

Land Use and Urban Design Report

July 2021



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Introduction

Purpose of Report

This report provides an analytical overview of existing land use and community character in the City of San Buenaventura (“Ventura”), including current uses, zoning and General Plan designations, and key form and design characteristics of the built environment. It also summarizes key plans, policy documents, and planned and/or ongoing projects that will impact and inform the 2045 General Plan Update. This citywide report is also supported by a series of twelve (12) standalone technical documents on existing “subareas” in the City of Ventura.

Summary of Key Findings

- Infill development will continue to be a major theme in Ventura. Though the city is largely built-out, with just over 5 percent of land classified as vacant, many commercial and industrial properties are underutilized and ripe for redevelopment. With more than 5,300 housing units allocated in the Sixth Cycle RHNA, many of these sites could become key opportunity sites for housing.
- Ventura can be analyzed and organized in different ways. The city is composed of twelve (12) distinct subareas, each corresponding to a specific region of the city, and eight (8) place types, which are based on “look and feel” and often found in different areas. Both methods are important for planning decisions; for example, understanding the conditions and characteristics of different subareas in the city can help identify geographic disparities in quality of life that the General Plan can seek to remedy. Similarly, the City may choose to develop form-based codes modeled on place types to ensure that future growth and development conforms to existing community character.
- The 2005 General Plan directed the preparation of specific and/or community plans in the Pierpont and Westside neighborhoods, but at the time of writing, no such efforts have been initiated. These areas could earn special consideration in the forthcoming General Plan Update.
- Ventura enjoys an abundance of parks and open spaces, with most residents living within at least a 15-minute walk of such an area. However, the City should examine whether some parks experience overcrowding due to the high populations they serve.
- Ventura has virtually no special gateway signage or treatments at key entry points into the city. Improving gateways can be one way for the City to further celebrate and affirm Ventura’s unique identity.
- Public school enrollment in Ventura has steadily declined in recent years, largely due to high living costs that cause families to move out of the city. The City should prioritize the expansion of affordable housing, among other initiatives, to reverse this trend.
- Ventura Unified School District (VUSD) has deemed two of its properties to be surplus, indicating a high likelihood that they will be sold and redeveloped. In the forthcoming General Plan Update, the City should work with VUSD to evaluate and identify new desired uses for these properties and consider whether they can serve as catalytic developments.
- Residents in certain areas, including parts of the Midtown and College Area neighborhoods, have relatively lower access to public open space than do other Venturans. As a near-term solution,

the City could pursue joint-use agreements with local schools to open recreational facilities for public use.

- The General Plan should evaluate the need for neighborhood parks in areas where additional housing is planned.
- Continued expansion of local funding programs and sources for organizations such as the Ventura Land Trust to further protect and preserve the city's natural resources and open space. The General Plan has an opportunity to identify current funding programs such as the Parks and Water Bond Act of 2018 that are in place and assess the gaps where additional local funding programs could be created and expanded. These funding sources can contribute greatly to the protection and repairs of parkland, coastal spaces, and water supplies against various natural hazards.

Background and Regulatory Context

Community History

The origins of modern-day Ventura can be traced back to the Spanish colonial era. After exploring much of the surrounding region through the second half of the eighteenth century, Spanish settlers led by Father Junipero Serra founded Mission San Buenaventura in 1782.¹ The settlers forcibly enlisted members of the indigenous Chumash population – who had inhabited the coastal region for many centuries prior – as a cheap source of labor to build the infrastructure required to service their colonial compound.² Perhaps the most notable project commissioned by the Spaniards was a seven-mile aqueduct sourced from the Ventura River, which served domestic water needs and systematized local agricultural production. Through these efforts, a colonial township centered on the Mission's agrarian economy emerged and prospered through the course of nineteenth century.³ Following California's official integration into the United States, the State legislature formally incorporated the town of San Buenaventura in 1866.⁴

The discovery of oil in the early twentieth century proved a major catalyst for urban growth. First drilled in 1919, the expansive Ventura Oil Field became a major extraction site where oil mining companies produced up to 20,000 barrels of oil per day.⁵ This "oil boom" initiated a period of unprecedented growth and development in Ventura, as people from all over converged on the city for new employment opportunities. Homes were built, roads were constructed, and amenities like the Ventura Theatre were created to support the rapidly growing community.⁶ Between 1920 and 1930, Ventura's population nearly tripled from 4,156 to 11,603.⁷ Population growth continued a steady pace in the decades thereafter, driven in part by outward migration from Los Angeles and facilitated by the completion of Highway 101 in the mid-twentieth century.

To this day, Ventura retains several elements of its past. These remnants are perhaps mostly clearly embodied in the vibrant mix of architectural styles that combine Spanish colonial, Victorian, and

¹ City of Ventura. "About Ventura". Retrieved from: <https://www.cityofventura.ca.gov/594/About-Ventura>

² The Old Mission San Buenaventura. "Mission History". Retrieved from: <https://www.sanbuenaventuramission.org/history>

³ Kusky, Carolyn (August 21, 1990). "Landmarks: County Historical Sites; The Buenaventura Mission Aqueduct". *Los Angeles Times*

⁴ City of Ventura. "About Ventura". Retrieved from: <https://www.cityofventura.ca.gov/594/About-Ventura>

⁵ VCReporter. "Oil & Gas". Retrieved from: <https://vcreporter.com/2013/05/oil-gas/>

⁶ Hamilton, Denise (June 9, 1988) "A New Life Awaits Ventura Theater: Restaurateur Has Big Plans to Book Jazz, Country, Salsa Acts at Ornaté Ex-Movie House" *Los Angeles Times*

⁷ California Department of Finance. "Historical Census Populations of Places, Towns, and Cities in California, 1850-2000"

Craftsman design features. While the local economy has evolved and diversified over the past several decades, some residents are still employed in the agricultural and fossil fuel sectors that first helped catapult Ventura into the modern era.

Regional Location

Today, the City of San Buenaventura (“Ventura”) sits on the southern edge of Ventura County, nestled comfortably between the Pacific coast and the Los Padres National Forest. The city is within close driving distance of regional destinations, such as Santa Barbara (27 miles) and Downtown Los Angeles (69 miles), and only minutes from the neighboring jurisdictions of Oxnard, Ojai, and Santa Paula. Ventura also enjoys strong access to major transportation arteries that facilitate travel to these destinations and beyond; Highways 101, 126, and 33 all pass through the city, and the regional Metrolink commuter rail system serves Ventura, with two Amtrak stations located in Downtown and Montalvo, respectively (see Subarea Reports for locations and description). This strategic location affords the community a unique mix of coastal charm, outdoor recreation options, and access to major employment and cultural centers.

As of 2020, Ventura’s estimated population reached 106,276. This represents a 2.9 percent contraction since 2015, despite sustained population growth in the greater SCAG region.

Planning Area

Per the Governor’s Office of Planning & Research (OPR), a General Plan must address all land contained within a City’s boundaries and any additional territory that “bears relation to its planning.”⁸

Consistent with the previous General Plan Update, the Planning Area for the forthcoming Update encompasses the full extent of the Ventura City Limits, County Islands, its Sphere of Influence (SOI), and adjacent County lands to the north. This area covers a dynamic landscape that is bounded by the Pacific coast and Highway 33 to the west, the Ventura River to the south, farmland to the east, and the foothills of the Los Padres National Forest to the north.

On its own, Ventura’s SOI encompasses a handful of peripheral areas, such as unincorporated Saticoy to the east and parts of Casitas Springs to the north. Other County lands included in the Planning Area cover large swathes of land that include Olivas, Taylor Ranch, and the Hillside Voter Participation Area (HVPA) in the foothills. Figure 1 shows the full extent of the Planning Area and distinguishes the boundaries of the City Limits, SOI, and additional County-owned lands. These surrounding areas are also briefly defined below:

- **Saticoy:** An unincorporated community just east of the Ventura City Limits. It is a predominantly commercial area hosting a variety of light industrial uses and manufacturing uses, though residential neighborhoods are found on its north end.
- **Casitas Springs:** An unincorporated community along Highway 33 with a full-time population of just over 1,000. Most of the area in the City’s SOI, however, is open space.
- **Olivas:** A large, predominantly agricultural area south of the city, bordering the Santa Clara River. Key amenities in this area include the historic Olivas Adobe, featuring the restored home of Don Raymundo Olivas, and the Olivas Park Golf Course. Elsewhere, one large block is used for commercial and light industrial operations.

⁸ California Government Code, Section 65300-65303.4 Article 5. Authority for and Scope of General Plans

- **Taylor Ranch:** A large, undeveloped hillside area northwest of the City Limits. It hosts several commercial agricultural properties.
- **Hillside Voter Participation Area (HVPA):** A large swathe of undeveloped open space north of the City Limits. It hosts various native plant communities, and parts of the area are being opened to public recreation (see “Parks and Open Space” section for more).

Unincorporated Communities

In 2012, the State adopted a new law pertaining to the governance of disadvantaged unincorporated communities. Per SB 244, a General Plan is required to analyze and assess the infrastructure needs of any disadvantaged County “island” fully surrounded by its City Limits. A ‘disadvantaged community’ is defined as a place that:

- Contains 10 or more dwelling units in close proximity to one another;
- Is either within a city SOI, is an island within a city boundary, or is geographically isolated and has existed for more than 50 years, and
- Has a median household income that is 80 percent or less than the statewide median household income.

The General Plan Land Use Element is accordingly required to:

- Identify unincorporated disadvantaged communities;
- Analyze the water, wastewater, stormwater, and fire protection infrastructure needs; and
- Identify funding alternatives for the extension of these services.

While there are five County Islands within the City’s built fabric, they are used almost entirely for agricultural production and thus unlikely to meet the criteria for a disadvantaged community. However, the unincorporated Saticoy community in the SOI – lying just east of the City Limits – does likely qualify as a disadvantaged community. Per State law, the City will need to plan for this community in the forthcoming General Plan Update.

Figure 1: Planning Area



Regulatory Setting

General Plan (2005)

State law mandates that every City and County produce and maintain an up-to-date General Plan – a high-level strategic document that establishes goals, policies, and specific actions to direct a community’s growth over the course of 20-30 years. Currently, General Plans are required by statute to contain at least eight topical chapters – formally known as “Elements” – that address the following subjects:⁹

- Land Use
- Housing
- Circulation
- Environmental Justice
- Open Space
- Conservation
- Safety
- Noise

A General Plan is intended to be a living document that is periodically updated to respond to changes in State legislation, community priorities, and environmental and market conditions. While there is no legal mandate from the State to comprehensively update a General Plan, cities and counties are encouraged to do so every 10-15 years. Because the City of Ventura’s General Plan was last updated in 2005, it lacks important information and analyses required by recent legislative initiatives, such as evaluating environmental justice concerns [Senate Bill (SB) 1000], strategizing for climate change adaptation and resilience (SB 379), incorporating Complete Streets (AB 1358), and forecasting traffic impacts using new analytical metrics (SB 743). This changing regulatory environment, coupled with new challenges facing the community, demands that Ventura now take a fresh approach to long-term growth planning.

Ventura’s current General Plan was last updated in 2005, and parts of the 1989 Comprehensive Plan still hold regulatory authority in areas of the city. For more on these documents, see the “Land Use Regulations” section.

Relationship of Report to General Plan

This report is one of several standalone technical documents that will inform the direction of the General Plan Update process. Specifically, the conclusions drawn from this analysis will lay the groundwork for the strategies proposed in the updated Land Use, Housing, and Open Space Elements.

California Coastal Act

In 1976, the State enacted the California Coastal Act in order to improve public access to the shoreline, protect natural resources, and achieve a balance between development and conservation needs in California’s Coastal Zone. The Coastal Act also provides specific policy guidance on various topics – such as energy, water quality, wetlands and sensitive habitats, natural hazards, and agricultural preservation – and requires that all interested parties, including public agencies, obtain a permit prior to building on land in the Coastal Zone. To implement these goals and policies, local governments are required to draft

⁹ State of California Governor’s Office of Planning and Research, General Plan Guidelines (2017).

Local Coastal Programs (LCP) that manage coastal development and conservation through various regulatory mechanisms. LCPs must be reviewed and certified by the California Coastal Commission.

The City of Ventura Local Coastal Program (LCP) was certified by the California Coastal Commission (Coastal Commission) in 1984. An LCP is comprised of two components: a land use plan and an implementation plan. The 1989 Comprehensive Plan was revised in August 2005 with the adoption of the City's 2005 General Plan. Because the Coastal Commission has not certified the 2005 General Plan as part of the LCP, the 1989 Comprehensive Plan, rather than the 2005 General Plan, operates as the current LCP and land use plan for areas within the Coastal Zone. The LCP will be updated concurrent with the forthcoming General Plan (see "Land Use Regulations" section for more on the LCP).

Save our Open Space and Agricultural Resources (SOAR)

Both the City and County enforce programs to ensure the protection and preservation of local undeveloped lands. In 1995, the City approved a SOAR ballot initiative that would require voter approval of any land use changes to 1) areas designated "Agriculture" per the General Plan, and 2) the Hillside Voter Participation Act (HVPA), which requires voter approval of any development within the HVPA area (see Hillside area on Figure 11: General Plan Land Use Designations). The measure also establishes a City Urban Restriction Boundary (CURB) around the existing City Limits and requires voter approval before any land beyond them can be developed.

Meanwhile, the County's SOAR initiative was passed in 1998 and requires countywide voter approval of any land use or policy changes to areas designated "Agricultural," "Open Space" or "Rural" under the County General Plan. In November 2016, county voters approved the extension of SOAR up to the year 2050.

City and County lands protected under SOAR are identified in Figure 17: Parks and Recreation Facilities.

Land Use + Regulatory Context

Existing Land Use

This section described existing land use based on its current character and function within the City of Ventura. As Table 1 highlights, single-family homes comprise the single largest existing land use category in Ventura, amounting to roughly 39 percent of land within the City Limits. Other notable uses in the City Limits include multifamily residential (7.0 percent), parks and recreational facilities (6.9 percent), retail/commercial centers (5.8 percent), and agriculture (5.1 percent). Currently, about 5.3 percent of parcels in the City Limits are vacant. Existing land uses in the City Limits and SOI are illustrated in Figure 2, and the distribution of uses is listed in Tables 1 and 2.

The following pages provided more detailed descriptions on each major land use category in the city. In the descriptions, various references are made to different areas and neighborhoods of the city. To better understand the areas to which these names correspond, please refer to the "Subareas" section and Figure 15 on page 46.

Figure 2: Existing Land Use

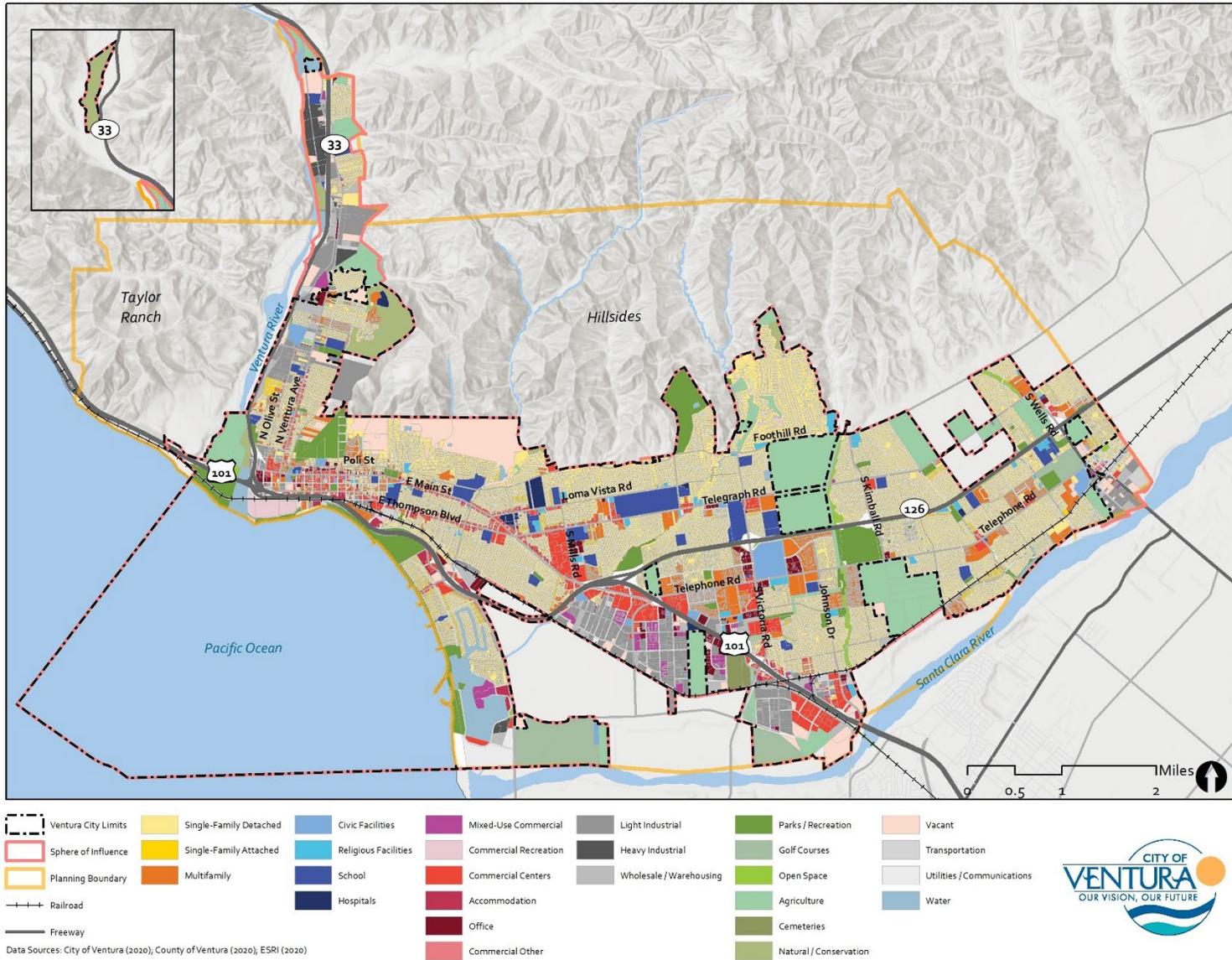


Table 1: Existing Land Use: City Limits

Land Use Type	Acres	Percent	Parcel Count
Residential	5,313.78	46.9%	31,400
Multifamily	794.73	7.0%	4,782
Single-Family Attached	142.79	1.3%	1,096
Single-Family Detached	4376.26	38.7%	25,522
Commercial	1,095.77	9.7%	1,520
Accommodation	53.78	0.5%	31
Commercial Centers	659.62	5.8%	1033
Commercial Other	1.51	0.0%	6
Commercial Recreation	77.83	0.7%	13
Mixed-Use Commercial	123.44	1.1%	234
Office	179.59	1.6%	203
Industrial	695.92	6.2%	745
Heavy Industrial	11.81	0.1%	3
Light Industrial	526.02	4.7%	680
Wholesale/Warehousing	158.09	1.4%	62
Public/Institutional	1,379.95	12.2%	364
Civic Facilities	160.89	1.4%	38
Religious Facilities	116.43	1.0%	82
Hospitals	66.59	0.6%	21
School	430.22	3.8%	48
Transportation	176.12	1.6%	89
Utilities/Communications	128.27	1.1%	11
Water	301.43	2.7%	75
Agriculture/Open Space	2,237.38	19.8%	422
Agriculture	577.40	5.1%	90
Cemeteries	58.38	0.5%	2
Golf Courses	398.06	3.5%	7
Natural/Conservation	315.07	2.8%	37
Open Spaces	107.59	1.0%	90
Parks/Recreation	780.88	6.9%	196
Vacant	597.84	5.3%	299
Vacant	597.84	5.3%	299
TOTAL	11320.62	100%	34,750

Table 2: Existing Land Use: SOI

Land Use Type	Acres	Percent	Parcel Count
Residential	157.46	8.5%	849
Multifamily	0.72	0.0%	2
Single-Family Attached	1.53	0.1%	10
Single-Family Detached	155.21	8.4%	837
Commercial	31.97	1.8%	37
Commercial Centers	6.57	0.4%	18
Commercial Other	0.26	0.0%	1
Mixed-Use Commercial	19.88	1.1%	11
Office	5.26	0.3%	7
Industrial	438.84	23.7%	116
Heavy Industrial	114.09	6.2%	27
Light Industrial	275.12	14.8%	69
Wholesale/Warehousing	49.63	2.7%	20
Public/Institutional	138.77	7.4%	71
Civic Facilities	14.97	0.8%	21
Religious Facilities	1.20	0.1%	7
Hospitals	0.75	0.0%	1
School	24.38	1.3%	3
Transportation	57.41	3.1%	21
Utilities/Communications	2.60	0.1%	6
Water	37.46	2.0%	12
Agriculture/Open Space	947.96	51.2%	40
Agriculture	923.37	49.8%	28
Natural/Conservation	21.48	1.2%	11
Open Spaces	3.11	0.2%	1
Vacant	140.13	7.6%	64
Vacant	140.13	7.6%	64
TOTAL	1,855.12	100%	1,177
<i>Note: Calculations do not include lands in the Planning Area outside the SOI, including County Islands and the Hillside Voter Participation Area (HVPA).</i>			

Residential

Residential land occupies the largest share of land in the City Limit (46.9 percent), represented in a mosaic of low-density neighborhoods that span virtually the whole city (except in industrial areas south of Highway 101). As shown in Table 3 and Figure 4, detached single-family homes form a staggering 82.3 percent of all residential land in the city and are fairly equitably distributed across town. Some areas, particularly Downtown and areas near Highway 126, host a relatively higher concentration of apartments and other “middle-density” housing types (e.g., duplexes, triplexes, garden courts). Many multifamily complexes, particularly in central Ventura, are planned developments that conform to a more uniform aesthetic and are relatively detached from the public realm, given their deep setbacks and controlled entries. In total, multifamily housing comprises just 15.0 percent of residential land in Ventura.

