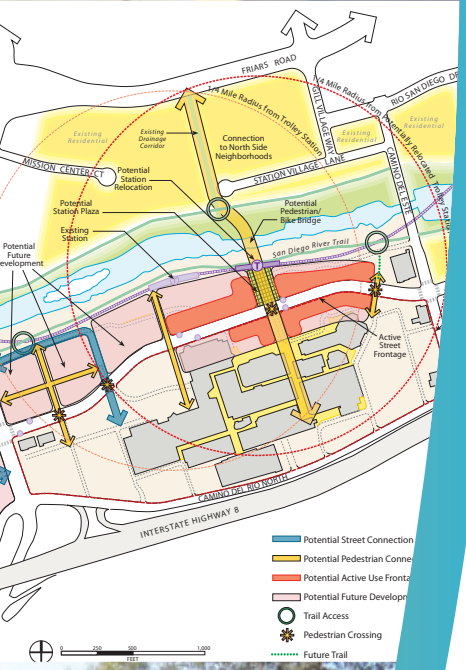


ISSUES AND OPTIONS

ANALYSIS

April 2016

Prepared for

The City of SAN DIEGO

By

DYETT & BHATIA
Urban and Regional Planners

Chen Ryan Associates
Keyser Marston Associates
Spurlock Poirier Landscape Architecture

MISSION VALLEY
Community Plan Update

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

1 Introduction and Overview

Introduction

This report examines issues affecting long-term physical development in the Mission Valley community, and presents potential options for addressing those issues through the Community Plan Update. The issues often reflect both particular *constraints* that affect the valley, and *opportunities* to make the area a more livable, economically vibrant, and ecologically healthy place. Fifteen issues are discussed in Chapter 2 of the report, as follows:

1. Fostering Coherent, Interconnected Neighborhoods
2. Promoting Connections across Physical and Natural Barriers
3. Need for a "Main Street"/Appropriateness of Camino de la Reina
4. Opportunities for an Interconnected Park and Open Space System
5. Maintaining the Vitality of Retail in Mission Valley
6. Prospects for Future Office Development
7. Opportunities on Large Sites
8. Appropriate Land Uses South of I-8
9. Enhancing Access to the Trolley
10. Improving Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure
11. Prospects for Aerial Tram Connections
12. Mission Valley Community Circulator on Camino de la Reina
13. Strategies to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions
14. Opportunities for Urban Agriculture
15. Opportunities to Grow the Tree Canopy

For each issue, potential strategies are outlined. These strategies are intended to spark discussion around strategies that may be addressed either in the form of policy language or maps (such for land use, transportation or environmental resources conservation) for the updated Community Plan. The Issues and Options Report may be reviewed alongside the Existing Conditions Map Atlas. The focus of the Map Atlas is on existing conditions and trends related to range of topics—such as land use, natural resources, urban form, and transportation infrastructure—that will frame choices for the long-term physical development of Mission Valley.

Community Plan Purpose and Process

GENERAL PLAN CONTEXT

The City of San Diego General Plan, adopted in 2008, is a comprehensive "blueprint" for San Diego's growth over the next 20 years; it provides the broad citywide vision and development framework. Central to the plan is the "City of Villages" strategy, which focuses growth into pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use activity centers linked to an improved regional transit system. As a part of this strategy, the General Plan identifies over 50 community Planning Areas in the city, including Mission Valley, for which community plans are to be developed or updated to provide more localized policies.

PURPOSE

The current Mission Valley Community Plan provides the detailed framework to guide development in Mission Valley. Originally adopted in 1985, the plan has undergone over 20 amendments in the intervening years. The Community Plan Update seeks to bring the plan up-to-date by:

- Analyzing current land use, development, and environmental characteristics;
- Evaluating changes in demographics that may affect land use needs;
- Understanding demand for housing and commercial development;
- Working with community members and stakeholders to determine key issues of concern, desires, and preferences to establish a vision and objectives for the Plan Update;
- Evaluating the "fit" of current Community Plan policies to achieve community goals and regulatory requirements;
- Ensuring that policies and recommendations remain in harmony with the General Plan and citywide policies, as well as regional policies.

This update process will result in a new Community Plan.

PROCESS

The Community Plan Update process will unfold in five phases:

- **Phase 1** includes evaluation of existing conditions as well as more detailed analysis of key issues and options for addressing those issues (this report).
- **Phase 2**—happening concurrently with Phase 1—includes community visioning and issue identification, which will be undertaken collaboratively with community members and stakeholders.
- **Phase 3** will include land use and transportation alternatives. This will explore various ways in which the vision can be achieved, resulting in a preferred plan and policy framework, and development of a draft Community Plan. Community members' input will be sought through workshops and online outreach.

- **Phase 4** will provide community members and decision-makers the opportunity to review and comment on the Draft Community Plan. The EIR process will formally begin.
- **Phase 5** will involve drafting the EIR and updating the Public Facilities Financing Plan. These will be introduced to the community at a workshop, and there will be a formal public review period for the Draft EIR. A Final EIR and Responses to Comments will be prepared.
- In **Phase 6**, the Draft and Final EIR, the Draft Public Facilities Financing Plan, and the Draft Community Plan will be presented to the Planning Commission and the Smart Growth and Land Use Committee of the City Council for formal recommendation and, then, the City Council for adoption.

Regional Location and Planning Boundaries

REGIONAL LOCATION

Mission Valley is located at nearly the geographic center of the City of San Diego. The San Diego River runs through Mission Valley, and is a significant asset and defining feature. As shown in Figure 1-1, the Planning Area sits at the crossroads of the regional freeway system, enjoying access from Interstates 5, 8, 15, 805 and State Route (SR) 163. The Planning Area is a regional center of offices, hotels, and retail businesses, as well as a subregional employment center The Planning Area is also a major regional visitor center, with a concentration of hotels located in close proximity to tourist attractions including Mission Bay, Sea World, and Balboa Park.

PLANNING BOUNDARIES

As indicated in Figure 1-2, the Community Plan Planning Area is generally defined by Friars Road and the northern slopes of the valley on the north, the eastern banks of the San Diego River on the east, the southern slopes of the valley on the south, and I-5 on the west. The Planning Area encompasses 3,216 acres.

Mission Valley Demographic Overview

The total population of Mission Valley in 2014 was 21,303, according to the most current estimate by San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG). People between the ages of 20 to 39 comprise almost 50 percent of the population, making these groups much more dominant in Mission Valley than in the city as a whole. Compared to the City of San Diego, Mission Valley has a smaller percentage of households with annual incomes less than $30,000 or more than $200,000, resulting in larger percentage of middle-income earning households. Non-Hispanic whites constitute 59 percent of the population in Mission Valley. Hispanics (of any race), Asians, and Blacks constitute 18, 12 and 5 percent of the population, respectively. The community's demographics are more fully described in the Existing Conditions Map Atlas.

any race), Asians, and Blacks constitute 18, 12 and 5 percent of the population, respectively. The community's demographics are more fully described in the Existing Conditions Map Atlas.

Existing Plans in Mission Valley

MISSION VALLEY COMMUNITY PLAN

The current Mission Valley Community Plan identifies several key issues, goals, and implementation actions for the community. These include improving the transportation system; relating development intensity to the capacity of the transportation system; encouraging mixed-use development on large sites to offer environments for living, working, shopping, and related activities; guiding urban form and physical development that protects and is responsive to the physical environment of Mission Valley; and encouraging the development of neighborhood facilities and services that fulfill the daily needs of local residents. The Community Plan establishes the type of future development through a set of broad land use designations, and regulates the scale of future development through "development intensity districts."

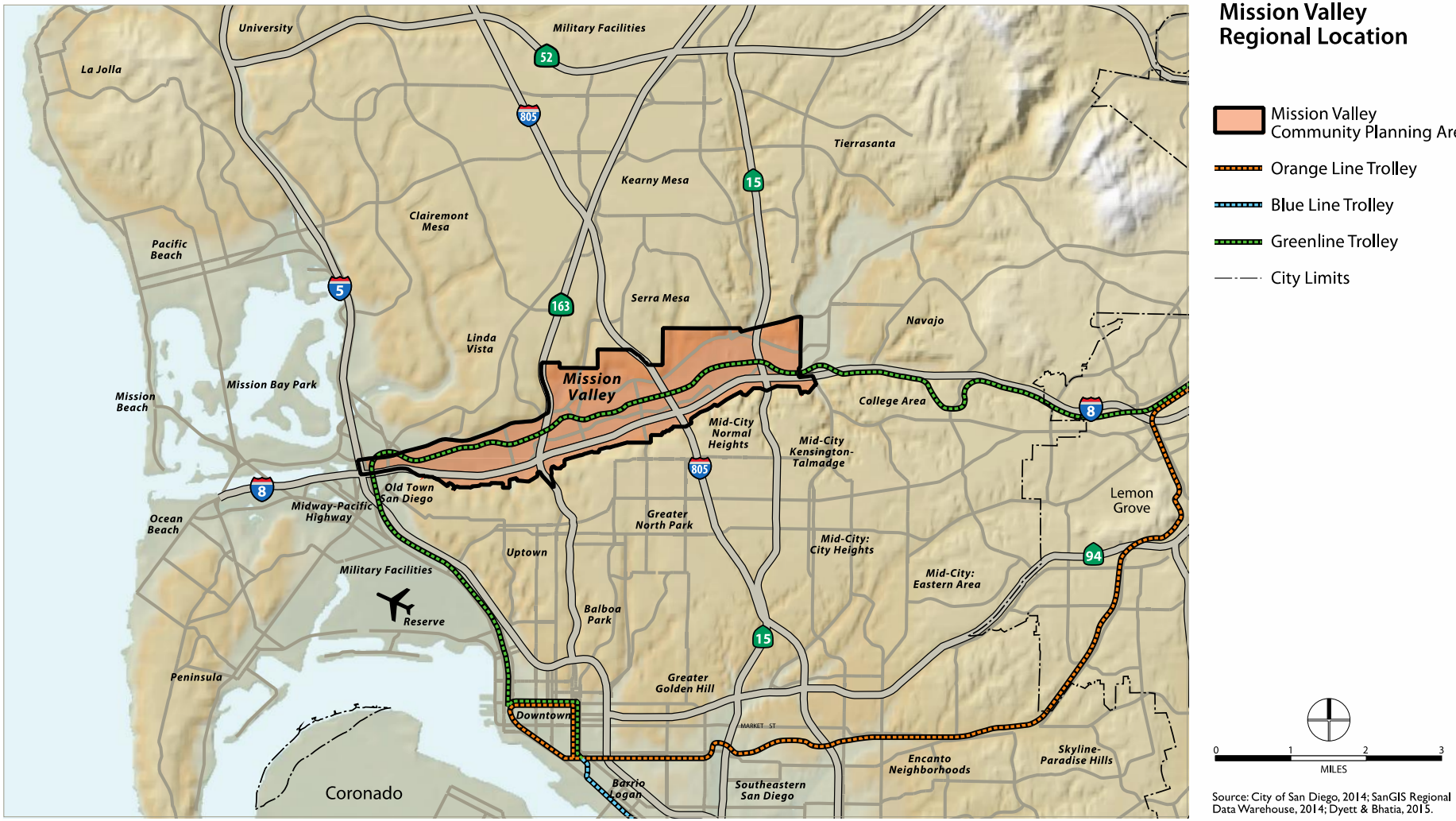
SPECIFIC PLANS

Six adopted specific plans provide greater detail for future development and public improvements for several sites within the Planning Area. Several of the adopted specific plans are dated, and may no longer reflect needs and desires of the community and/or property owners. The Mission Valley Community Plan Update provides an opportunity to revisit the Specific Plans as needed to reflect the updated community vision. As issues and options arise in this report relating to adopted specific plans, the specific plans are explained in further detail.

ZONING

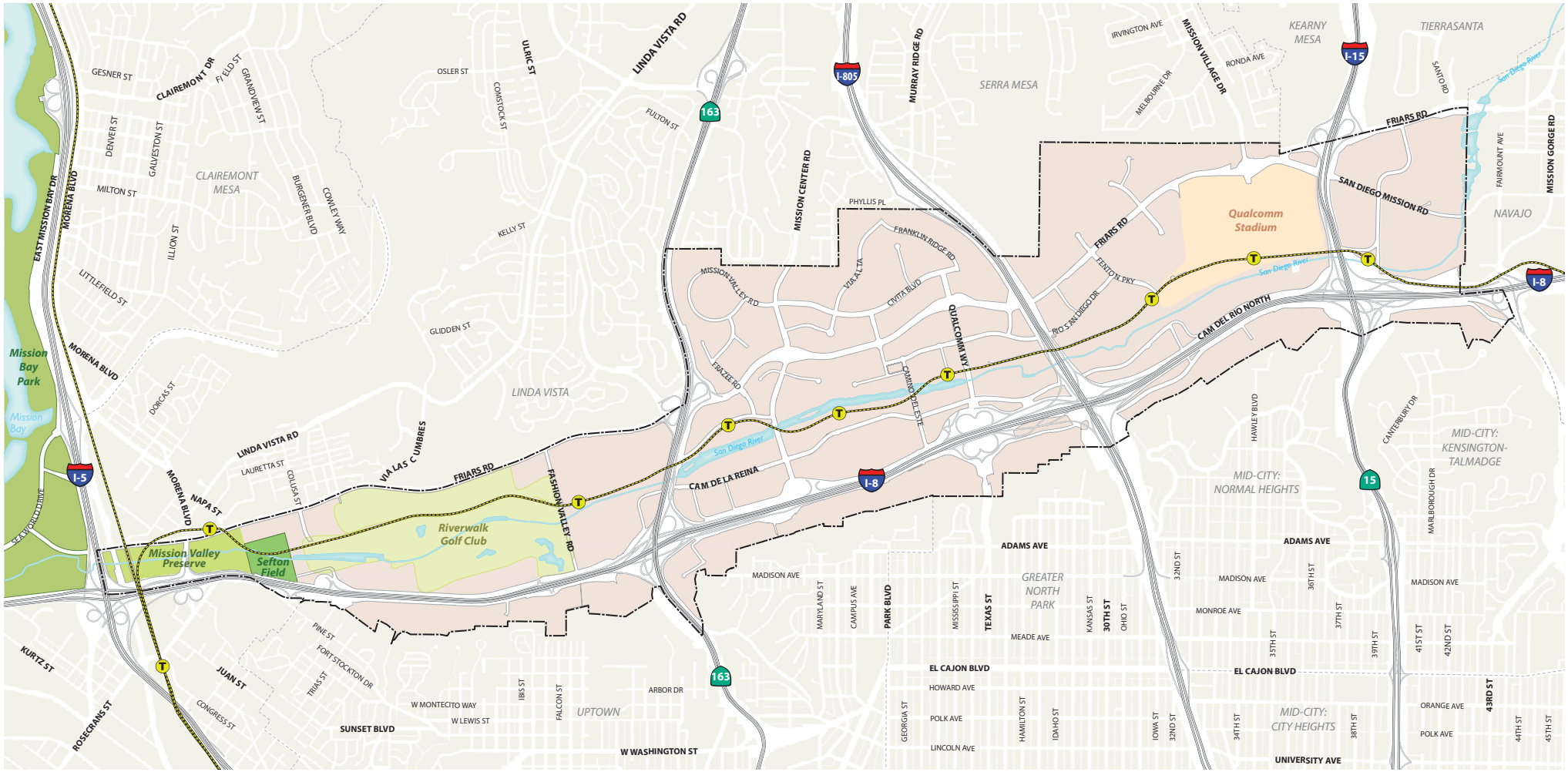
Zoning implements the policies put forth in the General Plan and the Community Plan through detailed development regulations. Zoning also regulates the form that development can take and the land uses that are permitted in Mission Valley. Most of Mission Valley is governed by the Mission Valley Planned District Ordinance. Some areas subject to a Specific Plan are zoned as MVPD-MV-M/SP; this indicates that a Specific Plan is in effect and should be reviewed to understand the regulations that govern development in these areas. In other cases, citywide zoning districts are used. As zoning must be consistent with policy, the zoning applicable to Mission Valley will be revised, as necessary, after the update of the Mission Valley Community Plan has been completed.

Figure 1-1: Regional Location



Source: City of San Diego, 2014; SanGIS Regional Data Warehouse, 2014; Dyett & Bhatia, 2015.

Figure 1-2: Planning Area



Trolley Stops
Light Rail
Freeways
Ramps
Streams/Creeks
Lakes/Ponds/Bays
Mission Valley Community Plan Boundary
Community Planning Areas

Data Source: City of San Diego, 2015; SANGIS/SANDAG Regional GIS Data Warehouse, 2015. (www.sangis.org)
Dyett & Bhatia, 2015

0 1,500 3,000 6,000 FEET

SAN DIEGO RIVER PARK MASTER PLAN

The San Diego River Master Plan, adopted by City Council in May 2013, communicates a common vision, principles, and recommendations to guide land use decisions within the River Corridor and River Influence Areas along the San Diego River. This vision for the river is supported by five main principles:

- Restore and maintain a healthy river system;
- Unify fragmented lands and habitats;
- Create a connected continuum, with a sequence of unique places and experiences;
- Reveal the river valley history; and
- Reorient development toward the river to create value and opportunities for people to embrace the river.

Specific recommendations include providing interpretive signage at key locations, creating new pedestrian and bicycle connections, and pursuing opportunities to address the hydrology of the river.

The existing Community Plan, Specific Plans, Zoning, and San Diego River Park Master Plan are further described and illustrated in the Existing Conditions Map Atlas.

This page intentionally left blank.

2.1 Issue 1: Fostering Coherent, Interconnected Neighborhoods

Issue Discussion

ISSUE SUMMARY

Mission Valley is composed of many large-scale development projects. Its housing stock generally consists of large, multifamily complexes. Mission Valley has some of the largest shopping malls in the city that draw visitors from across the region. Qualcomm Stadium, another of Mission Valley's regional attractions, is situated on a large site in the eastern part of the Planning Area. Community members and stakeholders have observed that these individual developments are often regionally rather than locally-oriented, and while Mission Valley will continue to remain a regional destination, an increasing effort should be made in the future to weave the community together into a cohesive urban fabric. Many would like to see Mission Valley evolve from isolated developments, and into a collection of coherent neighborhoods.

The Community Plan Update can set urban design standards that will guide the form development will take in Mission Valley over the next decade or more. This chapter considers how the Community Plan Update can bring this vision of interconnected, coherent neighborhoods into fruition.

BUILDING ORIENTATION

Many existing residential developments in Mission Valley have an "introverted" or inward-facing design, while commercial development are set back from streets by large parking lots. Developments are situated on large blocks, and internal circulation networks are private and disconnected from block to block. Building entrances often lack direct access from public streets, sidewalks, and the San Diego River. Recently proposed development projects appear to continue this trend, as can be seen in the examples of the Union Tribune Mixed Use Development Project and the proposed redevelopment of the Town & Country Resort. These adjacent projects are both located on large blocks just south of the San Diego River. Neither includes the new public streets nor the creation of new connections to each other.

Many residential developments in Mission Valley are highly separated from public streets and sidewalks, with landscaping, grade changes, and fencing. Building entrances face the site interior.

Commercial developments are set back from streets with large surface parking lots. Store entrances face the parking area, not the street.

STREET, BLOCKS, AND LOTS

The layout and size of streets, blocks, and lots has a direct impact on a community's walkability and connectedness. Districts that are navigable and enjoyable to traverse by foot tend to have a fine-grained network of streets, with frequent intersections. Streets are not so wide that they become challenging to cross, and there is a strong visual link from one side to the other.

Many of Mission Valley's blocks are large, extending as much as half a mile on a side. Others, like those south of I-8, are accessible from only one frontage. The primary street network is limited to two continuous streets in each direction. The secondary street network includes many cul-de-sacs and loops, requiring people to travel farther to go from one destination to another, and placing a burden on the primary streets, contributing to their large scale.

The Gaslamp Quarter's small blocks, moderately-scaled streets and frequent intersections (left) promote greater movement choice and fosters more connected neighborhoods compared to Mission Valley (right).

Options

Below are a variety of approaches—implementable through zoning, subdivision regulations, and design guidelines—for transforming Mission Valley into a collection of interconnected neighborhoods.

1. PROMOTE STREET CONNECTIVITY AND FINE-GRAINED BLOCK AND LOT PATTERNS

Future development in Mission Valley should be required to take the form more similar to that more commonly found in walkable communities. Potential policies include:

- **Connective street network.** New streets should be laid out in a connective pattern unless topography, environmental conditions, or the like make it impractical. New streets and mid-block pedestrian connections should connect to the surrounding circulation network. New development can create a robust secondary street network in Mission Valley.
- **Block size and maximum street spacing.** New streets and blocks should be designed to be "permeable," with superblocks only allowed where necessary to accommodate large building forms. Maximum block size should, for example, be no greater than 300 by 600 feet (downtown blocks by comparison are 200 by 300 feet, and in Hillcrest are 300 by 600 feet), and preferably smaller, with required mid-block pedestrian connections if/as needed.
- **Access to the San Diego River.** The San Diego River is defining feature of Mission Valley, and its greatest open space asset. Plans are already in place to enhance the river, and promote pedestrian and bicycle facilities along it. New development should

not only promote greater connectivity in general, but also frequent access to paths along the river from neighborhoods and public streets.

2. REQUIRE SITE PLANNING AND BUILDING CHARACTERISTICS THAT PROMOTE WALKABILITY

The Community Plan Update can also include policies that require buildings to be designed in a manner that engages public streets and neighboring development. Potential policies include:

- **Active uses on the ground floor.** Active uses (e.g., retail, restaurants, walk-in personal services) engage pedestrian and create a livelier environment on at least certain streets. They should be required on the ground floor along corridors where pedestrians are prioritized.
- **Entrances facing the street.** Require buildings to have their primary entrances facing the street and directly connected to the sidewalk.
- **Design of structures.** Doorways, windows, and other openings should be proportioned to reflect pedestrian scale and movement and to encourage interest at street level. Transparency of ground level non-residential uses should be created. Buildings should avoid long, monotonous, uninterrupted walls or roof planes.
- **Design and placement of parking areas.** Parking areas should be designed so that they do not impede pedestrian access. Parking areas (lots or structures) should be located behind buildings, in the center of blocks, or tucked under development. Pedestrians should not have to walk through or along a parking lot to access any building, but should be provided with independent sidewalk access. Off-street parking should be screened from pedestrian view.

3. IMPLEMENT ACTIVE STREET DESIGN

Active street design reinforces pedestrian-friendly building and site development standards and further enhances walkability. Roadway design that considers the needs of all of its users, provides pedestrian amenities, and includes safe pedestrian routes to and from key locations is central to decreasing isolation and creating a pleasant environment in which to walk from one development to another. Design elements include:

- **Sidewalk standards.** Require sidewalks to meet the current street design manual standards. Limit curb cuts and driveway entrances to reduce conflicts with pedestrians, expand pedestrian space, ensure pedestrian safety, and increase the supply of on-street parking. Encourage side street entrances to parking and loading areas, and sharing of driveways between adjacent new developments.
- **Reduce speeding.** Reduce motor vehicle speeds through traffic calming measures such as roundabouts, raised crosswalks, and textured pavement to increase safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- **On-street parking.** Maintain on-street parking and provide it as part of new street design.
- **Enhance amenities for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit riders.** Use street trees to provide shade to pedestrians. Provide benches and shade structures and/or trees at transit stops. Provide sufficient lighting along public streets. Provide seating and

other pedestrian-oriented furnishings. Use signage and wayfinding to help residents and visitors navigate and learn about their surroundings. Underground utilities to the extent possible.

The Community Plan Update can also focus certain strategies on specific key corridors, implementing safe routes to and from transit stops, the library, Sefton Field, access points to trails along the San Diego River, and highly frequented destinations. In addition, the Community Plan can recommend the construction of pedestrian trails that provide direct access to these locations where streets do not provide direct connections. Additional street design options are discussed in Chapter 2.2.

Adequately-sized sidewalks, street trees and furniture create a pleasant environment in which to walk and linger (right) and enjoy the waterfront (left).

4. CREATE COMMUNITY GATHERING PLACES

Another mechanism by which Mission Valley can create more interconnected neighborhoods is by creating more destinations in between them. The addition of new nodes of activity—such as outdoor cafes, community gardens, parks, plazas, public art installations, and farmers markets—can decrease the distance between destinations and create a more active street life, making Mission Valley feel more connected and its individual developments less isolated.

Street space and former parking areas can be redesigned to accommodate public art, pop-up businesses, food carts, and sidewalk seating.

This page intentionally left blank.

2.2 Issue 2: Promoting Connections across Physical and Natural Barriers

Issue Discussion

Mission Valley has real natural beauty. The San Diego River meanders through its center, and steep hills frame its northern and southern edges. Mission Valley's natural features—the river, the hillsides—create a beautiful setting but also create natural barriers to connectivity. Freeways and arterials also present significant obstacles. There are only limited crossings over and under the freeways, and where streets and trails cross under I-8 and SR 163 today, unpleasant conditions prevail that deter pedestrians and cyclists. Major streets such as Friars Road, Qualcomm Way, and Mission Center Road are wide, have few crossing opportunities, and carry many fast-moving vehicles. While the Trolley line is a means to connect destinations in both Mission Valley and beyond, its tracks also are a barrier, and one that the Community Plan Update can attempt to mitigate.

Every person who lives, works, or visits Mission Valley is, at one time or another, a pedestrian. As a result, these barriers to connectivity have a significant impact on the community and its members. Community members have expressed significant safety concerns as both pedestrians and cyclists in Mission Valley, and a strong desire to create connections across streets, highways, and other barriers. The Community Plan Update can implement and recommend strategies to improve these conditions.

San Diego's Harbor Drive Pedestrian Bridge crosses six lanes of traffic, a railway yard, and trolley tracks.

Options

The options presented represent a variety of approaches to creating connections across the major man-made and natural barriers in Mission Valley. Some strategies lend themselves for working in certain locations better than others, and others represent significant tradeoffs.

1. BUILD PEDESTRIAN BRIDGES

One strategy that can be used to promote connections across Mission Valley's barriers, particularly its highways and the San Diego River, are pedestrian bridges. In order to be successful—safe, well-used, enjoyable—bridges need to follow direct paths linking destinations, and be designed to create a high-quality pedestrian experience. Pedestrian bridges have the potential to create connections across I-8 and Friars Road, as well as the San Diego River. Strategically located connections across San Diego River can also greatly enhance Trolley station access, given that the Trolley runs adjacent to the river along much of its length in Mission Valley. Other potential locations for pedestrian bridges are between the YMCA and Sefton Park, through the Riverwalk site as a part of future development, over the river from Mission Valley Center Trolley Station, and from the Fenton Parkway Trolley Station to Mission City Parkway. These locations are shown on Figure 2.4-1: Connected Park and Open Space System (see Section 2.4).

2. TRANSFORM UNDERPASSES INTO VIBRANT PUBLIC SPACES

Underpasses beneath elevated highways in Mission Valley present public safety concerns and are unpleasant to walk or ride through. There are opportunities to turn these spaces into high-quality connections that also add to Mission Valley's identity.

Some communities have transformed underpasses into parks and public art spaces. For instance, San Diego's Chicano Park was established in 1970 below the San Diego-Coronado Bridge. This park has received recognition as major public art site, which displays murals of the struggles of Mexican and Chicano history. In Sydney, a lighting installation has transformed an underpass into glowing, golden forest, as well as a safe public space that connects communities.

Chicano Park (left), located beneath the San Diego-Coronado Bridge, hosts the country's largest collection of outdoor murals. A Sydney underpass (right) has been transformed with public art and lighting.

3. BUILD ON EXISTING ASSETS

Mission Valley has numerous assets that connect the community, in part, and should be improved upon as a part of the Community Plan Update. The San Diego River, in particular, is a natural linkage for the community, and its potential has not yet been fully realized. The San Diego River Park Master Plan envisions a continuous greenway and trail system along the river. Implementing this vision would create a wonderful recreational resource for the community and the city as a whole, as well as a linkage in the heart of Mission Valley. This is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2.4, and in the Existing Conditions Map Atlas. The trolley is another asset. The construction of an additional station as part of the development of the Riverwalk Golf Course presents an opportunity to expand its utility as a community connector.

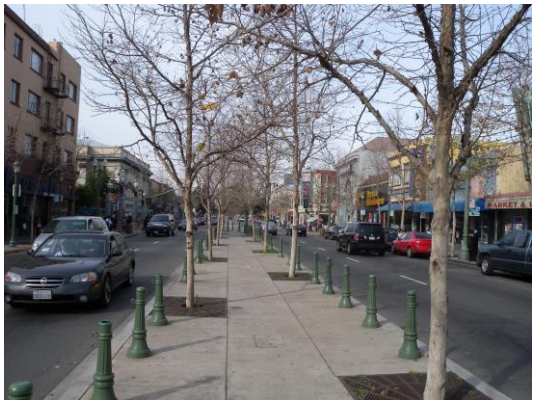
The San Diego River is a natural linkage for the community, with potential that has not yet been fully realized.

