Coachella Rail Station Feasibility Study and Integrated Land Use and Transit Network

Coachella Planning Commission

March 4, 2026

Agenda

- Study Overview
- Station Layout & Design
- Station Area Plan
- Economic Development Strategy
- Next Steps

Study Overview

Study Purposes

- Evaluate potential locations for CV Rail station site and layover facility in Coachella
- Select the City's preferred station location
- For the preferred location, develop:
  - Preliminary engineering plans, architectural drawings, and connectivity plans for the rail station
  - Transit-oriented community plans and economic development strategies for the surrounding area

CV Rail and the Coachella Station Study

- Final selection of station locations will be determined in the NEPA/CEQA CV Rail Tier II/Project Environmental Document[1]
- Analysis and information in this study will be utilized to help determine the final selection of the preferred alternative during formal NEPA/CEQA process
- Location of tracks for CV Rail are subject to negotiations and agreements with the host railroad
- This study does not commit the City to the approval or construction of any particular station location or design concept

1. Led by RCTC under the oversight of the Federal Railroad Administration and Caltrans Division of Rail.

Community Engagement

Pop up Events

- Eggstravaganza – April 12
- Movie Night – May 13
- Mariachi Festival – May 22
- Propsera Learning Exchange – May 29
- Independence Day – July 3
- Halloween Carnival – Oct 30
- Los Muertos Block Party – Nov 11
- Fiestas Azules – Jan 24
- DRD Health Resource Fair – Feb 7

Community Workshops

- November 21, 2024
- March 18, 2025
- July 24, 2025
- October 16, 2025

TAC Meetings

- Oct 24, 2024 – Introduction and Initial Sites
- Jan 30, 2025 – Station location evaluation
- Apr 24, 2025 – Preliminary station layout and land use vision
- Sept 11, 2025 – Station designs and land use plan
- Jan 15, 2026 – Refined design, plans, and strategies

Station Layout and Design

City's Preferred Station Site

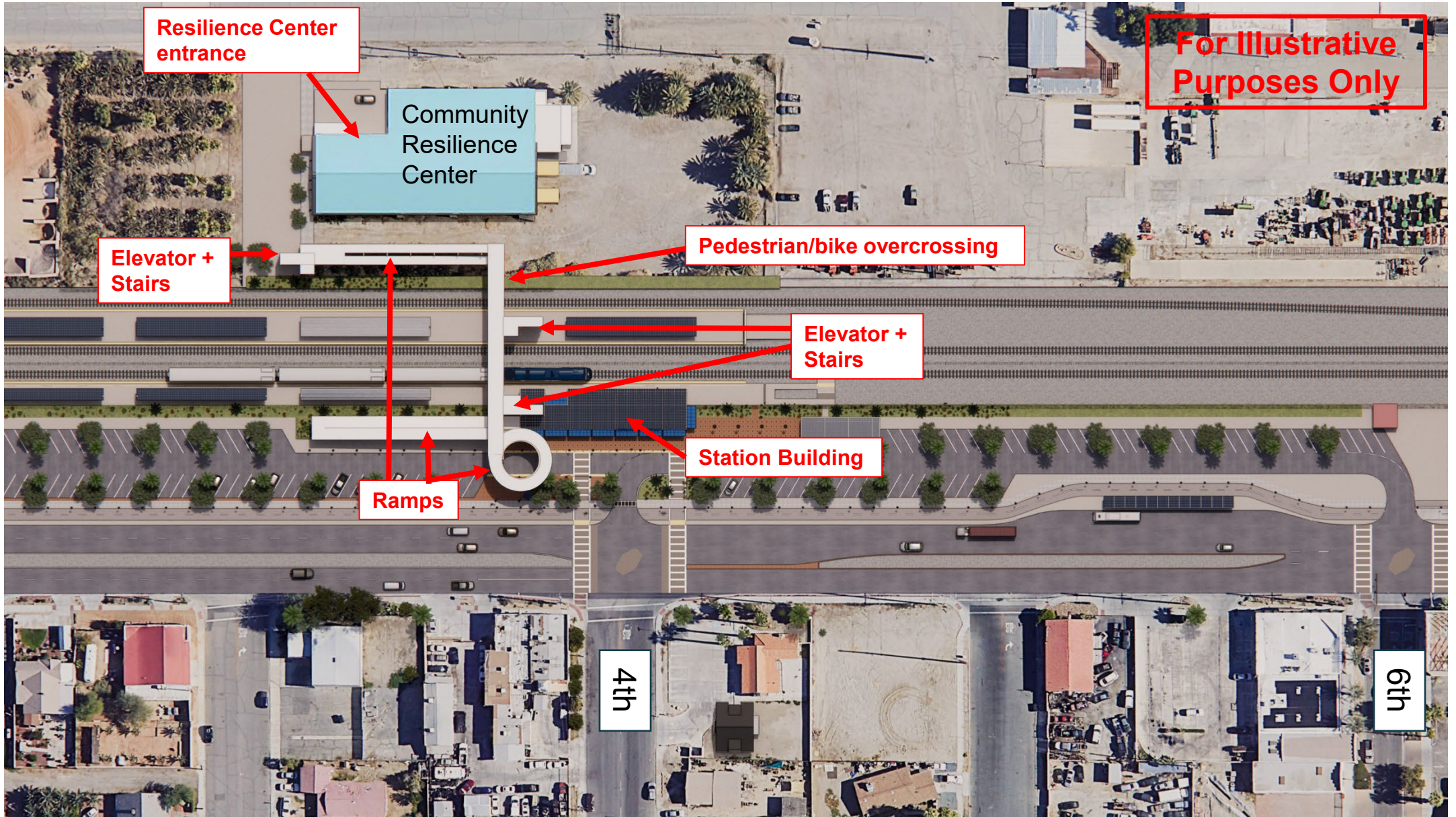
Site 2 in Pueblo Viejo was recommended to City Council because it has good accessibility, the most supportive land use, and the fewest engineering constraints

Layover Facility Location

- South of Avenue 52 was determined to be the optimal location operationally
- More land is available on the east side of the railroad to accommodate facility elements:
  - 3 storage tracks
  - Train wash
  - Crew building
  - Truck access and employee parking

Proposed Station Layout - Access

Proposed Station Layout - Components



Station View

STATION

Station Area Plan

Organization of the Plan

Chapter 1 (Background & Purpose)

→ *purpose, context, and high-level goals of the Plan*

Chapter 2 (Illustrated Vision)

→ *desired outcomes for the station and surrounding built environment*

Chapter 3 (Plan Area Toolkit)

→ *strategies and guidelines for achieving the vision of Chapter 2*

Chapter 4 (Implementation)

→ *actions, policies, and phasing for implementing the Plan*

Chapter 1: Purpose of the Plan

- Builds on the vision of the General Plan and Revitalization Plan
- Supports the priorities of RHNA and REAP 2.0
- Enhances grant eligibility/competitiveness
- Leverages the prospect of passenger rail service to define and illustrate a community-led vision for the area
- Provides policy and guidance for achieving the vision

Chapter 1: Guiding Principles

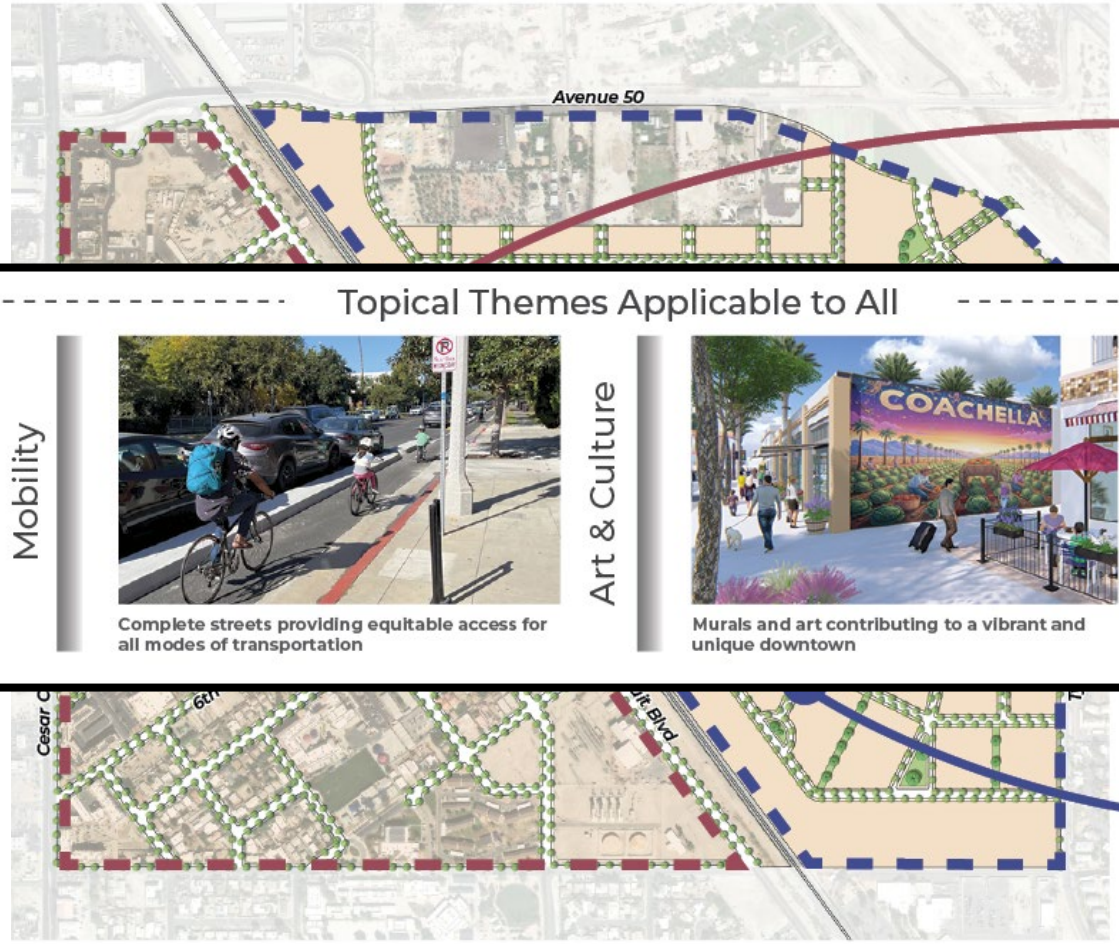
The Station Area will be:

- Safe and Comfortable
- Inclusive
- Connected
- Engaging
- Sustainable
- Distinct