There are also more than 10 mobile home parks across the city, totaling more than 275 acres and 2,400 dwelling units. Median lot size approximates 3,500 square feet, though individual properties may range from as small as 800 square feet to as large as 10,000 square feet. The median density across all mobile home parks is 11.9 dwelling units per acre (du/ac).

Table 3: Existing Land Use – Residential

Land Use Type	Acres	Percent
Residential		
Rural Residential	20	0.4%
Medium Density Single Family Residential*	182	3.4%
High Density Single Family Residential**	3,898	73.4%
Trailer Parks and Mobile Home Courts	275	5.2%
Duplexes, Triplexes and 2- or 3-Unit Condos	143	2.7%
Low Rise Apartments Condos and Townhouses	773	14.5%
Medium Rise Apartments and Condos	11	0.2%
High Rise Apartments and Condos	11	0.2%
*Note: Defined as single family detached residential units with a density of 3-8 du/ac		
**Note: Defined as single family detached residential units with a density of 9+ du/ac		

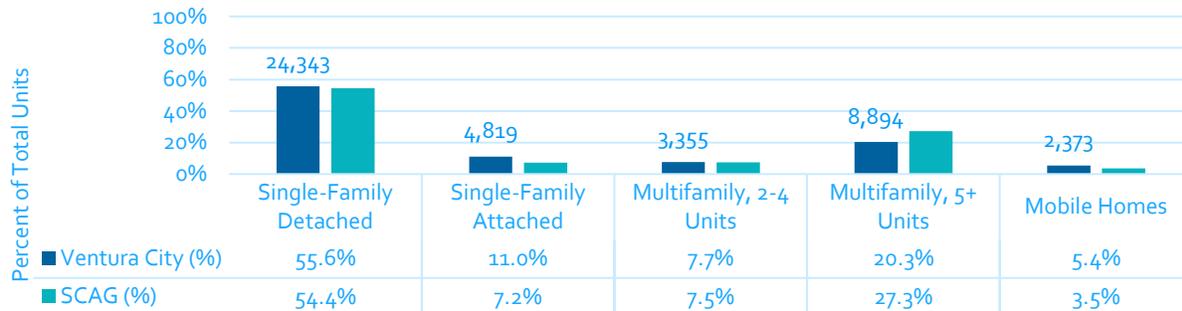
Housing Type

As already noted, Ventura is largely characterized by low-density residential uses. In 2020, Ventura hosted a total of 43,784 housing units¹⁰, with detached single-family homes forming 55.6 percent of the city’s housing stock. When including all other types of single-family units (e.g., townhomes), that figure rises to 66.6 percent, which is higher than the regional figure of 61.7 percent. Meanwhile, only 5.7 percent

¹⁰ This value is different from the household estimate above due to differences in survey source and years. SCAG’s pre-certified local housing data used both 2014-2018 5-Year ACS and 2020 the California Department of Finance estimates.

of housing units are vacant, and average household size is 2.528 (see “Housing” Report for more detail). Figure 3 compares the distribution of housing types between Ventura and the SCAG region.

Figure 3: Housing Type



Source: CA DOF E-5 Population and Housing Unit Estimates

Housing Trends

Over the past two decades (2000-2020), Ventura has also experienced significantly more development of single-family units (3,496) than multi-family units (735). In that same timeframe, the number of mobile homes decreased by 250. Since single-family homes tend to be sold at market rate, many of these newly constructed homes may be unaffordable to lower income households.

Age of Housing

Examining the age of a city’s housing stock helps illustrate historical development patterns and their impact on existing urban form. As Table 4 indicates, Ventura’s housing stock is rather old, as 79.6 percent of all homes were built in or before 1980. As shown in Figure 5, housing structures are generally oldest in the Westside and Downtown neighborhoods, where many homes were built prior to 1930, and newest across the eastern parts of Ventura. This reflects a historical settlement pattern that emerged around the San Buenaventura Mission, steadily growing eastward as economic and population growth necessitated continued urban expansion.

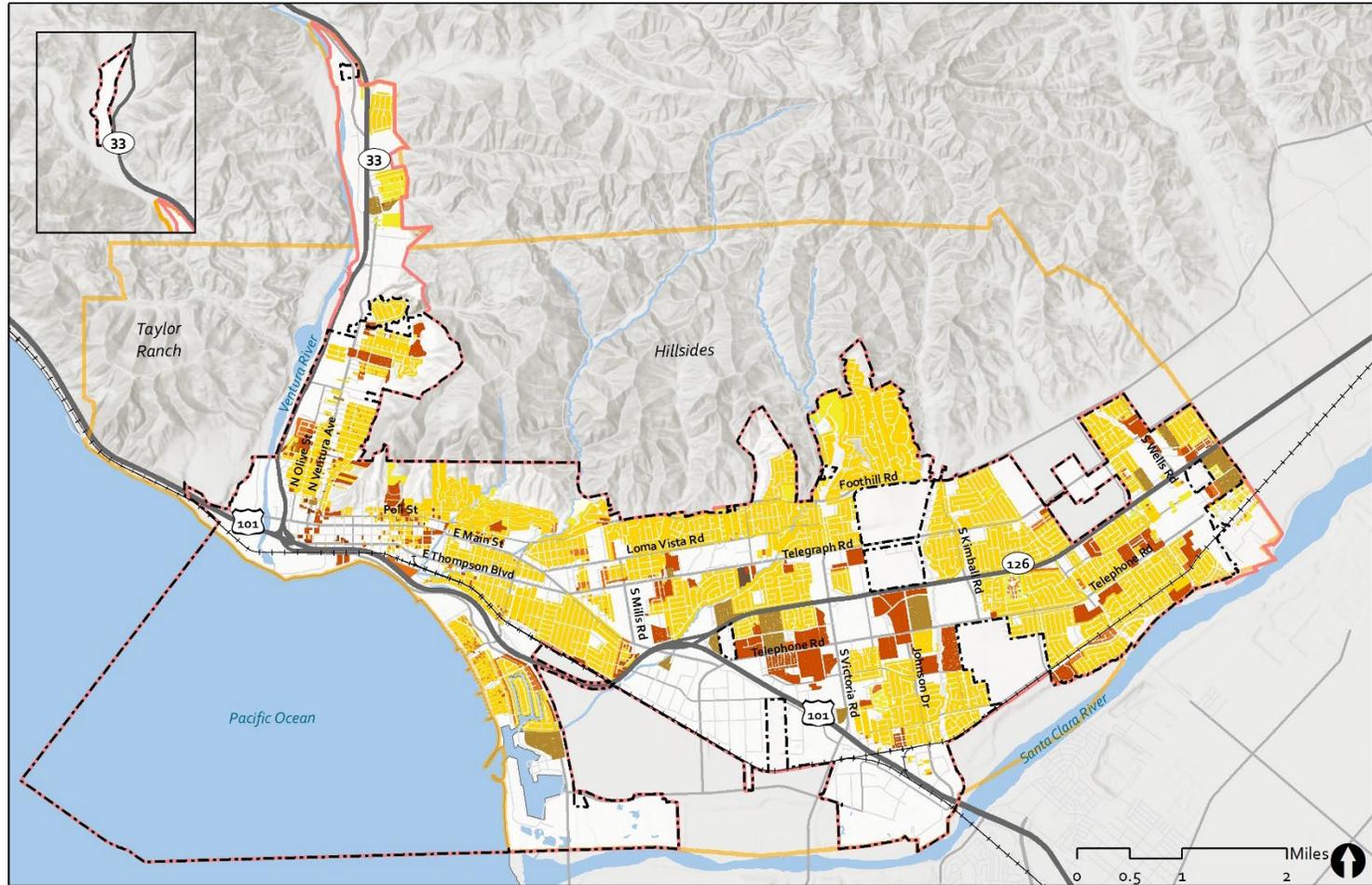
While historic structures impart a vital sense of character and culture on a neighborhood, they are also more likely to contain noxious and/or toxic building materials. For example, structures built prior to 1980 have a higher chance of containing lead paint. Given the old age of Ventura’s housing stock, the City should prioritize rehabilitation and monitoring efforts in the interest of public health.

It should also be noted that many homes burned in the 2017 Thomas Fire are slated to be reconstructed – a point not reflected in Figure 5. Of the 212 structures in the city that burned in the wildfire, 156 are in the process of being rebuilt and another 22 are in plan check (as of April 2021). Most of these are in the hillside areas north of Foothill Road, which are deemed very high fire risk areas. Moving forward, the City should limit development in these areas and develop adaptation strategies to protect existing life and property.

Table 4: Age of Housing

Year Built	Acres	Percent
0-1939	1,241	23.4%
1940-1960	1,139	21.4%
1961-1980	1,884	35.5%
1981-2000	765	14.4%
2001-2020	285	5.4%

Figure 4: Existing Land Use – Residential

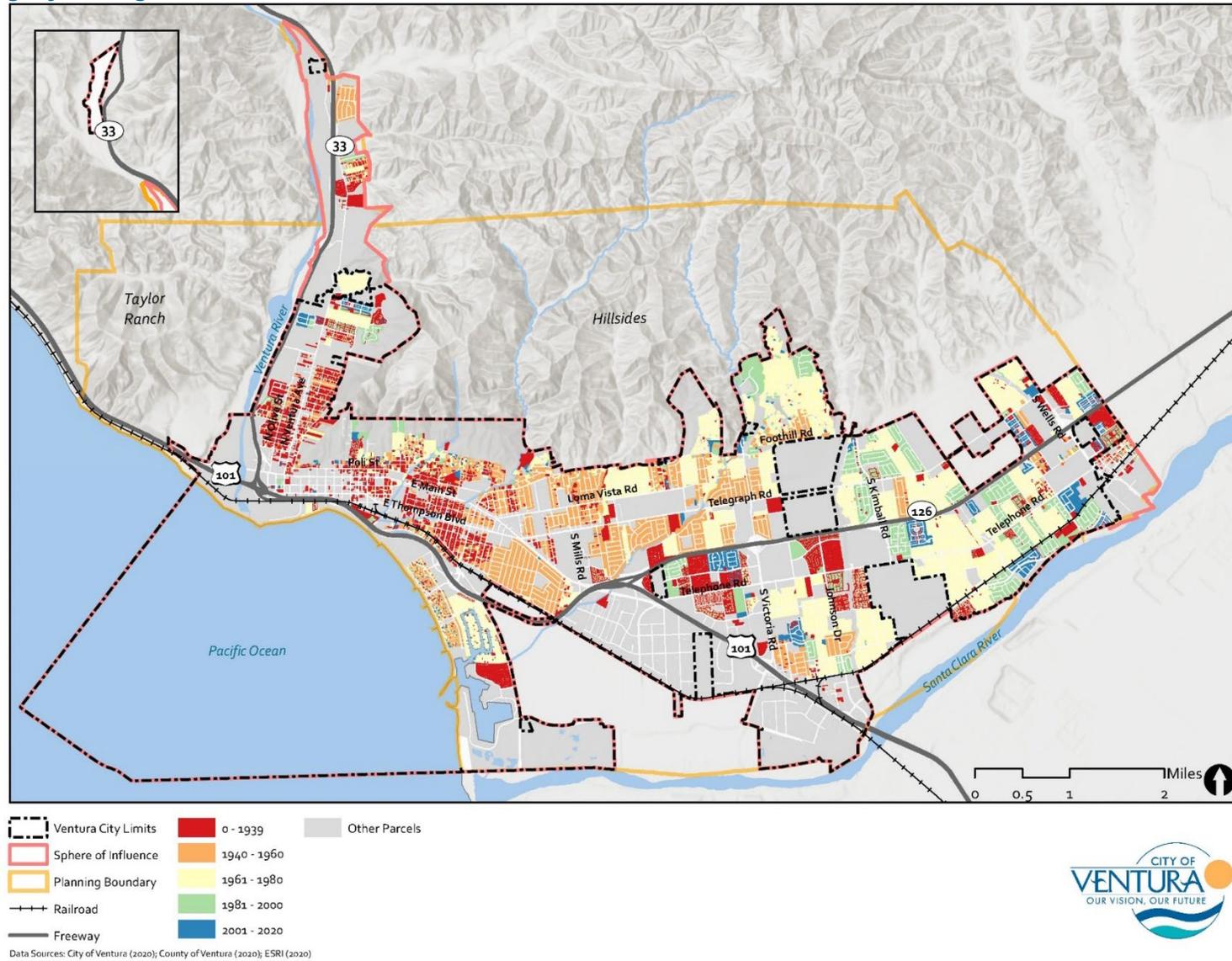


- | | | |
|---------------------|--|---|
| Ventura City Limits | Rural residential | Duplexes, triplexes, and 2 or 3 unit condos |
| Sphere of Influence | Estate lot SF detached | Low rise apartments, condos and townhouses |
| Planning Boundary | Medium density single family residential | Medium rise apartments and condos |
| Railroad | High density singlefamily residential | High rise apartments and condos |
| Freeway | Trailer parks and mobile home courts | |

Data Sources: City of Ventura (2020), County of Ventura (2020), ESRI (2020)



Figure 5: Age of Housing



Commercial

Just 9.7 percent of land in Ventura is commercial, of which 60 percent are Commercial Centers – a classification representing virtually all forms of retail. These uses are arranged in a variety of formats, including strip malls at key intersections, shopping centers and indoor malls, and small standalone structures along major corridors. Shopping centers are suburban in character and often sited near Highway 101, typically featuring ample surface parking, food retail chains, and “big-box” retailers like Target, Lowe’s, Office Depot, and Kohl’s that draw patrons from across the city and beyond. Notable shopping centers in the city include the 60-acre Pacific View Mall, Montalvo Square, and Ventura Gateway. Most shopping centers are single-story and defined by large setbacks and surface parking.

As noted above, many commercial corridors also support a variety of retail. East Main Street and Thompson Boulevard are Ventura’s main commercial thoroughfares, hosting several parcels that vary in size (6,000 to 17,000 square feet) and form an inconsistent street wall; some buildings are built up to the sidewalk with entrances flush to the curb, while others have deeper setbacks and front the roadway with surface parking. Parts of Loma Vista Road, Telegraph Road, and Victoria Avenue also serve as secondary retail corridors. All are auto-oriented with high travel speeds and limited pedestrian infrastructure.

Offices (16.4 percent), meanwhile, occupy the second-greatest share of commercial land and include a variety of professional services, including healthcare and dentistry, government administration, and other corporate operations. Typically, offices are arranged in suburban-style business parks – mostly in central Ventura – which comprise a grouping of multi-story commercial buildings organized around a large surface parking lot and have deep street setbacks. To a lesser extent, offices are also scattered around Downtown, though these are usually in single-story standalone structures built closer to the street. Notably, the corporate headquarters of the Patagonia clothing company is in Downtown.

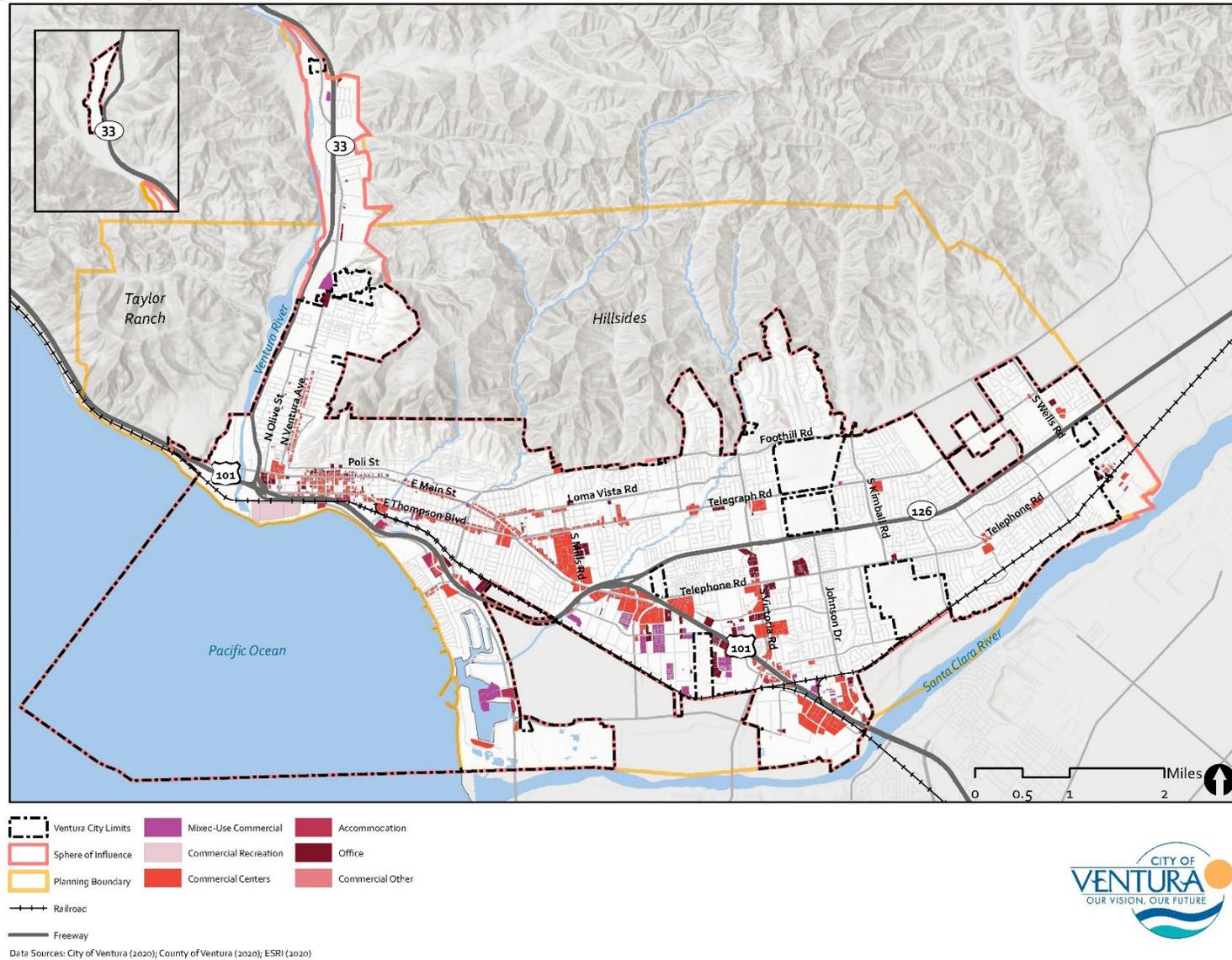
While most retail in the city is suburban in nature, Downtown Ventura is unique as a walkable retail destination given its array of uses sprinkled along a finely grained street grid. Main Street is the neighborhood’s key corridor, supporting a dynamic mix of uses including food establishments, bars, cafés, boutiques, that extends from Fir Street westward to the San Buenaventura Mission and Ortega Adobe (see the “Downtown” Subarea Report for more detail). Many of Ventura’s hotels and motels (4.9 percent of commercial land) are also in Downtown, given the area’s strong tourist appeal.