4. RETROFIT STREETS AND INTERSECTIONS

Another strategy for improving connections in Mission Valley is retrofitting its streets to make them safer and more attractive to pedestrians and cyclists. Streets such as Mission Center Road, Camino de la Reina, Camino del Este, Hazard Center Drive, Frazee Road, Qualcomm Way, Rio San Diego Drive, and San Diego Mission Road may benefit from:

- **Adding missing sidewalk segments.** Some streets in Mission Valley lack sidewalks in certain segments.
- **Crosswalks.** In many areas of Mission Valley, pedestrians must walk long distances in order to get to a safe place to cross a street. Adding safe, marked pedestrian crossings where they are warranted is an important strategy. Crosswalks can include additional features for pedestrian comfort and safety, including mid-block pedestrian-activated crossing systems and high-visibility markings, which can also enhance the identity of an intersection.
- **Median refuges.** Many of Mission Valley's streets are several lanes wide, making them challenging for pedestrians to cross safely, especially for older people or persons with disabilities. Median refuges provide safety and peace of mind, and can also be opportunities to grow the street canopy (see Chapter 2.15).
- **Countdown timers at all signalized intersections.** Digital displays that count down the seconds until traffic lights turn from green to yellow, and audible signals that help people with vision impairments are another important safety feature for pedestrians.

- **Curb extensions and bulb-outs.** Curb extensions, or bulb-outs, increase safety and comfort for pedestrians in many ways. They make pedestrians more visible to drivers. They shorten the distance pedestrians must walk in order to cross the street and help decrease the speed of vehicular traffic. They also provide opportunities for pedestrian amenities, such as street furnishings and landscaping.
- **Sidewalk widening.** Widening sidewalks improves the pedestrian experience and makes it more likely for community members to choose to walk to their destination.
- **Addition of bike facilities.** Protected bike lanes, separated from vehicular traffic by planters, parked cars, or posts, would make riding a bike in Mission Valley much more pleasant, enjoyable, and accessible to a wide range of people. Additional bike lanes, on-street lanes designated for bicycle travel, would also increase connectivity within Mission Valley. Painting buffered bike lanes would further enhance the bicycling experience by providing greater visibility and alert motorists to presence of bicycle facilities while providing greater distance between moving vehicles and bicycles.
- **Lane narrowing.** Where appropriate, narrowing the lanes of vehicle traffic can be used to encourage slower vehicle speeds. This, in turn, increases pedestrian and cyclist safety and makes it more likely that community members will opt to travel by foot and by bike. This roadway space can be reallocated to a variety of uses, including median refuges, wider sidewalks, curb extensions, bike facilities, and off-street parking.

Landscaped bulb-outs (left) shorten the crossing distance for pedestrians. The median in Oakland's Fruitvale District (right) provides a safe place for pedestrians to stop if they are unable to cross the street in the time allotted, as well as provides an opportunity to grow the urban canopy.

5. REQUIRE NEW STREETS AND PEDESTRIAN PATHS AS A PART OF NEW DEVELOPMENT

New development projects should be required to construct new streets and pedestrian passages that create a good secondary circulation network in Mission Valley. New streets should break up large blocks, connect to the public street and the existing street network, and maximize connectivity for drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians.

6. PROVIDE WAYFINDING AND SIGNAGE

Wayfinding and signage can highlight existing pedestrian connections in Mission Valley and alert pedestrians if destinations are only a short walk away. Wayfinding can also inform community members of the area's cultural and environmental heritage, as well as contribute to the area's special identity.

7. PROTECT VIEW CORRIDORS

Mission Valley's natural beauty—the San Diego River and its canyon walls—often go unnoticed from the seat of a fast moving car. But it is noticeable when exploring Mission Valley by foot or by bike. View corridors to the river and across the canyon should be preserved, not only because they are beautiful, but because doing so incentivizes these means of travel. Where new connections to the river from parallel streets such as Friars Road or Camino de la Reina are provided, these should be in a straight path to provide views to the river.

Views of the San Diego River should be preserved, in part to incentivize walking and bicycling.

8. CONNECT MISSION VALLEY WITH AN AERIAL TRAM

Mission Valley is a potential candidate for an aerial tram to connect it with its surrounding communities. An aerial tram is an intriguing option for overcoming the natural barriers presented by Mission Valley's steep slopes that border the community on its northern and southern boundaries. See Issue 11.

9. RETHINK MAJOR ARTERIALS

Limited-access roadways are critical to the regional transportation system, but there may be opportunities to lessen their impact locally by redesigning certain segments.

In Brooklyn, in response to community concerns regarding speeding vehicles and unsafe access to the adjacent Prospect Park, Prospect Park West was transformed from a one-way street with three travel lanes and parking on both sides of the street to a two-laned street with a separated, two-way bikeway. Evidence has shown these changes have increased bicycle use on the street, increased the street's overall capacity, and maintained motorized vehicle travel times. Moreover, San Francisco replaced the Embarcadero and Central freeways with a surface boulevard following the 1989 earthquake. This project dramatically enhanced the connection between the city and the bay, and laid the groundwork for the resurgent Hayes Valley neighborhood. Friars Road in particular may present opportunities for redesigning to enhance local connectivity and quality of life.

Before (left) and after (right) photos show the transformation achieved by the right sizing of Prospect Park West in Brooklyn, NY.

2.3 Issue 3: Need for a "Main Street"/Appropriateness of Camino de la Reina

Issue Discussion

Mission Valley has San Diego's largest concentration of retail development, substantial hotel and office development, and a rapidly increasing population. It occupies a central position on the region's transportation and public transit systems. While the area's topography provides some level of visual definition, Mission Valley's centers of activity are the malls, which are directed toward a regional, rather than just local, clientele. Locally-needed amenities such as cafés, restaurants, and small stores that would be part of a neighborhood center or main street are tucked away into malls, which need to be accessed via the automobile.

A locally-oriented "center" or "main street" can enhance Mission Valley's sense of place and identity, and provide a pedestrian-oriented local destination that stands out in contrast to the regionally oriented malls. The Community Plan Update will establish the location, use mix, and form of development in Mission Valley over the coming decades, and has the capacity to guide private and public investments toward creating a center for the community. One vision for this center is the creation of a "main street." This chapter considers the characteristics of the main street form, and whether Camino de la Reina, in particular, is well-suited for future main street-style development. The chapter also briefly explores some alternative potential main streets and community core concepts.

WHAT IS A MAIN STREET?

A "main street" is a typical element of American towns and cities, and one that carries great significance. Main streets, and the downtown districts that surround them, have been the traditional heart of commercial and civic life. Since about the 1950s, many American main streets and downtowns have struggled, as population, jobs, and most importantly shopping became highly dispersed. Dying downtowns galvanized many communities to try to bolster their main streets, and a renewed appetite for the qualities of small-town and urban life have encouraged property developers to reconfigure shopping centers to emulate aspects of the main street experience, and to create main streets from scratch as part of new development. A main street may be called by any number of names, but is likely to have some common characteristics. These are summarized here.

Location

In a small town or city, a main street is typically located in the center. This may not always be the geographic center, but the place where the street network and transit system converge. The main street is probably in close proximity to the rail line, river, waterfall, or other feature that made that location good for a town. In a larger city, a downtown district composed of a whole network of streets is more typical; the main street form in larger cities is more often the main shopping street for a neighborhood.

Land Use Characteristics

Main streets typically have active ground-floor uses, most importantly retail, restaurants, and personal service businesses. Above the first floor, buildings may have offices or apartments. Civic or community uses are also a typical part of the mix. Main streets are typically "two-sided," in that both sides of the street have a similar land use pattern, the most classic being the one described above. Main streets are also typically linear: the use pattern may be continuous for some distance along the corridor, with a notably different character (a residential neighborhood or an office district, for example) beginning as little as 100 feet on either side. Thus, a "main street" is a different idea from a "district," where an active, pedestrian-oriented use pattern may be dispersed on a series of connecting streets in a larger, walkable area.

Building Form Characteristics

The shape and orientation of buildings along main streets are also important. Main street buildings are typically built up to or near the sidewalk edge, with primary entrances facing the sidewalk and street. A classic main street has buildings of two to five stories, often attached to one another or filling a block. On many main streets, though, the height and scale of buildings varies—in fact, variation may be a part of what provides the street's character. However, tall buildings and buildings that stand on large footprints may be less successful in supporting a strong "pedestrian orientation" at the sidewalk level. Many main streets feature older (and historic) buildings, as well as buildings from the full range of a town's development up to the present.

San Diego's Gaslamp Quarter (left) and Santa Monica's 3rd Street Promenade (right) are examples of successful main street-style revitalization.

Emeryville's Bay Street and Portland's Pearl District feature new "main streets" developed from scratch.

Santana Row in San José offers a pedestrian-oriented Main Street environment, in a mixed-use setting, adjacent to Valley Fair Mall, the largest mall in the city.

Street/Streetscape Characteristics

Some of the most successful main streets are not overly wide, enabling easy crossings for pedestrians and visual relationships between both sides. For example, India Street in Downtown's Little Italy serves as a great main street for the neighborhood; in contrast, Broadway, which is downtown's traditional main spine, has always struggled with retail and sense and identity.

Main streets are also characterized by a high-quality pedestrian realm. This often means wide sidewalks, street trees, pedestrian-scaled lighting, benches, and other amenities. Curbside parking is usually provided, supporting short-term customer use in close proximity to businesses that, in a compact, higher-density environment, may not have their own on-site parking. Main streets typically are embedded in a street network that affords many intersections and relatively short blocks. They usually interface with a gathering space that is a focal point for the community.

WHAT WOULD A MAIN STREET ADD TO MISSION VALLEY?

Mission Valley has the most diverse mix of uses of any community outside of downtown, and a large daytime population. However, there are virtually no places in Mission Valley that are designed to support people walking between offices and restaurants or between shopping and home. A main street would provide a walkable place in a car-oriented environment.

Some Mission Valley community members and stakeholders reported a desire for the community to have a stronger identity or character. Others observed that it's hard to locate the "center" of Mission Valley. A main street has the potential to be a gathering place and foundation for the community's identity.

IS A MAIN STREET A GOOD FIT WITH MISSION VALLEY?

Main Street as an urban form element dates to a time when communities were more compact and when automobiles did not play the role they do today in shaping urban life. Mission Valley's commercial development began in earnest in the 1950s, coinciding with—and indeed playing a role in—the decline of the main street form. An important role of the Community Plan Update is to integrate new development better with transit, and promote walking and bicycling, while accommodating the needs of the automobile. However, this transformation does not necessarily need a main street as an element. The remainder of this chapter considers the "fit" between the main street concept and Camino de la Reina as well as some other streets, and identifies some alternative forms—neighborhood main streets and a central district.

Options

This chapter primarily considers whether Camino de la Reina would be a good "fit" for a future main street in Mission Valley; this is presented as option 1. Alternative pedestrian-oriented urban environment types and potential locations are presented in less detail as other options. Main street, community downtown, and trolley village options are shown on Figure 2.3-1.

1. CAMINO DE LA REINA AS MAIN STREET

Camino de la Reina is one of two primary streets that traverse Mission Valley in the east-west direction. The street serves as a "community connector," linking Hotel Circle and the development on both sides of I-8 west of SR 163 with the central retail commercial part of the community. East of Qualcomm Way, the street continues as Camino del Rio North, and supports a string of office and commercial uses, connecting under both the I-805 and I-15 freeways to communities to the east. The street parallels the San Diego River, to the north, and I-8, to the south. The segment of Camino de la Reina between SR 163 and Qualcomm Way is examined here for its potential to become a "main street" for Mission Valley.

The west end of the potential main street segment of Camino de la Reina is anchored by the Valley Corporate Center, a 12-story office building with surface parking alongside SR 163. Traveling east toward Mission Center Road, the south side of Camino de la Reina features auto dealerships; the site of a planned high-density, mixed-use development, which will add residential housing and retail space to the area; and the Westfield Mission Valley Shopping Center, a single-story shopping center with surface parking and pad retail sites. The north side of Camino de la Reina features four condominium developments, each composed of a complex of primarily 3-story buildings that are separated from the street and sidewalk by fencing, landscaping, and stairways. Standalone restaurants and retail buildings with parking are on each corner of Camino de la Reina and Mission Center Road.

Continuing east, the Westfield Mission Valley Mall occupies a large super-block on the south side of Camino de la Reina. Surface parking is generally located around the edges of this block, including along the Camino de la Reina frontage. The north side of the street is occupied by standalone retail and restaurants and the Park Valley Center shopping center. The Mission Center Trolley station is located directly north of the shopping center, at its rear, and beyond that is the San Diego River.

Between Camino del Este and Qualcomm Way, the south side of the street features standalone retail and office buildings that are set back from the street by surface parking, while more 3-story condominiums, separated from the adjacent sidewalk by fencing and landscaping, are on the north between Camino de la Reina and the river. Existing conditions and opportunities along Camino de la Reina are illustrated in Chapter 2.8: Opportunities on Large Sites.

Opportunities

Camino de la Reina has many qualities that make it highly-attractive and well-suited to being treated as a main street—or even *the* main street—for Mission Valley. These are summarized below.

- **Central location.** The street is centrally-located in the community, midway between SR 163 and I-805, and between the western and eastern ends of the valley.
- **Accessibility and direct access to the Trolley.** The street is directly adjacent to two of the main gateways into Mission Valley, Mission Center Road and Qualcomm Way, giving it great visibility and convenience for many Mission Valley residents and visitors. It also has direct access to the Mission Center Trolley station, which is just 350 feet north of the

street. This station is closer and more directly accessible to a primary street than any other in Mission Valley.

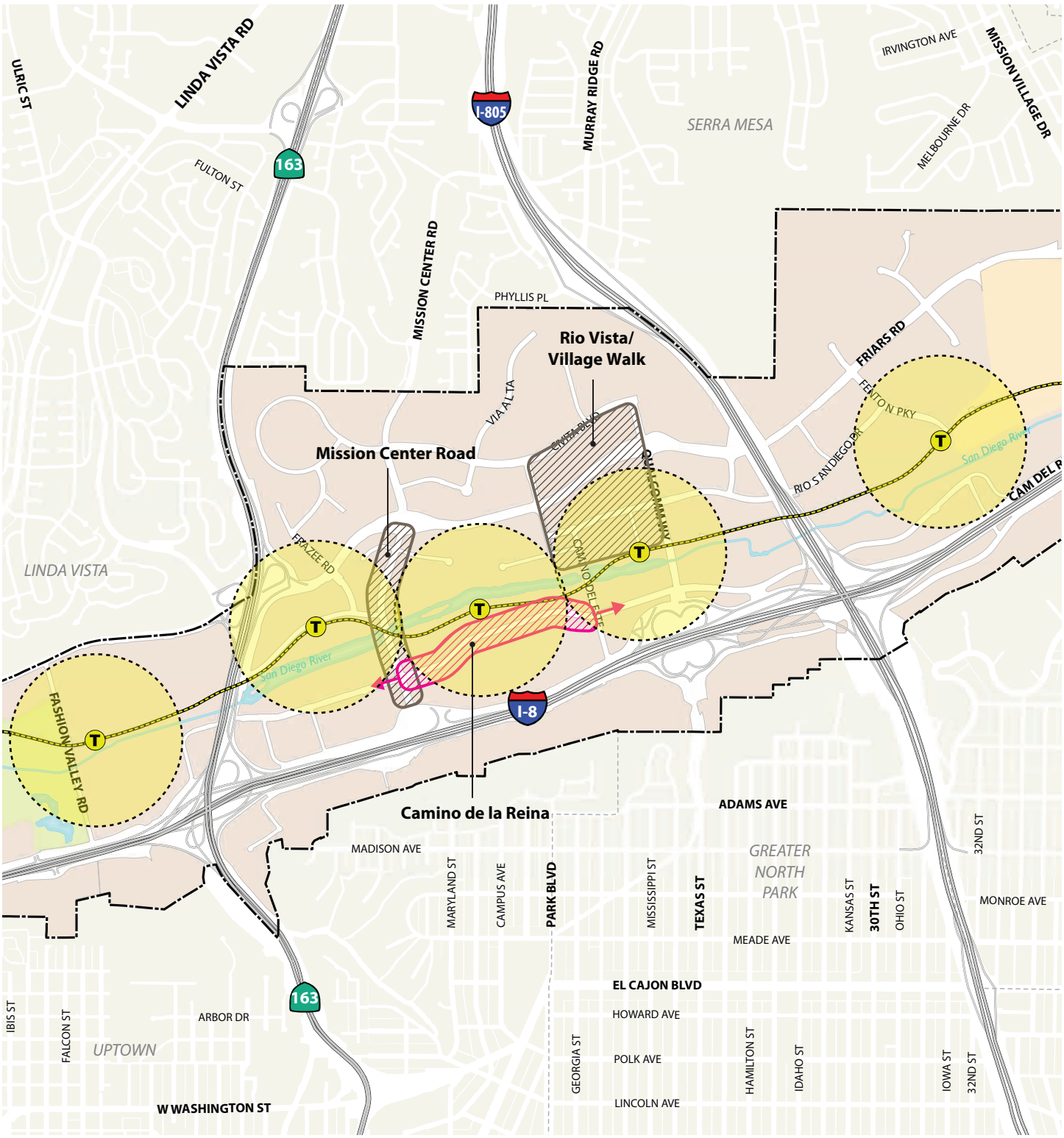
- **Strong relationship with the river and greenway.** Camino de la Reina parallels the San Diego River along the river segment where floodway, open space, and trail improvements have been completed. The new Discovery Center along the river will reinforce this connection. It is a compelling setting for active uses (for example, restaurants with outdoor seating), and for enjoying a walkable environment. The setting provides the basis for creating a strong and distinct Mission Valley identity.
- **Large potential development sites.** There are large parcels of under-utilized commercial land with strong development potential on both sides of Camino de la Reina between Mission Center Road and Camino del Este, including the Park Valley Center and Westfield Mission Valley Mall. Large underutilized sites are also present along the south side of the street west of Mission Center Road, most notably the Westfield Mission Valley shopping center. Coordinated development decisions between a very small number of property owners could transform the area.
- **Two-sided development potential.** The central segment of this stretch of Camino de la Reina, between Mission Center Road and Camino del Este, has the strongest main street potential, as land on both sides of the street could be developed, providing a "two-sided" commercial thoroughfare. This could be done either with the mall remaining, with new buildings along the street edge, or with the entire mall site being transformed.

Challenges

The street also has some limitations that will make main street transformation challenging.

- **Traffic and street width.** Camino de la Reina may not have the traffic volumes or be as wide as Friars Road or Mission Center Road, but at five lanes and 75 feet from curb to curb and carrying 10 to 13,000 cars per day, it is a challenging environment for creating a high-quality pedestrian realm and a strong connection between activities on both sides.
- **Separated from majority of the community which is north of the River.** Most of Mission Valley's land area and almost all its residential development is north of the San Diego River, making Camino de la Reina somewhat cut off from natural use patterns.
- **Downsides of consolidated ownership.** While the presence of a few large potential development sites is an opportunity (see above), it also counts as a challenge. It means that a few owners will make or break the idea of creating a main street for Mission Valley. It also is likely to result in very large-scale development projects. While it is possible for unified development projects to achieve main street-style character, they are also more likely to feel generic, missing the opportunity to create a distinctive place.
- **One-sided potential on segments east and west of core segments.** West of Mission Center Road and east of Camino del Este, the street only has main street development potential on the south side. This makes those segments less conducive to supporting a walkable strip. However, the central portion may be enough.

Figure 2.3-1 Potential Main Streets, Districts, and Trolley Villages



Camino de la Reina

Other Potential Main Streets/ Districts

Potential Trolley Villages

Trolley Stops

Light Rail

Mission Valley Community Plan Boundary

Community Planning Areas

0 1,500 3,000 6,000 FEET

Data Source: City of San Diego, 2015; SANGIS Regional GIS Data Warehouse, 2015. (www.sangis.org)
Dyett & Bhatia, 2015

This page intentionally left blank.

Elements that Could Support a Main Street along Camino de la Reina

The development of a successful main street district along Camino de la Reina should include these key ingredients:

- Future development between Camino de la Reina and the San Diego River must address both the street frontage and the river. The street-facing side of development must be active and pedestrian-welcoming, while the river side must also support public use and enjoyment, for example with upper-level restaurant patios overlooking the river. This concept is already addressed in the San Diego River Park Master Plan's River Influence Area requirements.
- New development on the Park Valley Center site must retain and enhance strong visual and physical access between Camino de la Reina and the Mission Center Trolley Station.
- The south side of Camino de la Reina should have street-facing buildings with active uses and primary entrances facing the street and supporting pedestrian activity on the sidewalk. This can be achieved while retaining most or all of the current Mall, or as part of a complete overhaul.
- Camino de la Reina would need to be redesigned for an enhanced pedestrian realm, with wider sidewalks, pedestrian amenities, intersection enhancements that provide pedestrian comfort and safety, street trees, and other features.
- A more fine-grained circulation network should be included, creating multiple paths for people to move through the area. A successful main street environment will be supported by streets, as opposed to driveways, and ample pedestrian passages and plazas.
- A pedestrian/bike bridge over the San Diego River should be seriously explored, providing a direct connection between the Trolley station and the main street, on the south, and the residential developments on the north.

2. MISSION CENTER ROAD AS THE COMMUNITY'S MAIN STREET

Mission Center Road may be an alternative candidate for creation of a main street that serves the whole community. Like Camino de la Reina, Mission Center Road is centrally-located and highly-visible and accessible. It has development potential on both sides of the San Diego River, linked by a bridge. Development sites along Mission Center Road are generally smaller, occupied by free-standing commercial buildings. This means that a future main street pattern would likely be slower to become established, but would be less dependent on the choices of a few owners, and may result in an environment with more "texture." However, Mission Center Road carries from 20,000 - 27,000 Average Daily Traffic (ADT), has seven to nine lanes of traffic, and, at 100 feet from curb to curb, would be very difficult to transform into an active, pedestrian-friendly environment. In addition, the river would create a long gap between active segments of the street.

3. RIO VISTA/VILLAGE WALK AS THE COMMUNITY'S DOWNTOWN

Several San Diego communities have central districts rather than main streets. For example, Hillcrest's core is centered at 5th and University avenues, with retail and restaurants spread out in both directions from it. The site of the Rio Vista shopping center and the planned Village Walk district (part of the Civita project), taken together, could become a unified central district for

Mission Valley. The two sites lie opposite each other on the south and north sides of Friars Road between Qualcomm Way and Gill Village Way. Village Walk is planned to become an "intensive activity center" with "shops, eateries and outdoor areas," direct access to Quarry Falls Park, and a central location between residential neighborhoods and employment districts and visibility along Friars Road. The Rio Vista shopping center could be intensified, and new streets and pedestrian connections made. A pedestrian bridge is already planned over Friars Road to link the two sites. Both these sites could also be planned for more intensive mixed-use development. The area is within walking distance of the Rio Vista Trolley station, and the Rio Vista Station Village could be integrated into this larger community hub. However, the fact that this potential hub is somewhat removed from the Trolley station and river may be seen as a challenge. Perhaps more of a challenge is Friars Road itself, a substantial barrier separating Rio Vista from the Civita portion of the potential district.

4. SUBAREA MAIN STREETS

Mission Valley could embrace its multi-centered character, and the Community Plan Update could identify more localized main streets instead of one that serves the whole community. Segments of Camino de la Reina, Mission Center Road, Rio San Diego Drive, Civita Boulevard, and Fashion Valley Road or a new street in the Riverwalk site could all support local "main street" segments. While this may dissipate the energy of one main street, given the long length of Mission Valley, two streets, for example, may be much more accessible than one, and each could have its own character.

5. RIVERFRONT MAIN STREET

Mission Valley's principal natural and scenic asset is the San Diego River. A main street along the river would provide a unique ambiance in the city, enabling people to stroll along the river and diners to experience water views. A Main Street such as this may extend approximately 1/3 of a mile, and be developed as part of future development at the Park Valley Center and/or the Riverwalk site. This main street could be a pedestrian-only promenade, or could allow vehicles in the context of a high-quality pedestrian realm. The City of Napa, for example, as part of its downtown redevelopment has embraced the river, providing a unique ambiance for downtown.

6. TROLLEY STATION VILLAGES

Mission Valley has eight Trolley stations, and could gain another with future development of the Riverwalk site. Some of these stations have the potential to be planned as the nucleus for a "village," where active uses and pedestrian-oriented street design would be prioritized.

2.4 Issue 4: Opportunities for an Interconnected Park and Open Space System

Issue Discussion

Mission Valley has (year 2014) an estimated population of 21,000, which is projected to grow substantially over the next 20 years to a population of about 40,000, as well an increase in the number of workers and visitors. Existing parks and open spaces in Mission Valley are far below what is needed to serve the community's existing and growing population. The community would need 59.6 acres of parks to serve today's population based on city standards—at least three times as much as currently exists, depending on how much of Mission Valley's "resource-based" park land counts toward the standard—and 112 acres in the next 20 years. Mission Valley also does not have any existing recreational facilities. City standards indicate that one 17,000 square foot recreation center is to be provided per 25,000 residents, and one Aquatic Complex is to be provided per 50,000 residents.

Park and recreational open space issues in Mission Valley include: (a) overall lack of park acreage, with existing parkland at 0.95 acres per 1,000 residents versus city standard of 2.8 acres; (b) a lack of active recreational space; and (c) a lack of a connected open space "system" that takes advantage of the San Diego River and connects the valley to the hillsides and rim communities. The river provides a phenomenal resource with potential to accommodate both natural preservation and passive recreational use, but its trails are limited, discontinuous, and not readily accessible from neighborhoods. Existing development in Mission Valley tends to be oriented away from the river, cutting off access and potential view corridors both to the river and hillsides. Additionally, the upper slopes of the valley also hold potential for passive enjoyment, but are not accessible due to a lack of connections across I-8 and a lack of trails. Finally, the community's street system provides little in terms of landscaped public realm that could contribute both to providing connections between parks and open spaces, and helping to manage stormwater and protect water quality in the river. This chapter provides some background on these related issues, and then identifies potential options for achieving an interconnected park and open space system through the Community Plan Update process.

EXISTING AND PLANNED PARKS

Mission Valley currently has only one active recreational park, the 8-acre Sefton Field located at the west end of the river valley. This is the only active recreation park facility in the community. The San Diego River Park, located along the center of the valley, is classified as a "resource-based park," and holds great potential to knit together the community but is developed only in certain segments. The existing First San Diego River Improvement project (FSDRIP), built in the 1980s,

provides 3.50 acres of trails and picnic areas along the river frontage. The Mission Valley Preserve, located at the very west end of the river valley, provides passive open space with interpretive trails, a seating and picnic area, and a portion of the San Diego River Pathway along the southern edge. At the east end of the valley, the State Ecological Preserve is open for public use and includes trails and fishing.

Future planned parks in Mission Valley will add key pieces to the community's park system. The Civita park system, located north of the San Diego River, will provide approximately 16 acres of active and passive recreational parkland. The future pocket park at the Union Tribune site will provide a passive 0.18 acre park adjacent to the river with overlooks and interpretive signs. Another pocket park is planned for the redevelopment of the Hazard Center. And, the future Discovery Center will continue the river park pathway system along the south side of the river.

SAN DIEGO RIVER PARK MASTER PLAN

The San Diego River Park Master Plan, adopted by the San Diego City Council in 2013, communicates a vision, principles, recommendations, and design guidelines to guide public investments and land use decisions. The River Park is envisioned as "a string of parks linked by open space, pathways, and green corridors: a multi-layered system that will serve a variety of needs, offering recreational, environmental and habitat benefits." This vision is supported by five main principles:

- Restore and maintain a healthy river system;
- Unify fragmented lands and habitats;
- Create a connected continuum, with a sequence of unique places and experiences;
- Reveal the river valley history; and
- Reorient development toward the river to create value and opportunities for people to embrace the river.

The Master Plan recommends strategies to advance each of these principles, and specific recommendations for each reach of the River. Relevant strategies are noted and expanded upon in the discussion of options that follows. In particular, the Master Plan delineates a River Corridor Area, covering the 100-year floodway and a 35-foot path corridor on either side, to accommodate natural flooding, protect native vegetation, and incorporate a multi-use pathway. The Plan also designates a River Influence Area, extending 200 feet on either side of the River Corridor Area, within which "development will occur and should be designed to acknowledge and celebrate the presence of the river and treat it as an amenity."

WATER QUALITY AND HABITAT

The San Diego River watershed drains about 440 square miles with a population of 475,000 in San Diego and communities to the east. The river receives a great deal of stormwater runoff, and as a result, the portion of the river within Mission Valley is an impaired water body on the Clean Water Act Section 303(d) List. Though Mission Valley has been extensively developed, undisturbed areas of vegetation are present along the San Diego River, including riparian and bottomland habitat. Vegetation along the river corridor is part of San Diego's Multi-Habitat

Planning Area, within which development is limited, to protect and ensure the viability of sensitive species.

FLOODING

A significant portion of Mission Valley is vulnerable to flooding from the San Diego River or its tributaries, and lies within the 100-year floodway or the 100-year or 500-year flood plain, as delineated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Uses and recreational amenities are required to be consistent with the Development Regulations for Special Flood Hazard and the Environmentally Sensitive Lands regulations as well as the meeting the requirements of the Multiple Species Conservation Program. Much (but not all) of the land in the floodway itself is designated as Open Space in the existing Community Plan, meaning that only recreation and similar uses would be allowed. Much of the land within the 100-year flood plain, however, is designated for a variety of urban uses, and is developed with hotels, commercial and residential uses. A deepened river channel, buffer zones, and riparian and upland habitat have been created between SR 163 and Qualcomm Way following the FSDRIP. Some other segments of the river are subject to other specific plans, and both those plans and the Community Plan Update will help guide future flood control measures.

Options

The options presented below represent different approaches to the issue of providing a high-quality and connected parks and open space system in Mission Valley. They should be seen as having the potential to work in combination. At the same time, they may represent tradeoffs or highlight the need to make priorities. Ideas are illustrated in Figure 2.4-1: Conceptual Connected Park and Open Space System.

