



# Comprehensive Plan Update

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# The Story So Far...

- Mason City, Iowa, has experienced many significant changes since the completion of its last comprehensive plan in 2006.
  - Environmental
  - Social
  - Economic
- New comprehensive plan needed to reflect the current realities of the city.

**RESILIENCY:** “The ability to prepare and plan for, absorb, recover, from or more successfully adapt to actual or potential adverse events” (*Disaster Resilience – National Academies*)

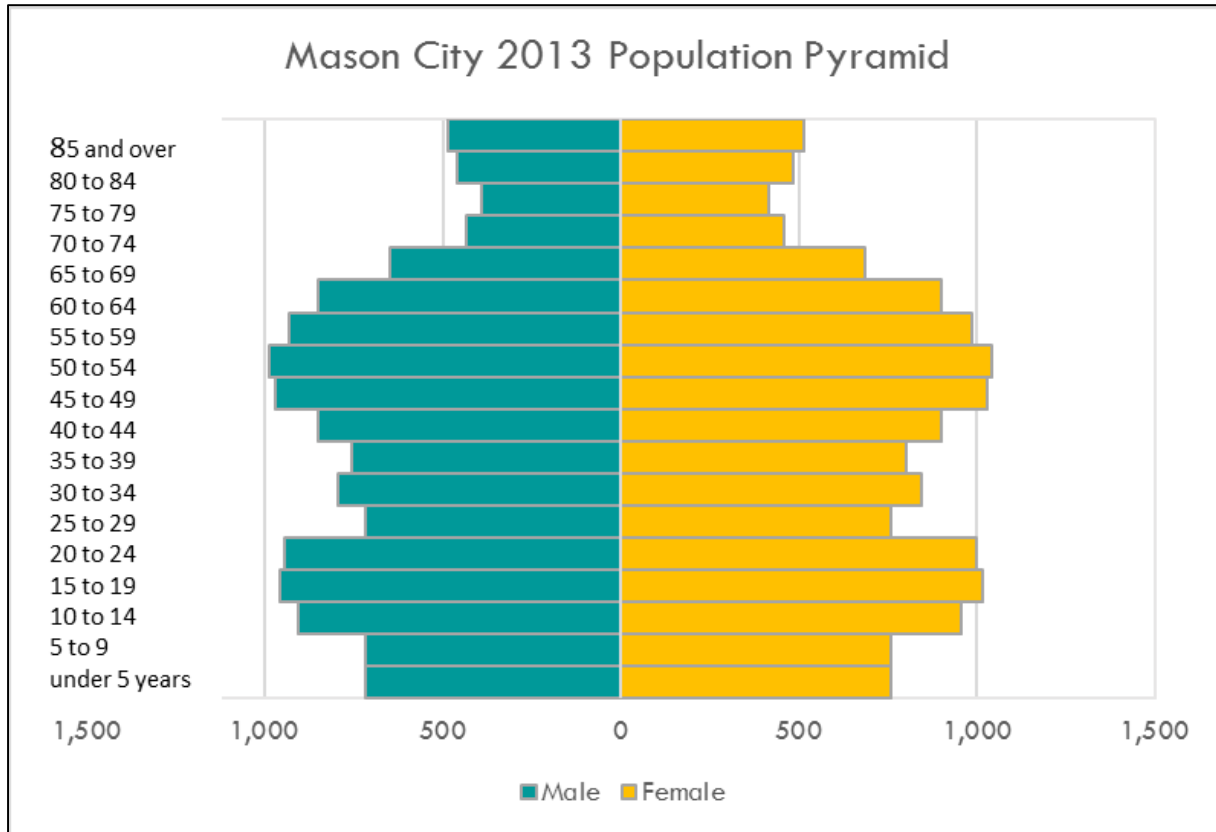
**LIFE CYCLE COMMUNITY:** “The ability to live in one’s own home and community safely, independently, and comfortably, regardless of age, income, or ability level” (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)





# The Story So Far... Social Changes

- Current analysis shows an increasingly older population, who live away from the connected urban core.

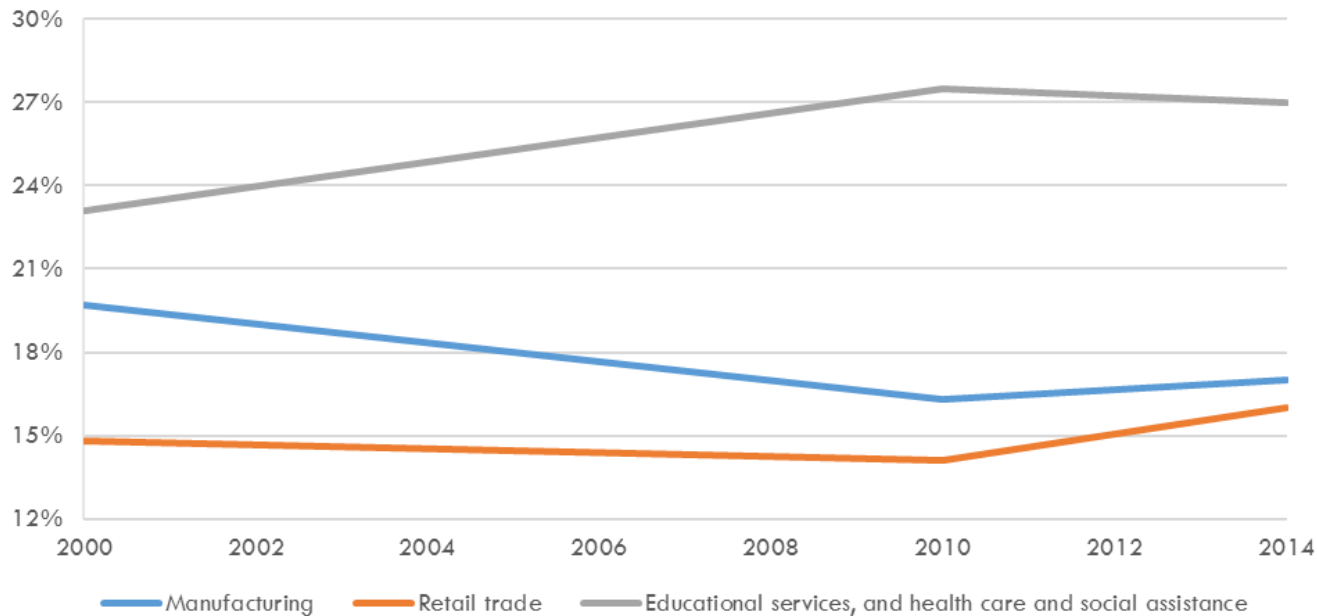


Mason City School Enrollment and Projections	
2011-12	3796.3
2012-13	3751.1
2013-14	3724.7
2014-15	3745.5
2015-16	3737.9
2016-17	3699.4
2017-18	3677.9
2018-19	3680.3
2019-20	3683.2
2020-21	3691.4