Chapter 1: Goals

- The Station Area will continue to evolve into a vibrant mixed-use environment
- The City's downtown will expand eastward, across the railroad
- Shops, restaurants, and civic facilities will draw residents and visitors
- Public improvements and new pedestrian-oriented development will provide a safe, comfortable, and attractive public realm
- The history and culture of Coachella will be acknowledged and celebrated
- The siting, design, and appointing of the rail station and adjacent areas will support effective rail operations
- The station and adjacent areas will function as a robust mobility hub

Illustrated Vision



Pueblo Viejo

Active ground floors in a mixed-use downtown environment

Public Realm improvements intended to create a beautiful, comfortable, safe, and active environment

Potential Station

Iconic train station with pedestrian and bicycle facilities located at the terminus of 4th Street

Bridge connecting both sides of the Plan Area: Pueblo Viejo and Downtown Expansion

Downtown Expansion

Opportunity for adaptive reuse of existing buildings in the initial phases

A walkable mixed use downtown environment, creating an extension of Pueblo Viejo

Chapter 2: Illustrated Vision – Pueblo Viejo

Tactical Activation

New Buildings Lining Streets

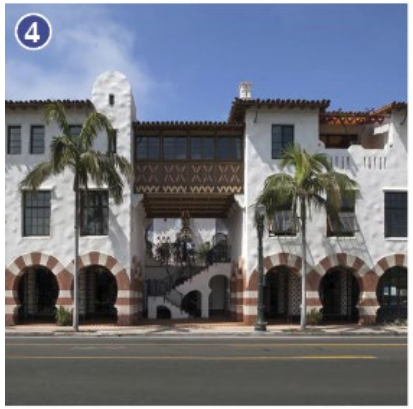
Active Streetscape Leading to Station

Chapter 2: Downtown Expansion

Wide Range of Uses in a Walkable Environment

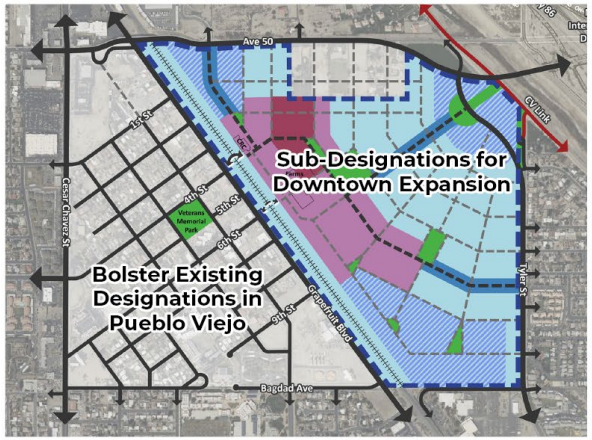
Chapter 2: Downtown Expansion

Wide Range of Uses in a Walkable Environment



Chapter 3: Plan Area Toolkit

Chapter at a Glance

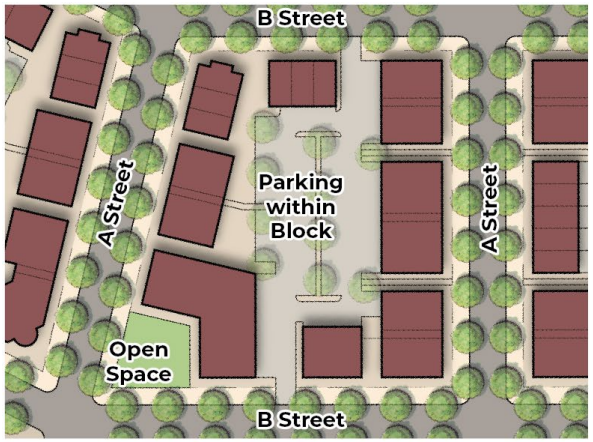


Land Use (Section 3.2)

This section describes the attributes of each land use Designation and Sub-Designation applicable to the Plan Area; these descriptions serve as a key to the remainder of the Toolkit.

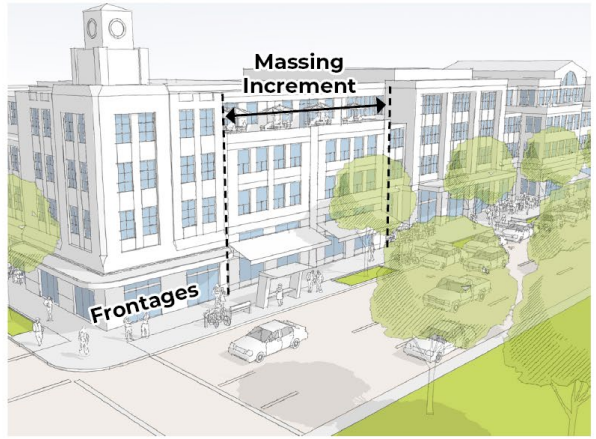
The Public Realm (Section 3.3)

This section describes how any improvements and new development are intended to create a connected, walkable, and attractive Public Realm, composed of streets, paseos, and open spaces.



Site Plan Design (Section 3.4)

Once blocks are defined by the Public Realm established per Section 3.3, this section describes how to configure buildings, parking, and utilities on those blocks.



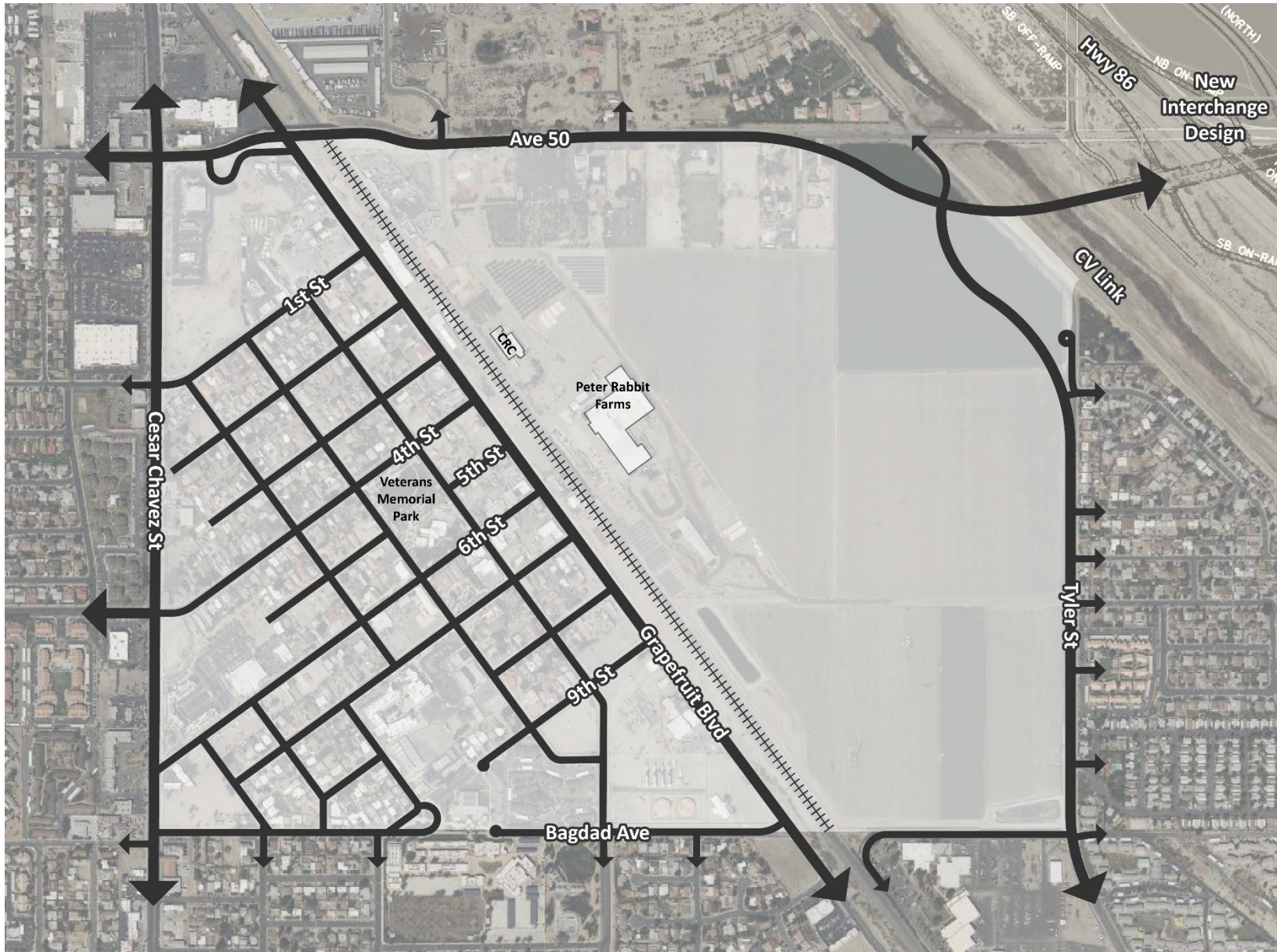
Building Design (Section 3.5)

This section identifies appropriate building types, how buildings can be properly designed and scaled to the context, and how their frontages can bring life to the streets, paseos, and open spaces which they line.

