Fairgrounds Master Planning Taskforce

Proposal to the Board of County Commissioners For the Review of the Fairgrounds Strategic Plan

Adopted: **September 21st 2010**

Updated: **December, 2013**
June, 2017

Last Update: **November, 2018**

Introduction:
The Fairgrounds provides all Gunnison County residents a meeting place that is economical, friendly, and flexible for a variety of activities and uses to:

- Enhance and improve the business activities in the community by providing a meeting place for both local and out-of-town groups.
- Preserve the community spirit and our quality of life especially as they relate to agriculture and the ranching heritage and culture.
- Provide facilities for youth activities that are not in competition with other existing public or private facilities in the community.

The County Commissioners have organized a task force to develop a master plan for the facilities and the land around them. The Fairgrounds encompasses some 24 acres currently which houses the rodeo arena and race track, a multi-purpose building, a 4-H building, various out buildings, the county maintenance facilities building and other structures that are utilized for county purposes, events and programs on the property. This area has evolved over the years as needs have been identified, but no formal planning effort has ever been completed to ensure that the property is efficiently utilized and that future expansion needs are accommodated.

2010 Commissioner's Charge: The charge that has been given to the task force is to identify the areas of the fairgrounds that have not been utilized (or are underutilized) and to present a recommended plan for how these areas can be most beneficially developed. Also the group should identify any foreseeable future expansion needs.

Community Input Process:

After the initial introductory meeting of the task force, it was quickly agreed that, because of the facility's use by all Gunnison County residents, a formal community input solicitation process should be completed prior to planning. Three key newspapers were identified to help advertise. The Gunnison Country Times, the Gunnison Country Shopper, and the Crested Butte News all ran a large ad for two weeks soliciting the community's advice for input to our group. Citizens were asked to provide thoughts on the future planning of the fairgrounds and inform the task force if there were special considerations that should be added to the plan.

Because of the solicitation, many citizens offered support for the process and suggested many ideas for consideration. These ideas were brought to the task force meetings, discussed, and valued based on needs. The task force would like to thank all of the people who took the time to voice their thoughts through emails and phone calls.

All community input will be an open and ongoing process for strategic planning into the future.

Beginning Task Force Meetings: The Task Force meetings began January 25th, 2010 and continued bimonthly through July 2010. After July, email conversations were continued through September when the fairgrounds master plan was completed and

adopted. For the future, the task force will continue to meet regularly as a working committee.

Current task force members include:
Eric McPhail: Chair of Committee and representing the CSU Extension office and all youth activities.
Melody Roper: Current fairgrounds manager and representing operational considerations and all interest groups currently using facility.
John Cattles replaced Rich Corbett as: Current Gunnison County maintenance supervisor and whose office is located on the fairgrounds.
Mike Pelletier: Current Gunnison County Geographic Information Service manager and offering mapping support.
Andie Ruggera: Current Planner for the City of Gunnison, Replaced Wendy Collins, former City Finance Director, and serves as a city representative, with knowledge of city planning and zoning.
Brad Tutor: Current small business owner and represents needs of many non-profits which utilize the fairgrounds for events.
Brett Redden: Current 4-H horse committee member and Club Leader and representing the needs of 4-H events.
Kevin Coblentz: Current Cattlemen's Days president and offering knowledge of rodeos and Cattlemen's Days events.
Mike Dawson: Current Cattlemen's Days committee member and Roping Club member representing needs of the arena and Cattlemen's Days rodeo events.

Existing Conditions and Descriptions:
Information from Aug. 2006 survey shows the fairgrounds divided into 3 parcels
Parcel 1- .86 acres. Zoning – industrial
Parcel 2- 1.71 acres Zoning .96 acres – industrial .75 – zoning multi-family residential
Parcel 3- 24.45 acres – zoning multi family residential
For specific parcel use see appendix Map A.

Buildings and Structures:

General Use Pavilion: The pavilion is an 80ft x 150ft metal covered building enclosed on the West side. The structure has large overhead halogen lights, multiple electrical outlets, and two water faucets. The structure is used primarily for storage of large county equipment during the winter months and opens up during the summer months to various uses. These uses include, but not limited to, 4-H / FFA animal holding and washing area during livestock shows, dog obedience classes, horse pens for high school rodeo, and additional event parking.

