San Diego City Redistricting
Part II: Demographic Dynamics

Once a decade, the City of San Diego participates in the "redistricting" process. Electoral district boundaries are redrawn to reflect population changes revealed by the decennial census. To the greatest extent possible, they must have equal populations, be compact and be delineated by natural borders. Legal considerations and public input also guide the updating of District boundaries. Ultimately, redistricting plans must provide "fair and effective" representation for all citizens, including racial and ethnic minorities.

After nearly a year of hearings, the San Diego City Redistricting Commission approved a new redistricting plan in August 2011. While the Commission achieved the principal goals set out by the City Charter, important questions remain on the impact these new Districts will have on the political dynamics at City Hall, as well as social and economic policymaking.

In an effort to foster greater understanding of these potentially significant changes, the National University System Institute for Policy Research (NUSIPR) used GIS and database software to analyze pertinent data available from municipal, state and federal government agencies.   In Part I we explored implications for the City's political landscape. Part II examines the demographic profiles of these Districts and exploring how these factors may affect public policy over the next decade.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- There are wide demographic differences between the Districts. From the number of families, to senior citizens, to military veterans, Council Districts differ greatly. If "all politics is local," candidates and elected officials competing in District-based elections are more likely to find electoral success if they understand, and are responsive to the unique demographic profile of their constituents and neighborhood-level concerns.

- Though San Diego is becoming more diverse, its Caucasian population remains a dominant electoral factor. While the number of Caucasian residents shrank over the past decade, and reflect less than half of the citywide population, they remain a large majority of the electorate. Despite the creation of a second "Latino" Council District and an Asian-influenced Council seat in

the last round of redistricting, it is unlikely that issues involving race and ethnicity will significantly increase in importance at City Hall.

- San Diego's aging population will become an increasingly important constituency. The overall senior population outpaced citywide growth over the past decade. With this trend projected to continue for the next few decades, senior issues will increasingly take center stage at City Hall. Adequate access to specialized senior services such as elder care and assisted living centers will become priority concerns for all Councilmembers.

- San Diego City children have unequal access to parks, libraries and recreation centers. Districts with larger populations of children under 18 years of age generally have fewer city facilities and less park acreage per child than Districts with smaller numbers of adolescents. While cuts to popular city programs have been commonplace, elected officials must consider new solutions, including public-private partnerships, to provide San Diego youth equal access to popular neighborhood facilities.

INTRODUCTION: METHODOLOGY AND TERMINOLOGY

In this policy brief we are interested in examining data from the 2000 and 2010 Census and the newly drawn Council District maps. For example, when we talk about changes in the number of veterans in a particular Council District we are referring to the new geographic boundaries adopted in 2010. For demographic figures, we gathered data from the 2000 and 2010 Census, as well as the 2006-2010 American Community Survey published by the United States Census Bureau. Housing statistics were obtained from the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG). Information on public parks, libraries and recreation centers were found on the San Diego Geographic Information Source (SanGIS) website. We then used GIS software tools to group data by Census block and tract, and process them into the new Council Districts.

A GROWING POPULATION

Overall, the population of the City of San Diego grew 6.5% over the past decade, from 1,221,509 residents in 2000 to 1,301,617 in 2010. San Diego grew somewhat slower than the rest of the state, which saw a 10% increase over the past decade.[1] Council District 1 experienced the greatest rate of growth, principally due to development in the North University City and Carmel Valley neighborhoods. These two areas accounted for more than 2/3rds (71%) of the District's population increase. While most of the other Districts saw marginal growth, two Districts (Districts 4 and 9) saw reductions in population from 2000 to 2010.

Table 1: Population Growth in the City of San Diego, 2000-2010

District	2000 Population	2010 Population	% Change
1	116,596	147,375	26.4%
2	140,648	142,462	1.2%
3	136,692	147,117	7.6%
4	144,600	142,727	-1.3%
5	122,528	143,961	17.5%
6	139,341	140,738	1.0%
7	140,540	147,362	4.9%
8	132,975	144,830	8.9%
9	147,589	145,045	-1.7%
Total	1,221,509	1,301,617	6.5%

[1] "State & County QuickFacts: California." United States Census Bureau website. Accessed May 1, 2012. <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06000.html>.

