



# Town of Star Valley Ranch Natural Resource Board

## Fox Run Park Master Plan

August 11, 2016

### Purpose and Need:

During 2008 the Town of Star Valley Ranch entered into an agreement with the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to transfer a 40 acres isolated parcel of public land from the federal government to the town. This transfer is authorized by the Recreation and Public Purposes Act. As required by this act, the town was committed to make certain public improvements and apply for a patent or “first deed” on this parcel. This deed has certain conditions or limitations that must be met in perpetuity or this land would be returned to the federal government. This public law requires that the parcel be held for public use and that recreation facilities developed are free to all citizens.

The Town of Star Valley Ranch worked with the Ashworth Group, landscape architects to develop a conceptual site plan. This plan (see map Appendix 1) was adopted and through a recreation grant process, a number of recreation improvements were made in 2010 and 2011. In addition the town constructed a new public works facility on approximately 5 acres of the 40 acres tract. Based on this commitment by the town and these new improvements, the BLM issued a patent to the Town of Star Valley Ranch in 2012.

Until 2012 this new public facility was known simply as the “BLM parcel” In 2012 the town’s Natural Resource Board (NRB) recommended to the town council that the park be named “Fox Run Park”. This name was adopted by the town and a new sign was installed in 2013.

A **land patent** is an exclusive land grant made by a sovereign entity with respect to a particular tract of land. To make such a grant “patent”, the sovereign entity (in this case the Federal Government) must document the land grant, securely sign and seal the document (patent), and openly publish the documents for the public to see. An official land patent is the highest evidence of right, title, and interest to a defined area. Patents are also known as **first-title deeds**.

**Overriding Planning Principle:** *Based on public input and desire, the Town of Star Valley Ranch will provide recreation facilities at Fox Run Park that are cost effective, meet the needs of the town’s citizens and protect the existing environment.*

### Natural Environment:

The forty acres within Fox Run Park is relatively level with a slight slope to the west-southwest. It sits on an alluvial fan with material deposited from Cedar Creek Canyon. It contains one historic drainage, the Middle Branch of Cedar Creek, which has not seen flow in 50 years or more. Vegetation is primarily Great Basin Sage with associated grasses and forbs. Along the historic old waterway are Long-leaf Cottonwood trees. Cottonwood requires wet streamside conditions and these trees are in a declining condition, due to the fact that the Middle Branch of Cedar Creek has been diverted to the North Branch for the past 50+ years.

Over 75% of the park area is in an undisturbed condition. On the north side of the parcel, approximately 5 acres have been impacted by the installation of the public works facilities. In the northeast corner several acres have been significantly modified by grading and the installation of a town culinary water well. (see map Appendix 2) Numerous trees have been added within the northeast corner as part of the Arbor Day celebrations.

#### **Wildlife:**

Sagebrush associated vegetation types within the State of Wyoming provide habitat for approximately 87 species of mammals, 297 species of birds, and 63 species of fish, reptiles, and amphibians (Wyoming Interagency Vegetation Committee 2002). Within Fox Run Park a diverse group of wildlife species occupy this island of sagebrush habitat including mule deer, small rodents, badger, fox, rabbit, and many birds including meadow larks, bluebirds, northern flickers, American Robins and various small raptors.

#### **Current Recreational Facilities and Use:**

The town applied for and received a grant for the installation of a number of improvements to the park including approximately 1.5 miles of walking paths, four small covered shelters with picnic tables, a trailhead with information board and along the northwest portion of the path system, 12 exercise stations. These facilities were finished in the spring of 2011.

During the summer months the park is popular with walkers and a few residents who use the exercise stations. Total park use from May to October, based on observation is 15 to 20 persons per day using the park for 30 to 60 minutes. Total summer use: 2,500 to 3,000 visits. Winter use is very light with just a handful of people using the trails to snowshoe.

**Public Meetings, questionnaire and Proposed Facilities:** Two public meetings were held, to gather input on future development of the park, on March 30<sup>th</sup> and April 27<sup>th</sup> of 2016. In addition, a questionnaire was developed and included in the town's Water Bill Newsletter. This questionnaire was also e-mailed to town residents the first week of May, 2016. Based on this public input, the following recreation facilities were identified as possible additions to the park that would be used by town residents:

- Dog Park – a fenced area with water and shade where dogs can run off leash.
- Multi-Purpose Athletic Field – large irrigated grassy area
- Water and Restrooms
- Pickle Ball Courts
- Ice Skating Rinks
- Community Garden w/Greenhouse
- Pond/Water Feature/Irrigate Cottonwood Trees
- Bouldering Wall – a climbing facility that does not require belaying
- Skateboard Park
- Interpretive trail and better signing
- Buck & Pole fencing along park perimeter
- Increased Parking
- Removal of high berms around the Public Works Yard and installation of screened security fencing

## Results of the Community Questionnaire

The Natural Resource Board received 36 responses to the Fox Run Park Master Plan Questionnaire. The analysis of this input leads us to the following conclusions (see results Appendix 3):

- Half of all respondents would like to see the park maintain its natural character.
- Improvements that the public would like to see include restrooms, water, a dog park and groomed winter recreation trails.
- There is very little support for traditional “municipal park” type improvements such as athletic fields, skateboard parks, etc.

