

Appendix A. Housing Opportunity Area Boundaries Report



MEMORANDUM

To: Jacob Armstrong, County of San Diego
Damon Davis, County of San Diego
From: Stephen Cook, TE, Intersecting Metrics
Date: September 6, 2024
Regarding: **Transit Opportunity Areas Boundaries – Methodology**

The purpose of this memo is to document the methodology and data sources used to develop the boundaries for the Transit Opportunity Areas (TOA) within the unincorporated portions of San Diego County (County). The concept of a TOA and its benefits to the County are outlined in the *Potential Transit Expansion within the County of San Diego Memo, November 9, 2021* (November 2021 Memo), which is included as **Attachment 1**.

As discussed in the November 2021 Memo, the purpose of TOAs is to capitalize on the future quality transit services that are planned to be implemented within the County by Year 2050. However, for future quality transit services to be extended to these areas, a level of land use density needs to be realized in order to attract sufficient transit ridership and justify the associated implementation and operational costs. Taking this into account, to be designated as a TOA, a parcel must meet two separate criteria; first it must have access to future quality transit services, and second there must be sufficient land use density (existing or potential) to support those quality transit services. Prioritizing urban style development within the identified TOAs will help to ensure that future quality transit services will be extended to the County, and ultimately, help meet its goals to reduce daily vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. As such, the land use zoning and densities in areas that are identified as TOAs will also be reviewed and potentially increased to attract future transit and create a more urban environment. The land use zoning and density review will be conducted in a subsequent report.

1.0 TOA Index

To identify the specific TOAs, an index was developed and applied to the parcels within a half-mile buffer of future transit lines (study area) per SANDAG's *2021 Regional Plan*. The index was used to measure if sufficient transit access may become available, and if the area/parcel can accommodate the land use density required to warrant and attract the planned transit services. As shown in **Figure 1**, the index applies two points for each identified planned quality transit service in which a parcel is located within a half mile of. A parcel is awarded three points if it is located within a half mile of a planned future transit stop. Planned transit stops are awarded a higher number of points as there is more certainty that future high quality transit will be available at these locations, and it shows that the region is planning to invest within these areas. Finally, a parcel is awarded points if it is located in specialized areas (Mobility Hubs or designated County Village Areas) or has access to existing infrastructure that is needed to accommodate growth, such as water and/or sewer. The total number of points a parcel receives is then summed to identify the total index score. Parcels with a total score of four or more points are identified as potential TOAs. The criteria and the designated amount of points a parcel received if it qualifies are explained in detail in **Attachment 2**.

