

# Soldotna Downtown Riverfront Redevelopment Plan Appendices

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# APPENDIX D: ENGAGEMENT

## D.1 Community Engagement Plan

**Document:** Soldotna Riverfront Redevelopment Project: Engagement Plan. FIRST FORTY FEET

**Description:** *The plan identifies the Project's engagement goals and objectives, key engagement milestones, the outreach strategy, method of stakeholder identification, engagement methods, and the role of decision-makers in the project process.*

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**Description:** *The plan sets the expectations for the project advisory committee including roles, responsibilities and a schedule of project advisory committee meetings.*

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## D.4 Engagement Milestone #2: Build the Vision- Preliminary Development Concepts

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## D.5 City Council Work Sessions

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# ENGAGEMENT PLAN

## I. INTRODUCTION:

Soldotna seeks to redevelop an 85-acre portion of downtown— currently a mix of auto-orientated businesses along the busy Sterling Highway along with underutilized and undeveloped properties located between the Sterling Hwy and the world-renowned Kenai River. The Riverfront Redevelopment Plan is intended to be transformative and will provide a strategy to guide the City’s long-term economic development goals—seeking to foster new investment and partnerships, create jobs, and improve the quality of the built environment for residents and visitors.

The Soldotna Riverfront Redevelopment Project will include a market analysis of existing and future development potential, public and stakeholder engagement, conceptual planning, property appraisal, environmental review of a catalyst site, feasibility analysis and implementation plan, and the development of a master plan document consolidating all work products, findings, and recommendations.

Public input will inform the Soldotna Riverfront Redevelopment Project’s master plan process. It will also help decision-makers shape the project to meet the needs of the communities it would serve.

Public engagement will consist of public and stakeholder meetings, to share information, gauge opinions, and to refine goals and objectives. The engagement plan highlights the type of engagement activities, outreach methods and feedback gathering to occur within two major project milestones.

## II. ENGAGEMENT GOAL and OBJECTIVES

The following engagement goals and objectives support the Project in informing, gathering input and using input from stakeholders regarding opportunities and challenges to redevelopment, to shape conceptual planning and a preferred master plan for the project area.

### A. Engagement Goals

Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.

- Promote sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.
- Seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
- Provide participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
- Communicate to participants how their input affected the decision.

### B. Engagement Objectives

- **Communicate with neighboring residents, businesses, community groups/organizations and schools** in a proactive and timely manner:
  - Ensure that neighbors and interested stakeholders are clear about the project timeline and invited to mark major milestones.
  - Provide regular Project progress updates, increasing awareness of work happening “behind the scenes” or in ways that are less visible to community members.
  - Ensure that the community and affected stakeholders know how to communicate with the City, if they have questions
  
- **Build on earlier community engagement**, and recent efforts that has informed the Soldotna Riverfront Redevelopment Project including the City’s comprehensive plan (2011), Downtown Development Plan (2015), and the Soldotna Riverfront Options & Opportunities concept paper (2018).
  
- **Identify and engage decision-makers, stakeholders and the community** who are key to the critical issues that affect the project area on the conceptual planning, a preferred plan, and implementing master plan for the Project area.
  
- **Strengthen community and empower participants:** Through involvement in the Riverfront Redevelopment planning process, educate, embolden and enable citizens as advocates and ambassadors for the Project.
  
- **Engage the private sector:** Encourage accessibility and awareness of the shared vision and Soldotna’s commitment to the Riverfront Redevelopment so that private partners have the information they need to buy-in and invest.
  
- **Demonstrate how stakeholders and community feedback is being used to guide the Project** by ensuring concerns and aspirations are reflected in concepts developed and the preferred plan.

### III. PROJECT MILESTONES

Engagement milestones will provide an opportunity to gather a range of stakeholder and community perspectives to inform the Project’s community goals and objectives, conceptual planning and preferred plan, and implementing master plan. Stakeholders will be given the opportunity to provide input so that the design of public infrastructure provides the most benefit to the communities it will serve. Engagement is intended to occur within two project milestones.

**Engagement Milestone #1: Goals and Objectives** – Develop and provide information about the project, and opportunities and challenges for the Project area; gather stakeholder feedback on Project area-specific challenges and opportunities to identify community goals and objectives.

**Engagement Milestone #2: Conceptual Planning** – Develop and present preliminary concepts for the Project area and gather stakeholder feedback on extent to which the preliminary concepts address community identified goals and objectives.

**Engagement Milestone #3: Master Plan Adoption** – Develop and present Riverfront Redevelopment Master Plan for review and adoption.

Engagement sessions will include one-on-one or group interviews, community meetings, and feedback gathering utilizing surveys, evaluations, and comment forms.

## IV. OUTREACH STRATEGY

The Soldotna Riverfront Redevelopment Project outreach strategy identifies core actions for outreach, dissemination of project information, and key messaging for engagement success.

### A. Core Actions

1. **Reach out** to neighboring residents, businesses, organizations and schools in a proactive and timely manner; notify community of planned next steps.
2. **Invite community members to stay engaged** by signing up for email updates, attending public meetings and providing input, as appropriate.
3. **Provide responsive information** that addresses community questions about the project including how to notify the City of concerns

### B. Key Messaging

- **The Soldotna Riverfront Redevelopment as a community project:** Highlight the ways that the plan is guided by shared values and robust community input. What values are guiding current and upcoming work?
- **Commitment to a shared vision:** Make it clear that the plan and vision created by the community will be implemented with fidelity. How is current work planning for community benefits?
- **Emphasize shared benefits:** Continually emphasize how the project will benefit the entire community, including those who live in the area now. How will the project improve livability for current and future residents?

## IV. OUTREACH CONTENT AND MATERIALS SUPPORT

First Forty Feet will provide outreach and project status content and materials to support the City of Soldotna in communications and outreach. The City of Soldotna email lists, City website, direct mailings and paid advertisement are(?) sources for disseminating Project information and supplementing engagement efforts.

Project-specific outreach content, and materials, for use by the City on the Project website and established City of Soldotna communications channels will consist of the following:

- **Project Orientation:** project overview and graphics depicting the project area, process and timeline for use on the Project website and established communications channels.
- **Goals and Objectives Milestone:** Summary of Project area redevelopment opportunities and challenges to be addressed and outcome of feedback gathered.

- **Conceptual Planning Milestone:** Summary of Redevelopment concepts, potential community benefits and outcome of feedback gathered.
- **Riverfront Redevelopment Master Plan:** Summary of Master Plan elements and implementing measures.

Engagement outreach/presentation materials and deliverables will be prepared and suitable across in-person and on-line platforms.

## V. STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION

The Soldotna Riverfront Redevelopment Project is an opportunity for the City of Soldotna to partner with the community, organizations, agencies and the private sector to bring new investment to the Project area and ensure that new development provides benefits and opportunities to a broad range of residents and businesses now and into the future.

### A. Decision-making and Technical Advisors

The following stakeholders are identified for engagement to provide direction, build excitement, be inclusive, form/strengthen strategic partnerships and promote the Riverfront Redevelopment Project's benefits.

- **Advisory Committee**  
The City will establish an Advisory Committee consisting of Project area property owners and businesses, and financial institutions, business and events organizations representatives who will meet periodically to review, provide insight and guidance for Conceptual Planning, a Preferred Plan, and final Master Plan document.
- **City Council**  
The City Council will be briefed on the project to review and provide guidance for Conceptual Planning, a Preferred Plan, and final Master Plan document.
- **Commissions and Committees**  
Commissions can provide insight and guidance for preliminary and preferred concepts with unique perspectives, local knowledge, and a commitment to advocacy for the Project.
- **Public Agencies**  
The City has a number of relevant public agencies to provide education, promote economic development, housing affordability and services to seniors, people with disabilities, veterans and other at-risk populations. FFF will consult with the City to determine public agencies for potential engagement such as:
  - Alaska Department of Transportation
  - Kenai Peninsula Borough
  - Kenai Peninsula Borough School District
  - Kenai Peninsula College

### B. Community Based Organizations and Strategic Partners:

Targeted engagement with CBO's and other strategic partners will ensure community responsive processes and outcomes. City of Soldotna to provide a list of appropriate CBO's for potential engagement.

- **Affected Property Owners and Businesses:**  
Affected owners, businesses and business organizations should be at the planning table to identify and address potential impacts of design refinements and infrastructure phasing as well as, opportunities for redevelopment and investment in the Redevelopment Area.
- **Community members and residents:**  
Includes neighborhood associations, residents, and churches etc. City of Soldotna to determine geographic area for engaging/informing residents.

## VII. ENGAGEMENT METHODS

The Soldotna Riverfront Redevelopment Project Engagement Process will include in-person one-on-one or group meetings, large-format community meetings and feedback gathering utilizing surveys, evaluations, and comment forms for use in on-line and in-person engagement.

### A. In-Person Engagement

- **City Council Updates**  
The COS will provide regular updates to City Council. The Consultant Team will support the COS as needed.
- **Stakeholders and Community Based Organizations Groups Outreach**  
To build a shared vision for the project area the COS will make presentations or provide materials to local stakeholders and community-based organizations to inform their members about the project, timeline and opportunities for engagement.
- **Project Advisory Committee-**  
Project Advisory Committee meetings will be a key engagement strategy. These gatherings are intended to be a continuation of previous engagement efforts that included a select group of external and internal partners to learn about the project and dive deeper into specific Engagement Topics affecting the Project area.
- **Community Events**  
Community Events are a forum for the COS and project team to share project information with the public and obtain input on challenges and opportunities, conceptual planning and a master plan for redevelopment of the Project Area.

The COS will decide the level of staffing needs including the opportunity to reach a broad range of communities, expected attendance, timing of the event and its location, to ensure a reasonable use of resources. Community Events will be held at accessible locations. Agendas, information packets, presentation exhibits, and meeting summaries will be posted on the website and disseminated through COS approved channels.

### B. On-Line Engagement

- **Website**

The project website is hosted on the City of Soldotna website and managed by the City. The project team will generate web content for engagement, including frequently asked questions and online engagement activities. The website will serve as an information resource and will provide a project overview, updates at key milestones and documents such as the schedule, public engagement calendar and graphics. The website may also include a sign-up form for email updates.

- **Surveys, Evaluations, and Comments**

The project may utilize three tools for gathering feedback during engagement sessions:

1. Survey questions gather insights on the preferred type and value of the Riverfront Redevelopment land use, development, and transportation concepts and scenarios.
2. Guiding Principles, Goals & Objectives evaluation criteria measure planning and scenarios performance.
3. Comments identify potential challenges and opportunities to be addressed.

Surveys, evaluations and comments allow people with a few minutes to spare an opportunity to learn about a specific project topic and provide input in a variety of multiple choice, short answer and ranking questions. These surveys, evaluation and comments will both inform the public and gather necessary information to make decisions. Surveys, evaluations and comments will be available online to allow stakeholders and the public to provide input as needed.

- **E-Newsletter**

Email updates may be distributed by the COS at project milestones. Email updates will announce opportunities to get involved and share links to surveys and recent engagement summaries.

- **Social Media**

The popularity and accessibility of social media enables users to receive up-to-date information immediately. Social media channels may be used as a tool to help share information throughout the project and accounts such as the COS Facebook, and other accounts will expand the reach of the Riverfront Redevelopment Project among its followers. This allows information about the Project to reach a broader portion of the public, including underrepresented communities. Individuals who may not want to engage or be able to participate via traditional public engagement methods can still be a part of the engagement process if they use social media.



# VIII. DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

## A. Public Input Documentation

The project team will share summaries of engagement efforts and input received with the Project Management Team (consisting of City of Soldotna and First Forty Feet Team representatives) and city council to help make key project decisions. Comments emailed or mailed to COS outside of a specific engagement event will also be included in the summaries. These summaries may take the form of a list of major themes discussed, verbatim input or infographics depending on the content and depth of input collected. Summaries of engagement efforts and input received will be posted on the COS website at project milestones and leading up to project decisions, to demonstrate that the input has been recorded and provided to decision makers and the community.

## B. Decision Makers

The decision-making process is led by the following groups that are informed by input gathered from public engagement efforts.

- **City Of Soldotna**

The Soldotna Riverfront Redevelopment Project will be organized and managed by a Project Management Team (PMT) comprised of John Czarnezki (JC) (Planning & Economic Development Director), Stephanie Queen (SQ) City Manager, Laura Rhyner (Assistant to the City Manager), Jennifer Hester (JH) (Associate Planner), and the Consultant Team (CT) includes key personnel from First Forty Feet, EcoNW, Greenworks and Kinney Engineering. The CT is led by the prime consultant, First Forty Feet (FFF).

- **Technical Advisory Group**

The Technical Advisory Group comprised of planning and public works staff from the City of Soldotna and as needed Agency partners (Kenai Peninsula Borough, ADOT, et. al.) as identified by COS, will provide technical input on issues including design, planning, environmental, phasing, and funding of the Project. Technical Advisory Committee members will review technical documents and make recommendations to the Project Management Team.

- **City Council**

The City Council will provide recommendations to the PMT on project decisions using input and findings from council meetings, technical analyses and public engagement findings.

- **Advisory Committee**

The Project Advisory Committee (PAC) will meet periodically through group meetings where they will explore topics and project deliverables and provide guidance and insight with representatives from the COS and Project Consultant Team during the project milestones— Goals and Objectives Identification and Conceptual Planning and Master Plan documentation.

# APPENDIX D: ENGAGEMENT

## D.1 Community Engagement Plan

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## D.4 Engagement Milestone #2: Build the Vision- Preliminary Development Concepts

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# Project Advisory Committee

## I. Introduction

The Soldotna Riverfront Redevelopment Project will utilize a representative Project Advisory Committee (PAC) consisting of members representing property ownership, and businesses in the Project area, those involved in Downtown business, outdoor recreation and tourist advocacy organizations/group as well as others interested in area redevelopment (Kenai Peninsula Borough, banking, attorney, architect, homeowners, neighbors, etc.). The PAC will advise City of Soldotna (COS) staff and the consultant team as they identify issues, develop and refine concepts into recommendations, and guide the development of a Master Plan. Members will be expected to make an approximately 12-month commitment to the Project process.

Committee members will be asked to share their advice, insight and expertise with fellow PAC members, COS and consultant team as well as their broader communities. Although the PAC is an advisory group and is not expected to come to a consensus on all matters, members will be expected to be fair-minded and listen respectfully as others express their opinions and perspectives.

Staff will also consult technical advisors from City departments and Agencies with jurisdiction within the Project area. These discussions will be shared with the PAC.

Public engagement will consist of public and stakeholder meetings, to share information, gauge opinions, and to refine goals and objectives. The engagement plan (separate document) highlights the type of engagement activities, outreach methods and feedback gathering to occur within two major project milestones.

## II. Roles

The PAC will advise and make recommendations to Project staff, and the consultant team who are committed to ensuring PAC discussions and proposals are accurately recorded and made available to the community. The consultant team in coordination with Staff will formulate concepts, refinements and a master plan using PAC input, City Council guidance, feedback from the broader community, as well as direction from the Comprehensive Plan and other adopted City policies and plans. The City Council, through a public process, will make the final decisions and recommendations for Master Plan adoption. The Master Plan and Engagement Summary will include information about the PAC meetings and discussions as well as how these meetings informed the Master Plan.

## II. Responsibilities

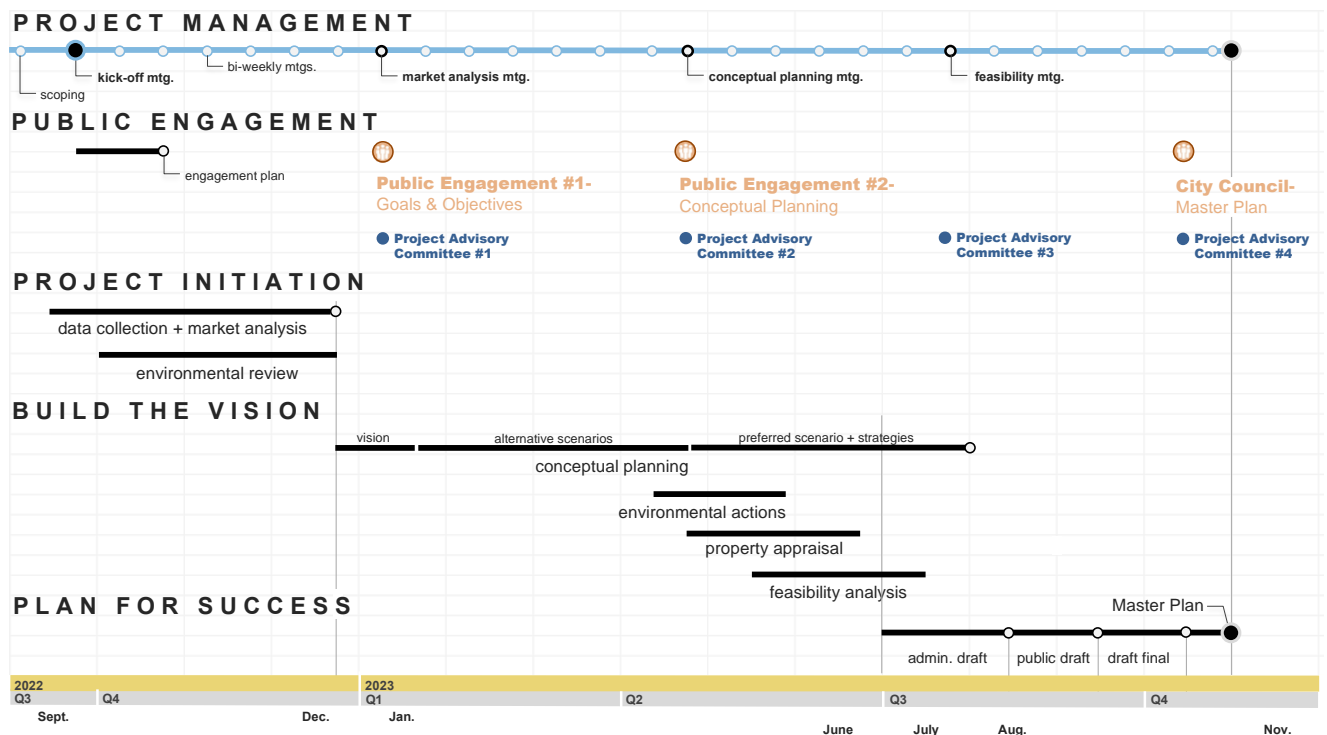
Ideally, committee members should both share their expertise and serve as conduits of information to and from their organizations and networks. In addition to acting as conduits to the larger communities of stakeholders, PAC members will be asked to participate in scheduled meetings and events during this 12-month project:

**PAC meetings.** The PAC will meet up to four times over the the 12-month project schedule. (See Project Schedule below.) Beyond attending these meetings, members may be asked to review materials prior to meetings. Meetings will be facilitated by the consultant team and City staff and held at City Hall during key project Milestones, lasting approximately 90-minutes.

**Public events.** City staff and the consultant team will be running a parallel public involvement process to gather broad community feedback with public events and discussions scheduled at key milestones over the course of the project. PAC members will be encouraged to attend these events to help share conversations the PAC has had and to listen to input from event attendees.

**City Council.** PAC members will be encouraged to attend the City Council adoption meeting scheduled for fall 2023.

## III. Schedule



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SOLDOTNA

# RIVERFRONT REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT

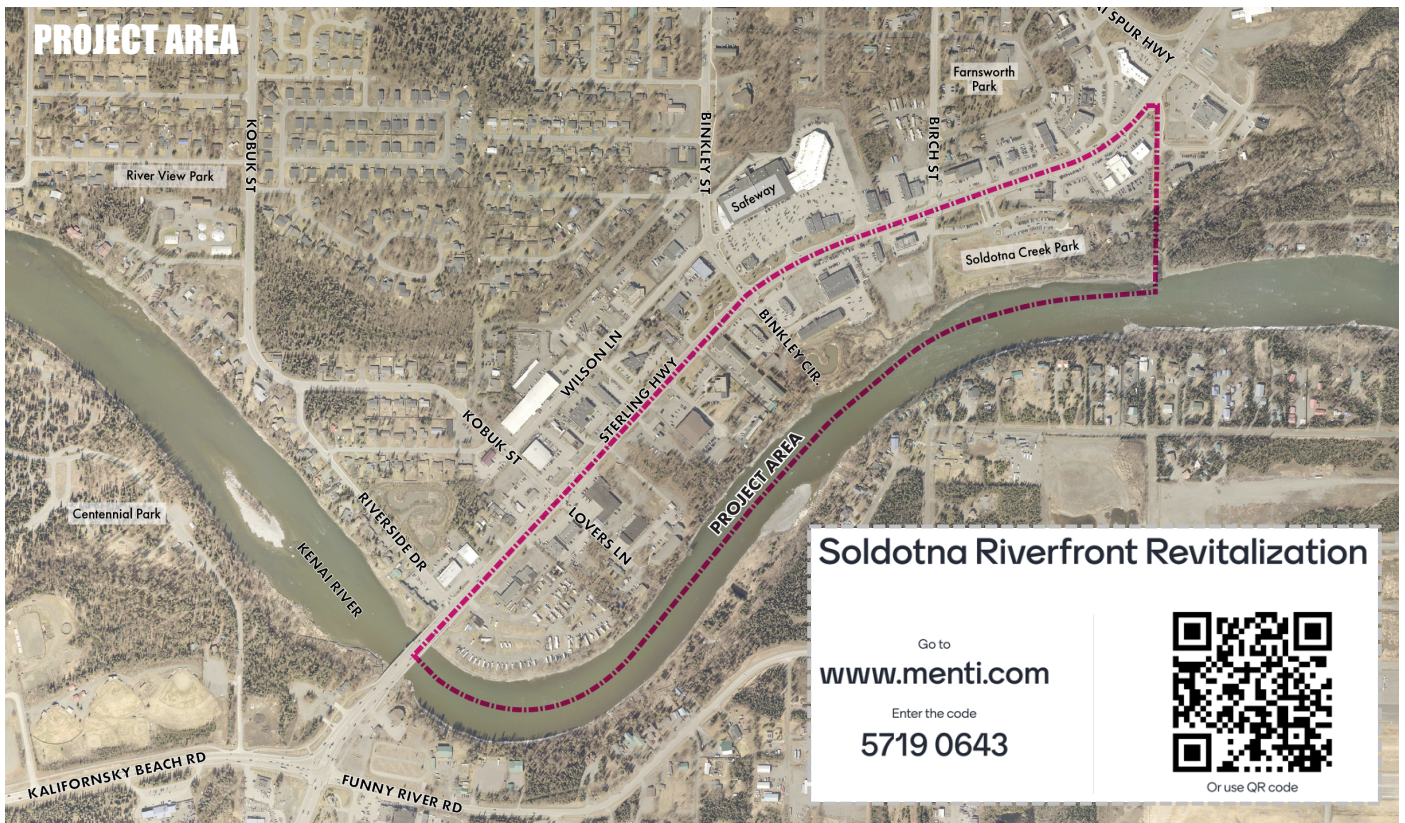
The City of Soldotna seeks to work with land and business owners, residents and community partners to **redevelop an 85-acre portion of downtown**— currently a mix of auto-orientated businesses along the busy Sterling Highway along with underutilized and undeveloped properties located between the Sterling Hwy and the world-renowned Kenai River.

The Kenai River is envisioned as the centerpiece of a walkable, connected downtown and plays a vital role in the local and regional economy of the central peninsula

The Riverfront Redevelopment Plan is intended to **be transformative and a strategy to guide the Downtown's long-term economic development goals**—seeking to foster new investment and partnerships, create jobs, and improve the quality of the built environment for residents and visitors.

Portland, Oregon firm First Forty Feet has assembled a multi-disciplinary team that is well-positioned to partner with the City to:

- » Create a **one-of-a-kind riverfront experience** that attracts locals and tourists with shopping, dining, & lodging in a walkable environment.
- » Highlight and **incorporate the Kenai River** with the Downtown.
- » Remedy environmental issues on a 10-acre brownfield site to **promote riverfront investment**.
- » **Identify critical infrastructure**, including roads, water, sewer, and energy investments necessary to support redevelopment.
- » Increase the inventory of developable commercial land to **support local businesses, business expansion and attract new entrepreneurs** to the community.
- » Identify opportunities for **public and private partnerships**.
- » Explore **options and strategies** for funding and implementation.



# PROJECT TIMELINE

## Project Initiation

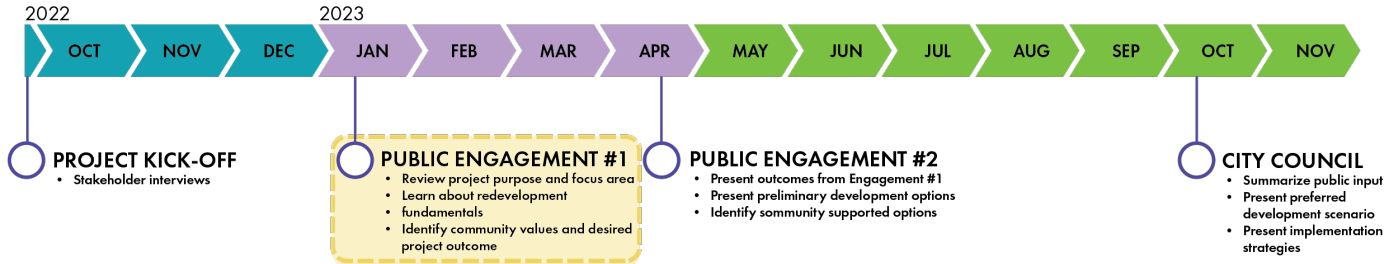
## Build the Vision

## Master Plan

Existing Conditions | Market Analysis | Environ. Review

Conceptual Master Planning | Preliminary Development Scenarios

Refined Master Plan | Preferred Development Scenario | Implementation Strategies



# PROJECT CONTACTS

### City of Soldotna

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### First Forty Feet (Consultant)

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## Subscribe to Soldotna Riverfront Redevelopment


**Stay up to date!**

Sign up to receive project updates

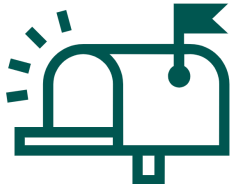
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Email

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I'm not a robot 

**Sign Up**









Visit the project webpage @ [www.soldotnariverfront.org/](http://www.soldotnariverfront.org/)

# Soldotna Riverfront Redevelopment

A plan to redevelop a portion of downtown and create a one-of-a-kind riverfront experience.



## Objectives

-  Create a **one-of-a-kind riverfront experience** with shopping, dining, and lodging in a walkable destination
-  Support **local businesses, business expansion and attract** new entrepreneurs
-  **Highlight and incorporate** the Kenai River with the Downtown
-  Identify opportunities for **public and private partnerships**
-  Identify **critical infrastructure** to support redevelopment
-  Explore **options and strategies** for funding and implementation



# Identity

## History

History begins with the **Dena'ina Athabaskan** people who have lived in and used the areas around the Kenai River for many thousands of years.

**Homesteaders** arrived in the late **1940's**. WWII veterans were encouraged to lay claim to Alaska's land.



**Sterling Highway, Kenai River Bridge, and Kenai Spur Highway** were constructed in the **1950's**.



New infrastructure resulted in increased settlement to the area. Development spurred along the highways.

In **1960** Soldotna became **incorporated**. The Kenai Peninsula Borough, college, and school district formed.



Business was booming by the **1970's**. The **Central Peninsula Hospital** opened as the first in the region.

1980

1988

1995

2011

2012

2015

Soldotna  
Creek Park  
deeded

Soldotna  
Comprehensive  
Plan

Soldotna  
Mainstreet  
Plan

Envision  
2030 Plan

Soldotna  
Creek Park  
updated

Downtown  
Improvement  
Plan

# Identity

## Location



Soldotna is a **HUB** and **CENTER** for:



**GOVERNMENT**



**HEALTH**



**EDUCATION**



**RETAIL & SERVICES**



**NATURE & WILDLIFE**

# Identity

## Community Gathering

Where do you meet friends and family in the downtown?  
Place a ★.

Where is the 'heart' of downtown?  
Place a ♥.



Today, Soldotna has a wealth of community gathering places. In the future, downtown redevelopment can support new indoor and outdoor gathering places.



**FOOD & BEVERAGE**



**RETAIL**



**PARKS & NATURAL AREAS**



**SPORTS & RECREATION**



**CULTURAL FACILITIES**

# Place

## Public Spaces and Downtown Character

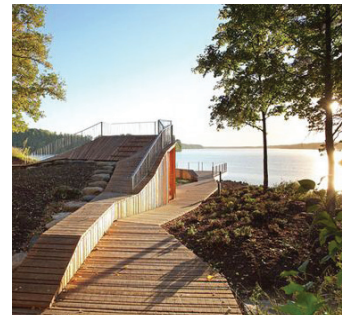
### Storefronts:



### Riverfront Dining:



### Riverwalk:



# Place

## Public Spaces and Downtown Character

**Landing Overlook:**



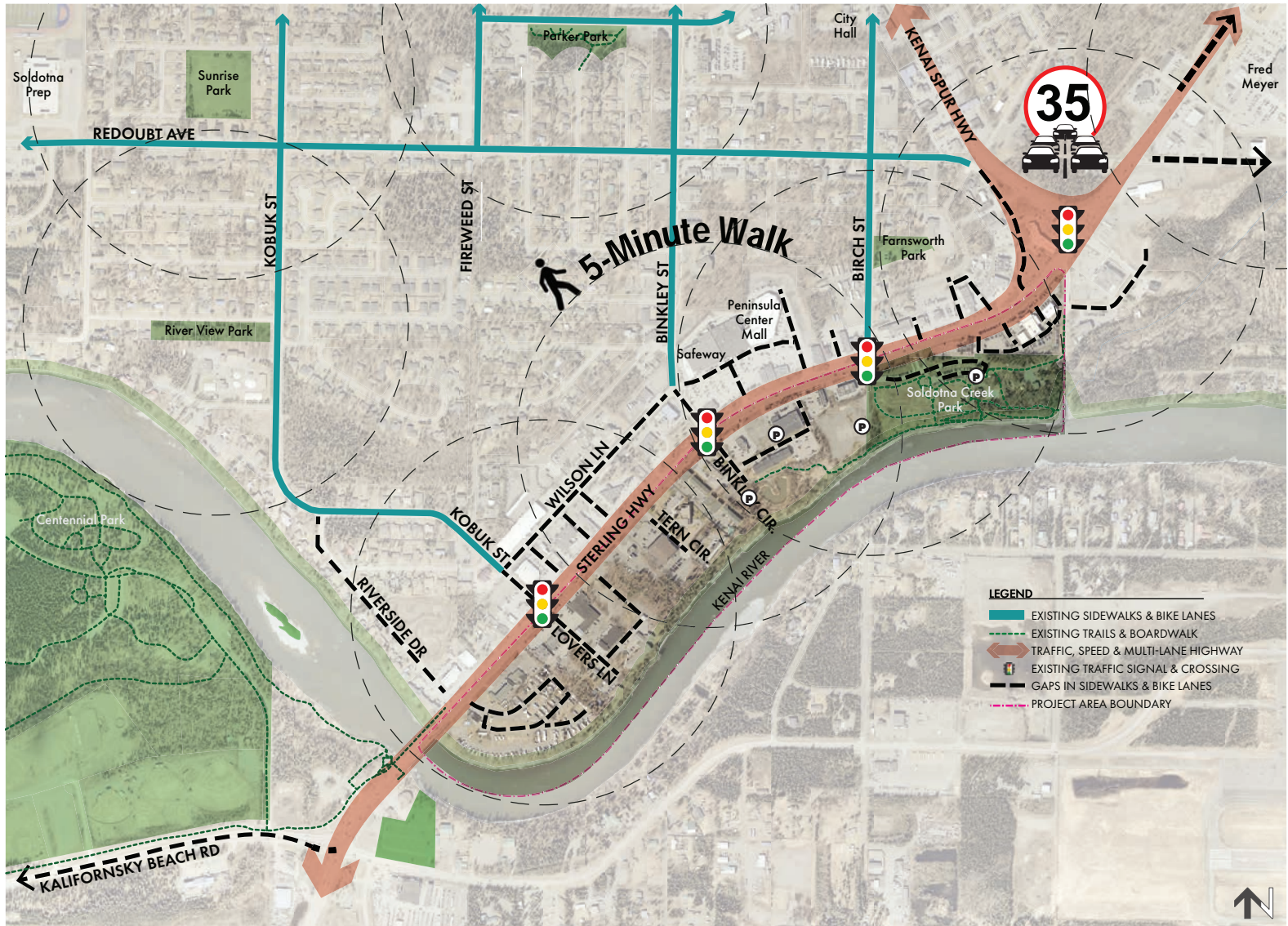
**Main Street:**



**Public Plaza:**



# Connected Challenges



## Many community destinations are within a short 5-minute walk or bike.



**Gaps** in sidewalks and bike lines must be eliminated to create stronger links between downtown shopping and dining and riverfront destinations like Soldotna Creek Park.



**Barriers** to walking and biking include multi-lane traffic, vehicle speed and limited signalized crossings of the Sterling Highway.



**Riverfront Trails & Boardwalks** are located on each end of the project area, however there are significant trail gaps and no areas to view the river between Soldotna Creek Park and the bridge.



**Parking** for events can exceed capacity at major destinations such as Soldotna Creek Park, while large parking lots are dispersed or are for private use only and may not be accessible by walking.

# Connected Opportunities

## Enhanced Crossings for Safer Intersections



## Safe and Protected Bikeways Encourage New Riders



## Overlooks and Landings Engage the River



## Wide & Comfortable Sidewalks Promote Walking

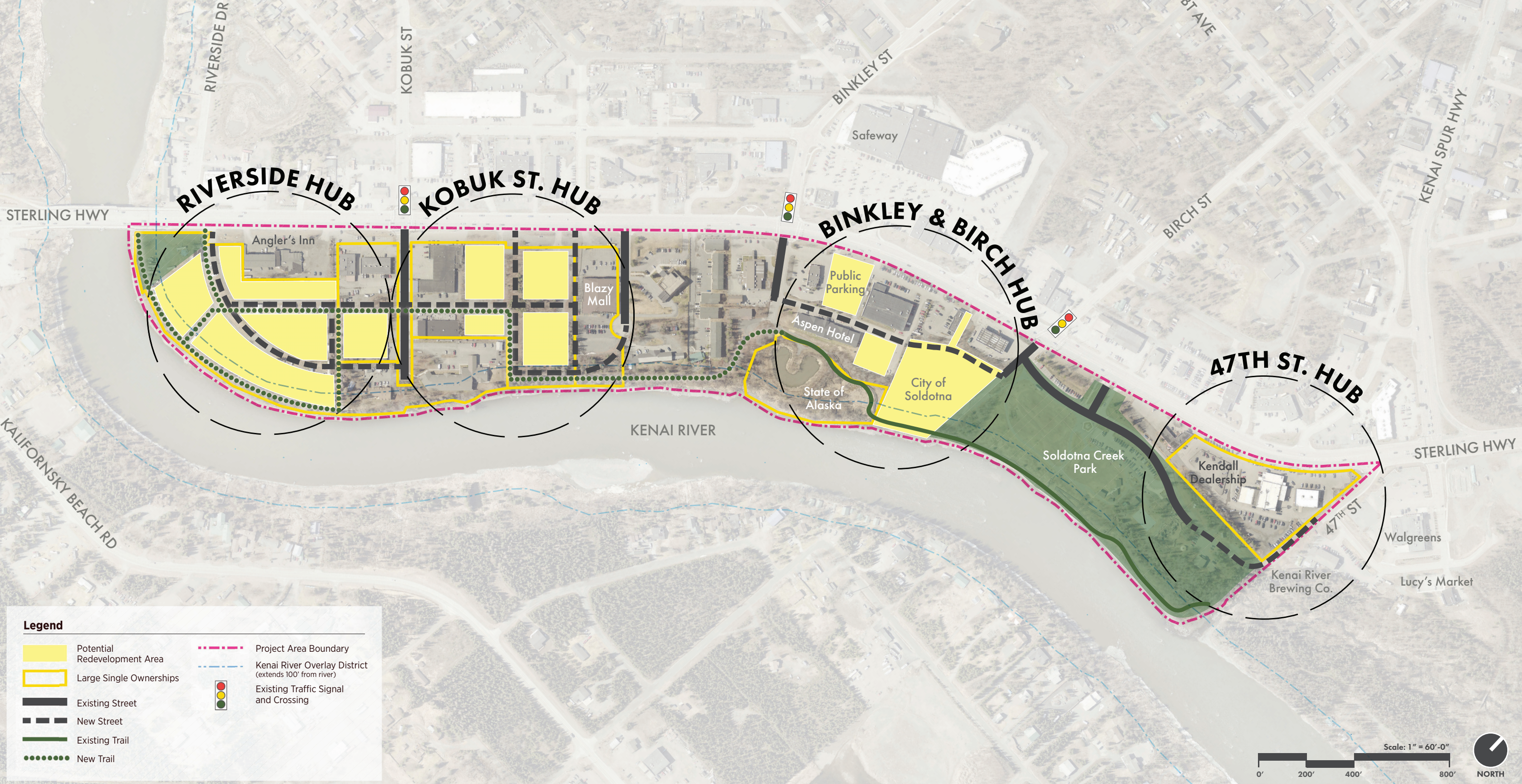


## River Access via Trails and Boardwalks



# Soldotna Riverfront Redevelopment Plan

Project Area



**Legend**

- Potential Redevelopment Area
- Large Single Ownerships
- Existing Street
- New Street
- Existing Trail
- New Trail
- Project Area Boundary
- Kenai River Overlay District (extends 100' from river)
- Existing Traffic Signal and Crossing

Scale: 1" = 60'-0"

0' 200' 400' 800'

NORTH



# RIVERFRONT REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT

## INTRODUCTION

Redevelopment of Soldotna’s downtown area is an opportunity to strengthen the heart of the community.

Your feedback is important to the project team in identifying community values and desired outcomes for potential redevelopment in the project area.

**Soldotna Riverfront Revitalization**

Go to  
**www.menti.com**

Enter the code  
**5719 0643**



Or use QR code

There are two options for providing feedback. 1. Scan the QR code with your phone or mobile device to complete the feedback form with the presentation. 2. Complete the questions in paper form below and on the following pages.

### Q1. Where do you like to meet family and friends in the downtown and riverfront area?

### Q2. What two or three words best describe Soldotna?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



## IDENTITY

Future redevelopment can support what is valued in the community----history, nature, gathering, active, art, & local.

### History

The downtown area has been shaped and influenced by the Kenai River, the early Homesteaders, and construction of the Sterling Highway.

### The Kenai Peninsula Hub

Soldotna’s central location on the peninsula and highway access has made it a center for government, healthcare, education and access to nature and wildlife. The downtown area serves as a major retail and services destination.

### Community

The downtown is a place where the community gathers anchored by Soldotna Creek Park and the riverfront serving as Soldotna’s “living room”, the addition of local breweries, shops, and restaurants and the soon to be built Soldotna Field House.

### Q.3 What are you most proud of about Soldotna?

## Q.4 What makes Soldotna unique among other towns in the Kenai Peninsula?



### PLACE

Future redevelopment can support downtown as an 18-hour hub of activity. These hubs of activity such as dining, shopping and entertainment should be places that are walkable, have opportunities to engage the river and include indoor and outdoor spaces for gathering.

#### Hubs of Activity

Downtowns often have a variety of “places” where people want to be and are centered around, shopping, entertainment, recreation (indoor and outdoor), and culture (museums, centers, & libraries) or oriented to the river.

#### A “Main Street”

Many downtowns have a couple of blocks and a street address that is identifiable as the heart to the community and a destination for shopping, dining, entertainment (music venues and movie theaters), and culture (museums, and concert halls)

#### Engaging the river

Redevelopment can engage the river in several ways providing direct interaction with the river or views and overlooks to the river below and beyond.

#### Public gathering

Memorable downtowns have a variety of spaces to gather from parks (large and small), to plazas, and riverfronts that attract residents and visitors alike.

**Q.5 Where is the heart of Soldotna?**

**Q.6 What would you like to see in the downtown and riverfront area?**

**Q.7 Rank the most desirable downtown experiences? 1 being most desirable.**

- Shopping, dining, entertainment and cultural
- A Main Street
- Public gathering
- Riverfront engagement



## **CONNECTED**

Important features of a connected downtown and riverfront include streets, and trails providing safe, direct, and continuous access to destinations for all ages, abilities and users, whether you walk, bike, roll, or drive.

### **Sterling Highway Safety, Access, & Aesthetics**

The Sterling Highway is the primary traffic route through town, provides access to businesses and acts as a gateway or “front door” to Soldotna. Today, the highway can be a barrier for those walking and biking with limited street crossings, sidewalks next to busy traffic and no bicycle facilities. Future improvements could enhance the visual quality of the corridor, provide enhanced crossings, and a more comfortable environment for walking and biking.

### **New Street Connections**

New Streets can improve access to existing businesses and destinations and provide opportunities to support redevelopment areas oriented to the highway and the river.

### **Riverfront Connections**

The downtown riverfront consists of a riparian zone with gradual and steep slopes and public and private ownerships. Given these conditions there are a variety of ways to connect with the river such as with trails, boardwalks, overlooks and buildings oriented to the river.

### **Community Connections**

Kobuk Street, Birch Street, and Binkley Street are local streets that link to citywide destinations like parks, schools, employment areas and the downtown and riverfront area. Future street improvements can support safe and comfortable ways to walk, and bike as well as drive to these destinations.

**Q.8 What are safety, access, and visual challenges along Sterling Highway? Rate the challenges – 0-not a challenge and 10- very challenging.**

1. Vehicle speed	0	2	5	7	10
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
2. Traffic noise	0	2	5	7	10
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
3. Pedestrian crossings	0	2	5	7	10
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
4. Lack of bicycle routes	0	2	5	7	10
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
5. Lack of buffer between sidewalk and roadway	0	2	5	7	10
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
6. Light & landscaping	0	2	5	7	10
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
7. Winter maintenance	0	2	5	7	10
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

**Q.9 How desirable is walking and biking to downtown and riverfront destinations? Pick up to three.**

I frequently walk and bike to downtown destinations

I would walk or bike if there were safe options

I would walk short distances between downtown destinations

I prefer to drive to the riverfront and walk the trails & boardwalks

I prefer to drive a vehicle



## REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

**Q.10 What are the challenges to redevelopment?**

**Q.11 What are the opportunities for redevelopment?**

**Q.12 Do you have any additional comments to share with the project team?**



# TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF

(Optional)

**Q.13** What is the zip code of your home address? .....

**Q.14** Do you own a business, building, or land in the project area? .....

**Q.15** How often do you visit the downtown area between Kenai Spur Highway and the Kenai River Bridge?

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Occasionally
- Rarely
- Never

**Q.16** For what purpose(s) do you visit the downtown area between Kenai Spur Highway and the Kenai River Bridge? Check all that apply:

- For my job/business
- Shopping
- Dining
- Entertainment
- Recreation
- Other:

**Q.17** Optional: Provide your name and the best way to contact you:

- Name: .....
- Mailing Address: .....
- City: .....
- State: .....
- Zip: .....
- Phone: .....
- Email: .....

**YES - I want to sign up to receive updates about the project.** (Be sure to provide your email address above.)



# *Poll Results - Chamber of Commerce Luncheon*

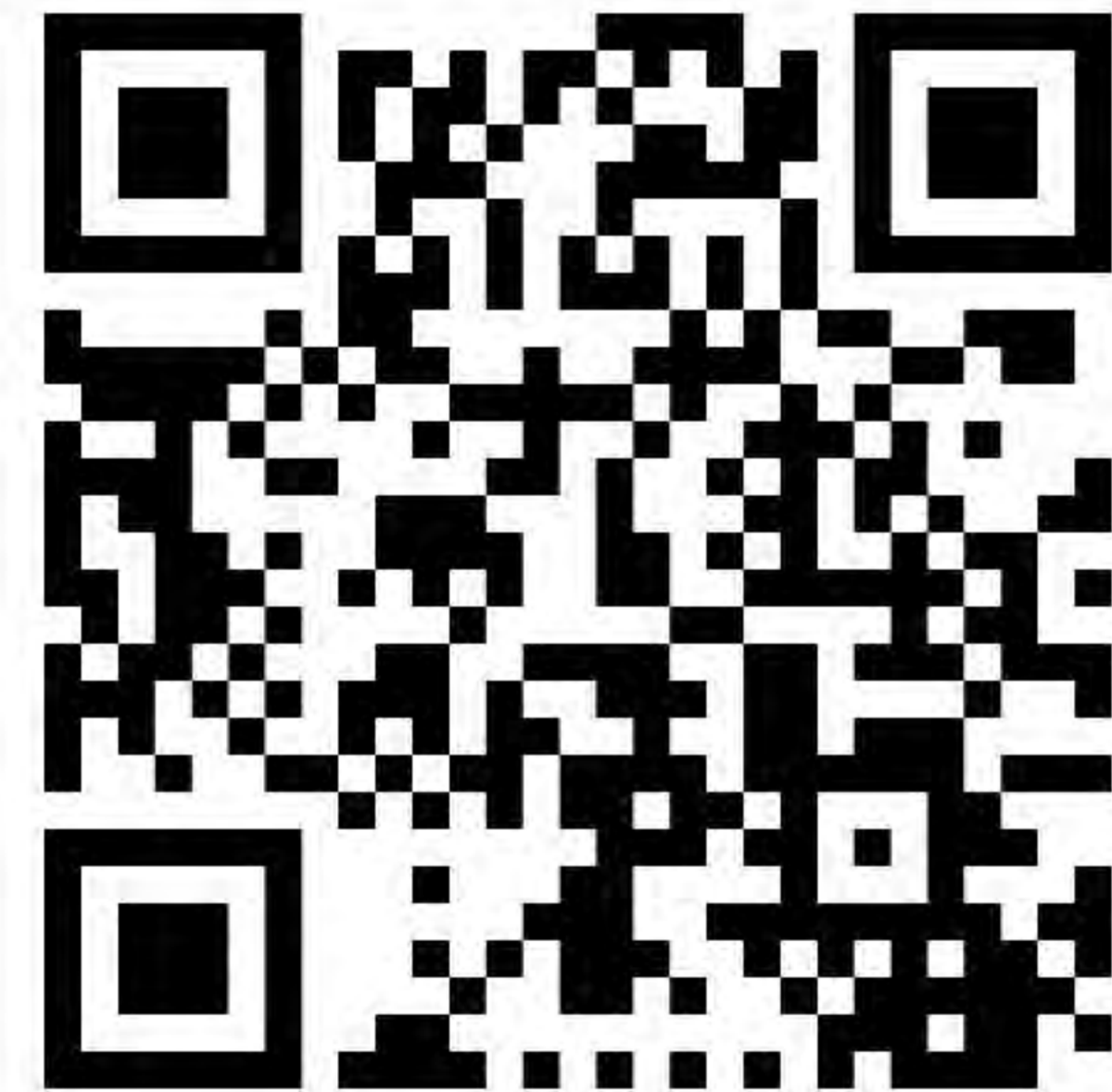


# Soldotna Riverfront Revitalization

Go to

**[www.menti.com](https://www.menti.com)**

Enter the code



Or use QR code

# What two or three words best describe Soldotna?



progressive  
my home for life  
friendly hometown  
healthy environment  
peaceful  
family  
budding  
healthy community  
splendid  
connected  
friendly  
growing  
tourist  
unique  
vibrant  
inviting  
local  
amazing people  
better than kenai  
family friendly  
fun  
hello  
community  
beautiful  
home  
engaging  
river  
thriving  
cozy  
innovative  
awesome  
peaceful  
bountiful  
energetic  
unlocal  
exciting  
relaxing  
bustling  
rivercity  
potential  
famous kenai river  
alluring  
exciting  
bountiful  
energetic  
unlocal  
exciting  
relaxing  
bustling  
rivercity  
potential  
famous kenai river

# Where do you like to meet family and friends in the downtown and riverfront area?

Kenai River brewing

Soldotna Creek Park

Soldotna Creek Park

Soldotna creek Park

The parks or restaurants.

Restaurant, cafe

Soldotna Creek Park

Soldotna creek park

Kenai river brewery

# Where do you like to meet family and friends in the downtown and riverfront area?

The bridge lounge because it's on the river

Park, Kenai River Brewery

Restaurant

Lucy's

Restaurant

Soldotna creek park

The Bridge Lounge

Kensi River Brewery

Soldotna Creek Park or Wednesday in the Park

# Where do you like to meet family and friends in the downtown and riverfront area?

Soldotna Creek Park

Restaurant

Indoor or outdoor restaurant WITH a bar.

Soldotna Creek Park or restaurant

krb

Soldotna Creek Park

Kenai River Brewery

No place shown

Breweries, Kenai River and Saint Elias

# Where do you like to meet family and friends in the downtown and riverfront area?

The park

Soldotna Creek Park

Brewery not in there. Btw. Odieis.

Soldotna creek park

Kenai River Brewery

Kenai Brewing



# What are the top three challenges to redevelopment?





# What are the opportunities for redevelopment?

open the area to visitors  
engagement  
landowner support  
growth improve city  
access



# What questions do you have?



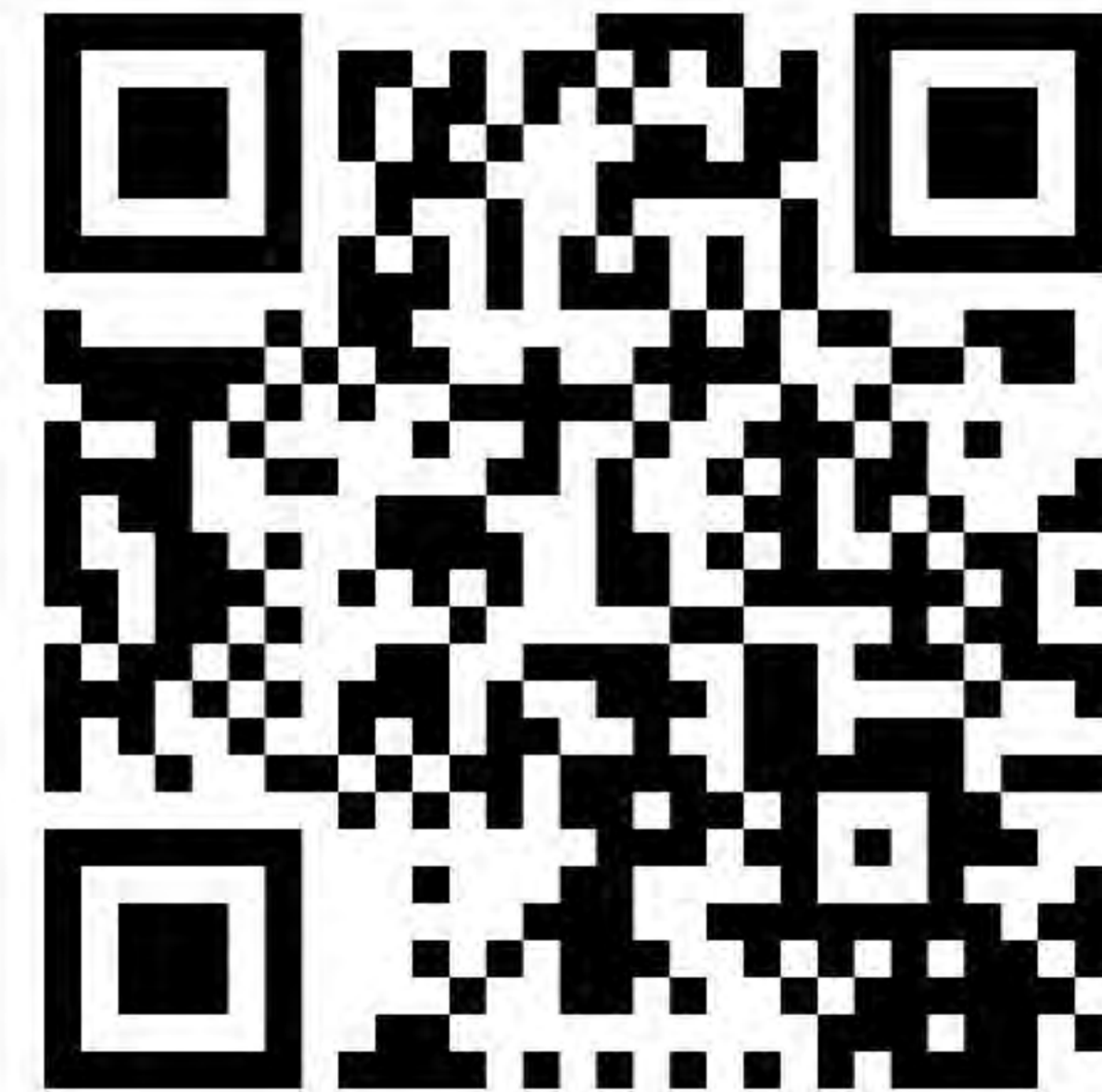
# *Poll Results - Community Open House 1*

# Soldotna Riverfront Revitalization

Go to

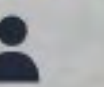
**[www.menti.com](https://www.menti.com)**

Enter the code



Or use QR code

# What two or three words best describe Soldotna?



# Where do you like to meet family and friends in the downtown and riverfront area?

Bridge Lounge

Kenai River Brewery

Soldotna Creek Park

Pizza boys

Brewery

Soldotna Creek Park

Kenai River Brewery

The Bridge Lounge

Bridge lounge



# Where do you like to meet family and friends in the downtown and riverfront area?

Soldotna creek park

Lucy's Market

Kenai River Brewery

Kenai River Brewing Company

Kaladi's

Kenai River Brewing

The Park

Kenai River Brewing

Soldotna creek park  
Odies Deli  
Lucy's Market  
Kenai River Brewing  
Pizza  
Boys Bridge Lounge



# Where do you like to meet family and friends in the downtown and riverfront area?

Kenai River Brewing

Kenai River Brewing, The Bridge, Odies, Soldotna creek park , Mykels

Bridge lounge, krbb

Odies

Soldotna creek park

Soldotna creek park

Kaladi Brothers Coffee

Lucy's Market or Kenai River Brewing

Kenai River Brewery

# Where do you like to meet family and friends in the downtown and riverfront area?

KR Brewery,, Odie's,,, SC Park

Krb

Soldotna creek park

Kenai river brewery

Kaladis , park, restaurant

Soldotna creek park.Fishing spots.

DQ

Soldotna creek park

KRB

# Where do you like to meet family and friends in the downtown and riverfront area?

Odies cafe

Kenai River Brewery

Kaladi coffee, Lucy's market, Kenai River brewery, odies deli

Pizza boys, The Bridge, Addie camp

Soldotna Creek Park and KRB



# What are you most proud of about Soldotna?

Soldotna Creek Park

Kenai River Small town charm Local businesses

Our growth

Activities and community

Kenai Peninsula College

Strong community ties

Salmon

The City Manager and Council having open minds

Trail system

# What are you most proud of about Soldotna?

Friendliness of people

The growth and the connections that are being made

Our trails

Great place to fish!

It's my home

Supporting small local business

Good place to raise family

Schools

The people that make up this community

# What are you most proud of about Soldotna?

Continual improvement in quality of life

Growth focused on community spaces

Our people

It is a great place to raise children.

Fishery

Connection to the Kenai River

Small town feel

Respect for fish

Perseverance of small business

# What are you most proud of about Soldotna?

So much energy around new ideas and businesses.

Progressive

Community friendly

The people

Fishing

The incorporation of the Dena'ina culture and language at the park.

Community involvement and opportunity for Community recreation

The Community feel, chamber involvement , entrepreneurship, our river, local pride

recent years' growth in both thought and infrastructure

# What are you most proud of about Soldotna?

The green spaces throughout the city and incorporation of nature into the city landscape.

Place, place, place  
Development  
Kenai  
River

Fiscal management. Invests in the community citizens business natural areas uses taxes in a manner that benefits all

The people.

**What makes Soldotna unique among other towns on the Peninsula?**



# Where is the heart of your town?

Words from the word cloud include: soldotna creek park river, soldotna y, parks, local businesses, lucys market, the people, kaladis, trustworthiness, tsalteshi, the river, krb, trails, business, soldotna creek park, the park, lucys, people, river, sohi, the y, fred meyers, kaladi brothers, river city, the beauty, homes, peninsula center mall, the bridge, safeway, fred meyer, park, river, lucys, people, the park, lucys, people, the y, fred meyers, kaladi brothers, river city, the beauty, homes, peninsula center mall.

# What would you like to see in the Downtown & Riverfront Area?

Restaurants

Walkable shopping and dining with view of the river

Good restaurants

More access to river

Wine bar

Riverfront dining

An actual downtown

Walkable access

Better walking



# What would you like to see in the Downtown & Riverfront Area?

Bike/walking path

A salmon education area. Fishing passage viewing

Bike rentals

Public river access

More dining choices

Walkable/accessible spaces

A fourth starbucks

Walking spaces  
Gathering spots  
Beauty & greenery

Easier access for walking around town

# What would you like to see in the Downtown & Riverfront Area?

Roller Rink

Walking access along river from Brinkley to the beidge

Local businesses and a walking area centered around viewing the river

A place to sit and take it all in

Parking

Bistros More food options Farm to table restaurants

Restaurants and shops, movie theater, awesome bowling alley with bar

More green space and green infrastructure

Ice cream parlor

# What would you like to see in the Downtown & Riverfront Area?

Clean riverwalk with dining and shopping opportunities

Walkable storefronts w/apartments above

Outdoor gathering -bars, restaurants

Casual meeting spaces, recreation space, beer gardens, walkability

Walkable, live and work in same area.

Activities for families and adults, not bar related

Restaurant with riverview

Walkable pathways along the river. A new visitor center that can serve as a gateway into the community and starting point for exploring on foot.

Shopping

# What would you like to see in the Downtown & Riverfront Area?

Entertaining venue

Connectivity w walkways

Small businesses, family friendly Recreation spots

Walking connection from Soldotna Creek Park to Bridge on the River

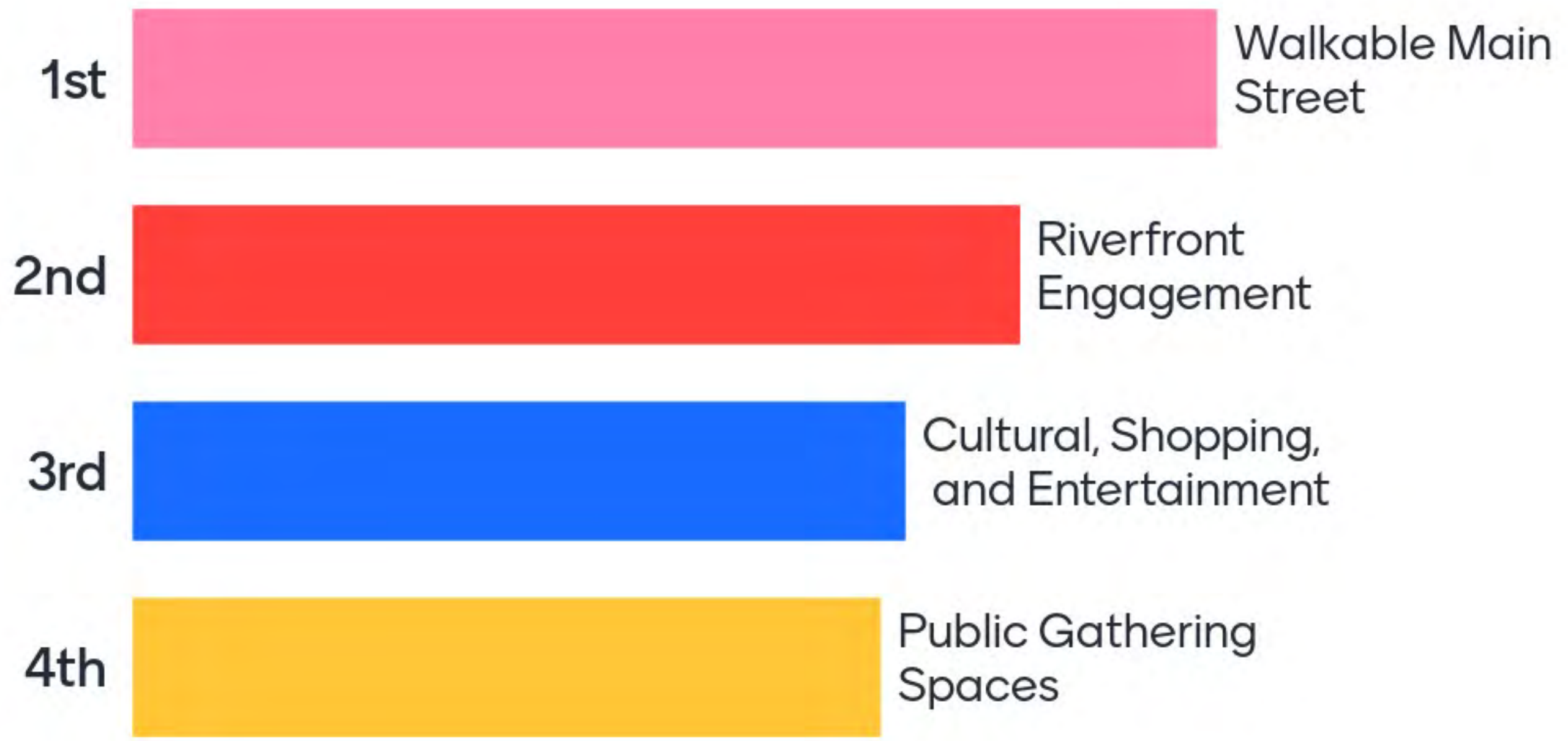
Walkable shops and local eateries

Walkable

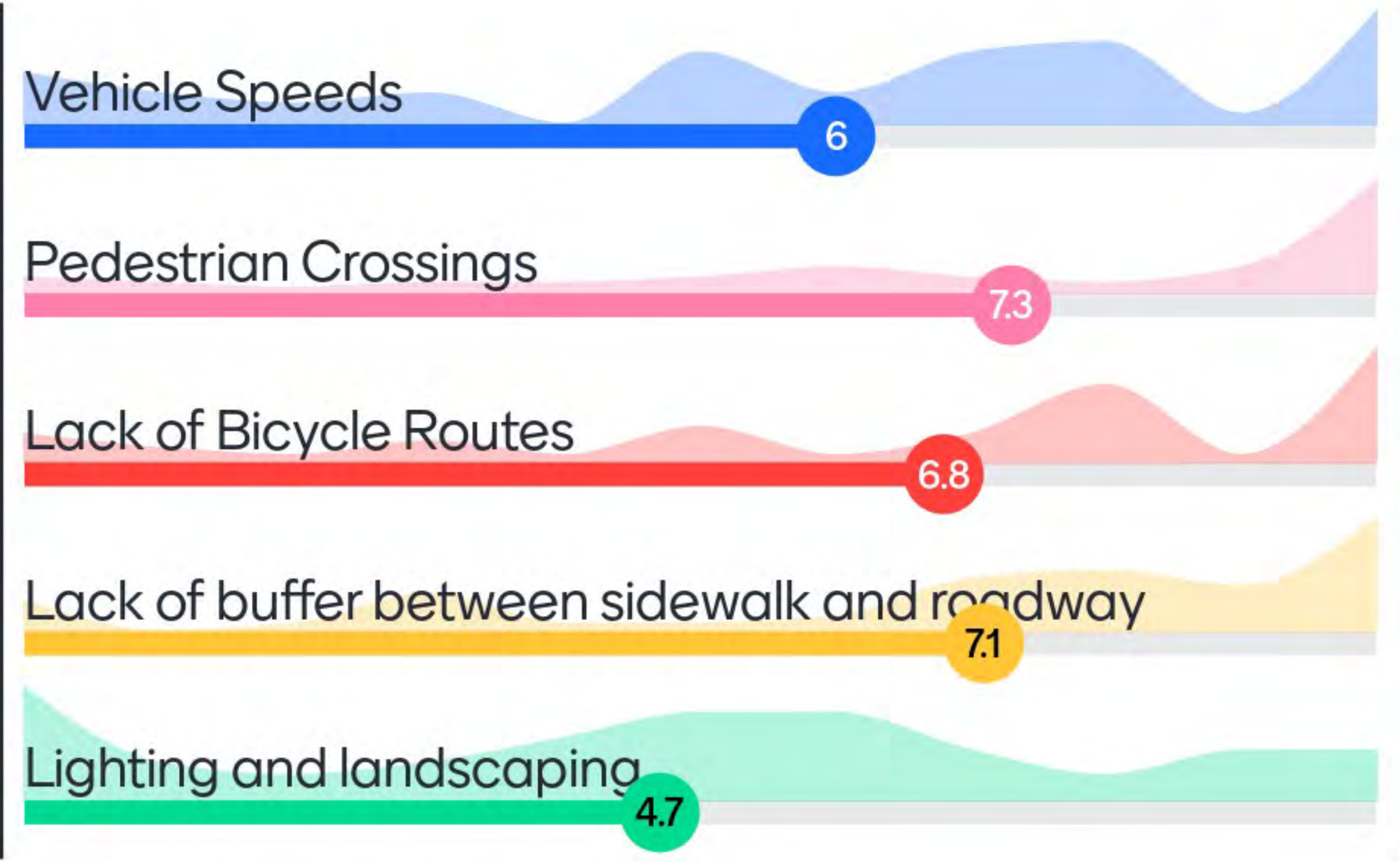
More classy establishments



# Rank the most desirable downtown experiences

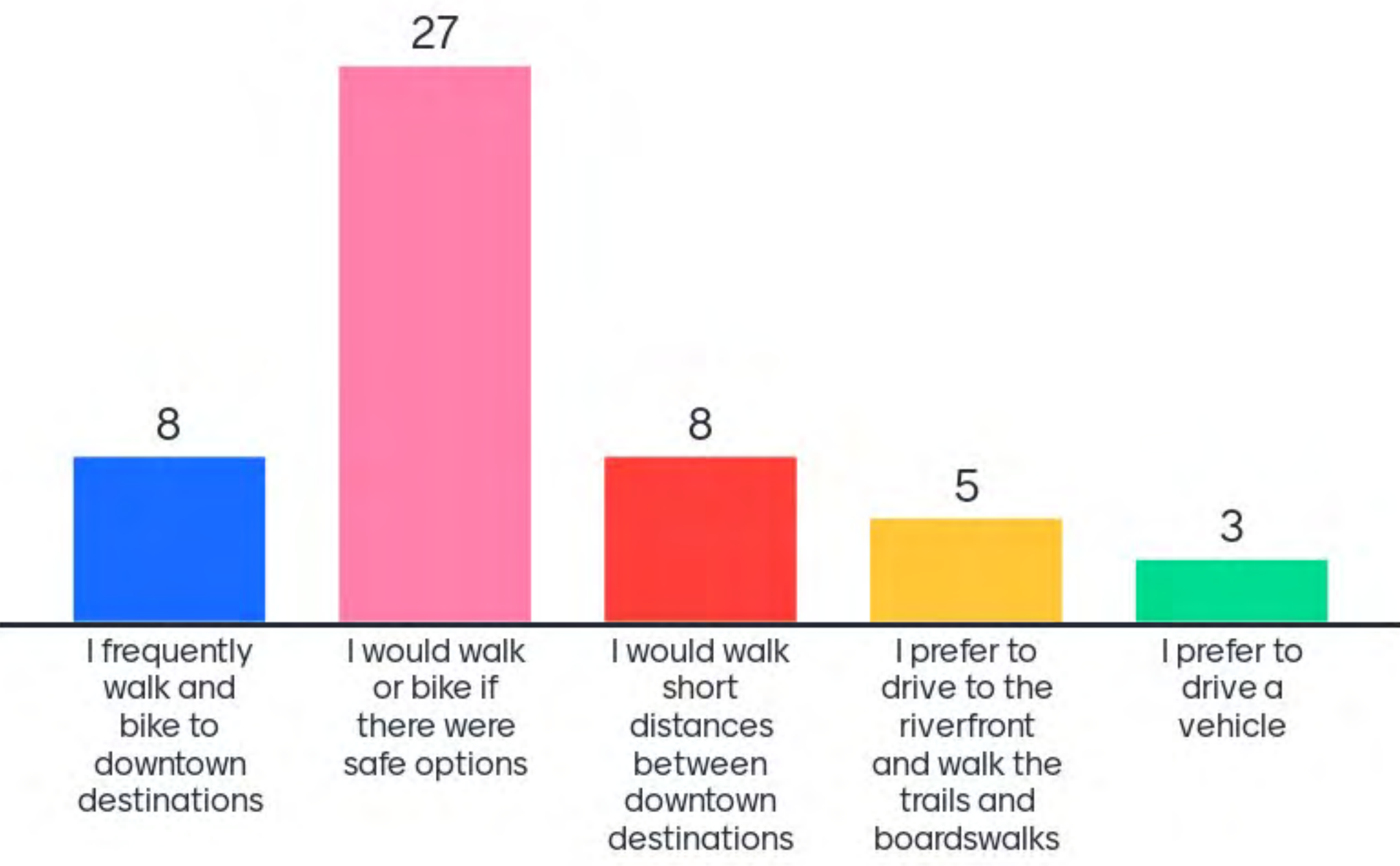


# What are safety, access, and visual challenges along Sterling Highway? Rate the challenges (0-no challenge- 10-very challenged)





# How desirable is walking and biking to downtown & riverfront destinations



**What are the top three  
challenges to  
redevelopment?**





# What are the opportunities for redevelopment?



# What questions do you have?



# APPENDIX D: ENGAGEMENT

## D.1 Community Engagement Plan

Document: Soldotna Riverfront Redevelopment Project: Engagement Plan. FIRST FORTY FEET

Description: *The plan identifies the Project's engagement goals and objectives, key engagement milestones, the outreach strategy, method of stakeholder identification, engagement methods, and the role of decision-makers in the project process.*

## D.2 Project Advisory Committee Plan

Document: Soldotna Riverfront Redevelopment Project: Project Advisory Committee- Roles & Responsibilities; FIRST FORTY FEET

Description: *The plan sets the expectations for the project advisory committee including roles, responsibilities and a schedule of project advisory committee meetings.*

## D.3 Engagement Milestone #1: Project Initiation- Objectives and Vision

Document: Project Handout; Engagement Boards for Display at the Community Workshop; Engagement #1 Feedback Form; and Engagement Results for sessions with the community and the Chamber of Commerce. FIRST FORTY FEET

Description: *Various engagement materials including an overall project handout, describing the project objectives, project area map and project timeline; large format boards illustrating the project area and timeline, elements that shape community identity, the places where people gather today and types of places they would like to see in the future, the challenges to walking and biking in the downtown and type of facilities to be considered in the project. A project feedback form was used to gather feedback on places and attributes of Soldotna that people value, the types of desirable future uses and riverfront activities in the project area, and opportunities and challenges related to riverfront access and general walk and bike conditions in and around the downtown. A summary of engagement results are tallied for each question posed during a community workshop and Chamber of Commerce luncheon.*

## **D.4 Engagement Milestone #2: Build the Vision- Preliminary Development Concepts**

**Document: Project Handout; Engagement Boards for Display at the Community Workshop; Engagement #2 Feedback Form; and Engagement Results for sessions with the community and the Kenai River Fish Habitat Symposium. FIRST FORTY FEET**

Description: *Various engagement materials including an overall project handout, describing the project objectives, project area map, project timeline and the "big ideas" for future redevelopment; large format boards illustrating the project area and timeline, the vision for downtown redevelopment, and preliminary concepts for parks, plazas and trails, riverfront and highway development and new and enhanced streets and trail connections.. A project feedback form was used to gather feedback on the project vision and preliminary development concepts. A summary of engagement results are tallied for each question posed during a community workshop and at the Kenai River Fish Habitat Symposium.*

## D.5 City Council Work Sessions

Document: The Big Ideas and Preliminary Concepts, Market Hall Options and Development Feasibility, and Downtown Riverfront Redevelopment Plan Elements slideshow presentations. FIRST FORTY FEET and ECONorthwest.

