

Subarea Report: Midtown

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 Midtown 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.



Ventura County Medical Center.
Source: Kaiser Permanente

Land Use	Percent
Residential	51.9%
Single-Family Attached	1.8%
Single-Family Detached	47.9%
Multifamily	2.2%
Commercial	13.1%
Accommodation	1.0%
Office	1.0%
Commercial Centers	10.7%
Commercial Recreation	0.3%
Mixed-Use	0.1%
Mixed-Use Commercial	0.1%
Industrial/Manufacturing	1.3%
Light Industrial	0.5%
Wholesale / Warehousing	0.9%
Public/Institutional	12.4%
Religious Facilities	1.0%
School	5.9%
Hospitals	2.9%
Transportation	1.9%
Water	0.6%
Open Space	1.6%
Parks / Recreation	1.2%
Natural / Conservation	0.4%
Agriculture	0.2%
Vacant/Other	19.3%

Midtown Overview

Midtown is 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 (1,982 acres) and the second-most populous (14,774 residents). It is also one of the most affluent subareas in the city, as median income (\$94,261) ranks as the second highest in the city and median home value (\$644,686) ranks as the third highest. Figure 1 shows an aerial view of Midtown.

Existing Land Use

As shown in Figure 2, residential land comprises just over half (51.9 percent) of all land in Midtown, including just 2.2 percent of multifamily housing. Commercial and retail uses (13.1 percent) are located in major shopping centers and along key corridors, while public/quasi-public uses (12.4 percent) are equitably dispersed throughout. Vacant land occupies the second greatest share of land (19.3 percent), though most are undeveloped properties in the foothills. While these are designated for residential under the General Plan and thus not protected under SOAR, they are still unlikely to be developed for political and environmental

reasons.

Midtown hosts various amenities of regional importance, including Community Memorial Hospital, Ventura County Medical Center, and the 70-acre Pacific View Mall – an indoor mall covering one million square feet in leasable retail space and has been the subject of redevelopment interest (both past and current). Key community-serving uses include four public schools – Ventura High, Blanche Reynolds Elementary, Will Rogers Elementary, and Loma Vista Elementary – four private schools, and four public parks.

Neighborhood Statistics



14,774 residents
(17.8% of City)



6,823 units
(15.7% of City)



7.5 units per residential acre
(Citywide: 7.8)



7.5 people per acre
(Citywide: 7.7)



median income
\$94,261
(Citywide: \$78,882)



median home value
\$644,686
(Citywide: \$570,100)



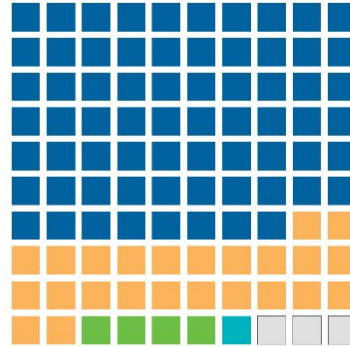
4,896 jobs
(9.6% of City)



15% residents aged 65+
(Citywide: 15.8%)



19% residents aged 18 or under
(Citywide: 21.8%)



- White (68%)
- Hispanic/Latino (24%)
- Asian (4%)
- Black (1%)
- Other/Two or More Races (3%)



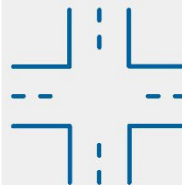
1.27 park acres per 1,000 residents
(Citywide: 7.2)



20.9% residents five minutes from park
(Citywide: 40.2%)








15.3% residents at very high fire risk
(Citywide: 10.7%)



86.7 intersections per mi²
(Citywide: 92.7)