Commercial Recreation uses form another 7.1 percent of commercial land, representing a few regional destinations like Ventura County Fairgrounds, Pierpont Racquet Club, and Golf n Stuff amusement park. Table 5 and Figure 6 show the distribution of commercial land within the City Limits.

Table 5: Existing Land Use – Commercial

Land Use Type	Acres	Percent
Commercial	1,095.77	
Accommodation	53.78	4.9%
Commercial Centers	659.62	60.2%
Commercial Other (Self-Storage Facility)	1.51	0.1%
Commercial Recreation	77.83	7.1%
Mixed-Use Commercial	123.44	11.3%
Office	179.59	16.4%

Figure 6: Existing Land Use – Commercial



Agriculture/Green Space

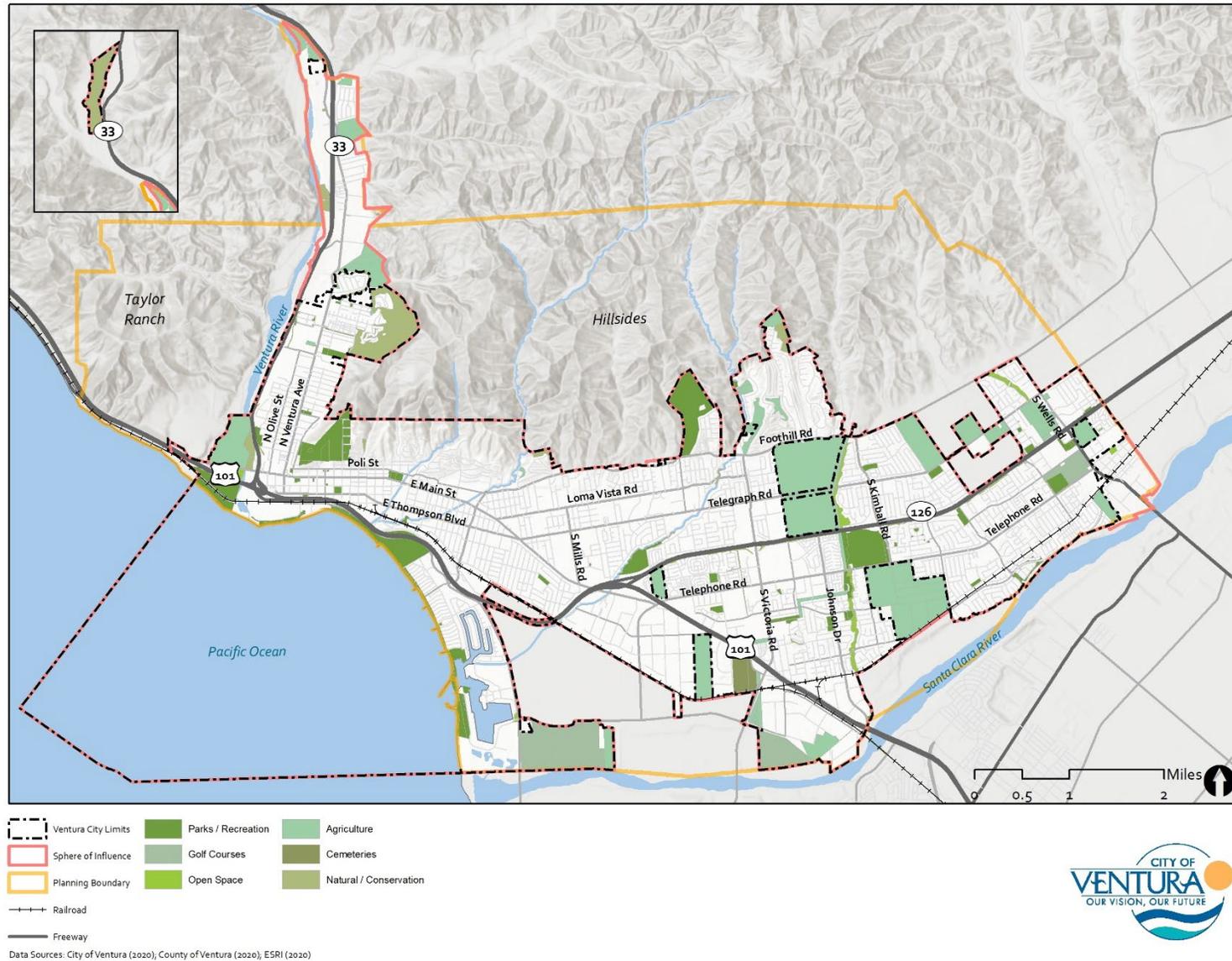
Agriculture and green space are abundant in Ventura, comprising nearly one-fifth (19.8 percent) of land in the City Limits and over half (51.1 percent) of land in the SOI. Public parks and “barrancas”, which are verdant ravines, total more than 500 acres within the City of Ventura and comprise its largest type of open space (see Table 6 below). Park types are many, ranging from mini-parks to large community parks, and are typically programmed with a variety of amenities, including athletic fields and courts, picnic areas, benches, gazebos, and community centers. Parks are reasonably well-distributed across Ventura and accessible to most residents (see Parks and Open Space section for more). While the City’s Parks & Recreation Department manages most parks and open spaces, the County manages a handful of amenities including the Fairgrounds, Saticoy Golf Course, Ojai/Ventura river trail, some beaches, and other linear greenspaces and barrancas. The State also manages the several State beaches in the area, and a small number of open spaces are held privately.

Agriculture also comprises more than one-quarter (25.81%) of all green space in the city (see Table 6 below). Most farms in the city are in East Ventura, though some smaller properties are found on the city’s southern and western peripheries. In the SOI, where farmland is more abundant, most properties are protected by the County under SOAR. Lemon and avocado are the most common crops, though strawberries, grapefruit, and cut flowers are also farmed. Figure 7 illustrates the distribution of agriculture and green space in the City Limits.

Table 6: Existing Land Use – Agriculture/Green Space

Land Use Type	Acres	Percent
Agriculture/Green Space	2,237.38	
Agriculture	577.4	25.81%
Cemeteries	58.38	2.61%
Golf Courses	398.06	17.79%
Natural/Conservation	315.07	14.08%
Open Spaces	107.59	4.81%
Parks/Recreation	780.88	34.90%

Figure 7: Existing Land Use – Agriculture/Green Space



Public/Institutional

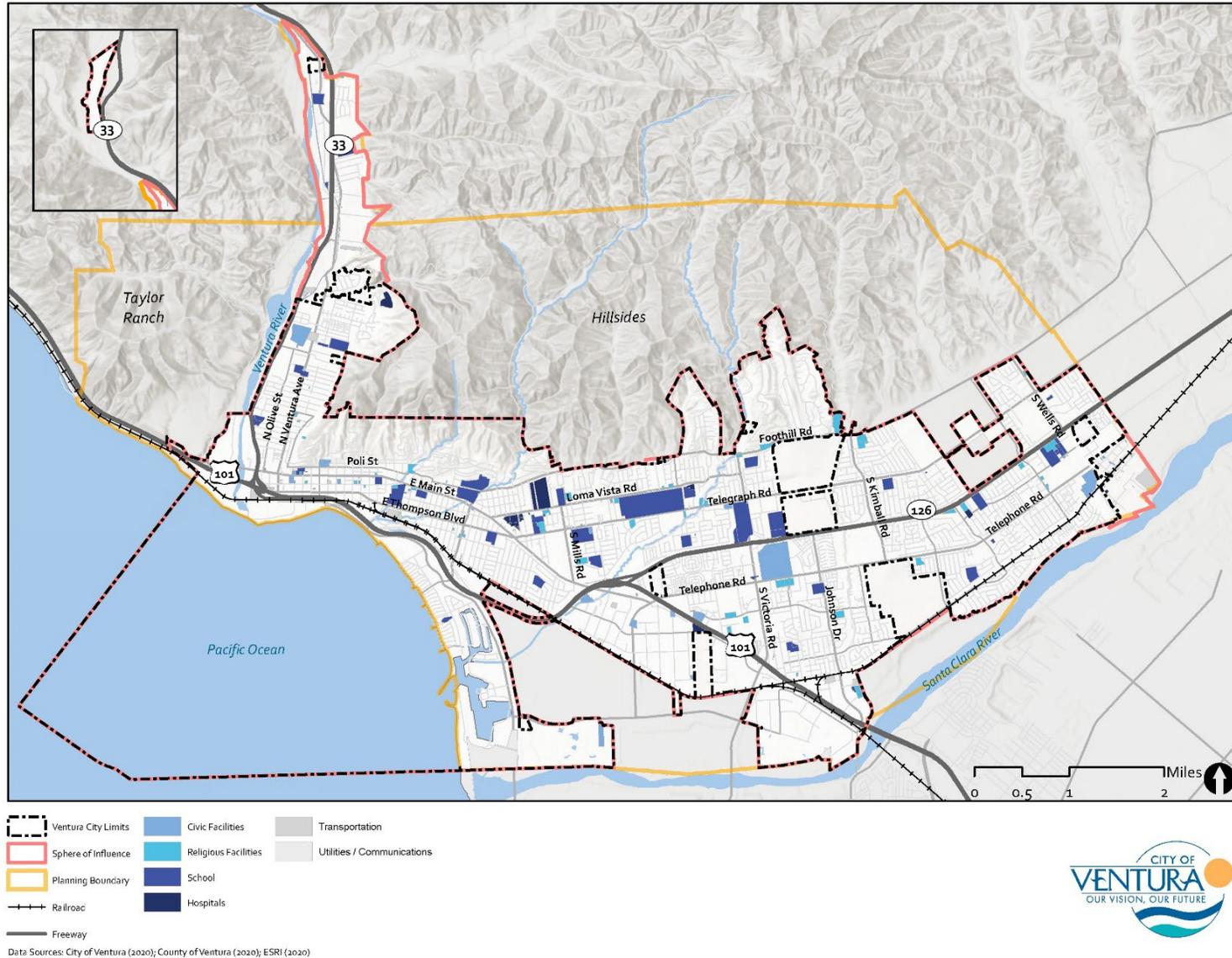
Community-serving land uses – including schools, hospitals, religious centers, civic spaces, and other public facilities – occupy 11.6 percent of the City’s land area. Schools occupy nearly a third of all public/institutional land and are distributed fairly equitably across town, including 27 public schools (managed by Ventura Unified School District [VUSD]), 15 private schools, and Ventura College (see “Public Facilities” section for more). Civic Facilities comprise another 11.7 percent of public/institutional properties and typically represent government administrative centers for both the City and County. These include City Hall in Downtown, Ventura County Government Center in central Ventura, VUSD headquarters in the Westside, and the Ventura County Veterans’ Center near unincorporated Saticoy. Ventura also hosts an array of religious facilities (8.4% of public/institutional land), including more than 40 churches, three Jewish temples/synagogues, one Hindu temple, and one Buddhist temple. Two major hospitals – Community Memorial Hospital and Ventura County Medical Center – are both in the Midtown district (see “Subareas” section for more detail).

Infrastructure is also covered under the Public/Institutional designation. Public utility stations form 12.8 percent of land, while transportation-related uses, including public rights-of-way and bus yards, form another 9.3 percent. These facilities tend to be peripheralized on the edges of town away from residential areas. Table 7 and Figure 8 show the distribution of public/institutional uses within the City Limits.

Table 7: Existing Land Use – Public/Institutional

Land Use Type	Acres	Percent
	1,379.95	100%
Civic Facilities	160.89	11.66%
Religious Facilities	116.43	8.44%
Hospitals	66.59	4.83%
School	430.22	31.18%
Transportation	176.12	12.76%
Utilities/Communications	128.27	9.30%
Water	301.43	21.84%

Figure 8: Existing Land Use – Public/Institutional



Industrial

Industrial uses form 6.2 percent of land area in the City Limits and are generally peripheralized on the edges of town. As shown in Table 8 and Figure 9, Light Industrial uses comprise more than three-quarters (75.6 percent) of this subset, primarily clustered south of Highway 101 and in the Westside. These areas host a variety of production, distribution and repair (PDR) uses – including auto shops, furniture stores, electricians, and breweries – as well as research and development (R&D) facilities for a small number of technology startups. Ventura’s primary industrial district is located south of Highway 101 (see “Arundell/North Bank” Subarea Report for more), where buildings typically sit on large lots (40,000+ square feet), have large footprints, and typically range from two to four stories in height. PDR uses, meanwhile, are typically on smaller lots and often include ample surface parking or storage space.

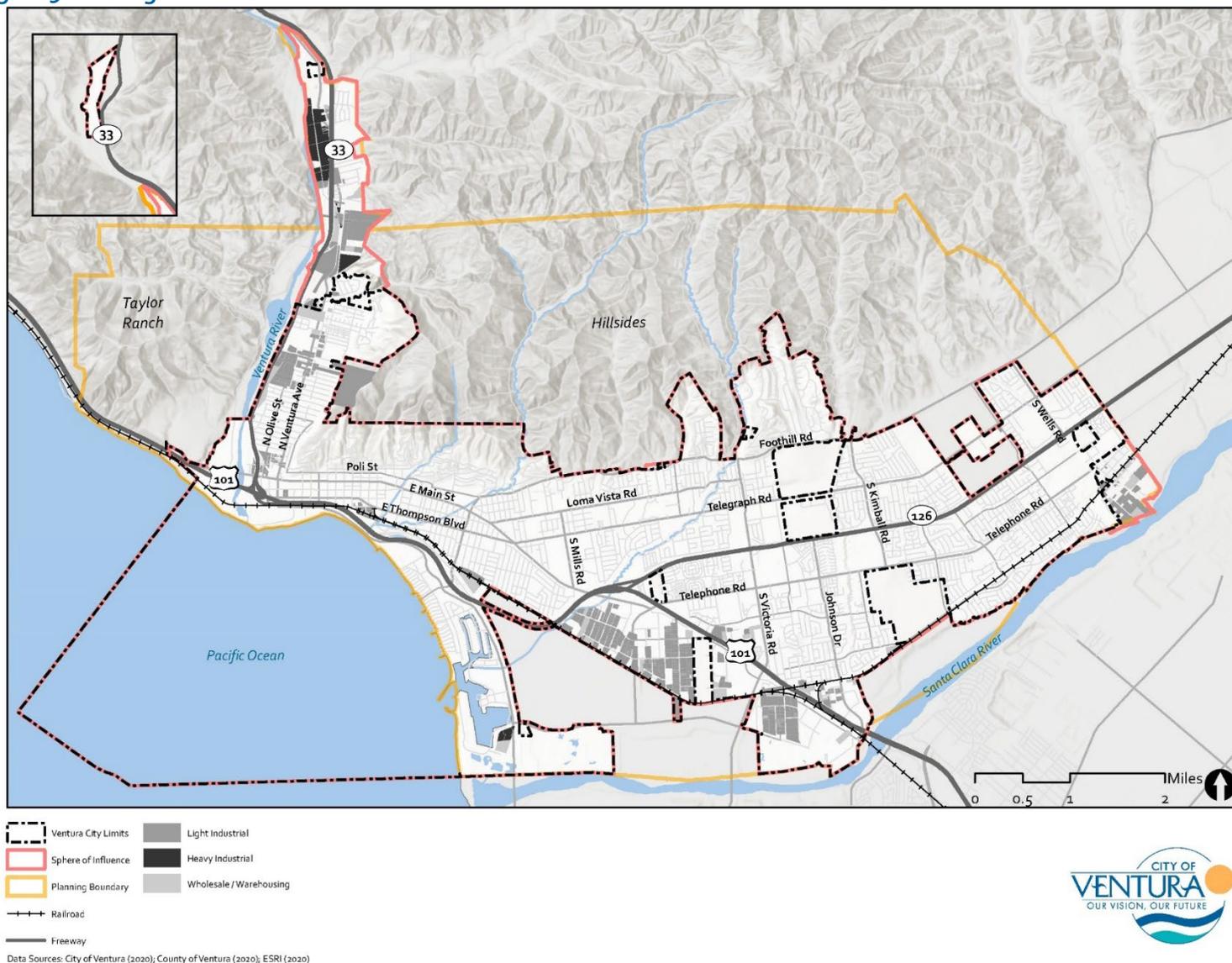
Wholesale/Warehousing (22.7 percent) and Heavy Industrial (1.7 percent) uses comprise the final quarter of industrial land in the city. As for the former, nearly all facilities are located south of Highway 101. The Heavy Industrial designation corresponds to a large oil refinery peripheralized on the southern edge of town.

In the SOI, both Saticoy and North Avenue contain several industrial uses, including a high concentration of oil refineries in the latter area. Given these areas’ proximity to residential areas, an investigation into industry-related health impacts will be considered in the General Plan’s Environmental Justice Element.

Table 8: Existing Land Use – Industrial

Land Use Type	Acres	Percent
	695.92	100%
Heavy Industrial	11.81	1.70%
Light Industrial	526.02	75.59%
Wholesale/Warehousing	158.09	22.72%

Figure 9: Existing Land Use – Industrial



Vacant

Vacant land comprises 5.2 percent of land in the City Limits, totaling nearly 600 acres. As shown in Figure 10, these properties are generally peripheralized on the edges of the city and are in both industrial and undeveloped areas. Of the 600 total acres designated as vacant, almost 60 percent (350 acres) are in the undeveloped hillsides north of Downtown. Divided into a handful of very large parcels, this wide swathe of open space is zoned single-family residential and not protected under the City's SOAR initiative, thus representing a potential "change area" for the city. However, given the steep natural gradient and lack of roadway infrastructure, development of these areas would likely be excessively costly, time consuming, and politically contentious. In addition, these areas are in a High Fire Risk Severity Zone.

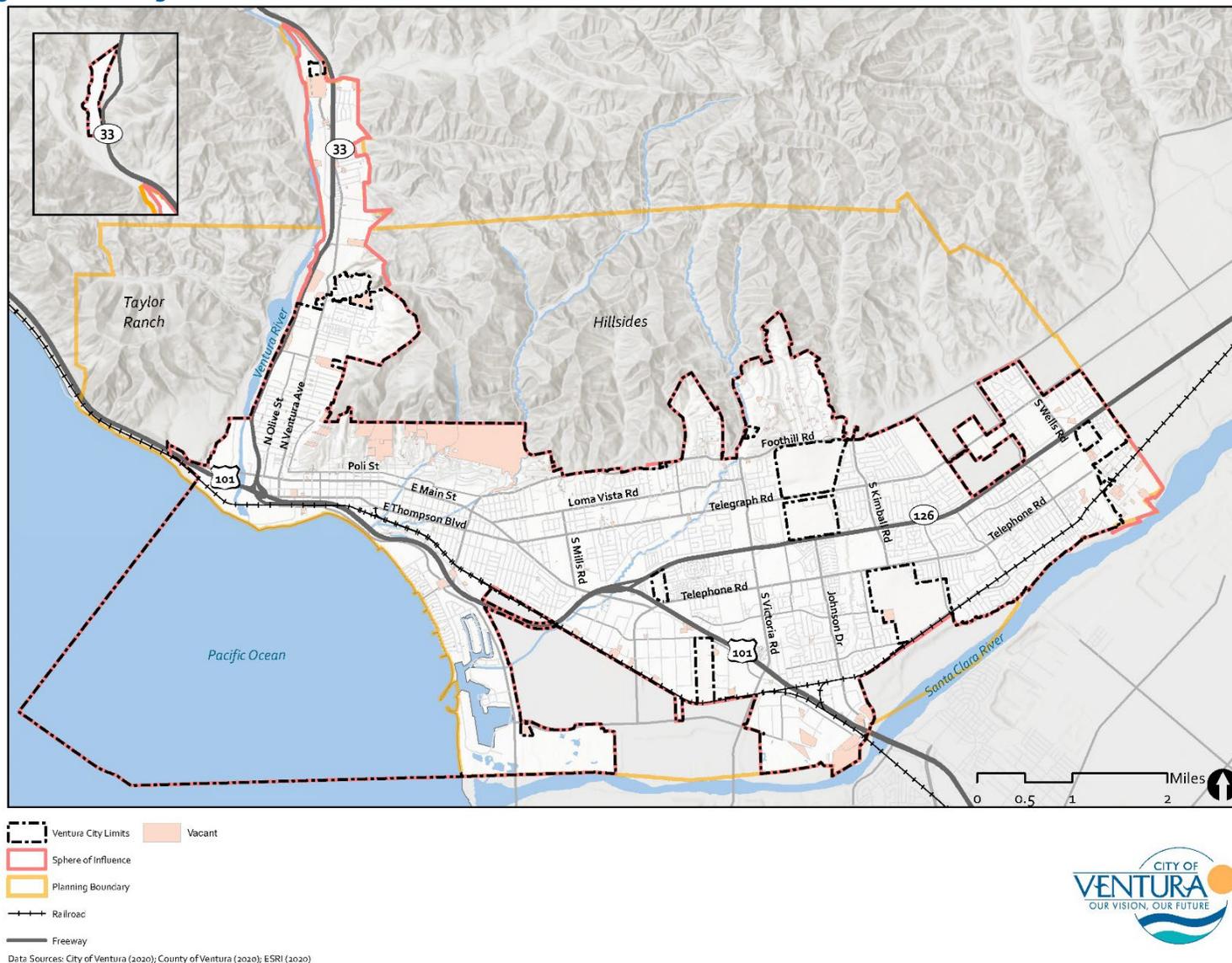
Most other properties are a mix of brownfield and greyfield sites in established industrial areas – namely south of Highway 101 and around unincorporated Saticoy – and are accordingly zoned either industrial or commercial. Although unsuitable for residential development given land use and noise incompatibilities, most sites could reasonably support new employment-generating uses; lots typically range from two to five acres in size and are well-served by the existing street network.

