Welcome!

Welcome to Community Workshop II for the Mid-City SR-15 Station Area Planning Study. As noted at Workshop I in late March 2011, the purpose of the study is to develop policy language and clear design guidelines for the area. This will allow staff and the community to review future development applications against the recommendations provided by the Planning Study.

One message we did hear, loud and clear, at the initial Workshop is the feeling by participants that this community does not lack from an excess of previous studies. To that end participants expressed a desire for implementable recommendations, even under tough economic conditions, that will help set the foundation for its ongoing revitalization. Your participation here this evening will bring us closer to that eventuality. Thank you.

Legend

- Study Boundary
- Community Planning Areas
- Proposed BRT Stations

Demographics

The SANDAG data for the Census Tracts w/in the study area confirms this. The Census Tracts w/in the study are 21, 22.01, 22.02, 24.01, 24.02. According to data for Census Tract 22.01 (which seems fairly representative of the area and which falls almost completely w/in the study area), the demographics breakdown is as follows:

Latino/Hispanic—2,484 (67%)

White—168 (5%)

Black or African American—429 (11%)

American Indian—20 (0.5%)

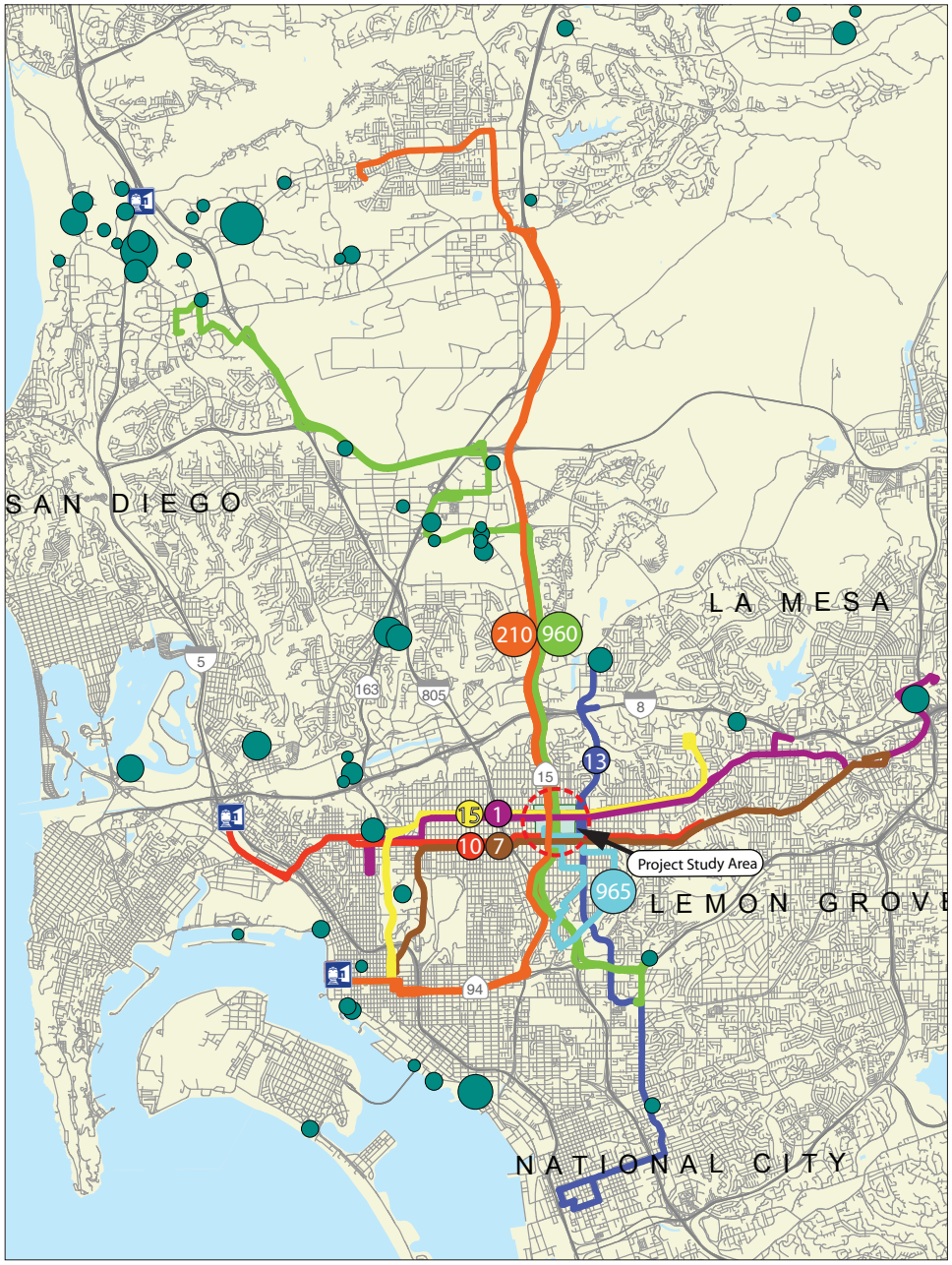
Asian & Pacific Islander—520 (14%)

Other—99 (2.5%)

Regional Context

The Mid-City area is home to an extensive network of regional transit options with direct connections for residents to downtown San Diego, Uptown San Diego, and San Diego State University, among others. However, existing routes along State Route 15 frequently do not connect residents to high-paying, high-quality jobs without a number of transfers. Each transfer limits the attractiveness of transit to riders.

While destinations served by the new BRT alignment have not yet been identified, providing residents with access to high-quality jobs must be a prime concern.



Legend

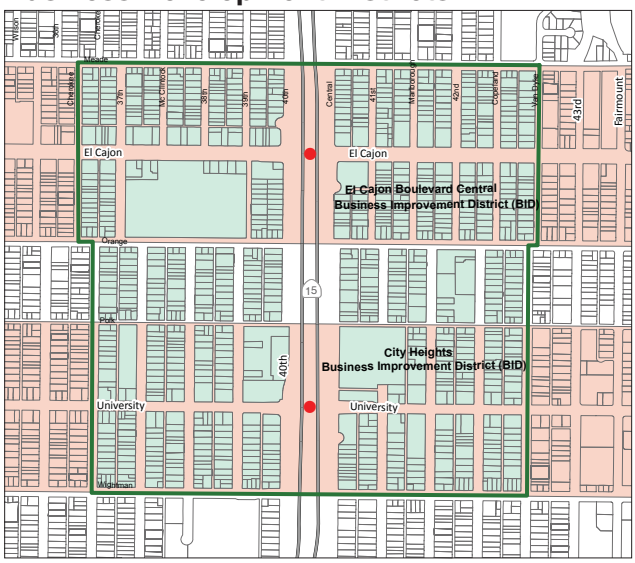
- MTS Fixed Route Service in Study Area
- Amtrak/NCTD COASTER Rail Stations
- Major Private Employers

GIS Mapping

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Mapping creates simple, attractive visuals and context for understanding the spatial relationship between a number of variables in the study area. GIS datasets are created and maintained by a number of agencies, including the City of San Diego, SANDAG, MTS, and others.

Together, these layers of data help provide transportation and land use planners with the tools they need to understand the conditions in the study area and the relationships between them.

Business Development Districts



Legend

- Proposed BRT Stations
- Project Study Area
- Business Improvement District Boundary

Roadway Classifications

Legend

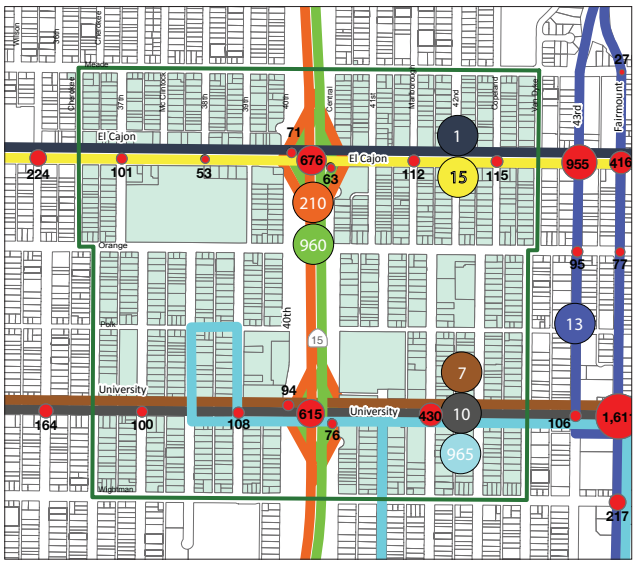
- Local Street
- Collector
- Major Road/4-Lane Major Road
- Freeway or Freeway Ramp
- Paper Street

Non-Residential Building Footprints

Legend

- Proposed BRT Stations
- Project Study Area
- Building Footprints

Existing Transit



Legend

- Project Study Area
- Half-Mile Buffer from Stations
- MTS Route
- Area MTS Stops
- Other MTS Stops

Additional GIS Maps

The following maps show other geographic analyses that were conducted by the project team within the study area. They represent land use, social and transportation characteristics of the neighborhood that will assist throughout the planning process.

