

Subarea Report: College Area

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 differences, this report provides an overview of the College Area 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.

Land Use	Percent
Residential	68.5%
Single-Family Attached	0.7%
Single-Family Detached	60.9%
Multifamily	6.9%
Commercial	5.6%
Office	1.6%
Commercial Centers	4.0%
Public/Institutional	22.1%
Civic Facilities	0.4%
Religious Facilities	1.7%
School	18.8%
Hospitals	0.2%
Transportation	0.1%
Water	0.8%
Open Space	3.1%
Parks / Recreation	2.8%
Natural / Conservation	0.3%
Vacant/Other	0.7%

College Area Overview

The College Area is 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 (5,461) of any subarea and is the third largest by size (1,553 acres). Figure 1 shows an aerial view of the subarea.

Existing Land Use

College Area is one of the most heavily residential areas in the city, with residential land comprising 68.5 percent of all land – the largest share of any subarea. As Figure 2 indicates, the overwhelming majority are single-family homes, though a handful of apartment complexes are found off Telegraph Road. Civic/Institutional uses unsurprisingly occupy a large share of land as well (22.1 percent), made up primarily of Ventura College and various neighboring public


and private schools. Commercial uses (5.6 percent), primarily in the form of neighborhood-serving retail, are mainly clustered in strip malls at key intersections.




Ventura College. Source: Ventura College

Many important neighborhood amenities are located on the Ventura College campus, including a performing arts theater, athletic fields, and a regularly held swap met. Elsewhere, a small neighborhood-serving retail node can be found at the intersection of Telegraph Road and Victoria Avenue.


Neighborhood Statistics




12,925 residents
(11.9% of City)




5,461 units
(12.6% of City)




6.6 units per residential acre
(Citywide: 7.8)




8.3 people per acre
(Citywide: 7.7)




median income
\$91,604
(Citywide: \$78,882)




median home value
\$590,420
(Citywide: \$570,100)



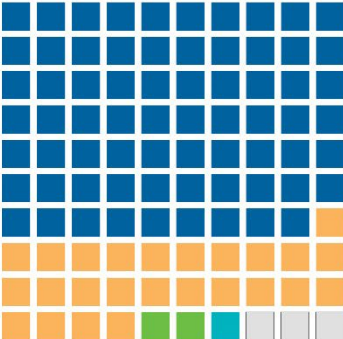
3,873 jobs
(7.6% of City)




23% residents aged 65+
(Citywide: 15.8%)




23% residents aged 18 or under
(Citywide: 21.8%)




- White (69%)
- Hispanic/Latino (26%)
- Asian (2%)
- Black (1%)
- Other/Two or More Races (3%)



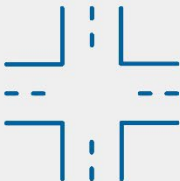
2.6 park acres per 1,000 residents
(Citywide: 7.2)



21.1% residents five minutes from park
(Citywide: 40.2%)