1. PROVIDE NEW PARKS OF COMMUNITY SIGNIFICANCE

A few large sites present special opportunities for parks, open space, or recreational facilities, as part of repositioning and/or development. The summary provided below is not intended to include all potential opportunities to incorporate parks within future redevelopment sites.

- **Riverwalk.** Occupying much of the western portion of Mission Valley, the Riverwalk Golf Course currently provides an open space character absent from the rest of the valley. Future development of the golf course is currently subject to the Levi-Cushman Specific Plan, which would provide for approximately 1,000 housing units and over 5 million square feet of office and retail space, with public open space concentrated along the river. An amendment has been initiated for the specific plan, which seeks both a greater residential emphasis and more park land and open space. In coordination with the owner, the City has the opportunity to achieve a large and high-quality park along the San Diego River (located in the 100 year floodway), including most of the site south of the river.
- **Qualcomm Stadium.** The City-owned Qualcomm Stadium site is the second major opportunity for a future park in Mission Valley. The existing community plan identifies a portion of the site as open space, and the San Diego River Park Master Plan states that a "river-oriented community park [at the site] could provide public recreation facilities adjacent to the naturalized open space San Diego River Park, which would complement

Mission Bay Park and Mission Trails Regional Park. The Qualcomm site may also be an appropriate site for a recreation center and/or an aquatic center to provide for the some of the recreational needs of Mission Valley, as well as for the Navajo community. The location and size for a future park at the Stadium may be considered as part of the Community Plan Update.

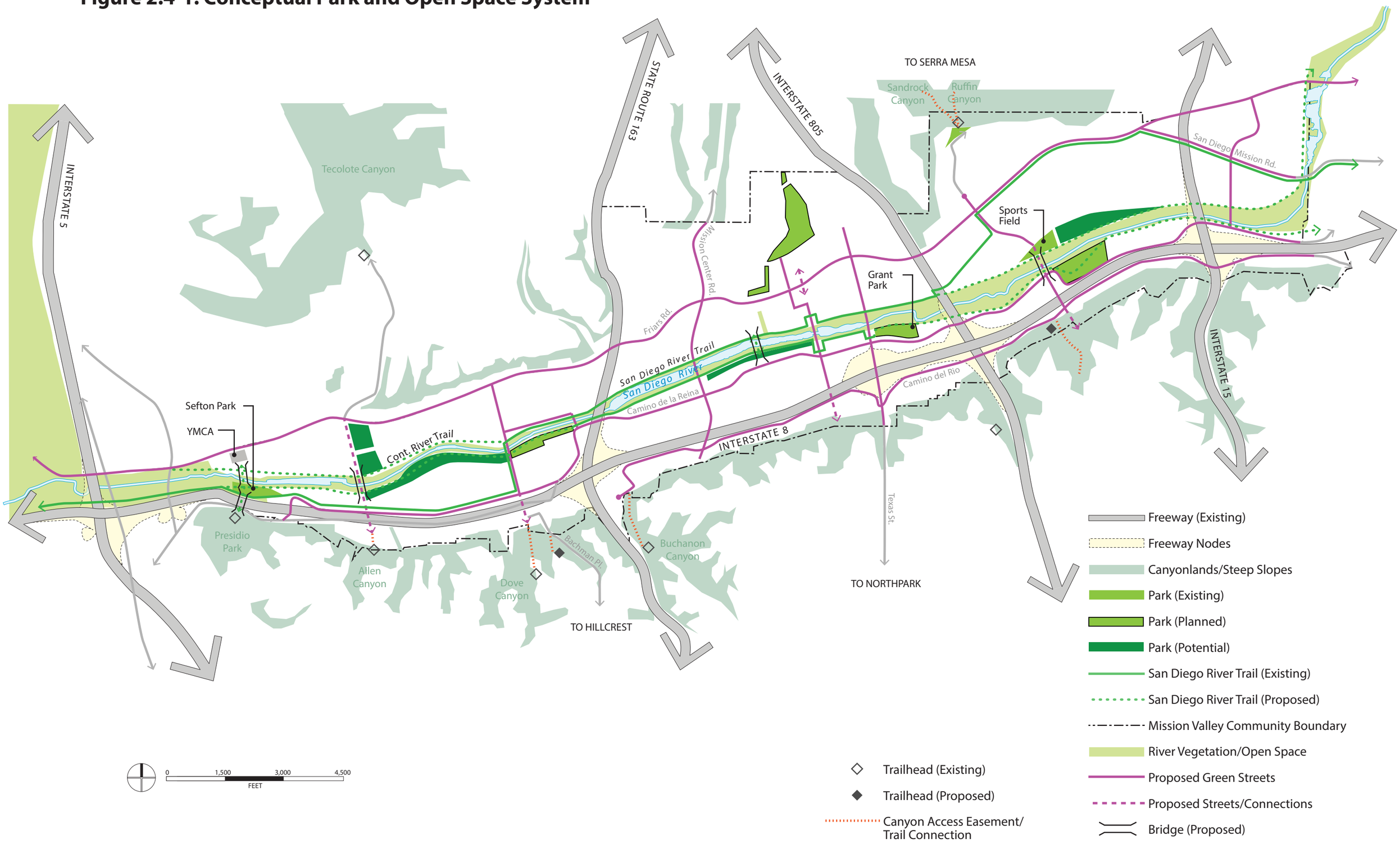
- **Retail Redevelopment Sites.** Several large shopping centers in the central part of Mission Valley, are seen as under-utilized properties that are likely to change during the coming years. While new development and intensification of these sites are likely, there is also the opportunity to consider dedicating a portion or all of these site for parks. This would require a mechanism to purchase or transfer development rights on the property.

2. DEVELOP A RANGE OF PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY

Mission Valley falls far short of "population-serving park land" to meet the needs of current and future residents. The Community Plan Update should identify opportunities to include new park and open spaces of different scales, types, and uses throughout the community. Park amenities should be distributed with the goal of providing population-based park land within a half mile of all residents, and to be linked in an overall system. Parks and open spaces can also be developed where they can be utilized for stormwater management and flood control. Future parks may include:

- **Use of the San Diego River resource-based park.** The Discovery Center, planned for the undeveloped site northeast of Qualcomm Way and Camino del Rio North, provides a good model for potential additional natural and interpretive park spaces along the river corridor. River Corridor area improvements will also be made with development of the Union Tribune site.
- **New community and neighborhood parks.** New parks may be created through public acquisition of property at key locations, typically using development impact fee proceeds. Parks may be provided as part of future development projects. In lieu of paying the park portion of development impact fees, new residential development may provide all or at least 50 percent of the public park on site. The park being developed as part of the Civita project is a good example of this. Council Policy 600-17 indicates that non-residential development benefits from park facilities and should share in the costs of new parks. Through a feasibility study, a fee for non-residential development could be established in Mission Valley to help facilitate the acquisition and construction of new parks. This could follow the model established in Downtown San Diego.
- **Mini-parks and pocket parks.** The San Diego General Plan classifies small parks of 1 to 3 acres as "mini-parks" and parks smaller than one acre as "pocket parks." These types of park spaces, while small, can be more easily achieved through new development even on relatively small sites. Mini- and pocket parks can include active areas like playgrounds, small multi-purpose courts or fields, picnic areas, and fitness stations. They can also provide seating, water features, amphitheaters and public art, and be amenities for local workers and visitors.

Figure 2.4-1: Conceptual Park and Open Space System



This page intentionally left blank.

- **Diverse recreation facilities and amenities.** Parks should be programmed to attract a variety of users. Facilities may include recreation centers, athletic fields, multipurpose courts, picnic facilities, play areas and flexible turf areas, landscaped garden spaces, swimming pools, sports courts, dog parks, trails, picnic areas, and nature centers. The Qualcomm site has particular potential to accommodate a future recreation and aquatic center for Mission Valley.

Appropriate and adequate sources of funding for the development and maintenance of future parks will be a critical issue. Park equivalencies may be appropriate for satisfying some of the community's population-based park needs. Park equivalencies may include joint use facilities with schools, the YMCA and others; trails; privately-owned, publicly accessible parks; rooftop parks or indoor recreation facilities; or portions of resource-based parks.

3. CREATE A CONTINUOUS AND ACCESSIBLE OPEN SPACE, GREENWAY, AND TRAIL SYSTEM ALONG THE RIVER

One of the most exciting opportunities for Mission Valley is the completion of an accessible open space, greenway, and trail system along the San Diego River. The San Diego River Trail Gaps Analysis (2010) and the San Diego River Park Master Plan (adopted 2013) are important sources for information and priorities for completing this system. The San Diego River corridor can play a role in connecting a diverse range of open space types throughout Mission Valley. Key elements may include:

- **Complete gaps in the trail system.** The San Diego River Park Master Plan calls for a multi-use trail on at least one side of the river; the other side may be developed with a walking trail, depending on environmental constraints. Specific segments that should be pursued in Mission Valley are as follows:
  - North side of the river through Mission Valley Preserve;
  - Both sides of the river through the Riverwalk Golf Course property;
  - Both sides of the river between Fashion Valley Road and Avenida Del Rio, adjacent to the Town and Country and Union Tribune development sites;
  - Both sides of the river between Qualcomm Way and the eastern boundary of the community. Future paths may include segments directly adjacent to the Trolley line on the north side of the river, and directly parallel to Camino del Rio North on the south side.

- **Add mid-block crossings, over- or under-crossings** that allow trail users to safely cross busy streets without having to go a quarter-mile or more out of their way to reach a signalized intersection. This condition occurs at Qualcomm Way and Camino del Este, the two primary streets that cross the only currently continuous part of the trail system. These intersections should be upgraded similar to the crossing at Mission Center Road which included a HAWK Pedestrian Crossing.
- **Provide trail amenities** such as overlooks, picnic tables, interpretive signs, comfort stations, small scale amphitheaters and seating, and habitat restoration.

4. ENHANCE CONNECTIONS AND VISIBILITY BETWEEN THE RIVER, CANYONS, AND LARGER OPEN SPACE SYSTEM

Connections to the river trail system also need to be enhanced, to give people access all along the corridor. In addition, connections to canyon lands and mesas adjacent to and beyond Mission Valley would expand recreational opportunities and provide a diversity of open space types available to Mission Valley residents. Responsible public access trails for hiking, and biking could be developed particularly through City-owned open space lands. Visual connections to the river, the hillsides and canyons would also enhance the community's sense of identity and quality of life. Key opportunities include:

- **Street and trail connections across the river.** Create or enhance street connections, pedestrian and bicycle trails and bridges to connect neighborhoods on both sides of the San Diego River and create continuity between the north and south valley edges. Some potential opportunities for these connections include:
  - Improve streetscape and pedestrian connections on Pacific Highway, Morena Boulevard, Mission Center Road, Qualcomm Way, and San Diego Mission Road.
  - Create cross-river connection between the YMCA and Sefton Park;
  - Create north-south connection(s) through the Riverwalk site as part of future development, with a priority given to walkers and bikers.
  - Provide an improved pedestrian connection under the I-8 Freeway at Hotel Circle and Camino de la Reina or provide a new pedestrian bridge over the I-8 Freeway.
  - Create a new pedestrian bridge connection over the San Diego River with potential redevelopment of Westfield Mission Valley site near the Mission Valley Center Trolley Station.
  - Connect Fenton Parkway to Mission City Parkway over the San Diego River.
- **Trail connections to canyons, hillsides, and adjacent open spaces.** Mission Valley's hillsides and canyons are an untapped resource that must be further explored. Opportunities include:
  - Creating a connection across the I-8 Freeway between Sefton Field and Presidio Park;
  - Creating a connection between the San Diego River trail and the Mission San Diego de Alcala;
  - Creating trail connections to Buchanan and Normal Heights canyons on the south side of the valley and Murray, Murphy, and Ruffin canyons on the north side.
- **Street and trail connections throughout the community.** Provide a more connected system of streets, sidewalks, paths and trails throughout Mission Valley for safe and convenient connections between neighborhoods, parks, and regional trails. These connections can be coordinated with a system of "green streets" discussed below.
- **Wayfinding.** Provide a comprehensive wayfinding and signage program to better highlight pedestrian connections to significant destinations within the community.
- **Preserve open space.** Preserve the visual quality of open space areas such as the steep hillsides and canyon walls.

San Diego River Park

Trails with overlooks (Cottonwood Creek Park, Encinitas, left,) and places to enjoy the natural environment (Mangfallpark, Rosenheim, Germany, right).

High-quality undercrossings (Buffalo Bayou Park, Houston) and overcrossings (Rosemont pedestrian bridge, Houston, lower left; Quince Street pedestrian bridge, San Diego, right.)

- **Freeway crossings.** Where the freeways cross the San Diego River, highlight the river as a significant recreational and natural resource through plantings, as described in the River Park Master Plan.

5. INTEGRATE EXISTING AND NEW DEVELOPMENT WITH THE OPEN SPACE SYSTEM

Many of the access and public open space improvements along the San Diego River corridor and adjacent to hillsides must be made across existing developed properties, or in coordination with future development.

- **Public access to and along the river with new development.** New trails or public streets should be integrated through new development along the river corridor to increase public access and visibility along the river and to the open space network. Access must be provided from the nearest public street, at a minimum. Large sites should feature multiple public access through the site to enhance the river's presence in the community. Specific opportunities for enhanced public access along the river corridor as part of new development include:
  - Riverwalk Golf Course site, and underutilized commercial properties along Hotel Circle North;
  - Town and Country site and Union Tribune sites, on the south side of the river between Fashion Valley Road and SR 163;
  - Park Valley Center site, on the south side of the river between Mission Center Road and Camino del Este;
- **Access and existing development.** Access to and along the river corridor should also be sought across existing developed properties, which create a strong barrier to river access along many stretches of the river. This must be done in coordination with property owners, and may require the dedication of public easements through purchase or transfer of development rights to other portions of the property or beyond.
- **Access to hillsides and canyons.** Future development along the hillside edges adjacent to preserved open space also creates opportunities to connect the community with its natural setting. Proposed development along hillside edges should provide visual or, where possible, trail access to open space lands.
- **Development oriented to the river.** New development along the river should be designed to face both the river and the street. Development should provide connections to the trail system and place active uses such as plazas, cafes, shops, parks, restaurants, recreation centers, and civic/meeting rooms facing public open spaces. Upper levels should address the river with windows and balconies to take advantage of views and, in turn, enhance the sense of urban engagement from the perspective of open space and trail users.

6. CREATE GREEN STREETS THAT SERVE MULTIPLE ROLES

The street system itself can provide a framework for connecting Mission Valley's parks and open spaces with each other and with the residents and workers who will use them. "Green streets," as they are termed here, may provide both an enhanced pedestrian realm and environmental benefits to air and water quality. Features of this system may include:

- **New streets.** New streets should be created as part of new development, breaking up large blocks, improving pedestrian accessibility, and incorporating stormwater treatment and landscape improvements.
- **Linear parks.** Identify streets that can be redesigned to incorporate linear parks adjacent to the right-of-way. These linear parks can be the framework for a complete trail network, provide recreational amenities, and add to the community's image and quality of life. With their good visibility and access to the street, linear parks can hold activities like farmers' markets and street fairs.
- **Green medians.** Many streets in Mission Valley have medians that have little to no landscaping. These can be redesigned to incorporate bioswales and rain gardens that help to slow the rate at which runoff enters the river, reducing flood hazards and filtering out pollutants, while also contributing to a park-like streetscape.
- **Street trees.** Street trees should be provided along all public sidewalks to create a more inviting pedestrian environment and promote walking within the community. Trees should be chosen in part for their capacity to provide shade.
- **Porous paving.** Incorporate permeable pavers and other sustainable materials to help with infiltration of stormwater to replace current impervious surfaces where possible in streets, sidewalks, trails, and parking lots.
- **Public realm amenities.** Add amenities such as café seating, in retail areas or small scale or informal play equipment in residential areas in order to make the public realm more inviting for pedestrians. Public realm amenities such as benches, lighting, signs and plantings, make for a comfortable and safe walking environment and should be included in all streetscape design.

Development should be oriented toward the open space system (Guadalupe River Park, San Jose, left.) Green streets can become festival streets for the community (Lancaster Boulevard, Lancaster, right.)

This page intentionally left blank.

2.5 Issue 5: Maintaining the Vitality of Retail in Mission Valley

Issue Discussion

ISSUE SUMMARY

Mission Valley's central location and proximity to major freeways have made it attractive to a diverse range of retail tenant types over the past 50 years. Retail uses are present throughout Mission Valley, allowing smaller retail establishments to capture additional expenditures and overflow from regional anchors such as Fashion Valley Mall, Westfield Mission Valley, and Fenton Marketplace. Residential and daytime population within a three-mile radius is over 200,000, with continued growth anticipated from residential and mixed-use projects, such as Civita. Significant sites are available in Mission Valley with potential for new development or intensification with new buildings and uses that are better suited for current and future retail market conditions. Challenges confronting the Mission Valley retail market include:

- the need to adapt, re-tenant, and/or reposition older, lower-performing centers
- rising competition from new or expanding retail, entertainment, and mixed-use destinations within the trade area
- responding to potential loss in retail sales to e-commerce and increasingly tech-savvy consumers
- transforming the auto-centric configuration of existing retail centers to create mixed-use, walkable environments that are consumer oriented

OVERVIEW OF RETAIL MARKET POTENTIAL

The principal strengths and weakness affecting the development potential of retail uses within Mission Valley are summarized below.

Table 2.5-1: Key Retail Market Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths	*Weaknesses*
• Central location in the city of San Diego and San Diego County • Critical mass retail area with several strong regional- and visitor-serving retail/entertainment uses including San Diego's flagship regional mall - Fashion Valley • Attractive to regional tenants due to proximity to major freeways and centrality • Very low vacancy relative to comparable submarkets • Strong rental rates, among the highest in the County • Excellent freeway and trolley access • Close proximity to employment • Surrounded by growing residential population with healthy median household income • Growing residential population will support need for grocery stores/neighborhood retail, and seek retail/restaurants in mixed-use walkable communities • Demand for new retail from both local (residents, office workers) and visitor patronage	• Lack of connectivity between centers • Lack of walkable environments within Valley and within most existing centers • Regional centers vulnerable to competition from the County's other regional malls/centers • Rising competition from e-commerce • Older centers experiencing high turnover and in need of reinvestment and/or repositioning • Existing auto dealers lack collective "auto mall" identity • Strong competition to auto dealerships from established auto malls within 30-minute radius • Challenging topography and limited parcel sizes hinder the ability to attract larger commercial development and new auto dealerships south of I-8

Based on current and anticipated market conditions (see discussion below), an assessment of the long-term development potential for retail uses in Mission Valley was conducted. The assessment identifies overall market support for retail development in Mission Valley, as well as potential sites for retail development and reinvestment. Mission Valley's competitive position in the retail space market (inclusive of malls, shopping centers, auto dealerships, hotels, personal services, etc.) is judged to be strong for the three time periods considered in this study: near-, mid-, and long-term.

Table 2.5-2: Summary of Retail Market Potential

Near-term (0 – 5 years)	Strong
Mid-term (5 - 10 years)	Strong
Long-term (10 + years)	Strong

Mission Valley is a retail powerhouse within the San Diego region and is likely to retain this status in the long-term. It contains two of the region's 11 regional malls, accounts for 10 percent of all estimated taxable retail sales in the city, and generates 25 percent of all General Consumer Goods sales in the city. Current retail buildings exhibit a nominal vacancy (just 1 percent) and achieve among the highest rents in the central portion of the city, $2.85 per square foot (SF) per month on a triple net basis (NNN). (NNN rent is rent in which the

tenant is responsible for all expenses associated with their proportional share of occupancy of the building.)

E-commerce will likely have a growing impact on retail sales and marketing in Mission Valley. In recent years, e-commerce sales have risen nationally at a rate substantially faster than shopping center sales. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, during the third quarter of 2015, e-commerce sales in the U.S. totaled $87.5 billion, or 7.4 percent of total U.S. retail sales. This represented an extremely robust 15.1 percent year-over-year growth in e-commerce sales, as compared to a nominal 1.6 percent increase in total retail sales during the same time period. Younger shoppers are increasingly tech-savvy and knowledgeable about their shopping choices. This trend directly threatens traditional mall stores such as apparel and accessories. Retailers have been transforming their store formats in an effort to right-size and attract shoppers. Most analysts agree that it is important for retail centers to create "experience" that cannot be replicated on-line. Examples include the additional of improved dining options, high-end movie theatres, film festivals, and other land uses, such as hotel, office, and multi-family. At the same time, national trends indicate growing lifestyle choices among millennials for urban, 24/7 neighborhoods. These trends suggest that mimicking urban, walkable, mixed-use environments will enhance economic performance for Mission Valley's older retail centers.

For a more detailed assessment of retail market conditions in Mission Valley, please see Appendix A.

Options

The City, property owners, and other community stakeholders may wish to evaluate potential options for new, expanded, and/or reconfigured retail land uses within Mission Valley. Potential options for consideration are presented below.

1. PROMOTE INTENSIFICATION OF, AND/OR REINVESTMENT IN, RETAIL USES IN THE CENTRAL PORTION OF MISSION VALLEY

Although retail uses are located throughout Mission Valley, the greatest concentration exists in the central portion of the Valley, in close proximity to the I-8 and SR 163 freeways. The Fashion Valley and Westfield Mission Valley malls are the major destinations in this portion of the Valley. These two malls form the backbone of the Valley and have the potential to serve as anchors for other uses such as hotel, office, and multi-family. Concentrating other retail, restaurant, and entertainment destinations in this zone can support greater synergy among all of these uses.

2. IDENTIFY UNDERPERFORMING RETAIL CENTERS AND EVALUATE ALTERNATIVE USES

The economic performance of existing retail centers throughout the Valley varies greatly, influenced by location, age, configuration, mix of uses/tenancies, and other factors. Retail centers that are currently experiencing high levels of vacancy and/or turnover may be candidates for reinvestment and/or adaptive re-use to new uses and tenancies. These

transformations could potentially include renovation, expansion, and/or addition of other components such as hotel, office, and/or multi-family. One such example includes the current transformation of Westfield University Towne Centre (UTC) in the University City Community Planning Area, which is programmed to include a 300-unit apartment tower.

3. PROMOTE THE INTENSIFICATION OF LOCAL/NEIGHBORHOOD-SERVING RETAIL AND SERVICE USES

Currently Mission Valley serves as a regional/subregional retail destination that draws shoppers and patrons from a relatively large trade area within central San Diego County. The Valley's existing retail mix also offers local/neighborhood-serving retail uses such as grocery stores, drug stores, and related services to residents. These uses are dispersed throughout the Valley and inter-mixed with the regional/subregional destinations. Major commercial corridors such as Camino de la Reina and Friars Road may present opportunities for intensification of local/neighborhood-serving uses, thereby forming a local neighborhood center. Opportunities to make local/neighborhood-serving retail more economical through financial incentives and deviations from City requirements would need to be considered in the Community Plan update process if this is selected as an option for retail vitality.

4. EVALUATE SITES SOUTH OF I-8 AS POTENTIAL OPTIONS FOR NEW USES

The portion of Mission Valley located south of I-8 is different than the rest of the Valley. It generally consists of a single, two-lane frontage road, with most development located on the south side of the road. Development parcels are generally shallow and/or characterized by rising topography. Land uses range from hotels/motels, restaurants, strip centers, auto dealers, churches, office buildings, and multi-family. As non-residential buildings reach the end of their useful economic life, it may be difficult to renovate or replace these buildings with comparable uses that meet contemporary design and market standards. An exploration of the best land uses for these sites is found in Chapter 8.

5. EVALUATE THE POTENTIAL FOR RE-USE OF OLDER CAR DEALERSHIP SITES

Older auto dealerships, particularly those in standalone locations, may find it challenging to sustain viable long-term operations. Some of these sites may be candidates for re-use as retail and/or mixed-use developments. Notably, the Bob Baker Ford site on Camino de la Reina was sold in 2015 and is currently being developed as a 305-unit apartment development.

6. CONSIDER THE POTENTIAL TO ESTABLISH A DESIGNATED AUTO CENTER OVERLAY

One option to bolster the auto dealership sector is to facilitate their concentration in a relatively defined district. This concentration enforces a "branded" district identity, allows for shared advertising and promotion, and potentially increases customer draw. In the San Diego region, concentrated auto malls have been developed from the ground up in cities such as Carlsbad, Escondido, and National City. However, auto dealerships in older districts

such as Kearny Mesa have gradually relocated, expanded, and/or modernized their facilities in order to achieve the benefits of an auto mall-style configuration. A similar opportunity may be appropriate for Mission Valley in areas south of I-8 between SR 163 and I-805.

2.6 Issue 6: Prospects for Future Office Development

Issue Discussion

ISSUE SUMMARY

Mission Valley is a preferred office market for national corporations, finance, real estate, insurance companies, and other business service firms. Mission Valley has traditionally served as a secondary, or "back office", market for price-sensitive tenants. While several high quality buildings have been renovated and retenanted, such as the Valley Corporate Center, Plaza 2020, and Mission Valley Crossroads, no major new office inventory has been developed in decades. Current vacancy rates are lower than the central portion of the city overall; however, current rents do not yet support new Class A office construction. The Mission Valley office market has been surpassed by burgeoning office development in the Kearny Mesa, Golden Triangle, and Del Mar Heights submarkets, all of which are located closer to executive housing options.

In terms of competitive advantages, Mission Valley offers numerous amenities (shopping, eating and drinking, services), excellent access, and a large and diverse labor force within easy commute. Mission Valley's proximity to the Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command (SPAWAR) will continue to attract defense-related office users. Nearby medical facilities such as Scripps Mercy Hospital, UCSD Medical Center, and Kaiser Permanente also suggest potential to attract overflow from these medical office markets. The rapidly growing residential market in Mission Valley – with new developments such as Civita and other mixed-use projects – will continue to attract potential new employers and employees, contributing to the overall health of the office market. The ongoing reconstruction and reconfiguration of existing buildings create an opportunity to strengthen Mission Valley's competitive advantage in the San Diego County office market. A major challenge confronting the Mission Valley office market will be to transform its current disjointed mix of disparate office buildings into an employment zone, or alternative Central Business District (CBD), like the University Towne Centre (UTC) area.

OVERVIEW OF OFFICE MARKET POTENTIAL

The principal strengths and weakness affecting the market potential for office uses within Mission Valley are summarized below.

Table 2.6-1: Key Office Market Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths	*Weaknesses*
• Central location in the City of San Diego and County • Plentiful parking supply • Close proximity to freeways, trolley, and amenities (shopping centers, hotels, services, restaurants) • Close proximity to residential • New desirable housing options for professional and executive staff (i.e., Civita) • Proximity to regional-serving hospitals • Attractive to Financial, Educational, and Government uses • Attractive to national corporations, insurance companies, and other service firms such as United Health, AIG, MetLife, and Aetna • Attractive to defense contractors due to high quality office space in close proximity to Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command (SPAWAR) • National trend toward high-quality work environments in close proximity to quality of life amenities • Lack of large blocks of space, particularly in Class A buildings, will put upward pressure on rents as recovery continues	• Class A office space, defined as extremely desirable investment-grade property with the highest quality construction, is limited in supply • Current rents in Mission Valley do not support construction of Class A office space • Nationally, leasable area per employee has been declining, from 225 square feet (SF) in 2010 to 176 SF in 2014, slowing growth in demand for new office space • Difficult to develop new high quality office buildings, particularly south of I-8, due to parcel size and topography issues (i.e., there is not enough land area to create efficient building and parking footprints) • Lack of walkable environments within Mission Valley to connect office workers to retail, restaurants, and amenities

Based on the market trends discussed in this report, an assessment of the long-term market potential for office uses in Mission Valley was conducted. The assessment identifies overall potential market support for office development in Mission Valley, as well as potential product types/tenants and key locations for office development. For additional discussion of existing office market conditions in Mission Valley, see Appendix A.

Table 2.6-2: Summary of Office Market Potential

Near-term (0 – 5 years)	Moderate
Mid-term (5 - 10 years)	Moderate to Strong
Long-term (10 + years)	Strong

Options

The City, property owners, and other community stakeholders may wish to evaluate potential options for new, expanded, and/or reconfigured office land uses within Mission Valley. Potential options for consideration are presented below.

1. PROMOTE INTENSIFICATION OF, AND/OR REINVESTMENT IN, OFFICE USES IN THE CENTRAL PORTION OF MISSION VALLEY

Mission Valley contains a broad range of office space, ranging from small buildings to high-rises; 40-year old buildings to recently renovated buildings; local-serving real estate businesses to regional headquarters in freeway frontage buildings. The greatest concentration of high-end office buildings is found in the central portion of Mission Valley between SR 163 and I-805. The most significant renovations in the last decade have all occurred in this central zone. This area is also well-served by the Trolley and located close to shopping, services, and restaurants. This central portion of the Valley has the greatest potential to forge an identity as an alternative Central Business District (CBD), similar to Downtown or the UTC area.

2. EXPAND MISSION VALLEY OFFICE MARKET BEYOND "BACK OFFICE" USES

Historically, Mission Valley has been home to "back office" uses or price-sensitive office tenants. This trend is evident in the relatively affordable market rents and the abundance of lower-tier, older office buildings. However, the Valley is strategically located in central San Diego County, offers excellent freeway and transit access, and provides extensive amenities for employees. New and renovated office buildings should take advantage of these factors to attract and retain employers in key industry sectors such as Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate (FIRE); Health Care; Military Defense; and Technology, Innovation, and Research.