Existing and Proposed Bicycle Network

Parklands

Schools

Street Speed Limits

Community Planning Areas

Designated Historic Districts

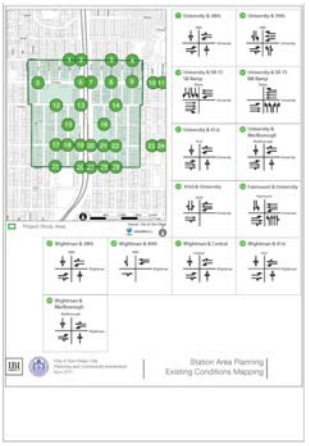
Proposed Noise Analysis Sites

Redevelopment & Infill Designations

Critical Intersections for Analysis

Existing Intersection Geometry – 1 of 2

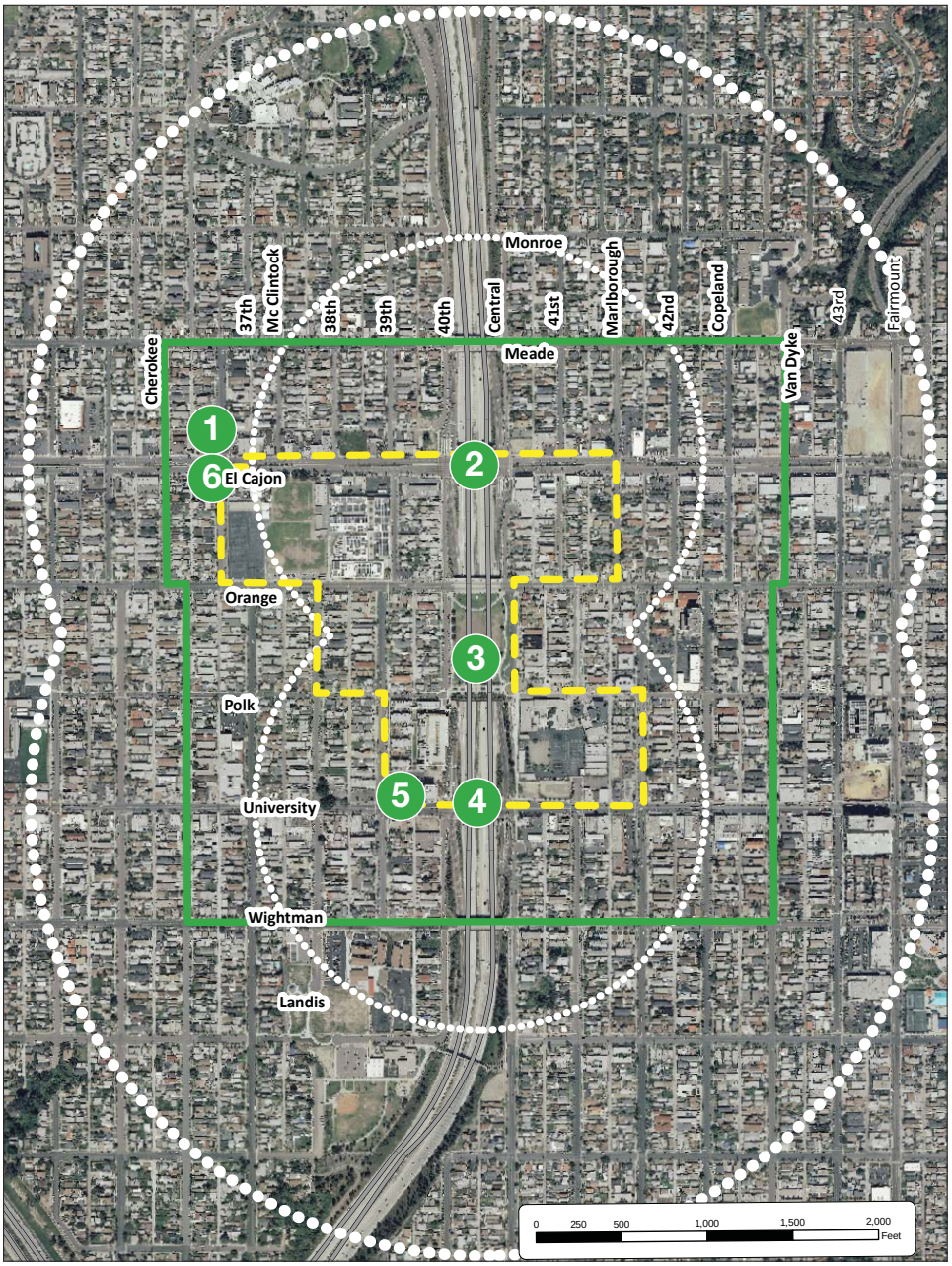
Existing Intersection Geometry – 2 of 2



Average Daily Traffic (ADT) Counts

Walk Audit Map

A Walk Audit was held on Saturday, 16 April 2011, with representatives from the City of San Diego, the consultant team and community stakeholders in attendance. The walk started on El Cajon Boulevard and took a circuitous patch through the heart of the community. The resultant "takeaway" of the event was a firm impression from community members of both the study area's strengths and weaknesses.



Itinerary

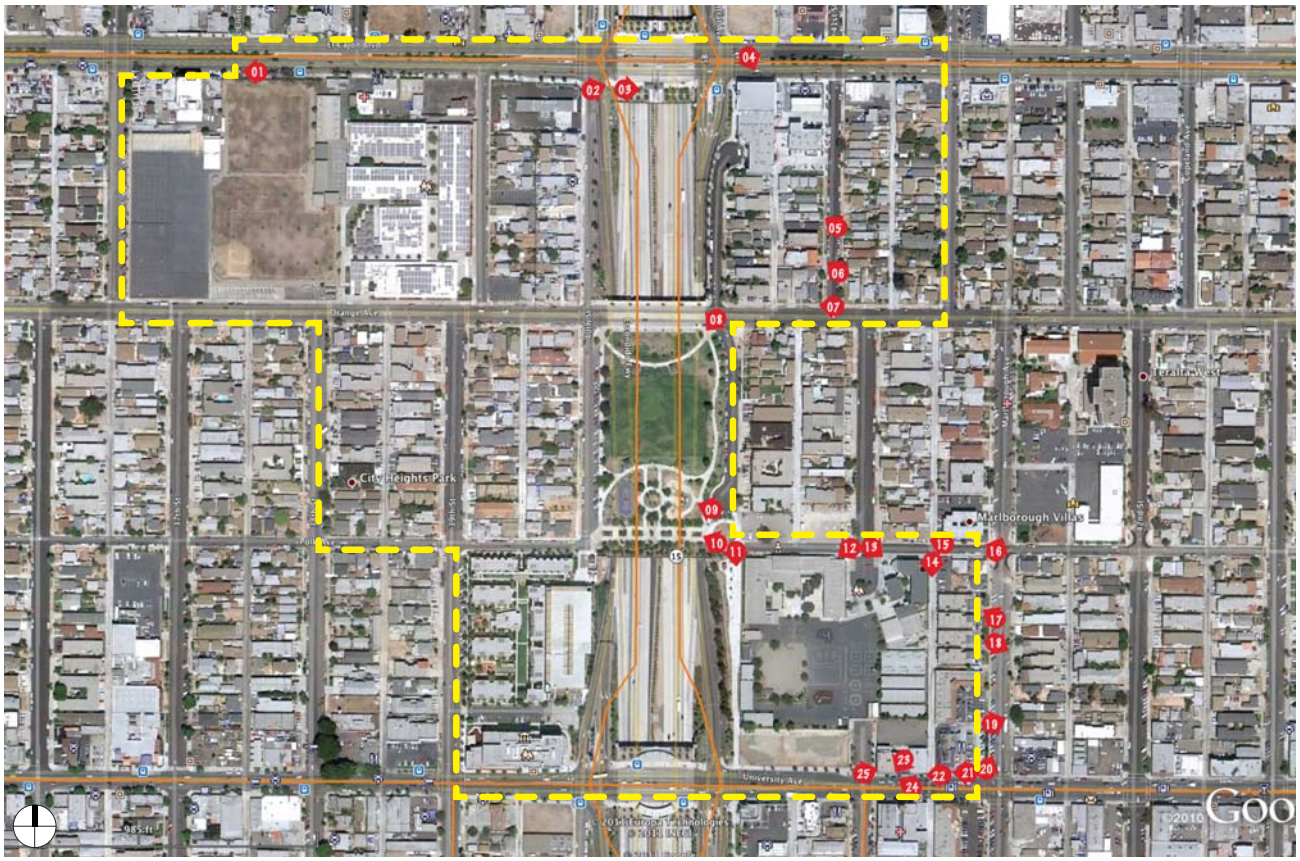
1. Start – El Cajon Blvd. BIA Office 9:30am
2. El Cajon Blvd. & SR-15 Station 10:00am - 10:15am
3. Teralta Park 10:30am - 10:45am
4. University Ave. & SR-15 Station 11:00am - 11:15am
5. Metro Career Center 11:30am - 11:45am
6. Return to El Cajon Blvd BIA Office 12:00pm

