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May 2, 2022

# Kenai Waterfront Revitalization Assessment

Concepts Workshop

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PREPARED FOR:



McKINLEY RESEARCH  
GROUP, LLC

Celebrating 50 Years



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# Welcome

- Introductions
  - **McKinley Research Group**
    - Donna Logan, Senior Consultant, Project Manager
    - Katie Berry, Director of Economics and Research
  - **Corvus Design**
    - Chris Mertl, ASLA, Principal, Landscape Architect
  - **PND Engineers**
    - Alexandra West Jefferies, Senior Engineer

## Attendees Introductions

Name, What are you looking forward to this summer?



# Meeting Agenda

## Summary of Community Visioning

Exercise: Have  
other ideas?

## Summary of Site Conditions

Opportunities and  
Constraints

## Summary of Economic Context

Considerations for  
Opportunities  
Exercise: Ranking  
Ideas

## Community Concepts Planning

Exercise: Put your  
concepts on paper







# Summary of Community Visioning



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# Visioning Process Overview

- Work session held February 24, 2022
- ~40 Kenai residents attended
- SWOT exercise and other facilitated exercises conducted
- Residents were invited to add feedback on City of Kenai website (~9 residents)
- Summary of key take-aways available:  
[https://www.kenai.city/sites/default/files/fileattachments/city\\_manager/page/14191/kenai\\_waterfront\\_revitalization\\_assessment\\_community\\_visioning\\_results.pdf](https://www.kenai.city/sites/default/files/fileattachments/city_manager/page/14191/kenai_waterfront_revitalization_assessment_community_visioning_results.pdf)

# SWOT Summary

STRENGTHS Existing Internal Advantages	WEAKNESSES Existing Internal Disadvantages	OPPORTUNITIES Potential External Improvement	THREATS Potential Negative Impacts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Location/access to Kenai River</li> <li>• Fishing location</li> <li>• Views of volcanoes</li> <li>• Wildlife viewing</li> <li>• Cultural and historic resources</li> <li>• Existing recreation facilities</li> <li>• Adjacent to City center and connectivity</li> <li>• Volume of visitors to area</li> <li>• Good commercial opportunities along Bridge Access Road</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sensitive habitat/permit restrictions</li> <li>• Underutilized site</li> <li>• Shore/bluff stabilization needed</li> <li>• Safety</li> <li>• Private ownership</li> <li>• Tidal influence/shallow water depths</li> <li>• Lack of public access throughout site</li> <li>• Aging and unused buildings/development</li> <li>• Bridge Access Road high traffic volumes/speed</li> <li>• Too far from City center</li> <li>• Improvements will be costly</li> <li>• Lack of utilities on site</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand recreation</li> <li>• River boardwalk</li> <li>• New businesses/investments</li> <li>• City/private partnerships and incentives for development</li> <li>• Make waterfront public</li> <li>• New commercial and retail businesses</li> <li>• Facilities for non-dipnetters</li> <li>• Tourism opportunities</li> <li>• New housing</li> <li>• Expand commercial fishing</li> <li>• Increase/upgrade facilities to support sport fishing</li> <li>• Potential harbor development and improved river access</li> <li>• Repurpose empty buildings and under-developed land</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preserving a healthy river/fish</li> <li>• Weather and winter</li> <li>• Sewer/water utility challenges</li> <li>• Lack of interest and financing</li> <li>• Costs and funding</li> <li>• Economic challenges</li> <li>• Adjacent traffic congestion</li> <li>• River congestion/dipnet traffic</li> <li>• Sport fish vs. commercial fishing</li> <li>• Tidal challenges</li> <li>• High management and maintenance costs</li> <li>• Permitting and EPA requirements</li> <li>• Lack of community buy-in</li> <li>• City dock improvements/needs</li> </ul>

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## Vision

The public desires and supports new development but not at the expense of impacting the existing uses, primarily the seafood plants, and the ability to access the Kenai River and its many resources.

