



Existing Conditions Report



The City of San Diego PARKS MASTER PLAN

June 2019



Marcy Neighborhood Park

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Introduction and Overview

The City of San Diego last prepared a systemwide Master Plan for parks and recreation in 1956. In the following decades, San Diego's population has nearly tripled in size, while becoming increasingly diverse. Shifts in lifestyles and patterns of neighborhood development are fundamentally reshaping recreation interests and priorities. In response to these dramatic changes, the Parks Master Plan (PMP) sets a roadmap for the City's parks and recreation system that is both inspirational and practical. It will express a long-range vision for the future of parks, recreation facilities, and programs across the City.

The PMP is a nearly three-year planning effort to analyze existing conditions and trends (Learning), identify community needs and priorities (Exploring), define an overarching vision (Envisioning) and establish strategies to put the vision into action (Implementing). This Existing Conditions report represents the first step in understanding the historic context, current issues, and emerging trends that have shaped San Diego's Parks and Recreation system today and will continue to influence its future.

Opportunities, Challenges, and Trends

Historic context, current issues, and emerging trends create ongoing challenges for the delivery of parks and recreation services while also highlighting opportunities for innovative, adaptive strategies in the years ahead.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Development and Fiscal Context

- Reliance on private developers for the planning and delivery of parks in the foundational eras of City growth produced an uneven distribution of recreational spaces;
 - While San Diego's scenic and natural areas are an integral part of the City's beauty and identity, the pervasiveness of landforms, such as canyons and areas of biological sensitivity reduce the amount of buildable land available;
 - Events such as passage of property tax initiative Proposition 13 and the Great Recession reduced General Fund revenue;
 - Current approaches to financing and delivering new parks, which rely on Development Impact Fees (DIF), generate minimal revenue for parkland acquisition in communities with little growth; and
 - The City continues to see compact infill growth, which concentrates demand for more park space in already urbanized areas with higher land values and rising development pressure.
-

Current Challenges

- Pre-World War II communities and post-war boom subdivisions lag in parks, creating deficits in community and neighborhood parkland and geographic inequity in access to recreational amenities;
 - Funding constraints limit the ability to maintain all existing park assets; one-quarter of parks assessed in the system are in poor condition with maintenance and repair backlogs in excess of 30 percent of their total value; and
 - While most parks sampled offered a comfortable, quality experience to users, fewer parks contribute to the sense of an overall network that creates access across spaces or embraces varied local contexts.
-

Emerging Trends + Opportunities

- Demographic trends, such as an aging population and greater diversity have shifted focus away from traditional organized play to individual, unscheduled recreation that emphasizes health, wellness, and nature, along with a wider array of sports;
- Growth in urban lifestyles has broadened interest in creative, flexible gathering spaces that combine recreation, socializing, and entertainment;
- Parks play an ever-greater role in the social, economic, and environmental life of communities; parks strengthen social fabric and foster inclusion; promote physical and emotional well-being; express local identity; and build sustainability and resilience; and
- Cities increasingly look to creative, flexible partnerships, funding, and delivery approaches to meet the expanding role of parks and recreation in quality of life.



Kate Sessions Park



01 INTRODUCTION

02 HISTORY OF PARKS IN SAN DIEGO

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04 DEMOGRAPHICS AND POPULATION ANALYSIS

05 SERVICE STANDARD ANALYSIS

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01

Introduction

1.1 Background

The City of San Diego last prepared a systemwide Master Plan for parks and recreation in 1956. In the following decades, San Diego's population has nearly tripled in size, while becoming increasingly diverse. Shifts in lifestyles and patterns of neighborhood development are fundamentally reshaping recreation interests and priorities. In response to these dramatic changes, the Parks Master Plan (PMP) sets a long-term roadmap for the City's parks and recreation system that is both inspirational and practical.

1.2 Purpose

The PMP articulates a long-range vision for the future of parks, recreation facilities, and programs across the City. This comprehensive planning effort creates an exciting vehicle to build on the current parks and recreation system with sustainable strategies for meeting the diverse and evolving needs of all residents.

The parks and recreation system offers more than safe and enjoyable places to play. Great parks promote physical, social, and environmental health; support community development and economic investment; and interpret local identity and culture. The PMP, therefore, is also an important expression of the community's values for overall quality of life in the years ahead.

01 SUMMARY

The PMP is a nearly three-year planning effort to develop a long term vision for the future of parks, recreation facilities, and programs across the City of San Diego.

It is also an expression of the community's values for overall quality of life in the years ahead. The PMP will serve as a framework for creating a parks and recreation system that is:

- Relevant
- Accessible
- Iconic
- Sustainable
- Equitable

This Existing Conditions report represents the first step in understanding the events, current issues, and trends that have shaped the Parks and Recreation system today and will continue to influence the future of recreation, including:

- Historic development patterns
- Municipal financing
- Demographic change
- Emerging recreation trends

The PMP is the City's opportunity to develop a vision and sustainable strategies to deliver a world-class park system for all San Diegans.

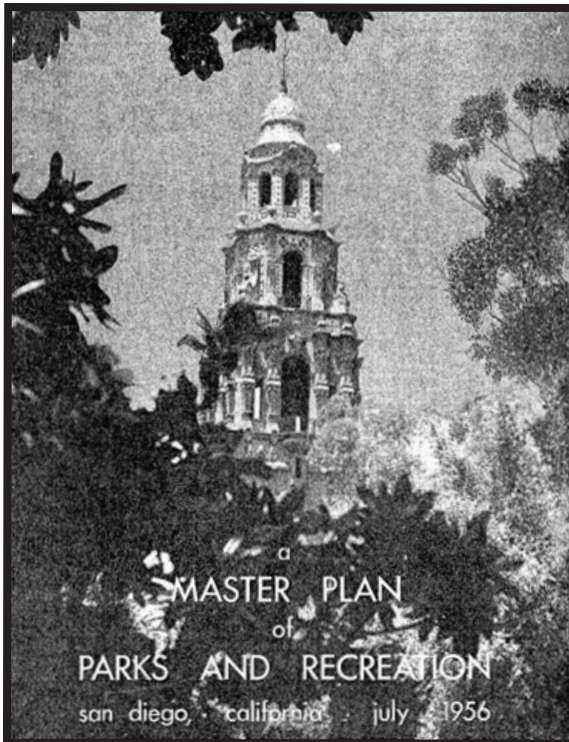


FIGURE 1-1
City of San Diego 1956 Parks Master Plan

At the time of its 1956 Parks Master Plan, the City owned 5,700 acres of parkland and 13 Recreation Centers across 38 communities.

The goal of the plan was to meet the needs of San Diego's rapidly growing population by ensuring that every area would be within a half mile of a neighborhood playground; establishing centers of community recreation in each neighborhood; and developing a financial and priority program for implementation.

“

Because San Diego has grown faster in population than in facilities, there is a park and recreation problem today which is in the nature of an urgent challenge. This challenge is recognized by the Parks & Recreation Commission, which realizes that the best way to meet it is through planning. Orderly development can result if there is a plan – otherwise piecemeal, haphazard development will occur.

1956 Parks Master Plan

”

1.3 Park Planning Efforts

The focus of the PMP is to create a Citywide policy framework for parks and recreation programs. Various efforts will continue to conduct long-range recreation-related planning at the scale of communities and parks. The Recreation Elements of Community Plan Updates (CPUs) establish parks, open space, and resource protection goals for communities, express local priorities, and identify strategies to enhance park and open space amenities.

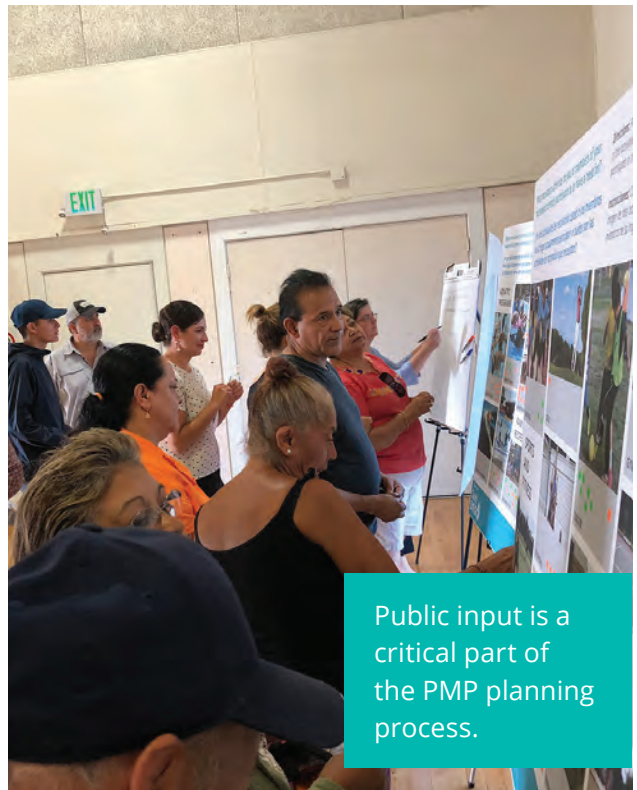
Specific Plans similarly offer policy guidance on parks and open space development within areas of the City, such as Transit Priority Areas (TPAs). At the park level, individual Park Master Plans, Natural Resource Management Plans, and Precise Plans guide the use, development, and management of regional and open space parks. General Development Plans engage Recreation Advisory Groups and the public in the collaborative design of proposed park projects, utilizing the Consultant's Guide to Park Design and Development.

Given its scope as an overarching framework, the PMP will not produce detail at the level of an individual community or park or replace existing recreation-related plans. The PMP complements these focused efforts through general policies or strategies that refine and update planning for communities and specific components of the park system.

1.4 Planning Process

The PMP is a nearly three-year planning effort to analyze existing conditions and trends (Learning), identify community needs and priorities (Exploring), define a systemwide vision (Envisioning) and establish strategies to put the vision into action (Implementing). (See Figure 1-2).

The PMP is an overarching policy framework. It will complement more focused efforts by offering general policies or strategies to refine and update planning for communities and specific components of the park system.



Public input is a critical part of the PMP planning process.

Fall 2017 to Summer 2018

1

Learning Existing Conditions

- Data Review
- Demographics Analysis
- Climate Action Plan Analysis
- Recreation Programs and Services Assessment

Fall 2018 to Winter 2019

2

Exploring Needs and Priorities

- Regional Workshops
- Stakeholder Interviews
- Online Activity
- Statistically Valid Survey
- Benchmark Comparison
- Service Standards Analysis
- Recreation Program Evaluation
- Trends Analysis

Spring 2019 to Fall 2019

3

Envisioning Long-Range Park Planning

- Visioning Workshops
- Vision Statement
- Guiding Principles
- Goals and Policies
- Conceptual Parks System Vision Map

Winter 2020 to Fall 2020

4

Implementing Parks Master Plan

- Implementation Workshop
- Short-term, mid-term and long-term actions
- Funding Strategies
- Partnership Opportunities
- Community Open Houses

FIGURE 1-2
Four Step Planning Process

1.5 Project Principles, Goals and Objectives

Principles

The PMP serves as a framework for creating a world-class parks and recreation system guided by the following principles, goals, and objectives.



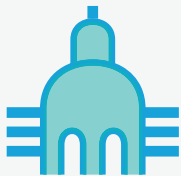
Relevant

Parks and recreational programs should meet the changing needs and wants of residents.



Accessible

Every resident should be able to get to a park space or program safely, conveniently, and actively.



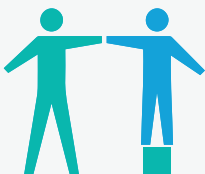
Iconic

Parks should reflect the unique qualities of their settings and enhance the image of the City of San Diego and its diverse communities.



Sustainable

Park improvements, programs, and management strategies should contribute to community economic development, social well-being, and a healthy environment.



Equitable

Every resident should be able to enjoy parks and recreational programs regardless of income, age, race, ability, or geographic location.

Sustainable icon: Created by Ken Murray from the Noun Project
Equitable icon: Created by Bruno Castro from the Noun Project

The PMP highlights the following initial goals and objectives. The planning team will continue to revisit and refine these goals and objectives based on public input and ongoing technical analysis.

Goals

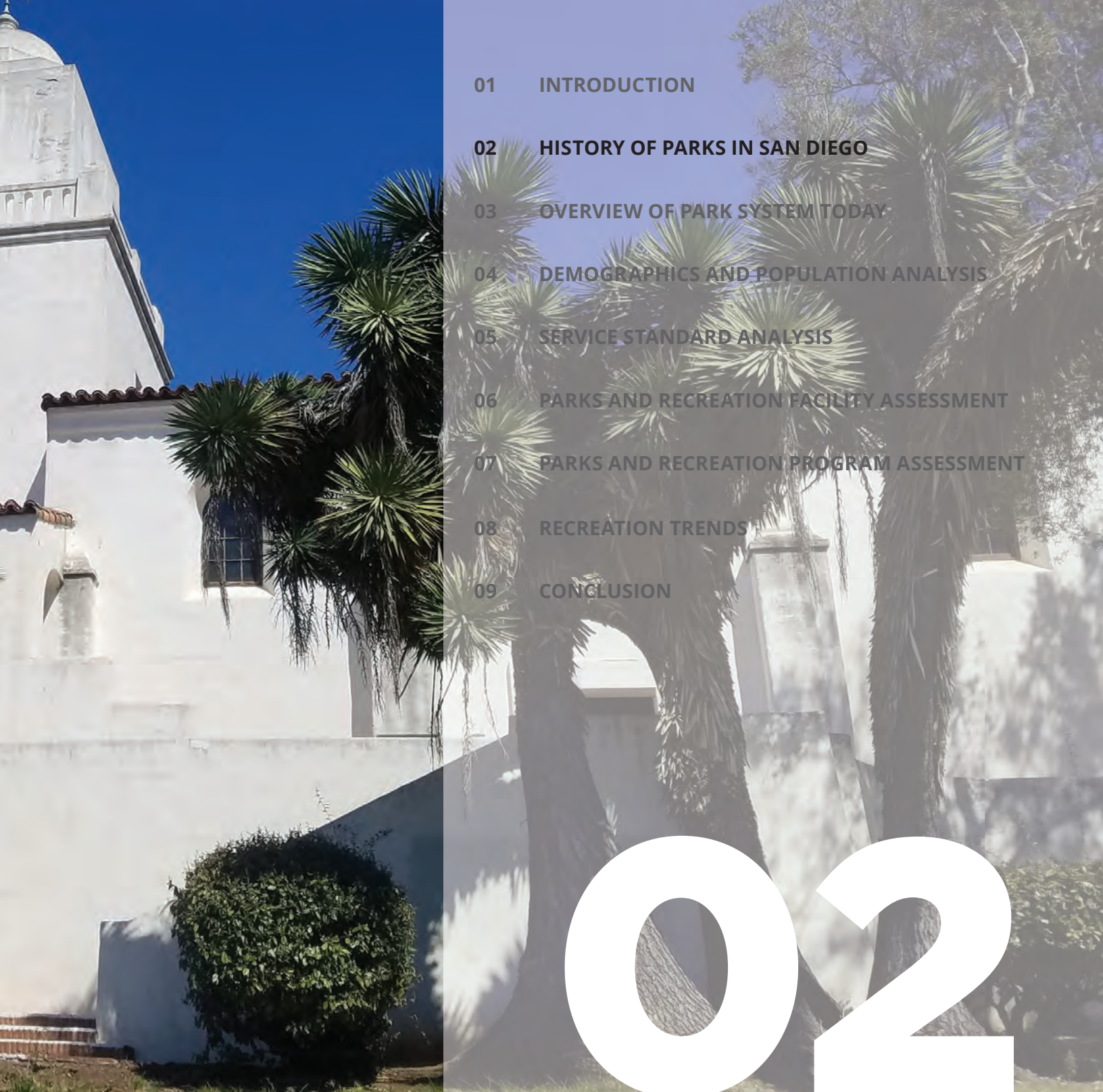
- Guide park acquisition, design, and construction for the next 20 to 30 years;
- Guide recreation programming for the next 20 to 30 years;
- Address park deficits to promote equity in all communities;
- Re-evaluate ways to measure system success;
- Identify new definitions of a meaningful park space;
- Build relationships with non-profit organizations and partner agencies;
- Balance use of Open Space parkland with conservation and protection of sensitive resources;
- Identify implementation strategies and funding options; and
- Identify parks and recreation facilities connectivity through trails and bike routes.

Objectives

- Evaluate the existing park system and recreation programs;
- Understand demographic and population trends;
- Identify Citywide and community-specific recreation needs and priorities;
- Outline opportunities for providing recreation space in areas with limited land;
- Develop methods to implement the City's Climate Action Plan strategies and goals;
- Create funding strategies to implement the PMP, including phasing; and
- Determine metrics to measure success.



Presidio Park

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02

History of Parks in San Diego

Over the decades, San Diego has passed through various eras that transformed the nature of parks and recreation. Climate and lifestyle fueled San Diego's early growth. Land speculation aimed at marketing San Diego as a desirable place to visit and live led to the protection and creation of many of the City's scenic, coastal, and historic resources. Early visionaries, such as Samuel Parsons and John Nolen, followed by Kevin Lynch, saw a broader opportunity to create a unified network of parks, open spaces, canyons, beaches, and scenic overlooks out of San Diego's extraordinary natural setting.

Parks planning, however, remained largely dependent on private development. Waves of real-estate driven construction spread parks unevenly across the City. Neighborhoods built just before or after World War II (WW II), for example, lag in parks compared to the communities of later eras.

Following the post-war boom, new development began to meet population-based park standards and pay its share of public infrastructure, including parks. The City assumed a more active approach in growth management and community initiatives, reflecting changing priorities for recreation programming, park uses, and open space. With increased interest in open space preservation and protection, the system expanded to include conserved natural areas.

Though the Parks and Recreation Department (Department) mission became more complex, the City's fiscal environment weakened, reducing resources to support new park development and maintenance of existing facilities. This lack of funding combined with redevelopment pressure in built-out urban neighborhoods has widened the parks disparity over time. The focus of the PMP is to recognize these systemic challenges and rebalance the resulting inequities through creative, adaptive responses.

02 SUMMARY

Historic patterns and trends related to development, expansion of the parks system and Department mission, community planning, and municipal financing continue to shape opportunities and challenges:

- Reliance on private development and rapid post-WW II growth led to gaps in parks that persist today;
- With park standards and impact fees in place, master planned communities built since the 1980s feature parks at a scale and design not seen in the older neighborhoods;
- Lack of equivalent funding, limited vacant land, and infill growth widen the parks gap in older, urban communities;
- The parks system and recreation mission have steadily expanded to reflect new conservation, programming, and partnership responsibilities;
- Parks planning in the City has become integrated with community building, social equity, sustainability and climate adaptation, housing, and mobility;
- With continued fiscal scarcity and uncertainty, the City has limited resources for maintenance, staffing, and the acquisition of parkland; and
- The City has looked to collaboration with communities, other government agencies, non-profit groups, and the private sector to bring new energy, creativity, and resources to parks planning.

Early marketing efforts, such as the 1915 Panama-California Exposition, celebrated the natural beauty of San Diego and sought to attract residents and visitors to the newly prominent city.

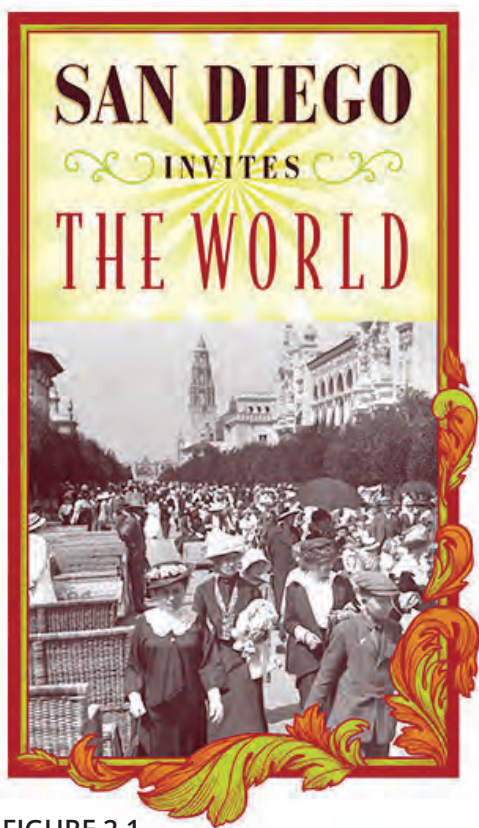


FIGURE 2-1
1915 Panama-California Exposition

The timeline illustrates the broad themes that have influenced parks and recreation planning for a century and a half in the City of San Diego. Patterns of community growth; changes in the size and mission of the parks system and Department; the rise of environmentalism, reurbanization, and stakeholder interests, and; a tighter, more uncertain fiscal environment have interacted to create the challenges and highlight the opportunities that define the PMP. Figure 2-2 and Figure 2-3 show the steady growth of the City from a handful of iconic spaces to a modern system serving 1.4 million residents in 52 diverse communities across 370 square miles.

“

Not only the Bay, but every type of scenery, beach, and promontory, mesa, and canyon unite in never-ending variety to form a city that is strikingly individual in character and of great beauty.

John Nolen, 1908

”

Years, Eras, and Population

Development Patterns

Park/Open Space Milestone

1700s

Mission/Old Town

- Founding of San Diego Mission

1800s

Horton's New Town


 2,300

- Relocation of San Diego Mission inland
- Horton land purchase in New Town
- First subdivision of residential tracts around downtown
- Start of summer "Tent City" in La Jolla for vacationers escaping inland heat

- Creation of early parks and public spaces: Horton Plaza in New Town, City Park (Balboa Park), Mount Hope Cemetery, Pantoja Park, Golden Hill Park, and Washington Square

1900-1920

Selling San Diego

 17,700

- Launch of downtown building boom
- Growth of first-ring suburbs

- Publishing of Samuel Parsons' *City Park Plan*
- Panama-California Exposition at Balboa Park
- Creation of: Belmont Park, La Jolla (Scripps) Park, and Presidio Park

1920-1940

Inner Streetcar Suburbs


 74,361

- Beginning of Navy presence in San Diego
- Spread of growth beyond first-ring suburbs
- Rise of early automobile suburbs
- City annexation of East San Diego

- California Pacific International Exposition at Balboa Park
- Creation of Torrey Pines City Park
- Dedication of undeveloped parks: Collier, Sunset Cliffs, Mountain View

1940-1960

Post-War Boom

 203,341

- Subdivision of Clairemont Mesa, Linda Vista, Serra Mesa
- City annexation of Otay Mesa
- Opening of Interstate Highway 8
- Opening of Mission Valley Center outdoor mall

- Military use of Balboa Park facilities
- Dredging of Mission Bay
- Creation of Torrey Pines State Natural Reserve
- Establishment of State and City Parks Standards

1960-1980

Planned Development


 573,224

- Rise of first master planned communities: Rancho Bernardo, Scripps Ranch, etc...

