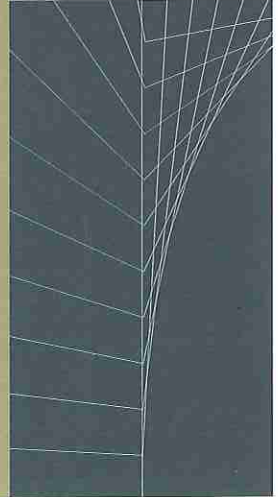
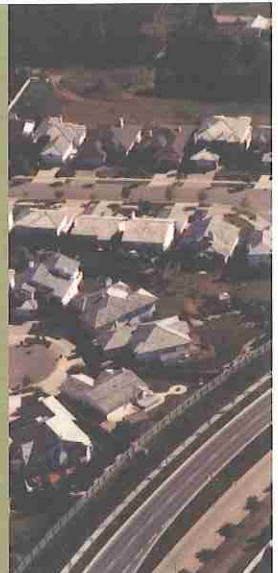


TRANSPORTATION MUNICIPAL/ENVIRONMENTAL STRUCTURAL  
LAND DEVELOPMENT LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE  
PLANNING STRATEGIC SERVICES GIS/MAPPING



## The City of Red Deer

Final Report

## Heritage Ranch 2009 Concept Plan

**WASKASOO PARK**  
SPECIAL GATHERING PLACES

October, 2009



**Table of Contents**

1.0 Introduction .....1  
2.0 Context .....2  
3.0 Biophysical Overview .....4  
    3.1 Vegetation .....4  
    3.2 Wildlife .....5  
    3.3 Sensitivities .....6  
4.0 Opportunities and Constraints .....7  
5.0 Site Concept Plan .....8  
    5.1 Access and Awareness .....8  
    5.2 Site Features and Amenities .....9  
    5.3 Lower Lands .....10  
    5.4 Utility Servicing .....11  
6.0 Building Evaluation and Concept Plan .....13  
    6.1 Facility Condition Evaluation .....13  
    6.2 Visitor Centre Concept Plan .....14  
7.0 Capital Costs and Phasing .....16  
    7.1 Recommended Capital Phasing .....17  
8.0 Business Case .....20  
    8.1 Existing Business Case Model .....20  
    8.2 New Direction .....21  
    8.3 Operational Needs and Planned Program Elements .....22  
    8.4 Recommended Business Model Phasing .....24  
9.0 Summary .....27

**List of Figures**

Figure 1 Overall Concept Plan  
Figure 2 Day Use Features  
Figure 3 Building Area and Group Camp  
Figure 4 Lower Lands  
Figure 5 Building Expansion Concept Plan  
Figure 6 Washroom Floor Plan

**Appendices**

Appendix A Servicing Study  
Appendix B Facility Condition Evaluation  
Appendix C Public Open House – Summary of Comments



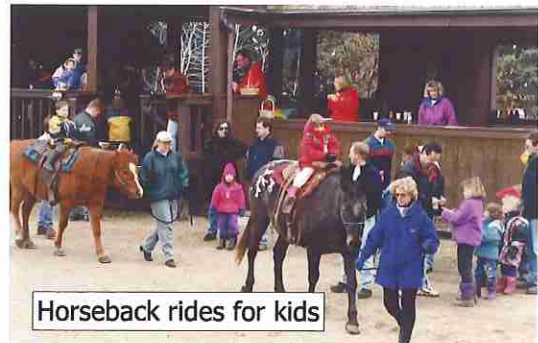
## 1.0 Introduction

The following Concept Plan Report has been prepared on behalf of The City of Red Deer to guide the ongoing development and operations of Heritage Ranch for the next 10 years. The 2009 Concept Plan is designed to be an appendix to the 2005 Special Gathering Places Study. In 2005, recommendations were made to phase out the equestrian programming from Heritage Ranch and change the focus of the facility to environmental education and interpretive programming through the development of a range of new facilities. The interpretive concept was put forward based on stakeholder and community input during the Study, but significant public concern was raised in the final stages of the Study over the removal of the horses and related programs. Based on this public feedback, the Heritage Ranch portion of the study was tabled and it was recommended that a revised concept plan be prepared.



Corral and Ranch Building

The Heritage Ranch – 2009 Concept Plan has been prepared by ISL Engineering and Land Services in consultation with City staff and the current Heritage Ranch operator. Consulting support has been provided by Group2 Architecture Engineering (building expansion concept) and CDC Consultants (business case). Community input from the 2005 study which included stakeholder workshops and two public open house events has been used as the foundation for the Concept Plan. A public open house was held in the fall of 2009 to gather community feedback on the proposed concept plan.



Horseback rides for kids

Based on the 2005 community input and discussions with City staff and the operator, it was determined that the Concept Plan would focus on the following:

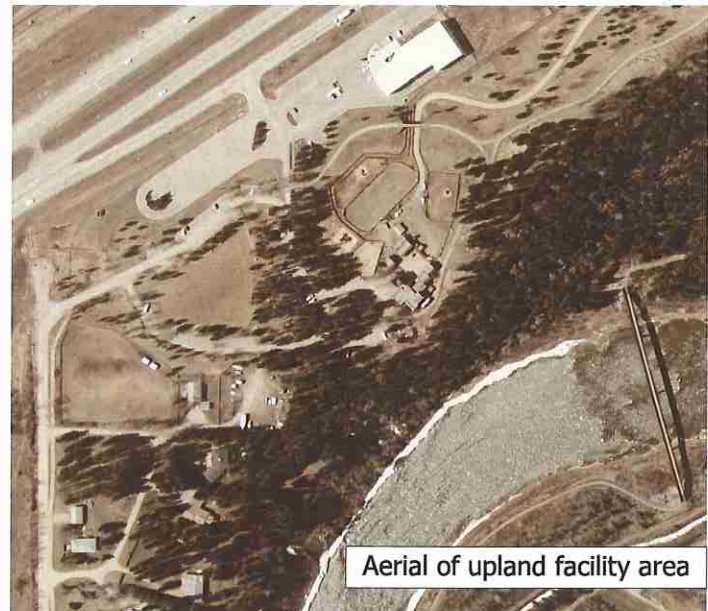
- Maintaining the current level of service delivery for the equestrian programs – trail rides and hay rides.
- An assessment of the condition of the existing Visitor Centre and operator's residence to confirm useable life and the feasibility of expansion of the Visitor Centre.
- Increase event capacity both indoors and outdoors to provide more flexibility for event bookings.



- If feasible, design an expansion of the Visitor Centre to provide a space for medium sized bookings (max. 80 people). Also provide much needed additional storage space and upgrading to facilitate full accessibility.
- Confirm a preliminary design and capital costs for providing water and sanitary services to the operator's residence, the Heritage Ranch Visitor Centre and the Alberta Sports Hall of Fame / Tourism Red Deer building.
- Provide for expanded parking to serve future bookings of the facility.
- Locate a new equipment shed/workshop (Quonset).
- Provide new outdoor family oriented features such as a playground and bookable group picnic areas to meet the needs of both Red Deer residents and visitors.
- Provide a designated site for outdoor education programming for small groups (e.g. boy scouts, elementary school classes).
- Improve access and awareness of the site by providing new signage and features to improve the overall profile of Heritage Ranch from both the Queen Elizabeth II Highway (QE II), and from Webster Drive/Cronquist Drive.
- Provide for additional amenities such as furnishings and trails.
- Identify potential future development and maintenance needs in the Lower Lands area of Heritage Ranch.
- Enhance the overall 'Ranch' experience through physical character and decorative improvements to facilities (e.g. 'ranch decor, art work, wagon wheels etc).

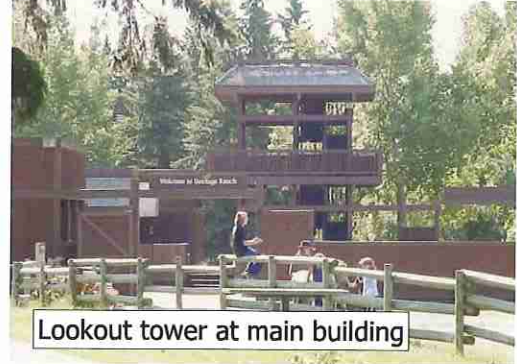
## 2.0 Context

Heritage Ranch is a large 87 hectare (ha) natural area, immediately east of the QE II, which was acquired by The City of Red Deer and developed through the Urban Parks Program<sup>1</sup>. The park includes a variety of natural environments and is divided by a heavily wooded escarpment into an upper and lower area. A bicycle/pedestrian trail links Heritage Ranch with Bower Ponds via a major river bridge and a trail along the southern boundary of the Red Deer Golf & Country Club.