Lunch and Debrief Session 12:00pm - 1:00pm

Legend

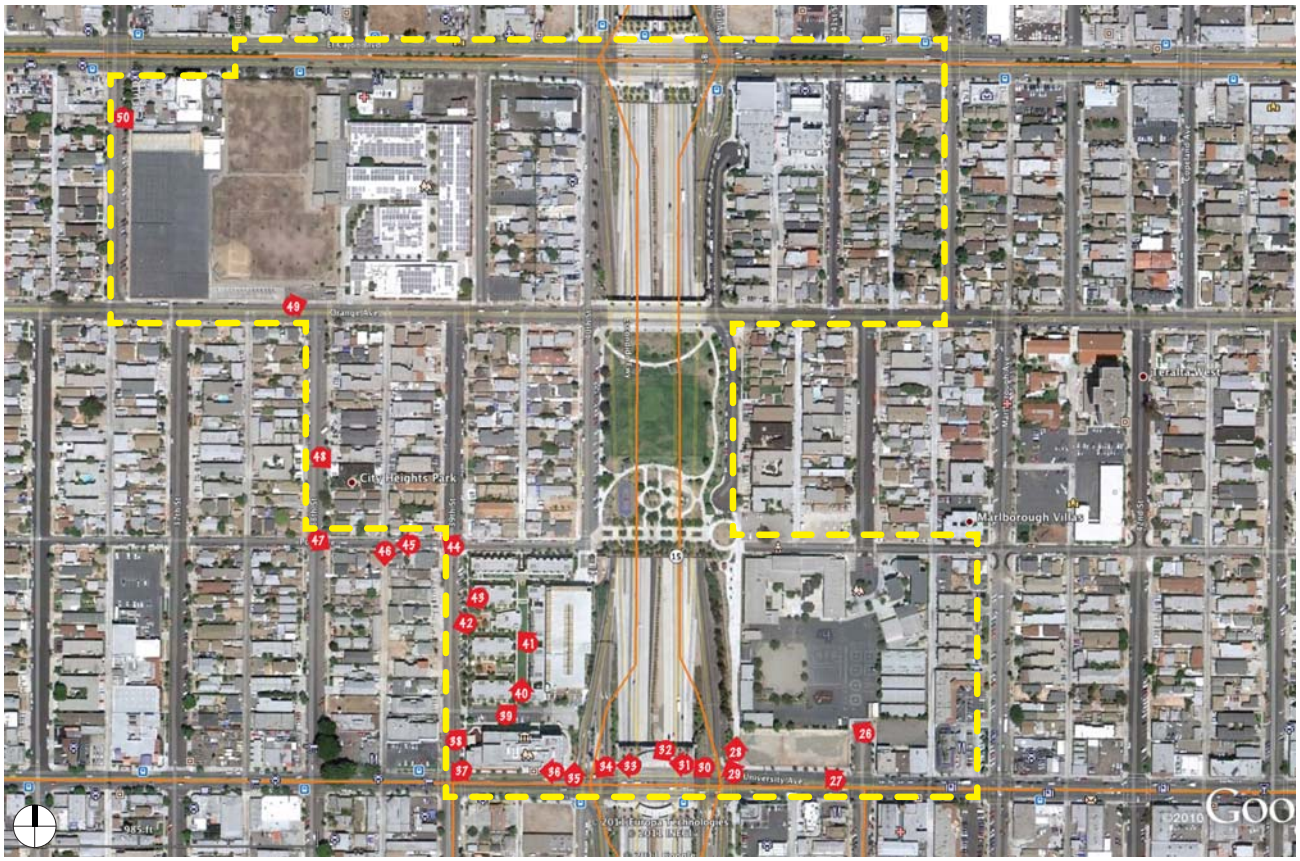
- Project Study Area
- 1/4 and 1/2-Mile Buffer from BRT Stations
- Walk Audit Route
- 1 Points of Interest

Walk Audit Context Photos 1



Walk Audit Route

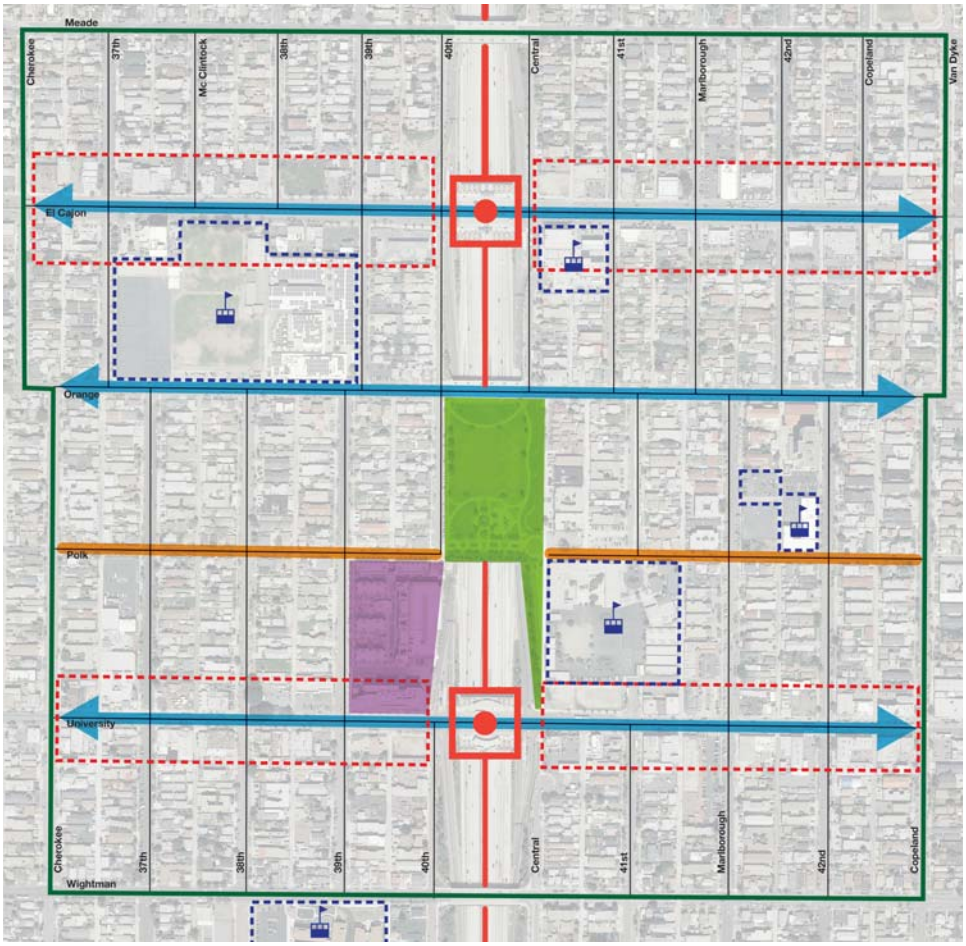
Walk Audit Context Photos 2



Walk Audit Route

Opportunities

The consultant team has held the view since the Request For Proposal (RFP) phase of the project that the Mid-City study area can serve, ultimately, as a textbook case study for other BRT TOD communities across the nation. Specifically, the separation of the community above and the BRT below on SR-15 delivers an interesting layout for intermodal service. Beyond that, assets such as Teralta Park and the potential of both El Cajon Boulevard and University Avenue can serve as solid building blocks for community revitalization.



Legend

- Study Boundary
- Strong Street Grid
- Strong East-West Connector Roads
- Small Scale Community Streets
- Appropriate Redevelopment
- Teralta Park
- Unique Layout for BRT
- Schools
- Mid-Density Mixed-Use Zone

