



Education




A. Introduction

Schools are an important part of the National City community. They educate our children, host neighborhood events, and provide open space for play. National City’s public schools are administered by the National City School District. National City has aligned its neighborhood boundaries with National School District’s elementary school attendance boundaries so as to emphasize schools as important focal points within neighborhoods. These neighborhood boundaries are also important in organizing citizen participation efforts by becoming the basis for the Neighborhood Action Plans presented in Part Five of this General Plan.

The City of National City recognizes that improving educational opportunities for people of all ages is critical to enhancing quality of life and contributes to developing an active and informed citizenry. It addresses day care, after school, library, occupational training, and formal and informal life-long learning programs in addition to community participation. Although school districts are separate political jurisdictions from the City, the City’s actions can have a profound impact on the ability of schools to provide a quality educational environment. Therefore, opportunities to collaborate and partner with school districts are also identified.

The education element is not a state-mandated element. The authorization for this optional element is contained within Section 65303 of the State of California Government Code, which authorizes local jurisdictions to adopt additional elements beyond the mandatory elements.



Life Long Learning
 – The voluntary, self-motivated pursuit of knowledge for personal or professional reasons. Life long learning opportunities come in many forms ranging from the informal informational plaque explaining the habitat types found along a recreational trail to a formal classroom setting at a community college.



B. Existing Setting

EDUCATION STATISTICS

National City has historically lower educational achievement levels than San Diego County and the nation in terms of educational achievement. Table E-1 identifies that for the population 25 years and over, a larger percentage of National City residents did not complete high school as compared to residents of San Diego County and the United States. In addition, a much smaller percentage of National City residents have earned a Bachelor’s Degree or higher as compared to residents of San Diego County and the United States.

TABLE E-1
Comparison of Educational Achievement
United States, San Diego County, and National City

| Highest Level of Education Achieved | United States | San Diego County | National City |
|---|---------------|------------------|---------------|
| Less than 9 th Grade | 6.4% | 7.3% | 20.4% |
| 9 th to 12 th Grade, No Diploma | 9.1% | 7.5% | 13.7% |
| High School Diploma or GED | 29.6% | 20.4% | 26.2% |
| Some College, No Degree | 20.1% | 22.9% | 19.6% |
| Associate’s Degree | 7.4% | 8.1% | 7.0% |
| Bachelor’s Degree | 17.3% | 21.1% | 10.5% |
| Graduate or Professional Degree | 10.1% | 12.7% | 2.5% |
| Total | 100% | 100% | 100% |

Source: U.S. Census 2006-2008 American Community Survey. Educational Attainment for the Population 25 Years and Over.

SCHOOLS

Three school districts serve the planning area. Sweetwater Union High School District operates Granger Junior High, National City Middle School, Sweetwater High School, and the National City Adult School. National School District operates the ten public elementary schools:

- Rancho de la Nacion;
- El Toyon;
- Ira Harbison;
- Palmer Way;
- Central;
- Las Palmas;
- Lincoln Acres;



Charter School –
A public school usually created or organized by a group of teachers, parents and community leaders or a community-based organization, and is usually sponsored by an existing local public school board or county board of education. Specific goals and operating procedures for the charter school are detailed in an agreement (or "charter") between the sponsoring board and charter organizers. A charter school is generally exempt from most laws governing school districts, except where specifically noted in the law. (California Department of Education)

- John Otis;
- Kimball; and
- Olivewood.

The southeastern portion of the planning area is located in the Chula Vista Elementary School District and is served by Valley Vista School.

National City contains one charter school, Integrity Charter, which is a K-7 school that operates with its own board of directors independent of the National School District board¹.

The County Office of Education operates the South Region Community Day Schools, which are juvenile court and community schools that serve grades seven through 12 and provide an alternative public education program.

Southwestern Community College has a campus within National City. Southwestern offers more than 285 associate degree and certificate options in addition to a host of noncredit courses designed to enhance personal and professional development².

In addition to these public schools, the planning area contains four private schools: San Diego Academy, the San Diego Christian Learning Center, Faithful Ambassadors Bible Baptist Academy, and Southport Christian Academy, all of which serve grades K through 12. The Southport Christian Academy also includes pre-K instruction.

Figure E-1 identifies the locations of all of these schools within the planning area.

