

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Stagecoach Community Plan was developed as a cooperative endeavor between Routt County, the Morrison Creek Metropolitan Water and Sanitation District, the MountainAir Company, the Stagecoach Ski Corporation, and the Stagecoach Property Owners Association. It also involved an intensive effort to contact and to solicit ideas and reactions from the large number of Stagecoach lot owners who live outside the state. Important information was provided by several other County departments, including the Road and Bridge Department and the Environmental Health Department, and by the South Routt County School District and the Oak Creek Fire Protection District.

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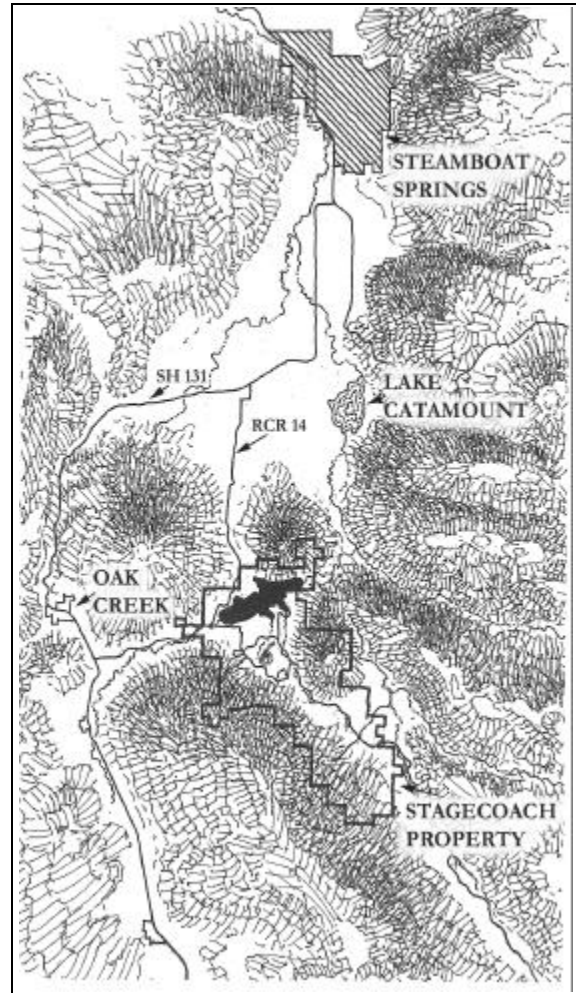


# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 History of Stagecoach

During the early 1970s, Woodmoor Corporation acquired land south of Routt County Road 14 and east of Colorado Highway 131, and began to plan for a large new community named Stagecoach. At that time, there was no Stagecoach Reservoir, and no ski area, but Woodmoor envisioned both a lake and a ski area as part of its new development. It also envisioned thousands of single family lots and multi-family units scattered across a large portion of south Routt County.

Woodmoor subsequently received County zoning for the entire site. The zoning that allowed for development of both multi-family development and for single family lots of less than 1 acre -- if central water and sewer services were provided. The County also approved subdivision plats covering 1,938 single-family lots and the potential for thousands of additional condominium and townhouse units. The number of platted lots in each subdivision is summarized in the table below.

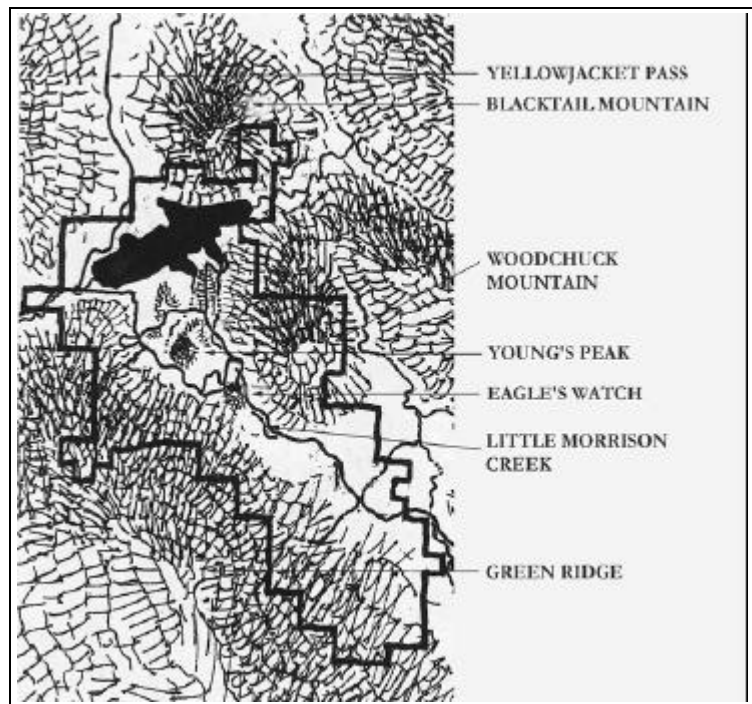


SUBDIVISION	PLATTED LOTS
Meadowgreen	50
South Shore	229
Morningside I	183
Horseback	249
Blackhorse I	101
Blackhorse II	70
Sky Hitch I	93
Sky Hitch II	59
Sky Hitch III	43
Sky Hitch IV	167
South Station I	218
South Station II	131
High Cross	65

SUBDIVISION	PLATTED LOTS
Overland	138

Single family lots were rapidly sold to over 1,400 different owners living all over the country – and the world. Since that time, 78 single family homes have been built on those lots. In addition, 172 multi-family units were constructed, but most of the multi-family tracts were retained for future development. Portions of the land that were not subdivided received County zoning approval for densities that would allow a total of over 4,500 more dwelling units if developed at their maximum densities. Even if developed at lower densities, the Woodmoor approvals would have accommodated about as many people as currently live in Steamboat Springs.

To provide water and sewer services for the anticipated development, Woodmoor helped create the Morrison Creek Metropolitan Water and Sanitation District (the “District”). The District sold bonds to investors and used the proceeds to begin constructing an extensive system of water wells, water pipes, sewer collection lines, and a sewage treatment plant. To achieve construction efficiencies, it sized these investments to serve between 1,000 and 2,000 dwelling units. When future homes were built and hook-up fees and real property taxes were collected, those revenues would be used to repay the bondholders.



Unfortunately, in 1974 Woodmoor experienced hard times and filed for bankruptcy. Without an active sales program, lot sales and resales slowed down. Without a master developer, construction of multi-family units stopped altogether. Some of those who had sold the land to Woodmoor received portions of the land back following the bankruptcy, subject to zoning and platting that the County had approved. Some of the original sellers – including the MountainAir Company – still own those lands.

Since houses were not being built, real estate tax revenues to the District did not rise as fast as expected, and hook-up fees were not paid either. As a result, the District was unable to meet its payments to the bondholders, and in 1976 it, too, sought the protection of the Bankruptcy Court. The Court required the District to impose a levy of 20 mils (\$20 on every \$1,000 of assessed valuation) to repay the bondholders – and to live within a 20 mil levy for its other



operations. As a result of these constraints, the District was unable to build additional pipes and facilities to serve new development unless the property owners agreed to pay for the construction.

Since most property owners were not able to finance those utility extensions themselves, home construction fell and stayed at a very low level for most of the next 15 years. Although it did not have the ability to expand, the District continued to operate and maintain the oversized infrastructure that had already been built. Fortunately, the District will be emerging from bankruptcy in 2000 (unless it decides to make voluntary bondholder payments to emerge sooner), which will allow the District to take over most of its financial affairs and plan for its future with more freedom.

In 1972, Woodmoor created the Stagecoach Property Owners Association (SPOA). Originally, SPOA had two membership classes: (1) Woodmoor, and (2) other lot owners. In 1977-1978, the non-Woodmoor lot owners took over control of the organization. Over the years, SPOA has published the Stagecoach Express newspaper on a periodic basis, collected membership dues, used those dues to finance the extension of a YVEA Electric Power line and other improvements, earmarked a portion of the dues for the use of property owners within



each subdivision, acted as a clearinghouse for information on Stagecoach, and represented its members' interests in dealings with the County and other public agencies. In the early 1980s, SPOA also participated in discussions that led to the approval of a "Vault Agreement" between the County and the Morrison Creek District. The Vault Agreement allows property owners to construct closed septic systems where septic drainfields are not allowed and central sewers are not available, on the condition that those closed systems are pumped out on a regular basis and access roads are built and maintained to minimum standards.

In light of this history, and the fact that infrastructure could not be installed to support the development as the buyers originally anticipated, it is not surprising that tensions have developed.

Some of the lot purchasers have been adamant about finding ways to develop their lots even without the original infrastructure in place. Some current residents are happy with the current levels of development, and are apprehensive about any changes that would bring in more residents. A few major landowners are anxious to move forward with development of the ski area, a golf course, or large residential lots. Some would like to see the District become more active in building more infrastructure when it emerges from bankruptcy, while others disagree. No one enjoys paying real property taxes, and many lot owners are skeptical about anything that would create additional assessments or charges on their land unless it brings about tangible short-term benefits to their particular property.

Fortunately, since 1995, Colorado's thriving real estate market and the inherent beauty of the Stagecoach area have helped increase the pace of lot resales, spur home construction, and raise real property tax revenues.

In 1980, Routt County adopted its first Master Plan, which provides guidance to future development throughout the county – and identified Stagecoach as a potential future growth area. Growth areas were envisioned to be self-contained communities with a mix of housing, commercial and retail use, and employment opportunities, surrounded by areas that will remain rural and will not permit the outward sprawl of the defined growth center. Under the Master Plan, in order to be a growth center, Stagecoach needs to contain a full range of services and jobs to augment the housing supply. The Master Plan does not include a detailed Community Plan for Stagecoach, but the District, SPOA, and some large Stagecoach landowners subsequently requested that a detailed plan be prepared. This is that plan.

## 1.2 Current Status

### 1.2.1 Current Development

Because the land included in Stagecoach includes the broad northern meadow near the Stagecoach Reservoir, a narrow neck of steep land to the south between Woodchuck Mountain and Young's Peak, and a large area of open meadows and wooded slopes at the southern end of the property, it is convenient to refer to the potential development areas as the "North Area" and the "South Area".

Most of the land between these two areas is unplatted and has never been planned to accommodate significant development. Interestingly, most of the platted single family lots are in the South Area, while most of the development amenities, utility lines, and existing development are in the North Area.

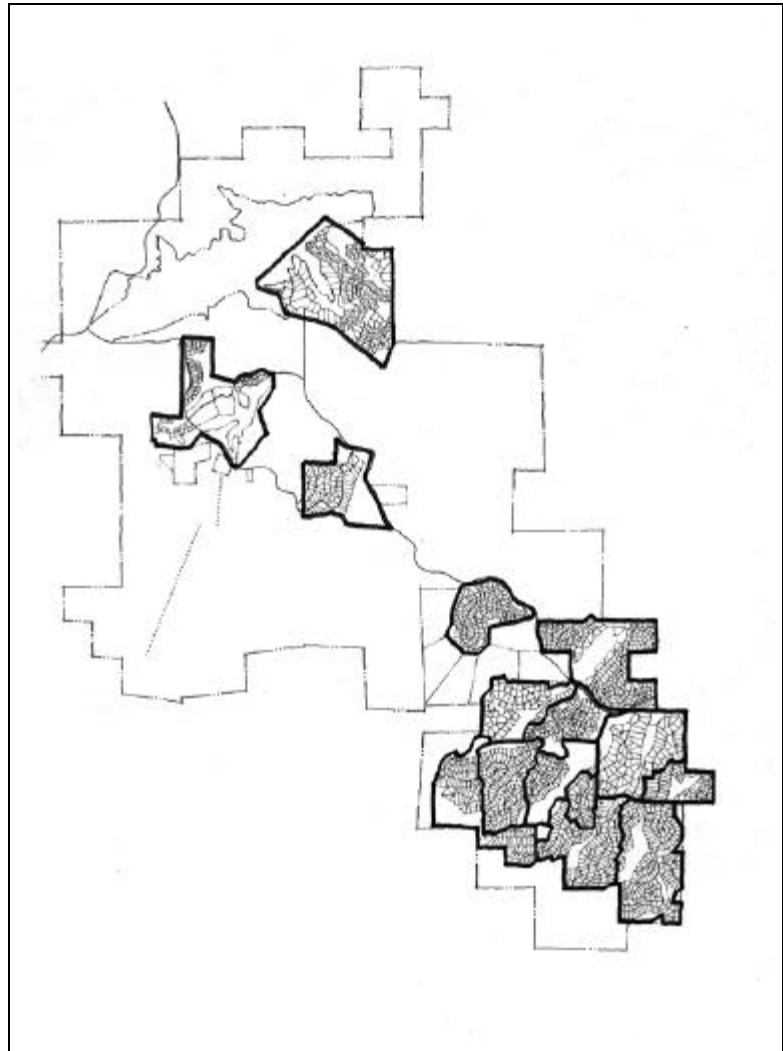
Stagecoach now includes 1,938 platted single family home sites, platted multi-family development sites sufficient to accommodate several hundred townhouses and condominiums, and about 19 significant tracts of zoned-but-unplatted land. Zoned-but-unplatted parcels need to go through a subdivision process before building lots are created or sold, and before any development occurs. Only 250 dwelling units have been built to date: 15 single family units in the South Area, another 63 single family homes in the North Area (mostly in the Meadowgreen and Eagles Watch subdivisions),

and 172 multi-family units in the North Area (mostly in the Stagecoach Town homes, Eagles Nest, and the Wagon Wheel area).

The results of recent surveys of lot owners indicate that many of those who responded do not plan on building a home or living in Stagecoach. Many have changed their plans since their purchase of the lot, while others have inherited lots or received them as gifts and treat them as an asset that they intend to sell when the time is right.

One survey by the County found that, in light of the anticipated costs of utilities, over 50% of respondents would be interested in selling their properties. On the other hand, a survey by SPOA found that 68% of lot owners would like to extend utilities to their sites if they could afford to do so. Read together, these two surveys suggest that a substantial minority of lot owners may be interested in selling their lots, but the

exact percentage varies depending on anticipated lots sales, prices, and utility extension costs.



### 1.2.2 Constraints to Development

Although the pace and price of lot sales have increased, the lack of water, sewer, roads, and electricity to many lots significantly depresses property values. In fact, the appraised values of many Stagecoach lots are significantly lower than the prices the owners paid for those lots 25 years ago.

Importantly, the lack of central water and sewer connections and passable roads to most of the lots also makes it very difficult for many property owners to develop at all. Under Routt County's "LDR" (Low Density Residential) and "HDR" (High Density Residential) zoning, and the terms of the original Stagecoach approvals, lots may only be developed if they have central sewer service. Virtually all of the Stagecoach lots fall into these zoning categories. Extending the water and sewer lines and roads to individual lots often requires the cooperation of virtually all of the benefitting lots within a subdivision (or at least along an access road), and cooperation is difficult. During recent years, SPOA has monitored at least 15 attempts by motivated lot owners to get their neighbors to contribute to road improvements that would benefit an entire area -- and all have been unsuccessful.

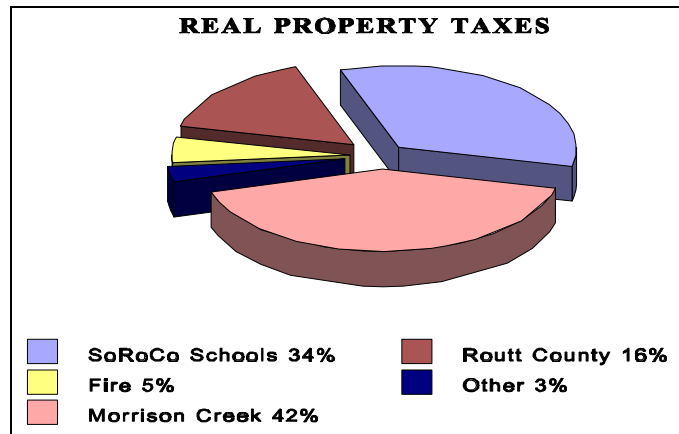


Although the recent Vault Agreement has opened the door to development without connections to the sewer system, the individual lot owners must still bear high monthly pumping and maintenance costs, as well as the costs of access road improvements, connections to the electric system, and a well.

There is currently very strong demand for 5 to 35 acre lots in south Routt County. Some property owners and brokers have succeeded in assembling smaller lots into 5 acre tracts, rezoning those tracts into the MRE (Mountain Residential Estate) zone district, requesting vacation of internal utility easements, and obtaining permission to develop them on a well-and-septic basis.

### 1.2.3 Real Property Taxes

Pursuant to Colorado law, lots that are improved with homes are assessed at “residential” assessment rates, while those that are unimproved are assessed at “vacant” rates. An average undeveloped lot in Stagecoach was assessed about \$350 in real property taxes in 1998, and those taxes went to a variety of different entities.



Although the mill levy for County services is the same throughout the county, additional levies for school districts, fire districts, and other special taxing districts can lead to total tax bills that vary significantly across the county. In addition, the Morrison Creek District levy includes a large mill levy to pay off the bondholders that most Routt County residents do not have to pay.

In fact, for an average Stagecoach lot owner, the largest part of his or her property tax bill went to the Morrison Creek Metropolitan Water & Sanitation District (about \$143), and the second largest piece went to the South Routt County School District (about \$120). Under Colorado law, school districts must establish a uniform system of real property taxes throughout their district, and those taxes must be paid by the property owners regardless of whether they build a house or contribute any children to the school systems. Over the past 25 years, the large number of platted and zoned lots in Stagecoach have added significant assessed value to the South Routt County School District even though the area had very few children attending local schools.

The next largest tax payment is to Routt County (about \$57 -- or about 16% of the tax bill). The County levy is used to pay for various services, including: sheriff, road & bridge maintenance (including snow plowing), environmental health, building permitting and inspection, emergency, social services (for services required by the State of Colorado), clerk & recorder, coroner, and the County courts, among others. The remainder of an average tax bill went to the Oak Creek Fire Protection District (about \$19), and the Library, Cemetery, Colorado River, and Upper Yampa Districts (about \$11 combined).

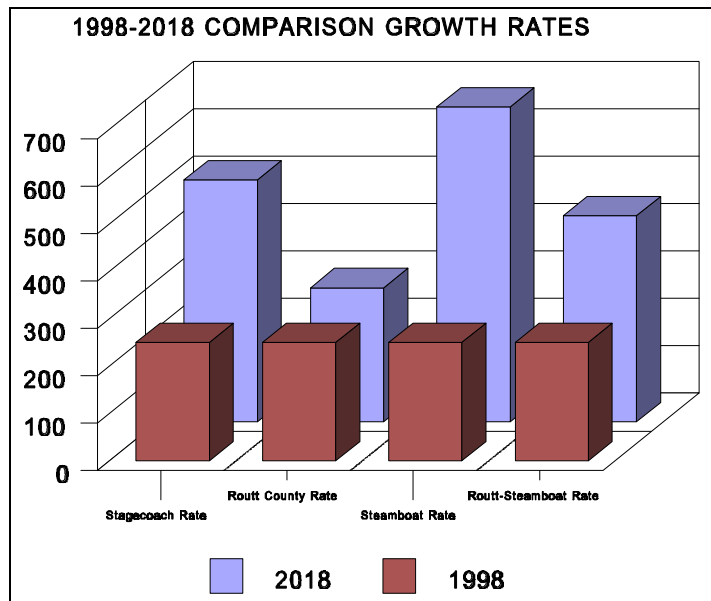
### 1.3 Issues to Be Resolved

#### 1.3.1 Lack of Direction

The historically slow pace of development in Stagecoach, and the lack of infrastructure and amenities that were originally planned by Woodmoor, have led to differing opinions about the future of the area. Some believe that the area should be built out as originally planned by Woodmoor 25 years ago. Others enjoy the slow pace of change and lack of neighbors and traffic, and believe that should continue. Still others believe that Stagecoach could become a recreation-based community with a different character and different attractions than those shown in the Woodmoor plan. A fourth group believes that the County should permit development as currently zoned and platted, without requiring the utilities and roads originally planned to support those densities of development. Finally, some believe that the development should grow to utilize the existing utility capacity efficiently, but not further.