Figure 1: Aerial

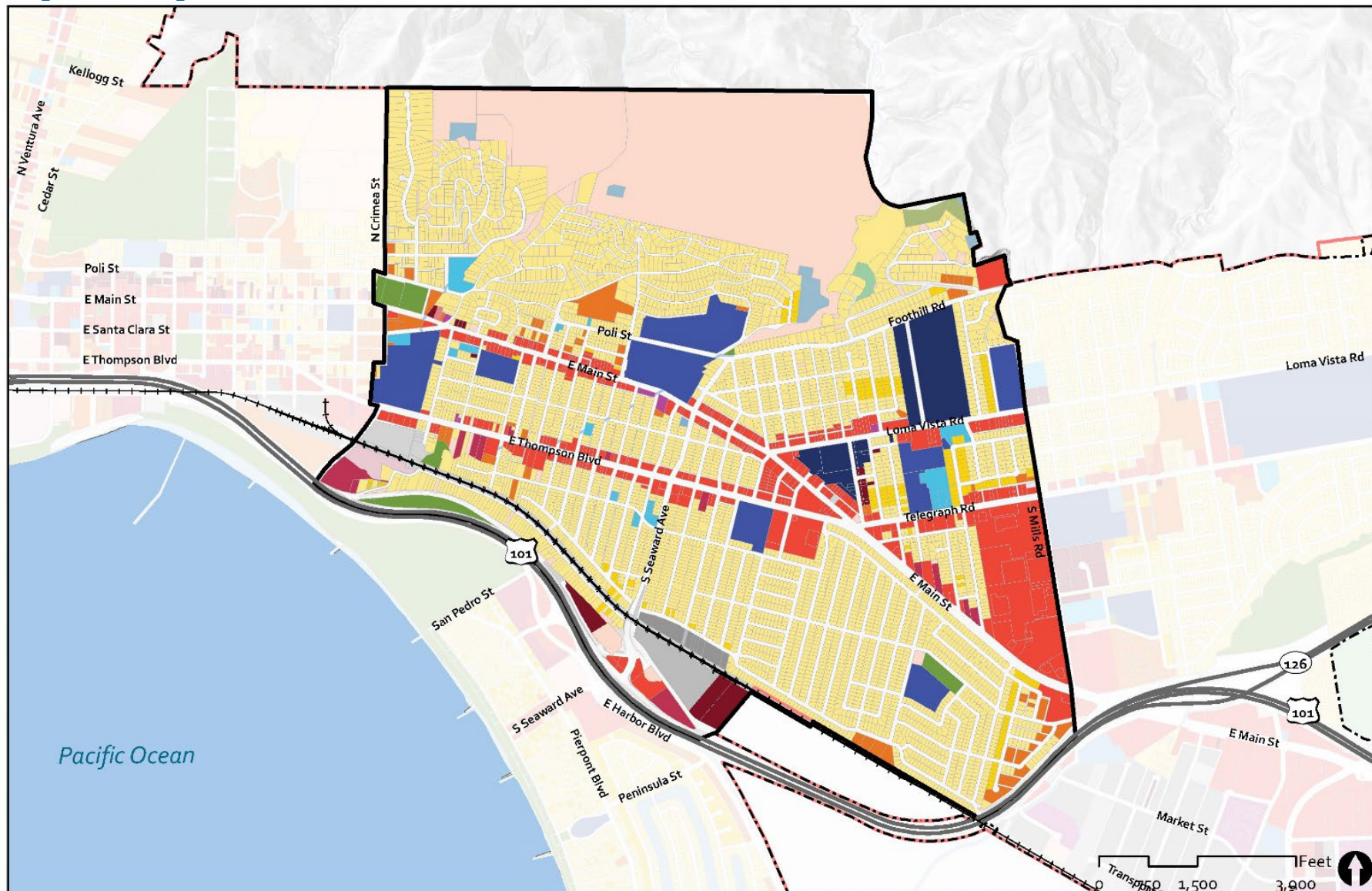


-  Midtown Subarea
-  Ventura City Limits
-  Sphere of Influence
-  Railroad
-  Freeway