FAMILY RESOURCE CENTERS

National City contains four Family Resource Centers (FRCs), operated by the National City Collaborative (NCC) and one operated by Southwestern Community College. These FRCs offer free health and social services to families in need. The locations of the Family Resource Centers are illustrated on **Figure E-2**.

¹ Integrity Charter School. (2010). About us. Retrieved February 17, 2010, from: http://www.integritycharterschool.net/Integrity_Charter_School/About_Us.html

² Southwestern College. (2005). About SWC. Retrieved February 17 2010, from <http://www.swccd.edu/2ndLevel/index.asp?L1=1>



The FRCs sponsor workshops on educational opportunities, career development, health, housing and other family issues. They are “one-stop” service operations that provide over 13 programs and partner services from more than 17 different funding streams. The goal is to provide the kind of services the community needs most, and the FRCs encourage residents and families to give back to the community.

The FRCs provide such services as:

- Prevention Services that bring information and education to the community, including adult education, after-school tutoring, Spanish literacy, health education classes, TB testing, immunization clinics, assistance with forms, as well as advocacy.
- Crisis Intervention is provided for immediate intervention services and referrals to families referred by the schools, from other agencies, and to those who seek help on their own. These services include counseling, care coordination, rental assistance, referrals for shelters, and emergency food. The FRC also intercedes on behalf of resident families regarding income maintenance and MediCal issues.
- Care Coordination is a team effort that provides service for long-term wellness, resolution of multiple needs and case management. Care Coordinators serve individuals, families with children in school, and others. They take into account the priorities of the family, and together with the assigned coordinator initiate a plan that addresses all pertinent concerns³.

LIBRARY

The National City Public Library serves the community via its main facility located at 1401 National City Boulevard. The facility, built in August 2005, houses a collection of over 200,516 books, 16,500 video materials, and 5,600 audio materials. State-of-the-art technology is available through Wi-Fi access and a network of 120 public computers offering Internet and email access, Microsoft Office, various software applications, and subscription databases.

The library also offers several programs for children, teens, and adults:

³ National City Collaborative Family Resource Centers. (n.d.). About NCC/FRC. Retrieved February 18, 2010, from <http://www.nucri.org/ncc/about.cfm>.



Children and Family Programs

- WOWmobile Literacy Program. Funded by First 5 Commission of San Diego, the WOWmobile visits preschools, Head Starts, apartment complexes, and family resource centers to provide literacy classes, workshops, family activities, and resources to parents of young children 0 to 5 years of age, supporting children's learning, behavior, and health, as well as teaching parents the best ways to make their children school ready.
- Teeny Tots. Children are introduced to early literacy skills through music, movement, and socialization.
- Family Kid Kraft (Seasonal). Step-by-step craft projects designed for the entire family.
- Book Bingo. Win a bingo game and win a free book.
- Passport Pals. Each week children explore a different country around the world and learn about its culture, food, music, and craft.
- Letters Club (summer): Kids write letters to friends, family, and celebrities.
- Kid-2-Kid. Kids have fun reading stories to other kids.
- Summer Reading Program. An incentive based reading program to promote reading during summer vacation.
- Family Story Time. Stories are read in English and Spanish to the entire family.
- Science Lab. Offers hands-on science experiments for second through sixth graders.
- Chocolate Reading Club. Kids earn chocolate incentives while reading their favorite book.
- Color Time Corner. Kids enjoy organized color time with seasonal color sheets.
- Drawing Club. Kids build on their literacy skills through drawing activities.

Teen Programs

- The library offers monthly programs focusing on encouraging teens to express themselves.

Adult Programs

- Literacy Services. Structured program designed to help adults improve their reading and writing skills. Learners learn at their own pace, assisted by dedicated Volunteer Tutors and self-taught online programs.
- Basic Computer Classes: Mouse/Keyboard, Word, Email, Internet Searching. Offered on a weekly basis to provide adults with basic computer skills.
- Weekend movies. For the whole family.
- Adult Crafts. Adults “make and take” a different craft each month.



- Get Together Series Programs. Offers different topics of interest such as art of longevity, easy Tai-Chi, medication, acupuncture, herbal medicine vs. pharmaceutical drugs, etc.
- Spanish Programs. General public interest topics such as shared housing, tenant rights, relationship dynamics, etc.; Entertainment programs such as Spanish (translated or dubbed) movies.

