

THE CAÑON CITY RIVERFRONT INITIATIVE

DESIGN + ENGAGEMENT PROCESS OVERVIEW

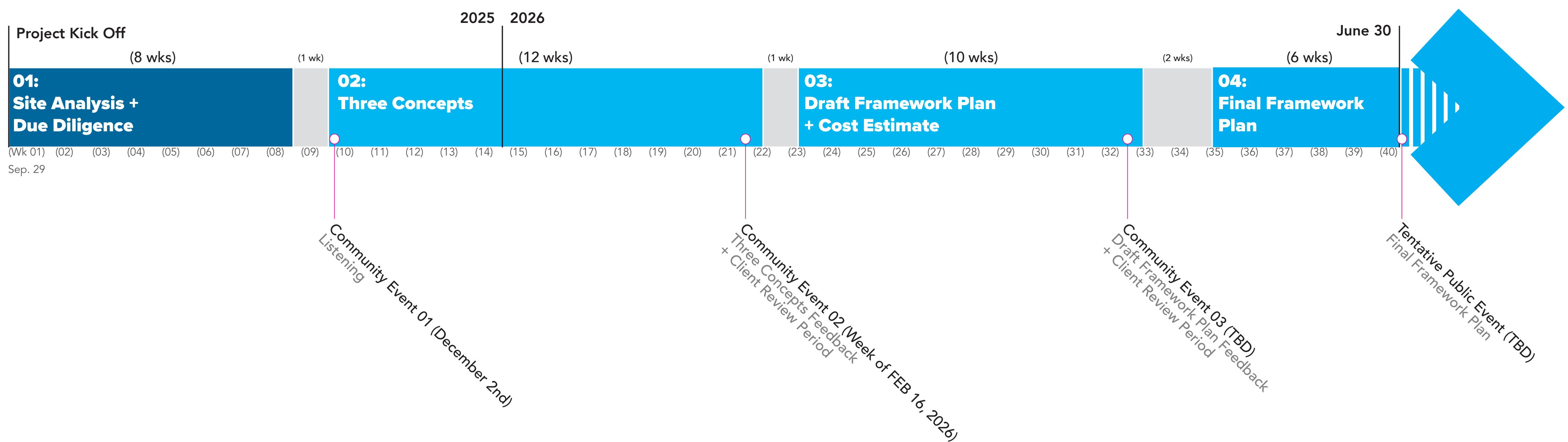
The Cañon City Riverfront Initiative is a multi-phase planning and design process focused on transforming key public spaces along the Arkansas River. Below are the key takeaways from the site analysis and due diligence process completed to date.

- 1 The Riverfront Initiative has many audiences.
- 2 The Riverfront Initiative should expand connectivity, enhance recreational opportunities, and catalyzes investment.
- 3 The Riverfront Initiative's possibilities are defined by the floodplain and river characteristics.
- 4 The WGP Site is informed by its infrastructural and regulatory context.

This effort aims to strengthen community connections to the river, enhance recreational experiences, and create a more vibrant and accessible future for residents and visitors alike. Our team is currently gathering feedback and learning about the site's existing assets, constraints, and opportunities.

Over the next several months, we will test ideas, share concept options, and shape a shared vision for improvements to Western Gateway Park, Centennial Park, and their surrounding corridors. Your voice will help guide the future of the riverfront.

The design team is meeting regularly with a stakeholder group that includes representatives from the City of Cañon City, the Oil Creek Ditch Company, Black Hills Energy, Commercial River Rafting Users, River Recreation Advocates, the Arkansas Headwaters, Fishing Enthusiasts, Near Neighbors, the Royal Gorge Route Railroad, White Water Festival Organizers, Historic Preservation Advocates, Public Arts Committee, and Business Owners, among others.



