

**REMOVAL OF THE MIDWAY-PACIFIC HIGHWAY COMMUNITY  
PLANNING AREA FROM THE COASTAL HEIGHT LIMIT  
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA  
SCH #2022030324**

***Prepared for:***

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April 2022



# DRAFT SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

SCH No. 2022030324

**SUBJECT: REMOVAL OF THE MIDWAY-PACIFIC HIGHWAY COMMUNITY PLANNING AREA FROM THE COASTAL HEIGHT LIMIT**

**Applicant:** City of San Diego Planning Department

**DRAFT DOCUMENT – April 22, 2022:**

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

The project is a proposed ballot measure that would amend the San Diego Municipal Code (Municipal Code) to remove the Midway-Pacific Highway Community Planning Area from the existing 30-foot height limit on buildings constructed in the Coastal Height Limit Overlay Zone.

This measure does not approve any specific development, and any proposed future development must comply with all governing laws. Building height would still be regulated by other zoning laws in the Municipal Code.

Voters in the City of San Diego (City) approved a citizens' initiative measure in 1972 that limited the height of buildings in the City to 30 feet in the Coastal Zone. Voters adopted the original language and are thus asked in this measure to consider an amendment to the law to remove the Midway-Pacific Highway Community Planning Area from the height limitation.

As defined in the 1972 ballot measure, and now as part of the Municipal Code, the geographic boundaries of the Coastal Zone include the City's land and water area from the northern City limits, south to the border of Mexico, extending seaward to the outer limit of the City's jurisdiction and inland to Interstate 5.

The Midway-Pacific Highway Community Planning Area contains approximately 1,324 acres of land. The approximate boundaries of the Midway-Pacific Highway Community Planning Area are Interstate 8 on the north, the San Diego International Airport on the south, Interstate 5 on the east, and Lytton Drive on the west. The Midway-Pacific Highway Community Planning Area includes the land surrounding Midway Drive and Sports Arena Boulevard, including the Pechanga Arena San Diego.

If approved by a majority vote of those qualified voters who vote on the ballot measure, the ballot measure would amend the law in the Municipal Code to change the height limit in the area defined as the Midway-Pacific Highway Community Planning Area. The amendments would take effect after the results of the election are certified in a resolution of the City Council.

## **PROJECT LOCATION:**

The Midway-Pacific Highway Community Planning Area is an urbanized community that encompasses approximately 1,324 acres of relatively flat area and is located in west-central San Diego, to the north of the San Diego International Airport, south of Mission Bay Park, between the north end of the Peninsula Community Planning Area to the west, and the Old Town San Diego Community Planning Area to the east. The Midway-Pacific Highway Community Planning Area is comprised of three sub-areas: the Midway area, which consists mainly of an urbanized commercial core; the narrow Pacific Highway corridor, which runs along Interstate 5 from the southern end of the Midway area south to Laurel Street; and the Marine Corps Recruit Depot. A portion of the Pacific Highway Corridor is within the Coastal Zone and subject to the California Coastal Act as implemented by the Midway-Pacific Highway Local Coastal Program and zoning regulations. The Midway-Pacific Highway Community Planning Area is urbanized and generally characterized as a mix of commercial and industrial areas, with some residential areas. Most of the Midway-Pacific Highway Community Planning Area is located within a transit priority area.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:**

The purpose of this document is to inform decision-makers, agencies, and the public of the significant environmental effects that could result if the project is approved and implemented, identify possible ways to minimize the significant effects, and describe a reasonable range of alternatives to the project.

Based on the analysis conducted for the project described above, the City of San Diego has prepared the following Draft SEIR in accordance with CEQA. The analysis conducted identified that the proposed project could result in significant and unavoidable impacts in the areas of **Visual Effects and Neighborhood Character (Scenic Vistas or Views, and Neighborhood Character)**. All other impacts analyzed in this Draft SEIR were found to be less than or not significant.

This document has been prepared by the City of San Diego's Planning Department and is based on the City's independent analysis and determinations made pursuant to Section 21082.1 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Section 128.0103(a) and (b) of the San Diego Municipal Code.

**RESULTS OF PUBLIC REVIEW:**

- ( ) No comments were received during the public input period.
- ( ) Comments were received but did not address the accuracy or completeness of the draft environmental document. No response is necessary, and the letters are incorporated herein.
- ( ) Comments addressing the accuracy or completeness of the draft environmental document were received during the public input period. The letters and responses are incorporated herein.

*Rebecca Malone*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Rebecca Malone, Program Manager  
Planning Department

April 22, 2022

Date of Draft Report

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Final Report

Analyst: Elena Pascual

## **PUBLIC REVIEW DISTRIBUTION:**

The following agencies, organizations, and individuals received a copy or notice of the Draft SEIR and were invited to comment on its accuracy and sufficiency. Copies of the Draft SEIR and any technical appendices may be reviewed in the office of the Planning Department, or purchased for the cost of reproduction.

### **FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**

Federal Aviation Administration (1)  
Naval Facilities Engineering Command, SW Division, Environmental Planning (12)  
Marine Corps Recruit Depot Facilities Div. (14)  
Environmental Protection Agency (19)  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (23)  
Army Corps of Engineers (26)

### **STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

Caltrans District 11 (31)  
Department of Fish and Wildlife (32)  
Cal Recycle (35)  
California Environmental Protection Agency (37A)  
California Highway Patrol (58)  
Department of Toxic Substance Control (39)  
Housing and Community Development (38)  
Natural Resources Agency (43)  
Regional Water Quality Control Board, Region 9 (44)  
State Clearinghouse (46A)  
California Coastal Commission (47)  
California Air Resources Board (49)  
California Transportation Commission (51)  
California Department of Transportation (51A)  
Native American Heritage Commission (56)  
California Public Utilities Commission

### **COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO**

Air Pollution Control Board (65)  
Planning and Land Use (68)  
Public Works (72)  
Department of Environmental Health (76)

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Councilmember LaCava, District 1  
Councilmember Campbell, District 2  
Councilmember Whitburn, District 3  
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Councilmember Cate, District 6  
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Department of Real Estate and Airport Management

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Mission Hills Branch Library (81Q)  
Ocean Beach Branch Library (81V)  
Point Loma/Hervey Branch Library (81Z)

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San Diego Unified Port District (109)  
San Diego County Regional Airport Authority (110)  
Metropolitan Transit System (112/115)  
San Diego Gas & Electric (114)

**School Districts**

San Diego Unified School District (125)  
San Diego Community College District (133)

**Community Planning Groups or Committees**

Community Planning Committee (194)  
Balboa Park Committee (226A)  
Black Mountain Ranch-Subarea I (226C)  
Otay Mesa-Nestor Planning Committee (228)  
Otay Mesa Planning Committee (235)  
Barrio Logan Planning Group (240)  
Downtown Community Planning Council (243)  
Clairemont Mesa Planning Committee (248)  
Greater Golden Hill Planning Committee (259)  
Serra Mesa Planning Committee (263A)  
Kearny Mesa Community Planning Group (265)  
Linda Vista Community Planning Committee (267)  
La Jolla Community Planning Association (275)

City Heights Area Planning Committee (287)  
Kensington-Talmadge Planning Committee (290)  
Normal Heights Community Planning Committee (291)  
Eastern Area Planning Committee (302)  
Midway-Pacific Highway Community Planning Group (307)  
Mira Mesa Community Planning Committee (310)  
Mission Beach Precise Planning Board (325)  
Mission Valley Planning Group (331)  
Navajo Community Planners, Inc. (336)  
Carmel Mountain Ranch Community Planning Group  
Carmel Valley Community Planning Board (350)  
Del Mar Mesa Community Planning Board (361)  
North Park Planning Committee (363)  
Ocean Beach Planning Board (367)  
Old Town Community Planning Board (368)  
Pacific Beach Community Planning Committee (375)  
Pacific Highlands Ranch-Subarea III (377A)  
Rancho Peñasquitos Planning Board (380)  
Peninsula Community Planning Board (390)  
Rancho Bernardo Community Planning Board (400)  
Sabre Springs Community Planning Group (406B)  
San Pasqual-Lake Hodges Planning Group (426)  
San Ysidro Planning and Development Group (433)  
Scripps Miramar Ranch Planning Group (437)  
Miramar Ranch North Planning Committee (439)  
Skyline Paradise Hills Planning Committee (443)  
Torrey Hills Community Planning Board (444A)  
Southeastern San Diego Planning Committee (449)  
Encanto Neighborhoods Community Planning Group (449A)  
College Area Community Planning Board (456)  
Tierrasanta Community Council (462)  
Torrey Highlands – Subarea IV (467)  
Torrey Pines Community Planning Board (469)  
University City Community Planning Group (480)  
Uptown Planners (498)  
Fairbanks Country Club Community Planning Group  
Mission Bay Park Committee  
North City Subarea 2 Community Planning Group  
Rancho Encantada Community Planning Group

**Other Agencies, Organizations and Individuals**

Old Town Chamber of Commerce (369)  
San Diego Chamber of Commerce (157)  
Building Industry Association (158)  
San Diego River Park Foundation (163)  
San Diego River Coalition (164)  
Sierra Club (165)  
San Diego Canyonlands (165A)  
San Diego Natural History Museum (166)  
San Diego Audubon Society (167)  
Jim Peugh (167A)  
San Diego River Conservancy (168)



Environmental Health Coalition (169)  
California Native Plant Society (170)  
San Diego Coastkeeper (173)  
Citizens Coordinate for Century 3 (179)  
Endangered Habitats League (182 & 182A)  
League of Women Voters (192)  
Carmen Lucas (206)  
South Coastal Information Center (210)  
San Diego Historical Society (211)  
San Diego Archaeological Center (212)  
Save Our Heritage Organisation (214)  
Ron Christman (215)  
Clint Linton (215B)  
Frank Brown - Inter-Tribal Cultural Resource Council (216)  
Campo Band of Mission Indians (217)  
San Diego County Archaeological Society Inc. (218)  
Kuumeyaay Cultural Heritage Preservation (223)  
Kuumeyaay Cultural Repatriation Committee (225)  
Hancock Street Neighborhood Business Association

#### **NATIVE AMERICAN DISTRIBUTION**

Barona Group of Capitan Grande Band of Mission Indians (225A)  
Campo Band of Mission Indians (225B)  
Ewiiapaayp Band of Mission Indians (225C)  
Inaja Band of Mission Indians (225D)  
Jamul Indian Village (225E)  
La Posta Band of Mission Indians (225F)  
Manzanita Band of Mission Indians (225G)  
Sycuan Band of Mission Indians (225H)  
Viejas Group of Capitan Grande Band of Mission Indians (225I)  
Mesa Grande Band of Mission Indians (225J)  
San Pasqual Band of Mission Indians (225K)  
Ipai Nation of Santa Ysabel (225L)  
La Jolla Band of Mission Indians (225M)  
Pala Band of Mission Indians (225N)  
Pauma Band of Mission Indians (225O)  
Pechanga Band of Mission Indians (225P)  
Rincon Band of Luiseno Indians (225Q)  
San Luis Rey Band of Luiseno Indians (225R)  
Los Coyotes Band of Mission Indians (225S)



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- Appendix B. Notice of Preparation and Responses and Initial Study
- Appendix C. Transportation Impact Analysis
- Appendix D. Visual Impact Analysis

## ***Acronyms and Abbreviations***

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2018 Community Plan	2018 Midway-Pacific Highway Community Plan
2018 PEIR	2018 Midway-Pacific Highway Community Plan Update Revised Final Program Environmental Impact Report
ALUCP	Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CPIOZ	Community Plan Implementation Overlay Zone
Complete Communities	Complete Communities: Housing Solutions and Mobility Choices
CP area	Midway-Pacific Highway Community Planning area
District	San Diego Unified Port District
EIR	Environmental Impact Report
EIR Guidelines	City of San Diego Environmental Impact Report Guidelines
FAR	floor area ratio
General Plan	2008 City of San Diego General Plan
General Plan PEIR	City of San Diego Final PEIR for the Draft General Plan
Housing Program	Complete Communities: Housing Solutions
I-	Interstate
IS	Initial Study
ITC	Intermodal Transit Center
LDC	Land Development Code
Master Plan Update	Mission Bay Park Master Plan Update
MCRD	Marine Corps Recruit Depot
Measure E	Ballot Measure for 30-Foot Height Limit Exception (November 2020)
MHPA	Multi-Habitat Planning Area
Mobility Choices Program	Complete Communities: Mobility Choices
OTC	Old Town Campus
Peninsula Community Plan	Peninsula Community Plan and Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan
Port	San Diego Unified Port District
project	Removal of the Midway-Pacific Highway Community Planning Area from the Coastal Height Limit
RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Board
SB	Senate Bill
SDIA	San Diego International Airport
SDMC	San Diego Municipal Code
SEIR	Supplemental Environmental Impact Report
TPA	Transit Priority Area
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
VMT	vehicle miles traveled

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## Executive Summary

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### S.1 Proposed Project

#### S.1.1 Project Location and Setting

The Midway-Pacific Highway Community Planning area (CP area) encompasses roughly 1,324 acres of relatively flat area in the west-central portion of the City of San Diego (City), north of the San Diego International Airport (SDIA), south of Mission Bay Park, and between the northern end of the Peninsula Community Plan area to the west and the Old Town Community Plan area to the east. The community is composed of three main elements: the Midway area, which consists mainly of an urbanized commercial core; the narrow Pacific Highway corridor, which runs along Interstate (I-) 5 from the southern end of the Midway area south to Laurel Street; and the Marine Corps Recruit Depot (MCRD). The San Diego River functions as the northern boundary of the CP area. The SDIA provides the southern boundary for the MCRD and the western boundary for the Pacific Highway corridor. I-5 forms the eastern boundary of the CP area. A portion of the Pacific Highway corridor is within the Coastal Zone and subject to the California Coastal Act as implemented by the Midway-Pacific Highway Local Coastal Program and zoning regulations.

The CP area is urbanized and generally characterized as a mix of commercial and industrial areas, with some residential areas. Approximately 1,009 acres, or 76 percent, of the CP area is in a Transit Priority Area (TPA), which is defined as an area within one-half mile of a major transit stop that is existing or planned. The CP area's overall physical structure reflects its geography and historical development patterns. The CP area is divided into several districts and villages that have been identified in the adopted 2018 Midway-Pacific Highway Community Plan (2018 Community Plan) as opportunities for infill development and larger scale sites with a mix of cohesive land uses. Historically, development in the CP area has been heavily associated with and influenced by aviation and military-related industries. Following World War II, the area was bisected from the Uptown Community Plan area and Old Town Community Plan area by the development of I-5. Automobile-oriented development patterns along with relaxed urban design requirements and the reuse of former federal property resulted in superblocks and a lack of uniformity in the built environment throughout the CP area.

#### S.1.2 Project Description

The project is a proposed ballot measure that would amend the San Diego Municipal Code (SDMC) to remove the CP area from the existing 30-foot height limit on buildings constructed in the Coastal Height Limit Overlay Zone. As discussed in Chapter 1.0, Introduction, the existing height limit was approved in 1972 by a citizens' initiative measure that generally limited the height of buildings in the City to 30 feet in the Coastal Height Limit Overlay Zone. Voters adopted the original language and, thus, will be asked in this measure to consider an amendment to the law to remove the CP area

from the height limitation. If approved by a majority vote of qualified voters, the ballot measure would amend the prohibition, currently codified in the SDMC Section 132.0505, to remove the height limit in the area defined as the CP area to allow for additional height. The amendment would take effect after the results of the election are certified in a City Council resolution. The project would not change the underlying base zone regulations, including the base zone’s height limit.

The project would not approve any specific development. Any proposed future development must comply with all governing laws. Building height in the CP area would still be regulated by zoning laws in the SDMC.

## **S.2 Project Objectives**

The following specific objectives were certified as part of the 2018 Midway-Pacific Highway Community Plan Update Revised Final Program Environmental Impact Report (2018 PEIR). These objectives have been carried forward to support the purpose of the project. The primary objectives of the project are as follows:

1. Establish multiple-use villages and districts within the community;
2. Enhance community identity and visual character through land use and urban design;
3. Create a complete mobility system that promotes access for pedestrians, bicycles, and transit, including within existing superblocks;
4. Create a Bay-to-Bay pedestrian and bicycle linkage (replacing the Bay-to-Bay canal concept);
5. Identify park and recreation facilities to serve the community;
6. Provide housing and commercial uses in proximity to transit;
7. Maintain employment uses including industrial, business park, and commercial office uses to support the City’s economy;
8. Improve localized water quality and conveyance through facility improvements and design; and
9. Identify future alternative uses for government-owned land in the community.

Since the certification of the 2018 PEIR, the City has adopted a new Strategic Plan, which includes the goal to “create homes for all of us.” To that end, an additional objective for the project is as follows:

10. Encourage housing for families (housing with three or more bedrooms) by removing development restrictions, which would allow housing developments to maximize zoned density while facilitating a diverse housing inventory with a range of housing types and prices.

## **S.3 Areas of Controversy**

Areas of controversy include potential impacts to surrounding neighborhoods due to increased building heights and build-out intensity of the CP area without height restrictions. Environmental

impacts classified as significant and unavoidable that may generate controversy have been identified for the resource topic of visual effects and neighborhood character and are described in Section 5.1, Visual Effects and Neighborhood Character, in Chapter 5.0, Environmental Analysis, of this Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (SEIR).

## **S.4 Project Alternatives**

To fully evaluate the environmental effects of proposed projects, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) mandates that alternatives to a proposed project be analyzed. CEQA Guidelines, Section 15126.6, requires the discussion of “a range of reasonable alternatives to the project, or to the location of the project, which would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project” and the evaluation of the comparative merits of the alternatives. The alternatives discussion is intended to “focus on alternatives to the project or its location which are capable of avoiding or substantially lessening any significant effects of the project,” even if these alternatives would impede to some degree the attainment of the project objectives.

Alternatives to the project are evaluated in Chapter 8.0, Alternatives, of this SEIR. The evaluations analyze the ability of each alternative to further reduce or avoid the significant effects of the project. The issue area of visual effects and neighborhood character included in the impact analysis of this SEIR has been given consideration in the alternative analysis. The SEIR evaluates three alternatives to the project: No Project Alternative (Maintain the Coastal Height Limit), Reduced Height Alternative, and Reduced Density Alternative.

### **S.4.1 No Project Alternative (Maintain the Coastal Height Limit)**

Under the No Project Alternative (Maintain the Coastal Height Limit), the existing 30-foot height limit on buildings constructed in the Coastal Height Limit Overlay Zone would continue to apply to future development in the CP area that is subject to the City’s land use authority. The 2018 Community Plan would continue to guide development in the CP area.

### **S.4.2 Reduced Height Alternative**

Under this alternative, building height would be limited to 50 feet in areas along the northeastern boundary south of I-8, including the Camino Del Rio District and the northern portions of the Kurtz District, and along the entire eastern CP area boundary adjacent to I-5, including the Hancock District and the Kettner District. The following zones would be height restricted to 50 feet by the Reduced Height Alternative: Residential Multi-Family (RM)-4-10; Commercial-Community (CC)-2-5, CC-3-8, and CC-3-9; and Industrial-Small Scale (IS)-1-1. Under the project, these areas would have a maximum building height of 100 feet or no maximum height. Thus, these areas have the potential to cause the most impacts to visual resources and neighborhood character. Table S-1,

Comparison of Maximum Building Heights under the Reduced Height Alternative, identifies the heights allowed in each zone under the project and the Reduced Height Alternative.

**Table S-1. Comparison of Maximum Building Heights under the Reduced Height Alternative**

Village, District, or Area	Zoning Designation <sup>1</sup>	Project Maximum Height Limit	Reduced Height Alternative Maximum Height Limit
Sports Arena Community Village	CC-3-6	65 feet	65 feet
	RM-3-8	50 feet	50 feet
Kemper Neighborhood Village	RM-2-5	40 feet	40 feet
	RM-3-8	50 feet	50 feet
	CC-1-3	45 feet	45 feet
	CC-3-6	65 feet	65 feet
Dutch Flats Urban Village <sup>2</sup>	CO-3-1	50 feet	50 feet
	CC-3-6	65 feet	65 feet
	RM-3-8	50 feet	50 feet
Camino Del Rio District	CC-1-3	45 feet	45 feet
	CC-3-1	50 feet	50 feet
	CC-3-8	100 feet	50 feet
Channel District	RM-3-8	50 feet	50 feet
	CC-3-6	65 feet	65 feet
Rosecrans District	CC-1-3	45 feet	45 feet
	CC-3-6	65 feet	65 feet
	RM-3-8	50 feet	50 feet
Cauby District	CC-1-3	45 feet	45 feet
	CC-3-7	65 feet	65 feet
	RM-3-8	50 feet	50 feet
Lytton District	CN-1-6	65 feet	65 feet
	RM-1-1	30 feet	30 feet
	RM-3-8	50 feet	50 feet
Kurtz District <sup>2</sup>	CO-3-1	50 feet	50 feet
	CC-2-5	100 feet	50 feet
	CC-3-8	100 feet	50 feet
	IP-2-1	No limit	No limit
Hancock Transit Corridor	CC-2-5	100 feet	50 feet
	CC-3-8	100 feet	50 feet
	RM-3-9	60 feet	60 feet
	CC-3-9	No limit	50 feet
	RM-4-10	No limit	50 feet

**Table S-1. Comparison of Maximum Building Heights under the Reduced Height Alternative**

Village, District, or Area	Zoning Designation <sup>1</sup>	Project Maximum Height Limit	Reduced Height Alternative Maximum Height Limit
Kettner District	CC-3-8	100 feet	50 feet
	IS-1-1	No limit <sup>3</sup>	50 feet
MCRD <sup>4</sup>	None	None	None

**Source:** City of San Diego 2018, 2022.

**Notes:** MCRD = Marine Corps Recruit Depot

<sup>1</sup> CC = Commercial – Community; CN = Commercial-Neighborhood; CO = Commercial-Office; IP = Industrial – Park; IS = Industrial – Small Scale; RM = Residential-Multifamily

<sup>2</sup> Includes Naval Base Point Loma, which does not have a zoned height limit. The highest intensity scenario (Alternative 4) identified under the Navy Old Town Campus Revitalization Project Environmental Impact Statement proposes buildings of up to 350 feet in height. The Coastal Height Limit does not apply to federal, state, or San Diego Unified Port District (Port) property, and the City has no land use authority over federal property (i.e., Naval Base Point Loma).

<sup>3</sup> Includes Port-owned lands regulated by the Port Master Plan, which requires that structures shall not exceed 130 feet in height. The Coastal Height Limit does not apply to federal, state, or Port property, and the City has no land use authority over Port property.

<sup>4</sup> The MCRD does not have a zoning designation; therefore, there is no height limit governing this area. The Coastal Height Limit does not apply to federal, state, or Port property, and the City has no land use authority over federal property (i.e., the MCRD).

Under this alternative, a Community Plan Implementation Overlay Zone (CPIOZ) would be established as a mechanism to implement reduced height limits in these areas. Per Chapter 13, Article 2, Division 14, Section 132.1401, of the SDMC, the purpose of a CPIOZ is to provide supplemental development regulations that are tailored to specific sites within Community Plan areas of the City. The intent of these regulations is to ensure that development proposals are reviewed for consistency with the use and development criteria that have been adopted for specific sites as part of the Community Plan Update process. In addition, the City does not have land use authority on lands regulated by the Port Master Plan and/or the SDIA’s Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP).

Similar to the project, under the Reduced Height Alternative, building heights in the remainder of the CP area would continue to be regulated by the zoning designation maximum height allowed in the SDMC.

### **S.4.3 Reduced Density Alternative**

Under this alternative, density in certain areas of the CP area would be reduced to accommodate lower building heights through rezoning. The lower density areas in the Reduced Density Alternative would be similar to the reduced height areas in the Reduced Height Alternative because these areas would have the potential to cause the most impacts to visual resources and neighborhood character. As shown on Figure 8-3, Reduced Density Alternative, lower density would occur along the northeastern boundary south of I-8, including the Camino Del Rio District and the northern portions of the Kurtz District, and along the entire eastern CP area boundary adjacent to I-5, including the Hancock District and the Kettner District. In these areas the CC-3-8 and CC-3-9 would be rezoned to CC-3-7 and RM-4-10 would be rezoned to RM-3-9. Building

heights would be regulated by the zoning designation maximum height allowed in the San Diego Municipal Code. CC-3-7 would allow for a maximum building height of 65 feet, and RM-3-9 would allow for a maximum building height of 60 feet. Table S-2, Comparison of Maximum Building Heights under the Reduced Density Alternative, identifies the zoning designation and heights allowed in each zone under the project and the Reduced Density Alternative.

**Table S-2. Comparison of Maximum Building Heights under the Reduced Density Alternative**

Village, District, or Area	Project Zoning Designation <sup>1</sup>	Project Maximum Height Limit	Reduce Density Alternative Zoning Designation	Reduced Density Alternative Maximum Height Limit
Sports Arena Community Village	CC-3-6	65 feet	CC-3-6	65 feet
	RM-3-8	50 feet	RM-3-8	50 feet
Kemper Neighborhood Village	RM-2-5	40 feet	RM-2-5	40 feet
	RM-3-8	50 feet	RM-3-8	50 feet
	CC-1-3	45 feet	CC-1-3	45 feet
	CC-3-6	65 feet	CC-3-6	65 feet
Dutch Flats Urban Village <sup>2</sup>	CO-3-1	50 feet	CO-3-1	50 feet
	CC-3-6	65 feet	CC-3-6	65 feet
	RM-3-8	50 feet	RM-3-8	50 feet
Camino Del Rio District	CC-1-3	45 feet	CC-1-3	45 feet
	CC-3-1	50 feet	CC-3-1	50 feet
	CC-3-8	100 feet	CC-3-7	65 feet
Channel District	RM-3-8	50 feet	RM-3-8	50 feet
	CC-3-6	65 feet	CC-3-6	65 feet
Rosecrans District	CC-1-3	45 feet	CC-1-3	45 feet
	CC-3-6	65 feet	CC-3-6	65 feet
	RM-3-8	50 feet	RM-3-8	50 feet
Cauby District	CC-1-3	45 feet	CC-1-3	45 feet
	CC-3-7	65 feet	CC-3-7	65 feet
	RM-3-8	50 feet	RM-3-8	50 feet
Lytton District	CN-1-6	65 feet	CN-1-6	65 feet
	RM-1-1	30 feet	RM-1-1	30 feet
	RM-3-8	50 feet	RM-3-8	50 feet
Kurtz District <sup>2</sup>	CO-3-1	50 feet	CO-3-1	50 feet
	CC-2-5	100 feet	CC-2-5	100 feet
	CC-3-8	100 feet	CC-3-7	65 feet
	IP-2-1	No limit	IP-2-1	No limit

**Table S-2. Comparison of Maximum Building Heights under the Reduced Density Alternative**

Village, District, or Area	Project Zoning Designation <sup>1</sup>	Project Maximum Height Limit	Reduce Density Alternative Zoning Designation	Reduced Density Alternative Maximum Height Limit
Hancock Transit Corridor	CC-2-5	100 feet	CC-2-5	100 feet
	CC-3-8	100 feet	CC-3-7	65 feet
	RM-3-9	60 feet	RM-3-9	60 feet
	CC-3-9	No limit	CC-3-7	65 feet
	RM-4-10	No limit	RM-3-9	60 feet
Kettner District	CC-3-8	100 feet	CC-3-7	65 feet
	IS-1-1	No limit <sup>3</sup>	IS-1-1	No limit
Marine Corps Recruit Depot <sup>4</sup>	None	None	None	None

**Source:** City of San Diego 2018, 2022.

**Notes:** MCRD = Marine Corps Recruit Depot

<sup>1</sup> CC = Commercial – Community; CN = Commercial-Neighborhood; CO = Commercial-Office; IP = Industrial – Park; IS = Industrial – Small Scale; RM = Residential-Multifamily

<sup>2</sup> Includes Naval Base Point Loma, which does not have a zoned height limit. The highest intensity scenario (Alternative 4) identified under the Navy Old Town Campus Revitalization Project Environmental Impact Statement proposes buildings of up to 350 feet in height. The Coastal Height Limit does not apply to federal, state, or San Diego Unified Port District (Port) property, and the City has no land use authority over federal property (i.e., Naval Base Point Loma).