- Protection of historic resources: Old Town San Diego State Historic Park and Balboa Park National Historic Landmark
- Rise of the Environmental Movement
- Creation of open space and ecological parks: La Jolla Underwater Park, Mission Trails Regional Park, Los Peñasquitos Regional Park, Tecolote Canyon Natural Park, Marian Bear Natural Memorial Park
- Creation of Chicano Park following community protests

1980-2000

Reurbanization

 875,538

- Opening of Trolley
- Opening of Interstate 15
- Initial development of Otay Ranch
- Opening of Horton Plaza
- Opening of Liberty Station and NTC Park

- Founding of San Dieguito River Park Joint Powers Authority
- Founding of Joint Exercise of Powers Agreement for Otay Valley Regional Park
- Beginning of Multi-Habitat Planning Area acquisition
- Era of infill parks in developed communities

2000 to Present

Smart Growth

 1,307,402

- Growth of housing in downtown
- Infill development of first-ring suburbs

- Establishment of San Diego River Park Foundation
- Designation of Chicano Park as National Historic Landmark
- Launch of City's 50 Parks in 5 Years campaign and Play All Day Parks Program
- Focus on conservation of canyons and trails development

Department Organization



Planning/Community Initiatives



Municipal Finance



- Beautification of City Park led by Kate Sessions
- Formation of City Playground Commission
- Formation of City Parks Commission with Parks Superintendent
- Appointment of first City Parks Director
- Establishment of Open Space Division
- Creation of six Divisions for Parks and Recreation
- Rise in public, private, and non-profit partnerships in parks and recreation
- Publishing of John Nolen's *A Comprehensive Plan For Its Improvement*
- Formation of City Planning Department
- Planning for Balboa Park led by Chamber of Commerce
- Publishing of John Nolen's *City Plan for San Diego California*
- Establishment of Council/Manager government
- Approval of bond issue for development of Mission Bay Park
- Completion of first City Parks Master Plan
- Publishing of Kevin Lynch's *Temporary Paradise?*
- Undertaking of first Community Plans
- Completion of Progress Guide and General Plan
- Completion of individual park plans: Bayfront, Florida Canyon, Mission Trails, etc...
- Adoption of City's Growth Management Plan
- Era of increasing community activism: Demands of Miramar residents for park space
- Establishment of CEQA
- Formation of California Coastal Commission
- Completion of river park master plans: San Dieguito, Otay River Valley, etc..
- Adoption of growth management and planning measures: Proposition A (density), Proposition C (regional planning), and Interim Development Ordinance
- Creation of Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP)
- Completion of guiding City plans: City of Villages General Plan, Climate Action Plan, Urban Forestry Management Plan, Vernal Pool Habitat Conservation Plan
- Undertaking of current Parks Master Plan
- Reliance on private benefactors for the dedication and purchase of park land
- Federal funding of parks through Works Progress Administration
- Operation of Mission Bay granted to General Dynamics
- Establishment of Environmental Growth Fund for acquisition of open space
- Adoption of City development fees for greenfield development
- Voter approval of Proposition 13, cutting tax revenue
- City resumption of control of Mission Bay Park
- Creation of Mello-Roos (special district) financing
- Use of creative financing for public projects: Convention Center, Horton Plaza
- Adoption of City development fees for infill development
- Open space exaction through MSCP
- Emergence of pension deficit crisis
- Loss of redevelopment funding
- Era of grant writing
- Voter dedication of leases to Mission Bay Park

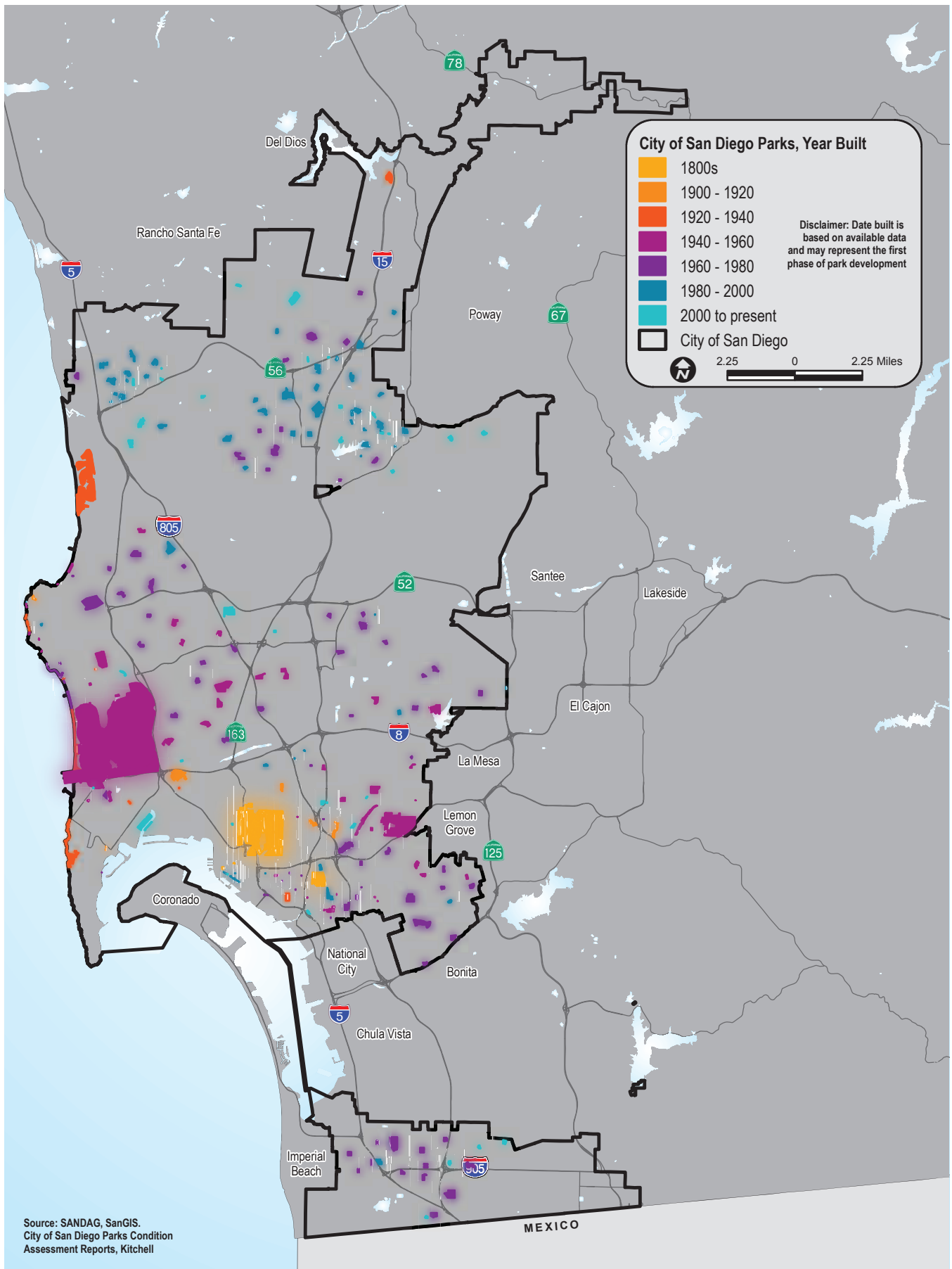


FIGURE 2-2
City of San Diego Park Development by Era

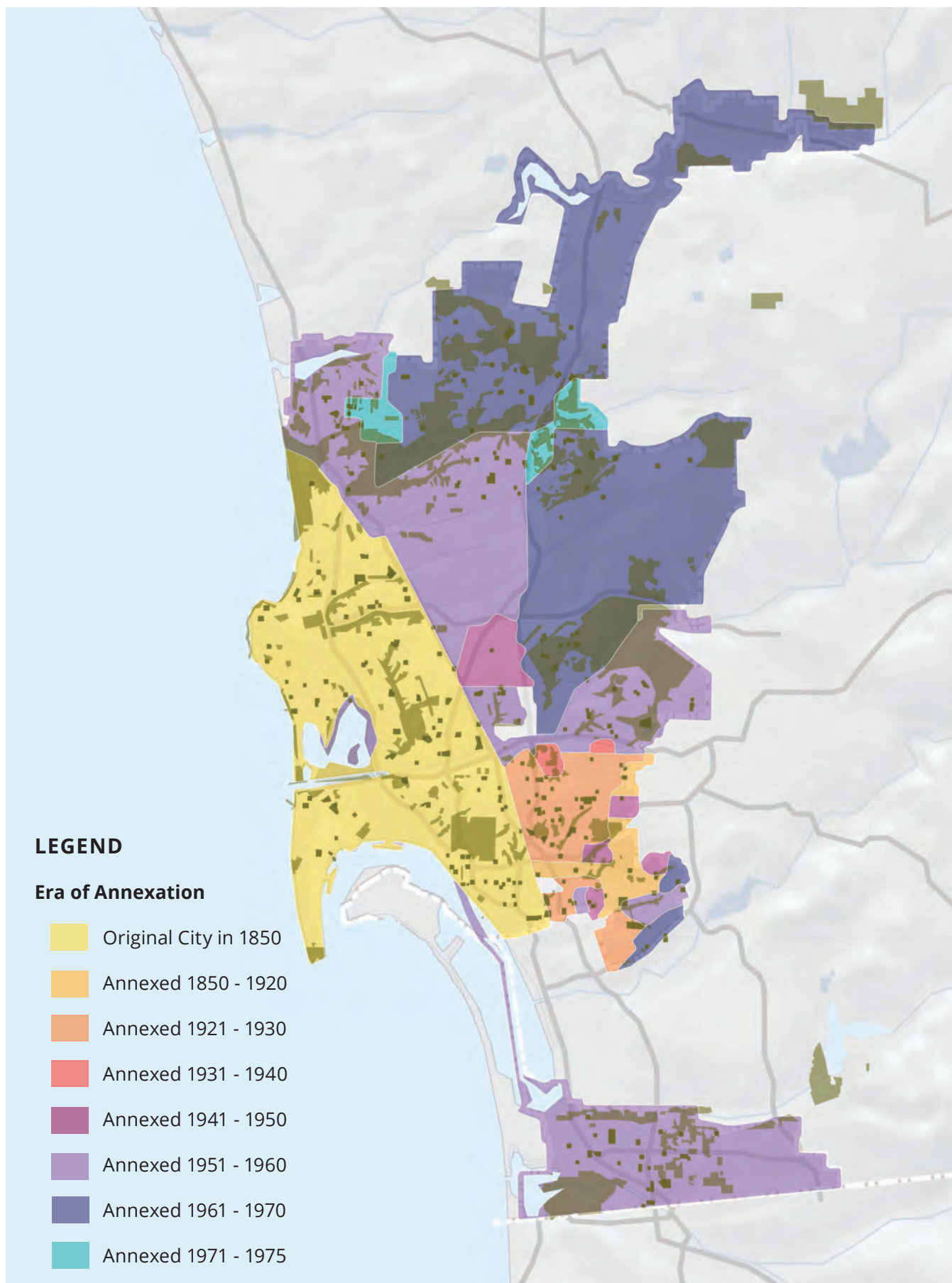


FIGURE 2-3
City of San Diego Growth through Annexation

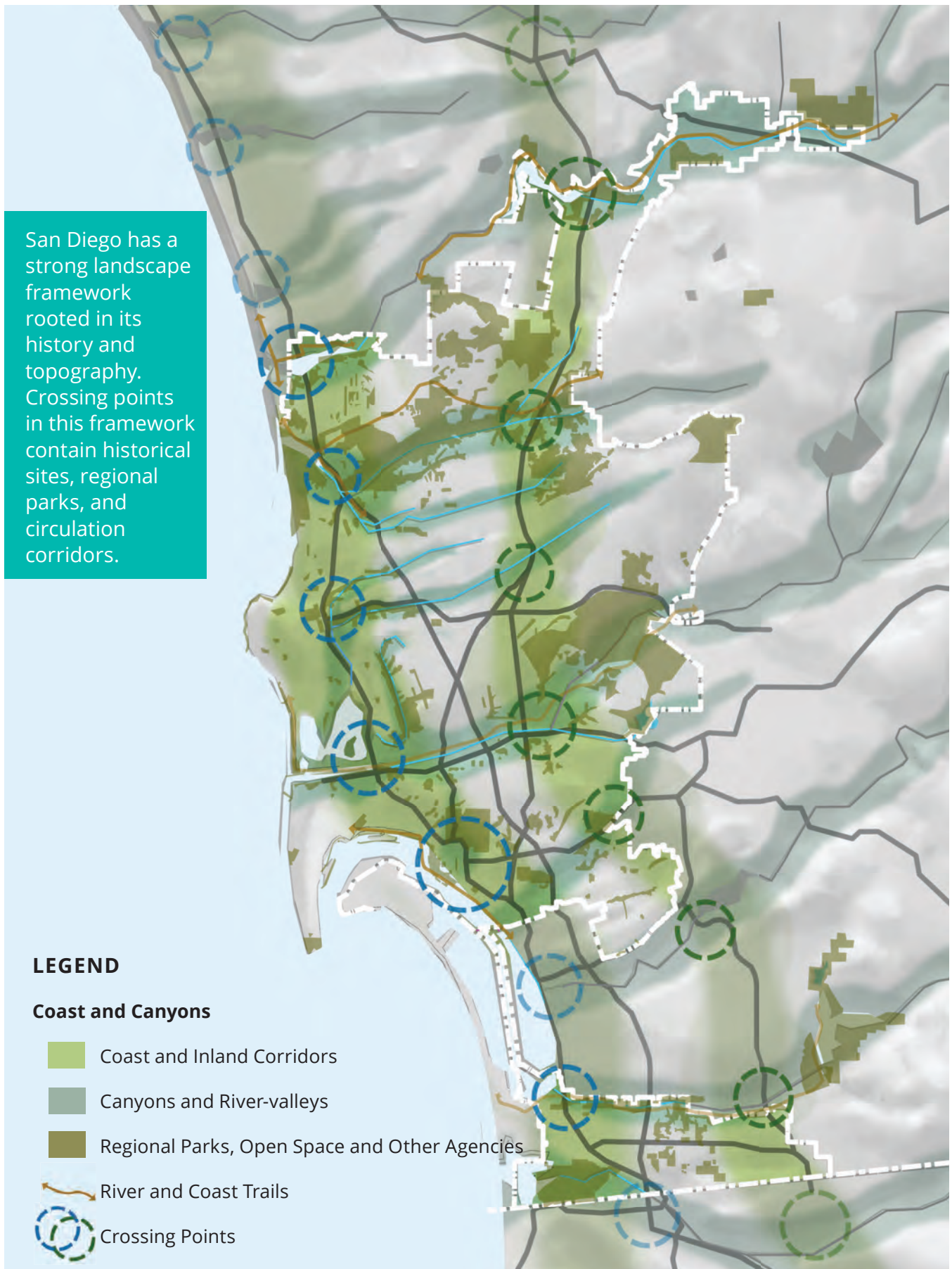


FIGURE 2-4
Coast and Canyons: Regional Framework Diagram

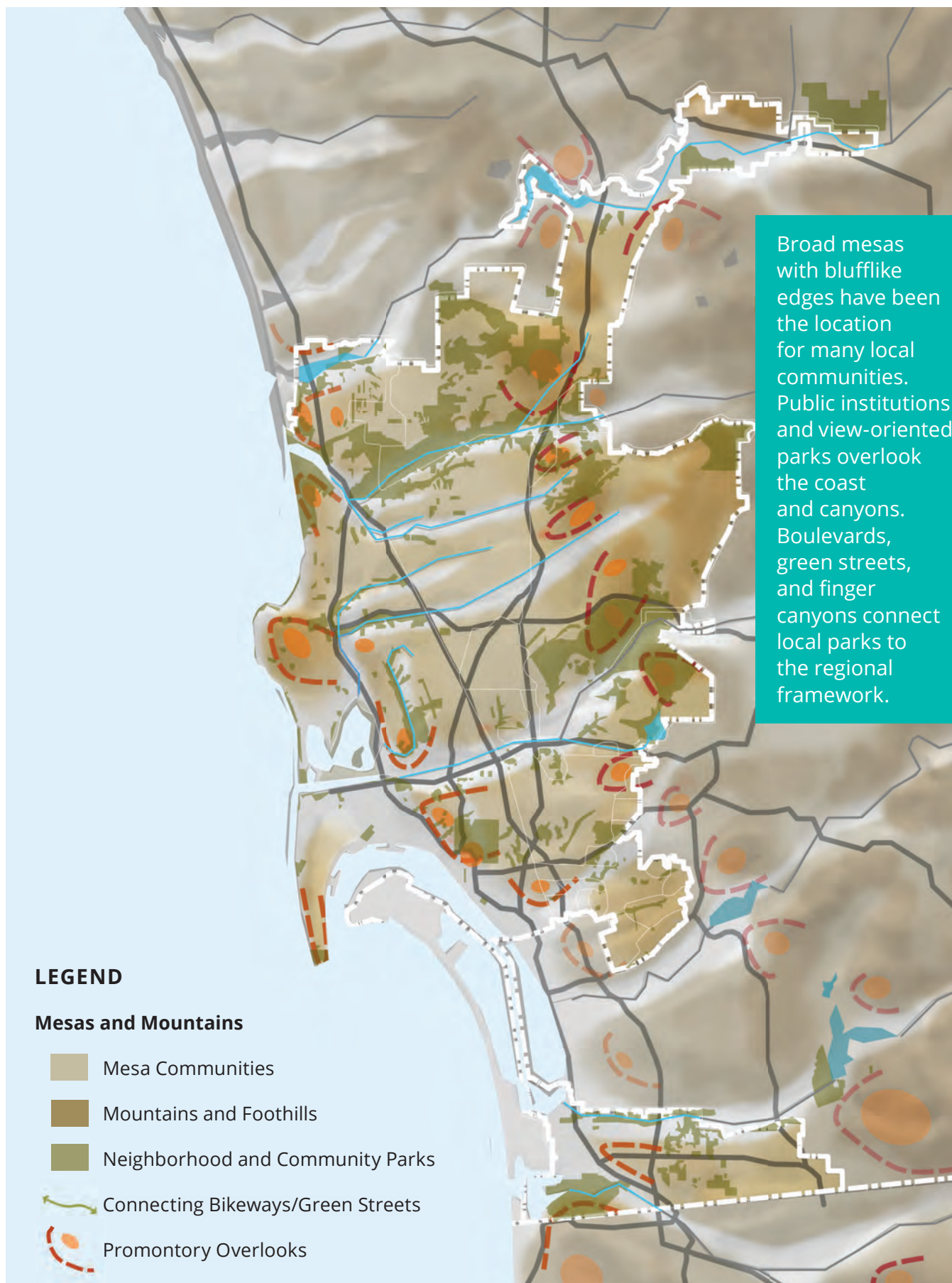


FIGURE 2-5
Mesas and Mountains: Local Parks and Recreation Diagram



Torrey Pines Gliderport

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03

Overview of Parks System Today

3.1 Guiding Documents

The PMP is not a stand-alone document, but rather an effort to integrate Department planning with the vision of the City of San Diego as a whole. The PMP must work in concert with both Citywide and community-based efforts to achieve shared goals. Guiding plans highlight sustainability and resilience through stronger, more adaptable resources; fair access to social and economic opportunities for all residents; livability and quality of life in neighborhoods; and connections between housing, jobs, amenities, and open spaces.

The PMP will draw from these broad, inter-related themes to identify priorities and develop complementary policies and implementation strategies. In this context, park planning becomes a vehicle for aligning many City and community initiatives focused on creating healthier, safer, and more vibrant neighborhoods. The Guiding Document Summary contains additional detail on the plans and studies reviewed.

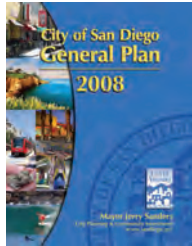
03 SUMMARY

City and community plans emphasize common themes of sustainability and resilience, equity, livability, and connectivity

Parks, open spaces, and recreation opportunities contribute to these shared goals by:

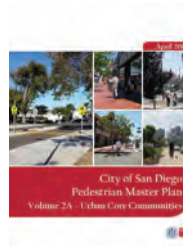
- Improving the health and resilience of the environment by protecting sensitive resources, preserving habitat, and performing natural functions, such as storm water management and storing carbon;
- Building stronger, more inclusive communities by offering access to positive social interaction, welcoming gathering spaces, and wellness activities;
- Enhancing quality of life in denser residential and employment centers; and
- Creating links that promote walking and biking and connect local spaces to the Citywide and regional recreation network.

Guiding Documents



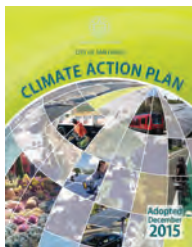
CITY OF SAN DIEGO GENERAL PLAN

2008



CITY OF SAN DIEGO PEDESTRIAN MASTER PLAN

2015



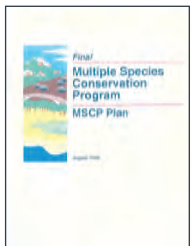
CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

2015



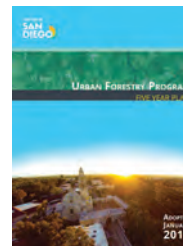
CITY OF SAN DIEGO BICYCLE MASTER PLAN

2013



MULTIPLE SPECIES CONSERVATION PROGRAM (MSCP)

1998



CITY OF SAN DIEGO URBAN FORESTRY MANAGEMENT PLAN

2017



CITY OF SAN DIEGO COMMUNITY PLANS

ONGOING



CONSULTANT'S GUIDE TO PARK DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

2011

The PMP is not a stand-alone document, but an effort to integrate Department planning with the vision of the City of San Diego as a whole. The PMP must work in concert with both Citywide and community-based efforts to achieve shared goals.

3.1.1. Sustainability and Resilience

Planning efforts recognize that the City's ability to sustain long-term well-being and adapt in the face of change depends on the health of its natural resources. Through implementation of the Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP), the City has steadily expanded the protection of habitat and open spaces and promoted development that fits within the unique landforms of San Diego (see Figure 3-1).

The 2008 General Plan further embraced the idea of a preserved open space network as an organizing principle of the City of Villages concept. Parks and natural areas would no longer be the disjointed spaces left untouched by development but would shape community form. Many Community Planning Areas have similarly highlighted the preservation of natural and scenic resources as opportunities to build resiliency into their neighborhoods, enhance local identities, and create nearby amenities for residents.

Open spaces can play a role in advancing overall strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and strengthen resiliency as called for in San Diego's Climate Action Plan (CAP). Parks can make denser, urban neighborhoods more appealing; networks of open space can encourage walking and biking; and parks and trees can help communities withstand the impacts of climate change, including sea level rise, fire risk, flooding, and urban heat. Expanded resources for operations and maintenance could also contribute to capital reinvestment that improves the energy and water efficiency of the recreation system's buildings and infrastructure, such as irrigation.

