



# Brown Ranch

Neuro-Inclusive Community  
Steamboat Springs, CO

**TIME MAGAZINE COVER PHOTO JUNE, 2022**



Jason Peasley, Executive Director of the Yampa Valley Housing Authority stands on Brown Ranch just west of Steamboat Springs, CO on May 16, 2022 David Williams for TIME

**SENATOR JOHN HICKENLOOPER**



Jason Peasley, executive director of the Yampa Valley Housing Authority, talks with U.S. Sen. John Hickenlooper, D-Colorado, prior to a round table discussion about affordable housing issues on Wednesday, April 20, at the Brown Ranch west of Steamboat Springs. The ranch was purchased by the authority last August, and the group is now addressing the best ways



**GOVERNOR JARED POLIS**



# STEERING COMMITTEE

**The Steering Committee is a diverse group of 20 community members tasked with creating an overall vision for the Brown Ranch, and creating a set of priorities that will guide the development through the coming decades.**

## COMMITTEE SELECTION

Within a day of closing on the property, the Housing Authority initiated a community-led comprehensive planning process for the Brown Ranch, including a call for Steering Committee members. YVHA received more than 90 applications for the Steering Committee from residents committed to working hard for the future of the community. The twenty who were ratified by the YVHA Board are a true snapshot of the community, representing a variety of skill sets, viewpoints, and lived experiences.

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The following Community Members met weekly in the fall of 2021 to create the framework for the Development Plan contained within this document. More information about the Steering Committee including member bios can be found on the project website, at:

<https://brownranchsteamboat.org/steering-committee/>

Andrew Beckler	Marsha Daugenbaugh
Anne Warhover	Megan Moore-Kemp
Cecilia Escobar	Patrick Phillips
Ed MacArthur	Patrick Staib
Erin Miller	Roger Ashton
Gates Gooding	Sarah Jones
Genevieve Kalmes	Tatum Heath
Kimball Crangle	Tim Wohlgenant
Kristin Brown Wilson	Vanessa Avitia
Lina Grant	Webster Jones

## VISION:

**“The Brown Ranch residents will live and connect in a vibrant, resilient, diverse, and welcoming neighborhood that provides a wide variety of housing options and services designed by and for the Yampa Valley community.”**

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

1. The Brown Ranch will provide affordable and attainable housing options for the Routt County workforce in a timely and efficient manner that meets both the urgent and long-term need.
2. The Brown Ranch will provide quality housing that is sustainable yet flexible, modern, efficient, safe, healthy, environmentally responsible, and in harmony with existing natural systems.
3. The Brown Ranch will be both physically and emotionally connected to the community, providing opportunity for social cohesion and successful vibrant and healthy lifestyles.
4. The community-driven process to design and develop the Brown Ranch will be inclusive, fact-based, honest, cost efficient and collaborative with all relevant stakeholders.

# HEALTH EQUITY PRIORITIES

The Health Equity Group reviewed the findings from both community input and data analysis, and identified six categories that reflect the health equity priorities for the community.

## SAFE, STABLE, AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Housing stability is a foundation for health and quality of life, as well as a fundamental need. There is a severe housing shortage for the Routt County workforce.

- Many families face unsafe and adverse living conditions.

## SAFETY AND INCLUSION

Individual and institutional discrimination and mental health struggles result in poor health outcomes.

- Mental health, substance abuse, and domestic violence are common concerns.

## RESILIENT COMMUNITY

Clean air and water are basic resources that are threatened by climate impacts. Poor air and water quality can create and exacerbate health conditions and vulnerabilities.

- Immigrants and older adults face increased climate-related health risks.
- Crises caused by aging infrastructure are becoming more common in the most vulnerable communities while heating and cooling costs create additional burdens.



# HEALTH EQUITY FINDINGS

This summary of findings reflects research and data from Health Equity Group meetings along with research and reports from multiple community organizations such as the Colorado Futures Center (CFC), and the Northwest Colorado Health Aging Coalition Report 2020.



## LACK OF HOUSING IMPACTS AVAILABLE WORKFORCE

There is a staff shortage among teachers, nurses and social service workers due to lack of affordable housing options. Routt County's working-age population (16-65), both in absolute numbers and as a share of the total population, hit a decade's low in 2021. The downward trend is strongest in the 24-44 age cohort.