<sup>3</sup> Includes Port-owned lands regulated by the Port Master Plan, which requires that structures shall not exceed 130 feet in height. The Coastal Height Limit does not apply to federal, state, or Port property, and the City has no land use authority over Port property.

<sup>4</sup> The MCRD does not have a zoning designation; therefore, there is no height limit governing this area. The Coastal Height Limit does not apply to federal, state, or Port property, and the City has no land use authority over federal property (i.e., the MCRD).

#### **S4.4 Environmentally Superior Alternative**

The Reduced Height Alternative is the environmentally superior alternative. The Reduced Height Alternative would substantially reduce impacts on visual effects and neighborhood character compared to the project, although not to below a level of significance. Regarding attaining most of the basic project objectives, the Reduced Height Alternative would not fully implement, to the same extent as the project, Project Objective 6 to provide housing and commercial uses in proximity to transit or Project Objective 10 to encourage housing for families (housing with three or more bedrooms) by removing development restrictions, which would allow housing developments to maximize zoned density while facilitating a diverse housing inventory with a range of housing types and prices. This is due to the potential for the height restrictions in the northern, eastern, and southern CP area boundaries to limit the range of dwelling unit sizes that could be constructed in the CP area, which could affect the type of housing available to families and would be inconsistent with the City’s objective of providing housing for a variety of people.

#### **S.5 Summary of Impacts of the Project**

Table S-3, Summary of Significant Environmental Impacts, summarizes the results of the environmental analyses in Chapters 5.0, Environmental Analysis, and 6.0, Cumulative Impacts, of

this SEIR, including the potentially significant environmental impacts of the project and proposed mitigation measures to reduce or avoid these impacts. Chapter 5.0 also includes discussions of proposed policies that would reduce identified impacts, although not to below a level of significance. Chapter 6.0 includes an analysis of cumulative impacts of the project for each issue.

**Table S-3. Summary of Significant Environmental Impacts**

Environmental Issue	Results of Impact Analysis	Mitigation	Impact Level After Mitigation
<b>Section 5.1, Visual Effects and Neighborhood Character</b>			
Issue 1: Scenic Vistas or Views	Implementation of the project would result in the substantial obstruction of a scenic vista or view from a public viewing area as identified in the 2018 Community Plan.	No feasible mitigation available	Significant and unavoidable (direct and cumulative impact)
Issue 2: Neighborhood Character	Implementation of the project would result in a substantial adverse alteration (e.g., bulk, scale, materials, or style) to the existing or planned (adopted) character of the area.	No feasible mitigation available	Significant and unavoidable (direct and cumulative impact)
Issue 3: Distinctive or Landmark Trees	Implementation of the project would not result in the loss of any distinctive or landmark trees or any stand of mature trees.	None required	Less than significant
Issue 4: Landform Alteration	Implementation of the project would not result in a substantial change in the existing landform.	None required	Less than significant
Issue 5: Light or Glare	Implementation of the project would not create substantial light or glare that would adversely affect daytime and nighttime views in the area.	None required	Less than significant

## S.6 Summary of Impacts of the Alternatives Compared to the Project

As shown in Table S-4, Summary of Impacts for Alternatives Compared to the Project, the No Project Alternative (Maintain the Coastal Height Limit), Reduced Height Alternative, and Reduced Density Alternative would reduce significant impacts to visual effects and neighborhood character compared to the project. The Reduced Height Alternative is the environmentally superior alternative.

**Table S-4. Summary of Impacts for Alternatives Compared to the Project**

Impact	Project		Alternatives		
	Without Mitigation	With Mitigation	No Project (Maintain the Coastal Height Limit)	Reduced Height Alternative	Reduced Density Alternative
<b>Visual Effects and Neighborhood Character</b>					
Issue 1: Scenic Vistas or Views	PS	SU (direct and cumulative impact)	<	<	<
Issue 2: Neighborhood Character	PS	SU (direct and cumulative impact)	<	<	<



**Table S-4. Summary of Impacts for Alternatives Compared to the Project**

Impact	Project		Alternatives		
	Without Mitigation	With Mitigation	No Project (Maintain the Coastal Height Limit)	Reduced Height Alternative	Reduced Density Alternative
Issue 3: Distinctive or Landmark Trees	LS	LS	=	=	=
Issue 4: Landform Alteration	LS	LS	=	=	=
Issue 5: Light or Glare	LS	LS	=	=	=

**Notes:** LS = Less than Significant Impact; NI = No Impact; PS = Potentially Significant Impact; SU = Significant and Unavoidable  
 = Impacts would be similar to those of the project.  
 > Impacts would be greater than those of the project.  
 < Impacts would be less than those of the project.

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## Chapter 1.0 Introduction

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This Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) for the Removal of the Midway-Pacific Highway Community Planning Area from the Coastal Height Limit (project) has been prepared on behalf of the City of San Diego (City) in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (California Public Resources Code, Section 21000 et seq.) and the CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15000 et seq.) and in accordance with the City’s Environmental Impact Report Guidelines (EIR Guidelines) (City of San Diego 2005) and the City’s CEQA Significance Determination Thresholds (City of San Diego 2020a).

In 2018, the Midway-Pacific Highway Community Plan Update Revised Final Program Environmental Impact Report (2018 PEIR) was certified. The 2018 PEIR analyzed environmental impacts associated with the 2018 Midway-Pacific Highway Community Plan (2018 Community Plan), including policies and recommendations related to a range of topics included in each section of the 2018 Community Plan, such as multimodal mobility, urban design, environmental conservation, recreation opportunities, neighborhood character, and historic preservation, in accordance with the general goals stated in the 2008 City of San Diego General Plan (General Plan).

Voters in the City of San Diego (City) approved a citizens’ initiative measure in 1972 that generally limited the height of buildings in the City to 30 feet in the Coastal Zone. As defined in the 1972 ballot measure, and now codified in the San Diego Municipal Code (SDMC), the geographic boundaries of the Coastal Zone include the City’s land and water area from the northern City limits south to the border of Mexico, extending seaward to the outer limit of the City’s jurisdiction and inland to Interstate (I-) 5. The Coastal Height Limit has been amended several times by the electorate (SDMC Section 132.0505). The Midway-Pacific Highway Community Planning area (CP area) is within the geographic boundaries of the 1972 ballot measure.

On November 3, 2020, City residents voted in favor of Measure E to amend the SDMC to remove the CP area from the existing 30-foot height limit. Following the vote approval, Save Our Access petitioned the Superior Court of California alleging that the City did not complete the required environmental review for the additional height limit beyond the 2018 PEIR and requested that adequate environmental analysis be prepared and considered, adequate notice and opportunity be given to interested parties, and findings supported by substantial evidence be adopted prior to the removal of the building height limitation. In December 2021, the Superior Court of San Diego County granted the writ of mandate ordering the City to set aside all approvals that submitted a ballot measure to the voters of the City of San Diego.

The proposed amendment to the SDMC to remove the CP area from the existing 30-foot height limit and to allow for additional height beyond 30 feet consistent with existing zoning is referred to herein as the “project.”

## 1.1 SEIR Purpose and Intended Use

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines, Section 15121, the purpose of this SEIR is to provide public agency decision makers and members of the public with adequate information regarding the potential significant effects of the project, possible ways to minimize the significant effects, and reasonable alternatives that would reduce or avoid any identified significant effects. This SEIR is informational in nature and is intended for use by decision makers, Responsible or Trustee Agencies as defined under CEQA, other interested agencies or jurisdictions, and the public.

This SEIR is intended to:

- Supplement the 2018 PEIR and address project modifications, changed circumstances, or new information that was not known and could not have been known with the exercise of reasonable diligence at the time the prior document was certified as required under CEQA Guidelines, Section 15163;
- Address new or substantially more severe significant environmental effects related to proposed project modifications;
- Recommend mitigation measures to avoid or lessen impacts associated with any new or substantially more severe significant environmental effects; and
- Update the impact analysis and mitigation measures where conditions have changed since the certification of the 2018 PEIR.

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, Section 15152, the SEIR will “tier” from the 2018 PEIR. Tiering refers to using the analysis of general matters contained in a broader EIR with later EIRs on narrower projects, incorporating by reference the general discussions from the broader EIR, and concentrating the later EIR solely on the issues specific to the later project. Agencies are encouraged to tier the environmental analyses that they prepare for separate but related projects. This approach can eliminate repetitive discussion of the same issues and focus the later EIR on the actual issues ripe for decision at each level of environmental review. Where an EIR has been prepared and certified for a program, plan, policy, or ordinance, any lead agency for a later project pursuant to or consistent with the program, plan, policy, or ordinance should limit the EIR on the later project to the effects that were not examined as significant effects on the environmental analysis in the prior EIR or are susceptible to substantial reduction or avoidance by the choice of specific revisions in the project. A later EIR shall be required when the Initial Study (IS) or other analysis finds that the later project may cause a significant effect on the environment that was not adequately addressed in the prior EIR.

Per CEQA Guidelines, Section 15162(d), the 2018 PEIR is available for review at <https://www.sandiego.gov/ceqa/final>. The 2018 PEIR is also included as Appendix A of this SEIR.

## **1.2 SEIR Legal Authority**

### **1.2.1 Lead Agency**

The City is the lead agency for the project pursuant to Article 4 (Sections 15050 and 15051) of the CEQA Guidelines. The lead agency, as defined by CEQA Guidelines, Section 15367, is the public agency that has the principal responsibility and authority for carrying out or approving a project. On behalf of the lead agency, the City's Planning Department conducted a preliminary review of the project and decided that an SEIR was required. The analysis and findings in this document reflect the independent, impartial conclusions of the City.

### **1.2.2 Responsible and Trustee Agencies**

State law requires that all EIRs be reviewed by Responsible and Trustee Agencies. A Responsible Agency, defined pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, Section 15381, includes all public agencies other than the lead agency that have discretionary approval power over the project. A Trustee Agency is defined in CEQA Guidelines, Section 15386, as a state agency having jurisdiction by law over natural resources affected by a project that are held in trust for the people of the State of California. Implementation of the project would require subsequent actions or consultation from Responsible or Trustee Agencies. A brief description of some of the primary Responsible or Trustee Agencies that may have an interest in the project is provided below.

#### **1.2.2.1 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has jurisdiction over development in or affecting the navigable waters of the United States. All permits issued by the USACE are subject to consultation and/or review by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Drainages occurring in the CP area may contain streams and wetlands, which may be classified as jurisdictional waters of the United States. No permits from the USACE are required at this time; however, future development projects, particularly improvements to infrastructure such as water and sewer lines that could occur with implementation of the project, may require review and/or USACE permits in the future.

#### **1.2.2.2 California Department of Transportation**

The CP area is adjacent to California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) facilities, including I-5 and I-8. No permits from Caltrans are required at this time; however, Caltrans' approval would be required for any encroachments or construction of facilities in a Caltrans right-of-way associated with future projects in the CP area.

#### **1.2.2.3 San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board**

The San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) regulates water quality through the federal Clean Water Act Section 401 certification process and oversees the National Pollutant

Discharge Elimination System Permit No. CAS0109266. The RWQCB is responsible for implementing permitting, compliance, and other activities to reduce pollutants in municipal, construction, and industrial stormwater runoff, including overseeing the development and implementation of Water Quality Improvement Plans as required by the Regional Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System Permit for the San Diego region, which includes the City, as well as ensuring that all other Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System Permit requirements are met. No permits from the RWQCB are required at this time; however, future development projects in the CP area may require review and/or Section 401 certifications.

#### **1.2.2.4 San Diego County Regional Airport Authority**

The San Diego County Regional Airport Authority operates the San Diego International Airport (SDIA). The airport authority also serves as the County’s Airport Land Use Commission and is responsible for land use planning as it relates to public safety surrounding the region’s airports. As a Responsible Agency, the San Diego County Regional Airport Authority, acting as the Airport Land Use Commission, would review future development proposals in the CP area and make “consistency determinations” with the provisions and policies set forth in the SDIA Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP) up until the time the Airport Land Use Commission determines that the project is consistent with the SDIA ALUCP. Future development projects in the CP area would be subject to the noise, safety, overflight, and airspace protection policies in the SDIA ALUCP, which also include the Code of Federal Regulations Part 77 requirement to provide notification to the Federal Aviation Administration as addressed in the SDIA ALUCP.

#### **1.2.2.5 San Diego Unified Port District**

The San Diego Unified Port District (District) has jurisdiction over the tidelands and submerged lands within San Diego Bay and maintains and controls those tidelands and submerged lands for public benefit. As a tool to allow the District to regulate its lands, the District adopted a Port Master Plan that provides planning and land policies for the physical development of tidelands and submerged lands. The District has land management authority over the District-owned parcels in the Kettner District south of Vine Street in the southeastern portion of the CP area.

### **1.3 EIR Type, Scope, Content, and Format**

#### **1.3.1 Type of EIR**

This EIR has been prepared as a SEIR as defined in CEQA Guidelines, Section 15163. Accordingly, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, Section 15163, the SEIR need contain only the information necessary to analyze the project modifications, changed circumstances, or new information that triggered the need for additional environmental review. Information and analysis from the 2018 PEIR that is relevant to the analysis of the project modifications is briefly summarized or described rather than repeated.

### 1.3.2 SEIR Scope and Content

The scope of analysis for this SEIR was determined as a result of the IS prepared for the project along with the Notice of Preparation that was publicly noticed and distributed on Friday, March 11, 2022, and the online public scoping meeting that was held on March 23, 2022, via Zoom. The Notice of Preparation and IS, related letters received, and comments made during the scoping meeting are included as Appendix B of this SEIR. Through these scoping activities, the project was determined to have the potential to result in a new significant environmental impact in the following area:

- Visual Effects and Neighborhood Character

The IS determined that all other environmental impact areas analyzed in the 2018 PEIR adequately addressed the project, and no additional analysis is required.

### 1.3.3 SEIR Format

The format and order of contents of this SEIR follow the City's EIR Guidelines and the 2018 PEIR. The SEIR's analysis of environmental effects is focused on visual effects and neighborhood character, which was determined through the initial review and public scoping processes to be potentially significant. A brief overview of the various chapters of this SEIR is provided below:

- **Executive Summary (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15123).** Provides a summary of the SEIR, a brief description of the project, identification of areas of controversy, and inclusion of a summary table identifying significant impacts, proposed mitigation measures, and significance of impact after mitigation. A summary of the project alternatives and a comparison of the potential impacts of the alternatives with those of the project are also provided.
- **Chapter 1.0, Introduction.** Contains an overview of the purpose, intended use, legal authority, type, scope, content, format, and process of the SEIR.
- **Chapter 2.0, Environmental Setting (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15125).** Provides a description of the project's regional context, location, and existing physical characteristics and land use in the CP area related to visual effects and neighborhood character. In Chapter 5.0, Environmental Analysis, the environmental setting discussion contained in Chapter 2.0 is referenced to avoid repetition.
- **Chapter 3.0, Project Description (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15124).** Provides a detailed discussion of the project, including background, objectives, key features, and environmental design considerations.
- **Chapter 4.0, Regulatory Framework.** Provides a summary of the applicable state and local environmental laws and requirements relevant to visual effects and neighborhood character.
- **Chapter 5.0, Environmental Analysis (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15126).** Provides a detailed community-specific evaluation of potential environmental impacts related to visual effects and neighborhood character. The analysis begins with a reference to the

environmental setting and regulatory framework provided in Chapters 2.0 and 4.0, respectively, and a statement of specific thresholds used to determine significance of impacts, followed by an evaluation of potential impacts. If significant impacts are identified, feasible mitigation measures to avoid or reduce any significant impacts are identified. Where mitigation measures are required, a statement regarding the significance of the impact after mitigation is provided.

- **Chapter 6.0, Cumulative Impacts (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15130).** Provides a detailed discussion of the project’s incremental effects related to visual effects and neighborhood character. According to CEQA Guidelines, Section 15065, “cumulatively considerable” means the incremental effects of an individual project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effect of past projects, effect of other current projects, and effects of probable future projects as defined in CEQA Guidelines, Section 15130.
- **Chapter 7.0, Other Mandatory Discussion Areas.**
  - **Growth Inducement (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15126.2[e]).** Evaluates the potential influence the project may have on economic or population growth in the CP area, as well as the region, either directly or indirectly.
  - **Effects Found Not to Be Significant (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15128).** Identifies the issues determined in the scoping and preliminary environmental review process not to be significant for the project, and briefly summarizes the basis for these determinations. For the project, it was determined that environmental issues associated with agriculture and forestry resources, air quality, biological resources, energy, geologic conditions, greenhouse gas emissions, health and safety, historical and tribal cultural resources, hydrology and water quality, land use, mineral resources, noise, paleontological resources, population and housing, public services and facilities, public utilities, transportation and circulation, and wildfire would not be significant and, therefore, are summarized in Chapter 7.0.
  - **Significant Unavoidable Environmental Impacts/Significant Irreversible Environmental Changes (CEQA Guidelines, Sections 15126.2[c] and 15126.2[d]).** Provides a summary of any significant unavoidable impacts of the project as detailed in Chapter 5.0. This chapter also describes the potentially significant irreversible changes that may be expected and addresses the use of nonrenewable resources and energy use anticipated during project implementation.
- **Chapter 8.0, Alternatives (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15126.6).** Provides a description of alternatives to the project: No Project Alternative (Maintain the Coastal Height Limit), Reduced Height Alternative, and Reduced Density Alternative.
- **Chapter 9.0, References (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15150).** Lists the reference materials cited in the SEIR.



- **Chapter 10.0, Individuals and Agencies Consulted (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15129).** Identifies the individuals and agencies consulted during preparation of the SEIR.
- **Chapter 11.0, Certification.** Identifies the agencies, organizations, and individuals responsible for the preparation of the SEIR.

### 1.3.4 Incorporation by Reference

As permitted by CEQA Guidelines, Section 15150, this SEIR has referenced several planning documents, studies, and reports. Information from these documents has been briefly summarized in this SEIR, and their relationship to this SEIR is described. These documents are included in Chapter 9.0, hereby incorporated by reference, and available for review at the City of San Diego, Planning Department, located at 9485 Aero Drive, San Diego, California 92123. The following are included in the list of materials incorporated by reference in this SEIR:

- City of San Diego General Plan (City of San Diego 2008)
- City of San Diego Final PEIR for the Draft General Plan (City of San Diego 2007)
- City of San Diego General Plan Housing Element 2021–2029 (City of San Diego 2021)
- SDMC (City of San Diego 2022)
- City of San Diego Climate Action Plan (City of San Diego 2015)
- 2018 PEIR (Appendix A)
- Final PEIR for Complete Communities: Housing Solutions and Mobility Choices (City of San Diego 2020b)
- Complete Communities: Housing Solutions and Mobility Choices (City of San Diego 2020c, 2022 [SDMC Chapter 14, Article 3, Division 11])

## 1.4 SEIR Process

The City, as the lead agency, is responsible for the preparation and review of this SEIR. The SEIR review process occurs in two basic stages. The first stage is the Draft SEIR, which offers the public the opportunity to comment on the document, and the second stage is the Final SEIR.

### 1.4.1 Draft SEIR

In accordance with SDMC Section 128.0306 and CEQA Guidelines, Section 15105, the Draft SEIR is distributed for review to the public and interested and affected agencies for a review period of 45 days. The purpose of the review period is to allow the public an opportunity to provide comments “on the sufficiency of the document in identifying and analyzing the possible impacts on the environment and ways in which the significant effects of the project might be avoided or mitigated” (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15204).

The Draft SEIR and related technical studies are available for review during the public review period at the City of San Diego, Planning Department, located at 9485 Aero Drive, San Diego, California 92123, and on the City's CEQA website: <https://www.sandiego.gov/ceqa/draft>.

The 2018 Community Plan can be viewed on the City's Planning Department website: <https://www.sandiego.gov/planning/community/profiles/midwaypacifichwy/plan>.

#### **1.4.2 Final SEIR**

Following the end of the public review period, the City, as the lead agency, will provide written responses to comments received on the Draft SEIR per CEQA Guidelines, Section 15088. All comments and responses will be considered in the review of the SEIR. Detailed responses to the comments received during public review, a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, Findings of Fact, and a Statement of Overriding Considerations for impacts identified in the SEIR as significant and unavoidable will be prepared and compiled as part of the SEIR finalization process. The Final SEIR will address any revisions to the Draft SEIR made in response to public or public agency comments. The culmination of this process is a public hearing where the City Council will determine whether to certify the Final SEIR, which includes adoption of the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, Findings of Fact, and Statement of Overriding Considerations, as being complete and in accordance with CEQA. The Final SEIR will be available for public review at least 10 days before the City Council public hearing to provide commenters the opportunity to review the written responses to their comment letters.

## Chapter 2.0 Environmental Setting

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This chapter discusses the Midway-Pacific Highway Community Planning Area's (CP area's) environmental setting from the 2018 Midway-Pacific Highway Community Plan Update Revised Final Program Environmental Impact Report (2018 PEIR) included as Appendix A of this Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (SEIR). Please refer to Chapter 2.0, Environmental Setting, of the 2018 PEIR (Appendix A) for a discussion of the environmental setting applicable to the Removal of the Midway-Pacific Highway Community Planning Area from the Coastal Height Limit (project).

### 2.1 Regional Location

The CP area is in west-central City of San Diego (City), north of the San Diego International Airport (SDIA), and south of Mission Bay as shown on Figure 2-1, Regional Location. Historically, the CP area was an area of tidal marshes and flats where the San Diego River flowed alternately into San Diego Bay and Mission Bay. Early attempts at developing the CP area were impeded by these swamp-like conditions. Eventually, the San Diego River mouth was channelized to flow into the Pacific Ocean between the two bays. Development of the area was based largely around regional transportation improvements including railways and highways, military development, and aviation.

Major transportation corridors traverse the community, connecting the CP area to Downtown San Diego and other communities in the City and region. These include Pacific Highway, which runs through the CP area from north to south; Interstate (I-) 5, which runs along the eastern boundary of the CP area; and I-8, which runs along the northern boundary. In addition, the CP area is traversed by several major streets: Sports Arena Boulevard and Midway Drive run northwest–southeast across the CP area and intersect with Camino del Rio West and Rosecrans Street, which run southwest–northeast, and Barnett Avenue and Lytton Street connect Rosecrans Street to Pacific Highway and serve as a dividing line between the CP area and the Marine Corps Recruit Depot (MCRD) to the southwest.

### 2.2 Project Location

The CP area encompasses roughly 1,324 acres of relatively flat area and is in west-central City of San Diego, north of the SDIA, south of Mission Bay Park, and between the northern end of the Peninsula Community Plan area to the west and the Old Town San Diego Community Plan area to the east as shown on Figure 2-2, Project Location. The community is composed of three main elements: the Midway area, which consists mainly of an urbanized commercial core; the narrow Pacific Highway corridor, which runs along I-5 from the southern end of the Midway area south to Laurel Street; and the MCRD. The San Diego River functions as the northern boundary of the CP area. The SDIA provides the southern boundary for the MCRD and the western boundary for the Pacific Highway corridor. I-5 forms the eastern boundary of the CP area. A portion of the Pacific

Highway corridor is within the Coastal Zone and subject to the California Coastal Act as implemented by the Midway-Pacific Highway Local Coastal Program and zoning regulations (Figure 2-3, Local Coastal Zone).

The CP area is urbanized and generally characterized as a mix of commercial and industrial areas, with some residential areas, as shown on Figure 2-4, Existing Land Uses. Approximately 1,009 acres, or 76 percent, of the CP area is within a Transit Priority Area, defined as an area within one-half mile of a major transit stop that is existing or planned (see Figure 2-5, CP Area Transit Priority Areas). The CP area's overall physical structure reflects its geography and historical development patterns. The CP area is divided into several districts and villages that have been identified in the adopted 2018 Midway-Pacific Highway Community Plan (2018 Community Plan) as opportunities for infill development and larger scale sites with a mix of cohesive land uses. Historically, development in the CP area has been heavily associated with and influenced by aviation and military-related industries. Following World War II, the area was bisected from the Uptown Community Plan area and Old Town Community Plan area by the development of I-5. Automobile-oriented development patterns along with relaxed urban design requirements and the reuse of former federal property resulted in superblocks and a lack of uniformity in the built environment throughout the CP area.

## **2.3 Existing Visual Effects and Neighborhood Character**

This section provides a summary of the existing visual effects and neighborhood character of the CP area. Refer to Section 2.3.8 of the 2018 PEIR for a complete discussion of the environmental setting for visual effects and neighborhood character (Appendix A).

### **2.3.1 Existing Context**

The Midway area consists of an urbanized commercial core with neighborhood, community, and region-serving retail centers; limited stay and business motels; institutional facilities; and military installations. The area is made up of wide streets, flat topography, and a mixture of large and small commercial buildings. Residential buildings are concentrated in a portion of the Midway area northwest of Rosecrans Street, near Lytton Street. Several large multi-family complexes are throughout the CP area. Commercial development in the CP area is mostly concentrated in the Midway area.

The Pacific Highway corridor contains predominantly older industrial buildings. The buildings are large-scale, with a group of smaller-scale industrial buildings in the northern portion of the corridor. The southern portion contains unscreened airport serving parking lots and parking structures. The Pacific Highway corridor and northeastern portion of the Midway area include mainly multi-use warehouses and light-manufacturing building. The street system does not have a consistent grid pattern throughout the CP area.

The San Diego Sports Arena, now known as Pechanga Arena, opened in 1966 as a sports and concert venue along Sports Arena Boulevard. The arena quickly became a focal point in the community and spurred the surge of restaurants that opened in the surrounding area.

Since the approval of the 1972 citizens' initiative measure, height in the CP area has generally been restricted by the 30-foot Coastal Height Limit Overlay Zone (Figure 2-6, Coastal Height Limit Overlay Zone).

