

The following section includes a series of urban framework diagrams and observations that describe how the study area relates to the urban fabric of San Diego.

The diagrams are represented at three scales:

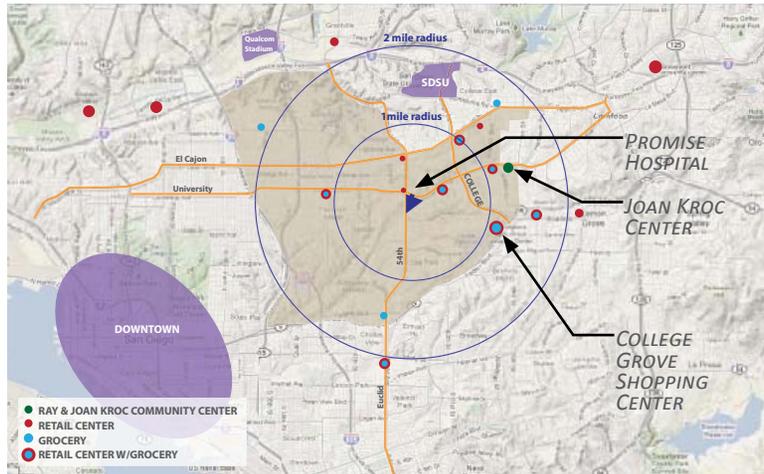
- Regional Framework

- Neighborhood Framework

- Site Framework

3

urban design context



Destinations

DESTINATIONS

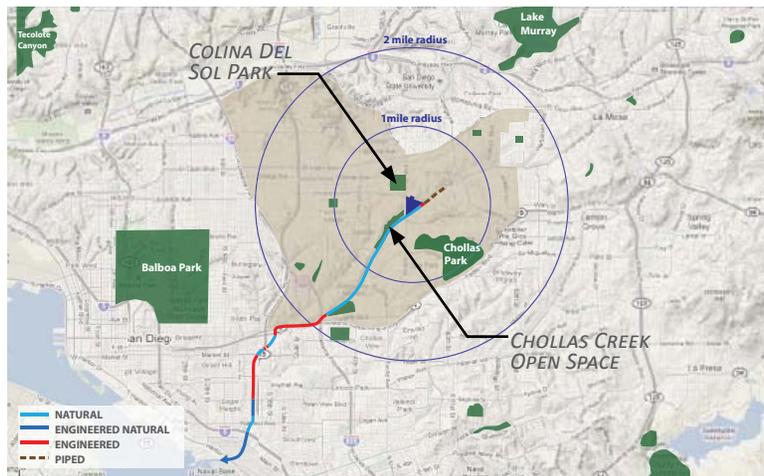
Chollas Triangle is in close proximity to San Diego State University, College Grove Shopping Center and the Joan Kroc Community Center. Five retail centers that include grocery stores are located approximately one mile from the site along primary bus routes.

Observations:

- Nearby retail centers compete with Chollas Triangle. However, there is lack of retail destinations within the western portion of Mid-City.
- Retail destinations in proximity to the site are largely auto oriented. An opportunity may exist for a different and distinct retail format.

Opportunities:

- There may be an opportunity for non-traditional student housing at Chollas Triangle that offers access to both SDSU and downtown employment centers.
- Chollas Triangle has the potential to become a community destination.



Parks and Open Space

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Chollas Triangle is in proximity to several different open space experiences including Chollas Park, Chollas Creek Open Space and Colina Del Sol Park. Two other regional parks, Balboa Park and Lake Murray park just over two miles away.

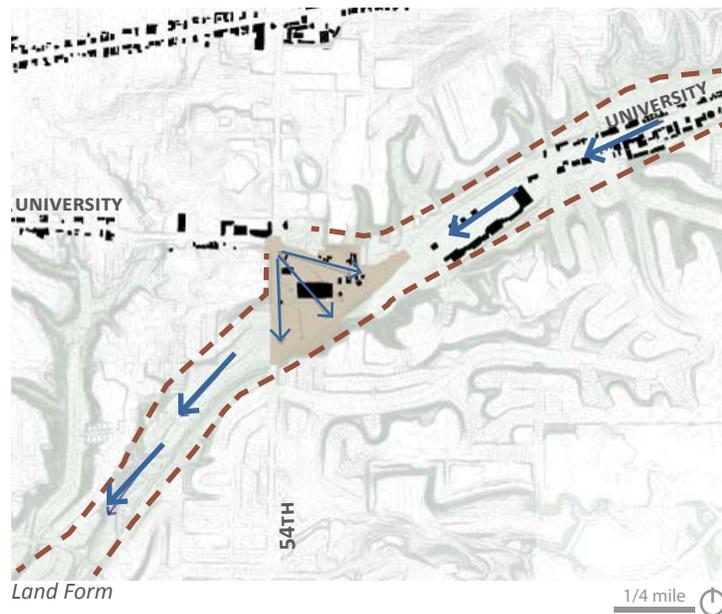
The main branch of Chollas Creek daylight at the southern edge of Chollas Triangle and flows southwest through the city in a series of natural and engineered channels before emptying into the San Diego Bay.

Observations:

- Chollas Triangle is located at the ‘urban headwaters’ of Chollas Creek.
- Chollas Creek offers a unique identity for the site and the community.
- Chollas Triangle has the responsibility to set an example for best practices in urban storm water management that respects natural drainage systems.

