<Sample Image>

Dynamic – *Ambitious, full of new ideas, flexible, adaptable to new conditions, and produces change.*

Durable – *Useful, able to perform over a long period, implementable, and reliably delivers results.*

The General Plan identifies a preferred future for National City and steers land use and development policies in that desired direction. It serves as the foundation for all planning decisions in National City. This is the first comprehensive revision of the city's General Plan in thirteen years. The previous General Plan was adopted in 1996. One of the main objectives of this comprehensive update is to create a dynamic and durable document that describes the interconnectedness of key urban planning issues, responds to the needs of a diverse citizenry, identifies realistic implementing actions, and establishes evaluation criteria to track National City's progress towards reaching its goals and policies.

A. What is a General Plan?

California law requires every city and county in the state to prepare and adopt a comprehensive and long-range general plan for the physical development of the jurisdiction[1]. The general plan serves as a blueprint for both public and private future development and outlines goals, policies, and implementation measures that reflect the city's values and priorities.

The following example shows the relationship among goals, policies, and implementation measures. The example is arranged to show a hierarchy from the general to the specific – goal to implementation measure. Although only one policy and one implementation measure are listed in the example, goals may have multiple policies and policies may have multiple implementation measures. In addition, implementation measures may relate to more than one policy. Pursuant to the State General Plan Guidelines (2003), each general plan policy should have at least one corresponding implementation measure.

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[1] Government Code § 65300.

Goal – *A broad direction-setter identifying an ideal future end related to health, safety, or general welfare.*

Policy – *A specific statement that guides decision-making. It indicates a particular commitment of the local legislative body to a particular course of action and helps to reach a general plan's goals.*

Implementation Measure - *An action, procedure, program, or technique that carries out the policy.*

Example Goal:
- ❖ Maintain and enhance the quality of existing residential neighborhoods in National City.

Example Policy:
- ❖ Improve the conditions of existing housing by continuing to provide assistance for housing rehabilitation and home improvement.

Example Implementation Measure:
- ❖ The City shall provide loans and rebates to income-qualified households to correct health and safety code violations, increase energy efficiency, and make other essential repairs.

State law requires every general plan to address seven specific topics, known as "elements," to the extent that they are locally relevant[2]. The city must ensure that the general plan and its elements form an integrated, internally consistent, and compatible statement of development policies[3]. The following briefly describes the State requirements for the seven, mandatory elements:

- The **Land Use Element** designates the general distribution type and intensity of all uses of the land in a jurisdiction. This includes residential uses, commercial uses, industrial uses, public facilities, and open space, among others.

- The **Circulation Element** identifies the general location and extent of existing and proposed major transportation facilities, including major roadways, bikeways, pedestrian trails, rail and transit, seaports, and airports.

- The **Housing Element** assesses current and projected housing needs and establishes policies and proposals for improving housing and providing adequate housing sites to meet all economic levels. State law requires that the Housing Element be reviewed by the State Housing and Community Development Department. The Housing Element is required to be updated every eight years and is tied to regional planning activities carried out by SANDAG. Therefore, it is on a separate update cycle from the rest of this General Plan.

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[2] Government Code § 65302.
[3] Government Code § 65300.5.

- The **Safety Element** establishes policies and programs to protect the community from risks associated with natural and manmade hazards such as seismic, geologic, flooding, and fire hazards.

- The **Noise Element** identifies and assesses noise problems and includes policies to protect the community from excessive noise levels.

- The **Open Space Element** details plans and measures for the preservation of land for the managed production of resources, protection of natural resources, and for public health and safety.

- The **Conservation Element** addresses the conservation, development, and use of natural resources, including water, forests, soils, rivers and creeks, wildlife habitats, sensitive vegetation, and mineral deposits.

State law allows cities to adopt a general plan in the format that best fits its unique circumstances and allows for the inclusion of optional elements. National City has chosen to adopt a general plan that integrates optional elements into the mandatory elements and includes two additional elements:

- **Community character**, which refers to the distinguishing characteristics of a place that make it unique, is included as a component of the Land Use Element;

- **Agriculture**, including the establishment of neighborhood gardens and other food-producing opportunities, is included as a component of the Open Space Element;

- **Sustainability** is a theme throughout all of the elements, but it is specifically included as a component of the Conservation Element as it relates to water and energy consumption and water and air quality;

- **Nuisances,** which refer to activities that interfere with the use and enjoyment of one's property, are included as a component of the noise element;

Sustainability - *Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.*

Environmental justice - The fair treatment and meaningful participation of people of all races, cultures, and incomes with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

- **Health and Environmental Justice**, which refers to improving public health and well being equally for all segments of the population through the design of the built environment, is an added element; and,

- **Education,** including partnering with school districts and increasing educational and community participation opportunities, is an added element.

