

AGENDA
CITY OF GUNNISON
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
REGULAR SESSION
Rev 5/6/10

DATE: WEDNESDAY, MAY 12, 2010
TIME: 7:00 P.M.
PLACE: CITY HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 201 WEST VIRGINIA AVE.

- 7:00PM
- I. CALL TO ORDER
 - II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG
 - III. CONSIDERATION OF THE APRIL 22, 2010 MEETING MINUTES
 - IV. OVERVIEW OF THE *VANTUYL RANCH MASTER PLAN*, CHAPTER 2, PREFERRED LAND USE PLAN
 - V. UNSCHEDULED CITIZENS
 - VI. COUNCIL UPDATE
 - VII. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS
 - VIII. PLANNING STAFF UPDATE
 - IX. ADJOURN INTO WORKSESSION

WORKSESSION

- I. LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE UPDATE – CHAPTER 2

**TO COMPLY WITH ADA REGULATIONS, PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL
NEEDS ARE REQUESTED TO CONTACT THE CITY OF GUNNISON
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT AT 641.8090**

This agenda is subject to change, including the addition or deletion of items at any time. Regular Meetings and Special Meetings are recorded and action can be taken. Minutes are posted at City Hall and on the City website at www.cityofgunnison-co.gov. Work sessions are not recorded and formal action cannot be taken. For further information, contact the Community Development Department at 641-8090.

**ALL PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION MEETINGS ARE USUALLY BROADCAST LIVE ON
LOCAL CABLE CHANNEL 15**

CHAPTER 2 – PREFERRED LAND USE PLAN

2.1 BUILDING CONSENSUS

2.1.1 INTRODUCTION

Module 2 establishes a *Preferred Land Use Plan* that will guide future land uses within the Ranch. The *Preferred Land Use Plan* is a composite of the best ideas derived from three Concept Plans. The *Preferred Land Use Plan* is the framework defining where future uses are located and is used to establish land use regulations and administrative policies that direct future Ranch management. These regulations and policies are established in Chapter 3 of this *Management Plan*. The *Preferred Land Use Plan* and accompanying management directives are intended to fulfill the goals and objectives established in Chapter 1 of this *Management Plan*. Chapter 2 focuses on the three Conceptual Plans and the consensus-building process used to arrive at the *Preferred Land Use Plan*.

2.1.2 GOALS

The overall plan goal is to “develop a plan to manage competing priorities and best utilize the property, while also preserving the land for passive recreation use, sustainable agricultural production, protecting wildlife habitat and the City’s aquifer recharge area.” Seven additional goals and accompanying tasks are found in Appendix A.

2.1.3 PUBLIC INPUT

Public input has been a key component in developing the land use alternatives in this chapter. On November 12, 2009 a public charrette was held to study land use alternatives that would be suitable on the Ranch in the future. Approximately 40 community members attended the charrette which was hosted by the City Planning and Zoning Commission. Three City Council members also participated in the charrette.

The charrette participants were given the task of developing an illustrative land use plan incorporating agricultural and recreational uses, and educational facilities. Five groups were assembled and each group developed a land use illustration. Several common themes evolved including the continuation of agricultural operations on the majority of the Ranch; establishment of the river corridor as a critical habitat area; facility improvements concentrated at locations with relatively easy access; and, depiction of several different trail system alignments.

These plans were then used by the consultants and City staff to develop three Concept Plans. After the three Concept Plans were established, they were formally presented to the Focus Group and at a community forum. Comments regarding the three concepts were solicited from Focus Group members, interested citizens, City staff, the school district and the Gunnison 4H/CSU Extension staff. The written comments and related documents are contained in Appendix F of this report.

2.2 GENERAL LAND USE CATEGORIES

There are four common land use categories (agricultural, recreation and community facilities, trails, and habitat conservation) depicted on each three conceptual land use plan presented in this chapter. In some cases, the spatial distribution of land uses are set by specific geographic boundaries, however, in others instances land uses will overlap. For example, the Conservation Area has a set geographic boundary, but rotational grazing, an agricultural use, may periodically occur in this area to help facilitate the organic composition of soils. The four land use categories and the Concept Plans are detailed in the remainder of this narrative.

2.2.1 AGRICULTURAL LAND USES

The Agricultural Land Use Area includes the existing Headquarters facilities, irrigated hay meadows, and grazing/pasture areas. These agricultural uses encompass most of the land area on the Ranch. Future agricultural management will be directed by a set of Conservation Management Practices set forth in Chapter 3 of this *Management Plan*. The Conservation Management Practices will address activities such as grazing management, pest control and irrigation applications. The City will continue to work with the lessee, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the CSU Extension, the Colorado Division of Wildlife and other stakeholders to implement sustainable management practices that emphasize natural processes, resource conservation, wellhead protection, and educational opportunities.