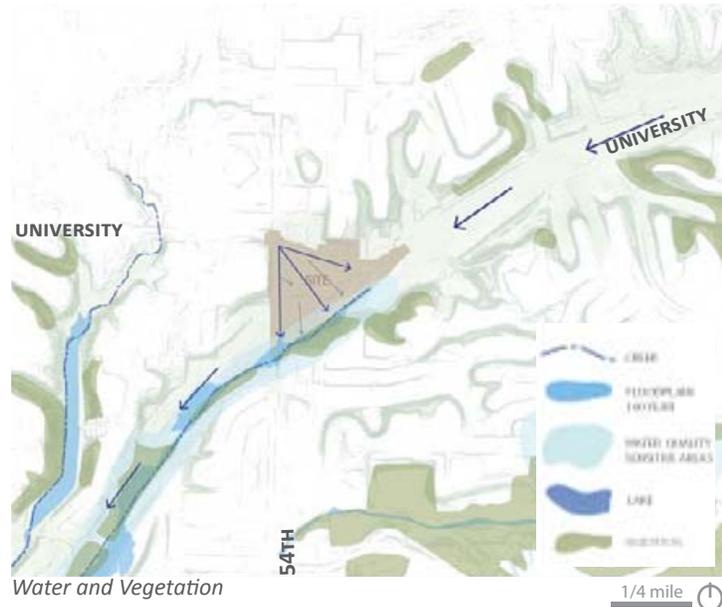
Opportunities:

- Chollas Triangle can begin a quality pedestrian connection between Colina Del Sol Park, Chollas Creek and Chollas Park.
- There in an opportunity to extend Chollas Creek Open Space east along the southern edge of Chollas Triangle.



Land Form

1/4 mile



Water and Vegetation

1/4 mile

LAND FORM

Chollas Triangle is located in one of the many canyons that define San Diego and is strategically situated at a natural break in the canyon wall to the north. University Avenue exits the canyon at this point and continues on an east/west trajectory to the west. The canyon returns to its natural creek bed character southwest of the site.

Canyon widths typically define development patterns. This holds true along University Avenue to the northeast. The width of the University Avenue R.O.W. encroaching upon the width of the canyon typically creates shallow lots that can support little more than auto oriented, strip development patterns.

Observations:

- The significant width of land between University Avenue and Chollas Creek allows for redesign consideration.
- The future character of the Chollas Triangle site will have to resolve the dichotomy between the natural and urban form of the canyon.
- The site cuts perpendicular across the gentle southwestern canyon slope.
- Site and canyon run-off converge at the southern edge of Chollas Triangle.

WATER AND VEGETATION

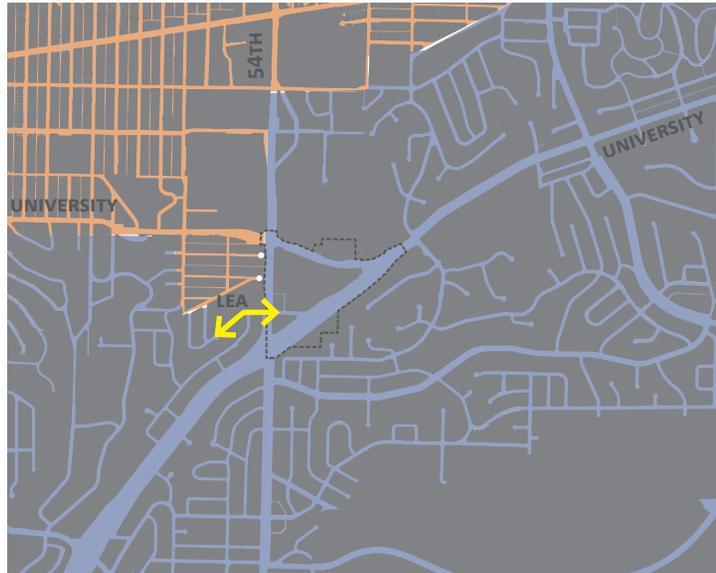
Southern portions of the site lie within Chollas Creek floodplain and water quality areas. Significant vegetation exists along Chollas Creek and the hillside. Aside from a few sporadic street trees, the remainder of the site is largely devoid of vegetation.

Observations:

- Surface run-off drains towards the creek and existing storm drains empty directly into the creek.
- Overgrown vegetation conceals Chollas Creek from view and provides refuge for transient populations.
- Invasive species are prevalent along Chollas Creek and the hillside.

Opportunities:

- Explore a potential partnership with Teen Challenge Center to create a landscape education/work program.
- Chollas Triangle should exemplify the recommendations set forth in the Mid-City Communities Plan and Chollas Creek Enhancement Program with respect to wetland and habitat restoration as well as exhibit best practices in urban storm water management.



Block and Lot Pattern

1/4 mile



Half Mile Walk

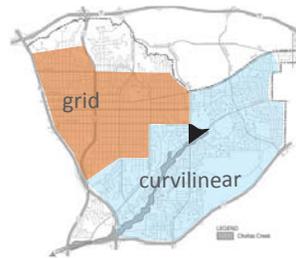
1/4 mile

LOT AND BLOCK PATTERN

Chollas Triangle is located where the traditional street grid and small block pattern transitions to larger block, curvilinear street system dictated in part by the canyon topography.

Observations:

- Only one local street, Lea Street at the west, connects to the site. Chollas Triangle is essentially cut off from the surrounding neighborhoods.
- There is no interior circulation system to navigate through the properties within the Chollas Triangle area.
- Traditional grids are usually more walkable than curvilinear street systems.

