



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Planning Commission

DATE ISSUED: March 21, 2017 REPORT NO. PC-17-023

HEARING DATE: March 30, 2017

SUBJECT: Mission Valley Community Plan Update Workshop

REFERENCE: Workshop Report PC-15-111

SUMMARY

Issue: This is a workshop to update the Planning Commission on the Mission Valley Community Plan Update. No action is required on the part of the Planning Commission at this time.

City Strategic Plan Goal(s)/Objective(s): The Mission Valley Community Plan Update is consistent with the following City of San Diego Strategic Plan goals and objectives:

- Goal #2: Work in partnership with all of our communities to achieve safe and livable neighborhoods.
 - Objective #3: Invest in infrastructure.
 - Objective #5: Cultivate civic engagement and participation.
- Goal #3: Create and sustain a resilient and economically prosperous City.
 - Objective #1: Create dynamic neighborhoods that incorporate mobility, connectivity, and sustainability.

BACKGROUND

The Mission Valley Community Planning area is over 3,200 acres in size and is located near the geographic center of the City of San Diego. It is bounded to the west by Interstate 5, to the east by the San Diego River and Fairmount Avenue, and by the valley walls north of Friars Road and south of Camino del Rio South (Attachment 1).

The Mission Valley Community Plan was adopted by the San Diego City Council on June 25, 1985. The plan has been amended twenty times, with the most recent amendments for the inclusion of Quarry Falls (2008), Hazard Center redevelopment (2010), and the San Diego River Park Master Plan (2013). In the summer of 2015, the Planning Department began a

comprehensive process to update the Mission Valley Community Plan to align the goals and policies with those in the current General Plan and the Climate Action Plan.

Since project initiation, staff has completed existing conditions and visioning work, which has resulted in four reports that are available for review on the project website (<https://www.sandiego.gov/planning/community/cpu/missionvalley>). These include:

- Existing Conditions Map Atlas - The Map Atlas is an informational document that focuses on mappable resources, trends and concerns. It was created to educate the community, inform policy changes, and frame decisions relating to long-term physical development in Mission Valley. Accurate as of January 2016 this document elaborates on land uses, natural resources, urban form, and transportation infrastructure.
- Issues and Options Analysis - Outlined in this report are fifteen issues expected to affect long-term development in Mission Valley along with potential solutions to be addressed in the update to the Community Plan. Issues identified include connectivity, establishing a neighborhood center/main street, land use, mobility, and the environment. The Issues and Options Analysis will provide a framework for identifying development alternatives. Additionally, this document provides an overview of existing plans in the community, the General Plan, and the Community Plan update process.
- Existing Conditions Report for the Mobility Element - This report provides the foundation for the mobility issues and opportunities identified in the Issues and Options Analysis. The content of this report includes an analysis of existing physical and operational conditions related to the mobility system within the Mission Valley community. This draft is the initial step towards updating the Mission Valley Community Plan's Mobility Element.
- Phase II Community Outreach Report - Phase II of the update process focused on identifying existing conditions in Mission Valley, and developing a vision for the next 20 to 30 years. This was accomplished through the development of the Map Atlas, Issues and Options Analysis, and several community outreach efforts. Community outreach efforts included: engaging residents, business owners, property owners, community members, developers, the local design community, and other stakeholders in gathering information on existing conditions, opportunities, connectivity, neighborhoods, strategies for moving forward, and a vision for the future. Input from the aforementioned stakeholders is summarized in this report.