Growth has traditionally been a critical issue in San Diego since the advent of district elections. This is especially true in Districts 1 and 5. Given the population increases in the neighborhoods these Districts represent there are good reasons to believe this will continue to be the case. Joining them in the "land use" caucus is likely to be Districts 3 and 8. District 3 now represents Centre City, which saw its population grow by 79% from 2000 to 2010. Ultimately, 1 out of 7 new San Diego city residents will live downtown. Overall, the neighborhoods represented in District 3 grew 7.6%. District 8, home to the new planned communities in Otay Mesa, grew nearly 9% between 2000 and 2010. If past is prologue, we would expect that concerns about growth, traffic, and infrastructure will become a much more prevalent dynamic in District 8.

What is likely to be the case is that the specific tenor of growth debates will shift. San Diego's post-war growth was largely in the form of large master-planned communities on open lands at the urbanizing fringe. With vacant land suitable for housing an ever-growing scarcity in San Diego County, regional and city planners have taken aim at "urban infill" as one solution towards addressing housing needs. Over the coming decades, more housing projects will be developed in older communities south of Highway 8, such as City Heights, Uptown, and North Park.

We can already see that process occurring. From 2000 to 2010, 71.5% of new housing units in the City of San Diego were multi-family homes (condos, townhomes, multi-level apartments). In fact, the number of single-family detached homes declined over the decade (from 219,207 units in 2000 to 211,257 units in 2010); all other housing growth derived from the construction of single-family multiple units. If past is prologue, we can expect more debates and political tensions over the issues of historic preservation, neighborhood character, density, and how to provide infrastructure services in an urbanized environment. Debates over growth are not going away but if demographics are a guide, the way in which these debates will play out will subtly shift.

AN AGING POPULATION

The 2010 Census provides clear evidence that the City of San Diego is a graying community. The median age of city residents has shifted from 32.6 years to 33.8. The total number of residents 65 years of age and older increased 9.1%, from 127,986 in 2000 to 139,637 in 2010. Among City Council Districts, District 8 experienced the largest increase in senior citizens (29%). Conversely, there are fewer young people in San Diego today than there were ten years ago. The number of residents under 18 years of age shrank 4.7% from 2000 to 2010.

SANDAG projects that from 2008 to 2030, the number of adolescents in the City of San Diego will grow 20.2%, slightly less than the overall citywide growth rate (26.7%).[2] Meanwhile, the number of residents 65 years and older is expected to rise 111%.

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[2] "2050 Regional Growth Forecast." SANDAG website. Accessed May 1, 2012. <http://profilewarehouse.sandag.org/profiles/fcst/city14fcst.pdf>.

Important distinctions lie within the aging population. Looking at ethnicity, Caucasians comprise 57.7% of all city residents aged 65 years and older (80,640 out of 139,637). Caucasians also have a significantly higher median age (39.9) in the City of San Diego than Latinos (26.7) and Asians (33.7).

As San Diegans continue to age, elected officials must be mindful of the need to address issues relevant to older adults, such as securing adequate access to health care facilities, elder care services, seasonal "cool zone" spots and assisted living centers. The thoughtful design of parks and "walkable" neighborhoods are also matters that are important to the quality of life that senior citizens enjoy.

Table 2: Youth & Senior Population Change in the City of San Diego, 2000-2010

District	Under 18 2000	Under 18 2010	65+ 2000	65+ 2010
1	21,240	27,404	14,997	18,564
2	18,004	18,296	17,928	16,620
3	20,689	16,305	14,751	14,931
4	46,524	39,509	13,295	14,795
5	32,560	36,551	15,052	17,414
6	32,677	28,996	13,272	15,214
7	32,674	31,392	18,333	19,280
8	43,591	41,531	9,743	12,572
9	45,319	39,384	10,615	10,247
Total	293,278	279,368	127,986	139,637