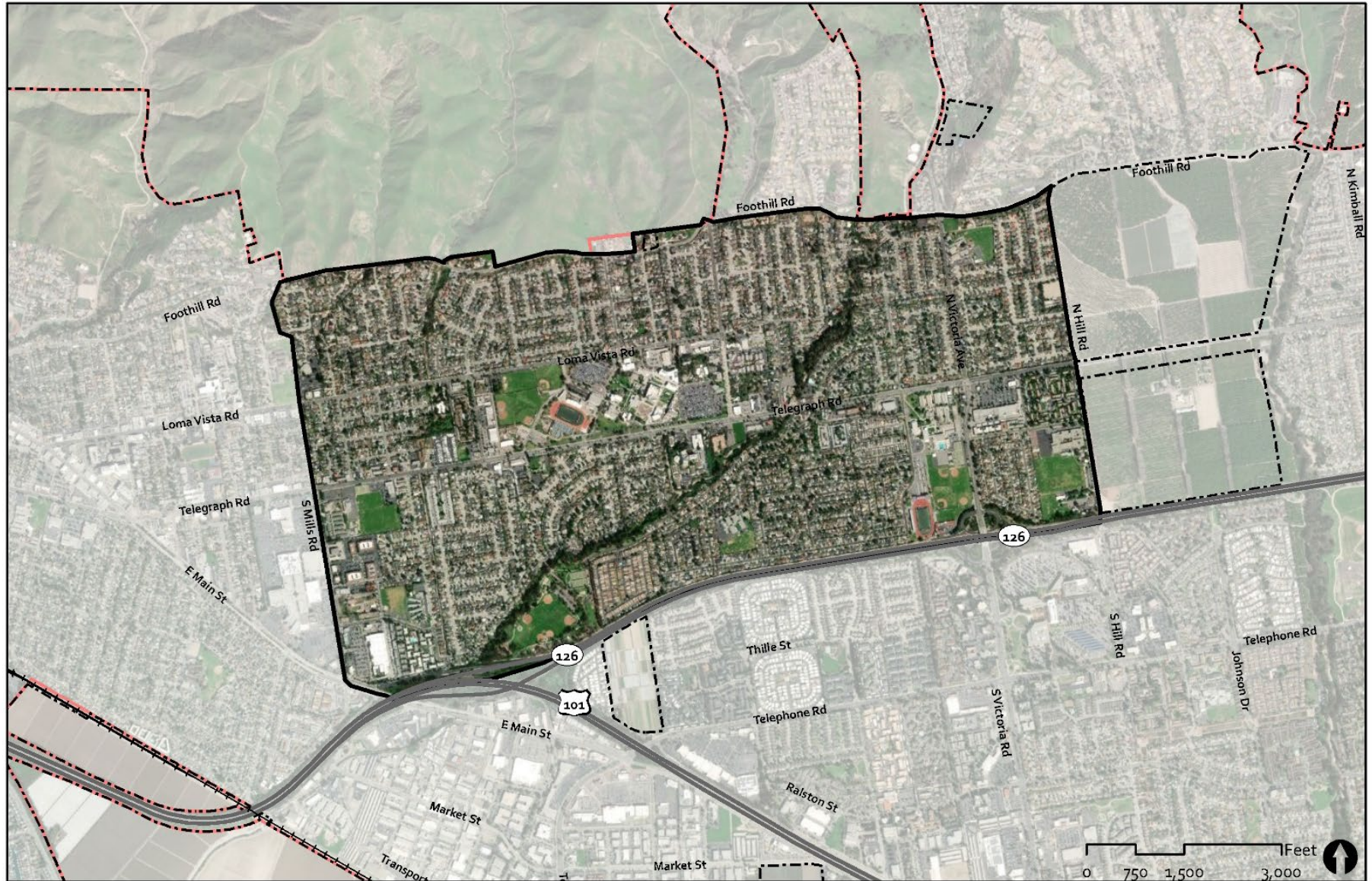







10.6% residents at very high fire risk
(Citywide: 10.7%)



90.2 intersections per mi²
(Citywide: 92.7)