The public wants revitalization to be authentic, protective of the river and natural environment, be accessible year-round, and provide economic opportunities.

There is a need to protect and celebrate the area's history, culture, and outstanding views of the river, surrounding landscape, wildlife, and volcanoes.

The phrase, "Build it for the locals, and the visitors will love it" is important in meeting these criteria.

# Great Ideas

Consensus on **mixed-use**.

Limit development to **low impact** uses, such as recreation and water dependent uses, was a priority.

Create a **destination facility** or 'anchor tenant' such as a convention center, lodge, hotel, or other facility that meets local needs and draws visitors.

Support new businesses, such as restaurants, breweries, tackle shops, tour operators, and general commercial and retail

Support boardwalks, park and open space, campgrounds, and recreation, as well as expand and **improve river access** and the needed support facilities.

Integrate existing seafood plants into the overall revitalization effort would meet the community's desire to represent an **authentic working waterfront**.



## Exercise

*What other ideas do  
you have for Kenai  
waterfront  
revitalization?*





# Summary of Site Conditions

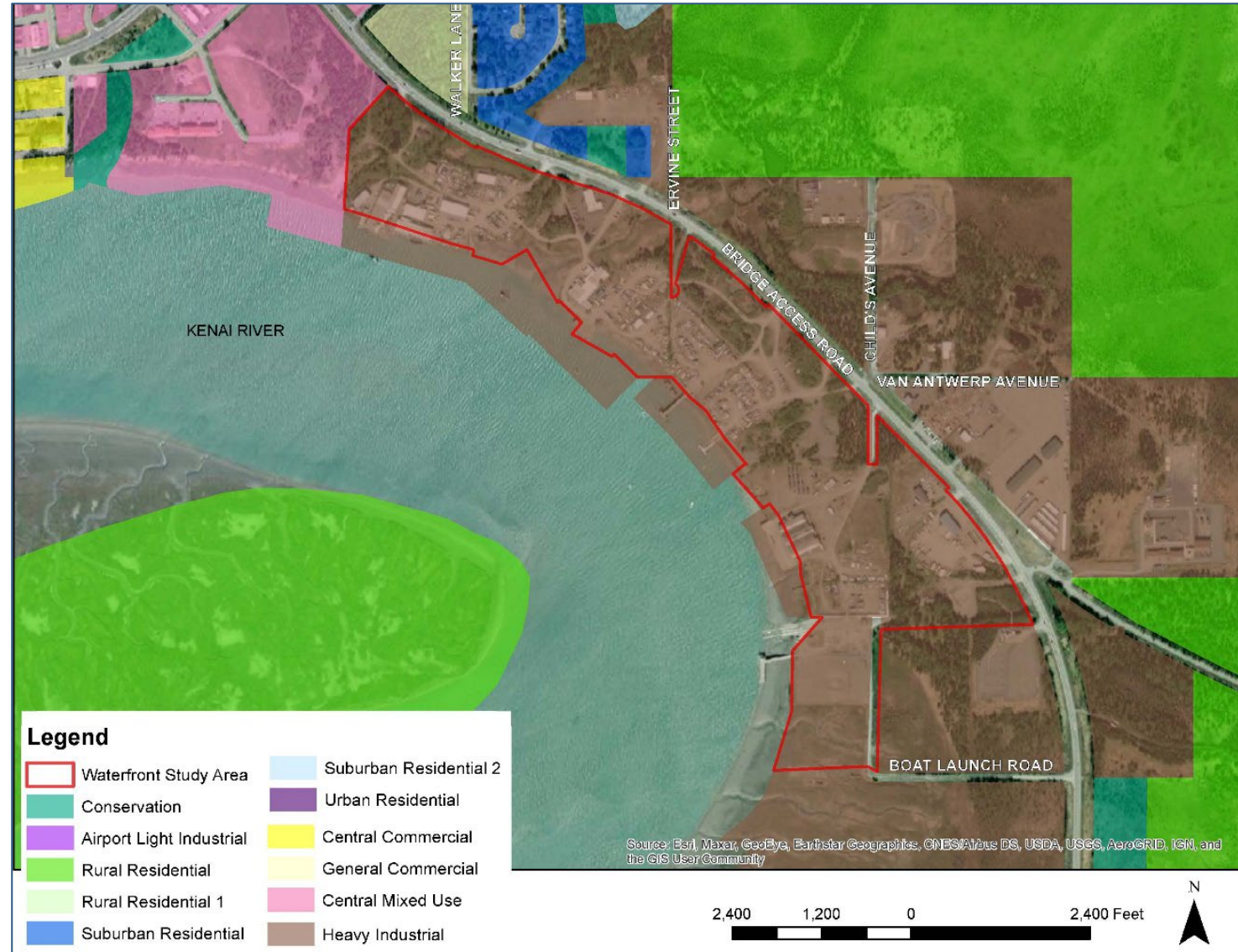


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# Zoning

## Heavy Industrial Use



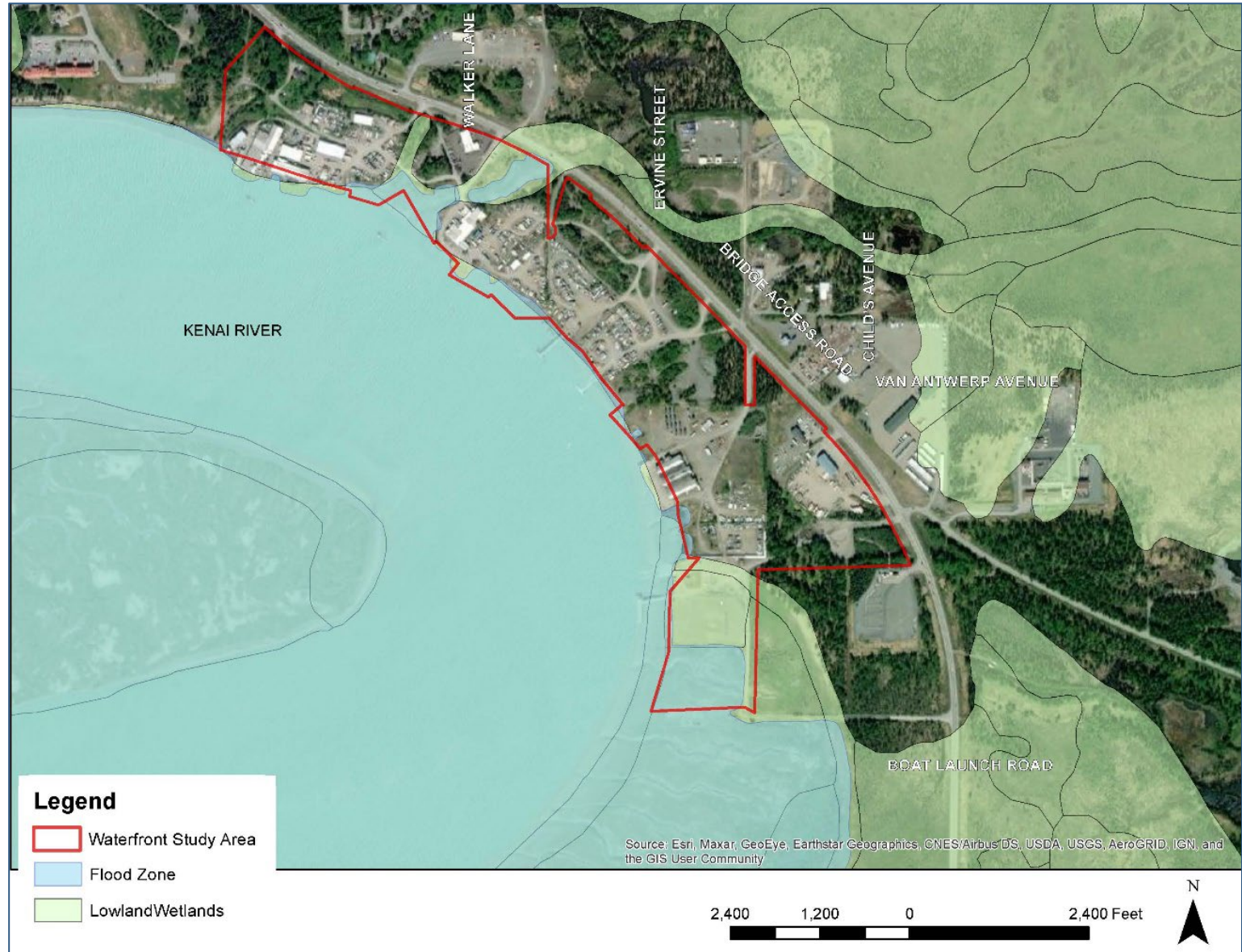


# Hydrology

Riverside is a FEMA-regulated flood zone