Chapter 3: Plan Area Toolkit

LEGEND

Existing Streets



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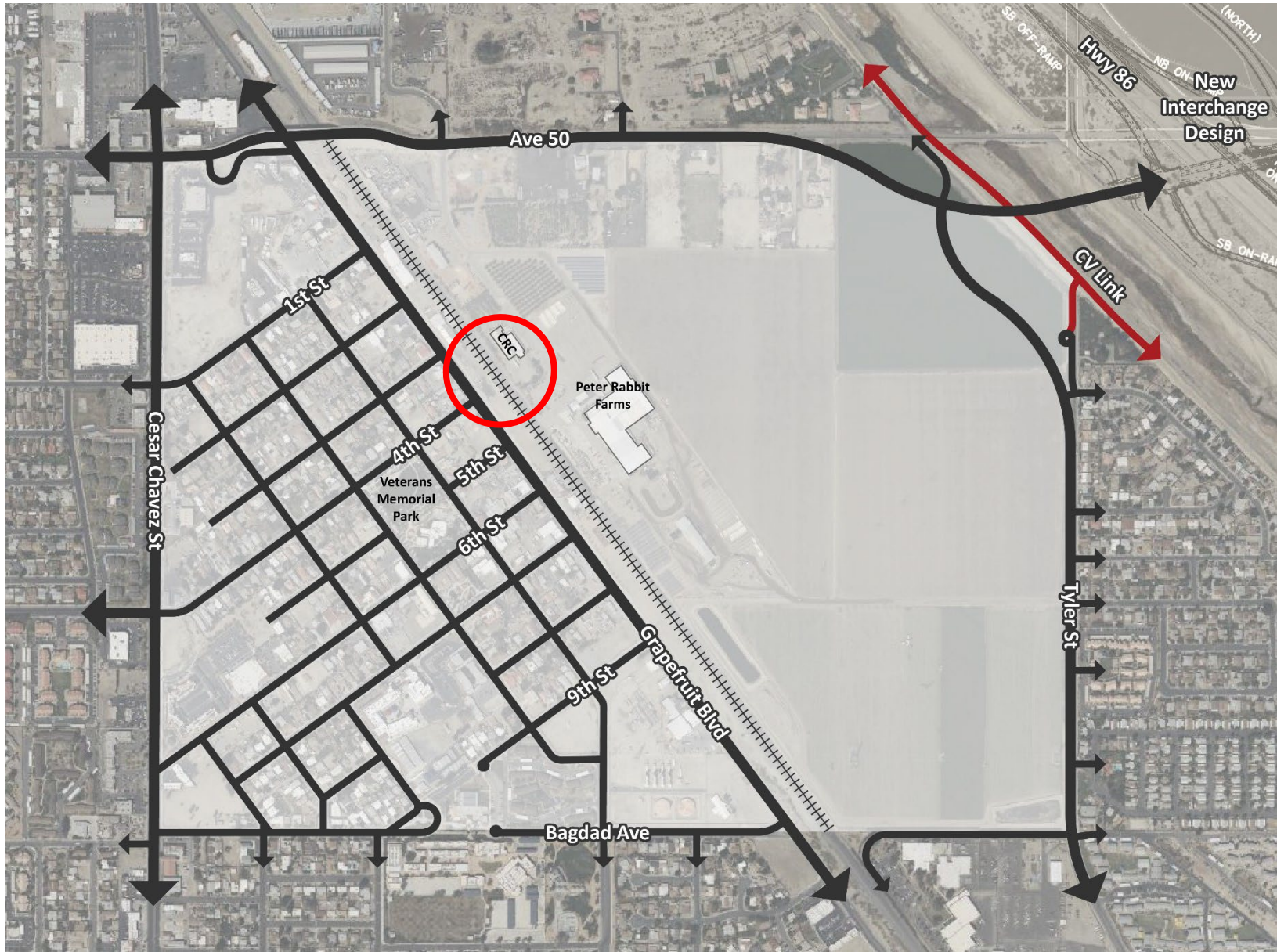
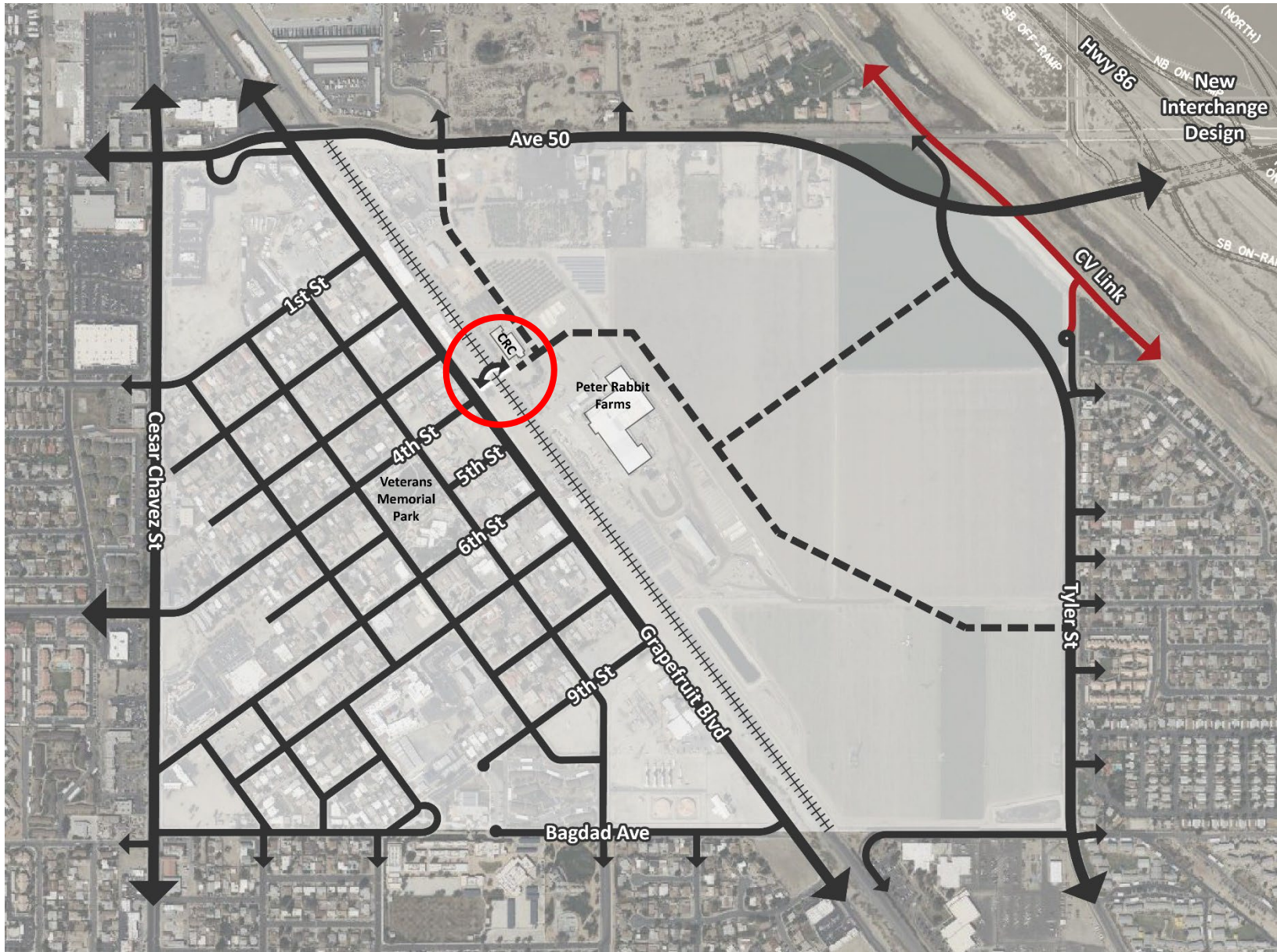


Chapter 3: Plan Area Toolkit

LEGEND

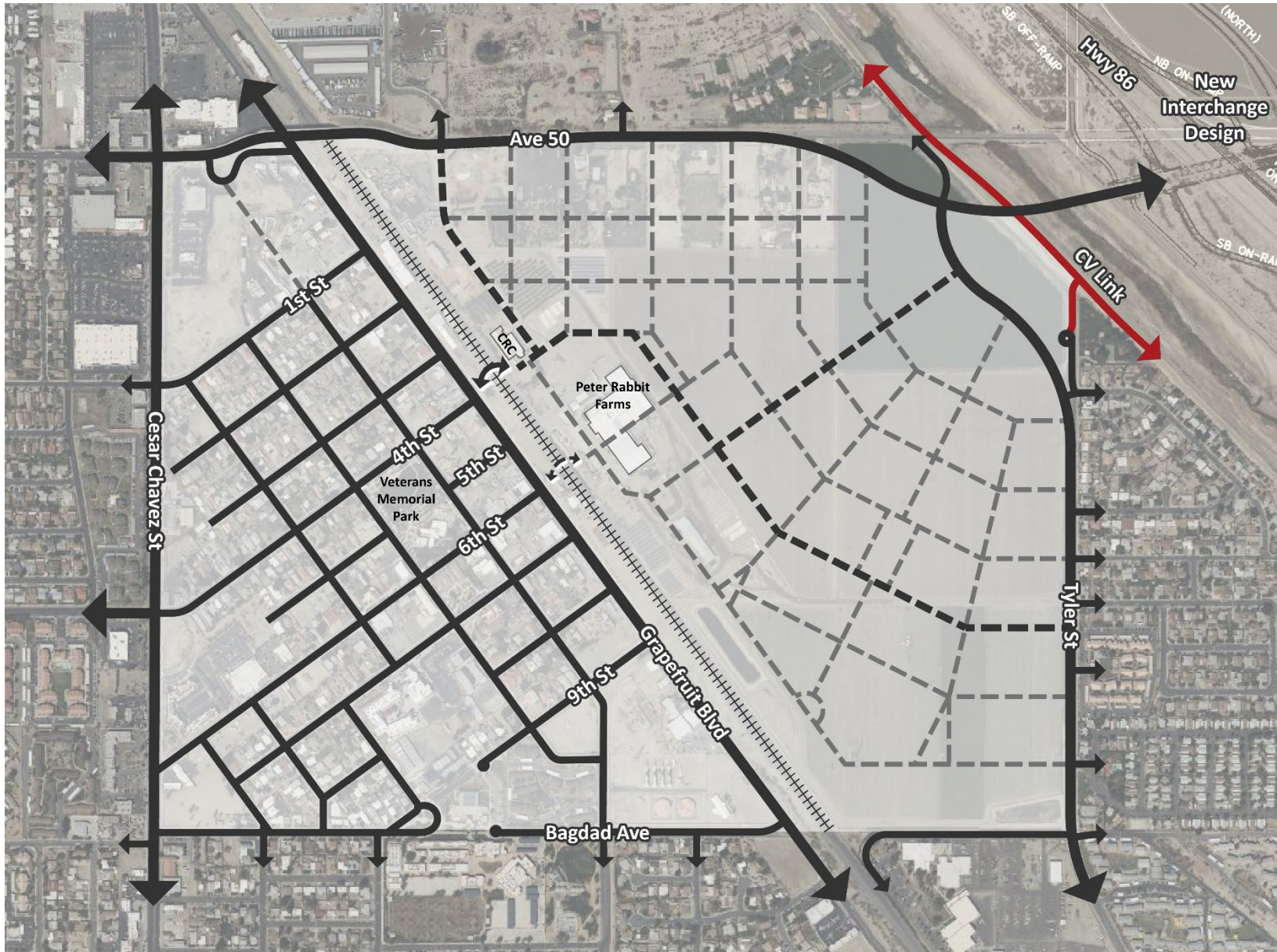
- Existing Streets
- Potential Neighborhood Avenues