# The Story So Far... Economic Changes

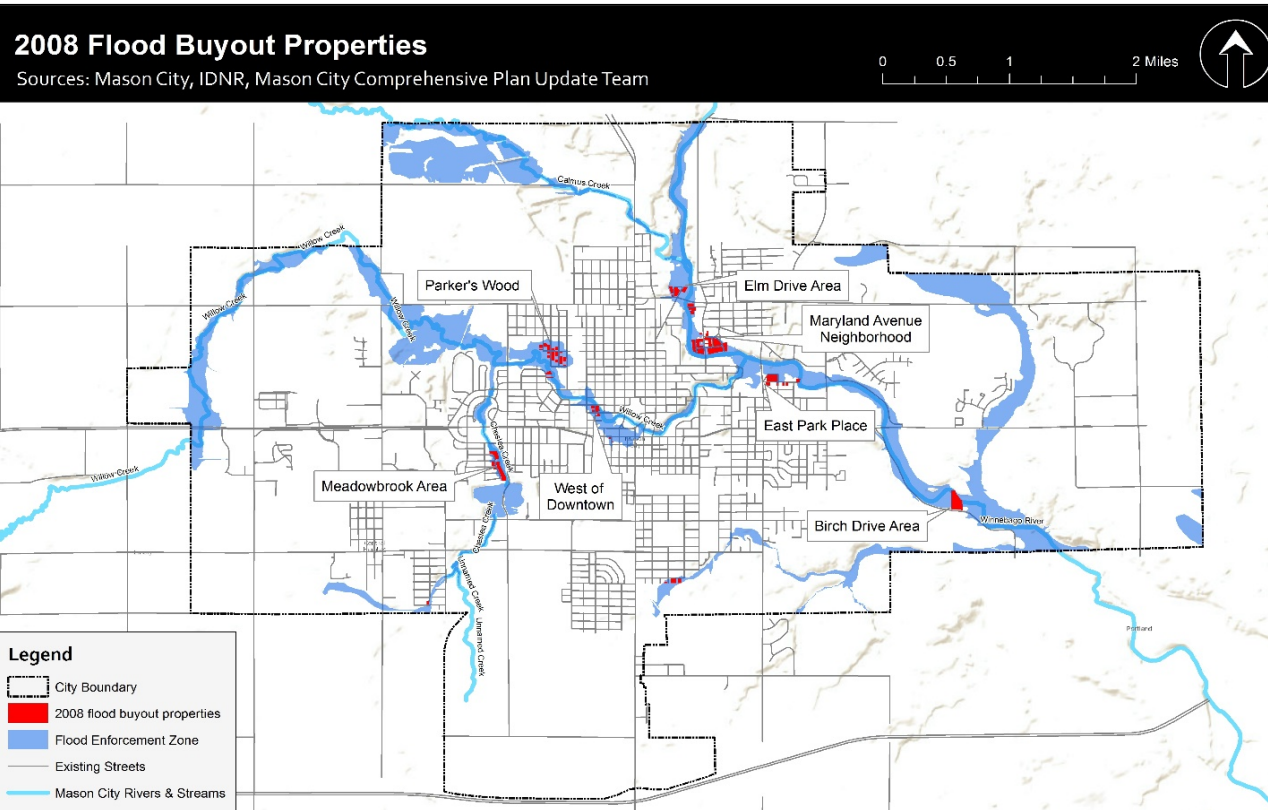
Mason City Employment in Selected Industries Over Time



	2000	2014	% Change
Mason City	\$33,852	\$42,009	24%
Ames	\$36,042	\$42,373	18%
Ft. Dodge	\$33,361	\$38,380	15%
Iowa City	\$34,977	\$42,119	20%
Marshalltown	\$35,688	\$48,750	37%
Ottumwa	\$30,174	\$38,095	26%
Waterloo	\$34,092	\$41,461	22%
State of Iowa	\$39,469	\$52,716	34%



# The Story So Far... Environmental Changes



Total bought out properties: 175 to date

Buyouts	Year	Buyout area	Funding Source
1	2009	500 block of S. Adams Ave.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Disaster Grant from the State of Iowa</li> </ul>
2,3,4	2009-2012	Multiple neighborhoods adjacent to Winnebago River, Willow Creek and Cheslea Creek	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (75% of cost)</li> <li>The State of Iowa ( 10% of the cost)</li> <li>US Department of Housing and Urban Development (15% of the cost)</li> </ul>
5	2009-2012	Multiple neighborhoods adjacent to Winnebago River, Willow Creek and Cheslea Creek	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>US Department of Housing and Urban Development</li> </ul>
6	2015-2016	300 and 400 blocks of 22nd St. SE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (75% of cost)</li> <li>The State of Iowa ( 10% of the cost)</li> <li>The property owners (15% of the cost)</li> </ul>





# Focus Group Meetings

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Government and Law Enforcement



Social Services and Health



Business and Service Clubs



Arts and Culture



Faith Community



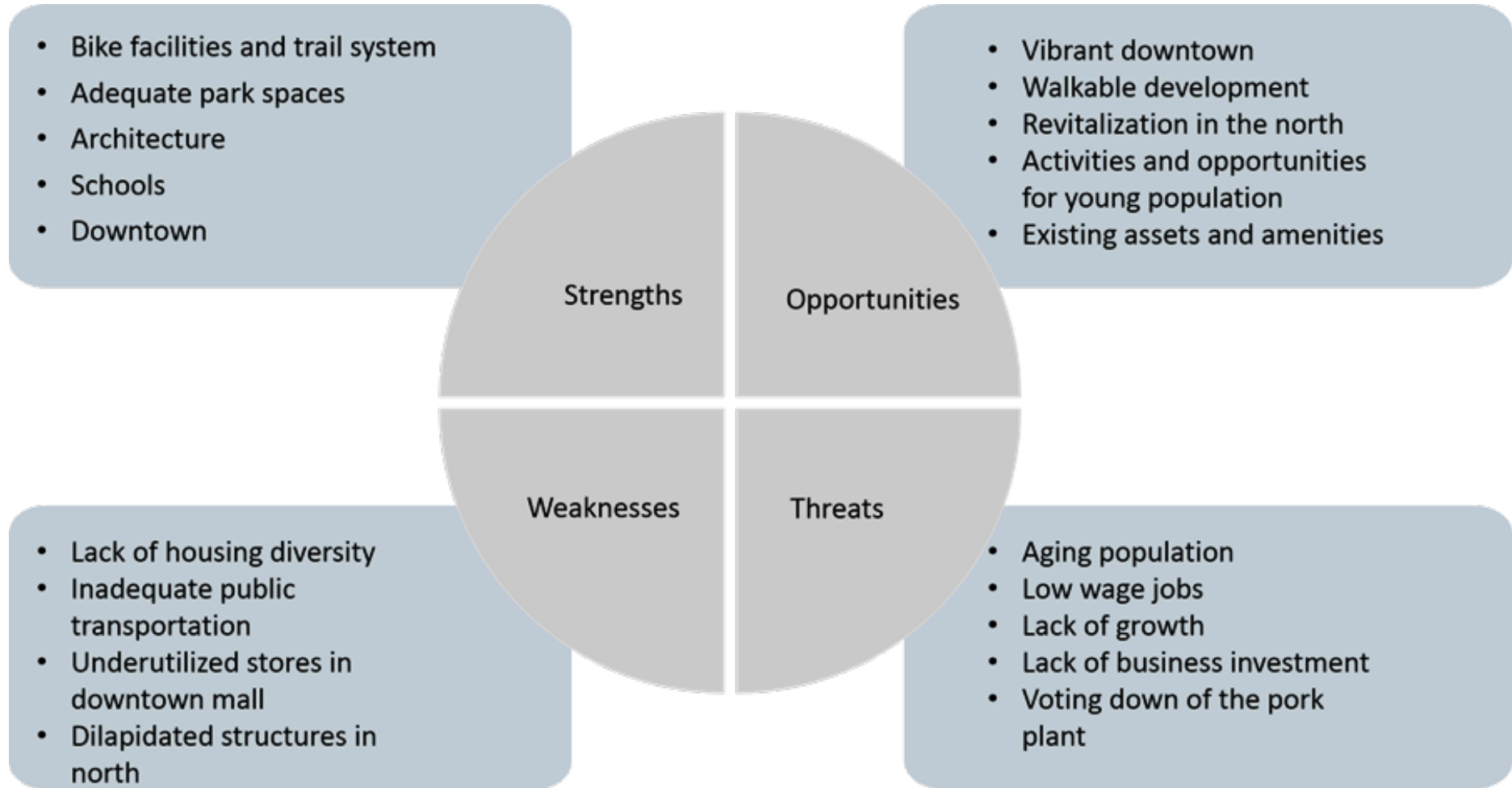
Education



Landlords and Developers



# Focus Group Meetings – Results







# Outreach Results



## Environmental Resiliency

- Flood Vulnerability
- Stormwater Run-Off



## Land Use

- Strict Separation
- Sprawl



## Housing

- Housing Diversity



## Transportation

- Lack of Connectivity
- Disconnect between Transportation and Land Use



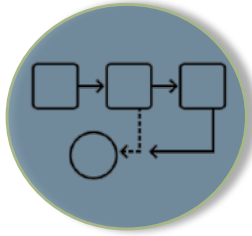
## Economic Prosperity

- Business Investment throughout the city

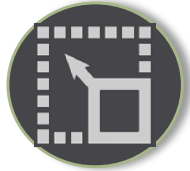


## Community Character

- Deteriorated Development
- Lack of Historic Preservation



# Development Scenarios



## CURRENT TREND SCENARIO

- Status Quo



## DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT SCENARIO

- Divides the community into geographic areas distinguished by an activity or amenity.
- Districts identified as business or industrial, public institution, or neighborhood districts.