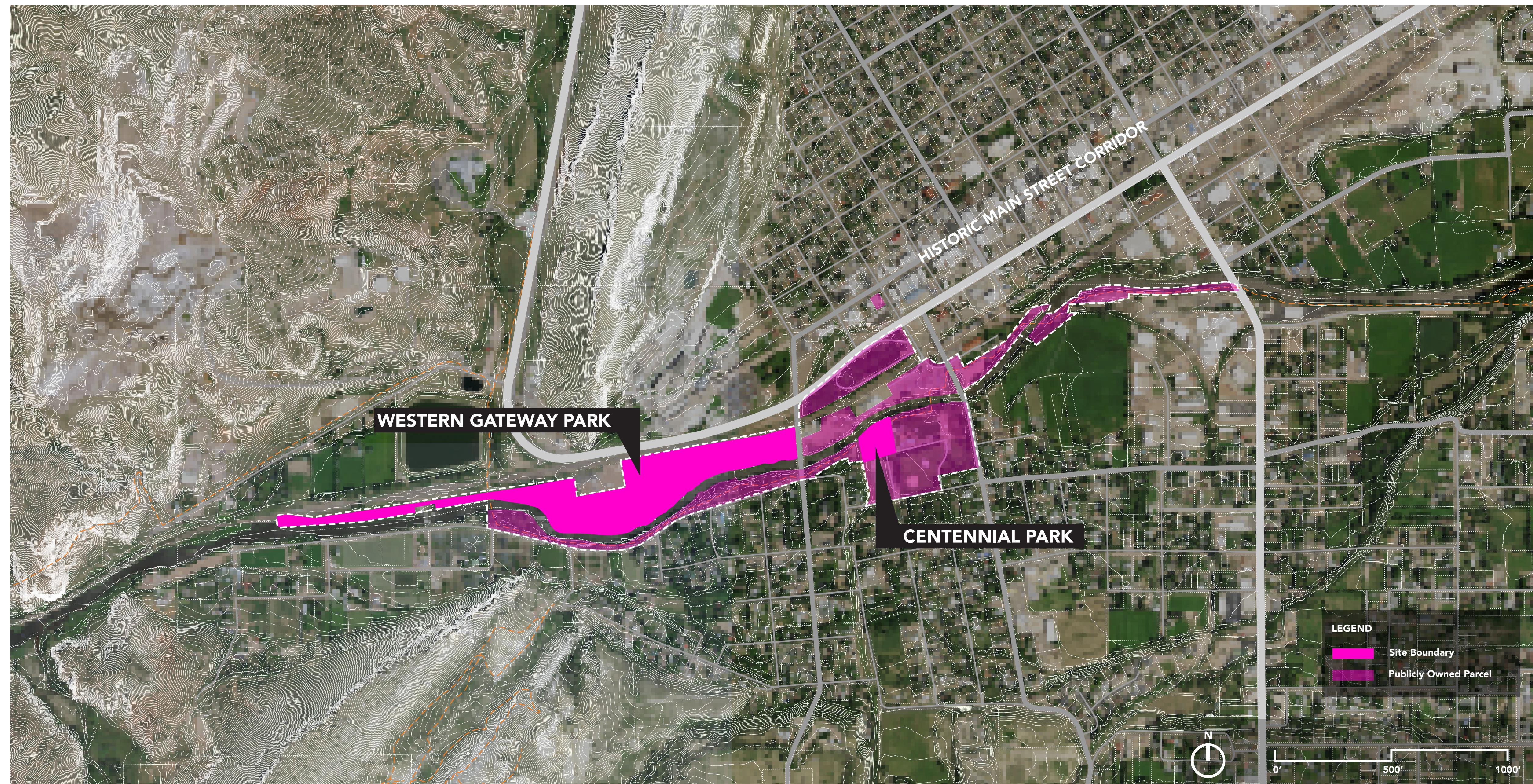
Western Gateway Park



Centennial Park



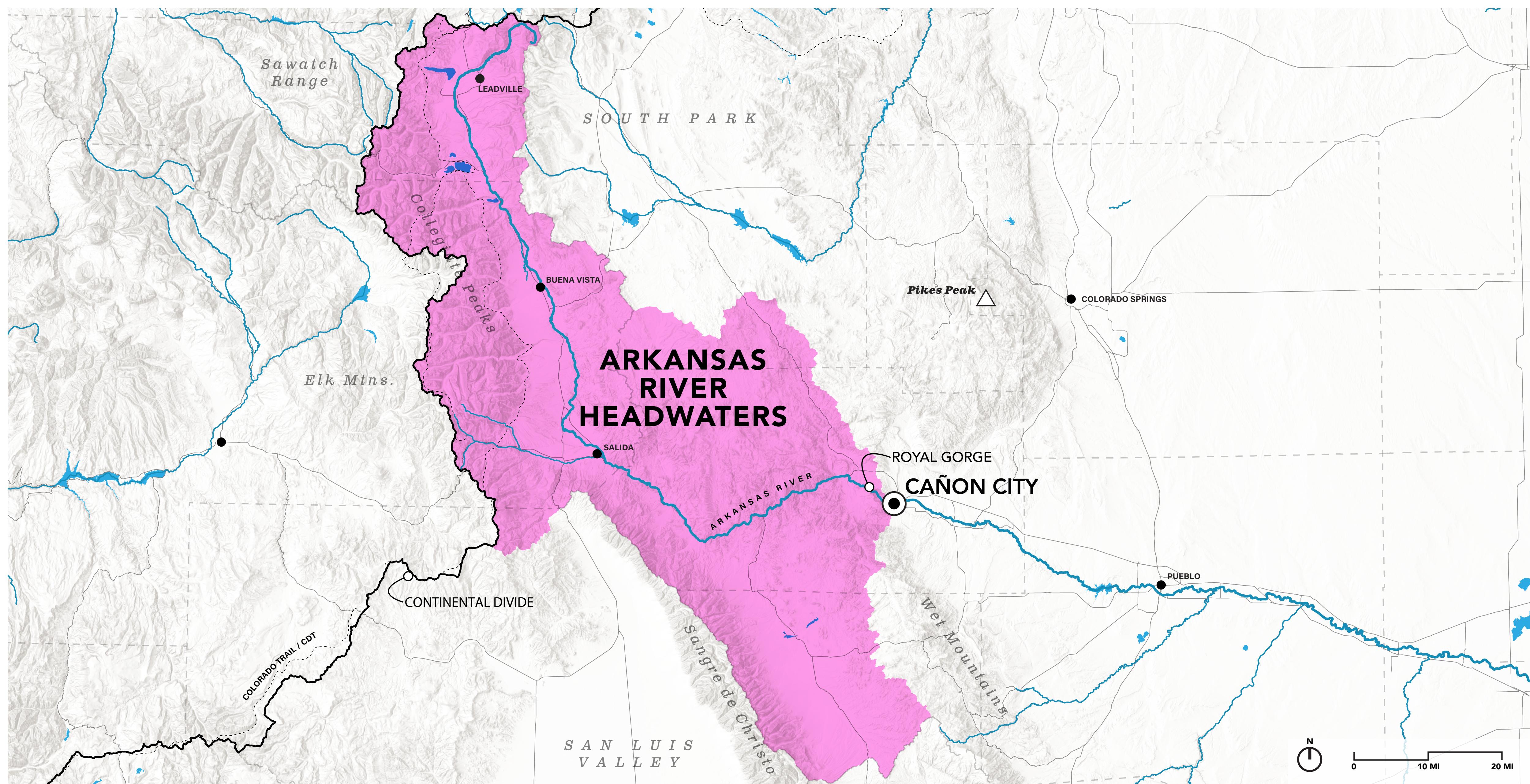
