

REPORT ON NEEDS, RESOURCES, PRIORITIES, AND IMPACTS, PART 1
September 2018

The Good Food District

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND CURRENT NEEDS

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Acknowledgments

This report is based partly on research conducted by students enrolled in GEOG 590: *Community-Based Geography Research* at San Diego State University during Spring 2018. The class was organized around the Good Food District and designed with input from Diane Moss, Executive Director of Project New Village, and members of the Good Food District Advisory Team consisting of community residents, food growers and activists, housing developers, representative of government agencies, nonprofit leaders, and academics.

I led the class and co-taught it with Fernando J. Bosco. We benefitted from the assistance of Jesse Tenenbaum, a Master student in the Geography Program. Throughout the class, undergraduate and graduate students worked together in four groups to gather data on various aspects of the good food district, including the natural environment (Ralph Carpio, Mackenna Kull, Kayla Mckenna, Alyson Scurlock, Genevie Wallendorf), food retail activity (Briana Campbell, Kaila Cooper, Aliona Galiknia, Ayia Lindquist, Risa Saiga), health (Michael Asuncion, Elle Chanthavisouk, Wesley Edgar, Dalton Kebely, Michaela Newsom) and sense of place (Diane Deugan, Joel Kramer, Nathaniel Molina, Adriana Romero Velasquez, Jazmin Sanchez, Carmen Tahmahkera). They visited Southeastern San Diego many times, worked in Mount Hope Community Garden, attend the People's Produce Farmers Market and interacted with local residents, including school children. The primary goals of the class were to assess community needs and establish a benchmark against which the outcomes of the Good Food District could be measured. These research-oriented activities have been described in a recent San Diego Food System Alliance newsletter: <http://www.sdfsa.org/blog/2018/2/14/seeds-of-collaboration-sdsu-students-advance-the-mission-of-the-good-food-district>.

Part I: Historic Background and Current Community Needs is the first step of a larger collaborative reporting effort to document the needs and resources of Southeastern San Diego, establish priorities, and assess impacts of the Good Food District. This report uses some of the exploratory data collected by students and complements them with additional data gathered through my own research using the US Census, searching photo archives and maps, reading historical accounts, talking to residents, and compiling information from other public sources to describe the historical background of Southeastern San Diego and highlight today's greatest needs and opportunities for action. It was presented to the Good Food District Advisory Team as the first step of a comprehensive planning workshop held at Project New Village in June 2018. Participants provided feedback and useful suggestions.

*The Good Food District
is a place-making
initiative that builds
upon the rich
agricultural history of
Southeastern San
Diego to create a
sustainable and
equitable future*

A Past Grounded in Agriculture

Southeastern San Diego has a rich agricultural past. In the early 1900s, its green hills were dotted with dozens of small farms, especially East in Encanto and Skyline. Farmers were from diverse backgrounds, including Mexican, Japanese, Filipino, and African-American growers. Residential development was limited and concentrated on the West side of the neighborhood in Grant Hill and Logan Heights.

One of those small farms was owned and operated by the Ito family (see Figure 1) who grew a variety of produce including celery and tomatoes, which they sold under the Encanto Hill label (Figure 2)



Figure 1:
Martin Ito at
Encanto Hill
Farm, late
1940s
Source: Robert Ito



Figure 2:
Encanto Hill
Label, late
1940s
Source: Robert Ito

Historic maps and photos highlight the rural nature of the neighborhood, which was characterized by lower population density and fewer streets than downtown San Diego and National City (see Figures 3 & 4).

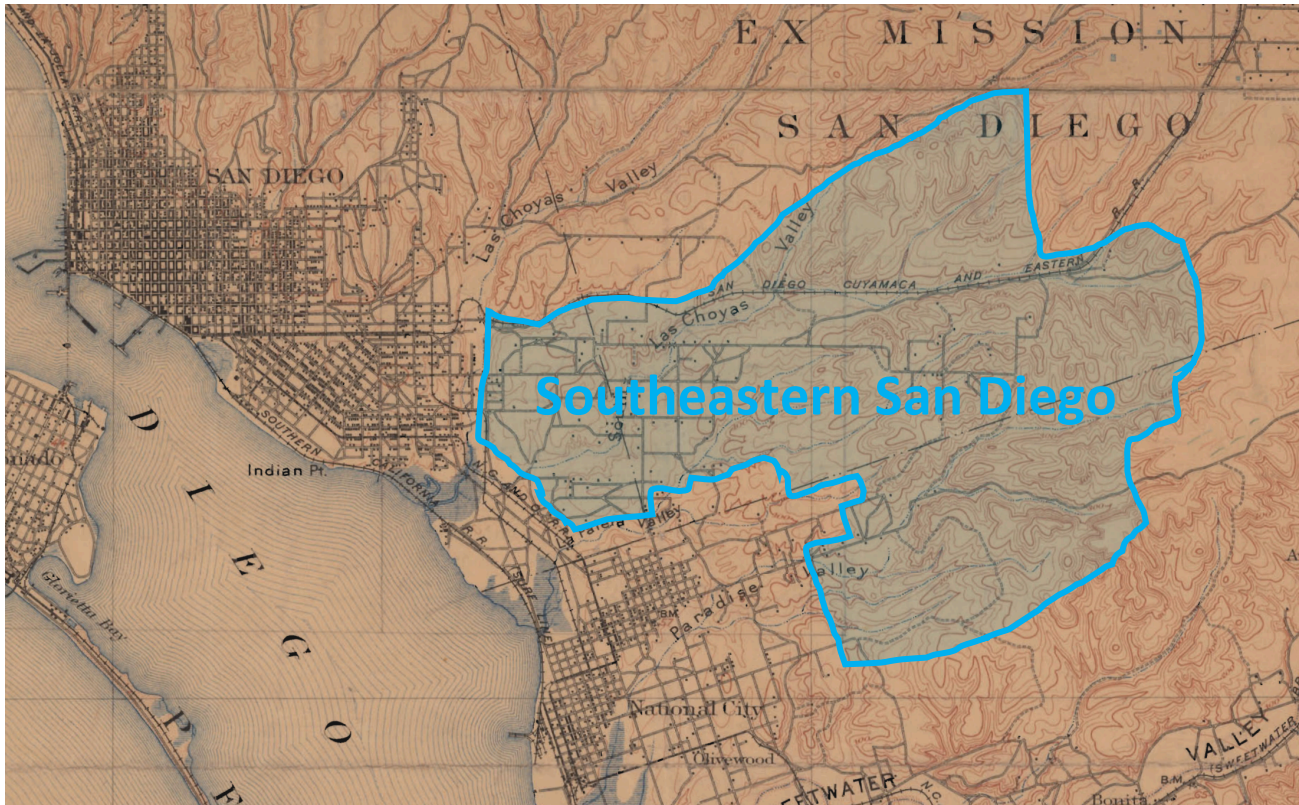


Figure 3: 1904 United States Geological Services Map of San Diego, shows Southeastern San Diego as a predominantly rural area with limited urbanization.

Source: <https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/legacy/city-clerk/pdf/historicalmaps/sdusgsma.pdf>



Figure 4:

Mount Hope Cemetery circa 1930s. Note the unpaved roads used by horses pulling a carriage.

Source: San Diego Historical Society

In the early 1900, most residents were farmers, with a large number running their own operation. The landscape was dotted with many small dairy farms, fruit orchards, and vegetable fields (Figures 5 & 6).



Figure 5:

Encanto 1915, with Imperial Avenue and the San Diego Arizona Railway tracks.

Source: San Diego Historical Center,
<https://www.johnfry.com/pages/PhotoSanDiego031.html>

Encanto was the first train stop outside of San Diego on the Eastern Railway line heading to Arizona and further East. When developers began subdividing the land in the early 1900s, they created many five and ten acre lots that were marketed as small suburban farms (see Figure 6) and sold for as little as \$50, attracting potential farmers from all over the country and beyond.



Figure 6:

1910 Advertising for land in Encanto Heights

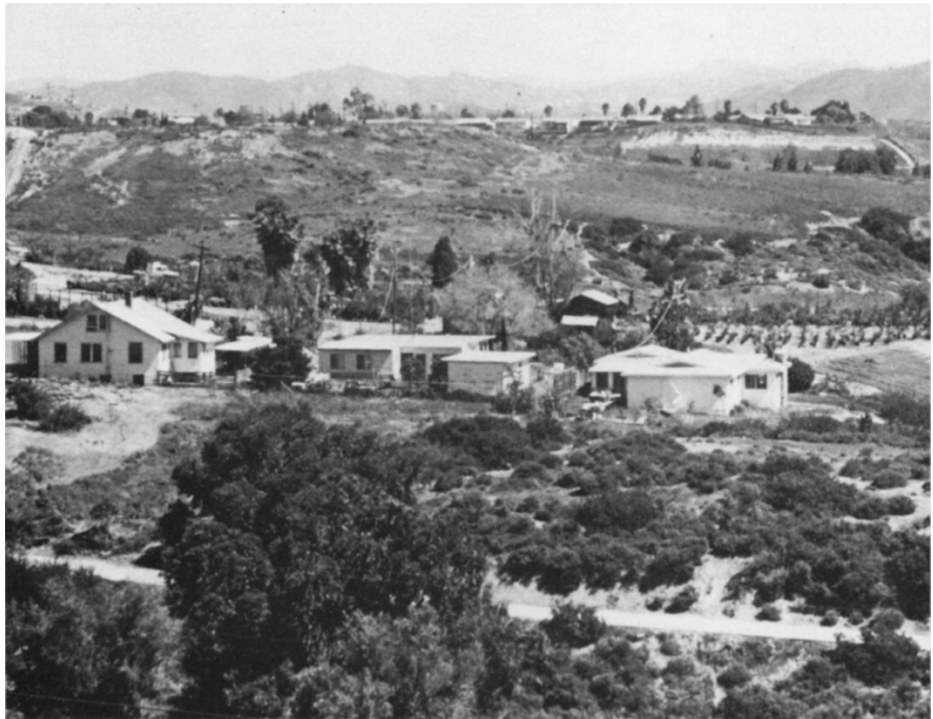
Source: San Diego History Center Photo Archive

By the late 1910s most of Southeastern had been annexed to the City of San Diego. New subdivisions were added and the population increased steadily. The neighborhood began to lose its rural character as the spread of the automobile promoted suburbanization, making land more profitable for housing development than it was for farming. Yet, many small farms persisted well into the 1950s (see Figure 7).

Figure 7:

Southeastern circa 1940s.
Fields can be observed on
the right side of the photo.

Source: Ford and Griffin (1979)



A close examination of the 1940 Census for the area near the intersection of Market and 40th Streets reveals that a large number of residents made a living producing food, including avocado and dairy farming and fishing (see Figure 8). Other common jobs included carpenter, porter, domestic worker, and laborer, with a significant share employed in the Navy or municipal shipyard, just a few miles East of Mount Hope.

These data also show the importance of western migration. A large proportion of residents came from southern and mid-western states in search of economic opportunities. Among them were African Americans who continued to face discrimination in the South and looked to California for a better life. International migration also shaped the history of the neighborhood where people from Mexico, Japan, the Philippines, Germany, Austria, and many other countries found a home.

Figure 8: Photo of a page of the 1940 Census, showing data for residents of 47th Street, Euclid Avenue and Hilltop Drive. Professions in food and agriculture are highlighted.

