

Subarea Report: Westside

July 2021



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Introduction

Ventura is home to a rich mosaic of neighborhoods with their own look, feel, and sense of place. While each has its own distinctive charm, each also faces its own unique set of conditions – such as housing quality, walkability, and park access – that have implications for residents’ quality of life. To better understand these unique conditions, this report provides an overview of the Westside subarea in Ventura, delineating its predominant uses, overall character, and prevailing issues. It is one in a series of twelve (12) standalone reports on existing subareas in the City of Ventura.

Westside Overview

Land Use	Percent
Residential	39.5%
Single-Family Attached	1.8%
Single-Family Detached	28.9%
Multifamily	8.8%
Commercial	3.6%
Office	0.8%
Commercial Centers	2.8%
Mixed-Use	0.1%
Mixed-Use Commercial	0.1%
Industrial/Manufacturing	13.4%
Light Industrial	9.3%
Wholesale / Warehousing	4.1%
Public/Institutional	7.2%
Civic Facilities	2.0%
Religious Facilities	0.2%
School	2.7%
Hospitals	0.9%
Transportation	0.7%
Water	0.8%
Open Space	22.5%
Parks / Recreation	2.6%
Open Space	1.9%
Natural / Conservation	18.0%
Agriculture	10.3%
Vacant/Other	3.4%

The Westside is 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. Covering 1,300 acres, it houses 14,056 residents and is the third-densest subarea in the city (10.8 persons per acre [ppa]). The Westside also contains a high concentration of lower income residents, with median income (\$53,008) is only 67 percent of the citywide figure (\$78,882). In addition, nearly three-quarters of the population (73.0 percent) identify as Hispanic/Latino. Figure 1 shows an aerial view of the subarea.

Existing Land Use

As Figure 2 indicates, the Westside is a predominately residential community, with housing occupying almost 40 percent of all land; however, just 22.3 percent of all housing is considered “middle-density”, such as garden apartments and bungalow courts, with the remainder coming in the form of single-family homes. Agriculture and open space comprise nearly another one-third (32.7 percent) of land in the community, although most of these spaces are not available for public recreation. The Westside is also home to various industrial and manufacturing operations, which comprise 13.4 percent of land and are mostly located east of Ventura Avenue. A smaller number of institutional (7.2 percent) and commercial (3.6 percent) uses are also dispersed throughout, mainly along or near the Ventura Avenue corridor.

The Westside does not contain any notable retail or civic nodes, except for a shopping center at the south end of Ventura Boulevard at the edge of the Westside and Downtown neighborhoods. Major public uses include three public schools – De Anza DATA Middle, Sheridan Way Elementary, and EP Foster Elementary – and three parks: Harry A. Lyon Park, Kellogg Park, and West Park, which also contains a community center. Apart from the Ventura Unified School District (VUSD), which is headquartered in the Westside, most economic activity is focused on retail and PDR uses. The infographic below, as well as Figures 1 and 2, summarize these high-level takeaways.



Westside Subarea. Source: Westside Community Council

Neighborhood Statistics



14,056 residents
(13.0% of City)

4,496 units
(10.3% of City)



10.3 units per residential acre
(Citywide: 7.8)



10.8 people per acre
(Citywide: 7.7)



median income \$53,008
(Citywide: \$78,882)



median home value \$394,829
(Citywide: \$570,100)



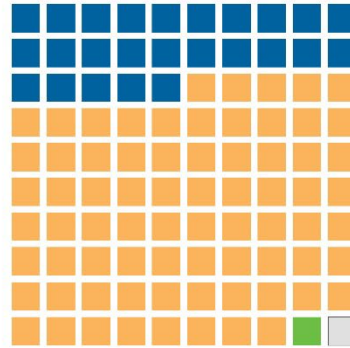
3,445 jobs
(6.7% of City)



7% residents aged 65+
(Citywide: 15.8%)



26% residents aged 18 or under
(Citywide: 21.8%)



- White (25%)
- Hispanic/Latino (73%)
- Asian (1%)
- Black (<1%)
- Other/Two or More Races (1%)



