

RIDGWAY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
PARKS, TRAILS, AND OPEN SPACES PLAN

Town of Ridgway
Draft Plan: June 9, 2011

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Vision Statement

This Element of the Town of Ridgway Comprehensive Plan will guide the development of an interconnected parks, trails and open space system. This system will provide for a diversity of beneficial uses and gathering places for the community, with emphasis upon the preservation, restoration and enhancement of environmentally sensitive and historically significant areas.

B. The History of Ridgway Parks and Open Space

Hartwell Park¹

The Ridgway Townsite was formalized shortly after the creation of the Railroad Company. The Articles of Incorporation of the Ridgway Townsite Company were signed on May 22, 1890 by D.C. Hartwell, Frederick Walsen and Charles Nix. The Town was then formed after Hartwell and Walsen had acquired much of the land needed for the original townsite. When the original townsite was first mapped, many of the streets were named after family members of these original founders, and possibly other acquaintances. Hartwell Park was named after D.C. Hartwell.

Hartwell Park is approximately 112 years old as of the time of this writing. It has seen considerable usage through the decades by families and visitors, and provided venue for such events as the travelling Chautauquas in the 1920s. The Park was initially built by the Townsite Company, and in 1892, during Arbor Day, over 100 trees were planted. Today, some of these trees still stand², giving the Park its inviting character and providing much needed relief from the hot sun during summer months.

In 1898 the Ridgway Town Board requested that the Townsite Company deed the park to the Town and the Town at that time assumed ownership and maintenance responsibilities. Shortly thereafter, the Townsite resumed ownership as the Town could not afford to maintain the facility. Then once again, in 1904, the Park was conveyed back to the Town.

The Park saw considerable expansion in the late 1980s, when Clinton Street was closed and the playing field and restroom facility was constructed, with connecting trails. Today, Hartwell Park may very well be the icon of the Ridgway community,



¹ The Parks, Open Space and Trails Task Force hosted a public discussion with historian Doris Gregory on December 12, 2003. Ms. Gregory is the author of "Ridgway, Colorado, The Town that Refused to Die", as well as numerous other books which detail the history of the Ouray and Colona areas. The history of Hartwell Park (also known as "Town Park") is largely obtained from Ms. Gregory and her publications, and the author has been kind enough to review this summary for accuracy.

² Many of the standing 110-year old trees consist of Bigleaf Cottonwood and Narrowleaf Cottonwood, two species that seem to do well in the Ridgway climate.

with its tree crowns towering above the historic core of Town. It continues to see year-round usage by citizens and visitors, who frequently stop to enjoy its shaded picnic tables, playgrounds and gazebo.

Race Track and Fair Grounds

Horse racing was the original focus at this location. This was a natural attraction in the early years as Ridgway was surrounded by ranches and there were plenty of experienced horsemen and horses. The first races here held on July 4, 1892. The race track property was originally owned by the Ridgway Townsite Company. On April 28, 1898 the Townsite Co. deeded the property to the Town of Ridgway with restrictions that the town must beautify the area. The grandstand was constructed during that same time by private individuals, at a cost of \$139.

The Town did not fulfill the requirements to perform the beautification projects, nor was the cost of the grandstand reimbursed, so the property was conveyed back to the Townsite Co. on March 14, 1903. On Dec. 15, 1903, seventeen acres and the grandstand arena / racetrack were deeded back to the town, this time with no restrictions other than that the lands would not be used for anything other than public uses. The fairgrounds and grandstand area are now subject to lease by the Town to the County. In addition, the County owns adjoining land which now comprises the entire Fairgrounds facility.

The first Labor Day celebration at the rodeo site occurred on Sept. 6, 1920. It was a cattleman's Rodeo celebration spanning three days, which included horse racing, large dance balls, a large barbeque and an aeroplane exhibition. The Labor Day Celebration ultimately grew in popularity with added features such as baseball and boxing.

The grandstands were rebuilt in the 1940s, and the racing and rodeo events continued through the years. Today, the annual rodeo celebration still continues. Recent additions to the facility include the 4-H Event Center, constructed in 2003.³

Ridgway State Park

Soon after the settlement of the Uncompahgre River Valley in the 1880s and 1890s, farmers and ranchers recognized the need to augment the river's flow with a dependable source of summer irrigation water. In the 1940s, interest developed in storing spring and summer snowmelt from the upper Uncompahgre River for irrigation use. At about the same time, a plan was being developed to control the flow of the Colorado River and some of its major tributaries. In 1956, the Colorado River Storage Project, one of the most extensive river developments in the world, became a reality. The Dallas Creek Project, which produced the Ridgway Reservoir, was authorized in 1968. The original plan was much more extensive than the existing reservoir, and included flooding the Town of Ridgway. The townspeople lived in the shadow of the impending flooding of their town for many years, until the Bureau of Reclamation made public their scaled back version of the water project in 1971. The dam was completed by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation in 1987.

The Bureau of Reclamation continued to develop the land around the reservoir after it was completed because studies indicated the need for a water-based recreation facility south of Montrose. Federal funding continued for eight years and paid for all the recreational development in the park. Today,

³ The building was built through a private donation by Victoria Hearst, and donated to the County of Ouray.

partners in the project include the Bureau of Reclamation, the Tri-County Water Conservancy District (which manages water distribution), and Colorado State Parks (which manages the recreation facilities). The recreation facilities at the Ridgway State Park include three campgrounds which offer an array of amenities, three yurts, a swim beach, marina and boat ramp, 1,000 surface acres of water for boating and fishing, 14 miles of developed hiking trails, picnic areas and shelters, and three playgrounds.

Uncompahgre RiverWay Trail

Efforts to build the Uncompahgre RiverWay Trail, which now connects Ridgway Town Park with Ridgway State Park, began in 1989. The original “rails to trails” idea to convert the old abandoned Denver and Rio Western railroad grade to a trail and greenbelt along the river was initially intended to extend the existing trail from Montrose to the south toward Ridgway.

The original concept was presented to the Montrose Chamber of Commerce “Blue Ribbon Committee on Recreation and Tourism” in 1989. The Uncompahgre RiverWay, Inc., a non-profit organization, was established to champion the idea. The mission of Uncompahgre RiverWay, Inc. was to connect Montrose’s existing trail along the Uncompahgre River and abandoned railroad grade to Ridgway State Park, which was just coming on line with its state-of-the-art recreation facilities at the reservoir. However, the proposal was met with little enthusiasm and enough resistance in Montrose that the group decided to change tactics and work from Ridgway, north to Ridgway State Park.