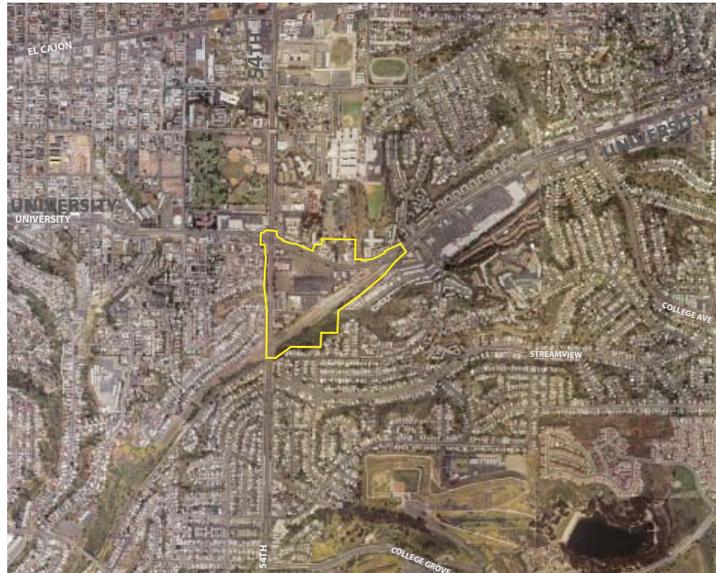


HALF MILE

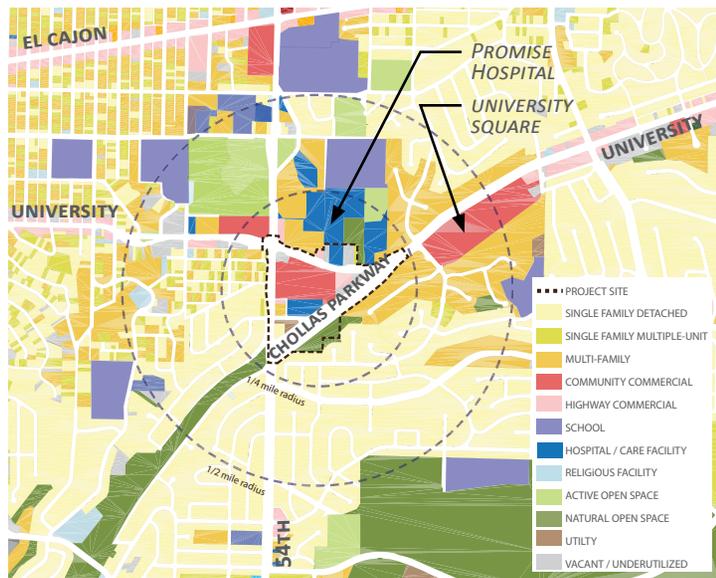
Chollas Triangle and immediately adjacent property is characterized by a large block, single use development pattern. Finer grain residential neighborhoods are located to the south and west.

The yellow tone depicts the actual half mile walk from the site following the street system, not as 'the crow flies'.

- Neighborhoods that appear in proximity to Chollas Triangle are actually quite distant when real connections are examined.
- Chollas Triangle is primarily accessed via 54th Street and University Avenue, each of which are poor pedestrian and bicycle environments.
- Much of the urban fabric north and east of the site is characterized by large block and lot pattern. This encourages an auto oriented development pattern that detracts from the pedestrian environment and discourages walking.



Aerial 1/4 mile



Existing Land Use: SanGIS Warehouse, January 1, 2007. 1/4 mile

EXISTING LAND USE

Civic uses are concentrated along 54th Street and include several schools, a park, recreation center and community pool.

Multifamily apartment development is concentrated near University Avenue immediately to the east, while smaller lot multifamily located along the original city street grid west of 54th Street.

Single family residential is concentrated on mesas to the northeast and south of the site. A concentration of hospital and adult care facilities is located immediately north of the site.

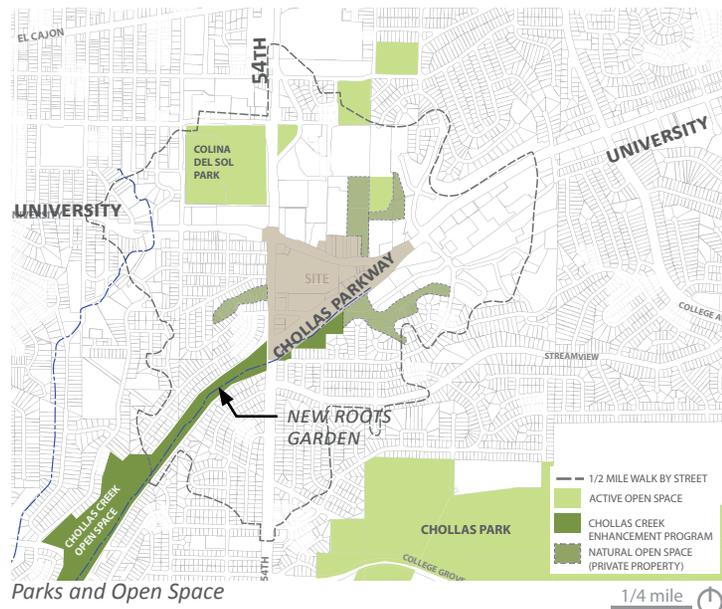
El Cajon Boulevard and University Avenue are neighborhood strip commercial corridors consisting of personal services, ethnic restaurants, auto body repair shops, liquor stores, pawn shops and small specialty retail.

Observations:

- A concentration of multifamily housing and employment generators including the hospital and schools suggests an opportunity to create a bus transfer/transit node.
- University Square is a stable commercial area northeast of the site that consists of neighborhood service chain retail and is anchored by a Save-A-Lot grocery store.
- Promise Hospital has a low visible presence along University.

Opportunities:

- Locating potential civic uses at this site will strengthen 54th as a civic node extending from El Cajon to Chollas Creek.
- Extending the Chollas Creek open space system along the southern portion of the site will connect residential neighborhoods at the southeast with University Square.



Parks and Open Space

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Chollas Triangle is surrounded by a variety of open space, both passive and active, all within a half mile walk.