LIFE LONG LEARNING

In addition to the educational services provided by the library, National City offers a variety of life long learning opportunities. The City’s Community Services Department is a gateway for providing people of all ages with information regarding a wide variety of topics such as family planning, wildfires, tsunami threats, and mental health.

National City’s senior center offers disaster preparedness and San Diego 211 presentations. Information on San Diego 211 helps educate people on a variety of services available to them in their community from food programs to affordable housing services.

The National City library, Southwestern College, and the Adult School provide adults and seniors with educational opportunities on a range of topics and at different academic levels. All of these facilities offer convenient times that tend to work around the schedule of the learner (i.e. afternoon and night classes).

CHILD CARE

Quality child care and pre-school programs are extremely important in shaping a child’s early development. In many households with children, both parents are working, which requires families to use before- and after-school care. For families with children under five, daycare is provided through private sector organizations or family day care facilities, or public agencies, such as Head Start.

There are five Head Start centers in National City that serve the role of a child care facility and of a preschool, depending on the age of the child. The Head Start centers provide a computer in each classroom and allow time for the children to use the computer. This activity helps introduce computer skills to children of lower-income and qualifying families.



WINGS is an after-school program for school-aged children (until 6 pm) created through a partnership with the City and the National School District. Over half of the District's children participate in academic and recreational activities in this program.

The City's Community Services Department offers two programs: Kids Club and Tiny Tots. Kids Club is held at El Toyon, Kimball, and Camacho Recreational Centers. This after school service is free to children and allows children up to 6th grade to participate. Under this program, 15-20 children participate in different sports throughout the school year. Tiny Tots is held at El Toyon Recreational Center. This program offers similar activities to preschoolers at an affordable cost to National City residents. The two sessions offered during the day provide service to approximately 40 children, ages four to five.

The National City Boy's and Girl's Club is another leader in providing after school programs for children ages six through 18. There are roughly 500 children that attend this club during the school year. At the Boys & Girls Club, children have access to games, activities, recreational uses, academic help, and approximately 25 computers.

The YMCA Childcare Resource Service center is also available to the entire community. It provides referrals to child care service and information related to child care in both English and Spanish.

In addition to these public child care programs, there are approximately 25 private family care facilities within National City.

COMMUNICATION & COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Much of the information regarding what is occurring within the City is provided through the City's website. Although children have access to computers at school, there can be obstacles for children and adults to access computers at home due to costs and a lack of computer literacy on behalf of parents. For those who do not have a home computer or internet access, there are several free wi-fi hotspots in National City, including the National City Library and Southwestern College. Several eateries also provide free or fee-based wi-fi to their customers.

Another way that information is disseminated to the community is through Neighborhood Councils. As of the



writing of this General Plan, the seven neighborhood councils are: Northside, Central, Granger, Eastside, Sweetwater Heights, Old Town, and Olivewood. At the Neighborhood Council meetings, community members can voice their thoughts and discuss issues pertaining to their neighborhood area. In addition, community members can ask the City Council and City Departments (i.e. Police, Code Enforcement, and Community Services) to make presentations about subjects of interest and relevance to the group. Neighborhood Councils help to increase community participation in community planning.

National City has also made an attempt to involve youth in City decision-making processes. Two high school students sit in on City Council meetings as youth representatives to the community. At the meetings they can comment on agenda and non-agenda items brought forth to City Council; however, they cannot vote and are not allowed to attend closed session meetings. Sweetwater High School’s principal selects the students from a pool of applicants after having conducted a review of their academic merits and leadership skills.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Compared to traditional types of infrastructure such as roads and water lines, planning for high-tech telecommunications infrastructure is a relatively recent phenomenon. Providing and supporting evolutions in electronic infrastructure including cellular facilities, fiber optics systems, and wireless capability will provide a vital framework for job and commercial growth, educational opportunities and quality of life issues in National City. Cox Communications and AT&T provide cable, phone and cable internet to the residents of National City.

C. Citywide Goals and Policies

SCHOOLS

Goal E-1: High quality schools and educational facilities that meet the needs of all ages and serve as neighborhood centers.

Policy E-1.1: Coordinate with local school districts during review of applicable discretionary approvals to provide adequate school facilities, meet the needs generated by



development, and avoid school overcrowding, to the extent feasible.

Policy E-1.2: Provide information on projected population growth and development patterns to school districts to help facilitate adequate school facilities.

