

4. Community Form

4.1 LANDFORM AND NATURAL FEATURES

Landform and natural features contribute to Mira Mesa's sense of place. As shown in figure 4-1, Mira Mesa is characterized by steep slopes on the west overlooking Sorrento Valley, trending eastward to a gradually rising series of flat mesas. Several steep-sided canyons border and cup through the area.

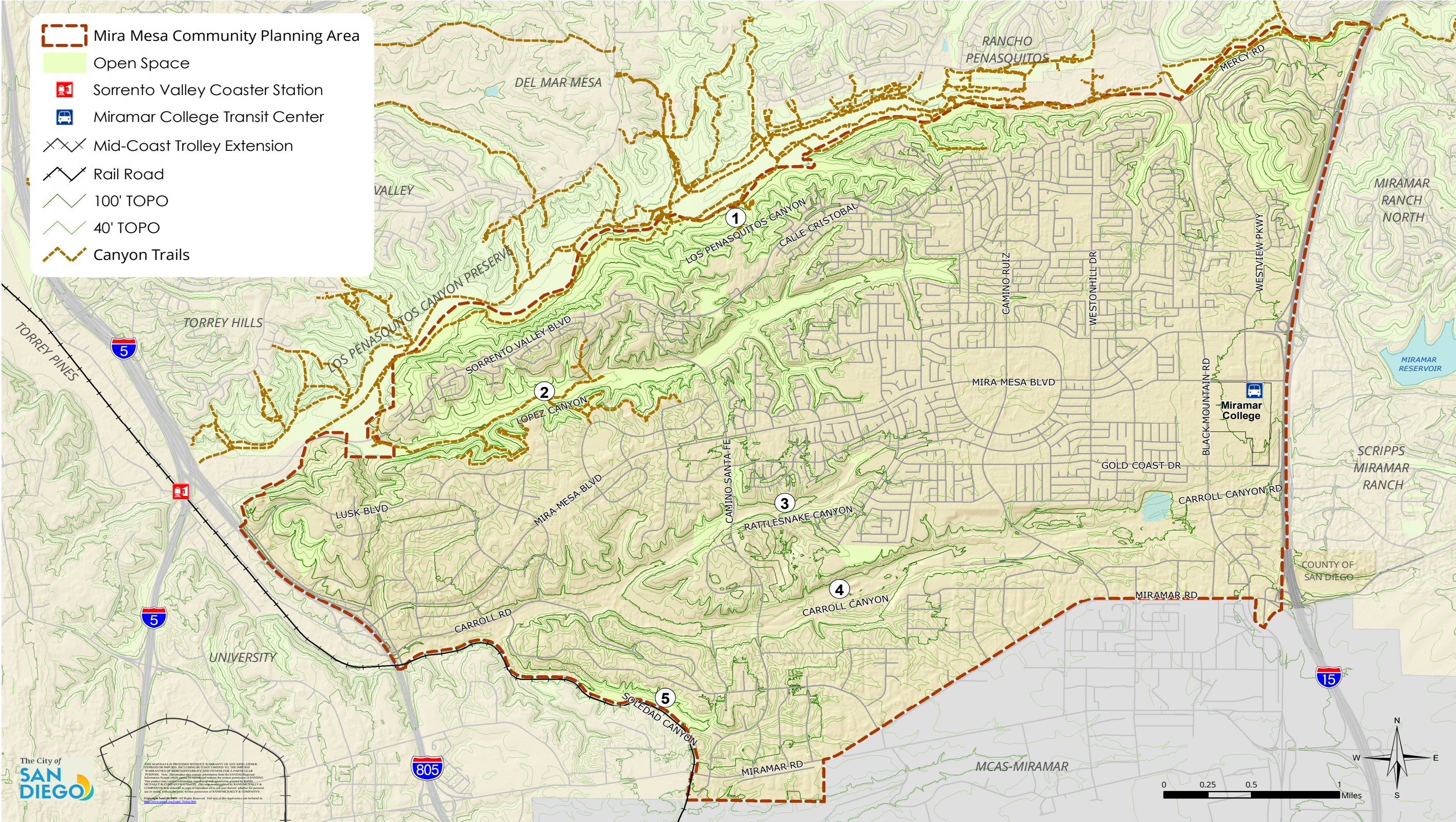
Mira Mesa is defined by five major canyons:

1. Los Peñasquitos Canyon;
2. Lopez Canyon;
3. Rattlesnake Canyon;
4. Carroll Canyon; and
5. Soledad Canyon

Los Peñasquitos, Lopez and Carroll Canyons are over 1,000 feet wide from rim to rim. In addition to the major canyons, many tributary cuts and washes extend in a general north-south direction creating small, separate mesas with very limited access. Land elevation above sea level range from 50 feet at a point in the westerly portion of Los Peñasquitos Canyon to 850 feet at Canyon Hills Park in the northeast portion of the planning area. Elevations of the mesas range from 350 feet to 500 feet from west to east.



Figure 4-1: Topography and Natural Features



4.2 STREET NETWORK

Streets and Highways

Highways

Three freeways borders Mira Mesa and shape its community form, as shown in Figure 4-2. They are, from West to East, as follows:

- I-5;
- I-805; and
- I-15.

Primary Street Network

Mira Mesa's primary street network is depicted in Figure 4-2. Four primary streets cross Mira Mesa in the north-south direction: Vista Sorrento Pkwy, Camino Santa Fe, Camino Ruiz, and Black Mountain Road.

Vista Sorrento Pkwy and Black Mountain Road continue north to the adjacent communities. Mira Mesa Blvd and Miramar Road are the two primary streets that traverse Mira Mesa in the east-west direction. Sorrento Valley Blvd and Calle Cristobal provides access to residential developments in the north and partially traverses along the east-west direction in the Planning Area.

These are the only two streets that connect the east and west portions of Mira Mesa, which are physically separated by I-805 and I-15. Kearny Villa Road continue as a southern connection along MCAS Miramar to Kearny Mesa.

Secondary Street Network

Mira Mesa's secondary street network, depicted in Figure 4-2, provides access to and between employment and residential areas in the Planning Area.

The local street network includes many cul-de-sacs and loops, which do not allow a fluidity of movement across Mira Mesa's neighborhoods. This street pattern also exerts pressure on the major and primary street network. A connective system of secondary streets does exist in portions of the community.