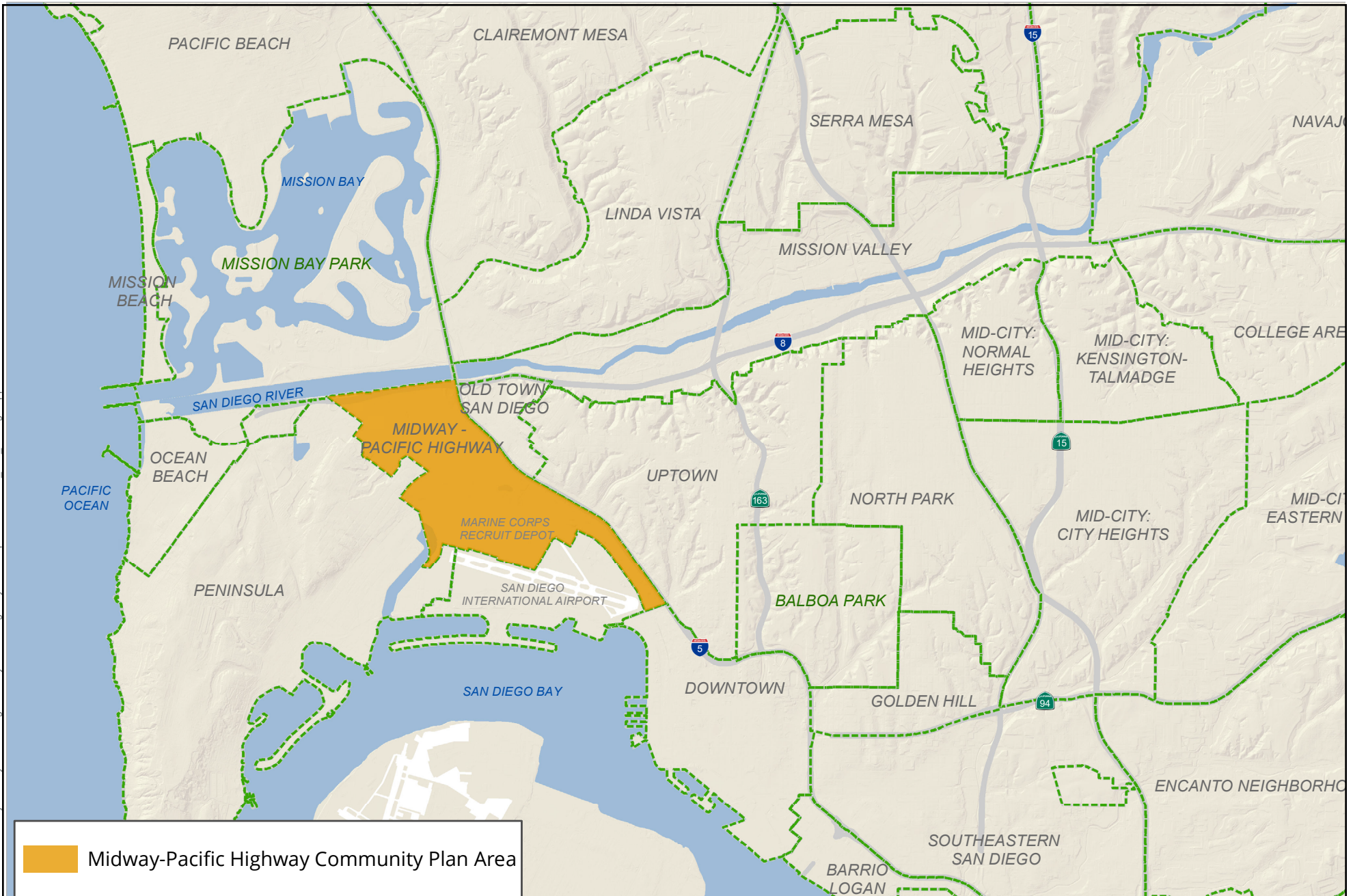
The lack of urban design requirements and haphazard development patterns have created an inconsistent visual character throughout the community.

### **2.3.2 Views and Vistas**

Due to its relatively flat, low-lying topography, the CP area does not have prominent view corridors and does not contain any designated scenic vistas.

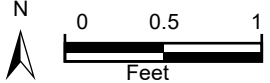
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 Midway-Pacific Highway Community Plan Area

Source: City of San Diego 2022.



**Figure 2-1**  
Regional Location

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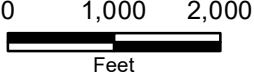




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CP Area

Source: SanGIS Imagery 2017.

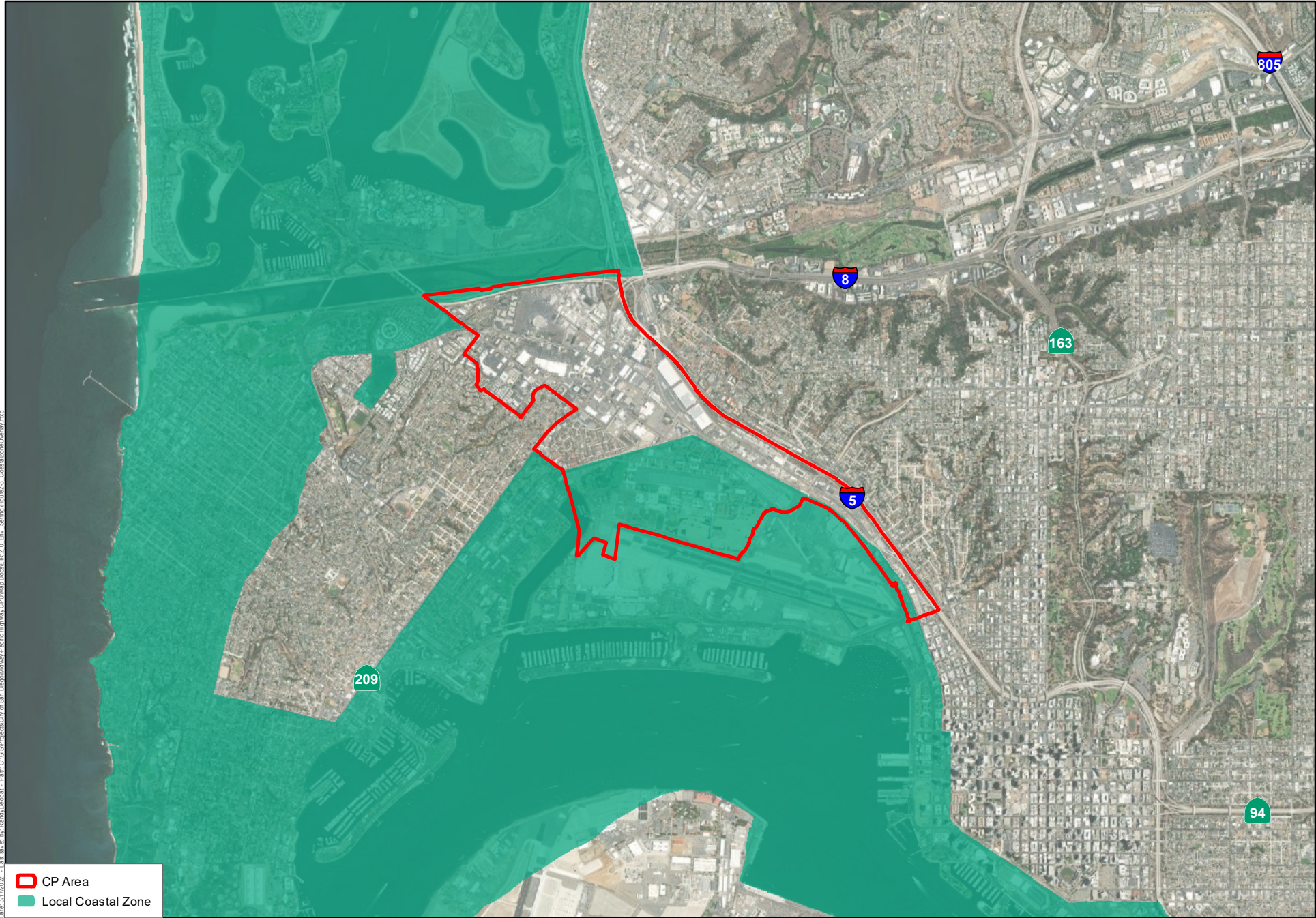


**Figure 2-2**

Project Location

Removal of the Midway-Pacific Highway Community Planning Area from the Coastal Height Limit

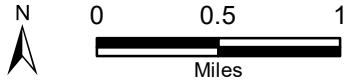
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▭ CP Area  
▭ Local Coastal Zone

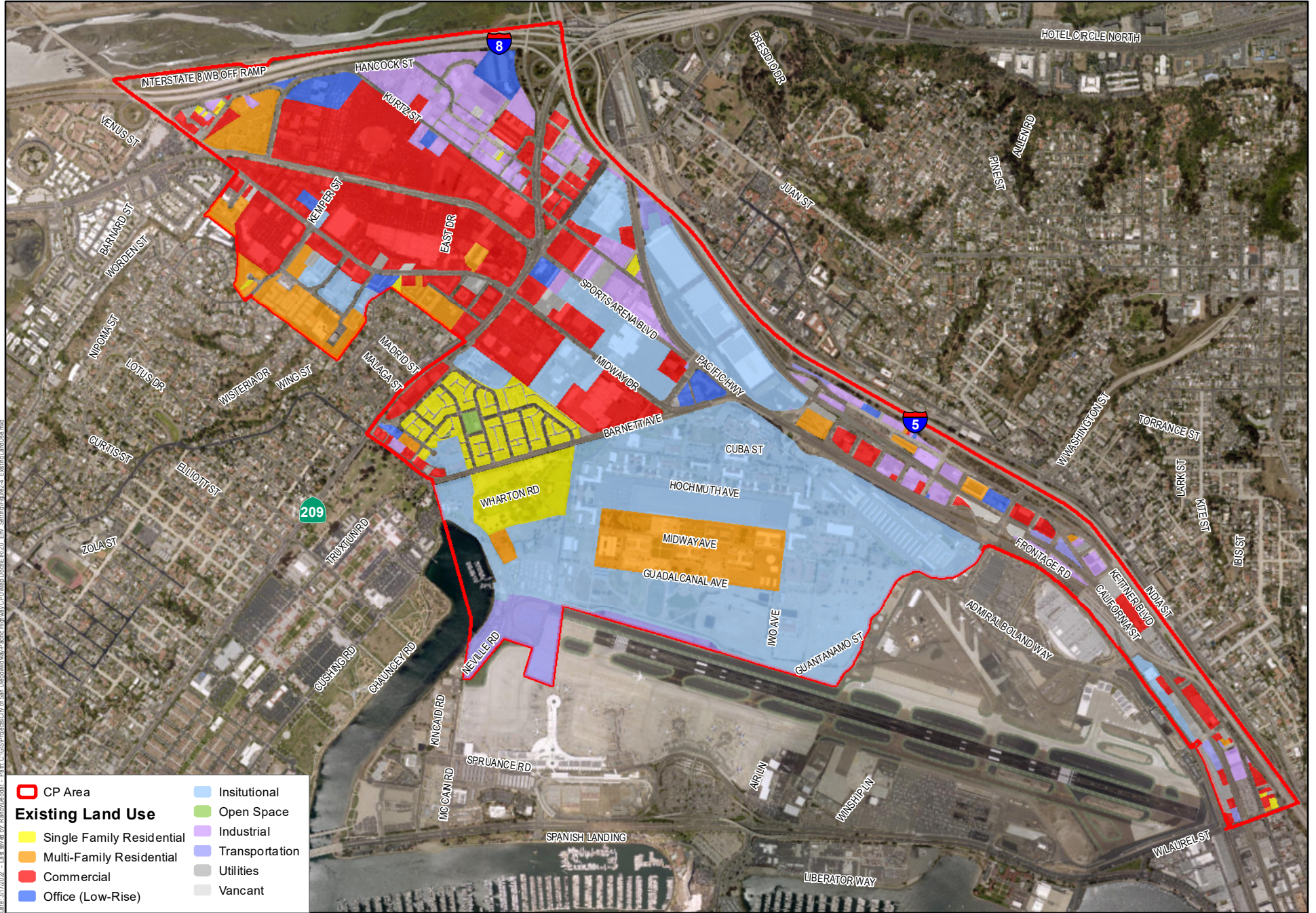
Source: SanGIS 2022; Maxar Imagery 2021.



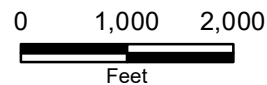
**Figure 2-3**  
Local Coastal Zone

Removal of the Midway-Pacific Highway Community Planning Area from the Coastal Height Limit

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Source: SanGIS 2022; SanGIS Imagery 2017.



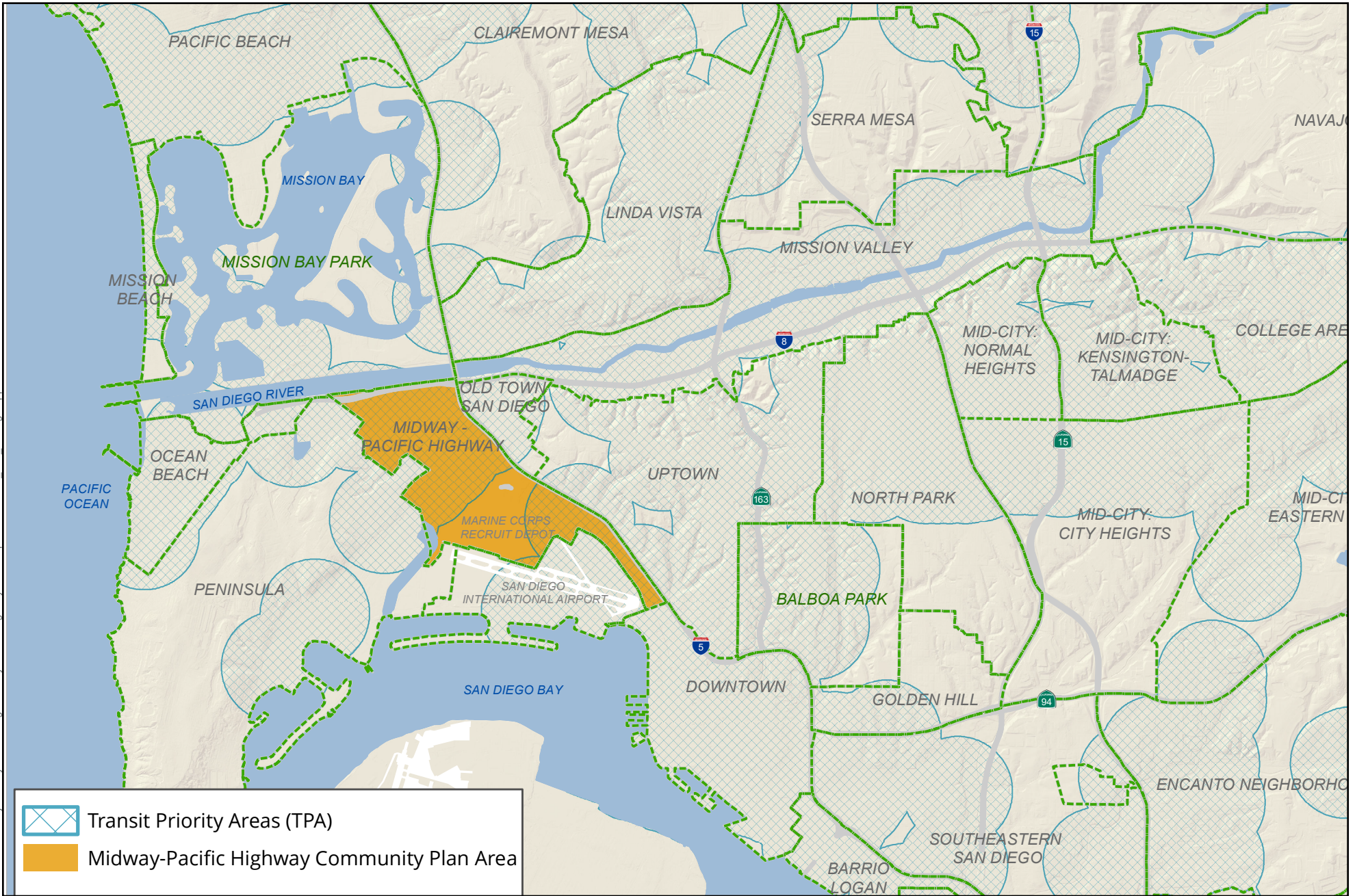
**Figure 2-4**

Existing Land Uses

Removal of the Midway-Pacific Highway Community Planning Area from the Coastal Height Limit

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Source: City of San Diego 2022.

 **Harris & Associates**

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**Figure 2-5**  
CP Area Transit Priority Areas

Removal of the Midway-Pacific Highway Community Planning Area from the Coastal Height Limit

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Source: City of San Diego 2022; SanGIS Imagery 2017.

**Figure 2-6**

**Coastal Height Limit Overlay Zone**

Removal of the Midway-Pacific Highway Community Planning Area from the Coastal Height Limit

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## Chapter 3.0 Project Description

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### 3.1 Introduction

This Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) examines the potential environmental effects of the Removal of the Midway-Pacific Highway Community Planning Area from the Coastal Height Limit (project). The project would amend the 1972 citizens' initiative, Proposition D, currently codified in the San Diego Municipal Code (SDMC) to remove the Midway-Pacific Highway Community Planning area (CP area) from the existing 30-foot height limit on buildings. The project may result in new significant environmental impacts to visual effects and neighborhood character from implementation of the project, and pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, Section 15060(d), this SEIR has been prepared.

The 2018 Midway-Pacific Highway Community Plan Update Revised Final Program Environmental Impact Report (2018 PEIR) comprehensively addressed the potential environmental effects of buildout of the 2018 Midway-Pacific Highway Community Plan (2018 Community Plan). This SEIR addresses the removal of the 30-foot Coastal Height Limit Overlay Zone (see Figure 2-6, Coastal Height Limit Overlay Zone) in the CP area. The project would not change the underlying base zone regulations, including the base zone's height limit in the CP area.

### 3.2 Relationship to the General Plan

The 2008 City of San Diego General Plan Update (General Plan) provided the City of San Diego (City)-wide vision and comprehensive policy framework for how the City should grow and develop, provide public services, and maintain the qualities that define the City as a whole. It did not change the land use designations or zoning on individual properties throughout the City but rather provided policy direction for future Community Plan Updates, discretionary project review, and implementation programs.

The 2018 Community Plan was built on the goals and strategies in the 2008 General Plan and was intended to further express General Plan policies through the provision of site-specific recommendations and policies that implement Citywide goals and policies at the Community Plan level, address community needs, and guide zoning. The 2008 General Plan and 2018 Community Plan work together to establish the policy framework for growth and development in the CP area.

### 3.3 Project Objectives

The following specific objectives were certified as part of the 2018 PEIR for the 2018 Community Plan. These objectives have been carried forward to support the purpose of the project. The primary objectives of the project are as follows:

1. Establish multiple-use villages and districts within the community;
2. Enhance community identity and visual character through land use and urban design;

3. Create a complete mobility system that promotes access for pedestrians, bicycles, and transit, including within existing superblocks;
4. Create a Bay-to-Bay pedestrian and bicycle linkage (replacing the Bay-to-Bay canal concept);
5. Identify park and recreation facilities to serve the community;
6. Provide housing and commercial uses in proximity to transit;
7. Maintain employment uses including industrial, business park, and commercial office uses to support the City’s economy;
8. Improve localized water quality and conveyance through facility improvements and design; and
9. Identify future alternative uses for government-owned land in the community.

Since the certification of the 2018 PEIR, the City has adopted a new Strategic Plan, which includes the goal to “create homes for all of us.” To that end, an additional objective for the project is as follows:

10. Encourage housing for families (housing with three or more bedrooms) by removing development restrictions, which would allow housing developments to maximize zoned density while facilitating a diverse housing inventory with a range of housing types and prices.

### **3.4 Project Description**

The CP area is an urbanized community that encompasses approximately 1,324 acres of relatively flat land and is in west-central City of San Diego, north of the San Diego International Airport (SDIA), south of Mission Bay Park, and between the northern end of the Peninsula Community Plan area to the west and the Old Town Community Plan and Uptown Community Plan areas to the east. The CP area is composed of three sub-areas: the Midway area, the Pacific Highway corridor, and the Marine Corps Recruit Depot (MCRD). A portion of the Pacific Highway corridor is within the Coastal Zone and subject to the California Coastal Act as implemented by the Midway-Pacific Highway Local Coastal Program and zoning regulations. The CP area is urbanized and generally characterized as a mix of commercial and industrial areas with some residential areas. Most of the CP area is within a Transit Priority Area as shown on Figure 2-5, CP Area Transit Priority Areas.

The project is a proposed ballot measure that would amend the previous citizens’ initiative, Proposition D, currently codified in the SDMC, to remove the CP area from the existing 30-foot height limit on buildings constructed in the Coastal Height Limit Overlay Zone (see Figure 2-6). As discussed in Chapter 1.0, Introduction, the existing height limit was approved in 1972 by a citizens’ initiative measure that generally limited the height of buildings to 30 feet in the Coastal Height Limit Overlay Zone. Voters adopted the original language and, thus, are asked in this measure to consider an amendment to the law to remove the CP area from the height limitation. If approved by a majority

vote of qualified voters, the ballot measure would amend the law in the SDMC to remove the height limit in the area defined as the CP area, which would allow for additional height as shown on Figure 3-1, Maximum Allowable Building Height. The amendment would take effect after the results of the election are certified in a City Council resolution. The project would not change the underlying base zone regulations, including the base zone’s height limit.

The project would not approve any specific development. Any proposed future development must comply with all governing laws. Building height would still be regulated by zoning laws in the SDMC.

### 3.4.1 Areas with Maximum Height Limits

The project proposes the removal of the 30-foot maximum height limit for buildings in the CP area. The CP area is divided into several districts, villages, and areas that have been identified in the 2018 Community Plan as opportunities for infill development and larger scale sites with a mix of cohesive land uses. A brief summary of each district, village, and area is provided below, and the districts, villages, and areas are further described in Section 3.4.1.1, Land Use, Villages, and Districts Element, of the 2018 PEIR (Appendix A). With the removal of this height restriction, each district, village, and area in the CP area would be regulated by the zoning designation maximum height allowed in the SDMC, which range from 30 to 100 feet in the CP area or higher in areas with no height limit. As noted in Table 3-1, CP Area Maximum Height Limits, four zones do not have a designated height limit. For these locations, overall building mass, including height, would be limited by allowable floor area ratio and setback standards, as well as other regulating documents, such as the SDIA’s Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan, as applicable. The districts, villages, and areas with their associated height limits in the CP area, as outlined in the SDMC, are shown in Table 3-1. Refer to Figure 3-1, which shows the building height limits in each district, village, and area according to the SDMC.

**Table 3-1. CP Area Maximum Height Limits**

Village, District, or Area	Zoning Designation <sup>1</sup>	Maximum Height Limit per the SDMC
Sports Arena Community Village	CC-3-6	65 feet
	RM-3-8	50 feet
Kemper Neighborhood Village	RM-2-5	40 feet
	RM-3-8	50 feet
	CC-1-3	45 feet
	CC-3-6	65 feet
Dutch Flats Urban Village <sup>2</sup>	CO-3-1	50 feet
	CC-3-6	65 feet
	RM-3-8	50 feet

**Table 3-1. CP Area Maximum Height Limits**

Village, District, or Area	Zoning Designation <sup>1</sup>	Maximum Height Limit per the SDMC
Camino Del Rio District	CC-1-3	45 feet
	CC-3-1	50 feet
	CC-3-8	100 feet
Channel District	RM-3-8	50 feet
	CC-3-6	65 feet
	CC-4-5	No Limit
Rosecrans District	CC-1-3	45 feet
	CC-3-6	65 feet
	RM-3-8	50 feet
Cauby District	CC-1-3	45 feet
	CC-3-7	65 feet
	RM-3-8	50 feet
Lytton District	CN-1-6	65 feet
	RM-1-1	30 feet
	RM-3-8	50 feet
Kurtz District <sup>2</sup>	CO-3-1	50 feet
	CC-2-5	100 feet
	CC-3-8	100 feet
	IP-2-1	No limit
Hancock Transit Corridor	CC-2-5	100 feet
	CC-3-8	100 feet
	RM-3-9	60 feet
	CC-3-9	No limit
	RM-4-10	No limit
Kettner District	CC-3-8	100 feet
	IS-1-1	No limit <sup>3</sup>
MCRD <sup>4</sup>	None	None

**Source:** City of San Diego 2018, 2022.

**Notes:** MCRD = Marine Corps Recruit Depot; SDMC = San Diego Municipal Code

<sup>1</sup> CC = Commercial – Community; CN = Commercial-Neighborhood; CO = Commercial-Office; IP = Industrial – Park; IS = Industrial – Small Scale; RM = Residential-Multifamily

<sup>2</sup> Includes Naval Base Point Loma, which does not have a zoned height limit. The highest intensity scenario (Alternative 4) identified under the Navy Old Town Campus Revitalization Project Environmental Impact Statement proposes buildings of up to 350 feet in height. The Coastal Height Limit does not apply to federal, state, or San Diego Unified Port District (Port) property, and the City has no land use authority over federal property (i.e., Naval Base Point Loma).

<sup>3</sup> Includes Port-owned lands regulated by the Port Master Plan, which requires that structures shall not exceed 130 feet in height. The Coastal Height Limit does not apply to federal, state, or Port property, and the City has no land use authority over Port property.

<sup>4</sup> The MCRD does not have a zoning designation; therefore, there is no height limit governing this area. The Coastal Height Limit does not apply to federal, state, or Port property, and the City has no land use authority over federal property (i.e., the MCRD).

The following discussion briefly describes what is envisioned for the districts, villages, and areas as depicted in the 2018 Community Plan (Figure 3-2, CP Area Districts and Villages).

**Sports Arena Community Village.** The Sports Arena Community Village would incorporate a mix of entertainment, office, retail, residential, public, and park uses. New uses can be integrated around the existing Pechanga Arena building or a new arena or other entertainment attraction. A network of public and private streets and pedestrian and bicycle connections would break up the superblock to create a walkable block pattern for development while improving public north-south vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle access.

**Kemper Neighborhood Village.** The Kemper Neighborhood Village would be a pedestrian-oriented mixed-use neighborhood incorporating office, visitor, retail, residential, and institutional uses in the San Diego Community College District's Continuing Education Center as the focal point.

**Dutch Flats Urban Village.** The Dutch Flats Urban Village is envisioned as an employment- and residential-focused urban village including office uses and innovation space to support and complement the Naval Base Point Loma properties and provide opportunities for defense-related research and development and other base sector industries to establish business locations in proximity to transit, Downtown San Diego, and the SDIA.

**Camino Del Rio District.** The Camino Del Rio District would include a mix of urban residential uses and small and mid-size businesses throughout the district with retail and visitor commercial uses along Camino del Rio West and Rosecrans Street. The western portion of the district includes areas designated for business park use to support flex space and residential uses.

**Channel District.** The Channel District at the northern end of the CP area directly south of the San Diego River would be a residential-oriented area with complementary visitor and office commercial uses. The creation of a pedestrian and bicycle linkage along Sports Arena Boulevard would serve as a community gateway to the San Diego River Park and Mission Bay Park.