One significant goal of this Plan is to clarify a future direction for Stagecoach that is consistent with the goals articulated in the Routt County Master Plan. That Master Plan calls for directing new growth into high quality, balanced “growth centers” and to keep the remaining portions of Routt County rural. Within South Routt County, Stagecoach is the designated growth center, and areas around it are intended to remain rural. If future growth cannot be accommodated in Stagecoach, that demand will tend to produce more dispersed and less organized development that will erode the rural character of the county. That would be inconsistent with the Master Plan and detrimental to South Routt County in general. A clearer direction of the role of Stagecoach in Routt County will help clarify and adjust expectations, and will allow investments by both the public and private sector to be made with more certainty.



#### 1.3.2 Lack of Market Activity

For the significant percentage of Stagecoach property owners who are willing (or anxious) to sell their lots, the low level of current sales activity is a cause for concern. While a market for larger consolidated lots exists, the market for smaller lots without utilities or septic capabilities is still very

weak. One measure of the slow pace of growth is to compare how much Stagecoach would grow during the next 20 years if it grew (a) at its historic level since 1990 (which included several good years), (b) at the rate that all of unincorporated Routt County grew since 1990, (c) at the rate Steamboat Springs grew since 1990, or (d) at the rate unincorporated Routt County and Steamboat Springs grew since 1990. The above table shows that comparison, and suggests that even if Stagecoach grew at the rate Steamboat Springs has grown during the past eight years, it would have only 650 units by the year 2018. If it grew at twice the rate Steamboat Springs has grown, it would still have less than 2000 units by the year 2018.

Since there are about 1,500 lot owners in Stagecoach (plus several landowners who would like to build new multi-family units on zoned and platted land), this growth rate would result in Stagecoach being between 25% and 50% built out after 20 more years. Another significant goal of this Plan is to clarify what amenities or policies could encourage higher levels of market activity without reducing quality levels or inspiring growth in Routt County as a whole.

### 1.3.3 Limited Options for Landowners

For those who want to build a home in Stagecoach (or might want to under the right conditions), the current situation holds few options to do so. If they can consolidate a larger lot of at least 5 acres, they can pay for access roads, electric connections (or solar power), well and septic improvements, and can build a home. If they cannot afford to do that, they can try to informally organize their neighbors to share access road and electric costs, or can wait until the economics of development improve. If their lots are smaller than 5 acres, they have basically the same options, except that they can either install a vault and pump it regularly (which is expensive), or try to get their neighbors to split the cost of sewer and water line extensions in their area (which is often very expensive). If they cannot afford any of these options, they can always change their minds about building and sell their lots to neighbor's who want to assemble 5 acres. Except for the availability of vaults and the extension of the Yampa Valley Electric Association power line, these options have changed very little over the past 20 years. A third goal of this Plan is to increase the number of options available to landowners.

### 1.3.4 The Need for Cooperation

In any development as large and complicated as Stagecoach, the cooperation of many parties is needed to create success. In this case, neither the Routt County government, nor the Morrison Creek District, nor the Stagecoach Property Owners Association created the challenges identified above, and none of those organizations is legally responsible to solve them. However, the cooperation of all three groups is necessary to clarify the vision for Stagecoach, encourage appropriate market activity, and create more options for the property owners. It will also take the cooperation of South Routt County Schools, Stagecoach State Park, the Oak Creek Fire Protection District, and many other service providers to help Stagecoach become a center to accommodate some of the growth that will inevitably come to South Routt County in a way that can make all the residents of the County proud. A fourth goal of this Plan is to identify specific ways for each of these entities to cooperate more closely than they have in the past.

### 1.3.5 Protection of Private Property Rights

The rights of owners of real property are protected by both the federal and state constitutions, and they need to be protected in the planning process. In addition, the nature of those protections needs to be clearly understood. Under both Colorado and federal law, land owners are entitled to put their properties to some reasonable economic use, and not to have the rules of development changed unless the County affords them both procedural and substantive due process. On the other hand, neither constitutional nor statutory laws guarantee (a) that land owners can do whatever they want with their properties, or (b) that land owners must be allowed to develop if adequate public facilities are not in place, or (c) that the County will not change the rules of development over time, or (d) that the County provide subsidies to rescue failed developments or to encourage future development. A final goal of this Plan is to ensure that both the clarified vision for Stagecoach and the means used to achieve it will respect those private property rights protected by state and federal law.

#### 1.4 Community Planning Process

To address these issues, a five step community planning process was used. **First**, the Consultants reviewed all the available studies and information about Stagecoach, visited Stagecoach, and spoke with members of the Planning Commission, the Stagecoach Steering Committee, the District, SPOA, and major Stagecoach landowners, and neighboring landowners to discuss their views for the future of Stagecoach and their goals for the planning process. **Second**, residents, property owners, and interested parties were invited to a public meeting where the Consultants presented six hypothetical design directions to residents, property owners, and interested parties. Those present chose to focus discussion on a Large Town Center concept, a Recreation concept, and a Nature/Hidden Development concept ideas for further development. **Third**, those three concepts were refined into a Preferred Land Use Alternative, and that Land Use Alternative was further refined during a series of three more public meetings. The **fourth** step was to prepare draft implementation strategies to help Stagecoach develop over time in accordance with the Preferred Land Use Alternative. **Finally**, the consultants compiled this document. Throughout this process, staff notified all known Stagecoach property owners and residents on several occasions about the planning process and the options being discussed. In addition, meetings with major landowners, District board members, and SPOA representatives were held throughout the process.

2. EXISTING CONDITIONS

This section of the Plan includes a review of detailed information about the land and the development that has occurred to date.



2.1 Platted Lots and Tracts

Large portions of Stagecoach have been platted into lots for development, while others have not.

Existing patterns of lot division are important because the process of re-subdividing an area to reflect new patterns or lot sizes can be very expensive and time-consuming -- particularly if there are many landowners involved. Unfortunately, a large number of platted lots in Stagecoach are located in the South Area, and are relatively far from the utilities and amenities that may drive development in the near future. The major subdivisions and tracts within Stagecoach are listed below, and are shown on page 11.

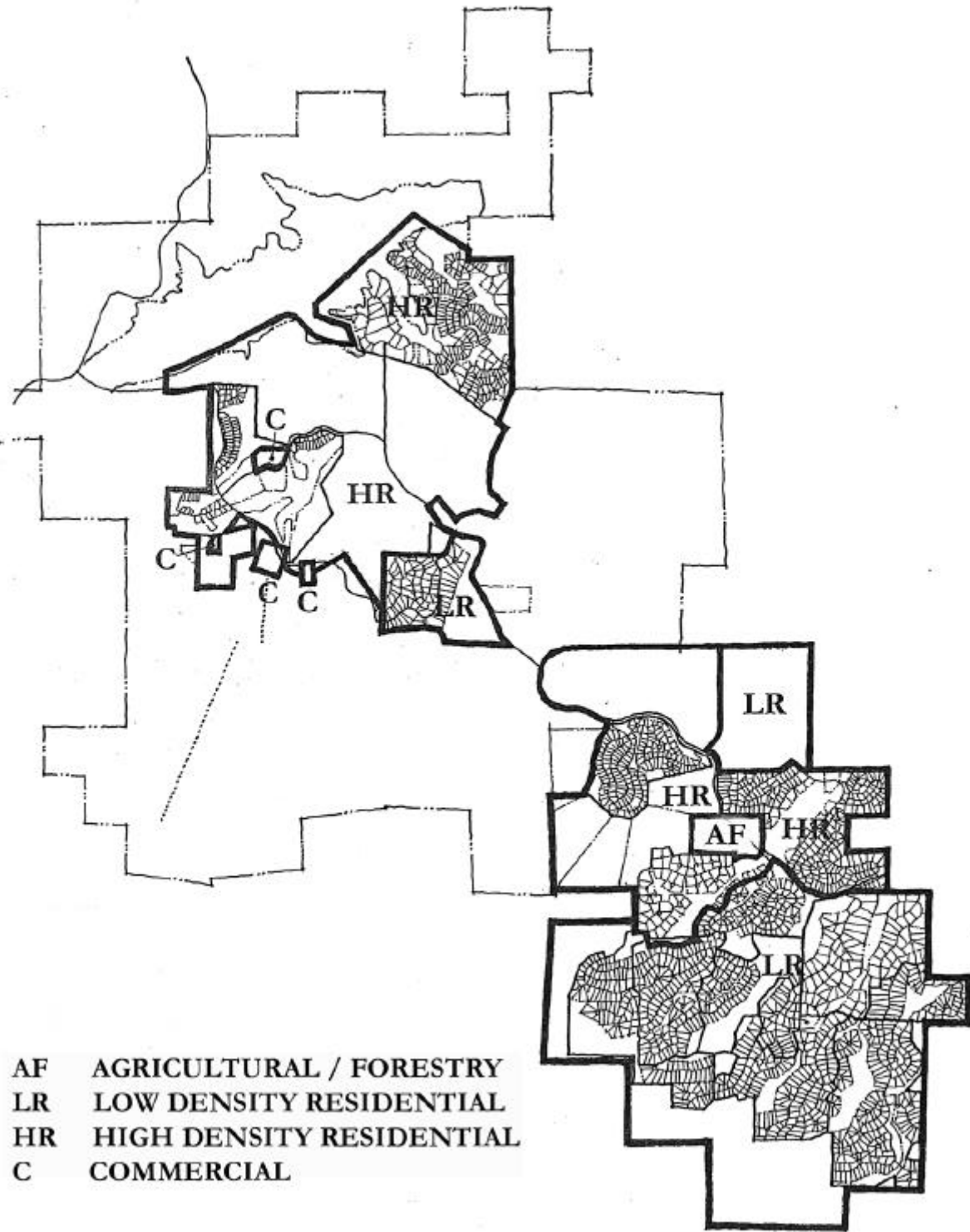
2.2 Maximum Zoned Densities

Most of the Stagecoach area has been zoned either “LDR” (Low Density Residential) or “HDR” (High Density Residential). LDR areas have a minimum lot size of 10,000 square feet per dwelling unit if served by central water and sewer, while HDR areas have a minimum lot size of 3,000 square feet per dwelling unit if served by central water and sewer. While many of the HDR areas are located in the northern portion of the site near amenities and utilities, a few are located in the southern portion of the site and farther away from these key development drivers. In addition, a few small areas in the northern portion of the site are zoned “C” or “C-1” for commercial use. The existing pattern of zoning does not consolidate residential density and commercial uses into a focused area that can serve as the “heart” of the community and can be efficiently served with utilities. In addition, the current zoning was explicitly designed to be served by a central water and sewer system (and approvals were conditioned on the existence of such a system), and that has not occurred in much of the area. Although it is important to recognize the expectations of all those who bought lots in Stagecoach, the pattern of existing zoning is not a rigid planning constraint, since zoning can be changed by action of the Board of County Commissioners to reflect new planning directions as long as constitutional rights are protected and statutory procedures are followed. The existing pattern of zoning is shown on page 13.

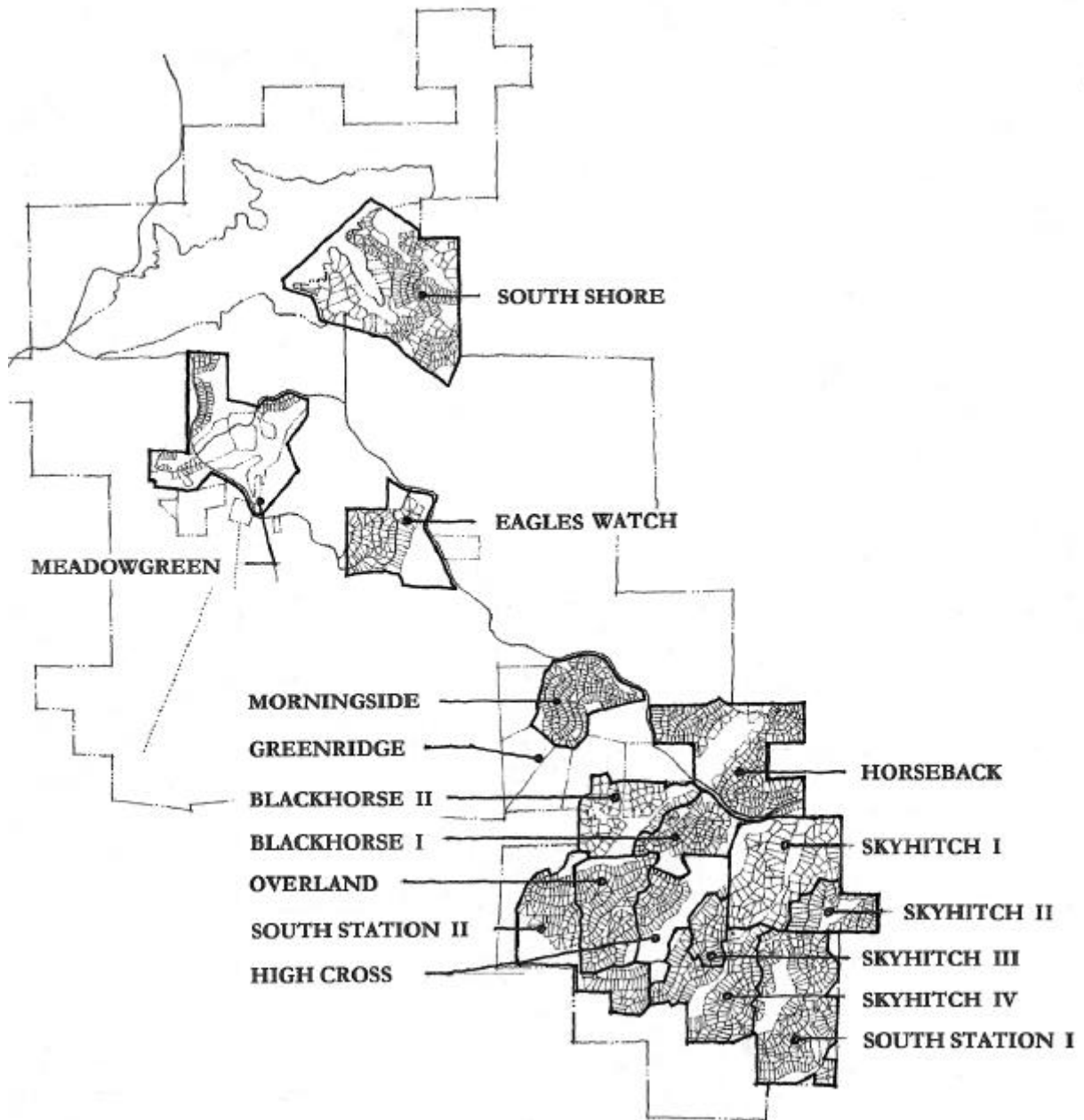
<b>Subdivisions and Tracts</b> (“Tracts” are areas that have not received or recorded final subdivision approvals.)	
North Area	South Area
Meadowgreen I, II, III	Morningside

<b>Subdivisions and Tracts</b> (“Tracts” are areas that have not received or recorded final subdivision approvals.)	
Townhouses (Projects I & II, Eagles Nest, Wagon Wheel)	Greenridge Tracts
Ski Area	Horseback
MountainAir Tract (Golf Course)	Blackhorse I
Wittemyer Tracts	Blackhorse II
AKS Tract	High Cross
Rea Tract	Skyhitch I
Wood Tract	Skyhitch II
South Shore	Skyhitch III
Colo Ute Tract	Skyhitch IV
Stetson Tract	South Station I
Roach Tract	South Station II
Henderson Tract	Overland
Lynx Basin Tract	Chaparral Tract
Mobley Tract	Water Tank Tract
Tornare Tract	
Cook Tract	
Lichnovsky Tract	
Eagleswatch	
3 Adams Tracts	
Stage Stop Tract: NOTE: This tract was not included in the original Stagecoach development, but is adjacent to Stagecoach and requested to be included in this Plan	

# ZONING MAP



Source: Routt County Planning



**LOT AND TRACT MAP**



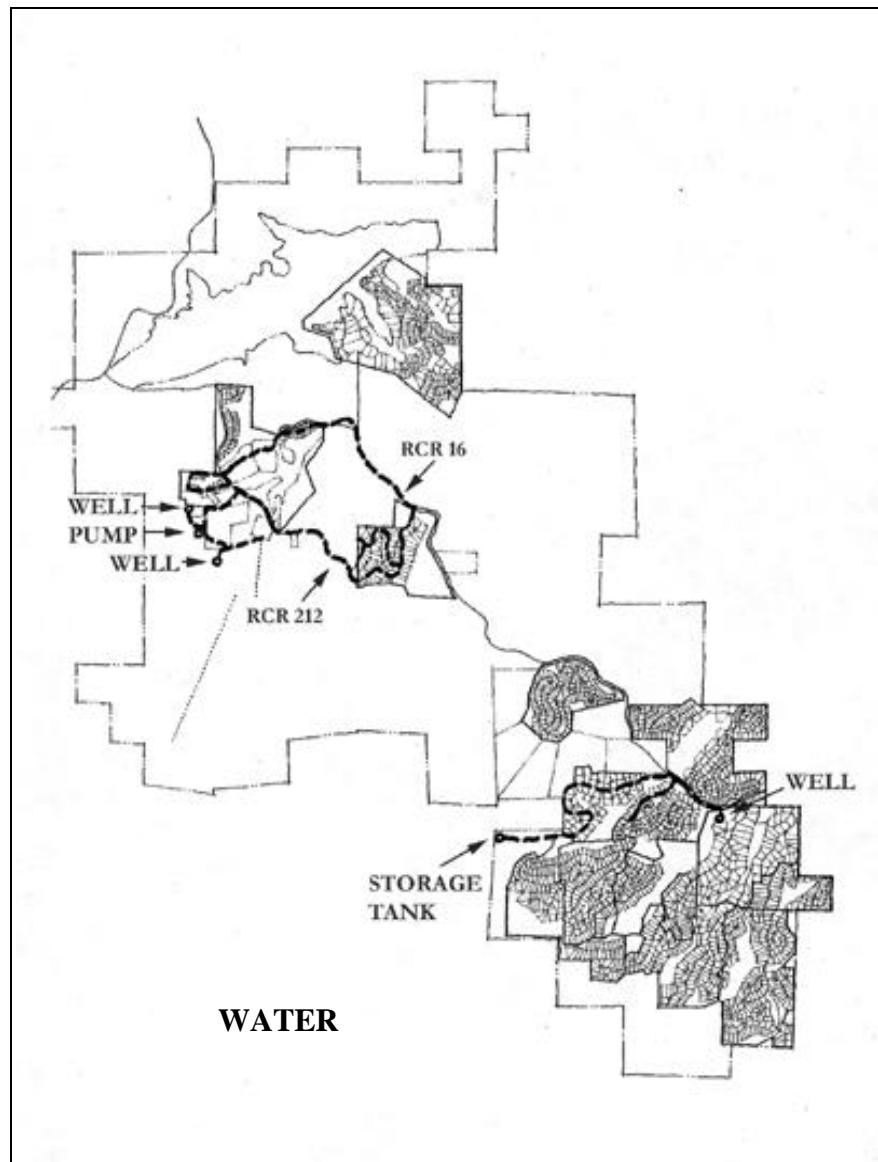
### 2.3 Water System

The original developers of Stagecoach and the Morrison Creek District have acquired water rights totaling about 5.1 cfs (more than three times as much water as the area is currently using) plus additional surface water rights from Stagecoach Reservoir.