Description: *Presentations were a part of work sessions with the City Council and project advisory committee, to review and discuss: preliminary concepts and the results of the Engagement #1 sessions, development feasibility analysis, and the preferred plan elements and development strategy.*



# RIVERFRONT REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT

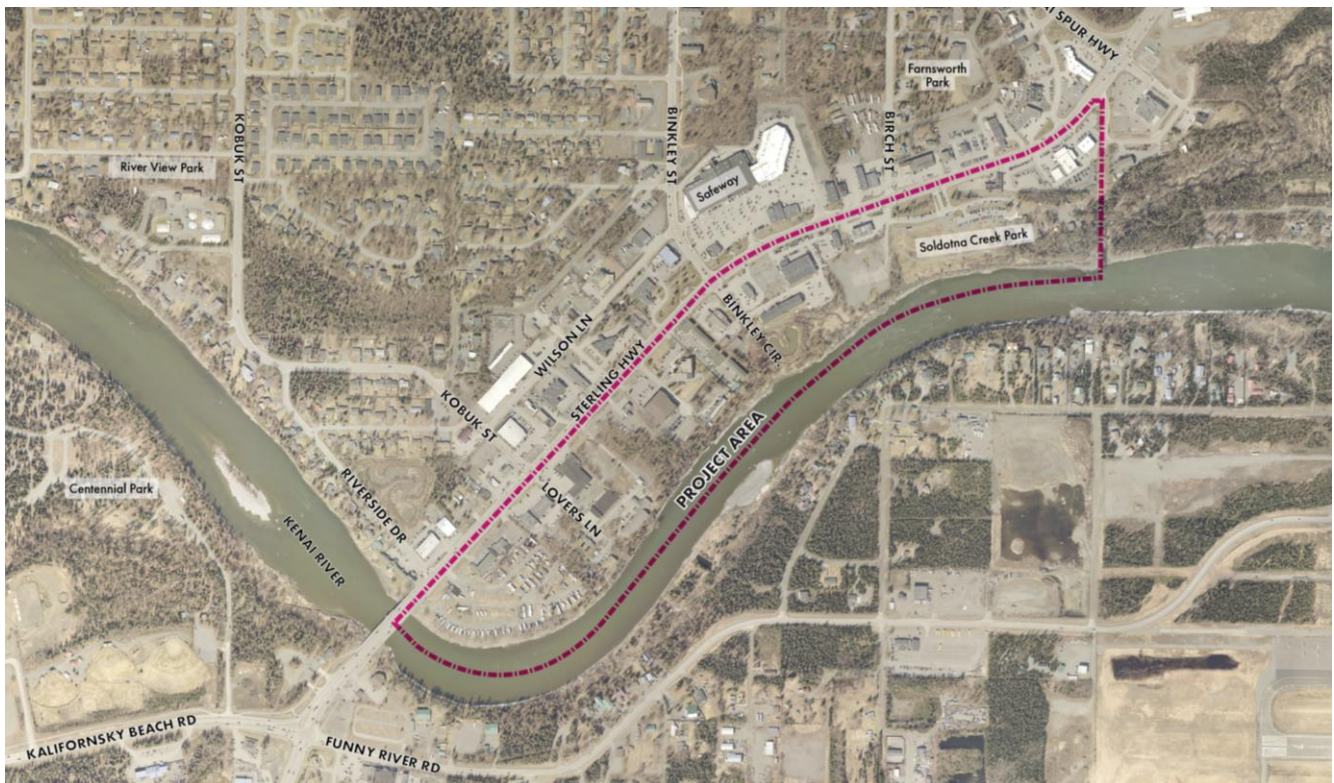
The City of Soldotna seeks to work with land and business owners, residents and community partners to **redevelop an 85-acre portion of downtown**— currently a mix of auto-orientated businesses along the busy Sterling Highway along with underutilized and undeveloped properties located between the Sterling Hwy and the world-renowned Kenai River.

The Kenai River is envisioned as the centerpiece of a walkable, connected downtown and plays a vital role in the local and regional economy of the central peninsula

The Riverfront Redevelopment Plan is intended to **be transformative and a strategy to guide the Downtown's long-term economic development goals**—seeking to foster new investment and partnerships, create jobs, and improve the quality of the built environment for residents and visitors.

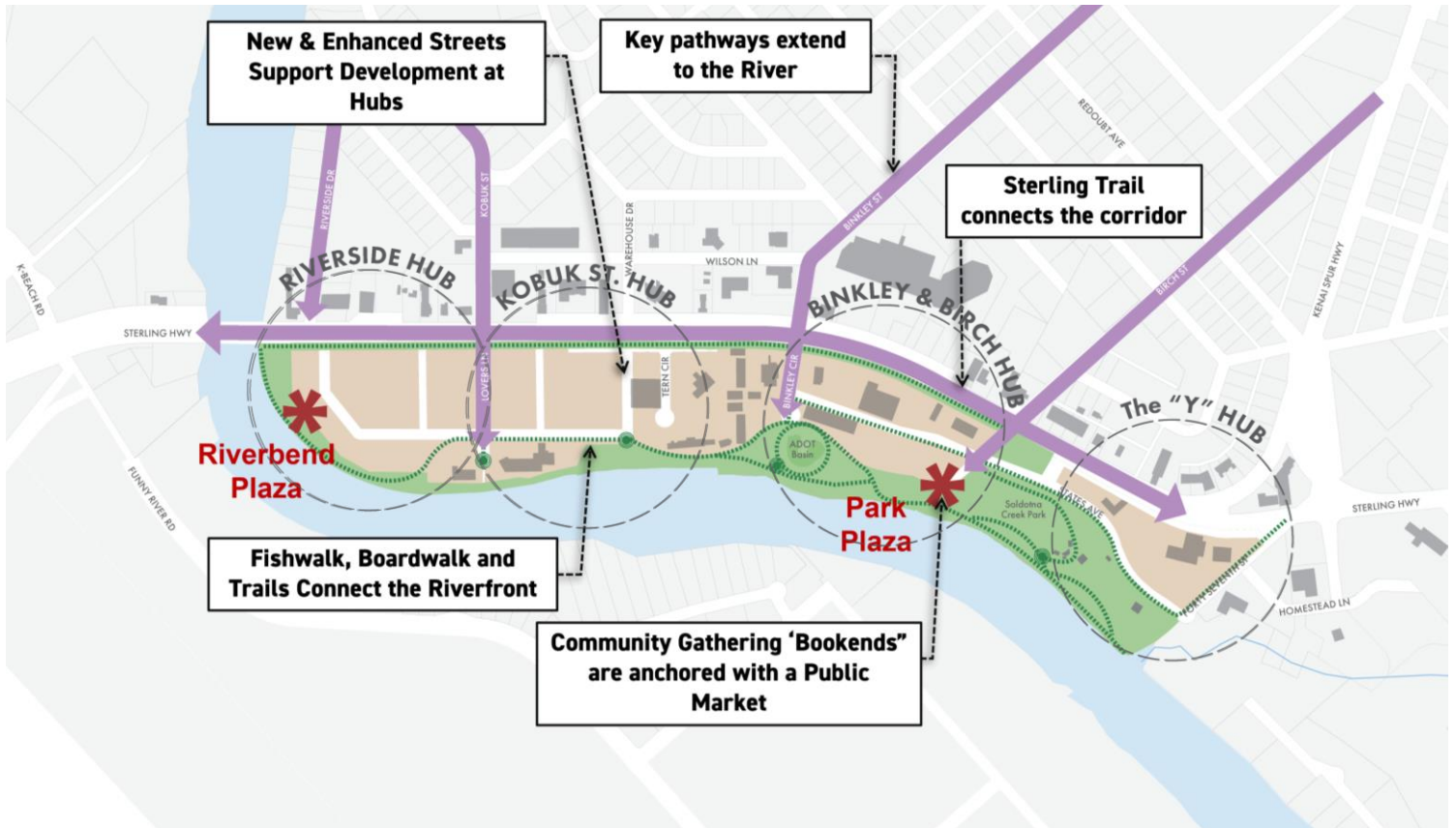
Portland, Oregon firm First Forty Feet has assembled a multi-disciplinary team that is well-positioned to partner with the City to:

- » Create a **one-of-a-kind riverfront experience** that attracts locals and tourists with shopping, dining, & lodging in a walkable environment.
- » Highlight and **incorporate the Kenai River** with the Downtown.
- » Provide **housing options** to meet local needs.
- » Remedy environmental issues on a 10-acre brownfield site to **promote riverfront investment**.
- » **Identify critical infrastructure**, including roads, water, sewer, and energy investments necessary to support redevelopment.
- » Increase the inventory of developable commercial land to **support local businesses, business expansion and attract new entrepreneurs** to the community.
- » Identify opportunities for **public and private partnerships**.
- » Explore **options and strategies** for funding and implementation.



# The Big Ideas

In response to community feedback and consistent with the project objectives a **Vision** for the redevelopment area is a place where **nature and urban gathering spaces** can coexist, expanding and enhancing one another. Strategies to implement the Vision are identified in the project area's "Big Ideas" for transforming the Sterling Highway corridor into a vibrant and active riverfront and downtown experience.



**IDENTITY:** The Kenai River corridor is a woven blend of **nature, wildlife, recreation & gathering.**

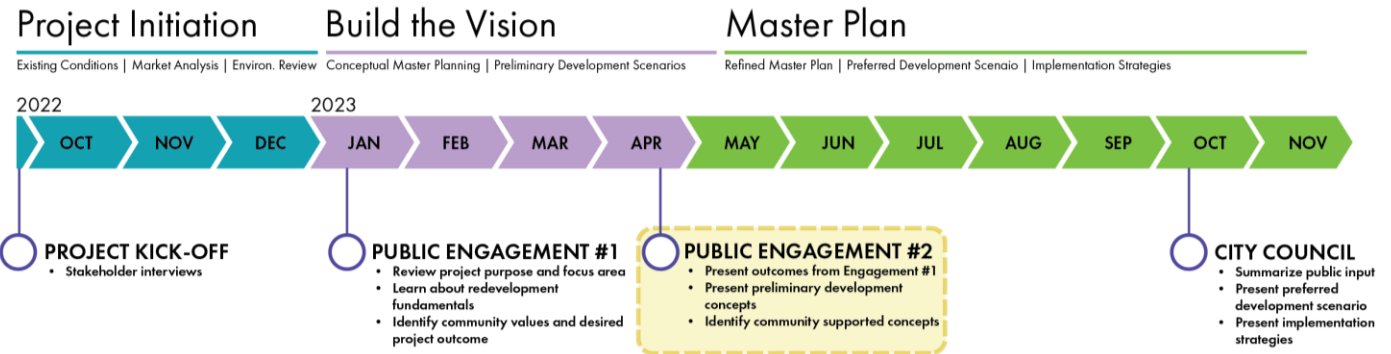


**CONNECTED:** **Key pathways** reconnect neighborhoods to the river and destinations along Sterling Highway



**PLACE:** New & enhanced streets support Downtown Hubs as **places to live, work, and play.**

# PROJECT TIMELINE



## PROJECT CONTACTS

### City of Soldotna

**John Czarnezki**

Director of Economic Development and Planning

[jczarnezki@soldotna.org](mailto:jczarnezki@soldotna.org)

907.714.1246

### First Forty Feet (Consultant)

**Jason Graf**

Project Manager

[jason@firstfortyfeet.com](mailto:jason@firstfortyfeet.com)

503.890.6755

## Subscribe to Soldotna Riverfront Redevelopment


**Stay up to date!**

Sign up to receive project updates

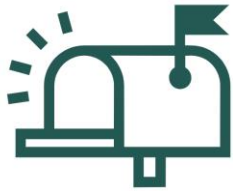
Enter your email here \*

Email

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I'm not a robot 

**Sign Up**



Visit the project webpage @ [www.soldotnariverfront.org/](http://www.soldotnariverfront.org/)



# IDENTITY

## History of Gathering and Natural Preservation

History begins with the **Dena'ina Athabaskan** people who have lived in and used the areas around the Kenai River for many thousands of years.

**Homesteaders** arrived in the late **1940's**. WWII veterans were encouraged to lay claim to Alaska's land.



**Sterling Highway, Kenai River Bridge, and Kenai Spur Highway** were constructed in the **1950's**.



Kenai River Bridge replaced and widened in 1965

New infrastructure resulted in increased settlement to the area. Development spurred along the highways.

In **1960** Soldotna became **incorporated**. The Kenai Peninsula Borough, college, and school district formed.



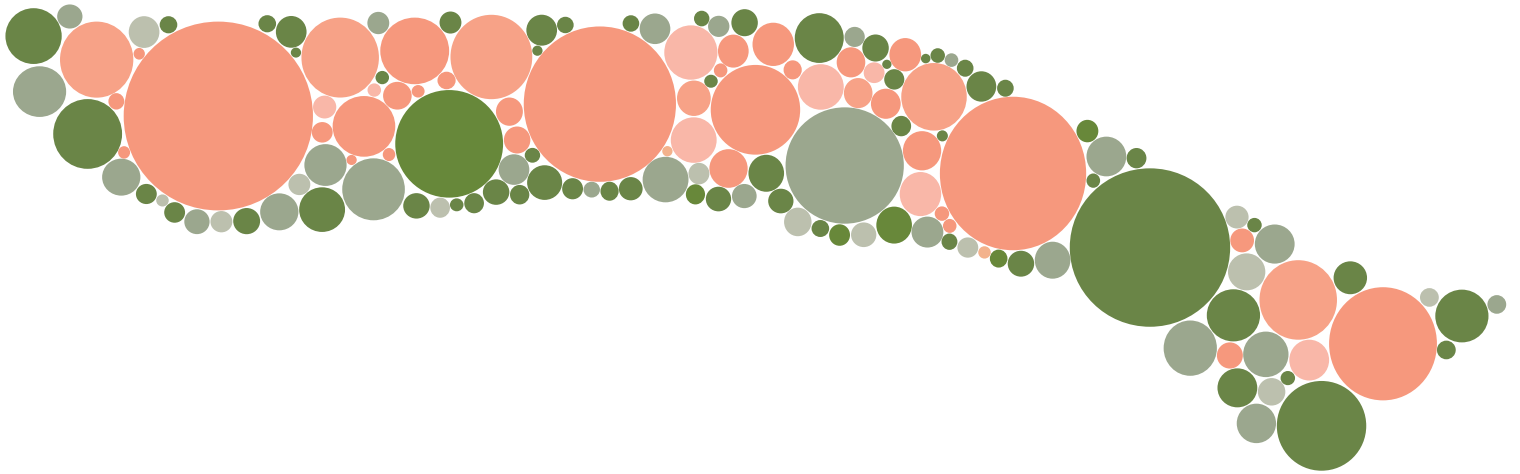
In **2012 Soldotna Creek Park opened**, serving as a valuable natural asset and gathering place in the city.





# IDENTITY

Soldotna is where the natural landscape and urban gathering spaces coexist, expanding, and enhancing one another.



**GATHERING**



**NATURE**

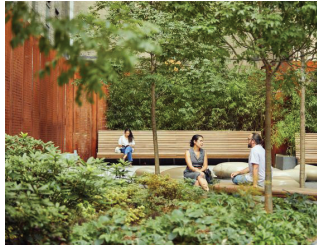
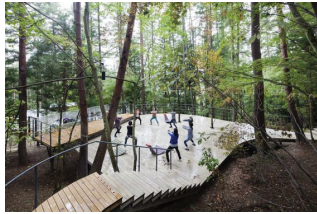






# IDENTITY

Through intelligent design, we can do what's best for the natural environment and for social well-being through gathering.





# PLACE

## Concept 1: River Street

Bridgehead Public Market



River Street

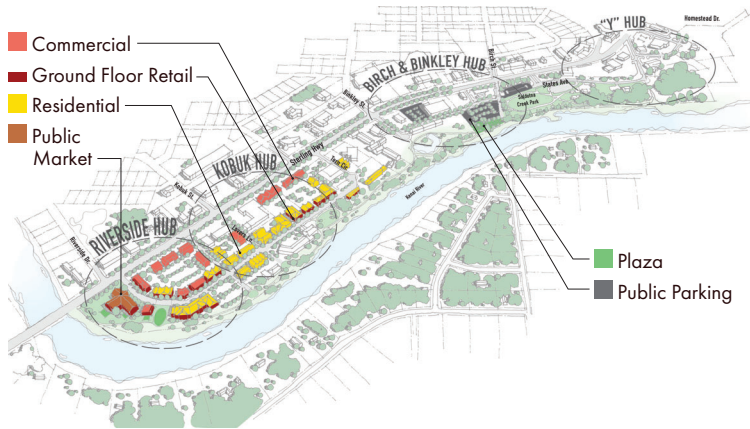


Plaza

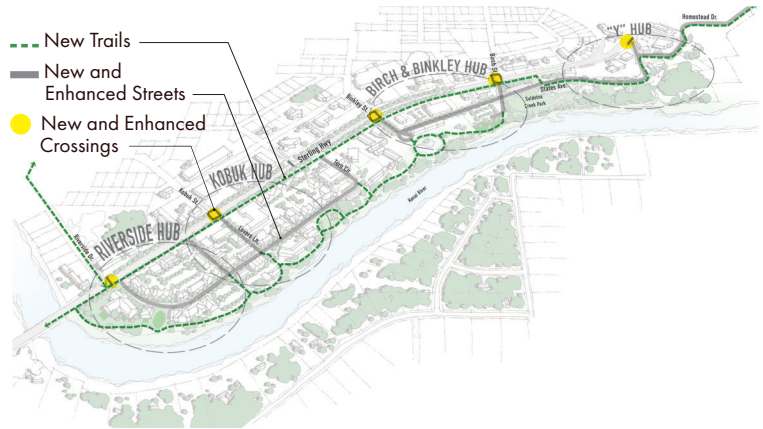


Riverwalk Trail

### Mix of Uses



### Enhanced Network of Streets + Trails





# PLACE

## Concept 2: Main Street

### Fishwalk



### Main Street



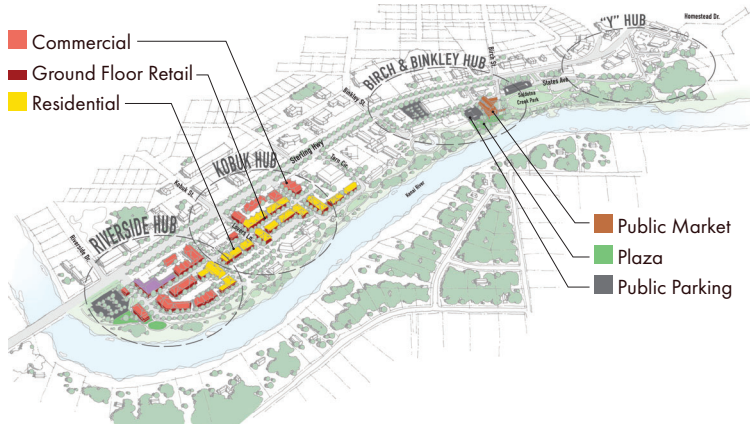
### Parkside Public Market



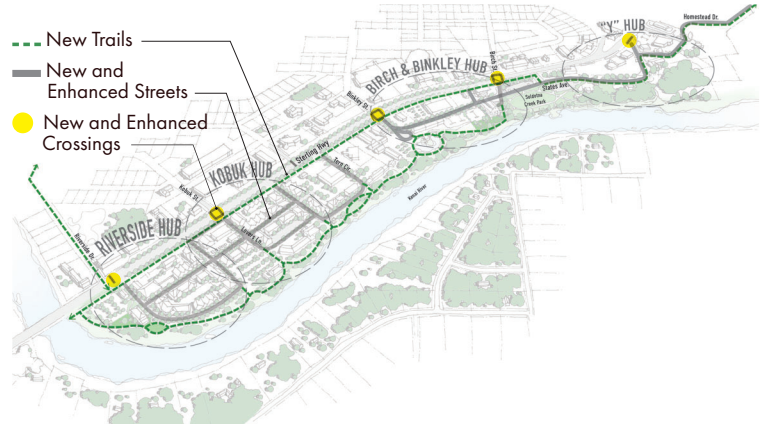
### Plaza



### Mix of Uses



### Enhanced Network of Streets + Trails





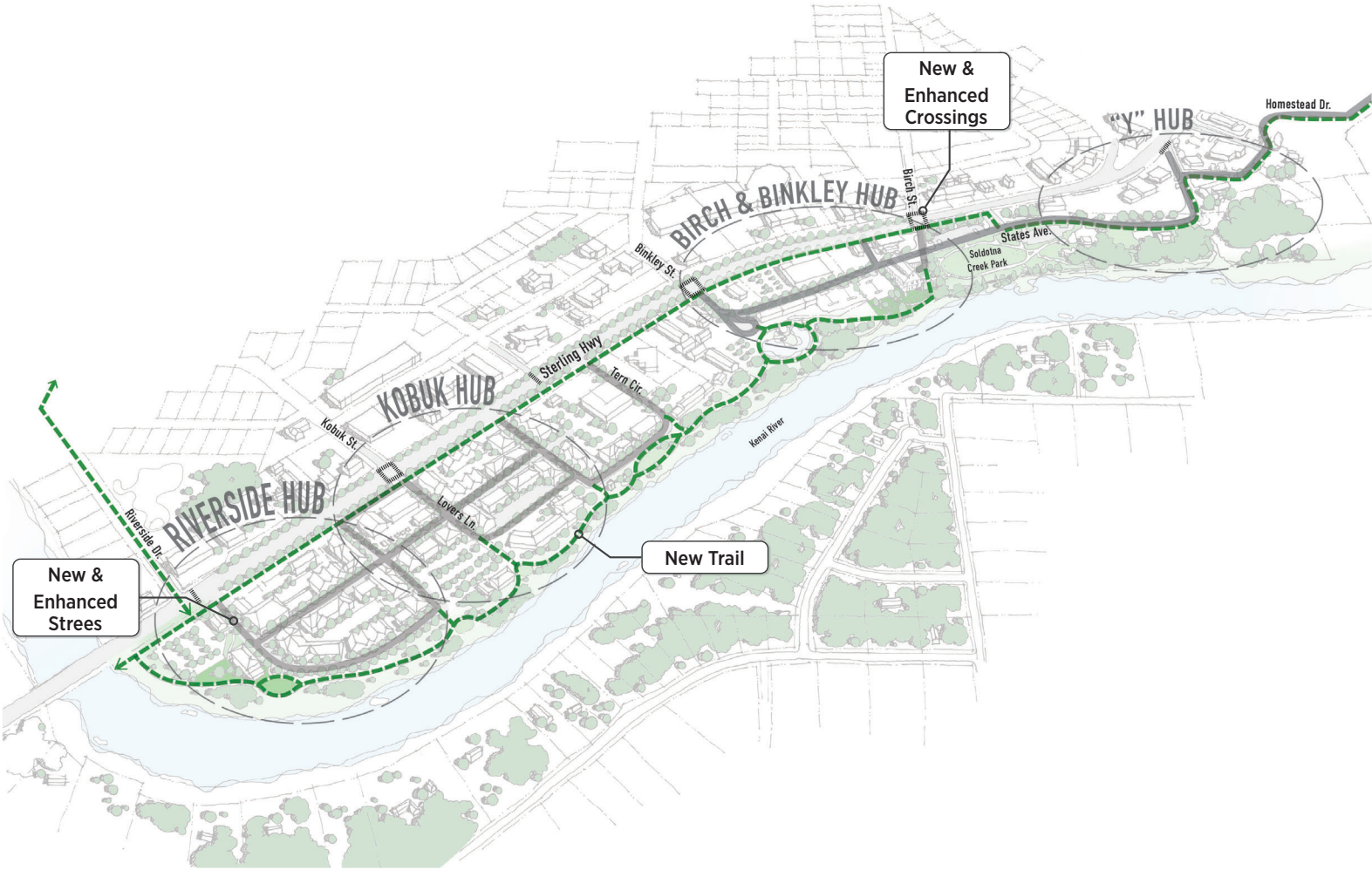
# PLACE 'Bookends' Public Gathering





# CONNECTED

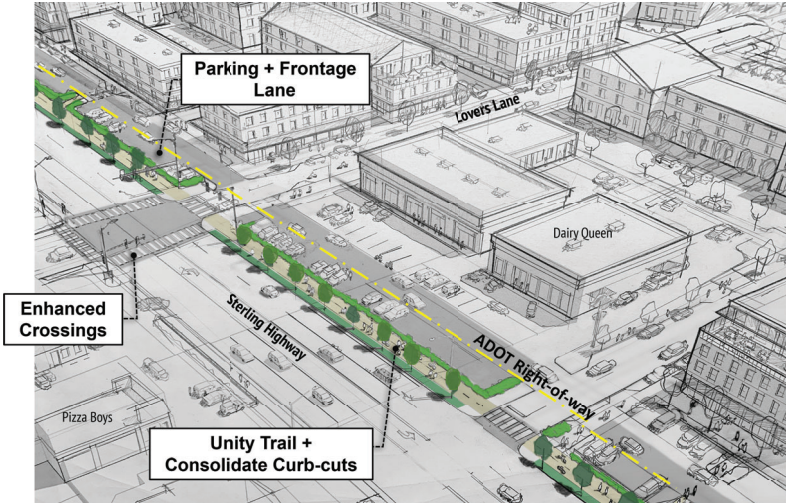
## Improving Walking & Biking on Sterling Highway



### Unity Trail at Sterling Highway Recommended Improvements



### Built Improvements

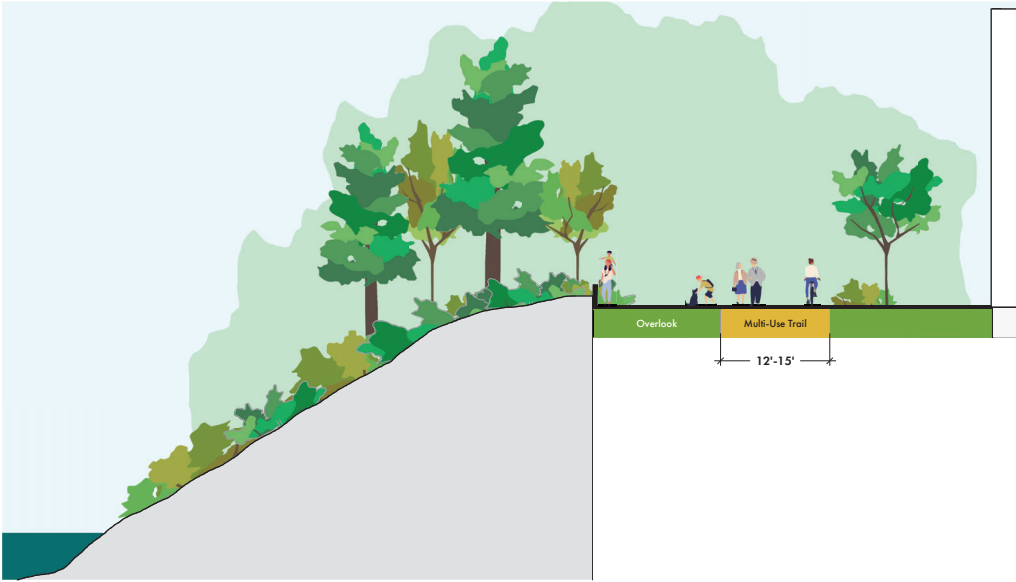




# CONNECTED

## Trails and Overlooks Provide River Access

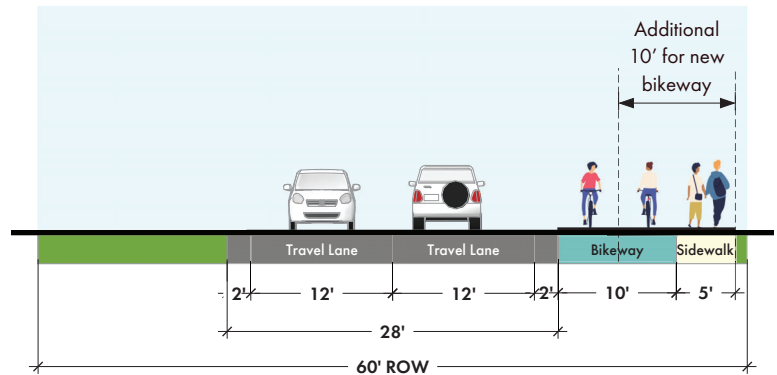
### New Kenai River Upland Trail



### Enhanced Riverside Drive Before



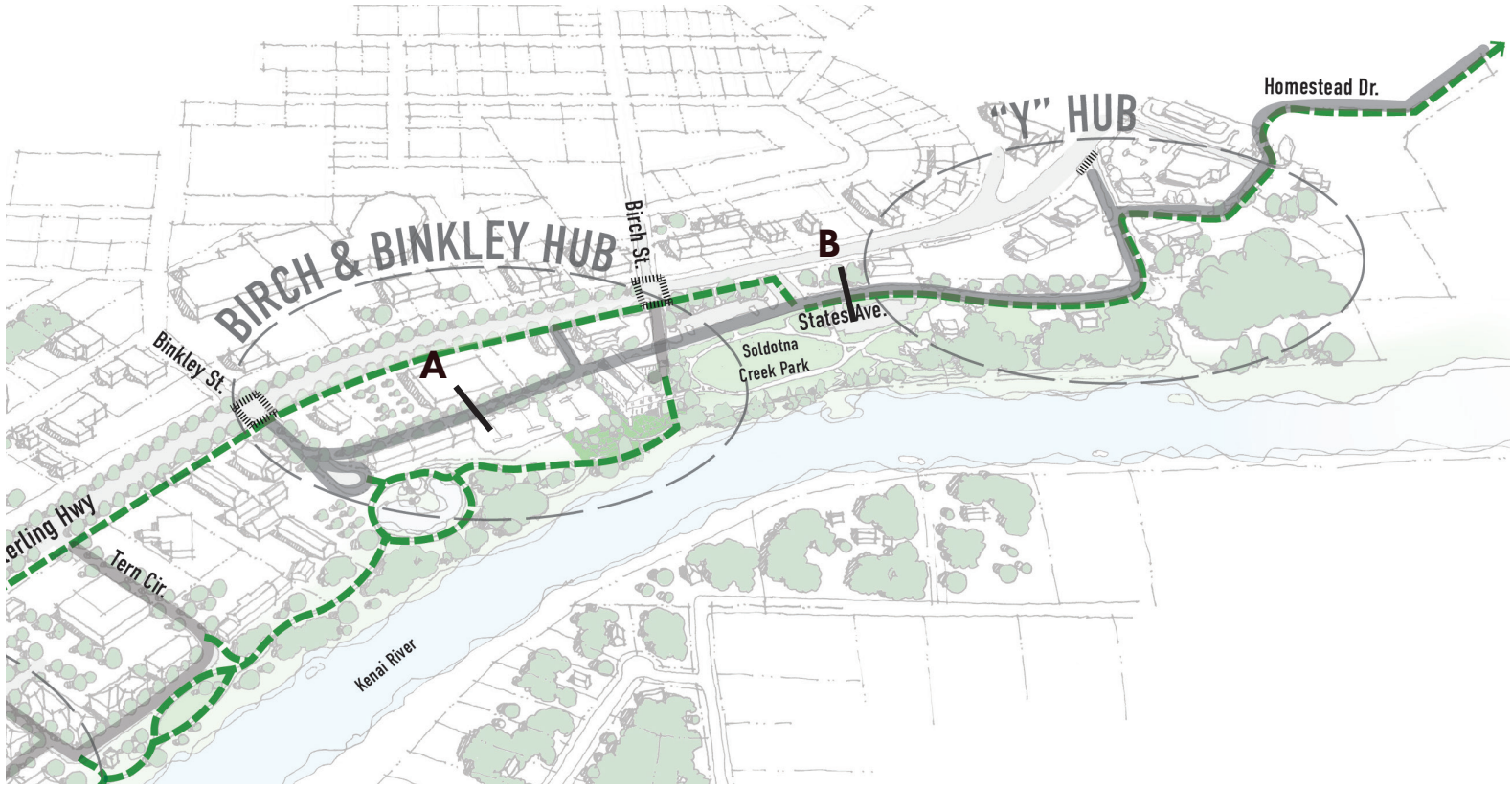
### After



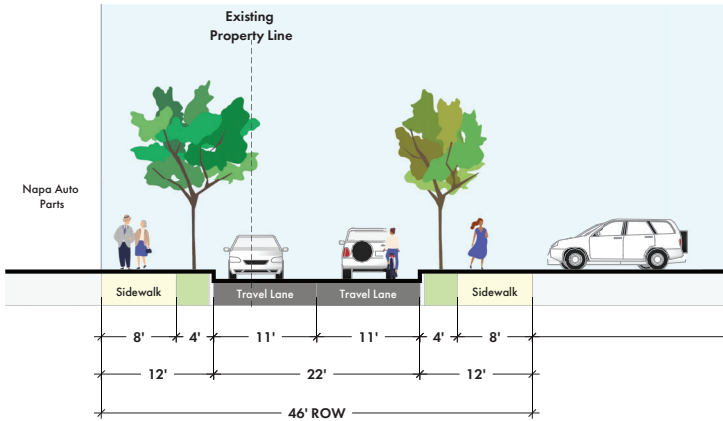


# CONNECTED

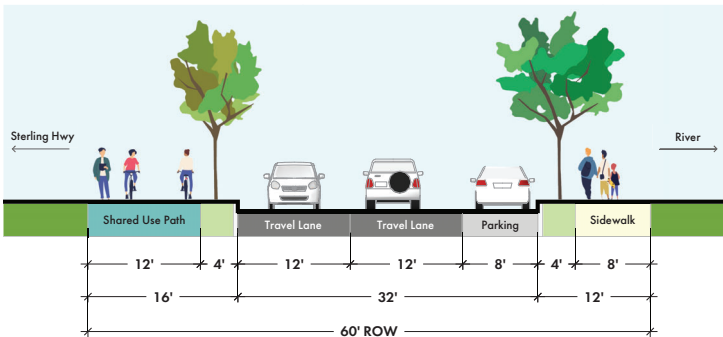
## Reclaiming States Avenue to Connect the Hubs



### States Avenue - Section A



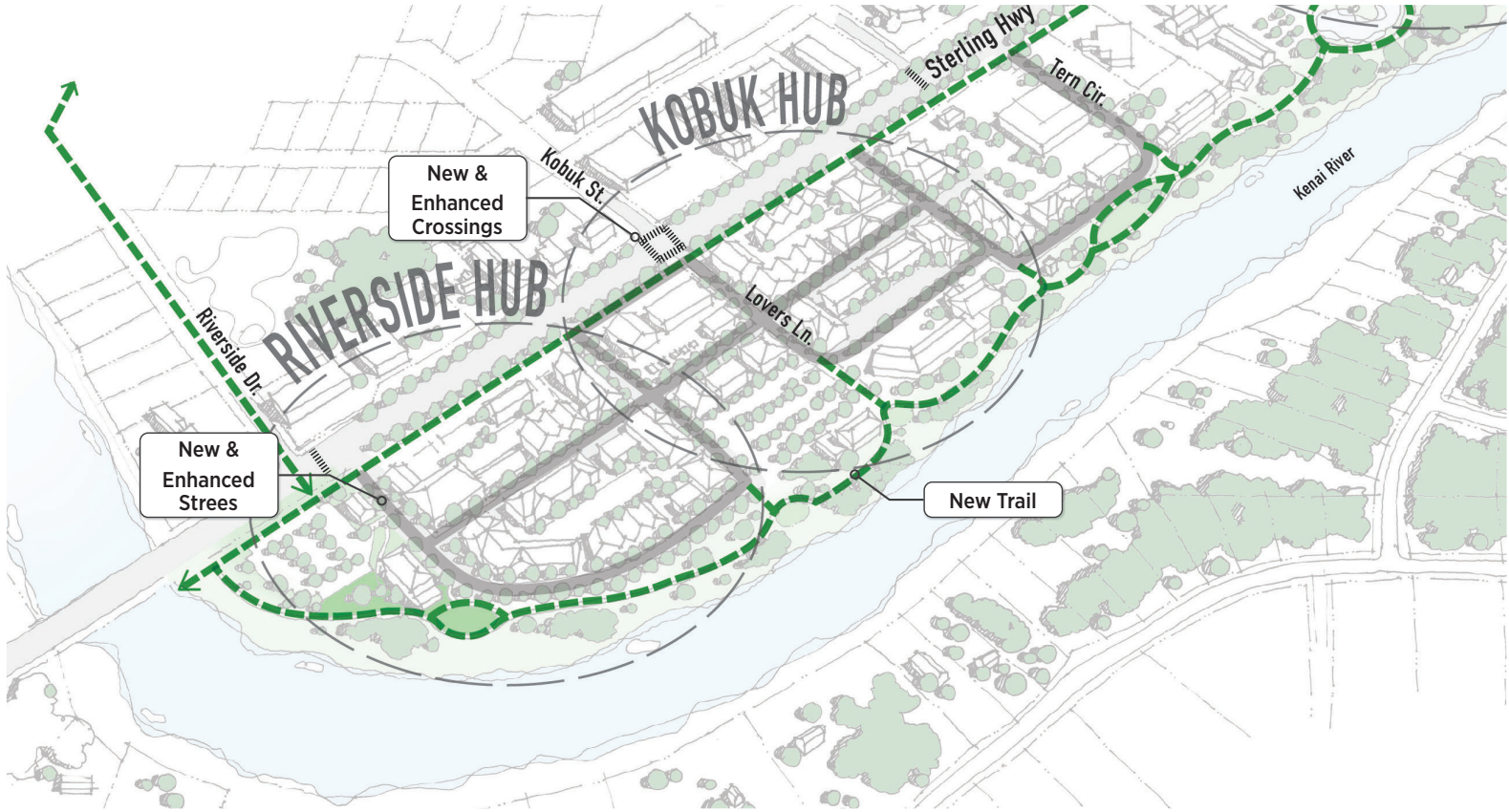
### States Avenue - Section B



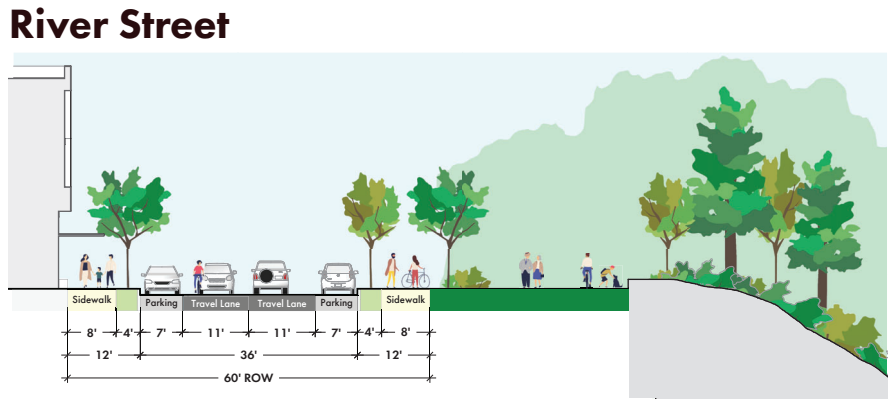
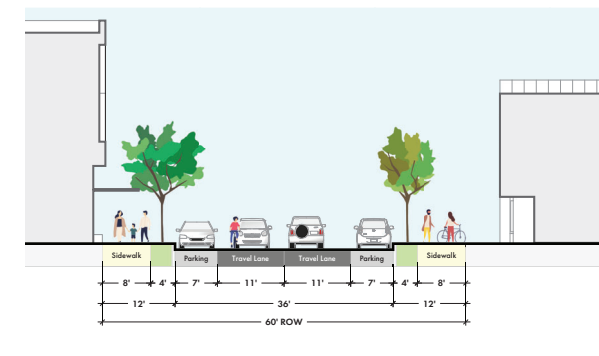


# CONNECTED

## New and Enhanced Streets to Connect the Hubs



### New Downtown Retail Street





# Soldotna Riverfront Redevelopment Plan

## BIG IDEAS

NEW & ENHANCED STREETS SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT AT HUBS

UNITY TRAIL CONNECTS THE STERLING CORRIDOR

KEY PATHWAYS EXTEND TO THE RIVER

FISHWALK, BOARDWALK AND TRAILS CONNECT THE RIVERFRONT

COMMUNITY GATHERING "BOOKENDS" ARE ANCHORED BY A PUBLIC MARKET



# RIVERFRONT REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT

## INTRODUCTION

Redevelopment of Soldotna’s downtown area is an opportunity to strengthen the heart of the community.

Your feedback is important to the project team in identifying community values and desired outcomes for potential redevelopment in the project area.



There are two options for providing feedback. 1. Scan the QR code with your phone or mobile device to complete the feedback form with the presentation. 2. Complete the questions in the paper form below and on the following pages and return to a project team member.



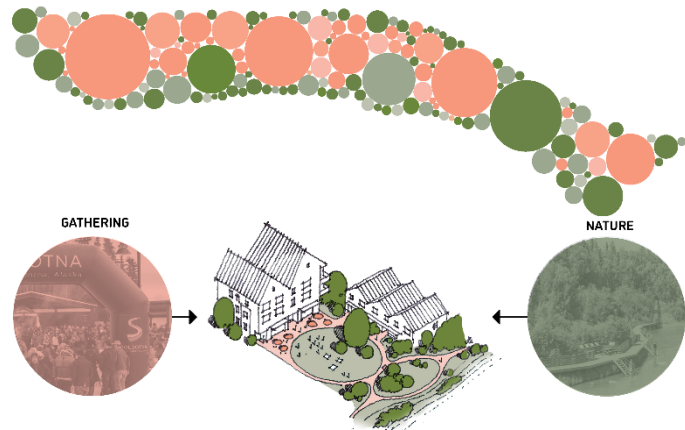
## IDENTITY

The project envisions the Kenai River corridor as a woven blend of nature, wildlife, recreation & gathering.

## Gathering

**Soldotna has a history of being a place of gathering in the region.** The history of the City of Soldotna begins with homesteading in the late 1940s, although Native Alaskan Athabaskan peoples had lived and used the areas around the Kenai River for many thousands of years prior to the city’s establishment.

In our recent history Soldotna has expanded its role as a gathering place. Soldotna Creek Park – all summer long; the Frozen River Fest and other events; local food and drink business where people meet in their third space. These are the elements of the community coming together that the project intends to strengthen.



## Nature

**Soldotna also has a history of reclaiming and preserving the natural environment.** Today, Soldotna remains Alaska's Kenai River City, pushing forward with bold and innovative efforts to protect and address its natural resources. In 2012, the city opened Soldotna Creek Park. Formerly a storage facility and maintenance grounds, the newest addition to Downtown Soldotna serves as a community gathering space, with open greenspace, river boardwalks, picnic pavilions, an amphitheater, and year-round public restrooms. The Kenai Watershed Forum located in Soldotna Creek Park is dedicated to the Peninsula's rivers, streams and surrounding communities of the Kenai Peninsula promoting healthy habitat on the Kenai Peninsula.

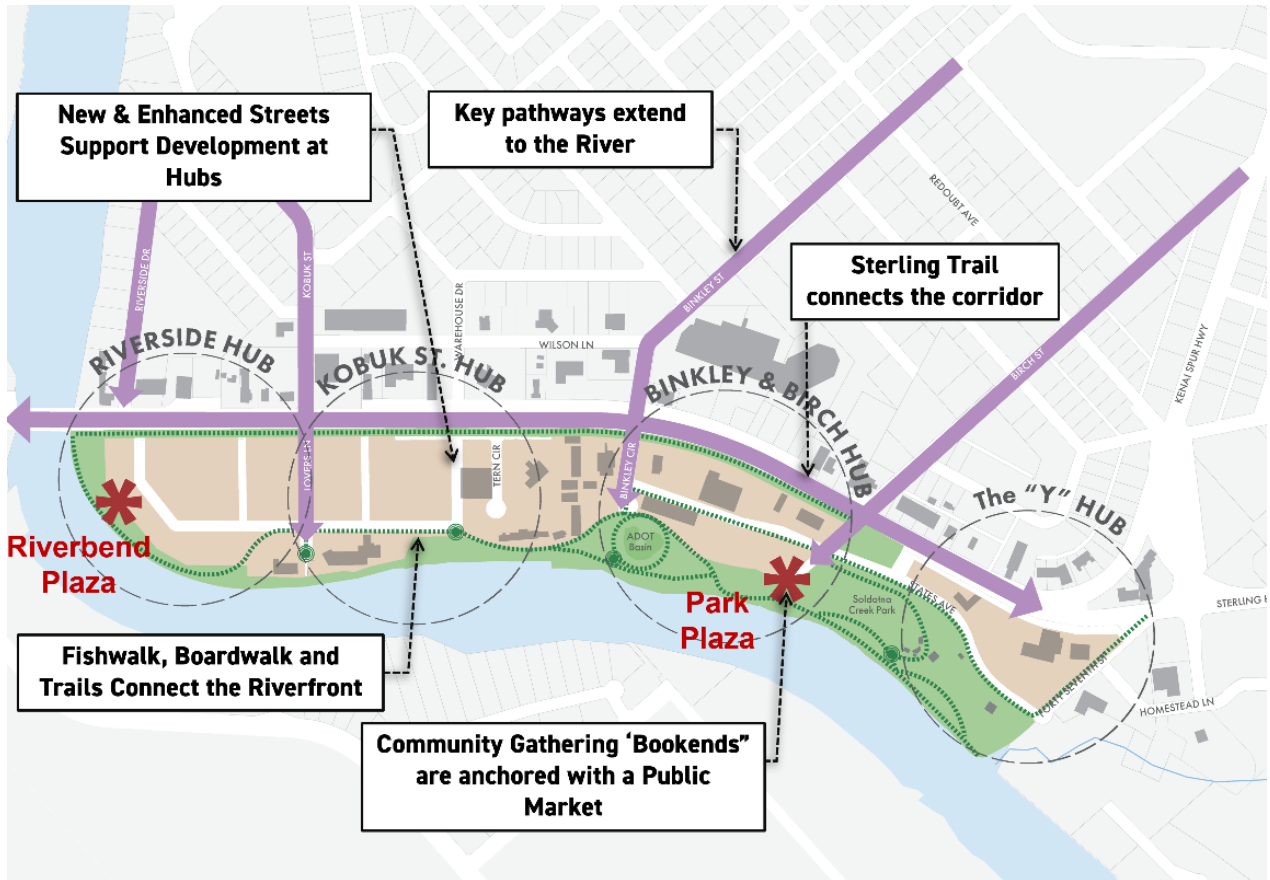
**In that sense Soldotna is defined by its stewardship of the land and being a place of gathering.** These two things can be contradictory at times - how can development and the gathering of people Downtown not only coexist with, but also expand, and enhance the natural habitats in the project area? A perfect example of this situation can already be seen in Soldotna Creek Park. The city was able to accommodate bank fishing as a gathering activity along the river's edge while at the same time limiting the resulting erosion of it. This not only meant that the natural habitats were protected, but also the social and cultural identity of the town, giving shape to something quite distinctive and spectacular in contributing to the identity of the downtown. How was this done?

- Strong Community Support
- Public investment in park and riverfront infrastructure
- Intentional design that provides a community benefit

**Q.1 Does the Vision of nature and gathering adequately capture Soldotna's community values?**

## The Big Ideas

The big ideas represent strategies that will bring the vision to life: a place where nature and urban gathering spaces can coexist, expanding and enhancing one another.



**Identity**—The Kenai River corridor is a woven blend of nature, wildlife, recreation and gathering.

**Place**—New and enhanced streets support downtown hubs as places to live, work and play. The hubs engage drive-by traffic and visibility along the Sterling Highway and the Kenai Riverfront to create a unique and one-of-a kind downtown and riverfront experience.

**Connected**—Key pathways reconnect neighborhoods to the river and destinations along Sterling Highway. Making downtown a safe place to walk and bike to destinations is a major consideration in the enhancements to existing streets and new streets.

### A Soldotna Public Market

Food and local goods are regularly showcased seasonally at Soldotna Creek Park. A public market could serve as a year-round destination to showcase these assets, promote small businesses, create space for community meetings and events and a unique riverfront destination.



### Q.2 Would a new public market be a valuable community asset on the riverfront?

Yes.

Maybe. But I have some concerns.

No.



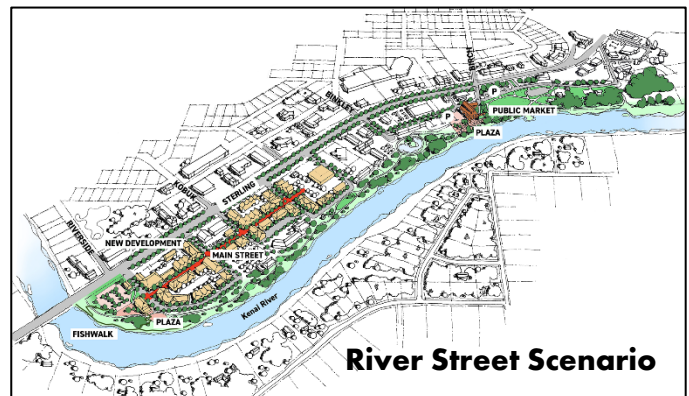
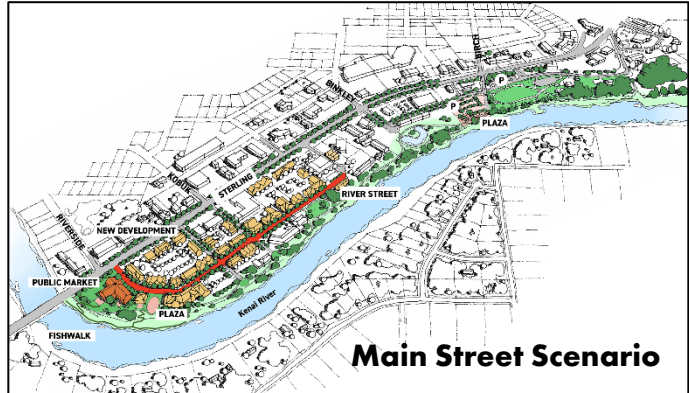
## PLACE

Future redevelopment can support downtown as an 18-hour hub of activity. These hubs of activity such as dining, shopping and entertainment should be places that are walkable, have opportunities to engage the river and spaces for gathering.

### Preliminary Redevelopment Concepts for Building the Hubs

#### Redevelopment focus along a Main Street or a River Street

Two scenarios depict how future development might be organized. The Main Street scenario is built around retail storefronts extending across a few blocks along a new street between the highway and the river. The River Street scenario orients retail storefronts to the Kenai River with a new street supporting housing and businesses with river views.



### Q.3 Which redevelopment option feels best for the downtown and riverfront area?

- Main Street Scenario
- River Street Scenario
- Hybrid
- Other

## “Bookends” Public Gatherings at Each End of the Corridor

Memorable downtowns have a variety of spaces to gather from parks (large and small), to plazas, and riverfronts that attract residents and visitors alike.

### Soldotna Creek Park Enhancements

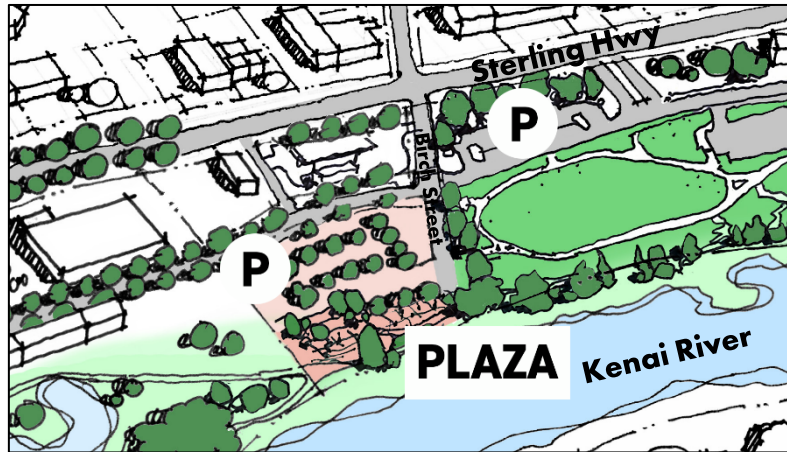
A plaza with river views and direct access from an extension of Birch Street would promote the use and function of Soldotna Creek Park and improve visual access to the river. Additional public parking could be constructed to support park use and seasonal events.

**Q.4 Do you support a riverside public plaza and parking area at Soldotna Creek Park?**

Yes.

Maybe. But I have some concerns.

No.



### Bridgehead Plaza and Fishwalk

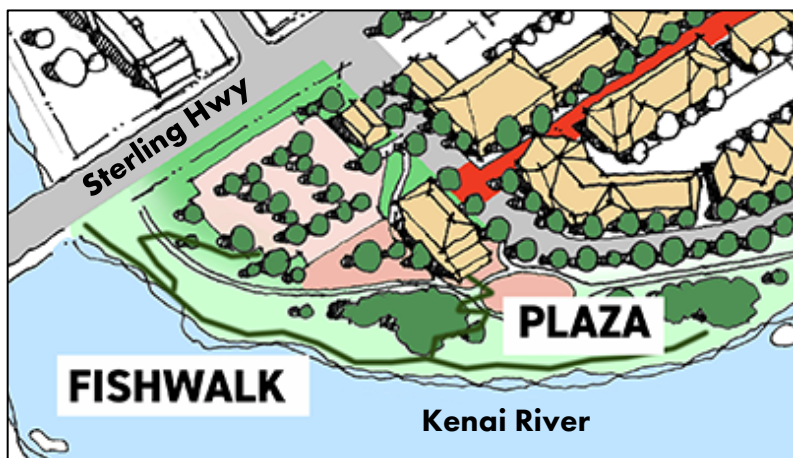
At the bridgehead, a riverside plaza and enhanced fishwalk is an opportunity for a complimentary visitor and public gathering space, an enhanced riverfront fishwalk and an amenity to attract development.

**Q.5 How important is an additional public gathering area near the bridgehead as a “bookend” to Soldotna Creek Park?**

Very important.

Somewhat important.

Not very important.





# CONNECTED

Important features of a connected downtown and riverfront include streets, and trails providing safe, direct, and continuous access to destinations for all ages, abilities and users, whether you walk, bike, roll, or drive.

## Sterling Highway Trail

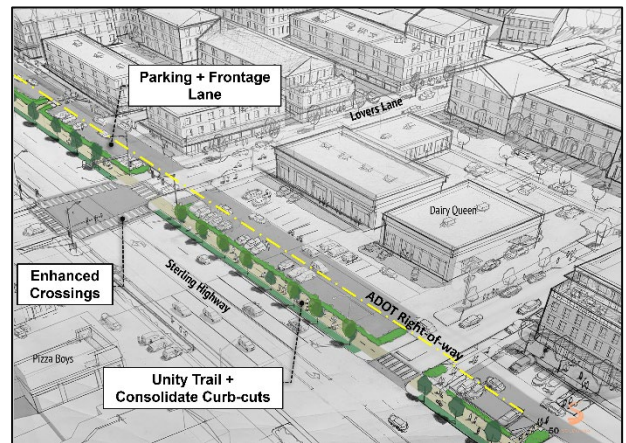
The Sterling Highway is the primary traffic route through town, provides access to businesses and acts as a gateway or “front door” to Soldotna. Today, the highway can be a barrier for those walking and biking with limited street crossings, sidewalks next to busy traffic and no bicycle facilities. Future improvements could enhance the visual quality of the corridor, provide enhanced crossings, and a more comfortable environment for walking and biking.

**Q.6 Do the proposed Sterling Highway improvements adequately address safety, access, and visual challenges?**

Yes.

Maybe. But I have some concerns.

No.



## New and Enhanced Street Connections

New Streets can improve access to existing businesses and destinations and provide opportunities to support redevelopment areas oriented to the highway and the river.

### Enhanced Street Connections

Kobuk Street, Birch Street, Binkley Street, are local streets that link to citywide destinations like parks, schools, employment areas and the downtown and riverfront area. Future street improvements can support safe and comfortable ways to walk, and bike as well as drive to these destinations.

**Q.7 Should these key streets be enhanced and extended to connect to view the river?**

Yes.

I’m not sure. I need more information.

No

Other



## Reclaiming States Avenue

States Avenue is a former street that today provides access to Soldotna Creek Park and the Kenai Watershed Forum. Reclaiming States Avenue and extending it east and west of the park would connect businesses on Homestead Drive to businesses at Birch Street and Binkley Street.

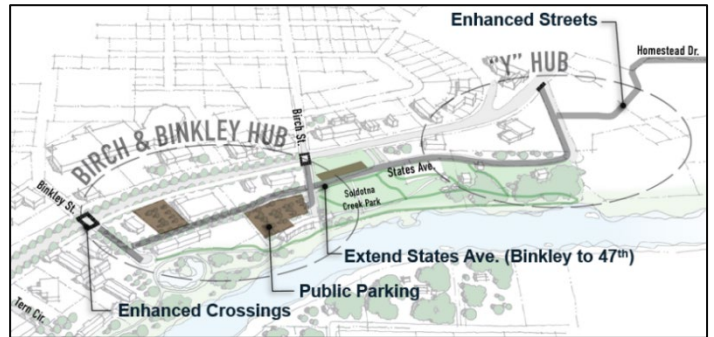
**Q.8 Do you have concerns with reclaiming and extending States Avenue to connect the "Y" Hub with the Birch and Binkley Hub?**

No concerns.  
Let's do it!

I'm not  
sure. I need  
more  
information.

Yes.

Other



## New Streets for a Walkable Downtown

**Q.9 How important are new streets to promote walking to businesses and the riverfront, support redevelopment and connect the hubs?**

Very  
important.

Somewhat  
important.

Not very  
important.



## Riverfront Trail Connections

The downtown riverfront consists of a riparian zone with gradual and steep slopes and public and private ownerships. Given these conditions there are a variety of ways to connect with the river such as with trails, boardwalks, overlooks and buildings oriented to the river.

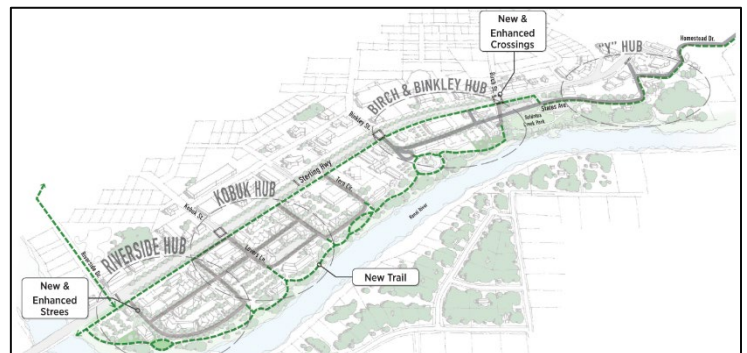
**Q.10 Should this project continue to pursue a new Riverfront Trail to connect Soldotna Creek Park to the bridgehead?**

Yes, but it  
should be  
different.

Absolutely  
this is a  
must-have.

Maybe, but I  
have some  
concerns.

No, the trail  
is not  
necessary.