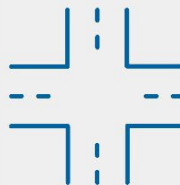
2.01 park acres per 1,000 residents
(Citywide: 7.2)



58.1% residents five minutes from park
(Citywide: 40.2%)



34.9% residents at very high fire risk
(Citywide: 10.7%)



53.1 intersections per mi²
(Citywide: 92.7)

Figure 1: Aerial

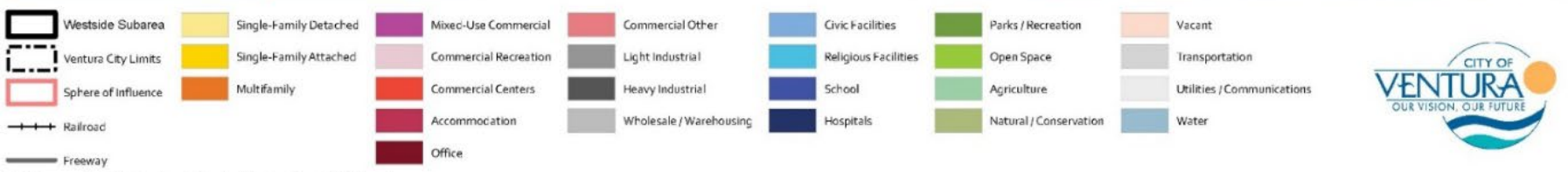
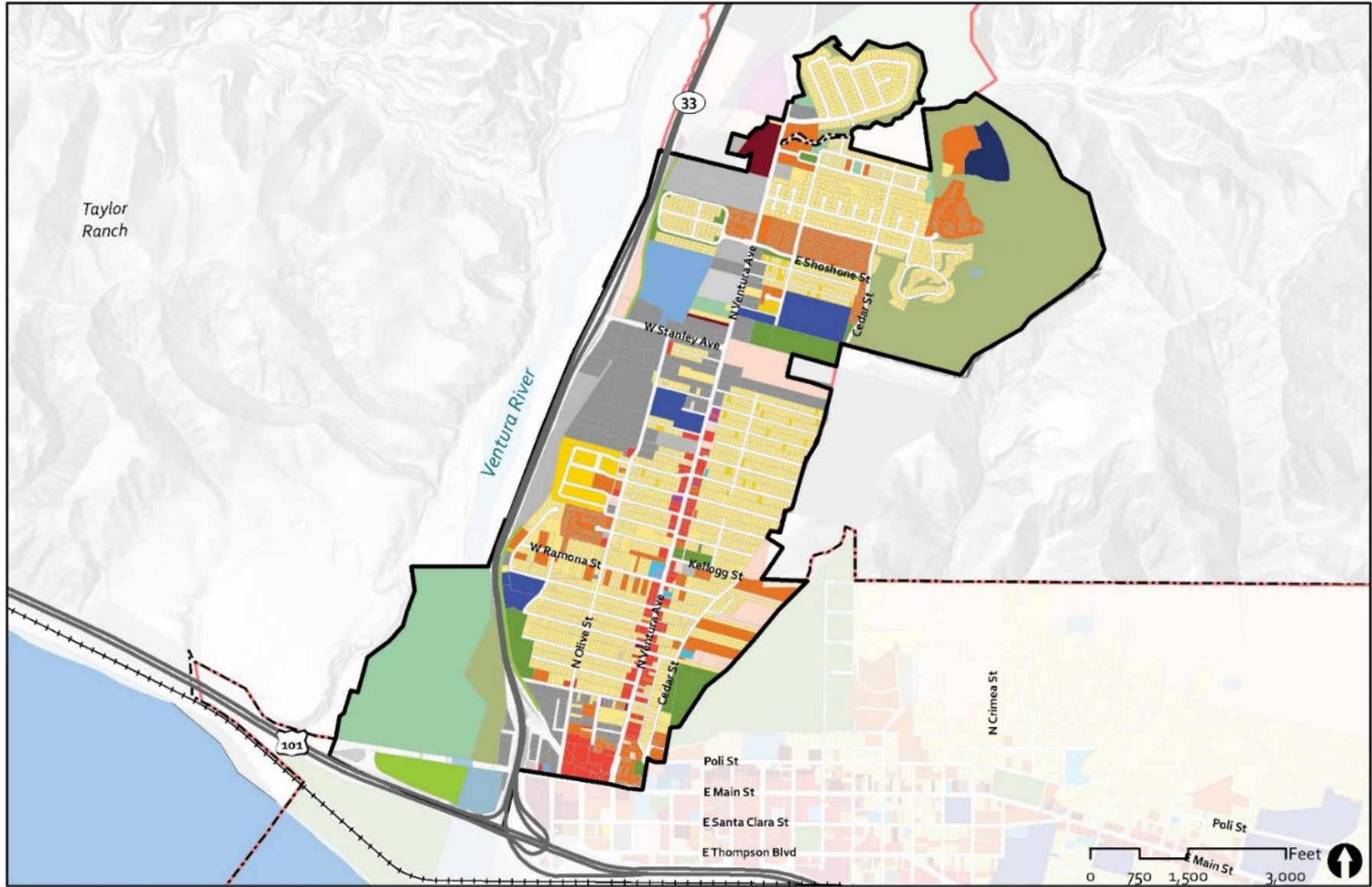