DISCUSSION

Through the public outreach process, the community has identified some core needs to be addressed in an updated community plan. These include:

- Improve the pedestrian and bicycle experience
- Address and manage traffic
- Make it easier to take transit
- Create a river-focused community
- Provide more parks and open spaces
- Develop more active recreation facilities
- Plan for a diverse mix of land uses, while reinforcing regional commercial
- Encourage more housing options, including affordable ones
- Foster a more urban experience, making a great place

City staff has identified some additional needs to address through an updated community plan. These include:

- Implement the strategies in the Climate Action Plan - particularly in the area of mode-shift
- Maintain Mission Valley's employment center characteristics
- Increase densities to support regional housing needs and transit ridership
- Create a healthier community
- Work towards Vision Zero
- Create an interconnected park system
- Provide opportunities for affordable and workforce housing
- Improve connectivity for all modes of transportation via new bicycle, pedestrian, transit, and vehicle linkages

Three land use alternatives have been developed to meet the needs identified by the stakeholders and professional planning staff. These alternatives each have a name to help distinguish them from one another. This includes Alternative 1 - "String of Pearls", Alternative 2 - "Vibrant Core", and Alternative 3 - "Campuses and Clusters". All three alternatives seek to accomplish the identified goals, but direct growth and change in different ways.

Alternative 1: String of Pearls

This alternative focuses on creating dense, mixed-use development within ¼ mile of the trolley stations, forming "pearls" or focus areas around the trolley line. These station areas would be transformed into activity hubs where people could live, work, and play. This strategy would locate taller buildings in limited areas, but buildings would be designed to be narrow and create view corridors. The use of taller and dense building in more limited areas would leave more land available for parks and open spaces. In addition, this alternative would include opportunities for strategic infill and better pedestrian connectivity throughout the valley. (See Attachment 2 for map of land use changes.)

Alternative 2: Vibrant Core

This alternative directs the bulk of new development to the heart of Mission Valley. This central core would be defined by public spaces such as event-sized plazas to complement new development and the San Diego River. New mixed-use development would be directed near Mission Center Road and along Camino de la Reina such as the Westfield Mission Valley site. The street grid system would be transformed to pedestrian-sized blocks with better transit connectivity. A smaller mixed-use center would be developed at Via Las Cumbres and new opportunities for regional-serving retail would be located south of Interstate 8. Additionally, existing office areas along Texas Street would be revitalized through connectivity from an aerial tram system. (See Attachment 3 for map of land use changes.)

Alternative 3: Campuses and Clusters

This alternative focuses on making the existing community function better through infill and strategic development. It builds upon the current development framework in a more pedestrian-friendly way by making the spaces "in-between" better. The goal is to use infill development to increase pedestrian connectivity while improving existing places. New open spaces would connect through development toward the San Diego River with many new places to live, work, and play throughout the valley. (See Attachment 4 for map of land use changes.)

Mobility Network

Mission Valley has several key roadway connections in the existing community plan that have not been built, which has led to a weak grid system with few north-south connections. In addition, many of the east west connections with the exception of Friars Road and Interstate 8 are disjointed, which forces significant out-of-direction travel to access destinations. These connections have not been built for several reasons including: insufficient funding, projects tied to development that never came to fruition, and community opposition (particularly to crossings of the San Diego River). The most notable are the extensions of Riverwalk Drive, Via Last Cumbres, and Fenton Parkway. These missing roadways and bridges create a particularly challenging situation when developing land use alternatives.

In the land use alternatives presented for Mission Valley, all the roadways that are in the current circulation element are included, with some additional community serving roadways. It should be noted that the roadways presented may not be achievable for financial and other reasons. As staff works through the alternatives process, some roadways may be eliminated or modified from those presented in the attachments. However, it is important to recognize that the elimination of potential roadways can have both positive and negative consequences. Much of the existing roadway congestion problems are in part caused by these missing connections. Not only does a lack of connectivity and congestion impede the free movement of cars, it restricts bus movement—delaying performance, and creates an undesirable environment for pedestrians. Connectivity is a critical component to a balanced mobility system and these tradeoffs are being considered in the update process.

