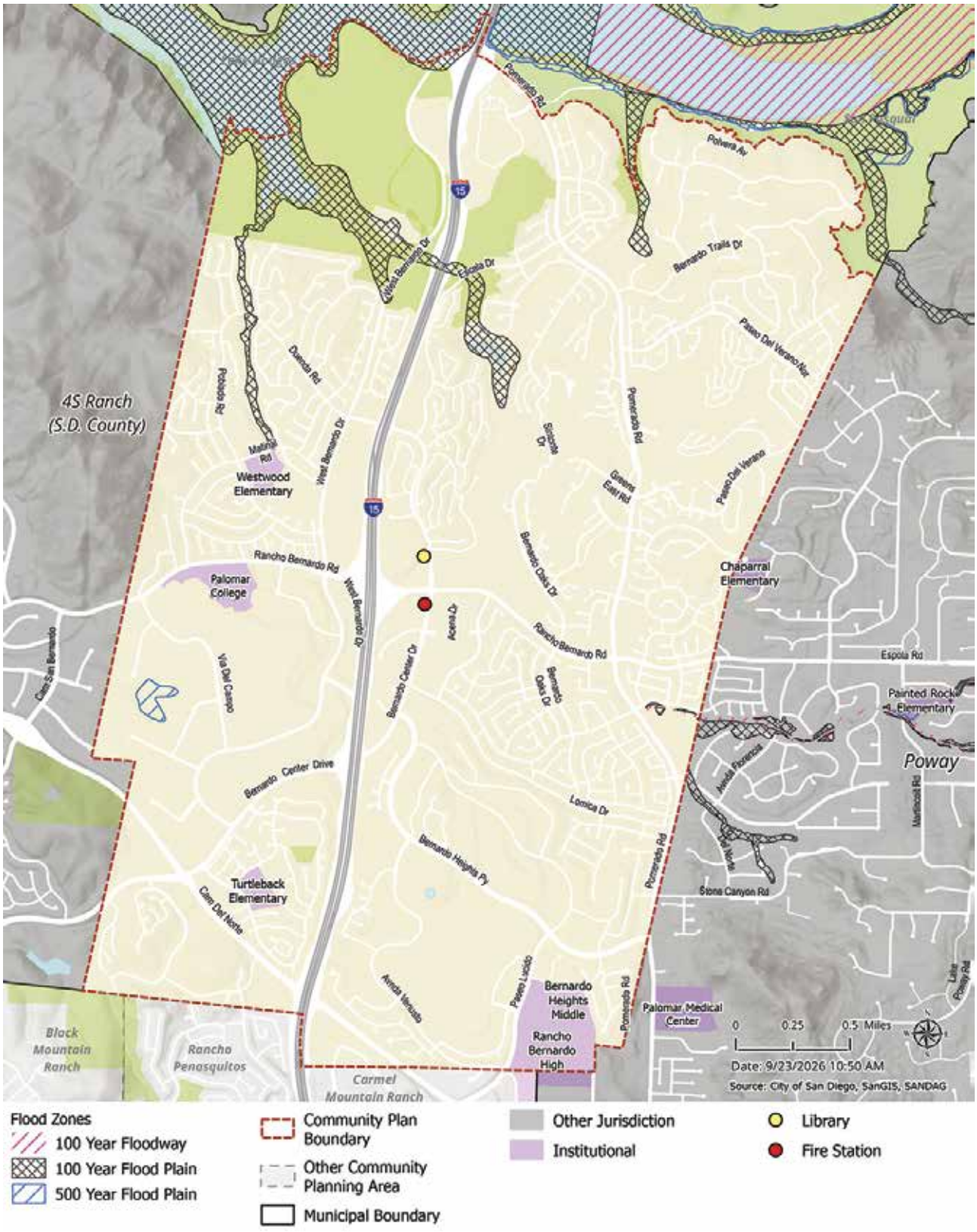
Flooding

The 100-year floodway, 100-year flood plain, and 500-year flood plain for the Rancho Bernardo Planning Area, as shown in Figure 3-10, are delineated by Federal Emergency Management Agency Flood Insurance Rate Maps. The community is located south of the San Dieguito River watershed, and areas within the flood plains may flood during heavy precipitation events.

Wildfire

Portions of the community are identified as being within a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone due to potential hazard from wildland fires. Inclusion within these zones is based on vegetation density, slope severity and other relevant factors that contribute to fire severity. Residents of these areas, especially those adjacent to natural landscapes and freeways, should take additional measures to prepare for the threat of wildland fire. Property owners within both the Brush Management Zone and the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, as shown in Figure 3-11, are required to clear brush and flammable materials. Creating defensible space around structures can help reduce the potential for fire to spread to homes and other buildings. Maintaining vegetation, planting native plants, removing combustible materials near structures, and keeping access routes clear can help improve the ability of firefighters to protect properties during a wildfire. Evacuation readiness is also an important component of wildfire preparedness. Residents should be familiar with evacuation routes and emergency notification systems, maintain an emergency plan and supplies, and be prepared to evacuate early when directed by emergency officials. This is particularly important in areas where access may be constrained by limited roadway connections or where wildfire could affect multiple neighborhoods simultaneously. The San Diego Fire-Rescue Department provides information regarding safeguarding homes and responding during a fire emergency. For more information on primary responders in this area, please visit Chapter 6: Public Facilities, Parks and Open Space.

Figure 3-10: Habitat and Potential Areas of Occurrence of Special Status Species



2014 – Bernardo Fire

A fire ignited on May 13, 2014, near Nighthawk Lane southwest of Rancho Bernardo, quickly spreading into adjacent brush. Over four days, it burned approximately 1,548 acres, prompted evacuations for dozens of homes (though none were destroyed), and caused three reported injuries. The blaze was traced to accidental equipment use and, with a coordinated response of over 200 personnel and multiple agencies, was fully contained by May 17, 2014.

2007 – Witch Creek Fire

Part of the massive October 2007 California firestorm, the Witch Creek Fire began on October 21 and rapidly spread into Rancho Bernardo amid powerful Santa Ana winds. Nearly 197,990 acres burned across the county, with Rancho Bernardo alone seeing 365 residences destroyed. The fire resulted in two civilian fatalities, numerous injuries, and triggered the evacuation of approximately 500,000 people countywide, marking one of the largest evacuation efforts in state history.

Recent Brush Fires

In recent years, Rancho Bernardo has seen several small but fast moving brush fires that prompted swift multi agency responses and temporary evacuations. In January 2025, the Center Fire ignited near Bernardo Center Drive and Camino del Norte, burning about 7 acres, forcing evacuations of nearby homes and childcare facilities, injuring one person, and was later traced to a homeless encampment before crews halted its spread by midday. A few months later, in August 2025, another brush fire broke out along a hillside near Camino del Norte and Bernardo Center Drive, quickly burning over 10 acres and generating large plumes of smoke. Coordinated air and ground efforts stopped the spread the same day, with no injuries or structures lost and evacuation warnings subsequently lifted. Most recently, in June 2026, a brush fire along West Bernardo Drive west of I-15 burned about 4 acres before crews contained it, with no threatened structures or evacuation orders issued, and firefighters remaining on scene to extinguish lingering hotspots.

3.9 Extreme Heat

Overview

Areas with limited tree cover and vegetation and high concentrations of structures and impervious surfaces, such as buildings, roads, and parking lots, tend to absorb and retain more heat than natural landscapes, resulting in elevated temperatures-often referred to as the urban heat island effect. Local temperatures are also influenced by factors such as surface materials and reflectivity, building density and form, shade, wind patterns, topography, and proximity to the coast. Rising temperatures driven by climate change further increase the frequency, intensity, and duration of extreme heat and can amplify the effects of these local conditions.

Heat Vulnerability measures a community's susceptibility to the impacts of extreme heat by considering both environmental exposure as well as social and health factors. These may include age, income, housing conditions, access to cooling and green space, outdoor exposure, and underlying health conditions. Identifying areas with greater heat vulnerability and understanding the environmental and social factors driving that vulnerability can help target strategies and investments to reduce heat exposure, strengthen adaptive capacity, and protect communities from the impacts of extreme heat.

Heat Exposure

In partnership with NASA DEVELOP, the City developed an Urban Heat Vulnerability Index to better understand heat exposure and vulnerability. Census tracts with higher heat exposure in Rancho Bernardo are shown in Figure 3-12. These census tracts are concentrated in the center and on the west side of the planning area, mostly due to a combination of higher daytime temperatures and high impervious surface coverages, which increases the heat exposure in these parts of Rancho Bernardo.

Heat Risk

The Urban Heat Vulnerability Index calculates heat risk as a measure of heat exposure and heat vulnerability combined. Heat vulnerability considers socio-economic factors, such as income or pre-existing health conditions. To calculate heat risk, values for census tracts are normalized to a range of 0 to 1 with higher scores indicating higher heat risk, as shown in Figure 3-13. The average score for Rancho Bernardo is considered high risk at 0.25, which is the same average score of the City of San Diego as a whole. This indicates that neighborhoods in Rancho Bernardo face similar risk to extreme heat events, such as heat waves, as other areas of the city.

Another tool for understanding heat risk is the **San Diego Heat Risk Explorer**. The Explorer indicates that key drivers of heat risk in Rancho Bernardo are related to the community's daytime heat exposure and population sensitivity, particularly driven by a large population of residents that are aged 65 or more.

These challenges may be further compounded in, older, more developed neighborhoods where outdated building infrastructure may make it more difficult to maintain comfortable indoor temperatures due to improper insulation, older appliances, and less efficient heating and cooling systems.

Figure 3-11: Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone and Brush Management Zone

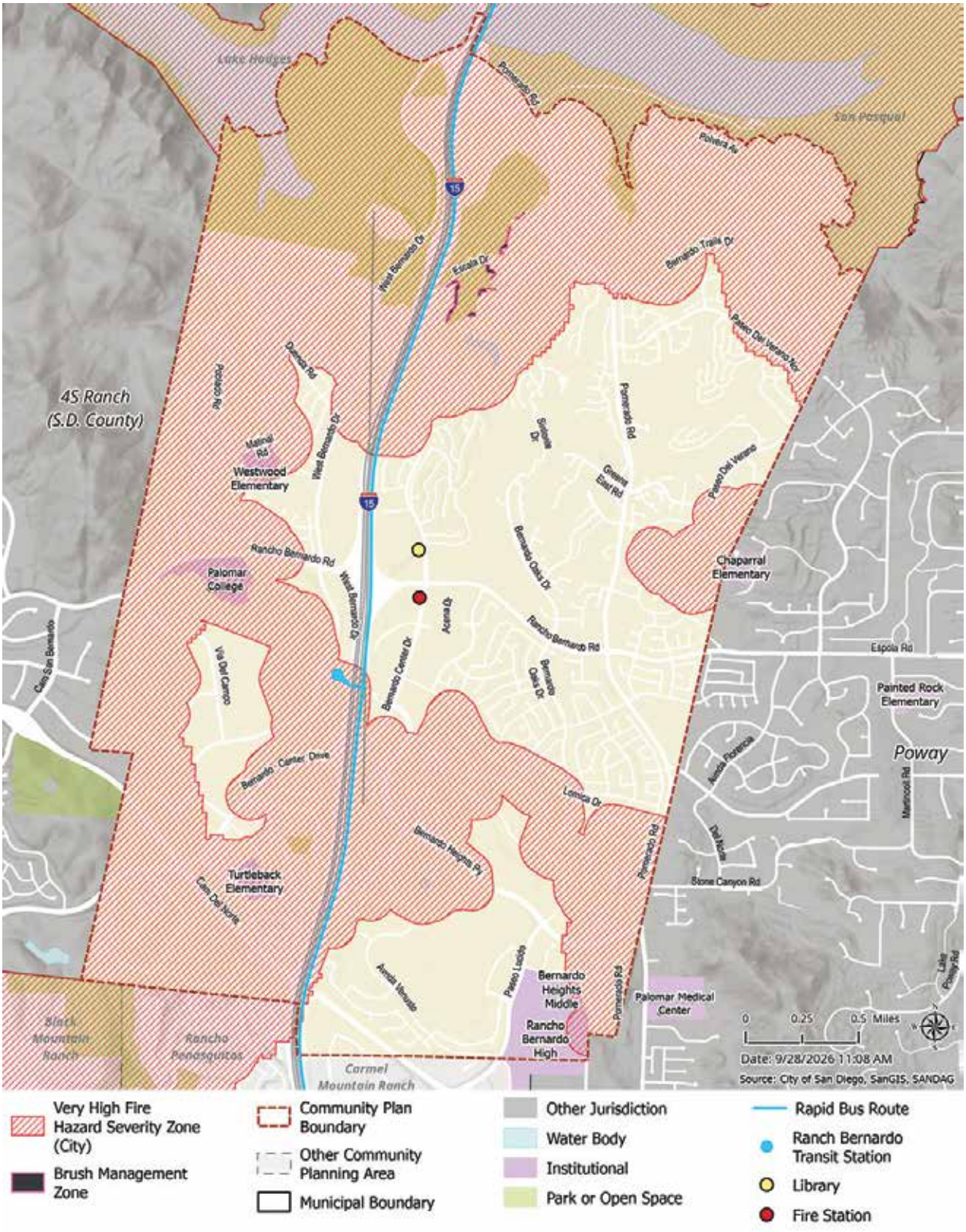


Figure 3-12: Heat Exposure

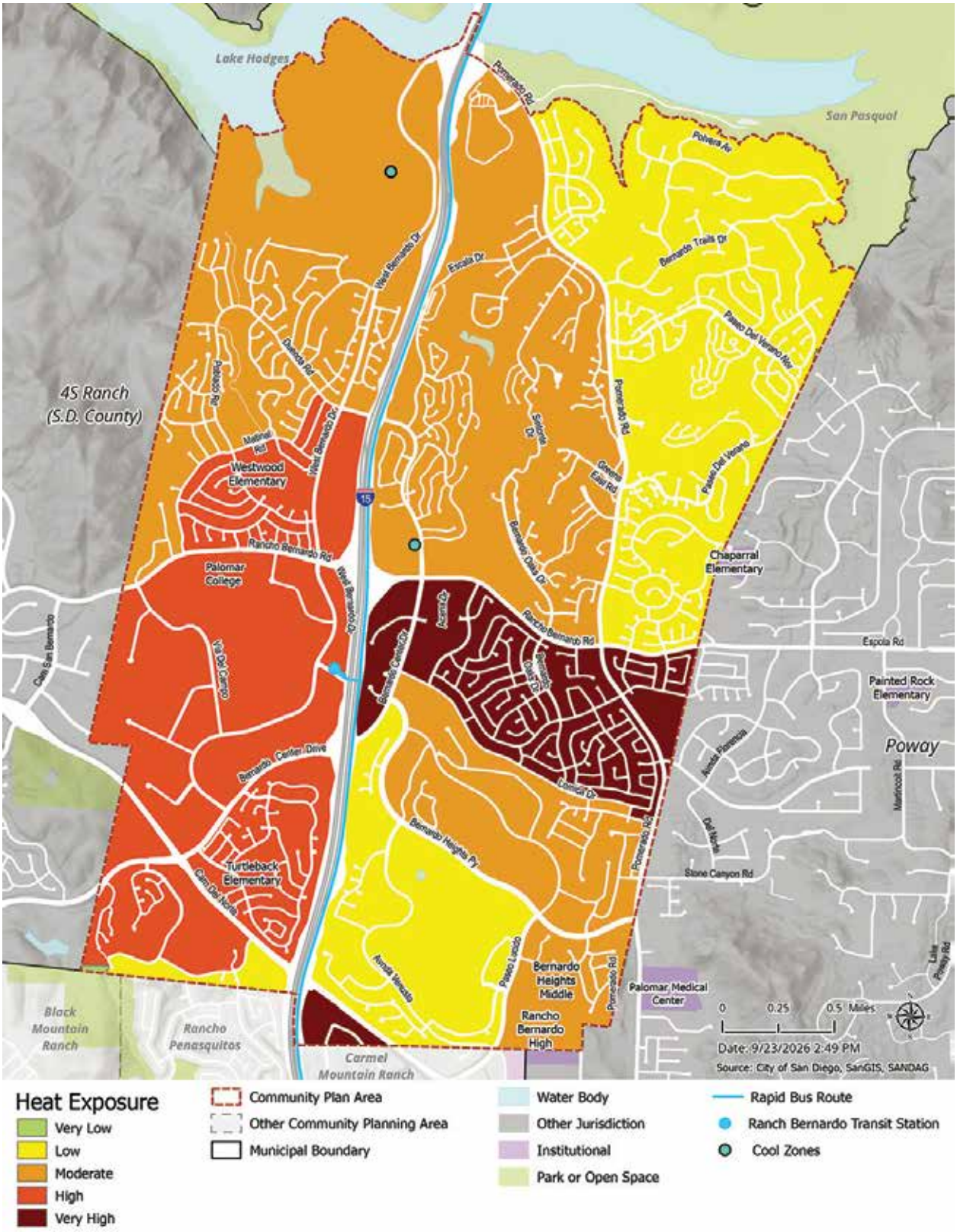
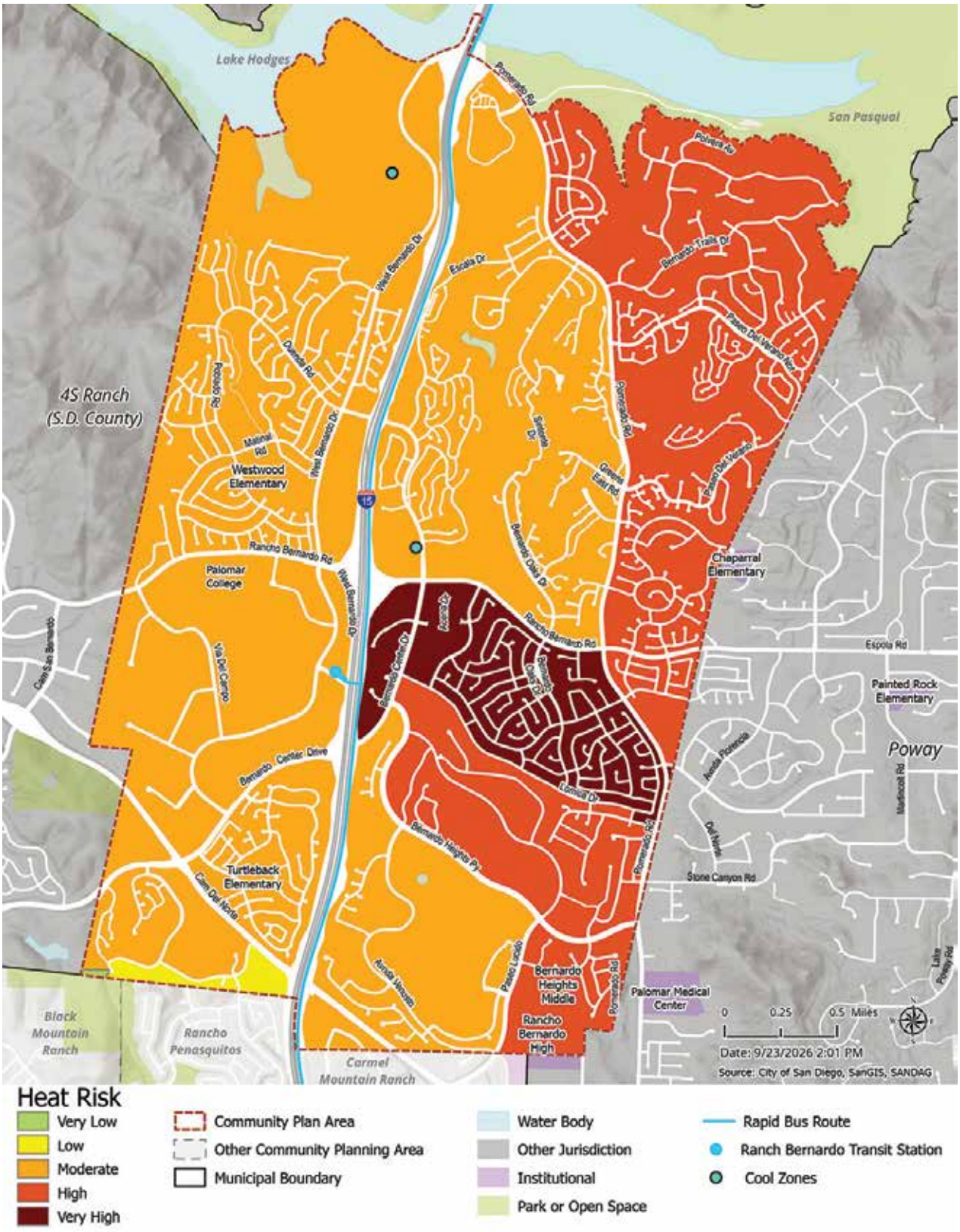


