



NATIONAL CITY BROWNFIELDS ASSESSMENT

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PANEL REPORT

Prepared for San Diego State University, Center for Regional Sustainability

NOVEMBER 2023



San Diego/
Tijuana

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The material presented in this document was prepared by members of the Urban Land Institute's San Diego-Tijuana chapter in summer/fall of 2023. The report seeks to provide an informed outlook on local real estate and planning topics and as understood by ULI San Diego-Tijuana and our contributing members. The analysis, views and opinions expressed herein are those of the contributors and not necessarily their employers, the ULI, or the ULI San Diego-Tijuana chapter. The material that follows was developed from a number of sources: interviews, research by individual contributing authors, surveys, and forecasting. While the information contained in this report represents informed analysis of issues in the San Diego-Tijuana region, it should not be used to make business decisions in lieu of professional consultation.

ABOUT THE URBAN LAND INSTITUTE

ULI, the Urban Land Institute, is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit research and education organization supported by its global network of members. The mission of the Urban Land Institute is to shape the future of the built environment for transformative impact in communities worldwide.

Founded in 1936, the Institute now has nearly 50,000 members across 81 nations worldwide, representing the entire spectrum of land use and real estate development disciplines working in private enterprise and public service. A multidisciplinary real estate forum, ULI facilitates an open exchange of ideas, information, and experience among industry leaders and policy makers dedicated to creating better places.



About ULI San Diego Tijuana

ULI San Diego - Tijuana is a community of more than 800 people from diverse professional and personal backgrounds in the binational region. As a nonpartisan organization, we have long been recognized as one of America's most respected and widely quoted sources of objective information on urban planning, growth, and development. The local program of work includes more than 50 educational forums, mentorship



Vacant lot activation in South Park.

programs, and technical assistance interventions annually.

ULI San Diego-Tijuana's education and outreach is focused on four core areas including: housing affordability, transit, community engagement, and leadership. ULI San Diego - Tijuana is the only binational District Council in the global ULI network.



ULI San Diego – Tijuana panel visited the pre-selected sites to conduct a site and context analysis.

About Technical Assistance Panels

In keeping with the ULI mission, Technical Assistance Panels are convened to provide pro-bono planning and development assistance to public officials and local stakeholders of communities and nonprofit organizations who have requested assistance in addressing their land use challenges.

A group of diverse professionals representing the full spectrum of land use and real estate disciplines typically spend one to two days visiting and analyzing the built environments, identifying specific planning and development issues, and formulating realistic and actionable recommendations to move initiatives forward in a fashion consistent with the applicant's goals and objectives.

The TAP Process

This report reflects the first of two Technical Assistance interventions which ULI San Diego – Tijuana members will be supporting on behalf of the SDSU National City Brownfields Assessment Project. Due to the requirements of the SDSU project, a substantial amount of background information and preliminary site analysis had already been completed for the first four study sites upon ULI's

commencement of this process. At time of this writing, ULI San Diego – Tijuana expects to conduct the second TAP process in early 2024 and provide updated and new recommendations and strategies shortly thereafter.

Working with the SDSU Team, ULI Staff and TAP committee members helped define the specific issues that needed to be addressed and with that the expertise that was needed. Together, we identified ULI members who would participate. The next step in the process was to assemble a briefing book. This contains relevant economic and demographic data, land use and zoning maps, and identifies key community stakeholders who will participate in the process. The briefing book was distributed to the panelists in advance of the working meetings, so they were well-informed when on the day of the TAP.

The two-day panel began with a site tour and overview from the SDSU team and city representative from National City. The panelists then met with key community stakeholders to gather as much input as possible. These interviews are confidential, and the information provided remains anonymous. The TAP group deliberated in a closed-door session to formulate the strategies and recommendations to move the project forward in a sensible manner. At the end of this phase, the panel members gave a public presentation outlining their recommendations which are now detailed in this report.

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About San Diego State University

Since its founding in 1897, San Diego State University (SDSU) has grown to become a leading public research university, and a federally designated Hispanic-serving Institution. Each year, the university provides more than 36,000 students with the opportunity to participate in an academic curriculum distinguished by direct contact with faculty and an international emphasis that prepares them for a global future.

SDSU is the oldest higher education institution in San Diego, uniquely situated only 30 minutes north of the U.S.-Mexico border on Kumeyaay land. SDSU is fully committed to excellent teaching, meaningful research and service to the regional community and others throughout the state, across the nation and internationally.

About SDSU. (n.d.). San Diego State University.

About SDSU's Center for Regional Sustainability

The Center for Regional Sustainability's primary mission is to advance sustainability through regional collaborations in higher education, research, stewardship, and outreach to ensure that generations of students will gain the skills and abilities that will allow our region to grow, prosper, and sustain itself in the long term.

Home. (n.d.). SDSU.

About the Sage Project

The Sage Project is a program within the Center for Regional Sustainability at San Diego State University with a simple goal: improving quality of life in our region through community-based projects, in alignment with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

The SAGE project. (n.d.). SDSU.



About National City

National City is located at the center of it all in San Diego County. Approximately five miles south of downtown San Diego and eleven miles north of the Mexican border. National City encompasses a total of 9.2 square miles with San Diego to the North, Chula Vista to the South and the bay to the west.

National City has a rich history dating back to 1887 and is the second oldest city in the county. This 140-year-old city on San Diego Bay embodies a proud and rich tradition of commerce, urban agriculture, production, and transportation. National City is emerging regionally as a vibrant urbane, cosmopolitan experience for residents and businesses. The expansion of Southwestern College, Brick Row and Kimball Park, as well the new library, expansion, The National City Aquatic Center, and many new development projects underway, or on the boards are a clear sign that National City has entered a "new era."

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Madison Swayne, PhD

Assistant Professor of City Planning
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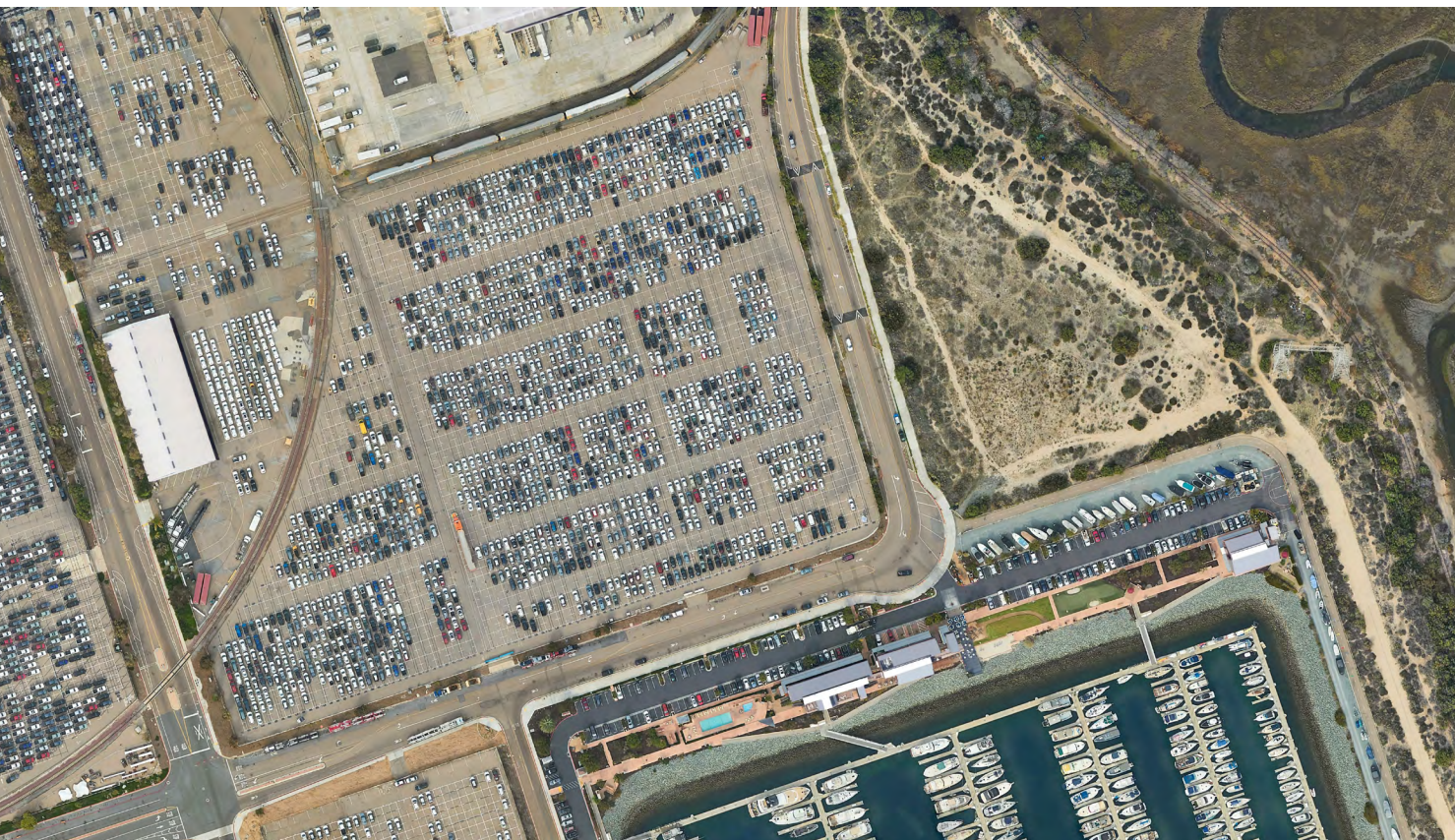
Kristofer Patrón-Soberano

