

# City of Black Hawk

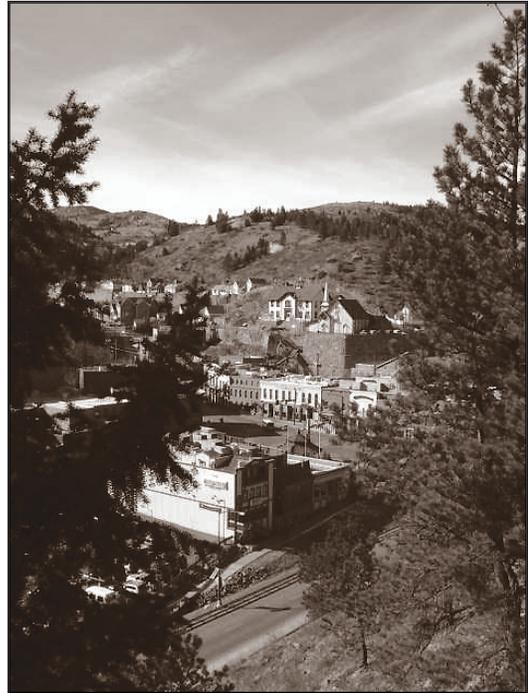


Public Open Space and Heritage Master Plan  
SEPTEMBER, 2003

# City of Black Hawk

## Public Open Space and Heritage Master Plan

Prepared By:  
City of Black Hawk Planning Staff  
DHM Design Corporation



September 2003

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All other photos by Mike Strunk, DHM Design.

## PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS

This is not a zoning document. Rather, it is an advisory guideline that illustrates and describes broad goals that reflect public input made during the planning process.

The open space areas shown on this map are schematic in nature and represent a vision that has been developed by the citizens. It is possible that not all land within the bubbles will become public open space due to property owners who do not wish to sell their land or because of funding limitations. Boundaries may be revised in the future in response to landowner desires and more detailed survey information.

Similarly, indicated trail locations are schematic in nature and may be later adjusted in response to field conditions and property ownership. If a trail shown on the maps crosses private land, for example, and the owner is not interested in negotiating with the city to provide land or an easement for the trail, the route may be relocated or deleted from further consideration.

Definition of open space for Black Hawk:

*Open space is that land which is protected from development because of its importance to the community due to the value of wildlife habitat, scenic qualities and/or heritage resources. It will be established only by acquiring land from willing landowners, or by designating existing public lands for protection.*

## DOCUMENT STATUS

This is the final report for the master plan, but it has not yet been adopted by the Board of Aldermen. When it is formally adopted, a copy of the resolution will be inserted into the front of this document.

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## INTRODUCTION

### Project Background and Goals

In 1859, John Gregory struck gold in what is now known as Black Hawk and the area became one of the richest mining areas in the United States. During the three decades that followed Gregory's original strike, hundreds of mines, homes and commercial buildings were constructed, mills and railroads were developed, and a network of mining roads and trails was established. During the 1900s mining declined, buildings were abandoned, and the area's rich heritage began to molder into the earth. By 1990, only a shadow of the former architectural treasure was left.



To jump-start flagging economies, and to fund preservation of the heritage of three mining communities, Colorado voters, in 1991, passed an initiative that allowed limited-stakes gambling to occur in Cripple Creek, Central City and Black Hawk... with the stipulation that a portion of the gaming revenues go back into those communities to fund historic preservation projects. Local investors, as well as nationally recognized gaming organizations, quickly began developing gambling establishments, both in historic buildings and by building new, state-of-the-art casinos. Gaming revenues began flowing into City coffers for historic preservation and by the end of 2002 nearly \$5 million was spent by Black Hawk for the purchase and rehabilitation of historic structures.

Black Hawk citizens, staff and elected officials have always been tremendously proud of the community's mining heritage and, in late 2002, decided to undertake an open space and heritage master plan to identify the most significant natural and cultural resources, and to develop strategies for their protection and interpretation. In January 2003, DHM Design Corporation, a firm with extensive experience in planning open space systems and protecting the heritage of similar small communities, was selected to work with the City of Black Hawk in the preparation of this Public Open Space and Heritage Master Plan. DHM was charged with several goals for the plan that had been articulated by the City:

- provide ways in which Black Hawk property owners can become involved in the preparation of the plan,
- use a collaborative and cooperative planning process that will foster sound relationships with other agencies,
- protect open space and the town's cultural heritage,
- develop a trail system,
- create destination tourism and economic diversification,
- provide a community identity, and
- create a southern gateway to the Peak to Peak Scenic and Historic Byway.

The master plan was to address the downtown area, primarily streetscape and creekscape issues, as well as the hill country above town. As seen on the accompanying maps, Black Hawk's Municipal Boundary Area (roughly 1,500 acres, or 2.5 square miles) is the same as the city limits and is surrounded, additionally, by the Growth Area (approximately 3,500 acres, or 5.5 square miles). The total study area, then, is roughly 5,000 acres, or 8 square miles.



## Definition of Open Space

There is no universally accepted definition of “open space”. Rather, since the use of that term came into common usage in the 1970s, each community that has established an open space system has developed their own definition. This was pointed out in this project’s first newsletter, where it was stated that citizens would be developing a definition for open space that was unique to Black Hawk. At this point in time, considering all public input to date, the definition of open space as it pertains to Black Hawk is expressed thus:

*Open space is that land which is protected from development because of its importance to the community due to the value of wildlife habitat, scenic qualities and/or heritage resources. It will be established only by acquiring land from willing landowners, or by designating existing public lands for protection.*

*Open space will typically be available for public use, except for seasonal closures that may be required to protect wildlife during migration, calving and nesting seasons.*

*Conservation easements may be acquired on land that remains in private ownership, because of wildlife or scenic qualities, in which case the land may be open only to visual access by the public.*

## Relationship of the Open Space Plan to the Comprehensive Plan

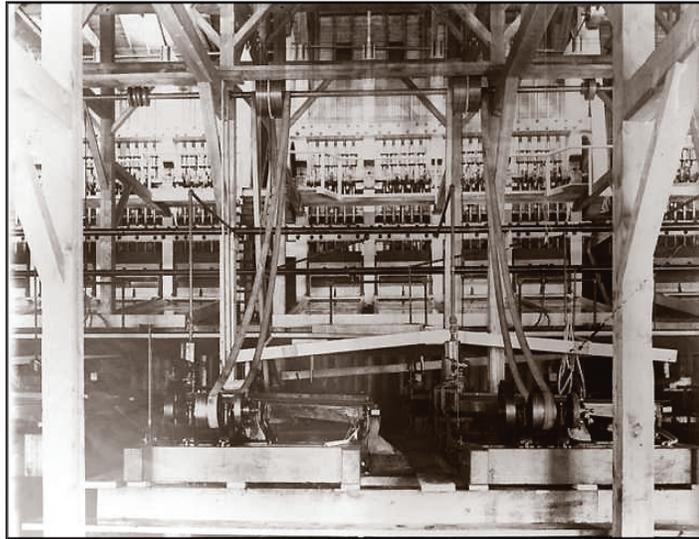
Black Hawk’s most recent Comprehensive Plan dates to 1993 and it contains several goals, action statements and guidelines that are consistent with, and set the stage for, this 2003 open space and heritage master plan:

- Create an entrance way into Black Hawk.
- Develop a park-like environment along the Creek, similar to that in Estes Park.
- Improve overall community aesthetics and amenities by creating landscaped trails, parks, and walkways, landscaping visual corridors, creating sidewalks, and lighting the streets, etc.
- Preserve and protect the community’s historic appearance and character.
- Encourage and assist the local historical society to work with other groups with similar interests, in researching and recording the history of the Black Hawk area, and specifically to identify properties which are of particular historic significance. The City will encourage and assist in the preservation of those properties of greatest significance to the Historical Society, and to the general public.
- Encourage the development of pedestrian walkways, with a priority on sidewalks and creek-side walkways in the existing developed areas of the City.
- Protect, enhance, perpetuate and use structures of historical, architectural or geographic significance, as a means of creating a special destination for visitors.
- Create hiking and biking trails.
- Protect and enhance the historic, cultural, artistic, social, economic, political and architectural elements of the City’s heritage, to ensure that the City remains a special place to visit.
- Promote outstanding historical or architectural structures, for the education, stimulation and satisfaction of the people of the City.
- Annually identify endangered historic resources that require preservation funds, and utilize the gaming-related proceeds available to the City of Black Hawk from the Colorado Historical Society, to ensure that Black Hawk’s special character, and unique properties are maintained.
- Open up a mining and milling museum with educational programs.
- Preserve environmentally sensitive areas.



- Preserve open space areas around the historic core.
- Preserve passive open space areas that help to retain the rural character of Black Hawk.
- Develop low impact outdoor recreation activities.

The 1993 Comprehensive Plan, of course, also addresses other types of land use including residential, commercial, business services and gaming. Understandably, after ten years of extremely high growth in the downtown area, the 1993 plan is in need of being updated. During the open space planning process, in fact, some residents and elected officials began to consider land use issues other than open space... particularly residential growth. Rather than cloud the issue of open space planning, however, this master plan addresses primarily open space and related issues. The City is currently considering beginning an update to the Comprehensive Plan, perhaps upon completion of the open space plan in the fall of 2003.





## PLANNING PROCESS AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

### Newsletters and Post Cards

From the outset, the City of Black Hawk desired a very public planning process... one that provided ample opportunities for residents of the City, citizens who live within the boundary of the Undeveloped Area and absentee property owners to provide input into the master plan. Over 270 names were compiled from Gilpin County Assessor records, and these individuals were kept informed throughout the process with a series of newsletters and post cards. Each was apprised of every meeting and milestone during the planning endeavor.

### Public Meetings, Workshops and Hearings

A series of three public meetings and workshops was held during the early stages of the planning process. On March 27, the first meeting was held to discuss the project methodology and schedule, and to identify issues, concerns and ideas. A hands-on workshop charrette was conducted on May 3 where citizens used blank base maps, flip charts and markers to begin to develop alternatives for the open space plan. Following refinement of the alternatives by the planning team, on June 12, a public meeting was held to discuss a set of three different scenarios for the Hill Country and Downtown areas. A fourth public hearing was held on August 13 to review a final version of the Draft Plan.



### Citizen Survey

A scientific survey of the 270 property owners in the Black Hawk area was administered in May and June. Over 14% returned the 28-question survey and provided input on preferences for outdoor activities, trails, open space protection, mining and railroad history, etc. Some of the questions were designed to measure the respondent's views relating both to themselves and to visitors. A "spouse form" was included with the survey so two members of households could provide input.



### Focus Groups

To gain input from potential visitors to Black Hawk, three meetings were held in the Denver metro area with groups of 7-8 people who had a special interest in Black Hawk and its recreation/tourism potential. These focus groups included trail users, history buffs and tourism professionals.

### Citizen Petition

Following a public meeting on June 12, where three alternatives were presented and discussed, citizens generated a petition that has received 45 signatures to date. The essence of the petition is this:

*The signers support Alternative 3. They desire that the Gilpin Tram grade be used for a public trail between Black Hawk and the Glory Hole, near Central City, and that a trail extend east over Miners Mesa back to Black Hawk to complete a loop.*



### One-On-One Communications

To learn about topics outside the public forum, two members of the planning team offered to meet individually with each of the City Aldermen, had informal discussions with citizens as they were encountered during the planning process, received telephone calls from interested landowners, and read letters as they were sent to the team. The planners also met with managers of nearby public land including representatives from the U. S. Forest Service; Colorado State Parks; Colorado Division of Wildlife; Gilpin, Clear Creek and Jefferson Counties; and Central City.

### What We Heard

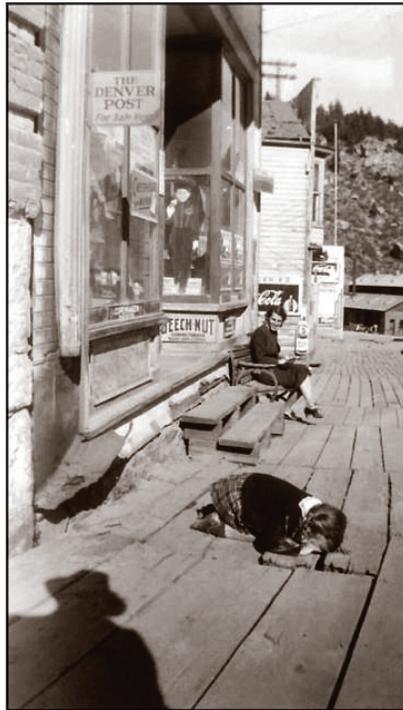
Summaries from the public meetings and focus groups, and results of the citizen survey, are available as a separately bound appendix from the Black Hawk Community Planning and Development Department. The input from all sources was used to help develop the range of alternatives, and ultimately identify the preferred alternative that is the basis of the Master Plan section of this report. Some of the highlights of the public input include the following:

- Citizens very much support protecting open space and developing trails, but want to do so in areas that will not impact residential areas.
- Providing for public use of open space is desired by most residents, however many support seasonal closures of important wildlife habitat areas during migration and calving seasons.
- Protection of visually prominent parcels such as hillsides and meadows, and preservation of wildlife habitat, is very important.
- Historic mining areas, antique mining equipment and the area's railroad history are of great importance and residents want to protect and interpret the remaining resources.
- Re-establishing an excursion train on the Colorado & Southern Railroad bed, between Black Hawk and Central City, is widely supported.
- Use of the Gilpin Tramway grade for a trail is a controversial subject. Residents of lower Chase Gulch feel such a trail would impact their neighborhood while 45 signers of a citizen-initiated petition support use of the Tram bed for a trail.
- There is widespread support for extending the existing downtown creek side trail south along Highway 119 to connect with the Clear Creek Canyon trail that is in the planning stages by Jefferson and Clear Creek Counties.
- Both citizens and elected officials from Black Hawk and Central City expressed a desire to see the two communities begin working together to mutual benefit on open space, trails and a "fun, quiet, people-mover system."
- Black Hawk property owners, understandably, were keenly interested in protecting open space and community heritage, and developing trails, for their own use.
- Participants of the focus groups, and managers of surrounding public lands, felt that Black Hawk could greatly increase its tourism potential by developing trails that connect to those in the nearby national forest, state park and county open space areas. They felt that providing a wide variety of recreational opportunities, including developing a trail system, re-opening an excursion train, capitalizing on the proximity to scenic drives and tours, and offering more opportunities for shopping and dining would be essential to promoting destination tourism.
- In the downtown area, citizens support improving the streetscape and creekscape through the use of landscaping, street furniture, sculpture, walkways and similar features.
- The public also supports the establishment of gateways at each of the three entrances to Black Hawk, including a visitor center at the southern entrance to town, on Highway 119.



### Appendix B - Record of Public Input

Because of the volume of material, copies of the newsletters and postcards, minutes of the public meetings, results of the citizen survey and focus group meetings, the citizen petition, and letters from citizens are available from the Black Hawk City Planner as a separately bound appendix document.





## EXISTING CONDITIONS & RESOURCES

An analysis of existing conditions and natural and cultural resources was undertaken as one of the first steps in the planning process. The information that was obtained during this endeavor was used to help determine, for example, what land and habitat was most in need of open space protection, where trails could be most easily developed in areas that would be of interest to users, and where the greatest opportunities existed for protecting and interpreting Black Hawk's mining, railroading, ranching and Indian heritage.

There is virtually no digital (Geographic Information System/GIS) data available for the Black Hawk area that is of sufficient detail to provide meaningful insight into resource conditions in an area as small as the project study area of approximately 5,000 acres. Thus, the existing conditions and resource analysis in this document represents primarily original research done by the planning team, some of it in consultation with other land managing agencies.

This section contains a description of accompanying maps with the same title as the paragraph headings shown below in bold font.

### **Black Hawk Area Opportunities**

Black Hawk lies near the center of a region with outstanding recreational and destination tourism resources. Within a twenty mile radius are thousands of acres of national forest, a state park, a wide variety of county-managed open space areas, the Continental Divide Trail, and shopping areas in such communities as Nederland, Boulder, Golden, Evergreen, Idaho Springs, Georgetown and Winter Park. Four Scenic/Historic Byways provide scenic drives for residents and visitors: Guanella Pass; Mount Evans; Lariat Loop; and Peak to Peak, for which Black Hawk is the southern gateway.

An outstanding opportunity exists for Black Hawk to work with other jurisdictions to develop a Backcountry Byway over Rollins Pass, much like the Alpine Loop Backcountry Byway between Ouray, Silverton and Lake City in Colorado's San Juan Mountains. The Rollins Pass loop drive would travel from Black Hawk through Central City, Winter Park, Empire, Idaho Springs and Gilpin, Boulder, Grand, and Clear Creek Counties, and would have a positive economic impact to all. The Rollins Pass Backcountry Byway would require re-opening a tunnel and two historic railroad trestles near the top of the pass, but legislation that established the James Peak Wilderness Area in Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests provided for that opportunity.

### **Heritage Resources**

In May 1859, John Gregory struck gold at the west edge of what is now called Black Hawk, having worked his way up Clear Creek Canyon a year earlier. The boom was on and other placer miners quickly followed to pan the nearby gulches. In July 1859, Gregory opened a toll road through Fourmile Gulch to provide a route for hauling out ore that was less tortuous than the more southern Clear Creek Canyon. As the easy gold in the stream bottoms played out, placer mining evolved into hard rock lode mining in the hills above. The number of miners increased, and with that the demand for goods and services, and towns like Black Hawk, Central City, Nevadaville and Russell Gulch began to develop. Black Hawk, lower in elevation than the mines and other towns, evolved into a community of gold mills, while the other towns were more heavily oriented to providing housing for miners who operated the mines above. As ore production increased, so did the demand for better transportation. In 1872, the Colorado Central Railroad reached Black Hawk via Clear Creek Canyon and the Colorado & Southern Railroad, south of Gregory Gulch, and the Gilpin Tramway, in the north side of the district, quickly followed. The Tram eventually extended to a point south of Russell Gulch.