<sup>1</sup> General Descriptions have been adapted from The City of Red Deer Ten-Year Capital Planning and Infrastructure Maintenance Plan (Sept. 2004)

The facilities at Heritage Ranch include a Visitor Centre that houses public washrooms and coffee concession, viewing tower, a stable and a tack shed. The Ranch is located on the extreme west side of Red Deer and is currently accessible from QE II via a roadside turn-off. The site has picnic facilities, a ball diamond and a children's playground. Heritage Ranch has the only equestrian facilities in Red Deer. The City of Red Deer manages the facility and equestrian programs through a contracted operator. Services offered by the facility operator include riding lessons, trail rides and hay rides during summer and sleigh rides during winter.



Adjacent to Heritage Ranch, the Alberta Sports Hall of Fame and the Tourism Red Deer Centre share the site and are accessible from the QE II.

The lower bottomlands of Heritage Ranch, running along the river, remain in a relatively natural state. There is an established 10 km's of equestrian trails. Facilities include a stocked fishing lake that has been developed from a series of abandoned gravel pits, a picnic shelter, a washroom/warming hut, and a playground. The natural environment in this area makes it a unique habitat for a wide variety of wildlife. The lower pasture area and the lower trails are groomed for cross country skiing and are well used throughout the winter.

In the Waskasoo Park Master Plan (1982), the following goals were established to create this park: acquire from province, develop park as wildlife habitat area, develop access road from Cronquist Drive and parking area, link trails, develop open sports fields and equestrian centre, develop gravel pits and open areas on lower area with fishing/skating ponds (no boats), group picnicking areas, canoe landing, develop equestrian and bicycling trails. All of these were developed. This park is now 28 years old, the facilities and programs are in need of upgrading.



### 3.0 Biophysical Overview

In the past Heritage Ranch supported some small scale gravel extraction operations before being acquired by The City of Red Deer just prior to the establishment of Waskasoo Park (Red Deer Regional Planning Commission 1982). Heritage Ranch consists of a partially-forested valley bottom, a steep section of



the valley escarpment, and a relatively flat area above the top-of-bank. These three areas fundamentally match three management zones into which the park was divided for development purposes (AGRA 1996). The area above the top-of-bank includes the majority of the infrastructure related to the equestrian activities, and consequently represents the most heavily developed area of Heritage Ranch. The valley escarpment remains, for the most part, undeveloped, although a few trails are present and some degradation has occurred as a result of mountain biking (Red Deer River Naturalists (RDRN) *pers. comm.*). The valley bottomlands include a large cleared field used as pasture, an old gravel pit reclaimed as a stocked fishing pond, a picnic and playground area, and several trails that wind through the surrounding forested areas.

#### 3.1 Vegetation

The vegetation of Heritage Ranch is closely linked with the topography. As a result of the extensive disturbance to the area above the top-of-bank, pasture grasses and manicured lawns dominate the area (AGRA 1996). The relatively steep valley escarpment remains largely in a natural state and supports a





mature, predominantly white spruce stand. The canopy of this forest is largely closed, resulting in reduced light penetration to ground level. Low light levels have resulted in a restricted understory, but increased moisture levels have led to an associated complex community of mosses (Red Deer Regional Planning Commission 1982). Along the base of the escarpment the vegetation becomes more typical of a mixedwood community, with white spruce, aspen, and balsam poplar all occurring in abundance. Although the bottomlands have experienced some degree of development, about two thirds remains naturally vegetated in the form of a mixedwood community. Of particular value to wildlife and ecological processes as a whole (e.g., provision of slope stability, water filtration, creation of fish habitat in the form of cover) is the presence of a band of mature riparian vegetation (a transitional, flood-tolerant vegetation zone bordering the edge of waterbodies) immediately adjacent to the Red Deer River.

### 3.2 Wildlife

The diversity of habitats present within Heritage Ranch suggests that this area supports a wide variety and abundance of wildlife. AGRA Earth and Environmental (1996) reported that 149 wildlife species, including 42 mammals, 101 birds, and 6 herptiles could occur in Heritage Ranch. Based on provincial species distributions the potential for many additional species exists. Among mammals, numerous species are expected to commonly occur. Those species include: Red Squirrel, Least Chipmunk, Deer Mouse, Masked Shrew, Red-backed Voles, Coyote, and Moose (AGRA 1996). Deer and Porcupine are reported to be abundant (RDRN *pers. comm.*). The more common bird species would include mixedwood forest species (e.g., Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Northern Flicker), deciduous forest species (e.g., Least Flycatcher, Veery), grassland species (e.g., Savannah Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow), and riparian species (e.g., Gray Catbird, Belted Kingfisher) (AGRA 1996).

Habitats within Heritage Ranch that are of particular ecological value include the mature white spruce stand and the riparian mixedwood community. The mature white spruce stand likely offers thermal cover to ungulates and is, therefore, likely to be an important area for deer during the winter. Bird species that are more heavily dependent on coniferous forests, such as the Boreal Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, White-winged Crossbill, and both Ruby- and Golden-crowned Kinglets are likely to occur in this area of white spruce (Fisher and Acorn 1998). Riparian communities, such as the treed area bordering the river throughout this park, likely support high levels of natural biodiversity.

Heritage Ranch is likely a significant component of the wildlife travel corridor available through the city's river valley (Ken Froggat *pers. comm.*). Its location at one end of Waskasoo Park, and at the periphery of the city, likely provides a valuable link connecting habitat within the Red Deer River Valley to more remote areas of wildlife habitat outside of the city's boundaries. The intact border of riparian habitat along the Red Deer River in particular is expected to function as a key travel corridor.

### 3.3 Sensitivities

Heritage Ranch includes Red Deer River Valley bottomlands, a section of the valley escarpment and a smaller area of uplands between the valley and the QEII. The bottomlands immediately adjacent to the river are situated in the 100-year flood risk area (WER Engineering Ltd. 1991). Additionally, the soils throughout much of the bottomlands are either rego black or orthic regosols and have moderate to severe limitations for construction, and slight to moderate limitations for other uses (Red Deer Regional Planning Commission 1982). The steep escarpment within Heritage Ranch presents two different limitations. The steep slope is unsuitable for most forms of infrastructure development, and even trail development on the escarpment would present the challenge of erosion control. The mature white spruce stand that occupies much of the escarpment is a relatively unusual natural feature within the Central Parkland Subregion of Alberta and, by virtue of a limited number of major ravines, is highly valued for its role as wildlife habitat. Wildlife and soil characteristics were also both identified as sensitivities in AGRA Earth and Environmental's (1996) environmental overview of Heritage Ranch. Further facility development in the area of white spruce should be avoided. Even subtle development, such as trail maintenance and upgrading, could lead to increased erosion. Informal mountain biking trails within the escarpment have been anecdotally identified as contributing to increased erosion (RDRN *pers. comm.*) It is possible, however, that carefully executed upgrading could in fact be used to mitigate existing erosion problems.



## 4.0 Opportunities and Constraints

A number of potential development opportunities were identified in 2005 during preparation of the Special Gathering Places Study and then reviewed during preparation of this Concept Plan:

- Providing private horse boarding would generate more year round revenue but could be limited by the available pasture - requires feed storage.
- Increasing marketing programs, special events and services will likely increase facility bookings.
- The existing ball diamond is under utilized and could be removed and replaced with other family friendly outdoor amenities.
- In order to provide more experiences for year-round activity on the site, a skating rink could be added but lighting would be required.
- Requests for wedding and banquet bookings at Heritage Ranch are common but expanded facilities are needed.
- To encourage active lifestyle in Red Deer, more connections could be provided to Maskepetoon Park, to West Lake subdivision, to Red Deer College, and to Fort Normandeau. Bicycle rentals at Heritage Ranch could allow visitors to explore the surrounding trails.
- Special events that would be compatible with current programs include: a country Thanksgiving, cabana sucre, Family Winterfest, and hayrides at Christmas.
- The diversity of habitats and abundance of wildlife provides an opportunity to develop environmental interpretive programming.
- Other non-invasive activities, such as bird watching and hiking, could be further encouraged in most areas of the park.
- Much of the infrastructure needed for orienteering already exists at Heritage Ranch, so orienteering programs could again be promoted.