At the local level District 1 added the most individuals 65 years of age and older. District 1 has seen the opening and expansion of several new senior living centers. UCSD and Scripps Health are both engaged in multi-billion dollar expansions and renovations to meet the current and future needs of an aging population in the northwestern part of the City.
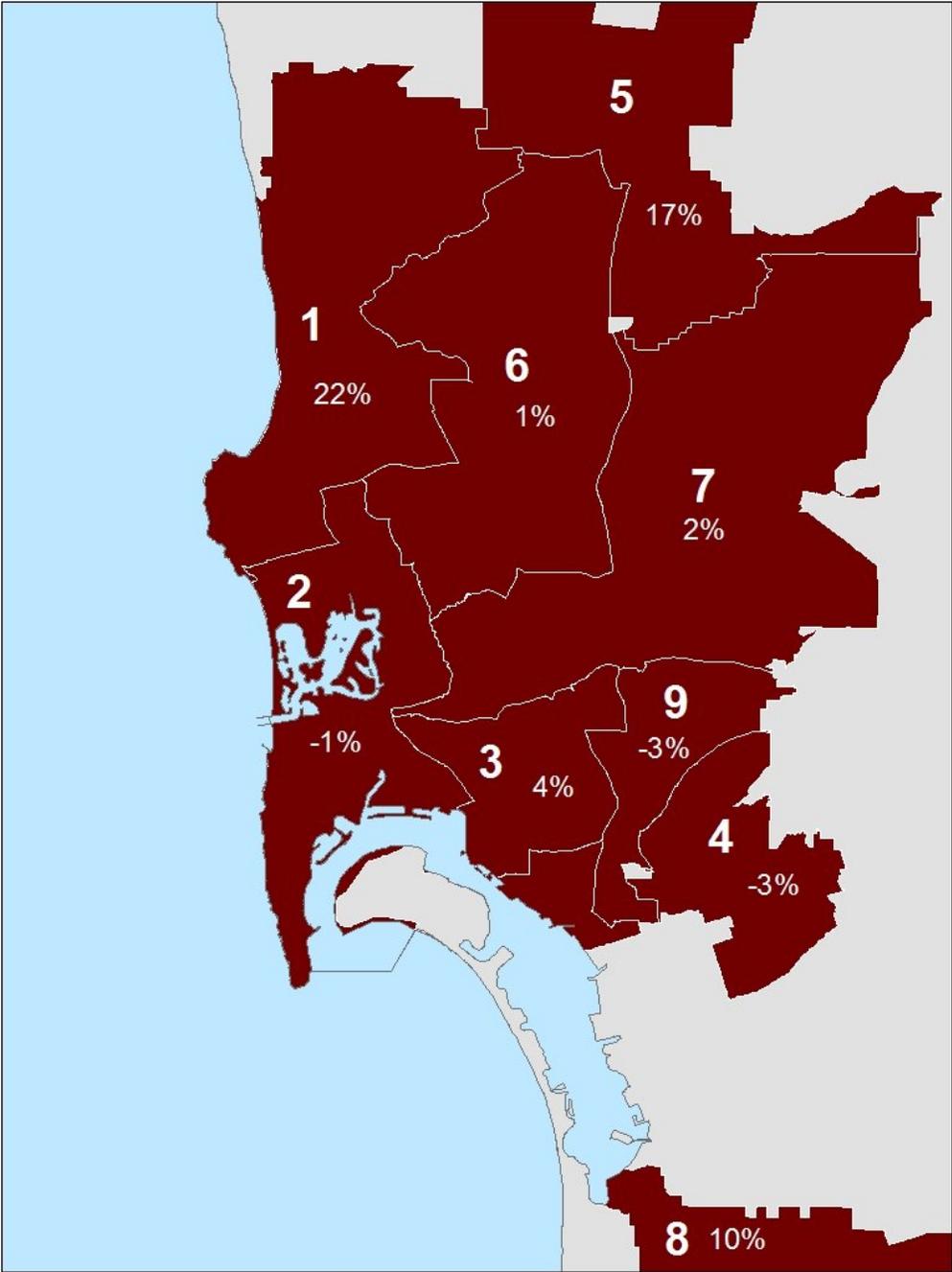
Long term, this growth is likely to create significant pressures and the potential for conflict. Much of the Golden Triangle was built for automobiles. Major arterials tend to be large, wide, and with speed limits posted at 50 MPH plus. While a skeleton pedestrian bridge and walk way system exists, it remains uncompleted and largely un-integrated in the planning. It is unclear as to whether such land use forms and planning are compatible with a population which is increasingly grayer. Politically, the challenge will be finding ways to finance pedestrian improvements in that community at the same time that other infrastructure needs in the city loom large and with vehicular traffic remaining a potent political concern.