Figure 3-13: Heat Risk

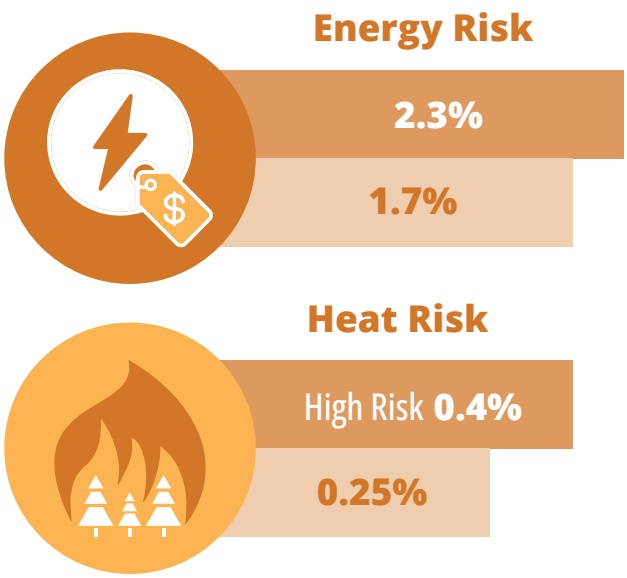


Moreover, older, more developed neighborhoods may face challenges in maintaining comfortable indoor temperatures due to outdated building infrastructure lacking energy-efficient features such as proper insulation, modern appliances, and efficient heating and cooling systems.

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 fixed incomes. Although solar panels can help lower energy costs, recent changes to state regulations have substantially reduced the financial benefits of rooftop solar systems, particularly for lower-income households that may be unable to afford the battery systems needed to maintain previous levels of cost savings. However, a recent change to state law helps increase access to solar by making small plug-in solar systems much easier and cheaper to adopt. The Plug-and Play Solar Act eliminates expensive fees and complicated approvals associated with traditional solar systems, allowing households to generate some of their own energy at a low cost, directly offsetting energy usage for appliances like refrigerators and air conditioners and potentially saving hundred of dollars per year.

While community members may use cost-effective methods like using fans to circulate air and closing blinds or curtains to stay cool to save energy, 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.



3.10 Urban Greening

Urban greening can provide the following community benefit:

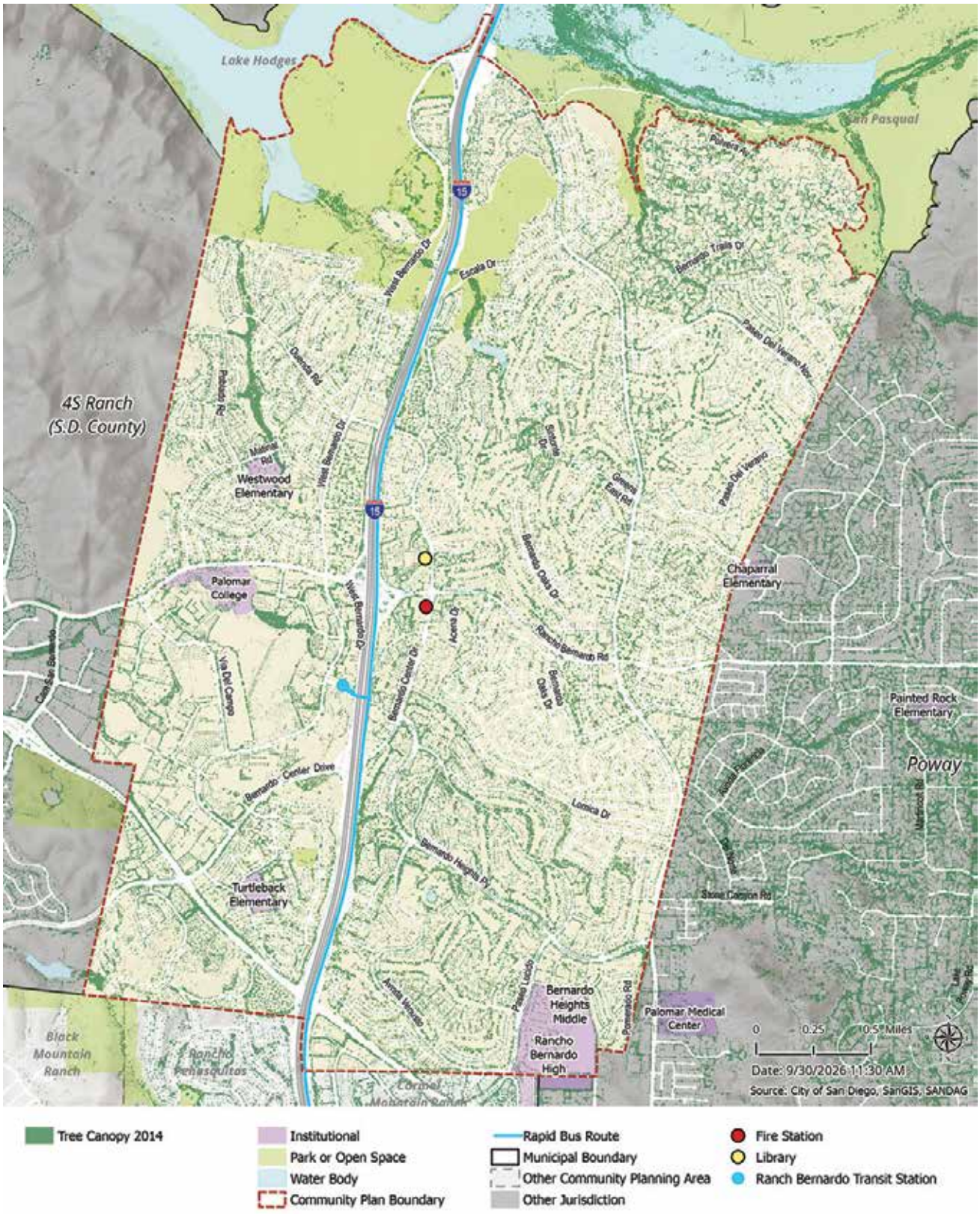
- Enhanced placemaking and community character
- Increased property values
- Shade and cooling, while supporting energy conservation
- Additional habitat
- Health benefits, such as reduced pollution and better air quality
- Soil and carbon sequestration

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 to coordinate the work of multiple City departments. The City's 2022 Climate Action Plan establishes a specific goal to increase urban tree canopy cover with targets of 28 percent by 2030 and 35 percent 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.

Tree Canopy Coverage

The tree coverage in Rancho Bernardo is shown in Figure 3-14. The mapping is based on City land cover data derived from high resolution aerial imagery and LiDAR. Approximately 20.1 percent of the Rancho Bernardo planning area is covered by tree canopy, which is higher than the City average of 14.9 percent, but still significantly lower than the City's goal of 28 percent 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 canopy; however, the figure is generally representative of an order-of-magnitude analysis for an area of this size.

Figure 3-14: Urban Tree Canopy



3.11 Air Quality and Pollution Burdens

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

According to the American Lung Association's 2026 "State of the Air" annual air quality report, the nation's two most widespread types of outdoor air pollutants are ozone pollution and fine particulate matter, also referred to as smog and soot, respectively. The report determined that the San Diego metropolitan area ranked ninth for most ozone pollution and fifth for most annual particulate matter (out of the 25 most-polluted cities). Ozone is both naturally occurring through atmospheric reactions as well as pollutants released by transport and industrial activities. Ozone rankings are all based on unhealthy air days, as recorded using the Air Quality Index that was adopted with the 2015 National Ambient Air Quality Standards for Ozone. In 2018, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) officially designated all or parts of the 25 most-polluted cities as "nonattainment" areas for that ozone air quality standard. That action requires these areas to take steps to clean up the sources of pollution going forward.

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





CalEnviroScreen and Pollution Burden

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

Based on the California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool 5.0, which was released as a draft in January of 2026, none of the census tracts within the Rancho Bernardo Community Planning Area meet the definition of a disadvantaged community. All tracts score within the top 30th percentiles: the census tracts on the eastern side of the community generally fall within the top 10th percentiles; tracts west of I-15 fall within the top 20th percentiles; tracts east of I-15, north of Rancho Bernardo Road, and east of Pomerado Road fall within the top 30th percentile, as shown in Figure 3-14 and Table 3-2.

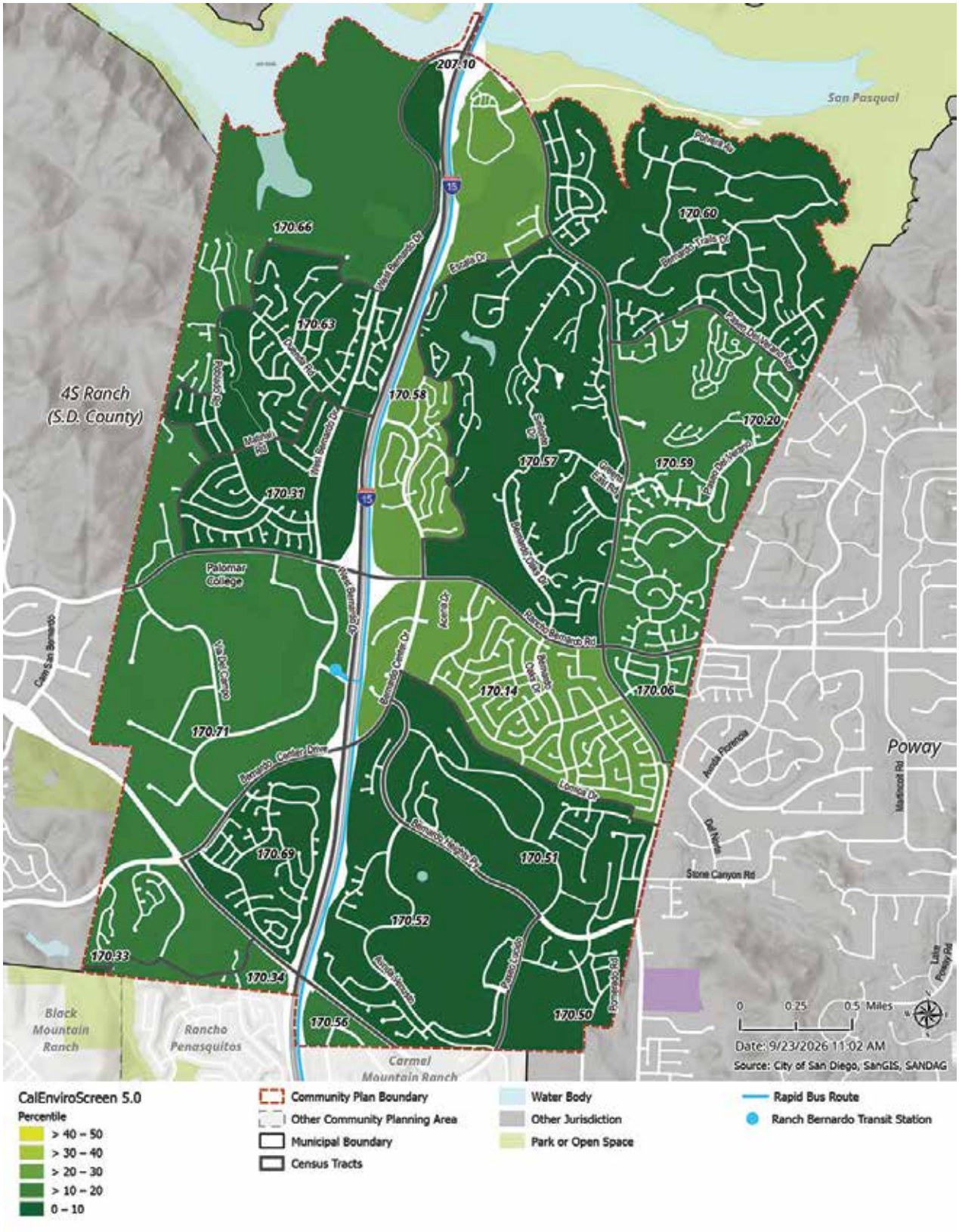


Table 3-2: CalEnviroScreen and Pollution Burden

Tract #	Overall CalEnviroScreen Percentile	Pollution Burden Percentile	Pollution Burden Percentile
6073017006	8.73	8.39	16.20
6073017014	26.85	19.55	34.86
6073017031	1.74	33.90	0.50
6073017033	1.58	2.73	5.15
6073017034	15.19	26.80	13.68
6073017051	6.16	18.39	6.12
6073017052	7.75	21.01	7.12
6073017055	20.89	43.10	14.04
6073017057	1.04	18.11	0.55
6073017058	22.68	41.94	16.24
6073017059	10.48	5.11	25.66
6073017060	5.37	10.95	7.72
6073017063	4.85	24.72	3.24
6073017066	16.86	53.55	7.68
6073017069	6.40	26.14	4.54
6073017071	15.53	44.68	8.38

Data Source: California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool 5.0

Figure 3-15: CalEnviroScreen and Pollution Burden



3.12 Sustainability, Equity, Resilience and Conservation Summary

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

- Rancho Bernardo **residents and employees drive more** than the regional average.
- The southwest portion of the community is within a **Transit Priority Area**.
- Most homes in Rancho Bernardo are **within a half-mile walking distance of a community facilit**y.
- **Walkability to grocery stores is limited** to the central portions of the community.
- Although all of Rancho Bernardo is considered a **high or highest resource community,** approximately 11 percent is identified as an **Environmental Justice Community**.
- Although most of the planning area has been developed, the **remaining natural areas**, mostly around the northern border of the community, are protected under the City's planned habitat preserve, the **Multi-Habitat Planning Area**.
- Wildfire risk is highest in natural landscape and freeway adjacent areas designated as Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones.
- Much of the community faces **high heat risk and exposure** due to a combination of higher daytime temperatures and high impervious surfaces.
- Tree canopy coverage in Rancho Bernardo is lower than the City of San Diego goal of 28%.
- Most of Rancho Bernardo census tracts fall within the **top 20th percentile of California communities facing pollution burden**.

04 Land Use & Development

4.1 Existing Land Use

The Rancho Bernardo Community Planning Area is approximately 6,500 acres. The breakdown of existing land uses is shown in Table 4-1, and the summary of existing land uses, excluding rights-of-way and utilities, is presented in Figure 4-1.

Residential is the most prominent existing land use in Rancho Bernardo, occupying 2,818 acres (43 percent), followed by parks and recreation uses with 1,604 acres (24 percent). Public facility uses account for 1,377 acres (21 percent), although most of that land use is dedicated to transportation, communications and utilities (1,212 acres). Industrial land uses account for 379 acres (6 percent) followed closely by commercial land uses, which account for 301 acres (4 percent). The remaining land use, which is made up of agriculture, undeveloped land and water bodies, accounts for 111 acres (2 percent) in the community. Figure 4-2 shows the distribution of the existing land use pattern across Rancho Bernardo. The overall pattern of existing land uses in Rancho Bernardo is shown in Figure 4-2.