Potential Buildout of Alternatives

A theoretical buildout of each of the land use alternatives has been developed to identify the potential yield of new housing units and square footage of commercial development. Each alternative was assigned an average dwelling unit per acre for residential and mixed-use development at medium and high densities, along with average non-residential floor area ratios. These averages were tailored to each alternative based on the design of the alternative. It is important to define reasonable development assumptions for a theoretical buildout because public facility needs will be calculated to match this estimation. If too much development is assumed, development impact fees could be artificially too high, which could stifle development. Conversely, if development assumptions are too low, adequate public facilities to support the development will not be achieved.

Recognizing that every site available for development will not necessarily develop based on economic conditions, staff created a map of potential opportunity sites where each site was tiered by its likelihood to develop. This map is available as Attachment 5. Sites were tiered based on if one or more of the following factors are present: if the site is vacant, if the site has a low assessed value and/or existing floor area ratio, or if the owners have communicated that they would like to redevelop. The tiers were combined with the land use plan and development assumption for each alternative to create a theoretical yield.

In addition, projects that are pending, approved, or in construction were also included in this calculation. The project pipeline for Mission Valley has been calculated as 5,390 housing units and 1,770,548 square feet of commercial development.

Based on these assumptions, the theoretical yield of each alternative (including pipeline projects) are as follows:

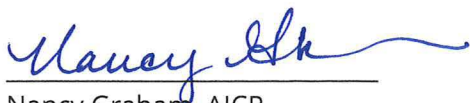
- Alternative 1: 21,828 units, 13,587,442 ft² commercial development, over 861.6 acres
- Alternative 2: 22,313 units, 11,746,756 ft² commercial development, over 1,021.1 acres
- Alternative 3: 24,732 units, 10,580,776 ft² commercial development, over 1,057.0 acres

CONCLUSION

The Planning Commission has expressed a desire to review the land use alternatives in advance of the selection of a preferred alternative in order to be able to provide meaningful input on the plan's substantive framework before policies are developed. The workshop today is to serve as a venue for that discussion. This date was selected in order to allow staff time to be responsive to input prior to a public workshop later this spring.

Through this outreach process, a preferred alternative will be developed that may likely be an amalgamation of all three alternatives. This preferred alternative will be the foundation for all policy development and will be considered the "project" during the future CEQA analysis phase. It is anticipated that the updated Mission Valley Community Plan will be completed in the fall of 2018.