FAMILIES

While the number of adolescents has declined since 2000, the number of families living in the City has not. The total number of families residing in the City of San Diego rose 5% between 2000 and 2010. Today, 285,211 families call San Diego home.

The rise in families can be observed in the far northern and southern most Council Districts. These figures may partly reflect the influx of new single family housing developments built around or shortly after the 2000 Census, in neighborhoods such as Ocean View Hills, Black Mountain Ranch, and Pacific Highlands Ranch. Census block data supports this hypothesis. Overall, Districts 1 and 5 experienced the greatest rate of change of families. Three Districts (Dists. 2, 4 & 9) saw a marginal decline in the number of families living within their boundaries.

Chart 1: Change in Number of Families by Council District, 2000-2010

Given such dynamics it is not surprising that we have seen the push to close certain small public schools in the City of San Diego (as well as strong resistance to such plans). Districts 2, 6, and 7, the epicenter of this policy dispute, have seen the number of individuals 18 and under decrease by a combined 4,671 children. San Diego Unified School District, whose boundaries overlap with the City of San Diego, has seen a 7% decline in enrollment over the last decade, from 141,804 students in 2000, to 131,784 students in 2010.[3] All demographic forecasts suggest this trend will continue, likely meaning that school closings will continue to be an item discussed again and again over the coming decade.

NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES

For the better part of the last decade, officials at San Diego City Hall have struggled to maintain city services and fund basic infrastructure. Cuts to popular programs have been commonplace, as operating hours have been reduced, and maintenance schedules rolled back throughout the City.

The number of these neighborhood facilities range widely by Council District. For example, District 8 has the greatest number of recreation centers, but one of the smallest tallies of city libraries. With the inclusion of Mission Bay Park, District 2 has the largest tally of park acreage in the City.

However, one notable pattern does emerge from the data. Districts with larger populations of children under 18 years of age generally have fewer facilities and less park acreage per child than Districts with smaller numbers of adolescents. For example, District 3 has one branch library for every 4,076 residents under the age of 18. Meanwhile in District 8, the ratio is one library for every 13,844 children.

Table 3: Libraries, Recreation Centers & Parks, by Council District

District	Under 18 Pop.	Libraries	Rec. Centers	Parks	Park Acreage
1	27,404	4	4	47	838.6
2	18,296	4	8	27	4,647.0
3	16,305	4	7	29	1,228.0
4	39,509	5	6	27	349.6
5	36,551	4	5	28	302.9
6	28,996	4	3	26	362.5
7	31,392	6	6	24	364.2
8	41,531	3	8	29	175.9
9	39,384	3	7	28	176.0

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[3] DataQuest. California Department of Education. Accessed May 1, 2012. <http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>.

Table 4: Ratio of Libraries, Recreation Centers & Parks per Child, by Council District

District	Under 18 Pop.	Library Ratio	Rec. Ctr. Ratio	Park Ratio	Park Acreage Ratio
8	41,531	13,844	5,191	1,432	236
4	39,509	7,902	6,585	1,463	113
9	39,384	13,128	5,626	1,407	224
5	36,551	9,138	7,310	1,305	121
7	31,392	5,232	5,232	1,308	86
6	28,996	7,249	9,665	1,115	80
1	27,404	6,851	6,851	583	33
2	18,296	4,574	2,287	678	4
3	16,305	4,076	2,329	562	13