Multiple Species Conservation Program

Approved in 1997, the MSCP is a comprehensive regional plan to preserve a network of habitat and open space in southwestern San Diego County. To implement its portion of the MSCP, the City of San Diego limits development within the 52,012-acre Multi-Habitat Planning Area (MHPA). These lands along with steep hillsides, significant biological resources, coastal beaches, bluffs, and flood hazards outline a natural framework for the parks and recreation system. Figure 3-1 shows the MHPA and Conserved Lands in the City of San Diego.

Natural resource management requires a careful balance between recreational access and the protection of sensitive areas. The MSCP Framework Management Plan establishes directives for balancing public access with resource management, such as clearly marking public access; locating trails, view overlooks, and staging areas on the least sensitive lands; and limiting recreation to compatible, passive activities.

Canyons, valleys, mesas, and beaches shape the City's beauty and overall character. These resources also make San Diego the most biologically diverse county in the contiguous U.S.

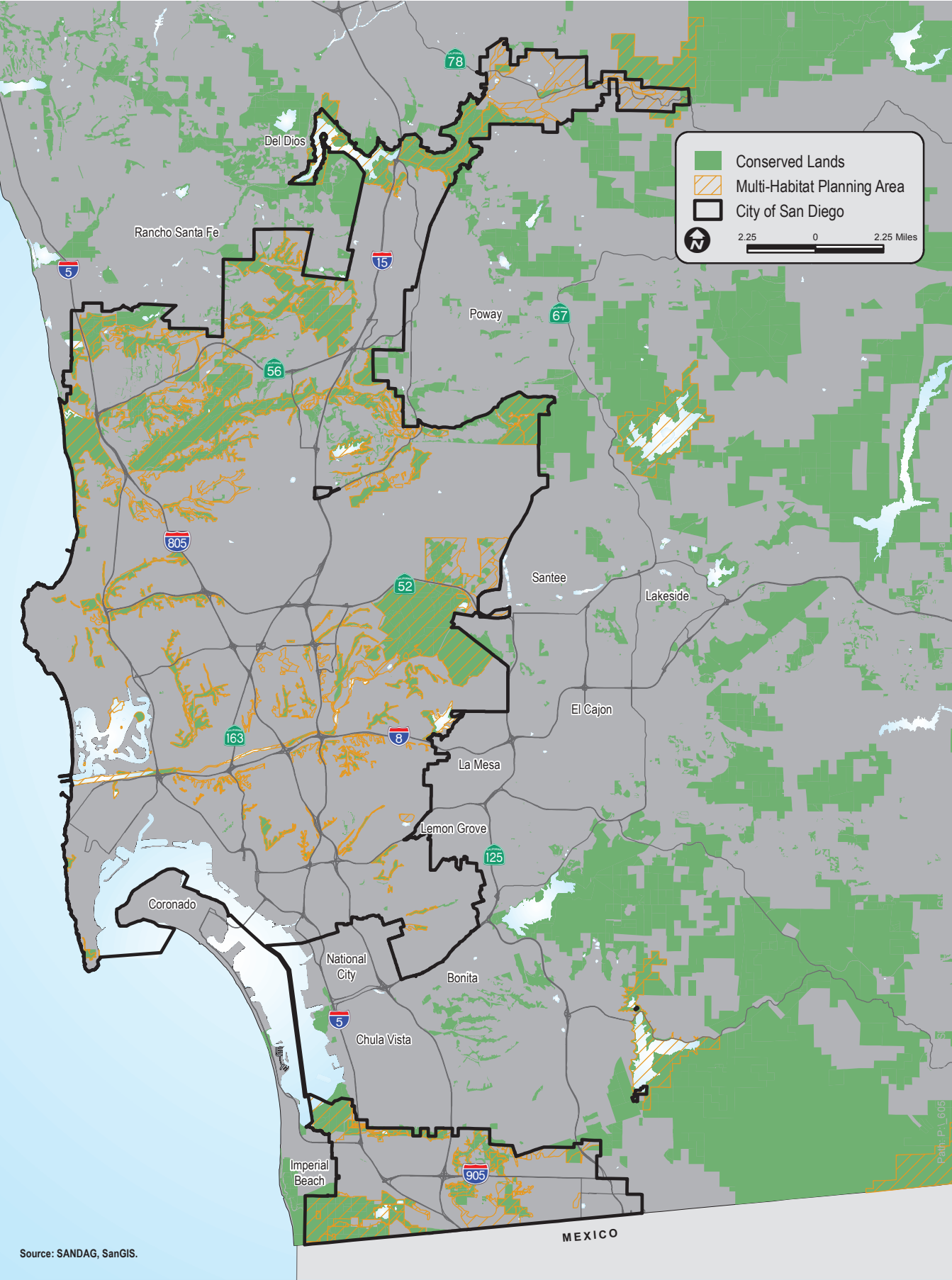


FIGURE 3-1
Conserved Lands, City of San Diego

Tree Canopy

One of the critical supporting measures for achieving climate resiliency is increasing the urban tree canopy (see Figure 3-2). A healthy urban forest cleans the air, manages stormwater, stores carbon, lowers air temperatures, and provides wildlife habitat. Building the tree canopy through plantings in parks, open spaces outside of the MHPA, and along trails and streets can improve these natural functions, while enhancing the comfort and aesthetics of communities. The Needs + Priorities report highlights best practices in incorporating parks and open space as key components of broader efforts to promote sustainability.

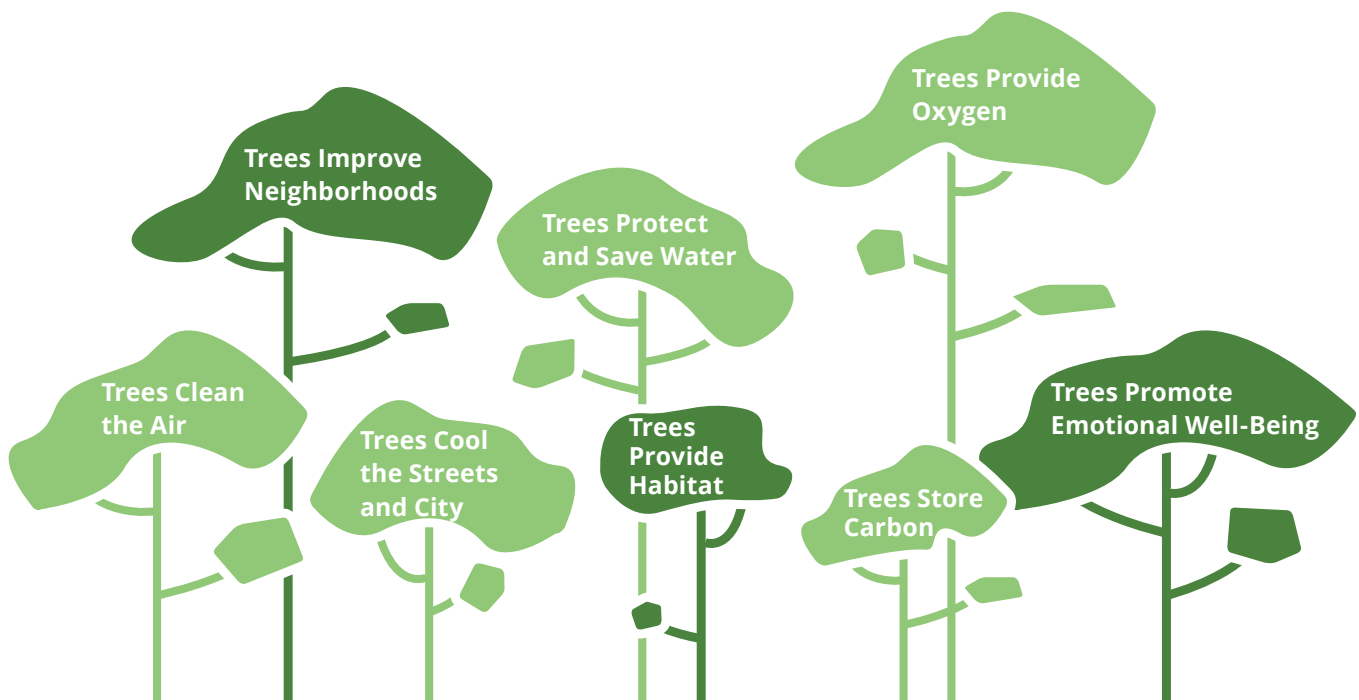
San Diego's Urban Forestry Management Plan serves as a primary guide to reach the CAP's goals of 15 percent urban tree canopy coverage by 2020 and 35 percent coverage by 2035. The Citywide tree canopy was approximately 13 percent in 2014. Communities with adjacency to open space, riparian corridors, or canyons tend to have tree canopy coverage of about 15 to 20 percent.

Built-out areas, such as downtown, communities with industrial activity or proximity to military facilities, and some coastal landscapes have a lower overall percentage of trees.

A holistic, coordinated approach to building the tree canopy should address ongoing maintenance challenges, such as irrigation and monitoring that affect the long-term health of trees. New tree plantings should also reinforce the transition toward diverse, native species that adapt well to San Diego's arid climate and soils and are easy to maintain.

The CAP calls for 15 percent urban tree canopy coverage by 2020 and 35 percent coverage by 2035. As of 2014, the Citywide tree canopy was about 13 percent.

The Many Benefits of Trees



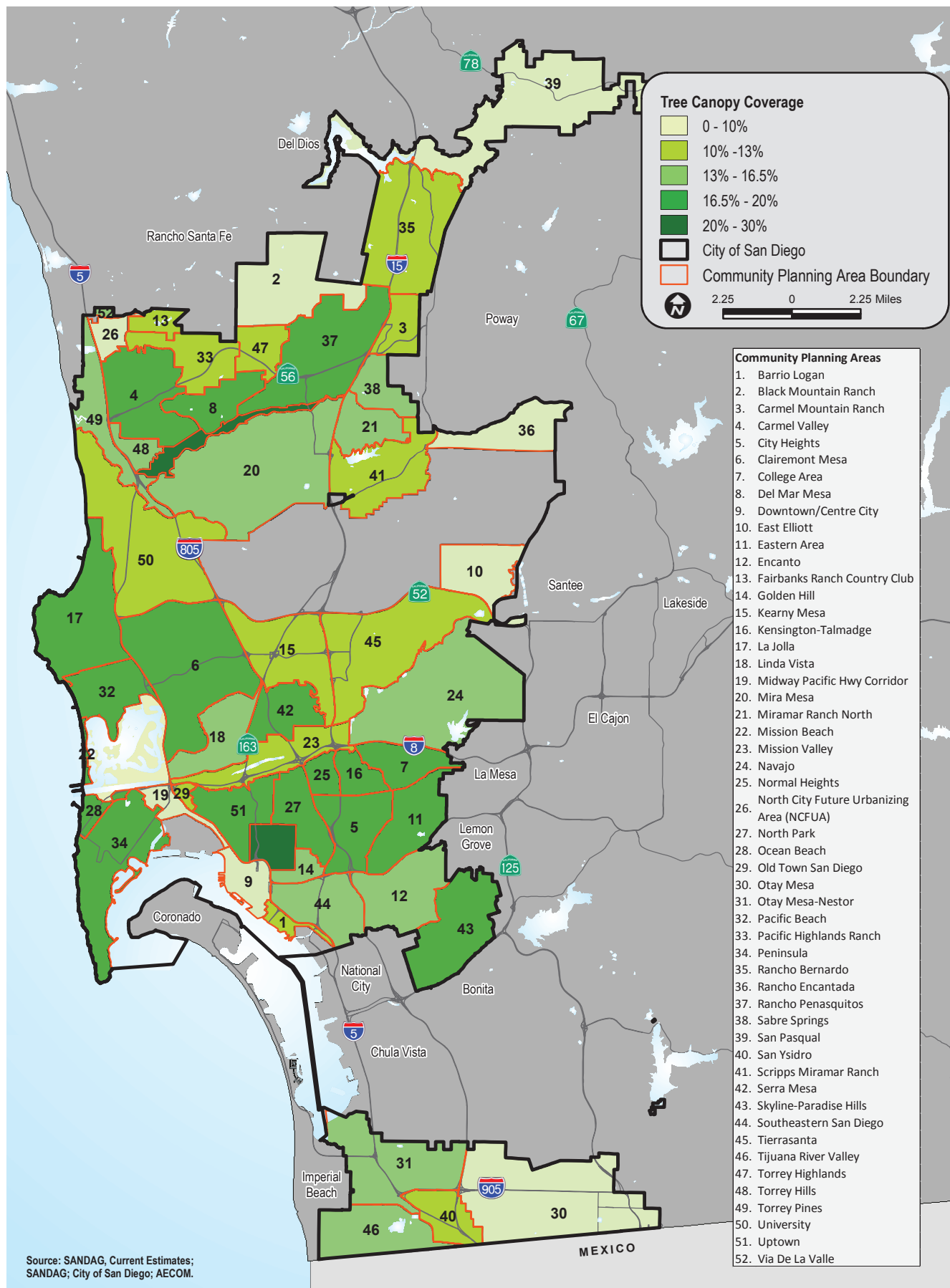


FIGURE 3-2
Tree Canopy Coverage, City of San Diego, 2014

3.1.2. Livability

The ultimate goal of planning is to enhance the livability of the City's communities. Many factors influence a community's quality of life, including attractive, functional built and natural environments; economic prosperity; transportation options, and educational, cultural, and recreational possibilities. As a means toward greater sustainability and affordability, planning frameworks call for concentrating growth in pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use areas linked to transit. To accommodate a compact residential development pattern, the City stresses land use changes, walkable community design, and parking management in TPAs within half a mile of existing or planned transit stops.

Nearby parks strengthen the comfort, aesthetics, and appeal of urban neighborhoods and job centers, improving the viability of higher residential and employment densities. Community Plans frequently view parks as a contributor to a neighborhood's sense of place. Plans recognize the relationship between parks and other community resources and quality of life opportunities, including shorelines, canyons, schools, art, sustainability, culture and history, and community farms and gardening.

The City calls for concentrating pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use growth within a half mile of existing or planned transit stops. Nearby parks can strengthen the comfort, aesthetics, and appeal of urban neighborhoods and centers.

Parks can help achieve both sustainability and livability goals by ensuring that urban parks offer accessibility through multiple modes and create high quality urban neighborhoods where people want to live and work. Figure 3-3 shows parks and recreation facilities relative to TPAs.

An increasingly central theme of livability in San Diego is the availability of quality, affordable housing, particularly within TPAs. New development pays Development Impact Fees (DIF) as a contribution to the fair-share cost of new public facilities. The need for park and recreation projects reflects General Plan service standard guidelines. In Impact Fee Studies recently completed for CPUs, park needs in urbanized communities are a major factor in DIFs, which could affect housing affordability and availability.

Gathering spaces, such as Piazza della Famiglia in Little Italy add to the vitality of urban centers and offer convenient recreation for nearby residents.



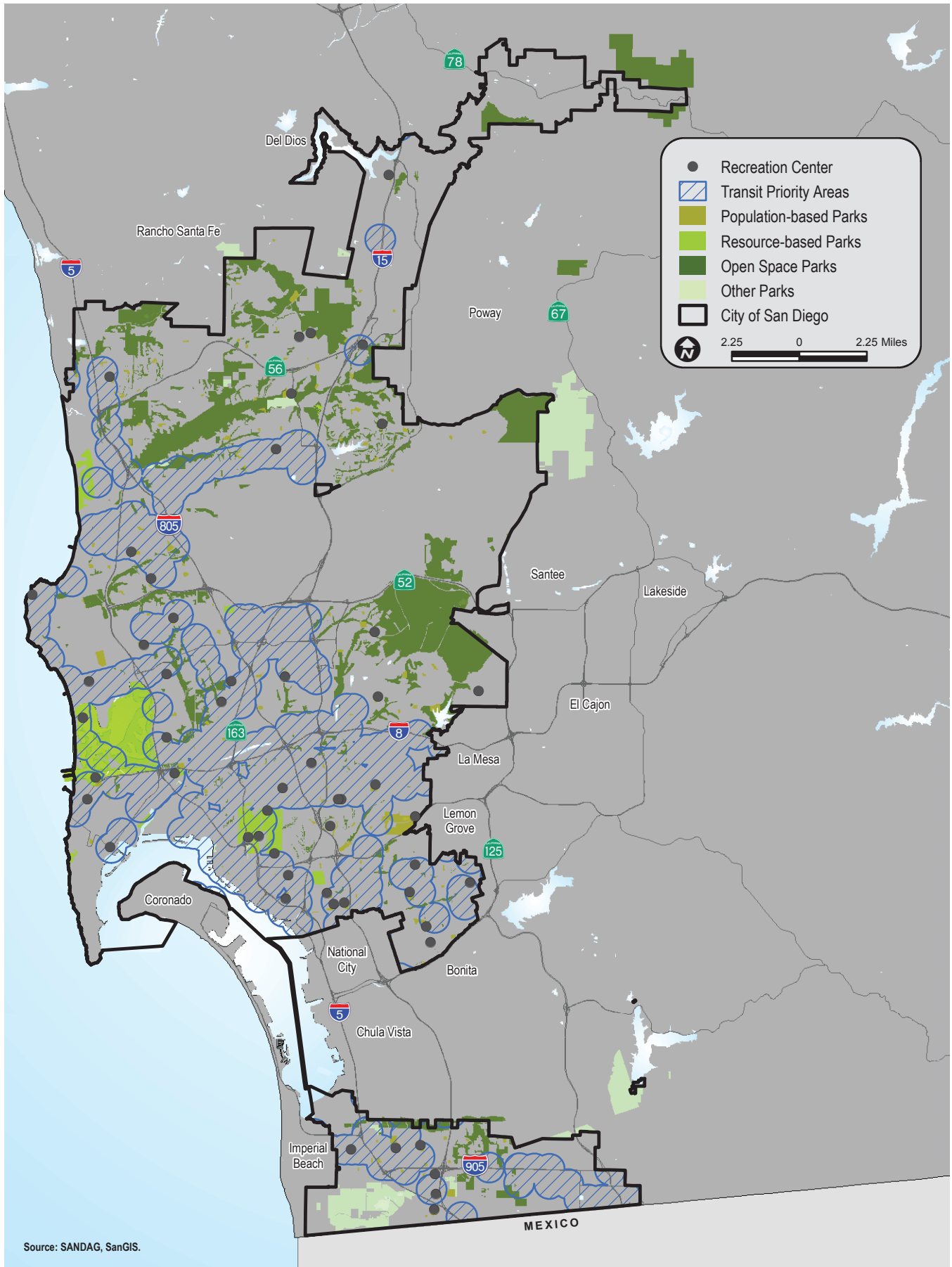


FIGURE 3-3
Transit Priority Areas and Parks, City of San Diego

3.1.3. Equity

City plans place a strong emphasis on equity or the idea that all residents regardless of age, income, race, or location should have the ability to participate fully in social and economic opportunities, including recreation, wellness, and cultural activities. The General Plan recognizes that factors such as population growth and decreasing land limit the City's ability to add new parkland, especially in older neighborhoods. To achieve greater flexibility and creativity, the 2008 General Plan introduced the concept of park equivalencies, which allow for the alternative provision of population-serving parkland and facilities when minimum service standards are not feasible.

Many Community Plans identify specific concepts for increasing park space in developed areas and meeting the changing recreation needs of growing populations. Strategies such as alternative service standards that stress access; creative, flexible park definitions; and prioritized investments in communities of need can work in concert to narrow equity gaps. The Needs + Priorities report of the PMP further explores equity as a guiding principle.

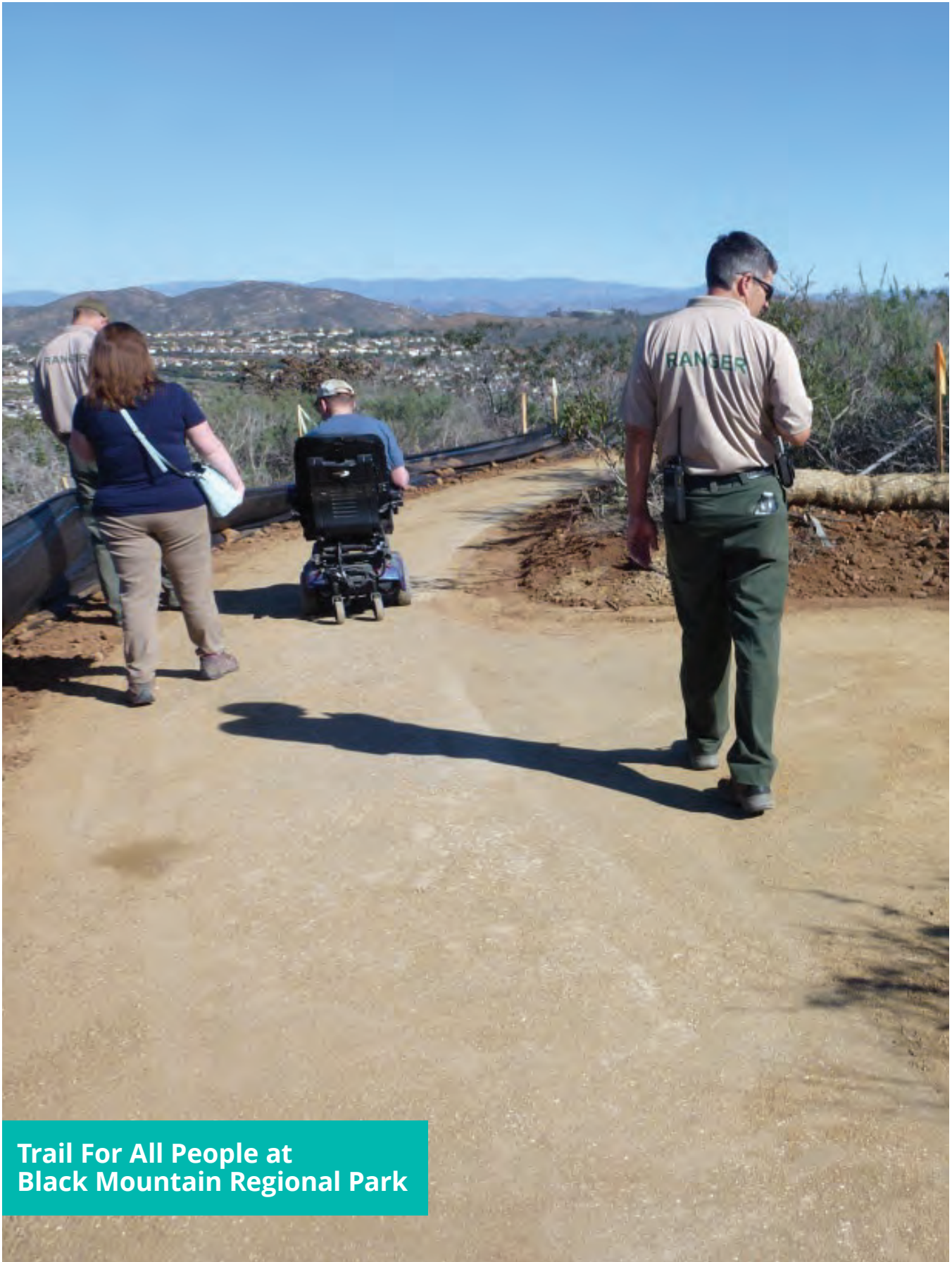
Equity and connectivity often overlap in the planning of parks. Siting new parks in underserved areas or improving safe walking connections to existing parks gives people opportunities to enjoy the benefits of recreation and social interaction.

