01

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

This Existing Conditions Community Atlas provides baseline information on existing conditions, opportunities, and challenges in the College Area Community Plan Update. The Atlas focuses on geographic resources, trends, and critical issues that will frame choices for the long-term physical development of the College Area. The Atlas includes information relating to demographics, land uses, economic settings, community form, mobility, the natural environment and open spaces, and environmental and community health. The Community Atlas will be used as a basis for:

- Facilitating community input on planning issues, priorities, and visions for the future;

- Evaluating policy issues and options, and preparing alternative land use and transportation concepts;

- Identifying potential community opportunities and constraints; and

- Formulating policies and implementation actions for the updated community plan.

1.2 College Community Plan Purpose, Vision and Process

GENERAL PLAN CONTEXT

The San Diego General Plan, last comprehensively updated in 2008, sets out a long-range vision and policy framework to guide future development, provide public services, maintain the qualities that uniquely define San Diego, and contains a set of overall guiding principles. The update to the General Plan shifts the focus from how to develop vacant land to how to design infill development and reinvest in existing communities. A key component guiding these efforts is the City of Villages strategy, which proposes growth be directed into pedestrian-friendly mixed use activity centers linked to an improved regional transit system. Regional and local investments that promote transit and bicycle use support this strategy. By increasing transportation choices, a reduction in overall vehicle miles traveled can be achieved, a key contributor to broader sustainable development initiatives. As part of this strategy, the General Plan identifies 52 community planning areas, including the College Area, for which community plans provide more specific policies tailored to the characteristics of the community.

Better mobility options are also needed for those who cannot drive, do not own a motor vehicle, or prefer to reduce their dependence on the automobile. Benefits to individual as well as public health can be achieved with any reduction in air pollutants as well as a shift in favor of walking. These villages and activity centers will be identified in the Community Plan, with mixed use commercial districts and higher density neighborhoods along transit lines being candidate village locations within the community. Within these village areas, the policies of the Plan can be used to focus the implementation of needed investments in infrastructure, transit, and other mobility improvements. As part of the planning process, the College Area Community Plan will tie into the general themes and guiding components of the City's General Plan and build upon these strategies.
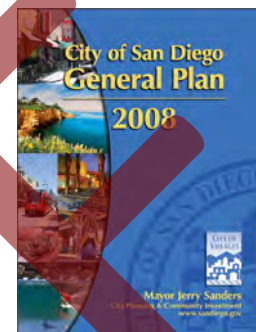
A key component of the General Plan is a City of Villages strategy which proposes growth be directed into pedestrian-friendly mixed use activity centers linked to an improved regional transit system. The College Area Community Plan Update will tie into the general themes and guiding components of the City's General Plan and build upon its strategies.

College Area Community Plan Vision

College Area envisions a college town with vibrant mixed use corridors and villages, that are connected to neighborhoods and the University, and that enhance the community.

COMMUNITY PLAN PURPOSE

Community plans work together with the General Plan to provide location-based policies to further the City of Villages strategy. Community plans are written to refine the General Plan's citywide policies, designate land uses and housing densities, achieve the community's vision, and provide additional site-specific recommendations as needed. Community plans also play a key role in helping the City to meet its Climate Action Plan (CAP) targets by planning for an urban form conducive to alternative modes of transportation.

What a Community Plan does:

- Provides a community-level policy and zoning framework for growth and development, for use by City officials, property owners, developers, and community members.

- Identifies strategies that support the community vision, and establishes goals and policies to address land use, the mobility network, urban design guidelines & community character, and the necessary public facilities to support the community.

- Provides a forum for public participation in the planning process.

COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE PROCESS

The City of San Diego has begun a collaborative effort to update the College Area Community Plan, which was last updated in 1989. Community plans provide goals and policies for housing, mobility, open space & parks, public facilities, conservation & sustainability, urban design and historic preservation. The updated community plan will help to revitalize key activity centers, provide housing options and recreational opportunities, and strengthen connections between SDSU and the community. During the update process, Planning Department staff will work with the College Area community and the public to identify and consider important questions, issues, and opportunities including:

- How will College Area grow over the next 20-30 years?

- What services, infrastructure or facilities are needed to meet this growth?

- How can the community best plan for new housing opportunities, including housing for San Diego State University students?