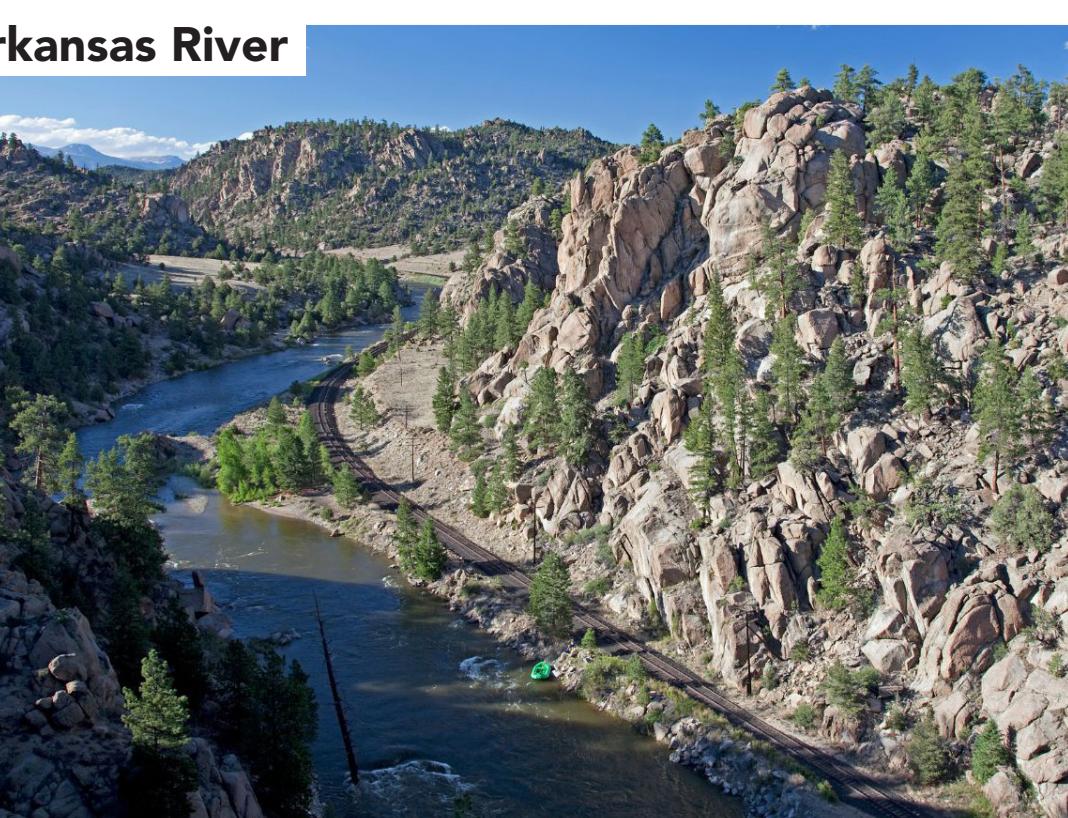
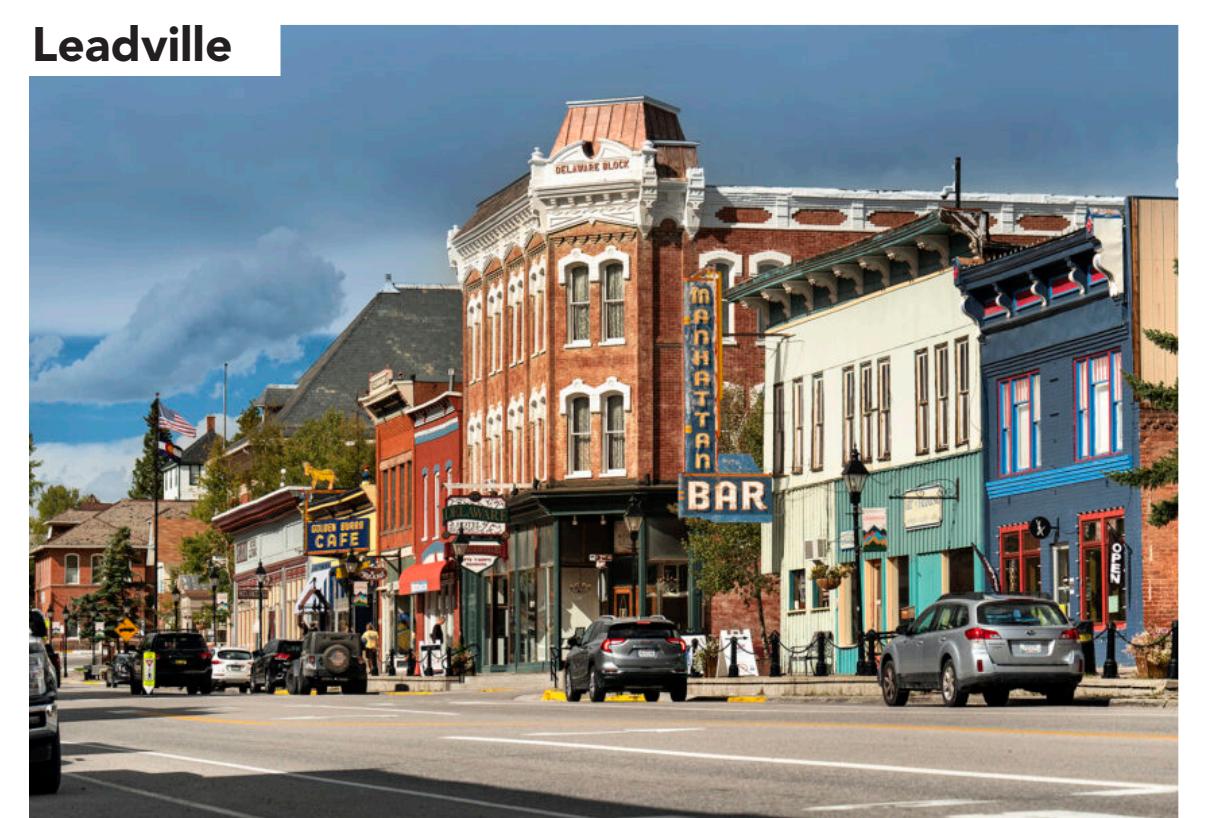
Arkansas River + Main Street