Sage Project's Program Administrator
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Housing Authority Director
CITY OF NATIONAL CITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



From Google Earth.

Assignment

National City has a proud history of industrial and military land use, but it has long struggled to balance this with livability and environmental equity for its residents. In 2017, the city adopted a Downtown Specific Plan (DSP). Its stated goals are providing housing; effective parking management; desirable land use and quality urban design; a user-friendly entitlement process; avoidance or mitigation of impacts; and improved mobility and access.

Within or just beyond the DSP's boundaries are many suspected brownfield sites that impede the progress envisioned by the DSP and city leaders. To help overcome this impediment, a team from San Diego State University (SDSU), working alongside the city, secured two federal

grants to identify, prioritize, and assess brownfield sites in National City.

Working in close collaboration with project partners and advisors, the SDSU team is cataloguing the brownfield sites, identifying likely contaminants at the sites, and suggesting strategies to remediate the sites. As part of its project, SDSU also engaged Urban Land Institute San Diego-Tijuana (ULI) to assemble a panel of land use and design experts to recommend future uses for four of the identified brownfield sites.

This ULI Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) conducted interviews with representatives from the city, the SDSU team, and a wide range of community stakeholders. They also toured the sites and reviewed a range of background material assembled from public and historical records.

Key Criteria

The panel's recommendations articulated in this report were based on the criteria they designed after the aforementioned interviews, tours, and research:

Consistent with community vision and needs

Stakeholders expressed a need for a mix of housing types, including affordable housing, for-sale homes, and multi-generational homes. The community also values parks and public gathering spaces and expressed a desire to expand educational opportunities. Environmental health was a popular concern.

Consistent with neighborhood context and scale

National City is culturally diverse with a blend of historic, low-rise, and mid-rise structures.

Consistent with zoning, neighborhood plans, and by-right development

Promote economic feasibility

According to the City of National City, median household income for its residents is \$41,437. Market-rate housing can be difficult for residents to purchase without assistance. The community can't support a large influx of retail uses.

Consider environmental baseline conditions and criteria

This includes environmental contamination status and flood zones. Paradise Creek, adjacent to the study area, often floods outside of its confines.

Create “activation” by project and nearby environment

The panel considered how each site could be redeveloped to create benefits on the site and beyond.

Prioritize pedestrian friendliness and walkability

Creating a better walking experience, especially to maximize the city's already-robust transit ridership, is on many stakeholders' wish lists.

Incorporate cultural sensitivity and homage

National City sits on historic Kumeyaay tribal land and has one of San Diego's largest Native American populations. The city is very diverse, and Hispanic and Filipino cultures are strongly represented in both demographics and civic leadership.



Quartyard in the East Village Neighborhood of Downtown San Diego.

Major Conclusions

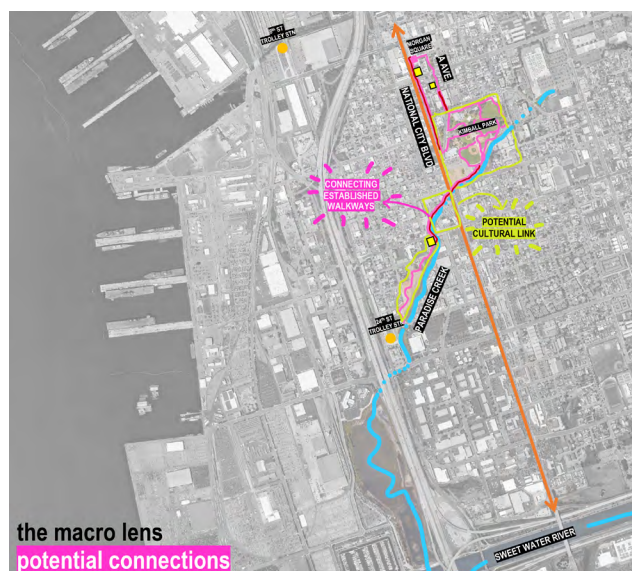
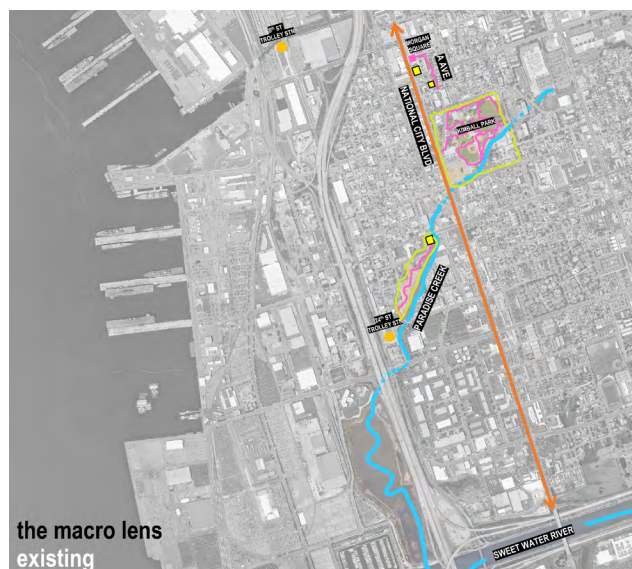
While the ULI TAP's assignment was to assess sites individually for their highest and best uses, while incorporating the criteria above, the panel also considered the sites together and in context of their surroundings to illuminate connections.

For instance, instead of just activating Paradise Creek Park as a destination, the panel sees it as a mid-point connection between the 24th Street trolley station and Kimball Park. This can be strengthened by further revealing the creek and by creating a greenway over the path of the creek where it runs underground between Paradise Creek Park and Kimball Park.

At the very urban National City Boulevard site, panelists saw a perfect opportunity for high density housing but also a chance to activate the street front and connect to the adjacent Chamber of Commerce and Southwestern College by including a business training/incubator space at the ground floor. Robust street trees and landscaping/hardscaping will further improve the street-level experience. These will also aid with air quality and help connect the site to the nearby, heavily treed residential area, where the final brownfield site sits.