- How can College Area nurture the economic relationship with San Diego State University and strengthen the community's connection to the university?

- How can the community support neighborhood businesses, including those along the community's celebrated El Cajon Boulevard business corridor?

- How can the community build upon College Area's robust transit network, including the trolley and the El Cajon Boulevard Bus Rapid Transit, to support additional housing near transit?

- Where can College Area create public and recreation spaces that provide opportunities to get outside, connect and play?

The public is encouraged to participate as an update to the College Area Community Plan is successful when it reflects the goals and values of the community.

PROJECT TIMELINE

2020	2021	2022	2022	2023
❶	❷	❸	❹	❺
Plan College Launch	Concept Development	Draft Plan	CEQA Environmental Review	Plan Approval

PLANNING DOCUMENT

	COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE			
		ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT		
				PUBLIC HEARINGS

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC INPUT

• Website & email sign up for updates • Online Engagement • Community Planning Group (CPG) Subcommittee	• Community Open House • Planning Commission Workshop • Online Engagement • CPG Subcommittee	• Community Open House • Online Engagement • CPG Subcommittee	• EIR Public Comment Period • CPG Subcommittee	• CPG Vote • Planning Commission • Council Committee • City Council

1.3 Regional Location and Planning Area

The College Area community is located along the southern border of Mission Valley, approximately eight miles northeast of Downtown. The College Area is primarily made up of single family residential neighborhoods, but includes major institutional uses such as the San Diego State University campus (SDSU) and Alvarado Hospital Medical Center, as well as the commercially-oriented El Cajon Boulevard - a major east-west thoroughfare. The community shares boundaries with the communities of Navajo, Mission Valley, Kensington-Talmadge, and Eastern Area, as shown in **Figure 1-1**.
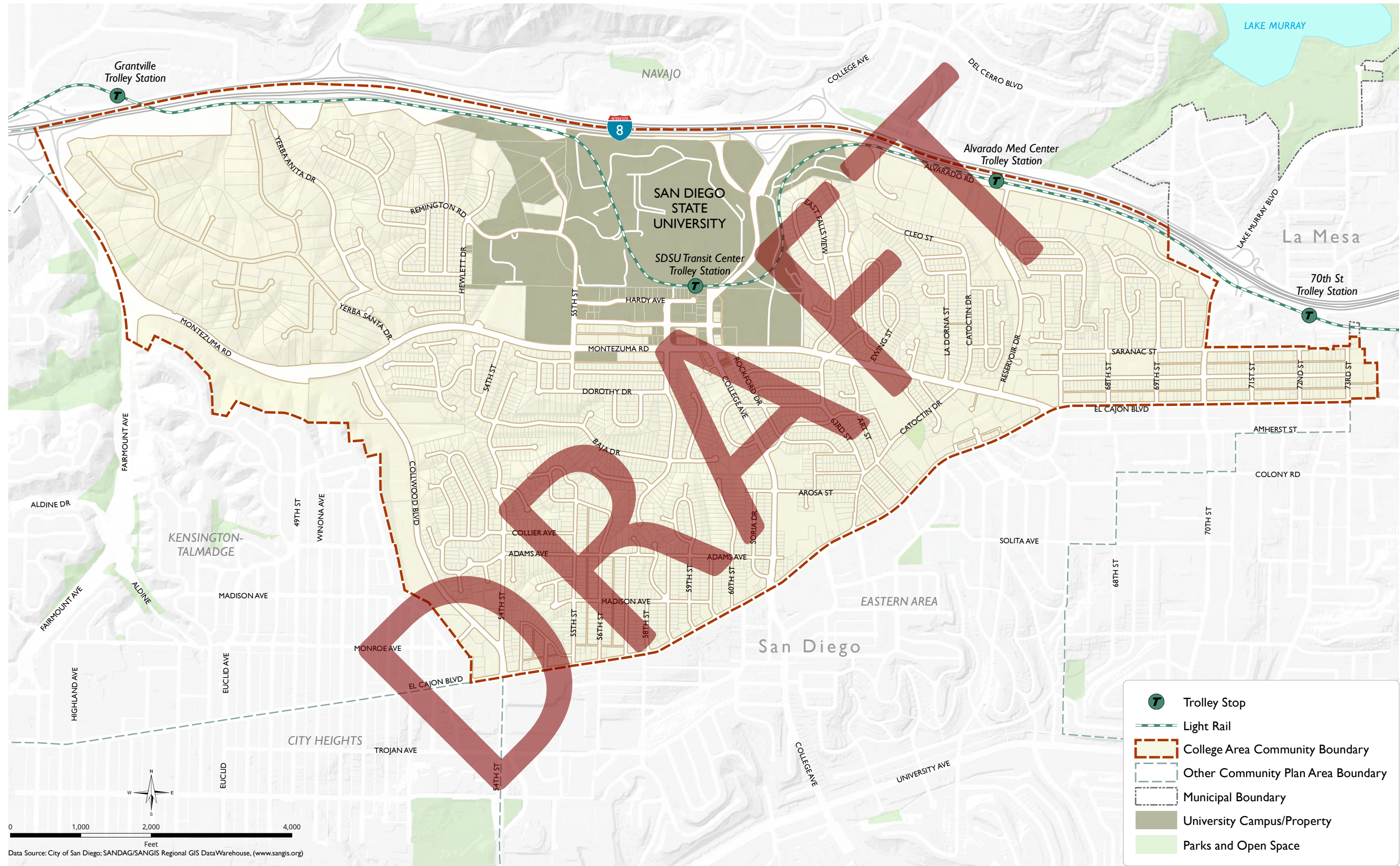
As indicated in **Figure 1-2**, the plan area encompasses approximately 1,970 acres and is generally bounded by Interstate 8 (Kumeyaay Highway) to the north; the City of La Mesa to the east; El Cajon Boulevard to the southeast; and Collwood Boulevard, Montezuma Road, and Fairmount Avenue to the west.