To support the town folks, ranching developed in the meadows of the Quartz Valley, northwest of Black Hawk and Central City. While Indians frequented this valley, primarily because of its abundance of game, they are more commonly associated with the Signal Hill area today.

Today, Black Hawk and the hills above contain fascinating remnants of abandoned mines and mills. An existing network of old mining roads, trails and railroad grades, most of them on private land, provide ways that local residents use to explore and enjoy their mining heritage. Ranching has diminished in the Black Hawk area in recent years, but horses and cattle still graze the Quartz Valley and Lake Gulch areas and interesting wooden corrals, water troughs, sheds and ranch houses provide a glimpse into an earlier era.



*Lake Gulch*



*Lake Gulch*

The remaining cultural resources of the Black Hawk area would be of great interest to visitors if they were made accessible through a public open space and trail system... and such a system would protect the heritage of which Black Hawk citizens are justifiably proud.



*Miner's Mesa*



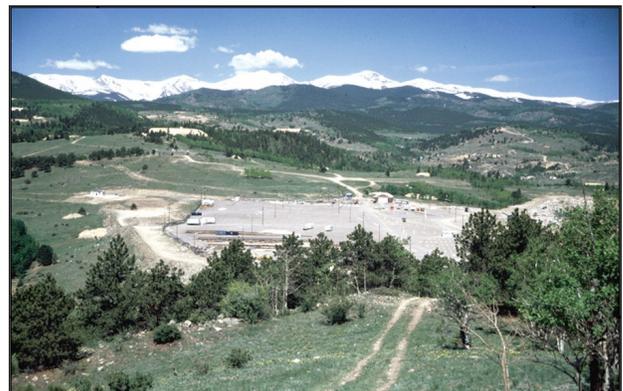
*Miner's Mesa*



*Downtown Black Hawk*

### Landforms, Views & Winds

As seen on the accompanying map, the Black Hawk area is located in a rugged area of Colorado's Front Range. Downtown sits at the confluences of Gregory Gulch and Chase Gulch with North Clear Creek Canyon, at an elevation of about 8,000 feet, while mountains rise almost 2,000 feet above the heart of the community. Several distinct watersheds are separated by major ridge lines, and smaller ridges further define the landscape character. Outstanding scenic views are common from the ridge tops, particularly from Maryland Mountain and Signal Hill, from which the Continental Divide, to the west, and Mount Evans, to the South, can be seen. The major ridges that run east-west create north slope conditions which are much cooler than the surrounding area. These slopes hold snow longer into the spring and the resulting moist conditions have resulted in dense stands of lodgepole pine, spruce and Douglas fir that are commonly known as "dark timber".



*Miner's Mesa from Signal Hill*



Prevailing winds come primarily from the west, and exposed ridge tops can be buffeted with howling conditions. The Miners Mesa area, south of downtown, is well known for its windy location.

Past mining activity has resulted in several high hazard areas. These locations, identified by the Colorado Division of Minerals and Geology and shown with a red cross hatch symbol on the map, contain shafts and other features that may collapse or subside catastrophically. While the Division has been working with landowners to cap known hazards, these areas remain dangerous.

### **Vegetation & Wildlife**

As can be seen from the accompanying 1998 aerial photograph, the Black Hawk area consists of a mixture of dense forest, primarily on moist slopes, and meadow areas on some ridge tops and south slopes. Most of the area south and west of Highway 119 was heavily logged due to past mining and railroad activity and aspen are frequently found at the edges of the disturbed areas. North and east of Highway 119 there was much less mining and as a result, the timber stands are much more intact. The Quartz Valley, in the northwest corner of the study area, contains large grassy meadows that have been used historically by both ranchers and elk. The Colorado Division of Wildlife and Colorado State Parks, as well as many local residents, place great value on the elk migration corridor that roughly parallels the Highway 119 corridor north of downtown Black Hawk. In spring and fall, elk migrate between the national forest high country, to the west and lower habitat to the east, including that in the Green Ranch section of Golden Gate Canyon State Park. The Green Ranch and Quartz Valley areas are also important as elk calving areas in the spring. In a land as arid as Black Hawk, any available water sources are important to wildlife, thus streamside riparian zones are shown on the map.



### **Public Land Ownership**

#### City of Black Hawk

Black Hawk owns a number of parcels that are outside the immediate downtown area but within the Growth Area and Undeveloped Area boundaries, as shown in brown on the accompanying map. One concentration of City land is located along both sides of Highway 119 north of town. A second area of City land starts in the southeast corner of the Undeveloped Area, near Highway 119, and extends west along the Undeveloped Area boundary through the Signal Hill and Miner's Mesa areas.

#### Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

BLM owns approximately 2,000 acres of land near Black Hawk, as shown in yellow on the accompanying map. A large holding is located north of Maryland Mountain, in Quartz Valley and near Missouri Canyon, on both sides of Highway 119. Another substantial parcel is south of Signal Hill, along Lake Gulch and on both sides of Highway 119 southeast of Black Hawk. All BLM lands are irregular in shape due to the fact that mining claims are located within, and at the edges of, the government land.

Across the country, in recent years, BLM has been disposing of its small, discontinuous parcels of land by donating or selling the land to other government agencies. BLM has indicated a desire sell land in the Black Hawk area to the City. If this is accomplished, land that has been functioning as open space and wildlife habitat throughout history will continue to serve residents and visitors as open space.



### Golden Gate Canyon State Park

The Green Ranch portion of Golden Gate Canyon State Park lies just east of downtown Black Hawk and extends into the City's Growth Area. State Parks was consulted during preparation of this master plan and they support the City's goals of protecting open space adjacent to the park, and of working cooperatively to provide trail connections. Golden Gate Canyon State Park intends to acquire the BLM land on the northeast side of Highway 119, thus extending the Green Ranch section of the park down to the highway right of way.

### Gilpin County

Gilpin County owns a small amount of former mining claims just north of the intersection of Highways 119 and 279. These parcels, shown in gray on the accompanying map, are intermingled with City lands, are on steep terrain and are landlocked.

### Arapaho/Roosevelt National Forest

The national forest boundary is located approximately two miles west of Black Hawk and national forest land, shown in green, extends for miles to the north, west and south. The U. S. Forest Service was consulted during preparation of this master plan and is interested in the possibility of trail connections between the forest and City open space.

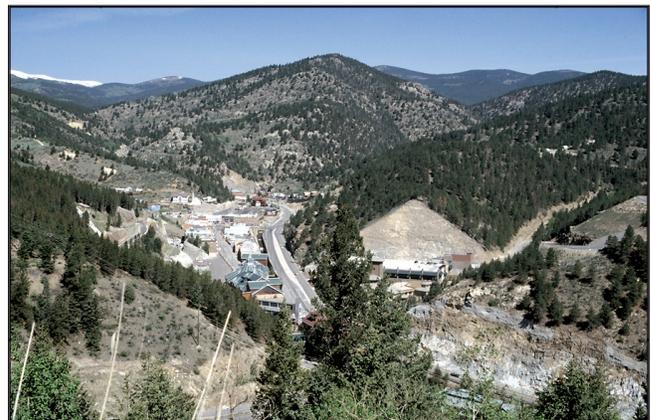
### **Downtown Opportunities & Constraints**

The Opportunities & Constraints map illustrates features in the downtown area that could be components of the open space master plan... or which are development oriented and thus not available for open space consideration.

Shown on the map are the boundaries of the Gaming District. Because of land values, property within this area is earmarked for casino related development. Tiny "parks", similar to the one at the intersection of Gregory Street and Highway 119 may be developed if they are considered an asset to the casino development, or on land that is not otherwise suitable for casinos.

Main Street is proposed to be extended out to Highway 119 at the southeast corner of the area. This will essentially be the main gateway to Black Hawk, and could undergo a feature landscape and sign project to welcome visitors to town. The existing creek side trail could be extended through this area, on its way to join the proposed trail along US 6 in Clear Creek Canyon, and could run under the new Main Street bridge. This new bridge should be designed to reflect Black Hawk's heritage and vernacular architecture, and all existing bridges could be remodeled to reflect a similar design. At the Highway 119/Dory Hill Road intersection, an opportunity exists to improve pedestrian circulation by building an overhead walkway.

New cut slopes should be visually enhanced by staining or painting the shot crete that has been applied to the cuts.

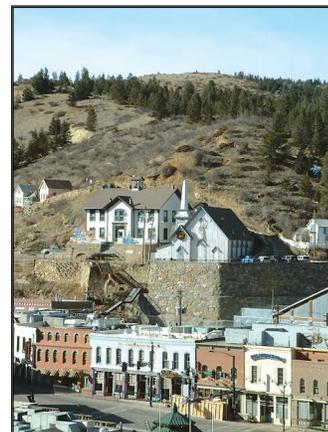


*Downtown from Miner's Mesa Road*

The lower portion of Gregory Street is in a floodway, and a project is scheduled by the City in the near future to improve storm drainage, and pedestrian circulation in this area.



The 1863 church and historic school house sit on the hillside above the lower end of Gregory Street. Now occupied by City offices that are planned for relocation, the church and school would make an excellent museum complex in the future. Because they are accessible by downtown pedestrians only via a set of three-story high metal stairs, a mechanical lift would be needed to move visitors from downtown up to the museum level. This device could be a modern elevator that was designed to look like a miner's lift, complete with headframe.



Near the west end of Black Hawk is Mountain City and the mouth of Cooper Gulch, the site of John Gregory's gold strike in 1859. A number of structures remain in Cooper Gulch that relate to the early days of mining in the area. The preservation and interpretation of the city's mining heritage, as done in the recently completed Mountain City project, could be expanded up Cooper Gulch... in fact, the long time owners of this area have expressed interest in doing just that.

The Colorado & Southern Railroad (C&S) grade is located on the steep slope south of downtown and much of it is in excellent shape. It also extended on what is now the uncompleted Bobtail Road and crossed a trestle over Gregory Street near the historic church. Many people during the planning process expressed a desire to re-open the C&S grade with an excursion train that would run between Black Hawk and Central City.

An historic cable tram ran 650 vertical feet up the slope from near the center of Main Street to what is now referred to as Miners Mesa. Should there be a reason, the possibility exists of developing a new aerial tram on this route, much like Glenwood Springs has recently done.

In recent years there have been several areas proposed for either private or public development. They include:

- At the northern edge of town, on Highway 119, a City public works/maintenance facility
- Farther south, starting at the existing post office and extending to the CDOT facility, a new Black Hawk municipal complex
- Along Main Street several casino-related developments, including a parking garage
- In the large existing cut area at the north end of Bobtail Road, a convention center
- On Miners Mesa, a mixed-use / residential project

The Opportunities & Constraints map also shows concentric circles at quarter-mile increments that radiate out from the center of Main Street (the Dory Hill Road intersection). Urban design studies have found that most pedestrians do not want to walk more than a quarter mile, and almost none will walk more than a half mile. Accordingly, the future design of the downtown area should take this into consideration, and appropriate people mover-systems should be developed.





BLACK HAWK

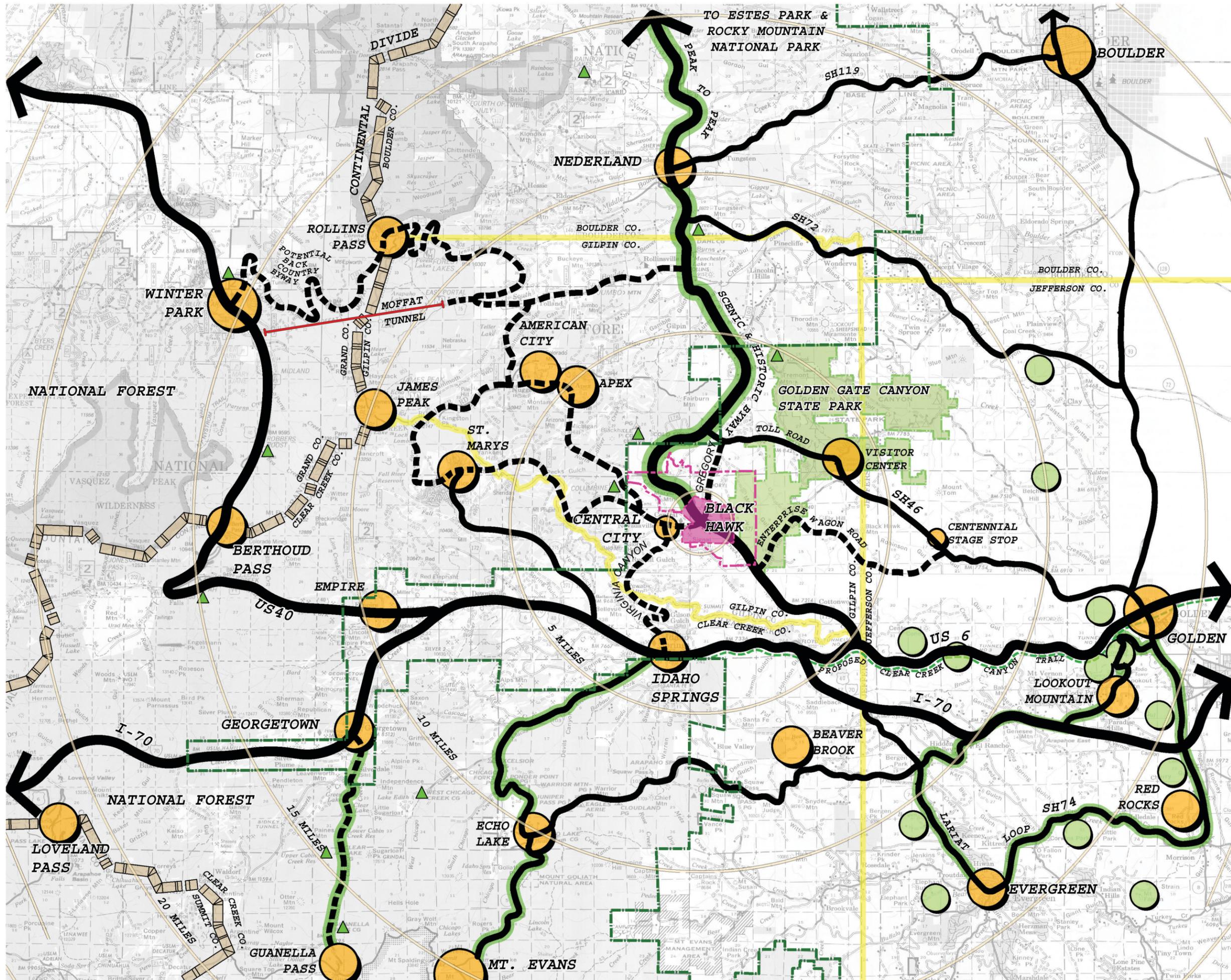
PUBLIC OPEN SPACE & HERITAGE MASTER PLAN

**BLACK HAWK AREA OPPORTUNITIES**

**Legend**

- Growth Area Boundary
- Undeveloped Area Boundary
- 5 Mile Marker
- Paved Highways
- Scenic & Historic Byways
- Gravel & 4WD Roads
- Continental Divide
- National Forest Boundary
- State Park Boundary
- County Lines
- Points of Interest
- Public Campgrounds
- County Open Space

**NOTE:** Boundaries for Golden Gate Canyon State Park, the National Forests and the City of Black Hawk are approximate and intended for planning purposes only. See detailed survey maps from each agency for accurate, current boundaries.



DATE: SEPTEMBER 29, 2003

**DHM DESIGN**  
Denver | Est. 1975 | Carbondale





BLACK HAWK

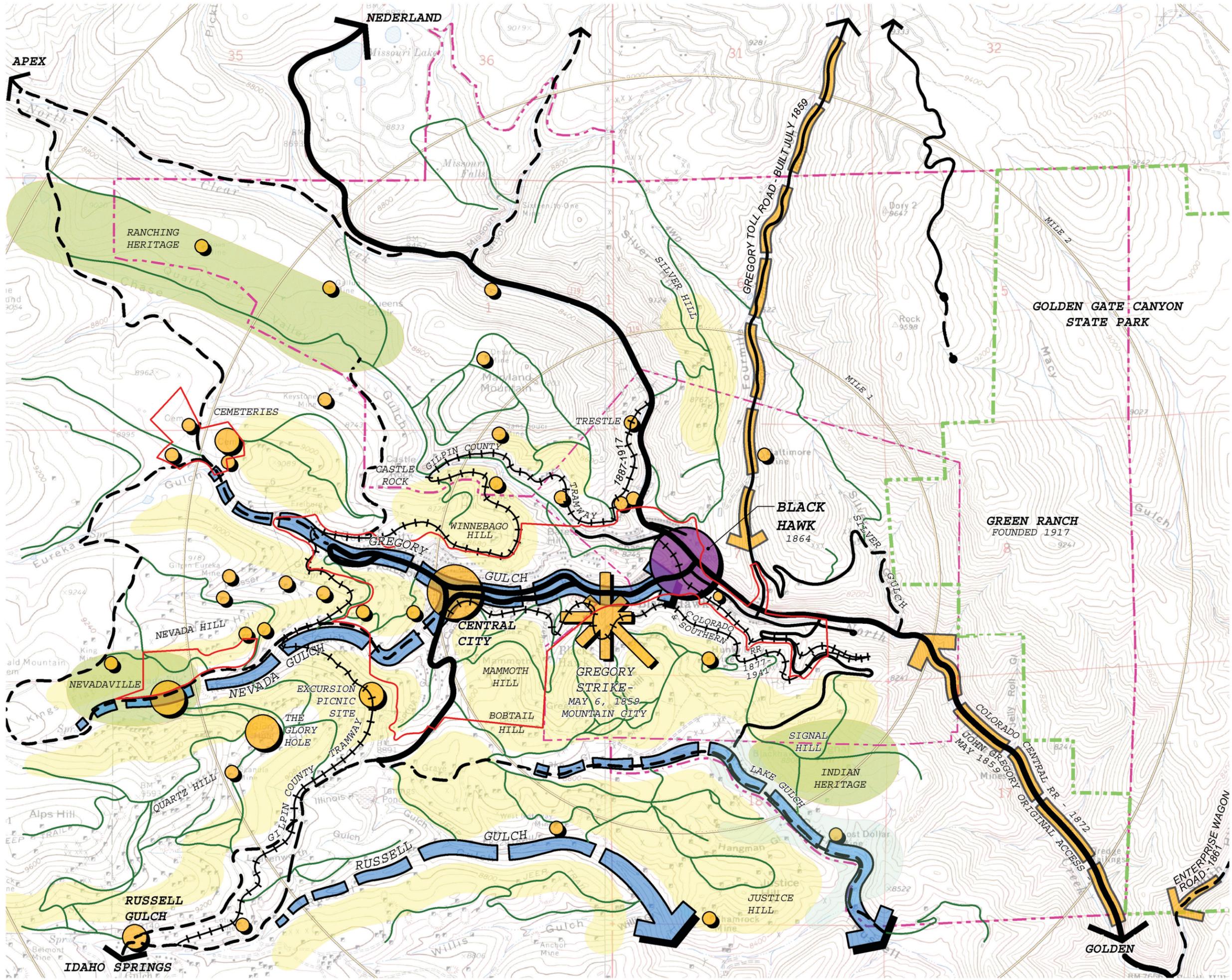
# PUBLIC OPEN SPACE & HERITAGE MASTER PLAN

## HERITAGE RESOURCES (HILL COUNTRY)

### Legend

- Growth Area Boundary
- - - Undeveloped Area Boundary
- Mile Marker
- National Historic Landmark District
- Points of Interest (Mines, Mills, Cemeteries, etc...)
- ➔ Placer Mining
- Hard Rock / Lode Mining
- Heritage Area
- ➔ Heritage Access Routes
- Heritage Trails & Roads
  - \* Located per USGS quad maps of 1906 & 1942 - may no longer be open due to private property or natural deterioration. Other routes may exist but not be shown due to lack of data or scale limitations.
- - - Golden Gate Canyon State Park / Green Ranch Boundary
- + + Tramway / Railroad Grade

**NOTE:**  
 Boundaries for Golden Gate Canyon State Park, the National Forests and the City of Black Hawk are approximate and intended for planning purposes only. See detailed survey maps from each agency for accurate, current boundaries.