Source: National Archive, Official 1940 Census Website, <https://1940census.archives.gov/>

Legacies of Racism

Despite an idyllic setting, the development of Southeastern San Diego is deeply marked by the legacies of racism, including racially-motivated policies, planning decisions, and individual choices.

*"Our food system is
built on stolen land
and exploited labor.
Our food system
needs a redesign if it
is to feed us without
perpetuating racism
and oppression."*

Leah Penniman

Between 1900 and 1920, African-American migration to San Diego increased as a result of economic decline in the cotton industry and growing racial tensions in the South. Most African-Americans lived downtown and worked in jobs related to the expanding railroads. By 1920, however, racially restrictive covenants became increasingly common throughout most of San Diego, forcing black and other non-white residents into Southeastern San Diego where such restrictions were less common. In most other neighborhoods such as Mission Hills, Bankers Hills, and Point Loma, property deeds included special clauses to prevent non-Caucasians from purchasing or even occupying houses. The area South of Market Street and West of Wabash Boulevard (now I-15) was one of the very few city neighborhoods where minorities could own or rent properties. As a result, it quickly became the heart of the African American community in San Diego.

As immigration from Mexico increased around WWII, large numbers of Mexican immigrants and subsequent generations of Mexican-Americans also began to settle in in the neighborhood, spreading eastward from Barrio Logan and Logan Heights. Filipinos, many of whom have historical ties with the US Navy and the close-by Naval Training Center, began moving in the neighborhood in the 1960s, especially after the beginning of the Vietnam War. As Southeastern became increasingly diverse, white residents fled to other areas, encouraged by publicly-funded freeway expansion, cheap gas, subsidized mortgage programs, and the promises of suburban life.

Real estate brokers, developers, and mortgage bankers contributed to racial segregation by stirring minorities into Southeastern and encouraging whites to move to other neighborhoods (Harris 1979). Federal policies also played an important role in furthering racial divisions within the region. Between 1934 to 1968, the newly created Federal Housing Administration (FHA) and the Homeowner Loan Corporation (HOLC) institutionalized racist lending practices through redlining – a process by which certain urban areas were defined as “too risky” because of “undesirable populations” and “detrimental influences” (Rothstein 2007).

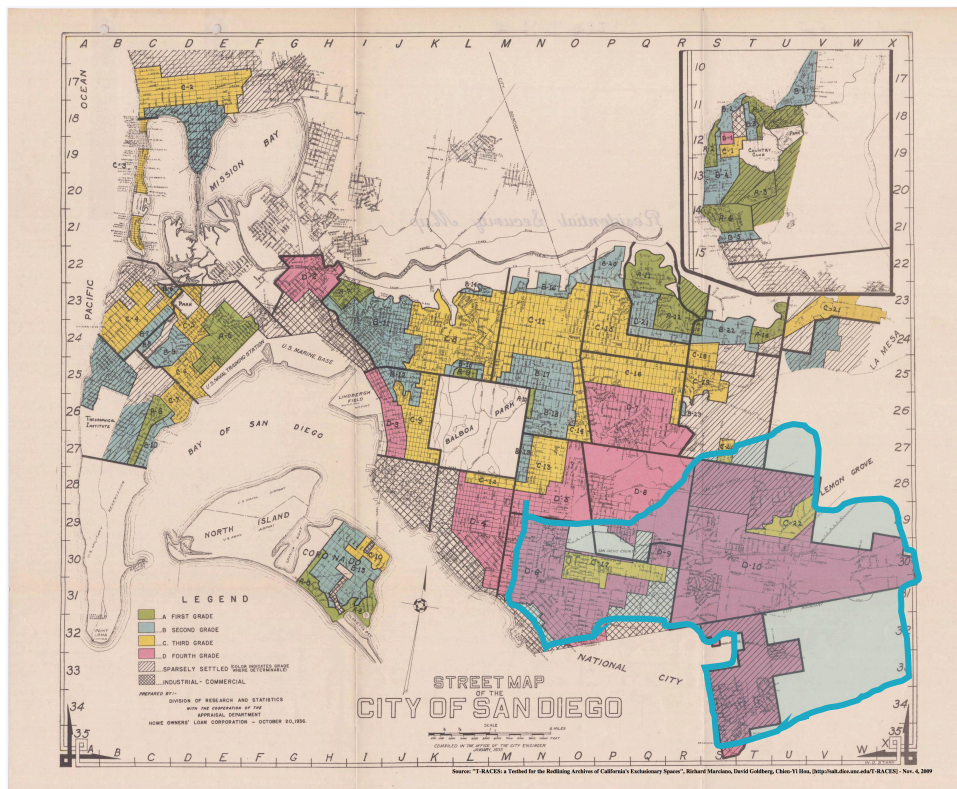


Figure 9:

1935 FHA map of the City of San Diego showing different “grades” for urban neighborhoods. Most of Southeastern San Diego is shaded red, indicating a presumed financial risk, which translated into limited lending and investment in the area.

Source: T-RACES: A Testbed for the Redlining Archives of California’s Exclusionary Spaces. R. Marciano, D. Goldberg, and C. Hou.
<http://salt.umd.edu/T-RACES>

By refusing to guarantee loans in “red-lined” neighborhoods such as Southeastern San Diego (see Figure 9), this federally-sanctioned policy effectively prevented residents – mostly people of color—from taking advantage of federal programs to own a home, invest in their communities, and build equity. This structural constraint had severe consequences on everyday life in these neighborhoods where landlords and business owners were hesitant to invest in maintenance and expansion. This continues to have a negative impact today despite the legal ending of such practices.

The federal government also prompted more white flight when it selected Southeastern San Diego as the location of several federal housing projects (see Figure 10). While these housing units met important needs, they also transformed the neighborhood by changing its demographic composition and exacerbating the concentration of poverty. Limited budget for the maintenance of these units often led to neglect and degradation. In the 1940s, the federal government subsidized housing development in the Western half of the neighborhood, including projects such as the Dells, Chollas View, and Logan (see Figure 10). In the 1960s and 70s, the development of Navy housing in Paradise Hills and Bay View Hills continue to draw in more low-income residents, including Filipino immigrants with connections to the US Navy. Today, the federal government no longer builds public housing but instead subsidizes production of privately-owned affordable housing through tax credits for developers. Despite this policy change, subsidized housing remains highly concentrated – in part because residents of affluent neighborhoods resist the construction

of affordable housing in their community for fear of declining property values. Southeastern continues to be a primary location for federally supported housing development (see Figure 11). Such concentration has led to further exodus of residents with a “not-in-my-backyard” attitude towards low-income and subsidized housing.

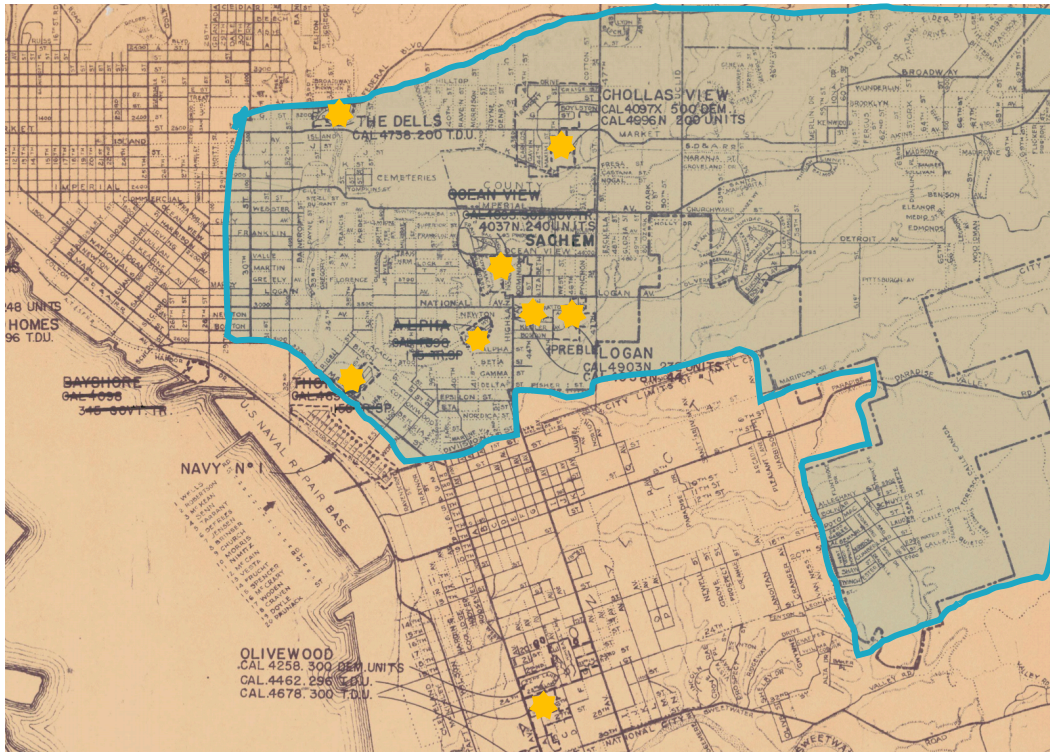


Figure 10:

1948 map of federal housing projects in the City of San Diego. As in many cities, federal housing projects were typically located in low-income neighborhoods of color. The map section shown here has more federal housing units than anywhere else in the city in part due to its proximity to the Navy base.

Source:

<https://www.sandiego.gov/site/default/files/legacy/city-clerk/pdf/historicalmaps/sdfhpl>

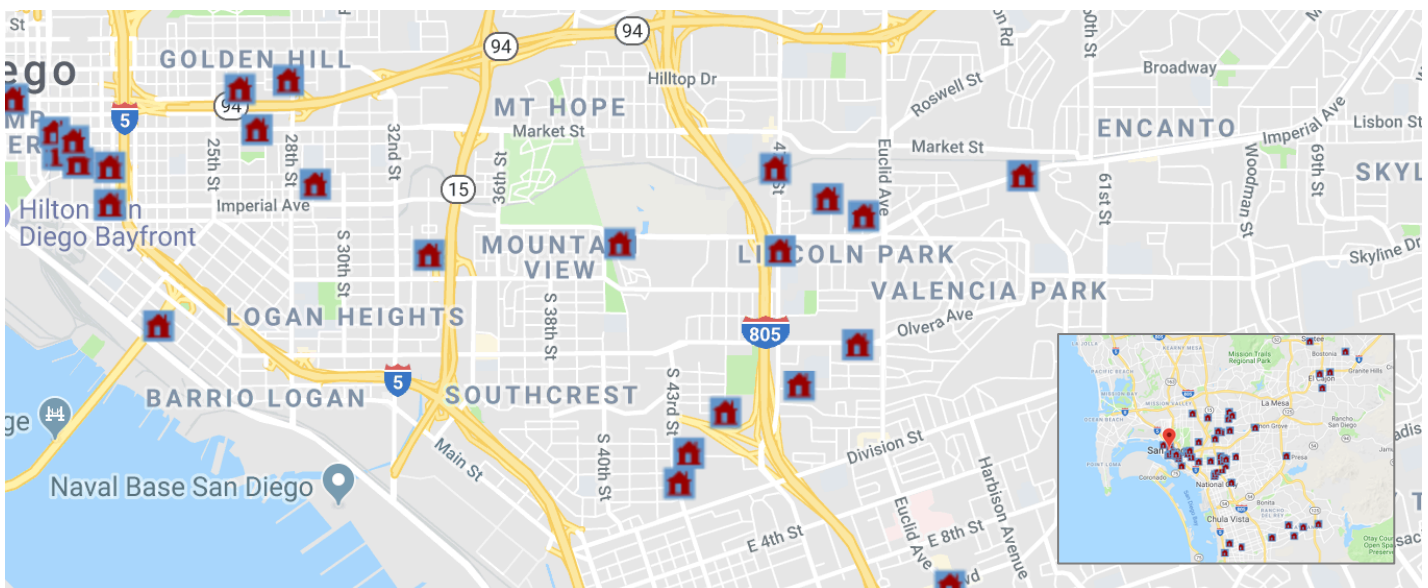


Figure 11: Location of HUD Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) Projects in Southeastern San Diego. Note on the small insert the concentration of projects South and East of downtown, relative to the rest of the region.

