



## 7 RECREATION

The Community Vision adopted as part of the Plan includes the following: “Enhance existing parks with improvements to landscaping, lighting, signage, walkways and play facilities, promote joint use schools, and provide new parks and gathering places.”

Parks and open spaces provide opportunities for recreation, relaxation, walking, and community gathering in Southeastern San Diego. The Plan provides policies to create a comprehensive parks strategy to accommodate the community through 2035.

## GOALS

1. A sustainable park and recreation system that meets the needs of a variety of users such as children, the elderly, persons with disabilities, and the entire teenage population.
2. A comprehensive plan for pedestrian and bikeway connections between parks and open space lands within the Southeastern San Diego community, as well as to surrounding communities.
3. A comprehensive plan for open space system preservation and management of Chollas Creek and area canyons.
4. Accessible bicycle and pedestrian trail corridors along Chollas Creek.
5. A program to incentivize the provision of publicly accessible but privately maintained open space as part of new development.
6. Expanded recreational opportunities through joint use or leasing of public and private facilities.
7. Improve and stimulate investments in this area.

The Recreation Element includes specific policies and recommendations addressing the following topic areas: Parks and Recreation Facilities, Preservation, Accessibility and Open Space Lands. These policies, along with the broader goals and policies of the General Plan, provide a comprehensive parks strategy intended to accommodate the community throughout the next twenty years.

Recreation topics overlap with other Plan elements, as shown in Table 7-1. Joint-use facilities at schools are relevant in the Public Facilities, Services, and Safety Element; open space also has value for the Conservation and Sustainability Element; and the parks system helps to produce the community's identity, a concern discussed in the Urban Design Element.

**TABLE 7-1: RECREATION TOPICS ALSO COVERED IN OTHER PLAN ELEMENTS**

RECREATION TOPIC AREAS	LAND USE	URBAN DESIGN	PUBLIC FACILITIES, SERVICES, AND SAFETY	CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABILITY
Park and open space land designations	x			
Legible overall open space network		x		
Joint-use facilities at schools, community facilities			x	
Open space, including Chollas Creek corridor				x
Development Incentives	x			

## 7.1 Parks and Recreation Facilities

### Population-Based Parks and Recreation Facilities Standards

The San Diego General Plan Recreation Element describes three categories of parks: Open Space Lands, Resource-based Parks, and Population-based Parks. This section covers Population-based Parks. Population-based parks and recreation facilities are typically located within close proximity to residents and are intended to serve the daily recreational and leisure needs of the neighborhoods and communities at a recommended rate of a minimum 2.8 usable acres per 1,000 residents.

Population-based parks consist of six categories of park types: 1) major park; 2) community park; 3) neighborhood park; 4) mini park; 5) pocket park or plaza; and 6) special activity park. Typically, major parks are a minimum 20 acres and serve single or multiple communities and provide specialized facilities that serve large populations. Community parks are a minimum of 13 usable acres, serve a population of 25,000, and provide active and passive recreation. Neighborhood parks are 3 to 13 usable acres, serve a population of 5,000 within approximately one mile radius, and are accessible primarily by foot or bicycle. Mini parks are 1 to 3 usable acres within a half mile radius; Pocket parks and plazas are typically less than 1 usable acre within a quarter mile radius from residents to be served. The size of special activity parks varies depending upon the activity and the population to be served. Usable park land, by Plan standards, must have a slope of less than two percent in graded, active use areas, or a slope of less than ten percent for unstructured recreational or passive use areas.

The General Plan also establishes minimum guidelines for recreation centers and aquatic complexes based on population. A recreation center, typically 17,000 square feet in size, should be provided for every 25,000 residents.

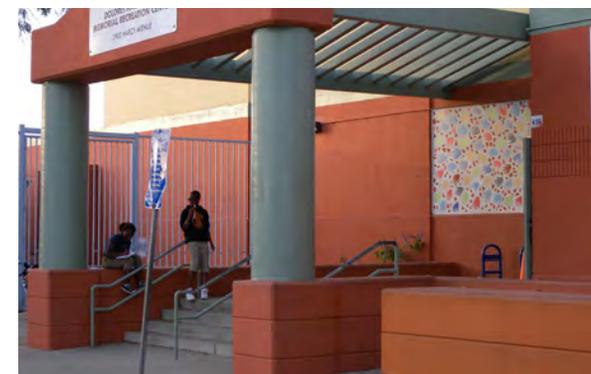
### Meeting City Standards for Population-based Parks and Recreation Facilities

Population-based park requirements are calculated based on the land use recommendations in this community plan update at full community development, and the park acreage and recreation facilities recommendations in the General Plan.

For Southeastern San Diego, the projected population at full development under the community plan is projected to be 67,430. Therefore, according to General Plan Guidelines for population-based parks, the community should be served by a minimum of 107 useable acres of park land. Additionally, Southeastern San Diego should have three recreation centers equivalent to 17,000 square feet each in size, and warrants one community swimming pool.

### Existing Population-Based Parks and Recreation Facilities in Southeastern San Diego

The park system that serves Southeastern San Diego is shown on Figure 7-1. It includes two community parks: Memorial Park in the west and Southcrest Park in the east. Both parks include a recreation center and a combination of ball fields and areas for passive enjoyment. Memorial Park also includes a community swimming pool. Willie Henderson Sports Complex at the eastern edge of the Planning Area features nearly 17 acres of sports fields and courts. In addition to the recreation



*Dorothy Petway Park (top) is the first of a two-phase project that will also include Southcrest Trails Park. Sherman Heights Community Center and the Dolores Magdaleno Memorial Recreation Center provide passive- and active-use recreation assets (middle and bottom).*



*The park system that serves Southeastern San Diego includes community parks, pocket parks, and joint use school fields and playgrounds.*

centers at Memorial and Southcrest, recreation centers exist at Mountain View Neighborhood Park and adjacent to King/Chavez Primary Academy (Stockton Recreation Center). The Jackie Robinson YMCA is also located in Southeastern San Diego, providing a valuable privately-operated recreation asset.

The community includes five neighborhood parks: Grant Hill Park, Dennis V. Allen Park, Mountain View Park, Dorothy Petway Park, and Southcrest Trails Park. These parks each have a somewhat different character. Grant Hill Park is located at a high point and helps to define the surrounding historic neighborhood. Mountain View Park includes a recreation center and a community center. Southcrest Trails Park has an approved General Development Plan, and will provide both recreational facilities and restored natural open space as part of the Chollas Creek open space system, but is currently undeveloped.

There are eight pocket parks considerably less than one acre in size. These pocket parks are the only public parks within walking distance for many residents. Two of these are City-owned park land, but are currently undeveloped. In total, there are 82 acres of useable park land in Southeastern San Diego.

Currently, the four Recreation Centers located in Southeastern San Diego serve all of the community's indoor recreation needs, and actually is in surplus of General Plan standards. The Memorial Pool serves some but not all of Southeastern San Diego residents' aquatic needs.

## Recreation Opportunities and Parks Equivalencies

Opportunities for additional park land and recreation facilities within Southeastern San Diego are anticipated to come primarily through property acquisition, redevelopment of private and public properties and through the application of park equivalencies.

Where vacant land is limited, unavailable or cost-prohibitive, the City's General Plan allows for the application of park equivalencies to be determined by the community and City staff through a set of guidelines. Facilities that may be considered as population-based park equivalencies include: 1) joint use facilities; 2) trails through dedicated open space; 3) privately-owned publicly-used parks; 4) non-traditional parks, such as rooftop or indoor recreation facilities; 5) portions of resource-based parks; and 6) park facility expansion or upgrades. Southeastern San Diego is an urbanized community where park equivalencies are appropriate for satisfying some of the community's population-based park needs. The pool at the Jackie Robinson YMCA also serves community residents.

Through the Plan Update process, the community and City staff identified and evaluated population-based park and recreation opportunities, as well as potential park equivalency sites for their recreational value, uses and functions, public accessibility, consistency with General Plan policies and guidelines, and other land use policy documents, including the Chollas Creek Enhancement Plan. It was determined that a variety of sites and facilities within the community do, or could, serve as population-based parks or park equivalencies.