Chapter 3: Plan Area Toolkit

LEGEND

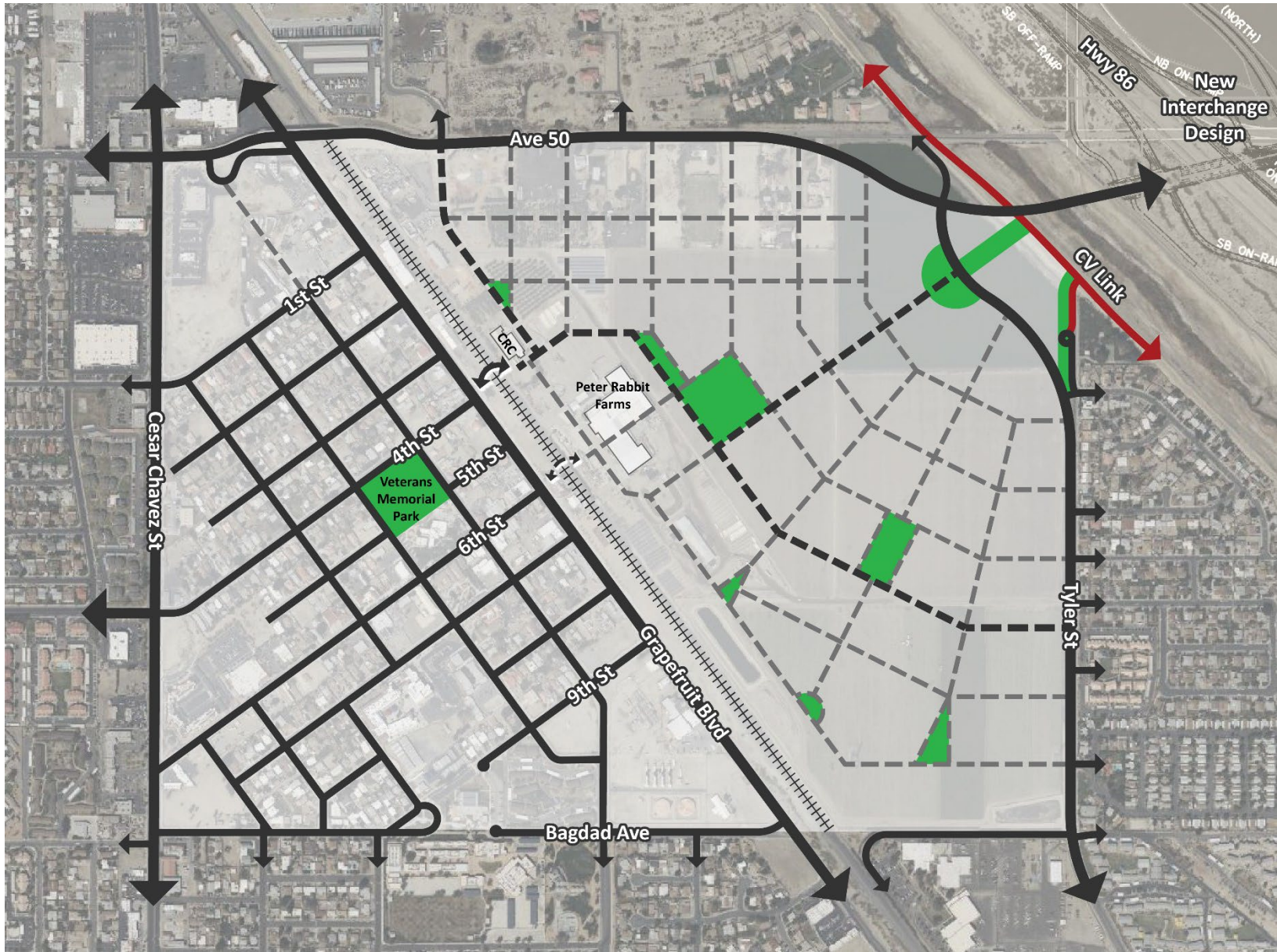
- Existing Streets
- Potential Neighborhood Avenues
- Potential Neighborhood Streets



Chapter 3: Plan Area Toolkit

LEGEND

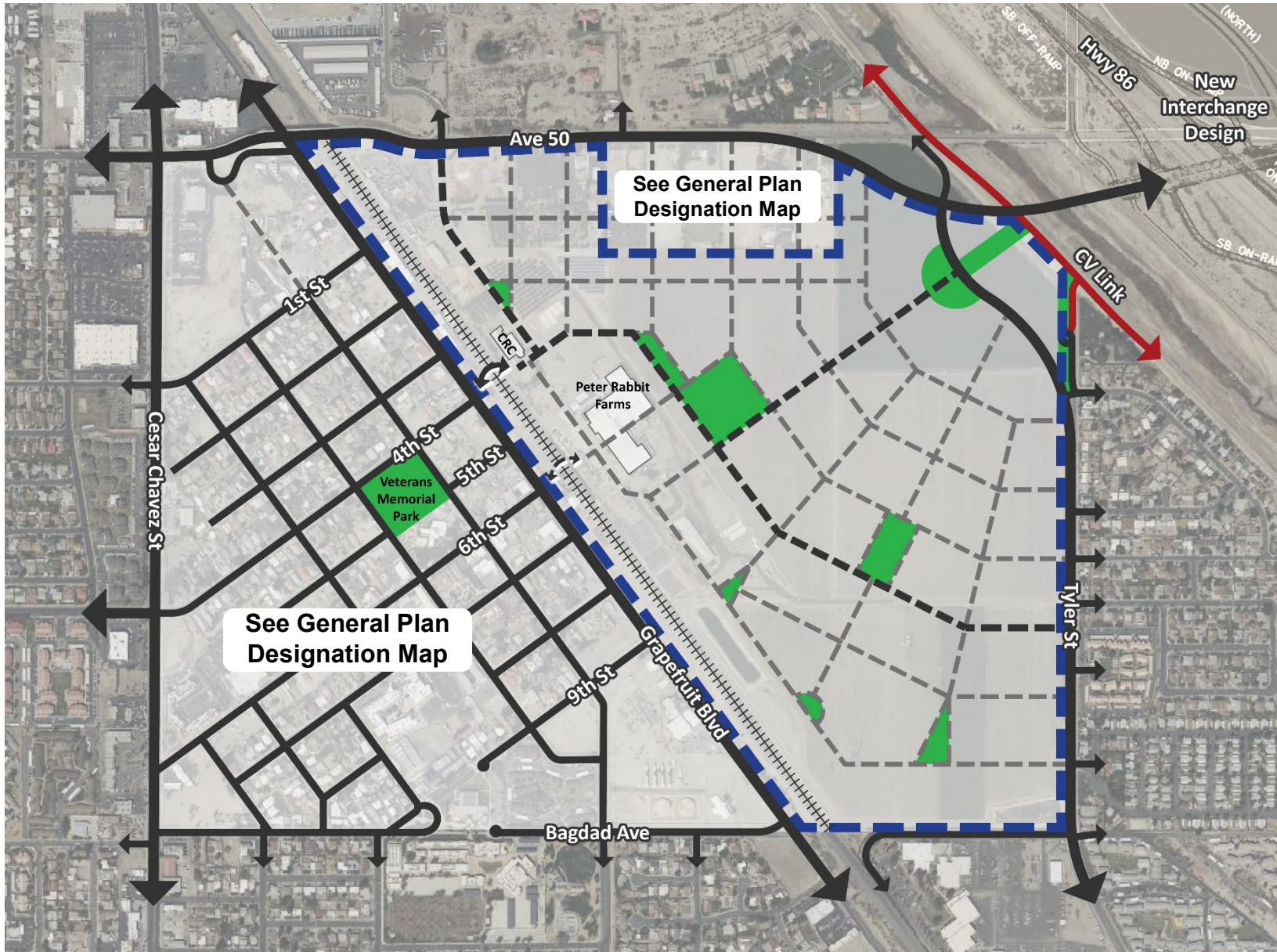
- Existing Streets
- Potential Neighborhood Avenues
- Potential Neighborhood Streets
- Open Space (Green and/or Plaza)



Chapter 3: Land Use

LEGEND

- Existing Streets
- Potential Neighborhood Avenues
- Potential Neighborhood Streets
- Open Space (Green and/or Plaza)
- Urban Employment Designation within the Urban Expansion Subarea



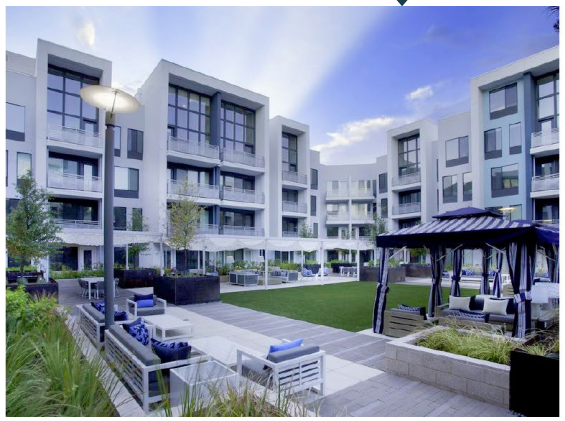
Chapter 3: Implementing the Adopted Housing Element