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

- **Ventura’s “Health District”:** Midtown hosts a high concentration of healthcare operations, which are mainly located east of Main Street between Telegraph and Foothill Roads. In addition to the two major hospitals highlighted above, notable uses include several urgent care centers, family practices, specialty clinics, assisted living facilities, and other free or low-cost clinics.
- **Low-Density Neighborhoods:** Midtown – like many other subareas – hosts a diversity of low-density residential neighborhoods, which cover most of the community and contribute to the third lowest residential density (7.4 du/ac) of any subarea. Neighborhoods predominate in the form of detached single-family homes and are typically organized on a predictable street grid. Residential lot sizes are very consistent, generally ranging from 5,500 to 7,000 square feet, and building heights are generally capped at one story.
- **Network of Commercial Corridors:** Midtown’s urban form is largely defined by two major corridors. East Main Street and East Thompson Boulevard are auto-oriented commercial strips running parallel to each other until eventually converging – along with Telegraph Road – at the “Five Points” intersection, which borders the Plaza Shopping Center. The Midtown Corridors Development Code applies to both roadways and promotes pedestrian-oriented development and moderates vehicular traffic. Meanwhile, Telegraph Road and Loma Vista Boulevard are mixed-use corridors providing access to Pacific View Mall and the Ventura County Medical Center, respectively.
- **Moderate Fire Risk.** Approximately 15.3 percent of residents live in very high fire risk areas. While this is lower than the citywide figure (28.6 percent), Midtown is at fourth highest risk of wildfire compared to all other subareas. Figure 6 shows fire risk in Midtown.
- **No Flood or Sea Level Rise Risk.** Midtown is not at significant risk of flooding or sea level rise, as only 0.2 percent of the population live in flood risk areas.

Streetscape

Given the confluence of several commercial corridors, Midtown’s streetscape is largely auto-centric. Most commercial roadways approach or exceed 60 feet in width, with at least two travel lanes running in each direction. Bicycle infrastructure is limited, as no striped lanes exist south of East Thompson Boulevard, and many sidewalks are narrow with few street trees and seating areas (see “Transportation and Mobility Report” for more). Several properties, particularly those near the Five Points intersection and nearby medical centers, have deep setbacks and front the roadway with surface parking lots (see Figure 4).



“Five Points” Intersection. Source: Google Maps

In residential areas, most homes are single-story on moderately-sized lots (~6,000 square feet), have driveways, and are set-back from the street with front yards. Additionally, some residential streets – particularly south of Thompson Boulevard – have a strong tree canopy and continuous sidewalk network, creating a pleasant pedestrian environment.