*The park-like Educational Cultural Complex (top) is a potential joint-use opportunity. Trails (middle) and privately-owned, publicly-accessible open space (bottom) are other potential park equivalencies.*

The Master Plan for the Commercial/Imperial Corridor recommends development of public space consisting of both public gathering spaces and population-based parks for residents of the corridor and the surrounding neighborhoods. One mini-park and two pocket park locations are identified. In addition, urban plazas, paseos, curb extensions and other public spaces provided as part of new developments that do not directly provide for park deficits, would further add to the availability of open space. The Chollas Creek corridor and natural open spaces as a whole are not considered population-based parks; however, proposed parks along the creek corridor will provide needed recreation space and create connections between communities. Trails that connect parks that feature such amenities as benches, picnic tables, exercise stations or areas for passive enjoyment should be considered “park-equivalent” portions of open space corridors. See Section 7-4: Open Space Lands for more discussion of open space along Chollas Creek.

The Chollas Creek corridor and natural open space, as a whole, are not considered population-based parks. However, proposed parks along the creek corridor will provide needed recreation space and create connections between communities. Trails that connect parks that feature such amenities as benches, picnic tables, exercise stations or areas for passive enjoyment should be considered “park-equivalent” portions of open space corridors. See Section 7-4: Open Space Lands for more discussion of open space along Chollas Creek.

Table 7-2 identifies some 40 potential park or joint-use sites in Southeastern San Diego. Some sites that have high potential and represent a variety of settings are briefly described below.

- Site 1 is Southeastern San Diego’s best opportunity for a new community park, which could accommodate much-needed new sports fields, as well as passive use areas along a restored portion of the Main Branch of Chollas Creek. Park development would require purchase of private property with a current mix of light industrial and vehicle storage uses, and could be done with a leaseback of the existing antenna. The park could be contained south of National Avenue or extend to the north.
- Site 3 is located on Caltrans right-of-way that is envisioned by the Plan as being redeveloped as a new neighborhood. The specific size and location of the park site will be evaluated more closely as part of the General Development Plan (GDP) process, but the park should be large enough to accommodate active uses and should be located to support the development of a higher-density mixed use village area along 43rd Street.
- Site 9 is a potential plaza site near the heart of the village area around the 25th Street Trolley station. Development of a plaza here would involve acquisition of a small city block and combining it with a segment of City street that would be closed to traffic. An alternative site directly to the east was proposed in the Commercial/Imperial Corridor Master Plan.
- Sites 29-34 are San Diego Unified School District properties, all of which have high potential as joint use sites with readily available land that could be improved.

FIGURE 7-2: EXISTING AND PROPOSED PARKS AND PARK

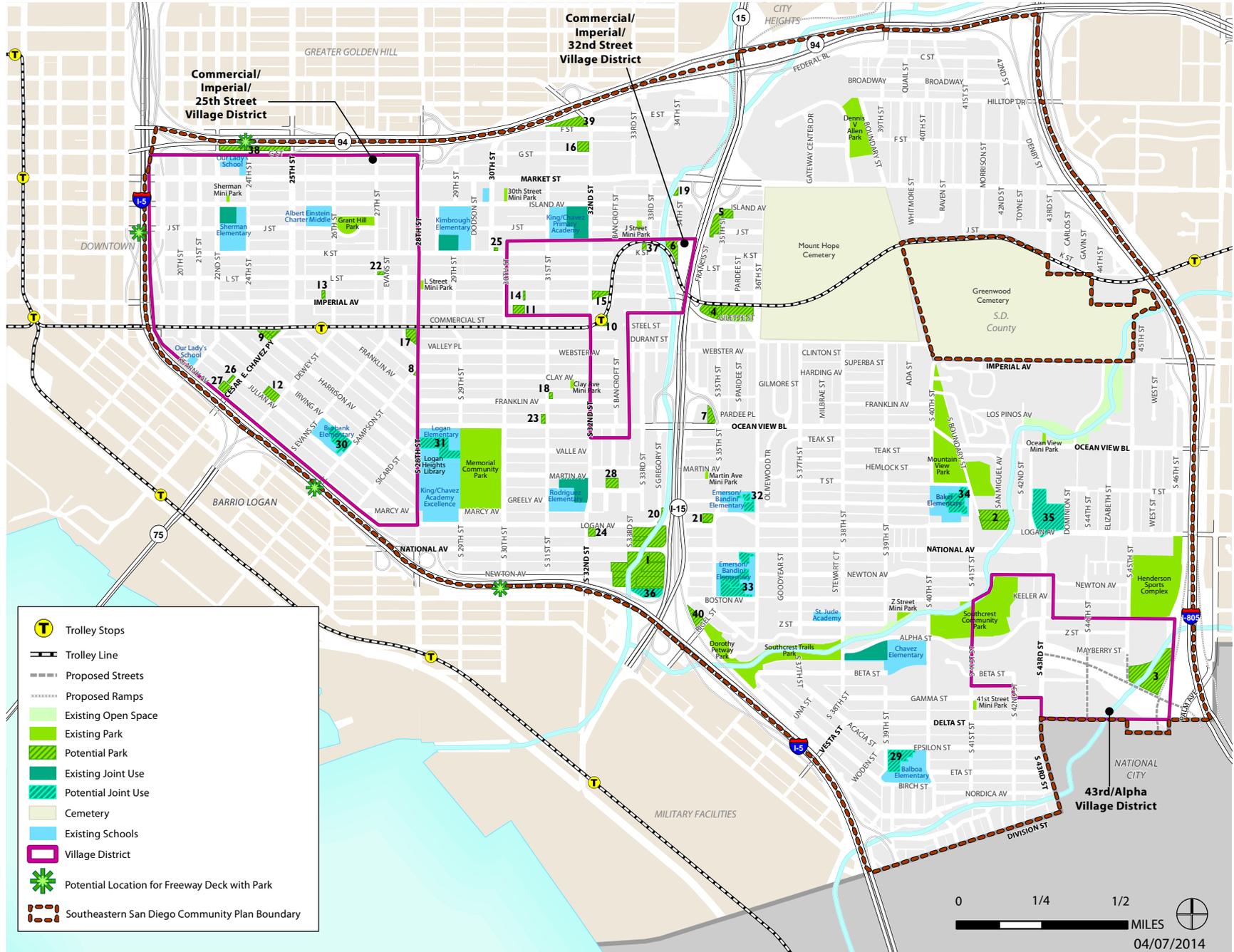


TABLE 7-2: POPULATION-BASED PARKS AND PARK EQUIVALENCIES INVENTORY				
PARK OR PARK EQUIVALENCY	EXISTING USABLE ACREAGE	FUTURE USABLE ACREAGE	ACQUISITION REQUIRED	RECREATION COMPONENTS AND AMENITIES RECOMMENDATIONS
<b>Parks</b>				
<i>Major Parks</i>				
None				
<i>Community Parks</i>				
Memorial	18.04	0.00		Existing facilities consisting of both active and passive recreation that includes a recreation center, community swimming pool, Boys Club, skate park, lighted multi-sports fields, children’s play area, walkways, seating and picnic tables. Pursue a study and implementation of a General Development Plan amendment for the vacant Girls Club building for either renovation for park purposes, or demolition to provide intensification of recreational use.
Southcrest	13.76	0.00		Existing facilities consisting of both passive and active recreation that includes a recreation center, a senior center with shuffleboard courts, comfort station lighted ball fields, multi-use courts, children’s play area, walkways, seating and picnic tables.
(1) Northwest of I-5/SR 15 interchange		11.63	X	Opportunity for large active park along Chollas Creek. Potential 2.67 acres of site with radio antenna as a joint use with radio station.
<i>Neighborhood Parks</i>				
Dorothy Petway	2.72			Existing facility consisting of passive recreation that includes a comfort station, shade structure, children’s play area, walkways, seating and picnic tables.
Dennis V. Allen	5.10			Existing facility consisting of both active and passive recreation that includes a multi-purpose court, children’s play area, walkways, seating and picnic tables.
Grant Hill	1.86			Existing facility consisting of both active and passive recreation that includes multi-purpose court, children’s play area, walkways, seating and picnic tables.
Willie Henderson Sport Complex	15.79			Existing facility consisting of both active and passive recreation that includes, multi-sports fields, multi-purpose courts, field house/comfort station, children’s play area, walkways, seating and picnic tables.
Mountain View	13.46			Existing facility consisting of both active and passive recreation that includes a ball field, multi-purpose courts, tennis courts, field house/comfort station, children’s play area, walkways, shade structure, seating and picnic tables.
Southcrest Trails		2.60		Proposed facility to consist of both active and passive recreation including basketball half courts, amphitheater, skate plaza, children’s play area, shade structures, walkways, seating, picnic tables and Chollas Creek revegetation.
(2) South end of San Miguel Ave		3.20		City fee-owned property. Adjacent to Chollas Creek. Historically farmed. Includes a lot line adjustment and acquisition of a portion of private property to south of city property.
(3) Future Alpha & 45th St		5.90		Park would be created as part of redevelopment of I-805 ramps. Large park site.