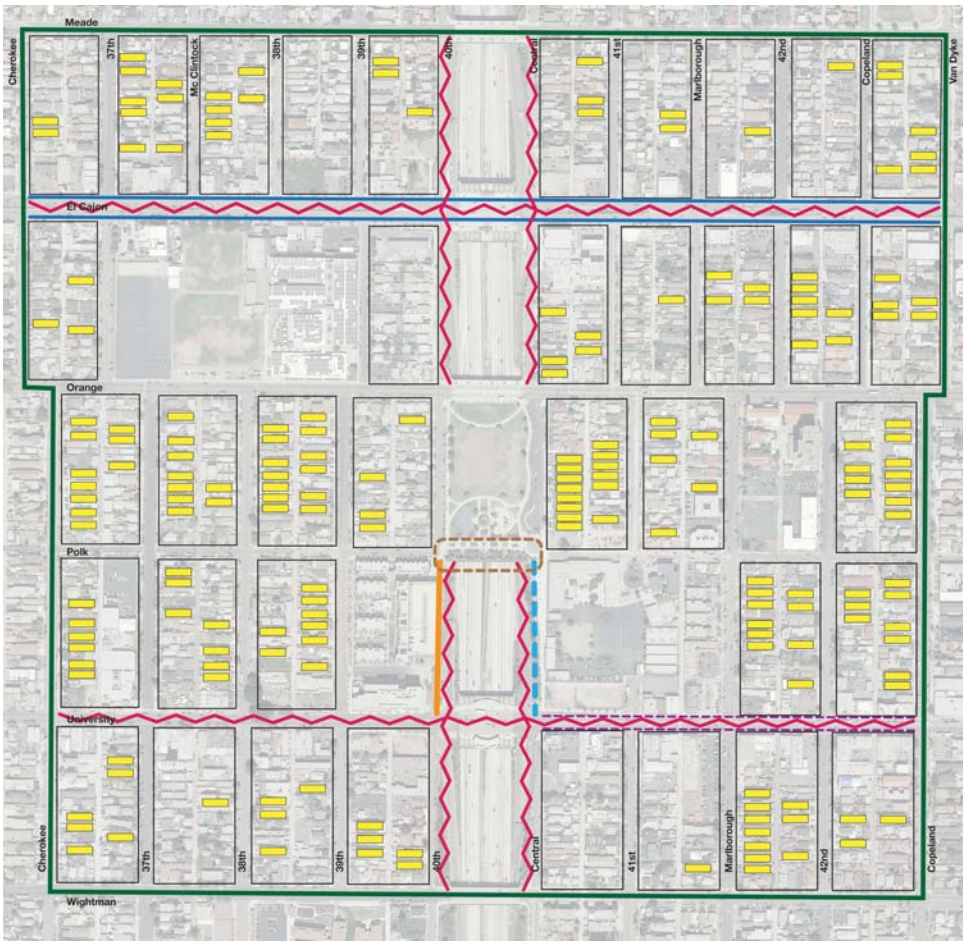
0 250 1,000 1,500 2,000 Feet

Strengths

- BRT system can turn neighborhood into a true Transit-oriented development (TOD) community.
- Series of public agencies/programs to build upon: City Heights Community Development Corp, Work Force Partnership, Headstart, Facelift, El Cajon Blvd BIA etc.
- Improve cycling and pedestrian networks.
- Provide community access to recreational facilities at school sites.
- Implement streetscape program along important streets to entice new development.
- Develop “rehabilitation toolkit” for Huffman apartments.

Constraints

Community constraints are evident in a number or areas. One area of concern regards the delivery of more market housing without experiencing gentrification. Retail facilities are of predictably poor quality and signage ordinances are not being enforced causing visual blight. Additionally, the community lacks green space, bike trails and other attributes of urban placemaking. Finally, there is the expressed fear that recommendations from this study will not be implemented.



Legend

- Study Area Boundary
- Wide Blvd. Inhibits Quality Retail Development
- Noise + Barrier Effects of Busy Roadways
- Narrow Sidewalks and Lack of Trees
- Negative Reputation of "Huffman Sixpack" and Lack of Owner Occupied Housing (15%)
- "Huffman Sixpack"
- Lack of Pedestrian Connectivity
- Disconnected Bike Trail
- Shrubs & Trees Pose Possible Park User Safety & Security Issue

0 250 1,000 1,500 2,000 Feet

Weaknesses

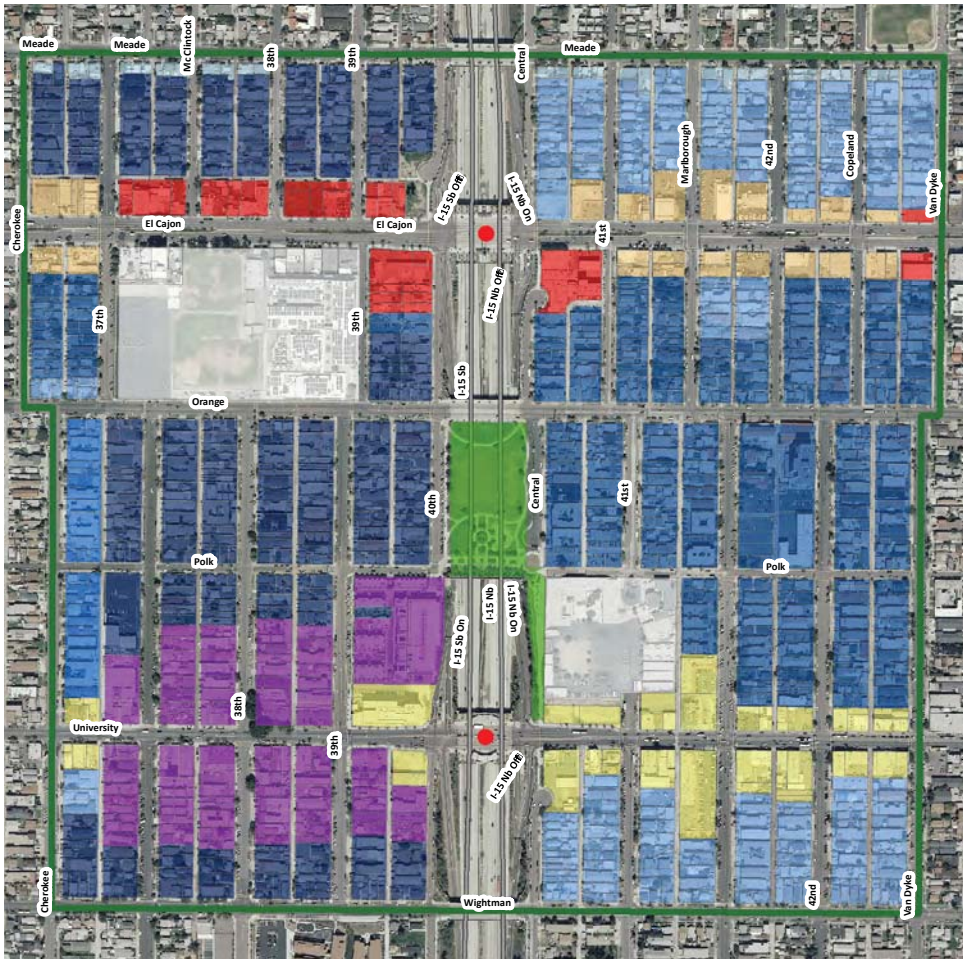
- Lack of enforcement of basic signage ordinances to the general detriment of the streetscape.
- Challenges associated with on-street parking/ congestion and competition for free parking.
- Undefined fear of gentrification associated with density/redevelopment.
- Community fear that recommendations within evolving planning study will not be implemented to maximize recommendations within evolving planning study.
- Concern for community safety without proper deployment of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED).

Existing Zoning

The map below shows the Existing Zoning Classification in the study area. Each zone has its own specific regulations relating to permitted uses of the land, density of development, and other characteristics.

These classifications are used to help guide the visioning process and development of alternatives for the Station Area Planning Study, and allow each alternative to conform to adopted zoning codes.

Adopted Land Use Under Zoning



Legend

- Study Area Boundary
- Station
- Residential (6-10 du/ac)
- Residential (11-15 du/ac)
- Residential (16-20 du/ac)
- Residential (21-25 du/ac)
- Residential (26-30 du/ac)
- Commercial/Mixed Use (29 du/ac)
- Commercial/Mixed Use A (73 du/ac)
- Commercial/Mixed Use B (35 du/ac)
- Industrial
- Park
- School

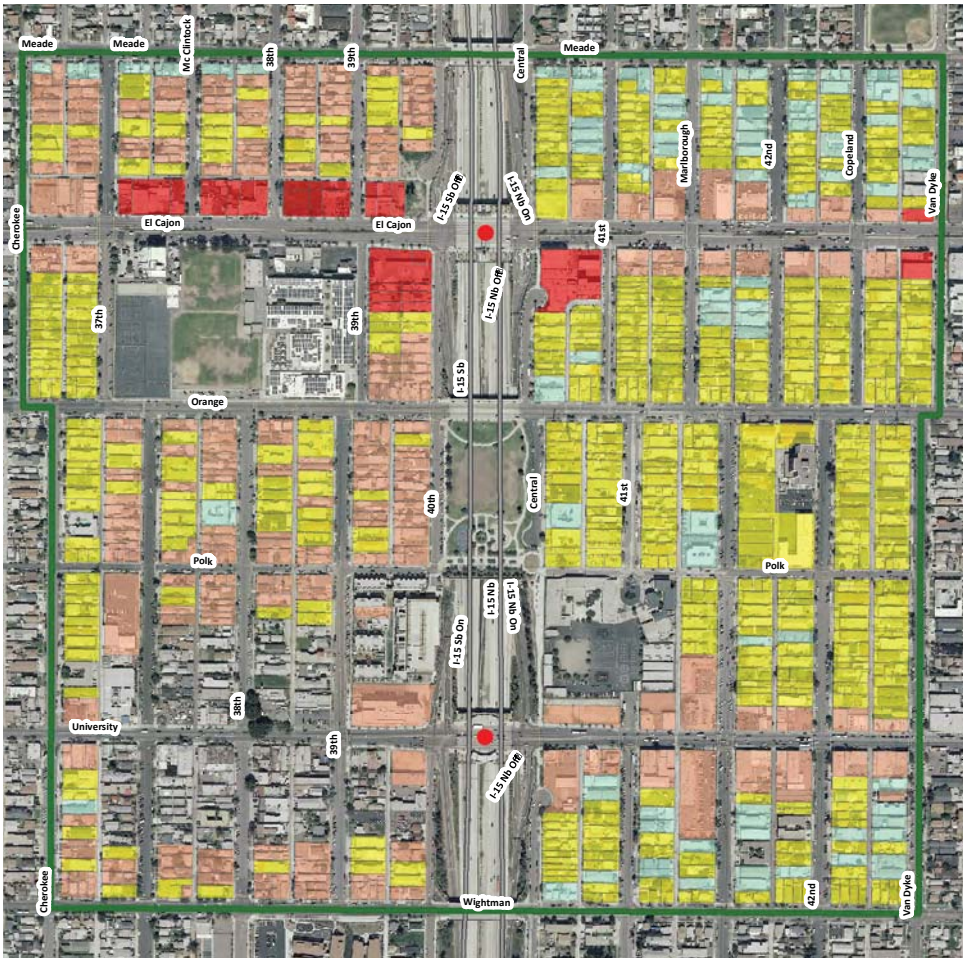
Maximum Development Potential

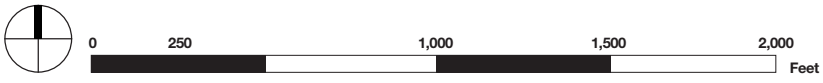
Using the City of San Diego's parcel data, the figure below illustrates the maximum number of dwelling units permitted on each parcel in the study area based on the City's adopted zoning regulations within the study area.