**Rosecrans District.** The Rosecrans District would be a pedestrian-oriented commercial area. Large-format retail uses would be retained while incorporating infrastructure that provides improved pedestrian and bicycle access and smaller infill pedestrian-oriented retail spaces fronting Rosecrans Street, Midway Drive, and Sports Arena Boulevard.

**Cauby District.** The Cauby District would be a pedestrian-oriented residential and commercial district with pedestrian-oriented commercial uses along Midway Drive and Rosecrans Street. The creation of a pedestrian and bicycle multi-use path along Midway Drive would connect Mission Bay Park and the San Diego River Park to the San Diego Bay.

**Lytton District.** The Lytton District would be a residential-oriented district with mixed-use residential and neighborhood-serving commercial uses along Lytton Street and Rosecrans Street. Gateway Village, which comprises the majority of the district, provides housing for military families, and the Loma Theatre on Rosecrans Street serves as a community icon and gateway landmark. The district

would include the creation of pedestrian and bicycle linkages to Naval Training Center Park at Liberty Station and the San Diego Bay along Lytton Street, Barnett Avenue, and Rosecrans Street.

**Kurtz District.** The Kurtz District would be an employment area with military, institutional, office, research and development, and complementary residential uses that support and complement Naval Base Point Loma properties in the district. Infrastructure and design improvements along Rosecrans Street and Pacific Highway would enhance the pedestrian and bicycle environment and the links to Old Town San Diego State Historic Park and Downtown San Diego.

**Hancock Transit Corridor.** The Hancock Transit Corridor would be a multi- and mixed-use corridor connected to the Washington Street Trolley Station and the historic Mission Brewery, with a diverse mix of residential, office, and retail uses. Pacific Highway would be transformed into a linear gateway providing an enhanced pedestrian and bicycle connection between Old Town San Diego State Historic Park, Midway-Pacific Highway, and Downtown San Diego.

**Kettner District.** The Kettner District would include a mix of residential, visitor, office, and commercial uses that benefit from access to transit at the Middletown Station and the SDIA Intermodal Transit Center (ITC), the SDIA, and Downtown San Diego. The San Diego Association of Governments is proposing the ITC as a major transit and passenger rail hub to serve the SDIA. The ITC would provide a focal point for the district complemented by an enhanced pedestrian and bicycle environment and streetscape along Pacific Highway and Kettner Boulevard. This district would also include several San Diego Unified Port District-owned properties along the western side.

**MCRD.** The MCRD would remain as an active military installation and an iconic landmark of the City's military history. The 2018 Community Plan included the MCRD area to identify and maintain its land use importance for national defense.

### 3.5 Summary of Previous Environmental Design Considerations

Several environmental design considerations, beyond compliance with mandatory existing regulations, were incorporated into the 2018 Community Plan and 2018 PEIR as recommendations within policies to avoid or reduce environmental impacts.

The 2018 PEIR included sustainable design considerations that impacted several elements of the 2018 Community Plan, such as building concepts and practices, transportation systems, recreation and conservation, water and air quality, housing, land use, and landscape designs. By incorporating sustainable concepts and practices into these elements, the 2018 Community Plan was able to implement these policies to reduce or avoid potential environmental effects associated with water and energy consumption, consumption of non-renewable or slowly renewing resources, and urban runoff. The 2018 Community Plan addressed the future of the community's public transportation by proposing sustainable practices and policies within existing urbanized areas with established public transportation infrastructures to reduce vehicle trips and miles traveled. Implementation of



the policies in the 2018 Community Plan elements strived to promote development of a balanced, multimodal transportation network to better pedestrian and bicycle facilities and improve pedestrian and bicycle connections between villages, districts, areas, and transit. The 2018 Community Plan also contained policies aimed at creating an accessible and sustainable park system that meets the needs of the community’s residents and visitors. The 2018 Community Plan’s multi-use path and bicycle networks not only enhance pedestrian and multimodal mobility but also reduce impacts related to traffic and circulation and air quality.

The 2018 Community Plan Conservation Element included policies to reduce impacts on air quality and climate change by considering siting, design, and construction of air pollution sources and other sensitive receptors during residential developments. The 2018 Community Plan also included policies that would support clean and renewable energy, urban forestry, and urban agriculture, as well as programs that promoted green streets, landscaping, and stormwater management practices in the Conservation Element. The project would carry forward and implement the policies identified in the 2018 Community Plan.

### **3.6 Scope of the Project**

The project would be limited to the CP area footprint and land use, density, and zoning previously analyzed in the 2018 PEIR. The removal of the 30-foot height restriction on buildings in the CP area would not change the underlying base zone regulations, including the base zone’s height limit. Therefore, this SEIR discusses the maximum heights allowed in the CP area per the zoning standards in the SDMC and through the allowable floor area ratio and setback standards, as applicable, and by other regulating documents after removal of the 30-foot height limit.

### **3.7 Future Actions Associated with the 2018 Community Plan and the Project**

Due to the lack of site-specific development proposals associated with the project, site-specific environmental analyses of future development anticipated in the CP area were not undertaken in this SEIR and the 2018 PEIR. However, the analysis anticipates that future development would occur in the CP area and would be subject to applicable development regulations and requirements of the CP area, this SEIR, and the 2018 PEIR. Future development in the CP area would involve subsequent approval of public and private development proposals through both ministerial and discretionary reviews in accordance with zoning and development regulations and the 2018 Community Plan policies. These subsequent activities may be public (i.e., road/streetscape improvements, parks, and public facilities) or private projects and are referred to as “future development” or “future projects” in the SEIR. A non-inclusive list of discretionary actions that would occur is listed in Table 3-7, Potential Future Discretionary Actions Associated with the Proposed CPU, in the 2018 PEIR. Table 3-2, Potential Future Discretionary Actions, identifies a list of additional discretionary actions that would occur with the implementation of the project.

**Table 3-2. Potential Future Discretionary Actions**

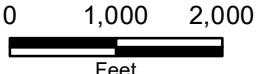
Discretionary Action	Agency
Certification of Final SEIR	City of San Diego
Adoption of Findings of Fact	City of San Diego
Adoption of Statement of Overriding Considerations	City of San Diego
Approval of the Ballot Measure	City of San Diego

**Notes:** SEIR = Supplemental Environmental Impact Report



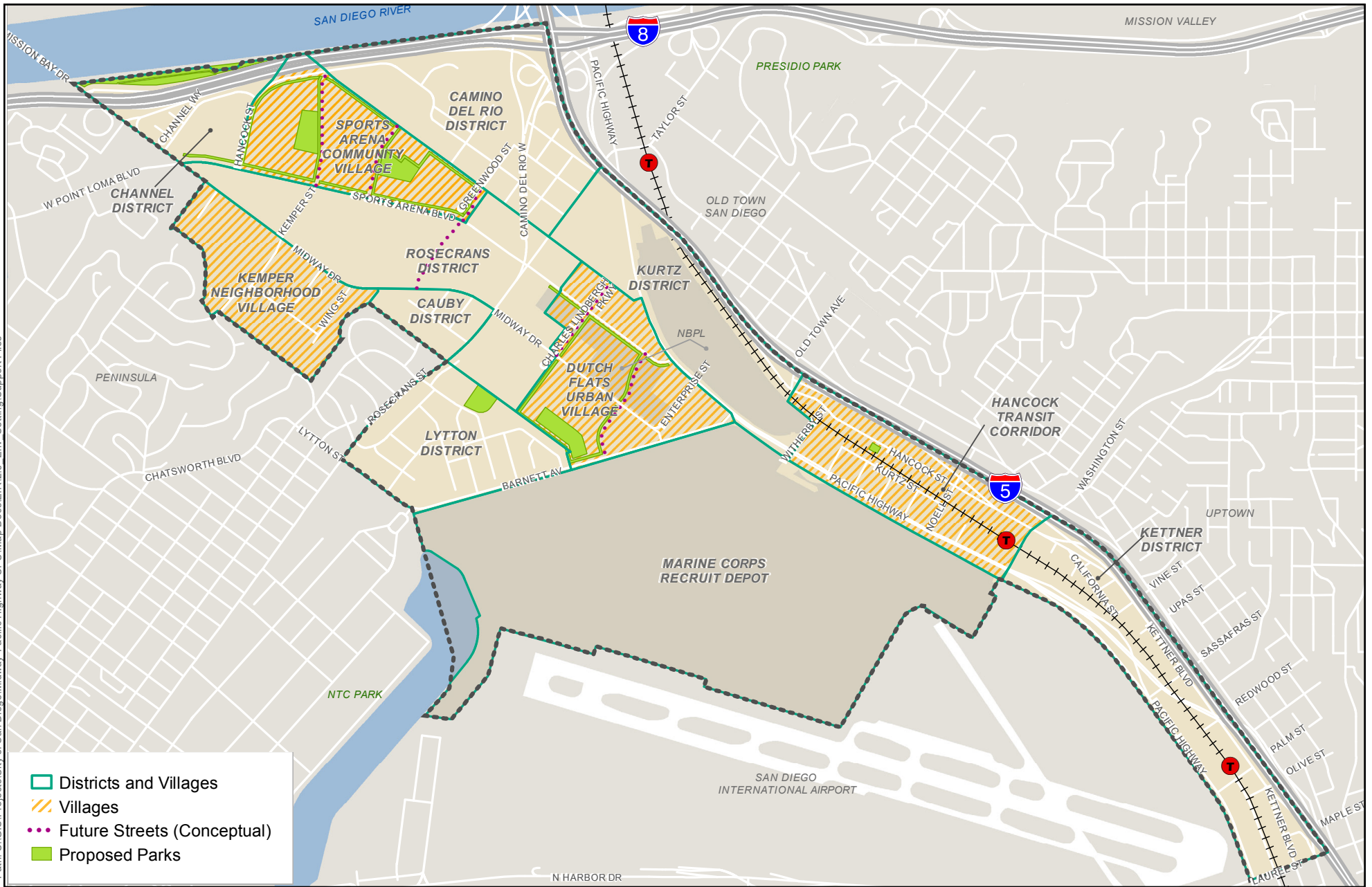
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Source: City of San Diego 2022; SanGIS Imagery 2017.

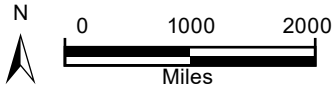


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Source: SanGIS 2021.



**Figure 3-2**  
CP Area Districts and Villages

Removal of the Midway-Pacific Highway Community Planning Area from the Coastal Height Limit

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## Chapter 4.0 Regulatory Framework

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This chapter includes the regulatory framework applicable to visual effects and neighborhood character addressed in Section 5.1, Visual Effects and Neighborhood Character, in Chapter 5.0, Environmental Analysis, of this Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (SEIR). Please refer to Chapter 4.0, Regulatory Framework, of the 2018 Midway-Pacific Highway Community Plan Update Revised Final Program Environmental Impact Report (2018 PEIR) (Appendix A) for a discussion of the regulatory framework applicable to other environmental topics addressed in the 2018 PEIR.

### 4.1 Visual Effects and Neighborhood Character

#### 4.1.1 State Regulations

##### 4.1.1.1 California Scenic Highway Program

Recognizing the value of scenic areas and views from roads in such scenic areas, the California Legislature established the California Scenic Highway Program in 1963. This legislation (Senate Bill [SB] 1467 [Farr]) sees scenic highways as “a vital part of the all-encompassing effort . . . to protect and enhance California’s beauty, amenity and quality of life.” Under this program, a number of state highways have been designated as eligible for inclusion as scenic routes. The 1-mile portion of State Route 163, known as the Cabrillo Freeway, between the northern and southern boundaries of Balboa Park is an officially designated state scenic highway (not in the Midway-Pacific Highway Community Planning area [CP area]). Portions of Interstate (I-) 8 and I-5 that are eligible state scenic highways, although not officially designated, are not located in or adjacent to the CP area.

##### 4.1.1.2 California State Housing Law Program

The California State Housing Law Program was established to assure the availability of affordable housing and uniform statewide code enforcement to protect the health, safety, and general welfare of the public and occupants of housing and accessory buildings. To fulfill this obligation, the program may propose legislation and regulations. The program oversees the application of state laws, regulations, and code enforcement by a city, county, city and county building, housing, health, and fire department or fire district (HCD 2022).

In the 2021 legislative session, the California Legislature passed a large volume of laws related to housing; some are highlighted below.

#### **Senate Bill 8 (Skinner): Extending Provisions in the Housing Crisis Act**

SB 8 limits a locality’s ability to prolong the housing approval process, gives housing applicants an opportunity to invoke vesting rights against later-adopted changes to local ordinances, limits cities’ ability to impose or enforce housing caps and development moratoria, and requires

developers who demolish existing housing to provide replacement housing and relocation benefits. Many of these provisions were originally due to sunset in 2025. SB 8 extends until 2034 the Housing Crisis Act provision that prohibits cities from conducting more than five hearings on an application, as well as provisions that provide vesting rights for housing projects that submit a qualifying “preliminary application.” Applicants who submit qualifying preliminary applications for housing developments prior to January 1, 2030, can now invoke vesting rights until January 1, 2034. SB 8 extends until 2030 provisions that limit localities’ authority to impose shifting requirements as part of application “completeness” review, as well as provisions that require localities to render any decision on if a site is historic at the time the application for the housing development project is deemed complete. SB 8 enacts a series of reforms intended to provide that Housing Crisis Act provisions apply to both discretionary and ministerial approvals and the construction of a single dwelling unit. The bill also makes a series of revisions to the already complex replacement housing and relocation requirements.

### **Senate Bill 9 (Atkins): Duplexes and Lot Splits**

SB 9 provides for the ministerial approval of converting existing residences occupied by a homeowner into a duplex if certain eligibility restrictions are satisfied. It also allows a single-family residence lot to be split into two lots and a duplex to be built on each lot, provided that the initial residence is occupied by an owner who attests that the owner will continue to live in a unit on the property as their primary residence for at least 3 years. The most notable exceptions to duplex and lot split by right approvals are (1) the property could not have been used as a rental for the past 3 years, (2) the property cannot already have an accessory dwelling unit or junior accessory dwelling unit, (3) the new lot may not be less than 40 percent of the property and must be at least 1,200 square feet, (4) modifications to the existing residence may not require the demolition of more than 25 percent of an exterior wall, and (5) neither the new duplex nor the lot split with up to four new units (a duplex on each) may not result in a significant adverse impact on the physical environment. SB 9 does not address covenants, conditions, or restrictions that may prohibit multi-family development or lot splits.

### **Senate Bill 10 (Wiener): 10-Unit Upzoning**

SB 10 states that, if local agencies choose to adopt an ordinance to allow up to 10 dwelling units on any parcel within a transit-rich area or urban infill site, the rezoning will be exempt from environmental review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), but subsequent project approvals are not necessarily exempt unless the local agency adopts a ministerial approval process or there is another exemption or local law that exempts the project.

### **Senate Bill 290 (Skinner): State Density Bonus Law Amendments**

The State Density Bonus Law grants bonuses, concessions, waivers, and parking reductions to projects with qualifying affordable housing. The law continues to be the most commonly used tool



to increase housing density and production. SB 290 first builds on a 2018 law by Senator Nancy Skinner, SB 1227, providing for density bonuses for projects that included student housing pursuant to the State Density Bonus Law. SB 290 adds the ability to request one concession or incentive for projects that include at least 20 percent of the total units for lower-income students in a student housing development. It also requires the agency to report on student housing projects receiving density bonuses as part of a Housing Element Annual Report.

**Senate Bill 478 (Wiener): Minimum Floor Area Ratio/Lot Coverage Standards and Prohibition on Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions of Floor Area Ratio for Missing Middle Multi-Family Housing**

SB 478 prohibits agencies from imposing a floor area ratio (FAR) of less than 1.0 for a housing development project (comprised solely of residential units, a mixed-use development with at least two-thirds of the square footage attributed to residential uses, or transitional or supportive housing as defined in the Housing Accountability Act) consisting of three to seven units and a FAR of less than 1.25 for housing development projects consisting of eight to 10 units. Additionally, an agency may not deny a housing development project on an existing legal parcel solely on the basis that the lot area does not meet the agency’s requirement for minimum lot size. To qualify, a project must consist of three to 10 units in a multi-family residential zone or mixed-use zone in an urbanized area and cannot be within a single-family zone or within a historic district. SB 478 also makes any private development covenant, condition, or restriction void and unenforceable if it effectively prohibits or unreasonably restricts an eligible FAR as authorized under the new FAR standards and summarized above (and now found in California Government Code, Section 65913.11).

**Assembly Bill 491 (Ward): State Law Requirement for Multi-Family Developments to Integrate Below Market Rate Units and Provide Same Access to Common Areas and Amenities**

Assembly Bill (AB) 491 requires that, for any residential structure with five or more residential dwelling units that include both affordable housing units and market rate housing units, the below market rate units must provide the same access to common entrances, areas, and amenities as non-below market rate units, and the building “shall not isolate the affordable housing units within that structure to a specific floor or an area on a specific floor.”

**Assembly Bill 721 (Bloom): Covenants that Limit Residential Development Rendered Unenforceable Against Affordable Housing Developments**

AB 721 makes recorded covenants that limit residential development unenforceable against qualifying affordable housing developments. The law builds on existing law that allows parties to eliminate unenforceable racially restrictive covenants from recorded documents. It also made any recorded covenants, conditions, and restrictions that restrict the number, size, or location of residences that may be built on a property or that restrict the number of people or families who

may reside on a property, unenforceable against the owner of a 100 percent below market rate housing development that is affordable to lower-income households.

#### **4.1.1.3 Senate Bill 743**

On September 27, 2013, Governor Jerry Brown signed SB 743 into law and started a process intended to fundamentally change transportation impact analyses as part of CEQA compliance. The Governor’s Office of Planning and Research submitted its final recommended Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA to the California Natural Resources Agency in November 2017. These changes include elimination of auto delay, level of service, and other similar measures of vehicular capacity or traffic congestion as a basis for determining significant impacts. The Governor’s Office of Planning and Research guidance covers specific changes to the CEQA Guidelines and recommends elimination of auto delay for CEQA purposes and the use of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) as the preferred CEQA transportation metric. This new legislation requires the selection of a VMT analysis methodology, establishment of VMT thresholds for transportation impacts, and identification of feasible mitigation strategies. SB 743 is intended to ensure that the environmental impacts of traffic, such as noise, air pollution, and safety concerns, continue to be properly addressed and mitigated through CEQA, and to more appropriately balance the needs of congestion management with statewide goals related to infill development, promotion of public health through active transportation, and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

#### **4.1.1.4 California Environmental Quality Act (California Public Resources Code, Section 21099[d][1])**

While the thrust of SB 743 addressed a major overhaul on how transportation impacts are evaluated under CEQA, it also limited the extent to which aesthetics and parking are defined as impacts under CEQA. Specifically, California Public Resources Code, Section 21099(d)(1), states that a project’s aesthetic and parking impacts shall not be considered a significant impact on the environment if:

- The project is a residential, mixed-use residential, or employment center project, and
- The project is located on an infill site within a Transit Priority Area (TPA).

California Public Resources Code, Section 21099(a), defines the following terms:

- “Employment center project” means a project on property zoned for commercial uses with a FAR of no less than 0.75 and that is within a TPA.
- “Infill site” means a lot within an urban area that has been previously developed or on a vacant site where at least 75 percent of the perimeter of the site adjoins or is separated only by an improved public right-of-way from parcels that are developed with qualified urban uses.
- “TPA” means an area within one-half mile of a major transit stop that is existing or planned. California Public Resources Code, Section 21064.3, defines a “major transit stop” as a site

containing an existing rail transit station, a ferry terminal served by either a bus or rail transit, or an intersection of two or more major bus routes with a frequency of service interval of 15 minutes or less during the morning and afternoon peak commute periods.

## **4.1.2 Local Regulations**

### **4.1.2.1 City of San Diego General Plan**

The 2008 City of San Diego General Plan Update (General Plan) includes a Citywide urban design strategy, goals, and policies regarding the physical features that define the character of a neighborhood or community. These goals complement the goals for pedestrian-oriented and walkable villages articulated in the City of Villages strategy.

The General Plan Urban Design Element establishes a set of design principles on which its policies are based and on which future public and private development physical design decisions can be based.

The General Plan Urban Design Element states, “As the availability of vacant land becomes more limited, designing infill development and redevelopment that builds upon our existing communities becomes increasingly important. A compact, efficient, and environmentally sensitive pattern of development becomes increasingly important as the City continues to grow. In addition, future development should accommodate and support existing and planned transit service” (City of San Diego 2008).

The General Plan Urban Design Element policies relevant to planning at the community plan level involve architectural and landscape elements and the design of transit and parking facilities, residential development, mixed-use villages and commercial areas, office and business park development, and public spaces and facilities. Policies call for respecting the City’s natural topography and distinctive neighborhoods, providing public art, and encouraging the development of walkable, transit-oriented communities. The General Plan Urban Design Element also provides policies that help reduce the potential for impacts to public views and addresses the natural environment, preserving open space systems and targeting new growth into compact villages through urban form and design policies. The element contains policies that address development adjacent to natural features and visual impacts to scenic areas or viewsheds.

### **4.1.2.2 Midway-Pacific Highway Community Plan**

An update to the previous 1991 Community Plan was adopted by the San Diego City Council on September 17, 2018. The purpose of the 2018 Midway-Pacific Highway Community Plan (2018 Community Plan) is to establish a vision with policies to guide the future growth and development in the CP area, consistent with the General Plan; provide strategies and implementing actions to accomplish the vision; provide guidance to design and evaluate development proposals and

improvement projects; and provide the basis for plan implementation, including zoning, development regulations, and a public facilities financing plan.

The 2018 Community Plan includes a Land Use, Villages, and Districts Element and an Urban Design Element. The Land Use, Villages, and Districts Element identifies a vision for each district and village, as well as land use designations and policies to achieve this vision. The Urban Design Element addresses the defining features and relationships of buildings, groups of buildings, development sites, public spaces, and public infrastructure in a community.

The 2018 Community Plan Elements provide policies addressing commercial and mixed-use development and residential infill development. These policies are related to street wall articulation, ground level uses, windows, building materials, lighting, signs, corners, architectural projections, rooftop and mechanical screening, public space, public art, street orientation and setbacks, sustainable building design, height and massing, and development transitions. In addition, the Land Use, Villages, and Districts Element includes specific goals and policies for creating distinctive villages and districts. These policies cover vision, uses, mobility, parks, and urban design and public realm.

The following visual policies identified in the Land Use, Villages, and Districts Element apply to the project (City of San Diego 2018a):

- **LU-4.82.** Provide and emphasize physical access to San Diego Bay via Sassafras, Palm, and Laurel Streets, and maintain bay views from the public right-of-way at Kettner Boulevard and Redwood, Palm, and Olive Streets as feasible.
- **LU-4.63.** Support the development of residential and/or office uses at the MTS [San Diego Metropolitan Transit System] storage yard property adjacent to Hancock Street should the property become available for development.
  - a. Incorporate a plaza or pocket park open to the public to provide a view corridor to Bandini Street.

#### **4.1.2.3 City of San Diego Complete Communities: Housing Solutions and Mobility Choices**

The City's Complete Communities: Housing Solutions and Mobility Choices (Complete Communities Program) was adopted by the San Diego City Council on November 9, 2020. The Complete Communities Program focuses on four key areas: housing, mobility, parks, and infrastructure. It includes planning strategies that work together to create incentives to build residences near transit, provide more mobility choices, and enhance opportunities for places to walk, bike, relax, and play. The Complete Communities Program also focuses on locating new development combined with the mobility network to be around transit hubs and existing development to support greenhouse gas emissions reductions (City of San Diego 2020). The

Complete Communities: Housing Solutions is referred to as the “Housing Program,” while the Complete Communities: Mobility Choices is referred to as the “Mobility Choices Program.”

The Housing Program applies Citywide within TPAs in zones that allow multi-family housing. In exchange for new development that provides affordable housing units and neighborhood-serving infrastructure improvements, additional building square footage (and residential units within said building square footage) and height beyond what is otherwise permitted in the respective base zone, Planned District Ordinance, and/or a Community Plan would be allowed (City of San Diego 2020). The majority of the CP area is within a TPA.

The purpose of the Mobility Choices Program is to implement SB 743 by ensuring that new development mitigates transportation impacts based on VMT to the extent feasible while incentivizing development in the City’s urban areas. The Mobility Choices Program aims to provide more mobility options for San Diegans to commute and recreate by streamlining development, such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities, in areas of the City. The Mobility Choices Program supports implementation of an enhanced active transportation network in VMT-efficient areas and implementation of VMT reduction measures to encourage and support the use of the active transportation network. It also identifies several VMT reduction measures required for new development in VMT-efficient areas to offset new VMT impacts (City of San Diego 2020).

#### **4.1.2.4 City of San Diego Parks Master Plan**

On August 3, 2021, the San Diego City Council approved the Citywide Parks Master Plan that replaced the City’s 1956 planning document. The 2021 Parks Master Plan makes a firm commitment to equity by prioritizing funding for park-deficient and historically underserved communities, where park needs are greatest. Based on the 2021 Parks Master Plan, the Famosa Slough State Marine Conservation Area is the only open space resource in the CP area (City of San Diego 2021).

The 2021 Parks Master Plan provides additional recreational opportunities for the public by delivering parks of all types, sizes, and features while emphasizing locations where park space is needed most and serves the greatest number of people. The plan also recognizes the importance of safe and enjoyable access by incorporating biking, walking, or rolling and transit options to easily visit local parks (City of San Diego 2021).

#### **4.1.2.5 Mission Bay Park Master Plan Update**

The 1994 Mission Bay Park Master Plan was amended on June 17, 2019, with the Fiesta Island Amendment. The fundamental goal of the Master Plan Update is to identify new recreational demands and chart a course for the continuing development of Mission Bay Park, which will sustain the diversity and quality of recreation and protect and enhance Mission Bay’s environment for future generations. This Master Plan Update maintains and expands on Mission Bay Park’s

traditional land and water use objectives. The Master Plan Update does not expand dedicate lease areas but promotes the intensification of certain existing leases to maximize their revenue potential. Key environmental recommendations include the establishment of an 80-acre wetland area at the outfall of Rose Creek and the creation of an overflow parking lot in South Shores. If properly designed, the wetland will help filter pollutants entering the bay through Rose Creek, which drains into a 58-square-mile area; provide increased habitat for wildlife along the Pacific Coast Flyway; and provide the setting for nature-oriented recreational activities, such as bird-watching and canoeing (City of San Diego 2019a).

#### **4.1.2.6 Old Town Community Plan**

The Old Town Community Plan was adopted by the San Diego City Council on October 29, 2018. The plan provides a vision with goals and policies to guide the future growth and development in Old Town San Diego consistent with the General Plan. The plan provides strategies and implementing actions to accomplish the vision; guidance to design and evaluate development proposals and improvement projects; basis for implementation, including zoning, development regulations, and a public facilities financing plan; and specific direction for implementing actions that may need to be developed further and/or carried out by the City or another governmental agency (City of San Diego 2018b).