TABLE 7-2: POPULATION-BASED PARKS AND PARK EQUIVALENCIES INVENTORY				
PARK OR PARK EQUIVALENCY	EXISTING USABLE ACREAGE	FUTURE USABLE ACREAGE	ACQUISITION REQUIRED	RECREATION COMPONENTS AND AMENITIES RECOMMENDATIONS
(4) Gillette St between Francis & 36th St		3.9	X	Potential for active recreation. Would require access improvements. Could be gateway element along Imperial Avenue.
<i>Mini-Parks</i>				
(5) 35th St between "J" St & Island		1.6		Potential for picnic areas, children's play areas, small multi-purpose turf area, walkways and landscaping.
<i>Pocket Parks/Plazas</i>				
"J" Street	0.22			Existing facility with passive recreation that includes children's play area, turf area and benches.
"L" Street	0.15			Existing facility with both active and passive recreation that includes multi-purpose court, turf area and picnic table.
"Z" Street	0.00	0.38		Parcel is adjacent to Chollas Creek and undeveloped City fee-owned park land acquired for population-based park development.
30th Street	0.23			Existing facility with passive recreation that includes children's play area, turf area and benches
41st Street	0.16			Existing facility with passive recreation that includes children's play area, turf area, picnic table and benches.
Clay Avenue	0.16			Existing facility with passive recreation that includes children's play area, and turf area.
Martin Avenue	0.00	0.14		Parcel is undeveloped City fee-owned park land acquired for population-based park development.
Sherman	0.11			Existing facility includes a parking lot, landscaping and a basketball hoop.
(6) Main Branch Chollas Creek north of Imperial		0.80		Opportunity for park coordinated with Chollas Creek Improvements and adjacent open space.
(7) Ocean View Blvd & 35th St		0.50		City fee-owned property.
(8) 28th St/Clay Ave/Sampson St triangle		0.10	X	Street vacation of a portion of the right of way on Sampson Street. Would require acquisition of underlying private property.
(9) Commercial St & Cesar Chavez Pkwy		0.60		Potential plaza identified as part of Commercial/Imperial Corridor Master Plan (CICMP) process. To be created as part of new development.
(10) Commercial & 32nd St. NE corner		0.50	X	Potential plaza as part of future development. Adjacent to 32nd St Trolley station.
(11) Imperial Ave between 30th St & 31st St, south side		0.60	X	Site identified for a mini-park as part of CICMP process.
(12) Julian Ave & Dewey St, northwest corner		0.70	X	Potential for children's play areas, multi-purpose courts and turf areas, walkways and landscaping.
(13) Imperial Ave west of 26th St		0.20		Site identified in CICMP process. To be created as part of new development.

<b>TABLE 7-2: POPULATION-BASED PARKS AND PARK EQUIVALENCIES INVENTORY</b>				
<b>PARK OR PARK EQUIVALENCY</b>	<b>EXISTING USABLE ACREAGE</b>	<b>FUTURE USABLE ACREAGE</b>	<b>ACQUISITION REQUIRED</b>	<b>RECREATION COMPONENTS AND AMENITIES RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
(14) Imperial Ave between 30th St and 31 St, north side		0.10	X	Site identified for a mini-park as part of CICMP process.
(15) Imperial Ave & 32nd St, northeast corner		0.60		Adjacent to 32nd St trolley station.
(16) "G" St & 32nd St, northwest corner		0.60		Potential for children's play areas, multi-purpose courts and turf areas, walkways and landscaping. But only if the on-ramp as part of SR-94 is not implemented.
(17) 28th St & Commercial St, southwest corner		0.60	X	Potential for children's play areas, multi-purpose courts and turf areas, walkways and landscaping.
(18) 31st St & Franklin Ave		0.10	X	Potential for children's play areas, multi-purpose courts and turf areas, walkways and landscaping.
(19) 34th St & Island Ave, northwest corner		0.10	X	Potential park associated with Chollas Creek. Gateway feature to path system from Market St.
(20) Gregory St north of Logan Ave		0.10	X	Potential park associated with Chollas Creek trail and improvements.
(21) 35th St & Logan Ave		0.50	X	Potential for children's play areas, multi-purpose courts and turf areas, walkways and landscaping.
(22) 27th & "L" St, northeast corner		0.10	X	Potential for children's play areas, multi-purpose courts and turf areas, walkways and landscaping.
(23) 31st St & Ocean View Blvd		0.20	X	Potential for children's play areas, multi-purpose courts and turf areas, walkways and landscaping.
(24) 32nd St & Logan Ave, southeast corner		0.30	X	Potential for children's play areas, multi-purpose courts and turf areas, walkways and landscaping.
(25) 30th St & "K" St		0.10	X	Potential for children's play areas, multi-purpose courts and turf areas, walkways and landscaping.
(26) Cesar Chavez Pkwy & Julian Ave, southeast corner		0.50	X	Potential for children's play areas, multi-purpose courts and turf areas, walkways and landscaping.
(27) Cesar Chavez Pkwy & Kearny Ave, northwest corner		0.50	X	Potential gateway element.
(28) Greely Ave west of Payne Ave		0.60	X	Potential for children's play areas, multi-purpose courts and turf areas, walkways and landscaping.
<i>Special Activity Parks</i>				
None				
<b>Subtotal Population-based Parks</b>	<b>71.8</b>	<b>38.4</b>		

TABLE 7-2: POPULATION-BASED PARKS AND PARK EQUIVALENCIES INVENTORY				
PARK OR PARK EQUIVALENCY	EXISTING USABLE ACREAGE	FUTURE USABLE ACREAGE	ACQUISITION REQUIRED	RECREATION COMPONENTS AND AMENITIES RECOMMENDATIONS
<b>Park Equivalencies</b>				
<i>Joint Use Facilities</i>				
Cesar Chavez Elementary School	1.78			Existing facilities consisting of turf multi-purpose playfield, multi-purpose courts, hardscape for games, and children's play area.
Kimbrough Elementary School	1.00			Existing facilities consisting of turf multi-purpose playfield.
King/Chavez Primary Academy	3.33			Existing facilities consisting of turf multi-purpose playfield, multi-purpose courts, and children's play area. Stockton Recreation Center is within this joint use.
Memorial Academy	0.31			Ground lease for swimming pool and recreation center.
Rodriguez Elementary	2.49			Existing facilities consisting of turf multi-purpose playfield, multi-purpose courts, hardscape for games, and children's play area.
Sherman Elementary	1.40			Existing facilities consisting of turf multi-purpose playfield, with skinned infield.
(29) Balboa Elementary		2.20		Potential turf multi-purpose playfield, multi-purpose courts, hardscape for games, and children's play area.
(30) Burbank Elementary		1.70		Potential multi-purpose courts, hardscape for games, and children's play area.
(31) Logan Elementary		2.70		Potential turf multi-purpose playfield, multi-purpose courts, hardscape for games, and children's play area.
(32) Emerson/Bandini Elementary/Bandini site		0.90		Potential turf multi-purpose playfield, multi-purpose courts, hardscape for games, and children's play area.
(33) Emerson/Bandini Elementary/Emerson site		3.70		Potential turf multi-purpose playfield, multi-purpose courts, hardscape for games, and children's play area.
(34) Baker Elementary		2.25		Potential turf multi-purpose playfield, multi-purpose courts, hardscape for games, and children's play area
(35) Educational Cultural Complex		5.8		Potential for passive recreation.
(36) National Ave/33rd St		2.67		Potential joint use of property with radio station. Proposed active recreation/ Chollas Creek restoration.
<i>Trails</i>				
Imperial Market Place				Existing trail system through City-owned open space; Current improvements include benches, protective fencing, and native landscaping, trash containers.
<i>Privately-Owned Park Sites</i>				
None				