During the Special Gathering Places Study, a number of constraints dealing with the equestrian service, and the park in general, were indicated by the Heritage Ranch operators. In general, these constraints all continue to exist in 2009:

- Not enough pasture land to support the current service.
- Trail width and clearing is compromising safety due to increased levels of trail use and diversity of users.
- Limited amount of workshop and storage space.
- Staffing resources are limited and animals need 24/7 care and security.
- Picnic sites that are dispersed throughout the site are under utilized.
- Water quality is poor.
- No Transit service to the Park.
- Not easily accessible from the Alberta Sports Hall of Fame.
- Inadequately promoted - public is not aware of services, features and programs available.
- Buildings look old and dated.
- Meeting space is small and not suitable for 'medium' sized gatherings – flexibility of meeting/program space is key to increasing bookings.



## 5.0 Site Concept Plan

The overall concept for the re-development of Heritage Ranch provides features and amenities designed to encourage and support more use by both visitors and residents of Red Deer. In particular, the focus is on raising awareness and enhancing the diversity of the facility, increasing the availability and flexibility of programmable space, providing amenities for bookings by large and small groups. As indicated, the equestrian programs of Heritage Ranch can be maintained with additional amenities provided to enhance and support these programs. The recommended development concept for the Heritage Ranch site is described below and illustrated on Figures 1-4.

### 5.1 Access and Awareness

One of the issues discussed as part of the Concept Plan process, was the controlled access between the city and highway through Heritage Ranch. Several options were reviewed to maintain the current situation of providing tourist access to the city from the highway while restricting access from the city to the highway. This is accomplished by maintaining the lockable gates at the two entrances to the Park and incorporating the gates into the new Gateway features as a recommendation of the concept plan. Another option that was considered was to include key pad control into the gates with the access numbers provided by Tourism Red Deer. Since access from the highway into the city is desirable from a tourism perspective, a study is being completed by the Sports Hall of Fame and Tourism Red Deer related to developing an access from their parking lot connecting to Cronquist/Webster Drive. This potential access/egress may address the long standing issues of vehicle movement through the site. It will also change the requirements for control gates. Until the study is complete, the concept plan only includes maintaining the existing access control gates. The plan is flexible enough to facilitate a new access or a change in access control. In addition to access control between the site and the highway, it is recommended that a gate is provided within the site to allow people a place to park for those that want to access the trails after normal operational hours (see Figure 2).

Several new features are proposed to increase awareness of the site and programs of Heritage Ranch and of Waskasoo Park. Two Heritage Ranch Gateways will be added along with an entrance feature located at the south entrance to the site which will be visible along both Webster Drive and Cronquist Drive. The feature will build in the heritage theme and incorporate a wooden cart, wagon wheels, a windmill, ornamental grass planting and a backdrop of native trembling aspen trees (See Figure 2).



At the west entrance gateway off the highway, a Waskasoo Park entry node will be created with a Waskasoo Trail Map and information sign. This will create a 'gateway' to the Waskasoo Park system that will encourage visitors to stop and



use the trails or return in the future to take advantage of this amazing amenity. This entry node will also provide an information board advertising the programs and upcoming events for Heritage Ranch. All signage will be developed to follow the Waskasoo Park Sign Identity Program and support the 'ranch' theme. This area will also contain clear signage on how to re-access Highway 2 from the day-use area, along Webster Drive to the 32<sup>nd</sup> Street exit.



To accommodate the proposed building expansion (See Section 6.0), the construction of a new 35 stall parking lot to the southeast of the main building and an additional 15 stalls along the park road is recommended (Figure 1 and 2). This will bring the site total for parking to 132 stalls. A new trail is proposed to connect the new parking and the building. The alignment for the trail is proposed through existing mature trees and will require some tree clearing. For safety and security, lighting will be provided along the new trail that connects the parking to Heritage Ranch, as well as in the maintenance yard. The existing maintenance yard will be reconfigured, a Quonset hut will be provided for storage of maintenance equipment, and the yard will be fenced and buffered from the parking lot with coniferous tree planting.

For trail users and those accessing the site on foot, the existing asphalt trail system will be expanded with several links to connect existing trails and provide pedestrian access between parking lots and various site amenities. To further improve access to the park for residents, it is recommended that transit service to Heritage Ranch be evaluated and a bus stop be provided if service is warranted.

*Summary of Access and Awareness Features*

- Heritage Ranch Gateways
- Heritage Ranch Entry Feature
- Control gates for site security
- Waskasoo Park Entry Node with trail sign
- New parking lot and trail to accommodate building expansion

**5.2 Site Features and Amenities**

The existing day-use area, which includes picnic sites and open field, will be retained and enhanced to provide a short term stopping area for highway travelers and a place where families and groups from Red Deer and the surrounding area can gather for casual socializing or fun outdoor events (e.g. reunions, company picnic, special event site for charity walks, community events, etc). This area will.







**Heritage Ranch**  
 Red Deer, AB  
 City of Red Deer

**Overall Concept Plan**



October 2009  
 12571





**Heritage Ranch Entrance Feature**



**Windmill Examples for Entry Feature**



**Ornamental Grasses and Perennials**

**Cart Example for Entry Feature**

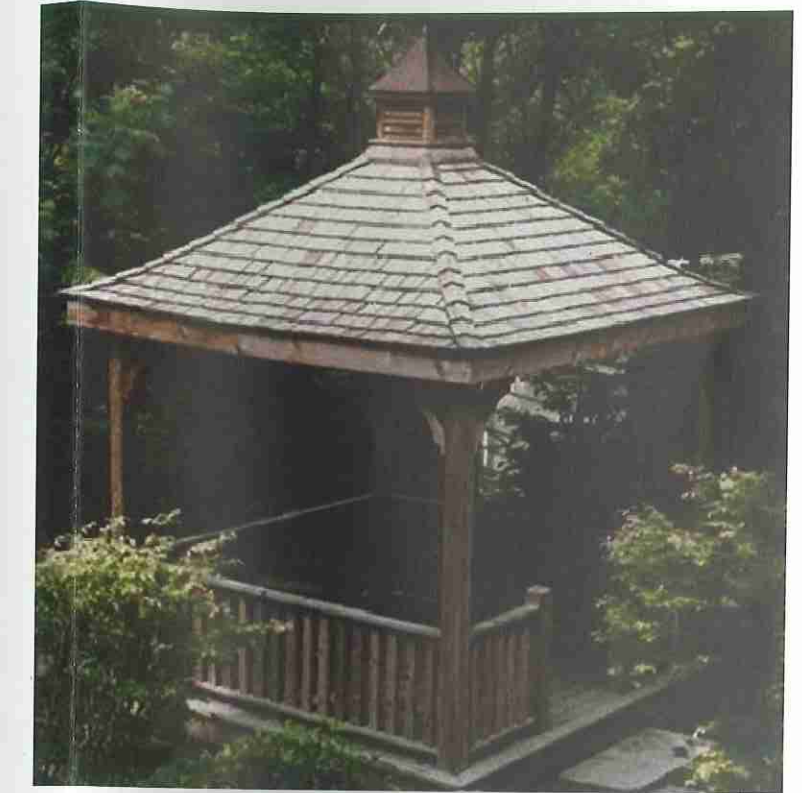


**Heritage Ranch Gateway**

**Day Use Features**







**Wood Gazebo Example**

**Heritage Ranch**  
Red Deer, AB  
City of Red Deer

**Building Area and Group Camp**



The proposed enhancements include a new expanded playground and two group picnic sites complete with sturdy, low maintenance gazebos and picnic tables. These group sites would be 'bookable' facilities rented out at a minimal cost (Figure 3). An access into the open space will be provided for set up of events (e.g. temporary stage). Power service should be extended from the proposed trail and parking lighting to provide a power outlet for community functions and events.

Just slightly north of the Heritage Ranch Visitor Centre, surrounded by existing forest, a site is proposed to accommodate a group camp and / or an outdoor education classroom. The area would consist of a large group fire pit and moveable picnic tables, as well as lighting, washrooms and fencing, and could be booked by groups of various sizes (Figure 3). To promote environmental awareness, the site will be implementing green initiatives, such as recycling bins in and around the visitor centre, as well as in open areas containing playgrounds and group gathering areas.