#### **4.1.2.7 Peninsula Community Plan**

The Peninsula Community Plan and Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan (Peninsula Community Plan) was adopted on July 14, 1987, by the San Diego City Council and has undergone several updates since, the most recent of which occurred on May 31, 2011. The plan describes a future community composed of residential, community commercial, commercial recreation, naval-related, and park uses. The Peninsula Community Plan's overall community goals include redeveloping the former Naval Training Center with a mix of uses that complement the Peninsula community, conserving the character of existing single-family neighborhoods, and promoting multi-family infill in areas proximate to transit lines to reduce traffic congestion and airport noise pollution. These goals also include providing housing opportunities for residents of all levels and age groups and promoting the continued development and sensitive redevelopment of a mix of community, visitor, and marine-related commercial land uses in the Roseville commercial district and neighborhood commercial uses in the Voltaire commercial district. In addition, the Peninsula Community Plan's overall community goals include increasing coordination between federal, state, and local government; conserving existing open space, including canyons, hillsides, wetlands, and shorelines; enhancing and protecting physical and visual access to the bay and ocean shoreline; developing a balanced transportation system, including alternatives to the automobile; maintaining and complementing the existing scale, architectural features, and vegetation in the Peninsula area; and providing additional park and recreation facilities (City of San Diego 2011).

#### **4.1.2.8 Uptown Community Plan**

An update to the 1988 Uptown Community Plan was adopted by the San Diego City Council on November 14, 2016, and provided detailed policy direction to implement the General Plan with respect to the distribution and arrangement of land uses, local street and transit network, prioritization of public facilities, community and site-specific urban design guidelines, and recommendations to preserve and enhance natural open space and historical and cultural resources in the Uptown community. On June 12, 2018, the San Diego City Council approved amendments to the 2016 Uptown Community Plan related to restoring residential density associated with the St. Paul's Senior Services site in the Bankers Hill/Park West neighborhood, allowing the community plan land use density to match the higher density allowed in the former Planned District zone in the Hillcrest neighborhood, and establishing a Community Plan Implementation Overlay Zone for the largely residential areas in the areas of the former MR-1500 zone in University Heights (City of San Diego 2019b).

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## Chapter 5.0 Environmental Analysis

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This chapter analyzes the potential environmental impacts that may occur as a result of implementation of the Removal of the Midway-Pacific Highway Community Planning Area from the Coastal Height Limit (project). The environmental issue addressed in this chapter includes the following:

- Visual effects and neighborhood character

Section 5.1, Visual Effects and Neighborhood Character, includes a description of existing conditions (or a reference to Chapter 2.0, Environmental Setting, for existing conditions), the thresholds for the determination of impact significance; an analysis of impact significance, and a mitigation framework for impacts identified as significant.

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## 5.1 Visual Effects and Neighborhood Character

This section addresses the visual effects of the Removal of the Midway-Pacific Highway Community Planning Area from the Coastal Height Limit (project) and the potential for impacts to visual effects and neighborhood character. This section also includes a description of the built and natural visual resources in the Midway-Pacific Highway Community Planning area (CP area). The analysis in this section is based on the information in the Visual Impact Analysis prepared by Harris & Associates (2022) for the project and included as Appendix D. In addition, this section discusses the project's consistency with relevant development regulations, policies, and guidelines, including the 2008 City of San Diego General Plan Update (General Plan), 2018 Midway-Pacific Highway Community Plan (2018 Community Plan), and San Diego Municipal Code (SDMC).

### 5.1.1 Existing Conditions

The existing environmental setting and regulatory framework are summarized in Chapters 2.0, Environmental Setting, and 4.0, Regulatory Framework, respectively. The following discussion pertains to the existing visual setting of the CP area.

A public viewshed is defined as the area visible from an observer's viewpoint, including the screening effects of intermediate vegetation and structures. Viewshed components include the underlying landform/topography (e.g., foothills, mountains, and flatlands) and the overlaying land cover (e.g., water features, vegetation, cultural sites, and buildings). The project viewshed covers the area in which the project would affect existing views. For the Visual Impact Analysis (Appendix D), the project viewshed generally includes the CP area, Old Town Community Plan area, and portions of the Uptown and Peninsula Community Plan areas and Mission Bay Park. The San Diego International Airport (SDIA) is also within the project viewshed, including abutting portions of San Diego Bay.

The topography varies throughout the viewshed, with elevated terrain in the Uptown and Peninsula Community Plan areas and a portion of the Old Town Community Plan area. These Community Plan areas generally comprise residential neighborhoods and recreational open spaces. It is not feasible to document all views in which the project would be seen; therefore, several key views were selected from representative areas in the viewshed. Ten key views were chosen to evaluate the existing view and the hypothetical view resulting from buildout of the CP area at maximum building height limits. These key view locations are shown on Figure 5.1-1, Key Views in the CP Area. The views were taken from locations accessible to the public, including in residential neighborhoods and parks/trails, and in consideration of the various types of viewers. Figures 5.1-2 through 5.1-11 show the existing conditions and buildout scenario for each key view. A description

of the existing condition for each key view is described below. A description of the buildout scenario for each key view is described in Section 5.1.3.2.

**Key View 1 – View South from Sea World Drive Bridge.** Key View 1 represents the scene that is viewed looking south from the Sea World Drive bridge overpass where it crosses Interstate (I-) 5 toward the CP area. Views mainly consist of the freeway and landscaping adjacent to the freeway. Some buildings are visible to the southwest; however, the horizon is generally level. Figure 5.1-2, Key View 1 – View South from Sea World Drive Bridge, depicts the existing conditions and buildout scenario.

**Key View 2 – View South from Fiesta Island.** Key View 2 represents the scene that is viewed looking south from the southern edge of Fiesta Island in Mission Bay toward the CP area. An embankment along the northern edge of Fiesta Island Road partially obstructs eye-level views from farther north in Fiesta Island toward the CP area. Scenery at this key view mainly consists of the water in Mission Bay, landscaping across the water at South Shores Park, and palm trees along Sea World Drive. The Pechanga Arena is visible in the center background view. Figure 5.1-3, Key View 2 – View South from Fiesta Island, depicts the existing conditions and buildout scenario.

**Key View 3 – View Southeast from Old Sea World Drive.** Key View 3 represents the scene that is viewed from Old Sea World Drive, Sea World Drive, and the South Shores area of Mission Bay Park toward the CP area. Views comprise some landscaping, low-rise buildings directly across the San Diego River, and residential buildings at higher elevations in the Uptown and Peninsula Community Plan areas. The skyline of Downtown San Diego can be seen farther in the distance toward the southeast. Figure 5.1-4, Key View 3 – View Southeast from Old Sea World Drive, depicts the existing conditions and buildout scenario.

**View 4 – View East from Robb Athletic Field.** Key View 4 represents the scene that is viewed from Robb Athletic Field in the Ocean Beach Community Plan area looking eastward toward the CP area. Foreground and midground views consist of open space and roadways. Background views consist primarily of mature vegetation that hides existing buildings to the east. The CP area is in the center and right background views. Figure 5.1-5, Key View 4 – View East from Robb Athletic Field, depicts the existing conditions and buildout scenario.

**View 5 – View Southeast from San Diego River Trail.** Key View 5 represents the scene that is viewed from the San Diego River Trail that runs along the northern edge of the CP area. I-8 is slightly elevated between the trail to the north and development to the south. Existing views looking south primarily show building tops due to the lower elevation south of the I-8. The Pechanga Arena is the tallest existing building seen in the center background view. Industrial and commercial development is visible in the left and right background views along with palm trees south of I-8. Figure 5.1-6, Key View 5 – View Southeast from San Diego River Trail, depicts the existing conditions and buildout scenario.

**View 6 – View East from Famosa Slough State Marine Conservation Area.** Key View 6 represents the scene that is viewed from the Famosa Slough State Marine Conservation Area in the Peninsula Community Plan area along Famosa Boulevard looking east toward the CP area and West Point Loma Boulevard. The area between the slough and the CP area is built out with low-rise residential and commercial buildings shown in the midground and background views. Figure 5.1-7, Key View 6 – View East from Famosa Slough State Marine Conservation Area, depicts the existing conditions and buildout scenario.

**View 7 – View West from Presidio Park.** Key View 7 represents the scene that is viewed from Presidio Park in the Old Town Community Plan area west toward the CP area. The park lies atop a hill at a higher elevation than the CP area. The slopes in the midground view consist of dense, mature vegetation, roads, and parking areas within the park premises. Intermittent distant views of lower-lying development are visible in the background view in the Peninsula Community Plan area. Figure 5.1-8, Key View 7 – View West from Presidio Park, depicts the existing conditions and buildout scenario.

**View 8 – View Southwest from Old Town San Diego State Historic Park.** Key View 8 represents the scene that is viewed looking southwest from Old Town San Diego State Historic Park. The park is adjacent to the easterly edge of the CP area in the Old Town Community Plan area. Existing views are generally limited to the immediate vicinity of the park. The mature landscaping and elevation of I-5 generally obstruct views of existing buildings in the CP area. Figure 5.1-9, Key View 8 – View Southwest from Old Town San Diego State Historic Park, depicts the existing conditions and buildout scenario.

**View 9 – View West from Andrews Street.** Key View 9 represents the scene that is viewed from Andrews Street immediately south of West Washington Street in the Uptown Community Plan area. The residential neighborhood that the view is in is on higher ground than the CP area and has unobstructed views of the CP area, the SDIA, and the Peninsula Community Plan area. Figure 5.1-10, Key View 9 – View West from Andrews Street, depicts the existing conditions and buildout scenario.

**View 10 – View Northeast from Liberty Station Naval Training Center Park.** Key View 10 represents the scene that is viewed from Liberty Station Naval Training Center Park just west of the CP area in the Peninsula Community Plan area. The park is a large open space with an eye-level view of the CP area. The foreground view is of water in a channel that connects to San Diego Bay to the south with the Marine Corps Recruit Depot Boathouse and Marina and mature landscaping in the midground view, which partially obscures existing low-rise buildings in the background view. Figure 5.1-11, Key View 10 – View Northeast from Liberty Station Naval Training Center Park, depicts the existing conditions and buildout scenario.

### 5.1.2 Significance Determination Thresholds

The thresholds used to evaluate potential visual effects and neighborhood character impacts are based on the City's California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Significance Determination Thresholds (City of San Diego 2020a). The following thresholds are modified from the City's CEQA Significance Determination Thresholds to reflect the programmatic analysis for the project. A significant impact on visual effects and neighborhood character could occur if implementation of the project would:

- **Issue 1:** Result in a substantial obstruction of a vista or scenic view from a public viewing area as identified in the community plan.
- **Issue 2:** Result in a substantial adverse alteration (e.g., bulk, scale, materials, or style) to the existing or planned (adopted) character of the area.
- **Issue 3:** Result in the loss of any distinctive or landmark tree(s) or stand of mature trees as identified in the community plan.
- **Issue 4:** Result in a substantial change in the existing landform.
- **Issue 5:** Create substantial light or glare that would adversely affect daytime and nighttime views in the area.

### 5.1.3 Impact Analysis

Pursuant to California Public Resources Code, Section 21099(d)(1), aesthetic and parking impacts of residential, mixed-use, or employment center projects on infill sites in a Transit Priority Area (TPA) shall not be considered significant impacts on the environment. As discussed in Chapter 3.0, Project Description, approximately 76 percent of the CP area is in a TPA as shown on Figure 2-5, CP Area Transit Priority Area. TPAs are in the Channel District, Camino Del Rio District, Sports Arena Community Village, Kemper Neighborhood Village, Rosecrans District, Lytton District, Dutch Flats Urban District, Hancock Transit Corridor, Kettner District, and portions of the Kurtz District. Due to the existing developed nature of the CP area, it is anticipated that many future development projects would be considered infill unless a project is larger than 5 acres. Therefore, pursuant to California Public Resources Code, Section 21099(d)(1), aesthetic impacts associated with future residential, mixed-use, or employment center infill projects that are in a TPA in the CP area would be less than significant. However, because some of the CP area is not in a TPA, the following analysis has been prepared to determine whether project impacts would exceed the thresholds normally used by the City for analyzing impacts on visual effects and neighborhood character.

The Visual Impact Analysis (Appendix D) assessed the impacts of the removal of the CP area from the Coastal Height Limit Overlay Zone, which generally limits building height to 30 feet. The Visual Impact Analysis (Appendix D) analyzed the project under a hypothetical scenario in which the CP area would be built out to the maximum building height limit per the development standards

in the SDMC. It also assumed that U.S. Navy-owned properties would be built out at the highest intensity scenario (Alternative 4) identified in the Navy OTC Revitalization Project Environmental Impact Statement. The purpose of analyzing the maximum building height limit is to assess the worst-case scenario from a visual perspective.

The development scenario for buildout with maximum building height was interpreted from approved planning documents, including the 2018 Community Plan and the SDMC. A three-dimensional wire-frame model of the maximum height scenario was created using computer-aided design software for two-dimensional and three-dimensional drawing. Imaging software was used to align the computer model to the site photographs. The computer model was then superimposed over photographs from each key view, and minor camera alignment changes were made to all known reference points within view. Buildings were color coded to distinguish the 30-foot height limit (red) and the Navy OTC development (gray). Estrada Land Planning developed the model and created the rendering perspectives for all 10 key views.

The computer-generated perspective was used to analyze visual impacts from the 10 key views.

Visual impacts resulting from development of the CP area were evaluated by viewing the existing visual character of the landscape from each key view and assessing the degree to which the construction of buildings at maximum height limits would change those views.

#### **5.1.3.1 Issue 1: Scenic Vistas or Views**

A scenic vista is defined as a viewpoint that provides expansive views of a highly valued landscape for the public's benefit. In addition, some scenic vistas are officially designated by public agencies. A degradation of the view from such a designated viewshed would be a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista. Public views refer to those that are accessible from public vantage points, such as public rights-of-way, parks, and landmarks. Public views in the community consist of viewsheds, which are generally unobstructed panoramic views from a public vantage point, and view corridors, which are views along public rights-of-way framed by permitted development. According to the 2018 Community Plan, no prominent view corridors or designated scenic vistas are in the CP area.

The 2018 Midway-Pacific Highway Community Plan Update Revised Final Program Environmental Impact Report (2018 PEIR) concluded that implementation of the 2018 Community Plan would not result in a substantial alteration or blockage of public views from critical view corridors, designated open space areas, public roads, or public parks; new development in the community would take place within the constraints of the existing urban framework and development pattern. Thus, the 2018 PEIR determined that public view impacts would be less than significant.

The project proposes the removal of the 30-foot maximum height limit for buildings in the CP area. The project would not change the underlying base zone regulations, including the base zone's height limit. With the removal of this height restriction, each district or village in the CP area would default to its zoning designation maximum height allowed in the SDMC. As described in Chapter 3.0, maximum heights in the CP area would range from 30 to 100 feet or higher in areas with no height limit. The increases in building height that would result from implementation of the project would not result in the substantial obstruction of a scenic vista or view in the CP area because no prominent view corridors or designated scenic vistas are in the CP area. The 2008 General Plan PEIR identified a public vantage point in the CP area on Pacific Highway between Sassafras Street and Laurel Street. The description of the policy at this location is as follows: "Preserve scenic vistas to the bay and other coastal areas . . . and utilize building design along view corridors to enhance views to the waterfront from public rights-of-way." However, this segment of Pacific Highway is the southwestern edge of the CP area, and views to the bay and coastal areas would not be obstructed by the removal of the 30-foot height limit.

The project viewshed generally includes the CP area, Old Town Community Plan area, and portions of the Uptown and Peninsula Community Plan areas and Mission Bay Park. These plans were reviewed to determine if the increase in building height that would result from implementation of the project would impact scenic vistas or views identified in these Community Plan areas. The topography varies throughout the viewshed, with elevated terrain in the Uptown and Peninsula Community Plan areas and a portion of the Old Town Community Plan area. These Community Plan areas generally comprise residential neighborhoods and recreational open spaces. Therefore, these areas were reviewed to determine if the increase in building height that would result from implementation of the project would impact scenic vistas or views identified in the Old Town, Uptown, or Peninsula Community Plan areas or Mission Bay Park.

The Old Town Community Plan does not identify any specific existing scenic views or vistas in the Old Town community. The Land Use Element of the Old Town Community Plan describes a vision for enhancements to the Presidio Park area (City of San Diego 2018). Key View 7 represents a typical view from a recreational user looking west from Presidio Park. As shown on Figure 5.1-8, under the buildout scenario, taller buildings in the Navy OTC development would be visible from some locations with wide open spaces. However, the Coastal Height Limit does not apply to federal property, and the City does not have land use jurisdiction over federal property (i.e., Naval Base Point Loma). Therefore, the project would not impact the future Navy OTC development. In general, viewers would not notice a significant change in the view from future development due to the distance, mature landscaping, and existing developed built environment below and west of the park. Therefore, an impact on a scenic vista or view corridor identified in the Old Town Community Plan would not occur.



The Peninsula Community Plan identifies a number of view corridors throughout the Peninsula Community Plan area that provide scenic vistas of San Diego Bay, Downtown San Diego, Coronado, Mission Bay, and Pacific Beach. These vistas occur primarily from existing roadways, which include Catalina Boulevard, Shelter Island Drive, Rosecrans Street, Talbot Street, Canon Street, Garrison Street, Chatsworth Boulevard, West Point Loma Boulevard, Famosa Boulevard, Santa Barbara Street, Point Loma Avenue, and Sunset Cliffs Boulevard. In addition, Sunset Cliffs Shoreline Park, now called Sunset Cliffs Natural Park, provides an unobstructed view of the ocean (City of San Diego 1987). None of the vistas in the Peninsula Community Plan area would be obstructed by development in the CP area. As an example, Key View 6 represents the scene that is viewed from the Famosa Slough State Marine Conservation Area along Famosa Boulevard looking east toward the CP area and West Point Loma Boulevard. As shown on Figure 5.1-7, under the buildout scenario, visual changes would occur in the background views, past existing buildings and landscaping. Elevated terrain toward the southeast hides views of taller buildings in the industrial zones in the southern portions of the CP area. Therefore, an impact on a scenic vista or view corridor in the Peninsula Community Plan would not occur.

The Urban Design Element of the Uptown Community Plan identifies public view corridors in three primary categories: views looking to the north and west over Mission Valley and to Mission Bay, views looking to the west and south to San Diego Bay, and views looking east to Balboa Park (City of San Diego 2019a). The public view corridors looking north and west to Mission Bay and west and south to San Diego Bay would have the potential to be obstructed by development in the CP area. Key View 9 represents the scene that is viewed from Andrews Street immediately south of West Washington Street in the Uptown Community Plan area. As shown on Figure 5.1-10, under the buildout scenario, visual changes are visible in the midground views, which currently encompass existing development of low-rise structures, large parking surfaces, and the SDIA. Future development in the CP area would change northwestern views due to building heights of 100 feet or more west of I-5. Public view corridors from the Uptown Community Plan could be impacted by implementation of the project. It should be noted that the highest buildings on the right side of the view (350 feet) would be from the Navy OTC development, which is not part of the project because the City lacks land use jurisdiction over federal government property.

The Mission Bay Park Master Plan Update (Master Plan Update) does not identify any specific scenic vistas or public view corridors from the boundaries of the plan area. However, the Master Plan Update envisions a park in which views to the water are maximized (City of San Diego 2019b). Key View 2 represents the scene that is viewed looking south from the southern edge of Fiesta Island in Mission Bay toward the CP area. As shown on Figure 5.1-3, under the buildout scenario, visual change occurs in the background view, with taller buildings primarily toward the southeastern horizon upon development of the CP area at maximum building height. The most noticeable changes would be seen in the left and center background portions of the view. Building heights above 40 feet can be seen from this key view, which changes the view quality of the horizon. The development

would not obstruct views to the water from Key View 2. Therefore, an impact on a scenic vista or view corridor in the Master Plan Update plan area would not occur.

Future development consistent with the project would result in increased building height that could obstruct scenic vistas and views from public viewing locations outside the CP area. Impacts on scenic vistas and views would be potentially significant.

### **5.1.3.2 Issue 2: Neighborhood Character**

The CP area is a developed, urbanized community, although not all lot or building sites are currently built to their allowable capacity under the 2018 Community Plan. The 2018 PEIR concluded that, with implementation of the 2018 Community Plan Urban Design Element and Land Use, Villages, and Districts Element policies, zoning, and the City’s Land Development Code (LDC) regulations, future development would be consistent with, and even improve, the existing neighborhood character. The 2018 PEIR determined that impacts related to substantial alterations on the existing or planned character of the area would be less than significant.

The project proposes the removal of the 30-foot maximum height limit for buildings in the CP area. The project would not change the underlying base zone regulations, including the base zone’s height limit. With the removal of this height restriction, each district or village in the CP area would default to its zoning designation maximum height allowed in the SDMC. As described in Chapter 3.0, maximum heights in the CP area would range from 30 feet to 100 feet or higher in areas with no height limit. The removal of the 30-foot height restriction has the potential to degrade neighborhood character due to the future development of taller buildings that would result in increased bulk and scale.

Visual impacts are associated with changes in either the human-made or natural environment, can be short or long term in duration, and can be beneficial or detrimental. Changes to views during construction of the project are considered short-term visual impacts. Long-term changes are associated with altering the natural topography, building permanent structures (e.g., buildings, bridges, walls), and removing vegetation, including mature trees. The focus of this analysis is on the long-term physical changes that are permanent in nature.

The evaluation of visual effects is largely subjective and depends on the degree of alteration, scenic quality of the area disturbed, and sensitivity of the viewers, which are defined as follows:

- “Degree of alteration” refers to the extent of change to the natural landform and the introduction of urban elements into an existing natural environment while acknowledging any unique topographical formations or natural landmarks.
- “Sensitive viewers” are those who use the outdoor environment or value a scenic viewpoint to enhance their daily activity and are typically residents, recreational users, or motorists in scenic areas.

The visual impacts of the project were determined based on the degree of change to the existing setting that would occur from the increased height of buildings in the view; the degree to which these features would obstruct, diminish, or dominate existing view qualities; and the sensitivity of the viewer.

The key views were assessed using the following criteria:

- **Low:** Minor adverse change in visual quality caused by the project only slightly affecting the resource. Viewers are not sensitive to change or are at a great distance from the change.
- **Moderate:** Major adverse change in visual quality caused by the project. Existing landscaping provides some coverage to help maintain visual quality. Viewers are not highly sensitive to change or are at a distance from the change.
- **High:** Major change in visual quality caused by the project to the extent that landscape treatment or other measures cannot mitigate the problem. Viewers are sensitive to change or are within the vicinity of the change.

In addition, sight distance is defined as foreground (0–0.25 mile), midground (0.25– 3 miles), and background (3 miles and farther). The final determination of significance considered the existing visual quality and the anticipated viewer response.

As discussed in Section 5.1.1, Existing Conditions, it is not feasible to analyze all views in which the project would be seen; therefore, representative key views were selected to demonstrate the change in views from surrounding areas adjacent to the CP area. Ten key views were chosen to evaluate the existing view and the hypothetical view resulting from buildout of the CP area at maximum building height limits. Visual impacts resulting from development of the CP area were evaluated by viewing the existing visual character of the landscape from each key view and assessing the degree to which construction of buildings at maximum height limits would change those views and result in a substantial adverse alteration (e.g., bulk, scale, materials, or style) to the existing or planned (adopted) character of the area. If the level of change was identified as moderate to high, a significant impact was identified. An analysis of each key view is provided below.

### **Key View 1 – View South from Sea World Drive Bridge**

Visual changes in Key View 1 are generally in the background views. Foreground and midground views would not change. Taller buildings are visible along the horizon, primarily toward the southeast, with development of the CP area at maximum building height. The most visible buildings are the Navy OTC buildings (shown in gray) in the center-left background view and buildings in the Sports Arena area (shown in beige) in the center-right background view as shown on Figure 5.1-2. As stated above, the Coastal Height Limit does not apply to federal property, and the future Navy OTC development is not part of the project because the City lacks land use jurisdiction over federal government property.

Key View 1 represents a typical view from a southbound I-5 traveler. Viewers will notice a change in the view; however, the level of impact on view quality would depend on distance from their vantage point and the density of traffic. There would be an increase in sense of direction and destination given the concentrated presence of taller buildings in the direction travelers are headed. Overall viewer response would be low to moderate depending on the vantage point.

Under the buildout scenario, Key View 1 would result in a low to moderate level of change as a result of the project, which would result in a potentially significant impact.

### **Key View 2 – View South from Fiesta Island**

Visual changes at Key View 2 occur in the background view with taller buildings primarily toward the southeastern horizon upon development of the CP area at maximum building height. The most noticeable potential changes would be seen in the left and center background portions of the view. Building heights above 40 feet can be seen from this key view, which changes the view quality of the horizon. The taller buildings associated with the Navy OTC development (shown in gray) are not part of the project because the Coastal Height Limit does not apply to federal property, and the City lacks land use jurisdiction over federal government property. The development would not obstruct views beyond the CP area due to the distance of the vantage point. Figure 5.1-3 depicts the existing conditions and buildout scenario at Key View 2.

Key View 2 represents a typical view from travelers (motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians) on Fiesta Island Road. Despite the change in horizon, the development would neither obstruct views beyond the CP area due to the distance of the vantage point nor change the views in the immediate vicinity, which attracts recreational users to the area. Overall viewer response would be moderate.

Under the buildout scenario, Key View 2 would result in a moderate level of change as result of the project, which would result in a potentially significant impact.

### **Key View 3 – View Southeast from Old Sea World Drive**

Visual changes at Key View 3 are in the midground views, with significant potential changes of the horizon toward the CP area. The building heights would obstruct views toward Downtown San Diego and of higher-elevation neighborhoods in the Peninsula and Uptown Community Plan areas. The tallest buildings in the Navy OTC development are visible, but the massing of buildings in the Sports Arena area have the greatest potential impact on views from this vantage point. Figure 5.1-4 depicts the existing conditions and buildout scenario at Key View 3.

Key View 3 represents a typical view from recreational users and motorists, who are considered temporary visitors to the area, on Old Sea World Drive, motorists on Sea World Drive, and recreational users at South Shores Park. These viewers will notice a significant change in the view due to the proximity and heights of development in the CP area. Overall viewer response would be high.

Under the buildout scenario, Key View 3 would result in a high level of change, which would result in a potentially significant impact.

#### **View 4 – View East from Robb Athletic Field**

Visual changes in the background views at Key View 4 show portions of buildings in the center-right view above 80 feet in height. The combination of undulating terrain and existing mature trees works to partially cover the buildings and lessen the impact on the skyline. The tallest buildings visible are in the Navy OTC development. As stated above, the Coastal Height Limit does not apply to federal property, and the Navy OTC development is not part of the project because the City lacks land use jurisdiction over federal government property. Figure 5.1-5 depicts the existing conditions and buildout scenario at Key View 4.

Key View 4 represents a typical view from recreational users at Robb Athletic Field. Views in the immediate vicinity would not change, and due to the distance of the view and natural landscaping partially blocking the buildings, the development would not be highly noticeable. Overall viewer response would be low.

Under the buildout scenario, Key View 4 would result in a low level of change as a result of the project. Impacts would be less than significant.

#### **View 5 – View Southeast from San Diego River Trail**

The view from Key View 5 would change significantly with development in the CP area at maximum height limits. Pechanga Arena would no longer be visible due to the new intervening development that could be constructed adjacent to the I-8, obstructing it from the Key View 5 location. The skyline would primarily comprise new development of 65- to 100-foot-tall buildings. Figure 5.1-6 depicts the existing conditions and buildout scenario at Key View 5.