TABLE 7-2: POPULATION-BASED PARKS AND PARK EQUIVALENCIES INVENTORY				
PARK OR PARK EQUIVALENCY	EXISTING USABLE ACREAGE	FUTURE USABLE ACREAGE	ACQUISITION REQUIRED	RECREATION COMPONENTS AND AMENITIES RECOMMENDATIONS
<i>Non-Traditional Park Sites</i>				
(37) 33rd St north of "J" St		0.10		Vacant street right of way with pedestrian tunnel at trolley tracks. No street vacation necessary.
(38) "G" St between 22nd St and 25th St		1.9		Potential as linear park.
(39) 32nd St & "F" St, NW corner		1.2		On-ramp to be closed as part of SR-94 improvements. Possible terraced mini-park.
(40) Rigel St & Franklin Ave		0.80		Caltrans Right of Way, potential expansion of Dorothy Petway Park for specialty use.
<i>Facility or Building Expansion or Upgrade</i>				
Southcrest Community Park				Replace turfed sports field with synthetic turf and upgraded sports lighting to increase hours and days of use.
Southcrest Community Park				New swimming pool.
Willie Henderson Sports Complex				Remodel recreation center and construct new indoor soccer area.
Subtotal Park Equivalencies	10.3	25.9		
<b>TOTAL PARK ACREAGE AND EQUIVALENCIES CREDITS</b>	<b>82.1</b>	<b>64.3</b>		

Note: Site #s refer to potential park sites evaluated by City Staff and shown on Figure 7-2. Many sites were recommended by the community.

Source: City of San Diego, 2013.

TABLE 7-3: PROPOSED POPULATION-BASED PARK INVENTORY SUMMARY	
PARK SPACE	USABLE ACRES
Existing & Future Population-based Parks	110
Park Equivalency Credits	36.2
Population-based parks requirements for year 2030	189
Population-based park deficit for year 2030	42.7

Source: City of San Diego, 2013.

- Site 38 would involve the narrowing of G Street and the use of a portion of Caltrans right-of-way along the north side of G Street to create a linear parkway serving the Sherman Heights neighborhood, and supporting development along the Market Street corridor. This could be done independently of, or in tandem with, a park deck over a portion of SR 94, as part of the 94 Express Lanes project.

Existing and potential parks and park equivalencies are shown in Figure 7-2 and summarized in Table 7-2.

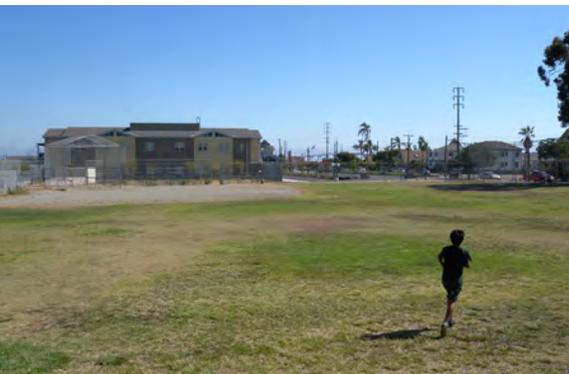
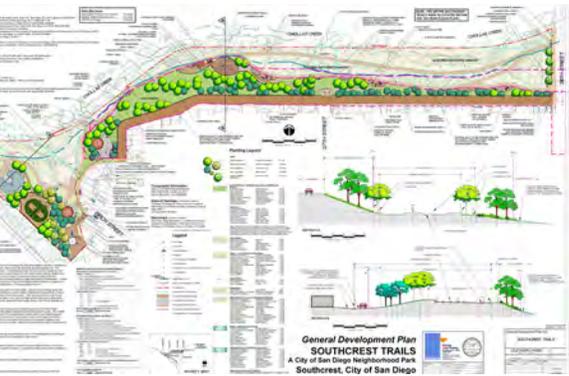
In summary, an estimated 189 total acres of population-based parks will be needed to serve Southeastern San Diego by the year 2030. With 82.1 acres of existing population-based parks and equivalencies combined with the 64.3 acres of park land and equivalencies that have been identified, a 42.7-acre deficit will result. Of the combined 146 usable acres of existing park land and identified parks and park equivalencies, 103 acres will serve the community's neighborhood park needs, and 43.4 acres will serve the community's community park needs. The deficit will need to be fulfilled in the future by land acquisitions/donations or future park equivalencies identified by the City or the community.



*Industrial land along Chollas Creek at National Avenue could be converted to public park space.*



*Possible amenities include sports fields and courts, picnic and play areas, community garden, and access to Chollas Creek trail.*



Funding has been allocated to develop Southcrest Trails park, as planned (top and middle). Joint-use school sites should be priorities for enhancement (bottom).

## Policies

- P-RE-1:** Continue to pursue land acquisition for the creation of new public parks through urban infill and redevelopment proposals, as identified in Table 7-2: Population-based Parks and Park Equivalencies Inventory.
- P-RE-2:** Pursue park equivalencies as opportunities arise, and as identified in Table 7-2: Population-based Parks and Park Equivalencies Inventory.
- P-RE-3:** Pursue expansion of recreation opportunities through joint use or leasing of public and private facilities.
- P-RE-4:** Encourage new private development proposals to include recreational facilities within their land holdings to serve existing and new residents in areas of the community where there are land constraints. Consider provision of non-traditional park and recreation amenities on rooftops of buildings and parking structures, and/or on the ground level, or within new buildings.
- P-RE-5:** Incorporate active or passive recreation into buildings or the surrounding exterior where space allows as public agency land or buildings are redeveloped.
- P-RE-6:** Increase recreational opportunities by acquiring and developing land through street/alley rights-of-way vacations (paper streets), where appropriate and legally defensible, to provide park and recreation uses.
- P-RE-7:** Retain and promote safety in Southeastern San Diego parks by providing park designs that incorporate the City's Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) measures (see General Plan Policy

UD-A.17).

- P-RE-8:** Implement recommendations contained in the Chollas Creek Enhancement Plan that specifically serve the neighborhood and community park needs of the community.
- P-RE-9:** Encourage development of pocket parks and plazas within commercial districts.
- P-RE-10:** Pursue a study and implementation of a General Development Plan amendment for the vacant Girls Club building for either renovation for park purposes, or demolition to provide intensification of recreational use.

## 7.2 Preservation, Protection, and Enhancement

The demand for park and recreation opportunities will continue to grow as the population grows. Undeveloped land for parks has already become difficult to find in the community making preservation of the existing parks and open space essential to providing recreation opportunities. Preservation can include improvements to existing facilities to increase their life span or expand their uses and sustainability. With increased demand and usage, the facilities at Memorial and Southcrest parks may need to be reconstructed, upgraded and expanded with sustainable and green technology features.

Preservation can also include the enhancement of open space that provides a balance between protecting natural resources and allowing for a certain level of public recreation use. For Southeastern San Diego, this would mean focusing passive use improvements on the edge

of open space areas, such as at the “Z” Street mini-park. To protect natural resources and add recreation value, interpretive signs could be featured at parks to educate the public on the unique natural habitat or the history of the place. See the Conservation and Sustainability Element for additional discussion of natural resource preservation.

The City maintains a list of projects that have been defined but not yet funded. These include numerous projects in parks in Southeastern San Diego. Projects common to several parks include upgrading security and ballfield lighting; upgrading irrigation systems; adding picnic shelters; repairing sidewalks; upgrading tot lots to meet State and Federal accessibility guidelines; and improving or expanding parking lots.

## Policies

- P-RE-11:** Preserve, expand and enhance existing park and recreation facilities to increase their life span, or expand their uses and sustainability.
- P-RE-12:** Preserve, protect, and restore canyons and hillsides as important visual amenities and limit public use to designated trails.
- P-RE-13:** Provide interpretive signs on the biological and scenic value of the open space systems at strategic open space overlooks and trail entryway locations.
- P-RE-14:** Provide sufficient human and economic resources to preserve and enhance the existing parks and open space areas serving Southeastern San Diego.
- P-RE-15:** Prepare a comprehensive study to analyze Chollas Creek’s distinctive natural, cultural, and historic resources of a regional nature for consideration of designation as a Regional Park.