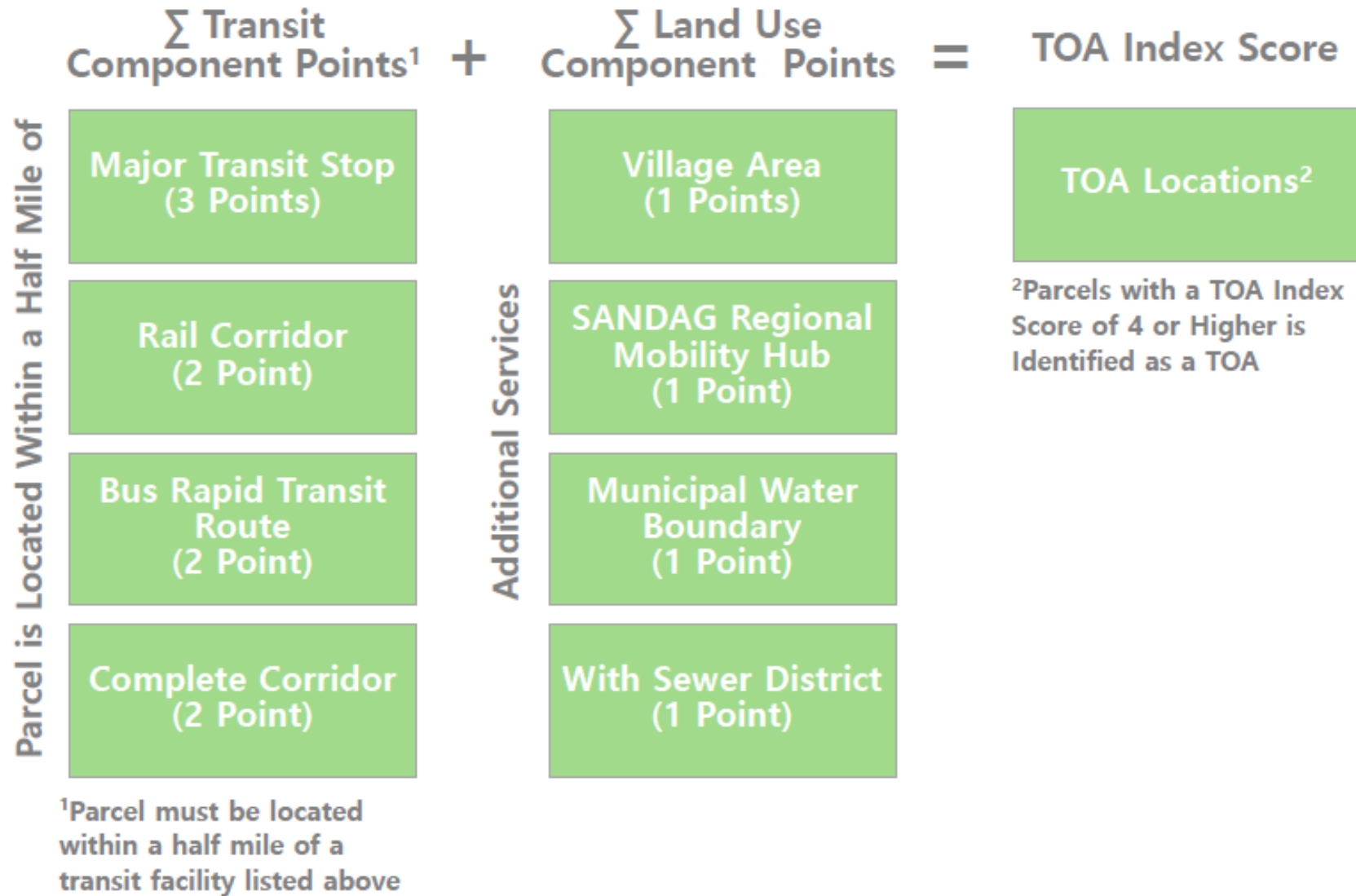


Figure 1: Transit Opportunity Area Identification Methodology Flowchart



2.0 Future Transit Access

Future transit routes and facilities within the County were identified based on the improvements outlined in Appendix A of SANDAG's *2021 Regional Plan*. The 2021 Regional Plan sets the vision, plan, timing, and funding allocation for a region's transportation network including transit services and facilities. Thus, it can be assumed that if sufficient land use densities are developed within these areas, then quality transit to service will be implemented to support them. For this analysis, only regional transit services such as rail, light rail, Bus Rapid Transit, express bus, and regional bus services are identified, as these are the types of services that would qualify as a major transit corridor¹ and create a future transit priority area². **Figure 2** displays the proposed buildout of the regional transit network. This network was used as the backbone to identify the areas within the County that will have future access to quality transit services.

Figure 3 shows the areas in the County located within a half-mile of the future quality transit service(s). This buffer was used as the study area to identify parcels that may be able to provide sufficient land use densities (existing or potential) to warrant future quality transit services.

3.0 Available Services

The TOA index also awards points for other infrastructure and services a parcel may have access to, allowing for higher density development. The following four service categories were included in the index, each carrying a weight of one point:

Village Areas – The County of San Diego General Plan identifies a series of designated areas with higher density development and where mixed-use development will be concentrated, known as Village Areas. The main goal of the Village Areas is to support multi-modal and mixed-use travel. Since the General Plan has already designated these areas as being higher density and mixed-use, they are prioritized for being included in the TOA.

Regional Mobility Hub - As outlined in SANDAG's 2021 Regional Plan, Mobility Hubs are communities with a high concentration of people, destinations, and travel choices. The 2021 Regional Plan prioritizes transit services and multi-modal travel within these areas through grant funding and other programs. Areas within a Regional Mobility Hub are more likely to receive future transit stops and other first mile / last mile services and infrastructure. As such, these areas were also prioritized for being included in the TOA.

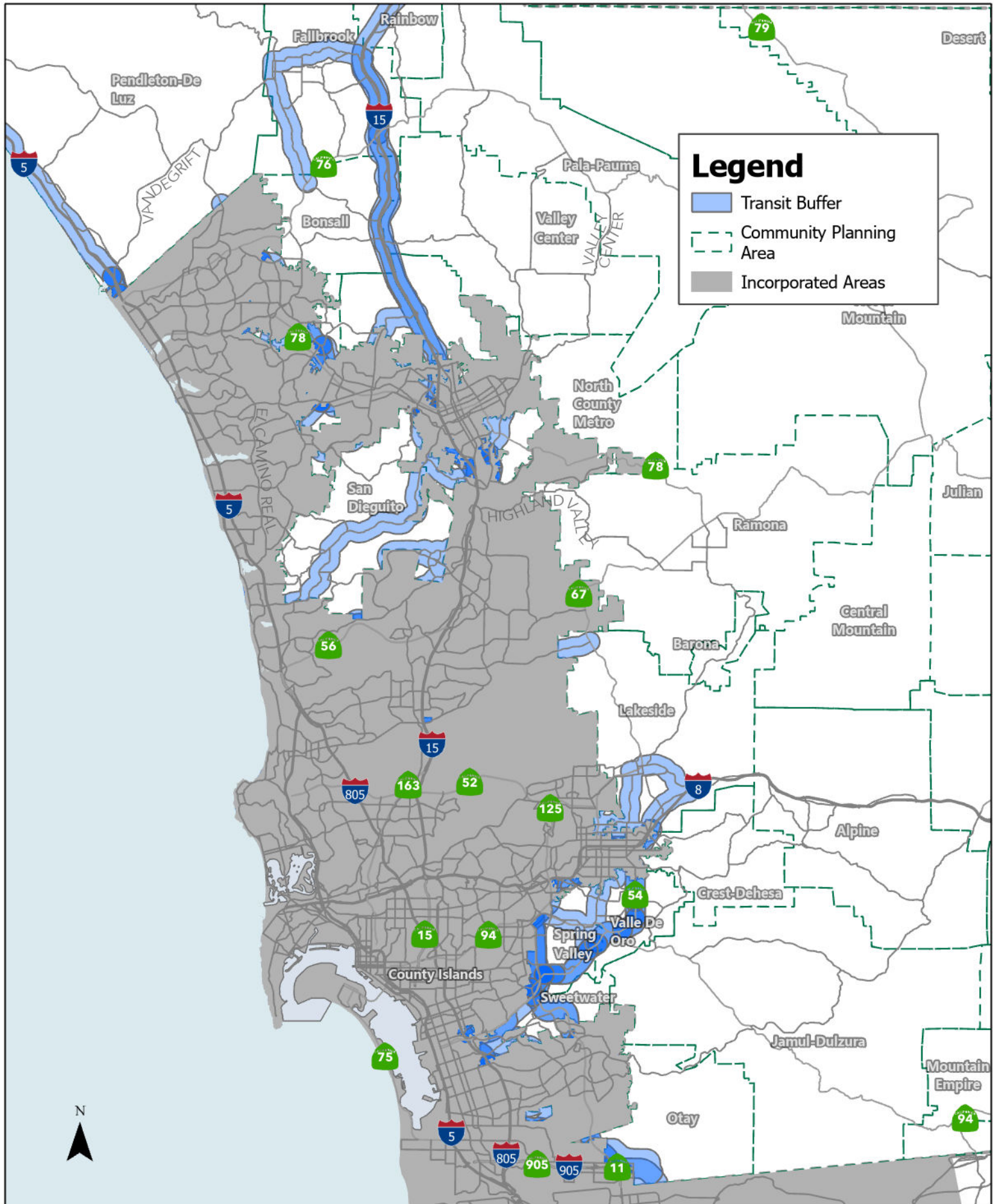
Municipal Water Authority Boundary – Not all of the unincorporated areas have access to municipal waterlines. Access to utilities, such as water, is critical for higher density development. Therefore, parcels located within the San Diego County Water Authority boundary are prioritized to being included in the TOA.