DATE: SEPTEMBER 29, 2003

**DHM DESIGN**  
 Denver | Est. 1975 | Carbondale





BLACK HAWK

### PUBLIC OPEN SPACE & HERITAGE MASTER PLAN

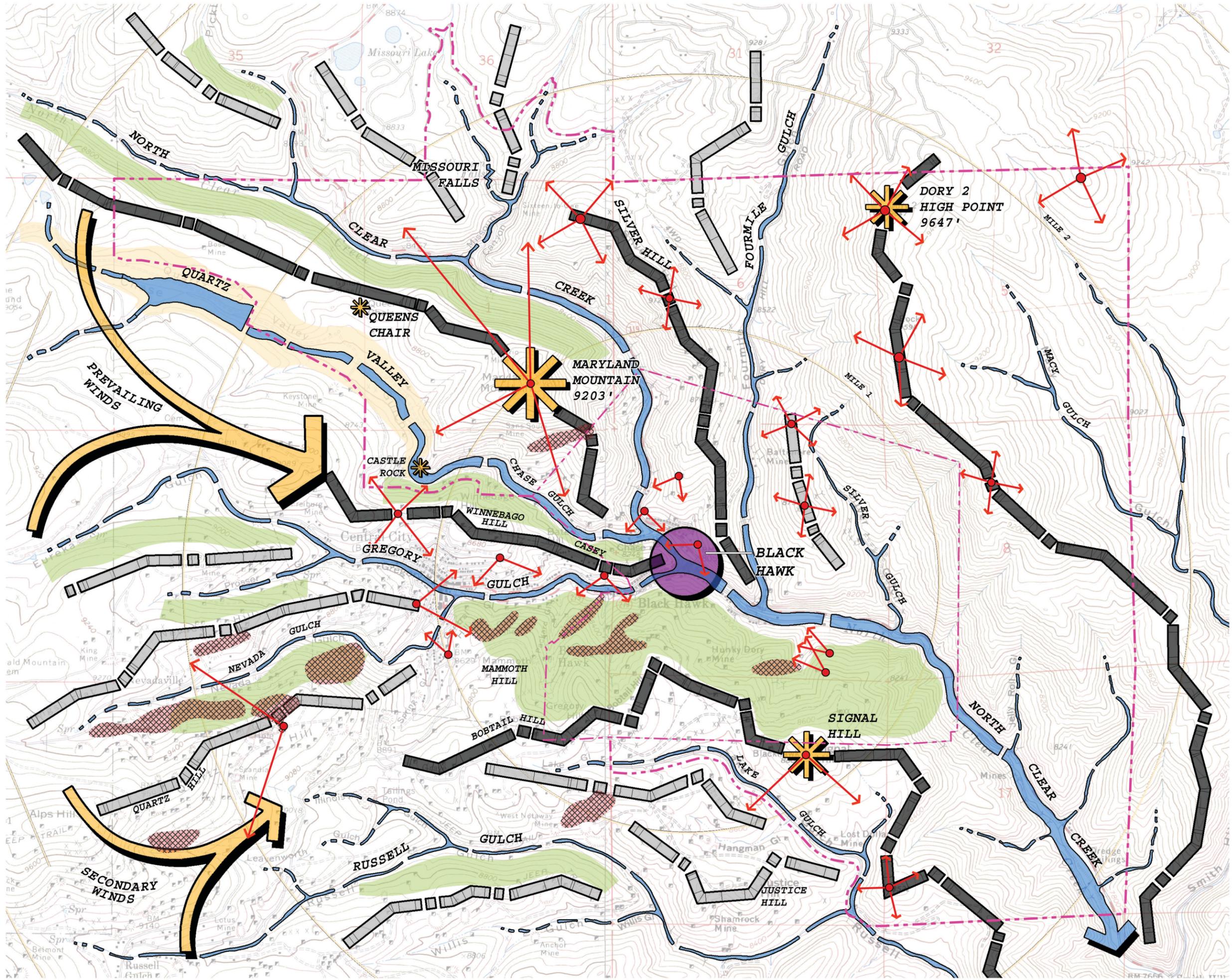
## LANDFORMS, VIEWS & WINDS (HILL COUNTRY)

### Legend

- Growth Area Boundary
- Undeveloped Area Boundary
- Mile Marker
- Major Ridges
- Secondary Ridges
- Steep North Slopes / Dark Timber
- Creeks / Gulches
- Prevailing Winds
- Geologic Features
- Viewpoints
- High Hazard Area

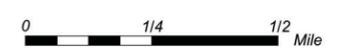
**High Hazard Area**  
Terrain that poses a high risk due to the presence of un-located, poorly-covered, mine shafts and stopes or has the potential for catastrophic subsidence due to abandoned mine tunnels. Human use of these areas should be confined to well-defined interpretive trails or boardwalks which have been located and constructed in consultation with the Colorado Division of Minerals and Geology and experienced local miners. The trails or boardwalks in these areas should be accompanied by interpretive signs and brochures that describe not only the mining history of the area, but also the risk of venturing off developed routes.

**NOTE:**  
Boundaries for Golden Gate Canyon State Park, the National Forests and the City of Black Hawk are approximate and intended for planning purposes only. See detailed survey maps from each agency for accurate, current boundaries.



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**DHM DESIGN**  
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BLACK HAWK

PUBLIC OPEN SPACE & HERITAGE MASTER PLAN

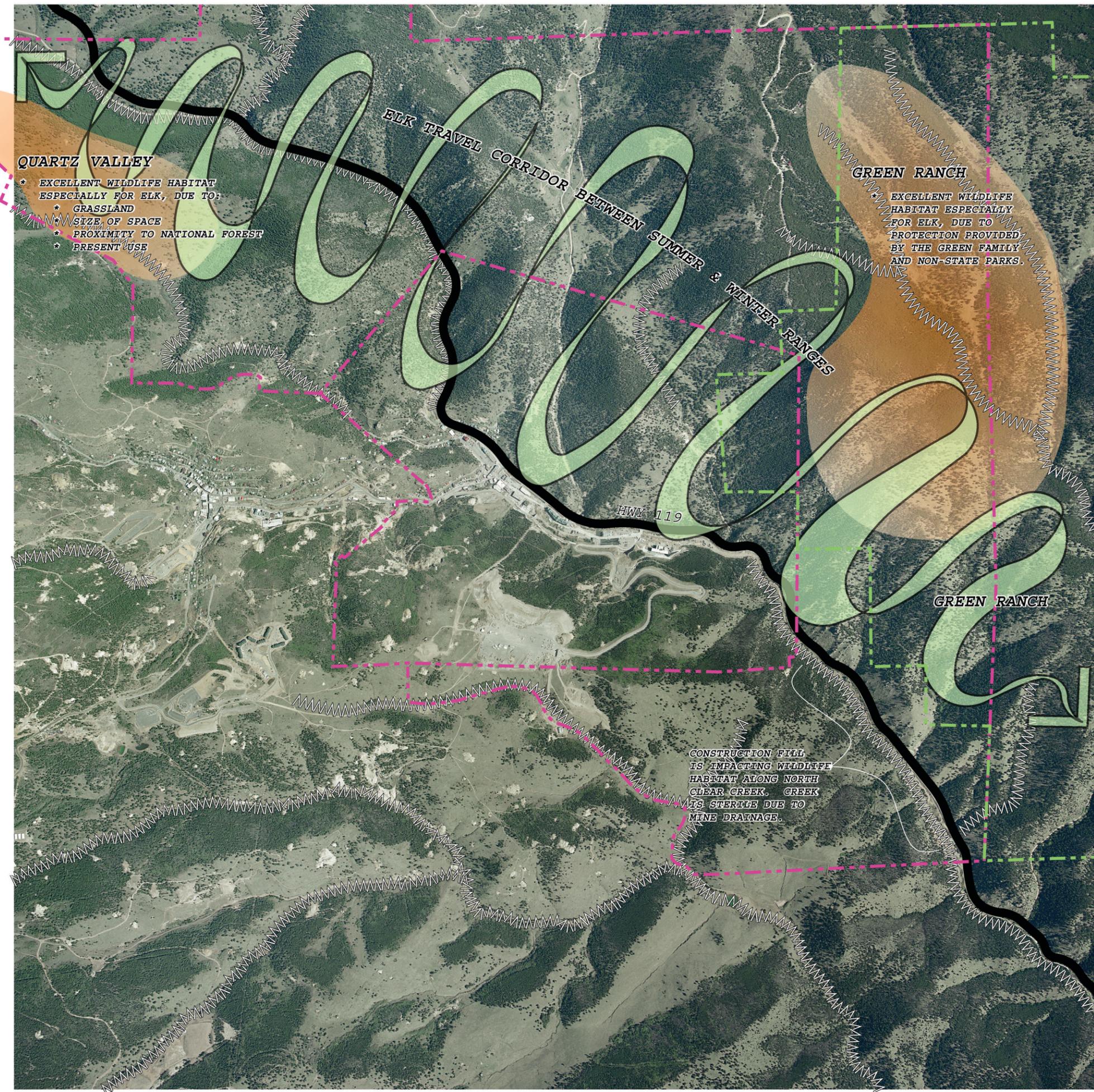
VEGETATION AND WILDLIFE (HILL COUNTRY)

Legend

- Growth Area Boundary
- Undeveloped Area Boundary
- Riparian Zone
  - \* Stream corridors where water and vegetation attract insects, birds, amphibians, small mammals and large mammals.
- Excellent Wildlife Habitat
  - \* See notes for each area.
- Elk Travel Corridor
  - \* Between summer and winter ranges.
- Green Ranch Boundary

NOTES:

- \* Entire area is habitat for elk, deer, mountain lion and black bear. Animals could be present at any time / any place.
- \* Illustrated wildlife information came from Division of Wildlife, State Parks and local residents.



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BLACK HAWK

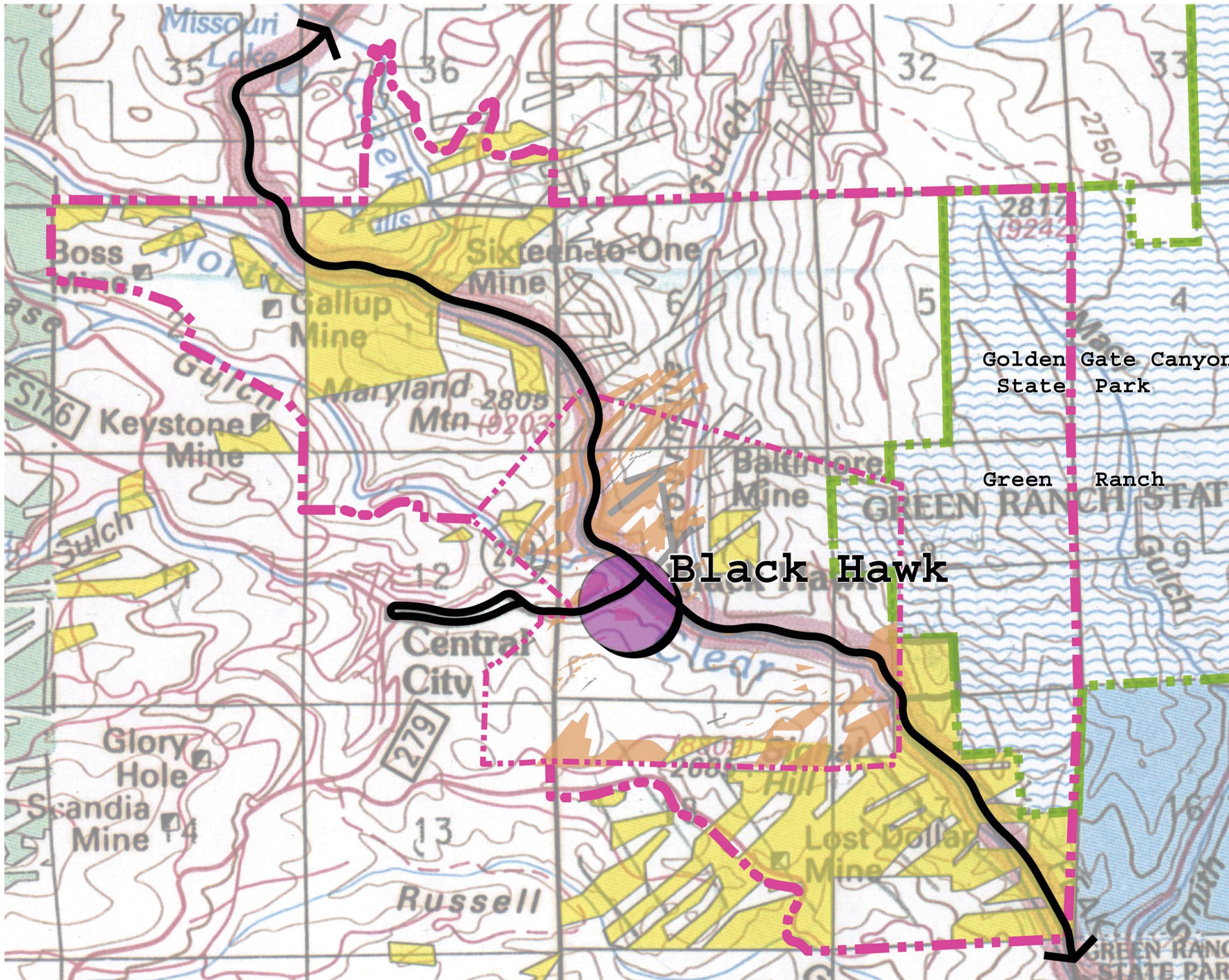
**PUBLIC OPEN SPACE & HERITAGE MASTER PLAN**

**PUBLIC LAND OWNERSHIP**

(HILL COUNTRY)

**Legend**

- Growth Area Boundary
- Undeveloped Area Boundary
- BLM Lands
- State Lands
- Golden Gate Canyon State Park
- National Forest
- City Lands
- County Lands



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# THE MASTER PLAN

(Preferred Alternative)

## Overview

The Preferred Alternative, which is a key component of this Master Plan, was developed by the Black Hawk community, including several interim reviews and decisions by the Board of Aldermen. It is a long-range community goal that will take many years to fully fund and implement.

The Preferred Alternative describes a menu of many facilities, concepts, activities and programs from which current and future elected officials can choose components for implementation. Some parts may never come to fruition but are included in the open space plan for consideration as its implementation is carried out in the years to come.

The open space areas shown on this map are schematic in nature and represent a vision that has been developed by the citizens. It is possible that not all land within the bubbles will become public open space due to property owners who do not wish to sell their land or because of funding limitations. Boundaries may be revised in response to more detailed survey information in the future and landowner desires. Similarly, indicated trail locations are schematic in nature and may be later adjusted in response to field conditions and property ownership. If a trail shown on the maps crosses private land, for example, and the owner is not interested in negotiating with the city to provide land or an easement for the trail, the route may be relocated or deleted from further consideration.

The Preferred Alternative is based on Alternative 3 as presented in the June 12 Alternatives Briefing Package and at the public meeting that evening. It reflects comments made by citizens at that meeting and a petition that was subsequently initiated by citizens. It also includes refinements made as the result of citizen input at the August 13 public hearing, at which most citizens spoke in favor of the plan. The Preferred Alternative was formulated by the City staff / DHM planning team and reflects input gained from:

- Four public meetings
- One-on-one communications with the Aldermen, Black Hawk citizens and managers of nearby public lands
- Three focus group meetings (trail users, heritage protectors and tourism professionals)
- A citizen survey that was sent to over 270 area property owners
- The planning team's past experience with open space, heritage and tourism systems in other, similar communities

Highlights of the Preferred Alternative include the following:

- Protect and interpret four distinctive heritage components of Black Hawk – mining, railroads, ranching/wildlife and Indian
- Provide open space areas and short easy trails close to homes
- Protect larger areas of open space as a wildlife refuge north of downtown and a scenic backdrop on the steep slope south of downtown
- Develop a variety of trails, including one on the Gilpin Tramway bed and one on the Colorado and Southern Railroad grade
- Work cooperatively with Central City on open space, trails and a people-mover system to the advantage of both communities



This Preferred Alternative addresses primarily open space, trail and heritage topics. Although residential growth surfaced during the public process, that is an issue that would be more properly addressed during the forthcoming Comprehensive Plan process and is thus not covered in the open space master plan.