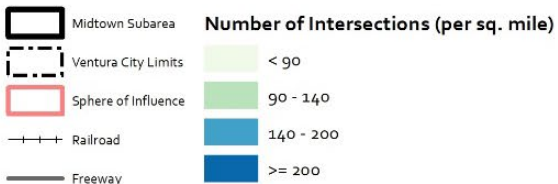
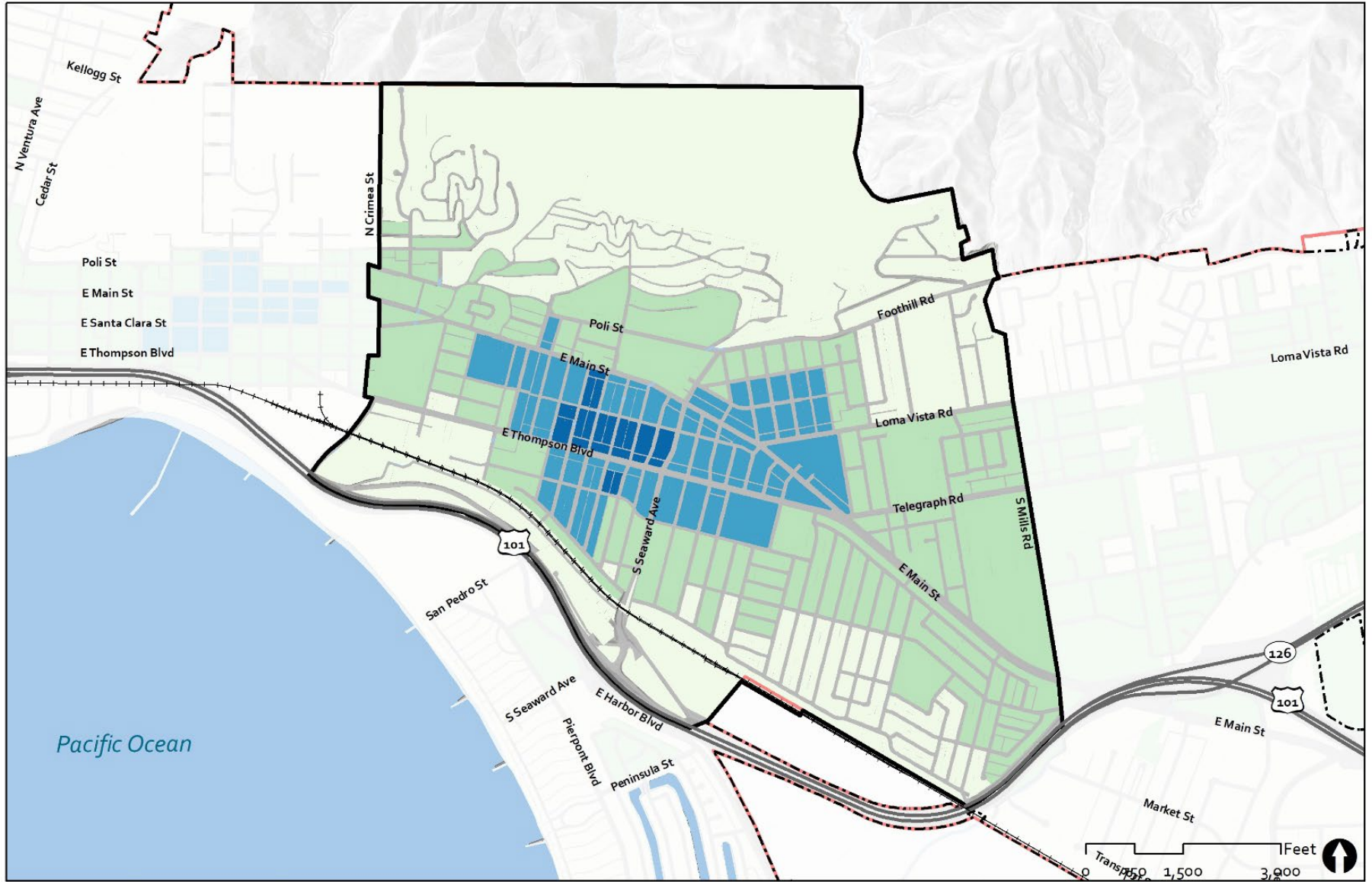
South Catalina Street. Source: Google Maps

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 Figure 3 below indicates, Intersection Density in Midtown is variable. East of the Five Points intersection between Main and Poli Streets, Midtown contains one of the densest concentrations of intersections anywhere in the city, with an array of short and standardized residential blocks that allow for both east-west and north-south travel. As in Downtown, however, Midtown's peripheral areas hosts a low concentration of intersections due to long/large blocks and a circuitous roadway network. These areas are found south of Main Street toward Highway 101, and in the hillside areas north of Poli Street.