The gap in park acreage is even more pronounced, with District 8 children clearly underserved when it comes to parks and available acreage.
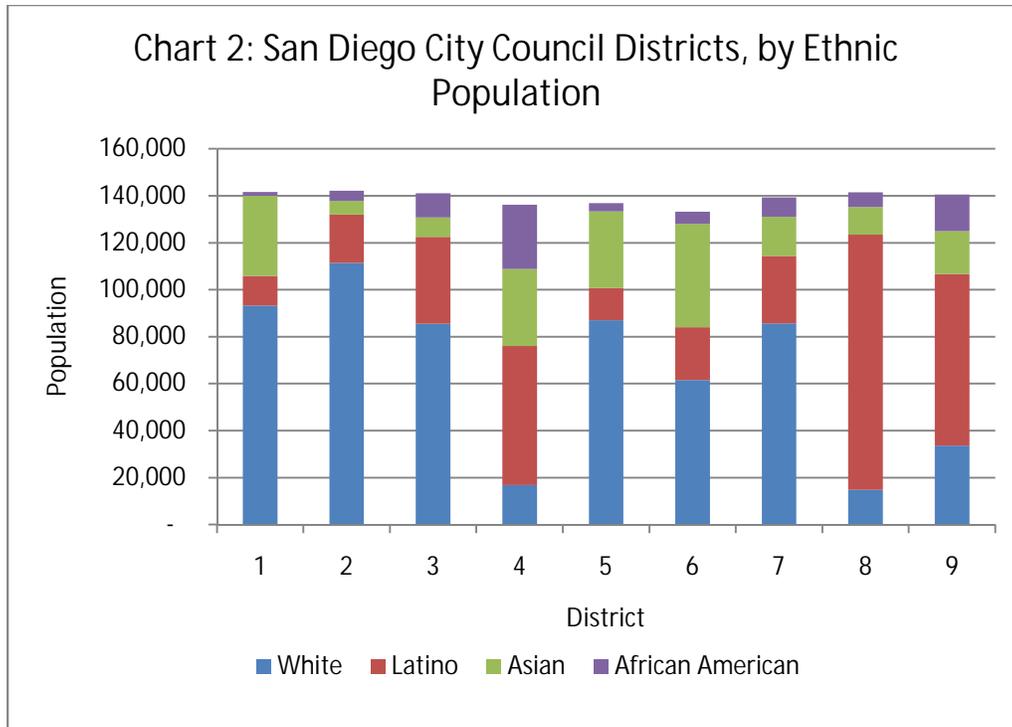
In many ways this reflects past demographics, with parks and libraries built in the San Diego communities which were growing in the 1970's and 1980's. In an era of fiscal constraints, the daunting political challenge is finding new resources to make investments in the communities currently underserved and shift operating budgets away from communities which have seen the most marked reduction in the number of residents younger than 18.
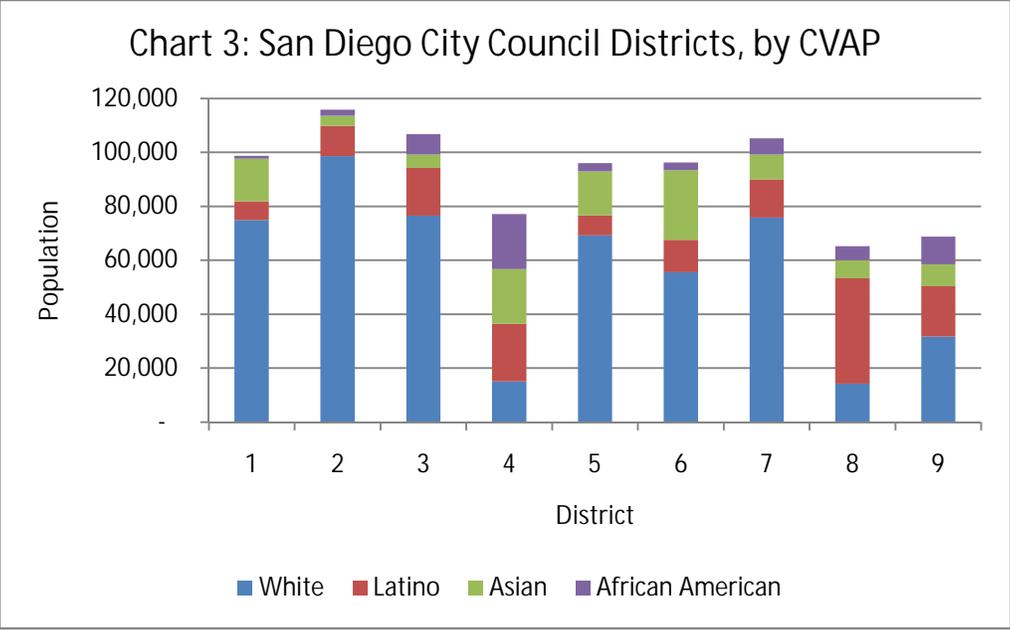
DIVERSITY