Multipurpose Building: The multi-purpose building is rented to the public and used by Gunnison County Departments for social, business, recreational and a variety of other uses. The spaces available for use are:
Conference room 24x24 (seats 35) McDonough room
Upstairs conference room 34x57 (seats 50) Hartman room

Small multi-purpose room 50x80 (seats 220) Vantuyl Room
Large multi-purpose room 125x80 (seats 400)
Commercial Kitchen
The multi-purpose building contains Colorado State University Extension Office and Fairgrounds Management office.

Mergelman Building: The Mergelman building was built in 1985 and donated to the Gunnison County 4-H organization, from funds donated by a local 4-H foundation, and is managed by the CSU Extension office. The building is a fully gas heated structure with one main conference room, one bathroom, and some storage. The large room allows for many 4-H activities and club meetings throughout the year. In 2017 a renovation was done to the building and completed in April 2018.

Grandstands: The Grandstands were remodeled in 2007 with the help of a GOCO grant. This structure is 220'x36' and has a seating capacity of 1,444 people. There are four uncovered bleachers on the grounds with a total holding capacity of approx. 700 people.

Arena: The rodeo arena is 320'x170' in size. There are 6 bucking chutes with a center return alley and stripping chute. A alley to load roping animals and roping boxes along with electricity for electric eye located on south end of arena. The arena has lighting, most recently updated 2009/2010 new wire service was installed to light posts with new ground faults and breaker panels for each light post. Additional lights were added to existing light posts to alleviate dark spots in the arena. In 2013, two steel walk-over bridges were constructed to provide ease of public access across alleyways.

Announcer booth and Holding Pens: The announcer booth is located above bucking chutes this area provide space for the electronic scoreboard technicians, event timers, sound technicians and other needed event personnel. Holding pens and sorting lanes for stock are located behind the announcer's booth the pens are Powder River rodeo panels. Most pens have water access.

Shower and Restroom Facility: The facility built in 2011 is a solar heated concrete block building with separate shower and bathroom units for men and women.

Warm-Up Arena: The facility built in 2018 a smaller arena that people could utilize when needed. Its intent was to make a safer place to exercise horses. It is constructed of posts and panels and measures XXX x XXX ft.

Storage Shed: The storage and work shed is needed to house tools and equipment as well as provides a covered working space.

Quonset Horse Building: The Quonset is a narrow stall barn consisting of -30- 10x 10 stalls. The main purpose is to house horses for events throughout the year. This structure has electricity and lighting available and has sound wired to the building. The dimensions of this Quonset are 150'x30'. This structure was built in 1950.

Maintenance Building: The Maintenance Building consists of an office, woodworking shop and storage space. The main purpose of the storage building is for parking vehicles, equipment and storing county property.

Coroner's Building and Shop: The building houses the County Coroner's office and equipment and provides space for County maintenance equipment.

Horse Stall Barns: This structure is located in the south/east corner of the fairgrounds next to the horse wash rack. This building contains 24, 10x10 stalls. There is electricity and lighting available and it is wired for the sound system. The Metropolitan Recreation District Grant helped fund purchase of stalls. This building was built in 2003.

Covered Horse Washing Station: Horse washing facility is located in the southeast corner next to the above mentioned horse stall building. The wash rack is a covered facility 60'x15' with concrete floor this drains into sanitary sewer. The covered structure was built in 2006.

Concrete Event Pad: Behind the rodeo arena is a large 600sq. ft concrete pad that was constructed to provide a base for a large tent. At times a rental tent is placed on the pad for an extra meeting space.