Figure 1-1 **Regional Location**

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Figure 1-1 Regional Location

Legend:
- ⓉTrolley Stop
- Trolley Routes
- Coaster
- Freeways
- College Area Community Boundary
- Other Community Plan Area Boundary
- Municipal Boundary
- Schools
- Parks
- Open Space
- Airport
- Water

Data Source: City of San Diego; SANDAG/SANGIS Regional GIS DataWarehouse

Figure 1-2 **Planning Area**

LAKE MURRAY

Grantville
Trolley Station

NAVAJO

COLLEGE AVE

DEL CERRO BLVD

INTERSTATE 8

Alvarado Med Center
Trolley Station

ALVARADO RD

LAKE MURRAY BLVD

La Mesa

SAN DIEGO
STATE
UNIVERSITY

YERBA ANITA DR

REMINGTON RD

HEWLETT DR

YERBA SANTA DR

EAST FALLS VIEW

CLEO ST

SDSU Transit Center
Trolley Station

70th St
Trolley Station

55TH ST

HARDY AVE

EWING ST

LA DORNA ST

CATOCTIN DR

RESERVOIR DR

SARANAC ST

MONTEZUMA RD

MONTEZUMA RD

54TH ST

DOROTHY DR

COLLEGE AVE

ROCKFORD DR

63RD ST

ART ST

CATOCTIN DR

68TH ST

69TH ST

71ST ST

72ND ST

73RD ST

EL CAJON BLVD

FAIRMONT AVE

COLLWOOD BLVD

BAJA DR

SORIA DR

AMHERST ST

ALDINE DR

49TH ST

WINONA AVE

AROSA ST

COLONY RD

KENSINGTON-
TALMADGE

COLLIER AVE

ADAMS AVE

ADAMS AVE

SOLITA AVE

70TH ST

FAIRMONT AVE

ALDINE

MADISON AVE

55TH ST

56TH ST

58TH ST

59TH ST

60TH ST

MADISON AVE

EASTERN AREA

68TH ST

HIGHLAND AVE

EUCLID AVE

MONROE AVE

EL CAJON BLVD

San Diego

EUCLID AVE

CITY HEIGHTS

TROJAN AVE

54TH ST

COLLEGE AVE

UNIVERSITY AVE

DRAFT

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

0   1,000   2,000   4,000
Feet

N
W   E
S

Legend

T Trolley Stop

Light Rail

College Area Community Boundary

Other Community Plan Area Boundary

Municipal Boundary

University Campus/Property

Parks and Open Space

1.4 Demographic Overview

According to the latest estimates from the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), the total population of the College Area was nearly 22,700 in 2019, approximately 1.6% of the city's population. Demographic characteristics of this population are largely influenced by the student population attending SDSU which reports a total enrollment of about 34,000 students. **Chart 1-1** shows age groups within the College Area; when compared to the overall city, residents in College Area are considerably younger. Individuals between the ages of 20 to 29 represent the largest share of the age groups, comprising approximately 37% of the total College Area population; nearly 61% of the population is under 30 years of age. In comparison, 18% of the population in the overall city is between the ages of 20 to 29, with 41 % of the population under 30 years of age. The median age in the College Area is 24.6 years – more than a decade less that the median citywide age of 35.2 years.