A 1995 engineering report on the Morrison Creek Water and Sanitation District facilities prepared by Civil Design Consultants reviewed the adequacy of the District's water facilities to serve future growth. Since that time, some of the recommendations in the report have been implemented and an additional well has been added to the system. At this point, the District has a total of nine water wells with a pumping capacity of 1.22-1.56 cfs. Only four of those wells (numbers 1, 2, 8, and 9) are currently being used. Because of limits on electric power, the available pumping capacity of the active wells in the north area (wells 2 & 8 & 9) has been limited to about 100-110 gallons per minute.

The extension of the YVEA electric line has made three-phase power and more powerful pumps possible, and the available pumping capacity may be increased by as much as 50%. Although the 1995 report concluded that (based on conservative engineering standards) the Morrison Creek water system only had a reserve capacity for 21 additional taps, the increase in pumping capacity may increase this number to a reserve of approximately 80 additional taps.

In addition to the capacity of the existing wells and pumps, the pattern of existing water distribution lines acts as a very significant restriction on development. At this point, the "lower water system", which serves the North Area, includes a looped system of lines following Routt County Roads 16 and 212. The "upper system"



serves the Black Horse II area in the South Area of the development and passes by the Horseback and Morningside subdivisions. Extensions of the upper system to additional areas far from Routt County Road 16 would require substantial investments in new distribution lines. As part of this planning effort, Civil Design Consultants updated its earlier work, and calculated that the cost of extending water lines to those subdivisions that do not now have them would cost between \$4,300 and \$10,300 per lot. The cost calculations are attached as an appendix to this Plan. In addition, the Morrison Creek District currently charges \$750 for a single family tap connection to its water system.

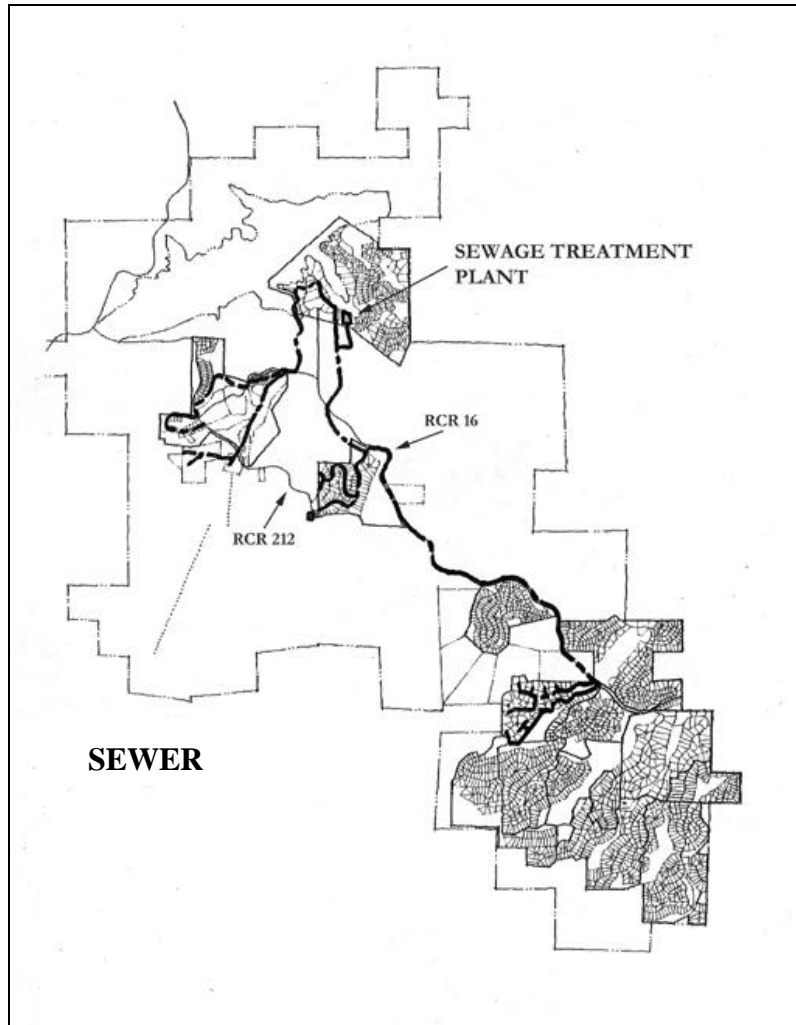
Owners of land far from the District's lines can drill individual wells. The cost of those wells can run \$18 to \$20 per foot for depths between 150 and 250 feet, and related lines and pumps can bring the total costs to between \$7,000 and \$10,000 per well.

#### 2.4 Sewer Lines and Treatment Capacity

The 1995 CDC Engineering Report on the Morrison Creek District also summarized the state of the District's sewer system. At this point, the system serves approximately 235 dwelling units, which is far below its design capacity. The system currently has a 500,000 gallons per day hydraulic capacity.

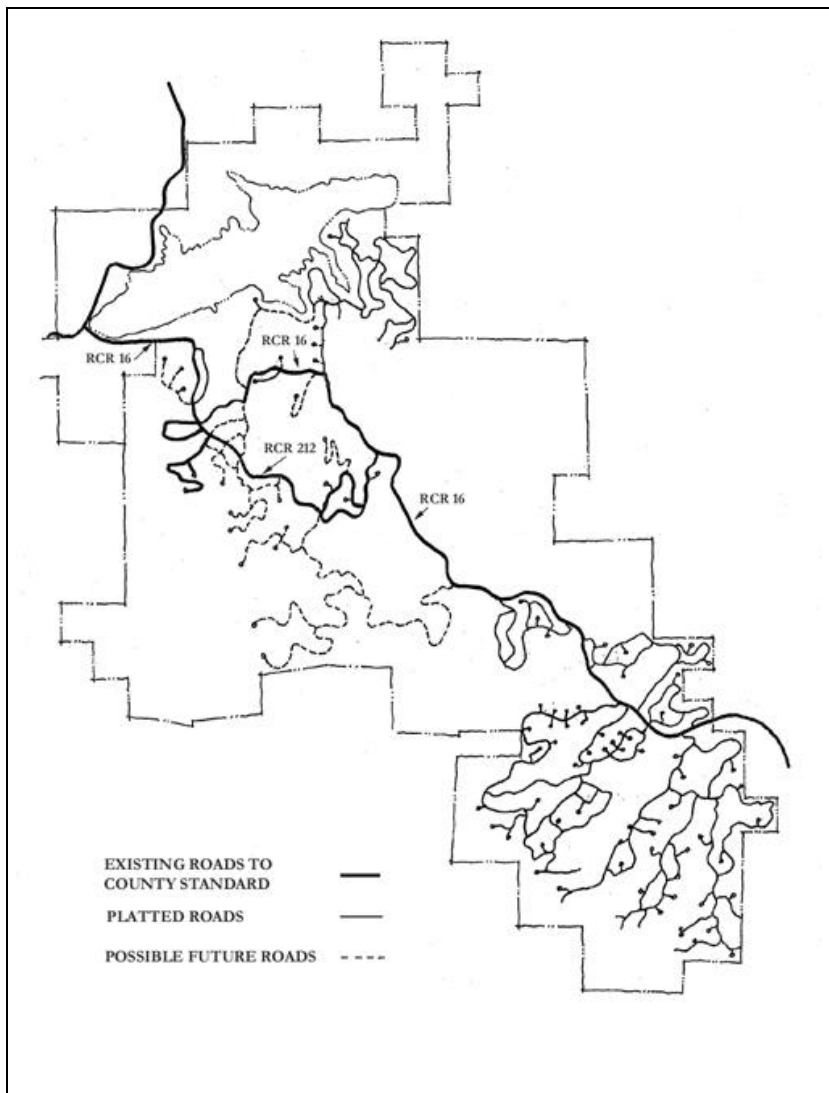
The District claims that it has an excess capacity of about 1,750 taps, although that number could change if treatment standards change in the future. Again, the 1995 capacity calculations were based on conservative engineering standards, and the seasonal nature of Stagecoach residency and possible lower-than-average household sizes may mean that the system could actually serve more new homes without substantial additional investment.

Just as for the water system, the current pattern of sanitary sewer trunk lines affects the cost of serving different portions of the Stagecoach area. One stem of the system currently extends all the way from the treatment plant near Stagecoach Lake up Routt County Road 16 as far as the Black Horse II subdivision. Extension of the trunk lines to additional portions of southern Stagecoach may be



expensive -- particularly for areas that do not drain efficiently into the County Road 16 trunk line. Additional trunk lines extend to serve those portions of northern Stagecoach listed in the table below. As a result of an update of their 1995 work, Civil Design Consultants now estimates that the cost of extending sewer lines to those subdivisions that do not have them would cost between \$4,600 and \$10,500 per platted lot. If systems are installed in smaller increments -- for less than an entire subdivision, for example -- the per lot costs would probably be higher. Their cost calculations are attached as an appendix to this Plan. Just as for water, the Morrison Creek District currently charges \$750 for a single family tap connection to its wastewater system.

Owners of lots located far from the trunk lines have more limited options than those who are close to those lines. The Routt County Commissioners have recently decided not to pursue a reduction in the minimum size for lots served with septic systems. At the present time, the only alternative to individual septic systems is a non-discharge system -- i.e., a "vault" that collects waste and is pumped out periodically. The cost of installing a vault can be up to \$5,000, the cost of required pumping can run up to \$300 per month, and the costs to bring access roads up to required standards can also be expensive. Only ten vaults have been installed to date, and both the County and the District have some concerns about their performance. Among other things, there are concerns that the vault owners may not be having them pumped frequently enough, that the availability of vaults undermines the quality of development, and that it detracts from the efficient functioning of the District's treatment plant. Under state health regulations, vaults are intended to be used as a temporary or seasonal use solution, and not as a permanent or year-round sewage system.



## 2.5 Road Capacity and Status

In 1995, DMJM Engineers were retained by Routt County and interested landowners to prepare the *Stagecoach Area Transportation Plan*, and to quantify what types of improvements might be needed to be made to the road system in the future. Although the results of this study have been controversial and its accuracy has been questioned, it remains the most current transportation study of the area. The chief concern has been that the DMJM plan appears to overstate how quickly the roads will become overused. To address this concern, the implementation section of this Plan calls for new traffic counts and a re-evaluation of the DMJM projections. This Plan has avoided referring to DMJM projections on how fast the roads will fill up, but has drawn on the DMJM work regarding the types of road improvements that would be needed if and when road capacities are reached.



The DMJM plan found that housing units in Stagecoach were generating approximately one-half as many trips as would have been anticipated based on the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Trip Generation book. It attributed the lower traffic generation rates to the seasonal nature of some of the housing and to residents' consolidation of work, shopping, and recreation trips that would have been taken separately if Steamboat Springs was closer. Although in the short run this may allow roads in Stagecoach to accommodate traffic from more residential units, the traffic generation rates will probably rise as more year round residents locate in the area, and as more retail and commercial uses are located in either Oak Creek or Stagecoach.

The DMJM plan also calculated the potential traffic impacts of a Stagecoach ski area with approximately 50,000 skier days, and of continued growth in traffic to and from Stagecoach State Park. It found that ski-related traffic during the winter months and state park-related traffic during the summer months would make up only about 5% of the total traffic generation from Stagecoach. The vast majority of traffic generated by the future Stagecoach development will be caused by residential construction. The inclusion or exclusion of the recreational operations will probably not affect the road needs of Stagecoach significantly.

In addition, the DMJM plan identified four major road improvements to Routt County Roads 14, 16, and 212 that will be need to accommodate various levels of growth in Stagecoach over time. One important conclusion was that the roadway capacity of Stagecoach is limited just as significantly by capacity constraints on Routt County Road 14 (which is outside the boundaries of both the South and North Areas) as by constraints on the County roads within the Stagecoach area itself. In addition, because of the remoteness of the Stagecoach site and its strong dependence on Steamboat Springs and Oak Creek for jobs and services, it is unlikely that bus-type transit services would be effective in removing these major roadway constraints. Past efforts to create a significant transit system have failed in part because of the windy and difficult winter driving conditions on Routt County Road 14 and Colorado highway 131.

The DMJM plan also noted that in order to avoid unacceptable levels of service in Stagecoach under a “medium growth” scenario, the first three road improvements needed would be those summarized below.

ROADWAY SEGMENT	IMPROVE TO	COST
RCR 14 North to 131	Type 1 Collector/Arterial	\$ 4,550,000
RCR 16 From RCR 212 to 18A	Type 1 Collector	\$ 776,000
RCR 18A North of RCR 16	Type 1 Collector	\$ 1,304,000
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$ 6,630,000</b>

If growth continued, five additional road segments would have to be improved, and Routt County Road 14 would have to be widened again, at an even higher cost.

If the traffic capacities of these roads are exceeded, the large majority of potential future costs for road improvements will need to be spent on Routt County Roads 14 and 16. Because these potential costs are so large, and because the transportation system will not function well unless investments in County Road 14 occur to support improvements to County Roads 16, 212, and 18A, the future vision for Stagecoach should consider the potential capacity of the system as a whole, and should not make assumptions that Routt County Roads 14 or 16 will become four lane roads.

As noted earlier, however, even if Stagecoach were to grow at the same rate as Steamboat Springs has grown for the past eight years, it would only have a total of 650 units by the year 2018. If it grew at twice the rate Steamboat Springs has grown, it would still have less than 2,000 units at the end of that time. At this point, the existing two lane designs of Routt County Roads 14 and 16 could probably accommodate those levels of traffic without requiring the expansion of either Routt County Road 14 or 16 to four lanes. As development in



Stagecoach proceeds, however, it will be important to monitor what types of units are built and how traffic levels change over time, so that major investments in Routt County Roads 14 and 16 can continue to be avoided. As an alternative, if the Stagecoach community supports growth that would lead to traffic congestion problems and a need to expand County Road 16, a discussion of how the costs of necessary expansions can be paid for by Stagecoach residents may be necessary.

In addition to the costs of major circulation systems, development in Stagecoach will require investments in those local roads that bring residents from the County roads to their homes. As part of this planning effort, Civil Design Consultants calculated the costs of such roads for each subdivision, and found that they range from a low of \$800 per lot to a high of about \$6,400 per lot,

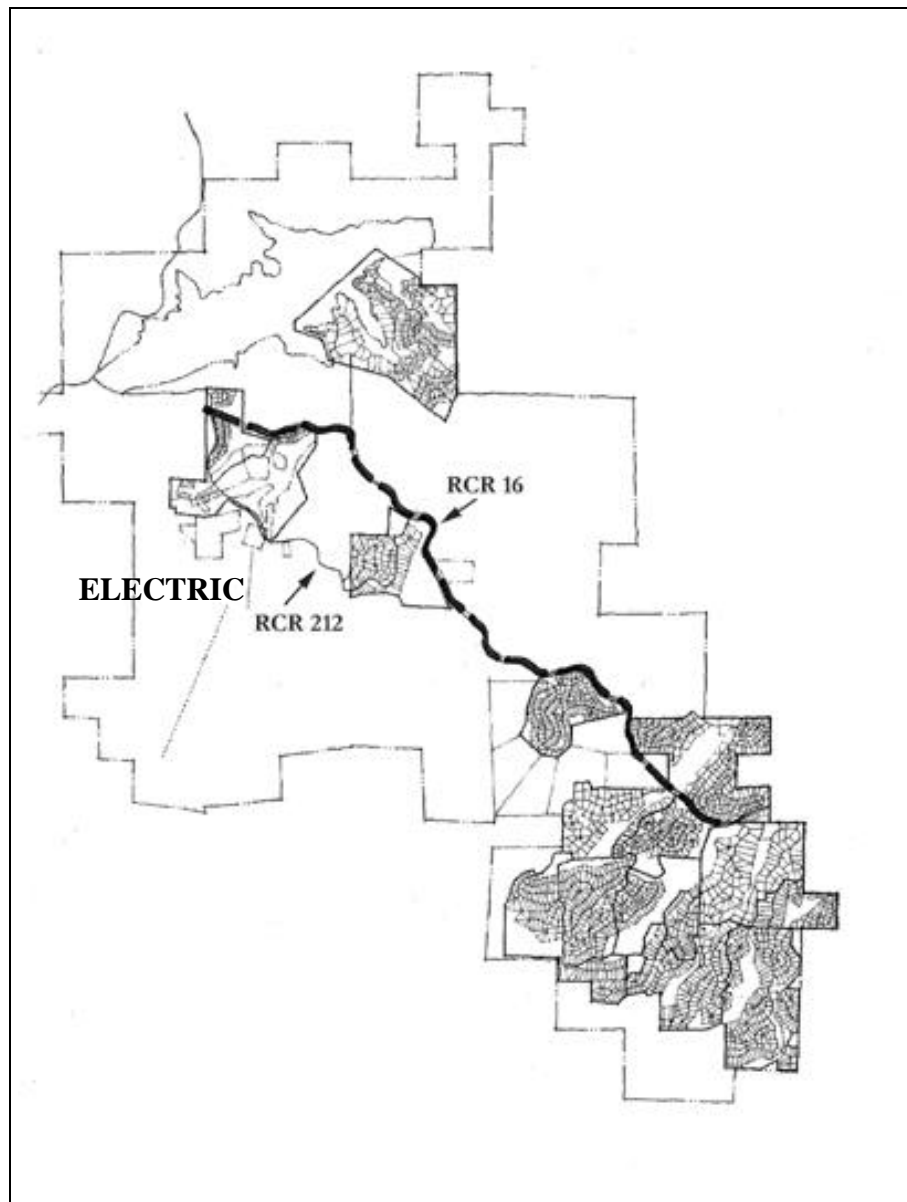
depending on the distance between the subdivision and the major road system. Their cost calculations are attached as an appendix to this Plan.

## 2.6 Electric and Telephone Service Status

During much of its existence, Stagecoach has suffered from limited electric capacity to serve new construction. In 1998, that situation changed, due to the efforts of the SPOA and the Yampa Valley Electric Association. A new 12.5 KV feeder line now crosses the North Area meadow near the reservoir and generally follows the alignment of Routt County Road 16 to a point near the entrance to the Sky Hitch III subdivision. It now appears that the capacity in that line should be adequate to serve approximately 1,400 additional dwelling units.

In spite of this important addition to Stagecoach, however, the cost of connecting individual buildings to the feeder line may still be substantial. In 1998, SPOA estimated those costs at between \$890 and \$ 980 per lot (plus \$800 to \$1,250 for a shared transformer) based on hypothetical electric distribution systems in the Sky Hitch and Black Horse areas. Residents in those areas might expect to experience hookup costs of between about \$1,700 and \$2,200 per home. Lot owners located further from the feeder line along RCR 16 can expect to pay more.

Telephone connections will also be costly. As part of this planning process, CDC estimate that the costs of connecting existing lots to both electric and telephone lines could fall between \$3,000 to



\$4,000 per platted lot. Their cost calculations are attached as an appendix to this Plan.

## 2.7 Emergency Services

Emergency services are currently provided to the Stagecoach area by Oak Creek Fire Protection District, from a location about six miles away. As the Stagecoach area continues to grow, and there are more residents, homes, and buildings to protect, the demands for emergency services will increase substantially. It may not be appropriate to respond from about six miles away. To meet those needs, the Fire District would like to obtain a site to maintain an emergency vehicle in Stagecoach. Such a facility would be most appropriately located near the Town Center (where it could access the higher density developments in the North Area and still have relatively direct road access to homes in the South Area. A fire facility would also be consistent with the other public uses anticipated in the Town Center area.

Immediate medical services are currently provided by the Steamboat Medical Group's Oak Creek Clinic, as well as other clinics in Steamboat Springs. As the population of Stagecoach grows, there may be adequate demand to support a small clinic in Stagecoach. That facility would also be appropriate for the Town Center area. The nearest hospital is Routt Memorial Hospital in Steamboat Springs. Under the growth assumptions in this Plan, it is unlikely that there would be demand for a hospital in Stagecoach during the 20-year planning horizon.