3. ENCOURAGE OFFICE DEVELOPMENTS AND RENOVATIONS TO INCORPORATE WALKABLE, MIXED-USE ENVIRONMENTS

National trends indicate significant transformations in office work environments. Increasingly, employers are seeking ecologically sustainable facilities, healthy work environments, and amenities and services for their employees. The amount of space per employee is shrinking, from 225 square feet in 2010 to 176 square feet in 2014, according to CoreNet Global, a national association of corporate real estate managers. At the same time that shared amenities within and outside the building are increasing. Examples include cafeterias, entertainment rooms, coffee bars, fitness centers and exercise classes, day care, dry cleaners, restaurants, and other services. This trend bodes well for a setting like Mission Valley with numerous options for shopping, services, and restaurants. Additionally, national trends indicate increasing preference among young professionals to live, work, and play in urban, 24/7 neighborhoods. These trends suggest that mimicking urban, walkable, mixed-use districts will enhance the marketability of Mission Valley office buildings.

This page intentionally left blank.

2.7 Issue 7: Opportunities on Large Sites

This section considers the market and urban design-related opportunities associated with seven of Mission Valley's large shopping center sites: Hazard Center East, Friars Mission Center, Westfield Mission Valley, Westfield Mission Valley West, Park Valley Center, Rio Vista Shopping Center, and Fenton Marketplace. These large sites present opportunities for future changes in use and intensification. The Community Plan Update can help to guide these changes in a way that contributes to successful development and an enhanced physical environment in the community. In some cases, ideas in this section may represent tradeoffs, while in others they could work in combination. Ideas also address connections beyond the sites themselves to the surrounding areas. Sites covered in this chapter are shown on Figure 2.7-1. Table 2.7-1 summarizes market conditions and long term development potential for these sites. In the discussion that follows, sites located in close proximity are grouped. In some cases, one of the sites may be subject to a Specific Plan while another may not. This chapter is formatted somewhat differently than others. Instead of an "issue discussion" followed by a series of "options," the chapter is organized by site, with existing conditions and planning context followed by a summary of "opportunities."

Hazard Center East and Friars Mission Center

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Hazard Center East is a neighborhood-serving retail complex featuring a grocery store, two restaurants, and surface parking on a 6.1-acre site bounded by Mission Center Road, Frazee Road, and Hazard Center Drive. An office park is located directly to the north, and other low-rise office development is on the east side of Mission Center Road. The Hazard Center high-rise office building, retail/office complex, and hotel and the Hazard Center Trolley station are located west of Frazee Road.

Friars Mission Center is a community shopping center composed of two buildings on a 13.8-acre site. Major tenants include Ralphs, BevMo!, restaurants, and financial services. Friars Mission Center shares a large block with two office towers and two low-rise office buildings occupied by State of California offices and the Art Institute of California. See Figure 2.7-2.

PLANNING CONTEXT

First San Diego River Improvement Project (FSDRIP) Specific Plan

Hazard Center East is part of the 261-acre FSDRIP Specific Plan, dating to 1982. FSDRIP entails two key elements: flood control related improvements along the San Diego River and four major private developments, including Hazard Center. Hazard Center, encompassing three large blocks between SR 163 and Mission Center Road and from the San Diego River to Friars Road, was planned as a multi-use complex with retail, office, and residential development. The Hazard Center East block was slated for a retail center including a grocery store, retail or drugstore, and a restaurant with landscaped surface parking. Development on the site has matched the plan.

Mission Valley Heights Specific Plan

Friars Mission Center is part of the Mission Valley Heights Specific Plan, adopted in 1987, which proposed a mix of business park and retail uses on approximately 90 acres of former quarry land. The Plan designated the 15-acre Friars Mission Center site as a community commercial center with good visibility from Friars Road. The Specific Plan also identified pedestrian-oriented improvements between Friars Mission Center and the Hazard Center Trolley station, including a potential overcrossing at the Friars Road and Frazee Road intersection, as well as a pedestrian path on the Hazard Center East site.

DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Hazard Center East

This center is close to the SR 163 freeway, but not freeway-oriented and it turns its back to Friars Road. The Hazard Center trolley station and San Diego River frontage path are easily accessible across the street. The principal development opportunity is office, followed by hotel or multifamily. The site is too small to accommodate a viable, diversified retail center competitive with other sites in Mission Valley.

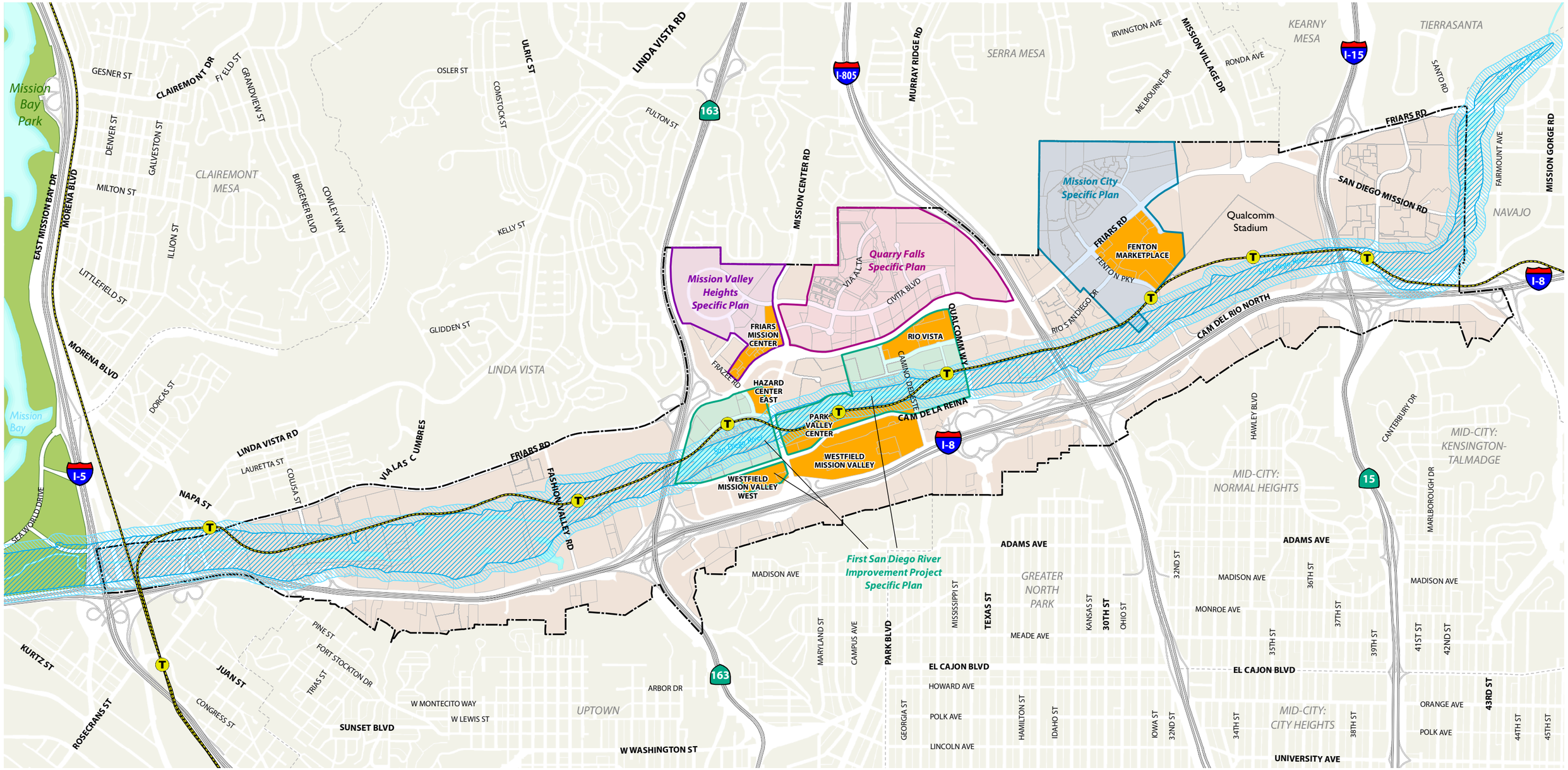
Table 2.7-1: Comparative Market Conditions and Development Potential

	Hazard Center East	*Friars Mission Center*	*Westfield Mission Valley*	*Westfield Mission Valley West*	*Park Valley Center*	*Rio Vista*	*Fenton Market-place*
Market Conditions							
Total Taxable Sales, 2014 ($1000s)	$22,990	$30,009	$262,709	$57,256	$70,108	$63,298	$353,540
% Avg. Annual Growth Rate 2010-2014	2.90%	6.63%	1.39%	1.77%	-0.64%	15.56%	5.14%
Taxable Sales per SF, 2014	$354/SF	$107/SF	$238/SF	$294/SF	$258/SF	$242/SF	$567/SF
Potential Action							
Reposition		x	x				
Convert	x		x	x	x	x	x
Intensify	x		x	x	x	x	x
Transition to multifamily/ mixed-use				x	x	x	
Other (see notes)	1	2	3				4
Potential Land Use							
Retail/Restaurant	Low	High	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	High
Office	High	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
Hotel	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	Medium
Multifamily	Medium	Low	Medium	High	High	High	High

Notes:
1. Transition to office or multifamily with ancillary retail
2. Maintain as a community center; strengthen tenant mix
3. Maintain as a regional mall; replace department store(s); expand mixed of uses
4 Add structured parking to support additional retail/mixed-use

Sources: Keyser Marston Associates, 2015; Dyett & Bhatia, 2016.

Fig 2.7-1: Opportunities on Large Sites



T Trolley Stops

Light Rail

Freeways

Ramps

Streams/Creeks

Large Sites

San Diego River Park Master Plan

River Corridor Area

River Influence Area

Planning Area Parcels

Lakes/Ponds/Bays

Mission Valley Community Plan Boundary

Community Planning Areas

Data Source: City of San Diego, 2015; SANGIS Regional GIS Data Warehouse, 2015. (www.sangis.org)
Dyett & Bhatia, 2015

0 1,500 3,000 6,000 FEET

This page intentionally left blank.

Friars Mission Center

Anchored by a full-line supermarket and drugstore, this site provides the major community retail center in Mission Valley. It is close to the SR 163 freeway and enjoys high visibility on Friars Road; however, it is relatively far from the trolley. It is flanked to the north by two prominent office buildings within the Pacific Center. The Civita master plan, which will include 4,780 new multifamily housing units, is under development to the east directly across Mission Center Road. The center is somewhat challenged by its elongated configuration: pedestrians are not likely to walk the length of the retail buildings from Frazee Road side to Mission Center Road. Given its success as a community retail center, the probable highest and best use is to remain as a community retail center in the long term. There also may be potential for addition of an office building, possibly displacing lesser-performing retail footprints. Other potential uses have also been considered.

ISSUES

- **Arterial roads serve as barriers for the community.** Friars, Frazee, and Mission Center roads range from six to eight lanes in various locations. Distance between intersections on these arterials ranges between 300 and 600 feet, a relatively long block for pedestrians. The intersection of Friars and Frazee roads in particular is a strong barrier to pedestrian use of the area.
- **The Hazard Center Trolley station is underutilized by residents within 1/2 mile radius.** The FSDRIP Specific Plan amendment from 2010 observed the limited use of the Hazard Center Trolley station, an observation that is reinforced by Trolley boarding data from 2014. This amounts to a poor use of public transit investment, and a missed opportunity for transit to serve a vital role in Mission Valley.
- **Hazard Center Drive is discontinuous.** Today, local residents and employees can only travel west of SR 163 or east of Mission Center Road by using the limited-access Friars Road.

URBAN DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES

The following are a number of potential urban design opportunities that respond to the issues listed above, some of which are illustrated in Figure 2.7-3.

1. Create a Connected, More Fine-Grained Grid

A local system of streets and pedestrian ways will provide direct and attractive routes for pedestrians, and connect local businesses and amenities. It will reduce the existing block scale to a more walkable one. A conceptual network of future streets and mid-block pedestrian connections is shown on Figure 2.7-3.

2. Create a High-Quality Pedestrian Realm

Streets and paths would not be attractive without pedestrian-oriented amenities. Key elements could include enhanced streetscape design; pocket parks, plazas, and landscaping; seating and shade structures; and water features. Development that is oriented directly toward the sidewalk is critical.

3. Intensify Development

Office and/or new or repositioned retail development could occur on the Hazard Center East site, bringing a more urban scale to a location with close proximity to the Trolley and the River, and an existing cluster of office buildings. The Friars Mission Center site could be intensified to accommodate office or mixed retail/residential buildings. With intensification, new roadways should be introduced, and future development should be oriented both to the new locally-scaled streets and walkways and to the roadways around the site perimeter. Active ground-floor uses would help energize the area. Intensification of these sites would require Specific Plan amendments.

4. Enhance Connections with the River

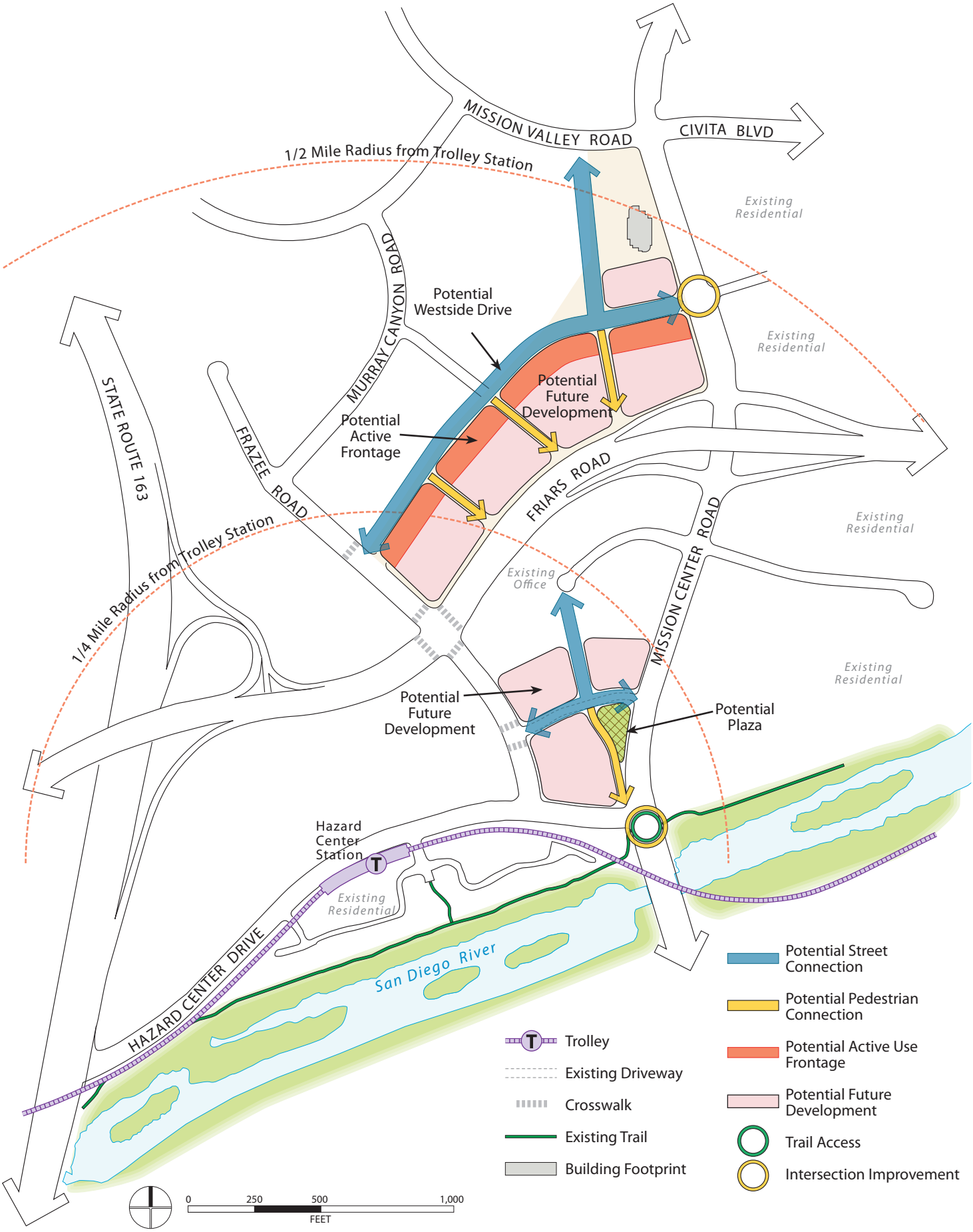
Future improvements to the Hazard Center East site should feature high-quality pedestrian connections to allow easy and welcoming access to the San Diego River path.

Figure 2.7-2: Hazard Center East and Friars Mission Center – Existing Conditions

Data Source: ESRI Digital Globe, 2015; Dyett & Bhatia, 2015.

0 250 500 1,000
FEET

Figure 2.7-3: Hazard Center East/ Friars Mission Center



Westfield Mission Valley, Westfield Mission Valley West, and Park Valley Center

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Westfield Mission Valley, Westfield Mission Valley West, and Park Valley Center are a conglomeration of retail development between I-8 and the San Diego River and between SR 163 and Qualcomm Way. Westfield Mission Valley, built in 1961 as Mission Valley Mall, was the first shopping complex built in the valley. It occupies an approximately 60-acre site and today features Macy's and Macy's Home Furnishings; regional chains including Target, Bed Bath & Beyond, and Michaels; and the 20-screen AMC Mission Valley cinemas. Parking is primarily provided in surface lots around the perimeter; in addition, a significant amount of subterranean parking is provided near the mall's interior. Westfield Mission Valley West, located on an approximately 20-acre site on the west side of Mission Center Road, currently features Trader Joe's, Marshalls, and Ulta, with restaurants along Camino de la Reina and Mission Center Road. Finally, Park Valley Center is located on a 22.5-acre site on the north side of Camino de la Reina, and features Saks Off 5th Ave, Best Buy, and Staples. The Mission Valley Center Trolley Station is located on the north side of Park Valley Center, providing transit within walking distance of this area. North of the Trolley station lies the San Diego River and a segment of the River Path. Figure 2.7-4 shows existing conditions at these sites.

PLANNING CONTEXT

The Westfield Mission Valley West site and the Park Valley Center site are included in the First San Diego River Improvement Project (FSDRIP) Specific Plan. The Westfield Mission Valley West parcel is proposed for a commercial office building with restaurants, boutiques, specialty shops and similar uses integrated into an office tower. The building would include 490,000 square feet of floor area and rise 20 stories or more, occupying just 5 percent of the site, the remainder of which would be landscaped to create a park-like setting, with parking underground. At the Park Valley Center site, the Plan identifies a two-phase development program, with free-standing commercial buildings in the first phase (now built), and a second phase that could include high-intensity office and hotel development, or additional retail development, depending on the market. Five options are provided in the FSDRIP, emphasizing the relationship between buildings, a pedestrian connection to the future Trolley station, and the river. The most intense option includes 300,000 square feet of retail, 500,000 square feet of office space, 300 hotel rooms, and parking garages. The Plan calls for providing good pedestrian access, and restricts development adjacent to the river. The San Diego River Park Master Plan, adopted by the City in 2013, identifies additional, specific design elements along the river that would celebrate the presence of the River Park. Elements include overlooks, neighborhood parks, signage, and river-oriented active uses.

DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Westfield Mission Valley Mall

As Mission Valley's first mall, this center occupies a large site with excellent freeway visibility, two freeway interchanges, and Trolley access just across the street to the north. The center has transitioned over the years to add a cinema, fitness center, new restaurants,

and a Target store. It has also responded to consolidations in the department store industry. The anticipated highest and best use of this site is as a regional retail destination, but with diversified uses, possibly to include office, hotel, and/or multifamily.

Westfield Mission Valley West

Mission Valley West is a smaller, surface-parked center that enjoys direct freeway visibility and access. It is far from the Trolley. Several hundred multifamily units are situated to the north and west (currently under construction). Although retail use in this location will likely continue to be viable, the probable long-term highest and best use of this site is multifamily. Office and hotel uses are also likely to be viable in this location.

Park Valley Center

This site is a long and narrow property stretching from Mission Center Road on the west (Best Buy) to Qualcomm Way on the east (Staples). It is directly served by the Trolley and fronts the San Diego River, but has no direct access to the river frontage. It is located directly north of the Westfield Mission Valley mall. If the site remains in retail use, it will continue to function as a disparate collection of retail stores and restaurants, i.e., shoppers will not likely walk from Best Buy to Staples. The shallow parcel reportedly limits options due to truck loading requirements. Given its trolley access, multifamily may be a strong long-term use of this site.

ISSUES

The bullet points below summarize the present issues that applies to some or all of the large sites:

- **Auto-oriented street environment.** Camino de la Reina and Mission Center Road are currently highly auto-oriented streets, with few crossings and only basic pedestrian infrastructure and amenities. This environment presents a challenge in the context of potential future development that supports walking and transit use.
- **Westfield Mission Valley turns its back on the street.** Macy's has a brick wall along the Camino de la Reina street frontage. The Mall's entrances are set back behind the parking lot, with no clear connection for visitors who come from the Trolley station. A successful transition to a pedestrian-supportive environment connecting this site with the larger area would benefit from design changes, pedestrian facilities, and new development around the Mall perimeter.
- **Park Valley Center site does not address the river.** The river is a great natural asset, but the shopping center turns its back on the river. With future development, this site has the potential to address Camino de la Reina, the Trolley station, and the river, and to incorporate strategic public and pedestrian-oriented spaces. Given the shallow parcel depth and the Trolley structure, design solutions may include upper-level restaurant patios facing the river, and ground-level pocket storefronts, design features or public art.
- **The Trolley line separates the river and the trail from development to the south.** The Trolley line itself creates a barrier to full access to and enjoyment of the river.

URBAN DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES

The following are a number of potential urban design opportunities, or options, that respond to the issues listed above, and figure 2.7-5 illustrates.

1. Develop Camino de la Reina as a "Main Street"

As discussed in Chapter 2.3, Camino de la Reina's central location, accessibility to the trolley, and strong relationship with the river give it potential to develop as a "main street." To support the development of a main street, the following improvements may apply along Camino de la Reina:

- Enhanced intersections and crosswalks;
- Streetscape improvements (paving, lighting, trees, amenities);
- On-street parking;
- Active ground floor uses and primary entrances facing Camino de la Reina;
- Potential for mixed-use, high-intensity development including condominiums and apartments above retail.

2. Foster New Urban-Scale Development

Each of these sites has the potential to intensify, including street-oriented additional retail and/or office and hotel development around the Westfield Mission Valley Mall; future multifamily development at the Westfield Mission Valley West site; and a mix of multifamily and a pedestrian-oriented retail core on the Park Valley Center site. Capturing these opportunities may require amendments to the FSDRIP.

3. Create a Community Gathering Space between the Station and Camino de la Reina

A linear station plaza extending south from the station will strengthen the Trolley's connection to Camino de la Reina, Westfield Mission Valley Mall and future active, street-facing development. The plaza could also host festivals and local events, making this area an exciting destination for both the Mission Valley community and visitors from around the larger region.

4. Celebrate and Connect to and Across the San Diego River

The San Diego River and River Trail are important community assets in Mission Valley, and should be better connected to adjacent development, with more visible access points and buildings that face the river. Future development at the Park Valley Center site must support ample access to the River Trail, including in the vicinity of the Trolley station; in the vicinity of a future pedestrian/bike bridge over the river, and at the west and east ends of the site, where the Trail is directly accessible without crossing the Trolley tracks. Future development on the Westfield Mission Valley West site should be planned to reinforce river access corridors between residential developments to the north.

5. Enhance Access to the Mission Valley Center Trolley Station

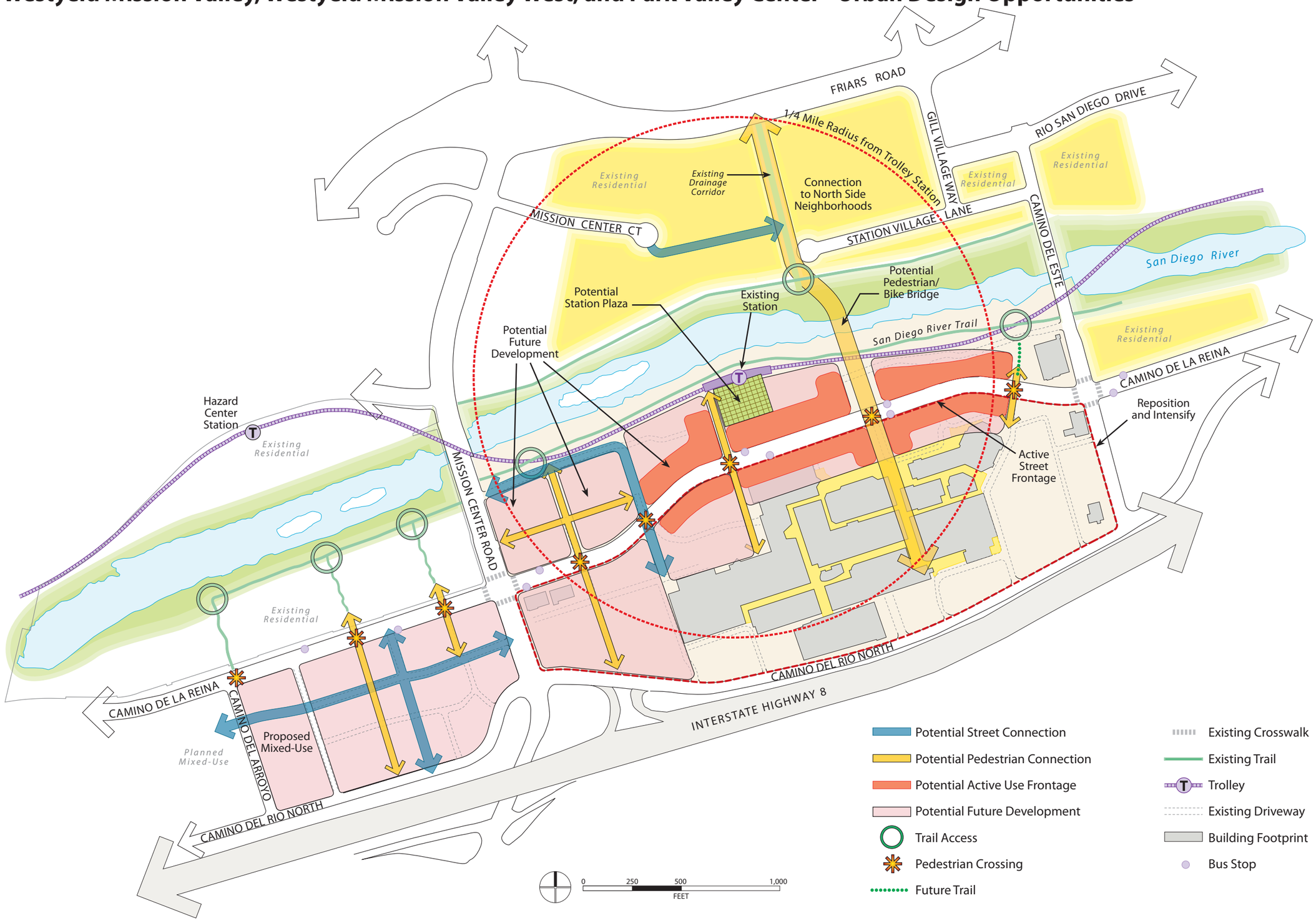
A pedestrian bridge linking the Mission Valley Center Trolley Station with development to the north should be seriously explored, along with improvements to the street and pedestrian grid north of the river. The bridge can be aligned with an existing undeveloped corridor between residential developments on the north side, and with the primary entrance to the Mission Valley Mall to the south, and within a short walk of the Mission Valley Center Trolley Station. It would connect with the San Diego River Trail on the north side; a new trail along the north-south easement connecting to Station Village Lane and Friars Road; and new public connections through residential developments on the east and west.

This page intentionally left blank.

Figure 2.7-4 Westÿeld Mission Valley, Westÿeld Mission Valley West, and Park Valley Center - Existing Conditions

Data Source: ESRI Digital Globe, 2015; Dyett & Bhatia, 2015.

Figure 2.7-5: Westÿeld Mission Valley, Westÿeld Mission Valley West, and Park Valley Center - Urban Design Opportunities



Rio Vista Shopping Center

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Rio Vista Shopping Center is bounded by Friars Road, Rio San Diego Drive, Gill Village Way, and Qualcomm Way. The center, completed in 1995, falls within a quarter-mile radius of the Rio Vista Trolley station. It is adjoined by multifamily residential development to the south and west, large-scale office buildings to the east, and the future Village Walk retail component of the Civita project to the north. The Rio Vista Shopping Center includes two main buildings and large surface parking lots extensively planted with palms. Currently, the major tenants are Ross, Sports Authority, Office Depot, Party City, and Living Spaces. Existing conditions are shown on Figure 2.7-6.

PLANNING CONTEXT

First San Diego River Improvement Project (FSDRIP) Specific Plan

The Rio Vista Shopping Center is included in the FSDRIP Specific Plan, and designated as a retail center that would act as a component of transit-oriented development centered on the Rio Vista Trolley station. The Plan also includes a linear, open station plaza between the Trolley station and Rio San Diego Drive to promote visibility and accessibility. The Promenade at Rio Vista, developed in 2009, has design features that address the Trolley station, but feels internally-focused.

Quarry Falls Specific Plan and Civita

The Quarry Falls Specific Plan outlines the land uses, circulation, and design standards for the large vacant site north of the Friars Road that is currently being developed as Civita. When complete, Civita will feature over 4,000 residential units, Quarry Falls Park, additional street connections to Friars Road, and a retail core—Village Walk—directly north of the Rio Vista Shopping Center, across Friars Road.

DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Rio Vista has visibility and access to Friars Road and Qualcomm Way, but is relatively remote from the freeway. The Trolley is located relatively close to the south. The center has experienced an evolution of tenants, as Kmart and Sears Essentials turned over before Living Spaces settled into the anchor space. The Civita master plan, which will include 4,780 new residential units, 480,000 square feet of commercial retail, and a 420,000 square feet of commercial office, is under development directly north across Friars Road. The Rio Vista site may face challenges as a retail center; the probable highest and best use is judged to be multi-family.

ISSUES

Three major issues are present on the Rio Vista shopping center site:

- **Limited pedestrian access.** Crosswalks are present at three intersections along Rio San Diego Drive. There are currently no crosswalks on Gill Village Way, limiting

pedestrian accessibility from the west. Friars Road is a major barrier between Rio Vista and the Civita development to the north.

- **No visibility to the Trolley station.** The Promenade at Rio Vista obstructs the visibility between the Rio Vista Shopping Center and the Trolley station, and causes the access to feel private.
- **Grade-separated roadways and development.** Friars Road is built above grade and Qualcomm Way is lowered below grade to accommodate on- and off-ramps. Office and residential buildings in the vicinity of Rio Vista Shopping Center are developed high above Qualcomm Way, making the roadway inhospitable and causing the buildings to be disconnected from any pedestrian activity.

URBAN DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities to address these issues while taking into consideration the development potential on the site are summarized below and illustrated in Figure 2.7-7.

1. Improve Pedestrian Access

Potential ways to increase connectivity between the Shopping Center and adjacent residential development include:

- More crosswalks along Rio San Diego Drive and Gill Village Way;
- Enhanced pedestrian treatments such as bulb-outs, raised crosswalks, pedestrian refuges, pedestrian beacons and countdown signals;
- New local street(s) with active ground floor uses connecting north from Rio San Diego Way;
- New retail buildings with street-facing entrances along Rio San Diego Drive;
- On-street parking.

2. Strengthen Connections to the Trolley Station and the Street Grid

The Shopping Center's current site plan allows for intensification to occur while maintaining "permeability" into the site directly from the Rio Vista Trolley Station; Camino del Este and land to the south; and Gill Village Way/Civita Boulevard and the Civita development to the north. If new streets and public spaces are introduced, they should extend the pattern established by the current network.

3. Establish a Community Shopping Hub on Both Sides of Friars Road

Upon completion of Civita, the two retail centers will be at the center of Mission Valley's residential development. There is a potential for integrating the two retail centers into one interconnected district. Figure 2.7-7 shows potential connections across Friars Road, which could be at grade and/or elevated as skywalks.

4. Create a High-Intensity Mixed Use District

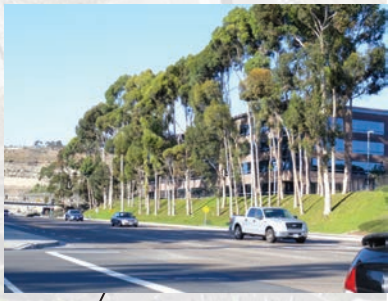
The Shopping Center site could be divided into a finer-grained district, with mixed-use development sites potentially lining Rio San Diego Drive, and robust connections to Civita's Village Walk district to the north.

Figure 2.7-6: Rio Vista – Existing Conditions

Rio Vista Shopping Center

Large surface parking lot

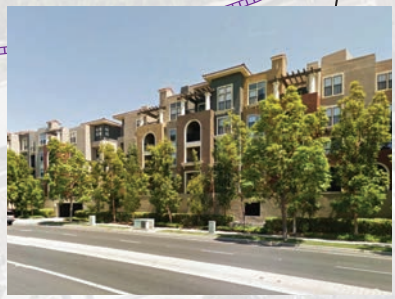
An office park east of Qualcomm Way, raised above street level



Friars Road

Driveway lines up with pedestrian connection to the Trolley station.

Gill Village Way



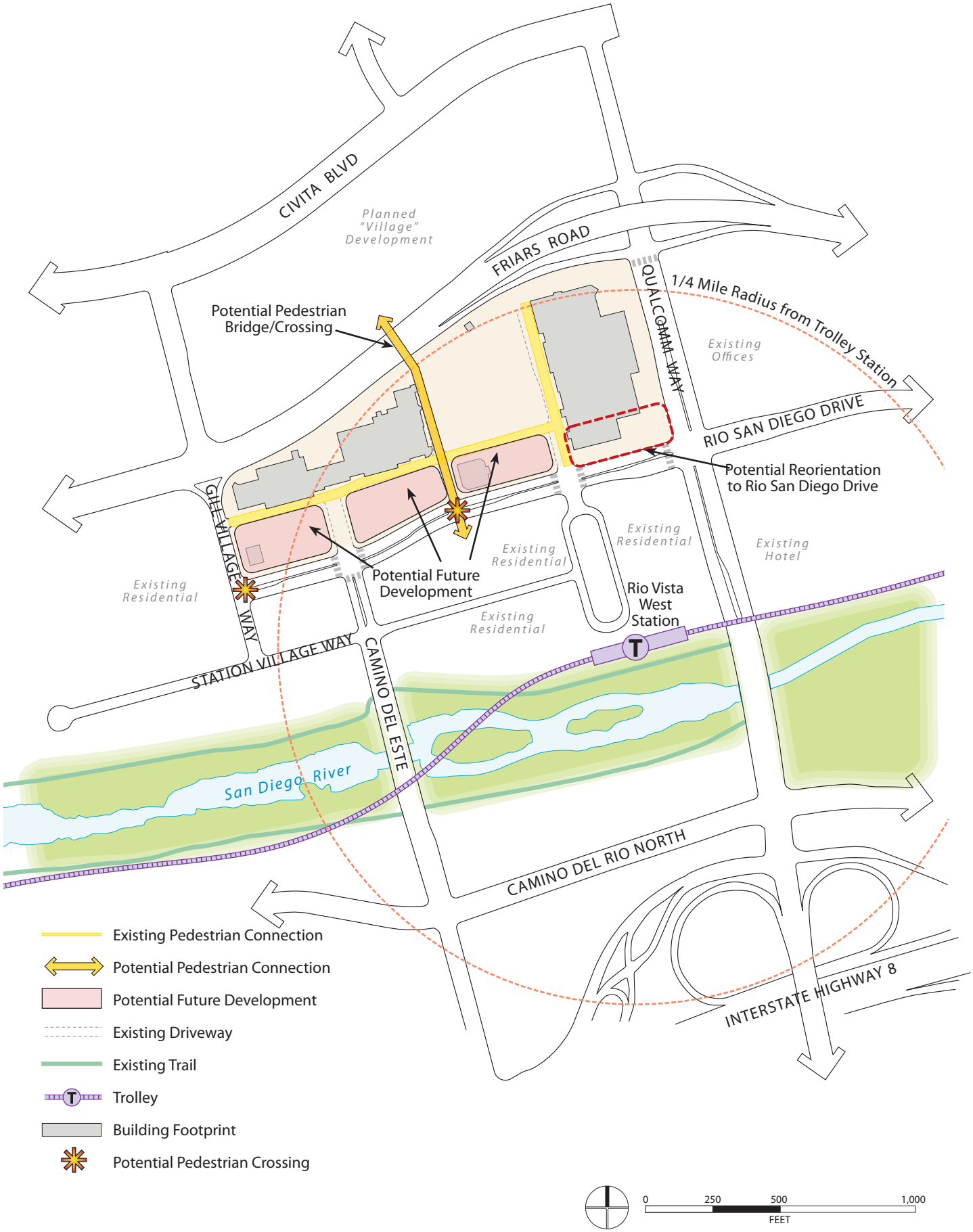
The Promenade condominiums south of Rio Vista

Rio Vista West Station at the end of a linear park

Data Source: ESRI Digital Globe, 2015; Dyett & Bhatia, 2015.

0 250 500 1,000
FEET

Figure 2.7-7: Rio Vista Shopping Center - Urban Design Opportunities



Fenton Marketplace

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Fenton Marketplace, opened in 2000, is defined by three anchor stores (Costco, Ikea, and Lowe's) on the west, an expansive surface parking lot at the center, restaurants and retail stores on the east along Fenton Parkway, and the Mission Valley Library at the south. Across from the library and behind the Del Rio Apartment Homes is the Fenton Parkway trolley station. Existing conditions are illustrated on Figure 2.7-8.

PLANNING CONTEXT

Adopted in 1998, the Mission City Specific Plan proposes a mix of residential, commercial, and office uses on a 225-acre site east of I-805 on both sides of Friars Road. Fenton Marketplace is located in the "Mission City South" subarea, which the Plan describes as a "lively urban core with a variety of land uses." The Plan emphasizes providing access to the Trolley station, to the San Diego River Corridor, and to the Mission City trail systems north of Friars Road. Suggested design elements include a station arrival plaza, a multi-use trail "paseo" extending the Mission City trail from the northern neighborhood to the pedestrian connections south of Friars Road, greenbelts, and supportive community or civic uses. Both the existing Community Plan and the Mission City Specific Plan propose a new right of way, known as the Milly Way Bridge, to connect the Fenton Parkway and Camino De Rio North across the San Diego River.

DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

This power center has three extremely strong large anchor stores: Costco, IKEA, and Lowe's. It also has direct Trolley access, the Mission Valley branch library, and river frontage. There is no evidence that other retail centers or locations in the trade area are likely to displace Fenton Marketplace's superior competitive position. However, in the longer term, multifamily housing may be the probable highest and best use for at least portions of the property. One option for the site is the gradual introduction of structured parking and intensification of development with new uses such as multifamily and mixed-use buildings. The Bay Street Emeryville development in the Bay Area provides a good example.

ISSUES

Key issues at Fenton Marketplace today are summarized below:

- **Connectivity between the Marketplace and the Trolley station is lacking.** There is no direct path or wayfinding between the Trolley station and the Marketplace, and the Trolley station is not visible from the Marketplace or from the rest of the neighborhood.
- **The trail under Friars Road is an underutilized asset.** The pedestrian underpass serves an important need, creating a safe crossing of Friars Road between a major shopping destination and the Portofino and Escala residential communities to the north. This path may not be used to its full potential.

- **The commercial buildings along Fenton Parkway do not activate the street.** The retail buildings along the Marketplace's perimeter are active and successful, but their entrances all face into the site interior.
- **Suburban layout.** The Marketplace's large parking lots and big box stores give the Marketplace a low-intensity, suburban character that does not make the most of its urban site characteristics. Introduction of mixed-use or multifamily development would require structured parking for the strong retail center.

URBAN DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES

The ideas summarized below respond to these issues and to potential intensification at Fenton Marketplace in the future, and are illustrated in Figure 2.7-9.

1. Intensify Fenton Marketplace as a Regional Commercial Center

Building on the existing success of the three anchors, the marketplace has the potential to intensify by converting the existing surface parking to structured parking and adding additional major tenants.

2. Transition Fenton Marketplace to Be a Pedestrian-Oriented Neighborhood Center

Surrounded by residential uses and a transit stop, Fenton Marketplace has tremendous potential to evolve as a walkable commercial center, where regional shoppers can park once, and residents from adjacent neighborhoods can access it on foot. Some features of this center may be:

- Street-facing retail on Fenton Parkway;
- A diverse tenant mixed of retail and services;
- Enhanced pedestrian realm and interior network, including a direct connection between the Friars Road underpass and Mission Valley Library and a pedestrian plaza where festivals and events could take place;
- Enhanced connection between the Marketplace, Mission Valley Library and the Trolley station.

3. Create a Mixed-Use District

Fenton Marketplace could be adapted to a higher-intensity mixed-use district, using the current driveway network as a framework for future streets, and replacing parking lots with new mixed use buildings and structured parking. Future mixed-use development may be best suited for the western portion of the site, near Fenton Parkway, leaving space at the site interior for structured parking for the retail center, which benefits from direct access and visibility from Friars Road.

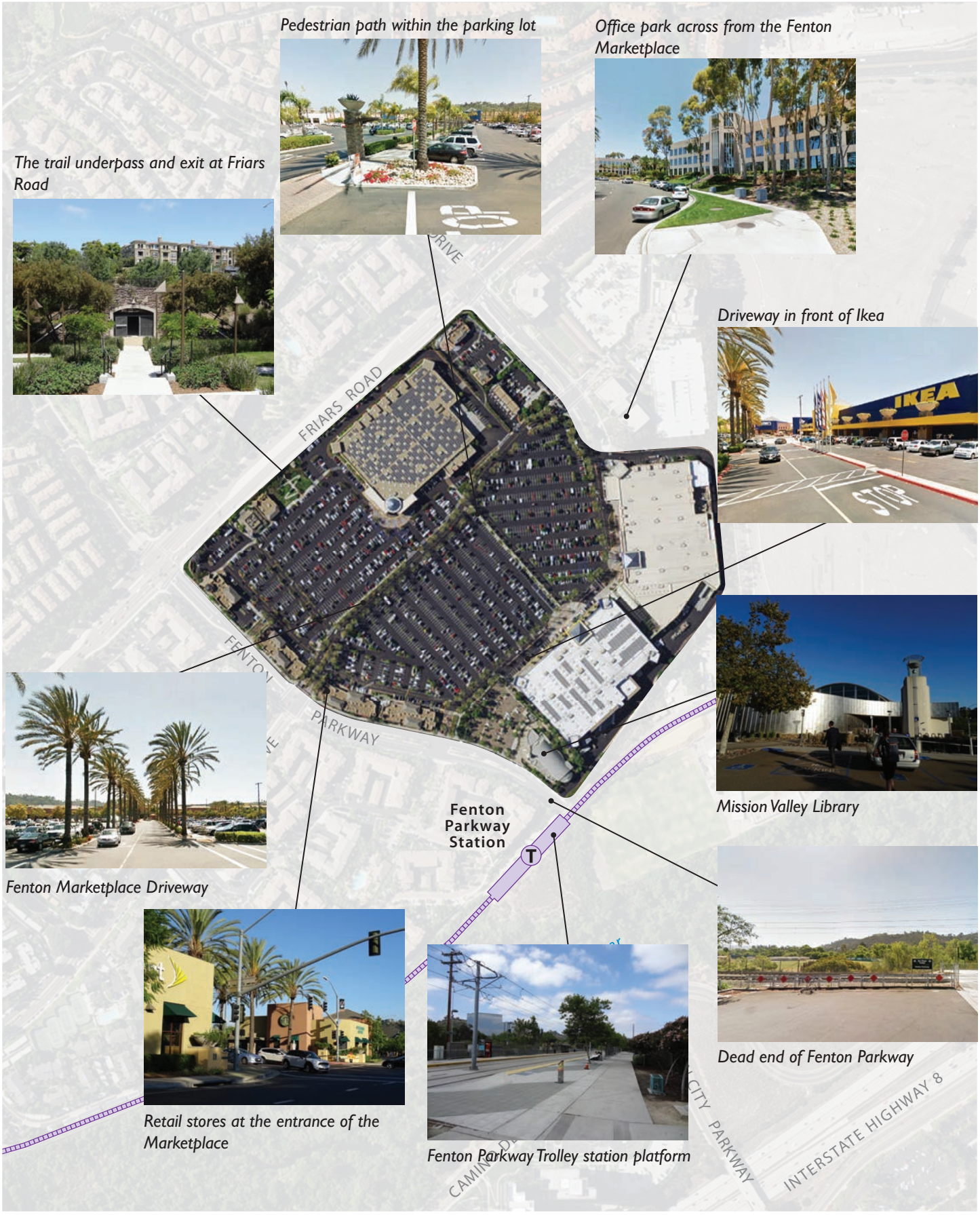
4. Enhance the Trolley Station Area, and Connections to It

The Trolley station is in need of design improvements that will enhance visibility and provide refuge for the transit riders. Two key design treatments, as suggested in the specific plan, would be appropriate:

- **A station arrival plaza.** A plaza should be created that is highly visible and connected to adjacent development, Fenton Parkway, the Mission Valley Library and the Marketplace, the future San Diego River Path, and a future park on the Qualcomm Stadium site.
- **Extension of Fenton Parkway (Milly Way Bridge).** The Milly Way Bridge would attract office workers at Centerside and other potential transit riders and visitors from south of the San Diego Riverto the Trolley station and the Marketplace. The connection should be a pedestrian/bike connection at a minimum, and preferably should accommodate vehicles.

This page intentionally left blank.

Figure 2.7-8: Fenton Marketplace – Existing Conditions



Data Source: ESRI Digital Globe, 2015; Dyett & Bhatia, 2015.

0 250 500 1,000
FEET

Figure 2.7-9: Fenton Marketplace

2.8 Issue 8: Appropriate Land Uses South of I-8

Issue Discussion

The geography of Mission Valley gives the community a highly linear form. Movement is relatively easy from east to west, but is highly constrained in the north-south direction by the steep slopes that form the community's north and south edges; by the San Diego River; and by major roadways, most importantly I-8. I-8 traverses Mission Valley from west to east at the base of the valley's southern edge. It creates a powerful barrier between the great majority of the community, which lies to the north, and the small band of development to the south. The unique conditions in the corridor south of I-8 call for special attention in the Community Plan Update process.

SITE CONSTRAINTS SOUTH OF I-8

The disconnected quality of the South of I-8 corridor has several distinct characteristics. First, the parcels are disconnected from development on the mesa to the south by the steep hillside, and disconnected from development to the north by I-8. Second, the strip's circulation system is limited almost entirely to one street: Taylor Street/Hotel Circle South to the west of SR 163; Camino del Rio South to the east. That street functions as a frontage road for I-8, with only limited connections to I-8 and a small number of other streets and freeways over an approximately six-mile length. Third, the strip itself is segmented. The portion west of SR 163 is disconnected from the portion to the east. Freeway ramp infrastructure at Texas Street/Qualcomm Way, and Interstates 805, and 15 results in awkward circulation patterns along Camino del Rio North.

The disconnected nature of the South of I-8 corridor means that the area has limited access to amenities in Mission Valley, even ones that are physically very close, such as the San Diego River. It is challenging for workers and hotel guests south of I-8 to reach the River, the Trolley, or the restaurants and shops around Westfield Mission Valley Mall on the north side of the freeway, and very few amenities are available on the south side. The limited roadway connections limit the area's capacity to handle traffic, and create substantial challenges in providing public services (e.g. fire and police). Finally, the corridor's location directly adjacent to I-8 results in development in an area with air quality and noise impacts.

SITE ADVANTAGES

The South of I-8 corridor also enjoys the notable benefit—from a commercial perspective—of high visibility from I-8, and relative accessibility to key regional destinations including the downtown San Diego, the airport, Mission Bay Park, Qualcomm Stadium, and San Diego State

University. The strip has potential advantages in the form of future direct connections to open space trails in hillside and canyon open spaces and to an enhanced system of open spaces and trails connecting to the river and beyond.

EXISTING LAND USES

The western portion of the South of I-8 corridor, from Presidio Park to SR 163, is composed mainly of hotels and motels, with a mix of older properties with a low-rise, landscaped character and newer mid- and high-rise properties with national hotel brands. Between SR 163 and Texas Street, more hotels give way to a mix of commercial uses, including a small concentration of auto dealerships. East of the Texas/Qualcomm interchange, the South of I-8 corridor is characterized by primarily low-rise office buildings with surface parking, except where the steep hillside and open space descends directly to the street (Camino del Rio South). Properties along the corridor have depths ranging from 200 to 700 feet, with most in the middle of that range; the back sides of most properties abut steep undeveloped hillside.

Options

Four strategies for directing future land uses and public investments in the South of I-8 corridor are presented here. These may be pursued separately or in combination, and may treat different aspects of the issue.

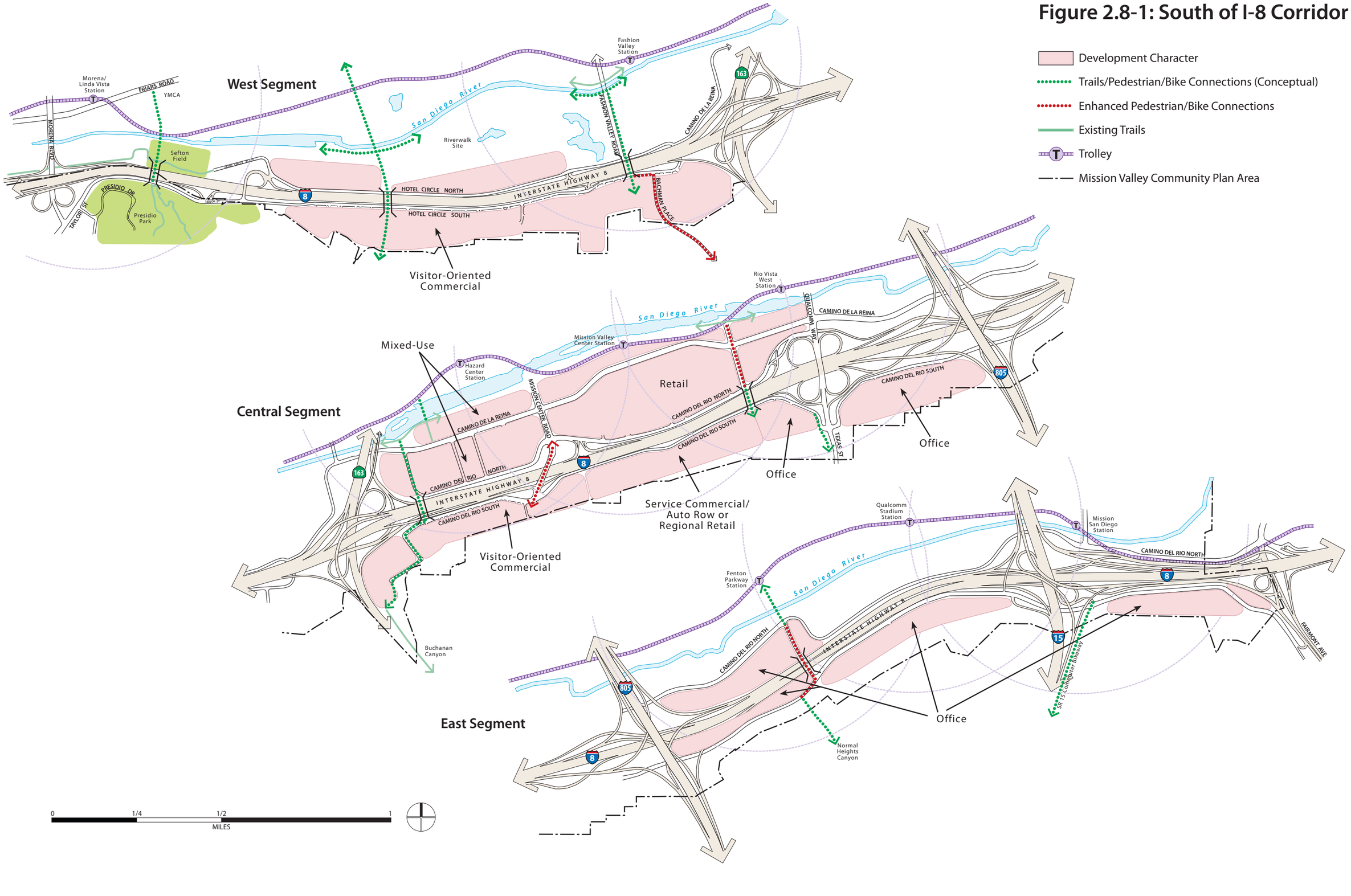
1. CREATE DISTINCT DISTRICTS ALONG THE CORRIDOR

The corridor has a relatively clear land use pattern today, which can be reinforced in the Community Plan Update to support further development of each area. These land use character areas are shown on Figure 2.8-1.

Hotel District in the Western Segment

The western segment of the corridor, between Presidio Park and approximately Mission Center Road, is primarily composed of hotels and motels, and has the best access to Mission Bay Park and Sea World; the airport; and downtown. The current Community Plan designates this area for "Office or Commercial Recreation" and "Commercial Recreation." The Community Plan Update could strengthen the hotel focus for this area by more narrowly tailoring the land use mix, removing the office option and facilitating visitor-serving commercial uses including hotels and restaurants. Updated development standards could facilitate the higher-intensity hotel format toward which there has been a transition. At the same time, the Plan Update could set lower development intensity or include incentives to encourage the rehabilitation and repositioning of aging "garden models," which could play up their history and provide an alternative, boutique hotel environment which isn't as of yet well-established in Mission Valley.

Figure 2.8-1: South of I-8 Corridor



This page left intentionally blank.

The Community Plan Update can help foster transition to both higher-intensity hotels (left) and boutique properties (right).

Service Commercial Uses and Auto Row in Central Segment

The segment of the corridor between approximately Mission Center Road and the Scottish Rite Center could be identified as a zone for service commercial uses, including auto sales and services and public storage. Three auto dealerships are already located in this segment. The clustering of more auto dealers along this strip would help to create a critical mass, and would provide a location for dealers who may want to relocate from the north side of I-8 where development pressure for higher-intensity development is strong. Zoning with a more limited set of allowed uses may result in lower land valuations and property tax assessments, which would be beneficial to the success of an "auto row." The Scottish Rite site could be a key asset for a future auto row, as could potential land freed up if the I-8 interchange at Texas Street/Qualcomm Way were to be redesigned in a more space-efficient manner. On the other hand, auto dealers have expressed the desire to have land use options, allowing them to adapt to market conditions, and have stated that moving from current locations and leases could result in large tax charges. This issue could be addressed in lieu of introducing more restrictive zoning.

Regional Retail Uses in the Central Segment

Alternatively, the central segment of the South of I-8 corridor could be designated for retail commercial development, and could become a site for big-box and other regional-serving stores. This would allow flexibility for big box retailers with a regional draw, which would benefit from the high freeway visibility from I-8 that they be afforded in this location. The depth of the parcels would be adequate for these uses. This would also carry the regional retail character over from Westfield Mission Valley Mall, to the north, and could allow regional retail to shift from other locations in the community. Fletcher Parkway in La Mesa provides an example of regional retail development on a corridor with limited lot depth. Camino del Rio South may not currently have the capacity to handle the traffic generated by large retail box stores, and would very likely need to be expanded.

Office Corridor in Eastern Segment

From approximately the Scottish Rite center west of Texas Street to the eastern boundary of the community, the south side of I-8 is lined with primarily 2 to 5 story office buildings, typically set

back some distance from the street, with surface parking and landscaping. This stretch of the corridor has one street connection to the north side of the freeway, at Mission City Parkway, and no access to the mesa above. The current land use profile of the area could be reinforced by the Community Plan Update.

2. FACILITATE DIVERSE COMMERCIAL LAND USES THROUGHOUT CORRIDOR

An alternative option would be to allow a broad range of land uses throughout the corridor, except that residential uses would continue to be not allowed because of the area's limited access and the freeway-related environmental effects. Because the area is relatively disconnected from the rest of the community, even if the land use mix produces an "incoherent" feeling, there would not be substantial impact on district character north of I-8, and the market would generate the type of development best suited to each site. For example, hotels may flourish in the eastern segment, even if they are not there currently, due to proximity to Qualcomm Stadium and San Diego State University. Retail commercial development may find a strong niche in the central segment, spinning off from the Westfield retail properties on the north side. Given the separation from high-quality transit and direct connection with the freeway, development intensity limits could be calibrated with traffic capacity, similar to the current approach.

3. DIMINISH THE BARRIER EFFECT OF I-8 BY ENHANCING CONNECTIONS

The third option could be combined with either of the first two, but would be especially relevant with Option 1. Existing connections across I-8 would be enhanced and new connections would be created, to link the South of I-8 corridor with the rest of the community. Existing crossings would be made much more pedestrian-friendly, and new crossings would be created in each segment, enhancing access to amenities on the north side of I-8. In particular, crossings would be planned to provide good access to Trolley stations and to the San Diego River greenway. Crossings would also link parks and open spaces on the south and north side, and link the river greenway to the canyons (see Chapter 2.4).

Finally, crossings could reinforce a hotel district along Hotel Circle South and North, on both sides of I-8; and an office district along Camino del Rio South and North, on both sides of I-8. Freeway decks providing parks and unifying districts could be explored. Figure 2.8-1 indicates potential crossing enhancements.

2.9 Issue 9: Enhancing Access to the San Diego Trolley

Mission Valley remains a car-oriented landscape despite the presence of high quality transit offered by the Green Line Trolley, as well as multiple express and local bus routes. Although the Mission Valley community can be characterized as a dense environment, land parcels tend to be very large, creating a fragmented built environment which in turn poses challenges for accessing the Trolley. Bus service is similarly challenged, where service quality and on-time performance suffers due to heavy vehicular traffic, particularly along bus routes that provide service to and from other neighboring communities. There is a potential in this community for increased transit ridership through improvements to localized Trolley Station access, improvements to station amenities and comfort levels, and improvements to bus service performance by alleviating traffic-related impediments to on-time performance through transit priority treatments.

Access and Connectivity Issues at Trolley Stations

There are a total of seven Green Line Trolley Stations in Mission Valley: Fashion Valley Transit Center, Hazard Center, Mission Valley Center, Rio Vista, Fenton Parkway, Qualcomm Stadium, and Mission San Diego. Two additional Trolley Stations are located within close proximity to the Mission Valley community: Morena/Linda Vista, located approximately ¼-mile to the west of the community boundary, and Grantville, located approximately ¾-mile to the east of the community boundary. The following summarizes access and connectivity issues for each station:

- **Morena/Linda Vista:** The station area provides quality access to the adjacent neighborhood of Morena, the Mission Valley YMCA, and several nearby employment centers. Further from the station, industrial land uses are prevalent, which limits potential connectivity. Although the station is located near the San Diego River, access to the San Diego River Trail is not possible near the Trolley Station.
- **Fashion Valley Transit Center:** Pedestrian connectivity to the adjacent Fashion Valley Mall is possible through a direct pedestrian bridge. The primary focus of this station is to serve mall patrons. A second priority of the station is to serve those transferring to and from bus services to the Trolley. Generally, other adjacent land uses are car-oriented, and do not support much pedestrian or bicycle connectivity, such as the RiverWalk Golf Course, the Town and Country Resort, and nearby office parks.