*Joint-use school sites could be made more attractive and usable outside of school hours, as at Washington Elementary School. Walkability between parks and neighborhoods should be enhanced.*



*Engaging signs encourage residents to interact with the natural environment (top). Open space lands preserve habitat while providing opportunities for recreation (middle and bottom).*

### 7.3 Accessibility

The American with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that newly constructed and/or altered local government facilities are to be readily accessible and usable by individuals with physical disabilities. Therefore, all new and existing parks and recreation facilities in Southeastern San Diego are required to meet ADA guidelines when they are constructed or retrofitted for improvements. This could include adding accessible pedestrian ramps, providing paved pathways at acceptable gradients that lead from a public street sidewalk or parking area to a children’s play area or other park destination, remodeling of restrooms and building interiors, and providing interpretive signage along a nature trail.

Accessibility also means the availability of active and passive recreation to all residents. The Memorial and Southcrest community parks are programmed to allow organized sport leagues use of the facilities at specific times while making the facilities available at other times for unstructured play and impromptu users. The schedule is adjusted each year to make sure a balance is provided. Future park and recreation areas should be designed to accommodate a variety of uses as determined by community desires consistent with General Plan Guidelines. When special uses are designed into parks, such as off-leash dog areas or community gardens, the areas should also include amenities such as pathways, benches, exercise stations, or picnic tables on the perimeter that could accommodate more than one type of user and enhance the recreational and leisure experience. Special uses, such as off-leash dog areas and community gardens, would be required to undergo a City approval process.

Accessibility within Southeastern San Diego has three main components: 1) all facilities should be located within walk-

ing distance of neighborhoods and employment centers; 2) facilities should be accessible to the broadest population possible, and 3) facilities should be open for use by the general public with a balance between programmed and non-programmed activities.

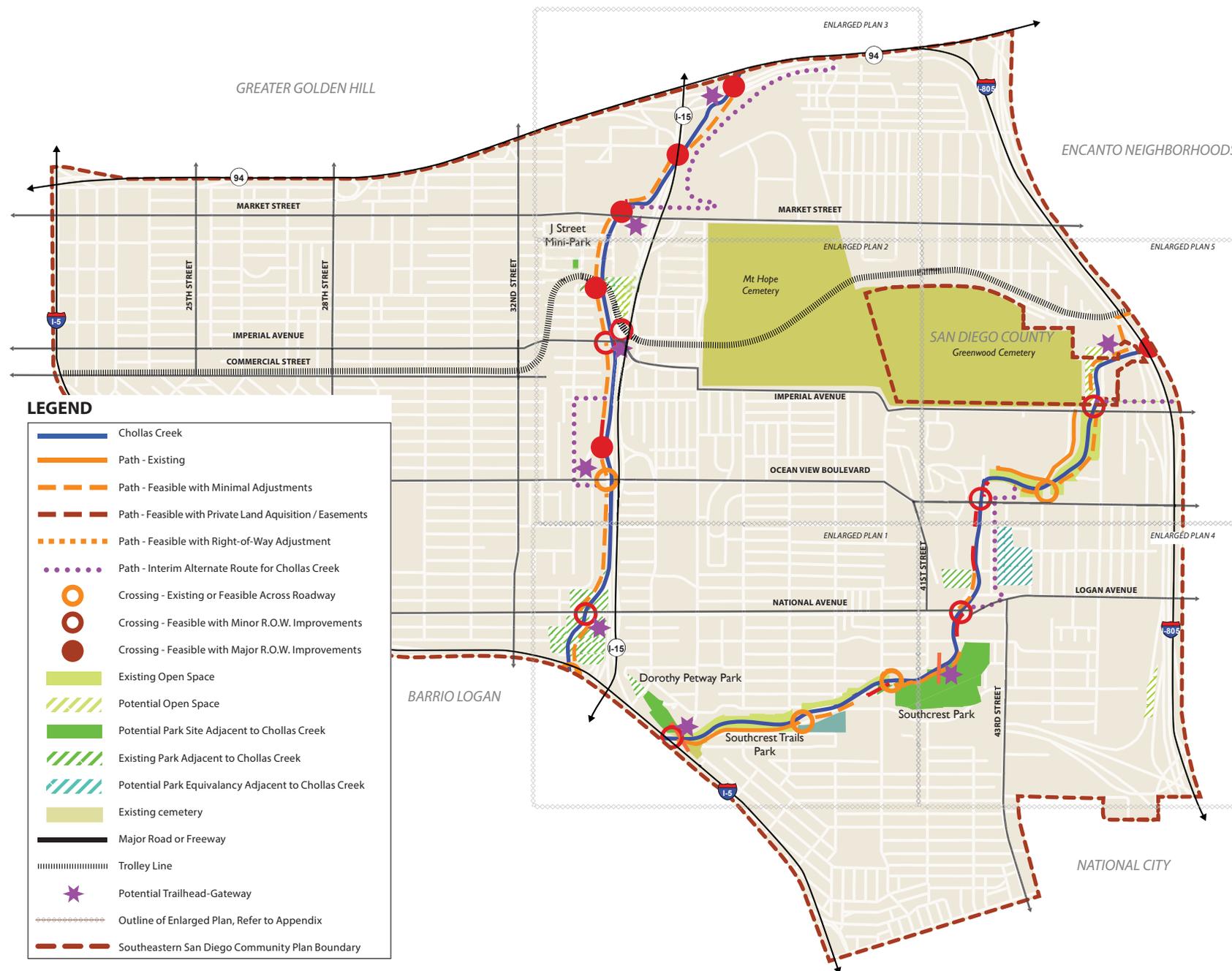
Access to parks is one of the criteria used to consider potential new park sites. Potential park sites that would add usable recreational space within a quarter-mile walk of residents not currently served by parks should generally be prioritized.

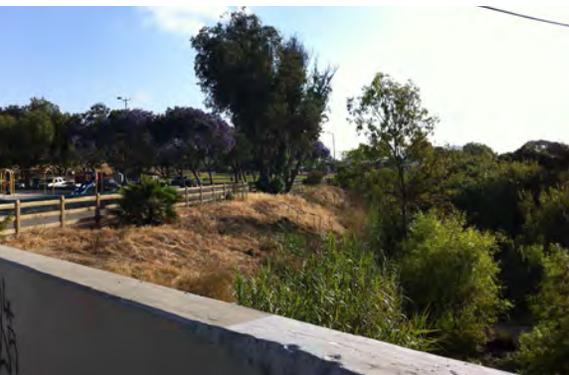
Chollas Creek corridor has the potential of providing a major pedestrian and bicycle link connecting Southeastern San Diego and to surrounding communities.

#### Policies

- P-RE-16:** Ensure all parks meet local, state and federal accessibility guidelines.
- P-RE-17:** Provide bus stops or accessible parking to community and neighborhood park and recreation facilities in Southeastern San Diego so persons with disabilities have access.
- P-RE-18:** Provide an information kiosk and map at the gateways to the community that identifies all parks that serve Southeastern San Diego and how to get to each by walking, biking or public transit.
- P-RE-19:** Develop and increase access to senior and youth services, activities and facilities wherever possible within the community’s public park and recreation system.
- P-RE-20:** Design all new recreation facilities for an inter-connected park and open space system that is integrated into and accessible

FIGURE 7-3: OPEN SPACE AND TRAIL SYSTEM





*A maintenance road can be used for a new trail along the South Branch (top), while a pedestrian tunnel provides a passage under the Trolley (middle). Passage under I-5 to the Bay is an important goal (bottom).*

to Southeastern San Diego residents.

**P-RE-21:** Pursue the attainment of public use easements for trails on private properties within the Chollas Creek Open Space system.

## 7.4 Open Space Land

Open space lands are City-owned property located within canyons, mesas and other natural land forms. Open space is intended to preserve and protect native habitats of flora and fauna while providing responsible, public access through hiking, biking and equestrian trails. See Figure 7- 3. Open space lands are typically free from development and kept in their natural state to protect their biological resources and habitat value.

Southeastern San Diego includes 12 acres of dedicated open space, which supports low intensity recreational uses such as hiking and bird watching. Open space lands are shown on Figure 7-3.

The Chollas Creek system extends over 25 miles from Mid-City and Lemon Grove through Encanto Neighborhoods and Southeastern San Diego to San Diego Bay. The South Branch of Chollas Creek flows across the Mountain View and Southcrest neighborhoods, while the Main Branch runs adjacent to State Route 15. Creek conditions vary, with sections of concrete-lined channel, concrete on one bank only, and earthen channel. Certain reaches have intermittent flow, while other sections have water throughout the year. Both branches of Chollas Creek present additional open space opportunities, including open space for urban runoff management purposes in the Planning Area.

## Chollas Creek Enhancement Program and South Branch Implementation

The Chollas Creek Enhancement Program, adopted in 2002, calls for restoring disturbed areas; avoiding future channelization; developing a system of linear trails, access points, and enhanced sidewalks where routes must follow streets; and ensuring that development preserves connections and addresses the corridor. The program includes a 20-year phasing schedule, and identifies the South Branch as the first phase, due to its potential for restoration and its exposure to a wide swath of neighborhoods and commercial areas. The City initiated a more detailed program for the South Branch and has proceeded to carry out improvements. As part of the Imperial Marketplace development, creek enhancements were made following Program guidance, including bank stabilization, revegetation, landscaping and trails. Enhancement or restoration actions planned or underway for other segments include:

- Widening and revegetating the channel in the vicinity of the YMCA, north of Imperial Avenue, and creating trails along the channel banks;
- Making streetscape and public art improvements along San Pasqual Street;
- Trail improvements along the creek through Southcrest Park and parallel to Alpha Street;
- Complete development of Southcrest Trails Park and comprehensive restoration of the creekbed.

## Additional Improvement Opportunities

Figure 7-3 shows existing and potential future open space along Chollas Creek, and shows a recommended route for developing a path system along the South and Main branch-



*Restoring access and environmental quality along Chollas Creek will require action both by the City and future private development adjacent to the creek. The top row of photos shows private development with public space along waterways. The bottom row shows segments of Guadalupe River Park in San Jose.*



*Creek conditions vary, with sections of concrete-lined channel (top, north of Ocean View Boulevard); concrete on one bank only (middle, north of Imperial Avenue); and earthen channel (bottom, at Southcrest Park).*

es. The diagram shows locations where paths are feasible or feasible with minimal adjustment, and where paths would require land acquisition, agreements, or right-of-way adjustments. Where providing a path directly along the creek would be difficult, an alternate route is identified. The diagram shows where critical crossings of major streets and freeways could be done with minor improvements, and where they would be challenging. Trailheads and gateways are identified, pointing to the importance of visibility and access, in a system that has been historically hidden from view.

Urban development along the creek has led to land ownership obstacles for creek re-construction. Restoring access and environmental quality along Chollas Creek will require action both by the City and future private development adjacent to the creek. These actions can include public access easements, and public land acquisition at key locations.

In other places, steep topography, major roadways and freeways complicate completing a trail connection. Major street crossings will require signalization improvements and bike/pedestrian bridges. Freeway undercrossings may require substantial infrastructure modification. Caltrans must also account for pedestrian/bicycle movement over freeways in future projects, such as the current re-design of Interstate 805. Temporary alternative routes are recommended as interim steps to bypass or circumvent significant obstacles.

Following Figure 7-3 are five enlarged plans with detailed improvements and conditions for different areas of Chollas Creek in Figures 7-4 to Figure 7-8.

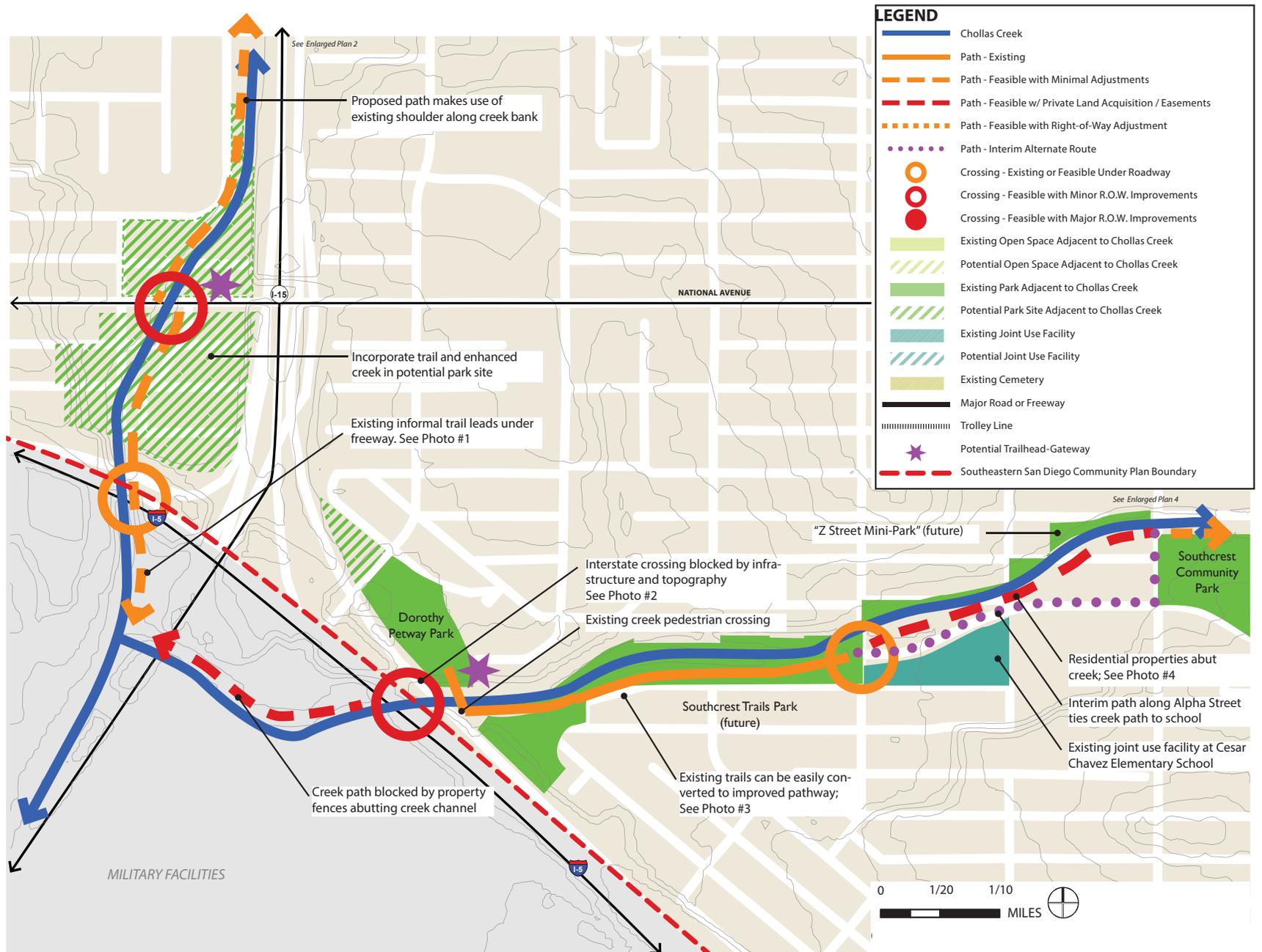
### Cemeteries

Like open space, cemeteries provide valuable visual relief in the urban environment, and can be protected as dedicated parkland. The 118-acre Mount Hope Cemetery is a distinctive and well-landscaped feature and is dedicated park land, though it does not provide recreational opportunities for the community. Its open space character is effectively doubled by the adjacent Greenwood Cemetery.