Together with other factors, this data helps identify particular parcels or groups of parcels that could potentially be targeted for redevelopment, and serves as a guideline for the scale of development allowed on each parcel.

This analysis indicates that there is sufficient land zoned for higher densities. The challenge stimulating development is likely because of a shortage of vacant land and small lot sizes that remain unattractive to developers.

Maximum Potential Development Under Adopted Zoning





Legend

- Study Area Boundary
- Station
- 1-10
- 11-25
- 26-50
- 51-73

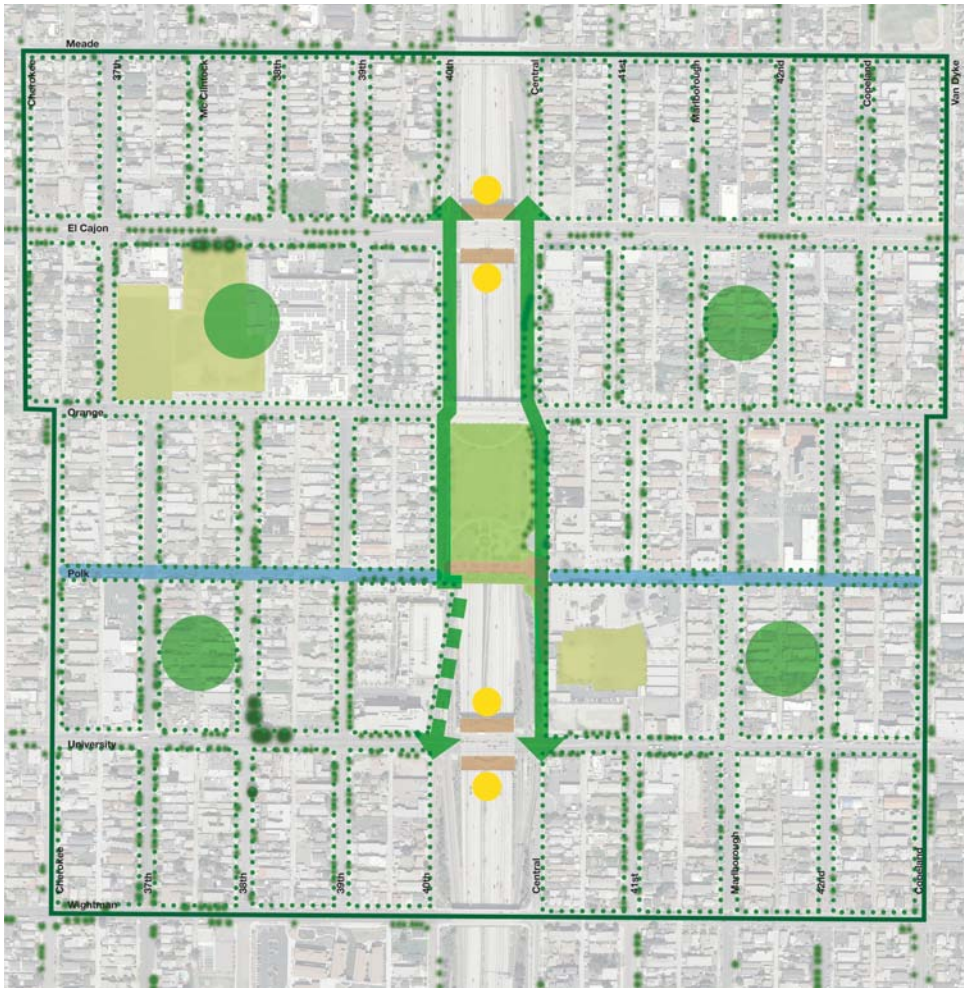
Developer Potential

- 3,516 Existing dwelling units
- 24,059 Maximum allowable dwelling units including existing units
- 15% of total capacity currently built
- Approximately 2 million square feet of potential residential development unbuilt assuming average unit size of 850 sq. ft. per unit
- Properties without a color are currently not zoned for increased densities; ie. industrial, institutional and parks

Open Space

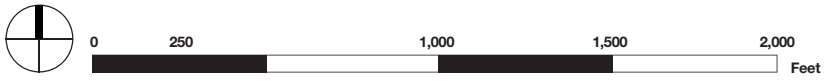
Issue: Like many inner city communities across the country, the study area possesses a deficiency of public open space. Planners traditionally strive for a ratio – 2.8 acres per 1,000 residents – which may be difficult to achieve in areas previously "built up", especially in tough economic times.

Idea: The Mid-City Area is blessed with the presence of Teralta Park – the product of foresight from another era. Using Teralta Park as its "heart" an open space network of "pocket parks", "linear greenways with street trees" and "shared streets" should provide for a new, affordable open space network to the benefit of the community.



Legend

- Study Boundary
- Station
- Existing Street Trees
- New Street Trees
- Future Greenway
- Existing Green Space
- School Playgrounds
- Existing Plazas
- Proposed Shared Street
- Additional Park space required in each quadrant



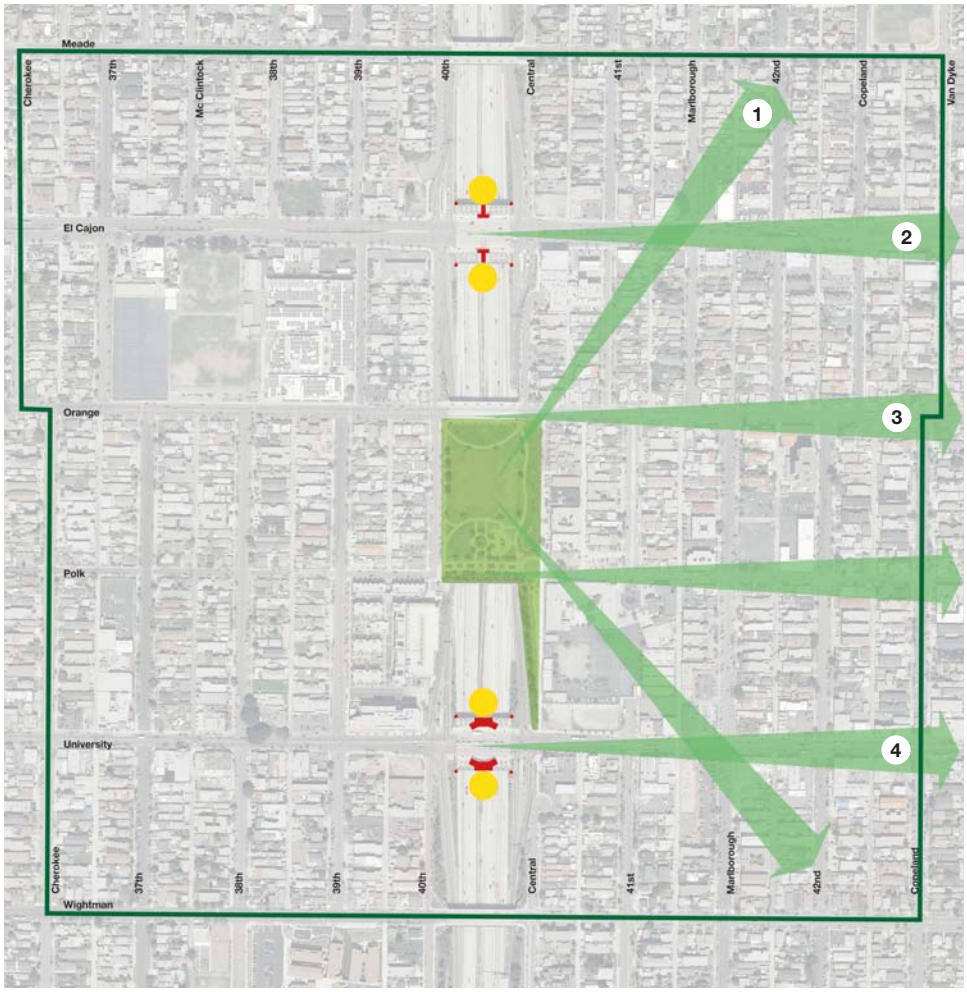
To develop a comprehensive Open Space network:

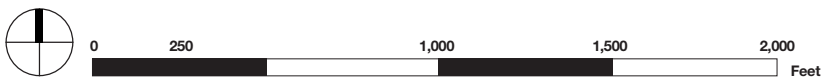
- Create pocket parks on some of the vacant parcels
- Over time, fill in the gaps in the street trees on all streets
- Develop Polk Avenue as a 'shared street'

Gateways/Landmarks/Views & Vistas

Issue: Community identity is an important component of urban placemaking and one greatly aided by the reinforcement of prominent, local gateways and landmarks. El Cajon Boulevard benefits from the presence of "The Boulevard" gateway signage west of the study area and Teralta Park is a significant reference point for community identification, but more needs to be done.