Source: <https://www.huduser.gov/qct/qctmap.html>

Beginning in the 1960s and continuing well into the 1980s, the construction of freeways, including State Route 94, Interstate 805 and Interstate 15, decimated the neighborhood (see Figure 12). These projects took years to be completed and resulted in a dramatic transformation of the landscape, contributing to green space losses, increases in noise and pollution, and social balkanization – what SDSU professors Ford and Griffin describe in 1979 as the “ghettoization of paradise.”



Figure 12: Freeway construction in Southeastern San Diego dramatically changed the nature of the neighborhood. The aerial photo on the left shows the construction of the intersection between State Route 94 and Interstate 15, looking North towards City Heights. Mount Hope is located in the bottom right corner. The surrounding landscape is relatively undeveloped and includes significant green space. The photo on the right shows the same aerial view today. There has been considerable commercial and residential development, including the large Gateway Center shopping center at the bottom where Costco is now located.

Source: Roselle (1968) and Google Earth (2018)

Population density in Southeastern San Diego remains lower than in other urbanized areas, but has increased dramatically in the past 70 years, claiming much of the open space and agricultural land uses (see Figure 13).

By the mid-1970s, despite its diversity and growing Latino and Asian populations, Southeastern San Diego had earned a reputation as the black community of San Diego. As a member of the city’s Urban League put it at the time, “Southeast San Diego is wherever Blacks live” (quoted in Ford and Griffin 1979). In 1950, the region’s black population was about 15,000 and only one Census tract in Southeastern San Diego had more than 50% of black residents. By 1975, the city’s black population had increased to over 50,000, but only 18% of resided outside of Southeastern. By then, most Census tracts had more than 50% of black residents (see Figure 14).



Figure 13: Encanto, looking South towards Bonita from Imperial Avenue

The aerial photo on the left (mid-1950s) reveals the presence of numerous fields and a relative lack of residential development. The photo on the right (2018) shows the same aerial view today, highlighting considerable residential development, including a large mobile home park on the right (which has expanded since the 1950s). While some green space remains, farms and fields have disappeared.

Source: Roselle (195x) and Google Earth Pro (2018)

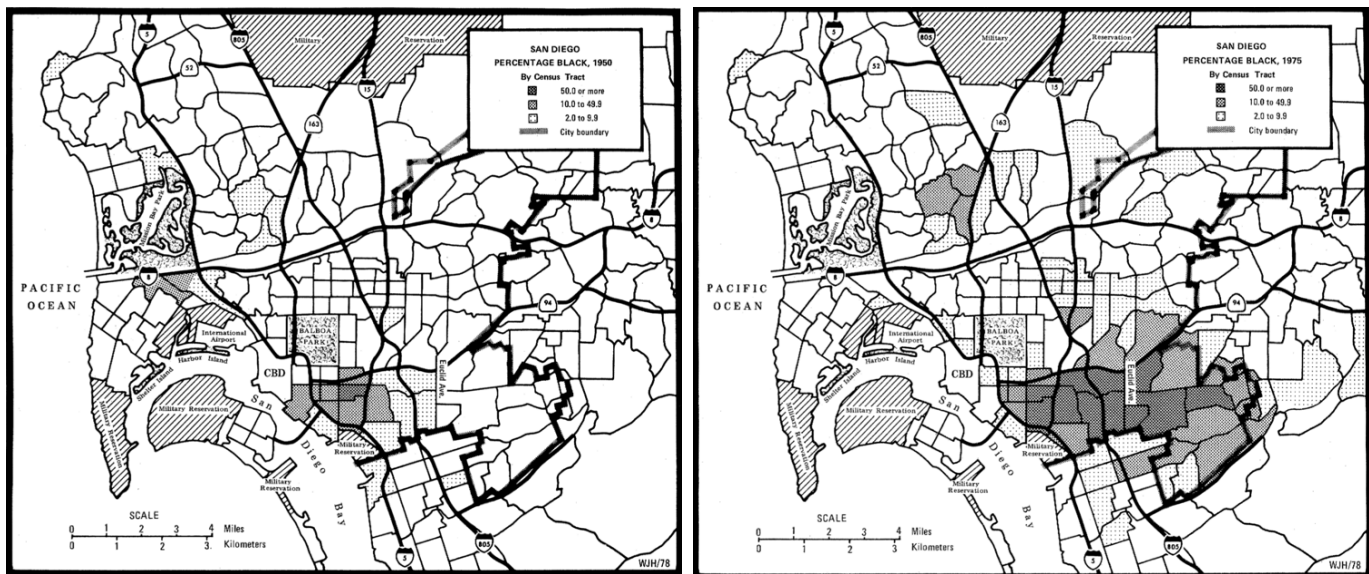


Figure 14: Increased numbers and concentration of back residents in Southeastern San Diego between 1950 and 1975.

Source: Ford and Griffin (1979) based on US Census data.

In the following decades, the neighborhood came to be known as one of the poorest and most dangerous places in the city. Local media rarely reported on anything other than crime and contributed to the negative image of Southeast where most San Diegans never ventured.

Meanwhile, the City of San Diego embarked on major revitalization efforts in the downtown area, investing millions in the Convention Center, Horton Plaza, the Gaslamp Quarter, and more recently Little Italy and the Waterfront. Low-income neighborhoods like Southeastern San Diego were often left on their own to fend for themselves and address growing social and economic problems. Political neglect followed decades of racially-biased housing and development policies.

Today, there are about 15,000 African-Americans residing in Southeastern San Diego – a much smaller number than in the 1970s. Many black residents have left the neighborhood, making room for new generations of immigrants and other minority groups (see next section). Yet, today, segregation persists and African Americans remain concentrated in and around Southeastern San Diego (see Figure 15). The image of the neighborhood, however, remains anchored in its history as the heart of San Diego's black community – both with the pride and the stigma that comes along with it.

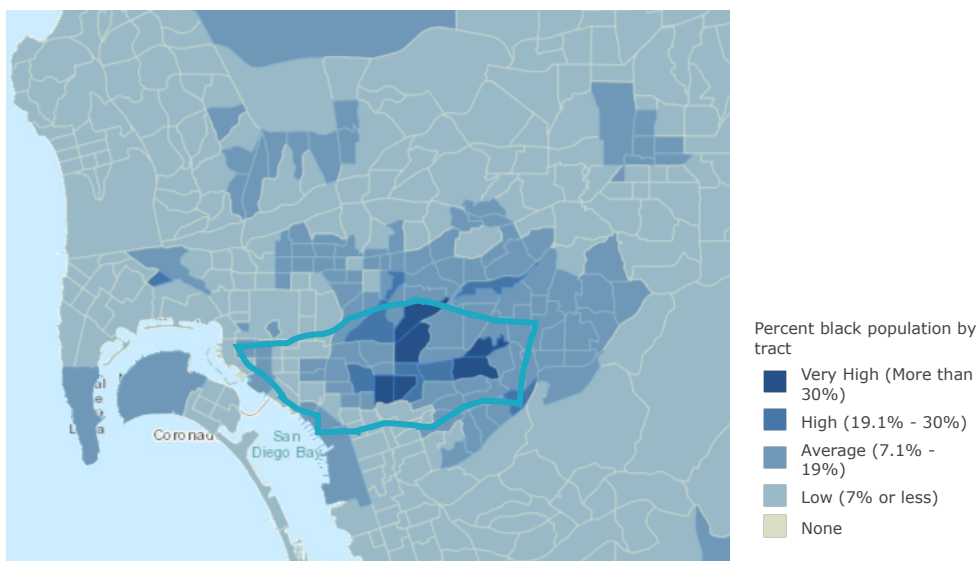


Figure 15: Percent Black Population in 2010, by Census Tract
Source: 2010 US Census Bureau, Atlas Publisher, ESRI

Mapping the Neighborhood: Identity and Politics

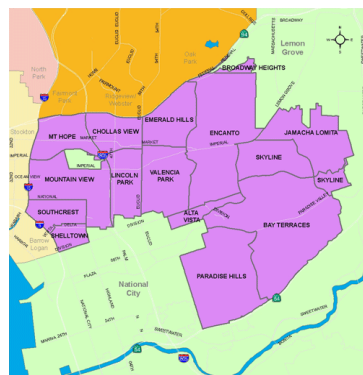
There is surprising disagreement regarding what actually constitutes Southeastern San Diego. Depending on who you ask, its size can vary dramatically (see Figure 14). Confusion about the geographic boundaries of the neighborhoods is no doubt related to the lack of planning that characterized its early days, its current fragmentation into different council districts, and various attempts by residents to avoid the negative stigma often associated with Southeastern San Diego.

by identifying themselves with smaller communities such as Mount Hope, Chollas View, Valencia park, etc.

This lack of consensus hinders civic engagement and political initiatives. It also negatively affects community cohesion and sense of place. In addition, it makes data collection a challenging task since the US Census and other public agencies do not always use consistent definitions. The various maps shown in Figure 16 illustrate different ways of defining the neighborhood. For the City of San Diego, it is the Community Planning Areas bordered by State Route 94 to the North, Interstate 5 to the West, Interstate 805 to the East and the National City line to the South. For many residents, however, the neighborhood extends further east across the 805 to incorporate Chollas View, Valencia, Encanto, Skyline, Bay Terraces, and other communities.