## Riverside Drive Trail to Centennial Park

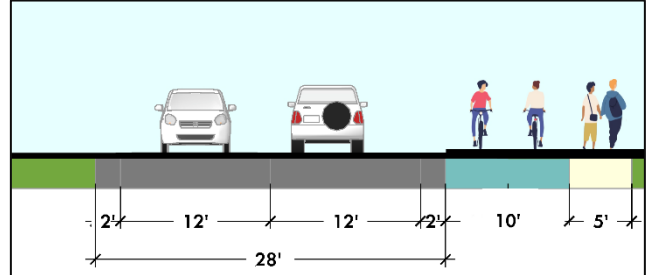
Today, Riverside Drive is a cut-through route for cyclists riding to Centennial Park and who ride in traffic with vehicles. A multi-use path on one side of the road may be a way to create a safe off-street bicycle connection and a new highway crossing could improve access to the redevelopment area and riverfront.

**Q.11 Do you support a trail connection along Riverside Drive linking the Kobuk Street bike lane to the bridge crossing to Centennial Park?**

Yes.

Maybe. But I have some concerns.

No.



## Additional Comments

**Q.12 Do you have any additional comments to share with the project team?**

## TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF

(Optional)

**Q.13 What is the zip code of your home address?** .....

**Q.14 Do you own a business, building, or land in the project area?** .....

**Q.15 How often do you visit the downtown area between Kenai Spur Highway and the Kenai River Bridge?**

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Occasionally
- Rarely
- Never

**Q.16 For what purpose(s) do you visit the downtown area between Kenai Spur Highway and the Kenai River Bridge? Check all that apply:**

- For my job/business
- Shopping
- Dining
- Entertainment
- Recreation
- Other:

**Q.17 Optional: Provide your name and the best way to contact you:**

- Name: .....
- Mailing Address: .....
- City: .....
- State: .....
- Zip: .....
- Phone: .....
- Email: .....

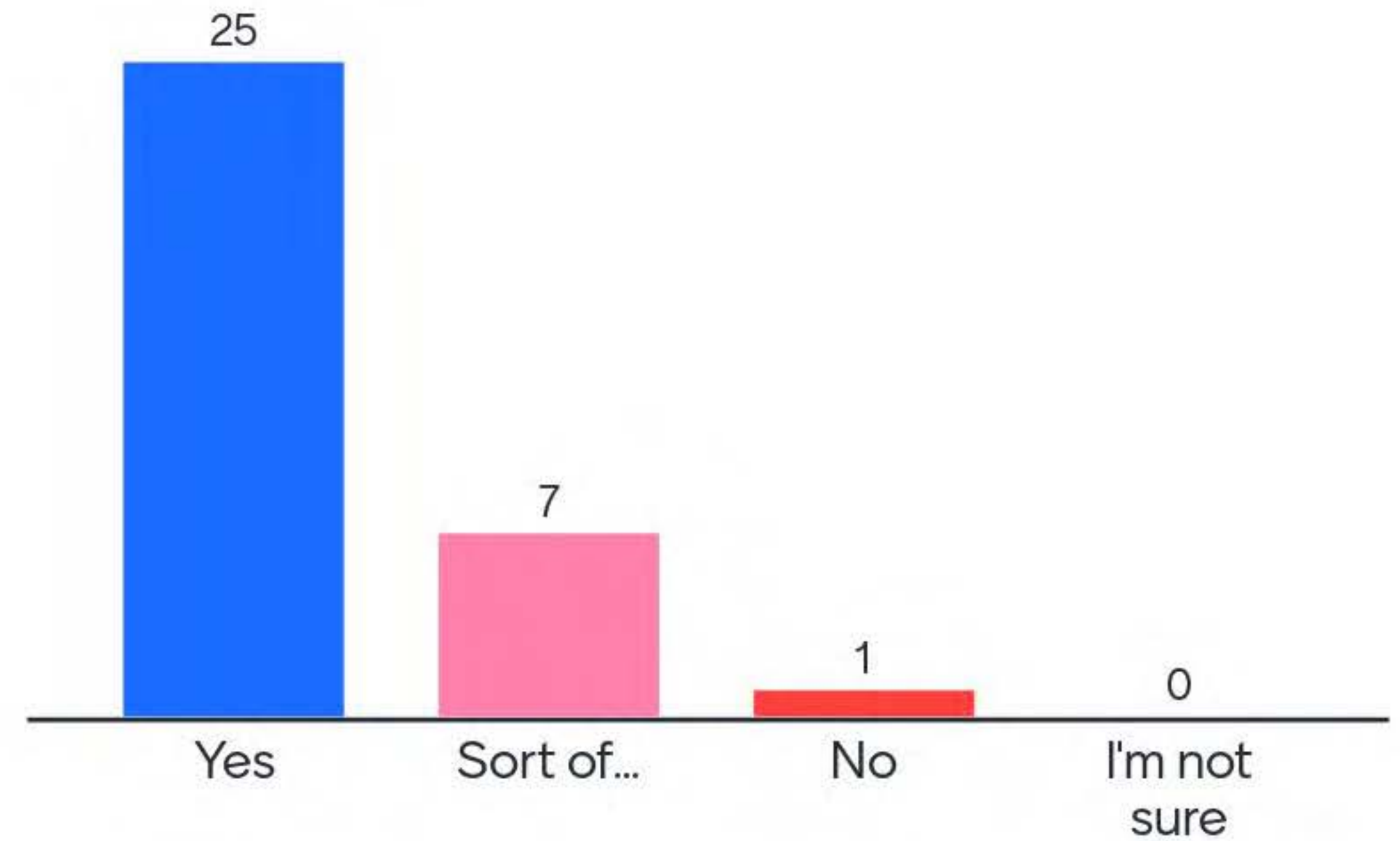
**YES - I want to sign up to receive updates about the project.** (Be sure to provide your email address above.)

# Poll Results - Community Open House 2

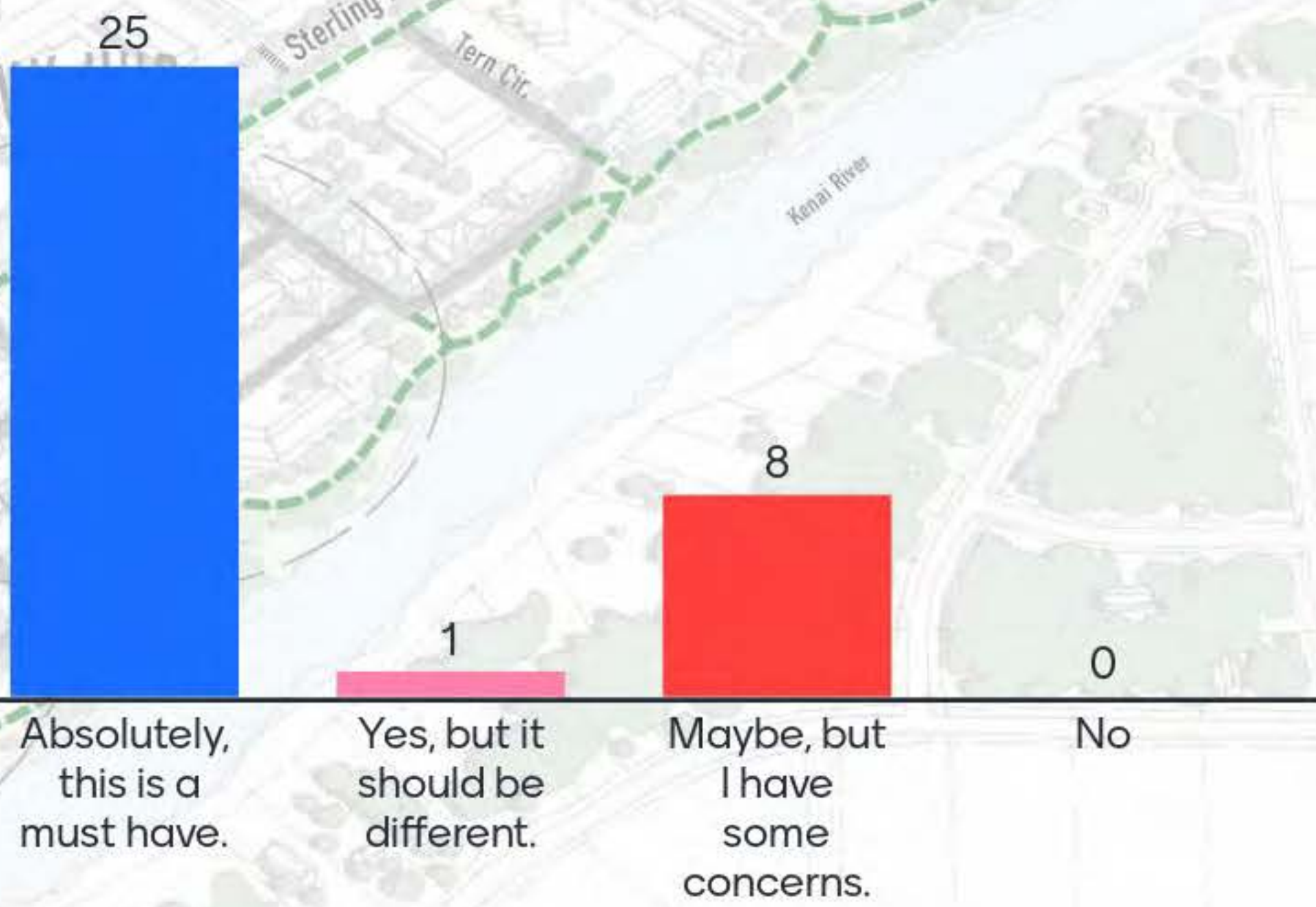


Does the vision adequately capture Soldotna's community values around nature and gathering?

Mentimeter



# Should this project continue to pursue a new Riverfront Trail to connect public gathering at each end of the project area?

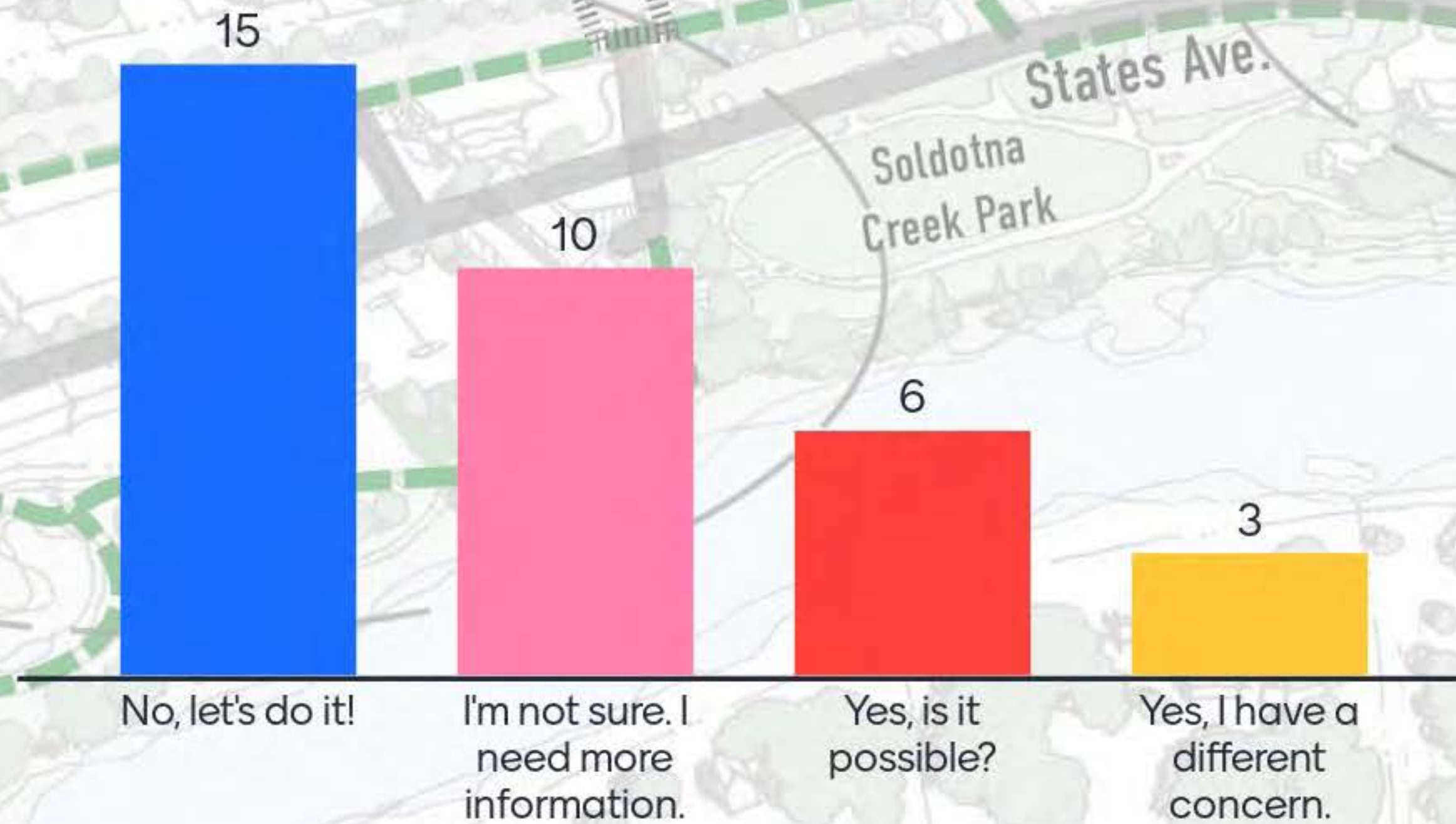


# Would a new public market be a valuable community asset on the Riverfront

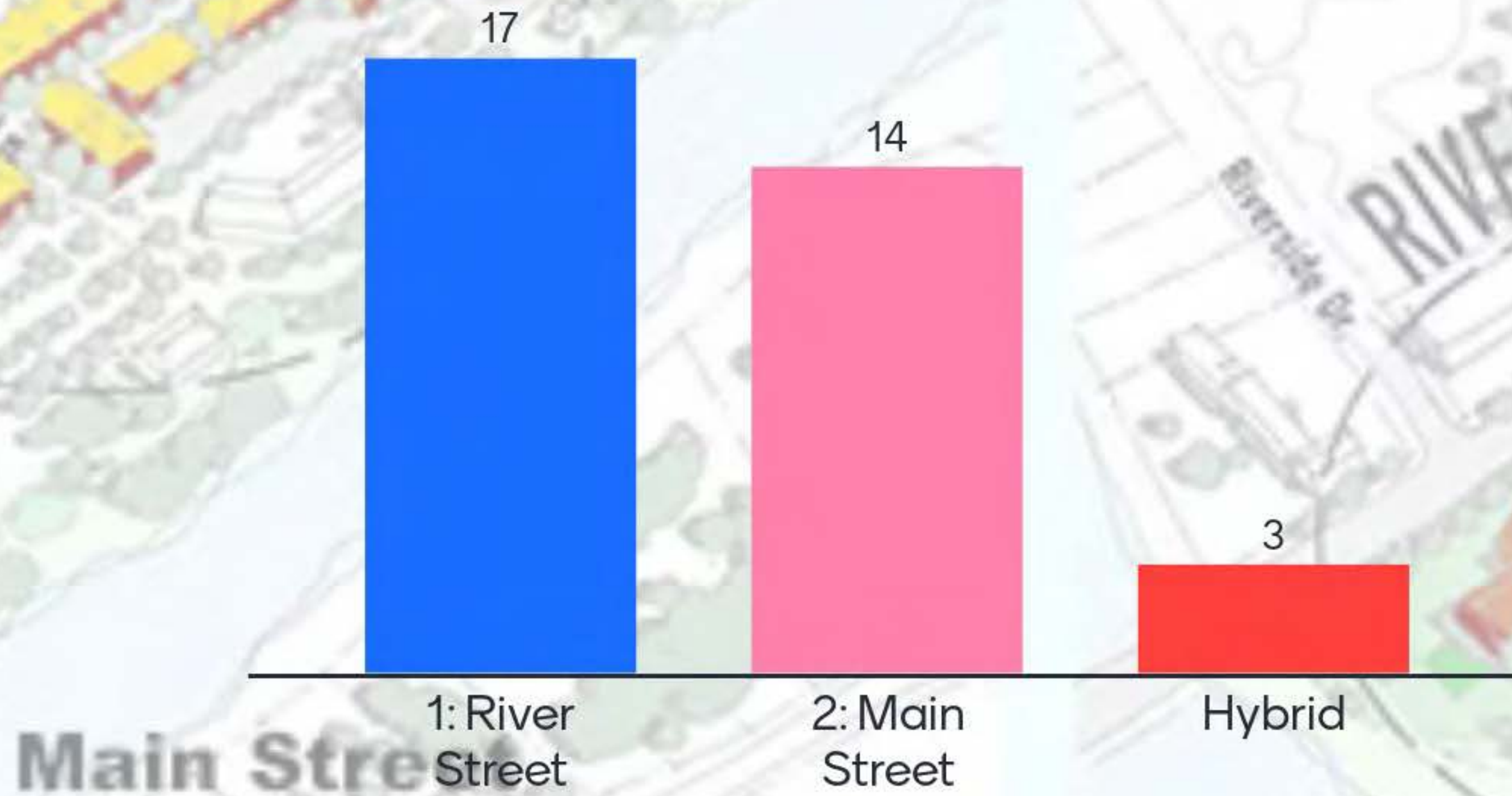


# Do you have concerns with reclaiming States Avenue to connect the hubs?

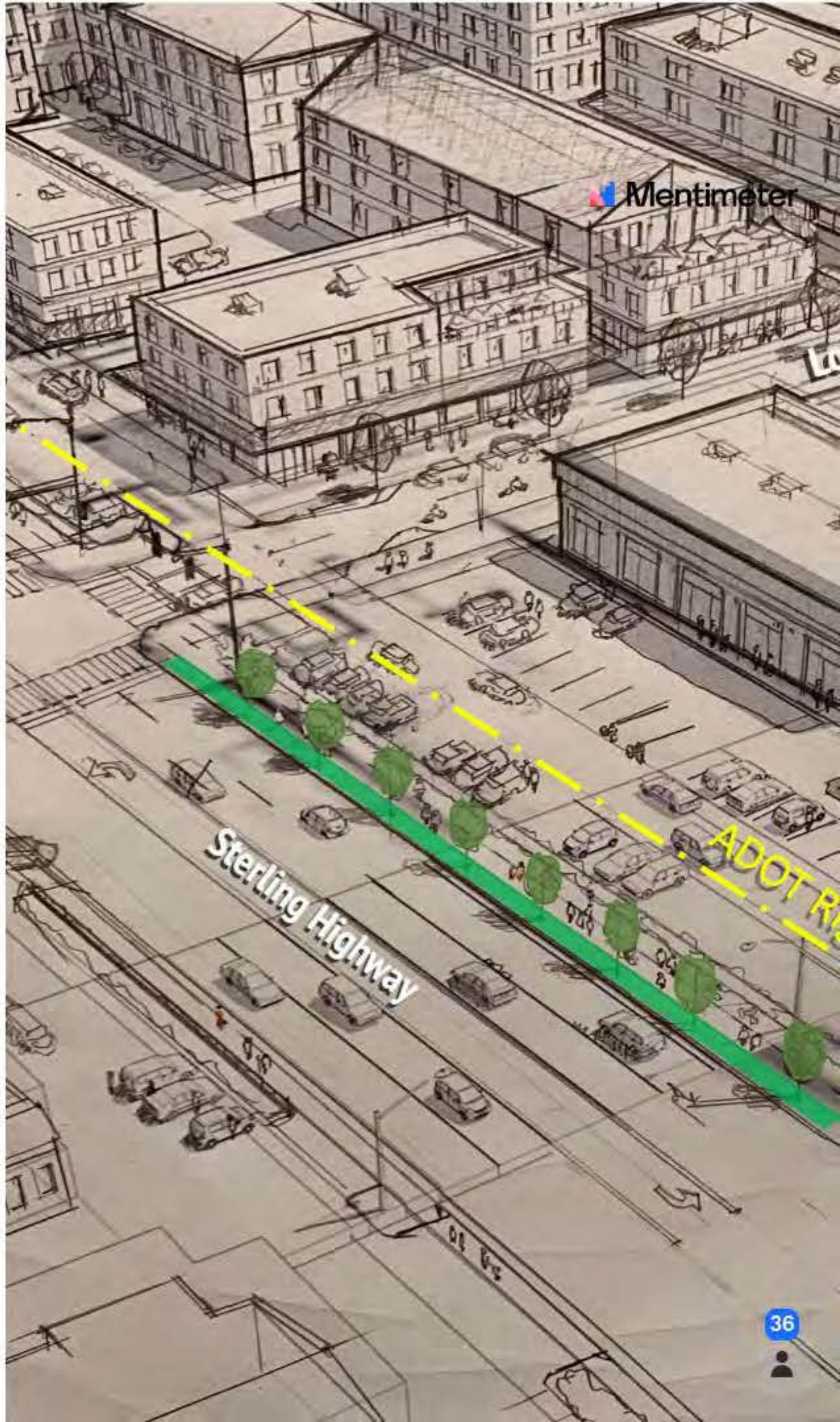
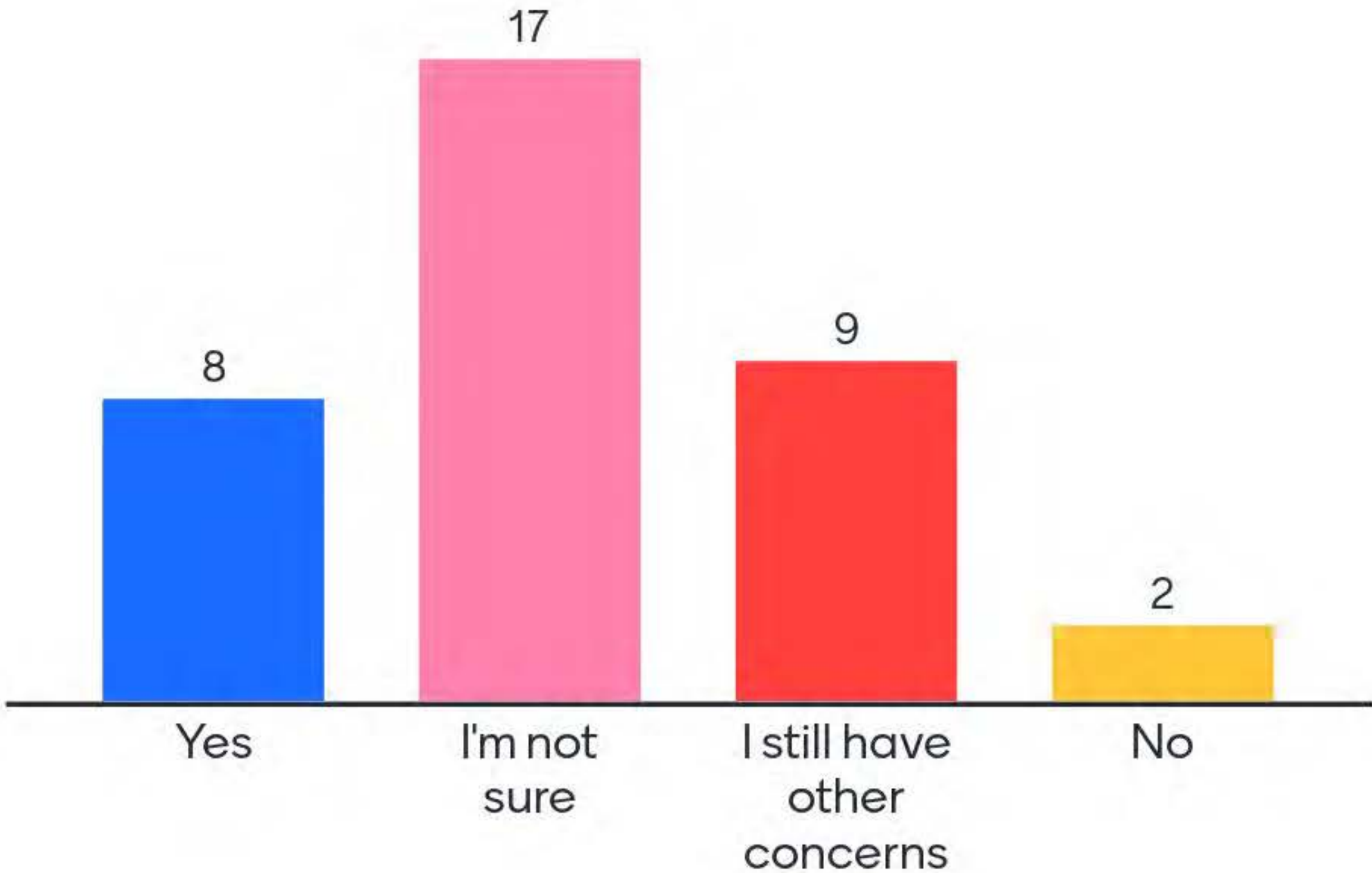
Mentimeter



# Which development option feels best for Soldotna?



Do the Sterling Highway improvements adequately address safety, access, and visual challenges?



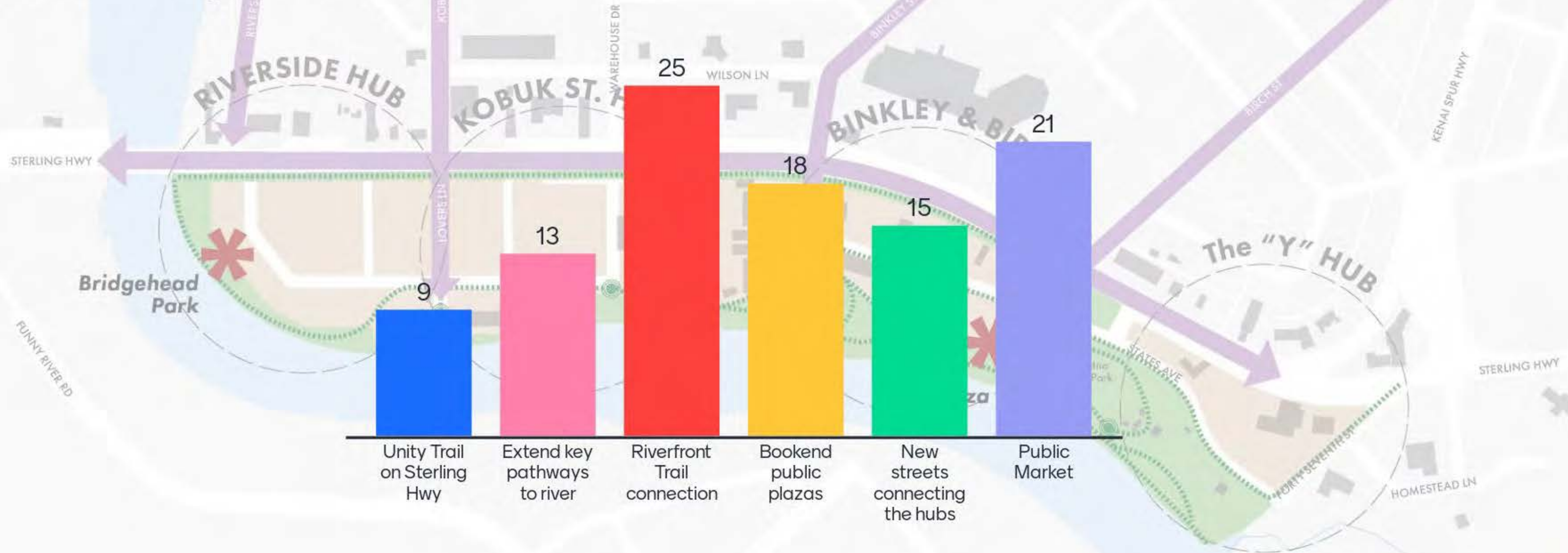


# Should these key pathways be enhanced to connect to the riverfront?



# Choose your top three "big ideas" for Riverfront Redevelopment.

Mentimeter



Is there anything we missed? Please tell us.

35 Answers

Mentimeter

Will there be fishing access?

Environmental impact on the river

Parking

I think we should focus on venue space as it seems to be limited in Soldotna.

There is a lot to absorb already.

Pedestrian bridges

Visitor center

Connection to tsalteshi

River protection. People visit for the salmon.

# Is there anything we missed? Please tell us.

35 Answers

Public parking

What property is available for purchase? Is the CoS considering purchase?

I always enjoy going to out of state locations with walkable areas with arts, museums, restaurant variety, etc. so please make this happen

I've heard much public concern about how to gain the properties. I see this as an area for much communication with the public.

I know you will consider handicap access.

Very much interested in how the new river walk will be integrated with the existing walkways and how they will be upgraded for additional foot traffic due to the increase in accessibility

Partnering to purchase the properties, either with the current owners or entrepreneurs..

Connect with Soldotna Elem students about planning work done several years ago

Discuss partnering with current owners or entrepreneurs to purchase key properties.

# Is there anything we missed? Please tell us.

35 Answers

River front owners are not entitled to silence

Please consider handicap access

Concerned about environmental impact and impact to existing businesses.

Consider mix of ped only along with mix ped and vehicle

ParkingParkingParking

Would creating a parking garage be an option?

Having a connection from the Riverfront Hub beneath the bridge to the opposite side of the Sterling. Jay walking would be a dangerous reality without a traffic-free option.

Concepts for safe ped crossings accross sterling highway

Are multi-level parking structures under consideration?



# Is there anything we missed? Please tell us.

35 Answers

Mentimeter

Underground parking would be an easy way that works around the world, and is easier to manage in the winter months than having vast, ugly, parking lots.

Currently SCP events have parking issues. If we make it more ...destinationistic... perhaps parking on the east end with shuttle

Consider ending riverside in cul-da-sac

Height is an issue with overpasses and all the RVs

A concern. Is about public parking, so there' is accessibility to use the trails, go to businesses, park, etc.

I don't think you should have cars on the Riverside street, and Market Street except to get to parking. As much walking and small shuttle as possible.

Just want to emphasize importance & meaning of walkable.. A walkway right next to the street without buffer is unsafe, noisy & smelly. I'll get in my car & drive 1 block instead of suffering it.

The parties responsible for development was not discussed. How is the private partnership going to work? Is there eminent domain factors?

# Poll Results - Kenai River Fish Habitat Symposium

What are the current issues in the project area that may negatively impact fish habitat?

24 Answers

Mentimeter

Run off from parking lot areas and heavy foot traffic on the banks

Urban run-off

Pollution

Runoff from highway

increased impervious surfaces

Storm water run off

Impervious surfaces

Stormwater discharge

Uneducated landlords/landowners

What are the current issues in the project area that may negatively impact fish habitat?

24 Answers

Mentimeter

Species disturbance during construction

Impervious surfaces

Runoff

People going "off trail".

Increased fishing pressure

Impervious coverage

Bank side erosion

Parking

Bank trampling



What are the current issues in the project area that may negatively impact fish habitat?

24 Answers

Mentimeter

Impervious surfaces/runoff pollution

Overuse

Lisa of green infrastructure

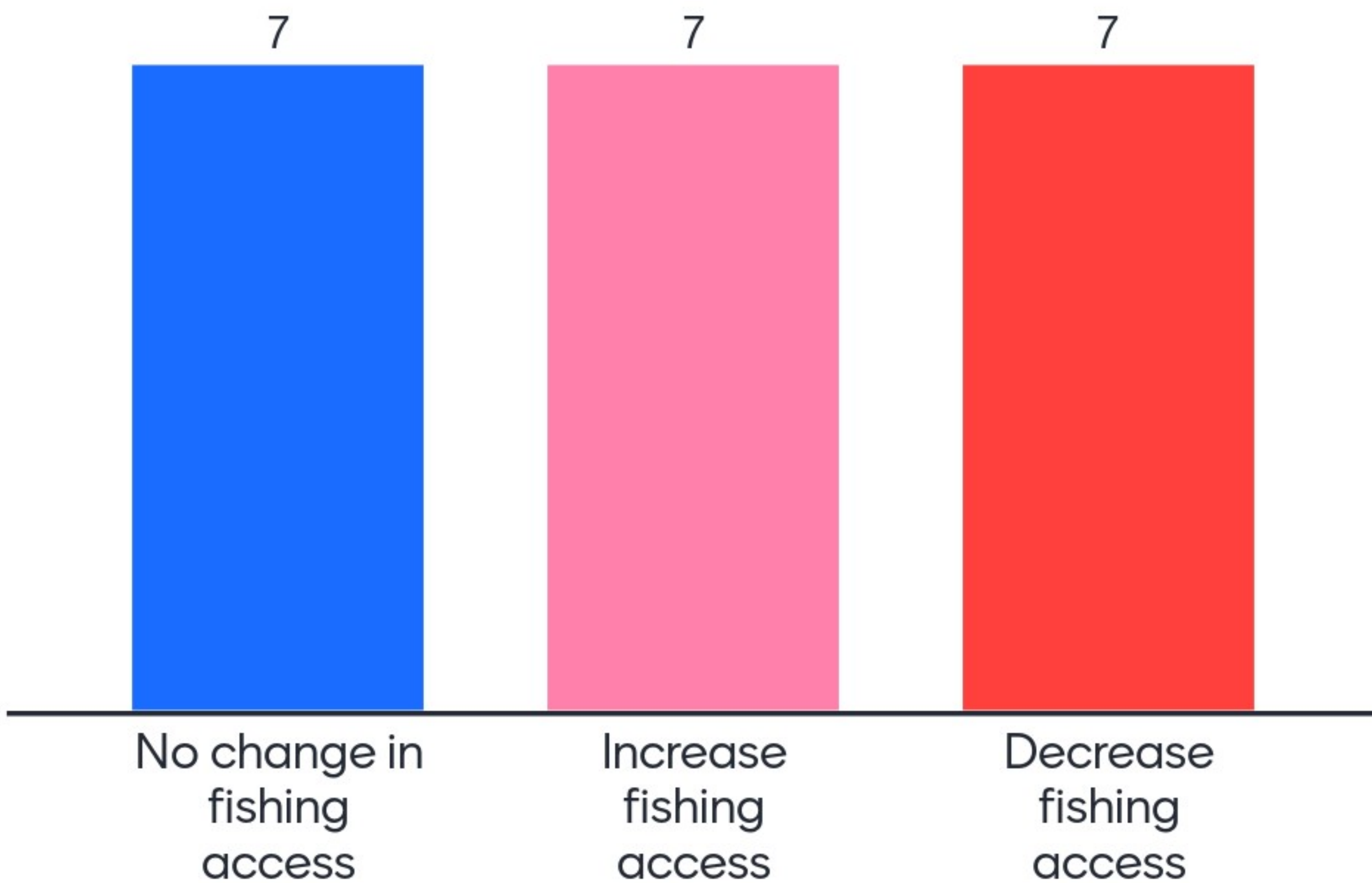
Runoff including tire particles toxic to coho salmon

Pollutants

Missing riparian buffer in some areas.



# What kind of fishing access can this area of the riverfront support?



# How can the design of infrastructure such as streets or public gathering areas support river and riparian health?

26 Answers

Mentimeter

Public rest room!Bike Lane

Keeping equal use by all modes of transportation

Designs that incorporate methods to filter road/path/parking runoff

Integrate porous pavement and other green infrastructure

Lots of shade, permeable vegetation buffers

Lots of trash cans, recycling bins and bathrooms to keep the area clean

Weed free certified materialsFew impervious surfaces

Planting buffers of native plants

Allow for natural movement of rivers edge

# How can the design of infrastructure such as streets or public gathering areas support river and riparian health?

26 Answers

Mentimeter

Well planned designs with run off and human impact in mind can benefit both the local users and the fish- run off & erosion control in mind

Ensuring buffer zone in place

Bear proof Trash cans

Elevated light penetrating walkway

Direct storm water runoff through filters (eg wetlands) or other biological treatments

More trees

Adequate vegetation and green space

Greenway better than wasting space on a street for cars

Improve green infrastructure to capture pollutants

# How can the design of infrastructure such as streets or public gathering areas support river and riparian health?

26 Answers

Mentimeter

Wide enough sidewalks to ski/groom in the winter

Increase visibility of users abusing

Ensure multi-layered riparian vegetation structure

Make sure vegetated buffer, bio swales and green infrastructure is implemented to protect water quality.

Addition of vegetation will help riparian habitat and mitigate human impact on the riverfront

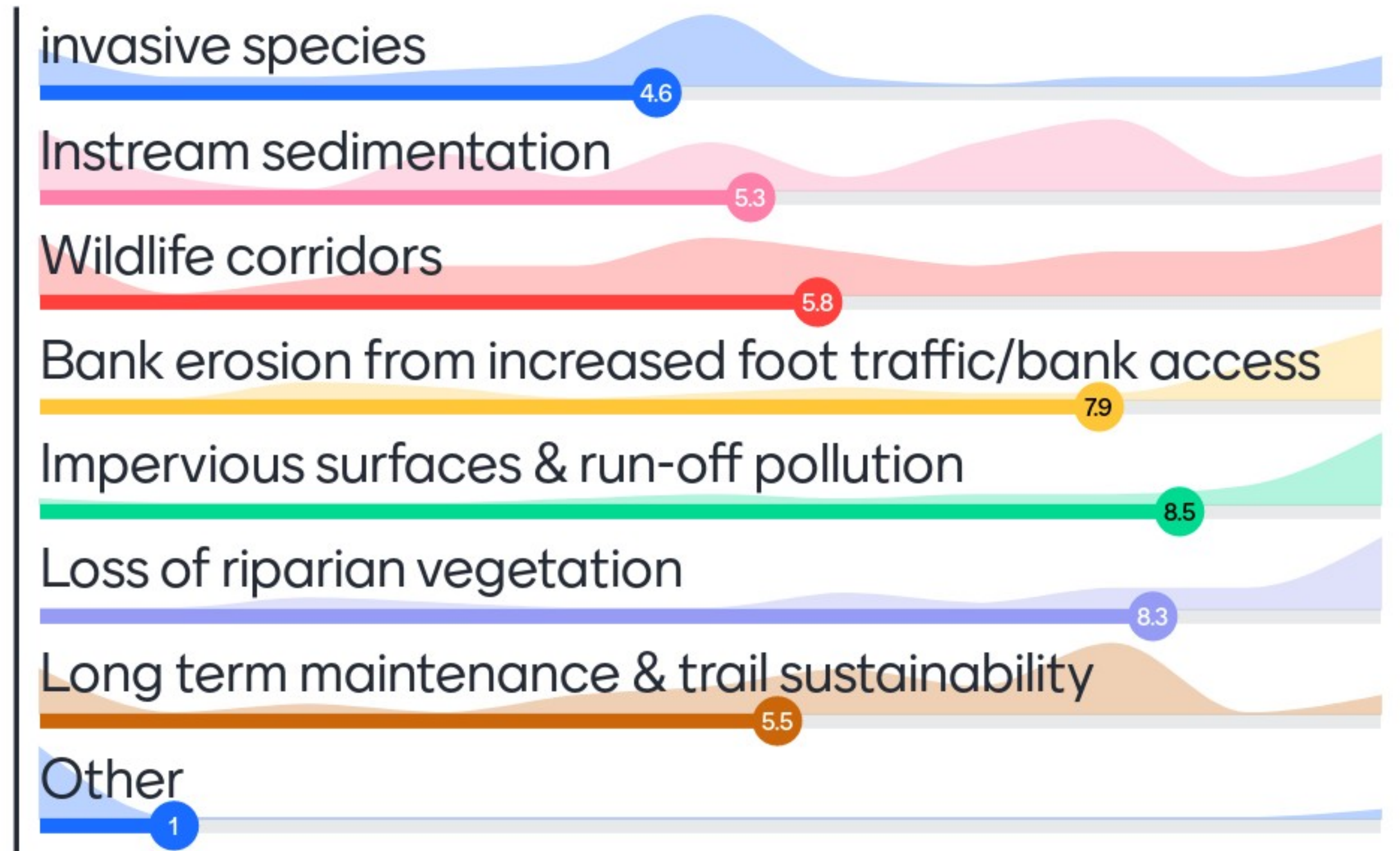
Austin TX non paved riverfront walk is inspiring case study

How about no car-based roads or parking lots on the park side? Just foot and non-motorized access?

Opportunities for outreach and education



# What are major river and riparian habitat concerns with redevelopment?



# APPENDIX D: ENGAGEMENT

## D.1 Community Engagement Plan

Document: Soldotna Riverfront Redevelopment Project: Engagement Plan. FIRST FORTY FEET

Description: *The plan identifies the Project's engagement goals and objectives, key engagement milestones, the outreach strategy, method of stakeholder identification, engagement methods, and the role of decision-makers in the project process.*

## D.2 Project Advisory Committee Plan

Document: Soldotna Riverfront Redevelopment Project: Project Advisory Committee- Roles & Responsibilities; FIRST FORTY FEET

Description: *The plan sets the expectations for the project advisory committee including roles, responsibilities and a schedule of project advisory committee meetings.*

## D.3 Engagement Milestone #1: Project Initiation- Objectives and Vision

Document: Project Handout; Engagement Boards for Display at the Community Workshop; Engagement #1 Feedback Form; and Engagement Results for sessions with the community and the Chamber of Commerce. FIRST FORTY FEET

Description: *Various engagement materials including an overall project handout, describing the project objectives, project area map and project timeline; large format boards illustrating the project area and timeline, elements that shape community identity, the places where people gather today and types of places they would like to see in the future, the challenges to walking and biking in the downtown and type of facilities to be considered in the project. A project feedback form was used to gather feedback on places and attributes of Soldotna that people value, the types of desirable future uses and riverfront activities in the project area, and opportunities and challenges related to riverfront access and general walk and bike conditions in and around the downtown. A summary of engagement results are tallied for each question posed during a community workshop and Chamber of Commerce luncheon.*

## D.4 Engagement Milestone #2: Build the Vision- Preliminary Development Concepts

Document: Project Handout; Engagement Boards for Display at the Community Workshop; Engagement #2 Feedback Form; and Engagement Results for sessions with the community and the Kenai River Fish Habitat Symposium. FIRST FORTY FEET

Description: *Various engagement materials including an overall project handout, describing the project objectives, project area map, project timeline and the "big ideas" for future redevelopment; large format boards illustrating the project area and timeline, the vision for downtown redevelopment, and preliminary concepts for parks, plazas and trails, riverfront and highway development and new and enhanced streets and trail connections.. A project feedback form was used to gather feedback on the project vision and preliminary development concepts. A summary of engagement results are tallied for each question posed during a community workshop and at the Kenai River Fish Habitat Symposium.*

## D.5 City Council Work Sessions

**Document: The Big Ideas and Preliminary Concepts, Market Hall Options and Development Feasibility, and Downtown Riverfront Redevelopment Plan Elements slideshow presentations. FIRST FORTY FEET and ECONorthwest.**

**Description: Presentations were a part of work sessions with the City Council and project advisory committee, to review and discuss: preliminary concepts and the results of the Engagement #1 sessions, development feasibility analysis, and the preferred plan elements and development strategy.**

# RIVERFRONT REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT

## **Project Update Agenda:**

The Riverfront Redevelopment project is moving from Building the Vision phase to assembling the components of the Master Plan. As we advance into a preferred scenario and the frameworks for land use, circulation, and implementation strategies this meeting is an opportunity to reflect on What We Heard from our engagement sessions regarding the Big Ideas and preliminary redevelopment concepts, review technical analyses, and discuss next steps.

### **Welcome (5 Min.)**

#### **What We heard (25 min)**

- The Big Ideas—Top Three
- Soldotna Public Market
- Development Scenarios
- New + Enhanced Streets
- “Bookend” Public Gatherings
- Trail Connections

*Committee Discussion*

#### **Development Feasibility Findings (40 min)**

- Circulation Analysis
- Utilities Analysis and Cost
- Public Market Interviews
- Preliminary Development Feasibility
- Preferred Scenario and Frameworks Recommendation

*Committee Discussion*

#### **Next Steps (20 Min)**

- Preferred Scenario and Development Summary
- Preferred Development Feasibility and Catalyst Projects
- Implementation Strategy

*Committee Discussion*





SOLDOTNA

# SOLDOTNA RIVERFRONT REDEVELOPMENT

**PROJECT UPDATE:**

**The Big Ideas and Preliminary Concepts**

City Council Work Session & Riverfront Advisory Committee August 23, 2023

# Agenda



**Engagement #2 What We Heard**

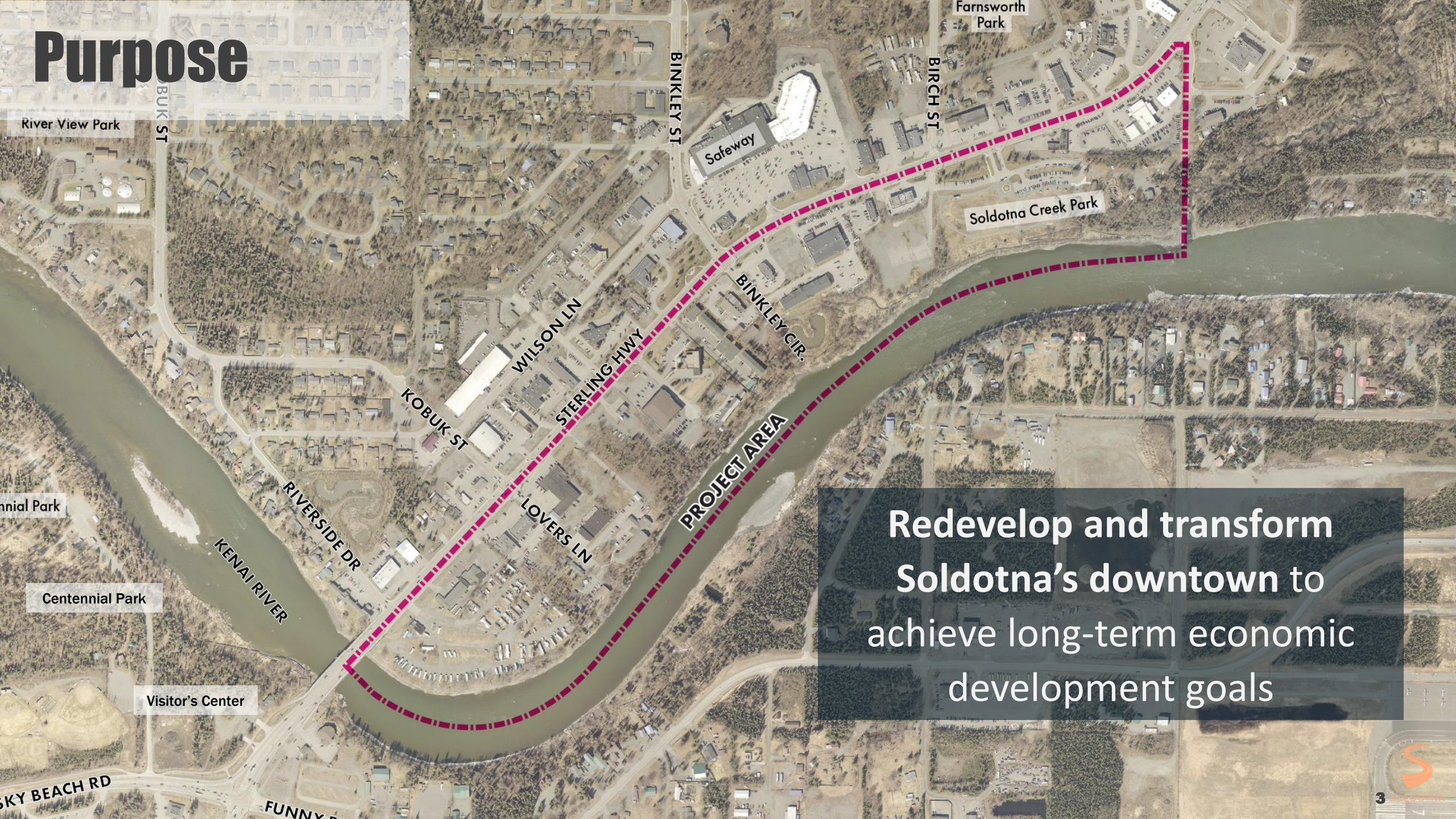


**Development Feasibility Findings**



**Next Steps**

# Purpose



Redevelop and transform Soldotna's downtown to achieve long-term economic development goals

# Objectives



Create a **one-of-a-kind riverfront experience** with shopping, dining, **entertainment**, and lodging in a walkable destination



Support **local businesses, expansion and attract** new entrepreneurs



Highlight the **Kenai River** and incorporate the **natural landscape** into the Downtown



Identify opportunities for **public and private partnerships**



Identify **critical infrastructure** to support redevelopment



Explore **options and strategies** for funding and implementation



Provide **housing options** to meet local needs

# Project Process + Schedule

## Project Initiation

## Build the Vision

## Master Plan

Existing Conditions | Market Analysis | Environ. Review | Conceptual Master Planning | Preliminary Development Scenarios | Development Feasibility | Refined Master Plan | Preferred Development Scenario | Implementation



**PROJECT KICK-OFF**  
 • Stakeholder interviews

**PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT #1**  
 • Review project purpose and focus area  
 • Learn about redevelopment fundamentals  
 • Identify community values and desired project outcome

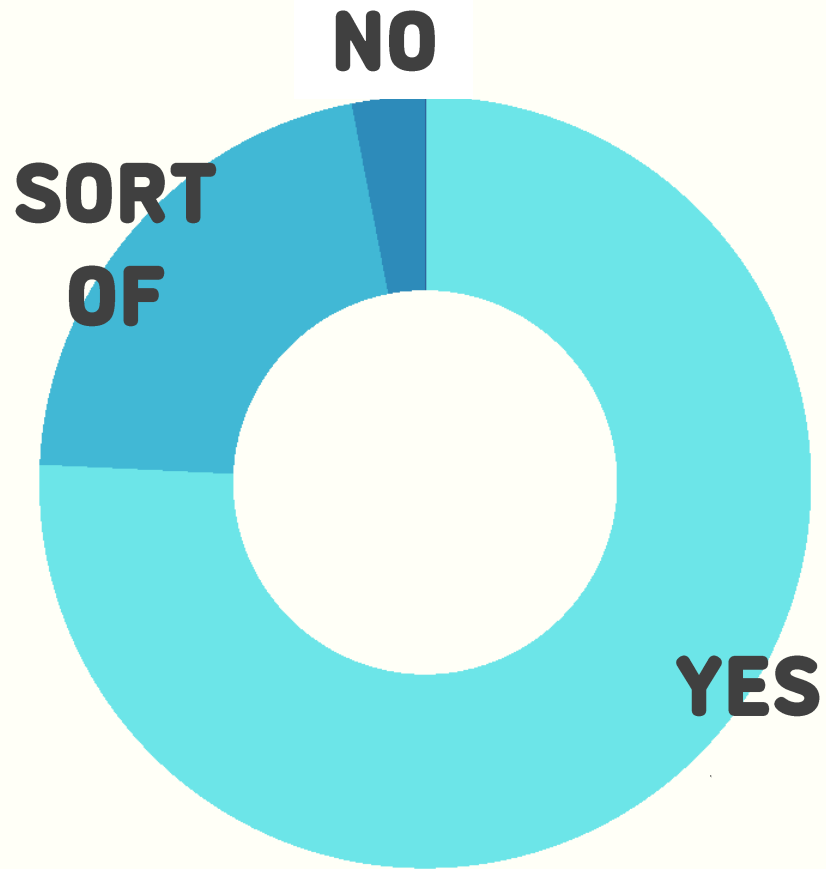
**PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT #2**  
 • Present outcomes from Engagement #1  
 • Present preliminary development concepts  
 • Identify community supported concepts

**TECHNICAL ANALYSIS**  
 • Circulation and Utilities Review and Cost  
 • Developer & public market interviews  
 • Development feasibility

**PROJECT UPDATE**  
 • Present outcomes from Engagement #2  
 • Present Development Feasibility Findings  
 • Discuss Next Steps

**CITY COUNCIL**  
 • Summarize public input  
 • Present preferred development scenario  
 • Present implementation strategies

# What We Heard

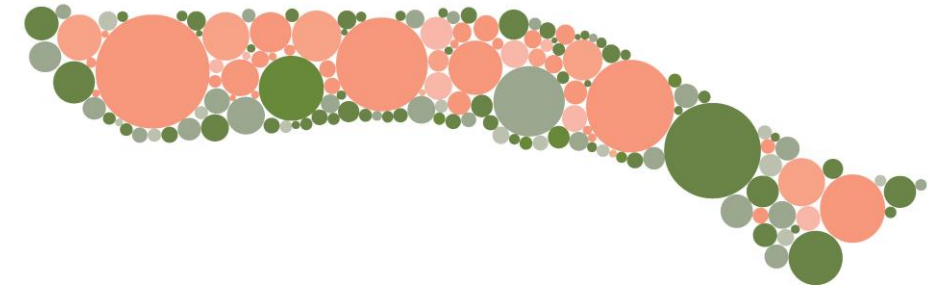


Does the Vision capture Soldotna's values around nature & Gathering?

## Vision

Downtown Soldotna is a place where **nature and urban gathering spaces** coexist, expanding and enhancing one another.

Future circulation improvements and redevelopment should incorporate elements of gathering and nature.



# The "Big Ideas"



The Kenai River corridor is a woven blend of **nature, wildlife, recreation & gathering**



**Riverbend Plaza**

**Park Plaza**

**Boardwalk and Trails  
Connect the Riverfront**

**Community Gathering  
'Bookends'**

# The "Big Ideas"

## IDENTITY

The Kenai River corridor is a woven blend of **nature, wildlife, recreation & gathering**

## PLACE

New & enhanced streets support Downtown Hubs as **places to live, work, and play**





# The "Big Ideas"

## IDENTITY

The Kenai River corridor is a woven blend of **nature, wildlife, recreation & gathering**

## PLACE

New & enhanced streets support Downtown Hubs as **places to live, work, and play**

## CONNECTED

**Key pathways** reconnect neighborhoods to the river and destinations along Sterling Highway



**New & Enhanced Streets Support Development at the Hubs**

**Key pathways extend to the River**

**Sterling Trail connects the highway corridor**

**Boardwalk and Trails Connect the Riverfront**

**Community Gathering 'Bookends'**

**Riverbend Plaza**

**Park Plaza**

**RIVERSIDE HUB**

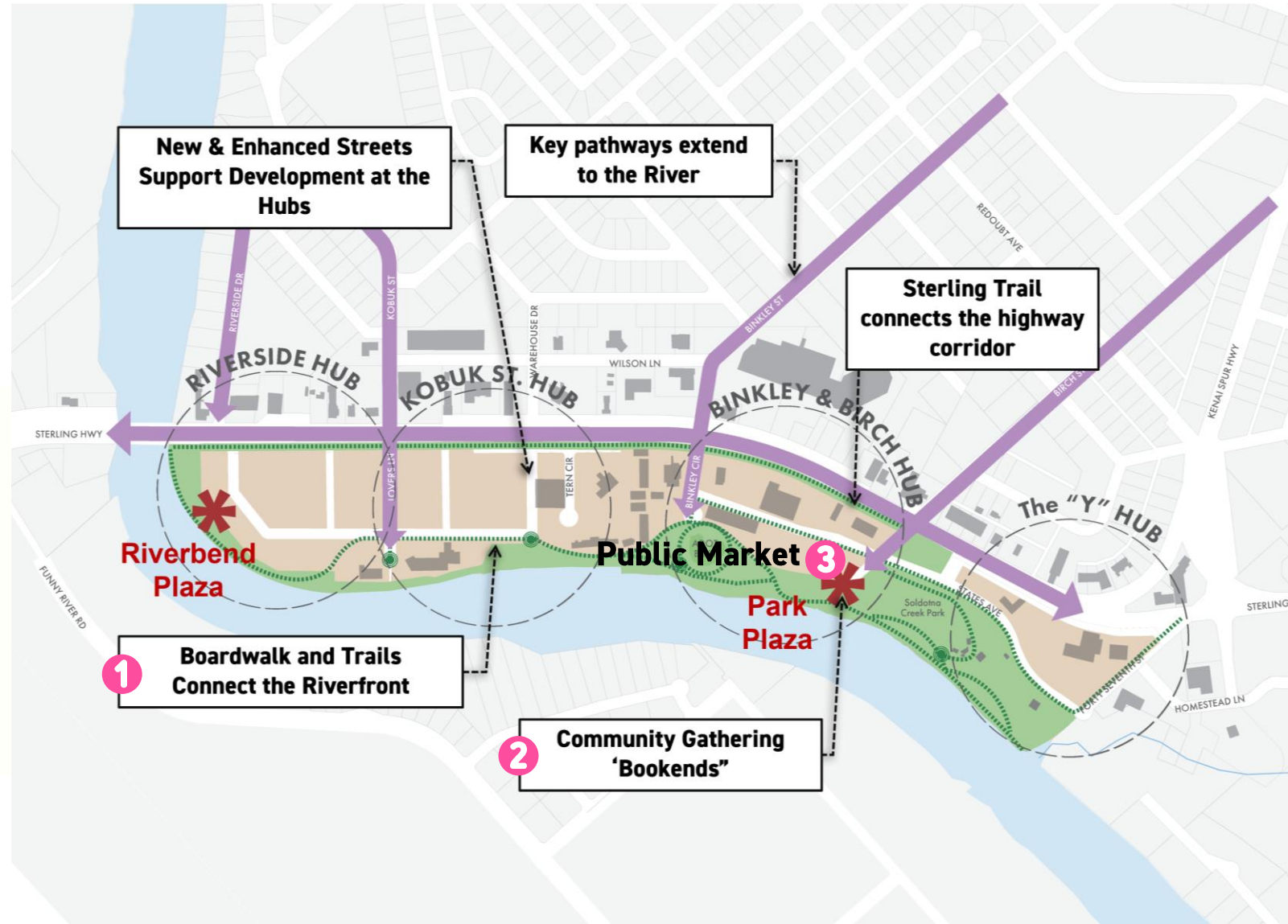
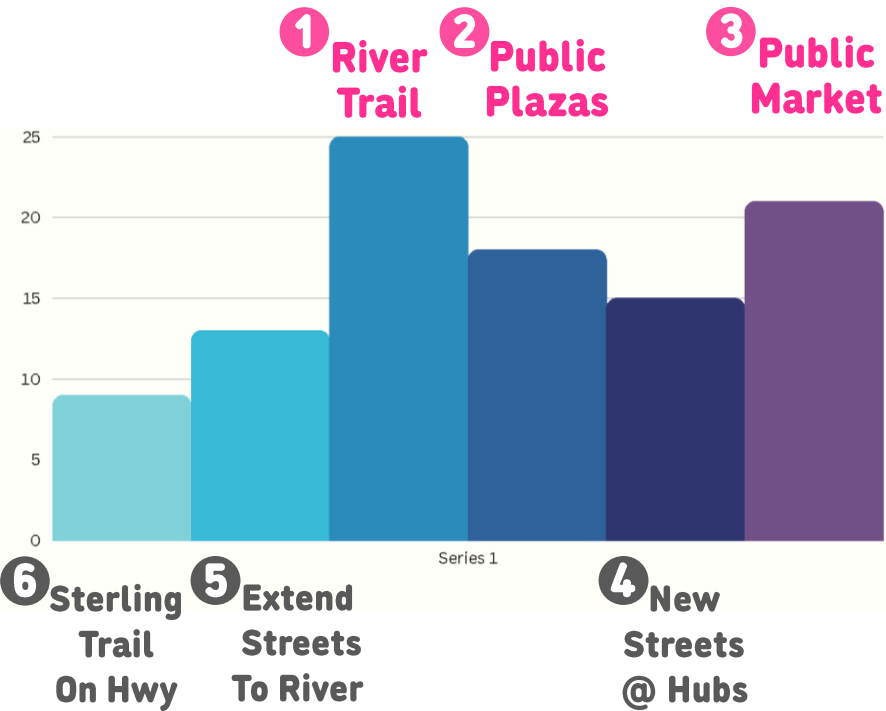
**KOBUK ST. HUB**

**BINKLEY & BIRCH HUB**

**The "Y" HUB**

# What We Heard

## The "Big Ideas"



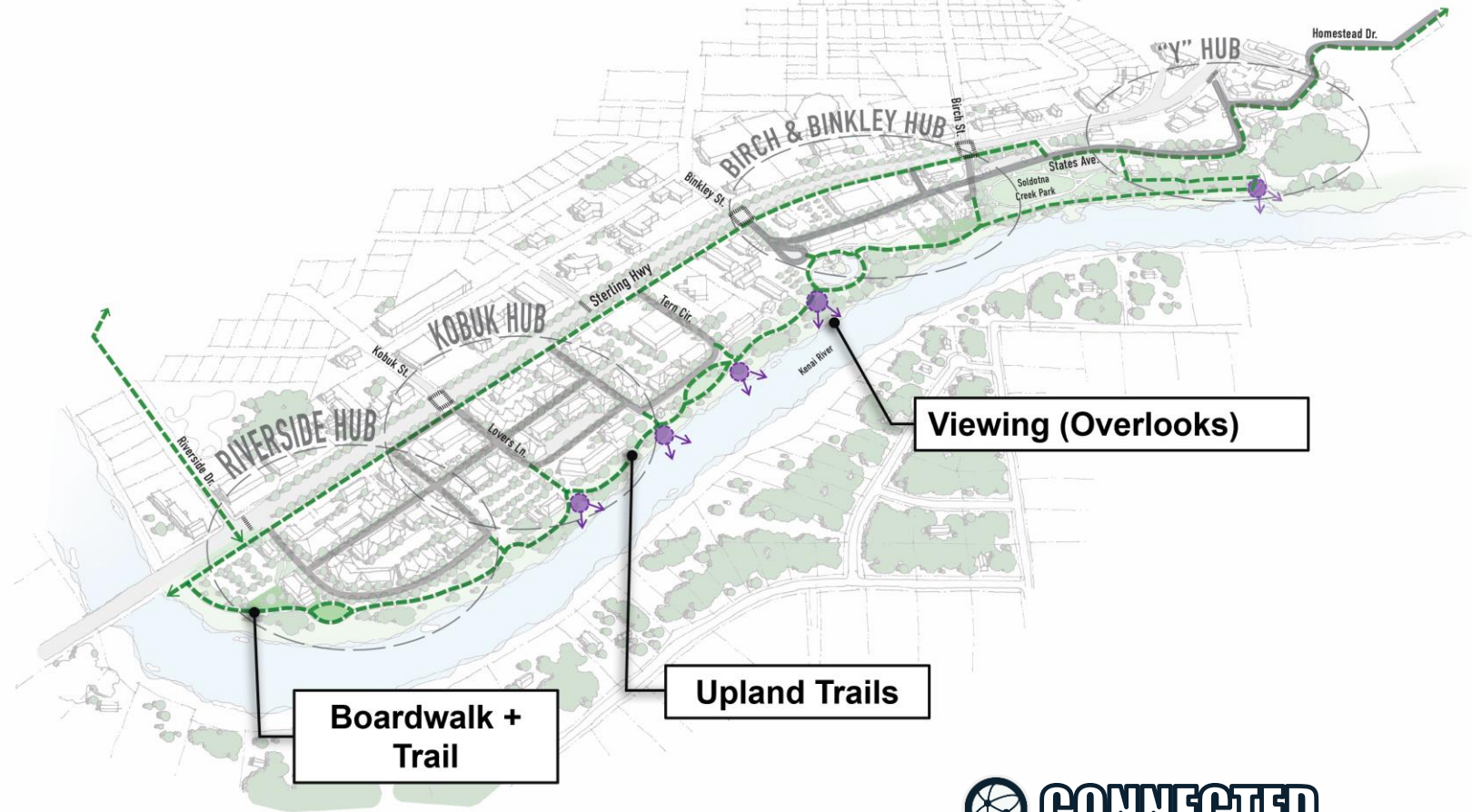
# What We Heard

## Riverfront Trail

Maybe,  
Need More  
Info

Yes, But  
different

Absolutely,  
A Must Have



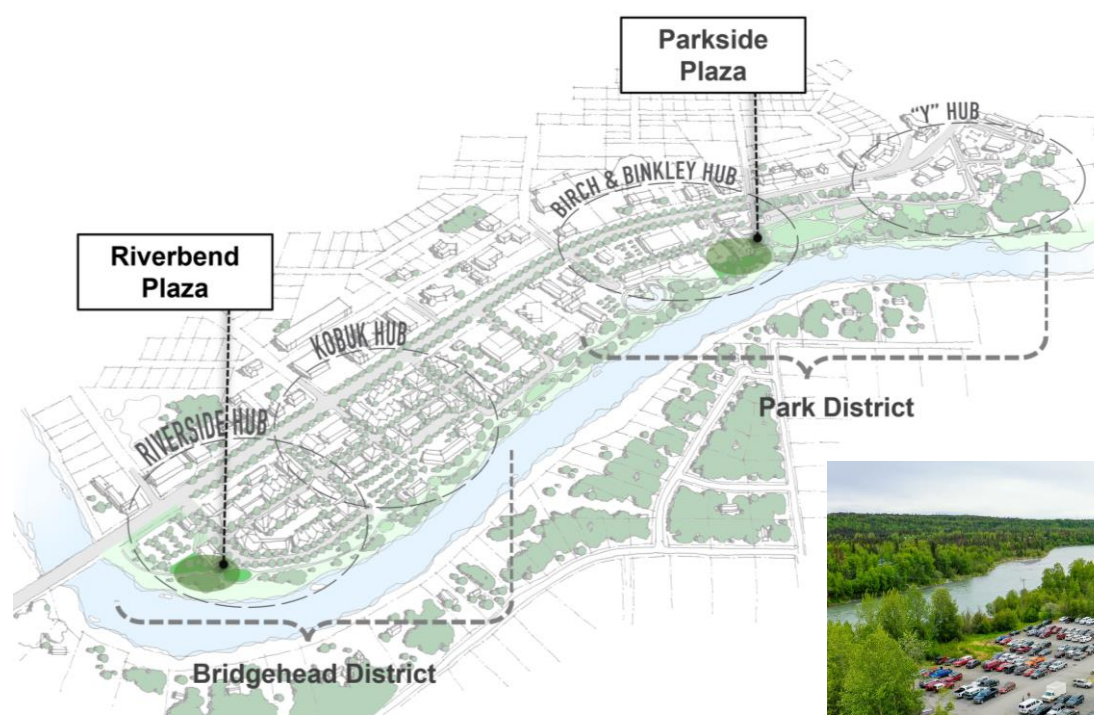
# What We Heard

**“Bookends”  
Public Gathering**

**Not  
Important**

**Somewhat  
Important**

**Very  
Important**



# PLACE



## “Bookends” Public Gathering

### Nature & Gathering

Soldotna Creek Park and Plaza

Riverbend Plaza at the Bridgehead



# PLACE

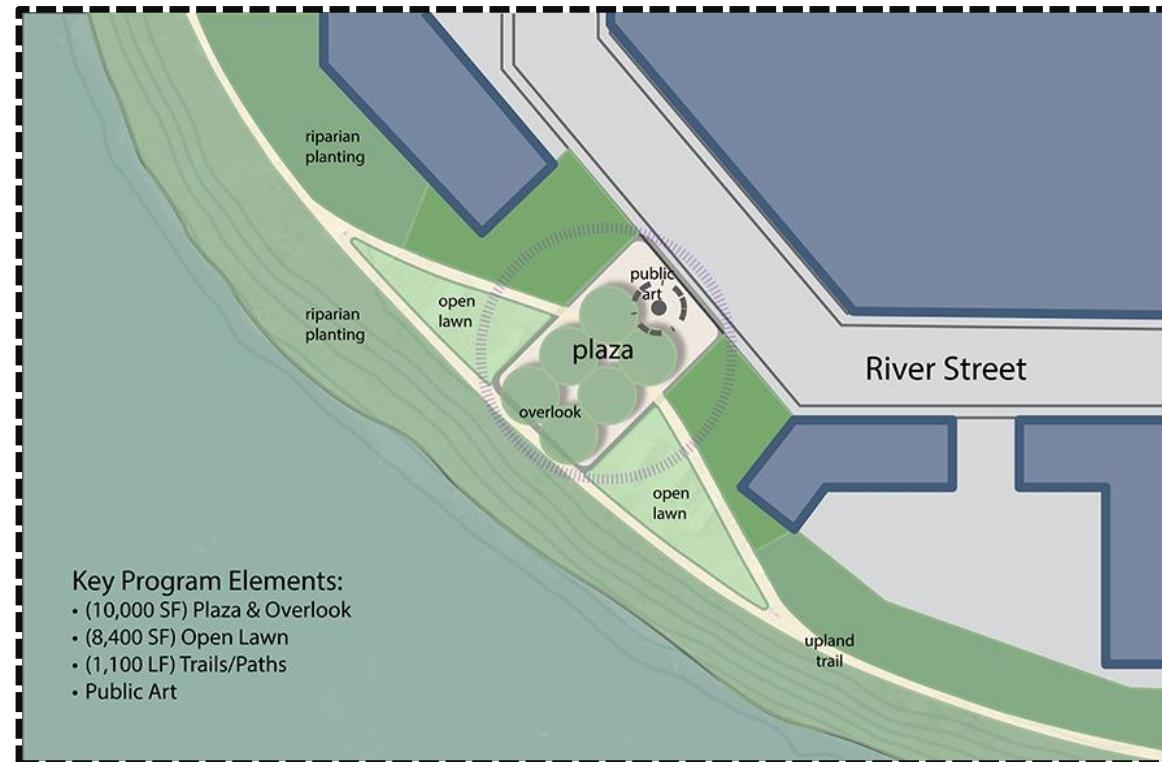


## “Bookends” Public Gathering

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Riverbend Plaza at the  
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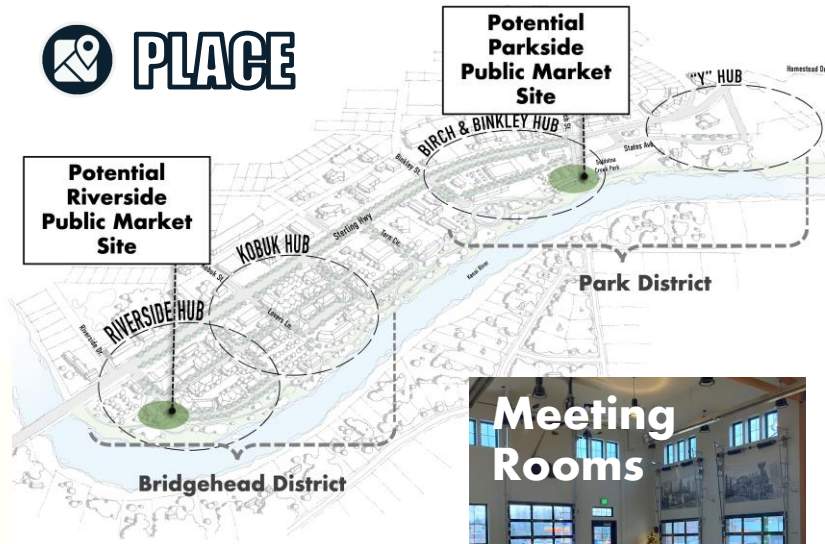
# What We Heard

## Public Market

NO  
Something Else

Maybe,  
Need More  
Info

YES,  
I Love it



Meeting Rooms



Outdoor Gathering



Central Hall with Vendor Stalls



Outdoor Play

Food and local goods are regularly showcased seasonally at Soldotna Creek Park. A public market could serve as a **year-round destination** to showcase these assets

# Development Feasibility Findings

## Public Market Precedents



### Governance:

- **Private developer** (no public support)

### Funding:

- Privately funded construction
- **High-end market rate rents support operations**

### Program:

- **14,000 SF**
- **9 local restaurants**
- 2 well-known anchors
- Events & gathering space
- Centerpiece for a development



# Development Feasibility Findings

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### Governance:

- **Nonprofit operator**
- **Public land ownership**

### Funding:

- **\*LRF district and private funding**
- **Rents, events, & fund raising**
- City project specific-not annual

### Program:

- **28,000 SF**
- **20 restaurants and shops**
- Hosts Farmers Market
- Commercial kitchen
- Adjacent event center
- **Waterfront, location & trail**

# Development Feasibility Findings

## Public Market Precedents



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- Adjacent event center
- **Waterfront, location & trail**



### Governance:

- **Nonprofit owned and operated; private property management**

### Funding:

- KANA; no City or Borough money
- **Rental income & KANA's revenue**
- **Rents \$3/sf over 3 to 5 years**

### Program:

- **63,000 SF**
- **1/3 rented to businesses**
- 11 storefronts & commercial kit.
- Meeting space, and offices
- Seismic shelter

# Development Feasibility Findings

## Public Market Precedents

### The Grove Market Hall

- Smaller scale
- Privately developed and operated; premium market rents
- Focus on local seasoned retailers meant no need for business support
- **Strong anchor tenants important**
- **Community gathering space**
- **Outdoor space was necessary**
- **Events boost visitors**
- Design matters

### Pybus Market

- Mid-sized; hosts Farmer's Market & 20 retail spaces
- PPP developed, nonprofit operated
- Operated through rents, events, & fundraising
- No time limit for businesses in market
- Community vision and buy in essential for long-term success
- **Waterfront and trail boost visitation and activating downtown**

**“There have been lean times. Relied on the generosity of others who believed in the vision.”**

**- Pybus GM**

**“Met w/each business to help them with business planning that would allow them to pay higher prices”**

**-Kodiak PM**

### Kodiak Marketplace

- 11 retail spaces co-located with business supports
- Nonprofit owned, operated, funded
- Ongoing subsidy from KANA
  - Deficit decreases with gradual rent increases
- **Community benefit, economic driver, revitalize downtown**
- Direct outreach and business plan support essential for getting higher rents
- Crucial to have public engagement and manage expectations

# Development Feasibility Findings

## What the Soldotna Public Market Should Deliver?

- **Vibrant** community hub: retail, food, entertainment
- **Celebrate** Soldotna and the Kenai River
- **Gathering** place for residents and tourists
- Appeal to **all ages**
- Operate **year-round** with events and activities
- **Affordable** for businesses and customers
- Support **local business**

“Would be nice to integrate with the river and riverwalk and have views of the river and fishing.”