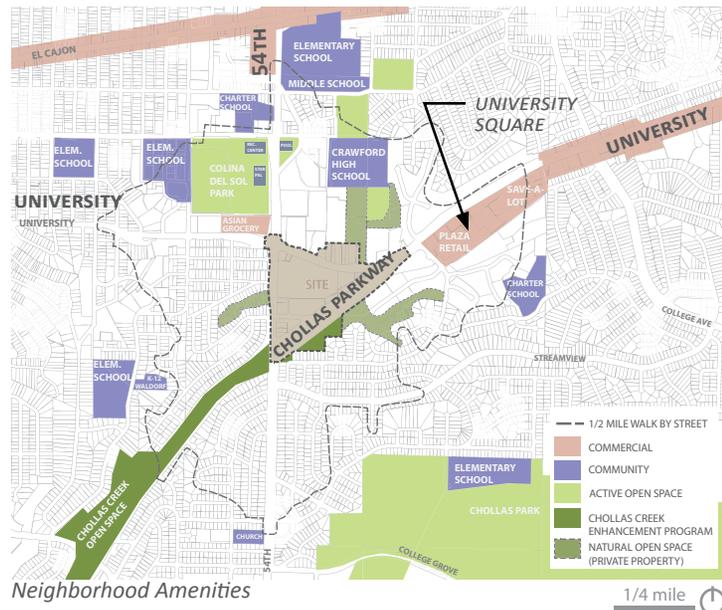
Colina Del Sol Park contains three baseball diamonds, two basketball courts, six tennis courts, children’s play equipment and a recreation center.

Chollas Park, a regional park located just over half a mile away, includes a sixteen acre lake, walking and running paths, hiking trails, picnic areas, children’s play equipment, a basketball court, and a multi-purpose ball field.

Crawford High School has two baseball diamonds, a football field and six tennis courts.

Observations:

- Chollas Triangle is not lacking recreation, but it is lacking good pedestrian connections and access to these amenities.
- Chollas Triangle is poised to become a connector between the different open spaces.



Neighborhood Amenities

NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITIES

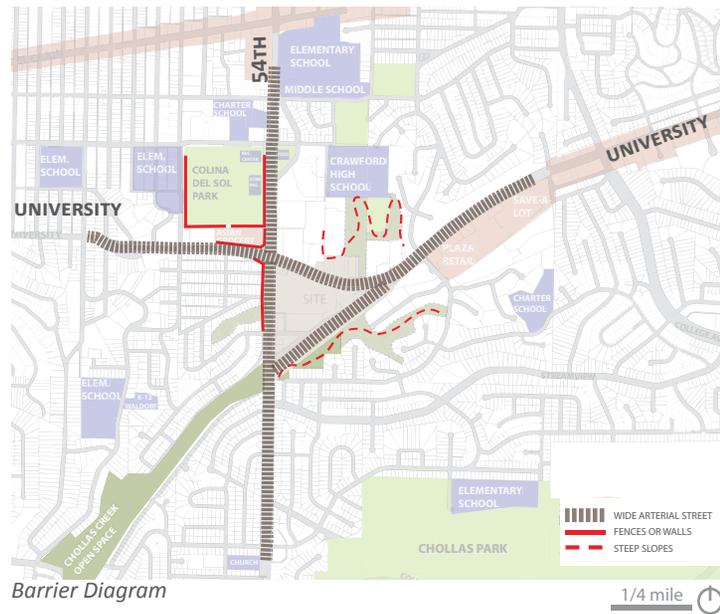
Chollas Triangle is proximate to numerous neighborhood amenities. These include four elementary schools, two charter schools, a middle school, a senior high school and a grocery store.

A STAR/PAL (Sports Training, Academics, Recreation/Police Athletic League) facility offering free educational, athletic and recreational programs to inner city youth is located in Colina Del Sol.

An adequate retail shopping center, including a grocery store, is located immediately northeast of the site.

Observations:

- These amenities support a variety of residential products.
- The project site is larger than any of the surrounding single use, neighborhood amenities.
- The schools, parks and University Plaza are significant energy centers, that bring people to the area.



Barrier Diagram

BARRIERS

While Chollas Triangle is in proximity to many neighborhood amenities, the natural and built environment create significant barriers.

Observations:

- Wide R.O.W.s at University and 54th (+/- 140 feet and +/- 100 feet respectively) create difficult pedestrian crossings.
- Automobile and bus traffic creates significant noise and air pollution.
- Steep slopes at mesas to the north and south, and a concrete wall at the west separate Chollas Triangle from the surrounding neighborhoods.
- Colina Del Sol Park is largely inaccessible, except from the north, due to fencing along the golf course and private property along the eastern and southern edges.
- Attached, narrow sidewalks create an unpleasant pedestrian experience along University and 54th.
- The intersection at Chollas Parkway and University Avenue is complicated and dangerous to motorists and pedestrians.
- Narrow attached sidewalks create poor pedestrian environment along high traffic volume streets.
- Wall to the west side 54th Street separates Chollas Triangle from the neighborhood.



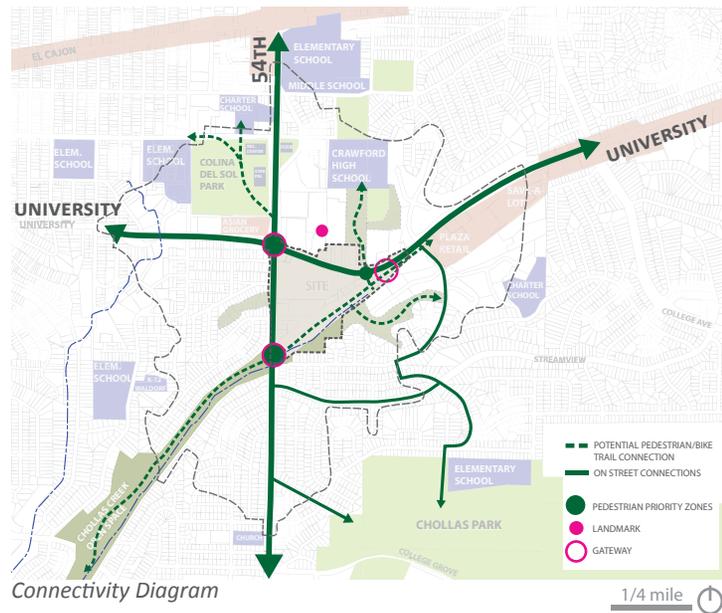
University and Chollas Parkway intersection is complicated and difficult for pedestrians to negotiate.