Key View 5 represents a typical view from recreational users on the San Diego River Trail. These viewers will notice a significant change in the view due to the proximity of the development in the CP area and the additional height of the buildings. Overall viewer response would be high.

Under the buildout scenario, Key View 5 would result in a high level of change as result of the project, which would result in a potentially significant impact.

#### **View 6 – View East from Famosa Slough State Marine Conservation Area**

Visual changes at Key View 6 would occur in the background views past existing buildings and landscaping. Higher floors of the buildings in the Navy OTC development can be seen in the center background view but do not significantly change the view quality. Elevated terrain toward the southeast hides views of taller buildings in the industrial zones in the southerly portions of the CP area. Figure 5.1-7 depicts the existing conditions and buildout scenario at Key View 6.

Key View 6 represents a typical view from visitors to the Famosa Slough State Marine Conservation Area, a wetlands preserve and open space area within a built environment, and from residents, pedestrians, and motorists in the vicinity of West Point Loma Boulevard. These viewers will not notice a significant change in the view due to the elevated terrain of the Peninsula Community Plan area and the existing built environment. Overall viewer response would be low.

Under the buildout scenario, Key View 6 would result in a low level of change as a result of the project. Impacts would be less than significant.

### **View 7 – View West from Presidio Park**

Visual changes at Key View 7 are primarily in the background views showing buildings of over 100 feet in height. There is little change to the horizon toward the CP area, with the exception of the Navy OTC buildings to the left of the view. Taller buildings in the Navy OTC development would be visible from some locations with wide open spaces. However, the Coastal Height Limit does not apply to federal property, and the future Navy OTC development is not part of the project because the City lacks land use jurisdiction over federal government property. In general, the dense and mature foliage provides coverage of much of the built environment despite the elevated terrain at this vantage point. Figure 5.1-8 depicts the existing conditions and buildout scenario at Key View 7.

Key View 7 represents a typical view from a recreational user looking west from Presidio Park. Viewers will not notice a significant change in the view due to the distance, mature landscaping, and existing developed built environment, including the Navy OTC buildings, below and west of the park. Overall viewer response would be low.

Under the buildout scenario, View 7 would result in a low level of change as a result of the project. Impacts would be less than significant.

### **View 8 – View Southwest from Old Town San Diego State Historic Park**

Visual changes at Key View 8 would occur in the midground views, especially looking southwest toward the Navy's proposed future development of the Navy OTC site. At the maximum 350-foot height, the large massing of the buildings in the Navy OTC development would, for the most part, intrude on views of the open sky, and future development that could occur in the CP area would be mostly obscured by the Navy OTC development. Some future development in the Commercial-Community (CC)-2-5 and CC-3-8 zones of up to 100 feet would also be visible but would not obstruct the view. Figure 5.1-9 depicts the existing conditions and buildout scenario at Key View 8.

Key View 8 represents a typical view from a visitor at the Old Town San Diego State Historic Park. These viewers will notice a significant change in the view due to the proximity of the Navy OTC development in the CP area. However, as noted above, the Coastal Height Limit does not apply to federal property, and the future Navy OTC development is not part of the project because

the City lacks land use jurisdiction over federal government property. Thus, overall viewer response to future development with the potential to be affected by the project would be low.

Under the buildout scenario, Key View 8 would result in a low level of change as a result of the project. Impacts would be less than significant.

### **View 9 – View West from Andrews Street**

Visual changes at Key View 9 are visible in the midground views, which currently encompass existing development of low-rise structures, large parking surfaces, and the SDIA. Development in the CP area would change northwestern views due to building heights of 100 feet or more west of I-5. The Navy OTC development up to 350 feet in height would be visible in the right midground view. However, the Coastal Height Limit does not apply to federal property, and the future Navy OTC development is not part of the project because the City lacks land use jurisdiction over federal government property. The majority of the background view of the SDIA and the Peninsula Community Plan area would be unchanged. Figure 5.1-10 depicts the existing conditions and buildout scenario at Key View 9.

Key View 9 represents a typical view from a resident in the western Uptown Community Plan area. These viewers will notice a change in the built landscape; however, the change may not be perceived as detrimental compared to the existing views. Overall viewer response would be low to moderate.

Under the buildout scenario, Key View 9 would result in a low to moderate level of change as a result of the project, which would result in a potentially significant impact.

### **View 10 – View Northeast from Liberty Station Naval Training Center Park**

Visual changes at Key View 10 would occur in the background views, primarily to the skyline in the center and right view areas. The changes would be greater toward the north and south where buildings have a maximum height of 100 feet or more. The highest buildings visible are the Navy OTC development with heights up to 350 feet. As stated above, the Coastal Height Limit does not apply to federal property, and the future Navy OTC development is not part of the project because the City lacks land use jurisdiction over federal government property. The development would not additionally obstruct views beyond the CP area. Figure 5.1-11 depicts the existing conditions and buildout scenario at Key View 10.

Key View 10 represents a typical view from a visitor to the Liberty Station Naval Training Center Park. These viewers will notice a change in the view along the skyline; however, due to distance and existing vegetation between this vantage point and the larger buildings in the CP area, the overall viewer response would be low.

Under the buildout scenario, Key View 10 would result in a low level of change as a result of the project. Impacts would be less than significant.

Future discretionary development would be required to incorporate design features that enhance neighborhood character and minimize adverse impacts associated with increased bulk, scale, and height, including building materials, style, and architectural features, as identified in the 2018 Community Plan Urban Design Element and Land Use, Villages, and Districts Element policies, zoning, and the City's LDC regulations. Nevertheless, implementation of the project could result in development at heights that would substantially alter the existing neighborhood character. The removal of the height limit would result in a major change in bulk and scale of buildings in the CP area, which would result in a high level of change for Key Views 1, 2, 3, 5, and 9. Therefore, the project would have the potential to result in a substantial adverse alteration to the character of the CP area and its surroundings. Impacts would be significant.

#### **5.1.3.3 Issue 3: Distinctive or Landmark Trees**

One tree with historical importance was identified in the CP area in the 2018 PEIR. The tree was identified as an olive tree west of the intersection of Midway Drive and Rosecrans Street that was planted as part of an effort by the San Diego Historical Society to mark the La Playa Trail, which is known as an ancient Kumeyaay path. However, upon further investigation, there is no such olive tree in this area. Although an olive tree was likely planted at this location when the San Diego Historical Society was marking the trail in the 1930s, both Rosecrans Street and Midway Drive have been expanded multiple times since then. It is likely that the olive tree was removed as part of the street expansions. Regardless, the project would be limited to the CP area footprint and land use, density, and zoning analyzed in the 2018 PEIR. The removal of the 30-foot height restriction would not result in a change to total allowable density buildout in the CP area; would not change the underlying base zone regulations, including the base zone's height limit; and would not allow development to extend beyond the footprint analyzed in the 2018 PEIR. The project would not change the potential for street trees to be removed during development of future land uses allowed under the 2018 Community Plan. Consistent with the 2018 PEIR, future development would be subject to San Diego City Council Policy 900-19, which provides protection for street trees. As such, implementation of the project would not result in the loss of any distinctive or landmark trees or any stand of mature trees. Impacts would be less than significant.

#### **5.1.3.4 Issue 4: Landform Alteration**

The CP area is largely developed with existing urban land uses. The 2018 PEIR concluded that the 2018 Community Plan would intensify some uses in the CP area, which could result in landform alteration. The 2018 Community Plan policies ensure that redevelopment takes into account existing development and landform. New development and redevelopment would be required to comply with the 2018 Community Plan Conservation Element and Urban Design Element policies,



which support conservation of existing landforms and open space and support the design of buildings that respect existing landforms and comply with the City's LDC for grading. The 2018 PEIR determined that compliance with the 2018 Community Plan policies and the City's LDC would reduce impacts to a less than significant level.

The project would be limited to the CP area footprint and land use, density, and zoning analyzed in the 2018 PEIR. The removal of the 30-foot height restriction would not result in a change to total allowable density buildout in the CP area; would not change the underlying base zone regulations, including the base zone's height limit; and would not allow development to extend beyond the footprint analyzed in the 2018 PEIR. Consistent with the 2018 PEIR, the project would require future development to comply with the 2018 Community Plan and the City's LDC, which would reduce potential landform alteration. Impacts would be less than significant.

#### **5.1.3.5 Issue 5: Light or Glare**

The 2018 PEIR concluded that future development may introduce new light sources and/or necessitate the use of additional light fixtures and may contribute to existing conditions of light and glare. In addition, the 2018 PEIR concluded that lighting impacts could occur at existing Multi-Habitat Planning Areas (MHPA) adjacent to the CP area along the San Diego River. All new development and redevelopment would be required to comply with the 2018 Community Plan Urban Design Element policies that support pedestrian-oriented street lighting with appropriate shielding and low heights to minimize light spillage. In addition, the policies support using design measures for signage and materials that would reduce glare without negatively impacting visibility. In addition, future projects would be required to comply with Section 142.0740 of the City's LDC, which includes regulations to minimize negative impacts from light pollution, including light trespass, glare, and urban sky glow, and promote lighting design that provides public safety and conserves electrical energy. Additionally, future project would be required to comply with Section 142.0730 of the City's LDC, which limits a maximum of 50 percent of the exterior of a building to be composed of reflective material that has a light reflectivity factor greater than 30 percent (City of San Diego 2021). In addition, all future projects would be required to comply with the MHPA Land Use Adjacency Guidelines, which require lighting of developed areas adjacent to the MHPA be directed away from the MHPA (City of San Diego 1997). The 2018 PEIR determined that compliance with the 2018 Community Plan Urban Design Element, the City's LDC, and the City's MHPA Land Use Adjacency Guidelines would reduce impacts to a less than significant level.

The project would be limited to the CP area footprint and land use, density, and zoning analyzed in the 2018 PEIR. The removal of the 30-foot height restriction would not result in a change to total allowable density buildout in the CP area; would not change the underlying base zone regulations, including the base zone's height limit; and would not allow development to extend beyond the footprint analyzed in the 2018 PEIR. Consistent with the 2018 PEIR, future development in the CP area consistent with the project could introduce new sources of light and glare due to higher building

heights. Sources of daytime glare include direct beam sunlight and reflections from windows, architectural coatings, glass, and other reflective surfaces. Nighttime illumination and associated glare are generally divided into two sources: stationary and mobile. Stationary sources include structure lighting and decorative landscaping, lighted signs, solar panels, and streetlights. Mobile sources are primarily headlights from motor vehicles. Consistent with the 2018 PEIR, future development projects would be required to comply with the 2018 Community Plan Urban Design Element, the outdoor lighting regulations outlined in Section 142.0740 of the City's LDC, the glare regulations outlined in Section 142.0730 of the City's LDC, and the City's MHPA Land Use Adjacency Guidelines. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

#### **5.1.4 Significance of Impacts**

##### **5.1.4.1 Issue 1: Scenic Vistas or Views**

Implementation of the project could obstruct scenic views and vistas from public viewing locations in the Uptown Community Plan area due to building height increases in the CP area. Project impacts on scenic views and vistas would be potentially significant. Representative key views were evaluated to make this determination. The City considered mitigation measures to limit building heights in scenic view corridors to reduce the impact; however, the expansive scenic views across the CP area would require height restrictions in most of the higher density zones in the CP area. Implementation of selective height restrictions would not be feasible because it would limit the City's ability to provide a diverse range of housing types to accommodate the density approved in the 2018 Community Plan. In addition, some areas are governed by other regulating documents, such as the Port Master Plan, SDIA Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan, and Navy OTC Revitalization Project Environmental Impact Statement where the City does not have building height regulatory authority. Finally, the City's Complete Communities Program encourages development in TPAs, which applies to the majority of the CP area (City of San Diego 2020b). Restricting height may impede the ability to develop a wide range of housing types and would be inconsistent with the City's objective of providing housing for a variety of people. Therefore, impacts would remain significant and unavoidable.

##### **5.1.4.2 Issue 2: Neighborhood Character**

Implementation of the project could result in future building heights up to and greater than 100 feet that could result in a substantial adverse alteration to the character of the area. Impacts would be potentially significant. The City considered mitigation measures to limit building heights in areas where neighborhood character would be impacted, including Key Views 1, 2, 3, 5, and 9. However, these views do not represent all possible views of the CP area; they are representative views selected to demonstrate the change in views from surrounding areas adjacent to the CP area. Restricting building height limits in these areas would not necessarily reduce impacts from all possible view locations or improve the impact on neighborhood character in all areas of the CP.

Implementation of selective height restrictions would not be feasible because it would limit the City's ability to provide a diverse range of housing types to accommodate the density approved in the 2018 Community Plan. In addition, some areas are governed by other regulating documents, such as the Port Master Plan, SDIA Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan, and Navy OTC Revitalization Project Environmental Impact Statement, where the City does not have building height regulatory authority. Finally, the City's Complete Communities Program encourages development in TPAs, which applies to the majority of the CP area (City of San Diego 2020b). Restricting height may impede the ability to develop a wide range of housing types and would be inconsistent with the City's objective of providing housing for a variety of people. Therefore, impacts would remain significant and unavoidable.

#### **5.1.4.3 Issue 3: Distinctive or Landmark Trees**

The project would not change the potential for street trees to be removed during development of future land uses allowed under the 2018 Community Plan. Consistent with the 2018 PEIR, future development would be subject to San Diego City Council Policy 900-19, which provides protection for street trees. Implementation of the project would not result in the loss of any distinctive or landmark trees or any stand of mature trees; therefore, impacts would be less than significant. No mitigation is required.

#### **5.1.4.4 Issue 4: Landform Alteration**

Implementation of the project would not result in a substantial change in the existing landform because the CP area is already largely developed. Consistent with the 2018 PEIR, the project would require future development to comply with the 2018 Community Plan and the City's LDC, which would reduce potential effects from landform alteration. Thus, impacts related to landform alteration would be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

#### **5.1.4.5 Issue 5: Light or Glare**

Implementation of the project would not create substantial light or glare that would adversely affect daytime and nighttime views in the area. Consistent with the 2018 PEIR, future development projects would be required to comply with the 2018 Community Plan Urban Design Element, the outdoor lighting regulations outlined in Section 142.0740 of the City's LDC, the glare regulations outlined in Section 142.0730 of the City's LDC, and the City's MHPA Land Use Adjacency Guidelines, which would reduce potential impacts from light and/or glare. Thus, impacts relative to lighting and glare would be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

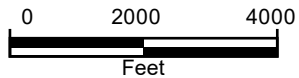
### **5.1.5 Mitigation Framework**

As discussed in Sections 5.1.4.1 and 5.1.4.2, no feasible mitigation measures are available to reduce the significant impacts associated with scenic vistas or views and neighborhood character to a less than significant level. These impacts would remain significant and unavoidable.

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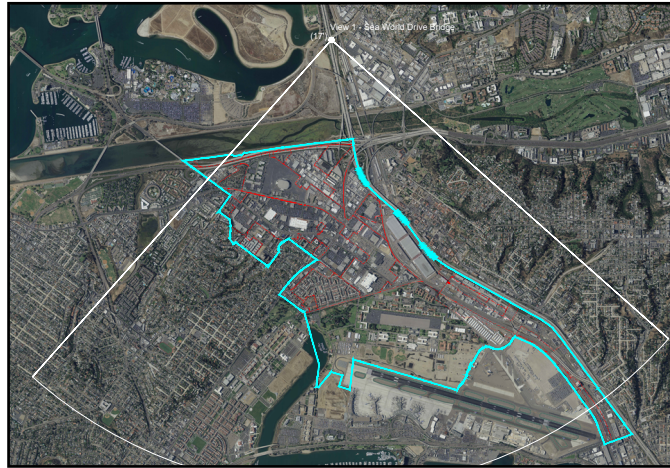
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**Figure 5.1-1**  
Key Views in the CP Area

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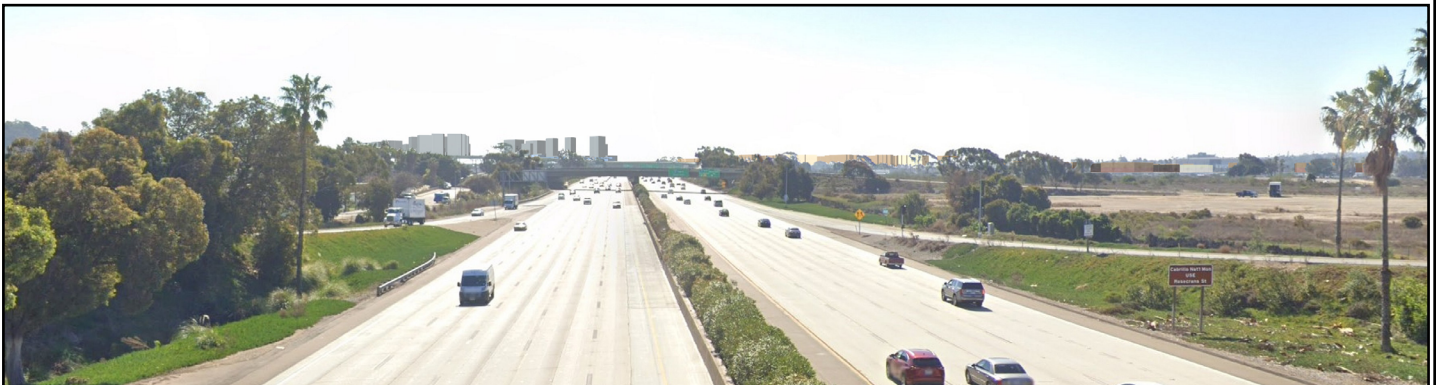
### Key Map



### Existing Conditions



### Buildout Scenario



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### Key Map



### Existing Conditions



### Buildout Scenario



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### Key Map



### Existing Conditions



### Buildout Scenario



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Key Map



Existing Conditions



Buildout Scenario

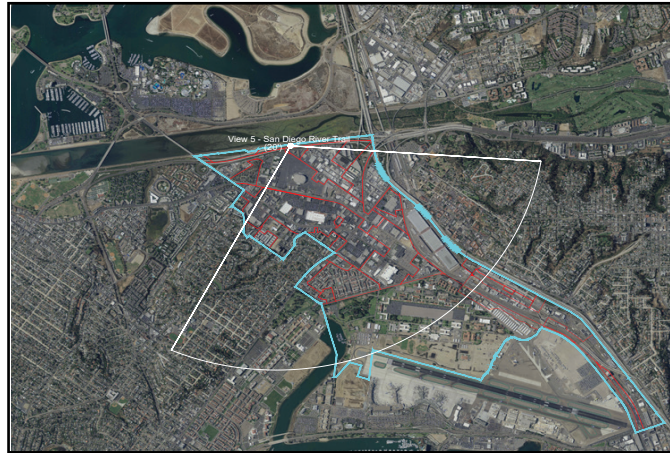


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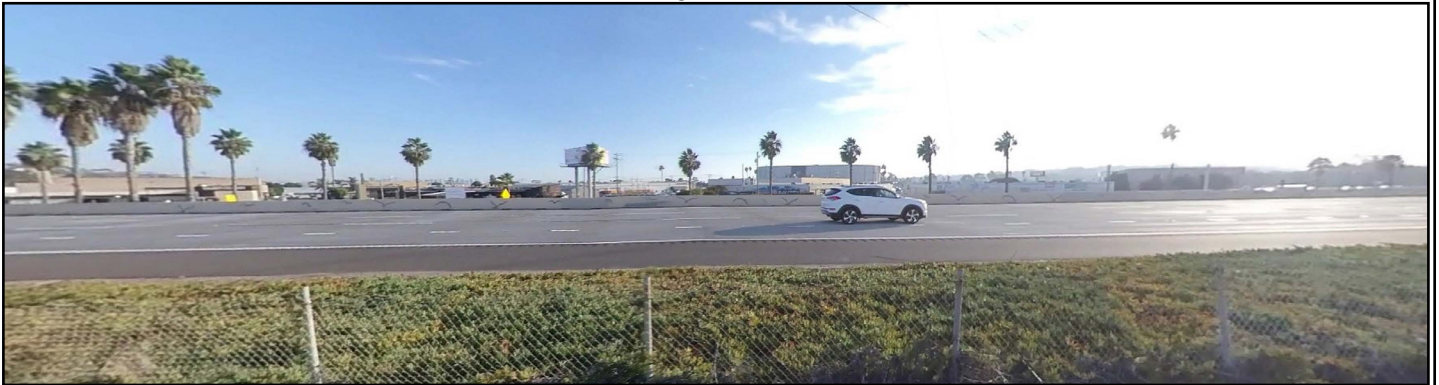
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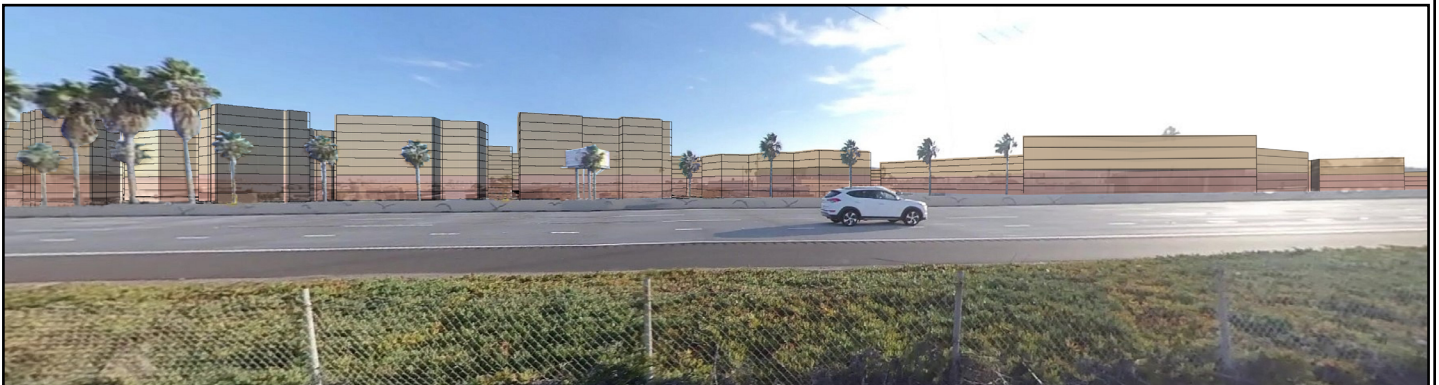
### Key Map



### Existing Conditions



### Buildout Scenario



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### Key Map



### Existing Conditions



### Buildout Scenario



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Key Map



Existing Conditions



Buildout Scenario



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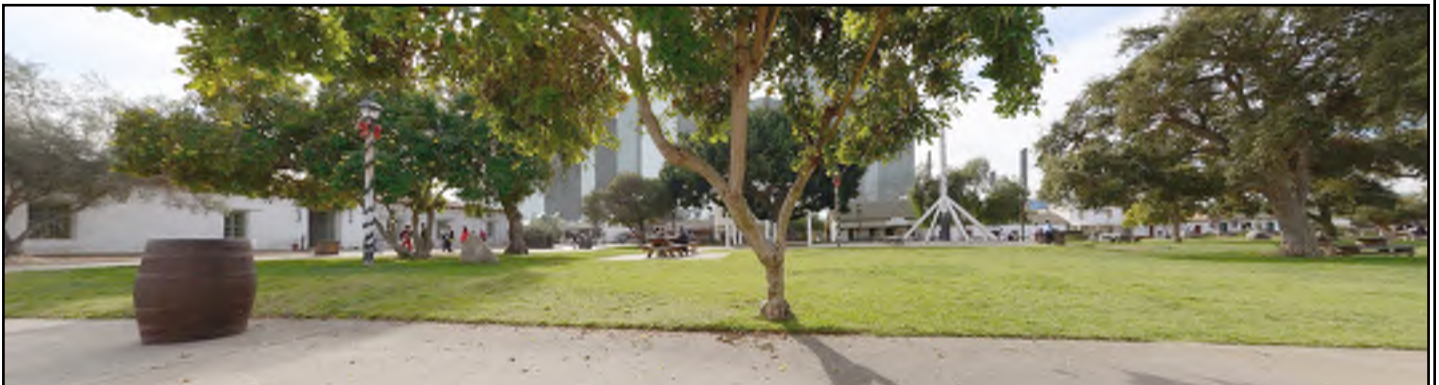
### Key Map



### Existing Conditions



### Buildout Scenario



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### Key Map



### Existing Conditions



### Buildout Scenario



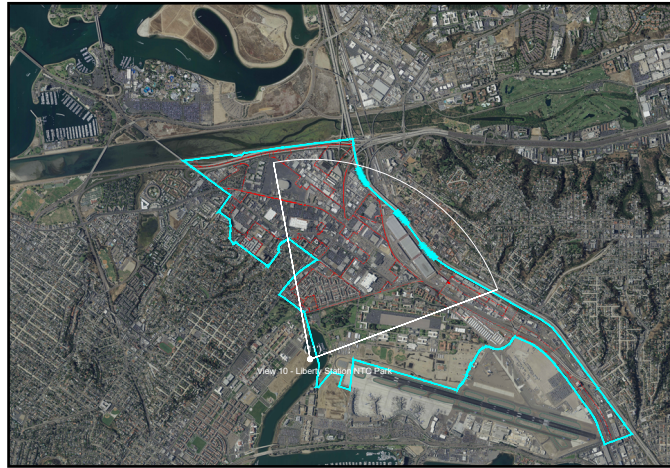
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### Key Map



### Existing Conditions



### Buildout Scenario



Source: Estrada 2022.

**Figure 5.1-11**

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## Chapter 6.0 Cumulative Impacts

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### 6.1 Introduction

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, Section 15355, defines cumulative impacts as “two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts.” These individual effects may include changes resulting from a single project or a number of separate projects. The cumulative impact from several projects is the change in the environment that results from the incremental impact of a project when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable probable future projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant projects occurring over a period of time.

CEQA Guidelines, Section 15130, requires that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) discuss the cumulative impacts of a project when a project’s incremental effect would potentially be cumulatively considerable. Cumulatively considerable, as defined in CEQA Guidelines, Section 15065(a)(3), means that the incremental effects of an individual project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, other current projects, and probable future projects. Where a lead agency determines a project’s incremental effect would not be cumulatively considerable, a brief description of the basis for such a conclusion must be included. In addition, the CEQA Guidelines allow for a project’s contribution to be rendered less than cumulatively considerable with implementation of appropriate mitigation.

According to CEQA Guidelines, Section 15130(b), the discussion of cumulative impacts “need not provide as great detail as is provided for the effects attributable to the project alone. The discussion should be guided by the standards of practicality and reasonableness.” Additionally, one of the following two possible approaches is required for considering cumulative effects:

- A list of past, present, and probable future projects producing related or cumulative impacts, including, if necessary, those projects outside the control of the agency.
- A summary of projections contained in an adopted General Plan or related planning document, or in a prior environmental document that has been adopted or certified, that described or evaluated region- or area-wide conditions contributing to the cumulative impact. Any such planning document shall be referenced and made available to the public at a location specified by the lead agency.