3.1.4. Connectivity

A unifying theme of City plans is greater physical links within and across communities. Connectivity reduces dependency on automobiles by encouraging walking, biking, and transit use. It also shapes more vibrant and active community forms. The General Plan and Community Plans recognize the value of a cohesive system of active and passive spaces. An interconnected system of active and passive spaces does more than make it easier to get to parks. The surrounding network creates pleasant recreational experiences for people walking or biking to parks and facilities. Better connectivity also improves the ability of residents to move around their communities and links local spaces to the regional recreation network.

Accessibility to parks and recreational opportunities is also an essential component of equity. The City's Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans focus on developing a more complete network that offers safe, convenient, comfortable access to public facilities, including parks. Concepts such as Safe Routes to Parks, linear parks, multi-use trails, and pedestrian-friendly streets can expand access to recreational opportunities for residents of all abilities. The Needs + Priorities report of the PMP explores the walking accessibility of the





**Trail For All People at
Black Mountain Regional Park**

3.2 Organizational Structure

The Department coordinates with a complex array of other City departments, public agencies, and community stakeholders in the delivery of services. Internally, the Department organizes a wide range of functions within six divisions as shown in Figure 3-4. The Department also relies on other City departments to perform parks-related planning and maintenance functions. The City's Planning Department conducts park planning and design integrated with other land use planning. The Public Works Department delivers capital projects, such as parks and recreation centers. The Transportation and Storm Water Department maintains storm drain facilities on parkland. Civic San Diego plans and implements capital improvements for Downtown and Redevelopment areas.

Externally, formal advisory bodies offer community input to the decision-making process. The Park and Recreation Board gives overall guidance on parks, recreation properties, and facilities. The City also has established Recreation Advisory Groups in place of the previously recognized Recreation Councils. Recreation Advisory Groups make recommendations on community recreation programs and the expenditure of Recreation Center Funds.

Regional Park Advisory Bodies and Citizen Advisory Committees (CAC) inform planning for specific components of the park system, including Golf Complexes, Balboa Park, Mission Bay Park, Sunset Cliffs Natural Park, San Diego-La Jolla Underwater Park, Tecolote Canyon Natural Park, MTRP, Otay Valley Regional Park (OVRP), Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve (LPCP), Presidio Park, and the San Dieguito River Park.

MISSION

To provide healthy, sustainable, and enriching environments for all

VISION

To connect all to the City's diverse world class park system

GOALS

Protect and enhance natural and developed assets

Develop and offer innovative recreational opportunities to meet the diverse needs of our communities

Foster growth and development of our employees

The City also participates as a member of Joint Power Authorities (JPA) with other municipalities and the County of San Diego. The JPAs function as separate agencies responsible for the planning, design, operation, and maintenance of large, multi-jurisdictional parks, including MTRP, OVRP, LPCP, and the San Dieguito River Park.

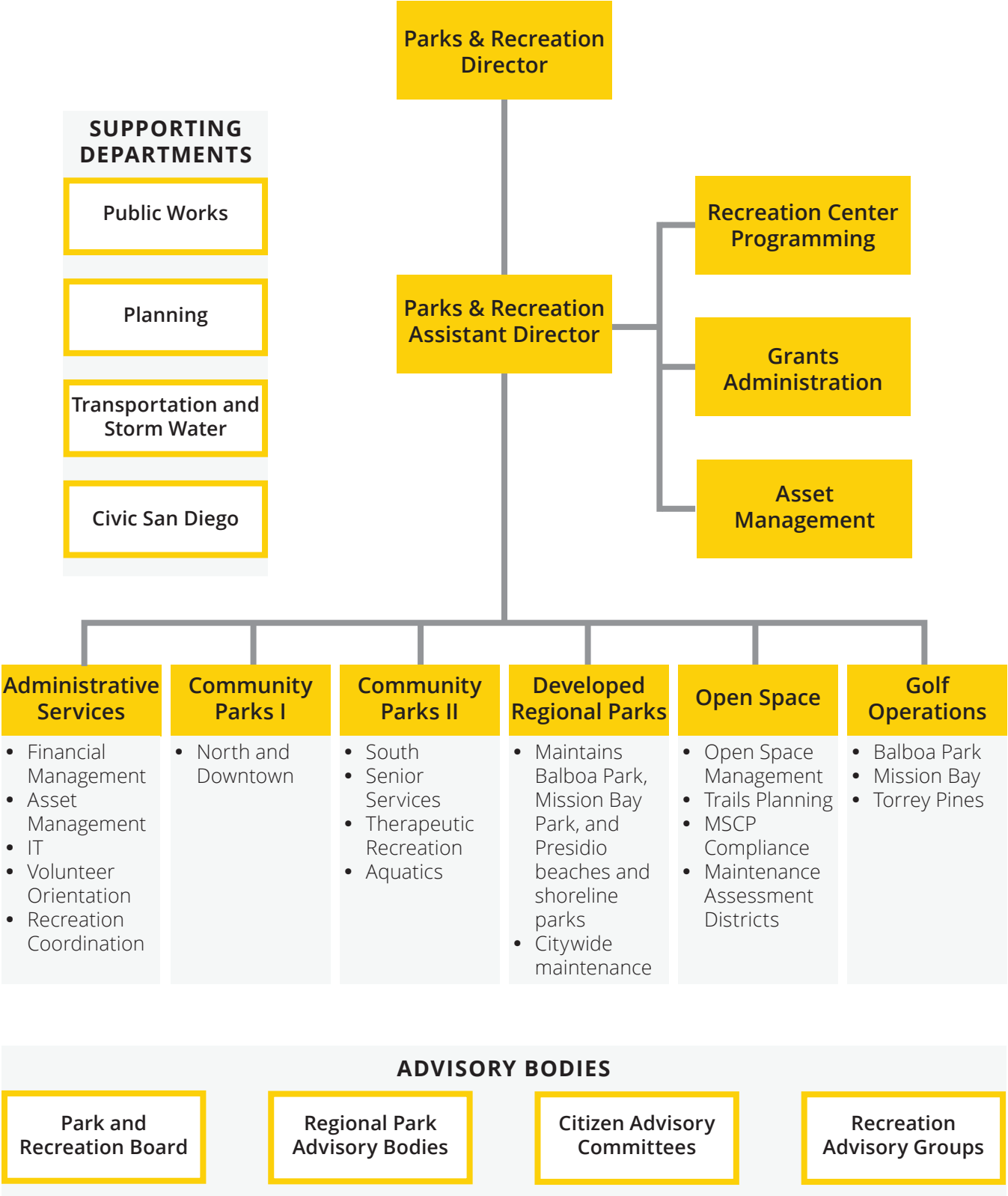


FIGURE 3-4
City of San Diego Parks and Recreation
Organization Structure

3.3 Assets

3.3.1. Current System

The City of San Diego offers diverse recreation opportunities, serving millions of residents and visitors each year. As of 2019, the City operates and maintains 439 parks, 200 miles of trails, and 42,000 acres of parks, underwater reserves, and conserved open spaces. When combined, these assets make San Diego the second largest urban park system in the U.S. by land area.

San Diego is noted for its beautiful destination parks, striking shorelines and beaches, and dramatic canyons. Distinctive regional parks, such as Balboa Park, Mission Bay Park, Mission Trails Regional Park, and Chicano Park serve as cornerstones of the City's physical and cultural identity. Renowned amenities, such as the Torrey Pines Golf Complex and Gliderport offer one-of-a-kind recreational experiences. The parks and recreation system also includes an extensive network of community-serving spaces, conserved lands, facilities, trails, and programs designed to meet multiple needs, ranging from neighborhood recreation to Citywide events and regional and national attractions.

The City is in an active phase of park expansion, pledging to improve or build new parks as part of the Mayor's ongoing 50 Parks in 5 Years initiative. As of 2018, 19 new parks have opened and more than a dozen other park projects are in various stages of design or construction.

3.3.2. Joint Use Facilities

The City of San Diego also delivers recreational opportunities to residents through long-standing and successful partnerships with neighboring school districts. Currently, joint use agreements at over 80 elementary and middle schools allow for the shared use of multi-purpose courts, sports fields, and children's play areas during non-school hours. Under the Play All Day Parks program launched in 2016, the City, San Diego Unified School District, and San Ysidro School District are collaborating to build over 45 new joint-use park sites in the next 5 to 10 years.

The Cesar Solis Community Park, which features a joint use field shared with the San Ysidro School District, is part of the City's commitment to break ground on or upgrade 50 parks in five years.



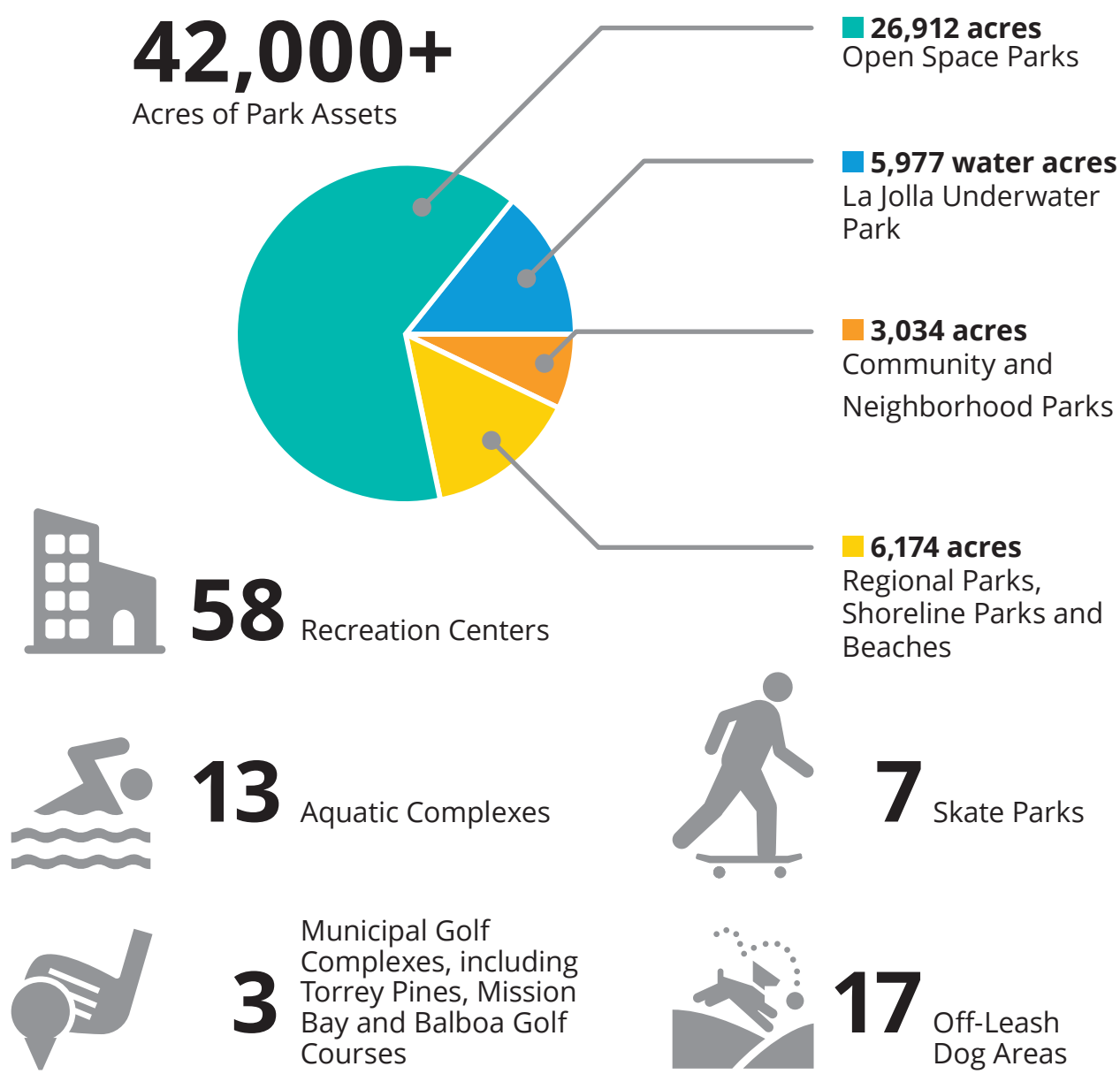


FIGURE 3-5
City of San Diego Parks and Recreation System

Building icon: Created by iconesia from the Noun Project | Swimming icon: Created by Robert A. Di Ieso from the Noun Project | Golf icon: Created by Dinosoft Labs from the Noun Project | Skater icon: Created by Scott Lewis from the Noun Project | Dog icon: Created by Iconation from the Noun Project

As the second largest urban system in the U.S., San Diego operates and maintains 439 parks, more than 200 miles of trails, and 42,000 acres of parks, underwater reserves, and open space assets.



Open Space Parks

The Department's Open Space Division manages over 27,000 acres of open space, including canyons and parklands.

Open space parks preserve and protect natural habitats, while providing access for hiking, biking and equestrian trails. Parks include Mission Trails Regional Park, Tri-Canyon Parks, Mission Valley Preserve, Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Black Mountain Open Space Park, San Pasqual and Clevenger Canyon Open Space Park, and Otay Valley Regional Park. Some 3,200 acres of open space are neighborhood canyons and parklands, offering nearby recreational and educational opportunities for residents.

Open Space Parks Rangers are available for interpretive talks and tours and often collaborate with community groups to restore native habitat, maintain trails, and clean up sites.



Black Mountain Open Space Park

Regional Parks

Regional parks are sites with distinctive scenic, natural, historical or cultural features, such as Balboa Park, Mission Bay Park, and Presidio Park. Shoreline parks and beaches stretch for 13 miles from Torrey Pines City Park south to Sunset Cliffs Natural Park, offering 65 view areas and coastal access points.

Developed Regional Parks Rangers are responsible for the protection, management, and interpretation of the natural and cultural resources at these parks.





Balboa Park

Community and Neighborhood Parks

Community and neighborhood parks, Recreation Centers, and Aquatic Complexes serve the daily recreational needs of residents within communities across the City.





Colina del Sol Community Park

Figure 3-6 shows the overall parks and recreation system in the City of San Diego. Within municipal boundaries, other City departments or public entities, including the Public Utilities Department, federal, state, and county governments, the San Diego Unified Port District, Joint Powers Authorities, and school districts own and operate park spaces and reservoirs offering additional recreational options for residents. The Supporting Maps Document contains more detailed maps of parks and recreation facilities.



















PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES LEGEND

Abbreviations

- CP – Community Park
- MP – Mini-Park
- NP – Neighborhood Park
- OS – Open Space
- ES – Elementary School
- HS – High School
- MS – Middle School

City Parks and Recreation Facilities

-  Recreation Center
-  Aquatic Complex
-  Dog Park
-  Ranger Station
-  Golf Complex
-  City Lake
-  Skate Park
-  Trail
-  Population-based Park
-  Resource-based Park
-  Open Space Park
-  Joint Use Park
-  Port Recreation Open Space
-  Other Park (County, State, Federal)
-  Lakes and Water Bodies
-  Council District Boundary

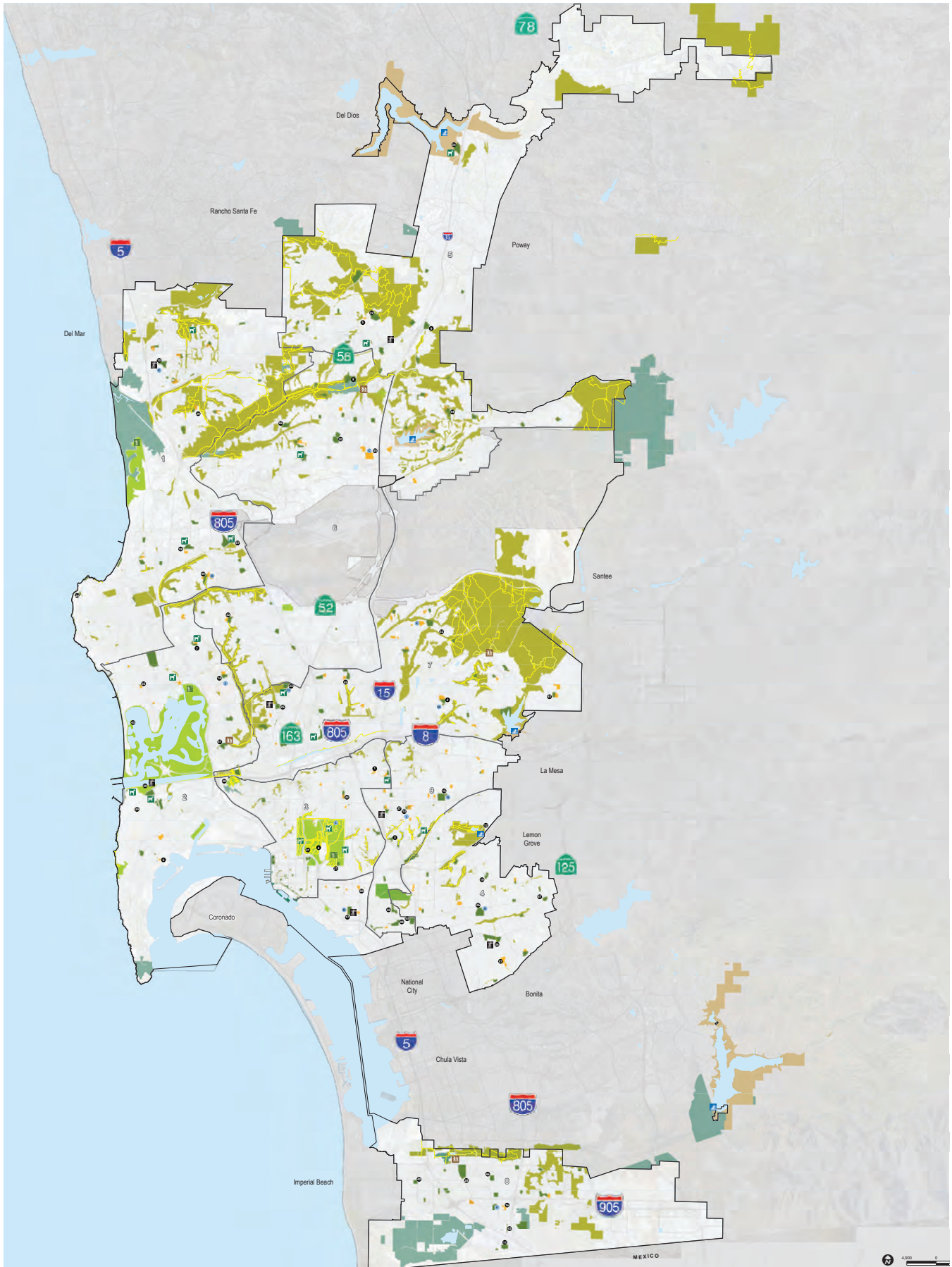



FIGURE 3-6
City of San Diego Parks and Recreation Facilities



Chicano Park

- 
- The background image is a collage. On the left, there are three vertical panels of murals. The top panel shows a group of people working in a field. The middle panel shows a woman in a blue dress and a man in a blue shirt. The bottom panel shows a man in a blue shirt and a woman in a blue dress. On the right, there is a large white number '04' overlaid on a photograph of a park. The photograph shows a concrete bridge over a street, with a brick building and a tree in the background. Two people are standing in the foreground, looking at a small table with items on it.
- 01 INTRODUCTION
 - 02 HISTORY OF PARKS IN SAN DIEGO
 - 03 OVERVIEW OF PARK SYSTEM TODAY
 - 04 DEMOGRAPHICS AND POPULATION ANALYSIS**
 - 05 SERVICE STANDARD ANALYSIS
 - 06 PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITY ASSESSMENT
 - 07 RECREATION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES
 - 08 RECREATION TRENDS
 - 09 CONCLUSION

Demographics and Population Analysis

Population growth and change significantly influence recreational needs. More residents generate higher demand, but shifts in the age, income, and cultural background of residents can also reshape preferences for the type of parks and services. Ultimately, the profile, size, and participation rates of users determine future recreation needs. However, an analysis of trends in population and households characteristics gives a glimpse into emerging recreation interests and can prepare the City to develop facilities and programming that remain relevant for residents. The demographic profile of the City suggests a changing population that will be bigger, more diverse, and older.

These demographic trends indicate an increasing need for generationally inclusive and accessible spaces that enable older adults to remain physically active and socially engaged in their communities; recreational spaces that are compatible with compact, urban settings and offer convenient pedestrian and bike access; and integrated, equity-based strategies to create healthier, stronger, safer, and more inclusive neighborhoods. The Demographic Summary Document contains additional data.

04 SUMMARY

San Diego's population will become bigger, more diverse, and older in the decades ahead. By 2050, forecasts indicate that:

- The City's population will rise by about 380,000 to nearly 1.8 million people;
- More than one in four residents will be 60 years or older;
- Most growth will be in the Downtown and eastern and southern parts of the City;
- As the millennial generation ages and forms families, the need for family and youth activities will grow, especially in communities that are currently underserved; and
- Most growth will be multi-family housing.

These trends suggest opportunities for:

- Generationally inclusive, accessible spaces and low impact and fitness-oriented recreation programming to meet the needs of older residents;
- Creative, flexible park spaces compatible with compact, urban settings;
- After-school and summer activities, skill-building programs, organized sports, unstructured play and nature-based learning in communities for children; and
- Equity-based strategies, such as increased access to parks, recreation programming and wellness and life skills activities in areas of need.

4.1 Population Characteristics

4.1.1. Racial / Ethnic Composition

The City will be more diverse in the decades ahead. Figure 4-1 shows the racial/ethnic composition of City residents in 2016 and 2050. Over the next 30 years, the Hispanic population is projected to grow by more than 70 percent. The City's Asian population is expected to increase by more than 60 percent. By 2035, the Hispanic community will become the City's single largest demographic group.

By 2050, Hispanic residents will be more than 40 percent of the City's population, while one in five residents will be of Asian ethnicity.