Elsewhere in the city, several smaller sites are in strategic infill locations and could support new residential or mixed-use development. Specifically, there several near the Downtown core that are governed by Form Based Code and could further enhance the district identity (see "Growth and Development" section for more). Meanwhile, there are several other sites in the established hillside neighborhoods north of Foothill Road, which are still vacant most likely due to the destruction of the 2017 Thomas Fire. A handful of very small vacant parcels are scattered around other residential parts of town. Table 9 shows the total acreage of vacant land in the City Limits.

Table 9: Existing Land Use – Vacant

Land Use Type	Acres	Percent
	597.84	
Vacant	597.84	100%

Figure 10: Existing Land Use – Vacant



Land Use Regulations

General Plan

1989 Comprehensive Plan

The City of Ventura has a long history of comprehensive planning. Its Land Use Element was first adopted in 1976, after which two comprehensive General Plan Updates were conducted in 1989 and 2005. The first update resulted in the 1989 Comprehensive Plan, which outlined goals, policies, and implementation measures across nine topics, organized into the following Elements:

- Resources Element
- Land Use Element
- Circulation Element
- Housing Element
- Safety Element
- Noise Element
- Park and Recreation Element
- Economic Development Element
- Community Design Element

The 1989 Comprehensive Plan still retains some regulatory authority to this day, as it governs land use and development decisions in Ventura’s coastal zone. This is because the 2005 General Plan was not certified by the California Coastal Commission, thus preserving the 1989 Land Use Plan as the City’s default coastal planning document (see “Local Coastal Program” section for more detail).

2005 General Plan

The 2005 General Plan resulted in a complete update of the 1989 Comprehensive Plan, addressing eight of the nine original Elements (the Housing Element was updated separately in 2004 for statutory reasons). The 2005 plan was a uniquely structured document, since it consolidated some Elements into one (e.g., Land Use Element and Community Design Element became “Our Well Planned and Designed Community”), and incorporated additional topics not required by the State, including health and wellness, arts and culture, education, and civic engagement. The chapters of the 2005 General Plan are outlined as follows:

- Our Natural Community
- Our Prosperous Community
- Our Well Planned and Designed Community
- Our Accessible Community
- Our Sustainable Infrastructure
- Our Active Community
- Our Healthy & Safe Community
- Our Educated Community
- Our Creative Community
- Our Involved Community

As the City's constitution and roadmap for the future, the 2005 General Plan also sought to build on a vision articulated in the *Ventura Vision* (2000) document, which was a collaborative community effort that outlined four overarching principles to guide future planning efforts:

- Reach broadly and deeply into the community;
- Build on existing natural, cultural, and economic assets;
- Emphasize and encourage connections within the community, and
- Work proactively and collaboratively to achieve the community's vision.

Relationship to Land Use and Design

The authority of Ventura's General Plan is primarily exercised through the Land Use Element. In this chapter, each parcel is assigned one of several Land Use Designations – a set of labels that express the City's intended use and character for different areas. These labels define the general parameters and characteristics that zoning is liable for implementing. Ventura's 2005 General Plan outlines nine (9) Land Use Designations, which are defined and described in Table 10 below.

As the only Element requiring State certification, the Housing Element is also closely related to zoning and land use decisions. Per State law, the Housing Element is required to develop not only an inventory of suitable housing sites, but also a plan to rezone these sites in accordance with State production mandates and other desired community outcomes.

In various Elements, the 2005 General Plan also expresses various goals, objectives, and policies related to land use and community design. These are primarily outlined in the Land Use Element and secondarily in the Conservation Element (Our Natural Community), Open Space Element (Our Active Community), and Economic Development Element (Our Prosperous Community). Key policy guidelines related to land use and design are summarized as follows:

- Pursue an "Infill First" strategy that directs growth to vacant and underutilized sites within the City Limits and SOI.
- Attract and retain enterprises that provide high-value, high wage jobs.
- Reinvest in older areas of the community.
- Provide and maintain facilities that enable the community to live in balance with natural systems.
- Expand the park and trail network to link shoreline, hillside, and watershed areas.
- Protect hillsides, farmlands, and open spaces.
- Enhance Ventura's historic and cultural resources.

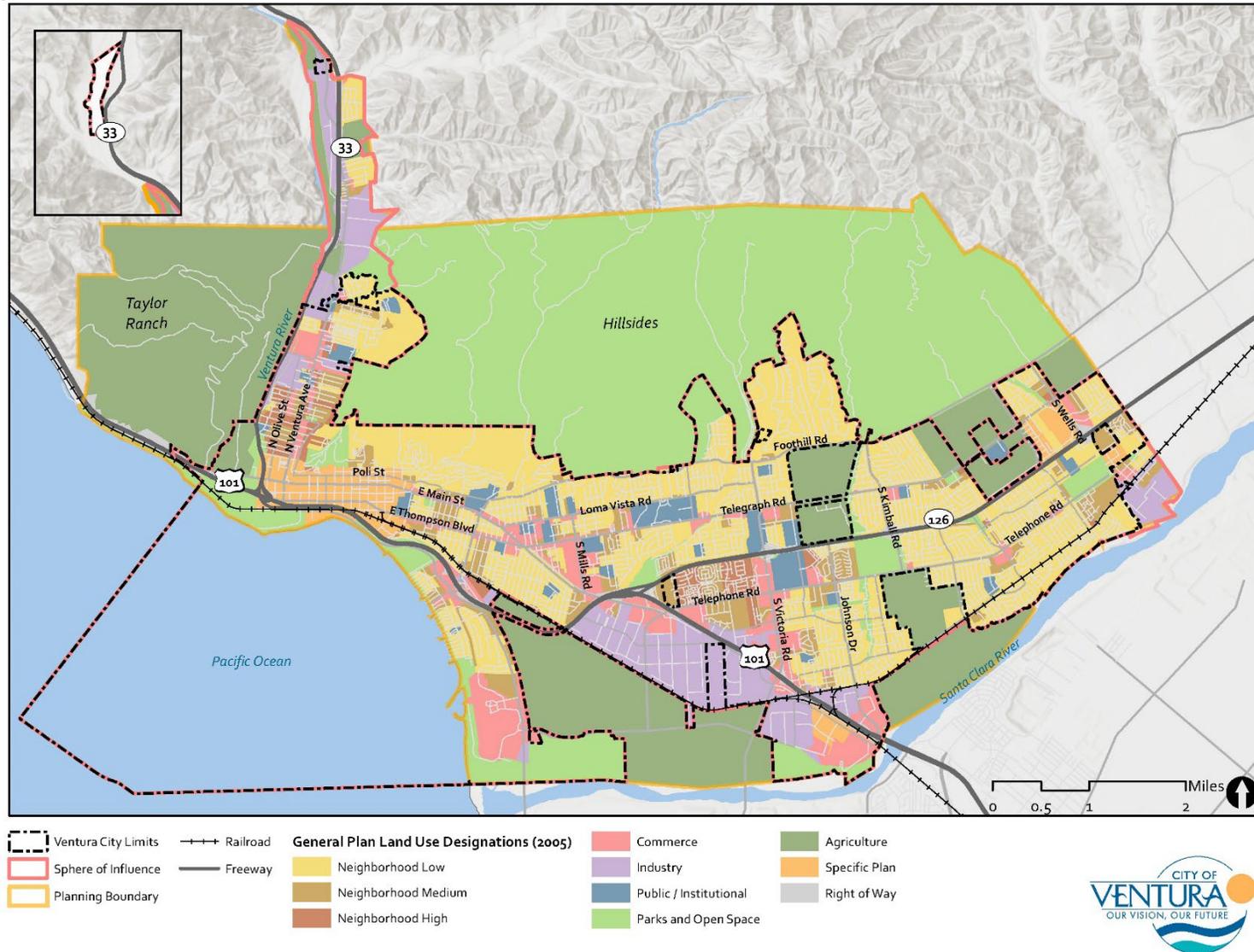
Since 2005, Ventura has grown generally consistent with these goals and policies. Specifically, the City and its partners have largely preserved hillsides and other open spaces, prioritized new development in infill locations, strengthened pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and improved trail access. While many of these guidelines remain important for Ventura, much has changed in the past 15 years that requires renewed thinking and a fresh perspective.

Table 10: Definition of Land Use Designations

Land Use Designation	Allowed Density (du/ac)
Agriculture (A). Predominantly accommodates the commercial cultivation of food crops and plants and raising of animals.	-
Commerce (C). Encourages a range of building types supporting a mix of functions, including commercial, entertainment, office, and housing.	-
Industry (I). Encourages intensive manufacturing, processing, warehousing, and light industries housed mainly in large-scale buildings.	-
Neighborhood Low (NL). Provides for a predominantly low-density residential character, emphasizing detached houses with some attached units. Includes opportunities for limited home-based occupations and neighborhood services in certain locations.	0-8
Neighborhood Medium (NM). Provides for a low-to-medium density residential character, including a mixture of detached and attached dwellings. Includes small-scale commercial at key locations, such as at intersections and along corridors.	9-20
Neighborhood High (NH). A broader mix of building types, including higher-density attached residential, commercial, office, entertainment, and mixed-use.	21-54
Public & Institutional (PI). Accommodates civic function including government offices, hospitals, libraries, schools, and public green space.	-
Parks & Open Space (POS). Dedicates land to public recreation and leisure, ranging from neighborhood playgrounds and mini parks to large regional parks and natural preserves.	-
Downtown Specific Plan (SP). Accommodates land uses and building types highlighted in the Downtown Specific Plan.	21-54
Note: The General Plan does not provide building intensity ranges for non-residential uses.	

A citywide map of Land Use Designations is illustrated below in Figure 11, and Table 11 lists the acreage and percent share for each designation. As is to be expected, the spatial and numerical distribution of land uses in the City Limits generally mirror the existing land uses described in the previous section; however, most land in the SOI is designated either for Agriculture (51.7%) or Industry (28.7%).

Figure 11: General Plan Land Use



Data Sources: City of Ventura (2020); County of Ventura (2020); ESRI (2020)

Table 11: Distribution of Land Use Designations

Land Use Designation	City Limits		SOI	
	Acreage	%	Acreage	%
Agriculture (A)	202.92	1.5%	884.65	51.7%
Commerce (C)	1,363.07	10.0%	33.50	2.0%
Industry (I)	1,174.17	8.7%	491.08	28.7%
Neighborhood High (NH)	399.18	2.9%	-	-
Neighborhood Low (NL)	6,277.40	46.3%	135.99	7.9%
Neighborhood Medium (NM)	1,173.05	8.7%	81.22	4.8%
Public & Institutional (PI)	621.84	4.6%	-	-
Parks & Open Space (POS)	1,587.92	11.7%	83.92	4.9%
Specific Plan (SP)	764.46	5.6%	-	-
TOTAL	13,564.02		1,710.356	

Note: Differences in spatial data account for discrepancies in total estimated land area between the Existing Land Use, Land Use Designations, and Zoning tables. Specifically, the latter two include the area from adjacent rights-of-way while the former does not.

Existing Zoning

The Zoning Ordinance is the primary regulatory mechanism for implementing the General Plan Land Use Element, specifying the type, intensity, and standards of development legally allowed on a given parcel. Per state law, the Zoning Ordinance must align with the land use and development policies articulated in the General Plan.

Accordingly, zoning in Ventura generally parallels the distribution of land use designations described in the preceding section. As shown below in Table 12, more than 62% of land in the city is zoned residential, including 43.2% for single-family zoning and just 5.08% for multi-family zoning – a point that reinforces the city’s low-density residential character. Meanwhile, parcels zoned for “fiscally positive” uses – such as office, commercial, industrial/manufacturing, and mixed-use – account for just 16.4 percent of land area in the City Limits.

Table 12: Distribution of Zoning Districts

Zoning District	Acres	Percent
Residential	8,651.03	64.4%
Single Family (R-1)	5,809.30	43.2%
Single Family Beach (R-1B)	89.97	0.7%
Two Family (R-2)	137.94	1.0%
Two Family Beach (R-2B)	25.7	0.2%
Multiple Family (R-3)	682.99	5.1%
Residential Planned Development (RPD)	1,657.80	12.3%
Mobile Home Park (MHP)	247.33	1.8%
Commercial	1,009.55	7.5%

Limited Commercial (C-1)	46.59	0.4%
Intermediate Commercial (C-1A)	146.89	1.1%
General Commercial (C-2)	105	0.8%
Commercial Planned Development (CPD)	347.41	2.6%
Commercial Tourist Oriented (CTO)	46.64	0.4%
Harbor Commercial (HC)	249.12	1.9%
Professional Office (PO)	67.9	0.5%
Mixed Use	185.19	1.4%
Coastal Mixed Use (CMXD)	6.84	0.1%
Harbor Mixed Use (HMXD)	28.36	0.2%
Mixed Use (MXD)	149.99	1.1%
Industrial/Manufacturing	1118.62	8.3%
Limited Industrial (M-1)	258.08	1.9%
General Industrial (M-2)	208.19	1.6%
Manufacturing Planned Development (MPD)	652.35	4.9%
Parks/Green Space	1328.59	9.9%
Agriculture (A)	219.19	1.6%
Parks (P)	986.36	7.3%
Parks/Open Space (P/OS)	123.04	0.9%
Civic/Institutional	53.89	0.4%
Hospital (H)	53.89	0.4%
Civic	146.28	1.1%
Transect Zones (Form-Based Code)	944.58	7.0%
Community Memorial Hospital District (SD-HI)	10.95	0.1%
Neighborhood General (T-3)	102.68	0.8%
Urban General (T-4)	614.88	4.6%
Urban Neighborhood Center (T-5)	137.58	1.0%
Urban Core (T-6)	78.49	0.6%
TOTAL	13,437.73	100.0%

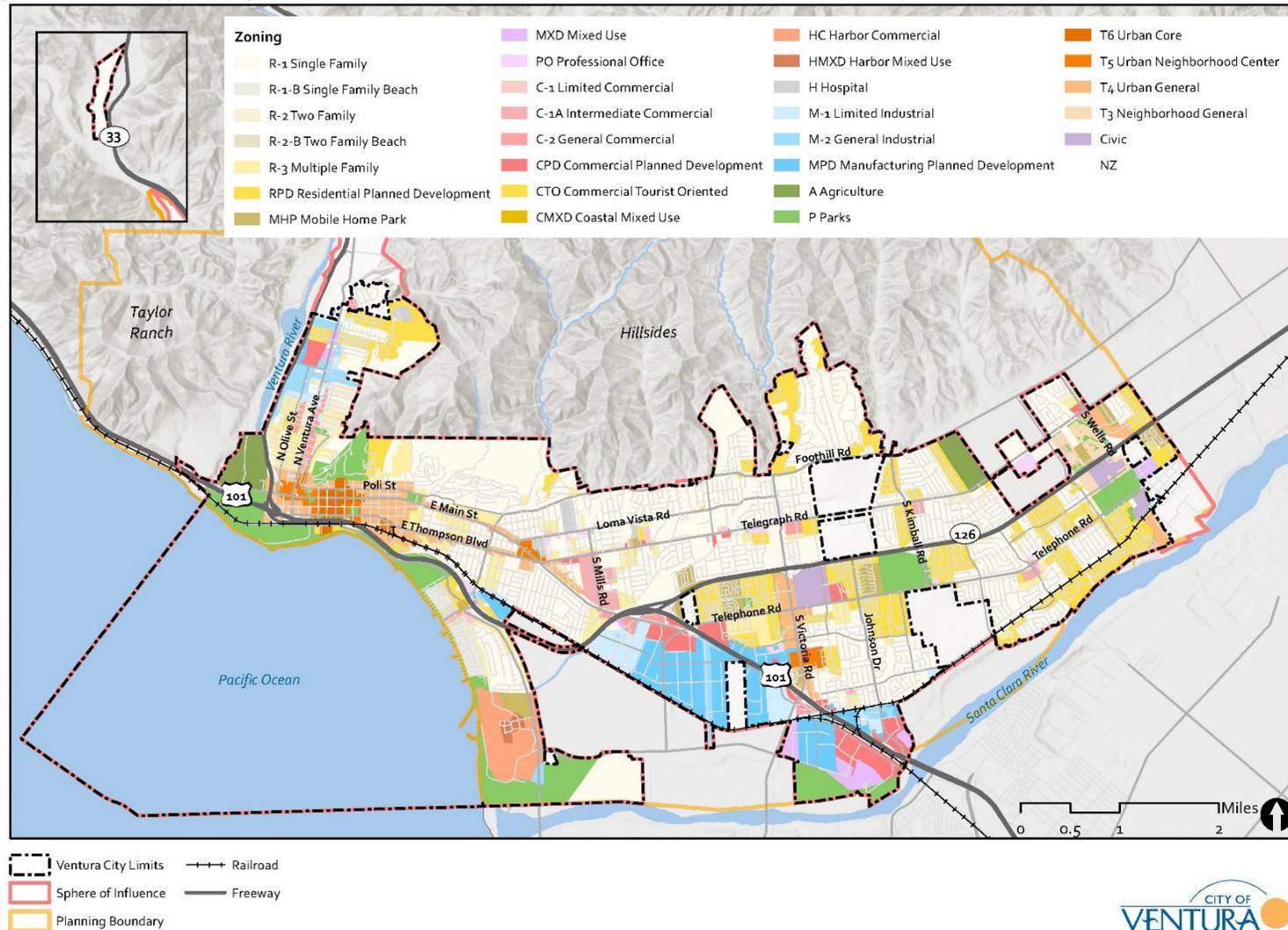
Note: Differences in spatial data account for discrepancies in total estimated land area between the Existing Land Use, Land Use Designations, and Zoning tables. Specifically, the latter two include the area from adjacent rights-of-way while the former does not.

While most districts are subject to specific standards and regulations outlined in the Zoning Ordinance, districts T-3 through T-6 are “transect-based” zones that are governed by specific form-based codes (FBC). In these areas, certain design-related criteria – such as building type, frontage type, and streetscape standards – regulate development rather than traditional “Euclidean” criteria, such as permitted uses and parameters like height, setbacks, density (du/ac), and Floor-Area Ratio (FAR). While such an approach can allow the City to facilitate a predictable form of development that emphasizes community character and walkability, it makes it harder to predict the amount of development.

Existing zoning in Ventura is shown below in Figure 12. The transect-based zones are concentrated in Downtown Ventura, along the major corridors of the Midtown neighborhood – East Main Street and Thompson Boulevard – and along South Victoria Avenue south of Highway 126. As will be noted in the

following section, these areas have been subject to more detailed community planning per General Plan policy direction. Elsewhere in the city, the zoning landscape largely mirrors the General Plan Land Use Designations.