Policy E-1.3: Work closely with school districts to help identify:

- New approaches to accommodate student enrollments, including alternative campus locations and education programs.
- School sites for new construction, if needed.
- Sources of funding for the expansion and rehabilitation of facilities as needed.
- Needs for extra-curricular, recreation, youth educational and information service programs.
- Corporate sponsorships and mentoring opportunities to supplement school program funding.
- How school districts can better serve the neighborhoods in which schools are located, through such measures as joint use agreements for shared access to park, recreational, maintenance, and library facilities, and coordinating on the design of school grounds and fields.

Policy E-1.4: Require that proposed land uses adjacent to a school site be planned in such a manner as to maximize compatibility between the uses.

Policy E-1.5: Work with school districts to promote education programs such as tutoring, occupational training, mentoring, and school readiness for pre-school aged children.

Why is This Important?

Schools are institutions that hold a community together, and the performance of an area's public schools is an important factor in successful economic development efforts. The quality of a community's schools plays a significant role in one's decision regarding whether or not to relocate or open a business in that community⁴.

⁴ Northway, Wally. (2007). *Public schools' importance in economic development growing*. Mississippi Business Journal, Retrieved February 19, 2010, from http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa5277/is_200706/ai_n21244995/.



ACCESS TO HIGHER LEARNING

Goal E-2: Greater opportunities for the City’s residents to attend colleges and universities.

Policy E-2.1: Support the Compact for Success Program at San Diego State University that guarantees admission to qualifying Sweetwater Union High School District (SUHSD) seniors.

Policy E-2.2: Assist the School District in disseminating information regarding financial aid, grants, and scholarship opportunities to high school students and the general public.

Policy E-2.3: Encourage the School District to establish scholarships for National City students funded through charitable donations.

Policy E-2.4: Encourage schools to raise community awareness that further education or vocational training beyond high school allows for a competitive advantage in the job market and can lead to higher salaries.

Policy E-2.5: Encourage the School District to identify programs that urge at-risk children and youth to stay in school.

Why is this Important?

Educational training beyond a high school diploma opens up more job opportunities. However, too many individuals pass up the opportunity to attend college each year because they assume that they have neither the time nor the money for a degree program. Finding ways around these barriers and providing information regarding flexible enrollment policies, innovative course delivery methods, and generous financial aid packages allow nearly anyone to attend college.

CITYWIDE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Goal E-3: Learning opportunities are integrated into aspects of everyday life.

Policy E-3.1: Identify opportunities to use public spaces such as City Hall, fire stations, parks, trails, plazas, and recreational facilities as places to inform the public about natural habitats, National City’s history, cultural arts, water and energy conservation methods, public health, career



opportunities, and other issues through static displays or events.

Policy E-3.2: Investigate partnership opportunities with or facilitate the efforts of non-profit and community organizations and higher learning institutions to develop education-based facilities such as museums, science centers, libraries, cultural institutions, and community gardens.

Policy E-3.3: Increase access to wireless internet connections, computers, and other forms of communication technology.

Policy E-3.4: Notify the public about the availability of family resource centers and other organizations that provide life long learning opportunities.

Why is this Important?

Life long learning opportunities contribute to personal fulfillment and development, social inclusion, active citizenship and employment. They also play a role in brain health and longevity by providing mental stimulation.

CAREER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Goal E-4: Increased job training opportunities.

Policy E-4.1: Work with the Sweetwater Union High School District and Southwestern Community College to identify the job training needs of local businesses, industries, and government agencies and to develop programs and classes that meet those needs.

Policy E-4.2: Explore funding opportunities to provide job training.

Policy E-4.3: Work with the National City Chamber of Commerce to encourage employers to expand on-the-job-training opportunities for their workers.

Policy E-4.4: Work with the National City Chamber of Commerce to target and recruit desirable employers to locate within National City.



Why is this Important?

Employers look for qualified and skilled workers. Promoting job training programs in National City can help residents find well-paying jobs.

LIBRARY

Goal E-5: A library system consisting of facilities and programs that meets the needs of all residents.

Policy E-5.1: During the review of discretionary projects, ensure that library facilities meet the needs generated by new development.

Policy E-5.2: Identify sources of funding for the expansion of library facilities, as needed.

Policy E-5.3: Work closely with school libraries to identify needs for public outreach programs, the development and expansion of extra-curricular recreation and education programs, and the provision of state-of-the-art information services.

Policy E-5.4: Require that proposed land uses adjacent to a library be planned in such a manner as to maximize compatibility between the uses.