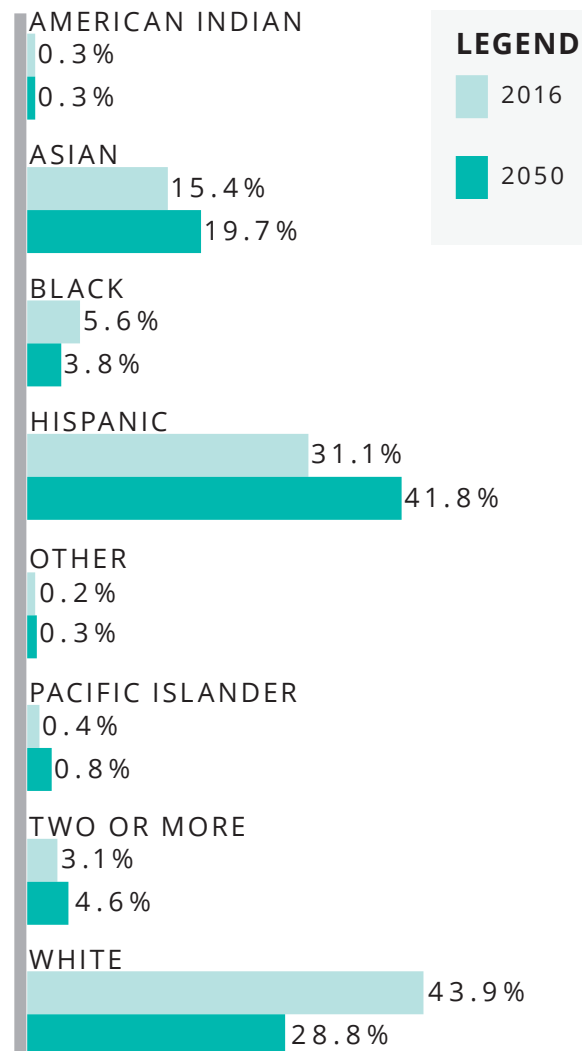


FIGURE 4-1
Population by Race and Ethnicity,
City of San Diego, 2016 and 2050

Source: SANDAG, U.S. Census Bureau;
SANDAG, Current Estimates; SANDAG,
2050 Series 13 Regional Growth Forecast;
U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American
Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

4.1.2. Age

Seniors

The age profile of the community influences participation rates for certain recreational programs, such as youth sports and after-school activities, as well as senior-oriented services and low impact recreation. Forecasts indicate that the City of San Diego will parallel the national trend of an aging population (see Table 4-1).

TABLE 4-1
Age Profile, City of San Diego, 2016 and 2050

AGE	2016	2050
Under 10	12.2%	11.8%
10 to 19	11.7%	11.3%
20 to 29	17.2%	15.5%
30 to 39	16.3%	14.5%
40 to 49	13.2%	11.5%
50 to 59	12.2%	11.3%
60 to 69	9.1%	10.0%
70 to 79	4.8%	7.3%
80+	3.3%	6.8%

Source: SANDAG, U.S. Census Bureau; SANDAG, Current Estimates; U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Figure 4-3 shows the percentage of residents age 60 or older in each Community Planning Area (CPA) in 2050. An aging population requires additional emphasis on facilities and programs, including generationally inclusive and accessible spaces that enable older adults to remain physically active and socially engaged in their communities.

By 2050, more than 425,000 people or one in four City of San Diego residents will be 60 years or older.

The Top 5 Community Plan Areas with the highest number of seniors in 2050:

- Mira Mesa
- Clairemont Mesa
- Navajo
- Otay-Nestor
- Skyline Paradise Hills

A higher percentage of seniors suggest opportunities for:

- Generationally inclusive recreation spaces
- Low impact recreation
- Social activities and life-long learning programs
- Wellness and fitness activities

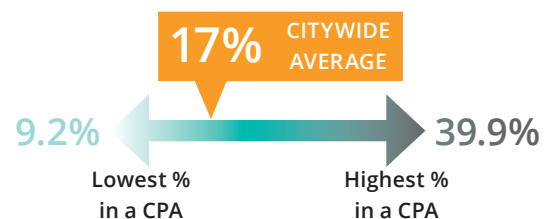


FIGURE 4-2 Percent of Population with Residents 60 and older, 2016

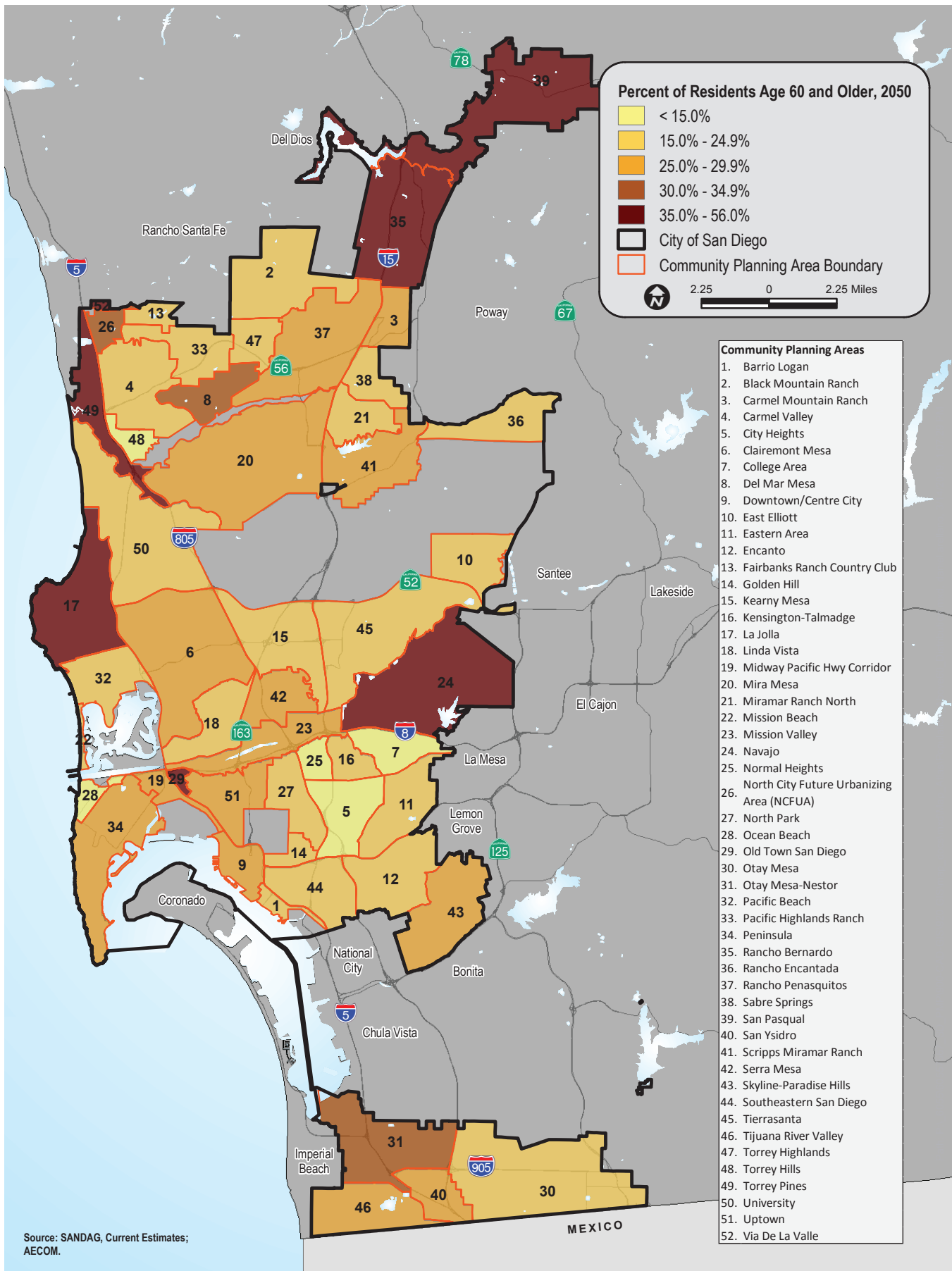


FIGURE 4-3
Percent of Residents Age 60 or Older by Community Planning Area, City of San Diego, 2050

Children

Though there is a strong aging trend, many areas of the City will continue to have high shares of school age children.

Figure 4-5 depicts the percentage of school age children by CPA. In general, communities to the south, east, and north tend to be younger. The Downtown and Coast in contrast have smaller numbers of children, reflective of the prevalence of young adult households prior to family formation or households headed by older adults.

A higher share of children highlights opportunities to offer after-school and summer activities, educational and skill-building programs, and organized sports, as well as readily accessible and safe spaces for unstructured play and nature-based learning.

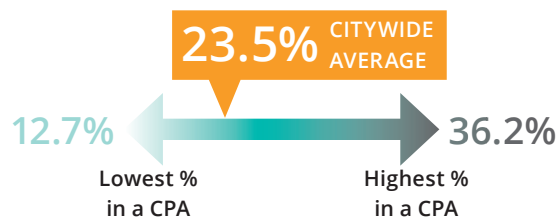


FIGURE 4-4 Percent of Population with Residents 19 and under, 2016

The Top 5 Community Plan Areas with the highest number of children in 2050:

- City Heights
- Mira Mesa
- Southeastern San Diego
- Clairemont Mesa
- Encanto

A higher percentage of children suggests opportunities for:

- After-school and summer activities
- Educational and skill-building programs
- Organized youth sports
- Nature-based learning



Trolley Barn Park

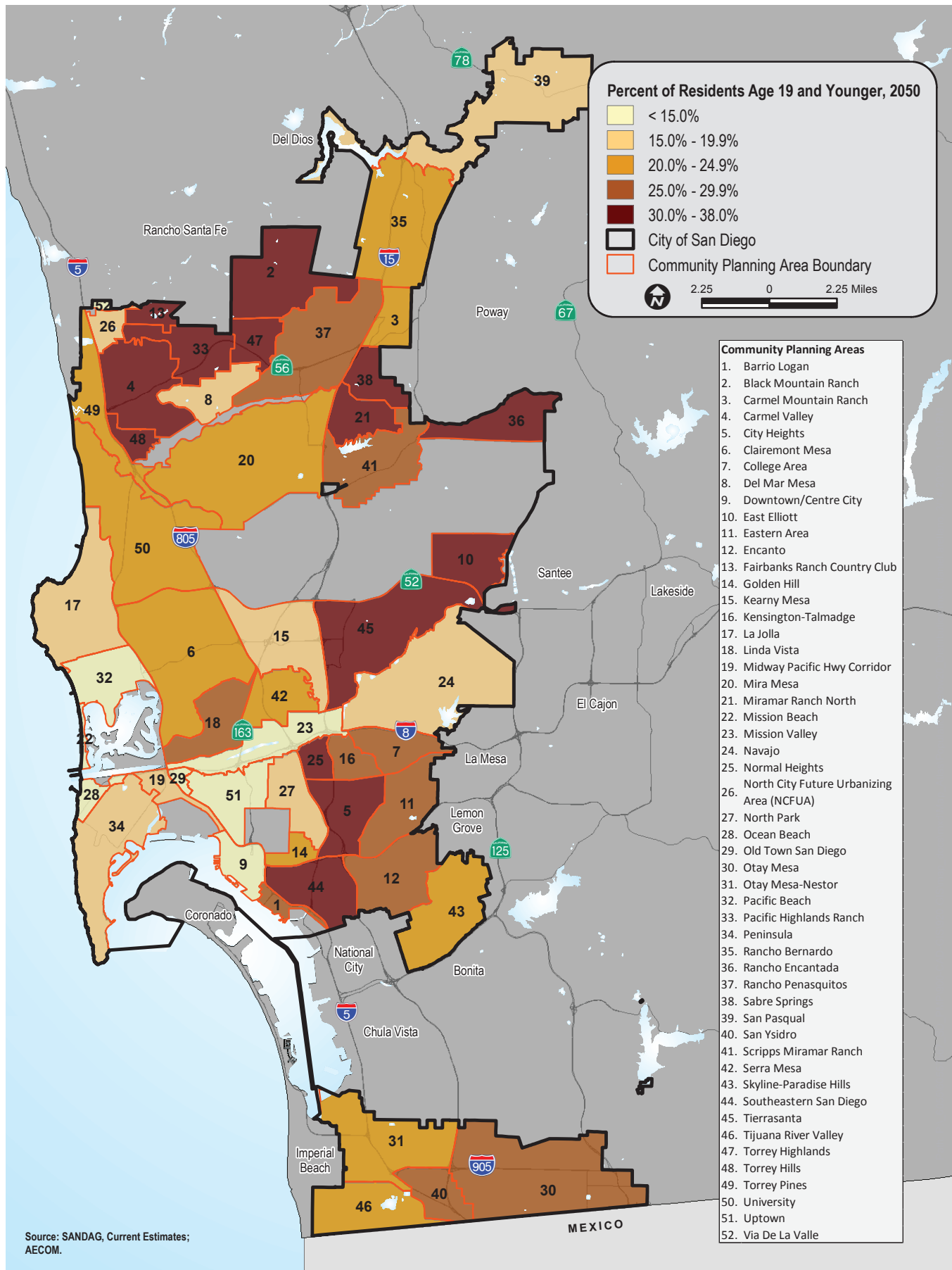


FIGURE 4-5
Percent of Residents Age 19 or Younger by Community Planning Area, City of San Diego, 2050

4.1.3. Other Population Characteristics

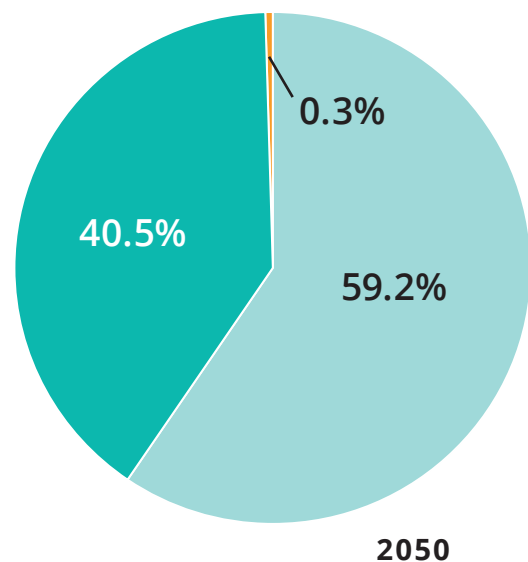
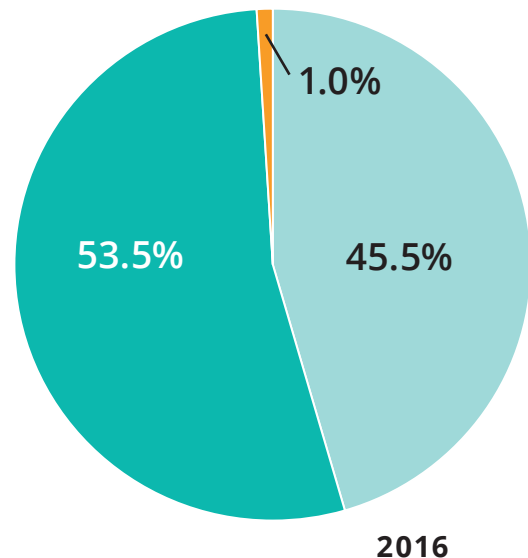
The percentage of City residents holding bachelor's and graduate or professional degrees rose between 2010 and 2016. About 45 percent of City residents hold a bachelor's degree or graduate or professional degree. About two-thirds of City residents age 16 and older participate in the workforce. The City of San Diego has a large military presence and one of the biggest concentrations of military/defense assets in the world. The percent of residents in the armed forces rose between 2010 and 2016.

As of 2016, three out of four workers in the City drove alone to their jobs. Approximately seven percent of households in the City lacked access to any vehicle, indicating a need for transit or safe pedestrian or bicycle access to daily destinations, including parks and recreational opportunities.

4.1.4. Household Type

The City has more than a half million housing units with an even split between single-family and multi-family structures. Forecasts indicate that most new residential development to accommodate San Diego's growing population in the decades ahead will be multi-family. By 2050, almost 60 percent of all housing units will be multi-family (see Figure 4-6). The intensive use of land for residential purposes highlights the need to explore recreational spaces compatible with compact, urban settings and to balance pedestrian and bike access to smaller neighborhood and community-oriented parks with driving and transit access to larger regional-serving parks and recreational facilities.

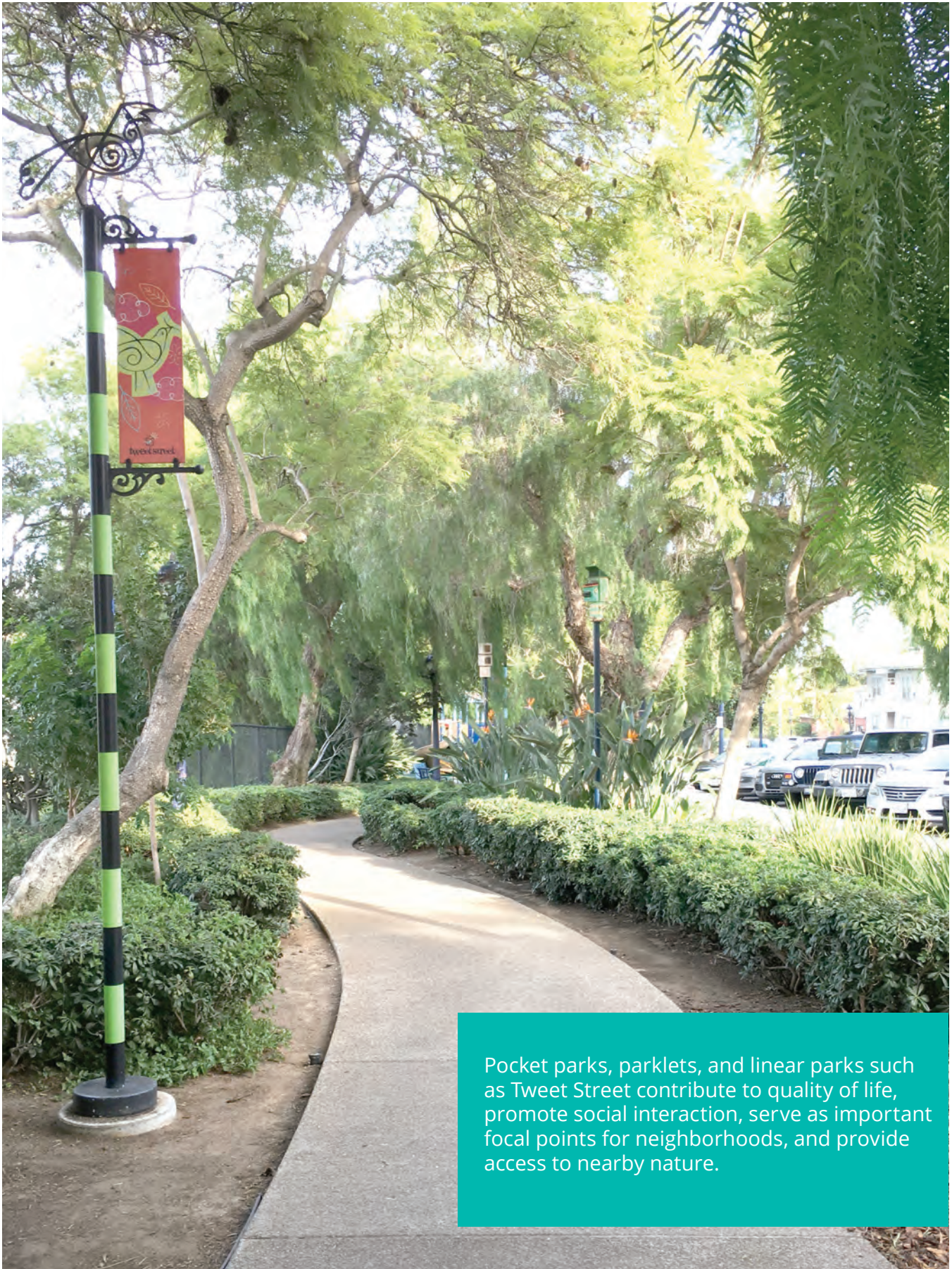
By 2025, the City is projected to have more multi-family than single-family housing units.



LEGEND

- SINGLE-FAMILY
- MULTI-FAMILY
- MOBILE HOME

FIGURE 4-6
Housing Type, City of San Diego, 2050



Pocket parks, parklets, and linear parks such as Tweet Street contribute to quality of life, promote social interaction, serve as important focal points for neighborhoods, and provide access to nearby nature.

4.1.5. Population Growth

The City of San Diego is California's second largest city with an estimated 2016 population of almost 1.4 million people. Projections indicate that the City will add about 380,000 residents by 2050. In 2050, the City's 1.77 million residents will represent 44 percent of the County's total population of four million. As evaluated in Chapter 5, this growing population base would require the City to expand population-serving park acreage to meet its current acreage-based park service standard.

Forecasts indicate that the fastest growing communities will be:

- Midway Pacific Highway Corridor
- Otay Mesa
- Barrio Logan
- College Area
- Downtown/Centre City

Downtown, eastern, and southern communities will grow more quickly than the City overall, while communities to the north and along the coast will see modest growth. Areas of high growth are associated with urban infill and the build-out of Otay Mesa, one of San Diego's largest remaining stretches of underdeveloped land.

Population growth, however, will not spread evenly across the City. As shown in Figure 4-7, the Downtown, Eastern, and Southern Planning Regions will exceed the annual growth rate of the City overall, while the Northern Central and Coastal community populations will expand more modestly. Figure 4-8 shows the annual population growth rate by CPA.