Respectfully submitted,



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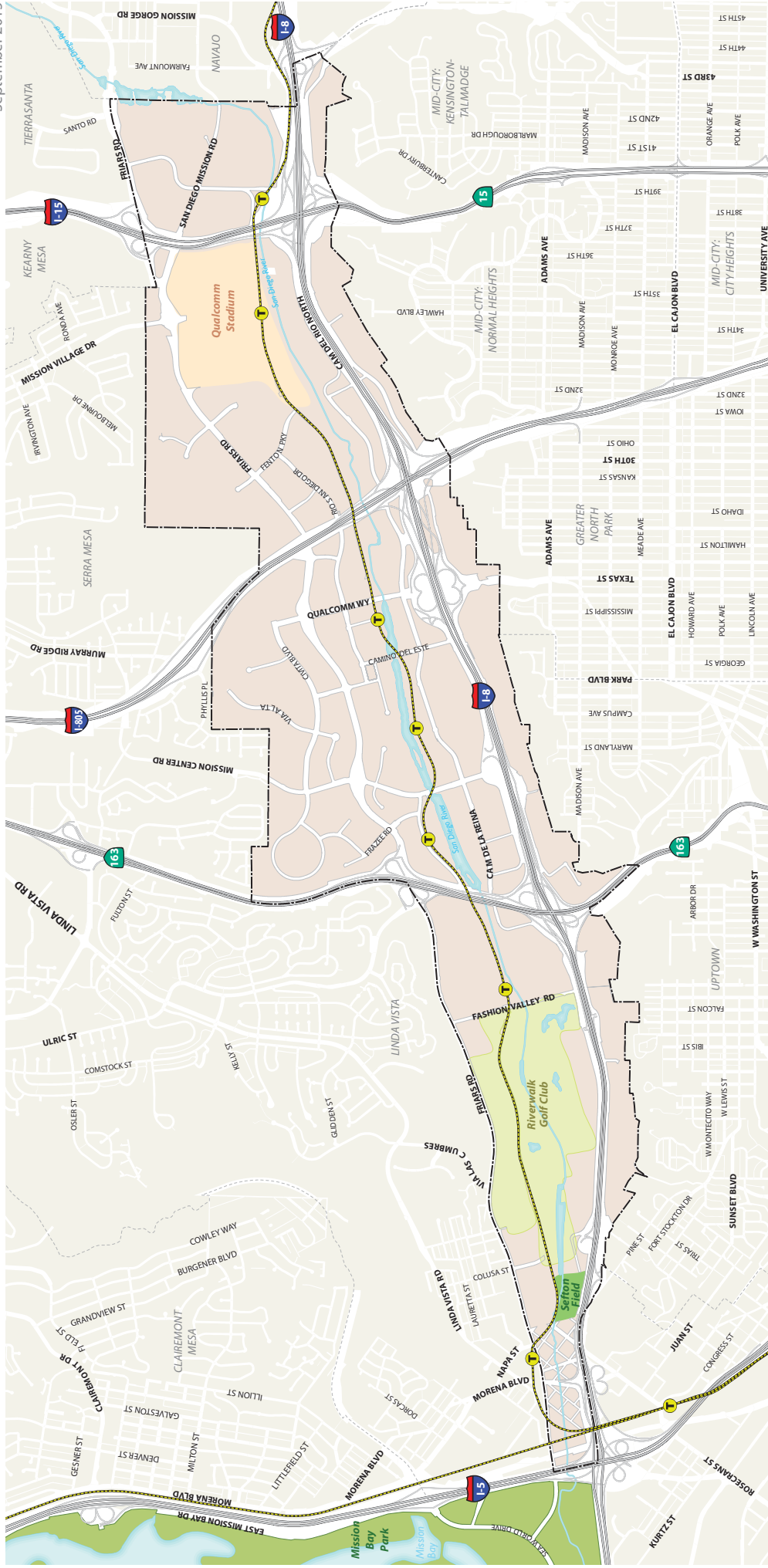
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Attachments:

1. Mission Valley Planning Area Map
2. Change Area Map of Alternative 1 – String of Pearls
3. Change Area Map of Alternative 2 – Vibrant Core
4. Change Area Map of Alternative 3 – Campuses and Clusters
5. Map of Potential Opportunity Sites By Tiers

Attachment 1: Mission Valley Planning Area

MISSION VALLEY COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE
September 2015



Trolley Stops
 Light Rail
 Freeways
 Ramps

Streams/Creeks
 Lakes/Ponds
 Mission Valley Community Plan Boundary
 Community Planning Areas