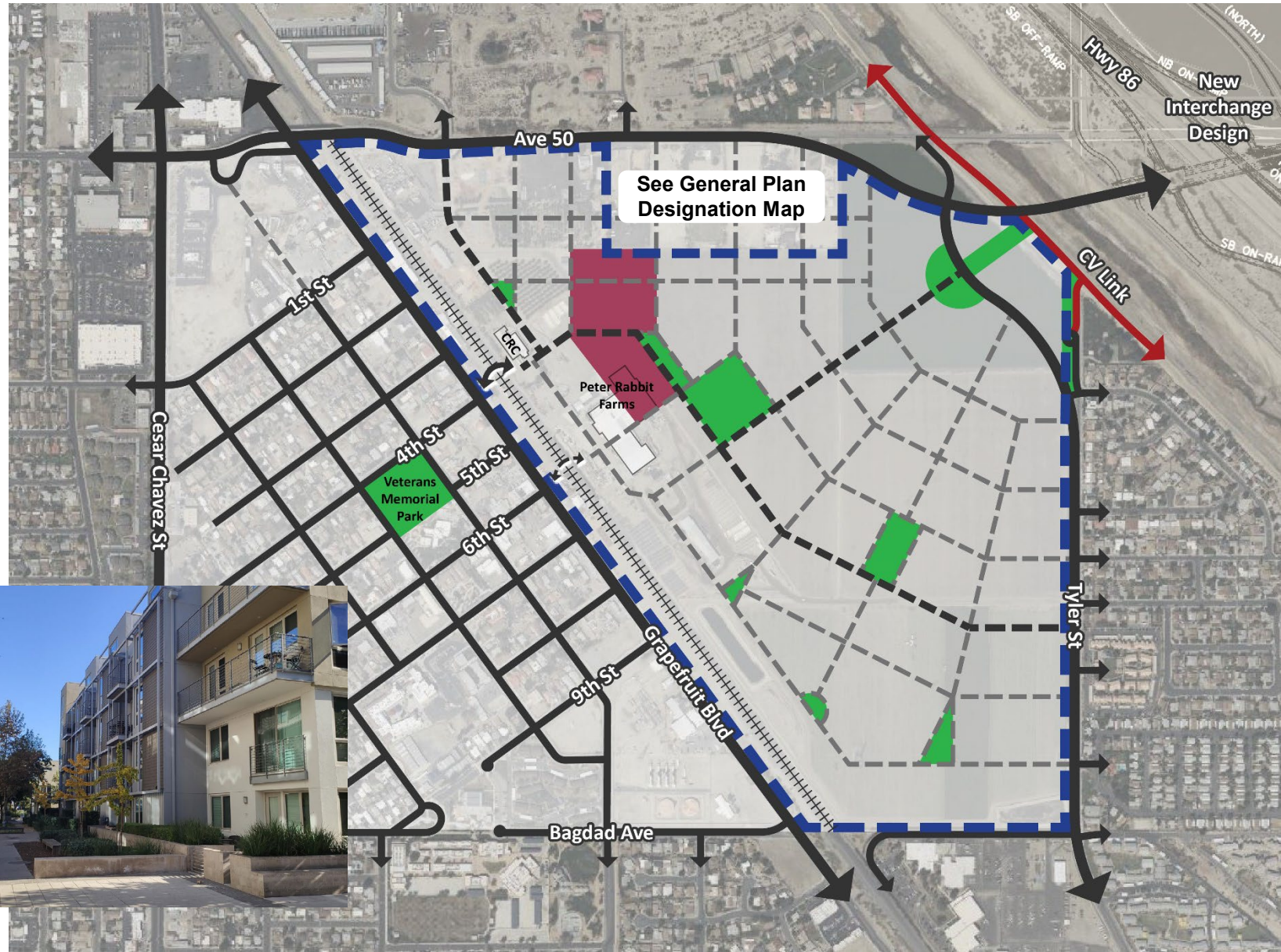
LEGEND

- Existing Streets
- Potential Neighborhood Avenues
- Potential Neighborhood Streets
- Open Space (Green and/or Plaza)
- Urban Employment Designation within the Urban Expansion Subarea

***Sub-Designations** (example locations):*

- U-E Core High





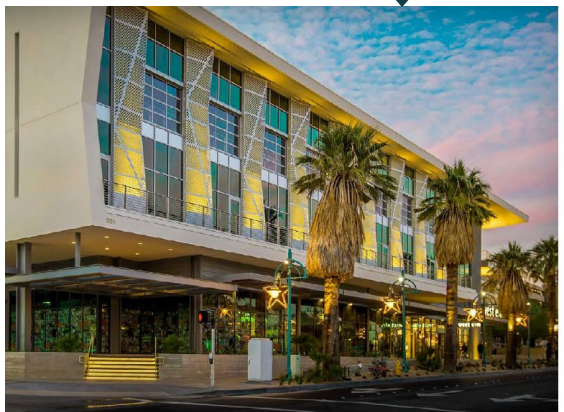
Chapter 3: Implementing the Adopted Housing Element

LEGEND

- Existing Streets
- Potential Neighborhood Avenues
- Potential Neighborhood Streets
- Open Space (Green and/or Plaza)
- Urban Employment Designation within the Urban Expansion Subarea

***Sub-Designations** (example locations):*

- U-E Core High
- U-E Core



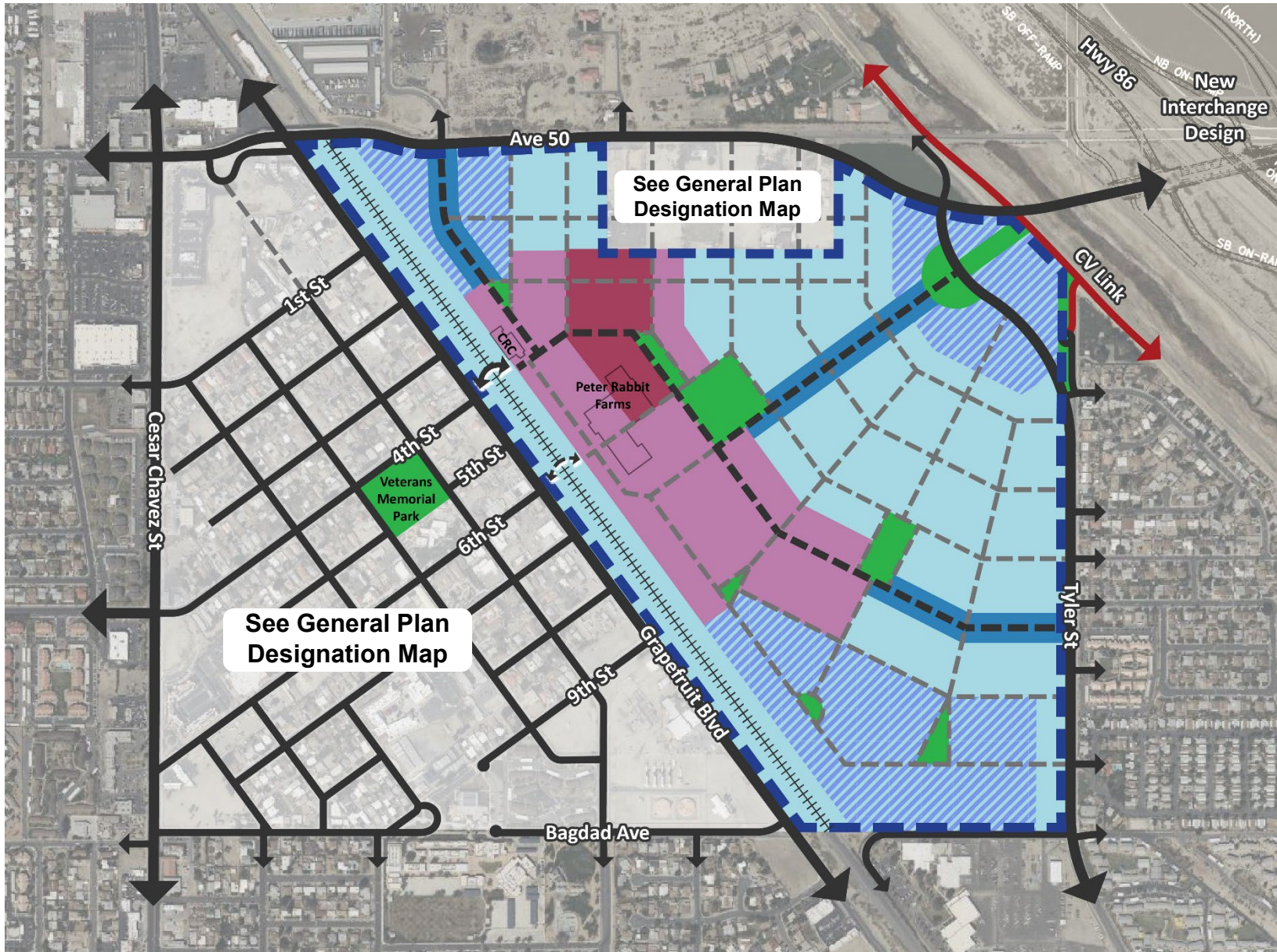
Chapter 3: Flexible Land Use Framework

LEGEND

- Existing Streets
- Potential Neighborhood Avenues
- Potential Neighborhood Streets
- Open Space (Green and/or Plaza)
- Urban Employment Designation within the Urban Expansion Subarea

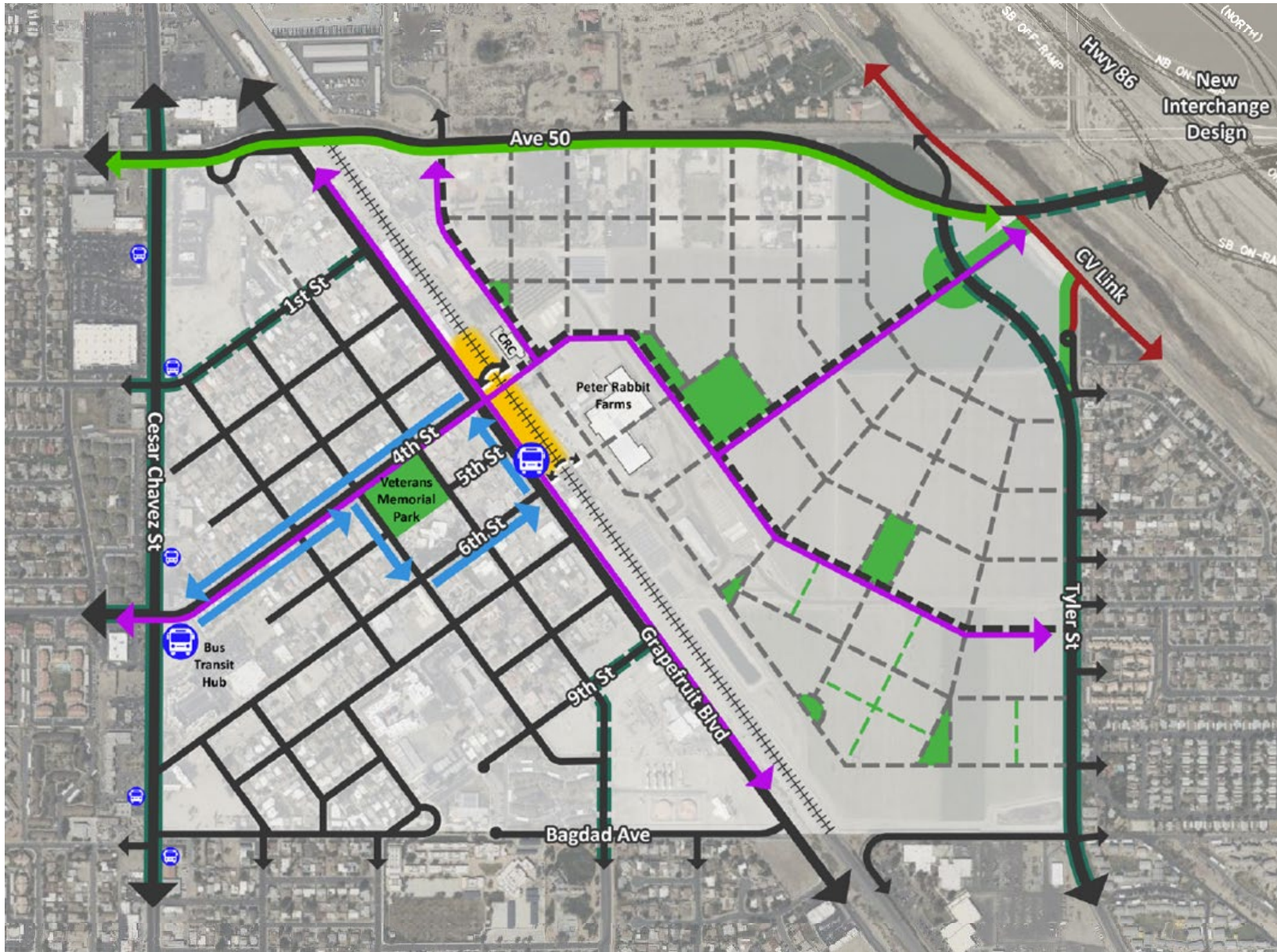
***Sub-Designations** (example locations):*

