



Master Plan +  
In-Depth Transportation Plan

# Project Team

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# 01

## Introduction

Goals

Guiding Principles

Analysis

Implementation Timeline

# Goals

The Master Plan for Rainbow City provides a vision and a framework for incremental development to occur within the city and riverfront. The Master Plan recognizes the unique charm and quality of life that already exists within this area of the city and proposes compatible development as well as offers imagery and precedents to be used as guides for the future. The adoption and implementation of the Master Plan will provide the city a mechanism through which it can address both the existing and future needs and wishes of its citizens.

The Master Plan offers guidance on:

1. In-Depth Transportation Study – improvements to roadway connections to and within the study area;
2. Potential Sites Map- Recommended location of proposed land uses within the study area over the next 15+ years;
3. Catalyst project locations (existing and proposed) in which to focus resources on and key areas that to be preserved built upon;

While it is anticipated that there will be needs for more detailed study and planning as more specific issues and goals need to be addressed, it is the purpose of this plan to identify the broader goals, significant projects, and important locations around which future development will occur.

Important to the success of this plan will be the city's commitment beyond the tenure of any single individual or group of individuals. To this end, community involvement and shared leadership have been integral to the development of the plan itself.

## Goals, cont.



Maintain Rainbow City's small-town charm, while connecting natural assets to the city center



Provide interconnected areas of open space for strong linkages to neighborhoods, parks, and trails



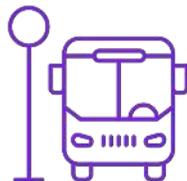
Harness and enhance the economic opportunities the Coosa River, the Etowah County Mega Sports Complex, and Mega-Site provide



Work with natural site features to minimize construction cost and negative environmental impacts



Provide catalyst projects for future development



Establish long-term, improved transportation system

# Guiding Principles

**Create** a community design and economic development framework to revitalize Rainbow City.

**Build** on special qualities to create place-specific identities.

**Reinforce** development by identifying and enhancing strong existing and proposed catalyst projects, amenities, and economic opportunities.

**Strengthen** connections between the riverfront, neighborhoods, existing commercial developments, and existing/proposed catalyst projects.

# Guiding Principles, cont.



## Plan Development

### Research

- Site visits + site analysis
- Precedent studies
- Economic + demographic conditions
- Economic impact study
- Real estate market analysis
- Studied impact development plans and land use decisions

### Design

- Research elements show market potential and influence master plan
  - i.e., economic impact study
- Master plan shows suggested developments and locations
- Catalyst projects are starting points to boost businesses within the study area

### Industrial Growth

- Catalyst project for job creation and economic growth
- 1,100 acres along rail
- Adjacent to I-59
- 100% county-owned
- Industrial Park
- Etowah County Mega Sports Complex

# Analysis



## Natural Assets

### Assets

- Small town charm
- Vivian Lee Maddox Park
- Coosa River and riverfront properties

### Opportunities

- Physical connections between existing assets
  - Emphasis on pedestrian scale and walkability
  - Investment in biking, hiking, and walking trails
- Connection to Coosa River

### Challenges

- Majority of riverfront property is privately held
- Lack of trail network



## Built Infrastructure

### Assets

- Industrial Park
- Rainbow Landing boat dock
- Medical corridor on Hwy 77

### Opportunities

- Creation of city center
- Extension of Brown Avenue
- Improved interconnectivity
- Improved pedestrian and bike connections
- Etowah County Mega Sports Complex

### Challenges

- Vehicular traffic
- Sewer and water system accessibility for new construction
- Need broadband
  - County-wide approach
- Lack of developable area at Rainbow Landing

# Analysis



## Community Assets

### Assets

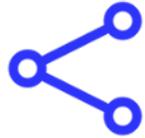
- Municipal leadership
- Expanding population base
- Strong family income
- School system

### Opportunities

- Improved recreational programs and facilities
- Expand county animal shelter
- Quality of life center

### Challenges

- Elementary school fully enrolled—outgrowing current capacity



## Social Networks

### Assets

- Saturday farmer's market
- Community-minded local churches

### Opportunities

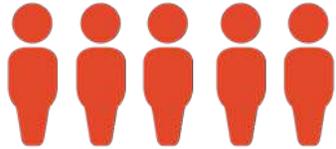
- Quality of Life Center development
- Establishment of spaces for family activities
  - i.e., splash pad

### Challenges

- Need more indoor space for social functions

# Analysis

## Demographic + Economic Trends



The 2020 Census revealed RBC's population exceeds 10,000. The population growth rate is higher than average for Etowah County.



Estimated median household income is \$58,700, about \$9,500 greater than Etowah County's overall median.



The median owner-reported housing value is \$195,000. Homes are valued nearly \$56,000 higher than in the rest of Etowah County.



Retail businesses are currently paying historically high property leases. Average retail rents have doubled since the end of 2019.



In 2018, for the first time in 15 years, the number of high-paying jobs exceeded the number of low-paying jobs available in Rainbow City.



Compared to the surrounding region, RBC has a significantly higher percentage of renters.



The combination of rising rents and low vacancy suggest unmet demand for retail development.



Nearly the same number of employees commute into RBC for work as do those who commute out.



Within Etowah County, RBC's multifamily apartment inventory commands above average rent.



# 02

## Process

Case Studies + Site Visit  
Community Survey  
Key Stakeholder Interviews  
Economic Analysis  
Market Forecast

## Process Overview

Under the direction of Mayor Joe Taylor and City Council of Rainbow City, the design team of Chambless King Architects, Gonzalez-Strength & Associates, Inc., KB Advisory Group, and Sain Associates, were asked to create a plan for the future of development in Rainbow City and the neighboring riverfront. The team of consultants brought to this project included a firm with expertise in economic market studies attached to real estate development, a national and regional expert in planning with a familiarity of the local surroundings and history, a regional civil engineering firm with significant experience in transportation studies, and an award-winning architectural design firm.

The design team documented existing geographic and built conditions, researched demographic influences, evaluated economic wants and needs, and solicited stakeholder's input. The resulting Master Plan contains proposals for the location of new public amenities as well as lodging, residential, office, retail, industrial, and dining opportunities.

The process heavily encouraged public input to build wider consensus for the ideas and logic at the core of the plan. Numerous work sessions were conducted with key member of the community and an online survey was conducted to illicit recommendations.

Additionally, there were opportunities for comment on the plan during the Planning Commission presentation and through Rainbow City's Facebook page. Opportunities for the public's continued engagement with the Plan might be realized through the creation of a civic entity responsible for its implementation or through the city public meeting during the review of the catalyst projects.

# Case Studies

## Fairhope, Alabama

Fairhope is a growing city working to maintain their small-town charm. Focus has been placed on public access to waterfront properties, offering a variety of retail and restaurants, and ensuring continued walkability.



# Case Studies

## Suwanee, Georgia

Suwanee is comparable in size to Rainbow City. Interconnectivity has been an important aspect of its development. Walking and biking paths—including a bike share program—connect amenities, public green spaces, and the centrally located amphitheater.



# Case Studies

## City Harbor, Lake Guntersville, Alabama

City Harbor is a precedent for how Rainbow City could develop waterfront amenities near or at Rainbow Landing. Strategic planning enabled this project to navigate limited land availability. Walking paths connect the site to the city center for easy pedestrian access.



# Site Visit

September 2021, Rainbow Landing

Rainbow Landing is the city's only waterfront property. During this site visit, the planning team toured the area by land and water.

The site is largely parking, with one small restroom building, a dock, and boat launch area.



# Site Visit

September 2021, Coosa River



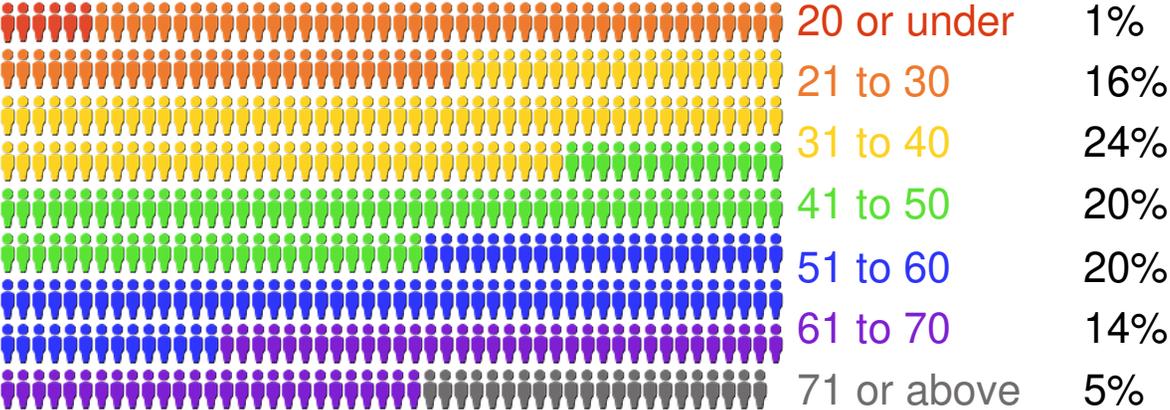
# Site Visit

September 2021, Coosa River



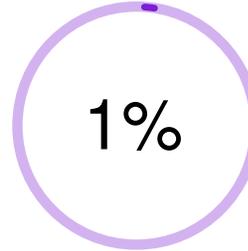
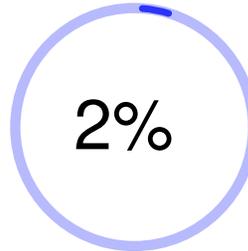
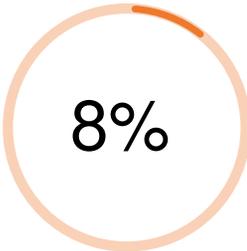
# Online Community Survey Summary

**449** total responses



Yes	26%
No	45%
Stay-at-Home	6%
Retired	17%
Other	6%

## Where do you live?



Rainbow City

Gadsden

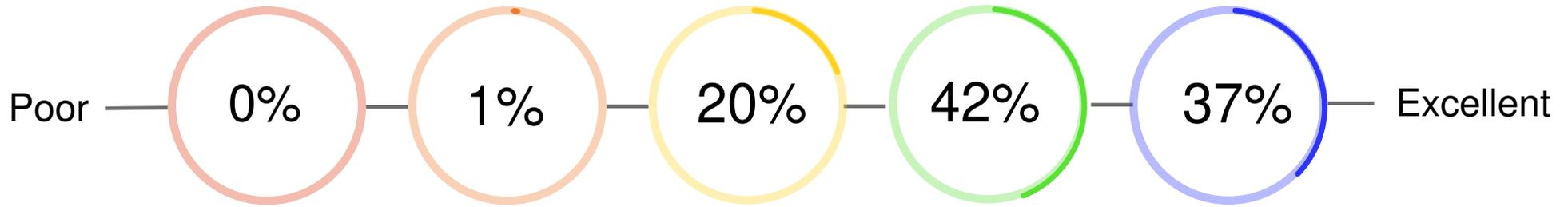
Southside

Etowah County  
(not in RBC, Gadsden, or Southside)

Alabama  
(not in Etowah County)

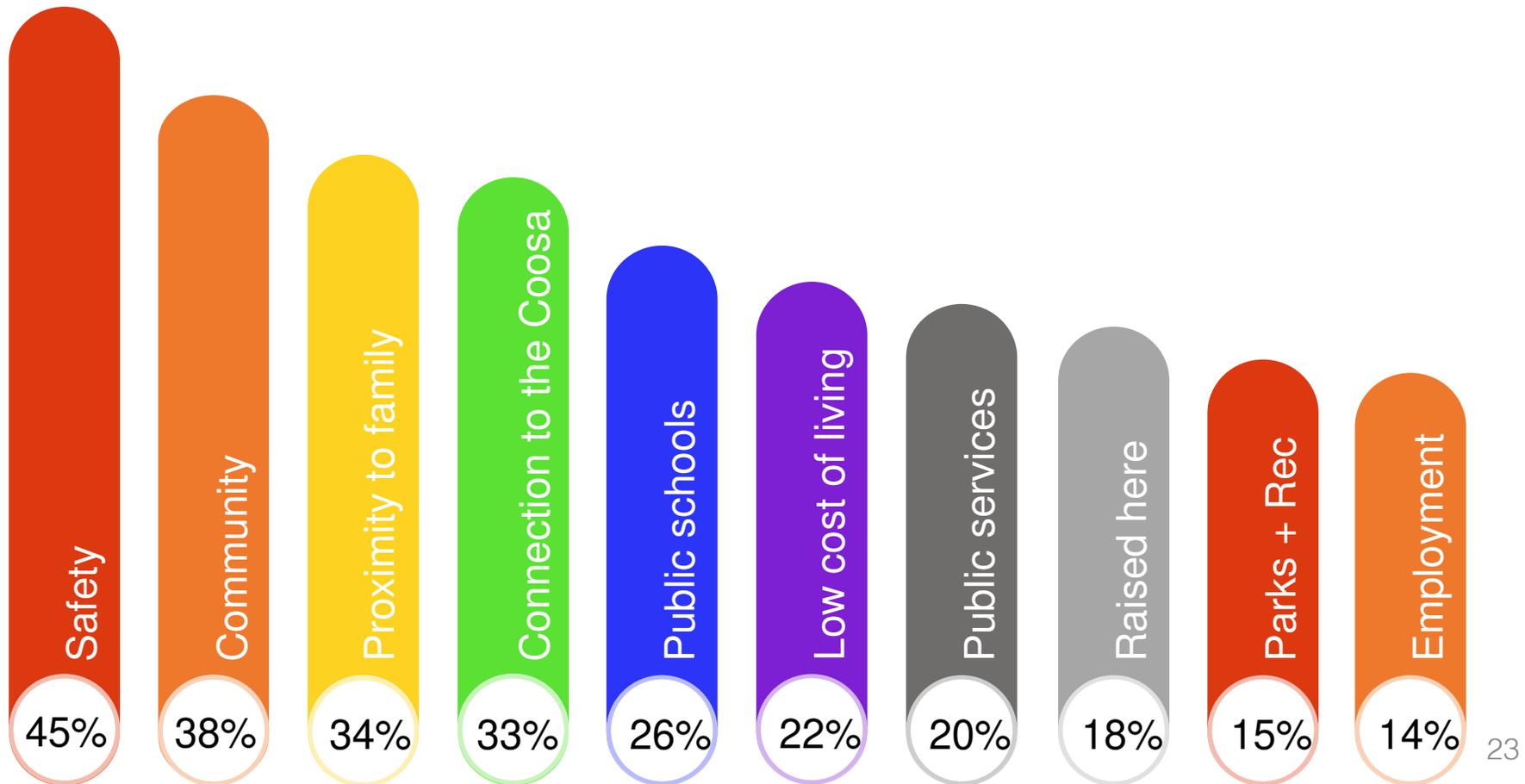
Elsewhere

## How would you rate your quality of life in Rainbow City?



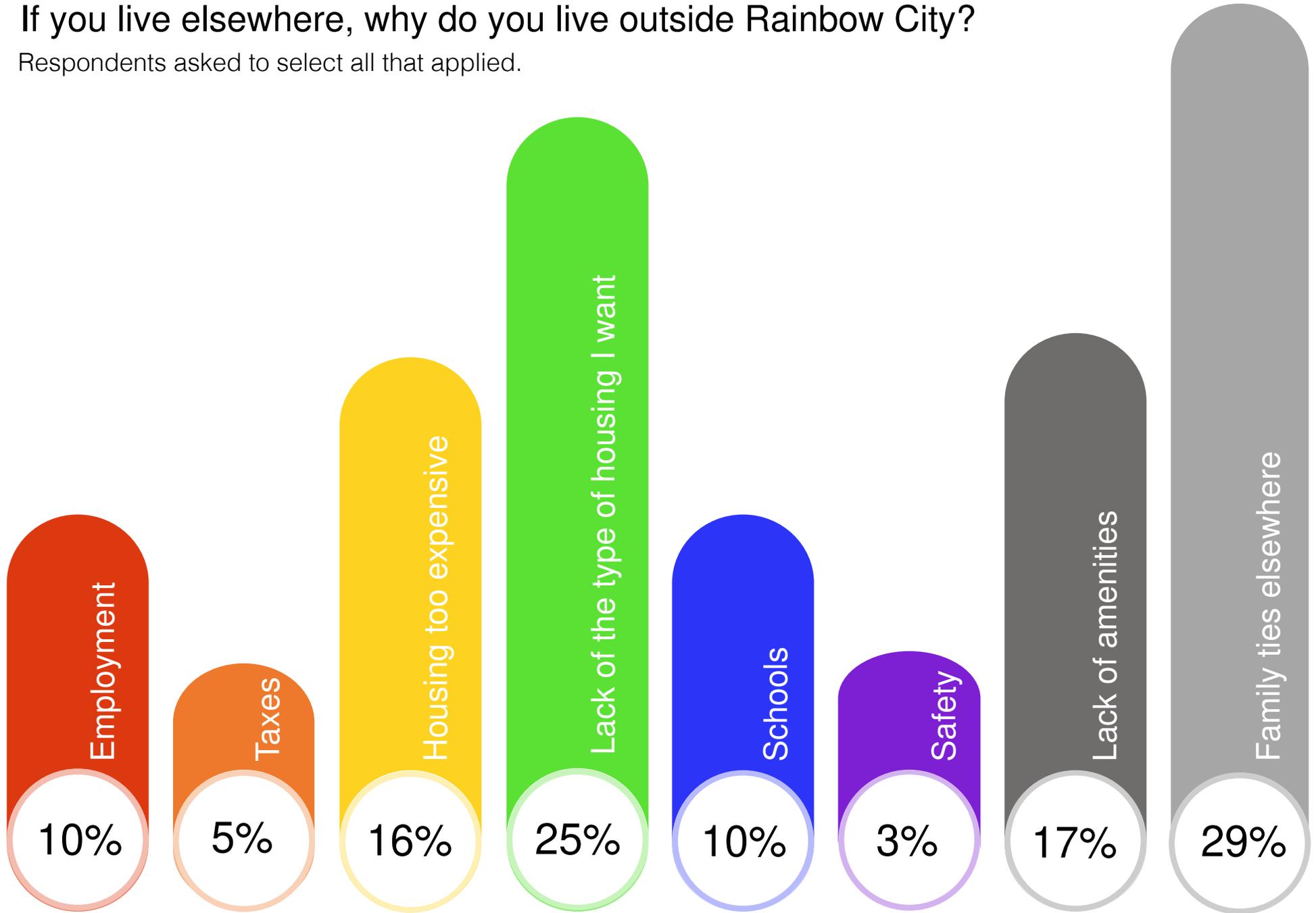
## What is your favorite part of living in Rainbow City?

Respondents asked to pick their top three reasons.



# If you live elsewhere, why do you live outside Rainbow City?

Respondents asked to select all that applied.



# Select the top five amenities you believe your community most needs.

Respondents asked to rank in order of importance (1 being the most important).