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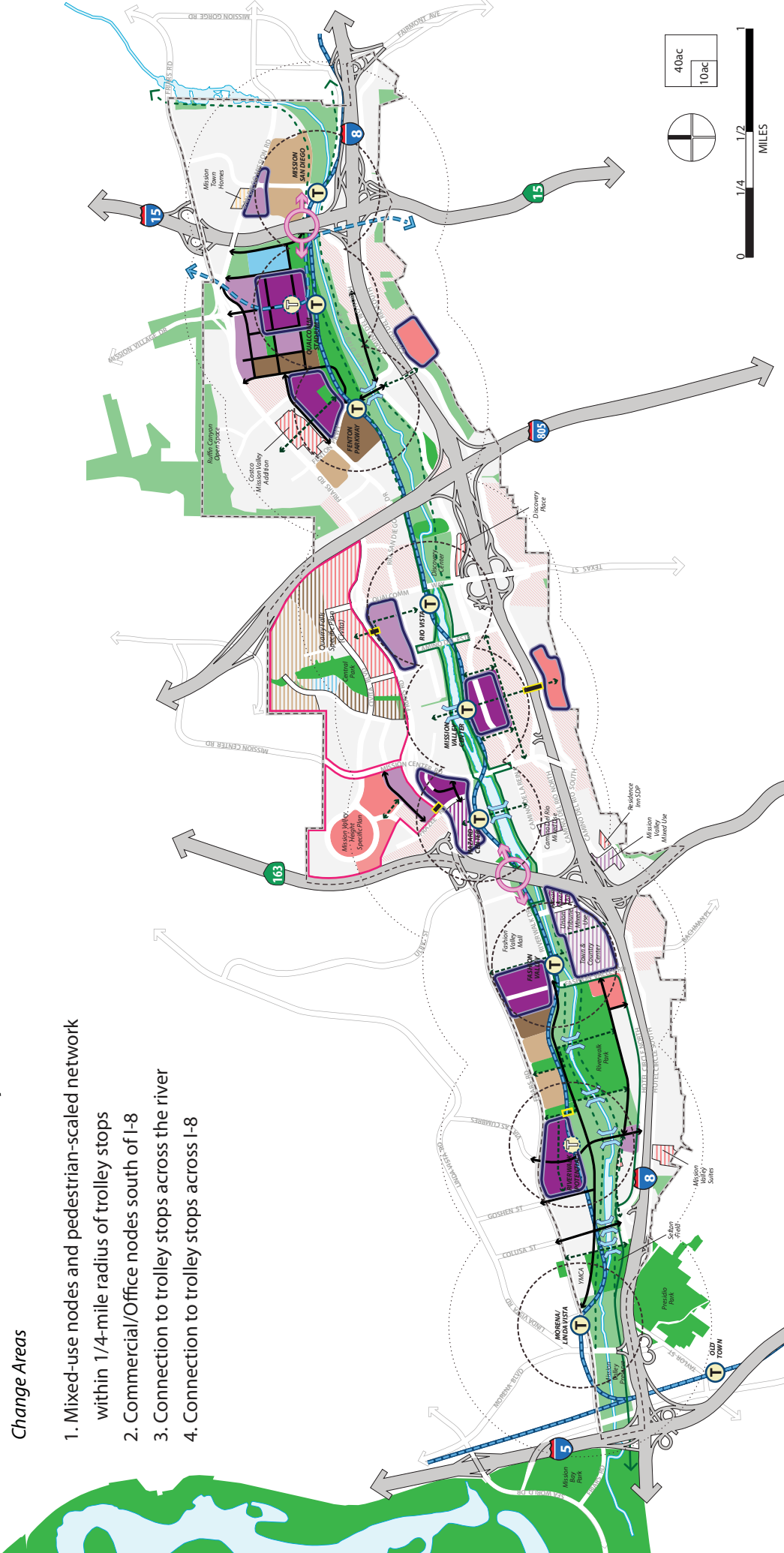
Data Source: City of San Diego, 2015; SANGIS Regional GIS Data Warehouse, 2015. (www.sangis.org)
Dyett & Bhatia, 2015



Attachment 2: Alternative 1, STRING OF PEARLS

Change Areas

1. Mixed-use nodes and pedestrian-scaled network within 1/4-mile radius of trolley stops
2. Commercial/Office nodes south of I-8
3. Connection to trolley stops across the river
4. Connection to trolley stops across I-8