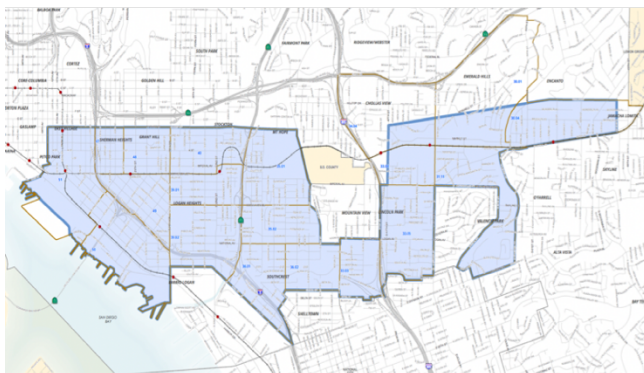
a. Community Planning Area
(City of San Diego)



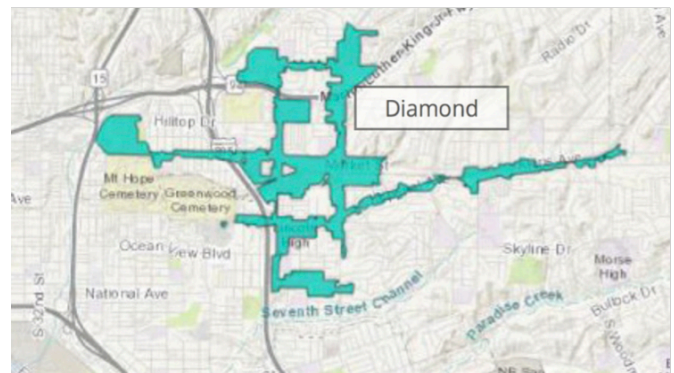
b. Public Use Microdata Area
(US Census)



c. Art map
(Isauro Amigable Inocencio Jr.)



d. The Promise Zone
(US Department of Housing and Urban Development)



e. The Diamond Business Improvement District
(City of San Diego)

Figure 16: Mapping Southeastern San Diego

Source: a. City of San Diego. 2015. Southeastern San Diego Current Community Plan:

<https://www.sandiego.gov/planning/community/profiles/southeasternsdplan>;

b. US Census; c. Isauro Amigable Inocencio Jr: <http://www.sosayweallonline.com/call-for-submissions-southeast-stories/>; d. US Department of

Housing and Urban Development (HUD): www.huduser.gov; e. City of San Diego: Business Improvement District:

<https://www.sandiego.gov/economic-development/about/bids>.

Following the mission of the Good Food District, our focus is on the current Mount Hope Community Garden and its potential impact on the greater Southeastern San Diego community.

Therefore, we include in our analysis the central neighborhoods surrounding Mount Hope, but exclude Paradise Hills, Skyline and Bay Terraces which are further away in the south-eastern part and less likely to be directly impacted by the Good Food District as shown in Figure 18. Our boundaries include the Promise Zone and the Diamond Business Improvement District (d and e in Figure 17) that are politically and economically important for the neighborhood. We gathered most of our data by selecting Census tracts within these boundaries. According to the most recent Census of Population and Housing (US Census 2016), the area is home to almost 110,000 people, living in 27,910 housing units.

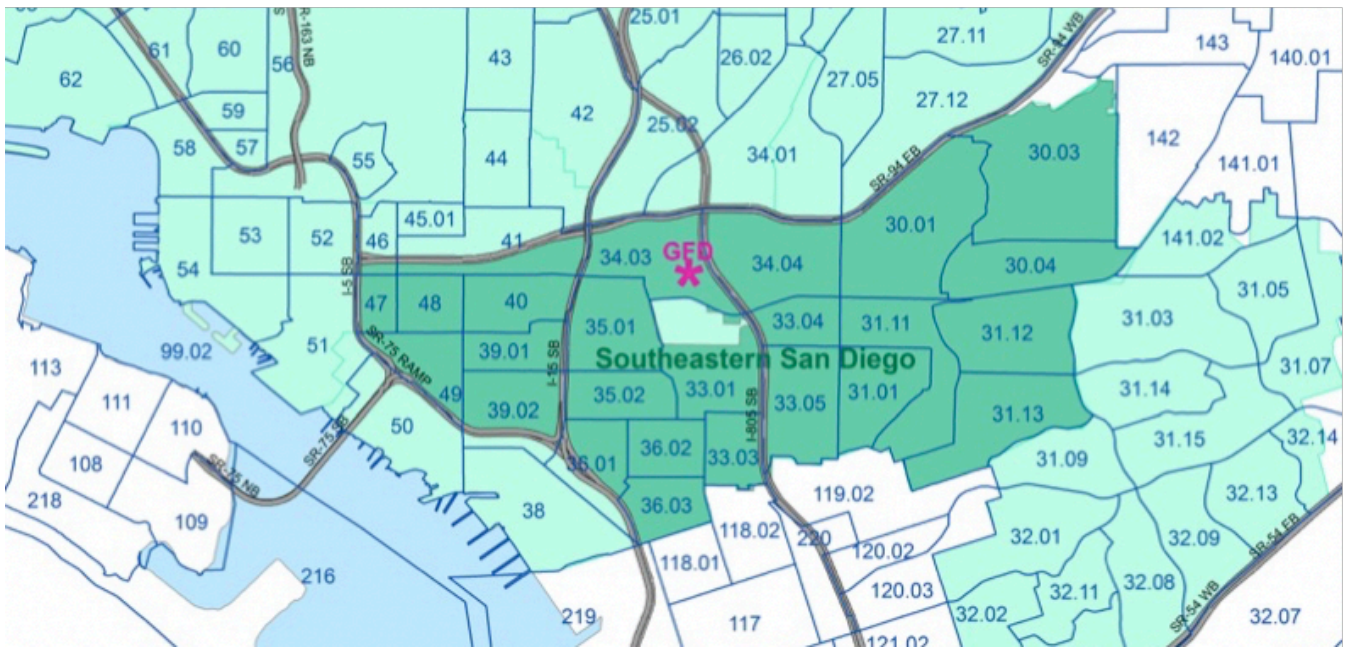


Figure 18: Our Definition of Southeastern San Diego and the Good Food District

Source: Pascale Joassart-Marcelli. 2018. Department of Geography, San Diego State University.

Current Community Needs

Residents of Southeastern San Diego face many challenges in their daily lives. Community outreach activities conducted in March and April 2018 suggest that the greatest needs are related to employment, health, community cohesion, and housing (see Figure 17).

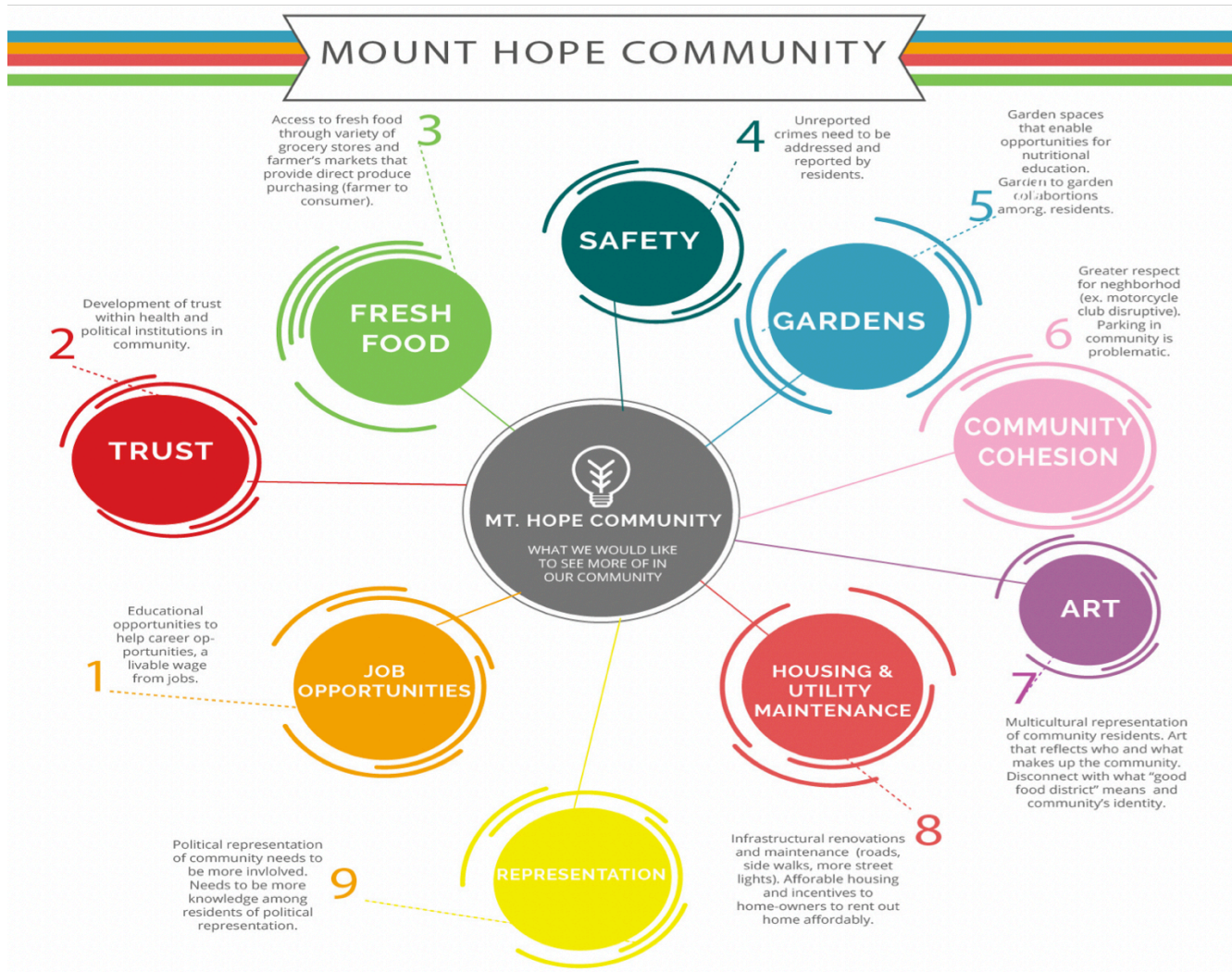


Figure 17: Needs and Priorities identified in Community Outreach Activities

Source: Diane Deugan, GEOG 590, Department of Geography, SDSU

Job opportunities, including education, training, and access to living-wage jobs, are a priority for many residents. Participants also emphasized health concerns, particularly the need for greater access to healthy food and nutritional education, more trust in health professionals, and the expansion of gardens. Community cohesion transpired through several suggestions for more trust in local institutions, greater safety and monitoring/reporting of crime, greater respect for community residents, more community spaces like gardens, and stronger political representation

and civic engagement. Finally, residents drew attention to the built environment, including the lack of affordable housing, declining infrastructure, parking concerns, and pedestrian safety.

The needs described in Figure 15 are echoed by recent data gathered from the US Census and other public sources, which show how Southeastern San Diego fares compared to the County of San Diego as a whole in a number of key areas.

Jobs and Economic Opportunities

Southeastern San Diego is one of the poorest neighborhoods in San Diego. As Table 1 illustrates, the median income is \$39,954 – slightly more than half the County’s. At 30 percent, the official poverty rate is more than twice as high as in the overall region. It shows that almost a third of the population lives below the very low poverty thresholds defined by the US Census. If we use the more realistic poverty cutoff of 200 percent of the official threshold, more than 60 percent of the neighborhood’s population is considered poor, suggesting that a very large number of people experience economic hardship and are struggling paying for basic necessities like housing, health care, food and transportation. Indeed, 21 percent of households in Southeastern San Diego receive SNAP assistance, almost three times the rate for the County. And more than 1 household out of 10 does not have a vehicle, compared to 1 out of 17 in the County overall. The unemployment rate is also significantly higher in Southeastern San Diego.

	Southeastern San	San Diego County
Median Income	\$39,954	\$71,071
Official poverty rate	30.6%	14.0%
Percent households using SNAP	20.7%	7.0%
Unemployment rate	13.3%	8.0%
Percent households with no	11.1%	5.8%

Table 1: Economic Characteristics, Southeastern San Diego vs. San Diego County

Source: Author’s computations based on 2016 American Community Survey 5-year estimates

Current income levels are well below estimated required “living wages” in San Diego and fail to cover most basic expenses (see Table 2). For example, a family of four, with two adults and two children, would need an annual pre-tax income of \$81,525 to be able to afford a basic diet (as defined by the USDA), childcare, medical insurance premium and healthcare costs, fair market rent (as defined by HUD for San Diego County), transportation, other miscellaneous expenses such as clothing and personal care items, and taxes. This corresponds to an hourly wage of \$19.60, assuming full-time and full-year employment. The median income in Southeastern San Diego (\$39,954, see Table 1) is less than half the required amount, forcing people to make impossible choices.