Per the U.S. Census, "Family" is defined as a group of two people or more (one of whom is the householder) related by birth, marriage, or adoption and residing together. **Chart 1-2** shows the family population within College Area and citywide. Of the total household population in the College Area, 44% are considered to be family households while 56% are non-family households. In comparison, the City has a 74% family households makeup - about 30% greater than the College Area. This indicates that there are significantly less family households that comprise the College Area population, most likely due to the SDSU student population. The average household size in the College Area is 2.58 persons per household, similar to the citywide average household size of 2.68 persons.

The median household income for residents in the College Area is around $54,500 which is 33% less than the citywide median household income of $80,200. **Chart 1-3** shows the household income distribution comparing the College Area to the overall city. 17% of the College Area collects less than $15,000 in annual income, almost double the City-wide rate of 9% within this income category. The student population at SDSU likely contributes to the community's lower median household income and to the significant portion of the College Area with an annual income below $15,000.

As shown in **Chart 1-4**, the College Area community is predominantly non-Hispanic White (50%). Hispanic of any race is the second largest ethnic group (23%). The third largest ethnic group is non-Hispanic Asian (13%). The fourth largest ethnic group is non-Hispanic Black (8%). Residents who are two or more ethnicities, or identify as another ethnicity not previously listed, represent 6% of the College Area community. As per the American Community Survey from 2018, the College Community has the following breakdown of languages spoken: 80% speak only English, 8% speak Spanish, 4% speak a Indo-European Language, 6% speak an Asian-Pacific Island Language, and 2% speak another language.

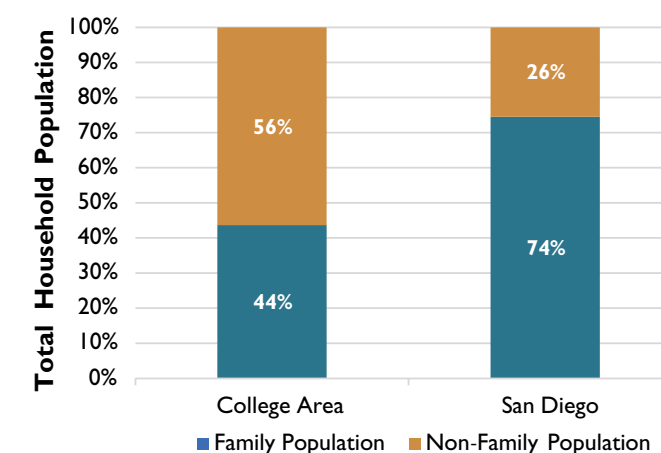### Chart 1-1: Age Groups, College Area and San Diego
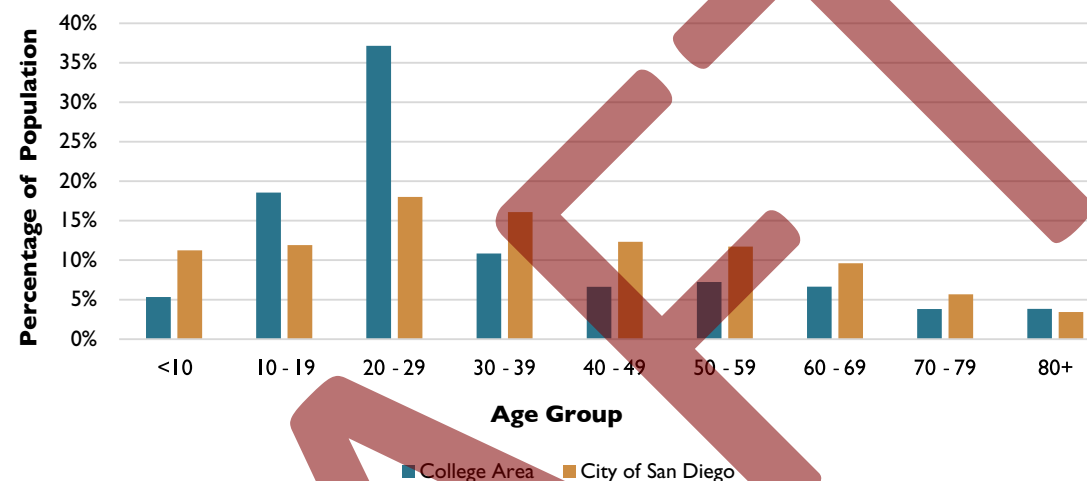
Source: City of San Diego; SANDAG 2018 Estimates; Dyett and Bhatia 2020