- Westside Subarea
- Ventura City Limits
- Sphere of Influence
- Railroad
- Freeway

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



Figure 2: Existing Land Use



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



Neighborhood Features and Challenges

- Central Role of Ventura Avenue.** Ventura Avenue is the spine of the Westside, serving as a major north-south corridor that runs the length of the community and facilitates travel both into Downtown (southward) and out of the city (northward). It also supports a variety of uses ranging from retail, light industrial and automotive, low-density residential, and other commercial operations. However, land use transitions are often abrupt, pedestrian and bike infrastructure are poor, and the corridor generally lacks a distinctive retail or civic node that could otherwise activate the public realm.
- Network of Low-to-Mid Density Neighborhoods.** Ventura Avenue is flanked on both sides by small residential neighborhoods, most of which are organized on a predictable street grid with relatively long blocks. Single-family homes are the predominate housing type, though denser structures like duplexes and bungalow courts can also be found throughout. On average, lot sizes are typically smaller than in other parts of Ventura, which also contributes to the Westside's relatively high population density (10.8 ppa). Housing structures are mostly single-story, set-back from the street with landscaped front yards, and sit on low-traffic residential streets with a limited tree canopy.
- Residual Industrial Character.** The Westside still retains a strong industrial character that dates back to the early days of oil extraction. Much of the area's employment base is in the production, distribution, and repair (PDR) sector, with sites mainly located on the east end (particularly between Vince Street and Stanley Avenue). Many of these uses are sited on large parcels that are significantly underutilized. Given of the relative decline of both oil and gas and PDR sectors, these areas could present potential redevelopment sites support some combination of housing and employment-generating uses (see "Market Study" for more).
- High Fire Risk:** Due to its proximity to the Los Padres foothills, the Westside faces the second greatest fire risk of any subarea in the city. More than a third (34.9 percent) of the population live in areas deemed "very high fire risk." Figure 6 shows fire risk in the Westside subarea.
- Flooding Risk:** No part of the Westside subarea is at risk of sea level rise, and although the subarea is protected from flooding by a levee along the Ventura River, it is currently uncertified by FEMA. The Ventura County Watershed Protection District (VCWPD) is in the process of correcting the levee elements to re-certify it.

Streetscape

The Westside has a variable streetscape environment. The neighborhood's two main corridors – Ventura Avenue and Olive Street – are fairly auto-dominated, containing minimal street trees, relatively narrow sidewalks, and almost no bicycle infrastructure. The number of intersections per square mile is also low throughout the Westside, which is indicative of long street blocks with limited opportunities for pedestrian crossing and placemaking. That said, many major intersections on Ventura Avenue have painted crosswalks, curb bulb-outs, and are signalized.



Ventura Avenue. Source: Google Maps

Given the diverse array of uses it supports, Ventura Avenue also has an intermittent street wall. Many buildings on retail-oriented blocks – such as those south of Center Street, have no setbacks with storefronts flush to the sidewalk. Meanwhile, most PDR uses (particularly in the northern end) have deep setbacks and often front the roadway with parking lots or storage areas, detracting from the public realm and pedestrian experience.