Figure 12: Existing Zoning



Data Sources: City of Ventura (2020), County of Ventura (2020), ESRI (2020)



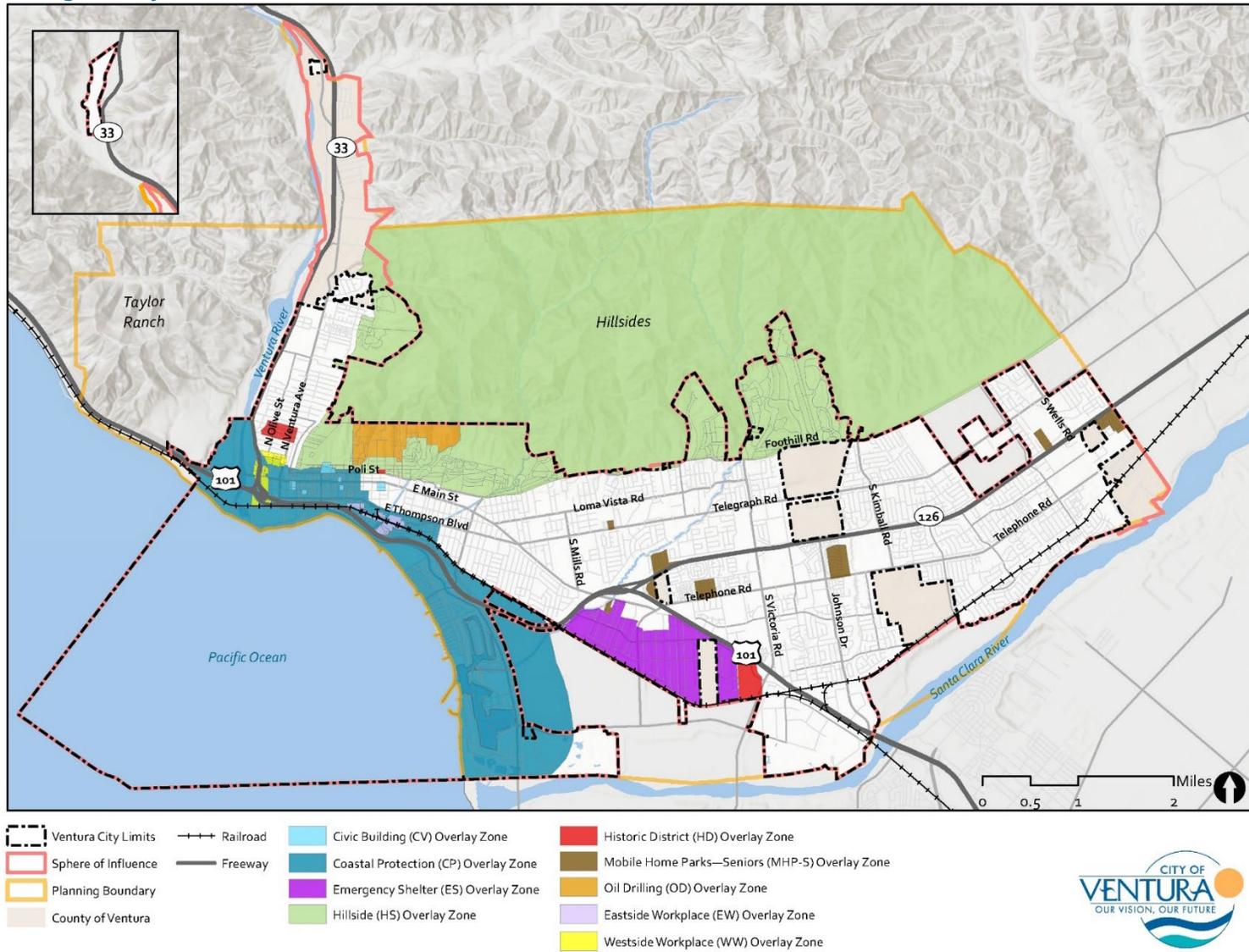
The City also applies 14 overlay districts in various locations across Ventura. The intent of a zoning overlay is to enforce additional land use regulations in areas that, by some reason, merit special consideration and/or protection. For example, the Historic District (HD) Overlay Zone applies to various cultural landmarks – such as the San Buenaventura Mission and Mitchell Block – to protect historic structures from destruction and ensure that adjacent uses are compatible with the established character of these areas. Overlay districts are defined below in Table 13 and mapped in Figure 13.

Table 13: Overlay Zones

Overlay Zone	Purpose/Description	Acres
Coastal Protection (CP)	Regulates development in coastal zone areas in conformance with the Local Coastal Program (LCP).	2,530
Coastal Bluff (CB)	Preserves the scenic qualities of coastal bluff areas and ensures that development does not compromise bluff stability.	-
Emergency Shelter (ES)	Regulates emergency shelters, with full supportive services, for homeless individuals in the M-1, M-2, and MPD zones.	555
Flood Plain (FP)	Enforces alternative land use regulations for coastal areas subject to flooding to protect human life and property.	-
Sensitive Habitat (SH)	Protects and restores, to the extent feasible, environmentally sensitive habitat areas to ensure continued biological productivity.	-
Historic District (HD)	Regulates development in areas with a historic landmark or point of interest to protect against its destruction and preserve neighborhood character.	98
Downtown Parking (DP)	Enforces a unique set of off-street parking requirements in Downtown Ventura.	-
Tourist-Oriented (TO)	Encourages the development of tourist-serving commercial and recreational facilities.	-
Seniors Mobile Home Park (MHP-S)	Enforces regulations to ensure the continued supply of mobile homes available to senior households.	156
Oil Drilling (OD)	Establishes limitations, safeguards, and controls for fossil fuel extraction in industrial zones.	206
Westside Workplace (WW)	Implements the Downtown Specific Plan by helping to create an enhanced environment for artisans and craftspeople.	39
Eastside Workplace (EW)	Implements the Downtown Specific Plan through the retention of existing commercial uses.	41
Hillside Overlay (HS)	Implements the Downtown Specific Plan by setting standards for building height.	11,048
Civic Building (CV)	Implements the Downtown Specific Plan by encouraging unique and creative building design for civic buildings.	22

Note: Acreages for the CB, FP, SH, DP, and TO Overlays were not available.

Figure 13: Zoning Overlays



Data Sources: City of Ventura (2020); County of Ventura (2020); ESRI (2020)



Local Coastal Program

As noted in the “Regulatory Setting” section, local governments with land in coastal areas are required to prepare an LCP to manage the conservation and development of coastal resources. Specifically, an LCP must include a land use plan and supporting implementing measures, such as zoning ordinances, that specify the location, type, and scale of land uses allowed in coastal areas. In Ventura, for example, the Coastal Protection Overlay Zone (CP) defines standards and regulations that govern development in the Coastal Zone. A local government is authorized to issue development permits pursuant to its LCP and associated implementation measures.

While the City of Ventura does have a State-certified LCP, the document is outdated and in need of review. The 2005 General Plan has not been certified by the California Coastal Commission, which means that the current LCP (1983) is still based on the Land Use Plan articulated in the 1989 Comprehensive Plan. As a result, policies developed more than 30 years ago – when climate change and coastal conditions were significantly different than they are today – effectively still govern coastal land use and development decisions in Ventura. To better account for changing environmental conditions, such as sea level rise, the City will update its LCP concurrent with the General Plan.

Growth and Development

Planning and Policy Documents

Specific and Community Plans

In support of community goals and policies, the 2005 General Plan directs the preparation of specific and/or community plans in the Westside, Downtown, Midtown, Pierpont, Wells, Saticoy, and Victoria Corridor areas. Per state law, a Specific Plan is a detailed regulatory document that implements the General Plan in a defined area by prescribing a land use plan, development standards, infrastructure improvements, financing and implementation measures, and other guidelines as needed to support the envisioned level of change.

A Community Plan also outlines policy strategies specific to an area, though it is not a regulatory document and, as such, is not required to provide the same degree of technical detail. Still, the 2005 General Plan requires that both Specific and Community Plans include a form-based code as an implementation tool to regulate development.

Since 2005, the City has adopted or amended five Specific Plans and two Community Plans, and two more are still in draft form. Each is described in greater detail in Table 14 below. Figure 14 then displays the location of each planning area.

Table 14: Specific and Community Plans

Plan Name	Year	Acres	Vision / Policy Objectives	Implementation Status
<i>Specific Plans</i>				
Downtown Specific Plan	2007	514	<p>Promote Downtown’s continued revitalization as a cultural and commercial destination.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote economic development in the professional and creative sectors Expand housing supply at all income levels Provide an integrated transportation system Nurture arts and cultural expression 	Partially Built out (Applications, permitting and development still ongoing)
UC Hansen Specific Plan	2008	35.7	<p>Create a walkable new neighborhood that is connected to surrounding residential areas and that respects adjacent agricultural lands.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a network of streets that organize the neighborhood into small, walkable blocks Provide a mix of housing types, including options for farmworker households Develop community-serving amenities like parks, community garden spaces, and bike lanes 	Fully Built Out
Parklands Specific Plan	2009	66.7	<p>Create a “mini-village” that includes a variety of housing types and neighborhood-serving retail.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote development that prioritizes the public realm, pedestrian-friendly streets, and a diversity of uses Create convenient circulation patterns for all modes of transportation Create a continuous network of open space areas Provide a diverse mix of housing options affordable at all levels 	Partially Built Out (Parklands Apartments)
Ventura Harbor Specific Plan*	2010	339	<p>Create a mixed-use beachfront community with new housing, office space, and a hotel.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retrofit streets to better accommodate pedestrians and cyclists Improve connectivity through improved signage and street connections Incorporate sustainable storm water strategies Improve existing parks and create new public open spaces 	N/A – Plan not completed

Auto Center Specific Plan	2017	54.6	<p>Ensure that new auto sales and service uses are compatible</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a Functional Integration of Commercial and Limited Industrial Uses • Enhance the Image of the City of Ventura • Minimize conflicts with surrounding land uses • Provide for necessary utilities and services 	Partially Built Out (New freeway sign completed)
Olivas Park Specific Plan	2019	139	<p>Create a commercial and/or industrial area that provides jobs and strengthens the local tax base.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop land use regulations and infrastructure to allow for commercial and industrial development • Create an integrated circulation and transportation system that considers vehicular, pedestrian, bicycling, transit and parking needs 	Not yet Built Out
Community Plans				
Saticoy and Wells Community Plan	2009	1,000	<p>Promote Saticoy's revitalization by improving livability while retaining its industrial base.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make great public places, such as parks, shops, workplaces, and civic buildings • Create a continuous and interconnected street network • Facilitate infill development, green redevelopment, and TOD • Create a variety of housing choices 	Mostly Built Out
Victoria Avenue Corridor Plan	2009	286	<p>Establish Victoria Avenue as a premier business corridor through new development and design practices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote urban design consisting of connected streets, small blocks, and public open spaces • Activate the public realm with high-quality buildings • Create new activity nodes with larger stores successfully integrated along the corridor 	Not Yet Built Out
Westside Community Plan*	2012	900	<p>Create an interconnected and revitalized Westside community while preserving its Latino heritage.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase shopping opportunities and diversify the local economy • Provide housing for people of all incomes, ages, and abilities • Enhance Ventura Avenue with plazas and green spaces that can accommodate gathering areas, trees and public art. • Provide infrastructure that safely accommodates all travel modes • Create new park space and increase passive and active recreational opportunities 	N/A – Plan not completed

These efforts demonstrate considerable progress in completing new neighborhood planning initiatives, as four of the seven areas identified in the General Plan have seen a Plan adopted since 2005; and, while the City has not created a Plan for the Midtown community, it adopted a Development Code (2007) for the two major corridors in the area – East Main Street and Thompson Boulevard. This leaves Pierpont and Westside as the two remaining areas for which the City has not yet adopted a Specific or Community Plan. Should the City desire, these areas could merit special consideration in the updated General Plan.

Still, it is worth noting that only two of the above planning areas – UC Hansen and Saticoy and Wells – are either mostly or completely built out. The updated General Plan may choose to evaluate any barriers to development and outline strategies to incentivize plan implementation.

Housing Initiatives

The City also administers various programs related to housing production and affordability. Ventura’s Density Bonus program applies to the whole city and enables developments of at least five units to receive a density bonus under one (or more) of the following conditions:

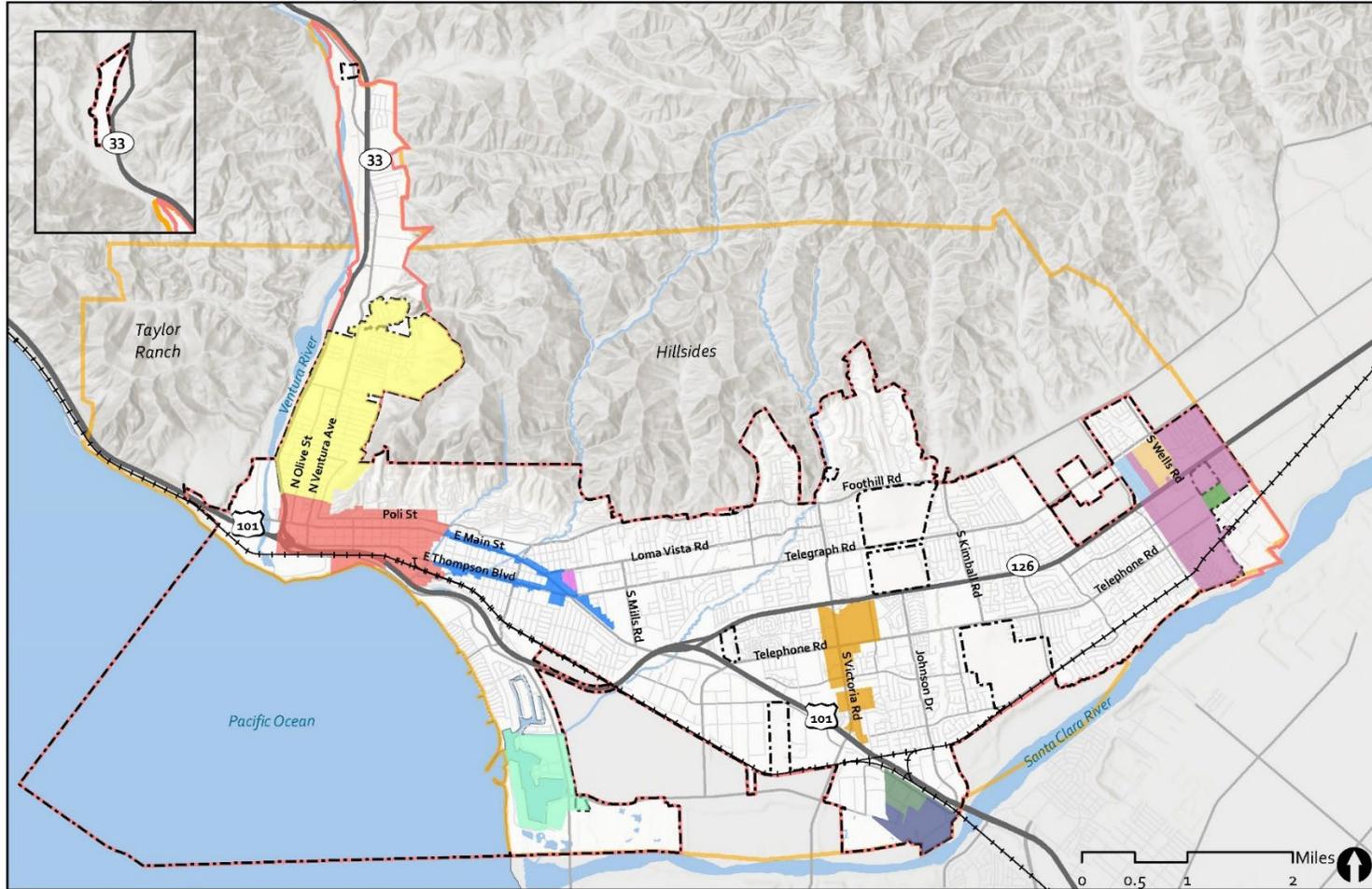
- At least ten percent of the total dwelling units, prior to the grant of the density bonus, are reserved for lower income households
- At least five percent of the total dwelling units, prior to the grant of the density bonus, are reserved for very low income households
- The development is a common interest development and at least ten percent of all dwelling units, prior to the grant of a density bonus, are reserved for moderate income households
- The development is a condominium conversion and: (a) at least 15 percent of the total dwelling units are reserved for low income households; or (b) at least 33 percent of the total dwelling units are reserved for moderate income households; or
- The development is a senior citizen housing development.

In late 2020, the City also developed an Interim Inclusionary Housing Program requiring projects with at least 15 residential units to set aside a certain percentage for moderate-, low-, or very low-income households. Projects containing 60 units or more must designate 15 percent of all units as affordable, while projects containing 59 or fewer units have varying obligations based on total units, as shown in Table 15 below. For a more complete evaluation of housing initiatives, refer to the Housing Needs Report.

Table 15: Inclusionary Housing Requirements

Total Units	Inclusionary Units
5 – 20	1
21 – 26	2
27 – 33	3
34 – 39	4
40 – 46	5
47 – 53	6
54 – 59	7

Figure 14: Specific and Community Plans



- | | | | |
|---------------------|--|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Ventura City Limits | Auto Center Specific Plan | Olivas Park Specific Plan | Ventura Harbor Specific Plan - DRAFT |
| Sphere of Influence | Community Memorial Hospital Development Code | Parklands Specific Plan | Victoria Avenue Corridor Plan |
| Planning Boundary | Downtown Specific Plan | Saticoy and Wells Community Plan | Saticoy Village Specific Plan |
| Railroad | Midtown Corridor Development Code | UC Hansen Specific Plan | Westside Community Plan - DRAFT |
| Freeway | | | |

Data Sources: City of Ventura (2020); County of Ventura (2020); ESRI (2020)



Recent and Planned Projects

Ventura has also experienced considerable development activity in recent years, with many projects implementing the General Plan’s “Infill First” strategy in addition to other goals articulated in the abovementioned planning efforts. The City’s current development pipeline lists several pending projects that, together, would result in more than 3,300 new housing units and over 700,000 non-residential square feet (NRSF), which includes a mix of retail, industrial, hotel, and office space.

The development pipeline notes several high-profile projects that bring significant resources and can help catalyze further development in surrounding areas. These major projects are listed below in Table 16, which are updated as of April 2020. For purposes of this report, a “major” project is defined as having at least 20 residential units and/or at least 20,000 non-residential square feet (NRSF).

Table 16: Major Planned Projects (April 2020)

Project Name	Type	Status	NRSF	Units
Parklands Apartments	Residential	Under Construction	7,115	173
Broome (The Grove)	Residential	In Planning Process	0	250
Westside Renaissance	Residential	In Plan Check	0	50
Ventura Downtown Housing	Residential	All Planning Approvals	0	255
Marriott-Residence Inn	Commercial	Under Construction	92,850	0
Sondermann-Ring (Portside)	Mixed Use	Under Construction	21,300	300
Northbank/Vanoni	Residential	All Planning Approvals	0	198
The Willows	Mixed Use	Under Construction	5,000	306
Mar-y-Cel	Mixed Use	Under Construction	6,452	140
Logue (Leap of Faith)	Mixed Use	In Planning Process	10,000	125
FPA Land Dev/Victoria Corp C	Industrial	All Planning Approvals	158,984	0
Westview Village	Residential	Under Construction	0	140
Hilton	Commercial	In Planning Process	156,160	0
Downtown Triangle Site (Coastline)	Residential	Under Construction	0	231
Front Street Mixed Use	Mixed Use	All Planning Approvals	4,912	51
Deanza Courts	Mixed Use	In Plan Check	0	78
The Point	Mixed Use	In Planning Process	3,400	110
Saticoy East Village	Mixed Use	Under Review	33,540	10
5811 Olivas Park Dr.	Industrial	Under Construction	23,501	0

Vets Home	Residential	In Plan Check	0	122
Anastasi: Harbor/Seaward	Mixed Use	In Planning Process	19,780	97
Citrus II	Residential	Under Construction	0	78
VA Clinic	Institutional	Under Construction	48,927	0
TOTAL	-	-	591,921	2,714

Growth Projections

The City's forthcoming General Plan Update establishes a planning horizon to the year 2045. This timeframe overlaps with that of *Connect SoCal* – a regional plan articulating strategies that align land use and transportation planning decisions to efficiently accommodate projected growth. This robust effort represents SCAG's Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS), which is required per SB 375.

As of 2016, SCAG anticipates that Ventura will experience significant population, household, and employment growth in the coming decades (see Table 17 below). These projections have significant implications for long-range planning, since SCAG allocates RHNA numbers to jurisdictions based on anticipated growth over the course of 6-8 years. With substantial growth on the horizon, SCAG has thus allocated 5,302 housing units – more than 12 percent of the current housing stock – to Ventura for the sixth RHNA cycle (2021-2029).