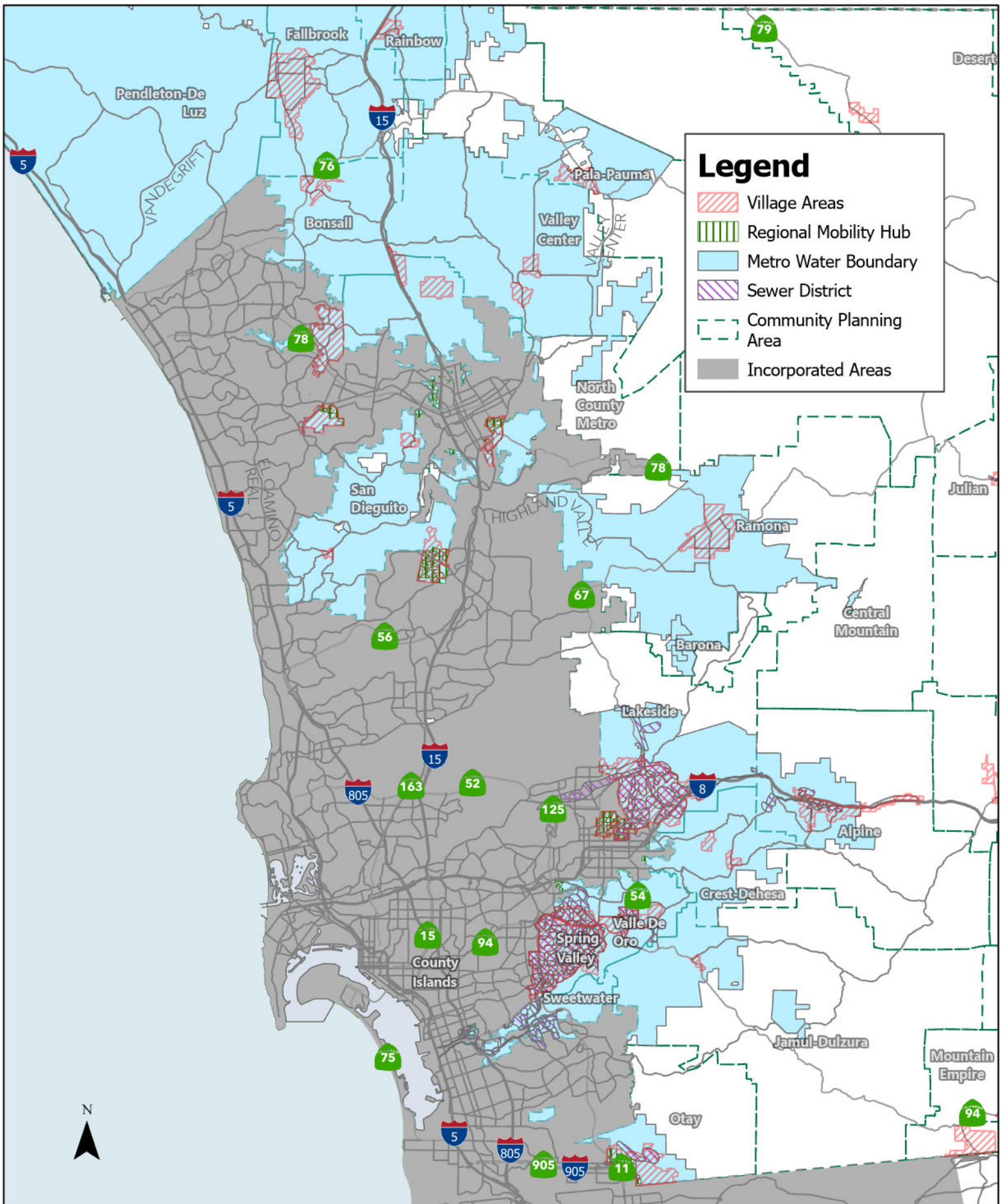
Sewer District – Similar to water, access to sewer services can play an important role in accommodating new growth. Therefore, parcels located within an existing sewer district are also prioritized for being included in the TOA.

Figure 4 displays the areas that provide the additional services outlined above.

¹ [California Public Resources Code Section 21155](#)

² [California Public Resources Code Section 21099](#)





Legend

- Village Areas
- Regional Mobility Hub
- Metro Water Boundary
- Sewer District
- Community Planning Area
- Incorporated Areas



4.0 Excluded Areas

The County of San Diego has several environmentally sensitive areas that are not appropriate for development, let alone higher density development. Therefore, these areas have been excluded from the TOAs. Parcels located within the following areas were excluded from being included in the TOA.

- Sensitive Animal Habitats
- Sensitive Biological Areas
- Forest Conservation Areas
- 100 Year Floodplain

Brief descriptions and sources for the data used in the analysis is provided in **Attachment 3**.

VMT efficient areas and identified infill areas were also not included in the TOA as they have already been identified as not having a VMT related impact. Both the VMT efficient areas and identified infill areas are established in the County's Transportation Study Guidelines, and are identified in the County's SB-743 Location-Based Screening Maps³.