	Expenses*						Annual taxes	Required pre-tax annual income	Required hourly living wage**
Family Type	Food	Child Care	Medical	Housing	Transportation	Other			
1 Adult	\$3,564	\$0	\$2,150	\$14,544	\$3,860	\$2,803	\$4,299	\$31,220	\$15.01
1 Adult 1 Child	\$5,245	\$8,260	\$6,828	\$20,892	\$7,975	\$4,533	\$9,778	\$63,510	\$30.53
1 Adult 2 Children	\$7,893	\$13,911	\$6,547	\$20,892	\$8,373	\$4,999	\$11,848	\$74,463	\$35.80
1 Adult 3 Children	\$10,476	\$19,562	\$6,604	\$30,084	\$10,051	\$6,395	\$16,464	\$99,636	\$47.90
2 Adults	\$6,533	\$0	\$5,139	\$16,104	\$7,975	\$4,533	\$6,916	\$47,201	\$11.35
2 Adults 1 Child	\$8,124	\$8,260	\$6,547	\$20,892	\$8,373	\$4,999	\$10,578	\$67,773	\$16.29
2 Adults 2 Children	\$10,487	\$13,911	\$6,604	\$20,892	\$10,051	\$6,395	\$13,185	\$81,525	\$19.60
2 Adults 3 Children	\$12,773	\$19,562	\$6,274	\$30,084	\$10,013	\$5,932	\$16,803	\$101,441	\$24.38

Table 2: Cost of Living Expenses and Required Living Wage in San Diego

Source: Adapted from MIT's Living Wage Calculator: <http://livingwage.mit.edu/counties/06073>

Children are much more likely to live in a poor household. This is especially true in Southeastern San Diego where almost 1 child out of 2 comes from a household with income below the official poverty threshold (see Figure 18). Working-age people also have higher poverty rates. In fact, a significant share (16%) of people employed in the civilian labor force do not earn enough to escape poverty, while in the rest of the County employment tends to be a surer path out of poverty.

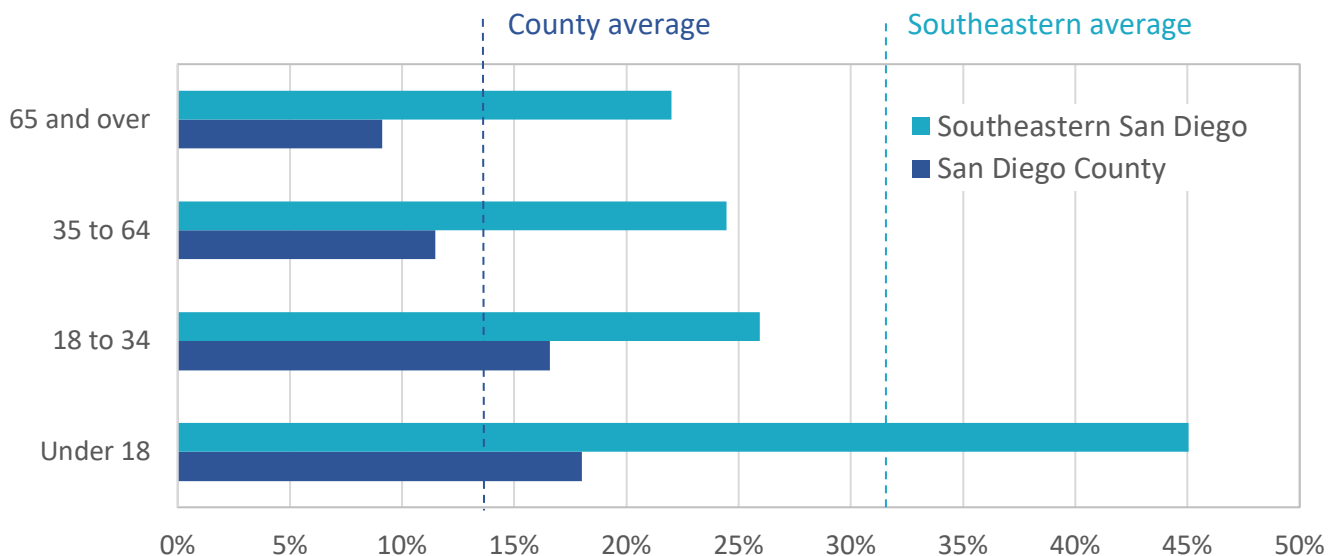


Figure 18: Official Poverty Rates, by age group, Southeastern San Diego vs. San Diego County

Source: Author's computations based on 2016 American Community Survey 5-year estimates

A fuller picture of economic hardship in Southeastern San Diego can be obtained by looking at the income distribution. Figure 19 shows the percent of the population in different income groups (defined by their ratio to official poverty) in Southeastern compared to the County of San Diego. The trend line (a polynomial function) shows that the distribution in Southeastern is skewed towards very low levels of income, with the largest group having incomes between 50 and 99 percent of the official poverty threshold. In contrast, the largest category in the County consists of people whose income is more than 5 times the poverty threshold. These figures reflect the tremendous economic inequality that characterizes our region, with extreme poverty in some neighborhoods and great affluence in others.

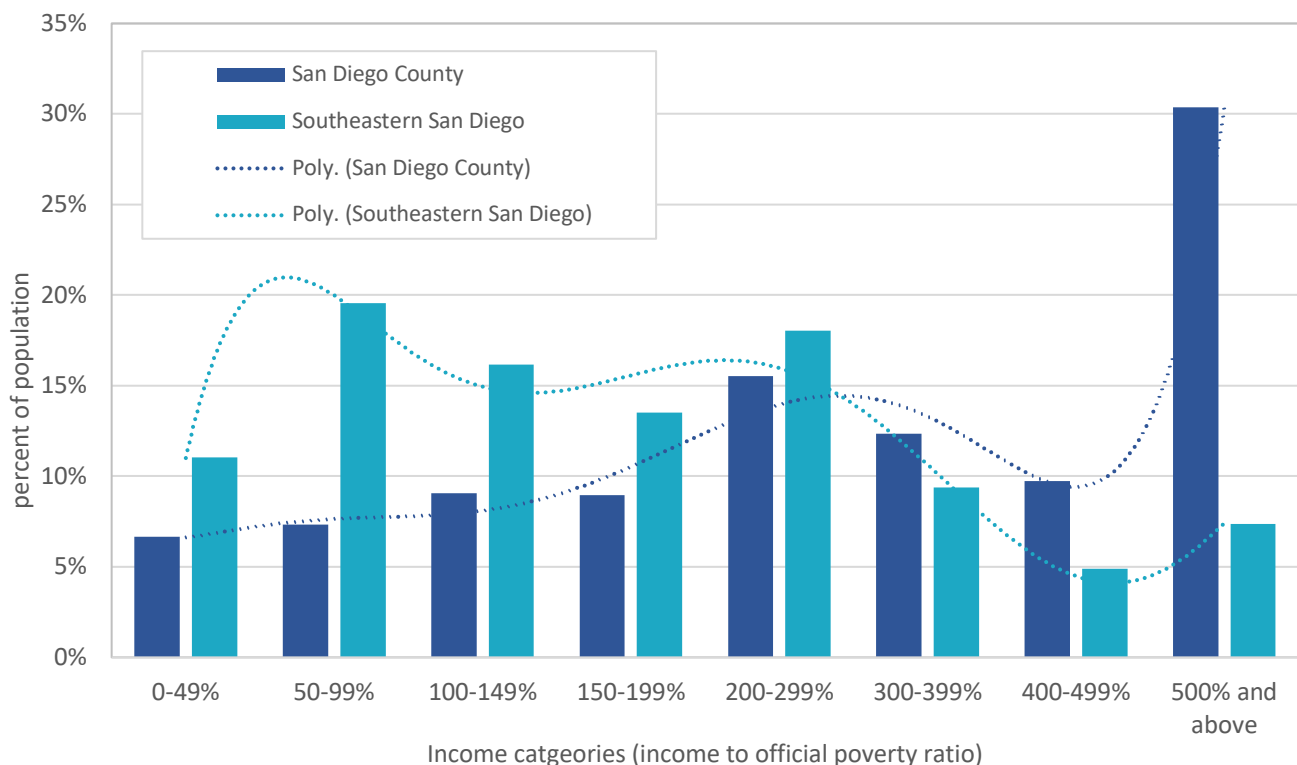


Figure 19: Income Distribution (by income to poverty ratio), Southeastern San Diego vs. San Diego County

Source: Author's computations based on 2016 American Community Survey 5-year estimates

Widespread poverty is partly related to the lack of employment opportunities in the area and the lower levels of formal education that adult residents have obtained compared to the region overall (see Figure 20). It is therefore not surprising that educational opportunities, workforce development, and pathways to well-paying jobs rank the highest on residents' list of priorities.

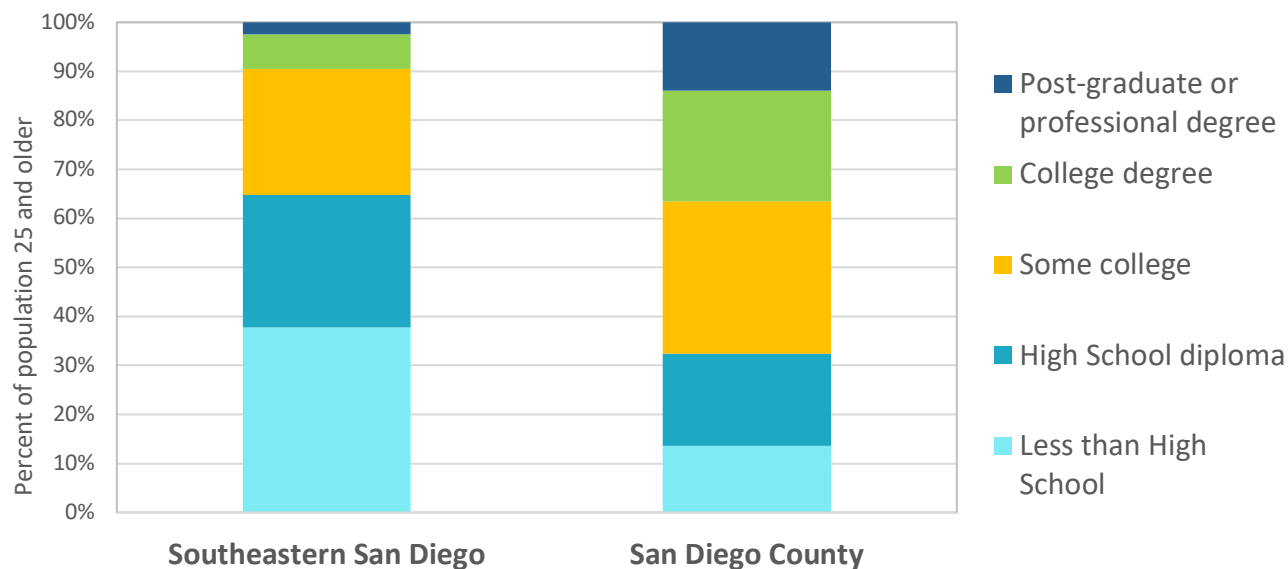


Figure 20: Educational attainment of population 25 and older, Southeastern San Diego vs. San Diego County

Source: Author's computations based on 2016 American Community Survey 5-year estimates

Housing

As shown in Table 2 above, housing is the most significant household expense and a major source of stress for San Diegans, especially those earning low or fixed income. In Southeastern, most residents spend more than 30% of their income on rent or mortgage – a common indicator of housing unaffordability.