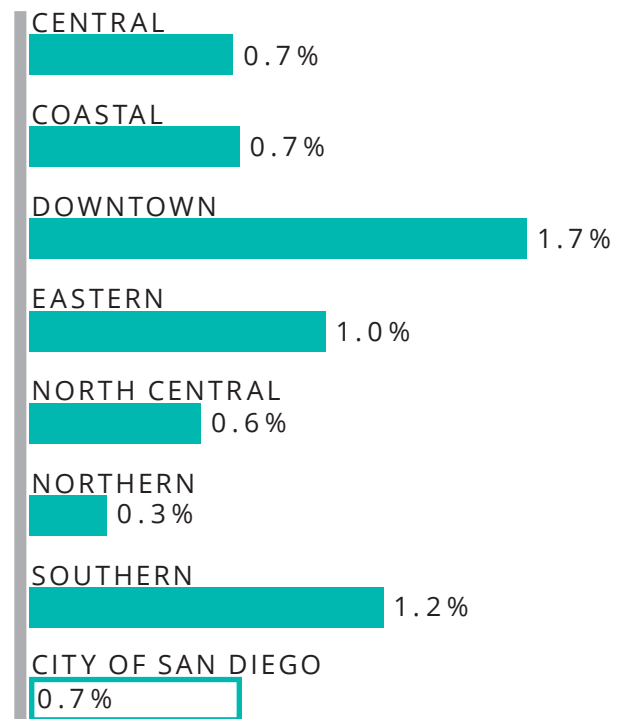


FIGURE 4-7
Annual Growth Rate by Planning Region,
City of San Diego, 2018-2050

Source: SANDAG, U.S. Census Bureau; SANDAG, Current Estimates; SANDAG, 2050 Series 13 Regional Growth Forecast; U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

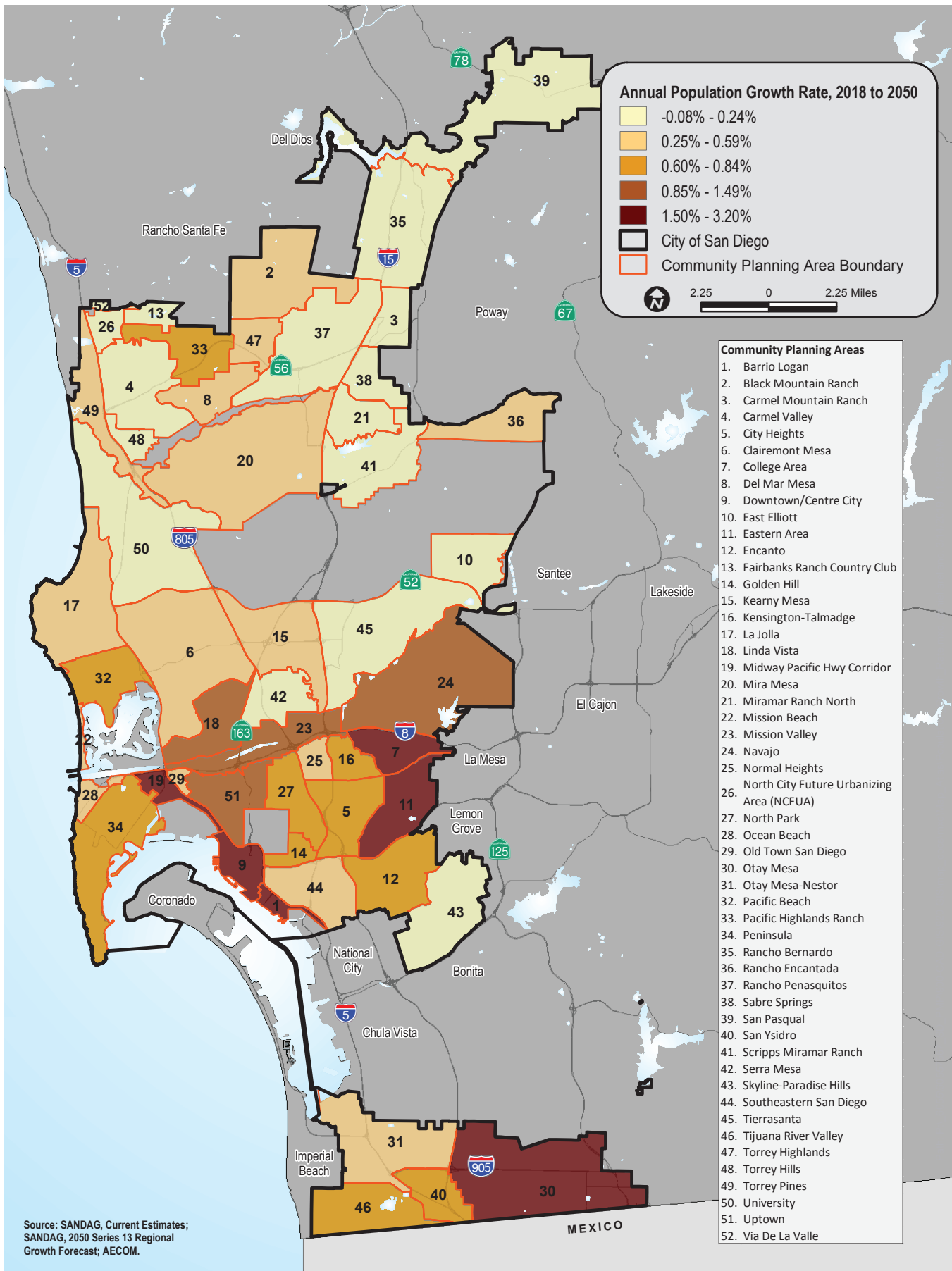


FIGURE 4-8
Annual Population Growth Rate by Community Planning Area, City of San Diego

4.2 Areas of Need

Equity is the principle that public parks and recreation services should be available and accessible to all people regardless of income, ethnicity, gender, ability, or age. Living near parks, recreational programs, and green space encourages greater physical activity and positive health benefits, strengthens community engagement, expands economic opportunity, and improves environmental quality.

Part of understanding whether a parks system promotes equity is to analyze the distribution of parks and recreational facilities across the City. The PMP assesses current park acreage, as well as the walk accessibility of parks. Park deficiencies or gaps in any given area are often the result of complex, systemic factors, including the age of a community, market and development trends, resource constraints, and lack of available land.

These factors frequently converge in communities with chronic economic challenges, indicating a higher level of need for the benefits associated with parks. An equity lens can highlight opportunities to prioritize future investments and align the delivery of parks and recreational services with other community-building initiatives.

Communities in need tend to be in the central and southern parts of the City. Residents in these areas may lack the resources to access recreational, fitness, and well-being opportunities through private means. Poor health outcomes also indicate the need for convenient access to recreational activity and clean natural areas. Along with improved physical well-being, targeted programming can address social

disparities by offering positive activities and inclusive spaces for youth, connecting children to broader recreational and cultural experiences, and building basic safety and life skills, such as learning how to swim. Parks also strengthen the overall social fabric of a community, connecting residents to one another and fostering interaction. The Needs + Priorities report further explores approaches for identifying areas of need.

Equity is the principle that public parks and recreation services should be available and accessible to all people regardless of income, ethnicity, gender, ability, or age.

Parks and recreation can promote greater equity through:

- Expanded access to wellness, fitness, and healthy lifestyle activities;
- Activated public spaces that enhance neighborhood safety;
- Art and cultural opportunities that express local identity;
- Summer and after-school programming;
- Safe, accessible spaces for play and family-friendly gatherings;
- Multi-generational spaces for seniors; and
- Safety and life skills programming.



Memorial Pool

Aquatics provide an important recreational, safety, and fitness amenity for communities.



Hawk Pocket Park

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Service Standard Analysis

Service standards measure the adequacy of service delivery in a given area and guide planning, programming, financing, and budgeting. The City of San Diego 2008 General Plan identifies standards and guidelines for developing population-based parks and recreation facilities, including Recreation Centers and Aquatic Complexes (see Table 5-1). While an acreage-based service standard strives to provide recreational spaces in the communities where people live, areas of the City vary in the number of community- and neighborhood-serving parks and facilities due to historic, development, and demographic factors (see Chapter 2).

Many of the City's older communities that experience park deficiencies developed prior to the use of current park development standards and guidelines. Expanding the supply of recreation-related acreage is challenging, however, because San Diego is a land-constrained City.

Funding shortfalls further compound this obstacle by limiting opportunistic purchases of increasingly expensive and scarce land once it becomes available. Standards, for example, require the planning and construction of park space in conjunction with other development. The weaker development market in some of these communities generates minimal revenue from DIF, one of the primary mechanisms to fund new parkland acquisition and construction.

Continued population growth in the City also exacerbates park deficits. The trend toward compact infill development concentrates demand for park space in already urbanized areas, creating pressure to use available land more intensively. The General Plan recognized the need to

05 SUMMARY

The City's current service standard is 2.8 acres per 1,000 residents for community parks, neighborhood parks, mini-parks, and joint use facilities. Central and southern communities tend to have fewer acres of parkland.

Areas of San Diego vary in the number of parks and recreation facilities due to:

- Older communities developed prior to the use of current park development standards;
- Areas with less growth generate minimal revenue from DIF, the primary mechanism to fund acquisition and construction; and
- Trend toward compact infill development concentrates demand for park space in already built-out areas.

Given these challenges, the PMP explores additional service standard techniques, such as access and equity to determine the ability of the system to meet the needs of all residents.

address these constraints in achieving acreage-based standards by introducing the concept of park equivalencies. Equivalencies allow for the flexible provision of parkland and facilities when minimum service standards are not feasible or community priorities reflect different approaches. The City has established criteria to ensure that the alternative spaces are usable and accessible. Eligible park equivalencies include:

- Joint use facilities
- Other agency parks, such as Federal, State, County, or Port of San Diego
- Grounds of City buildings, such as libraries
- Trails
- Portions of resource-based park
- Privately-owned park sites
- Non-traditional sites, such as rooftop parks, linear parks, and stormwater facilities
- Facility or building expansions or upgrades

interim standards and criteria to guide the implementation of acreage-based park equivalencies consistent with the City of San Diego's General Plan Recreation Element. Communities evaluate the appropriateness of and the amount of credit applied to proposed equivalencies through the community plan amendment or update process. While the City's primary goal is to obtain land for parks and improve existing facilities, the PMP creates a vehicle for re-examining park definitions and exploring creative, practical, and equitable ways to meet the recreational needs of diverse, growing communities.

The Park Equivalencies Toolbox provides

TABLE 5-1
Parks and Recreation Facility
Standards and Guidelines

	CATEGORY	STANDARDS
POPULATION-BASED PARKS	Community Park, Neighborhood Park, Mini Park, and Joint Use Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.8 acres per 1,000 Population
POPULATION-BASED FACILITIES	Recreation Centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve a population of 25,000 • Minimum 17,000 square feet per center or 25,000 population
	Aquatic Complexes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve a population of 50,000 • Minimum standard 25 meters by 25 yards swimming pool

Service standards measure the adequacy of service delivery in a given area and guide planning, programming, financing, and budgeting. The 2008 General Plan identifies standards and guidelines for developing parks and recreation facilities, including community and neighborhood parks, Recreation Centers, and Aquatic Complexes.

The General Plan introduced the concept of park equivalencies, which allow for the flexible provision of population-serving parkland and facilities when minimum service standards are not feasible, or community priorities reflect different approaches to providing recreation spaces.

5.1 Community and Neighborhood Parks

One of the most commonly used service standards in municipal park systems is the number of public park acres per 1,000 residents within the community. The City of San Diego sets a standard of 2.8 acres per 1,000 residents for population-based parks, which consist of community parks, neighborhood parks, mini-parks, and joint use facilities. As of 2018, there were 3,034 acres of population-serving parks in the City, translating into 2.14 acres per 1,000 residents. Based on a projected 2050 population of 1,777,000 the acreage-based standard would drop to 1.71 acres per 1,000 residents without the addition of new parkland.

While the acreage-based service standard helps ensure a commitment to more parkland and recreation facilities as the City grows, it is incomplete as an indicator of system performance. The City runs a deficit of smaller, community-oriented parks, but San Diego remains rich in large resource-based space, serving both residents and visitors, and has one of the largest inventories of land per capita among major cities nationally.

Though recognized through park equivalencies, acreage associated with regional parks, such as Mission Bay Park and Balboa Park, as well as beaches do not currently count toward meeting population-based park requirements. The standard also does not assess the ability of residents to access other publicly owned recreational amenities within the municipal boundary of the City. Additionally, while the acreage-based standard captures the availability of parkland and facility space within a given community, it does not consider the quality of the recreational experience or the ability of residents to access the amenities. For these reasons, the PMP explores additional service standard techniques to determine the extent to which parks and recreational facilities are able to meet the needs of all residents.

5.2 Recreation Centers and Aquatic Complexes

The City has also established a standard of 17,000 square feet of Recreation Center per 25,000 residents and one Aquatic Complex per 50,000 population (See Table 5-1). Figure 5-2 and Figure 5-3 show current deficits and surpluses for Recreation Centers and Aquatic Complexes by CPA. As with community and neighborhood parks, the City would have to expand its supply of Recreation Center space and Aquatic Complexes to satisfy current standards and maintain pace with projected population growth.

While the City runs a deficit of smaller, community-oriented parks, San Diego is rich in large resource-based space, serving both residents and visitors, and has one of the largest inventories of land per capita among major cities nationally.



Doyle Recreation Center

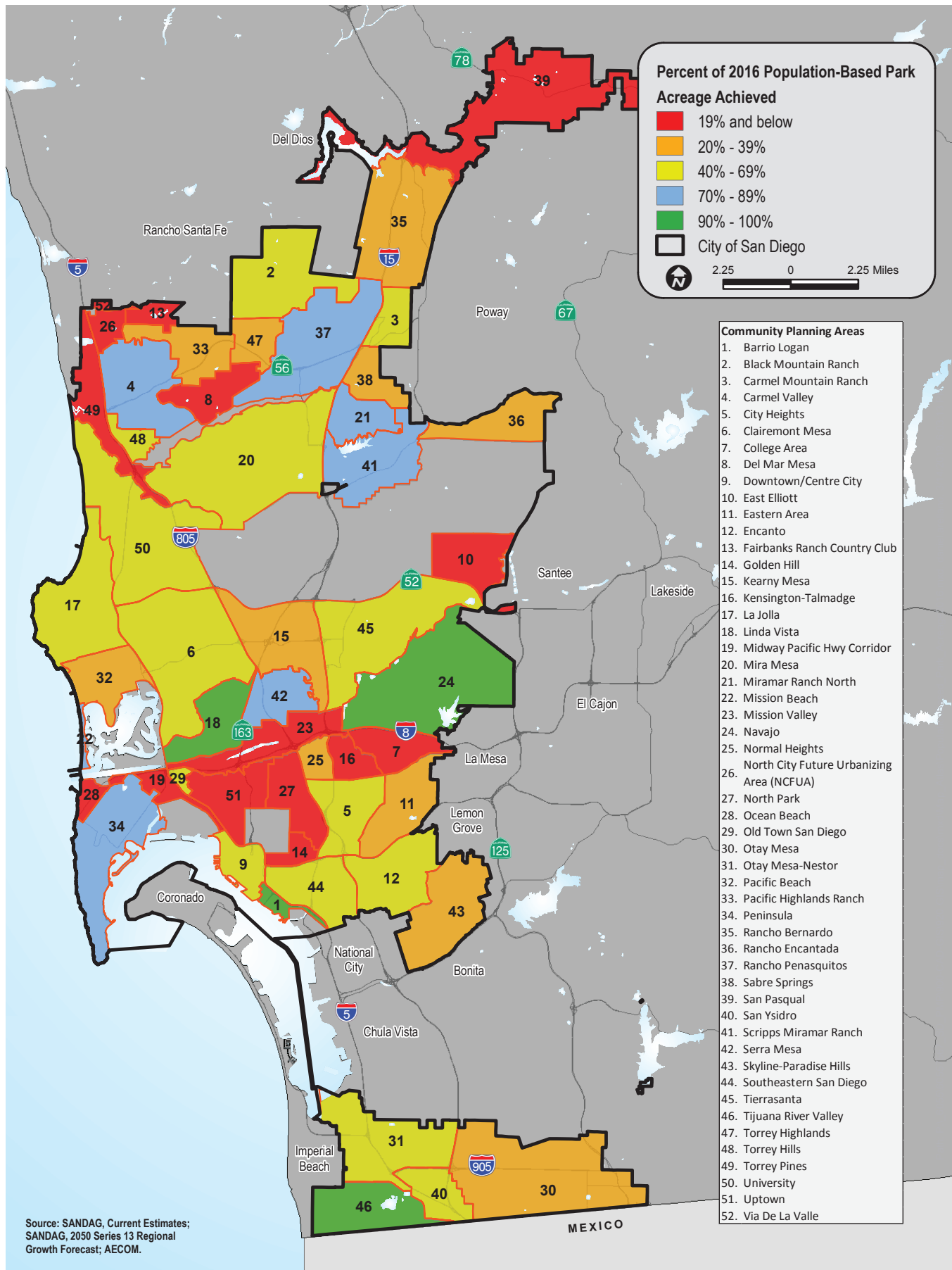


FIGURE 5-1
Population-Based Park Acreage Achieved, City of San Diego, 2016

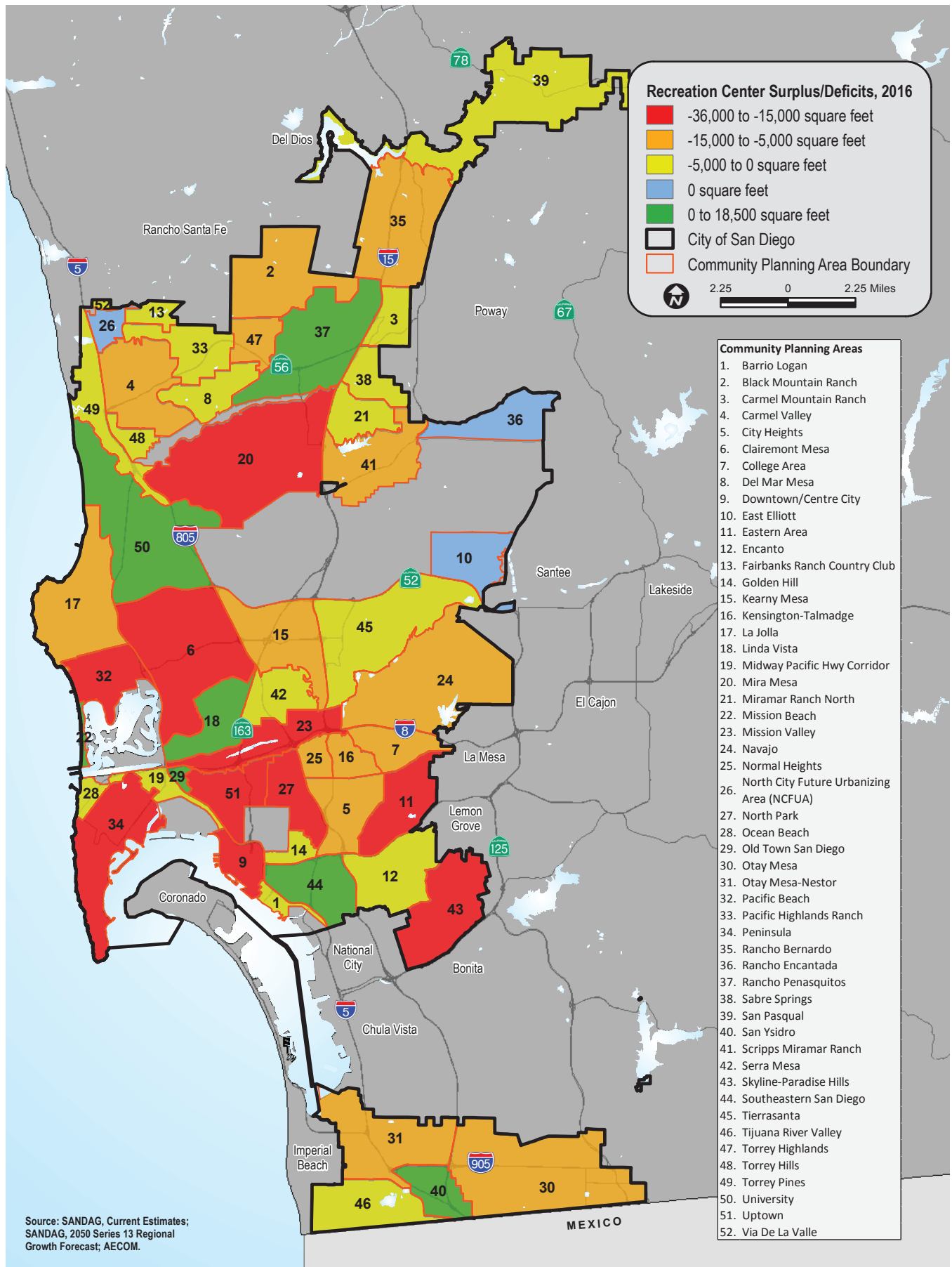


FIGURE 5-2
Recreation Center Surplus and Deficits, City of San Diego, 2016

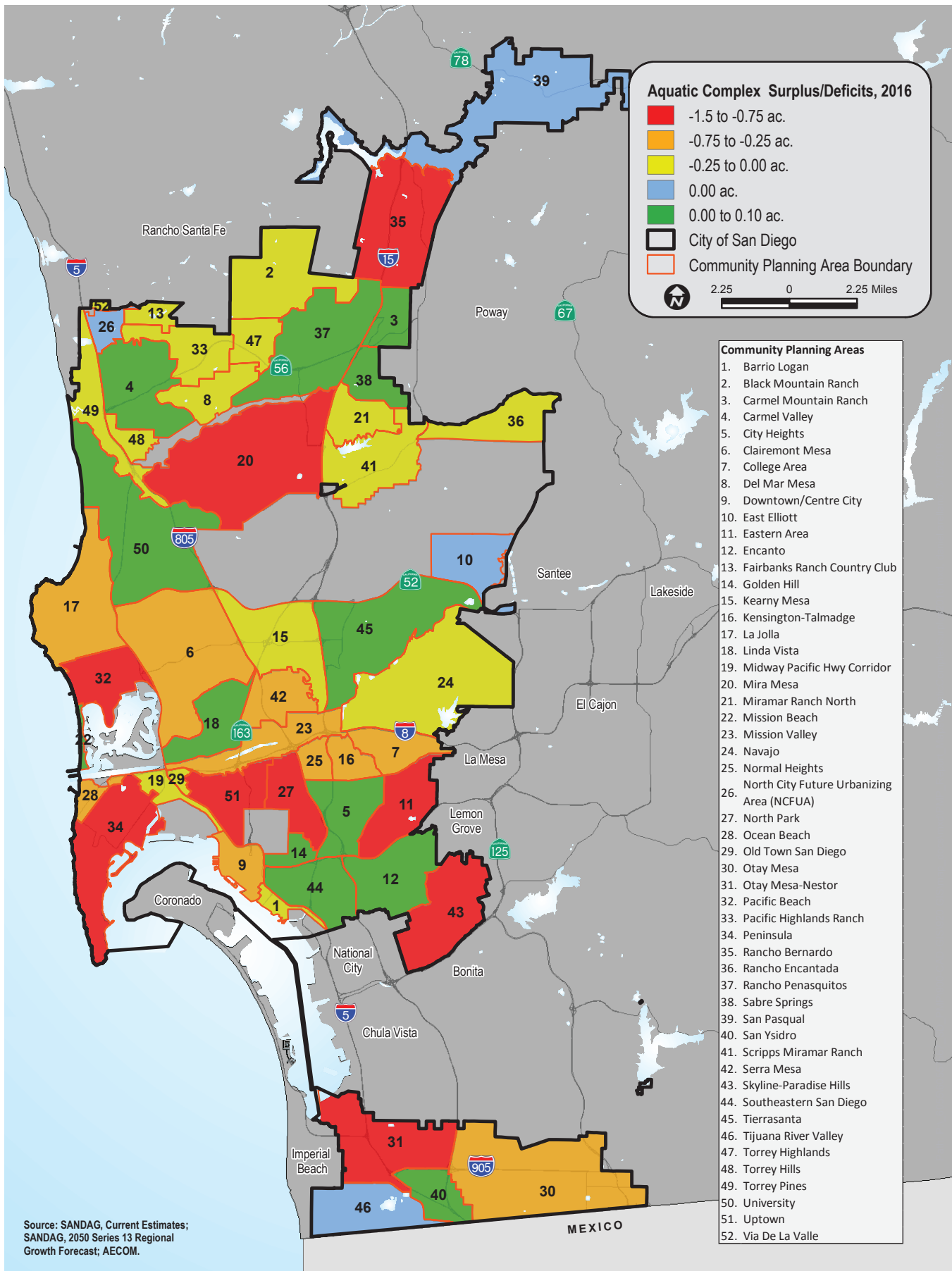


FIGURE 5-3
Aquatic Complex Surplus and Deficits, City of San Diego, 2016



Pickleball at Balboa Park Activity Center

- 
- The background of the slide is a photograph of an indoor tennis court. On the left, a man in a blue t-shirt and black shorts is in motion, hitting a backhand shot. On the right, a woman in a white t-shirt and dark shorts is ready to receive the ball. A large white number '06' is overlaid on the bottom right of the image. A semi-transparent grey box on the right side of the image contains a table of contents.
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Parks and Recreation Facility Assessment

The quality of the experience at a park varies based on the design, function, age, context, and resources available for park maintenance, programming, and operations.