## 2.8 Educational Facilities

Public schools are currently provided to the Stagecoach area by the South Routt County School District (RE3). The design capacities and current enrollment of the schools that serve Stagecoach are shown below:

School	Design Capacity	1998 Enrollment	Percentage Occupancy
South Routt Elementary School	250	215	86%
SoRoCo Middle School	125	106	85%
SoRoCo High School	150	138	92%

Based on the 2,300 dwelling unit planning assumption used in this Plan, and in spite of the fact that many of the dwelling units may be for seasonal or retirement use, the Stagecoach area might eventually generate between 400 and 700 elementary school children during the 20 year planning horizon. This number would be enough to justify the construction of either a major addition to the existing elementary school or a new elementary school. If a new school is constructed, the most appropriate location would be at the edge of the Town Center area with good access to Routt County Roads 16 and 212. A school location near the Town Center will enable Stagecoach residents to combine school trips with other shopping trips and errands, while keeping the school site near the periphery will avoid conflicts between school children and adults using the Town Center.

The dedication or purchase of an appropriate site for the elementary school should be negotiated with the South Routt County School District, and should take into account the fact that Stagecoach property owners have paid significant amounts of taxes to the District for over 20 years while generating few demands on the school system.

Based on the same assumptions, Stagecoach probably will not generate the student demand for a middle or high school of its own during the 20 year planning period. On the other hand, given the high occupancy rates in the current middle and high schools, an expansion to those existing school facilities will probably be required to accommodate children from Stagecoach.

In addition, Colorado Northwest Community College provides higher educational opportunities to the Stagecoach area. It is unlikely that Stagecoach will generate the demand for a separate higher education facility.

## 2.9 Alternative Energy Options

Although YVEA has recently expanded its electric service capacity through Stagecoach, not all Stagecoach homes are intending to take advantage of that service. Some current Stagecoach residents have installed active solar devices to power their homes, and at least one unit is using a wind generator on a backup basis. Because of Colorado's sunny climate and the deregulation of power suppliers, it is likely that these and other types of alternative energy sources (such as active solar designs or earth sheltered construction) probably will be incorporated into additional Stagecoach homes in the future.

## 2.10 Wildlife Habitat

Throughout Colorado, the vast majority of wildlife species are found in riparian stream corridors. Not only do many small species use the stream corridors as sources of food, shelter, and water, but many larger species such as deer and elk use them as cover and as transportation corridors between other habitat areas. In general, the existing pattern of lots and parcels in Stagecoach avoids development in or near riparian corridors. This practice should be continued as building locations are selected on already-platted lots or newly-consolidated lots, and as new development areas are designed through the relocation of currently-platted lots to the town center/ski base area and the golf course area.

The Stagecoach area does not currently contain migration or calving areas for larger grassland species such as elk. Those areas do exist further up Lynx Pass, and portions of the South Area may be used by these species on occasion. The consolidation of smaller lots into 5 acre lots in the South Area should reduce the number of homes in the area and encourage the continued occasional use of the area.

## 2.11 Wildfire

Because of the relatively high precipitation in the Stagecoach area, the State of Colorado does not list the Stagecoach area as an area of high wildlife danger. Nevertheless, wildfires do occur regularly along the boundaries between wild lands and developed lands. The risk of damage or loss from



Wildfires should be significantly reduced by following the building location guidelines and vegetation management guidelines for “Defensible Space” published by the Colorado State Forest Service.

## 2.12 Air Quality

The Stagecoach area is not included in the Steamboat Spring airshed, and is not currently in violation of any federal air quality standards. The Routt County Solid Fuel Device Resolution, adopted in 1991, currently does not cover Stagecoach. However, in 1996 the City/County Air Quality Committee recommended that Routt County consider a county-wide wood smoke ordinance based on population density, so this situation may change in the future. In sparsely populated areas such as Stagecoach, the most significant threat to air quality generally comes from particulate matter (i.e. dust from dirt roads) rather than vehicle emissions, but that balance generally shifts as roads are paved and the population grows. Since the relatively high snowfall in the South Area and further up Lynx Pass tends to suppress dust during much of the year, particulate matter is not expected to exceed federal thresholds during the 20-year planning horizon.

## 2.13 Water Quality

At the present time, the Morrison Creek District’s sewage treatment facility is operating within applicable standards for water discharge into Stagecoach Reservoir, and there are no other known violations of water quality standards. As areas develop, however, the risk of water pollution generally increases - particularly as rain carries automotive byproducts (oil, gas, and rubber) from roads into streams, and as homeowners or recreational facility owners use fertilizers and other chemicals on their properties. Runoff from these sources into the Stagecoach streams and reservoir can be reduced by requiring the use of grass-lined swales between paved areas and nearby streams, by providing covered areas for the storage of ski area, golf course, and marina maintenance equipment and vehicles, and by using development agreements to limit the use of fertilizers.

## 2.14 Incorporation or Expanded District Service

With only 250 dwelling units currently in place at Stagecoach, and with an active Metropolitan District in place to provide water and sewer services, it would almost certainly not be cost-effective for Stagecoach to incorporate as a Colorado town at the present time. Incorporation always carries with it both advantages and disadvantages. On the positive side, it allows a community to take over the provision of many services and facilities, and to adopt land use controls and police regulations different than the County. On the negative side, it also carries with it the practical duty to provide certain services (such as zoning, animal control, budgeting, and reporting) and relieves the County government of the duty to provide those services.

In the case of Stagecoach, incorporation would leave the Morrison Creek District and the South Routt County School District in place (along with their tax levies) as providers of water, sewer, and school services. It would also leave the Routt County portion of the property tax levy in place. The cost of providing additional services would therefore be an additional cost to the new town’s taxpayers. While the new town would have the power to collect sales taxes, those revenues would probably be small (in light of the low sales that the current population would generate), and the tax itself would be subject to a vote of the people.

For all of these reasons, in the short run the residents of Stagecoach would be unlikely to find incorporation to be a cost-effective way to provide public services. As Stagecoach grows, however, or as the retail sales base grows, it should continue to review both the new powers that it would gain through incorporation and the cost-effectiveness of providing those services required of a Colorado town. In addition, the residents of Stagecoach and the Board of the Morrison Creek District should explore whether it would be cost effective and practical for the District to assume responsibility for additional service and facilities (following a vote of the people) as an alternative to incorporation.

### 3. PLANNING OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

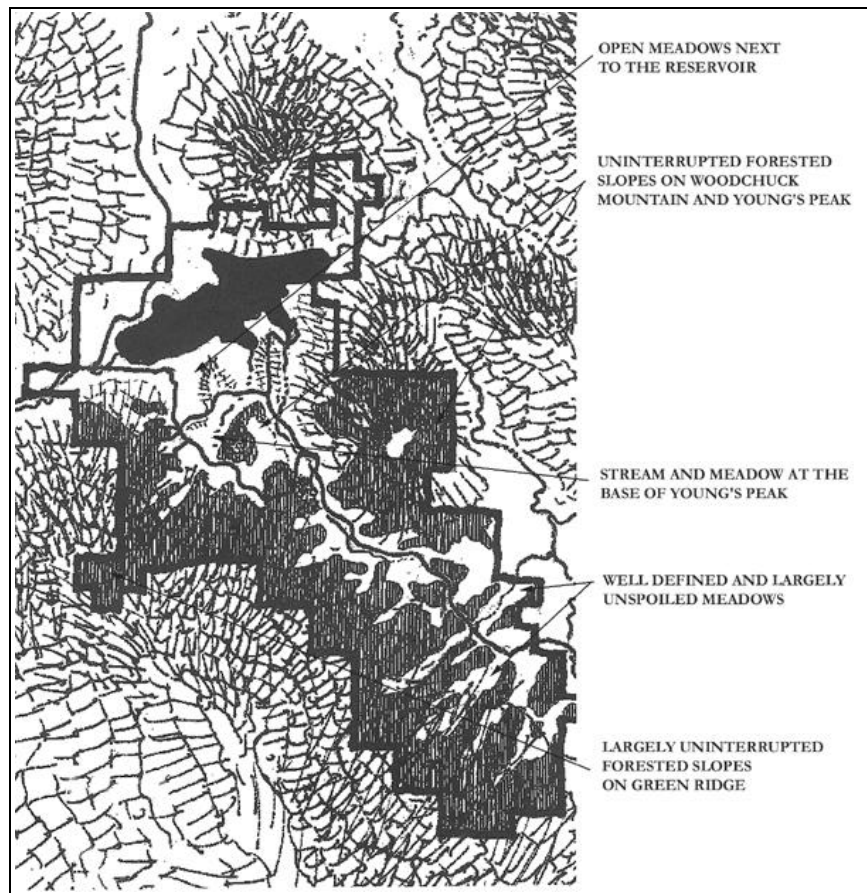
The future vision for Stagecoach must consider not only the information presented in part II, but an understanding of the less quantifiable aspects of Stagecoach that may create important opportunities and constraints to future development.

#### 3.1 Planning Opportunities

Fortunately, the Stagecoach area has several important advantages that make future development likely. While some of these opportunities arise from the spectacular physical setting and character of the land, others (such as the existence of large unplatted tracts of land) arise as a by-product of the troubled development history of the area. In crafting the future vision for this area, Stagecoach needs to take advantage of the opportunities listed below.

##### 3.1.1 Significant Amenities

The Stagecoach area is blessed with tremendous physical beauty, including the views over Stagecoach Reservoir, Woodchuck Mountain, Young's Peak, the relatively open valleys both in front of the lake and behind it, and the minor streams that run through the valley. The feeling of attractive isolation has been a factor in many residents' choice to move to the area -- and will continue to be in the future. In addition, Stagecoach Reservoir provides important opportunities for active and passive recreation. The development of the ski area promises to add a second important recreational amenity, and the potential for a golf course adds a third. Most importantly, the synergy of all three forms of recreation near one another could give the area an important advantage in attracting development.



### 3.1.2 Lack of Direct Competition

No other area in Routt County offers the combination of views, enclosure, significant natural features, and three different recreational opportunities with strong demographic draws. The recent amendments to the plans for development in Catamount may have the indirect affect of steering some resort and residential demand to the Stagecoach area. Stagecoach is also the only freestanding community designated in the Master Plan to accommodate future growth in Routt County, provided that it meets all the criteria for a balanced, free-standing community.

### 3.1.3 Morrison Creek Metropolitan Water and Sanitation District

The fact that the Morrison Creek district has been up and running for 25 years, that it knows the capacities of its utilities and has been taking steps to manage the system, and that it will soon emerge from bankruptcy, are all advantages enjoyed by the Stagecoach area. An existing, experienced provider of utilities is easier to work with than creating and financing a backbone utility system where none exists.

### 3.1.4 Stagecoach Property Owners Association

Similarly, SPOA has a longstanding track record as a clearinghouse for information about Stagecoach, a facilitator of joint decisions, a representative for residents' interests, and an active investor in the area. It is always easier to build on an existing neighborhood organization with established working relationships and a revenue base than to create one where none exists.

### 3.1.5 Unplatted Lands

Because significant tracts of land in key locations remain unplatted (particularly in the North Area) opportunities are open to explore different futures for those areas. Among other things, it preserves the opportunity to plan for ski-, marina-, and golf course-related developments, as well as a town center with supporting retail and commercial uses and job opportunities. The ability to negotiate with a single owner (rather than numerous fragmented owners) about large development areas is an added benefit.



### **3.1.6 Multiple-Lot Ownerships**

Although the ownerships of many areas of Stagecoach are fragmented, some investors have taken the opportunity to assemble groups of contiguous lots (or acquired groups of contiguous lots as a result of the Woodmoor bankruptcy). Examples are the large blocks of lots owned by a single owner in South Shore, Horseback, Black Horse II, and the Greenridge tracts, as well as the ski area tract and the North Area meadows. Contiguous ownerships make negotiations over the future of these areas easier, and may make it easier to re-direct development from areas where it is difficult and costly to serve to areas where it is easier to serve.

### **3.1.7 Potential for Lot Consolidations**

Since Stagecoach property owners have indicated that they do not intend to move to Routt County or build on their lots, it may be possible to plan for less development than was reflected on the Woodmoor plans. In addition, it opens up the possibility of encouraging sales of those lots to adjacent lot owners who may want larger lots (either for elbow room or to qualify for individual septic systems), or the transfer of density to areas where it can be served more efficiently

### **3.1.8 Available Utility and Road Capacity**

Finally, the ability of the existing utility and road systems to accommodate significant additional growth creates opportunities to use existing systems more efficiently, and to accommodate some of the growth that will inevitably come to Routt County at lower cost than if new systems had to be built. Although there are limits to the capacities of existing systems, the historically slow growth rates in Stagecoach suggest that the important limits may not be reached during the 20 year Plan horizon.

## **3.2 Planning Constraints**

In spite of all the planning opportunities presented by the Stagecoach area, there are several constraints that will limit future development options. Most of those constraints arise from the complicated financial history of the development and the related bankruptcies of both Woodmoor and the Morrison Creek District. Those constraints are outlined below.

### **3.2.1 Lot Ownership**

One significant planning constraint in the Stagecoach area is that the 1,938 platted lots and 19 major unplatted tracts of land are owned by over 1,400 individuals and organizations scattered throughout the world. Fragmented ownerships increase the time and expense of notifying landowners about costs of development and alternatives to development, and of negotiating towards lot consolidations and joint improvements.

### 3.2.2 Existing Patterns of Residential Construction

Obviously, where lots have already been developed with permanent structures and neighborhoods have developed, those patterns of development need to be respected. Plans for vacant and undeveloped areas need to fit in with significant already-developed areas such as Projects I and II, Meadowgreen, Wagon Wheel, Eagles Nest, and Eagleswatch.



### 3.2.3 Utility and Road Limitations

Although the improvements constructed over time by Woodmoor, the District, YVEA, and the County have excess capacity, those capacities are not unlimited. The following table summarizes when additional capacity may need to be constructed, and the approximate cost of the next improvement that might need to be made.

Type of Infrastructure	Additional Costs May Begin After	Approximate Costs of Capacity Expansion
<b>Major Roads</b> (Widening RCR14 and/or 16 to 4 lanes)	1,750 Additional Units (depending on type of development)	\$ 6,630,000
<b>Major Sewer Facilities</b> (Expansion of Treatment Plant)	1,750 Additional Taps	\$ 500,000
<b>Electricity</b> (Additional Line)	1,400 Additional Units	\$ 200,000
<b>Major Water Facilities</b> (Additional Wells)	150 Additional Taps	\$ 30,000

As this table shows, the potential costs of road capacity improvements overshadows the costs of incremental improvements of the other systems. It now seems reasonable to assume that Stagecoach could grow to a total of about 2,000 units before very substantial investments would be needed to made.

### 3.2.4 Financial Constraints and TABOR

Although the Morrison Creek District will be emerging from bankruptcy soon, and will have more freedom to adjust its rate and fee structures, it will still be subject to Colorado’s Taxpayer Bill of Rights (TABOR). TABOR limits the rate at which the District could increase revenue collections or tax rates, and requires a vote of all District property owners to raise taxes or to issue most types of debt. In addition, most forms of borrowing are also limited by the total assessed value of property in the district -- which is not very high. This combination of an election requirement and limited property values means that the District will probably not be in a position to borrow significant funds to expand its infrastructure systems in the near future (assuming that it wanted to).

Routt County is also subject to TABOR restrictions on revenue growth, new taxes, and the issuance of debt, except that in those cases a vote would be required of the entire county. So the County would also have a hard time adopting new forms of revenue or borrowing money to build infrastructure in Stagecoach (again, assuming that it wanted to). Since neither the District nor the County are a likely source of additional money for Stagecoach, the future vision should not assume that more money will be forthcoming from these sources to make major public improvements any time soon. However, smaller groups of land owners may be able to initiate Local Improvement Districts or Public Improvement Districts as outlined in the Implementation portion of this Plan.

### 3.2.5 Landowner Costs for Utility Extensions

As part of this planning effort, Civil Design Consultants estimated the total costs of extending water, sewer, roads, electricity, and telephone service to each subdivision that does not have them now. In doing so, it also considered that the SPOA has earmarked a portion of the dues from each subdivision for that area. In order to avoid overstating per lot development costs, CDC assumed that those monies could be used to reduce the total costs of infrastructure for the subdivision, and reduced its cost calculations accordingly. The cost calculations are attached as an appendix to this Plan, and are summarized below.



Subdivision	Utility & Road Extension Cost Per Platted Lot
Meadowgreen	\$ 18,990
South Shore	\$ 23,135
Morningside I	\$ 13,567
Horseback	\$ 17,289
Blackhorse I	\$ 21,616
Blackhorse II	\$ 11,003
Sky Hitch I	\$ 29,205
Sky Hitch II	\$ 24,579
Sky Hitch III	\$ 20,942
Sky Hitch IV	\$ 21,986
South Station I	\$ 19,441
South Station II	\$ 21,226
High Cross	\$ 16,406
Overland	\$ 24,338

These per lot costs will be beyond the means of many of the current Stagecoach property owners, and the future vision for the area should take into consideration that the ultimate size of the Stagecoach community may not include full buildout of some of these subdivisions as platted.

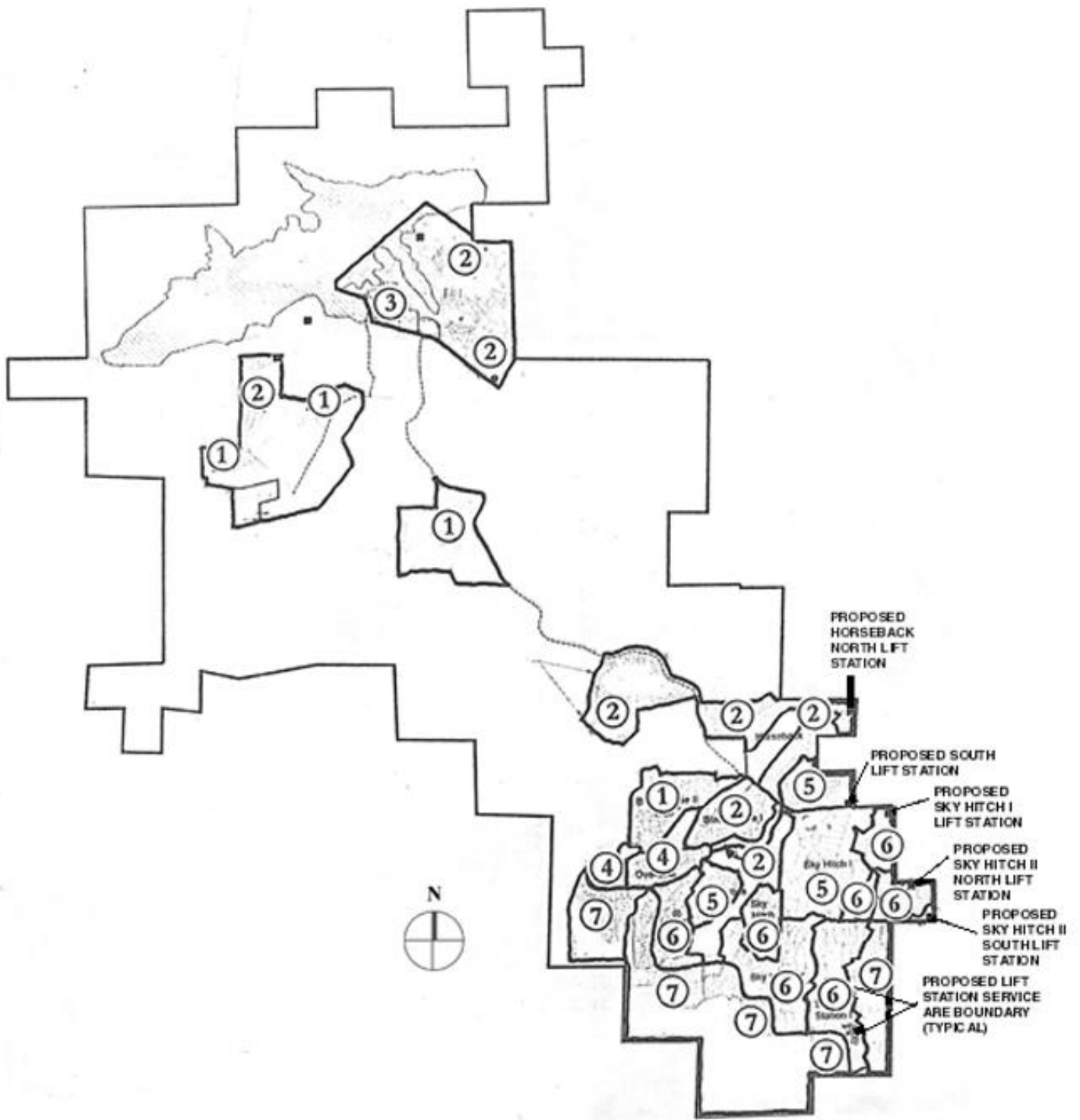
### 3.2.6 Utility Extension Sequencing

Even more important than the per lot extension costs listed above is the fact that many subdivisions can only be served efficiently if other areas between them and the trunk lines have already been served. While many portions of the North Area could receive efficient extensions of infrastructure today (because of the system of utility loops already in place), that is not true of the South Area. In the South Area, for example, the South Station I subdivision's per lot utility extension cost of \$19,441 only applies after utilities have been extended to Sky Hitch I and Sky Hitch II. If the property owners in South Station I want to pay for the extension of services before Sky Hitch I and II have been served, the per lot costs will be much higher than those shown in the table above. The need to extend utilities in efficient increments means that many South Area lots that are far from Routt County Road 16 can only be developed as platted if the property owner either (a) invests substantial money, or (b) waits a long time. Since Stagecoach may only grow by 600 to 2,000 units in the next 20 years, and since some of that growth will probably be accommodated in multi-family development, it is likely that some of the South Area lots will not be able to develop at the per lot costs in the table above within the next 20 years. As a practical matter, the owners of many of those lots may choose to sell rather than wait that long or invest the money required to serve their lots out of sequence.