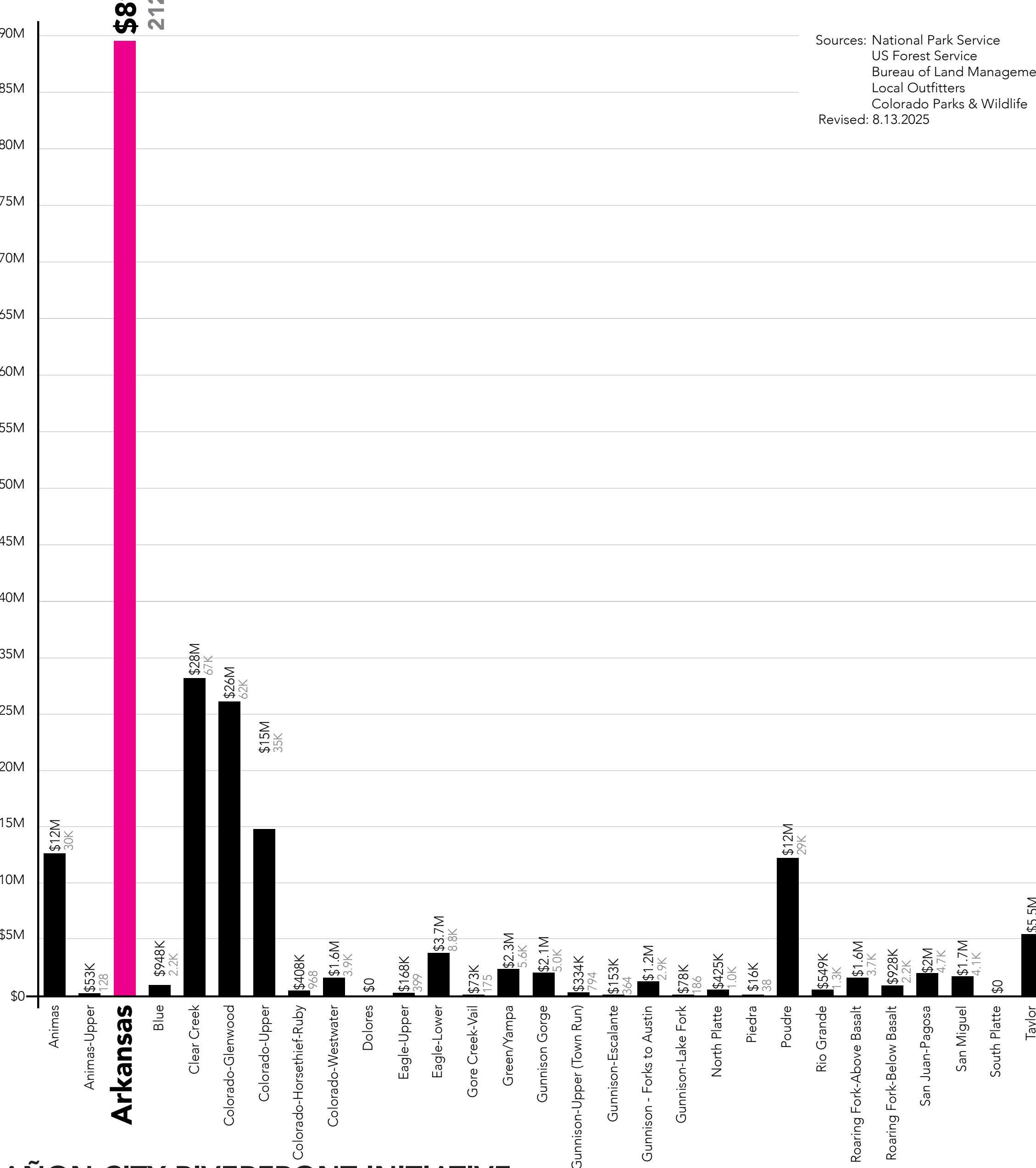
GATEWAY TO THE ARKANSAS RIVER HEADWATERS

REGIONAL CONTEXT

Cañon City sits at a powerful intersection of geography and recreation. As a gateway to the Arkansas River Headwaters and the Royal Gorge, the city plays a central role in one of Colorado's most active river corridors. The Arkansas River supports more commercial rafting than any other river in the state and fuels a major regional outdoor economy. With this national significance, the Cañon City riverfront is uniquely positioned to become both a celebrated local amenity and a regional destination for recreation, relaxation, and connection to nature.



ECONOMIC IMPACT OF COMMERCIAL RIVER RAFTING IN COLORADO - 2024
COMMERCIAL USER DAYS IN THE STATE OF COLORADO - 2024



Sources: National Park Service
US Forest Service
Bureau of Land Management
Local Outfitters
Colorado Parks & Wildlife
Revised: 8.13.2025



RIVERFRONT ANCHORS FOR CAÑON CITY

EXPAND CONNECTIVITY, ENHANCE RECREATION

Western Gateway Park and Centennial Park form two key anchors along the riverfront. These areas connect to a broader network of trails, parks, and downtown destinations. The initiative seeks to enhance these places—not only as individual parks, but as parts of a larger, continuous public realm along the Arkansas River.

From Tunnel Drive to South Cañon Trails and the Historic Main Street Corridor, these nodes hold great potential to support year-round recreation, civic events, and ecological restoration. Improvements here can activate the river corridor and strengthen everyday experiences across Cañon City.