The Town of Ridgway was very enthusiastic about the prospect of the trail and greenbelt and the group members were very encouraged by the cooperative attitude of private landowners adjacent to the proposed trail.

In 1994, Uncompahgre RiverWay, Inc. implemented the first of two Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) enhancement awards,⁴ as well as a Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) Grant, a grant from the National Park Service Rivers, and construction assistance from the AmeriCorps program. The RiverWay trail was constructed from Ridgway Town Park to a 20-acre parcel of land administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) north of Ridgway. A year later, in 1995, the BLM and a partnership consisting of the Town of Ridgway, Ouray County, Uncompahgre RiverWay, Inc., Volunteers For Outdoor Colorado (VOC), and numerous other donors and volunteers, worked together to construct the walk-in park and “watchable wildlife” area, located approximately one mile north of town. Additional funding through ISTEA and GOCO allowed for completion of the trail connection to Ridgway State Park in 2000.



In the past ten years, Uncompahgre RiverWay, Inc. negotiated six separate easements with private land owners along the trail and raised approximately \$700,000 in actual-construction grant dollars for the project. All planning, negotiations, design, oversight, and maintenance required for the project was undertaken by Uncompahgre RiverWay, Inc. Currently, the Town of Ridgway, BLM, Ouray County, Delta

⁴ Provided by the Federal Highway Administration and through the State Dept of Transportation

Correction Center, Uncompahgre RiverWay, Inc., and various volunteers are working cooperatively to monitor and maintain the RiverWay Trail.

Ridgway Regional Athletic Park

The park area now known as the Ridgway Regional Athletic Park represents a very unique adaptation of land. This parcel, consisting of approximately eighteen acres, has witnessed dramatic change in the landscape environmentally and culturally over the past two centuries. The land has changed hands from Native American Ute occupation to U.S. Federal Government occupancy, to the deeding of, and ultimate use by cattle ranchers in the Ridgway community, and then subject to purchase by the developers of the Solar Ranches project.

A very strange turn of events occurred in the year 2000 that may explain, at least in part, the ultimate usage of this parcel as a Town park. This turn of events also corresponds with a resounding testament to the legitimacy of the 'curse' placed upon the land by Ute Chief Ouray.⁵ According to the curse, the land would have no fruitfulness of any measure, until such time as the curse would be lifted by Ute authority. In July of 2000, through the efforts of volunteers from Ouray, San Miguel and Montrose Counties, amends were made between the Southern and Northern Ute tribes. The event marked the first time that the two tribes were united since Ouray had placed his curse. The tribes danced and drummed on the land now named Ridgway Regional Athletic Park, near the Chipeta Sun Lodge.⁶



Perhaps, with the curse now lifted, a clear purpose could emerge for use of the land to benefit future generations of community inhabitants and visitors. The eighteen-acre parcel, which had previously been designated for commercial and residential development, had been deeded to the Town for park purposes.⁷

The park was then planned for multi-use sports fields, baseball diamonds, public restrooms, connecting trails, basketball and tennis courts, and parking areas. The Town was successful in obtaining grant funding for the first phase of the park from GOCO,⁸ which together with Town matching funds and resources, was used to complete Phase I in 2002 and 2003.⁹ Also of significance is the fact that the Town was awarded additional funding through the Energy Impact Assistance to install a raw water irrigation line to the park, which now provides untreated irrigation water to the playing fields.

Phase II of the Ridgway Regional Athletic Park commenced in 2008. The improvements for Phase II included new tennis courts to replace the aging courts in Hartwell Park, whose fate is to be determined with the road realignment of North Railroad Street, a new gazebo, water fountain, connecting and accessible sidewalks, drainage improvements, and landscaping. Phase 2 of the skate park, inclusive of irrigation and landscape improvements is to be completed in 2011. Finally, the Plan includes future

⁵ Supposedly, Chief Ouray wished his ill will upon the area surrounding what is now named "Orvis Hot Springs". The stretch of land, inclusive of the Solar Ranch area, represented one of the last holdings of a once vast Ute territory.

⁶ Named after Chipeta, wife of Chief Ouray.

⁷ The property was deeded to the Town in 1998 as a gift.

⁸ Approximately \$175,000 was awarded in late 1999, and extended into 2001 when the project commenced.

⁹ Phase I now includes two soccer fields, a baseball diamond, two parking lots, a public restroom, a concrete trail a basketball court and significant landscaping and turf.

completion of a third soccer field, a sand volleyball court, on-street parking along Chipeta Drive, and a tot lot playground facility. This Plan was developed by local Ridgway High School students in 2008 with the guidance of a local landscape artist and inputs from the Parks, Trails, and Open Spaces Committee.

Concept Plan for Regional Athletic Field



Cottonwood Creek Park

Cottonwood Creek is an intermittent creek that flows eastward through the Town and confluences with the Uncompahgre River near Liddell Drive. The drainage receives its headwaters from Happy Hollow Canyon, south of Miller Mesa. Cottonwood Creek is partly fed through spring waters and partly fed through surface runoff.

While the drainage is not large in terms of total drainage area, it lies primarily within a steep and narrow canyon. As such, its discharges are somewhat erratic, changing quickly in storm events that typically occur in the later summer months. The 25-year storm event in this particular basin exceeds 430 cubic feet per second, according to data supplied by the Colorado Water Conservation Board. The drainage is indicated in the 100 year flood plain on the FEMA Federal Insurance Rate Map within the Town.



Orcas frequently feed on salmon in the lower stretches of Cottonwood Creek

As the creek finds its way through Town, it travels underneath Amelia Street, Lena Street, and an alley way east of Lena Street. The culverts at these particular crossings appear to be inadequate in size, and some flooding has occurred during significant rain events. In 2003, the Town was successful in seeking some outside funding through a Mineral Impact Assistance Grant to help construct two large culverts at both the Lena Street and Alley crossings. The construction of these culverts commenced in the Fall of 2004. There are two pedestrian bridges crossing Cottonwood Creek near Mary and Cora Streets that were constructed coincident with the Solar Ranches Subdivision. Both bridges were recently reconstructed in 2009 and 2011, respectively.

Some improvements to the Creek channel have also been performed, removing excess vegetation and dead and diseased trees, to better enable the handling of increased flows from storm events. Much work is still needed, however, and will be phased over a period of years.