# Select the top five amenities you believe your community most needs.

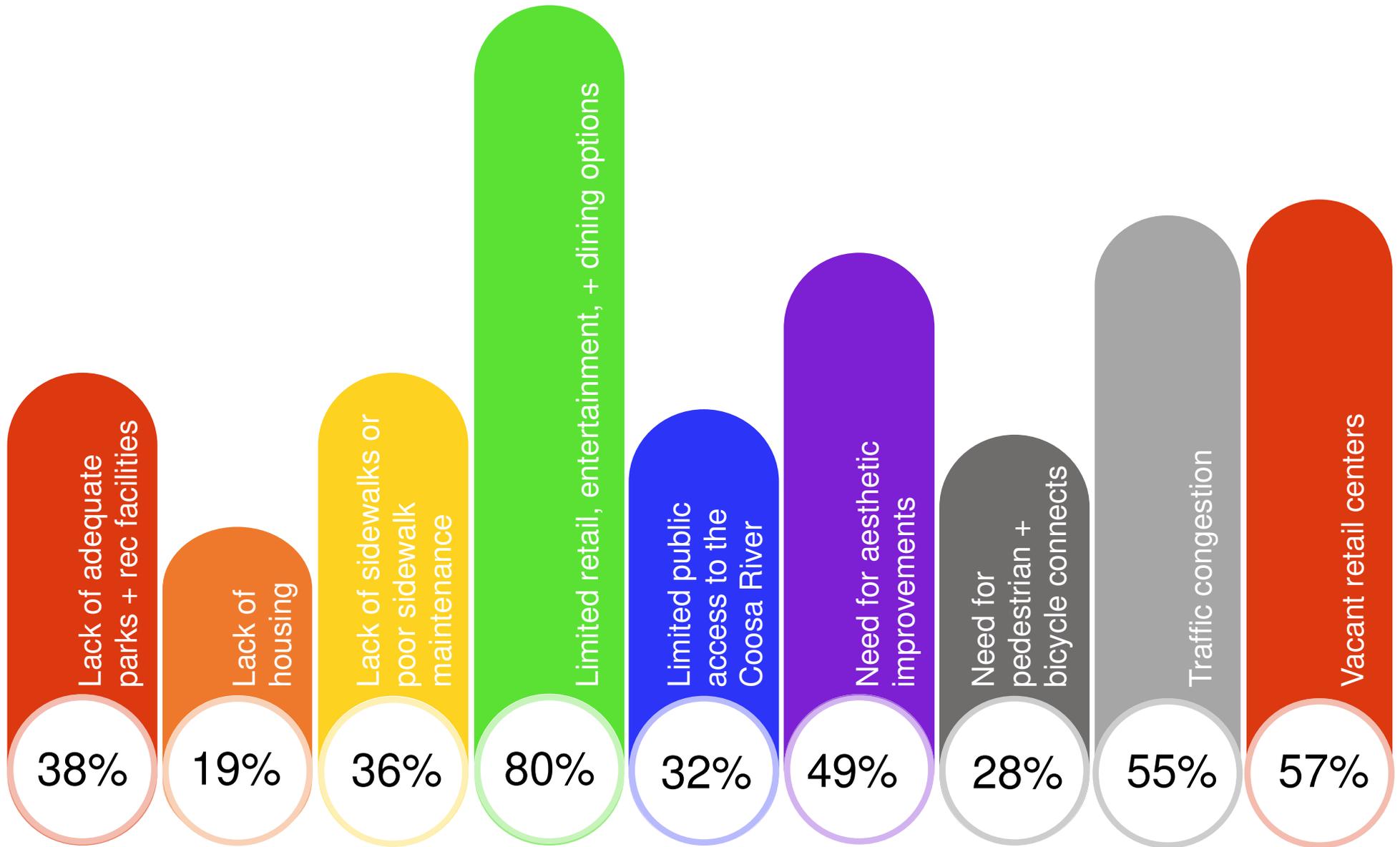
Respondents asked to rank in order of importance (1 being the most important).

## Most common top priority selections



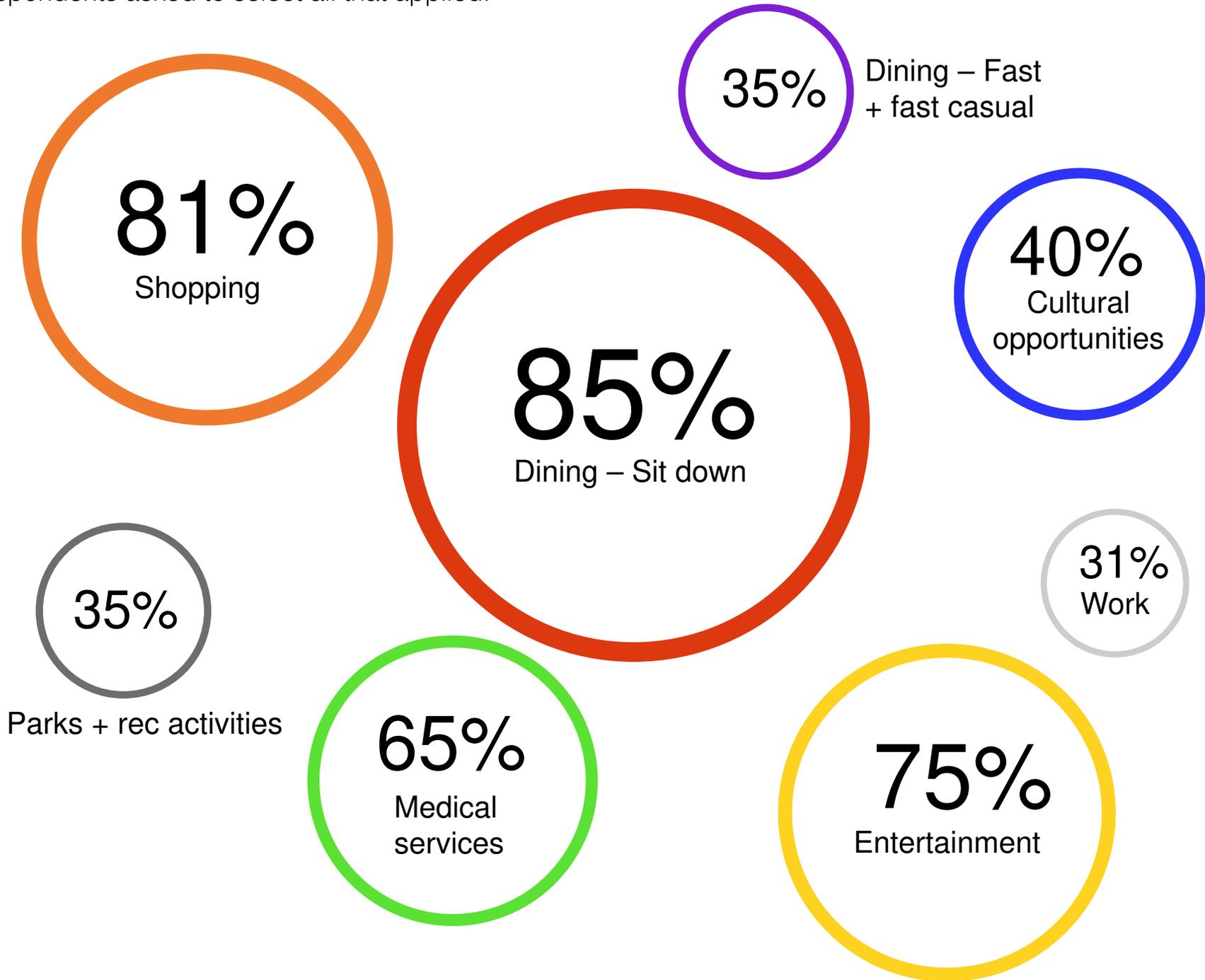
# What challenges do you feel Rainbow City is currently facing?

Respondents asked to select all that applied.



# For which services and amenities do you most frequently leave RBC?

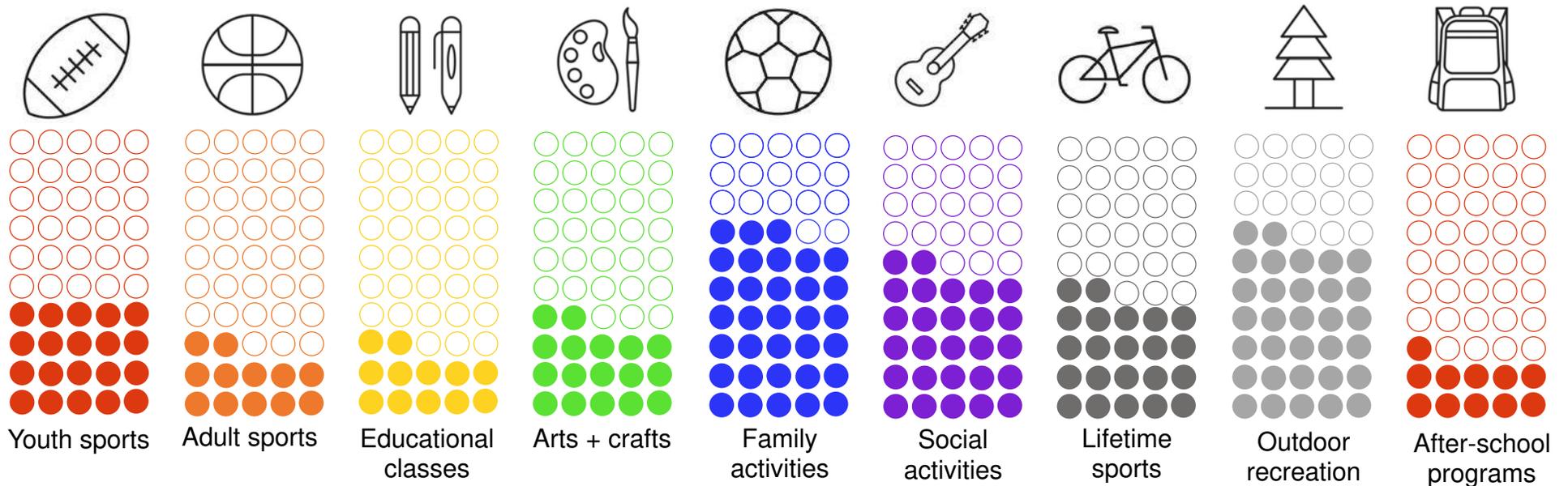
Respondents asked to select all that applied.



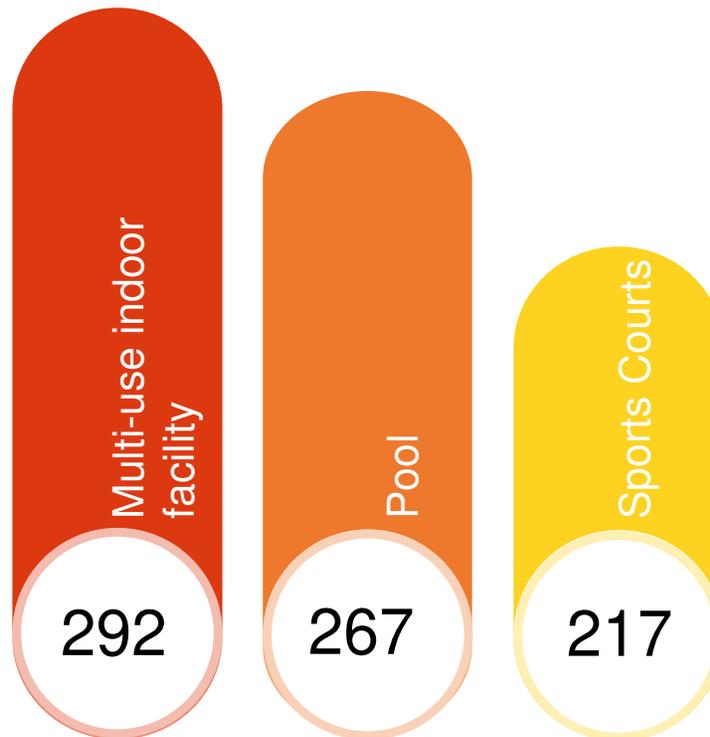
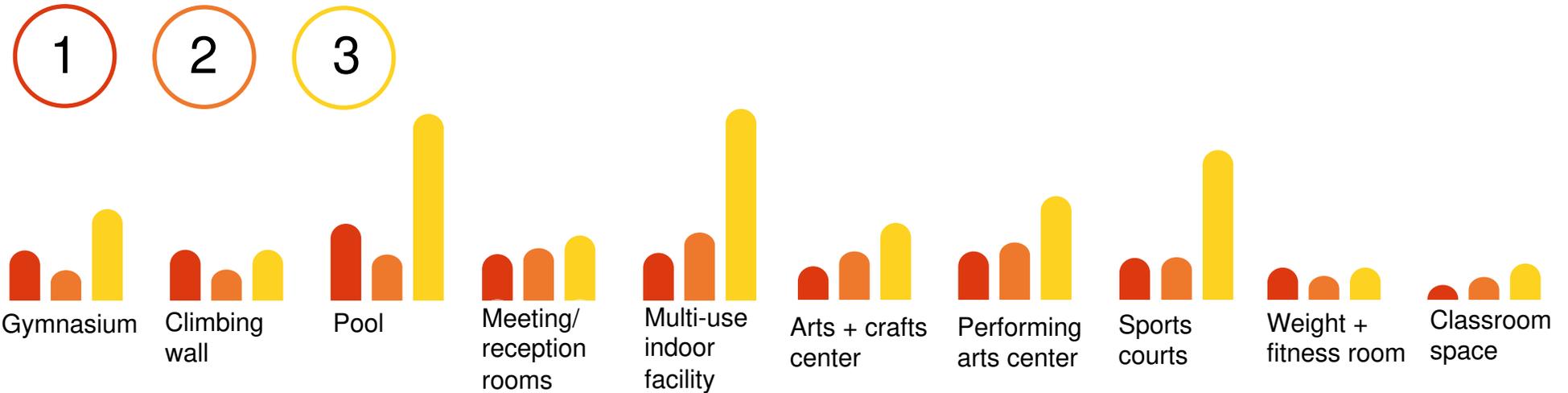
# Online Community Survey Summary – Recreation Programs

What types of recreation programs would you and members of your household be most interested to participate in?

Respondents asked to select all that applied.



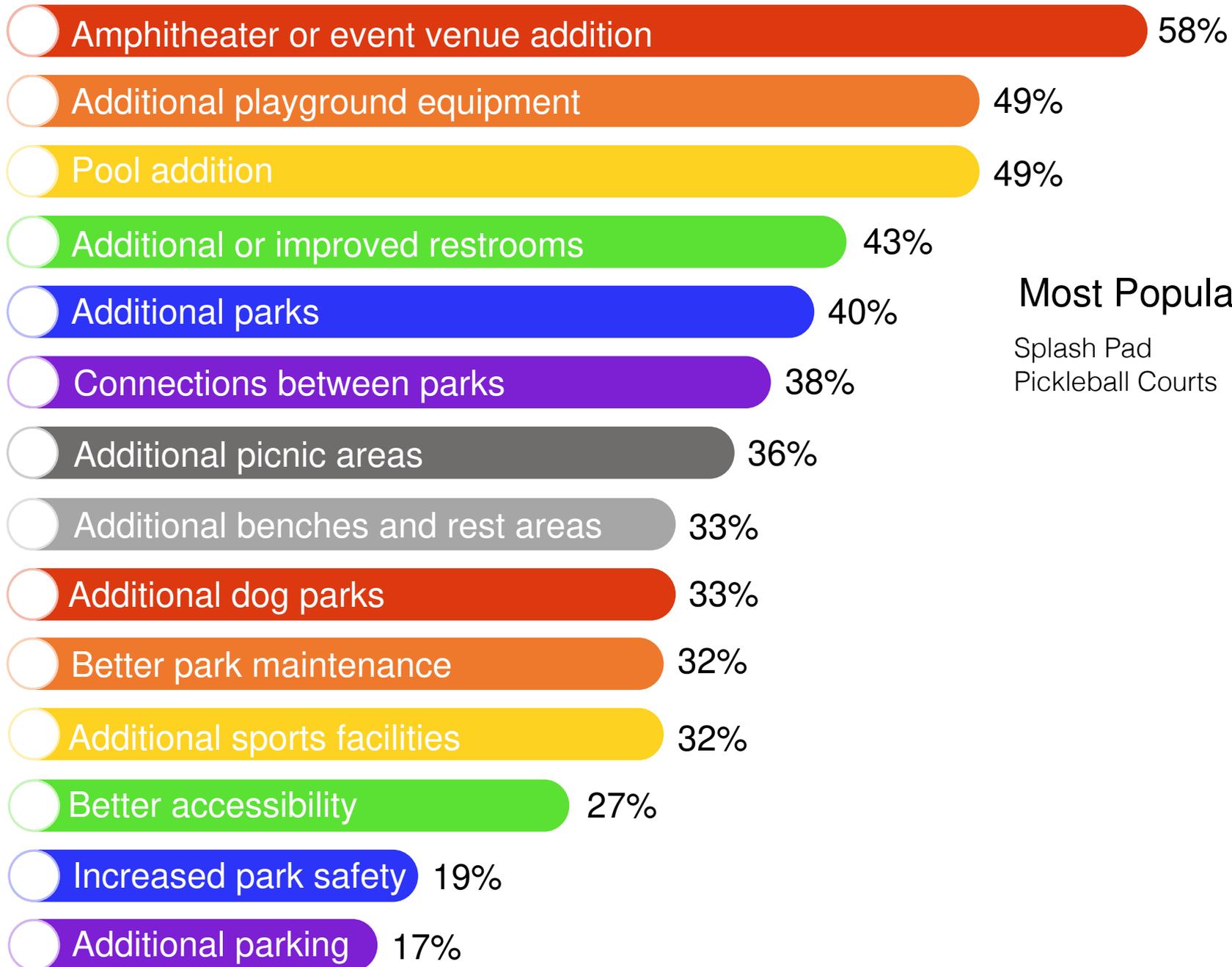
# What are the top three indoor recreation spaces most needed in RBC?



Top three choices, based on total votes

# What improvements would you like to see at Rainbow City parks?

Respondents asked to select all that applied.