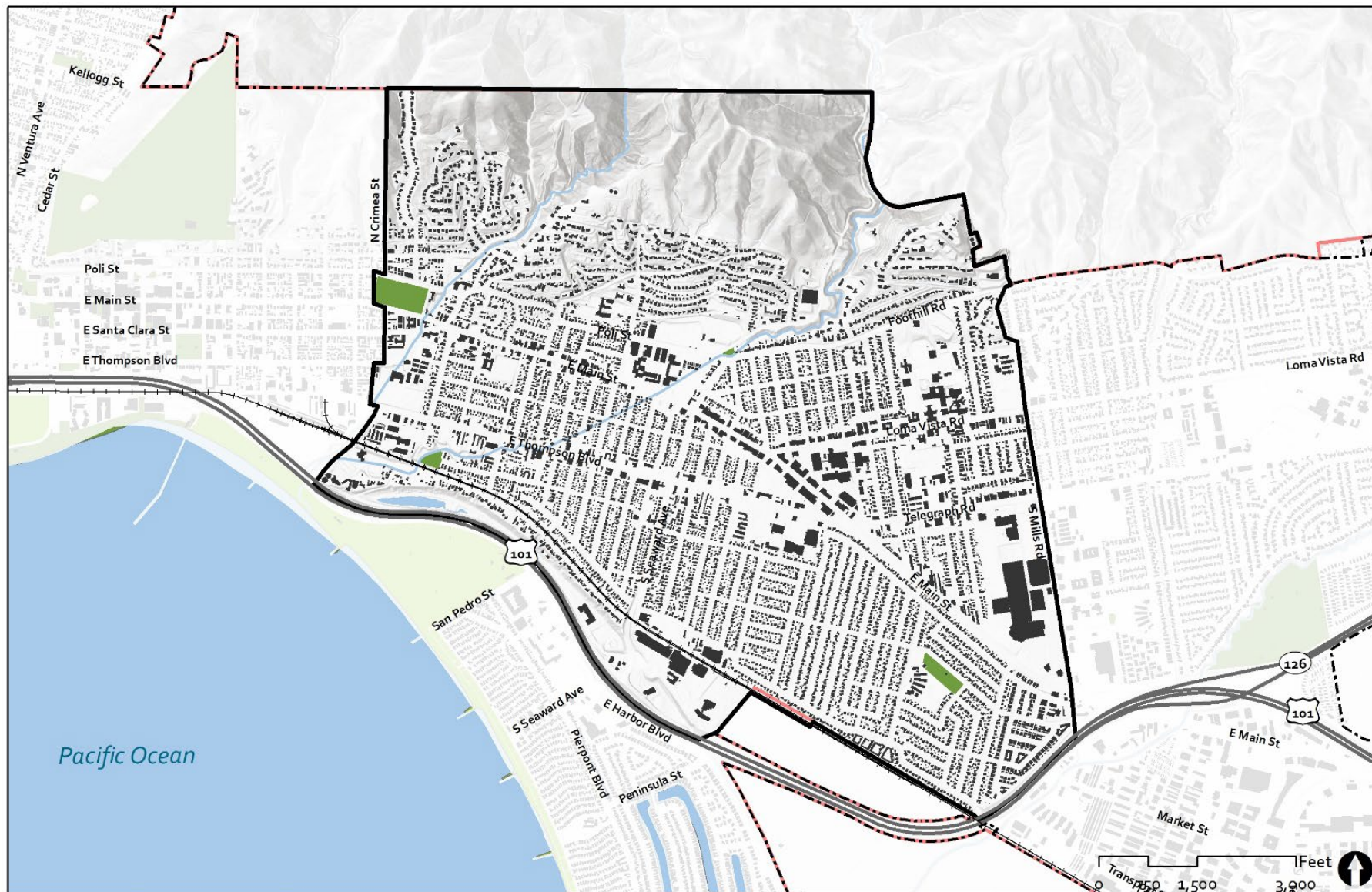
Figure 3: Intersection Density



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



Figure 4: Building Footprints



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



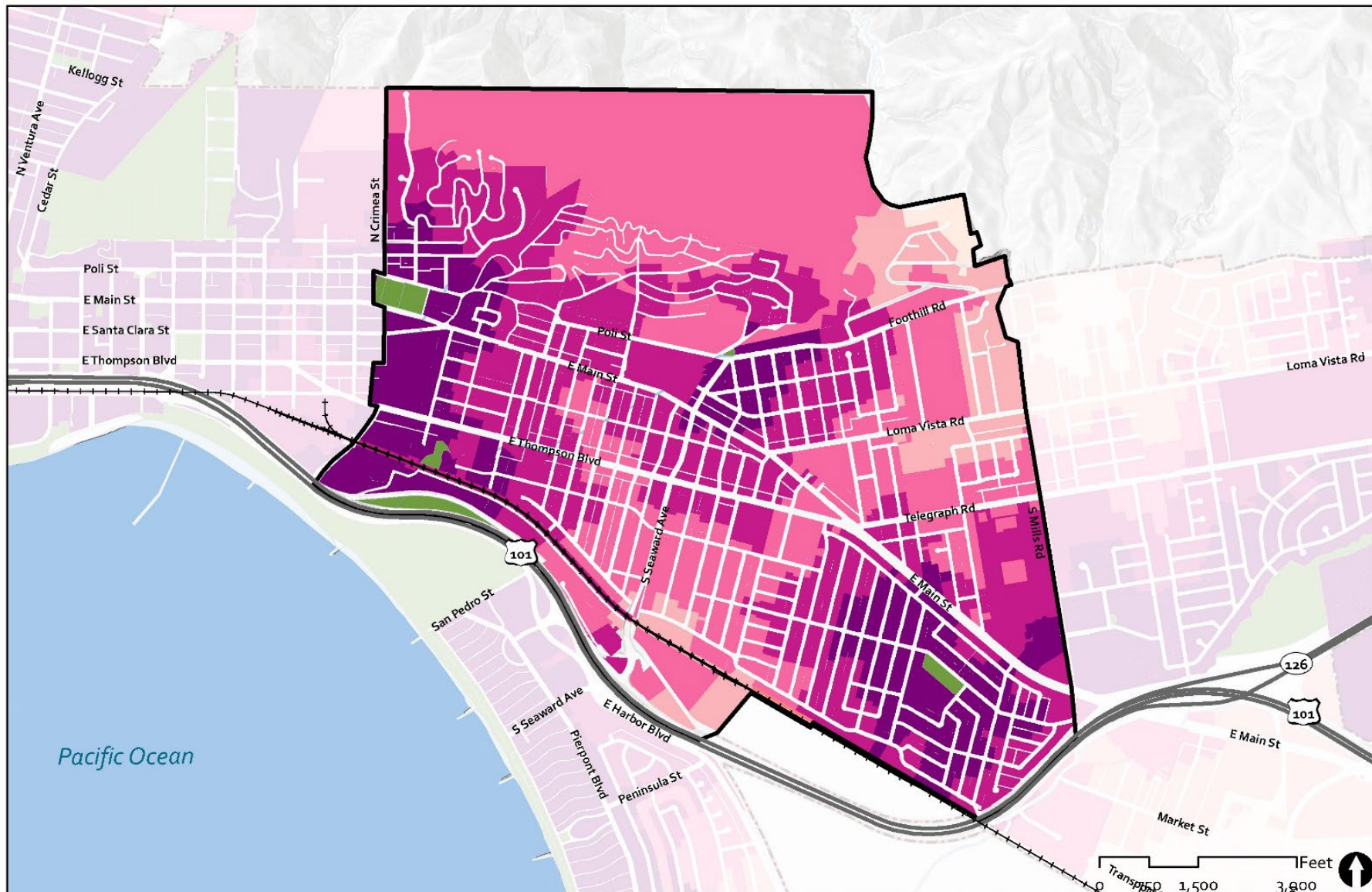
Open Space

Though it is one of the most populous neighborhoods in the city, Midtown is severely lacking in public open space. It only contains one full-service neighborhood park – Blanche Reynolds, south of Highway 101 – and has two other mini-parks elsewhere. As such, there is slightly more than one acre of public parkland per 1,000 residents – the second lowest rate in the city – and just over one-fifth of residents (20.9 percent) live within a five-minute walk of a public park (see Figure 5). Given the many schools in the area, the City may choose to pursue joint-use agreements to open these facilities for public recreation.