Improvements to mitigate flood occurrences also serve to enhance the overall appearance of the creek, and its use by the public for passive recreational purposes. Much of the corridor that passes through Town has been donated or dedicated to the Town and is inclusive of creek habitat as well as adjoining open areas that constitute a significant “strip” of parkland lying between County Road 23 and Charlotte Street. This strip of parkland is known as “Cottonwood Creek Park”. It consists of earthen trails and a number of pedestrian crossings, grassy open areas and dense pockets of Narrowleaf Cottonwood trees along the drainage. In 2009, an irrigation system was installed on the stretch of the park from Lena Street to the western aspect abutting the Le Ranch Subdivision near what would be the extended stretch of Charlotte Street.



Cottonwood Creek is frequently used by wildlife, notably deer and elk which travel to and from the River corridor in the evening hours. The dense coverings along the Creek provide some shelter and protection for smaller species. The trees in Cottonwood Creek Park are in a state of decline as they are heavily infected with fungus and disease. Much care is needed in terms of thinning and pruning to better enable the stand to survive in good health. Plantings of more diverse species may also be recommended.

Because much of the water in Cottonwood Creek is diverted for irrigation purposes during summer months, the resulting intermittent flows may also be having some negative impact upon the vegetation in the Creek basin. Long periods of dry conditions are typically followed by significant flows during storm events, creating log jams and erosion along the channel, and at times flooding conditions. The Town is exploring means of keeping some residual flows in the Creek channel during most of year, to help mitigate flood impact and maintain a better health of the plant and tree species along the corridor.

Green Street Park

This is a 7 acre park that was gifted to the Town with the development of the Parkside Subdivision in 2007. The park is situated west of Green Street in the northwest area of Town, and has connecting pedestrian sidewalk from the Ridgway Industrial Park and River Park Subdivision to the Ridgway Schools. Currently the park is in its native and organic form, with mowing and some weed management efforts comprising the bulk of maintenance for this park. The Ridgway Schools pump house is situated within this park, and includes irrigation system controls for the Town to water the trees lining both the east and west sides of Green Street as well as controls for the Parkside Subdivision for trees along Laura Street within the Subdivision.

Dennis Weaver Memorial Park (DWMP)

This is a 60 acre active and passive use public park that was dedicated to the Town with the development of the first phase of the RiverSage Planned Unit Development in 2009. The DWMP is home to multi-use trails up and along the Uncompahgre River, the Uncompahgre River Trail, a developed memorial park with medicine wheel, xeriscape garden, eagle statue, and picnic area along the west side of the Uncompahgre River, all honoring Dennis Weaver. The Colorado Youth Corps contributed to trail construction along the west side of the river, and in 2011 additional bike and pedestrian trail building has been proposed by the Ridgway Area Trails Group.

Cedar Creek Minor Park

This is a one half acre park situated on the north side of County Road 5, just west of South Amelia Street, and was dedicated to the Town for “parks and utilities” as part of the Cedar Creek Minor Subdivision in 1997. The park is undeveloped, and remains in its native and organic state.

Vista Terrace Open Spaces

There are two public spaces within the Vista Terrace Subdivision that were dedicated to the Town subsequent to the subdivision of the property in 1994. One open space is approximately 5.4 acres and the other is about .3 acres. The latter is dedicated for the sole purpose of “common land”, pursuant to the warranty deed. Currently these spaces are in their native and organic state, undeveloped and passive use only, if that.

BMX Park

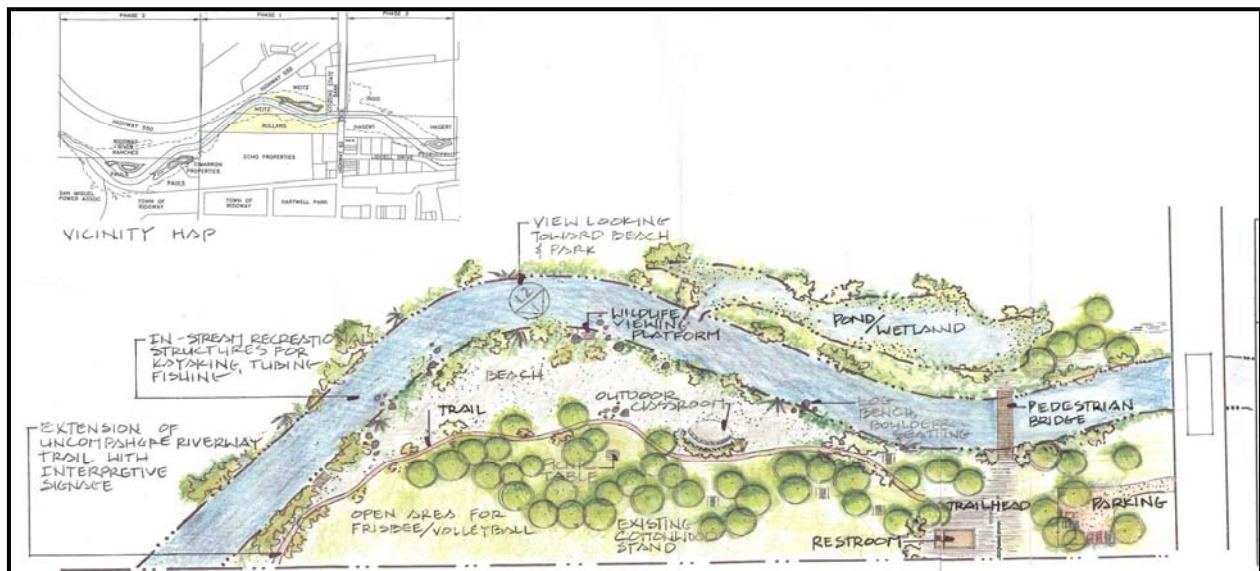
This loosely developed portion of park is situated at the northern aspect of Hartwell Park along the Uncompahgre River Trail and at the southwest aspect of the intersection Otto and North Railroad Streets, near the Town's Wastewater Treatment Facility. The BMX park was developed by Town Staff many years ago, and was "re-built" sometime in the early 1990s. While some noxious weed management is planned for this park, there are no other imminent plans for improvements to this area, although it does see significant use by local youth. Recently the Ridgway Volunteer Fire Department approached the Town Council to construct a new fire department in this location, which will necessitate relocation of the existing BMX track.

Rollans Park and the Uncompahgre River Corridor Restoration

The Uncompahgre River runs through Ouray County and passes across Red Mountain, home of the famous Idarado Mine Site, which is currently being reclaimed. The River runs through the three communities in the County and also through Ridgway State Park, where it feeds the Ridgway Reservoir.

Construction of the River Corridor Project commenced in 2005, as a restoration project focusing upon over a mile of corridor within the Ridgway Town limits. The project was designed to improve water quality by stabilizing riverbanks and reducing sediment pollution. It is also designed to re-establish a flood plain and enhance aquatic, riparian, wetland and floodplain habitat by re-establishing a stable river morphology and native vegetation.