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## OVERCROWDED HOUSING

Doubled-up households are becoming more common due to high costs and lack of supply. Overcrowding can exacerbate stress. Steamboat has a doubled-up household rate of 18.6% compared to Colorado at 15.5%.<sup>3</sup>



## HIGH HOUSING COSTS

About 30% of households are cost burdened in Steamboat Springs and Colorado state. In Routt County 28% of households are cost burdened.<sup>1</sup>



## INEQUITABLE LIFE EXPECTANCY

In Craig, where much of the Steamboat Springs workforce lives, average life expectancy is 75.4 to 79.7 years, compared to 77.7 to 82.2 years in Steamboat Springs itself.<sup>4</sup>



## HIGHER WORKFORCE DISABILITY

Steamboat Spring has a disability rate of 4.7% of the total population.<sup>2</sup>

This summary of findings reflects input from Health Equity Group meetings and survey findings, targeted outreach, and research and reports from multiple community organizations including Northwest Latinx Alliance, LiftUp Client Survey 2021 and Integrated Community based on their day to day experience with traditionally unrepresented voices within the community.



## NEED FOR SAFE PEDESTRIAN SYSTEMS

Safe sidewalks, trails and walkable access to essential services are needed.



## TRAFFIC SAFETY CONCERNS

Traffic safety is a significant concern, and most collisions in the county happen in Steamboat Springs.



## FOOD ACCESS CHALLENGES

Food prices are among the highest in the state, well over the state average.



## COVID INEQUITY

Latinx community members suffered more than 2x the COVID-19 death rate, compared to white community members.



## CHANGING CLIMATE INEQUITIES

Many people don't have access to cooling during summer heat and smoke waves and there are high rates of ER visits due to heat.



## CHILDCARE CHALLENGES

Routt County has a very low rate of childcare attendance due to lack of affordability, which affects people's ability to keep a job.

# MOBILITY GUIDING PRINCIPLES

## PEOPLE FIRST

Design for people before cars by prioritizing safe and comfortable pedestrian, bike, and transit infrastructure.

- Locate a transit stop or hub within a 1/2 mile of all homes
- Implement a gridded street network to reduce street widths and improve walkability.
- Provide designated bike lanes throughout the neighborhoods, connected to the multimodal trail.
- Provide a network of pedestrian-focused spaces (greenways) that connect to the multimodal trail.

## ACCESS

Ensure safe and clear access throughout the neighborhood for people with a range of physical, visual, and auditory abilities.

- Minimize street slopes where possible to accommodate a range of physical abilities.
- Prioritize 5% maximum slope in neighborhood centers, especially areas adjacent to transit stops.
- Provide accessible pedestrian signals at intersections within neighborhood centers.
- Provide a multi-modal trail that is a maximum of 5% slope and provide way-finding maps to identify routes through the community that are 5% or less, to the greatest extent possible.

## CONNECTIVITY

Provide easy and intuitive connections from all homes to the neighborhood centers, school site, transit stops, multi-modal trail, and parks and open spaces.

- Use a grid network to facilitate easy connections from all homes, and create multiple options for routes.
- Distribute neighborhood centers, transit stops, and parks to allow access within 1/4 mile from all homes.
- Create shared streets, or woonerfs,\* along key edges that front community park space.

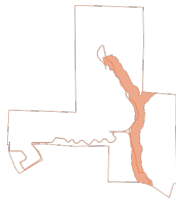
\*woonerf: a Dutch term which means a circulation area shared by pedestrians, wheeled users, and vehicles, and accessible to surrounding uses

## EDGES

Create a trail network along the perimeter of development areas to navigate wildland-urban interfaces.

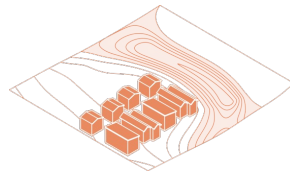
- Provide a fire-break between undeveloped areas and housing for fire fighting management.
- Create a space for people to visually connect to nature while protecting wildlife habitat.
- Provide a gradual, flexible transition from the grid of the developed portion of the site to the undeveloped, natural portion of the site.

# BIG MOVES: COMMUNITY-CENTERED ORGANIZING DESIGN CONCEPTS



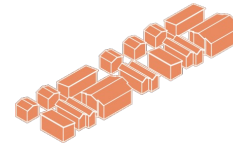
## USE SLATE CREEK AND THE MULTIMODAL TRAIL AS THE BACKBONE OF BROWN RANCH

The north-south Slate Creek corridor acts as the primary pedestrian and open space backbone to the Brown Ranch development. Neighborhood cores lead to this green spine, and primary public open spaces within it are stitched together by pedestrian trails through restored riparian zones, organizing the north-south connections on site.



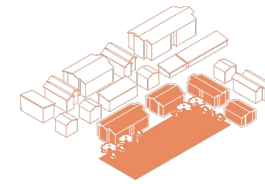
## FORM DEVELOPMENT AREAS TO RESPOND TO SITE CHARACTER, TOPOGRAPHY, AND VIEWS

Block shapes and locations react to the unique site topography, character, and views. Beyond avoiding steep slopes, each neighborhood embraces its unique location, whether surrounded by flattops, nestled adjacent to the riparian corridors or perched within upland hills. East-west views towards the ski mountain and north-south views towards Emerald Mountain are reinforced by the neighborhood grid orientation.