A study by the mortgage company HSH (2014) reported that a person in San Diego would need to earn \$98,534 a year in order to buy a median-priced home in the county. This required income is more than three times the median income in Southeastern San Diego. And while property values are lower in the neighborhood (\$303,743 vs. \$455,380), they remain out of reach for most. As a result, the proportion of renters is well above the regional average, with 60 percent of households renting compared to 47 percent in the region overall (see Table 3). While the low rate of home ownership is related to the limited income, it can also be traced back to the racist housing policies described above, which limited access to mortgage loans for decades and excluded most residents from the tax advantages and equity building opportunities afforded to homeowners elsewhere.

	Southeastern San Diego	San Diego County
Total housing units	27,910	1,103,128
Percent owner occupied	39.9%	52.7%
Percent renter occupied	60.1%	47.3%
Median rent	\$1,036	\$1,435
Median property value	\$303,743	\$455,380

Table 3: Housing Characteristics, Southeastern San Diego vs. San Diego County

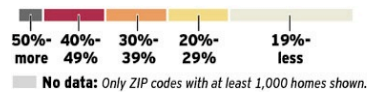
Source: Author's computations based on 2016 American Community Survey 5-year estimates

During the Great Recession, southeastern was hit hard by predatory lending practices, which resulted in many households owing more on their mortgage than the value of their home. As Figure 19 illustrates, in Southeastern San Diego (and most of the South Bay), between 29 and 49 percent of homes were worth less than what their owners owed, resulting in foreclosures and loss of equity.

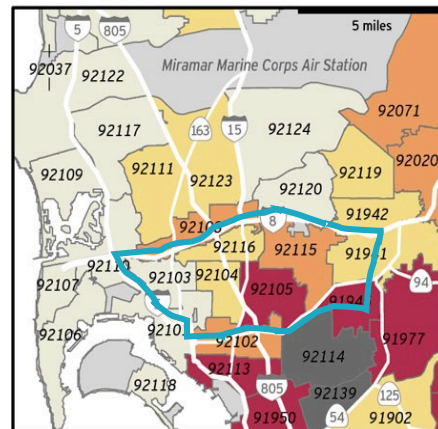
Home values versus outstanding mortgages

Areas with the highest percentage of homes worth less than what is owed on any outstanding mortgages are more prevalent in the South Bay, which has a large number of new developments, and the southern part of San Diego, where prices rose dramatically in the boom years.

PERCENTAGE OF HOMES WORTH LESS THAN WHAT THEIR OWNERS OWE



Based on DataQuick models that estimate current home value and identify any open loans on the property. Data are for single-family detached houses and condos.



SOURCES: MDA DataQuick; SanGIS; TeleAtlas; ESRI

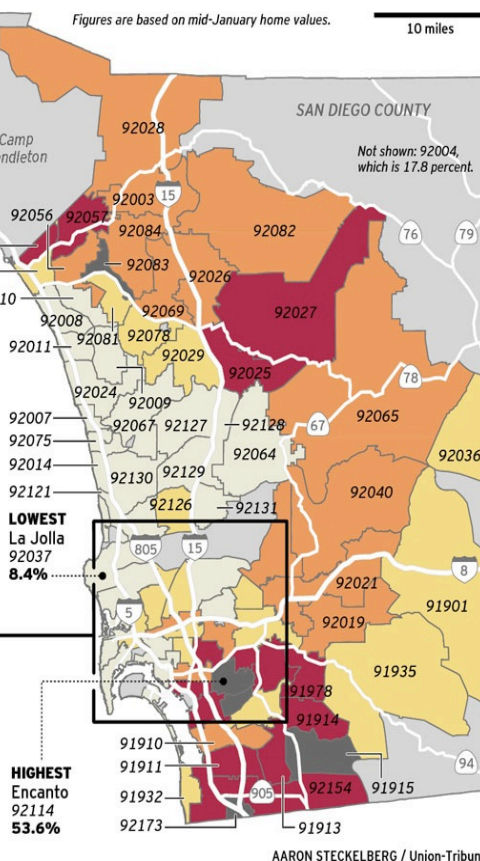


Figure 19:
Home Values versus
Outstanding Mortgages

Source: San Diego Union Tribune,
February 2009

Today, one of the biggest threats facing the neighborhood is gentrification. The relatively low property values are not affordable to most current residents but are attractive to newcomers with higher incomes, making Southeastern San Diego prime for gentrification. The influx of new

residents, who are primarily white and affluent, is likely to displace current families who will no longer be able to afford rising rents. These trends have been observed in the surrounding neighborhoods of Barrio Logan, Golden Hill, and City Heights (see Figure 20). Indicators suggest that Southeastern San Diego is beginning to experience some of these changes in a few small pockets. Without sufficient protections for affordable housing, gentrification will cause displacement, hurting the most vulnerable residents.

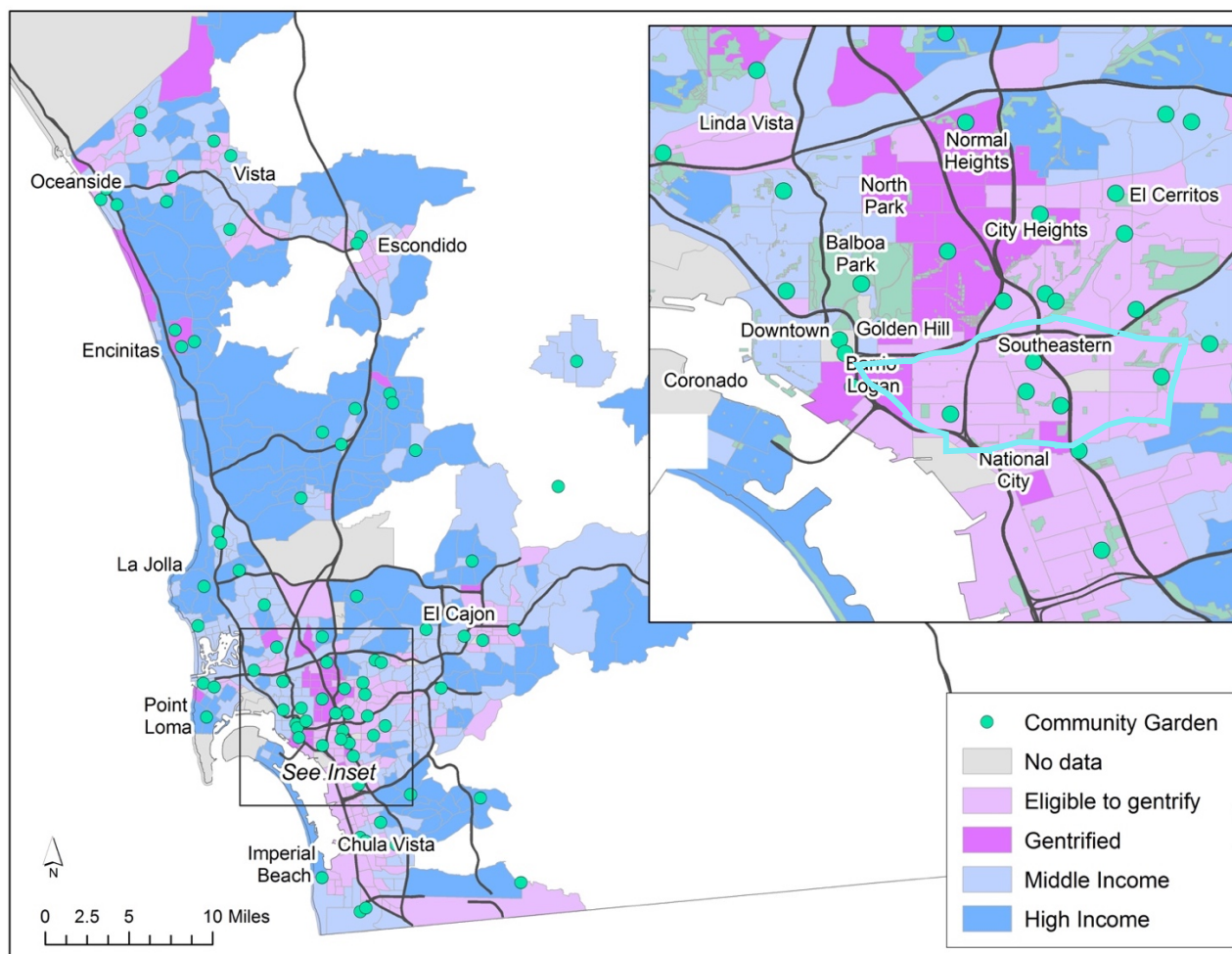


Figure 20: Gentrification in San Diego, 1990 to 2016

Source: Pascale Joassart-Marcelli, using US Census data

Health and Food Access

Residents of Southeastern San Diego are very concerned about health issues. In a 2016 survey conducted by Project New Village, 12 percent of adult respondents reported having been diagnosed with hypertension, 13 percent with diabetes, 10 percent with asthma, 10 percent with heart problems, and 9 percent with other major health concerns such as cancer.

According to 2014 data from the California Health Interview Survey (CHIS), 22 percent of 18 to 64 year-olds residing in the three zip codes that intersect the boundaries of Southeastern San Diego (i.e., 92102, 92113, 92114) reported being in poor to fair health, compared to 15 percent for the County and 14 percent for the City of San Diego.

Data gathered from Live Well San Diego indicate that in 2018 Southeastern San Diego residents fare worse than the County on all major preventable causes of death (see Table 4).

	Southeastern San Diego	San Diego County
Cancer	164.8	148.26
Hypertension	31.74	20.6
Chronic Heart Disease	116.62	83.89
Stroke	41.01	33.27
Diabetes	35.93	20.96
Three-Four-Fifty*	365.5	298.7
* Concept based on three behaviors (poor diet, physical inactivity, and tobacco use) contributing to four diseases (cancer, heart disease and stroke, type 2 diabetes, and pulmonary disease such as asthma) that cause 50 percent of deaths worldwide.		

Table 4: Age adjusted death rates per 100,000 population for major non-communicable (chronic) disease
Source: Live Well San Diego 2018, <https://data.livewellsd.org>

Chronic diseases have been linked to poor diet and obesity. Data from the 2014 California Health Interview Survey (CHIS) shows that obesity is more prevalent in the Southeastern San Diego zip codes than in the City and County on average (see Figure 21).