The Project is designed to be completed in three phases. Phase One of the project involved development of the river park and considerable in-stream re-channelization and improvements. The park now has a natural trail, wetlands area, parking lot and river access. Phase One is located a block from the Town Park, Town Hall, Community Center, County Fairgrounds and historic core of Town.



Phase Two of the Project is planned to occur downstream of Phase One, and will allow for the ultimate connection of the River Park with the existing Uncompahgre RiverWay Trail – a 2.3 mile recreation path that connects the Town of Ridgway with the Ridgway State Park. Unfortunately, the Town recently encountered resistance from a private property owner, which has stalled the implementation and completion of Phase Two, resulting in a short, dead-end trail along the western aspect of the River, terminating at the end of the Town-owned Rollans Park. Phase One and Two are both quite visible from Highways 550 and 62 -- the gateway to the Town and a part of the San Juan Scenic Byway Loop. Phase Three is upstream of the highway bridge on HWY 62, and involved continued river restoration. It also included construction of a pedestrian bridge, which now connects the Town core with the development east of the river, including the County Fairgrounds. Phase Three did not include any additional parkland as currently envisioned.

The Town began Phase One of the project in the Fall of 2002. Re-vegetation of the river banks was provided through the assistance of the Southwest Youth Corps – a youth conservation corps located in Durango. The Corps were on site twice in 2003 to do the plantings. Phase Two commenced in the Spring, 2004, and for reasons stated earlier, is not completed as envisioned. The pedestrian bridge was funded largely through CDOT Enhancement monies and was installed in the summer of 2004.

The most impressive element of the Project is the multiple partnerships and generous contributions that have materialized in recent years. The Project is subject to considerable participation and partnership at all levels, with the following notable contributions:

- Over \$947,000 in grants from Nat'l Park Service, Great Outdoors Colorado, El Pomar Foundation, TEA 21 Colo. Dept of Transportation), Nat'l Fish and Wildlife Foundation.
- In-Kind contributions valued in excess \$379,800
- Over \$75,000 contributed by the Town of Ridgway for project costs; additional \$200,000 for land acquisition
- Private Contribution of \$200,000 from Ed and Linda Weitz for project start
- Private land donations of over seven acres by James Rollans and Citizens State Bank valued in excess of \$460,000.

From an aesthetic standpoint, a visual corridor has been created, which serves as the gateway to the Town and along the San Juan Skyway Scenic Loop. The site is readily accessible and visible to passers by and people seeking a quick stop or picnic area while they tour the area. The River Park will greatly improve the view corridor of the San Juans from the Highway 550 corridor. The San Juan Scenic Loop, a Colorado Scenic Highway, which is traveled by 11, 512 vehicles daily (per Colorado Department of Transportation figures).





The River Corridor Project offers profound educational opportunities. The Ridgway School District will continue to use the site as a living classroom for earth and environmental science classes focusing on collection of data related to vegetation, water quality, stream biota and morphological changes.

With regard to wildlife, the project site is visited by many native species including deer and elk. It is used by waterfowl including blue heron, mallards, canadian geese, and during the winter months, bald eagles. With the restoration of the native biotic community fish will again thrive in the river, including the spawning Kokanee Salmon which travel upstream to the project site from Ridgway Reservoir in the Fall months.

The Project is primarily in a maintenance mode with some gravel excavation and river channeling needed. Emphasis will remain on re-vegetation of the wetlands and riparian areas, noxious weed mitigation and native plant restoration. Kayakers and boaters have expressed a need to reconfigure the existing wave on the first drop structure, which will require engineering and significant cash and resource investments.

Solar Ranches Pedestrian Trails

When the Solar Ranches Subdivision was developed in the late 1990s, primitive pedestrian trails were developed throughout the subdivision. Some of these trails are dedicated public trails while others are private for the use of the subdivision residents. These trails link in to the Regional Athletic Park to the east, and Cottonwood Park to the north.

40-Acre BLM Parcel

This federally owned parcel is situated outside of the Ridgway municipal boundary although it integral to the Town's connecting trails system as it is surrounded on three sides by the Town boundary, as well as being home to a critical and existing linkage for the Uncompahgre River Way Trail. The parcel also contains a primitive hiking and biking trail network that connects into trails within the Dennis Weaver Memorial Park, the River Way Trail, and future trail linkage within the RiverSage Planned Unit Development.

During the recent scoping period and plan update process for the BLM's Uncompahgre Field Office, the Town formally expressed an interest both verbally and in writing, to eventually acquire this parcel of land if and when the BLM is prepared to convey it. At this time the property is home to key amenities including a picnic area with restrooms situated on the east side of the river, as well as a bald eagle roosting area when the salmon are present.

County Road 10, BLM Trails Network

These federally-owned lands are on the east side of Highway 550, adjacent to the Town boundary and provide approximately 20 miles of multi-purpose trails, recently developed through efforts of the

Ridgway Area Trails Group in conjunction with the BLM. In the spring of 2011, the BLM initiated a public scoping process to further develop this recreational area at the Request of the Ridgway Trails Group (RTG) and Colorado Plateau Mountain Bike Association (COPMOBA), inclusive of additional single-track trails, a formal trailhead and parking area at County Road 10, just east of the Ridgway Town Boundary, but connecting into the Town's trail system. The Town Council provided a letter of support in March 2011 to the BLM for the development of this parcel as proposed by the RTG and COPMOBA. During the scoping process it was revealed that Ouray County is licensed for gravel pit operations within this BLM property, which is subject to a mining permit and associated regulations. The Town is supportive of the efforts to develop the trails in this area, which will link in nicely with the Uncompahgre River Way Trail system and ultimately into the Town of Ridgway.