Figure 4-1: Existing Land Use by Acreage

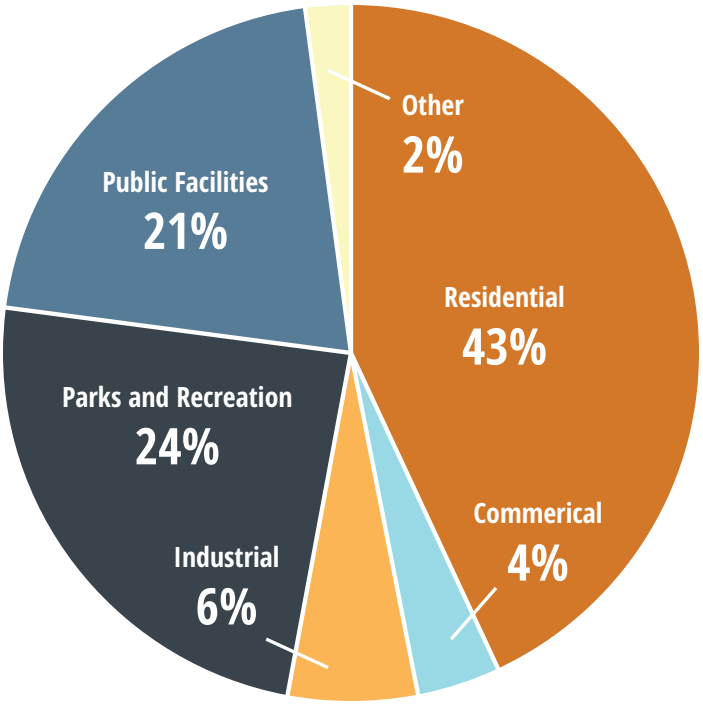
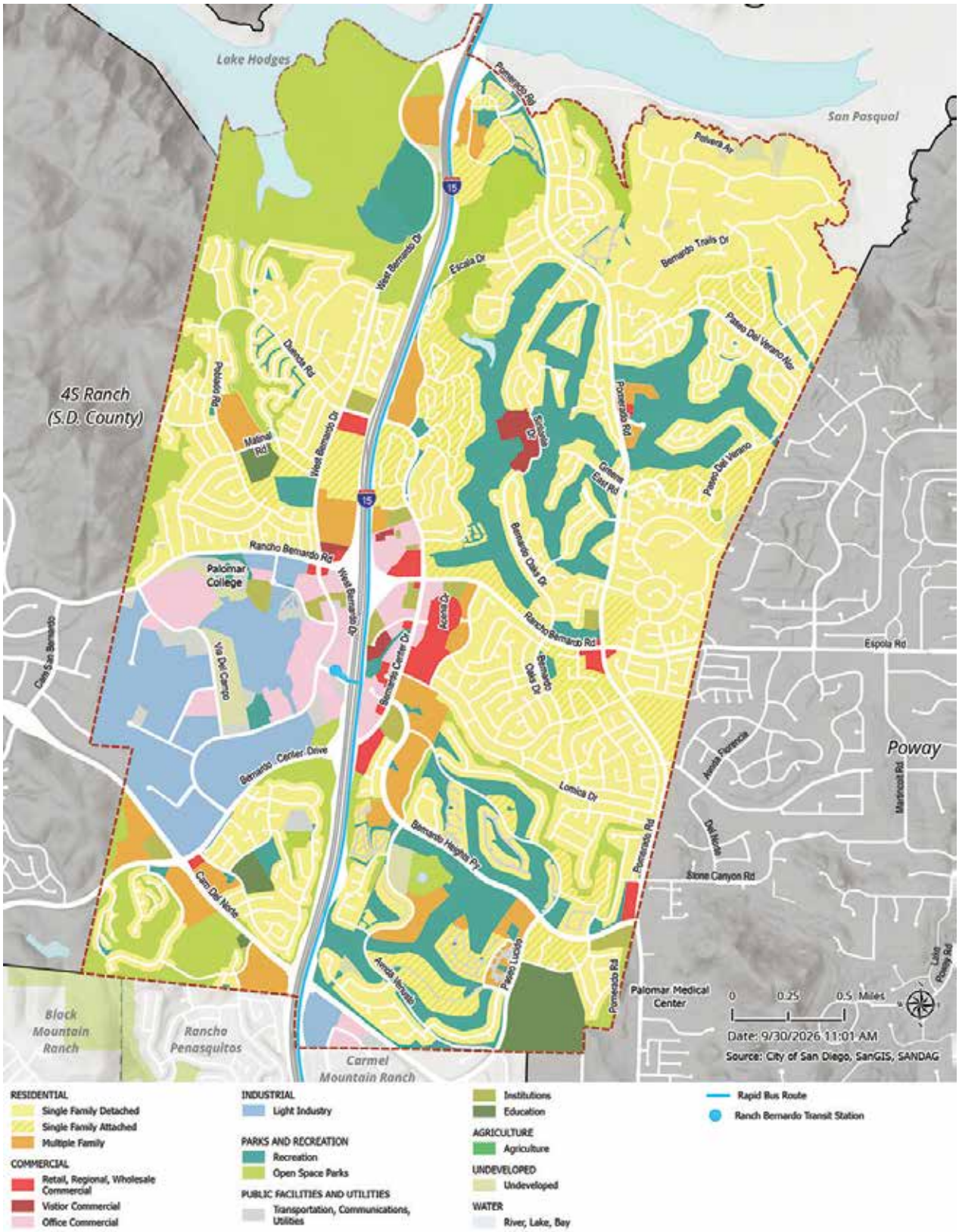


Table 4-1: Existing Land Use by Acreage

Existing Land Use Categories	Acres	Percentages
Residential	2,818	43%
Single Family Detached	2,020	31%
Single Family Attached	526	8%
Multiple Family	272	4%
Commercial	301	4%
Retail, Regional, Wholesale Commercial	78	1%
Visitor Commercial	28	<1%
Office Commercial	195	3%
Industrial	379	6%
Light Industry	379	6%
Parks and Recreation	1,604	24%
Recreation	750	11%
Open Space Parks	854	13%
Public Facilities	1,377	21%
Institutions	62	1%
Education	98	1%
Transportation, Communications, Utilities	1,217	18%
Other	111	2%
Agriculture	0.1	<1%
Undeveloped	81	1%
River, Lake, Bay	30	<1%
Total	6,590	100%

Source: SANDAG (2025)

Figure 4-2: Existing Land Use



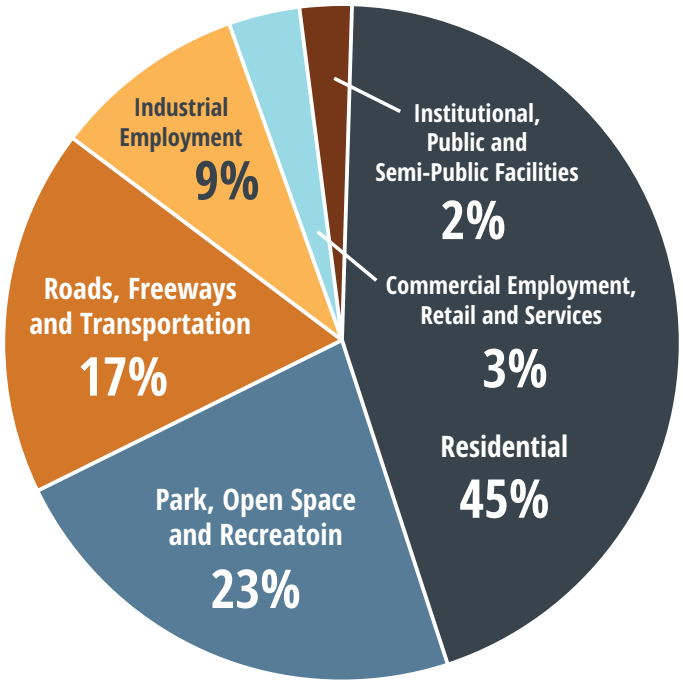
4.2 Rancho Bernardo Community Plan

The Rancho Bernardo Community Plan identifies key issues, goals, and implementation actions for the community. These include enhancing mobility and circulation; aligning land use intensity with infrastructure capacity; promoting a balanced mix of residential, commercial, and industrial uses; and supporting economic development. It also emphasizes the importance of protecting environmental resources, including sensitive habitats and open space, while encouraging well-designed urban form and the provision of community facilities and services that meet residents' daily needs.

Land Use Designations

Figure 4-3 shows the location of the different land use designations within Rancho Bernardo. Figure 4-4 and Table 4-2 show that most of the community is designated for residential (45 percent) and park, open space, and recreation use (23 percent). Roads, freeways, and transportation account for 17 percent of uses and industrial employment uses account for 9 percent. Commercial employment, retail and services account for 3 percent. The remaining land in the community is dedicated to institutional uses (2 percent), such as schools and religious institutions.

Figure 4-3: Adopted Community Plan Land Uses Summary



Source: City of San Diego

4.3 Zoning

All the community plan designated land uses in Rancho Bernardo are implemented by base zones and in certain locations overlay zones in the San Diego Municipal Code. The zoning is intended to implement the community plan's vision and policies by setting requirements that address things like allowed uses, how many homes can be built, the size and height of a building, or how far a building needs be set back from a street. Other regulations that determine what buildings look like and how they function include:

- residential density, which is the number of homes that can be built on a given size of land, typically an acre;
- floor area ratio, which determines the maximum square footage of a building based upon the total property size;
- building massing, including maximum building height and setback requirements that ensure space between buildings and the right-of-way.

The distribution of zones across Rancho Bernardo is shown in Figure 4-6 and Table 4-3 includes all the zones in Rancho Bernardo and some of the development regulations associated with each zone. Figure 4-6 is being shown for illustrative purposes only. Please refer to the City of San Diego Official Zoning Map and Municipal Code for further information.

Figure 4-4: Adopted Community Plan Land Uses

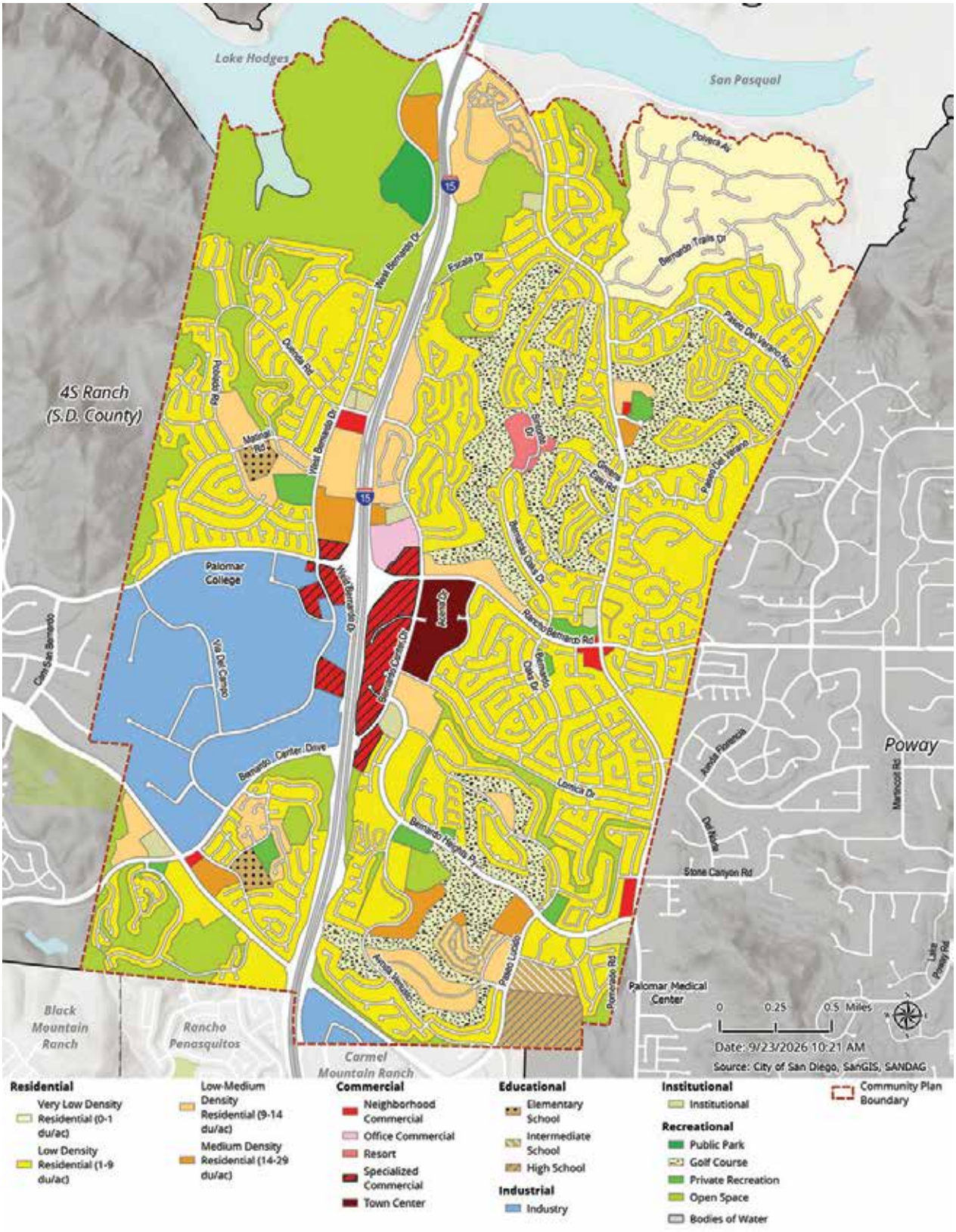


Table 4-2: Adopted Community Plan Land Uses by Acreage

Land Use Designation	Description	Acres	Percentages
Residential		**2,963**	**45%**
Very Low Density Residential *(0-1 homes per acre)*	This land use designation occurs on the northeastern boundary of the community near San Pasqual Valley and Lake Hodges and is distinguishable by larger lots.	**371**	**6%**
Low Density Residential *(1-9 homes per acre)*	This land use designation characterizes almost one-third of the community and is interspersed throughout the community, broken up by open spaces and golf courses. Low-Density is typified by conventional single-family homes.	**2,138**	**32%**
Low Medium Density Residential *(9-14 homes per acre)*	This land use designation is interspersed throughout the community primarily located near the main community corridors; it is characterized by lower-intensity multifamily housing, such as duplexes and townhomes.	**360**	**5%**
Medium Density Residential *(14-29 homes per acre)*	This land use designation is located sparsely throughout the community: some in the northwest, a bit along the I-15 corridor, one property in the center of the community on Pomerado Road, and the rest near the southern boundary; it is characterized by medium-low intensity multifamily housing, such as stacked flats and walk-up apartments.	**95**	**1%**
Park		**1,504**	**23%**
Bodies of Water	This land use designation includes the portion of Lake Hodges in the far northwestern portion of the community.	**26**	**<1%**
Golf Course	This land use designation includes the golf courses east of I-15.	**521**	**8%**
Open Space	This land use designation includes preserved hillsides and natural habitat that protect environmental resources, provide scenic character, and separates developed neighborhoods.	**864**	**13%**
Private Recreation	This land use designation includes privately owned recreational facilities that serve residents and members, such as clubs and Home Owners Association Parks. Private Recreation is a defining feature of Rancho Bernardo's master-planned character and, as such, are distributed throughout the community.	**58**	**1%**
Public Park	This land use designation includes Rancho Bernardo Community Park in the northwestern part of the community along West Bernardo Drive.	**35**	**1%**

Source: City of San Diego

Table 4-2: Adopted Community Plan Land Uses by Acreage (continued)

Land Use Designation	Description	Acres	Percentages
Roads. Freeways and Transportation		**1,149**	**17%**
Right-of-Way	This land use designation includes the I-15 corridor and the public and private streets that provide local and regional access throughout the community.	**1,149**	**17%**
Industrial Employment		**612**	**9**
Industry	This land use designation includes areas clustered mostly in the center of the community, north of Bernardo Center Drive, south of Rancho Bernardo Road, and west of I-15 and accounts for most of the jobs in Rancho Bernardo.	**612**	**9**
Commercial Employment, Retail & Services		**218**	**3%**
Neighborhood Commercial	This land use designation provides a range of necessity goods, and personal and repair services for the convenience of the immediately adjacent residential neighborhood, concentrated in individual sites or small shopping centers.	**21**	**<1%**
Office Commercial	This land use designation provides office space for professional, medical, financial, and business services; it is located in the center of the community, just east of I-15 and north of Rancho Bernardo Road and west of Bernardo Center Drive.	**21**	**<1%**
Resort	This land use designation includes the Rancho Bernardo Inn located in the center of the community at the Country Club of Rancho Bernardo.	**19**	**<1%**
Specialized Commercial	This land use designation provides commercial retail and service uses that support Rancho Bernardo and surrounding communities.	**105**	**2%**
Town Center	This land use designation provides a mix of retail, office, civic, residential, and public uses intended to serve as a focal point for community activity.	**52**	**<1%**
Institutional, Public and Semi-Public Facilities		**136**	**2%**
Elementary School	This land use designation includes elementary schools that serve the educational needs of the community.	**24**	**<1%**
Intermediate School	This land use designation includes Bernardo Heights Middle School.	**21**	**<1%**
High School	This land use designation includes Rancho Bernardo High School.	**52**	**1%**
Institutional	This land use designation includes religious institutions in Rancho Bernardo.	**40**	**<1%**
Total		**6,583**	**100%**