All elements of a general plan, whether they are mandatory or optional, are regarded as equally important. In addition, the goals and policies within each element are consistent with each other and with the other elements of the plan.

The general plan's maps, diagrams, and development policies form the basis for the zoning ordinance, subdivision ordinance, design guidelines, and capital improvement actions – tools which implement the general plan. Under California law, no specific plan, zoning, subdivision map, or public works project may be approved unless the City finds that it is consistent with the adopted general plan.

B.   National City Profile

National City is located in San Diego County, approximately five miles south of downtown San Diego and eleven miles north of the Mexican border (Refer to Figure 1-1, Regional Location). It encompasses 9.2 square miles and is considered almost fully developed. It is bordered by the City of San Diego to the north and east, the San Diego Bay to the west, and the City of Chula Vista to the south. In addition, a small unincorporated community, known as Lincoln Acres, is located to the southeast of National City, generally north of SR-54 and east of I-805. I-5 and I-805 cross National City from north to south, and State Route 54 traverses the southern edge.

National City is San Diego County's second oldest city and was incorporated on September 17, 1887. It has a long and rich history. The land that National City now occupies was originally home to the Jamacha Tribe of the Diegueno Indians and was later used by Spanish soldiers to graze horses. It was part of the 26,000-acre El Rancho de la Nacion Spanish land grant, which was granted to John Forster, the son-in law of Mexican governor Pio Pico, in 1845. The United States claimed California following the Mexican-Amercian war in 1874. Even though California became a state in 1850, land grants were allowed to continue as private property under American law. After ten

years, Forester sold his land to a French developer and in 1868, it was purchased by Frank, Warren, and Levi Kimball.

The Kimball brothers cleared the lands, built roads, constructed the City's first wharf and brought the first railroad into town. The Kimballs were responsible for opening the first post office and the first library in National City. They were also involved in several other business ventures including brick burning, lumber cutting, raising sheep, and growing produce. Frank Kimball worked with the US Department of Agriculture to plant a variety of items imported from other areas, including orange trees, lemon trees, eucalyptus trees, olive trees, grape vines, red oats, and potatoes[4]. In 1885 the Kimball brothers began advertising San Diego County by taking its best produce to national and international fairs, where it always won top honors. During this time many travelers took advantage of low cost train tickets and came to California intending to visit, but ended up settling here. The result was a financial boom[4].

National City experienced a sudden increase in building and population growth during the mid- to late 1880's. By 1893, America experienced a serious economic depression due largely to overbuilding and shaky financing of railroads. During this time, Frank Kimball sold much of his land to Ralph Granger, a Colorado silver mining man. Ralph built a music hall, Granger Hall, where many famous musicians played.

National City's automotive heritage began in 1904 when Ralph Granger bought his first car. It was the first motor car in the City. The motor car was quickly accepted by the pioneers of National City. Clarence and William Hunt opened the first auto dealership in 1904. The brothers were contacted by the wealthy Arnie Babock, whose father built the famous Hotel del Coronado, to build a reliable sturdy motor car in their machine shop. The "Hunt Special" was successfully tested in 1910. While the Hunt Special was under construction, National City citizens learned about the new Ford Model T that sold for $850 and National Avenue (renamed National City Boulevard in 1978) was packed with vehicles sputtering down the newly paved road. In the late 1920's Chevrolet began to outsell Ford's basic Model T and National Avenue was graced by the automobiles of some of Hollywood's most famous stars including Clark Gable and Jean Harlow. By 1955, car dealerships were flourishing

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[4] Phillips, I. (July 1962). National City in Review. San Diego Historical Society Quarterly. Vol. 8, No. 2.

along National Avenue and advertising themselves as the "Mile of Cars"[5].

Agriculture in National City experienced two natural disasters that would impact the industry. In 1913, a major frost damaged many of the fruit and olive trees and in 1916, the Sweetwater Dam collapsed and destroyed much of the farmland and homes in its path to the ocean. As a result, various industries began to gradually replace farming. In 1943, the South Bay Plaza Shopping Center was the second shopping center to open in the county.