Developed uplands above floodplain

Wetlands/small drainage span the southern portion

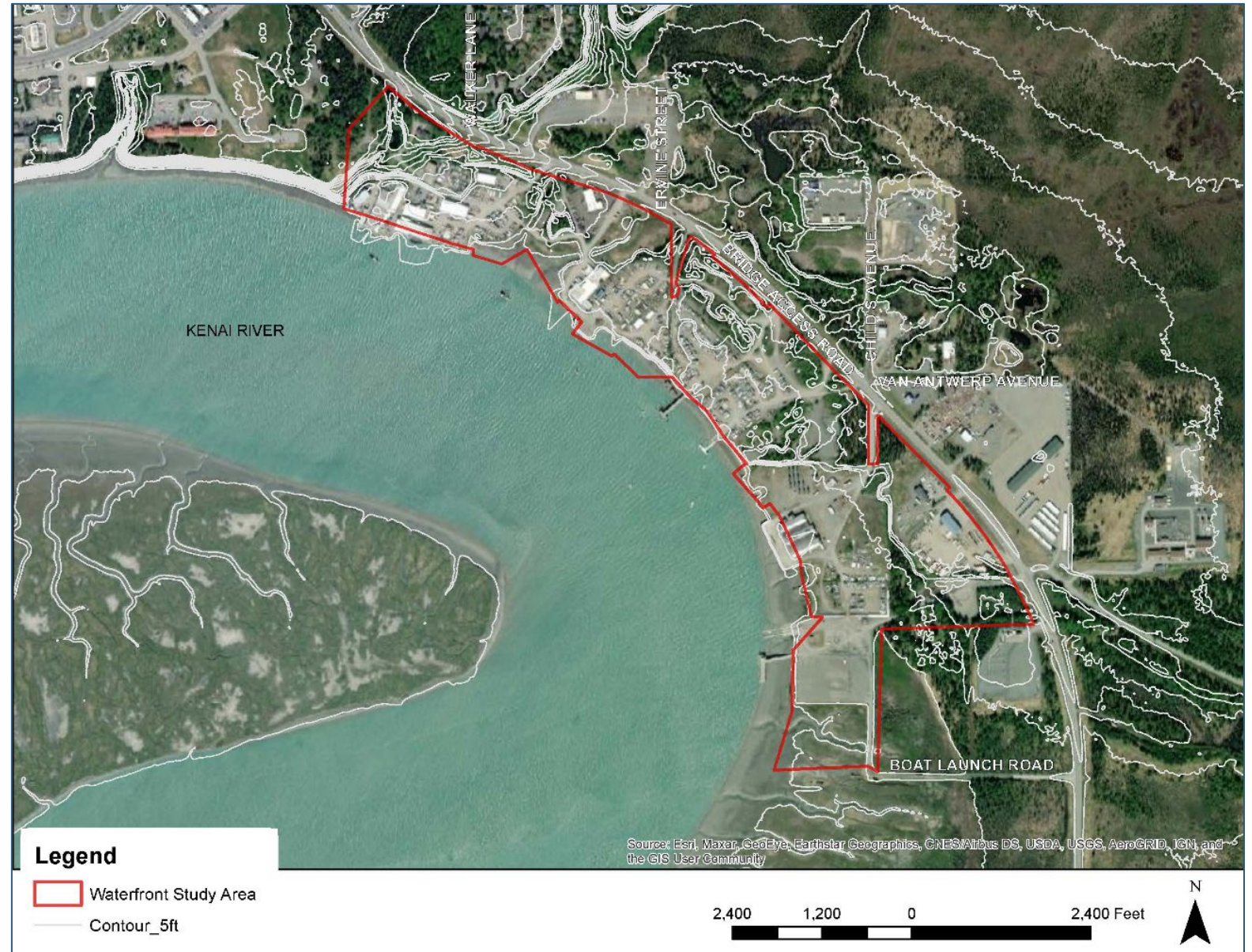




# Topography

Soils in undeveloped area are poorly drained with high runoff rates

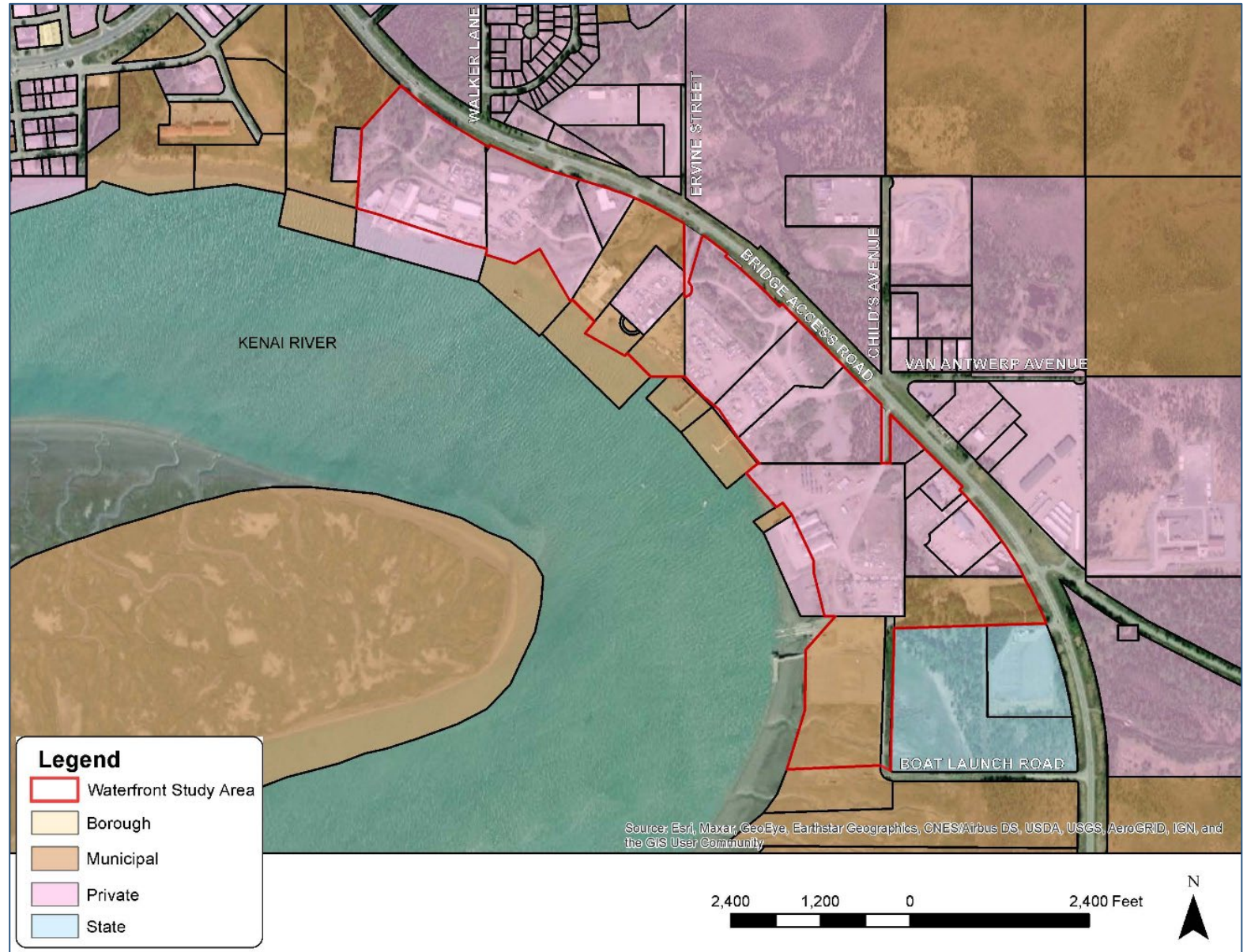
Developed areas have gravel surfacing





## Land Ownership

City-owned parcel on southern edge includes gravel road access, parking (238 vehicles with trailers), dock, boat launch, restrooms, and an elevated viewing platform