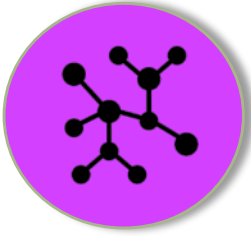
## NEIGHBORHOOD CORE SCENARIO

- Incorporate functions such as town squares or community village near the crossroads of two thoroughfares.
- Greater density commercial and residential uses in a pedestrian scaled setting.

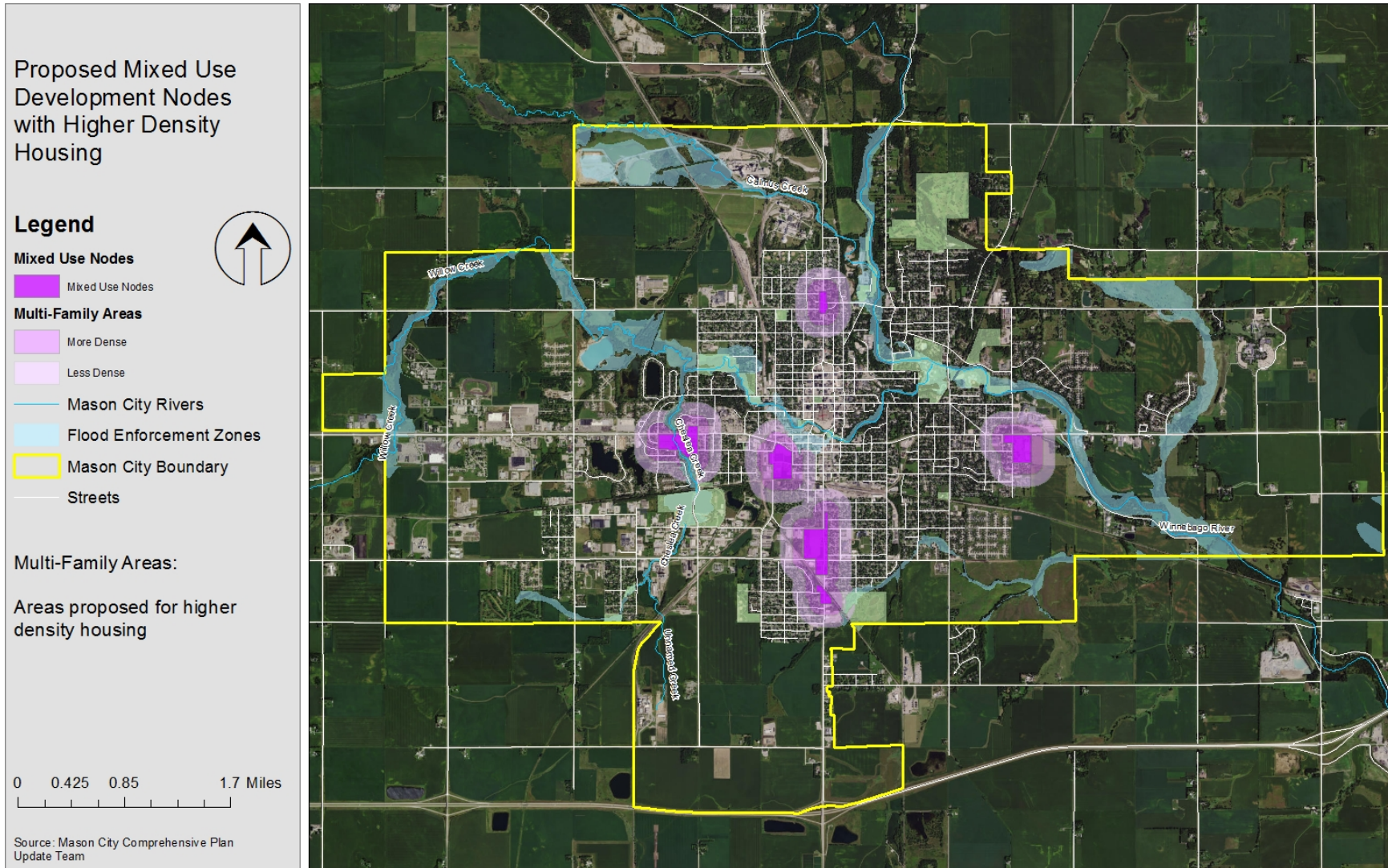


## CORRIDOR SCENARIO

- High density land uses around or along the highway corridors.
- Redevelopment efforts directed toward major transportation, utility corridors and the downtown.



# Nodal Development





# Public Open House

- In March, a Public Open House was held, with over 70 residents of Mason City attending
  - Maps
  - Comment Cards
- Using our proposed development scenario, team used Public Open House to gauge perception of nodal pattern.
- Residents also were able to suggest alterations to the land use presented.

MASON CITY  
MASON CITY  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

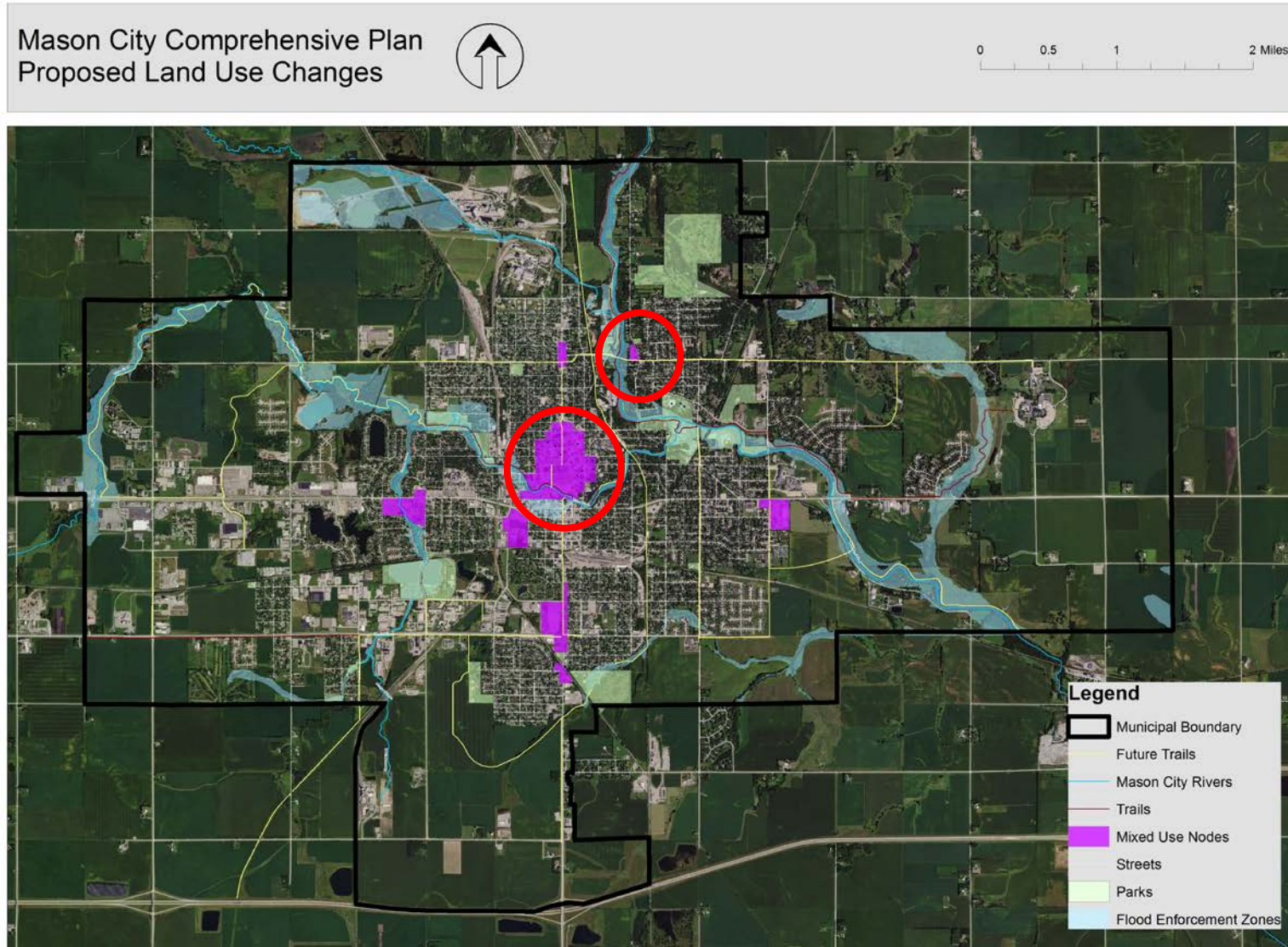
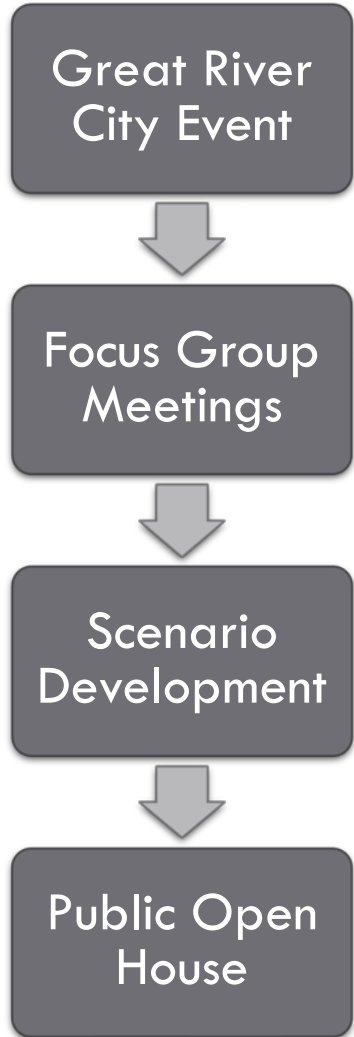
What is your suggestion? Why?