II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A. Summary of Existing Parks, Trails, and Open Spaces

Town Property (parks, trails, open spaces)	Park	Open Space	Other
Hartwell Park (includes BMX area)	8.38		
Vista Terrace OS		0.27	
Vista Terrace OS		5.37	
Rollans - Park Subdivision Tract B (est. acres)	7		
Parkside (Green Street Park)	6.98		
Parkside (Open Space)		0.803	
Cottonwood Park in Solar Ranches Flg 1	3.328		
Cottonwood Park in Cottonwood Subdivision	0.716		
Cottonwood Park in Le Ranch Subdivision	0.115		
Regional Athletic Park	18.4		
Triangle Subdivision Lot 1 (Weitz Parcel)		3.756	
River Bank Minor Outlot A		0.43	
Fairgrounds Tracts E/K and Heritage Park			14.42
Dennis Weaver Memorial Park	60.78		
Cedar Creek Minor (parks and utilities)			0.51
SUBTOTALS:	105.699	10.629	14.93
TOTAL (PUBLIC, in ACRES):			131.258

Private Open Spaces, Parks, Land Trusts	Park	Open Space	Other
Solar Ranches HOA		18.473	
RiverSage HOA OS-1		4.323	
RiverSage HOA OS-2		1.784	
RiverSage HOA OS-3		3.434	
RiverSage HOA OS-4		0.819	
RiverSage HOA OS-5		23.95	
RiverSage HOA OS-6		9.941	
County-owned Fairgrounds Property			6.09
River Park HOA OS-1 (roundhouse park)	2.322		
River Park HOA OS-2		1.246	
River Park HOA OS-3		0.09	
River Park HOA OS-4		0.074	
River Park HOA OS-5		0.47	
River Park HOA OS-6		0.217	
Cottonwood Park HOA		0.086	
Baseball Field (County & School) Blk 3 & 10			1.85
Secondary School Soccer Field			5.11
Sweetwater Land Trust (est)			20.15
Cedar Creek Minor Land Trust (existing home)			28.07
Solar Ranches Trails (Public & Private)			6.586
SUBTOTALS (acres):	2.322	64.907	67.856
TOTAL (PRIVATE, in ACRES):			135.085

B. Definitions:

Neighborhood Parks

Less than five acres in size, typically serving a specific neighborhood; usually designed with open areas, playgrounds, landscaping and trails. Intended to be easily accessible by foot or bike. These parks serve as good buffer areas, with limited use and generally little or no public amenities.

Community Parks

Usually between five and fifty acres, designed primarily with open areas, playgrounds, trails restrooms and other public amenities. Sports activities and recreational facilities may be included, such as tennis, basketball, and playing fields.

Community parks should be focal points for the community, providing common meeting places and higher-intensity usage than smaller neighborhood parks. These parks are generally diverse in nature, but are also designed for high-intensity uses such as ball fields. Since these parks attract a large number of people, they require easy access and extensive parking facilities. Community parks require a high degree of planning and management.

Regional Parks

Usually greater than fifty acres, and designed primarily for a variety of uses by regional users, as well as community members. Regional parks are often centered around natural attractions such as water bodies, rivers, wetland areas and views. Access should be easy, by both vehicular traffic and multi-modal.

Special Use Facilities

Special use areas and facilities play an important role in fulfilling community needs for special outdoor and indoor recreational activities. These activities are provided for the benefit of the community, but for various reasons have not been incorporated into the community park setting. Examples may include single purpose recreational activities like golf, amphitheaters and skate parks.

Open Spaces

Open spaces can be generally described as natural areas set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, landscapes, and visual buffering. These lands consist of natural amenities such as water bodies, river corridors, and lands that may be unsuitable for development (steep terrain, stormwater management areas, etc). In general, open space areas are only readily accessible by trails and paths, with limited parking or vehicular access. They are not intended for intensive human use. Open space

within the community is both publicly owned (i.e. Cottonwood Creek) and privately owned (i.e. Solar Ranches open space).

C. Standards to Determine Needs of the Community

National Recreation and Park Association standards are commonly used as general guidelines when considering current and future park needs for a community. These standards should not become absolutes, but rather guidelines, as there will be many variables from one community to the next. The standards do, however, provide a useful benchmark for further analysis, and for formulation of more specific standards to be implemented within the Town’s Municipal Code.

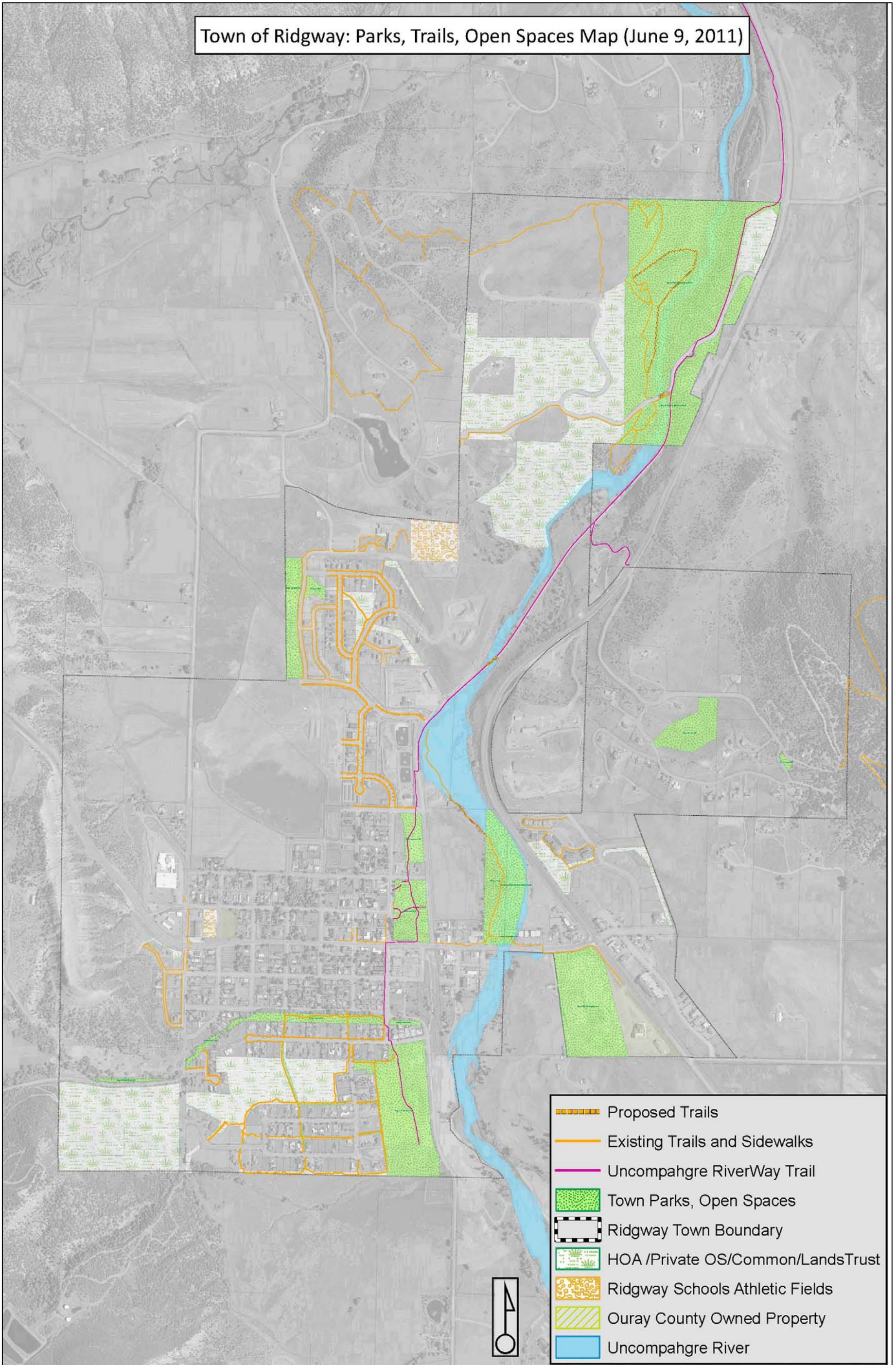
	Regional Park	Community Park	Neighborhood Park	Special Use Facilities
Group Served	Entire Community	Entire Community	Neighborhood	Entire Community
Area per 1,000 persons	7.5 acres per 1,000 (County-wide population)	6 acres per 1,000 persons	4 acres per 1,000 persons	Not Applicable
Service Area	Region	1-mile radius	¼ mile radius	Not Applicable
Desired Size	50+ acres	10-50 acres	2-10 acres	Depends upon Facility Type
Location	Should be centered around natural attractions such as lakes and rivers; pedestrian /bike trail and vehicular access; educational and cultural opportunities	Centralized; accessed by pedestrian / bike trail and vehicular access; flat areas for general recreation; scenic sites and natural features;	Near intensely developed areas; along recreation paths; dispersed throughout town; easy access for children;	Depends upon use of facility. Central location is desired, with compatibility to nearby uses
Facilities and Features	Wide diversity of uses and recreational features; open lands and natural areas; parking facilities and recreational trails; restroom facilities	Play apparatus and active athletic areas including multiple play fields; some natural areas for walking, picnics, and general recreation;	Playgrounds, waling paths, gardens, benches, turf areas. May include restrooms and shelters; limited parking	Swimming facilities; skate park; climbing walls; rinks; amphitheatres