Beyond Ventura Avenue, the streetscape environment is fairly quaint and pedestrian-friendly. In most single-family neighborhoods, houses are set back approximately 20 feet from the curb and the street grid is fairly regular.

Intersection Density

Intersection Density is one metric used to evaluate an area’s walkability. A high concentration (i.e., density) of intersections in a defined place is typically indicative of a gridded street pattern, which expands travel routes and connectivity, creates frequent opportunities for controlled pedestrian crossing, and can even facilitate placemaking at key nodes. Intersection densities of 140 per square mile or more are more conducive for walkability.

As Figure 3 below indicates, Intersection Density is exceptionally low across most of the Westside. Virtually all residential neighborhoods have very few north-connector streets (sometimes one), and in the north part of the area, several cul-de-sacs dead-end the street network.

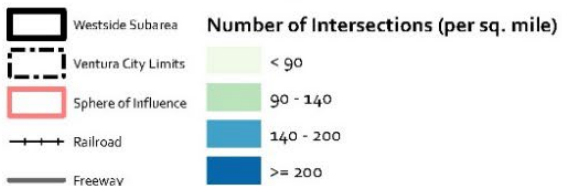
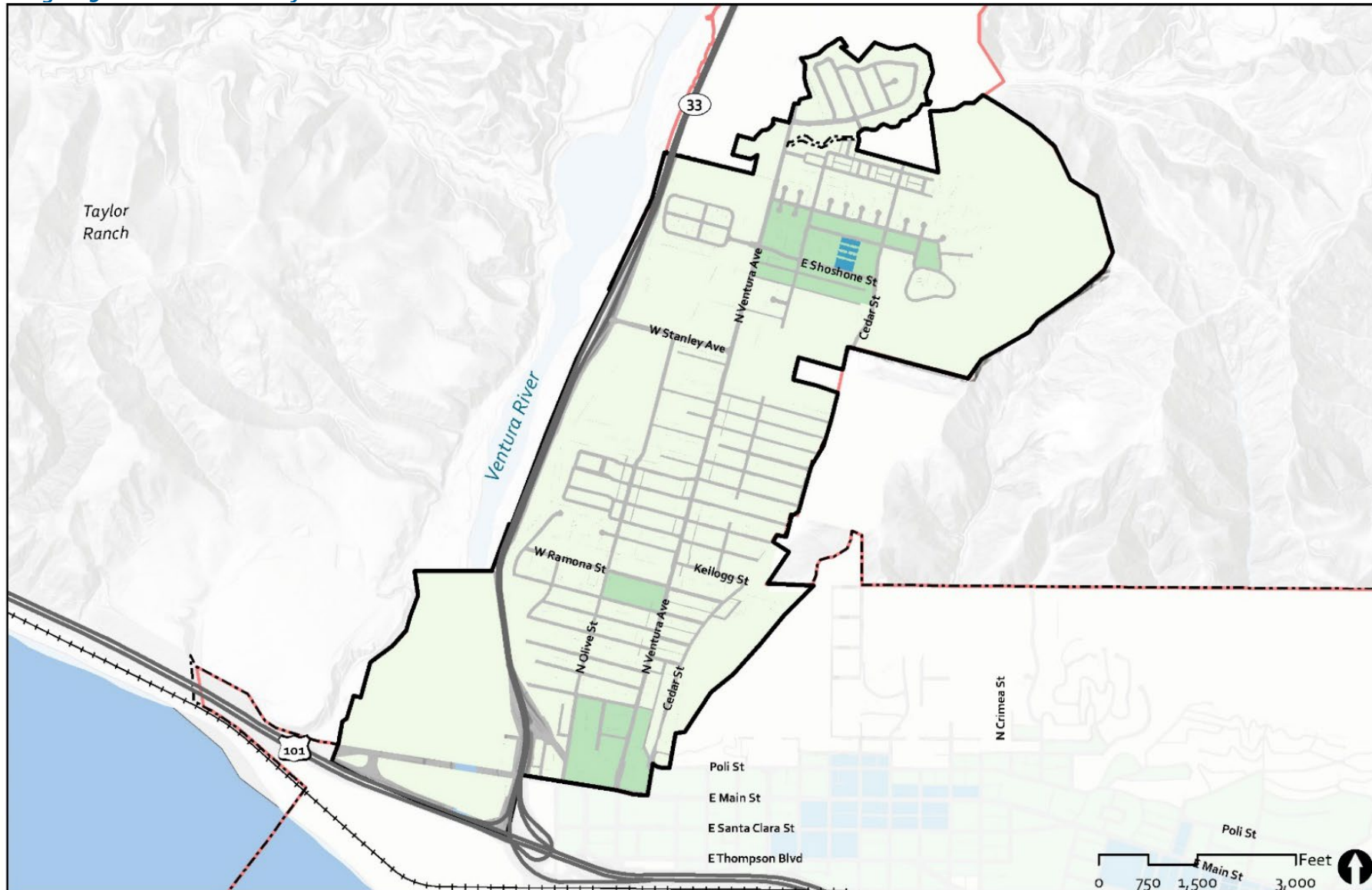