## Proposed Alternatives: (see Alternative Maps, Appendix 4)

- **Alternative #1: No Action** - manage the current facilities with an emphasis to the open space and natural characteristics of the park. Maintain the portable toilet but no water development would be added.
- **Alternative #2: Minimal Development** – maintain the current open space natural character of the park. Install a Dog Park in the northeast corner of the property where the natural sage brush/steppe habitat has already been disturbed. Install water and restrooms.
- **Alternative #3: Medium Development** - To the existing facilities add a Dog Park, Multipurpose Athletic Field, 4 Pickle Ball Courts and a Community Garden. The Pickle Ball Courts could be designed to allow flooding in winter for an Ice Skating Rink. Dog Park would be in the center of the park and the current parking area would be expanded to the east. Install restrooms and water.
- **Alternative #4: Maximum Development** - In addition to the facilities in Alternatives #2 and #3 a Skateboard Park, Boulderling Walls and an Interpretive Trail would be added.
- **Alternative #5: Maximum Development with Water Feature** - Same as Alternative #4 but a water feature would be added by designing a stream to follow the old Middle Branch of Cedar Creek drainage with a small pond at the southwest corner of the park.

**Evaluation Criteria:** The following evaluation criteria were developed from public input at the two public meetings. These criteria were used in the analysis of the various alternatives.

- Cost Effective/Return On Investment
- Grants Available for funding project including maintenance
- Meets a need demonstrated by public interest/use
- Affordable annual maintenance cost
- Minimizes impact to the natural environment
- Meets the needs of children
- Anticipates the change in town demographics
- Increased liability to the town

### Limitations and Constraints:

During the planning process certain limitations and constraints were identified, these include:

- Recreation facilities must be free to the public, no admission charges
- Maintenance of facilities with town employees and resources will be extremely limited
- All improvements will need to be funded with grants, donations and the work of volunteers
- Environmental concerns
- No duplication of facilities with other organizations

**Analysis of Alternatives:** Each alternative was evaluated against the stated evaluation criteria. See table below:

Evaluation Criteria	Alt #1	Alt #2	Alt #3	Alt #4	Alt #5
Cost Effective/Return On Investment	+	++	-	-	-
Grants Available for funding project including maintenance	+	+	-	-	-
Meets a need demonstrated by public interest/use	-	+			
Maintenance cost	++	+	-	-	-
Minimizes impact to the natural environment	++	+	+	-	-
Meets the needs of children	--	-	-	++	++
Anticipates the change in town demographics	--	-	+	++	++
Increased liability to the town	++	+	-	-	--
Does not duplicate a facility already available in the area	++	++	--	-	--

**++ Exceeds criteria**

**+ Meets criteria**

**- Partially meets criteria**

**-- Does not meet criteria**

### Recommended Alternative:

Based on the above analysis the Natural Resource Board recommends to the Town of Star Valley Ranch Alternative #2. This alternative was selected by the NRB based on the following:

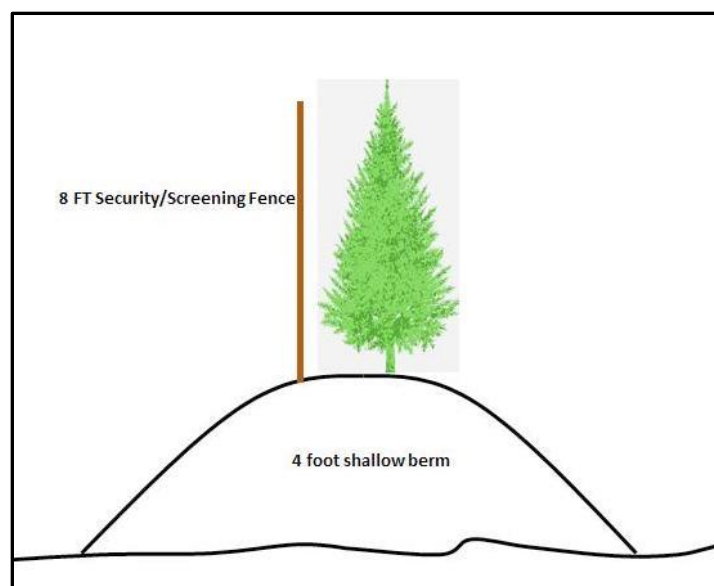
- Minimizes impact to the natural environment
- Increases recreation use, based on the documented desires of the public.
- Is cost effective; grants for development and maintenance are available
- Does not duplicate recreational facilities that are already available to town citizens
- Does not increase the liability to the Town of Star Valley Ranch