The map on page 31 uses the following ranking system to summarize the infrastructure sequencing issues in Stagecoach.

<b>Ranking</b>	<b>Indicates</b>
1	Zoned and platted land with major infrastructure in place (future development fills in the gaps)
2	Zoned and platted land near major infrastructure, where demand is not tied to the construction of a recreational amenity (such as a ski area or golf course)
3	Land in the North Area that is not zoned or platted, or where demand is tied to the construction of a recreational amenity.
4	Land in the South Area that is zoned and platted, but not close to infrastructure
5	Land in the South Area that is zoned and platted, but cannot receive efficient extension of central utilities until lands with lower number rankings (i.e. 1 through 4) have utilities
6	Land in the South Area that is zoned and platted, but cannot receive efficient extension of central utilities until lands with lower number rankings (i.e. 1 through 5) have utilities
7	Land in the South Area that is zoned and platted, but cannot receive efficient extension of central utilities until lands with lower number rankings (i.e. 1 through 6) have utilities





## 4. STAGECOACH COMMUNITY PLAN

While planning opportunities and constraints can help define the boundaries for Stagecoach's future, they do not determine what kind of a community it should be. Because of the differing goals of the residents, non-resident owners, and investors in the Stagecoach area, it is important that this Plan clarify the vision for what kind of a place Stagecoach should be in the future.

### 4.1 Alternatives Land Uses Considered

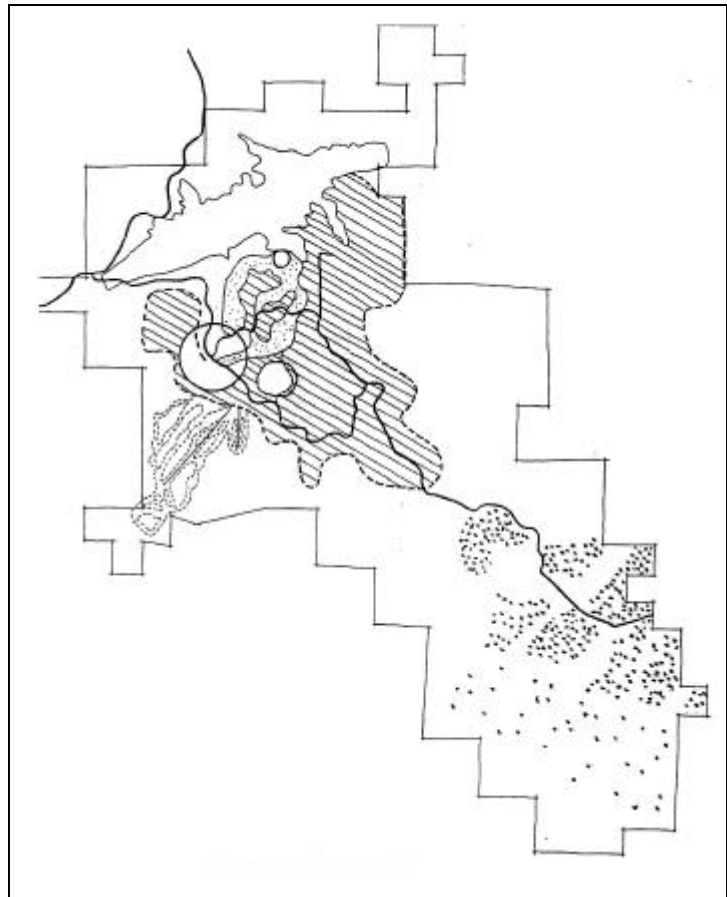
To clarify the vision, the planning process identified what draws people to the area now; what might draw them to the area in the future; and what kind of growth would be acceptable to those who already live there (and the county as a whole). Three conceptual land use alternatives were developed to emphasize different types of development that could occur within a relatively isolated mountain environment. The realistic alternatives were all designed to be achievable without significant additional investments to the road system or sewage treatment plant, and to have roughly equal numbers of residents. Each alternative is discussed below.

#### 4.1.1 Large Town Center

One alternative was to focus future development (particularly multi-family density) towards a single Town Center.

Because of the location of existing utilities and the ski area and golf course properties, the Large Town Center would probably need to be located in the North Area. It would have a walkable core area with significant retail and support services, and would create a "central place" that would provide services to all of Stagecoach. Over time, some employment opportunities could also occur in the Town Center.

In the South Area, the time and expense of providing utilities would lead to lot consolidations, and building would occur as large lots are consolidated for septic services. Individual lot owners would still be able to develop on existing platted lots of 1 acre or less if they meet County requirements for such development.



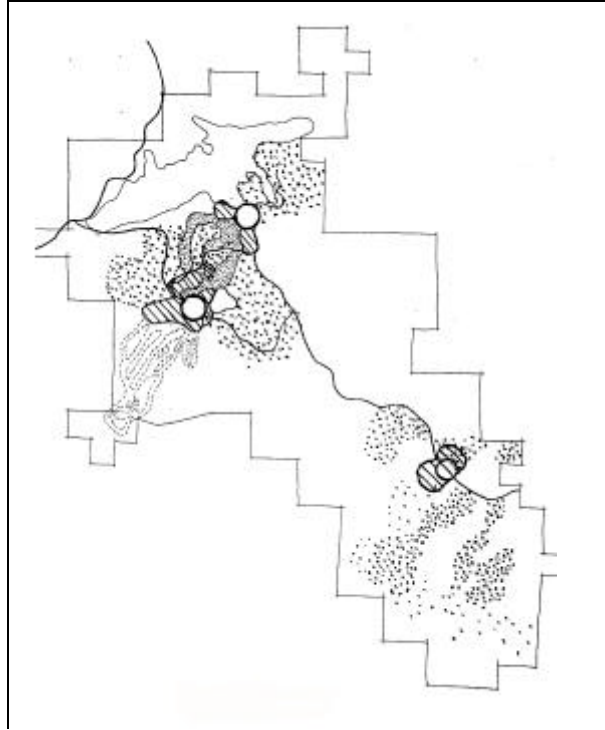
While some participants liked the idea of a Town Center in order to reduce the number of shopping trips into Steamboat Springs, others felt that the creation of a single central place with intense

development was inconsistent with the rural beauty of Stagecoach. There was also concern that significant retail and support services could only be supported if Stagecoach attracted more development than is likely in the next 20 years – and that a Large Town Center might languish for years because of lack of buying power to support its tenants.

#### 4.1.2 Recreation

A second alternative emphasized the wide variety of recreational experiences that are or could be provided in Stagecoach. Under this alternative, future development density would be guided towards three smaller focal points -- one oriented towards the ski area, another towards a future golf course (and possible nearby commercially-oriented marina on Stagecoach Reservoir), and a third to provide support services and recreational opportunities for the southern area.

Development in the South Area would occur much as it would in the Town Center alternative, except that some multi-family development might occur where utilities were available around the South Area focal point.

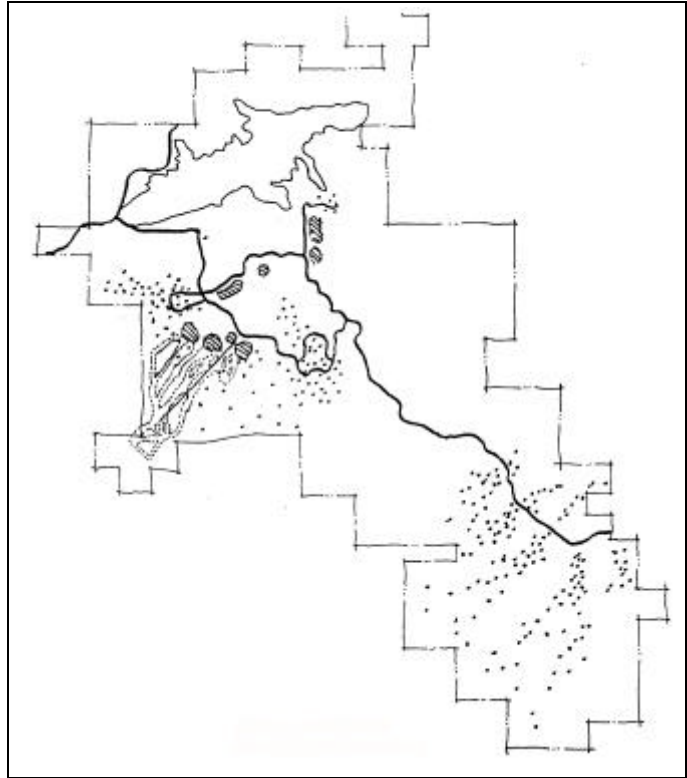


There was wide support for the development of additional recreational amenities in Stagecoach -- including the ski area, non-motorized hike and bike trails, and lake-related uses. Some felt that the presence of a golf course would increase market activity in Stagecoach, and that a golf course in the North Area would help preserve at least part of the open feeling of that meadow. Because of its isolated location and the probable slow pace of development in the South Area, there was concern that a South Area retail center would not be economically viable. Stagecoach State Park pointed out that an operator on the north shore of the reservoir has been granted a 10 year agreement to operate a marina, and that a marina on the south shore would require an amendment to the existing PUD covering the State Park.

#### 4.1.3 Nature

A third alternative would not guide future development towards any retail or recreational activity centers. Instead, development would occur in dispersed patterns, but would be guided towards areas where it would be least visible to other property owners. Development densities throughout Stagecoach (not just the South Area) would be reduced through lot consolidations. In return for increased isolation, residents would have to make more shopping and employment trips to Steamboat Springs.

This alternative had much support from existing residents who chose to move to Stagecoach because of its physical beauty, privacy, and peace and quiet. Unfortunately, further research showed that a large number of platted lots were in fairly visible sites, and would be hard to “hide” in the trees. The same was true even if groups of adjacent lots were assembled into 5 acre tracts -- many would not have a building site that could be hidden in the trees or behind landforms. In addition, some of the most well hidden areas were also the furthest from the trunk utilities and roads, so that they would be the most expensive to develop. Finally, the effort to make fewer homes visible from roads and public places might result in more homes being visible to their neighbors. As a result, the interest in a “natural-looking” development was re-directed into design principles that minimize the visibility of development even if it occurs in open areas.



#### 4.2 Vision Statement

The following vision statement embodies the general direction for Stagecoach that emerges from the constraints, opportunities, and discussion outlined above.

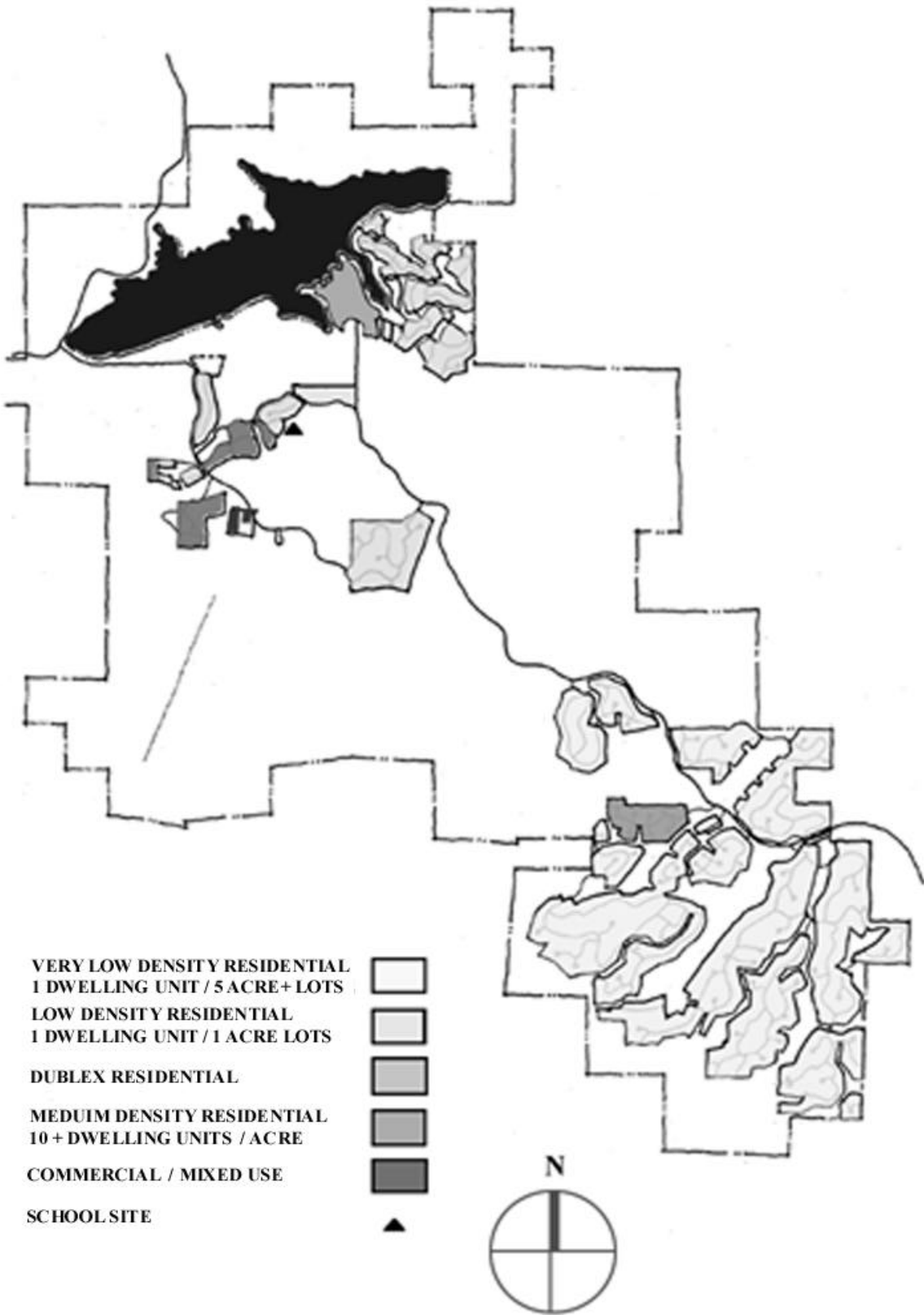
**Over the next twenty years,  
Stagecoach will grown into a balanced community  
with a distinct rural Routt County small town character  
emphasizing  
new and expanded public and private recreational amenities;  
diverse types of high quality housing;  
preservation of open lands;  
an environmentally sensitive transportation system;  
and a small town center to serve as the focal point for  
retail, commercial, and public facilities serving the community.**

### 4.3 Preferred Land Uses

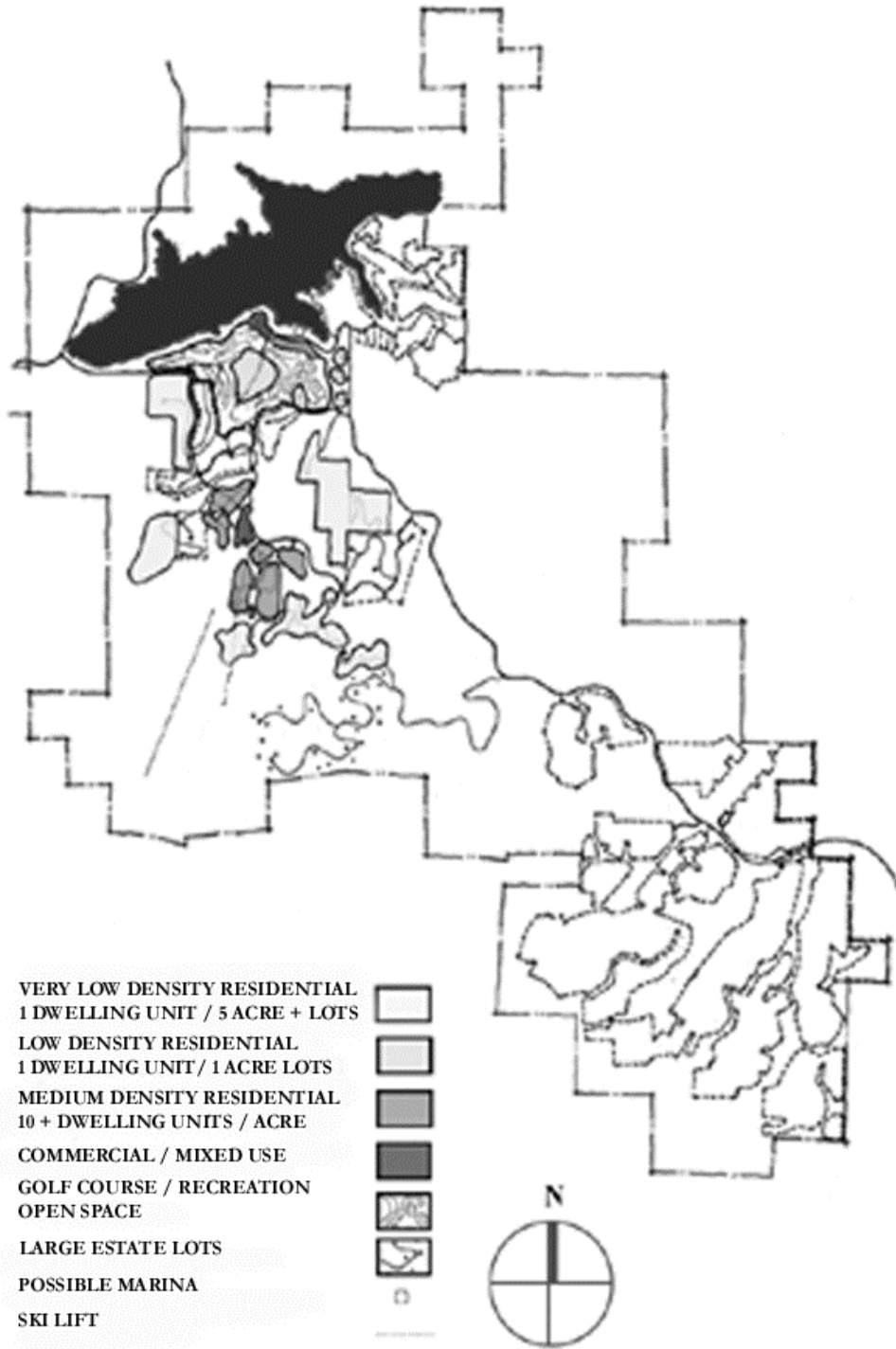
The final land use plan incorporates some of the strongest features from each of the alternatives considered. Since the Recreation alternative received the strongest support, and had the fewest practical problems, it became the base for the final plan. The size of the recreational center at the base of the ski area was increased in size in order it to also serve as a small Town Center for all of Stagecoach. It would be significantly smaller than in the Large Town Center alternative. The concept of more natural-looking development (and more refined infrastructure cost numbers) resulted in more emphasis on lot consolidation and fewer homes in the South Area. At the same time, there was consensus that those who can afford to bring roads and services to their South Area lots – no matter how remote – should be allowed to do so. Finally, there was general support for the idea that Stagecoach will not grow to a community of more than 2,000 units in the next 20 years (and maybe much less). The Land Uses shown on the next few pages includes approximately 2,400 units, and represents more development than would probably occur during the next 20 years. The 400 additional units were included in this Plan in order to respect the number of already-zoned and platted units in the North End, and to allow them to be reconfigured to help make the ski area and golf course areas more economically viable.