2.2.2 COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND RECREATION LAND USES

The public land uses include facilities and areas that will be designated and developed for education, recreation and other civic purposes. The size and extent of these areas vary between the three Concept Plans. Proposed uses include the future library site, community gardens, dog parks, community parks, education facilities, event facilities, and picnic areas. The location of these amenities should facilitate access and use by the community, while minimizing impacts on natural resources and agricultural operations.

2.2.3 TRAILS

The trail system will extend through the Agriculture Land Use Areas and link anticipated trailhead areas for easy access to the Ranch. Trail use is anticipated to be year-round with foot and bike use trails being established and Nordic skiing being accommodated during the winter months. Trail designs will vary with large trail surfaces incorporated for the trail corridors and primitive “single-track” trails being developed in the sensitive areas. The emphasis of trail alignment and design will be to minimize conflicts between recreational, agricultural, and natural habitats, while maintaining opportunities for education and other community benefits.

2.2.4 CONSERVATION LAND USES

The wetlands and riparian habitat in the lower lying portions of the Ranch along the Gunnison River are an important ecological resource. The river corridor area provides habitat for a variety of wildlife species, serves as a recharge area for the aquifer, and is a natural flood control area. The ecological significance of this area precludes the development of any major facilities. Land uses within the Conservation Area will emphasize the site’s ecological functions while providing visitors an opportunity to enjoy and learn about riparian habitat in a manner that minimizes impacts. This area

does not preclude ongoing agricultural use, but may require more deliberate management to minimize impacts.

The City, in cooperation with the CDOW and other partners, will seek opportunities to improve the function and diversity of habitat in this area.

2.3 CONCEPT PLAN 1

This Concept Plan assumes that an agreement can be reached with the Bureau of Reclamation to swap the 10-acre parcel north of Char-Mar Park for a similar-size parcel in the southwest corner of the Ranch. Such a land swap would facilitate the clustering of public recreation facilities in the area between CR 13 and the park, and the extension of Char-Mar Park onto the Ranch. Proposed amenities include a small community garden and an event facility. A loop trail would encircle the Ranch, following the length of the Gunnison River bank. Drive-in public access would be from CR 13. A dog park is not included.

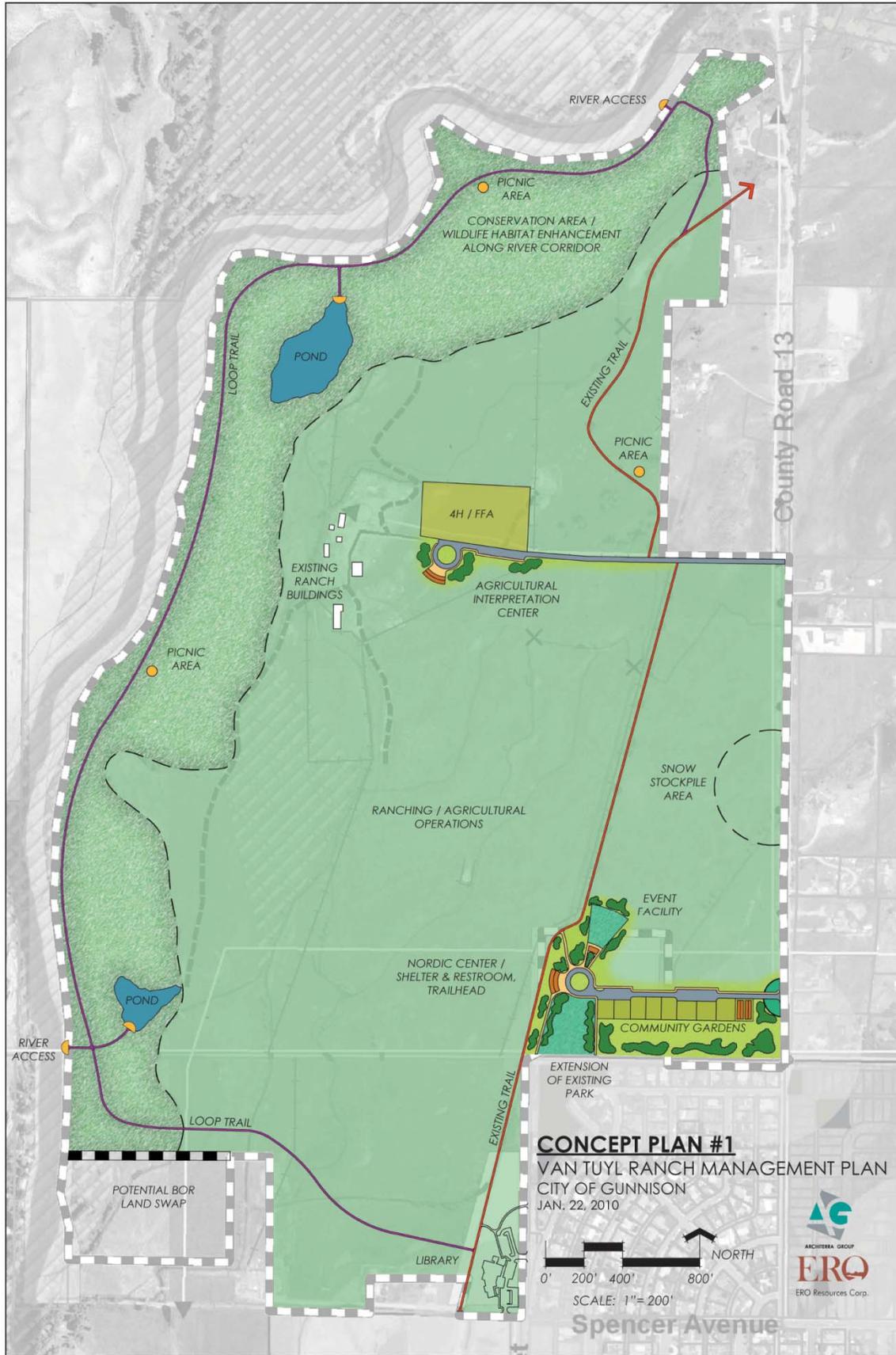
Agriculture-oriented facilities (interpretative center and 4H/FFA area) would be located adjacent to the existing ranch buildings. Ponds along Wilson Creek would be expanded, providing more diverse open-water habitat while also improving groundwater infiltration.