Blanche Reynolds Park. Source: MapQuest

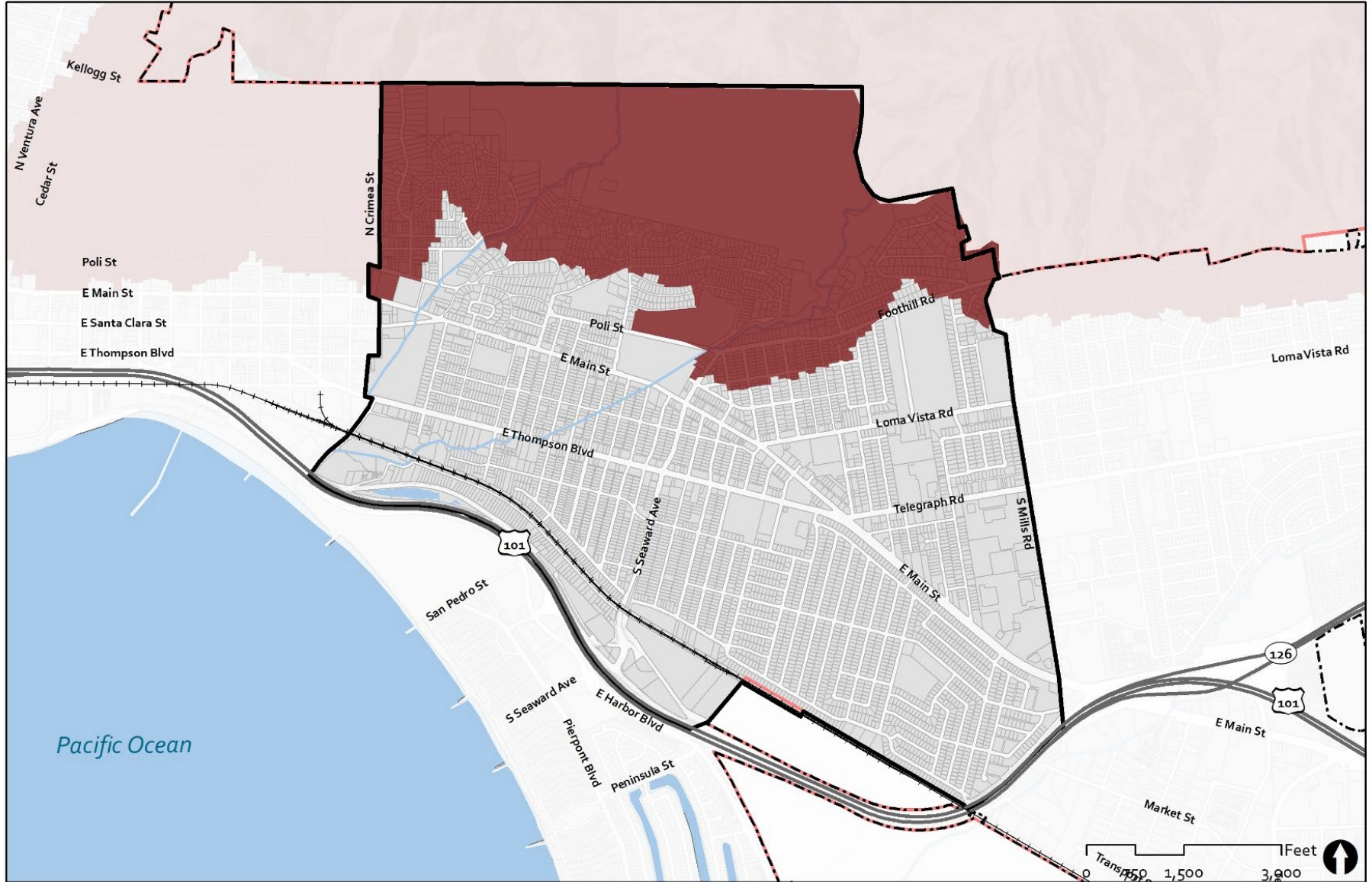
Figure 5: Walk Access to Parks



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



Figure 6: Fire Risk



- Midtown Subarea
- Railroad
- Very High
- Ventura City Limits
- Freeway
- Sphere of Influence



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

Summary of Key Findings

- **Redevelopment Potential:** Midtown hosts several large commercial areas with abundant surface parking and retail establishments with uncertain growth prospects. Many of these areas, specifically Pacific View Mall, have been cited as potential redevelopment sites that could support a mix of housing, employment-generating uses, and/or other needed community amenities.
- **Severe Parkland Shortage:** Midtown is severely deficient in public parkland, with just over one acre of parkland per 1,000 residents – the second lowest of any subarea in the city. Meanwhile, just over one-fifth 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.
- **Socioeconomic Considerations:** Midtown is a fairly affluent area, boasting the second-highest median household income (\$94,000) and home value (\$640,000) of any subarea in the city. Inflated housing prices, coupled with limited opportunities for multifamily development, may create an exclusionary environment for lower-income households.
- **Wildfire Risk:** Parts of Midtown are vulnerable to wildfires, which are only anticipated to increase in frequency as climate change intensifies. Approximately 15.3 percent of all residents live in “Very High Fire Risk” (VHFR) areas, indicating a need to rethink development patterns, expand evacuation routes, and strengthen adaptation and resilience efforts.

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