“Vendor and food is not enough - need music and something the old and young want to be at.”

“It would be the worst to be so expensive and only seasonally used.”

# Development Feasibility Findings

## Public Market Critical Element

Affordable restaurant and retail space for local businesses

Multi-use space that shifts with need

Anchor tenant

Active programming: events, management, etc.

# Development Feasibility Findings

## Specific Ways to Support Small Business

### In Market Hall

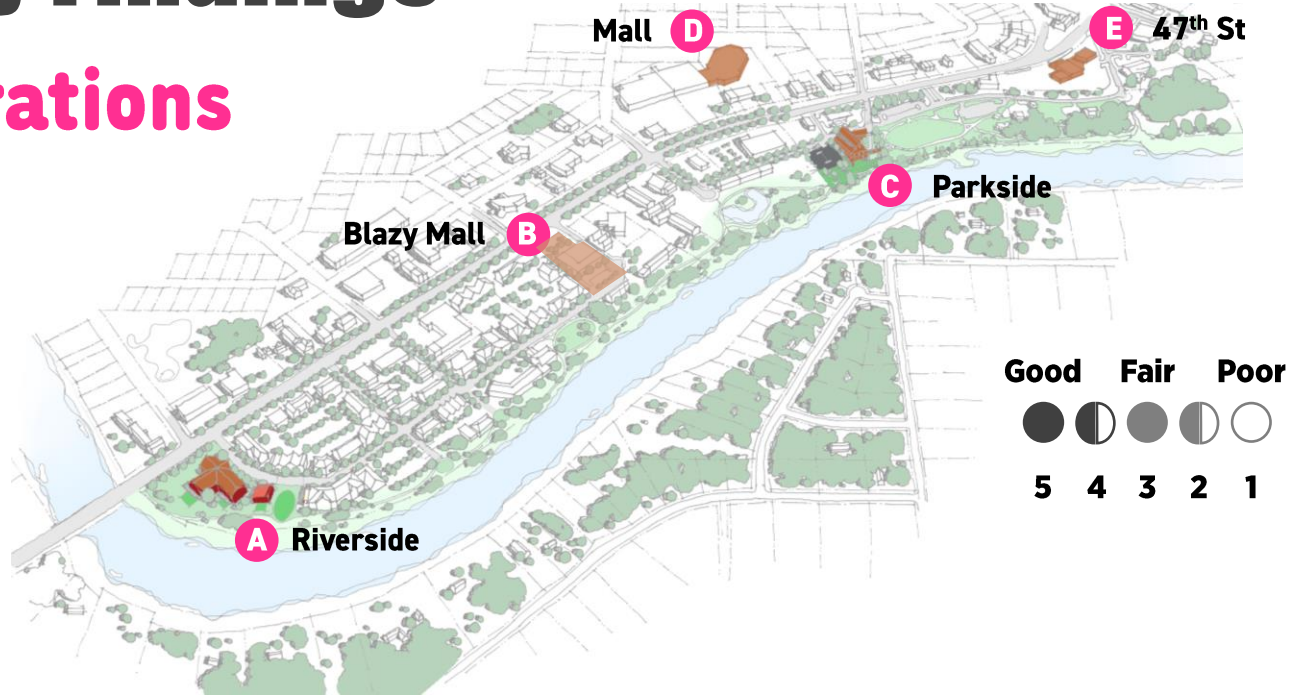
- Ensure affordable rent
  - Graduated rent or percentage rent
  - First month free
- Adequate storage within spaces
- Active, supportive management

### In City

- Pair facade improvement program with tenant improvement, and/or equipment grants in commercial areas
- Ensure adequate access to a commissary kitchen
- Coordinate suite of business support services

# Development Feasibility Findings

## Public Market Site Considerations



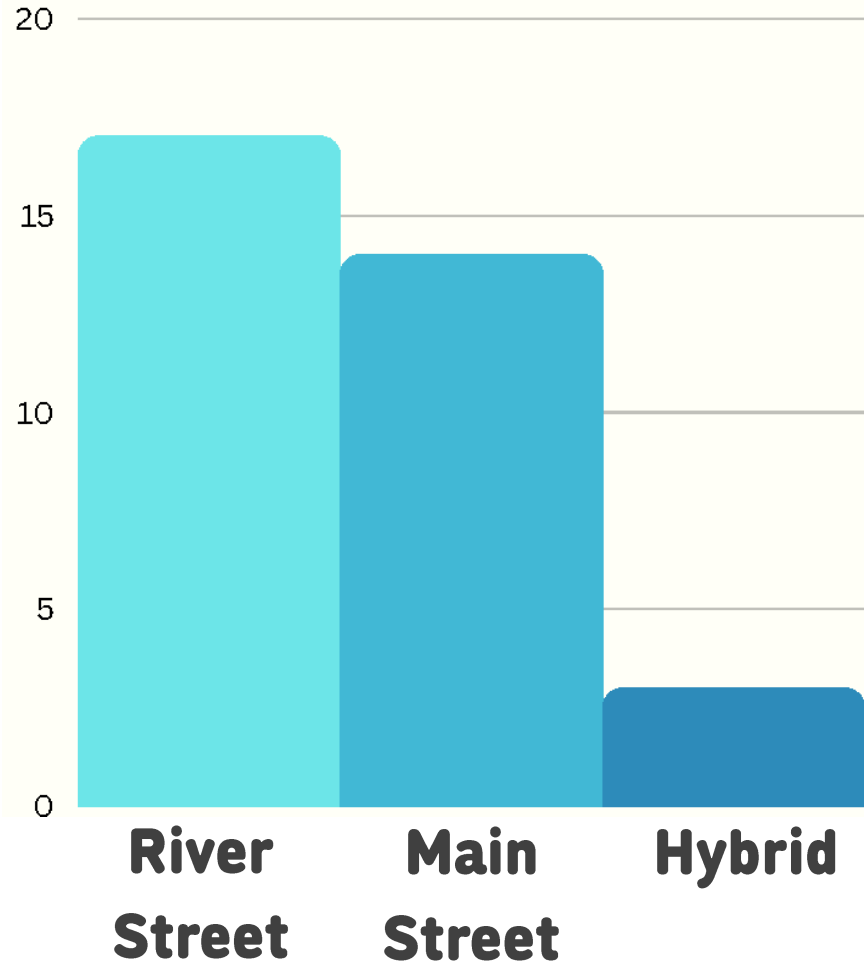
- City owned property=lower cost
- Accommodate parking needs
- Ability to stage indoor and outdoor events
- Outdoor public gathering space
- Waterfront and trail location
- Regional access

### Criteria & Evaluation

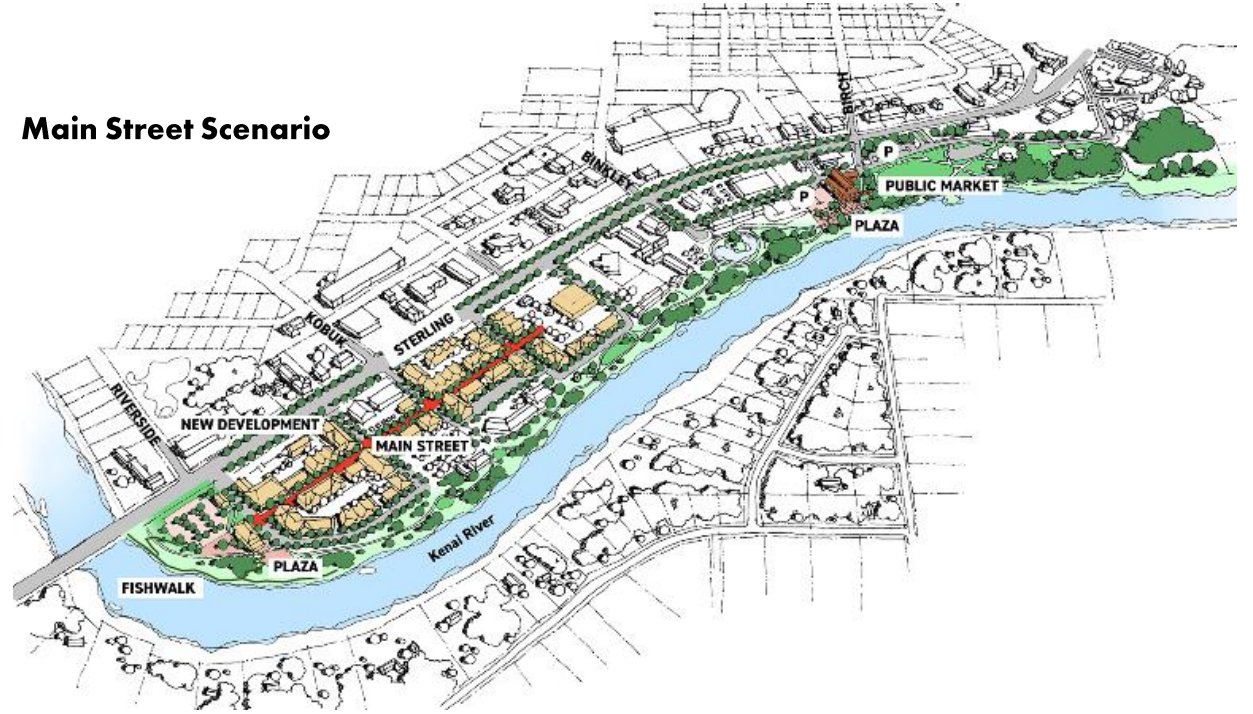
	A- Riverside	B- Blazy Mall	C- Parkside	D- Mall	E- 47th St
■ City owned property	○	○	●	○	○
■ Accommodates parking needs	○	●	●	●	◐
■ Stage indoor and outdoor events	◐	◐	●	◐	◐
■ Outdoor public gathering space	◐	●	●	◐	◐
■ Waterfront and trail location	●	◐	●	○	○
■ Regional access	●	●	●	●	●

# What We Heard

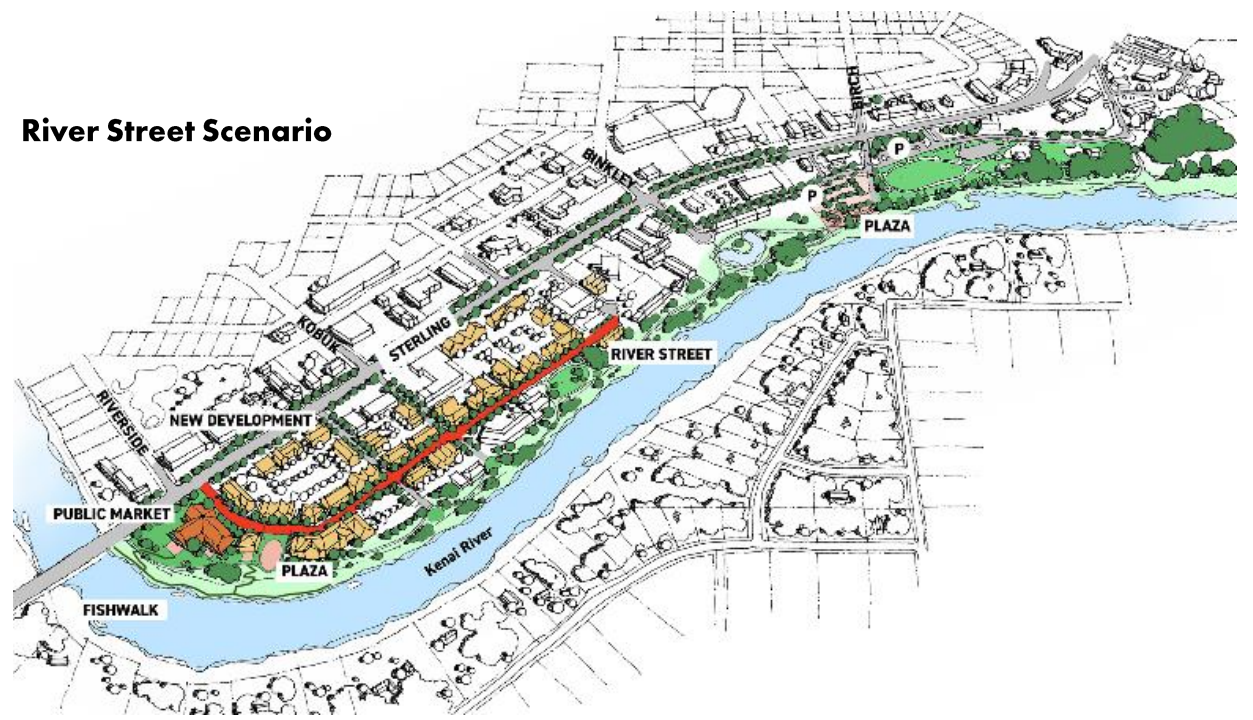
## Downtown Development Scenarios



Main Street Scenario



River Street Scenario





# Development Feasibility Findings

## Criteria

### 1. Project Objectives

- Create a riverfront experience and destination
- Support existing local business + attract new
- Highlight the Kenai River + nature
- Provide housing options

### 2. Development Feasibility

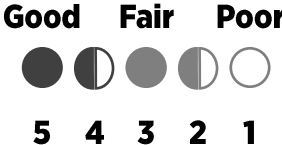
- Uses and density meet current market demand
- Phasing

### 3. Circulation

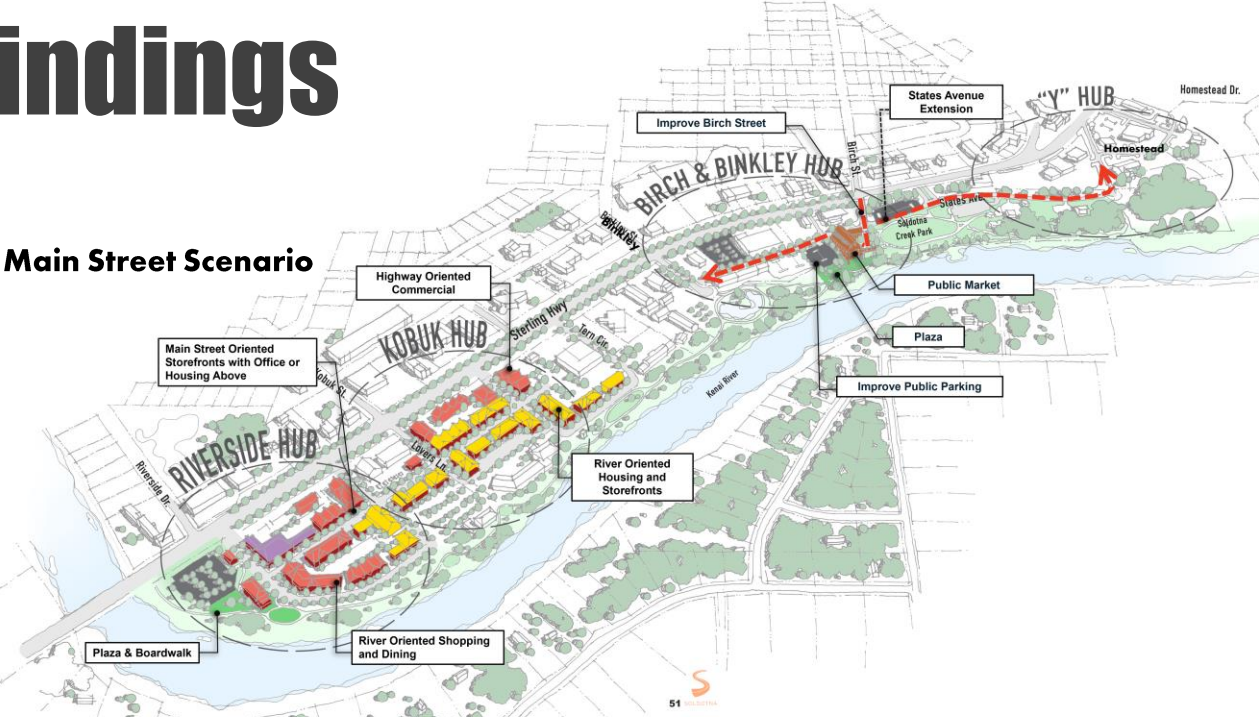
- Promotes walk + bike destination
- Connects neighborhoods to riverfront
- Enhances business access
- Supports highway operations

### 4. Infrastructure + Cost

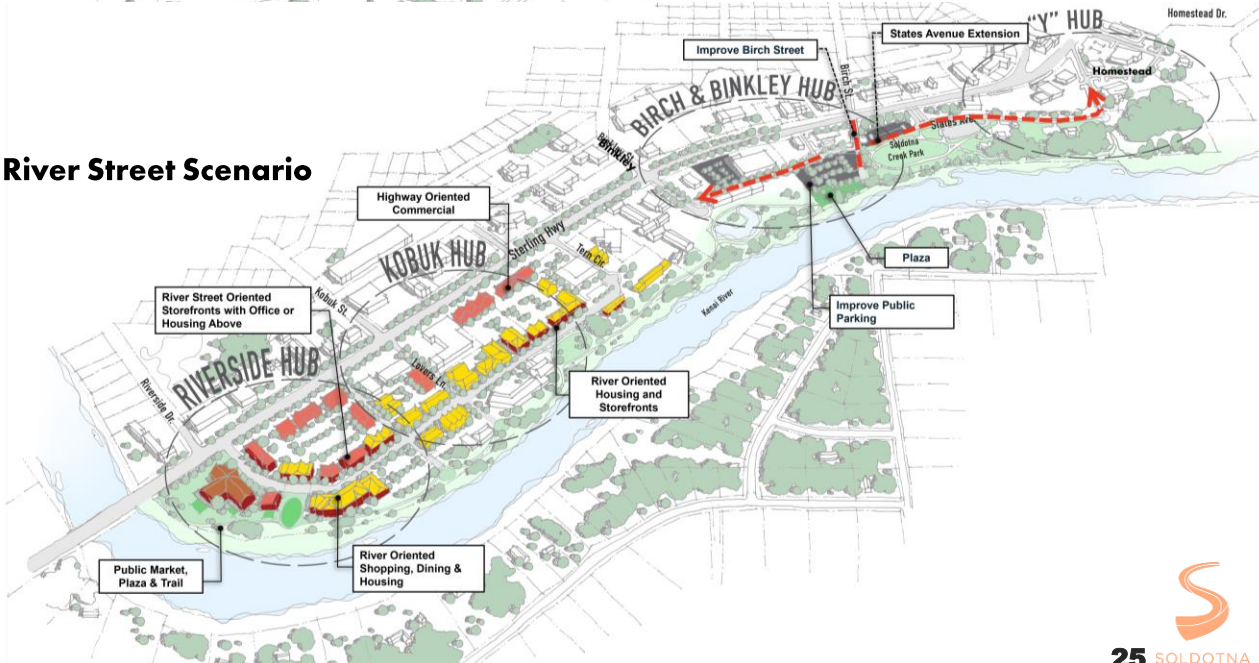
- Utilities
- Streets + right-of-way
- Cost



#### Main Street Scenario



#### River Street Scenario



# Development Feasibility Findings

## Criteria

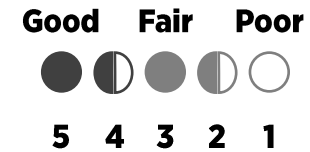
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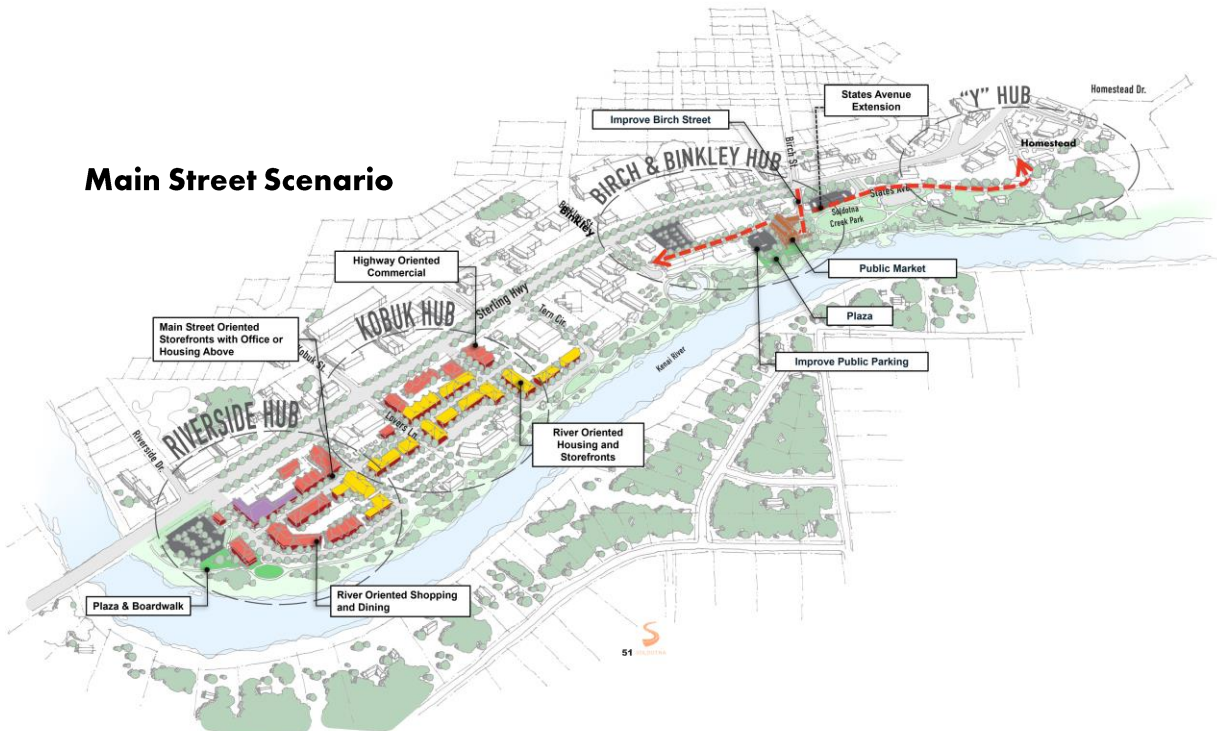
Main Street Scenario



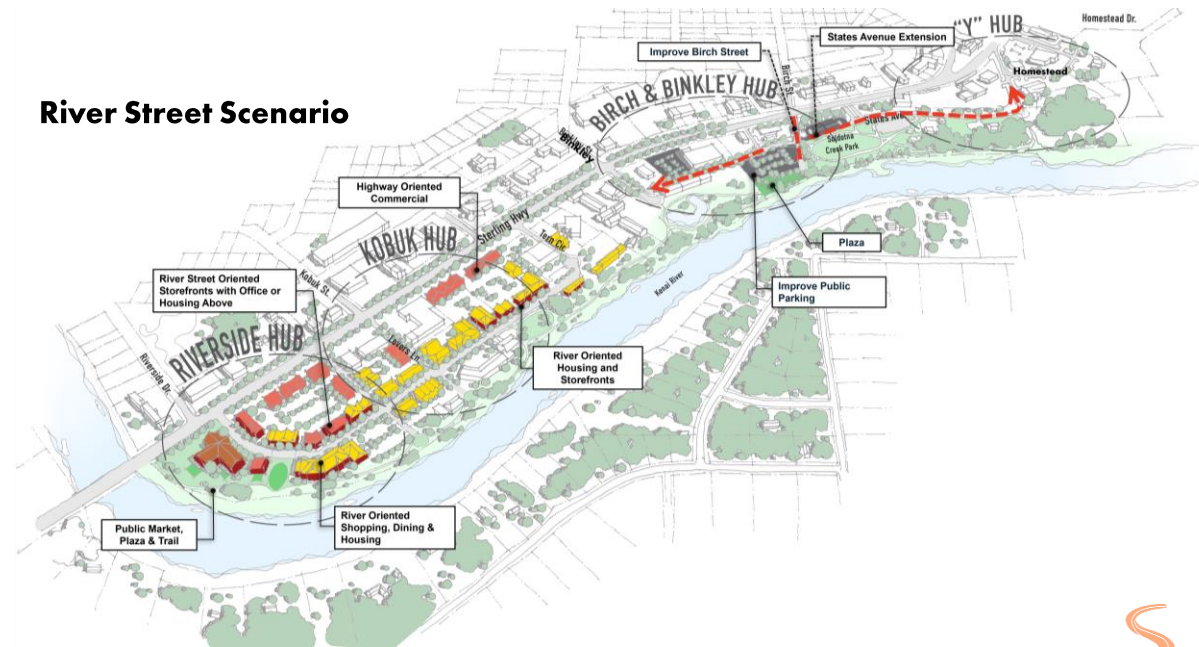
River Street Scenario



Main Street Scenario



River Street Scenario



# Development Feasibility Findings

## Criteria

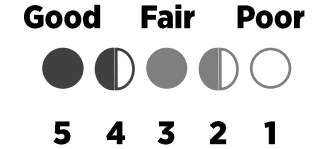
### 2. Development Feasibility—Scenarios

- Uses and density meet current market demand
- Phasing

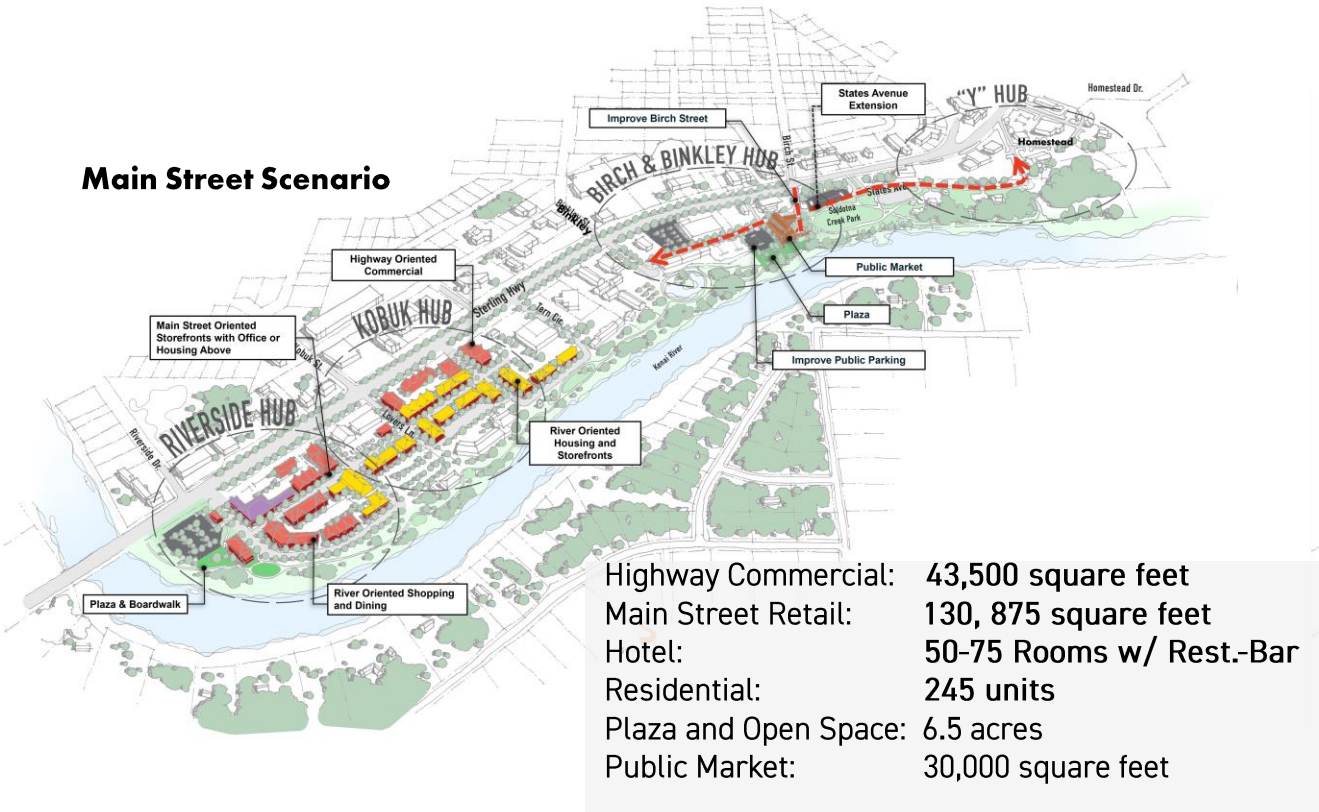
Main Street Scenario



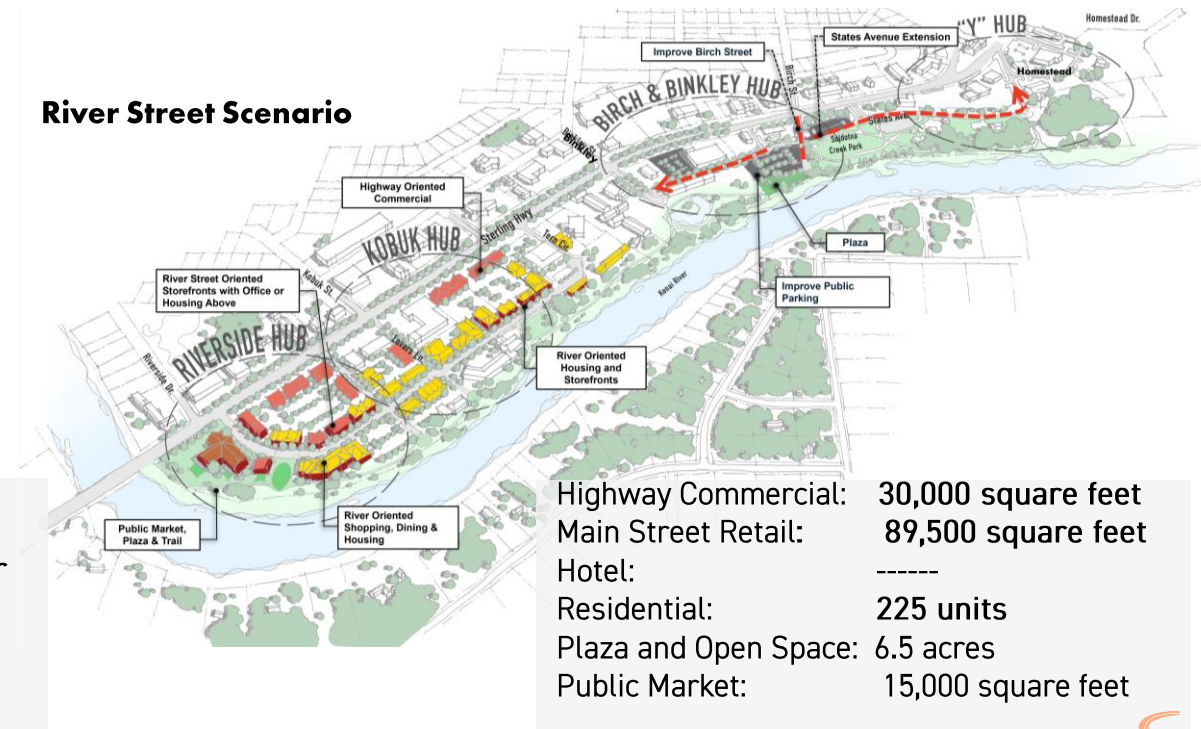
River Street Scenario



Main Street Scenario



River Street Scenario



# Development Feasibility Findings

## 2. Development Feasibility—Market Study



Three story mixed-use and multifamily are **not currently feasible**



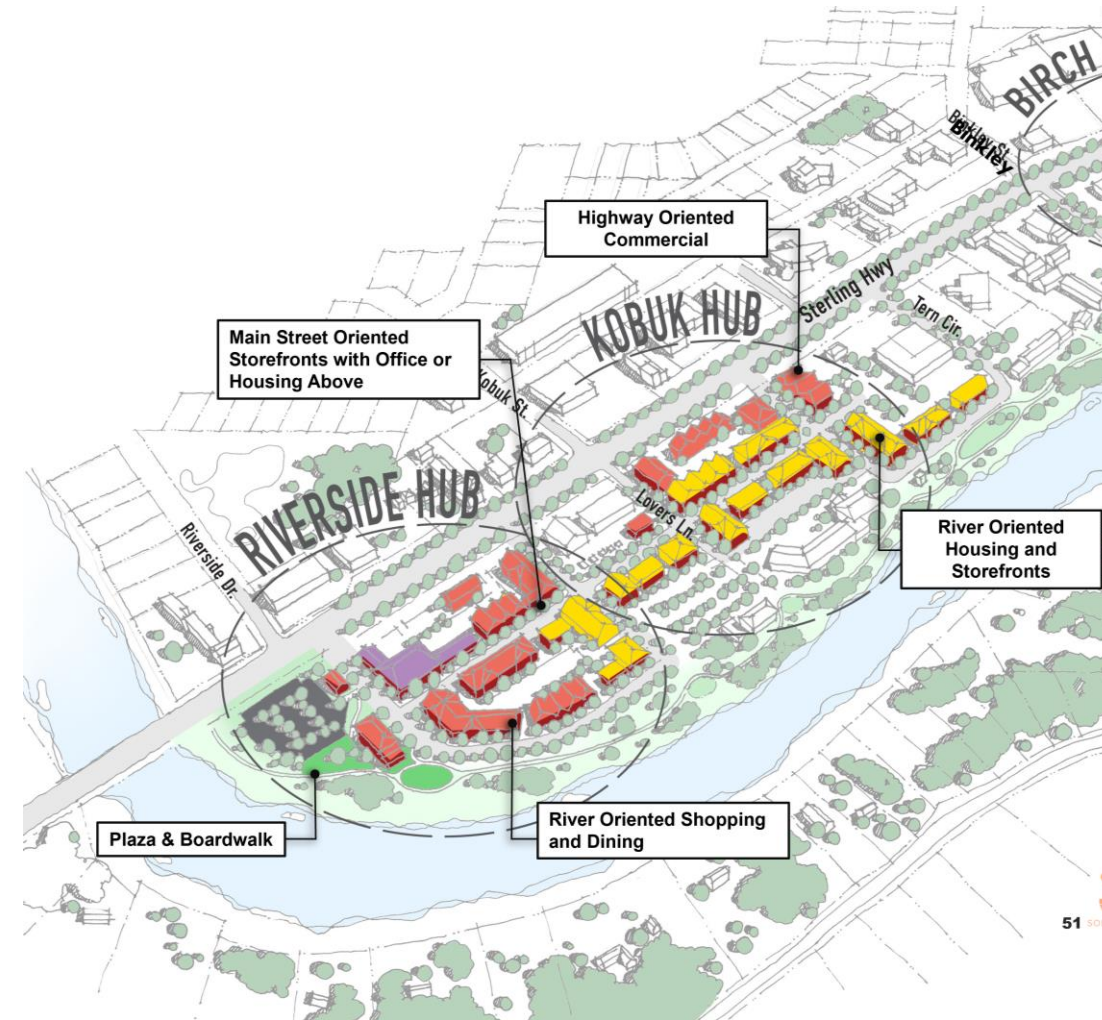
Townhomes are **more feasible**, especially with lower cost land



A new hotel **could be feasible** but would need district public amenities



**Public participation and phasing** will be necessary to stimulate desired development



# Development Feasibility Findings

## Development Considerations & Takeaways

### Preferred Scenario

- Provide housing diversity
- Use River Street road network
- Include hotel use
- Retail, dining, & entertainment cluster versus 3-block area
- Public market at the park

### City's Role

- Participate in public private partnerships
- Construct infrastructure improvements
- Consider timing/phasing of public and private investment

# Development Feasibility Findings

## Development Considerations & Takeaways

### Phase 1

- Establish a market hall
- Encourage townhome development
- Assemble partners to build affordable housing
- Improve trails, streets, and waterfront amenities

### Phase 2

- Encourage a hotel w/ restaurant
- Promote Adaptive reuse

### Phase 3

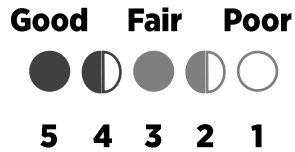
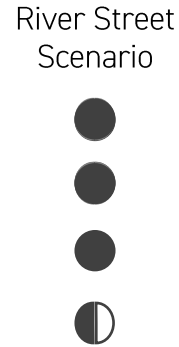
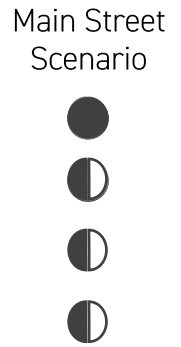
- Pursue three-story mixed-use development

# Development Feasibility Findings

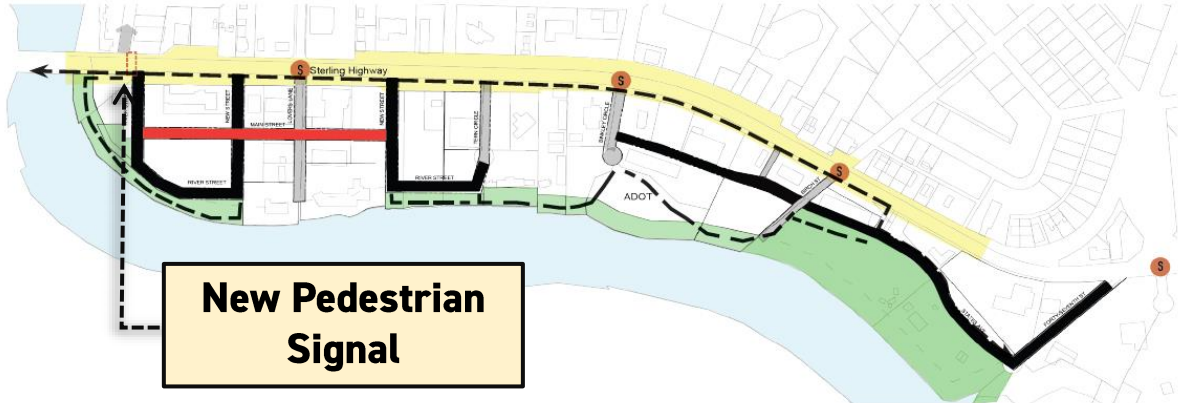
## Criteria

### 3. Circulation

- Promotes walk + bike destination
- Connects neighborhoods to riverfront
- Enhances business access
- Supports highway operations

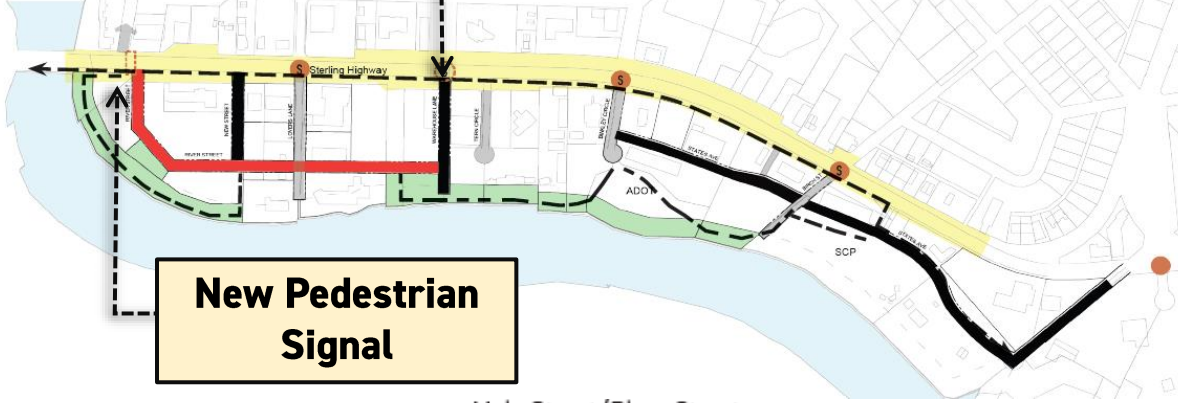


Main Street Mobility Framework



**New Pedestrian Signal**

River Street Mobility Framework



**New Pedestrian Signal**

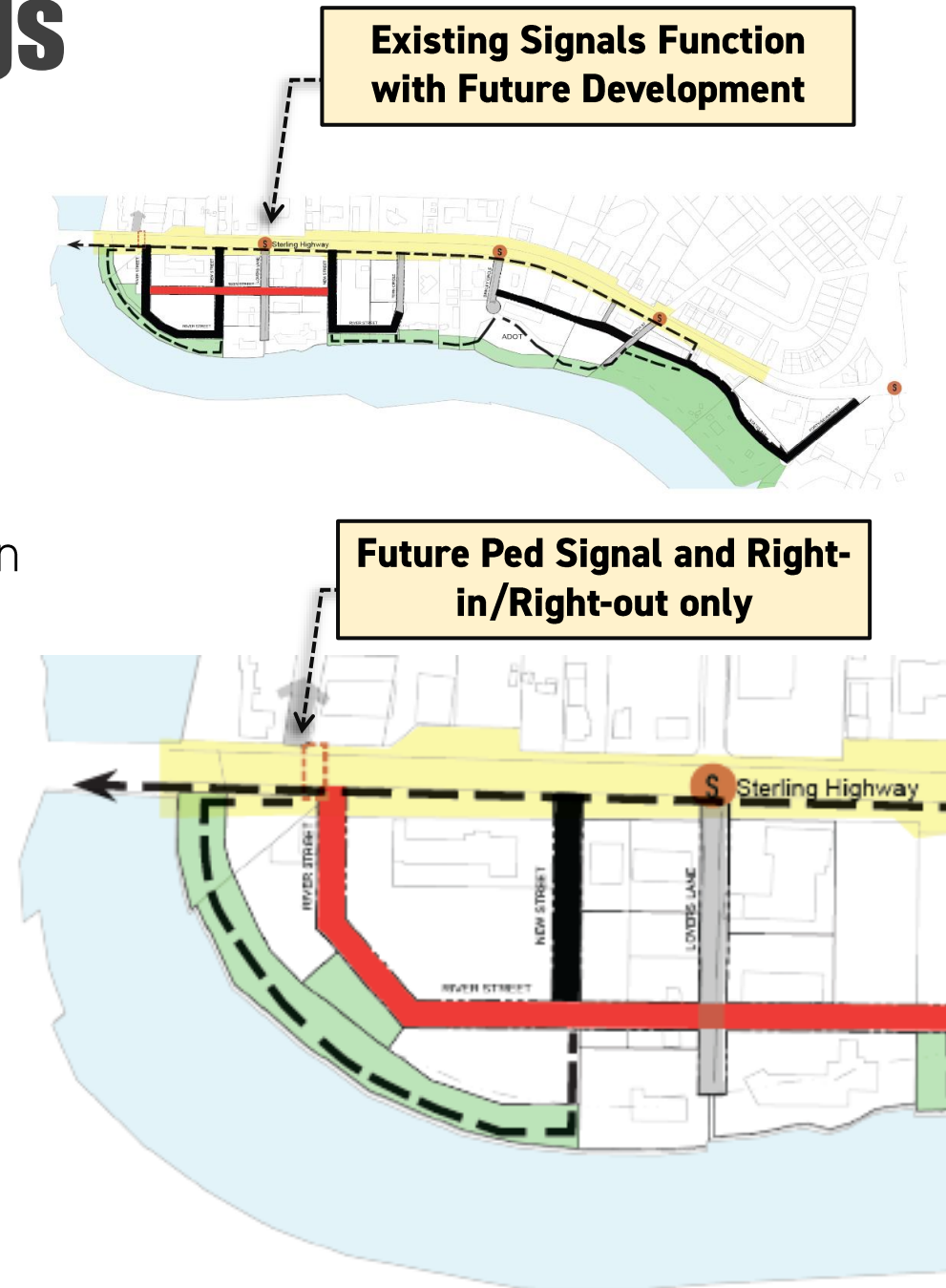
**New Signal**

- Main Street/River Street
- New Street
- Enhanced Street
- Existing Signal
- ◐ Proposed Signal
- ◻ Proposed Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon
- Sterling Highway ROW Transportation Demand Management Area

# Development Feasibility Findings

## 3. Circulation

- The **new and enhanced streets promote a complete street network** supportive of walking and biking in the district and are likely to reduce vehicle trips on the Sterling Highway.
- **Current signalized intersections are expected to be able to accommodate future development** and anticipated traffic at an acceptable level of service.
- Consider allowing **right-in and right-out turns only onto and off Riverside Drive and River Street.**
- Consider **placing a median refuge and using rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFBs)** at the intersection of Riverside Street and Sterling Highway.
- Given the 35-mph speed limit, a new signal at Warehouse Lane may be acceptable and help to keep traffic on Sterling Highway platooned at while adding an additional walk and bike crossing.

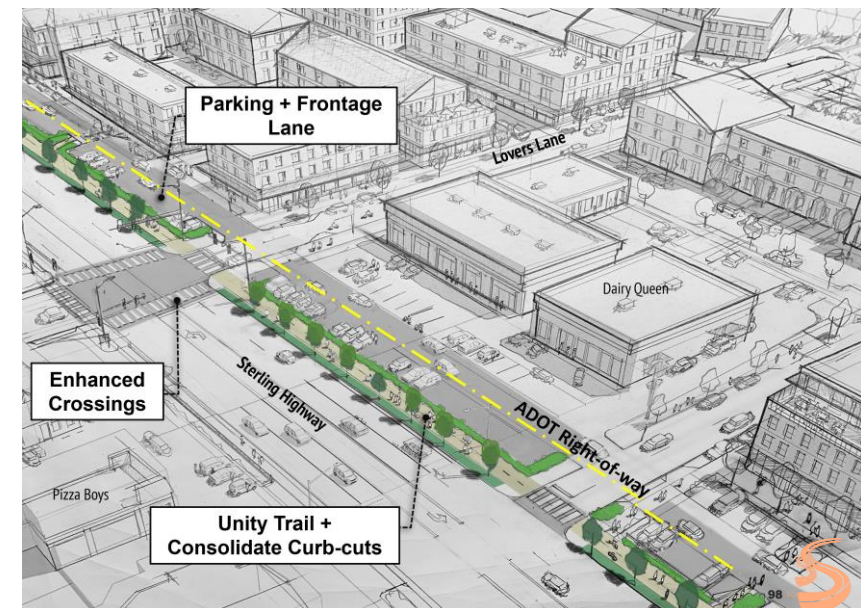




# Development Feasibility Findings

## 3. Circulation

- Consolidating driveways on the river side of Sterling Highway would **improve access control**, and reduce vehicle conflicts.
- Consolidating driveways from the bridge to Birch Place **would reduce the number of driveways or side streets accessing the highway from 15 to 7**. This would decrease conflict points improving safety and decreasing delay.
- The **proposed multi-use trail would also benefit from access control**, as bike riders would interact with vehicles only at the side streets.



# Development Feasibility Findings

## Criteria

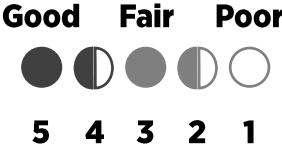
### 4. Infrastructure + Cost

- Utilities
- Streets + right-of-way
- Cost

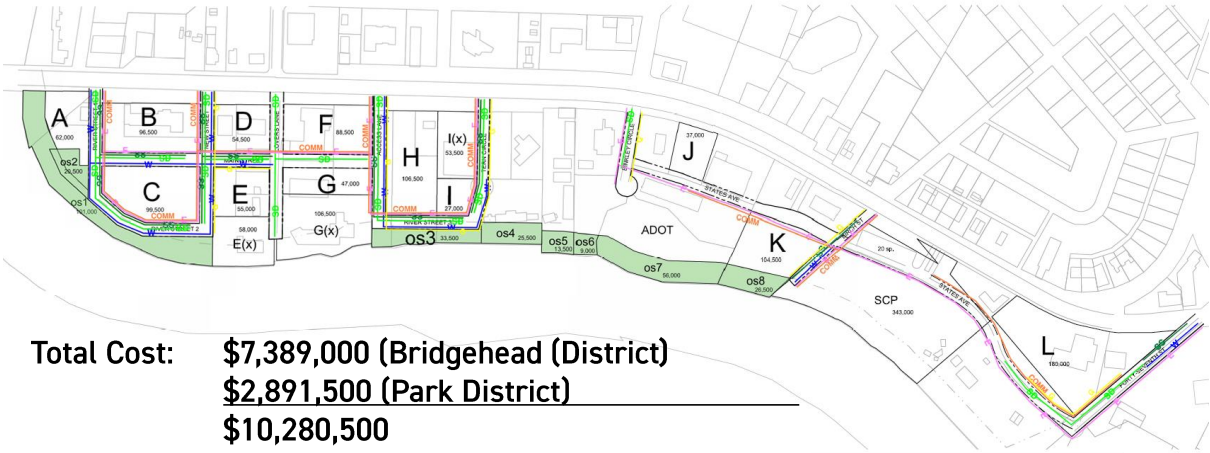
Main Street Scenario



River Street Scenario

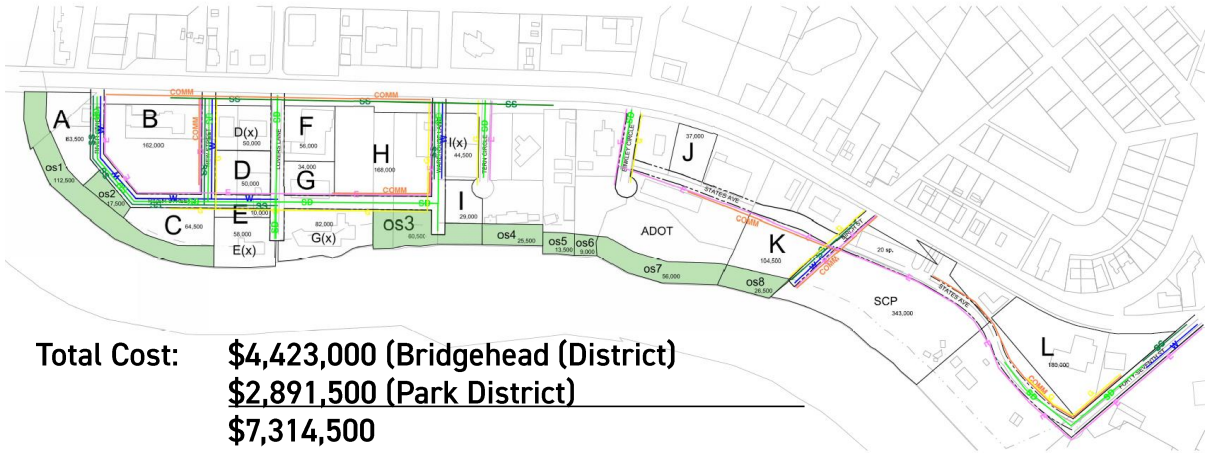


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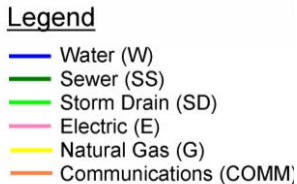


Total Cost: **\$7,389,000** (Bridgehead (District))  
**\$2,891,500** (Park District)  
**\$10,280,500**

#### River Street Scenario



Total Cost: **\$4,423,000** (Bridgehead (District))  
**\$2,891,500** (Park District)  
**\$7,314,500**



# Development Feasibility Findings

## 4. Infrastructure + Cost

- **River Street Alternative** would have less **potential impact on utilities** as it does not include short new street segments along routes not currently developed or supported by utility mains.
- **River Street alternative** would have a **lower cost for utilities and roadway improvements**.

Main Street Total Cost: \$7,389,000



Figure 2: Main Street Alternative

River Streets Total Cost: \$4,423,000



Figure 3: River Street Alternative

# Development Feasibility Findings

## Criteria

### 1. Project Objectives

- Create a riverfront experience and destination
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- Highlight the Kenai River + nature
- Provide housing options

### 2. Development Feasibility

- Uses and density meet current market demand
- Phasing

### 3. Circulation

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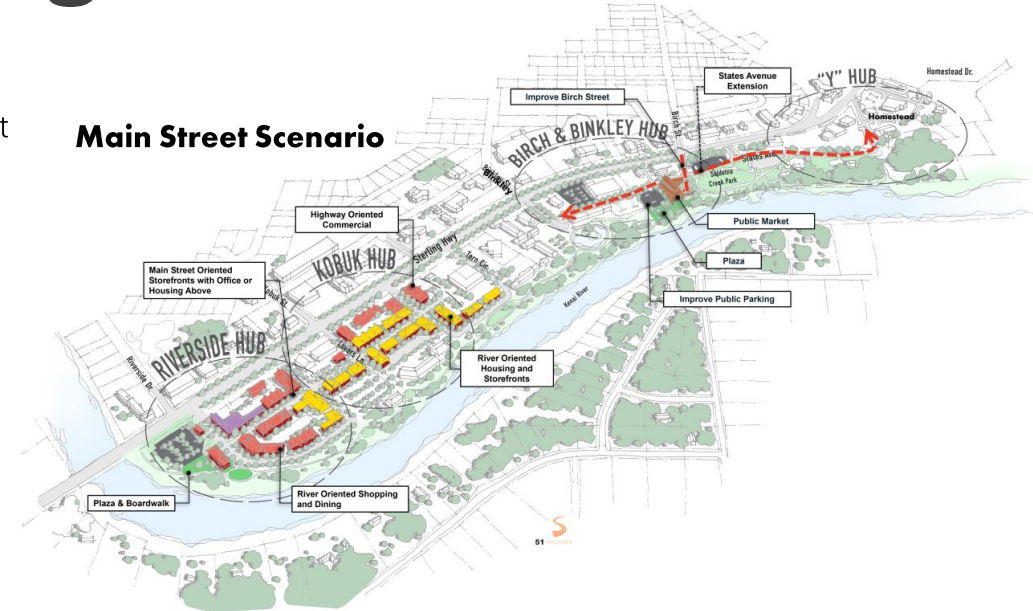
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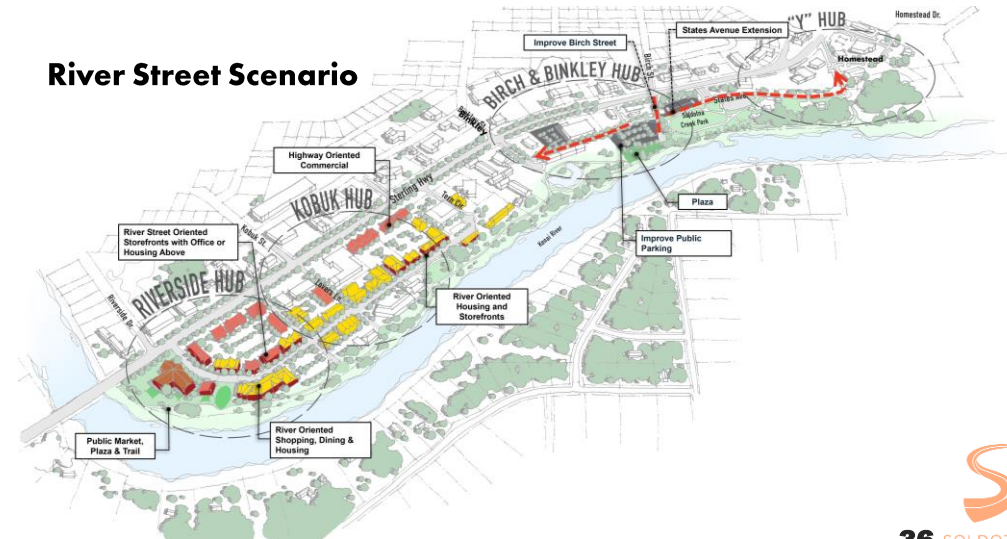
River Street Scenario



Main Street Scenario



River Street Scenario



# Project Process + Schedule

## Project Initiation

## Build the Vision

## Master Plan

Existing Conditions | Market Analysis | Environ. Review | Conceptual Master Planning | Preliminary Development Scenarios | Development Feasibility | Refined Master Plan | Preferred Development Scenario | Implementation



Development Feasibility + Phasing Work Session- Sep. 13

**PROJECT KICK-OFF**  
 • Stakeholder interviews

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**CITY COUNCIL**  
 • Summarize public input  
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# Next Steps

## Preferred Scenario + Development Summary

- Plans + Illustrations
- Development Yield + Typologies
- Regulatory + Design Guidelines Framework

## Catalyst Projects

- Public Market
- Waterfront Plazas
- Phasing I-III

## Implementation Strategies

- Actions
- Roles + Responsibilities
- Timeline

## Draft Master Plan

- Draft
- Review Draft
- Final Draft





# Soldotna Riverfront Redevelopment: Market Hall Options and Development Feasibility

## City Council Work Session September 13, 2023

01

Set the Stage

02

Review  
Residential,  
Mixed-Use and  
Hotel Feasibility

03

Review Options  
for a Market  
Hall

04

Discuss  
Conclusions  
and Next Steps



# Project process and schedule

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## Build the Vision

## Master Plan

Existing Conditions | Market Analysis | Environ. Review

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Development Feasibility | Refined Master Plan | Preferred Development Scenario | Implementation

2022

2023



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• Present implementation strategies

## Part 1: Market Analysis

- Understand the demand for different uses in Soldotna

## Part 2: Feasibility Analysis

- Understand the rent, sales price, or room rates needed to justify new development

**Even if there is demand for a particular use, it may not materialize if businesses (or households) cannot afford the rent in newly developed space.**

# Purpose and scope of development feasibility analysis

**Purpose:** Explore catalytic opportunities for development in the **near-term**

## **Scope of Work – Dual Approach**

- Use pro forma analysis to evaluate the feasibility of **residential, mixed-use, and hotel uses**
- Begin to explore **market hall** concept in Soldotna



Strong interest in a public market with significant community expertise and capacity to operate and occupy space



Three story mixed-use and multifamily are not *currently* feasible



Townhomes are more feasible, especially with lower cost land



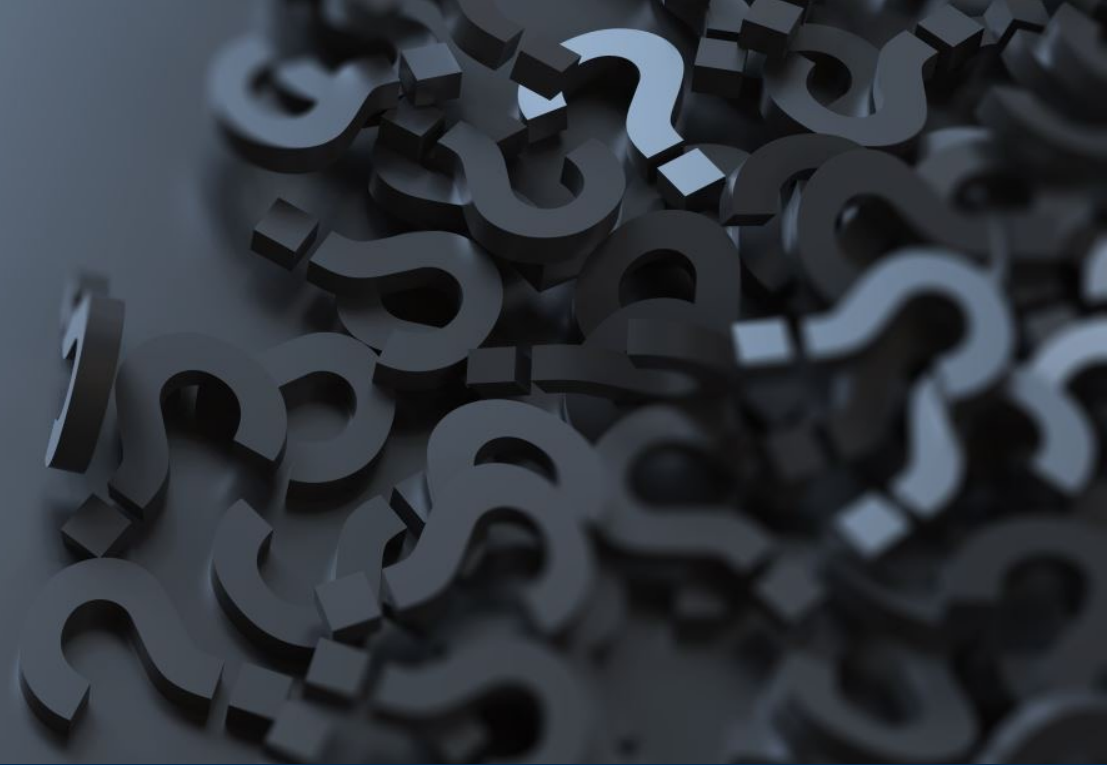
A new hotel could be feasible but would need enhancements

**City participation and purposeful phasing will be necessary to stimulate desired development and ensure that Soldotna remains affordable and accessible to Soldotna residents.**

# Key considerations for next steps and phasing

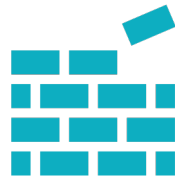
- How can the City work to balance private new development which will garner higher rents with affordability and accessibility?
- What is the City's appetite for different development options and level of City involvement/investment?