Idea: The advent of BRT service presents the opportunity to establish both El Cajon Boulevard and University Avenue as the north and south borders of what can become a significant and vibrant neighborhood with regional appeal. The stations, themselves, properly designed, can serve as strong community gateway markers. These, combined with equally strong north/south pedestrian/cycle connections on either side of Teralta Park, would enable the park to form a central focus, which is strong enough to put Mid-City on the map.





Legend

- Study Boundary
- Station
- Existing Gateway Structures
- Mountain Views
- Teralta Park

Vistas to the East

Teralta Park looking northeast

El Cajon looking east

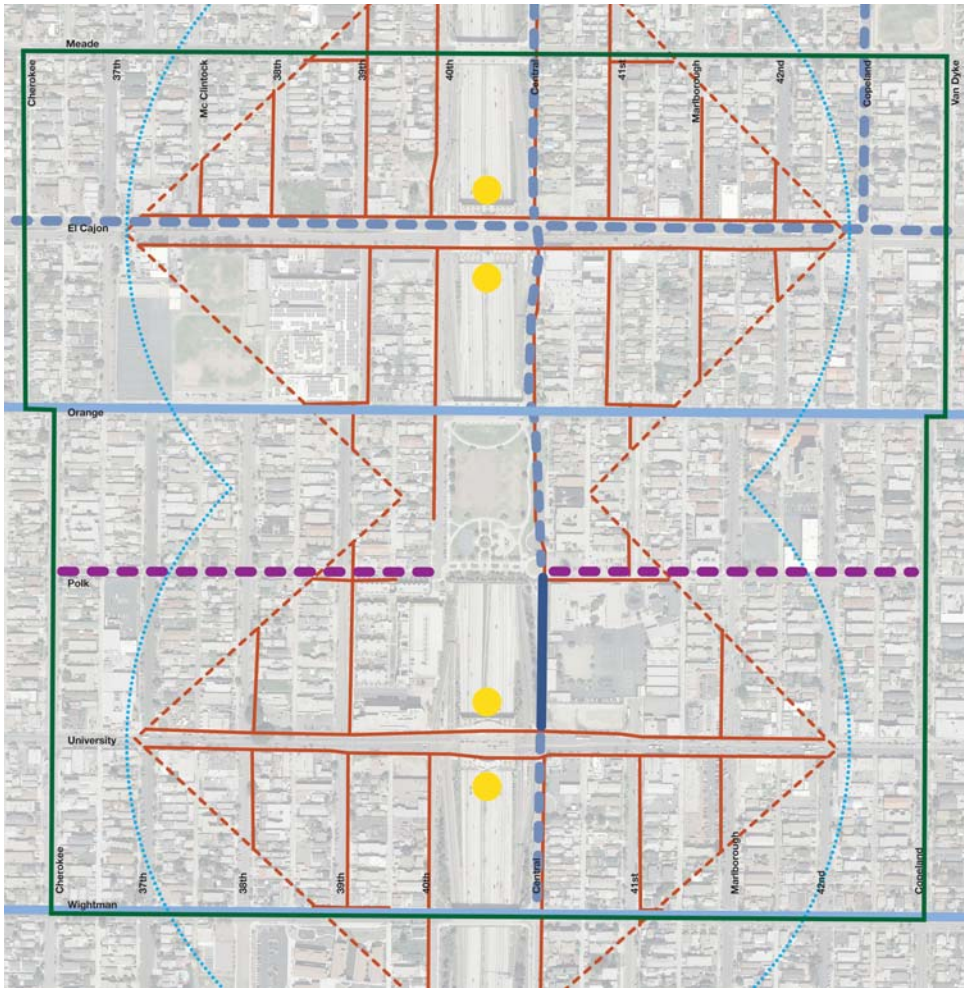
Orange looking east

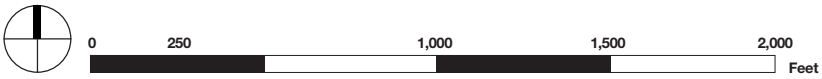
University looking east

Connectivity

Issue: The study area has the benefit of having been laid out as an orthogonal grid – streets and blocks that, for the most part, intersect at right angles. This configuration is ideal for "walkability" – in the case the safe and pleasurable experience of traveling on foot throughout one's community. However, pedestrians are more often than not under attack, either by vehicles or by the lack or inconsistent delivery of sidewalks.

Idea: Recently, the concept of Active Transportation Planning has come into the fore – whereby consideration is given to pedestrian first, bicycles second, public transit third and the private automobile last. In the process everybody wins – Mother Earth with the reduction of greenhouse gases (GHGs), and the pedestrian who experiences the healthy benefit of walking and spends less on the daily commute.





Legend

- Study Boundary
- Station
- Existing Class II Bike Path
- Existing Class III Bike Routes
- Planned Bike Routes
- Proposed Shared Street
- Actual 1/4 Mile
- Actual Pedestrian Shed
- 1/4 Mile Radius TOD Circle

To encourage Walkability consider the provision of:

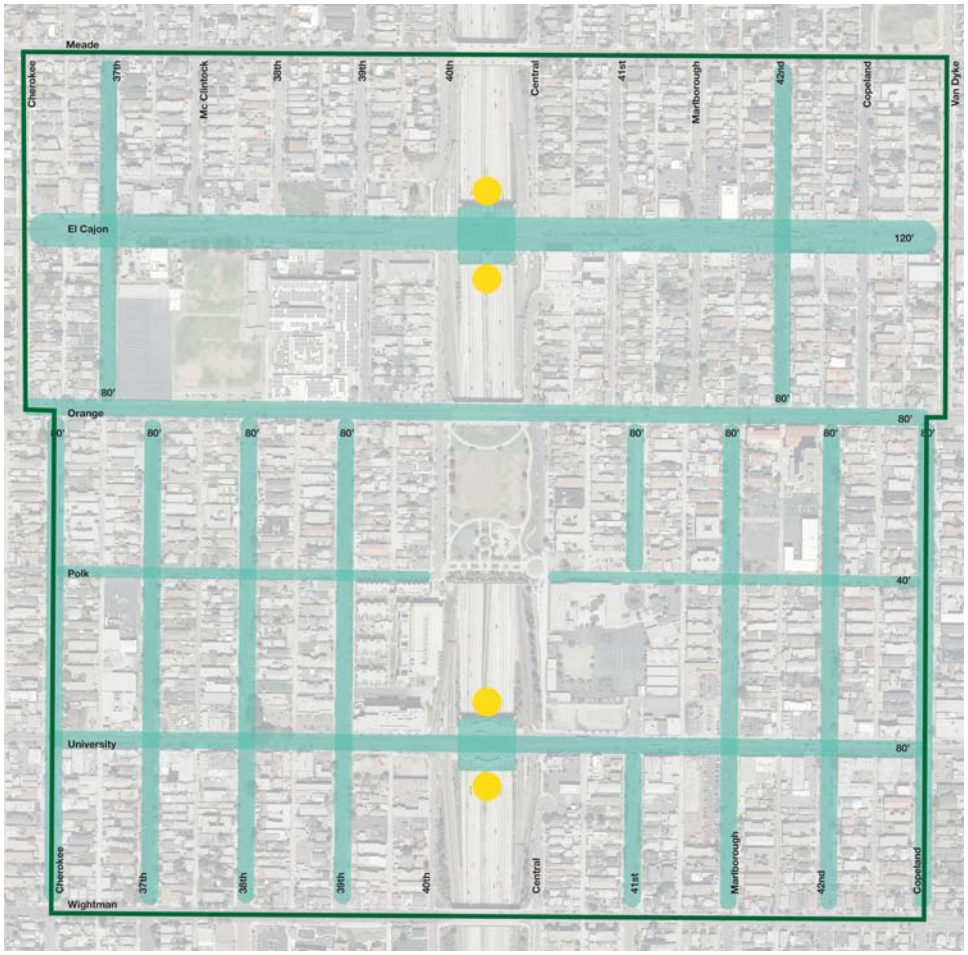
- Narrower roadways with wider sidewalks
- Street trees
- Parallel parking
- Better sidewalks and crosswalks
- Building entrances fronting the street
- Reduced traffic speed
- Reduced traffic volume
- Fine-grain street network
- Mixed-use development

Excess R-O-W

Issue: Our towns and cities designate a significant portion of our land area to roadways. As we approach an era of Active Transportation Planning with its greater emphasis on pedestrians and cyclists, it has been observed that “the wider the road the faster the speed that cars are likely to travel”.