**Other Recommendations:** In addition to the selected alternative the Natural Resource Board recommends the following improvements to the park. These improvements would apply to any selected alternative:

- Install 'Buck & Pole' fencing around the exterior perimeter of the park to reduce the chance of motorized vehicle trespass into the area.
- Utilize vault toilets when looking into installing permanent restrooms. These toilets can be used year-round without winterization or heating the restroom structure.



- Reduce the height of the various berms around the Public Works Yard and install a security/screening fence and plant trees. This would improve the visual appearance of the maintenance facility. See diagram below.



# **Appendix 1**

## **Existing Fox Run Park Masterplan**





## **Appendix 2**

### **Natural Environment Map**



# Fox Run Park

Town of Star Valley Ranch, WY  
1/12/16

## Legend

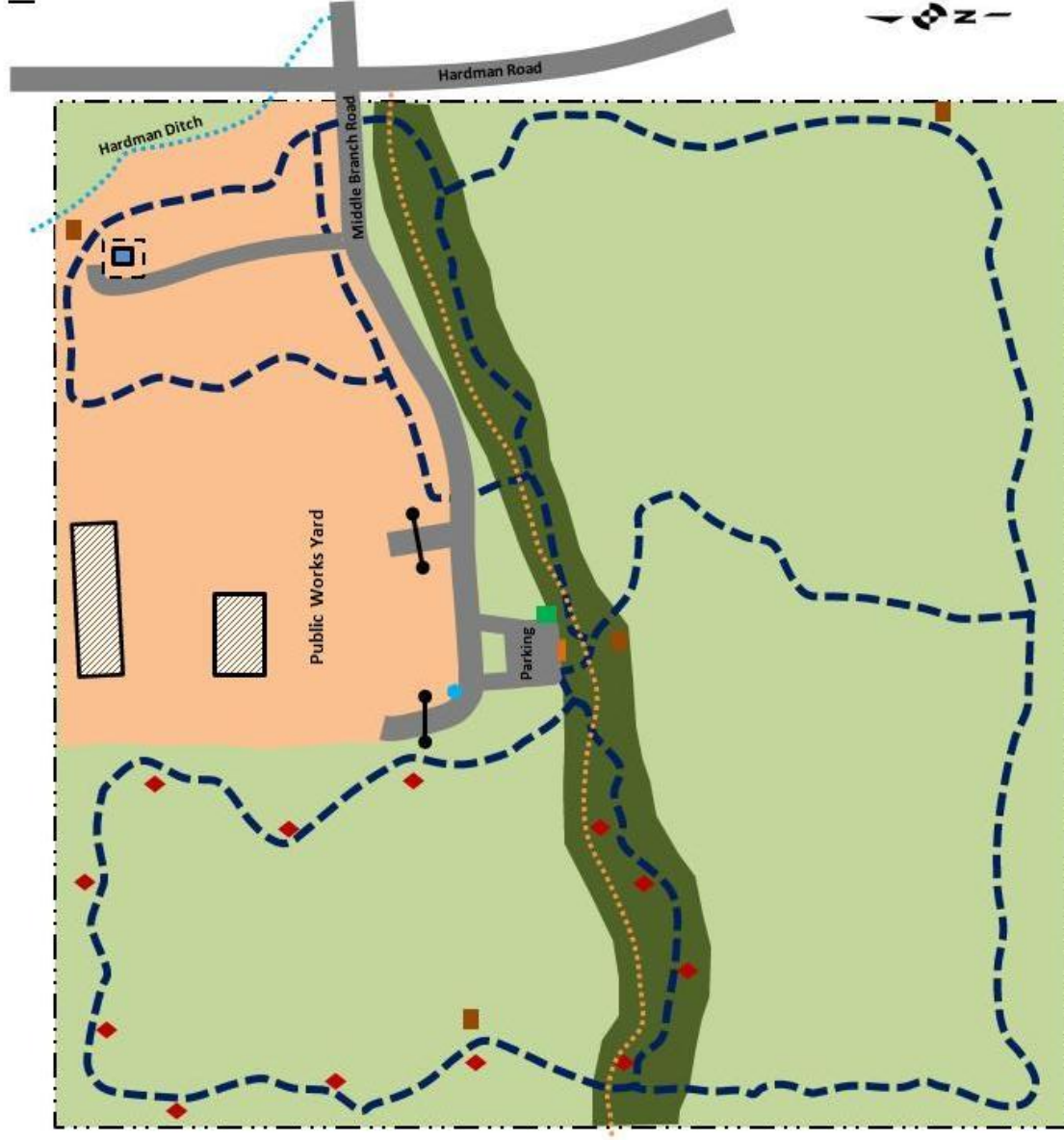
- Walking Trail:
- Exercise Station:
- Picnic Shelter:
- Well & Pump House:
- Earthen Berm:
- PWD Buildings:
- Portable Toilet:
- Security Gate:
- Fire Hydrant:
- Information Board:
- Park Boundary:
- Middle Branch Drainage:
- Sagebrush Scrub:
- Cottonwood Sagebrush:
- Area w/75% Veg Disturbance:

## Fox Run Park

### Natural

### Environment

Scale: 1"=200'



# Appendix 3

## Results of Fox Run Park Questionnaire

Percentage of respondents that said they would like to see:

Water	50.0%
Restrooms	47.2%
Natural Areas	47.2%
Dog Park	44.4%
Groomed X Country Ski & Snowshoe Trails	38.9%
Nature Trail	33.3%
Chip-Seal Trails	27.8%
Community Garden/ Greenhouse	16.7%
Pond/Water Feature	16.7%
Ice Skating Rink	13.9%
Bouldering Wall	11.1%
Pickle Ball Court	11.1%
Athletic Field	11.1%
Skateboard Park	2.8%
Frisbee Golf	2.8%

## Fox Run Park Masterplan – Questionnaire Comments

- Would like to see the park mostly natural/open space
- Keep as natural as possible, focus on enjoying nature outside in our natural park
- For the amount of people I see using it right now all would be a waste of money
- Need trash receptacles
- It would be nice to make it clear; no horses on x-country ski trails. Couldn't believe someone had their horse on the trails last winter, yucky!
- Tennis Court! Love the fitness trail
- Keep skiers and their dogs off the golf courses where snowmobiles ride and pay! Omit permits for snowmobiles. They pay for what??
- There are a lot of people who have dogs but no place to take them to socialize and play with other dogs. Would love to see a dog park here.
- Please keep the park quiet and natural. Things like a skateboard park & pickle ball will detract from the natural serenity.
- Dog parks mean barking dogs and dog poo that owners tend not to pick up after. A dog park would have to be monitored. Does the town really want to monitor a dog park.
- Variety of trees, flowering, etc.
- Should be a large area for the dog park. Small is a waste of money. There or elsewhere where drinking water is available.
- Leave it the way it is - open space. To me it is ridiculous to try and make a nice park with the ugly maintenance yard to look at!! Dodging trucks and heavy equipment is not my idea of a pleasant park experience.
- I would really like it to look as natural as possible to keep the beauty of the park.
- Get rid of those stupid earth berms and install a nice looking fence!
- Please keep it natural and classy. No tacky-tacky!
- It would seem better to chip & seal all of the roadways before doing expensive recreational things, fun things. Hard surfaced roads will promote biking and walking and would benefit every single person on SVR. Thanks.
- Thayne has good facilities that the Ranch can use and vice versa
- Inside gym with bikes and exercise equipment, yoga classes and line dancing.
- Not all of these facilities need to be at Fox Run Park. Spread out around the town.
- Remember the playground equipment we have is not used much. Enthusiasm is great, use isn't!
- Swings and slides for children so families can enjoy this park. Also a bike trail to enjoy park and double as a walking trail.
- Think you should take better care of existing things. Oil road – fix potholes from Town Hall to HOA Building. Vote = NO Fox Run Park
- Current leash laws make it nearly impossible to run your dog legally. Seems a reasonable expectation to provide such a place (dog park).
- Please, a dog park would be such a plus!
- Support groomed x-country ski trails if there is a way to prevent snowmobiles from entering

- I treasure that fact that Fox Run Park is a natural park with native sagebrush habitat. As more and more lots are developed on the ranch this native habitat will continue to disappear. The sage, wildflowers, juniper and low native shrubs remain on few developed lots. It is important to honor the land that was here before human intervention. It has so much to teach us!
- The sound level/noise of the above options should be taken into account in terms of possible disturbance to natives birds and small mammals.
- Fox Run Park is very unique in its natural presence. If it is thought that a more recreational “traditional” park is desired, it would be nice to have it in a location of its own. By doing so, it would continue to support the natural, “peaceful”, feeling that exists in the current Fox Run Park.
- It would be wonderful to preserve some open space in a more natural state!