The initial TOA Boundaries, based on the TOA index and excluded areas is displayed in **Figure 5**.

5.0 Area Refinements

After the application of the TOA index, the eligible parcels within the TOA boundary were further refined based on the following parcel level attributes:

High VMT Per Capita Area – A primary goal of the TOA is to create more areas within the unincorporated portions of the County for sustainable growth. To help ensure that the proposed growth within the TOAs will be sustainable, all parcels that are projected to have a VMT / Capita that is above 110% of the regional mean were excluded from the TOA. The VMT / Capita was derived based on the SANDAG Series 14 Base Year (Year 2016) transportation forecast, and the Traffic Analysis Zone (TAZ) in which the parcel is located in.

Non-Taxable Parcels – Parcels that are currently excluded from paying property tax were also excluded from the TOA. Non-taxable parcels are typically owned by government agencies, preserves, or other sensitive areas, or are owned by private non-profit institutions. The non-taxable parcels are identified in the assessor's parcel records.

Minimum Parcel Size – Parcels that are less than an acre in size are assumed to have a lower probability to redevelop at a higher density. Therefore, all parcels with a developable area of less than an acre were excluded from the TOA.

Zoning – Not all zoning is compatible with residential development; therefore, parcels located within commercial, industrial, or special purpose zoning were not included within the TOAs. It should be noted that residential development is allowed within some commercial zoning; however, they were excluded from the TOAs since the residential densities are directly connected to the commercial zoning.

³ [County of San Diego SB 743 Location-Based Screening Maps \(sandiegocounty.gov\)](http://sandiegocounty.gov)



6.0 Developable Areas - Net Developable Acreage

Due to geographic features, not all of the areas within the TOAs are developable. Therefore, the net developable acreage of a parcel is established by subtracting the areas that are occupied by either steep slopes (45%) or identified wetlands.

7.0 Final TOA Boundaries

The final TOA boundaries were established by applying the methodologies and criteria outlined in the previous sections. **Figure 6** displays the parcels within the County that qualify as a TOA. **Table 1** displays a summary of the TOA.

Table 1: TOA Summary

Metric	TOA
Total Number of Parcels	6,500
Total Acres	8,053.7
Net Developable Acres	5,695.7