Figure 1: Aerial

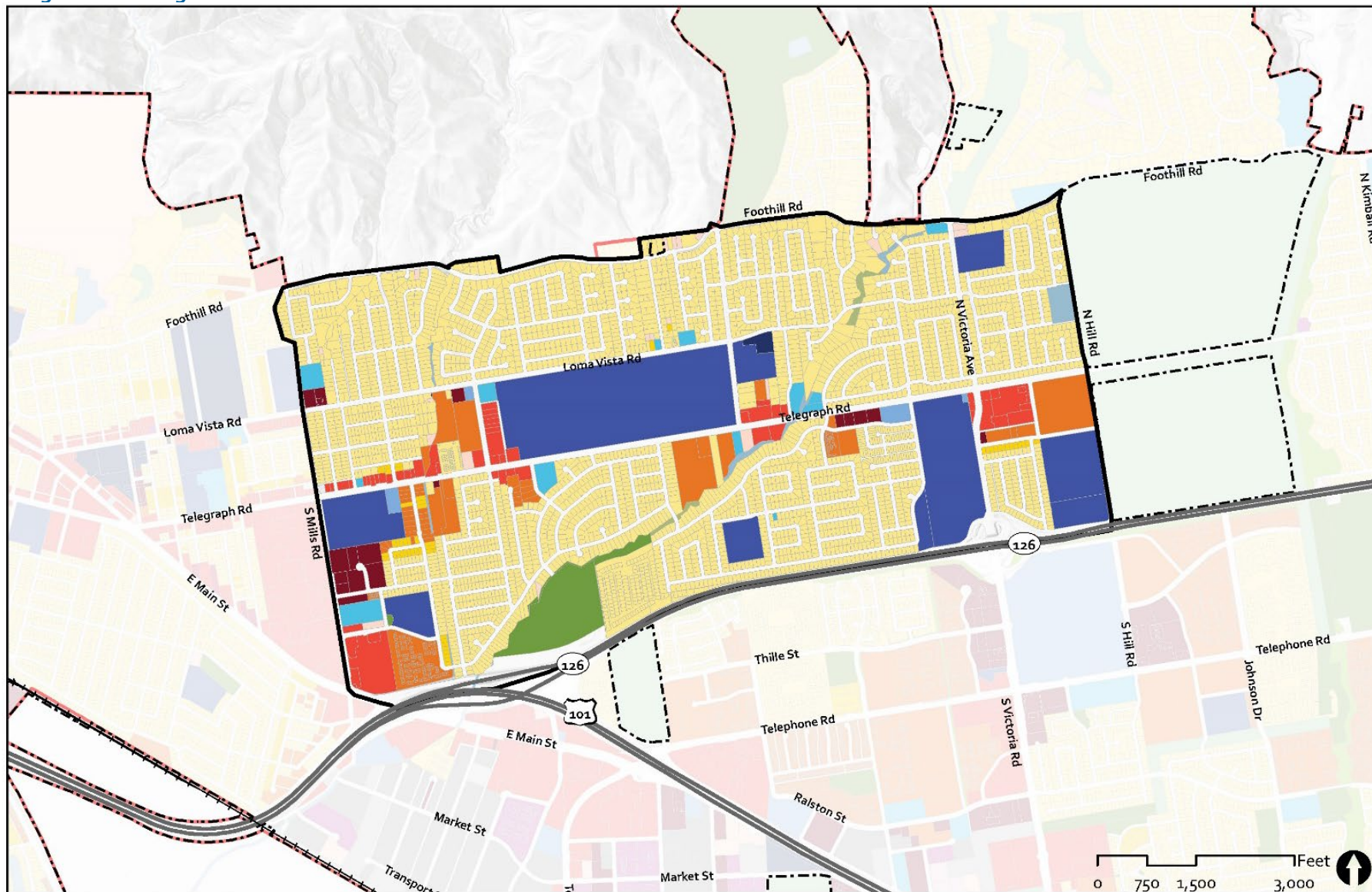


-  College Subarea
-  Ventura City Limits
-  Sphere of Influence
-  Railroad
-  Freeway

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



Figure 2: Existing Land Use



- | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|
| College Subarea | Single-Family Detached | Mixed-Use Commercial | Office | Civic Facilities | Parks / Recreation | Vacant |
| Ventura City Limits | Single-Family Attached | Commercial Recreation | Light Industrial | Religious Facilities | Open Space | Transportation |
| Sphere of Influence | Multifamily | Commercial Centers | Wholesale / Warehousing | School | Agriculture | Utilities / Communications |
| Railroad | Accommodation | | | Hospitals | Natural / Conservation | Water |
| Freeway | | | | | | |

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



Neighborhood Features and Challenges

- **Suburban Layout:** College Area’s character is laid out in a suburban pattern. Despite containing the most dwelling units of any subarea in the city, College Area has one of the lowest residential densities (9.7 du/ac), which is characteristic of suburban sprawl. Single-family neighborhoods extend in all directions from major thoroughfares, particularly to the north and south of Telegraph Road. While some higher-density housing is present along Telegraph Road, these mostly consist of planned apartment communities that are deeply set-back from the street and separated by surface parking and/or retaining walls (see Figure 4 for building footprints). This leaves them feeling detached from the surrounding public environment.
- **Prominent “Village Corners”:** The district’s retail landscape is largely characterized by “Village Corners,” which are neighborhood-serving commercial areas at key intersections. Along Telegraph Road – College Area’s primary commercial corridor – a Village Corner can be found at each major cross-street: Victoria Avenue, Day Road, and Ashwood Avenue. Most are single-story strip malls with small-footprint uses, such as banks and restaurants, on pad sites close to the road. Like most strip malls, Village Corners are generally characterized by large setbacks and surface parking lots fronting the roadway.
- **Ventura’s Civic Hub:** College Area hosts one of the city’s highest concentrations of civic institutions, mainly featuring academic and religious facilities. Besides Ventura College, which is the district’s primary anchor, College Area hosts eight public schools, two charter schools, and one private school. The district also hosts nine churches of various Christian denominations.
- **Moderate Fire Risk.** Approximately 10.6 percent of residents live in very high fire risk areas. While this is lower than the citywide figure (28.6 percent), College Area is at fifth highest risk of wildfire compared to all other subareas.
- **Low Flood and Sea Level Rise Risk.** College Area is not at significant risk of flooding or sea level rise, as only 0.1 percent of the population live in flood risk areas. Properties that adjoin the Arundell Barranca channel face a localized risk of flooding.