*PDR uses with an inconsistent street wall.
Source: Google Maps*



*Consistent street wall with minimal setbacks.
Source: Google Maps*

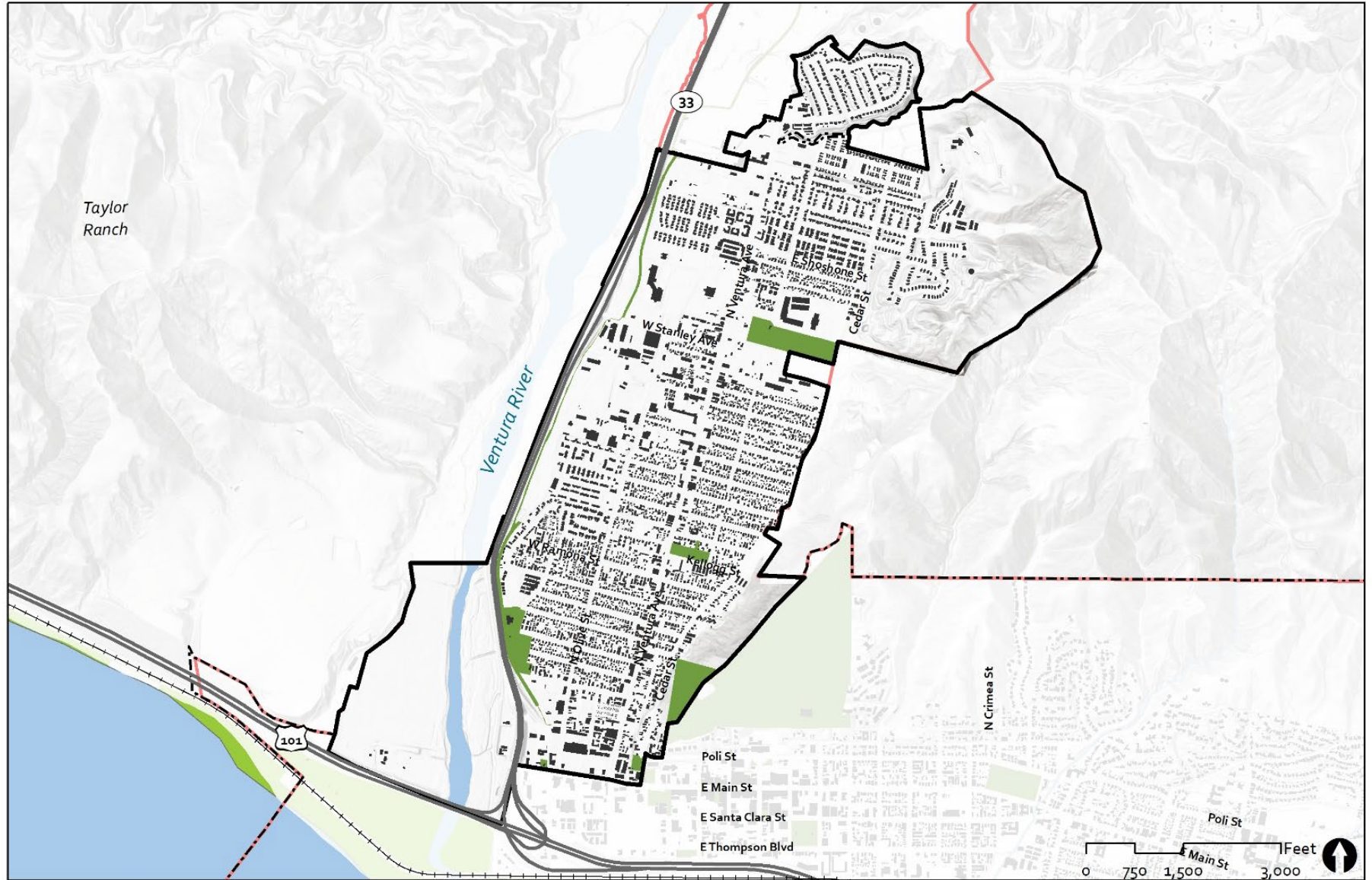
Figure 3: Intersection Density



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



Figure 4: Building Footprints



- | | | | | | |