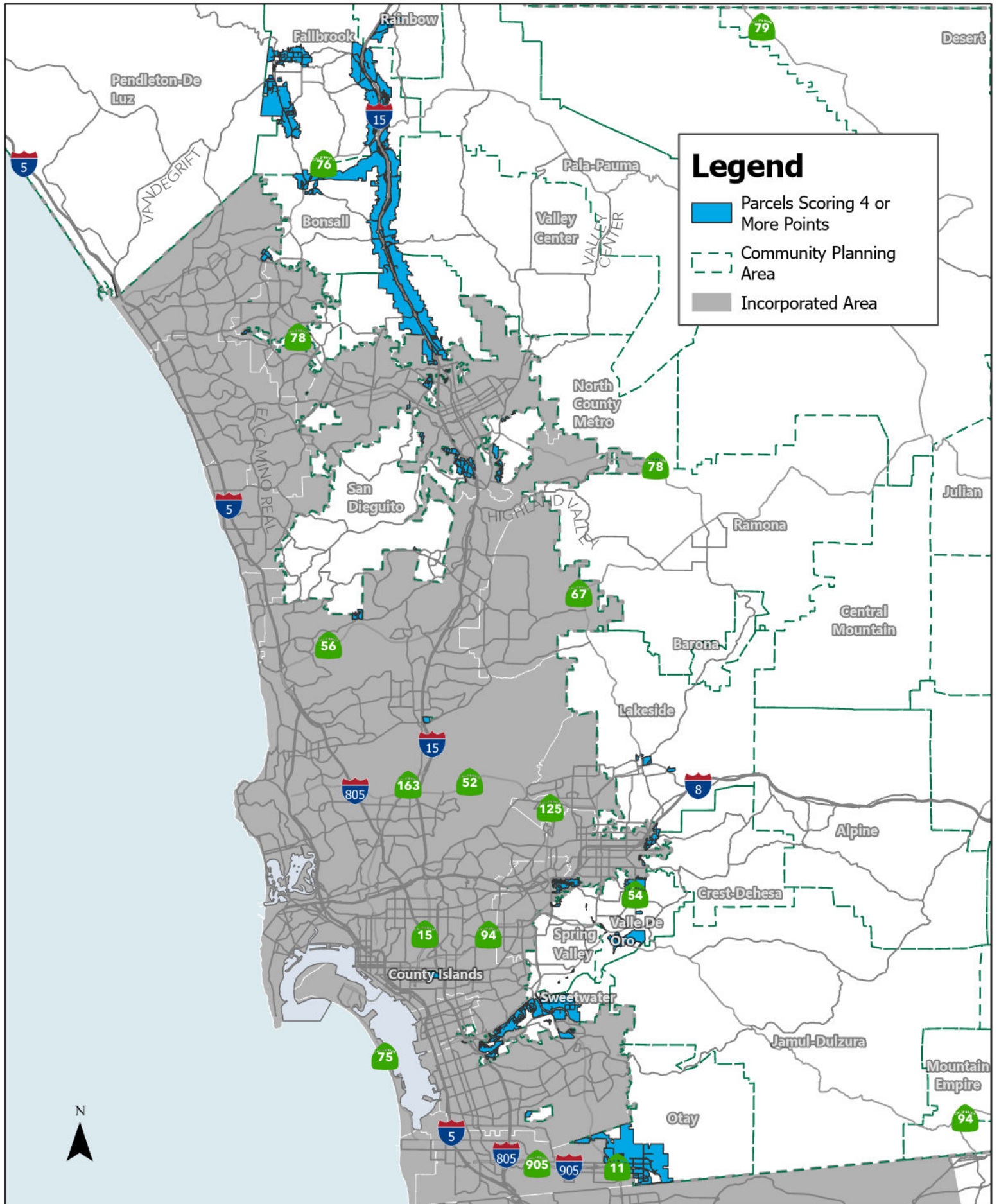
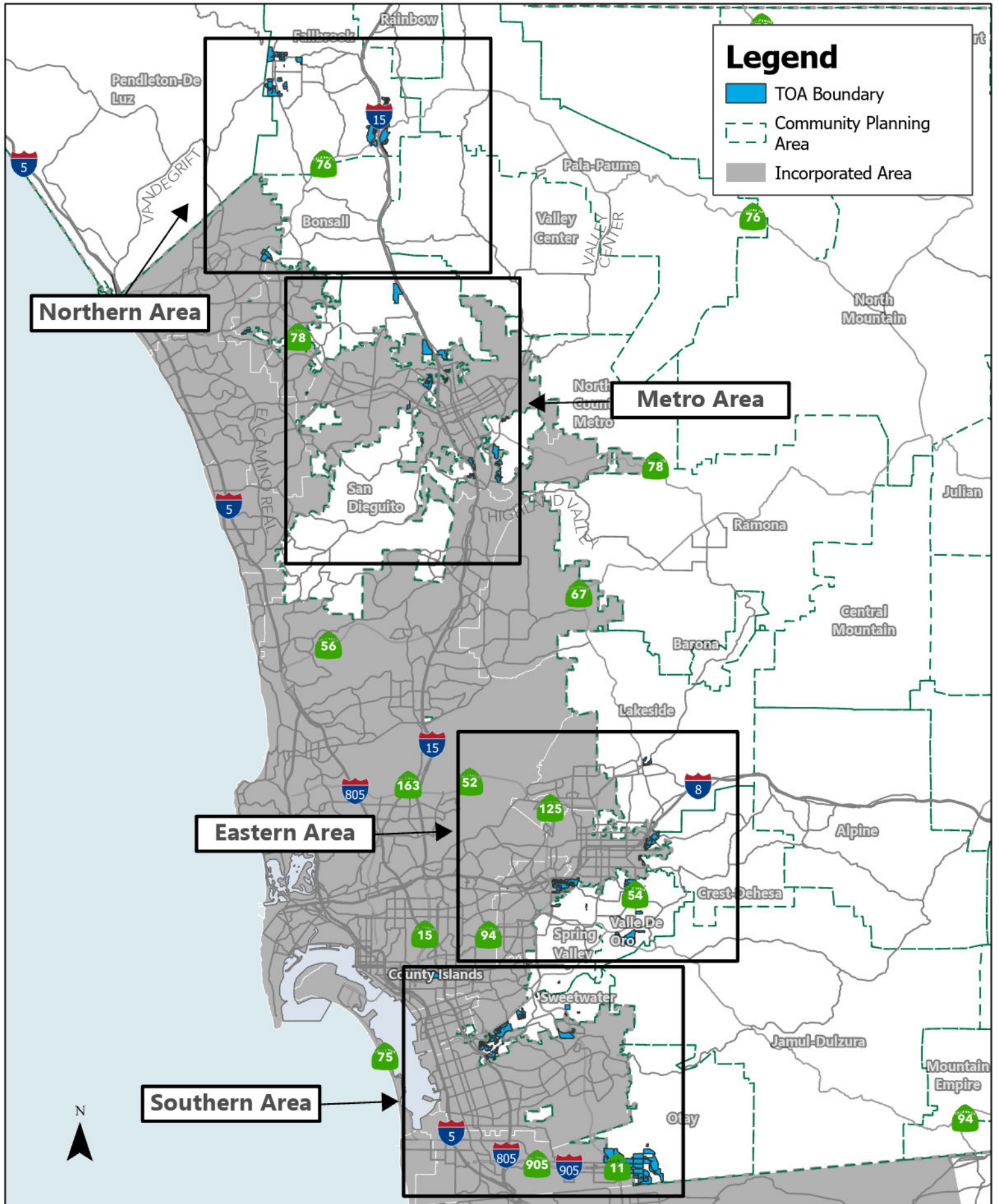