Benefits

- Facilities clustered near town facilitate walk-in/bike-in access
- Integration with Char-Mar Park
- Minimal disturbance to agricultural areas
- Facilities utilize degraded portion of the Ranch
- Agricultural interpretive center adjacent to the Ranch could provide more focused programs and uses.

Drawbacks

- The river bank trail would significantly impact resources and be difficult to construct.
- The BOR land swap is not likely in the short-term
- Use of the agricultural interpretive center could be limited due to separation from public facilities.



2.4 CONCEPT PLAN 2

Concept Plan 2 explores the feasibility of public recreation facilities in the southern portion of the Ranch, adjacent to the existing trail and near the future library site. Proposed amenities include a larger community garden area, an event facility, and a dog park clustered together with shared parking and restrooms. A trail connection in the southern half of the Ranch would provide river access and a connection to nearby public lands. A separate loop trail would be located in the northern half, with two spurs extending to river access points. Drive-in public access would be from County Road 15.

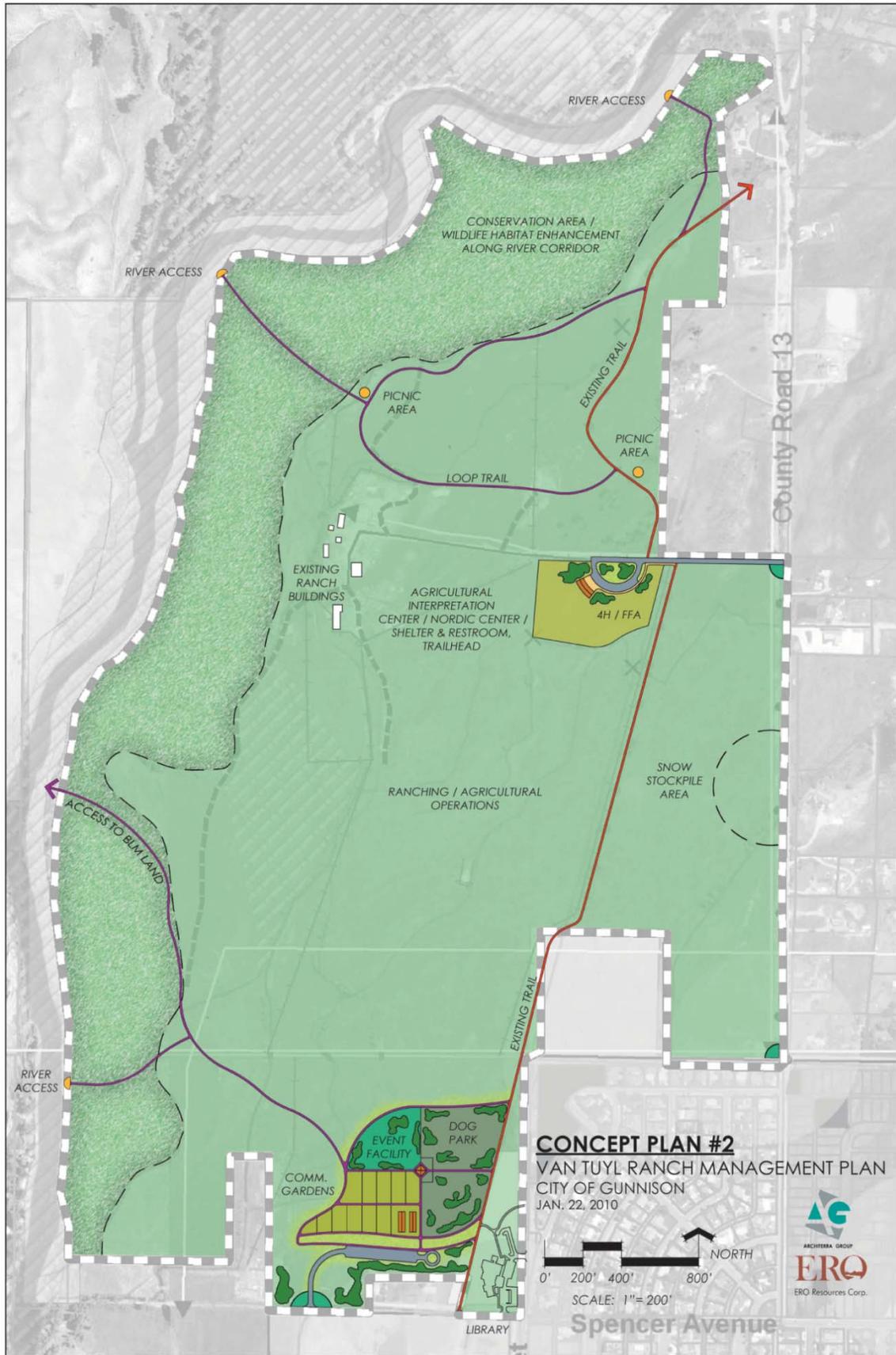
Agriculture-oriented facilities (interpretative center and 4H/FFA area) would be located along the Ranch access road, adjacent to the existing trail. This facility could be used as a trailhead for summer use and as a Nordic center in the winter.

Benefits

- Facilities located closest to neighborhoods, schools, and library for easy walk-in/bike-in access
- Minimal disturbance to riparian habitat
- Agriculture interpretive center adjacent integrated into trail uses/Nordic trails
- Secondary trailhead/loop trail provides better access to northern area

Drawbacks

- Facilities would be located in a productive agricultural area
- Limited trail connections – no larger loop
- Vehicular access is substandard
- Much of the site is low-lying and is seasonally inundated by surface water.