Where would it go? Why?





# Public Open House – Results





# Land Use Goals and Objectives

## INFILL AND COMPACT DEVELOPMENT



- provide opportunities and flexibilities
- prevent leapfrog development
- improve and maintain the infrastructure

- Continue preservation of areas prone to runoff and flooding.
- collaborate with entities



## BUILDING RESILIENT NEIGHBORHOOD

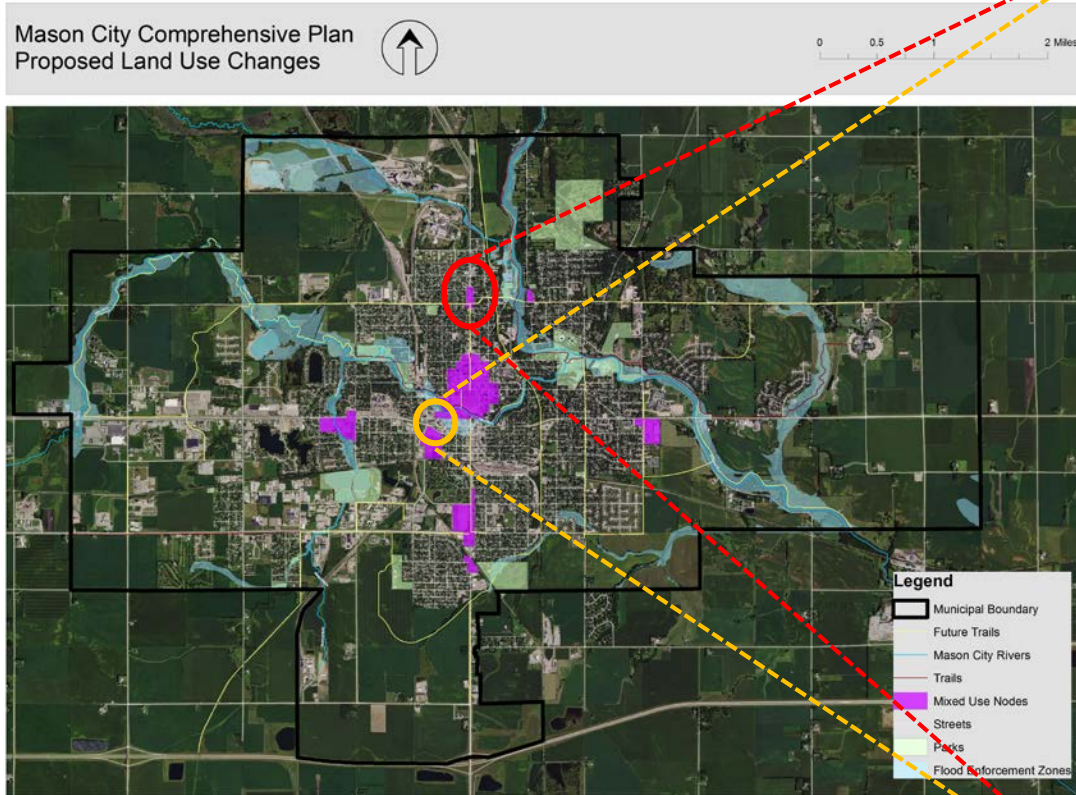
## MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT



- Incorporate regulatory incentives
- Provide sufficient infrastructure and technical assistance
- Continue the city's commitment to revitalize and redevelop



# Example: Reuse of underutilized land



underutilized parking lot on Federal St. We are using it for a park along Wild Creek

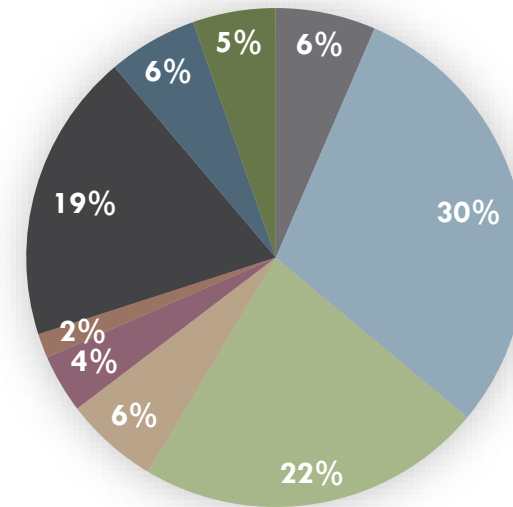


# Future Land Use

## CATEGORIES

- Commercial Corridor
- Agriculture
- Low Density Development
- Medium Density Development
- High Density Development
- Multi Use Nodes
- Industrial
- Civic and Public Use
- Park Space and Public Open Space