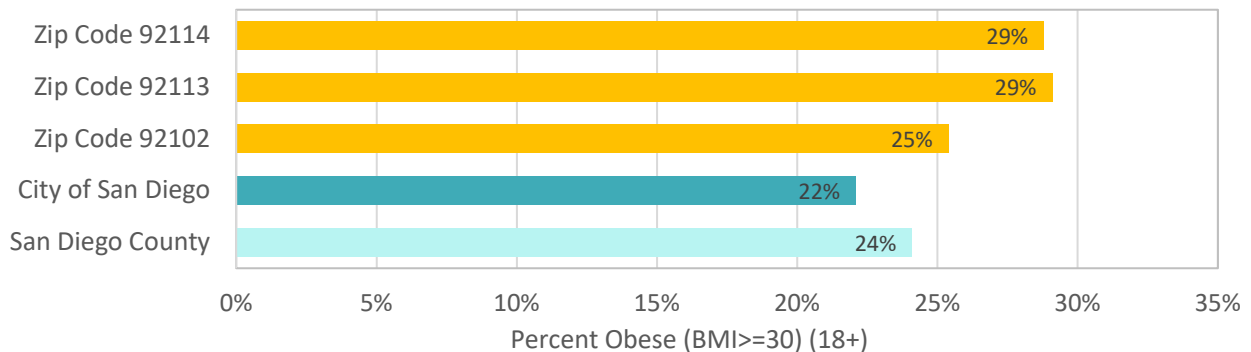


Figure 21: Percent of Population (18 and older) that is Obese (i.e., BMI ≥ 30)
Data Source: 2014 California Health Interview Survey (CHIS), <http://askchisne.ucla.edu>

Chronic disease is often attributed to behavior such diet, physical activity, and sleep. Behavioral data regarding sugary drink consumption – a potential indicator of poor diet – indicate that southeastern San Diego residents consume more empty calories than others in the region. Approximately 27 percent of neighborhood residents consume at least 1 sugary drink per day compared to 15 percent in the City of San Diego and 16 percent for the County. The same dataset shows very little difference in smoking rates, which are around 12 percent of adults (18 and older).

Evidence also suggests that unhealthy diets are often correlated with food insecurity, which pushes people to consume high-calorie and low-nutrient foods that tend to be more readily available and affordable. Indeed, food insecurity – or hunger – is affecting a greater proportion of people in Southeastern San Diego than in the rest of the region and the state. Data from the 2014 California Health Interview Survey (CHIS) shows that, in the three zip codes that make up Southeastern San Diego, approximately 20 percent of residents were unable to consistently afford enough food (see Figure 22). These figures are two to three times higher than the region as a whole.

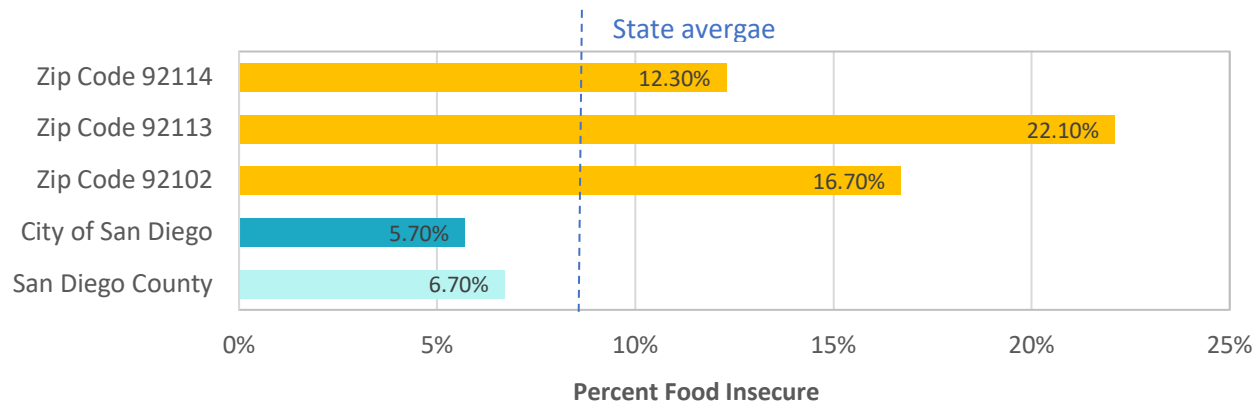


Figure 22: Percent of Population Food Insecure

Data Source: 2014 California Health Interview Survey (CHIS), <http://askchisne.ucla.edu>

As Figure 23 clearly shows, food insecurity is an acute problem in Southeastern San Diego – one of the few hunger hotspots in the County.

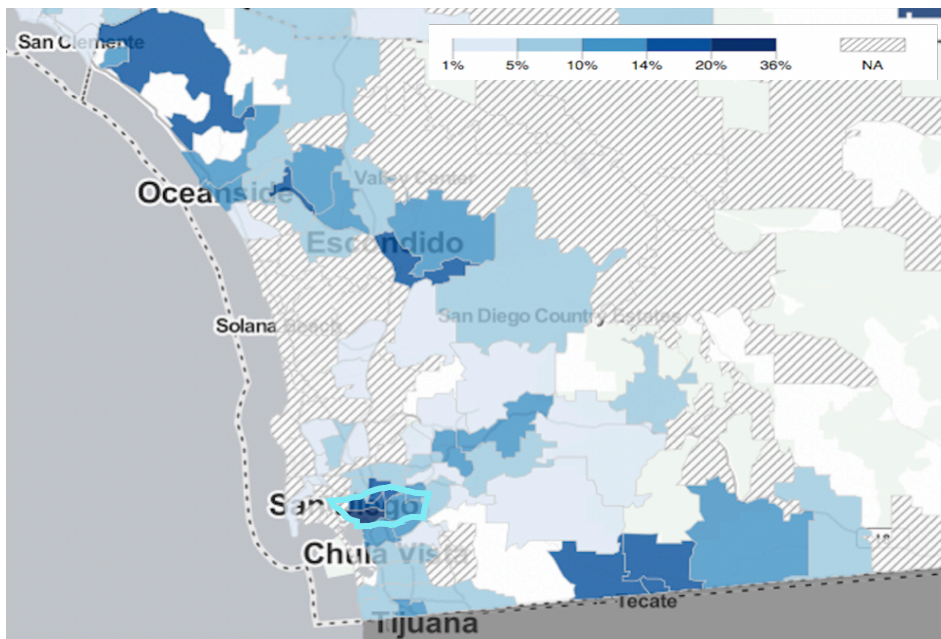


Figure 23:

Food Insecurity (18+) by Zipcode, San Diego County

Data Source: 2014 California Health Interview Survey (CHIS), <http://askchisne.ucla.edu>

The coexistence of food insecurity and obesity are also consequences of living in a food environment characterized by limited access to affordable and healthy food options. Figure 24 shows access to supermarkets and reveals that thousands of low-income people in Southeastern San Diego, including in the Mount Hope area, live in communities without any supermarkets within a 1-mile walking distance. Supermarkets are often assumed to offer a larger selection of fresh, affordable, healthy and culturally appropriate food.

Audits of food retailers and restaurants conducted in 2014 (Joassart-Marcelli, Bosco and Delgado 2014) and again in 2018 (San Diego State University, GEOG 590) indicate that Southeastern San Diego is home to many small food stores, which provide an important service to local residents and help reduce food insecurity. Because policy makers tend to focus primarily on supermarkets, these smaller stores receive less attention and represent a missed opportunity to improve the food environment. Our audits suggest that a significant share of small stores lacks fresh produce and healthy food. In addition, the community faces significant challenges linked in part to high exposure to unhealthy food options.

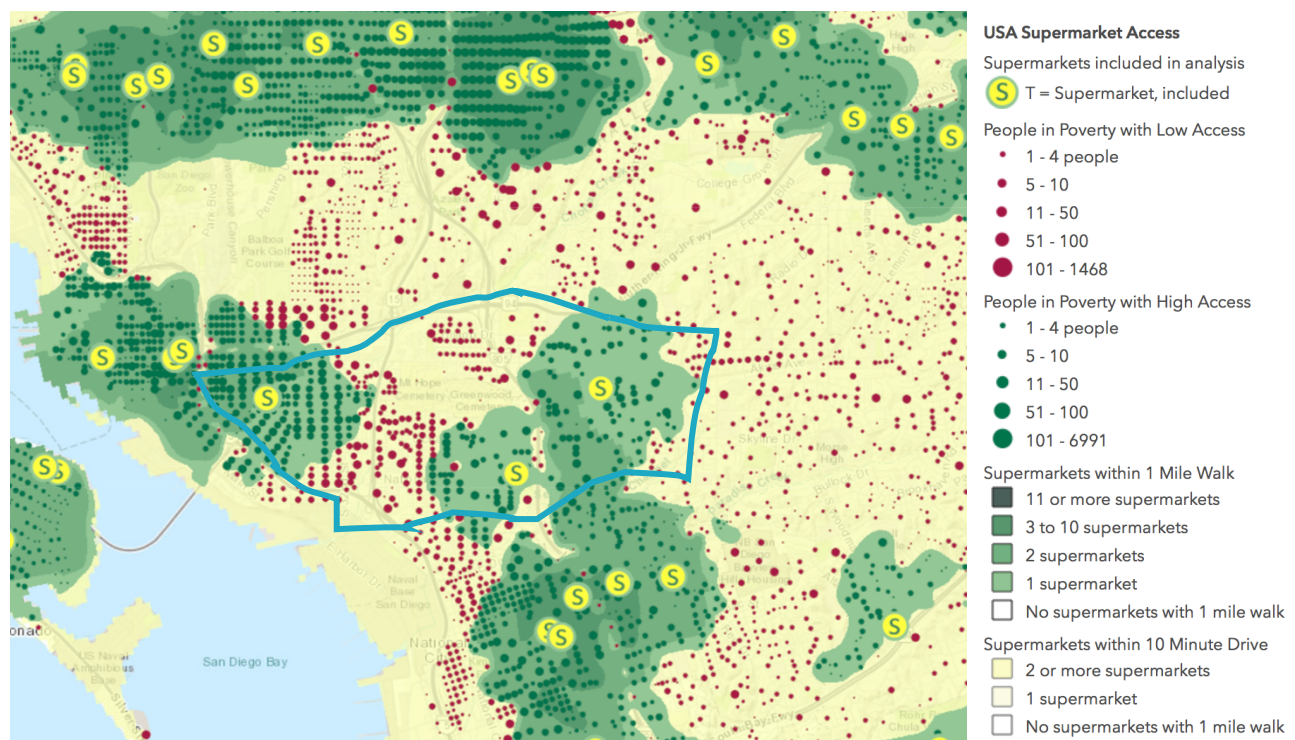


Figure 24: Food Access in Southeastern San Diego (based on supermarket location)

Source: Esri, Map Service, infoUSA, U.S. Census Bureau, <https://www.arcgis.com/home/item.html?id=da445548bb844a3ca0ec646dd1a714e1>

This presents an important opportunity for improvement. Indeed, market analyses based on population data and store location suggest that there is unmet demand in Southeastern San Diego (see Figure 25). The orange polygons on Figure 25 represent saturated areas where supply (based

on location of grocery stores) may exceed demand (based on population size). In contrast, the green polygons, show areas of opportunity where potential demand exceeds supply. Most of

Southeastern San Diego, including Mount Hope and surrounding communities, represent areas of opportunities for market development. This is not surprising given the limited access to food documented in Figure 23 and 24 above.