### Policies

- P-RE-22:** Protect and enhance the natural resources of open space lands by re-vegetating with native drought tolerant plants and using open wood fences adjacent to very sensitive areas to provide additional protection while still allowing views into the area.
- P-RE-23:** Require that all storm water and urban run-off drainage into open space lands be filtered or treated before entering the open space area.
- P-RE-24:** Provide recognizable entrances (trailheads) to the trail system as shown on Figure 7-3: Open Space and Trail System. Include a kiosk at trailheads that includes a map of how the canyon relates to the neighborhoods of Southeastern San Diego, and interpretive signs on the biological and scenic value of the open space systems.
- P-RE-25:** Construct new trails within Southeastern San Diego's public open space, as shown on the Open Space and Trails System diagram (Figure 7-3).
- P-RE-26:** RE-27 Provide interpretive signs at major trailheads to educate users on the sensitive natural and cultural habitats and unique biological and scenic qualities of these open space areas.
- P-RE-27:** Provide accessible trails with benches and

FIGURE 7-4: CHOLLAS CREEK PROPOSED ROUTE ENLARGED PLAN 1



overlook(s) to ensure that all residents have access to Chollas Creek  
**FIGURE 7-5: CHOLLAS CREEK PROPOSED ROUTE ENLARGED PLAN 2**