## **Appendix 4**

### **Alternative Maps**

# Fox Run Park

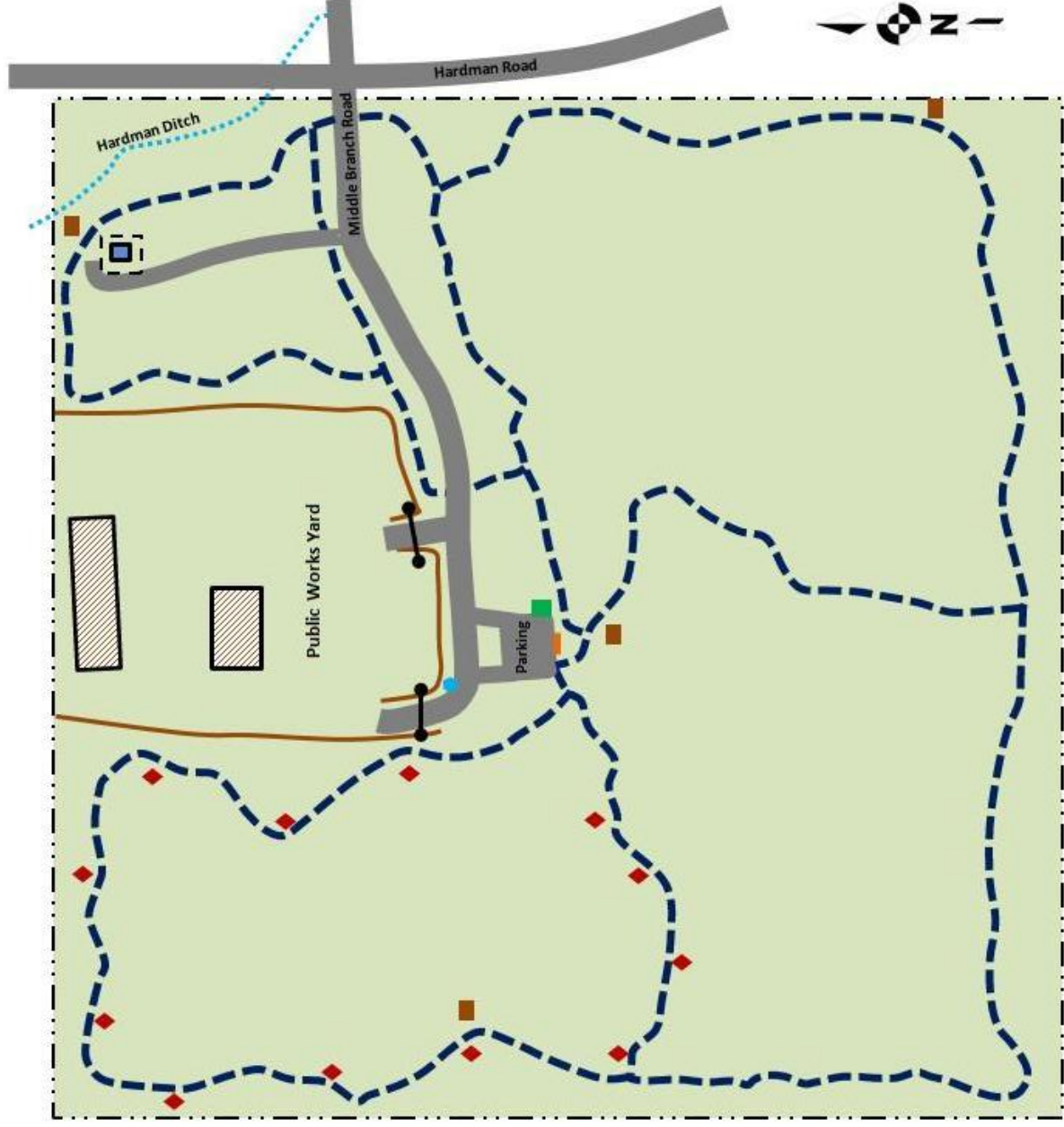
Town of Star Valley Ranch, WY  
7/14/16

## Legend

- Walking Trail:
- Exercise Station:
- Picnic Shelter:
- Well & Pump House:
- Earthen Berm:
- PWD Buildings:
- Portable Toilet:
- Security Gate:
- Fire Hydrant:
- Information Board:
- Park Boundary:

**Fox Run Park**  
**Master Plan**  
**Alternative #1**  
**(no action)**

Scale: 1"=200'





# Fox Run Park

Town of Star Valley Ranch, WY  
1/12/16

## Legend

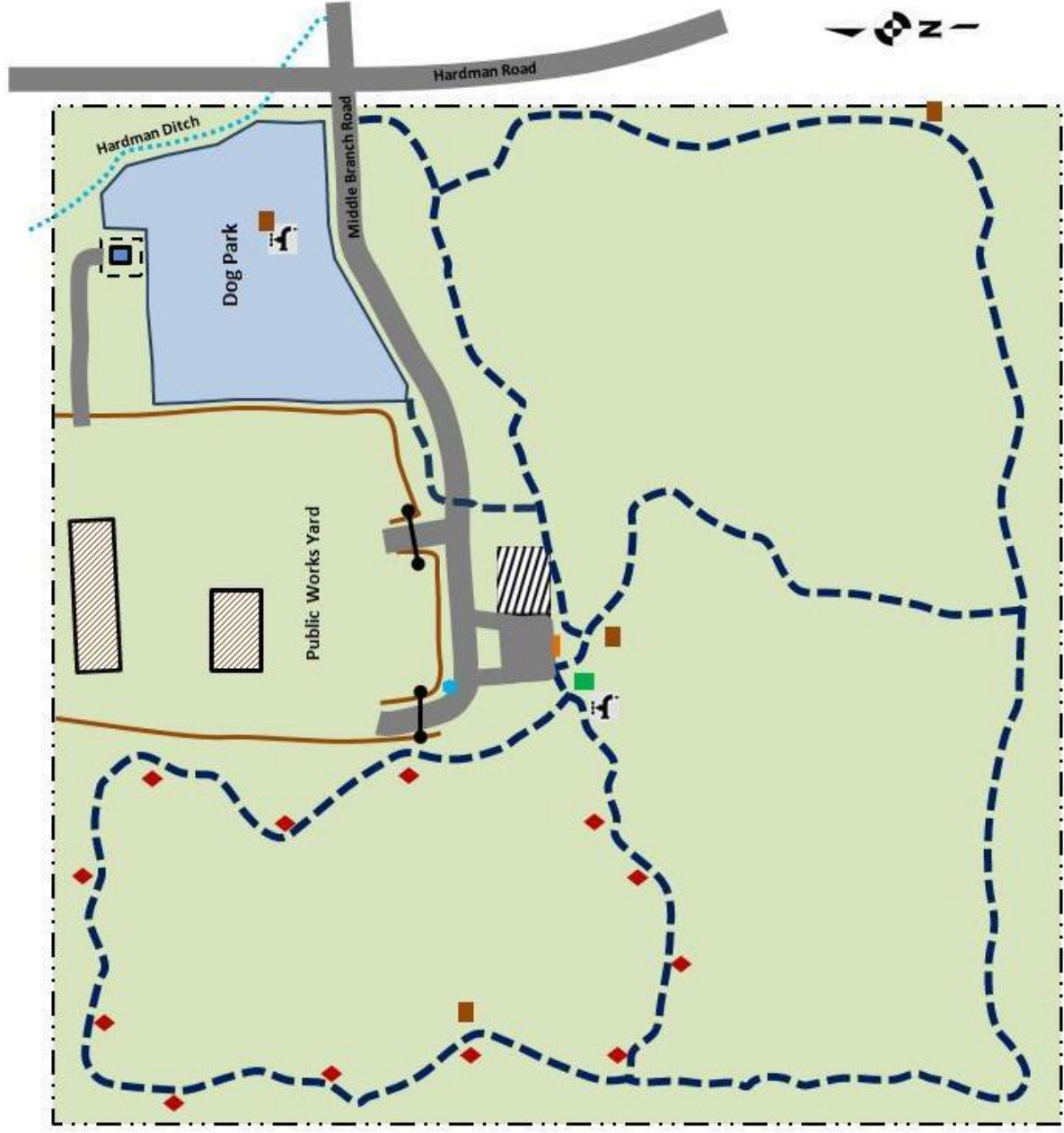
- Walking Trail:
- Exercise Station:
- Picnic Shelter:
- Well & Pump House:
- Earthen Berm:
- PWD Buildings:
- Toilet:
- Security Gate:
- Fire Hydrant:
- Information Board:
- Park Boundary:
- Water Hydrant:
- Expanded Parking:

**Updated Draft**

**Master Plan**

**Alternative #2**

Scale: 1"=200'