Streetscape

Given its suburban character, College Area’s streetscape environment is largely autocentric. Telegraph Road, the main east-west arterial, has a 75-foot-wide right-of-way, and the south end of Victoria Avenue extends as wide as 85 feet. While both do host Class II bike lanes, they have narrow sidewalks and little to no tree canopy. Within residential neighborhoods, however, residents enjoy a typical low-density environment with front yards and landscaping fronting the street. Some residential streets enjoy a modest tree canopy, though it is generally lacking at the district-scale.



Telegraph Road. Source: Google Maps

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

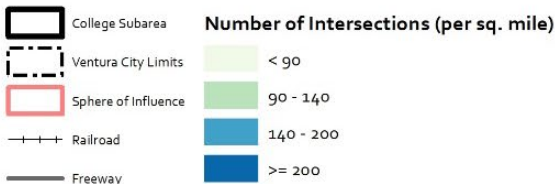
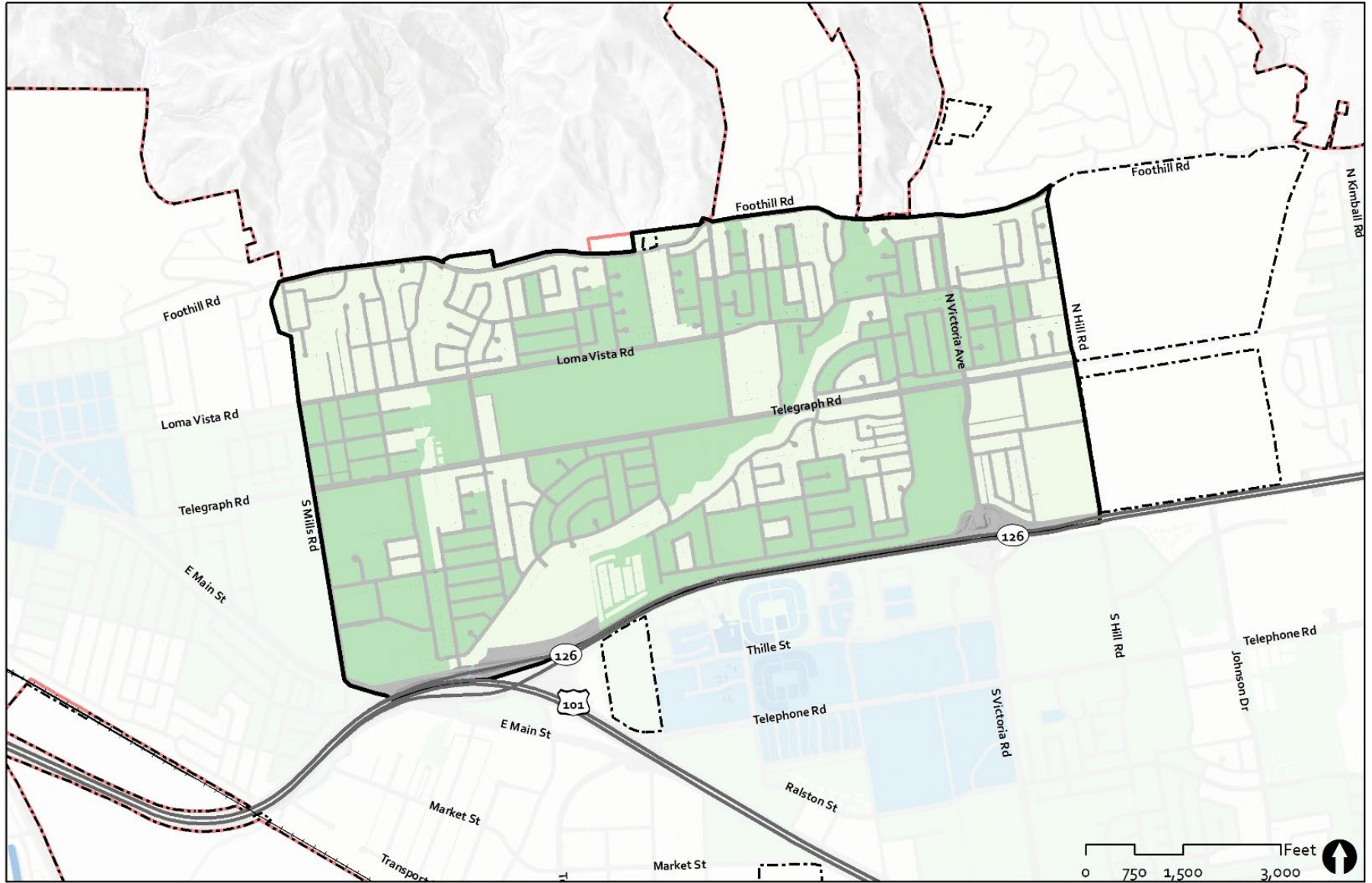
crossing, and can even facilitate placemaking at key nodes. Intersection densities of 140 per square mile or more are more conducive for walkability.