Source: City of San Diego

Figure 4-5: Zoning

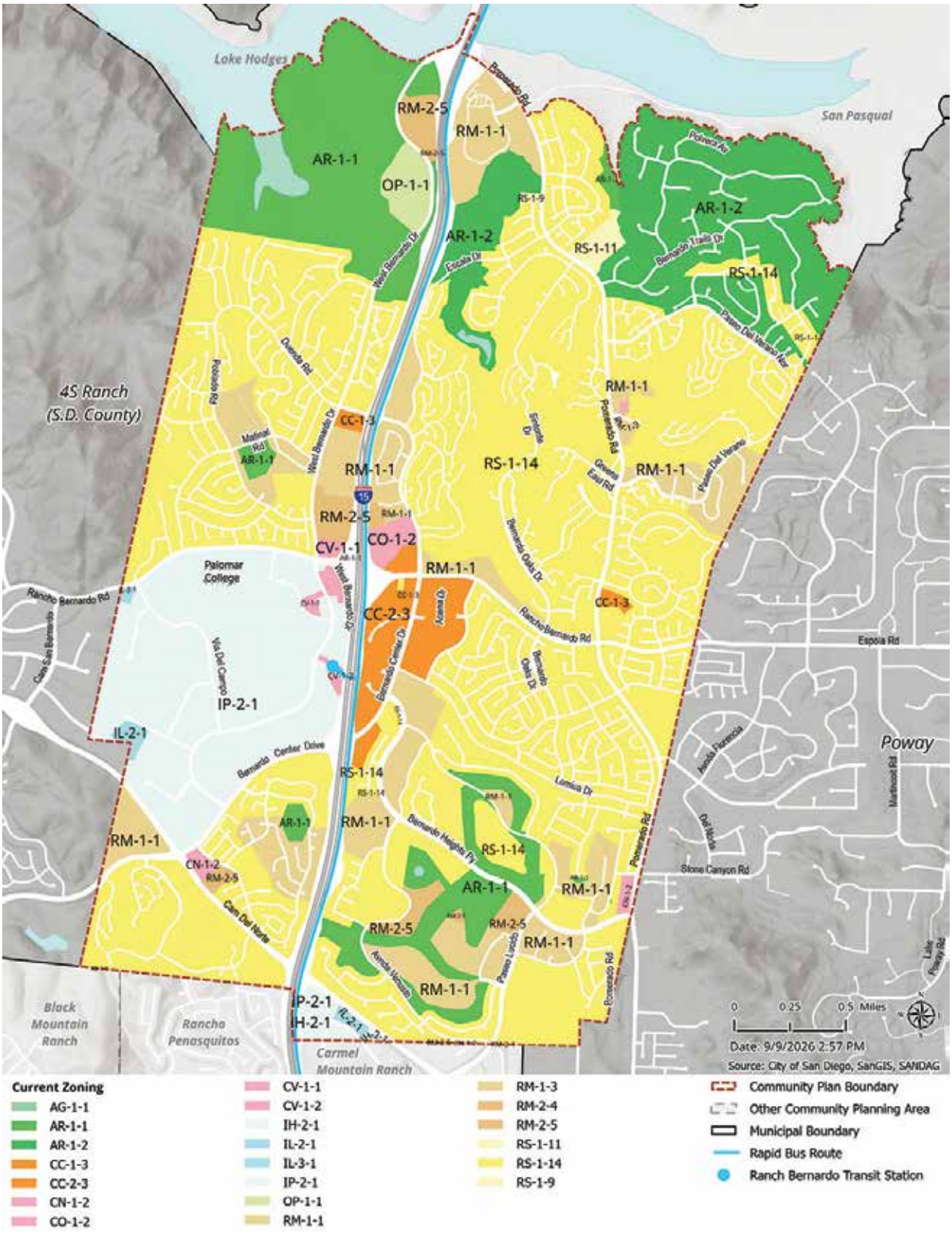


Table 4-3: Summary of Existing Zoning Designations*

Zone	Description	Max. Allowed Residential Density *(Homes per Acre)*	Max. Floor Area Ratio	Max. Building Height
Agriculture				
AG-1-1	Allows for a wide range of agricultural uses and low-density homes on lots of at least 10 acres.	0.1	--	30
AR-1-1	Allows for limited agricultural uses and low-density homes on lots of at least 10 acres.	0.1	--	30
AR-1-2	Allows for limited agricultural uses and low-density homes on lots of at least 1 acre.	1	--	30
Commercial				
CC-1-3	Allows for a mix of community-serving commercial uses and residential uses designed for people arriving by car.	29	0.75	45
CC-2-3	Allows for a mix of community-serving commercial uses and limited residential uses, designed for people arriving by car.	29	0.75	45
CN-1-2	Allows for residential uses with limited convenient retail and personal service uses, designed for people arriving by car.	29	1.0	30
CO-1-2	Allows for a mix of office and residential uses that serve as an employment center.	29	1.5	60
CV-1-1	Allows for a mix of large scale hotels, dining, recreation, visitor attractions for tourists and residential uses.	29	2.0	60
CV-1-2	Allows for a mix of neighborhood scale pedestrian oriented hotels, dining, recreation, visitor attractions for tourists and residential uses.	29	2.0	45
Industrial				
IH-2-1	Allows for large-scale manufacturing industrial uses with some office uses.	--	2.0	--
IL-2-1	Allows for a wide range of manufacturing and distribution industrial uses mixed with office and limited commercial uses.	--	2.0	--
IL-3-1	Allows for a wide range of manufacturing and distribution industrial uses mixed with office, and commercial uses.	--	2.0	--
IP-2-1	Allows a mix of light industrial and office uses.	--	2.0	--
Open Space				
OP-1-1	Allows for active parks.	--	--	--
Residential				
RM-1-1	Allows for lower-density multifamily housing designed to look and feel like a single-family neighborhood.	15	0.75-1.25	30
RM-1-3	Allows for lower-density multifamily housing designed to look and feel like a single-family neighborhood.	22	1.05- 1.25	30
RM-2-4	Allows for medium-density multifamily housing.	25	1.20- 1.25	40
RM-2-5	Allows for medium-density multifamily housing.	29	1.35	30
RS-1-11	Allows for single-family homes on lots of at least 10,000 sf.	2	0.60	30/35
RS-1-14	Allows for single-family homes on lots of at least 5,000 sf.	9	0.60	30/35
RS-1-9	Allows for single-family homes on lots of at least 20,000 sf.	2	0.60	30/35

Source: City of San Diego

** Note: The summaries provided in this table are for general informational and planning purposes only. For a complete description of all requirements and permitted uses for each base zone and any applicable overlay zones, please refer directly to the City's Municipal Code.*

4.4 Existing Density and Intensity

Residential Density (Homes Per Acre)

The breakdown of existing residential density by total residential land (acres) in Rancho Bernardo is shown in Figure 4-7 and Table 4-4; the share of homes in the community at each density range relative to the total share of homes is shown in Table 4-4. The locations of existing residential density are shown in Figure 4-8. The residential share of residential land and total homes is further broken down between single family homes and multi-family homes below:

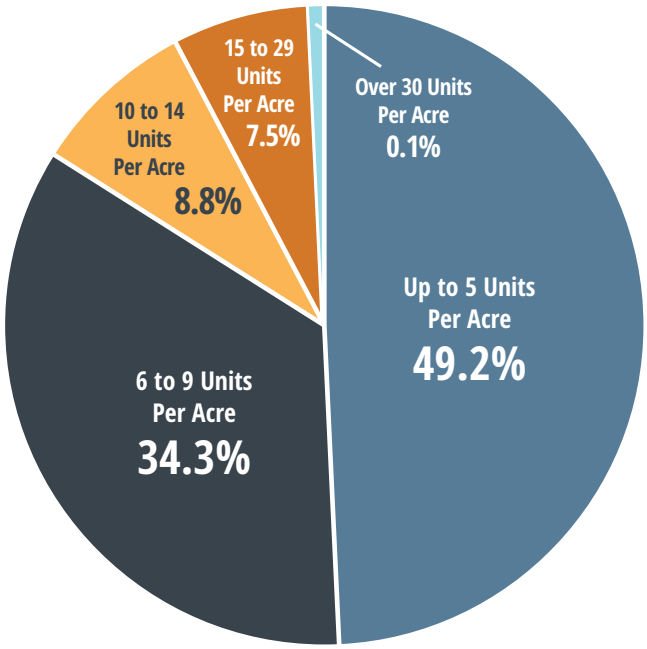
- **Single-Family homes** account for 83 percent of all residential land and 60 percent of all homes
  - ***1 to 5 homes per acre or less:*** 49 percent of all residential land and 23 percent of all homes
  - ***6 to 9 homes per acre:*** 34 percent of all residential land and 37 percent of all homes
- **Multi-Family homes** account for 17 percent of all residential land and 40 percent of all homes
  - ***10 to 14 homes per acre:*** 9 percent of all residential land and 16 percent of all homes
  - ***15 to 29 homes per acre:*** 8 percent of all residential land and 23 percent of all homes
  - ***30 or more homes per acre:*** less than 1 percent of all residential land and 1 percent of all homes

Overall, the average residential density in the planning area is approximately 6 homes per acre. The average density of single-family homes is 4.6 homes per acre and the average density for multi-family homes is approximately 15.3 homes per acre.



SkyLINE is a seven-story, mixed-use, transit-oriented affordable housing community located next to the Rancho Bernardo Transit Station.

Figure 4-6: Existing Residential Density



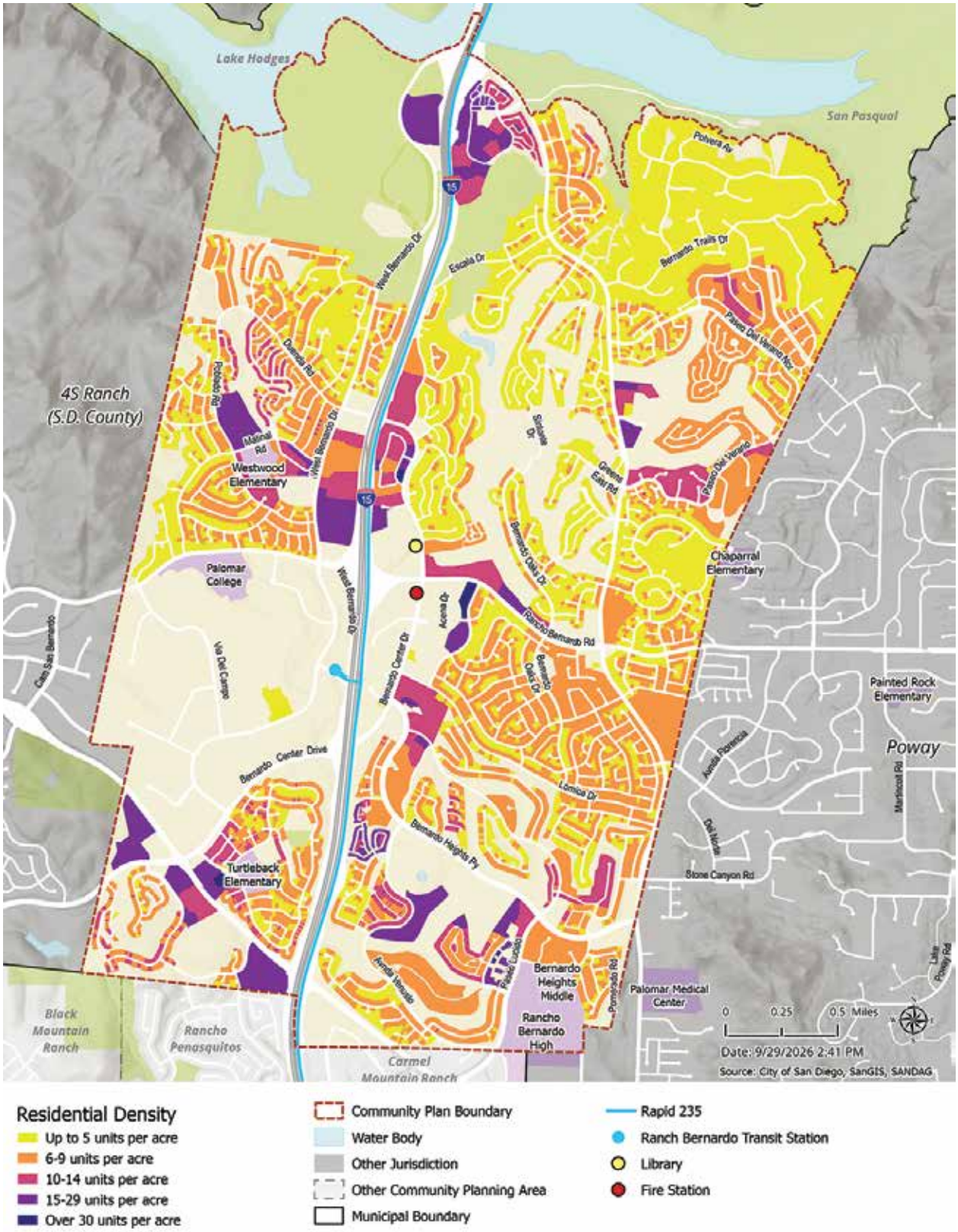
Source: City of San Diego

Table 4-4: Residential Land and Homes by Density Range

Density Range	Total Acres	Share of Residential Acres	Total Homes	Share of Total Homes
Single Family Homes				
Up to 5 Homes per Acre	1,391	49%	4,207	23%
6 to 9 Homes per Acre	969	34%	6,631	37%
Subtotal	2,360	83%	10,838	60%
Multi-Family Homes				
10 to 14 Homes per Acre	249	9%	2,870	16%
15 to 29 Homes per Acre	212	8%	4,059	23%
30 or More Homes per Acre	4	<1%	200	1%
Subtotal	465	17%	7,129	40%
Total	2,825		17,967	

Source: City of San Diego, SanGIS, SANDAG

Figure 4-7: Existing Residential Density



Non-Residential Floor Area Ratio

Floor Area Ratio compares the total floor area of a building to the size of the property it is built on. For example, a Floor Area Ratio of 2.0 means the building square footage is equal to twice the area of the property. The breakdown of existing Floor Area Ratios by acre in Rancho Bernardo is shown in Figure 4-9 and Table 4-5. The location of existing non-residential FAR is shown in Figure 4-10. The median Floor Area Ratio in Rancho Bernardo is 0.29.

Table 4-5: Non-Residential Floor Area Ratio Summary

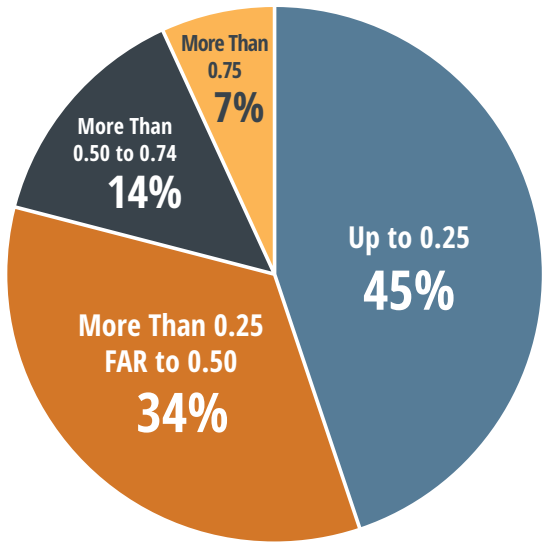
Floor Area Ratio	Share of Non-Residential Properties
Up to 0.25	45%
More than 0.25 FAR to 0.50 FAR	34%
More than 0.50 FAR to 0.75 FAR	14%
More than 0.75 FAR	7%

There are 15 properties that have a Floor Area Ratio greater than 0.75: only 6 of those 15 have a Floor Area Ratio greater than 1.0. The maximum Floor Area Ratio in Rancho Bernardo is 5.9



Office Park development in Rancho Bernardo.

Figure 4-8: Non-Residential Floor Area Ratio



4.5 Commercial, Business and Employment

Employment Uses and Prime Industrial

Employment or commercial uses account for around 10 percent of the land use in Rancho Bernardo, as shown in Figure 4-1. Industrial uses, which includes light industry or manufacturing, account for just over 5 percent of land in Rancho Bernardo and are generally located in the center of the community west of I-15. All industrial lands in Rancho Bernardo are considered Prime Industrial, as shown in Figure 4-10. Prime Industrial land is a General Plan designation for areas that support concentrations of employment and businesses that export goods and services outside the region, thereby bringing income into the local economy. The designation helps ensure that changes in these areas are carefully considered so they can continue to support economic activity and employment while accommodating other community needs where appropriate.

Commercial uses, which include retail, regional, wholesale, visitor and office commercial account for just under 5 percent of land in Rancho Bernardo and are generally located in the heart of the community east of I-15.

Jobs in Rancho Bernardo

As of 2023, Rancho Bernardo provided about 21,000 jobs with most clustered in the center of the community, north of Bernardo Center Drive, south of Rancho Bernardo Road, and west of I-15, with an additional commercial district located east of I-15 along Bernardo Center Drive, as shown on Figure 4-11. Table 4-5 shows industry sectors in Rancho Bernardo and the number of jobs within each industry sector and the relative share of each industry's jobs to the total within Rancho Bernardo.

Almost a quarter of all jobs in the Community are in manufacturing (21.2 percent), followed by professional, scientific and technical services (18.0 percent) and health care and social assistance (15.1 percent).