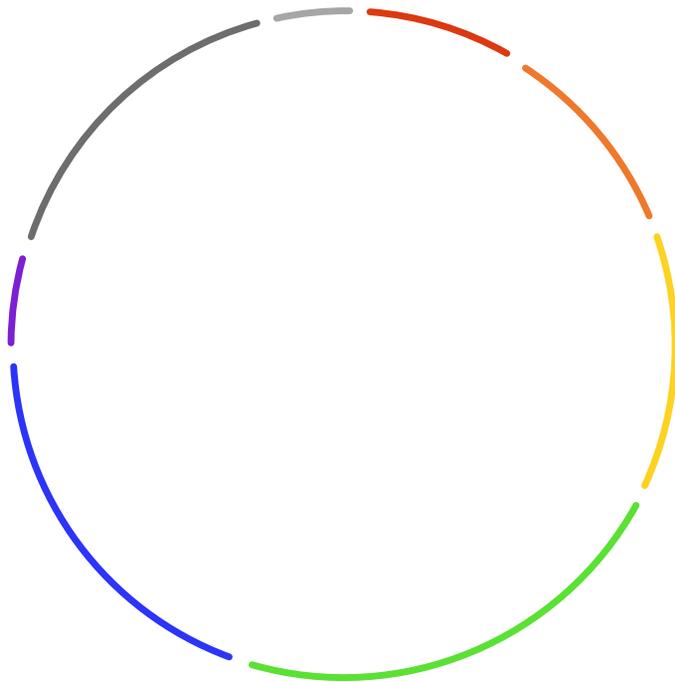


## Most Popular Write-Ins

Splash Pad  
Pickleball Courts

# Online Community Survey Summary – Transportation

What should be Rainbow City's highest transportation priority?

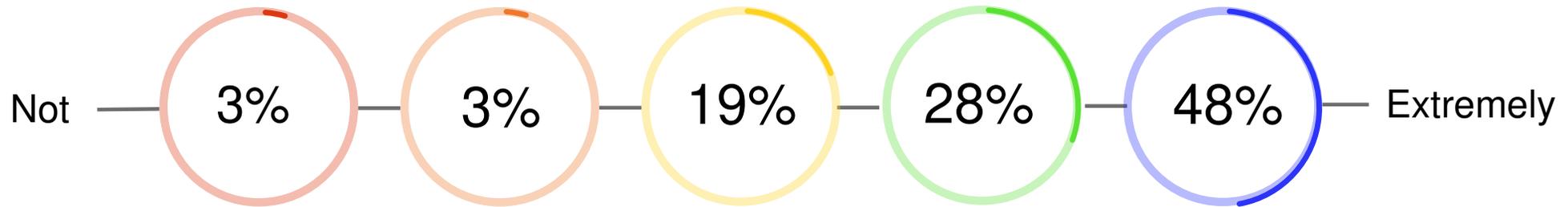


Additional bicycle lanes	7%
Improvements to or additional sidewalks	11%
Reducing speeding in neighborhoods	12%
Street maintenance	23%
Traffic light timing	21%
New roads	4%
Additional lanes	19%
Other	3%

## Most Popular Write-In

Need red light at Park Lane and Hwy 77

## How important is it to improve local road connectivity in Rainbow City?



## Specific locations for additional sidewalks, new roads, or additional lanes.

Responses listed in order of popularity.

Additional lanes at intersection of Hwys 411 and 77 — **30+ respondents mentioned this request**

Additional lanes and/or traffic control on Rainbow Drive, especially south of Hwy 77

Better connections between neighborhoods and schools

Increased speed limit on Hwy 77

Additional lanes at intersection of Hwy 411 and Rainbow Drive

Sidewalks included in all neighborhoods

Right turn lane from Steele Station onto Hwy 77

Improvements on Lister Ferry Road

Address school traffic on Lumley Road

Bike lanes on Hwys 411 and 77 leading to John Jones and Rainbow Middle School

# How important is it to improve walking/bicycling options in Rainbow City?



## Where would you want to bike or walk?

Responses listed in order of popularity.

- Around the Coosa River
- Between parks and recreation areas
- Library
- City Hall
- Rainbow Landing
- Shopping areas
- Vivian Lee Maddox
- Lister Ferry Road

Do you prefer cycling in bike lanes on roadways, sidewalks, or off-road paths?

Bike lanes	14%
Sidewalks	16%
Off-road paths	21%
N/A	49%

# Online Community Survey Summary – Development

## Which areas should Rainbow City focus on for future development?

Responses listed in order of popularity.

Hwys 411 and 77

Areas for entertainment

Rainbow Plaza

Fill currently vacant spaces

Restaurants/Shopping

Along the Coosa River

Bringing in big box stores

Area around the sports complex

## Which areas should be protected from future development?

Responses listed in order of popularity.

Residential areas

Riddles Bend

School zones

Lumley Road

Airport

Steele Station

Around the Coosa River

Stop the rendering plant

## Which areas should be annexed into Rainbow City?

Responses listed in order of popularity.

Airport — **30+ respondents**

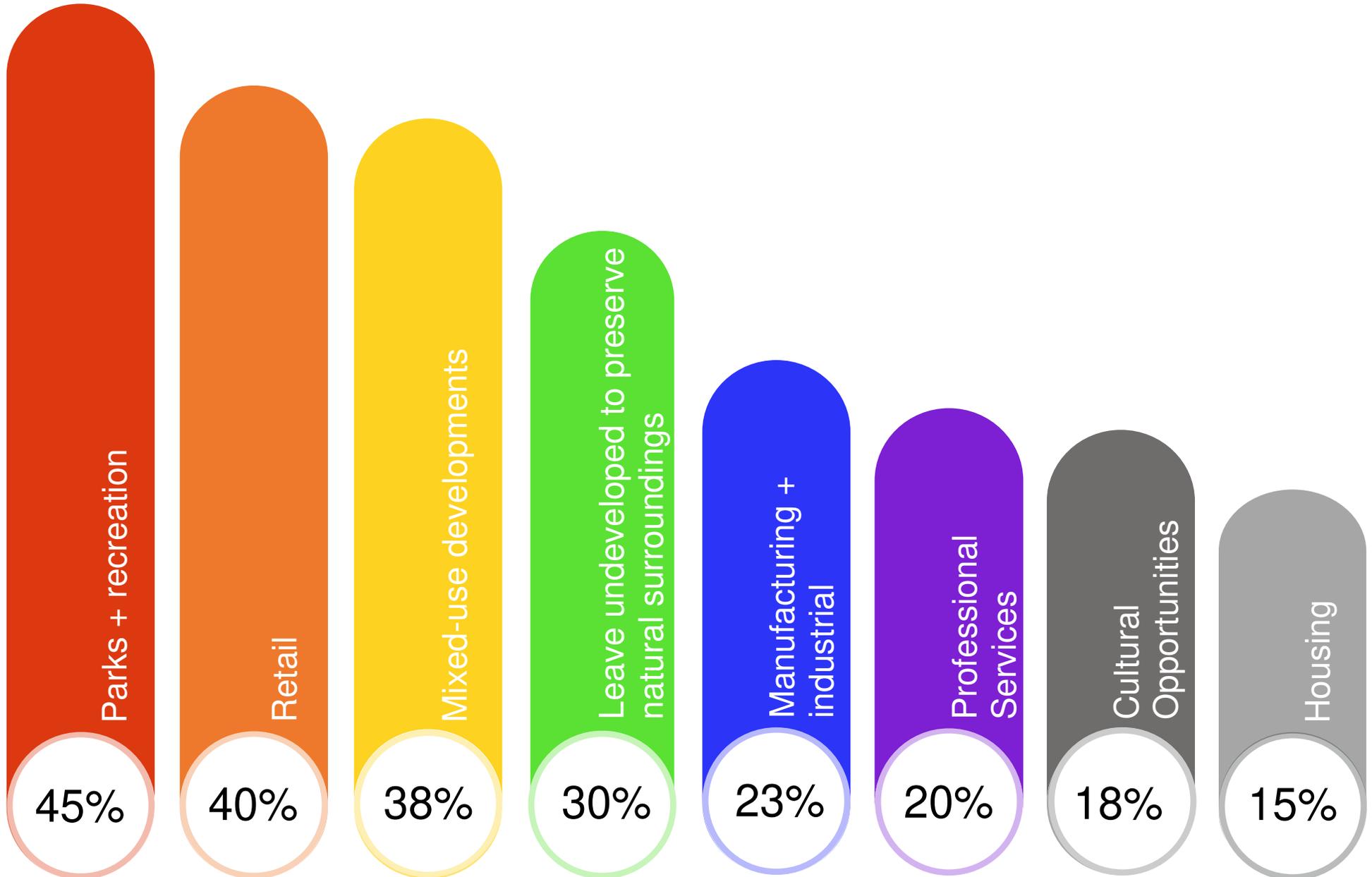
Southside

Whorton's Bend — **20+ respondents**

Attalla

# How should undeveloped land in Rainbow City be used?

Respondents asked to select all that applied.

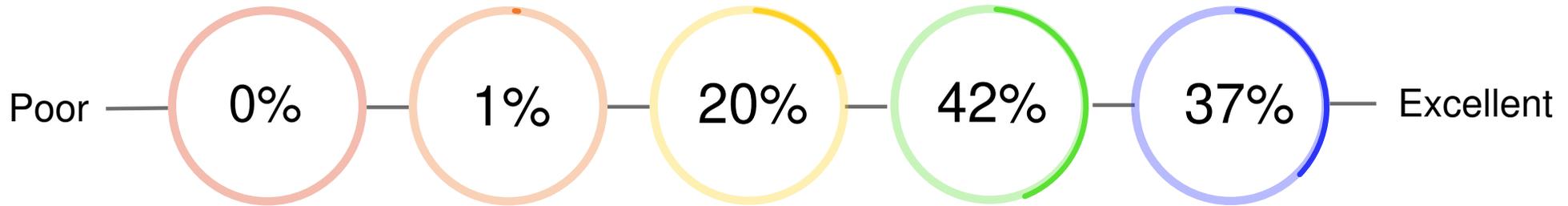


# What additional housing options would you like to see offered in RBC?

Respondents asked to select all that applied.



## How do you feel about the future of Rainbow City?



## What would be your big idea for the future of Rainbow City?

“Keep the small-town feel.”

“First, we need to get the threat of the rendering plant to go away for good. Then we need to work on beautifying our city while filling empty stores with high-quality shops, not Dollar Generals.”

“Bring in what we leave town for, so we don't want to move for a better quality of life. Neighbors are diverse and and amazing, if we keep on track with listening to each other, the City success will follow.”

“A Main Street development on the new road the city built with retail and food. Park improvements with ponds and walking /biking trails connecting to Main Street development .”

“A really nice park that is kept clean with lots of new playground equipment for kids and a splash pad and/or pool.”

“I would focus on community involvement and family but follow through.”

“Appeal to families! If we get the young ones to stay here, they will help the area grow.”



# Key Stakeholder Interviews

Beyond the online community survey, in-person interviews were held with community members to dig deeper into issues and ensure the master plan reflect the opinions and wishes of Rainbow City residents.

## 35 Total Interviews

20 male + 15 female

## Wide Range of Interviewees

Longtime and recent residents  
Property owners and renters  
Business owners  
White- and blue-collar workers  
First responders  
School administrators  
Municipal leaders

## Sample of Interview Comments

“Time for us to act like a town of 10,000.”

“There are nearly 300 students in the local marching band, but no amphitheater large enough to accommodate them.”

“We don’t utilize [the riverfront] like Chattanooga. Gunter’s Pier is a great example of how we could capitalize on [it].”

“I think the downtown should be on the north side of town to draw people in from Gadsden. Gateways are important, clean up the north side of town.”

“The city needs to provide support for families. What can the city do to enhance social service?”

# Economic Analysis

The economic and real estate market analysis provides a summary of key demographic economic, and real estate trends impacting the future development in Rainbow City, Alabama.

This analysis is expected to help inform the physical planning portions of the master plan as well as the recommendations regarding policies to encourage the desired mix of land uses benefiting residents, employees, and businesses.

# Real Estate Forecast

As part of the Rainbow City Master Plan Market Study, KB Advisory Group prepared 15-year development potential forecasts for the key land uses:

- New For Rent Residential
- New Single-Family For Sale Residential
- New Attached (Townhome) For Sale Residential
- New For Rent Residential
- Retail
- Industrial
- Office

Each real estate development potential forecast utilizes population and employment projections for growth in Rainbow City under various assumptions, including the area's recent market history and demonstrated capture of its fair share of Etowah County's and population and household growth, employment growth, and real estate development.

Hotel demand assumptions relied largely upon a recent hotel feasibility study prepared for Rainbow City by Core Distinction Group in 2021.

## Rainbow City, AL

### 15-Year Real Estate Demand Forecast

<b>New Residential</b>	<b>Units</b>
For-Sale Detached (Single-family)	661
For-Sale Attached (Townhome/Condo)	117
<b>TOTAL FOR-SALE</b>	<b>778</b>

For-Rent Conventional Attached (Apartment/Townhome)	410
For-Rent Walkable Attached (Apartment/Townhome)	202
<b>TOTAL FOR-RENT</b>	<b>612</b>

<b>New Commercial</b>	<b>Sq. Feet</b>
Retail	<b>234,135</b>
Office	<b>15,246</b>
Industrial	<b>241,241</b>

<b>New Hospitality</b>	<b>Rooms</b>
Hotel	<b>180</b>

# Residential Forecast

Housing demand originates from **three consumer buyer segments**:

- New households moving to the local area,
- Current owner households in turnover, and
- Current renter households in turnover who will chose to stay in the area.

This analysis qualifies the three demand segments for Rainbow City by income levels, tenure, annual turnover, preference to buy/rent new, and preference to buy/rent detached/attached homes.

The results of the analysis show demand for approximately 90-100 new homes sold or rented each year on average over the next 10-15 years.

Residential Demand		Rainbow City	15 Year		
<b>I. Estimated Housing Demand Due to Growth</b>					
Households 2010		4,121			
Households 2020		4,374			
Households 2035		4,782			
Net growth households 2020-2035		409			
Percentage Growth		9.3%			
Estimated percentage owner occupied		63.9%			
Estimated percentage renter occupied		36.1%			
<b>Estimated Annual Owner Demand (2020-2035)</b>		<b>17</b>			
<b>Estimated Annual Renter Demand (2020-2035)</b>		<b>10</b>			
<b>II. Estimated Housing Demand Due to Turnover</b>					
Total occupied housing units		4,147			
<b>Total owner occupied housing units</b>					
		<b>2,650</b>			
% Owner HH earning \$50K+		62%			
Total Owner HH earning \$50K+		1,655			
% of owners who moved, 2015-2016		9.8%			
Annual Owner Turnover		163			
Annual turnover owner to owner (49.7%)		81			
Annual turnover owner to renter (21.0%)		34			
<b>Total renter occupied housing units</b>		<b>1,497</b>			
% Renter HH earning \$50K+		33%			
Total renter occupied housing units		499			
% of renters who moved, 2015-2016		18.5%			
Annual Renter Turnover		92			
Annual turnover renter to owner (46.4%)		46			
Annual turnover renter to renter (75%)		69			
Annual Owner Demand due to Turnover		127			
Annual Renter Demand due to Turnover		104			
<b>Annual Turnover Demand for Owner Housing</b>		<b>127</b>			
<b>Annual Turnover Demand for Rental Housing</b>		<b>104</b>			
<b>Total Demand</b>					
Owner					
I. Annual demand from household growth		17			
II. Annual demand from turnover of existing units		127			
III. Other demand @20%		29			
New housing unit (30%)					
<b>Total annual demand for new owner housing</b>		<b>52</b>	<b>778</b>	<b>661</b>	<b>117</b>
Renter					
I. Annual demand from household growth		10			
II. Annual demand from turnover of existing units		104			
III. Other demand @ 20%		23			
New housing unit (30%)					
<b>Total annual demand for rental housing</b>		<b>41</b>	<b>612</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>202</b>

# Commercial Forecast

Assuming new population and employment growth in the area, Rainbow City can likely support over 200,000 additional square feet of retail space over the next 15 years.

This new space would need to be in desirable locations that are able to attract spending from both residents and visitors.

Additional commercial space demand in retail locations can come from demand for office space for local-serving professionals.

Further, approximately 250,000 SF of industrial space has the potential to be absorbed into the Rainbow City market over the next 15 years. This analysis excludes high-profile capture of large-scale industries due to state-level economic development efforts, which function outside of the local supply/demand dynamics.

<b>Retail Forecast</b>	<b>Rainbow City</b>
2022-2037 New Households	927
Average Annual Household Expenditures (Source: Claritas, 2021)	\$ 42,090
Additional Retail Demand	\$ 39,022,570
Retail Demand (Sq. Ft.) **	195,113
Additional Regional Demand (20%)	39,023
<b>Total New Retail Demand</b>	<b>234,135</b>

\*\* Assumes \$200 sales per square foot.

	<b>2020</b>	<b>2035</b>	<b>Growth 2020-2035</b>	<b>Growth in Office Demand (sf)</b>
Total Employment	3,681	4,341	660	
<b>Office Related Employment Growth</b>				
Information	67	82	15	3,030
Real Estate, Finance, Insurance	200	205	5	1,001
Professional, Scientific, Technical	91	113	21	4,291
Mgmt of Companies	18	24	6	1,249
Services	116	144	28	5,675
Public Administration	91	88		
<b>Total</b>	<b>583</b>	<b>656</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>15,246</b>

\*\*75% of Services employment is considered office-related

\*\*75% of Professional, Sci, Tech is considered office related

\*\*\*Assumes 200 s.f. per employee

	<b>2020</b>	<b>2035</b>	<b>Growth 2020-2035</b>	<b>Growth in Demand (sf)</b>
Total Employment	3,681	4,341	660	
<b>Industrial Related Employment Growth</b>				
Utilities	16	18	2	946
Manufacturing	456	489	33	16,378
Construction	223	588	364	182,003
Wholesale Trade	89	213	124	37,186
Services	39	48	9	4,729
<b>Total</b>	<b>823</b>	<b>1,355</b>	<b>532</b>	<b>241,241</b>

\* 25% of Services employment is considered industrial-related.

