

For Immediate Release

Contact:

Dawn Hjelseth

Vice President of Marketing & Communication

River City Company

[dawn@rivercitycompany.com](mailto:dawn@rivercitycompany.com)

Cell: 616-886-4347

### **River City Company Seeks Public Input on Future of Hawk Hill**

**March 7, 2023 (Chattanooga, Tenn.)** River City Company announced today the opening of a community survey to provide the opportunity for the public to assist with determining the future highest and best use of Hawk Hill, the current location of AT&T Field. With the anticipated relocation of the Chattanooga Lookouts baseball team from AT&T Field to the U.S. Pipe & Wheland Foundry site, Hawk Hill will become available for redevelopment. As downtown Chattanooga's economic development non-profit, River City Company will seek community input to assist in developing a comprehensive, long-term vision for the site to guide future redevelopment.

Many Chattanoogaans remember the site as the home to the Kirkman Technical School which operated from 1928-1991. The school's mascot was the Golden Hawks, and the hill where the football field was located was often referred to as "Hawk Hill" or "Kirkman Hill." The high school was located at the base of the hill, along Chestnut Street, where the IMAX Theatre, Creative Discovery Museum, Marriott Residence Inn, and Hilton Garden are today. In 1991, the school closed with the City of Chattanooga retaining ownership until 1994 when River City Company purchased the site from the City of Chattanooga for \$2,500,000 for the purpose of facilitating redevelopment.

Per the sales agreement, River City Company then gifted a portion of the land, the former gymnasium, to the Creative Discovery Museum for the construction of a children's museum. The remainder of the land was to be redeveloped for businesses or activities that were compatible with the Tennessee Aquarium, the Aquarium Plaza, Ross's Landing Park and Plaza, the children's museum, and other public and private property in the vicinity.

In Fall 1993, River City Company contracted with LDR International, Inc. and produced the Kirkman Site Development Guidelines, which provided a framework for future redevelopment, including potential land uses, public open space, pedestrian and vehicular access, and architectural guidelines.

As River City Company was working on various portions of the former Kirkman property in the early 1990's, Mr. Frank Burke, whose family owned the Chattanooga Lookouts Minor League Baseball club, inquired whether River City would consider Hawk Hill for a new downtown baseball stadium. Extensive discussions ensued between Mr. Burke, the City of Chattanooga, and River City Company. To help facilitate the stadium development, the Sports Authority of the City of Chattanooga was created to serve as the lease holder for the duration of the Chattanooga Lookouts occupying Hawk Hill.

In 1999, River City Company sold Hawk Hill to the Chattanooga Sports Authority to help facilitate the AT&T Field development. In the land transfer agreement, there is a reversion clause that states should the

baseball team ever cease operations or relocate, River City Company retains the right to repurchase the property and the baseball stadium will be demolished after the Chattanooga Lookouts have relocated to their new facility.

“While it is too early to identify the specific timing of the property transfer back to River City Company, we are beginning the process now to provide opportunities for the community and stakeholders to participate in the planning process,” said Emily Mack, President and CEO of River City Company. “The planning process will include Hawk Hill, the adjacent riverfront parking lots, and a parking lot behind the Creative Discovery Museum. While any redevelopment would most likely be phased over time, we believe it’s important to look at this area holistically, rather than individual parcels.” The site referred to as Hawk Hill is approximately 7.5 acres. When factoring in the adjacent riverfront parking lots and the lot behind the Creative Discovery Museum, the total area is approximately 13 acres.

Along with the community input, River City Company has engaged two external firms to assist with the visioning and planning process. Released February 22, 2023, RCLCO Real Estate Consultants provided a detailed market analysis for downtown Chattanooga, which can be found at <https://www.rivercitycompany.com/reports-and-studies>. The Urban Design Associates (UDA) will assist with visioning and planning efforts specific to Hawk Hill, including potential mix of land uses, infrastructure needs, and capacity testing. Utilizing guiding principles outlined in the ONE Riverfront Plan and paired with a real estate market analysis and community input, River City Company will explore potential land uses, density, public spaces, connectivity, and the necessary infrastructure to support future redevelopment.

The public input survey for the future of Hawk Hill will be open until April 15 and can be found at [www.rivercitycompany.com/hawk-hill](http://www.rivercitycompany.com/hawk-hill). Additional information including graphics outlining the potential development site can be found on the website as well. If a civic or neighborhood association would like River City Company to speak at an upcoming meeting, please contact Dawn Hjelseth at [dawn@rivercitycompany.com](mailto:dawn@rivercitycompany.com) for scheduling.

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