The Preferred Alternative is described in more detail in the following sections: Hill Country Facilities & Open Space; Downtown Facilities & Open Space; and Interpretation, Programs and Activities.

### **Hill Country Facilities & Open Space** (see Preferred Alternative Hill Country map)

This map covers all land within Black Hawk's Growth Area Boundary, the western edge of Golden Gate Canyon State Park (Green Ranch), and the area around Central City. Because of its scale, detail is limited and it is thus used to illustrate broad concepts.

Three Gateways will be developed at the entrances to Black Hawk: south of town, near the intersection of the proposed extension of Main Street and Highway 119; at the proposed Municipal Center on Highway 119 at the north edge of town; and near Mountain City at the west edge of Black Hawk. Each of the Gateways will include sculpture that reflects the town's heritage. A Visitor Center will be located at the South Gateway to serve the majority of guests who arrive in Black Hawk by traveling north on Highway 119 from the Denver metro area.

Specific locations within Black Hawk's Growth Area boundary will be protected and used to interpret, in conjunction with the Gateways and Visitor Center, the town's four heritage themes:

- Mining Heritage Area - Cooper Gulch
- Railroad Heritage Area - Cooper Gulch
- Ranching/Wildlife Heritage Area - Quartz Valley
- Indian Heritage Area - Signal Hill

### Close-In Open Space Areas

Throughout the planning process, citizens expressed a desire to protect open space areas that would be close to residential areas, and to downtown. It was pointed out that these could provide short, easy trails for use after work and at lunch time. Citizens felt that these areas and facilities should be established in the initial phase of developing Black Hawk's open space and trail system. Accordingly, this plan provides for several areas that meet those desires.

Concern was also expressed during the planning process that open space and trails should not be established close to existing homes, where their use by the general public would impact Black Hawk residents. Accordingly, open space and trails will not be located in lower Chase Gulch, on the Casey or along the abandoned portion of Church Street.

The close-in open space areas are described below. Additional information on these areas is also contained in the Downtown Area Facilities & Open Space section of this report.

*Silver Hill South:* The southern end of the Silver Hill ridge will provide open space and trails close to the homes that are north and east of Highway 119, between the proposed Municipal Center and Public Works facilities and the trailhead near the water treatment plant.



*Miner's Mesa North Slope:* The steep slopes south of downtown and the Signal Hill area will be preserved as a visual backdrop to the City; to provide close-in open space to residents, employees and visitors to the Main Street and lower Gregory Gulch areas; and to protect the Indian heritage around Signal Hill. This area includes the abandoned Colorado and Southern Railroad grade, and this will be developed as a trail, as described later.

*Cooper Gulch:* Cooper Gulch will be protected as open space to preserve the area's invaluable mining heritage. Existing structures will be restored and other buildings may be reconstructed, all of which would be used for interpretation of historic mining events and activities in the 1860-1880 era. As on Maryland Mountain, hazardous areas have been identified in Cooper Gulch due to abandoned mines and the potential for catastrophic subsidence. Trails in this area will be located and designed in consultation with the Colorado Division of Minerals and Geology and local miners. Specialized trail construction in this area may be necessary, including use of boardwalks, fencing and signing. Such trails and boardwalks will be developed to allow visitors to safely walk through this fascinating mining area on self-guided, as well as guided, interpretive tours. Living history demonstrations and reenactments will be used to interpret Black Hawk's mining heritage.

Cooper Gulch will also be the focus of protecting and interpreting Black Hawk's railroad heritage. The abandoned Colorado and Southern Railroad grade runs through the middle of the Cooper Gulch heritage area, and a railroad depot and museum will be developed here to complement the mining heritage exhibits.



*Downtown from Gilpin Tramway*



*Cooper Gulch*



*Colorado & Southern Railroad Grade*



## Outlying Open Space Areas

*Quartz Valley / Maryland Mountain:* Throughout the public process, citizens expressed a desire to protect important wildlife habitat; visually prominent parcels, such as hillsides and meadows; and areas where Black Hawk's heritage remains largely intact. Accordingly, a key open space area will be located in the Quartz Valley, Chase Gulch Reservoir and Maryland Mountain area to protect wildlife, the ranching heritage and scenic meadows and geologic formations. This action is supported by three landowners in the Quartz Valley, who have expressed an interest to the City in selling their land for open space, or to place a conservation easement on the land to protect it. Additionally, much of this area is currently owned by BLM, and consultation with that agency during the planning process revealed that BLM desires to sell those parcels.

Input during the public process indicated that the lower southern slopes of Maryland Mountain, and the lower portion of Chase Gulch, should be left out of the open space area so they might be used for residential development in the future. Accordingly, the master plan excludes those areas from open space protection.

Because a portion of Maryland Mountain has been identified as a hazardous area due to abandoned mines and the potential for catastrophic subsidence, trails in this area will be located and designed in consultation with the Colorado Division of Minerals and Geology and local miners. Specialized trail construction in this area may be necessary, including use of boardwalks, fencing and signing. Access to Chase Gulch Reservoir will continue to be from the existing location on Upper Apex Road, and the area north of the reservoir will be protected as pristine wildlife habitat.

*Wildlife Refuge:* Because of keen citizen interest in protecting wildlife, a refuge / open space area will be established by purchasing private land within the elk migration corridor in the northern portion of the Black Hawk Growth Area. This City-owned wildlife refuge will abut Golden Gate Canyon State Park / Green Ranch on the east, and, in connection with the Quartz Valley open space area, will provide a safe travel corridor for elk that migrate to and from the national forest to the west.

During the spring and fall migrations, and during the spring calving season, the area beyond established roads may be closed to human use, but during times that elk are not present, public use will be allowed on trails. Privately operated van tours might provide Watchable Wildlife opportunities during the migration seasons.



*Quartz Valley*



*Queens Chair*





The wildlife refuge will consist of three areas, as described below.

*Silver Hill North* - This area lies west of Dory Hill Road and is bordered on the west by Highway 119 and Missouri Canyon. It encompasses very steep terrain on Silver Hill and is bisected by an old mining road. The northwest portion of this area is owned by BLM and is available for purchase by the City.

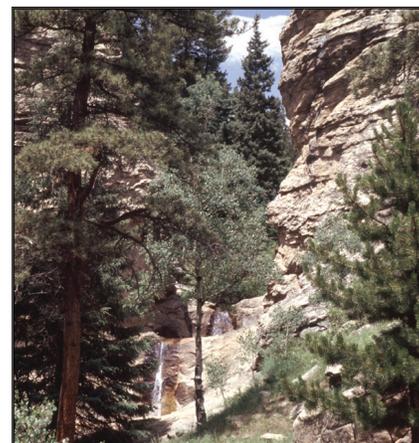
*Silver Gulch* - This portion of the refuge is located east of Dory Hill Road and adjoins the Green Ranch section of Golden Gate Canyon State Park. It is bordered on the north by Black Hawk's Growth Area boundary, and on the south by a valet parking area. Nearly forty acres in the southwest corner of this area is owned by BLM and is available for purchase by the City.

*Missouri Falls* - As seen previously on the Public Land Ownership map, BLM owns land north of Highway 119, south of Missouri Falls. Black Hawk will acquire this land, and, in combination with existing City-owned land near Missouri Falls, will protect this area as part of the wildlife refuge.



*Missouri Falls*

Residents near Missouri Falls voiced concern during the planning process that increased public use of that area might have adverse impacts on their neighborhood. Thus, this area will be patrolled and maintained as described in the Implementation section of this plan, and rangers and maintenance staff will enforce laws, coordinate search and rescue services and pick up litter. Trails in this area will be restricted to the canyon floor, below the rims.

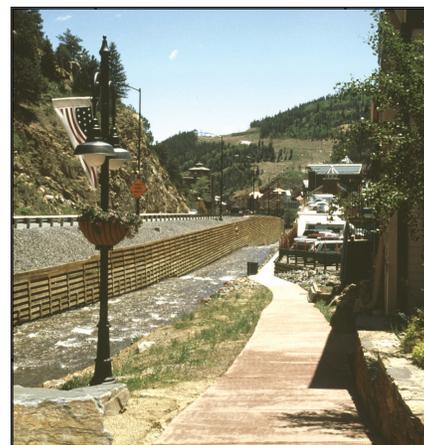


*Missouri Falls*

### Trail System

*Hill Country Trails:* Black Hawk is fortunate to have a large number of old mining roads and trails... essentially a ready-made trail system. Where land is acquired for public open space, some of these routes will be used to provide backcountry trails. In some places, new routes will be constructed to tie the trail system together. Trails will be located along the ridge on Silver Hill, in the Silver Gulch area, and will connect to Golden Gate Canyon State Park (Green Ranch) subject to continued coordination with and approval by Colorado State Parks. The Black Hawk area trail system will also connect to trails on national forest land to the west, subject to coordination and approval by the U.S. Forest Service. The primary opportunity for this connection is from the proposed trailhead on Upper Apex Road.

*North Clear Creek & Gregory Gulch Trails:* A more urban, or highly developed, trail will be constructed by extending the existing North Clear Creek trail in the downtown area north to the proposed Municipal Center and south, along the



*North Creek Trail*



Highway 119 corridor, to tie to the Clear Creek Canyon trail that is proposed by Jefferson County and Clear Creek County parallel to US Highway 6. An improved trail will also connect Black Hawk, Mountain City and Central City in Gregory Gulch, and this will extend northwest to the Central City cemeteries and on to Chase Gulch Reservoir, again if Central City desires to work cooperatively.

*Gilpin Tramway Trail:* The Gilpin Tramway bed will be used for a trail, with branch routes extending to the top of Maryland Mountain and up Chase Gulch, from the Tram grade crossing near Castle Rock, to the reservoir. The lower portion of Chase Gulch, below Castle Rock will not be open to public use. During the public planning process, concern was raised about use of the Tram grade as a trail because of the possibility of users throwing rocks down onto Chase Street homes, and because of exposure to a section of 25 foot high deteriorating rock walls, with steep slopes below, and because of littering and fire risk. In response to these concerns, the master plan calls for several actions:

- Trail development on the tram grade will occur in a later phase of implementation, and then occur only after the City has successfully resolved trail use in other open space areas.
- The deteriorating rock walls will be stabilized as needed to ensure that they will not fail in the future.
- Regulations will be developed and posted concerning trail use, including no climbing of walls, and no littering or rock throwing.
- Park rangers will regularly patrol the tram (and other) trails to enforce the regulations, and maintenance workers will regularly remove litter and perform other maintenance functions, as described in the Implementation section of this report.
- Park rangers will also educate trail users about proper trail etiquette, and work to obtain voluntary compliance.
- If necessary, high screen fencing could be installed in the area above the homes in question, and attractive railings could be installed at the top of the high retaining walls to protect hikers and bikers from falling.
- Also if necessary, an ATV could be stored in a small garage where the tramway trail crosses Chase Gulch so it is ready for immediate use by rangers. The ATV could be equipped for a first response to wild land fires.

Pending interest by and coordination with Central City, the Tramway trail will run along the abandoned grade on the east and south slopes of Winnebago Hill to Eureka Gulch, then toward Nevadaville and the Glory Hole. It will then extend east past Mammoth Hill, Bobtail Hill and Miners Mesa to connect with the North Clear Creek trail in the downtown area. This will provide a long loop trail around Black Hawk and Central City, with connecting side trails to make shorter loops.

As a further visitor attraction, and to provide handicapped access to Black Hawk's Hill Country, horse-drawn wagon tours might



*Gilpin Tramway grade*



*Gilpin Tramway grade above Chase Street*

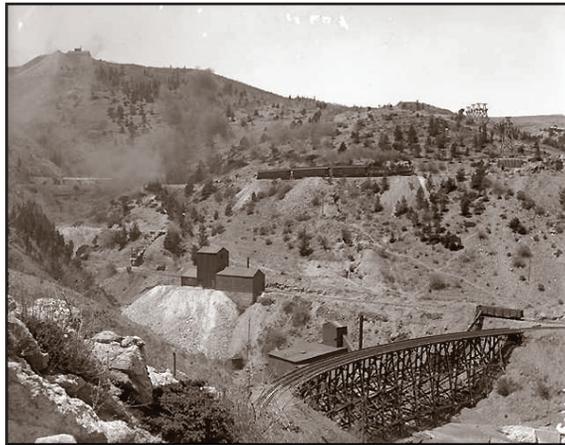


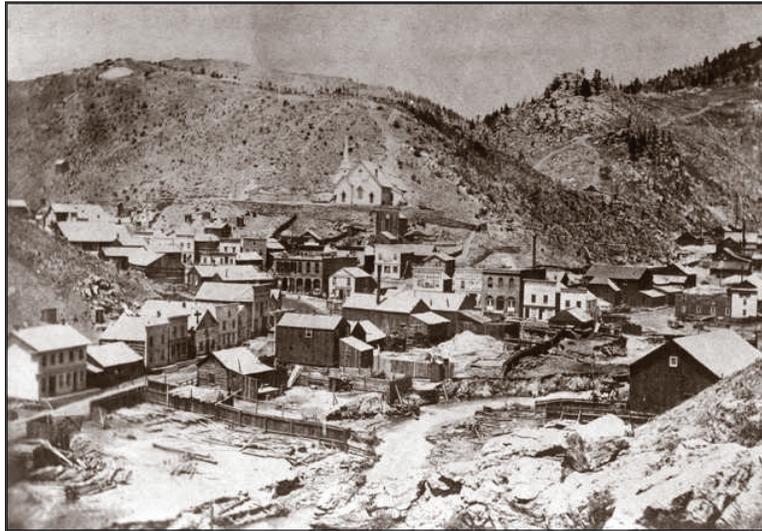
*Gilpin Tramway grade*



be given on the Tramway trail. With little work, the existing condition of the Tram bed could accommodate both trail and wagon use, with improvements being needed primarily for two short stretches near the area where the Tram grade crosses Chase Gulch. Widened passing lanes would be provided in key locations and drivers would stay in contact with each other by radio to schedule use of these areas, much as shuttle system drivers do in some national parks.

*Colorado and Southern Trail:* During the planning process, considerable interest was expressed by Black Hawk citizens, and by participants in the focus groups, of re-opening the Colorado and Southern Railroad grade for use by an excursion train between Black Hawk and Central City. The present owners of a large portion of the railroad grade below Miner's Mesa, however, are not interested in cooperating to establish an excursion railroad through this area. The owners are, however, willing to work with the City to develop a non-motorized trail on the C&S grade in this area. Accordingly, Black Hawk will work to develop this important trail as part of its open space and trail system.



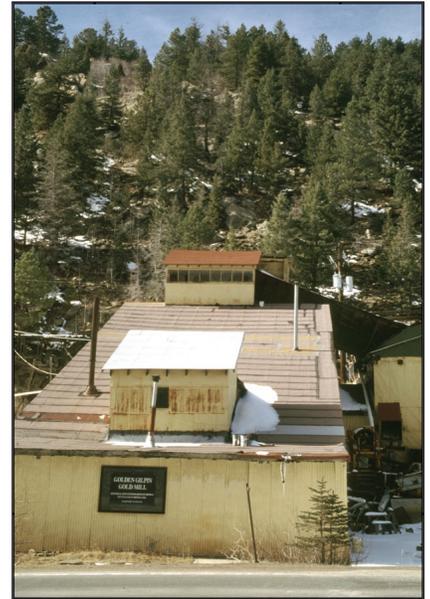




## Downtown Area Facilities & Open Space (see Preferred Alternative Downtown map)

This map is an enlargement of the downtown portion of the Hill Country map and provides more detail in the areas close to the center of Black Hawk.

Three Gateways are identified to be developed at the entrances to Black Hawk. All will include sculptures that reflect the community's mining, railroad, ranching/wildlife or Indian heritage, will serve as trailheads, and will be potential stops on the shuttle/people mover system. The South Gateway, located at the intersection of the proposed Main Street extension and Highway 119, will also include a Visitor Center. The North Gateway, which will include the proposed Municipal Center, will serve as a key access point for the trail on the Gilpin Tram bed when it is developed in a later phase of implementation. A vertical lift device of some type, perhaps an incline similar to the one that ran for decades at Manitou Springs, could provide access from street level up to the trail. If the owner is willing, the Golden Gilpin Mill, across Highway 119 from the Municipal Center, could be developed into a museum and a lift could be incorporated at this location to provide access to the Tramway trail. The West Gateway will incorporate the Mountain City heritage area into it. All three Gateways will include interpretive exhibits, restrooms and parking. They will be designed to identify the entrances to Black Hawk, and will include architectural and landscape details that reflect the town's heritage.



*Golden Gilpin Mill*

The bridges in the downtown area will be enhanced to be more visually appealing and reflect the community's heritage, while remaining perfectly functional. Although a detailed design process will be needed to determine specifics, ideas for these enhancements include stone veneer and decorative lights and railings.

In conjunction with future improvements to the drainage system along Gregory Street, a more pedestrian-friendly sidewalk or boardwalk will be developed between Main Street and Mountain City. This is intended to be extended on to Central City, pending cooperation by that community. Landscaping, street furniture, sculpture and other details will be included in the Gregory Street improvements to encourage pedestrian circulation in this corridor.

The creekscape along North Clear Creek will be enhanced with plantings, sculpture and artwork on the highway retaining walls. The existing paved trail in this area will be extended north to the proposed Municipal Center and south to the Clear Creek Canyon / US 6 trail that is in the planning stage by Jefferson County and Clear Creek County. Because the existing creek side trail is in a trough formed by retaining walls, users are exposed to potential flash floods that have, historically, cascaded down from the watersheds above town. The new trail extensions should be designed to minimize flood risk, and should include an automated flood warning system.