Policy E-5.5: Work to establish satellite library facilities at the community parks.

Policy E-5.6: Work with Southwestern College, Sweetwater High School, and the elementary schools that serve National City to establish joint-use agreements for public access to school library facilities.

Why is this Important?

Technology has become an important part of libraries and our society in general. Learning to use technology through using an electronic library catalog or coming to libraries to practice using various software programs or learning to search online databases are of tremendous value, especially for those who cannot afford computers or the connectivity costs associated with the Internet.



CHILD CARE

Goal E-6: The availability of affordable, safe child care for National City's residents.

Policy E-6.1: Encourage child care centers near schools, major transit hubs, and close to employment centers, to reduce commute trips and improve air quality.

Policy E-6.2: Streamline application procedures for small and large family day care centers.

Policy E-6.3: Assess child care demand created by new development against available community resources to determine child care facility needs.

Policy E-6.4: Encourage the use of public facilities for child care services; including collaboration between schools and parks, faith based institutions, community centers, and senior centers.

Policy E-6.5: Provide child care services at City-sponsored events, when feasible.

Policy E-6.6: Work with Family Resource Centers, the County of San Diego and other relevant government and non-governmental organizations to:

- Encourage the expansion of child care options for low-income residents such as Head Start and Early Head Start.
- Provide information to parents regarding how to choose quality care for their children.
- Support adequate training for child caregivers.

Why is this Important?

Because many parents work or attend school, they rely on child care facilities to watch their children. High-quality child care and early education can build a strong foundation for young children's healthy development. Ensuring high quality child care for low-income families is especially important because parents who are preoccupied with a daily struggle to ensure that their children have enough to eat and are safe from harm may not have the resources, information, or time they need to provide the stimulating experiences that foster optimal brain development⁵.

⁵ Hawley, Theresa. (2000). *Starting Smart: How early experiences affect brain development*. Zero to Three and the Ounce of Prevention Fund. Retrieved February 19, 2010, from <http://www.zerotothree.org/site/DocServer/startingsmart.pdf?docID=2422>.



COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Goal E-7: A sense of pride and investment in National City fostered through the meaningful participation of all segments of the community in the decision-making process.

Policy E-7.1: Coordinate with faith-based and other non-profit organizations, schools, the business community, local media outlets, FRCs, and libraries to improve public outreach efforts.

Policy E-7.2: Utilize the latest forms of technology and communication methods to convey both general and detailed information to the public and provide additional opportunities for feedback through new technologies for the public to better identify issues, submit comments, and exchange dialogue.

Policy E-7.3: Organize Community Councils and Neighborhood Action Committees for the purpose of involving community members in City decision-making and implementation processes.

Policy E-7.4: Encourage the involvement of community members in identifying priorities for implementation programs and capital improvement projects.

Policy E-7.5: Expand efforts to reach out to and provide meaningful involvement opportunities for low-income, minority, disabled, children and youth, senior, and other traditionally underrepresented citizens in the public participation process.

Policy E-7.6: Periodically review the effectiveness of the procedures and strategies used to solicit public input.

Why is this Important?

Educational attainment is a powerful predictor of civic engagement. The more education people have, the more likely it is that they will participate in civic affairs⁶. Democratic societies rely on the active and informed participation of their citizens in order to make good collective decisions and ensure that powerful minority interests do not take control.

⁶ Ehrlich, Thomas. (n.d.). *Civic Engagement*. Retrieved February 19, 2010, from <http://measuringup.highereducation.org/2000/articles/ThomasEhrlich.cfm#TPE>.



TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Goal E-8: Universal and easy access to state-of-the-art internet services and modern telecommunications technology.

Policy E-8.1: Encourage new development to be wired or provided with other necessary infrastructure for state-of-the-art telecommunications services.