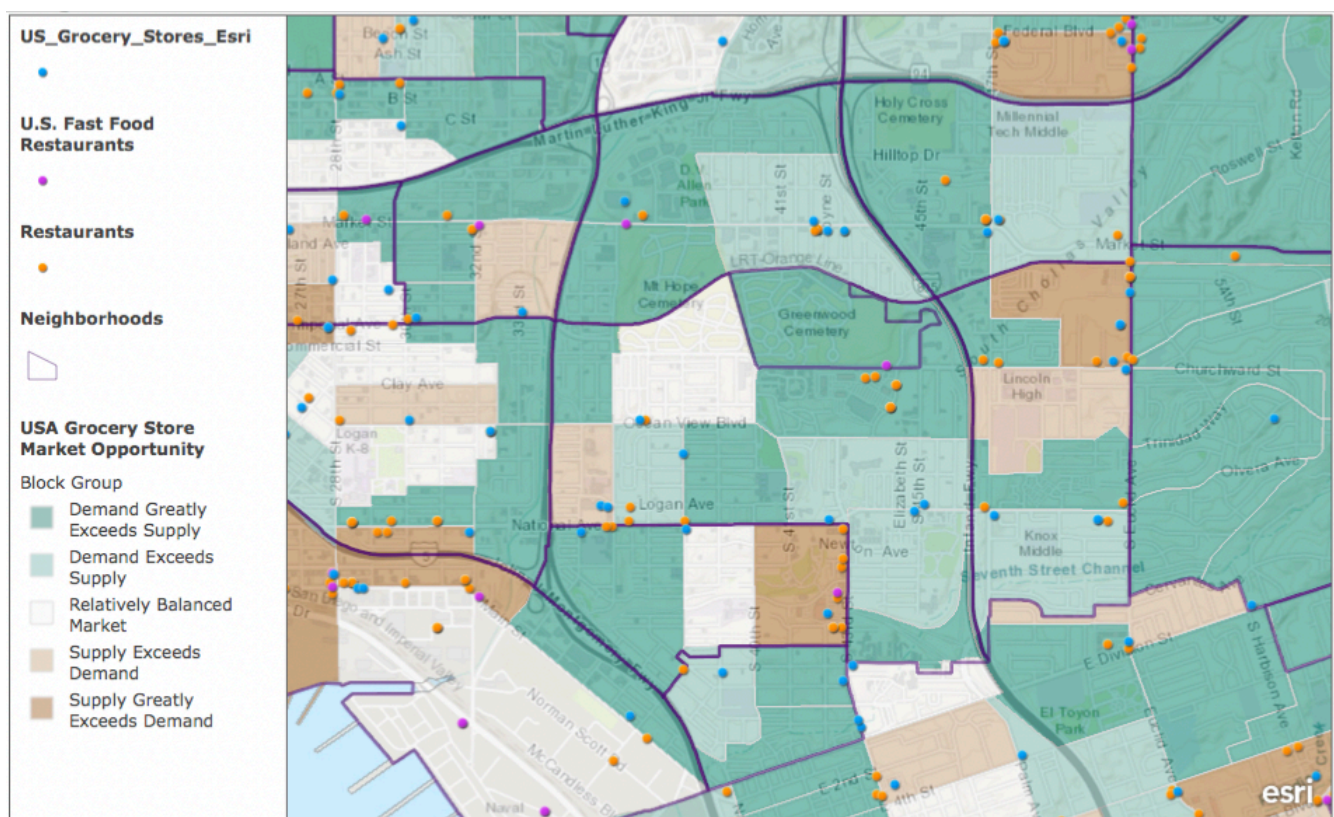


Figure 25: Grocery Store Market Opportunity
Source: ESRI

Changing Demographics and Sense of Community

Southeastern San Diego has always been home to a diverse population. Over the past decades, its ethnic and racial composition has changed noticeably. As discussed and illustrated in previous sections, the western and central part of the neighborhood have been an important place for the Black community in San Diego. After the White flight of the 60s and 70s, African-Americans shared the space with Asians and Latinos. In recent years, as a growing number of African American residents moved out, new residents settled in, including a large share of immigrants. Today, Southeastern is a majority Latino neighborhood (see Figure 26), with Latinos representing 69 percent of the population (compared to 47% for the County overall). The Black population is also

significantly overrepresented (13 percent vs. 5%). Asians, and especially Whites, are underrepresented in the area.

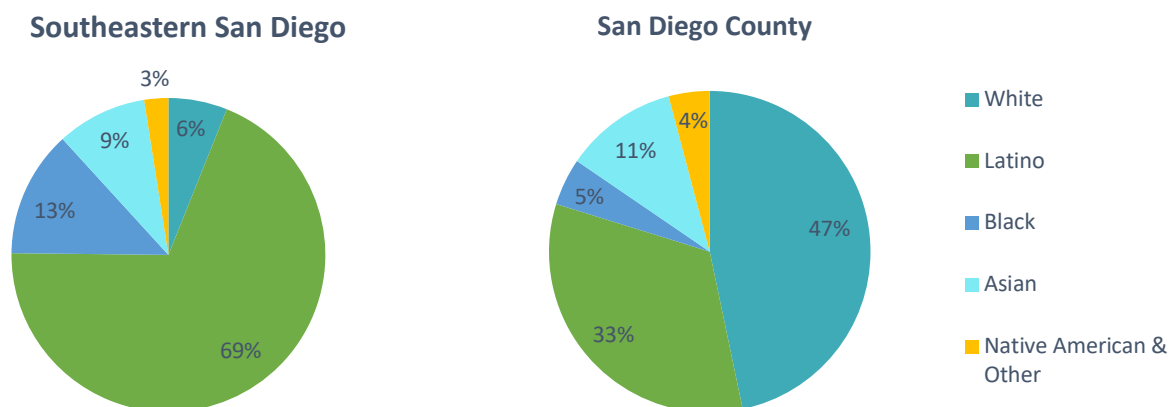


Figure 26: Population Composition by Race/Ethnicity, Southeastern San Diego vs. San Diego County Source: Author's computations based on 2016 American Community Survey 5-year estimates

By 2016, more than a third of Southeastern San Diego's residents were born outside of the United States, mostly from Latin America, especially Mexico (see Table 5). The proportion of immigrants, including those from Latin America and not naturalized is significantly higher than in the County overall. These demographic characteristics create unique challenges that need to be addressed in place-making initiatives.

	Southeastern San Diego	San Diego County
Percent foreign-born	37.2%	23.5%
Share of Foreign-born by Region of Origin		
Europe	0.4%	8.0%
Asia	18.2%	37.8%
Africa	0.6%	2.3%
Oceania	0.5%	0.6%
Latin America	80.1%	49.7%
North America	0.1%	1.7%
Share of Foreign-Born by Citizenship Status		
Naturalized US Citizen	36.0%	50.2%
Not naturalized	64.0%	49.8%

Table 5: Foreign-Born Population, Southeastern San Diego vs. San Diego County Source: Author's computations based on 2016 American Community Survey 5-year estimates

This changing demographic mix is altering the identity of the community and its sense of place. Many residents who participated in outreach activities mentioned the importance of strengthening community by building social connections and trust relationships with neighbors. A great number mentioned the importance of green and public gathering spaces in supporting this need. Indeed,

research on the benefits of green space, including community gardens, parks, edible forests, etc. highlight their significance in building social capital. Green space is also an important aspect of healthy environments because it promotes active living and helps reduce stress.

The City Project (García and Strongin 2010) documents a lack of green space in Southeastern San Diego and several other low-income communities of color in the region (see Figure 27). The report describes this deficiency as a social justice issue considering that it is highly correlated with poverty and race.

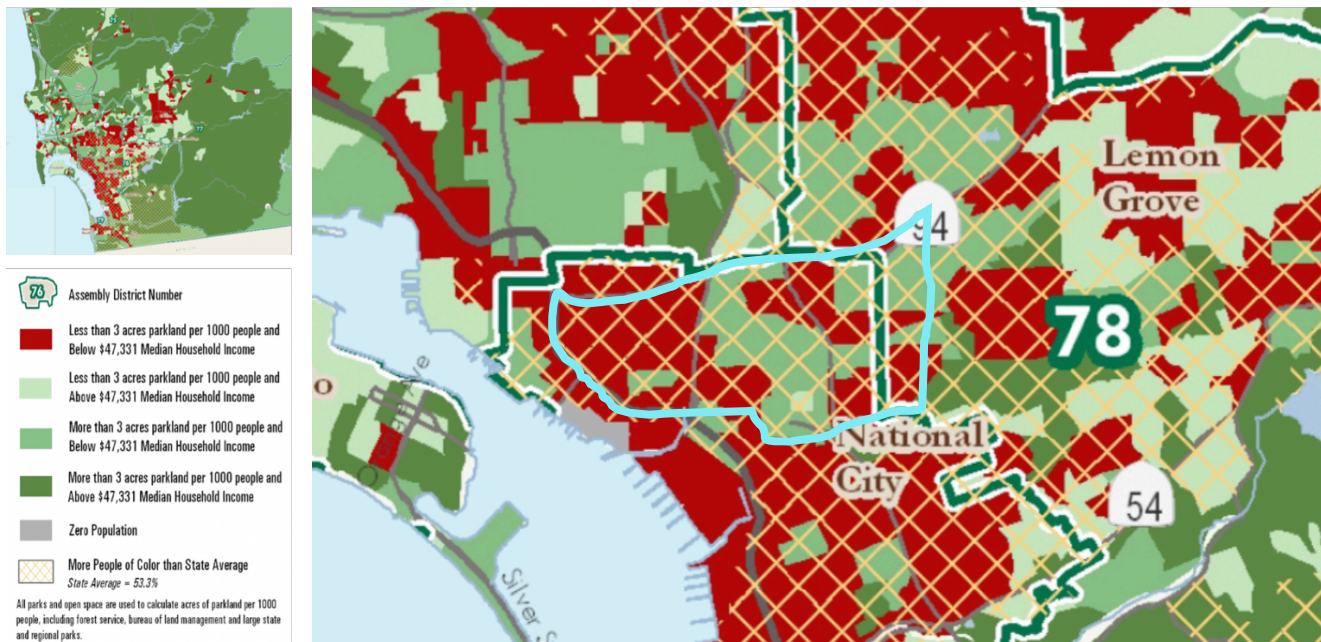


Figure 27: Parkland Access in Southeastern San Diego
Source: García and Strongin (2010)

Next Steps

Southeastern San Diego has a rich agricultural history that runs deep into the fabric of the community. The Good Food District aims to recapture some of this history to address the deep structural inequalities that have marked the neighborhood and continue to shape contemporary needs in terms of jobs, housing, health, and environment. Specifically, Project New Village –the convening organization— aims to elevate and integrate urban agriculture as a key component of community revitalization.

The Good Food District is envisioned as a neighborhood destination that promotes the production, sale and consumption of local food as a means for better health, wealth and community cohesion.

This model for transformation is premised on community engagement and activation to which Project New Village is deeply committed.

Having identified priorities and important needs to be addressed in this report, our current work consists of developing a project that utilizes our strengths and existing resources to best meet the needs of the community. Part 2 of this report will describe the outreach and participatory planning activities undertaken by Project New Village to gather input from residents of Mount Hope and surrounding Southeastern San Diego neighborhoods. It will outline the major objectives and programmatic components of the Good Food District. In Part 3, we will eventually assess the success of the Good Food District and evaluate its impacts on residents and participants. This will provide a set of best practices that may inform similar projects in other communities.

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