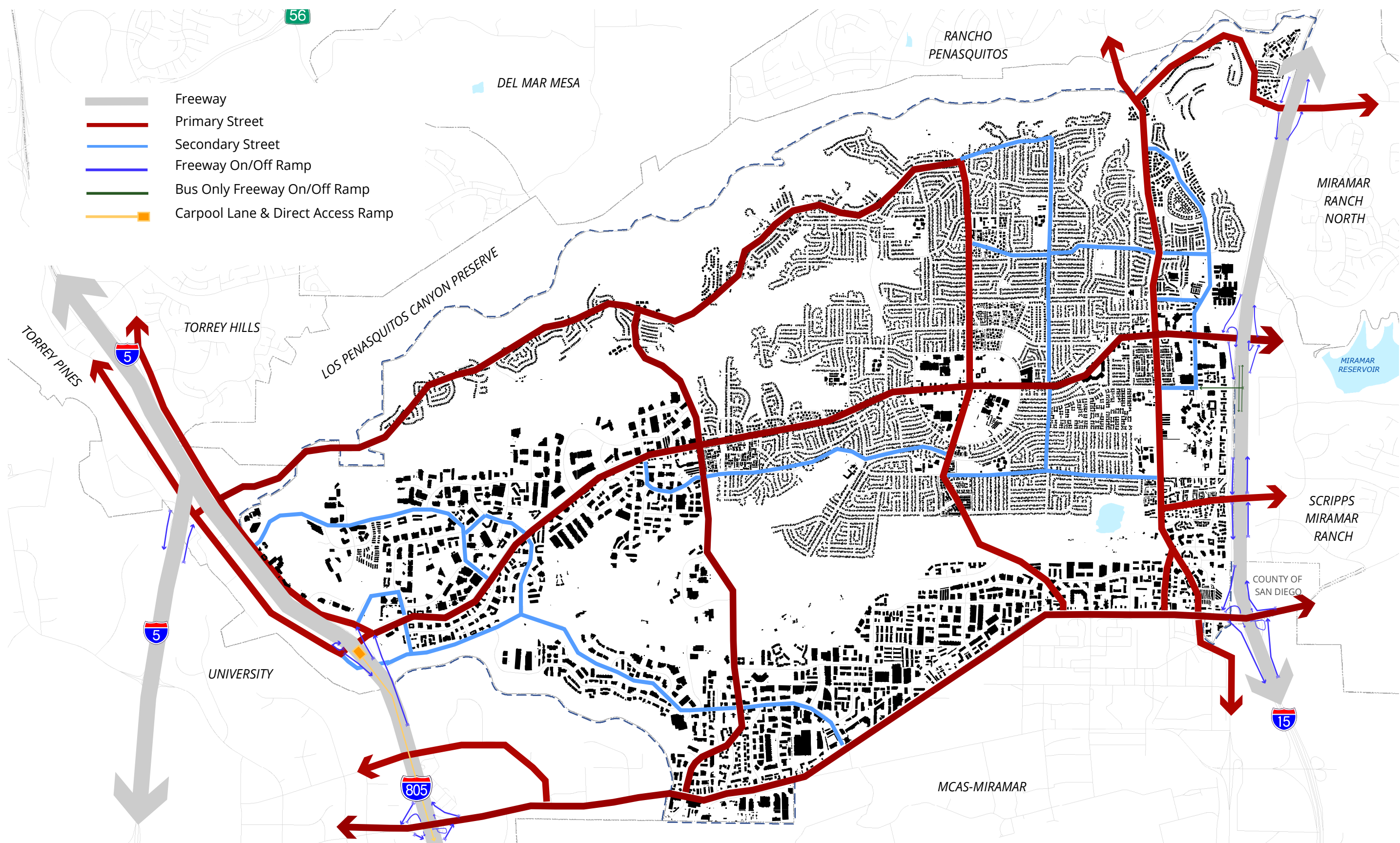


Interstate 15 – Looking North



Mira Mesa Blvd

Figure 4-2: Streets and Highways



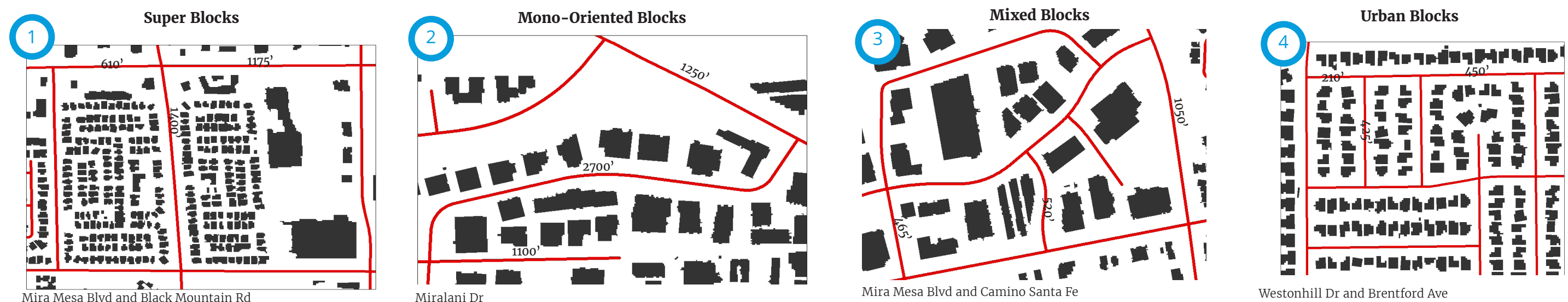
4.3 STREET, BLOCK, AND BUILDING FOOTPRINT

In general, Mira Mesa's blocks are large in size and intended to be traversed by automobile. Four types of blocks are found in Mira Mesa, described below (Figure 4-3).

- "Super" blocks are situated along Black Mountain Road and Miramar Road. These blocks are primarily associated with large scale-auto-oriented uses and offer limited interconnectivity to surrounding blocks. They typically have one means of entrance and egress, as well as limited internal connectivity.
- "Mono-oriented" blocks are generally located in employment areas in Sorrento Mesa and Miramar Road. These blocks are accessible from only one frontage. A row of long and narrow lots is typically located within these blocks.
- "Mixed" blocks are generally located along Mira Mesa Boulevard. These blocks host a variety of uses. Notably, these blocks are partially divided by dead end streets. They do not provide an efficient secondary street network.
- "Urban" blocks are few in number and generally located near core shopping areas along Mira Mesa Boulevard. These blocks are more compact than the blocks described above and provide a more gridded circulation network. These blocks are more permeable and navigable by individuals utilizing a variety of transportation modes (e.g., pedestrians, bicycle, transit, automobile). In many cases, internal circulation is only for pedestrians and bikes; the network of actual streets remains limited.