The final site is located just one block south of National City's Historic Row and one block north of mid-rise affordable housing. Kimball Park is an easy walk. Old-growth trees and historic-style streetlamps provide ample shade and ambiance. Panelists believe this is a perfect site to establish multi-generational housing with built-in accessory dwelling units (ADUs) for extended family members or income generation. The development could meet the unique needs of local families and serve as a transition between the surrounding low and medium density areas.

Finally, the panel identified several ideas for the City of National City and SDSU that could further elevate the city's evolution and the next phase of the overall brownfields program. These include creative opportunities to activate the brownfield sites before ground is broken for redevelopment and advice about parking, the permitting process, and more.





Parco National City. Image from Protea Properties.

ABOUT NATIONAL CITY

National City is located along the bayfront in San Diego's South Bay, approximately 14 miles north of the U.S.-Mexico border.

In 2020, the population was 56,173. It is San Diego's second-oldest city and was incorporated in 1887. To the west of the city is San Diego Bay. To the north and northeast is San Diego. National City shares its southeast border with Bonita, and the City of Chula Vista lies to the south, across the Sweetwater River. The city is served by the San Diego trolley's blue line, with stations at 8th Street and 24th Street. The diverse city includes those of Hispanic or Latino, Asian, Native American, White, African American, and other heritage.

The Challenge

As stated in the Technical Assistance Panel brief, "National City's long history of industrial activity, proximity to freeways, and mixed and often incompatible land uses have created multiple paths for environmental contamination and many brownfields."

Freeway construction that divided the community and the practice of redlining also negatively impacted the livability and prosperity of the area for generations.

SDSU is working with National City to identify and catalogue the city's brownfield properties with the ultimate goal of facilitating remediation and eventual redevelopment of those sites.

SDSU engaged ULI San Diego-Tijuana District Council to assemble a panel of experts to evaluate four city-owned brownfield sites to recommend economically feasible reuse options. In doing so, ULI's panel considered economic, social, cultural, health, and other factors, partly based on stakeholder interviews, to determine highest and best uses. As part of its analysis, the panel also focused on how the City of National City and its residents can prosper in a sustained fashion.

PRIORITY SITES

1

Former Education Center

921 National City Blvd.

Description of Location and

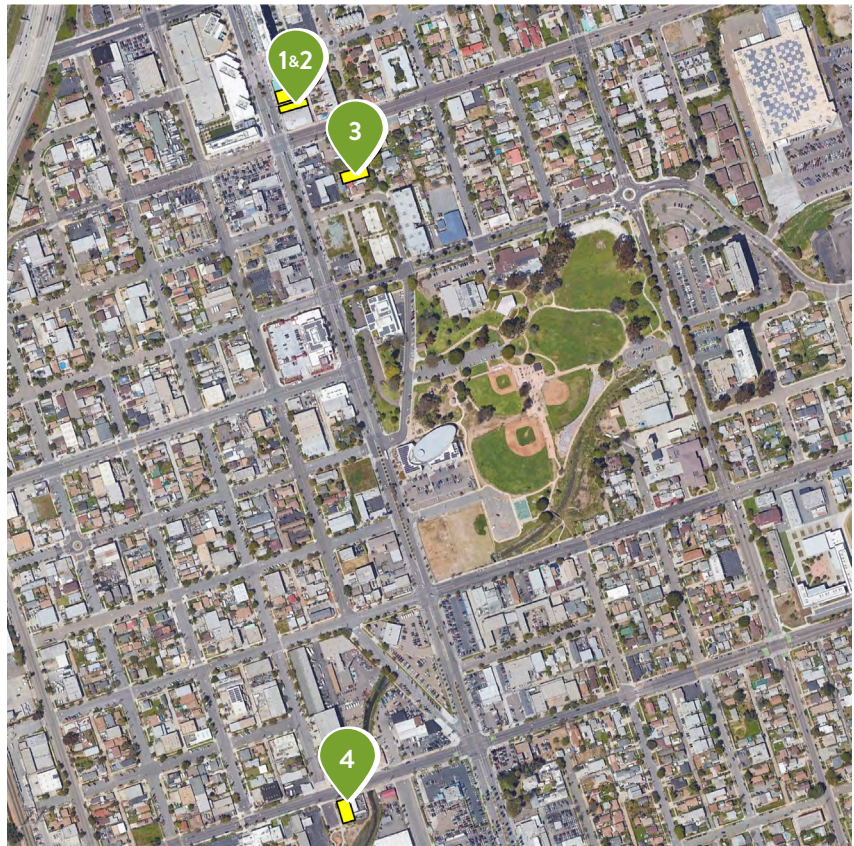
Census Tract (CT): Central to the DSPA and located in CT 060730117004, in Opportunity Zone (OZ) 06073011801

Past Use: Adjacent to historic dry cleaner, now vacant land

Proposed Use: 122 Residential units, retail, commercial, and educational uses

Environmental Concerns:

Chlorinated solvents, petroleum hydrocarbons, heavy metals, VOCs, SVOCs



2

Steamed Bean

929 National City Blvd.

Description of Location and

Census Tract (CT): Central to the DSPA and located in CT 060730117004, in Opportunity Zone (OZ) 06073011801

Past Use: Adjacent to historic dry cleaner, now vacant land

Proposed Use: 122 Residential units, retail, commercial, and educational uses

Environmental Concerns:

Chlorinated solvents, petroleum hydrocarbons, heavy metals, VOCs, SVOCs

3

A Avenue Parcel

1028 A Ave.

Description of Location and

Census Tract (CT): Central to the DSPA and located in CT 060730117004, in Opportunity Zone (OZ) 06073011801

Past Use: Mixed industrial use including adjacent auto shops, now vacant land

Proposed Use: 38 Housing units and mixed use

Environmental Concerns:

Chlorinated solvents, petroleum hydrocarbons, heavy metals, VOCs, SVOCs

4

Welding Shop

140 W 18th St.

Description of Location and

Census Tract (CT): In the DSPA in CT 060730219001; in flood plain; adjacent to OZ 06073011801

Past Use: Welding shop, now vacant building

Proposed Use: 0.25 Acres of expanded green space

Environmental Concerns:

Chlorinated solvents, petroleum hydrocarbons, heavy metals, VOCs, SVOCs

The Grants

The San Diego State University team, led by Jessica Barlow, PhD and Madison Swayne, PhD, secured two community-wide assessment grants to support this brownfields assessment program:

- ▶ Community-Wide Assessment Grant, US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfield Grants Program
- ▶ Community-Wide Assessment Grant, CA Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) Equitable Communities Revitalization Grants (ECRG) Program

Through these grants, the team's work includes inventory, planning, community engagement, and environmental assessment for the brownfield sites. SDSU is working with a Brownfields Advisory Committee (BAC), which includes a representative from each Project Partner organization.

- ▶ City of National City
- ▶ County of San Diego Office of Equitable Communities
- ▶ Urban Land Institute
- ▶ Environmental Health Coalition
- ▶ South County Economic Development Council

2023 is year two of SDSU's three-year process. Its team will apply for additional grants to remediate the brownfield sites identified during the three-year process. ULI's TAP report will be leveraged to support those grant applications, among other purposes.

The City of National City has multiple objectives, which include cleaning the environment, improving quality of life, and sparking interest from private developers.



Welding Shop.

The Briefing Material

The TAP Panel reviewed the following background materials.

- ▶ Technical Assistance Panel Brief: SDSU Brownfields Project
 - This comprehensive document provided panelists with background information about the brownfields assessment program, relevant planning documents and maps, details about the four brownfield sites being studied by the TAP, and various legal and mitigation reports.
- ▶ Walking tour map/site list
- ▶ List of interviewees
- ▶ Recording of a Zoom session interview with stakeholder interviewee Jim O'Callaghan
- ▶ Aerial site photos (from National City TAP co-chair Divya Nautiyal)
- ▶ Relevant news clips and excerpts from the TAP brief (from National City TAP co-chair Divya Nautiyal)

The panel made the following assumptions as part of its analysis and recommendations.