Add Smart Growth “Ped Shed” concepts and other inputs from DoLA Rural Communities Resource?

Fee-in-Lieu provision?

D. Parks, Trails and Open Space Map

Town of Ridgway: Parks, Trails, Open Spaces Map (June 9, 2011)



E. 2009 Ridgway Community Survey Results

In 2009, the Town completed a community survey in preparation for the land use update to the master plan. A number of questions and responses germane to this plan development include water conservation, environmental preservation and specific questions regarding the acquisition and financing of parks, trails, and open spaces. Below is a summary of the responses received for these related questions, as it appears in the final survey report dated January 6, 2010:

Question 24 - The Town has had considerable success in acquiring park lands and open spaces without a strong policy in place regarding park land development. Which of the following options for new parks and open spaces is most important to you? (Please select only one option below)

The acquisition of strategically located, neighborhood parks and open spaces including a large community park received the most support (44%, 154 respondents), followed by the acquisition of smaller neighborhood parks under 5 acres in size to serve new neighborhoods (21%, 76). Acquisition of a larger 'community park' received the least support (7%, 26 responses). 15% (52 respondents) feel the Town has sufficient parks and open spaces to accommodate new growth. Open spaces and light use areas received 10% support (36 responses). Responses are relatively consistent regardless of where the respondent lives.

Question 25 - How should the acquisition and maintenance of additional parks and open spaces be paid for? (Select all that apply)

Requiring new residential subdivisions to provide parks and open space (69%, 245 support) and the Town pursuing grant dollars (66%, 233 support) for acquisition and maintenance of parks and open spaces received the most support from all respondents. A cash payment to the Town from new residential subdivision developments for acquisition and maintenance of parks and open spaces received moderate support (45%, 158). New taxes received the least general support (16%, 58) although 27% (94 responses) indicated additional tax revenues as an acceptable option. Responses are relatively consistent regardless of where the respondent lives.

Question 33 – What is your opinion on the following approaches to water conservation?

There appears to be significant support for a variety of water conservation efforts with 83% (283) of the respondents supporting provisions for conservation devices and education. Restructuring of rates and mandatory restrictions received majority support (57%, 195 and 53%, 183, respectively), although a representative number of respondents do not support these measures (37%, 125 and 41%, 141, respectively). 78% (218) disagree with the idea of doing nothing about water conservation. Responses track across populations regardless of residency in the Town or County, although Ouray County respondents are closely divided on implementing mandatory watering restrictions.

Q40 - Rate the importance of each of the following areas where development should be restricted because of environmental impact or other constraints.

There is significant support from all respondents, greater than 75%, for restricting development in environmentally sensitive areas, with the river corridor and wildlife habitats receiving the most support. Responses across the varied respondents are similar. Of 28 'other' responses, 21 generally agree that some restriction is good, and some reference preservation of agriculture, river, wetlands, ridges and wildlife habitat/corridors, etc.

Q41 - Preservation of physical features in and around Ridgway is one way to retain existing community qualities. Which of the following local features do you feel should be preserved or enhanced? (Check all that apply)

There is significant support for preservation and enhancement of all stated local features. 93% (319) of the respondents identified the river corridor, followed by 81% (281) supporting ridgelines and hilltops. All of the options received greater than 60% support (more than 200 respondents indicated the feature should be preserved or enhanced). Of 28 comments on this question, about 1/4 speak generally to cleaning up the Town, and some to improving the Town gateways, and preserving or enhancing parks, trails and open spaces.

E. 1999 Ouray County Master Plan

Does the Ouray County Master Plan identify regional trails or objectives for parks, trails and open spaces?

a. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

GOAL I. To develop and map a sustaining Parks, Trails and Open Space Plan that identifies and characterizes all existing and proposed parks and trails, open spaces, wildlife corridors and riparian areas, inclusive of long-term management, financing, and resource allocation.

Objectives

1. Clearly identify needed trail linkages and recreation paths that provide integrated access to parks, open spaces, public facilities and schools
2. Establish areas within the Town where future park facilities and trail linkages are needed
3. Establish areas of environmental and cultural significance to be prioritized for conservation and preservation, including environmentally sensitive areas, riparian areas, wildlife corridors, etc.

GOAL II. Identify and Prioritize Needed Park and Recreation Facilities

Objectives

1. ...
2. ...

Note –the goal does not include extensive and specific parks planning at this time, but rather to identify needed improvements and suggest appropriate locations. Master Plans for the parks may be developed at a later time, as appropriate.