**Fututre Land Use Breakdown**

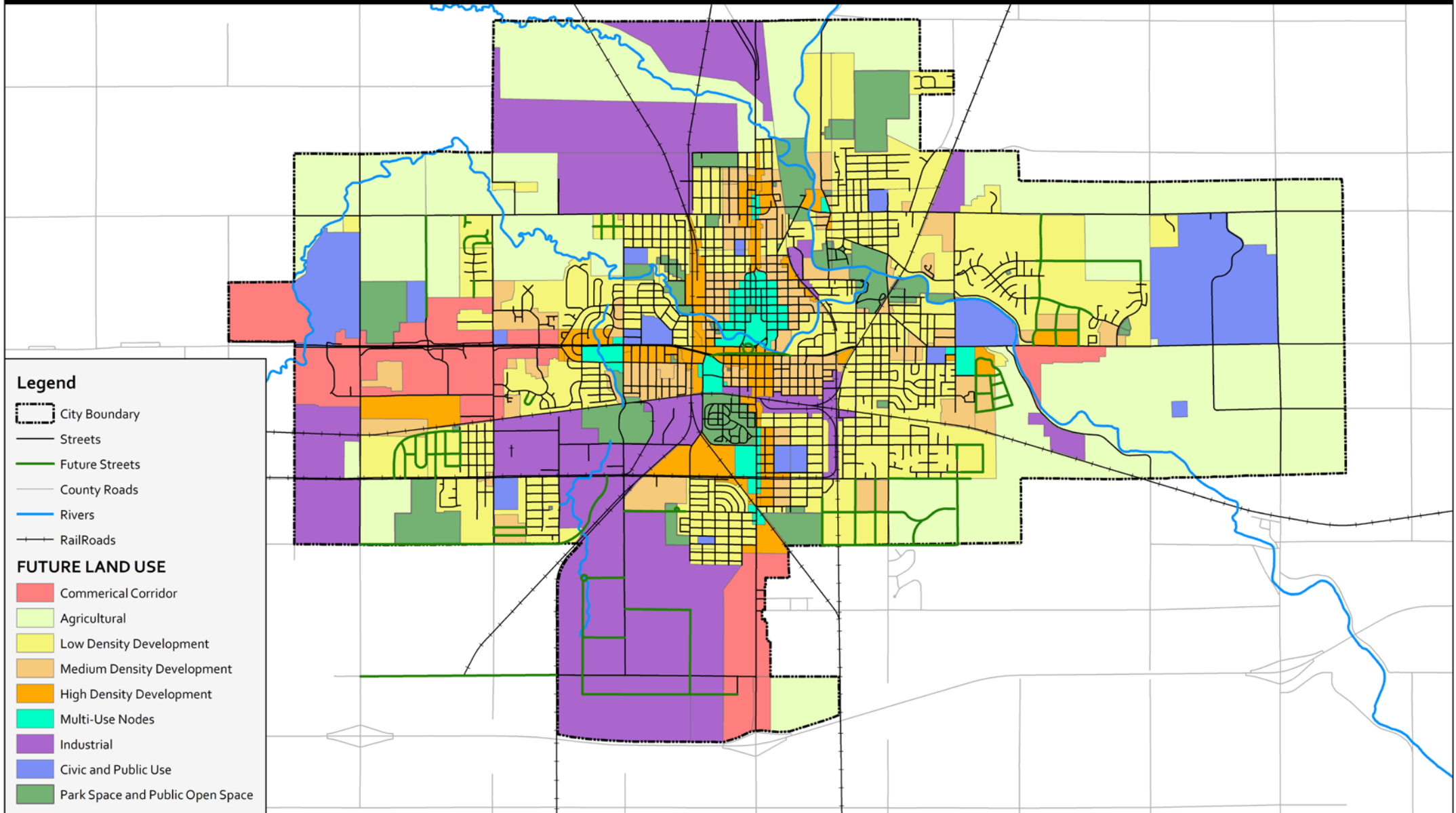


- Commercial Corridor
- Agricultural
- Low Density Development
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# Future Land Use Map

Sources: Mason City, Mason City Comprehensive Plan Update Team



## Legend

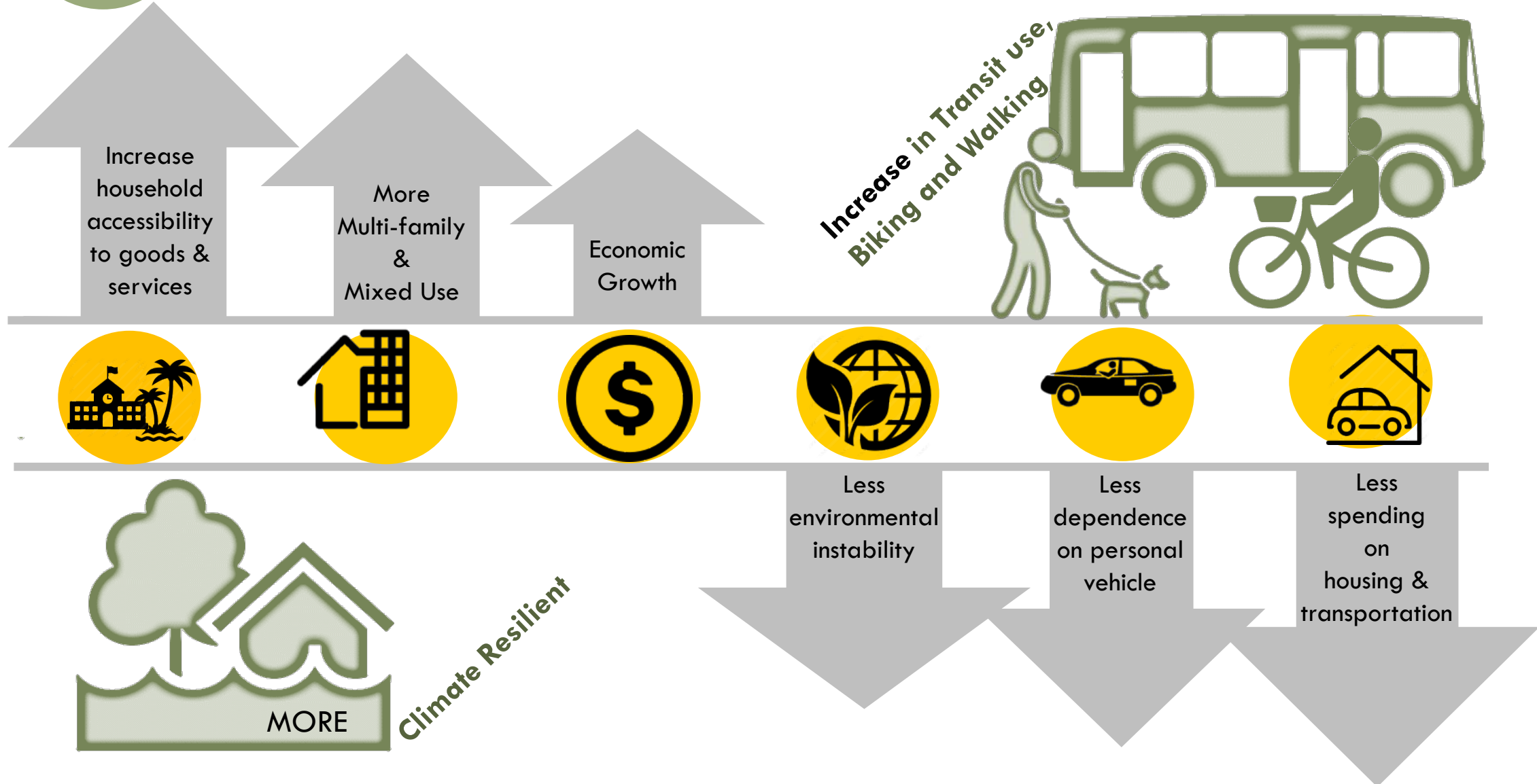
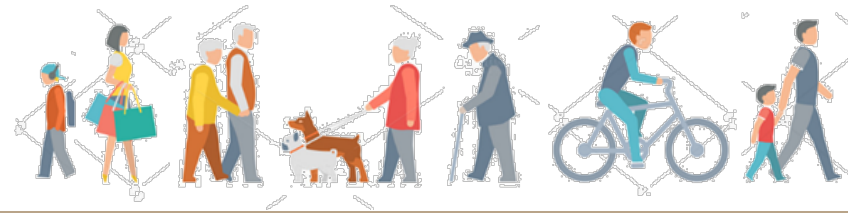
- City Boundary
- Streets
- Future Streets
- County Roads
- Rivers
- RailRoads

## FUTURE LAND USE

- Commerical Corridor
- Agricultural
- Low Density Development
- Medium Density Development
- High Density Development
- Multi-Use Nodes
- Industrial
- Civic and Public Use
- Park Space and Public Open Space



# At a glance: Tomorrow





# Next Steps

- Finalize edits to comprehensive plan
- Work session with Mason City, City Council
- Submit!

RESILIENT  
MASON CITY  
2027

MASON CITY  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

WELCOME TO MASON CITY  
The Arts

THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA  
School of Urban & Regional Planning

THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA  
IOWA INITIATIVE  
FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

City of  
MASON CITY  
IOWA

Thank you!

Questions?



# Focus Group Questions

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## Opening/ Introductory Questions

1. Introductions –
2. How long have you been in the City and what do you like the most about it?
3. What parts of MC do you show off/ what do you avoid when people come to visit?

## Transition & Core Questions

4. If you were to recommend that someone should move to MC what would you say to convince them?
5. How has Mason City changed in past 10 years?
6. Where do you see the city growing in next 10 years?(directional) –
7. What would you like to see in the future (people, amenities, businesses, bars?)

## Community Character

8. What is MC's sense of identity? Architecture, public art, streetscape, landscape, music
9. What drives the sense of identity?
10. What cultural assets are most loved?
11. What would you do to build on existing cultural assets?
12. What would you like to see DONE to increase tourism?

## Economic Development

1. What are the obstacles that prevent job growth or higher wages in MC?
2. Viewing the current context of the city, which businesses do you think are viable for the Mason City to pursue? What businesses should MC not pursue?
3. Where within the city do you want to see more business growth?

## Education

1. What types of changes (positive and/or negative) has the district or community gone through in recent years that had an impact on students?
2. What types of changes do you see for students in the next 5-10 years?
3. What can the community do to improve student success in MC?
4. What types of activities are available for youth and young kids? What activities are needed?
5. How has SVPP impacted the educational system and families?

## Equity & Health

1. IN what ways does MC support diversity and encourage new families to move to the area?
2. What are the biggest challenges for families in accessing the resources they need?
3. Aging in place has been highlighted as a priority in MC. What would you change or improve to support seniors in MC?
4. How can health outcomes be improved for all citizens in the next 5-10 years?