As shown in Figure 3, intersection density is rather low in the subarea. In contrast to other parts of the city, residences in the College Area not typically organized in a grid pattern. Rather, nearly all residential neighborhoods contain cul-de-sacs that dead-end the street network and reduce overall permeability. This, in turn, limits the number of outlets onto major thoroughfares, which may cause traffic to increase on a handful of connector streets.

Court Avenue. Source: Google Maps

Figure 3: Intersection Density



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



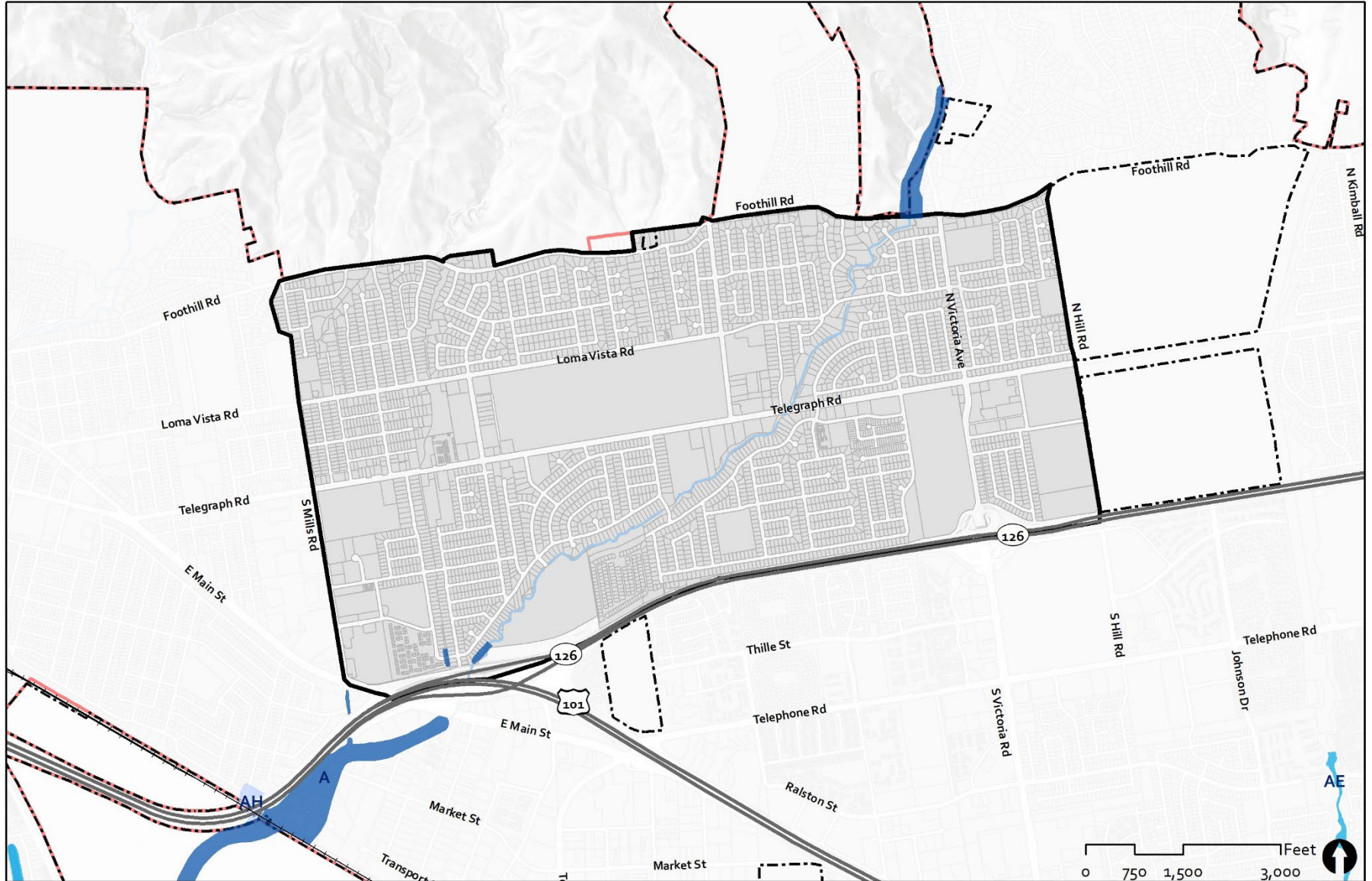
Figure 4: Building Footprints



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



Figure 5: FEMA Flood Risk



- | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------|---|----------|---|--|
|  | College Subarea |  | Railroad |  | A: Areas With A 1% Annual Chance Of Flooding |
|  | Ventura City Limits |  | Freeway |  | AE: Base Floodplain Elevation |
|  | Sphere of Influence | | | | |



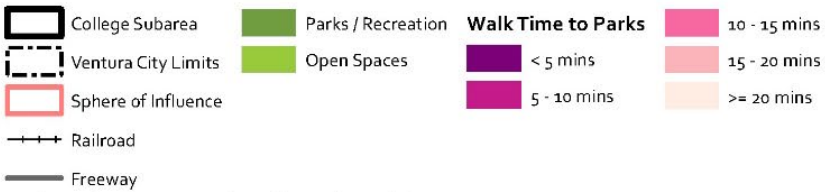
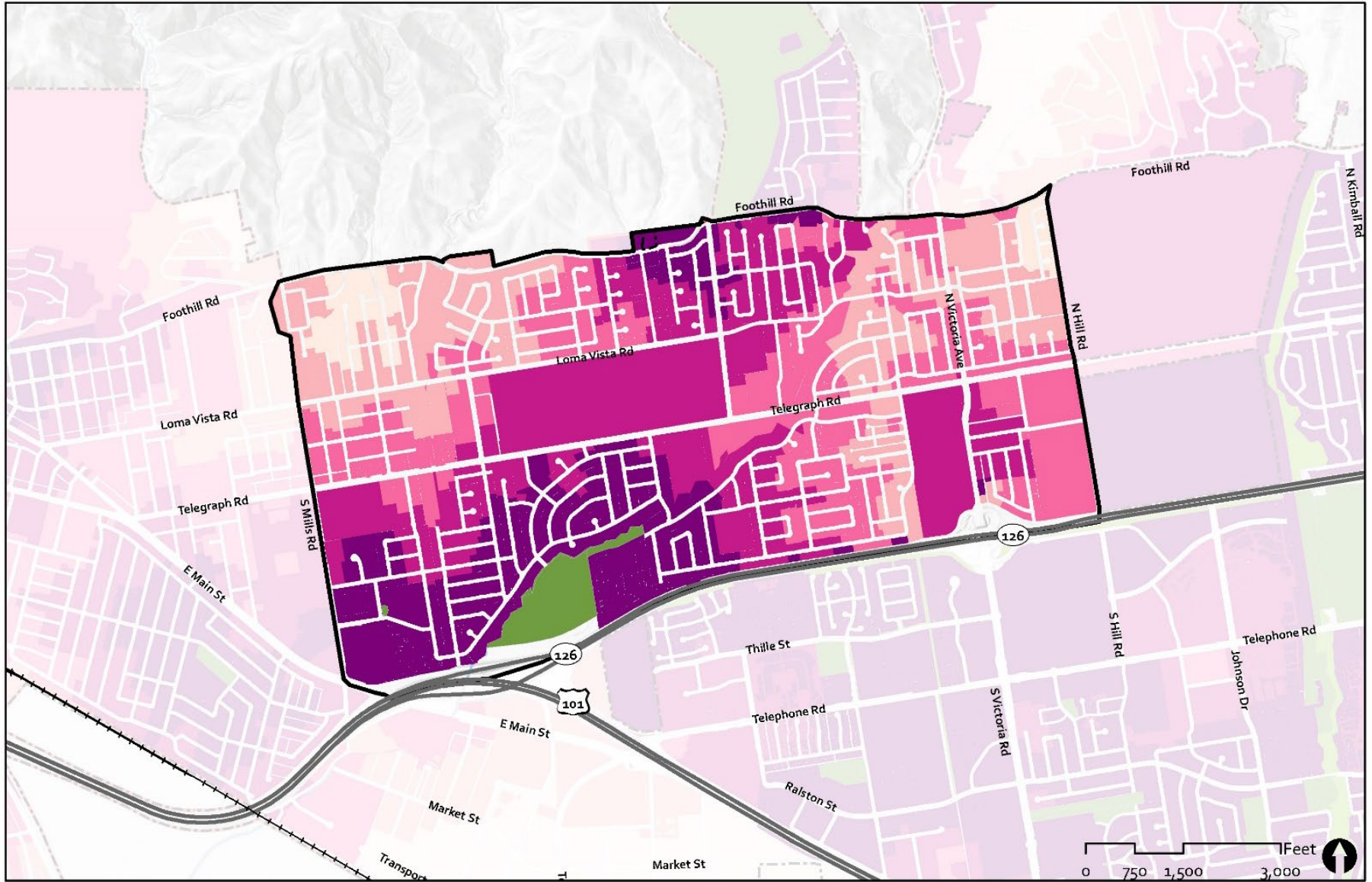
Open Space