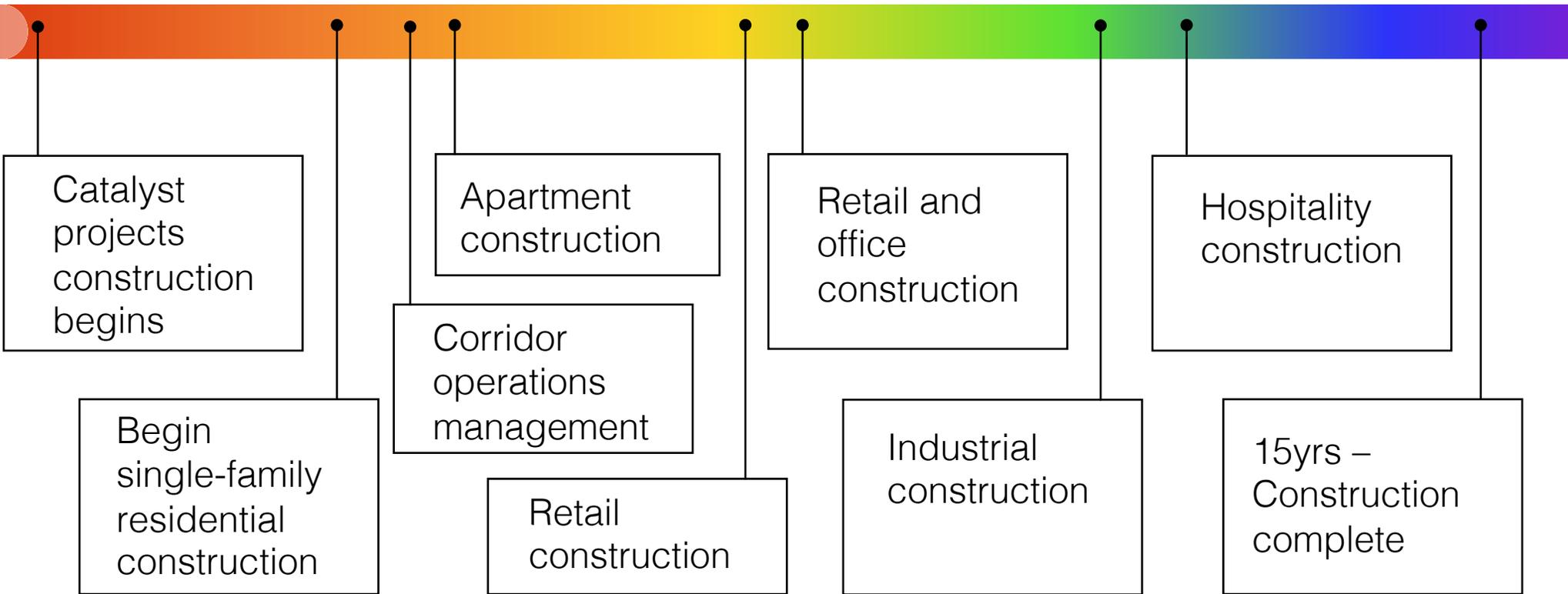
\*\* Assumes 500 s.f. per employee

# Implementation Timeline

2

5

10+



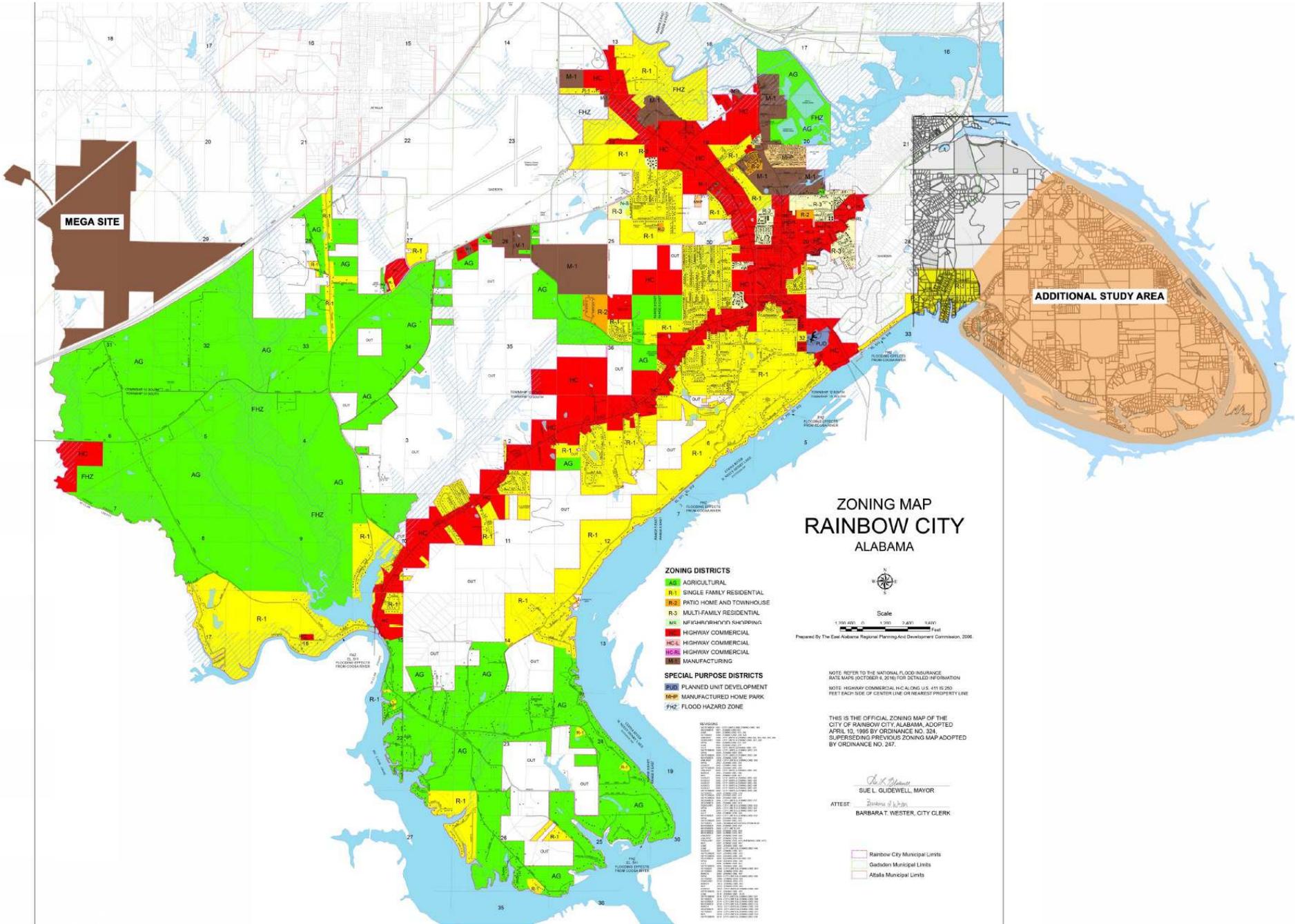


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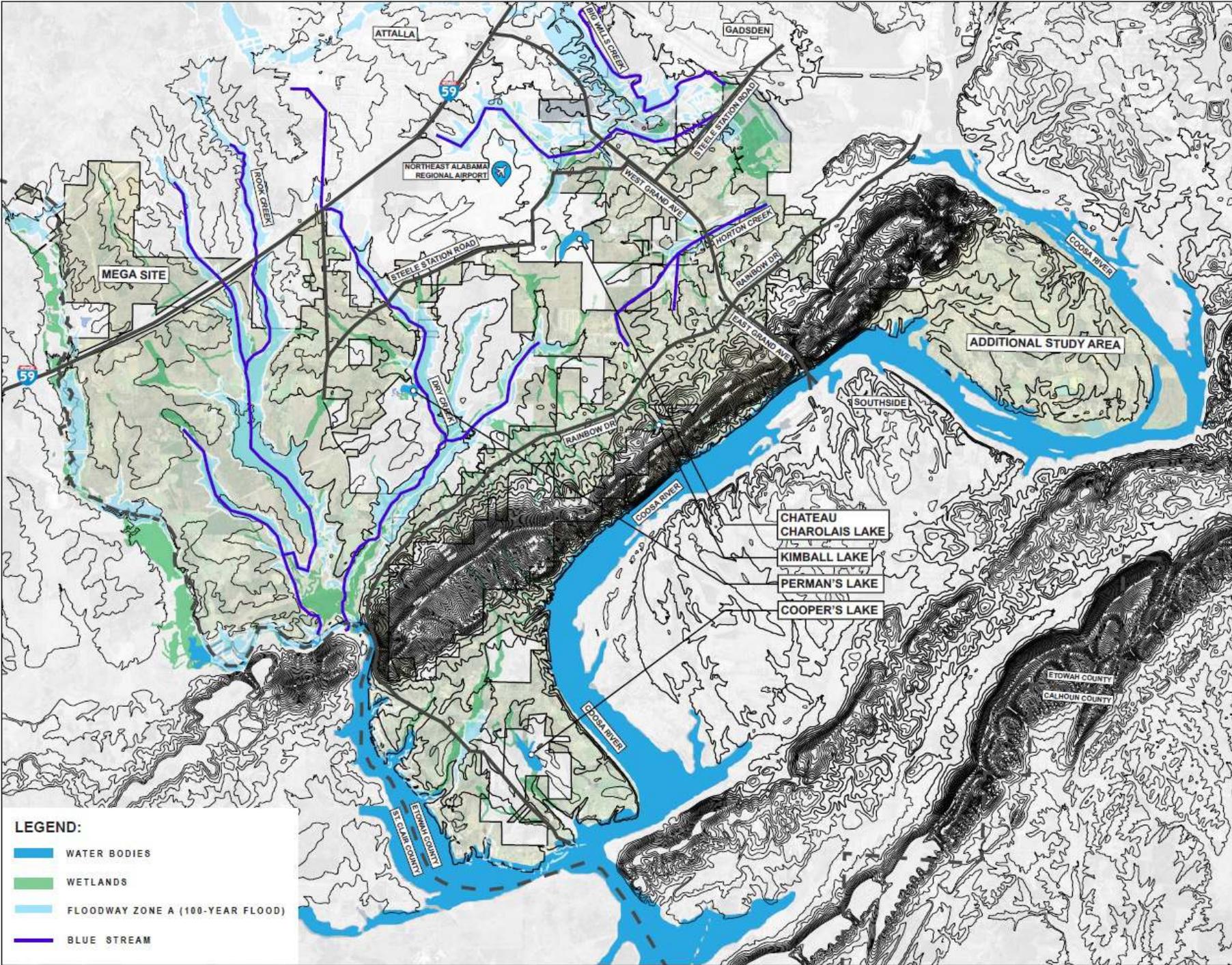
## Study Area