Figure 4-9: Non-Residential Floor Area Ratio

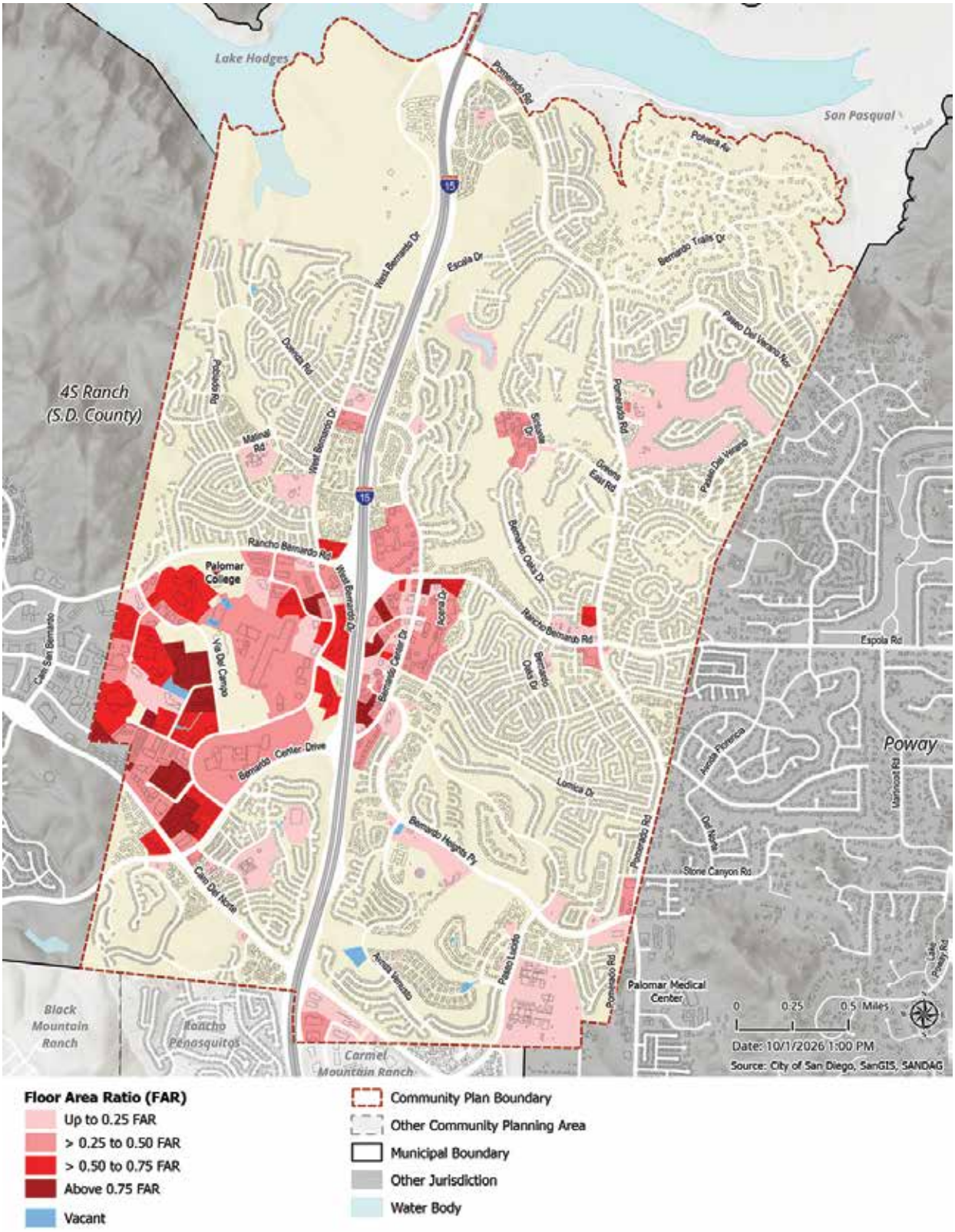
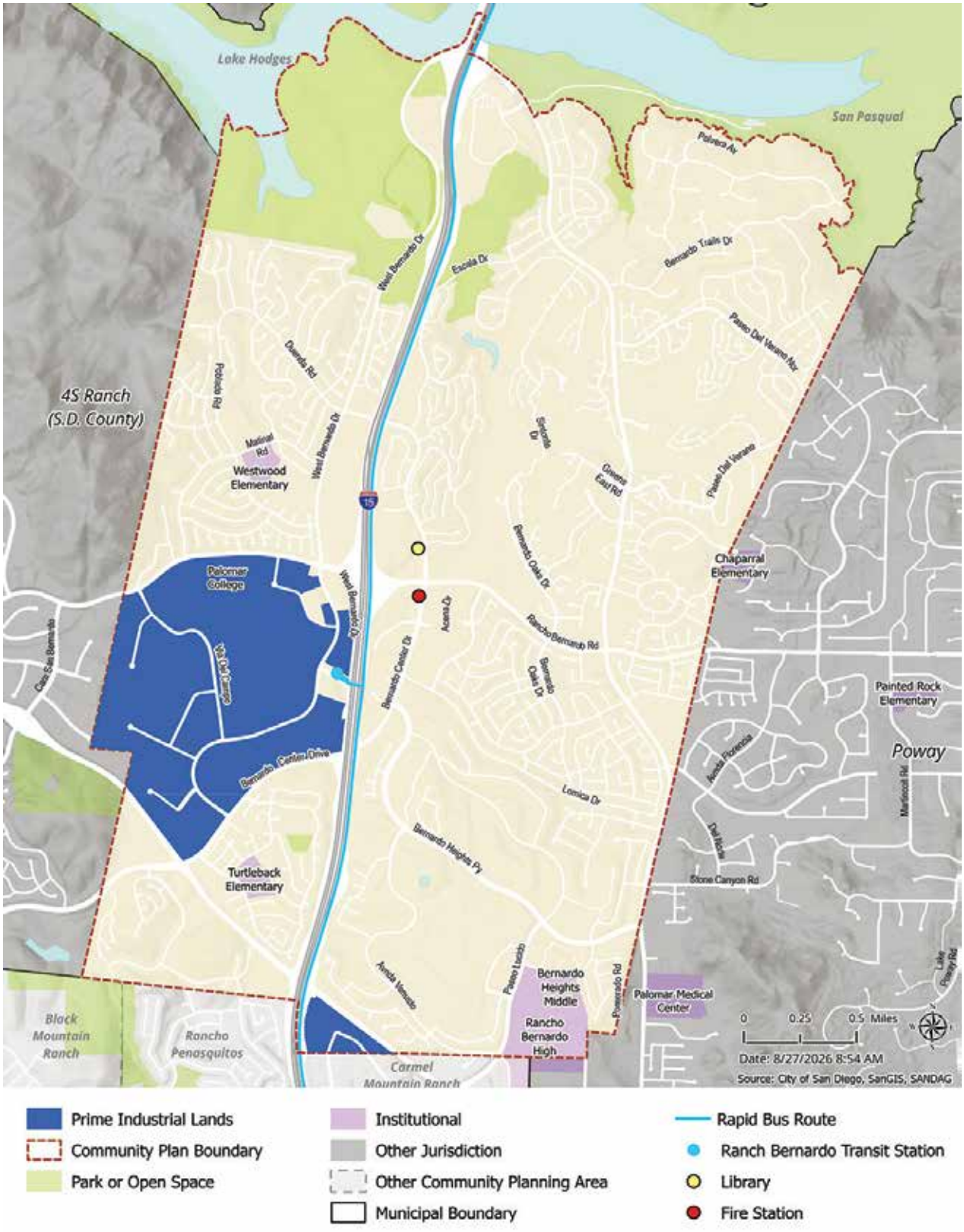


Figure 4-10: Prime Industrial Land



4.6 Balance of Homes, Jobs and Commutes

A healthy balance of homes and jobs provides people with the opportunity to live closer to where they work, supporting shorter commutes and enabling some to travel without a car, which can save time and money. An imbalance between homes and jobs can result in workers facing longer commutes, higher transportation costs, and less time for family and recreation. These extended commutes also increase vehicle miles traveled, traffic congestion, and greenhouse gas emissions.

Rancho Bernardo has 23,000 jobs and 17,980 homes. For every home in Rancho Bernardo there are 1.3 jobs. Rancho Bernardo also experiences a significant inflow of commuters. Out of approximately 23,000 jobs in Rancho Bernardo, only around 1,400 workers live and work within the community (approximately 6 percent), as shown in Table 4-6 and Figure 4-12. The remaining 21,000 jobs in Rancho Bernardo (approximately 94 percent) are held by employees who commute from somewhere else.

When reviewing commute origins, almost one-quarter (24.5 percent) of commuters live outside of San Diego County; almost one-third (28.1 percent) live more than 25 miles away from Rancho Bernardo and more than one-fifth (20.9 percent) live over 50 miles away. These commutes are significantly higher than the San Diego regional average total daily miles traveled for employees discussed in Chapter 3 (Table 3-1), which is 11.9 miles and includes both trips to and from work as well as daily errands.

Table 4-6: Employment Profile (2023)

Industry Sector	Count	Share
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting	2	0.0%
Mining, Quarrying and Oil, Gas Extraction	0	0.0%
Utilities	17	0.1%
Construction	896	4.0%
Manufacturing	4,475	19.7%
Wholesale Trade	744	3.3%
Retail Trade	650	2.9%
Transportation and Warehousing	1,036	4.6%
Information	295	1.3%
Finance and Insurance	793	3.5%
Real Estate. Rental, Leasing	767	3.4%
Professional, Scientific, Technical Services	3,909	17.2%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	969	4.3%
Administrative, Support, Waste Management, Remediation Services	860	3.8%
Educational Services	762	3.4%
Health Care and Social Assistance	3,621	16.0%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation	380	1.7%
Accommodation and Food Services	1,837	8.1%
Other Services (Excluding Public Administration)	644	2.8%
Public Administration	12	0.1%
Total	22,669	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (2023)

Table 4-7: Rancho Bernardo Worker Commute Origins (2023)

Commute Origin	Shares of Employees	Cumulative Share of Employees
Commutes by Place		
Rancho Bernardo	5.7%	N/A
City of San Diego	32.3%	38%
San Diego County	37.5%	75.5%
Outside of San Diego County	24.5%	
Commutes by Distance		
Within 5 Miles of Rancho Bernardo	23%	N/A
Within 10 miles of Rancho Bernardo	17.5%	40.5%
Within 25 miles of Rancho Bernardo	31.4%	71.9%
Within 50 miles of Rancho Bernardo	7.2%	79.1%
Within 75 miles of Rancho Bernardo	7.3%	86.3%
Within 100 miles of Rancho Bernardo	5.4%	91.7%
More than 100 miles from Rancho Bernardo	8.3%	

An example of an office building in the Rancho Bernardo.



Figure 4-11: Location of Jobs

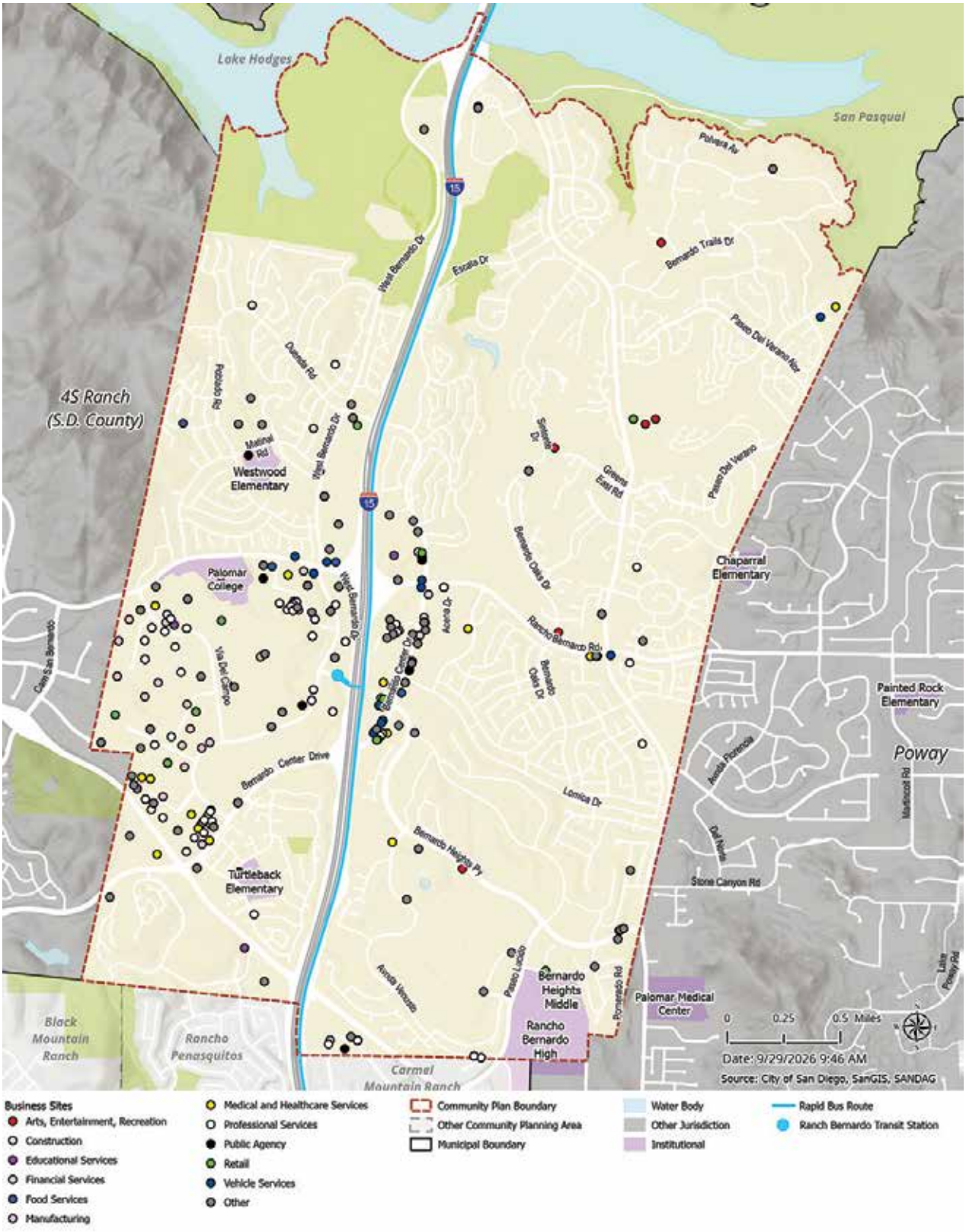


Figure 4-12: Commuter Inflow/Outflow



4.7 Land Use Summary

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

- **Residential use is the most prominent** existing land use in Rancho Bernardo, occupying 2,800 acres or 43 percent of the community.
- Almost **one quarter of all the land** in Rancho Bernardo is used **for recreation or open space park**.
- The **existing uses closely mirror the Rancho Bernardo Community Plan** adopted in 1978; the 1978 plan designates 45 percent of the community residential and 23 percent of the community as park, open space or recreation.
- **83 percent of the residential land in Rancho Bernardo are single-family homes**, which make up 60 percent of the total homes in the community; the remaining 17 percent of the residential land in Rancho Bernardo are **multiple family homes, which make up 40 percent of the total homes** in Rancho Bernardo.
- **Around 10 percent of the land in Rancho Bernardo is for employment or commercial use**, including just over 5 percent of land for industrial, which includes light industry or manufacturing; and just under 5 percent of land is used for some type of commercial use, including retail, visitor commercial, and office.
- **The top three industry categories of jobs** in Rancho Bernardo are manufacturing (21.2 percent), followed by professional, scientific and technical services (18.0 percent) and health care and social assistance (15.1 percent).
- **Most of the jobs within Rancho Bernardo are clustered in the center of the community**, north of Bernardo Center Drive, south of Rancho Bernardo Road, and west of I-15.
- **72 percent of people employed in Rancho Bernardo commute within 25 miles**; 7 percent commute between 25 and 50 miles; the remaining 21 percent of employees commute more than 50 miles away. There are less homes than jobs in Rancho Bernardo.



05 Mobility



5.1 Overview

This section describes the existing transportation network in Rancho Bernardo for pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders, and cars. The section also highlights possible future transportation-improvements and safety.

5.2 Street and Freeway

The street and freeway network allows for people and goods to travel within and through the community. Streets and freeways also provide connections to other transportation options, including local and rapid bus services.

The existing street classifications within the Rancho Bernardo Community Planning Area are shown in Figure 5-1.

Freeway Network

Interstate 15 (I-15) is a major north-south freeway that splits across Rancho Bernardo and it provides connections to regional employment centers and destinations along the regional freeway network. It consists of 14 travel lanes, with five general purposes lanes in each direction and two lanes for express High Occupancy Vehicle center lanes. Access to the community is provided by interchanges at Camino del Norte, Bernardo Center Drive, Rancho Bernardo Road, and West Bernardo Drive/Pomerado Road. A direct access ramp at George Cooke Express Drive from the I-15 Express Lanes provides access to the Rancho Bernardo Transit Center. Although south of the community plan area, I-15 connects to State Route 56 (SR-56) which provides an important east-west connection between I-15 and Interstate 5 (I-5), improving regional access to coastal communities and employment centers.

Major Streets

Major streets provide connections from other streets to the freeway system and adjacent communities. They have four- to six- travel lanes, a raised center median, and intersections. Major streets also provide access to community destinations. Major streets in Rancho Bernardo include:

- Rancho Bernardo Road
- Camino del Norte
- West Bernardo Drive
- Pomerado Road
- Bernardo Center Drive
- Bernardo Heights Parkway
- Paseo Lucido

5.3 Pedestrian Walkability

Walking in Rancho Bernardo is influenced by the size of blocks and location in the community. Walking to neighborhood destinations like grocery stores, schools, parks, recreation centers, the library, and transit stops is easier on flat and continuous sidewalks. Walking is more difficult in areas that lack complete sidewalks or where people must walk longer distances to reach destinations. Interstate-15 and the natural canyons, valleys and hills that define the community disrupt the community's street network, which makes it harder for people to walk to destinations and between neighborhoods. Many streets were also designed to be curvilinear and winding, which creates additional difficulty for pedestrian trips by adding additional walking distance between destinations.

The existing sidewalk network and locations with missing sidewalks within Rancho Bernardo are shown in Figure 5-2. Missing sidewalks are concentrated in the Bernardo Trails neighborhood located in the northeastern part of the community. Bernardo Trails was designed and built without sidewalks, reflecting the rural character of the neighborhood.

Despite these gaps and barriers, the Community's sidewalk network provides relatively robust connections to parks, schools, grocery stores, recreation centers, and other key destinations.