Despite its strong residential character, College Area is generally lacking in public parks and open space. The district hosts just one public park, Camino Real, which is nestled in the south end between the Arundell Barranca and Highway 126. Given this scarcity, there are only 2.60 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents – just over a third of the citywide figure (7.2) – and less than half of all residents (48 percent) live within a ten-minute walk of a park (see Figure 5 below). Given the high number of schools in the area, there is a potential for the City and VUSD to develop a joint-use agreements as a short-term solution to expand public access to outdoor recreation. Other opportunities exist to expand the trail system along the Arundell Barranca to give the community a unique recreational asset that promotes healthy lifestyles.



Camino Real Park. Source: Visit Ventura

Figure 6: Walk Access to Parks



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



Summary of Key Findings

- **Untapped Barranca Potential:** The Arundell Barranca, which traverses the length of College Area, has potential to become a major community asset for district residents. While there are a few short walking trails running alongside the ravine, particularly near Camino Real Park, they are disconnected from one another and often located on private property, thus restricting public access. The City could work with relevant property owners and the Ventura County Watershed Protection District (VCWPD) to create a continuous trail network that extends the length of the district.
- **Inadequate Parkland:** College Area is severely deficient in public parkland, with just over 2.5 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents – the fourth-lowest of any subarea in the city. Though an overwhelmingly residential district, just over one-fifth of residents (21.1 percent) of residents live within a five-minute walk of a park. An expansion in joint-use agreements with local schools could be a near-term solution to this shortage.
- **Moderate Wildfire Risk:** Parts of College Area are highly vulnerable to wildfires, which are only anticipated to increase in frequency as climate change intensifies. Approximately 10.6 percent of the population –nearly 1,373 residents – live in “Very High Fire Risk” (VHFR) areas, indicating a need to limit development in foothill areas, expand evacuation routes, and strengthen adaptation and resilience efforts.
- **Low Walkability:** College Area has no notable pedestrian nodes or corridors that could activate the public realm. Most roadways are auto-centric with limited bike/ped infrastructure, and a high concentration of cul-de-sacs reduces the district’s overall permeability. Meanwhile, retail uses are limited to small strip malls that are tucked away from the street.

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