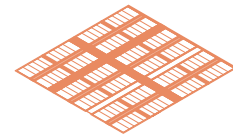
## DESIGN A WIDE VARIETY OF HOUSING TYPES, EQUITABLY MIXED THROUGHOUT THE DEVELOPMENT

Each block throughout the development contains an equitable mix of housing types. Mixing a wide variety of housing types throughout the site creates a compact, diverse, and walkable neighborhood that can meet the urgent housing demand and critical health equity goals.



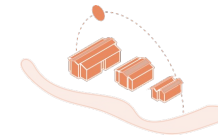
## CREATE A HEART IN EVERY NEIGHBORHOOD: VIBRANT MIX OF USES AND GATHERING

Each neighborhood region has a central "heart," with an active mixed-use zone that includes community spaces, retail, live-work units, and services, with housing above. Each of these neighborhood cores have access to transit and are along streets that lead directly to larger community parks and open space.



## FOLLOW A "GRIDS AND GREENWAYS" MOBILITY NETWORK

The site plan follows a specific grid pattern to allow for increased mobility and redundancy for pedestrians and cars. The grid pattern allows for smaller, safer streets while creating easier access and a better pedestrian experience. Alternating roads and greenways allow a maximum number of units to front public open space and connect to the broader trail network.



## MAXIMIZE SUSTAINABLE DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES

The plan creates sustainable design opportunities across scales. Block orientation and parcel layout maximize solar access, capture prevailing breezes for passive ventilation opportunities, and prioritize shading to mitigate heat. Greenways and open spaces encourage sustainable transit while facilitating storm water strategies, and building and open space principles limit resource use.



# SUSTAINABLE DESIGN GUIDEPOSTS AND STRATEGIES

Bringing together what we heard from the *entire community*—Steering Committee vision and guiding principles, Focus Team principles, targeted outreach to traditionally unheard voices, and consultant team research and recommendation—these guideposts and strategies directly shape the physical design of the project.

## INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE COMMUNITY

Supporting housing choices for all, serving the highest need, and creating accessible community resources and gathering places:

- Design blocks with lot size flexibility to accommodate multiple types of housing.
- Locate highest density blocks with active ground floor uses in greatest proximity to amenities and transit.
- Provide direct access to resources and open space amenities through greenway and trail network.
- Distribute housing types equitably throughout the neighborhoods, with a mix of Multi-Family, Single-Family Attached, and Single-Family Detached with Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) on every block.

## WALKABLE, BIKEABLE, AND TRANSIT FIRST COMMUNITY

Supporting healthy, active lifestyles, connected communities, and a low carbon future:

- Create a redundant, gridded mobility network with multiple options.
- Minimize parking and create alley-accessed parking with ADUs above.
- Minimize vehicle lane widths for slower speeds and include bike lanes on all minor streets.
- Limit through traffic to a single road.
- Aggregate surface parking into parcels that can transition to housing in the future.
- Design greenways for north-south connections to the core trail and community resources.

## SAFE AND RESILIENT COMMUNITY

Responding to climate, safety, and health:

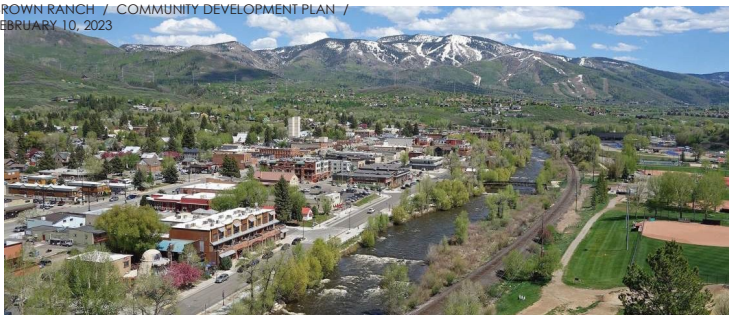
- Orient blocks north/south to maximize solar exposure and opportunity for solar energy generation.
- Use open space and greenway network to capture and manage stormwater and create and restore habitats.
- Edge open spaces with service-accessible trails and roads to maximize fire resilience.

## CONTEXT CONNECTED

Rooted in the site, surrounding nature and the greater Steamboat Springs community:

- Villages respond to special places on the site – Slate Creek, key viewsheds, and drainages.
- Prioritize the multimodal trail connections throughout the site.
- Create visual connections to the landscape beyond the site.
- Use alleys to support old town character and maximize efficiency.
- Promote arts and culture integration throughout the community.