Idea: A recent notion involves the concept of “road dieting”, whereby established road rights-of-way are examined for possible reduction. The excess width can be reclaimed as public realm improvements – linear community gardens, public markets or, in the case of Polk Street, a linear hardscaped “shared streets” for the benefit of pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles alike.

Streetscape Typologies



Legend

- Study Area Boundary
- Station
- Right-of-Way Opportunities

Neighborhood Street – Idea A

Community Gardens

Neighborhood Street – Idea B

Angled Parking

Shared Street – Idea C

Linear plaza for pedestrians, bikes and cars

Building Typologies

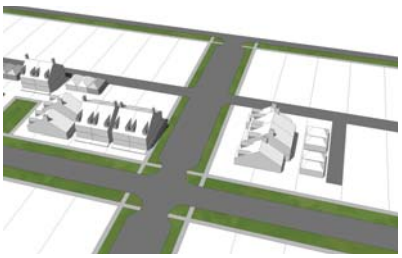
Issues: Inner-city communities offer scant variety of housing types – single-family houses, walk-up apartments (Huffman 6-Packs in the study area) and high-rise apartment towers. The community could benefit from other housing types and other housing tenures in pursuit of the American Dream of owing a house with a yard.

Ideas: Other housing types for consideration include stacked row houses, live/work, mid-rise perimeter block housing, etc. Other types of housing tenure include strata title condominiums (individual unit ownership with shared communal property), co-housing, etc. In combination, they add variety to the community and additional options to home ownership.

SF House

SF Granny Flat

Duplex – 4 Plex



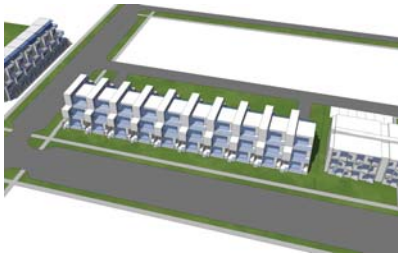
Bungalow Court

Row Townhouse

Live-Work Townhouse

Small Apartment

Stacked Townhouse



Stacked Townhouse

4-5 Storey Mixed Use

6-8 Storey Mixed Use

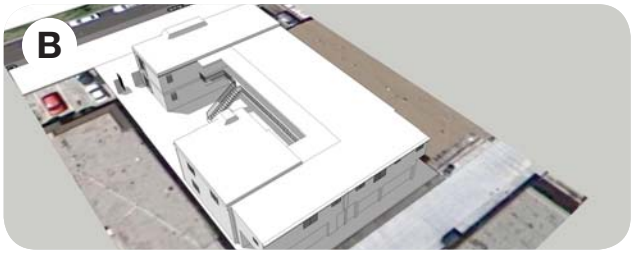
Podium Tower

Huffman 6-Pack

Issues: At present the owner occupied housing in the study area is at 15%. A desire was expressed by the Community previously to pursue Market Housing over Public Housing and that this product cater to young families rather than risking "gentrification" by building "up market" housing.

Ideas: The study area currently has 1500 (+/-)residential units contained in a development typology called the Huffman 6-Pack. Were these units to be renovated and possibly converted to condominium ownership it would provide additional market housing geared locally to young families and recent retirees.

Before



After

The Mid-City study area has an extensive supply of small, bungalow housing that can be renovated and resold to first time homeowners who can benefit from low priced housing stock within the fabric of a strong community.

Placemaking

Issue: A sense of place is both hard to define and easy to recognize! It regards the synergy that adds to the pleasure of the public realm experience by being on main street or central park. However, this experience has been steadily decreasing since the mid-20th Century as the automobile, and with it, the enclosed shopping center has overtaken and largely obliterated the public realm within our communities.

Idea: The study area has the pieces – the previously mentioned Teralta Park along with the strong main street presence of both El Cajon Boulevard and University Avenue – to become a regional draw building upon its Hispanic heritage by providing informal public markets – in open area plazas (on vacant lots), indoor day markets (in vacant buildings) and night markets (on reclaimed street fronts), etc. The advantage of these types of commerce is that they are not cost intensive and can serve a good incubators for local businesses to grow and prosper.

Plaza Market

Night Market

Public Market/Building Exterior

Public Market/Building Interior

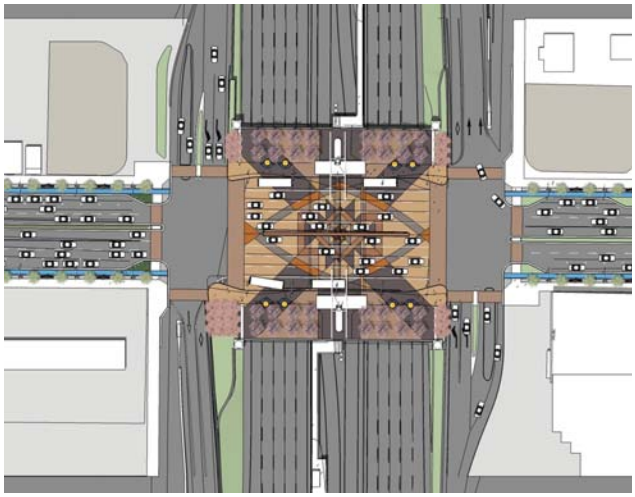
The Mid-City community could benefit from a local theater located either on El Cajon Boulevard or University Avenue. The theater would show second run Hollywood movies, first run European/International movies, and Hispanic titles geared to a local audience. In addition, the theater could serve as a focal point for public lectures and arts presentation for cultural nourishment for local residents.

Station Areas – El Cajon Boulevard

El Cajon Boulevard, a strong community anchor street, is the widest street in the Mid-City study area, featuring a 120' right of way. It should benefit from a "street diet" and general improvements as follows:

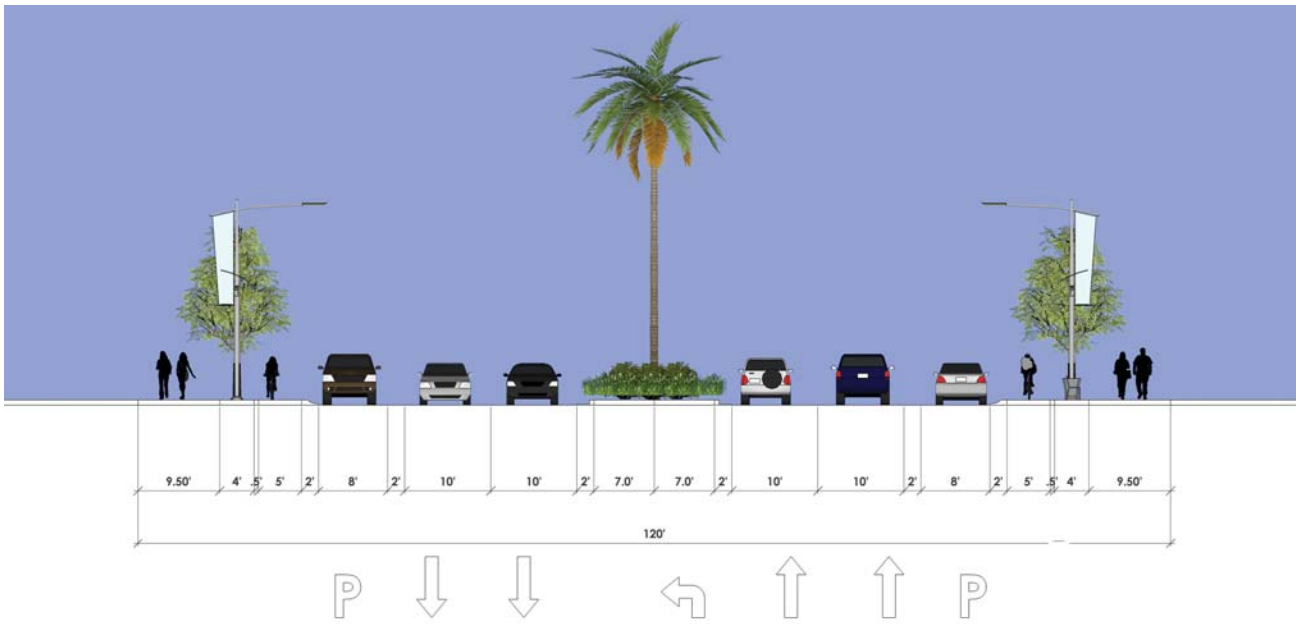
- 12' sidewalk with Street Trees
- Street furnishings including benches, trash containers, bike racks
- Street Pedestrian-scaled street lighting, hanging flower baskets and banners
- Dedicated bike lane, raiser higher than the roadway but lower than the sidewalk
- On-street parallel parking
- Two through vehicle lanes
- Left turn lanes as required
- Treed street median to center line of street
- Repeated on north side of the street