|--|---------------------|--|----------|--|--------------------------|
| | Westside Subarea | | Railroad | | City Park/Open Space |
| | Ventura City Limits | | Freeway | | Regional Park/Open Space |
| | Sphere of Influence | | | | Building Footprints |



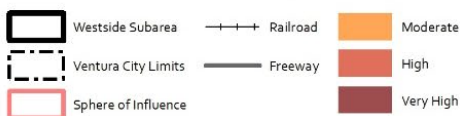
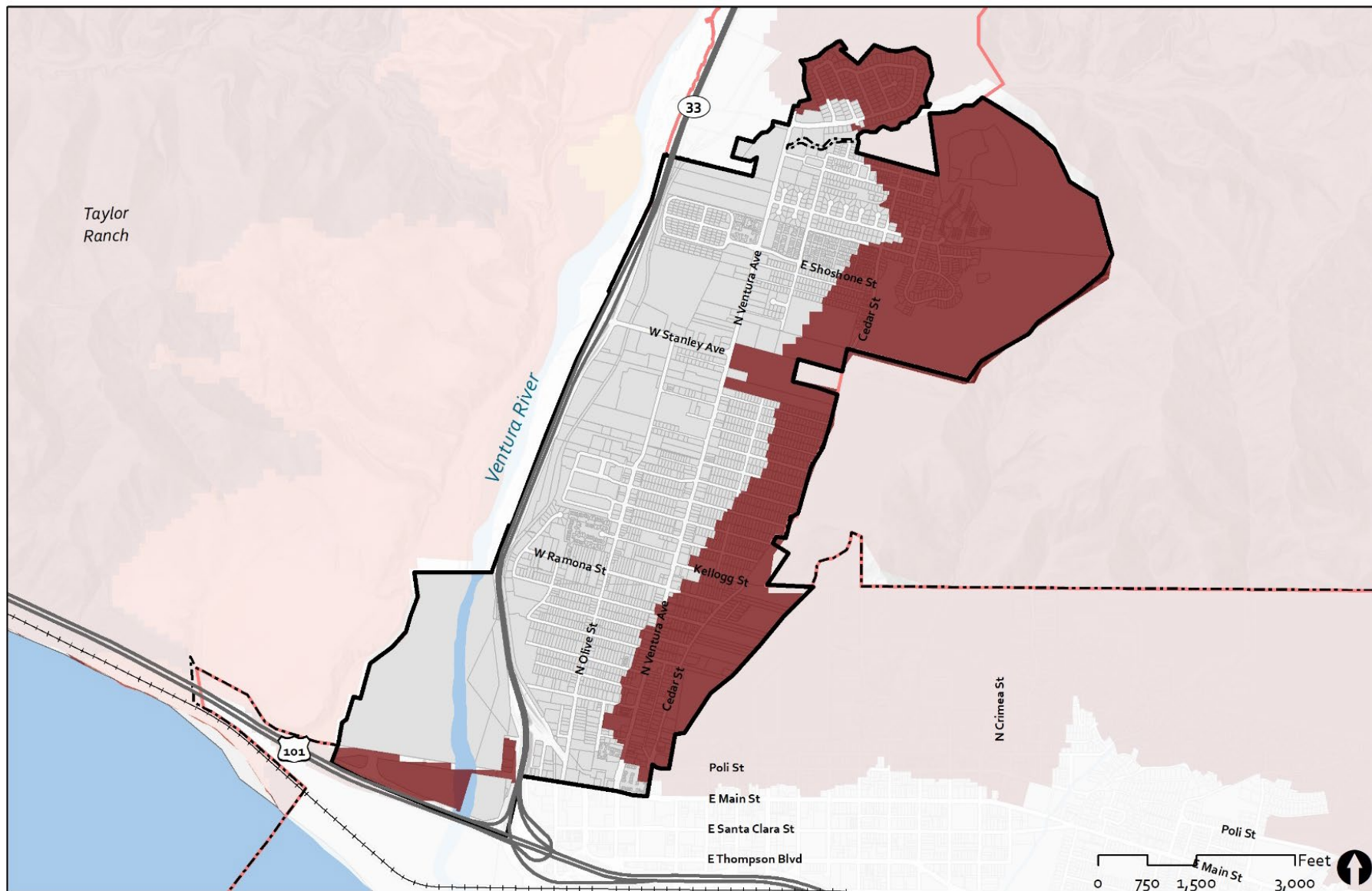
Open Space