*North Clear Creek*



Cooperative agreements should also be made with Central City and other upstream entities so immediate telephone warnings can be made to the City of Black Hawk in the event of an imminent flash flood risk. Black Hawk should have a system in place that would quickly warn people along the creek side trail to vacate the area.

The streetscape on main roads in Black Hawk will be improved with the addition of landscaping and sculpture, and a coordinated system of signs and street furniture.

Parking could be significantly improved in town, with potential parking facilities at the three Gateways, trailheads and Convention Center.

The existing City offices are to be moved to the new Municipal Center, and when this is accomplished, the historic church and school house will be converted to a Museum complete with sculpture and exhibits that commemorate the community's heritage. An elevator should be constructed beside the existing steps to provide easy pedestrian access from the lower street level up to the elevation of the church and school house. Selack Street, in this area, will also undergo both functional and aesthetic improvements in conjunction with the planned expansion of Bullwhackers casino.



A pedestrian bridge will cross over Gregory Street from the church/school house Museum complex to the proposed Convention Center along Bobtail Road. This facility would be in the same location as the old Colorado & Southern Railroad trestle and will be designed to be complimentary to the historic design of that structure.

An open space and trail system will be developed north of downtown, as illustrated on the Hill Country, as well as, Downtown maps. Trailheads will be developed near the water treatment plan, with adequate attention being given to providing security of area facilities in this area. Two trailheads are also identified in the Silver Gulch area.

Open space will also be protected on the steep slope south of Black Hawk to protect the visual backdrop of downtown, and to allow public use of trails that could be developed on old mining roads, and on the Colorado and Southern Railroad grade, in this area.

The West Gateway at Mountain City would be at the lower end of the Cooper Gulch Heritage Area. The remaining heritage structures in Cooper Gulch will be stabilized and similar facilities may be relocated or reconstructed in this area to help interpret Black Hawk's mining heritage. Because portions of the Cooper Gulch area are hazardous due to abandoned mine shafts and subsidence, trails and/or boardwalks will be carefully located and constructed to provide safe access for visitors as they tour this fascinating area. There is considerable vertical elevation change from the lower to the upper portion of Cooper Gulch, and this will be taken into consideration when developing access for seniors, the handicapped, and visitors from lower elevations who cannot climb hills at 8,000 feel elevation. A Railroad Depot and Museum will be located on the Colorado and Southern Railroad grade in the Cooper Gulch area and these will be used to interpret Black Hawk's railroad heritage. A static display of an authentic narrow gauge train might be displayed on a



short section of track in this area. If insurance and other issues can be resolved, the Bobtail Mine, located on the south side of Gregory Street, may be re-opened for tours. The present owners have expressed interest in this, and of providing a vertical lift from the Bobtail tunnel up to the C & S railroad grade in the heart of the Cooper Gulch Heritage Area.

Development of the open space, trails and heritage facilities described above contemplates that the City would also establish an open space department, staffed with park rangers and maintenance personnel, to enforce laws, pick up litter and ensure that the system has minimal impact on Black Hawk residents, as described in the Implementation section of this report.







BLACK HAWK

### PUBLIC OPEN SPACE & HERITAGE MASTER PLAN

## PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE (HILL COUNTRY)

#### Legend

- GROWTH AREA BOUNDARY
- PUBLIC OPEN SPACE / WILDLIFE REFUGE
- EXISTING MAIN ROADS
- PROPOSED TRAILS ON OLD MINING TRAILS AND RAILROAD BEDS
- PROPOSED TRAILS ON NEW ROUTES

#### EXISTING POINTS OF INTEREST

- GEOLOGIC FEATURES
- MINES, MILLS, TOWNS, CEMETERIES

#### CONSTRUCTED FACILITIES

- VISITOR CENTER, RAILROAD DEPOT (D), MUSEUM, CONVENTION CENTER (C), TRAILHEAD (T), ETC.

#### NOTES:

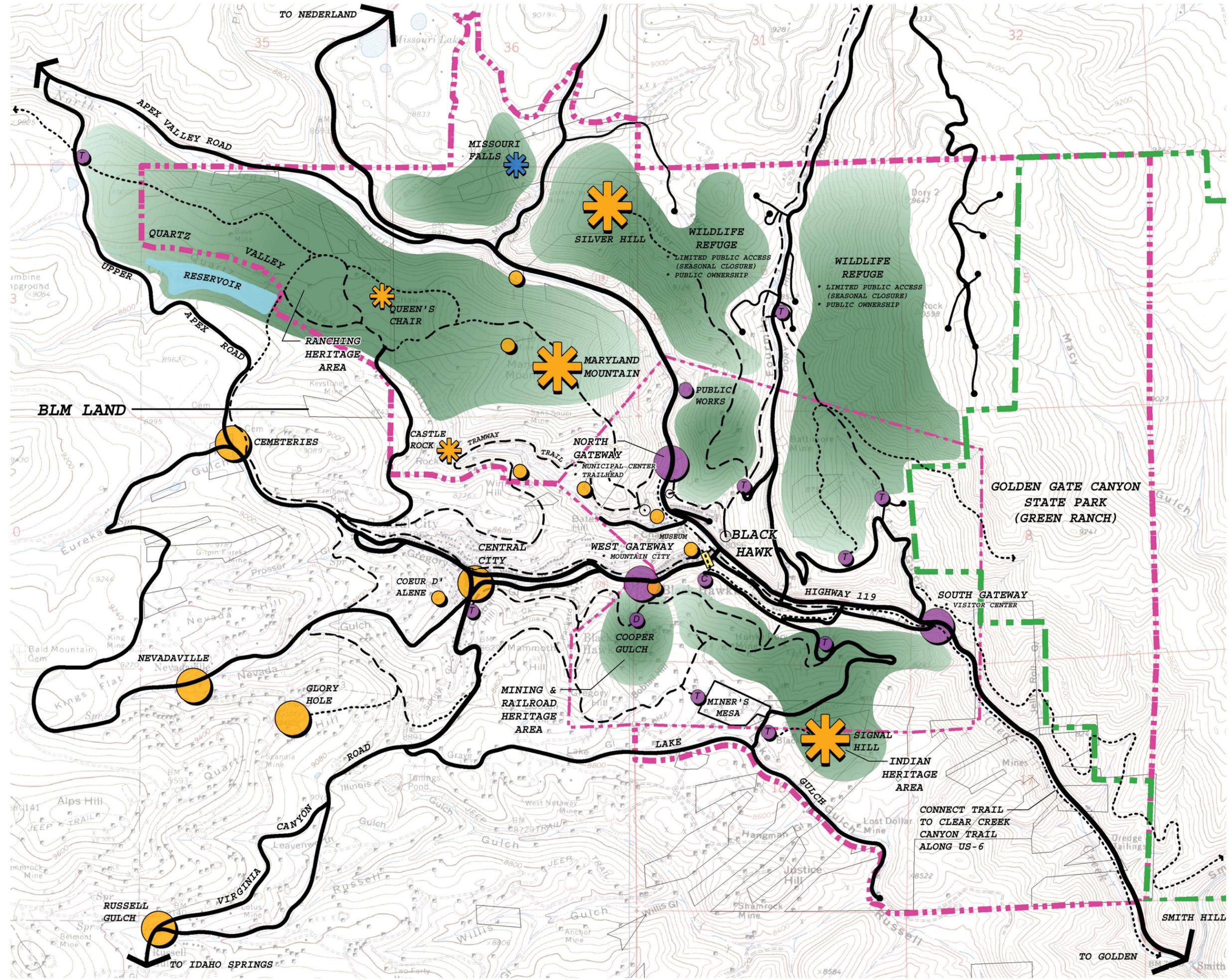
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- \* TRAIL CONNECTIONS TO THE GREEN RANCH ARE SCHEMATIC IN NATURE AND SUBJECT TO DETAILED PLANNING AND APPROVAL BY STATE PARKS.

DATE: SEPTEMBER 29, 2003 - REV 2

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0 1/4 1/2 Mile



CONNECT TRAIL TO CLEAR CREEK CANYON TRAIL ALONG US-6

TO GOLDEN

TO IDAHO SPRINGS

TO NEDERLAND



BLACK HAWK

### PUBLIC OPEN SPACE & HERITAGE MASTER PLAN

## PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

(DOWNTOWN AREA)

#### Legend

- GROWTH AREA BOUNDARY
- PUBLIC OPEN SPACE / WILDLIFE REFUGE

#### ACCESS

- EXISTING MAIN ROADS
- PROPOSED TRAILS ON OLD MINING TRAILS AND RAILROAD BEDS
- PROPOSED TRAILS ON NEW ROUTES
- PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE

#### EXISTING POINTS OF INTEREST

- GEOLOGIC FEATURES
- MINES, MILLS, TOWNS, CEMETERIES

#### CONSTRUCTED FACILITIES

- VISITOR CENTER, RAILROAD DEPOT (D), MUSEUM, CONVENTION CENTER (C), TRAILHEAD (T), ETC.

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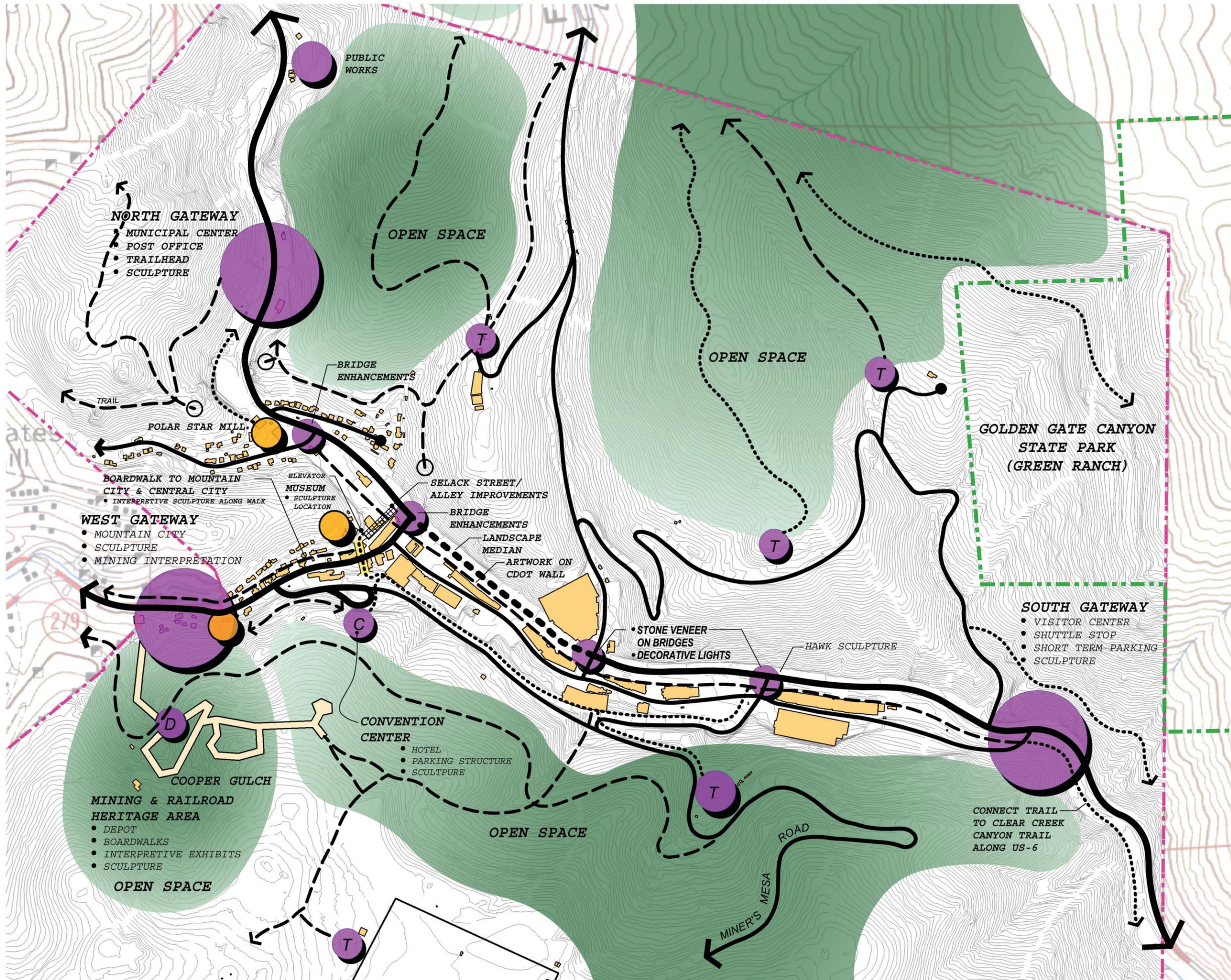
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DATE: SEPTEMBER 29, 2003 - REV 2

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0 200' 400' 800' Feet



**NORTH GATEWAY**  
 • MUNICIPAL CENTER  
 • POST OFFICE  
 • TRAILHEAD  
 • SCULPTURE

PUBLIC WORKS

OPEN SPACE

OPEN SPACE

**GOLDEN GATE CANYON STATE PARK (GREEN RANCH)**

**SOUTH GATEWAY**  
 • VISITOR CENTER  
 • SHUTTLE STOP  
 • SHORT TERM PARKING  
 • SCULPTURE

**WEST GATEWAY**  
 • MOUNTAIN CITY  
 • SCULPTURE  
 • MINING INTERPRETATION

**CONVENTION CENTER**  
 • HOTEL  
 • PARKING STRUCTURE  
 • SCULPTURE

**COOPER GULCH MINING & RAILROAD HERITAGE AREA**  
 • DEPOT  
 • BOARDWALKS  
 • INTERPRETIVE EXHIBITS  
 • SCULPTURE

OPEN SPACE

OPEN SPACE

CONNECT TRAIL TO CLEAR CREEK CANYON TRAIL ALONG US-6

MINER'S MESA ROAD

CONVENTION CENTER

HOTEL  
PARKING STRUCTURE  
SCULPTURE

COOPER GULCH

MINING & RAILROAD HERITAGE AREA  
DEPOT  
BOARDWALKS  
INTERPRETIVE EXHIBITS  
SCULPTURE

OPEN SPACE

OPEN SPACE

CONNECT TRAIL TO CLEAR CREEK CANYON TRAIL ALONG US-6

MINER'S MESA ROAD

CONVENTION CENTER

HOTEL  
PARKING STRUCTURE  
SCULPTURE

COOPER GULCH

MINING & RAILROAD HERITAGE AREA  
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CONNECT TRAIL TO CLEAR CREEK CANYON TRAIL ALONG US-6

MINER'S MESA ROAD

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## **Interpretation, Programs & Activities**

The previous components of the Master Plan section of this report describe primarily the open lands and facilities that will be provided by implementing the Preferred Alternative. Other important components that will help Black Hawk develop into a destination resort are the interpretive concepts, programs, and activities that can be developed to attract overnight destination resort visitors to Black Hawk. These are addressed below.

### Interpretive Concepts

To attract visitors who would stay longer than most of the current visitors (Front Range day-trippers), the Preferred Alternative describes a wide range of facilities, activities and programs. These would be tied together with the common theme of life in the 1860-1880 time period, and will present the opportunity to participate in activities of that time. Exhibits, brochures, audio tapes, films, living history programs and walking/driving tours are proposed for the visitor center, museums, streetscapes, trails and heritage areas as a means of interpreting Black Hawk's history to both citizens and visitors.

Black Hawk and Central City are well situated in capitalizing on a Heritage Tourism experience. Providing authentic experiences is one of the primary advantages of heritage tourism, and this is something other destination resort areas cannot do. Also, living history has fallen by the wayside in many historical themed communities due to the expense. Black Hawk has a tax base that could help support the planning, training, costumes, and props necessary for a superior living history program.

Some of the same programming efforts used for ocean cruises could be developed for Black Hawk, to provide a "Land Cruise into the Nineteenth Century." Visitors would come to Black Hawk for several days, or perhaps a week, and a menu of activities would be offered just as it is on an ocean cruise.

Advertising would focus on groups far enough away that they would stay for more than a single day and might arrive by a transportation mode other than a car. Visitors could be met at Denver's Union Station or DIA by a Black Hawk shuttle driven by a subtly costumed host.

### Living History Program

Black Hawk has an opportunity, in conjunction with development of open space, trail and heritage facilities, to develop a living history program that would be an enormous attraction to overnight destination resort visitors.

One example of a highly successful living history program is found at Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia. At various locations around the town, visitors encounter costumed interpreters who are engaged in day-to-day activities of the time. For example, in a seamstress's shop, women may be working on hats and discussing a contemporary issue – perhaps not related to sewing at all – such as the likelihood that the price of tobacco will rise and therefore the demand for finer clothes will increase. Or perhaps they discuss where the cloth came from and how much it cost – introducing concepts of the trade of the period. The visitors come and go at will. There isn't a feeling of a performance, but rather the sense that they are passing through a slice of Colonial life. There may be an opportunity for visitor participation, and the interpreter stays in character during any exchange.

The visitor comes away from the program knowing more about life and thinking in Colonial times, not just knowing that the sewing machine had not been invented at that time.



A series of these tableaux, or re-enactments, are presented at each site each day, possibly from 10:00 to 12:00 in the morning and 2:00 to 4:00 in the afternoon. Each person has researched the character being presented, and possibly has had acting training – it is difficult to know whether the interpreters are historians first or actors first.

Other highly successful living history programs are found at Virginia City/Nevada City, Montana (mining/railroading); the American West Heritage Center in Wellsville, Utah (ranching/Indians); and Columbia State Historical Park in California’s gold country (mining).

For Black Hawk, a series of themes could be identified and then interpreted both by actual people who are role-playing and by life-size sculptures. Many of these could take place in the proposed Cooper Gulch Heritage Area.