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, Section 15130(d), cumulative impact discussions may rely on previously approved land use documents, such as General Plans, Specific Plans, and Local Coastal Plans, and may be incorporated by reference. In addition, no further cumulative impact analysis is required when a project is consistent with such plans and the lead agency determines that the regional or area-wide cumulative impacts of a project have already been adequately addressed in

a certified EIR for that plan. CEQA Guidelines, Section 15130(e), also states that “if a cumulative impact was adequately addressed in a prior EIR for a community plan, zoning action, or general plan, and the project is consistent with that plan or action, then an EIR for such a project should not further analyze that cumulative impact, as provided in Section 15183(j).”

The cumulative impacts assessment of visual effects and neighborhood character in this chapter primarily relies on the cumulative impact determinations in the City of San Diego Final Program EIR for the Draft General Plan (i.e., 2008 City of San Diego General Plan Update [General Plan]) (General Plan PEIR) (City of San Diego 2007) and the 2018 Midway-Pacific Highway Community Plan Update Revised Final Program Environmental Impact Report (2018 PEIR) (Appendix A). The General Plan PEIR identified a cumulatively significant impact for visual effects and neighborhood character. In addition, the 2018 PEIR identified a cumulatively significant impact for transportation and circulation, paleontological resources, and historical and Tribal Cultural Resources. Consistent with CEQA Guidelines, Section 15130(e), where significance of cumulative impacts was previously identified for the General Plan PEIR and the Removal of the Midway-Pacific Highway Community Planning Area from the Coastal Height Limit (project) would be consistent, those impacts do not need to be analyzed further.

## **6.2 Cumulative Analysis Setting and Methodology**

### **6.2.1 Plans and Programs Evaluated for Cumulative Impacts**

The General Plan, 2018 Midway-Pacific Highway Community Plan (2018 Community Plan), Old Town Community Plan, Uptown Community Plan, Peninsula Community Plan, Mission Bay Park Master Plan Update, and City of San Diego’s (City’s) Land Development Code were used to evaluate cumulative impacts. These documents are on file at the City’s Planning Department, 9485 Aero Drive, San Diego, California 92123, and available online at the URLs below:

- City of San Diego Plans: <https://www.sandiego.gov/planning>
- City of San Diego Land Development Code: <https://www.sandiego.gov/city-clerk/officialdocs/municipal-code>

## **6.3 Assessment of Cumulative Impacts**

The geographic scope for the analysis of cumulative impacts depends on the nature of the issue and the project and varies depending on the environmental issue being analyzed. Often, cumulative impacts are not limited by jurisdictional boundaries. The geographic scope for the cumulative analysis for the project includes the Midway-Pacific Highway Community Planning area (CP area); the Old Town, Uptown, and Peninsula Community Plan areas; and Mission Bay Park.

### 6.3.1 Visual Effects and Neighborhood Character

The approach to the cumulative analysis used the summary of projections in the General Plan and assumed buildout of the CP area; Old Town, Uptown, and Peninsula Community Plan areas; and Mission Bay Park. In addition, the cumulative analysis includes the redevelopment of the Navy Old Town Campus (OTC) site adjacent to Pacific Highway and Interstate (I-) 5 as described in Alternative 4 (preferred alternative with maximum development height up to 350 feet) of the Navy OTC Revitalization Project Environmental Impact Statement. There is also potential for future redevelopment of the Pechanga Arena site in the CP area. However, due to the speculative nature of future project-specific site development details, the analysis in this Supplemental EIR (SEIR) uses the development assumptions from the 2018 PEIR. Changes in visual character and quality resulting from buildout of the CP area; Old Town, Uptown, and Peninsula Community Plan areas; and Mission Bay Park could contribute incrementally to cumulative impacts with regard to visual effects and neighborhood character. The most sensitive viewers are typically recreational users of public parks/trails, residents in neighborhoods adjacent to the CP area, and residents at higher elevations than the CP area, such as in the Uptown and Peninsula Community Plan areas.

Future development in accordance with the CP area and surrounding communities is likely to take place on infill sites or as redevelopment of previously developed locations. Compliance with the San Diego Municipal Code, City's Land Development Code, and 2018 Community Plan would ensure that the cumulative loss of any distinctive or landmark trees or stand of mature trees, landform alteration, and light and glare impacts are avoided.

The 2018 Community Plan and surrounding communities' land use plans contain policies to ensure that new development is consistent with the existing character and protects public views. However, viewers would still notice a significant change in views due to the proximity and heights of future development in the CP area from the increase in building heights allowed by the project coupled with cumulative development. As depicted on Figures 5.1-2 through 5.1-11, the majority of the CP area is currently developed to a maximum height of 30 feet, and the project would allow heights up to 100 feet or higher in areas with no height limit, while the Navy OTC development would allow heights up to 350 feet. The cumulative development would impact Key Views 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, and 9 as follows:

- **Key View 1.** Future buildings would be visible along the horizon, primarily toward the southeast, with development of the CP area at maximum building height. The most visible buildings are the Navy OTC buildings (shown in gray) in the center-left background view and buildings in the Sports Arena area (shown in beige) in the center-right background view as shown on Figure 5.1-2, Key View 1 – View South from Sea World Drive Bridge. Under the buildout scenario, the project would result in a significant cumulative impact at Key View 1.

- **Key View 2.** Future development would be visible in the left and center background portions of the view, primarily toward the southeastern horizon, upon development of the CP area at maximum building height. The most noticeable potential changes would be seen in the left and center background portions of the view. Building heights above 40 feet can be seen from this key view, which changes the view quality of the horizon as shown on Figure 5.1-3, Key View 2 – View South from Fiesta Island. Under the buildout scenario, the project would result in a significant cumulative impact at Key View 2.
- **Key View 3.** The building heights of future development would obstruct views toward Downtown San Diego and of higher-elevation neighborhoods in the Peninsula and Uptown Community Plan areas in this view. The tallest buildings in the Navy OTC development would be visible, but the massing of buildings in the Sports Arena area has the greatest potential impact on views from this vantage point as shown on Figure 5.1-4, Key View 3 – View Southeast from Old Sea World Drive. Under the buildout scenario, the project would result in a significant cumulative impact at Key View 3.
- **Key View 5.** Due to the development in the CP area at maximum height limits, the Pechanga Arena would no longer be visible because intervening future development could be constructed adjacent to the I-8 as shown on Figure 5.1-6, Key View 5 – View Southeast from San Diego River Trail. The skyline would primarily comprise new development of 65- to 100-foot-tall buildings. Under the buildout scenario, the project would result in a significant cumulative impact at Key View 5.
- **Key View 8.** Future development would be visible in the midground views, especially looking southwest toward the Navy’s future development of the Navy OTC site. At the maximum 350-foot building height, the large massing of the buildings in the Navy OTC development would, for the most part, intrude on views of the open sky, and future development that could occur in the CP area would be mostly obscured by the Navy OTC development as shown on Figure 5.1-9, Key View 8 – View Southwest from Old Town San Diego State Historic Park. Some future development in the Commercial-Community (CC)-2-5 and CC-3-8 zones of up to 100 feet would also be visible but would not obstruct the view. Under the buildout scenario, the project would result in a significant cumulative impact at Key View 8.
- **Key View 9.** Future development would be visible in the midground views and would change northwestern views due to building heights of 100 feet or more west of I-5 as shown on Figure 5.1-10, Key View 9 – View West from Andrews Street. The Navy OTC development up to 350 feet in height would be visible in the right midground. Under the buildout scenario, the project would result in a significant cumulative impact at Key View 9.

Therefore, cumulative impacts associated with visual effects and neighborhood character would be potentially significant.

Implementation of selective height restrictions would not be feasible because it would limit the City's ability to provide a diverse range of housing types to accommodate the density approved in the 2018 Community Plan. In addition, some areas are governed by other regulating documents, such as the Port Master Plan, San Diego International Airport's Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan, and Navy OTC Revitalization Project Environmental Impact Statement, where the City does not have building height regulatory authority. Finally, the City's Complete Communities: Housing Solutions and Mobility Choices program encourages development in Transit Priority Areas, which applies to the majority of the CP area. As stated above, restricting the height may impede the City's ability to develop a wide range of housing types and would be inconsistent with the City's objective of providing housing for a variety of people. Therefore, cumulative impacts associated with visual effects and neighborhood character would remain significant and unavoidable.

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## Chapter 7.0 Other Mandatory Discussion Areas

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The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines require that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) contain a discussion of impacts associated with growth inducement, effects found not to be significant, significant unavoidable environmental impacts, and significant irreversible environmental changes. Each of these discussion areas is addressed in the following sections.

### 7.1 Growth Inducement

This Supplemental EIR (SEIR) must examine the potential growth-inducing impacts of the Removal of the Midway-Pacific Highway Community Planning Area from the Coastal Height Limit (project). More specifically, CEQA Guidelines, Section 15126.2(e), requires that an EIR:

Discuss the ways in which the proposed project could foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment. Included in this are projects which would remove obstacles to population growth (a major expansion of a waste water treatment plant might, for example, allow for more construction in service areas). Increases in the population may tax existing community service facilities, requiring construction of new facilities that could cause significant environmental effects. . . . It must not be assumed that growth in any area is necessarily beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment.

According to the City of San Diego’s (City’s) CEQA Significance Determination Thresholds, growth inducement “is usually associated with those projects that foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, which may result in the construction of major new infrastructure facilities. Also, a change in land use policy or projects that provide economic stimulus, such as industrial or commercial uses, may induce growth. Accelerated growth may further strain existing community facilities or encourage activities that could significantly affect the surrounding environment.” In addition, the thresholds state that “the analysis must avoid speculation and focus on probable growth patterns or projects” (City of San Diego 2020).

The 2018 Midway-Pacific Highway Community Plan Update Revised Final Program EIR (2018 PEIR) determined that the 2018 Midway-Pacific Highway Community Plan (2018 Community Plan) would serve as a comprehensive, long-term plan for the physical development of the Midway-Pacific Highway Community Planning area (CP area) and would be intended to manage and address future growth to support transit use and multimodal mobility. Based on the previously forecasted population, the population in the CP area would grow whether or not the 2018 Community Plan was adopted. The 2018 Community Plan included policies that directed housing growth to areas suitable for infill and new development with a focus on integrating residential uses into the planned mixed-use villages in

the community. It provided guidance on orderly growth and redevelopment in accordance with smart growth principles and, therefore, would not result in growth-inducing impacts.

The project would be limited to the CP area footprint and land use, density, and zoning analyzed in 2018 PEIR. The removal of the 30-foot height restriction would not result in a change to total allowable buildout density in the CP area; would not change the underlying base zone regulations, including the base zone's height limit; and would not allow development to extend beyond the footprint analyzed in the 2018 PEIR. With implementation of the project, the CP area population would not increase beyond what was previously analyzed in the 2018 PEIR. Therefore, the project would not be growth inducing but growth accommodating and would provide comprehensive planning for management of CP area population growth.

## **7.2 Effects Found Not to Be Significant or Adequately Examined in the 2018 PEIR**

CEQA Guidelines, Section 15128, requires that an EIR contain a brief statement disclosing the reasons why various possible significant effects of a project were found not to be significant and, therefore, are not discussed in detail in the EIR. An Initial Study (IS) (included as Appendix B) was prepared in accordance with CEQA Guidelines, Section 15063(c), during the environmental scoping process. The IS was circulated for a 30-day public review period with the Notice of Preparation. Based on tiering and subsequent review concepts identified in the CEQA Guidelines, the City determined that the following environmental resources were adequately examined in the 2018 PEIR:

- Agriculture and forestry resources
- Air quality
- Biological resources
- Energy
- Geologic conditions
- Greenhouse gas emissions
- Health and safety
- Historical and Tribal cultural resources
- Hydrology/water quality
- Land use
- Mineral resources
- Noise
- Paleontological resources
- Population and housing
- Public services and facilities
- Public utilities
- Transportation and circulation
- Wildfire

Refer to the IS (Appendix B) for a detailed discussion of the project's impacts regarding each environmental resource listed above.

## **7.3 Significant Unavoidable Environmental Impacts**

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines, Section 15126.2(c), any significant unavoidable impacts of a project, including those impacts that can be mitigated but not reduced to below a level of significance despite implementation of feasible mitigation measures, must be identified in the EIR.

For the project, impacts related to visual effects and neighborhood character would remain significant and unavoidable (refer to Section 5.1, Visual Effects and Neighborhood Character, in Chapter 5.0, Environmental Analysis, of this SEIR for more detail).

## 7.4 Significant Irreversible Environmental Changes

CEQA Guidelines, Section 15126.2(d), requires an evaluation of significant irreversible environmental changes that would occur should the project be implemented. Irreversible changes typically fall into one of three categories:

- **Primary impacts**, such as the use of nonrenewable resources (i.e., biological habitat, agricultural land, mineral deposits, water bodies, energy resources, and cultural resources)
- **Primary and secondary impacts**, such as highway improvements that provide access to previously inaccessible areas
- **Environmental accidents** potentially associated with future development under the project

CEQA Guidelines, Section 15126.2(d), states that irretrievable commitments of resources should be evaluated to assure that current consumption of such resources is justified.

Construction of development implemented in accordance with the project would require the irreversible consumption of natural resources and energy. Natural resources consumption would include lumber and other forest products, sand and gravel, asphalt, steel, copper, other metals, and water. Building materials, while perhaps recyclable in part at some long-term future date, for practical purposes, would be permanently consumed. Energy derived from nonrenewable sources, such as fossil fuels, would be consumed during construction and as a result of operational lighting, heating, cooling, and equipment and transportation uses. This commitment of natural resources and energy would be irreversible. The commitment of natural resources required for the construction and operation of the project would limit the availability of such resources for future generations or for other uses during the life of the project. Given the low likelihood that the land will revert to lower-intensity uses or its current form, the project would generally commit future generations to these environmental changes. Therefore, similar to the conclusion in the 2018 PEIR, the project would result in significant irreversible environmental changes.

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## Chapter 8.0 Alternatives

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The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, Section 15126.6, requires that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) compare the effects of a “reasonable range of alternatives” to the effects of a project. The CEQA Guidelines further specify that the alternatives selected should attain most of the basic project objectives and avoid or substantially lessen one or more significant effects of the project. The “range of alternatives” is governed by the “rule of reason,” which requires the EIR to set forth only those alternatives necessary to permit an informed and reasoned choice by the lead agency and to foster meaningful public participation (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15126.6[f]).

CEQA generally defines “feasible” to mean an alternative that is capable of being accomplished in a successful manner within a reasonable period of time while also taking into account economic, environmental, social, technological, and legal factors (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15126.6[f][1]).

As discussed in the direct and cumulative impact analyses in Sections 5.1, Visual Effects and Neighborhood Character, in Chapter 5.0, Environmental Analysis, and 6.3.1, Visual Effects and Neighborhood Character, in Chapter 6.0, Cumulative Impacts, respectively, the Removal of the Midway-Pacific Highway Community Planning Area from the Coastal Height Limit (project) would result in direct and cumulative significant environmental impacts related to scenic vistas or views and neighborhood character. In developing the alternatives to be addressed in this chapter, consideration was given regarding the alternatives’ ability to meet the basic objectives of the project and the potential to eliminate or substantially reduce the significant environmental impacts.

The following specific objectives identified in the 2018 Midway-Pacific Highway Community Plan Update Revised Final Program Environmental Impact Report (2018 PEIR) (Appendix A) and this Supplemental EIR (SEIR) support the purpose of the project, assist the City of San Diego (City) as the lead agency in developing a reasonable range of alternatives to evaluate in this SEIR, and will ultimately aid the lead agency in preparing findings and overriding considerations, if necessary. The primary objectives of the project are as follows:

1. Establish multiple-use villages and districts within the community;
2. Enhance community identity and visual character through land use and urban design;
3. Create a complete mobility system that promotes access for pedestrians, bicycles, and transit, including within existing superblocks;
4. Create a Bay-to-Bay pedestrian and bicycle linkage;
5. Identify park and recreation facilities to serve the community;
6. Provide housing and commercial uses in proximity to transit;
7. Maintain employment uses including industrial, business park, and commercial office uses to support the City’s economy;

8. Improve localized water quality and conveyance through facility improvements and design;
9. Identify future alternative uses for government-owned land in the community; and
10. Encourage housing for families (housing with three or more bedrooms) by removing development restrictions, which would allow housing developments to maximize zoned density while facilitating a diverse housing inventory with a range of housing types and prices.

The alternatives addressed in this SEIR were selected in consideration of one or more of the following factors (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15126.6[e]):

- The extent to which the alternative would feasibly accomplish most or all of the basic objectives;
- The extent to which the alternative would avoid or substantially lessen any of the identified significant environmental impacts of the project;
- The feasibility of the alternative, taking into account site suitability, economic viability, availability of infrastructure, general plan consistency, and consistency with other applicable plans and regulatory limitations;
- The appropriateness of the alternative in contributing to a “reasonable range” of alternatives necessary to permit a reasoned choice; and
- The requirement of the CEQA Guidelines to consider a “no project” alternative and to identify an “environmentally superior” alternative in addition to the no project alternative.

Based on the criteria described above, this SEIR considers the following project alternatives:

- No Project Alternative (Maintain the Coastal Height Limit)
- Reduced Height Alternative
- Reduced Density Alternative

General descriptions of the characteristics of each of these alternatives, along with a discussion of their ability to reduce the significant environmental impacts associated with the project, are provided in the following subsections.

## **8.1 No Project Alternative (Maintain the Coastal Height Limit)**

### **8.1.1 Description**

Under the No Project Alternative (Maintain the Coastal Height Limit), the existing 30-foot height limit on buildings constructed in the Coastal Height Limit Overlay Zone would continue to apply to future development in the Midway-Pacific Highway Community Planning area (CP area) that is subject to the City’s land use authority. The adopted 2018 Midway-Pacific Highway Community

Plan (2018 Community Plan) would continue to guide development in the CP area. See Figure 8-1, No Project Alternative (Maintain the Coastal Height Limit).

## **8.1.2 Analysis of No Project Alternative (Maintain the Coastal Height Limit)**

### **a. Visual Effects and Neighborhood Character**

The No Project Alternative (Maintain the Coastal Height Limit) would retain the 30-foot building height limit for future development within the Coastal Height Limit Overlay Zone. Future development under the No Project Alternative (Maintain the Coastal Height Limit) would be limited in building height compared to the project where building height would range from 30 feet to 100 feet or higher in areas with no height limit in the CP area. Impacts on scenic vistas or views under the No Project Alternative (Maintain the Coastal Height Limit) would be reduced compared to the impacts under the project. The degree of change would be less compared to the project because the height of buildings would be limited to 30 feet, and existing view corridors and key views would not substantially change from the existing 30-foot building heights. In addition, significant impacts associated with a substantial adverse alteration to the character of the area would be reduced compared to impacts under the project because the degree of change in bulk and scale of future buildings in the CP area would be reduced due to the 30-foot building height restriction.

Similar to the project, the No Project Alternative (Maintain the Coastal Height Limit) would result in less than significant impacts related to distinctive or landmark trees, landform alteration, and light and glare because future development projects in the CP area would be required to comply with the 2018 Community Plan Conservation Element and Urban Design Element policies, the outdoor lighting regulations outlined in Section 142.0740 of the City's Land Development Code (LDC), the glare regulations outlined in Section 142.0730 of the City's LDC, and the City's Multi-Habitat Planning Area (MHPA) Land Use Adjacency Guidelines.

The No Project Alternative (Maintain the Coastal Height Limit) would meet all project objectives identified in the 2018 PEIR except Project Objective 10 to encourage housing for families (housing with three or more bedrooms) by removing development restrictions, which would allow housing developments to maximize zoned density while facilitating a diverse housing inventory with a range of housing types and prices. Therefore, compared to the project, impacts on visual effects and neighborhood character would be avoided under the No Project Alternative (Maintain the Coastal Height Limit).

## **8.2 Reduced Height Alternative**

### **8.2.1 Description**

Under this alternative, building heights would be limited to 50 feet in areas along the northeastern boundary south of Interstate (I-) 8, including the Camino Del Rio District and the northern portions of

the Kurtz District, and along the entire eastern CP area boundary adjacent to I-5, including the Hancock District and the Kettner District, as shown on Figure 8-2, Reduced Height Alternative. The following zones would be height restricted to 50 feet by the Reduced Height Alternative: Residential Multi-Family (RM)-4-10; Commercial-Community (CC)-2-5, CC-3-8, and CC-3-9; and Industrial-Small Scale (IS)-1-1. These areas have the potential to cause the most impacts to visual resources and neighborhood character because they would have a maximum building height of 100 feet or no maximum height under the project. Table 8-1, Comparison of Maximum Building Heights under the Reduced Height Alternative, identifies the heights allowed in each zone under the project and the Reduced Height Alternative.

**Table 8-1. Comparison of Maximum Building Heights under the Reduced Height Alternative**

Village, District, or Area	Zoning Designation <sup>1</sup>	Project Maximum Height Limit	Reduced Height Alternative Maximum Height Limit
Sports Arena Community Village	CC-3-6	65 feet	65 feet
	RM-3-8	50 feet	50 feet
Kemper Neighborhood Village	RM-2-5	40 feet	40 feet
	RM-3-8	50 feet	50 feet
	CC-1-3	45 feet	45 feet
	CC-3-6	65 feet	65 feet
Dutch Flats Urban Village <sup>2</sup>	CO-3-1	50 feet	50 feet
	CC-3-6	65 feet	65 feet
	RM-3-8	50 feet	50 feet
Camino Del Rio District	CC-1-3	45 feet	45 feet
	CC-3-1	50 feet	50 feet
	CC-3-8	100 feet	50 feet
Channel District	RM-3-8	50 feet	50 feet
	CC-3-6	65 feet	65 feet
Rosecrans District	CC-1-3	45 feet	45 feet
	CC-3-6	65 feet	65 feet
	RM-3-8	50 feet	50 feet
Cauby District	CC-1-3	45 feet	45 feet
	CC-3-7	65 feet	65 feet
	RM-3-8	50 feet	50 feet
Lytton District	CN-1-6	65 feet	65 feet
	RM-1-1	30 feet	30 feet
	RM-3-8	50 feet	50 feet
Kurtz District <sup>2</sup>	CO-3-1	50 feet	50 feet
	CC-2-5	100 feet	50 feet
	CC-3-8	100 feet	50 feet
	IP-2-1	No limit	No limit



**Table 8-1. Comparison of Maximum Building Heights under the Reduced Height Alternative**

Village, District, or Area	Zoning Designation <sup>1</sup>	Project Maximum Height Limit	Reduced Height Alternative Maximum Height Limit
Hancock Transit Corridor	CC-2-5	100 feet	50 feet
	CC-3-8	100 feet	50 feet
	RM-3-9	60 feet	60 feet
	CC-3-9	No limit	50 feet
	RM-4-10	No limit	50 feet
Kettner District	CC-3-8	100 feet	50 feet
	IS-1-1	No limit <sup>3</sup>	50 feet
MCRD <sup>4</sup>	None	None	None

**Source:** City of San Diego 2018, 2022.

**Notes:** MCRD = Marine Corps Recruit Depot

<sup>1</sup> CC = Commercial – Community; CN = Commercial-Neighborhood; CO = Commercial-Office; IP = Industrial – Park; IS = Industrial – Small Scale; RM = Residential-Multifamily

<sup>2</sup> Includes Naval Base Point Loma, which does not have a zoned height limit. The highest intensity scenario (Alternative 4) identified under the Navy Old Town Campus Revitalization Project Environmental Impact Statement proposes buildings of up to 350 feet in height. The Coastal Height Limit does not apply to federal, state, or San Diego Unified Port District (Port) property, and the City has no land use authority over federal property (i.e., Naval Base Point Loma).

<sup>3</sup> Includes Port-owned lands regulated by the Port Master Plan, which requires that structures shall not exceed 130 feet in height. The Coastal Height Limit does not apply to federal, state, or Port property, and the City has no land use authority over Port property.

<sup>4</sup> The MCRD does not have a zoning designation; therefore, there is no height limit governing this area. The Coastal Height Limit does not apply to federal, state, or Port property, and the City has no land use authority over the federal property (i.e., MCRD).

Under this alternative, a Community Plan Implementation Overlay Zone would be established as a mechanism to implement reduced height limits in these areas. Per Chapter 13, Article 2, Division 14, Section 132.1401, of the San Diego Municipal Code (SDMC), the purpose of a Community Plan Implementation Overlay Zone is to provide supplemental development regulations that are tailored to specific sites in Community Plan areas of the City. The intent of these regulations is to ensure that development proposals are reviewed for consistency with the use and development criteria that have been adopted for specific sites as part of the Community Plan Update process. In addition, the City does not have land use authority on lands regulated by the Port Master Plan and/or the San Diego International Airport’s Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan.

Similar to the project, under the Reduced Height Alternative, building heights in the remainder of the CP area would continue to be regulated by the zoning designation maximum height allowed in the SDMC.

## 8.2.2 Analysis of Reduced Height Alternative

### a. Visual Effects and Neighborhood Character

Under the Reduced Height Alternative, future development along the northern, eastern, and southern CP area boundaries would have a limited building height of 50 feet compared to a maximum building height of 100 feet or no maximum, pursuant to the zoning designation in the

SDMC. The following zones would be height restricted to 50 feet by the Reduced Height Alternative: Residential Multi-Family (RM)-4-10; Commercial-Community (CC)-2-5, CC-3-8, and CC-3-9; and Industrial-Small Scale (IS)-1-1.

Impacts on scenic vistas under the Reduced Height Alternative would be reduced compared to the project. Specifically, the level of change to public view corridors outside the CP area would be reduced in the Uptown Community Plan area, represented by Key View 9 (Figure 5.1-10, Key View 9 – View West from Andrews Street). This is identified as a significant impact for the project. Under the Reduced Height Alternative, future development west of I-5 in the Pacific Highway corridor would be lower in height than depicted in the buildout scenario on Figure 5.1-10. The Coastal Height Limit does not apply to federal property, and the City does not have land use jurisdiction over federal property (i.e., Naval Base Point Loma). Therefore, the project would not impact the future Navy Old Town Campus (OTC) development, and the taller buildings associated with the development in the right midground view would remain unchanged. The project’s direct impact from Key View 9 would be reduced under this alternative but not to below a level of significance because viewers would still notice a change in the built landscape.

In addition, impacts associated with a substantial adverse alteration to the character of the area would be reduced compared to the project. Specifically, the level of change to the existing setting would be reduced in Key Views 1, 2, 3, 5, and 9 due to the elimination of the potential for future development of 65- to 100-foot-tall buildings along the northeastern boundary south of I-8, including the Camino Del Rio District and the northern portions of the Kurtz District, and along the entire eastern CP area boundary adjacent to I-5, including the Hancock District and the Kettner District (see Figure 8-2). In addition, because the Reduced Height Alternative would restrict building heights to 50 feet in these areas, viewer sensitivity would also be reduced because future development would not be as noticeable in Key Views 1, 2, 3, 5, and 9. A description of each of these key views under the Reduced Height Alternative is provided below:

- **Key View 1.** Development to the right of I-5 would be lower in height than depicted in the buildout scenario on Figure 5.1-2, Key View 1 – View South from Sea World Drive Bridge. The Coastal Height Limit does not apply to federal property, and the City does not have land use authority over federal property (i.e., Naval Base Point Loma). Therefore, the project would not impact this development, and the taller buildings associated with the Navy OTC development along the left side of I-5 would be unchanged. The project’s direct impact from Key View 1 would be reduced under this alternative.
- **Key View 2.** Future mid-rise development in the center of the view immediately to the right of the Pechanga Arena would be lower in height than depicted in the buildout scenario on Figure 5.1-3, Key View 2 – View South from Fiesta Island, and more consistent with existing development. The Coastal Height Limit does not apply to federal property, and the City does not have land use authority over federal property

(i.e., Naval Base Point Loma). Therefore, the project would not impact this development, and the taller buildings associated with the Navy OTC development shown in gray in the left side of the view would be unchanged. The project's direct impact from Key View 2 would be reduced under this alternative.