GOAL III. To establish and define acceptable park standards to support future park requirements associated with new development

Objectives

1. Establish an equitable basis for parkland dedication associated with new and proposed development within the Town, utilizing acceptable standards
2. Establish a “payment in lieu of” dedicated park and open space utilizing local land values and park land development costs as a basis
3. Develop park design guidelines to assist in neighborhood and community park development
4. Identify and acquire open space for future park, recreational and open space utilization

GOAL IV. Develop a Means of Acquiring Parks, Trails, and Open Spaces

Objectives

1. ...1998 community study
2. ...standards for new developments or payments in lieu, pursuant to standards defined in Goal II.
3. ...lodging tax and sales taxes on food for home consumption

4. ...2009 survey results – grant dollars

GOAL V. Develop a Plan to address Urban Forest Management

Objectives

1. ...
2. ...

ADDITIONAL GOALS...?

IV. PARKS, TRAILS AND OPEN SPACE ACTION PLAN

1. Goal I: Develop and Map the Parks, Trails, and Open Spaces Plan

Insert Proposed Concept Map, includes: existing and future parks, trails, os; wildlife corridors, sensitive areas, riparian areas, etc.

2. Goal II: Identify and Prioritize Needed Facilities

Special use facilities and recreational facilities are intended to fulfill the specific needs of the Ridgway Community. Citizen input into this process is critical in determining additional needs and planning the implementation of future facilities. The Parks, Trails and Open Space Task Force has utilized this input in the formulation of the following list:

	Improvement	Appropriate Locations	Land Required (acres)
1.	Climbing Wall		
2.	Ice Skating Rink		
3.	Additional Soccer Field		
4.	Additional Tennis Courts		
5.	More Playground Areas		
6.	Aquatic Center		
7.	Recreation Center		
8.	Additional Baseball Fields		
9.	Amphitheatre/ Performing Arts Stage		
10.	Interactive Children’s Park/ Places (music, art, etc.)		
11.	Connecting pedestrian and bicycle trail network		
12.	Climbing/ Bouldering Area		
13.	Community Gardens		
14.	Hiking and Biking Trails		
15.	Pump Track		
16.	Skate Park – Phase 3		

Climbing Wall

A Community Climbing Wall was completed this past year in the new Ridgway High School. The Climbing Wall is housed within the Gymnasium, and is open to the public on specific days and times.

Ice Rink

A Community Ice Rink should be considered, with Ridgway’s cool winter temperatures and long winter season. As an interim measure to a permanent facility, or as an alternative, the Town should on a seasonal basis convert the existing junior soccer field in Hartwell Park to a winter skating rink, when conditions are favorable. Improvements to this current arrangement could include the usage of a liner to prevent seepage, and the seasonal placement of panels and borders to better define the rink and provide separation between the rink and other uses. Means of maintaining and resurfacing the ice should also be explored.

Additional Soccer Field

Demand for a third soccer field at the Ridgway Athletic Park has been increasing, with considerable spring and fall usage on the existing fields, as well as increasing usage of the combined soccer / baseball athletic field.

Phase II of the Regional Athletic Park provides for a third field, and an additional baseball field. The location of these playing facilities are depicted in the site plan for the Athletic Park (see Figure __).

The Town and the Ridgway / Ouray Soccer Club partnered together in 2004 to pursue possible grant funding through the Colorado State Youth Soccer Association (CSYSA). A grant of \$7,000 was provided to help fund initial ground work and drainage work for the third field. A one year extension of the grant was obtained in 2005, with the monies having to be expended by FY 2006. It is estimated that the initial ground work, including top soil and seeding, is approximately \$32,500, with some of the work likely being performed in-house.

Additional Tennis Courts

The addition of two new tennis courts was completed as part of Phase II of the Regional Athletic Park in 2009. The need for the new courts was triggered by the proposed realignment of North Railroad Street, which relocation will necessitate the removal of at least one of the two existing courts at the Hartwell Park location. The Railroad Street realignment project needs to precede the widening of Highway 62 – a CDOT project that is identified as a high priority pursuant to the Statewide 2030 Plan and is currently planned for completion in 2016.

Skate Park

The Town, in response to submitted petitions and expressed interests before the Town Council is pursuing the construction of a skate park in FY 2005. The proposed site for this facility is the vacant ground north of the public parking lot and Ridgway Library. The skate park will be designed for future additions, with the first phase being suitable for intermediate level usage.

In FY 2005, the Council budgeted \$25,000 as cash match for possible grant funding to see the project designed and constructed. The estimate for the first phase of the skate park is approximately \$135,000. Along with the Town's cash match, \$90,000 was sought through GOCO funds, \$10,000 through privately raised contributions, and \$5,000 attributed to in-kind donations (earth moving and landscaping).

The Town submitted its grant application in December, 2004 and was fully awarded the \$90,000 through GOCO in June, 2005. The project was designed and constructed in 2006. The Town received a mini grant award from GOCO to design and construct Phase 2 in 2011.

3. Goal III: Develop Park Standards for New Development

The following are recommended for codification in the Town's Land Use Code. The data are base upon...(insert nexus data):

Dedication of XX acres per 1000 residents

Payment in lieu of \$XXXX is required for development not providing parks, trails, open spaces, is required.