As of 2009, National City has a population of approximately 61,000. Since the 1990s, National City has experienced slight changes in ethnic mix. In 1990, 26.1% of residents were white, compared to 13.2% in 2008. The population of African Americans declined slightly from 7.9% in 1990 to 5.5% in 2008. The percentage of Hispanic/Latino residents increased from 49.6% in 1990 to 60.5% in 2008. In 1990, 15.9% of residents were Asian/Pacific Islander, compared to 17.9% in 2008. Filipinos make up a significant portion of this Asian population. These numbers indicate that National City has experienced an influx of immigrants from Mexico and Central America as well as from Asia and the Pacific Islands, while the population of white and African American residents has been decreasing. The percentage of other races or two or more races has increased approximately 93% between 1990 and 2000, but still makes up a relatively small percentage of the total population at just fewer than 3%. Possible reasons for this increase include people becoming more aware of the mixed race designation and the US Census making it easier to choose this designation. Refer to Table 1-1.

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[5] "History of the Mile". (2008). Mile of Cars Association. http://www.mileofcars.com/history-of-the-mile.php

TABLE 1-1
Population Characteristics 1990-2008[6]

Race/Ethnicity	1990		2000		2008		Percent Change 1990-2008
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
White	14,080	26.1%	7,653	14.1%	8,073	13.2%	-42.7%
Hispanic/Latino	26,914	49.8%	32,053	59.1%	37,028	60.5%	+27.3%
Asian/Pacific Islander	8,608	15.9%	10,262	18.9%	10,980	17.9%	+21.6%
African American	4,265	7.9%	2,823	5.2%	3,343	5.5%	-21.6%
Other Races or 2+Races	124	0.23%	1,469	2.7%	1,766	2.9%	+93%
TOTAL	53,991	100%	54,260	100%	61,190	100%	+11.8%

National City's population has increased 11.3 percent from 2000 to 2008, which is slightly higher than the percentage of growth experienced in San Diego County during the same timeframe. The SANDAG 2030 Regional Growth Forecast estimates that National City is one of the six jurisdictions in the County that will grow at a faster rate than the regional average. National City's population is expected to increase 33% between 2004 and 2030, while housing is expected to increase by 26%. Refer to Table 1-2.

TABLE 1-2
Population And Dwelling Unit Projections (2004-2030)[7]

	2004		2010		2020		2030		2004 to 2030 Change			
	Pop.	DUs.	Pop.	DUs.	Pop.	DUs.	Pop.	DUs.	Pop.		DUs.	
									Num.	%	Num.	%
National City	56,018	15,158	59,905	15,722	69,104	18,481	74,241	19,108	18,233	33	3,950	26

These projections give an idea of the quantity of growth that is likely to occur in the future. These projections are not targets or absolute limits, but can serve as guides to help ensure that the City is adequately prepared to address future needs.

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[6] 1990 Census; 2000 Census; SANDAG Current Estimates, 2008.
[7] SANDAG 2030 Regional Growth Forecast Update, July 2008.

C. The Planning Area

The State of California encourages cities and counties to look beyond their borders during General Plan development and update processes, and to consider a planning area that extends beyond the municipal limits. Therefore, this General Plan assesses an area known as the Planning Area, which extends beyond the City's limits to include the sphere of influence (Refer to Figure 1-2, Planning Area Boundary). While the City does not have regulatory power over the unincorporated portion of the Planning Area, including it in the Planning Area signals that National City recognizes the impact that development within this area has on the future of the City. The unincorporated portion of the Planning Area will remain under the jurisdiction of San Diego County unless and until such time as it is annexed into the City of National City. There is no other land outside of the sphere of influence within the Planning Area boundary because all of the other land surrounding National City is located within the city limits of Chula Vista or San Diego.

Sphere of influence – *The probable ultimate physical boundaries and service area of the City, as determined by the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) of the county. National City's sphere of influence corresponds with city limits in all areas except that it encompasses the unincorporated community of Lincoln Acres.*

D. General Plan Organization

National City's General Plan contains six parts as follows:

PART 1: INTRODUCTION. The introduction identifies what a General Plan is and what its purpose is. It contains a description of National City and the General Plan Planning Area. It also reviews the organization and use of the General Plan as well as the process of how it was prepared.

PART 2: VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES. Part 2 describes National City's vision for the future and the guiding principles upon which the goals, policies, and implementation measures are based.

PART 3: GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS. Part 3 contains the nine topical elements of the General Plan, which set out citywide goals and policies. The nine elements are:

The **Land Use and Community Character Element.**

The **Circulation Element**.

The **Housing Element**. This element is located in a separately bound document.