- ▶ All sites will be remediated to the appropriate level for the proposed development either by the city or by the developer.
- ▶ On sites where development is not proposed, the City will help facilitate clean-up for community benefit including coordination with other entities such as the Port of San Diego or the Army Corp of Engineers.
- ▶ The City will partner with the developer of these sites to provide flexibility in zoning or use as required to support community focused benefits should any of the proposed uses differ from by-right uses.
- ▶ The House National City Opt-In Density Bonus Program (in exchange for affordable housing, qualifying projects receive a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) bonus) will remain in place.
- ▶ There are no mandated parking requirements.
- ▶ Improvements up to the property line and into the right of way will be allowed to support the proposed concepts.
- ▶ The goals expressed by our stakeholder interviews are aligned with City and Community interest. Specifically, these goals include housing affordability, home ownership, community benefit through increased open space and remediation to support environmental justice.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Who We Spoke To



Pedro Garcia

Economic Development Manager
CITY OF NATIONAL CITY



Marcus Bush

City of National City
Councilmember, Urban Planner,
Affordable Housing Developer



Vicki Estrada, FASLA

Founder & President
ESTRADA LAND PLANNING



Ted Godshalk

Executive Director
PARADISE CREEK EDUCATIONAL PARK, INC.



Kelsey Genesi

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Carlos Aguirre

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Janice Reynoso

Executive Director
MUNDO GARDENS



Jacqueline Reynoso

Director of Programs & Policy
CORDOBA CORPORATION



Jim O'Callaghan

President & CEO
SOUTH COUNTY EDC

What We Heard

The following comments come from the panel's interviews with the stakeholders. The panel divided into breakout rooms to host the interviews and then reconvened to share stakeholder comments with all panel members.

PARADISE CREEK EDUCATION PARK, INC.

- ▶ With the tide, Paradise Creek tends to flood the area around and across from the old, vacant welding shop. (See map on page 22.)
- ▶ Many people don't know that Paradise Creek Education Park exists.
- ▶ Paradise Creek Education Park is isolated and seems like a back door.
- ▶ Paradise Creek Education Park could be a midway point. Trolley station – Paradise Creek Education Park – Kimball Park.
- ▶ Paradise Creek is a major creek, but a significant portion is underground and not visible. It should have been planned differently. There's no connectivity. Most people don't know it exists.
- ▶ Connect Paradise Creek Education Park to other neighborhood parks with parkways.

- ▶ The creek abuts Kimball Park – there’s potential to create community value through connecting these two sites.
- ▶ Park and community space is popular with local residents.
- ▶ For parks, consider interactive elements. Tie it into the phone? Augmented reality?
- ▶ At Paradise Creek Education Park, create a low-impact shade structure by pulling the walls out of the old welding shop. The roof can be supported with existing supports.
- ▶ The adjacent school is willing to give up space for a community resource center at Paradise Creek Education Park.

HOUSING

- ▶ Southwestern College expressed an interest in student housing.
- ▶ Be careful of gentrification and displacement.
- ▶ The House National City policy seeks to be like the City of San Diego’s Complete Communities’ housing solutions element. House National City is an FAR-based program where National City can accommodate all sizes of infill without requiring lots to be merged to get the right densities.
- ▶ 70% of National City residents are renters.
- ▶ National City’s median household income of \$55,000 doesn’t support the purchase of a \$500,000 house.
- ▶ A Community Land Trust model could help community home ownership and also rentals.
- ▶ Help people know how to buy a home.
- ▶ Porches and stoops connect people with sidewalks.
- ▶ We don’t have a parking shortage; we have a housing shortage.
- ▶ National City passed an ordinance to give National City residents priority in purchasing homes. (National City’s Housing Element (6th Cycle) Implementation Programs include a first-time homebuyer program: “Provide first-time homebuyer assistance to low- and moderate-income households to achieve homeownership”)

RETAIL

- ▶ What’s missing in National City? A destination; a lifestyle center.
- ▶ We’re not there yet for more ground floor retail.
- ▶ Help business owners know how to start up/run a brick-and-mortar retail store.
- ▶ People are concerned about displacement of mom-and-pop shops.

CIRCULATION & WALKABILITY

- ▶ We have high public transportation ridership here, but we need to improve pathways, especially to the 8th street trolley station. It’s terrible to walk through the freeway underpass. It’s dark, grim, and depressing.
- ▶ Make the town homey and more walkable.
- ▶ People don’t walk the streets anywhere in National City for a night out.
- ▶ We have no EV charging stations.
- ▶ A neighborhood electric vehicle mobility system – FRANC – tying together destinations in downtown National City, Old Town National City, and West Side National City is recently activated.

ENVIRONMENTAL & SOCIAL JUSTICE

- ▶ This project is important because of environmental racism history in National City.
- ▶ The city needs a master tree plan.
- ▶ Reduce pollution.

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- ▶ Instead of being behind everyone, National City can use its creativity to be on the forefront.
- ▶ We’re trying to put a BID in place. It would include 8th and the hotel, Southwestern College – maybe all the way to Highland.
- ▶ A property at 7th & Roosevelt is going to become a paddle tennis complex.
- ▶ Bright Side Produce gets fresh produce to 18 liquor stores in National City. Olivewood Gardens trains people to garden and provides space. Mundo Gardens is also creating community gardens.
- ▶ National City’s general plan calls for schools to be focal points within neighborhoods to develop an active and informed citizenry.
- ▶ “I don’t get any news from the city.” The city needs to market itself more.

CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHICS

- ▶ Design needs to honor the past. It needs to reflect the unique culture and the Kumeyaay heritage.
- ▶ Filipino and Mexican cultures need to be acknowledged.
- ▶ Use public art – artists find the specialness of a place.
- ▶ Create a place for youth to go.
- ▶ National City has the highest percentage in San Diego County of grandparents raising grandkids.
- ▶ The community needs spaces for older people. A bookstore-coffee shop blend would be good.

FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

📍 SITES 1 & 2

Former Education Center & Steamed Bean, National City Boulevard

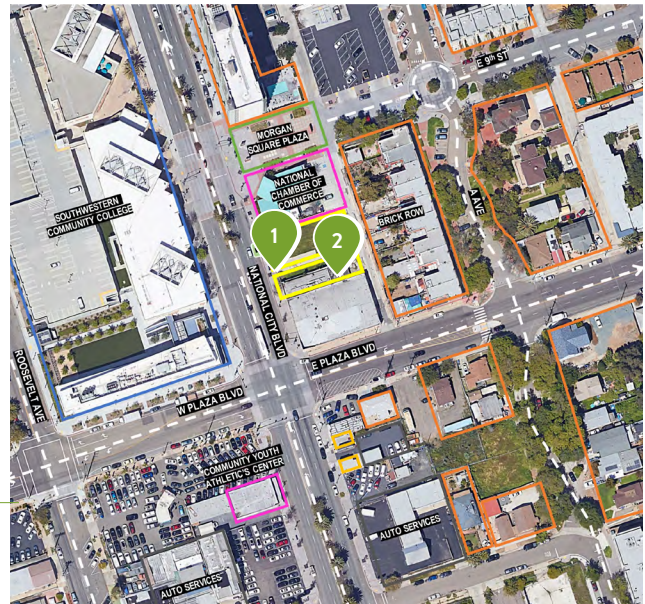
Past Use: Adjacent to historic dry cleaner, now vacant land

Observations

- ▶ Surface lot + vacant building
- ▶ Across from Southwestern Community College – Higher Education Center
- ▶ Access to 932, 962, 963 bus routes
- ▶ South of 8th Avenue main corridor (Note: there's a market on 8th & A)
- ▶ Adjacent to Chamber of Commerce, vacant bar/restaurant building (with proposed multi-family mixed-income project in the works), Morgan Square Plaza

■ AGENCY/GOVERNMENT
 ■ COMMUNITY/PUBLIC AMENITY
 ■ COMMERCIAL

■ AUTO RELATED SERVICES
 ■ EDUCATION
 ■ RESIDENTIAL



1

Former Education Center, 921 National City Blvd.