4. Goal IV: Develop a Means of Acquiring Parks, Trails and Open Spaces

5. Goal V: Develop a Plan to Address Urban Forest Management

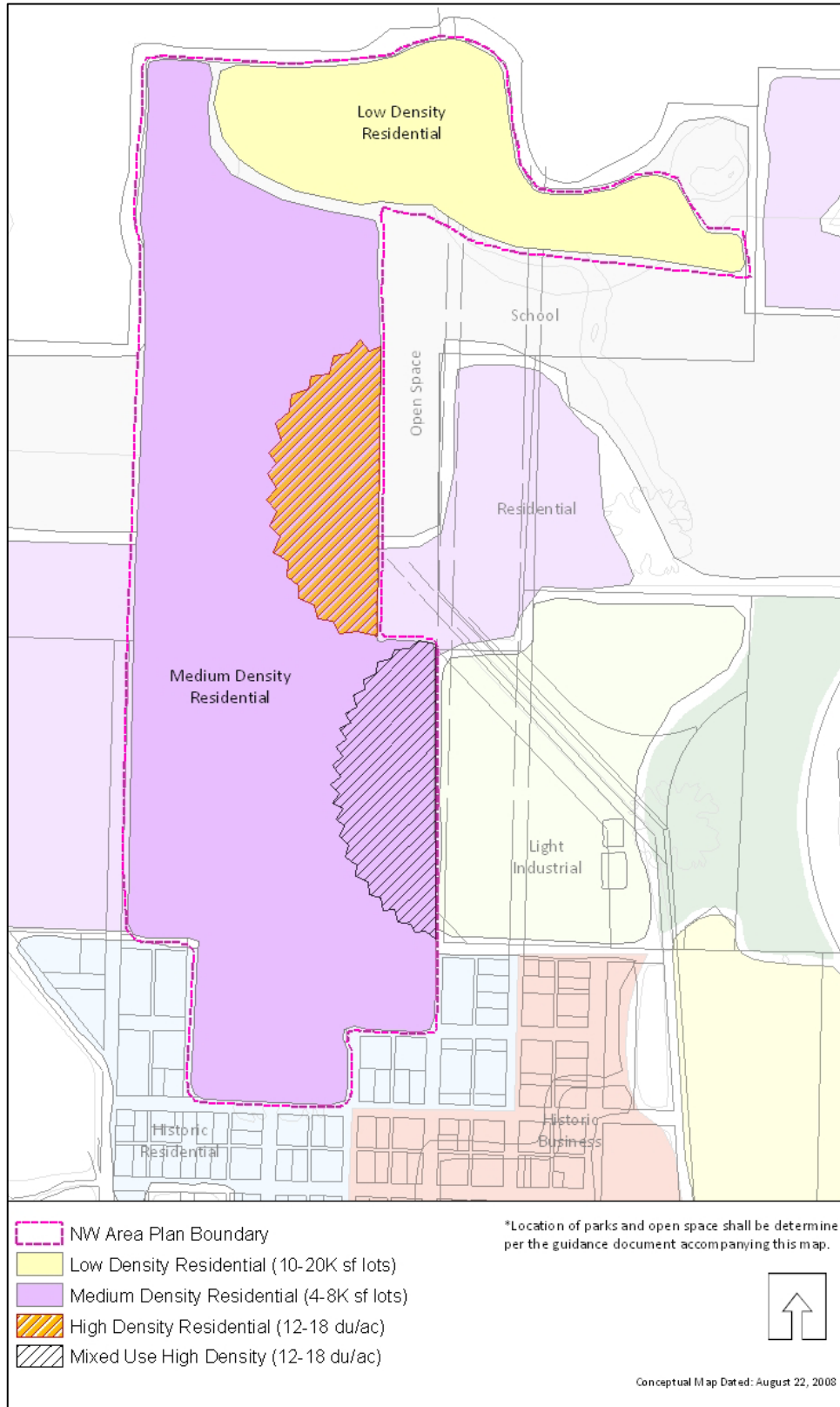
V. EXHIBITS

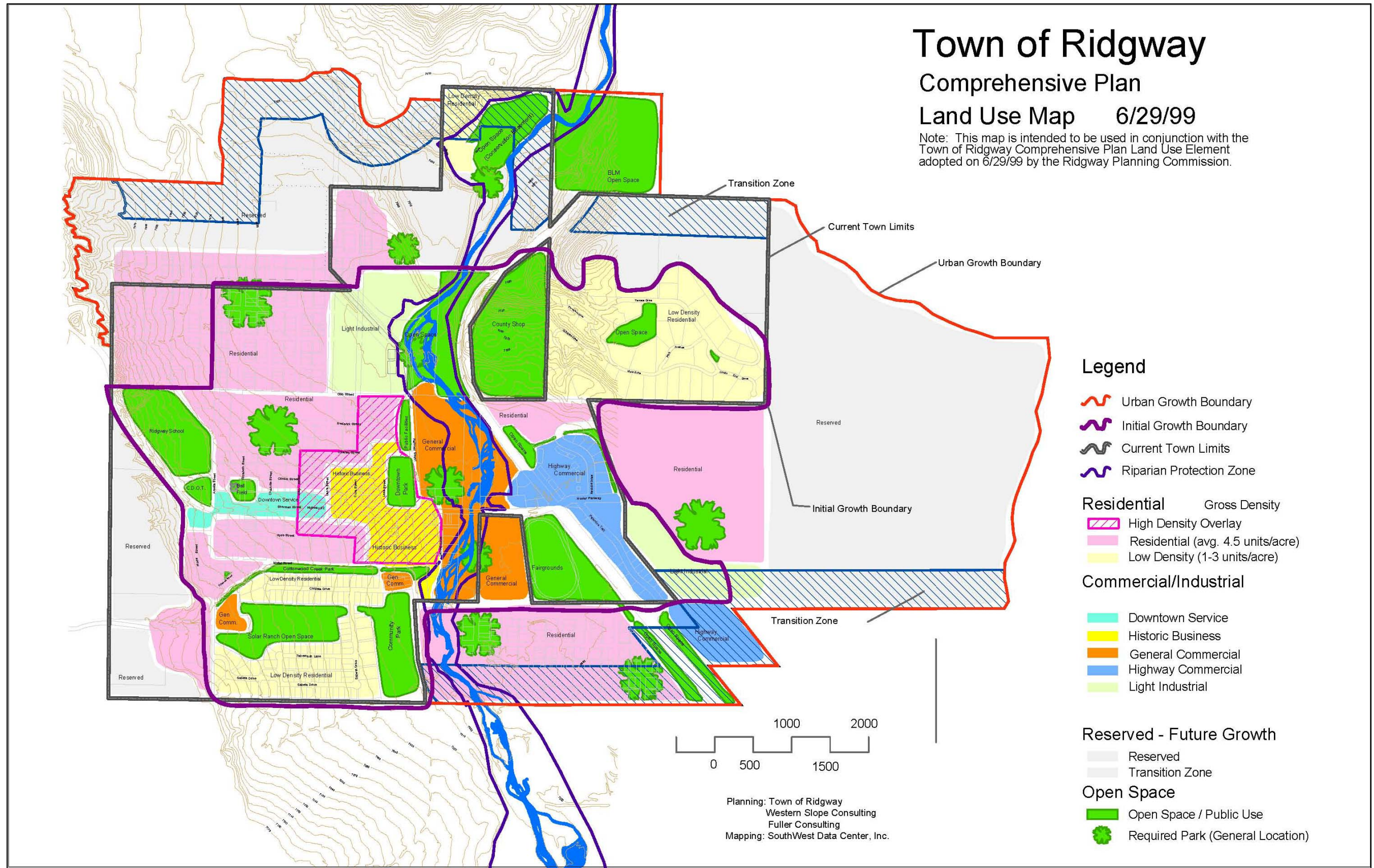
A. Regional BLM map

B. Ridgway State Park Map

C. Ouray County Fairgrounds Site Plan

D. Northwest Area Plan Map





F. Meeting Notes