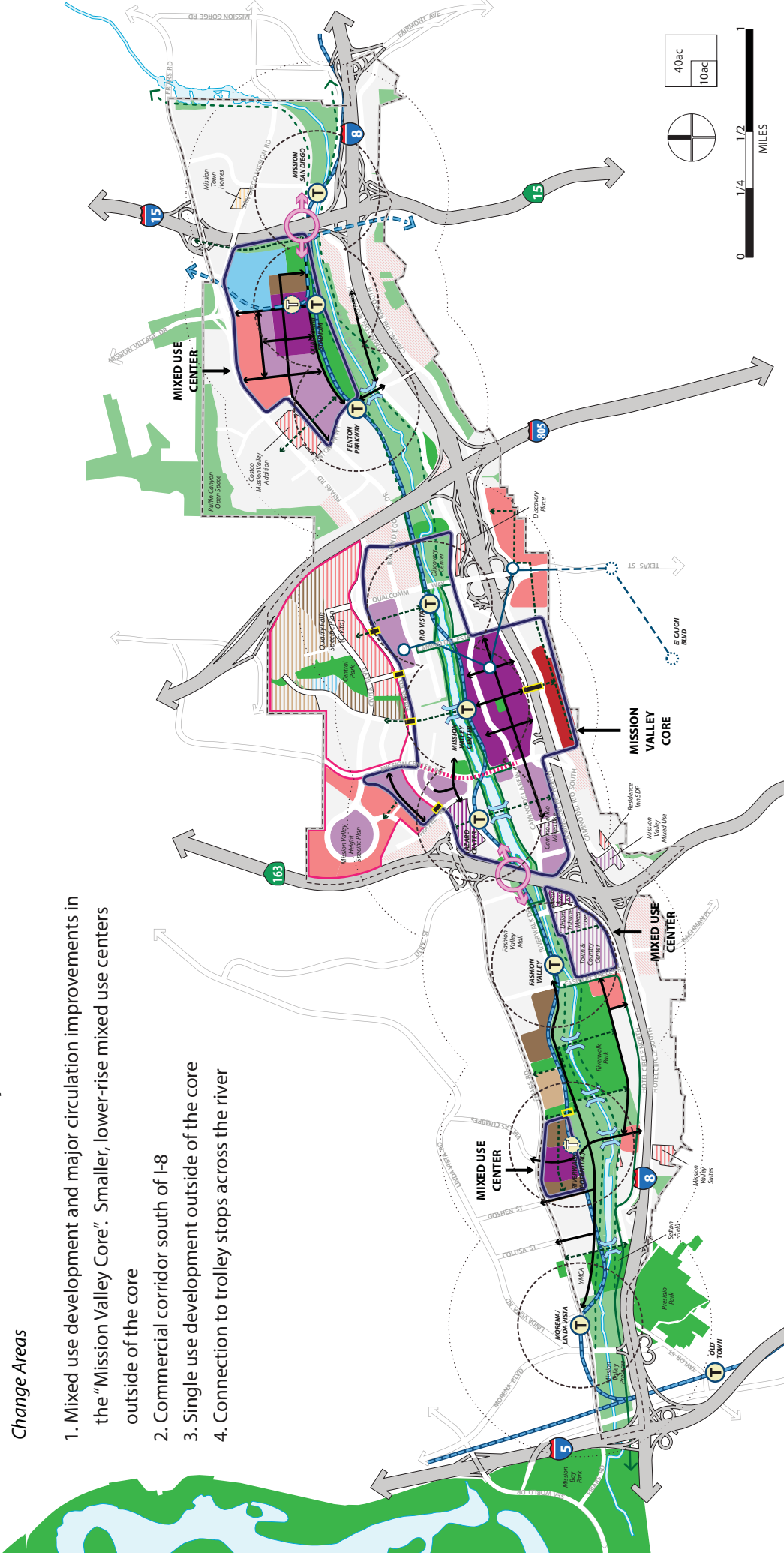


Potential Development Area Land Use (Simplified)	Approved/In Construction Projects Land Use (Simplified)	Park and Open Space	Potential Circulation Improvement	Potential Circulation Improvement
Mixed Use (HD)	Mixed Use (HD)	Existing Park	Proposed Roadway Connection	Existing San Diego River Trail
Mixed Use (MD)	Mixed Use (MD)	Existing Open Space	Proposed Pedestrian/Bicycle Connection	Proposed San Diego River Trail
Residential (HD)	Residential (HD)	Potential Park	Proposed Roadway Enhancement	Existing Trolley (Green Line)
Residential (MD)	Residential (MD)	Potential Open Space	Proposed Bridge	Proposed Trolley (Purple Line)
Commercial/Office/Hotel	Residential (LD)	Development Node	Proposed Grade-Separated Pedestrian Crossing	Proposed Aerial Tram
Regional Retail	Commercial/Office/Hotel	Specific Plan	Proposed At-Grade Pedestrian Tunnel	1/4-mile Radius from Trolley Station
Strategic Infill	Public/Institutional		Proposed Undercrossing Improvement	1/2-mile Radius from Trolley Station
Public/Institutional				

Attachment 3: Alternative 2, VIBRANT CORE

Change Areas

1. Mixed use development and major circulation improvements in the "Mission Valley Core". Smaller, lower-rise mixed use centers outside of the core
2. Commercial corridor south of I-8
3. Single use development outside of the core
4. Connection to trolley stops across the river