The **Safety Element**.

The **Noise and Nuisance Element**.

The **Open Space and Agriculture Element**.

The **Conservation and Sustainability Element**.

The **Health and Environmental Justice Element**.

The **Education Element**.

PART 4: CITYWIDE IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES. To help ensure that appropriate actions are taken to implement the General Plan, Part 4 includes a set of implementation programs. Implementation programs identify the specific steps to be taken by the City to implement the policies outlined in the General Plan. They may include revisions of current codes and ordinances, plans and capital improvements, programs, financing, and other measures that should be assigned to various City departments after the General Plan is adopted.

PART 5: NEIGHBORHOOD AND DISTRICT ACTION PLANS. Part 5 of the General Plan provides more specific policy direction and implementation measures for nine neighborhoods and four business districts.

PART 6: INDICATORS. Part 6 of the General Plan identifies a series of indicators that the City can use to track its progress towards achieving its general plan goals and policies. Measuring how well a city is currently performing on a specific issue and identifying changes that have occurred as a result of implemented policies and programs helps to identify the effectiveness of a city's actions and provides the opportunity to modify those actions as necessary in order to meet certain targets.

Indicator – A measurement that identifies the progress (or lack of progress) being made towards a particular goal. For example, if a goal is help kids get active and healthy, one way to measure progress is by assessing annual physical fitness test results before and after a specific recreational program has been implemented.

E.   How to Use the General Plan

The City's General Plan is intended for use by all members of the community including residents, businesses, developers, City staff, and decision-makers. The organization of the General Plan allows users to find topics or sections that interest them and to quickly review city policies. However, users should realize that the policies throughout all elements are interrelated and should be examined comprehensively and must be considered together when making planning decisions.

For residents, the General Plan indicates the general types of uses that are permitted within their neighborhoods and the long-range plans and changes that may affect their neighborhoods. The General Plan also identifies the policies the City will use to evaluate development applications. It indicates how the City will attract businesses that provide goods and services to meet daily needs and new jobs that lessen the need to commute. The General Plan informs

residents how the City plans to improve transportation infrastructure, continue to provide adequate public services and facilities, and protect valued open spaces and environmental resources. It also describes the actions the City will take to ensure that the city and its neighborhoods remain great places to live.

For businesses, the General Plan outlines the measures the City will take to protect investments and encourage future success. Expectations for the city's business areas are spelled out and policies ensure that business operations will be compatible with other businesses and nearby residential areas.

For developers, or those moving homes or businesses to the city, the General Plan introduces the community, provides background information, and outlines development regulations. It is important to review all maps and policies throughout this General Plan, the Background Report, Design Guidelines, and the National City Municipal Code to get a complete perspective on how and where development may occur.

For decision-makers, the General Plan is a tool to help city staff, the Planning Commission, other boards and commissions, and the City Council make land use and public investment decisions. Future development decisions must be consistent with the General Plan.

The General Plan is also intended to help other public agencies, from Caltrans to SANDAG to local school districts, as they contemplate future actions in and around National City.

F.   General Plan Preparation Process

The General Plan Update process began in March of 2009 and the Plan was adopted on _____. This General Plan effort is the result of work by city residents and business owners representing all segments of this community. Hundreds of residents participated in many different roles bringing their ideas, passions, and energy to plan National City's future. This input has directly shaped the General Plan.

Note: This section should be revised/expanded upon as we get further along in the process.

Public participation efforts to include here:

- The Strategic Plan process;
- Coordination efforts with the Port District, County of San Diego, School Districts, Military, and other organizations (EHC, ICF, etc.).
- The November 2009 Neighborhood Councils (NHC) breakfast;
- The open-ended SWOT questionnaire that was provided at the NHC breakfast and online;
- Three series of community workshops held at each of the community parks in February, May, and September of 2010;
- The multiple-choice SWOT questionnaire that was provided at the February community workshops and online;
- The elementary school student assembly presentations and map assignment;
- The five Council Working Meetings;
- The fellowship programs;
- Neighborhood action committees.