Perhaps one tableau takes place in an assay office, and the discussion is between a mine owner and the assayer about gold and its ties to the national economy. Miners showing how to pan gold, operate a long tom, single and double-jack a powder hole, a wheelwright... these are all things that could be demonstrated. A Chinese laundry would be excellent, to point out the differences in social and economic status of a minority, and there is good research available on Chinese in mining towns.

Tableaux could also be presented on streets and sidewalks. Perhaps a wagon is drawn up to the side of the street and the driver is talking with someone on the sidewalk about topics related to a mine in the hills above town, or about taking the load of ore to the mill just outside downtown.

The role of women in Black Hawk’s early days would be fascinating. There could be a seamstress, milliner, schoolteacher and cook, to mention only a few examples. Perhaps two housewives are talking about encouraging their husbands to be on the local school board, or to start a church – civilizing activities usually ignored in the “boom” days, but pursued after stability was established and women and families arrived in the mining towns. There could even be a bawdy house, but this would need to be carefully researched and staged to prevent the “Miss Kitty” syndrome.

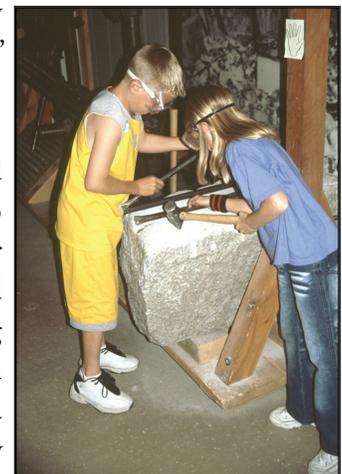
Living history programs, to be successful, must be carefully thought through, planned, and managed. They are not inexpensive to establish or operate. However, they can be very attractive to visitors, and might be especially nice for the elderly or disabled since little is required of the visitor except to move from one location to the next and then watch and listen. Obviously handicapped access would be needed for any interpretive program. One of the latest developments in living history programs is to provide for interactive demonstrations where visitors, especially children can actively participate in the program. Allowing a child to pan for gold, rock a long tom, wind a windlass or throw a switch to activate a working model of a stamp mill would provide a memory of Black Hawk that would last forever. An excellent example of interactive mining displays is the Western Museum of Mining and Industry in Colorado Springs.



*Virginia City, Montana*



*American West Heritage Center, Utah*



*Western Museum of Mining & Industry, Colorado Springs*



BLACK HAWK

A caveat: It is important that activities and programs considered for Black Hawk not turn into a “Wild West Show.” Trivial and clichéd activities such as gunfights should be discouraged. More appropriate would be a race between fire companies to extinguish a staged fire, or to affect a rescue.

Likewise, dance halls girls and gamblers should be de-emphasized outside the casinos, especially during daylight hours. Perhaps costumed couples could stroll the sidewalks, available to answer questions or to announce activities and events. If there is a prospector, his “first person role” would be as someone who has just come down from the hills with his burro to have some “color” assayed. He should not be waving a whiskey bottle and dancing a jig, having just found the Mother Lode. There are also opportunities for good, educational interpretation about Chinese, Mexicans, and African-Americans. Be cautious about too many barbershop quartets.

### Historical Activities

Daytime interpretive programs would highlight the historical significance of Black Hawk and the surrounding National Historic Landmark district. Staff in costume would present experiences of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Appropriate activities would be found in newspaper accounts of the time.

- Dancing lessons: Provide fans and tie-on floor-length skirts for the ladies and frock coats for the men, and teach them the ballroom dances of the 1880s, especially the waltz.
- Cooking lessons: Give classes in Cornish cuisine, preferably on a wood cook stove.
- Wildflower and wildlife appreciation: Present lantern slides of the flora and fauna of the area.
- Expeditions: Take horse-drawn wagon or stagecoach tours to “genteel” locations such as the cemeteries, overlooks, and monuments. These could include “white tablecloth” picnics or stargazing expeditions. Women would be provided parasols, men top hats.
- Chuck wagon cookouts: Similar to many other Colorado locations, visitors could attend cowboy cookouts to enjoy steak and taters, and western entertainment.
- High Teas: Tea and champagne presented in elegant historic locations.
- Readings and debates: Reenactments of such events as Dickens visiting the US, Mark Twain speaking, “bombastic” poetry being read, shy schoolmarms reading love poems or poems to nature, etc.
- Architectural tours: After a slide show about 19<sup>th</sup>-century architectural styles, groups would tour the area to look at examples of these styles.
- Sketching: Art lessons would be given, and small groups would venture out to capture their Black Hawk experience on paper (see Expeditions, above).
- Period Photography: Demonstrations and lessons could be given using old-time equipment, both for studio photography (visitors in costume) and outdoor landscape/architectural photography.
- Concerts and recitals:  
Band concerts are popular, outside when possible. Other musical experiences such as presentations of popular and semi-popular songs and music of the time would attract visitors. These could be structure concerts, or ongoing events in public areas.
- Mine Tours: Tours could be offered of old mines, similar to those at Cripple Creek, Silverton and Idaho Springs. This would require resolution of insurance and liability issues.



*Old Hundred Mine, Silverton*

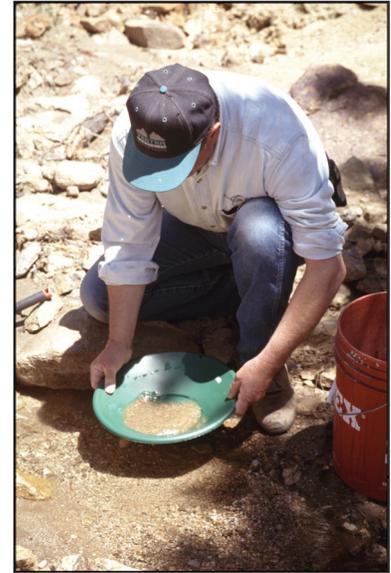


### Festivals & Special Events

Festivals and special events of many types are suggested: music, art and sculpture, film, woodcarving, railroading and mountain biking are only a few of the possibilities, as at Telluride, Aspen, Winter Park, Durango and Crested Butte. A “miner’s days” festival, where demonstrations that include such things as single jacking and double jacking could be held to draw many visitors, similar to events at Creede, CO. Mountain man/Indian rendezvous are held at locations throughout the West, and Black Hawk could get in on this circuit by holding an annual rendezvous at the Quartz Valley or Signal Hill Heritage Areas.

### Outdoor Recreation

Visitors would venture into the Black Hawk area’s “high country” during the day to hike, bike, ride horses, and motor to various sites of natural and historical interest. Passive and active interpretation of the historic scene would emphasize the ruins and remains of mining and processing, and the trails, roads, railroads, and trams that carried people, animals, and materials around the countryside. Recreational gold panning could be expanded in the Black Hawk area. Interpretation of the natural scene should point out how, although it is still quite scarred and bare, the area has reforested significantly from its muddy, denuded condition during the most active mining period.



*Lake Gulch*



## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

A number of concepts, facilities and activities were identified during the planning process that would contribute to Black Hawk's stated goals of diversifying the city's economy and increasing destination tourism. Some of these ideas did not receive a large degree of interest or support and are thus not included as primary components of the Preferred Alternative. So that these ideas are not lost, and in case the City decides, in the future, to pursue them, these concepts are described in this section of the report. Many of the concepts described in this section are in concert with the Economic Development Plan and Analysis for the City of Black Hawk, completed in August 2003 by BBC Research & Consulting.

### **Day Trips / Scenic Drives**

Black Hawk could certainly take advantage of its proximity to four Scenic/Historic Byways - Peak to Peak, Guanella Pass, Mount Evans and Lariat Loop - by providing guided tours or brochures and audiotapes for visitors with their own vehicle. An opportunity also exists to work with the US Forest Service and Winter Park to reopen Rollins Pass and establish a Backcountry Byway that would include Jeep roads between Black Hawk, Central City, St. Mary's Glacier, Apex, American City and the old Rollins Pass railroad grade near Tolland. The Alpine Loop Backcountry Byway, between Lake City, Ouray and Silverton provides a huge boost to the economies of those communities via guided Jeep tours, Jeep rentals, and visitors who drive their own 4x4 vehicles, and might be a model for a similar system that extends out from Black Hawk.

Loop tours across Trail Ridge Road, dinner at the Peck House in Empire, a mine or mill tour in Idaho Springs, and Georgetown visits could be arranged. The Eisenhower Tunnel and Silverthorne Outlet Stores would also be attractive. Although these might appear to take income away from Black Hawk, they would add value to the visitor experience and increase the likelihood of good reports through word-of-mouth advertising. Similarly, Black Hawk could arrange for day trips from Summit County and Winter Park, with an eye toward attracting those visitors for a longer stay in Black Hawk at another time. These types of trips could be marketed as part of the Black Hawk experience, and thus attract visitors who may not otherwise visit the town.

### **Hut System**

During the alternatives formulation process, consideration was given to establishing an overnight hut system at scenic highpoints along Black Hawk trails. These huts, which could be simple cabins or yurts, could be operated on a fee basis, perhaps by a concessionaire. They would serve families with young children, older citizens, novice hikers from low elevations and others who are physically limited as to how far they can hike or how much they can carry. The Black Hawk hut system would allow a "backcountry" experience in which visitors would be comfortable because they are relatively close to civilization should an emergency arise. These huts would serve individuals who are interested in the hut experience, but who are not up to the more demanding hut systems found elsewhere in the West, such as the Tenth Mountain Division system between Aspen and Vail.

The Black Hawk hut system was discussed at the three focus group meetings, and with managers of adjacent public lands. All were very supportive of the concept and felt that such a system would be an important way to attract overnight visitors to Black Hawk, as an additional means of diversifying the economy. Use of the huts might be a one-night experience for visitors who would spend the remaining portion of their multi-day stay in Black Hawk hotels and B & B's. The hut system is included as an optional component of the master plan, for possible implementation as a later phase of the master plan.



## Excursion Train

During the planning process, both citizens and participants in the focus groups expressed a high level of interest in establishing a narrow gauge excursion train that would run between Black Hawk and Central City. Many viewed this as an attraction that would have a significant positive impact on the community's economy by bringing a large volume of tourists to the area, similar to excursion trains in Durango, Antonito, Canon City, Cripple Creek, Leadville and Georgetown. Citizens and focus group participants also felt that the train would result in casino patrons wanting to stay overnight, and that families of gamblers would visit the area because there would be something to do besides gaming.



*Silverton*

Accordingly, the planning process examined two alternative locations for developing an excursion train: the Colorado and Southern Railroad grade and the Gilpin Tramway grade. Each was examined in some detail, and each was contained in the set of alternatives that were described in a briefing package dated June 12, 2003. Both railroad options were discussed at a public meeting that evening and are described below:



*Cripple Creek*

### Colorado and Southern Railroad

The Colorado and Southern Railroad (C & S) once ran from downtown Black Hawk to the south side of Central City, via the slopes south of Gregory Gulch. The abandoned grade for this three-foot gauge railroad is located primarily on north-facing slopes that are densely wooded with conifers; thus, views down into Gregory Gulch and to the hills above are limited. The grade crosses Cooper Gulch not far above the original Gregory Strike and today's Mountain City historical village. In downtown Black Hawk, the railroad crossed a trestle above Gregory Gulch and ran parallel, and above, Main Street on what is now Bobtail Road. Miner's Mesa Road crosses the old grade at two points near the casino's employee parking area. The grade between Miner's Mesa Road and Central City is still in good shape and can be traveled in a truck, except for one short length just west of Cooper Gulch. Much of the grade near Black Hawk is in single ownership.

Again pending resolution of ownership, the Colorado and Southern Railroad grade could be re-opened for use by an excursion train, with depots in both Black Hawk and Central City. The Black Hawk Depot could be located in the general area of the existing employee parking area on Miners Mesa Road. This large, flat area could include a railroad museum and could be the focal point for preserving and interpreting Black Hawk's railroad heritage. Passengers could board the train at this location and enjoy a trip on the original grade to Central City, with an intermediate stop in the Cooper Gulch Heritage Area.

During the planning process, citizens favored the Colorado and Southern grade as the more desirable of the two possible routes for an excursion train. Because the depots at both ends of the route would be very close to the downtown areas of Black Hawk and Central City, many felt that a train on this route would enjoy more use. Although north-slope conditions would mean more snow cover in from fall through spring, and views would be more limited, the proximity of this route to the most intense mining areas was seen to be an advantage. Initially, citizens felt that the Colorado and



Southern grade would be the easiest on which to re-establish an excursion train because the relatively few landowners would be supportive of the endeavor. However, because a major owner of land on Miner's Mesa has plans to develop his land, he has stated that he will support a trail on the C & S grade, but not a railroad.

### Gilpin Tramway

The Gilpin Tramway grade, which once served two-foot narrow gauge trains, is located on the slopes north of Gregory Gulch and Chase Gulch. Between Black Hawk and Central City, the abandoned grade is located primarily on south-facing slopes, and travels through natural grasslands and sparse coniferous forest. Thus, it offers outstanding views of the dense mining areas around Black Hawk and Central City. The tram grade extends from Highway 119 to Central City and on to Russell Gulch. Most of the grade is still in good shape and can easily be traveled by hikers and mountain bikers; a good portion of it can be driven in a truck. The grade is owned by a variety of private individuals.

If the right of way was purchased by a single entity, the Tramway grade could be re-opened for excursion trains. A depot in Black Hawk could be at one of three possible sites, as described in the master plan's *Alternative Briefing Package* of June 12, 2003. With the cooperation of Central City, a depot, possibly with a concessionaire-run restaurant, could be located on Winnebago Hill, north of Central City, at the east end of Nevada Hill, or on Quartz Hill, below the Glory Hole, where the original excursion trains stopped for picnics. The train could use a steam-powered locomotive, or, for a lower operating cost with less smoke, a diesel or gasoline-powered engine. An interim stop could be made where the tram grade crosses Chase Gulch. Again with cooperation of all involved, the train could extend on to Nevadaville and Russell Gulch to make a run of approximately 5 miles.

Of the two possible excursion train routes that were discussed during the public process, the Gilpin Tram was the least favored. While it would offer the best views, and be able to operate during a longer snow-free season because of south-facing slopes, citizens felt that it was too far from town and that the multiple ownership would be difficult to resolve. The tram grade also runs close to existing homes and it was felt that an excursion train on this route would impact the residents in those areas.

### **Wagon Tours / Chuck Wagon Supper**

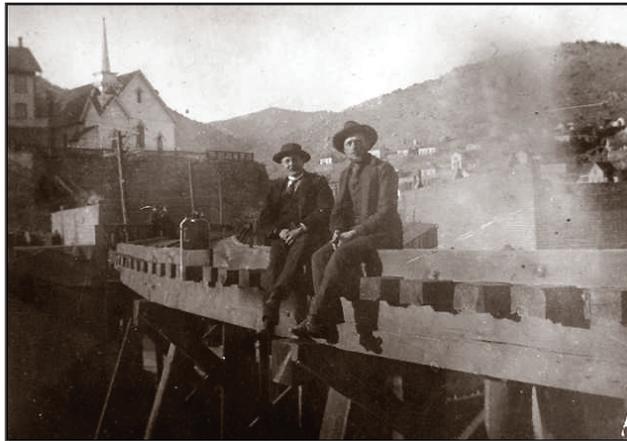
If an excursion train was ever developed on the Gilpin Tramway grade, a train stop could be developed on Winnebago Hill, and horse-drawn wagon tours could take passengers on an interpretive tour, via Chase Gulch Road, into the beautiful Quartz Valley... an area with an important ranching heritage and a significant wildlife habitat area, and could connect to a train stop at Castle Rock. Visitors to Quartz Valley could enjoy a chuck wagon cookout, complete with Western entertainment. The chuck wagon cookout could be modeled after similar facilities in Estes Park, Colorado Springs and Durango, and could be a significant component of the Black Hawk economy.



### **Black Hawk / Central City Cooperative Ventures:**

During the planning process, some citizens and community leaders from both Black Hawk and Central City expressed a desire that the two towns work together to mutual advantage to develop the open space, trails and heritage system. Cooperative ventures that could benefit both communities include the following:

- Connect the two towns with a trail up Gregory Gulch. Extend this on to the cemeteries and from there to Chase Gulch Reservoir, as described in the Trails section.
- Extend the Gilpin Tramway trail to run through Central City to Nevadaville, and develop a connection between this trail and Miner's Mesa via the Mammoth Hill area, as described in the Trails section.
- Develop a quiet, fun, non-polluting people-mover system that runs through Black Hawk, up Gregory Gulch and through Central City... something like San Francisco's cable car system. Keep the big, over-the-road busses to the edges of the towns, where they would connect with the quiet people-mover system at depots.





## PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

### **Policies and Regulations**

Successful implementation of Black Hawk's Public Open Space and Heritage Master Plan will depend upon the City's developing policies and regulations that will allow the establishment and management of the open space, trail and heritage system. While it is outside the scope of this document to craft the wording of those policies and regulations, listed below are some of the issues that must be addressed in the future, perhaps as part of the next update to the City's Comprehensive Plan.

### Land Acquisition

There are a variety of tools that the City could use to protect, and provide for public use of, open space. Many of these can result in tax credits for the landowner. The most pertinent of these tools are listed below and these, and other, open space acquisition methods should be explored and articulated in the City's policies and codes.

- Fee Simple Acquisition
- Conservation Easements
- Lease - Option
- Donation or Gift
- Land Exchange
- Purchase of Development Rights
- Transfer of Development Rights

When a private property owner is interested in selling land in fee simple to the City for open space, he or she should initiate the acquisition process as shown below:

- Property owner contacts the City stating wishes to sell land.
- City Staff meets with land owner to make sure land is within either the municipal boundary or the Growth Area (Gilpin County).
- Staff requests a current land appraisal from the property owner to show the current market value of the land.
- The property owner submits a letter to the Board of Aldermen, stating his or her interest in selling the land to the City of Black Hawk as well as the intended sale cost of the land (which is based on the appraisal). The land appraisal is included in this packet.
- The request is scheduled as an item in the Executive Session at the next Council Meeting. Staff presents the letter to the Board of Aldermen. It is suggested that the property owner is present for the meeting.
- Following direction from the Board of Aldermen, Staff works on the acquisition procedure with the City Attorney and the property owner.