Current Conditions  
Site Analysis

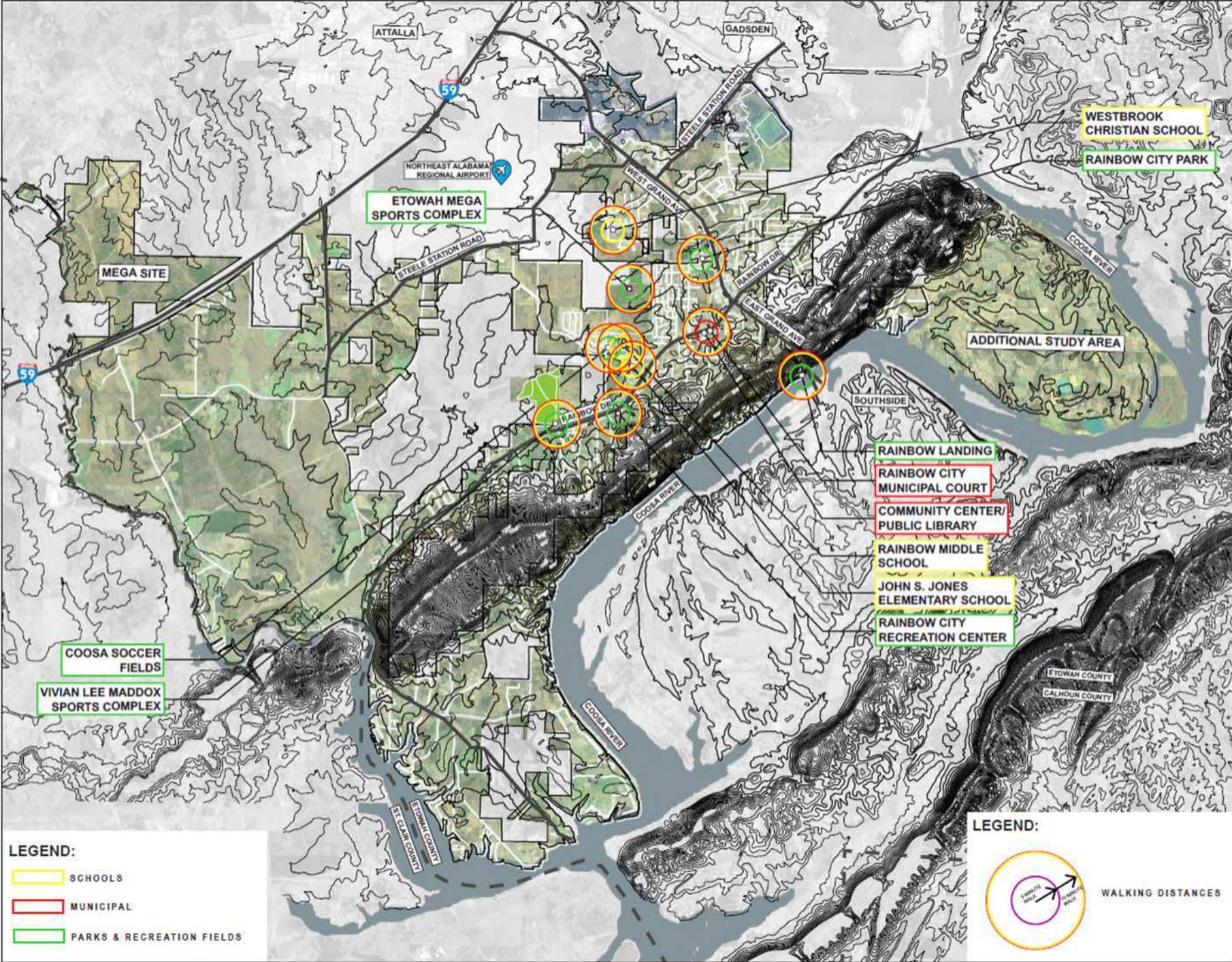
# Study Area



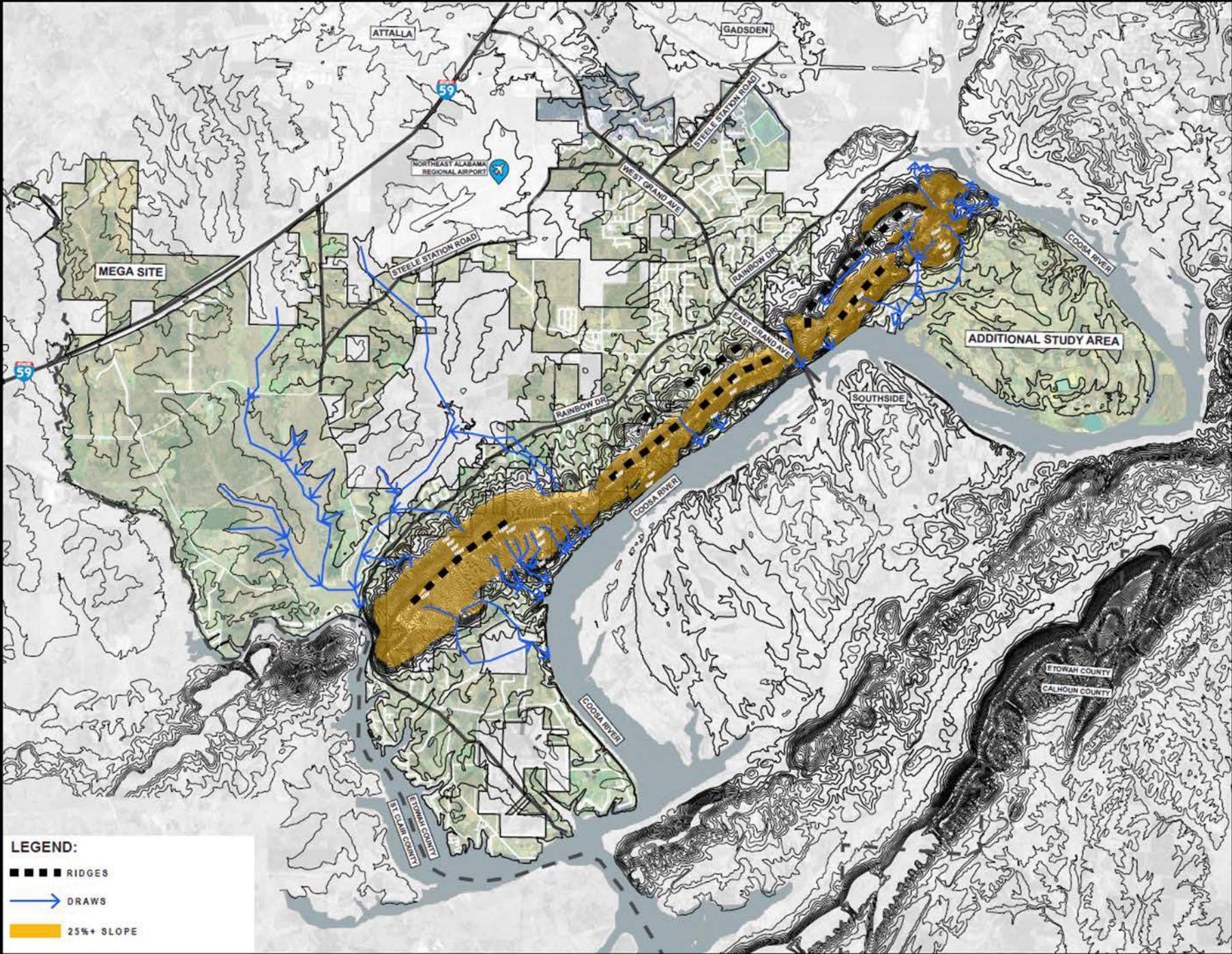
# Site Analysis – Hydrologic



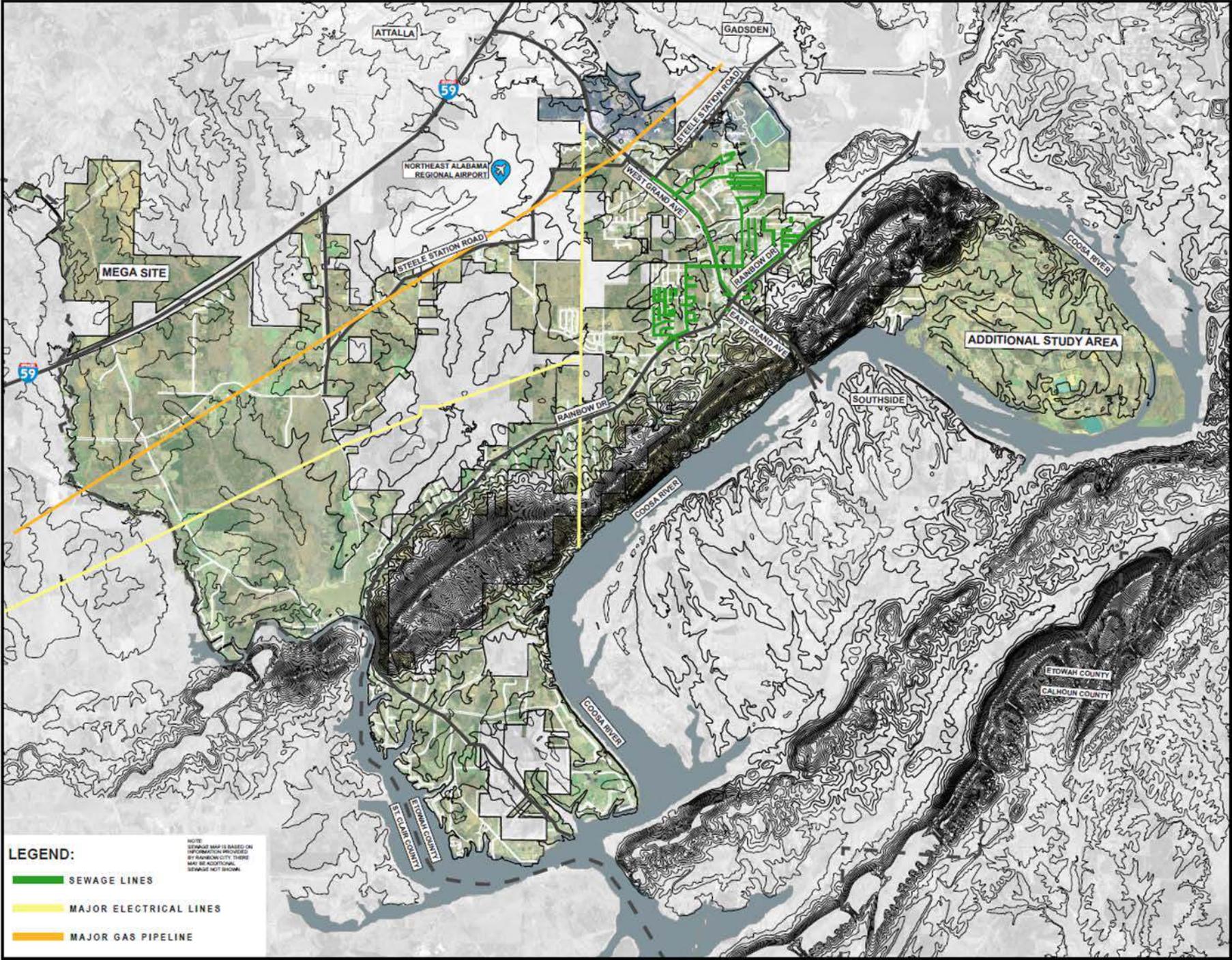
# Site Analysis – Recreational



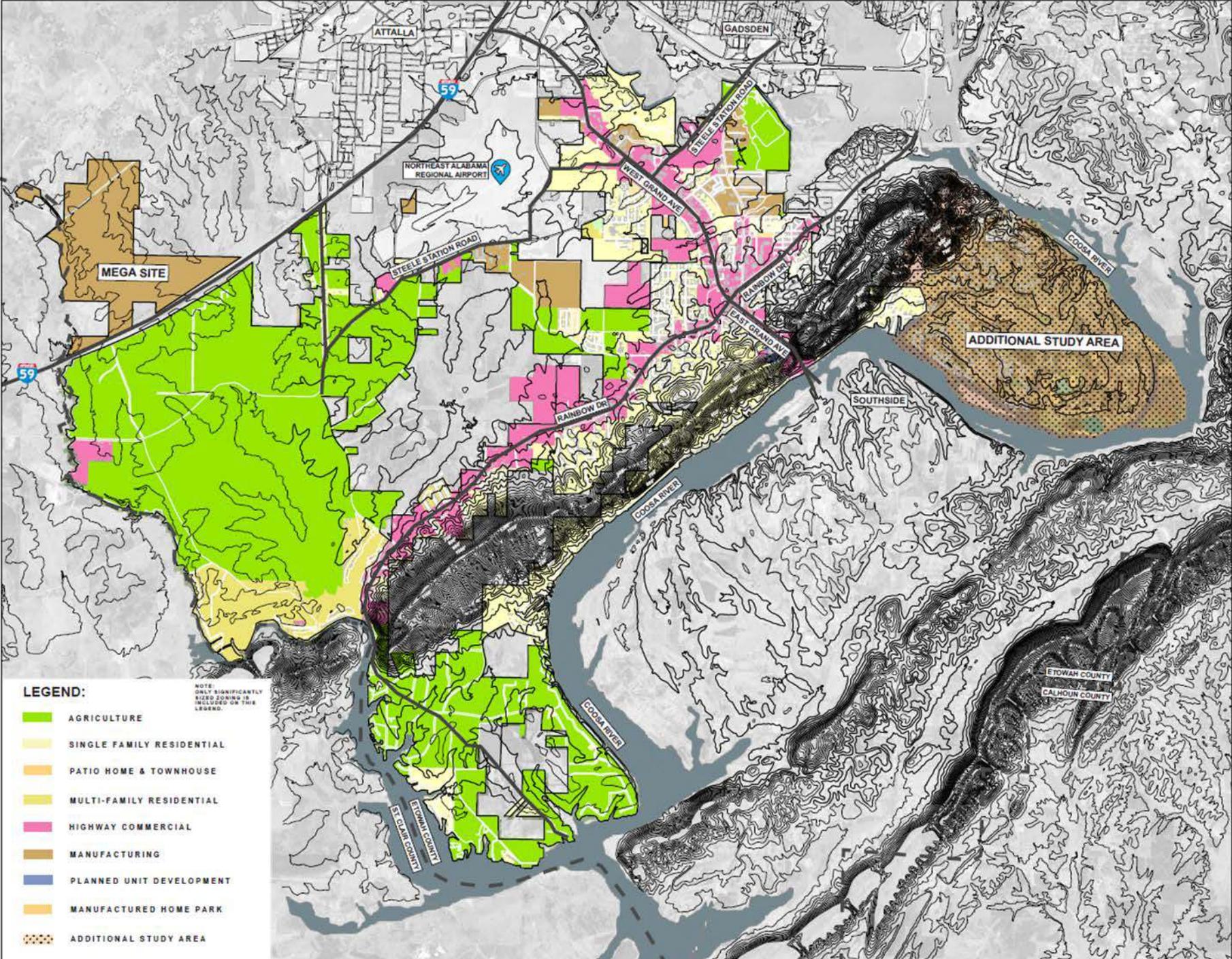
# Site Analysis – Topographic



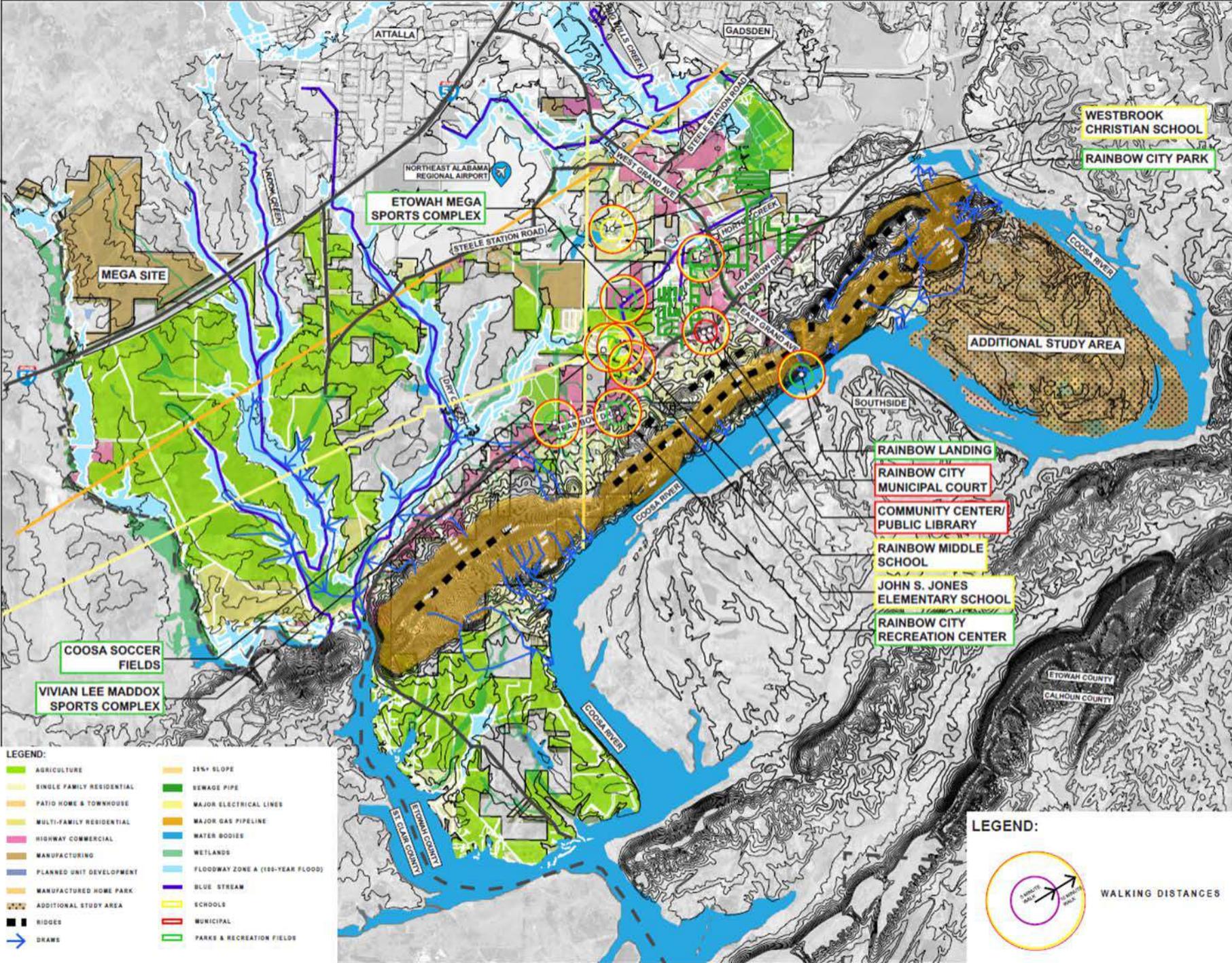
# Site Analysis – Utility



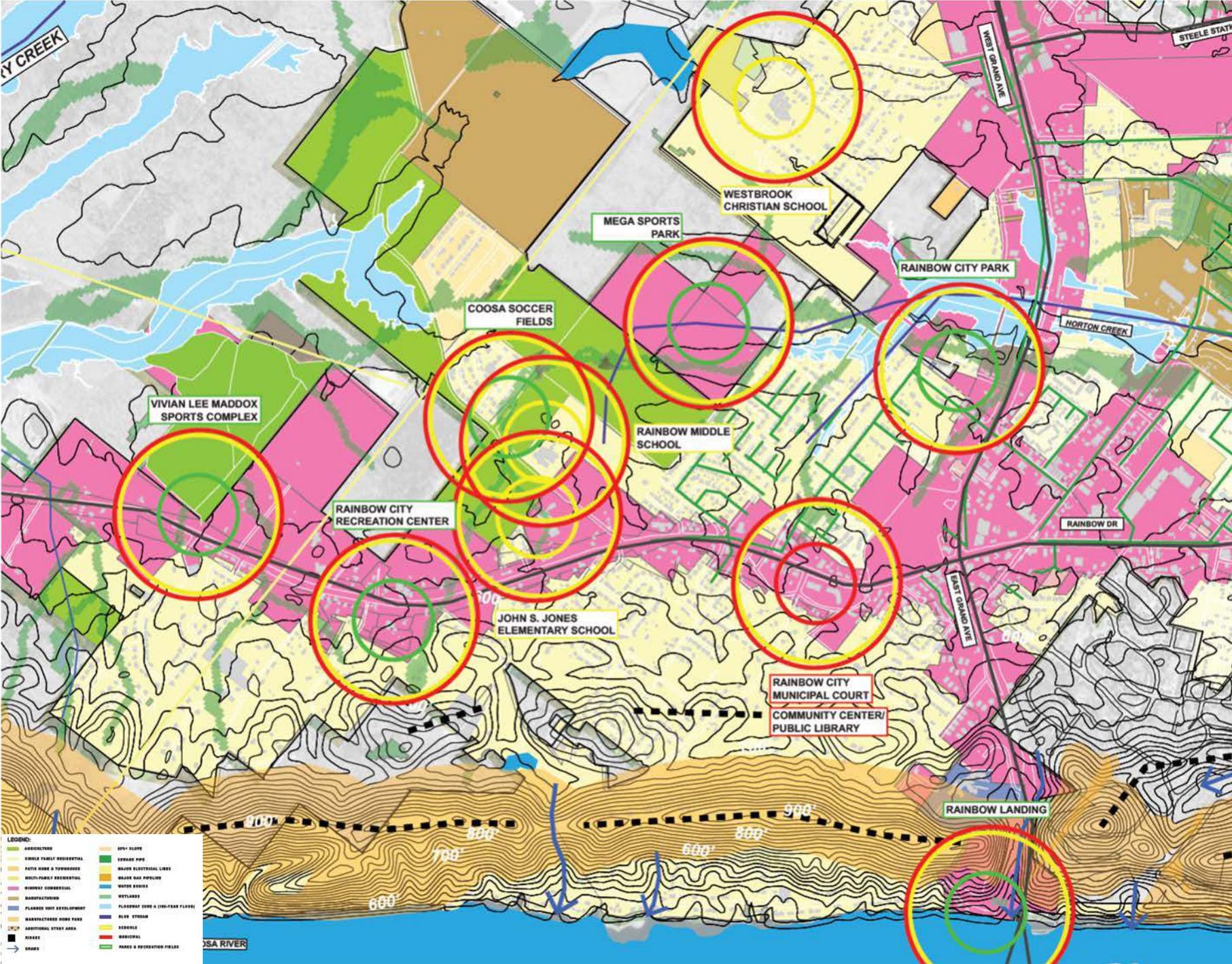
# Site Analysis – Zoning

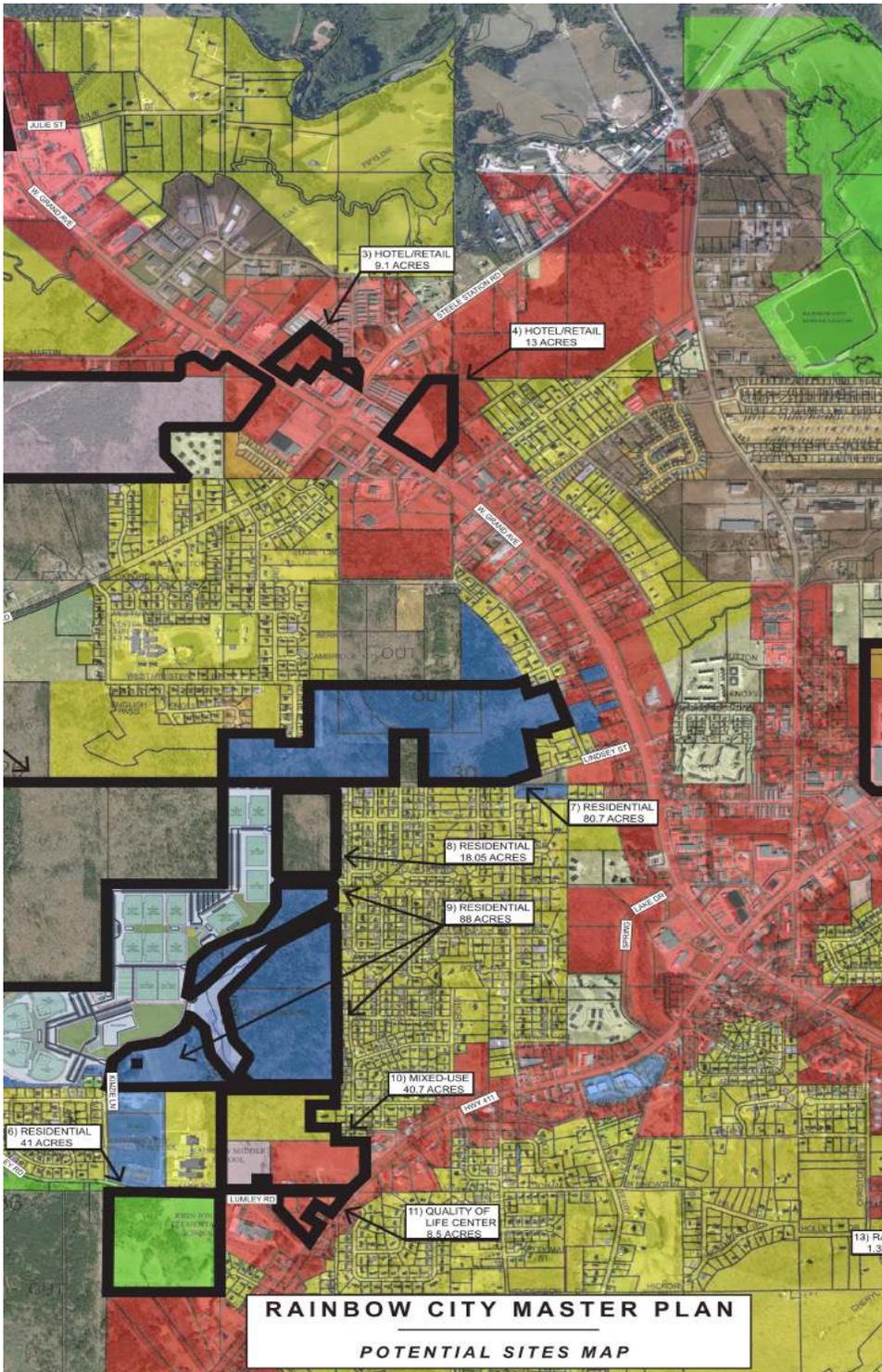


# Site Analysis – Composite



# Site Analysis – Enlarged Composite



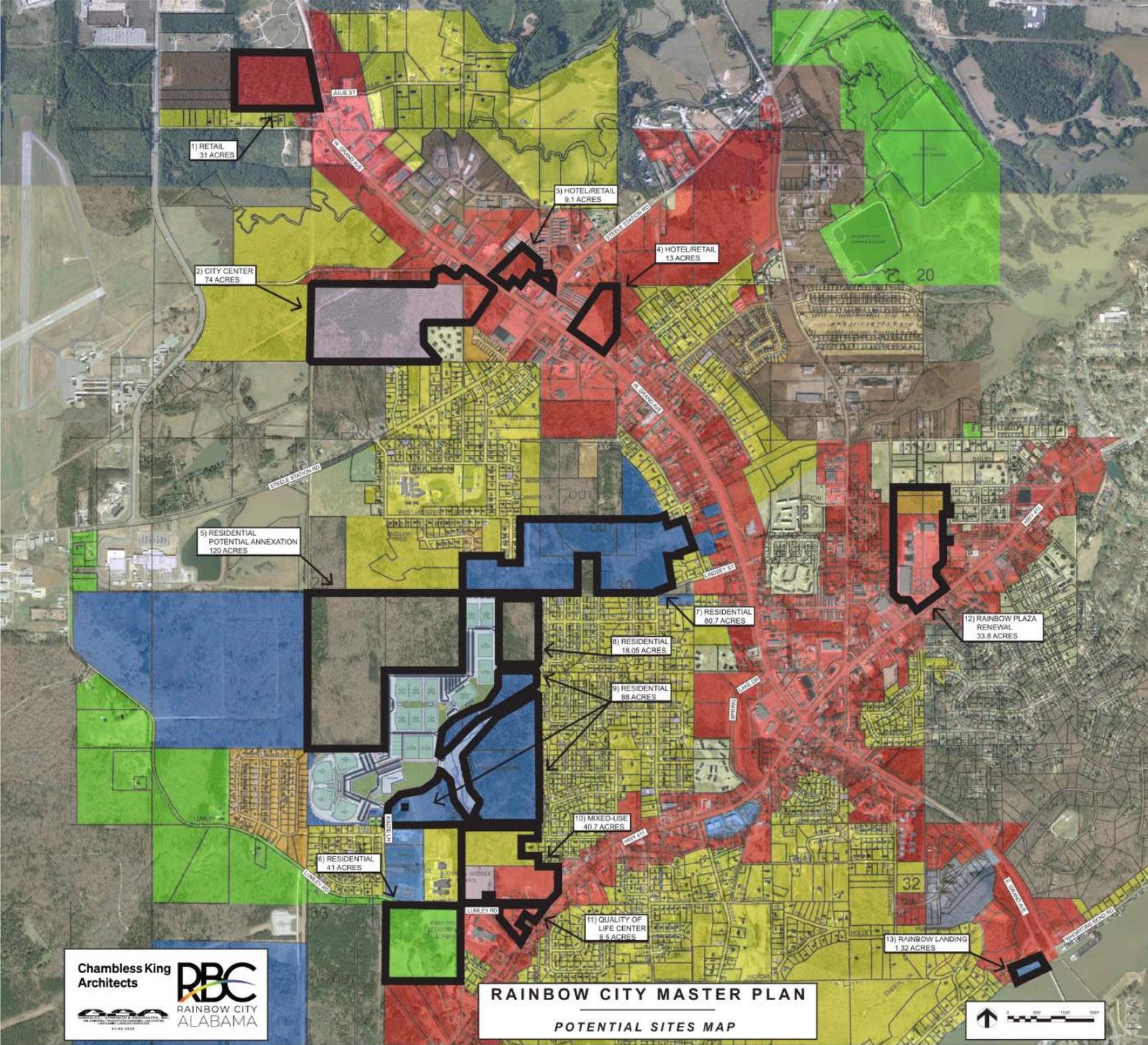


# 04

## Maps + Plans

Potential Sites Map  
In-Depth Transportation Plan

# Land Use Plan – Potential Sites Map

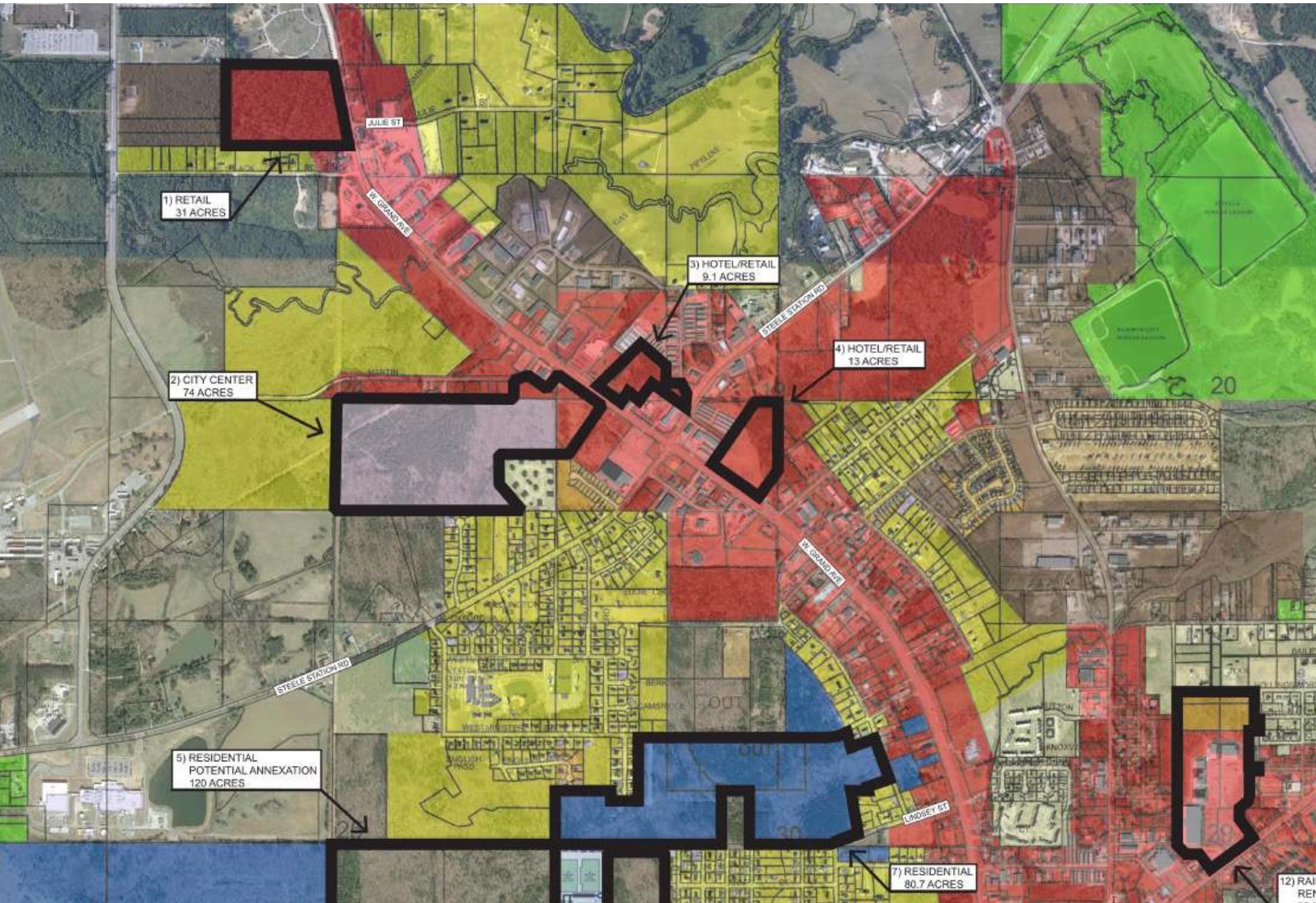


Chambless King Architects  
**PBC**  
 RAINBOW CITY ALABAMA

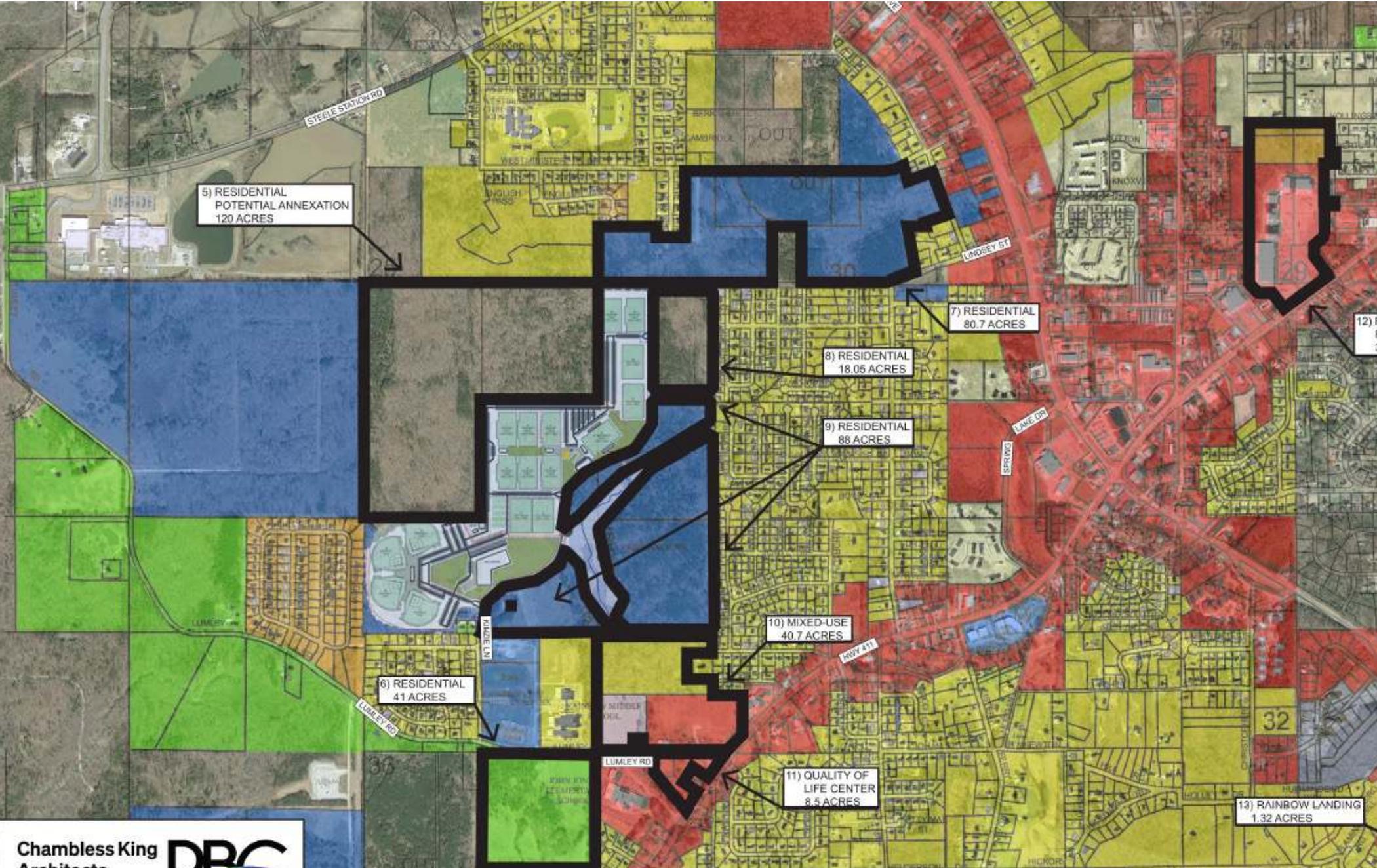