San Diego is ethnically becoming a more diverse community. The total number of non-Hispanic Caucasians in the City decreased 2.8% between 2000 and 2010. This phenomenon is likely due to a combination of factors, including natural deaths, migration, and a comparatively lower fertility rate than non-Caucasians.

Numerically, Latinos comprise the greatest source of San Diego City growth, increasing in population by more than 64,000 residents since 2000. However, Asian Pacific-Americans are the fastest increasing ethnic community in San Diego, growing 24% from 2000 to 2010. In comparison, the number of Latinos increased 21%, while the number of African Americans declined from 92,830 in 2000 to 81,340 in 2010.

Looking at City Council divisions, Districts 4 and 8 have the most diverse populations, while Districts 2 and 1 are the least diverse.

Chart 2: San Diego City Council Districts, by Ethnic Population

An important distinction to make within demographic data, particularly when discussing diversity and ethnic background, is to identify which segment of the population is eligible to vote. Many of those counted by the Census are under 18 years of age, or are not citizens of the United States, and as a result, do not have electoral power they can exercise. In 2012, the Census Bureau released its 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-year estimates of citizen voting age population for California. Using GIS software to analyze the data, stark contrasts emerge for four Council Districts (4, 6, 8 & 9) with large ethnic populations. While Caucasians may be a minority in these City Council Districts, on Election Day they wield disproportionately greater electoral power (62% of CVAP among all major ethnic groups citywide).

Chart 3: San Diego City Council Districts, by CVAP

A stacked bar chart showing population by CVAP for San Diego City Council Districts 1 through 9. The y-axis shows Population from 0 to 120,000 in increments of 20,000. The x-axis shows District (1–9). The legend indicates the categories: White (blue), Latino (red), Asian (green), African American (purple).
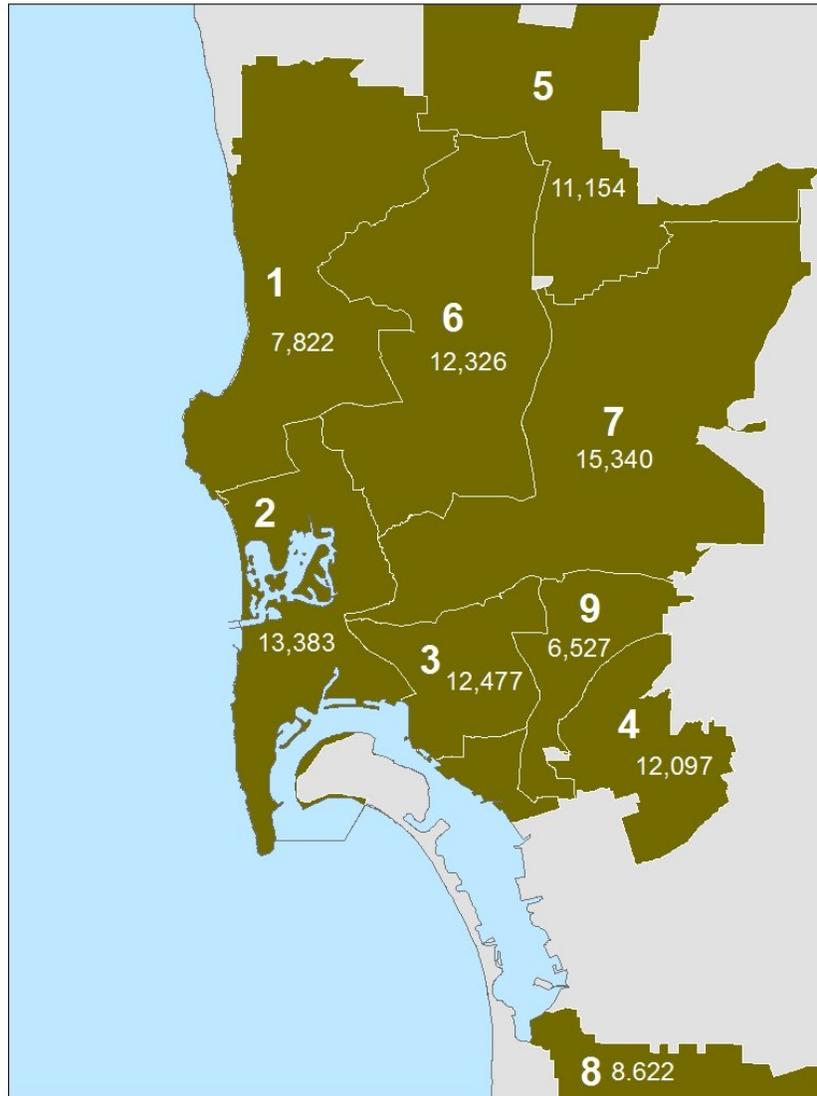
MILITARY VETERANS