Another proposed amenity is a scenic wooden gazebo and ornamental planting offering an ideal location for wedding photos and secluded gatherings. The gazebo would be connected to the Visitor Centre via a short paving stone trail. A new 40' x 80' hay shed has been constructed northwest of the main corrals to support the existing equestrian programs and site operations by ensuring sustainable feed sources are available year-round.



Proposed Wooden Gazebo

In order to provide an inclusive recreation site, efforts will be made to make the site as universally accessible as possible, including signage design, which will consider those who are visually impaired.

*Summary of Site Features and Amenities*

- New Playground and Group Picnic Sites
- Access and power for temporary stage
- Scenic Wooden Gazebo site
- Green Initiatives to promote Environmental Awareness
- Universal Accessibility

**5.3 Lower Lands**

The equestrian programs will continue in this area with existing trails maintained for trails rides as well as for walking, hiking and nature interpretation programs. The lower lands will also continue to include extensive cross country ski trails and the major Waskasoo Park paved trails should be extended to provide a



Trail Rides in the Lower Lands



starting point for a future connection to Fort Normandeau and to Maskepetoon Natural Area. Orienteering can still be promoted as an active group use. The existing playground should be removed and site furnishings such as a metal shelter and picnic tables could be added. This site would be suitable as a 'walk-in' group camp site. In the future (5-7 years), the existing outhouses, fishing pier and bridge over the pond will require upgrading or replacement. As part of the outhouse replacement, a warm-up shelter for cross-country skiing has also been proposed (Figure 4). Since the need and timeframe for these proposed items has not been clearly defined, they have not been included in the Concept Plan capital cost estimate provided in Section 7.0.

#### *Summary of Lower Lands Upgrades*

- Equestrian Programs
- Maintain trails for walking and cross-country skiing
- Future connection to Maskepetoon and Fort Normandeau
- Orienteering
- Remove existing playground and provide additional site furnishings

#### **5.4 Utility Servicing**

A servicing study for providing water and sanitary services to the Heritage Ranch Visitor Centre, the operators residence and the Alberta Sports Museum and Tourism Red Deer was prepared by Al-Terra Engineering in 2002 (See Appendix A). As part of the scope of the Concept Plan, ISL Engineering and Land Services reviewed the servicing design and prepared updated capital costs for servicing implementation.

Based on the review, the preliminary design for servicing the buildings was considered to be a workable design that would meet City standards. The concept for sanitary services included a low flow gravity system that would be tied into the main sanitary lines on Cronquist Drive. The water system is designed as a looped system with fire service provided. In reviewing the design, an alternative alignment for both water and sanitary has been recommended to reduce the amount of road and parking disruption and restoration required. The proposed alignment takes advantage of the proposed trail corridor connection between the new parking lot and the main building which would require removal of some mature trees. During preliminary design, the trail and utility alignment should be evaluated and a cost-benefit analysis be prepared to compare the costs/impacts of tree removal versus road and parking lot reconstruction. The proposed alignment is illustrated on Figure 1.

A.D. Williams Engineering completed an evaluation of the current power services to Heritage Ranch in January 2009, with consideration of the capacity of the existing service to support the proposed development.

The current transformer supplying the service is 75 KVA, 120/208V (City id. 2256). The highest load in the last 12 months was 28.8 KVA or 80 A. The main service in the building is 400 A, and the usable amperage is 320 A (80% of 400 A).







The projected additional mechanical loads resulting for the proposed building expansion and upgrades would include a 5 ton and a 2 ton RTU, plus 2 - 15A breakers for fan motors in the kitchen should it go commercial with a central exhaust fan and designated make up air unit (not mechanically cooled). The additional load of 84 A (80% of total breaker amperage) would lead to a total of 164 A used. This would leave remaining 156 A of spare capacity. Existing capacity will also be sufficient for the proposed parking and trail lighting requirements.

Based on the evaluation, the current transformer and service are more than sufficient to handle the new proposed loads and renovations that are defined in the Concept Plan. Should a commercial kitchen load exceed the existing spare electrical capacity, a portion of the kitchen could be gas fired.

*Summary of Utility Services*

- Provision of water and sanitary services to residence, Visitor Centre and Alberta Sports Museum/Tourism Red Deer
- Sanitary – Low Flow Gravity System
- Water – loop system with fire service
- Changes to alignment proposed to reduce impacts to existing roads and parking



## 6.0 Building Evaluation and Concept Plan

Group2 Architecture Engineering was retained to complete a Facility Condition Evaluation of the existing Heritage Ranch Visitor Centre and the existing operator's residence. Based on the findings of the evaluation and the program discussion with City staff and the current operator, Group 2 prepared a concept plan for the expansion of the Visitor Centre to accommodate additional programming and to improve the overall operational capacity.

### 6.1 Facility Condition Evaluation

The following is an overview of the Facility Condition Evaluation of the Heritage Ranch building and the operators Residence. The detailed evaluation has been provided in Appendix B.

The Visitor Centre was originally constructed in 1983 and provides space for small gatherings and support for programs at the Ranch. There have been some small renovations and additions to the building in subsequent years as the functions and requirements of the facility have continually evolved over time. Based on the Facility Condition Evaluation rating system, the Visitor Centre is considered to be in acceptable condition which means that generally it meets present requirements with the exception of some minor deficiencies, and it has average operating and maintenance costs. The evaluation identifies a number of required repairs including the concrete floor in the basement, painting of interior and exterior surfaces, repairs to stairs and doors, carpet replacement, and minor roof repairs. The mechanical system has been deemed to be in marginal condition and requires upgrading to provide consistent heating and cooling throughout the existing facility and expanded meeting room. Associated electrical upgrades will also be required to account for the change in size and function of the building. Building code upgrades, such as exiting capacity and wheelchair accessibility, should also be made to the existing building to account for the change in size and changes in the building code since the original construction.

The operator's residence is a two bedroom single storey bungalow, estimated to have been constructed approximately 50 years ago. The residence is considered to be an important feature of the Heritage ranch equestrian operations because a full time resident is needed for care of the horses and security for the site.

With the exception of the building envelope and the kitchen equipment, which are in poor condition, the rest of the residence is considered to be in acceptable condition. The evaluation recommends the complete replacement of the envelope elements: windows, doors, insulation, cladding, soffits, vapour barrier and eaves. The envelope upgrades should be designed to support the 'ranch' theme of the overall site. In the kitchen it is recommended that a new fridge, stove and possibly a dishwasher be added. In terms of other repairs, the report recommends painting of walls and doors and the replacement of flooring, plumbing fixtures, bathroom vanities and electrical fixtures.



## 6.2 Visitor Centre Concept Plan

The proposed expansion and renovation of the Visitor Centre has been designed primarily to expand the operational capacity and to provide some much needed storage for the facility. The concept plan (Figure 5) will add a 55 m<sup>2</sup> addition to the existing 310 m<sup>2</sup> building, which will increase the occupant capacity from approximately 50 to roughly 80 occupants. This expansion will cause the removal of some exterior deck space but it will also provide access to the remaining deck to allow for the use of exterior reception space for room bookings.

The main meeting room will expand from the current 48 m<sup>2</sup> to 89 m<sup>2</sup> to allow for increased capacity (60 – 80 people) and programming opportunities, and will have a 9.7 m<sup>2</sup> storage space added. The initial concept retained the columns in the meeting room as it was considered to be too costly to overcome the structural challenges of removing them. After a more detailed review, it was determined that the columns could be removed to open up the entire meeting space based on the following structural upgrades:

- Install new piles to at grid intersections along the perimeter for the addition to support floor beams and columns. Screw piles are most likely the most economical method for piling.
- Shore the existing roof and remove the existing beams and columns – columns could be salvaged for reuse.
- Modify existing columns at west end of room to accept new beams. One new column will be added on west side to allow for new beam framing adjacent to existing load bearing wall. Existing foundations have the necessary capacity.
- Install new double beams (approximately 660mm deep) across entire space. The span design span is 12m long. Three beam lines are required.

As part of the addition, there will also be some reorganization of the existing building to provide more kitchen storage and relocation of the main office to enhance the overall function of the facility. The access to the existing upper meeting room will also be simplified from having three separate access points with the required stairs to only having a single access. The savings in area will contribute to the display area in the main lobby and add a small storage closet to this room. The expansion of the Heritage Ranch Visitor Centre is aimed at enhancing current functions which will increase the capacity of the facility to cater to larger groups, as well as provide the opportunity for greater variety and flexibility in the types of events, programs and functions it can accommodate. Although the washrooms are functional and require only minor repairs, they do not conform to current accessibility standards. As this is a public building, a renovation of the washroom facilities is recommended to ensure universal access to the Visitor Centre (Figure 6).