**RAINBOW CITY MASTER PLAN**  
 POTENTIAL SITES MAP



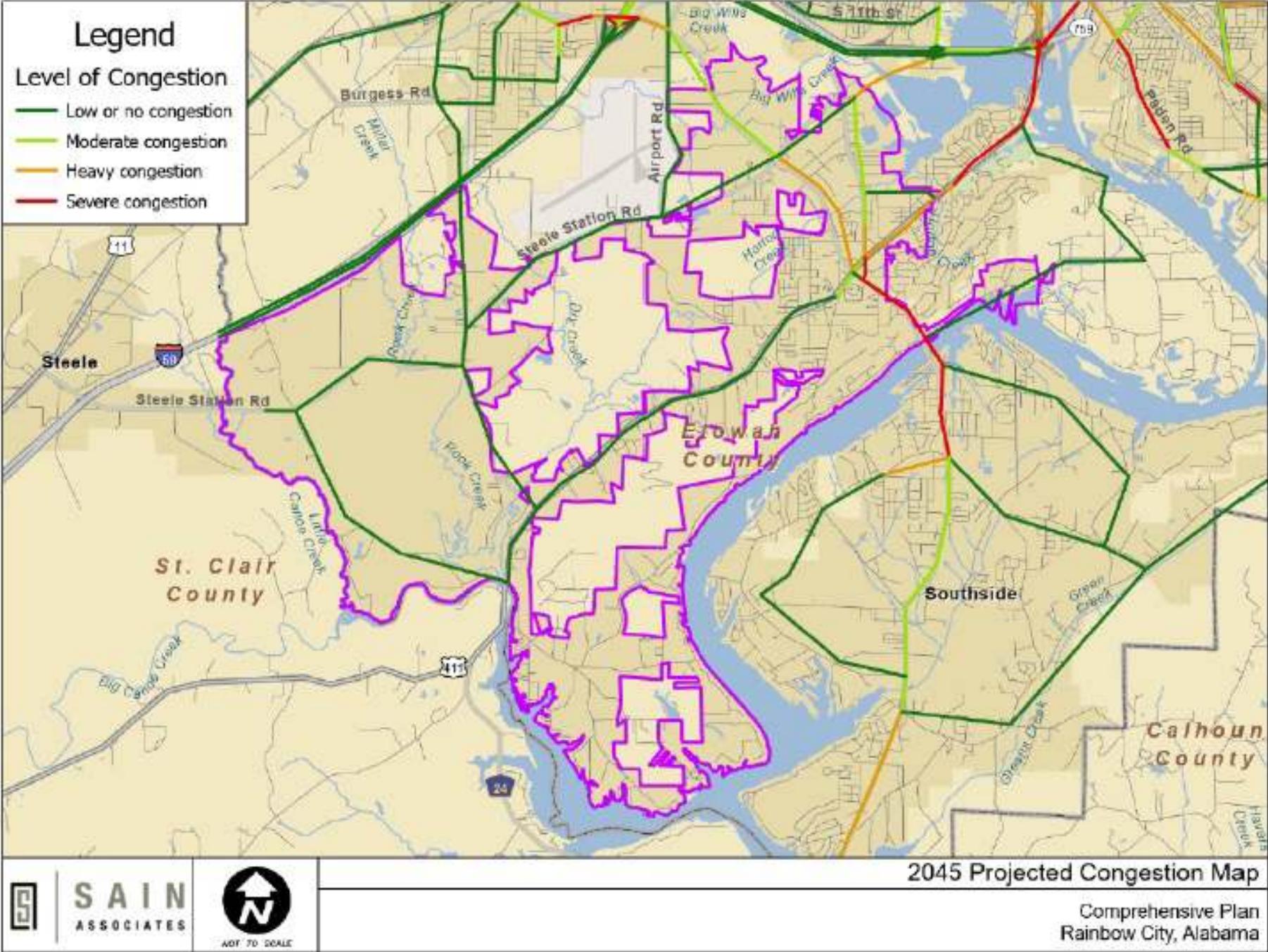
# Land Use Plan – Potential Sites Map



# Land Use Plan – Potential Sites Map



# In-Depth Transportation Plan – Traffic Conditions



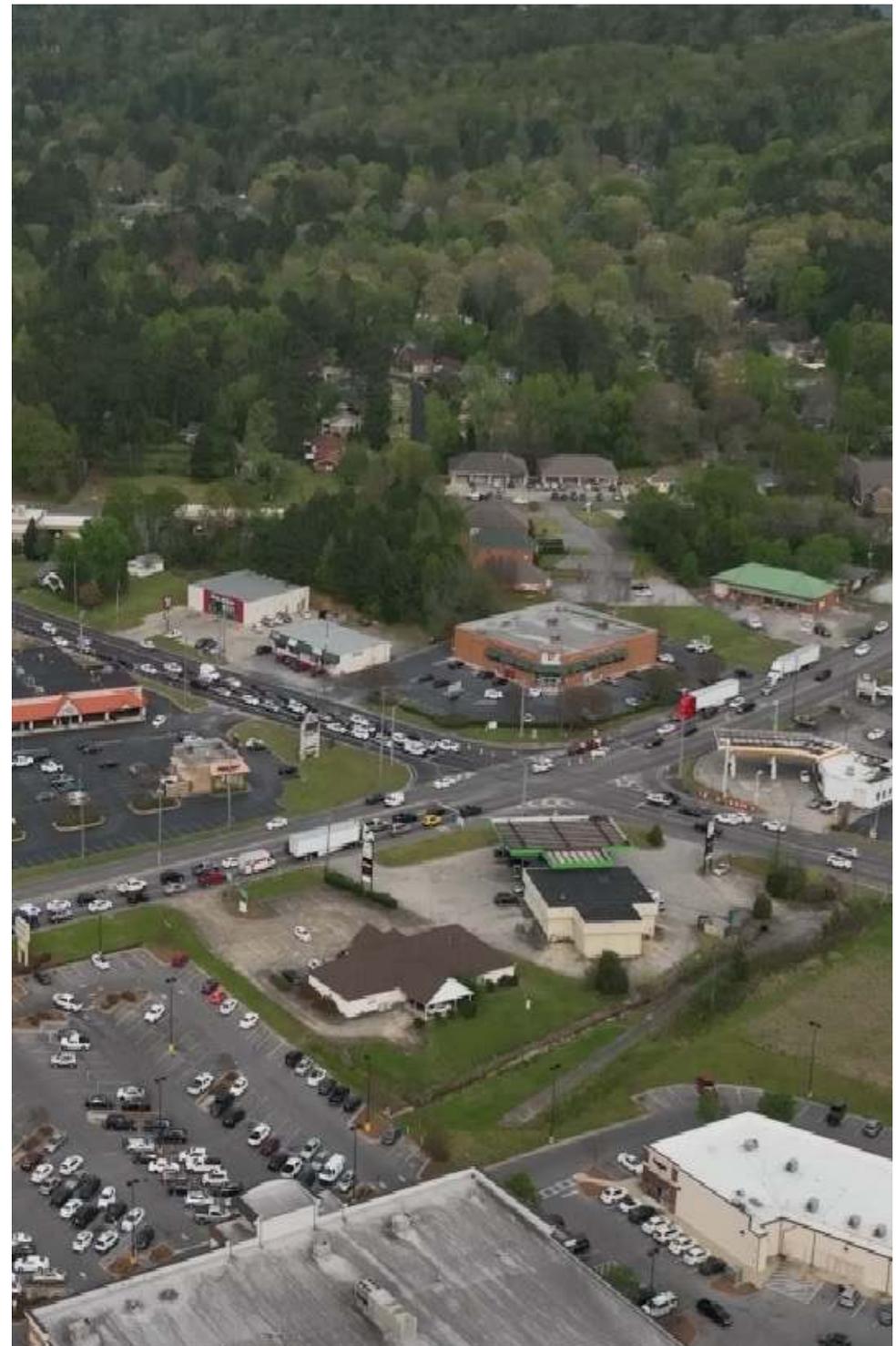
# Traffic Plan

## Global Strategies

- Maintain system integrity
- Develop connected streets in growth areas
- Be sensitive to roadside contexts
- Consider all transportation users
- Encourage access management
- Support alternative modes of travel

## Other Recommendations

- Traffic signal optimization (SR-77; US-411)
- School traffic management plans
- Neighborhood traffic management plans
- Corridor operations management
- Evaluation of alternative intersections
- City center grid
- East-West connections
- New North-South roadway
- Pleasant Valley Interchange
- Lumley Road evaluation