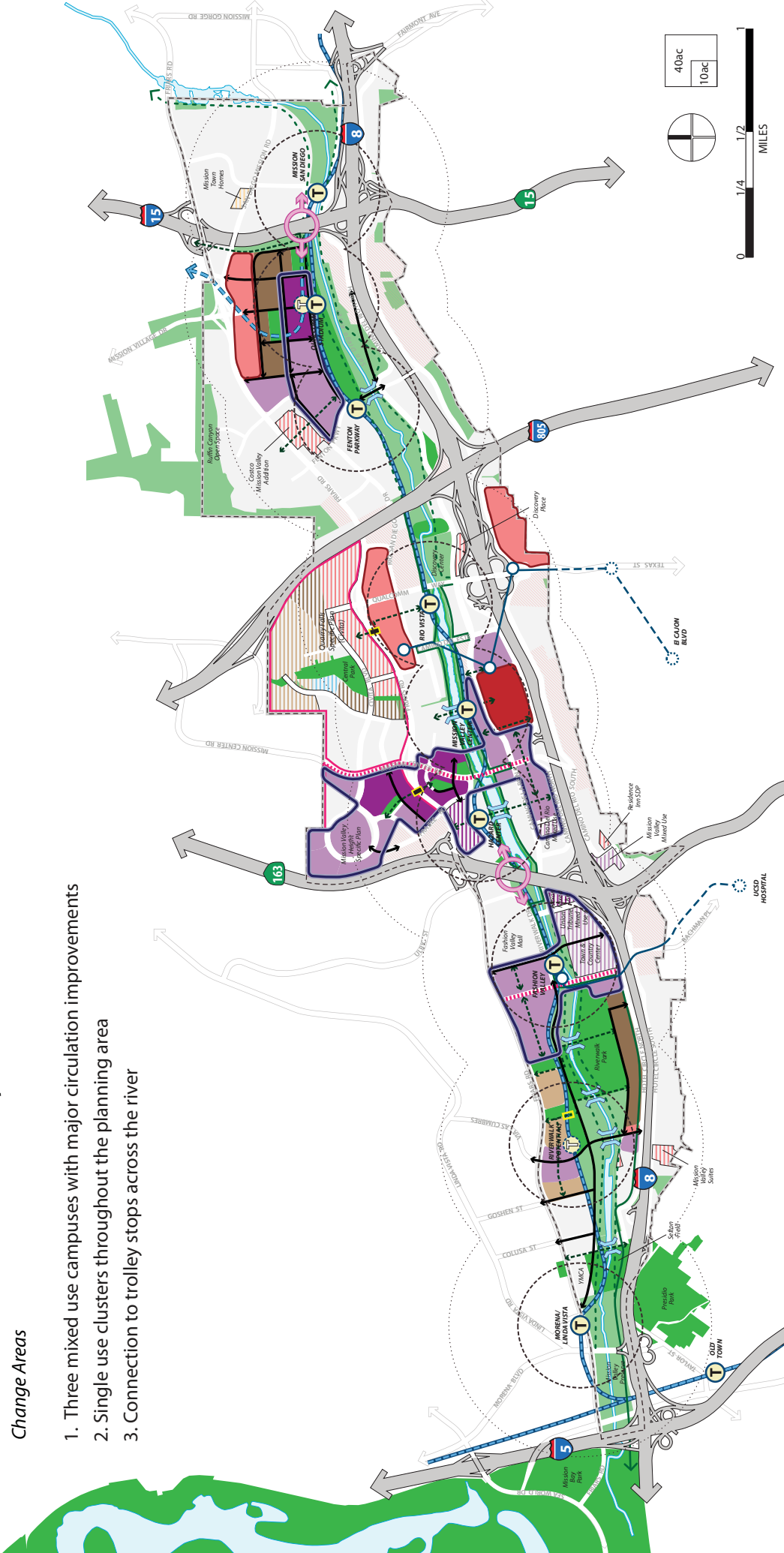


Potential Development Area Land Use (Simplified)	Approved/In Construction Projects Land Use (Simplified)	Park and Open Space	Potential Circulation Improvement
Mixed Use (HD)	Mixed Use (HD)	Existing Park	Proposed Roadway Connection
Mixed Use (MD)	Mixed Use (MD)	Existing Open Space	Proposed Pedestrian/Bicycle Connection
Residential (HD)	Residential (HD)	Potential Park	Proposed Pedestrian/Bicycle Enhancement
Residential (MD)	Residential (MD)	Potential Open Space	Proposed Roadway Enhancement
Commercial/Office/Hotel	Residential (LD)	Center/Core	Proposed Bridge
Regional Retail	Commercial/Office/Hotel	Specific Plan	Proposed Grade-Separated Pedestrian Crossing
Strategic Infill	Public/Institutional		Proposed At-Grade Pedestrian Tunnel
Public/Institutional			Proposed Undercrossing Improvement
			Existing San Diego River Trail
			Proposed San Diego River Trail
			Existing Trolley (Green Line)
			Proposed Trolley (Purple Line)
			Proposed Aerial Tram
			1/4-mile Radius from Trolley Station
			1/2-mile Radius from Trolley Station

Attachment 4: Alternative 3, CAMPUSES AND CLUSTERS

Change Areas

1. Three mixed use campuses with major circulation improvements
2. Single use clusters throughout the planning area