Narrow attached sidewalks create poor pedestrian environment along high traffic volume streets.



Wall to the west side 54th Street separates Chollas Triangle from the neighborhood.



CONNECTIVITY

University Avenue and 54th Street are ‘front doors’ to Chollas Triangle, most people will arrive at the site along these corridors. Improving pedestrian connections to the neighborhoods will strengthen the site as a center.

Observations:

- Canyon north of University is an informal connection to Crawford High School.
- Attached, narrow sidewalk creates a poor pedestrian environment along 54th.

Opportunities

- Improving streetscape and pedestrian character will help stitch Chollas Triangle into the surrounding neighborhoods.
- Connections to Chollas Park through the neighborhood are not obvious.
- Connect Chollas Triangle and neighborhoods to the southwest with a multi-use trail connection along Chollas Creek and 54th Street.
- Creating an obvious entry to Colina Del Sol Park at the southeast corner will establish stronger pedestrian connection between Chollas Triangle and the neighborhoods and schools located to the northwest.
- Intersections play a critical role in stitching Chollas Triangle into the community and should be designed as pedestrian priority zones.

- Active building uses along primary streets will strengthen pedestrian connections.
- Explore potential for trail connections to neighborhoods via easements.
- Creating gateways at primary site corners will help establish village identity.



Canyon north of University is an informal connection to Crawford High School.



Poor pedestrian environment along 54th Street.



Existing Uses: 2011

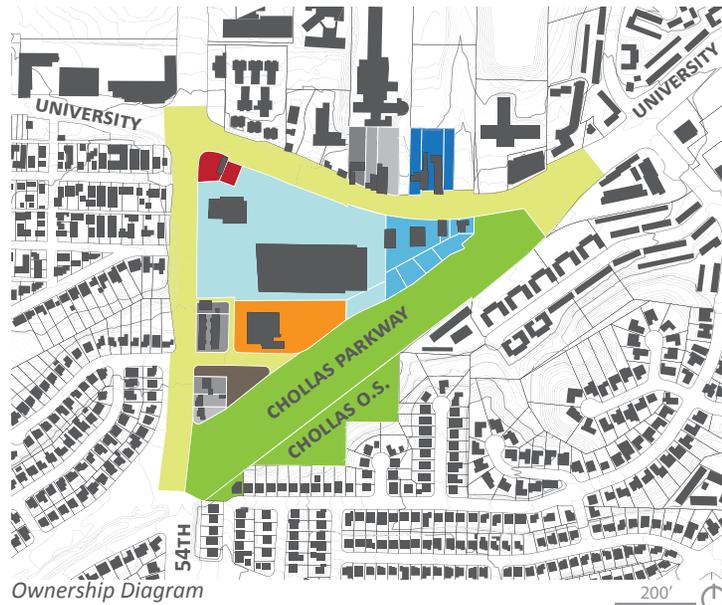
- The Sears building has been recently updated and Gonzales Grocery store will be occupying half of the space.
- Lucky Star restaurant and ballroom is a local destination.
- The Teen Challenge Center is an important community amenity that will remain on site.
- The gas station is currently on the market.

EXISTING USES WITHIN PROJECT AREA

- ① Recycling Facility
- ② Mexican Grocery
- ③ Massage
- ④ Colina Veterinary Hospital
- ⑤ Alvarado Parkway Institute Outpatient Services
- ⑥ Used Car Facility
- ⑦ Used Car Facility
- ⑧ Liquor Store
- ⑨ New Ark of the Covenant Church
- ⑩ Deeper Life Bookstore
- ⑪ Sears /Kmart | Future Gonzales Grocery
- ⑫ Teen Challenge Center
- ⑬ Electric Substation
- ⑭ Residential: Three Single Family Homes
- ⑮ Residential Apartments: 20 Units +/-
- ⑯ Lucky Star Restaurant and Ballroom Dancing
- ⑰ Gas Station

EXISTING USES ADJACENT TO PROJECT AREA

- ① Vien Dong Super Market
- ② Apartments
- ③ Alcoholics Anonymous
- ④ Apartments
- ⑤ Promise Hospital
- ⑥ University Care Center
- ⑦ University Gardens Senior Living
- ⑧ University Terrace Apartments
- ⑨ University Plaza
- ⑩ Colony Village
- ⑪ College Terrace
- ⑫ New Roots Community Garden

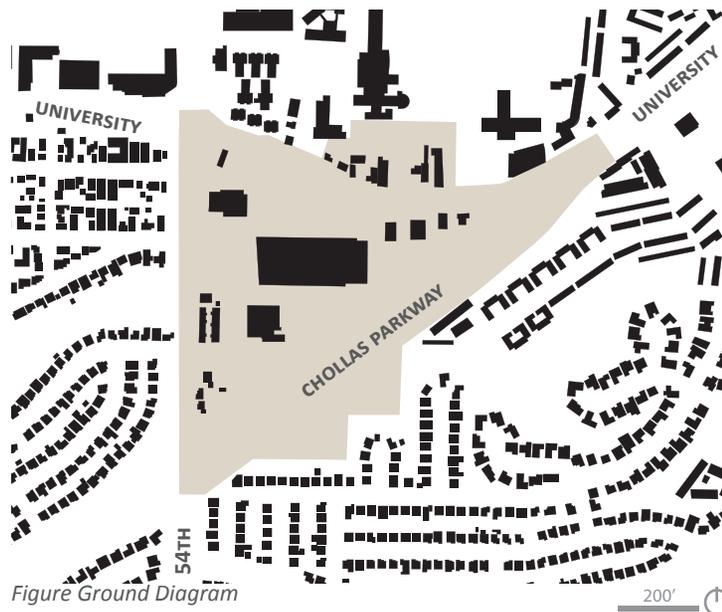


OWNERSHIP

Each color indicates various parcels assembled by a single land owner. Grey tones indicate individual parcel ownership.