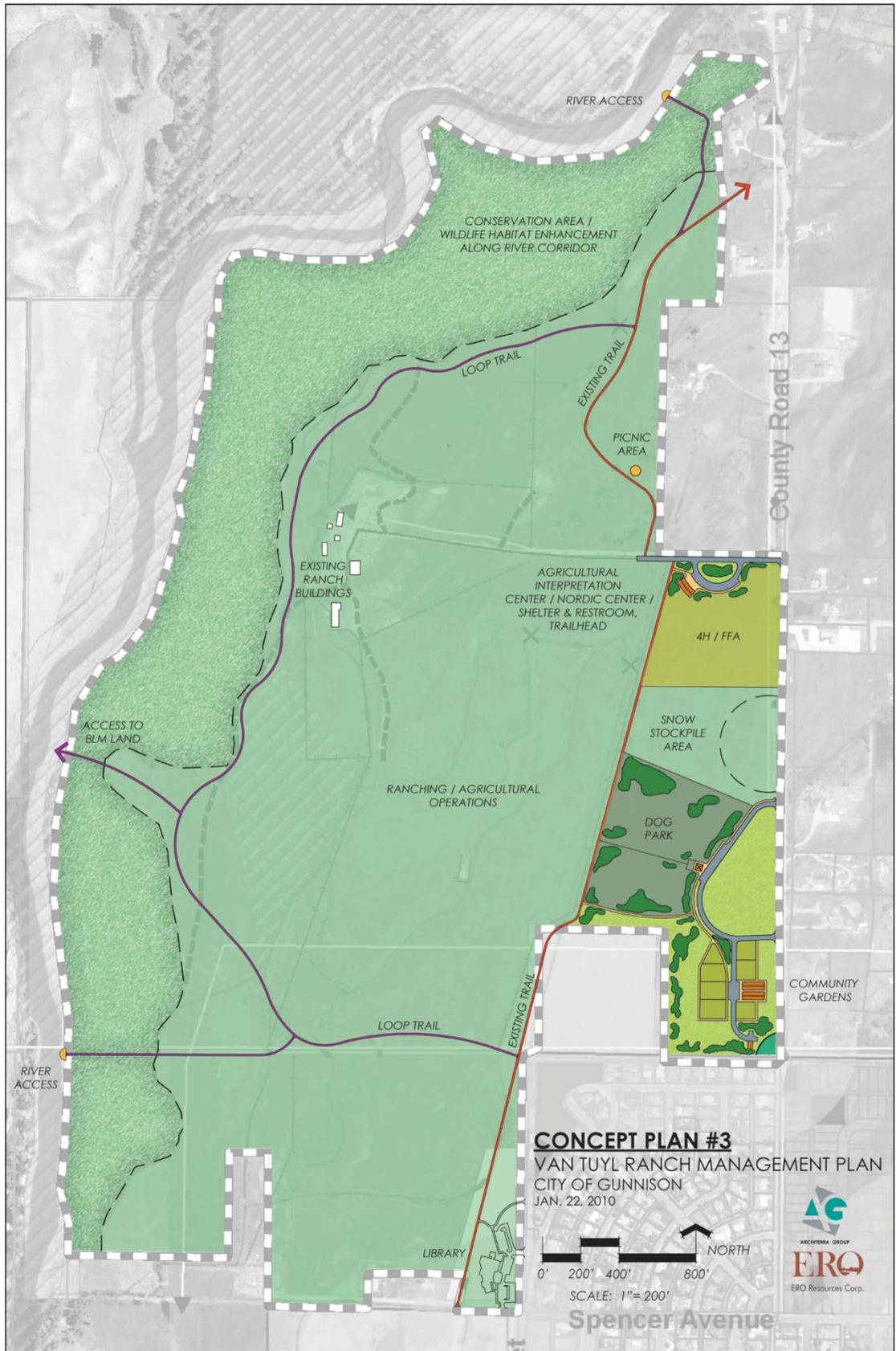


2.5 CONCEPT PLAN 3

Concept Plan 3 makes the greatest use of the area along the eastern edge of the Ranch, part of which is already degraded and less desirable for agricultural production. Facilities include a large community garden area and dog park with shared parking and restrooms. A loop trail would follow the upland edge of the riparian corridor, providing opportunities for river access and a potential connection to nearby public lands.

Agriculture-oriented facilities (interpretative center and 4H/FFA area) would be located at the entrance to the Ranch along CR 13. This facility could be used as a trailhead for summer use and as a Nordic center in the winter.

Benefits	Drawbacks
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clusters developed facilities in an already degraded area• Trail alignment provides extended loop trail while minimizing resource impacts• Proximity of restrooms to existing sewer line	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facilities would be more distant from neighborhoods and schools• No integration with Char-Mar Park or library site• Dog park location adjacent to City wellhead• Limited trail access to river



2.6 ANALYSIS AND REVISIONS

Once the three Concept Plans were developed, the Focus Group was given the opportunity to analyze and revise them. Comments regarding the three Concept Plans were wide in scope and content. Table 2.6 is a comparison of how the three concepts may meet or conflict with the established goals (2.1.2).

TABLE 2.6 COMPLIANCE WITH ESTABLISHED GOALS				
Goal		Concept 1	Concept 2	Concept 3
Ensure protection of the aquifer		1	1	3
Conserve ecological system function		1	1	1
Maintain sustainable agricultural use		1	3	1
Ensure health, safety and property protection		2	2	2
Provide educational opportunities		2	1	2
Maintain recreation activities sensitive to agricultural and habitat needs		1	1	3
Establish sustainable trail system		3	1	3
Low Impact (positive attribute)	1	11	10	15
Moderate Impact (natural attribute)	2			
High Impact (negative attribute)	3			

The major essence of the analysis and revision process was to specifically define the location of facility improvements and the scale or geographic extent for such improvements, and to establish a preferred trail system alignment.