2

Steamed Bean Site, 929 National City Blvd.

Vision

The panel suggests a multi-story apartment building with a ground level program that may include:

Technical Assistance/Business Training

Explore collaboration opportunity with the adjacent Chamber of Commerce in support of business development and job growth

Incubator

Explore collaboration opportunity with the adjacent Southwestern Community College in support of training and mentorship opportunities

Other civic/cultural uses

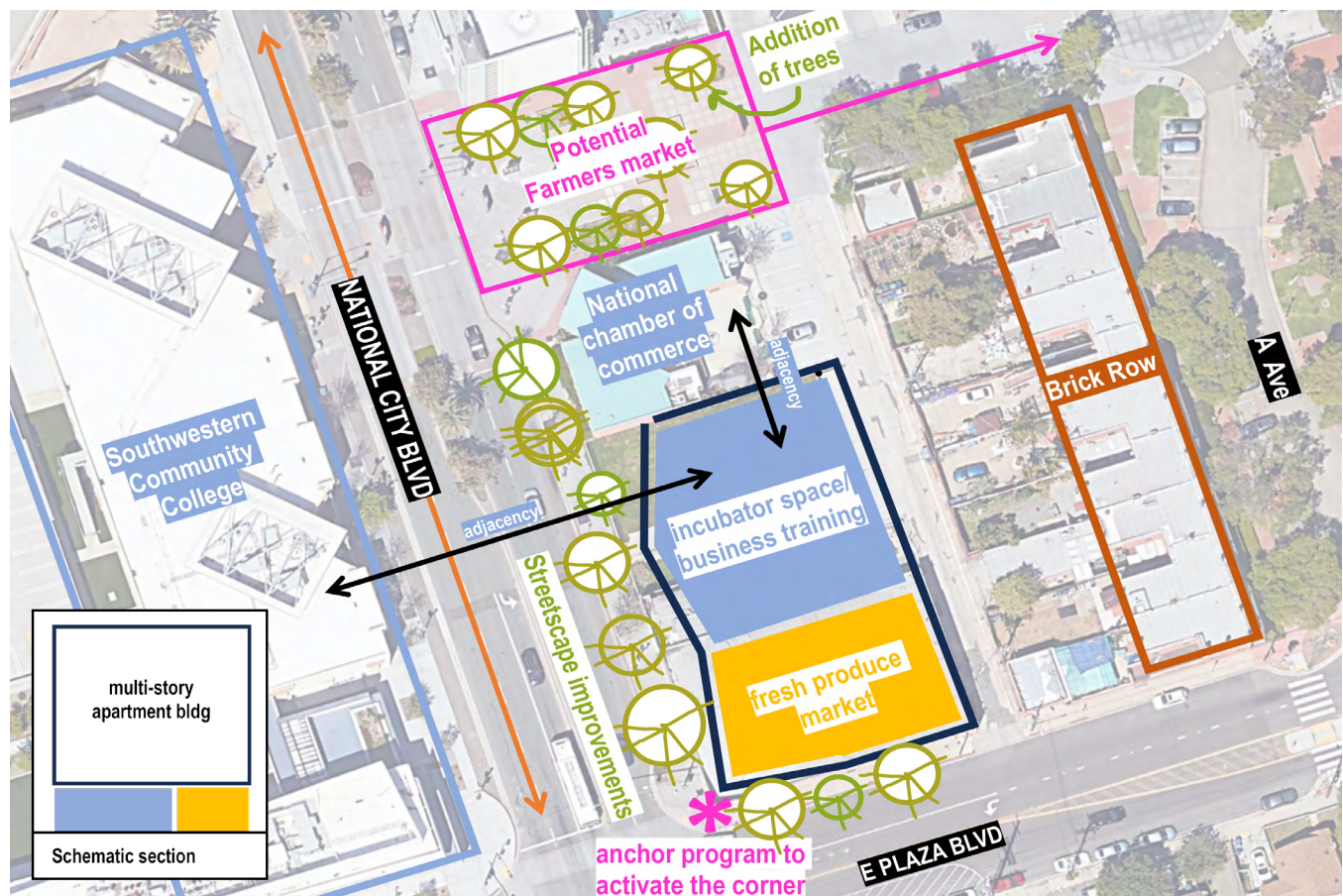
Establishing a cultural museum was proposed by one of the stakeholders

A market

A market or a grocery store as an anchor tenant to provide better access to healthy and fresh food



UC San Diego Park & Market building in East Village, a transit-friendly space for university classes, programs, public and private events, and entertainment.





The 8th & Republican Mixed-Used Development, located in Seattle and design by Miller Hull Partnership, is set back from the street at mid-block proving a generous public courtyard, the backdrop for a well-loved neighborhood café and patio with a participatory water feature.

Due to its location on a main thoroughfare and its connection to transit, density should be maximized.

The residential units should support a mix of income levels. Leverage the ground level program space to activate the pedestrian experience with setbacks, landscaping/hardscaping, awnings, etc.

Planting/replanting street trees along the National City Boulevard frontage will provide shade, improve air quality, and elevate curb appeal and walkability.

The Continental is a mixed-use project located in San Diego's Little Italy, this is a building designed with limited parking and retail activating the ground floor of the building.