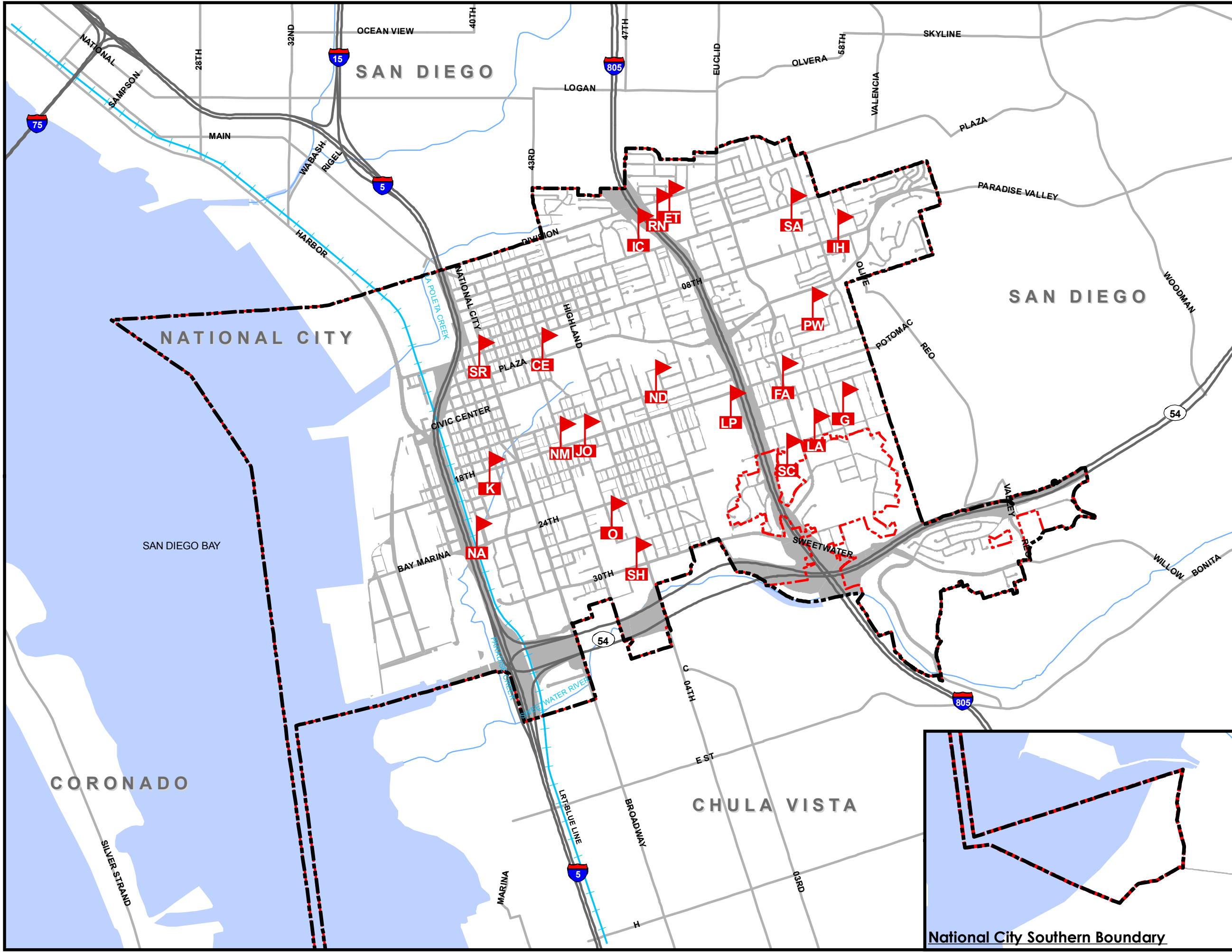
Policy E-8.2: Provide flexibility within the Zoning Code to encourage technology and home-based businesses.

Policy E-8.3: Promote greater product choices, improved service quality, and/or reduced consumer costs for cable television and internet services.

Policy E-8.4: Work with telecommunications infrastructure operators to ensure that National City has state-of-the-art internet and telecommunication facilities, system upgrades, features and coverages.

Why is this important?

Providing for easy access to high-speed internet service, excellent cellular coverage, and competitive cable service will make National City more attractive to business, learning institutions and new development and contribute to the economic health of the community.