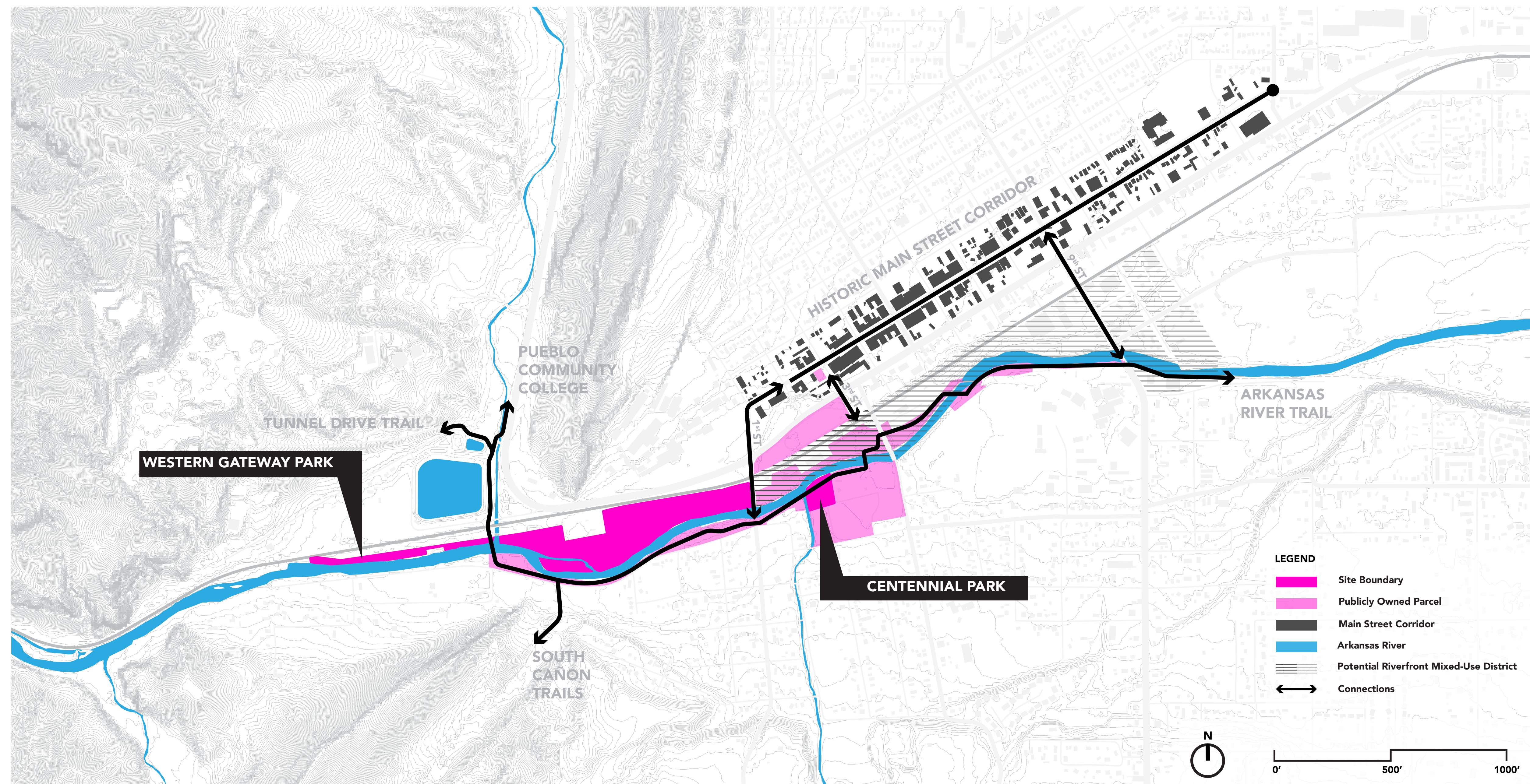
Overlook on South Cañon Trail



Arkansas River Recreation



Arkansas River Trail

