

# Neighborhood Assessment

## SR 94 Freeway Cap Park Feasibility

### Compilation of Project Materials

*Part of the Freeway Cap Best Practices & SR 94 Cap Park Study*



# Neighborhoods

## Existing Character, Enhanced Connectivity

Surrounding the proposed State Route (SR) 94 park cap, there are two neighborhoods/communities: Greater Golden Hill to the north and Southeastern San Diego to the south. Downtown San Diego also is nearby. Plans and studies have been conducted for and in the area, incorporating the preferences and priorities of the communities, and identifying opportunities for and constraints to future development.

### Background

Greater Golden Hill is an urbanized community, located east of Downtown San Diego and southeast Balboa Park. The landscape is characterized by a varying topography of canyons and mesas, as well as a historic district that features a variety of eclectic building types.

Southeastern San Diego also is an urbanized community, located just south of Golden Hill across SR 94 and east of Downtown San Diego. Southeastern San Diego is similar to Greater Golden Hill in its landscape (i.e., topography) and early development (i.e., western portion of the community).

Both Greater Golden Hill and Southeastern San Diego have goals of maintaining community character/heritage, including the preservation of existing residential neighborhoods, historic architectural resources, and open space areas.

### Land Use

In both Greater Golden Hill and Southeastern San Diego, the largest land use is “residential” (49 percent of total developed acreage and 39 percent of total developed acreage, respectively), followed by “roads/freeways” (37 percent of total acreage and 39 percent of total acreage, respectively). In both communities, parks comprise less than 7 percent of total developed acreage.

## Parks and Open Space

In Greater Golden Hill, city-owned canyons serve as open space areas. In Southeastern San Diego, there are a variety of neighborhood parks, community parks, and open space areas. Balboa Park, located in close proximity to the communities (e.g., the southeast corner, also known as the “Golden Hill Triangle” area), is a resource-based park; however, this park serves both the citywide population, as well as visitors.

There is a lack of population-based parks in Greater Golden Hill and Southeastern San Diego. For population-based parks, the acreage standard, as defined in the City of San Diego General Plan, is a minimum of 2.8 acres per 1,000 people. For Greater Golden Hill (15,954 people) and Southeastern San Diego (57,041 people), this means 45 acres and 160 acres of population-based parks, respectively. Greater Golden Hill has 51 acres of park/military uses (not including the adjacent Balboa Park) and Southeastern San Diego has 100 acres of park/military uses. However, in Southeastern San Diego most of this combined acreage is military use.

With limited vacant land and challenges surrounding the acquisition of developed land, meeting needs/standards is becoming increasingly difficult.

**60 acres**  
of population-based parks are needed in Southeastern San Diego to meet city standards

Figure 1: Parks and Open Space



Source: 2015 Southeastern San Diego Community Plan;  
2013 Golden Hill Community Plan

Park access due to topography and reliance on public transit also is an issue. The communities have identified park opportunities, including an SR 94 park cap, as well as enhanced bicycle and pedestrian facilities to and through the communities.

## Transportation

Both Greater Golden Hill and Southeastern San Diego are well served by freeways, with regional access provided by Interstate (I-) 5, SR 94, and I-15. SR 94, which divides both communities, was constructed in the mid-1950s.

Additionally, connections to Downtown San Diego, a major employment and population center, are maintained by a number of east-west streets (e.g., B Street, C Street, Broadway, Market Street, Island Avenue, and Imperial Avenue), public transportation (e.g., buses and the Trolley), and bicycle and pedestrian facilities. North-south streets that connect Greater Golden Hill and Southeastern San Diego are more limited and include 25<sup>th</sup> Street, 28<sup>th</sup> Street, and 30<sup>th</sup> Street. Both communities include gridiron street patterns, but transportation networks can be limited due to topography or other physical barriers (i.e., abrupt changes causing dead-ends). Both communities have goals of improving transportation, including streetscape improvements and an integrated bicycle network.

Recent transportation plans, studies, and projects, which have, will, or propose to improve transportation, include the following: the 25<sup>th</sup> Street Renaissance Street Enhancement Project, the SR 94 Express Lanes Project, the Southeastern San Diego Community Plan Update, the Greater Golden Hill Community Plan Update, the Euclid Avenue Corridor Master Plan, the Imperial Avenue and Commercial Street Corridor Plan, and the Downtown San Diego Mobility Plan.