This target will directly influence the City's approach to the forthcoming General Plan. In the Housing Element, the City will need develop an inventory of potential housing sites and a set of associated implementation strategies (e.g., rezoning) that can facilitate such growth. In the Land Use Element, the City must also modify its Land Use Designations to align with the Housing Element and its associated implementation measures.

Table 17: 2045 Growth Projections

Category	2016	2045	Growth (%)
Population	108,800	123,900	13.9%
Households	41,100	46,700	13.6%
Employment	60,800	64,500	6.1%

Sources: Connect SoCal Demographics and Growth Forecast, 2016

Community Character + Design

This section analyzes the existing form, structure, and character of the City of Ventura. Understanding the community's design features, while not required by statute, is central to the General Plan Update process. Understanding the key characteristics of the built environment – including the location and design of our homes, stores, parks, offices, and other spaces, and the way that we move between these various places – is vital to strengthening quality of life.

Urban Form

Topography

As previously noted, Ventura is uniquely nestled between the Los Padres National Forest foothills – situated to its north – and the Pacific Ocean to the west. This environment provides the city a positive drainage slope, with elevation highest at the foothills and gradually decreasing southwest toward the coast.

Gateways

Gateways are entry points that mark arrival to a city. Gateway signage and markers visually impart a community's identity to visitors. The design of gateway signage can convey a community's values, including natural resources, history, and culture.

Access into and out of Ventura is somewhat limited due both to the terrain and existing circulation network. From the south, drivers may enter Ventura from Oxnard via East Harbor Boulevard, North Victoria Avenue, or Highway 101. From the north and west, however, Highways 33 and 101 are – respectively – the only public roadways that accommodate travel into the city. Conditions are somewhat more flexible to the east, as drivers may enter via SR 126, Telegraph Road, or Foothill Road.

At the intersection of California Street and the Highway 101 offramp, a “Historic Downtown” sign welcomes drivers to Ventura and reinforces the city's authentic beach character (as shown in the above photo). This represents the only special gateway in the city.



Source: Visit Ventura

Community Focal Points

Community focal points refer to hubs that generate activity and interest, including historic sites, community facilities, commercial centers, schools, and recreational facilities. Apart from Ventura College and the Pacific View Mall, most attractions of citywide or regional import are located in the Downtown area. Specifically, Ventura's Downtown core is characterized by a walkable street grid lined with historic buildings and a dynamic mix of community amenities, including retail, restaurants, bars, boutiques, and open space. It is also within walking distance of several cultural and historic landmarks dating to the Spanish Colonial days and earlier Chumash settlement. These sites include the San Buenaventura Mission, Olivas Adobe, Ortega Adobe, and Shisholop Village (see “Arts and Culture” Report for more detail).

Elsewhere in the city, secondary focal points include the Pacific View Mall, Buenaventura and Olivas Links golf courses, Ventura County Fairgrounds, and various public beaches (see “Subareas” Report for more detail).

Community Character

Subareas

Ventura is home to a rich mosaic of neighborhoods with their own look, feel, and sense of place. Based on extensive research and analysis, informed by community input, twelve (12) distinct subareas were identified in Ventura. These subareas briefly introduced below and mapped in Figure 15.

While each subarea has its own distinctive charm, each also faces its own unique set of conditions – such as housing quality, walkability, street environment, and park access – that have implications for residents' quality of life. To better understand these differences, the City developed a series of twelve (12) standalone reports that delineate the predominant uses, overall character, and prevailing issues in each subarea. These documents will support this report in informing the development of area-specific goals, strategies, and policies in the forthcoming General Plan Update (see Subarea Reports for more detailed analysis and findings).



Westside

A dense mixed-use community on the northwest end of the city, bounded by Main Street to the south, Grant Park to the east, Ottawa Street to the north, and State Route (SR) 33 to the west. The Westside contains a relatively high concentration of lower income residents and is a major hub of Ventura's Hispanic/Latino community. Previously the site of significant oil extractive activities, the area also hosts a light industrial district.



Downtown

A vibrant mixed-use community located in and around the city's historic core, generally bounded by the foothills to the north, Sanjon Road to the east, the Pacific Ocean to the south, and the 101/33 junction to the west. With its historic landmarks, walkable streets, and proximity to the beach, it is Ventura's main cultural destination.



Midtown

A bustling mixed-use area in west Ventura, bounded by the foothills to the north, Mills Road to the east, Highway 101 to the south, and Sanjon Road to the west. It is the largest subarea by size, the second-most populous, and host to key regional institutions like Pacific View Mall, Community Memorial Hospital, and the Ventura County Medical Center.



Pierpont

A small-scale coastal neighborhood on the southwest end of the city, bounded by the Arundell Barranca to the south, Harbor Boulevard to the east, Highway 101 to the north, and the Pacific Ocean to the west. A largely affluent community, Pierpont boasts the highest median home value of any subarea (\$983,567) and is the smallest

subarea by size. Given its proximity to the beach, residents enjoy unparalleled access to natural recreation.



Marina

A small mixed-use community encircling the Ventura Harbor, bounded by the Arundell Barranca to the north, Harbor Boulevard to the east, Santa Clara River to the south, and the Pacific Ocean to the west. With less than 1,700 full-time residents, it hosts a small but growing population, as evidenced by recent residential projects like Portside Ventura Harbor.



College Area

A large mixed-use community in central Ventura, bounded by Foothill Road to the north, the Harmon Barranca to the east, Highway 126 to the south, and Mills Road to the west. Characterized by several low-density neighborhoods, it has the second-most dwelling units of any subarea and is the third-largest by size. It is also anchored by Ventura College, which is centrally located within the district and provides some services to the surrounding community.



Foothill

A grouping of two hillside residential neighborhoods in the Los Padres foothills, bounded by Foothill Road to the south and undeveloped hillsides on all other sides. It is a largely upscale community with several two-story homes and desirable viewsheds of the city and ocean. Nearly the entire residential population (96.9 percent) lives in “very high fire risk” areas, leaving it highly vulnerable to natural disaster as climate change intensifies. This high risk has already been evidenced by the 2017 Thomas Fire.



Thille

A mixed-use district in central Ventura, bounded by Highway 126 to the north, Victoria Avenue to the east, and Highway 101 to the south and to the west. A suburban community, Thille hosts several planned residential communities that are functionally disjointed from one another and detached from the public realm. This includes two mobile home parks and several apartment complexes, giving Thille the highest proportion of multifamily structures of any subarea in the city. Thille also hosts suburban-style shopping centers and business parks with ample street parking.



Arundell/North Bank

Ventura’s primary “industrial district” bounded by Highway 101 to the north, Santa Clara River to the east, Olivas Park to the south, and Highway 126 to the west. The area is physically buffered from surrounding residential neighborhoods and hosts a high concentration of production, distribution, and repair (PDR) uses, as well as some research and development (R&D) facilities. Despite its small population and peripheral location, it is a major employment center for the city, hosting the most jobs of any subarea.



Southeast/Montalvo

A large mixed-use community on the southeast end of the city, bounded by Telephone Road to the north, Kimball Road to the east, the Metrolink rail line to the south, and Victoria Avenue to the south. It can be roughly divided into two distinct segments: a suburban commercial district south of Nightingale Street, supporting various shopping centers and some light industrial properties, and a predominantly residential area north of it. One of the most populous subareas in the city, Southeast/Montalvo contains a relatively high concentration of multifamily housing, including several apartment complexes at its north end. It also hosts the second-most jobs of any subarea in the city.



Eastside/Juanamaria

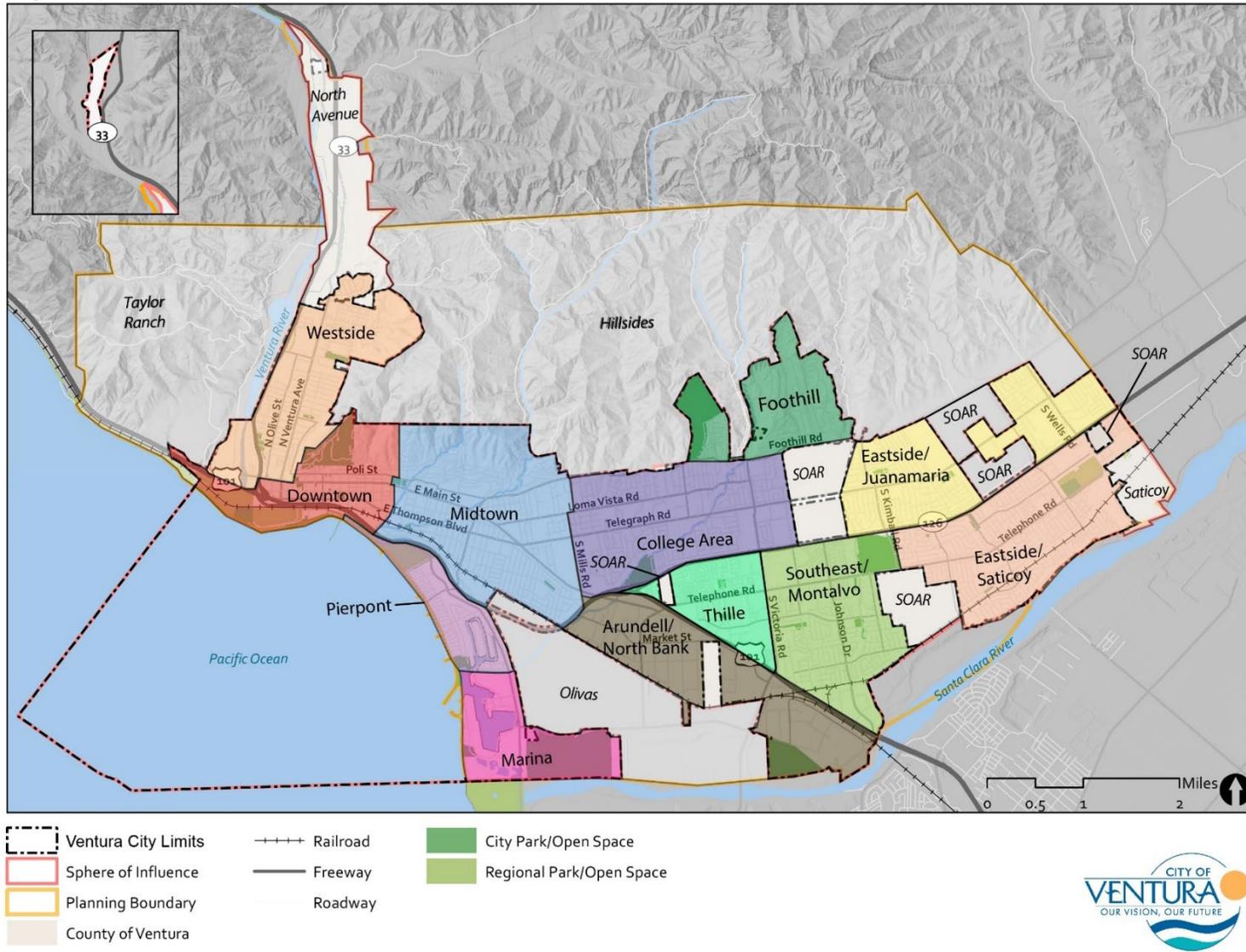
An expansive suburban residential area on the east end of the city, bounded by Foothill Road to the north, the City Limits to the east, Highway 126 to the south, and Kimball Road to the west. The subarea is divided into two parts by an agricultural County Island, with the east side containing some recently constructed planned developments. The subarea hosts the second-fewest jobs.



Eastside/Saticoy

Another expansive suburban residential area on the east end of Ventura, bounded by Highway 126 to the north, the City Limits to the east, Santa Clara River to the south, and Kimball Road to the south. Although suburban in character, it is the most populous and densely populated subarea in the city, and also contains the most housing units. The subarea hosts the Saticoy Regional Golf Course and neighbors the unincorporated community of Saticoy, which is in Ventura’s SOI. The east end of this area has experienced newer housing development in recent years, including some apartment complexes.

Figure 15: Subareas



Data Sources: City of Ventura (2020); County of Ventura (2020); ESRI (2020)

Place Types

Identifying “place types” is another method of organizing a community based on “look and feel”. In this way, place types differ from other use-based classification systems – like zoning and General Plan designations – because they account for the qualitative and experiential aspects of the built environment, such as urban form, building pattern, and public realm elements like streetscape and open space. These design-based characteristics help distinguish how different parts of a city are experienced on the ground.

Given the City’s frequent use of form-based codes, organizing the city into distinct place types helps further define the specific attributes that form the pillars of Ventura’s “community character”. The analysis presented here can thus form the foundation for future development and design regulations that serve to retain the diversity of design themes that are found across the city.

The sections below define and describe each identified character area in Ventura, excluding parks and open spaces. A citywide figure of place types is provided following these descriptions.

Residential Neighborhoods



Single-Family

Unsurprisingly, the Single-Family typology is the most common character area and found in virtually all parts of the city. These areas consist of low-density neighborhoods with homes typically organized on a predictable street grid. Homes generally range between 5,000 and 8,000 square feet in size, are mostly one-story, and only minimally set-back from the street, with front yards, porches, and/or stoops accentuating the building façades. While the residential character is predominantly single-family, these areas also include a mixture of duplexes, triplexes, garden courts, and apartments to a lesser extent.



Hillside Single-Family

Hillside Single-Family areas are distinguished from Single-Family areas due to their location, topography, and building scale. These neighborhoods are exclusively found north of Foothill Road, occupying a steeper terrain at the foothills of the Los Padres National Forest, and are made up almost entirely of residential uses. Properties are relatively larger than in other parts of the city, with some two-story homes and lot sizes ranging from 0.25 to 0.75 acres in size. Street setbacks vary, though many are at least 20 feet from the right-of-way. Neighborhood roads do not follow a street grid and are generally curvilinear, thus offering limited outlets to nearby arterial streets.



Via Ventura. Source: Westside Rentals

Planned Communities

Planned Communities sit on large residential lots that are relatively 'closed' to the public. These largely consist of multifamily structures – such as apartments, townhomes, and garden courts – but also include mobile home parks. Planned Communities are often gated and/or accessible via limited points of entry, are one to four stories in height, and have surface or tuck-under parking. Some complexes have shared community facilities, such as pools and green spaces.



Pacific View Mall. Source: Pacific View Mall

Retail Centers

Retail Centers are large commercial areas with a wide service population, typically located off of major corridors and near Highway 101. This Place Type consists of large one-story, big box structures typically with few windows and entrances, as well as retail and restaurant buildings on pad sites at shopping center entrances. Retail Centers have large setbacks and are separated from streets by large surface parking lots. Shopping and dining uses are in standalone buildings on pad sites, strip malls, or enclosed malls.



Main Street, Downtown

Mixed-Use Core (Downtown)

The Mixed-Use District area corresponds specifically to Downtown, which serves a unique citywide and regional destination with a diverse array of uses. With its historic landmarks, walkable streets, and proximity to the beach, Downtown serves as Ventura's primary civic core and attracts visitors from across the city and region. The area contains a robust mix of commercial, civic, recreational, and historic amenities, with Main Street featuring as its destination corridor lined with restaurants, cafes, bars, and boutiques.



Ashwood Shopping Center. Source: Google Earth

Village Corners

Village Corners are neighborhood-serving commercial areas, typically located at key intersections near residential neighborhoods. Most are single-story strip malls with small-footprint uses, such as banks and restaurants, on pad sites close to the road. Village Corners are generally characterized by large setbacks and surface parking lots fronting the roadway.



Main Street Corridor

Corridors

Corridors are wide, auto-oriented roadways supporting a wide array of uses including one-to-two story retail, restaurants, auto dealerships, government uses, offices, and housing. Though most Corridors have sidewalks, pedestrian crossings are limited and street canopies are inconsistent – if not entirely lacking – thus creating a suboptimal pedestrian environment. The street wall is also inconsistent, as some buildings are close to the street while others – such as strip malls – are set-back from the sidewalk and have large parking lots.



B&R Tool Supply. Source: Google Earth

Light Industrial/R&D

Light Industrial/R&D areas are employment-generating districts buffered from surrounding residential neighborhoods, such as the Arundell/North Bank area south of Highway 101. In addition to research and development (R&D) facilities, these areas host a variety of production, distribution and repair (PDR) uses including auto shops, furniture stores, breweries, and warehouse and storage facilities, among others. Buildings are typically located on large lots (40,000+ square feet), have large footprints, and typically range from two to four stories in height. Whereas most R&D and manufacturing facilities

have large setbacks with abundant surface parking, other traditional PDR uses are often built closer to the road but have an inconsistent street wall.



Ventura County Government Center. Source: Courthouses.co

Business Parks

Business parks comprise a grouping of multi-story commercial buildings organized around a large surface parking lot. While these areas typically host a wide array of professional services, such as legal offices and medical facilities, most of Ventura's Business Parks host government administration offices operated by the City and/or County. Like Retail Centers and Village Corners, Business Parks have deep street setbacks.

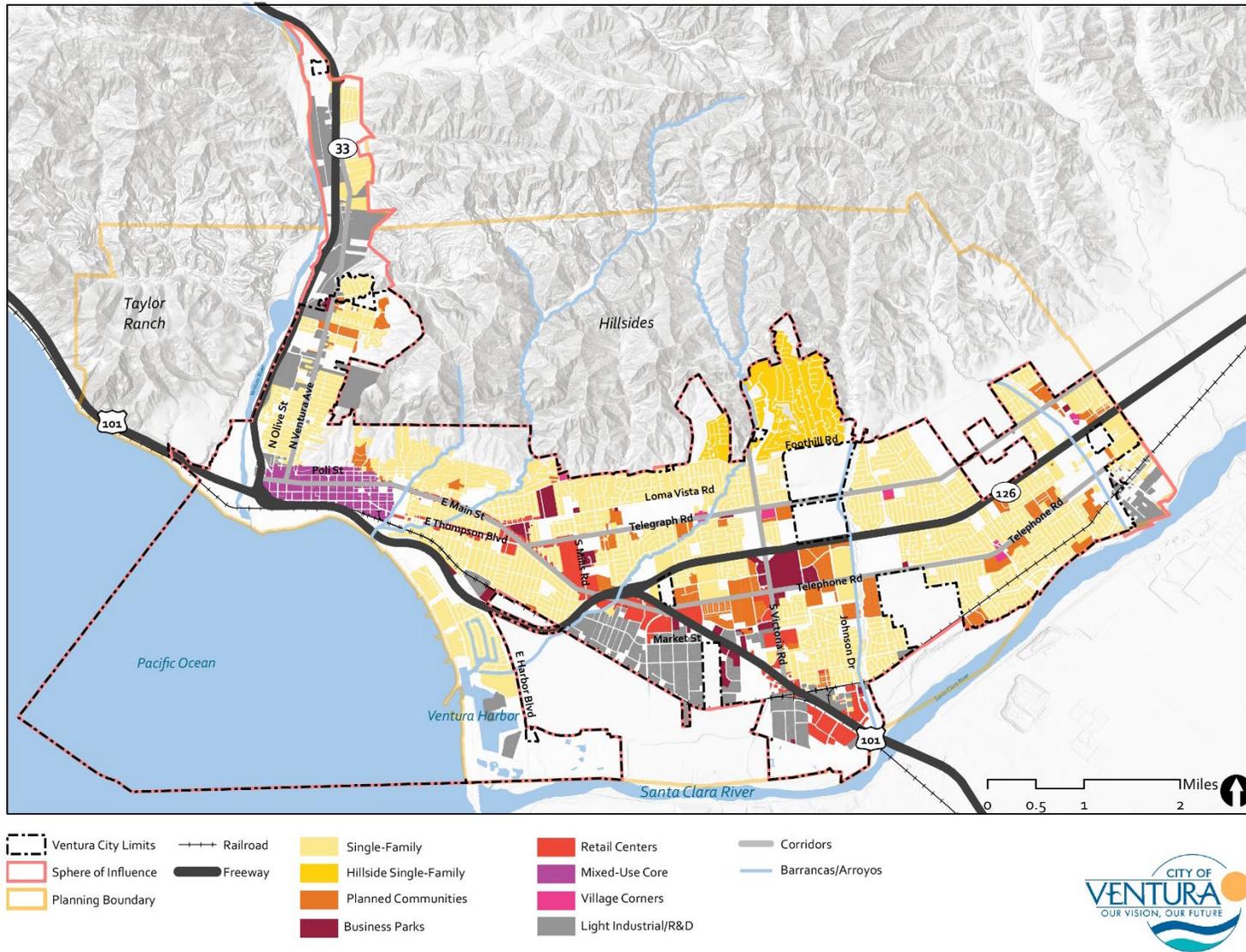


Arundell Barranca. Source: Ventura County Watershed Protection District

Barrancas/Arroyos

Barrancas and arroyos are a defining feature of Ventura's natural landscape and are woven throughout the city's built environment. The major channel in Ventura – the Arundell Barranca – begins at the Los Padres foothills and traverses the city, ultimately discharging into the Ventura Harbor. Many parks and multi-use paths are built along barrancas.