Some of the important Preferred Land Use elements are shown on the following two pages, and the composite land use plan rendering is shown on page 38.

**LAND USE ELEMENTS THAT ARE ALREADY ZONED AND PLATTED**



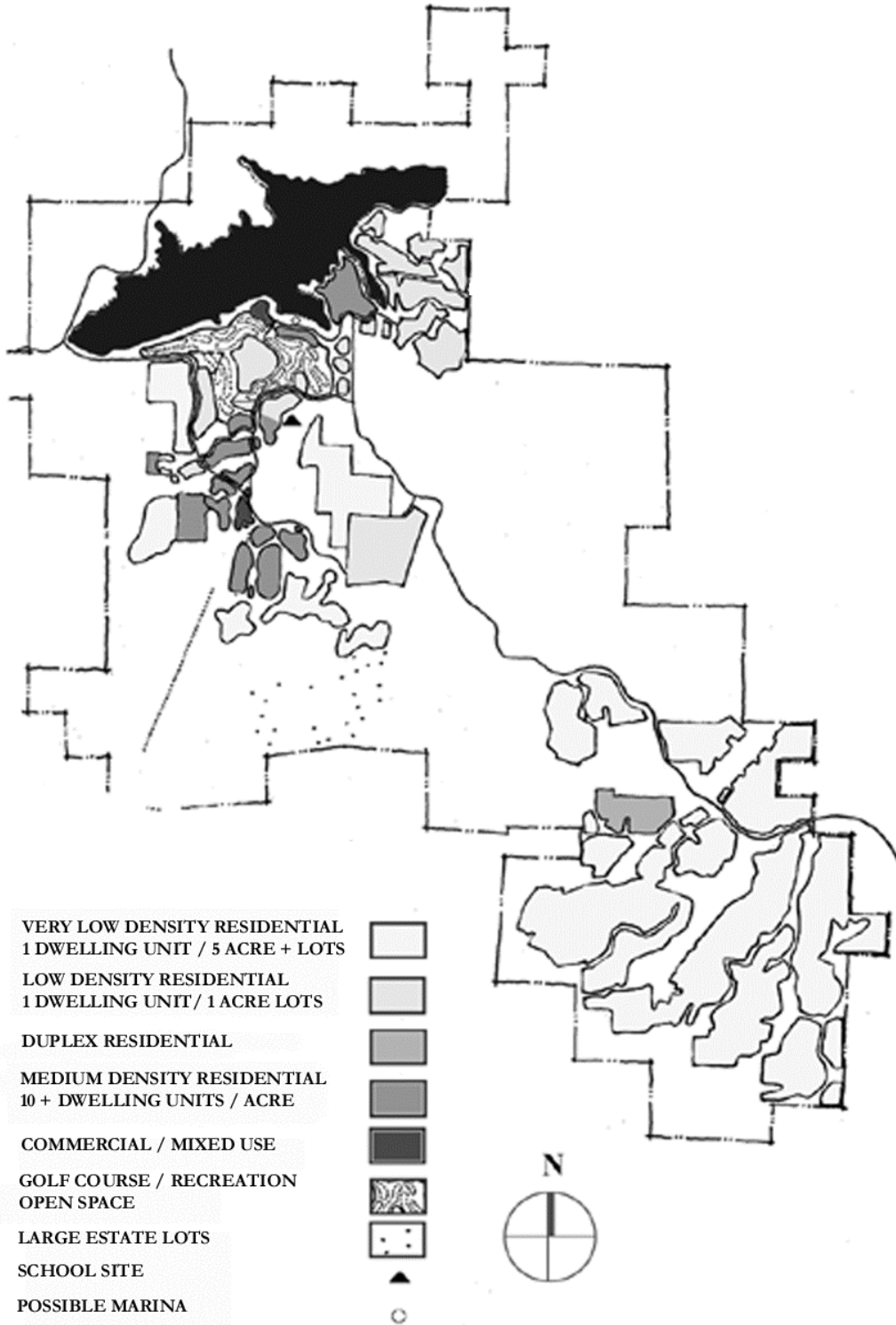
# LAND USE ELEMENTS THAT WOULD NEED



## ZONING OR PLATTING IN THE FUTURE



# COMPOSITE LAND USE PLAN MAP



## COMPOSITE LAND USE PLAN RENDERING

#### 4.4 Differences From Current Platting and Zoning

In both the North Area and South Area, the Preferred Land Uses differ from the current platting in significant respects, but few of the changes would require the zoning or platting of new areas. The exceptions are isolated cases where new platting is necessary (1) to support the development of a major recreational amenity; or (2) to reorganize existing zoned-and-platted densities into less visible and more viable areas; or (3) to incorporate in-holdings or adjacent properties that asked to be included and gained community support during the planning effort. These changes are summarized in the table below.

Parcel or Location	Difference from Current Platting and Zoning	Reason
Ski Area (and Meadowgreen lots 8 and 10)	Move some platted and zoned density from the County Road 16-212 intersection to the base of the ski area, for a total of 500 units at the base of the ski area.	Improves size and viability of ski base development, and removes development from a highly visible corner at the edge of the North Area meadow. Although this would require rezoning and platting, it would not add any dwelling units beyond those already zoned and platted in Stagecoach.
North Area Meadow	Move some platted and zoned density from the western portion of South Shore to areas around the golf course, for a total of 420 units around the golf course.	Residential lot premiums help pay for the golf course development, and the current HDR zoning would allow far more density. The golf course site itself (not including surrounding housing) would need to be rezoned "OR" (Outdoor Recreation).
South Shore/ East of C.R. 18A	Assume that platted multi-family lots will develop as single family homes.	Predominant single family character of eastern South Shore, and more concentrated multi-family areas around the Town Center, ski base, and golf course.
South Shore/ West of C.R. 18A	Move 420 units of density on MountainAir ownership to North Area Meadows. Allow 80 units of multi-family density to remain.	Transfer of MountainAir density to North Area meadow will support the feasibility of a golf course and would reflect the fact that some originally platted lots have been flooded by the reservoir. Remaining 80 dwelling units of density would allow reasonable development of smaller scale multi-family developments on the MountainAir, Tri-State Generation, and Upper Yampa Water properties.
Rea Parcel	Multi-family units along edge of North Area meadow, instead of current commercial designation	Multi-family will fit in better with nearby residential development near the proposed golf course, and commercial uses should be focused on the smaller Town Center area
Romick Parcel	3 new 35 acre tracts and 10 new 5 acre lots	Site is surrounded by Stagecoach, is zoned AF and MRE
Roach Parcel	3 new 5 acre tracts along the base of Young's Peak	An application for rezoning to MRE has been submitted. 5 acre tracts would preserve the open feel at the base of this visible peak, and current HDR zoning would allow far more density
Henderson Parcel	3 new 5+ acre and one 35 acre tracts along the base of Young's	An application for rezoning to MRE has been submitted. 5 acre tracts would preserve the open feel at the base of this visible peak, and the current HDR zoning would allow far more density
Stage Stop Parcel	10 new 5-10 acre lots, all sited so that they are not visible from Yellow Jacket Pass on	5-10 acre housing is a good entrance use to set an open/natural tone for Stagecoach, and is less intense

Parcel or Location	Difference from Current Platting and Zoning	Reason
	RCR 14 or the western portion of the reservoir.	than the nearest residential uses. Since this involves the creation of new dwelling units beyond current zoning and platting, the applicant might be required to purchase Transferrable Density Credits, as discussed below.
All South Area Subdivisions	Assume that 90% of the small single-family lots will be consolidated into 5 acre lots and develop without central utilities; and that 10% of single-family lot owners will build on their lots as platted. Assume that Black Horse II multi-family lots will build out with duplex units.	Cost of utility extension, difficulty of organizing hundreds of owners to support infrastructure assessments, and long waits required before infrastructure can be extended efficiently.

Although this Plan anticipates the changes listed above, all landowners would keep the ability to build on their lots as currently zoned and platted. In either case proposed developers will be required to comply with all applicable County zoning and platting requirements.

#### 4.5 Ski Area

A small ski area has been operating at Stagecoach since 1996 under a special use permit from Routt County, and would serve as the winter recreation base for the community. At the present time, ski operations involve only limited snowcat access and not the full approval intensity. This Plan anticipates that the ski areas will expand to accommodate more skiers, lift operations, and base facilities sized to accommodate local and area demand for a smaller ski area that would not compete with the Steamboat ski area. The details of any expansion will be developed by the owner of the ski area property, and will be subject to the issuance of appropriate permits by Routt County. Use of the ski area would probably be restricted and require payment of a fee.

##### 4.5.1 Policies

1. The ski area should be encouraged to expand its operations to accommodate more skiers in order to better serve as a winter base of recreation for the Stagecoach area.

##### 4.5.2 Actions

1. Support proposals to expand the capacity of the ski area through the addition of lift operations, base facilities, or skier support facilities to support up to 50,000 skier days per year if the proposals comply with all applicable Routt County land use and environmental regulations.

#### 4.6 Small Town Center

These drawings of the smaller town center area are conceptual, and are intended to illustrate important elements and principles that should be incorporated in the final design. That final design should be negotiated with the property owner at the time that development goes through the County development permit process.

The smaller town center is intended to serve as a focal point, meeting place for the community, and as its symbolic “heart.” It should be organized around an intersection where Routt County Road 212 crosses a future street leading up to the base of the ski area. In order to support the creation of a balanced growth center with adequate retail facilities and a small employment base, the small town center might grow to include between 30,000–50,000 square feet of retail/commercial development within the 20 year Plan horizon.



#### 4.6.1 Policies

1. A small, walkable town center with small pedestrian meeting spaces should be developed between Routt County Road 212 and the base of the ski area.
2. An emergency fire/rescue vehicle should be located within the town center to respond to potential emergencies.
3. A small medical clinic should be located in the Town Center area to serve the Stagecoach population as it grows.
4. An elementary school should be located near the Town Center area.

#### 4.6.2 Actions

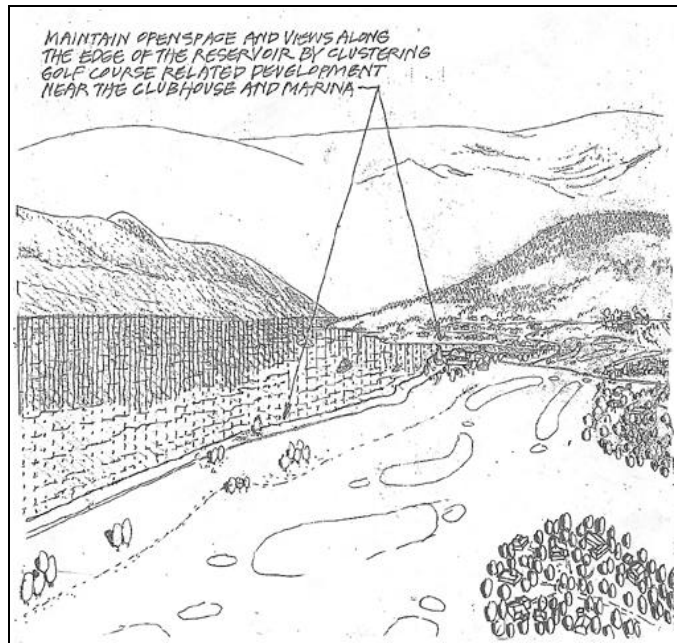
1. Support proposals to develop a town center containing between 30,000 and 50,000 square feet of retail and commercial uses, as well as public facility sites, between Routt County Road 212 and the base of the ski area should generally be approved if they comply with this Plan and all applicable Routt County land use and environmental regulations.
2. Organize a majority of retail and commercial development in the town center on both sides of a street leading from Routt County Road 212 and the base of the ski area.
3. Organize multi-family retail development around both sides of Routt County Road 212, on either side of the retail/commercial street leading off of Road 212, and on a network of small new roads connecting to Road 212 and the retail/commercial street.
4. Organize town center development to preserve views from the town center down the meadow to the northeast to the golf course and marina development.
5. Kept new primary structures at least 50 feet away from stream/wetland areas crossing the area from southwest to northeast.
6. Orient town center buildings so that their front entrances face Routt County Road 212 or local streets.
7. Do not approve new retail and commercial uses outside of the town center area unless they would be permitted under zoning in place at the time this Plan was adopted.
8. Work with emergency service providers to obtain an emergency fire/rescue vehicle site near the town center.
9. Work with medical care providers to establish a small medical clinic in the town center.

10. Work with South Routt County School District to obtain the dedication or purchase of an elementary school site near the town center area, with good access to Routt County Roads 16 and 212.

#### 4.7 Golf Course and Marina Development

This drawing of the possible golf course and marina area and the Plan recommendations below are purely conceptual. Acceptable development plans may not contain all of the suggested design elements contained below, but those that incorporate more design principles will be considered more consistent with this Plan. The development of a high quality golf course/marina tract is very important to the success of this Plan, but is inherently very expensive. The developer of any future golf course should be given the flexibility to bring forward the best possible design, and to capture significant golf course frontage premiums for their own lots, while respecting the design intent of this Plan to the greatest degree feasible.

The golf course/marina area is intended to provide an important summer base for recreational activities at Stagecoach. Both facilities may be private or daily/user fee facilities. The golf course should be designed to maintain as much of the open feel of the North Area meadow -- and particularly the edge of the reservoir and the views to and from the reservoir -- as possible, while recognizing the economic realities of golf course development. Those realities include the need to create golf course frontage lots that are sited and designed to capture a significant portion of the beauty of the area for the residents on the golf course lots. The golf course and marina facility may contain additional recreational amenities such as a swimming pool, tennis courts, spa and exercise facilities, and/or ancillary uses such as boat storage.



Due to the economic realities of golf course development, however, it is possible that an acceptable golf course and marina development plan may not come forward. If that occurs, then a high quality, environmentally sensitive residential development of up to 420 units may be acceptable if it preserves open areas along the lake and throughout the tract, as well as views to and from the lake and a well planned trail system.

##### 4.7.1 Policies

1. A golf course and marina should be developed to serve as a summer base of recreation in Stagecoach if they can be made economically viable and consistent with this Plan.

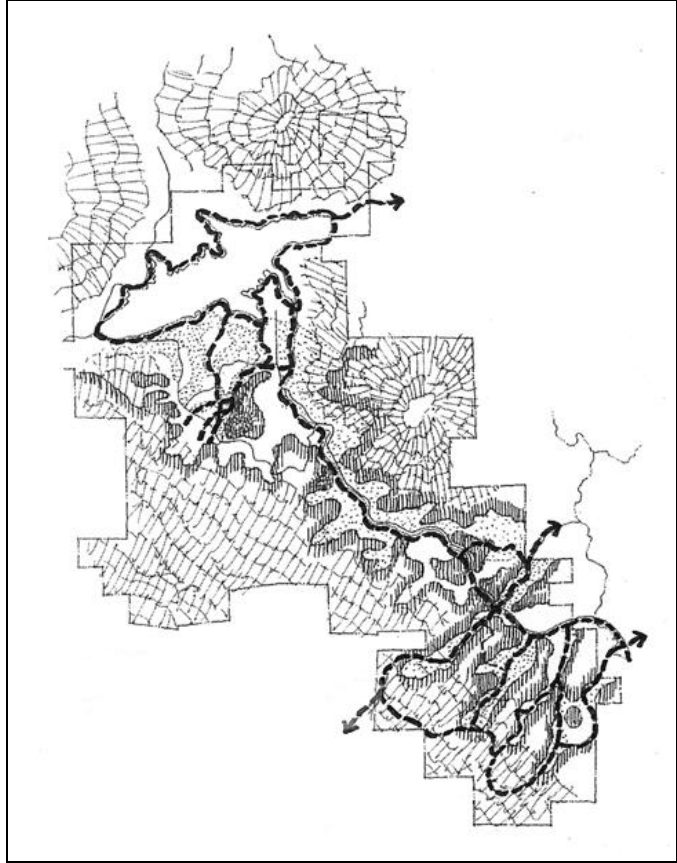
2. If a golf course development cannot be made economically feasible and consistent with this Plan, then up to 420 units of residential uses may be developed in the North Area meadow.

#### 4.7.2 **Actions**

1. The design and layout of the golf course and surrounding residential uses should preserve as much of the open feeling of the meadow as possible, particularly along the edge of the reservoir and the views to and from the reservoir.
2. Up to 420 residential units should be approved around the golf course, with multi-family units (if any) being concentrated near the clubhouse and marina.
3. Design trails to link the golf course and marina to the small town center and other amenities, and locate those trails to avoid interference with golf course and marina activities.
4. Approve a marina development with supporting recreational facilities along the south shore of the reservoir, provided that the design and layout of the facility complies with all applicable Routt County land use and environmental regulations and is coordinated with the reservoir-related facilities at Stagecoach State Park.
5. If a golf course is not developed, up to 420 residential units should be approved in the North Area meadow, provided that the design and layout of those units preserves as much of the open feeling of the meadow as possible, particularly along the edge of the reservoir and the views to and from the reservoir, and provided that the design and layout complies with all applicable Routt County land use and environmental regulations.

#### 4.8 Trails and Views

The importance of a good system of non-motorized trails has been recognized since at least 1988, when SPOA had a Stagecoach Trails Plan proposal prepared. The trail system shown here would link major areas in both the North and South Areas, and would take advantage of some of the most dramatic views in Stagecoach. They have not been subject to engineering review, however, and should remain conceptual until more specific analysis of the routes has been made. Hikers and mountain bikers can probably share the same trails, at least until heavy trail use occurs. Over the long term, experience shows that separate trails will probably be necessary for bikers, although they can often be located in the same general corridor. The Stagecoach area should probably be responsible for maintenance of the trails once they have been constructed.



##### 4.8.1 Policies

1. A system of non-motorized hike/bike/ski trails should be developed to link the various recreational amenities and open spaces in Stagecoach.

##### 4.8.2 Actions

1. Design and approve a system of continuous trails that are open to the public, take advantage of views of the North and South meadows, the reservoir, Young's Peak, Green Ridge, Woodchuck Mountain, and Blacktail Mountain.