SITE 3

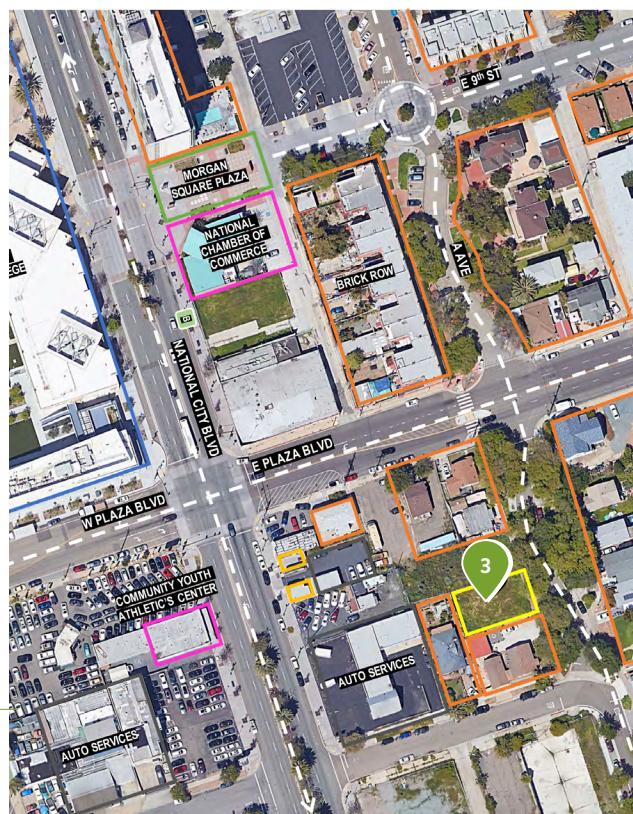
A Avenue Parcel

Past Use: Mixed industrial use including adjacent auto shops, now vacant land

Observations

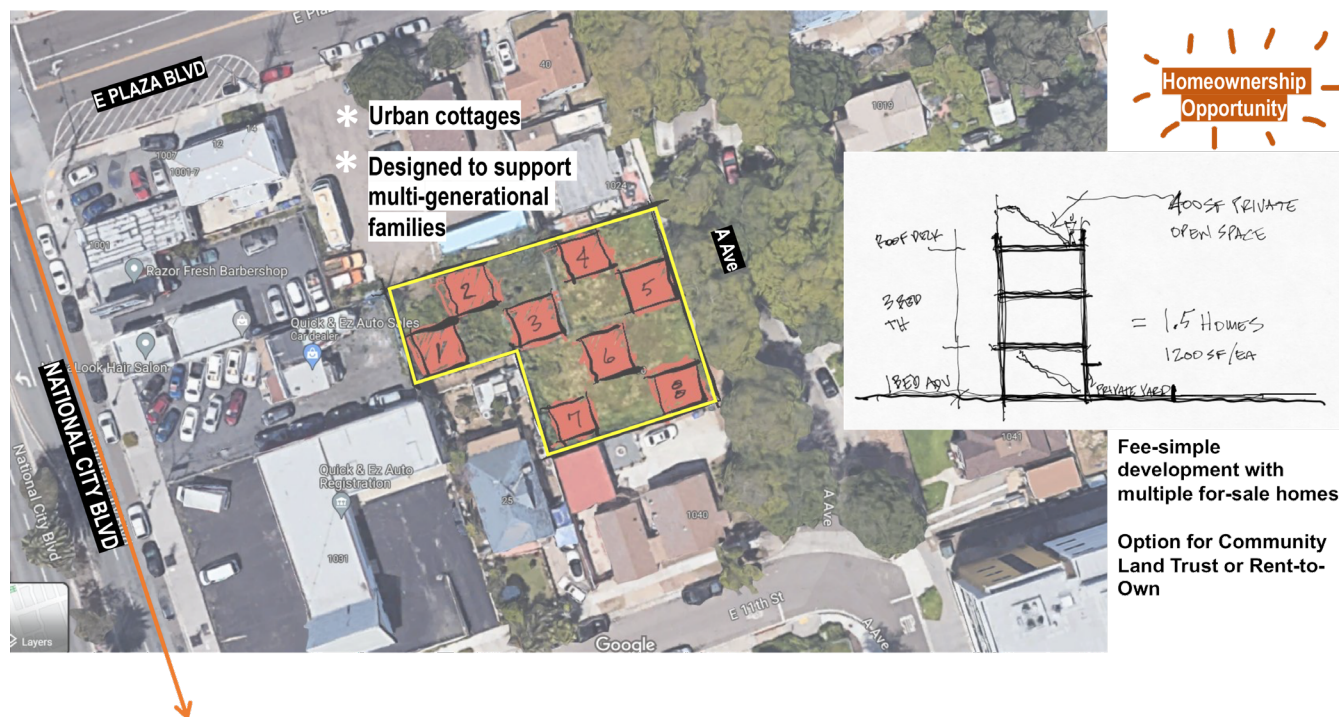
- ▶ Surface lot on site
- ▶ Elevation change
- ▶ Adjacent to single-family residential
- ▶ Located north of two recently constructed, mid-rise affordable housing projects
- ▶ Proximity to Kimball Park
- ▶ Clear connectivity to historic Brick Row
- ▶ Sidewalk lined with trees and historic street lights
- ▶ Only allows for 8 units per acre

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| ■ AGENCY/GOVERNMENT | ■ AUTO RELATED SERVICES |
| ■ COMMUNITY/PUBLIC AMENITY | ■ EDUCATION |
| ■ COMMERCIAL | ■ RESIDENTIAL |



3

A Ave Parcel Site, 1028 A Ave.



Vision

The panel believes the city and its selected developer have an opportunity to help those historically shut out of the home ownership market to build generational wealth at this parcel. The site is well suited to accommodate fee-simple, for-sale “urban cottages” that can support multi-generational families.

Include an attached accessory dwelling unit (ADU) with each unit to provide options for multi-generational or income-producing residency. Layer Community Land Trust or Rent-to-Own options to further promote attainability goals. (National City’s Housing Element (6th Cycle) Implementation Programs include a Community Land Trust program: “The establishment of community land trusts to preserve the long-term availability of land for affordable housing using the San Diego Community Land Trust model or similar program.”)

Three-story, modulated buildings, with approximately 60% lot coverage, will create a neighborhood-appropriate transition between the surrounding low-rise single-family homes/townhomes and the mid-rise residential buildings.



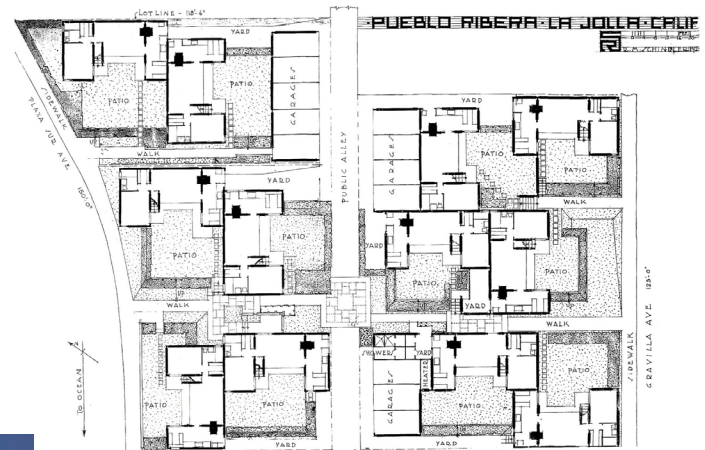
CIDCO Housing located in Navi Mumbai, has an overall density of 55 low cost housing units per acre and was designed in a way that creates livable public space, semi-public space and private space.

The panel suggests a design that balances privacy and community between residents. Consider courtyard paths and bump-outs as well as rooftop spaces. Use strategic setbacks from the street and public benches or other seating elements to create a “front porch” interface with the treelined sidewalk.

The added expense of providing parking on this site is unnecessary due to its proximity to transit, neighborhood amenities, and street parking.



El Pueblo Ribera is a twelve unit complex of duplexes, located in La Jolla. In these units the interior and exterior are integrated, helping to reduce the footprint of the buildings and creating private and shared courtyards for the entire complex.



Located in the heart of San Diego's Hillcrest Village, Eitol is a mixed-use, multifamily residential building. Its 13-tower design creates unique, standalone-like units with no shared walls, and also creates the opportunity to have private and shared exterior spaces.

📍 SITE 4

Welding Shop

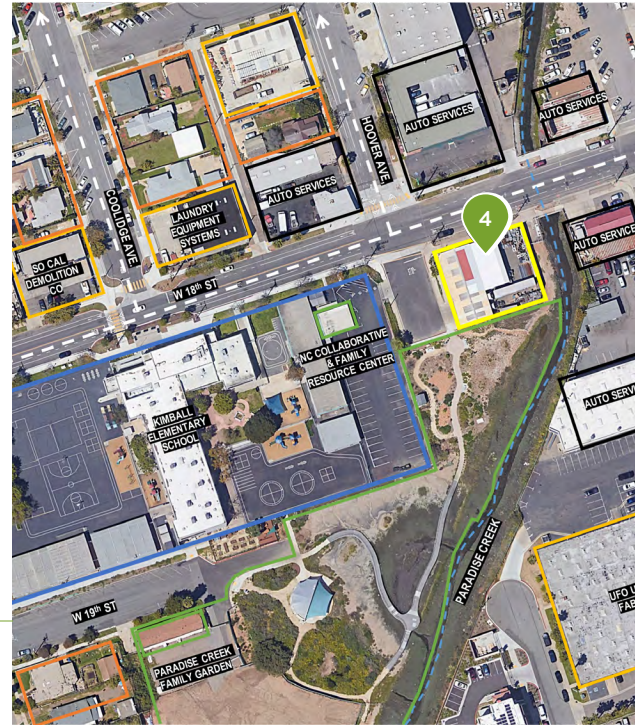
Past Use: Welding shop, now vacant building

Observations

- ▶ Existing vacant structure needs addressing
- ▶ Adjacent elementary school
- ▶ Nature path and interactive, educational elements
- ▶ Adjacent affordable housing community separated from creek by fencing
- ▶ Chain link fence along creek front on 18th Street
- ▶ Flooding on site and across 18th Street with high tide