Figure 16: Place Types



Data Sources: City of Ventura (2020); County of Ventura (2020); ESRI (2020)



Parks + Open Space

This section provides an overview of existing parks, open spaces, and recreational facilities, in the City of Ventura. The general intent is to assess the quality and condition of these services and identify deficiencies as appropriate.

Related Plans and Policy Documents

The City has developed various plans and policy documents related to the enhancement of parks, open spaces, and recreational amenities in Ventura. These include:

- **Our Active Community (2005)**, formally the General Plan’s Open Space Element, which provides general policy guidance on the enhancement of parks and other recreational amenities. Specifically, the Element calls for expansion of the trail and park network (Policy 6A) and ensuring equal access to facilities and programs (Policy 6B). The General Plan then highlights implementation strategies that identify both the responsible entity and estimated timeframe for each action.
- **City Tree Master Plan (2020)**, which guides the management of a comprehensive Urban Forest program in the city. The Plan develops guidelines and standards on the type, placement, and orientation of street trees relative to their immediate surroundings. It also surveys 28 major arterial and collector streets and identifies ideal tree species to be planted on each.
- **Senior Strategic Plan (2020)**, which identifies gaps in the provision of senior services – including recreation – and proposes both goals and strategies to ameliorate them. Goals are largely centered on improving organizational resources and partnerships, enhancing programs and service delivery, improving facilities and amenities, and strengthening financial investment.

Park Typologies and Inventory

The City of Ventura hosts a diversity of recreational amenities for the community to enjoy, including parks, natural open spaces, trails, plazas, gyms, and community centers. In total, Ventura’s Parks, Recreation, and Community Partnerships Department owns and operates over 30 public parks totaling more than 600 acres, and both the State and County manage several beaches within the City Limits. Other open spaces in the Planning Area, such as the Harmon Canyon Preserve, are publicly accessible but privately owned.



Kellogg Park. Source: Pacific Coast Land Design



Ventura Community Park. Source: 19six Architects

Public parks in Ventura can broadly be classified into the following tiers¹¹:

- **Community Parks**, which serve residents of more than one neighborhood and are intended to offer more specialized recreation options. Community parks may include amenities such as athletic fields, courts, youth play structures, picnic areas, landscaped areas, as well as indoor recreational facilities. Community parks are typically between 20 and 50 acres in size.
- **Neighborhood Parks**, which are intended to serve specific residential areas, providing for active and passive recreation and are generally up to eight (8) acres in size.
- **Mini-Parks**, which are small parks also intended to serve specific residential areas. Mini-parks typically do not exceed three (3) acres in size and may be equipped with benches, picnic tables, and/or playgrounds.
- **Linear Parks/Greenways**, which include both programmed and undeveloped strips of green space. Many of these amenities run alongside barrancas and may include shared-use paths. This forms an extensive bicycle and pedestrian network throughout the city.

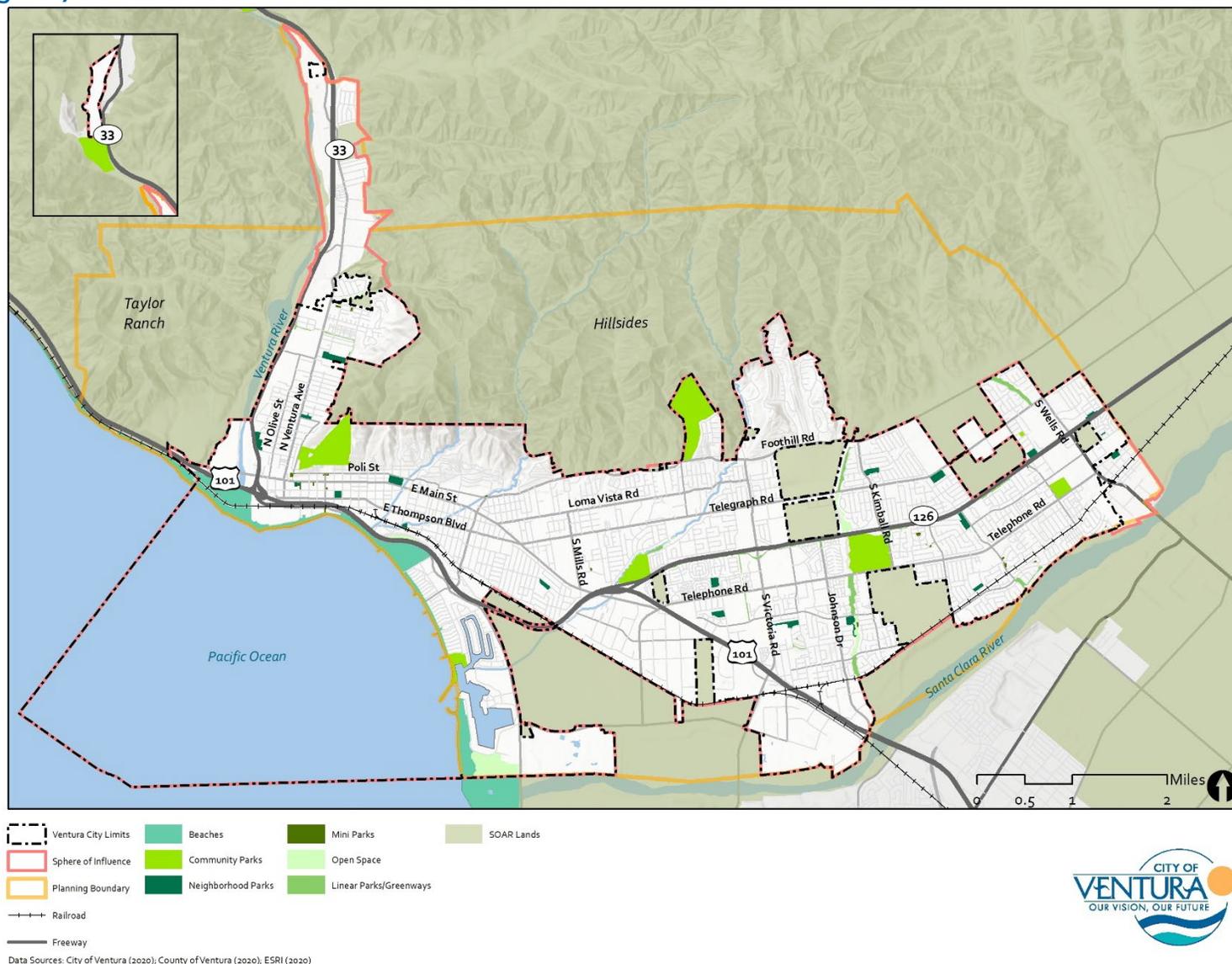
Table 18 below lists Ventura's existing park inventory, which is organized by park type and provides acreage estimates for each park. Figure 17 shows the distribution of different park types across the city.

¹¹ **Note:** These typologies differ slightly from those presented in the 2005 General Plan. Instead, this framework is adapted from recent City data that presents a more robust classification system.

Table 18: Existing Parks Inventory

Community Parks	Acres	Neighborhood Parks	Acres	Mini Parks	Acres	Linear Parks/Greenways	Acres
Arroyo Verde Park	129.2	Aldea Hermosa Park	0.4	California Plaza	0.4	Parkside 126 Greenways (3)	4.9
Camino Real Park	38.1	Azahar Park	0.0	California Street Mini Park	0.3	Cypress Point Greenway	1.5
Fritz Huntsinger Complex	18.3	Barranca Vista Park	6.0	Citrus Walk Sunstone Park	0.9	Woodside Greenways (2)	2.6
Grant Park	109.6	Blanche Reynolds Park	3.3	Downtown Mini Park	0.4	Greystone Greenway	1.0
Marina Park	20.4	Cemetery Memorial Park	7.2	Eastwood Park	1.0	Rio Grande Greenway	3.4
Ventura Community Park	98.1	Chumash Park	6.2	Figueroa Street Plaza	0.6	Valdez Alley	0.2
Seaside Wilderness Park	24	Enclave Park	0.1	McWherter Corner	0.3	Weston East Greenway	1.4
SUBTOTAL	437.8	Harry A. Lyon Park	10.9	Pacific View Skate Bowl	0.3	Sycamore Greenway	1.6
		Hobert Park	7.1	Padre Serra Park	0.6	Weston West Greenway	2.0
		Juanamaria Park	5.0	Citrus Walk Park	1.2	Webster Linear Park	1.4
		Junipero Serra Park	2.6	Enclave Green	0.0	County Square Linear Park	3.7
		Kellogg Park	2.5	Harmon Antelope	0.5	Montalvo Hill Greenway	1.0
		Marion Cannon Park	5.0	Henderson Cottages Park	0.2	Harmon/Seagull Ave	2.6
		Mission Park	1.5	Medford Green	0.1	Harmon/Wildcat Ave	3.3
		Montalvo Hill Park	6.6	Montalvo Hill Mini	0.1	Harmon	8.0
		Ocean Avenue Park	1.3	Petit Greenway	0.4	Woodside West Linear Park	5.9
		Plaza Park	3.6	Petit Greenway	0.7	Woodside East Linear Park	7.2
		Thille Neighborhood Park	4.9	Standard Pacific	0.2	Paseo Del Mar Linear Park	2.6
		Westpark	6.4	Solana Heights Parks (2)	1.5	Harmon	14.1
		Blackburn Park (The Farm)	4.0	SUBTOTAL	10.0	Kennebec Greenway	4.8
		Community Park (The Farm)	1.4			Eastside Kimball	2.6
		Promenade Park	1.0			Stonehedge Linear Park	2.1
		SUBTOTAL	85.6			SUBTOTAL	78.0
						GRAND TOTAL	611.3

Figure 17: Parks and Recreation Facilities



Recreation Facilities and Community Centers

Along with the above parks, the City owns and operates several facilities that offer unique recreational opportunities for the community, including those highlighted below:

- **Ventura Aquatic Center** is a state-of-the-art aquatic facility that features a 50-meter competition pool, 25-meter recreation pool, water playground pool, and two water slides, which are designed for users of all ages and abilities. The Center also hosts lap swim and shallow-water exercise programs available to the public at low cost.
- **Westpark Community Center**, located in Westpark, consists of the only City-owned gymnasium for large meetings and sporting events. The center holds a variety of community events, including a Día de los Muertos celebration, Christmas Program, youth dinner, and after-school program. The center is also available for rental to the public.
- **Barranca Vista Center**, located in Barranca Vista Park, hosts all-age classes in theater, dance, music, art, wellness, and family events. It also contains a Social Hall available with a rental for events, weddings, receptions, meetings, and parties.
- **Ventura Avenue Adult Center** is a standalone senior center that offers classes, drop-in activities, facility rentals, and a range of other programs and services. The facility includes a café, banquet hall, meeting rooms, and a patio.
- **Albinger Archaeological Museum**, placed on the National Register of Historic Places, is a cultural site located next to Mission San Buenaventura. Built atop the home of former mayor Angel Escondon, the museum displays local artifacts that span 3,500 years of history, covering cultures such as the indigenous Chumash, Spanish, Mexican, Chinese, and mid-18th Century U.S. settlers.
- **Cornucopia Community Garden** is the City's largest community garden, equipped with approximately 150 plots available to the community for rent. Plots average 18ft. x 20ft. in size and cost \$85 for a 6-month rental. The Garden is located off of Telephone Road near the intersection with Johnson Drive.
- **Kellogg Community Garden** is the City's newest community garden, equipped with 47 plots available to the community for rent. Plots average 3ft. x 6ft. in size and cost \$30 for a 6-month rental. The Garden is located within Kellogg Park in the Westside neighborhood.
- **Westpark Community Garden** is equipped with 22 plots available to the community for rent. The Garden is located within Westpark in the Westside neighborhood.



Barranca Vista Center. Source: City of Ventura

The Museum of Ventura County, which hosts various historic regional collections, is also located in Downtown Ventura.

Joint Use Agreements

The City of Ventura and Ventura Unified School District (VUSD) also operate a joint use agreement permitting public use of the playground at Blanche Reynolds Elementary during non-school hours.

Open Spaces

Surrounding Ventura are many expansive open spaces and nature preserves that are treasured by the community. However, most of these spaces are in private holdings on unopen to public access. Despite these limitations, the public enjoys free access to two major amenities, which are described below:

- **Harmon Canyon Preserve** is a large-scale nature preserve that features extensive hiking trails traversing hillsides, oak groves, and stream crossings. At 2,100 acres, the site is owned by the Ventura Land Trust and hosts a trailhead at 7511 Foothill Road.
- **Emma Wood River Trail and State Beach** begins west of the Ventura River Estuary and loops through to nearby Seaside Wilderness Park. While the trailhead sits less than 3 miles from its namesake State Beach, no pedestrian link exists between the two.

Some open spaces surrounding Ventura are semi-open to public access, including Willoughby Preserve and Hayden Preserve.

Some natural open spaces are also located within the City Limits, including:

- **Grant Park/Ventura Botanical Gardens (VBG)** is an expansive hillside park north of Downtown, offering visitors a breathtaking panorama of the Pacific Ocean and Ventura cityscape. Spanning 109 acres, it features a 3.9-mile out-and-back trail that leads hikers through plants from five Mediterranean climate zones, including California, Central Chile, the South African Cape, Southern Australia, and the Mediterranean Basin. Guided and themed tours are normally provided but currently suspended due to COVID-19.
- **Surfers' Point** is a premier surf spot located immediately south of the Ventura County Fairgrounds (also known as the 31st District Agricultural Association). It also hosts a lawn area equipped with picnic tables and grills.

Beaches

Given its coastal location, Ventura also enjoys access to several beaches along its western periphery. These spaces provide unique recreational opportunities that are cherished by the community, including both passive and active activities. Harbor Cove Beach, located near the Marina, hosts four beach volleyball courts that are open to the public at no charge. Unlike public parks, some beaches in Ventura are managed by the State or County. Table 19 below lists all public beaches within the City Limits. This list does not include either the McGrath or Emma Wood State Beaches, which are located either partially or entirely outside the SOI.

Table 19: Beaches

Beach Name	Acres
San Buenaventura State Beach Park	81.1
Surfer's Point	16.0
Surfers Knoll	33.7
Pierpont Beach	24.8

Waterfront Promenade	8.5
South Jetty Beach	31.2
Harbor Cove Beach	31.2
TOTAL	226.5
<i>Source: Ventura General Plan, 2005</i>	

Hiking Trails

Ventura has several open space trails that serve both pedestrians and bicyclists. Trails along the foothills include the Arroyo Verde Park Loop and the Two Trees Trail. Trails along the coast include the San Buenaventura Beach Trail and the Omer Rains Coastal Bikeway. Additionally, the Ojai/Ventura Trail starts at the coast in Ventura eventually ending inland in Ojai. Trails in the city are also present in city landmarks such as the Botanical Gardens, which includes the Ventura Botanical Gardens Trail that stretches approximately two miles throughout the 109-acre garden (VBG 2020).

The City has greatly expanded its trail system through several city programs and organizations. The Ventura Land Trust (VLT) Organization, a nonprofit organization in the city works to actively protect and preserve Ventura’s open space, trails, and park system. VLT has permanently protected approximately 30 acres of open space in the Ventura River watershed and managed over 60 acres of additional open space. VLT continues to actively look for new funding sources and opportunities to further conserve and protect the city’s open spaces.

Information the city’s parks, trails, and open space is widely available at trailheads, parks, and recreation centers.

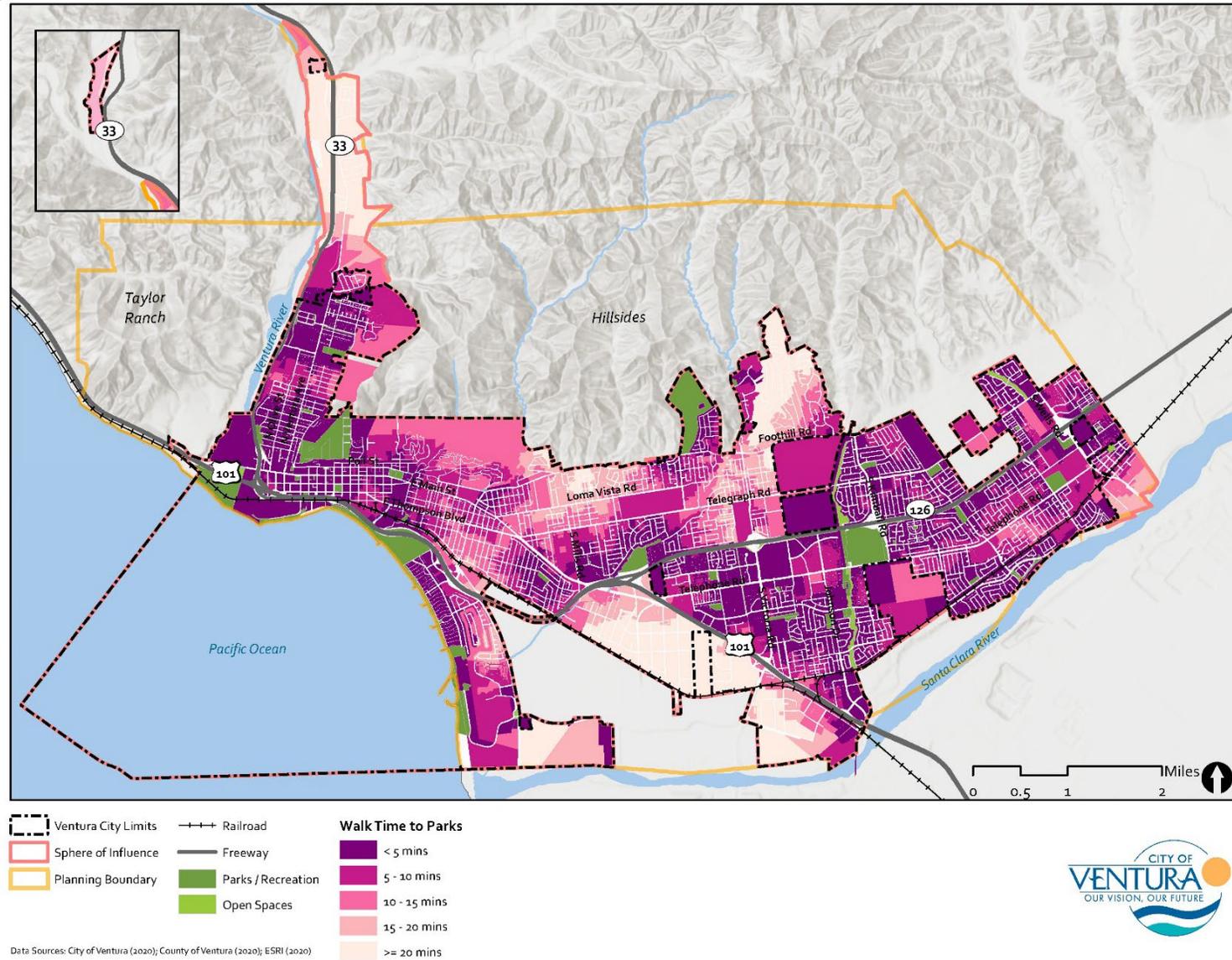
Park Level of Service and Park Access

Per the 2005 General Plan, the City aims to provide 10 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, which exceeds the 9-acre benchmark set by the National Park and Recreation Association. With 607 acres of parkland in the City Limits serving 111,566 residents, the City’s park service ratio currently approximates 5.4. The City would have to build more than 500 additional acres of parkland to meet its ambitious 10-acre standard, which is highly unlikely given both the current availability of land and other competing priorities, such as housing production.

That said, Ventura already well exceeds the baseline ratio of 3 acres per 1,000 residents set by the California Quimby Act and even surpasses the 5-acre cap (see more on the Quimby Act below). As indicated above, Ventura is also blessed with world-class natural recreation – including 226 acres of public beaches – that also serve the community. These considerations suggest that, at the citywide scale, Ventura contains ample recreational amenities sufficient to the needs of its population.