# Fox Run Park

Town of Star Valley Ranch, WY

7/14/16

## Legend

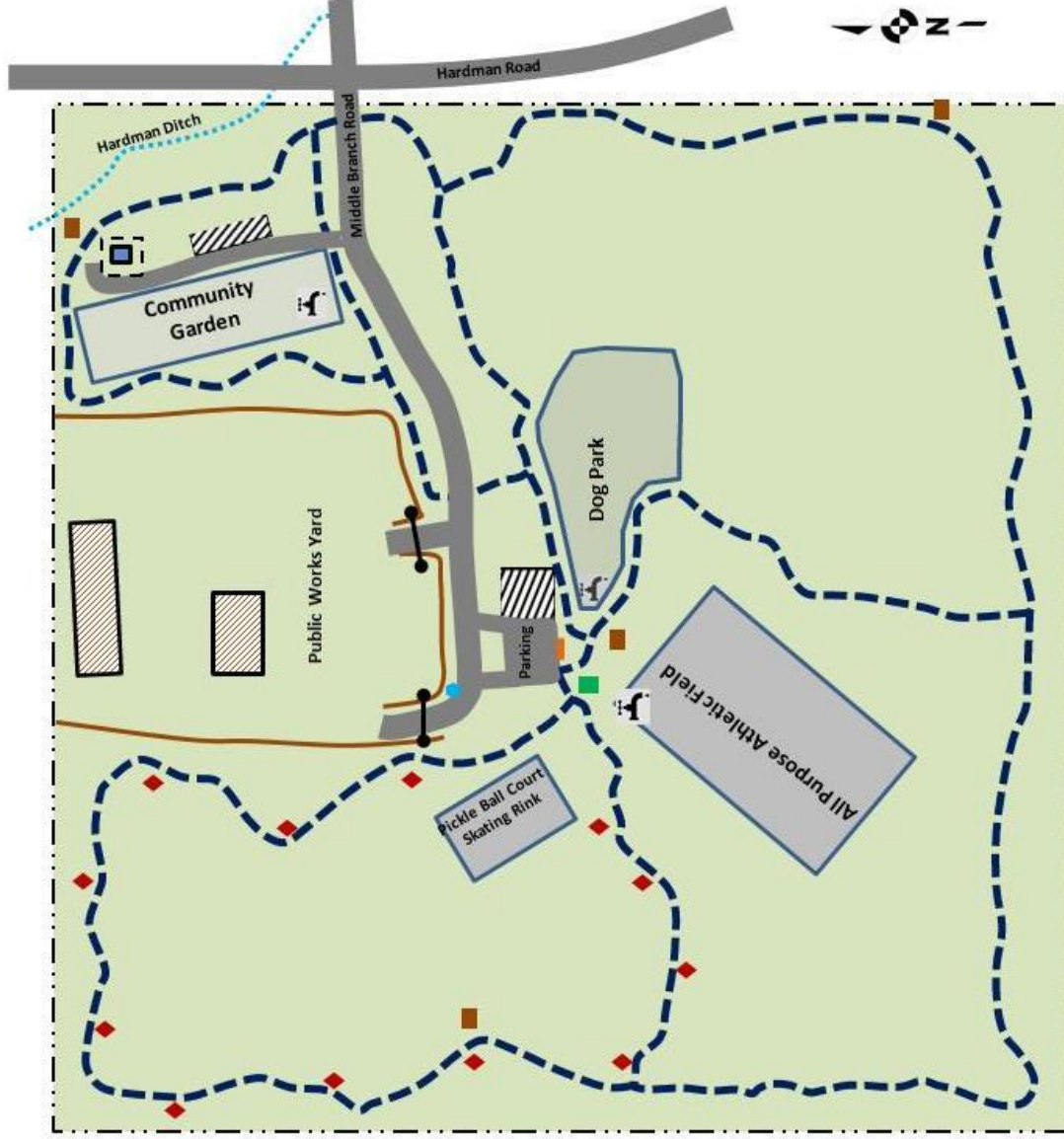
- Walking Trail:
- Exercise Station:
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- Well & Pump House:
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- PWD Buildings:
- Toilet:
- Security Gate:
- Fire Hydrant:
- Information Board:
- Park Boundary:
- Water Hydrant:
- Expanded Parking:

**Updated Draft**

**Master Plan**

**Alternative #3**

Scale: 1"=200'