If the property owner is interested in exploring the use of one of the other acquisition methods, as described above, the process is essentially the same as for fee simple acquisition. Once the transaction is complete, the land is considered open space and will be used according to the Public Open Space and Heritage Master Plan.

### Land Use Regulations (zoning code and subdivision regulations)

Black Hawk's land use regulations, including the zoning code and subdivision regulations, should be reviewed, and perhaps revised, to reflect the goals identified in the open space master plan. Of particular concern would be to examine



the City's requirement that developers designate a certain percentage of land as open space in future development projects. It may be desirable to adjust the current requirement either up or down, and to define the type of land, or the constraints that would apply to designated open space, e.g. mine tailings are not suitable.

### Open Space Use Regulations

Before any of the City's open space is officially opened to the public, regulations should be developed and posted to govern use by citizens and visitors. These should include, among other topics, the following:

- Campfires
- Non-motorized and motorized trail use and restrictions
- Off-trail use
- Rock climbing
- Dogs
- Winter use
- Litter
- Hours of closure
- Seasonal closure due to wildlife conditions, muddy trail conditions, etc.
- Natural and cultural resource protection and management

### **Priorities & Phasing**

#### Policies and Regulations

As described above, the development of policies and regulations that pertain to the City's open space, trail and heritage system should be the top priority for implementing this master plan.

#### Open Space Department and Staff

To begin implementation of this master plan, a high priority should be for the City to hire the appropriate staff to begin to acquire land from willing landowners. Another immediate task that should be undertaken by staff is to prepare grant applications to help fund the protection and interpretation of open space and heritage resources, and the development of trails. Since existing city-owned land could immediately be designated open space, and existing mining roads and trails on city-owned land could be used for public trails, staff will be needed at the outset to manage and maintain the open space and trails system.

Specific staffing needs are described in a following section.

#### Land Acquisition

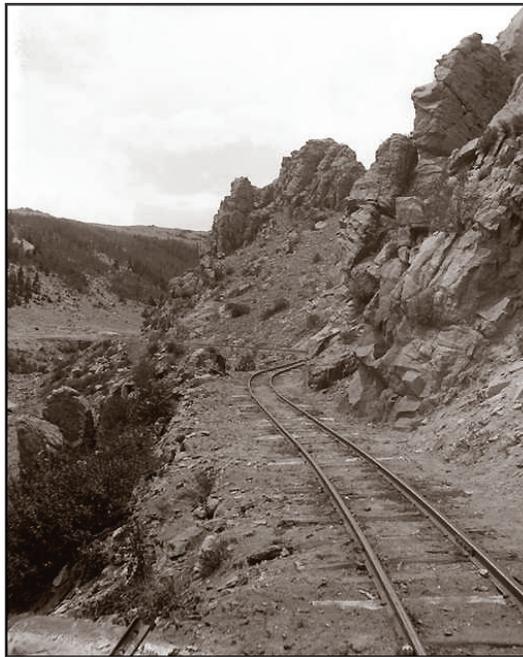
Land acquisition from willing landowners could begin immediately upon approval of the master plan by the Board of Aldermen, as funding permits. The priorities for this acquisition are described in the phasing section, below.

In general, the priorities for open space acquisition, within the areas illustrated on the Preferred Alternative map, should be determined by the threat of loss due to development pressure and the existence of willing sellers. An additional consideration in establishing priorities for land acquisition is that many Black Hawk citizens feel that initial open space protection efforts should be focused on land close to downtown and residential areas.



### Trail Development

Black Hawk, more than most communities, is blessed with a trail system that is almost ready for public use. Numerous mining roads and trails on public land have been used informally by local residents, and many would require little work to be suitable for use by citizens and visitors. As a high priority, the City could provide appropriate signage and minimal clearing and improvement to existing trail surfaces. In some cases, it may be possible and desirable to immediately develop small parking areas at trail heads. Other more significant trailhead, and trail corridor, development will be dependent on future land acquisition.





Phasing (see Preferred Alternative map)

Description	Phase One	Phase Two	Phase Three
<b>Open Space Areas</b>			
Cooper Gulch	X		
Miner's Mesa North Slope (south of downtown)	X		
Quartz Valley / Maryland Mountain	X		
Silver Gulch (east of Dory Hill Rd)	X		
Silver Hill South (between Hwy 119 & Dory Hill Rd)		X	
Silver Hill North (between Missouri Falls & Dory Hill Rd)		X	
Missouri Falls			X
<b>Trails &amp; Trailheads</b>			
Cooper Gulch	X		
Colorado & Southern RR (Miner's Mesa North Slope)	X		
Gregory Gulch* (Black Hawk to Central City)	X		
Quartz Valley / Maryland Mountain	X		
Silver Gulch (east of Dory Hill Rd)		X	
Silver Hill South (between Hwy 119 & Dory Hill Rd)		X	
Silver Hill North (between Missouri Falls & Dory Hill Rd)		X	
North Clear Creek (north to post office)		X	
North Clear Creek (south to US 6)		X	
Gilpin Tramway* (Hwy 119 to Eureka Gulch)			X
Eureka Gulch* (Central City to Chase Reservoir)			X
Gilpin Tramway* (Eureka Gulch to Virginia Canyon Rd)			X
Mammoth Hill / Bobtail Hill / Miner's Mesa*			X
Green Ranch Connection (Silver Gulch to east)			X
*Assuming cooperation with Central City			
<b>Facilities</b>			
South Gateway & Visitor Center	X		
North Gateway	X		
West Gateway	X		
Cooper Gulch Heritage Area	X		
Signal Hill Indian Heritage Area		X	
Quartz Valley Ranching Heritage Area		X	
Church / School Museum			X

Notes:

- The phasing shown above is based on citizen input that was expressed during the planning process, opportunities expressed by landowners, and overall community priorities as perceived by the planning team.
- The phasing show above is only a general guideline. Actual implementation of the plan must be adjusted in response to changing opportunities and the scheduling of other public projects.



## Open Space Department & Mission Statement

Throughout the public process, citizens repeatedly expressed concern that establishing an open space and trail system would result in rowdy parties on Saturday night and trash strewn about trailhead parking areas. Indeed, these events are occurring now, and some citizens feel they will escalate in the future. To address these concerns, and to ensure that Black Hawk's open space and trail system will be an asset to the community, an open space department will be established to manage and maintain the open space and trail system. It will be staffed with properly trained and experienced personnel from the outset.

Another key role of open space staff will be to apply for grants to help offset the cost of land acquisition, trail development and facilities construction. Staff will also be needed to develop educational, interpretive and living history programs, and to work with willing land owners in the acquisition of open space, or the establishment of conservation easements.

The Open Space Department should be an independent and self-contained unit within the City government, and it should report directly to the City Manager. Budgeting, grant writing, planning and design of capital improvements, and maintenance operations, as they pertain to the open space, heritage and trail system, should all be direct responsibilities of the Open Space Department.

A draft of the Mission Statement for the Black Hawk Open Space Department is included below. A final version of this statement should be developed and adopted by the Board of Aldermen as a first step in establishing the Department.

### *Mission Statement*

*The mission of the Open Space Department  
is to protect and interpret open space, natural resources  
and the City's cultural heritage, and to provide trails, for  
the enjoyment and use of Black Hawk residents and visitors.*

## Management & Staffing

Ultimately, a team of 4-8 individuals may be needed to staff the Open Space Department, including both full-time and part-time positions, especially if an extensive interpretive / living history program is established. The paid staff should be supplemented by a cadre of volunteers who would serve in such positions as trail hosts and interpreters. Initially, two employees would be sufficient to start the implementation of the master plan: an Open Space Director and a Maintenance Worker. A brief description of their duties follows:

### Open Space Director

This person would be in charge of all administrative and management aspects of the open space system. He or she would be directly responsible for fund raising, budgeting and negotiations with land owners regarding acquisition. The Director would also be responsible for coordinating a volunteers program, particularly for interpretive activities.

Law enforcement will be required in open space areas from the outset of opening public lands to use by citizens and visitors. Therefore, it may be desirable to require that the Open Space Director be a certified law enforcement officer, and that this position's duty hours include Friday and Saturday nights. If the Director is a law enforcement officer, his/her duties could include those of a park ranger.



An optional, or supplemental, method of providing law enforcement services on open space may include the establishment of very clear intergovernmental agreements (IGAs) with the Black Hawk police department and Gilpin County sheriff. It must be recognized, however, that a park ranger approach to law enforcement is often very different from that typically used by police officers. While fully trained and equipped to deal with almost any law enforcement situation, park rangers are trained to use a softer touch, to rely on visitor education and voluntary compliance as the initial step in resolving issues, and to manage both natural and cultural resources. A properly trained and experienced park ranger could be located in the Black Hawk Police Department, rather than the Open Space Department.

The Open Space Director will also be responsible for acquiring the equipment necessary for managing and maintaining the open space and trail system. Office and administrative equipment such as computers and copy machines; patrol ranger equipment such as mountain bikes, uniforms and firearms; and maintenance equipment such as shovels, saws, etc. will all be needed prior to opening the open space to public use.

The duties described above would keep one person extremely busy. While combining these responsibilities into one position may be feasible initially, the law enforcement / ranger duties may soon need to be split out into a separate position... particularly if the police department and sheriff IGAs overburden those organizations.

The Director position should require a college degree in a field related to park and recreation administration, natural and cultural resources, or planning and design. The Managers of many Colorado State Parks have the education and skills that would be required of the Open Space Director, including law enforcement. Consultation with State Parks would be helpful as Black Hawk begins to recruit for this position.

#### Maintenance Worker

A maintenance position should be established upon adoption of the open space master plan. This person would be responsible for patrolling the existing public lands and trails and picking up litter. He or she could also begin to maintain trails and trailheads that are currently in use, and to do light construction of new trails (clearing, grading, water bars and similar activities).

If properly skilled, the maintenance worker could cooperate with other City staff or consultants to develop a sign plan for the open space, trail and heritage system and could construct and erect regulatory and interpretive signage.



## Other Required Studies

### Overview

Much of this master plan can be implemented without any additional studies. Indeed, land can be acquired for open space and trails, interpretive and trail signs can be installed, and living history and interpretive programs and activities can be initiated.

Prior to the construction of new, physical facilities, however, additional studies may be needed, as determined on a case-by-case basis. What studies are required, and for which facilities, will largely depend on the location and character of the specific site that is selected for construction.

While some of the following studies would be required only to protect the City's investment in capital construction, others would be needed only if federal grants were involved in their development. Never-the-less, because the protection of open space is, by definition, concerned with the protection of natural and cultural resources, most open space agencies voluntarily undertake pertinent environmental studies as part of the planning, design and construction process. If such studies determine that impact to important resources would occur, it may be possible to relocate the facilities, or to design them in ways that mitigate those impacts.

When there is doubt as to the compliance requirements regarding environmental studies, the City should confer with a qualified natural and cultural resource consulting firm.

Following is a list of studies that may be needed prior to the construction of facilities such as trails, trailheads and visitor centers. They are described further in the following paragraphs.

- Wetlands delineations
- Threatened and endangered species studies
- Flood plain mapping
- Historic structures evaluations
- Archeological studies
- Hazardous materials and geologic conditions reports
- Topographic and boundary surveys

### Wetlands

If the proposed project is likely to impact jurisdictional waters of the United States (streams, marshes, wetlands, etc), a delineation of such areas would need to be completed by an approved wetlands consultant. Depending upon the outcome of the delineation, a final determination, and possibly a permit will be required from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Small impacts (typically less than 0.5 acres) will likely require a nationwide permit, while larger impacts would require an individual permit. In some cases, alternative sites and/or designs may be required, and mitigation (development of wetlands on another site) may be necessary.

### Threatened & Endangered Species

Prior to beginning the implementation of this master plan, the City of Black Hawk should confer with a qualified environmental consulting firm to determine the likelihood of there being threatened and/or endangered plant and animal species in the study area. Then, as individual construction projects are contemplated, site-specific studies may be needed to determine the presence or absence of such species. Should such species be identified, permitting and consultations under the Endangered Species Act would need to be conducted with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.



### Flood Plains

Updated flood plain mapping within the present City limits is currently underway and this mapping should be used in determining the location and design of capital improvements such as the visitor center, museums and trail heads. If significant open space facilities are contemplated in areas outside the limits of current flood plan mapping, additional mapping may be needed along major stream corridors. Most minor recreation facilities, such as a trailhead parking lot, are permissible within flood plains.

### Historic Structures & Sites

A portion of the Black Hawk built environment is within a National Historic Landmark District, and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. When construction of new facilities is contemplated within or near the NHL, consultation, where applicable, should be made with the Colorado State Historic Preservation Office, the Office of Archaeological and Historic Preservation, and the Colorado Historical Society. This should be integrated into planning processes, occurring well before construction begins.

### Archeological Sites

There are certainly sites of prehistoric, as well as historic, value in the Black Hawk area. As part of the planning, design and construction process for any facility, a survey should first be conducted to determine the presence or absence of undocumented archeological resources and the impact of construction on documented cultural resources. The additional time required for site testing or extensive literature research should be included in the project schedule and budget. Additionally, monitoring of construction activities may be required by the Office of Archaeological and Historic Preservation.

### Hazardous Materials & Geologic Conditions

Due to past mining activities, sites around Black Hawk may be contaminated with hazardous materials. Additionally, some areas are subject to subsidence due to abandoned mine tunnels. Adequate studies should be undertaken as part of the facility planning and design process to determine if hazards exist, and whether relocation or mitigation is necessary.

### Topographic & Boundary Surveys

To allow proper design of facilities like visitor centers, parking areas, etc., a detailed topographic survey, usually at a contour interval of one foot, will be necessary. If the subject site is close to the boundaries of land that is not owned by the City of Black Hawk, a boundary survey will also be required.



## Funding Options & Strategies

There are many sources of funds that could be used to implement this Open Space and Heritage master plan in addition to the City of Black Hawk's general fund. They include:

### State

- Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO): outdoor facilities & open space
- Colorado State Trails Program: trails and trail heads
- Colorado State Parks: Land and Water Conservation Grant
- Colorado Youth Corps Association: trail construction
- Colorado Department of Transportation: trails
- Colorado State Forest Service: tree grant programs
- Colorado Department of Local Affairs: Energy Impact & Initiatives programs
- Colorado State Historical Society: historic protection & restoration

### Federal

- Transportation Efficiency Act (TEA-21): trails & historic preservation
- Land and Water Conservation Fund: open space acquisition
- National Endowment for the Arts Fund: planning, design, historic preservation

### Non-Profit Organizations, Foundations & Trusts

The following organizations have provided substantial contributions for parks, recreation and historic preservation. Many of these award grants only to recipients with 501 (c) (3) status, thus entities like the Gilpin County Historical Society would need to partner with the City to access these funding sources.

- Anna Keesling Ackerman Trust: parks & rec; historic; human services; youth
- Bacon Family Foundation: parks & rec; historic; human services; youth
- Coors Brewing Company: protecting and improving water resources
- John G. Duncan Charitable Trust: parks & rec; historic preservation
- Gates Family Foundation: conservation; parks & rec; historic; youth
- Kenneth Kendal King Foundation: conservation; parks & rec; youth

### Land Trusts

A number of land trusts work in Colorado to protect agricultural land, wildlife habitat and open space. The following organizations are some of the land trusts that could provide funds or technical assistance in implementing the actions in this master plan that describe the protection of open space, wildlife habitat and ranch land.

- Colorado Open Lands
- Colorado Wildlife Heritage Foundation
- The Conservation Fund
- The Nature Conservancy
- Trust For Public Land
- American Farmland Trust
- Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust

The funding sources in this section, and many others, are listed in the *Colorado Grants Guide*. It describes the type and limits of grants, and provides contact information for each organization.

A key point to this section of the document is to point out that there are *many* financial resources available for the implementation of the master plan...funding need not come solely from the City of Black Hawk.



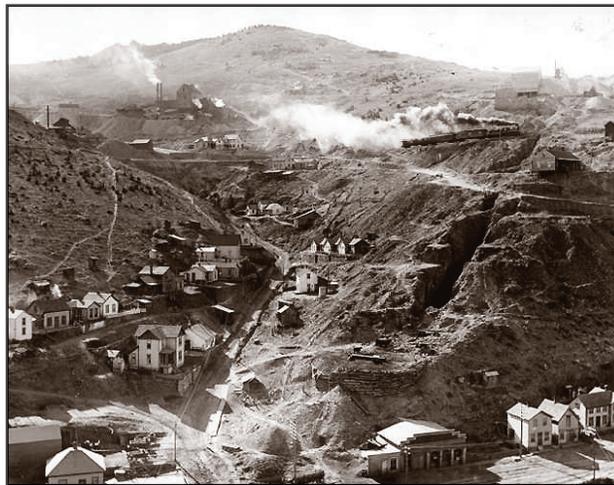
## SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

This master plan is the result of an extremely thorough public process and describes a community goal... a *vision*... that was articulated by many Black Hawk area property owners in four public meetings, by responding to a citizen survey, and via telephone calls, informal discussions and letters. It will serve existing and future residents by providing a wide variety of outdoor recreational activities that do not now exist. Together, these new facilities, activities and programs will appeal to overnight destination visitors, and will attract a younger clientele than exists in the present visitor demographic profile. The new opportunities will be of interest to family and friends of current gaming customers who do not care to gamble, and thus patronage at the casinos will increase. Economic growth and jobs for current citizens will expand.

Las Vegas and Reno, Nevada, other cities whose economies are largely dependent upon gambling, have also recognized in recent years that they must provide a wide variety of outdoor recreation opportunities to attract “a younger, more athletic crowd to a town where the customer base had been turning geriatric” (per Scott Sonner, Associated Press). In those towns, the casinos are working hand-in-hand with the cities to provide outdoor recreation facilities to attract a new demographic profile. The type of facilities, activities and programs described in this master plan for Black Hawk are absolutely in line with the direction that Las Vegas and Reno are taking to diversify their economies.