- U-E Core High
- U-E Core
- U-E General
- U-E Corridor Frontage
- U-E Commercial Focus



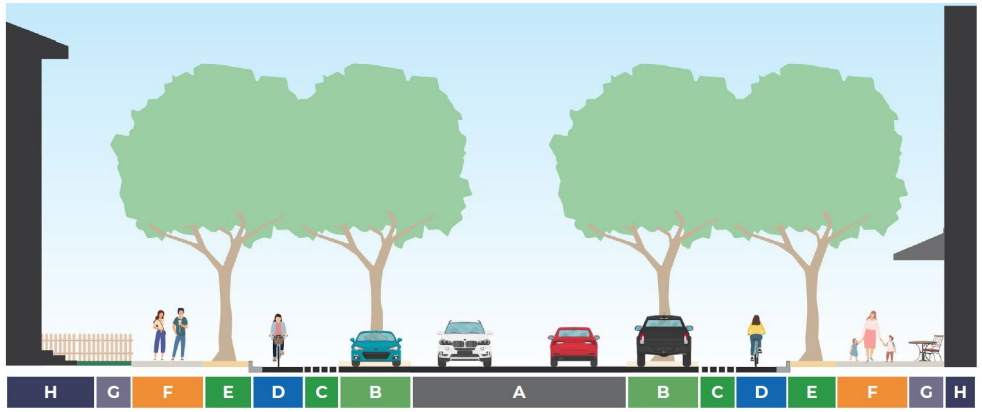
Chapter 3: Mobility Concepts

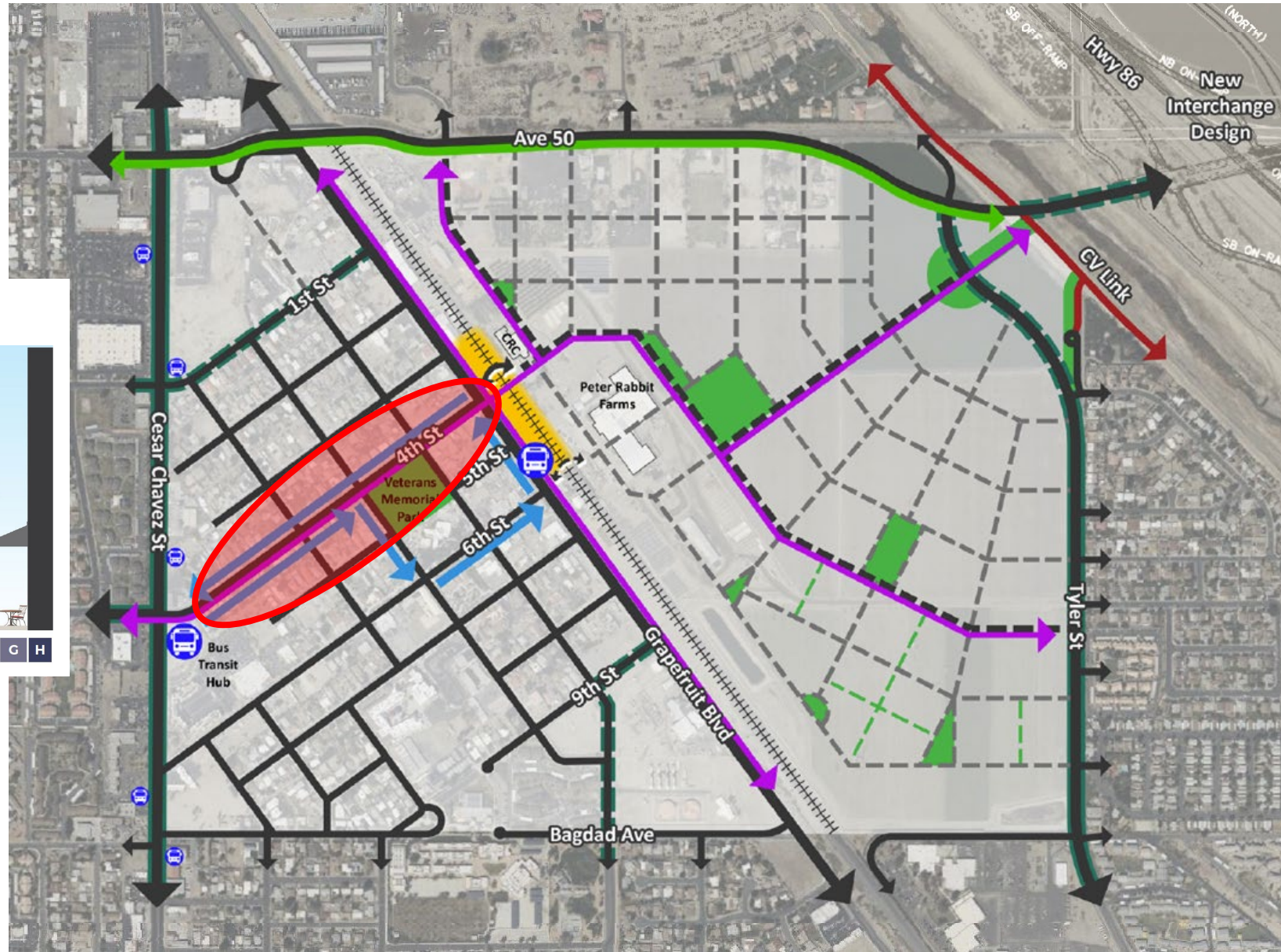
- Existing Streets
- Potential Neighborhood Avenues
- Potential Neighborhood Streets
- Rail Lines
- Train Station and Bus Stop Area
- Open Space (Green and/or Plaza)
- Pedestrian Bridge Associated with Station
- Future Goal: additional east-west connectivity, such as a pedestrian bridge near 6th Street
- Bus Stops (including envisioned stop at station)
- Potential Bus Loop to Train Station
- CV Link
- Primary Bike Routes to Station
- Existing Bike Routes at Periphery
- Future Bike Routes at Periphery
- CV Link Connector
- Example Paseos