Observations:

- The majority of private property is controlled by five landowners.
- City of San Diego controls the Chollas Parkway and open space adjacent to Chollas Creek, offering a significant opportunity to incentivize redevelopment of the site through open space improvements.
- City of San Diego R.O.W. is primarily dedicated to automobile traffic. There is potential to reduce vehicle lane widths in order to create a more pedestrian friendly street edge.

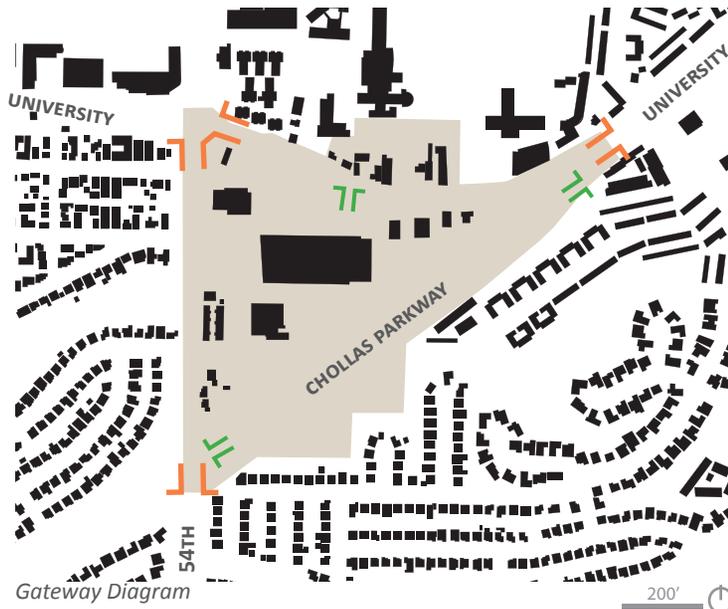


URBAN FORM

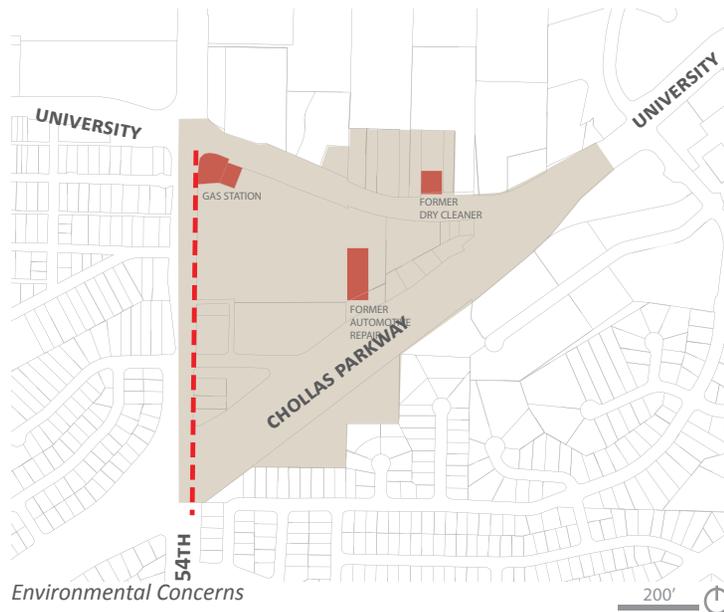
The existing Chollas Triangle site can be characterized as a large parking lot with randomly sited, single story commercial buildings. No consistent development pattern or formal street edge exists, nor any noteworthy architectural styles. Commercial uses generally front University and are surfaced parked at the front or sides of buildings.

Observations:

- Large, single use building and expansive parking lots creates a poor pedestrian experience at the Chollas site.
- Expanses of under utilized parking lots, particularly along University, may indicate that the project is over parked.
- Finer grain residential neighborhoods to the west and south are largely intact.
- Wide right-of-ways create opportunities to expand the pedestrian realm.



Gateway Diagram



Environmental Concerns

GATEWAYS

The existing site does not have any gateways. Gateways are an opportunity to establish an identity for a future community center at the Chollas Triangle site.

Opportunities:

-  Potential for automobile gateways that introduce users to a special district along University Avenue.
-  Human scale gateways should be considered for any future community open space system as well as along University to draw pedestrians through the site to Chollas Creek.

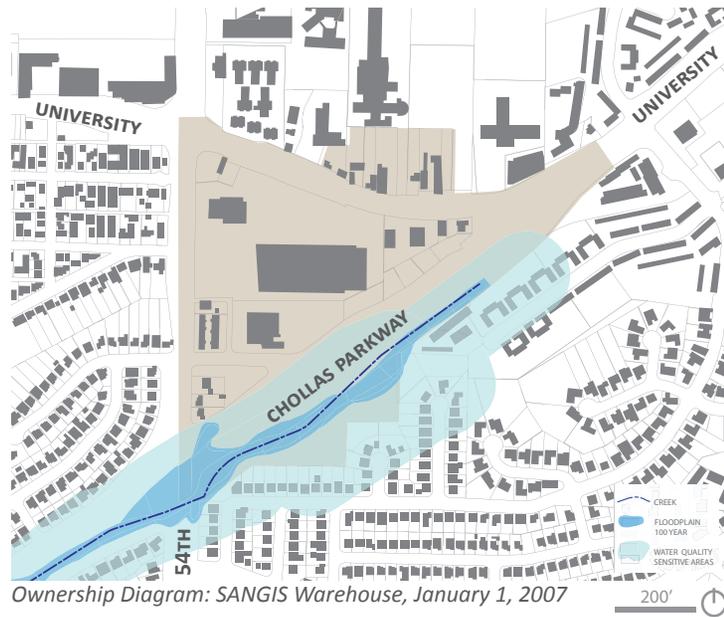
ENVIRONMENTAL

Several current and former site uses may require environmental remediation. Further analysis will be required.

In the vicinity of the Chollas Triangle site, the La Nacion fault is mapped as being located along and parallel with 54th Street. This fault is considered potentially active. Setbacks from potentially active faults are not required by State law for residential and commercial development.

Observations:

- Mid-City Communities Plan recommends locating linear parks along fault line as a means to create open space and improve connections while establishing a building setback.



CHOLLAS CREEK

The Chollas Creek Enhancement Program provides recommendations for wetland conservation, restoration and rehabilitation. It encompasses the Chollas Creek channel, floodway and flood plain fringe including the first legal parcel abutting the Creeks floodway. Chollas Creek adjacent to the site is designated as a Restoration and Rehabilitation of Natural Habitat Area.

Observations:

- Chollas Creek emerges from underground pipe into an engineered channel.
- The natural beauty of the creek and health of the ecosystem is comprised with litter.

Opportunities:

- Restore Chollas Creek to a naturalized state from 54th Street to 58th Street.
- Create significant public access to Chollas Creek through the creation of a linear park.
- Responsibility to set example for best practices in storm water management while educating public about urban and natural drainage systems.
- Green street infrastructure may be a viable option for cleansing storm water prior to entering Chollas Creek.



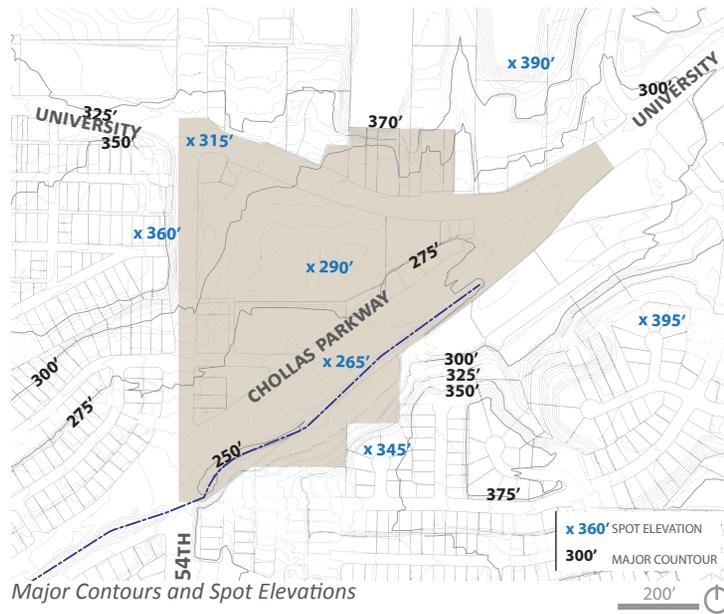
Workshop participants at one of two locations where the creek is easily visible from the street.



Chollas Creek emerges from underground pipe into an engineered channel.



The natural beauty of the creek and health of the ecosystem is comprised with litter.



TOPOGRAPHY: HIGH AND LOW POINTS

Located in a canyon, Chollas Triangle sits much lower than the surrounding landscape. The highest point, +/- 315 feet above sea level, is at the intersection of University and 54th Street. The lowest point, +/- 250 feet above sea level, is at the southwest corner of the site near Chollas Creek, creating an overall elevation difference of 65' on site.

The surrounding mesa's are between 30 and 80 feet above Chollas' highest point. The most obvious grade difference is between Chollas Creek and the mesa immediate south of the site.

Observations:

- Sub-station dominates the view when looking north from the low point near the intersection of 54th Street and Chollas Parkway.
- Future development should consider visual impact on surrounding properties that sit higher than the site.

Opportunities:

- Higher ground near University may allow the entire site to maximize creek and hillside views.



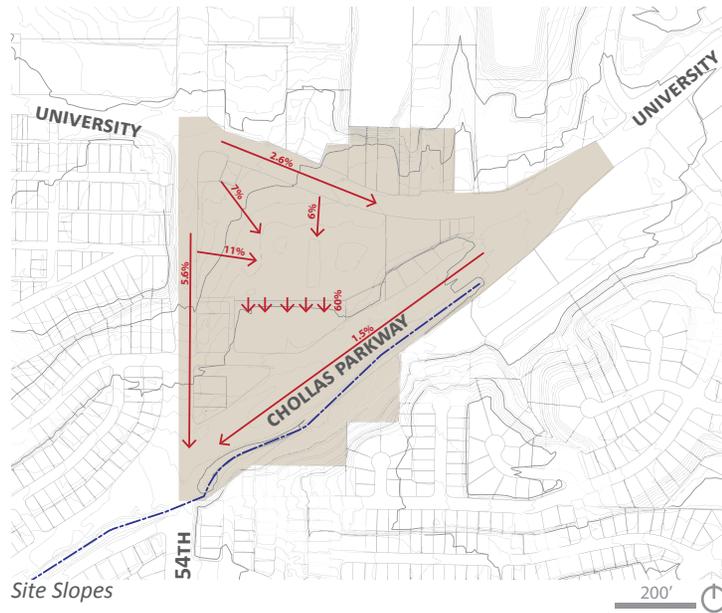
Residences located on mesa southeast of the site.



Residences located on mesa west of 54th Street.



Looking northeast from low point near 54th Street and Chollas Parkway.



TOPOGRAPHY: SITE SLOPES

The site generally slopes from northwest to southeast towards Chollas Creek, with the steepest slopes located at the western edge of the site. There is a significant grade break, +/-12 feet, running east/west across the center of the site.

Observations:

- Topography enhances solar access for southern facades.
- Future streets and walks will need to consider ADA requirements.

Opportunities:

- Grade differences allow for podium style buildings and tuckunder parking.
- Parking decks can be located in a manner that utilizes grade differences to access different levels, eliminating the need for internal ramps.
- The gentle curve and slope along University is an opportunity to create interesting street edge.



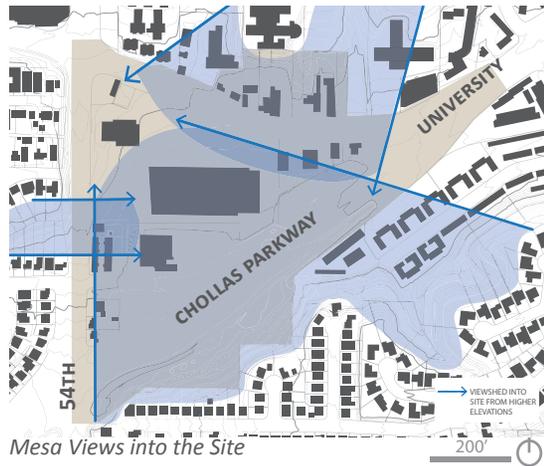
+/- 12' grade break at center of site.



11% slope from 54th Street towards Kmart.



Significant grade difference along 54th Street.



Mesa Views into the Site

MESA VIEWS INTO THE SITE

The mesas offer views into the site from all sides. The existing views are dominated by parking lot and rooftop mechanical equipment. Vegetation, which could be used to screen parking, is non-existent.

Observations:

- Roof top design is important. Care should be taken to screen mechanical equipment.

Opportunities:

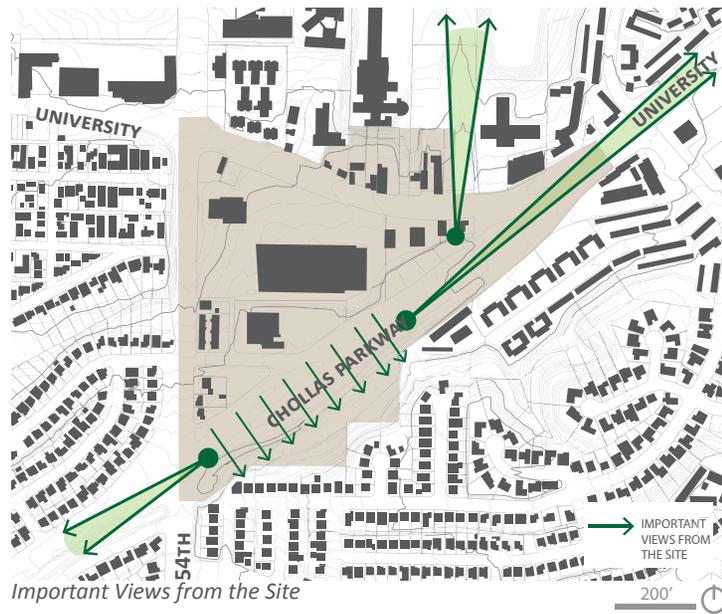
- Increased site landscaping and quality architecture will increase visual aesthetic from surrounding properties.



View of Chollas Triangle from mesa west of site.



View of Chollas Triangle from mesa north of site.



IMPORTANT VIEWS FROM THE SITE

Chollas Triangle offers several special viewsheds that are seldom found in urban settings. The southern edge of the site offers views to Chollas Creek and a heavily vegetated hillside. At one location, natural canyon views can be enjoyed across University.

Observations:

- Chollas Parkway offers distant views in either direction and views of the sky that are uncluttered by power lines and highway signage.
- Building form and massing in cooperation with site slopes can maximize views to Chollas Creek.

Opportunities:

- Locating public places where important views exist will preserve views for future generations.
- A linear park along Chollas Creek would preserve long views.



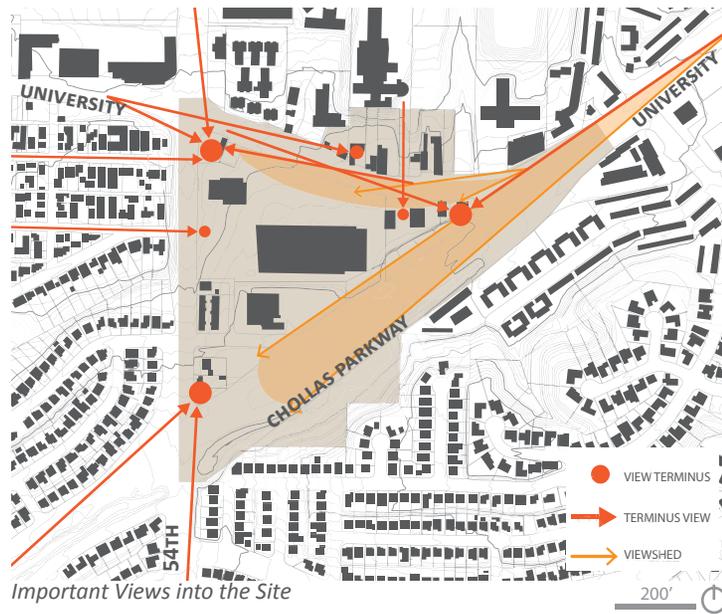
View into canyon north of University.



Looking east along Chollas Parkway.



Hillside view from Chollas Parkway.



IMPORTANT VIEWS INTO THE SITE

Chollas Triangle’s prominent location at a slight bend along University Avenue commands distant views from either direction. In addition, the significant grade change along 54th creates prominent view termini at both the Chollas Parkway and University intersections.

Observations:

- Distant views into Chollas Parkway from the northeast are currently impeded by a complicated intersection.
- Views along University and 54th have natural termini opportunities at the corners of the site.
- The intersection of 54th and Chollas Parkway is a terminus for natural views originating from the Chollas Creek open space to the west and northern views along 54th.

Opportunities:

- Slight curve and slope along University presents an opportunity to create a dramatic street edge creating an identity for the entire site.



View looking east along University. The slight bend offers an opportunity to create a dramatic and identifying street edge.



View into Chollas Parkway from University and Chollas Parkway intersection.