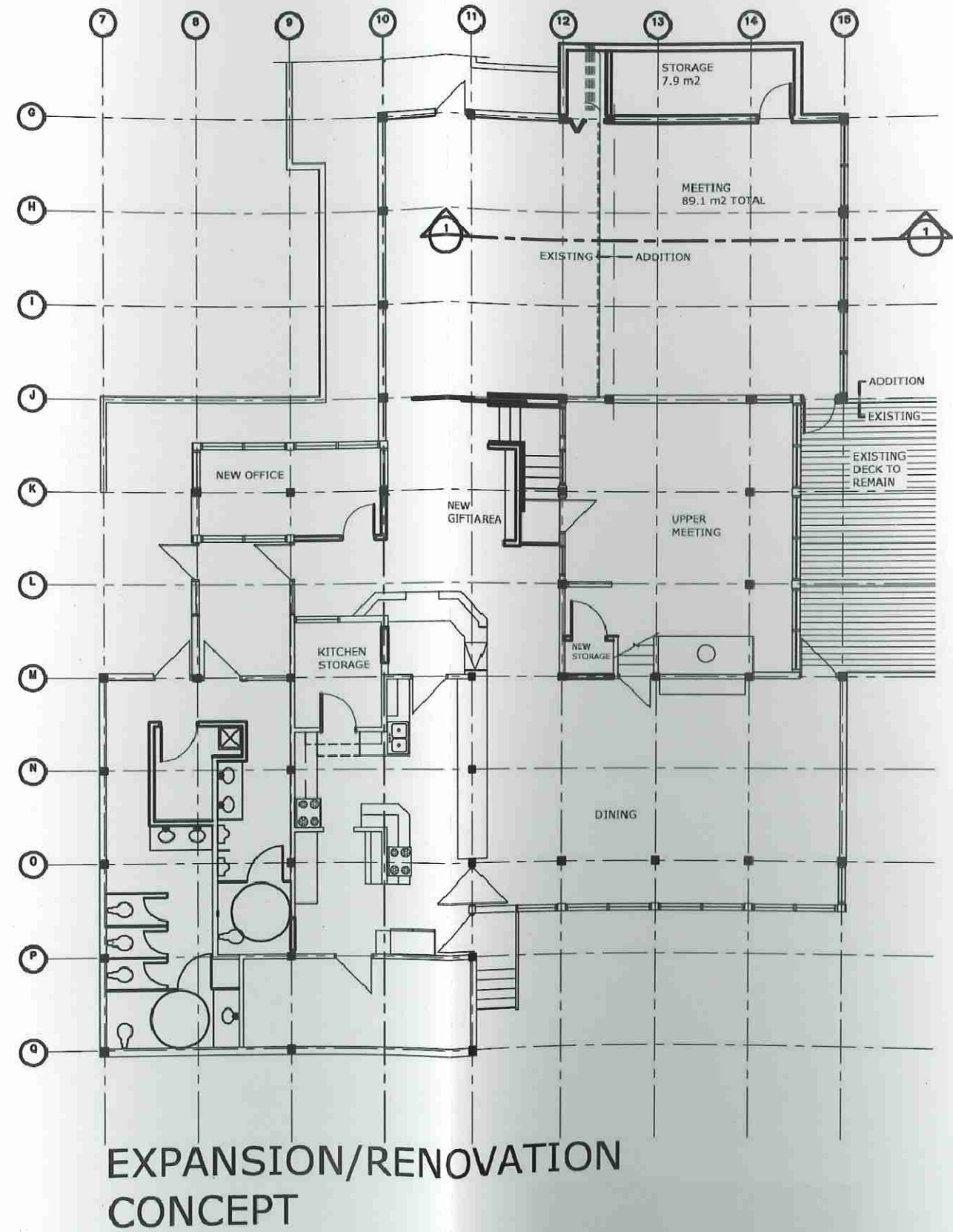
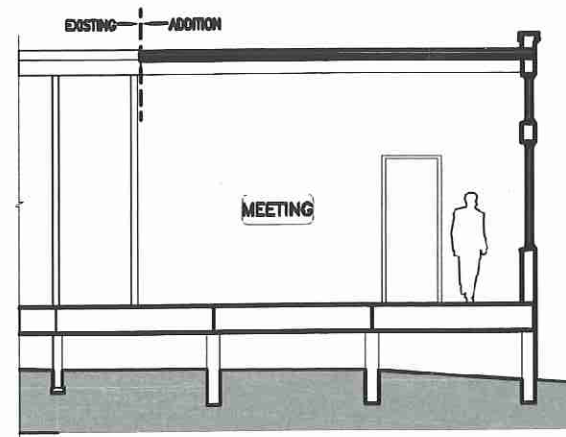
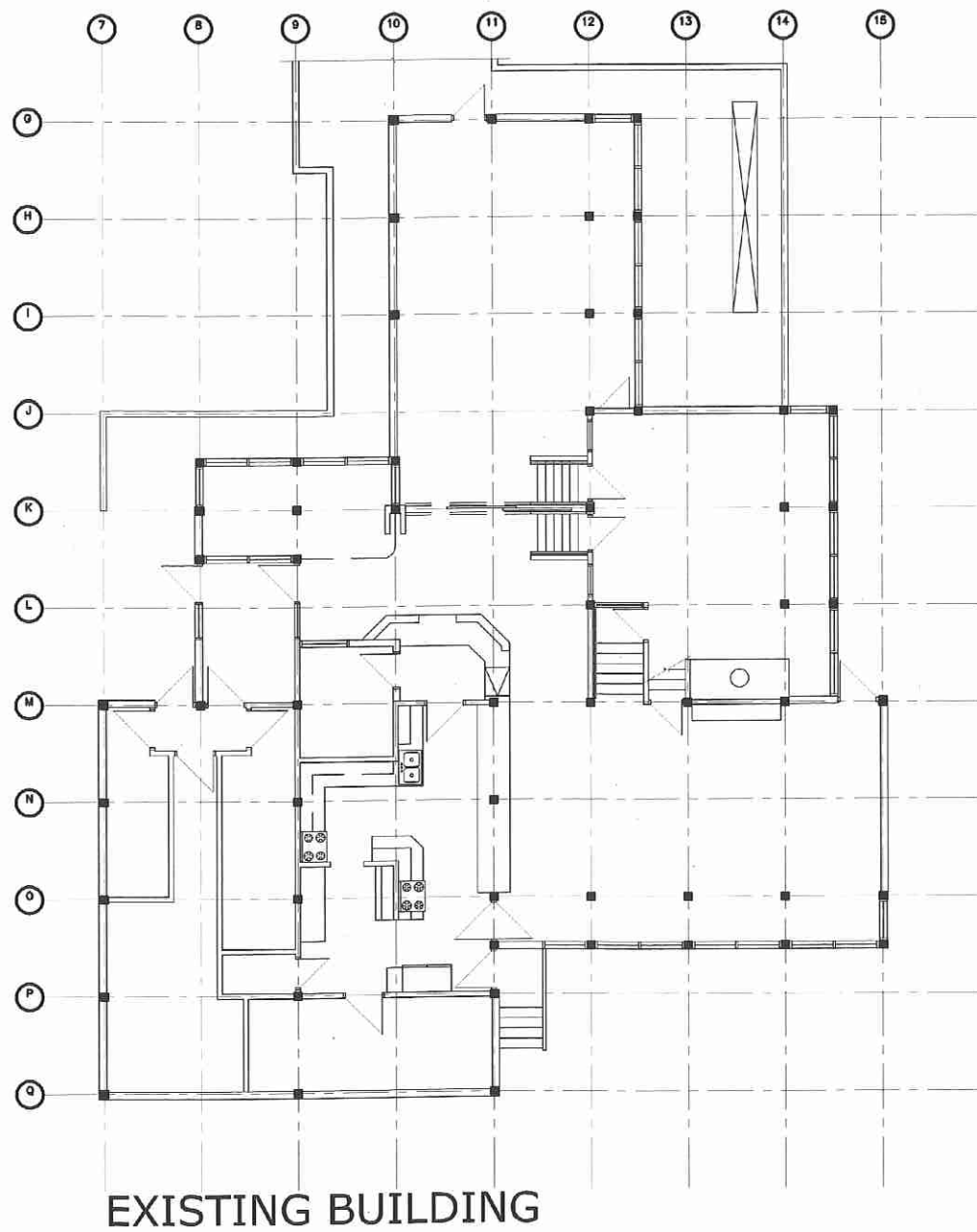
The construction of the new addition will match the existing building as much as is deemed feasible in terms of look and character. The goal is to create a seamless addition that will enhance the facility's functionality and appearance, while not detracting from its long-standing historical uses. The existing structure is constructed using timber construction with a rustic appearance in keeping with the