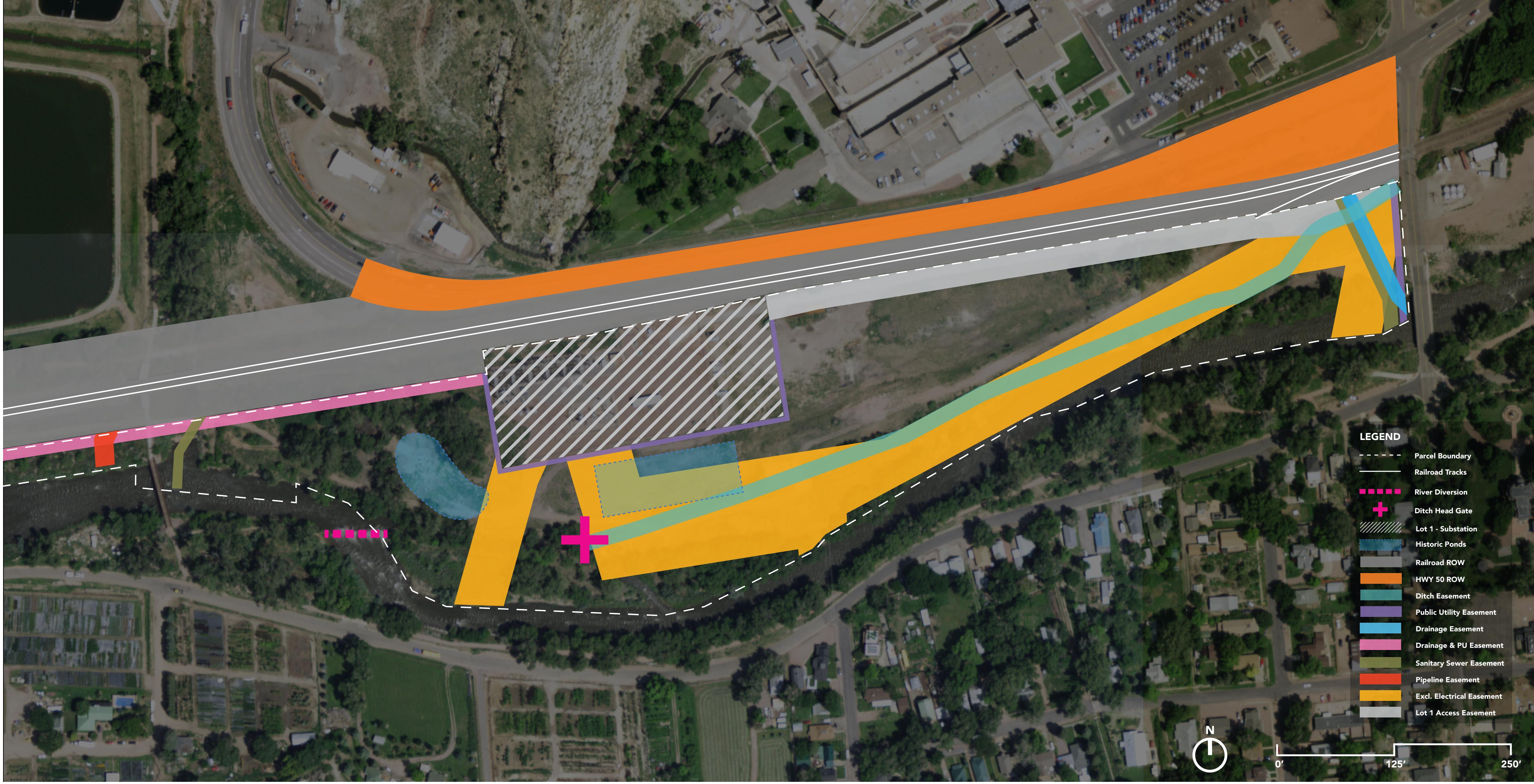
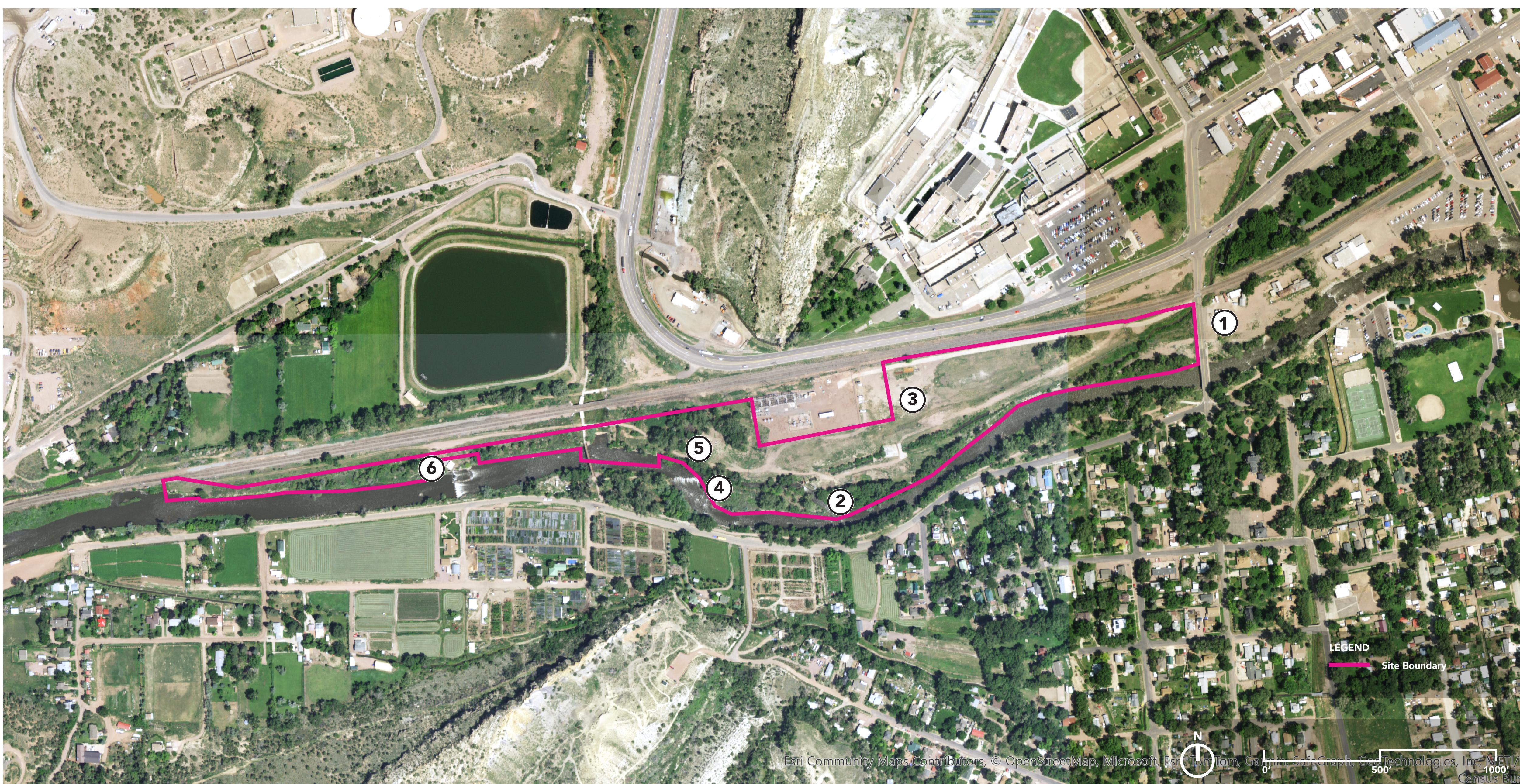
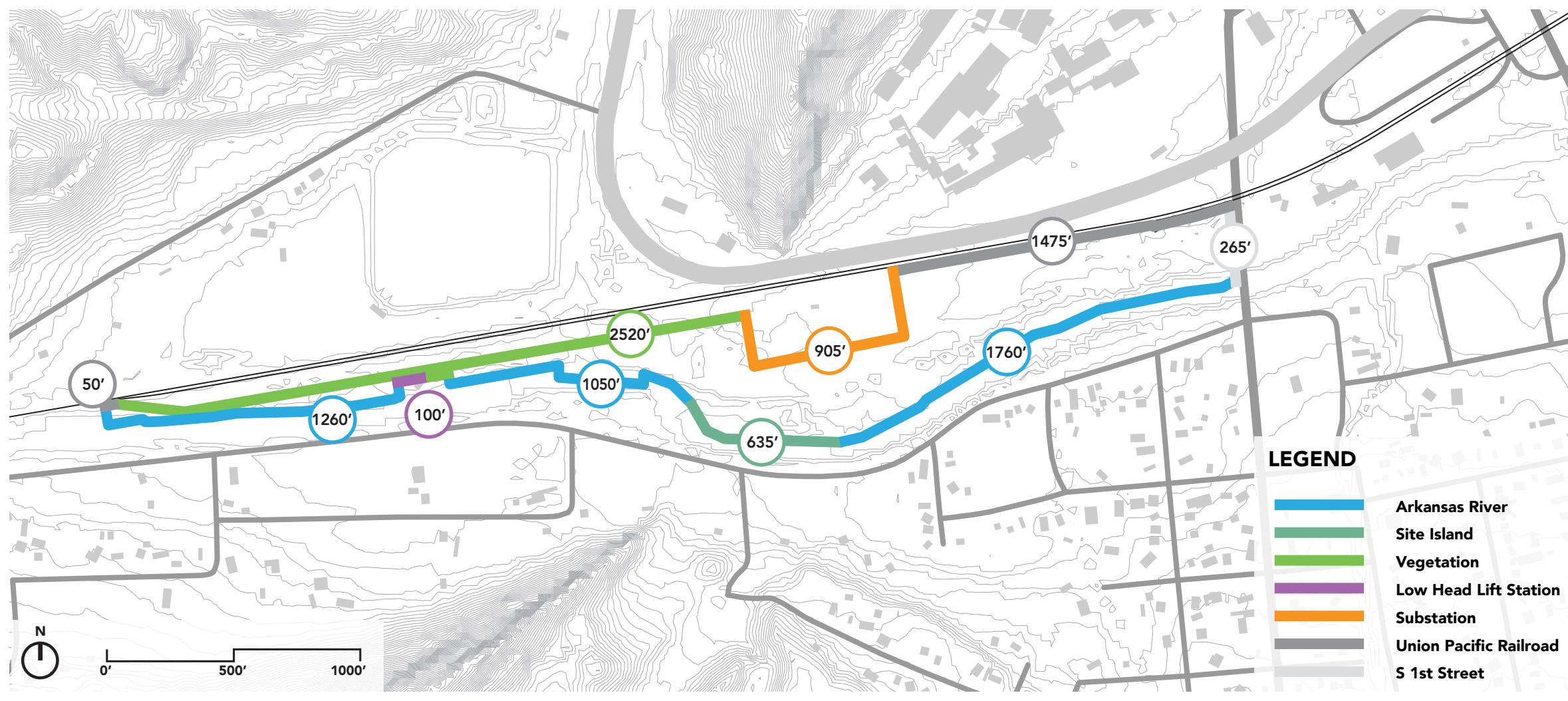