- **Hazard Center:** The Hazard Center Trolley Station is within easy walking distance of the Hazard Center mall, the DoubleTree hotel, the San Diego River Trail, and a multifamily community to the south. South of the river, additional multifamily communities exist such as the River Scene, River Front, and Rio del Oro developments, but connectivity remains an issue due to a need to cross the San Diego River. Further from the station, land uses tend to be big-box retail, and are separated by wide, heavily-travelled, high speed arterials that tend to discourage walking and cycling. Additionally, the station's location is somewhat hidden from view, which forms an addition barrier to potential transit users.
- **Mission Valley Center:** The station area provides quality access to the San Diego River Trail. Generally, the station is in close proximity to many of the dining, retail, and entertainment opportunities near the Westfield Mission Valley mall. However, access is discouraged because of the station's location behind the adjacent shopping center, discontinuous land uses, long block lengths, and the need to cross wide, heavily-travelled, high speed arterials. North of the station there are several multi-family developments, but the San Diego River presents a barrier to connectivity. In addition, some residential complexes have locked gates that limit "back door" access to the properties, which may provide shorter walking distances than existing access options.
- **Rio Vista:** The Rio Vista Trolley Station primarily serves adjacent multifamily developments. Nearby shopping and employment centers offer ample parking, nearly all of which is located closer to the establishment's front door than the Trolley Station. New nearby residential developments, such as Civita, currently lack pedestrian connectivity. The Trolley Station's location within the adjacent Rio Vista Apartment complex can may confuse riders since the station is visually obscured from the street network, and may appear to be an amenity for Rio Vista residents only. Although access to the San Diego River Trail is available, the majority of nearby land uses are residential.
- **Fenton Parkway:** Fenton Parkway is situated near multifamily residential developments, the Mission Valley Branch Library, and the Fenton Marketplace shopping center. However, the station is located behind the adjacent residential complex and requires a longer walk than the farthest parking spots. Nearby residential uses are gated, and lack direct access to the Trolley Station due to fencing. Several large employment centers are located across the San Diego River to the south, such as the Centerside office complex, which is among the largest in the community. However, these office complexes lack connectivity to the Trolley Station. In addition, nearby retail is mostly big-box style, which often corresponds to large purchases requiring a vehicle to transport.
- **Qualcomm Stadium:** This station is primarily used to access events taking place at Qualcomm Stadium, as well as for park-and-ride access during periods of non-use. There are no land uses near this station that would attract or encourage uses other than events at the stadium, and no access to the San Diego River Trail.
- **Mission San Diego:** This station area is located near auto-oriented multifamily residential developments as well as the San Diego Mission, which have reasonably

direct access from the Trolley Station. There are few nearby commercial land uses. The Trolley Station is situated close to I-8 which poses difficulties for cyclists and pedestrians, and also limits the number of land uses to the south that would attract transit riders.

- **Grantville:** The Grantville Trolley Station is located near commercial and light industrial land uses approximately ¾-mile to the east of the Mission Valley Community. The station has 254 parking spots on site, which provide park and ride opportunities. However, the station is located along a frontage road near the north side of the Interstate 8 freeway, which limits the number of destinations that can reasonably be reached on foot.

Options

1. IMPROVE TROLLEY STATION ACCESS BY INCREASING PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIVITY

Figure 2.9-1 shows the key corridors in Mission Valley. One notable feature is the presence of three significant east-west corridors, including I-8, the San Diego River, and Friars Road, and four north-south corridors, including SR-163, Mission Center Road, Qualcomm Way, and I-15. Although these corridors provide significant automobile access, they create barriers for cyclists and pedestrians attempting to access the Trolley. In order to improve station access, it will be necessary to devise connections that allow for easy access across these barriers, such as the recently installed high-intensity activated crosswalk (HAWK) beacon on Mission Center Road, as shown below. Pedestrian bridges across the San Diego River at the Hazard Center and Mission Valley Center stations, similar to what is available near the Fashion Valley Transit Station, would also provide greater connectivity and shorter walking times than the existing roadway crossings. The Fenton Parkway station would have greater connectivity through either a multimodal or pedestrian bridge. Since most transit riders begin or end their trip as a pedestrian, safe pedestrian crossings improve access to Trolley Stations, particularly given the wide, high-speed roadways present in the community.

HAWK beacon on Mission Center Road.

2. ENHANCE STATION AMENITIES AND IMPROVE COMFORT LEVELS

Ensuring that stations are comfortable and attractive places to wait in all weather conditions will contribute to enhancing the Trolley's attractiveness and perceived accessibility to users. Currently, shade from the summer sun and shelter from rain can be scarce at Trolley Stations. Comfortable benches, substantial overhangs and/or awnings, and accurate, easy-to-read next arrivals signage can communicate welcoming impressions, particularly at times of day when service frequency is reduced.

Mission Valley's predominant retail is large-scale in nature, and often associated with large purchases that are more easily transported by a private vehicle. Some retailers in the Mission Valley community have attempted to promote transit use. In particular, IKEA offers a 20% discount on shipping for customers who arrive by transit. Such retailer incentives may serve to increase the portion of visitors to Mission Valley choosing to ride the Trolley.

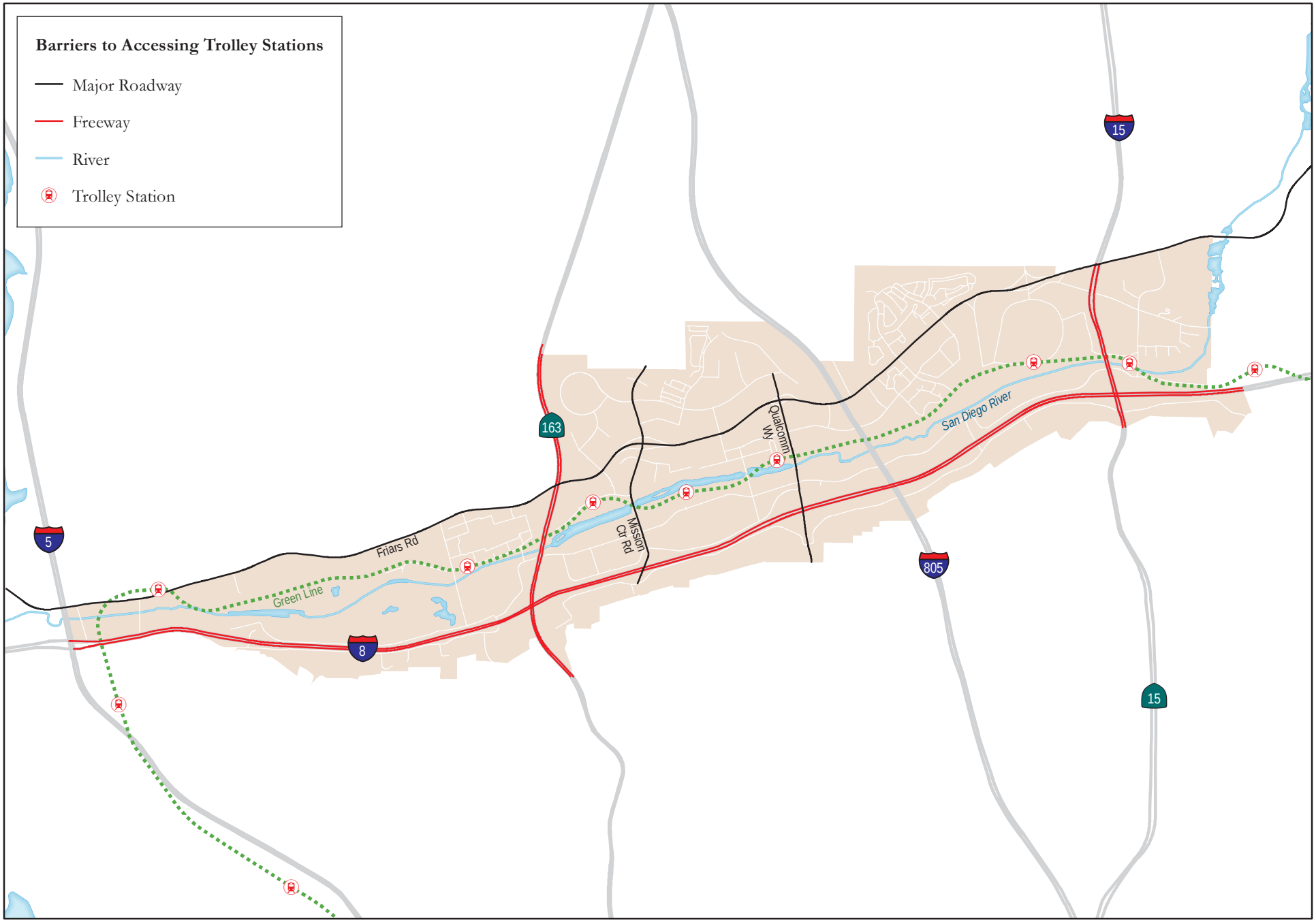
Mission Valley is congested in large part due to the combination of isolated land uses and free parking, both of which promote vehicular use. Oftentimes, Trolley Stations are located beyond the furthest parking space, requiring transit users to walk further to shop than single-occupant vehicle drivers. This can discourage transit use, and at a minimum, sends the message that transit is not a high priority mode. The Mission Valley Center and Fenton Parkway Trolley Stations, for example, are both located behind their respective shopping centers, requiring the transit rider to walk further to get to the stores than drivers. Future redevelopment should focus on making the Trolley Station a central feature of each area served. This will help to send a message that Trolley use is a preferred, convenient means of access that will deliver passengers to the center of their destination.

3. A NEW TROLLEY STATION AT RIVERWALK

There is a two mile gap in transit service through the RiverWalk Golf Course site, situated between the Morena/Linda Vista and Fashion Valley stations, as shown in Figure 2.9-2. As redevelopment of the RiverWalk occurs, an additional Trolley Station will provide significant access opportunities to new development in this location. As San Diego works to meet sustainability and carbon emissions goals set forth in the Climate Action Plan, high profile sites, such as large-scale redevelopment projects in Mission Valley, will play a key role in reducing the high levels of reliance on automobiles currently seen in the community and region.

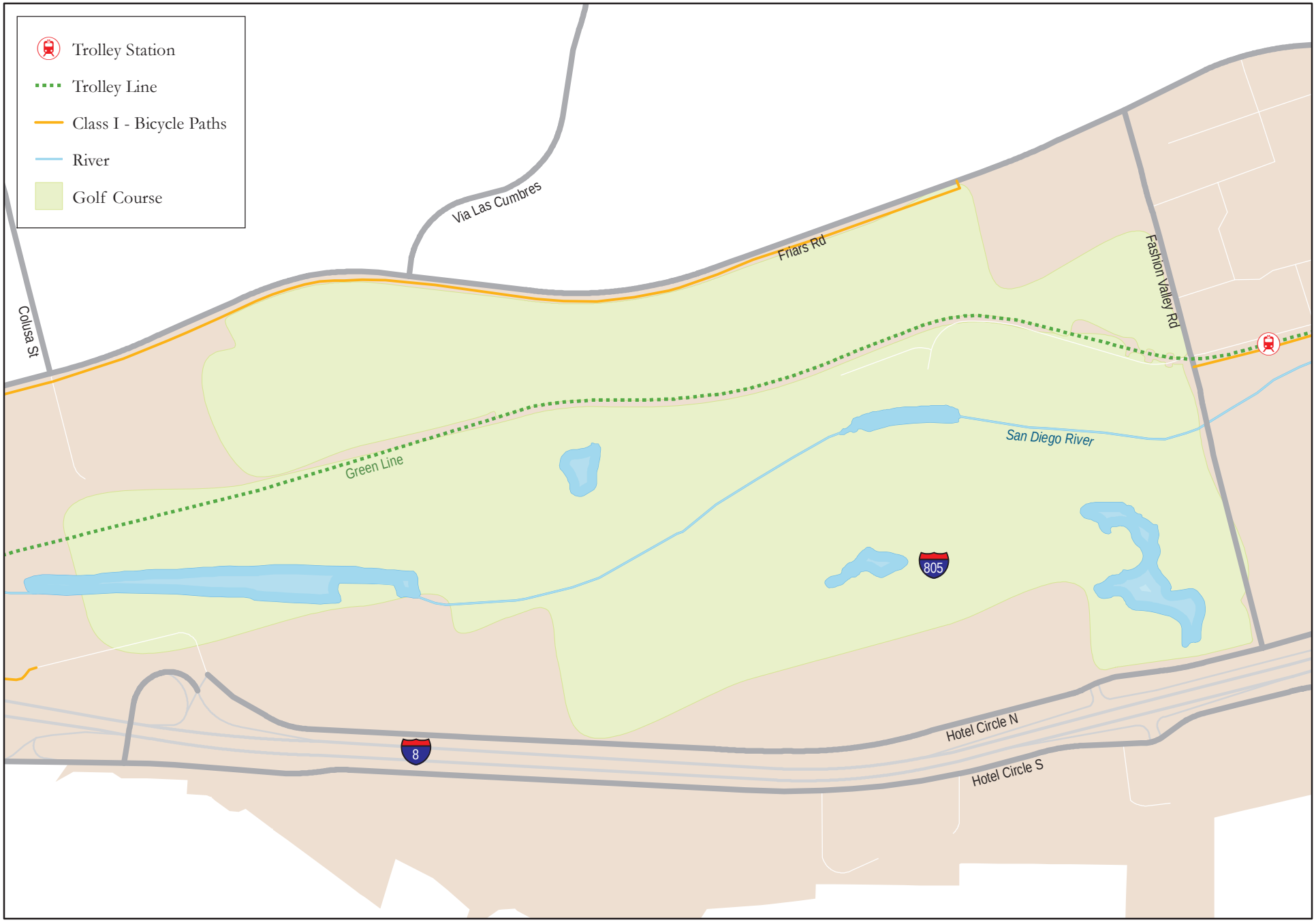
A new trolley station at RiverWalk will increase overall Green Line Trolley running times, likely adding up to several minutes to the overall end-to-end running time, when considering deceleration, station dwell, and acceleration times. Ultimately, site development plans should carefully integrate the new transit amenities that will become available to ensure that the station is used to its full potential. Placing the station as a central feature, surrounded by high performing, complementary uses, is key to ensuring that the new station returns high ridership levels.

Figure 2.9-1: Roadway and Transit Corridors



CHEN RYAN

Figure 2.9-2: Riverwalk Site



CHEN RYAN

2.10 Issue 10: Improving Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure

The quality of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure affects the decision to walk or ride a bike. In order to encourage and achieve mode shifts from automobiles to walking and cycling, the infrastructure serving these modes needs to be improved. Currently, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in Mission Valley is subject to the same connectivity issues discussed in Issue 9, where I-8, the San Diego River, and Friars Road, along with the general predominance of wide, high-volume arterial roadways, make walking and cycling difficult.

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

Recent research on factors influencing the safety and comfort of pedestrians and cyclists show several recurring themes. Since networks are comprised of segments and intersections, attention must be paid to both environments and their influence on the network as a whole. In particular, pedestrian and cyclist comfort traveling along segments is highly influenced by right-of-way width allocated to these users, vehicular traffic volume and speed, and adequate separation from vehicles. Pedestrian and cyclist comfort and safety at intersections are influenced by lighting, crosswalk visibility, crossing distance, and traffic control measures. Additionally, personal safety and comfort considerations, such as planters, public seating, presence of illegal graffiti and sidewalk cleanliness reinforce quality of the facility. Together, these factors play a major role in determining a person's willingness to make a trip by active travel. Thus, quality active travel infrastructure is instrumental toward achieving a significant shift in travel choice, since substantial rates of bicycle and pedestrian travel are unlikely to precede the existence of safe, comfortable, useful facilities.

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

Options

1. ESTABLISH THE SAN DIEGO RIVER TRAIL AS A REGIONAL ACTIVE TRAVEL CORRIDOR

Riding to 2050, the San Diego Regional Bike Plan, outlines a planned bike network that represents a regional vision for the year 2050. In particular, the San Diego River Trail is identified as a regional bicycle corridor that supports quality east-west connectivity for Mission Valley, as well as neighboring communities. The San Diego River Trail holds tremendous potential for offering a high quality, safe active travel corridor for the entire length of Mission Valley. Currently, the San Diego River Trail is incomplete, as shown in Figure 2.10-1, and mainly used for recreational purposes. Completing the trail connection from Ocean Beach to the community of Navajo and beyond, as outlined in the San Diego

Regional Bike Plan, will provide true active travel choice in Mission Valley, which is fundamental to shifting mode share toward a higher percentage of trips taken by active travel. With additional connections or spurs to locations near the trail, such as access across the river, or to commercial, residential, or office uses in the central Mission Valley area, this path could form a central spine to serving recreational and utilitarian users alike. This facility can achieve the dual benefit of offering cyclists and pedestrian a respite from vehicular travel as well as increased convenience.

Busy thoroughfares in Mission Valley can make crossing uncomfortable, and can deter active travel.

2. IMPROVE NORTH-SOUTH CONNECTIVITY

North-south connections for cyclists and pedestrians across I-8 are lacking as well. Connectivity is mainly limited to high-volume roadway segments or busy overpasses, typically not designed with active travelers in mind, as shown in the photo below. The San Diego Regional Bike Plan includes improved north-south connectivity by way of identified regional corridors, such as the Coastal Rail Trail, the Clairemont-Centre City Corridor, and the I-15 bikeway.

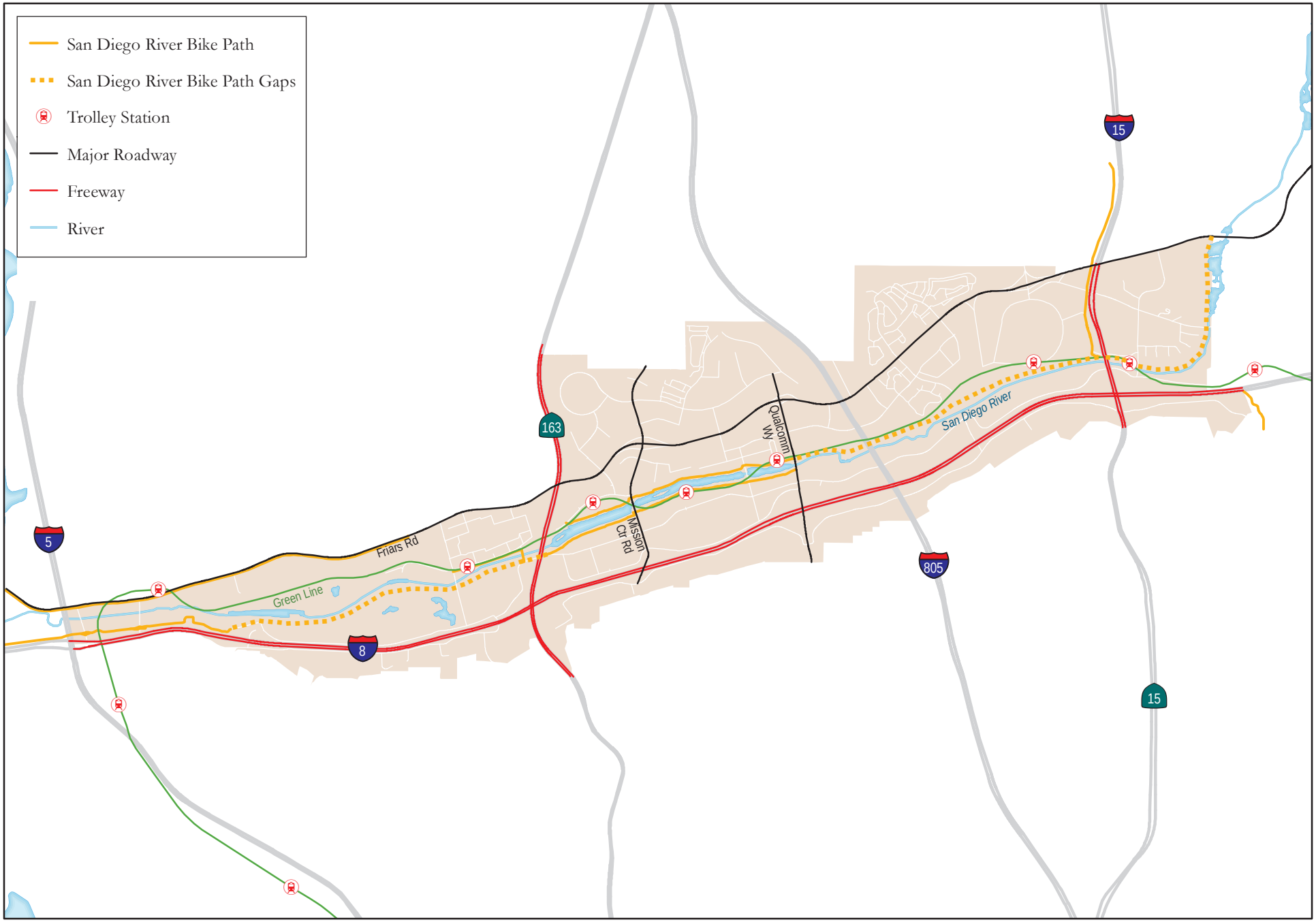
In addition to enhancing regional connectivity, building upon the network identified in the San Diego Regional Bike Plan and the City of San Diego's Bicycle Master Plan is vital to promote non-vehicular intra-community travel in Mission Valley. For example, improving pedestrian and bicycle permeability through the I-8 corridor is important for enhancing south Mission Valley's non-vehicular connectivity to the rest of the community. In particular, Hotel Circle South and the intensive commercial development located along Camino Del Rio South, between SR-163 and I-15, are difficult for the active traveler to access if coming from portions of the community north of I-8, and should be prioritized for connectivity improvements.

In addition to these network considerations, the Mission Valley community is characterized by large, enclosed parcels that would benefit from small scale linkages to increase permeability and facilitate connections between adjacent uses. Oftentimes, access is not possible without using a circuitous route. The presence of these barriers has a particularly negative effect on pedestrian travel. In some instances gates are present, but neither the public or even residents can pass because the gates are semi-permanently locked. As future redevelopment occurs, there is a significant opportunity to remove these barriers to active travel, thus enhancing the ability of pedestrians and cyclists to travel safely and conveniently along internal roadways and avoid high volume or high speed arterials. In addition, existing properties should be retrofitted in absence of redevelopment to create backdoor and through-way connections to eliminate these circuitous paths.

Locked pathway on private property next to San Diego River Trail

This page intentionally left blank.

Figure 2.10-1: San Diego River Trail



CHEN RYAN

This page intentionally left blank.

2.11 Issue 11: Prospects for Aerial Tram Connections

Mission Valley is characterized by steep slopes to the north and south. Mesa rims rise several hundred feet above the valley floor, and access to the mesas is limited to a small number of roadways through various canyons. These limited number of access points are typically congested and do not always provide bicycle or pedestrian facilities. As a regional employment, retail, and residential hub, the relative difficulty in accessing Mission Valley due to topographical challenges presents a barrier to future growth, and serves to partially obscure the community's desirable, central location within the regional context.

Options

1. AERIAL TRAM CONNECTIVITY BETWEEN MISSION VALLEY AND NEIGHBORING COMMUNITIES

Aerial trams represent a promising approach to dealing with steep slopes and limited room for roadway building. They are being implemented in several cities across the US and are becoming viewed as a legitimate component of an urban transportation network. The Portland Aerial Tram links a similarly topographically challenged section of the City of Portland. It connects the South Waterfront area with the Oregon Health and Science University campus above, as shown in the following images.

Portland Aerial Tram from the Oregon Health and Science University.

Portland Aerial Tram.

The Portland Aerial Tram is the second commuter aerial tramway installed in the United States, after the Roosevelt Island Tramway in New York City. Abroad, aerial tramways have been installed in a growing number of locations, such as Singapore, Hong Kong, and Medellin, Colombia.

Barcelona Aerial Tram

An aerial tram can create a straight-line connection over challenging terrain since it does not require flat surfaces for its travelway. Additionally, trams can potentially offer high frequency service, particularly if multiple gondolas are attached to the cable. The ability to overcome topographic challenges may make tramways an applicable fit given Mission Valley's relative importance in the city and its very constrained transportation networks.

Aerial tram studies undertaken in San Diego, such as the San Diego Bay to Balboa Park Skyway Feasibility Report (2015), have established a precedent for considering skyway technology as a transportation alternative in San Diego, particularly where San Diego's unique topography presents a challenge to implementing more traditional connectivity solutions. The San Diego Bay to Balboa Park Skyway Feasibility Report provides guidance on several potential challenges, and seeks to illuminate future implementation issues in San Diego. In addition, the study presents potential alignment and station considerations and provides a path to implementation, including financing and construction considerations. This study is underscored by the current 2050 Regional Transportation Plan, San Diego Forward, which includes the possibility of using aerial trams to connect the future Mid-Coast Trolley to Pacific Beach as well as to link the Sorrento Valley community to the Coaster and Mid-Coast Trolley Line.

The potential for privacy concerns has been raised, particularly near high-rise buildings adjacent to the tramway. As a countermeasure, certain technologies have been suggested, such as strategic opaquing of tram windows when passing near sensitive areas.

Aerial tramways may be well-received in a city with a large tourism industry, such as San Diego, provided that quality station areas are identified, and links to other modes of travel are implemented. Since aerial tramways generally remove passengers from their vehicles, the ultimate success of an aerial tramway in Mission Valley is reliant upon continued development and improvement of supporting transit, pedestrian, and bicycle facilities in the community.

2. FUNICULAR RAILWAY

Funiculars achieve many of the same goals of aerial tramways in cases where topography isolates land uses. A typical funicular consists of two cars, which simultaneously run in opposing directions, providing a counterbalance of weight. Funicular railways are capable of traversing very steep slopes, such as those that separate Mission Valley from neighboring mesa communities to the north and south, and are generally best suited to short distances, as distance of travel affects headways between departures.

Strand Beach Funicular, Dana Point (Source: Wikimediahttps://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:StrandBeachFunicular.JPG)

Peak Tram, Hong Kong (Source: Wikimedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peak_Tram#/media/File:Hongkong_peak_tram.jpg)

Funiculars are found in topographically challenged regions throughout the world. The Strand Beach Funicular is a nearby example in Dana Point, which provides beach access from a hilltop location. The greatest number of funiculars are found in mountainous regions of Europe, where topography presents a similar challenge to connectivity as is seen in Mission Valley. Other examples are found in Asia, such as the Peak Tramway in Hong Kong.

The characteristics of funicular railways appear to be well-suited to the conditions of Mission Valley, where crow-flies distance between neighboring communities is short, but topography restricts connectivity to several congested canyons. A funicular may be best used to serve walkable destination pairs with high two-way connectivity demand, such as Mission Valley to the Uptown Community. However, siting considerations in Mission Valley may require careful consideration, due to the fact that most popular land uses are located in the center of the valley, away from the canyon rims that a funicular will traverse.

This page intentionally left blank.

2.12 Issue 12: Mission Valley Community Circulator on Camino de la Reina

Mission Valley is characterized by large single-use parcels. This development pattern, combined with wide, congested roadways that have historically prioritized automobile travel, hinders walkability, even though uses are often in close proximity. For Example, the 1.5 mile segment of Camino de la Reina between Fashion Valley Mall and Qualcomm Way is flanked by enclosed land developments behind large parking lots – the disconnected nature of land uses is shown in the photo below. In addition, Mission Valley is a popular destination, attracting large numbers of visitors. Combined, these factors serve to promote single-occupancy vehicle (SOV) travel, even when trip lengths fall within walking or bicycling distance.

Land Uses in Mission Valley are often disconnected, and located behind large parking lots. A community circulator may encourage travel between destination locations.

Options

1. IMPLEMENT A COMMUNITY CIRCULATOR TO LINK KEY DESTINATIONS

There is strong potential for implementation of a community circulator in the Mission Valley area. A circulator service that connects key uses may lead to an increase in non-SOV travel throughout the community. Improved connectivity to transit may bridge the last-mile gap that often exists between transit stations and popular destinations for those traveling to and from Mission Valley.

Community circulators are an effective way to move people around in high traffic areas, particularly when land use and street network patterns make walking between locations difficult. Routes are generally short, operated at a low speed, with frequent stop spacing similar to local bus service. Fares are generally kept low to encourage high levels of ridership, and service is frequent particularly during peak periods. The obstacles to easy active travel seen in Mission Valley, combined with Trolley Station access barriers, as discussed in the preceding three sections, suggest that a community circulator may merit additional study to enhance true travel choice in the Mission Valley community.

A notable example of a successful community circulator exists in Emeryville, CA, located near Oakland. Emeryville is currently undergoing rapid redevelopment from a formerly industrial community toward becoming a walkable, mixed-use destination. To increase circulation and promote transit use, the Emery Go-Round provides free last-mile service to and from the nearby MacArthur BART station to various points around the community, with frequencies varying between 10 and 30 minutes. Operations are funded through a citywide Property Business Improvement District (PBID). The photo below displays the Emery Go-Round service.

