

Opportunity for Economic Development and Open Space through Alamosa Community Collaboration

- The back nine holes on the Cattails Golf Course were created 40 years ago under a template of the times - upscale home sites on the edges of a golf course. No consideration was given to open space or retention of natural habitats.
- Although platted for decades, build-out of domestic lots has been slow and sporadic, an indicator of the local demand for upscale housing.
- The scenic qualities of the back nine have made it one of the most beautiful courses in the region.
- Most golfers and many homeowners are unaware that all of the open space and forested areas on the back nine are actually home sites.
- Most of the build-out has occurred in formerly wild areas screened from play. The next phase will be very evident from the course.
- **Developers of the remaining building sites have sufficient land base to proceed with their proposed RV resort without acquiring additional land.**
- By requesting purchase/trade with Alamosa Ranch property, the developers have invited the city to partner into their venture.**
- This gives the Alamosa community the opportunity to enact 21st century solutions to facilitate the needs of the developers as well as protect remnant wild areas that can now be part of the discussion.**
- **A key feature of these solutions is heavy on land trade and light on cash.**
- **Acreage slated for resort development will be heavily landscaped with non- native species and require watering. RV resort areas suggested in this proposal are wide open pasture or cultivated land facilitating such landscaping methods.**
- The goal is no net loss of open space.**

We offer two possible scenarios that allow for the positive economic influence of an RV park, the concerns of local residents as currently expressed and the broadening of recreation and wildlife habitat opportunities within our community.

OPTION 1-

Trade Cottonwood II properties for a 55 acre field between the Old Dairy and Splashland on the north side of North River Road (pink outline on map, marked as Option 1.)

This is a cultivated field that has been hard to water and contains a lot of alkali. Other than open space it does not have natural habitat or recreational attributes.

- A key feature to this option is the **limitation of traffic impacts to the golf course, disc course, existing housing around Cattails, trailheads and junction of State Avenue and North River Road. The focus of potential traffic issues will center on the North River Road(CoRd6S)/Highway 17 junction.**

- Proximity to Highway 17 commercial frontage.
- RV's parked well away from current residential neighborhoods.
- Proximity to Cattails Golf Course.
- Potential for expansion to the east from a private ownership (availability unknown.)

OPTION 2

Build Phase 1 (pink outline on the map, marked Phase I) of the RV resort as planned on city ranch property.

Instead of purchase by the developers, Phase 1 would be traded for the private forested lot known as RV resort development Phase II shown as Trade Lot 1 on the map.

Phase II (pink outline on the map, marked Phase II) of the RV resort development would then be relocated to land north of Phase I through trade with equitable parcels around the golf course shown as Trade Lots 1 and 2, see below.

Entry to both Phase I and II **would shift north** between the two phases. The resort would be entirely on what is now Alamosa Ranch land. The city would acquire quality open space currently enjoyed by local residents who believe that is already open space.

- This option would relieve the congestion anticipated by the upgrading of the multiple use entrance road. The developer's plan will cluster simultaneous use by RV's, vehicles heading to trailheads, disc course and the archery range and possible residential traffic entering the north end of the subdivision. By shifting to a single-user entrance up the road much of this congestion will be avoided.

- RV's will be parked well away from existing homes.

- All new construction will be on the flats and conducive to intense construction and preferred non-native landscaping treatments.

- Straight up equitable land trade without any or minimal financial exposure is another bonus.

Proposed Private Tracts to be traded as Open Space (outlined in red on map)

- **1** (Trade Lot 1, red outline on map)

The forested lots currently slated for Phase II (32 acres.) Already in use by local residents and assumed to be open space, this would formalize recreational use and protect a climax cottonwood forest that is relatively rare in the SLV and continually shrinking from similar developments all along the Rio Grande corridor. This forest area is prime habitat for dozens of wildlife species including red tailed hawks, owls, flickers, woodpeckers, marmots, ground squirrels, jack and snowshoe rabbits—the list is extensive.

Developers plan to cut out most of this native forest and replace it with non-native plant, water-intensive landscaping.

Developers want to start Phase I of the RV resort development on the flat pasture to lower construction cost, confirming that the wooded area will be more expensive to build on no matter when. By moving Phase II north of Phase I on similar flat pasture, reduced cost savings will occur on this tract as well.

- **2** (Trade Lot 2, outlined in red on map)

The northeast corner of the Cattails Golf Course boundary has been identified as **one of the prime bird habitats in the SLV**. Two prominent local birdwatchers are adamant promoters for saving this area from development. As part of the land trade agreements, this should be offered up instead of the 18 lots currently being appraised for trade with the city.

The major drawback to this 18 lot parcel is its location. Although a fine cottonwood island- it *is* an island isolated from recreational trails and is in the center of a ring of fairways, tee boxes and greens. Trail access to enjoy this area is problematic and public use would be limited.

Trade Lot 2 (20 lots approximately) is in the northeast corner of private lots adjacent to North River Road and abuts a prime section of the Alamosa Ranch. This proposed trade lot is a diverse mixture of native habitats augmented by the Independent Ditch, dug more than a century ago.

The Independent Ditch running through this section has created an artificial streamside environment. There are also many cattail wetlands (making any construction tedious at best) interspersed among a canopy of tall trees. This combination of elements has created a truly unique mini-environment that attracts an amazing roster of birds. At peak migrations in spring and fall up to 150 species of birds have been identified, a Valley phenomenon.

Based on the above attributes this special area needs to be acknowledged for its ecological diversity and warrants protection regardless of ownership.

Option 2 would trade parcels (Trade Lots 1 and 2) in the Cottonwood II holdings for acreage north of the golf course- Phase I would remain in the same place, Phase II would be north of Phase II both adjacent to North River Road.

Trading and acquiring these two private tracts for open space makes recreational management sense. The two parcels are on the edges rather than the center of the Cattails and abut natural existing open space. This trade will synchronize with existing low impact recreational use currently occurring along the levee and ranch loop trails, archery range and disc golf course.

SUMMARY

With the above suggested options 1 and 2, this trade, subject to appraisal and subsequent adjustments, would give the RV resort development economical building sites with a single-use entrance, thus avoiding many traffic and congestion issues. Option 1 is the best solution for traffic issues. Option 2 will relieve congestion issues by a single use entrance north of the suggested entrance.

The potential loss of pasture in Option 2 is regrettable and will need to be assessed against future livestock operations. However, there is plentiful grazing land still available as compared to diminishing natural heritage areas such as those requested for trade.

The Alamosa community would receive quality open space and wildlife habitat that most assume is already municipal land. There would be no net loss of open space.

The Alamosa community would also receive the economic boost from this RV park project, and further confirm our town as a tourist destination.

Submitted by a citizen's ad hoc committee. Compiled by David Montgomery
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RV 2018

Rio Bravo
Phase 2

Option 2

Rio Bravo
Phase 1

Entry Road

Option 1

Dairy
Site

Trade Lot 1

Trade
Lot 2

State Ave/ N. River Road
Junction

Cattails Back 9

Co Rd 65

Statess

17

Northwood

Sunn

Google Earth

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