Current Events and Attractions:

Estimated 75,000 visitors and participants annually.
Cattlemen's Days Rodeo and Shows: provides 25,000 visitors and participants
High School Rodeo: Provides 450 visitors and participants each year
30 roping events: Provides 1500 visitors and participants per year
20 barrel racing events: Provides 800 visitors and participants per year
4-H camps, trainings, events and shows
Monster Truck Show
Cowboy Mounted Shooting
Special Olympic trainings
Snow and Ice equipment trainings and competitions
Law enforcement trainings
Horse therapy riding and training sessions
Food pantry distributions
National dog shows
Hunter's education classes
Banquets
Meetings
Weddings
Funerals
Public use of commercial kitchen

Immediate Needs:

Immediate needs are suggested tasks that should require limited budgeting and should be completed as soon as reasonably and fiscally possible. Many of these tasks will immediately help the fairground's use and ensure more possibilities for future development.

Increase Fairgrounds Signage: Heightened awareness of the Fairgrounds is needed. Fairgrounds sign on Highway 50 and Spruce, suggesting location direction, should be acquired. Also, fairground map and history signs should be placed in garden and on multipurpose building to identify resource locations and fairground use. Look into Safeway permission to be on their current sign. Look at a display space for historical history pictures. Possibly have a kiosk sign to house some current event brochures.

Plan for the removal of part of or all of the existing horse race track. It has been discussed that removing the race track will provide more benefits to the fairgrounds planning, by increasing the utilization of the space better. More parking will be added and an additional horse riding area will need to be created. This will be done in sections.

City and County to design north entrance to fairgrounds. It has been discussed that removing the north end race track is a step forward. The committee is looking at the city right-of-way and how to address paving, realigning, parking, widening, and landscaping Spruce Street. This will be the area from New York Ave. to the Fairground's Archway.

Engineer a site plan for traffic flow, parking, and landscaping. The committee feels that there is a safety issue with the current design of traffic flow around the multipurpose building. Users of the facility have limited parking and must walk across the roadway to enter into the building. There are no good turnaround options either. Also, during snow events, roof slides and ice buildup on the road next to the building and walkway can cause safety hazards. The committee will hold many meetings to discuss best design and would then like a professional engineer to look into feasibility, drainage, winter maintenance, traffic use, etc., and draft a design for committee review.

Insulation for west side of large event room. The committee looked at and decided that it would be best to figure out a better insulation scheme for the west wall. The room gets really hot as soon as the afternoon sun hits the outside wall and after looking at the current design it would be wise and efficient to fix this problem. After efficiency is worked on, then the committee may look into the possibility of a cooling system for the room.

Redesign the configuration of the pens and alleys behind small announcer booth area. Cattlemen's Days committee wishes to design a better use for the space around the southeast corner of the arena to better address safety and use for the spectators of events. Cattlemen's days will look at the design and bring to the committee a design plan and budget so that the county can start to address if budgets can help with this. County GIS will work on getting a map of the area with utilities to help with design.

Miscellaneous Building Updates: For better functionality, suggestions have been made to add large room dividers, AV wiring in conference room, adjustable lighting in conference room, insulation in the west wall of large room, and possibly evaporative cooling system for the large room.

Immediate Future Needs:

Immediate future needs are suggested tasks that should be completed as soon as reasonably and fiscally possible. These projects may need future planning and budgeting, but have been identified as an immediate need.

Build a better traffic flow, and parking design for the multi-purpose building. This phased project will be contingent upon the engineered design that is based on from the immediate needs section.

Future Needs:

Future needs are suggested tasks that the committee has identified as being a benefit to the fairgrounds future. These projects may need future planning and budgeting, but while lower in priority, have been identified as a need.

Application for city PUD: The purpose of the Gunnison Fairgrounds reclassification is to provide an area for activities and developments associated with a fairgrounds facility and to ensure that the planning and development of the fairgrounds facility is compatible with and enhances the planning and development of the City of Gunnison. The existing Fairground parcels are in both multi-family residential and industrial zones, which is not the true use of the property. The task force also felt that a reclassification of the property would help to show the County's dedication to the Fairgrounds with hopes that future development be restricted to development which benefits the Fairground's activities. The City of Gunnison and Gunnison County should work together to correct the current zoning problems.

Utility Updates and Other improvements to Infield East and North of Arena: Improvements include design and addition of utility posts for RV and camper hookups, as well as, design and addition of water faucets. Better design of the area will help improve parking space. Addition of water and electrical hookups will allow for more use by overnight visitors. This is one of the key advantages needed to hosting large events such as the State High School Rodeo.