2.6.1 IMPROVEMENTS – GEOGRAPHIC EXTENT

As noted in Table 2.6.1, the Concept Plans encompass differing area sizes related to the proposed public facility improvements (Sites 1 and 2). Concept Plan 3 proposes the greatest area impact with 50 acres to be taken out of agricultural production and converted into recreation and education facilities. Concept Plans 1 and 2 each propose about 20 acres being taken out of agricultural production. Some members of the Focus Group expressed concern regarding the extent of agricultural area depletion.

TABLE 2.6.1 SUMMARY OF CONCEPT PLAN ELEMENTS			
ELEMENT	CONCEPT PLAN 1	CONCEPT PLAN 2	CONCEPT PLAN 3
MANAGEMENT AREA			
Agricultural Uses	336 acres	337 acres	308 acres
Public Institution & Recreation Uses	22 acres Ranch 5 acres Library	22 acres Ranch 5 acres Library	50 acres Ranch 5 acres Library
Habitat Conservation Area	102 acres	102 acres	102 acres
LAND AREA CHANGES			
BOR Land Swap	√		
PUBLIC RECREATION FACILITIES			
Community Garden	East Area – small	South Area	East Area
Char Mar Park Expansion	√		
Dog Park	None	√	√
Trails	2.1 miles Riverbank Loop	2.3 miles North Loop	2 miles Riparian Edge Loop
BLM Access	None	√	√
Interpretive Center	Ranch Headquarters Area	Ranch Road	Ranch Entry
Nordic Center (shared use)	East Area	Ranch Road	Ranch Entry
Outdoor Event Facility	East Area	South Area	None
Parking	East Area	South Area Ranch Road	East Area Ranch Entry
4H/FFA Area	√	√	√
Restrooms	2	2	2
Picnic Areas	3	2	
River Access	2	3	2
HABITAT MANAGEMENT			
Pond/Wetland Area	√		

2.6.2 PERMANENT PUBLIC FACILITY IMPROVEMENT LOCATIONS

The Focus Group came to consensus on the following points that helped to define the location of the facility improvements:

- Permanent facilities being considered should be co-located rather than dispersed throughout the Ranch property.
- The Ranch headquarters should not be a location for permanent public facilities.
- Permanent facility locations must consider impacts upon adjacent neighborhoods particularly in regard to noise, odors, and increased traffic.
- Permanent facilities should be easily accessible.
- The amount of land impacted by new development should be very limited.

The Focus Group determined that two viable locations for permanent facilities exist. “Site 1” is on the southeast corner of the Ranch at the intersection of Vulcan Street and County Road 13 and “Site 2” is on County Road 15 on the south end of the Ranch directly adjacent to the Gunnison Community School.



FIGURE 16 PERMANENT FACILITY LOCATION OPTIONS

Staff tabulated opportunities and constraints for each site (Table 2.6.2) to help the Focus Group determine which is most viable for permanent facilities.

TABLE 2.6.2 OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS				
CRITERIA	SITE 1 EAST – ADJACENT TO CR 13		SITE 2 SOUTH – ADJACENT TO SCHOOL AND LIBRARY	
	Favorable Conditions	Area(s) of Concern	Favorable Conditions	Area(s) of Concern
	Site Size	11 acres		9 acres
Utility Extensions (proximity to water, sewer, electric)	All are in place or adjacent to site.		Electricity adjacent to site	900 ft to nearest access for water and sewer
Utility Extensions (monetary cost of extending utilities)	\$42,250			\$279,500
Access (pedestrian/auto)	Easy access off CR 13 and Vulcan for both	Would increase traffic on CR 13. Alignment of Vulcan and CR 13. Separated from existing trail, no established trailhead location.	Easy pedestrian access through existing trail. School and southern portion of library site currently being used as trailhead.	Alignment of CR 15 / 11 th / Spencer/ Quartz problematic for vehicular access. Additional traffic in proximity to school.
Traffic Generation ¹	144 trips per day			1,278 trips per day
Proximity to school		.4 mile (2,100 ft or 5 city blocks) 5 to 10 minute walk	250 feet along the existing trail	
Reduction of Agricultural Production	Site has not been in production for several years and conditions are not optimal for hay production.			Site conditions allow high quality hay production.
Soils ²	Low soil shrink/swell; rapid permeability that would affect pond construction; good structural soil for construction of facilities. (FoB soil type)		West portion: Low soil shrink/swell; rapid permeability that would affect pond construction; good structural soil for construction of facilities. (FoB soil type)	East portion: Seasonally high groundwater; poor structural fill material might require an engineered foundation; high permeability and groundwater will affect pond and trail construction. (GaA soil type)
Topography	This area is the highest on the Ranch at an elevation of 7,726 feet at the east boundary to a low point of 7,720 feet at the west boundary.			Irrigation flows and water runoff drains to this site. The elevation on the east boundary is 7,706 feet and the lowest point to the west of the site is 7,698.
Irrigation Ditch		The Whipp Ditch is located on the northern and eastern boundary of the site.		A large drainage system is located across the northern boundary of the site.