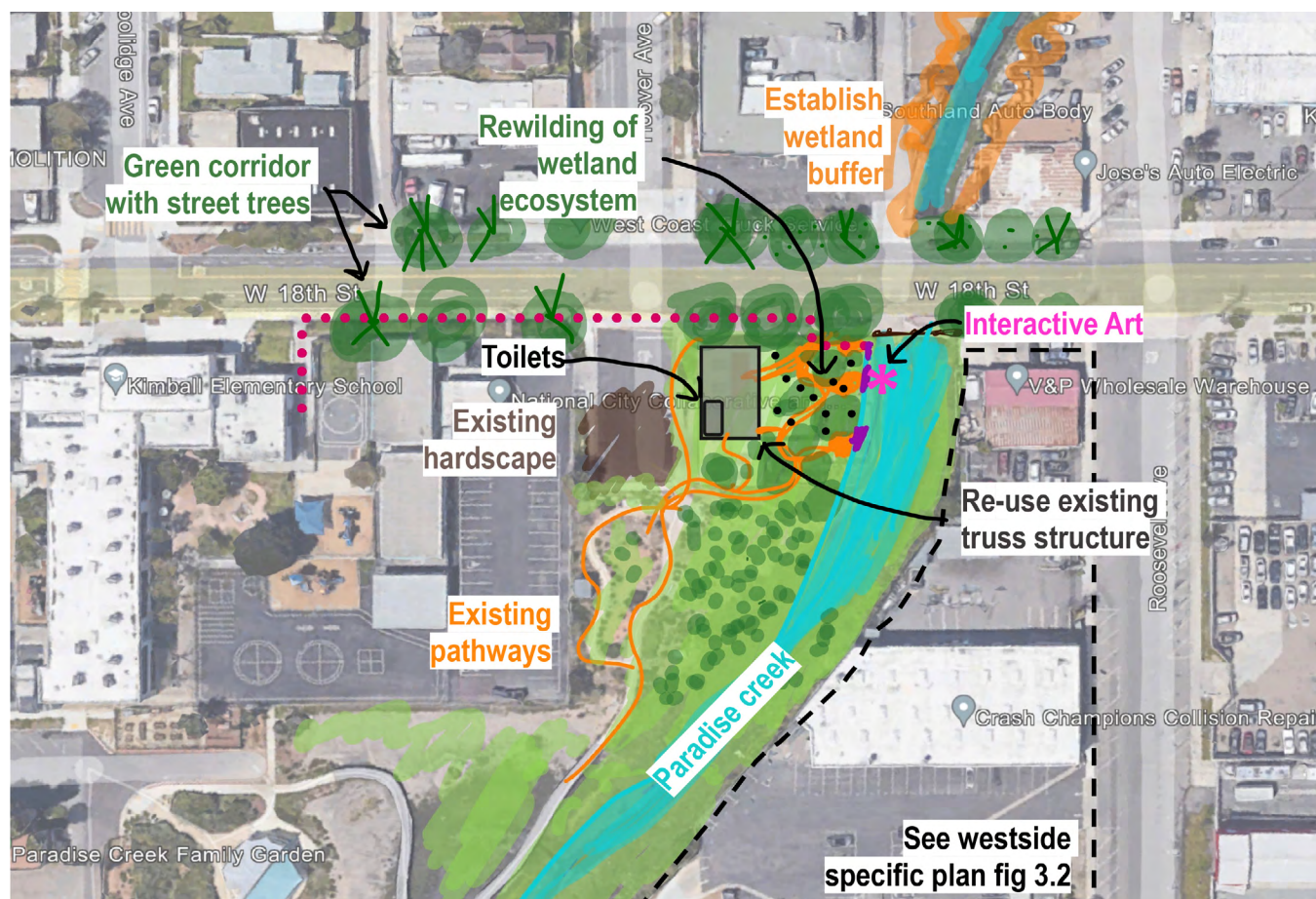
■ AGENCY/GOVERNMENT
 ■ COMMUNITY/PUBLIC AMENITY
 ■ COMMERCIAL

■ AUTO RELATED SERVICES
 ■ EDUCATION
 ■ RESIDENTIAL



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Welding Shop, 140 W 18th St.



Vision

The persistent flooding at this site, combined with expectations of continued sea level rise, inspired our panel to present two options for this site.

Option 1 – Low Impact:

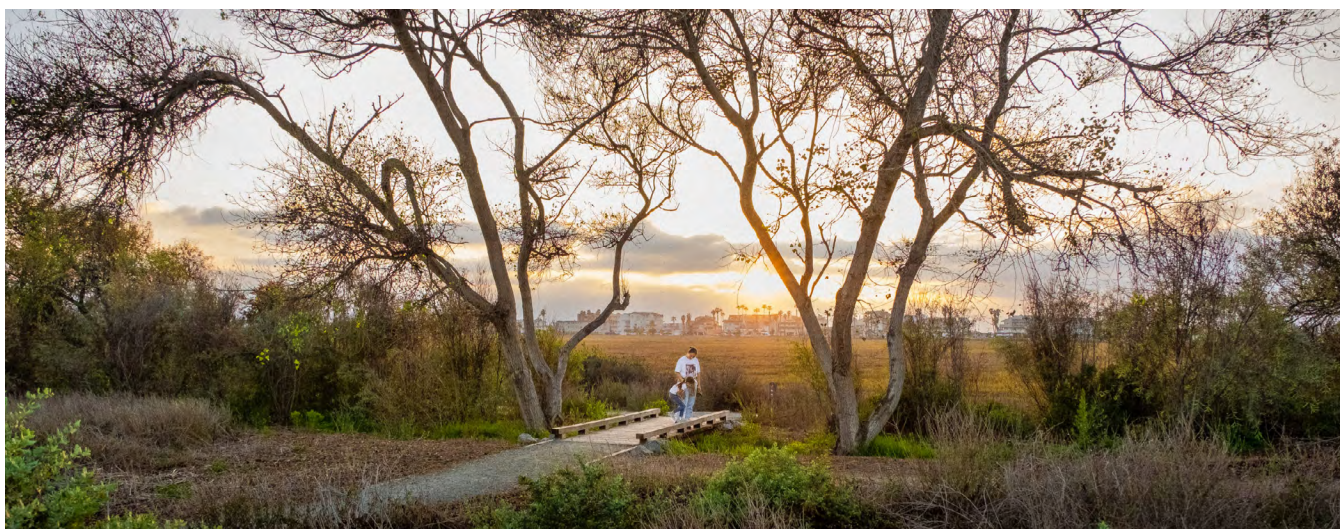
The low-impact approach involves removing the vacant welding shop entirely, allowing for a more thorough re-wilding of the site. Restore riparian habitat and create upland habitat by partnering with Paradise Creek Educational Park, Inc.

Utilize existing pathways through Paradise Creek Educational Park but create additional small trails leading to overlook areas at the edge of the creek. Further engage and encourage visitors by including additional interactive art components exhibiting water levels and/or riparian topography.



Lines is an interactive site-specific installation that uses sensors and LED lights to mark the sea level rise from climate change.

Remove the chain link fence along the creek edge on 18th Street and improve the guardrail to be more consistent with the natural materials and beauty of the area. Reestablish/replant street trees along 18th Street to provide shade and improve air quality, creating a green corridor on both sides of the street, with potential to highlight the creek as it flows past 18th Street as well.



The Tijuana Estuary offers recreational opportunities like hiking and biking trails, horseback riding, and exploring nature and wildlife.

Increase partnership with local schools to implement a skills-based, nature education component that could include water testing, habitat restoration, invasive species research, and more. Organizations like Paradise Creek Educational Park, Ocean Discovery Institute, Surfrider Foundation, Coastkeepers, etc. could be considered.

Option 2 – Medium Impact:

The medium-impact approach involves all strategies articulated in the low-impact approach but keeping the existing truss structure of the welding shop as a shade structure pavilion.