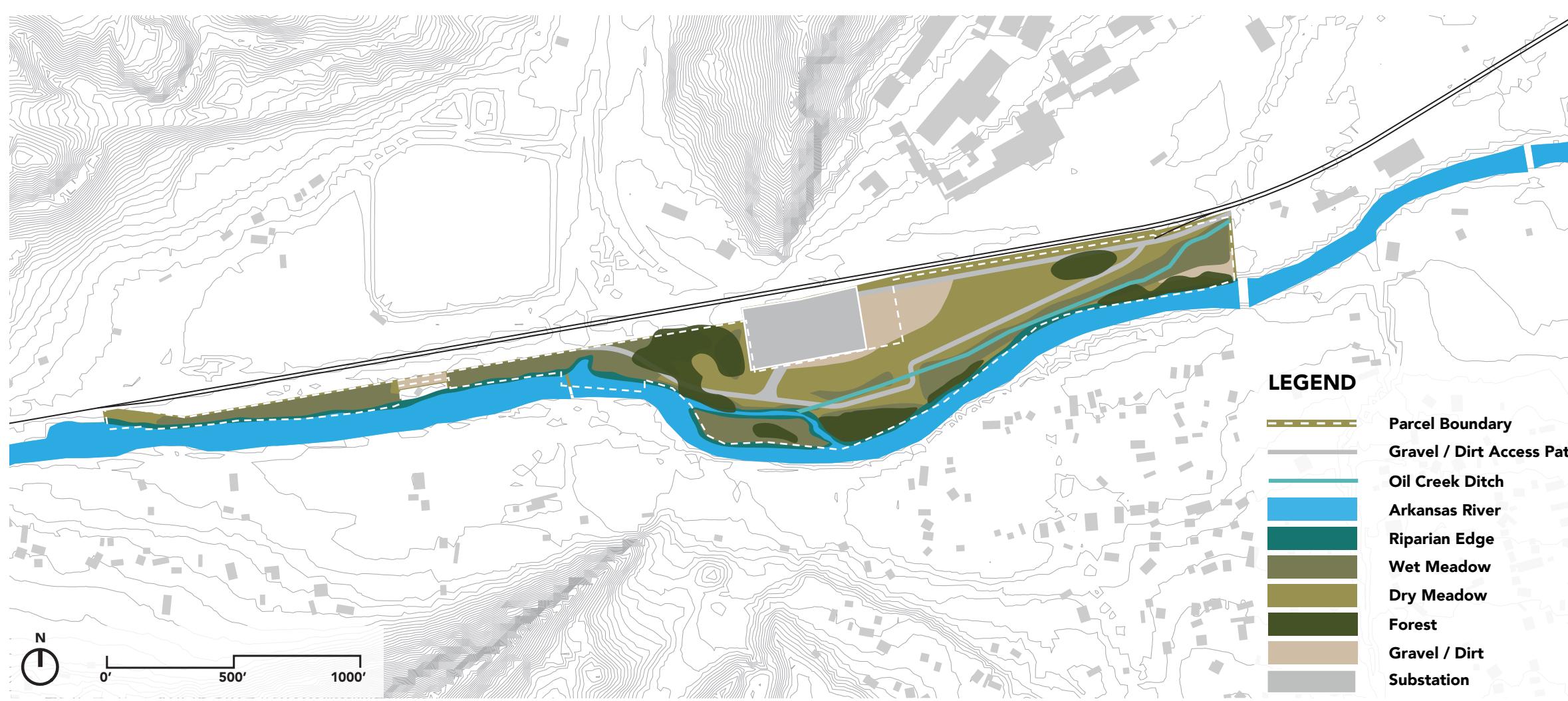
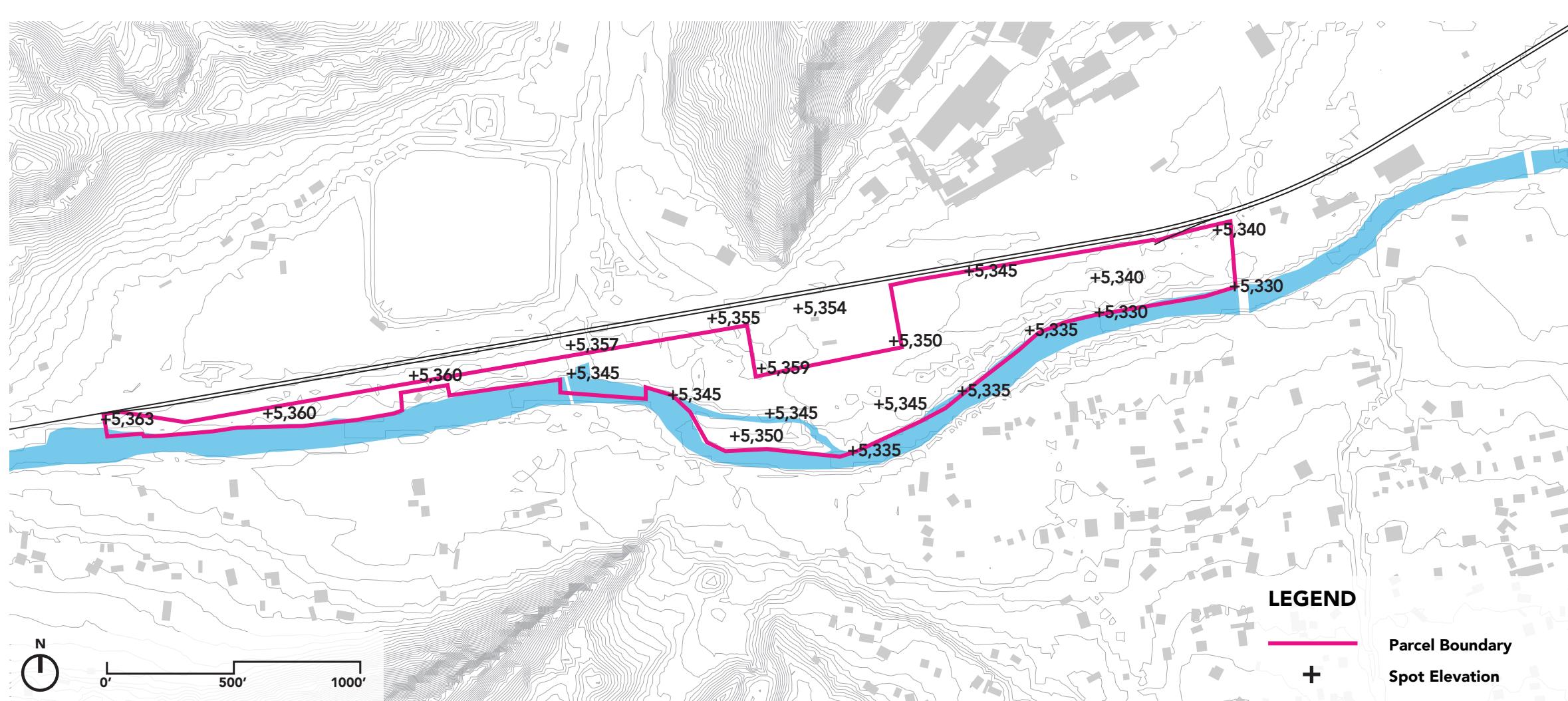
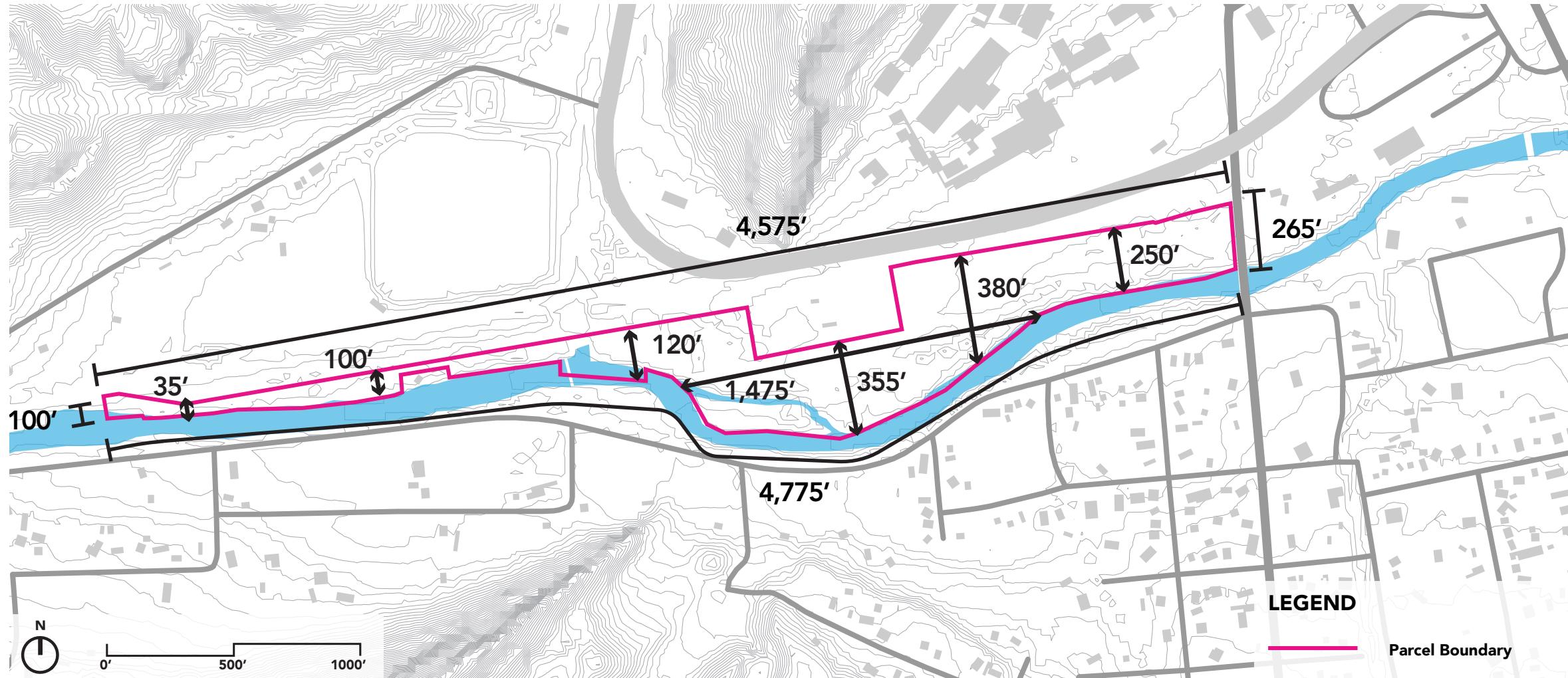