Figure 5

Parcels Scoring 4 or More TOA Index Points



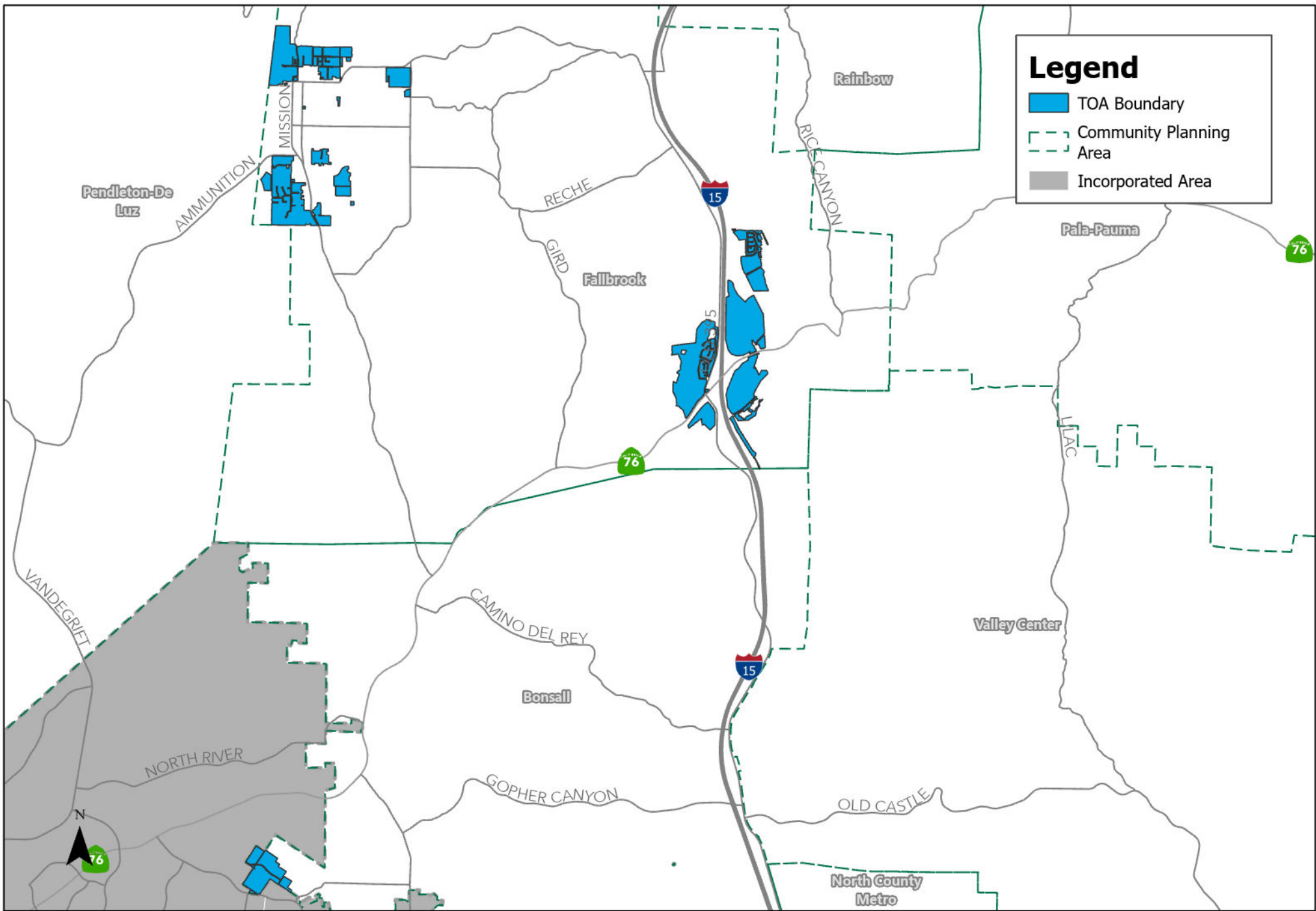
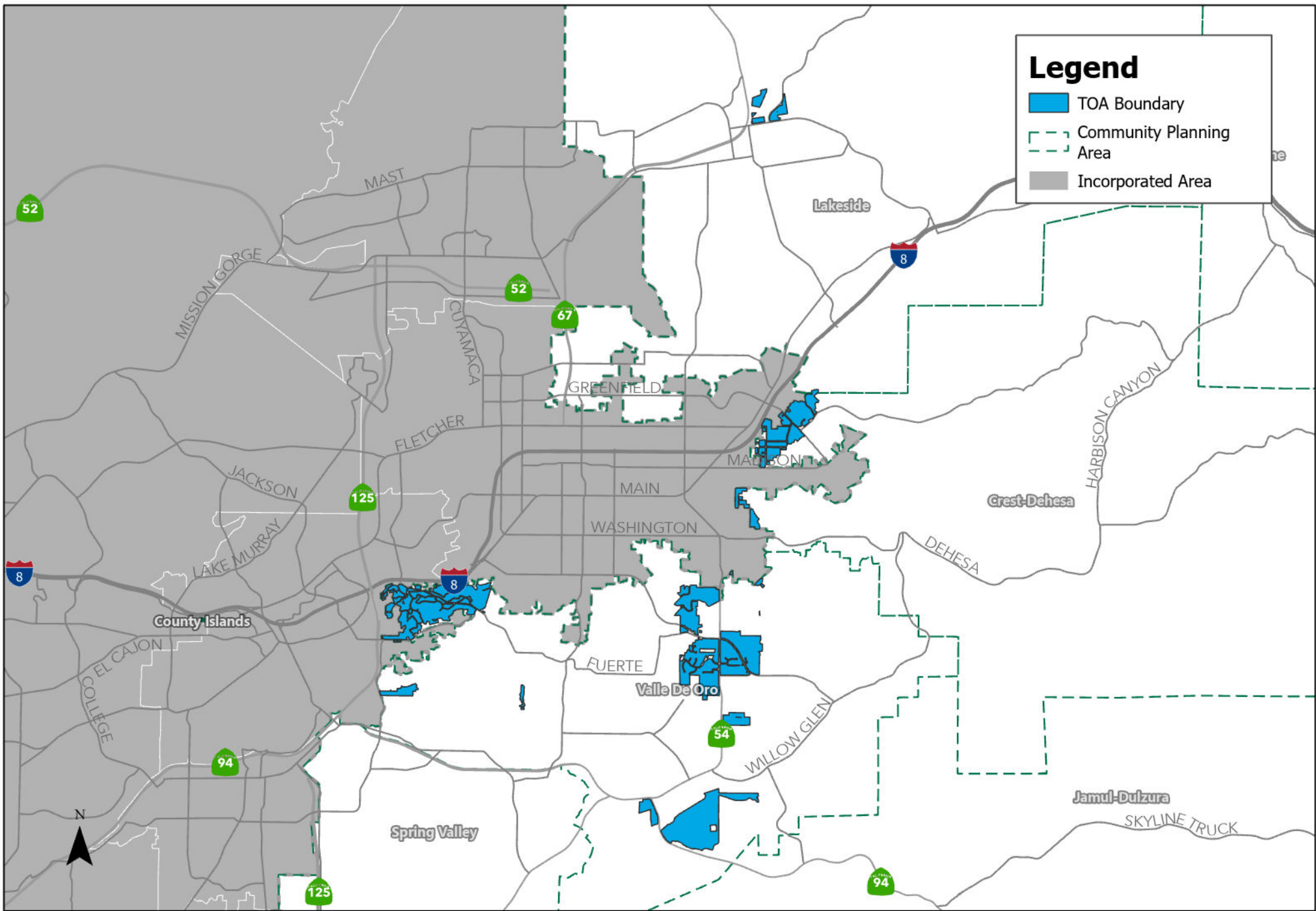