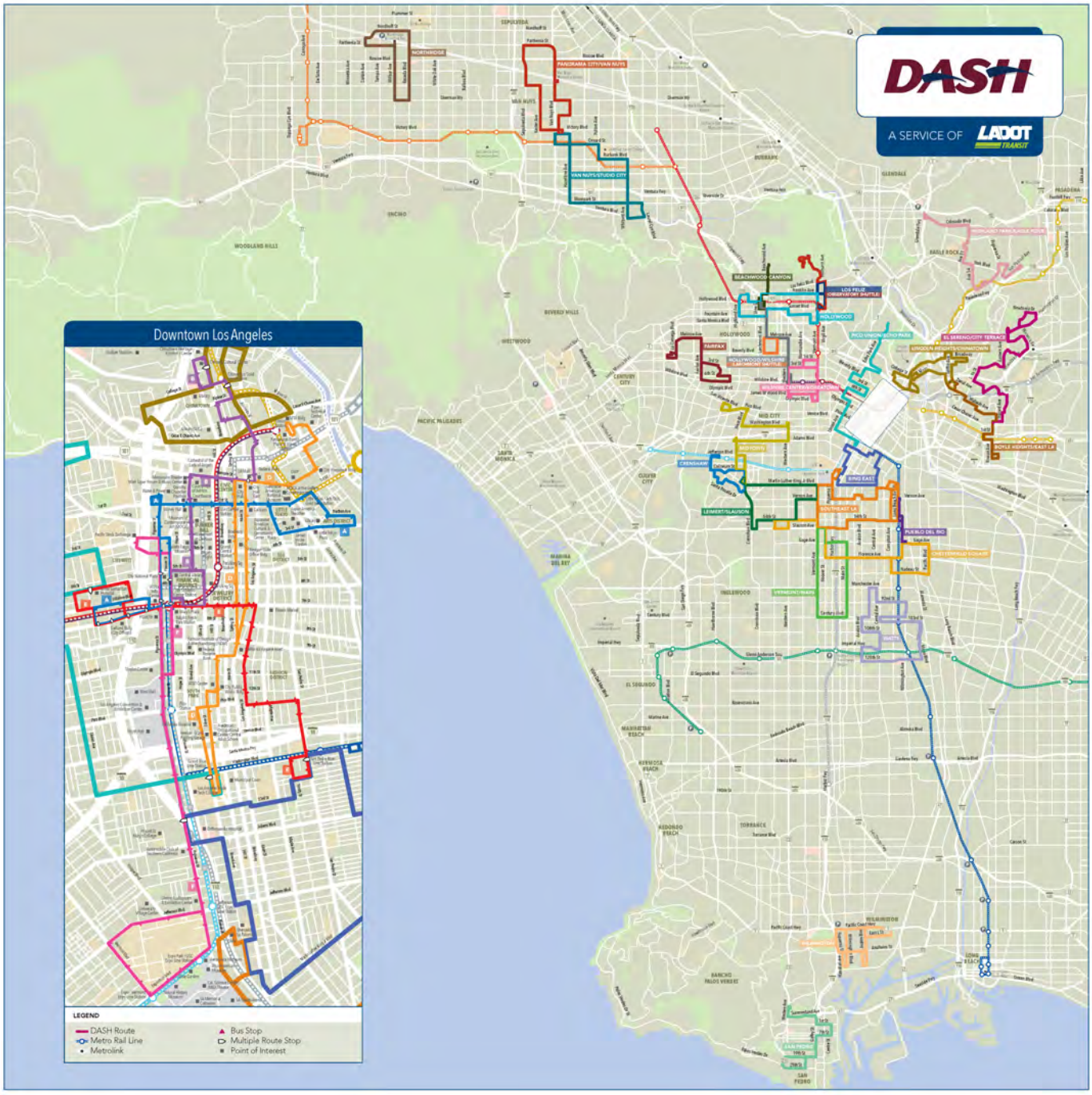
In addition to providing a last-mile transit service and promoting intra-community travel, community circulators can lend to a vibrant street life and have been sometimes referred to as a "pedestrian accelerator." For example, in addition to providing last-mile service from BART, the Emery Go-Round also promotes travel within the community due to frequent service and free fare. In Mission Valley, future redevelopment may make foot traffic and street life a more prominent part of Camino de la Reina. Future redevelopment along Camino de la Reina may encourage the formation of a walkable district, which would increase the benefit provided by a community circulator with additional pedestrian circulation.

The Emery Go-Round provides frequent, free service to connect the community of Emeryville to BART service.

The DASH bus provides frequent low cost circulator service in Los Angeles neighborhoods.

The DASH service in Los Angeles is another example of a successful community circulator. Each route is designed to interface with the larger Metro network – preferably a rapid bus or rail station – and serves an individual neighborhood to facilitate community circulation and last-mile connectivity to and from the regional transit network. DASH service generally varies between 5 and 30 minute frequencies, while fares are fifty cents. Currently, 27 DASH community circulator routes are in operation throughout the Los Angeles area. Figure 2.12-1 depicts the DASH community circulator route map.

Figure 2.12-1: DASH Route Map



Source: Los Angeles Department of Transportation

The SuperLoop provides two distinct circulators, which converge at the UTC Transit Center.

Local to San Diego, the SuperLoop service, operated by the San Diego MTS, provides a series of community circulators to the catchment area of the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) and North University City. The services operate in a west and east loop, while converging at the UTC Transit Center. The service is useful as a first/last mile connector to longer-range transit services, such as the *Rapid* 237 or the future Mid-Coast Trolley extension. Additionally, UCSD students that live in North University City find the service useful to commute to and from school. The SuperLoop offers a peak-period headway of 10 minutes on weekdays, with 15 minute headways during non-peak periods and weekends.

2. POOL PLANNED AND EXISTING PRIVATE CIRCULATORS

Some developments within Mission Valley have implemented, or are planning to implement, a private circulator service. Examples include the Centerside office complex, which offers lunchtime shuttle services for employees, as well as the Civita residential development, which plans to implement a circulator to connect residents to transit and major community attractions. These circulators are often implemented through conditions established during a development's approval process. While not accessible to all members of the general public, these circulators have a high likelihood of facilitating mobility for eligible travelers.

Although these systems are currently privately financed and operated, future large developments within the community are likely to continue the trend of implementing community circulators as a traffic-mitigating community amenity. An opportunity may exist to pool these services to attain economies of scale in operations and maintenance funding, as well as to increase the number of persons eligible to utilize these services.

This page intentionally left blank.

2.13 Issue 13: Strategies to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Issue Discussion

CLIMATE CHANGE

Global climate change is a change in the weather patterns of the earth, which can be measured by wind patterns, storms, precipitation, and temperature. A particular concern is increase in average temperatures, contributing to sea level rise. Many components of society and ecosystems are sensitive to climatic variability, including human health, agriculture, coastal zones, and the natural environment. In California, sea levels have risen by as much as seven inches over the last century, resulting in eroded shorelines, deterioration of infrastructure, and depletion of natural resources. California's water supply is threatened due to prolonged drought and increased demands from growth. Less precipitation, premature runoff of snowpack and rainwater, and restrictions on the Colorado River and the Bay-Delta in Northern California have increased the pressure on the state's water supplies.

GREENHOUSE GASES

Global temperatures are regulated by the accumulation of naturally occurring greenhouse gases (GHGs), which include carbon dioxide (CO2), methane (CH4), nitrous oxide (N2O), and water vapor. Human activities also produce these naturally-occurring gases, as well as other GHGs such as hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs) and sulfur hexafluoride (SF6). Human activities have elevated atmospheric GHG concentrations beyond naturally-occurring levels.

Energy-related activities account for three-fourths of human-generated GHG emissions. These activities include electricity production, transportation, the treatment and transportation of water, and industrial processes such as producing construction materials and managing waste. Electricity generation is the largest source of GHG emissions in the United States, followed by transportation.

KEY REGULATORY CONTEXT

Federal Regulations

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has issued regulatory actions under the Clean Air Act, Energy Policy Act, Energy Independence and Security Act, and other statutory authorities to address issues related to climate change. In the 2008 U.S. Supreme Court decision *Massachusetts v. EPA*, the Court held that the Clean Air Act authorized the EPA to regulate

tailpipe GHG emissions if the EPA determined they caused or contributed to air pollution that endangered public health or welfare. Since then, the EPA has developed and implemented regulations to reduce GHG emissions by using renewable fuels through the Renewable Fuels Standard program created under the Energy Policy Act of 2005; raised federal Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards for cars and light-duty trucks; and even granted a waiver of Clean Air Act preemption to California for the State's GHG emission standards for motor vehicles beginning with the 2009 model year.

State of California Regulations

California has enacted a set of executive orders, legislation, policies, and programs intended to work together to reduce the state's contribution to global emissions of GHGs. Key state actions are described below.

California's GHG Emissions Reduction Targets

Executive Order S-3-05 (Gov. Schwarzenegger, June 2005) recognized California's vulnerability to climate change, noting that increasing temperatures could potentially reduce snow pack in the Sierra Nevada, which is a primary source of the state's water supply. Additionally, this Order acknowledges that climate change could influence human health, coastal habitats, microclimates, and agricultural yield. The Governor thus set GHG emissions reduction targets for California, as follows: reduce GHG emissions to 2000 levels by 2010; to 1990 levels by 2020; and 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. Executive Order B-30-15 (Brown, 2015) established a California GHG target of 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030.

California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006

The California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, also known as Assembly Bill (AB) 32, directed the California Air Resources Board (CARB) to perform numerous tasks aimed at achieving the state's reduction targets. As the roadmap for achieving AB 32's reduction goals, the CARB Scoping Plan outlined the combination of policies, programs, and measures necessary to reduce statewide GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, the equivalent of reducing emissions by 15 percent below current levels and 30 percent below projected business-as-usual levels in 2020. Many of the measures would, when implemented, contribute to emission reductions statewide as well as in local communities.

Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008

The Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008 (Chapter 728, Statutes of 2008, also known as Senate Bill (SB) 375) promotes better integration of transportation and land use planning throughout California. The statute was intended to complement efforts under AB 32 by requiring CARB to develop regional GHG emission reduction targets for passenger vehicles. Pursuant to SB 375, each of California's MPOs must prepare a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) outlining how the region will meet its GHG reduction target by integrating land use planning, transportation planning and funding, and housing needs. The SCS will be incorporated into the regional transportation plan, typically prepared by each MPO every 4 to 5 years.

San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), the MPO for the San Diego region, has developed the SCS as an element of its Regional Transportation Plan, which it combined with the

Regional Comprehensive Plan into San Diego Forward: The Regional Plan. The SCS includes the following building blocks: (1) a land use pattern that accommodates future employment and housing needs, as well as protects sensitive habitats; (2) a multi-modal transportation network; (3) managing demands on the transportation system in ways that reduce or eliminate traffic and maximize the efficiency of the transportation network; and (4) innovative pricing policies and other measures designed to reduce the number of miles people drive in their vehicles. The SCS also includes five strategies to move the San Diego region towards reducing GHG emissions and building a more sustainable future: (1) focusing housing and job growth in already urbanized areas; (2) protecting the environment and helping ensure the success of smart growth land use by preserving sensitive habitat, open space, and cultural resources; (3) investing in a robust transportation network; (4) addressing housing needs of all segments of the population; and (5) implementing the Regional Plan through incentives and collaboration. At its core, the SCS encourages communities to plan for more compact, higher density, greater employment intensity, and walkable developments situated near transit. The SCS also plans for transit investment to support this vision, including new Trolley lines serving and bike routes in Mission Valley.

California Green Building Standards Code (Title 24, Part 11)

In January 2010, the California Building Standards Commission adopted the first-in-the-nation mandatory Green Building Standards Code (CALGREEN) as a supplement to the 2007 California Building Standards Code. The Code was updated in 2013. The purpose of the code is to improve public health, safety and general welfare by enhancing the design and construction of buildings in the following categories: 1) planning and design, 2) energy efficiency, 3) water efficiency and conservation, 4) material conservation and resource efficiency, and 5) environmental air quality. The code identifies mandatory and voluntary measures that apply to the planning, design, operation, construction, replacement, use and occupancy, location, maintenance, removal, and demolition of every new building or structure throughout the State of California.

City of San Diego Regulations

Sustainable Building Policies

In several of its policies, the City aims to reduce GHG emissions by requiring sustainable development practices in City operations and incentivizing sustainable development practices in private development. The City has established a mandate for all City projects to achieve the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver standard for all new buildings and major renovations over 5,000 square feet. Incentives are also provided to private developers through the Expedite Program, which expedites project review of green building projects and discounts project review fees.

Waste Diversion Regulations

The City has also enacted codes and policies aimed at helping achieve the state's 75 percent waste diversion target, including the Refuse and Recyclable Materials Storage Regulations (Municipal Code Chapter 14, Article 2, Division 8), Recycling Ordinance (O-19678 Municipal Code Chapter 6, Article 6, Division 7), and the Construction and Demolition Debris Deposit Ordinance (0-19420 & 0-19694 Municipal Code Chapter 6, Article 6, Division 6).

City of San Diego General Plan

The General Plan includes several climate change-related policies aimed at reducing GHG emissions from future development and City operations. For example, Conservation Element policy CE-A.2 aims to "reduce the City's carbon footprint" and to "develop and adopt new or amended regulations, programs, and incentives as appropriate to implement the goals and policies" related to climate change. The Land Use and Community Planning Element, the Mobility Element, the Urban Design Element, and the Public Facilities, Services, and Safety Element also identify GHG reduction and climate change adaptation goals. These elements contain policy language related to sustainable land use patterns, alternative modes of transportation, energy efficiency, water conservation, waste reduction, and greater landfill efficiency. The overall intent of these policies is to support climate protection actions, while retaining flexibility in the design of implementation measures, which could be influenced by new scientific research, technological advances, environmental conditions, or state and federal legislation.

Climate Action Plan

In December 2015, the City adopted the Climate Action Plan (CAP), which identifies measures to meet GHG reduction targets for 2020 and 2035. The CAP consists of a 2010 inventory of GHG emissions, a Business as Usual (BAU) projection for emissions at 2020 and 2035, state targets, and emission reductions with implementation of the CAP. The CAP identifies GHG reduction strategies focusing on energy- and water-efficient buildings; clean and renewable energy; multi-modal and land use planning; zero waste goals; and climate resiliency.

To achieve its proportional share of the state reduction targets for 2020 (AB 32) and 2050 (EO S-3-05), the City would need to reduce emissions below the 2010 baseline by 15 percent in 2020, and 49 percent by 2035. Through implementation of the CAP, the City is projected to reduce emissions even further below targets (City of San Diego 2015).

Options

Land use planning and policy at the community level will play a key role in helping the City reduce GHG emissions. This chapter describes opportunities for the Community Plan Update to contribute to each of the four GHG reduction strategies identified in the City's Climate Action Plan: water and energy-efficient buildings; clean and renewable energy; bicycling, walking, transit and land use; and waste management. The fifth strategy proposes an Urban Tree Planting Program; this is addressed in Chapter 2.15 of this report. While these strategies may be appropriate for the Community Plan, certain strategies—such as mandating certain building efficiency requires—would likely need to be applied on a citywide scale. Strategies such as land use/transportation integration and tree planting could be implemented at the Community Plan scale.

WATER AND ENERGY-EFFICIENT BUILDINGS

"Green building" refers to development practices that are more energy-, fuel-, and water-efficient than traditional development, resulting in resource conservation and fewer GHG emissions. The building sector consumes almost 70 percent of the energy consumed and 40 percent CO2

emissions produced in the United States. Green building is an important tool to fighting climate change and reducing GHG emissions, in part because technology already exists to make substantial reductions in buildings' CO2 emissions and energy usage.

The Climate Action Plan identifies five actions to be undertaken citywide to achieve water and energy-efficient buildings: a Residential Energy Conservation and Disclosure ordinance; a Municipal Energy Strategy and Implementation Plan; a new water rate and billing structure; a Water Conservation and Disclosure Ordinance; and an Outdoor Landscaping Ordinance. The Community Plan Update can augment these efforts in a number of ways, summarized below.

GHG emissions and energy consumption can be substantially reduced through green building.

1. Require Buildings to Exceed CALGREEN Standards

The statewide CALGREEN code establishes minimum requirements applicable to the construction of all new buildings in the state, requiring that they be built using environmentally sustainable construction practices. The CALGREEN code also includes more stringent, voluntary provisions, which the Community Plan may require new development in Mission Valley meet. These measures, organized into two tiers, were designed to be easily adopted by ordinance by those cities and localities that want to be leaders in environmental sustainability and the green building movement.

For example, the mandatory requirements under the Planning and Design category are (1) developing and implementing a plan to manage storm water drainage during construction, and (2) preparing construction plans that indicate how site grading or drainage systems will manage all surface water flows to keep water from entering buildings. Voluntary provisions that may be

adopted under this category include more stringent limits on impermeable paving. To meet the Tier 1 standards, at least 20 percent of a project's total parking, walking, or patio surfaces must be permeable. To meet Tier 2 standards, at least 30 percent must be permeable.

The Community Plan could incent and/or require new construction to meet CALGREEN's Tier 1 or Tier 2 requirements, in whole or in part. For example, for non-residential projects, Palo Alto requires new construction to meet the more stringent Tier 2 requirements and tenant improvements and renovations to meet CALGREEN's Tier 1 requirements. As another example, San Rafael requires new residential buildings to meet the Tier 1 measures, excluding the measures concerning Energy Efficiency.

2. Require New Buildings to be LEED Certified, GreenPoint Rated, or Be LEED or GreenPoint Quality

The Community Plan may also require new construction to meet the standards set by private, independent rating systems. LEED, perhaps the best known of these systems, certifies the design, construction, and operation of high performance buildings. The LEED program is a point-based system. Building projects earn points for satisfying green building criteria within specific credit areas. Projects also may earn Regional Priority bonus points for implementing green building strategies that address important local environment issues.

Another rating system, focused on residential construction, has been developed by Build It Green, a membership supported non-profit organization whose mission is to promote healthy, energy- and resource-efficient residential development in California. Build It Green has three strategic objectives: (1) drive policy development by partnering with government to establish credible and accessible green building policies that promote private sector innovation and provide consistent guidelines statewide; (2) increase supply of green homes by training building professionals on the latest best practices and connecting green product suppliers with consumers; and (3) stimulate consumer demand by increasing awareness of the benefits of green building and making "GreenPoint Rated" a trustworthy, recognized brand for green homes. The GreenPoint Rated program provides an objective, third-party verification system for identifying green homes, understanding green benefits, and recognizing green features. Like LEED, GreenPoint is a points-based system; the greater the number of points, the more green the construction.

Currently, San Diego requires all City projects to achieve LEED Silver certification for all new buildings and major renovations over 5,000 square feet. Incentives are also provided to private developers through the Expedite Program; this program expedites project review of green building projects and discounts project review fees. The Community Plan can do more.

The Community Plan could require private development to be certified or be of a quality that is certifiable in accordance with a certain LEED standard, from the lowest (Certified) to the highest (Platinum). Alternatively, the Community Plan could require residential construction to achieve (or be able to achieve) a specific GreenPoint Rating. San Jose requires new residential construction of fewer than 10 units to submit a GreenPoint or LEED checklist. New construction of 10 or more units must be GreenPoint Rated 50 points or LEED Certified, and new high-rise residential construction must be LEED Certified. San Francisco requires new residential buildings to be GreenPoint Rated. Applicants are required to demonstrate that a minimum of 75

GreenPoints will be achieved. Alternatively, this rating requirement may be met by obtaining LEED Silver certification.

3. Prescribe Specific Measures

While the independent rating systems provide developers flexibility to achieve a level of sustainability through a variety of methods, it is also possible for the Community Plan to require certain green building measures instead of or in addition to meeting a required rating. In doing so, the Community Plan can address particular needs or goals of the community. For instance, West Hollywood requires all modifications to bathrooms and kitchens and all new structures to include the installation of water saving features, all new or modified structures to install Energy Star appliances, and any project that requires a development permit to provide roof capacity for photovoltaic system installation. The Community Plan could mandate the optional CALGREEN measures of its choosing, or draft measures of its own that are reasonably necessary based on the climatic, topographical, or geographical considerations of Mission Valley. Potential measures include reducing the heat island effect and promoting energy efficiency by requiring vegetated roofs or roofing materials that meet minimum requirements with respect to solar reflectance and thermal emittance, and requiring new development to provide vegetation or man-made shading devices for windows on the east, south, and west-facing walls.

4. Incentivize Green Performance in Addition to Mandatory Standards

In addition to mandating compliance with green building standards above and beyond those minimally required by CALGREEN, the Community Plan can incentivize developers to exceed any codified standards. Incentives can take many forms. For instance, the City, through its Expedite Program, already expedites project review of green building projects and discounts project review fees. Another incentive that may be considered is providing developers that meet certain green building standards increased floor-area-ratio (FAR) or unit density.

CLEAN AND RENEWABLE ENERGY

Rooftops and parking lots present opportunities to generate solar power (left). The Community Plan can also ensure there is infrastructure for those who drive lower emission vehicles (right).

Clean and renewable energy sources include plant matter, solar power, wind power, wave power, geothermal power, and tidal power. It usually also includes technologies that improve energy efficiency. The Climate Action Plan identifies three actions to be undertaken citywide to achieve

100 percent renewable energy citywide by 2035: a Community Choice Aggregation or other program that increases the City's renewable energy supply; an increase the number of municipal zero emissions vehicles; and the consideration of a Municipal Alternative Fuel Policy. The Community Plan Update can augment these efforts in a number of ways, summarized below.

5. Generate Renewable Energy

San Diego's sunny climate makes it particularly suitable to generating solar energy. One way to support the generation of solar energy is to facilitate and promote the siting of photovoltaic energy systems in Mission Valley. It is possible for the Community Plan to require or encourage new development to provide roof capacity for photovoltaic system installation, as is done in West Hollywood. It is also possible for the Community Plan to require the installation of solar panels on the portion of new buildings' roofs that California law requires to be "solar-ready", as San Francisco recently did. Mission Valley also has a large number of surface parking lots where photovoltaic systems could be installed; not only would these facilities generate clean and renewable energy, they would protect and shade parked vehicles. The Community Plan can also adopt policies that remove any impediments to solar energy generation in Mission Valley, such as by ensuring that solar energy systems are listed as a permitted use in Mission Valley's Planned District zones and making clear that photovoltaic cells are not mechanical systems that need to be enclosed or screened from view. Eligible projects that generate a certain percentage of project energy needs through solar panels can also qualify for the Sustainable Expedite Program. As part of this program, these projects may be eligible for a deviation such as from the height restrictions.

6. Require Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

The Community Plan may also support private actors' energy efficient choices. The Community Plan could require that commercial parking lots to be outfitted with Electric Vehicle Charging Stations or, for residential construction, provide the capability for their installation.

BICYCLING, WALKING, TRANSIT AND LAND USE

The Community Plan can also make it easier and more pleasant for community members to walk, bike, and take public transit.

As the Climate Action Plan recognizes, it is insufficient for San Diego's buildings to be built sustainably and powered with renewable energy. As the transportation sector accounts for over 50 percent of all GHG emissions within San Diego, housing, workplaces, and services must be built sufficiently close together and be accessible via transit, bicycle, and walking in order for the City to achieve its GHG reduction goals. Potential ways for the Community Plan to support these goals are discussed below.

7. Realize the "City of Villages" Vision

The City of Villages strategy focuses growth into compact, mixed-use centers linked to the regional transit system, and preserves open space lands. Opportunities to realize this strategy are discussed in other chapters of this paper, including in Chapters 2.1, 2.7, and 2.8.

8. Create Complete Streets to Promote Travel by Foot, Bike and Transit

Bike facilities, wider and more shaded sidewalks, and other amenities make it safer and more attractive for people to navigate Mission Valley without a car. A detailed discussion of ways to promote alternate forms of transportation may be found in Chapters and 2.1 and 2.2.

9. Promote Urban Agriculture

Urban agriculture can reduce the energy used to transport food and provide opportunities for neighborhood residents to increase their connection to their community and to each other. Opportunities to promote urban agriculture are discussed in detail in Chapter 2.14.

REDUCE AND DIVERT WASTE

In comparison to the existing signage along the San Diego River (left), leave no trace signage (right) can inform community members to take their trash with them and keep the area as they found it.

Waste is typically defined as unwanted materials or substances, usually byproducts of a productive process. However, items that some people discard have value to others. The "cradle to cradle" concept contends that all waste can be retrieved at the end of its use and become a healthy input for another process. While it has been customary to use landfilling and incineration to dispose of waste, it is possible for humans to reduce, reuse, or recycle the vast majority, if not all, of our waste.

In fact, the City's Climate Action Plan sets forth a plan to achieve zero waste. The CAP identifies two actions to be undertaken citywide: enact a Zero Waste Plan and implement landfill gas collection operational procedures, and implement operational procedures to capture methane gas from wastewater treatment. The Community Plan Update can augment these efforts.

10. Facilitate the Reduction and Proper Disposal of Waste

The Community Plan can promote the proper disposal and reduction of waste through a variety of means.

- Provide water bottle filling stations in high traffic areas and public parks.
- Host clean up events at city trails, parks, and waterways. This is especially critical in Mission Valley, where homeless encampments and associated waste are common issues along the San Diego River.
- Host collection events that make it convenient for residents to properly dispose of household hazardous waste.

11. Embrace Leave No Trace

Part of reducing waste is educating community members about the amount their actions can affect their surroundings and incentivize them to make positive changes to minimize their impact on the environment. The "Leave No Trace" concept, generally associated with human use of wilderness areas, asks people to pack in and pack out their waste. This causes people to be very aware of the waste they produce, and has the potential to change consumer behavior.

A leave no trace policy could be adopted in the San Diego River Park, particularly for a limited area and for a limited time. Such a policy, paired with an educational component and good signage, could educate park users regarding how they can minimize their impact on this important and sensitive resource. Other parklands ask visitors to leave no trace, especially in wilderness areas. The National Park Service has a leave no trace policy. More recently, parks located in urban areas, including Ocean Beach in San Francisco, are experimenting with removing garbage cans and asking visitors to pack out their trash.

12. Facilitating the Reuse of "Waste"

The Community Plan can provide or promote opportunities for community members to exchange used goods. For example, the City can facilitate the creation of small free "libraries" where people can share books, along sidewalks or in parks. This both highlights waste reduction and encourages community bonds.

A community facility such as a little free library can make it easier for residents to exchange used books (left). Reusable water bottle filling stations (right) can also make community members less likely to buy and dispose of plastic water bottles.

This page intentionally left blank.

2.14 Issue 14: Opportunities for Urban Agriculture

Issue Discussion

The Community Plan Update has the opportunity to support urban agriculture and help to build a sustainable food system in Mission Valley. Urban agriculture—backyard gardens, community gardens, community supported agriculture operations (CSAs), and farmers' markets—can help to improve access to healthy food, absorb runoff, reduce carbon emissions, and build community bonds. Agriculture was the first major use in Mission Valley, and there is an opportunity to synthesize the community's agrarian past with its increasingly urban future.

WHAT IS A SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEM?

Local agriculture, farmers' markets, and distributing and eating locally-grown food are aspects of a "sustainable food system." A sustainable food system addresses several areas of influence: food access and quality, production (farms and gardens), procurement (markets, stores, and city policies), transport (shipping methods and fuels, packaging, and other factors), and consumer and business decision-making. Sustainable food relates to broader issues of community health, environmental quality, local economic development, neighborhood revitalization, and community connectedness.

BENEFITS OF URBAN AGRICULTURE

Numerous studies have found that people who live in communities where fast food restaurants and corner stores are more convenient than grocery stores have more health problems and higher mortality than residents of areas with a higher proportion of grocery stores; the reverse is also true. Community gardens, community-supported agriculture (CSA) operations, and farmers' markets can also play a positive role in providing access to healthy and nutritious food and can help make Mission Valley a healthier place to live.

Urban agriculture can also provide environmental benefits. Growing more food locally means less food will be shipped long distances by truck, thus reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Urban agriculture can also help to capture and clean stormwater runoff, thus play a role in improving water quality.

Community gardens are also a way to productively use marginal urban land such as land under and along freeways and sites that house utility infrastructure. Last but maybe best, community

gardens can be attractive focal points that bring community members together, and promote public health through engaging community members in active, outdoor activity.

Options

1. CREATE COMMUNITY GARDENS ON PUBLICLY-OWNED LAND AND AS PART OF FUTURE PARKS

Mission Valley has the potential to provide multiple sites for community gardens that contain individual and shared-plot spaces. Land owned by Caltrans, in particular around freeway interchanges, and City-owned land including at the Qualcomm Stadium site, may have remnant areas that could be used as community gardens. The Qualcomm Stadium site is particularly attractive for community gardens due to it being partially located in the flood zone that is outside the Multi-Habitat Planning Area (MHPA); the areas of Mission Valley that are most likely to flood are ineligible for community gardens as they are located within the MHPA.

Priority sites for community gardens can be identified through the Community Plan Update. It will be critical to work in partnership with Caltrans and/or other public agencies. Community gardens can also be included as part of future parks and recreation facilities in Mission Valley. The City should develop and maintain partnerships with organizations to facilitate the development, administration, and operation of community gardens in Mission Valley.

2. FACILITATE THE INCLUSION OF COMMUNITY GARDENS IN NEW DEVELOPMENT

The Community Plan Update can include policies that would establish incentives for developers and landowners to include space for food production. Incentives may include additional floor area or density. Gardens may be incorporated into site plans of future developments, or located on rooftop gardens, and may be a resource for residents of the development or for members of the larger community.