# Fox Run Park

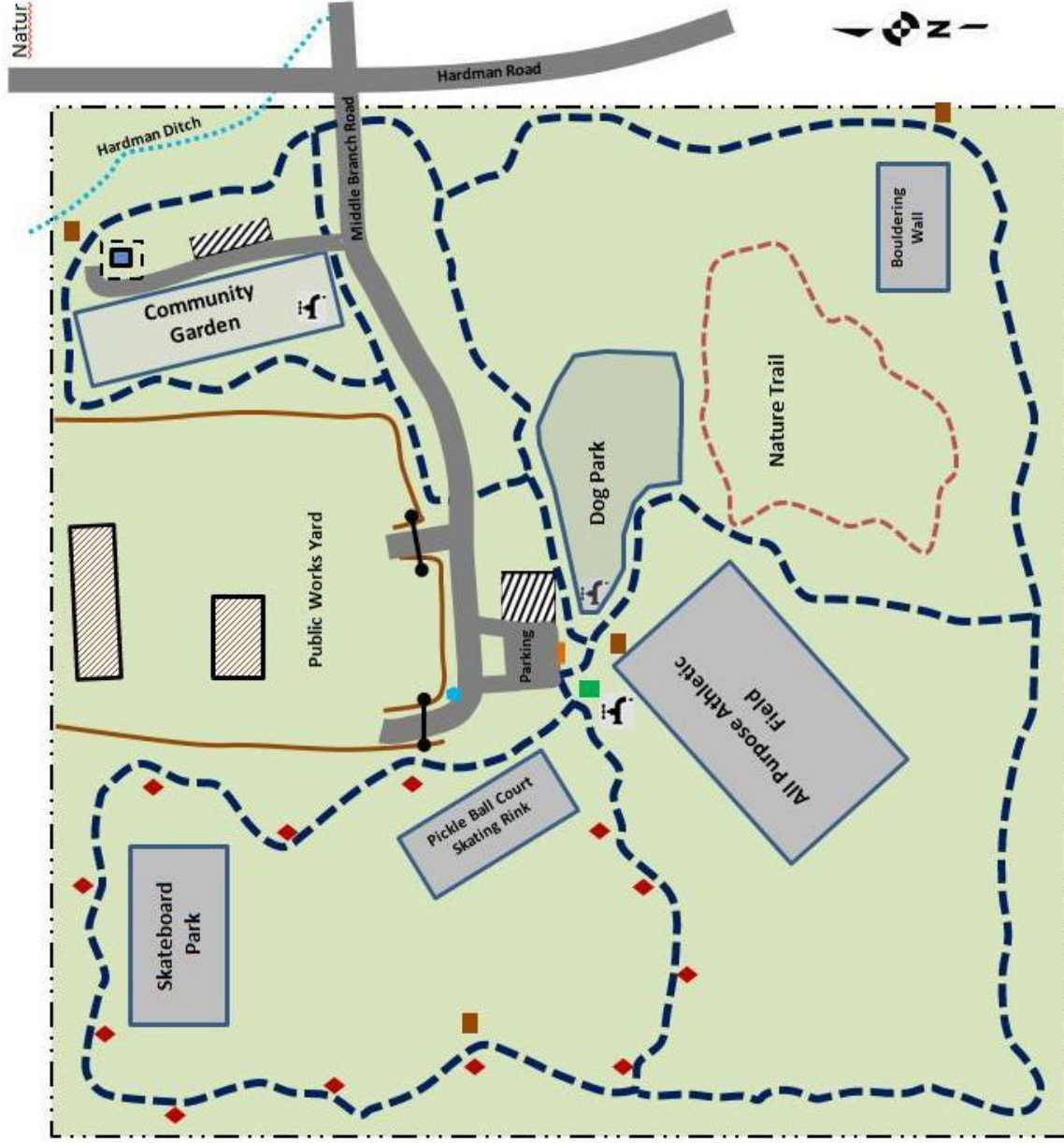
Town of Star Valley Ranch, WY  
7/14/16

## Legend

- Walking Trail:
- Exercise Station:
- Picnic Shelter:
- Well & Pump House:
- Earthen Berm:
- PWD Buildings:
- Toilet:
- Security Gate:
- Fire Hydrant:
- Information Board:
- Park Boundary:
- Water Hydrant:
- Expanded Parking:

**Updated Draft**  
**Master Plan**  
**Alternative #4**

Scale: 1"=200'





# Fox Run Park

Town of Star Valley Ranch, WY  
7/14/16

## Legend

- Water Feature:
- Walking Trail:
- Exercise Station:
- Picnic Shelter:
- Well & Pump House:
- Earthen Berm:
- PWD Buildings:
- Toilet:
- Security Gate:
- Fire Hydrant:
- Information Board:
- Park Boundary:
- Water Hydrant:
- Expanded Parking:

**Updated Draft**  
**Master Plan**  
**Alternative #5**

Scale: 1"=200'