6.1 Park Condition Index

6.1.1. Park Condition Assessment

In 2014, the City began Park Condition Assessment (PCA) studies to document the physical state of park assets. Through FY 2016, the consultant team evaluated an initial group of 76 parks and released an interim report of findings. This first sampling emphasized older community and neighborhood parks, along with Balboa Park. The assessed parks in that group totalled 1,252 acres, representing approximately 47 percent of the City's developed parkland. The team is currently finalizing draft data for an additional 86 parks evaluated in FY 2017 and 2018 and will complete the remaining park assessment in 2019.

The PCA program focuses on the developed portions of City parks where infrastructure has been built or installed for public use. The assessment does not include open space parks, golf courses, or joint use sites with local schools. The PCA is a visual assessment of the park assets that are outside and visible above the ground, including:

- Playgrounds
- Park Furnishings
- Landscaping
- Fences and Walls
- Above—Ground Storm Water Devices
- Pedestrian Paving
- Playing Fields
- Parking Lots
- Outdoor Courts
- Park Roads

06 SUMMARY

Park and Facilities Condition Assessments in the City indicate that:

- About three-quarters of parks are in generally good condition;
- One-quarter of parks have maintenance and repair costs that are 30 percent or more of the total value of park assets;
- Older neighborhood parks tend to have a higher maintenance and replacement backlog;
- There is a need for significant reinvestment to restore park assets and buildings to good condition; and
- Continued deferred maintenance will increase the amount of reinvestment necessary to improve conditions.

An additional sampling of 49 City parks evaluated the overall feel, function, and quality of the recreational experience. Frequently observed challenges relate to:

- Play quality as measured through a lack of unstructured or creative play;
- Turf condition;
- Clear wayfinding/signs;
- Connections to adjoining trail systems when present;
- Accessibility for all users; and
- Integration with the community fabric and expression of community identity.

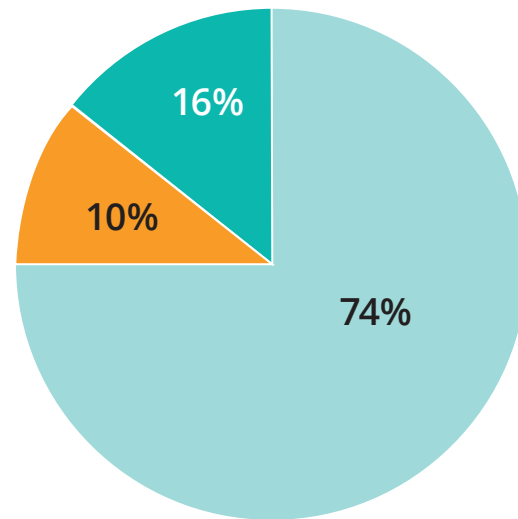
The PCA calculated a Park Condition Index (PCI) value for each park based on the condition of its assets. The PCI rating as shown in Figure 6-2 is the combined cost of the maintenance backlog and capital backlog divided by the total replacement value of those assets assessed. Therefore, the higher the PCI score for a park, the poorer its overall condition. Even parks with a good PCI score may have a backlog of repairs and replacements but the cost of those needs is lower relative to the total value of the assets in the park.

The average PCI of the 76 park results released to date is 16, which corresponds with good condition. However, conditions varied greatly across the sampling of parks from a high (poor) score of 81 to a low (good) score of 5. A total of 26 parks, primarily older neighborhood parks in the City's central communities, had a PCI of 30 or higher, indicating a maintenance and replacement backlog that was 30 percent or more of total asset value.

The interim report estimates that reinvestment of approximately \$71.9 million would be necessary to improve assets in all 76 parks to a PCI of 15 or good. The PCI scores reported are for 2016. Continued deferred maintenance will increase the PCI score and the amount of reinvestment necessary to improve asset conditions.

Figure 6-1 shows available PCI scores for a total of 163 parks in the City. The map includes draft PCI results from the FY 2017 and FY 2018 assessments.

PERCENTAGE OF PARKS BY PCI RATINGS



LEGEND

GOOD FAIR POOR

FIGURE 6-1
Percent of City of San Diego Parks by PCI Rating

About three-quarters of the 163 parks assessed in San Diego have a good PCI rating, while the remaining one-quarter have a fair or poor value. Primarily older neighborhood parks in the City's central communities had a high maintenance and replacement backlog.

	RATINGS	SCORES
	GOOD	0% TO 20%
	FAIR	21% TO 29%
	POOR	30% OR HIGHER

FIGURE 6-2
Park Condition Index Ratings

6.1.2. Facilities Condition Assessment

In addition to park amenities, a separate Facilities Condition Assessment (FCA) program evaluated 244 buildings or structures, including 118 facilities in Balboa Park. The inventory assessed comfort stations, Recreation Centers, Senior Centers, swimming pools, and other structures. The FCA calculated a score comparable to the PCI. The Facility Condition Index (FCI) is the estimated combined cost of maintenance backlog and capital backlog divided by the replacement value of the structure.

An additional \$126 million in reinvestment would be necessary to bring assessed buildings up to a score of 15 or good. Balboa Park overall averaged a PCI of 5 for its park assets, placing it at the high end of the good category. However, Balboa Park scored significantly lower on building conditions, particularly for its City-occupied structures. City-occupied public buildings, comfort stations, and office/work yard/operations structures in Balboa Park averaged fair to poor FCI scores.

Continued deferred maintenance will increase the amount of reinvestment necessary to improve park and building conditions.



Golden Hill Recreation Center

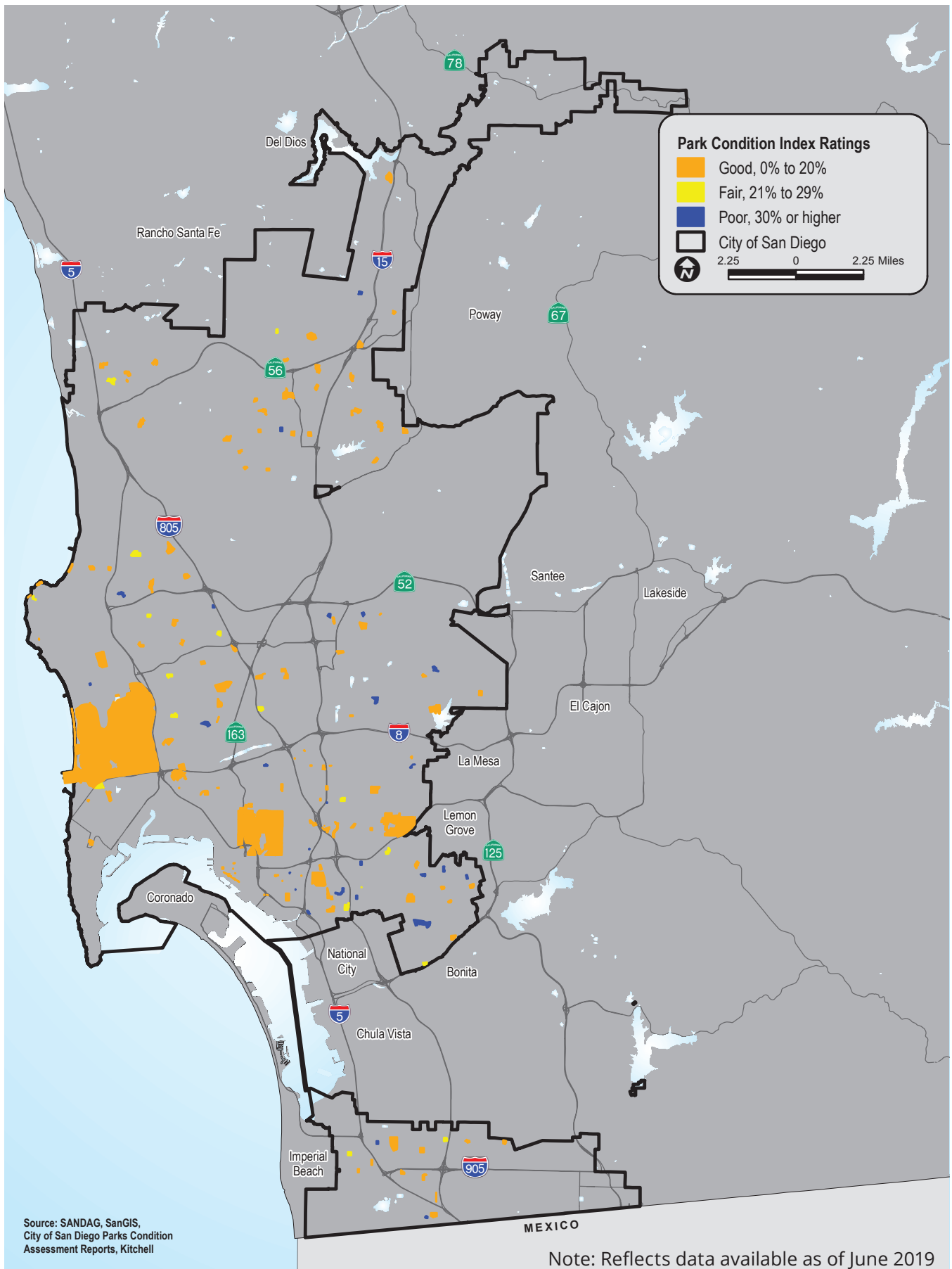


FIGURE 6-3
City of San Diego Park Condition Index

6.2 Park Evaluations

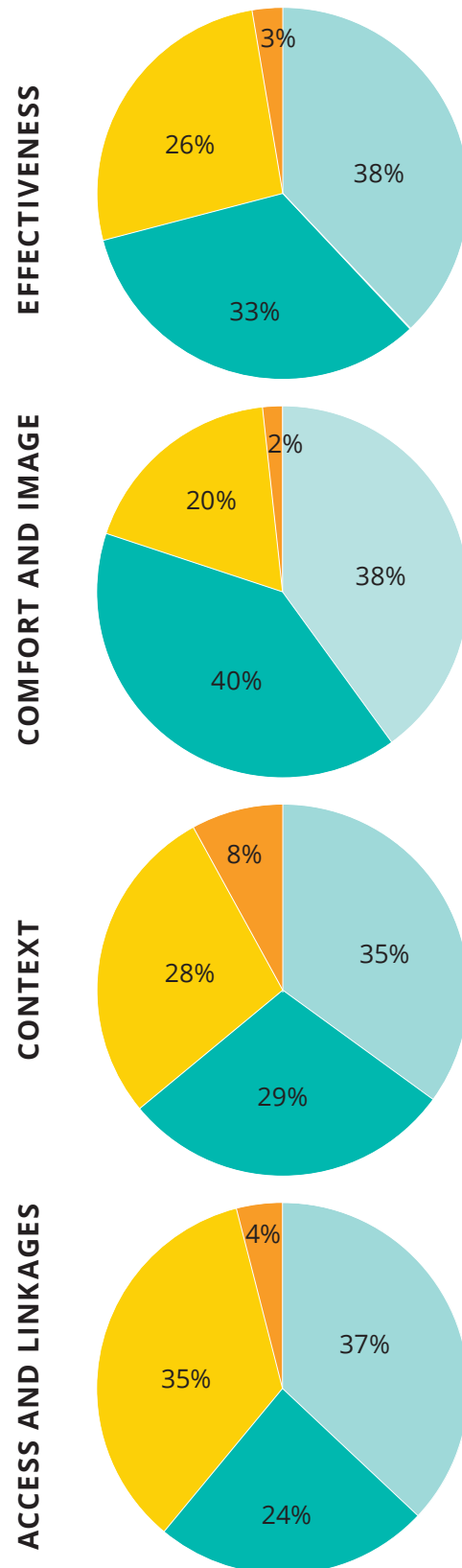
To supplement existing assessment data, the PMP planning team evaluated an additional sampling of 49 City parks as shown in Figure 6-5. This sample reflects a balance across City geography, park type, and park age. While the PCI values summarized in the previous section document the physical condition of park assets, this evaluation focuses on observational aspects of park performance, including the overall feel, function, and quality of the recreational experience.

The assessment did not include structures within parks, such as Recreation Centers. The planning team assigned a qualitative rating for criteria in four categories: effectiveness; comfort and image; context; access and linkages. The purpose of this analysis is not to assign a numerical score to each park visited, but to identify common successes and opportunities across the sampling of parks, and by implication the broader system. The PMP will draw from these findings to highlight notable gaps in service delivery and inform recommendations that promote an enhanced and equitable park experience for residents.

Figure 6-4 shows the performance of the sampled parks in the general areas of effectiveness, comfort and image, access and linkages, and context. The parks overall performed better on effectiveness and comfort and image but showed some challenges with access and context.



FIGURE 6-4
Park Evaluation Findings



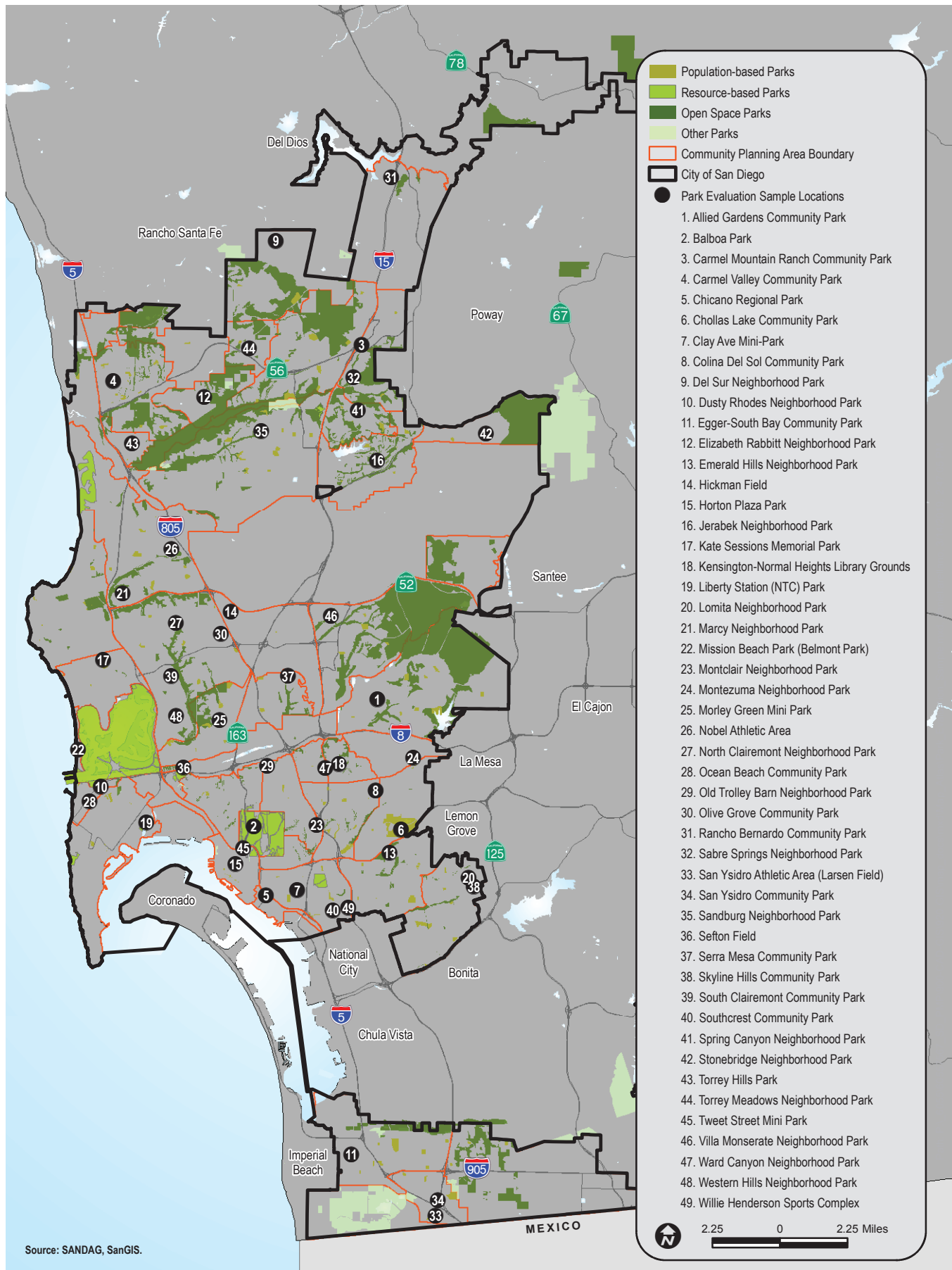


FIGURE 6-5
Park Evaluation Sites

6.2.1. Successes and Opportunities

The PMP planning team observed the following general successes and opportunities in the categories assessed.

Effectiveness / Comfort

Activation

The majority of parks visited show signs of moderate to significant use and activity with varying amenities offered for users. Many of these parks experience heavier use in evenings or weekends. Some of the parks are successful in all-day activation through partnerships and programming. Activities through Recreation Centers or third parties increase the number and frequency of park visits by residents.

Adjacency to schools or libraries also expands opportunities for activity within parks. Locating parks next to schools allows for joint use, which promotes activity before and after school hours. More intense activity resulting from shared programming and space contributes to a greater sense of comfort and safety within the parks.

Quality of Play Experience

Dedicated children's play areas and entire park sites can incorporate opportunities for multiple types of play experiences. Although most neighborhood and community parks have some amount of structured play equipment, many of these pieces are old or aging. Close to one-third of play structures observed have very little play equipment remaining or show signs of age or disrepair.

Few existing parks intentionally offer unstructured play experiences, such as sensory, cooperative or nature play. Outdoor environments have the potential to promote children's physical and mental development

and well-being through areas that encourage creative play. Additional opportunities exist to incorporate unstructured play in small, low-cost ways. Many unstructured play environments offer paved surfaces along with combinations of sand, grass, and water that children can manipulate.

Context

Parks designed to embrace their context and local needs tend to show more use and offer higher value to residents. Although three-quarters of the parks visited did not strongly connect with or express community identity, the remaining one-quarter of sites incorporated design features unique to their surrounding neighborhoods. Community identity expressed itself through park location and layout, as well as specific design elements within each park.

Some parks sampled have heavy use not only for recreation purposes but also due to their function within their physical context. These parks are often connectors, with high degrees of permeability. They offer users opportunities for respite away from the street. Many parks in San Diego are also near canyons and open spaces with significant views. While most parks do little to connect people to these visual resources, some spaces are more successful at bringing paths and gathering areas to residents.

San Diego parks also have significant cultural and historical contexts to draw upon. Residents and users have stronger relationships with parks that are relevant to their own backgrounds and needs. Parks with features unique to their user groups, such as murals at Chicano Park or horse corrals at Del Mar Mesa Neighborhood Park, exhibit an awareness of their community identity.

Access and Linkages

Accessibility

Opportunities to improve accessibility include upgrades of existing infrastructure and accessible routes to park elements. Some parks lack accessible pedestrian entrances, and path slopes within parks are often steep and difficult to navigate. Seating areas may be set back from accessible routes or set within turf areas.

Play equipment areas, especially in older parks, often lack accessible features for navigating and using play spaces. Improving accessibility in parks is necessary in the effort to create an equitable parks system. The Office of ADA Compliance & Accessibility administers the City's Americans with Disabilities Act Transition Plan, which formally assesses accessibility across programs and facilities, including parks, and highlights compliance efforts and a course for improvements.

The system could also enhance overall system connectivity. Few existing parks are part of an accessible and understandable network of open space. The majority of parks assessed near existing trail systems do not have connections to these trails, and close to half of the parks evaluated are not near transit stops or do not offer bike parking. Some of the parks observed have multiple pedestrian entry points, and they appear to have increased usage, serving as a connection within and between neighborhoods.

Attention to transitional or pocket spaces can offer increased use and success of the parks visited. The edges between park and street or between features within parks offer opportunities for flexible and mixed uses.

Wayfinding and Identity

Improved park signage elements can enhance both wayfinding and user experiences in parks. The existence and types of signage vary greatly between parks, and older parks especially lack a cohesive approach to sign location and function. Although many parks have signs at their entrances, sign locations have limited visibility. Community parks, which typically span larger areas of space and encompass more types of programs, would benefit from directional signage or maps to help users locate park amenities. Signage can also direct users to nearby public amenities, such as trails or other points of interest.

Opportunities also exist to include interpretive or educational signage into City of San Diego parks. Signage or interpretive elements that connect people to their local canyons, rivers or histories deepen the experience of place.

06

The most frequently observed individual challenges across the parks assessment relate to:

- Play quality as measured through a lack of unstructured or creative play;
- Turf condition;
- Clear wayfinding / signs;
- Connections to adjoining trail systems when present;
- Accessibility for all users; and
- Integration with the community fabric and expression of community identity.



Nature Play Mud Day, Golden Hill Recreation Center



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Parks and Recreation Program Assessment

7.1 Program Mix

The Department offers a wide array of recreational services and programs for children and adults, including senior services, sports, special programs and activities, therapeutic recreation, and dance.

Created in 1972, the City's Therapeutic Recreation Services program provides sports, recreation, leisure, and outreach services to more than 50,000 people with physical, mental, and emotional disabilities each year.

Founded in 1942, the nationally acclaimed Civic Dance Arts Program offers affordable classes, camps, and performance opportunities in multiple dance forms for residents of all ages. The audition-only San Diego Civic Dance Arts Companies provide advanced level training and performances at various events year round. The San Diego Civic Dance Association, a non-profit organization, supports the City's dance offerings through volunteer and fundraising efforts.



Therapeutic recreation provides programming and adaptive sports for people with special needs.

07 SUMMARY

The Department offers a wide array of recreational services and programs for children and adults. Core programs, which are an essential part of the Department's mission are:

- Therapeutic Recreation
- Senior Programs
- Special Events
- Teen Activities
- Volunteer Programs
- Fitness
- After School Activities
- Tot Activities
- Learn to Swim
- Camps
- Mentorship

A review of recreational program delivery highlights opportunities for:

- Partnerships with other recreation program providers, particularly YMCA and Boys & Girls Clubs;
- Adjustment of user fees to offset service delivery costs, especially for non-core services that meet the needs of a smaller segment of the population; and
- Development of a coordinated Department-wide social media strategy along with dedicated staff to support community outreach efforts.

Based on a review of SDRecConnect, the City’s online activity registration system, the Department offered 1,800 recreational offerings for the Fall 2018 and Winter 2019 seasons. Offerings reflect the total number of individual classes or sessions for all program areas. Figure 7-2 shows the mix of available programming. Sports; General Recreation, including after-school activities, cooking, and Kidz Kamps; and Arts & Culture, such as arts and crafts, theater, music, and ceramics are among the most widely offered classes. Figure 7-1 shows program offerings by age category. The Department currently tailors about three out of four programs for youth/children.