¹ Based on 4 trips per acre for a City Park (Trip Generation, 6th Edition, Institute of Transportation Engineers) and 100 trips per day for a trailhead (VanTuyl Ranch Annexation and Gunnison Library Traffic Study).

² *Soil Survey of Gunnison Area, Colorado, 1975.*

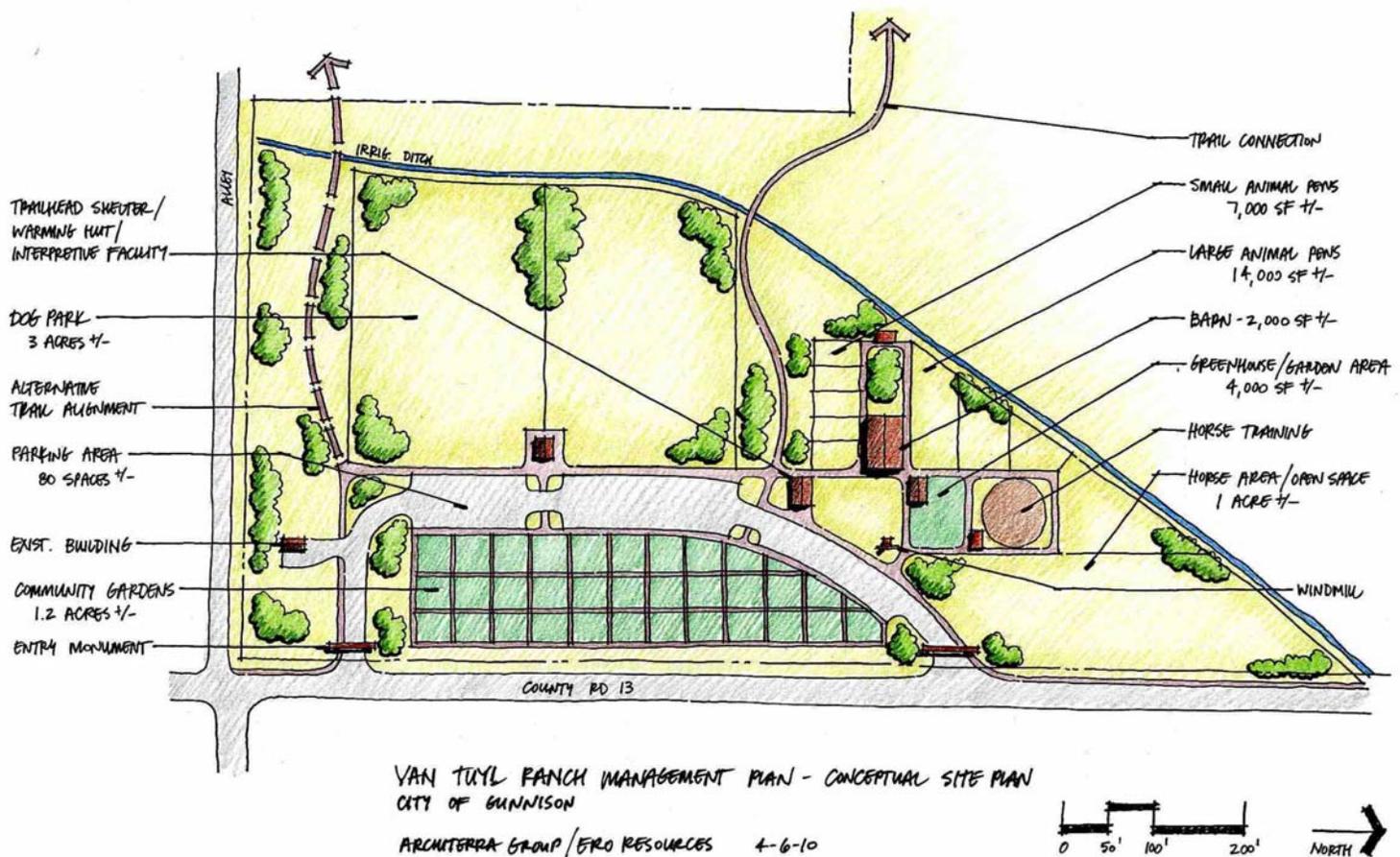
In summary, locating permanent public facilities at Site 2, adjacent to the Gunnison Community School and library site provides several benefits regarding educational programming and use. However, it has certain physical limitations including substandard road access and problems with extending utilities. The area is currently a very productive hay meadow.