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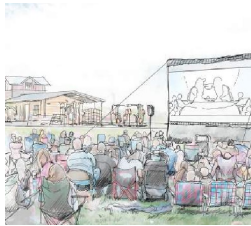


# AERIAL VIEW



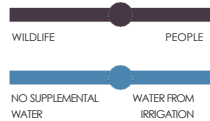
# LANDSCAPE TYPOLOGIES

## PARKS & PUBLIC REALM



**COMMUNITY PARKS**  
RECREATION AND ACTIVITY  
NODES

Large parks designed to serve recreation needs, provide community activities and programs, address stormwater, and enhance the landscape with native and low-water use plants.

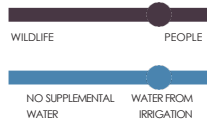


- Recreational areas
- Playgrounds
- Trails and paths
- Community event space
- Picnic and gathering
- Native trees and plants
- Water quality and infiltration
- Stormwater detention



**NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS**  
GATHERING AND PLAY NODES

Parks designed for play and community gathering with greater amounts of manicured landscape.

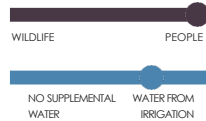


- Flexible recreational areas
- Playgrounds
- Seasonal activities
- Picnic and gathering
- Community gardens
- Low-water use trees and plants



**GREENWAYS & PLAZAS**  
SOCIAL CENTERS FOR  
GATHERING

Small green spaces designed for social activities, play, and smaller gatherings.

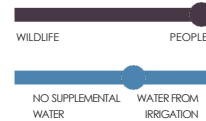


- Flexible multi-use lawn
- Playgrounds
- Trails and paths
- Picnic and gathering
- Community gardens
- Low-water use trees and plants



**STREETSCAPE**  
LIFE WITHIN THE PUBLIC REALM

Streets designed to function as places to walk and meet neighbors.

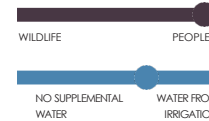


- Water quality and infiltration
- Low-water use trees and plants



**PRIVATE LANDSCAPE**  
RESIDENTIAL LIFE

Spaces designed for private and semi-private gathering.



- Low-water use trees and plants

# GREENWAYS & PLAZA SOCIAL CENTERS FOR GATHERING

Greenways and plazas are small green spaces designed for social activities, play, and small gatherings.

The greenways are oriented north-south to connect people to the multimodal trail to the south. These spaces are located between neighborhood streets to provide better access to green space such that all residents are within three blocks of green space. The greenways are designed to support gatherings, play spaces, and community gardens. Plazas should be located in places with greater housing density and accommodate small community events.

## WATER USE



## LANDSCAPE & IRRIGATION DEMAND



## CHARACTER IMAGES



Provides pockets of program along greenways



Flexible lawns for various forms of gathering and events gathering



Provide adequate seating and lighting for gathering



Greenway with path and amenities

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## GRASSES



Switchgrass  
*Panicum virgatum*



Large Blue Fescue  
*Festuca amethystina*

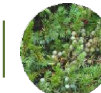


Side-oats Grama  
*Bouteloua curtipendula*



Prairie Dropseed  
*Sporobolus heterolepis*

## SHRUBS



Common Juniper  
*Juniperus communis*



Kinnikinnick  
*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*



Twinberry Honeysuckle  
*Lonicera involucrata*



Red-osier Dogwood  
*Cornus sericea*

## TREES



Honeylocust  
*Gleditsia triacanthos*



Hackberry  
*Celtis occidentalis*



Kentucky Coffeetree  
*Gymnocladus dioica*



Sugar Maple  
*Acer saccharum*

# Horizons' Action Plan



- ▶ Hold in-services for staff and people in services to become financially eligible before the waitlist opens to the public
- ▶ Encourage people in services to purchase their own 2 bedroom apartment with the intent of each client being the landlord for their own Host Home Provider
- ▶ Build a day program and office site near the nonprofit center
- ▶ Facilitate people in services as active community members thereby creating work opportunities and natural supports. Horizons is already a prominent community partner with a rural mill levy and a client employment rate of over 70%

# Takeaways:

- ▶ Contact your local housing authority and get involved. Share your expertise regarding environmental components for people with physical and intellectual disabilities. **YOU ARE THE EXPERTS!**
- ▶ Educate and involve interested staff, people in services, and provide opportunities for them to become eligible.
- ▶ Historically, community centered boards administered the homeless vouchers through HUD. Find out who manages those vouchers locally and take advantage of them. We save thousands of dollars as a provider every year by ensuring our folks are on that waitlist
- ▶ Become more familiar with what health equity and neuro-inclusive housing really means for our folks – because understanding the practical application of these concepts directly impacts the quality of life of people we serve.