Figure 4-4 illustrate the relationship between street, block and building footprint within Mira Mesa. The intersection density by census block group highlight the levels of accessibility and connectivity. In general, intersection density can correspond closely to block size. Smaller blocks make a neighborhood more walkable. Research by Ewing and Cervero (2010) finds, of all the built environment characteristics, intersection density is one of the most important factor for walking, increasing transit use and reducing vehicles miles driven.

Figure 4-3: Block Pattern Detail



4.4 BUILDINGS

Residential

Residential buildings in Mira Mesa are diverse in their design and layout. While nearly all residential buildings in Mira Mesa are single family, the community still offers a range of building types, including townhomes, stacked flats, garden apartments, and wrap apartments.

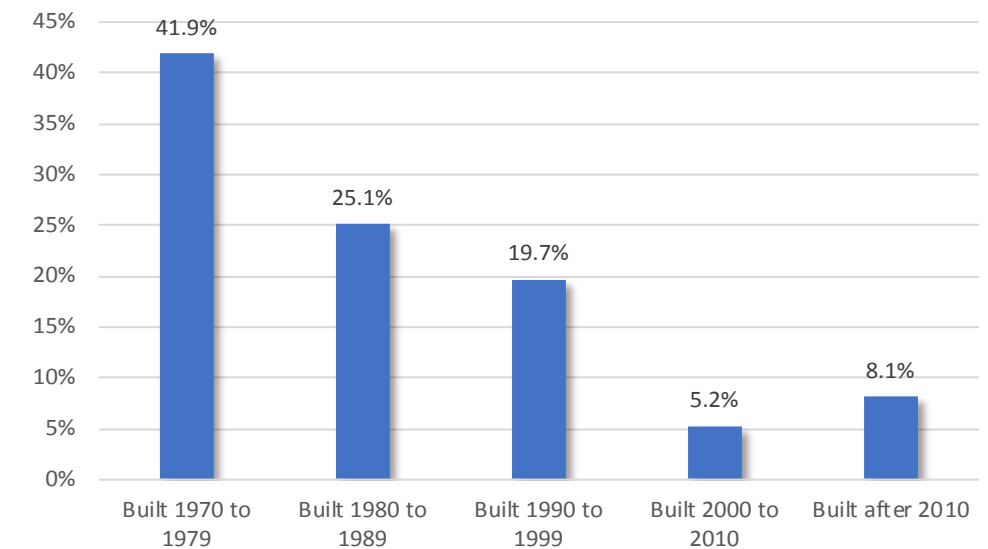
- **Townhomes** typically provide parking in the rear. Parking may be accessed from an alley, and/or arranged in a motor court. They are typically two stories high and dwelling units share demising walls.
- **Stacked Flats** often take the form of townhomes, but with single-story dwelling units that are stacked.
- **Garden Apartments** are two or three-story walk-up buildings with a combination of surface and tuck-under garage parking. Dwelling units are stacked with shared stairs, elevators and walkways.
- **Wrap Apartments** are four to five-story building with residential units and/or retail wrapping around an above-grade parking structure.

As shown in Chart 4-1 and Figure 4-5, 67 percent of residential units in the community were built between 1970 to 1989. Most residential buildings in Mira Mesa are constructed of wood and range in height from one to five stories. Apartment and condo complexes typically provide common open space and amenities, such as a pool, gymnasium, community lounge and playground.

Mixed Use

Mira Mesa has a very few examples of mixed-use developments. Developments are mixed both vertically (as in the Casa Mira View) or horizontally (as in proposed conceptual rendering of 3 Roots). Many housing developments in Mira Mesa are adjacent to strip commercial providing close proximity to retail services.