## Land Use & Housing

1. What types of housing options does MC need? Why?
2. Where do you see the most residential/ retail/ commercial/ parks and open space uses in the future? (maybe include map within this question, LAND USE MAP?)
3. How would you change the current growth trends (specify) of Mason City?
4. What types of green building practices are people using now or interested in using?

## Transportation and Parks/Trails

1. What could be done to improve the connectivity of MC?
2. What could be done to improve the parks/trails in MC?

## Environmental Resiliency

1. Has the city done enough to prevent flooding and other natural disaster events? How could it be improved?

## Ending

13. Is there anything you want to add to your thoughts or anything important that we might have missed?
14. We all have big hopes for the city and its development. How do you think the community should pay for the amenities?

# Great River City Survey

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Hi my name is \_\_\_\_\_,

-Intro IISC -Work for Mason City, Gathering community information. -May I ask you a couple of questions?

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1. Where do you **live**?

Mason City:

Downtown/Central  
Northeast  
Northwest  
Southeast  
Southwest

Clear Lake

Cerro Gordo County

Other -> *If outside of county/state:*

Where do you **work**?

Mason City    Other

**How often** do you visit Mason City

**What brings you here?**

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2. What are the **best** things about living(visiting) in Mason City now?

Schools   Parks   Health   Raise family   Culture/Arts   Shopping   Jobs   Community   Aging/Retirement   Politics

3. What are the most **frustrating** things about living(visiting) in Mason City?

Traffic   Parking   Small town   Jobs   Shopping   Education/schools   Poverty   Identity   Pork Plant   Politics   Crime

4. What are your **hopes** for Mason City in the future?

Economy/jobs:

Environment:

Culture:

Social Equity:

Transportation/Mobility:

5. How many years have you lived in Mason City?

Gender:   M/F

Kids <18?    Y/N

Age:   18-34    35-54    55-70    71+

Do you **rent** or **own** your home?

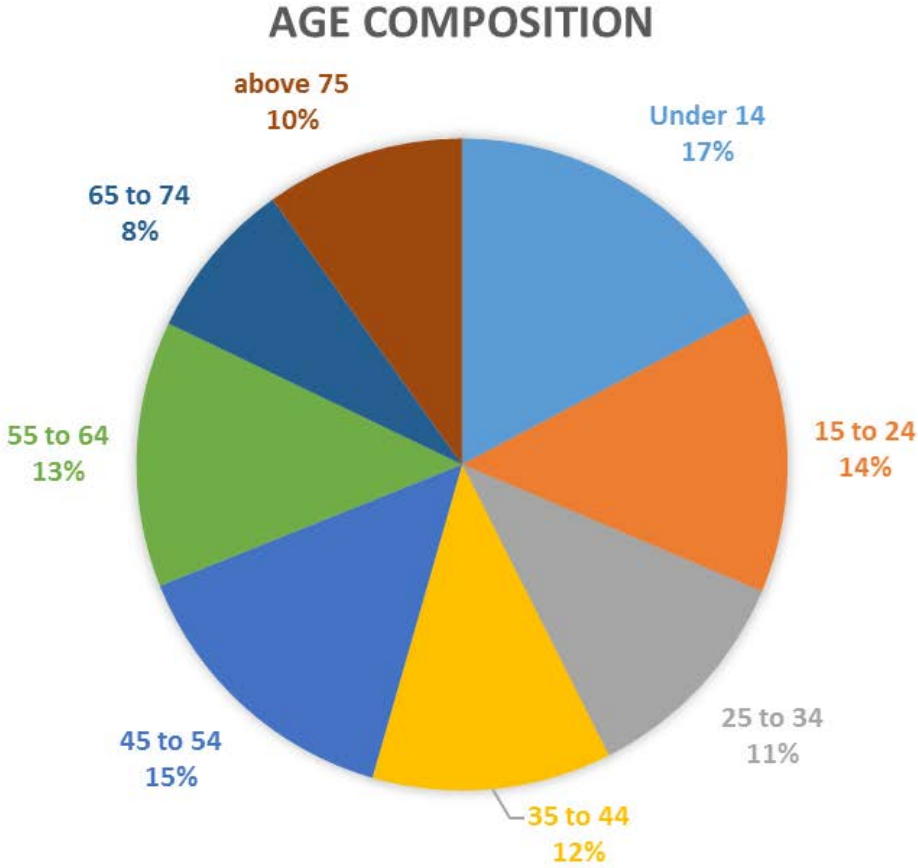
Employed/Retired/Student

# Iowa Smart Planning Principles

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- Collaboration
- Efficiency, transparency, and consistency
- Clean, renewable, and efficient energy
- Occupational diversity
- Revitalization
- Housing diversity
- Community character
- Natural resources and agricultural protection
- Sustainable design
- Transportation diversity