Figure 6a

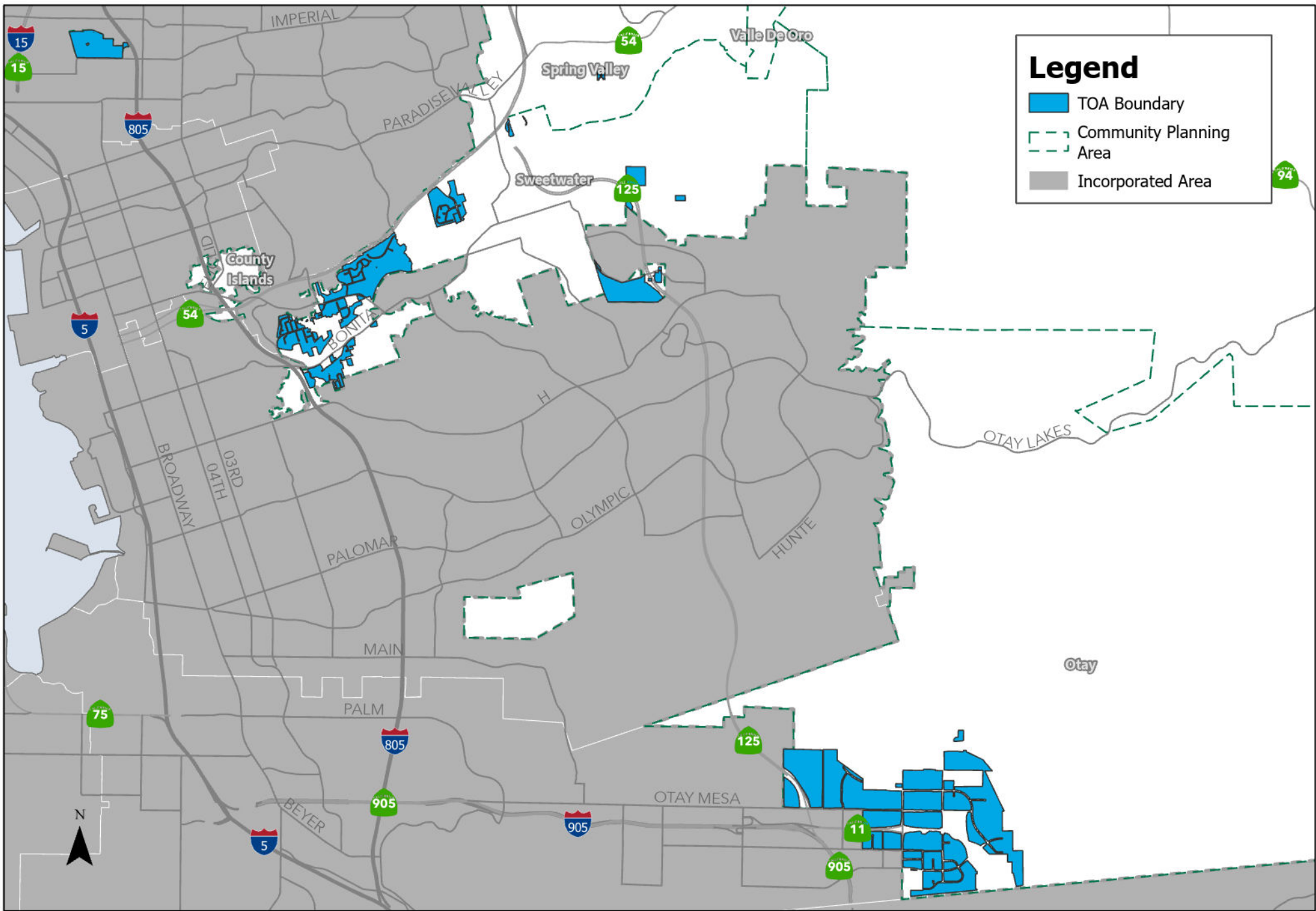
TOA Boundary - Northern Area





Legend

- TOA Boundary
- Community Planning Area
- Incorporated Area





Attachment 1
Potential Transit Expansion within the County of San Diego Memo



Attachment 2

Index Criteria – Definition and Points

Transit Component

Major Transit Stops – Existing and proposed transit stops along major routes within the County. Major transit stops were derived based on SANDAGs Series 14 ABM2+ model. It should be noted that some of the proposed future transit lines have not identified potential stop locations. As such, this does not represent a comprehensive list of all future transit stops. Major transit stops were used to identify Transit Priority Areas (TPA) that may be established in the future. Parcels within a half-mile of a major transit stop were awarded three points since infill developments within TPAs are consistent with the goals set within Senate Bill 743 (SB-743).

Rail Corridors – This includes both existing and future rail corridors that provide transit services, such as the San Diego SPRINTER, as well as planned rail corridor routes envisioned by the 2021 Regional Plan. It should be noted that the 2021 Regional Plan does not identify the specific technology that will utilize future rail corridors, but it does assume that these corridors will services by high frequency railed transit (passenger rail, light rail, subway, etc.). Rail corridors are considered major transit corridors in which new development would have a less than significant VMT related impact, or new major transit stations can be implemented to create a TPA. Since all future transit stops are not known, it cannot be guaranteed that a station will be located within a half mile of a development. Therefore, one point is awarded for parcels within a half mile of existing and future rail corridors.

Bus Rapid Transit Routes – Both Route 225 (South Bay Rapid) and Route 235 (I-15 Rapid) currently operate within the County. Several new bus rapid transit routes are identified within the 2021 Regional Plan (branded as Next Gen Rapid). Similar to rail corridors, Next Gen Rapid routes are considered major transit corridors in which new development would have a less than significant VMT related impact, or new major transit stations can be implemented to create a TPA. Since all future transit stops are not known, it cannot be guaranteed that a station will be located within a half mile of a development. Therefore, one point is awarded for parcels within a half mile of existing and future Bus Rapid Transit corridors.