Chart 4-1: Residential Building Age



Source: City of San Diego, 2018; County of San Diego, 2018



Townhomes



Stacked Flats



Garden Apartments

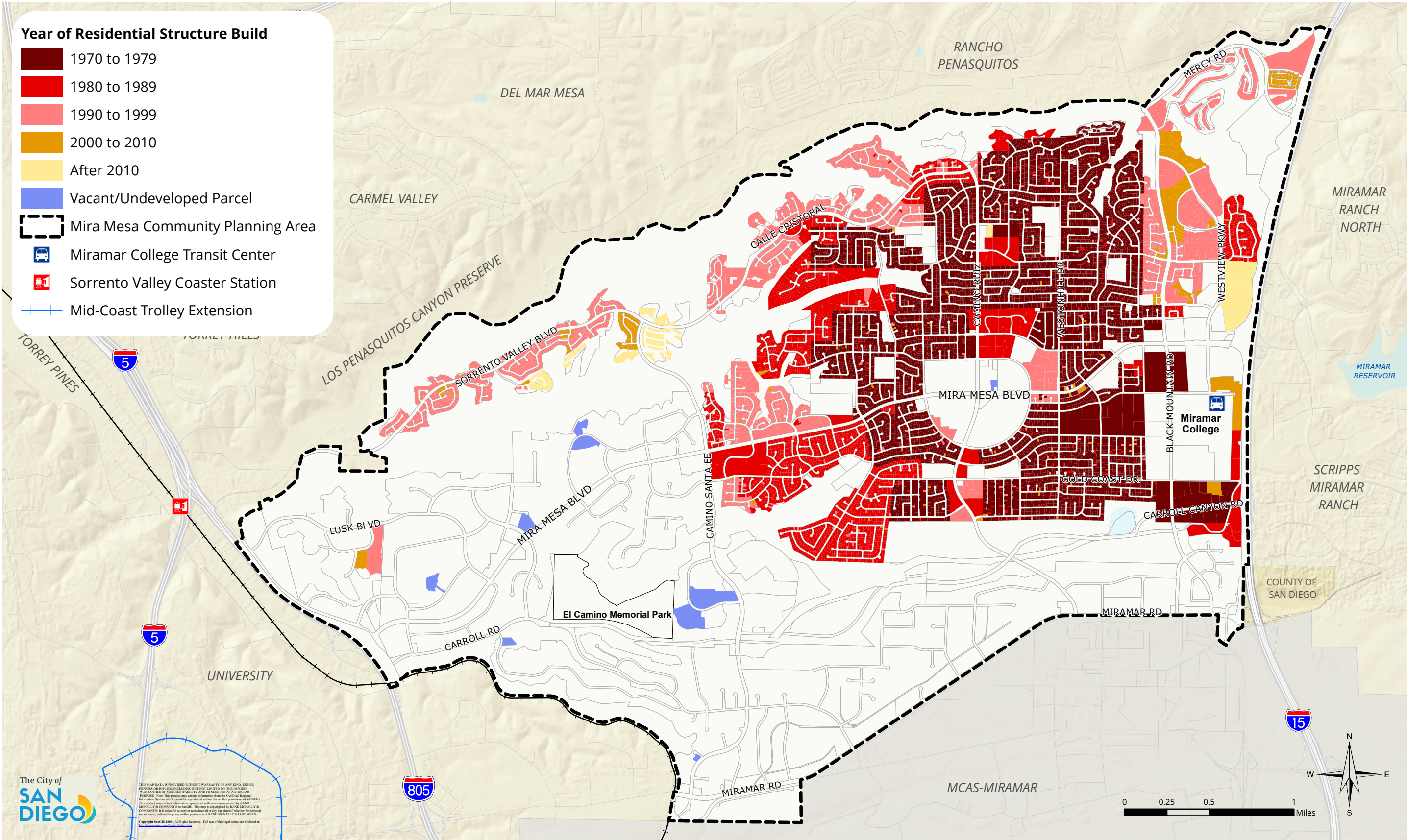


Wrap Apartment/Mixed-Use (Casa Mira View)



Proposed Horizontal Mixed-Use (3 Roots)

Figure 4-5: Residential Building Age



Non-residential

Chart 4-2 and Figure 4-6 shows, 65.7 percent of non-residential buildings in Mira Mesa were built between 1970 to 1989.

Office

Mira Mesa is a major employment center for the region, with low, mid, and high rise office buildings distributed throughout the community. Concentration of major office buildings are in Sorrento Mesa area.

Industrial/Warehouse

Industrial buildings and warehouses are a major land use in Mira Mesa. The building type is characterized by tilt-up concrete and metal frame buildings with long, expansive bays and flat roofs. They are often surrounded by access drives and alleys and exist predominantly along Miramar Road and Black Mountain Road.

Hotel/Motel

Hotels in Mira Mesa are predominantly focused adjacent to the I-15 at Miramar road and near I-805 in Sorrento Mesa, with good visibility from the highway. They range in scale from two-story motels to mid-rise and high-rise buildings. Majority of hotels target business, military, and visitor crowd.

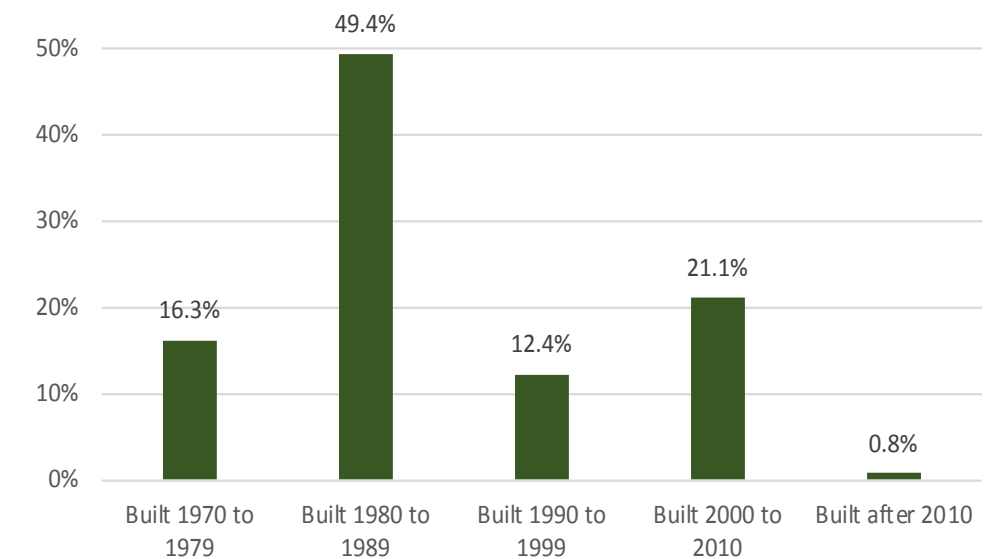
Commercial Retail

Retail use in Mira Mesa is represented by three predominant building types. Strip commercial centers are characterized by “big box” buildings set back behind surface parking lots and with in-line shops. Shopping malls are characterized by anchor stores (such as large department stores) and internal circulation. A third type is smaller-scale retail in a mixed-use format.

Auto-Oriented Service

Mira Mesa is home to several auto-oriented and service businesses, and these are typically represented by a unique building type that is designed for that use. Most often, buildings in this category are focused along the I-8 corridor with good visibility from the highway. Signage is a key component of the building as well as colors and forms designed to attract the attention of fast-moving traffic.

Chart 4-2: Non-residential Building Age



Source: City of San Diego, 2018; County of San Diego, 2018



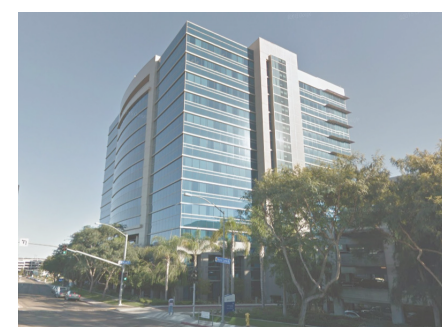
Low-Rise Industrial



Mid-Rise Hotel



Business Park



Qualcomm High-Rise Tower



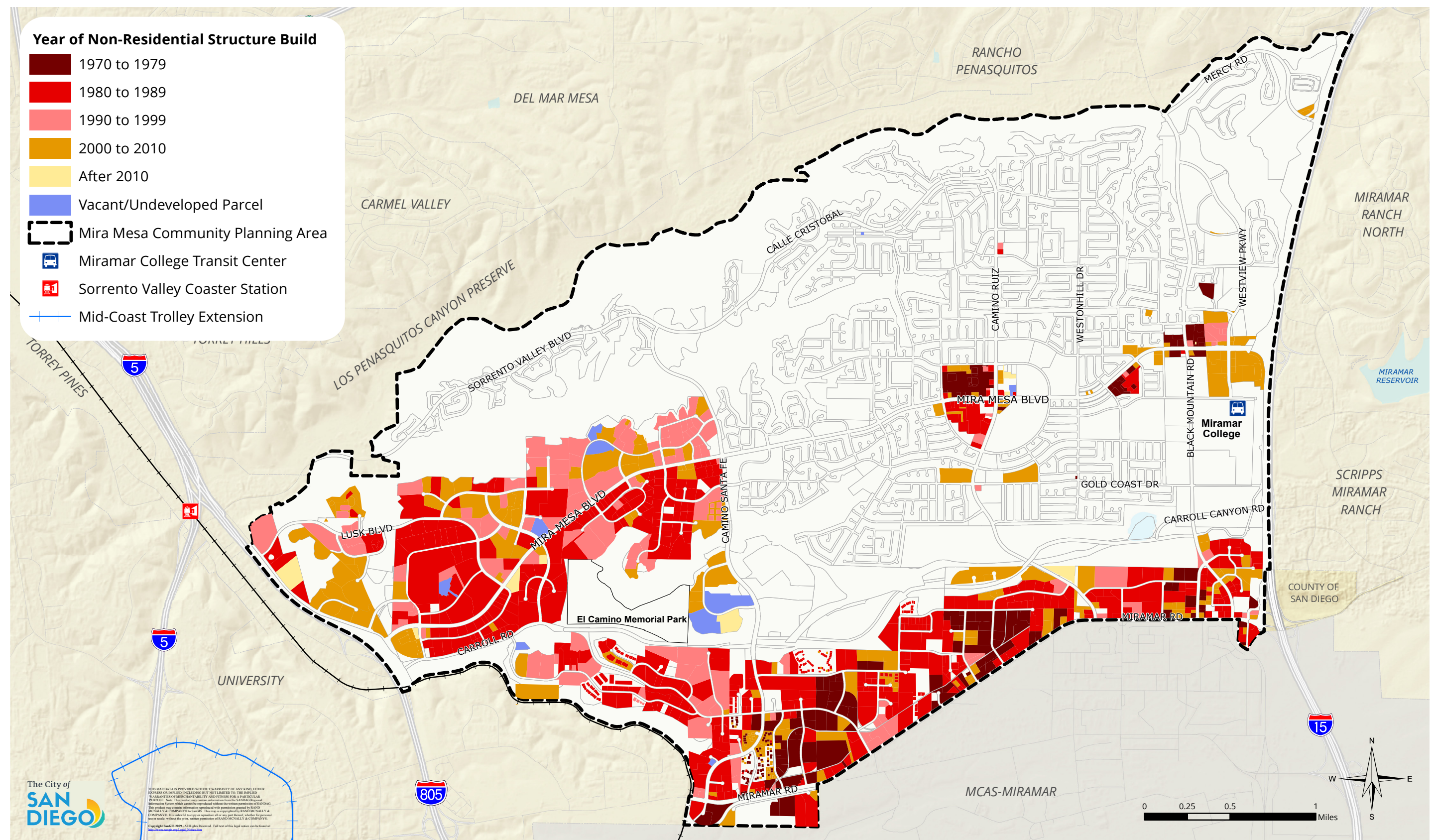
Mira Mesa Shopping Mall



Strip Center

Source: Google Streetview

Figure 4-6: Non-residential Building Age



4.5 PLACE TYPE

There are distinct districts within Mira Mesa. These are defined by their use characteristics—single-family residential, multi-family residential, retail/commercial, office, light industrial, and community college areas—as well as by their location in Mira Mesa (Figure 4-7). In general, residential areas are located on top of flat mesa tops, while offices are situated in the areas of the Planning Area with steeper slopes. Retail/Commercial are generally located along Mira Mesa Boulevard and Miramar Road.



Canyon Ridge Single-Family Area



Multi-Family Area near Mira Mesa Community Park



Miramar College Area



Sorrento Mesa Office/R&D Area



Mira Mesa Shopping Mall



Miramar Industrial Area

Source: Google Earth Pro

Figure 4-7: Suburban Place Type