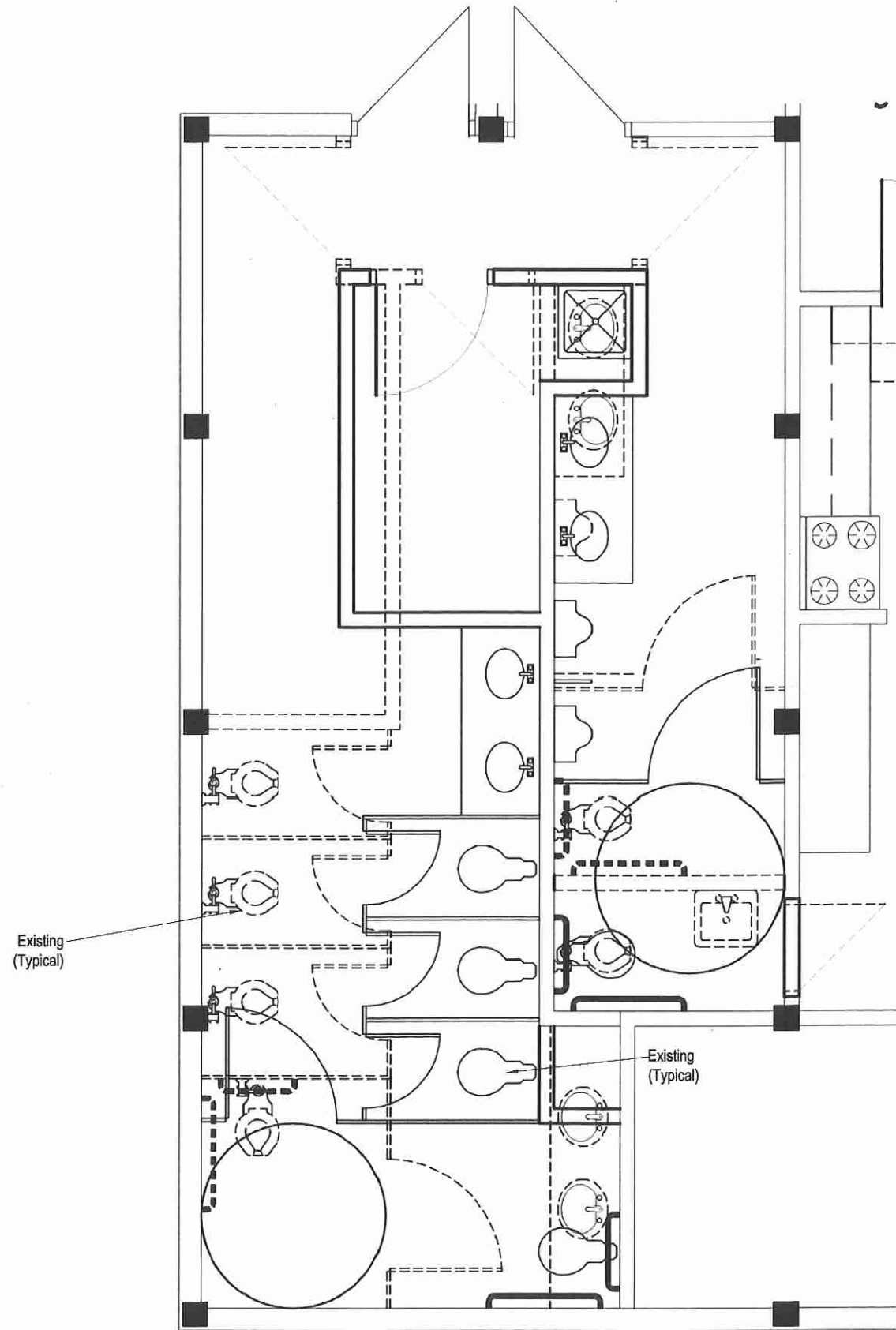
overall 'Ranch' theme. A capital allowance for enhanced lighting, furnishings and 'ranch' style decorative elements and art work has been included.

As indicated in the facility evaluation, there are a number of repairs and code upgrades that have been identified as necessary and should be included as part of the renovation and expansion. It is recommended that upgrading of the mechanical and electrical system also be completed as part of the renovation. Mechanical system upgrades could be completed in conjunction with the proposed building servicing. If the mechanical upgrades were to be conducted as part of an expansion rather than a standard renovation, synergies could be reached between the additional requirements and the expanded needs thereby reducing the long-term cost of the mechanical system. Electrical service to the building has been confirmed to be adequate to meet the increased demand of the mechanical system and various upgrades.

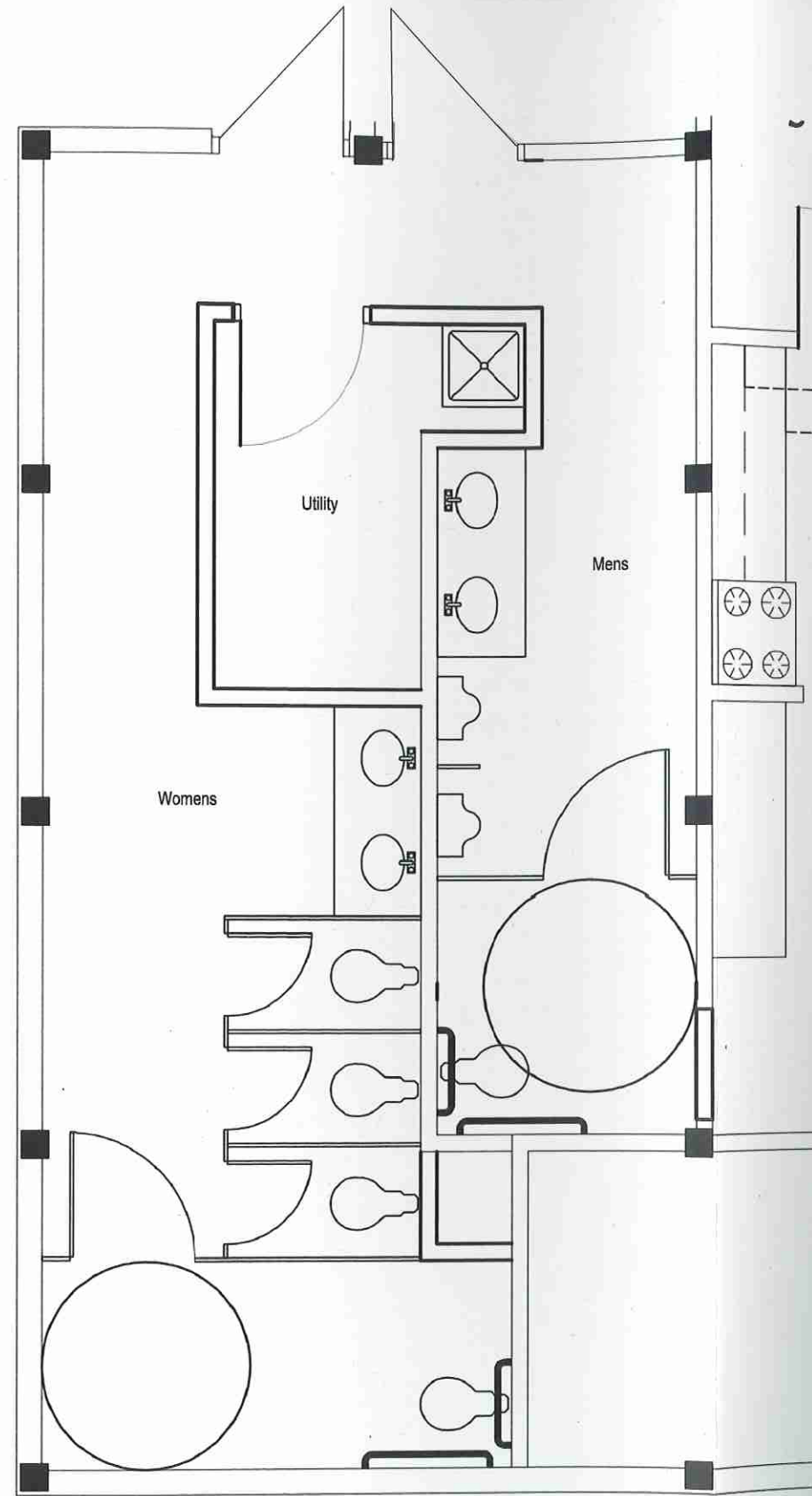








**Existing Washroom with Proposed Layout Shown**



**Proposed Washroom - Fully Accessible**

**Heritage Ranch**  
Red Deer, AB  
City of Red Deer

**Washroom Floor Plan**



## 7.0 Capital Costs and Phasing

The estimated capital costs for the proposed development concepts for Heritage Ranch total \$4.4 million dollars which includes \$1.7 for the utility servicing. All costs are in 2009 dollars and are based on current construction costs. A contingency and fee amount of 25% has been included to produce the overall project total. If the project is delayed or phased over several years, inflation values will have to be added to reflect current construction costs.