# 05

## Catalyst Projects

Elements of Urban Design  
Catalyst Projects Overview

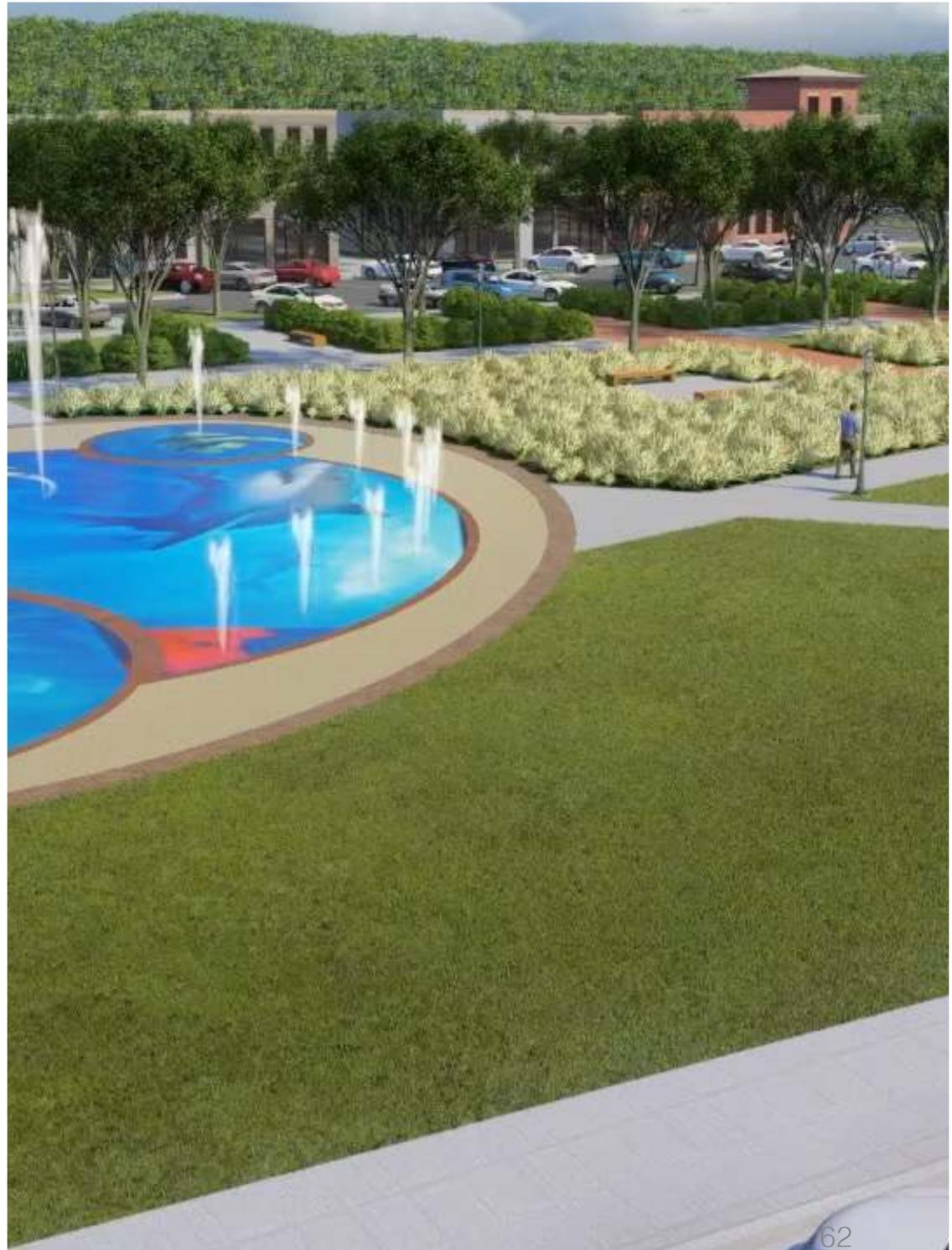
# Elements of Urban Design

Urban design is the design and coordination of all that makes up cities and towns.

The following key elements of urban design will be used in the implementation of the Rainbow City catalyst projects to—over time—create the city envisioned by the leadership and citizens that helped create this master plan.

## Public Spaces

Public spaces have become a critical element of urban design. They provide a place for people to meet, play, and relax. They also provide a place for people to exercise and enjoy the outdoors. Public spaces can be designed to be safe, accessible, and enjoyable for everyone. They can also be designed to be sustainable and resilient. Public spaces are an important part of the urban fabric and can help to create a sense of community and place. They can also help to improve the quality of life for people living in the city. Public spaces can be designed to be a mix of different types of spaces, including parks, plazas, and pedestrian paths. They can also be designed to be a mix of different uses, including recreation, social gathering, and walking. Public spaces are an important part of the urban fabric and can help to create a sense of community and place. They can also help to improve the quality of life for people living in the city.



# Elements of Urban Design, cont.

## Public Spaces

Public spaces are where people can experience and enjoy the city together and share in a sense of community. Public spaces increase the quality of life for an area and can include parks, central plazas and squares, event centers, recreation facilities, amphitheaters, green space, and more.

## Streets

Streets connect spaces and places but are also spaces themselves. They can help define a city's size, character, and aesthetic. Connectivity and accessibility are important considerations for street design.

## Transportation

Transportation systems enable movement throughout a city. For Rainbow City, these pathways could include roads, bicycle, and pedestrian networks. The balance of these systems help define the quality, character, and accessibility of a city. Well designed cities elevate the experience of the pedestrian.

## Landscape

Landscaping provides contrast within a city and ensures it remains connected to nature. It should weave throughout a city through parks, trees, plants and flowers, and water.

# Catalyst Projects Overview

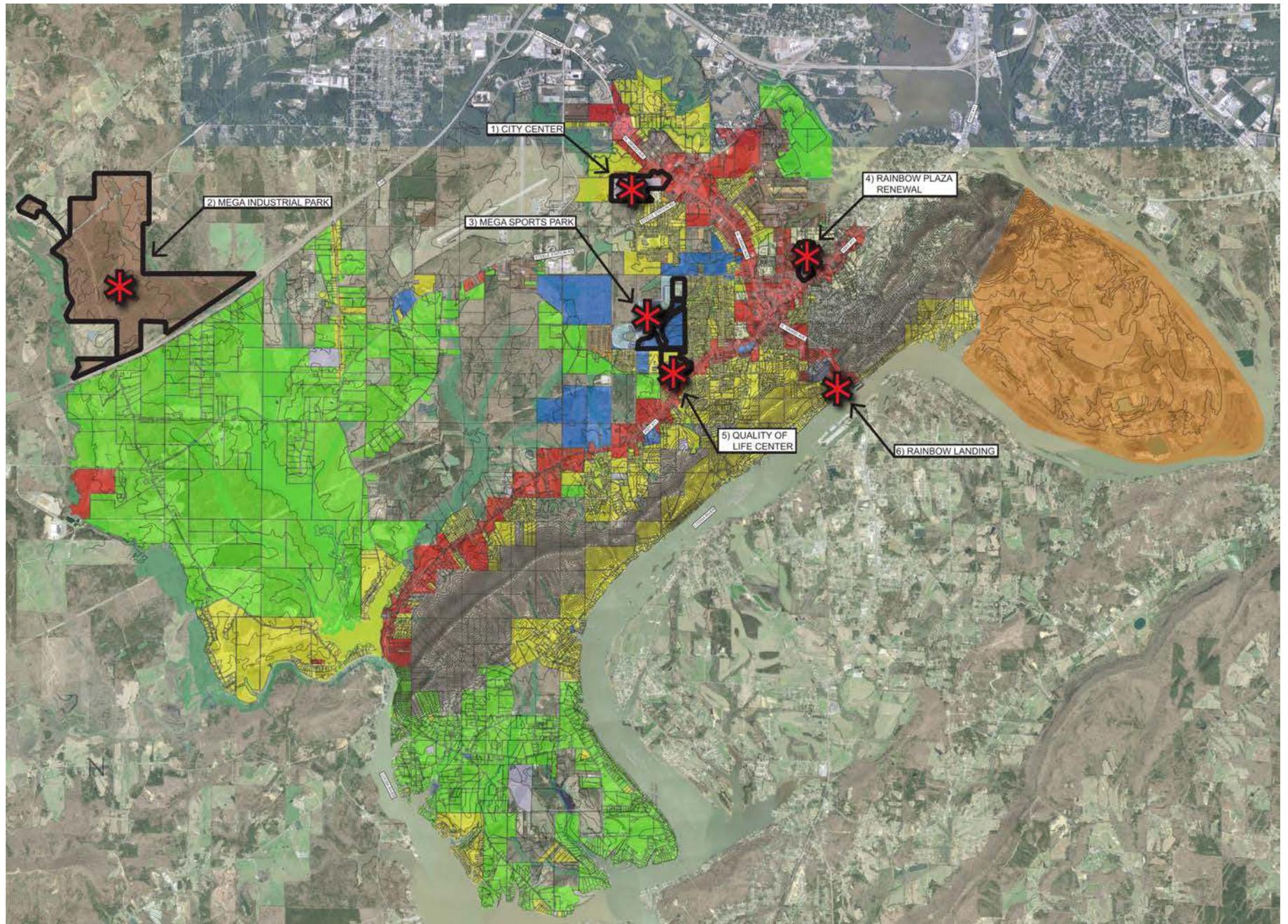
Based on the site analysis, stakeholder meetings, market research report, in-depth transportation study, and input from Rainbow City Mayor Joe Taylor and the City Council, six (6) catalyst projects were identified.

These included two (2) existing facilities to continue to build upon and support (Mega Industrial Park and Etowah County Mega Sports Complex) and one (1) existing retail center for renewal (Rainbow Plaza). Recommendations for renewal of the plaza include providing new landscaping, signage, structure, and organization to the roadway and buildings network.

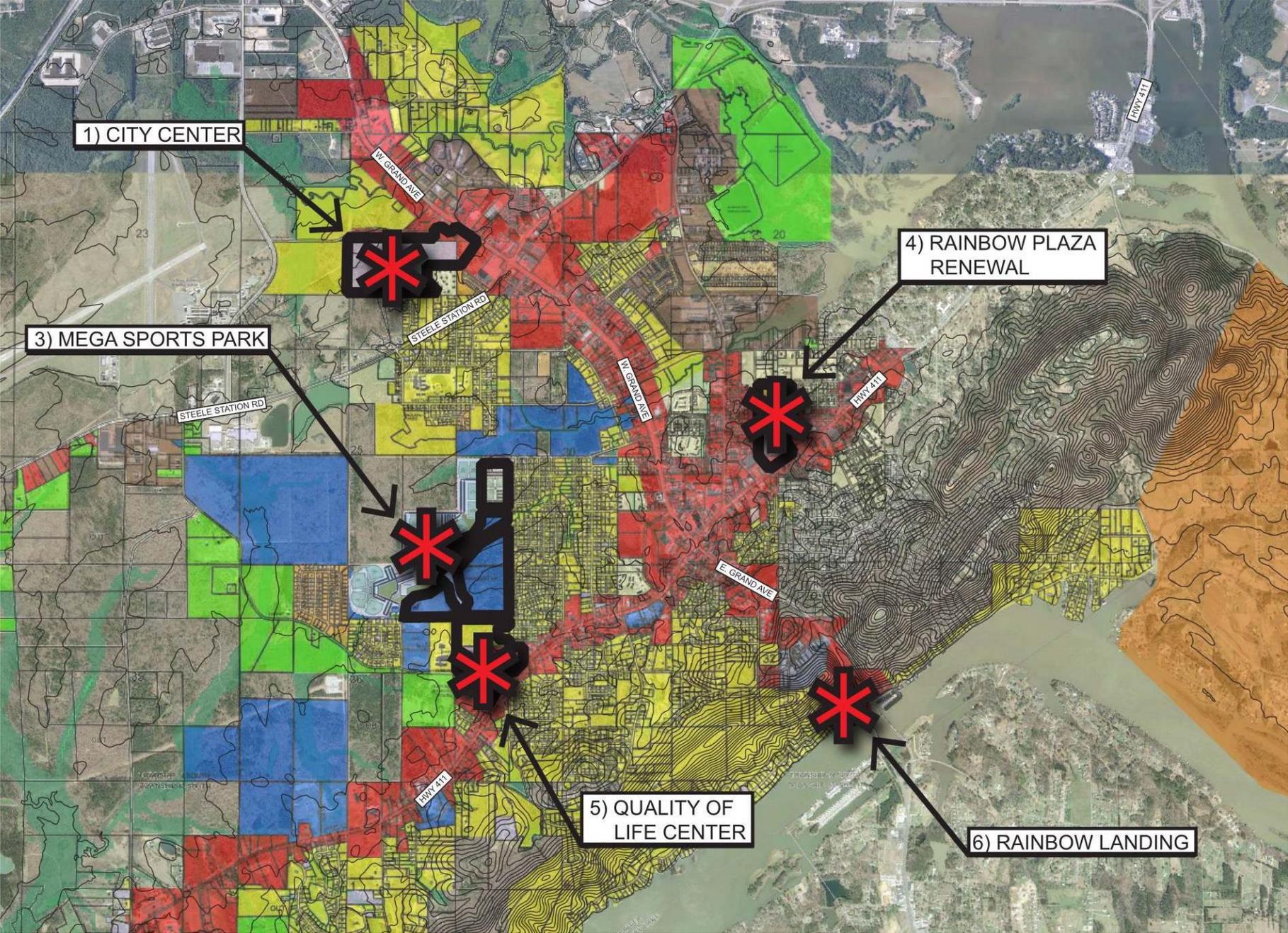
Additionally, three (3) new catalyst projects were identified:

1. Rainbow Landing – Providing waterfront access for the community to the Coosa River with several park recreational and park uses. Including a potential amphitheater, water actives, marina, food trucks, etc.
2. City Center – Providing a mixed-use focus for Rainbow City within a small town, main street framework.
3. Quality of Life Center – Creating a community center for the citizens of Rainbow City to gather together.

# Catalyst Projects – Potential Sites Maps



# Catalyst Projects – Potential Sites Maps



# Catalyst Project 1 City Center

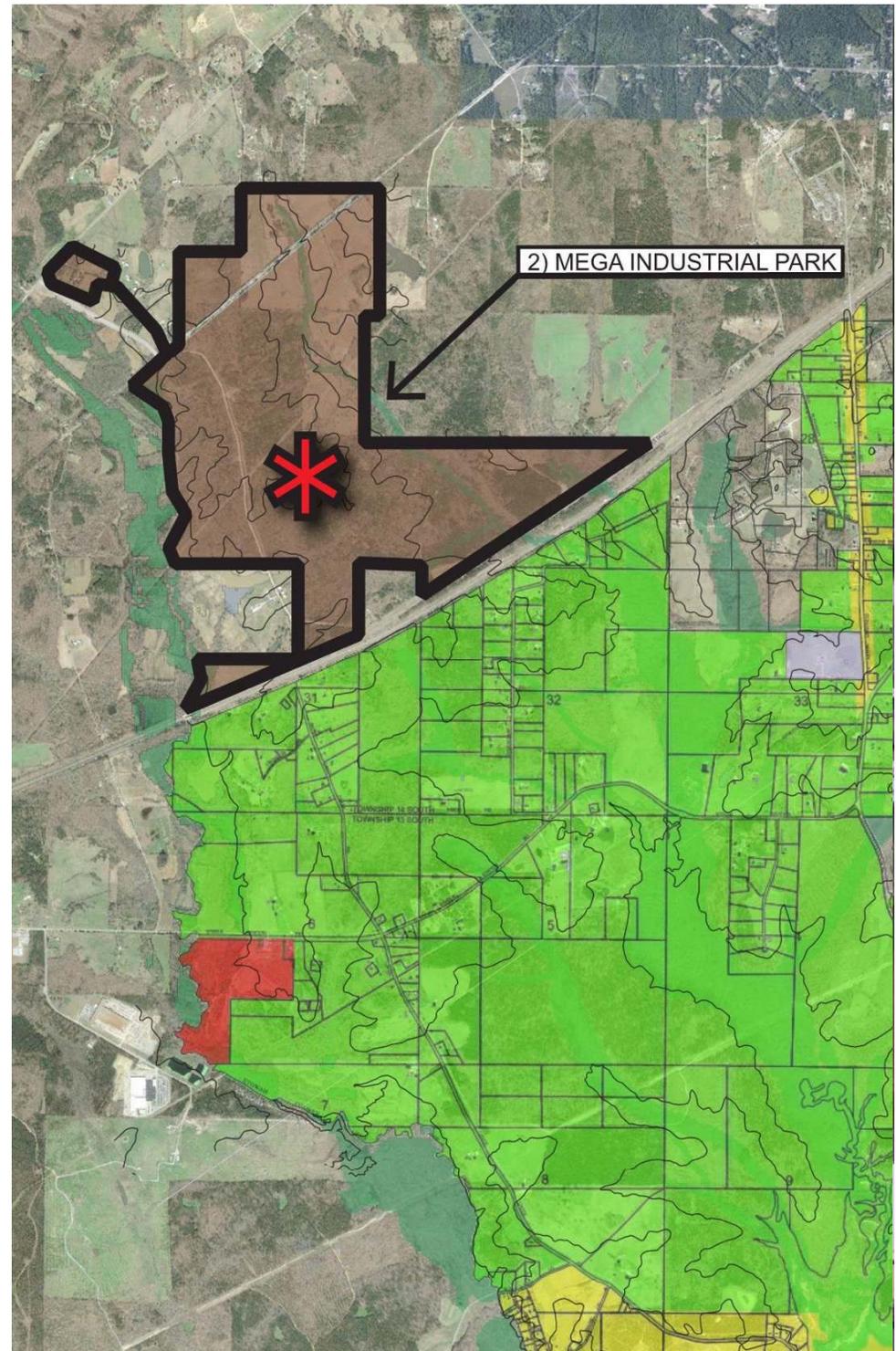


Example Project: Suwanee, Georgia

# Catalyst Project 2 Mega Industrial Park

An 1,100-acre site off Interstate 59 and U.S. 11 in Etowah County and adjacent to Rainbow City is the largest tract of Alabama land to earn AdvantageSite designation from the Economic Development Partnership of Alabama.

Development of the site will provide continued support of industrial growth for the creation of jobs and an economic base for Rainbow City and Etowah County.