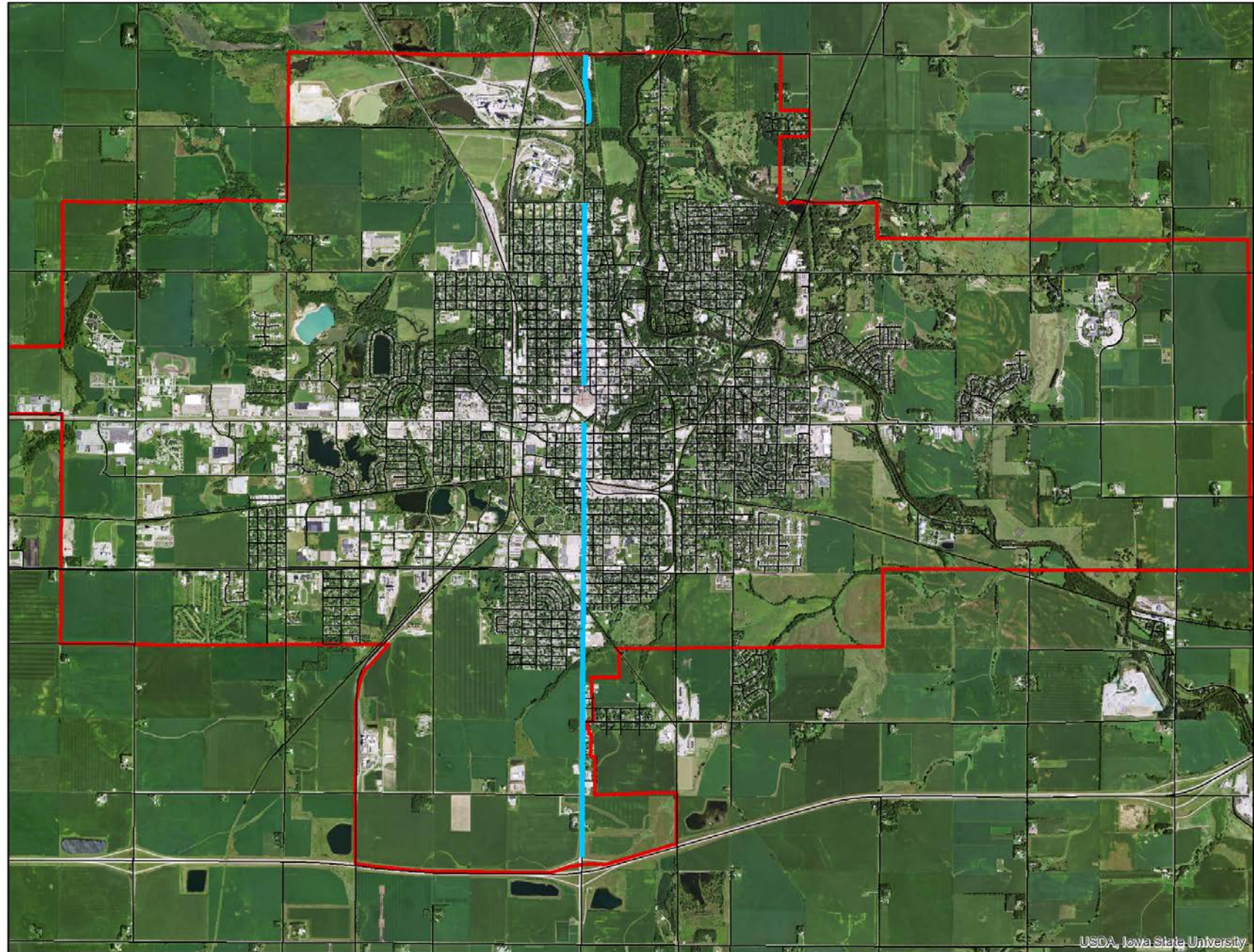
# Age Breakdown for Mason City



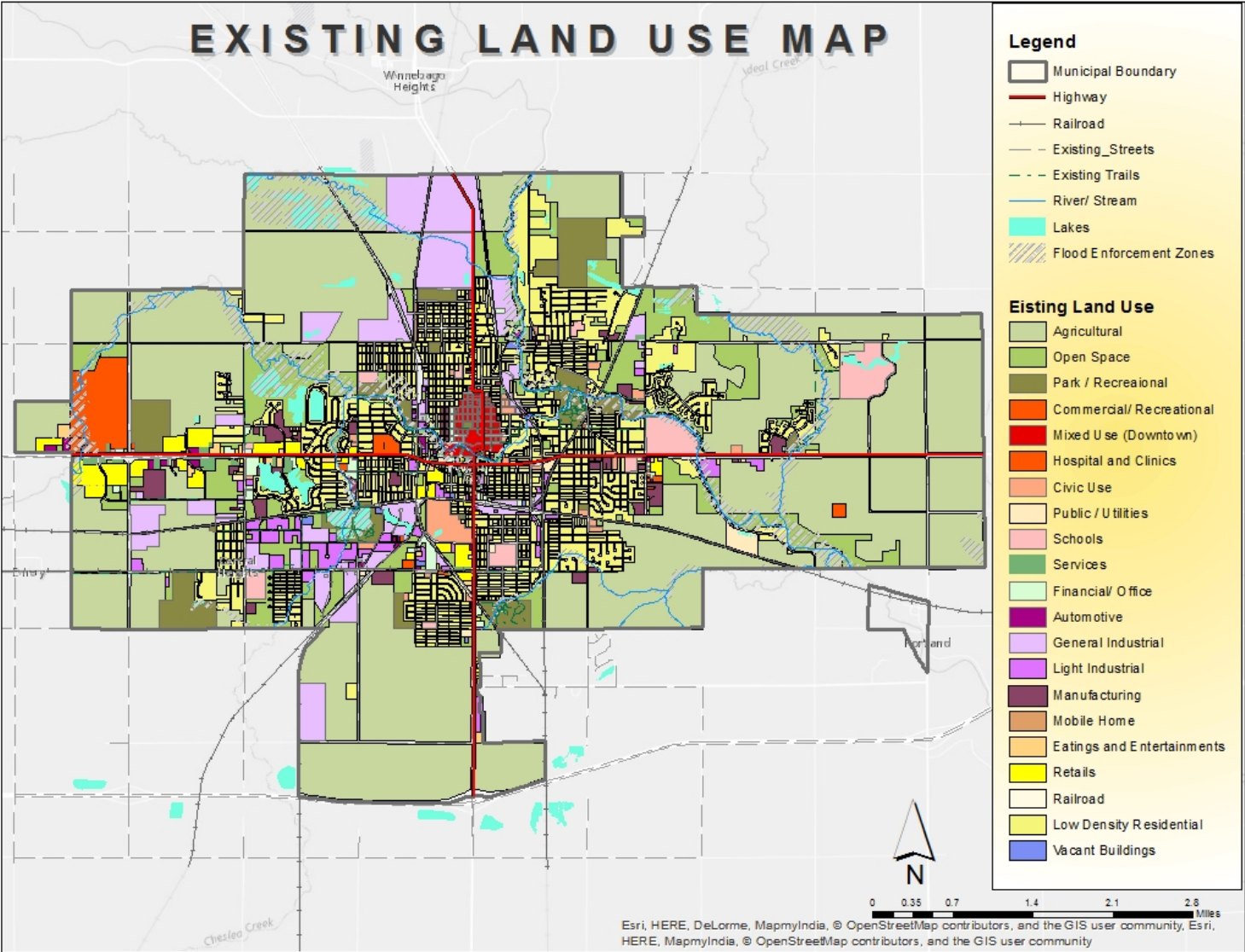


# Aerial

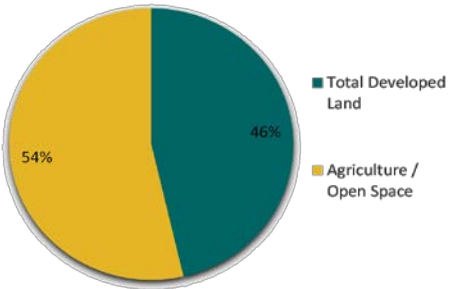
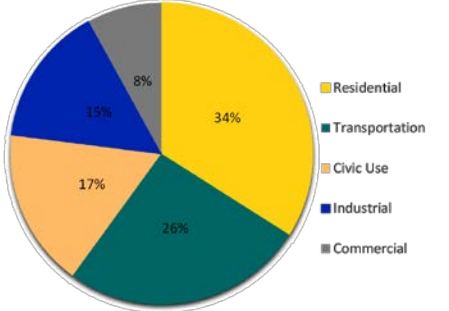
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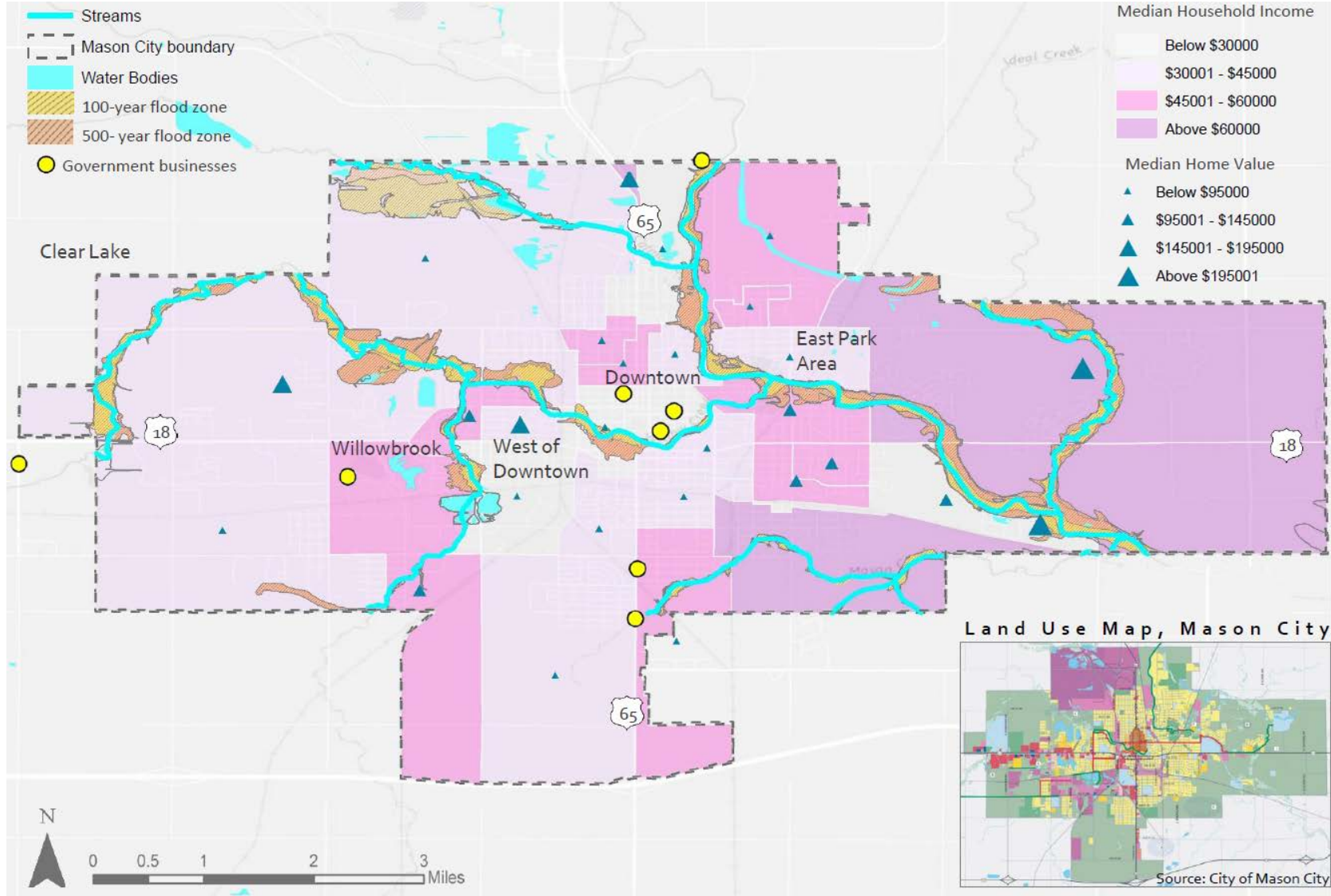
# Existing Land Use