This space could accommodate outdoor markets and other community gatherings. It will provide a better visual connection between 18th Street and the park since the walls of the structure will be removed.

The city could build a small restroom building within the footprint of the pavilion structure to capitalize on existing plumbing infrastructure. The restroom needs to be designed to withstand flooding potential.

In Portland, a burned-out and abandoned Hawthorne Asylum was converted into a food cart pod without major intervention, just revitalizing the existing structures.



Seattle converted the Seattle Gas Light Company gasification plant into Gas Works Park, letting nature take over.



FURTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR THE CITY

Permitting & Project Processing

House National City is a potentially beneficial approach to local programming to help spur development and increase unit count in the city, as evidenced in the San Diego Complete Communities Program and should extend into National City's downtown without the requirements of a discretionary review.

The discretionary review in the Downtown Specific Plan process leaves developers with a significant level of uncertainty when analyzing potential deals. Furthermore, the plan's density calculation limits infill development in some of these areas, which may lead to developers avoiding National City all together because

of anticipated return on investment and/or concerns of the cost and total time required to work through the development process.

The panel learned that permitting durations are of concern for businesses that may occupy commercial spaces. The City of San Diego demonstrates a model worth considering to address this issue.

San Diego has connected its Small Businesses department with an online appointment system that allows small businesses to ask initial questions about the process from licenses to planning. During planning, the Small Business department assists with expediting the project set up and review process, as well as providing the customer with updates and answering questions along the way.



Business Improvement Districts

The panel encourages National City's efforts to create a Business Improvement District (BID) in its downtown and feels that Little Italy and downtown Chula Vista serve as good models.

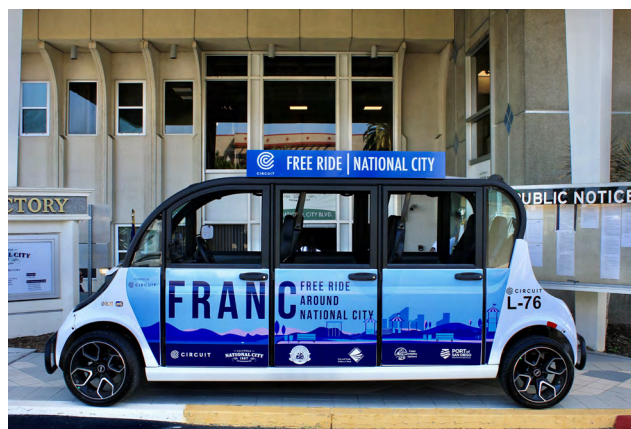
The focus should be on attracting, educating, and welcoming business, development, and more residents to the downtown. The BID can help provide National City residents a reason to stay in the city to dine, shop, and recreate. Market on 8th is a great example of how business can start to create a destination.

Parking

One stakeholder's comment, "would you rather have a home or a car?" resonated with our panel, and we believe priorities should be structured and supported accordingly.

National City should update its tally of how much parking is available in the city to support prioritizing housing over cars going forward. The City of San Diego has implemented a Transit Priority Area (TPA) amenity scorecard that specifies ways for a developer to exclude parking (and thereby reduce pass-through costs) in exchange for bicycle storage or repair stations; transit pass subsidies; micro mobility options; EV charging spaces; or on-site healthy food retail or day care facilities.

National City should implement a similar amenity score card system. The city's anticipated FRANC shuttle service could be funded by a developer trade for not providing parking.



Connecting the Parks

National City has tremendous natural resources that aren't being maximized. Connecting its parks and celebrating its creek would elevate the beauty and walkability of National City.

From the 24th Street Transit Center, use Paradise Creek Education Park as a gateway to the city center. In addition to the recommendations for Site 4 (welding shop), the panel suggests creating a natural buffer (and perhaps pedestrian path) along Paradise Creek after it crosses under 18th Street and runs along businesses that are often flooded during high tide.

Ideally, a greenway path would connect all the way to Kimball Park. Explore the feasibility of the triangular lot and the southwest corner lot of Kimball Park as a future site for a museum or cultural center.

This strategy could address several issues raised during stakeholder interviews, including:

- ▶ Preserving the past
- ▶ Respecting/celebrating Kumeyaay, Hispanic and Filipino cultures
- ▶ Increasing walkability

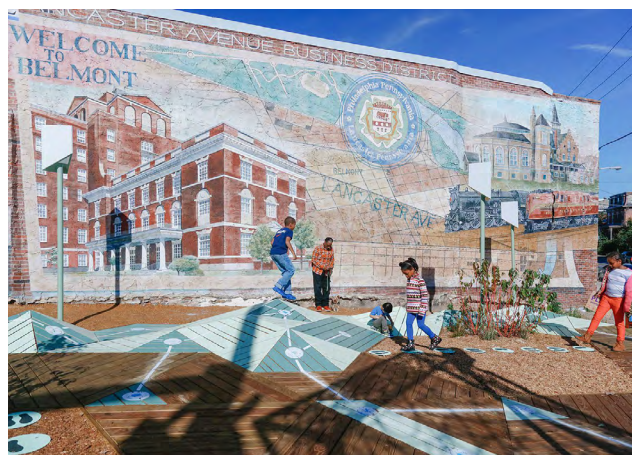


Temporary Uses

SDSU and National City should be proud of the impressive community engagement occurring as part of SDSU's brownfield grants process. While planners, city staff, and developers know that noticeable change can take years, other citizens typically expect more rapid results after being drawn into the community engagement process.

Our panel suggests showing the community that progress is being made by implementing the following strategies at brownfield and nearby sites - especially those owned by the city:

- ▶ Art installations
- ▶ Food truck pods
- ▶ Farmers' and makers' markets
- ▶ Morgan Square improvements (including adding trees to create shade cover)

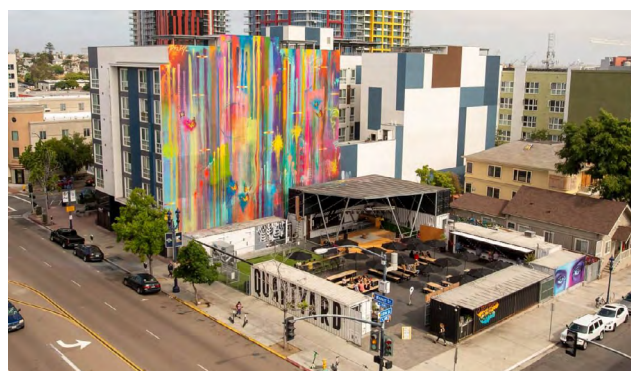


Playful Learning Landscapes Action Network transforms everyday public places into hubs of playful learning. An example of this is the Urban Thinkscape project, a bus stop that provides playful learning to Philadelphia's Belmont community.



Above: SILO used a vacant area in San Diego's Makers Quarter and turned it into a vibrant and thriving cultural enclave.

Right: Quartyard was an event venue and urban park built from repurposed shipping containers on a vacant lot in the East Village neighborhood of downtown San Diego.



INFORMATION FOR SDSU



Suggestions

Community support is key to the success of SDSU's brownfields project and longevity of its impact.

Make the most of the practical and budget considerations when selecting sites and allocating resources so that "pay off" in the eyes of the community is likely.

SDSU should focus community outreach on education about brownfield sites and the remediation process and timeline. It should also be transparent with the public about its site prioritization process, including making its site scoring results searchable and available to the public.

The SDSU team should also consider more targeted outreach to specific groups, including property owners, the Filipino community, small businesses and multi-generational groups.



8th & Republican Mixed-Use Development by Miller Hull Partnership.

Next Steps

Fall 2023

- ▶ ULI continues to support BAC/community outreach efforts.

Late 2023/Early 2024

- ▶ ULI will conduct Brownfield TAP #2 with second set of selected sites.
- ▶ ULI will develop and deliver the final TAP #2 report.



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