Of course, implementation of the master plan will require extensive funding, but this need not be borne by the City of Black Hawk alone. Participation by the casinos should be courted, since they, too, will benefit. Additionally, federal, state and non-profit funding sources are available for historic preservation; open space; trails; and transportation facilities, including the people-mover system.

This master plan is the result of input and hard work by dozens of Black Hawk citizens, staff and elected officials. Current and future generations of residents and visitors will benefit from their visions and endeavors.





## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & PLANNING TEAM

### Property Owners and Residents of Black Hawk

The planning team wishes to thank the many landowners and citizens of the Black Hawk area who contributed their ideas and expressed their hopes and desires in helping to create a vision for the future of the community. This plan would not be as meaningful without their turning out for meetings on snowy evenings, participating in workshops on Saturdays, responding to the citizen survey, writing us letters and contacting us on the telephone and while we were in the field. Thank you!

### Board of Aldermen

Mayor Kathryn Eccker	Dick Cottrell	Kathleen Doles
Tom Kerr	Al Price	David Spellman
Richard Ummel		

### Planning Team

City of Black Hawk Staff  
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Sean McCartney, City Planner/Project Manager  
Cindy Linker, Administrative Assistant

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Roger Burkart, Landscape Architect	Dave Grossi, GIS Specialist
Cliff Lind, GIS Specialist	Karen Carrillo, Desktop Publisher

#### RRC Associates, Research & Survey Consultants

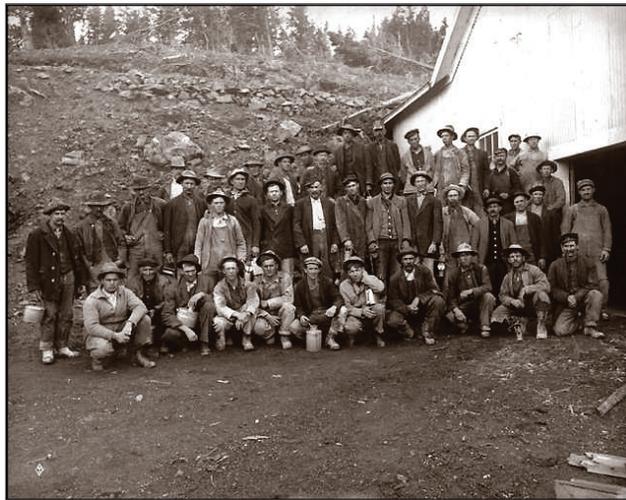
Chris Cares, Principal-In-Charge  
Nate Fristoe, Research Analyst  
Julie Lucey, Research Analyst

#### Central Colorado Preservation Partners

Jackie Powell, Historic Preservation Planner

### Other Contributors

Jim Herron, Colorado Division of Minerals and Geology	Carol Leasure, Colorado State Parks
Tom Howard, Colorado Division of Wildlife	Dan Lovato, U.S. Forest Service
Charlie Hudson, Jefferson County Open Space	Ken Foelske, Jefferson County Open Space
Tim Mauck, Clear Creek County Open Space	Marilyn Hogan, Clear Creek County Open Space
Doug Lancaster, CCS Consultants, Land Surveyor	Trent Miller, SWCA Environmental Consultants
Todd Kohler, SWCA Environmental Consultants	Diane Gansauer, Great Outdoors Colorado
Karen Weinsheimer, Gilpin Parks & Recreation District	Ken Ladeceur, Gilpin County School District



# OVERVIEW OF BLACK HAWK SURVEY & FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

*June 30, 2003*

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**Presented by: Chris Cares in Conjunction with DHM Design**  
**303 / 449-6558**  
**chris@rrcassoc.com**

**Prepared for: City of Black Hawk**



*Historic Black Hawk*

## THE PROCESS

### *A Community Survey*

- Survey with “spouse form” mailed to 270 property owners
- Designed to learn what citizens think
- Post cards returned separately to permit surveys to be anonymous
- Reminder cards mailed June 6th to improve response
- Results through June 30 are based on 39 responses. Results are summarized in the Attachments.
- Not too late to respond – we want to hear from you

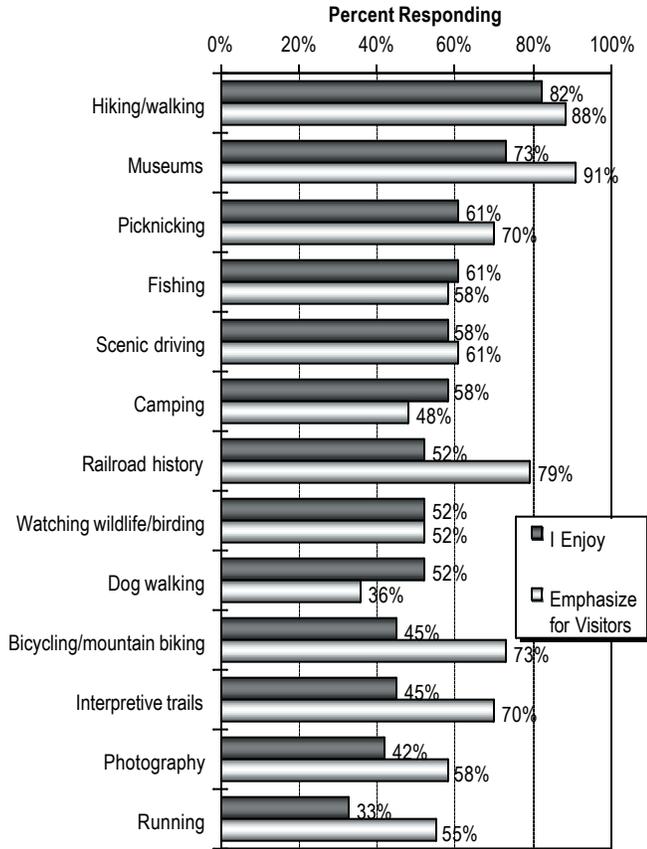
### *Focus Groups*

- Conducted with three interest groups – “trail users,” “history buffs” and “tourism professionals”
- Designed to learn what select groups from outside Black Hawk think

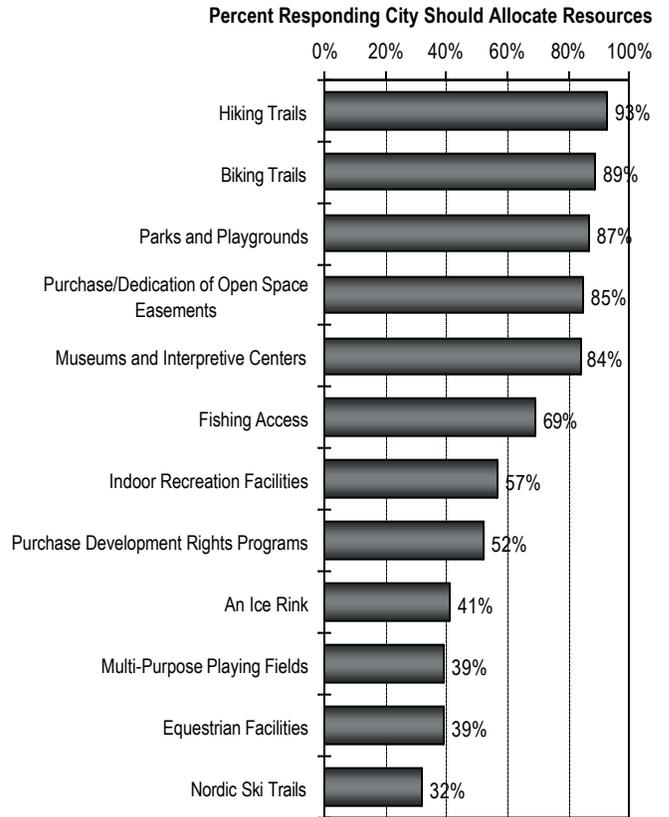
## RESULTS FROM THE SURVEY

- Generally survey confirms the direction of discussions at workshops
  - Support for hiking/walking trails, museums, railroad history, etc. (see graphs below)
  - Support for emphasizing historic mining areas, museums and interpretive centers, and wildlife habitat. Other categories received relatively less attention.
  - In a key finding, there is willingness and desire to allocate money to some of these programs and facilities (see Figure 3 below).
  - There were a large number of “open ended” comments with the surveys. A sampling of these comments is provided in the report, as well as the complete listing at the end of the document. In general, through their comments, respondents support the overall direction of the Open Space Plan.
  - With respect to priorities, citizens generally prefer “open space with public use” as a priority (in contrast to limited public use or no public use (see Question 17).
  - Generally citizens are indicating a preference for out right purchase, or zoning incentives over other techniques. Yet, there is support for using a variety of methods to accomplish the plans.

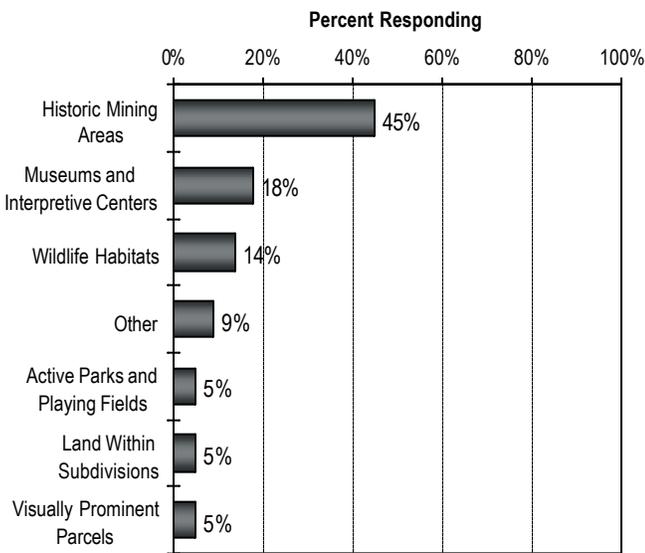
**FIGURE 1**  
**OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES/INTERESTS THAT YOU ENJOY /**  
**THAT SHOULD BE EMPHASIZED FOR VISITORS**



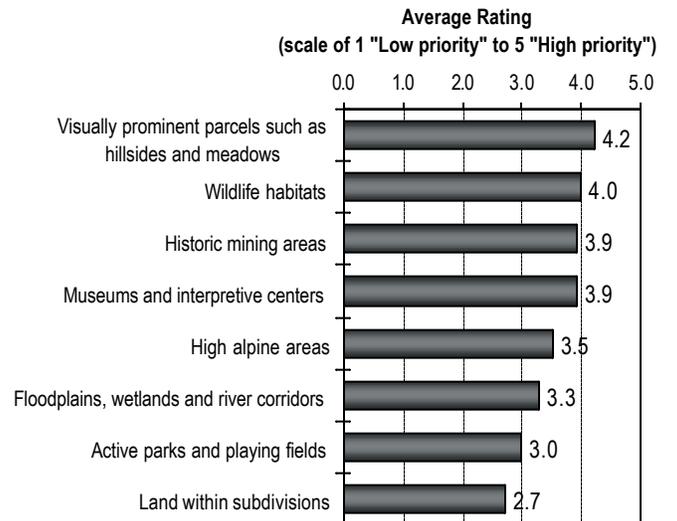
**FIGURE 2**  
**PROGRAMS OR FACILITIES**  
**TO WHICH THE CITY SHOULD ALLOCATE RESOURCES**



**FIGURE 3**  
**LAND FOR OPEN SPACE: TOP PRIORITY**



**FIGURE 4**  
**LAND FOR OPEN SPACE: PRIORITY RANKINGS**



# RESULTS FROM THE FOCUS GROUPS

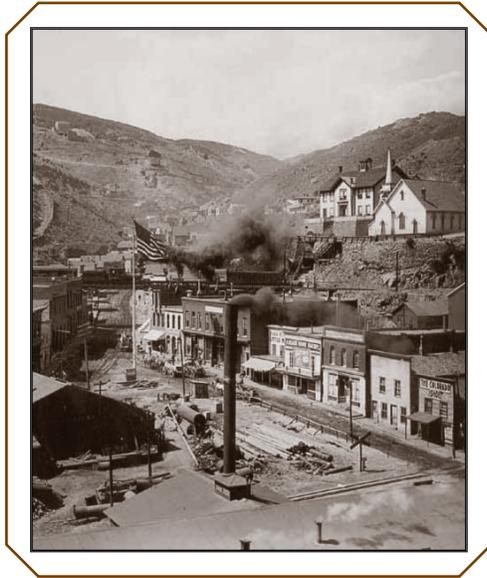
## *Trail Users and History Buffs*

- Participants in both focus groups expressed genuine excitement and enthusiasm for a variety of ideas discussed in the focus groups. Both saw great potential for Black Hawk. The first group was made up of trail users including bikers, hikers and horseback riders. The second group was “history buffs.” While each group talked primarily about their interests, unprompted the recreation users group mentioned using historic sites and messages to broaden the visitor experience. The historic group mentioned trails and open space as a part of the historic opportunities, to bring visitors to experience and enjoy Black Hawk.
- The groups identified excellent potential for trails, using the existing mining roads. “Black Hawk starts with a unique advantage with existing roads and trails.” Also, the existence of bus service, lodging, restaurants and the historic resources which could add to the “interest” of the trail system are all unique opportunities for Black Hawk.
- The focus group participants indicate there is large and growing demand for bike, hiking and equestrian trails, especially in proximity to the growing Front Range. Further, with Golden Gate Canyon nearby, Black Hawk is close to being “on the map” and it will be relatively easy to build on the existing identity of Golden Gate. They mentioned numerous ideas for promoting Black Hawk through guides, articles, word of mouth and advertising/positioning.
- The trail users said, “do a plan for multiuse trails;” and “anticipate and plan around conflicts of different user groups.” Learn from the successes (and failures) of other communities. Consider dogs in the planning.. Start small and grow the system. Consider the needs of local residents as well as visitors who will use the system.
- A Visitors Center is a “Big Idea” with wide support from both focus groups.
- Gold mining was identified as a major opportunity for recreation. This generated interest from several in the historic group.
- The idea of yurts and cabins on the trail system was explored. This was viewed positively in both groups– the opportunity to create a hut program geared to youth or seniors was viewed as an opportunity. It seemed to resonate with both groups as a positioning “niche” for Black Hawk, if the community uses trails and open space/historic programs as part of the strategy to broaden the economic base.
- The idea of a train was also viewed very favorably. Both groups got excited about its potential as a tourist draw and as a part of the overall trail system/historic experience.
- The suggestion was made to provide multi-use trails; others felt that separate trails should be provided for each type of user because of conflicts. There was much discussion on this point with no consensus. Further comments on the issue were:
  - Use time zoning to mitigate trail conflicts (alternate days for hikers, bikers, horses). Some felt all users must have somewhere to go on an given day - “you can’t send visitors back home because they arrived on the wrong day.”
  - Provide several types of trails regarding dogs: no dogs, dogs under sight/voice control, dogs on leash.
- Some felt that agencies can never provide enough staff to enforce regulations as described above. Others felt that volunteer trail hosts are effective at educating users and urging compliance.

- Some of the participants feel that Boulder County Open Space is a good model for trail management, while Jeffco is not. Boulder is willing to try different techniques and listens to the users.
- Provide stacked loop trails (different lengths, with options). Provide narrow, rocky trails as well as 8' wide paved trails.
- Traffic is a huge issue. To attract trail users, must provide trailheads at the edges of town so they don't have to get mixed up in downtown traffic.
- Provide a good bus system from Golden/Boulder to trailheads, not just to casinos.
- It is important to get the Black Hawk trail system included in Tom Barnhart's *Guide to Mountain Bike Trails*, then they would be highly used. Good trail maps must also be provided (e.g., Moab, Fruita). Put maps on website, like Latitude 40 does for Nederland trails.
- Equestrians would use Black Hawk trail system, and stay overnight in town, if bed and breakfasts would provide accommodations for horses.
- Educational/interpretive exhibits must be well done. Don't "Disney-fy" Black Hawk! A good model is Homestead Gulch, between Lyons and Estes Park, a USFS area. A bad model is the Black Hills.

### ***Tourism Professionals***

- The tourism focus group participants indicated that they presently send visitors to Black Hawk, yet it is most often for gaming and day trips. Black Hawk's main advantage is its location--a chance for out-of-state visitors to sample a "snapshot" of the Colorado mountains without traveling far. The group was generally skeptical of Black Hawk's ability to use casino-based lodging and the outdoors to turn the city into an overnight destination. Yet, interestingly, at least once participant said he is already selling the value of Black Hawk rather than the gaming. The inexpensive price of food and the history are what this tourism professional is promoting. In effect, he represents what Black Hawk could pursue by capitalizing on history and scenery for economic gain.
- The group felt strongly that Central City and Black Hawk are closely linked in the minds of the touring public. "The towns should work together." One participant, aware of past conflict, suggested that storytellers could tell about it - "people love to hear about conflict."
- The group brainstormed a number of activities that Black Hawk could market to visitors. Similar to other groups, there was strong enthusiasm for the ideas of the train, a visitor's center, gold panning, historic mine tours, horseback rides, rafting in Clear Creek, the Opera House, trails, an amphitheater, etc. They felt that Black Hawk should pursue an event or two to "put them on the map" and gain recognition.
- The group was concerned about parking in Black Hawk. From their point of view, parking must be addressed for visitors to have a good time.
- There was concern that Black Hawk would not follow through with marketing to support new improvements. "Marketing is the key to reaping economic benefits from improvements."
- On balance, the group had many creative ideas for Black Hawk on how marketing could be used. They feel Black Hawk has a product with potential, yet they are unclear about the role of the casinos in promotion efforts. "Without the casinos, the ability to market to overnight tourists is very difficult." At the same time, the improvements discussed were viewed positively. They would "certainly" expand the day visit potential of Black Hawk and as professionals this group would continue to recommend the city.



*mc*

*To accomplish great things, we must not only act, but  
also dream; not only plan, but also believe.*  
*Anatole France*