Complete Corridors - The 2021 Regional Plan also identifies a series of Complete Corridors within the regional highway network where additional transit service and improvements are envisioned. Complete Corridors will be designed to give buses and other transit vehicles dedicated space on roadways that are currently identified to have excess vehicular capacity. Complete Corridors will also offer transit vehicles a traffic signal system that gives them priority over other traffic; thus, reducing travel times and improving service. These improvements should provide the opportunity to implement additional future high-frequency regional transit services (Rapid bus or Express bus) within the Unincorporated County. As such, these corridors have the potential to become major transit corridors in the future. Since the transit technologies, services, and stops have not been defined along these corridors, it cannot be guaranteed that a station will be located within a half mile of a development. Therefore, one point is awarded for parcels within a half mile of future Complete Corridors.



Additional Services Component

Village Areas – The County of San Diego General Plan identifies a series of designated areas with higher density development and mixed-use development will be concentrated, known as Village Areas. The main goal of the Village Areas is to support multi-modal and mixed-use travel, as outlined in Goal LU-5.1 of the County of San Diego General Plan:

Reduction of Vehicle Trips within Communities. Incorporate a mixture of uses within Villages and Rural Villages and plan residential densities at a level that support multi-modal transportation, including walking, bicycling, and the use of public transit, when appropriate.

This makes the identified Village Areas ideal locations to increase land use densities to draw and expand more regional transit services and Mobility Hub locations to the Unincorporated County. As such, parcels located within these areas are awarded one point.

Regional Mobility Hubs - As outlined in the 2021 Regional Plan, Mobility Hubs are communities with a high concentration of people, destinations, and travel choices. Mobility Hubs can span one, two, or even a few miles based on community characteristics. Mobility Hubs will be uniquely designed to fulfill a variety of travel needs while strengthening a sense of place. A fully connected network of regional Mobility Hubs ensures seamless connections to major work, school, shopping, and leisure destinations using transit and Flexible Fleets. Infrastructure improvements associated with the regional transit network, Complete Corridors, and Mobility Hubs will ensure that Flexible Fleets have safe spaces to use streets and places to charge and park vehicles at key destinations. Based on these identified features, Mobility Hubs are generally associated with the development that is encouraged within TPAs. As such, parcels located within these areas are awarded one point.

Municipal Water Authority Boundary – Not all of the unincorporated areas have access to municipal waterlines. Access to utilities, such as water, is critical for higher density development. Therefore, parcels located within the San Diego County Water Authority boundary are prioritized.

Sewer District – Similar to water, access to sewer services can play an important role in accommodating new growth. Therefore, parcels located within an existing sewer district are also prioritized.



Attachment 3 TOA Source Data

TOA Source Data

Category	Metric	Definition	Source	Year	Analysis	Field Used	Field Description
Steep Slopes	Steep Slopes	Steep slopes as defined by County of San Diego Planning Development Services. Those slopes greater than 25% slope are considered steep.	SANGIS	8/28/2015	Reduce potential building area within a parcel based on the area of present Steep Slopes.	All	N/A
Environment	Habitat	Habitat Evaluation Model - prioritizing critical biological resource areas with the region.	SANGIS	6/18/2008	High and Very High Areas used to screen out parcels.	DESC_	Description relating to the potential presence of 93 target species and to factors that contribute to high biodiversity
	Wetlands	Geospatially referenced information on the status, extent, characteristics and functions of wetlands, riparian, deepwater, and related aquatic habitats.	SANGIS	12/14/2023	Reduce potential building area within a parcel based on the area of present wetlands.	All	N/A
	Forest Conservaton	Areas identified in the Forest Conservation Initiative (FCI).	SANGIS	N/A	Screen out parcels within FCIs	All	N/A



TOA Source Data

Category	Metric	Definition	Source	Year	Analysis	Field Used	Field Description
Environmental	Sensitive Areas	This dataset is a combination of six elements of environmentally sensitive areas: 1. Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) Hardline Preserve designation, 2. Preserved land within County of San Diego South County MSCP, 3. County of San Diego South County MSCP Pre-Approved Mitigation Area (PAMA) designation, 4. Clean Water Act section 303(d) water bodies listed by the California Water Resources Control Board in 2016 with a 200-foot buffer, 5. Waters that support habitats necessary for the survival and successful maintenance of plant or animal species established under state and/or federal law as rare, threatened, or endangered from 2007, 6. Areas of Significant Biological Concern (ASBC).	SANGIS	3/12/2019	Screen out parcels and/or reduce potential building areas based on the area of sensitive areas.	All	N/A



TOA Source Data

Category	Metric	Definition	Source	Year	Analysis	Field Used	Field Description
Environmental	Floodplain	Represents areas most likely to be subjected to inundation by a 100-year flood.	SANGIS	6/2/2022	Screen out parcels and/or reduce potential building areas based on the area of the floodplains.	All	N/A
Sewer	Sewer Service Area	Sanitation District Service Area Boundary – This layer would be utilized to determine if a specific San Diego County unincorporated property is located within the Districts sewer service boundary or proximity thereof.	SANGIS	9/23/2021	Identify and place bonus on areas with sewer access	All	N/A
Water	Metro Water	Parcels located in the metro water district	SANGIS	8/28/2015	Provides a bonus to areas served by metro water	All	N/A
Fire	Local Fire	Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones in the Local Responsibility Area	Cal Fire	4/1/2024	Screen our parcels in Very High Fire Areas	All	N/A
	State Fire	Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ) in the State Responsibility Area	Cal Fire	4/1/2024	Screen our parcels in High and Very High Fire Areas	FHSZ	N/A