Legend

Base Layers

- ┅┅ National City Planning Area Boundary
- ▭ National City Boundary
- ▬ Roads_Freeway
- ▬ Roads_Major

EL CAJON

LA MESA

LEMON GROVE

SAN DIEGO

CORONADO

NATIONAL CITY

San Diego Bay

CHULA VISTA

PACIFIC OCEAN

IMPERIAL BEACH

USA
MEXICO

TIJUANA

Figure 1-1
Regional Location

N

0   1   2   4
Miles

CALIFORNIA
NATIONAL CITY
1887
INCORPORATED

X-XX
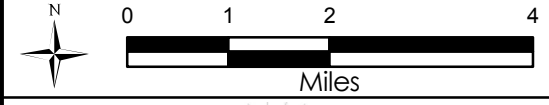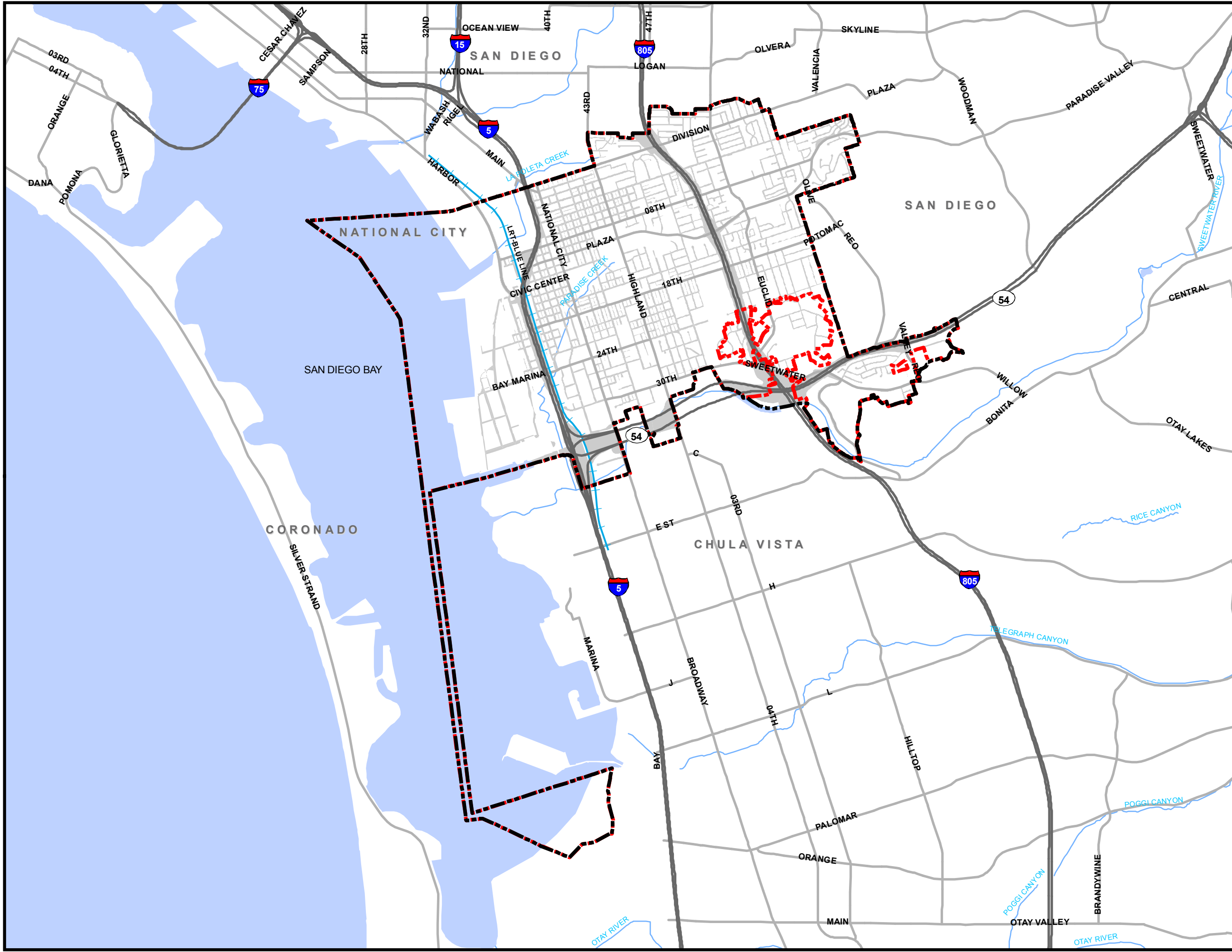
Legend

Base Layers

- ▪▪▪ National City Planning Area Boundary
- ▪▪▪ National City Boundary
- ▬▬ Freeways
- ▬▬ Major Roads
- ┼┼ Railroad

Figure 1-2
Planning Area Boundary

N

0   0.375   0.75   1.5
Miles

CALIFORNIA
NATIONAL CITY
1887
INCORPORATED

X-XX