Figure 5-1: Street Classifications

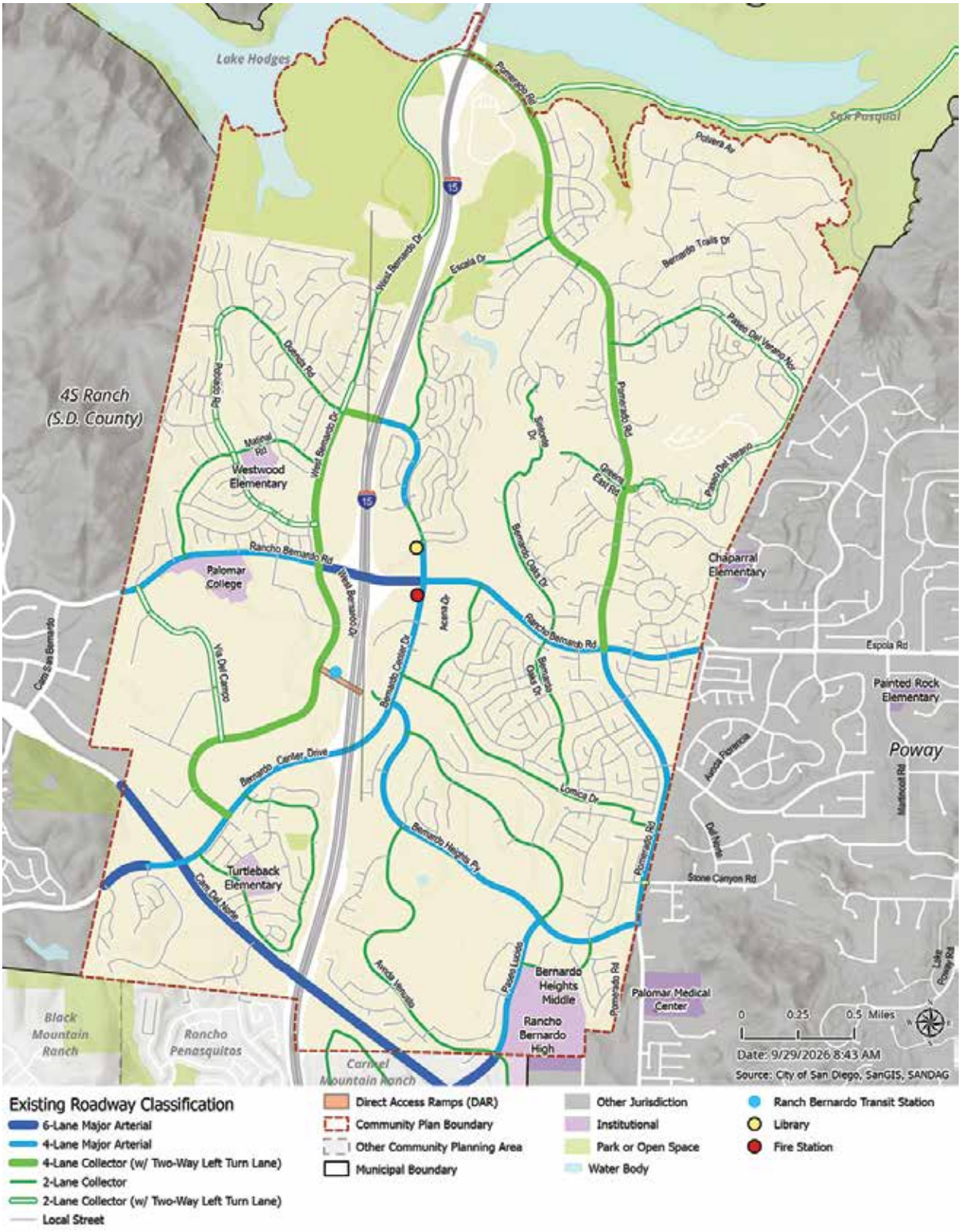
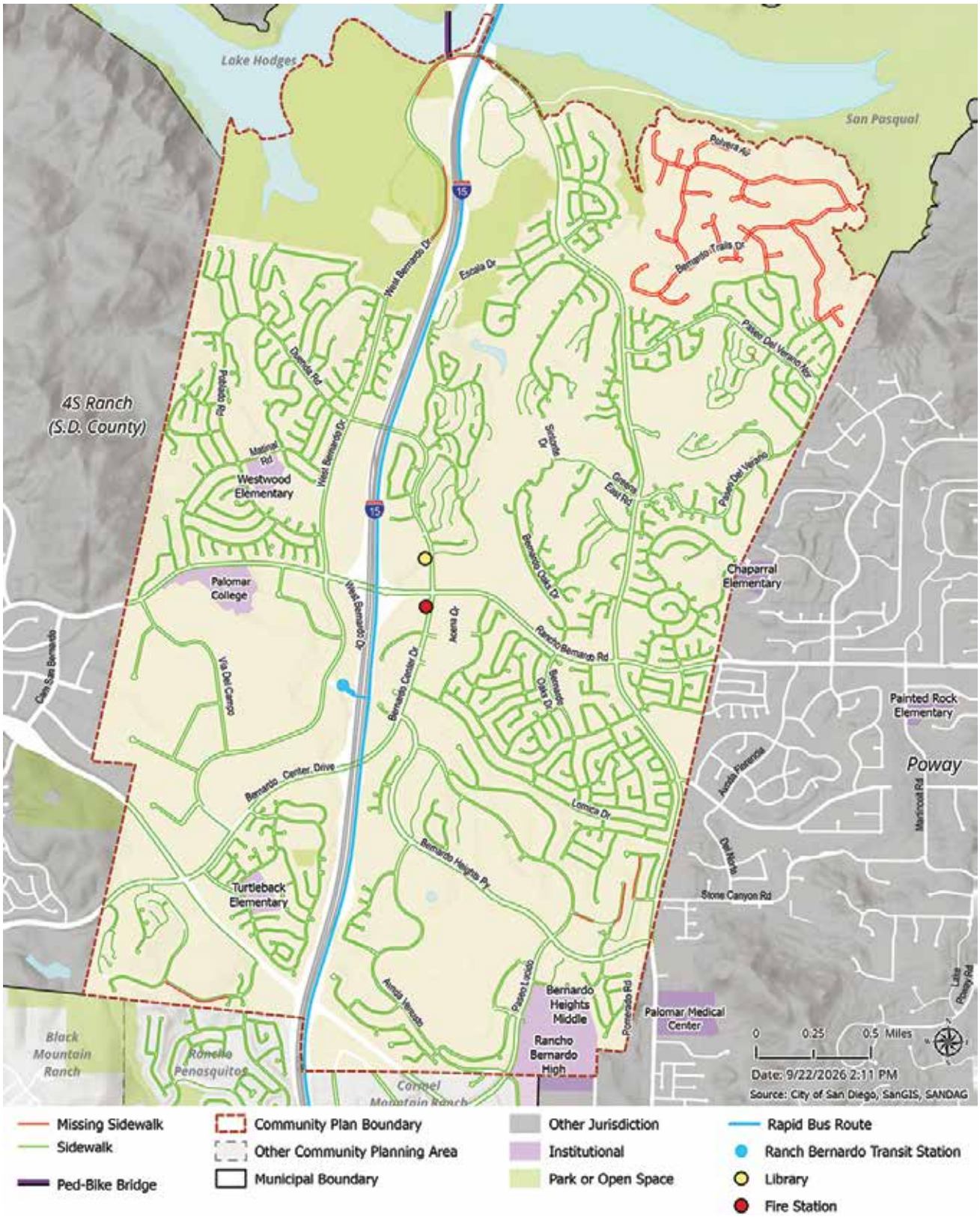


Figure 5-2: Sidewalks



5.4 Bicycle

Bikeways are planned and constructed by the City to implement the City's Bicycle Master Plan, while regional bikeways are planned and constructed by the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG).

Existing Bikeway Network

Bikeways are classified based on the protection they offer to bike riders. The existing bike network in Rancho Bernardo consists primarily of Class II bikeways, with some Class I and Class III bikeways as shown in Figure 5-3. A brief description of each bikeway class is provided in Table 5-1.

Regional Bikeways

The San Diego regional bicycle network consists of bikeways that provide connections between major transit centers, employment hubs, neighborhoods, and other key destinations. The network includes a variety of facilities, including off-street paths, separated bikeways, and bicycle boulevards. The only major regional bikeway that crosses within and through Rancho Bernardo is the West Bernardo Drive Bike Path, which connects the David Kreitzer Lake Hodges Bicycle/Pedestrian Bridge to Rancho Bernardo Community Park Drive. The bike path is 2,600 feet long in total. 760 feet of the bike path was built on a cantilevered viaduct because the section of West Bernardo Drive next to the lake was too narrow otherwise to accommodate the width of the bike path.

Planned Bikeway Network

The planned bikeway network in Rancho Bernardo focuses on strengthening connections between community amenities, services, and other key destinations while upgrading bikeways to provide a safer and more comfortable riding experience.

5.5 Transit

Existing Transit Network

Transit options within Rancho Bernardo include two regional Rapid Bus routes and several local bus routes, as shown in Figure 5-4 and Table 5-2 . These services provide connections to employment centers, shopping areas, schools, and community facilities. The Rancho Bernardo Transit Station also offers express bus service to Downtown San Diego and other employment centers, as well as park-and-ride facilities that support commuter travel.

Rancho Bernardo is served by MTS Rapid bus service along the Interstate 15 corridor, providing frequent, limited-stop transit connections between Escondido and Downtown San Diego. Rapid Route 235 operates throughout the day, serving the Rancho Bernardo Transit Station and connecting the community to major destinations including Escondido, Sabre Springs, Mira Mesa, Kearny Mesa, City Heights, and Downtown San Diego.

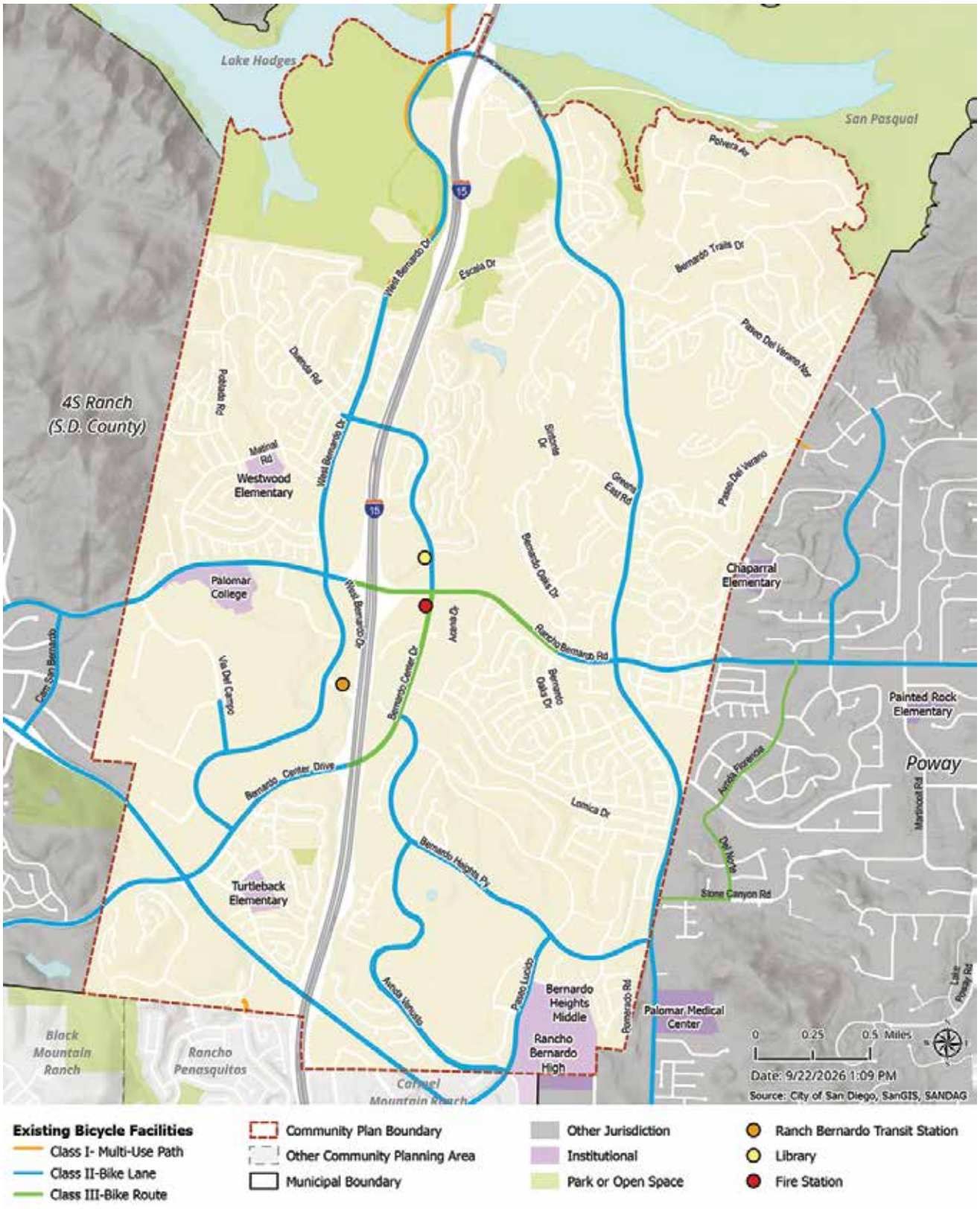
Table 5-1: Local and Rapid Bus Routes

Route Number	Description
Local Bus Routes	
Route 20:	Local bus service between Rancho Bernardo Transit Station and Downtown San Diego.
Route 945:	Local bus service between Rancho Bernardo and Poway High School via Pomerado Road.
Route 945A:	Operates as the "Poway Loop", providing limited additional weekday local bus service to Poway High School covering a loop via Twin Peaks Road, Espola Road, Pomerado Road, and Poway Road.
Rapid Bus Routes	
Rapid Route 235:	Rapid bus route between Escondido Transit Center and Downtown San Diego via Rancho Bernardo Transit Center.
Rapid Express Route 280:	Rapid bus route between Escondido, Del Lago, Rancho Bernardo and Downtown San Diego.

Table 5-2: Bicycle Classifications

Bicycle Classifications	Description
Class I - Bike Path	Bike paths, also known as shared-use or multi-use paths, are paved, off-street paths completely separated from cars for people biking and walking/rolling. Existing Class I Bike Paths in Rancho Bernardo: • West Bernardo Drive between Rancho Bernardo Community Park Driveway and I-15 Southbound Ramp • West Bernardo Drive between Aguamiel Road and 18130 West Bernardo Drive
Class II - Bike Lane	Bike lanes are on-street striped lanes with markings and signage for one-way bike travel, adjacent to car lanes. They are often enhanced with painted buffers. Existing Class II Bike Lanes in Rancho Bernardo: • West Bernardo Drive between Pomerado Road and Bernardo Center Drive • Pomerado Road between West Bernardo Drive and Bernardo Heights Parkway • Rancho Bernardo Road between West Bernardo Drive and Western Boundary • Rancho Bernardo Road between Bernardo Oaks and Eastern Boundary • Bernardo Center Drive between West Bernardo Drive and Rancho Bernardo Road • Bernardo Center Drive between Western Boundary and I-15 Overpass • Camino Del Norte between Western Boundary and Southern Boundary • Bernardo Heights Parkway between Bernardo Center Drive and Eastern Boundary • Paseo Lucido between Bernardo Heights Parkway and Southern Boundary • Avenida Venusto between Bernardo Heights Parkway and Paseo Lucido • Via del Campo between West Bernardo Drive and Via Esprillo
Class III - Bike Route	Bike routes provide shared use with cars within the same travel lane and are marked with shared lane markings (“sharrows”) and signage. Existing Class III Bike Routes in Rancho Bernardo: • Rancho Bernardo Road between West Bernardo and Bernardo Oaks Drive • Bernardo Center Drive between I-15 Overpass and Rancho Bernardo Road
Bicycle Boulevard Class III Enhanced	Enhanced Bike Routes, or bicycle boulevards, are bikeways with additional features that facilitate safe bike travel, such as speed humps, diverters, or other traffic-calming features to slow cars. There are no existing Class III Enhanced Bicycle Boulevards in Rancho Bernardo.
Class IV Separated Bikeway	Separated bikeways, also known as cycle tracks, are on-street bikeways that provide physical barriers to car traffic, like flex posts, concrete curbs, parking, or bollards. They may be constructed at street or sidewalk level and can be designed for one-way or two-way bicycle travel There are no existing Class IV Separated Bikeways in Rancho Bernardo.

Figure 5-3: Bicycle Network



Planned Transit Network

SANDAG'S 2025 Regional Plan outlines a 25-year vision for how the region will grow and invest in transportation infrastructure to improve mobility, accessibility, safety, health, equity and sustainability. To make public transit a faster, more reliable, convenient, and attractive alternative to driving, the Regional Plan includes investments in new and expanded transit services, including a range of bus services, such as Rapid, express, local, community circulator, and rural. These services are intended to improve mobility in areas that are difficult to serve with traditional transit, reduce the need to drive for short trips, and complement or replace underperforming bus routes where needed.

Less than 1 percent of Rancho Bernardo workers commute by transit, a lower share than the citywide average of 3 percent and the countywide average of 2 percent (see Table 5-4). To support existing and future transit demand, the 2025 Regional Plan proposes improvements to local and rapid bus service. Planned enhancements include increased service frequencies during peak and off-peak periods, extended service hours, and the introduction of new transit service to improve regional connectivity.

The following transit services are planned to serve Rancho Bernardo, as shown in Figure 5-4 and Table 5-3:

Table 5-3: Planned Transit.

Route Number	Description
Rapid Route 237:	Rapid bus service between UC San Diego and Rancho Bernardo Transit Center via Sorrento Valley/Carroll Canyon.
Rapid Route 238:	Rapid bus service between UC San Diego and Rancho Bernardo Transit Center via Sorrento Valley/Mira Mesa.
Rapid Route 290:	Extension of existing Rapid Route 290 from Rancho Bernardo Transit Center and Downtown San Diego.
Rapid Route 484:	Commuter express rapid bus service between Carlsbad to Kearny Mesa via I-15 and Rancho Bernardo Transit Center.
Rapid Route 246:	Express bus service between Rancho Bernardo to UC San Diego via State Route 56.
Circulator Route 675:	Rancho Bernardo Business Park Loop

5.6 Safety Data

The City collects and analyzes safety data, including traffic crashes data, to identify locations where safety improvements may be needed. This data also helps inform what type of street improvements may be need to help reduce the number and severity of traffic crashes while improving safety for people walking, riding, taking transit, or driving. In Rancho Bernardo, the City has implemented a variety of safety measures to enhance conditions for people walking/rolling, bicycling, and driving, including high-visibility crosswalks, traffic warning devices, and traffic signal timing that prioritizes people walking.