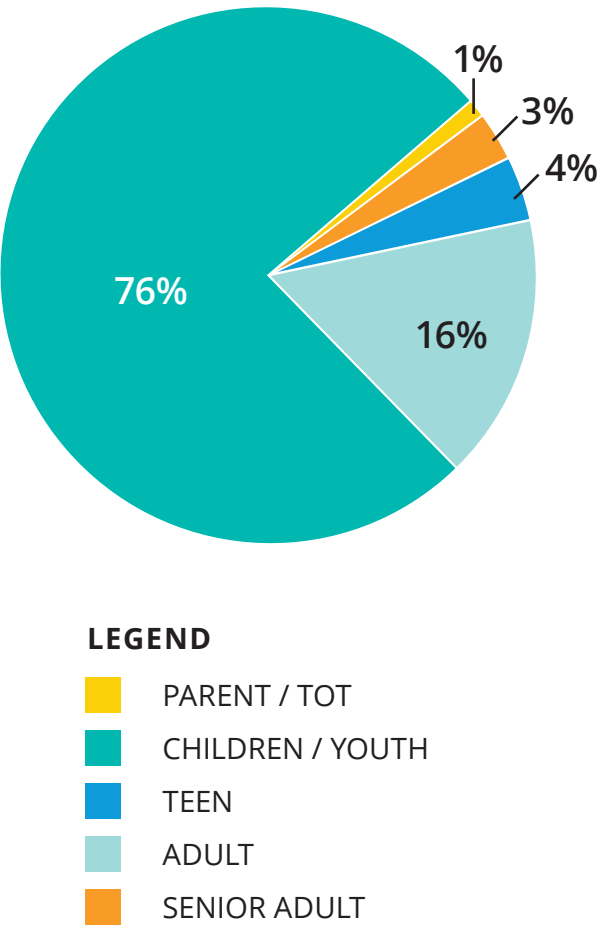


FIGURE 7-1
Recreational Offerings by Age Category,
City of San Diego, Fall 2018-Winter 2019

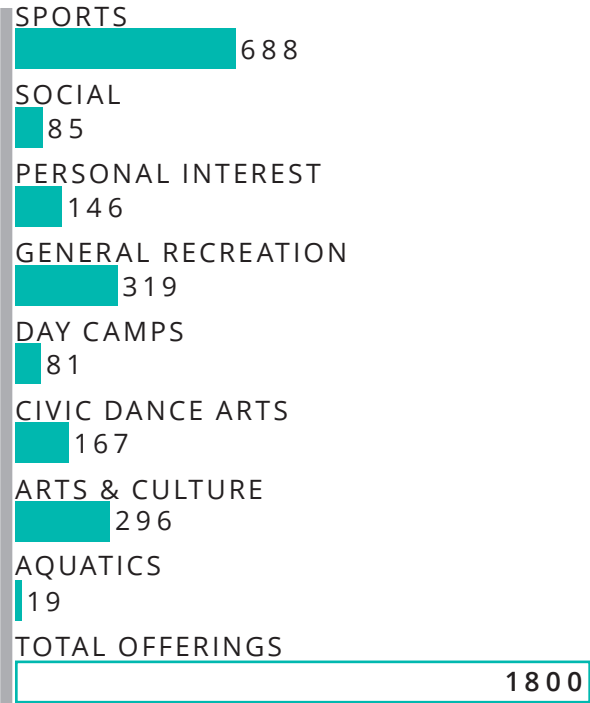
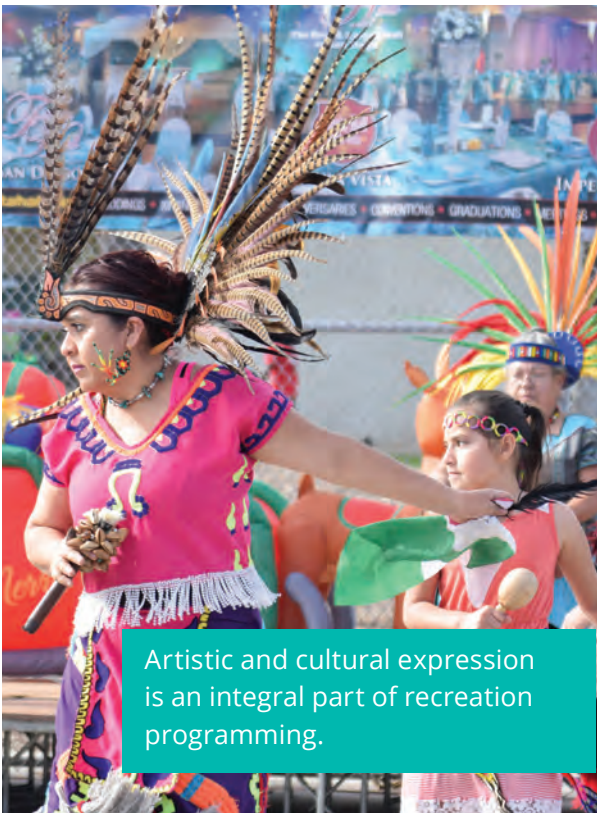


FIGURE 7-2
Recreational Offerings, City of San Diego,
Fall 2018-Winter 2019

7.2 Core Program Identification

The ability to align program offerings with community needs and priorities is vital to the delivery of relevant recreation services. City of San Diego staff ranked the importance of current recreational services across three categories:

- Core
- Important
- Nice-to-Have

Core programs are an essential part of the Department's mission and serve the majority of community members. Important programs meet a significant need, while serving a broad segment of the community. Nice-to-have programs add value to the community but meet the needs of a smaller number of users.

Based on questionnaire findings, core programs with the highest percentage of essential or importance rankings are:

- Therapeutic Recreation
- Senior Programs
- Special Events
- Teen Activities
- Volunteer Programs
- Fitness
- After School Activities
- Tot Activities
- Learn to Swim
- Camps
- Mentorship

Core services are generally available from year to year, forming the foundation of recreational programming. These offerings typically have evolved beyond a trend to a "must have" program area with a wide demographic appeal or the

ability to provide a significant public benefit, such as health, safety, or community engagement.

Given the central role of core programs in contributing to quality of life and equity within a community, departments often structure fees to subsidize essential services, while the targeted appeal of nice-to-have programming allows for higher cost recovery. The Staff Survey Summary contains additional detail on program rankings.

Core programs are an essential part of the Department's mission and serve the majority of community members. They also promote equity by expanding recreational opportunities for people with special needs, investing in the development and wellness of children and seniors, and teaching basic safety skills, such as learning to swim.



7.3 Age Segment Analysis

Park and recreation systems should strive for an equitable balance of offerings across age segments. Staff identified age segments as either primary or secondary markets or not applicable. Table 7-1 shows the results of the age segment rankings. A lower weighted average indicates that staff more often identified the age segment as a primary market. The results highlighted Elementary School (Grades K-5) children, Middle School (Grades 6-8) children, and families as the most frequently served users of current services.

TABLE 7-1
Age Segment Analysis

AGE SEGMENTS	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Elementary School (Grade K-5)	1.21
Middle School (Grades 6-8)	1.21
Families	1.39
High School (Grades 9-12)	1.43
Upper Middle-age Adults (Age 55-64)	1.45
Adults (Age 25-54)	1.5
Young Adult (Age 18-24)	1.5
Preschool	1.6
Senior Adults (Ages 65+)	1.7

7.4 Partner Service Providers

As shown in Table 7-2, staff identified the YMCA along with the Boys & Girls Clubs as the primary partner providers of recreation services.

Non-profit providers and private entities offer specialized programming and instruction, quality recreation facilities and equipment, and competitive play that can complement public sector service delivery.

TABLE 7-2
City of San Diego Recreation Programs, Partner Service Providers

ORGANIZATION	PERCENT OF STAFF IDENTIFYING ORGANIZATION AS PARTNER PROVIDER
YMCA	95.45%
Boys & Girls Clubs	63.64%
Other Club Sports	50.00%
San Diego Unified School District	40.91%
AYSO	31.82%
Crusader Soccer	18.18%

7.5 Marketing Approaches

Given the presence of partner service providers in the market and the wide array of entertainment options available to residents, it is critical for departments to adopt a highly visible, coordinated approach to marketing recreation services. Based on the results of the statistically valid survey administered as part of the PMP, 55 percent of residents indicated that their primary barrier to higher participation in City recreation programs was lack of familiarity with offerings. Generally, program guides and the City website serve as the main sources of marketing for City of San Diego Parks and Recreation services.

The Department also uses creative marketing mediums, such as the Adventure Passport program (e.g. Discover Otay Valley Regional Park) that encourages families and individuals to explore various parks in the system and a partnership with the GreenInfo Network to develop the Get Outside San Diego online resource. In addition, the City has effectively conducted targeted outreach through social media, such as Nextdoor and Peachjar, to promote after-school offerings to students. The Kids to Canyons program, which connects local youth to nature within neighborhood canyons, highlights cross-promotional opportunities with partners, such as the San Diego Public Library.

When asked to identify preferred methods for program promotion as shown in Table 7-3, staff expressed interest in use of the Parks and Recreation website, smart phone apps, and social media. Staff meetings indicated that meaningful outreach is essential and the lack of social media outreach is often a hindrance in expanding program participation. Individual initiatives such as the Public Information Officer (PIO) driven beach access program, housed

TABLE 7-3
City of San Diego Recreation Programs,
Preferred Methods for Program Promotion

PROMOTION METHOD	PERCENT OF STAFF INDICATING PREFERENCE
Parks and Recreation website	89.66%
Smart phone apps	86.21%
Social media (Twitter, Facebook, etc.)	86.21%
City website coverage/blasts	79.31%
Online program guides (per facility site)	72.41%
Free promotion - Newspaper articles, TV coverage and Radio promotions	68.97%
School flyers/Peachjar	62.07%
E-mail blasts	58.62%
Printed material (Parks and Recreation flyers and program guides)	44.83%
Paid advertisements – Newspaper, TV and Radio	44.83%
Nextdoor	41.38%
In facility promotions – Signage and Bulletin Boards	37.93%
Marquees	31.03%
On-hold preprogrammed phone messages	10.34%

on the Therapeutic Recreation Services page on the website, have been successful in garnering 50,000+ views in 1.5 months. Meetings with Department leadership reinforced a need for a Department-wide social media strategy along with dedicated staff to support the PIO's office in maximizing community outreach.

7.6 User Fees

In 2015, the City prepared a cost of service analysis of fees charged for the following types of services delivered by the Department. The study excluded analysis of the Department's fees for classes and programs.


- Permits: Including youth and adult league reservations, field and/or court use, skate park, and aquatics
- Balboa Park: Including permitted uses of the park grounds, as well as facility rentals
- Recreation Center Building Use: Including facility rentals within the City's various recreation center buildings
- Beaches and Bay: Including long term boat beaching, mooring permits, and volleyball league reservations
- Camps: Including indoor and outdoor day camp programs, as well as campground rentals
- Other Miscellaneous Fees: Including dance instruction, use of park grounds for events, etc.
- Mount Hope Cemetery: Including all aspects of fees for service for this City-owned site

Analysis showed that the City recovered approximately 66 percent of delivery costs for the user fee services analyzed. Cost recovery was 43 percent for athletic programs, 26 percent for aquatics, and 14 percent for camps. The study estimated revenue impacts based on a range of additional fee implementation options, including 100, 75, 50, and 25 percent cost recovery, as well as a basic 7.5 percent cumulative Consumer Price Index increase since the time of the last Department fee update.

Overall, the study indicated opportunities for the adjustment of fees to offset service delivery costs. The PMP explores opportunities to establish cost recovery targets to inform pricing decisions for services delivered. A new fee schedule is anticipated in 2019/2020. In general, cost recovery targets should reflect the degree to which a program provides a public versus private good. Fee structures should generally subsidize programs providing public benefits (i.e. essential programs); programs providing private benefits (i.e., value-added or nice-to-have programs) should seek to recover costs and/or generate revenue for other services.



Walking at Balboa Park

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Recreation Trends

While development patterns have altered the physical context in which the Department delivers services, other trends, particularly related to demographics and lifestyles are altering recreation priorities. The Department should not plan for service provision based on general trends at the expense of the expressed preferences of residents, as explored in the Needs + Priorities report.

Rather, understanding these trends helps to place the public's stated interests in context and encourages solutions to emerging challenges. While refining its program offerings to meet future needs is a critical step on the path forward, the City must also address changing economic forces by exploring innovative financing and partnership strategies that allow for complete, creative, and flexible service delivery.



08 SUMMARY

Due to demographic and lifestyle changes, recreational preferences have shifted away from scheduled recreation and traditional league-sports to activities that people can choose to do at their discretion, termed at-will recreation.

Demand is rising for activities that focus on health, wellness, and socializing and reflect the growing diversity participants:

- Walking
- Biking and mountain biking
- Visits to dog parks
- Yoga and tai chi
- Special events
- Rugby, hockey, lacrosse, cricket
- Kickball
- Pickleball
- Recreational aquatics

While recreation services are adapting to changing recreation needs, traditional sources of funding, including general fund subsidy and grants are decreasing. To address revenue shortfalls, many departments seek funding from foundations, special assessments and voter-approved funding, and partnerships, and look for increased cost recovery from program fees and greater use of private concessions.

8.1 Recreation and Sports

From the 1950s to the 1980s, parks services revolved around a predominantly middle-class, suburban, youth-oriented delivery model that assumed nuclear families in single family homes with 2.5 children playing a standard set of sports with known costs.

Today, demographic trends such as an aging population, greater cultural diversity, the increased participation of woman and girls in sports, and the rise in non-nuclear families have altered this paradigm. The resulting shift in preferences places new demands on the functions and goals of Parks and Recreation Departments. The public has come to demand a much broader set of services than just places for organized play, producing a general shift toward at-will recreation. Busy lifestyles make typical, scheduled recreation less desirable. People are looking for more activities that they can choose to do at their discretion and with a greater focus on health, wellness, and socializing, rather than competition.

Leisure interest surveys now commonly list recreation activities, such as walking, biking, visits to dog parks, yoga, tai chi, mountain biking, kayaking, trail running, triathlons, and special events as top needs. The nature of youth and adult sports is also changing. Traditional, seasonal sports such as football, baseball, softball and basketball are seeing slight decreases or little growth, while a wider array of sports activities, such as soccer (including 5 on 5), rugby, hockey, lacrosse, cricket, pickleball, and recreational aquatics continue to gain popularity. These emerging sports are more inclusive of women and girls and offer greater opportunities for social engagement. In many diverse communities, the

The rise of flexible, unscheduled recreation and the diversification of sports are among the biggest trends reshaping the delivery of parks and recreation services.

country or region of origin of participants is the biggest determinant in sports preferences.

In addition to the diversification of sports interests, the nature of youth sports organization is also changing. For the most popular sports, the traditional model of seasonal play is giving way to travel clubs and year-round play, with professional or semi-professional coaching staffs run by organizations that typically operate at a profit. These clubs tend to attract the most skilled players and focus on competition, rather than the skill development of all children who wish to participate.

Adult recreation is also evolving. Traditional senior programs are declining, while the trend is toward active adult programs. Participation in pickleball, water aerobics, travel clubs, and arts and culture is rising as the Baby Boomer generation places greater value on health, wellness, and social interaction.

Younger adults composed primarily of the Millennial generation trend toward activities that revolve around fitness and social experiences. Biking, mountain biking, trail running, hiking, yoga, tai chi, kick ball, and dog parks are increasingly popular activities.

8.2 Finance, Operations, and Planning

While Parks and Recreation Departments are adapting to changing recreation needs, they also must respond to economic forces. Traditional sources of funding, including general fund revenue and grants are decreasing, and impact fees are under scrutiny for their potential impacts to housing affordability. The Great Recession and the fiscal constraints facing many municipal governments left departments across the U.S. with large backlogs of deferred capital reinvestment. In California, the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978 lowered property value taxes, resulting in a significant reduction in revenue for the City of San Diego.

To address revenue shortfalls, many departments seek funding from foundations, special assessments, voter-approved funding, and partnerships, and look for increased cost recovery from program fees and greater use of private concessions. Operational activities have had to rely more on partnerships, volunteers, and outsourcing to perform basic maintenance.

Departments are also redefining their role in program provision. Traditionally, Parks and Recreation Departments acted as a sole provider of services. Today, many departments meet community needs through creative partnerships and program facilitation in addition to direct service delivery. Non-profit providers and private entities, such as the YMCA, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, and fitness clubs offer specialized programming, quality recreation facilities and equipment, and convenient drop-in access that can complement gaps in public sector service delivery.

Trends also affect the planning and design of parks and recreation facilities. Departments need more flexibility in the programming of indoor and outdoor spaces. The trend in park planning is for more multi-use fields, with multi-generational centers that have multi-modal access. Security, ease of maintenance, cost recovery, sustainability, and resiliency drive design.

Many local governments are exploring creative ways to take advantage of multi-benefit infrastructure and public-private partnerships. The decline of brick and mortar stores also offers opportunities to provide park space and recreation in conjunction with retail and commercial redevelopment in a new model referred to as “Recreation.” The emergence of ride share services and the eventual availability of autonomous vehicles will greatly increase access for users and decrease the demand for parking in parks, freeing up land for more recreation.



The Parks and Recreation Department funds operations and maintenance through General Fund revenues, along with charges for services and dedicated revenue from special districts. As in many cities, traditional sources of funding, including the General Fund and grants, have decreased in San Diego.

Funding levels are expressed in 2019 dollars and calculated per 1,000 residents

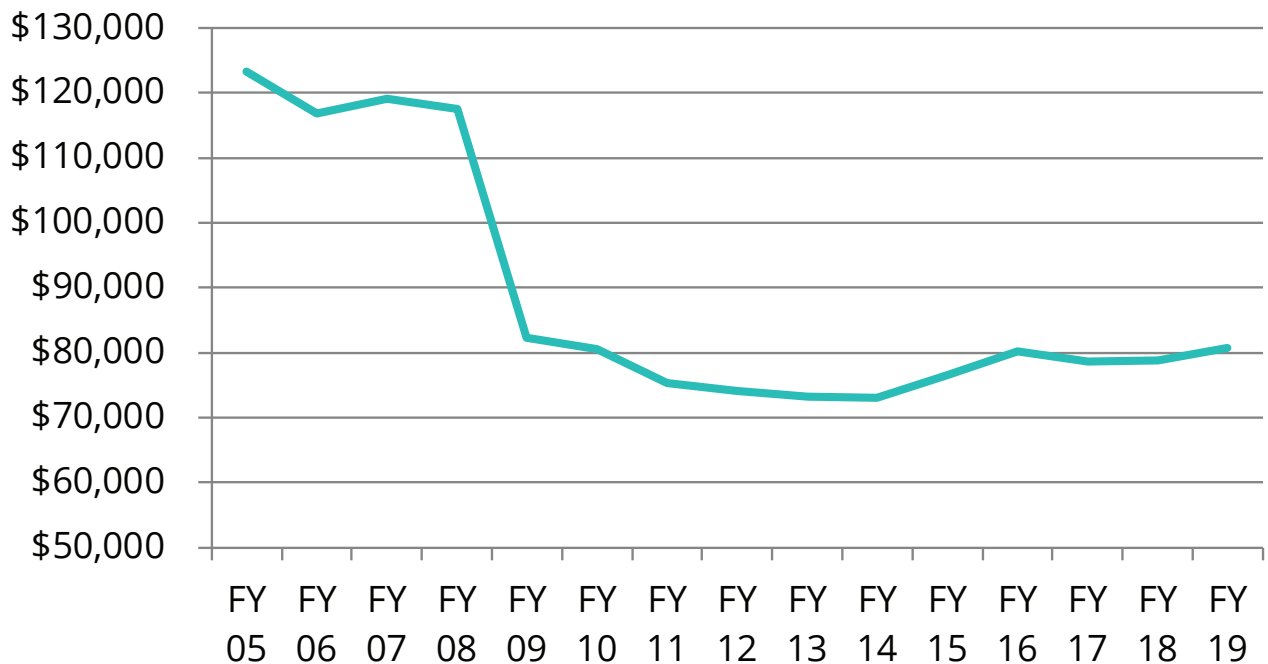


FIGURE 8-1
Parks and Recreation Department General Fund Revenue per 1,000 Residents, 2005 to 2019

Source: AECOM



Civita Park



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Conclusion

CONCLUSION

Historic context, current issues, and emerging trends have shaped San Diego's Parks and Recreation system today and will continue to influence its future. These factors create ongoing challenges for the City but also highlight opportunities for innovative service delivery strategies in the years ahead.

The Needs + Priorities phase of the PMP builds on these general trends, opportunities, and challenges by defining specific recreation priorities of San Diego residents and developing guiding themes for innovative, adaptive responses.

Development and Fiscal Context

Previous patterns of development, San Diego's unique landscape, and an uncertain fiscal environment have interacted throughout the decades to affect the delivery of parks and recreation opportunities:

- Reliance on private benefactors and developers for the planning and delivery of parks in the foundational eras of City growth produced an uneven distribution of recreational spaces;
- While San Diego's scenic and natural areas are an integral part of the City's beauty and identity, the pervasiveness of landforms, such as canyons and areas of biological sensitivity reduce the amount of buildable land available for new development, including parks;
- Events, such as passage of Proposition 13 and the Great Recession reduced available General Fund revenue;
- Current approaches to financing and delivering new parks, which rely on DIF, generate minimal revenue for parkland acquisition in communities with little growth; and
- The City continues to see compact infill growth, which concentrates demand for more park space in already urbanized areas with higher land values and rising development pressure.

Current Challenges

The City's built environment and financial climate combine to create gaps in the availability and quality of recreation:

- Pre-WW II communities and post-war boom subdivisions lag in parks, creating deficits in community and neighborhood parkland and geographic inequity in access to recreational amenities;
- Funding constraints limit the ability to maintain all existing park assets; one-quarter of parks assessed in the system are in poor condition with maintenance and repair backlogs in excess of 30 percent of their total value; and
- While most parks sampled offered a comfortable, quality experience to users, fewer parks contribute to the sense of an overall network that creates access across spaces or embraces varied local contexts.

Emerging Trends + Opportunities

While development and fiscal conditions set the backdrop for the parks and recreation system, changing demographics and community interests continue to reshape the recreation needs and priorities of residents:

- Demographic trends such as an aging population and greater cultural diversity have shifted focus away from traditional organized play to unscheduled or at-will recreation that emphasizes health, wellness, and nature, along with a wider array of sports;
- Growth in urban lifestyles has broadened interest in creative, flexible gathering spaces that combine recreation, socializing, and entertainment;
- Parks play an ever-greater role in the social, economic, and environmental life of communities; people see parks as opportunities to strengthen social fabric and foster inclusion; promote physical and emotional well-being; express local identity and culture; and build sustainability and resilience; and
- Cities increasingly look to creative, flexible partnerships and funding and delivery approaches to meet the expanding role of parks and recreation in quality of life