02

LAND USE

2.1 Existing Land Use

2.2 Density and Intensity

2.3 Adopted Land Use

2.4 Zoning

2.5 Land Use and Mobility

2.6 Land Use Summary

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2.1 Existing Land Use

The College Area community encompasses approximately 1,969 gross acres and 1,548 net acres. **Figure 2-1** displays the distribution of existing land use as of 2019 and **Table 2-1** and **Chart 2-1** show the pattern of existing land use in acres and percentage of land area.

RESIDENTIAL

Nearly three-fourths of the College Area is residential (69%), with single family residential (63%) comprising the largest share of residence land area. Multi family residential and dormitories/group quarters represent 6% (99 acres) of the College Area and are typically located in close proximity to SDSU and along transit corridors, with many of the structures serving as student housing. There are approximately 8,549 housing units (1,071 acres) within the College Area, with 4,079 units as multi family residential or attached single family and 3,412 units as single family detached residential. Despite multi family residential representing 6% of the land use, it contains 60% of the total housing units for the College Area.

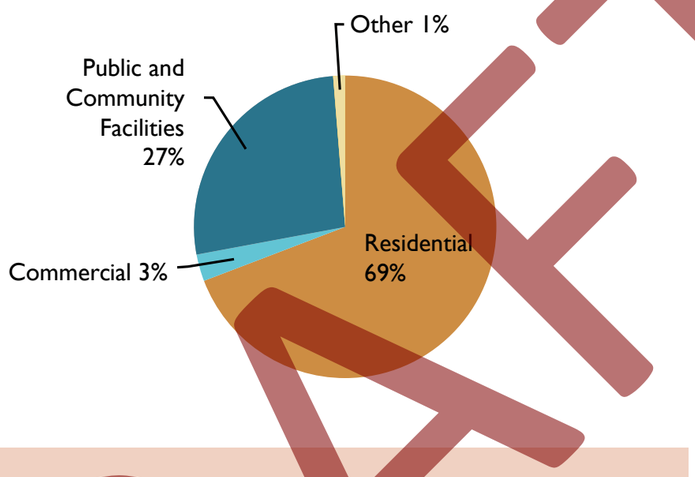
PUBLIC AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Institutional uses comprise about 27% of the College Area, including the Alvarado Hospital Medical Complex, religious institutions, Platt College, and schools. The San Diego State University (SDSU) Campus accounts for more than half of the land utilized for institutional uses. The SDSU campus is 262 acres, or about 14% of the total College Area. Parks and open spaces account for about 5% of the College Area. While park facilities are located within single family residential neighborhoods, most of the College Area's open space is among the canyons in the western portion of the community.

COMMERCIAL AND OTHER

Around 3% of the land use is commercial. The commercial uses include retail, regional, wholesale, and visitor commercial. Commercial uses are found in a fine-grained pattern primarily along El Cajon Boulevard. To a lesser degree, commercial uses are also found along College Avenue, along Montezuma Road, and adjacent to the University. Office uses, which make up a 0.1% of the College Area, can also be found interspersed among commercial uses on El Cajon Boulevard.

Chart 2-1: Existing Land Use



Within the College Area, 69% of the land area is residential, 27% Public and Community Facilities, 3% Commercial, and 1% all other uses.

CORE AREA LAND USE

The College Community Redevelopment Project, part of the Master Project Plan adopted in 1993 and was ceased by the State when local Redevelopment Agencies (RDAs) were dissolved in 2012, was initiated by the SDSU Foundation and the City of San Diego to improve conditions surrounding the SDSU campus. This core area, shown in **Figure 2-2**, is focused along the southern edge of the campus near the SDSU Transit Center. Current uses include high-density housing along Montezuma Road, mixed use commercial/ and residential along College Avenue, designated sorority and fraternity housing, and very-high-density residential along Hardy Avenue.

Table 2-1: Existing Land Use

Existing Land Use Categories	Acres	Percentage
Residential	**1,071**	**69%**
Single Family Residential	972	63%
Multi Family Residential	99	6%
Commercial	**45**	**3%**
Retail Commercial	37	2%
Visitor Commercial	6	0.4%
Office Commercial	2	0.1%
Public and Community Facilities	**412**	**27%**
Institutional	105	7%
Educational	224	14%
Parks, Open Space, and Recreation	83	5%
Other	**22**	**1%**
Communication and Utilities	.1	.01%
Parking	5	0.3%
Vacant	17	1%
Transportation and Right of Way (ROW)	**421**	**-**
TOTAL Net Area (excluding Transportation and ROW)	1,548	100%
TOTAL Gross Area (including Transportation and ROW)	1,969	

**Numbers may not add due to rounding. Percentages with less than 1% are shown as 0%.*

Source: City of San Diego; Dyett and Bhatia 2020

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Figure 2-1 **Existing Land Use**

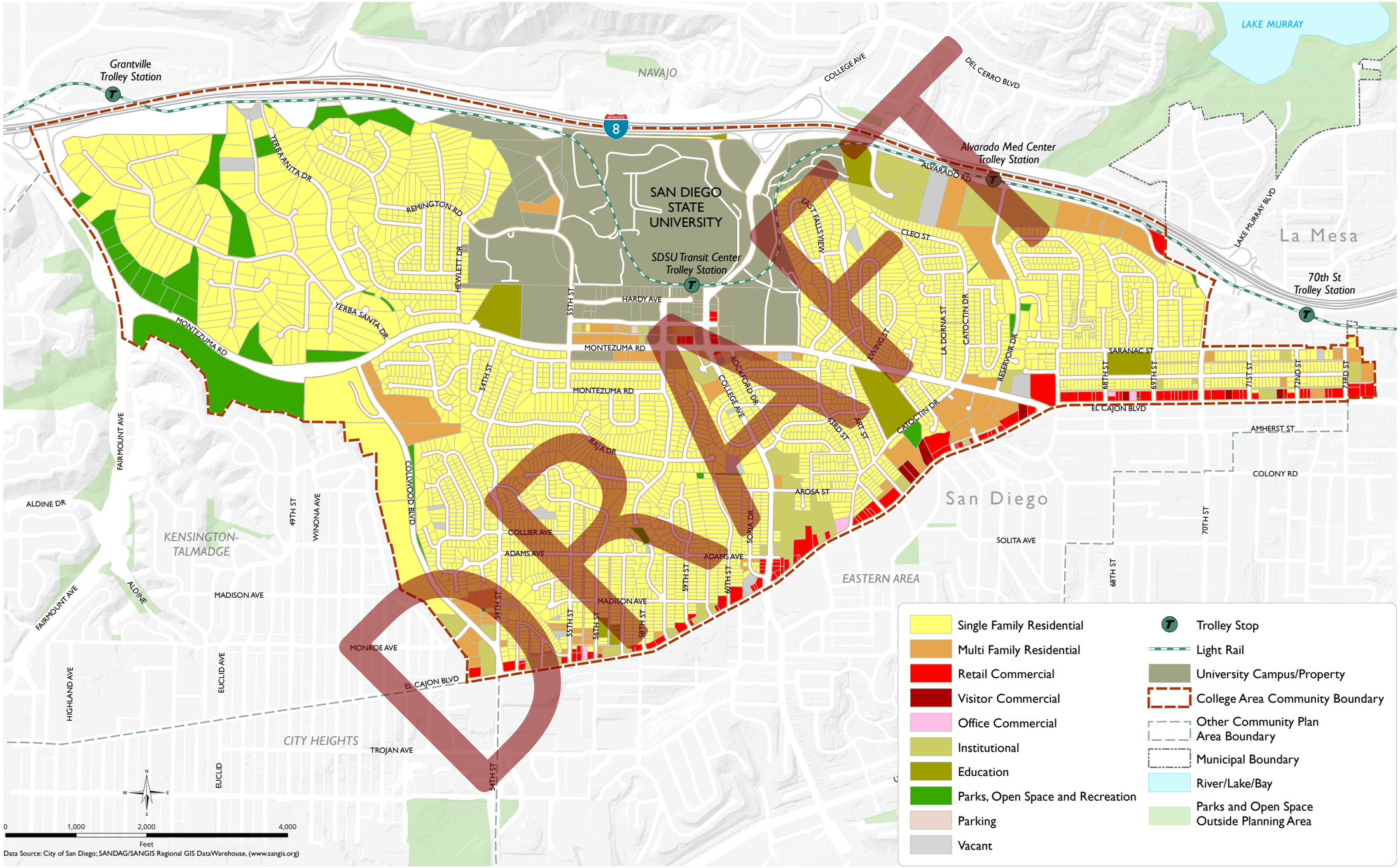
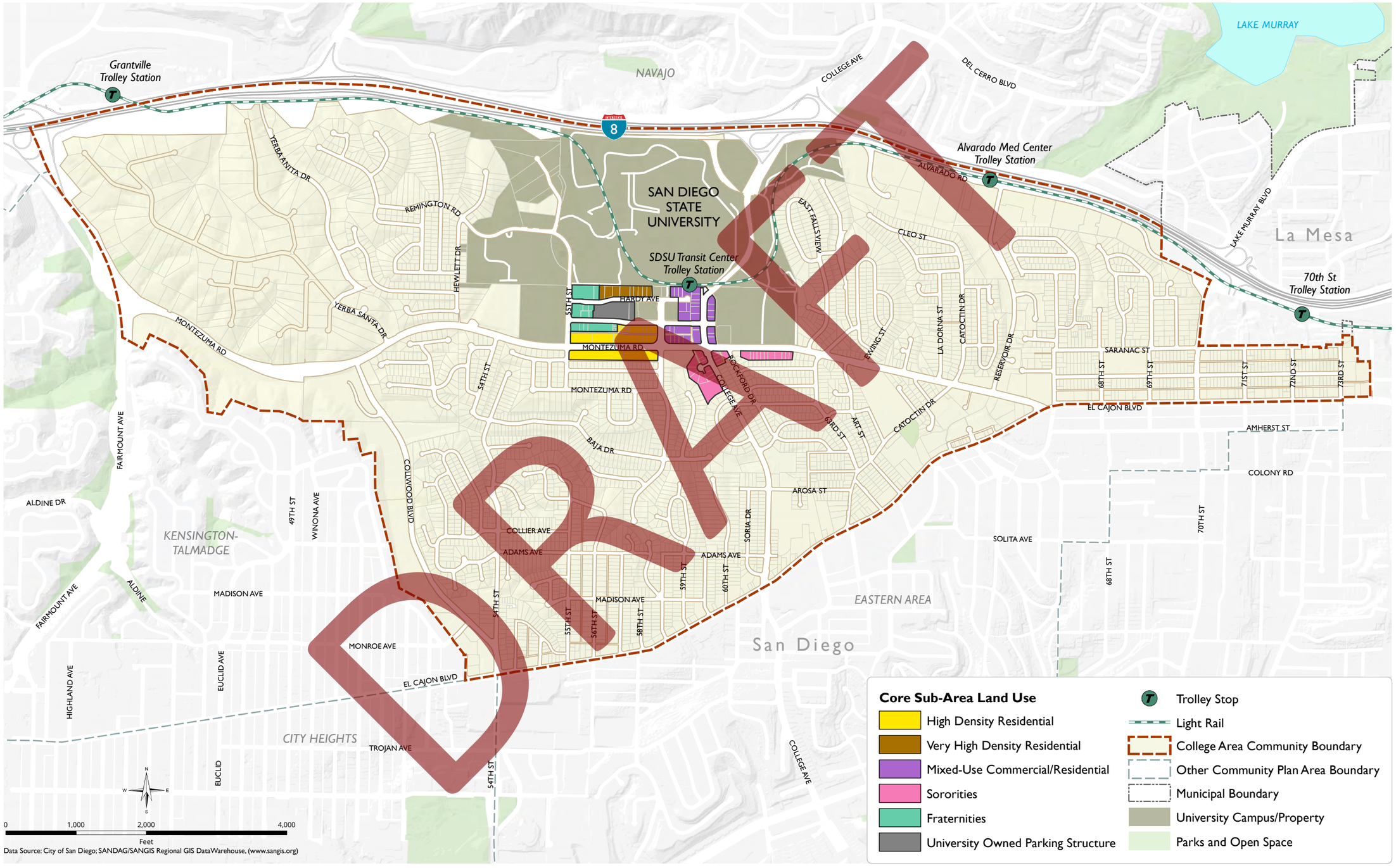


Figure 2-2 **Core Area Land Uses**



2.2 Density and Intensity

EXISTING RESIDENTIAL DENSITY

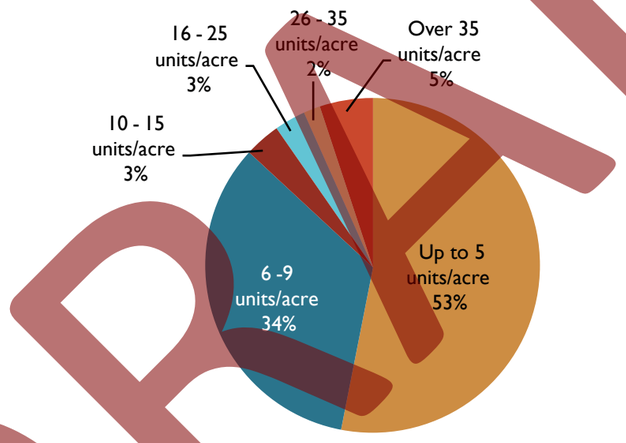
Residential density is expressed as the number of housing units per acre (units/acre). The density distribution of existing residential development is shown in **Figure 2-3** and summarized in **Chart 2-2**. The majority acreage within College Area (53%) has a density up to 5 units/acre which reflects the large portion of detached single family homes as are the predominant housing type in the community. A total of 1,240 units are up to 5 units/acre. Thirty four percent of the total residential and area has a density of 6-9 units per acre. This consists of 2,435 units.

The average residential density for College Area is, at 7.8, below the average San Diego citywide residential density of 10.1units/acre.[1]

Figure 2-4 shows dormitories and other group quarters facility, most of which are located within the Core Area surrounding the edges of the SDSU campus. There are several high occupancy multifamily complexes—most of which cater to SDSU students—located on the periphery of the campus, Montezuma Road, and along El Cajon Boulevard as illustrated in **Figure 2-5**. There is a concentration of high occupancy residences at the intersection of Montezuma Road and El Cajon Boulevard. While many of the high occupancy buildings are apartment complexes on large lots, high occupancy buildings on smaller lots can also be found interspersed throughout the College Area. **Figure 2-6** illustrates the approved residential and mixed use projects. A total of 162 units have been approved within the College Area.

1 *SANDAG SR-13 Forecast; Data Surfer*

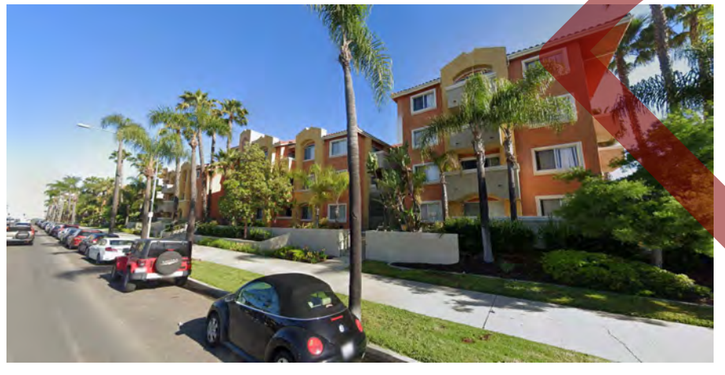
Chart 2-2: Breakdown of Existing Residential Densities



Within the College Area, 53% of residential land has a density of up to 5 units/acre, with an overall average density of 7.8 units/acre which reflects the predominance of single family homes in the community. The citywide average residential density is 10.1 units/acre.

What are Group Quarters?

The US Census Bureau defines group quarters as places where people live or stay in a group living arrangement. These places are owned or managed by an entity or organization providing housing and/or services for the residents. These services may include custodial or medical care as well as other types of assistance, and residency is commonly restricted to those receiving these services. College dormitories, religious group living quarters, and hospice/nursing facilities are examples of group quarters.



The Core Area consists of mixed use buildings and high density housing. (photo credit: Google Streetview)

Example of some of the single family homes in the College Area.

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Figure 2-3 **Residential Density**

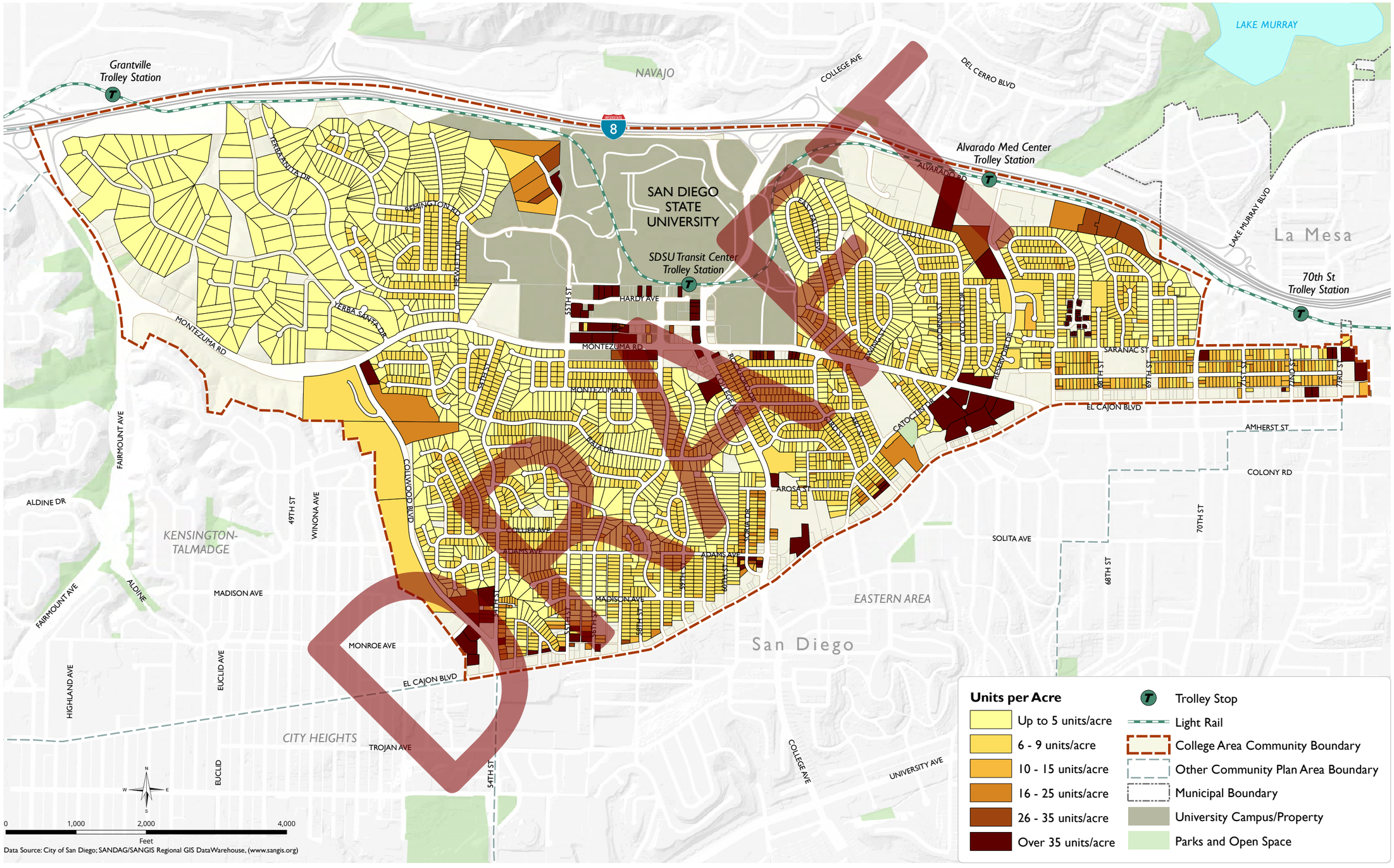


Figure 2-4 **Dormitories**

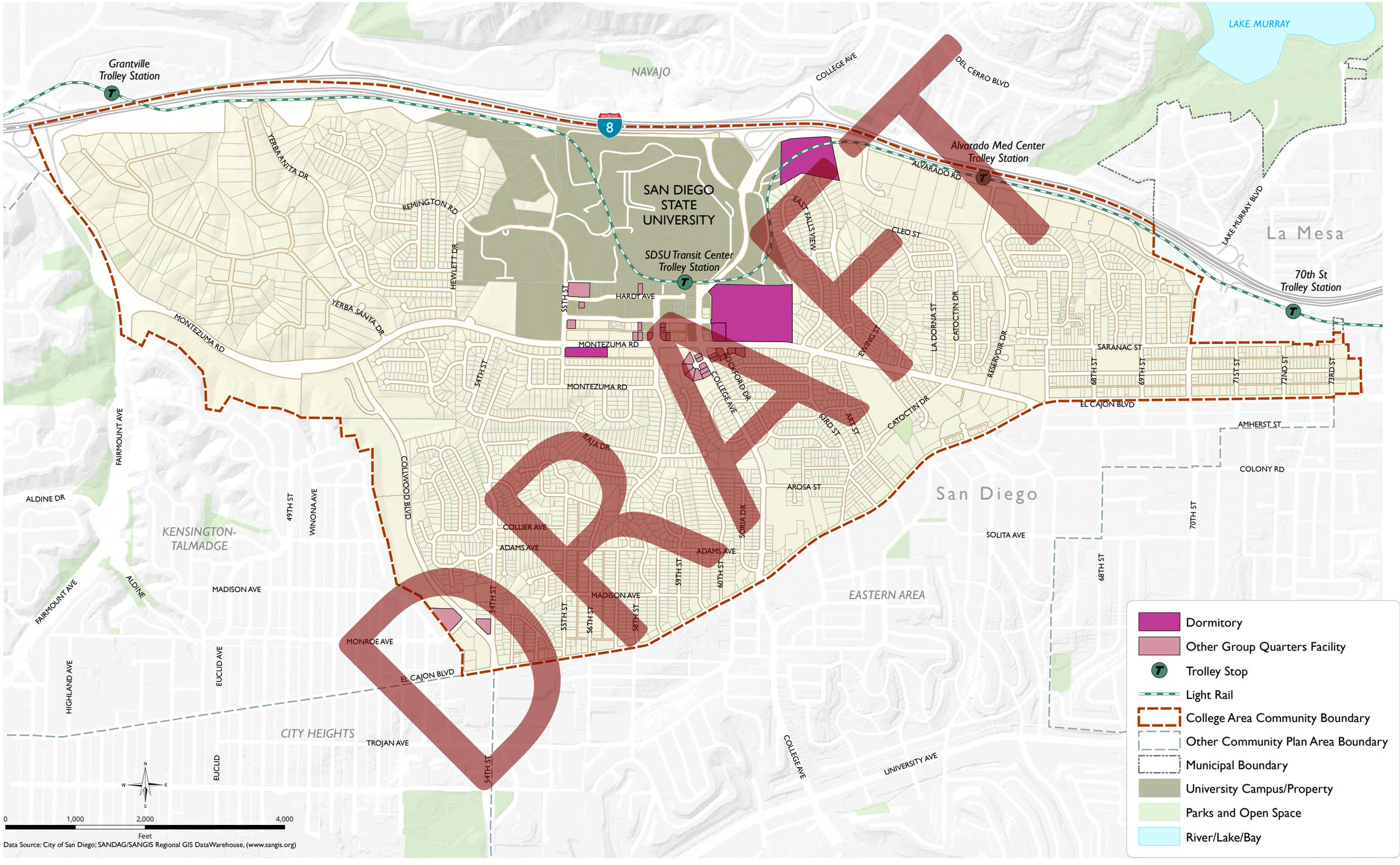


Figure 2-5 **Single Family Homes with 5 Bedrooms**

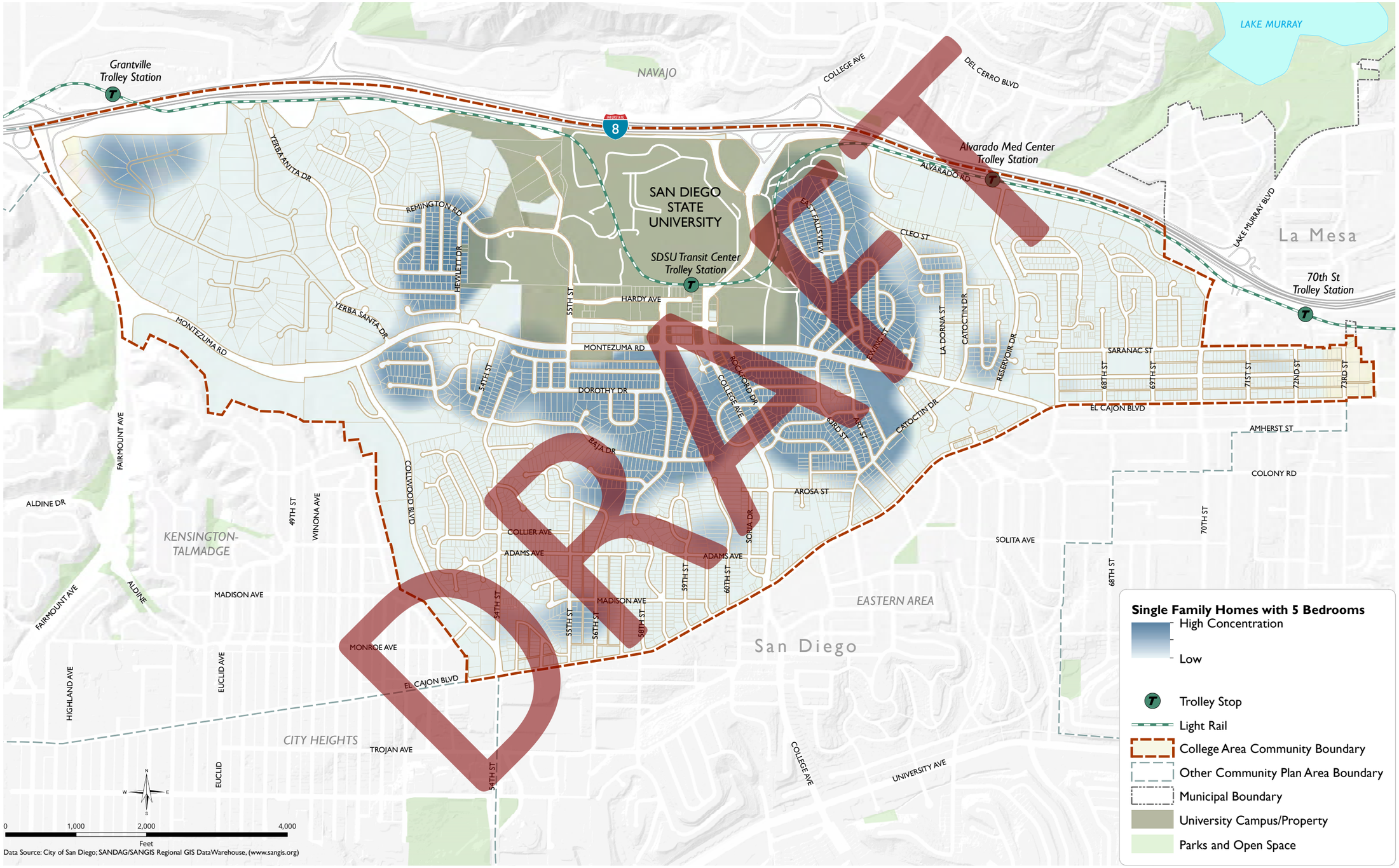
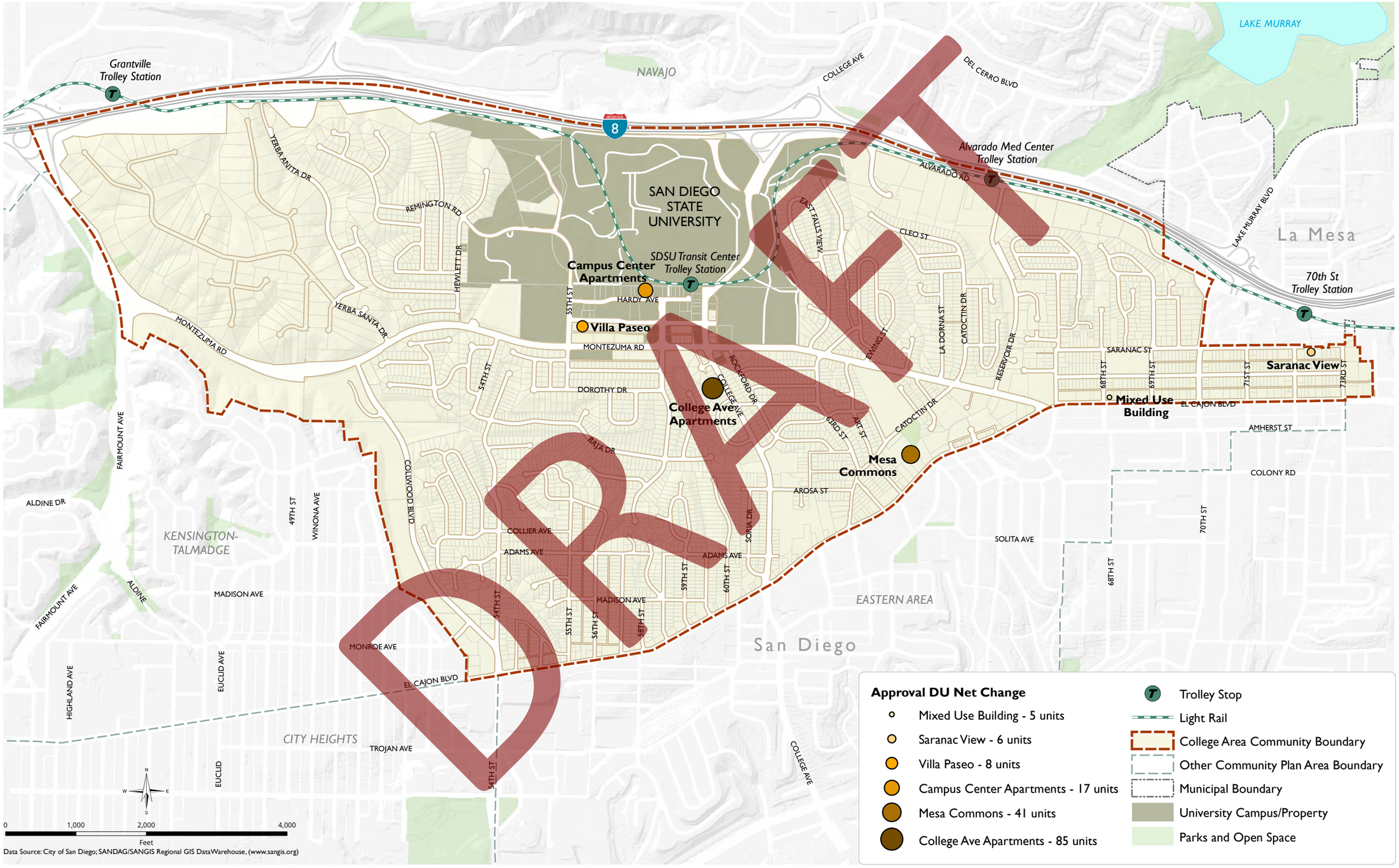


Figure 2-6 **Approved Multi Family Residential Construction**



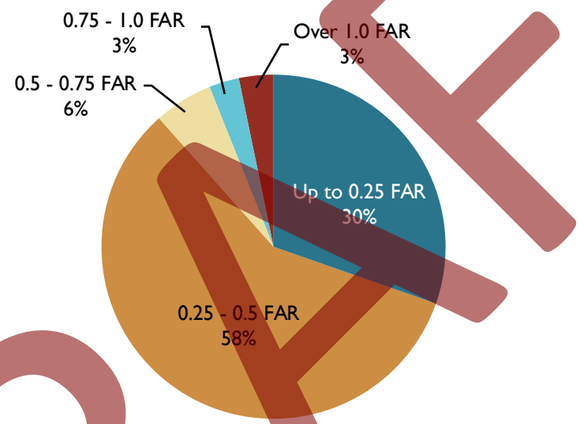
EXISTING NON-RESIDENTIAL INTENSITY

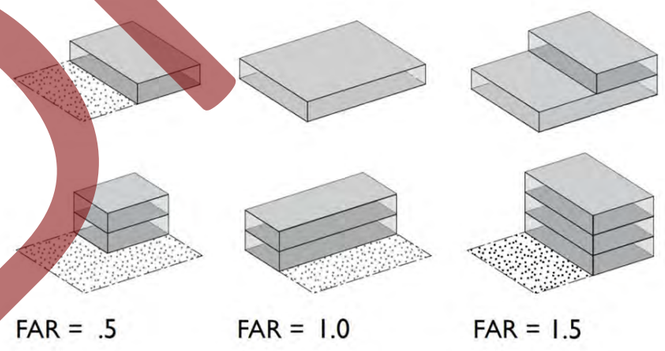
Development intensity is expressed as Floor Area Ratio (FAR), which refers to the ratio between a building's total floor area and the total area of the site. The intensity of non-residential development (office, commercial, institutional, and industrial) in the College Area is shown in **Figure 2-7** and a breakdown of FAR percentages is shown in **Chart 2-3**. Overall, non-residential buildings have an average 0.6 FAR.

The breakout of FAR values shows that, for non-residential land, 30% is below 0.25 FAR, 58% is between 0.25 to 0.5 FAR, 6% is between 0.5 to 0.75 FAR, 3% is between 0.75 to 1.0 FAR, and 4% is 1.0 FAR or more. When summarized, most of the non-residential land (88%) has an FAR below 0.5. Development with the highest FARs are located within the Core Area and at Iconic Alvarado, the mixed use building near the Alvarado Medical Center Trolley Station. Even though 88% of the non-residential land has an FAR below 0.5, the average FAR is higher due to the properties that are above 1.0 FAR (including some of the older commercial buildings at 7200 El Cajon Boulevard) which increases the overall average.

Within the College Area, 88% of non-residential land has a floor area ratio (FAR) below 0.5, with an overall average 0.6 FAR.

Chart 2-3: Breakdown of Existing Non-Residential Intensities (Floor Area Ratio FAR)





FAR is calculated by comparing the ratio of a building's total floor area to the area of the site it is on.

The average floor area ratio for non-residential buildings within the College Area is 0.6.

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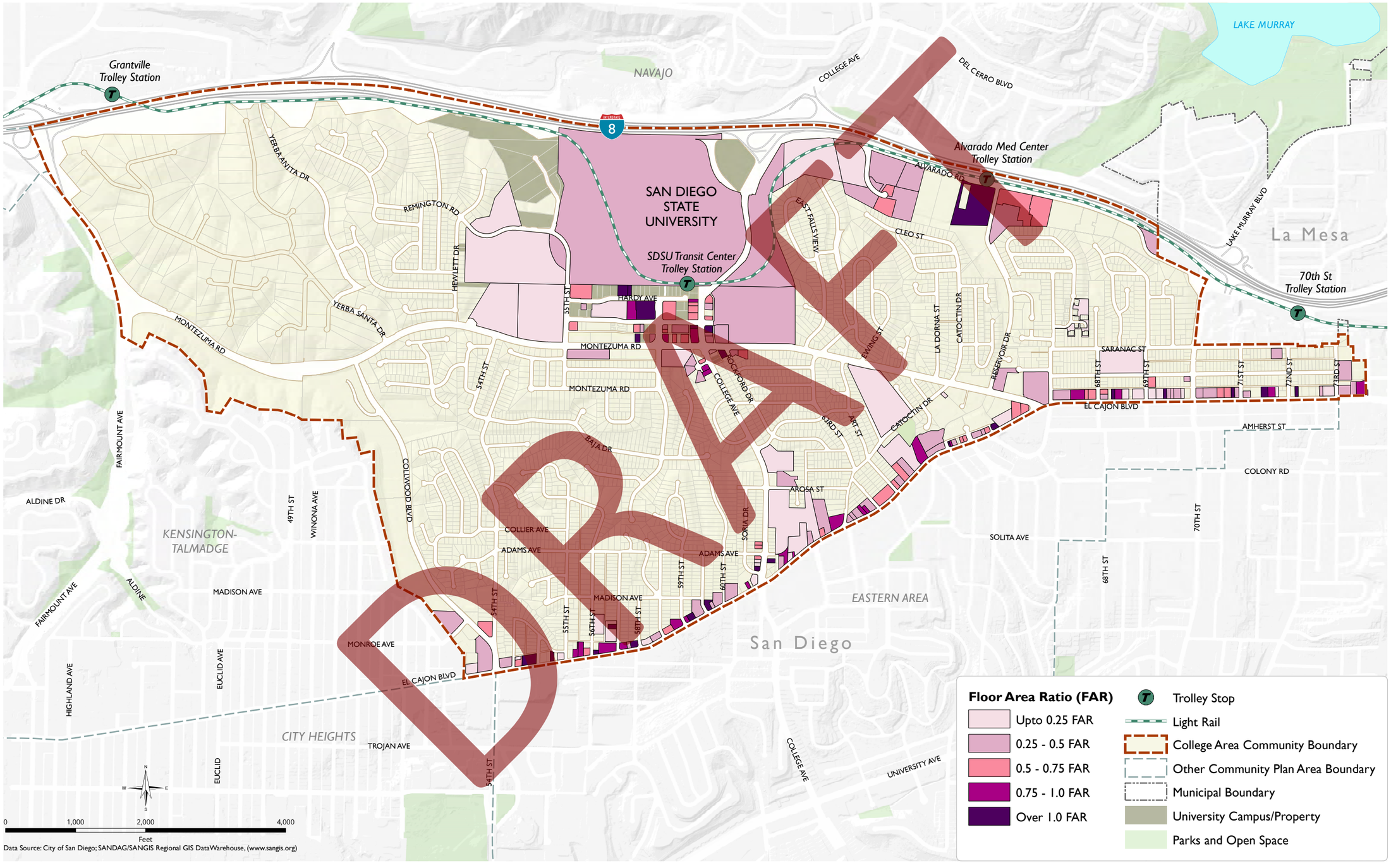
Figure 2-7 **Non-Residential FAR**



2.3 Adopted Land Use

The College Area Community Plan land use diagram, shown in **Figure 2-8**, shows the Plan's adopted land use designations. As shown in the figure and listed in **Table 2-2**, a significant portion of the College Area (44%) is designated as Low Density Residential, with all residential uses representing 62% of the total acreage. General Commercial with residential (3%) is largely found along El Cajon Boulevard, with Low-to-Medium Residential bordering the commercial corridor. Medium to Medium-High Residential land uses are found around the periphery of the SDSU campus, near Alvarado Road, and along Montezuma Road. These, along with Very-High Residential uses, are largely student housing. Mixed Use Commercial is found on campus, and Office Commercial is located near the hospital. The SDSU campus represents about 14% of the total land use and open-space represents about 14%. A breakdown of land use designations in the current College Area Community Plan is shown in **Chart 2-4**.

The largest percentage of land by land use designation in the adopted College Area Community Plan is Low Density Residential (43%), followed by the SDSU campus (13%) and Open Space (13%).

Chart 2-4: Community Plan Adopted Land Use Summary

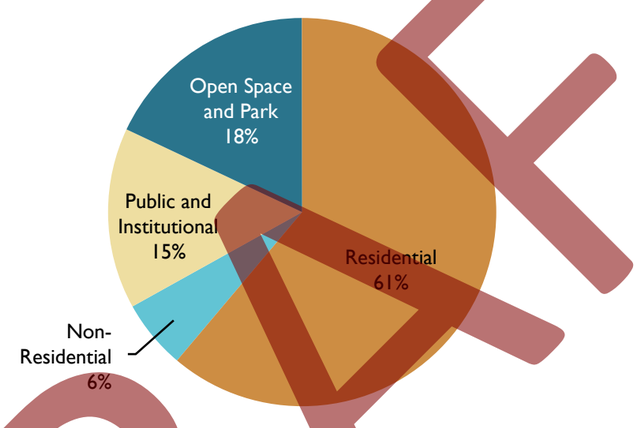


Table 2-2: Adopted Community Plan Land Use Designations

Land Use Designation	Permitted Density Range (housing units per acre)	Sum of Acreage in the College Area	Percentage of Total Acreage
Residential		**958**	**61.2%**
Very Low Density Residential	0-1	130	8.3%
Low Density Residential	5-10	677	43.2%
Low/Med Density Residential	10-15	48	3.1%
Med-Med High Density Residential	15-45	31	2.0%
High Density Residential	45-75	69	4.4%
Very High Density Residential	75-110	3	0.2%
Non-Residential		**88**	**5.6%**
Office Commercial	-	18	1.1%
Visitor Commercial	-	6	0.4%
General Commercial w/ Residential	45-75	1	0.1%
General Commercial w/ Residential	75-110	55	3.5%
Mixed Use Commercial Residential	75-110	8	0.5%
Public/Institutional	**-**	**240**	**15.3%**
Library	-	2	0.1%
University Campus	-	200	12.8%
School	-	24	1.5%
Hospital and Related Medical Offices	-	14	0.9%
Parks/Open Space		**250**	**15.3%**
Park	-	2	0.1%
Open Space	-	245	12.8%
Open Use Area	-	3	0.2%
Transportation / ROW		**402.9**	
Total Net	-	1566	100%
Total Gross		1,969	

**Numbers may not add due to rounding. Percentages with less than 1% are shown as 0%.*

Source: City of San Diego; Dyett and Bhatia 2020

Adopted Community Plan Land Use Data right of way (ROW) and net acres vary from the existing land use data due to portions of the Adopted Community Plan land use designations encompassing portion of right of way.

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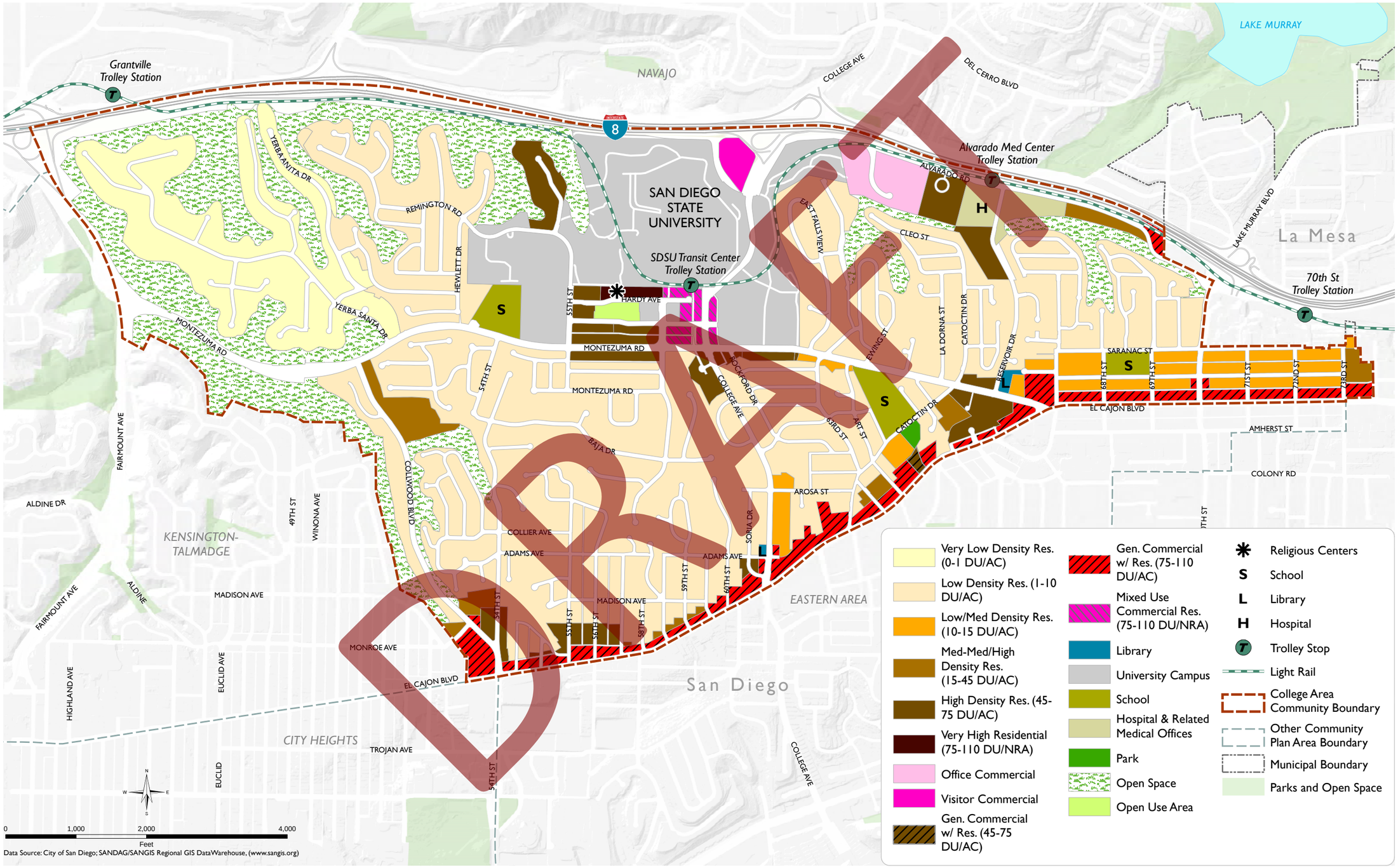
Figure 2-8 **Community Plan Adopted Land Use Designations**



2.4 Zoning

Zoning is the policy mechanism for the San Diego Municipal Code that implements the policies put forth in the General Plan and the Community Plan; via zoning, the Municipal Code contains detailed development regulations that control the form development can take and the land uses that are permitted. Both citywide zoning districts and Central Urbanized Planned District (CUPD) zones regulate the College Area. The current zoning designations are shown in **Figure 2-7** and listed in **Table 2-3**. At approximately 78% of the total acreage, a significant majority of land within the College Area is zoned for Residential Single Unit (RS); Residential Multiple Unit (RM) comprises about 11% and commercial uses comprises about seven.

CENTRAL URBANIZING PLAN DISTRICT ORDINANCE

As **Figure 2-7** shows, most of the College Area is governed by Citywide zoning, and areas along El Cajon Boulevard are subject to the Central Urbanizing Plan District (CUPD) Zones. CUPD zones assist in implementing the goals and objectives of the College Area Community Plan and the Mid-City Communities Plan, and relevant zoning is indicated as CUPD-CT and CUPD-CU. As zoning must be consistent with existing Community Plans, the zoning applicable to the College Area will be revised, as necessary, as part of the update of the College Area Community Plan. This will include using Citywide zoning.

COMMUNITY PLAN IMPLEMENTATION OVERLAY ZONE (CPIOZ)

The Municipal Code (section 132.1402) includes the Community Plan Implementation Overlay Zone (CPIOZ), which provides supplemental development regulations that are tailored to specific sites within community plan areas of the City. The CPIOZ establishes supplemental development regulations that are tailored to specific sites within community plan area. In the College Area, the CPIOZ-A designation is applied to only to a property to the east of Friends of the College-Rolando Library as shown in **Figure 2-7**.

Within the College Area, 78% of the land is zoned for Residential Single Unit, 11% Residential Multiple Unit, and 8% Commercial.

Table 2-3: Current Zoning Designations

Zoning Designation	Zoning Name	Description/Purpose	Sum of Acreage in the College Area	Percentage of Total Acreage
Commercial Base Zones			**163**	**8.3%**
CC-1-3	Commercial Community	Mix of residential and commercial development with an auto orientation (1 housing unit/1,500 sf. of lot area)	14	0.7%
CN-1-2	Commercial-Neighborhood	Mix of residential and commercial development with an auto orientation (1 housing unit/1,500 sf. of lot area)	15	0.7%
CO-1-2	Commercial-Office	Mix of office and residential uses that serve as an employment center (1 housing unit/1,500 sf. of lot area)	35	1.8%
CUPD-CT-2-4	Central Urbanized Planned District- Commercial Transition	Provides a transition between the CU-2-4 zone and abutting residential use areas.	2	0.1%
CUPD-CU-2-3	Central Urbanized Planned District- Central Urbanized	Accommodate development with pedestrian orientation and medium-high density residential use	48	2.5%
CUPD-CT-2-4	Central Urbanized Planned District- Central Urbanized	Accommodate development with pedestrian orientation and high-density residential use	25	1.3%
CV-1-2	Commercial-Visitor	Mix of visitor-serving uses and residential uses with a pedestrian orientation (1 housing unit/1,500 sf. of lot area)	24	1.2%
Residential			**1,765**	**89.9%**
RM-1-1	Residential Multiple Unit	Lower density multiple dwelling units with some characteristics of single dwelling units (1 housing unit/3,000 sf. of lot area)	77	3.95
RM-1-2	Residential Multiple Unit	Lower density multiple dwelling units with some characteristics of single dwelling units (1 housing unit/2,500 sf. of lot area)	2	0.1%
RM-3-7	Residential Multiple Unit	Medium density with limited commercial uses (1 housing unit/1,000 sf. of lot area)	4430	2.3%
RM-3-8	Residential Multiple Unit	Medium density with limited commercial uses (1 housing unit/800 sf. of lot area)	58	1.5%
RM-3-9	Residential Multiple Unit	Medium density with limited commercial uses (1 housing unit/600 sf. of lot area)	19	2.9%
RM-4-10	Residential Multiple Unit	Urbanized, high density with limited commercial uses (1 housing unit/400 sf. of lot area)	456	0.9%
RS-1-1	Residential Single Unit	Urbanized Community min. 40,000 sf. lot	4	23.2%
RS-1-2	Residential Single Unit	Urbanized Community min. 20,000 sf. lot	1075	0.2%
RS-1-7	Residential Single Unit	Urbanized Community min. 5,000 sf. lot		54.7%
Open Space				**1.8%**
OP-1-1	Open Space, Park	Allows developed, active parks	1	0.1%
OR-1-1	Open Space	Allows open space with limited private residential development	35	1.8%

Source: San Diego Municipal Code, Chapter 13 Zones; City of San Diego GIS; Dyett and Bhatia 2020

Zoning Data right of way (ROW) and net acres vary from the existing land use data due to portions of the zoning designations encompassing portion of right of way.

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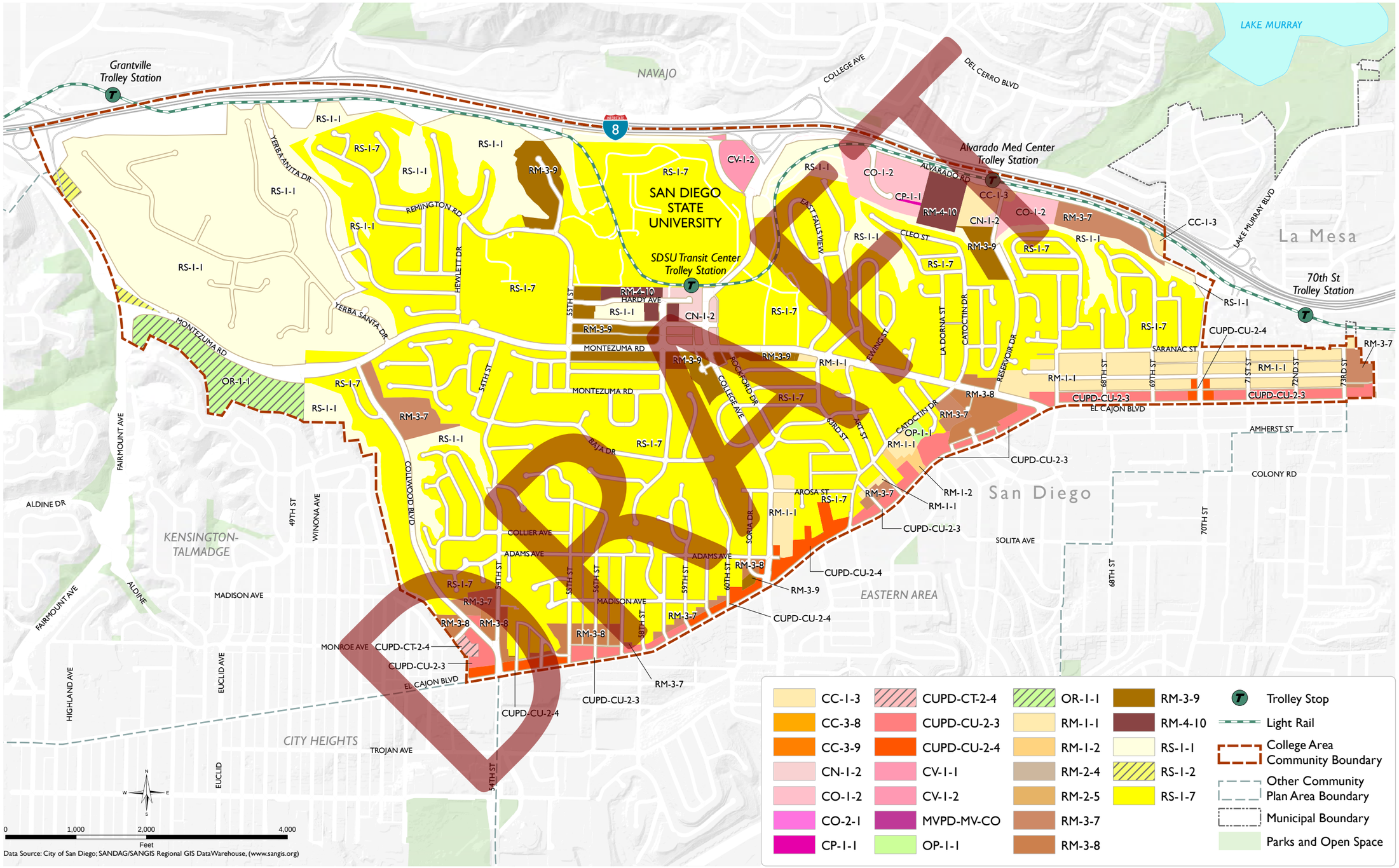
Figure 2-9 **Current Zoning**



2.5 Land Use and Mobility

The relationship between land use and mobility can better connect our communities to essential services, commercial retail, housing and job opportunities, increased public transit accessibility, and creation of walkable communities. This section outlines a few key components of land use and mobility as they relate to the College Area.

CITY OF VILLAGES STRATEGY

San Diego's "City of Villages" strategy focuses growth in mixed use villages and corridors served by high frequency transit as addressed by the General Plan.

TRANSIT PRIORITY AREAS

Transit Priority Areas (TPAs) or areas within a half-mile of major public transit stops. Multifamily Residential projects in TPAs are not required to provide parking, an incentive which can reduce development costs and increase housing production. Affordable housing projects within TPAs are eligible for density bonuses beyond standard state bonuses for affordable housing.

El Cajon is an important transportation corridor.

EXISTING TRANSIT

As shown in **Figure 2-8**, the College Area is served by three Light Rail Transit (LRT) trolley stations: at SDSU, the Alvarado Medical Center and 70th Street in La Mesa. The community is also served by two Rapid Bus routes with peak headways of 15-minutes or less that operate on El Cajon Boulevard and College Avenue. Route 215 runs from SDSU to Downtown San Diego, and BRT 115 runs from SDSU to the El Cajon Transit Center. As a result, nearly the entire community is designated as a TPA.

Nearly the entire College Area community is within a Transit Priority Area, locations that the "City of Villages" strategy focuses growth within. Additionally, El Cajon Boulevard, the SDSU campus area, and areas surrounding the Alvarado Trolley Station have been identified as SANDAG Smart Growth Areas.

Linking land use and transportation is a key component of Transit Priority Areas.

SANDAG SMART GROWTH AREAS

In addition to its TPA designation, portions of the College Area also designated as SANDAG Smart Growth Areas. These areas are envisioned to have better coordination between transportation and land use planning in order to make the most use out of both and to create more housing, jobs, and transit accessible places (see sidebar for smart growth definition). Smart growth areas also receive higher priority for transportation improvements. **Figure 2-8** shows the boundaries of the four main areas that are designated for smart growth: College Avenue and Montezuma Road (SD-CO-1), which is identified as a Community Center; the SDSU campus and transit station (SD-CO-2), which is designated as a Special Use Center; Alvarado Medical Center and light rail station (SD-CO-3), which is designated as a Town Center; and El Cajon Boulevard (SD-CO-4), which is identified as a Mixed use Transit Corridor.[2]

2 *SANDAG, Quick Reference: Smart Growth Areas by Place Type. May 2016. Accessed 10/2020. https://www.sandag.org/uploads/projectid/projectid_296_14006.pdf*

What is Smart Growth?

SANDAG defines Smart growth as a compact, efficient, and environmentally-sensitive urban development pattern. It focuses future growth and infill development close to jobs, services, and public facilities to maximize the use of existing infrastructure and preserve open space and natural resources.

Smart growth is characterized by more compact, higher density development in urbanized areas throughout the region. These areas are walkable, bike-friendly, near public transit, and promote good community design, resulting in housing and transportation choices for those who live and work in these areas.

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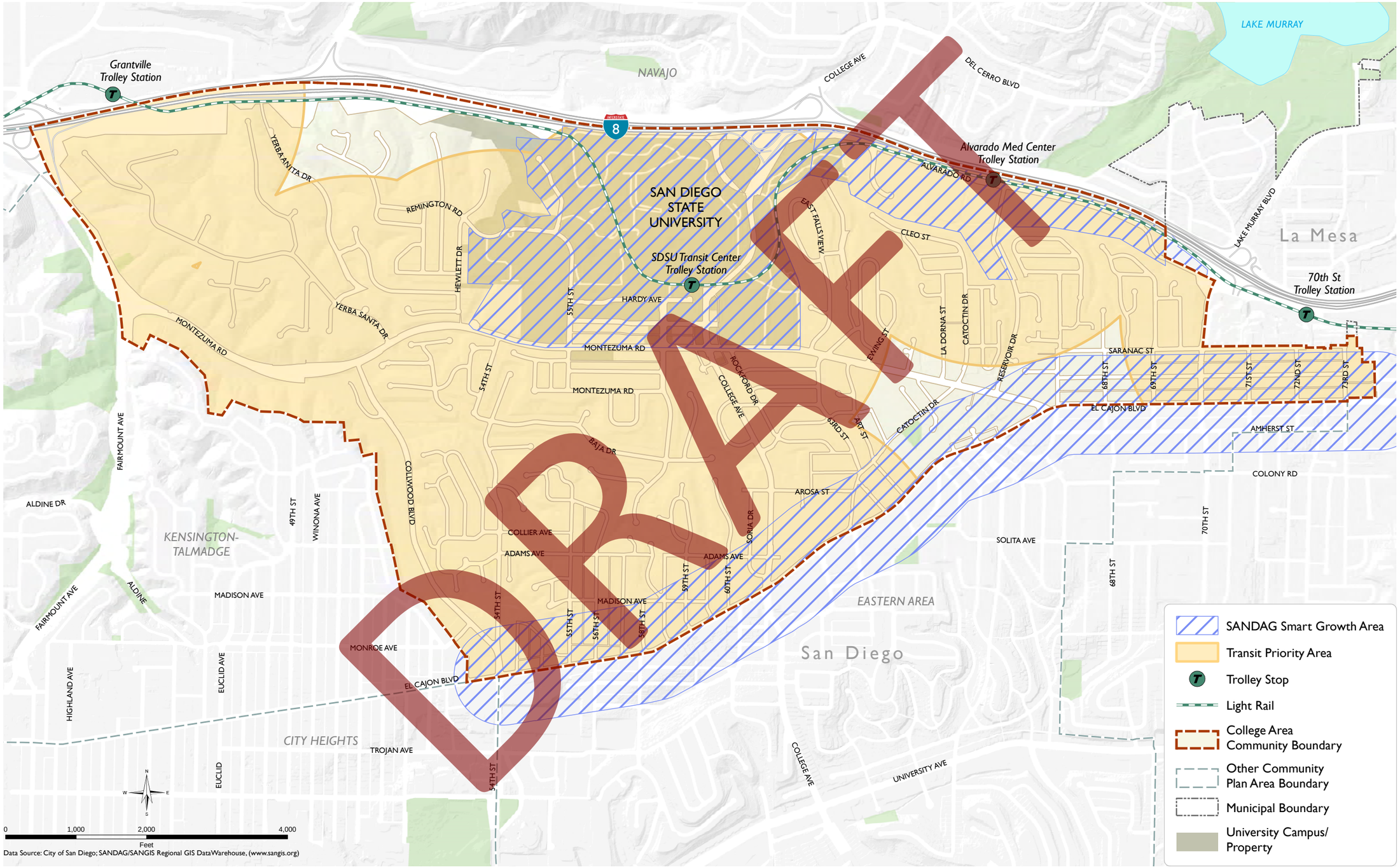
Figure 2-10 **Transit Priority Areas and SANDAG Smart Growth Areas**



2.6 Land Use Summary

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

- Within the College Area, **69%** of the land area is residential, **27%** is used for Public and Community Facilities, **3%** is commercial, and **1%** is all other uses.
- Within the College Area, **53%** of residential land has a density of up to **5** units/acre, with an overall average density of **7.8** units/acre which reflects the predominance of single family homes in the community. The citywide average residential density is **10.1** units/acre.
- **51%** of the homes within the College Area are Multifamily Residential and **49%** of the homes in the community are Single family Residential.
- Within the College Area, **88%** of non-residential land has a floor area ratio (FAR) below 0.5, with an overall average **0.6** FAR. Even though **88%** of the non-residential land has an FAR below 0.5, the average FAR is higher due to the properties that are above 1.0 FAR (like some of the older commercial buildings at 7200 El Cajon Boulevard) which increases the overall average
- The largest percentage of land by land use designation in the adopted College Area Community Plan is Low Density Residential (**43%**), followed by the SDSU campus (**13%**) and Open Space (**13%**).
- Within the College Area, **78%** of the land is zoned for Residential Single Unit, **11%** for Residential Multiple Unit, and **8%** is zoned for Commercial.
- Nearly the entire College Area community is within a **Transit Priority Area**, locations that the "City of Villages" strategy focuses growth within. Additionally, El Cajon Boulevard, the SDSU campus area, and areas surrounding the Alvarado Trolley Station have been identified as SANDAG **Smart Growth Areas**.

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