Collisions Involving Pedestrians or Bicyclists

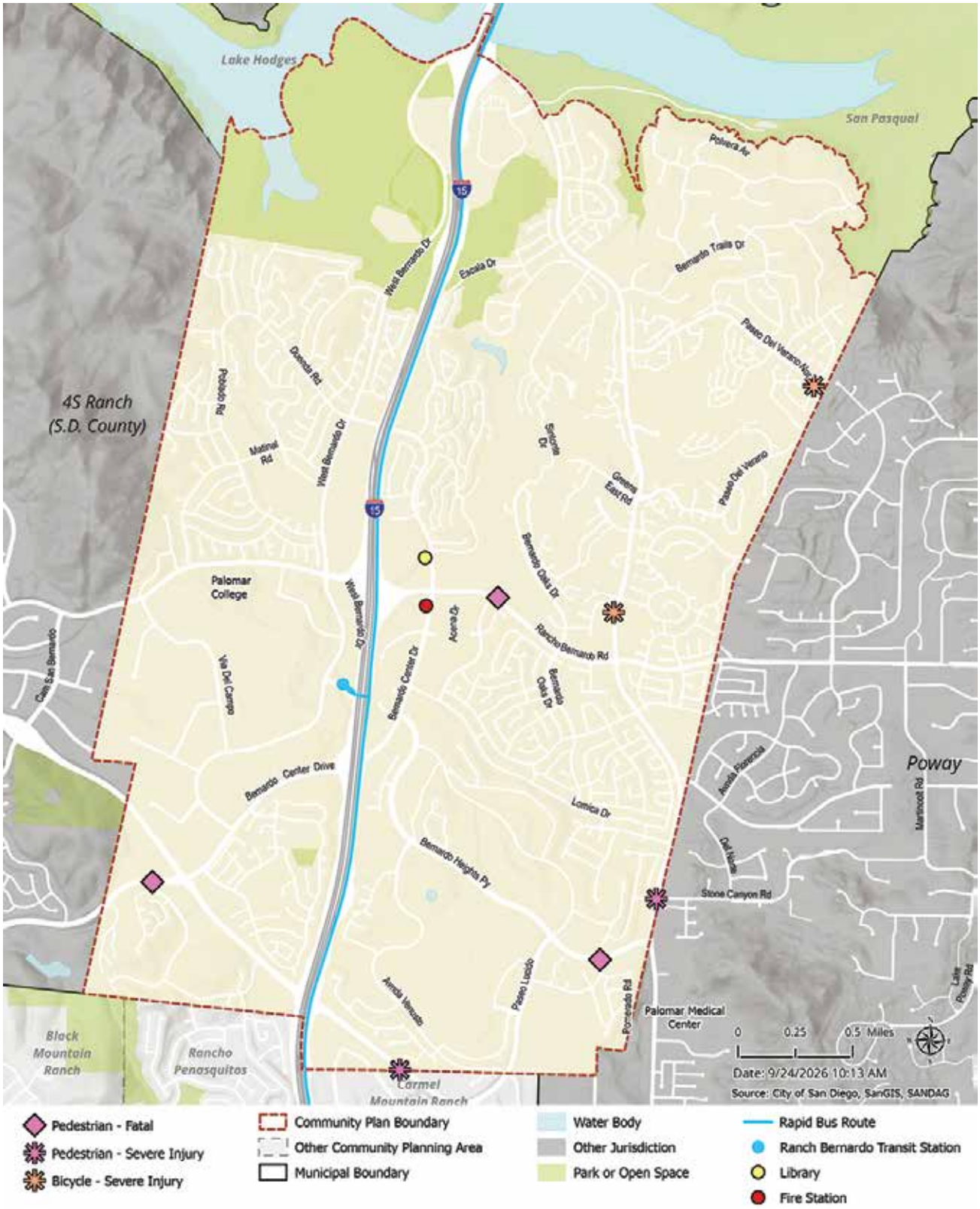
Based on collision data, Rancho Bernardo had seven pedestrian- and bicycle-involved collision resulted in a severe injury or fatality between 2014 and 2025, as shown in Figure 5-5.



Figure 5-4: Existing and Planned Transit Network



Figure 5-5: Pedestrian and Bicycle Collisions Resulting in Severe Injuries or Fatalities



5.7 Household Transportation Characteristics

How People Get to Work

About 67 percent of workers living in Rancho Bernardo get to work by driving alone, while almost 5 percent carpool, as shown in Table 5-4. Less than 1 percent get to work by public transit, just over 1 percent walk, and 0.1 percent bike. Overall, 2 percent of people get to work by walking, biking, or transit, which is significantly below the citywide average of 7 percent. Over 26 percent of workers living in Rancho Bernardo work from home, which is higher than the citywide average of 21 percent and the regionwide average of 19 percent.

Table 5-4: How People Get to Work for Rancho Bernardo, Citywide, Regionwide during 2020 to 2024

Commute Mode Share	Rancho Bernardo	Citywide	Regionwide
Drive Alone	66.6%	63%	66%
Carpooled	4.7%	8%	8%
Transit	0.7%	3%	2%
Walked	1.2%	3%	3%
Bicycle	0.1%	1%	1%
Taxicab, Motorcycle, or Other	0.4%	2%	2%
Worked from Home	26.3%	21%	19%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020-2024 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Commuting Characteristics by Sex. (ACSST5Y2024. S0801)

Commute to Work Time

The average time to get to work for workers living in the Rancho Bernardo is about 24.8 minutes, which is slightly longer than the citywide average (23.5 minutes) and the countywide average (25.5 minutes), as shown in Table 5-5. About 9 percent of workers have a commute of 10 minutes or less.

Table 5-5: Travel Time to Work for Rancho Bernardo, Citywide, Regionwide during 2020 to 2024

Commute Mode Share	Rancho Bernardo	Citywide	Regionwide
Travel time to work less than 10 minutes *(percent)*	8.9%	8%	9%
Mean travel time to work *(minutes)*	24.78	23.5	25.5

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020-2024 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Commuting Characteristics by Sex. (ACSST5Y2024. S0801)

Vehicle Ownership

Vehicle ownership patterns can also reflect how people travel. About 1 percent of households in Rancho Bernardo do not own a vehicle, compared to 3 percent citywide, as shown in Table 5-6. About 19 percent of households own only one car, compared to 23 percent citywide. About 48 percent of households own two vehicles, representing a higher share than the citywide and regionwide overall and demonstrates the community's stronger reliance on driving. About 32 percent of households own three or more vehicles, which is the same as the citywide average.

Table 5-6: Vehicle Ownership for Rancho Bernardo, Citywide, Regionwide during 2020 to 2024

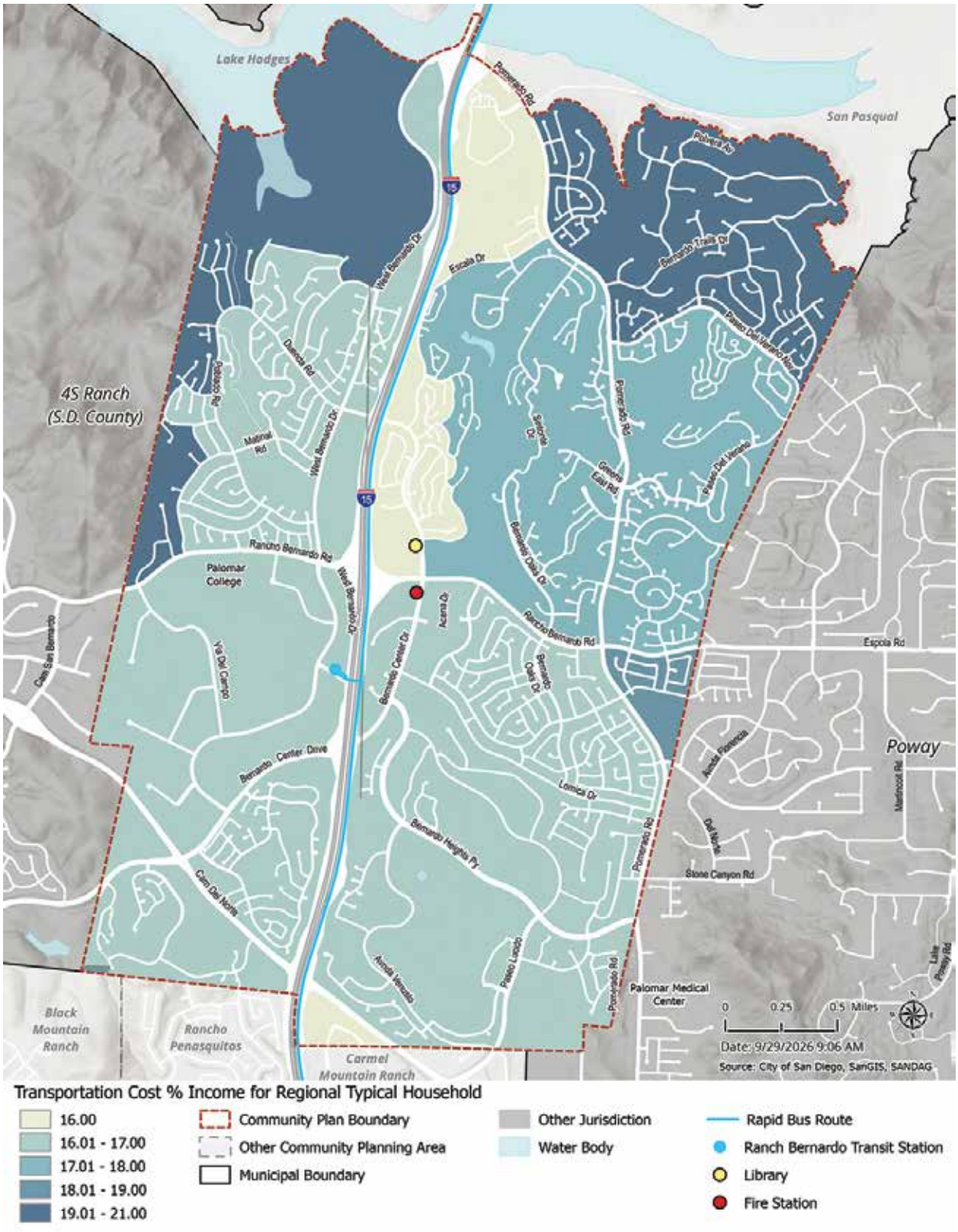
Number of Vehicles	Rancho Bernardo	Citywide	Regionwide
None	1.2%	3%	3%
1 Vehicle	19.3%	23%	19%
2 Vehicle	47.8%	42%	41%
3 or More Vehicles	31.7%	32%	38%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020-2024 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Commuting Characteristics by Sex. (ACSST5Y2024. S0801)

Transportation Costs

Transportation costs as a percentage of annual household income are shown in Figure 5-6. Households in Rancho Bernardo spend between 16 and 21 percent of their annual income on transportation, compared with the range of 11 to 23 percent for households across the San Diego region. Transportation costs can represent a significant financial burden, particularly for lower-income households, which can spend a larger share of their income on transportation than higher-income households. These characteristics further highlight the importance of also providing affordable transportation options to reduce household costs while improving access to employment, education, services, and other key destinations.

Figure 5-6: Household Transportation Spending



5.8 Mobility Summary

This section summarizes the key information related to mobility for the Rancho Bernardo planning area presented in this chapter.

- The **freeway, wide thoroughfares, topography, and curvilinear street network are the primary barriers** to pedestrian walkability in Rancho Bernardo.
- The existing bike network in Rancho Bernardo is primarily a combination of **Class II and Class III** facilities.
- Transit within Rancho Bernardo is provided by local and Rapid Bus service and **the Rancho Bernardo Transit Center provides regional transit connections.**
- **Approximately 0.7 percent of Rancho Bernardo workers commute by transit, compared to the citywide average of 3 percent.**
- Around **28 percent of Rancho Bernardo workers** either **commute by walking, bicycling, public transit, or work from home.**
- In Rancho Bernardo, **households spend between 16 and 21 percent of their annual income** on transportation.



06 Parks and Public Facilities

6.1 Overview

This section describes the existing community facilities and open space in Rancho Bernardo. The community has access to schools, emergency services, parks, recreational facilities, trails and open space that supports daily life and provides places for outdoor activities. Parks and natural spaces contribute to local air and water quality, offer wildlife habitat, and serve as natural buffers within the community.

6.2 Parks and Recreation

Existing Parks

Rancho Bernardo's system of existing parks includes a large community park, trails in a resource-based park and the San Dieguito River Park, and private recreation facilities, as shown in Table 6-1 and Figure 6-1. The types of public parks are addressed below:

- **Neighborhood, Community, and Mini Parks** are population-based parks that have facilities and services near residential areas. They serve the daily needs of neighborhoods and the community. Privately-owned parks and recreation spaces with public access easements may also satisfy some of the community's population-based park needs.
- **Resource-based Parks** are located at, or centered on beaches, canyons, mountains, river parks, habitat systems, lakes, historic sites, and/or cultural facilities and are intended to serve the Citywide population, as well as visitors.
- **Open Space Parks** are generally City-owned lands with canyons and mesas located throughout the City. Open space parks preserve and protect native plants and animals, while providing public access and enjoyment through hiking, biking, and equestrian trails.

Recreation Centers & Aquatics Complexes

As shown in Table 6-1 and Figure 6-1, Rancho Bernardo has two recreation centers. Both the community's recreation center buildings are set within the Rancho Bernardo Community Park – the Ed Brown Senior Center and the Rancho Bernardo-Glassman Recreation Center, which has an indoor gymnasium and meeting rooms for rent. While Rancho Bernado does not have a City maintained pool, many community members and their registered guests have access to one or more privately maintained pools, and all Rancho Bernardo residents may access the aquatic complexes in the neighboring or nearby communities of Carmel Mountain Ranch and Mira Mesa and throughout the City. The Rancho Bernardo High School pool, owned and maintained by the Poway Unified School District, serves high school students water polo, swimming and diving teams. Additionally, the community has access to swimming lessons, water exercise, recreational swimming, lap swimming and competitions at Carmel Mountain Community Pool. The Carmel Mountain Community Pool (located just south of Camino del Norte) serves the communities of Rancho Bernardo, Carmel Mountain Ranch and Rancho Peñasquitos.

Park Master Plan Recreation Value Based Park Standard

The Parks Master Plan uses a point value system to measure how much recreational value each park provides to the community. Parks receive points for things such as their size, sports and recreation activities, how easy they are to reach, playgrounds and other amenities, special events, and other features. This system considers the value of different types of parks, including large sports fields, small neighborhood parks, and trails.

Table 6-2 shows park value points for the existing parks in Rancho Bernardo in comparison to the Citywide goal of 100 park value points for every 1,000 residents.

The Park Master Plan provides goals for the number recreation centers and swimming facilities based on the number of people living in a community. The Parks Master Plan has a goal to have 17,000 square feet of recreation center space for every 25,000 people. For aquatic facilities, the goal is to have one aquatic complex for every 50,000 people. These goals in relationship to the existing population are also shown in Table 6-3.



Rancho Bernardo's existing park facilities are detailed in Table 6-1. The Rancho Bernardo Glassman Recreation Center offers a variety of programs.

Table 6-1: Rancho Bernardo Recreation Center Facilities

Recreation Centers	Description	Existing Size (Sq. Ft.)
Rancho Bernardo Glassman Recreation Center	Originally built in 1995, the Rancho Bernardo Glassman Recreation Center, situated within the Rancho Bernardo Community Park, features a full-size indoor gymnasium, two multi-purpose meeting rooms, and a community kitchen available for public rentals and neighborhood events. The center hosts a wide array of recreational programs, including open-play indoor basketball, public volleyball, and indoor pickleball. Indoor rental rooms offer versatile, climate-controlled environments officially designated as a community "cool zone", providing functional spaces of varying sizes perfectly suited for club meetings, private parties, and instructional classes.	13,000
Ed Brown Senior Center	The Ed Brown Center for Active Adults, managed by a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, is a community hub offering fitness classes, social events, and room rentals. It features active wellness programs, creative workshops, and flexible gathering spaces. There are several rooms, including an auditorium for approx. 100 users. Large shade pavilion.	5,000
	TOTAL RECREATION CENTER SQ. FT.	**18,000**





The Rancho Bernardo Community Park provides a range of recreation opportunities.

Table 6-2: Rancho Bernardo Existing Parks and Recreation Facilities Points Value Summary

Total Population (2025)	42,000 People
Recreation Value Points	
Recreation Value Points Goal *(100 Points Per 1,000 People)*	4,200 Points
Current Recreation Value Points	959 Points
Recreation Center	
Recreation Center Goal *(17,000 Sq. Ft. Per 25,000 People)*	28,600 Points
Current Recreation Center Square Footage	18,000 Points
Aquatic Complex	
Aquatic Complex Goal *(1 Complex per 50,000 People)*	1 Complex
Current Number of Aquatic Complexes	0 Complexes

Note: Population estimate and recreation center goal are approximate and rounded to the nearest hundredth.

San Dieguito River Parks

San Dieguito River Park serves as the immediate northern backyard and primary open space buffer for the Rancho Bernardo community. The park's central focal point, Lake Hodges and the landmark Bernardo Mountain, directly border the neighborhood to the north and west. This geographical relationship integrates the park deeply into the community's daily life through direct trail access to the Bernardo Bay Trail and the Piedras Pintadas Trail, which originate right next to the Rancho Bernardo Community Park. The David Kreitzer Lake Hodges Bridge provides direct access to several trails on the northern side of Lake Hodges, including the San Dieguito River Trail and the Coast to Crest Trail, as well as more direct access to the Elfin Forest Recreational Reserve.

The San Dieguito River Park began when six local governments, the County of San Diego and the Cities of Del Mar, Escondido, Poway, San Diego, and Solana Beach, joined together to plan the river valley as one regional park. Before this partnership, each city or the county created its own plans during the 1970s and 1980s, producing studies about the land and its natural resources. Although these plans were separate, they all emphasized protecting and improving the valley's unique environment. Over time, many community members and organizations supported these efforts, helping shape the park's long-term vision. The San Dieguito River Concept Plan documents this shared vision, outlines the park's goals and objectives, and provides the planning framework for future implementation.

The San Dieguito River Park Joint Powers Authority is the agency responsible for creating a natural open space park in the San Dieguito River Valley, which extends from the ocean at Del Mar to Volcan Mountain, just north of Julian. In the Rancho Bernardo community, local citizen action and neighborhood donors heavily financed the multi-million-dollar campaign to buy and preserve Bernardo Mountain from commercial development. Today, the San Dieguito River Park provides Rancho Bernardo residents with multi-use trails, staging areas, and opportunities for passive recreation such as hiking, biking, horseback riding and wildlife viewing.