The Westside is generally lacking in parks, open spaces, and recreational facilities. Currently, the neighborhood contains three public parks – West Park, Harry A. Lyon Park, and the recently developed Kellogg Park – which together include amenities such as a community center, playgrounds, athletic fields, a skate park, tennis courts, and seating areas. While Figure 5 suggests that these parks are well-distributed across the area (95 percent of residents live within a 10-minute walk of a park), they amount to just over 2 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents – less than a third of the citywide figure (7.2 acres/1,000 population). This suggests that parks in the Westside could potentially experience overcrowding at times, which can accelerate physical deterioration and compromise the experience of parkgoers.



Kellogg Park. Source: Pacific Coast Land Design

Figure 6: Fire Risk



Data Sources: City of Ventura (2020), County of Ventura (2020), CALFIRE (2021), ESRI (2020)



Summary of Key Findings

- **Strong Access to Parks:** Most Westside residents enjoy convenient access to parks, as nearly 58 percent live within a five-minute walk of one, and nearly all are within a 15-minute walk. This proximity provides a strong foundation for creating a healthy and livable community.
- **Potential Park Overcrowding:** Parks in the Westside, though proximate to most residents, may suffer from occasional or chronic overcrowding. There are just over two acres of public parkland per 1,000 Westside residents, which is far lower than the citywide figure and may reflect a general shortage of recreational amenities in the community.
- **High Wildfire Risk:** The Westside is highly vulnerable to wildfires, which are only anticipated to increase in frequency as climate change intensifies. More than a third (34.9 percent) of all residents live in “Very High Fire Risk” (VHFR) areas, indicating a need to rethink settlement patterns, expand evacuation routes, and strengthen adaptation and resilience efforts.
- **Limited Bike/Ped Infrastructure:** Opportunities for active transportation are limited in the Westside. Though Ventura Avenue has many painted and signalized crosswalks, sidewalks are relatively narrow and almost completely devoid of street trees. Meanwhile, sharrows are the only form of bicycle infrastructure available, which increases the potential for conflict between travel modes.
- **Redevelopment and Revitalization:** The Westside could become a key growth area in the city, as it hosts several PDR sites that are both underutilized and engaged in sectors with limited growth potential (see “Market Study” for more). These sites could represent a potential “area of change” primed for revitalization; however, given the Westside’s demographic profile, the City should be mindful of potential gentrification that could arise from such a scenario.

***Note:** Due to misalignments between subarea and Census-designated boundaries, demographic indicators presented in this report should be treated as approximations.*