**How the City answers these questions will inform development phasing and programming.**



# Residential, Mixed-Use, and Hotel Feasibility

# Research questions



*What scale of development is currently feasible in the project area?*



*What level of City support will be required to facilitate development that is not quite feasible?*

# Residential and Mixed-Use Feasibility Analysis



# Residential and mixed-use pro forma method

- Compares development feasibility across prototypes
- *Residual Land Value (RLV)* is an estimate of what a developer would be able to pay for land given development inputs

## Building Program Information

- Unit size, parking ratios, building heights

## Development Costs

- Hard costs (labor & materials)
- Soft costs (permit fees & interest)

## Revenue

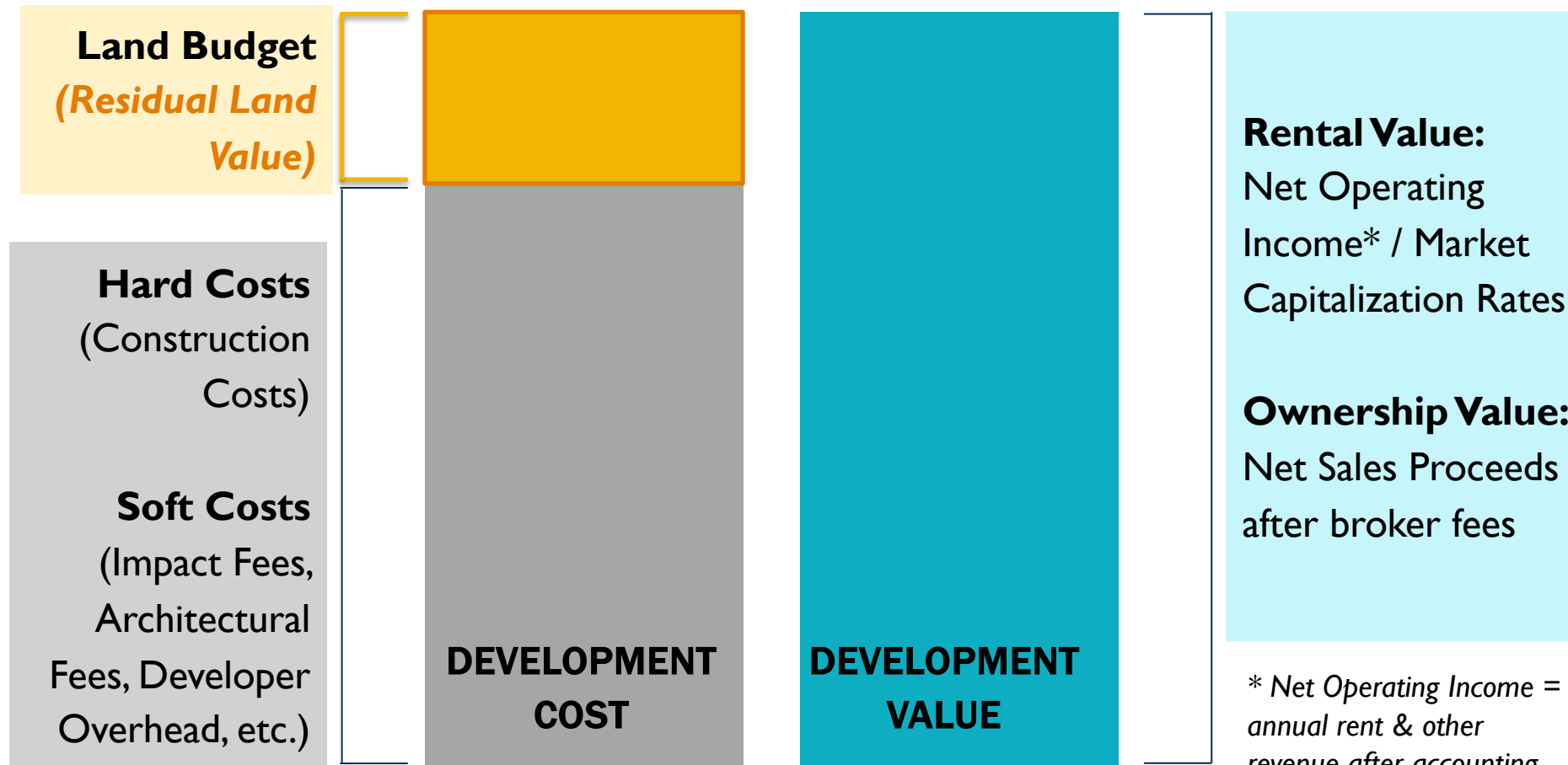
- Sale price, rent, operating costs

## Valuation Metrics

- Capitalization rates, debt service coverage ratios, and yield on cost thresholds

# Residual land value (RLV)

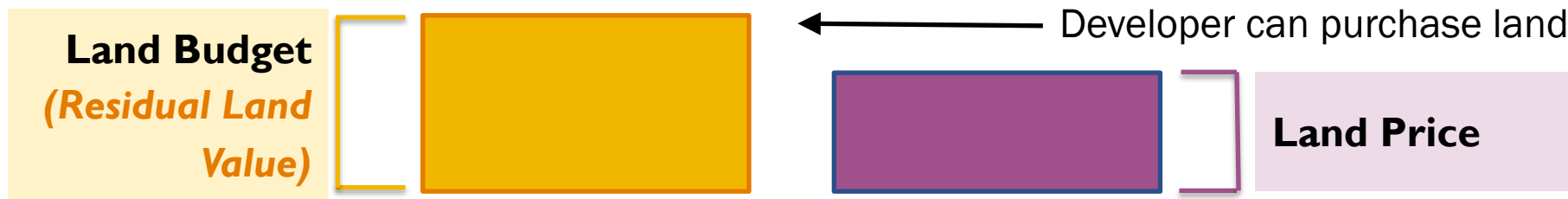
## Feasible Development Example



\* Net Operating Income = annual rent & other revenue after accounting for vacancy minus operating costs

# Residual land value (RLV)

- RLV analyses should be thought of as a strong *indicator* of the relative **likelihood of development**.
- Higher RLV relative to existing land prices indicates **better development feasibility**.



# Prototypes analyzed

## Townhomes



Anchorage

Source: Redfin

## Multifamily



Seward

Source: Loopnet, Costar

## Mixed-Use

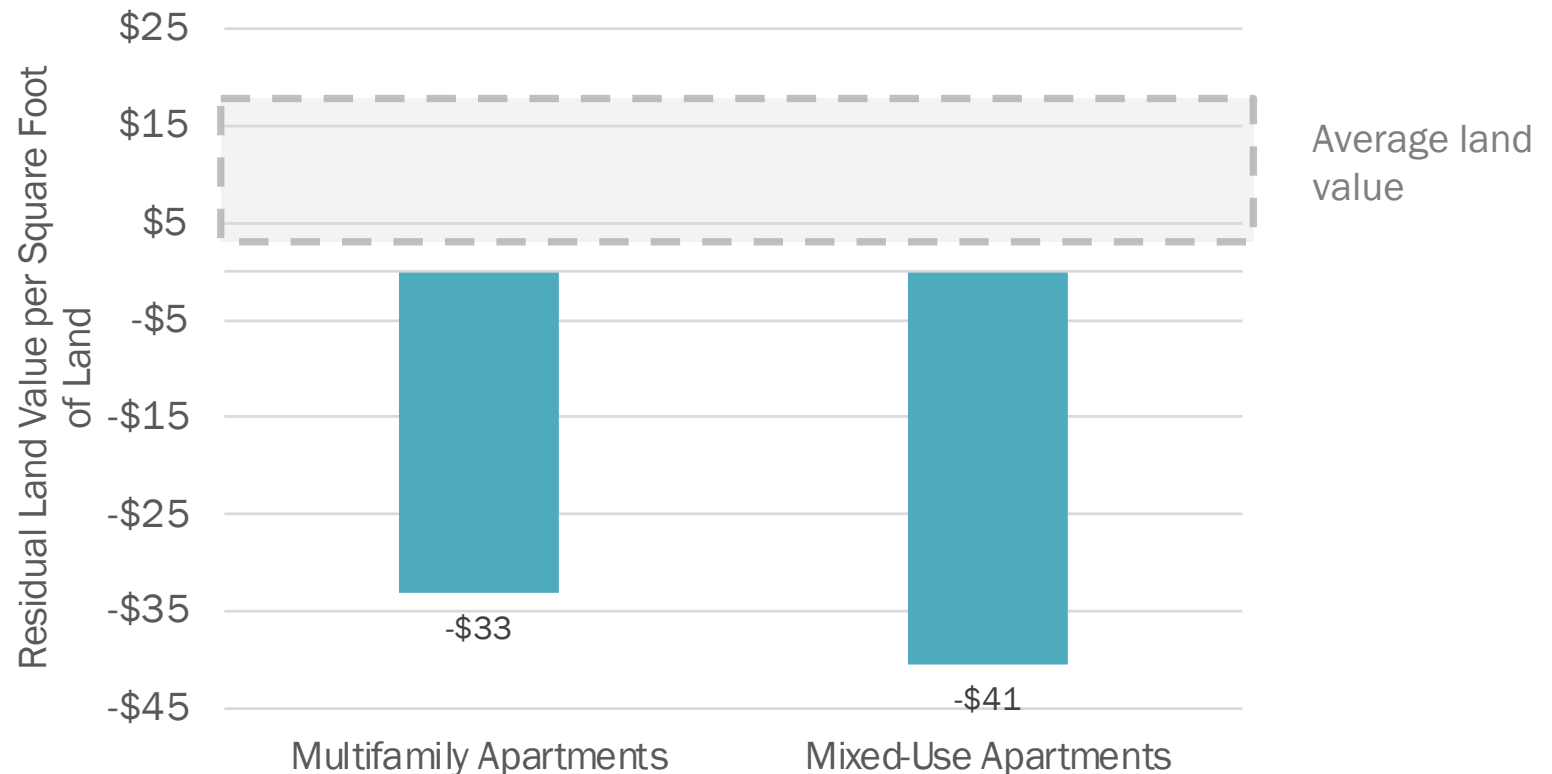


Anchorage

Source: Apartments.com, Costar

## Finding 1: Three story mixed use and multifamily is **not feasible** currently

- Observed rents are around \$1.50 per sf
- Apartment rents would need to be **at least \$2.30 per sf** for development to be financially feasible



# Multifamily and mixed-use findings

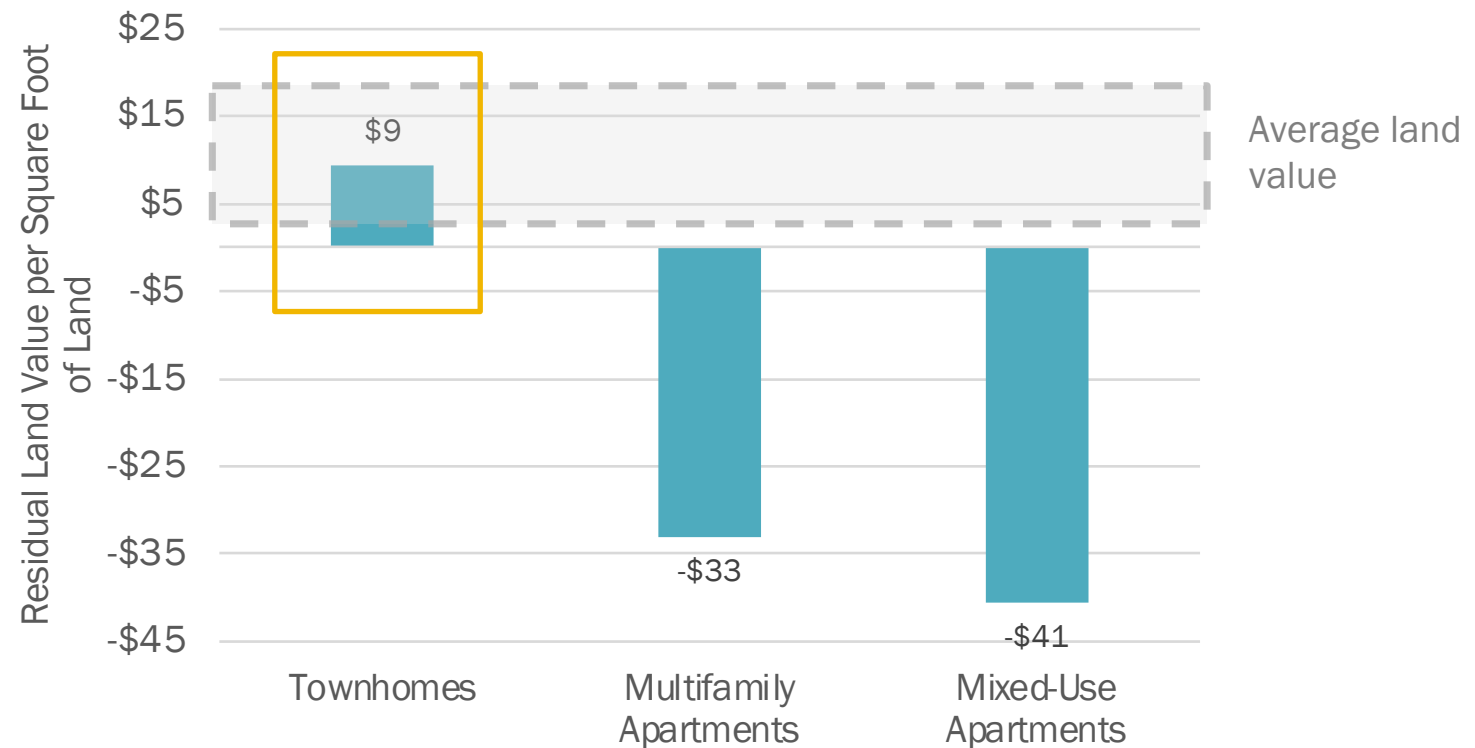
**Finding 1: Three story mixed use and multifamily is **not feasible** currently**

When RLV is **negative**, a developer would need the **land for free plus a subsidy** of some kind



## Finding 1: Townhomes are **more feasible**, especially with lower cost land

- Observed sales price were around \$250 to \$325 per sf
- Assuming the average comparable sales price, developers could pay **\$9 per sf** for land



# Hotel Analysis



# Hotel pro forma method

*Internal Rate of Return (IRR)* is the compound annual rate of return an investor should expect to make on the hotel project over many years



## Building Program Information

- Unit size, parking ratios, building heights

## Development Costs

- Hard costs (labor & materials)
- Soft costs (permit fees & interest)

## Revenue

- Room rates, operating costs, stabilization period

## Valuation Metrics

- Capitalization rates, debt service coverage ratios, and yield on cost thresholds

## What is IRR?

- The compound annual rate of return an investor should expect to make over many years.

## Why use IRR instead of RLV for hotels?

- A cash flow model that solves for an IRR is a more robust analysis of feasibility than RLV but requires more assumptions.
- Hotels have a longer stabilization period and more complex operating costs. A cash flow model that results in IRR allows us to better approximate these conditions.
- RLV is often a first step in initial feasibility for residential and mixed-use. Developer may proceed to detailed IRR after RLV insights.

- Required rate of return is influenced by factors like investment risk, market conditions, and investor expectations.
- Safest investment is US government bonds, currently at 4.2%
- Developing a hotel is risky and requires higher returns.  
An appropriate IRR is 14% (currently).

# Pro forma baseline assumptions

- Average Daily Room Rate: \$169.40
- Natural Occupancy Rate: 66.2%
- Total Rooms: 62
- Type of Hotel: Upper midscale to upscale; branded

A new hotel would be cash flow positive but provide a **low rate of return** which may deter developers. However, enhancements could substantially **boost IRR**

## Ways to boost IRR for hotel development:

- Include bar/restaurant
- Enhance the attractiveness of the area
- Riverfront views
- Close part of the hotel in the off-season
- Consider ways to lower development costs

**Example:** Raising the ADR from \$169 to \$199 (2023 dollars) and the occupancy rate by 2 percent, all possible with a more attractive than average property, would raise the IRR to 12%.



# Market Hall Options and Considerations

# Research questions



*What can be learned from case studies and applied to Soldotna?*



*Are key stakeholders interested in participating in a market hall?*



# Market hall case studies

1

## The Grove Market Hall

Bend, OR

Opened 2020

14,000 sf w/9 restaurants



2

## Pybus Public Market

Wenatchee, WA

Opened 2013

28,000 sf w/20 vendors & commercial kitchen; hosts farmer's market



3

## Kodiak Marketplace

Kodiak, AK

Opening 2023

63,000 sf w/11 retail spaces co-located with business supports



**Governance:** Private – no public support

**Funding:** High-end market rents

## Other Takeaways

- Seasoned retailers meant the need for fewer business supports
- Strong anchor tenants very important
- Outdoor expansion element
- Events to boost visitation
- Design matters



# Case study 2: Pybus Public Market

**Governance:** Nonprofit established to operate;  
Public land ownership

**Funding:** *Construction* – Public land, funding through LRF district, private investors

*Operations* – Rent, events, fundraising

## Other Takeaways

- Located along riverfront – Alignment of market and trail development boosted visitation activating downtown
- Community vision and buy-in essential for long-term success
- All businesses on same schedule

“There have been lean times. Relied on the generosity of others who believed in the vision.”

- Pybus GM

Pybus is on the verge of breaking even as original leases expire and new leases are set at higher rates.

# Case study 3: Kodiak Marketplace

**Governance:** Nonprofit owned and operated

**Funding:** *Construction* – Funded by KANA  
*Operations* – rental income and KANA's other revenue streams

## Other Takeaways

- Developed for community benefit, economic driver, revitalize downtown
- Rents \$3/sf over 3 to 5 years – Ongoing KANA subsidy decreases with gradual rent increases
- Direct outreach and business plan support essential for higher rents
- Crucial to have public engagement and manage expectations

“Had to go in person to businesses and help them to do business planning that would allow them to pay higher prices”  
-Project Manager



# A Market Hall in Soldotna: Stakeholder Feedback

# Who we talked with and what they said

## Community Stakeholders

- Megan Weston, business owner
- Cliff Cochran, SBDC Director
- Melodie Allan, business owner
- Kaitlin Vadla, Planning Commission and nonprofit director
- Annette Villa, operator/manager of the Wednesday Market

“I’m excited about a market hall here. We have a great small business culture but it’s hard to compete against national chains.”

“I’m passionate about supporting small business. They’re the backbone of our town.”

“I love the idea of a public market!”

“This will be genuinely the best thing for the community”

# Envisioning a Soldotna market hall: what it should deliver

- Vibrant community hub: retail, food, entertainment
- Celebrate Soldotna and the Kenai River
- Gathering place for residents and tourists
- Appeal to all ages
- Operate year-round with events and activities
- Affordable for businesses and customers
- Support the business ecosystem

“Would be nice to integrate with the river and riverwalk and have views of the river and fishing.”

“Vendors and food is not enough - need music and something the old and young want to be at.”

“It would be the worst to be so expensive and only seasonally used.”

# Potential offerings in a market hall

Mix of local  
restaurants, retail,  
and services

Community gathering  
spaces and meeting  
rooms

Event space

Multi-use space that  
shifts with need

Shared office space  
for retail tenants

Commissary kitchen  
(could be utilized by market  
tenants but not located in the  
market)

Community seating  
and dining

Service provider or  
government office  
space (could be an anchor)

Indoor playground  
(movable, visible from all  
angles)



# Critical elements of a market hall

Affordable restaurant and  
retail space for local  
businesses

Multi-use space that shifts  
with need

Anchor tenant

Active programming:  
events, management, etc.

## Mix of Local Retail / Restaurants / Services

### Examples

#### Anchor

- Local Grocery w/Alaskan goods
- Deli
- Brewery
- Distillery
- Restaurant open most of the day

#### Other

- Flower Shop
- Fish Market
- Ice Cream or Gelato
- Restaurants / Beverage
- Take Home Dinners
- Food Truck Hookup
- Jewelry / Clothing
- Tour Guides

## Operator

If a paid position, multiple experienced community members expressed interest in serving as the operator of a Soldotna market hall.

“Need to find someone with a passion for this and sees the vision.”

## Supporters

- Kenai Economic Development District (KPED)
  - Business support; consider as potential tenant
- Cook Inlet Keeper
  - Currently operates incubator space with a DEC approved kitchen
  - Kaitlin could support through grant writing
- SBDC
  - Connecting to tenants
- City of Soldotna

# Potential programming components

## Programming

- Educational activities (esp. for children in winter)
- Musicians (busking/paid)
- Pop-up events
- Theme days (e.g., children's day where they sell their work)
- Cooking competitions
- Art Shows
- Concerts
- Comedy Shows
- Community Forums

“Events are essential...vendors and food are not enough...”

# Specific ways to support small businesses

## In Market Hall

- Ensure affordable rent
  - Graduated rent or percentage rent
  - Stabilization: first month(s) free
- Adequate storage within spaces
- Active, supportive management

## In City

- Pair facade improvement program with tenant improvement, and/or equipment grants in commercial areas
- Ensure adequate access to a commissary kitchen
- Coordinate suite of business support services

# Key considerations and takeaways for market hall

- Significant community expertise and capacity to operate/lease space if paid positions and affordable rent
- Partnerships will be essential to success: public, private, nonprofit effort
- Market may become more self-sustaining over time
- Market requires a consistent champion
- Community could be part of making the space
- Design matters (movable equipment, reclaimed materials, etc.)
- Marketing is critical
- Can serve as a catalyst for redevelopment and downtown activation

## PROS

- Wealth of talent and potential tenants
- Provides needed retail that may not be otherwise feasible
- Could serve as redevelopment catalyst
- Supports small businesses and builds capacity for additional retail tenancy over time

## CONS

- Extensive time and effort
- Potential risk of failure
- Reduces capacity to pursue other city priorities for investment



# Conclusion and Next Steps



**To stimulate development in the near term, the City may need to:**

- Participate in public private partnerships
- Construct infrastructure improvements
- Consider timing/phasing of public and private investment



# Phasing recommendation

## Phase 1

- Establish a market hall
- Encourage townhome development
- Assemble partners to develop affordable housing
- Improve trails, streets, and waterfront amenities

## Phase 2

- Encourage a hotel w/restaurant
- Promote adaptive reuse

## Phase 3

- Pursue three-story mixed-use development

# Next steps: setting the stage for development

- Build/strengthen relationships with property owners, regional developers, local businesses, and affordable housing providers
- Secure property
- Consider how to balance affordability and new development
- Seek additional funding sources for public improvements, affordable housing, and redevelopment projects
- Determine City's interest in pursuing a market hall
- Develop phasing plan for infrastructure improvements

Implementation plan will provide additional steps based on which options the City is interested in pursuing

# **ECON**Northwest

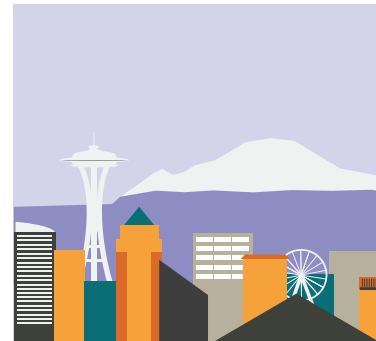
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Los Angeles



Portland



Seattle



Boise



SOLDOTNA

# SOLDOTNA RIVERFRONT REDEVELOPMENT

**PROJECT UPDATE:**

**Downtown Riverfront Redevelopment Plan Elements**

City Council Work Session & Riverfront Advisory Committee November 14, 2023

# Agenda



**The Plan**



**Implementation**



**Next Steps**

# Purpose

Redevelop and transform Soldotna's downtown to achieve long-term economic development goals



# Objectives



Create a **one-of-a-kind riverfront experience** with shopping, dining, **entertainment**, and lodging in a walkable destination



Support **local businesses, expansion and attract** new entrepreneurs



Highlight the **Kenai River** and incorporate the **natural landscape** into the Downtown



Provide **housing options** to meet local needs



Identify opportunities for **public and private partnerships**



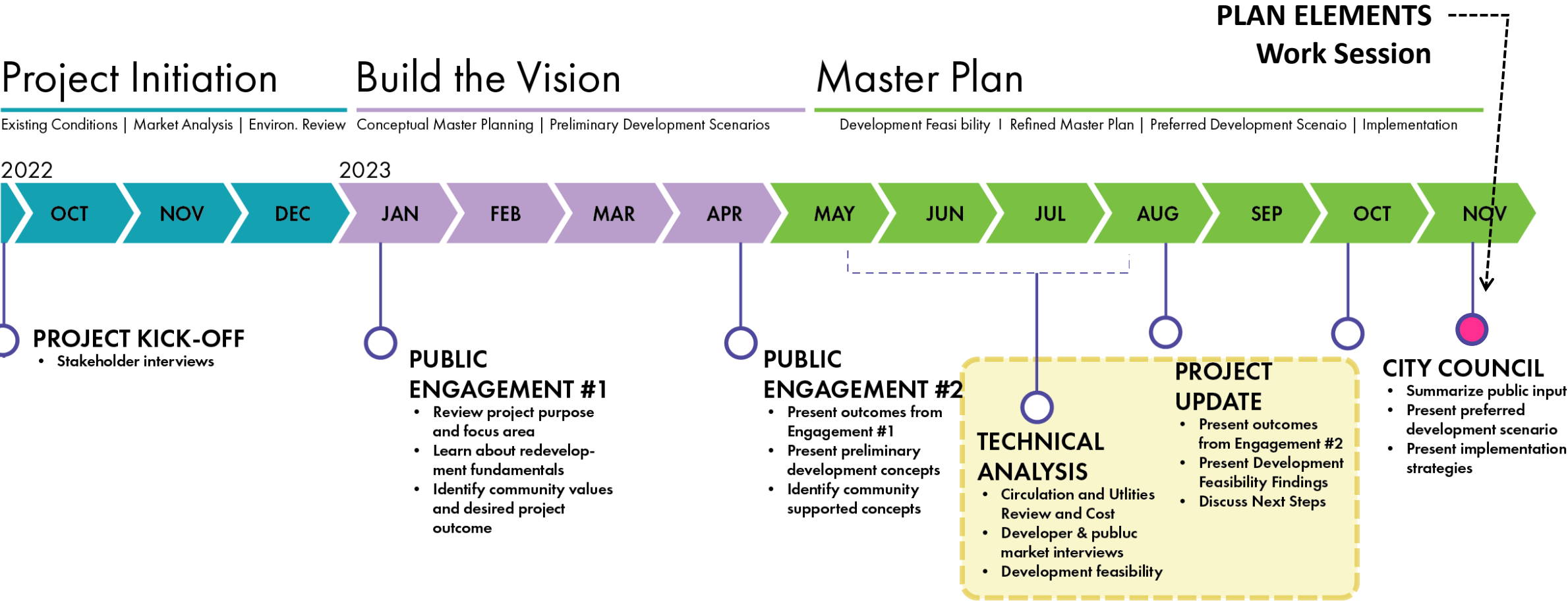
Identify **critical infrastructure** to support redevelopment



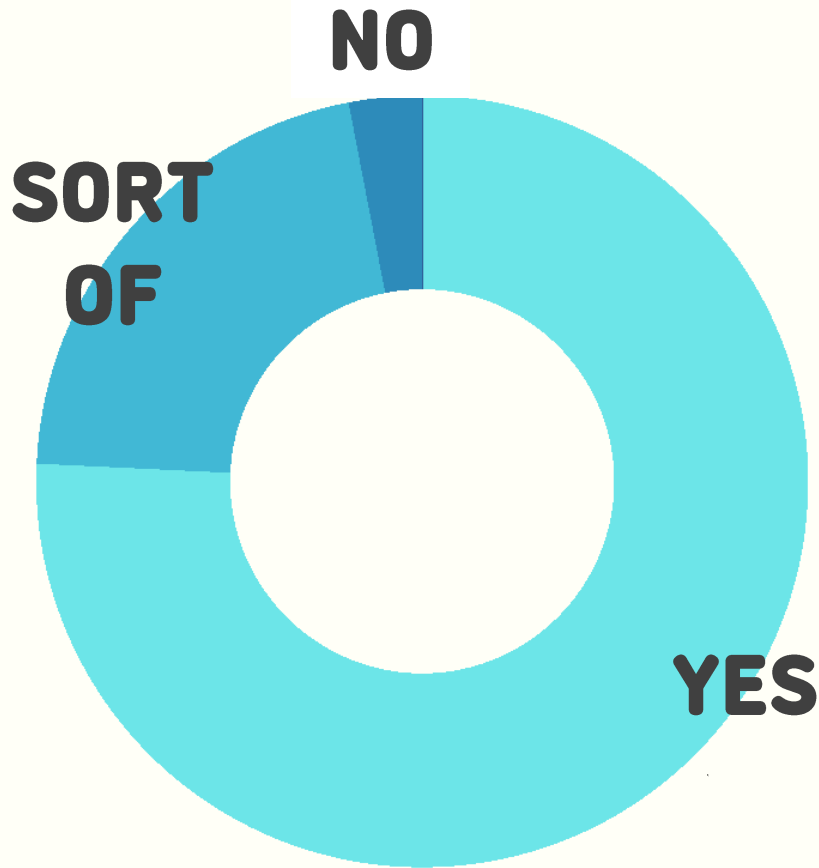
Explore **options and strategies** for funding and implementation



# Project Process + Schedule



# What We Heard

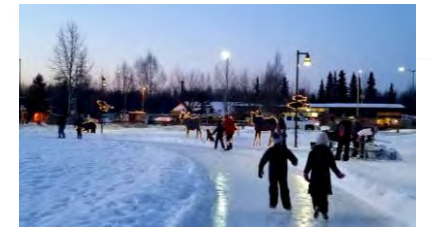
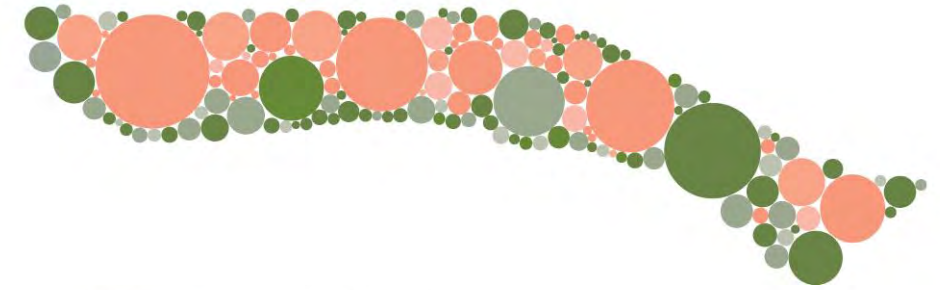


Does the Vision capture Soldotna's values around Nature & Gathering?

# Vision

Downtown Soldotna is a place where **nature and urban gathering spaces** coexist, expanding and enhancing one another.

Future circulation improvements and redevelopment should **incorporate elements of gathering and nature.**



# Guiding Principles

“The Kenai River is envisioned as the centerpiece of a walkable, connected downtown and plays a vital role in the local and regional economy of the central peninsula”

## IDENTITY

Reinforce what is valued in the community---history, nature, gathering, active, art, & local.

## PLACE

Support a hub of activity that is walkable and engages the river, with indoor and outdoor spaces for gathering.

## CONNECTED

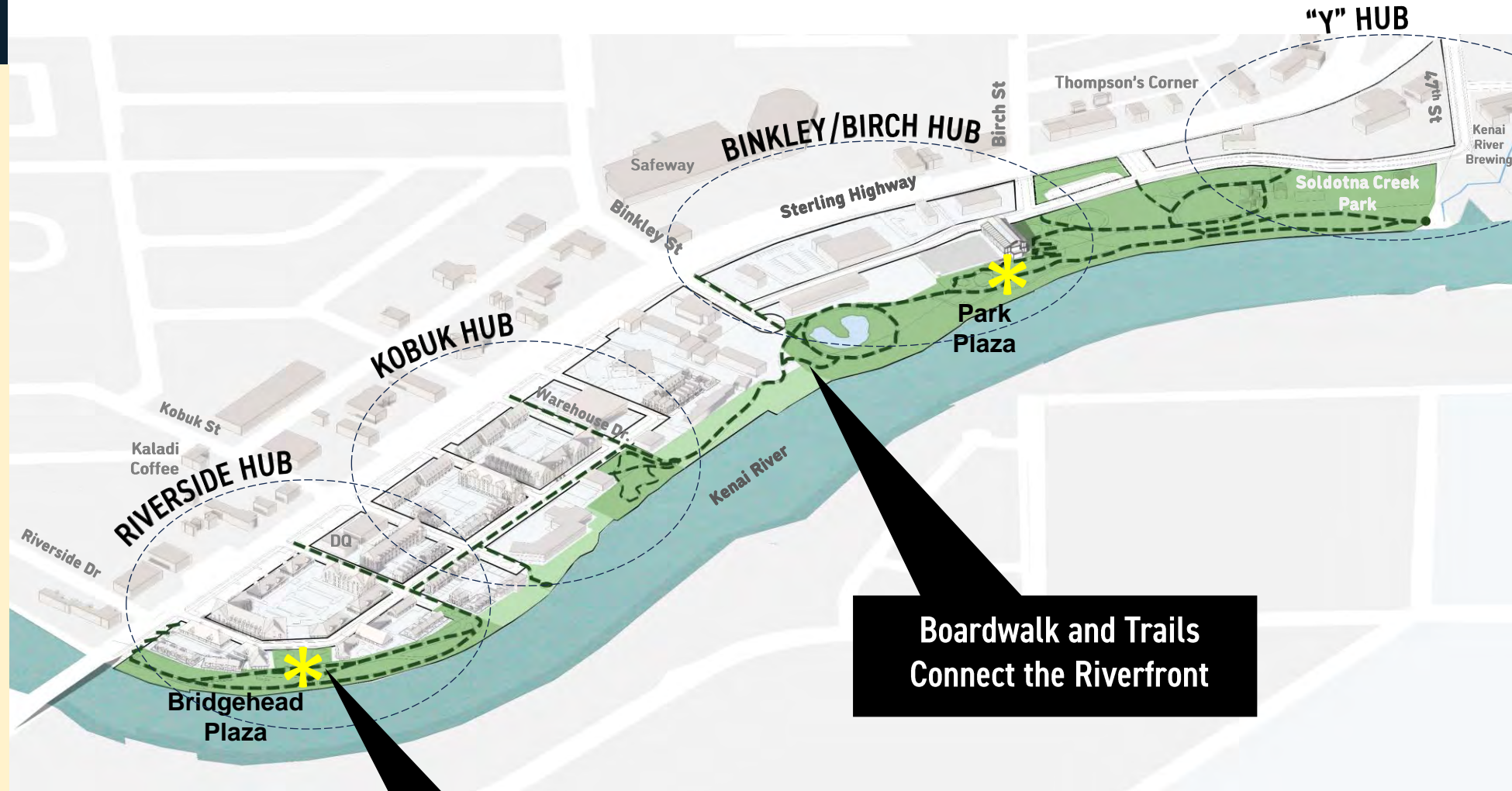
Provide for streets, trails, and boardwalks with safe, direct, and continuous access to destinations for all ages, abilities and users.



# The "Big Ideas"



The Kenai River corridor is a woven blend of **nature, wildlife, recreation & gathering**



**Boardwalk and Trails  
Connect the Riverfront**

**"Bookend"  
Public Plazas**

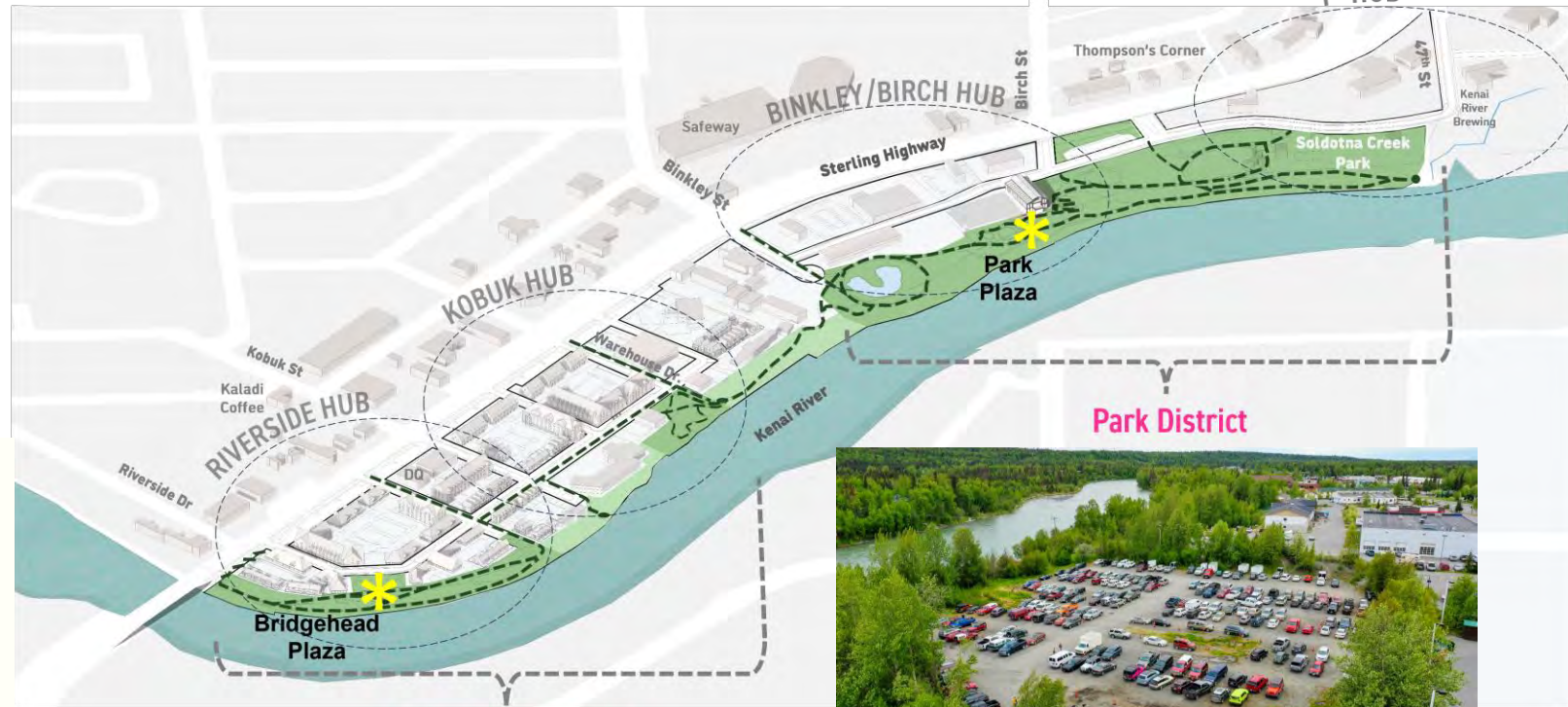
# What We Heard

## “Bookends” Public Gathering

Not  
Important

Somewhat  
Important

Very  
Important



Bridgehead District



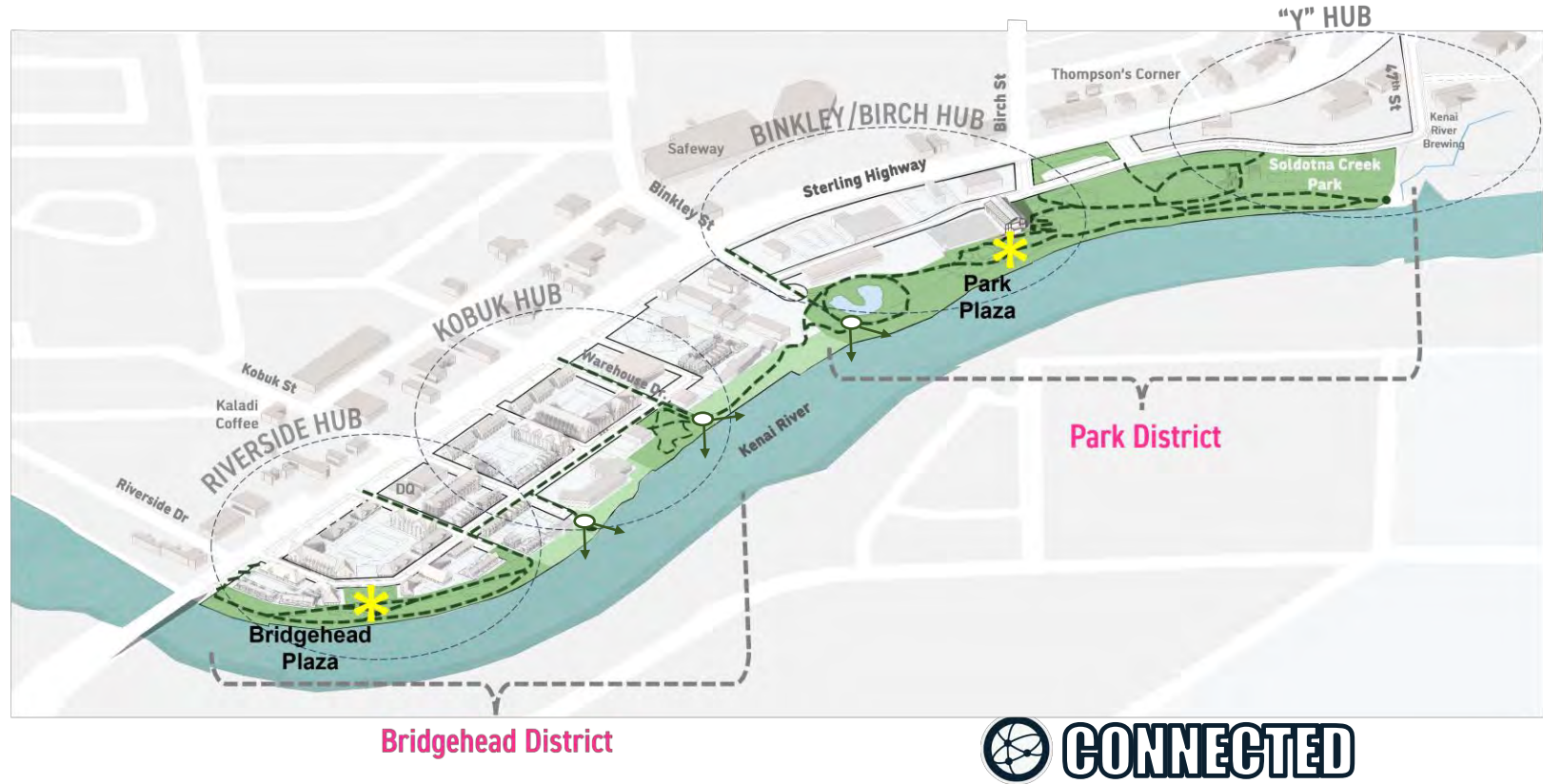
# What We Heard

## Riverfront Trail

Maybe,  
Need More  
Info

Yes, But  
different

Absolutely,  
A Must Have



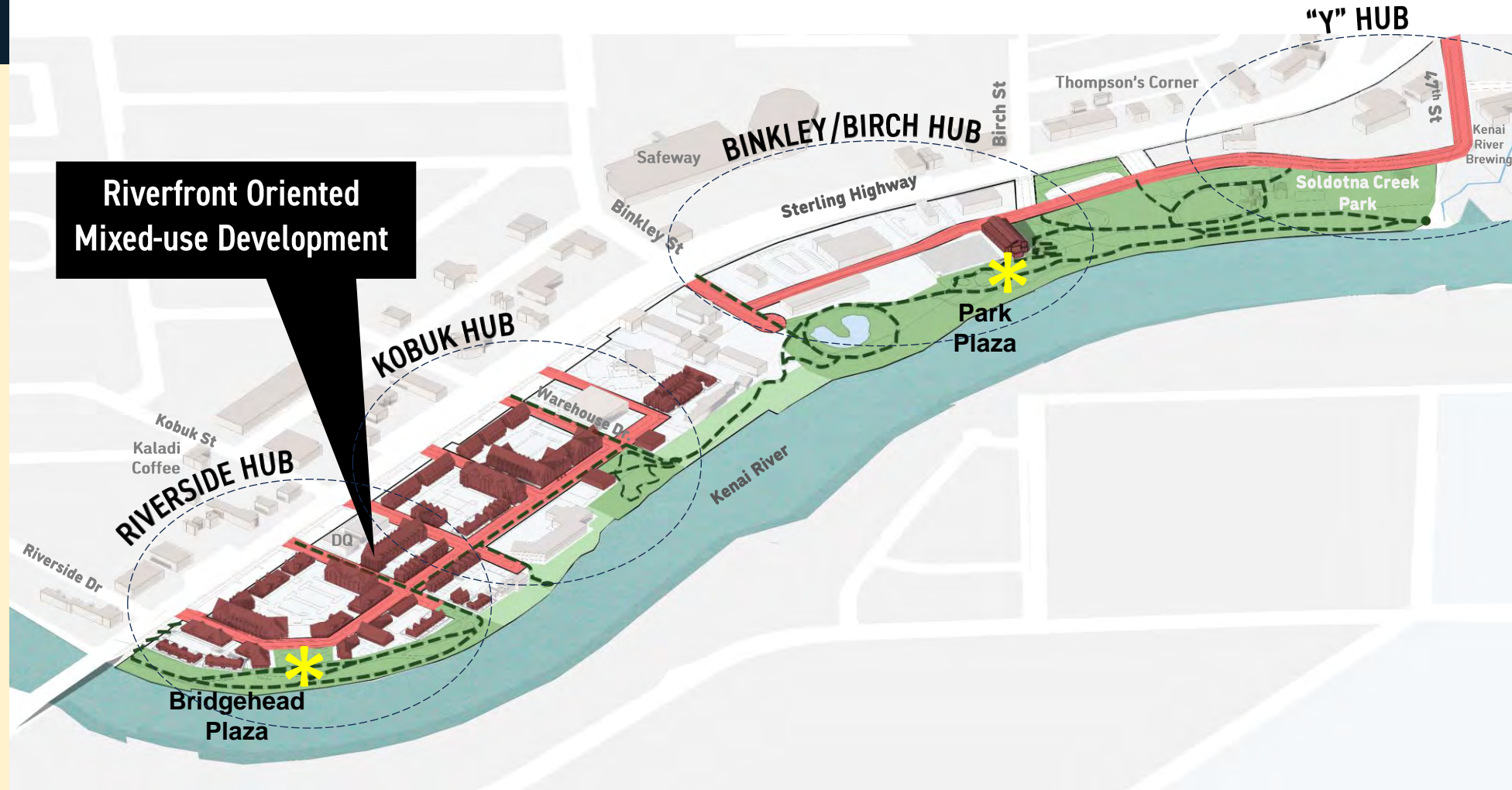
# The "Big Ideas"

## IDENTITY

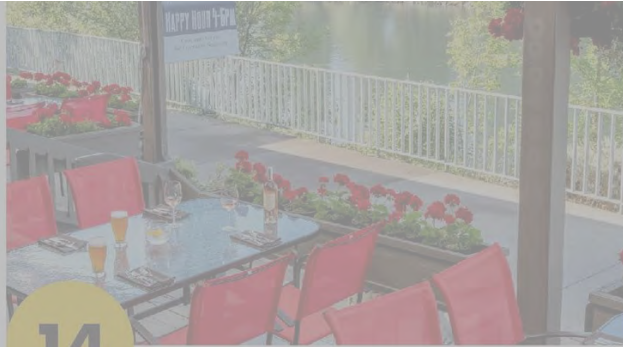
The Kenai River corridor is a woven blend of **nature, wildlife, recreation & gathering**

## PLACE

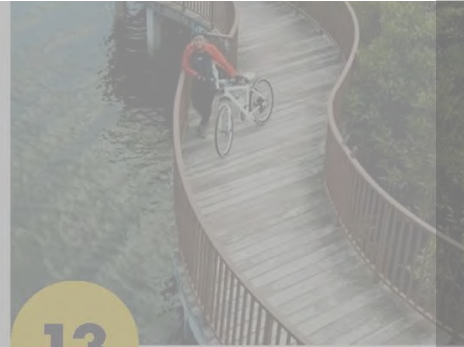
Support street oriented Downtown Hubs as **places to live, work, and play**



# What We Heard!



**14** **Riverfront Dining**  
category ranked the highest with 26 dots total.



**13** **Riverwalk**  
category ranked second with 25 dots total.



**12** **Main Street**  
category ranked the high dots total.

## What would you like to see in the downtown & riverfront?

A mix of uses.  
New businesses and fun places to spend time downtown.

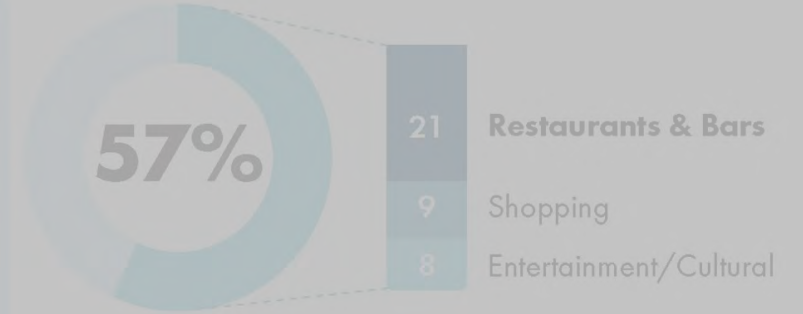
"An awesome bowling alley with bar"

"Activities for families and adults, not bar related"

"Bistros"

"Beer gardens"

"Walkable shopping and dining with a view of the river"



## Rank the most desirable experiences for downtown

**65%**  
of respondents ranked **WALKABLE MAIN STREET** in the **top two** most desirable experiences.

**47%**  
of respondents ranked **RIVERFRONT ENGAGEMENT** in the **top two** most desirable experiences.





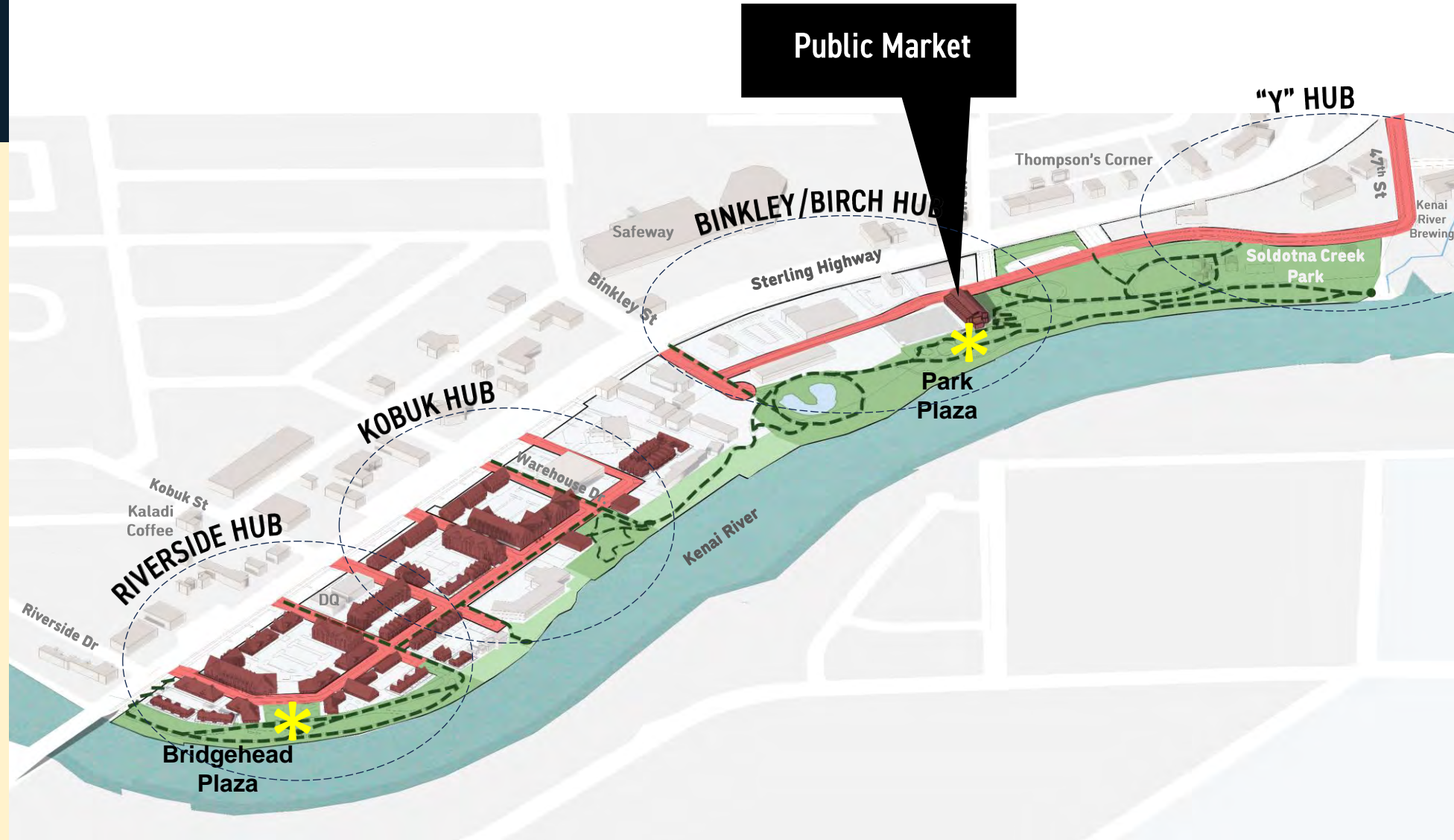
# The “Big Ideas”

## IDENTITY

The Kenai River corridor is a woven blend of **nature, wildlife, recreation & gathering**

## PLACE

Support street oriented Downtown Hubs as **places to live, work, and play**



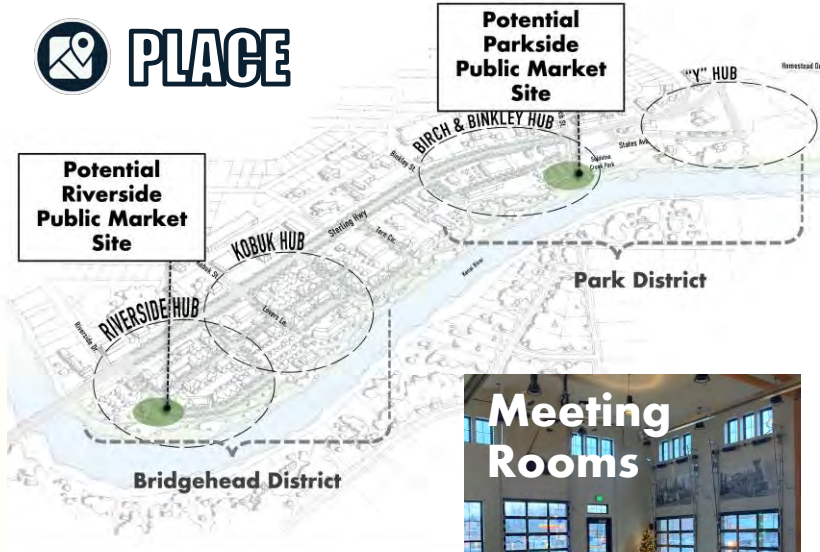
# What We Heard

## Public Market

**NO**  
Something Else

**Maybe,  
Need More  
Info**

**YES,  
I Love it**



Food and local goods are regularly showcased seasonally at Soldotna Creek Park. A public market could serve as a **year-round destination** to showcase these assets

# The “Big Ideas”

## IDENTITY

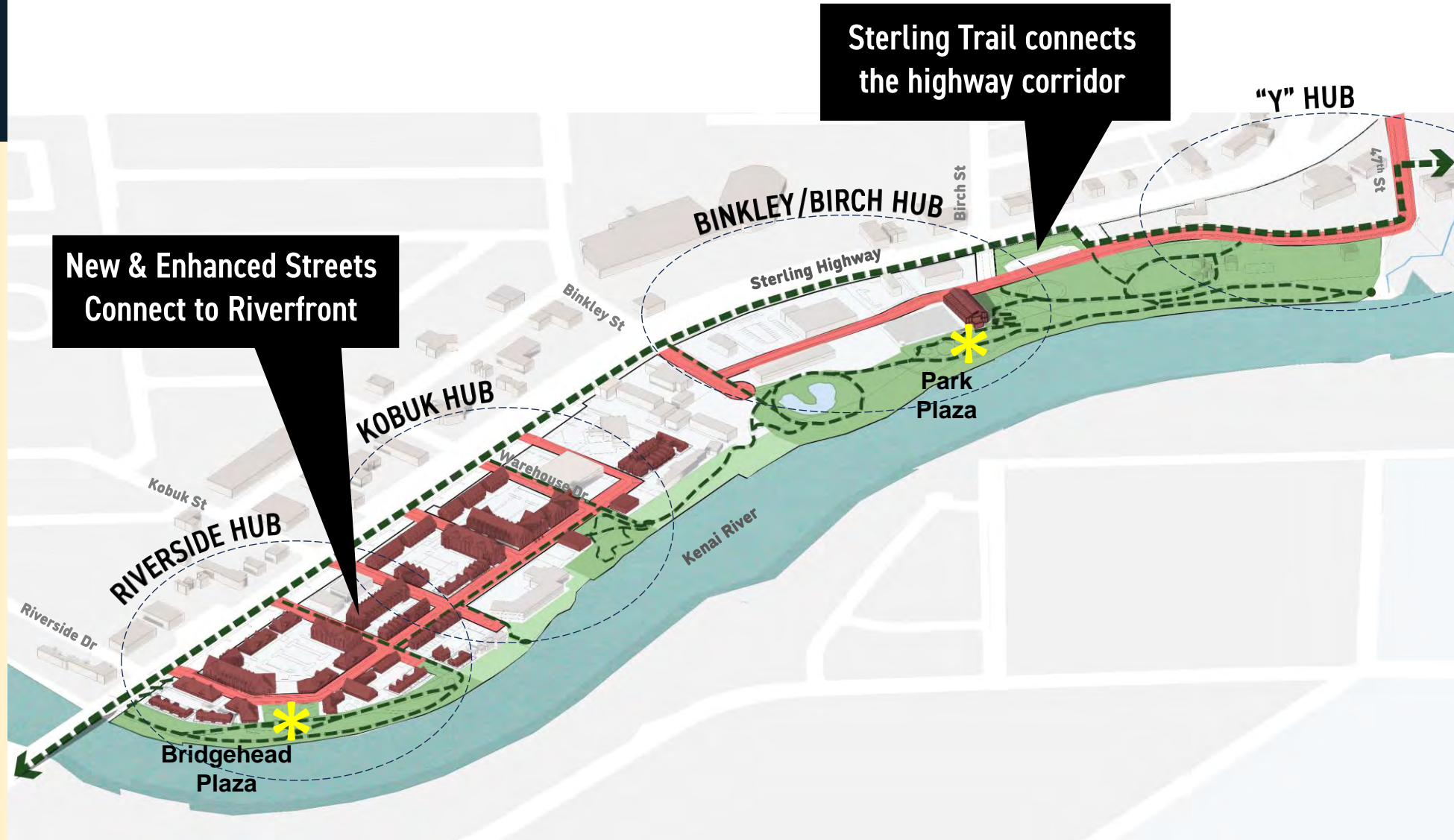
The Kenai River corridor is a woven blend of **nature, wildlife, recreation & gathering**

## PLACE

Support street oriented Downtown Hubs as **places to live, work, and play**

## CONNECTED

**Key pathways** and new streets connect to the river and destinations along Sterling Highway



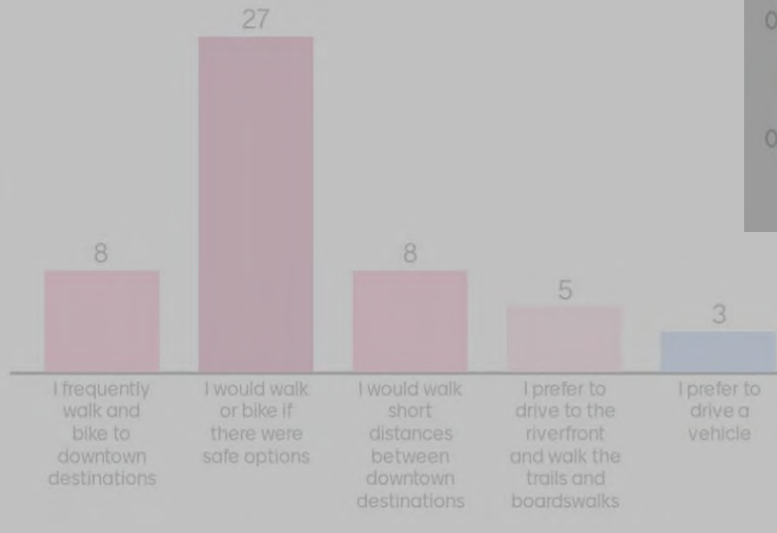
# What We Heard!



How desirable is walking and biking to downtown & riverfront destinations?



Desire some sort of WALKING and/or BIKING option.



Rate safety, access, and visual challenges along Sterling Highway?