#### 4.9 Design Guidelines

Although it is important that the special recreational amenities and public areas in Stagecoach be designed sensitively, it is also important that other development respect the existing landforms and the beauty of the area. New construction should avoid the hazards associated with steep slopes and geologically unstable areas, as well as areas with high wildfire risk or wildlife habitat value. The design guidelines shown here reflect general principles that should be followed unless there is a compelling reason why it would be impossible or impractical to follow them.

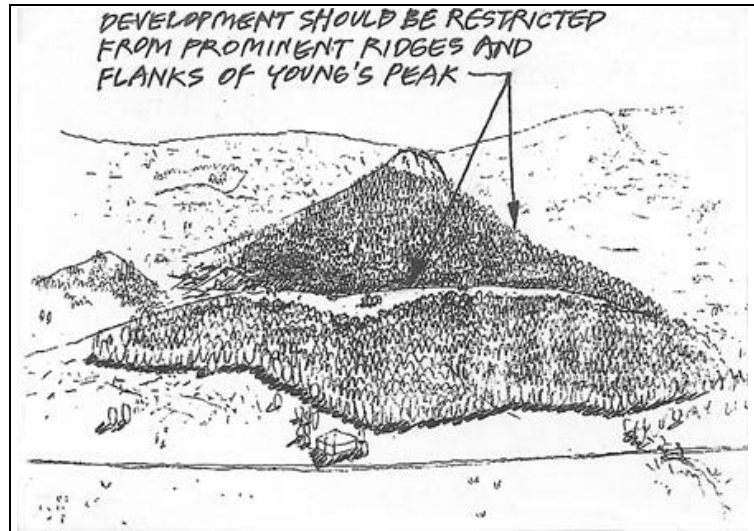
In general, development patterns should protect and enhance the Green Gateway to Stagecoach, and should keep away from the portion of Routt County Road 16 as it enters the Stagecoach property.

An open entry drive will emphasize the importance of the existing wetland area, and the long views across the meadows and the reservoir. Where development cannot be kept far from this entry road, it should be clustered to minimize its visibility from the road.



#### 4.9.1 Policies

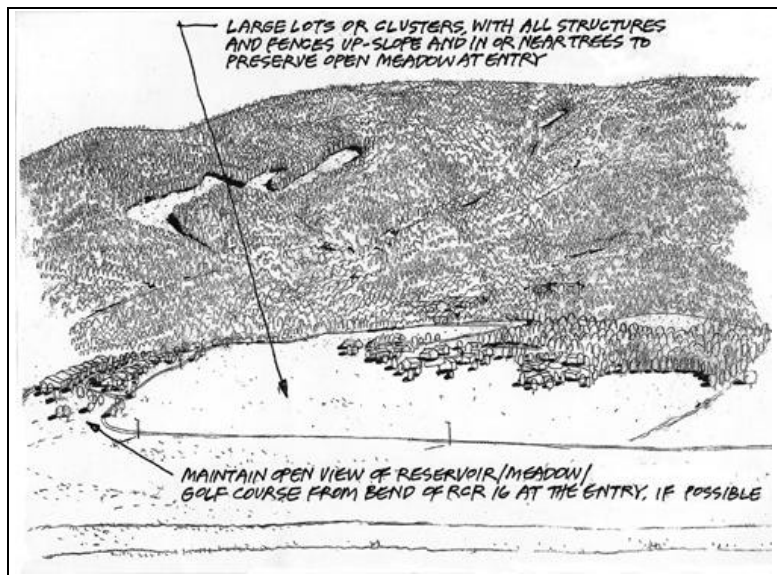
1. New construction should avoid the hazards associated with steep slopes and geologically unstable areas.
2. New development should preserve the open feeling along the entryway to Stagecoach on Routt County Road 16, including the views to and over the reservoir and the North Area meadow, as much as possible.
3. New improvements and road cuts should be kept far down the flanks of Young's Peak, Woodchuck Mountain, and Green Ridge, so that the developments are not visible from Routt County Roads 16, 18A, and 212, if possible.
4. New improvements should generally not be located in open meadows, unless this Plan designates portions of the those meadow as development areas.
5. Site grading and driveway cuts should be located to minimize visibility from Routt County Roads 16, 18A, and 212 and from as many neighboring building sites as possible.
6. Preserve the natural ridgelines of Stagecoach free from development (when viewed from those roads).
7. Where development has already taken place, infill and adjacent development of the same type should fit in with the existing patterns of development.
8. New improvements should be located and designed so as to support the continued viability of wildlife in the area, and to avoid harm to wildlife wherever possible.
9. New improvements should be located and designed to reduce the risk of human injury and property damage through wildfire.
10. New development should be designed and constructed to avoid reductions in air quality wherever possible.
11. New development should be designed and constructed to avoid reductions in water quality wherever possible.



#### 4.9.2 Actions

1. Require that new improvements for human occupancy be located outside of designated geological hazard areas.

2. Locate new improvements so that they are not visible along the south side of Routt County Road 16 from the bridge until it turns south, to the greatest degree possible. If that is not possible, cluster the improvements to minimize their visibility from the road.
3. New improvements should not be located between the north side of Routt County Road 16 and the reservoir.
4. Meadowgreen lots 1 through 20 should be replatted further south and adjacent to Meadowgreen lots 21 through 50, if possible, in order to preserve open views from Routt County Road 16 into the North Area meadow before the road turns south.
5. Require that new improvements be located so that they are not visible over the ridgelines of Young's Peak, Woodchuck Mountain, Green Ridge, or other slopes enclosing the Stagecoach area, when viewed from Routt County Roads 16, 18A, or 212, unless no other improvement sites are feasible on the parcel.
6. Where a parcel contains no improvement site where the improvements would not be visible over the ridgelines of Young's Peak, Woodchuck Mountain, Green Ridge, or other slopes enclosing the Stagecoach area, require that the visibility of the improvement be minimized through the use of color, plantings, roofline treatments, shielded and downcast lighting, or other techniques.
7. Where lots are platted along the flanks of Young's Peak, Woodchuck Mountain, or Green Ridge, require that building sites be locate as low as practicable on those slopes and in locations where they are not visible from
8. If new lots should platted along the flanks of Young's Peak, Woodchuck Mountain, or Green Ridge, ensure that building sites will not be visible from Routt County Roads 16, 18A, and 212.
9. Do not approve new improvements for human occupancy on slopes over 30%, unless no other building sites area available on the parcel, or unless alternative building sites would violate other portions of this Plan.
10. Do not approve new improvements in open meadows, unless this Plan designates the meadow as a development area, or unless no other building sites area available on the parcel, or unless alternative building sites would violate other portions of this Plan.



11. Do not approve new improvements in critical wildlife habitat areas (as designated by the Colorado Division of Wildlife), unless no other building sites area available on the parcel, or unless alternative building sites would violate other portions of this Plan.
12. Where new improvements and road cuts cannot be located so that they are not visible from Routt County Roads 16, 18A, and 212, locate and design those improvements and cuts to be as unobtrusive as possible when viewed from those roads.
13. Locate new improvements so as to minimize required site grading, unless a site requiring more extensive site grading would reduce visibility from Routt County Roads 16, 18A, and 212.
14. Require that areas disturbed by site grading or road cuts be revegetated as promptly as practical after construction.
15. Do not approve new improvement within 50 feet of the outer edge of riparian corridors, unless no other building sites area available on the parcel, or unless alternative building sites would violate other portions of this Plan.
16. Where properties are fenced, require that fence designs are of types approved by the Colorado Division of Wildlife to minimize risks to wildlife.
17. Require that any trash containers are design should be bear and rodent-resistant.
18. New improvements for human occupancy should be located outside of designated severe wildfire hazard areas wherever possible, and should be designed to comply with the Colorado State Forest Service guidelines on “Defensible Space.”
19. New improvements should incorporate those construction techniques and controls on wood-burning devices applicable to the area pursuant to Routt County regulations.
20. New improvements should incorporate grass-lined swales between paved areas and nearby streams.
21. New development in the ski area, golf course, and marina area should provide covered areas for maintenance equipments.
22. Development agreements should be negotiated to limit the use of fertilizers on recreational and commercial properties to levels that will not degrade the water quality in Stagecoach streams or the reservoir.

#### 4.10 Employee Housing and Affordable Housing

Fortunately, the diversity of the current Stagecoach housing stock will probably help ensure that the community grows as a healthy, mixed-income community. Many of the individual homes constructed will continue to appreciate, and will attract development of similarly high quality. At the same time, the substantial stock of several hundred multi-family units developed 25 years ago will continue to serve a need for less expensive housing in the Stagecoach area, and the county as a whole. The plans for more multi-family housing around the ski base and golf course will also help supply the market for smaller units – for both seasonal visitors, second home owners, and year round residents. As new recreational and commercial development occurs, however, it will be important to ensure that housing for the new employees is provided at prices they can afford, and that the overall housing stock remains balanced.

#### 4.10.1 Policies

1. Ensure that Stagecoach provides a diversity of housing types that meets the needs of those who work in Stagecoach and a portion of those who work in south Routt County.

#### 4.10.2 Actions

1. Require that new recreational and commercial development that occurs in conjunction with the ski area, town center, golf course, or marina, provide or arrange for housing for their employees at prices that the employees can afford.
2. Once a total of 500 dwelling units have been constructed in Stagecoach, the County and SPOA, consult with the Routt Affordable Living Foundation (RALF) to evaluate future needs for affordable housing in Stagecoach and the most efficient way to meet those needs in ways consistent with this Plan.

#### 4.11 Transferrable Density Credits

One technique that could promote the achievement of this Plan is Transferrable Density Credits (TDCs). In its simplest form, a TDC is the right to develop a residential dwelling unit, and that right can be severed from the lot to which it is allocated. Each TDC program designates a “Sending Area” where it would like to reduce development, and a “Receiving Area” where more development would be acceptable. TDCs may only be sold by property owners in the Sending Area, and can only be used to add dwelling units to a Receiving Area.

In this case, the Sending Area would include all South Area subdivisions (including those lots zoned for multi-family development). The Receiving Areas would include (1) all existing and new multi-family development areas in the North Area, and (2) all proposed single family residential areas shown on this Plan that do not currently have residential zoning to accommodate the proposed residential development, as shown on the map on page 50. Transfers of density from Receiving Areas to Sending Areas would not be permitted.

Each lot owned in a “Sending Area” would be allocated one TDC per lot owned regardless of whether the lot is zoned for single-family/duplex or multi-family development. The owner of the lot could decide whether to use the TDC to build one home on that lot, or sell the TDC to someone in the Receiving Area. If an owner of a single-family/duplex or multi-family lot decides to sell the TDC to a buyer in the Receiving Area, then he or she would be required to record an easement on the lot stating that it can no longer be developed (i.e., it is now just acreage) but they would retain ownership of the lot subject to the easements. The lot owner in the Sending Area could still sell the lot (with the easement) to someone else who wants acreage. TDC transfers would be voluntary in the Sending Area -- no one would be obligated to sell. Allowing the voluntary sale of density credits in the South Area would give southern lot owners another way to sell something new for value.

Buyers of TDCs could only use them to build an additional dwelling unit (i.e. one that would not normally be allowed) in the Receiving Area. In this case, potential purchasers would include two groups of property owners. First, it would include the owners of the ski area, the golf course, and other multi-family lots in the North Area who want to build more units than are currently shown on the Plan. For example, if the owner of the ski area and town center property wanted to build more than 500 units (and traffic studies showed that the road system could handle the additional traffic)

they would need to buy one TDC for the 501<sup>st</sup> unit, one for the 502<sup>nd</sup> unit, and one for each additional unit they want to build. This group of buyers might not enter the market for some time, since they can complete major development without needing to buy TDCs. The second group of potential TDC buyers include the owners of adjacent lands, such as the Stage Stop Parcel, if they request upzonings from Agricultural designations to residential uses consistent with this Plan. They, too, would need to purchase a TDC from a lot owner in the South Area for each dwelling unit they want to construct.

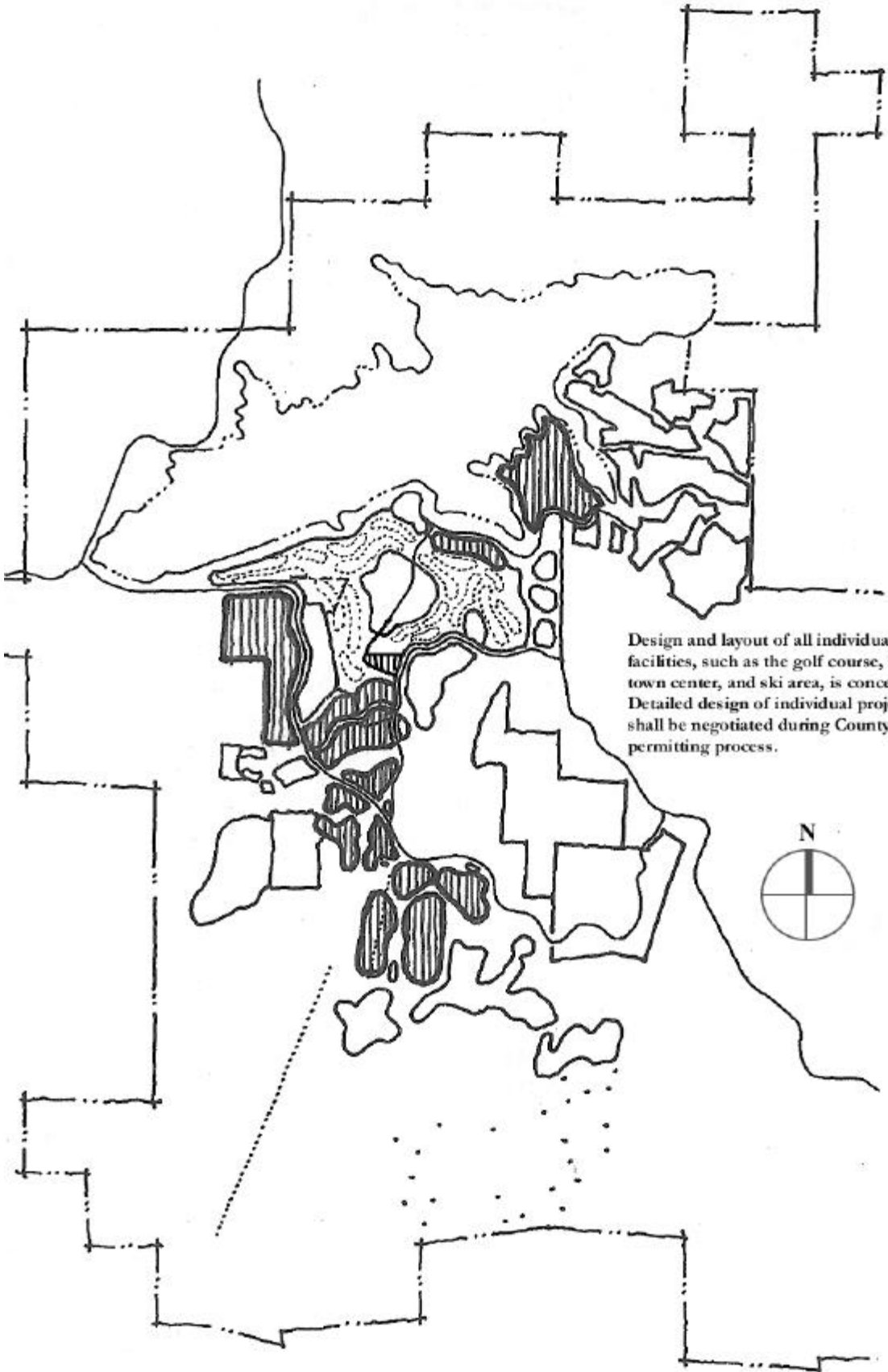
#### **4.11.1 Policies**

1. Create private market mechanisms by which those who would like to build density in the North Area beyond those shown on this Plan could purchase development potential from those in the South Area who do not want to build on their lots.

#### **4.11.2 Actions**

1. Create a Transferrable Development Credit (TDC) system based on the sending and receiving areas shown in this Plan, with a provision that no owner in the sending area would be obligated to sell a TDC, but that those in the receiving areas who want to build more density than is shown on this Plan would be required to buy more TDCs to do so.

**TDC RECEIVING AREA MAP**



Design and layout of all individual facilities, such as the golf course, marina, town center, and ski area, is conceptual. Detailed design of individual projects shall be negotiated during County permitting process.







## 5. IMPLEMENTATION

Although the Stagecoach Community Plan can establish a clearer vision for the future of the area, it needs to incorporate specific implementation steps if that vision is to become a reality over time. Without concerted efforts to implement the Plan, it will remain just a set of good ideas that may or may not happen. It is therefore important that Routt County and all other interested parties commit themselves to making the Plan a success. That will take a significant investment of time and effort.

Once the County, the District, SPOA and others begin taking specific steps to implement the Plan, it will begin to take on a life of its own, and Stagecoach will begin to control its destiny more than it has in the past. The more actively individual players work to coordinate their activities in a positive manner behind this Plan, the greater its chances for success.

This section outlines both an approach to implementing the Plan, and specific steps that can be taken to do so. It also provides a matrix of responsibilities and timeframes, and calls for continued monitoring of growth in Stagecoach to ensure that future activities are consistent with the Plan.

### 5.1 Keys to Success

In order to move towards the Plan's vision, protect the property rights of the Stagecoach property owners, and reduce dissatisfaction with the costs of development in Stagecoach, it will be important to:

- 5.1.1 **Harness the Power of the Private Market.** Implementation steps should try to work with significant market forces – such as the demand for larger lots in south Routt County and the strong track record of recreation related development in the Rocky Mountain west – rather than trying to force patterns of development for which there is no market demand. In addition, the consolidation of smaller lots (particularly in the South Area) will only occur if market forces can be harnessed to facilitate the sale of lots by those who do not intend to build, and the purchase and consolidation of those lots by those who do.
- 5.1.2 **Acknowledge True Development Costs and Timing.** Some of the frustration with the slow pace of development and lot sales in Stagecoach has come from (1) misunderstandings about the true costs of development, (2) confusion about who is responsible for those costs, and/or (3) unrealistic assumptions about how soon specific lots might receive utility or road extensions. While those costs could have been spread over more beneficiaries over more time at less cost when Woodmoor was acting as a master developer, the bankruptcies of Woodmoor and the District have dramatically changed development economics. Everyone involved in Stagecoach, including individual lot owners, should be making investment, sales, and construction decisions based on the revised lot development costs included in this Plan.
- 5.1.3 **Reduce Development Costs Without Reducing Quality.** Since the time and expense of extending basic infrastructure to many lots will be much higher than expected, it is even more important that other development costs be reduced as much as possible. At the same time, many of the current residents of Stagecoach have made investment decisions to create a very high quality residential and recreation community, and development costs should not be reduced in ways that will reduce the overall quality of development or negatively affect

property values in Stagecoach. The County should continue to work with SPOA, the District, and lot owners to evaluate alternative individual and community sewage systems that are consistent with the intended character of Stagecoach and the economic health of the District.

- 5.1.4 **Provide Property Owners with More Information and Choices.** Property owners make better decisions when they have current, accurate information on which to base those decisions. Property owners are generally happier with their decisions when they have more options to choose from – even if none of the options give them exactly what they want. In this case, the large number of property owners residing all over the world makes it even more important that information about anticipated development costs and opportunities to sell or consolidate lots be distributed frequently. The quality of this information must be kept high, since a large number of property owners and investors are affected.

## 5.2 Applicability of the Plan

The following implementation strategies have been drafted to reflect three important over-riding principles.