- **Key View 3.** Future development across the viewshed would be lower in height than depicted in the buildout scenario on Figure 5.1-4, Key View 3 – View Southeast from Old Sea World Drive. In particular, the buildings on the left side of the view would be reduced from 100 feet in height to 50 feet, which would provide a better view of the Navy OTC development behind them. A significant change in neighborhood character would still occur from Key View 3 under this alternative.
- **Key View 5.** Future development to the left of the Pechanga Arena would be lower in height than depicted in the buildout scenario on Figure 5.1-6, Key View 5 – View Southeast from San Diego River Trail. The heights in this area would be similar or less than the heights depicted in the development to the right of the Pechanga Arena. A significant change in neighborhood character would still occur from Key View 5 under this alternative.
- **Key View 9.** Future development in the Pacific Highway corridor would be lower in height than depicted in the buildout scenario on Figure 5.1-10. The Coastal Height Limit does not apply to federal property, and the City does not have land use authority over federal property (i.e., Naval Base Point Loma). Therefore, the project would not impact this development, and the taller buildings associated with the Navy OTC development along the right side of the view would be unchanged. The project's direct impact from Key View 9 would be reduced under this alternative.

The Reduced Height Alternative would reduce some, but not all, of the project's significant impacts associated with a substantial adverse alteration to the character of the area. In addition, the 10 key views of the CP area are representative views selected to demonstrate the change in views from surrounding areas adjacent to the CP area. Restricting building height limits in these areas would not necessarily reduce impacts from all possible view locations or improve the impact on neighborhood character in all areas of the CP. Therefore, impacts would be reduced compared to the project but not to below a level of significance.

Similar to the project, the Reduced Height Alternative would result in less than significant impacts related to distinctive or landmark trees, landform alteration, and light and glare because future development projects in the CP area would be required to comply with the 2018 Community Plan Conservation Element and Urban Design Element policies, the outdoor lighting regulations outlined in Section 142.0740 of the City's LDC, the glare regulations outlined in Section 142.0730 of the City's LDC, and the City's MHPA Land Use Adjacency Guidelines.

The Reduced Height Alternative would not fully implement Project Objective 6 to provide housing and commercial uses in proximity to transit or Project Objective 10 to encourage housing for families (housing with three or more bedrooms) by removing development restrictions, which would allow housing developments to maximize zoned density while facilitating a diverse housing inventory with a range of housing types and prices. The height restrictions in the northern, eastern, and southern CP area boundaries would limit the range of dwelling unit sizes that could be constructed in the CP area, which could affect the type of housing available to families and would be inconsistent with the City’s objective of providing housing for a variety of people.

Therefore, compared to the project, visual effects and neighborhood character would be substantially reduced under the Reduced Height Alternative but not to below a level of significance. Impacts would remain significant and unavoidable under this alternative.

## 8.3 Reduced Density Alternative

### 8.3.1 Description

Under this alternative, density in certain areas in the CP area would be reduced to accommodate lower building heights through rezoning. The lower density areas for the Reduced Density Alternative would be similar to the reduced height areas for the Reduced Height Alternative because these areas have the potential to cause the most impacts to visual resources and neighborhood character. As shown on Figure 8-3, Reduced Density Alternative, lower density would occur along the northeastern boundary south of I-8, including the Camino Del Rio District and the northern portions of the Kurtz District and along the entire eastern CP area boundary adjacent to I-5, including the Hancock District and the Kettner District. In these areas, the Commercial-Community (CC)-3-8 and CC-3-9 would be rezoned to CC-3-7 and Residential Multi-Family (RM)-4-10 would be rezoned to RM-3-9. Building heights would be regulated by the zoning designation maximum height allowed in the SDMC. The Commercial-Community (CC)-3-7 zone allows for a maximum building height of 65 feet, and Residential Multi-Family (RM)-3-9 allows for a maximum building height of 60 feet. Table 8-2, Comparison of Maximum Building Heights under the Reduced Density Alternative, identifies the zoning designation and heights allowed in each zone under the project and the Reduced Density Alternative.

**Table 8-2. Comparison of Maximum Building Heights under the Reduced Density Alternative**

Village, District, or Area	Project Zoning Designation <sup>1</sup>	Project Maximum Height Limit	Reduce Density Alternative Zoning Designation	Reduced Density Alternative Maximum Height Limit
Sports Arena Community Village	CC-3-6	65 feet	CC-3-6	65 feet
	RM-3-8	50 feet	RM-3-8	50 feet
Kemper Neighborhood Village	RM-2-5	40 feet	RM-2-5	40 feet
	RM-3-8	50 feet	RM-3-8	50 feet

**Table 8-2. Comparison of Maximum Building Heights under the Reduced Density Alternative**

Village, District, or Area	Project Zoning Designation <sup>1</sup>	Project Maximum Height Limit	Reduce Density Alternative Zoning Designation	Reduced Density Alternative Maximum Height Limit
	CC-1-3	45 feet	CC-1-3	45 feet
	CC-3-6	65 feet	CC-3-6	65 feet
Dutch Flats Urban Village <sup>2</sup>	CO-3-1	50 feet	CO-3-1	50 feet
	CC-3-6	65 feet	CC-3-6	65 feet
	RM-3-8	50 feet	RM-3-8	50 feet
Camino Del Rio District	CC-1-3	45 feet	CC-1-3	45 feet
	CC-3-1	50 feet	CC-3-1	50 feet
	CC-3-8	100 feet	CC-3-7	65 feet
Channel District	RM-3-8	50 feet	RM-3-8	50 feet
	CC-3-6	65 feet	CC-3-6	65 feet
Rosecrans District	CC-1-3	45 feet	CC-1-3	45 feet
	CC-3-6	65 feet	CC-3-6	65 feet
	RM-3-8	50 feet	RM-3-8	50 feet
Cauby District	CC-1-3	45 feet	CC-1-3	45 feet
	CC-3-7	65 feet	CC-3-7	65 feet
	RM-3-8	50 feet	RM-3-8	50 feet
Lytton District	CN-1-6	65 feet	CN-1-6	65 feet
	RM-1-1	30 feet	RM-1-1	30 feet
	RM-3-8	50 feet	RM-3-8	50 feet
Kurtz District <sup>2</sup>	CO-3-1	50 feet	CO-3-1	50 feet
	CC-2-5	100 feet	CC-2-5	100 feet
	CC-3-8	100 feet	CC-3-7	65 feet
	IP-2-1	No limit	IP-2-1	No limit
Hancock Transit Corridor	CC-2-5	100 feet	CC-2-5	100 feet
	CC-3-8	100 feet	CC-3-7	65 feet
	RM-3-9	60 feet	RM-3-9	60 feet
	CC-3-9	No limit	CC-3-7	65 feet
	RM-4-10	No limit	RM-3-9	60 feet
Kettner District	CC-3-8	100 feet	CC-3-7	65 feet
	IS-1-1	No limit <sup>3</sup>	IS-1-1	No limit
MCRD <sup>4</sup>	None	None	None	None

**Source:** City of San Diego 2018, 2022.

**Notes:** MCRD = Marine Corps Recruit Depot

<sup>1</sup> CC = Commercial – Community; CN = Commercial-Neighborhood; CO = Commercial-Office; IP = Industrial – Park; IS = Industrial – Small Scale; RM = Residential-Multifamily

<sup>2</sup> Includes Naval Base Point Loma, which does not have a zoned height limit. The highest intensity scenario (Alternative 4) identified under the Navy Old Town Campus Revitalization Project Environmental Impact Statement proposes buildings of up to

350 feet in height. The Coastal Height Limit does not apply to federal, state, or San Diego Unified Port District (Port) property, and the City has no land use authority over federal property (i.e., Naval Base Point Loma).

<sup>3</sup> Includes Port-owned lands regulated by the Port Master Plan, which requires that structures shall not exceed 130 feet in height. The Coastal Height Limit does not apply to federal, state, or Port property, and the City has no land use authority over Port property.

<sup>4</sup> The MCRD does not have a zoning designation; therefore, there is no height limit governing this area. The Coastal Height Limit does not apply to federal, state, or Port property, and the City has no land use authority over federal property (i.e., MCRD).

The City has no land use authority on lands regulated by the Port Master Plan and/or the San Diego International Airport's Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan.

### **8.3.2 Analysis of Reduced Density Alternative**

#### **a. Visual Effects and Neighborhood Character**

Under the Reduced Density Alternative, future development along the northern, eastern, and southern CP area boundaries would be rezoned to have a limited building height of 60–65 feet as designated by the SDMC compared a maximum building height of 100 feet under their current zoning designations as allowed by the project. Zones Commercial-Community (CC)-3-8 and CC-3-9 would be rezoned to CC-3-7, and Residential Multi-Family (RM)-4-10 would rezoned to RM-3-9 under the Reduced Density Alternative.

Impacts on scenic vistas under the Reduced Density Alternative would be reduced compared to the project. Specifically, the level of change to public view corridors outside the CP area would be reduced in the Uptown Community Plan area, represented by Key View 9 (Figure 5.1-10). This is identified as a significant impact for the project. Under the Reduced Density Alternative, future development west of I-5 in the Pacific Highway corridor would be lower in height than depicted in the buildout scenario on Figure 5.1-10. The Coastal Height Limit does not apply to federal property, and the City does not have land use authority over federal property (i.e., Naval Base Point Loma). Therefore, the project would not impact this development, and the taller buildings associated with the Navy OTC development in the right midground view would remain unchanged. Therefore, the project's direct impact from Key View 9 would be reduced under this alternative but not to below a level of significance because viewers would still notice a change in the built landscape.

In addition, impacts associated with a substantial adverse alteration to the character of the area would be reduced compared to the project. Specifically, the level of change to the existing setting would be reduced in Key Views 1, 2, 3, 5, and 9 due to the elimination of the potential for future development of up to 100-foot-tall buildings along the northeastern boundary south of I-8, including the Camino Del Rio District and the northern portions of the Kurtz District, and along the entire eastern CP area boundary adjacent to I-5, including the Hancock District and the Kettner District (see Figure 8-3). In addition, because the Reduced Density Alternative would result in a rezone limiting building heights to 65 feet in these areas, viewer sensitivity would also be reduced because future development would not be as noticeable in Key Views 1, 2, 3, 5, and 9. A description of each of these key views under the Reduced Density Alternative is provided below:

- **Key View 1.** Development to the right of I-5 would be lower in height than depicted in the buildout scenario primarily toward the southeast as building heights would be limited to 60–65 feet compared to maximum buildout of 100 feet as shown on Figure 5.1-2. The Coastal Height Limit does not apply to federal property, and the City does not have land use authority over federal property (i.e., Naval Base Point Loma). Therefore, the project would not impact this development, and the taller buildings associated with the Navy OTC development along the left side of I-5 would be unchanged. The project’s direct impact from Key View 1 would be reduced under this alternative.
- **Key View 2.** Future mid-rise development in the center of the view immediately to the right of the Pechanga Arena would be remain the same as depicted in the buildout scenario on Figure 5.1-3. In addition, development to the left would be lower in height as depicted in the buildout scenario. The Coastal Height Limit does not apply to federal property, and the City does not have land use authority over federal property (i.e., Naval Base Point Loma). Therefore, the project would not impact this development, and the taller buildings associated with the Navy OTC development shown in gray in the left side of the view would be unchanged. The project’s direct impact from Key View 2 would be reduced under this alternative.
- **Key View 3.** Future development across the viewshed would be lower in height than depicted in the buildout scenario on Figure 5.1-4. In particular, the buildings on the left side of the view would be reduced from 100 feet in height to 60–65 feet, which would provide a better view of the Navy OTC development behind them. A significant change in neighborhood character would still occur from Key View 3 under this alternative.
- **Key View 5.** Future development to the left of the Pechanga Arena would be lower in height than depicted in the buildout scenario on Figure 5.1-6. The heights in this area would be similar or less than the heights depicted in the development to the right of the Pechanga Arena. A significant change in neighborhood character would still occur from Key View 5 under this alternative.
- **Key View 9.** Future development in the Pacific Highway corridor would be lower in height than depicted in the buildout scenario on Figure 5.1-10. The Coastal Height Limit does not apply to federal property, and the City does not have land use authority over federal property (i.e., Naval Base Point Loma). Therefore, the project would not impact this development, and the taller buildings associated with the Navy OTC development along the right side of the view would be unchanged. The project’s direct impact from Key View 9 would be reduced under this alternative.

The Reduced Density Alternative would reduce some, but not all, of the project’s significant impacts associated with a substantial adverse alteration to the character of the area. In addition, the 10 key views of the CP area are representative views selected to demonstrate the change in views from surrounding areas adjacent to the CP area. Restricting development density through rezoning

in these areas would not necessarily reduce impacts from all possible view locations or improve the impact on neighborhood character in all areas of the CP area. Therefore, impacts would be reduced compared to the project but not to below a level of significance.

Similar to the project, the Reduced Density Alternative would result in less than significant impacts related to distinctive or landmark trees, landform alteration, and light and glare because future development projects in the CP area would be required to comply with the 2018 Community Plan Conservation Element and Urban Design Element policies, the outdoor lighting regulations outlined in Section 142.0740 of the City's LDC, the glare regulations outlined in Section 142.0730 of the City's LDC, and the City's MHPA Land Use Adjacency Guidelines.

The Reduced Density Alternative would not fully implement Project Objective 6 to provide housing and commercial uses in proximity to transit; Project Objective 7 to maintain employment uses including industrial, business park, and commercial office uses to support the City's economy to the same extent as the project; or Project Objective 10 to encourage housing for families (housing with three or more bedrooms) by removing development restrictions, which would allow housing developments to maximize zoned density while facilitating a diverse housing inventory with a range of housing types and prices. This is due to the reduced development density in the northern, eastern, and southern CP area boundaries, which would impede the City's ability to achieve the buildout density identified in the 2018 Community Plan. Furthermore, this alternative would limit the range of dwelling unit sizes that could be constructed in the CP area, which could affect the type of housing available to families and would be inconsistent with the City's objective of providing housing for a variety of people.

Therefore, compared to the project, visual effects and neighborhood character would be substantially reduced under the Reduced Density Alternative but not to below a level of significance. Impacts would remain significant and unavoidable under this alternative.

#### **8.4 Environmentally Superior Alternative**

CEQA Guidelines, Section 15126.6(e)(2), requires the identification of an environmentally superior alternative among the alternatives analyzed in an EIR. The guidelines also require that, if the No Project Alternative (Maintain the Coastal Height Limit) is identified as the environmentally superior alternative, then another environmentally superior alternative must be identified. Table 8-3, Summary of Impacts for Alternatives Compared to the Project, provides a summary comparison of the alternatives with the project to highlight if the alternatives would result in a similar, greater, or lesser impact regarding potentially significant impacts.



**Table 8-3. Summary of Impacts for Alternatives Compared to the Project**

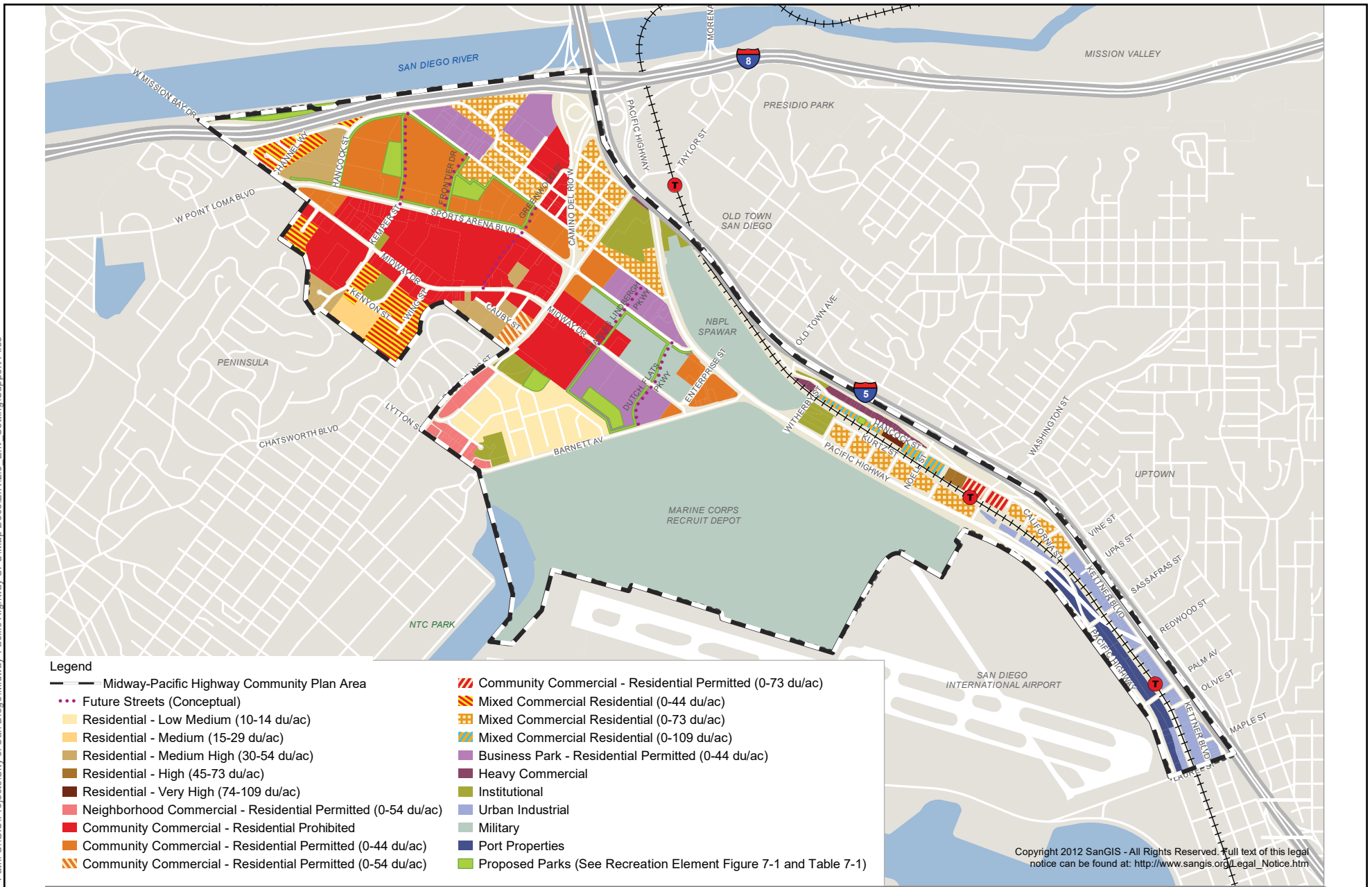
Impact	Project		Alternatives		
	Without Mitigation	With Mitigation	No Project (Maintain the Coastal Height Limit)	Reduced Height Alternative	Reduced Density Alternative
<b>Visual Effects and Neighborhood Character</b>					
Issue 1: Scenic Vistas or Views	PS	SU (direct and cumulative impact)	<	<	<
Issue 2: Neighborhood Character	PS	SU (direct and cumulative impact)	<	<	<
Issue 3: Distinctive or Landmark Trees	LS	LS	=	=	=
Issue 4: Landform Alteration	LS	LS	=	=	=
Issue 5: Light or Glare	LS	LS	=	=	=

**Notes:** LS = Less than Significant Impact; NI = No Impact; PS = Potentially Significant Impact; SU = Significant and Unavoidable  
 = Impacts would be similar to those of the project.  
 > Impacts would be greater than those of the project.  
 < Impacts would be less than those of the project.

Based on a comparison of the alternatives' overall environmental impacts and their compatibility with the project's goals and objectives, the Reduced Height Alternative is the environmentally superior alternative for this SEIR. Under the Reduced Height Alternative, building heights would be limited to 50 feet compared to 60–65 feet under the Reduced Density Alternative. The Reduced Height Alternative would reduce impacts on visual effects and neighborhood character compared to the project, although not to below a level of significance.

Regarding attaining most of the basic project objectives, the Reduced Height Alternative would not fully implement Project Objective 6 to provide housing and commercial uses in proximity to transit or Project Objective 10 to encourage housing for families (housing with three or more bedrooms) by removing development restrictions, which would allow housing developments to maximize zoned density while facilitating a diverse housing inventory with a range of housing types and prices. This is due to the potential for the height restrictions in the northern, eastern, and southern CP area boundaries to limit the range of dwelling unit sizes that could be constructed in the CP area, which could affect the type of housing available to families and would be inconsistent with the City's objective of providing housing for a variety of people.

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Source: AECOM 2018.

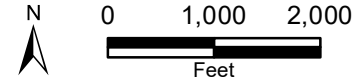
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Source: City of San Diego/Midway-Pacific Highway Community Planning Area, 2017.

CP Area	CC-1-3: 45ft Max	IS-1-1: 50ft Max	CN-1-6: 65ft Max
Alternative Reduced Height Zone	CC-2-5: 50ft Max	RM-3-8: 50ft Max	CC-3-7: 65ft Max
<b>Zoning: Max Height</b>	CC-3-8: 50ft Max	RM-4-10: 50ft Max	CC-4-5: ≥100ft Max
RM-1-1: 30ft Max	CC-3-9: 50ft Max	RM-3-9: 60ft Max	IP-2-1: ≥100ft Max
RM-2-5: 40ft Max	CO-3-1: 50ft Max	CC-3-6: 65ft Max	M: ≥100ft Max
		RM-4-10: ≥100ft Max	

Source: City of San Diego 2022; SanGIS Imagery 2017.

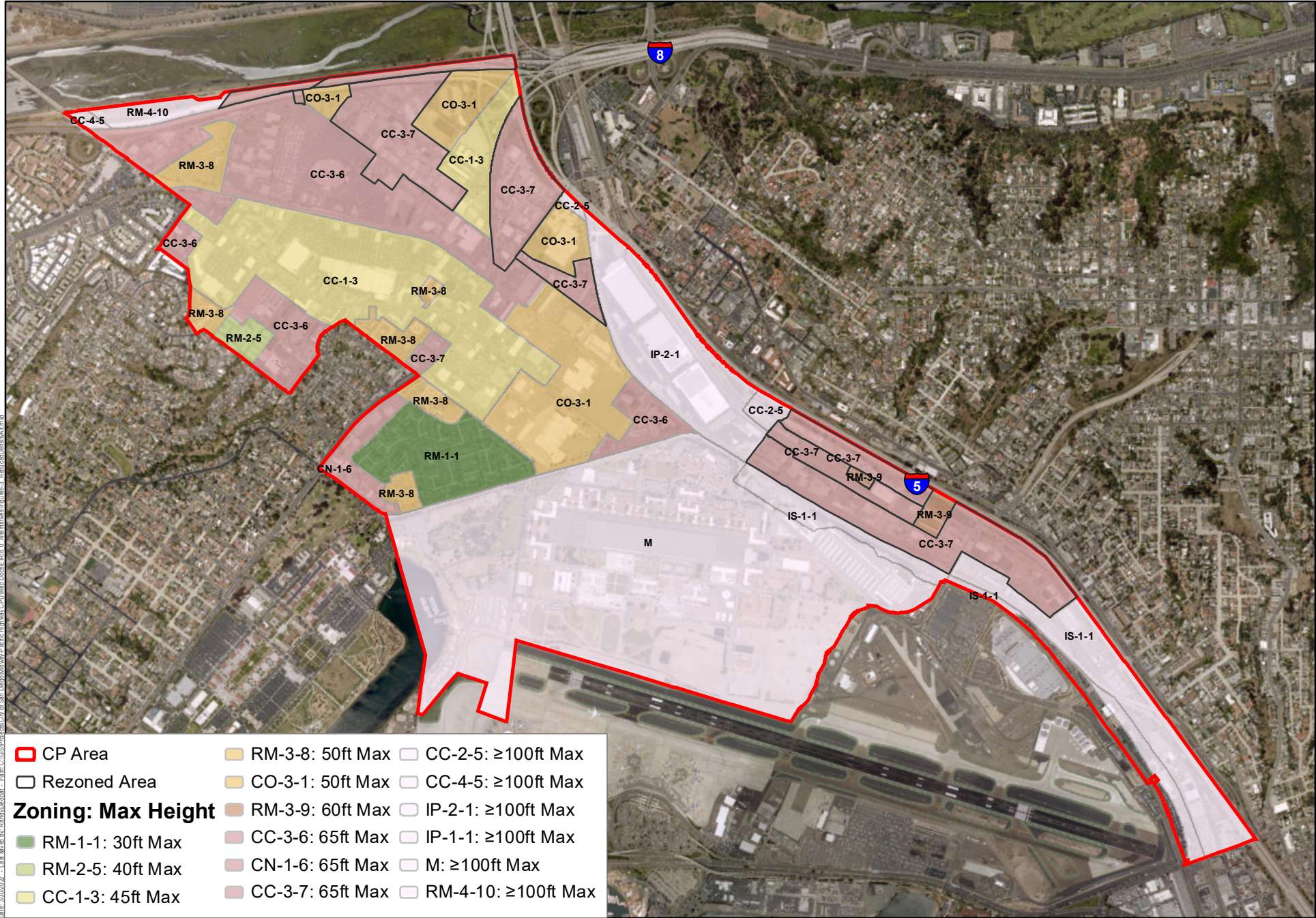


**Figure 8-2**

Reduced Height Alternative

Removal of the Midway-Pacific Highway Community Planning Area from the Coastal Height Limit

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Date: 3/20/22 - 1:14:58 PM; Path: C:\GIS\Projects\City of San Diego\Map\MapDocs\EIS\0 - Alternatives\Figure 8-3 - ReducedDensityAlt.mxd

Source: City of San Diego 2022; SanGIS Imagery 2017.



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City of San Diego. 2022. San Diego Municipal Code. Accessed April 2022. <https://www.sandiego.gov/city-clerk/officialdocs/municipal-code>.

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## **Chapter 10.0      Individuals and Agencies Consulted**

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Refer to the 2018 Midway-Pacific Highway Community Plan Update Revised Final Program Environmental Impact Report (2018 PEIR) for individuals and agencies consulted during the 2018 PEIR process. No additional individuals or agencies were consulted during the preparation of this Supplemental EIR (SEIR).

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## **Chapter 11.0 Certification**

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This Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) has been completed by the City of San Diego's Planning Department and is based on independent analysis and determinations made pursuant to the San Diego Municipal Code, Section 128.0103. The following individuals contributed to the preparation of this SEIR.

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