The City of San Diego has held a long-standing reputation as a large, supportive community for military veterans. Thousands of servicemen who were stationed and received training at military bases in San Diego during World War II returned back after the war's end and purchased homes. Now, as the veteran population ages, their numbers are dwindling. According to U.S. Census Bureau estimates, the total number of military veterans in the City of San Diego fell from 113,900 in 2000 to 99,748 in 2009, a 12.4% decline.

A closer look at the data reveals that all but one Council District (Dist. 1) lost veterans over the last decade. In 2000, District 3 had the second-largest number of veterans in the City (16,367), but has since seen a 24% decline. Today, most military veterans live in the city's older inland neighborhoods north of Highway 8, and coastal neighborhoods that wreathe Mission Bay.

Chart 4: Total Number of Military Veterans by Council District

While the loss of veterans has been a trend in the City of San Diego, it may not continue for long. Due to defense budget cuts, and the drawdown of military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, a significant number of post-9/11 veterans are expected to retire and return to civilian life this decade. In all, NUSIPR estimates that more than 16,000 post-9/11 veterans will be separating from service into San Diego County from 2010 to 2020.[4]

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[4] National University System Institute for Policy Research. Public Sector Spending on Programs and Emergency Services for Homeless Veterans in San Diego County. San Diego: 2012, pg. 12. Estimate has been revised based on 2012 Defense Department budget cuts.

It is incumbent upon elected officials at San Diego City Hall to begin evaluating new ways of partnering with the military community and non-profit organizations to successfully transition returning veterans into the civilian labor force. Servicemen and women could not be leaving the military at a more challenging economic time. Most national economic forecasts project anemic job growth through 2014. Traditional industries that have been a strong source for veteran job opportunities, such as construction and manufacturing, have experienced significant declines in San Diego County. Moreover, veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom have a higher unemployment rate than similarly aged non-veterans. Veteran access to housing, health care, higher education, and disability services are also important topics that merit greater discussion at City Hall.

About the National University System Institute for Policy Research

The National University System Institute for Policy Research (NUSIPR) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that formulates and promotes high quality economic policy and public opinion research to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of local governments in San Diego County and to improve the quality of life enjoyed by the region's residents.

NUSIPR regularly publishes independent research and analysis for the public on a range of topics, including unemployment, business growth, and the San Diego housing market. The Institute also works collaboratively with clients to develop high-quality research products that are tailored to their policy needs.