75 ft. extension of the North side of the General Use Pavilion to accommodate the growth of the youth livestock projects and provide more covered parking when needed.

Additional Horse Stall barns along the South end of the Fairgrounds

Storm water drainage from Spruce St. and Multi-Purpose building runoff should be diverted away from the building and street and out into the livestock pasture.

Update fencing around Fairgrounds to be more secure, consistent, safe, and attractive.

List of Completed Tasks from the Strategic Planning taskforce:

Completed: **Warm up horse arena.** Completed in 2018. The committee wanted to start to develop a warm up horse arena south of the main arena. Dirt was taken from abandoned parts of track and reused. Costs were kept low in using donated materials.

Completed: **New Slurry Seal the Parking Lot:** Completed Summer of 2017.

Completed: **Deck and Roof Ice Buildup Drainage**: Ice buildup on the multipurpose building is a problem for both maintenance and safety and should be improved. This was addressed in the fall of 2017 with a heated gutter and water catchment system on the East side of the building. In 2018 the deck of the building was removed and a new concrete deck was poured.

Completed: **Renovation to Mergleman Building:** In 2015 discussions began to update the 4-H building were pushed forward with partial funding secured. Plans were designed to meet many needs including: increase storage, increase efficiency, addition of hot water, and a food serving area to the existing building. Fundraising and construction was completed as of April 2018.

Completed: **Alleviate drainage problem behind both North side garage doors of the Multi-Purpose Building**: The garage door entrance areas can be a source of water pooling and increased drainage should be put in place to alleviate water collection areas in times of road and storm water runoff.

Completed**: Greenhouse addition to Mergleman Building**: In 2011 discussions began to build a memorial greenhouse for the Nienhueser family. Total funding has been secured for this addition and construction has begun. Completion of this greenhouse will provide a lasting resource for adult and youth 4-H educational programs offered by the CSU Extension office. Completed in 2014.

Completed: **Update Southern Storm Water Drainage System**: Currently the South end of the Fairgrounds suffers from poor storm water drainage. A new system of drainage should be engineered to alleviate seasonal flooding of this area. Elevations were taken along Bidwell Avenue from West to East. It was determined that there is enough elevation fall to set a drop inlet 360 ft. or less away from the existing drop inlet. Valley pans should be installed across Bidwell Avenue to the new drop inlet and another valley pan installed in front of the existing horse stalls to the existing valley pan in place. The retention pond in the South-East area of the Fairgrounds should be maintained to catch runoff from the North-East livestock pasture. The pond helps catch solids from the

pasture and drain into the existing drop inlet. Another option, instead of a new drop inlet, is to install a valley pan across South Spruce Street and construct a ditch along Bidwell to the existing drop inlet.

Completed: **Build a Parking Lot on South East Corner**: The southeast corner of the Fairgrounds property, at the corners of Wisconsin Street and Bidwell Avenue is currently underutilized property because of drainage issues. The area currently stores rock and fill material. It is anticipated this material could be used to raise the surface level of the area, which could then be utilized for additional parking. The southeast entry gate off of Bidwell Avenue, via Wisconsin Street, is a main entry for trucks and trailers during the summer months, and is the main contestant entry gate during Cattlemen's Days. A considerable amount of truck/trailer traffic drives in front of three houses that face Bidwell Avenue sometimes during late night hours. Moving the main truck/trailer entrance to the North would alleviate vehicles pulling directly in front of houses. The development of a parking lot would provide needed parking for visitors, and larger vehicles, ie, trucks, including semi-trucks used to haul cattle to the fairgrounds, trailers, and even recreational vehicles. The access to the arena would be less than 300 yards for contestants or visitors wishing to access the arena, infield and livestock areas.

Completed: **Construct Better Irrigation and Drainage of North East Infield Pasture**: Work has begun on improving the drainage of the north east infield. A thirty foot culvert has replaced a ten foot section, placed to help drain water into a new ditch allowing reclamation of more useable space. A ditch running north to south has been filled in and a new one constructed to allow the fence to be moved to the east and gain parking space. The task force recommends that the County work within its means to complete this drainage issue.