3. MAKE IT EASIER TO ESTABLISH URBAN AGRICULTURAL USES AND OPERATIONS

Currently, community gardens are permitted as a limited use in base residential and commercial zones in San Diego. On-site sales of produce are permitted in commercial and industrial zones, and are permitted one day per week in residential zones. However, community gardens are not included in the list of permitted uses in the Mission Valley Planned District zones. The City can support home and community gardens by ensuring that zoning does not prevent or restrict the use of residential yards and common open space in multifamily communities for urban agricultural activities. In addition, larger-scale urban agriculture may be an appropriate temporary use on private parcels that may be developed in the future, in all zones in Mission Valley where it would not conflict with natural resource protection. Use of San Diego River for limited irrigation may be explored.

Meanwhile, the City can seek to partner with community supported agriculture (CSA) programs as an alternative source of fresh and healthy fruits and vegetables for local residents, particularly

those with limited mobility, limited income, or those furthest from existing grocery stores. CSAs can also be linked with Community Supported Kitchens (CSKs), which may offer a weekly pick-up box of prepared foods; cater events; offer classes; and even operate a café. Members of CSAs and CSKs generally pay a fee to receive weekly pick-ups, and can receive credits and discounts by contributing work.

4. SUPPORT URBAN FORAGING

Another emerging trend in urban sustainable food systems is urban foraging. In this model, city residents look around at the plants that make up the "green space" throughout the community, identify edible plants (usually fruit-bearing trees), and harvest their fruit as a local, healthy food source. Websites such as neighborhoodfruit.com and veggietrader.com are designed specifically to help connect community members to sources of fruit and vegetables in their neighborhoods, either through databases of trees on public lands, or coordinated "swaps" between households with produce to share. The Community Plan Update can contribute to this option by taking fruit into consideration when choosing trees and plants for public landscaping, and providing information on existing trees and plants.

Community gardens and farmers' markets can be focal points that bring the neighborhood together and create a sustainable food system.

This page intentionally left blank.

2.15 Issue 15: Opportunities to Grow the Tree Canopy

Issue Discussion

BENEFITS OF TREES

Mission Valley enjoys a Mediterranean climate, with relatively mild weather year-round. As a result, it is an area where a variety of trees can flourish. Trees are great assets in an urban environment. Trees provide shade, comfort, and skin protection to pedestrians, and can help to shade and cool adjacent homes and businesses, reducing the "urban heat island effect." They create a safer walking environment by creating a buffer between the road and sidewalk. Tree selection can support neighborhood identity and create a sense of place. Trees soften a dense urban environment and bring nature into the city. Trees help manage urban runoff both by delaying transmission of water to the ground and helping with absorption, and improve water quality.

THE EXISTING TREE CANOPY

Mission Valley had an estimated 2,076 street trees[1] along its 99 miles of streets as of 2002. The community's streets have a diverse range of species: California sycamore, eucalyptus, sweet gum, pine, Brisbane box, carrot wood, poplar, jacaranda, and Mexican fan palm. The City's Draft Urban Forest Management Plan estimates that if one tree were planted every 50 feet on both sides of existing public streets in Mission Valley (200 trees per mile of street), the community would have a capacity of 19,800 street trees. The Community Plan Update should help to guide Mission Valley in reaching this potential. The Plan Update can identify tree species along certain corridors to create neighborhood themes, help with wayfinding, and contribute to Mission Valley's identity.

[1] This figure does not include trees in park, residential, or commercial properties. In addition, this figure likely underestimates the number of street trees in Mission Valley, as it is only updated when a tree care management companies (contractors to the city performs tree maintenance, enters information into their database, and provides that data to the city.

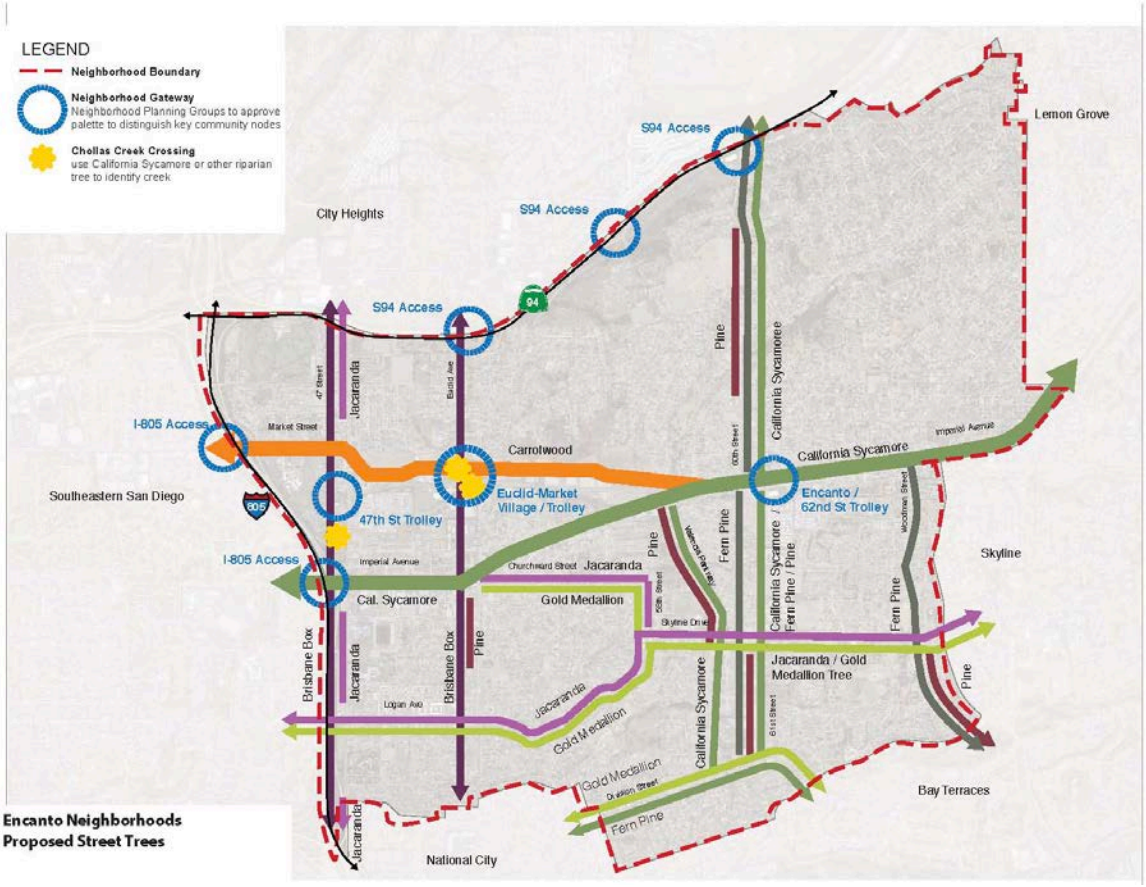
Options

1. INCREASE THE OVERALL TREE CANOPY

The Community Plan Update should include in its policies an aim to maximize the tree canopy and reach full street tree capacity in Mission Valley. Street tree spacing should create a continuous canopy and a buffer between the street and the sidewalk.

2. INCLUDE A COMMUNITY STREET TREE MASTER PLAN IN THE COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE

Many of San Diego's communities have their own Master Street Tree Plans. These plans identify tree species proposed for priority streets so that trees can become a defining characteristic of individual streets and neighborhoods, reinforce street hierarchy within the community, and be a wayfinding tool. Community Plan analysis and policies can lay the groundwork for a Master Street Tree Plan.



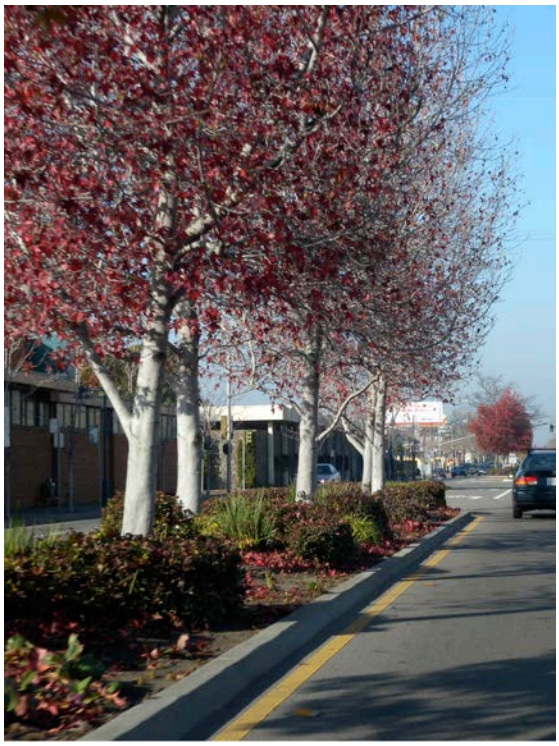
Encanto's recently completed community plan includes a comprehensive street tree plan, part of which is shown above.

3. SELECT AN APPROPRIATE AND USEFUL TREE PALETTE

Only appropriate and useful trees should be selected to contribute to Mission Valley's urban canopy. Trees should be selected with the following attributes in mind.

- **Consistent with City guide.** Select trees that are consistent with *San Diego's Street Tree Selection Guide*, lists recommended trees by size of available planting area.
- **Provide shade.** As much as possible, shade trees should be selected in order to provide shade and sun protection to community members, assist with natural cooling of adjacent buildings, and reduce the impacts of the urban heat island effect. To that end, palm trees should be avoided where shade, rather than decorative function, is desired.
- **Native species.** Particularly where streets cross the San Diego River, native riparian species, such as the California sycamore or Coast live oaks, should be used. The use of such species highlight the waterway and the significance of the corridor, as well as contribute to a sense of place. Selection of native species is also appropriate elsewhere in Mission Valley, to contribute to the area's identity and create an urban forest that requires less water and is more resistant to pests and diseases.
- **Drought-tolerant.** Species should be selected according to their water needs. It is preferable to select trees that do not require watering in the winter months after they are established.
- **Site appropriate.** Trees should be selected that are consisted with existing and future land uses. For instance, street trees should not have aggressive roots, which will damage sidewalks and utilities. Trees should be sited in locations that will not interfere with existing street lighting or obstruct visibility of businesses and their signage. Only trees that will not require unnecessary pruning of their natural shape should be chosen. Trees should be chosen with consideration of their maintenance needs, production of litter, ease of establishment, and quality of the habitat they provide to local wildlife. And, different trees are appropriate for different locations. Consideration should be given to the available planting areas or widths, for instance. Trees in key commercial areas should be chosen, in part, for their beauty and visual and/or seasonal interest.
- **Diversity.** A diverse series of species should be chosen as street trees for Mission Valley. This makes the urban forest less susceptible to being seriously impacted by one disease or pest. This does not mean that multiple species should be planted on each street or block. Rather, given the vast potential for additional street trees, there is room for a variety of species to be planted in the community.

Trees that do not provide shade, such as the Italian cypress and palms pictured on the left, are inappropriate in locations where providing shade is desirable, such as along sidewalks. A row of trees of the same species, such as the eucalyptus trees shown on the right, can contribute to a sense of place and help with wayfinding.



Medians (left) provide opportunities for new tree plantings. Wide sidewalks provide opportunities to plant an allée of trees (right)

4. LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO PLANT TREES

Part of growing the tree canopy should include finding new opportunities to plant trees in Mission Valley.

- **Landscaped Medians.** Trees should be planted in existing or new medians that are four feet wide or more.
- **Wide sidewalks.** Sidewalk widening can both create a more comfortable pedestrian environment and create additional opportunities for greening and public space. A double row of street trees should be planted where sidewalks and setbacks, together, exceed a total of fifteen feet. Opportunities to plant trees in curb extensions should also be reviewed.
- **Green streets.** Upgrading streets that provide connections to recreation and open spaces within Mission Valley can direct community members to recreational opportunities and provide additional places to grow the urban canopy.
- **Missing trees.** Empty tree basins should be planted with trees.

5. INCENTIVIZE NEW DEVELOPMENT TO RETAIN EXISTING, MATURE TREES AND PLANT NEW TREES

New development in Mission Valley should be incentivized to retain healthy, existing landmark trees and trees that are sufficiently mature. Development projects should also be required to plant new trees through the development permit process. In addition, new development should not interfere with existing trees in the right-of-way. In particular, awnings, canopies, balconies, and signs should not conflict with trees or landscaping or compromise tree health.

6. MAINTENANCE OF EXISTING TREES AND NEW PLANTINGS

Part of growing a verdant, expansive tree canopy is caring for existing and new plantings. Trees require maintenance in order to stay healthy and not become a hazard to people and property. It is recommended to conduct a regular tree maintenance and pruning program, as it is more cost effective than responding to work orders as needed. It is also recommended that regular pruning occur every five years. It is important to track maintenance history and prune in blocks, which will also increase efficiencies and decrease costs. All of this requires a regular funding source.

There are various funding streams to look into for increasing the funding for trees. For instance San Diego Maintenance Assessment District Ordinance provides for the use of Maintenance Assessment Districts (MADs), which are used in many parts of the city to manage trees. San Francisco is considering the implementation of a parcel tax to fund tree maintenance. Other options include business improvement districts, public/private partnerships, and permit fees.

This page intentionally left blank.

Appendix A: Assessment of Market Conditions

Assessment of Retail Market Conditions

This section presents an evaluation of key market supply and demand factors impacting the viability of retail space within Mission Valley.

NATIONAL RETAIL MARKET CONDITIONS

National economic conditions continue to be highly supportive of retail activity. Wage growth is intensifying and, correspondingly, retail sales are growing at their fastest pace since 1999. Ongoing improvement in the national and local retail market will continue to depend on the strength of the employment market. Over the last year, the U.S. has added approximately 2.0 million jobs, resulting in a decrease in the unemployment rate to 5.0%, the lowest it has been in seven years. By comparison, the County added approximately 47,000 jobs, resulting in a decrease in the unemployment rate to 4.6%. Rising employment in combination with other market supply and demand factors will continue to have a significant impact on the retail market throughout the County.

REGIONAL RETAIL MARKET CONDITIONS

According to the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), total County population was estimated at 3,194,362 in 2014. SANDAG also estimates that County population will increase by 925,330, or 29%, from 2012 to 2050. During this same time period, it is projected that the number of jobs in the County will increase by 460,492, or 32%. The anticipated growth in both population and jobs indicates a need to supplement retail supply in order to meet the anticipated growth in both resident- and employee-driven demand. Current market data indicate healthy retail market conditions throughout the County. According to commercial real estate service provider, NAI San Diego, the County contains approximately 122 million SF of retail space. County vacancy rates during the third quarter of 2015 were 4.3%, slightly higher than 3.9% from the previous year. The County's employment market remains strong with a current unemployment rate of 4.6%, lower than the State of California (State) average of 5.5% and the national average of 5.0%. A relatively low vacancy in conjunction with an improving employment market indicate the continued growth of the County retail market.

MISSION VALLEY RETAIL MARKET CONDITIONS

SANDAG estimates that Mission Valley contained a total population of 21,303 in 2014. It is anticipated that Mission Valley will experience a population increase of 17,302, or 91%, from 2012 to 2050. During this same time period, SANDAG projects Mission valley will add 14,250 jobs, or 32%. The increase in both population and jobs are indicative of the need to expand and strengthen Mission Valley's retail market.

The Mission Valley retail market is defined by its two regional malls, power centers, and plentiful supply of general retail. Retail is dispersed throughout Mission Valley, primarily located along Camino De La Reina and Friars Road, generally between SR 163 and Interstate 15 (I-15). Mission Valley's current inventory of retail space totals approximately 5.8 million SF, within a diverse mix of retail center types as presented below.

Table A-1: Mission Valley Retail Market – by Retail Center Type

Retail Center Type	*Description*	*Total GLA (SF)*	
Mall	Center providing full depth and variety of shopping goods built around a full-line department store	3,400,000	58%
Shopping Center	A group of retail stores that are planned, developed, owned, and managed as a single property, with on-site parking provided	900,000	16%
Power Center	Center consisting of several freestanding (unconnected) anchors	800,000	14%
General Retail[1]	Includes all freestanding retail buildings, except those contained within a center	700,000	12%
Total Retail SF		**5,800,000**	**100%**

1. Includes auto dealerships.

Source: CoStar Group.

According to NAI San Diego, current retail vacancy rates in Mission Valley are extremely low at 1.0%, compared to Downtown (4.9%), Central San Diego [1] (3.1%), and the County as a whole (4.3%). The current average retail rent in Mission Valley is $2.85 NNN, notably higher than retail rents in Downtown ($2.59 NNN), Central San Diego ($2.66 NNN), and the County as a whole ($1.95 NNN). According to CoStar, commercial land sales in Mission Valley from 2010 to 2015 averaged between $75 and $100 per SF. Low vacancy rates in conjunction with moderate rent and land prices reflect values that are supportive of a robust retail market.

As shown below, estimated taxable sales in Mission Valley totaled $2.3 billion in 2014, representing 10.5% of total estimated taxable sales in the city. General Consumer Goods, the largest sales category in Mission Valley, comprised 25.2% of all General Consumer Goods sales in the entire city.

[1] Includes Clairemont/Kearny Mesa/ Tierrasanta, Downtown, Mid City/Southeast San Diego, Mission Valley, Pacific Beach/Morena Boulevard, Point Loma/Sports Arena Boulevard, and other.

Table A-2: Estimated Taxable Sales by Category ($000s), Mission Valley vs. City of San Diego, 2014[1]

	Mission Valley			*City of San Diego*		
Category	*Estimated Taxable Sales, 2014*	*% of Total*	*Average Annual Growth Rate, 2010 - 2014*	*Estimated Taxable Sales, 2014*	*% of Total*	*Average Annual Growth Rate, 2010 – 2014*
General Consumer Goods[2]	$1,518,163	65.0%	4.8%	$6,021,001	27.0%	3.8%
Autos and Transportation	$318,288	13.6%	12.2%	$3,161,083	14.2%	8.1%
Restaurants and Hotels	$236,169	10.1%	3.9%	$4,110,618	18.4%	6.1%
Business and Industry	$96,281	4.1%	5.1%	$3,706,326	16.6%	6.4%
Building and Construction	$94,505	4.1%	2.0%	$1,653,693	7.4%	7.7%
Fuel and Service Stations	$31,073	1.3%	5.6%	$2,408,469	10.8%	6.0%
Food and Drugs	$40,294	1.7%	3.1%	$1,262,295	5.7%	3.1%
Total, All Outlets[3]	**$2,334,773**	**100%**	**5.5%**	**$22,323,486**	**100%**	**5.7%**

1. Estimated taxable sales data may not accurately reflect retail sales by category due to the reporting methods of the California State Board of Equalization (i.e., select retail stores will reflect the same average taxable sales at different locations in the city).
2. Includes Department Stores, Electronic/Appliance Stores, Apparel, Home Furnishings, Music Stores, etc.
3. Excludes Transfers and Unidentified sales category.

Source: HdL Companies, City of San Diego.

Between 2010 and 2014, total estimated taxable sales in Mission Valley grew at an average annual growth rate of 5.5%, slightly lower than the growth rate experienced by the city (5.7%) during this same period. In 2014, the top three retail categories in Mission Valley were General Consumer Goods, Autos and Transportation, and Restaurants and Hotels, representing approximately 88.8% of total estimated taxable sales. By comparison, during the same year, the top three retail categories in the city were General Consumer Goods, Restaurants and Hotels, and Business and Industry, representing approximately 62.0% of total estimated taxable sales.

According to detailed sales data for new and used auto dealerships provided by the City, sales of autos in Mission Valley showed robust growth since 2010. Between 2010 and 2014, auto sales experienced an average annual growth rate of 13.0%. As shown below, the current mix of auto makes in Mission Valley is very limited in comparison to larger auto malls in Carlsbad, Escondido, and National City.

Table A-3: List of Available Car Makes by Submarket, 2015

	Mission Valley	*Carlsbad*	*Escondido*	*National City*
Acura			X	X
Alfa Romeo		X		
Buick	X	X	X	X
Cadillac	X	X	X	
Chevrolet	X	X		X
Chrysler	X	X	X	X
Dodge	X	X	X	X
Fiat		X		
Ford		X	X	X
GMC	X	X	X	X
Honda		X	X	X
Hyundai		X	X	X
Infiniti		X	X	
Jaguar		X		
Jeep	X	X	X	X
Kia		X	X	X
Land Rover		X		
Lexus		X	X	
Lincoln	X			
Mazda	X	X	X	X
Mercedes-Benz		X	X	
Mini			X	
Mitsubishi				X
Nissan			X	X
Ram	X	X	X	X
Scion				X
Subaru				X
Toyota		X		X
Volkswagen			X	X

In 2014, of the eight largest retail centers in Mission Valley, Fashion Valley accounted for approximately 50.3% of total estimated taxable sales, followed by Fenton Marketplace (20.4%) and Westfield Mission Valley (15.2%). Together, these three retail centers accounted for approximately 85.9% of total estimated taxable sales among the retail centers listed below.

Table A-4: Estimated Taxable Sales by Retail Center, Mission Valley[1]

Retail Center	*Estimated Taxable Sales, 2014*	*% of Total*	*Average Annual Growth Rate, 2010 - 2014*
Fashion Valley	$869,304,000	50.3%	5.9%
Fenton Marketplace	$353,540,000	20.4%	5.1%
Westfield Mission Valley	$262,709,000	15.2%	1.4%
Park Valley Center	$70,108,000	4.1%	-0.6%
Rio Vista Shopping Center	$63,298,000	3.7%	15.6%
Westfield Mission Valley West	$57,256,000	3.3%	1.8%
Friars Mission Center	$30,009,000	1.7%	6.6%
Hazard Center East	$22,990,000	1.3%	2.9%
Total All Retail Centers	**$1,729,214,000**	**100%**	**4.8%**

Source: HdL Companies, City of San Diego.
1. Estimated taxable sales data may not accurately reflect retail center sales due to the reporting methods of the California State Board of Equalization (i.e., select retail stores will reflect the same average taxable sales at different locations in the city).

Retail centers experiencing the fastest average annual growth rates from 2010 to 2014 include Rio Vista Shopping Center (15.6%), Friars Mission Center (6.6%), Fashion Valley (5.9%), and Fenton Marketplace (5.1%). During this same time period, retail centers experiencing the slowest average annual growth rates were Park Valley Center (-0.6%), Westfield Mission Valley (1.4%), Westfield Mission Valley West (1.8%), and Hazard Center East (2.9%).

An analysis of 2014 estimated taxable sales per SF by each retail center is presented below. As shown, in 2014, Fenton Marketplace experienced the highest estimated taxable sales per SF at $567, compared to Friars Mission Center, which experienced only $107 per SF in the same year. Fashion Valley experienced the highest volume of estimated taxable sales at $869 million, followed by Fenton Marketplace ($354 million) and Westfield Mission Valley ($263 million). Estimated taxable sales for these retail centers totaled approximately $1.8 billion, yielding an average estimated taxable sales per SF of $383.

Table A-5: Estimated Taxable Sales Per SF by Retail Center, Mission Valley[1]

Retail Center	*Estimated Taxable Sales, 2014*	*SF GBA*	*Estimated Sales per SF*
Fenton Marketplace	$353,540,000	623,018	$567
Fashion Valley	$869,304,000	1,720,963	$505
Hazard Center East	$22,990,000	65,000	$354
Westfield Mission Valley West	$57,256,000	195,000	$294
Park Valley Center	$70,108,000	271,222	$258
Rio Vista Shopping Center	$63,298,000	261,135	$242
Westfield Mission Valley	$262,709,000	1,102,621	$238
Friars Mission Center	$30,009,000	280,376	$107
Total All Retail Centers	**$1,729,214,000**	**4,519,335**	**$383**

Source: HdL Companies, City of San Diego.
1. Estimated taxable sales data may not accurately reflect retail center sales and sales per SF due to the reporting methods of the California State Board of Equalization (i.e., select retail stores will reflect the same average taxable sales at different locations in the city).

There are six (6) developments with retail uses in Mission Valley that are currently under construction, approved, or in review, as listed below. At completion, these developments will add more than 716,000 SF of retail, representing a 12.3% increase over existing Mission Valley inventory.

Table A-6: Planned or Under Construction Commercial Retail Projects

Project	*Address*	*Description of Project*	*Status*
Mixed-Use			
Civita	8080 Friars Road	• 4,780 residential units • 480,000 SF of commercial retail • 420,000 SF of office • 17.5 acres of parks, civic uses, open space and trails, and an optional school site	Under Construction
Camino Del Rio Mixed-Use Development	730 Camino del Rio North	• 291 residential units • 14 shopkeeper units • 4,000 SF of retail	Approved
Mission Valley Mixed-Use Development	444-480 Camino del Rio South	• 72 residential apartments • 101,050-SF commercial building	Approved
Union Tribune Mixed-Use Development	350 Camino De La Reina	• 200 residential units • 212,000-SF parking structure • 3,000 SF of retail • 60,000 SF of outdoor amenity/public space	Approved
Discovery Place	2315 Camino Del Rio South	• 88,275 SF comprising hotel, fast food, and retail/commercial	In Review
Retail/Commercial			
Costco-Mission Valley Addition	2345 Fenton Parkway	• 2,787-SF commercial addition • 2,347-SF commercial addition	Approved

Source: City of San Diego, 2015.

Assessment of Office Market Conditions

This section presents an evaluation of key market supply and demand factors impacting the viability of office space within Mission Valley.

REGIONAL OFFICE MARKET CONDITIONS

National office trends continue to experience robust activity due to the increase of office-using employment. Current County office market trends are reflective of the conditions of the national market. The San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) projects the number of jobs in the County will increase by 460,492, or 32%, from 2012 to 2050. Additional office space is needed accommodate for this anticipated increase in employment. Existing County conditions indicate a steady office market with potential for growth.

According to NAI San Diego, the County contains nearly 114 million SF of office space. During the third quarter of 2015, the County office market experienced a significant increase in rental rates, Class A office inventory, and number of office leasing and building sales transactions. Four office buildings totaling 669,155 SF were constructed in the County during the third quarter of 2015. Construction of office space in the County has remained consistent over the past five years, delivering between 500,000 and 800,000 SF per year, yet below the historical average. This low pace of construction has contributed to low vacancy rates and increased renovation of existing office uses throughout the County. As such, County vacancy rate was 11.6%, down from the previous year rate of 12.0%. Earlier this year, office lease rates in the County reached an average of nearly $2.77 per SF per month full-service gross (FSG), a record high for the market since the national recession. (FSG leases are leases requiring the landlord to provide and pay for all operating expenses for a property in return for a fixed periodic rent from the tenant.) Current County unemployment is 4.6%, lower than both the State (5.5%) and national average (5.0%). Declining vacancy and unemployment rates indicate the potential for new office market opportunities throughout the County.

MISSION VALLEY OFFICE MARKET CONDITIONS

Due to its central location in the region, rental rates perceived as good value, ample parking supply, and abundance of retail, the Mission Valley office market is the preferred market for regional offices of national corporations, insurance companies, and other business services firms. Office space is concentrated along major highway intersections of I-8 and SR 163, I-8 and I-805, I-8 and I-15, as well as Mission Center Road and Friars Road.

SANDAG projects that Mission Valley will add up to 14,250 jobs, or 32%, between 2012 and 2050. This is indicative of a need to increase the supply of office space to accommodate for future job growth. There are approximately 7.1 million SF of office space in Mission Valley. A majority of this office space is classified as Class B, defined as buildings with ordinary architectural design and structural features, and Class C, defined as older buildings that offer basic space, which account for 72.0% of total office space. The remaining 28.0% of space is classified as Class A office space. The breakout of Mission Valley office space by building class and current average rent is presented below.

Table A-7: Mission Valley Office Space by Class

Building Class	*Total SF*	*% of Total*	*Average Rent* [1]
Class A	2,000,000 SF	28%	$3.17
Class B	3,500,000 SF	49%	$2.28
Class C	1,600,000 SF	23%	$1.72
Total	7,100,000 SF	100%	$2.43

1. Reflects countywide current average rental rate

Source: Colliers International.

According to NAI San Diego, average office rents in Mission Valley are $2.29 per SF per month FSG. Average rents in Mission Valley are lower than Downtown ($2.34 FSG), UTC ($3.30 FSG), and the County as a whole ($2.43 FSG). However, rental rates in Mission Valley remain higher than the Central San Diego submarket [2] ($2.13 FSG) as a whole. NAI San Diego also estimates current vacancy in Mission Valley as 9.5%, lower than Downtown (15.4%), UTC (17.1%), Central San Diego (10.2%), and the County as a whole (11.6%). In general, vacancy factors below 10% suggest potential demand for development of new office inventory. According to CoStar, from 2010 to 2015, office buildings in Mission Valley sold for prices ranging from $116 to $300 per SF, with an average price of $170 per SF. A total of two buildings sold for prices ranging from $250 to $300 per SF, indicating values that begin to support new construction building costs. In general, the current cost to develop new mid-rise office buildings with structured parking is estimated at $300 to $350 per SF. Given the tight vacancy condition in the Mission Valley submarket, and the recent building sales approaching $300 per SF, new speculative office development can be expected in the next five to 10 years. Additional office space is planned as part of the Civita master plan, which includes plans for up to 620,000 SF of office space.

[2] Includes Kearny Mesa, La Jolla, Mira Mesa/Miramar, Mission Valley, Pacific Beach/Rose Canyon/Morena Boulevard, and Uptown East.

This page intentionally left blank.

DYETT & BHATIA
Urban and Regional Planners

755 Sansome Street, Suite 400
San Francisco, California 94111
415 956 4300 415 956 7315