El Cajon Blvd. Station – Plan View



Typical Street

El Cajon Boulevard – Typical Section

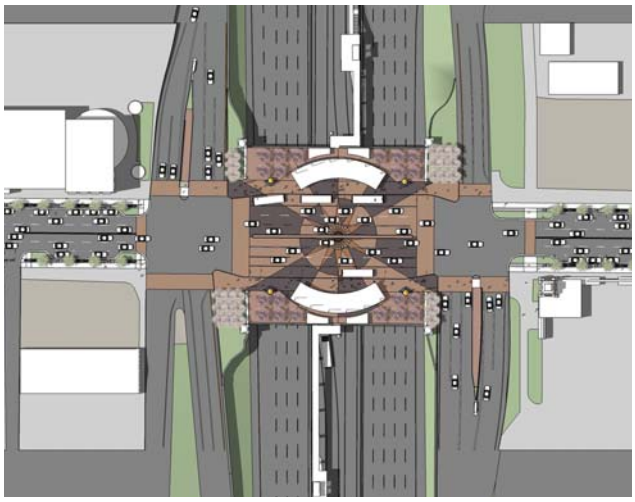


Station Areas – University Avenue

University Avenue, the other strong community anchor street, has less extensive right of way than does El Cajon Boulevard. Nonetheless, it is equally important as a spatial definer of the Mid-City community and, as such, it too should be refurbished, possibly as follows:

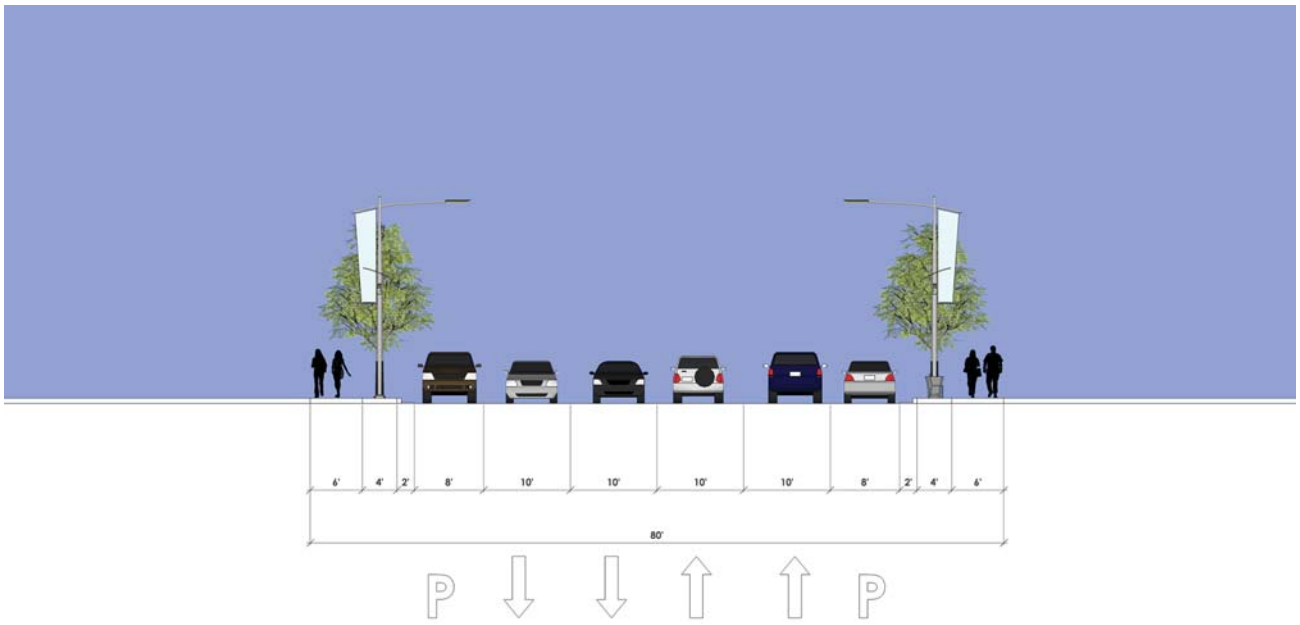
- 10’ sidewalk with Street Trees
- Street furnishings including benches, trash containers, bike racks
- Street Pedestrian-scaled street lighting, hanging flower baskets and banners
- On-street parallel parking
- Two through vehicle lanes
- Repeated on north side of the street

University Ave. Station – Plan View



Typical Street

University Ave. Station – Typical Section



BRT Station Areas

The BRT stations at El Cajon Boulevard and University Avenue possess the ingredients required to forcefully place the Mid-City community on the map in the regional consciousness. The fact that the BRT service runs north/south within the depressed SR15, to be joined to the community, with its local bus service running east/west, enables these two station areas to become truly multi-modal hubs that by their very nature serve to define the Mid-City as a Transit-Oriented Community (TOC) community of consequence. The streetscape in the vicinity of the stations should be improved to increase pedestrian connections and to define the area as the important hub that it is.

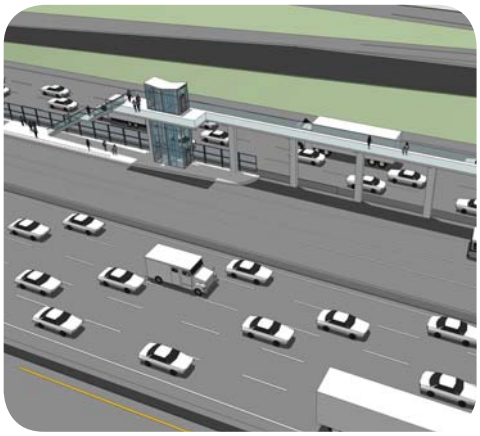
El Cajon Boulevard

University Avenue

BRT Station Enhancements

In order to encourage the use of these BRT stations, they should be enhanced to make them attractive, safe and secure places. The success of the transit system and the positive impact of transit on the Mid-City area can be better assured if these stations are of a high quality, in terms of physical appearance and amenities offered.

BRT station at El Cajon Blvd.



BRT station at El Cajon Blvd.

- Pedestrian bridge to station is long.
- The bridge is narrow and exposed to the elements.
- Station platforms are exposed to freeway noise, dust and pollution.
- Measures should be considered to mitigate these concerns.

Detail

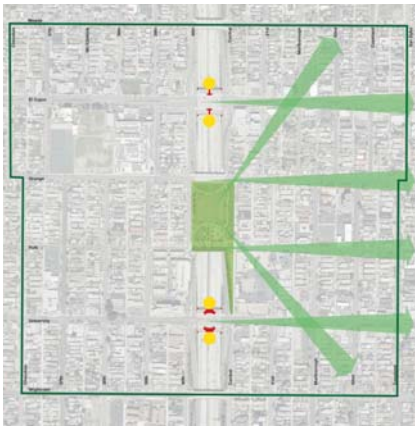
- Enhanced tree plantings and landscaping.
- Kiosks offering convenience items and travel necessities.
- Unique and attractive station pylon/markers.
- High quality banners, graphics and branding.
- Resilient and decorative paving materials.
- Well-defined pedestrian realm.

Mid-City Vision

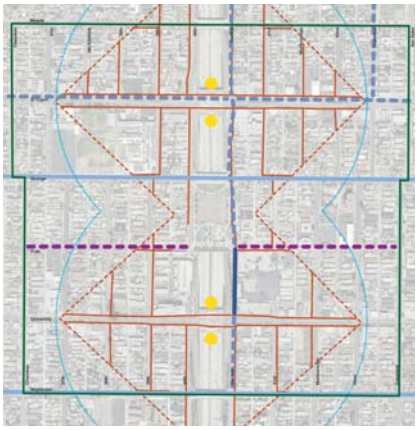
The emerging vision for the Mid-City community is one of stability for existing and new residents, alike, to invest and grow in, not one of gentrification at the expense of the local population. It is envisioned as a community that delivers urban public realm by the sensitive re-use of existing “streets & blocks”. Beyond that, the vision holds promise for the Mid-City to become a regional draw based upon BRT service to deliver shoppers to Teralta Park and portions of El Cajon Boulevard and University Avenue as weekly public markets serving a larger portion of the population.

Open Space ☐ ☐

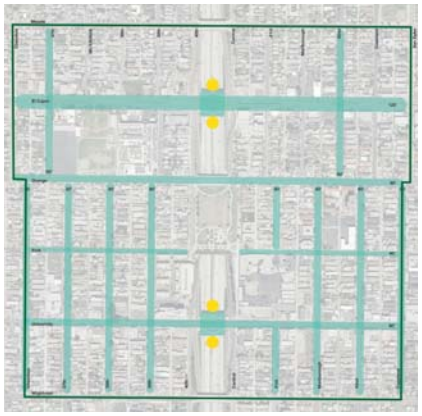
Gateways/Landmarks/ Views & Vistas ☐ ☐



Connectivity ☐ ☐



Excess R-O-W ☐ ☐

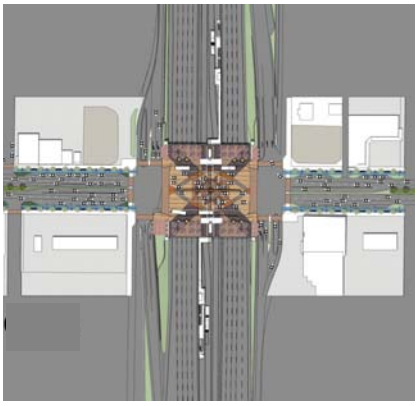


Building Typologies ☐ ☐

Huffman 6-Pack ☐ ☐

Placemaking ☐ ☐

Station Areas ☐ ☐



BRT Stations ☐ ☐