3. Connection to trolley stops across the river



Potential Development Area Land Use (Simplified)	Approved/In Construction Projects Land Use (Simplified)	Park and Open Space	Potential Circulation Improvement
Mixed Use (HD)	Mixed Use (HD)	Existing Park	Proposed Roadway Connection
Mixed Use (MD)	Mixed Use (MD)	Existing Open Space	Proposed Pedestrian/Bicycle Connection
Residential (HD)	Residential (HD)	Potential Park	Proposed Pedestrian/Bicycle Enhancement
Residential (MD)	Residential (MD)	Potential Open Space	Proposed Roadway Enhancement
Commercial/Office/Hotel	Residential (LD)	Campus	Proposed Bridge
Regional Retail	Commercial/Office/Hotel	Single-use Cluster	Proposed Grade-Separated Pedestrian Crossing
Strategic Infill	Public/Institutional	Specific Plan	Proposed At-Grade Pedestrian Tunnel
Public/Institutional			Proposed Undercrossing Improvement
			Existing San Diego River Trail
			Proposed San Diego River Trail
			Existing Trolley (Green Line)
			Proposed Trolley (Purple Line)
			Proposed Aerial Tram
			1/4-mile Radius from Trolley Station
			1/2-mile Radius from Trolley Station



Data Source: City of San Diego, 2015; SANGIS Regional GIS Data Warehouse, 2015. (www.sangis.org)
Dvett & Bhatia, 2015