- 5.2.1 **New Approvals Consistent With the Plan.** The County will evaluate development proposals for conformity with the adopted Plan. If proposals to plat, re-plat, or rezone land, or to transfer density from one area to another, are consistent with this Plan or results in development densities lower than those shown in the Plan, the chances of approval will be much greater.
- 5.2.2 **Individual Choice for Platted Lot Owners.** Individual lot owners who want to build a home on their lots as originally platted will be free to do so – no matter how remote and isolated the lot is from roads and utilities – but the owner will be responsible for meeting all County requirements for such development, including service provision requirements.
- 5.2.3 **District and SPOA Consistency is Encouraged – But Not Required.** Since the County has only limited authority over the activities of the Morrison Creek District – and no authority over the activities of SPOA – those organizations are not required to take actions consistent with the terms of this Plan. They are strongly encouraged to make decisions consistent with the Plan, however, and should not expect to receive County approvals or support for activities that are inconsistent with the Plan. Following adoption of the Plan, the County may discuss with the District or SPOA the possibility of intergovernmental agreements or letters of agreement that would encourage more consistency with the Plan.

### 5.3 Specific Implementation Actions

#### 5.3.1 **Review Applications for Consistency With this Plan**

In order to guide future decisions toward the implementation of this Plan, Routt County should review proposed zoning changes, subdivision applications, and other applications for consistency with this plan. The review should address consistency with the Vision Statement in Section 3 and those Policies and Actions listed in Section 4, as well as the Specific Implementation Actions in this Section 5. Applications for developments that would require Routt County Roads 14 or 16 to become four lane roads should not be approved. In addition, the County may want to adopt or reinforce language in its zoning and subdivision regulations requiring that future decisions be consistent with this Plan. The Morrison Creek District should also be encouraged to adopt infrastructure extension and service policies supporting the Plan.

#### 5.3.2 **Reduce or Waive Filing and Development Approval Fees**

In order to encourage the consolidation of smaller lots into larger lots to meet the 5 acre requirement, the County should reduce or waive application and processing fees for such consolidations and any related rezonings from LDR or HDR designations to the MRE zone district, as well as other small-scale rezonings that reduce densities in ways consistent with this Plan. The revenue loss to the County may be offset by lower road maintenance costs on CR 16 due to reductions in traffic from the fewer, larger lots. Fees and charges should not be waived for proposed projects that would increase development densities or the County's operating or maintenance costs.

#### 5.3.3 **Organize Annual Cost-of-Development Mailings**

The SPOA has already done a good job of distributing information about the projected costs of extending infrastructure to different subdivisions. CDC's update of infrastructure costs and identification of efficient infrastructure expansion sequences should also be widely distributed with easy-to-read explanations of their assumptions and methodologies. As it approaches the end of its bankruptcy, the District will also have better information about its anticipated fees and assessments over the next few years. SPOA and the District should cooperate to mail information about the capital and operating costs of development and utility services to each lot owner on an annual basis. Regular, accurate information about future options would help many lot owners decide whether or not they want to build homes or sell their lots. These annual mailings could also repeat the survey of property owner intentions to an updated address base each year, so that SPOA could track any changes in the proportion of owners who actually want to develop their lots.

#### 5.3.4 **Develop a Web Site Information Bank**

The Board of Realtors, SPOA, and the County should cooperate in the creation of a single database covering the locations and prices of recent lot sales. Although some of this

information is already available from the County Assessor's portion of the Routt County web site, it would be helpful to organize the information by subdivision, so that property owners can locate the information most relevant to them. By keeping this information updated on a regular basis, property owners will be able to track the pace of activity and make more informed decisions. All information would have to be public, and would need to include appropriate disclaimers protecting all of the sponsors from liability for unintentional mistakes.

### **5.3.5 Create Periodic Sales Pools**

Using data from the Information Bank and/or from their own sources, realtors and/or SPOA could publicize the creation of sales pools in each subdivision. Realtors could notify lot owners in a subdivision that an buyer (who need not be named) is willing to buy three lots in X subdivision at a price not to exceed \$ Y per lot if offers to sell are received within Z days.

In the alternative, a realtor could identify the some of the lowest priced lots for sale in a given subdivision and notify all the potential buyers in that subdivision of the opportunity to purchase enough land to create a 5 acre lot at the lowest current price. Creative use of the internet to contact prospective buyers and sellers could make this a more effective tool.

### **5.3.6 Conduct an Annual Lot Auction**

Realtors could also sponsor an annual auction to bring buyers and sellers together. Using data from the Information Bank or from their own sources, realtors could notify all lot owners of the opportunity to put their lot up for sale at an auction. Potential sellers could name their lowest sale price. If bidders at the auction offer more than the minimum price, the lot would be sold. If no one bids the minimum price, then it would not be sold. Information about the number of lots sold and the prices paid would be put into the Information Bank in order to encourage participation in the next year's auction. Creative use of the internet to contact prospective buyers and sellers could make this a more effective tool.

### **5.3.7 Reduce Road Standards for Remote Areas**

In order to make it more efficient to develop on large lots once they are consolidated (and to free up more property owner money to consolidate lots), the County should reduce road standards in those areas where it is very likely that larger lots will be consolidated over time.

More specifically, the County could agree to use those road standards applicable to Land Preservation Subdivisions (i.e. the Colorado Department of Transportation Low Volume standards instead of the County's current Rural Road standards) in those areas with a infrastructure sequence rating of 5, 6, or 7. That would include most or all of the Overland, High Cross, South Station I, South Station II, Sky Hitch I, Sky Hitch II, Sky Hitch III, and Sky Hitch IV subdivisions, plus a small part of the Horseback Subdivision. Reductions of road standard below CDOT Low Volume standards would not be approved.

### **5.3.8 Support Efforts of Lot Owners to Create New District Financing Tools**

As residential construction activity continues, some subdivisions may find it advantageous to form Local Improvement Districts (LIDs) to help them pay for utility and road extensions

other than water and sewer lines (which are under the control of the Morrison Creek District) – even if the resulting development will be on 5 acre lots. Several lot owners have expressed their willingness to pay additional assessments in order to bring roads and utilities to their properties, and SPOA and the County should cooperate in the formation of such LIDs when they meet the requirements of applicable Colorado law.

Another possible tool to finance needed improvements would be a Public Improvement District (PID). Under a PID approach, a group of landowners would file a petition to create the PID. If approved, the Board of County Commissioners would sit as directors of the district, and would conduct its affairs, which could include selling bonds secured by the property in the PID boundaries.

A third possibility would be for the Morrison Creek District to take on responsibility for building or operating new types of improvements (besides water and sewer). This would require a vote of its members, but would allow the use of an existing organization and might avoid the creation of multiple overlapping districts. It would also lay the groundwork for a long term option for incorporation.

#### **5.3.9 Finalize the System for TDC Transfers**

Although the basic parameters for the TDC system are described above, and the Sending and Receiving Areas have been identified, there are many decisions that still need to be made so that the system will operate effectively. The County should work with SPOA, the District, and affected landowners to establish how much the density (carrying capacity) in the Receiving Areas could be increased, and how many TDCs need to be transferred from the South Area in return for the ability to develop one more unit in the North Area. Since land is more valuable and easier to service in the north than in the south, a one-to-one transfer may not be fair. By carefully calibrating the TDC system, it will be more likely that it will meet the needs of both buyers and sellers.

#### **5.3.10 Study Detailed Water Supply Issues**

The Morrison Creek District has requested that one of the next steps should be they prepare a detailed study to identify the best possible way to develop available water rights to deliver water to the growing Stagecoach community most efficiently. Any information from this study that would affect costs of the system should be incorporated into the Cost of Development Mailings to property owners described above.

#### **5.3.11 Study the Economic Feasibility of Ski Area Development**

Since this Plan is heavily oriented towards the creation of appropriately-scaled recreational amenities, there should be continued efforts to evaluate the market feasibility of a moderately sized ski area, and to evaluate what type and scale of runs and trails and other features would best fit market demands. As more non-proprietary information is developed, it should be made available to lot owners and potential investors through the annual mailings and Information Bank described above.

### **5.3.12 Study the Economic Feasibility of Golf Course Construction**

Similarly, since this Plan anticipates the possible construction of a golf course to help preserve the open feeling of the North Area meadow, and to operate as a summer recreational opportunity, there should be continued efforts to evaluate the market feasibility of a golf course. As more non-proprietary information is developed, it should be made available to lot owners and potential investors through the annual mailings and Information Bank described above.

### **5.3.13 Study the Economic Feasibility of a Marina Development**

The third major recreational facility is a possible marina development on the south shore of the reservoir. Again, it will be important to determine what size of a facility might be supported by the Stagecoach market, whether the facility should supplement or replace the current facility in the State Park on the north shore of the reservoir, and how to ensure that the use of the marina facilities does not create environmental damage through over-use of the lake. As more non-proprietary information is developed, it should be made available to the County, State Parks, lot owners and potential investors through the annual mailings and Information Bank described above.

### **5.3.14 Plan for the Trails System**

This Plan calls for a system of trails to link together the various recreational amenities, and to give residents a better opportunity to explore the open spaces and enjoy the spectacular views in and around Stagecoach. The County, the Colorado State Parks, the Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S. Forest Service, and SPOA, should move forward to see where such trails could be located to provide the maximum benefits with minimum impact on the environment, and to determine who would maintain the trails after construction.

### **5.3.15 Evaluate Employees/Affordable Housing Needs of the Community**

The trend of housing prices throughout Routt County is upward and Stagecoach is no exception. As a potential “growth center” identified in the Routt County Master Plan, Stagecoach needs to incorporate a broad mix of land uses, including employment opportunities at the town center, golf course, ski area, marina area, and housing for those who work in the area at prices they can afford. In the short term, this can be accomplished by requiring that those who created the jobs ensure that such housing is attainable – and will remain attainable – for their employees. Once a total of 500 dwelling units have been constructed in Stagecoach, the County should initiate work with SPOA and the Regional Affordable Living Foundation (RALF) to complete a study of the affordable housing needs of the Stagecoach area and Routt County, and how to best meet those needs within the parameters of this Plan.

### **5.3.16 Encourage Stagecoach Rezoning Consistent With Plan**

The County should also encourage individual landowners in Stagecoach to initiate rezonings consistent with this Plan where it is feasible to do so. In the case of lot consolidations, this assistance could include a packet of applications forms and checklists that would lead to a successful rezoning of the MRE zone district. Where land included in the boundaries of the Stagecoach area is not already platted or is not indicated for higher densities or different uses in this Plan, the land should generally be limited to lots of 35 acres or larger.

### **5.3.17 Encourage Surrounding Areas to Remain Rural**

Similarly, much of the beauty of the Stagecoach area comes from the pristine landscape that surrounds it. The County should encourage surrounding landowners to protect their lands in current rural uses, and should use all available tools and incentives including purchase of Development Rights, LPS, and conservation easements to help them do so. In general, development around the boundaries of the Stagecoach area south of Routt County Road 14 should be in lot sizes of 35 acres or larger.

### **5.3.18 Support Efforts of Lot Owners to Sell or Donate Lots or Easements to a Land Conservation Organization**

Property owners can often obtain a charitable tax deduction in return for donating lots to a qualified land conservation organization, or for selling their lots to such an organization at a price lower than their fair market value. Where lot owners decide that they do not want to make the investments necessary to make their lots developable, such a donation or sale might be financially advantageous to the lot owner and consistent with this Plan. The County, SPOA, and land conservation organizations should make information available about these options.

### **5.3.19 Update Transportation Planning Regularly in Order to Confirm the Adequacy of the Road System**

Because of the complicated history of Stagecoach and the slow pace of recent development, much of this Plan depends on assumptions about what types of development will occur in the future, what kinds of traffic impacts it will create, and what types of services it will need. Seasonal second home or resort development will generate one pattern of traffic demands, while year-round housing occupied by those who work in Steamboat Springs will create a much more intensive type of traffic demand. In order to obtain good baseline traffic information, the County should obtain new traffic counts, and staff should re-evaluate the findings of all prior traffic studies in light of the updated counts.

The County should also monitor the future buildout of Stagecoach and periodically update its transportation planning to confirm the adequacy of the road system and to avoid the need for costly road improvements. It should also monitor the pace of lot consolidations on an annual basis to see whether the character and density of the South Area is moving toward the vision in this Plan. The County should probably conduct additional traffic counts when the

dwelling unit count reaches 500, and again when it reaches 1,000 dwelling units, as well as one month after the opening day of each ski lift, the golf course, and/or the marina, to see how much additional capacity is available on the road system. Routt County should explore methods of financing and equitable cost sharing contributions from proposed developments during the development review process. Throughout this continuing process, road capacities should be evaluated for the system as a whole (including Routt County Road 14).

### 5.3.20 Evaluate Incorporation and Expanded District Service Options

As Stagecoach grows, the residents and the District should periodically review whether it would be cost effective and beneficial either to expand the list of services and facilities provided by the District or to incorporate Stagecoach as a municipal government. A feasibility study of the cost-effectiveness expanded District services or incorporation should be made when 1,000 units have been constructed, and when 10,000 square feet of retail sales area has been constructed.

### 5.4 Matrix of Actions and Responsibilities

The implementation steps outlines above are shown in matrix form below.

Implementation Action	Time Frame	Estimated Cost	Responsibility / Funding Source	Planning Schedule	Implementation Schedule
1. Review Applications for Consistency	Short Term	\$ 0	County/ District	N/A	1999
2. Reduce or Waive Fees	Short Term	To be announced	County	N/A	1999
3. Annual Cost-of-Development Mailings	Short Term Continuing	\$2,000	SPOA/ District	1999	2000
4. Web Site Information Bank	Short Term Continuing	\$5,000	Realtors / SPOA/ County	1999	2000
5. Periodic Sales Pools	Short Term Continuing	\$1,000 per pool	Realtors / SPOA	1999	2000
6. Annual Lot Auction	Short Term Continuing	\$5,000 per auction	Realtors / SPOA	1999	2000
7. Reduce Road Standards for Remote Areas	Short Term	\$ 0	County	N/A	1999
8. Support Efforts to Create New Financing Districts	On Request	\$ 0	SPOA / County	N/A	On Request
9. Finalize the System for TDC Transfers	Medium Term	\$ 0	County / Realtors / SPOA	2000	2001
10. Water Supply Study	Short Term	\$20,000	District	As Determined by Morrison Creek District	
11. Ski Area Feasibility Study	Medium Term	\$20,000	Landowner	As Determined by Landowner	
12. Golf Course Feasibility Study	Medium Term	\$20,000	Landowner	As Determined by Landowner	



<b>Implementation Action</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Responsibility / Funding Source</b>	<b>Planning Schedule</b>	<b>Implementation Schedule</b>
<b>13. Marina Feasibility Study</b>	<b>Medium Term</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>	<b>County/ Landowner</b>	<b>As Determined by Landowner</b>	
<b>14. Trails System Planning</b>	<b>Medium Term</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>	<b>County / USFW / SPOA / State Parks</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>
<b>15. Employee/Affordable Housing Needs Study</b>	<b>Medium Term</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>	<b>County/SPOA</b>	<b>When 500 du's are built</b>	<b>Following year</b>
<b>16. Encourage Stagecoach Rezonings Consistent With Plan</b>	<b>Continuing</b>	<b>\$ 0</b>	<b>County / SPOA</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>17. Encourage Surrounding Lands to Remain Rural</b>	<b>Continuing</b>	<b>\$ 0</b>	<b>County / SPOA</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>18. Encourage Lot Sales or Donations to Land Conservation Organizations</b>	<b>Continuing</b>	<b>\$ 0</b>	<b>County/ SPOA/ Conservation Organizations</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>19. Update Transportation Planning Regularly</b>	<b>Continuing</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>	<b>County / SPOA / District</b>	<b>Now, and when 500 and 1,000 dwelling units reached; and one month after opening of each key recreational amenity.</b>	
<b>20. Evaluate Incorporation and Expanded District Service Options</b>	<b>Continuing</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>	<b>SPOA / District</b>	<b>When 1,000 units have been constructed, and when 10,000 square feet of retail sales area has been constructed</b>	

## 5.5 Conclusion

Although the bankruptcies of Woodmoor and the Morrison Creek District have created significant challenges over the past 25 years, the Stagecoach area still retains its stunning beauty, its unique combination of potential recreational opportunities, and the organizations necessary to make it a success. Colorado's strong real estate economy and tourism industry are also poised to support the future development of the area in a way that both Stagecoach and Routt County can be proud of.

If the vision in this Plan is embraced by the community, and future decisions are consistent with it, there is every reason to believe that Stagecoach will mature into a unique, high quality community.

Although quite different and somewhat smaller than the original Woodmoor vision, it will probably be even more rewarding to its residents and more sensitive to the land that is the source of its charm.

**APPENDIX**

**INFRASTRUCTURE COST STUDY  
FOR STAGECOACH SUBDIVISIONS**

**Prepared by Civil Design Consultants**

# Stagecoach Area Community Plan

## SUMMARY OF ESTIMATED COSTS

SUBDIVISION	S.F. EQUIV. PLATTED		WATER	SEWER	ROADS	ELECTRIC	TELEPHONE	EQUITY	TOTAL***	COST PER	COST PER
	LOTS*	LOTS**								S.F. EQUIV. LOT*	PLATTED LOT**
Meadowgreen	50	50	255,750	335,600	238,800	125,000	25,000	30,661	949,489	18,990	18,990
Southshore	265	229	2,360,000	1,724,600	340,000	801,500	114,500	42,791	5,297,809	19,992	23,135
Morningside I	183	183	960,000	855,000	150,000	457,500	91,500	31,155	2,482,845	13,567	13,567
Horseback	325	249	1,367,000	1,743,060	244,000	871,500	124,500	45,174	4,304,886	13,246	17,289
Blackhorse I	101	101	500,500	738,000	556,800	353,500	50,500	16,113	2,183,187	21,616	21,616
Blackhorse II	210	70	0	99,000	399,600	245,000	35,000	8,393	770,207	3,668	11,003
Sky Hitch I	93	93	836,000	975,125	547,200	325,500	46,500	14,255	2,716,070	29,205	29,205
Sky Hitch II	59	59	356,950	593,475	272,580	206,500	29,500	8,832	1,450,173	24,579	24,579
Sky Hitch III	43	43	192,500	374,675	168,000	150,500	21,500	6,669	900,506	20,942	20,942
Sky Hitch IV	167	167	976,500	1,152,710	901,800	584,500	83,500	27,396	3,671,614	21,986	21,986
South Station I	218	218	929,200	1,521,280	950,400	763,000	109,000	34,699	4,238,181	19,441	19,441
South Station II	131	131	729,250	880,320	669,000	458,500	65,500	21,977	2,780,593	21,226	21,226
High Cross	65	65	280,500	474,150	61,200	227,500	32,500	9,478	1,066,372	16,406	16,406
Overland	138	138	866,500	1,080,330	882,000	483,000	69,000	22,152	3,358,678	24,338	24,338
<b>TOTALS</b>	2048	1796	10,610,650	12,547,325	6,381,380	6,053,000	898,000	319,745	36,170,610	17,661 (avg.)	20,140 (avg.)

\* Single family equivalent lots: each multifamily lot is considered as three single family equivalent lots for master planning purposes.

\*\* Platted lots: both single family and multifamily lots are counted only once for cost comparison purposes.

\*\*\* Total estimated cost of improvements required has been reduced by member subdivision's equity as of 31 August 1998

Estimated costs include 15 percent for survey and engineering and are based upon year 2000 dollars.

Estimated costs for infrastructure improvements are based upon typical costs experienced in this area considering contracts procured through the public, competitive bid process; costs will vary from the estimates shown. The costs are also based on planning level quantity estimates, numerous options exist in most cases and further detailed engineering studies are necessary to determine more accurate cost projections.

Estimated costs assume that each subdivision's improvements are completed as one large project and that all of the required extensions in adjacent subdivisions which are necessary for connection are in place.