Chapter 3: Mobility Concepts

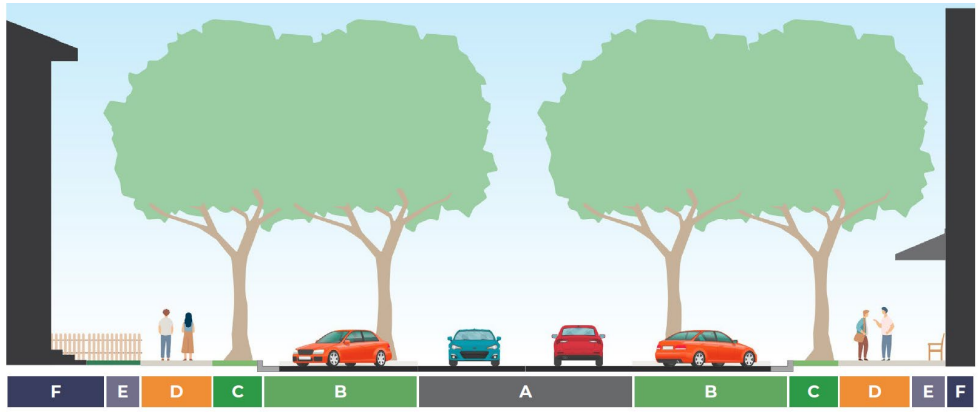
Pedestrian and Cyclist-Oriented 4th St

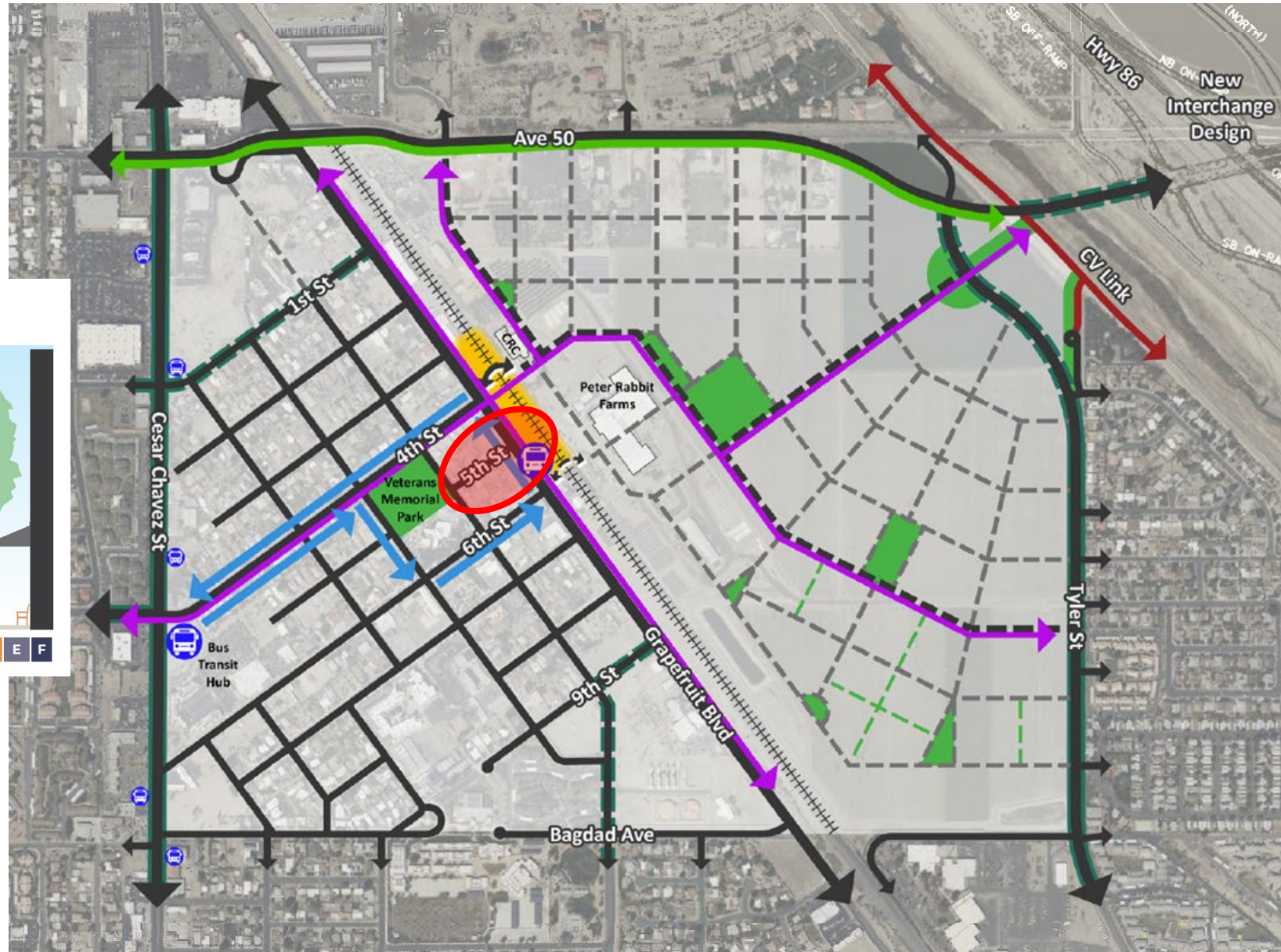




Chapter 3: Mobility Concepts

Additional Trees and Parking on 5th St

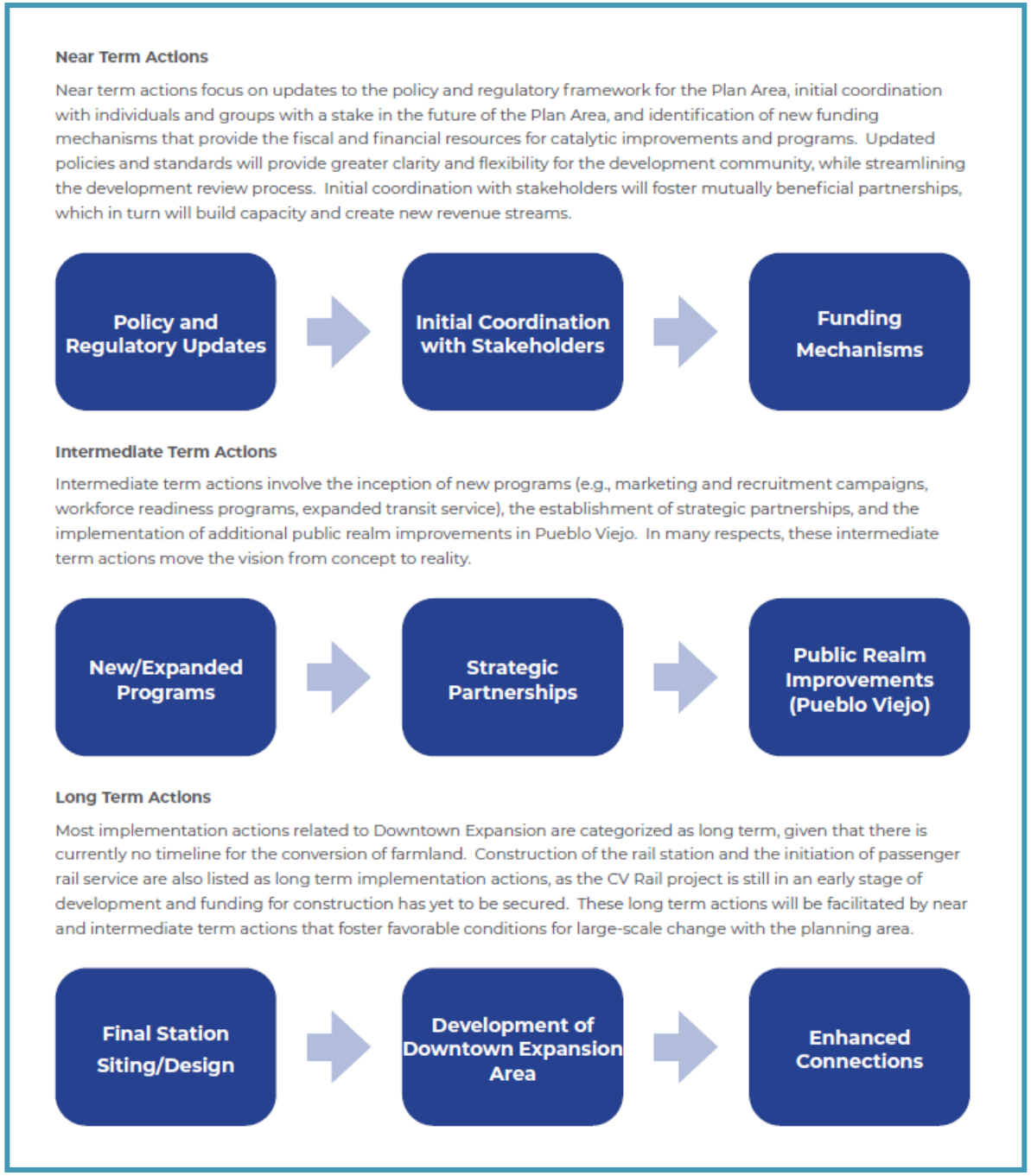




Chapter 4: Implementation

Phasing

- Contingent upon Many Factors
  - Funding
  - Staffing
- Critical to Success
  - Leadership
  - Coordination and partnerships with state, regional, and local agencies/organizations
  - Clear and flexible development/design standards and a straightforward entitlement process
  - Strategic public realm investments
  - Building Coachella's presence and brand



Near Term Actions

Near term actions focus on updates to the policy and regulatory framework for the Plan Area, initial coordination with individuals and groups with a stake in the future of the Plan Area, and identification of new funding mechanisms that provide the fiscal and financial resources for catalytic improvements and programs. Updated policies and standards will provide greater clarity and flexibility for the development community, while streamlining the development review process. Initial coordination with stakeholders will foster mutually beneficial partnerships, which in turn will build capacity and create new revenue streams.

Intermediate Term Actions

Intermediate term actions involve the inception of new programs (e.g., marketing and recruitment campaigns, workforce readiness programs, expanded transit service), the establishment of strategic partnerships, and the implementation of additional public realm improvements in Pueblo Viejo. In many respects, these intermediate term actions move the vision from concept to reality.

Long Term Actions

Most implementation actions related to Downtown Expansion are categorized as long term, given that there is currently no timeline for the conversion of farmland. Construction of the rail station and the initiation of passenger rail service are also listed as long term implementation actions, as the CV Rail project is still in an early stage of development and funding for construction has yet to be secured. These long term actions will be facilitated by near and intermediate term actions that foster favorable conditions for large-scale change with the planning area.

Chapter 4: Implementation

Policy/Action Framework

- Connectivity
- Housing
- Commerce/employment
- Sustainability/resiliency
- History/cultural heritage
- Rail operations

5. History and Cultural Heritage

The development of the Plan Area provides an opportunity to highlight Coachella's history and culture, including its association with Native American and Hispanic communities, the natural resources of the Coachella Valley, regional agricultural industry, and the railroad. The showcasing of Coachella's history and cultural heritage can contribute to efforts to render the Plan Area an attractive and engaging visitor destination.

Policy 5.1 Native American History and Culture. Pursue opportunities to acknowledge and celebrate local Native American history and culture.

Action 5.1.1 Maintain dialogue with local tribal groups and seek their input on appropriate ways to acknowledge and celebrate tribal history and culture. (Near Term)

Action 5.1.2 Support events that acknowledge and celebrate tribal history and culture. (Near Term)

Action 5.1.3 Engage Temalpakh Farm on the prospect of establishing a retail and or dining venue in the Plan Area. (Near Term)

Action 5.1.4 Consider posting a land acknowledgement in a public space within the Plan Area, perhaps as a plaque or monument. (Near Term)

Policy 5.2 Coachella's Origins as a Railroad Town. Acknowledge and celebrate Coachella's origins as a railroad town.

Action 5.2.1 Showcase Coachella's origins as a railroad town through signage, public art, and community events. (Intermediate Term)

Action 5.2.2 Consider opportunities to establish a railroad museum in the Plan Area, potentially in partnership with Union Pacific and/or other railroad entities. (Intermediate Term)

Action 5.2.3 Encourage the establishment of a railroad-themed retail and/or dining venue in close proximity to the railroad (e.g., train car restaurant, replica of original Coachella train depot). (Intermediate Term)

Action 5.2.4 In coordination with Union Pacific, consider establishing a safe and secure public viewing area where residents and visitors can view railroad activity. (Intermediate Term)

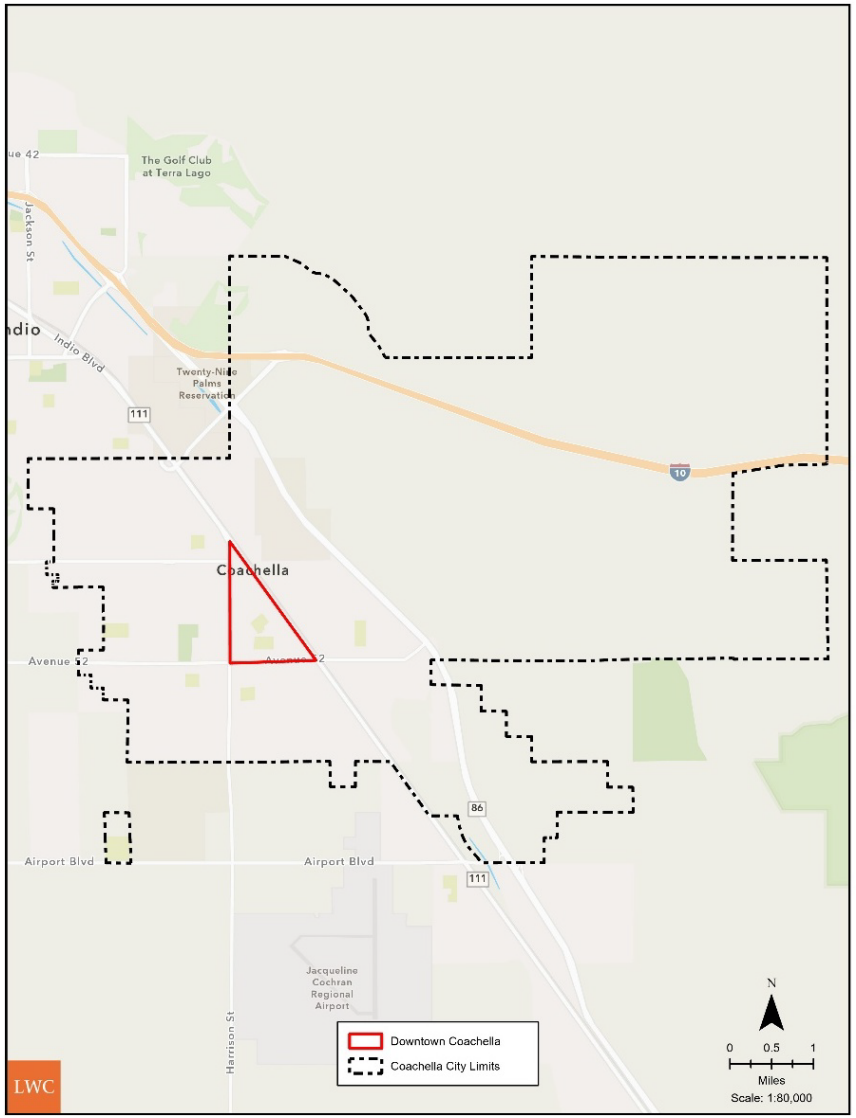
Economic Development Strategy

Market Area Analysis

City of Coachella vs. Coachella Valley

- Higher share of families with children:
  - 40% of households have children under 18, compared to 24% in the Coachella Valley
- Predominantly Hispanic/Latino community:
  - ~97% Hispanic or Latino (any race) compared to ~52% across the Coachella Valley
- Lower median household income:
  - ~$68,000 in Coachella vs. ~$85,000 in the Coachella Valley