Legend

Schools

- SR - South Region Community Day Schools
- RN - Rancho de la Nacion
- IC - Integrity Charter
- ET - El Toyon Elementary
- IH - Ira Harbison
- PW - Palmer Way
- CE - Central Elementary
- ND - National School District
- G - Granger Junior High
- LP - Las Palmas
- LA - Lincoln Acres
- JO - John A. Otis Elementary
- NM - National City Middle
- K - Kimball
- NA - National City Adult School
- O - Olivewood
- SH - Sweetwater High
- SA - San Diego Academy
- FA - Faithful Ambassadors Bible Baptist Academy
- SC - San Diego Christian Learning Center

Base Layers

- National City Planning Area Boundary
- National City Boundary
- Freeways
- Roads
- Railroad

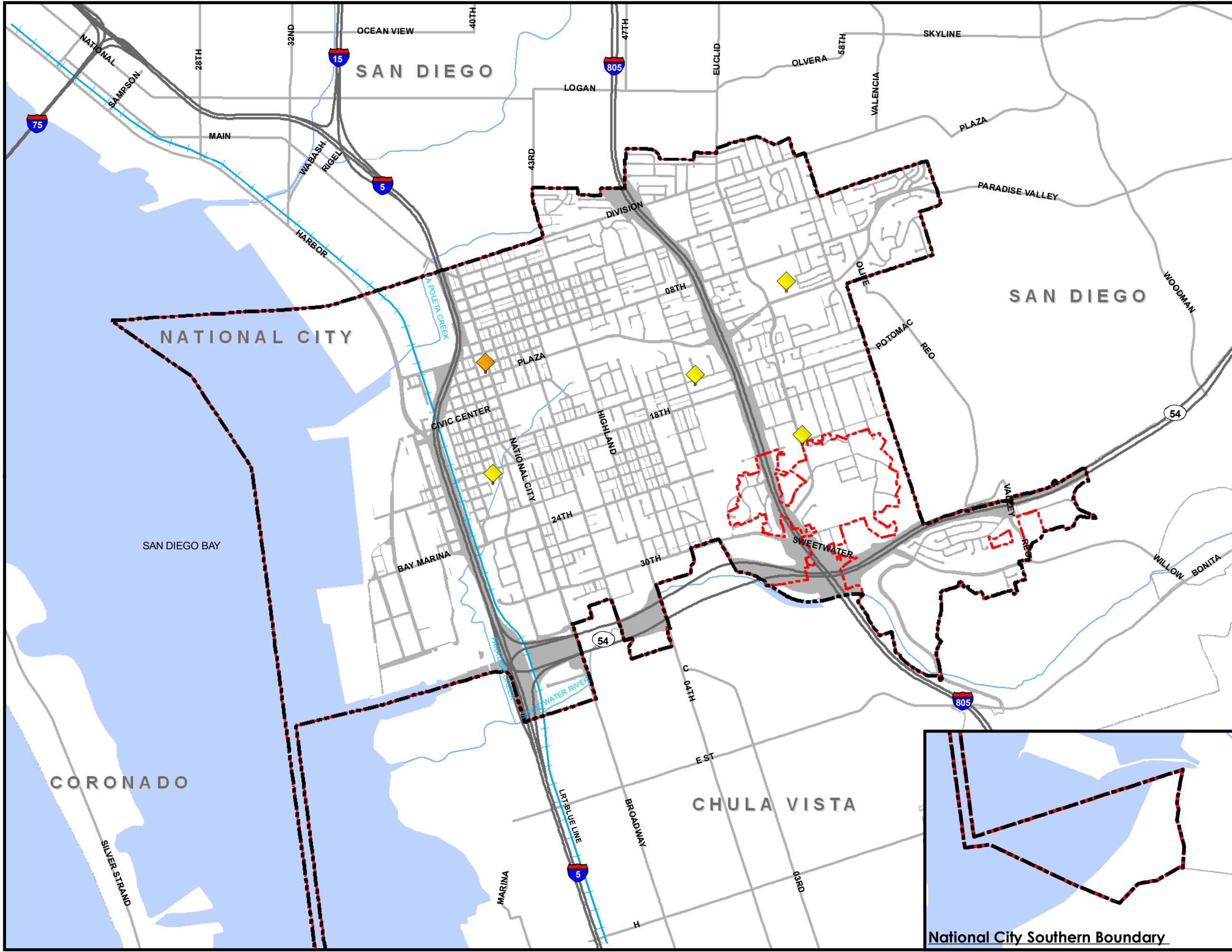
**Figure E-1
School Locations**

0 0.25 0.5 1
Miles

NATIONAL CITY 1837 INCORPORATED

National City Southern Boundary

X-XX



Legend

Family Resource Center

- National City Collaborative
- Southwestern Community College

Base Layers

- National City Planning Area Boundary
- National City Boundary
- Freeways
- Roads
- Railroad

Figure E-2
Family Resource Centers

0 0.25 0.5 1
Miles

National City Southern Boundary

X-XX