## "Walkability"



Ranked in **Top 2** aspirations for the downtown and riverfront area

# The "Big Ideas"

## IDENTITY

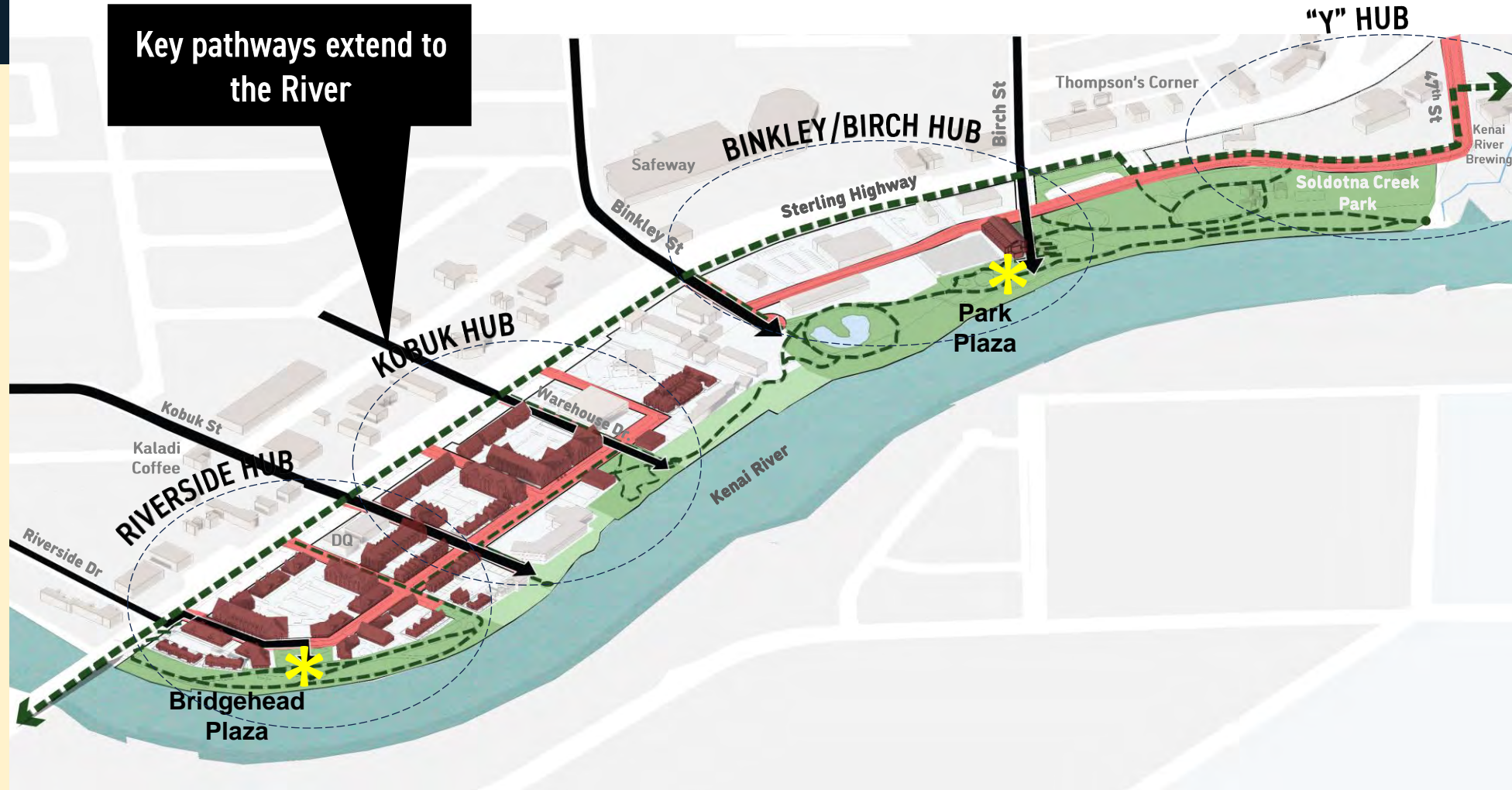
The Kenai River corridor is a woven blend of **nature, wildlife, recreation & gathering**

## PLACE

New & enhanced streets support Downtown Hubs as **places to live, work, and play**

## CONNECTED

**Key pathways** reconnect neighborhoods to the river and destinations along Sterling Highway

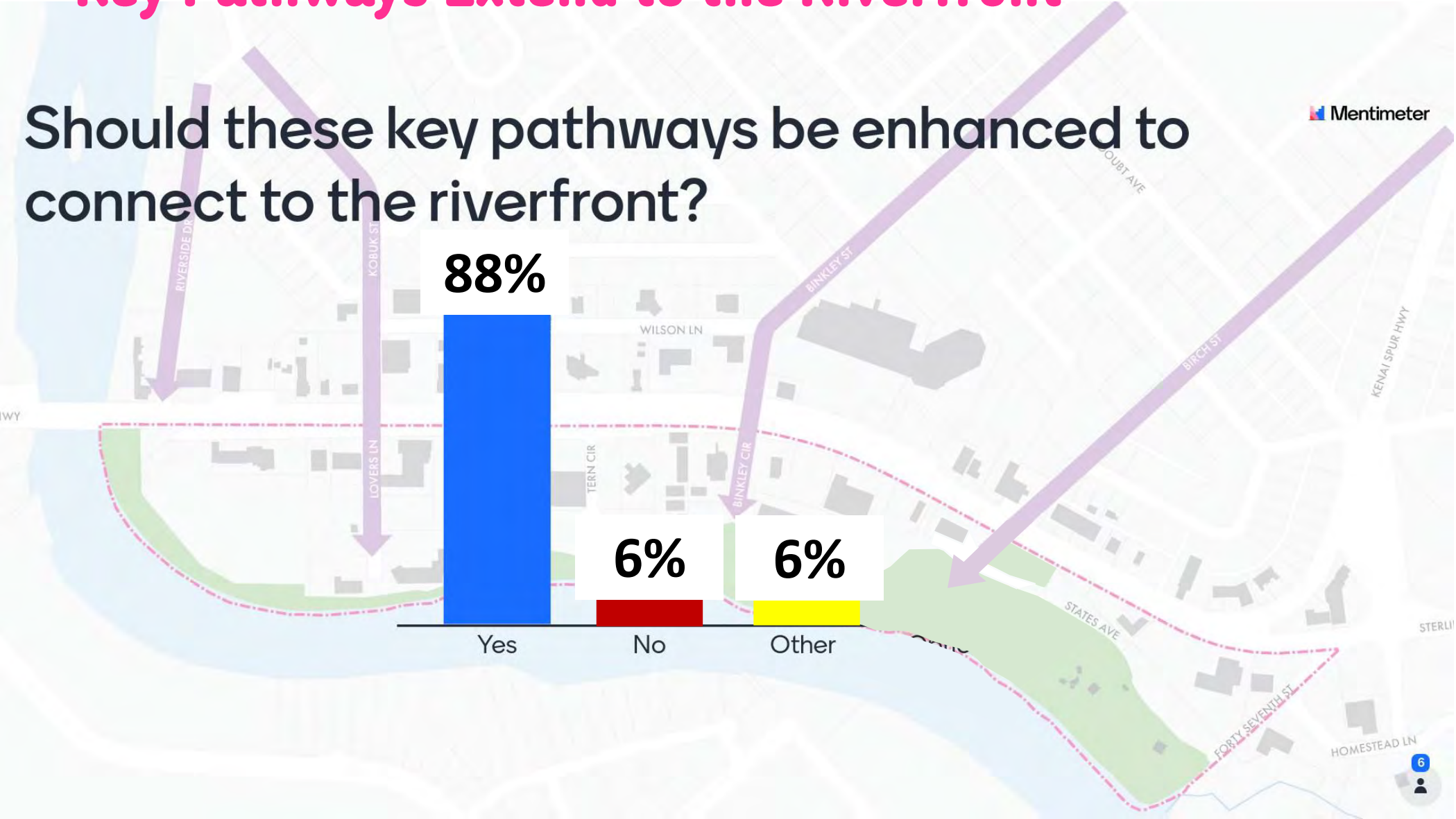
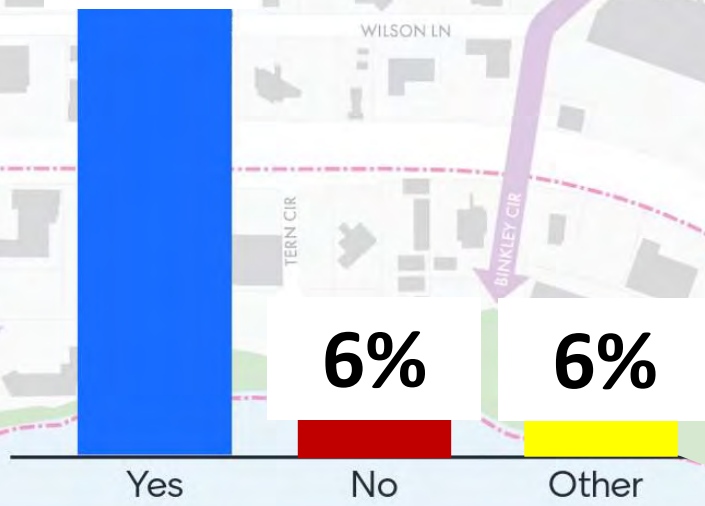


# What We Heard

## Key Pathways Extend to the Riverfront

Should these key pathways be enhanced to connect to the riverfront?

88%



# The "Big Ideas"

## IDENTITY

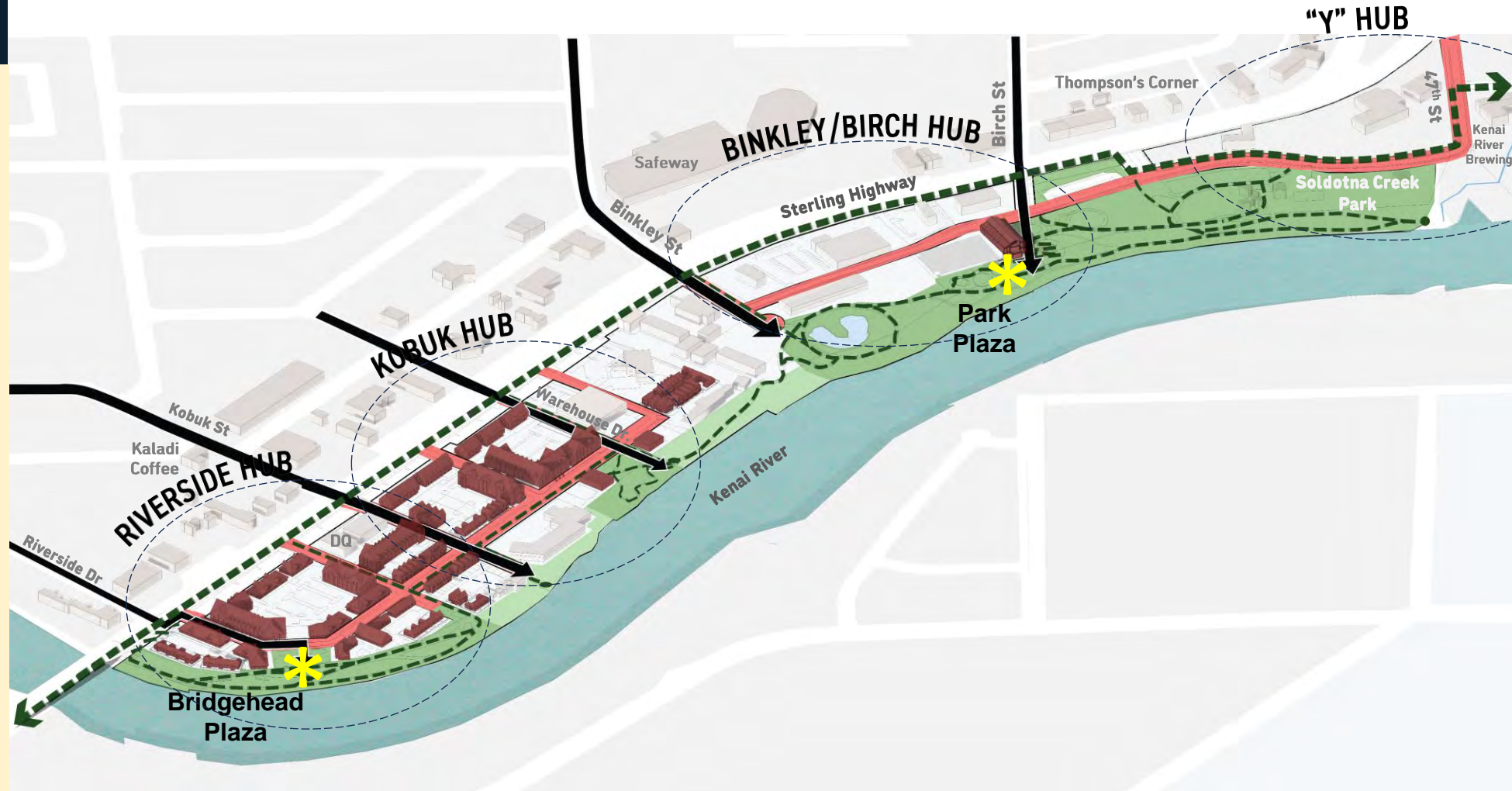
The Kenai River corridor is a woven blend of **nature, wildlife, recreation & gathering**

## PLACE

New & enhanced streets support Downtown Hubs as **places to live, work, and play**

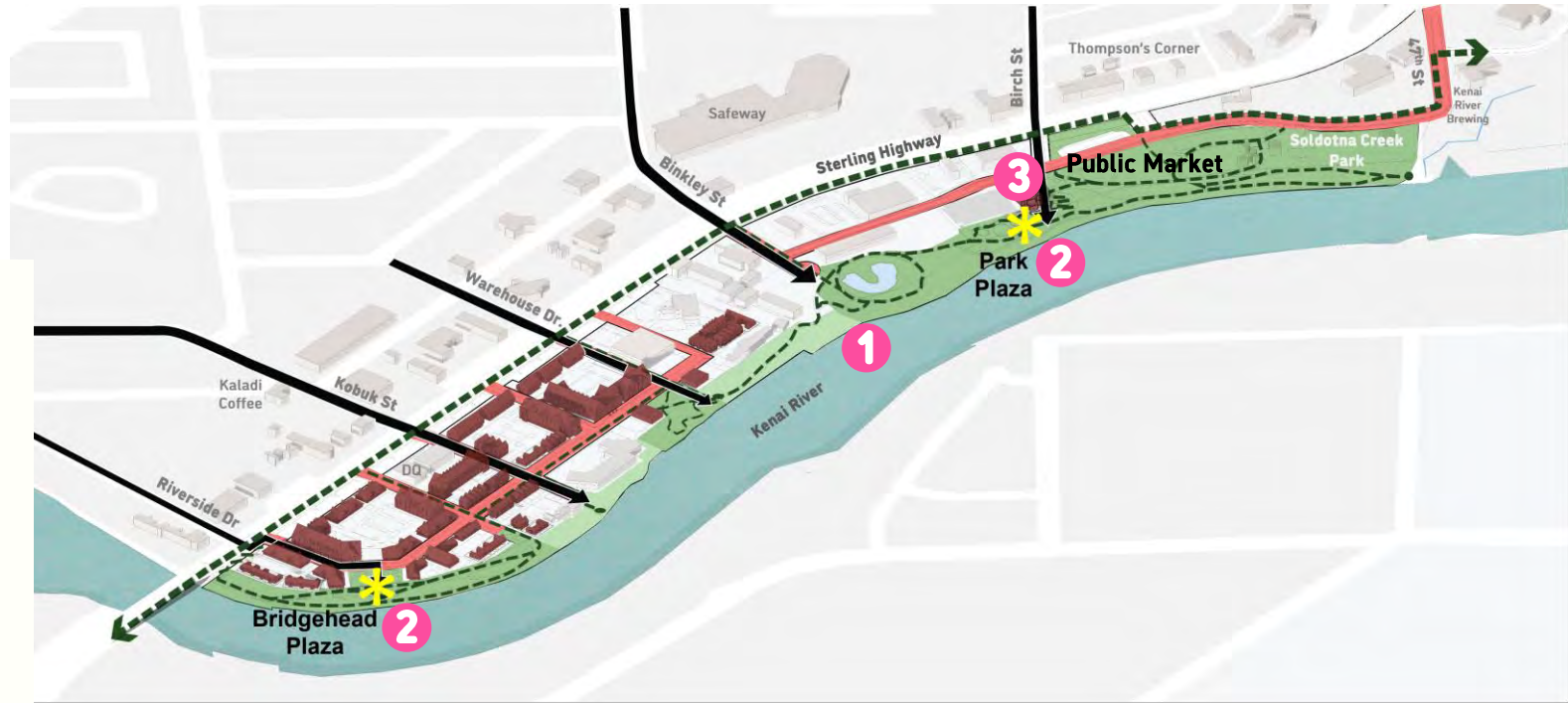
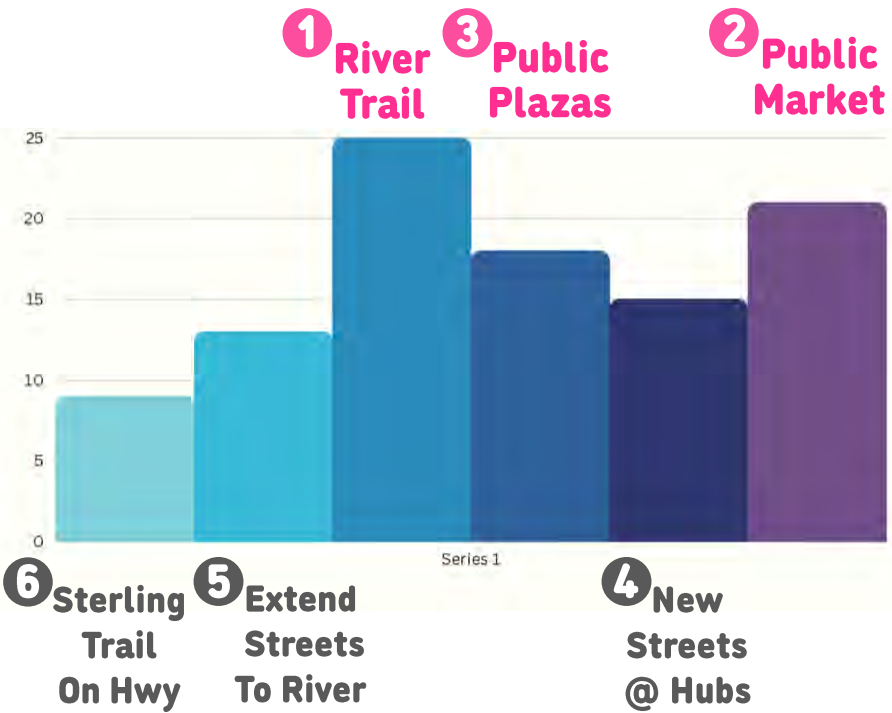
## CONNECTED

**Key pathways** reconnect neighborhoods to the river and destinations along Sterling Highway



# What We Heard

## The "Big Ideas"





# FRAMEWORKS

Land Use

Mobility

Utility

Regulatory

## Land Use

- Retail, Dining, & Entertainment
- Commercial, Office, & Services
- Hotel, Dining & Public Market
- Multifamily Residential
- Single-Family Townhome
- Park & Open Space

## Mobility

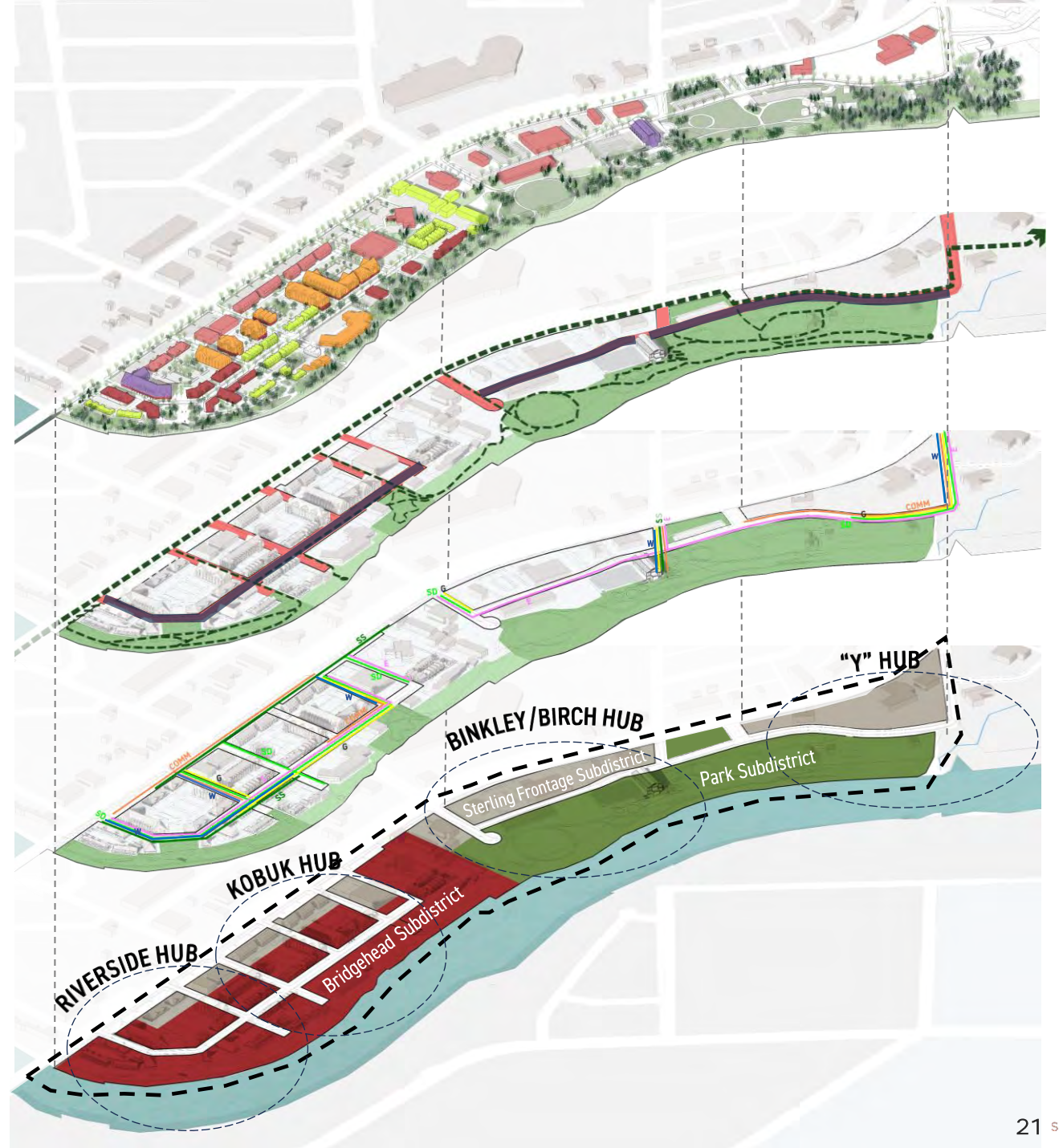
- River Street & States Avenue
- New & Enhanced Streets
- Sterling Trail
- Trails & Boardwalks

## Utility

- Water (W)
- Sanitary (SS)
- Storm Sewer (SD)
- Electrical (E)
- Natural Gas (G)
- Communication/Fiber (COMM)

## Regulatory

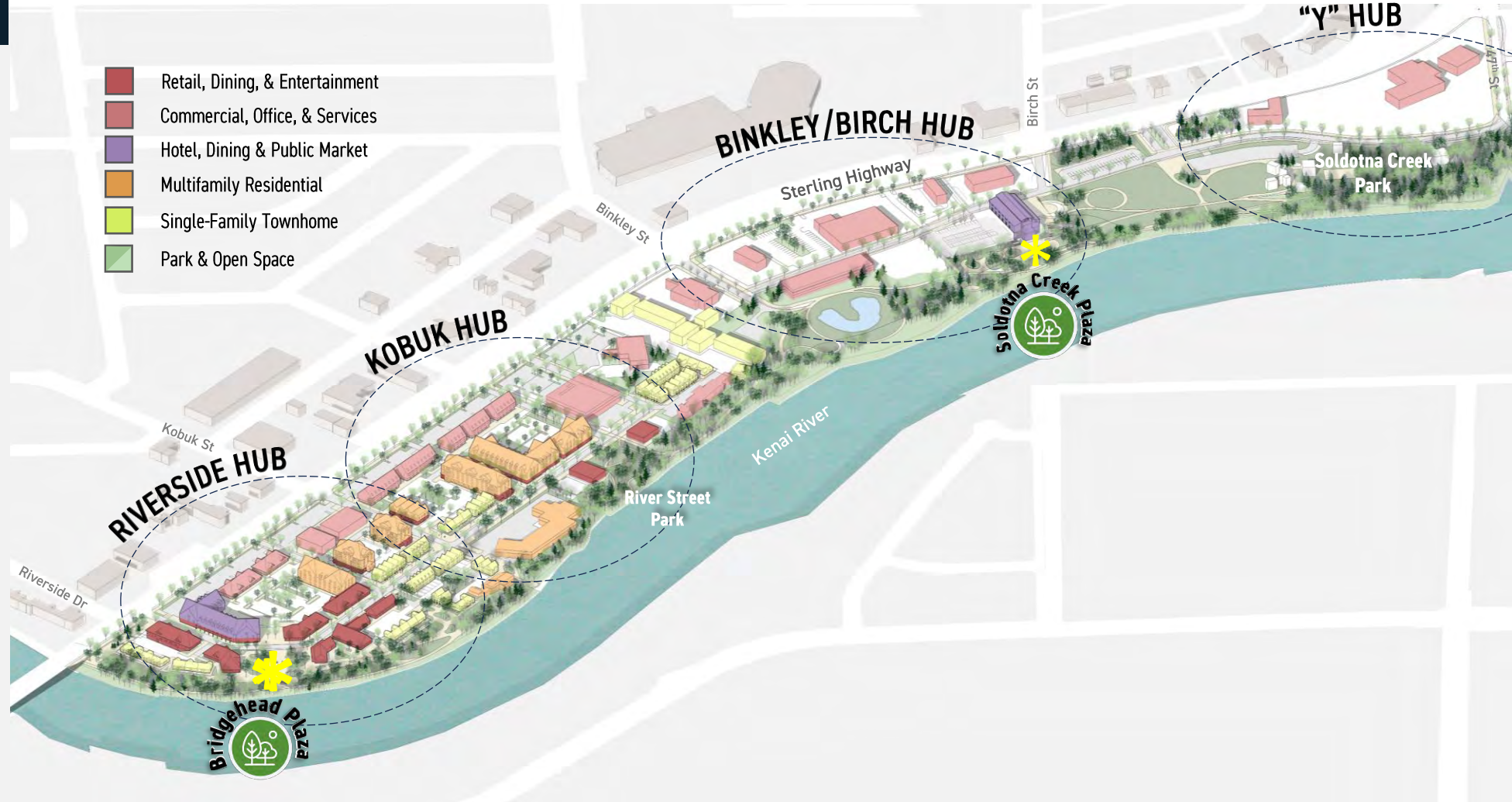
- Downtown Riverfront MU District
- Bridgehead Subdistrict
- Park Subdistrict
- Sterling Frontage Subdistrict



# FRAMEWORKS

## Land Use

- Supports a mix of uses
- Provides Housing Options
- Encourages river oriented and highway-oriented development
- Expands River Focused Amenities

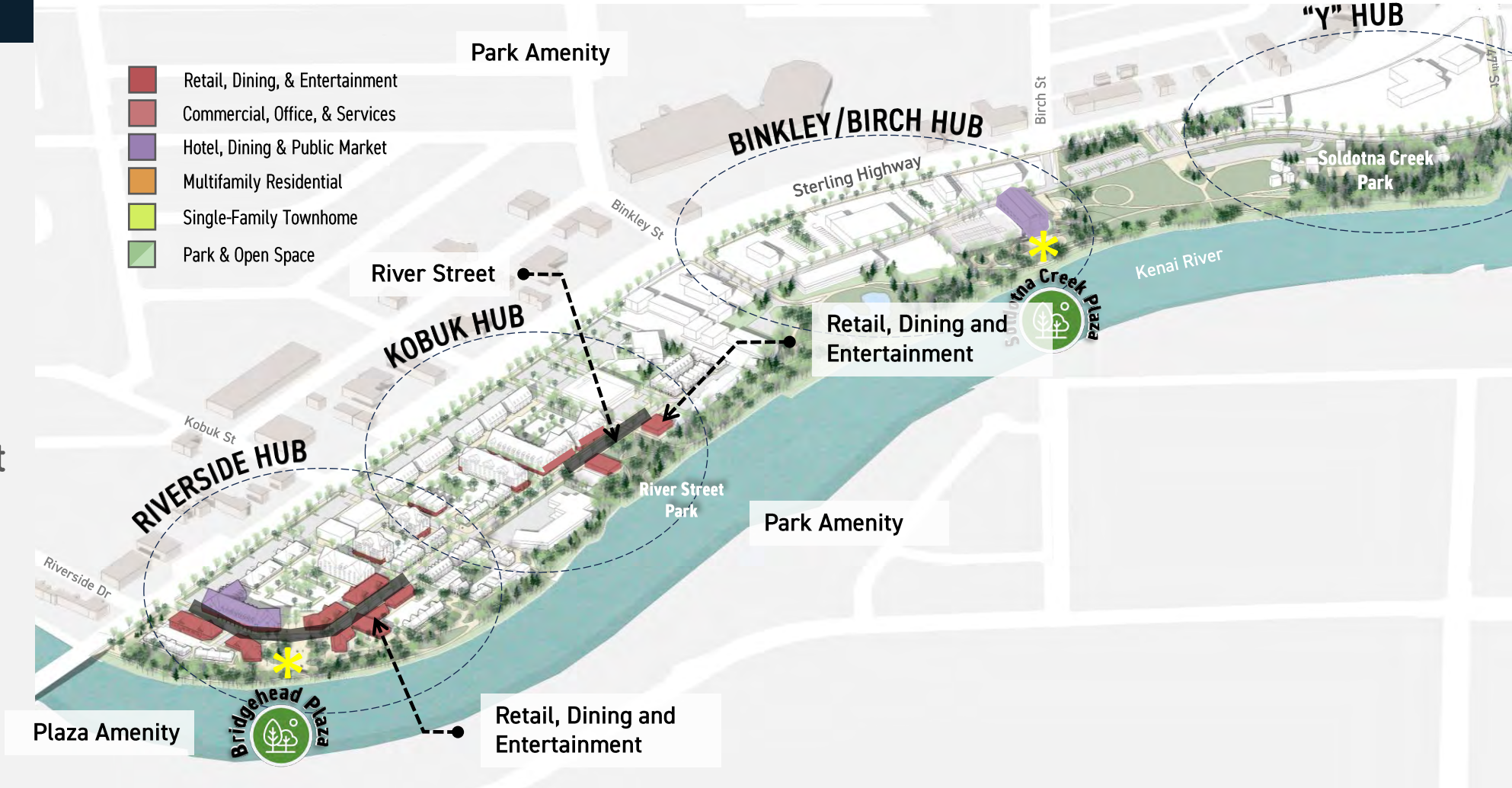


# FRAMEWORKS

## Land Use

### Retail, Dining and Entertainment

- Clustered along the River Street
- Oriented to riverfront amenities



# FRAMEWORKS

**Old Mill District**

**Retail, Dining &  
Entertainment Hub**

**Hotel**

**River Street Oriented  
Buildings**

**Trails &  
Public Plaza**



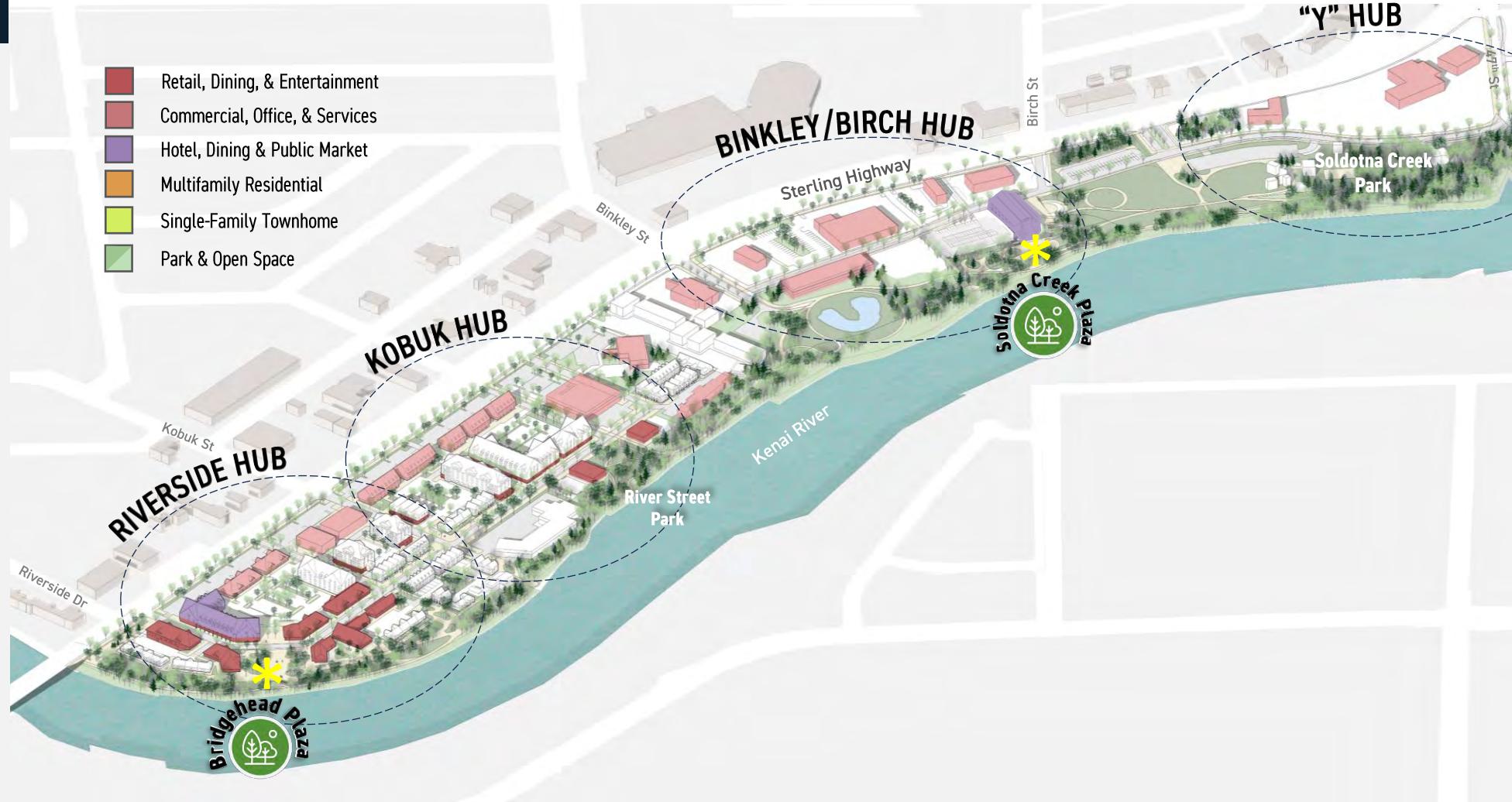
**Old Mill**  
DISTRICT

# FRAMEWORKS

## Land Use

### Sterling Commercial

- Highway Oriented
- Supports a Broad Mix of Commercial uses
- Allows for Housing on Upper Floors



# FRAMEWORKS

## Land Use Riverfront Neighborhood

- Market rate and Affordable Housing
- Mixed Use Apartments over Commercial
  - Townhomes



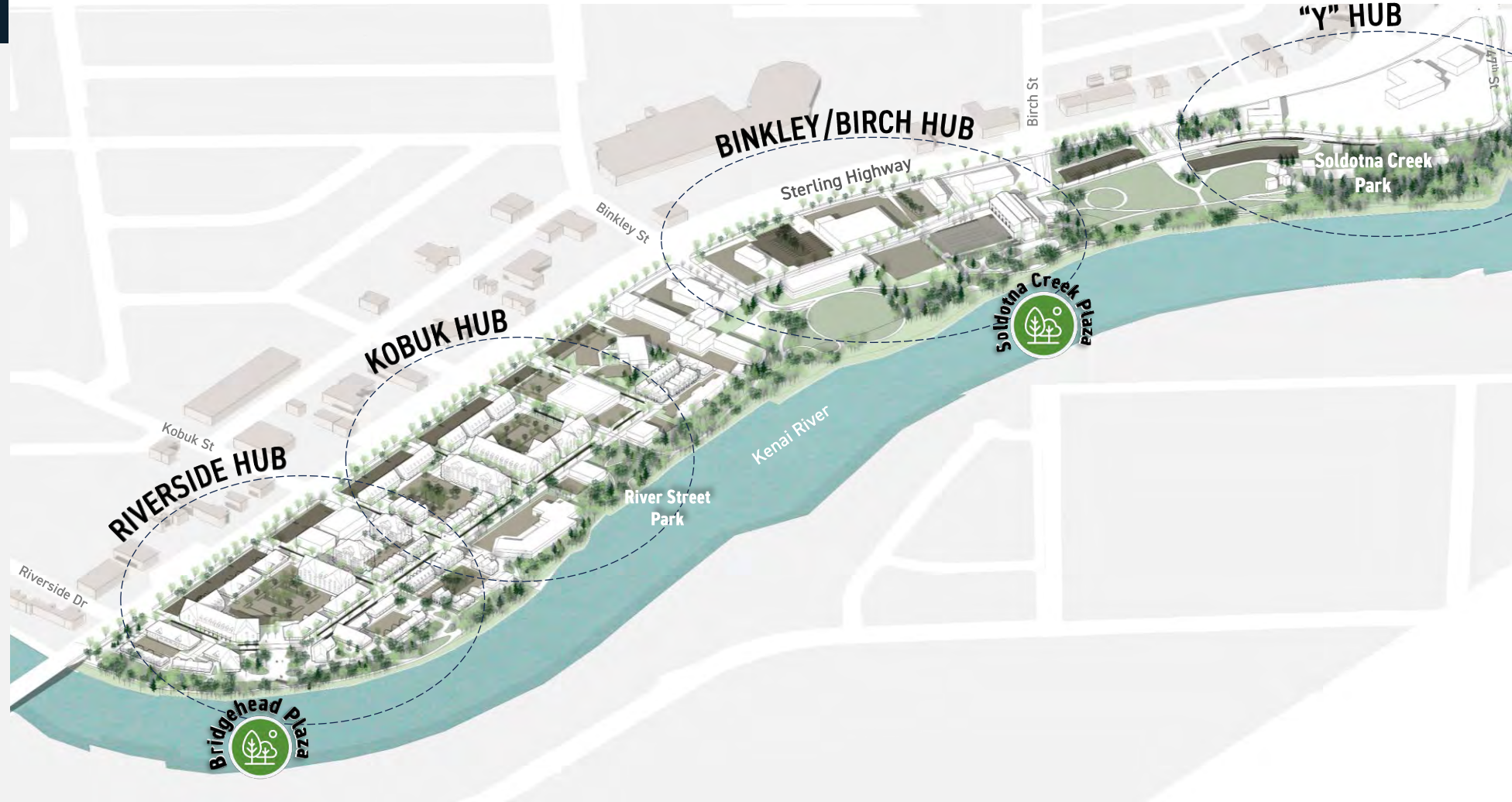
# FRAMEWORKS

## Parking

Minimum Parking Requirement:

- 1 Space per 400 Square Feet of Development
- 1 space per unit

Allow On-street Parking and Sterling Frontage to count toward requirement

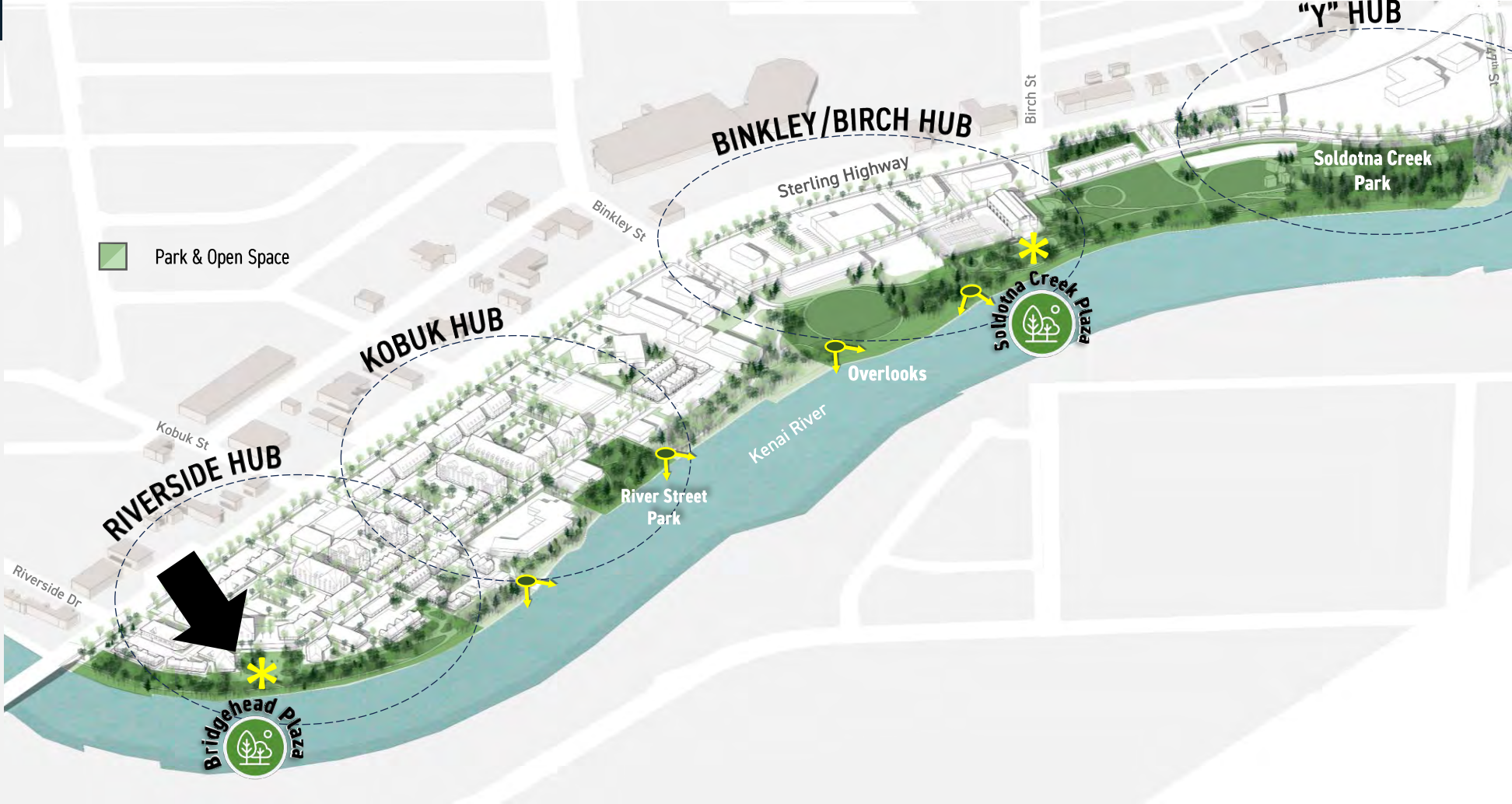


# FRAMEWORKS

## Land Use

### Public Gathering :

- *Parks*
- *Plazas*
- *Open Space*





# Bridgehead Plaza



- New Development
- New Street
- River Street

• Bridgehead Plaza

• Trails + Boardwalks

Kenai River

# Bridgehead Plaza



River access

Public Gathering

Retail, Dining, &  
Entertainment Destination

Walkable Streets

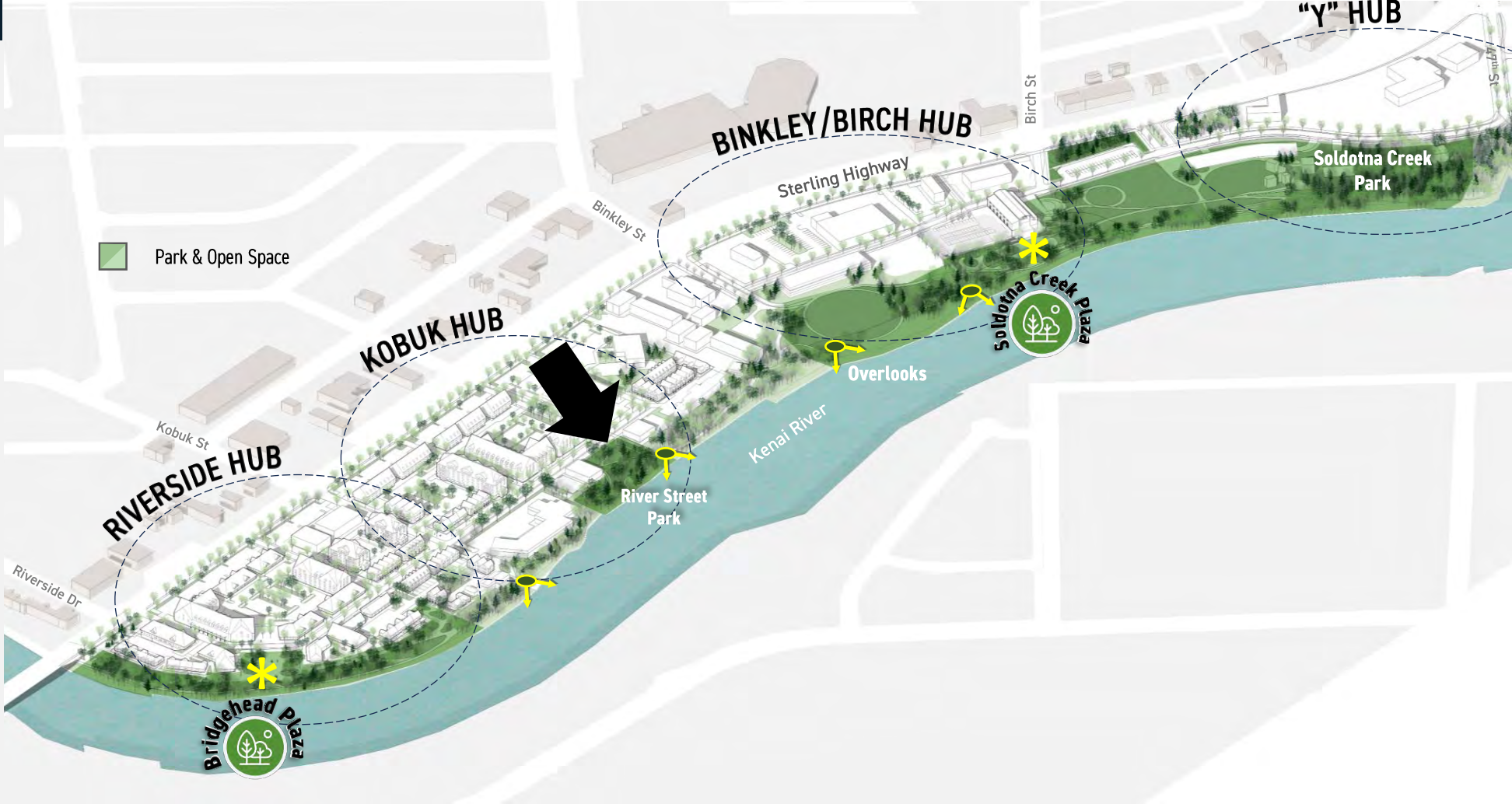
River Street

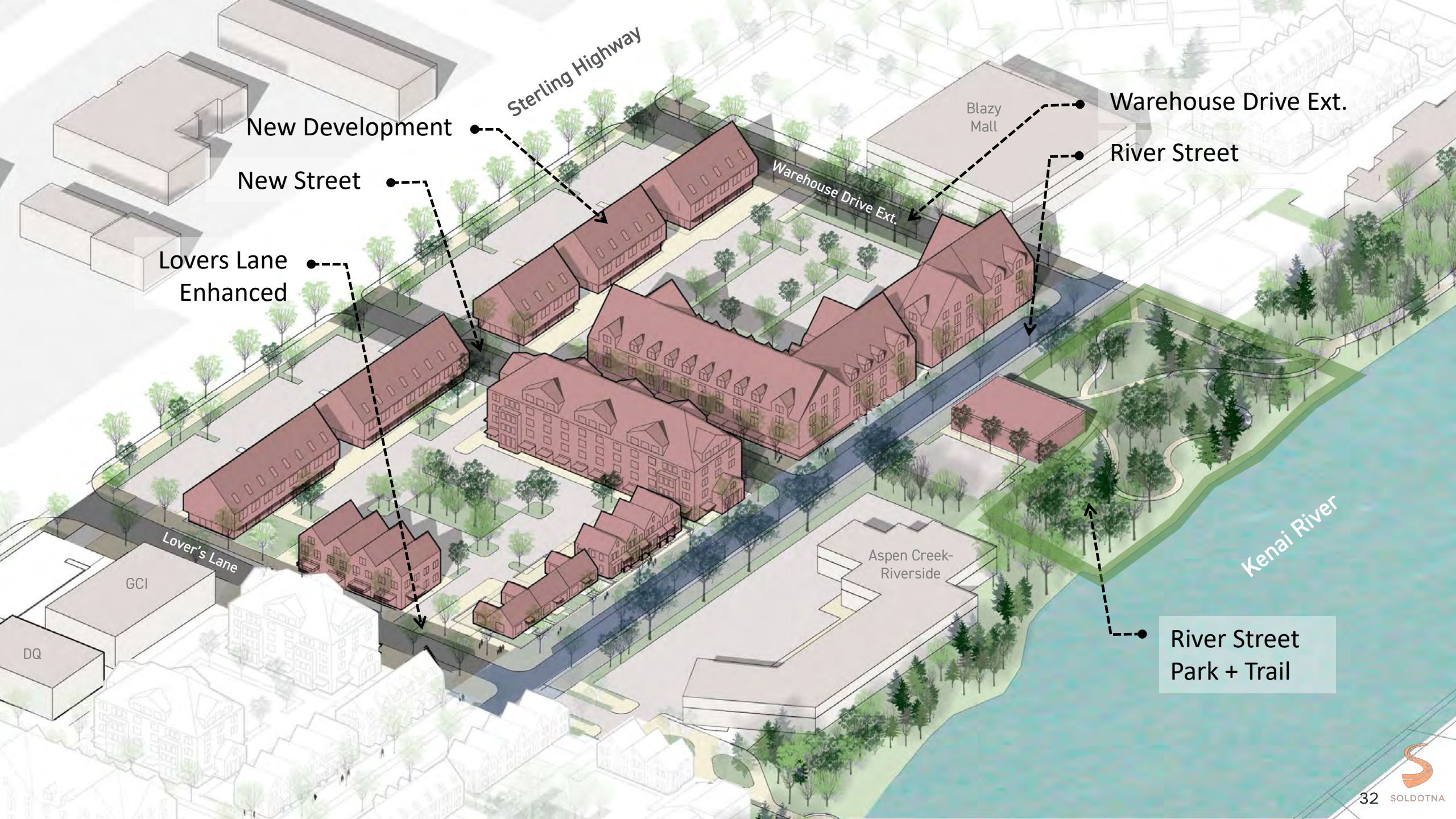
# FRAMEWORKS

## Land Use

### Public Gathering :

- *Parks*
- *Plazas*
- *Open Space*





Sterling Highway

New Development

New Street

Lovers Lane  
Enhanced

Lover's Lane

GCI

DQ

Warehouse Drive Ext.

Blazy  
Mall

Warehouse Drive Ext.

River Street

Aspen Creek-  
Riverside

Kenai River

River Street  
Park + Trail



# River Street Park

Mixed Use Residential Over Storefronts

Park Oriented Storefronts

Riverfront Amenity with Trail Access

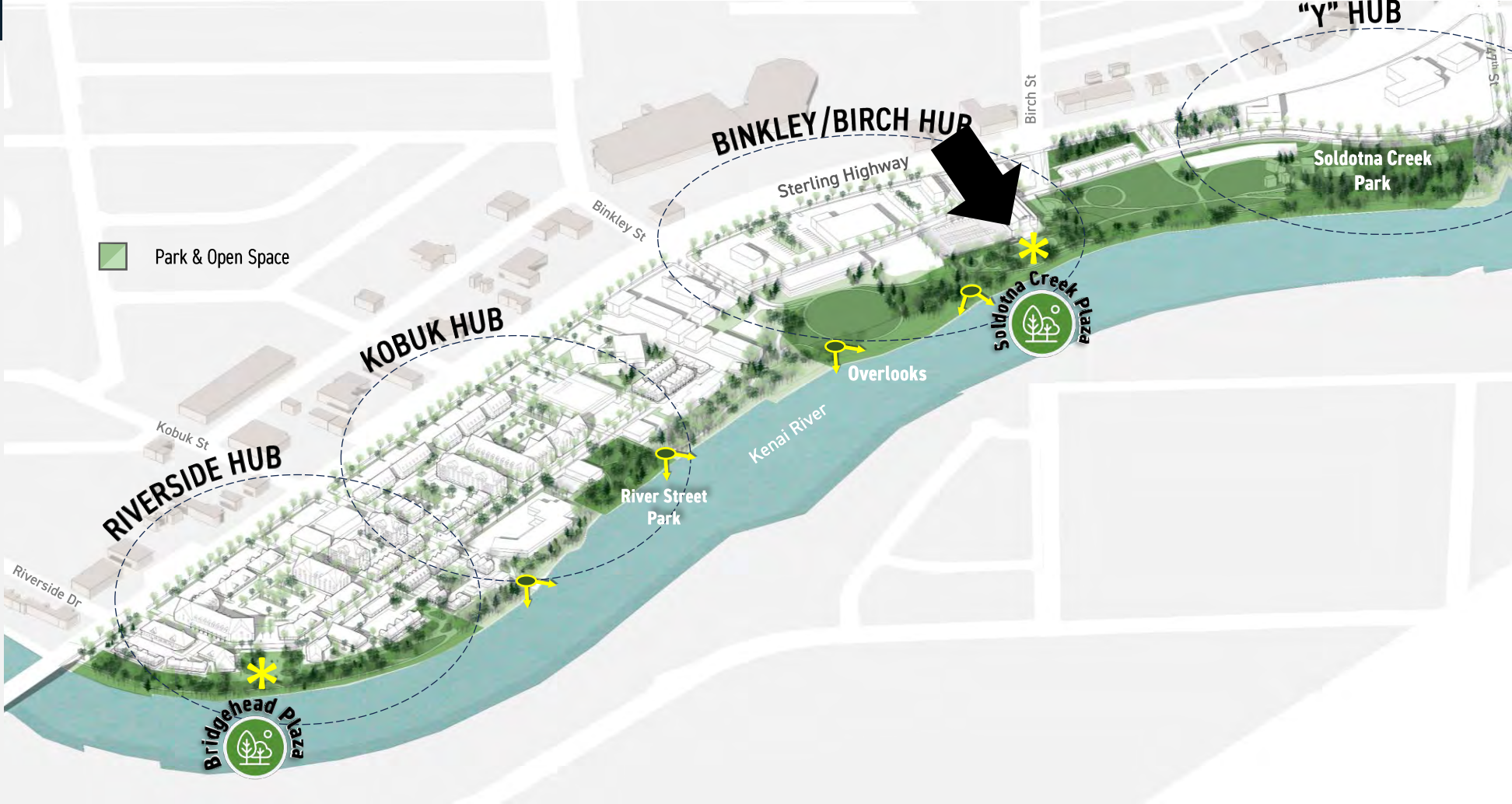


# FRAMEWORKS

## Land Use

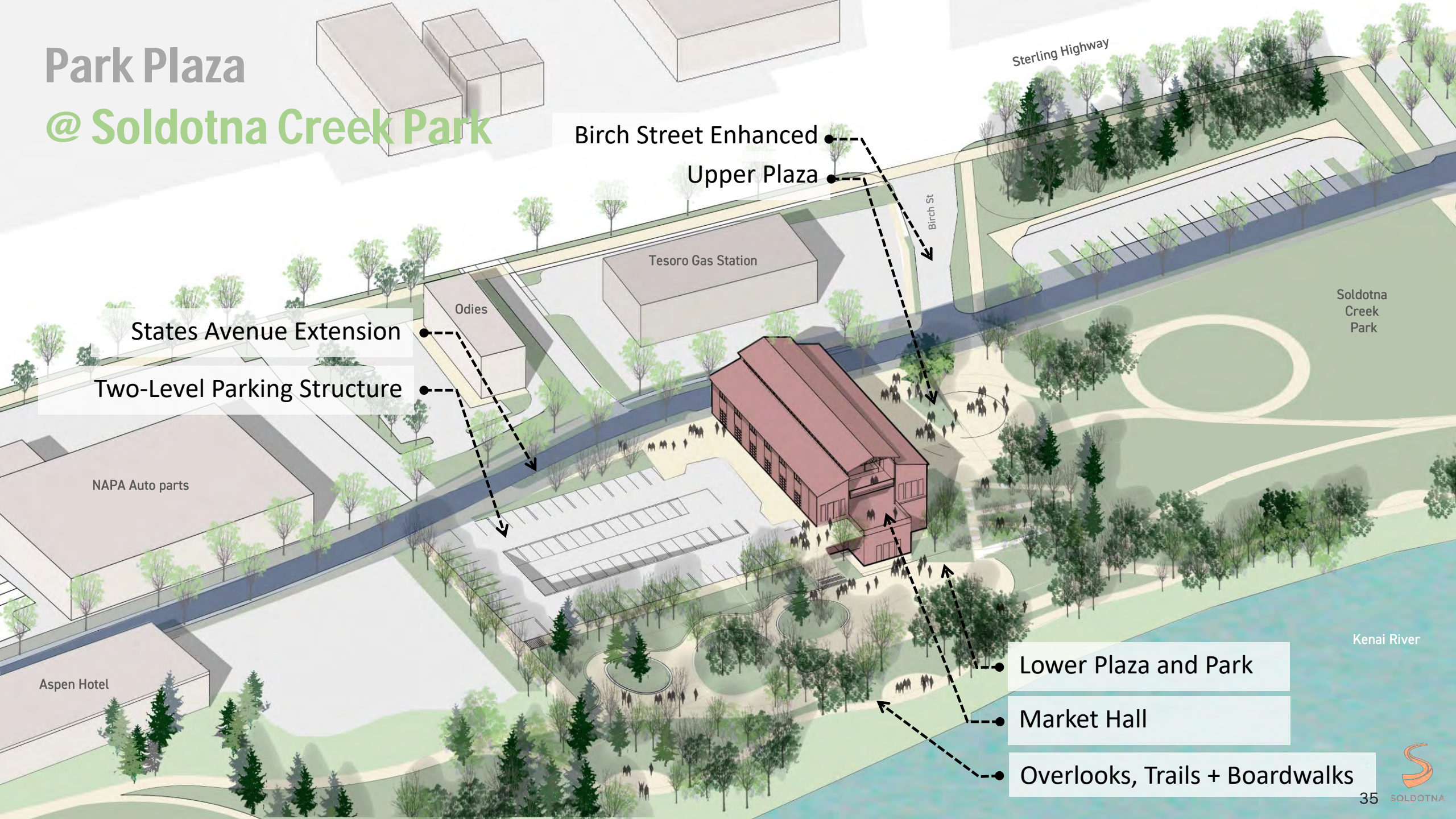
### Public Gathering :

- *Parks*
- *Plazas*
- *Open Space*



# Park Plaza

## @ Soldotna Creek Park



Birch Street Enhanced

Upper Plaza

States Avenue Extension

Two-Level Parking Structure

NAPA Auto parts

Aspen Hotel

Tesoro Gas Station

Odies

Soldotna Creek Park

Kenai River

Lower Plaza and Park

Market Hall

Overlooks, Trails + Boardwalks

# Park Plaza @ Soldotna Creek Park

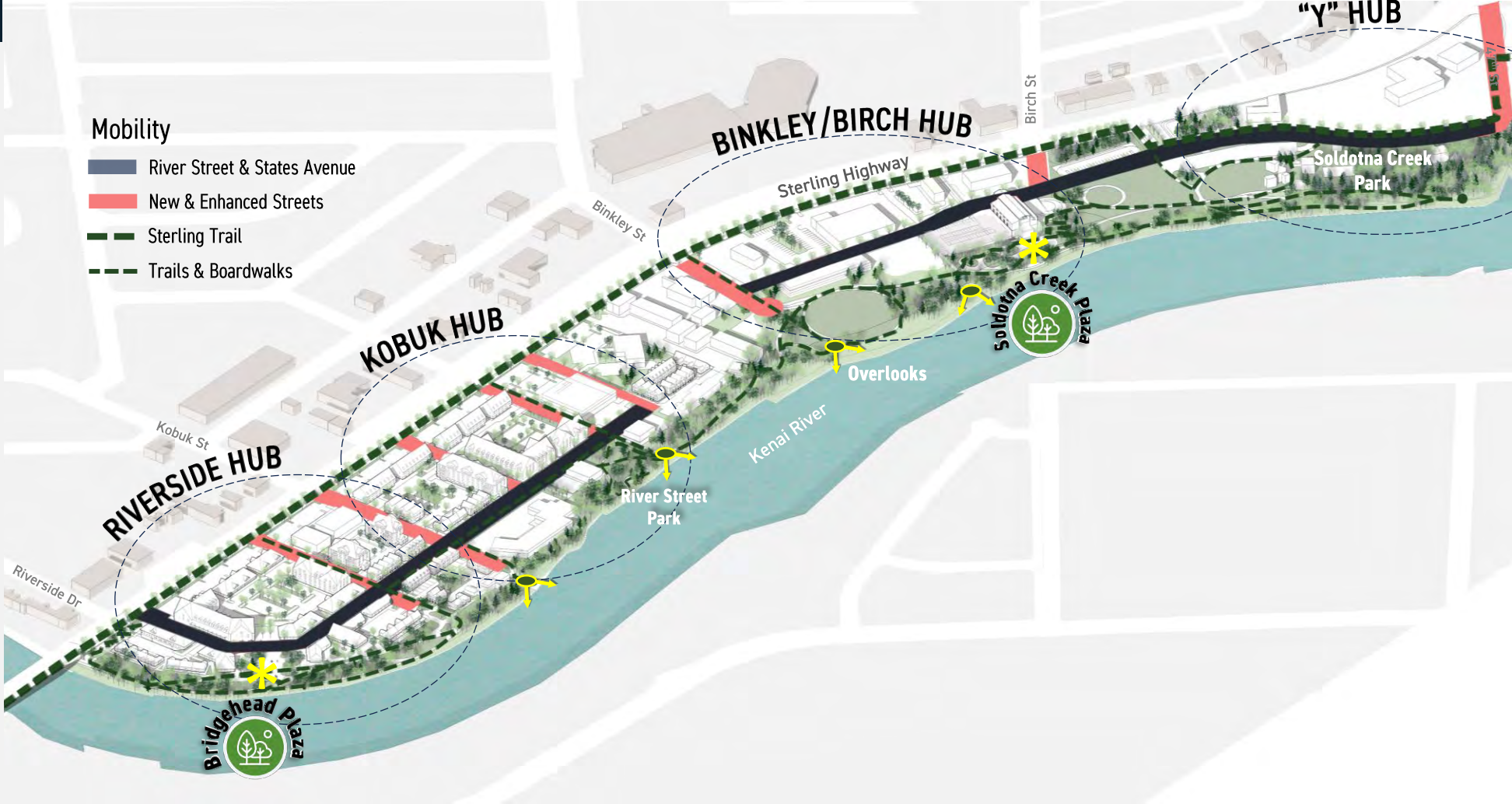




# FRAMEWORKS

## Mobility

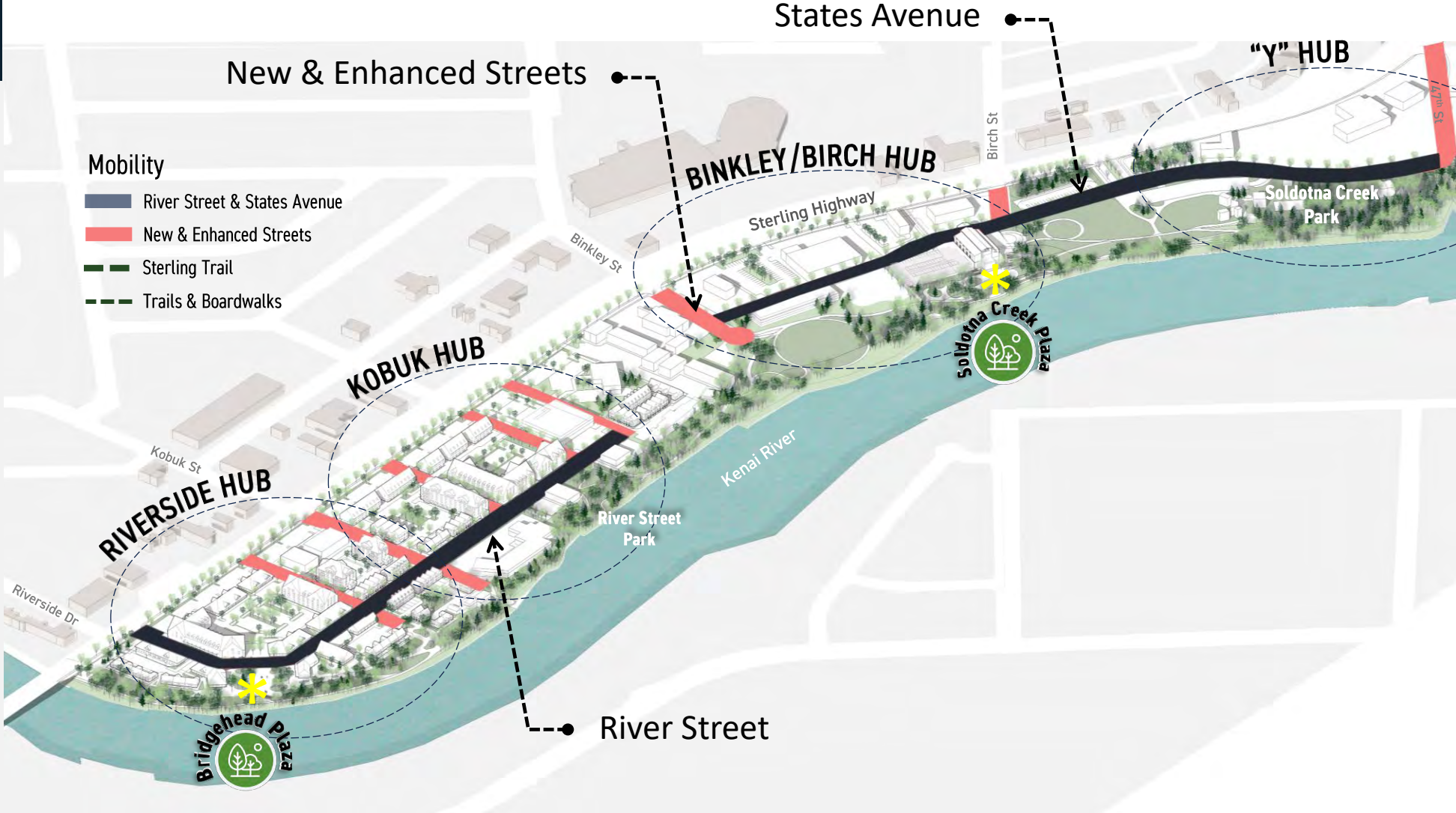
- *River Street*
- *States Avenue*
- *New & Enhanced Streets*
- *Trails & Boardwalks*