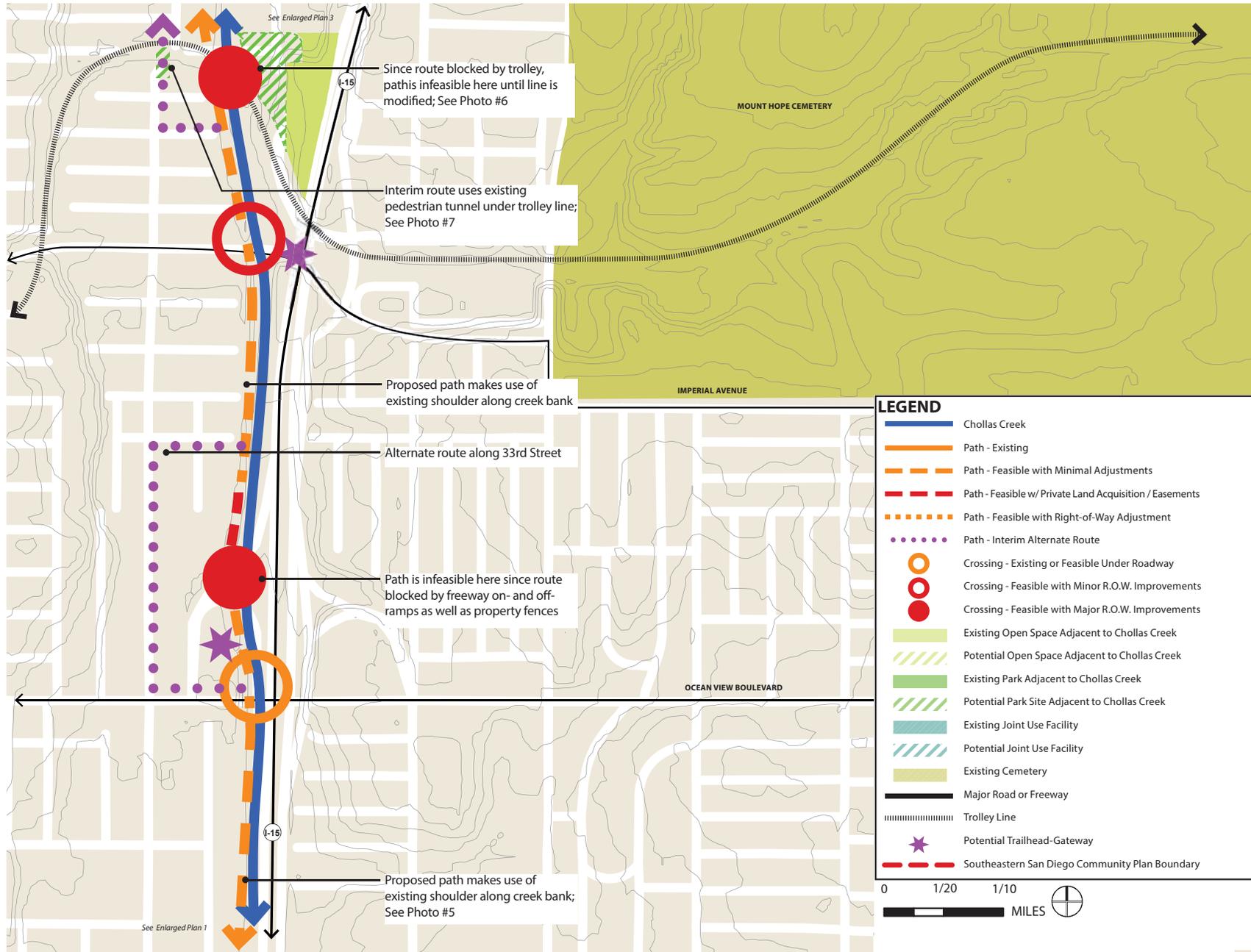


FIGURE 7-6: CHOLLAS CREEK PROPOSED ROUTE ENLARGED PLAN 3

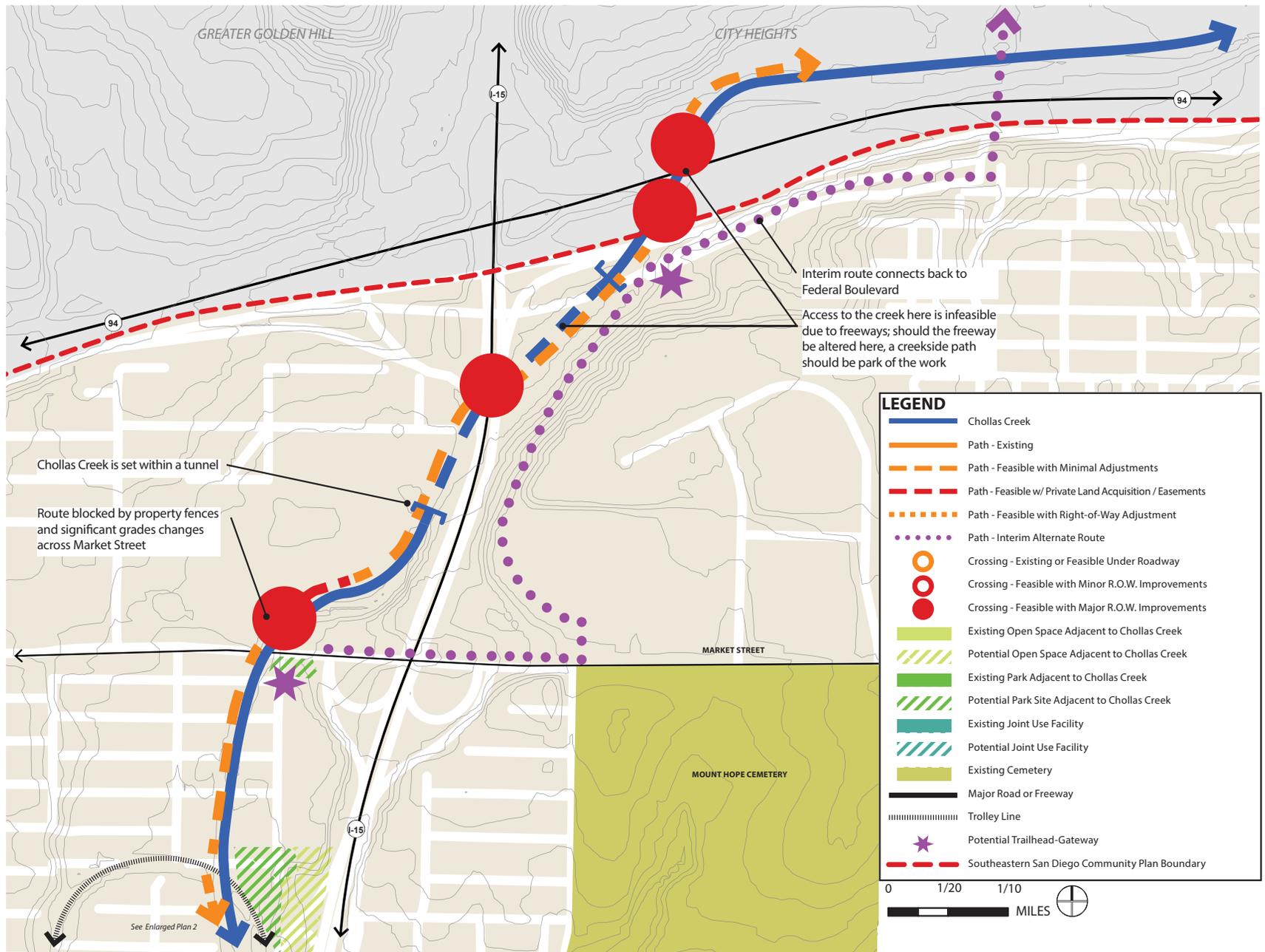


FIGURE 7-7: CHOLLAS CREEK PROPOSED ROUTE ENLARGED PLAN 4

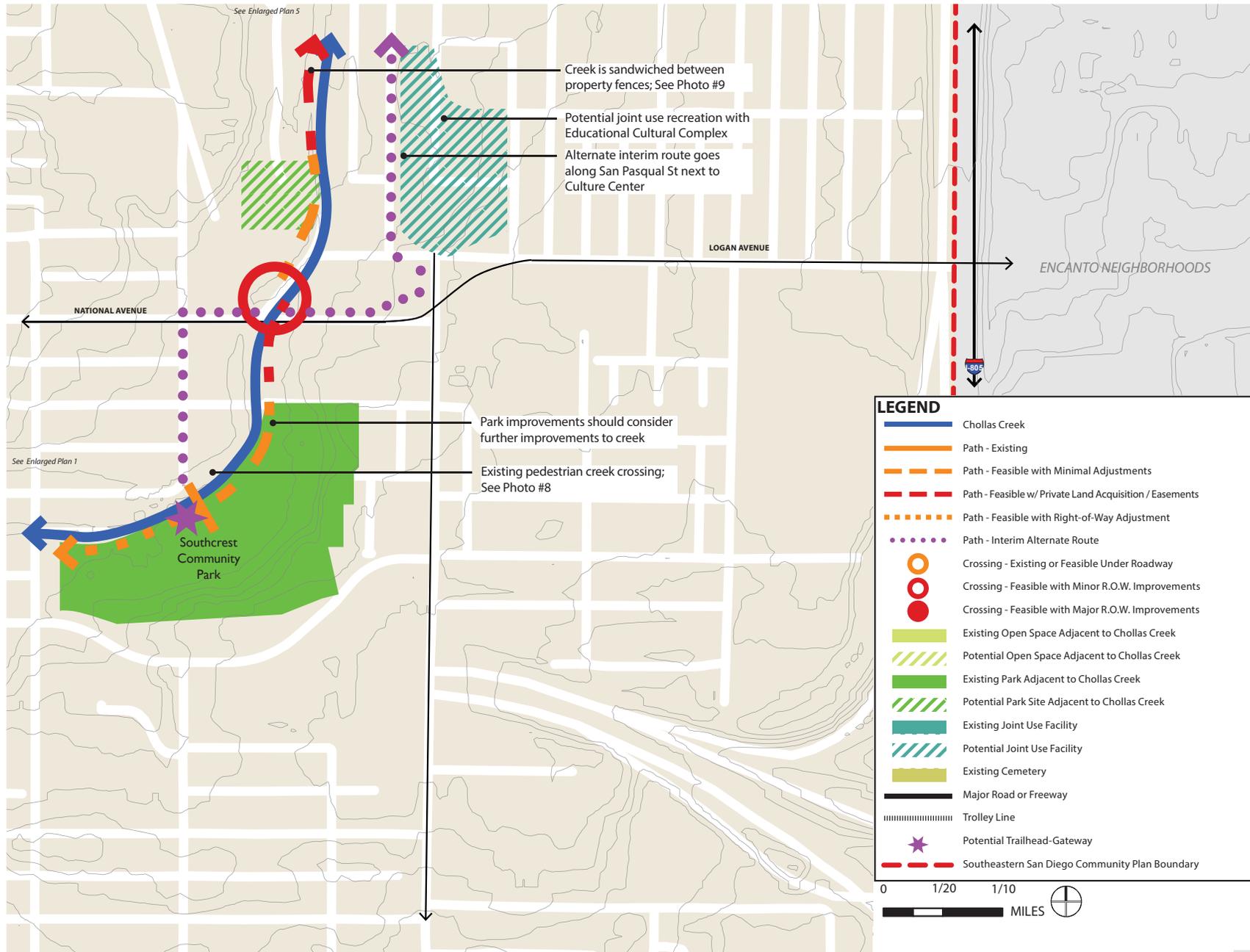
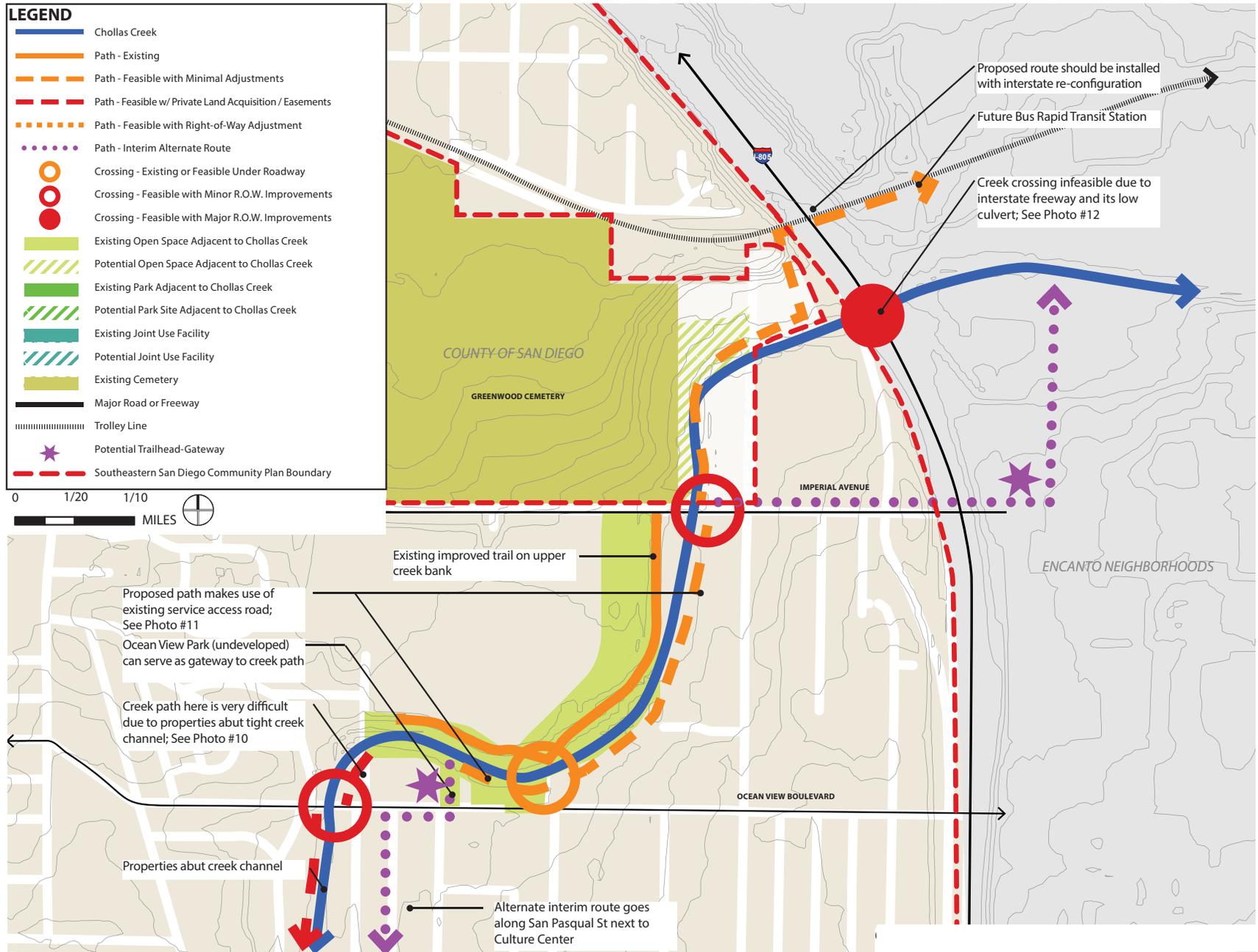


FIGURE 7-8: CHOLLAS CREEK PROPOSED ROUTE ENLARGED PLAN 5



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