That said, access to recreation does vary across the city. Figure 18 below maps walkability to public parks (including the Blanche Reynolds playground), with areas in dark purple having the most convenient access and areas in lighter shades having the least convenient access. As the map indicates, most residents in the city – excluding those in the Foothill, College Area, and the Arundell/Northbank neighborhoods – are within a 15-minute walk of a park or other open space. Furthermore, while most Ventura residents enjoy strong access to outdoor recreation, some areas suffer from park overcrowding given the large populations they support (see “Subareas” Report for more).

Figure 18: Walk Access to Parks and Open Space



Funding

California jurisdictions are authorized to levy two types of fees on development to support the planning, acquisition, improvement, and expansion of public parkland. Pursuant to the Quimby Act (AB 1191), a jurisdiction can require subdivision projects to dedicate parkland, or pay a proportionate fee in-lieu thereof, at a ratio of 3 acres per 1,000 residents. Should the amount of existing parkland in an area already exceed that standard, the jurisdiction may require a dedication of up to 5 acres per 1,000 residents. Pursuant to the Mitigation Fee Act (AB 1600), a jurisdiction may also impose “impact fees” on all other projects to fund improvements needed as a result of new development, such as public parkland, school facilities, utilities, and affordable housing, among others. State law requires that a jurisdiction show a “reasonable relationship” between a fee and the purpose for which it is charged.

Currently, the City of Ventura administers both types of fees. Pursuant to the Quimby Act, the City’s Parkland Dedication Ordinance requires subdivision projects to dedicate land, pay a fee in-lieu thereof, or provide both in support of public parkland. Subdivision projects of 50 parcels or less are typically only required to pay a per-unit fee of \$2,957.98. In the Downtown Specific Plan area, condominium projects exceeding 50 dwelling units are required to pay a per-unit fee of \$7,454.34. In all other cases, dedication of land at a ratio of 4.6 acres per 1,000 residents may be required. The following formula is used to calculate the required dedication:

Land dedication = (DU x Average Household Size x S) / 1,000, where:

- DU = number of dwelling units in subdivision
- Average Household Size = 2.57
- S = park acreage standard of 4.6 per 1,000 residents, per City Council Resolution 2015-028

Pursuant to the Mitigation Fee Act, the City also administers a Parks and Recreation Facilities Tax that ties new residential development to the construction and/or improvement of “public parks, playgrounds, and other recreational facilities” in Ventura. The purpose of the Tax is to generate adequate funding for new recreational facilities needed to support a growing population. Specifically, the City levies a one-time, per-unit tax on residential projects as a condition of approval. The per-unit tax varies in cost based on dwelling unit size, as defined in the fee schedule below in Table 20:

Table 20: Parks and Recreation Facilities Tax by Number of Units

Dwelling Unit Size	Fee
1 Bedroom	\$170.00
2 Bedrooms	\$230.00
3 Bedrooms	\$370.00
4 or More Bedrooms	\$530.00
Mobile Home Pad	\$100.00
<i>Source: Ventura Municipal Code</i>	

In addition, apartment projects not included in a subdivision pay a \$3,050 per-unit fee and \$1,525 for granny flats.

Pilot Beautification Granting Program

In Spring of 2020, the City of Ventura developed a Pilot Beautification Granting Program (BGP). The goal of the program is to help community groups and non-profit organizations complete projects that beautify the community, such as parks and open space. Funding for the program is supported through the city's Measure O. Projects must meet the needs of the city, be on public property, and protect the health and safety of Ventura residents.

Parks and Water Bond Act of 2018

In June 2018, voters in the State of California passed Proposition 68, also known as the Parks and Water Bond Act of 2018. This proposition allocated \$4 billion to put towards California's most pressing water, park, and natural resource needs. Funding has gone toward issues such as regional water supplies and water quality, stormwater management, water recycling, flood protection and repairs, ocean and coastal protection, local parks and open districts, and clean water and drought preparedness. Many of the specific issues targeted by this bill are prevalent in the city, such as the need for flood protection and repairs, ocean and coastal protection, regional water supplies, and local parks and open space districts. Many cities such as Ventura continue to rely on State and Federal funding in addition to local funding programs for the protection of natural resources.

Public Facilities

This section summarizes existing public facilities and services in Ventura, which perform a critical role in promoting human development and ensuring a high quality of life for residents. This section specifically addresses schools, libraries, and police and fire services.

Schools

Ventura Unified School District

Ventura Unified School District (VUSD) provides public K-12 education to the community, operating a total of 27 schools, comprised of 18 elementary schools, six (6) middle schools, and five (5) high schools. Ventura is also home to 15 private schools, two charter schools, and Ventura College (described further below). As of the 2019-20 academic year, VUSD enrolled 16,236 students.

Significant facility upgrades are planned in the coming years. In April 2020, the VUSD Board approved a Long-Range Facilities Master Plan that identifies a range of needed improvements costing more than \$800 million. Proposed projects include the construction of educational amenities such as STEM Centers, libraries, CTE Program areas, science labs, and Special Education Program spaces, among others. Conventional building renovations – such as roof repairs, new furniture, exterior lighting and security cameras, heating and air conditioning, and cafeteria renovations – are also included.¹²

To fund these projects, VUSD had aimed to place a bond measure on the November 2020 ballot, which would have required 55 percent voter approval. However, that effort was suspended due to the economic impact of COVID-19.

Figure 19 shows the distribution of all school types in the City Limits, and Table 21 lists all public schools in the city.

¹² Ventura Unified School District, Long Range Facilities Master Plan and Potential Bond Measure Presentation

Figure 19: Schools

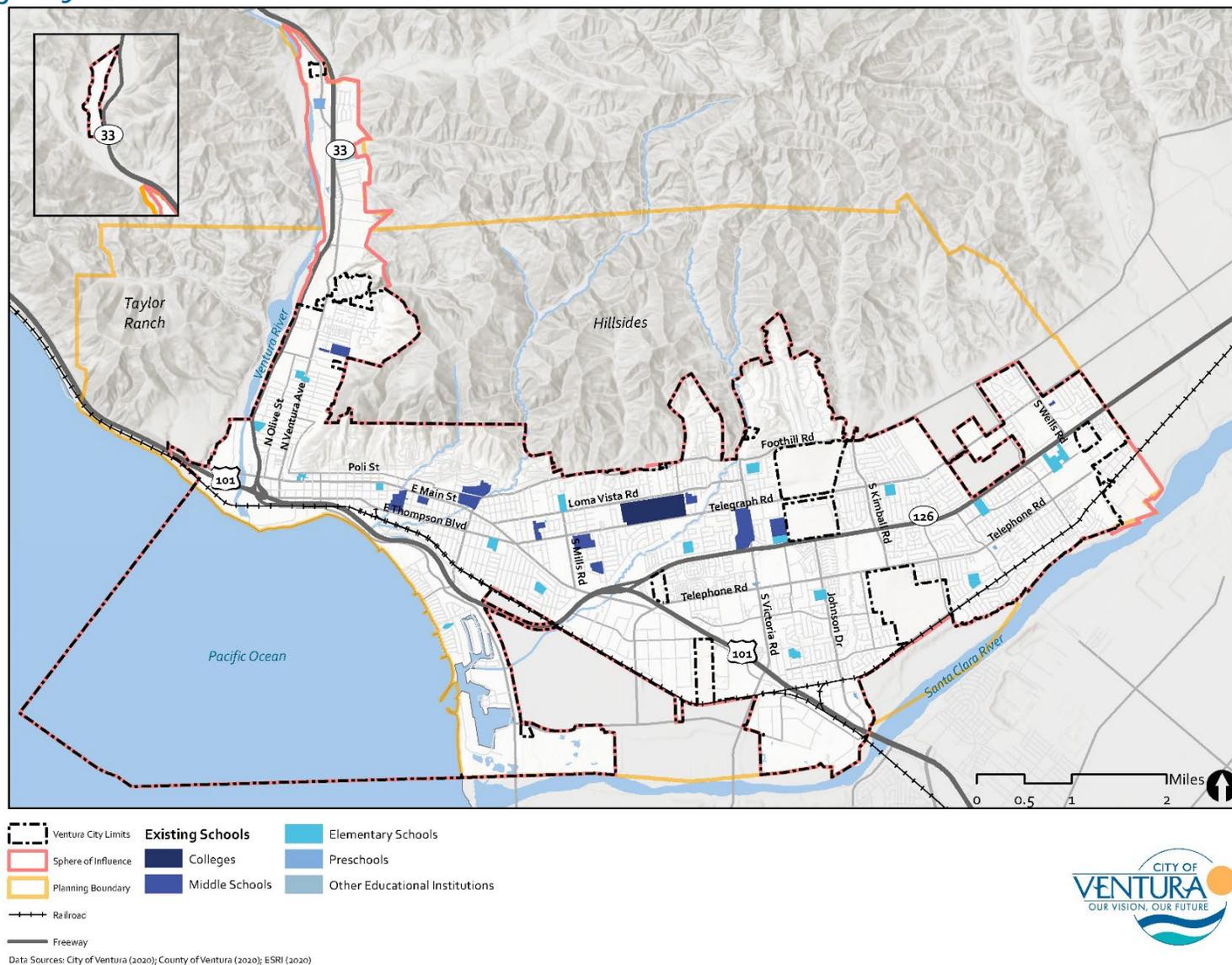


Table 21: Public Schools (VUSD)

School	Enrollment (2019-20)
Elementary Schools	
Sheridan Way Elementary	418
E.P. Foster Elementary	404
Elmhurst Elementary	422
Blanche Reynolds Elementary	256
Lincoln Elementary	228
Portola Elementary	565
Will Rogers Elementary	511
Montalvo Elementary	385
Sunset Elementary	341
Citrus Glen Elementary	539
Junipero Serra Elementary	495
Juanamaria Elementary	482
Pierpont Elementary	276
Loma Vista Elementary	377
Poinsettia Elementary	429
Mound Elementary	587
ATLAS	405
Homestead (Alternative)	30
Middle Schools	
Anacapa Middle	898
Balboa Middle	1,133
Cabrillo Middle	916
DATA	786
High Schools	
Ventura High	2,074
Buena High	1,866
El Camino High	268

Foothill Technology High	977
TOTAL	16,236
<i>Source: Ventura Unified School District</i>	

VUSD has struggled with declining enrollment over the past decade, experiencing a 7.4 percent decline from the 2010-11 (17,509) to 2019-20 (16,212) school years.¹³ This downward trend is expected to continue in coming years, as current projections forecast enrollment dropping to 15,585 in the 2024-25 academic year. Based on conversations with VUSD staff, an outflux of families due to high living costs is the single greatest factor contributing to declining enrollment.

In late 2019, VUSD also established a 7-11 Advisory Committee to consider the sale and/or lease of District-owned properties deemed “surplus.” Specifically, the Committee was tasked with reviewing and evaluating nine (9) properties based on current and projected property needs. Following a series of several public meetings, the Committee released recommendations for each of these properties, as defined in Table 22 below:

Table 22: Potential VUSD Surplus Properties

Facility	Acres	Address	Determination
Loma Vista Elementary	8.86	300 Lynn Dr	<i>Not Surplus</i>
Will Rogers Elementary	7.83	316 Howard St	<i>Not Surplus</i>
Anacapa Middle	19.31	100 S Mills Rd	<i>Not Surplus</i>
Education Service Center	24.83	2647 N Ventura Ave	<i>Surplus</i>
Avenue Elementary	7.44	255 W Stanley Ave	<i>Surplus</i>
ATLAS Elementary	13.95	760 Jazmin Ave	<i>Not Surplus</i>
Washington Elementary	5.35	96 MacMillan Ave	<i>No Determination</i>
Jewett Estate	10.01	E of Tamarin Ave b/w Lemur St and Ralston St	<i>No Determination</i>
Sudden Estate	9.16	W of Saticoy Ave b/w Telegraph Rd and Foothill Rd	<i>No Determination</i>
<i>Source: Surplus Property 7-11 Advisory Committee: Final Report and Recommendations, VUSD (2020).</i>			

The City may wish to consider new desired uses for the above surplus properties in the forthcoming General Plan Update.

¹³ Ventura Unified School District, Historic District Enrollment (2020)

Ventura College

Ventura College, a two-year community college, is a major institution in Ventura that typically enrolls between 13,000 and 14,000 students annually. The school is one of three institutions that make up the Ventura County Community College District (VCCCD), along with Moorpark College and Oxnard College. It also operates two satellite campuses in nearby Santa Paula and Camarillo.

Occupying 112 acres in its namesake “College Area” neighborhood, Ventura College houses 70 classrooms, 32 laboratories, a performing arts center, and an array of sports facilities that include eight tennis courts, four softball fields, a football field, running track, and indoor stadium. While there are no current plans to expand the campus outward, a recently-adopted Facilities Master Plan (FMP) envisions circulation improvements as well as renovations to buildings like the Student Services Center, Science Building, Agricultural Building, Diesel Program Facility, and Athletic Event Center, among others.

Libraries

Ventura County Library is the primary service provider in the city, operating three permanent branches within the City Limits and one in Saticoy. These branch libraries are home to a range of programs and amenities important to the community, including book groups, youth programs, STEAM workspaces, adult literacy programs, and a drop-in ESL program at the Avenue branch. Both the Avenue and Saticoy branches also operate Hotspot loan program that allows patrons to “check out” Wi-Fi access for up to a week, which helps to bridge the “digital divide.”

In addition to physical branches, the County Library also provides weekly mobile services at the Westview Village housing community. Permanent services may be eventually established here in coordination with the Ventura Housing Authority.

Police

The Ventura Police Department (VPD) is a law enforcement agency that provides police services in partnership with the community to enhance and maintain a safe environment. VPD is split into two main branches: the Administrative Division – which also includes the Investigative Division – and the Field Services Division. The latter is composed of several specialized teams and task forces, including:

- Patrol Officers
- School Resource Officers (SRO)
- Alcohol Enforcement Unit
- K9 Team
- SWAT
- Crisis Intervention Team (CIT)
- Patrol Task Force (PTF)
- Traffic Unit



Source: VPD Facebook

VPD is a major City Department, receiving the single-greatest share of General Fund expenditures (\$38.7 million – or 33 percent of the total – for FY-2020-21) and is authorized to employ the largest number of full-time employees (189). These high figures come amid improvements in citywide safety. Crime rates fell by more than 13% between 2018 and 2019, and anecdotal evidence suggests that this trend has

continued through 2020. As shown in Table 23 below, average police response times also improved across all priority levels.

Table 23: Police Response Times

	Average Response Time (2015-2018)	Average Response Time (2019)
Priority 1 Calls	5:16	5:06
Priority 2 Calls	10:58	9:27
Priority 3 Calls	30:05	19.11
<i>Source: VPD (2020).</i>		

Fire

Fire protection, fire prevention, and emergency medical and rescue services are provided by the Ventura City Fire Department (Ventura Fire). The department also operates specialized Water Rescue, Hazardous Materials, and Urban Search & Rescue units. Due to high wildfire risk in parts of Ventura, the department also released a Wildfire Action Plan in July 2020 to help households mitigate fire risk and understand recommended evacuation procedures. Ventura Fire operates six fire stations in the city.



Source: City of Ventura Twitter

As a 24/7 all-hazard emergency response agency, Ventura Fire is the second-highest recipient of General Fund expenditures (\$20.8 million, or 18 percent, of the total for FY 2020-21) and is allocated the third-highest number of authorized full-time employees (86) of any department.

Ventura Fire has experienced an increase in the demand for services, with call volumes having increased 42 percent from 2009 (11,470) to 2020 (16,243). This volume corresponds to a level of demand that far outweighs that of comparable regional cities – in 2017, Ventura Fire received 146 calls per 1,000 residents, compared to 95, 92, and 75 in nearby Thousand Oaks, Oxnard, and Simi Valley, respectively.¹⁴

Several factors may contribute to this disparity, such as fires in homeless encampments, an older housing stock, an aging population, and a dearth of residential sprinklers (85 percent of homes do not have sprinklers).¹⁵ As climate change intensifies, the increased likelihood of wildfires may further elevate the demand for services.

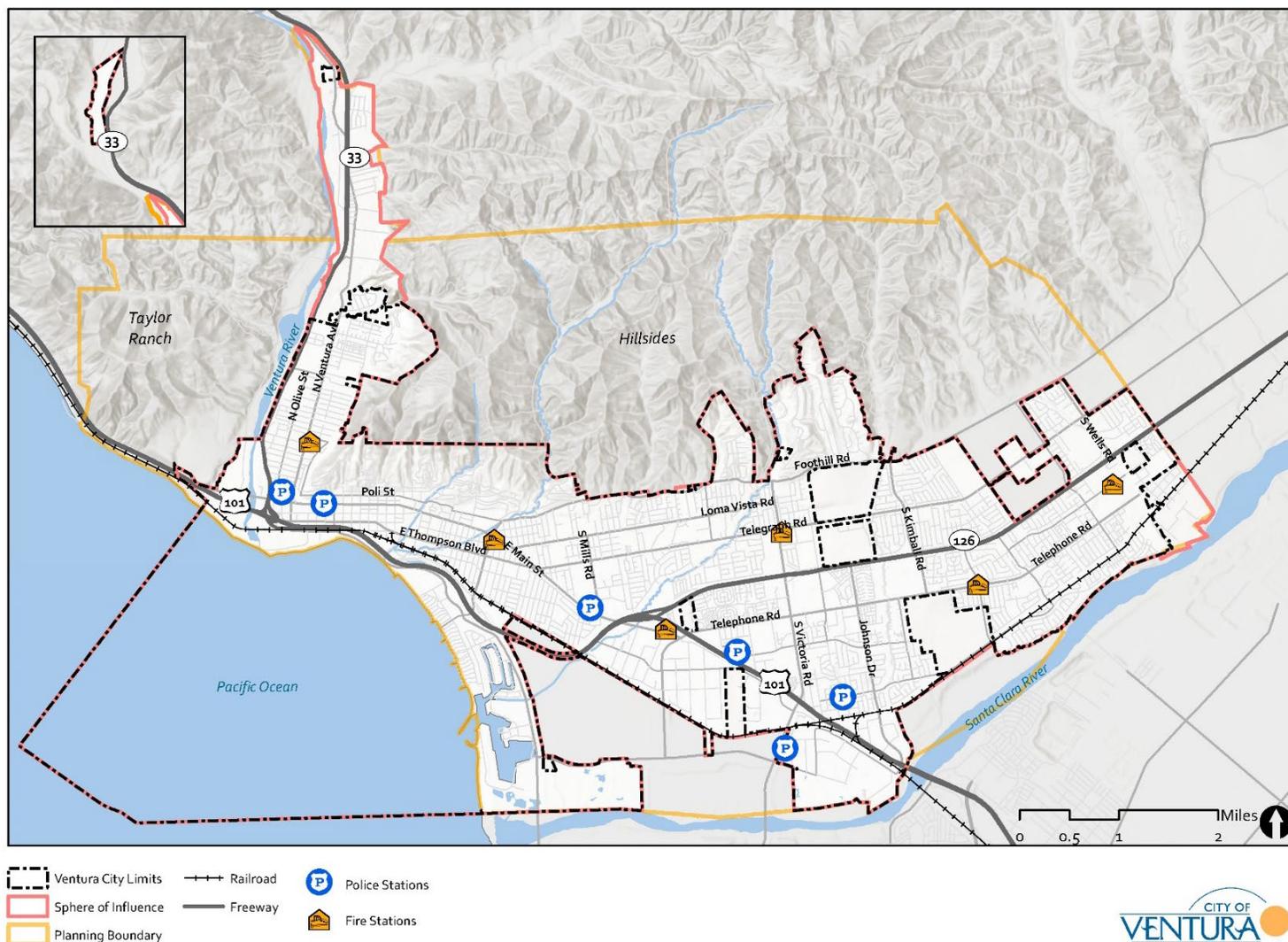
This high volume of emergency calls is, however, met with substandard response times. Between late 2014 and late 2018, Ventura Fire’s response to calls within 5 minutes fell from 65 percent to under 55 percent. This standard is significantly below the department’s target of 90 percent and may be attributed to the Department’s challenges in mitigating rising demand. Moving forward, increased investment in

¹⁴ Ventura City Fire, Operational Review (2019)

¹⁵ Ibid

fire services to meet demand and ensure community safety could be warranted. A map of public facilities, including libraries, police, and fire services, is shown below in Figure 20.

Figure 20: Public Facilities: Fire and Police



Data Sources: City of Ventura (2020); County of Ventura (2020); ESRI (2020)