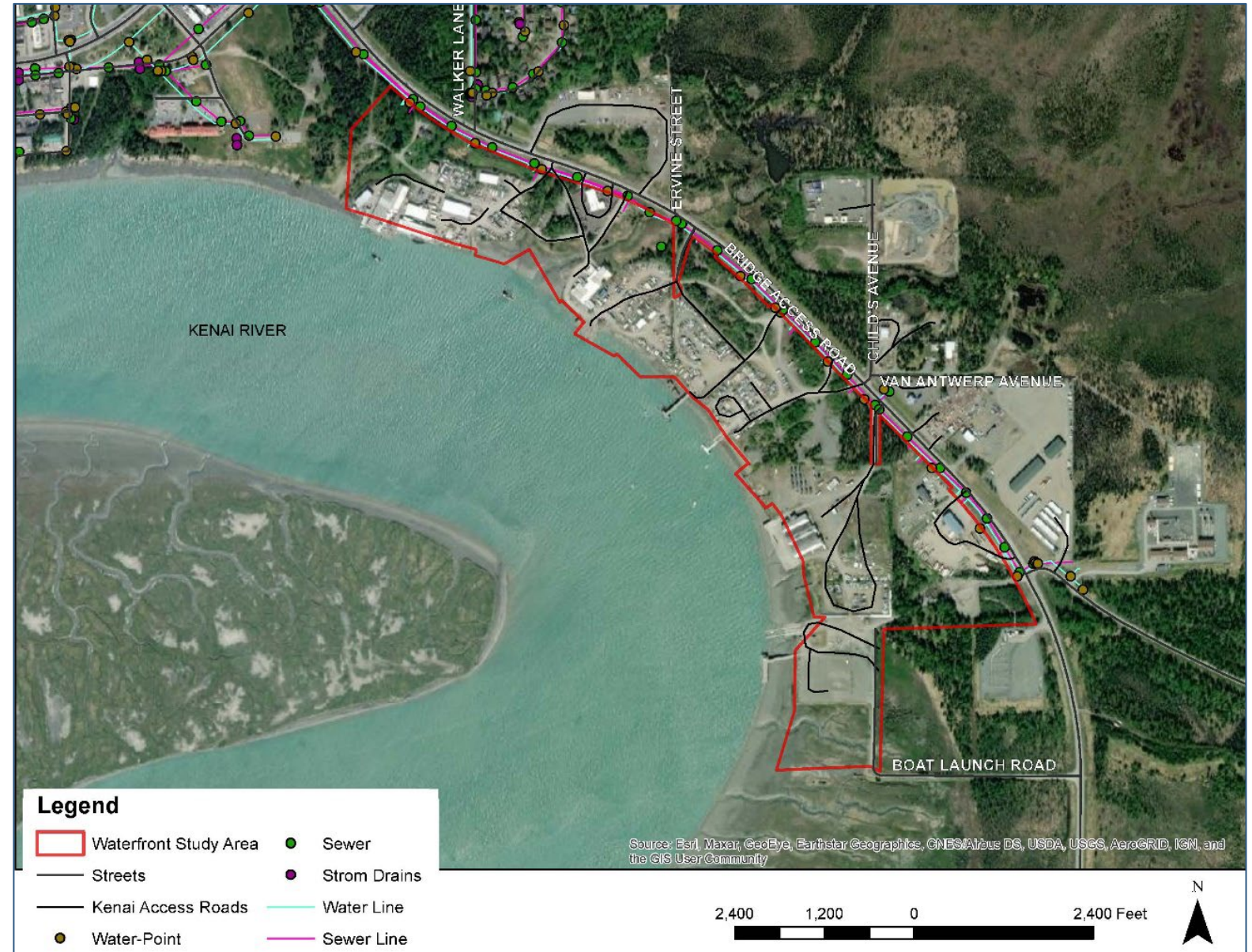
# Utilities

Water/sewer runs  
within Bridge Access  
Road ROW

No stormwater  
infrastructure

3-phase power E of  
Bridge Access

Gas main SW of  
Bridge Access Road



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## Access

- From Bridge Access Road – 2-lane highway, 45 and 55 mph
- City ROW along Boat Launch Road
- Other access within City ROW is through Childs Ave, accessing the Port of Kenai and through Ervin Circle that terminates at a municipal-owned parcel currently leased to a private user.
- Paved portion of Boat Launch Road off Bridge Access Road





# Summary of Economic Context



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# Economic Context Highlights

- **Demographics**

- Kenai City population grew 4.6% (2017-2021);
- KPB grew 1.3% (2017-2021); 10% growth expected by 2045
- 19% of population identifies as Alaska Native
- Kenai City median age: 36.3 years

- **Economy**

- Kenai City average household income -- \$82,662
- Government jobs largest category of employment in KPB
- Oil industry jobs make up 4% of employment, but pay the highest wages
- Seasonal employment
- Seafood industry (sport fishing, commercial, personal use harvest)
- Visitor industry – Kenai/Soldotna welcomed 127,000 nonresident visitors in 2016 (most recent data)
  - Most popular activities were fishing, wildlife viewing, and hiking/nature walks

# Economic Context Highlights

- **Recreation**

- Important for resident quality of life and visitor activity