Item	Description	Notes	Units	Quantity	Unit Price	Total
1.0	<b>Gateways</b>	Incl. construction of wood gateway structure with controllable entry gate	Each	2.0	\$55,000	\$110,000
2.0	<b>Entry Feature</b>	Incl. grading, supply and installation of windmill, cart and landscaping	Lump Sum	1.0	\$44,000	\$44,000
3.0	<b>Waskasoo Park Entry Node</b>	Incl. grading, paving stone plaza, Waskasoo park signage and maps, lighting	Lump Sum	1.0	\$52,000	\$52,000
4.0	<b>Visitor Centre Expansion &amp; Renovation</b>	Approx. 55 sq. m of expansion, furnishings and decorative renovations. Includes service connections for water and sanitary	m2	65.0	\$5,400	\$351,000
5.0	<b>Visitor Centre Repairs</b>	Repairs and upgrades as defined in the Facility Condition Evaluation	Lump Sum	1.0	\$196,800	\$196,800
6.0	<b>Building Parking - 35 Stalls</b>	Incl. grading, granular base, asphalt, line painting, curb stops, post and rail fence barriers, signage and edge restoration	m2	1340.0	\$65	\$87,100
7.0	<b>Lighting</b>	New parking and trail to Main Building - Incl. supply and installation of power service and lights and power outlet in day use area	Lump Sum	1.0	\$55,000	\$55,000
8.0	<b>Day Use Parking - 15 Stalls</b>	Incl. grading, granular base, asphalt, line painting, curb stops, and edge restoration	m2	240.0	\$65	\$15,600
9.0	<b>Asphalt Trails</b>	Incl. clearing, grading, granular base, asphalt (3.0m wide), signage, cross walks, bollards, restoration	Lin.m.	600.0	\$225	\$135,000
10.0	<b>Playground</b>	Incl. excavation, concrete curbs and plaza, playstructures, surfacing, restoration	Lump Sum	1.0	\$260,000	\$260,000
11.0	<b>Group Picnic Site</b>	Includes grading, concrete base and prefabricated gazebo plus 10 picnic tables on gravel pads.	Each	2.0	\$68,000	\$136,000
12.0	<b>Gazebo - Wedding</b>	Includes grading, concrete base and prefabricated gazebo plus paving stone path and landscaping	Lump Sum	1.0	\$48,000	\$48,000
13.0	<b>Group Camp</b>	Incl. clearing, grading, topsoil/seed, washroom, fence, tables, fire pit, benches	Lump Sum	1.0	\$68,000	\$68,000



Item	Description	Notes	Units	Quantity	Unit Price	Total
14.0	<b>Outdoor Furnishings</b>	Allowance for supply and installation of various amenities - Bench, trash etc.	Lump Sum	1.0	\$22,000	\$22,000
15.0	<b>Landscaping</b>	Allowance for tree and shrub planting to enhance parking and open areas and landscape restoration of areas disturbed during construction	Lump Sum	1.0	\$35,000	\$35,000
16.0	<b>Maintenance Yard</b>	Incl. grading, granular base, fencing and gates	m2	1480.0	\$24	\$35,520
17.0	<b>Quonset / Storage Building</b>	Prefabricated metal fabric building	Lump Sum	1.0	\$56,000	\$56,000
18.0	<b>Shop/Garage</b>	Replace existing garage with new shop/garage - 800 sq.ft.	Lump Sum	1.0	\$34,000	\$34,000
19.0	<b>Operators Residence Repairs</b>	Repairs and upgrades as defined in the Facility Condition Evaluation	Lump Sum	1.0	\$114,800	\$114,800
20.0	<b>Utility Services</b>	Utility servicing of both Heritage Ranch and Alberta Sports Museum/Tourism Red Deer	Lump Sum	1.0	\$1,700,000	\$1,700,000
<b>Subtotal</b>						<b>\$3,555,820</b>
<b>25% Contingency &amp; Fees</b>						<b>\$888,955</b>
<b>PROJECT TOTAL</b>						<b>\$4,444,775</b>

**7.1 Recommended Capital Phasing**

Based on discussions with The City project team, the following capital phasing plan is recommended. The phasing plan has been developed with consideration of approved budget funding for 2010 and 2011:

**Phase 1: Short term (2010)** – Servicing of site and buildings and Visitor Centre expansion, upgrades and repairs. Phase 1 capital components selected to match approved budget funding for servicing and visitor centre upgrades.

Phase 1 - 2010						
	<b>Utility Services</b>	Utility servicing of both Heritage Ranch and Alberta Sports Museum/Tourism Red Deer	Lump Sum	1.0	\$1,700,000	\$1,700,000
4.0	<b>Visitor Centre Expansion &amp; Renovation</b>	Approx. 55 sq. m of expansion, furnishings and decorative renovations. Includes service connections for water and sanitary	m2	65.0	\$5,400	\$351,000
<b>Phase 1 Subtotal</b>						<b>\$2,051,000</b>
<b>25% Contingency &amp; Fees</b>						<b>\$512,750</b>
<b>PROJECT TOTAL</b>						<b>\$2,563,750</b>



**Phase 2: Mid term (2011)** – new parking lot, associated trail and lighting, landscape restoration, Quonset Hut and operators residence expansion. Projected phase 2 capital cost designed to match approved budget funding.

Item	Description	Notes	Units	Quantity	Unit Price	Total
<b>Phase 2 - 2011</b>						
5.0	<b>Visitor Centre Repairs</b>	Repairs and upgrades as defined in the Facility Condition Evaluation	Lump Sum	1.0	\$196,800	\$196,800
6.0	<b>Building Parking - 35 Stalls</b>	Incl. grading, granular base, asphalt, line painting, curb stops, post and rail fence barriers, signage and edge restoration	m2	1340.0	\$65	\$87,100
7.0	<b>Lighting</b>	New parking and trail to Main Building - Incl. supply and installation of power service and lights and power outlet in day use area	Lump Sum	1.0	\$55,000	\$55,000
9.0	<b>Asphalt Trails</b>	Incl. clearing, grading, granular base, asphalt (3.0m wide), signage, cross walks, bollards, restoration	Lin.m.	600.0	\$225	\$135,000
10.0	<b>Playground</b>	Incl. excavation, concrete curbs and plaza, playstructures, surfacing, restoration	Lump Sum	1.0	\$260,000	\$260,000
12.0	<b>Gazebo - Wedding</b>	Includes grading, concrete base and prefabricated gazebo plus paving stone path and landscaping	Lump Sum	1.0	\$48,000	\$48,000
16.0	<b>Maintenance Yard</b>	Incl. grading, granular base, fencing and gates	m2	1480.0	\$24	\$35,520
17.0	<b>Quonset / Storage Building</b>	Prefabricated metal fabric building	Lump Sum	1.0	\$56,000	\$56,000
18.0	<b>Shop/Garage</b>	Replace existing garage with new shop/garage - 800 sq.ft.	Lump Sum	1.0	\$34,000	\$34,000
19.0	<b>Operators Residence Repairs</b>	Repairs and upgrades as defined in the Facility Condition Evaluation	Lump Sum	1.0	\$114,800	\$114,800
<b>Subtotal</b>						<b>\$1,022,220</b>
<b>25% Contingency &amp; Fees</b>						<b>\$255,555</b>
<b>PROJECT TOTAL</b>						<b>\$1,277,775</b>



**Phase 3: Long term (post 2011)** – development of the balance of the recommended site improvements including day use, playground, trails, group camp, and parking.