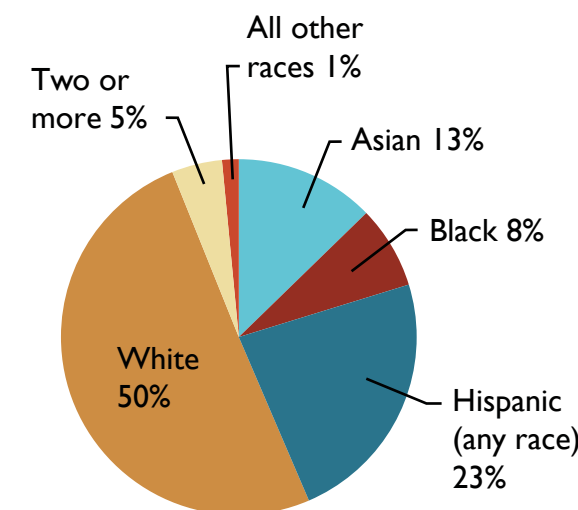### Chart 1-3: Household Income, College Area and San Diego
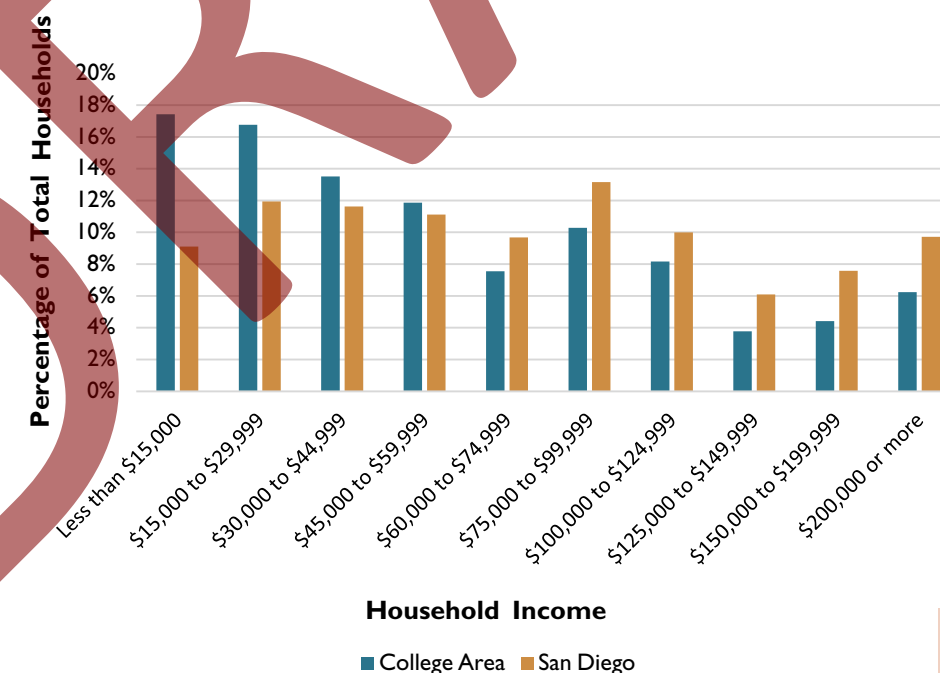
Source: SANDAG 2018 Estimates; Dyett and Bhatia 2020

Chart 1-2: Family Population, College Area and San Diego

Source: City of San Diego; ACS 2019 Current Estimates; Dyett and Bhatia 2020

### Chart 1-4: Ethnic Breakdown of College Area

Source: SANDAG 2018 Estimates; Dyett and Bhatia 2020

Nearly 61% of the College Area population is under 30 years of age, largely influenced by the student population attending SDSU.