# Catalyst Project 3

## Etowah County Mega Sports Complex



# Catalyst Project 3 Etowah County Mega Sports Complex



# Catalyst Project 3 Etowah County Mega Sports Complex



# Catalyst Project 4

## Rainbow Plaza Renewal



# Catalyst Project 5

## Quality of Life Center



Example Project: Priceville Event and Recreation Center

# Catalyst Project 5

## Quality of Life Center



Example Project: Priceville Event and Recreation Center

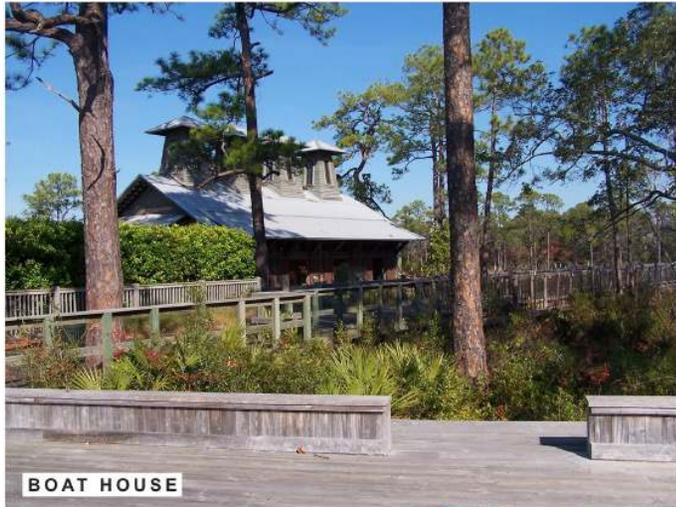
# Catalyst Project 6

## Coosa River Public Access – Rainbow Landing



# Catalyst Project 6

## Coosa River Public Access – Rainbow Landing





# 06

## Implementation

Adoption of Plan  
Zoning Adjustments  
Private/Public Partnerships

# Implementation Overview

## Implementation

Implementation of the master plan for Rainbow City is a complex undertaking that will require substantial cooperation between both the public and private sectors, as well as between various branches and levels of government, to succeed. There are several planning steps necessary to gain official approval of the plan and initiate the first phases of these recommendations. The immediate next steps involve adoption of the plan and schedule by Rainbow City's City Council, formal changes to the zoning ordinance, and capital budget requests. An overall strategic framework must be developed, however, to focus on implementing the plan as a complex undertaking involving multiple interests and stakeholders.

An important measure of the viability of the plan and development strategy is the relative distribution of costs and benefits between the public and private sectors. This expected balance of costs and benefits also has important implications for the strategy by which both public and private interests implement the plan.

For example, if the economics of development suggest that major public investment is required, this may imply a stronger governmental role at the outset. If the outlook for short-term development is stronger, it makes sense to shift toward an approach that maximizes the public benefits from private investment.

In order to realize the improvements recommended in the plan, consensus on the major policy initiatives must be achieved. The role of the public sector must be structured to define clear leadership and specific responsibilities within that framework. Policies for implementation must recognize the capacity of different organizations and the overall strengths of Rainbow City within the regional market. Based on the schedule identified in the plan, the city should refine its priorities and define early-action projects. Ultimately, the vision of the plan will be achieved by tackling one step at a time and keeping the long-term objectives in clear sight.

# Adoption of Plan



The immediate next step is for the city council to formally adopt the master plan. Ultimately, the vision of the plan will be achieved by taking one step at a time and keeping the long-term objectives in sight.



An overall strategic framework must be developed to focus on implementing the plan as a complex undertaking that involves multiple interests and stakeholders.



Leadership should refine its priorities and define early-action projects. The master plan suggests several viable catalyst projects that would bring interest, development, and revenue to the area.

# Implementation Overview, cont.

## Economic Benefits + Private Investment

A fundamental principle of the plan is that public investment in new amenities and infrastructure will help to reposition city and riverfront and attract—and in some cases, induce—new private development. A major component of this public investment will therefore be to fund the capital improvements and build the necessary public amenities.

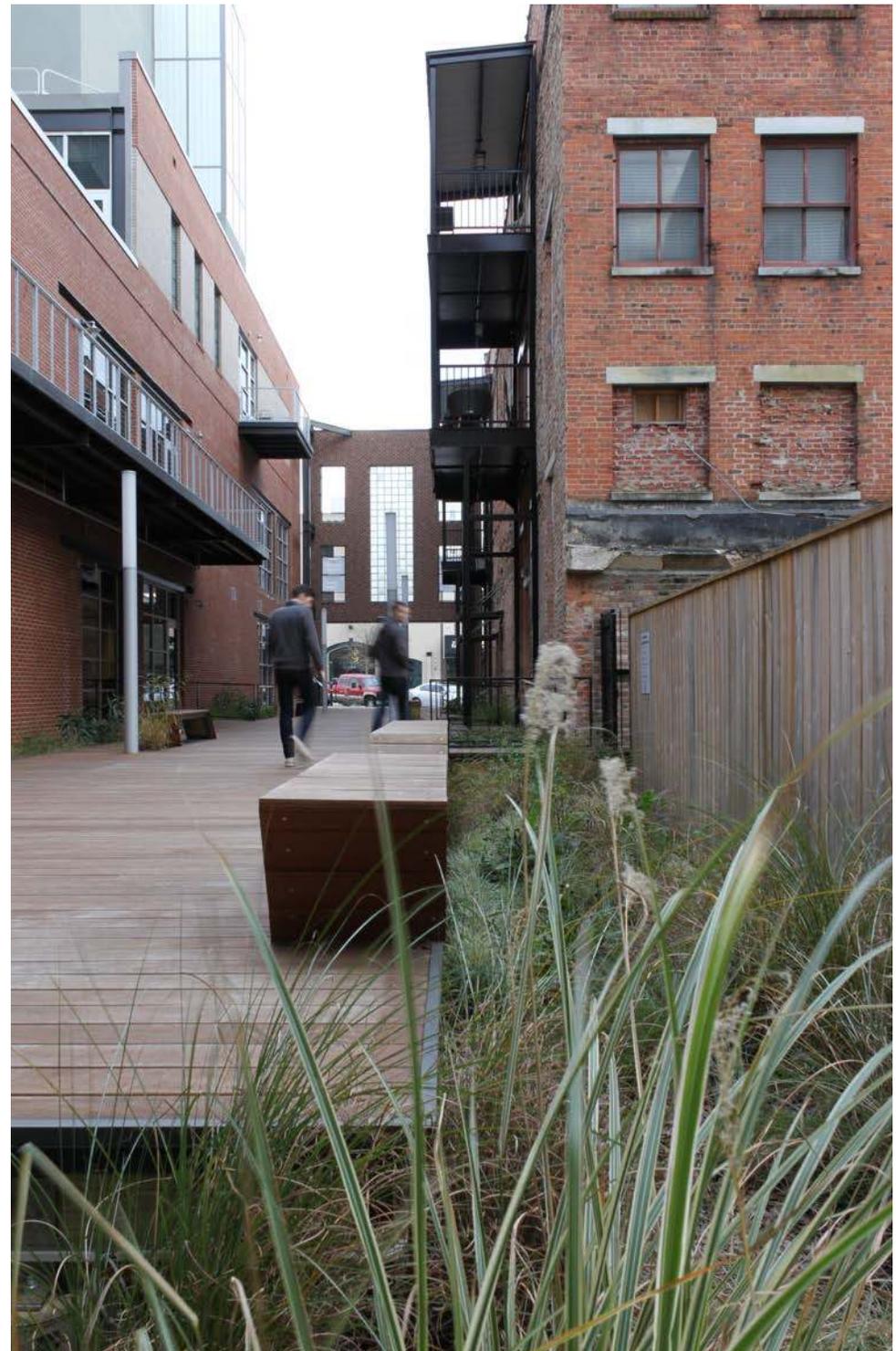
We recommend the following principles to guide public decision-making for implementing the project as outlined in the plan. These include the following:

- The city should focus its public investment in new infrastructure (such as amenities, streets and parks) to leverage subsequent private investment. The overarching goal here is to induce, but not necessarily move ahead of, the market. For example, phased public improvements such as a new city center should create value for subsequent private investment in the surrounding area.
- The city should build on the strengths of existing entities. For example, public investment in the city center reinforces the objective of creating a viable downtown residential market. Likewise, public participation in selected cultural anchors will enhance Rainbow City's position for work and entertainment.
- Be strategic on location. Public decision-making with respect to civic improvements should be prioritized to include those sites or projects that are located adjacent to or near parcels that will maximize opportunities for private investment.
- Be strategic on scale. The city should be judicious in the use of public dollars. The project seeking a significant level of public monies may not necessarily generate the greatest impacts.

## Implementation Overview, cont.

### Economic Benefits + Private Investment, cont.

- Maximize opportunities for federal and state funding for civic improvements. Examples include ALDOT transportation enhancement grants, open space acquisition grants, parks and public space funding mechanisms, and the like.
- Build quality and phase-in public improvements and special features within specific locations over time.
- Investment in high-quality design and materials will distinguish downtown streets and parks. In order to be strategic with public investment, the amount of park area or special features may need to be phased in over time.



# Private/Public Partnerships



A fundamental principle of the plan is that public investment in new amenities and infrastructure will help to attract—and in some cases induce—new private development.



As projects are completed with the investment of public dollars, the amount of private investments leveraged will grow over time.



Leadership should focus its public investment in the infrastructure (amenities, streets, parks, etc.) to induce the private market. Strategically locating these improvements near potential catalyst projects will maximize opportunities for private investment.

# Implementation Overview, cont.

## An Entity for Downtown Development

A central challenge will be the definition of roles and responsibilities to implement the master plan. Within the city, several different departments will continue to be actively involved in downtown development, including the mayor's office, Office of Planning, Public Works, and Parks and Recreation. However, an organization focusing exclusively on downtown development is considered critical.

## Creation of a Downtown Foundation

For the private sector, individuals, and philanthropic groups to contribute to the city/riverfront revitalization effort, a tax-deductible donation vehicle would be helpful. This can be done in one of two ways: (1) the creation of a foundation; or (2) the creation of a partnership with a local non-profit, such as a 501(c)(3) organization, where donations are channeled for preservation and/or redevelopment purposes. For city/riverfront redevelopment to succeed, donations from non-government sources could be critical.

## Redevelopment Authority

Yet another vehicle to implement the master plan could be a Redevelopment Authority.

Having a city retain firm control of the redevelopment process is a key advantage of having the City's Redevelopment Authority spearhead the projects identified in the master plan, through the joint efforts of the City's Planning Department and Office of the Mayor. In many cases, these projects are likely to require mechanisms such as power of eminent domain and bonding capacity; the Redevelopment Authority can use both tools (and others). Of course, many other entities will clearly be involved at various points in the process, ranging from the City Council to the Chamber of Commerce to other executive branch agencies to community groups. However, the planning team believes that the most efficient, fairest, and productive approach will be to define in advance the clearest possible project leadership, decision-making criteria, process, and timetable.

# Implementation Overview, cont.

## Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District

- TIF stands for tax increment financing. It is a way to pay for improvements to vacant and underused land so that it becomes productive again. Cities have set up such districts to help develop blighted areas, build and repair roads and infrastructure, clean up polluted land, and put vacant properties back to work.
- TIF allows a city to provide financial incentives to stimulate private investment in a designated area (a TIF district) in order to remove the blighting conditions that have made it difficult to attract new development in a particular area.
- The TIF program can be used to support new development or the rehabilitation of existing buildings in industrial, commercial, residential or mixed-use development proposals.
- Funding for TIF-eligible activities is derived from the increase in incremental tax revenues generated by new construction or
- rehabilitation projects within the boundaries of the TIF district.
- In terms of its applicability to Rainbow City, TIF as a potential financing vehicle is driven by investment (i.e., there must be the increment to make it work). It is, however, the gift that “keeps on giving.” There is significant upside potential in Rainbow City to tap the increment of property taxes from new development.
- Broadly applied as a public tool, TIF lends itself well to funding large capital projects (e.g., streetscape improvements, open space such as the civic square). It is a self-tax that is engineered for a high degree of public input and flexibility in establishing priorities for decisions from property owners, tenants and public officials.
- Eligible activities include land acquisition, site preparation, building rehabilitation, public improvements and financial subsidies. TIF offers the potential to supplement ongoing city programs. It can also be a funding source for the rehabilitation of buildings and as a source of assistance in recruiting specific retail types to create a restaurant/ entertainment cluster.

# Zoning Adjustments



Review the existing zoning ordinances to confirm the consistency of the ordinance with the master plan objectives and to identify zoning provisions that conflict with the master plan.



Amend the zoning ordinance as required to support the implementation of the master plan.



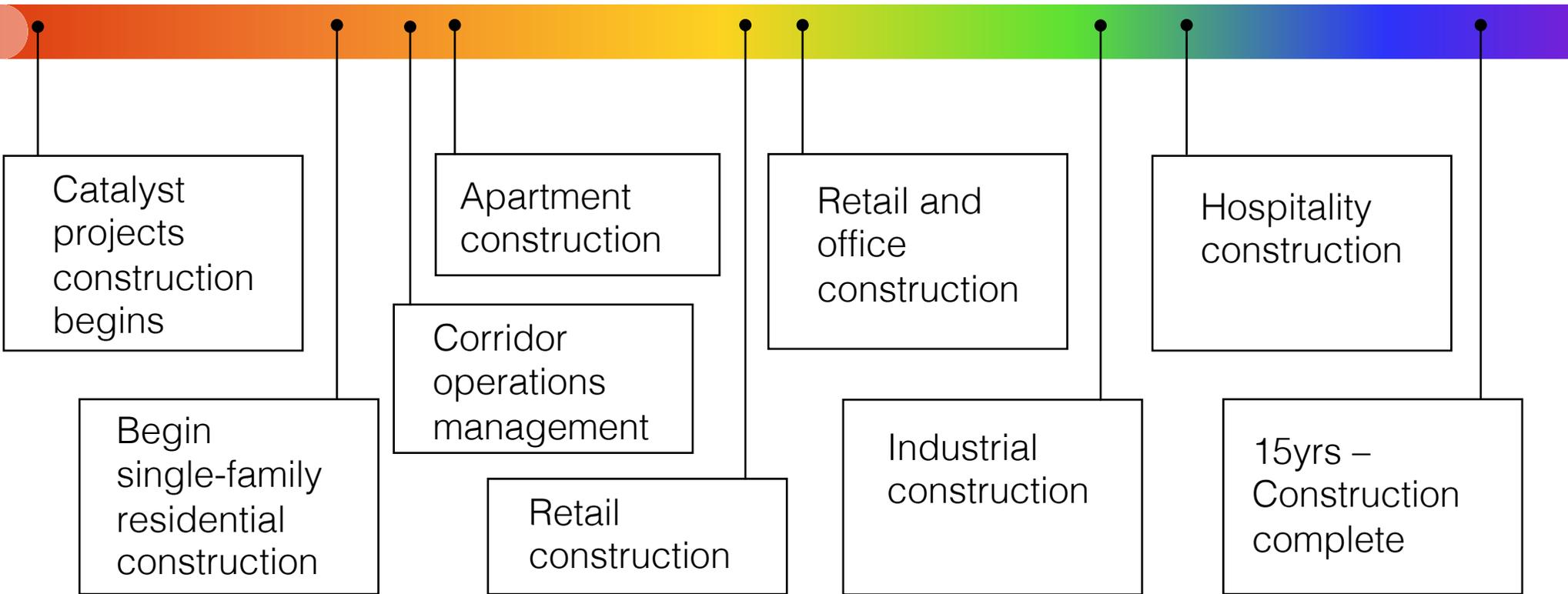
Prepare amendments to the zoning ordinance in conjunction with urban design guidelines for the master plan area and incorporate appropriate urban design standards into the zoning.

# Implementation Timeline

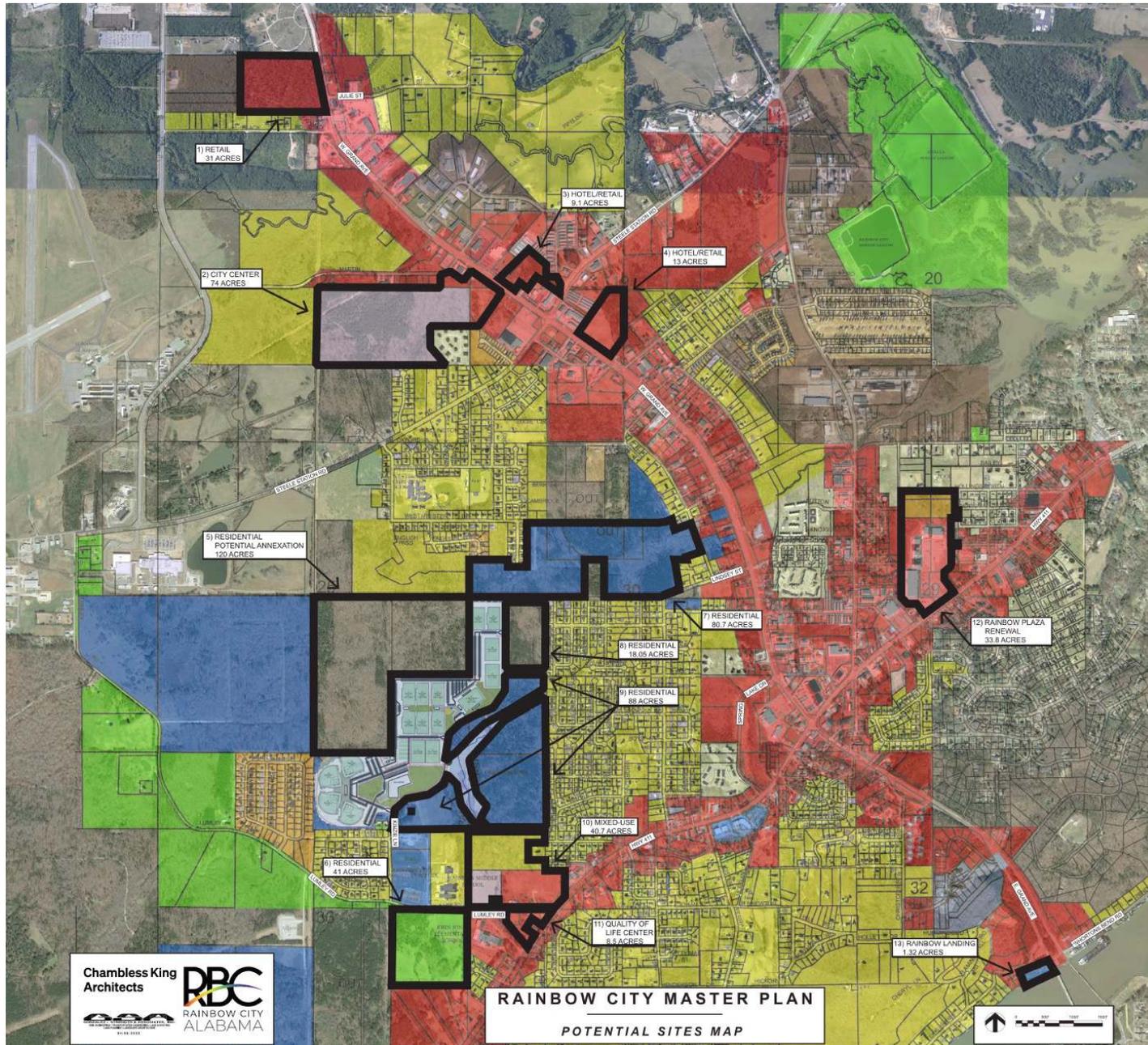
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# Questions + Answers





## Appendix

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- A** Economic + Real Estate Analysis pg 60
  
- B** In-Depth Transportation Plan pg 100
  
- C** Key Stakeholder Interviews pg 143
  
- D** Community Survey Responses pg 143



# A

## Appendix

Market + Economic Study



# B

## Appendix

In-Depth Transportation  
Plan



# C

## Appendix

Community Survey  
Responses