# FRAMEWORKS

## Mobility

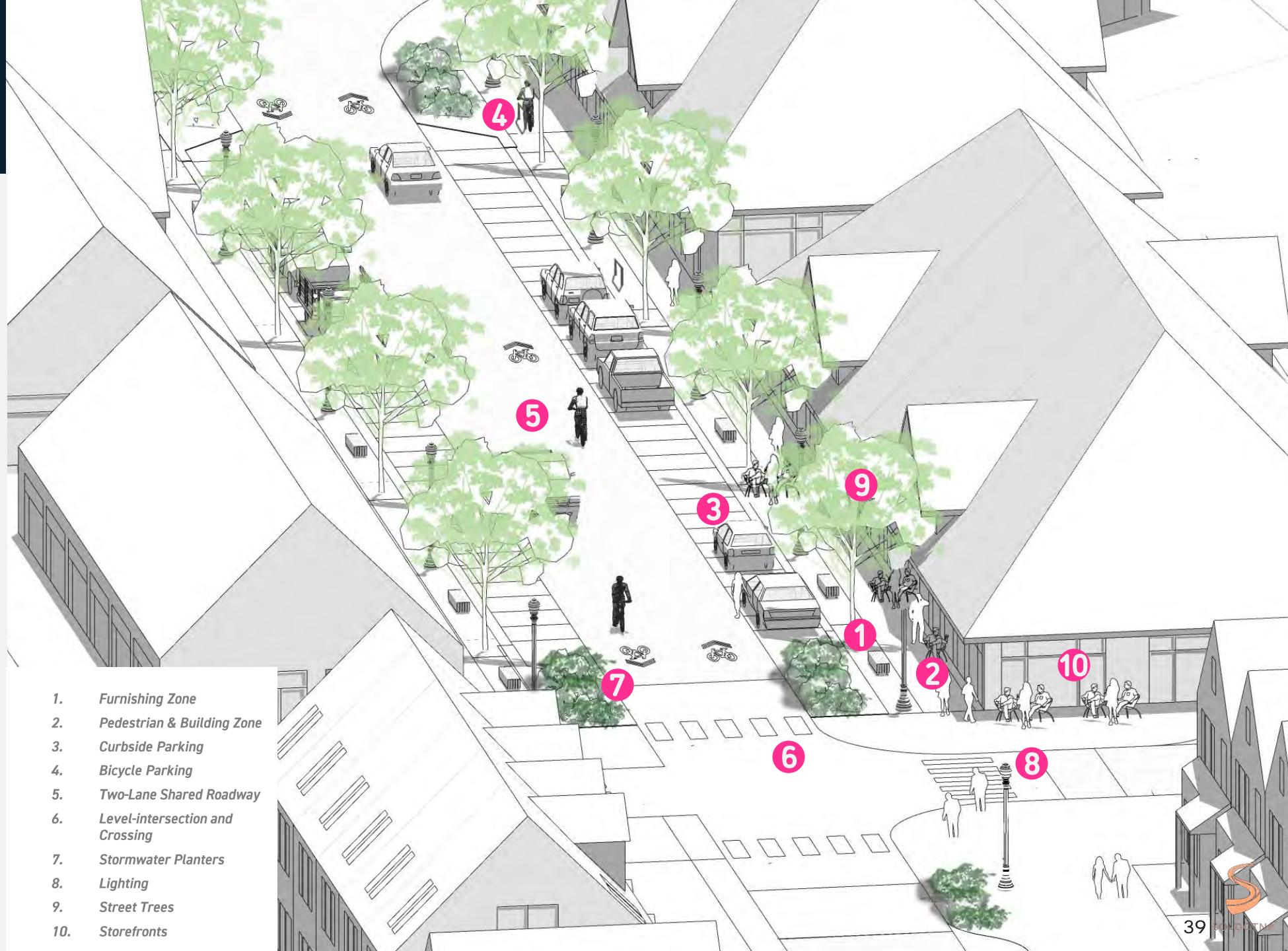
- *River Street*
- *States Avenue*
- *New & Enhanced Streets*



# FRAMEWORKS

## Street Anatomy Principles:

- *Prioritize walking and biking*
- *Support outdoor dining & seating*
- *Manage stormwater to promote river habitat*
- *Provide a safe—"slow traffic" and a well-lit street*
- *Promote Universal Access for all Users*



1. Furnishing Zone
2. Pedestrian & Building Zone
3. Curbside Parking
4. Bicycle Parking
5. Two-Lane Shared Roadway
6. Level-intersection and Crossing
7. Stormwater Planters
8. Lighting
9. Street Trees
10. Storefronts

# FRAMEWORKS

## Mobility

### Trails and Boardwalks :

- 1. Riverfront Trail + Boardwalk
- 2. Sterling Trail
- 3. Connecting Trail

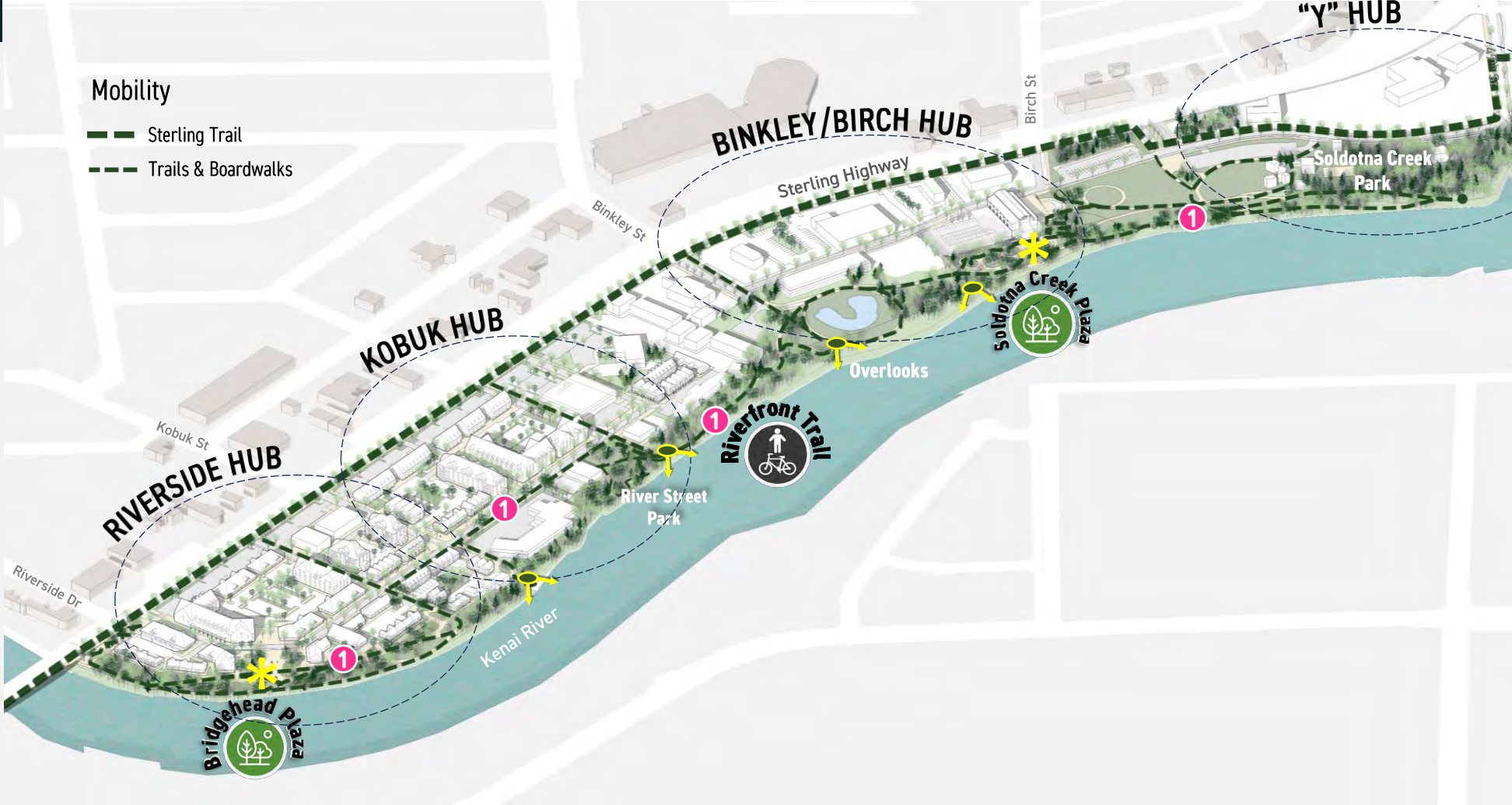


# FRAMEWORKS

## Mobility

Trails and Boardwalks :

- 1. *Riverfront Trail + Boardwalk*



# Riverfront Trail

Upland Trail @ River Street Park



# FRAMEWORKS

## Mobility

### Trails and Boardwalks :

- 1. Riverfront Trail + Boardwalk
- 2. Sterling Trail



# Sterling Trail

Multi-use Trail and Landscape Buffer



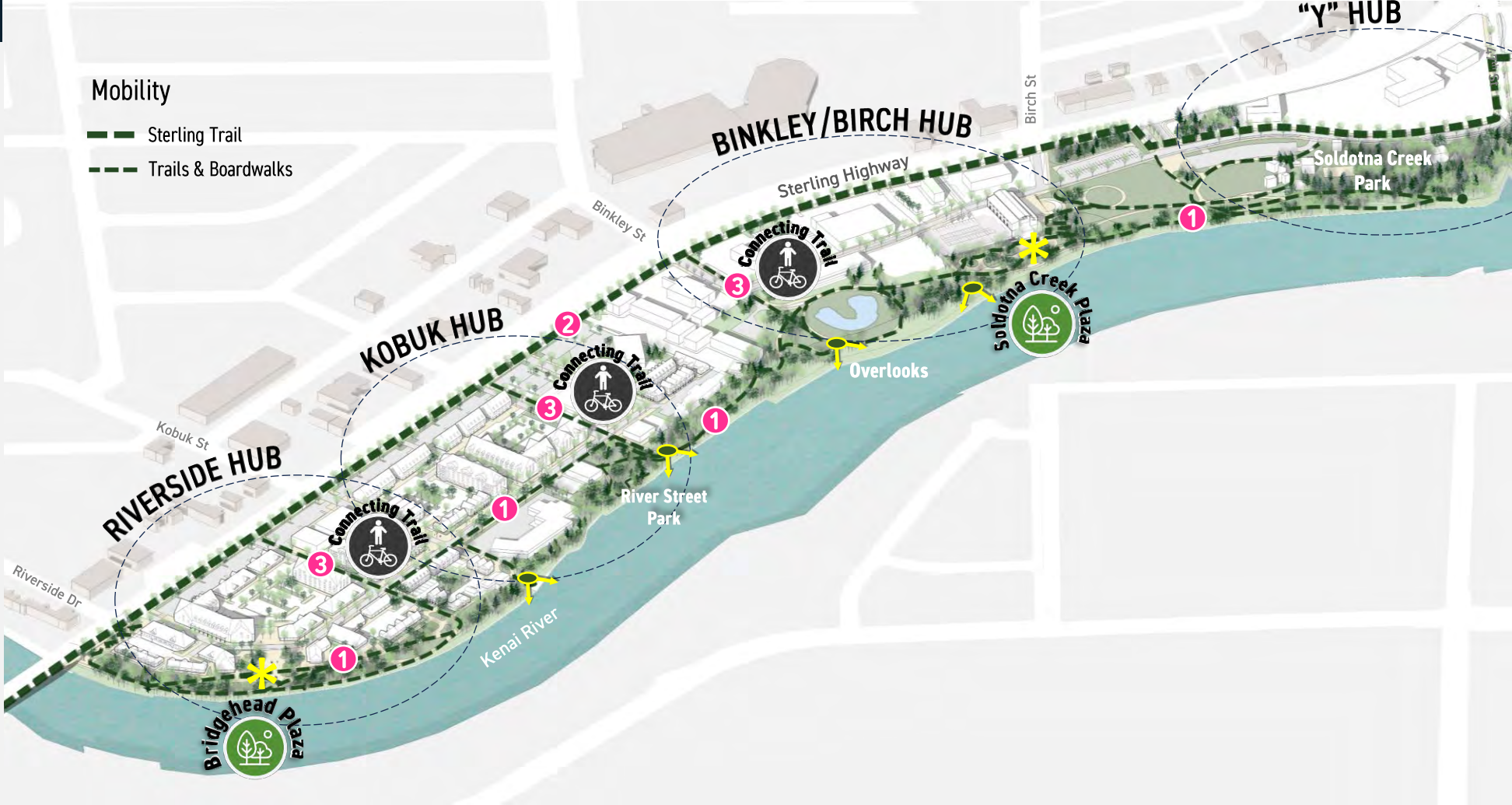


# FRAMEWORKS

## Mobility

### Trails and Boardwalks :

- 1. Riverfront Trail + Boardwalk
- 2. Sterling Trail
- 3. Connecting Trail



# Connecting Trail

## River Street Multi-use Trail



# FRAMEWORKS

## Mobility

### Trails and Boardwalk Principles:

- *Promote Continuous Trail Access*
- *Balance River Access + Riparian Health*
- *Provide a Network of Trail "Loops"*

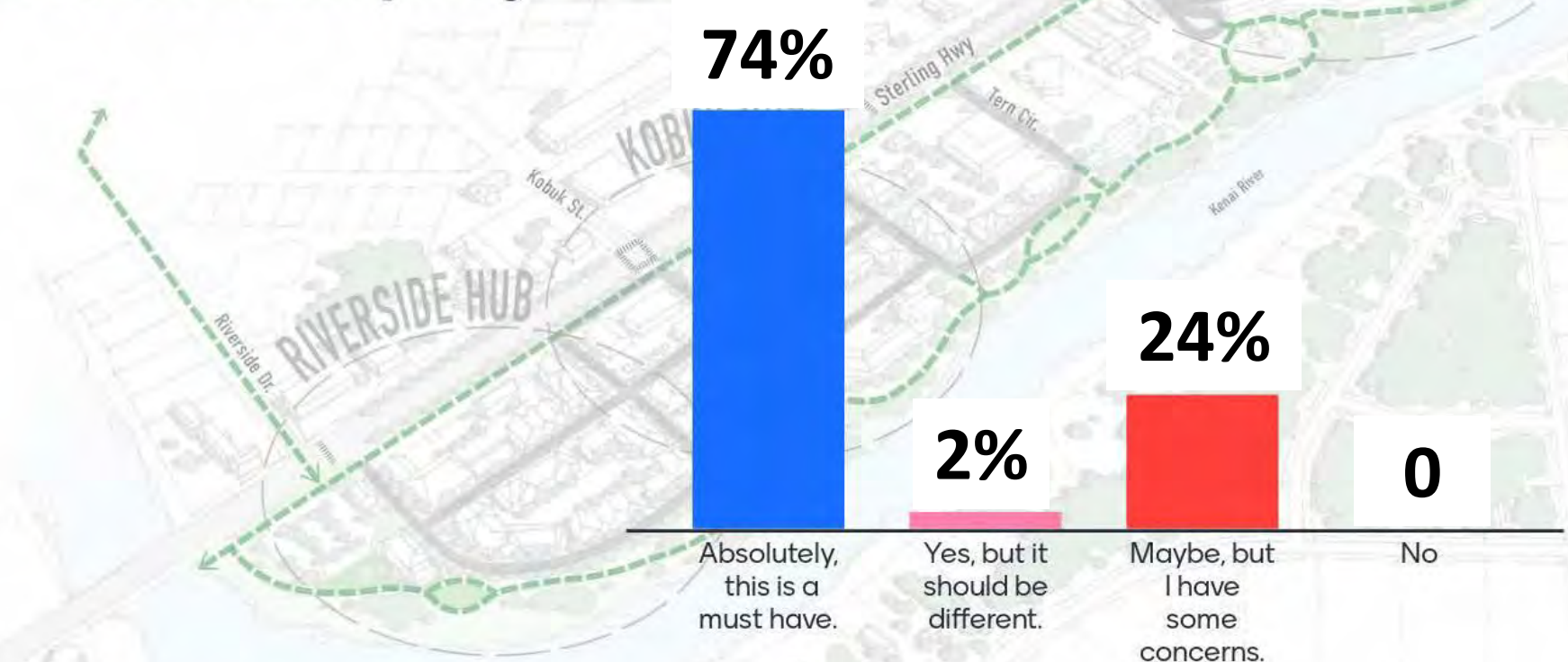


# Promote Continuous Trail Access

Downtown Riverfront  
Redevelopment Plan Workshop

Mentimeter

Should this project continue to pursue a new Riverfront Trail to connect public gathering at each end of the project area?

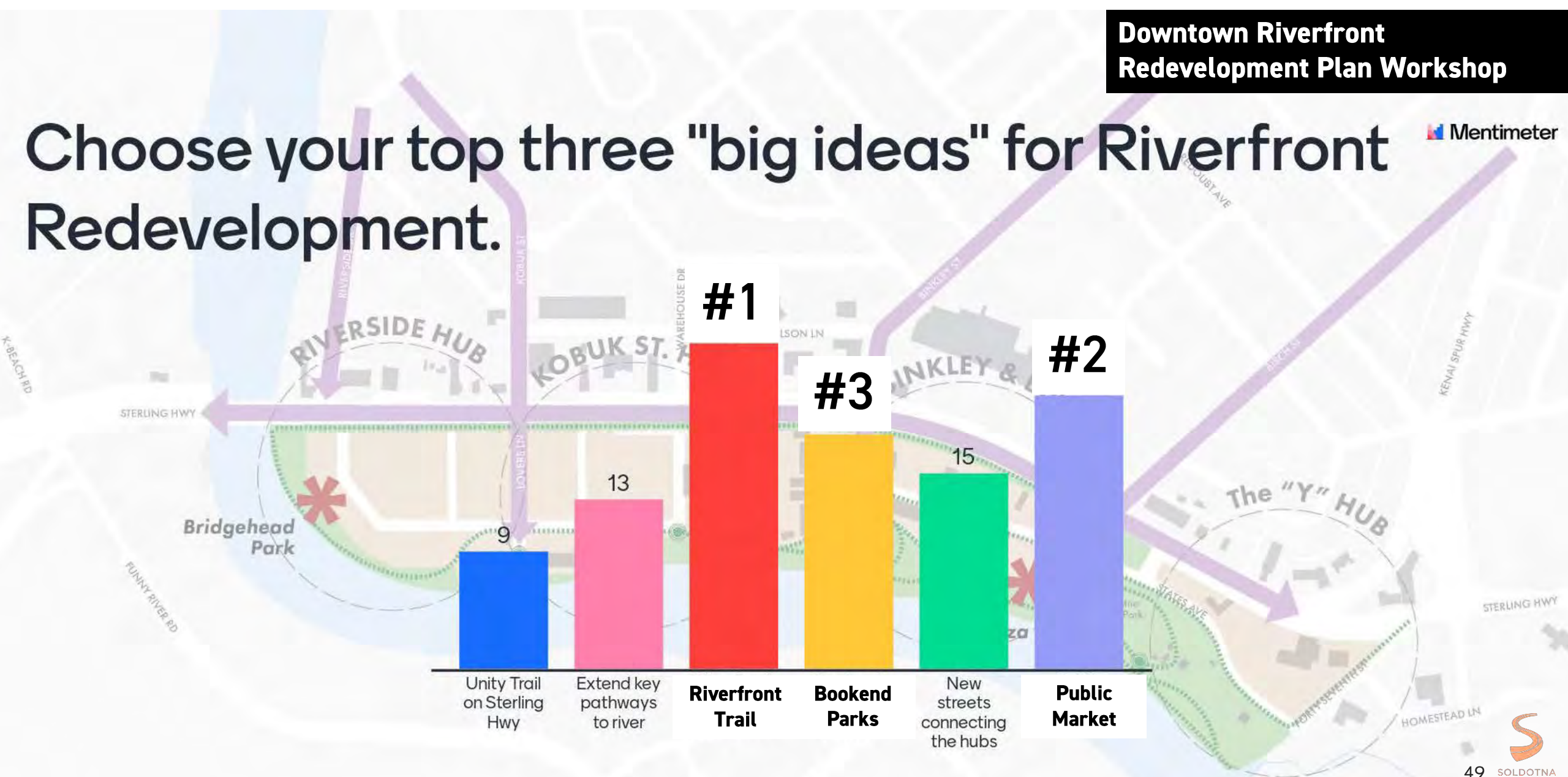
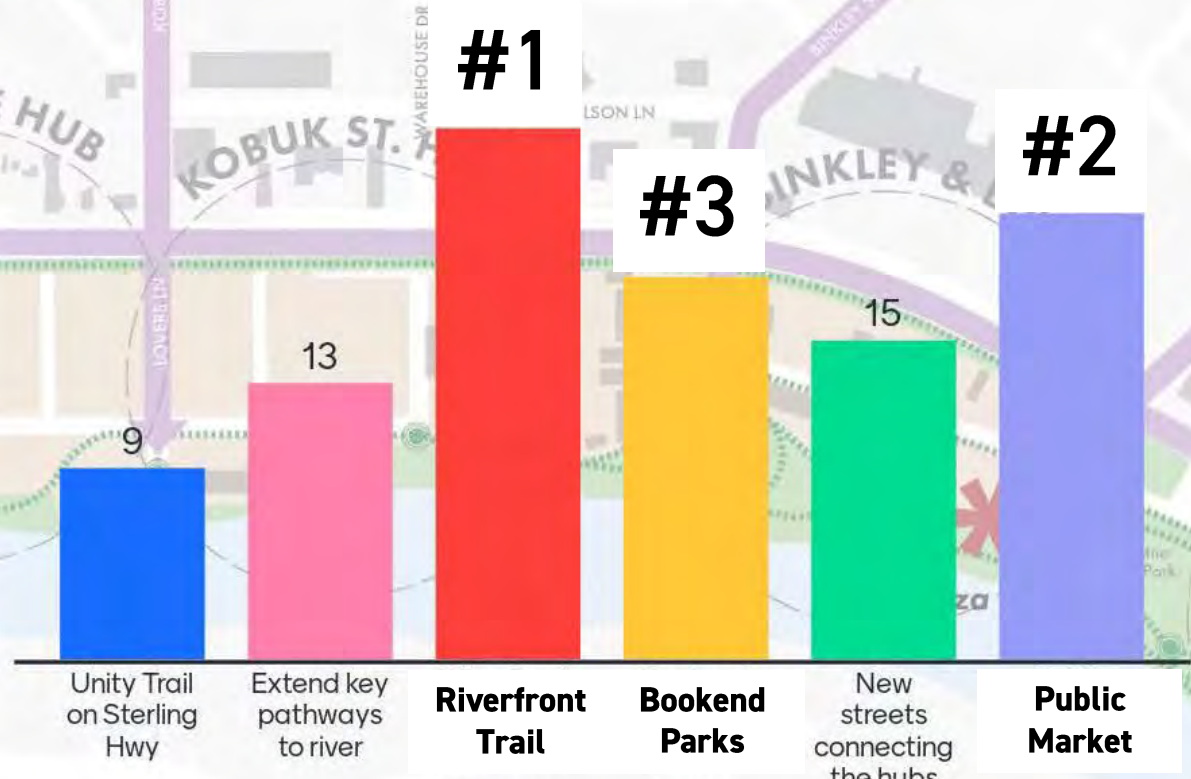


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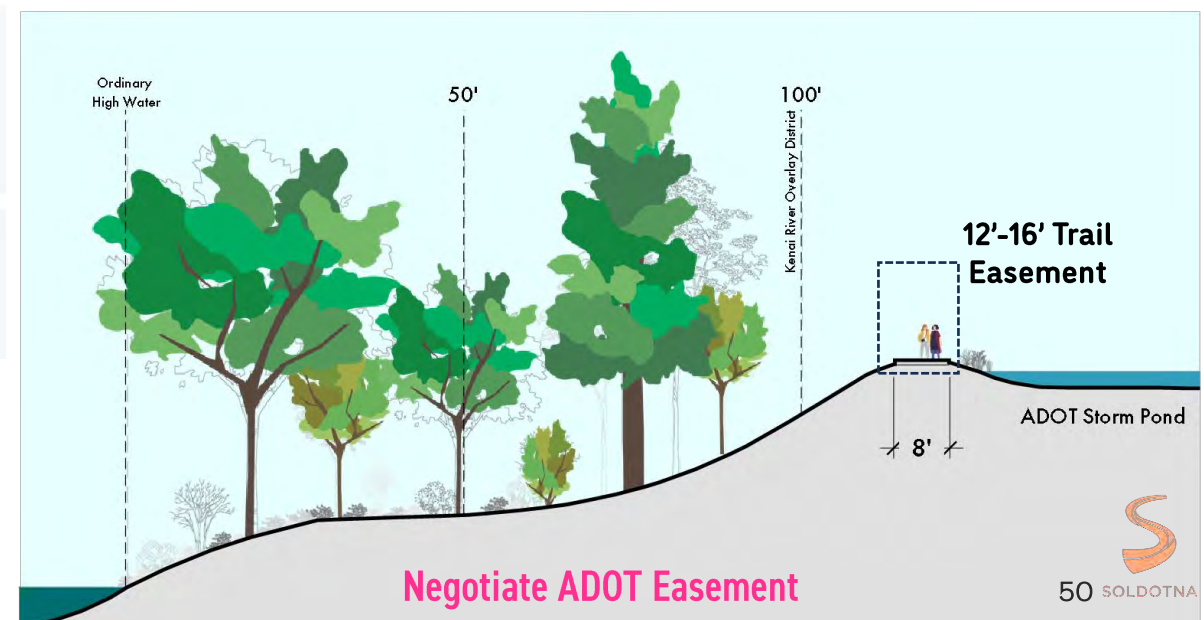
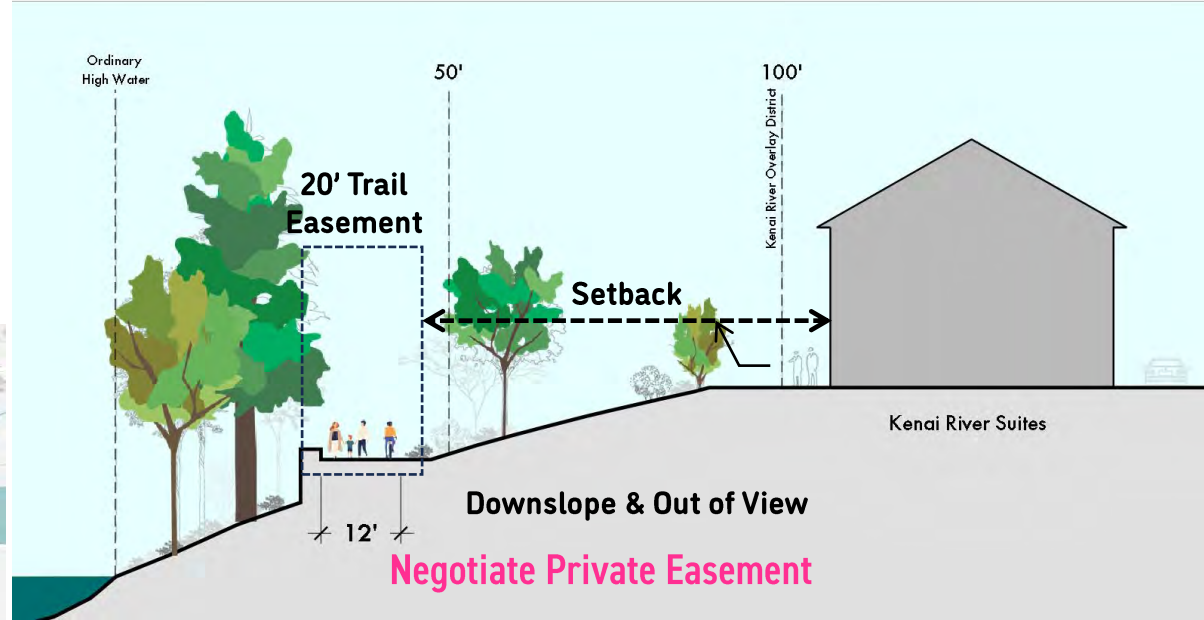
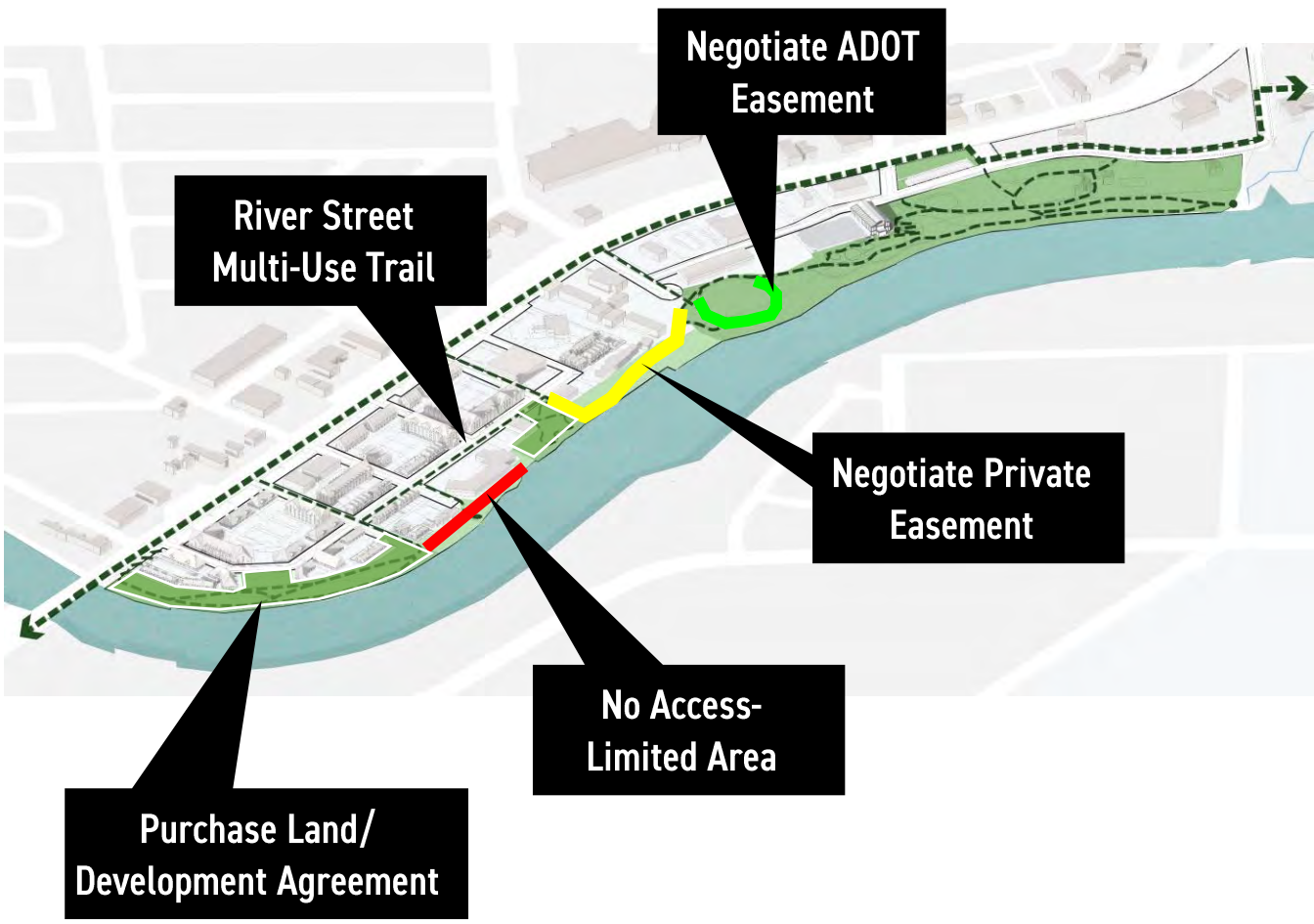
Downtown Riverfront  
Redevelopment Plan Workshop

## Choose your top three "big ideas" for Riverfront Redevelopment.

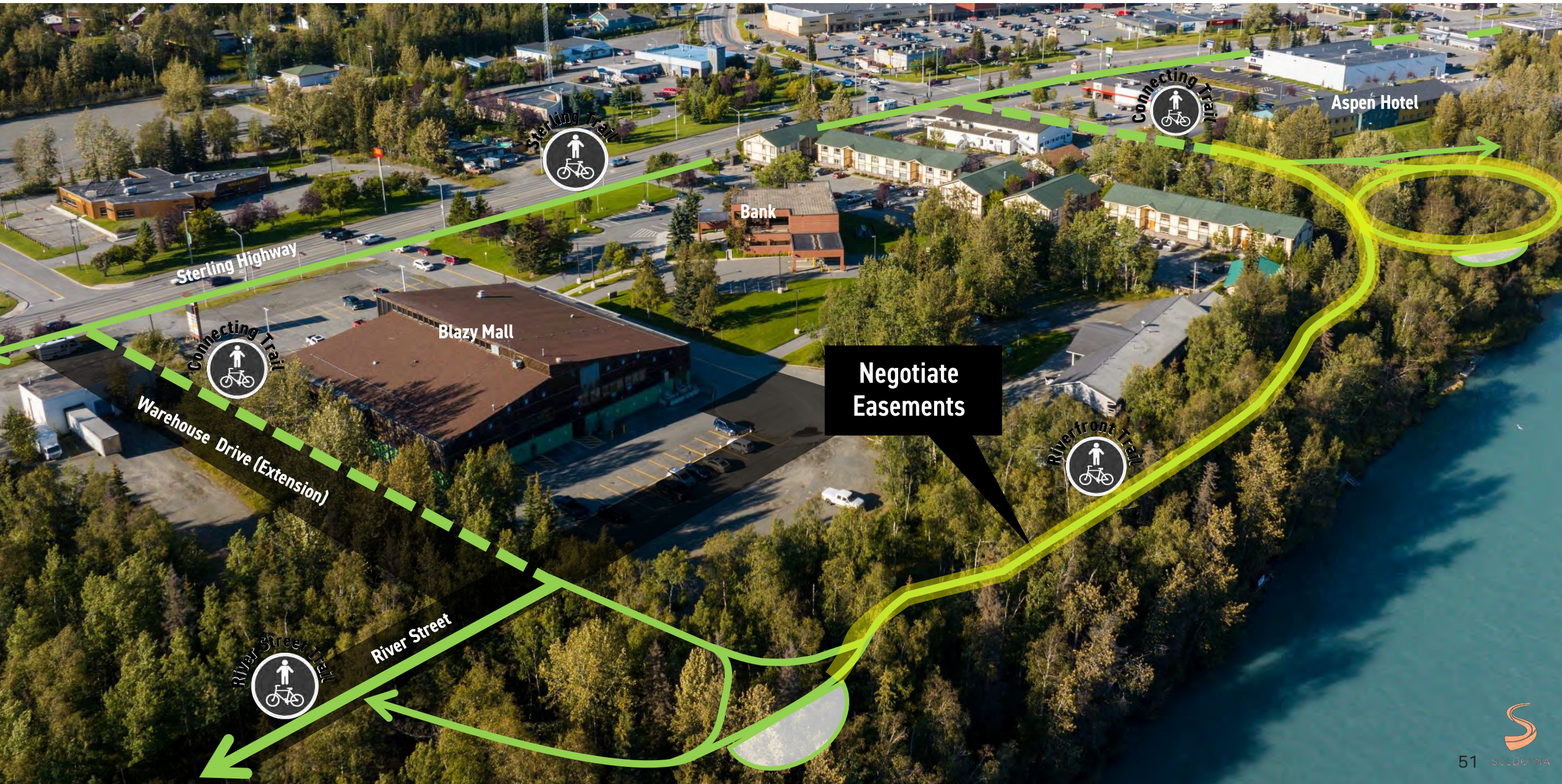
Mentimeter



# Promote Continuous Trail Access



# Promote Continuous Trail Access



Sterling Highway



Aspen Hotel

Bank

Blazy Mall

Negotiate Easements



Warehouse Drive (Extension)



River Street

# Balance River Access + Riparian Health



Combat Fishing

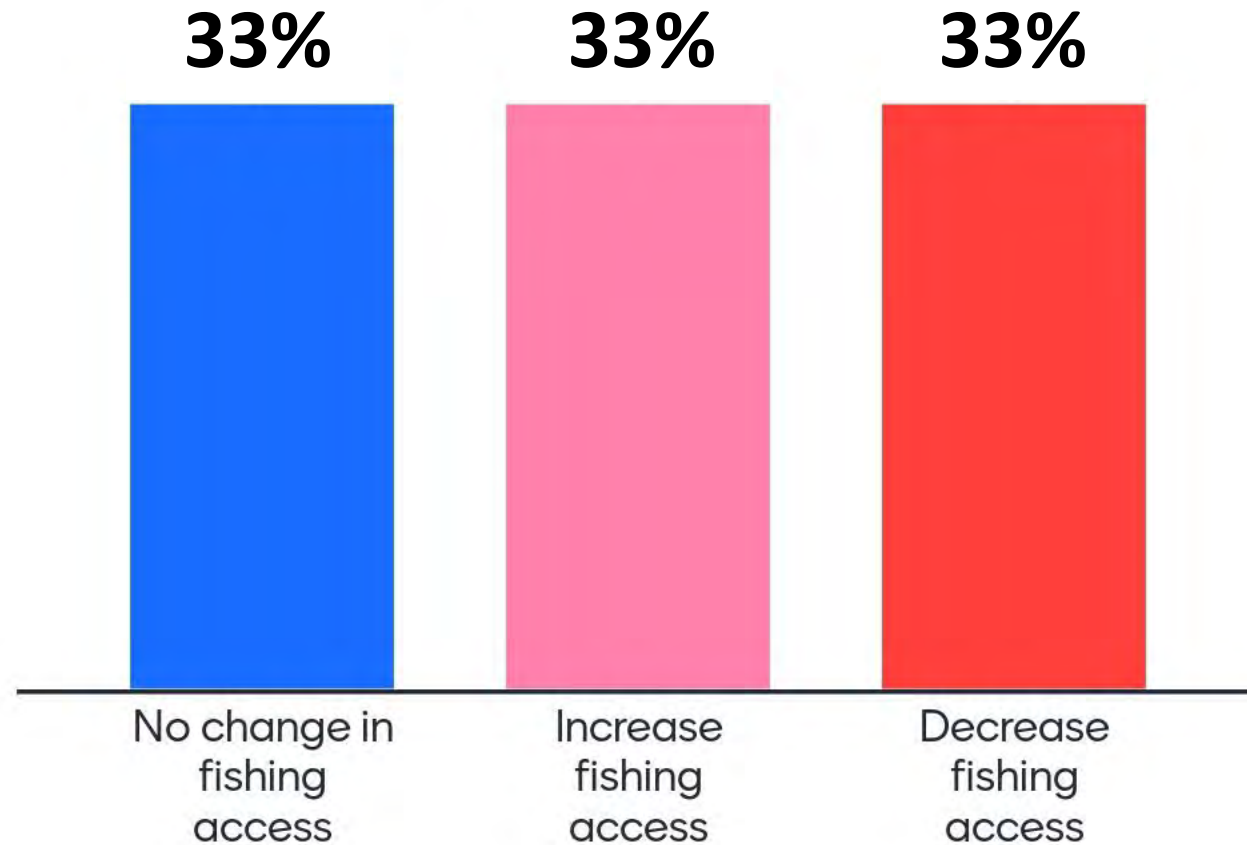


# Balance River Access + Riparian Health

Kenai River Fish Habitat Symposium

Mentimeter

What kind of fishing access can this area of the riverfront support?



# Balance River Access + Riparian Health

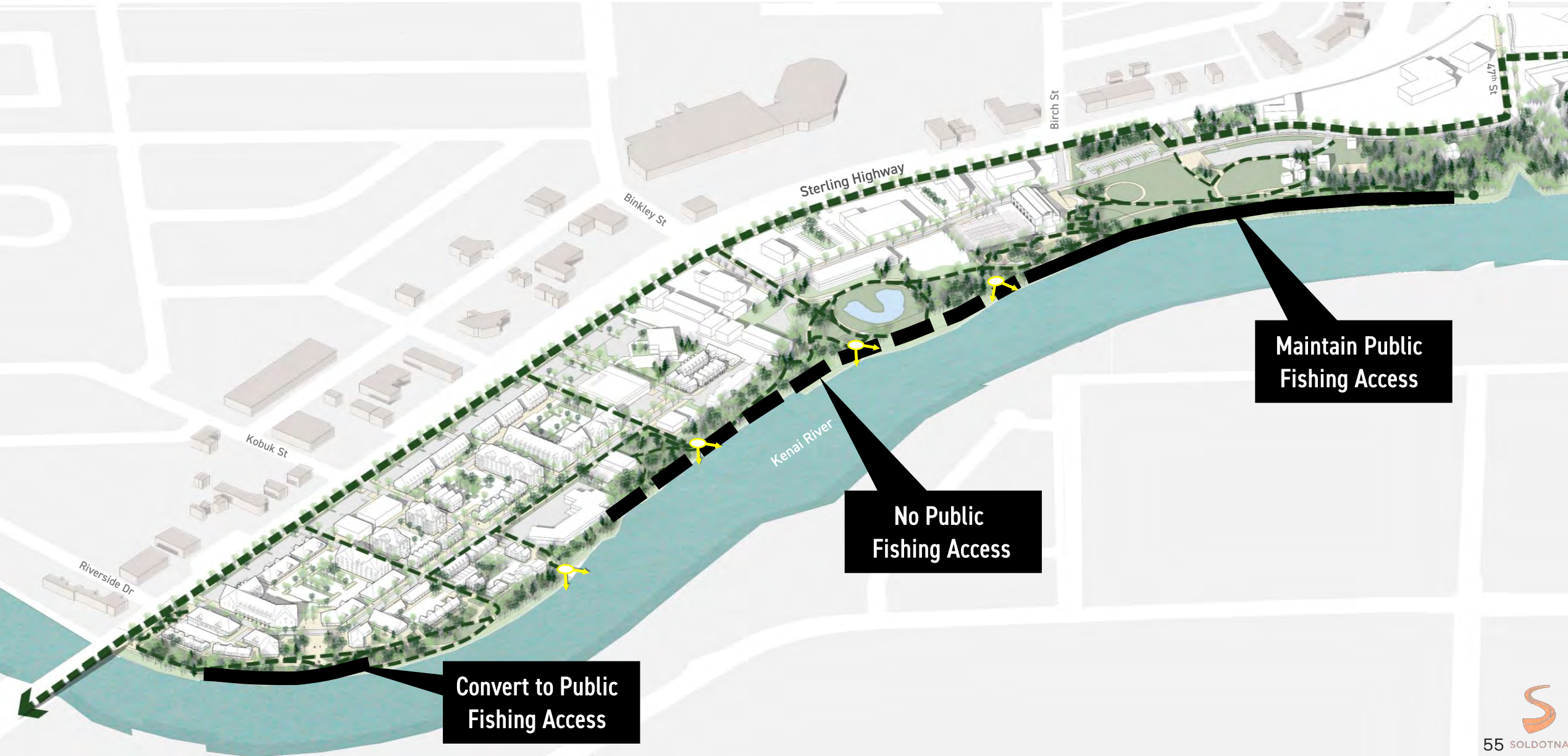
Kenai River Fish Habitat Symposium

## What are major river and riparian habitat concerns with redevelopment?

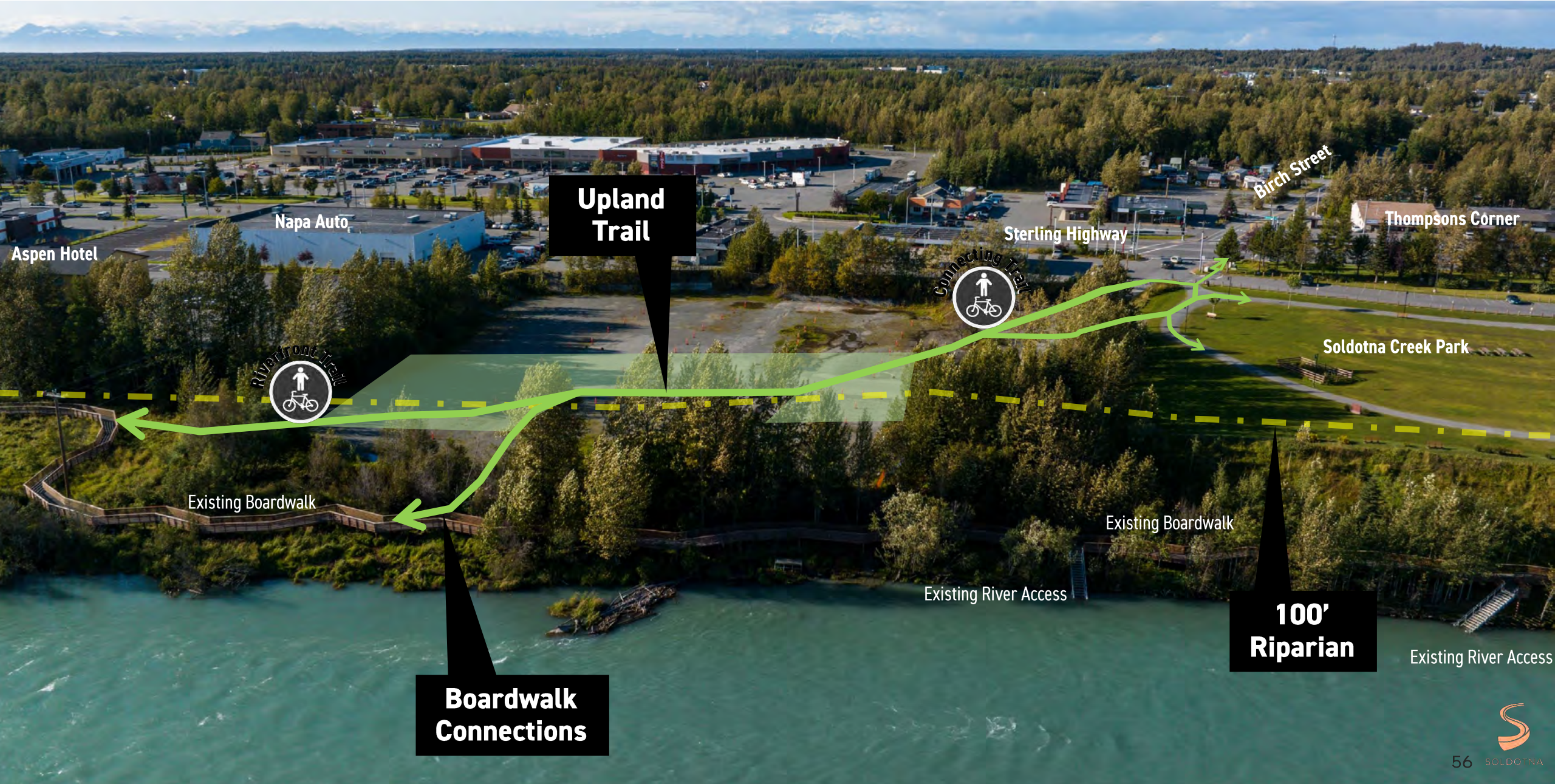
Mentimeter



# Balance River Access + Riparian Health



# Balance River Access + Riparian Health



**Upland Trail**



**100'  
Riparian**

**Boardwalk  
Connections**

# Balance River Access + Riparian Health



# Balance River Access + Riparian Health



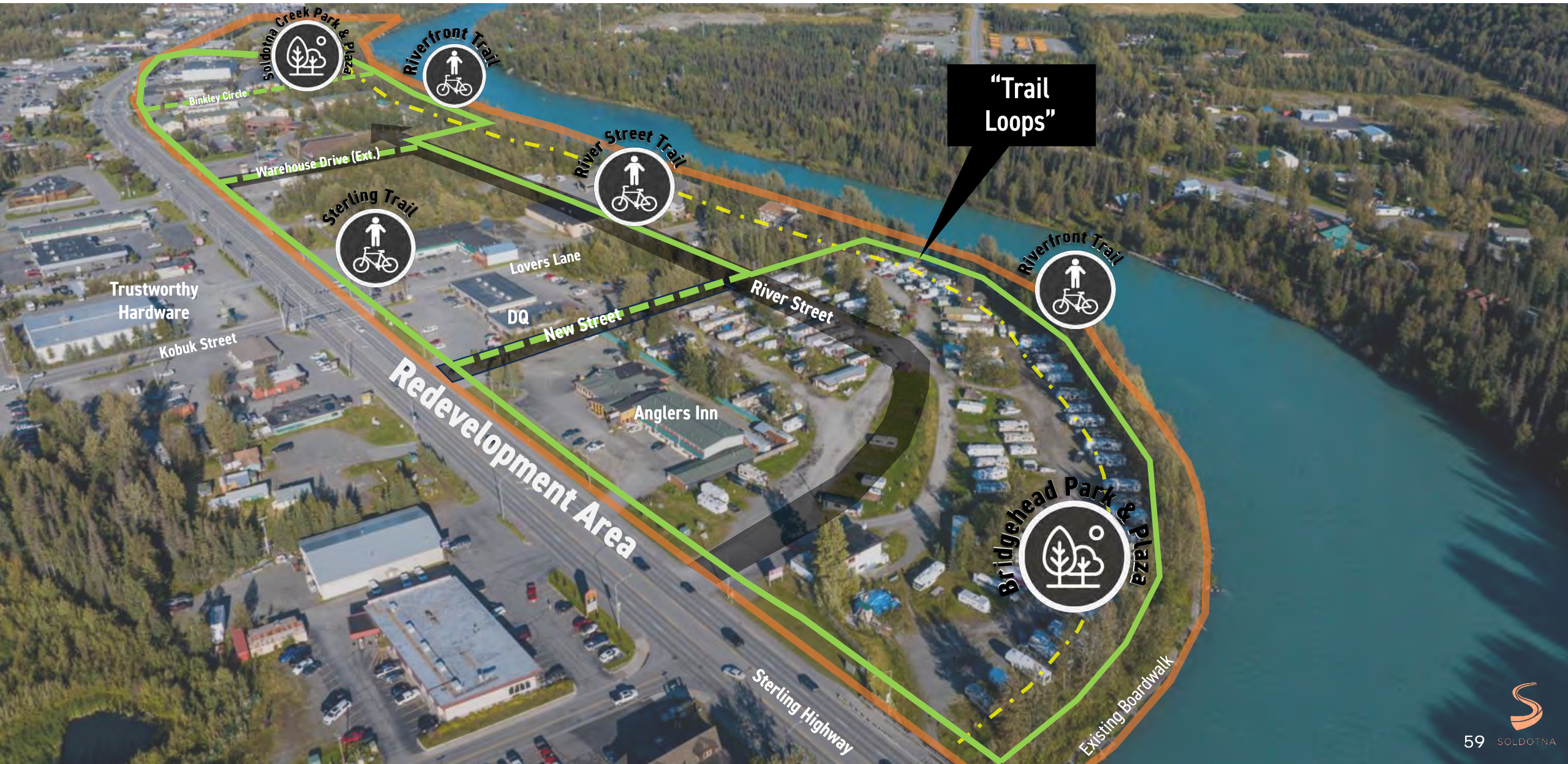
**ELP Boardwalk**

**Upland Trail**

**100' Riparian**

**Avoid Slopes**

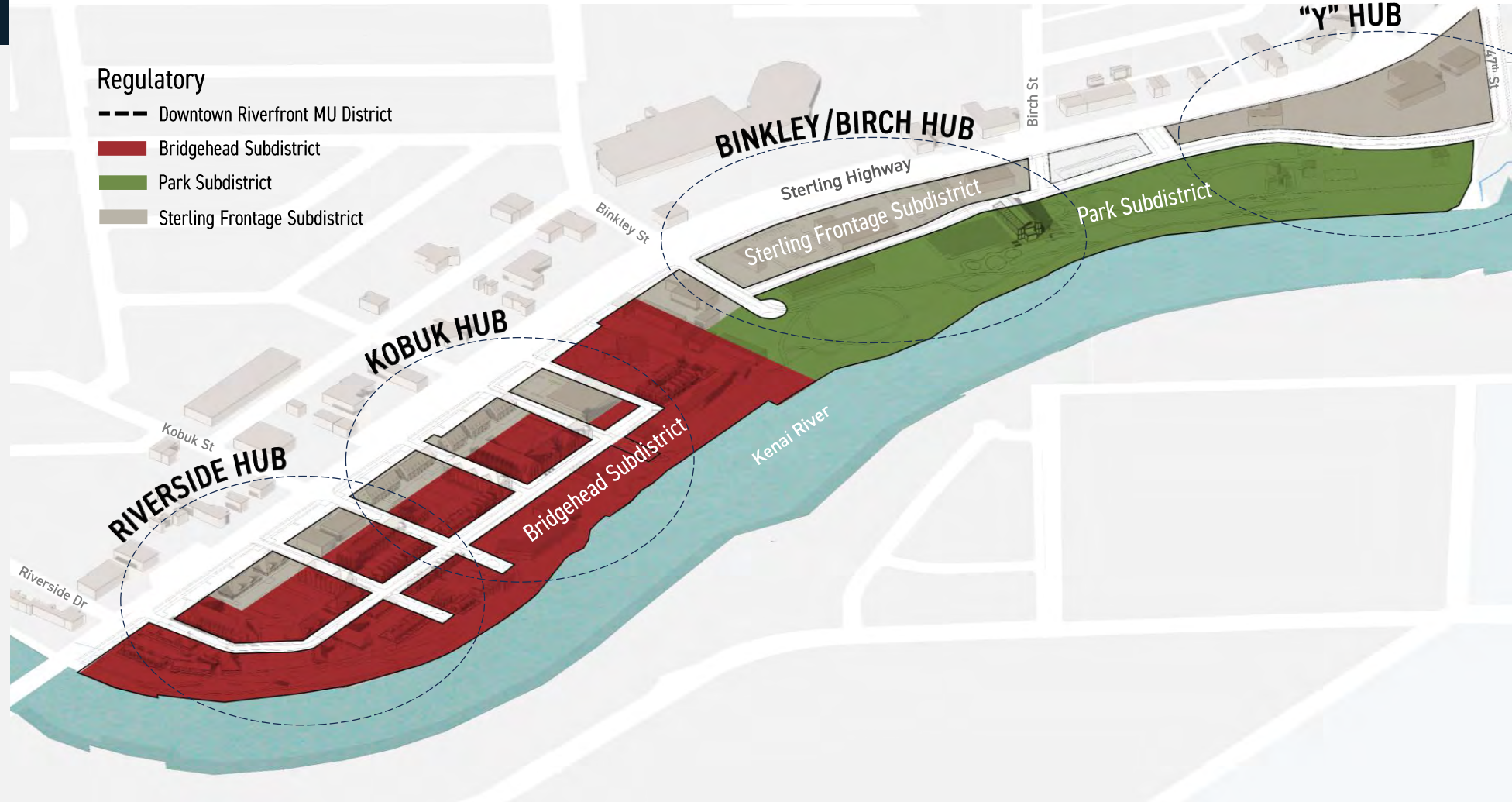
# Provide a Network of "Trail Loops"



# FRAMEWORKS

## Regulatory

- *New Mixed-Use Overlay*
- *Tailor Uses to Distinct Subdistricts*
- *Promote a walkable downtown*



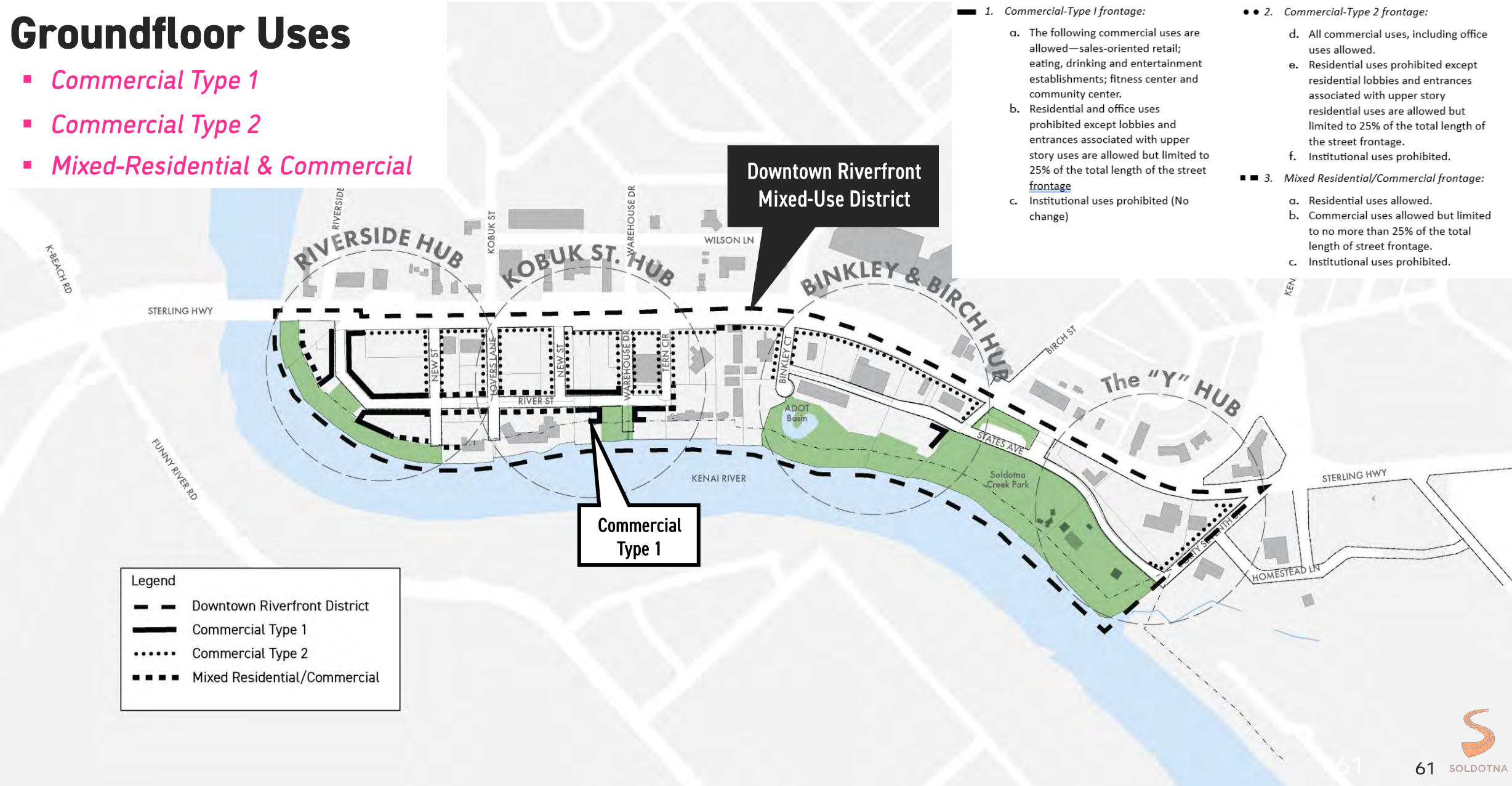


# Downtown Riverfront Mixed-Use District

## Groundfloor Uses

- Commercial Type 1
- Commercial Type 2
- Mixed-Residential & Commercial

1. Commercial-Type 1 frontage:
  - a. The following commercial uses are allowed—sales-oriented retail; eating, drinking and entertainment establishments; fitness center and community center.
  - b. Residential and office uses prohibited except lobbies and entrances associated with upper story uses are allowed but limited to 25% of the total length of the street frontage
  - c. Institutional uses prohibited (No change)
2. Commercial-Type 2 frontage:
  - d. All commercial uses, including office uses allowed.
  - e. Residential uses prohibited except residential lobbies and entrances associated with upper story residential uses are allowed but limited to 25% of the total length of the street frontage.
  - f. Institutional uses prohibited.
3. Mixed Residential/Commercial frontage:
  - a. Residential uses allowed.
  - b. Commercial uses allowed but limited to no more than 25% of the total length of street frontage.
  - c. Institutional uses prohibited.