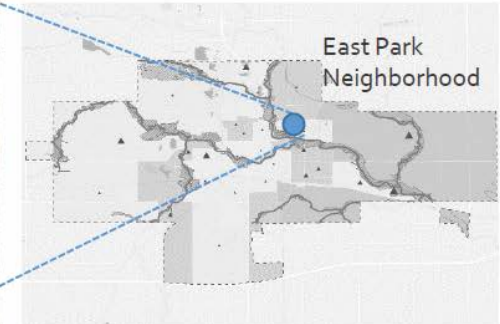
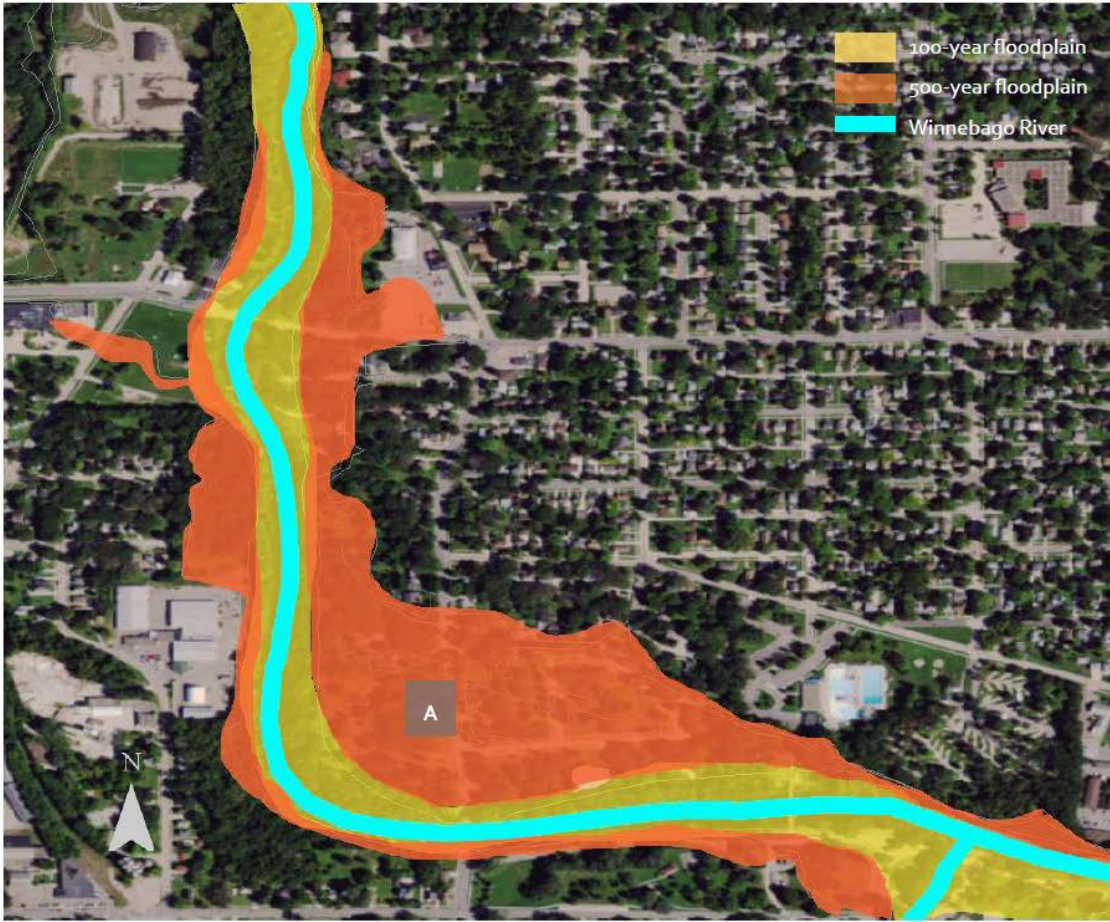
Land Use breakdown



# Affected Flood Areas



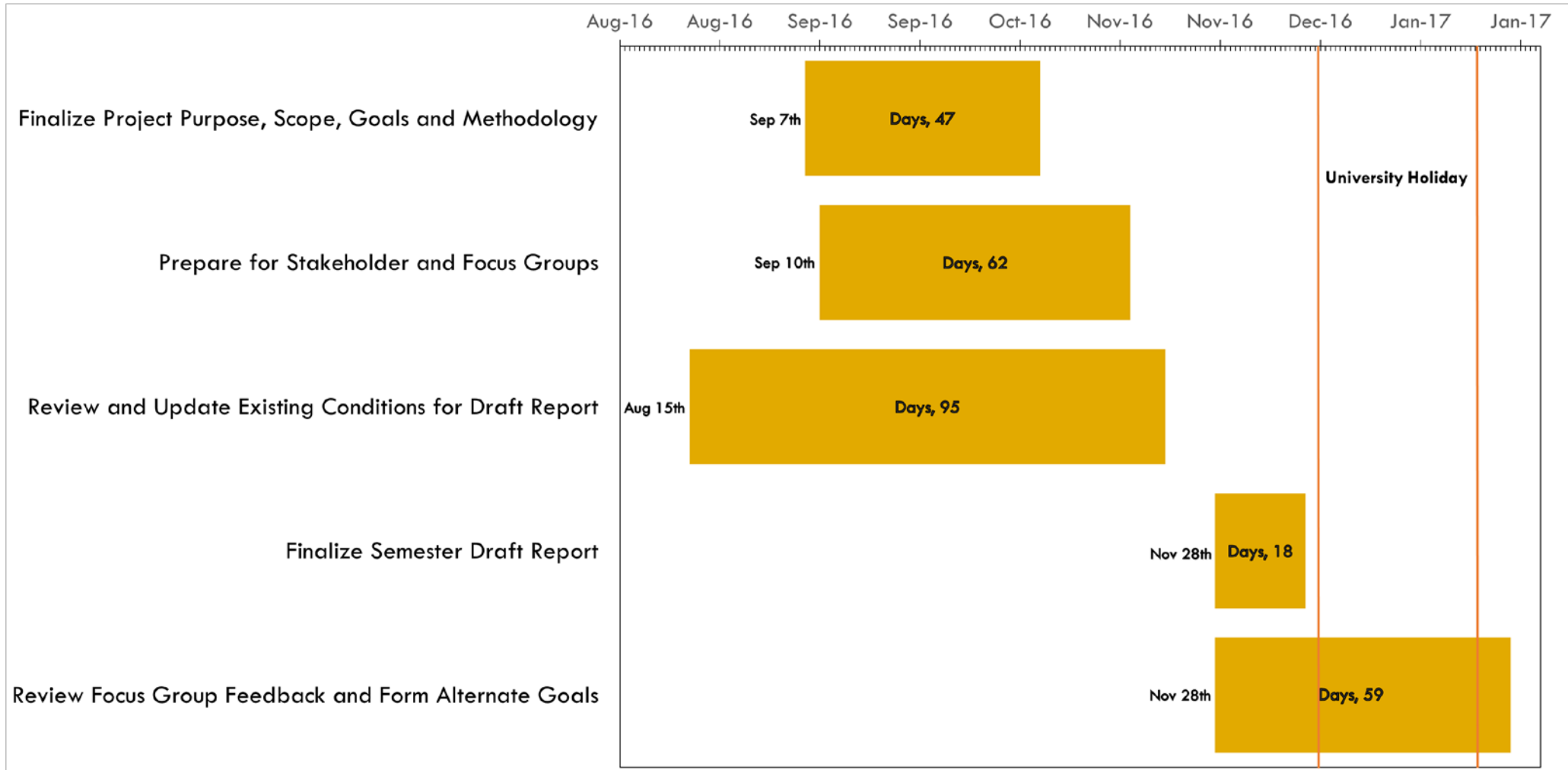
# Affected Flood Areas



East Park Neighborhood with sidewalks in place where residential properties have been demolished.  
Source: Mason City Team, 2016



# First Semester Timeline





# Second Semester Timeline