Completed: **Construct Green Buffer Area along West side of 14th Street**: There has never been a clear visual Fairground boundary along 14th Street. An unattractive and undeveloped parking lot provides an inhospitable welcome to one of the most used entrances to the Fairgrounds. Also, residents along the West side of 14th Street have complained to the task force, in hopes that some type of landscaping barrier might be put in place to help beautify the boundary. The purpose of the green buffer area would be to help in the beautification and appearance of the West side of the Fairgrounds and visually designate a boundary between the Fairgrounds, residential housing and the new jail facility. These buffer plans should be developed along with the proposed jail facility plans, as storm water drainage, irrigation, and water line placement will need to be incorporated into the boundary area planning.

Completed: **Build new Showers and Bathrooms on West side of Grandstands**: The building of the new bathrooms and showers facility will replace an inadequate bathroom facility. The new facility will have hot water, adequate lighting and handicapped accessibility. This facility will have some solar heating as well as energy saving light timers and water measuring systems.

Future Expansion Considerations:

The Task Force acknowledges that when property adjacent to the Fairgrounds is purchasable and when funding is available, the County should highly consider purchasing lands that are beneficial for additional parking and facility expansion.

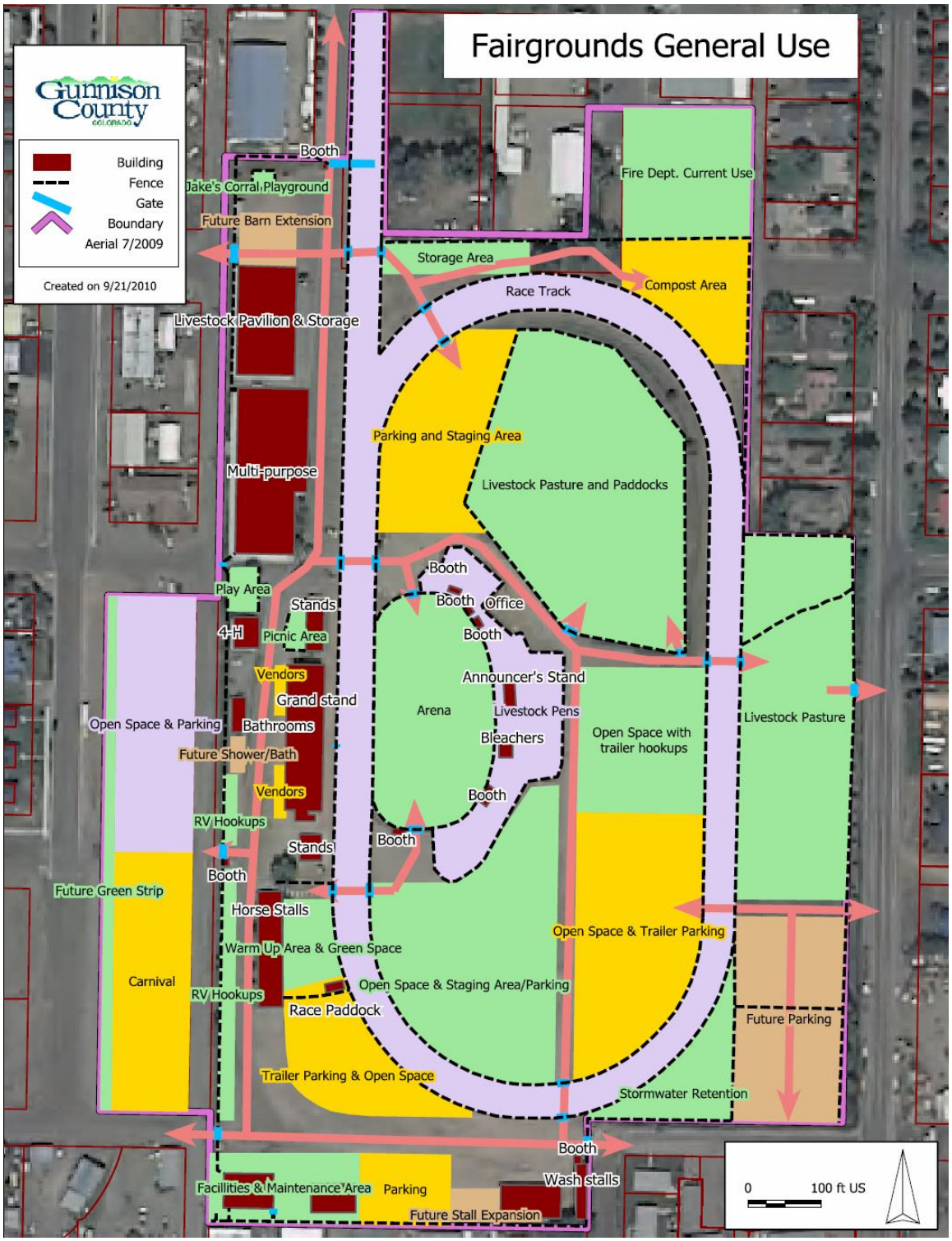
Race Track Considerations:

The historic race track has been a valued discussion since 2010. The committee wanted it to stay as long as possible and as long as it was being used for a race track. In 2017, the task force decided that the race track could be compromised and utilized for future planning of the fairgrounds. The beneficial use of the space was deemed more appropriate than keeping the entire race track intact. However, the race track will continue to be used as needed or until areas are developed and the track sections are needed to be taken out.

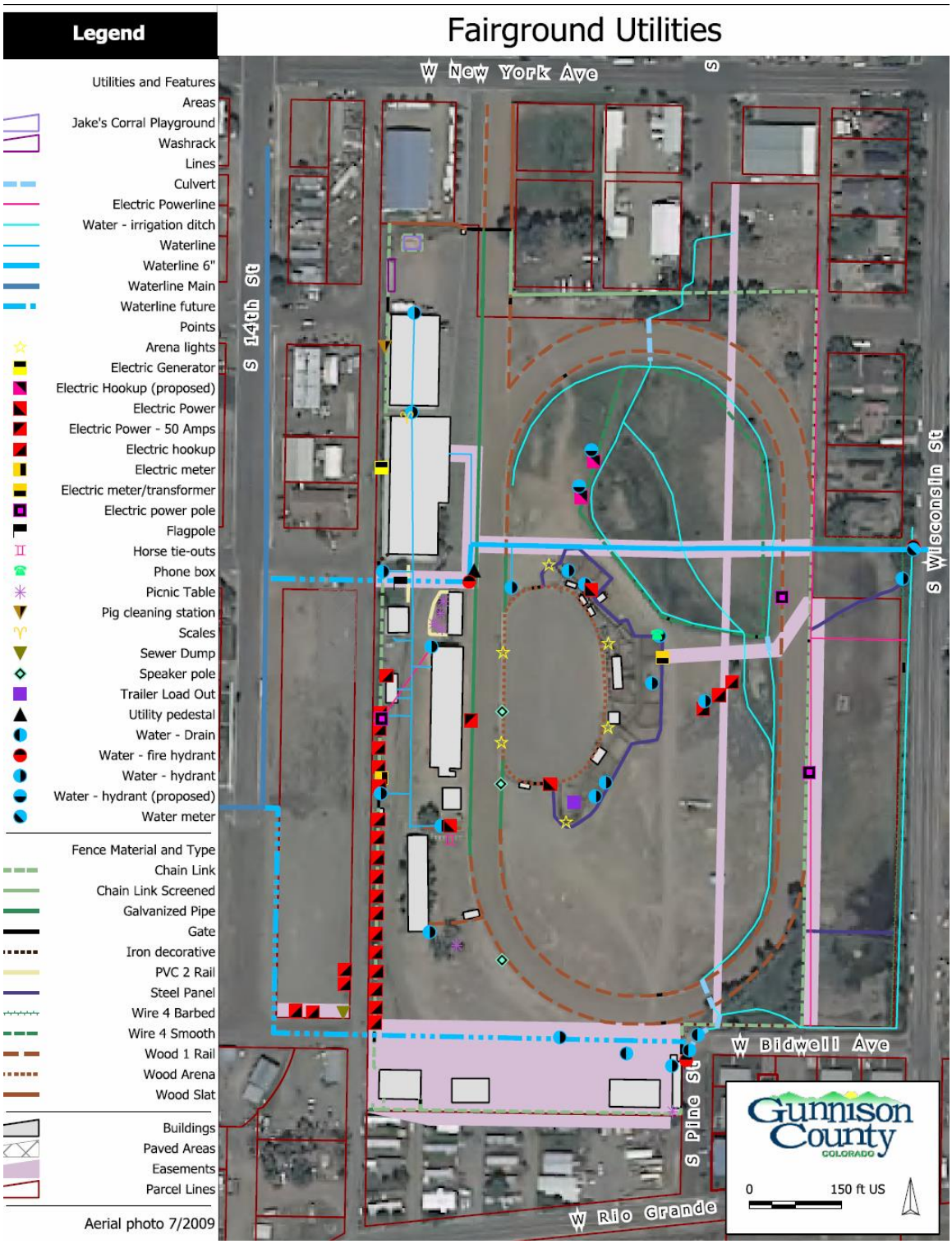
Final thoughts from the Task Force:

Many volunteers have been needed for this process, and the Task Force would like to thank all the people who came and gave their time and thoughts to the process. We would also like to thank the Gunnison County Commissioners who value the Fairgrounds and recognized a true need for a dedicated Master Plan.

Map A: 2013


Fairgrounds General Use
Gunnison County
Building
Fence
Gate
Boundary
Aerial 7/2009
Created on 9/21/2010
Booth
Jake's Corral Playground
Future Barn Extension
Fire Dept. Current Use
Storage Area
Compost Area
Race Track
Livestock Pavilion & Storage
Parking and Staging Area
Multi-purpose
Livestock Pasture and Paddocks
Booth
Booth
Office
Booth
Play Area
Stands
4-H
Picnic Area
Vendors
Announcer's Stand
Grand stand
Arena
Livestock Pens
Open Space & Parking
Bathrooms
Bleachers
Open Space with trailer hookups
Livestock Pasture
Future Shower/Bath
Vendors
Booth
RV Hookups
Stands
Booth
Booth
Future Green Strip
Horse Stalls
Open Space & Trailer Parking
Warm Up Area & Green Space
Carnival
Open Space & Staging Area/Parking
RV Hookups
Race Paddock
Future Parking
Trailer Parking & Open Space
Stormwater Retention
Booth
Wash stalls
Facillities & Maintenance Area
Parking
Future Stall Expansion
0
100 ft US

Map B: 2013


Legend
Fairground Utilities
Utilities and Features
Areas
Jake's Corral Playground
Washrack
Lines
Culvert
Electric Powerline
Water - irrigation ditch
Waterline
Waterline 6"
Waterline Main
Waterline future
Points
Arena lights
Electric Generator
Electric Hookup (proposed)
Electric Power
Electric Power - 50 Amps
Electric hookup
Electric meter
Electric meter/transformer
Electric power pole
Flagpole
Horse tie-outs
Phone box
Picnic Table
Pig cleaning station
Scales
Sewer Dump
Speaker pole
Trailer Load Out
Utility pedestal
Water - Drain
Water - fire hydrant
Water - hydrant
Water - hydrant (proposed)
Water meter
Fence Material and Type
Chain Link
Chain Link Screened
Galvanized Pipe
Gate
Iron decorative
PVC 2 Rail
Steel Panel
Wire 4 Barbed
Wire 4 Smooth
Wood 1 Rail
Wood Arena
Wood Slat
Buildings
Paved Areas
Easements
Parcel Lines
Aerial photo 7/2009
W New York Ave
S 14th St
S Wisconsin St
W Bidwell Ave
S Pine St
W Rio Grande
Gunnison County
COLORADO
0
150 ft US

Angle parking more to allow for sidewalk area next to building
Scale 1 : 1071
20 0 20 40 60 80 100
feet

Scale 1 : 1071
20 0 20 40 60 80 100
feet

walkway
Scale 1 : 1071
20 0 20 40 60 80 100
feet