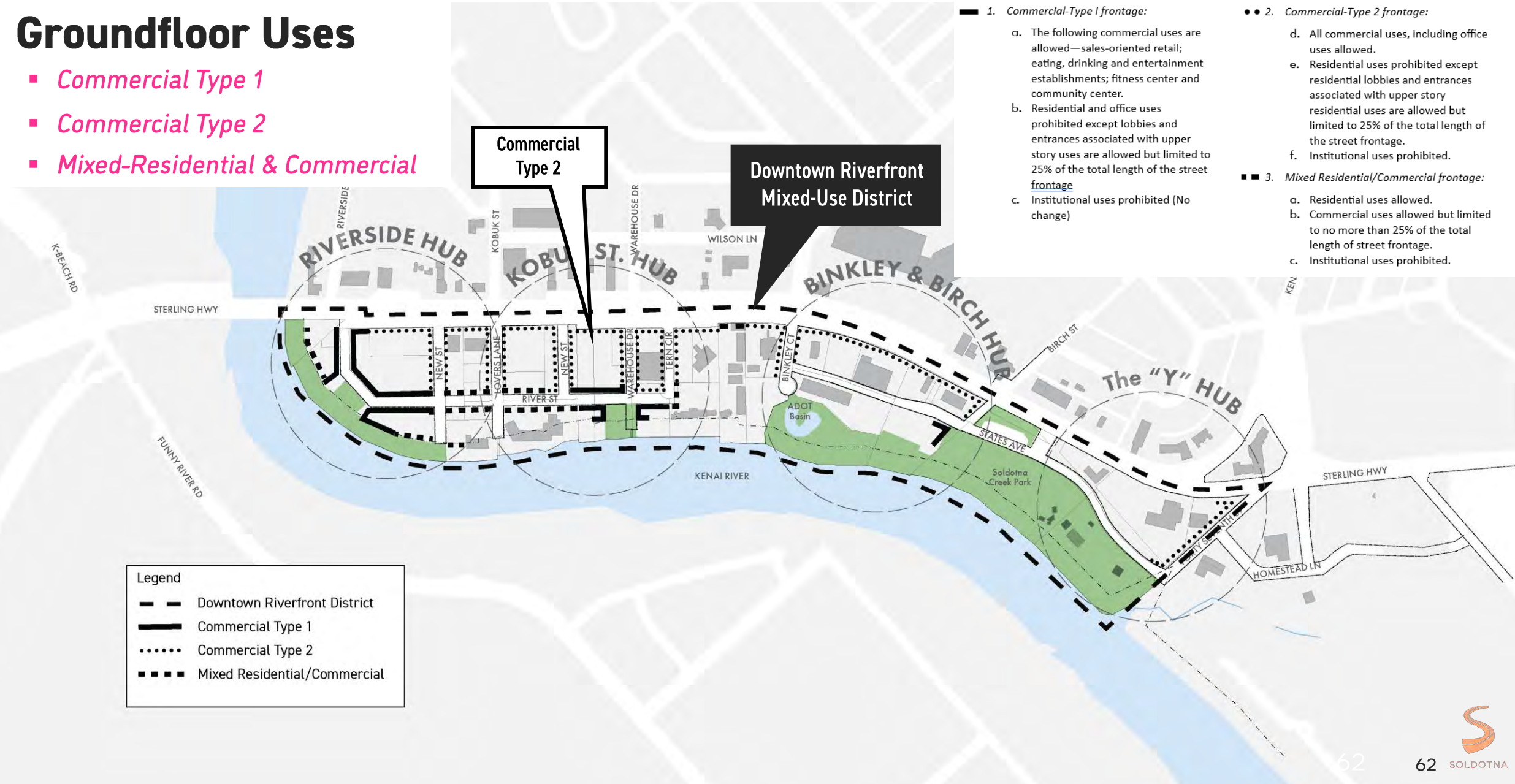
**Legend**

- Downtown Riverfront District
- Commercial Type 1
- ..... Commercial Type 2
- Mixed Residential/Commercial

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## Groundfloor Uses

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**Legend**

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- ..... Commercial Type 2
- Mixed Residential/Commercial

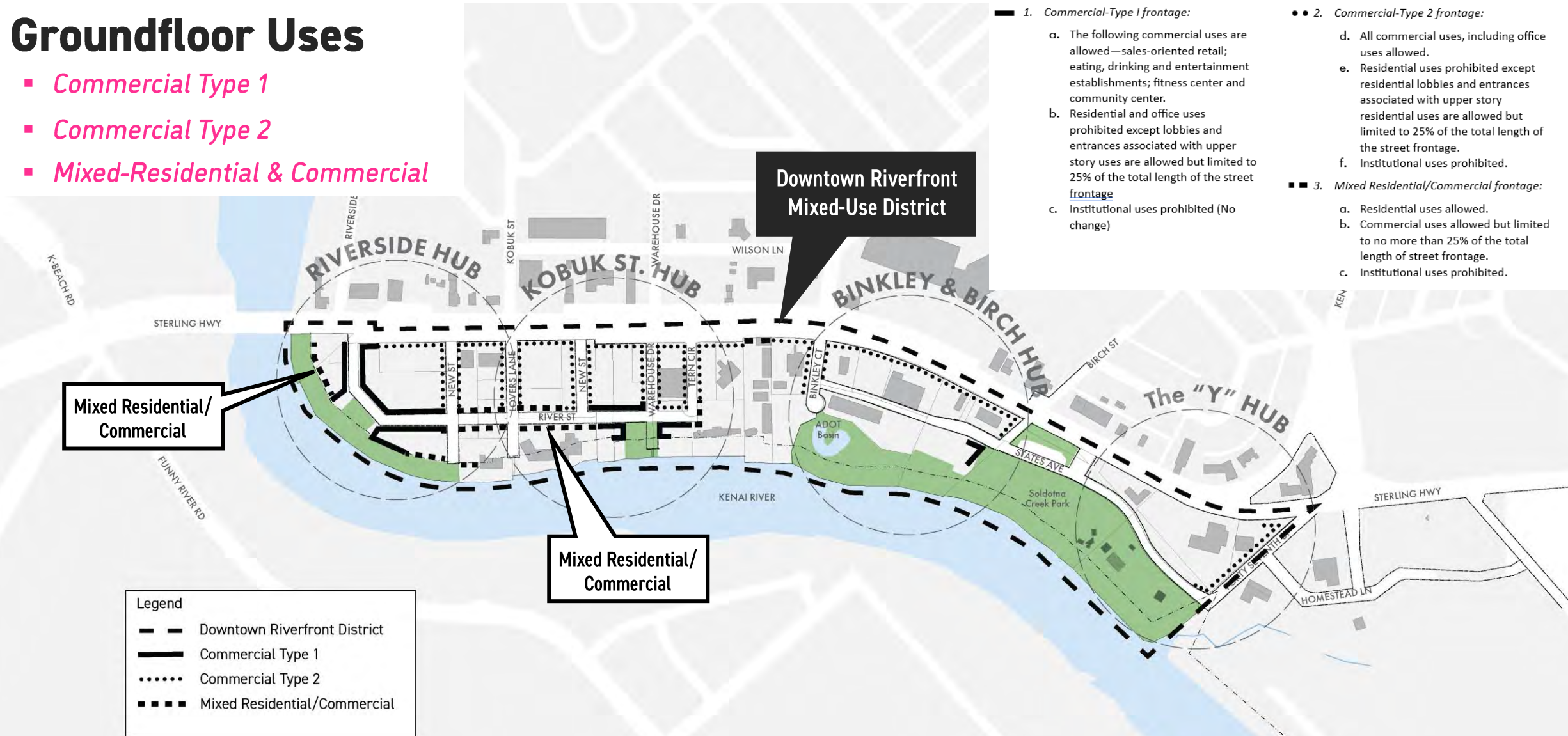
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**Legend**

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- Commercial Type 1
- ..... Commercial Type 2
- - - Mixed Residential/Commercial

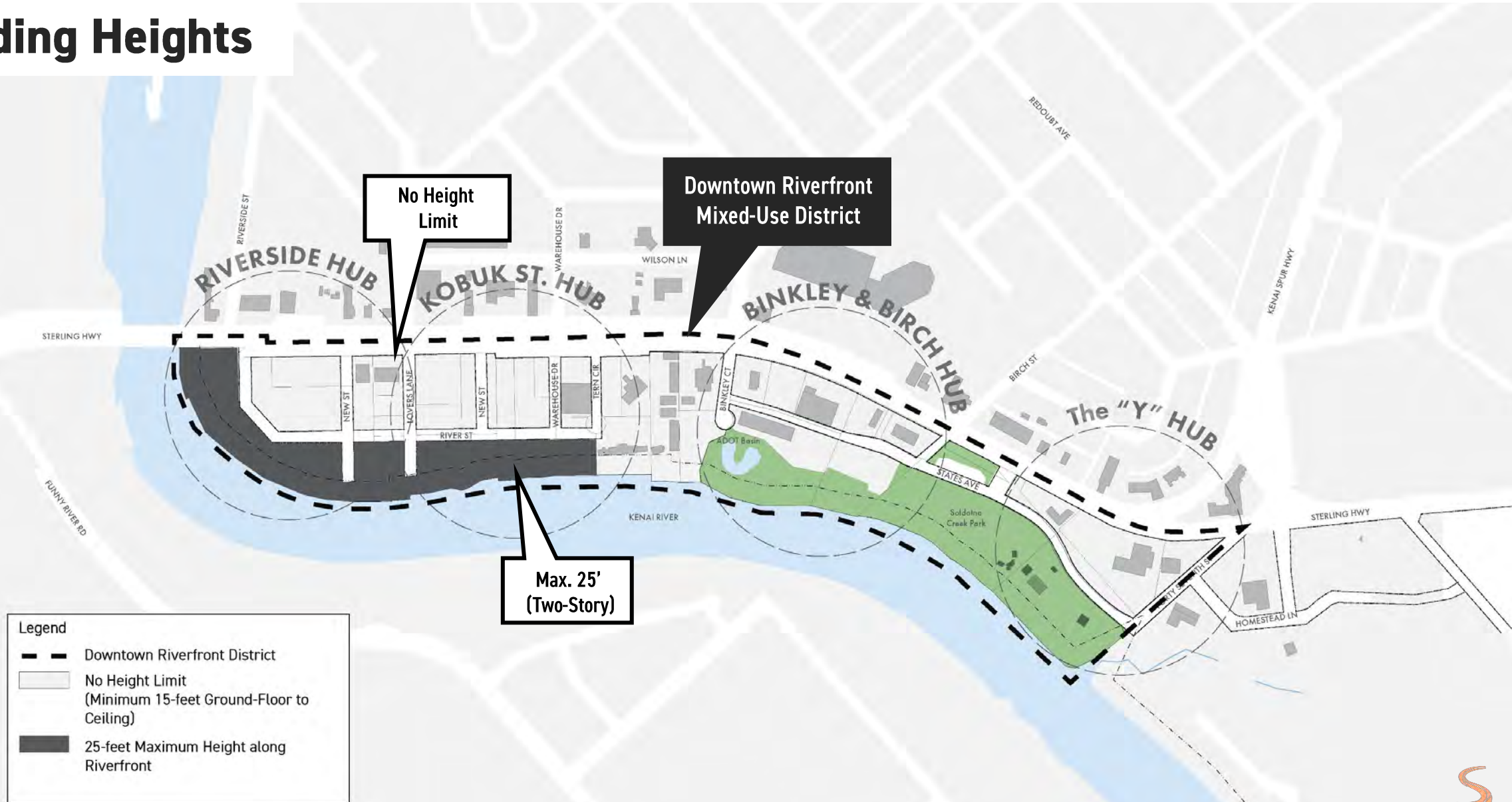
Mixed Residential/  
Commercial

Mixed Residential/  
Commercial

Downtown Riverfront  
Mixed-Use District

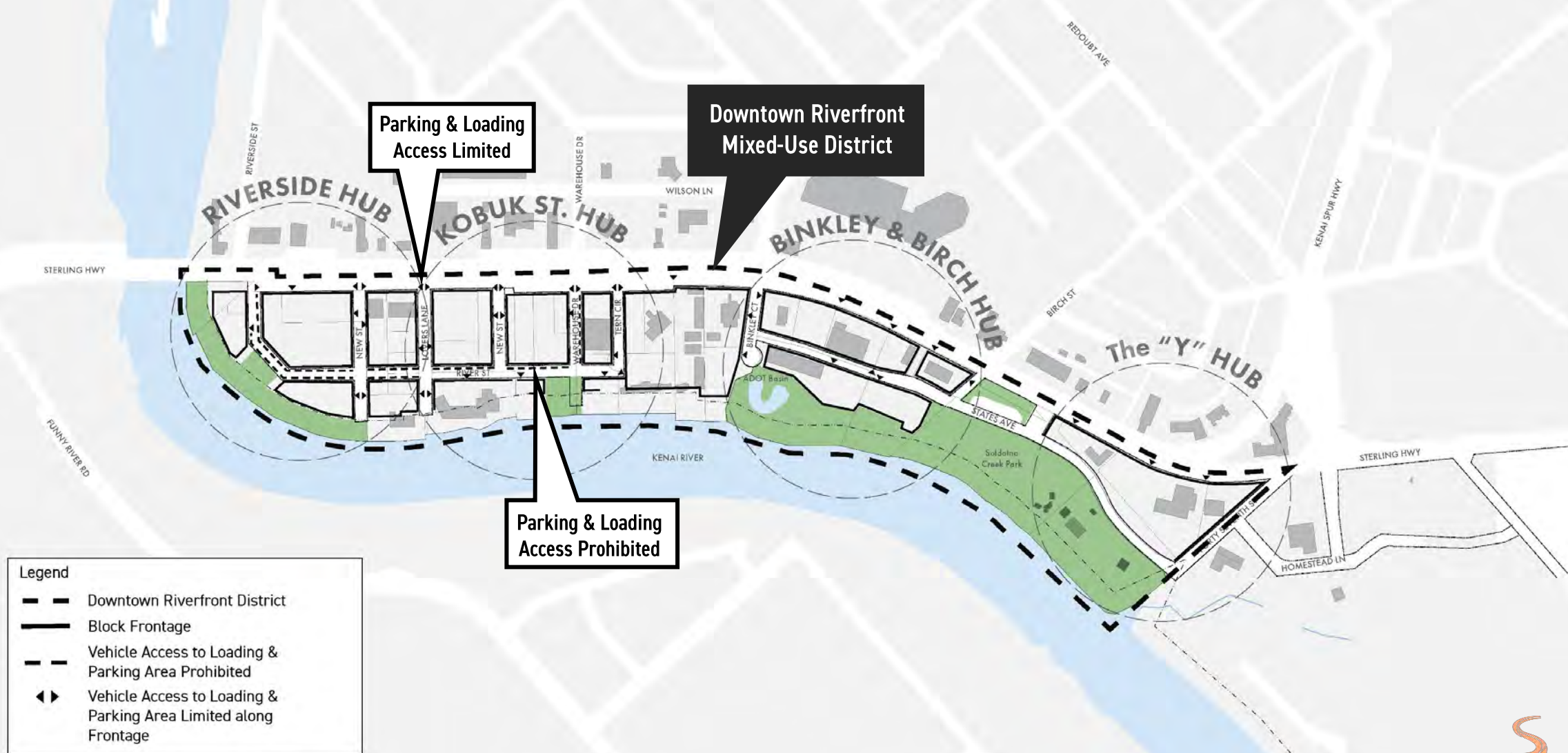
# Downtown Riverfront Mixed-Use District

## Building Heights



# Downtown Riverfront Mixed-Use District

## Parking/Loading Access



# IMPLEMENTATION

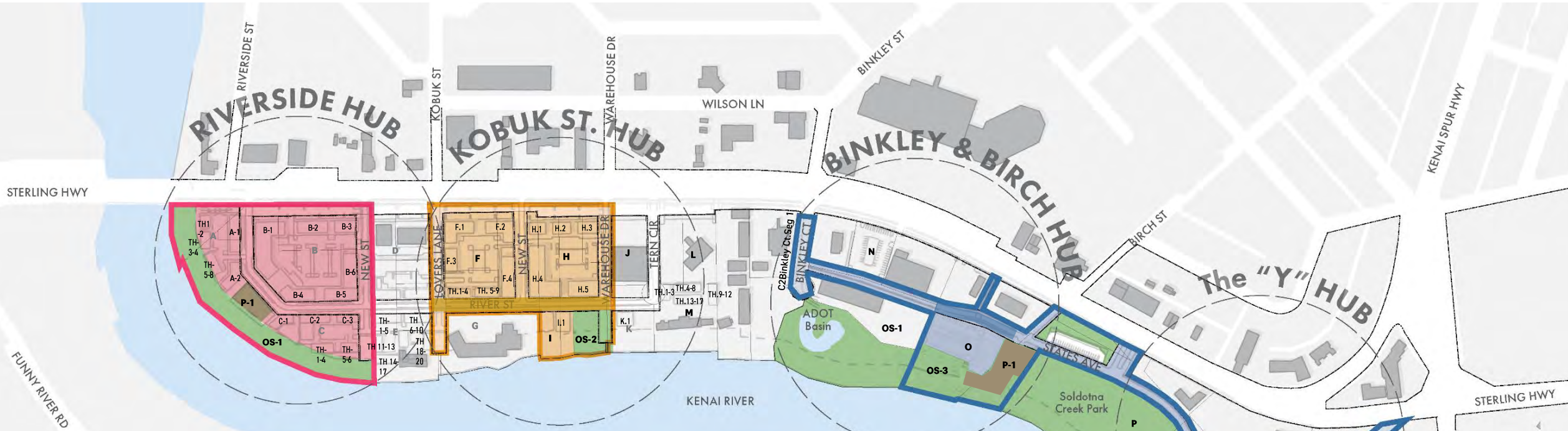
**Catalysts + Phasing**

**Funding**

**Action Plan**



# Implementation- Catalyst Sites + Phasing



### Riverside Hub

Partnership/Development Agreement  
 Infrastructure/Amenity Design  
 Infrastructure/Amenity Investment

**DEVELOPMENT SUMMARY**

Retail + Commercial	74,850 SF
Housing	42 Units
Hotel	62 Rooms
Street Improvements	1,788 LF
Utilities Infrastructure	1,788 LF
Bridgehead Plaza	35,000 SF
Trails + Boardwalks	1,200 LF

### Kobuk Hub

Partnership/Development Agreement  
 Infrastructure/Amenity Design  
 Infrastructure/Amenity Investment

**DEVELOPMENT SUMMARY**

Retail + Commercial	79,600 SF
Housing	158 Units
Street Improvements	3,050 LF
Utilities Infrastructure	3,050 LF
River Street Park +Trails	37,000 SF

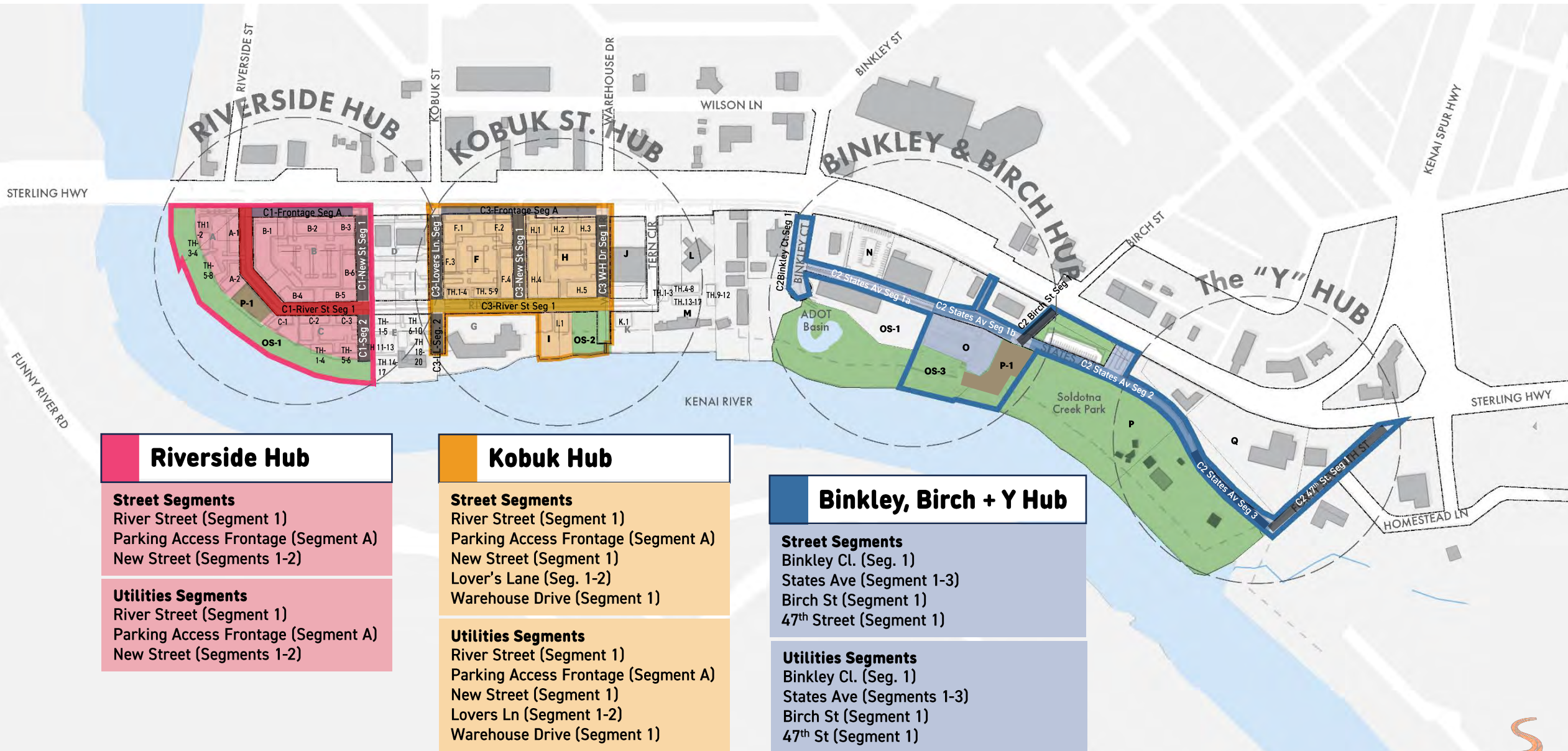
### Binkley, Birch + Y Hub

Partnership/Developer Agreement  
 Infrastructure/Amenity Design  
 Infrastructure/Amenity Investment

**DEVELOPMENT SUMMARY**

Market Hall	31,750 SF
Parking Structure	170 SP
Street Improvements	1,788 LF
Utilities Infrastructure	1,788 LF
Park Plaza	68,500 SF
Trails + Boardwalks	1,160 LF

# Implementation- Catalyst Sites + Phasing



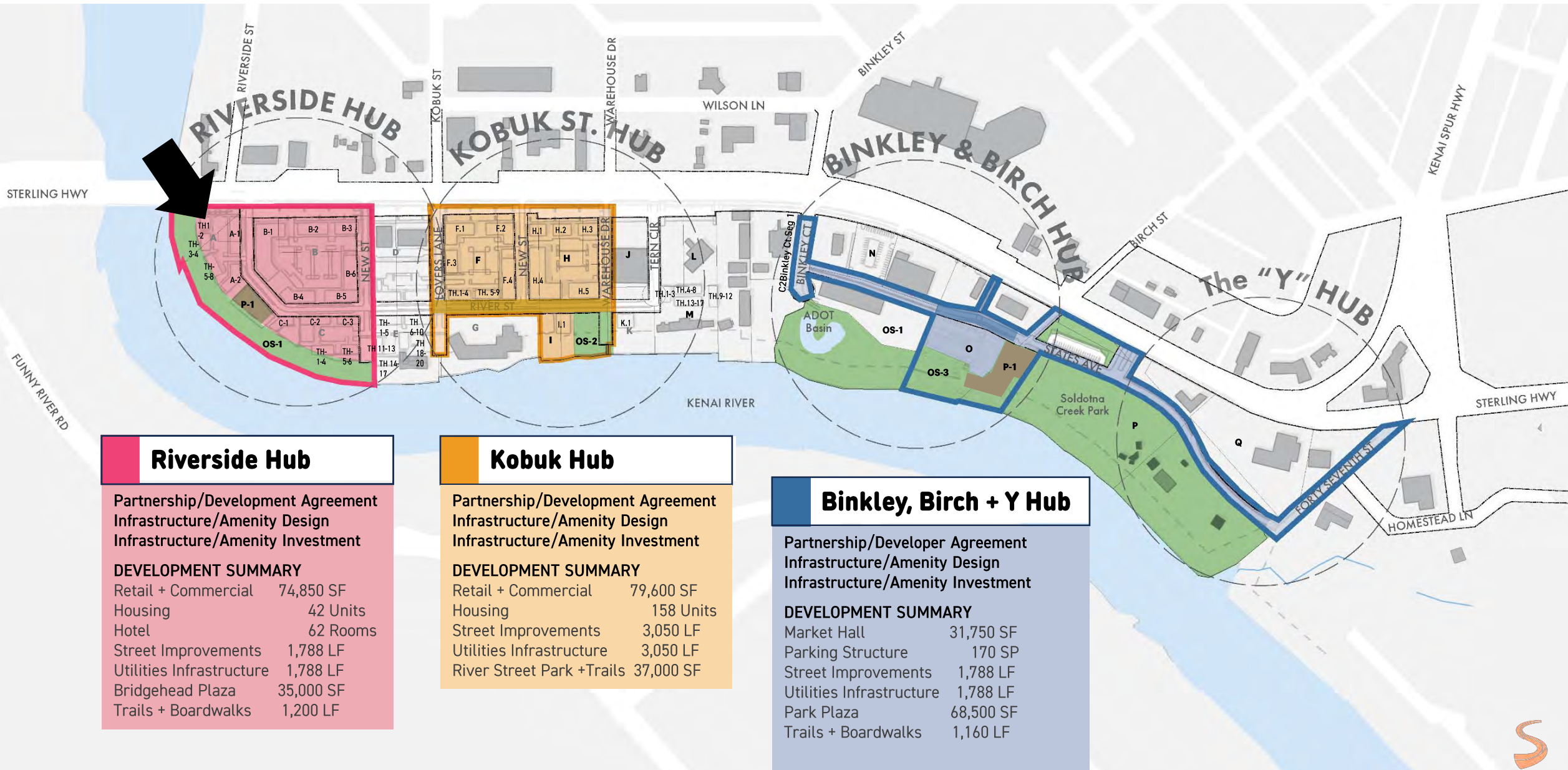
Riverside Hub
<b>Street Segments</b> River Street (Segment 1) Parking Access Frontage (Segment A) New Street (Segments 1-2)
<b>Utilities Segments</b> River Street (Segment 1) Parking Access Frontage (Segment A) New Street (Segments 1-2)

Kobuk Hub
<b>Street Segments</b> River Street (Segment 1) Parking Access Frontage (Segment A) New Street (Segment 1) Lover's Lane (Seg. 1-2) Warehouse Drive (Segment 1)
<b>Utilities Segments</b> River Street (Segment 1) Parking Access Frontage (Segment A) New Street (Segment 1) Lovers Ln (Segment 1-2) Warehouse Drive (Segment 1)

Binkley, Birch + Y Hub
<b>Street Segments</b> Binkley Cl. (Seg. 1) States Ave (Segment 1-3) Birch St (Segment 1) 47 <sup>th</sup> Street (Segment 1)
<b>Utilities Segments</b> Binkley Cl. (Seg. 1) States Ave (Segments 1-3) Birch St (Segment 1) 47 <sup>th</sup> St (Segment 1)



# Implementation- Catalyst Sites + Phasing



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# Catalyst Sites + Phasing

## BUILD OUT-Development Summary

### Riverside Hub

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Sterling Commercial

Sterling Highway

Mixed Use Housing + Commercial

New Street

River Street

Riverside Drive

Mixed-Use Hotel, Restaurant & Retail

Trails + Boardwalks

Kenai River

Bridgehead Plaza

Riverfront Townhome




River Street Retail

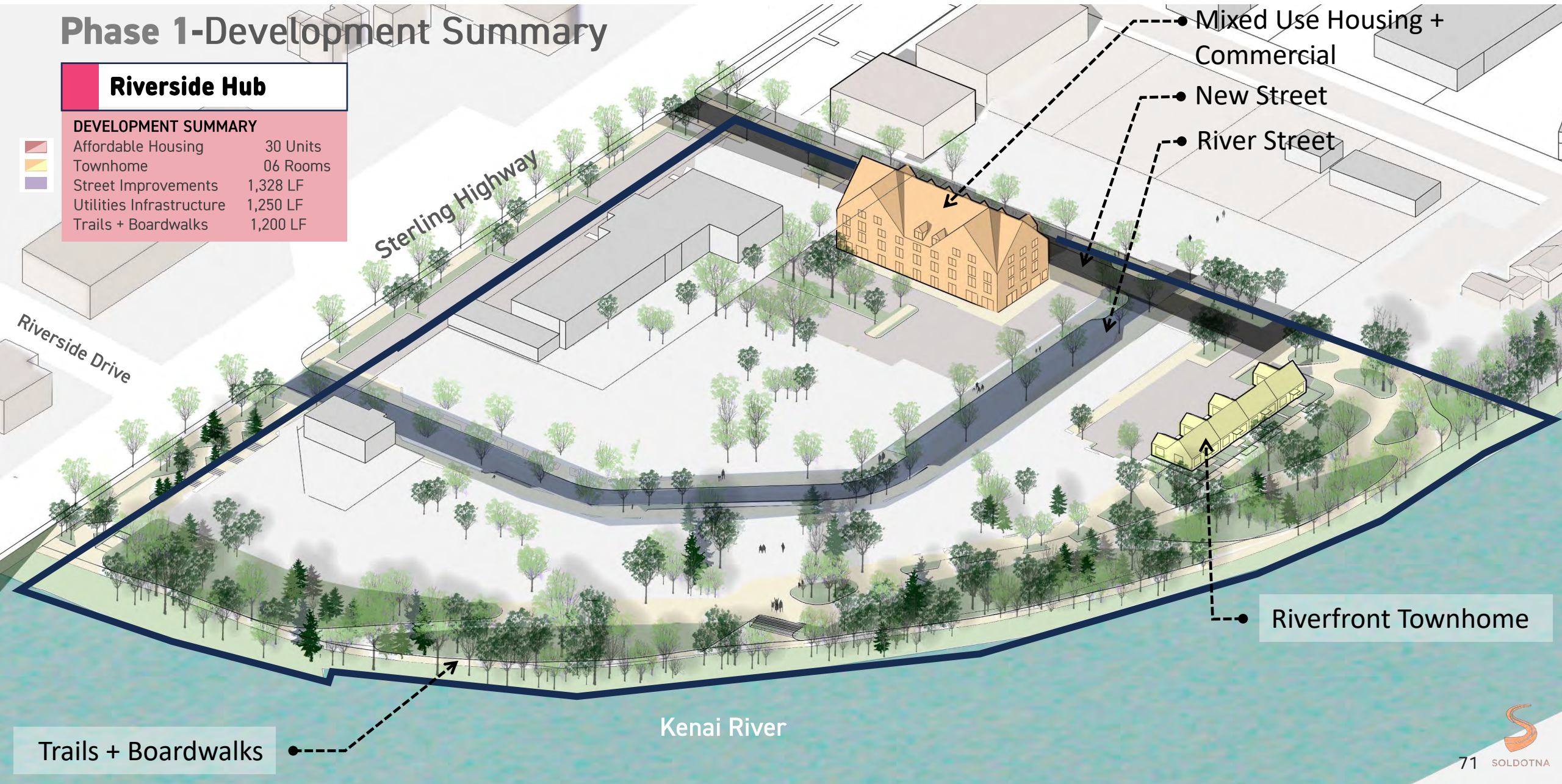
# Catalyst Sites + Phasing

## Phase 1-Development Summary

### Riverside Hub

#### DEVELOPMENT SUMMARY

	Affordable Housing	30 Units
	Townhome	06 Rooms
	Street Improvements	1,328 LF
	Utilities Infrastructure	1,250 LF
	Trails + Boardwalks	1,200 LF



• Mixed Use Housing + Commercial

• New Street

• River Street

• Riverfront Townhome

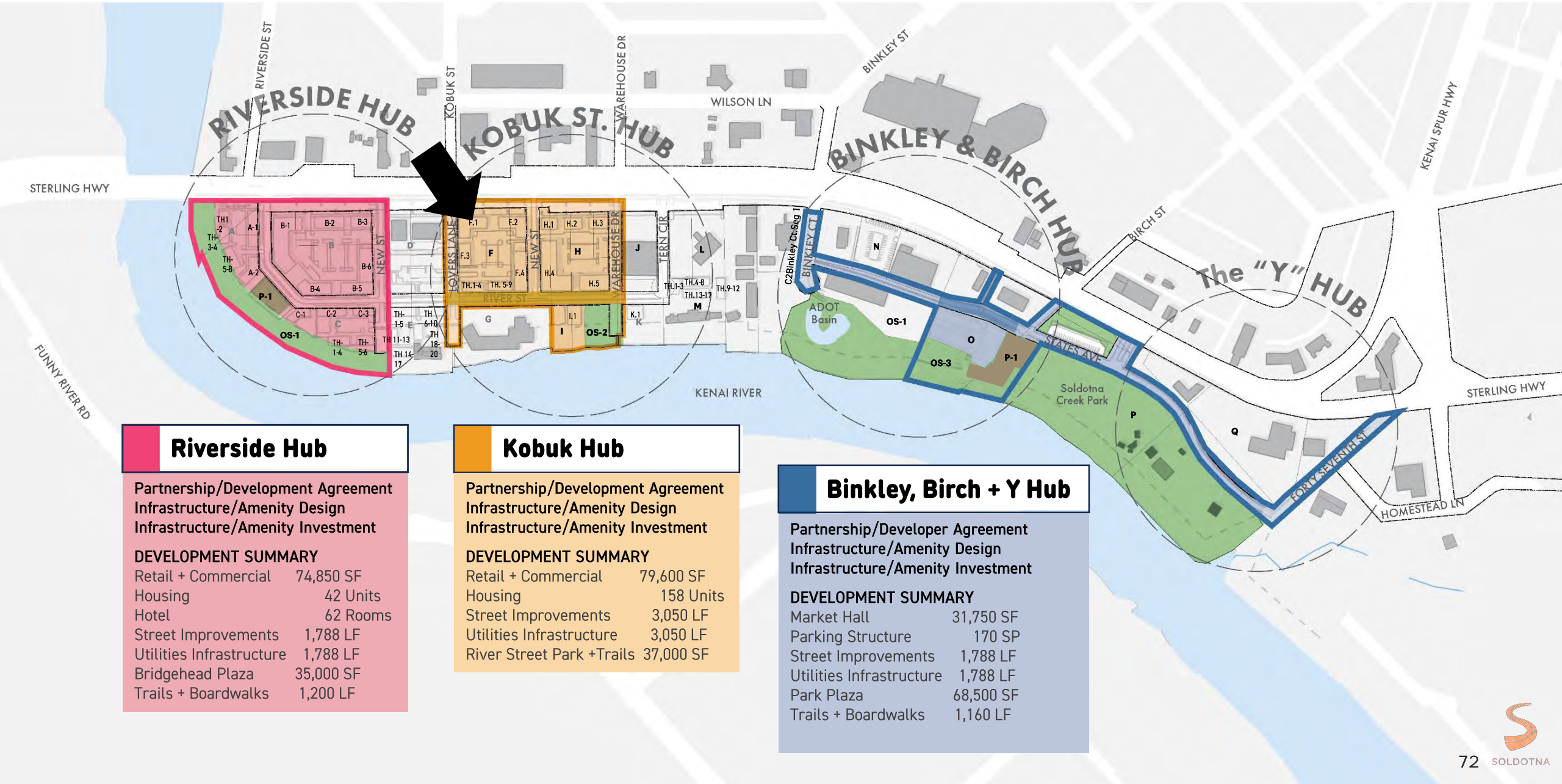
• Trails + Boardwalks

Kenai River

Sterling Highway

Riverside Drive

# Implementation- Catalyst Sites + Phasing



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New Street

Sterling Commercial

Mixed Use Housing + Commercial

Lovers Lane Enhanced

Warehouse Drive Ext.

Mixed Use Housing + Commercial

River Street

River Street Park + Trail

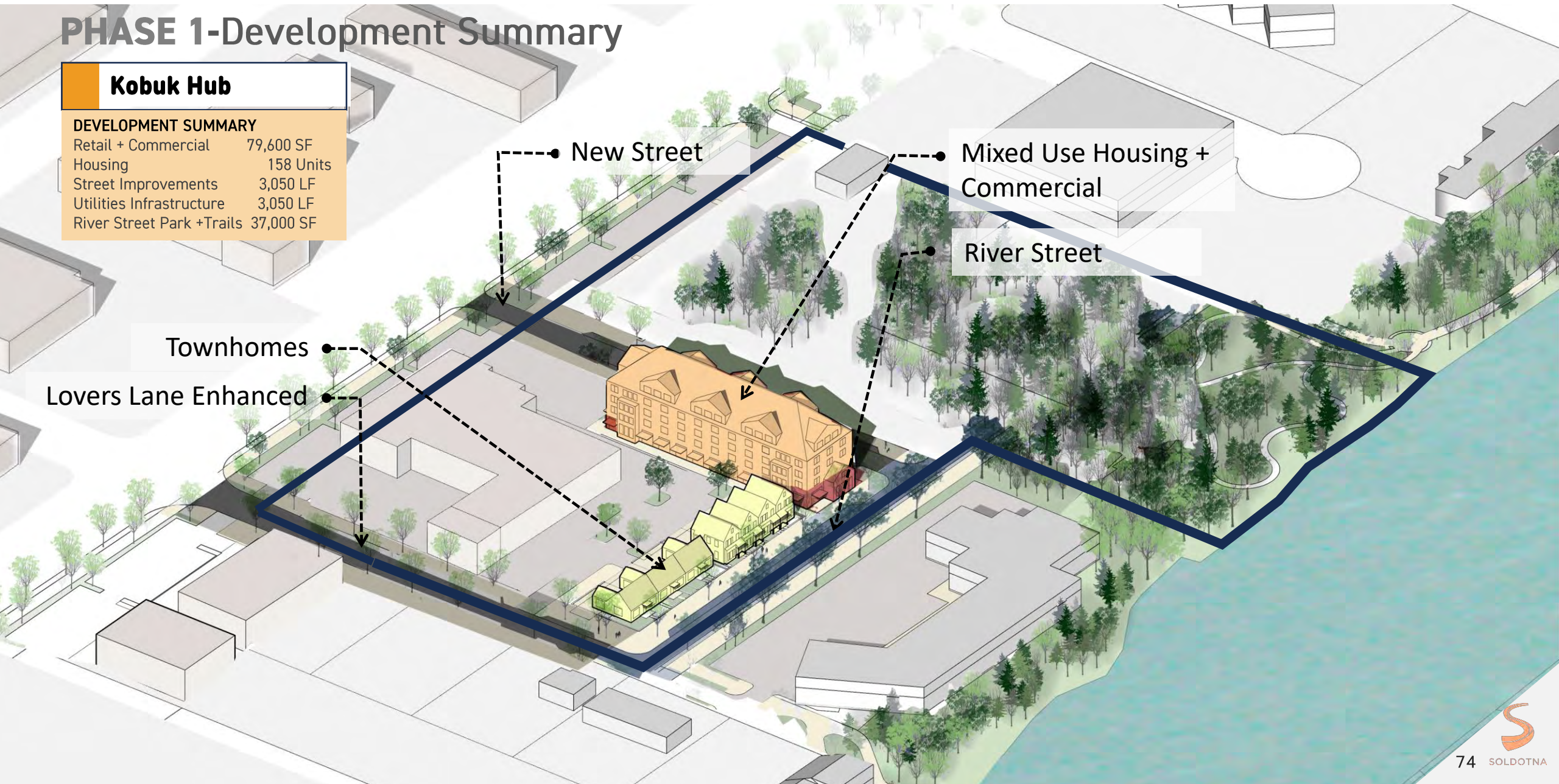
# Catalyst Sites + Phasing

## PHASE 1-Development Summary

### Kobuk Hub

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New Street

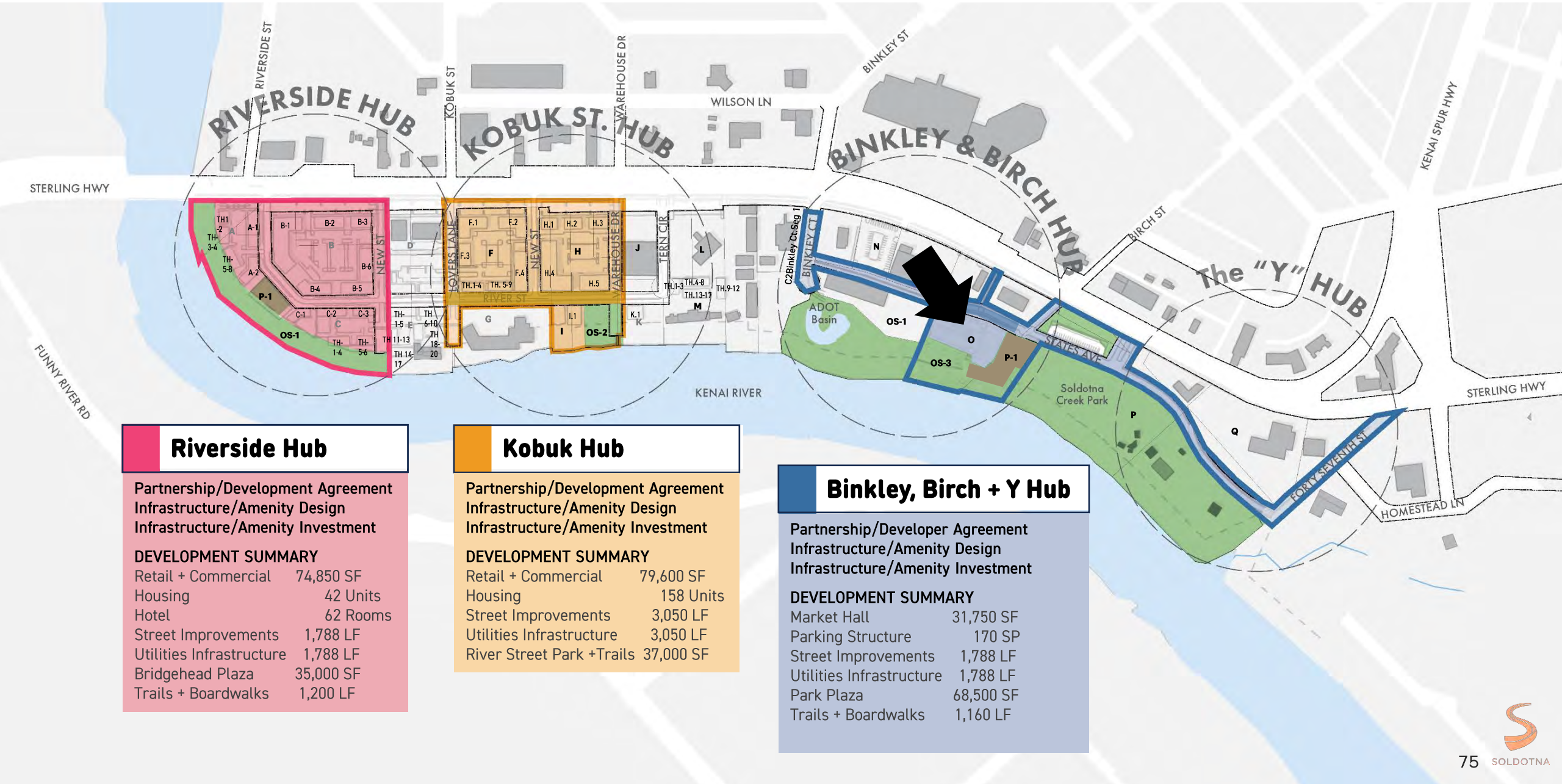
Mixed Use Housing +  
Commercial

River Street

Townhomes

Lovers Lane Enhanced

# Implementation- Catalyst Sites + Phasing



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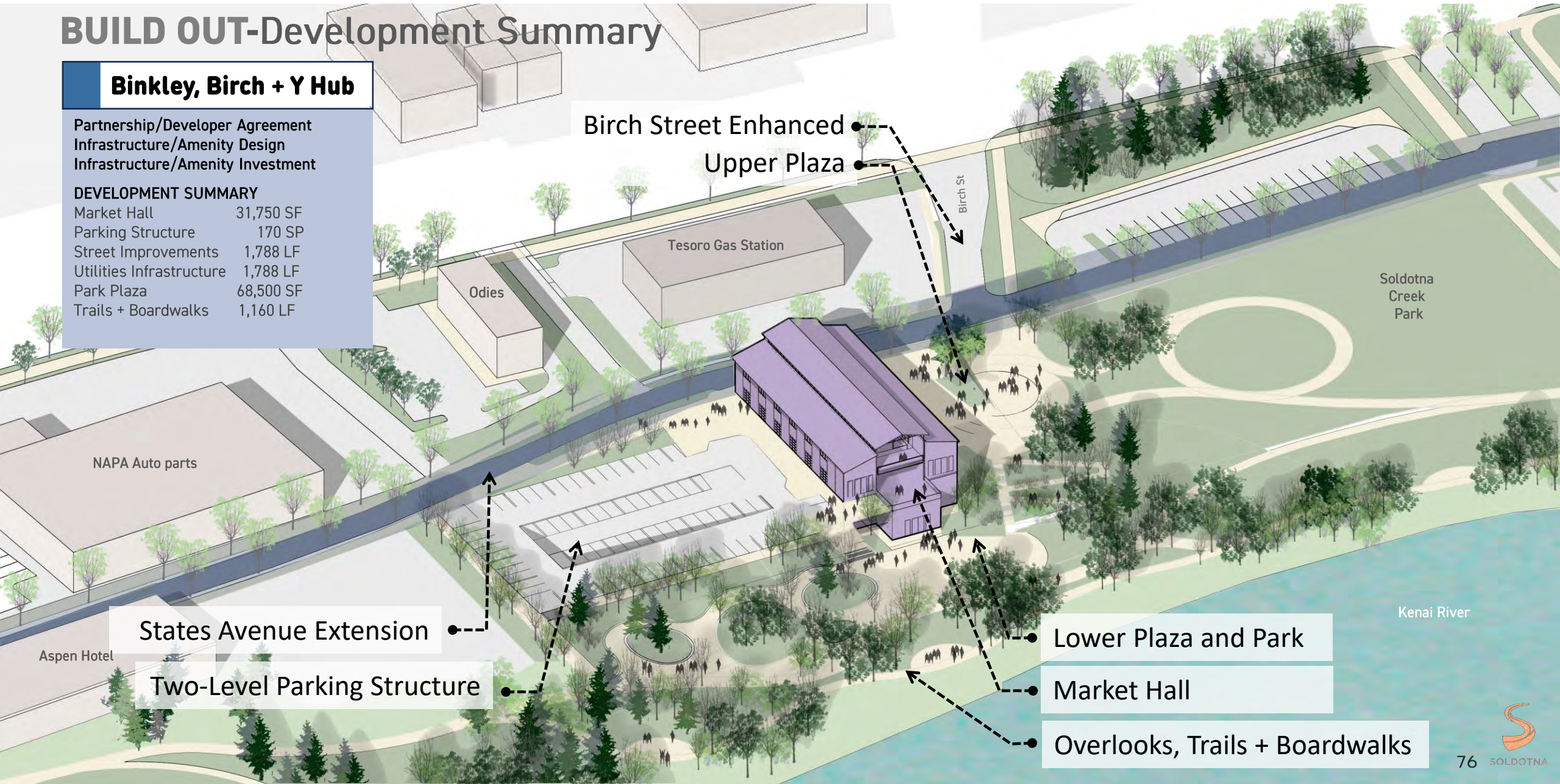
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Birch Street Enhanced

Upper Plaza

Tesoro Gas Station

Odies

NAPA Auto parts

Soldotna  
Creek  
Park

Kenai River

States Avenue Extension

Aspen Hotel

Two-Level Parking Structure

Lower Plaza and Park

Market Hall

Overlooks, Trails + Boardwalks



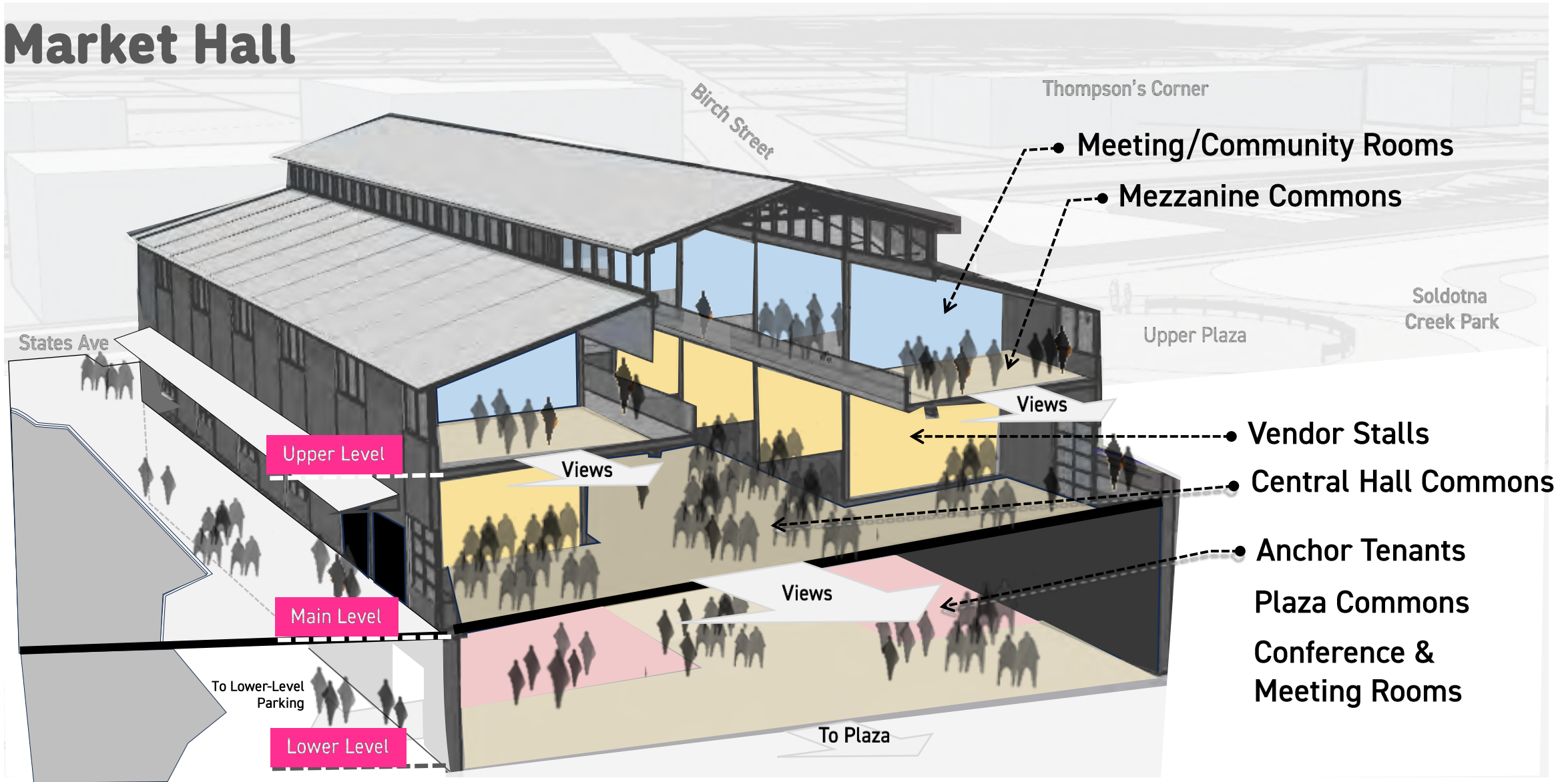
# Catalyst Sites + Phasing

## Market Hall



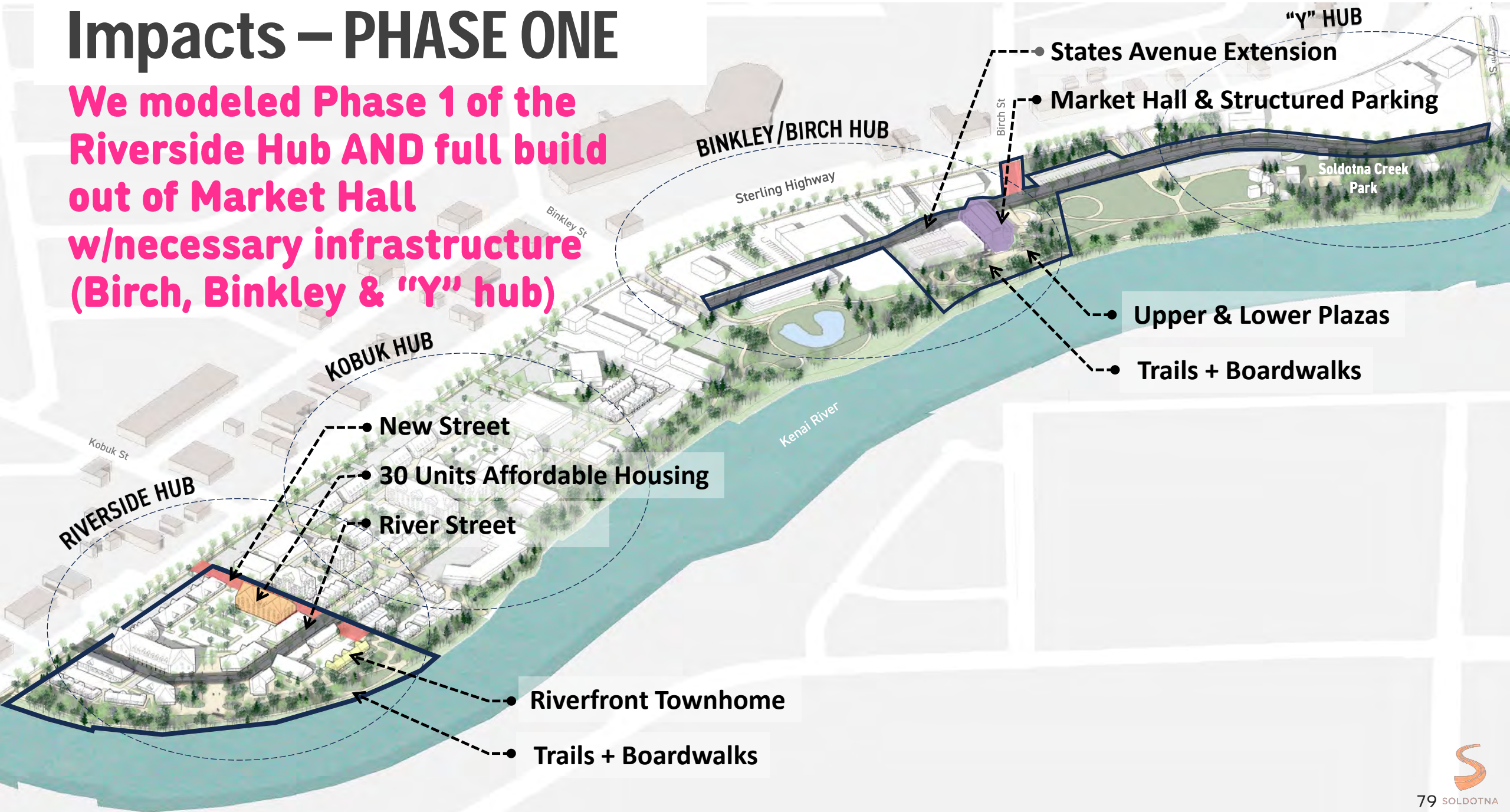
# Catalyst Sites + Phasing

## Market Hall



# Impacts – PHASE ONE

We modeled Phase 1 of the Riverside Hub AND full build out of Market Hall w/necessary infrastructure (Birch, Binkley & "Y" hub)



**BINKLEY/BIRCH HUB**

**"Y" HUB**

- States Avenue Extension
- Market Hall & Structured Parking

**KOBUK HUB**

- New Street
- 30 Units Affordable Housing
- River Street

**RIVERSIDE HUB**

- Riverfront Townhome
- Trails + Boardwalks

- Upper & Lower Plazas
- Trails + Boardwalks

# Impacts – PHASE ONE

## We modeled Phase 1 of the Riverside Hub AND full build out of Market Hall w/necessary infrastructure (Birch, Binkley & “Y” hub)

- River Street and New Street
  - Improves safety, accessibility, multi-mobility
  - New opportunities for private development
- Trail and Boardwalk
  - Enhances access to the riverfront
- Affordable Housing: 30 Units
  - Affordable for those who work and live in Soldotna; additional customers
- Townhomes: 6 Units
  - Brings private investment to the area; additional customers
- Market Hall
  - 18-23 affordable retail stalls, supports the business development pipeline, community gathering space

# Impacts – PHASE ONE

Preliminary results

**We modeled Phase 1 of Catalyst Site 1 AND full build out of Market Hall w/necessary infrastructure**

## Total Construction Impacts over 5-Year Buildout

- 572 total jobs
    - Direct: 430 jobs
    - Secondary: 142 jobs
  - \$28.6 million in labor income
    - Direct: \$23 million
    - Secondary: \$5.6 million
  - \$1.4 million in total taxes
    - Local & state
  - Development to Infrastructure Ratio: 3.6
    - Every \$1.00 spent on infrastructure would support \$3.60 in development
- \*The City may choose to financially support the market hall and/or affordable housing
- \*Infrastructure is necessary to attract private development but does not guarantee development

# Implementation Steps – Phase One



# Implementation

## Funding Sources

### Local, Public Revenue Sources

- General Fund
- Establish new source
  - Transient Occupancy Taxes
  - Urban Renewal
  - Special Assessment District
  - Bonds
  - Development Driven Sources (SDC, CET)
  - User Fees

### Grants and Loans

- State (Transportation, Natural Resources, Commerce, etc.)
- Federal (USDOT, EDA, EPA, USDA, HUD)
- Foundations (Rasmuson Foundation, Kenai Peninsula Foundation, AARP)

### Philanthropy

- Fundraising, sponsorship, naming rights

# Implementation Steps – Phase One

## Site Ownership and Remediation





# Implementation Steps – Phase One

## Site Ownership and Remediation

### Do First

#### ANSWER CRITICAL QUESTIONS

- Are you purchasing the land or partnering with the owner?
- Does the site require remediation?

#### IF THE SITE REQUIRES REMEDIATION

- Seek federal grant funding to support remediation (EDA, EPA)

# Implementation Steps – Phase One

## Infrastructure, Utilities, Trails

### Do First

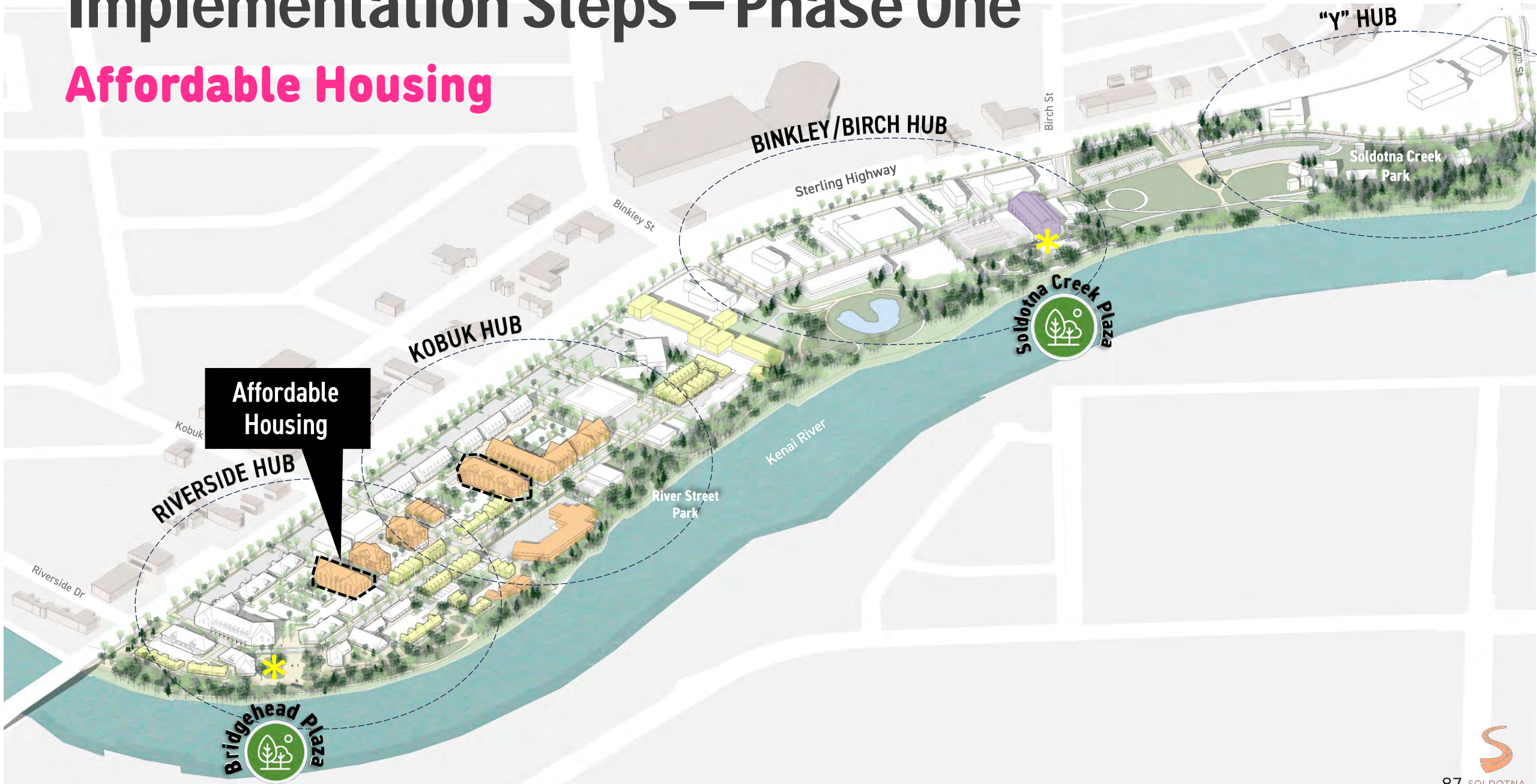
- Identify and prioritize catalytic infrastructure projects
- Secure funding through grants or CIP for 30% construction of Phase 1 infrastructure, utilities, trails
- Complete 30% construction documentation for roadway, utilities, boardwalk, and trail design

### Do Second

- Obtain right of way
- Secure funding through grants or CIP for 100% construction
- Complete 100% construction documentation and prepare bid package
- Select contractor
- Complete permitting and construction

# Implementation Steps – Phase One

## Affordable Housing



# Implementation Steps – Phase One

## Affordable Housing

### Do First

#### ANSWER CRITICAL QUESTIONS

- Agree that affordable housing is a priority
- Consider the City's preferred role (initially and ongoing) as well as the City's stretch role
- Evaluate the City's capacity and interest (move forward or stop here)

#### IF THE CITY MOVES FORWARD

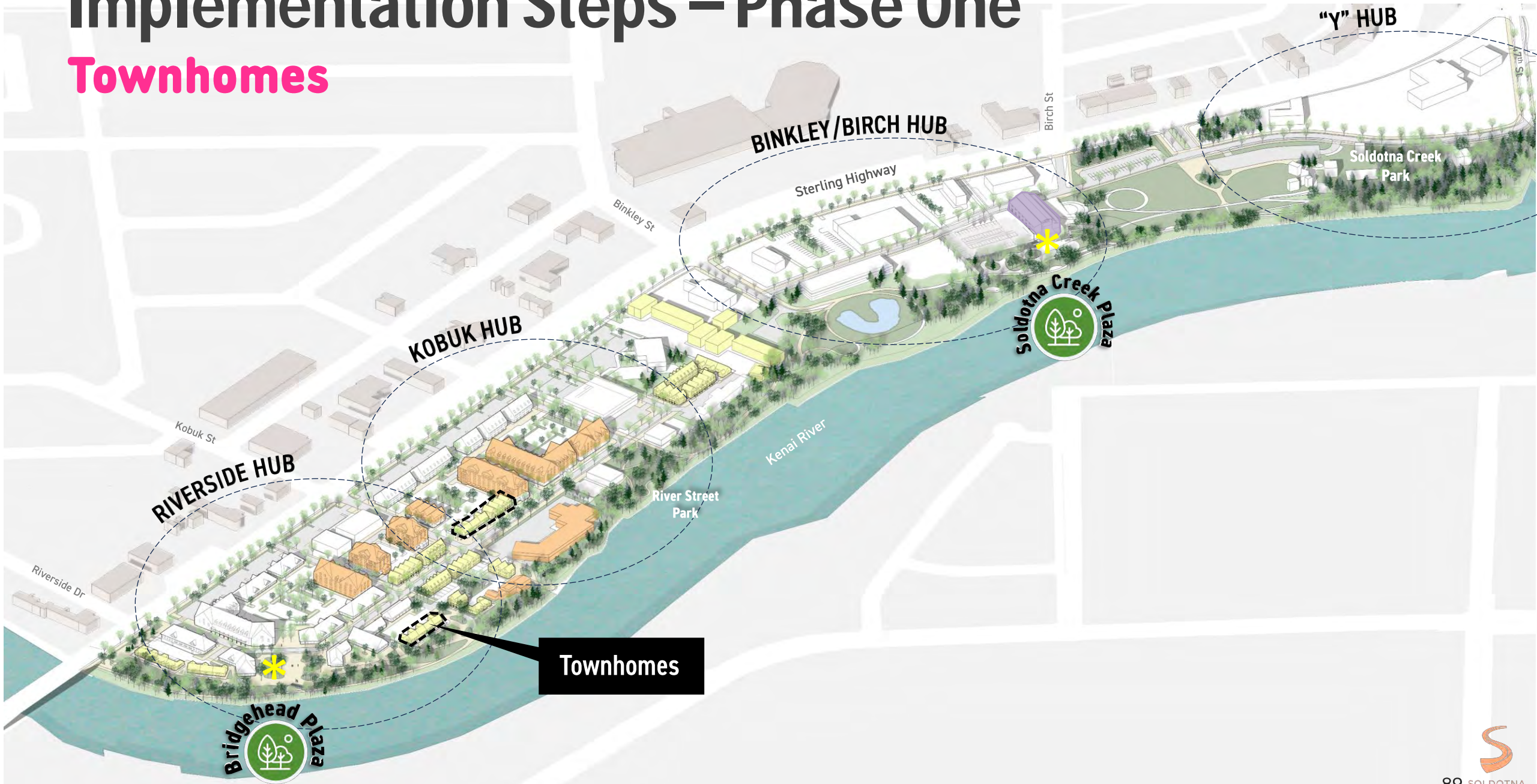
- Assign a City Project Manager
- Spread the word to potential partners and funders

### Do Second

- Conduct site analysis (including infrastructure needs)
- Assign site(s)
- Determine City funding capacity (and other federal and state sources the City can leverage)
- Conduct solicitation for affordable housing project (if on City-held site)
- Build needed infrastructure, if any (note: potential CDBG usage if Consolidated Plan allows for it and affordable housing is a designated use for the site)

# Implementation Steps – Phase One

## Townhomes



# Implementation Steps – Phase One

## Townhomes

### Do First

#### ANSWER CRITICAL QUESTIONS

- Agree that townhomes are a priority for phase 1
- Consider the City's preferred and stretch role
- Evaluate the City's capacity and interest

#### IF THE CITY MOVES FORWARD

- Assign a City Project Manager
- Continue conversations with property owners to understand needs and goals
- Evaluate site assemblage and/or redevelopment opportunities (inc. infrastructure needs, if any)

### Do Second

#### IF CITY PROPERTY:

- Conduct any site remediation needed
- Evaluate infrastructure needs, if any, and determine phasing
- Conduct developer solicitation

#### IF PRIVATE PROPERTY

- Evaluate infrastructure needs, if any
- Determine City role, if any, in matchmaking with developers, infrastructure investment, etc.

# Implementation Steps – Phase One

## Market Hall



# Implementation Steps – Phase One

## Market Hall

### Do First

#### ANSWER CRITICAL QUESTIONS

- Agree on purpose and objectives of market hall
- Consider the City's preferred role in development and ongoing operations
- Evaluate the City's capacity and interest

#### IF THE CITY MOVES FORWARD

- Assign a City Project Manager
- Conduct programming and location analysis
- Conduct a preliminary fundraising analysis
- Seek or provide next phase project funding
- Evaluate potential operator options

### Do Second

- Form stakeholder “Blue Ribbon” committee
- Determine preferred site
- Identify operator (organization or individual)
- Refine programming and conduct preliminary design
- Obtain cost estimate
- Develop fundraising plan



# Economic Impacts

## Full Buildout



Bridgehead Plaza

Soldotna Creek Plaza

# Economic Impacts

Preliminary results

## Full Buildout (inclusive of Phase 1)

### Total Construction Impacts over Full Buildout

- 2,070 total jobs
  - Direct: 1,550 jobs
  - Secondary: 520 jobs
- \$110 million in labor income
  - Direct: \$88 million
  - Secondary: \$22 million
- \$5.1 million in total taxes
  - Local & state
- Development to Infrastructure Ratio: 5.3
  - Every \$1.00 spent on infrastructure would support \$5.30 in development

\*The City may choose to financially support the market hall and/or affordable housing

\*Infrastructure is necessary to attract private development but does not guarantee development

# Next Steps

- **Assemble and Review Redevelopment Plan Chapters—  
Through November**
- **Final Redevelopment Plan for Review and Adoption—  
Mid December**