Item	Description	Notes	Units	Quantity	Unit Price	Total
<b>Phase 3 - Future</b>						
1.0	<b>Gateways</b>	Incl. construction of wood gateway structure with controllable entry gate	Each	2.0	\$55,000	\$110,000
2.0	<b>Entry Feature</b>	Incl. grading, supply and installation of windmill, cart and landscaping	Lump Sum	1.0	\$44,000	\$44,000
3.0	<b>Waskasoo Park Entry Node</b>	Incl. grading, paving stone plaza, Waskasoo park signage and maps, lighting	Lump Sum	1.0	\$52,000	\$52,000
8.0	<b>Day Use Parking - 15 Stalls</b>	Incl. grading, granular base, asphalt, line painting, curb stops, and edge restoration	m2	240.0	\$65	\$15,600
11.0	<b>Group Picnic Site</b>	Includes grading, concrete base and prefabricated gazebo plus 10 picnic tables on gravel pads.	Each	2.0	\$68,000	\$136,000
13.0	<b>Group Camp</b>	Incl. clearing, grading, topsoil/seed, washroom, fence, tables, fire pit, benches	Lump Sum	1.0	\$68,000	\$68,000
14.0	<b>Outdoor Furnishings</b>	Allowance for supply and installation of various amenities - Bench, trash etc.	Lump Sum	1.0	\$22,000	\$22,000
15.0	<b>Landscaping</b>	Allowance for tree and shrub planting to enhance parking and open areas and landscape restoration of areas disturbed during construction	Lump Sum	1.0	\$35,000	\$35,000
<b>Subtotal</b>						<b>\$482,600</b>
<b>25% Contingency &amp; Fees</b>						<b>\$120,650</b>
<b>PROJECT TOTAL</b>						<b>\$603,250</b>



## 8.0 Business Case

Heritage Ranch continues to be a popular recreation area. The equestrian theme and beautiful natural areas and trails are the main draw for visitors. The node and ambiance of the facility has resulted in an increased demand for group bookings for events such as parties, birthdays, meetings, retreats, weddings and other special events. The upgrades proposed as a part of the Heritage Ranch 2009 Concept Plan will enhance the current uses of the area and create opportunities to attract new as well as returning visitors.

The current Business Model for Heritage Ranch is a shared service model with The City of Red Deer providing park maintenance, facility support and an operating subsidy to a private operator that manages the equestrian activities, the facility rentals and programs on the site. Over time, the business model has proved challenging to manage. This has been exacerbated by the existing capacity of the facility to meet the overall program needs of the community.

The facilities are also dated and deteriorating and from both a programming and sustainability perspective they require upgrading. Due to the current shape and small square footage of the existing facility, business and programming opportunities are turned away for functions that require accommodation for over 40-50 people.

The 2005 Waskasoo Special Gathering Places Study recommended eliminating the equestrian theme and services; however public support identified this theme as an important part of the Red Deer parks experience. In order to successfully maintain the equestrian theme and to better meet the recreational and social needs and related opportunities for both residents and visitors, there are changes to the facility and its amenities that are recommended in the 2009 Concept Plan.

To support the recommended physical re-development being proposed in the Concept Plan, the following business case provides recommendations related to changes in the overall business and operational model designed to improve the operation while meeting the public demand for equestrian services.

### 8.1 Existing Business Case Model

The City of Red Deer operates a number of facilities and programs within the park nodes in Waskasoo Park. The City uses a variety of business models to meet the program needs at each location:

- **Bower Ponds:** The City is responsible for facilitating bookings of events and facilities, operations and maintenance of the site and contracted concession and rental services.
- **River Bend:** A not for profit organization operates and maintains the site while The City collaborates with the society to ensure that public access is a key component of its service, primarily for not-for-profit programming.
- **Lion's Campground:** The City engages a contractor to handle the day-to-day site management (in season).

- **Not-for-profit sector:** (e.g. Museum and Art Gallery or Waskasoo Education and Environment Society (WEES)). The City retains responsibility for the capital maintenance of the facilities, however it also maintains a significant investment in operations. This allows the contracted agency to hire skilled staff to operate, program and manage facilities, and the programs.

Similar models have been more challenging to implement at Heritage Ranch; because of the staffing and safety requirements, the equestrian service receives a priority at the Ranch. Programming and marketing have been viewed as “nice to haves” rather than as an integral part of the service model. There was a period when The City provided program support at Heritage Ranch with a great deal of success. However, changes, over time, redirected these resources to other functions leaving programming the sole responsibility of the site contractor.

The contracted operations provide a much-desired equestrian service to residents; however, the current operating model is not fully able to deliver on the expectations of the public. In order to continue to operate an equestrian program at Heritage Ranch, a change in operations needs to occur. Currently, the equestrian operation is established on an agreement for service between a contractor and The City of Red Deer with a contract that covers the care and safety of the livestock, the management of staff and the day-to-day maintenance of the buildings and ranch area, the programs, rentals and operations of the Heritage Ranch Visitors Centre. The City of Red Deer is responsible for the day-to-day maintenance of park areas outside the ranch footprint and the capital maintenance of the infrastructure on the site. Programming and marketing of recreation, social and equestrian opportunities and services to enhance the community access to the Heritage Ranch experience as well as partner and community involvement with programs and services is not as effective as it needs to be.

In 2008 the operational investment at Heritage Ranch has primarily been to support the equestrian program at \$40K annually. The City of Red Deer also invests \$55 – \$65K annually at the node for parks maintenance and operations, outside of the ranch footprint, but including the onsite residence. Additionally, in 2009, The City of Red Deer increased its annual contribution to the equestrian operations from \$40,000 to \$50,000. It is anticipated that The City would retain responsibility for the operations and maintenance for the park node regardless of the how the Heritage Ranch site is operated.

## 8.2 New Direction

There is a diversity of knowledge, skills and abilities required to successfully administer and deliver programs and services of the scope encompassed at Heritage Ranch.

It may be prudent to consider a change to the operating model, in conjunction with the proposed capital development program in order to refocus the activities at the site so that the equestrian service is only one of a number of options for citizens to enjoy. Having decided to retain the equestrian experience, it is



important that improvements to the equestrian amenities, facility and programmable spaces and site safety be undertaken as a priority followed by a reinvestment in program, marketing and facilitation support to maximize the many leisure opportunities available at the node.

Some of the facility elements that are proposed in the Heritage Ranch Concept Plan are designed to contribute to the ongoing sustainability of operations at the site. Other proposed features are designed to contribute to the safety and enjoyment of citizens, and to increase day-use of Heritage Ranch by residents, which in turn will contribute indirectly to program support and sustainability.

The proposed facility re-development plan will ensure that Heritage Ranch is positioned for twenty more years of success as a community operation even if The City chooses to alter its approach to equestrian services. The viability of the node as a heritage/outdoor meeting and programming space can then be enhanced in new and improved indoor and outdoor facilities.

The 2005 Recreation, Parks and Culture organizational review identified that The Department should focus service delivery on its clearly identified strengths – facility development and management. To facilitate a change in focus to accompany the Heritage Ranch capital development program, The City of Red Deer may wish to incorporate a stronger level of leadership in order to capitalize on the potential programmability of the site. This can be aligned with the Department's philosophy of facilitation to support the community expectations for service. In order to make this shift, there are some key areas that must be addressed:

- Business Development and Management – development of a business plan to appropriately position the use of the meeting, seminar and small banquet space as well as the group camp and overall programmability of the site.
- Marketing and Advertising – focused attention to creating a higher level of awareness in the community about Heritage Ranch and its programs and amenities, in order to attract and retain patrons.
- Customer Service – creating a positive experience for patrons who choose to use Heritage Ranch for their recreation and social gathering experiences.
- Programming and program facilitation – such as on site interpretive and outdoor programs and community special events or volunteer program to enhance programs and services at the node. There should also be a focus on partnership and collaboration development to enhance services at Heritage Ranch.
- Program Support to Equestrian operations – planning and marketing of equestrian camps and related special events.

### **8.3 Operational Needs and Planned Program Elements**

Four main areas categorize the needs and program development areas that are critical to the ongoing success of Heritage Ranch operation. The proposed program elements in this concept plan will enhance the node in key areas of operation and improve: