BARRIO LOGAN

Community Plan Update

Park System Strategy: Background and Assessment

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. EXISTING PARK AND RECREATION RESOURCES 1

Parks and Recreation Services 1

Park Resources 2

Park Classifications 2

Schools 9

Private Parks 9

Nearby Park Resources 10

Recreation Programs 11

II. PARK AND RECREATION NEEDS 13

Standards Analysis 15

Access Analysis 16

Additional Park Lands 29

Additional Recreation Facility Needs 32

Opportunities 37

Summary of Needs 38

MAPS

Map 1. Existing Park Resources

Map 2. Neighborhood & Community Parks Access

Map 3. Playground Access

Map 4. Recreation Center Access

Introduction

This document, prepared as part of the Barrio Logan Community Plan Update, addresses parks and recreation in Barrio Logan. The park system strategy is a critical element of the Community Plan. The purpose of this report is to provide a baseline of information about the parks and recreation resources available in Barrio Logan and nearby, to assess the need for parks and facilities, and to serve as a foundation document for the community charrette planned for January 2009.

This document is organized into two major sections:

- I. Existing Park and Recreation Resources
- II. Park and Recreation Needs

Following the community charrette, a park system strategy will be developed as part of the Community Plan Update.

I. EXISTING PARKS AND RECREATION RESOURCES

Park and Recreation Services

The City of San Diego Park and Recreation Department is the government provider for parks and recreation services in Barrio Logan. The Department provides parks, facilities, and services throughout the City, and oversees planning and design for the park system citywide. The Department mission and vision provide guidance for the provision of parks and recreation services for both residents and visitors.

Mission:

To acquire, develop, operate, and maintain a park and recreation system which enriches the quality of life for residents and visitors alike, and preserves it for future generations.

Vision:

We enrich lives through quality parks and programs.

As the mission and vision indicate, the Park and Recreation Department is committed to contributing to quality of life for the city's residents and visitors.

The Park and Recreation Board serves in an advisory role to the Department. The Board was chartered by the City Council under Municipal Code Section 26.30 to advise on matters relating to the acquisition, development, maintenance and operation of parks, beaches and recreation properties and facilities. The Board includes eleven members who are appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council to serve two year terms, with a maximum of eight years. The Board is intended to represent park and recreation interests citywide, and is not representative of individual neighborhoods. However, each recreation center is served by a Recreation Council, which serves in an advisory role to the Park and Recreation Board on local recreation needs and issues.

Park Resources

The Park and Recreation Department oversees nearly 40,000 acres of developed and undeveloped parks and open space. Within this extensive park system are over 340 parks, 25 miles of shoreline, 13 community swimming pools, 3 public golf complexes, 52 recreation centers, and more. Supplementing these parks and facilities are a number of private and not-for-profit recreation centers located around the city, where the Department has joint use or lease agreements that provide for public access, typically for a fee.

Park Classifications

The City of San Diego categorizes its parks into three major types, defined below.

- **Population-based Parks and Facilities**: Population-based parks and facilities are located in close proximity to residential development and are intended to serve the daily needs of the neighborhood and community. When possible, they adjoin schools in order to share facilities, and ideally are within walking distance of the residences within their service area. The City's goal is to provide 2.8 acres of Population-based parks per 1,000 residents, or a combination of usable acreage

and equivalencies[1], sites owned or operated by other entities that contribute to the park and facility acreage within San Diego.

- **Resource-based Parks**: Resource-based parks are intended to preserve areas with significant scenic, cultural or natural resources, and to make them available to the public. This type of park is centered on features such as beaches, canyons, habitat systems, lakes, historic sites, or cultural facilities and serves a citywide population as well as visitors.
- **Natural Open Space**: Natural open space lands are city-owned land located throughout the city consisting of canyons, mesas, and other natural landforms. Public open space is intended to preserve and protect native plants and animals, while providing public access and enjoyment by the use of hiking, biking, and equestrian trails.

Public Parks in Barrio Logan

There are only two public parks within Barrio Logan, summarized in Table 1.1 and described in greater detail below. Map 1 depicts the existing park resources in and around Barrio Logan.

Table 1.1 Barrio Logan Public Parks

Park	Acres	Ownership	Classification
Chicano Park	8.18	City of San Diego	• Population-based
Cesar Chavez Park	4.2	Port of San Diego	• Not classified by City due to Port ownership • Equivalent to a City of San Diego Population-based park

Source: City of San Diego

There are no Resource-based Parks or Natural Open Space lands within Barrio Logan.

[1] Further equivalencies information is contained in the Recreation Element of the Adopted 2008 City of San Diego General Plan

Chicano Park

Chicano Park is a neighborhood park constructed under the Interstate 5 and Coronado Bridge, and is one of two formal parks in Barrio Logan. The park includes two handball courts, one basketball court, lawn areas, concrete plazas and a children's playground. Used heavily by residents as the central park within the neighborhood, the park serves as a community gathering space, a place for recreation, and a symbol of the neighborhood's struggle and achievements over many decades. The Chicano murals add vibrancy and identity to the park.

Because of its location underneath a freeway overpass, the park is divided into several segments by streets and other transportation infrastructure. The on and off-ramps of the freeways create visual barriers through the park and cast shadows over much of the area. Some sections of the park are quite cut off from other activity areas, and attract vagrants and undesirable activity such as public drinking. The park is heavily used by children, teenagers, adults and the elderly, but the undesirable activity that takes place within parts of the park creates a sense that the park may be unsafe, and in some cases, is an unsafe environment.

Cesar Chavez Park

Cesar Chavez Park (formerly known as Crosby Street Park) provides the area's only public access point to San Diego Bay, despite the community's significant history with the waterfront. The park provides arbors, children's play equipment, bike paths, restrooms, gazebos, lawn areas, barbeque facilities, picnic tables and interpretive signs. A public pier extends from the park offering fishing opportunities, and providing views of the San Diego Bay, the City of Coronado and downtown San Diego.

A street right-of-way bisects Cesar Chavez Park, and the park itself is not very visible or accessible due to its location within the industrial area. Although the park is owned and operated by the Port of San Diego, it is considered to serve as 100% equivalent to a City of San Diego Population-based Park by the Park and Recreation Department.

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Park
Private Park
Cemetery
Creek
Public Facility
Private Facility
School
Barrio Logan Community Plan Area
City Boundary
Freeway/Ramp
SDMTS Trolley and Station

N

0 500 1000 2000 feet

Map 1: Existing Park Resources

January 2009

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Schools

In many communities, schools (especially elementary schools) function as neighborhood parks, providing needed park space and supplementing city-owned resources. Residents often use school sites, regardless of whether there is a formalized joint use agreement in place or not. Within Barrio Logan, there is only one public school: Perkins Elementary School. This site is small, and is not designed to support non-school public use, although it has the potential to do so if redesigned in the future. Currently, the school grounds include an unturfed sports field, surrounded by a tall chainlink fence. It also includes paved areas for games and activities and two children's play structures. If the site remains as it is now, the site could potentially add approximately .66 acres of equivalent Population-based park acreage to Barrio Logan. If the school building was replaced in the future in a different configuration, potentially more area could be provided for public park uses.

Private Parks

The Gateway Family Apartments on Logan Avenue provide two and three bedroom units for 42 low and very low income families. The apartment complex has a community meeting space and outdoor recreation facilities, including children's play equipment. The playground is situated on a street corner and allows for easy access by the public. This playground functions as a public tot lot within Barrio Logan.

Nearby Park Resources

Although Barrio Logan is separated from surrounding neighborhoods by a number of physical barriers, including Interstate 5 and railroad corridors, the neighborhoods around Barrio Logan include park and recreation resources that are relatively close for Barrio residents. While the City of San Diego's policy is to consider those Population-based Parks within a particular neighborhood as serving that neighborhood first, most residents do not recognize neighborhood boundaries when using parks and may go to the most accessible site, regardless of whether it is in their own neighborhood. Two major community parks are located nearby: Memorial Community Park and Southcrest Park. There are also other smaller neighborhood and mini-parks. These sites are also depicted on Map 1.

- **Memorial Community Park and Recreation Center** is an 18.04 acre park, considered a Population-based Park and a Community Park. It includes the Memorial Park Recreation Center, which provides programs for all ages. Memorial Community Park is located north of Interstate 5, several blocks away from Barrio Logan. The site includes picnic areas, outdoor basketball courts, a multi-purpose field, the Bill & Maxine Wilson skate park, and the Memorial Community Swimming Pool. Within the recreation center are a gymnasium, a weight room, a crafts room, and meeting rooms. The site also includes a senior center. A wide variety of programs are provided through the recreation center. Memorial Community Park is located adjacent to two schools (Memorial Academy and Logan Elementary), and the Boys and Girls Club. According to City staff, local gang territoriality limits casual use of the park grounds by the general public, and particularly those from Barrio Logan and other neighborhoods. In addition, Memorial Community Park is not sufficient in size or facilities based on city standards to serve future needs within its own neighborhood.
- **Southcrest Community Park** is a 17.2 acre park (13.76 acres useable), also considered a Population-based Park and a Community Park. The park includes the Southcrest Recreation Center, which has a gymnasium, meeting rooms, an arts and crafts room, and a weight room. Within the park, there are outdoor basketball courts, a picnic area, and children's playground. The recreation center offers a full range of recreation programs.

- **Chavez Elementary School** has a 1.0 acre joint use multi-purpose field near Southcrest Community Park.

Recreation Programs

For the purpose of the Barrio Logan Community Plan Update, recreation is broadly defined to include the full range of activities that provide refreshment of one's mind or body, including traditional health and wellness and leisure activities as well as lifelong learning and child and youth development.

Recreation programs are offered through the City of San Diego and other community organizations and services. A list of identified programs is below.

City of San Diego Programs

Park and Recreation Department

The City of San Diego Park and Recreation Department offers a variety of recreation programming at City recreation centers, swimming pools, and regional parks. Senior services are offered at Senior Centers, with centers located throughout the city, including in Barrio Logan/Paradise at 1880 Logan Avenue, as well as nearby at Memorial Community Park, and Southcrest Park. The City of San Diego also offers a citywide Therapeutic Recreation program, offering inclusionary programs at City recreation centers and pools, as well as programs, special events and activities designed for people with disabilities.

Library Services

The City of San Diego also provides library services through the San Diego Public Library. In Fall 2009, the Logan Heights Branch Library will open. This will be a new two-story, 25,000-square-foot branch library located on the Logan Elementary School site, adjacent to Memorial Community Park and located close to the pedestrian bridge connecting to Barrio Logan over I-5. Just north of Barrio Logan, the new Central Library Library is being constructed in downtown San Diego, only about five blocks away. The Public Library offers programs at its main and branch libraries, as well as its Visual Arts Program, offering art exhibitions of local artists at libraries throughout the system.

Programs Offered by Community Organizations

There are many community organizations and services in Barrio Logan that provide recreation opportunities for residents. They include City-funded, institutional, and not-for-profit organizations.

- **Barrio Station:** Barrio Station is a not-for-profit organization that provides counseling and recreation services to youth and young adults in Barrio Logan. Barrio Station includes a variety of recreation facilities, offering the largest recreational center in the community. The facilities and services provided through the organization are:
    - *Grassroots Youth Program* was created in response to a growing need for culturally attuned juvenile diversion and prevention counseling services.
    - *Project Star* works with peripheral and documented gang youth on a city-wide basis. Neighborhood Youth Counselors work with the population aged 12 to 21 years.
    - *Barrio Youth Center* incorporates a total of 50,000 square feet of youth services facilities. The center focuses on providing literacy and juvenile delinquency prevention services through recreation and youth development alternatives and activities. The complex includes the following facilities:
        - *A Gymnasium*: Indoor 4,000 sq. ft. facility including weights, a boxing ring, locker room with showers, and a karate/aerobics studio.
        - *A Theater*: An 8,400 sq. ft. performance theater with kitchen, stage lighting, and built in sound system.
        - *A Recreation Room* with table games, opening onto an outdoor area for basketball and socializing.
        - *A Teen Lounge* for middle school aged youth, with a karaoke machine and art materials.
        - *A Swimming Pool* located across the street from the main campus.
- **San Diego Community College District:** The Cesar Chavez campus of the San Diego Community College District is housed within a City-owned building adjacent to Chicano Park. The campus offers math, history/government, English, computer, ESL, economics, G.E.D. preparation, and Spanish courses.
- **Barrio Child Development Center**: Barrio Child Development Center provides subsidized pre-school care for children ages 3 - 5 years old.

- **Barrio Logan College Institute**: The Barrio Logan College Institute offers academic enrichment, skill building, tutoring, mentoring, and college exploration and application services focused primarily on local Latino students. The programs focus on school-aged youth (elementary, middle, high school) and also include parent and mentor programs.

II. PARK AND RECREATION NEEDS

This section identifies park and recreation needs from several perspectives:

- **Community Preferences**, as identified through the Community Plan Update public involvement process;
- **Standards Analysis**, based on the San Diego General Plan numerical standards for Population-based Park and Recreation facilities;
- **Access Analysis,** identifying geographic access to parks and underserved areas;
- **Additional Park Land Needs**, discussing the need for natural open space, public plazas, and connections to public facilities; and
- **Additional Recreation Facility Needs**, reviewing the need for several types of recreation facilities.

Community Preferences

The Barrio Logan Community Plan Update process has included an extensive public involvement process. Community members discussed parks and recreation needs, issues and opportunities through a variety of methods. Below is a summary of key themes related to parks and recreation.

Community Assets

- Mexican/Latino cultural amenities/events
- Waterfront-adjacent location
- Community-oriented and friendly walking destinations
- History and culture

Parks and Recreation Needs

- Expand Chicano Park using surrounding land
- Provide safe, maintained, and well-lit public places
- Need community gathering places for cultural events
- Provide programs, classes, and activities for children
- Provide additional recreation facilities to meet standards of other City of San Diego communities
- Create destinations and tourism opportunities
- Provide streetscape improvements that connect public facilities
- Increase community partnerships to develop projects
- Implement joint use on Perkins Elementary

Impacts to the Community's Quality of Life

- Environmental hazards
- Homelessness
- Safety
- Neglected streets and public space
- Truck congestion and noise
- Lack of recreation opportunities for children
- Lack of spaces for residents to gather outside and mingle

In addition, residents would like to see more open space, improved streetscapes, and more land developed for parks and recreation purposes. They would like to see schools used more for parks and recreation, brownfield sites reclaimed, an indoor pool, improved waterfront access, community rooftop gardens, pocket parks at dead-end streets, improved school site landscaping, dog parks, and expanded waterfront opportunities. Community members also indicated they would like to see additional sports fields, farmers/artists markets, and increased arts and cultural opportunities. For

linkage opportunities, area residents would like to see connections to the waterfront and better use of alleys.

Standards Analysis

Park acreage per 1,000 residents is a common measurement that provides a way of comparing "apples to apples" across communities and identifying trends. The 2008 San Diego General Plan establishes standards for parks and recreation facilities based on population. The General Plan calls for at least 2.8 acres of Population-based park land per 1,000 residents.

Barrio Logan Community Plan Update Planning Context, Appendix A contains a summarized analysis of standards. For the purposes of this analysis, SANDAG population data and forecasts for Barrio Logan are used: a 2007 population of 3,270 and a forecasted population of 5,738 in 2030, under the current land uses. Table 2.1 shows the usable acreage, as determined by the City, for each of the parks in Barrio Logan. Table 2.2 depicts how to calculate the current level of service.

Table 2.1 Barrio Logan Park Acreage Summary

Park	Gross Acres	Usable Acres
Chicano Park	8.18	8.0
Cesar Chavez Park	4.21	4.21
Total	12.93 ac	12.21 ac

Table 2.2 Calculating Level of Service (LOS)

Formula
$\frac{\text{Acreage}}{\text{Population}} \times 1{,}000 = \text{LOS}$
Barrio Logan Parks
Total Usable Park Acreage: 12.21 Estimated 2007 Population: 3,270 $\frac{12.21}{3{,}270} \times 1{,}000 = 3.73$
Current Park LOS
3.73 acres/1,000 residents

As the analysis indicates, Chicano Park and Cesar Chavez Park together currently provide enough acreage to meet the minimum standard of 2.8 acres per 1,000 residents. With the future population of 5,738, the two existing parks will provide 2.13 acres per 1,000 residents, a deficit of 3.85 acres in 2030. The City has identified 2.66 acres of park expansions within the Facilities Financing Plan: 2.00 additional acres at Chicano Park and 0.66

acres if Perkins Elementary School is developed as joint use. This would leave a deficit of 1.19 acres of Population-based Park acreage in 2030, under the current land use scenario.

As noted in Section I of this report, Barrio Logan has no Resource-based Parks or Natural Open Space. Within Barrio Logan opportunities to provide park land of other types are limited given the developed nature of the community.

Another consideration is the significant employment population within the community. The City standards are based on residential needs. In planning for the future park system within Barrio Logan, potential needs of employees should be considered, as these needs could impact the community need for Population-based Park Land.

Access Analysis

The San Diego General Plan provides guidelines for geographic provision of parks in Table RE-2. Neighborhood parks, a type of population-based park that is smaller in size and typically includes picnic areas, children's play areas, multi-purpose courts, multi-purpose turf areas, comfort stations, walkways and landscaping, are called for within about a mile distance, accessible by bicycling and walking. Community parks, also a type of population-based park, are larger in scale and include all the facilities included in neighborhood parks as well as recreation centers, aquatic complexes, multi-purpose sports fields and other larger scale features that require parking. The General Plan calls for one community park within a community plan area, but allows for a community park to serve multiple planning areas depending on location. No specific distance is provided for community parks, but these facilities are intended to have a larger draw than neighborhood parks.

Traditionally, cities have looked at a straight-line distance from parks when evaluating their geographic service area. However, a straight-line distance does not take into account the physical connections that provide access to a particular park, nor does it factor in physical barriers that impede access. Several important factors influence park access—how people get to and use parks and recreation facilities:

- **Transportation Modes:** People travel to and from parks in a variety of ways. The primary modes of travel include walking, bicycling, driving, and using public transportation.

- **Access Points:** Parks have access points that allow residents to enter these sites to use the recreation facilities located there. For parks, access points are located where streets enter or intersect the site and no barriers such as fencing exist.
- **Barriers:** Physical (infrastructure) and natural (creeks and canyons) barriers can limit access to parks. One potential obstacle is a lack of sidewalks or off-street pathways that enable pedestrians to gain access to parks. Another obstacle can be created by the road system. A good road network can provide access to parks, but it can also create perceptual or physical barriers to reaching certain sites. Crossing a major street may be an obstacle to a child walking to a park, even if he/she lives nearby. Other physical barriers, such as buildings, fences, and private property can block access to a park site. For example, if a park has one access point and is otherwise surrounded by private property, residents on the side of the park without an access point have to travel further to use the park facilities.
- **Travel Distance:** The distance people are willing to travel to reach a park depends on the appeal of the amenities within it, and, as mentioned previously, the mode of travel chosen for the trip. People are willing to travel further for amenities that are more unique and larger in scale. Recreation participants are also willing to travel further when traveling by car versus traveling by foot or by bike. Generally speaking, the distance people are willing to travel to get to a park or trail can be determined by studying user preferences and abilities. Typical pedestrians are willing to walk between ¼ and ½ mile (5-10 minutes) to reach a park destination. Bicyclists are willing to travel approximately ½ - ¾ mile to reach a destination[2].

To illustrate the difference between a service area and an access area, Figure 2.1 graphically depicts the park coverage around a hypothetical park for both ¼ and ½ mile service areas and access areas. Figure 2.1 shows the service coverage based on a straight-line radius for service areas, along with an access area defined by the distance a park user must travel to reach the park, by using existing roads,

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[2] Asha Weinstein and Paul Schimek (2005), *How Much Do Americans Walk? An Analysis Of The 2001 NHTS*, Transportation Research Board Annual Meeting (www.trb.org).

sidewalks, and trails. The lighter color polygon is based on a ¼-mile access area reach, while the darker polygon is based on a ½-mile. In comparison, the ¼ and ½ mile service areas are noted.

Barrio Logan is surrounded by barriers that limit the ability of residents to access parks within the community and nearby it. The street pattern, the land uses, and the lack of pedestrian crossings across major streets and highways all serve to limit access to the existing park resources. To evaluate the ability of Barrio Logan residents to access existing park resources, the planning team created a series of three access maps:

- Access to Community and Neighborhood Parks
- Playground Access
- Recreation Center Access

Figure 2.1 Service Radius Versus Access Distance

In Barrio Logan, many residences have very limited outdoor recreation area, making parks critical to the ability of residents to recreate: to play, picnic, toss a ball, or have a family gathering. Many single family residences are located on small lots, without much outdoor space. Newer multi-family development has included outdoor areas, such as at the Gateway development. However, these

areas tend to be smaller in size. For these reasons, park access is critically important to the quality of life in Barrio Logan, even more so than in areas with larger residential lots.

Access to Community and Neighborhood Parks

Map 2 depicts access to the community and neighborhood parks in Barrio Logan and nearby. This analysis looks at ½ mile and 1 mile distances for neighborhood parks: ½ mile is generally accepted as the maximum convenient walking distance and 1 mile is the service area for neighborhood parks identified in the General Plan. The analysis also looks at 1 ½ mile and 2 mile distances for community parks. While no distance is identified for community parks in the General Plan, these distances are industry standards and recognize that residents are willing to travel further to reach the more varied features at community parks, and stay a longer duration. Table 2.3 summarizes the assumptions used in the analysis.

Table 2.3 Community and Neighborhood Park Access Assumptions

Park Type	Distance	Existing Parks
Neighborhood Parks	½ -1 mile	• Cesar Chavez Park • Chicano Park
Community Parks	1 ½ - 2 mile	• Memorial Community Park • Southcrest Park

Map 2 shows that the existing neighborhood parks serve north Barrio Logan very well. Residents are able to walk or bike to a neighborhood park easily and within a short time period. Access to Cesar Chavez Park could be expanded by improving the existing pedestrian link from the street end next to the SDMTS yard. Residents in south Barrio Logan are underserved and do not have easy access to neighborhood parks. For some residents, the nearest park of any kind is well over one mile away and in another community.

According to the access map, although no community parks are located in Barrio Logan, many residents are within a one mile distance of Memorial Community Park or Southcrest Park. The General Plan does allow a community park to serve multiple neighborhoods. However, based on the acres per

1,000 population standard in the General Plan, these parks are already over capacity serving their own neighborhoods and do not have capacity to serve Barrio Logan residents. In addition, gang territoriality issues limit the casual use of Memorial Park by residents from outside the neighborhood, making it even less likely that Memorial Park could adequately serve Barrio residents.

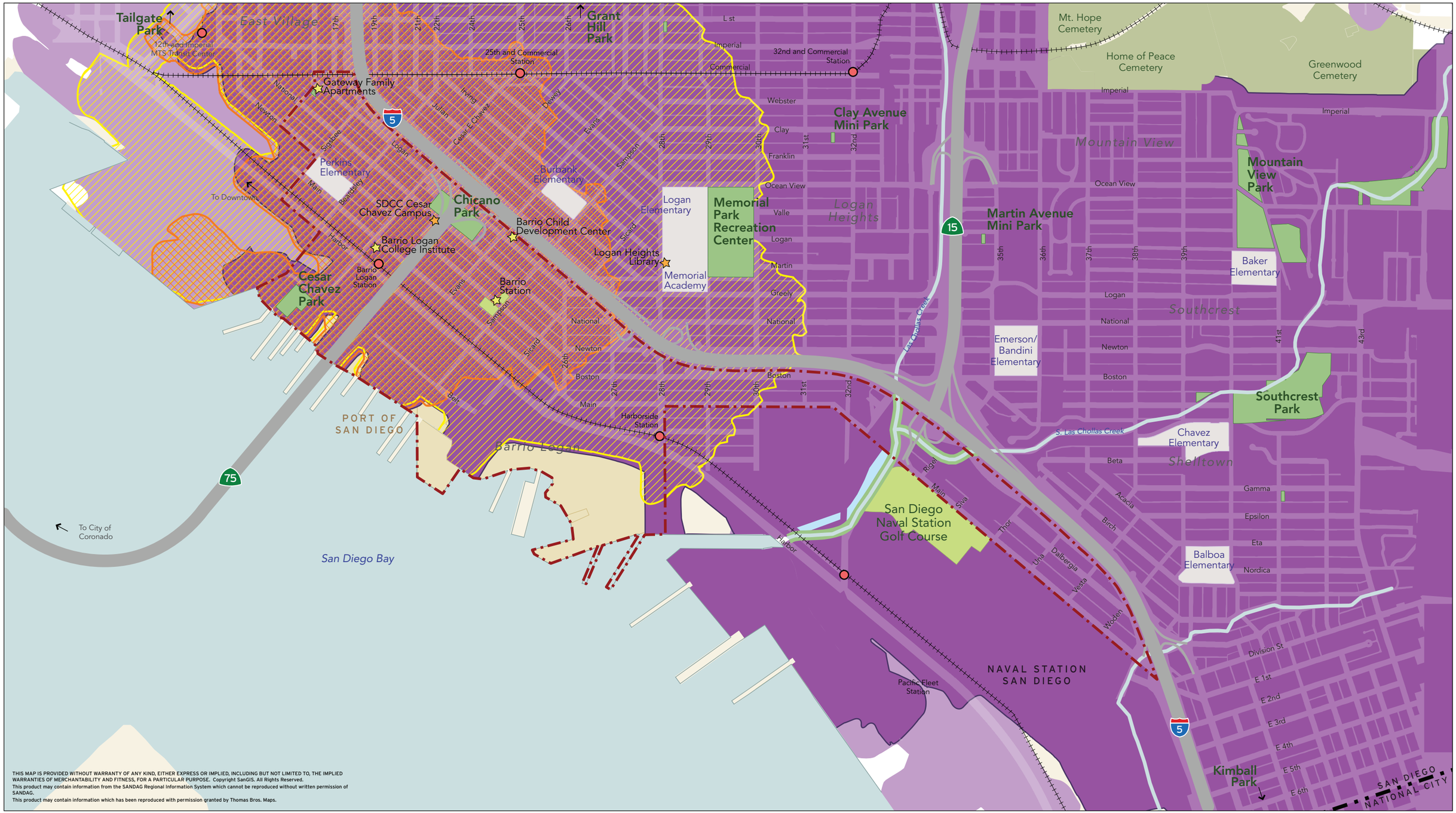
Playground Access

Map 3 depicts access to playgrounds for Barrio Logan residents. Generally playground users are children with their families. As previously noted, research has shown that $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ mile is the distance people are willing to walk. Since small children are less mobile, a ¼ mile distance was used in the analysis. The General Plan does not provide playground access guidelines. Table 2.4 summarizes the playgrounds accessible to the public in and near Barrio Logan.

Table 2.4 Playground Locations

Playgrounds	Existing Parks
Public Parks	• Cesar Chavez Park • Chicano Park • Memorial Community Park
Schools	• Logan Elementary • Perkins Elementary
Private Sites Accessible to the Public	• Gateway Family Apartments

As Map 3 depicts, the north section of Barrio Logan has good access to playgrounds. At the ¼ mile distance, neither Memorial Community Park nor Logan Elementary serves Barrio Logan residents well for playground access. All areas of Barrio Logan south of Sampson lack convenient access to playgrounds.



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1/2 Mile Neighborhood Park Service Area
1 Mile Neighborhood Park Service Area
1 1/2 Mile Community Park Service Area
2 Mile Community Park Service Area
Park
Private Park
Cemetery
Creek
Public Facility
Private Facility
School
Barrio Logan Community Plan Area
City Boundary
Freeway/Ramp
SDMTS Trolley and Station

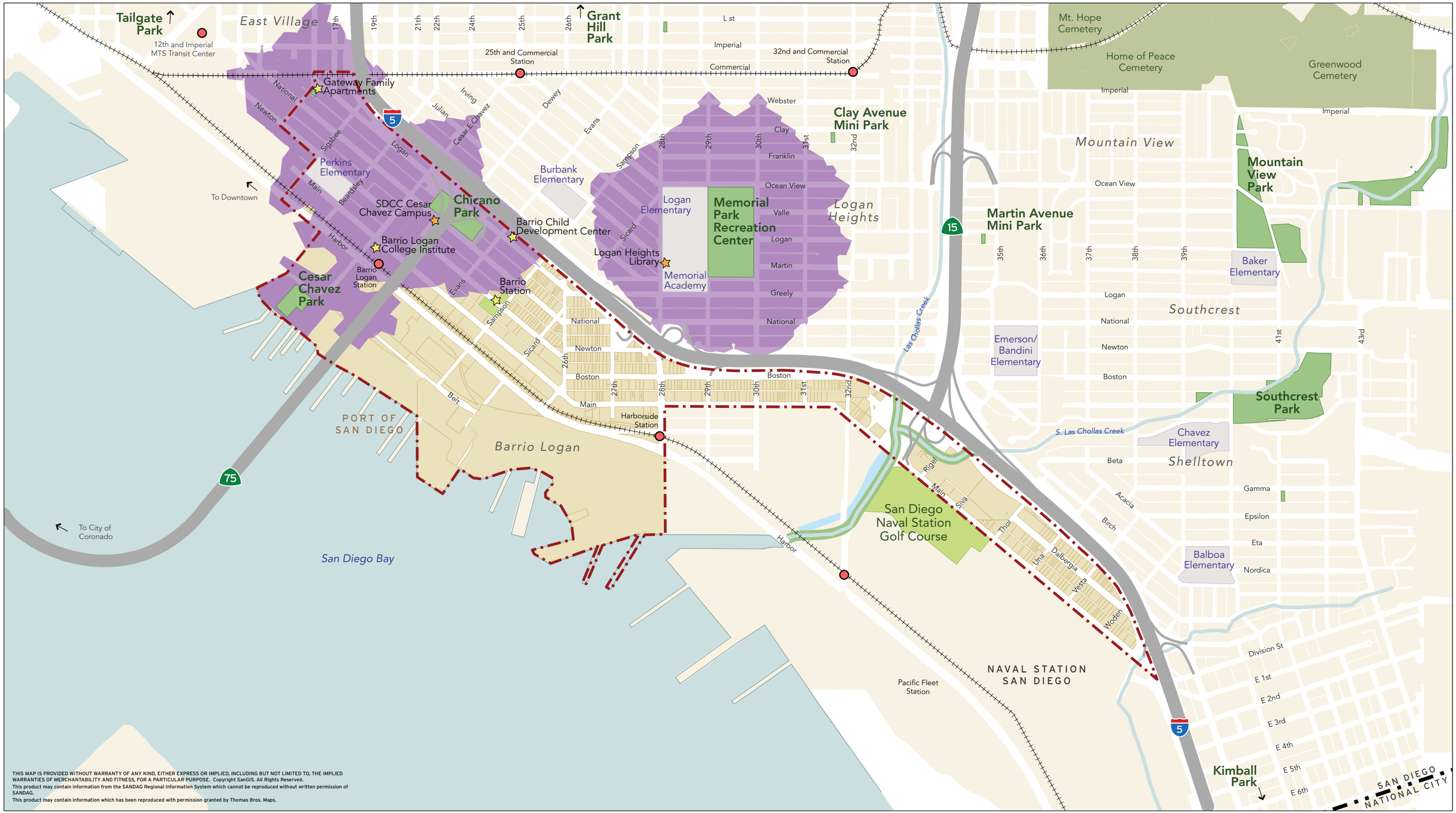
N

0 500 1000 2000 feet

Map 2: Neighborhood & Community Park Access

January 2009

Park System Strategy: Barrio Logan Community Plan Update



1/4 Mile Playground Service Area
Park
Private Park
Cemetery
Creek
Public Facility
Private Facility
School
Barrio Logan Community Plan Area
City Boundary
Freeway/Ramp
SDMTS Trolley and Station

N

0 500 1000 2000 feet

Map 3: Playground Access

January 2009

Park System Strategy: Barrio Logan Community Plan Update

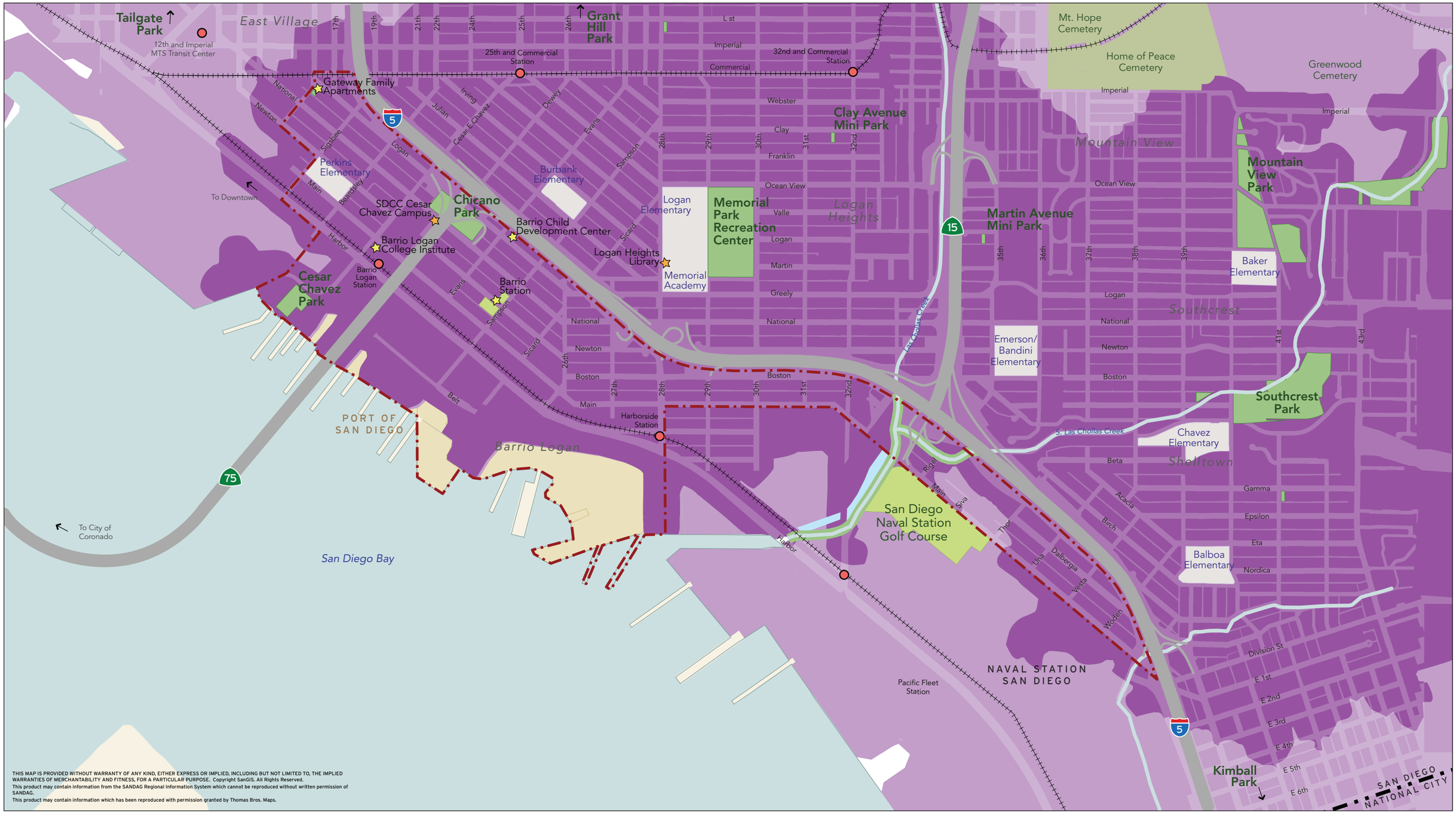
Recreation Center Access

There are no public recreation centers within Barrio Logan, but a recreation center is one of the key amenities included within a community park. Recreation centers are also the primary sites where the Park and Recreation Department offers recreation programs.

Map 4 depicts 3 mile service areas from the existing recreation centers at Memorial Community Park and Southcrest Park, based on the guideline in the General Plan. Given that Barrio Logan is isolated by barriers from surrounding areas, Map 4 also depicts a 1-mile recreation center service area around the Barrio Station complex. While the Barrio Station complex is targeted toward youth and their families and is owned and operated by a not-for-profit, it includes most of the elements of a public recreation center.

With a 3 mile service area, the Memorial and Southcrest centers combined would theoretically serve Barrio Logan. However, given territoriality issues, the isolation of Barrio Logan, and the fact that the centers are at capacity serving the population of its own neighborhood, it is not reasonable to conclude that Barrio Logan is well-served by these sites. At a 1 mile service area, Barrio Station could serve all of Barrio Logan, except for a small section of homes near the San Diego Naval Station Golf Course. Barrio Station is well-located within central Barrio Logan, but there is no formal agreement between the Park and Recreation Department and the not-for-profit. In addition, the Barrio Station programming is targeted primarily at middle school and high school aged youth, so it does not serve the needs of the full range of ages within the community.

Map 3 shows that one recreation, if located centrally, could serve all of Barrio Logan. Since the existing centers outside the neighborhood don't have capacity to serve Barrio Logan residents even though the centers are within 3 miles of the neighborhood, a center is needed in Barrio Logan. In the future, the City could consider developing a partnership agreement with Barrio Station, as it has with other agencies such as the YWCA, and possibly work with Barrio Station to expand its facility to increase its ability to serve area residents. Another option would be to develop a joint use facility at the Perkins school site that combines a recreation center and a school, similar to the example at Pacific Park School in Glendale, California. This could only occur if the existing building were demolished and replaced with a new facility designed to support joint use.



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1 Mile Rec Center Service Area
3 Mile Rec Center Service Area
Park
Private Park
Cemetery
Creek
Public Facility
Private Facility
School
Barrio Logan Community Plan Area
City Boundary
Freeway/Ramp
SDMTS Trolley and Station

N

0 500 1000 2000 feet

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Map 4: Recreation Center Access

January 2009

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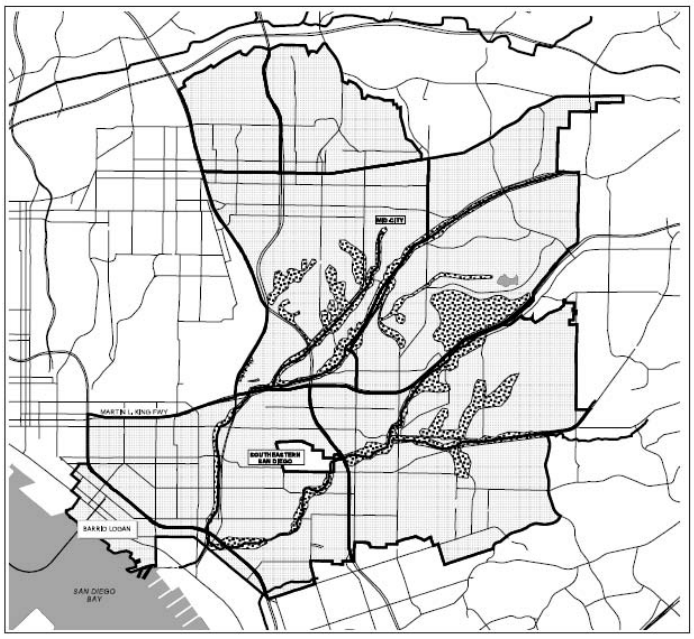
Additional Park Land Needs

Natural Open Space

As noted earlier, Barrio Logan does not currently have any natural open space land. Given the community's location, land use mix and barriers to the waterfront, opportunities for natural open space sites in Barrio Logan are limited, particularly sites that are connected to the residential population.

Chollas Creek offers the most significant opportunity to provide natural open space that is accessible to Barrio Logan residents. The main and southern channels of Chollas Creek bisect Barrio Logan and connect with the bay in the Naval Station San Diego. Chollas Creek is a 25-mile natural drainage system that originates in Lemon Grove and contributes to improving water quality through filtering. The main channel connects with the proposed future development of Chollas Creek Park (identified in the *Chollas Creek Enhancement Program*) and flows southwest from communities in the northeast.

Figure 2.2 Chollas Creek Drainage System



Source: Chollas Creek Enhancement Program

The creek is threatened by intense urbanization, overgrown vegetation characterized by poor circulation, and continuous use as a dumping ground for trash and toxic materials. The US Environmental Protection Agency identified the creek as an impaired body of water with high concentrations of diazinon, coliform, and metals such as cadmium, copper, zinc and lead. Efforts to clean up, restore, and protect Chollas Creek are being made by community organizations and the development of the *Chollas Creek Enhancement Program*.

Foresight into protecting the Chollas Creek was written in the 1978 *Barrio Logan-Highway 100 Community Plan*. In the plan it states "A natural linear park should be developed taking advantage of the Chollas Creek regional open space development potential." The 2003 update also emphasized a linear park along the creek as one of its recommendations.

Support for a natural open space park along Chollas Creek should be carried forward into the current Community Plan Update. If additional land could be dedicated for park and recreation use where the Creek passes 32nd St. or Harbor Dr., access to the creek could be enhanced and additional park land could be provided. Natural open space park land would be considered an equivalency to City of San Diego Open Space park guidelines by the Park and Recreation Department.

Public Plazas

The Urban Design Element of the General Plan includes the following policy about public plazas and gathering space.

General Plan Urban Design Element
UD-E.1. Include public plazas, squares or other gathering spaces in each neighborhood and village center (see also UD-C.1 and UD-C.5 for additional public space requirements in village centers, and UD-F.3 for policy direction on public art and cultural activities in public spaces). a. Locate public spaces in prominent, recognizable, and accessible locations. b. Design outdoor open areas as "outdoor rooms," developing a

hierarchy of usable spaces that create a sense of enclosure using landscape, paving, walls, lighting, and structures.

c. Develop each public space with a unique character, specific to its site and use.

d. Design public spaces to accommodate a variety of artistic, social, cultural, and recreational opportunities including civic gatherings such as festivals, markets, performances, and exhibits.

e. Consider artistic, cultural, and social activities unique to the neighborhood and designed for varying age groups that can be incorporated into the space.

f. Use landscape, hardscape, and public art to improve the quality of public spaces.

g. Encourage the active management and programming of public spaces.

h. Design outdoor spaces to allow for both shade and the penetration of sunlight.

i. Frame parks and plazas with buildings which visually contain and provide natural surveillance into the open space.

j. Address maintenance and programming.

Currently, there are no public plazas within the neighborhood commercial areas in Barrio Logan. Chicano Park includes a large plaza space underneath the Coronado Bridge overpass that is suitable for outdoor markets, community fairs and other larger scale gatherings. However, this plaza space is a "dead space" when events are not scheduled. It also does not meet the guidance of the General Plan: it is not readily accessible as it is surrounded by streets; it is not designed as a series of outdoor

rooms; and it is not framed by buildings that provide natural surveillance. In addition, it is not linked to village retail and commercial areas, and does not support the neighborhood's economic vitality.

While the plaza within Chicano Park serves some functions well and can continue to do so into the future, a smaller plaza located near the neighborhood commercial streets is also needed. The General Plan provides excellent guidance on how to locate such a plaza, and the Logan Avenue commercial area has several possible locations that meet the criteria, including some within public right-of-way. Careful attention should be given to the design of a plaza, and elements should be incorporated that attract the community even when there are no scheduled events. For example, a sprayground or interactive fountain could be incorporated into a plaza to draw families with children. Public plazas may also be considered to meet Population-based Park requirements, if General Plan guidelines are met.

Additional Recreation Facility Needs

Swimming Pools

The City of San Diego defines a swimming pool as a 25 meter x 25 yard pool. This pool configuration is quite flexible for lap swimming, competitive swimming, lessons, and some types of aquatic exercise. However, in the past ten years, the trend in aquatics facilities has been a move from singular flat or deep water pools to pool complexes which also include separate shallow water with spray features, water play equipment, current channels and pools for therapeutic purposes/activities. Shallow water pools that include these water features are considered leisure pools. A leisure pool stresses the recreational swimming element and has a majority of its pool area with depths of four feet or less. The shallow water also permits more people in the pool at one time and is more conducive to play and general recreation swimming, rather than lap or competitive swimming. Leisure pools typically also have warmer water than pools used for competition, making them attractive for certain types of aquatic exercise and therapy. Leisure pools can vary in size, depending on the features incorporated. MIG, Inc.'s project experience indicates that leisure pools draw two to three times the number of annual swimmers compared to conventional flat water pools. Many communities will provide both competition and leisure pool elements at a single site to maximize revenue generation opportunities.

San Diego's Population-based guideline for swimming pools is 1 pool per 50,000 residents or within ±6 miles. Within Barrio Logan, there is a small outdoor pool located within the Barrio Station complex. Nearby, Memorial Community Park includes a city-operated outdoor swimming pool that is within the ±6 miles distance guideline. While the Memorial Community Park pool is undergoing renovation, it is constrained and the renovation will not result in a significant increase in capacity. The Barrio Station pool is heavily used, but is small, has limited deck space and no capacity for expansion due to its location on a corner lot, with buildings on two sides and streets on the other two sides.

Leisure Pool at Ventura Community Park, Ventura, CA

Swimming pools are costly to operate. In addition, San Diego is currently in a Stage 1 Water Emergency. Despite these potential constraints, expanding public swimming opportunities in Barrio Logan should be pursued if feasible, to provide a similar level of access enjoyed in other areas of San Diego. Two potential opportunities are:

- Partner with Barrio Station to provide an equivalency and potentially replace the existing pool with a larger facility at another location.
- Consider incorporating a swimming pool at Perkins Elementary School if the site is rebuilt to accommodate joint use, as discussed in the Recreation Centers section.

Spraygrounds

Spraygrounds or interactive water features are another regional and national trend. These features attract high use, especially from children and families. They can be integrated into a wide variety of park settings, including urban plazas. Once built, interactive water features are relatively inexpensive to operate (compared to a swimming pool) because they typically do not require lifeguards since there is no standing water. Unlike pools and water parks, entrance fees are typically not charged for interactive water features because there is no access controlled gate.

City Hall Plaza, Hillsboro, OR

Pacific Park, Glendale, CA

A sprayground or interactive water feature would provide a major community draw in a very small space. It would supplement aquatic needs and could contribute to the vitality of an urban plaza if designed and sited properly. The images above and on the previous page illustrate the wide variety of ways interactive water features can be incorporated into parks and public spaces. As previously noted, San Diego is currently in a Stage 1 Water Emergency. This may place a constraint on building additional features that use water. However, spraygrounds use less water than a swimming pool and can be designed with recirculating water systems. In addition, these features can be designed so that they function as a plaza even if the water is turned off, so can serve a dual purpose.

Athletic and Multipurpose Fields

There are limited athletic fields available within Barrio Logan. Perkins Elementary includes two unturfed ball fields that are not suitable for organized play, and Cesar Chavez Park has a rectangular turf area that is used for informal soccer, but is not regulation size. Other than that, there are no areas large enough for athletic fields within the community. In the future, athletic fields should be considered at new sites or redeveloped existing sites if the site is large enough to accommodate one or more fields, along with support facilities such as restrooms and parking. If the existing field at Perkins Elementary were improved, a joint use agreement could be established to provide public access. If the Perkins Elementary site were redeveloped to support public use, an athletic field could be considered for inclusion at the site.

Picnic Areas

Picnic areas with barbecues and groupings of tables, sheltered or unsheltered, provide opportunities for family and community gathering within parks. Whether reserveable or not, these facilities serve an important function and support healthy activities. Small picnic areas should accommodate 25 to 30 people, while large picnic areas may accommodate 50 to 100 or more. Formal picnic areas should be located near a restroom, public parking area or pubic transportation stop. Ideally, these facilities should also be near a playground and an open turf area for casual games and activities. Barrio Logan is lacking in formal picnic areas. While Cesar Chavez Park and Chicano Park have picnic tables, neither park has a formally developed group picnic area. It would be difficult to add a picnic area to Chicano Park, given its configuration. Picnic areas should be considered for Cesar Chavez Park or any new parks.

Walking Paths and Trails

Throughout the country, trails and trail-related activities are among the highest participation recreation activities across most populations. Walking, both for pleasure and exercise, tops most national surveys as a favored recreation activity. Providing safe, off-street opportunities for people to walk, jog, bike and skate is becoming an important part of City transportation and park systems. Using a bicycle, walking, or skating to get around is called "active transportation," to denote the health benefits. Creating trail systems for active transportation is being recognized as an important health strategy. Trails that provide alternatives to driving to local destinations foster a higher level of personal activity and reduce environmental effects of car travel.

The "Complete Streets" movement is another national trend. Complete Streets are designed and operated to enable safe, attractive and comfortable access and travel for all users, and can incorporate active transportation. The Complete Streets concept addresses all modes of transportation, including by foot, bike, automobile, bus, trolley, and train, as well as the transportation needs of all age groups and abilities. The idea is not so much to remove automobiles from streets, but to allow for a variety of transportation options to move freely and safely on the same street.

Historically, Barrio Logan is a working class neighborhood. The tendency to travel by foot is greater in this neighborhood and, therefore, walking paths and sidewalk networks are especially needed and would be valued features in the community that enhance access to parks, public facilities and commercial areas.

Within Barrio Logan, there are limited walking paths, with the exception of the existing public sidewalk network. There are no off-street paths or trails, and the two public parks do not have looped walking paths. There are a number of planning efforts completed or underway and some of these plans call for pathways in or near Barrio Logan. The citywide Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan, currently underway, may provide guidance on bicycle and pedestrian facilities and connectivity within Barrio Logan.

The Bayfront pathway, partially constructed, will pass through Barrio Logan near Harbor Avenue. If completed, this pathway would provide an excellent recreation amenity for Barrio Logan residents, provide a connection to downtown, and contribute to the citywide pathway system.

The CalTrans right-of-way within Barrio Logan also offers an excellent opportunity for a pathway in the neighborhood. An informal "desire line" already exists along a long portion of this land. A path here would provide recreation opportunities in an area of the neighborhood that lacks public recreation facilities, and it would increase access to existing parks and facilities within the neighborhood and nearby, including the new branch library.

Other streets within Barrio Logan could be redesigned and improved to create wider sidewalks or dedicated pathways within the existing right-of-way (e.g., Cesar Chavez Blvd./St.). When road improvement projects occur, pedestrian and bicyclist connectivity and features should be incorporated. In addition, the existing system of alleys could be redesigned and improved to provide pedestrian connections within the neighborhood.

Linear parks or greenbelts with pedestrian pathways or bikeways could potentially serve as a park equivalency, based on General Plan guidelines.

Opportunities

While there are many constraints to providing additional parks and recreation facilities within Barrio Logan, there are also a number of sites that offer opportunities.

- **CalTrans Right-of-Way**. The R.O.W. along Interstate 5 offers an ideal opportunity to provide a linear park with a pedestrian and bike path, including improved links to the pedestrian bridge over Interstate 5 that leads to the new Logan Heights Library. A walkway along this R.O.W. could also connect to a Chollas Creek trail system in the long term.

- **Perkins School Site**. The Perkins school site could be redesigned and redeveloped to support joint use of the site for a park and school. A project like this could also incorporate a recreation center or swimming pool if the school site is redeveloped with joint use as a key concept.

- **Existing Public Land**. There is a significant amount of publicly-owned land in Barrio Logan, including street and transit rights-of-way as well as sites owned by the Redevelopment Agency. For example, a linear park could be provided along Cesar Chavez Boulevard, connecting Barrio Station and Cesar Chavez Park.

- **Other Community Plans**. The community plans for the neighborhoods adjacent to Barrio Logan in some cases call for new parks or facilities relatively nearby. For example, the Downtown Community Plan states in Section 4.1-P-14: "Work to secure a site for an additional park in southeastern downtown, near Barrio Logan". If these community plan recommendations are implemented, it may be possible to develop parks or facilities that would also serve the needs of Barrio Logan residents, thus gaining multiple benefits from new public improvements (e.g., multiple stories recreation facilities to expand service capacity).

- **Private Development and Redevelopment**. The Gateway project already provides an excellent local example of private development contributing to the parks and recreation system in Barrio Logan. Other developments, such as the planned Mercato development, may offer similar opportunities.

- **Industrial Sites and Brownfields**. Barrio Logan's industrial history means that the neighborhood has a number of industrial sites and brownfields, some of which are larger in size. In some cases, sites are not currently being used, such as the San Diego Gas and Electric vacant structures that are adjacent to the substation. In other cases, industrial uses such as towing yards have meant that there is limited investment in structures on a site. If the Community Plan Update recommends land swaps or land use changes, there may be an opportunity to gain part of some of these sites for park and recreation uses.
- **Cesar Chavez Continuing Education Center**. This college facility is housed in a city-owned building (currently leased by the Community College District) and is planned to be vacated when the community college builds the new campus on adjoining property. Then, the building will revert to recreational uses, which have yet to be determined.

Summary of Needs

Park Land

- Within Barrio Logan, the existing inventory of developed Population-based Parks provides enough acreage based on city standards to meet current needs, but not all residents have access to neighborhood and community parks. However, the two existing parks have some limitations due to their siting and the streets that separate different areas of the parks. Based on city standards and current zoning, more park land will be needed in the future, and the need could increase if the Community Plan Update calls for more residential land use than the current zoning. Additionally, the two parks don't offer a full range of recreation facilities and additional recreation facilities should be considered. Barrio Logan also does not have its own community park, in accordance with the General Plan guideline. Nearby community parks don't adequately serve Barrio Logan.
- Barrio Logan is underserved by parks, mainly due to the lack of natural open space and resource-based parks. Chollas Creek offers the greatest opportunity for a natural open space system that could incorporate parks within the neighborhood. There does not appear to be any opportunities for resource-based parks within Barrio Logan at this time.

- An urban plaza is needed, located in conjunction with the Logan Avenue commercial district which complies with the General Plan guidelines and City criteria for Population-based Parks equivalency.

Recreation Facilities

- Additional playgrounds are needed to provide convenient access for Barrio Logan residents.
- Recreation center access meets city distance standards, but the existing and future population in the areas around the existing centers means that the centers are at or will be over capacity and won't be able to accommodate Barrio Logan residents. The current public recreation centers are located outside of Barrio Logan.
- The nearest public swimming pool is at Memorial Community Park. The Barrio Station pool is an excellent community asset, but the site is constrained and expansion is not possible at the current site. Barrio Logan will not generate enough future residents to justify a full-size swimming pool; Southcrest Park has the population, but does not have a swimming pool. A public pool located in Barrio Logan could serve the adjacent neighborhood as well, or vice versa.
- A sprayground should be considered at a public plaza or within a park in Barrio Logan. This feature could supplement the existing swimming pool opportunities by providing water play at a satellite site.
- There is a need for athletic fields, but the greatest constraint is the lack of large enough sites to accommodate various team-oriented sports activities which typically need 1-2 acres for each formal field, depending on the type.
- Walking and bike paths are needed in Barrio Logan, to provide opportunities for exercise, as well as increase connectivity and improve access to existing parks and public facilities. There are several opportunities to provide walking and bike paths within the community.

- Temporary street closures could be considered to accommodate recreational uses, such as court games, performances, farmers markets, etc. An example is the street closure at Hillcrest DMV and Normal St.