Hikes of various intensity can be found in places like the San Dieguito River Park.

Figure 6-1: Existing Public Parks, Open Space and Recreation Facilities

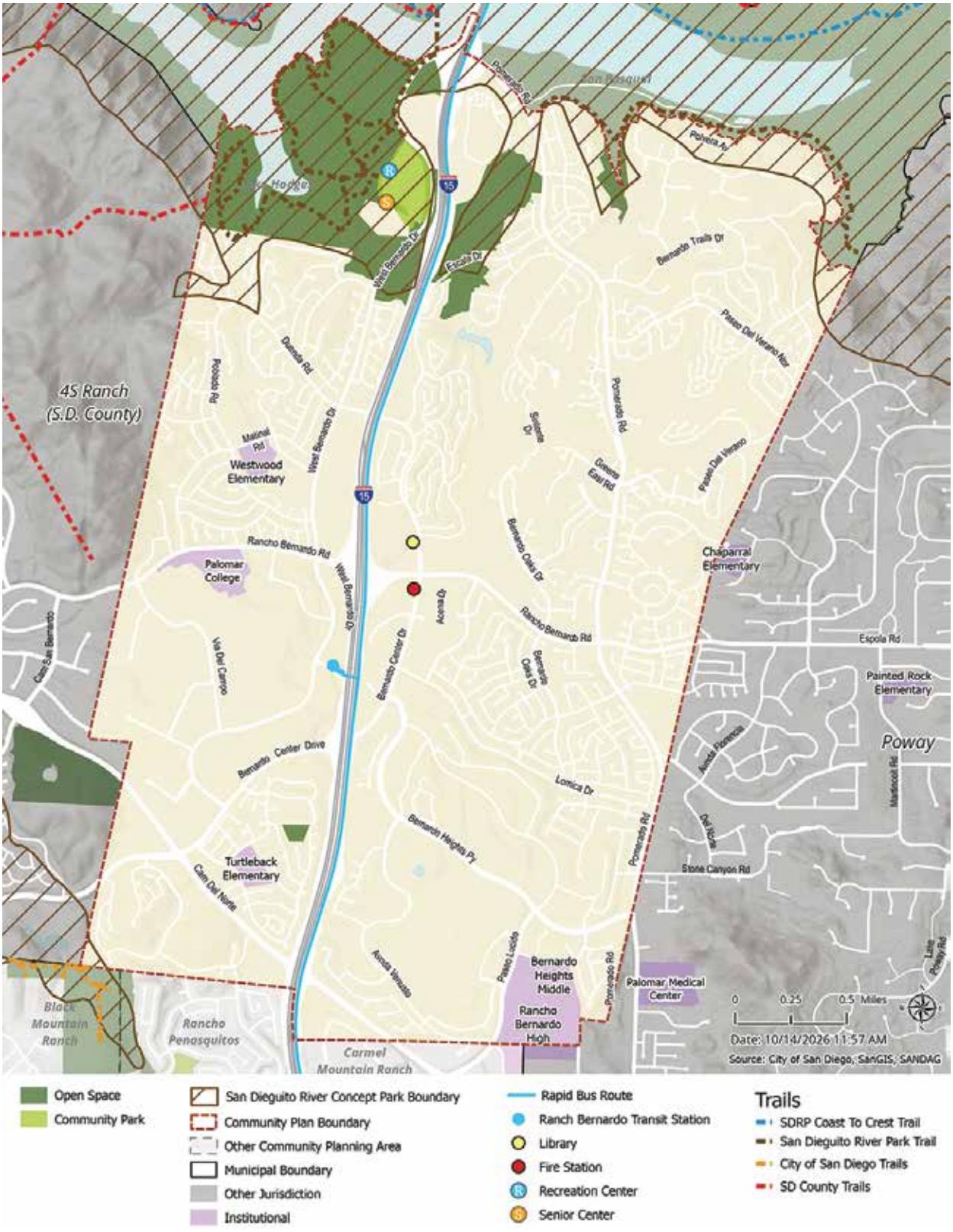


Table 6-3: Rancho Bernardo Existing Parks and Recreation Facilities Points Value

Community Park	Description	Existing Recreation Value (Points)	Existing Size (Acres/#)	Existing Size (Miles)
Rancho Bernardo Community Park	Rancho Bernardo Community Park contains the Rancho Bernardo-Glassman Recreation Center and the Ed Brown Senior Center. Outdoor sports amenities consist of six tennis courts, two outdoor basketball courts, eight ballfields for baseball and softball, and a dedicated lawn bowling green. The park also features two distinct playgrounds, picnic facilities, horseshoe pits, a gazebo, and barbecues. A paved walking path loops around the fields, and a two-acre fenced dog park provides off-leash space for dogs. Some of the parking is covered by solar panel trellises, and there are electric charging stations.	854	37.9	N/A
Neighborhood Parks and Mini Parks	**Description**	**Existing Recreation Value (Points)**	**Existing Size (Acres/#)**	**Existing Size (Miles)**
High Country West Park	Existing turf multi-purpose lawn, fenced. Property is owned by the City of San Diego Public Utilities Department (PUD), and day-to-day community access, maintenance, and rules are managed by the High Country West Property Owners Association.	0	4.6	N/A
Open Spaces and Trails	**Description**	**Existing Recreation Value (Points)**	**Existing Size (Acres/#)**	**Existing Size (Miles)**
Battle Mountain Trail in Battle Mountain Open Space	Battle Mountain Trail is a steep, and rugged 0.5-mile out-and-back hike, featuring an approximately 278-foot elevation gain and a prominent large white cross at the summit. The trailhead is at the very end of Reata Way.	14	N/A	0.50
Bernardo Bay Trail in San Dieguito River Park	The Bernardo Bay Trail is a relatively easy approximately 2.5-mile trail network near Lake Hodges -- located in the Bernardo Bay natural areas of the San Dieguito River Park with two trailheads and parking available.	49	N/A	2.50
Piedras Pintadas Interpretive Trail in San Dieguito River Park	The Piedras Pintadas Interpretive Trail is a relatively easy 2.20-mile loop trail near Lake Hodges -- located in the Bernardo Bay natural areas of the San Dieguito River Park. The trailhead is at Rancho Bernardo Community Park with parking available.	35	N/A	2.20
Moon Song Trail	The Moon Song Trail is a local path in the Westwood Valley subdivision. The trailhead is on Poblado Road east of Moon Song Court. The trail follows a small stream and utility road, leading hikers north toward the Piedras Pintadas Trail. It is best known for a seasonal trickle along the route that residents often call the Moon Song or Lake Hodges Waterfall.	7	N/A	0.34
TOTAL COMMUNITY RECREATION VALUE		**959 Points**	**42.5 Acres**	**5.54 Miles**

Private Recreational Facilities

Rancho Bernardo was planned under a distinct recreational model in which private neighborhood clubs, rather than municipal parks, provide most community recreational amenities. Beginning in the 1960s, developers established deed-restricted facilities tied to subdivision property ownership, ensuring each homeowners association residential area had its own recreation facilities. Clubs like the Rancho Bernardo Swim and Tennis Club, Westwood Club, Bernardo Heights Community Center, High Country West Rec Club, and the Oaks North Community Center function as localized social and athletic hubs, funded through mandatory homeowner dues. With amenities ranging from parks, pools and courts to fitness rooms and hobby spaces, and governed by strict access and membership rules, these centers form a private, resort-style recreation network that differentiates Rancho Bernardo from communities that rely primarily on City's park network. Private park and recreational facilities are shown in Figure 6-2.

Private Golf Facilities

Rancho Bernardo has four private golf courses: the Country Club of Rancho Bernardo, the Rancho Bernardo Inn course, and the Oaks North complex. The Rancho Bernardo Inn and the Oaks North Golf courses, though privately owned and operated, offer public access to their golf facilities through standard daily-fee bookings.



The Piedras Pintadas Trailhead is a family friendly hike within the San Dieguito River Park.

Figure 6-2: Existing Private Parks and Recreation Facilities

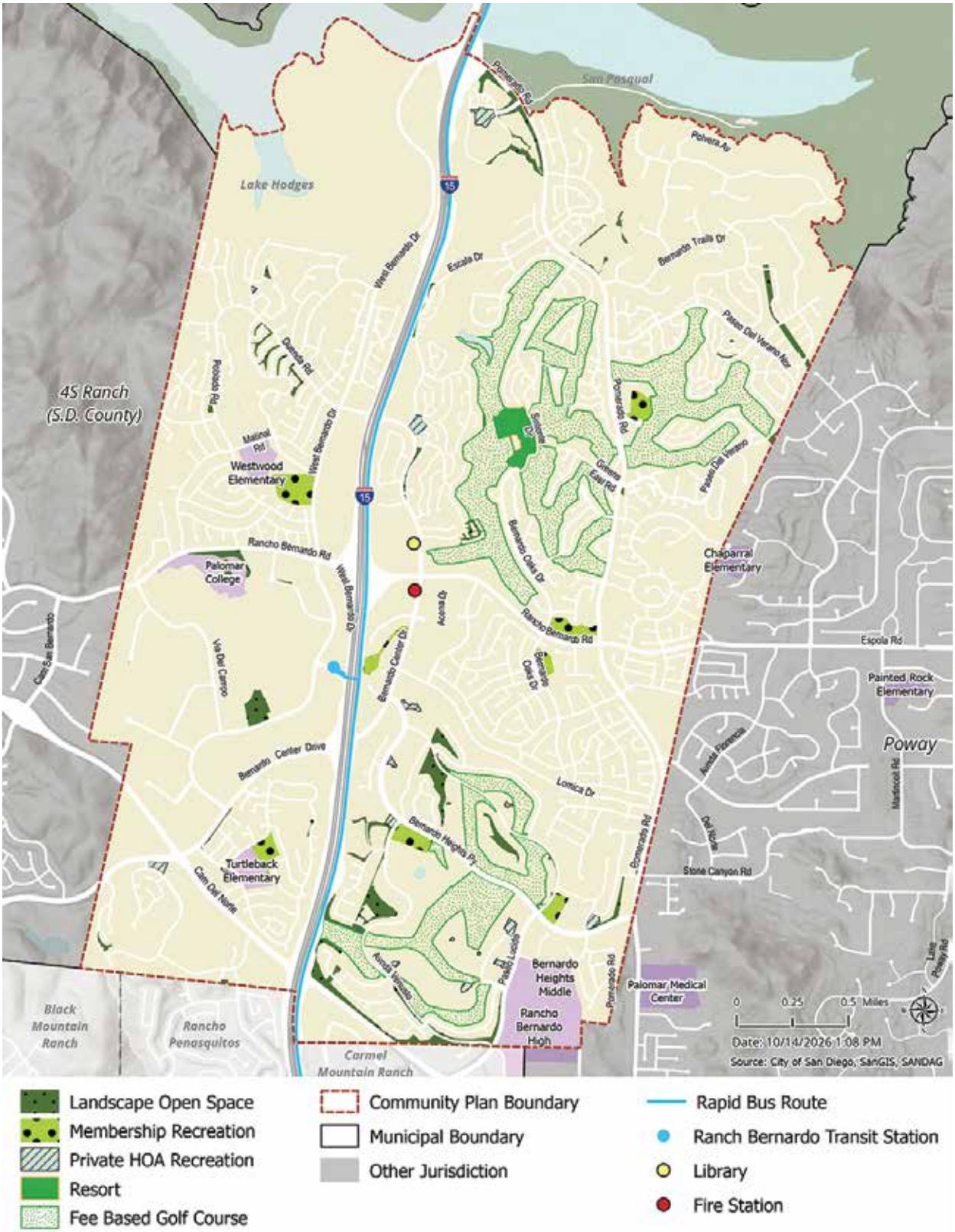


Table 6-4: Private Parks and Recreational Facilities

Privately Built, Resident-only Access Parks/Recreation Facilities ***Building sizes/details are approximated.*	Existing Site Size** (Acres)	Existing Size** (Sq. Ft.)	Existing # Pools** (Quantity)
** These sites were included in the 1974 Community Plan. ** These private facilities were quantified by aerial photographic and GIS methods and have not been field verified.*			
Bernardo Crest Apartments Pool and Clubhouse			1
*Bernardo Heights Community Centre	4.5	8,800	1
Camino Bernardo Clubhouse	1.7	2,250	1
Carmel Trails West Pool, Clubhouse and Park/Tennis			
Carmel Trails East Pool and Clubhouse	0.37	250	2
*The Eastview Club (Eastview Rancho Bernardo Community Center)			1
* High Country West Rec Club	6.3	4,300	1
*Las Brisas Bernardo Club	1.7	2,300	1
La Serena Apartments Pool and Clubhouse	0.6	2,000	1
La Terraza Apartments Pool and Clubhouse	0.37	670	1
*Lucido Park (Bernardo Heights HOA)	4.8	0	0
Masters Hill Pool and Clubhouse on Royal Birkdale Road			1
Masters Hill Pool and Clubhouse on Royal Lytham Row			1
Neighborhood Park at Matinal Circle	2.0	0	0
*Oaks North Community Center	6.06	18,500	1
Palazzo Bernardo Pool and Clubhouse			1
*Rancho Bernardo Swim and Tennis Club (Avco Developer-Built)	10.3	20,500	2
*Seven Oaks Community Center	4.7	11,500	1
Silvergate Rancho Bernardo	0.5	0	1
The Falls Condos North Pool			1
The Falls Condos South Pool and Tennis			1
The Overlook Apartments at Bernardo Heights Pool and Clubhouse			
The Villas Apartments Pool Clubhouse and Tennis			1
Villa Tavlana Condos North Pool, Clubhouse Park and Tennis			1
Villa Tavlana Condos South Pool and Clubhouse			1
*Westwood Club	12.8	12,000	1

6.3 Public Services, Facilities, and Safety

Overview

Rancho Bernardo has one library, one fire station, four public schools, three private school, and one community college, as shown in Figure 6-4.

Fire and Rescue

Fire Station 33 provides fire and rescue services to all of Rancho Bernardo and the surrounding area. The station is equipped with a Fire Engine, Brush Engine, and Paramedic Unit and Rescue Rig. Fire Station 33 is located at 16966 Bernardo Center Drive, San Diego and serves approximately 25 square miles.

Police

The City provides police services through geographic service areas, and the Police Department has defined neighborhood names corresponding to each police beat. The Northeastern Division serves ten beats, four of which are within Rancho Bernardo.

Libraries

The Rancho Bernardo Library is a 23,000-square-foot neighborhood facility and functions as one of the library systems' largest facilities. Originally opened in 1996, the library provides computer access, meeting/study rooms, outdoor space, and features the IDEA (Digital Memory) Lab. In 2023, the Library Master Plan was adopted by the San Diego City Council. The Master Plan presents a vision for the San Diego Public Library system where the library and its services are equitable, engaging and experiential, geographically accessible everywhere, and empowered with the necessary resources to thrive. The Master Plan also provides a detailed roadmap to modernize branches, meet growing community needs, and become more geographically available across San Diego. The Master Plan recommends a makeover to the existing Rancho Bernardo Branch Library to refresh the library and address deferred maintenance needs.



Fire Station 33 serves the Rancho Bernardo community.

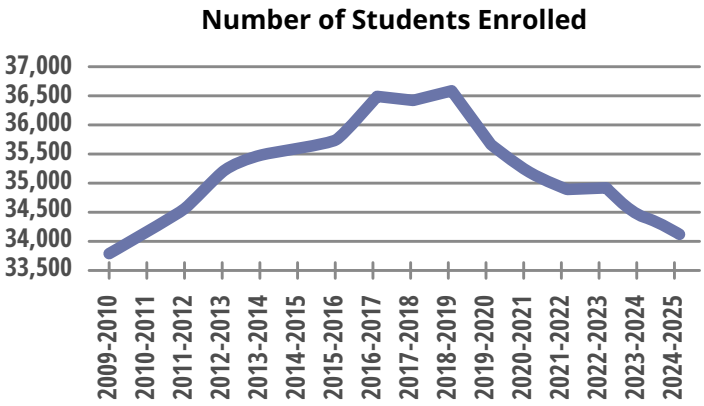


Schools

The Rancho Bernardo community is served by the Poway Unified School District. Figure 6-4 illustrates the school facilities present in the community. Public schools in the Rancho Bernardo community include Westwood Elementary, Turtleback Elementary, Bernardo Heights Middle School and Rancho Bernardo High School. Poway to Palomar Middle College is a public dual enrollment high school where students can enroll in college-level courses at the adjacent Palomar College. Private schools include LifeBridge Elementary, Primrose School of 4S Ranch and Westwood Club Preschool.

Figure 6-3 provides historical student enrollment trends in Poway Unified School District for those attending all Elementary, Middle and High Schools. From 2009 to 2025, the total student enrollment increased modestly by 0.86 percent, or 290 additional students. Student population peaked between 2016 and 2020 but increases and decreases have been very modest over time.

Figure 6-3: Poway Unified School District Enrollment



Childcare and Daycare

Childcare facilities are an important community resource that support children, families, and the local workforce and are dispersed throughout the community. In Rancho Bernardo, childcare is provided through daycare centers, preschools, schools, and smaller home-based providers. The number and location of childcare facilities may change over time as providers open, close, or modify their services. Conveniently located and accessible childcare can reduce travel demands, help parents and caregivers participate in the workforce, and support families at different income levels.

Figure 6-4: Public Services and Facilities



6.4 Parks and Public Facilities Summary

This section summarizes the key information related to parks and public facilities for the Rancho Bernardo planning area presented in this chapter.

- Rancho Bernardo's parks and **recreational facilities consist mainly of privately accessed facilities, a large community park with sports fields, and recreation centers and trails** in San Dieguito River Park.
- Rancho Bernardo has **connections to an organized network of protected open spaces**.
- Residents of the Rancho Bernardo community have access to a recreation center and a senior center
- Many residential developments in Rancho Bernardo include **privately owned, operated, and maintained recreation and aquatic facilities** that are available only to the residents of the development.
- Rancho Bernardo has **one library, one fire station, four public schools, one private school, and one community college**.
- Poway Unified School District has generally maintained **consistent student enrollment** since 2009.