WESTERN GATEWAY PARK

A NEW PARK FOR THE CITY

The Western Gateway site is rich with potential—and complexity. Bounded by the Arkansas River, active rail lines, and utility infrastructure, it presents a unique design challenge. Understanding this site's topography, hydrology, and access is key to imagining what's possible.

The site includes historic irrigation ditches, important easements, and ecologically sensitive zones. This phase of the initiative focuses on documenting these conditions and identifying opportunities to enhance river access, expand natural habitat, and introduce park amenities that fit the site's unique character and constraints. With thoughtful design, the site can become a welcoming threshold to Cañon City and a dynamic destination along the riverfront.



WESTERN GATEWAY PARK

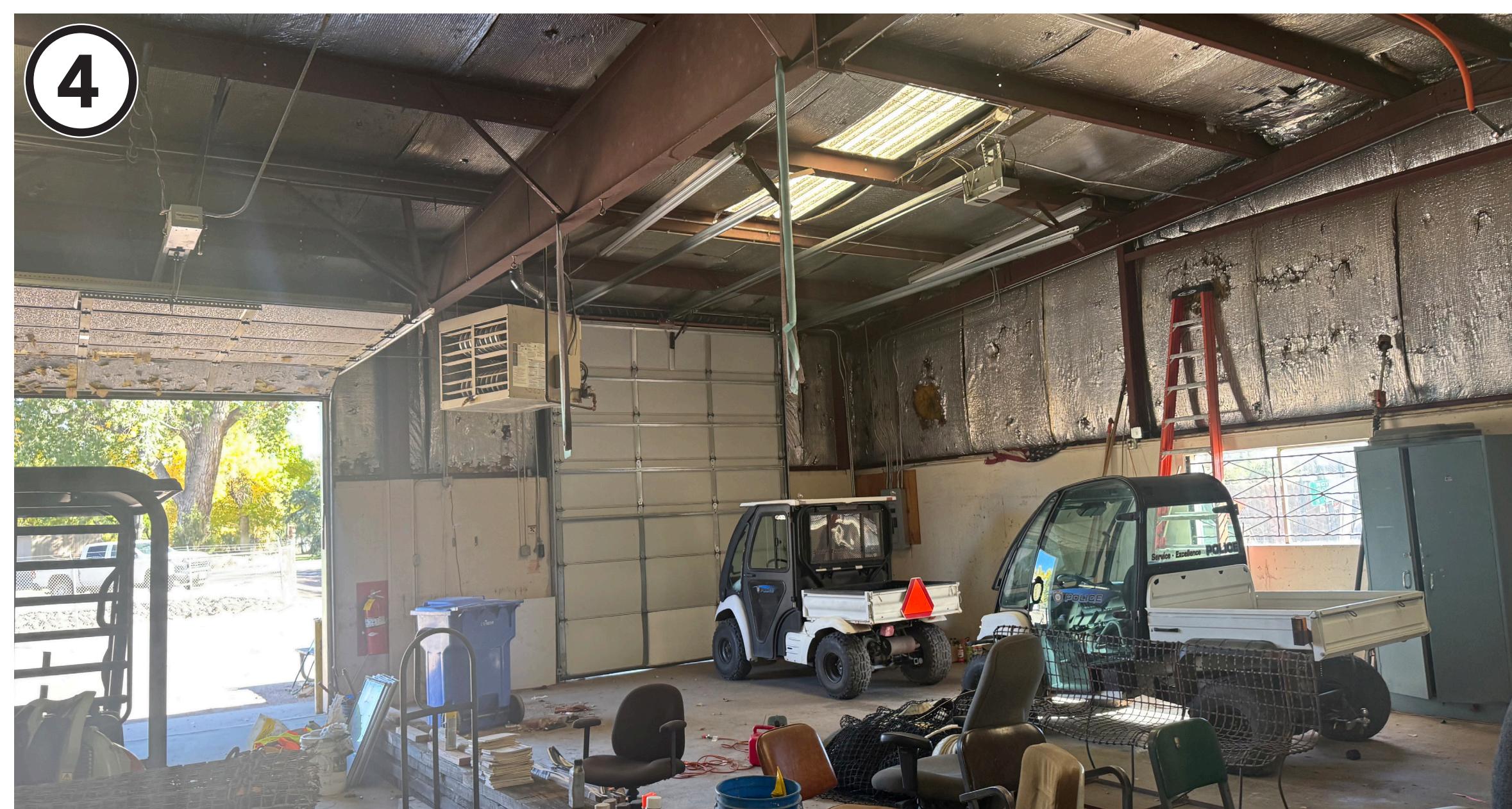


CENTENNIAL PARK

FORMER MAINTENANCE BUILDING + LANDSCAPE

Tucked between the Arkansas River and the heart of Centennial Park, the former parks maintenance building and yard offer a unique opportunity to reimagine an underutilized site within a highly active civic space. With its direct proximity to the river, recreational amenities, and downtown, this site could support a range of future uses—from a community gathering space or event pavilion to a small riverfront outpost for education, rentals, or concessions.

As part of the broader Riverfront Initiative, this site plays a key role in stitching together park uses, improving river visibility, and creating a more vibrant, connected experience along the river corridor.



TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

RIVER

HOW OFTEN DO YOU GO TO /
GET IN THE RIVER?

WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO
IN OR NEXT TO THE RIVER?

WHAT WOULD BRING YOU
TO THE RIVER MORE?

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

PARK

HOW OFTEN DO YOU VISIT A
PARK IN CAÑON CITY?

WHAT PARK DO YOU VISIT /
WHAT DO YOU DO THERE?

WHAT DO YOU WANT A NEW
PARK TO INCLUDE OR PROVIDE?

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

CITY

WHAT MAKES CAÑON
CITY UNIQUE?

WHAT ROLE DO YOU THINK THE SITE
SHOULD PLAY IN CAÑON CITY?

WHAT POTENTIALLY WORRIES
YOU ABOUT A NEW PARK?