Some advantages for Site 1 include easy access from the existing city neighborhoods; the site could be easily served by sewer utilities and water utilities; and the area is not currently in agricultural production. The constraints include potential impact to residents of the Palisades subdivision; it would be less conducive to serving educational needs; and, it would increase traffic on County Road 13.

At a meeting on March 11, 2010 the Focus Group defined more specific geographic limitations that could be taken out of agricultural production. Both of the proposed development areas were scaled down and delineated by using the alignment of existing major irrigation ditches. Site 1 contains approximately 12 acres and Site 2 measures 9.8 acres.

The consensus of the Focus Group was to locate the permanent facilities at Site 1. Figure 17 indicates the amenities that will be included.

FIGURE 17 SITE 1 – PERMANENT FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS



2.6.3 TRAIL SYSTEM ALTERNATIVE

Each of three Concept Plans depicts a unique trail system alignment. Concept Plan 1 shows a trail looping through the Ranch and following the river channel. While this river corridor alignment would provide a unique experience for users, it comes with a trade-off of impact to this unique habitat area. The trail alignment shown on Concept Plan 2 applies a conservation approach by limiting the fragmentation of the river corridor habitat. Concept Plan 3 proposes a loop trail alignment following Wilson Creek. While the Concept Plan 3 trail alignment encroaches into habitat areas, it is less intrusive than Concept Plan 1 and would still allow users to experience the open space amenities. It is anticipated that the trails encroaching into river habitat area will have a minimal trail surface width (tread width).

Other important elements of the proposed trail alternatives relate to river access. The Focus Group and members of the community indicated that access to the river is an important amenity for the Ranch. Two of the trail alignments depict a trail access segment that would allow potential extension of a regional trail system access into the Antelope Creek drainage.

2.6.4 PREFERRED TRAIL ALIGNMENT

A trail system consisting of interconnected loops is the best approach for the public to enjoy the open space. Additionally, this recreational value is increased if water features are available for public enjoyment.

The Preferred Trail Alignment provides inter-connecting loops and allows access to the Gunnison River and Wilson Creek. The alignment provides the opportunity to use Wilson Creek as a physical barrier which will limit access to the Conservation Area. The following map depicts the preferred trail system alignment that the Focus Group reached consensus on.

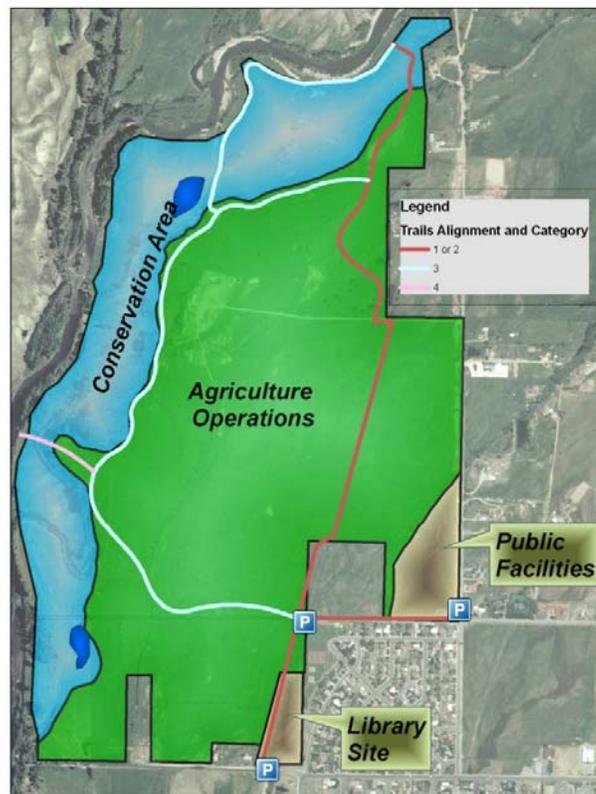


FIGURE 18 PREFERRED TRAIL ALIGNMENT

2.7 PREFERRED LAND USE PLAN

The *Preferred Land Use Plan* was developed through an inclusive process and addresses numerous scenarios generated by the Focus Group and interested community members. For example, there was overwhelming support to consolidate facility improvements in one location. The *Preferred Land Use Plan* recommends improvements and operations that support educational opportunities and agricultural functions and protect important habitat areas. The *Preferred Land Use Plan* includes the permanent facility improvements as depicted in Figure 17, as well as the preferred trail alignment depicted in Figure 18.