## Environmental Considerations

To construct a cap over SR 94, the following environmental issues should be considered:

noise and vibration, community and neighborhoods (e.g., air quality), visual resources and aesthetics, and historic architectural resources.

The Environmental Impact Report for the SR 94 Express Lanes Project, which extends through the study area along the SR 94, will evaluate many of these considerations.

A cap over SR 94 should be designed to be consistent with the existing visual character and quality, and would avoid or minimize impact to historic resources that are listed or potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

In terms of community and neighborhood impacts, a cap over SR 94 would improve community cohesion (including accessibility and connectivity) and would not result in displacements.

In terms of noise and air quality related to freeway traffic, park user exposure would not be worse than resident (e.g., those living next to the freeway) exposure, and the cap could improve existing conditions by limiting exposure to (covering) freeway noise and air pollutants.

## Demographics

### Population and Employment

As illustrated in Figure 2, Greater Golden Hill and Southeastern San Diego are relatively lower density communities, with restricted height limits and less population density in 2030 than adjacent Downtown San Diego.

Figure 2: Population, 2030



Source: SANDAG Series 12 Data  
Explore here: <https://skfb.ly/FCRH>



Greater Golden Hill has 16,000 people and 1,800 jobs, which is anticipated to grow by 2035 (26 percent and 17 percent, respectively). It has 723 developed acres and 7,289 housing units.

The residential density is 21 housing units per developed residential acre and the employment density is 45 jobs per developed employment acre.

Southeastern San Diego has 57,000 people and 11,100 jobs, which is anticipated to grow by 2035 (10 percent and 18 percent, respectively). It has 2,843 developed acres and 15,204 housing units. The residential density is 14 housing units per developed residential acre and the employment density is 19 jobs per developed employment acre.

**Income**

In Greater Golden Hill and Southeastern San Diego, the greatest number of households (1,274 households and 3,956 households, respectively) have incomes within the \$15,000 to \$29,999 range. Additionally, most households (59 percent and 79 percent, respectively) have incomes below \$60,000.

**Race and Ethnicity**

In Greater Golden Hill, 45 percent of the population is Hispanic (7,206 people). By 2035, this will grow to 60 percent (12,147 people).

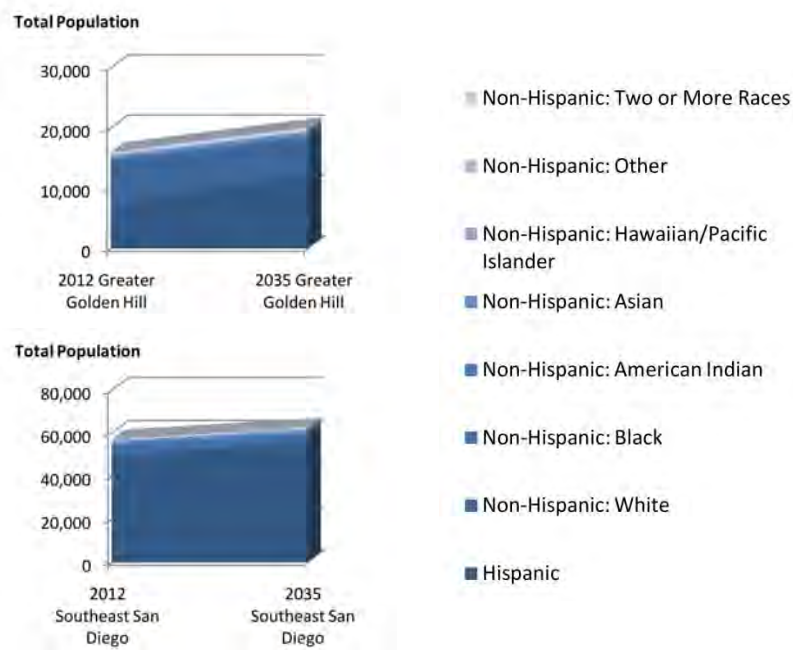
In Southeastern San Diego, 84 percent of the population is Hispanic (47,967 people). By 2035, this will grow to 89 percent (55,800 people).

*Figure 3: Household Income, 2012 and 2035*



Source: SANDAG Series 13 Data

*Figure 4: Population by Race and Ethnicity, 2012 and 2035*



Source: SANDAG Series 13 Data