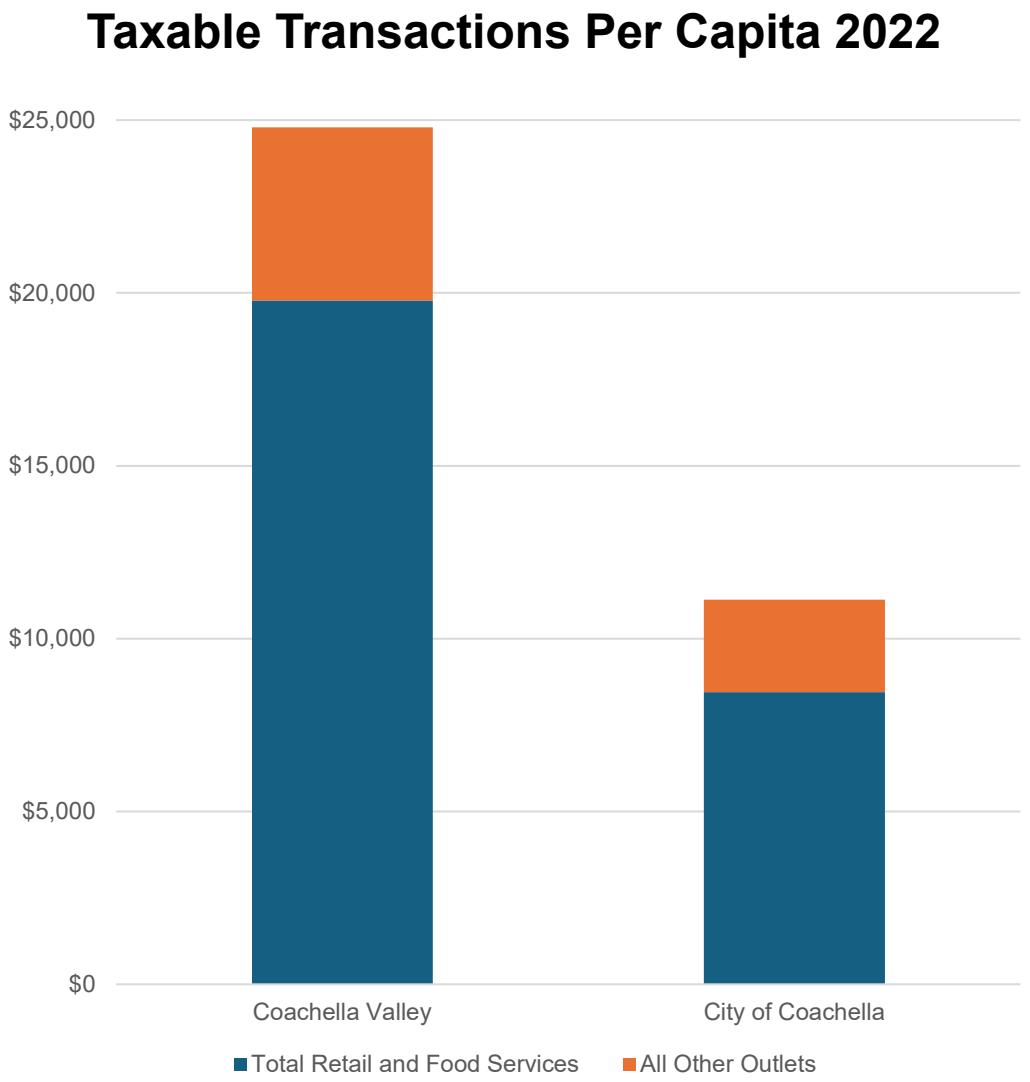
City of Coachella and Downtown Coachella



Market Area Analysis

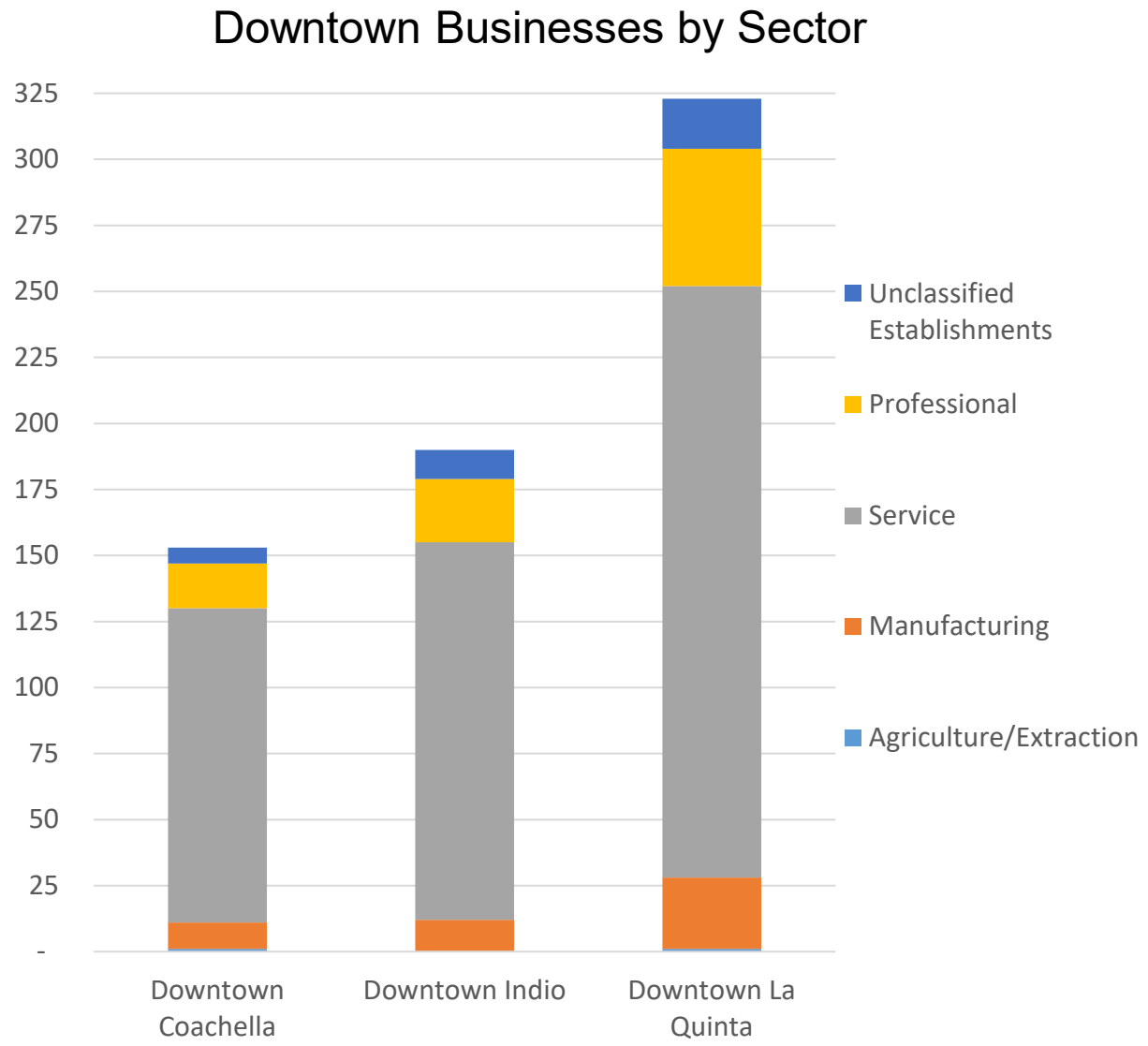
Taxable Sales Leakage

- The City of Coachella has a spending gap of **~$13,600 per capita** compared to the Coachella Valley
- This gap reflects retail sales leakage and represents an opportunity to capture additional local spending.
- Largest Spending Gap Sectors
  - Food Services and Drinking Places
  - General Merchandise Stores
  - Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers



Comparable and Competitive Environment

- Business count by Downtown:
  - Downtown Coachella: 153 businesses
  - Downtown Indio: 190 businesses
  - Downtown La Quinta: 324 businesses
- All three downtowns are service-sector focused
- Downtown Coachella has a higher share of agriculture/extraction related businesses
- La Quinta was viewed as a “one-stop shop” during focus groups



Comparable and Competitive Environment

- Business density and diversity matter
  - Strong mix of retail, service, and office uses
- Serve everyday community needs
  - Focus groups emphasized the importance of businesses that support daily, routine activities
- Downtown development priority
  - Façade improvement grants
  - Downtown Business Incentive Program
- Placemaking & events programming
  - Activates downtown spaces and supports local businesses

Downtown La Quinta Events

Top Left: *Certified Farmers Market*
Bottom Left: *Seasonal Events*
Top Right: *Art on Main Street*
Sources: City of La Quinta, Old Town La Quinta

Key Findings and Market Gaps

Quick-service restaurants and cafés offering affordable, family-friendly meals

Grocery and convenience stores tailored to larger households and frequent shoppers

Hair salons, barbershops, nail salons, and other personal care providers

Tutoring centers, family clinics, and play-based learning spaces

Retailers serving cost-conscious shoppers

Banks and financial providers supporting the everyday needs of working families

Businesses celebrating Coachella’s agricultural heritage while providing affordable access to fresh, healthy food

Next Steps

Study Wrap-Up and Next Steps

- Finalizing remaining deliverables – Area Plan, cost estimates, and phasing/implementation plan
- City Council presentation March 11, 2026
- Study will conclude by the end of March 2026
- Broader Coachella Valley Rail environmental and design process begins this year, with more opportunities for community engagement
- City of Coachella can begin implementing Area Plan and Economic Development Strategy recommendations