## 1.5　Existing Plans and Regulatory Framework

LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE

The City of San Diego Land Development Code (LDC) is part of the municipal code and contains regulations and controls pertaining to land use, density and intensity, building massing, architectural design, landscaping, storm water management, street frontages, lighting, and other development characteristics. The LDC implements the policies and recommendations of the Community Plan and all development within the community must comply with regulations set forth in the LDC. Zoning is also within the municipal code and is a key tool used to implement community plan land uses.
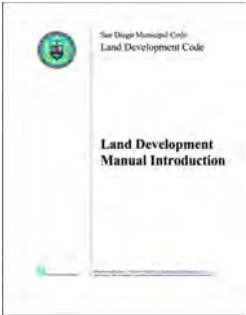
EXISTING COLLEGE AREA COMMUNITY PLAN (1989)

The current College Area Community Plan was originally adopted in 1989 and has been amended three times since then. The Plan identifies several key issues, goals, and objectives for the College Area Community. These include providing for growth that ensures preservation of single family neighborhoods; improving the transportation system; providing a range of retail and commercial services that support the community; developing a cohesive open space system and adequate recreational and social opportunities; and ensuring a high level of public services. The plan is organized into eight elements including housing, San Diego State University, transportation, commercial, open space, parks and recreation, public facilities, and urban design and an implementation section.
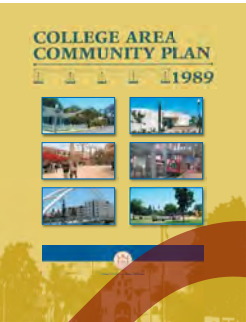
MASTER PROJECT PLAN (1993) AND CORE SUB-AREA DESIGN MANUAL (1997)

The Master Project Plan (MPP) is a redevelopment plan adopted in 1993 that was required as part of the 1989 College Area Community Plan. The MPP presents approved land uses, development densities and general design principles applicable throughout the Redevelopment Project Area,

as well as specific requirements for five sub-areas. The MPP includes five redevelopment sub-areas, the largest of which is the 58.6 acre Core Sub-Area on the southern side of the SDSU campus. The Core Sub-Area extends from Plaza Drive on the north to sites fronting the south side of Montezuma Road; and from 55th Street on the west, to the alley east of College Avenue. The Core Sub-Area Design Manual, adopted in 1997, gives more precise form to the prescriptions of the MPP through detailed development controls and architectural and landscape guidelines which are designed to ensure coordinated development of the area and appropriate functional and aesthetic relationships between various projects.

SDSU CAMPUS MASTER PLAN (2007)

The 2007 Campus Master Plan is the blueprint that guides the physical growth and development of the SDSU campus. The Campus Master Plan includes the development of classrooms, student and faculty/staff housing, and student support facilities throughout the SDSU campus and immediately adjacent to it to meet a projected enrollment increase of 10,000 full-time equivalent students. The six project components include:

- Adobe Falls Faculty/Staff Housing, which includes development of faculty and staff housing on a site approximately 33 acres in size located north of Highway 8 (note, this component is not within the plan area);

- The Alvarado Campus, which includes an expansion of the current Campus Master Plan northeastern boundary and the multi-phase development (near-term and long-term) of approximately 612,000 GSF of academic/research/medical space, and a 552,000 GSF vehicle parking structure;

- The Alvarado Hotel, which includes development of an approximately 60,000 GSF six-story building with approximately 120 hotel rooms and studio suites;

- Campus Conference Center, which includes development of a new 70,000 GSF 3-story building to be used for meeting/conference space, office space, food services, and retail services;

- Student Housing, which includes demolition of two existing student housing structures and the construction of five new housing structures, ultimately resulting in a net increase of 2,976 new student housing beds on campus; and

- The Student Union/Aztec Center Expansion and Renovation, which consists of a 101,000 GSF expansion and renovation of the existing Aztec Center to include social space, recreation facilities, student organization offices, food services, and retail services. This expansion is expected to be completed in 2021.

SDSU prepared a 2018 Draft Additional Analysis that included mitigation measures to implement recommended road improvements and a transportation demand management program.

SAN DIEGO PARKS MASTER PLAN (2020 - NOT ADOPTED)

The San Diego Parks Master Plan, most recently updated in 2020, provides a citywide framework for park and recreation goals, policies, and needs. The plan sets a new standard for park space, updating the City's previous target of 2.8 acres per 1,000 residents to a system that evaluates the amenities or features a park provides for the community. The new system, called the Recreational Value-Based Park standard, sets a new recreational value of 12 points per 1,000 people and represents a range of recreation experiences comparable to the opportunities available to residents in communities that previously achieved the acreage-based standard.

MULTIPLE SPECIES CONSERVATION PROGRAM (1997)

The Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) is a comprehensive, long-term habitat conservation planning program to preserve native habitat for multiple species. This is accomplished by identifying areas planned to be conserved in perpetuity, referred to as the Multi-Habitat Planning Area (MHPA), to achieve a workable balance between new development and species conservation. A portion of the open space lands in the western part of the community are within the MHPA. Open space lands within the MHPA are addressed in the Conservation and Recreation elements of the Community Plan and are implemented by the City's MSCP Subarea Plan.
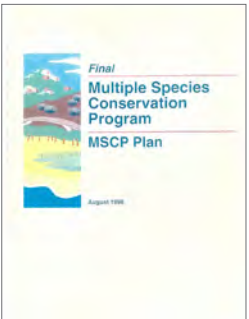
CLIMATE ACTION PLAN (2015)

The 2015 City of San Diego Climate Action Plan calls for eliminating half of all greenhouse gas emissions in the city and aims for all electricity to be from renewable sources by 2035. The Climate Action Plan provides a road map to achieve greenhouse gas reductions, conforms to California laws and regulations, implements the General Plan, provides California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) tiering for greenhouse gas emissions from new development, and establishes strategies to accomplish other sustainability goals.
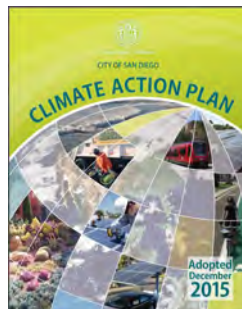
OTHER CITYWIDE DOCUMENTS

Other citywide documents that inform the College Area Community Plan include the City of San Diego's Pedestrian Master Plan, Bicycle Master Plan, Street Design Manual, and Urban Forestry Management Plan.
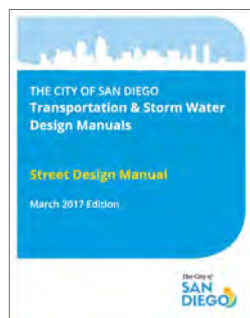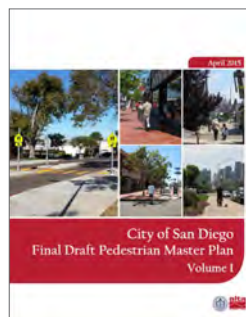
1.6   Introduction Summary

This section summarizes key information related to the College Area Community Plan Update project presented in this chapter.

- The College Area encompasses about **three square miles** anchored by major institutions such as SDSU and the Alvarado Hospital Medical Center.

- Nearly **61%** of the College Area population is **under 30** years of age, largely influenced by the student population attending SDSU.

- About **44%** of the total College Area household population is considered "family households"—**30%** less than the citywide family households makeup of **74%** and most likely due to the SDSU student population.

- The median household income for College Area residents is **$54,500**, **33%** less than the citywide median household income, and a significant portion of the population makes under **$15,000**, likely influenced by the SDSU student population.

- In order from larger to smaller ethnic categories by population, residents of the College Area are 1) non-Hispanic White, 2) Hispanic of any race, 3) non-Hispanic Asian, and 4) non-Hispanic Black.

- The existing College Area Community Plan was adopted in **1989** and requires updating so that the College Area Community and the public have the opportunity to decide how the College Area should grow over the **next 30 years**. The current San Diego General Plan was updated in 2008 and updating the College Area Community Plan will expand upon the General Plan to make localized goals and policies.

- A key component of the General Plan is a **City of Villages** strategy, which proposes growth be directed into pedestrian-friendly mixed use activity centers that are linked to an improved regional transit system. The College Area Community Plan Update will tie into the general themes and guiding components of the City's General Plan and build upon the strategies within.