  - Municipal Park, Kenai North and South Beach, Kenai Municipal Park Trails and Meeks Trails, Kenai Spur Highway, and others.

- **Visitor Attractions**

- Kenai River Flats and Wildlife Viewing Area
- Kenai Scenic Bluff Overlook Park
- Kenai Visitor and Cultural Center
- Old Town and other various sites

- **Conference and Meeting Spaces**

- 5 facilities that can seat more than 100 people for banquet-style event or meeting
- 5 facilities can host receptions for 180-400 people
- 3 facilities have some breakout room capacity
- ~250 conference-quality hotel rooms, including 5 hotels near downtown and Cannery Lodge

## Great Ideas Considerations

Concept	Resident Use	Visitor Use	City Net Revenue	Zoning Change Needed	Detailed Feasibility Needed	Possible Public/Private Partnership
Boardwalk/ Non-motorized path	✓	✓	X	X	X	X
Brewery/Restaurant/ Retail	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Convention Center	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	X
Park/Campground	✓	✓	X	✓	X	X
Boat Launch and Parking Improvements	✓	✓	X	X	X	X



## Exercise

*Ranking ideas based  
on economic context  
and community vision*





# Community Concepts Planning



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## Exercise

*Putting ideas on paper*



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# JOIN US TOMORROW

## Open Studio – 8:00 am – 5:00 pm

## Preferred Concepts Presentation 7:00 – 8:30 pm

## KENAI CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND VISITORS CENTER



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